



**TOWN OF PAONIA**  
**214 GRAND AVENUE**  
**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2024**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA 6:30 PM**  
[HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/85682812676](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85682812676)  
**MEETING ID: 856 8281 2676**

**Roll Call**

**Approval of Agenda**

**Approval of Minutes**

[August](#) 19, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

**Actions & Presentations**

**1. Public Hearing -**

Consideration of Recommendation of Approval to the Board of Trustees of the Final Plat of the (Minor) Subdivision on the property at 841 HWY 133 owned by West Elk Land & Hops LLC.

2. Planning Commission discussion for determining when to hold their regularly scheduled monthly meeting & time.

3. The Board has requested that you review parking ordinances to help streamline parking requirements for businesses and to outline the information that is needed and a proposed process to look at other parking options by the end of November.

4. Review and discussion of the October 15, 2024, revised draft Comprehensive “Master” Plan.

**Adjournment**

I. RULES OF PROCEDURE

**Section 1. Schedule of Meetings.** Regular Board of Trustees meetings shall be held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, except on legal holidays, or as re-scheduled or amended and posted on the agenda prior to the scheduled meeting.

**Section 2. Officiating Officer.** The meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be conducted by the Mayor or, in the Mayor's absence, the Mayor Pro-Tem. The Town Clerk or a designee of the Board shall record the minutes of the meetings.

**Section 3. Time of Meetings.** Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees shall begin at 6:30 p.m. or as scheduled and posted on the agenda. Board Members shall be called to order by the Mayor. The meetings shall open with the presiding officer leading the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. The Town Clerk shall then proceed to call the roll, note the absences and announce whether a quorum is present. Regular Meetings are scheduled for three hours, and shall be adjourned at 9:30 p.m., unless a majority of the Board votes in the affirmative to extend the meeting, by a specific amount of time.

**Section 4. Schedule of Business.** If a quorum is present, the Board of Trustees shall proceed with the business before it, which shall be conducted in the following manner. Note that all provided times are estimated:

- (a) Roll Call - (5 minutes)
- (b) Approval of Agenda - (5 minutes)
- (c) Announcements (5 minutes)
- (d) Recognition of Visitors and Guests (10 minutes)
- (e) Consent Agenda including Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (10 minutes)
- (f) Mayor's Report (10 minutes)
- (g) Staff Reports: (15 minutes)
  - (1) Town Administrator's Report
  - (2) Public Works Reports
  - (3) Police Report
  - (4) Treasurer Report
- (h) Unfinished Business (45 minutes)
- (i) New Business (45 minutes)
- (j) Disbursements (15 minutes)
- (k) Committee Reports (15 minutes)
- (l) Adjournment

\* This schedule of business is subject to change and amendment.

**Section 5. Priority and Order of Business.** Questions relative to the priority of business and order shall be decided by the Mayor without debate, subject in all cases to an appeal to the Board of Trustees.

**Section 6. Conduct of Board Members.** Town Board Members shall treat other Board Members and the public in a civil and polite manner and shall comply with the Standards of Conduct for Elected Officials of the Town. Board Members shall address Town Staff and the Mayor by his/her title, other Board Members by the title of Trustee or the appropriate honorific (i.e.: Mr., Mrs. or Ms.), and members of the public by the appropriate honorific. Subject to the Mayor's discretion, Board Members shall be limited to speaking two times when debating an item on the agenda. Making a motion, asking a question or making a suggestion are not counted as speaking in a debate.

**Section 7. Presentations to the Board.** Items on the agenda presented by individuals, businesses or other organizations shall be given up to 5 minutes to make a presentation. On certain issues, presenters may be given more time, as determined by the Mayor and Town Staff. After the presentation, Trustees shall be given the opportunity to ask questions.

**Section 8. Public Comment.** After discussion of an agenda item by the Board of Trustees has concluded, the Mayor shall open the floor for comment from members of the public, who shall be allowed the opportunity to comment or ask questions on the agenda item. Each member of the public wishing to address the Town Board shall be recognized by the presiding officer before speaking. Members of the public shall speak from the podium, stating their name, the address of their residence and any group they are representing prior to making comment or asking a question. Comments shall be directed to the Mayor or presiding officer, not to an individual Trustee or Town employee. Comments or questions should be confined to the agenda item or issue(s) under discussion. The speaker should offer factual information and refrain from obscene language and personal attacks.

**Section 9. Unacceptable Behavior.** Disruptive behavior shall result in expulsion from the meeting.

**Section 10. Posting of Rules of Procedure for Paonia Board of Trustees Meetings.** These rules of procedure shall be provided in the Town Hall meeting room for each Board of Trustees meeting so that all attendees know how the meeting will be conducted.

## **II. CONSENT AGENDA**

**Section 1. Use of Consent Agenda.** The Mayor, working with Town Staff, shall place items on the Consent Agenda. By using a Consent Agenda, the Board has consented to the consideration of certain items as a group under one motion. Should a Consent Agenda be used at a meeting, an appropriate amount of discussion time will be allowed to review any item upon request.

**Section 2. General Guidelines.** Items for consent are those which usually do not require discussion or explanation prior to action by the Board, are non-controversial and/or similar in content, or are those items which have already been discussed or explained and do not require further discussion or explanation. Such agenda items may include ministerial tasks such as, but not limited to, approval of previous meeting minutes, approval of staff reports, addressing routine correspondence, approval of liquor licenses renewals and approval or extension of other Town licenses. Minor changes in the minutes such as non-material Scribner errors may be made without removing the minutes from the Consent Agenda. Should any Trustee feel there is a material error in the minutes, they should request the minutes be removed from the Consent Agenda for Board discussion.

