INFORMATIVE BROCHURE
VISUAL IMPACT REGULATIONS (SECTION 9)

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The purpose of this brochure is to clarify the visual impact regulations of Ouray County (or attempt to), and is written only to address how the regulation pertains to the construction of new buildings and structures. This brochure does NOT encompass all aspects of the regulation, and you are encouraged to meet with the Land Use Staff as soon as possible regarding any proposed construction in the visual impact corridors.

The visual impact regulations DO apply to:

1. The regulation defines certain county roads and highways as "visual impact corridors". These roads are Highway 550, Highway 62, County Roads 5, 7, 8, 10, 24, 24A, and a portion of County Road 1. If your structure will be built within 1.5 miles of any of these roads, it will be probably* be evaluated for compliance to the visual impact regulations.

   * See below for exceptions

The visual impact regulations DO NOT apply to:

1. The regulation does not apply to construction beyond 1.5 miles from the roads listed above. Even if the structure is visible, it does not have to comply with the visual impact regulations if it is beyond 1.5 miles from the visual impact corridor (road).
2. If the structure is not built on an escarpment edge or ridgeline, the regulation will not apply to structures used exclusively for agriculture or mining purposes.
3. The regulation does not apply to construction that is not visible from the roads listed above. If your proposed building is only 100 feet from the road, but is entirely not visible from the road, the regulations will not apply. You may be required to demonstrate this to Staff when applying for your building permit.
4. The regulation does not apply to "neighbor to neighbor" views. Construction is only reviewed for compliance from the roads listed above. If you want to build a pink house that is not visible from the visual impact corridor, but is visible from the neighbor's living room, the County can not require an alternative color (however, it may be in your best interest to work something out with your neighbor).

Now that we've established which structures are affected, let's discuss what is required to comply with the visual impact regulations. There are two major components to the visual impact regulations; the point system and skyline break:

POINT SYSTEM:

The point system attempts to assess the visual impact of a proposed structure based on its characteristics. There are 8 categories to evaluate the impact and mitigation of a proposed structure:

1. Impact Criteria: Size and Height
2. Mitigation Criteria: Size of the lot, Natural Screening, blending, distance from the road, if located in a pre-1986 subdivision, and additional screening.

Let's explain each of these criteria, and how they are measured:

Impact Criteria:

Size: The size of the structure is measured in square feet, and includes the garage and any other portions of the home with a roof overhead. In the case of a pole barn or car port, the size is measured as the square feet of ground that is under roof. Visual impact is calculated on a "per building basis". In other words, if a home and a detached garage are being proposed, each structure is evaluated separately; the size measurements are not cumulative.

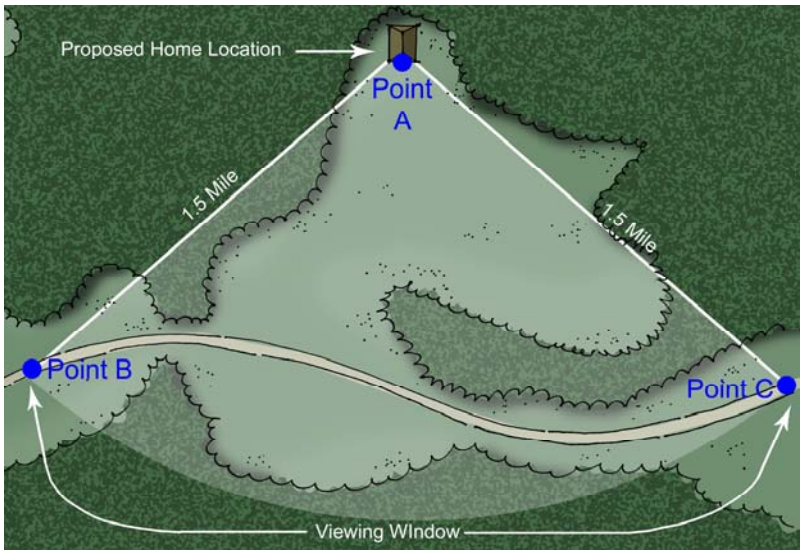
Height: When calculating height of a structure or building, refer to the definition of "building height" in Section 22 of the Ouray County Land Use Code. In a nutshell, the height is the maximum vertical distance of the structure, measured from the peak of the roof to the natural or finished grade (whichever is lower).

