



Meeting Date: January 20, 2026

AGENDA MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of Town Council

Through: Dave Corliss, Town Manager

From: Tara Vargish, P.E., Director, Development Services
Brad Boland, AICP, Planning Manager

Title: **Discussion/Direction Planning Commission and the Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 2.16)**

Executive Summary

Staff is requesting Town Council consideration of proposed amendments to the Town Code related to the Planning Commission and the Comprehensive Master Plan. The proposed updates outdated language, clarifies the advisory role of the Planning Commission, and better aligns the Code with current planning practices, statutory authority, and how the Town of Castle Rock uses its Comprehensive Master Plan today.

Background

Town Council directed staff to review and return with recommended changes related to the Town's Boards and Commissions regarding various items such as term lengths, residency and attendance. As part of this effort, staff reviewed Chapter 2.16 of the Castle Rock Municipal Code, which addresses the Planning Commission and its role in relation to the Comprehensive Master Plan. Through this review, staff identified several areas where updates to the code language may be appropriate.

Pursuant to Chapter 2.16 of the Castle Rock Municipal Code, the Planning Commission is empowered to review and make recommendations to Town Council regarding the Comprehensive Master Plan and related planning matters. While the Planning Commission's role has remained consistent, the code language related to the Comprehensive Master Plan has not been updated in some time. Staff identified opportunities to refresh the language to improve clarity and better reflect current best practices for comprehensive planning.

Staff believes this is an appropriate time to consider updates to this language, as the Town is anticipated to undertake an update to the Comprehensive Master Plan in 2026.

Discussion

Staff is requesting Town Council direction to proceed with preparation of an ordinance amending Town Code provisions related to the Planning Commission and the Comprehensive Master Plan.

During the recent review of Town Code, staff identified that the existing language governing the Planning Commission's role and the content of the Comprehensive Master Plan has not been updated in many years. The proposed updates are intended to modernize and clarify the code and are not intended to expand or alter the fundamental authority of the Planning Commission or Town Council.

The proposed changes would:

- Clarify the Planning Commission's advisory role in the Comprehensive Master Plan process;
- Reinforce that the Comprehensive Master Plan is an advisory policy document;
- Make clear that the Comprehensive Master Plan does not adopt or amend zoning or subdivision regulations, but instead provides guidance for future regulatory actions;
- Improve overall readability and organization of the code language.

The comprehensive plan elements outlined in the code are intended to be broad in nature and do not preclude the incorporation of additional elements or topics that may be identified through public engagement or by the Town Council as beneficial to the community.

Some of the comprehensive plan elements may appear to overlap with planning efforts undertaken by other Town departments, such as Public Works, Castle Rock Water, and Parks and Recreation. The Comprehensive Master Plan is intended to serve as a coordinating policy document for the Town's planning and decision-making processes. It provides broad policy guidance to support coordination among Town departments and other public entities, while recognizing that such departments maintain separate, technical master plans and programmatic documents. Staff will review and consider additional language, as appropriate, to further clarify this relationship.

Reviewing and updating this code language at this time is beneficial as the Town prepares to initiate an update to the Comprehensive Master Plan. This discussion also provides a logical transition into planning for that future process.

Fiscal Impact

No fiscal impact is associated with these code amendments. The proposed changes are organizational and clarifying in nature and do not create new programs, staffing requirements, or regulatory obligations.

Recommendation

At this time, staff is seeking Council direction to bring forward a formal ordinance for first reading that incorporates updates to Chapter 2.16 of the Castle Rock Municipal Code

Proposed Motion

"I move to direct staff to bring back an Ordinance with updates to Chapter 2.16 regarding the Planning Commission and Comprehensive Plan."

Attachments

Attachment A: Draft Ordinance