



PRIVATE OWNER INTELLIGENCE / JULY 2026

The 2026 Colorado Outdoor Estate Capital Planning Field Guide

Capital levels, site risk, reserve, phasing, controls and stewardship for \$500,000 to eight-figure outdoor estates.

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Plan the capital conversation - not a false final number.

This field guide connects the Registry's owner tools into one decision process. It explains what should be protected at different capital levels, how Colorado property conditions can redirect visible scope, and which gates should be passed before construction capital hardens.

A responsible early capital plan is a range tied to scope, assumptions and uncertainty. It is not a promise that a stated budget will purchase a described project.

- 01 Use the capital levels as program positions. They describe how an owner might organize priorities, not packages or prices.
- 02 Use the worked scenarios to expose parcel risk. The same allocation can produce different visible outcomes.
- 03 Use the stage gates to control authorization. Each gate should reduce a different category of uncertainty.
- 04 Use the source record to verify principles. Parcel requirements still belong to the current authority and qualified professionals.
- 05 Keep the owner reserve visible. Unused capital should not disappear into scope without explicit authority.

QUICK AND DEEP VERSIONS

The existing 8-page Capital Planning Brief remains the quick-read meeting document. This 20-page field guide adds capital-level comparisons, a Front Range versus foothill scenario, reserve logic, stage gates, source notes and owner controls.

Six layers compete for the same dollar.

Feature lists often assume every dollar reaches visible finishes. A complete model makes the less visible obligations explicit before the owner approves the visible program.

Capital layer	What it may carry	Owner control
Professional definition	Survey, investigations, design, engineering, approvals, estimating, builder preconstruction	Deliverables and decision gates
Sitework and structure	Access, demolition, earthwork, drainage, utilities, foundations, retaining, logistics	Verified site assumptions
Outdoor architecture	Pavilions, kitchens, enclosure, terraces, masonry, shade, architectural detail	Priority and quality hierarchy
Water and landscape	Pools, spas, water, irrigation, planting, lighting, furnishings, establishment	Program and operating intent
Project controls	Supervision, protection, procurement, testing, documentation, closeout	Reporting and acceptance
Owner-held reserve	Design development, unresolved conditions, deliberate changes, early operations	Explicit release authority

Registry allocation percentages are educational scenarios created to make tradeoffs visible. They are not a Colorado cost survey, bid, appraisal or recommendation for a specific property.

Focused estate intervention.

At \$500,000, discipline matters more than the number of features. Protect professional definition, essential sitework, one primary experience, complete interfaces and an owner-held reserve.

- 01 Strong position: one highly resolved pavilion or terrace environment, a focused pool or wellness program, or a landscape transformation on a comparatively buildable property.

- 02 Capital pressure: multiple centerpieces, difficult retaining, long utility runs, major structures, extensive water or a heavily constrained site.

- 03 Owner test: can the team explain which one experience organizes the project and which attractive ideas are deliberately deferred?

- 04 Do not do: spread the allocation across disconnected premium features while leaving utilities, drainage, restoration or commissioning underfunded.

INTERPRETATION LIMIT

This is an illustrative program position, not a package or market price. The actual property, scope, jurisdiction, design, market, procurement and professional agreements determine feasibility and cost.

Complete architectural center.

A \$1 million allocation can organize a coordinated outdoor center when the property, program and delivery model support it. The center may be water, architecture or landscape - but it should operate as one place.

- 01 Strong position: a coordinated pool and spa environment, pavilion and hospitality terrace, or estate landscape sequence with its supporting systems.

- 02 Capital pressure: foothill access, rock, drainage, structure, wildfire response, utilities, occupied-home logistics and restoration.

- 03 Owner test: does the current model separately show definition, enabling works, the architectural center, supporting environment, controls and reserve?

- 04 Do not do: promise a complete visible feature list before the parcel and approval path are understood.

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Highly resolved estate environment.

At this level, the opportunity is integration: architecture, water, fire, landscape, lighting, furnishings and service can reinforce one estate thesis instead of competing as individual upgrades.

- 01 Strong position: a complete central compound with substantial architecture, water, terraces, walls, mature landscape, controls and disciplined delivery.

- 02 Capital pressure: major pool houses, engineered hillsides, specialty glazing and steel, imported material, mature specimens and private procurement.

- 03 Owner test: can the team show one responsibility matrix and one current forecast across every discipline and package?

- 04 Do not do: multiply custom centerpieces faster than the leadership, documentation and operating plan can integrate them.

INTERPRETATION LIMIT

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Private outdoor compound.

Five million dollars creates meaningful design freedom, but more capital creates more options - not immunity from land, approvals, access, custom fabrication, fragmented leadership or long-term operating obligations.