Mitigation Criteria:

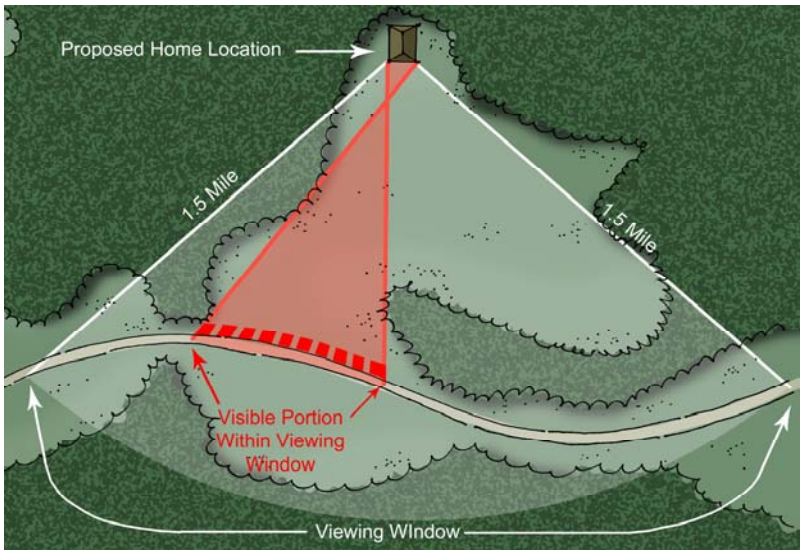
Lot Size: The lot size can usually be determined by contacting the County Assessor's office, or researching recorded plats and surveys of the subject property. Points for lot size may only be taken when the lot is 7 acres or greater.

Natural Screening: (This calculation can be confusing to many, so please refer to the graphics below for clarification.) Natural screening is established by calculating the distance of roadway (or visual impact corridor) in which a structure is completely screened from view, within the "viewing window". That figure is then divided by the total distance of roadway (within the viewing window) to calculate the percentage of natural screening.

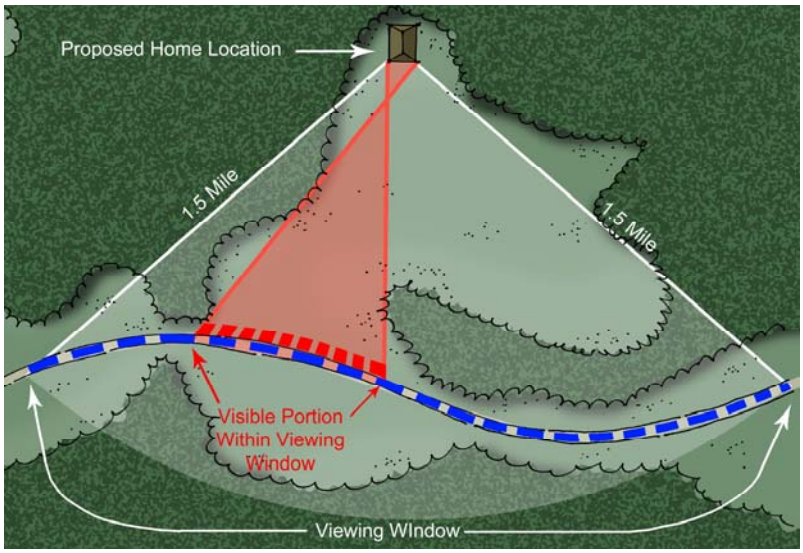
Step 1) Establish the viewing window by measuring 1.5 miles from the proposed structure (Point A) to where it intersects the visual impact corridor (Points B & C). The area between Point B and C is referred to as the "viewing window".



Step 2) Identify and measure the portion of roadway, within the viewing window, that the structure is entirely screened from view (not visible at all). This area is shown in red.



