

Strategic Growth Element

Introduction and Background

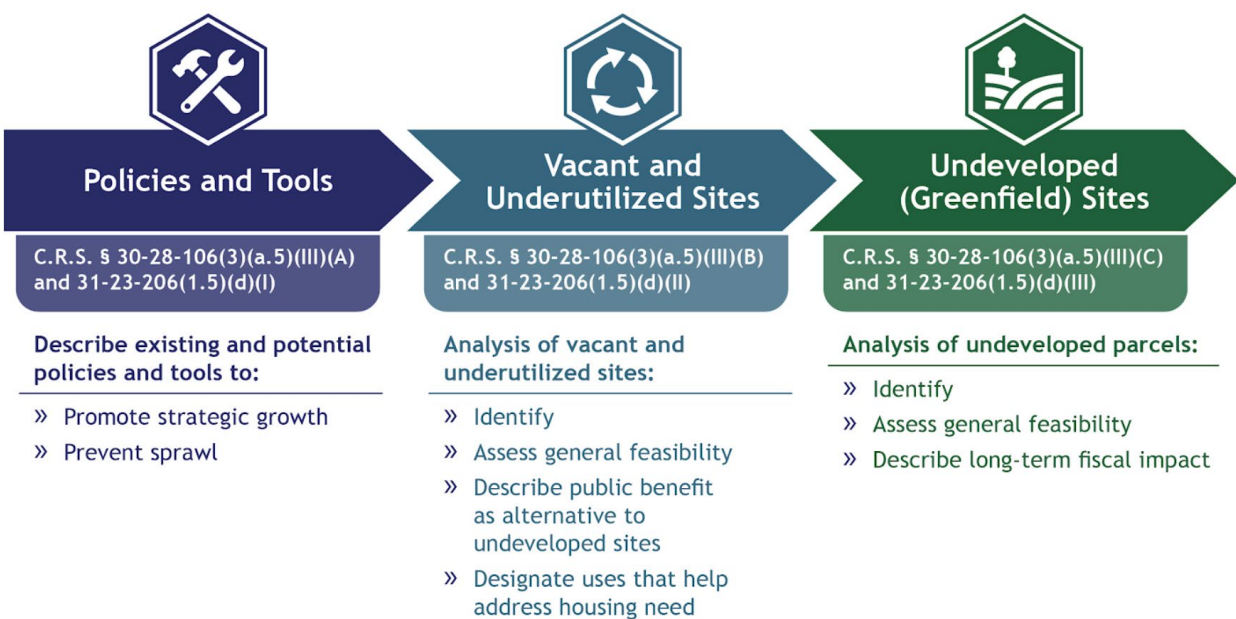
Following the passage of SB24-174, all subject jurisdictions, including Adams County, were charged with developing and implementing plans intended to drive strategic growth.

Strategic growth is “a fiscally and environmentally sustainable approach to land use planning, housing, community well-being, and infrastructure that promotes the development or redevelopment of vacant and underutilized infill parcels and mitigates the need for extensions of infrastructure and public services into natural and agricultural lands”.

– Colorado Statewide Strategic Growth Report

Among other requirements, SB24-174 required that all subject jurisdictions adopt a Strategic Growth Element as part of their comprehensive plans by December 31, 2026, and update it every five years. A Strategic Growth Element must include three components, as shown in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Three Key Components of Strategic Growth Elements



This document serves as an addendum to the Adams County Comprehensive Plan (*Advancing Adams*) and meets the Strategic Growth Element requirement.

The Role of the County

Adams County has a diverse set of growth patterns, ranging from established urban neighborhoods and close-in suburban communities to the west and large rural and agricultural areas to the east. Incorporated towns and cities accommodate growth along the eastern edge of the Denver-Aurora metro area through both infill and annexations that continue to expand the edges of these communities. Eastern Adams County has also seen growth, including unincorporated communities like Strasburg, with more gradual movement towards new housing types, preservation efforts, and infill opportunities.

Adams County guides growth in unincorporated areas through the goals and policies in Advancing Adams, as well as future land use designations, subarea plans and development standards. These tools establish the County's vision and expectations for development, while County programs, investments, and partnerships help address barriers to housing.

The County manages development review and code enforcement as well as road and stormwater infrastructure and some public services in unincorporated areas, while municipalities and special districts provide water, utilities, and other services. Planning for growth also requires coordination with service providers to understand capacity, improvement needs, timing, and responsibilities. Municipalities in Adams County guide development within their boundaries, making coordination important where planned growth, infrastructure, and potential annexations affect both jurisdictions.

Growth Trends and Housing Need

Adams County will need to accommodate more housing as it grows. According to the County's 2026 Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), Adams County needs at least 10,016 new homes in unincorporated areas by 2036 to meet current and future demand. Achieving this level of housing production will involve preserving existing housing and increasing the County's current housing supply. Strategic growth considers where new housing develops, how choices about growth patterns will shape communities, and what impacts growth will have on other systems, services, and community priorities.

Methodology and Data Sources

Adams County has many sites that could feasibly see new housing or mixed-use development to accommodate projected growth. Some of these sites represent potential infill or redevelopment; these are located in areas designated for future transit and/or job centers, along strategic corridors, or in planned subareas (Component #2). Other sites would be considered undeveloped “greenfield” areas (Component #3).

To assess, select, and evaluate the sites in Component #2 and Component #3, the following data sources were used:

1. Site data including parcel numbers, current and proposed zoning, future land use, dimensional standards, floodplain status, airport overlays, and environmental history.
2. UrbanFootprint data and scenario modeling outputs. UrbanFootprint is a parcel-based modeling platform that can be used to characterize existing site conditions and test development programs on selected sites or areas.
3. The County’s updated HNA, developed by EConorthwest and referenced to provide housing need context.
4. A Fiscal Impact Model for the Watkins site, developed by TischlerBise using Adams County data.

For each of the selected sites, these tools were used to develop scenarios that serve as comparative illustrations of potential development impacts, rather than detailed or specific site designs or prescriptive recommendations.¹ These sketch-level development analyzes help evaluate and compare potential housing and employment capacity.

Disclaimer: The identification and analysis of properties in this Strategic Growth Element is for general County planning purposes and to satisfy applicable statutory requirements. Inclusion of a property does not indicate that the property owner has requested, authorized, or consented to the analysis, nor does it imply any intent or obligation to develop or redevelop the property. The analysis is informational and planning-level only and does not create, modify, or establish any property right, development right, entitlement, or expectation of development. All property owners retain their rights under applicable law, and any future development or redevelopment remains subject to applicable County regulations, review procedures, and required approvals.

¹ Existing conditions in the vicinity of each site were evaluated using UrbanFootprint base canvas data, which provides an estimate of the number and types of housing units and jobs at the parcel level. The Watkins and Strasburg sites, which are each located in rural areas, use a five-mile radius around each development site to capture existing conditions. The Federal Boulevard site, which sits in the heart of the Denver metro area and within five miles of many dense and diverse communities, uses a smaller one-mile existing conditions radius in this memo.

