

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS

Great Neighborhoods

typically have characteristics such as:

- Identity shaped by its physical setting, streets, architecture, history, and Residents.
- Has a mix of housing types to support different needs, preferences, and lifestyles.
- Encourages a healthy economic diversity where a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community.
- Gathering places such as parks, plazas, sidewalks, shops, or dining options, and a discernible center where many activities of daily living can occur within walking distance.
- Easily Accessible and services are readily accessed including recreation, education, public safety, and other amenities that support quality of life.
- Pedestrian Friendly and have mobility options that may include travel by foot, bicycle, transit, or automobile; allowing for independence to those who do not drive such as the elderly and the young.

During extensive community outreach sessions, it was clear that the Residents of the Town of Paonia deeply care about our community and want to ensure its future is created by and for locals. The Town of Paonia seeks to maintain the integrity and variety of existing neighborhoods; maintain existing community character; create inclusive housing opportunities for the community – including housing for people of varying ages, household types, and income levels, and those who want to rent or own; emphasize connectivity of existing and new neighborhoods to amenities, services, and multimodal transportation options; improve the existing housing stock; integrate new infill development housing that fits well with the character of existing neighborhoods; and design and build sustainable homes. Focusing on neighborhoods supports not only the Paonia *Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan*, but also *The Principles of Good Neighborhood Design* and the Charter of the *Congress for the New Urbanism*.

“Cities [Towns] are cooperative human enterprises that exist to promote the best life possible for their citizens.” - Phillip Bess, M.Arch.

“Neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population; communities should be designed for the pedestrian and transit as well as the car; cities and towns should be shaped by physically defined and universally accessible public spaces and community institutions; urban places should be framed by architecture and landscape design that celebrate local history, climate, ecology, and building practice.”

– excerpt from the Charter for the New Urbanism

These plan cornerstones are supported by thoughtful design improvements to the public realm, integrated planning for capital investments, focusing on local and community needs, and maintaining the existing community character. Constructed physical elements intentionally designed to provide a safe, attractive, and engaging environment contribute to a community that residents, workers, and visitors can all enjoy. Designing neighborhoods that are sensitive to social, cultural and local contexts also contributes to maintaining a sense of place and is what gives Paonia its identity.

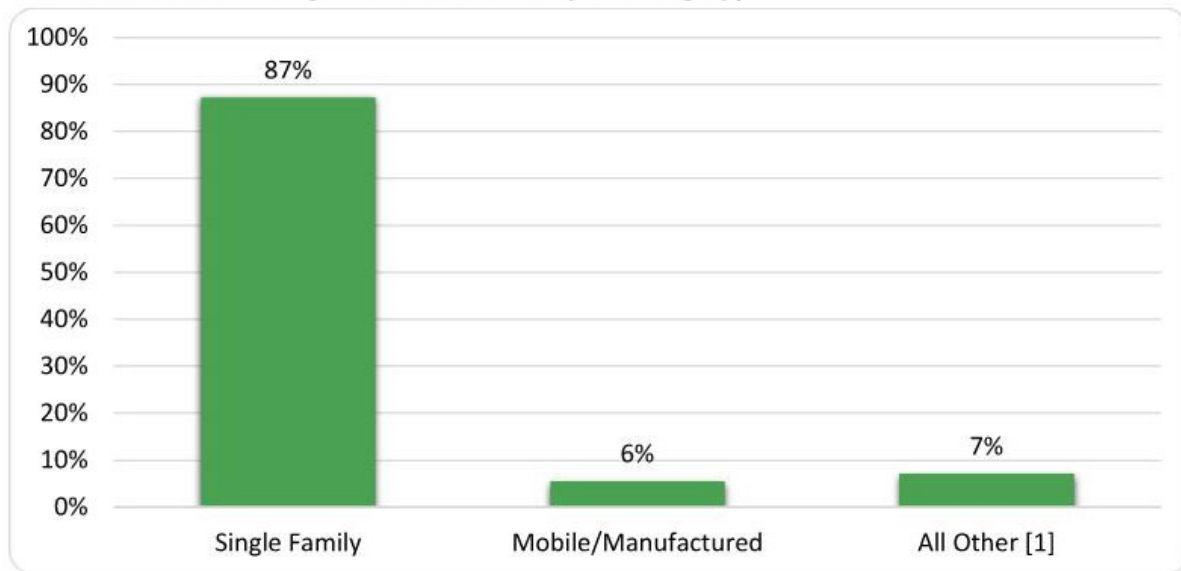
Clearly identifiable gateways and vibrant streetscapes provide a clear and welcoming entrance to our community by reflecting shared values and civic pride. Preserving our sweeping vista views, as well as public art installations and other culturally significant landmarks such as the Miners’ Memorial, add to Paonia’s sense of history and character. This element is intended to provide policy direction for