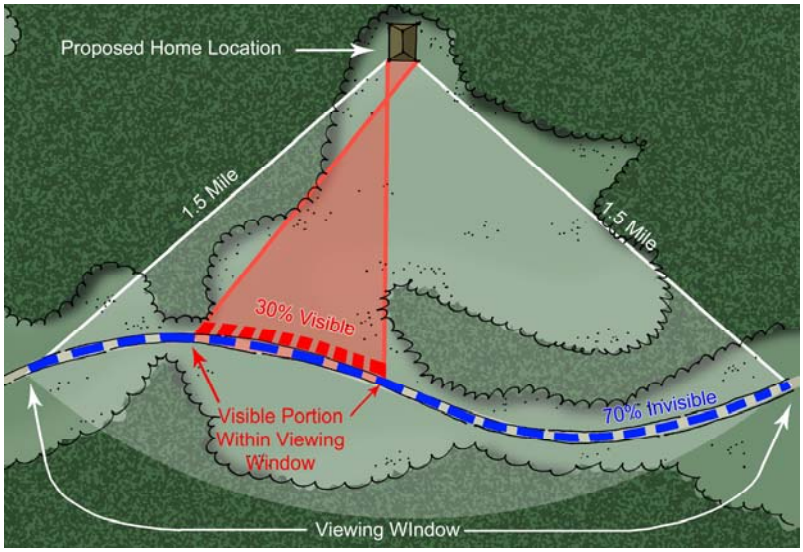
Step 3) Identify and measure the entire length of roadway, within the viewing window. This distance is shown in blue.



Step 4) Divide the number found in step #2, by the number found in step #3. For Example:

- If the section of road shown in red were 3,000 feet long; and
- The entire section of road in the viewing window (shown in blue) was 10,000 feet long
- Then divide 3,000 by 10,000
- 3,000 / 10,000 = .3 (or 30% visible)

If the structure is visible for 30%, then the remaining portion is naturally screened by 70%.



<u>Calculating natural screening for multiple view corridors:</u> In the instance that the structure is visible from multiple view corridors, natural screening is calculated as follows:

	<u>Distance Visible (see step #2)</u>	**<u>Total Distance within Viewing Window</u>**
Corridor #1	750 ft.	2,350 ft.
Corridor #2	120 ft.	8,500 ft.
Corridor #3	810 ft.	2,600 ft.
Add Corridors 1-3 =	**1,680 ft.**	**13,450 ft.**

Divide (see step #4 above) 1,680 / 13,450 = 0.1249 (or, visible for 12.49% of the corridor)

Therefore, natural screening = 87.51%

Blending: In order to ensure that your structure blends it is important to consider the natural colors and tones found in landscape surrounding the proposed building site. When applying for your building permit, you will need to submit color and/or material samples to the land use staff for review.

Here is one example of how the use of colors can successfully achieve blending:

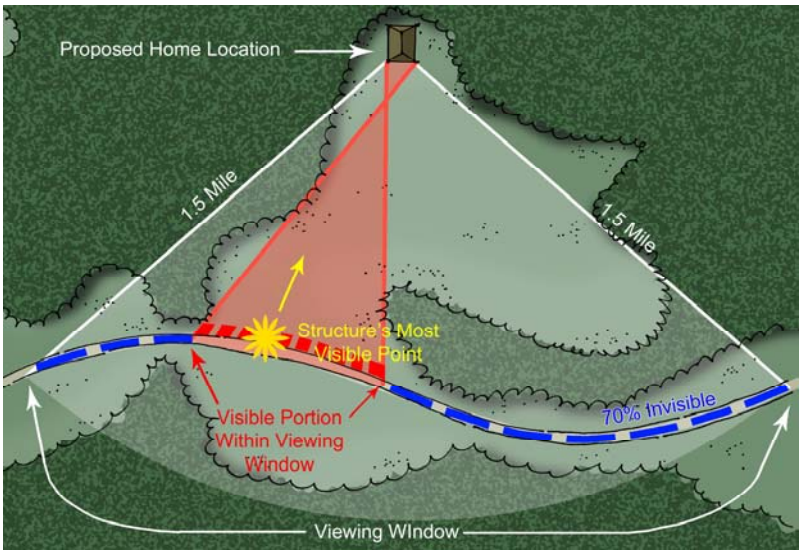
Distance: The distance from a designated road (visual impact corridor) is measured from the centerline of the road to the nearest point of the proposed structure. In the instance that the proposed structure will be visible from multiple roads, distance is measured only to the nearest road.