**Section 3. Removal of Item from Consent Agenda.** One or more items may be removed from the Consent Agenda by a timely request of any Trustee. A request is timely if made prior to the vote on the Consent Agenda. The request does not require a second or a vote by the Board. An item removed from the Consent Agenda will then be discussed and acted on separately either immediately following the consideration of the Consent Agenda or placed later on the agenda, at the discretion of the Board.

## **III. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Section 1.** An executive session may only be called at a regular or special Board meeting where official action may be taken by the Board, not at a work session of the Board. To convene an executive session, the Board shall announce to the public in the open meeting the topic to be discussed in the executive session, including specific citation to the statute authorizing the Board to meet in an executive session and identifying the particular matter to be discussed “in as much detail as possible without compromising the purpose for which the executive session is authorized.” In the event the Board plans to discuss more than one of the authorized topics in the executive session, each should be announced, cited and described. Following the announcement of the intent to convene an executive session, a motion must then be made and seconded. In order to go into executive session, there must be the affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3) of Members of the Board.

**Section 2.** During executive session, minutes or notes of the deliberations should not be taken. Since meeting minutes are subject to inspection under the Colorado Open Records Act, the keeping of minutes would defeat the private nature of executive session. In addition, the deliberations carried out during executive session should not be discussed outside of that session or with individuals not participating in the session. The contents of an executive session are to remain confidential unless a majority of the Trustees vote to disclose the contents of the executive session.

**Section 3.** Once the deliberations have taken place in executive session, the Board should reconvene in regular session to take any formal action decided upon during the executive session. If you have questions regarding the wording of the motion or whether any other information should be disclosed on the record, it is essential for you to consult with the Town Attorney on these matters.

## **IV. SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT**

**Section 1. Deviations.** The Board may deviate from the procedures set forth in this Resolution, if, in its sole discretion, such deviation is necessary under the circumstances.

**Section 2. Amendment.** The Board may amend these Rules of Procedures Policy from time to time.

**Minutes**  
**Planning Commission Meeting**  
**Town of Paonia, Colorado**  
**August 19, 2024**

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Roll Call**

PRESENT

Chair Watson

Vice Chair Howe

Commissioner McCarthy

ABSENT

Commissioner Smith

**Approval of Agenda**

Chair Watson makes a motion, seconded by Commissioner McCarthy, to approve the agenda.

The motion carries unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

None

**Actions & Presentations**

1. Master Plan Discussion

The Planning Commission members review what was discussed during the last meeting held on August 7, 2024, and where the Town is in regards for asking DOLA for an extension on the completion of the Comprehensive (Master) Plan. It was clarified that the mayor is the one to be sending the letter to DOLA for an extension as per their instructions.

Town Clerk Vetter provides the date of September 4, 2024, for the Joint Board & Planning Commission meeting and can be where direction can be provided to complete the plan by the deadline. An update will be provided to the Board of Trustees during the August 20, 2024, special meeting.

The Commission members discussed the statute requirements for the plan, including a housing element.

Commissioners asked if they would be able to direct the Comprehensive Plan contractor for additional items.

Town Clerk Vetter clarified that Town Administrator Wynn would be the one to speak with or request items from Phoenix Rising.

Commissioner McCarthy stated that until at least one more commission member is appointed, they will not be able to decide whether to pass the plan and will be delayed.

The Commissioners raised additional questions on approach, process, and elements. Clerk Vetter suggested, since the Planning Commission is an advisory board, that they decide on what questions or what is needed from the Board so they can be asked for the Joint Meeting to be held the next day, August 20, 2024.

The Planning Commission continues going through the spreadsheet of comments made one by one, commenting on each with either Yes or No, for agreeing with comment recommendation or not. They also identified line items for the Planning Commission to continue discussion and not to remove items that were public input/engagement included in the plan.

Vice Chair Howe suggested including Dark Skies in the wording in the plan since they received international designation for the Town of Paonia.

Commissioners discussed Accessible Dwelling Units and Housing plan with a focus on challenges and lack of affordable housing causes.

Commissioner McCarthy outlines items to be completed and suggests a full Planning Commission board is needed. He continued by suggesting a timeline of September 4<sup>th</sup>, at the joint meeting, asking the Board what is needed from Phoenix Rising, set another Planning Commission meeting mid-September for working on the formatting, another meeting mid-October for adding the missing elements, and possibly ready for passing in November.

Chair Watson states that Commissioner McCarthy's timeline would fall within the start of the budget timeline.

Town Clerk Vetter clarifies the budget timeline would be stated on the August 27, 2024, Board strategic planning session.

The Commission discussed the housing action plan that was not included as part of the submitted Comprehensive plan. Explanation of why the separation from the Comprehensive Plan is provided and members advised to read the Housing plan published on the Town website. Clarification is made that the Housing Action Plan must be included in the Comprehensive Master Plan but could be amended.

Chair Watson concludes discussion by announcing the next Planning Commission meeting will be on September 4, 2024, and the Strategic Planning session will take place September 27, 2024.

**Adjournment**

Chair Watson adjourns the meeting at 8:23PM.