- 01 Strong position: substantial architecture, resort-scale water, fire and garden environments, structural sitework, mature landscape, automation and phased estate delivery.
- 02 Capital pressure: whole-property scope, specialty procurement, structural and civil work, premium protection, commissioning and staffing expectations.
- 03 Owner test: can the owner see visible scope, hidden infrastructure, professional definition, delivery, procurement, reserve and stewardship as separate conversations?
- 04 Do not do: govern a private capital development as a larger collection of contractor proposals.

INTERPRETATION LIMIT

This is an illustrative program position, not a package or market price. The actual property, scope, jurisdiction, design, market, procurement and professional agreements determine feasibility and cost.

\$1 million on an accessible Front Range parcel.

Assume comparatively manageable access and grade, no major retaining composition, known utilities and a defined approval path. This does not eliminate risk; it changes which risks dominate the early capital model.

- 01 Protect first: owner brief, survey, design and engineering, selective demolition, protection, shared utilities and primary drainage.
- 02 Program position: one complete architectural center - such as a pool environment, pavilion terrace or landscape composition - plus supporting circulation and restoration.
- 03 Reserve posture: hold capital for design development, concealed conditions, approvals, procurement and deliberate owner decisions.
- 04 Authorization gate: current scope, assumptions, exclusions, allowances, procurement risks and acceptance standards are visible in one report.
- 05 Outcome discipline: finish fewer relationships completely rather than distribute capital across unrelated premium features.

Planning inference: when the property requires less extraordinary enabling work, more of the same capital may reach the visible estate. This is not a claim that any listed program can be delivered for \$1 million.

\$1 million on a constrained foothill parcel.

Assume steep or restricted access, uncertain rock or soils, consequential drainage, wildfire context, utility distribution and a residence that remains occupied.

- 01 Protect first: survey, jurisdiction, geotechnical and civil definition, access and staging study, drainage strategy, wildfire coordination and utility plan.
- 02 Program position: a smaller central experience or a deliberate first phase after enabling works, rather than promising the same visible program as an accessible parcel.
- 03 Reserve posture: maintain a stronger unresolved-risk position until access, ground, drainage, wildfire, approvals and logistics are better defined.
- 04 Authorization gate: excavation, haul, equipment, temporary stabilization, restoration and occupied-home assumptions are explicitly priced or carried.
- 05 Outcome discipline: plan the whole property, install shared infrastructure where practical and leave a documented path to the next phase.

Colorado Geological Survey notes that potentially expansive soils should be identified by competent professional soil and engineering-geology specialists. Visual impressions are not a substitute for investigation.

Official source: coloradogeologicalsurvey.org/hazards/expansive-soil-rock/

The multipliers owners underestimate.

The same visible program can require very different capital because delivery conditions change the hidden project underneath it.

- 01 Slope, rock, soils and groundwater: excavation, foundations, slabs, pools, walls, drainage, waterproofing, equipment and restoration.

- 02 Access and material handling: drive geometry, staging, cranes, pumps, haul routes, storage, occupied-home separation and landscape protection.

- 03 Drainage and land disturbance: temporary controls, permanent systems, erosion, sediment, stabilization, water quality and restoration.

- 04 Wildfire context: structures, decks, fences, planting, storage, access, service zones and ongoing defensible-space work.

- 05 Jurisdiction and private review: building, zoning, grading, fire, utility, sanitation, environmental and association requirements.

- 06 Premium procurement: deposits, lead times, mockups, inspection, storage, tolerances, protection and replacement planning.

- 07 Compressed schedule or winter work: sequencing, temporary protection, heating, access, productivity, commissioning and landscape establishment.

Official context: City of Castle Pines GESC resources; Colorado Geological Survey; Colorado State Forest Service.

Fund the questions before funding every answer.

Survey, investigations, design leadership, engineering, approvals, cost planning and builder preconstruction reduce different kinds of uncertainty. The correct team and depth depend on the parcel and program.

Registry scenario	Illustrative reserve	What it is intended to test
Accessible / comparatively defined	8% to 12%	Core design, engineering, approvals and builder definition
Integrated estate program	10% to 15%	Multiple disciplines, coordinated design, cost and procurement
Hillside / heavily engineered / complex review	12% to 18%	Deeper investigation, civil and structural work, review and logistics

These percentages are Registry-created educational scenarios, not a market fee survey or recommendation. Actual disciplines, reimbursables, permit costs, professional fees and construction-phase services depend on scope and agreements.

- 01 Define deliverables and decision rights for every professional.
- 02 Separate feasibility, design, engineering, approvals and construction-phase services.
- 03 State which estimates are conceptual, schematic, coordinated or procurement-ready.
- 04 Keep owner diligence, legal/title review and specialty consulting visible when applicable.