Component 1: County Policies & Tools

Existing Policies

Component #1 requires the County to, at a minimum, to describe existing and potential strategic growth policies and tools (C.R.S. § 30-28-106(3)(a.5)(III)(A) and 31-23-206(1.5)(d)(I)). Adams County has established policy direction that supports key goals for growth, such as housing near jobs, transit, and services, encouraging infill and redevelopment, and strategically limiting expansion into agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas. Adopted in 2022, Advancing Adams provides direction through different goals and policies. These inform future land use designations that regulate growth and development opportunities. The plan reflects future, long-range aspirations of the County and residents by:

- Describing, designating, and mapping **future land use** categories that shape growth and development by informing changes to zoning
- Identifying **key issues** for a range of topical chapters that intersect with strategic growth
- Adopting **goals, policies, and strategies** based on public input that inform staff analysis and officials' decisions while guiding strategic planning, implementation, and investment

Advancing Adams Relevant Goals & Policies

- **Community and Housing (COH) Goal 1:** Support sustainable and responsible land use planning for residential growth and development. (See Policy COH 1.1)
- **Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) Goal 1:** Facilitate the protection and restoration of natural areas and ecosystems to improve habitat connectivity, sensitive lands, and natural habitats while enhancing the quality of life and shaping urban areas. (See Policy NRE 1.1)
- **Built Environment and Connections (BEC) Goal 1:** Support existing communities and accommodate growth and development that coordinates with local plans, is fiscally and environmentally responsible, and enhances the overall well-being of the community. (See Policies BEC 1.1 & 1.2)
- **Built Environment and Connections (BEC) Goal 3:** A built environment that meets the needs of the community while mitigating adverse impacts, recognizes known and unknown hazardous conditions, and responds to the increasing resource constraints going forward. (See Policy BEC 3.1)
- **Economic Development (ED) Goal 3:** Guide growth and development to targeted areas and provide compatible transitions between land uses. (See Policy ED 3.1)
- **Cultural Heritage (CH) Goal 1:** Ensure agriculture is supported with adequate allocation of area for future land uses and zoning, preservation practices, economic development, access and distribution, and technological innovations. (See Policy CH 1.1)

- **Strategic Corridors & Subareas (CSP) Goal 1:** Enhance five strategic corridors in cooperation with multiple jurisdictions to provide improved connectivity that considers multiple modes and integrates with the parks and trails networks, orderly transitions across jurisdictional boundaries, infrastructure and uses, and corridors that provide opportunities for safe travel and vibrant communities.

Existing Planning Tools

Adams County has also adopted policies associated with its strategic growth priorities in existing planning efforts outside of its comprehensive plan. Ongoing and completed long range planning has focused on updating development standards and regulations, small area plans, and community-wide visioning processes.

Exhibit 2 provides a summary of relevant planning tools guiding planning growth policies in Adams County. Opportunity evaluation site analyses also identify specific actions or potential policies that draw on this context.

Exhibit 2. Relevant Planning Tools for Strategic Growth

Planning Tool	Structure	Relevance
Development Standards Overhaul	Land use and development code updates	Directly updates development regulations
Strasburg Plan	Small area plan	Provides long-range vision of Strasburg through extensive community visioning
County Revitalization Authority	New applicable finance opportunity	Allows for new financing mechanisms to support County growth policies
Strategic Corridors (Advancing Adams)	Comprehensive Plan	Guides how County processes development applications in priority corridors
Future Land Use Map (Advancing Adams)	Comprehensive Plan	Strategically focuses areas under consideration for development
Advancing Adams (Other Chapters)	Comprehensive Plan	Includes goals and policies related to growth
Balanced Housing Plan (BHP) Strategy 1.1	New strategy in BHP	Directs County to adopt a new real property disposition policy for new affordable housing
BHP Strategy 2.1	New strategy in BHP	Ties accountability of BHP action to ongoing standards overhaul
BHP Strategy 2.2	New strategy in BHP	Ties accountability of BHP action to ongoing process updates

Source: Adams County Policy Documents

Development Standards Overhaul (DSO) and Relevant BHP Strategies (2.1 and 2.2)

Existing and proposed policies. Adams County's Development Standards and Regulations have the most direct effect on what can be built on individual properties. Recent overhaul efforts reflect community priorities to increase the capacity of what a single property owner can add on an existing lot, while also elevating the capacity for larger developers to add denser housing in key areas of the County. Dimensional requirements that adapt for infill

and compact development contexts reduce barriers to middle and higher-density housing on vacant and underutilized properties.

BHP Strategies 2.1 and 2.2 both relate to this process. Strategy 2.1 calls for allowing middle housing in more places and Strategy 2.2 calls for allowing more by-right residential development in strategic corridors.

Strasburg Plan

Existing policy. The Strasburg Subarea Plan provides a vision for the unincorporated community over the next 25 years. The plan creates growth policies for the area reflecting community values, specifically supporting development goals for a vacant infill site.

County Revitalization Authority (CRA)

Existing policy. The County has established its own CRA and begun taking steps to develop one or more county revitalization plans. These plans can identify specific revitalization areas and projects that help advance investment in critical infrastructure, remediation of contaminated soils, redevelopment of former landfills, or other activities that help reduce barriers to development on infill sites facing practical barriers to redevelopment. A CRA can issue revenue bonds and use tax increment financing to fund these projects.

Strategic Corridors (Advancing Adams)

Existing policy. Advancing Adams identifies five strategic corridors to guide future development. One of those corridors is Federal Boulevard. These corridors help focus development consideration and redevelopment efforts on infill locations near existing and proposed transit.

Future Land Use Map (Advancing Adams)

Existing policy. Advancing Adams identifies and maps a range of future land uses throughout the unincorporated areas of the county. These land use categories help inform zoning and development decisions. Large portions of the county carry designations that Adams County has adopted policies associated with its strategic growth priorities in existing planning efforts. Ongoing and completed long range planning has focused on updating development standards and regulations, small area plans, and community-wide visioning processes.

Other Chapters in Advancing Adams

Existing policy. Other goals and policies in Advancing Adams relate to growth in the context of other topic areas, including Community & Housing, Natural Resources & Environment, Built Environment & Connections, Economic Development, and Cultural Heritage.

BHP Strategy 1.1: Real Property Disposition Policy

Proposed policy. This BHP strategy directly creates an action for the County to formalize a policy for assessing opportunities to convert property it owns into affordable housing. This can encourage the use or reuse of infill sites to help meet the County's housing needs.

Component 2: Vacant and Underutilized Sites (Infill and Redevelopment)

Component #2 requires the County to, at a minimum, identify vacant and underutilized sites near transit or job centers, assess their feasibility for residential use, describe the public benefits of developing them instead of greenfield land, and designate feasible sites for residential use (C.R.S. § 30-28-106(3)(a.5)(III)(B)). This component is intended to serve as a targeted list and not a comprehensive, jurisdiction-wide inventory. New areas can be added, edited, or removed in future Strategic Growth Element updates.

Site Selection

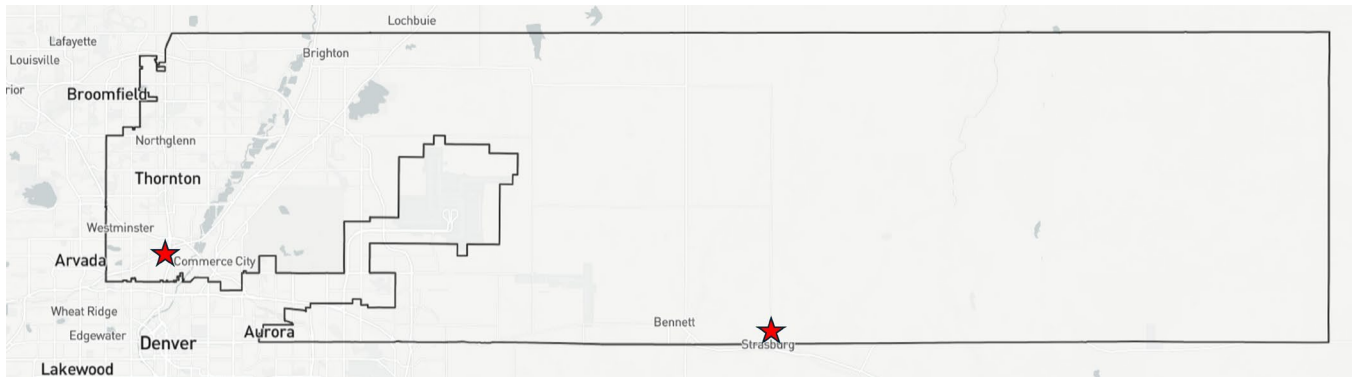
Four criteria informed the selection of opportunity evaluation sites for Component #2:

- **Proximity to transit or job centers:** Sites that are inside a Transit Station Area on the County's transit-oriented communities maps, and/or that are inside a strong employment concentration area per Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data.
- **Underutilized or vacant status:** Vacant or underutilized parcels.
- **Strategic Corridors:** Sites within the Strategic Corridors in Chapter 8 of Advancing Adams.
- **Additional plan support:** Sites where actions to create a County Revitalization Authority have previously been discussed by the Adams County Board of County Commissioners or sites that are described for strategic growth in an adopted subarea plan.