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Ruben Santiago, Deputy Clerk

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Suzanne Watson, Chair

DRAFT

**TOWN OF PAONIA, COLO-  
RADO  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

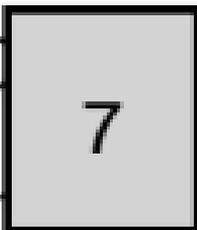
**Notice** is hereby given that the Planning Commission of the Town of Paonia will hold a Public Hearing commencing Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., at the Paonia Town Hall, 214 Grand Avenue, Paonia, Colorado 81428. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider a recommendation of approval of the final plat of the (minor) Subdivision on the property at 841 HWY 133 owned by West Elk Land & Hops LLC.

**Further Notice** is hereby given that the Board of Trustees of the Town of Paonia will hold a Public Hearing commencing Tuesday, November 11, 2024 at 6:30PM, at the Paonia Town Hall, 214 Grand Avenue, Paonia, Colorado 81428. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider approval of final plat of the (minor) Subdivision on the property at 841 HWY 133 owned by West Elk Land & Hops LLC.

Any person may appear at the Public Hearings and be heard regarding the matters under consideration. Copies of the proposed subdivision plat and related application materials are on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Town Clerk, 214 Grand Avenue, Paonia, Colorado 81428.

Legal Description: Lot 2, Riverbank Neighborhood Minor Subdivision, according to the instrument recorded March 21, 2012 in the records of the Delta County Clerk and Recorder under Reception No. 657278.

Dated the 17 day of September,  
2024.

TC  OF PAONIA, COLO-  
RADO

Sar  Vetter, Town Clerk

Published Thursday, September  
26, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31,  
November 7, 2024

Town of Paonia  
PO Box 460  
214 Grand Avenue  
Paonia CO 81428-0460

(970) 527-4101

Receipt No: 2.005045

Sep 19, 2024

**PAID**

SEP 19 2024

TOWN OF PAONIA

David Warren

Previous Balance:	.00
App. Fees, Licenses & Permits - Minor Subdivision Applications	500.00
<hr/>	
Total:	500.00
<hr/>	
Check	Check No: 1602
Total Applied:	500.00
<hr/>	
Change Tendered:	.00
<hr/>	

09/19/2024 9:42 AM

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Re: West Elk Land & Hops LLC-Public Hearing Posting

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From Samira V <SamiraV@townofpaonia.com>  
Date Wed 9/18/2024 9:57 AM  
To David Warren <highwirehops@gmail.com>

Thank you David!



**Samira M. Vetter**  
*Paonia Town Clerk*  
P: (970) 527-4101  
F: (970) 527-4102  
E: SamiraV@TownofPaonia.com  
214 Grand Ave.  
PO Box 460  
Paonia, CO 81428  
<https://townofpaonia.colorado.gov>

"The measure of who we are is what we do with what we have." – Vince Lombardi

**Sender and receiver should be mindful that all my incoming and outgoing emails may be subject to the Colorado Open Records Act, § 24-72-100.1, et seq.**

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**From:** David Warren <highwirehops@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 9:47 AM  
**To:** Samira V <SamiraV@townofpaonia.com>  
**Subject:** West Elk Land & Hops LLC-Public Hearing Posting

[You don't often get email from highwirehops@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

Hi Samira,

I've attached photos of our Public Hearing posting at the farm. Please let me know if you need anything more from us.

Thanks so much!  
David

**PAONIA**  
COLORADO

**TOWN OF PAONIA, COLORADO  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

Notices hereby given that the Planning Commission of the Town of Paonia will hold a Public Hearing commencing Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., at the Paonia Town Hall, 214 Grand Avenue, Paonia, Colorado 81428. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider a request for approval of the final plan of the (minor) Subdivision of the property at 841 HWY 133 owned by West Elk Land & Hops, LLC.

**Further Notice** hereby given that the Board of Trustees of the Town of Paonia will hold a Public Hearing commencing Tuesday, November 11, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., at the Paonia Town Hall, 214 Grand Avenue, Paonia, Colorado 81428. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider approval of final plan of the (minor) Subdivision of the property at 841 HWY 133 owned by West Elk Land & Hops, LLC.

Any person who appears at the Public Hearings and be heard regarding the matter under consideration. Copies of the proposed subdivision plat and related application materials are on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Town Clerk, 214 Grand Avenue, Paonia, Colorado 81428.

Legal Description: Lot 2, Riverbank Neighborhood Mine Subdivision, according to the instrument recorded March 21, 2012 in the records of the Delta County Clerk and Recorder under Reception No. 657278.

Dated the 17th day of September, 2024.

TOWN OF PAONIA, COLORADO  
Cynthia M. Votaw, Town Clerk

Printed September 17, 2024





**TOWN OF PAONIA, COLORADO  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

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**Legal Description:** Lot 2, Riverbank Neighborhood Minor Subdivision, according to the instrument recorded March 21, 2012 in the records of the Delta County Clerk and Recorder under Reception No. 657278.

Dated the 17th day of September, 2024.

TOWN OF PAONIA, COLORADO  
Samira M. Vetter, Town Clerk

Posted September 17, 2024



Sent from my iPhone

**Minutes**  
**Planning Commission Meeting**  
**Town of Paonia, Colorado**  
**January 17, 2024**

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Roll Call**

**PRESENT**

Chair Dave Knutson  
Vice-Chair Mary Bachran  
Commissioner Suzanne Watson  
Secretary Lyn Howe

**ABSENT**

Commissioner Steve Clisset

**Approval of Agenda**

Chair Knutson speaks to the importance of timely packet availability and transparency for meetings.