maintaining and improving Paonia’s physical and visual composition, with emphasis on maintaining high-quality and diverse neighborhoods, sustaining Paonia’s strong community identity, highlighting amenities, and ensuring that a framework is established that meets the intent of the Housing Needs Assessment, “the full range of rental and ownership housing types and prices needed to support household changes over time and ensure Paonia remains a complete and vibrant community.”

OVERVIEW

The Housing and Neighborhoods Element is informed by both the 2023 Housing Needs Assessment and the 2023 Housing Action Plan. Most housing in Paonia consists of single-family, owner-occupied homes on single or double lots. Approximately, nine out of ten homes (87%) are either single-family homes or mobile/manufactured homes. Few housing units exist that fall into the category of “missing middle” housing types, like duplexes. Other existing housing types include occasional townhomes, a few multiple tenant housing types, and shared common area/courtyard homes such as the Silver Leaf Co-housing project. Throughout the public input that was gathered by the Housing Needs Assessment, the community expressed a desire to maintain the existing residential character of Paonia, emphasize single-family housing, and increase housing security for locals.

Town of Paonia Housing Unit Distribution by Building Type



[1] 2+ units per building.

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, CONSULTANT TEAM

Paonia Housing Needs Assessment Pg. 30

According to the Housing Needs Assessment, the majority of homes are owner-occupied, and about 11% are classified as unoccupied or vacant, which includes those for sale or rent, those sold or rented but not yet occupied, vacation homes and short-term rentals, as well as homes not occupied year-round for other reasons (such as being uninhabitable). The same assessment determined that the majority (54%) of existing housing in Paonia’s town limits is 50+ years and older, which is 34% higher than the housing stock in the Paonia Census County Division (CCD), the unincorporated areas of Delta County with a census designation of Paonia (out-of-town areas). The out-of-town areas experienced

very robust housing construction from the 1970s to the 1990s, but like Paonia, new residential construction has been limited since 2000.

For the purposes of this Plan and its goals, the term neighborhood refers to geographic areas throughout Paonia made up of historic additions to the official Town plat. Within Paonia there is a lack of diversity of housing options within different neighborhoods that limit the variety of living environments, housing types, and levels of affordability.

WHAT IS AFFORDABLE & WORKFORCE HOUSING?

- **Affordable Housing:** The 2023 Housing Needs Assessment defined “Affordable” as, “consistent with the federal standard that no more than 30% of a household’s gross income (before taxes) should be spent on housing costs, including utilities.” Housing affordability comes down to the relationship between the price of housing in a region (either for sale or rent) and the incomes of households within that region. The 2023 Housing Needs Assessment discussed in detail the relationship with wages within Paonia and the North Fork Valley and the availability of housing, housing prices and rent costs. When households spend more of their incomes on housing, they have less income to spend on essential services such as healthcare, and even less on discretionary items that benefit the local economy such as eating out at local restaurants.
- **Workforce Housing:** Workforce housing is a subset of affordable housing, and generally refers to housing that is affordable to households earning between 80% and 120% of the median income (AMI). Housing costs for households earning between 80% and 120% of AMI should not exceed 30% of those households’ gross annual incomes. Typically, workforce housing is targeted toward workers who are vital for the everyday function of the community such as teachers, public safety workers, first responders, public works employees, and workers in retail, food/beverage, hotel, and other core industries.

“More apartments or accessory dwelling units for singles, low-income folks and elderly are needed.” - Housing Action Plan Open House Participant

Reflecting broader societal changes, an increasing proportion of housing will need to meet the changing demands for multigenerational, or specialized units, and to provide options for affordable and workforce housing. The 2023 Housing Action Plan identified allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as a top priority for the Paonia community. Colorado House Bill 24-1152 was passed and goes into effect on June 30, 2025, which eases restrictions and burdens on most Colorado residents to build an accessory dwelling unit. Contextual and integrated architectural and site design can help to bring together different uses and housing types to promote diversity and variety to build great neighborhoods.

