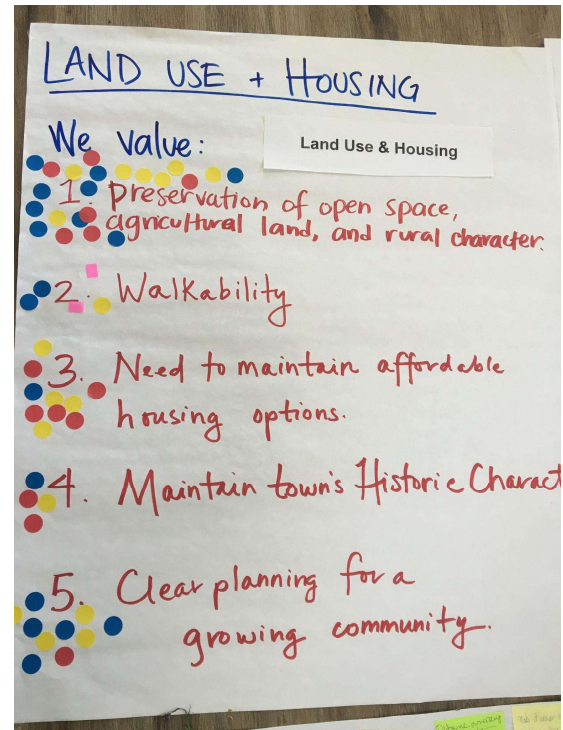


LAND USE FRAMEWORK

VISION: Paonia's rural character and slower pace of life are interconnected with the landscape, the seasons, and the thriving community life. Urban agriculture thrives, the community feels connected to the surrounding farmland and natural landscape. Wildlife corridors, greenways and viewsheds are protected and cherished. The Town contains walkable, tree-lined streets that surround a small but vibrant historic downtown. The historic core neighborhoods are celebrated, while "gentle" growth harmoniously adds to the character of the Town and provides housing for all walks of life that make up the diverse local community.

VALUES

- Open space, agricultural land, and interconnection with nature.
- The Town's rural character and historic heritage.
- Clear planning for a growing community.
- A diverse and accessible community comprised of all ages, incomes, family status, race, religion or creed.



OVERVIEW:

Paonia's residents appreciate the slow-paced rural life, the neighborly encounters, the natural environment and the farming and ranching legacy. The local history and traditions shape the Town's identity and there is general consensus within the community that Paonia should maintain its historic small-town feel and rural character. Development should be directed in a way that benefits the existing residents and that preserves the established character of the Town.

Development in Paonia has been slow and steady for several decades with slight population fluctuations. An increase in housing demand has been observed over the past 3 years, determined mainly by the migration from urban cores to rural areas during the COVID pandemic. In 2020, a water tap moratorium was adopted that prevented the sale of new water taps, which curtailed new construction. The moratorium, along with the pandemic-driven migration, has increased the cost of housing in Paonia.

The increased housing demand has brought up the necessity for a solid land use framework that preserves the characteristics which are currently valued by the community and make Paonia a unique place to live. Along with the increased housing demand, rising costs place a spotlight on the need for affordable housing. In response to this need, the Town conducted a *Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Action Plan* in conjunction with this Master Plan process. The *Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Action Plan* is an element of the Comprehensive Plan and may be referred to for a current housing diagnosis and for identifying strategies to address the housing needs.

Public feedback received during the community engagement process for this Comprehensive Plan expressed the community's desire for future land planning to be respectful of the natural environment and to focus on preserving the open land, the agricultural tradition and the scenic view sheds that characterize the valley. Special attention should be paid to the conservation and protection of the existing wildlife

corridors within the Town limits and to improving river access. Areas prone to flooding and wildfire should be carefully considered, along with development of guidelines for building within the FEMA 100-year floodplain and in areas prone to landslides or runoff.

The community appreciates that new development should be directed in a way that benefits the existing residents and that maintains the established character of the Town. Growth outside of Town limits is currently defined by the *Paonia - Delta County Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA)* and the *Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan*. The current growth planning strategy focuses on protecting productive agricultural areas, open land and scenic viewsheds, specifically the *West Elk Scenic Byway*. It states that annexation and new residential development should be concentrated in proximity to existing infrastructure, and the fiscal impacts of new development should be covered by the residents who benefit from any extension of municipal utility services. Future development within the *3-Mile Growth Area* and the *Urban Growth Areas* along Highway 133 should be compatible with its surroundings and should focus on maintaining a critical mass of agricultural land. (Additional information can be found in the *Paonia - Delta County Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA)* and the *Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan*).

This Future Land Use Framework is a holistic response to the community's concerns. It is a tool for decision making and future zoning revisions. It offers guidance on how to manage change in the future in a way that maintains the community's vision for the Town.

POLICIES

POLICY LUF-1: Preserve Paonia's rural character while balancing the need for infill, economic growth, housing and redevelopment.

POLICY LUF-2: Approach development with clear and consistent regulations and procedures that are effective and fair.

POLICY LUF-3: Promote a built environment that is in harmony with the existing scale and historic character of Paonia while remaining open to contemporary, energy efficient and alternative building methods.

POLICY LUF-4: Support diverse and affordable housing options for all to ensure that Paonia remains a complete and vibrant community.

POLICY LUF-5: Enhance the Town's resiliency to natural disasters and environmental hazards.

POLICY LUF-6: Promote access to open space, river corridor and surrounding countryside.

POLICY LUF-7: Protect key wildlife habitat and riparian corridors.

POLICY LUF-8: Maintain viewsheds, open lands and the rural feel of the Town.

ACTION ITEMS

Please refer to the *Town of Paonia Comprehensive Plan - Action Item List* for the current *Land Use Framework Action Items*.