Vice-Chair Bachran makes a motion, seconded by Secretary Howe, on approval of agenda.

Motion carries unanimously.

**Actions & Presentations**

1. Appointment of Officers

Chair Knutson provides overview of existing seats and discusses timing of appointments with Town Clerk Vetter and Commissioner Watson. Town Attorney Cotton-Baez had advised previously such appointments take place at the start of the year.

Vice-Chair Bachran makes a motion, seconded by Commissioner Watson to have Dave Knutson retain his position as Chair, Mary Bachran to retain her position as Vice-Chair, and for Lyn Howe to retain her position as Secretary.

Motion carries unanimously.

2. Master Plan Status Update - Phoenix Rising Resources

Calla Rose – Phoenix Rising – presents update on comprehensive plan. Apologizes for not having provided physically copies due to unable to print issues caused by internet connectivity drops. She informed the committee that she will be submitting work order change for additional funds for bringing on Shay and Andrew (Coburn) as well and asks for more time for map creation. Should have update by end of this week. She discussed the approach, elements for feedback, public workshops, input, and public hearing.

Town Administrator Wynn goes through the planned dates and actions set with Phoenix Rising.

Chair Knutson expresses his pleasure with having Shay and Andrew (Coburn) working on this.

Public Comment: None

Chair Knutson and Town Administrator Wynn discuss funds and transfers with DOLA.

No motion is made.

### 3. Public Hearing-

Application for Minor Subdivision of Property at 841 HWY 133 Paonia CO 81428 by West Elk Land & Hops

Chair Knutson opens the Public Hearing at 5:15PM

Chair Knutson explains the process for the Public Hearing. Advises that proper notifications were done and commissioner disclosures (no conflicts of interest). Town Administrator Wynn explains the details of parcel split plans and rules for splitting lots. He goes through a checklist of items met and presented from the various entities and considerations to applicant. He also explains that zoning was not contemplated and didn't see it posted as part of this presentation for approval. He explained that this hearing is for deciding to subdivide, zoning comes later.

Town Administrator Wynn goes on to explain public notifications duration was four weeks, certified letters sent out to adjacent property owners, and of some residents coming in to review presented plans and plat. He discusses Town Attorney provided explanation of access easements and provides detail.

Town Administrator Wynn recommends that the planning commission could conditionally approve the subdivision and have a seller grant appropriate access easements upon sale of the subdivision.

Applicant:

David Warren – sworn in – co-owner of property. Gives background history of property formerly known as Riverbank. Project cancelled in 2008 and divided into two parcels. Components; water, sewer, access, and fire protection. Discusses augmentation plan description and relation to project. Working with water contracts to retain water. Currently has an Observation Well permit and will be a General Use Well in a couple weeks. Explains septic systems used due to being except from connection to town's water system due to distance to closest sewer. Incorporated all fire department recommendations. Discusses that Estate zoning makes sense due to lot sizes and water rights. Would like to stay within town limits. He states that their application has met all criteria.

D. Warren and his co-owners are asking the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to the town trustees this evening to approve our minor subdivision estates zoning contingent on three components that need to be completed. Components are 1.) Securing the General Use permit for Well, 2.) Completing engineer plans for optimistic water well and delivery plan to each lot., 3.) Developing HOA guidelines which will consist of a simple agreement for shared irrigation system use maintenance and improvements: HOA usage for water only.

Town Administrator Wynn reiterates that there are two different issues: Subdivision and Zoning.

Public Comment: Opens at 5:38PM

R. Schmidt – sworn in – speaks to the need for clarification on previous subdivision and questions if already subdivided. He questions if there are any existing full easement available for utilities/road access, annexation, and utilities/services provided by the Town.

B. Bruner – sworn in – speaks to property already zoned properly. Speaks against having a gated-type community.

C. Paterson – sworn in – speaks of the lack of lead time to review information to research. She states neighbor adjacent to property in question was not notified. She feels process should be slowed down to coincide with the Town’s Master Plan.

Response from applicant:

Allison Elliot (co-owner). – appreciate public input and concern. Addresses concerns about sewer distance. She feels what was presented would be the best option for what to do with the property and the Town.

Public comment closed at 5:53PM

Chair Knutson asks if there are any objections to accepting the presented information from the applicant.

No objection to receiving information is heard.

Secretary Howe speaks of the need for clarification on subdividing a previously subdivided property and whether it can be done. She also expresses her concern about the lack of lead time for public access/review of all the information received.

Vice-Chair Bachran makes a motion, seconded by Secretary Howe for a 5-minute break.

Motion carries unanimously.

Planning Commission reconvening’s at 6:02PM.

Town Clerk Vetter explains they have identified one owner adjacent to the property that was not properly notified. She explains the process for how notifications are sent, and it was not purposeful.

Town Administrator Wynn explains that number eleven of our criteria states that minor subdivision application is not available more than one time for the same lot or adjacent lots under the same ownerships. He identified change of ownership in 2012, allowing subdivision.

The Commission members discuss access issues in the past, possible hardships created, population density changes, Master Plan/growth conflicts, issues with zoning changes.

Town Administrator Wynn explains that the Planning Commission doesn’t make decisions on zoning. He states that questions of access have been addressed working with CDOT and the Fire department.

Vice-Chair Bachran and Commissioner Watson briefly discussed zoning procedures but per Commission rules, they can only recommend but take no action.

