

Strategic Growth, Housing Analysis, and Comprehensive Plans SB24-174



COLORADO

Department of Local Affairs



CCI

**Colorado
Counties, Inc.**

Strategic Growth

KC McFerson & Scott Williamson, Community Development Office, DOLA



Legislative Background



SB24-174 required DOLA to submit a Statewide Strategic Growth Report to state legislature by October 31, 2025 and stated the report must include three major elements:

1. A land use scenario analysis
2. An analysis of the impact of state policies and programs on sprawl
3. Land use policy recommendations

Final recommendations reflect a combination of extensive research, analysis, and input what we heard on policy areas for the Statewide Strategic Growth Report.

Analysis of policy driven scenarios on:

- Cost and availability of housing
- Infrastructure
- Climate and air quality
- Water supply
- Transportation and transit
- Parks and open space
- Resource lands
- Wildfire risk
- Critical areas

Concurrent Efforts from SB24-174



Strategic Growth Report (SGR)	Vital Landscapes and Resources Report (VLAR)	Comp Plan Element Guidance & Local Policy Toolkit
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Focused on analysis of growth trends, land use scenarios across a variety of metrics required by SB24-174● Includes a list of <u>statewide policy recommendations</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Standalone report focused on connectivity and preservation of priority landscapes in Colorado● Includes a list of <u>opportunities, best practices, and resources</u> in the VLAR Planning Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Focused on supporting local planning, decision-making, and implementation● Provides <u>technical guidance</u> and a <u>detailed inventory of tools available for local governments</u>

Strategic Growth Report Structure



Introduction (Chapter 1)

Colorado Growth Trends (Chapter 2)

Colorado Policy Context (Chapter 3)

Transect Analysis (Chapter 4)

Scenario Analysis (Chapter 5)

Policy Scan (Chapter 6)

Implications and Recommendations (Chapter 7)

Note: there is also an executive summary and appendices

Defining 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."



Large Lot
Dispersed
Residential Places

Suburban Places

Traditional
Neighborhoods






Downtowns

Urban Core

What does growth look like across CO?



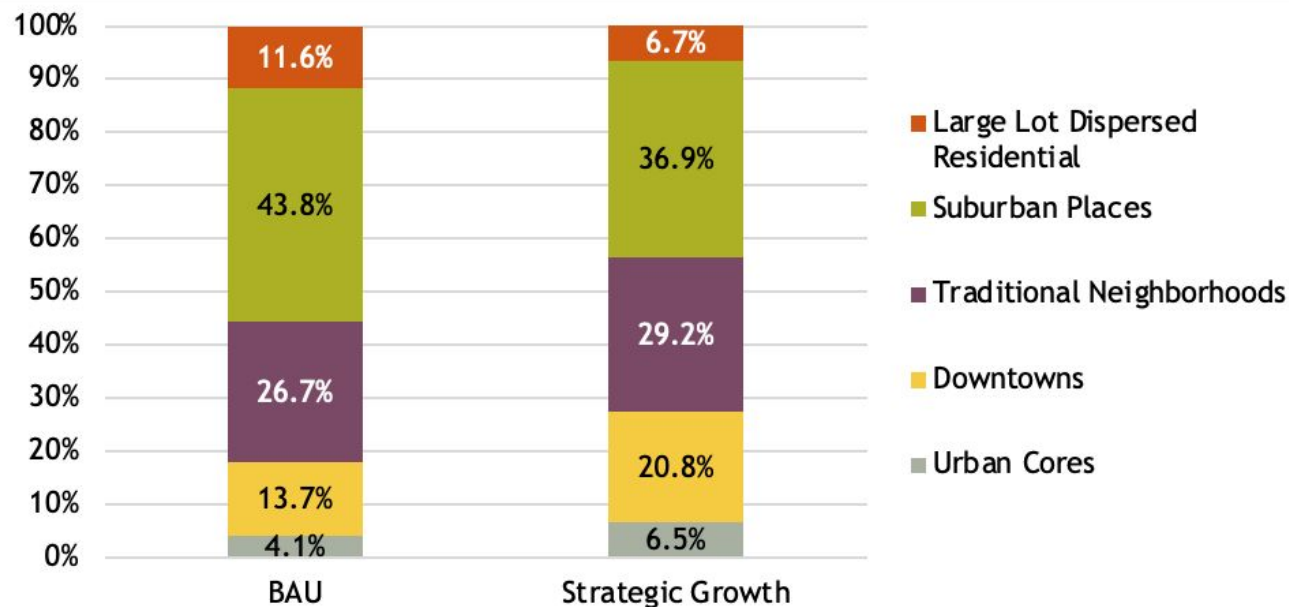
There is no single approach to growth. But more compact places show benefits for efficiency, sustainability, and long-term fiscal viability.