The following sites address Component #2:

1. **Clear Creek-Federal Station Area** (Component #2): A 42.5-acre infill site consisting of six total parcels located in an urbanized area along the Clear Creek Corridor near RTD's G Line.
2. **Strasburg** (Component #2): A 301.9-acre infill agricultural site consisting of a single parcel located just north of Interstate 70 currently separating two neighborhoods in the unincorporated community of Strasburg.

Exhibit 3. Locations of Component #2 Sites



Site 1: Clear Creek-Federal Station Area

Location and Context

The Clear Creek-Federal Station Area site is in an urbanized part of Unincorporated Adams County, at West 60th Avenue and Federal Boulevard on the Clear Creek corridor. The site consists of six total parcels organized into three groups. These parcels wrap the Clear Creek-Federal Station on RTD's G Line, which connects Wheat Ridge and Arvada to Denver Union Station. The site is bounded by Clear Creek to the north, Federal Boulevard to the west, and Interstate 76 to the south and east. Groups of vacant parcels west and north of the station offer the opportunity for redevelopment as transit-oriented communities.

In addition to transit access on RTD commuter rail, this area has road and bus access on Federal Boulevard, with the Colorado Department of Transportation facilitating efforts to establish bus rapid transit service on the corridor. Proximity to the Clear Creek Trail offers the opportunity for improved direct access to the regional trail system. The area also has nearby interstate access to I-76. Clear Creek floodplain and floodway involvement limits development opportunities without additional mitigation; former uses suggest the need for additional environmental study and brownfield remediation activities prior to redevelopment.

Exhibit 4. Clear Creek-Federal Station Area Site



Source: MIG, using UrbanFootprint (basemap © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap)

Exhibit 5. Clear Creek Federal Station Area Site Summary

Site Summary	
Parcels	6
Approximate Area	42 parcel acres (28 net acres)
Current Land Use Designation	Mixed-Use
Current Zoning	TOD, I-2, I-3
Proposed Zoning	TOD, multifamily, townhomes
Potential Housing Capacity	150-1,700 units
Potential Employment Capacity	0-1,100 jobs
Relevant Adopted Plans	Advancing Adams: Five Strategic Corridors & Subareas
Potential Public Benefits	• Housing volume and diversity • No infrastructure extensions needed • Brownfield remediation and creek access • Transit ridership, lower household transportation costs

Existing Policies

Advancing Adams provides a description, vision, and series of strategies for the Federal Boulevard Corridor as one of the Comprehensive Plan's five strategic corridors. The Clear Creek-Federal Station on the Regional Transportation District's (RTD) G Line sits in the middle of the corridor near West 60th Avenue. Future land use categories suggest mixed-

use development, though current zoning and is a mix of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning and industrial zoning categories. Advancing Adams envisions “a mixed-use community that includes retail, employment, entertainment, and housing with safe and comfortable access to the light rail station, bus stops, and trails.” It also names brownfield contamination and floodplain constraints as the reasons that vision has not been realized and directs the County to coordinate with property owners on remediation of historic landfills.

Site Characteristics

All parcels are currently vacant or underutilized with a Mixed-Use future land use designation.² The County’s proposed Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning, which would apply to these sites, sets minimum densities of 18 units per acre for multifamily on Sites A and C and 12 units per acre for townhomes on Site B. The proposed TOD zoning also requires 20% public open space and caps front setbacks at 5-10 feet, describing a walkable, station-oriented building form.

The three sites total 42.49 parcel acres and 28.38 net acres with the characteristics described below in Exhibit 6.

Exhibit 6. Clear Creek-Federal Station Area Parcels and Regulatory Standards

Site Group	Address	Parcel Area (Ac.)	Net Site Area (Ac.)	Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Min. Density	Max. Height
Group A	5901 Federal Blvd.	3.26	1.85 (floodway removed)	TOD	TOD, multifamily	18 du/ac.	95 ft.
Group B	2601 W. 60th Ave.	23.57	10.87 (floodway removed)	I-2, I-3	TOD, townhomes	12 du/ac.	40 ft.
Group C	2860, 2400 and 2300 W. 60th Ave.	15.66	15.66	I-3, I-2	TOD, multifamily	18 du/ac.	95 ft.

Source: Adams County Community and Economic Development, SGE Site Info Component 2 (2026).

Constraints

Floodplain and floodway. Every parcel is in the Clear Creek floodplain; Sites A and B include floodway. The net site area being considered for development in this analysis removes the floodway portions of Sites A and B, thereby reducing the total developable footprint from around 42.5 to 28.4 acres. Development on the remaining floodplain will

² These standards reflect the County’s development code as of September 2026. The County is in the final stages of adopting revised standards expected to allow greater height and density with smaller setbacks; the development programs analyzed here remain feasible under either version.

require fill, elevation, or other mitigation through the County's floodplain permit process, consistent with FEMA requirements.

Brownfield conditions. All three parcel groupings within the Clear Creek-Federal Station Area are designated brownfields. Site A originally consisted of a gas station; Site B was a landfill; and Site C was divided into various uses, including an auto salvage yard, a gravel mine, an asphalt plant, and a landfill. Environmental study of these parcels is uneven and remediation costs will depend on the site and development type. For example, previous use as a landfill and the potential presence of hazardous materials associated with brownfields pose different problems for structured multifamily than they do for attached townhomes.

Transit and Job Center Proximity

The Clear Creek-Federal Station Area is well-served by public transit. The Clear Creek-Federal RTD Station is directly on the site, with G Line service to Denver Union Station and other parts of the regional network. Federal Boulevard is a planned bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor. The Clear Creek Trail runs along the site's northern edge.

Census LEHD data shows that this site also has a concentration of employment, with more than 5,000 jobs located within one mile. Additional residents here would have strong access to employment opportunities.

Feasibility For Residential Use

This site already has infrastructure and services in place. It sits inside the County's urban service area and is surrounded by developed land with water, sewer, streets, and utilities. Development at this site can connect directly to these existing adjacent systems rather than extending new ones. The County has already designated the site for residential use through its Mixed-Use future land use and proposed TOD zoning. Development feasibility here will depend on the costs of brownfield remediation and floodplain mitigation work, not a lack of access to services and/or infrastructure. Those financial unknowns are likely to be large, fixed costs, which could favor higher-intensity development that spreads the cost across more units. The site is also a strong candidate for funding support such as brownfield redevelopment grants, the County Revitalization Authority, and the state Transit Oriented Communities Infrastructure (TOCI) Grant Program.

Potential Residential Uses

Exhibit 7 demonstrates three different scenarios for residential use on the Clear Creek-Federal Station Area site. Proposed zoning sets a capacity floor of about 445 housing units, well above the low-density residential program yield. Programs B and C imply average densities of roughly 60-65 units per acre across the developable area. This is typical of transit-adjacent multifamily housing in the Denver region and can be achieved well within the 95-foot height limit.