Chair Knutson closes the Public Hearing portion at 6:19PM.

Commission Deliberation:

Vice-Chair Bachran states that the application meets all requirements and having mixed density is a good thing to have.

Commissioner Watson re-iterates her previously expressed concerns, but still uncomfortable with density change and access to support that. She speaks to the need for more information from staff is required.

Secretary Howe asks if the identified subdivision question has been answered.

Town Administrator Wynn explains that another split would have to go through another process for a major subdivision. Town permits are required and must follow design & build standards. He explains that it would have to fit criteria in the Comprehensive plan. Vice-Chair Bachran makes a motion to accept subdivision. No second is heard.

Motion fails due to lack of a second.

Chair Knutson opens it for further discussion or enrichment.

Vice-Chair Bachran makes a motion, seconded by Secretary Howe, that the Planning Commission conditional approval of the application for minor subdivision property at 841 HWY 133. With the formulation of an access agreement upon the sale of the properties that, they obtain the general use well permit, that they have engineering plans with a domestic water system developed in two weeks before the sale, and development of an HOA.

Motion carries with Commissioner Watson voting Nay.

Members discuss zoning questions and Town Administrator Wynn provides three options on the zoning questions; 1., Approval, 2., Denial., 3., push to the Board of Trustees to decide.

Vice-Chair Bachran makes a motion, then rescinded, that the Planning Commission do nothing and that this be taken up by the Board of Trustees as Part of the Master Plan. Commissioner Watson and Town Administrator Wynn discussed timing of zoning discussions can take place in June, along with the Land Use code talks.

Vice-Chair Bachran makes a motion, seconded by Secretary Howe, to recommend that the Board of Trustees take up the zoning issue after June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Motion carries unanimously.

- 4. Recommendations to Town Council regarding Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Action Plan regarding Short Term Rentals

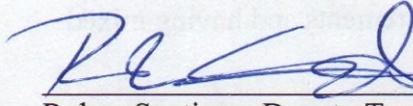
Chair Knutson provides a background on item agenda addition and importance on acting on Short Term Rentals (STRs) and Accessible Dwelling Units (ADUs).

Vice-Chair Bachran and Commissioner Watson discussed recommendations made by consultants Shay and Andrew (Coburn) and the desire to keep outside entities from purchasing property and management from afar.

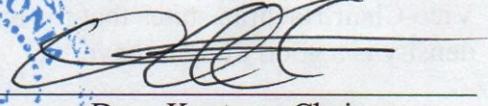
Town Administrator Wynn suggests solutions can include items such as required licenses with annual renewals. Explains that the Town Code re-write is needed and budgeted for. Chair Knutson asks for a brief update from Shay and Andrew (Coburn) to include in the packet.  
No motion is made.

**Adjournment**

Chair Knutson adjourns the meeting at 7:11PM

  
Ruben Santiago, Deputy Town Clerk



  
Dave Knutson, Chair

Town Administrator Wynn explains that isn't being contemplated right now but if in the future they wanted to deed right of ways to the Town, the Town would not accept anything that wasn't built to Code. For the purposes of this public hearing, that is one of the things that the owners would have to settle as a part of the HOA guidelines.

Trustee Smith then asks about stormwater runoff and Town Administrator Wynn explains that is in his staff report as a suggested fifth condition as well as changing the conditions to be complete before the recording of the final plat. They also clarify that the Town Administrator will be the arbiter of whether they have met those conditions.

Mayor Bachran closes the Public Hearing at 9:49 p.m

Mayor Pro-Tem Knutson makes a motion, Seconded by Trustee Smith to extend the meeting to 10:30 p.m.

The Board of Trustees and the Town Attorney discuss how similar the Town's subdivision regulations are to the State Statutes and whether the decision can be delayed until after more planning pieces have been put into place. The Town Attorney reminds them that they have to make decision based on what is in place right now and that the applicant has a right to a decision in a reasonable amount of time.

Trustee MacInnis asks what the regulations are on well and septic systems within Town limits: What is the regulation on well and septic within town limits and a discussion ensues about spirit of the law and letter of the law and that there are no regulations around septic systems within town limits. Discussion further delves into how they can ensure the same lots don't just continue to be subdivided with new owners and the enforceability of certain conditions vs Code amendments.

Trustee MacInnis makes a motion, seconded by Trustee Smith, to deny the application.

Voting Yea: Trustee Smith, Trustee MacInnis

Voting Nay: Mayor Pro-Tem Knutson, Trustee Valentine, Trustee Swartz

The motion fails.

Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Knutson, Seconded by Trustee Swartz, to conditionally approve the Minor Subdivision with the conditions 1) that the applicants grant appropriate access easements on the lots 2) that the applicants obtain a general use well permit from the State 3) that the applicant provide engineering plans for the domestic water systems 4) the applicant establish an HOA and provide guidelines for shared usage, maintenance and improvements 5) that the applicant have engineered drainage plans and that all of these conditions be met before the final plat can be signed and recorded.

Voting Yea: Mayor Pro-Tem Knutson, Trustee Smith, Trustee Valentine, Trustee Swartz

Voting Nay: Trustee MacInnis

The motion carries.

Agenda Item #9 Consideration of Approval of Wright Water Engineering Contract for the Hydrogeological Study

Trustee Swartz makes a motion, seconded by Trustee MacInnis to approve the contract for the Hydrogeological Study with Wright Water Engineering.

The motion carries unanimously.