Key Metric	 Large Lot Dispersed Residential	 Suburban Places	 Traditional Neighborhoods	 Downtowns	 Urban Core
Density	Lowest	Lower	Moderate	Higher	Highest
Housing Costs	Highest	Lower	Lowest	Moderate	Higher
Household Expenses	Highest	Higher	Moderate	Lower	Lowest
Household Water Use	Highest	Higher	Moderate	Lower	Lowest
Household VMT	Highest	Higher	Lower	Lower	Lowest
GHG Emissions	Highest	Higher	Moderate	Lower	Lowest

What Could Strategic Growth Mean For CO?



Share of Growth by Place Type in Business as Usual (BAU) and Strategic Growth Scenarios, 2025-2045



Key Findings

For a summary of key findings from the scenario analysis followed by more in-depth information, refer to page 75 of the report.

Analysis includes:

- Land use, water, transportation, housing, wildfire, climate, and more

[Colorado Strategic Growth Report](#)

Summary of Analysis Conclusions



Compared to Business as Usual (BAU) Strategic Growth Would:



Consume about 36% less land overall



Use 19% less water (total annual residential and commercial use)



Result in ~10.8% fewer total Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

Produce ~11.5% less GHG emissions from vehicles



Produce ~23% less GHG emissions from buildings

Result in 24% more multifamily housing, raising the overall mix of new housing



Create 7% shift away from high Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) risk areas