PUD (if approved prior to 3/4/1986): If your proposed structure is located within a PUD that was approved prior to 3/4/1986, you will receive one additional mitigation point.

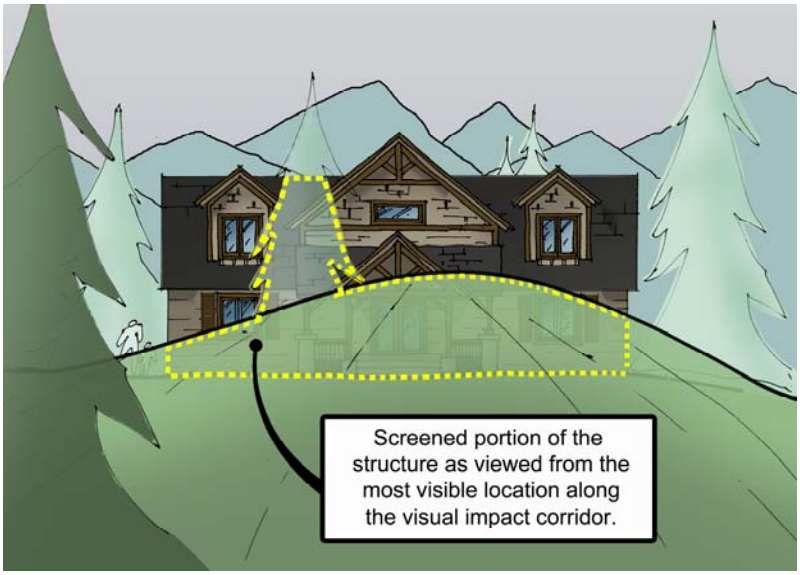
Additional Screening: Additional screening is measured from the structures most visible location along the viewing window. In the instance that the entire structure is visible for a distance, the most visible location will be the point where the entire structure is visible and is nearest to the road.

Additional screening may be planted or placed by the owner (such as trees and rocks), but can also include screening that exists naturally. See the following examples:

Step 1) Establish the point along the view corridor where the proposed structure will be the most visible. In this graphic, the most visible location is shown with the yellow asterisk.



Step 2) Let's assume that this is the view of the home shown in Step #1. Determine the portion of the home that will be screened. In this example the screened portion is shown by the yellow dashed line. This home is approximately 45% screened.



Additional screening that will be planted or placed by the owner will probably not be installed prior to the completion of construction. Therefore, these calculations are usually estimated.

Calculating the point system:

The following worksheet can be used to calculate the point system, as it pertains to your proposed structure. When finished you may have no more than five points.

Primary Criteria - Impact Points:

Size of Structure = _____ s.f. x 0.001 = _____ pts.

Height of Structure = _____ ft. x 0.3 = _____ pts.

Total Impact Points ..... _____ pts. *

(This number will be subtracted from the number obtained below)

Secondary Criteria - Mitigation Points:

Area or size of lot = _____ AC x 0.3 = _____ pts. (5pts max)
(Only if greater than 7 AC)

Natural screening = _____ % x 0.1 = _____ pts.

Will the structure blend? Yes = 3 points, No = 0 points = _____ pts.

Distance from corridor/road = _____ mi. (0.5 pts. for each ¼ mile) _____ pts.

Located in a pre 1986 subdivision? Yes = 1 point, No = 0 point _____ pts.