### **Mayor & Trustee Reports**

Parks & Public Safety Committee Report

COPY

EASEMENT QUITCLAIM DEED

WEST ELK LAND & HOPS, LLC ("Grantor"), whose address is P.O. Box 747, Paonia, Colorado 81428, in consideration of Ten Dollars (\$10.00) and other valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which the parties acknowledge, sells and quitclaims to PAONIA RIVERBANK, LLC ("Grantee"), whose address is P.O. Box 1554, Paonia, Colorado 81428, the following easements in Delta County, Colorado:

1. Irrigation Easement. A perpetual, non-exclusive easement for irrigation purposes twenty-two feet in width along the eastern boundaries of the real property in Delta County, Colorado, legally described as:

Lot 1 and Lot 2, Old Hops Minor Subdivision,  
as depicted on the plat of Old Hops Minor Subdivision  
recorded in the Delta County, Colorado real property records

Such easement is subservient to, and Grantee's use of such easement shall not interfere with, the existing easement described as "22' UTILITY & IRRIGATION EASEMENT" as depicted on the plat of Old Hops Minor Subdivision recorded in the Delta County, Colorado real property records ("Grantor's Easement"). Grantee shall be responsible for all costs and expenses associated with the use and maintenance of the easement granted above. Grantor shall be responsible for all costs and expenses associated with the use and maintenance of Grantor's Easement. To the extent reasonably possible, Grantor's use and maintenance of Grantor's Easement shall not interfere with Grantee's rights under this Deed.

2. Emergency Access Easement. A perpetual, non-exclusive easement for access by emergency service providers to Grantee's property described on page 2, below, described as "60' Access Easement" and "30' Access Easement" as depicted on the plat of Old Hops Minor Subdivision recorded in the Delta County, Colorado, real property records, over and across the real property in Delta County, Colorado, legally described as:

Lot 1, Lot 2, and Lot 3, Old Hops Minor Subdivision,  
as depicted on the plat of Old Hops Minor Subdivision  
recorded in the Delta County, Colorado real property records

Grantee shall be responsible for constructing and maintaining the road on the emergency access easement at Grantee's sole cost and expense. Grantor reserves the right to the use and enjoyment of the easement and the road constructed on it so long as such use does not interfere with Grantee's rights under this Deed; provided, however, that if Grantor or its authorized users damage the easement or the road, then Grantor shall be responsible for the cost to repair the damage.

The easements granted in this Deed are solely and exclusively for the benefit of Grantee's

property in Delta County, Colorado, legally described as:

Lot 3, Riverbank Neighborhood Minor Subdivision #2 as described by Plat recorded July 27, 2018, under Reception Number 704944

Grantee's use of the easements shall be limited according to the terms of this Deed, and the doctrine of "normal evolution of use" shall not apply to Grantee's use of the easements. The easements shall run with the land and shall inure to the benefit of Grantee's heirs, successors, assigns, and personal representatives, subject to the conditions and limitations set forth in this Deed.

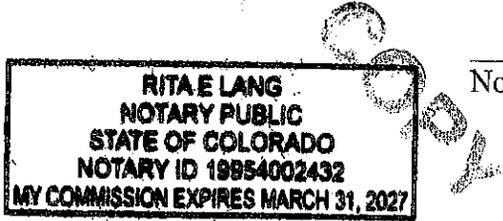
DATED: August 19, 2024.

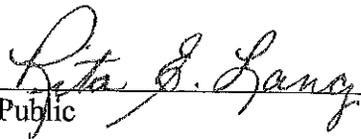
WEST ELK LAND & HOPS, LLC  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David R. Warren, Managing Member

STATE OF COLORADO    )  
  ) ss.  
COUNTY OF DELTA     )

Subscribed and sworn to before me the 19 day of August, 2024, by David R. Warren, Managing Member of West Elk Land & Hops, LLC.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.  
My commission expires: March 31, 2027



  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

EASEMENT QUITCLAIM DEED

WEST ELK LAND & HOPS, LLC, whose address is P.O. Box 747, Paonia, Colorado 81428, for no consideration, sells and quitclaims to OLD HOPS FARM HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, whose address is P.O. Box 747, Paonia, Colorado 81428, the following easements in Delta County, Colorado:

- 60' ACCESS EASEMENT,
- 30' ACCESS EASEMENT,
- 30' ACCESS EASEMENT FOR MAINTENANCE,
- 12' IRRIGATION EASEMENT,
- 15' UTILITY EASEMENT,
- 50' UTILITY & IRRIGATION EASEMENT,
- 15' IRRIGATION EASEMENT,
- IRRIGATION EASEMENT,
- 22' UTILITY & IRRIGATION EASEMENT,

all as depicted on the plat of Old Hops Farm Minor Subdivision, recorded in the Delta County, Colorado real property records.

The use and maintenance of all such easements are subject to and governed by the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions for Old Hops Farm Subdivision recorded in the Delta County, Colorado real property records.

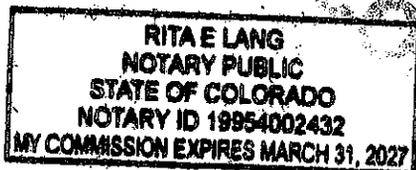
DATED: AUGUST 19, 2024.