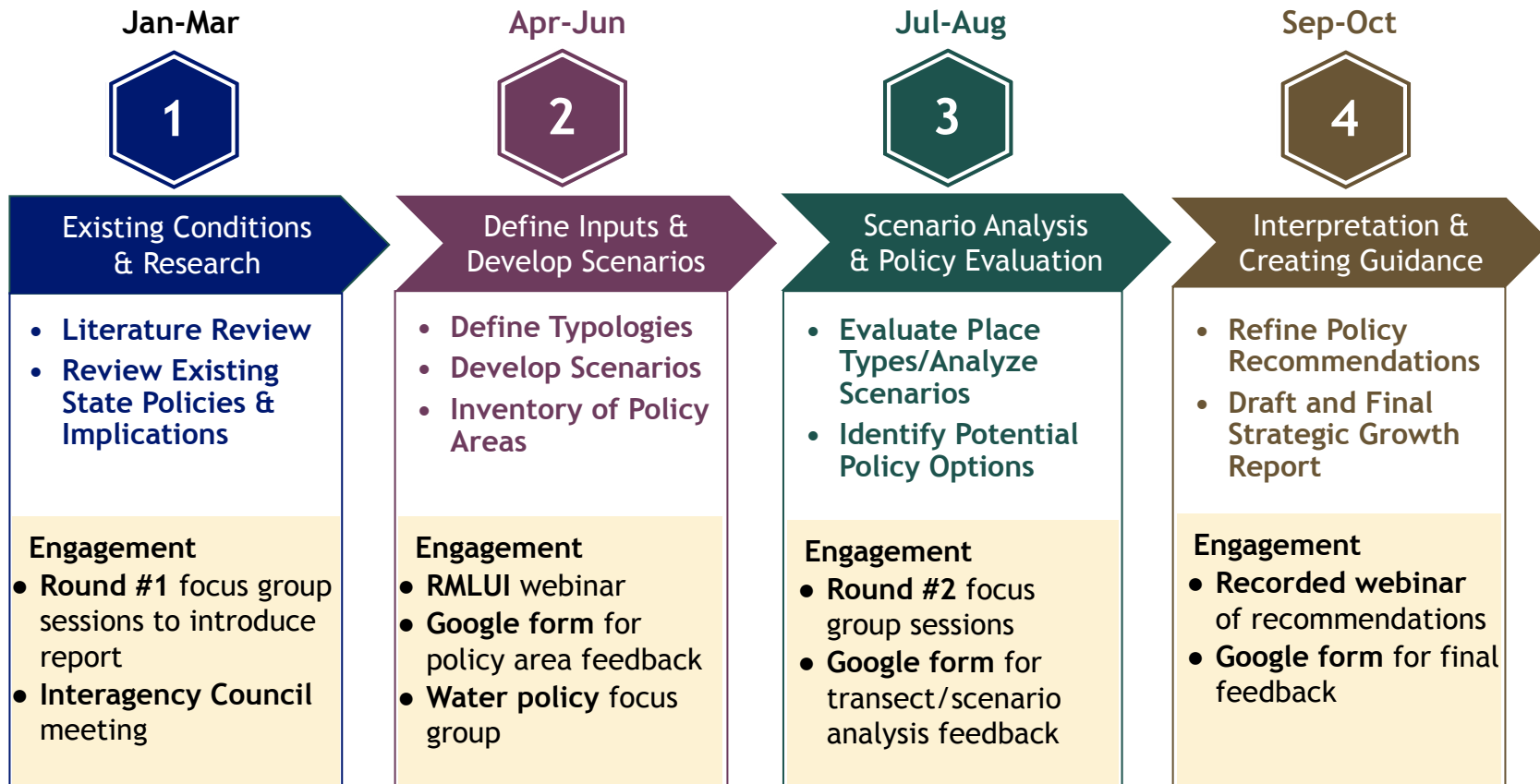
\$1,708

Savings estimated on
annual household
vehicle costs

Strategic Growth Report: Engagement Themes



What We've Heard: Engagement Overview



This input yielded a variety of themes, with three clear messages from local governments:

- Need for Flexible Funding
- Regional Coordination Support
- Targeted Technical Assistance

Policy Recommendations

Note: Order of slides does not indicate order of prioritization



Land Use and Infrastructure Recommendations

- Align incentives to grow strategically
- Align strategic growth and transportation decision making
- Optimize public infrastructure financing tools for strategic growth
- Identify and address barriers to more housing options in infill places
- Foster orderly and strategic expansion of existing urban areas
- Pair opportunities for strategic growth with strategic conservation

Water Supply Recommendations

- Support ongoing research to address impacts of water transfers on land use and agricultural water supply
- Research opportunities to enable local policies that match municipal water supply & community priorities for strategic growth
- Support local governments in promoting, incentivizing, or requiring that development be water-efficient
- Encourage and support growing efforts for regionalization of sustainable and resilient water management

Optimize public infrastructure financing tools for strategic growth

Why is it important?

- Equipping local governments to leverage diverse tools for value capture to fund infrastructure in a fiscally constrained environment
- Many financing tools improved and adjusted over time individually, but not as a suite of tools

Potential research questions

- *What could improve tools that finance and fund infrastructure (URAs, TIFs, Metro Districts, Special Districts, Opportunity Zones, impact fees, etc) effectively filling infrastructure gaps that produce Neighborhood Centers and Transit-Oriented Centers?*
- *Do special districts have the capacity to accommodate the desired infill growth that local jurisdictions are planning for?*

Next Steps



- **Vital Landscapes and Resources Report** (Final public review closed Nov 14th; making internal revisions for publishing by end of December)
- **Strategic Growth Element Guidance** (to be drafted in late 2025; finalized early 2026)
- **Water Supply Element Guidance** (to be drafted in late 2025; finalized early 2026)

Thank You!



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Comprehensive Plans and Water Supply Elements

Scott Williamson, Land Use and Water
Planner, DOLA



Comprehensive Plan – Requirements



- A narrative description of the procedure used for the development and adoption of the master plan
- Housing Action Plan (most recent - first due in 2028)
- Recreation and Tourism
- Three-mile Plan (required of regional planning commissions and municipalities)
- **Strategic Growth (by 12/31/26, updated every 5y)**
- **Water Supply (by 12/31/26, updated every 5y)**

Comprehensive Plan – Strategic Growth Exemption



Municipalities, counties, and regions are not required to include a strategic growth element if they have not received funding to do so and are:

- Municipalities with a population of
 - 2,000 or less
 - or
 - 20,000 or less with negative population change
- Counties with a population of
 - 5,000 or less in the county's unincorporated territory
 - or
 - 20,000 or less with negative population change

View the DOLA
Multi-Law
Applicability sheet
and reach out to us
for any further
clarification

Considering Assessments and Reports (1)



Beginning in 2026, local and regional planning commissions must consider the following when adopting or amending a comprehensive/master plan where applicable or appropriate:

- Applicable housing needs assessments
- Statewide Strategic Growth Report
- Vital Landscapes and Resources Report
- Colorado Water Plan



Considering Assessments and Reports (2)



1) Consider where applicable and appropriate:

Vital Landscapes
and Resources
Report

Strategic
Growth Report

DOLA HNA
Guidance

Housing Needs
Assessments

Colorado Water
Plan

2) Using the following
DOLA Guidance:

Vital
Landscapes
and Resources
Planning Guide

DOLA Strategic
Growth
Element
Guidance

DOLA Water
Supply
Element
Guidance

3) To inform these elements
of your comp plan:

Strategic Growth
Element

Three-Mile
Plan

Housing
Action
Plan

WSE conservation
policies, available water
supplies inform SGE

SGE development
scenario(s) inform WSE

Water Supply
Element

Key:

Locally
Developed

State
reports

DOLA
Guidance

Considering Assessments and Reports (3)



This slide presents the same content as the previous slide in an accessible format for screen readers.

1. Consider where applicable and appropriate:
 - a. (State Report) **Vital Landscapes and Resources** - leads to Vital Landscapes and Resources Planning Guide
 - b. (State Report) **Strategic Growth Report** - leads to DOLA Strategic Growth Element Guidance
 - c. (Local Report) **Housing Needs Assessments** - leads to DOLA Strategic Growth Element Guidance
 - i. Supported by DOLA HNA guidance
 - d. (State Report) **Colorado Water Plan** - leads to DOLA Water Supply Element Guidance
2. Using the following DOLA Guidance:
 - a. Vital Landscapes and Resources Planning Guide - leads to DOLA Strategic Growth Element Guidance
 - b. DOLA Strategic Growth Element Guidance - informs the Strategic Growth Element
 - c. DOLA Water Supply Element Guidance - informs the Water Supply Element
3. To inform these elements of your comprehensive plan:
 - a. **Strategic Growth Element**
 - i. Development scenario(s) inform the Water Supply Element
 - ii. Informs the **Three-Mile Plan**
 - iii. Informs the **Housing Action Plan**
 - b. **Water Supply Element**
 - i. Conservation policies and available water supplies inform the Strategic Growth Element

Housing Needs Assessments and Housing Action Plans

Mark Williams, Lead Land Use
Technical Assistance Planner, DOLA



HNAs and Housing Action Plans



- Housing Needs Assessments (HNAs) and Housing Action Plans - HNA is “step 1”, Action Plan “step 2”
- Action Plans must be responsive to approved HNAs and address housing needs shown in HNA
- HNAs and Action Plans can be local or regional





SB24-174 HNA Requirements



- Requires detailed housing market analysis for places with a population of **1,000+**



- Exempt if population **shrank by more than 1%**



Required baseline data & information in statute, but no limit on adding analysis.



HNAs help explain housing markets, don't require how much must be built or where.



Due by December 31, 2026.

Housing Needs Assessments



- 165 cities, towns, and counties must have an HNA
 - Housing plans in mountain towns and cities since at least the 1970s; need is now more widespread
-
- More than 40 places (so far) from mountain towns to Eastern Plains are doing HNAs voluntarily