Exhibit 7. Clear Creek-Federal Station Area Development Programs Tested

Program	Description	Housing Units	Jobs
A. Low-density residential	Detached single-family homes on varied lot sizes	~156	None
B. Medium- to high-density residential	90% multifamily, 10% attached (townhome) units	~1,855	~430 (mostly retail and services)
C. High-intensity mixed use	95% multifamily housing with office, light industrial and retail space	~1,770	~1,110 (750 office, 185 industrial, 170 retail)

Source: MIG, UrbanFootprint scenario analysis (2026).

Capacity To Meet Housing Needs

Programs B and C would each supply approximately 18 percent of the 10,016 units that Unincorporated Adams County needs by 2036.³ Though such programs would likely require careful phasing to address market absorption constraints, they demonstrate that substantial progress towards meeting housing need is possible through catalyst development opportunities. Furthermore, Programs B and C each deliver smaller, attached, and rental units, which are more likely to meet the needs of smaller households earning below the area median income. The low-density alternative, if allowed under zoning, would only add less than 2 percent of Unincorporated Adams County's housing need; these would be large-lot, single-unit homes less likely to serve the lower-income household housing needs.

Both higher-density programs would offer potential for regulated affordable units. Affordable housing finance tools and programs often prioritize multifamily and attached rental units in station-area sites because of achievable economies of scale and other features of common funding sources like federal tax credits. This site may contribute to meeting housing needs across the income spectrum, reaching lower-income households that have the greatest housing need with support from incentives, land contributions, and public-private partnerships or moderate-income households seeking market rate rents. Introducing substantial new housing near a rail station can place upward pressure on rents in surrounding neighborhoods over time. The County's Balanced Housing Plan includes displacement mitigation strategies to address that risk.

The site is already designated for residential use through its Mixed-Use future land use, with an intended TOD zoning designation. The site would therefore not require a future land use amendment to support infill residential development.

³ Adams County Housing Needs Assessment (2026).

Public Benefits as an Alternative to Greenfield development

- **Housing volume and diversity where need is greatest.** Programs B and C would produce (1,770-1,855 diverse housing units on just over 28 acres). These units would be among the best served by public transit in Unincorporated Adams County and would likely fit smaller, more affordable typologies that have the largest current gap.
- **No infrastructure extension.** The site is already served by infrastructure and services; units built here avoid any major new roads, water, sewer, or service extensions. Development at this intensity would still require capacity improvements, including in areas where the County has identified existing water and sewer constraints. The contrast with greenfield development is one of scale. Improvements to existing infrastructure are usually less costly than expanding service to new areas, but every program will nonetheless require some degree of infrastructure investment.
- **Brownfield remediation and creek access.** Redevelopment would serve as a mechanism to assess and remediate what was once a landfill and other contaminated brownfield sites. It would also improve conditions along the Clear Creek frontage and path for stronger public access. Without redevelopment, these conditions will be more difficult to achieve.
- **Transit ridership and lower household transportation costs.** Station area-adjacent households generate fewer and shorter vehicle trips on average, lowering traffic congestion, carbon emissions, and transportation costs.

Potential Policies or Actions

Beyond designating this site for residential use, actions to encourage growth may include:

- **Advancing county revitalization planning.** Continue advancing the potential role of a County Revitalization Authority for this site. Identify potential revitalization projects that remove barriers to site development.
- **Completing environmental characterization.** Continue environmental assessment work for these sites to clarify the remediation scope and cost ahead of any development activity.
- **Planning floodplain mitigation.** Coordinate a site-wide floodplain strategy alongside key partners such as the Mile High Flood District and FEMA. Pursue a site-wide strategy rather than parcel-by-parcel solutions to achieve economies of scale, reduce costs, and produce a more cohesive waterfront edge.
- **Assembling financing and implementation partners.** Line up the County Revitalization Authority, brownfield programs, the state's Transit Oriented Communities Infrastructure (TOCI) Grant Program, and affordable housing financing tools and incentives to close any financial gap created by remediation and floodplain costs.

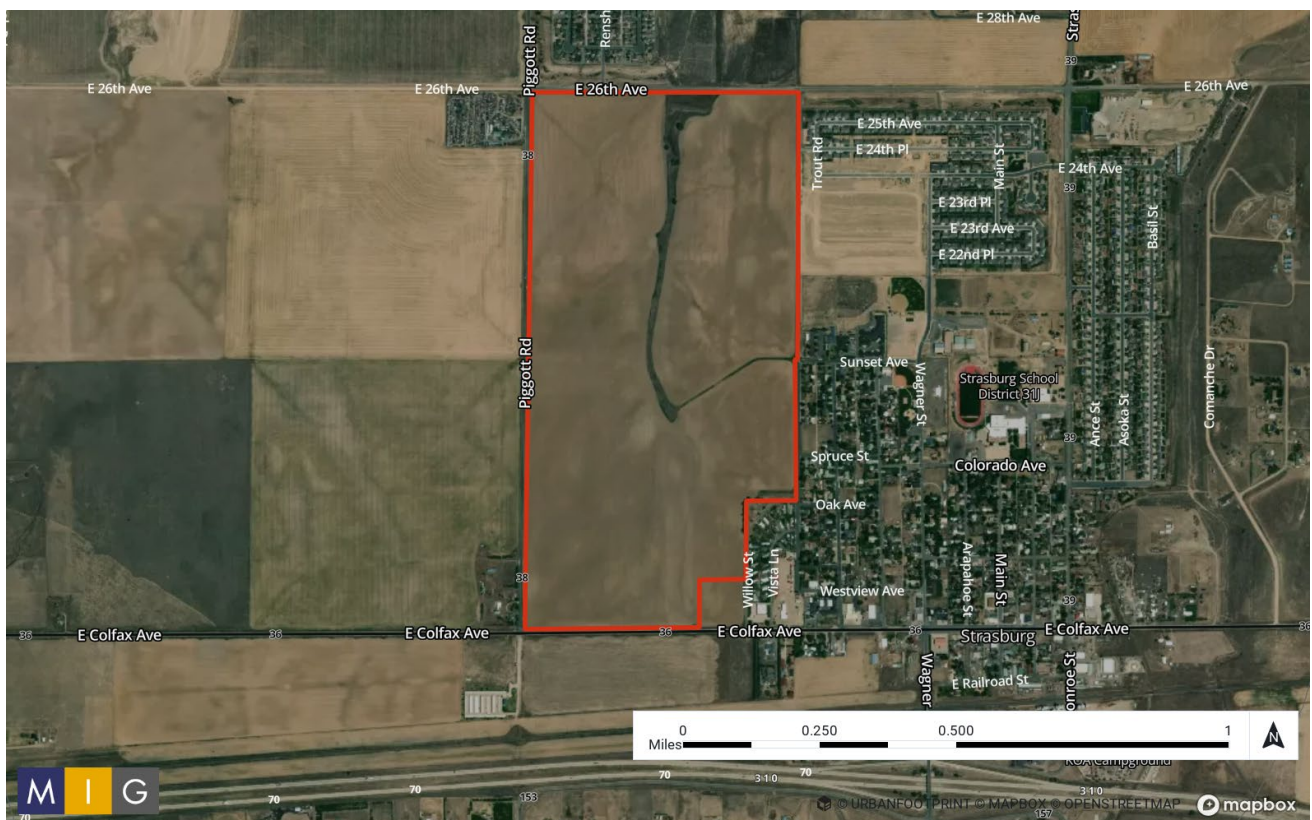
Site 2: Strasburg

Location and Context

The Strasburg site consists of a single 302-acre agricultural parcel near the western edge of Strasburg, an unincorporated community on the County's southern boundary near I-70. The site is bounded by Piggott Road to the west, East 26th Avenue to the north, East Colfax Avenue (State Highway 36) to the south, and the Strasburg street grid (including Strasburg High School and the Blackstone Ranch subdivision) to the east.