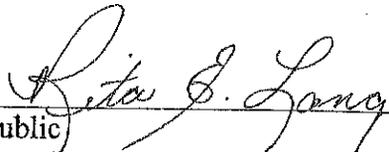
WEST ELK LAND & HOPS, LLC  
  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 David R. Warren, Managing Member

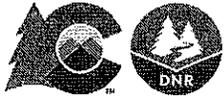
STATE OF COLORADO    )  
                                   ) ss.  
 COUNTY OF DELTA        )

Subscribed and sworn to before me the 19 day of August, 2024, by David R. Warren, Managing Member of West Elk Land & Hops, LLC.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.  
My commission expires: March 31, 2027



  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Notary Public



**ORIGINAL PERMIT APPLICANT(S)**

WEST ELK LAND & HOPS LLC

**APPROVED WELL LOCATION**

Water Division: 4      Water District: 40  
 Designated Basin: N/A  
 Management District: N/A  
 County: DELTA  
 Parcel Name: N/A  
 Physical Address: 841 HWY 133 PAONIA, CO 81428  
 NE 1/4 SW 1/4 Section 31 Township 13.0 S Range 91.0 W Sixth P.M.

**UTM COORDINATES (Meters, Zone:13, NAD83)**

Easting: 274149.0      Northing: 4306175.0

**PERMIT TO USE AN EXISTING WELL**

ISSUANCE OF THIS PERMIT DOES NOT CONFER A WATER RIGHT  
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

- 1) This well shall be used in such a way as to cause no material injury to existing water rights. The issuance of this permit does not assure the applicant that no injury will occur to another vested water right or preclude another owner of a vested water right from seeking relief in a civil court action.
- 2) The construction of this well shall be in compliance with the Water Well Construction Rules 2 CCR 402-2, unless approval of a variance has been granted by the State Board of Examiners of Water Well Construction and Pump Installation Contractors in accordance with Rule 18.
- 3) Approved pursuant to CRS 37-90-137(2) to use an existing well, permit no. 329389, on the condition that this well is operated in accordance with the West Elk Land & Hops, LLC Augmentation Plan approved by the Division 4 Water Court in case no. 23CW3028. If this well is not operated in accordance with the terms of said decree, it will be subject to administration including orders to cease diverting water. This well is known as the Old Hops Well.
- 4) The issuance of this permit hereby cancels permit no. 329389.
- 5) The use of ground water from this well is limited to domestic use in up to six single-family homes.
- 6) The maximum pumping rate of this well shall not exceed 63 GPM.
- 7) The annual withdrawal of ground water from this well shall not exceed 2.16 acre-feet.
- 8) The return flow from the use of this well must be through an individual wastewater disposal systems of the non-evaporative type where the water is returned to the same stream system in which the well is located.
- 9) The owner shall mark the well in a conspicuous place with well permit number(s), name of the aquifer, and court case number (s) as appropriate. The owner shall take necessary means and precautions to preserve these markings.
- 10) A totalizing flow meter must be installed on this well and maintained in good working order. Permanent records of all diversions must be maintained by the well owner (recorded at least annually) and submitted to the Division Engineer upon request.
- 11) This well shall be constructed not more than 200 feet from the location specified on this permit and as decreed in Division 4 Water Court case no. 23CW3028.
- 12) This well shall be constructed more than 600 feet from any existing well, completed in the same aquifer, that is not owned by the applicant.

NOTE: This permit will expire on the expiration date unless a pump is installed by that date. A Pump Installation and Production Equipment Test Report (GWS-32) must be submitted to the Division of Water Resources to verify the pump has been installed. A one-time extension of the expiration date may be available. Contact the DWR for additional information or refer to the extension request form (GWS-64) available at: [dwr.colorado.gov](http://dwr.colorado.gov)

NOTE: Parcel Identification Number (PIN): 318731303002

WELL PERMIT NUMBER 89332-F

RECEIPT NUMBER 10036222

*Justina Mickelson*

Date Issued: 7/22/2024

Issued By JUSTINA MICKELSON

Expiration Date: 7/22/2025



# 841 Highway 133

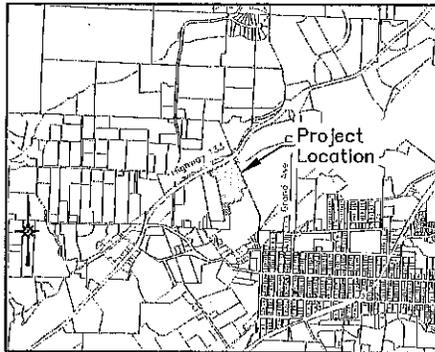
841 Highway 133

Paonia, CO 81428

## CONSTRUCTION PLANS

Prepared for:

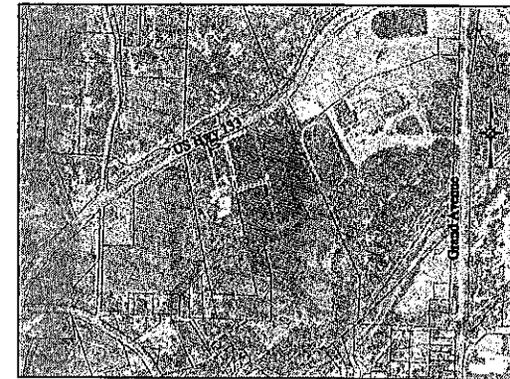
### HIGH WIRE HOPS



**PROJECT LOCATION MAP**  
(1" = 1,600')

#### INDEX OF SHEETS

Sheet No.	Description
C1	Cover Sheet
C2	General Notes & Abbreviations
C3	Water Plan
C4-C5	Water Line Plan & Profile