EAST CENTRAL COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



HNAs: Effective at Any Scale

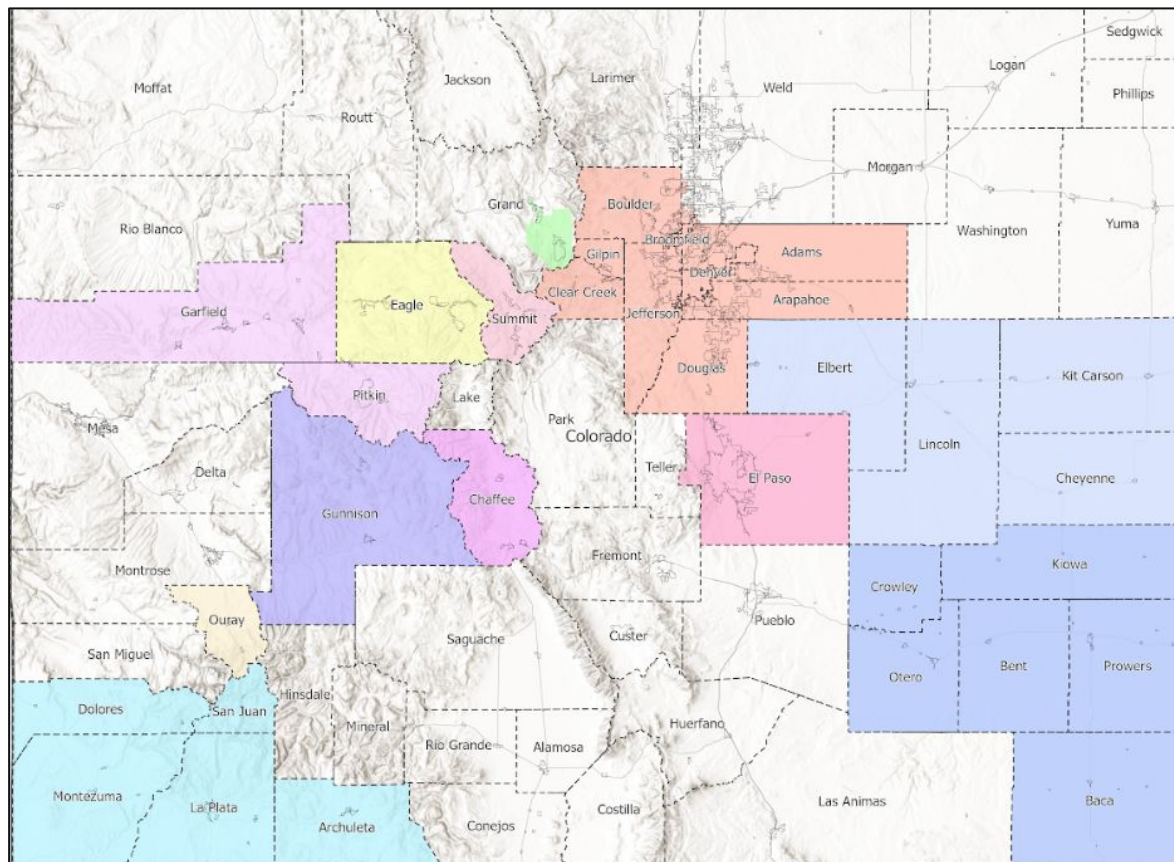


Population 3.4 million

Population 1,223



Regional HNAs Approved or in Process





Housing Action Plans: Detailed Implementation



Detailed Implementation Plans - Housing Action Plans are detailed implementation plans.



Regional or Local Flexibility - Can be done as a regional or local HAP as long as statute requirements are met for each local gov't.



Increased Public Engagement - More public engagement for Action Plans.



Deadline - Due by January 1, 2028.

Threshold for Housing Action Plans



Action Plans required if:



5,000+

1,000+



- Population of 5,000 or more
- Population of 1,000 or more that participated in regional HNA
- Deemed “rural resort communities” (as of January 1, 2024)
- No Action Plan required if there was a 1% negative population change from 2010-2020.

Benefits of SB24-174



More money spent locally

allowing tenants to go beyond the bare necessities.



Fewer evictions

47% of renters in Colorado are housing burdened (30%+ income spent on housing).



Healthier populations

stable housing is a major determinant of health.



More job opportunities

construction and long-term economic stability.

Posted on: September 30, 2025

Lake County Affordable Housing Project Nearly Sold Out in First Phase, Shares Construction Updates

Lake County's affordable housing project, [Housing @ 10,200'](#), is moving ahead. The public-private partnership is a collaborative effort and the project will bring 24 for-sale, deed-restricted homes for income-eligible buyers to Lake County in 2026.

Housing @ 10,200' is funded in part by grants from DOLA used to bring the infrastructure to the two sites and to lower the purchase price for 14 of the units for buyers earning under 100% of the Area Median Income (AMI).



State Land Use and Housing Legislation

The Community Development Office at the Department of Local Affairs' Division of Local Government has been tasked with implementing a number of bills passed by the Colorado General Assembly in the 2024 and 2025 legislative sessions and is working to provide guidance and assistance for local governments on complying with them.

The Community Development Office continues to develop and refine programmatic and compliance tools and resources to help local governments. Please continue to check back on this site and sign up for the office's newsletter for updates.