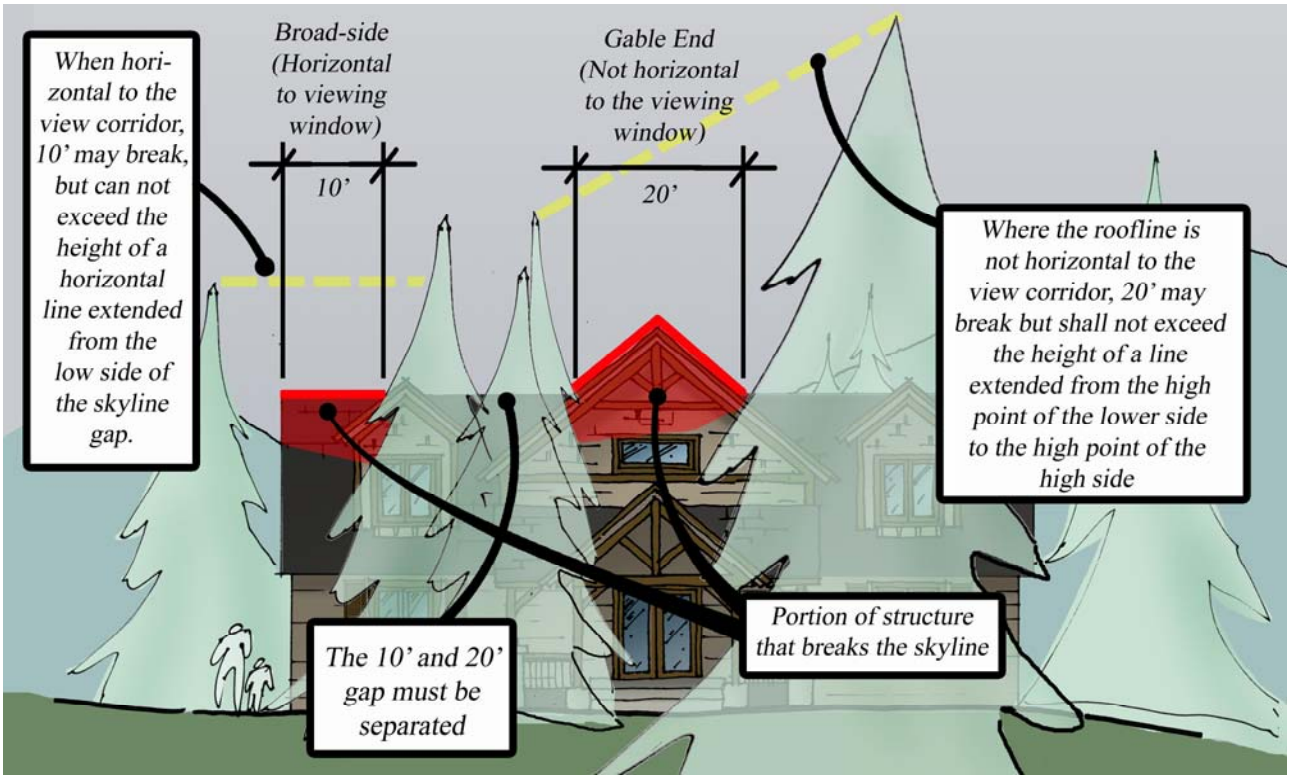
Additional screening = _____ % x 0.1 = _____ pts.

Total Mitigation Points ....._____ pts.*

*** Subtract impact points from mitigation points. The total can not exceed 5 points.**

SKYLINE BREAKS:

The visual impact regulations prohibit structures from breaking the skyline. However, certain exceptions do allow small breaks to the skyline. See the following example:



- The red portions in this graphic display portions of the structure that do break the skyline, but are allowed by the visual impact regulations.

- When viewing the broad-side of the roof (on the left) 10' may break the skyline if it does not extend above the yellow line.

- When viewing the gable end (or roof peak), 20' may break the skyline if it does not extend above the yellow line.

To evaluate a proposed structure for skyline breaks, the land use staff may require that the owner construct "story poles" to mimick the roof lines of the proposed structure. The image to the right shows story poles constructed on site with 2x4's. When constructing story poles it is best to string a line across the top, with flags tied every 5', in order to establish the amount of skyline break.

OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

Ridgeline and Escarpment Setbacks:

All structures within a visual impact corridor must be set back 50’ from any ridgeline or escarpment edge. See Section 9.6 A & B for the definitions of ridgeline and escarpment.