Contingency should fall as definition rises.

There is no responsible universal percentage for every estate. Reserve should respond to what remains unknown and who controls it.

Project position	What the owner should see	Release test
Early planning	Range, open assumptions and unresolved-risk posture	Parcel facts and program become clearer
Feasibility	Named investigations, allowances, risk register and design choices	Each major unknown has an owner and path
Schematic authorization	Current estimate, alternates, procurement exposure and schedule decisions	Scope and interfaces are coordinated enough to proceed
Construction authorization	Owner reserve, builder contingency, allowances and estimating risk separated	Release authority and reporting rules are written
Delivery	Approved, pending and forecast changes reconciled monthly	Unused reserve remains visible to the owner

The purpose of reserve is not to make an unsupported number look safe. It is to keep uncertainty and owner decisions visible until the project has enough definition to authorize them.

Six gates before capital hardens.

Each gate should retire a different class of uncertainty. Passing a gate means the owner can see what is known, assumed, excluded and still unresolved.

- 01 Owner brief: estate thesis, decision authority, capital range, reserve philosophy, non-negotiables and operating expectations.

- 02 Ground truth: survey, jurisdiction, access, utilities, grade, water, soils, wildfire context, existing assets and investigations.

- 03 Feasibility: preliminary program, approval path, delivery structure, capital bands, major risks and explicit exclusions.

- 04 Schematic authorization: one coordinated concept, current estimate, assumptions, alternates, risk register and decision schedule.

- 05 Construction authorization: coordinated documents, permit status, procurement plan, schedule, controls, allowances, reserve and acceptance standards.

- 06 Turnover and stewardship: testing, training, as-builts, warranties, seasonal procedures, service plan and replacement forecast.

OWNER RULE

Do not let a polished visual, one lump-sum range or an early start date substitute for the evidence required at the current gate.

Plan the whole property. Authorize complete phases.

A phase should operate, drain, secure and look intentional on its own. Shared or destructive infrastructure should be installed before premium finishes whenever practical.

- 01 Definition and enabling works: master plan, approvals, access, drainage, utilities, grading, structural provisions and temporary protection.

- 02 Architectural center: the pool environment, pavilion, garden structure or landform that organizes the estate.

- 03 Supporting environment: secondary terraces, fire, water, landscape, lighting, privacy, furnishings and restoration.

- 04 Establishment and commissioning: testing, tuning, training, records, warranty activation, landscape establishment and first-year operations.

PROTECT THE NEXT PHASE

Record elevations, control points, joints, waterproofing terminations, utility stubs, spare capacity, sleeves, access panels, soil zones, material reserves and temporary landscape. Re-price each phase using current design, risk, approvals and procurement.

Decision gate: every phase has a defined endpoint, its own acceptance standard and a documented path into the next without destructive investigation.

One current forecast. Visible authority.

An integrated team can coordinate many firms and specialists, but the owner still needs one clear commercial record across the complete environment.

- 01 What scope, quantities and assumptions create the current range?
- 02 Which professional services, permits, utilities, furnishings and owner items are excluded?
- 03 Does every allowance state quantity, quality, labor, freight, tax and markup?
- 04 Are owner reserve, builder contingency, estimating risk and escalation separated?
- 05 Can the owner see approved, pending and forecast changes in one log?
- 06 Does monthly reporting reconcile contract, commitments, allowances, reserve and forecast?
- 07 Which decisions affect procurement or the critical schedule path?
- 08 What tests, records, training and operating plans define acceptance?

A credible capital report makes uncertainty easier to govern. It does not hide uncertainty inside a single impressive total.

Material ambition changes the delivery system.

Premium materials affect more than unit cost. They can change design coordination, samples, mockups, approvals, fabrication, transport, storage, installation tolerances, protection, cleaning and future replacement.

Material or system	Capital questions before commitment
Quarried or imported stone	Source, range approval, lead time, yield, freight, storage, mockup, sealing, spares
Custom metal and structural glass	Engineering, delegated design, finish sample, tolerances, fabrication slot, handling, replacement
Specialty timber and exterior cabinetry	Species, movement, finish, weather exposure, detailing, maintenance, hardware, protection
Mature specimen landscape	Availability, tagging, transport, crane access, soil volume, irrigation, establishment, replacement terms
Pools, water, controls and equipment	Hydraulics, utilities, service access, automation, commissioning, winter operation, components

Owner test: the team can trace every critical selection from design intent through approval, procurement, receipt, protection, installation, acceptance and replacement record.

Completion is operational readiness.