Sign up for the Community Development Office's Newsletter for Updates

2024 Land Use and Housing Legislation Overview Webinar

Recent Colorado Land Use and Housing Laws



Residential
Occupancy
Limits (HB
24-1007)



Minimum
Parking
Requirements (HB 24-1304)



Accessory
Dwelling
Units (HB
24-1152)



Transit-
Oriented
Communities (HB 24-1313)



Housing
Plans (SB 24-
174)



Residential
Stair
Modernization (HB25-1273)



Local Growth
Limit
Policies (HB25-1093)



Regional
Roundtables (HB25-1198)



Factory Built
Structures (SB25-002)

Applicability

Info & Resources



Access the Map

[Spreadsheet version] DOLA Multi-law Applicability

DOLA Multilaw Applicability Web App

The DOLA Multilaw Applicability interactive map makes it easy to explore where each law takes effect—whether statewide or by jurisdiction. Dive into the details of key state laws and gain insights into how they shape local planning, development, and housing policy.

Stay informed, stay ahead—explore the map today.

dlg.colorado.gov/state-land-use-and-housing-legislation

HNA Guide

- There is a sample scope of work as well
- The end of the Guide is a checklist
- **HNA Webinar** from 3/12/25

dlg.colorado.gov/housing-plans

Housing Needs Assessment Guide for Colorado Communities

December 2024

Legislative Requirements per SB24-174

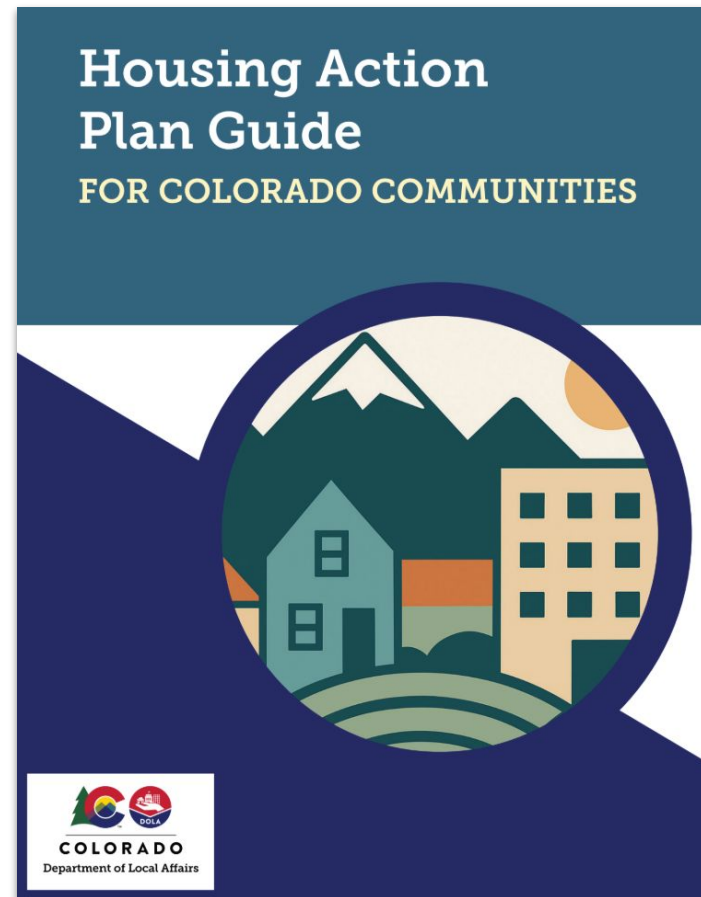


Housing Action Plan Resources



HAP Guide

- **Quick Reference Guide**
provides a summary to get started
- **Action Plan webinar** from 7/31/25
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** for many housing related questions



State Demography Office Resources



SDO data bundles

- Easily downloadable
- 33 data points for counties
- Correspond to SB24-174 requirements



SDO Data Bundle Lookup



Uses for SDO Data

- Local governments doing their own HNA
- Consultants working with local governments



- **Sample RFP scopes** for HNAs, Action Plans, Comp Plans
 - Helps ensure your consultant will focus on the correct data to get through process as quickly as possible
- **Courtesy reviews** - contact DOLA with any questions related to housing or Comp Plans for feedback

Funding and Technical Assistance

Leverage grants!



Notable Funding Programs



To Help Fund Housing

HPLN - Housing Planning Grant Program

EIAF - Energy/Mineral Impact Assistance Fund

LPC - Local Planning Capacity Grants (if eligible & full comp plan update, full land use code update)

For more information:

dlg.colorado.gov/funding-opportunities



Housing Needs Assessments



Timeframe



Revising an HNA may save time:
4-6 months for a revision.