The Strasburg 2050 Subarea Plan identifies a vacant site adjacent to existing neighborhoods in the unincorporated community as a development opportunity. Nearby schools offer area job opportunities, as well as community serving businesses along Colfax. The site has nearby access to I-70. Future land use designation suggests a mixed-use category, though the parcel is primarily agricultural. A drainage corridor runs north-to-south through the site. Development of the site allows for the opportunity to connect existing Strasburg neighborhoods to the east and north.

Exhibit 8. Strasburg Site



Source: MIG, using UrbanFootprint (basemap © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap)

Exhibit 9. Strasburg Site Summary

Site Summary	
Parcels	1
Approximate Area	301.86 parcel acres; 218.2 (net acres)
Current Land Use Designation	Mixed-Use
Current Zoning	A-3, R-1-C, R-2, C-5
Proposed Zoning	Mixed-Use (Strasburg)
Potential Housing Capacity	500-2,800 units
Relevant Adopted Plans	Strasburg 2050 Subarea Plan
Potential Public Benefits	• New and expanded housing diversity • Natural resource preservation • Commercial main street development • Efficient extension of services

Existing Policies

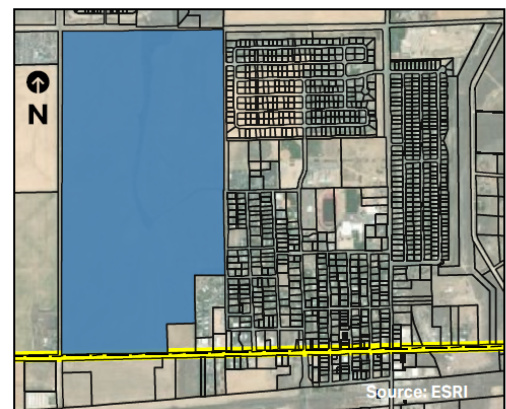
This parcel presents a notable development opportunity in the Strasburg area. It carries a Mixed-Use future land use designation, and a specific site strategy already outlined in the Strasburg 2050 Subarea Plan. The plan caps residential density at 14 units per acre, with the central drainage way preserved as open space and commercial uses oriented towards East Colfax Avenue. The Strasburg 2050 Subarea Plan assumes this development will cover roughly 200 acres, accounting for most of the site area excluding the drainage corridor. Proposed zoning standards implement this strategy. Existing strategic growth policy in the Strasburg 2050 Subarea Plan identifies the opportunity for the County to work with the developer on a mixed-use project on this site.

Exhibit 10. Strasburg 2050 Subarea Plan Strategy LUH 1.1.7

LUH Strategy 1.1.7: Work closely with the developer of the 200 acres northeast of Piggot Road and East Colfax Avenue (see Figure 1-13) to develop a mixed-use development that reflects Strasburg's character and is an asset to the community. Residential density should not exceed 14 du/acre, the drainage way in the center of the property should be maintained as open space, and commercial uses should be oriented towards East Colfax Avenue to contribute to a vibrant main street.

Source: Strasburg 2050 Subarea Plan (Adams County, adopted July 2026), Strategy LUH 1.1.7 and Figure 1-13, p. 29.

Figure 1-13. Future Mixed-Use Development Parcel



Site Characteristics

Exhibit 11 demonstrates key characteristics of the identified Strasburg site.

Exhibit 11. Strasburg Site Characteristics

Attribute	Value
Location	Northeast corner of Piggot Road and East Colfax Avenue
Area	301.86 total acres; 218.2 acres net site area
Current zoning	A-3, R-1-C, R-2, C-5
Proposed zoning	Mixed Use (Strasburg)
Development density	Townhomes; 10 to 14 units/ac.; maximum height 35 ft.
Key standards	Minimum lot width 75 ft.; minimum FAR 0.75; front setback 5 ft. (25 ft. on Colfax); 20 ft. side and rear next to R-1-C or R-2; 2 parking spaces per unit plus 15% visitor
Constraints	Drainage corridor through the center, up to about 70 acres of floodplain; no environmental concerns; no airport overlay
Transit	None; potential Bustang stop on I-70

Source: Adams County Community and Economic Development, SGE Site Info Component 2 (2026).

Constraints

Few known physical constraints restrict site development. The only physical constraint is the drainage corridor, which runs north-to-south through the site and affects about 70 total acres. Given the site's large size and lack of existing development, this drainage way can serve as an organizing feature for future development rather than a limitation. The Subarea Plan already reserves it as an open space and preserved greenway. There are no other identified environmental concerns or imposed constraints such as airport overlays. The site is subject to a 35-foot height limit, which comfortably accommodates townhomes, small-lot homes, and 2-3 story mixed use buildings along East Colfax Avenue.

Transit and Job Center Proximity

Strasburg does not have any rail or fixed-route transit access. The County has expressed interest in a Bustang stop along I-70, which would connect the Strasburg community to other parts of the Denver metro area and the I-70 corridor. This site's strength is employment and service density: it is adjacent to the high school campus, the commercial core on Colfax, and a strong local employment base. Many daily trips can be made within Strasburg by bike, on foot, or by a short drive. Expanding commercial space along East Colfax Avenue through this development would further strengthen the adjacent job concentration.

Feasibility for Residential Use

This site is feasible for residential use at the intensity outlined in the Subarea Plan. Homes are already under construction immediately north and east of this site, with existing and planned infrastructure to support them. Streets are stubbed to the parcel from the existing grid, while water and sewer are already being extended to serve adjacent development. Single site ownership simplifies phasing and delivery of the project, including the open space corridor. The County has designated the site for mixed use development. Water and sewer build-out capacity remains an open question. The site is also likely best suited for development that phases from the south and east edges first to prioritize connections to other existing development in the Strasburg market.

Potential Residential Uses

Exhibit 12 summarizes four potential development programs for this site, including one that directly follows the strategy outlined in the Subarea Plan. Program A extends existing nearby development patterns, including the Blackstone Ranch subdivision, and shows what conventional large-lot single-family development would yield. Programs C and D produce similar housing yields on the same developable area, and both fall within the Subarea Plan's 14 unit per acre cap. Program D is the closest match to the County's adopted direction because it also delivers the East Colfax commercial main street the Plan calls for, which Program C does not.

Exhibit 12. Strasburg Development Programs Tested

Program	Description	Housing Units
A. Low-density single family	Large-lot detached homes mirroring adjacent Blackstone Ranch (8,000 to over 18,000 sf lots) on about 218 acres outside the drainage corridor. Half-acre lots west of the drainage would remove about 250 units.	~555
B. Mixed low-density neighborhood	Mostly small-lot detached homes with a pocket of higher density in the southeast corner nearest the school and Colfax	~1,400
C. Mixed neighborhood, medium density	Multifamily (1,394), attached (943), small-lot detached (585) and large-lot detached (84) units	~3,000
D. Subarea Plan concept	Mixed use at 10 to 14 units per acre on roughly 218 developable acres outside the drainage corridor, with the drainage way as open space and a commercial main street on East Colfax. Townhomes and small-lot homes predominate, with multifamily above or beside main-street commercial.	~2,880

Source: MIG, UrbanFootprint scenario analysis (2026); Program D derived by MIG from the Strasburg 2050 Subarea Plan strategy and the County's proposed zoning standards.

Capacity to Meet Housing Needs

Strasburg's housing stock today consists almost entirely of detached single-unit homes. The community has historically served households moving east from the Denver metro area in pursuit of lower land costs. Program D would introduce townhomes, small-lot homes, and apartments above main-street commercial ground floors, each of which are housing types that do not exist in Strasburg at scale today. These housing types would serve younger households, seniors, and local workers. Though such programs would likely require careful phasing to address market absorption constraints, Program D would supply roughly 29 percent of Unincorporated Adams County's projected housing need through 2036.