Substantial completion is not the same as a safe, tested, teachable and serviceable estate. Write closeout requirements before construction, then plan the first operating year before the delivery team disperses.

- 01 Functional testing: pools, water, snowmelt, irrigation, lighting, fire controls, gates, kitchens, audio, security and automation.
- 02 Estate record: permits, inspection closeout, as-builts, concealed-work photographs, equipment schedules, valve and panel directories, finish records and test results.
- 03 Operator training: normal, seasonal, emergency, vacation-mode and manual-override procedures for the actual operators.
- 04 Deficiency control: incomplete, damaged, failed, seasonal, owner-deferred and observation-period items tracked separately.
- 05 First operating year: startup, tuning, shutdown, landscape replacement windows, warranty walks, controls review and benchmarking.

The U.S. Department of Energy describes commissioning for new construction or major renovation as a process for making sure buildings meet intended design and operational intent. The estate application here is an informed planning analogy, not a federal standard for private residences.

Official source: energy.gov/cmei/femp/commissioning-federal-buildings

Budget beyond construction.

Pools, landscape, irrigation, snow, kitchens, fire, controls, drainage and specialty materials create recurring service and eventual replacement obligations.

- 01 Asset register: every maintainable system, finish, piece of equipment and living asset with location and responsibility.

- 02 Annual calendar: startup, tuning, inspections, cleaning, pruning, irrigation review, shutdown, snow and warranty events.

- 03 Service structure: vendors, response expectations, access, documentation and coordination across connected systems.

- 04 Operating budget: utilities, landscape, pool, preventive service, seasonal work, repairs and a separate replacement reserve.

- 05 Water intelligence: holistic landscape design, correct irrigation timing, efficient equipment, maintenance and pool water management.

- 06 Five- to ten-year forecast: expected component, finish, equipment and landscape replacement or renewal.

The Registry annual ownership-cost tool is an educational scenario model, not a vendor quote. Replace its assumptions with actual equipment, utility rates, service proposals, warranties and the completed asset register.

Official source: epa.gov/watersense/outdoors

Bring one decision record.

The purpose of the next meeting is not to choose every feature. It is to make the current project position legible enough for the correct next commitment.

- 01 State the estate thesis and three non-negotiable outcomes.
- 02 Bring the current survey, property record and known jurisdiction information.
- 03 Declare the capital range and owner-held reserve philosophy.
- 04 Name the decision-maker, owner representative if any, and operating voice.
- 05 Require the five largest unknowns and the path to resolve each.
- 06 Request one responsibility matrix, approval map, risk register and decision schedule.
- 07 Ask for current assumptions, exclusions, allowances, alternates and procurement exposure.
- 08 Define what evidence is required before the next capital gate.

REGISTRY OWNER TOOLS

Use the Estate Readiness Score, Budget Allocator, Preconstruction Fee Planner, Phasing Planner, Annual Ownership-Cost Estimator and 35-point Preconstruction Checklist at coloradooutdoorestates.com/tools.

For a suitable Colorado project, the Registry may consider one private introduction to a selected integrated outdoor-living firm after reviewing property, capital, program, timing and technical conditions.

Document the evidence. Show the boundary.

Official sources support the Colorado risk, approval, water and commissioning principles below. Capital-level descriptions, allocation percentages and scenarios are Registry-created educational models, not external cost surveys.

Official source	URL
City of Castle Pines - Building Department	castlepinesco.gov/city-services/city-departments/community-development/building-division/
City of Castle Pines - Stormwater and GESC	castlepinesco.gov/city-services/city-departments/public-works/stormwater-management/
Colorado Geological Survey - Expansive Soil and Rock	coloradogeologicalsurvey.org/hazards/expansive-soil-rock/
Colorado State Forest Service - Protect Your Home and Property	csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/protect-your-home-property-from-wildfire/
Boulder County - Building Permits	bouldercounty.gov/property-and-land/land-use/building/building-permits/
U.S. EPA WaterSense - Outdoors	epa.gov/watersense/outdoors
U.S. Department of Energy - Commissioning	energy.gov/cmei/femp/commissioning-federal-buildings

SOURCE CHECK

Sources checked July 29, 2026. Confirm the current parcel, authority, adopted requirements and professional guidance before relying on any jurisdiction-sensitive statement.

EDUCATIONAL LIMIT

This guide is not architectural, engineering, permitting, wildfire, legal, financial, appraisal, feasibility or cost advice for a specific property. It does not promise that a capital level will purchase a described program. Actual requirements depend on scope, site, jurisdiction, design, delivery, procurement, market and professional agreements.

Research standard: coloradooutdoorestates.com/methodology

Private Registry review: coloradooutdoorestates.com/#assessment