New HNAs take longer:
12-18 months for a new HNA.



Estimated Cost

Average HAP cost: **\$63,000**

- Revisions: ~\$25k (lower)
- New Plans: ~\$111k (higher)



January 15 Webinar



Housing Action Plans



Timeframe



Revising a HAP may save time:
6-8 months for a revision.



New HAPs take longer:
15-18 months for new plans.



Estimated Cost

Average HAP cost: **\$56,000**

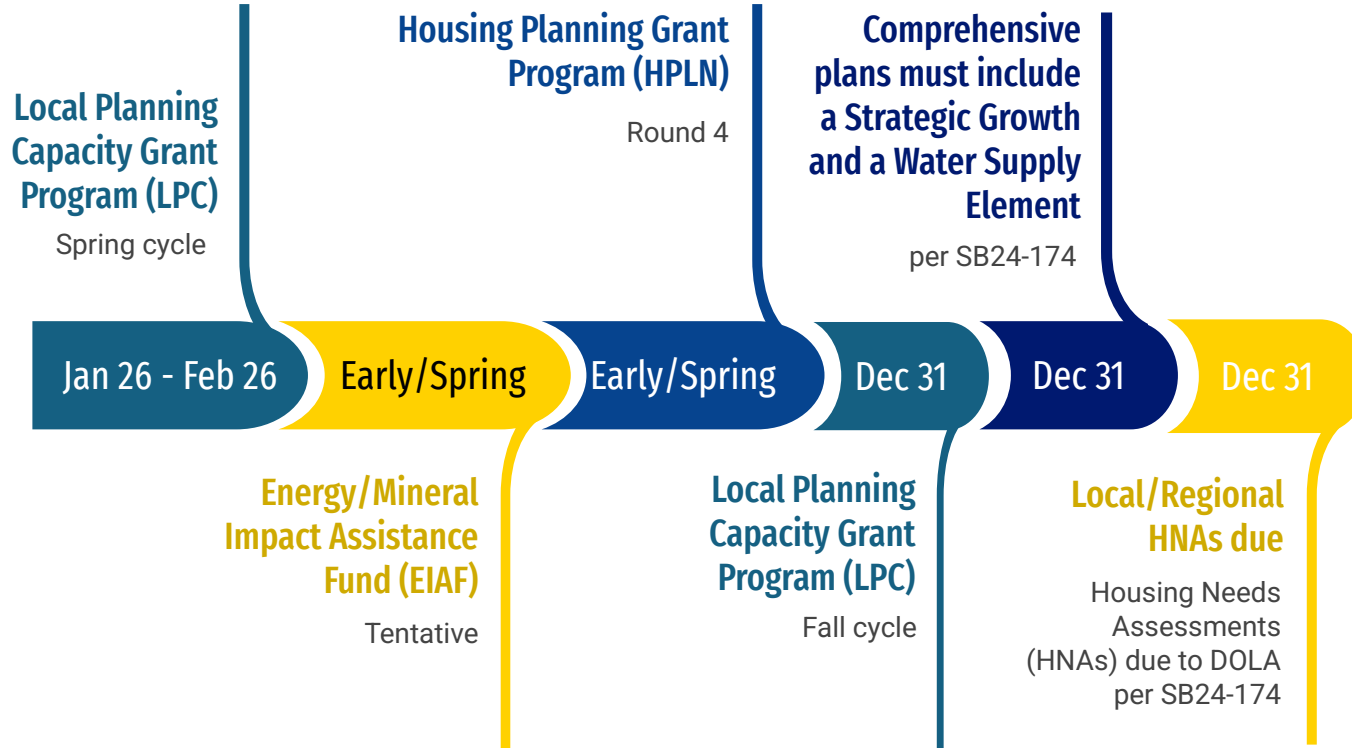
- Revisions: ~\$40k (lower)
- New Plans: ~\$62k (higher)

Strategic Growth & Water Supply Elements

- Data for these components are more limited - Water Supply guidance currently available, but Strategic Growth available in early 2026
- It's not too early to plan for these items, or include them as part of your scope
- While there are some high bid outliers, average costs are \$30k for **both** elements
- LPC funding is available for other comp plan requests outside of WS & SG



2026 Deadlines and Funding Opportunities At-a-Glance



Thank You!



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