Nothing within this element shall require the Town to allow development that is inconsistent with any vision, goals, and policies described within the Future Land Use Element. The Town of Paonia shall encourage and support the provision of housing for all Residents of the Town in accordance with the Vision, Goals, and Policies identified in this element. The following goals and policies provide direction for all aspects of physical planning. Goals are defined as desired ideals and a value to be sought. Policies articulate a course of action that guides governmental decision making to meet the goal. To further define how policies can be implemented in the short- and long-term specific strategies can be found in the 2023 Housing Action Plan. They are not inclusive of all actions and options.

VISION

To create a thriving, sustainable and inclusive community where all Residents have access to affordable, safe and attainable housing that preserves the Town's unique character and values. By leveraging the Town's resources, and strategically utilizing the water tap moratorium as a catalyst, we will leverage our community's resources and foster partnerships to develop a diverse range of affordable housing options that meet the needs of our Residents and ensure that our community remains a vibrant place to live, work, and grow for generations to come.

VALUES

- Focus on the needs of locals (ensuring that long- and short-term goals are met)
- Maintain the existing community character
- Collaboration for greater capacity across public, private and non-profit sectors
- Allow for a diversity of housing options to support local residents' housing security

GOALS FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- HOUSING – 1** Maintain Paonia as a community that is accessible to a range of income levels, ages, and households by ensuring adequate and affordable housing options are available.
- HOUSING – 2** Enhance and maintain the character of Paonia's existing residential neighborhoods, balance the need to accommodate infill development.
- HOUSING – 3** Commit to inclusivity by ensuring a diversity of housing options that meet the needs of residents including those for seniors and residents with special needs.
- HOUSING – 4** Preserve views to the mountains, natural amenities and scenic vistas from the public realm.
- HOUSING – 5** Identify, recognize and protect Paonia's unique and irreplaceable historic and culture heritage.
- HOUSING – 6** Preserve, protect and stabilize the character and visibility of residential neighborhoods, particularly within areas with natural hazards such as floodplain and steep slope conditions, or require demolition when rehabilitation is not possible nor economically feasible, such as in areas where a significant concentration of substandard housing exists that contributes to negative neighborhood or environmental conditions.
- HOUSING – 7** Encourage building and construction strategies, methods and practices that promote energy efficiency through low impact design principles, including the use of renewable energy resources in the construction of new homes and the rehabilitation of existing homes.

POLICIES HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

GOAL

HOUSING – 1 Maintain Paonia as a community that is accessible to a range of income levels, ages, and households by ensuring adequate and affordable housing options are available.

POLICIES

- POLICY Housing – 1 Work with Delta County, private water companies, and developers to develop housing units designed and priced for employees living and working in Delta County, with a primary focus on those living and working in Paonia or the Paonia Census tract.

- POLICY Housing – 2 Promote the use of alternative zoning techniques and mechanisms to provide a mix of housing types within residential neighborhoods, which can include reducing minimum lots sizes, and encouraging accessory dwelling units that may be restricted as long-term rentals with affordable leases.

- POLICY Housing – 3 Provide fast-track processing and other incentives for proposed housing developments intended for persons with special housing needs including the elderly (persons aged 60 years or older), the handicapped, low-income residents, and large families.

- POLICY Housing – 4 Acknowledge the role of the private sector as a necessary partner in addressing the community’s affordable and workforce housing needs.

- POLICY Housing – 5 Use annexations as an opportunity to expand Paonia’s supply of affordable and workforce housing and continue to require pre-annexation agreements for new construction within the Growth Management Area as a condition of getting domestic water service.

- POLICY Housing – 6 Support the development of housing options designed to accommodate multi-generational needs to allow residents the opportunity to age in place.

- POLICY Housing – 7 Take advantage of all opportunities to add needed affordable and workforce housing to Paonia and the surrounding area while being mindful of the Town’s desire to avoid overconcentration and overly dense in any one neighborhood.

GOAL

HOUSING – 2 Enhance and maintain the character of Paonia’s existing residential neighborhoods, balance the need to accommodate infill development.

POLICIES

POLICY Housing – 8 Support enhancement programs and efforts to strengthen existing or aging residential neighborhoods.

POLICY Housing – 9 Support flexibility in building design and type to allow neighborhoods to continue meeting the needs of community such as senior housing, intergenerational families, and special needs housing.

GOAL

HOUSING – 3 Commit to inclusivity by ensuring a diversity of housing options that meet the needs of residents including those for seniors and residents with special needs.

POLICIES

POLICY Housing – 10 Encourage new developments to accommodate a variety of housing sizes, household types, tenure types, densities, and prices.