The site has a strong affordability advantage due to land costs and the Strasburg 2050 Subarea Plan's allowance for attached housing. Given typically lower land values in this area, small-lot townhomes could likely reach households between 80-120% of Area Median Income (AMI) without subsidy.

This site is designated for mixed use in Advancing Adams and the Strasburg 2050 Subarea Plan. The Strategic Growth Element can designate it for future residential/mixed use infill without a change to the future land use designation.

Public Benefits as an Alternative to Greenfield Development

This parcel is agricultural land today. However, it is contiguous with the existing Strasburg community, including streets and utilities. Development here would concentrate Strasburg's growth where the community and its services already sit rather than on scattered rural parcels. This has multiple benefits:

- **New and expanded housing diversity.** This site would offer the first townhomes, small-lot homes, and mixed-use housing in Strasburg, with the added benefit of locating them near the existing commercial core.
- **Natural resource preservation.** Any development on this site would add roughly 70 acres of public space and trailway via the drainage corridor. This would link the school and adjacent neighborhoods to the open space network envisioned by the Plan.
- **A commercial main street.** This site could add a new East Colfax main street that brings new services and jobs, as well as providing the community with a new commercial and social center.
- **Efficient extension of services.** As a single large, contiguous, single-owner parcel, this site can be served by planned extensions of existing systems at a far lower cost per unit than the same number of homes developed on dispersed rural parcels.

Potential Policies or Actions

Beyond designating this site for residential use, actions to encourage strategic growth at this site that helps address County housing needs may include:

- **Confirming water and sewer capacity.** Confirm the capacity, timing, and cost of extending service to the full site and reflect any phasing constraint in the entitlement.
- **Master planning the site with the owner.** Fix the open space corridor, street connections to the existing grid, and the main street location in a site development plan or subdivision plat before development begins.
- **Pursuing transit.** Continue to pursue a Bustang stop on I-70 and connect the site's street and trail network once delivered.

Component 2: Infill and Redevelopment Sites Summary

Together, identified infill sites could accommodate up to 4,800 housing units at the higher end of estimated scenarios. Though actual development would require careful phasing to address local market absorption constraints, strategic growth on these sites could address about half (47%) of the total projected housing need for unincorporated areas of Adams County through 2036 through infill development, while providing other public benefits. Other strategies may be required to intentionally meet needs like affordability for low- and very low-income households, accessible housing, and other housing features.

Exhibit 13. Infill and Redevelopment Sites, Capacity Summary

Site	Net Site Area (Ac.)	Zoning Capacity Floor	Potential Housing Units	Max. Share Of 2036 Unincorporated Need (10,016 Units)
Clear Creek-Federal Station Area	28.4	~445 units at proposed TOD minimum densities	156-1,855	18%
Strasburg	218.2	~2,180 units at proposed 10 du/ac. minimum on ~218 developable acres	555-3,000	29%
Total	246.6	~2,625 units	711-4,855	47%

Source: MIG, from Adams County site data, UrbanFootprint scenario analysis, and the Adams County Housing Needs Assessment (2025).

Component 3: Undeveloped Sites (Greenfield)

Component #3 requires the identification of undeveloped land that is not adjacent to existing development but is under consideration for growth (C.R.S. § 30-28-106(3)(a.5)(III)(C)). It also requires assessment of development feasibility based on infrastructure and transit access and description of the long-term fiscal impacts of new infrastructure and service costs. This component aligns with existing policy direction in Advancing Adams to “analyze and evaluate fiscal and other impacts to the County when extending residential development into previously undeveloped or agricultural areas.”

Site Selection

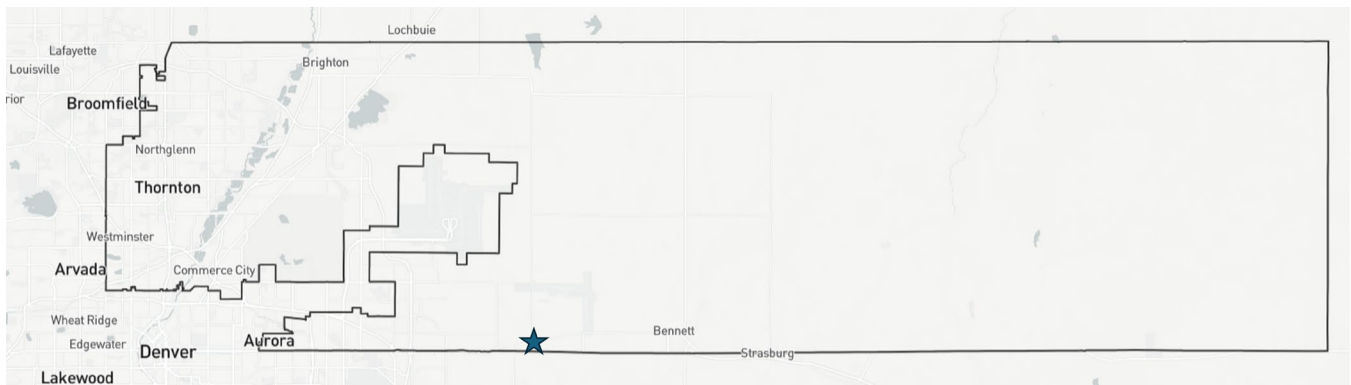
Three criteria informed the selection of opportunity evaluation sites for Component #3:

- **Undeveloped land:** Sites on land that has not previously been developed (greenfield)
- **Not adjacent to existing development:** Sites that are not adjacent to existing development
- **Under consideration for growth:** Sites where the County’s future land use designation or adopted plans indicate potential for residential development

The following site addresses Component #3:

1. **Downtown Watkins:** A 96.7-acre greenfield agricultural site consisting of three total parcels located between I-70 and the Colorado Air and Space Port adjacent to the unincorporated community of Watkins, though separated by a freight rail corridor.