POLICY Housing – 11 Support the development of a range of housing options, as may be appropriate in different parts of the community, including, but not limited to small homes, accessory dwelling units, townhomes, live/work units, and limited small-scale apartments or condominiums.

POLICY Housing – 12 Support strategies that help local residents maintain resident-occupied housing, rather than housing occupied by second homeowners.

POLICY Housing – 13 Expand the supply of housing that is accessible to seniors, people with disabilities, or persons with mobility limitations through the use of universal design and visitability principles in the construction of new housing and the rehabilitation of existing homes.

POLICY Housing – 14 The Town shall discourage redevelopment and demolition practices that significantly reduce existing housing stock in older neighborhoods and that result in the displacement of very low, low, and moderate-income residents or special needs households.

POLICY Housing – 15 The Town shall monitor all redevelopment and demolition activity to ensure that comparable relocation housing is available in accordance with federal regulations, regardless of whether federal monies are used in the activity, and the Town shall ensure that all adopted and proposed regulations maintain and encourage diversity in housing types that will support adequate relocation housing as required.

POLICY Housing – 16 Expand housing options for the aging population to facilitate aging in place such as ADUs and intergenerational households and housing products for downsizing households.

POLICY Housing – 17 Support a continuum of care from independent living to assisted living to transitional facilities.

GOAL

HOUSING – 4 Preserve views to the mountains, natural amenities and scenic vistas from the public realm.

POLICIES

POLICY Housing – 18 Maintain scenic vistas from rights of way, public facilities and public lands to Open Spaces, Jumbo Mountain, Mount Lamborn, Landsend Peak, the Core Commercial District of Downtown Paonia, as shown on the map entitled “Viewshed, Gateways, and Historic Context.”

POLICY Housing – 19 Ensure views designated on the map entitled, “Viewshed, Gateways, and Historic Context,” are integrated into planning for new development. This may include dedication of land, setbacks, height restrictions, modified building orientations or modified placement on a lot.

GOAL

HOUSING – 5 Identify, recognize and protect Paonia’s unique and irreplaceable historic and culture heritage.

POLICIES

POLICY Housing – 20 Protect historic and cultural resources for the aesthetic, cultural, educational, environmental, and economic contribution they make to maintaining and constructing Paonia’s identity and quality of life.

POLICY Housing – 21 Acknowledge and support Paonia’s artisan, artistic and multi-cultural heritage and community diversity in planning Town facilities, programs, events, and resources.

GOAL

HOUSING – 6 Preserve, protect and stabilize the character and visibility of residential neighborhoods, particularly within areas with natural hazards such as floodplain and steep slope conditions, or require demolition when rehabilitation is not possible nor economically feasible, such as in areas where a significant concentration of substandard housing exists that contributes to negative neighborhood or environmental conditions.

POLICIES

POLICY Housing – 22 Commercial uses that are adjacent to residential districts may expand if the expansion will not have an adverse impact on the character or viability of the surrounding neighborhood, or if the expansion will substantially increase non-residential traffic in the surrounding neighborhood.

POLICY Housing – 23 Support and encourage individual homeowners and developers to increase reinvestment that improves resilience, stormwater management, and water conservation type improvements to landscape and/or structures on private property, as well as enhancing the design, structural quality, and aesthetic conditions of existing housing and the neighborhoods through the pursuit of building form standards in upcoming updates to the Town’s Land Development Code which ensure that new development and redevelopment preserve the existing community character.

POLICY Housing – 24 Support efforts of community-based organizations and neighborhood improvement initiatives which contribute to the stabilization, conservation, enhancement, and improvement of existing housing, structures, and other physical facilities within neighborhoods.

POLICY Housing – 25 The Town will create programs and/or incorporate tools within its Land Development Code to reduce substandard housing that will also help to identify specific structures and/or general areas for rehabilitation, redevelopment, and, if appropriate, demolition.

GOAL

- HOUSING – 7** Encourage building and construction strategies, methods and practices that promote energy efficiency through low impact design principles, including the use of renewable energy resources in the construction of new homes and the rehabilitation of existing homes.

POLICIES

- POLICY Housing – 27** Encourage individual homeowners and private developers to use currently acceptable green housing specifications as made available from the U.S. Green Building Council for the rehabilitation of existing housing structures and the construction of new homes.

POLICIES

- POLICY Housing – 28** Promote and enforce efficient design and construction standards as these become adopted as part of the International Building Code. The Town shall also promote commercial and residential standards, such as passive houses, that are promulgated from time to time by the Colorado Green Building Guild.