Exhibit 14. Location of Component #3 Sites

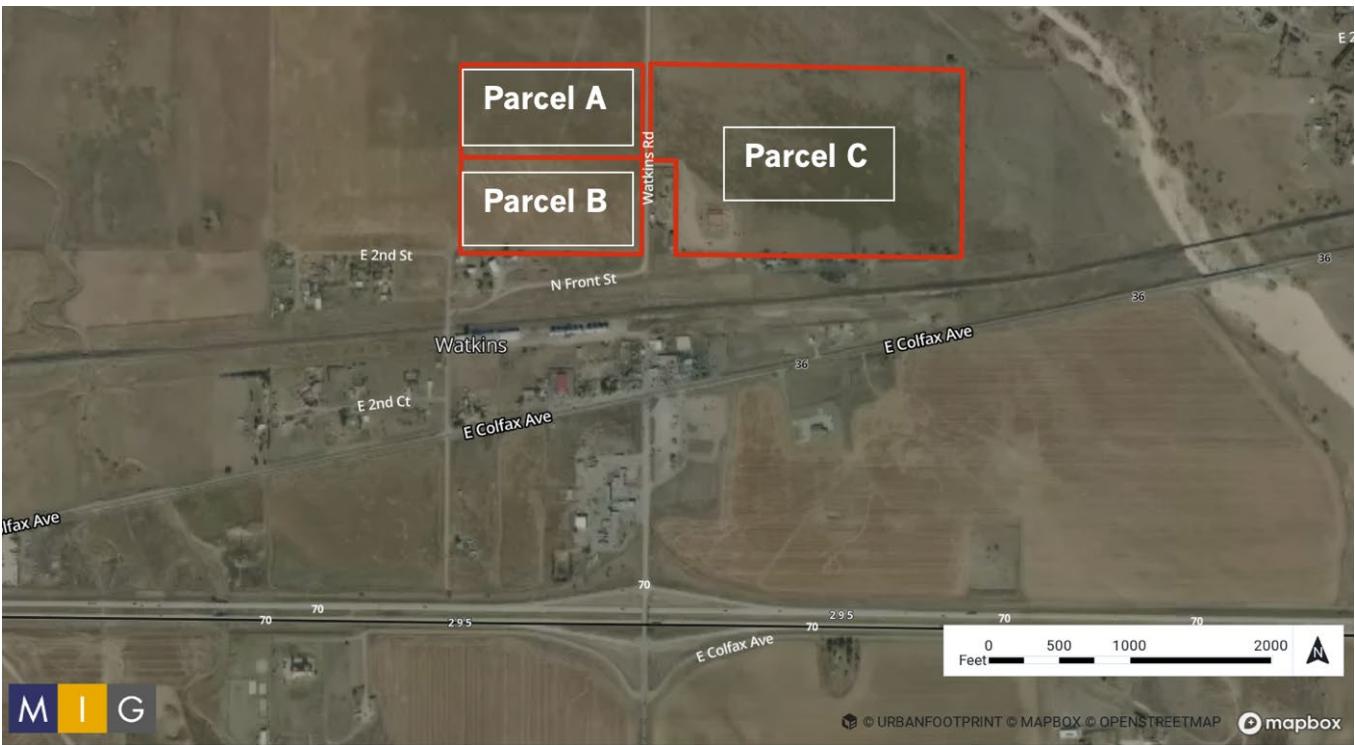


Site 3: Downtown Watkins

Location and Context

The Watkins site met the requirements for selection and consists of three agricultural parcels on either side of Watkins Road near the unincorporated community of Watkins on the County’s southern edge. The site is adjacent to corridors including East Colfax Avenue, the Union Pacific rail line, and I-70. It sits about 25 miles east of downtown Denver, 10 miles west of Strasburg, and four miles southwest of the Colorado Air and Space Port. Watkins is a rural community with scattered single-family homes, a school, and a highway-oriented business community along East Colfax Avenue. This area is not served by transit, though like Strasburg, the County may explore a Bustang stop on I-70 near the site.

Exhibit 15. Downtown Watkins Site



Source: MIG, using UrbanFootprint (basemap © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap)

Exhibit 16. Downtown Watkins Site Summary

Site Summary	
Parcels	3
Approximate Area	96.69 parcel acres
Current Land Use Designation	Community Hub
Current Zoning	A-2, A-3
Proposed Zoning	R-3, townhomes
Potential Housing Capacity	140-520 units
Potential Employment Capacity	0-1,000
Relevant Adopted Plans	Colorado Air and Space Port (CASP) Subarea Plan

Fiscal Impacts of Development	• Developer investment in central water and sewer service extensions • Multiple potential scenarios with County capital costs above capital revenue • Multiple potential scenarios with County net fiscal impact positive after including operational cash flows
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Existing Policies

The Colorado Air and Space Port (CASP) Subarea Plan designates this site as a Community Hub. Community Hubs are local- and regional-serving concentrations of retail, office, and service uses at high-traffic intersections, providing goods and services to surrounding residential and employment areas and to the broader Denver-Aurora market. Housing, recreation, and civic uses at these Hubs help support the subarea's employment centers. The CASP Subarea Plan's key components include integrated and community-serving retail, office, civic and residential activity, a range of housing types, and walking and biking connections to adjacent neighborhoods.

Site Characteristics

This site consists of three parcels totaling roughly 96.7 acres. Two of the sites, located on the west side of Watkins Road, are exactly 20 acres apiece with no existing development and no assigned address. The third parcel, located at 2210 Watkins Road on the east side of the street, is around 56.7 acres. It has a conditional use permit (CUP) for warehousing use.

Exhibit 17. Downtown Watkins Site Parcels

Parcel	Address	Parcel Area (Ac.)	Current Zoning	Existing Use	Floodplain
Parcel A	None assigned	20.00	A-2	Vacant	100- and 500-year
Parcel B	None assigned	20.00	A-2	Vacant	100- and 500-year
Parcel C	2210 Watkins Rd.	56.69	A-3	Warehousing (conditional use)	100- and 500-year

Source: Adams County Community and Economic Development, Site Data Element 3 (2026).

Constraints

All three parcels sit in both 100- and 500-year floodplains, which may reduce developable area but also creates an opportunity for new open space on the eastern parcel. The site is within the CASP's height overlay and Airport Influence Zone, which caps building height at 35 feet subject to FAA review. Residential development will also require noise and aviation

disclosures and may face additional requirements or conditions to ensure compatibility with airport operations. No additional environmental concerns have been identified.

Exhibit 18. Downtown Watkins Regulatory Standards and Constraints

Attribute	Value
Future land use	Colorado Air and Space Port (CASP) Subarea Plan: Community Hub
Potential Community Hub zoning and density for modelling	R-3, townhomes on separate lots; maximum 14 du/ac.; maximum height 35 ft. subject to FAA approval
Key standards	Minimum lot 2,500 sf per attached unit; minimum lot width 25 ft.; front and rear setbacks 20 ft.; 60 ft. setback from Watkins Road; 2 parking spaces per unit plus 15% visitor
Constraints	100- and 500-year floodplain on all parcels, concentrated on the eastern parcel; airport height overlay and Airport Influence Zone; no environmental concerns identified
Transit	None; potential Bustang stop on I-70

Source: Adams County Community and Economic Development, Site Data Element 3 (2026).

Feasibility Based on Infrastructure and Transit

This site currently lacks infrastructure connections. Serving this location at Community Hub intensity would require extensions of several key infrastructure and service types:

- **Water and sewer.** The parcels currently do not appear to be served by water or sewer infrastructure; new development would likely require infrastructure connections or wells and septic. Townhomes typically require central systems, either extended from the nearest district or built as a new treatment and supply system. In either case, the site would require a new secured water supply, which is likely to add both significant cost and lead time to the development process.
- **Streets and drainage.** The site would require improvement of Watkins Road, intersection work at East Colfax Avenue, a new internal street network, and drainage infrastructure for the floodplain and site runoff.
- **Public services.** The site would require extensions of County services including fire and emergency response, sheriff patrol, parks, and school capacity for several hundred to a few thousand residents. This location is remote relative to the County's existing service centers and from the Bennett and Strasburg facilities that serve the eastern county, making these extensions potentially costly and logistically challenging.
- **Transit and access.** There is no existing transit access and no employment centers within walking or biking distance other than the CASP and businesses along East Colfax. Nearly all trips would be by car.

Development is physically feasible. The I-70/Watkins Road interchange presents strong regional access, which is why this area is identified as a future hub in the CASP Subarea Plan. The primary question is whether the necessary infrastructure and service extensions can be provided at a cost that the County and/or the development itself can bear.

This analysis assumes that the site would stay in Unincorporated Adams County post-development, but that assumption should be held loosely. The CASP Subarea Plan notes that many parcels in the subarea have been annexed into Aurora in a patchwork pattern as they are developed. The CASP Subarea Plan recommends annexation agreements with property owners tied to strategic infrastructure investment. Annexation may be one pathway to facilitating development feasibility.

Potential Development Programs

This analysis includes three potential development programs for the Watkins site. Program A shows the potential yield of conventional large-lot, single-family development. Program B follows the County’s R-3 standards, with single-lot townhomes and a small retail core. This program is the closest match to the CASP Subarea Plan’s Community Hub designation. Program C tests an employment-led mix oriented to the CASP market, with flex industrial and office space and a smaller residential component. All three programs assume that the drainage corridor in the eastern parcel will be preserved as an open space corridor.

Program B serves as the primary basis for the fiscal analysis that follows as it aligns most closely with the Subarea Plan’s designation for this area.

Exhibit 19. Downtown Watkins Development Programs Tested

Program	Description	Housing Units	Jobs
A. Low-density residential	Large-lot detached homes	~143	~13 retail
B. Townhome neighborhood with retail core	Townhomes on separate lots per the proposed R-3 zoning, around a low-intensity retail center serving Watkins and the Colfax corridor	~661	~164 (158 retail, 6 office)
C. Flex employment with residential	Industrial flex and office space with live-work units and a residential component, oriented to the Air and Space Port employment market	~520	~1,000 office and industrial

Source: MIG, UrbanFootprint scenario analysis (2026). Program names describe the County direction each program tests. Within each program, UrbanFootprint assigns a mixed housing product at build-out: Program B models as 147 detached units, 207 townhomes and 307 apartments; Program C models as 55 detached units, 264 townhomes and 201 apartments.

Long-Term Fiscal Impact

The Adams County Fiscal Impact Model (a project-level model TischlerBise built for the County in 2024) estimates the County's annual and cumulative revenues such as property tax, sales and use tax, fees, and intergovernmental revenue against the operating costs of the departments that serve new residents and the required capital facilities. This model uses a 20-year time horizon, absorbed evenly from 2025 to 2044.⁴ Its coefficients were developed and calibrated to the County's own budget and service levels.

This analysis treats each of the three development programs as unincorporated development in the West Road service area with housing unit and job estimates listed in Exhibit 19.

Exhibit 20. Cumulative 20-Year Fiscal Impact to Adams County by Program, Downtown Watkins

Cumulative 2025-2044 (Constant 2024 Dollars)	A. Low-Density Residential (143 Units)	B. Townhomes and Retail (661 Units, 67,800 Sf)	C. Flex Employment and Residential (520 Units, 583,900 Sf)
County revenues (general fund, special funds, capital funds and impact fees)	\$3,755,800	\$12,873,000	\$15,026,800
Operating expenditures, general fund departments	\$632,400	\$2,502,600	\$2,469,600
Special fund expenditures (road and bridge, social services, other)	\$988,200	\$3,728,000	\$3,398,500
Capital expenditures	\$1,031,700	\$5,348,700	\$5,128,900
Net fiscal impact, 20-year cumulative	+\$1,103,500	+\$1,293,800	+\$4,029,800
Average annual net result	+\$55,200	+\$64,700	+\$201,500
Net result, capital only ⁵	+\$102,200	-\$1,066,700	-\$1,587,400
Population and jobs at build-out (model estimate)	415 residents; ~13 jobs	1,464 residents; ~164 jobs	1,107 residents; ~990 jobs

⁴ The projection period begins in 2025 because that is the TischlerBise model's first year after its 2024 base. The model holds every cost, revenue, and output value in constant 2024 dollars with no inflation, so the results do not depend on the start year. These results show what a 20-year build-out of each program would produce for the County in any 20-year window, whether it begins in 2025 or later, provided that the County's 2024 budget, rates, and unit values continue to hold.

⁵ Net capital results consider only the capital expenses and revenues incurred by each scenario, excluding operational cash flows. Capital revenues include the Capital Facilities Fund and any assessed impact fees; capital expenses cover new County facilities/offices and roads. Neither category includes water or sewer infrastructure impacts, which are financed via third parties.

Source: Adams County Fiscal Impact Model (TischlerBise, November 2024), project-level version, run by MIG in September 2026 with the model's default assumptions. Constant 2024 dollars; not inflation adjusted.

All three programs produce a modest net positive fiscal result for Adams County over 20 years, ranging from about \$1.1 million in cumulative gain under Program A to about \$4.0 million under Program C. These cumulative County gains translate to between \$55,000-\$202,000 in annual net fiscal revenue. Most of these revenue gains come from new property taxes, as well as impact fees and capital contributions that the developments would pay up front. Operating costs are concentrated mostly in the Sheriff's Office, corrections, and courts. Capital costs (covering road and facility investments needed to deliver these services) exceed the capital revenue they would generate under Programs B and C; Program C specifically triggers additional facility costs because of the number of new jobs added.

However, this model carries three key limitations that govern how these results should be interpreted:

1. The model covers the County general fund, special fund, and capital facilities only. It does not cover water and sewer infrastructure or internal roads, which fall on a private operator and/or the site's developer, or school district and fire department costs that may be incurred by the associated districts. Those are the largest infrastructure costs at this site and are likely the input that will affect development feasibility.
2. The model prices capital costs at the County's current average cost per household/employee. This assumption may understate the marginal costs of serving a remote location or meeting specific needs for a given site.
3. The model's default housing unit values (\$450,000 single-family, \$300,000 townhome, \$200,000 apartment) may or may not reflect actual attainable values in this area. These values are below current Adams County prices.

Model results offer order-of-magnitude estimates and as a relative comparison between the three programs rather than as precise projections. Programs B and C offer greater overall revenue generation potential and County return, though by very different margins. Program B delivers more than four times Program A's housing on the same site, but the net fiscal result is only marginally stronger because the added service and capital demand rises nearly as fast as the added revenue. Program C's employment base, not its housing, is what drives a materially higher return.

Lost Agricultural and Ecosystem Value

Development on this site would remove about 97 acres of A-2 and A-3 agricultural land. In the eastern part of Adams County, where agricultural land is abundant and the Subarea Plan has already designated a Community Hub, this agricultural production loss is modest. The larger risk comes from the floodplain and drainage corridor on the eastern parcel, which provides stormwater conveyance.

Potential Policies or Actions

To inform decisions about growth on this site, the County could consider:

- **Refining the fiscal analysis with a defined development program.** Rerun the County model with more specific inputs once a defined site proposal exists or as part of the next update to the CASP Subarea Plan.
- **Coordinating with Aurora.** Identify potential annexation pathways that allow for orderly growth and infrastructure extensions.
- **Protecting the drainage corridor.** Retain the eastern parcel's floodplain as open space in any concept plan.

Greenfield Sites Summary

The Watkins site could produce at maximum estimate about 661 units with a mix of townhomes, apartments and detached units. This represents roughly 6.5 percent of units needed in Adams County by 2036. However, these units would be distributed across a larger area than infill sites and would require substantial new infrastructure and service investments that infill sites would not.

Comparing Infill and Greenfield Sites

The Watkins site identified in Component #3 is a strong candidate for new greenfield development but provides lower housing yield at a higher cost compared with the infill sites described in Component #2. Program B at the Watkins site would produce about 661 units with a mix of townhomes, apartments and detached units.

However, the capacity of the Watkins site represents roughly one-third of the Clear Creek-Federal Station Area site yield on more than three times the acreage. This site would also require substantial new infrastructure and service investments that the Clear Creek-Federal Station Area and Strasburg sites would not. The Strasburg site is also located on agricultural land today, but it is contiguous with an existing community, commercial district, and utility network. The Strasburg site also provides sole ownership and an adopted plan strategy. This site would potentially provide lower housing yield at a higher cost than the identified infill sites. However, all three could have potential to contribute to meeting the County's housing needs.

Exhibit 21. Summary of Opportunity Evaluation Sites

Site / Component	Location	Parcels	Parcel Area (Ac.)	Current Zoning	Future Land Use	Existing Use
Clear Creek-Federal Station Area (Component #2)	W. 60th Ave. at Federal Blvd., Clear Creek Federal G Line station	6	42.5	I-2, I-3, TOD	Mixed Use	Vacant former landfill, salvage and industrial parcels
Strasburg (Component #2)	Piggott Rd. at E. Colfax Ave. (Hwy 36), west edge of Strasburg	1	301.9	A-3, R-1-C, R-2, C-5	Mixed Use	Vacant agricultural land
Watkins (Component #3)	Watkins Rd. north of E. Colfax Ave. and I-70	3	96.7	A-2, A-3	CASP Subarea Plan: Community Hub	Vacant; one parcel in warehousing under conditional use

Source: Adams County Community and Economic Development site data (2026); MIG analysis.