**PROJECT OVERVIEW**  
(1" = 500')

#### DESIGN TEAM CONTACTS

**OWNER/DEVELOPER:**  
HIGH WIRE HOPS  
David Warrent  
841 Highway 133  
Paonia, CO 81428  
970.270.2855  
highwirehops@gmail.com

**CIVIL:**  
RIVER CITY CONSULTANTS, INC.  
Craig Rothluebber  
215 Pitkin Ave, Suite 201  
Grand Junction, CO 81501  
870.241.4722  
crothluebber@rcwest.com

**SURVEY:**  
WILLMORE AND COMPANY  
PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYING, INC.  
Kris Crawford  
406 Grand Avenue  
Paonia, CO 81428  
970.527.4200  
kris@willmorelandsurveying.com

NO.	DATE	REVISION	BY

PROJECT PHASE: Issued for Construction  
DATE ISSUED: 2024 July 23

**RIVER CITY CONSULTANTS**  
215 Pitkin Ave, Suite 201  
Grand Junction, CO 81501  
870.241.4722  
rcwest.com

DRAWN BY: [Name]  
CHECKED BY: [Name]

High Wire Hops  
841 Highway 133  
Cover Sheet

**GENERAL CONSTRUCTION NOTES**

- All boundary line work, project control, underground utility locations, and topographic survey data shown hereon was provided by River City Consultants, Inc. Locations of underground utilities as shown hereon are based on visible evidence from above ground structures, markings by the respective utility companies and/or their locator services, and drawings provided by the utility companies. No excavations were made during this survey to determine exact locations and depths of underground utilities and structures. Actual locations may vary from those as shown hereon and additional underground utilities may exist. Existence and locations of all underground utilities and structures should be verified prior to any construction on this property.
- Contractor shall give 48 hour notice to all authorized inspectors, superintendents, or person in charge of public and private utilities affected by his operations prior to commencement of work. Contractor shall ensure himself that all construction permits have been obtained prior to commencement of work. All permits obtainable by the Contractor are required to be obtained at the Contractor's expense.
- The Contractor shall limit construction activities to those areas within the project limits of disturbances and/or loss of slopes as shown on the plans and cross sections. Any disturbances beyond these limits shall be restored to the original condition by the contractor at the contractor's expense. Construction activities in addition to normal construction procedure shall include the parking of vehicles or equipment, disposal of debris or any other action which could alter the existing conditions. The contractor shall not stockpile or store equipment within 30 feet of the edge of traveled way during the project, unless protected by temporary barrier or existing guardrail.
- All satisfactory excess excavation from either utility or street construction shall be spread uniformly across the lot as directed by the Owner or his designated representative. All unsatisfactory or waste material including vegetation, roots, concrete, rocks, or other debris, shall be hauled from the project by the Contractor at the Contractor's expense.
- All utility installations are to be performed in accordance with the technical specifications of the Town of Paonia. All water and sewer lines must be tested and approved prior to street construction. All waterlines are to be constructed in accordance with the technical specifications of Ute Water District.
- All sewer, storm drain, and water lines shall be surveyed and shown on as-built drawings in three dimensions at each end and at all angle points.
- All areas disturbed by construction activities shall be paved, landscaped, or revegetated with a certified weed-free native seed mix appropriate for site soils and conditions. These areas shall be maintained until a vegetative cover of at least 70% of pre-construction conditions exists. If necessary, additional topsoil, seed, mulch, and/or fertilizer should be applied to establish sold vegetative cover.

**TESTING NOTES**

- Contractor shall familiarize themselves with the geotechnical testing requirements of the City of Grand Junction. It shall be the responsibility of the Contractor to contact the Testing Firm 24 hours in advance of the need for testing, and to verify that the appropriate number of tests have been taken. The results of the required types of tests and number of passing tests shall be furnished to the Engineer for verification before final acceptance by the Owner will be granted. All failing tests shall be brought to the immediate attention of the Engineer and re-tests shall be performed until passing results are obtained. All utility lines, including service lines, falling within the Public Right-of-Way or the Public easements shall be tested. Payment of testing is the Contractor's responsibility and shall not be paid for separately but shall be incidental to the work.
- Only materials on which a proctor and accurate nuclear density test can be performed are approved for utility trench backfill, unless otherwise approved by the Engineer.
- Backfilling of trenches without testing during the backfill operation is strongly discouraged and will result in removal and replacement of backfill back to the last documented passing test.

**WATERLINE CONSTRUCTION NOTES**

- All water line construction shall be in accordance with the latest revision of the Town of Paonia Standards and Specifications.
- All trenches shall be compacted according to the recommendations in the Geotechnical Report. Contractor shall be required to perform all compaction tests through a certified soils lab.
- Cover required over top of new waterlines is 4'-0" (48 inches).
- All service connections to be 3/4 inch Type "K" copper, unless specified otherwise.
- All materials, labor and equipment required for testing and disinfection of waterlines shall be furnished by Contractor. Disinfection of waterlines shall conform to the Town of Paonia Standards.
- Only material on which a proctor test can be performed and accurate nuclear density tests can be run are approved for waterline trench backfill unless otherwise approved by the Engineer.
- Stop gravel bedding in service lines at lip of gutter.
- Domestic water shall not be used for irrigation. Developer must secure irrigation rights/water for irrigation purposes, water taps/meters will not be sold for irrigation of landscaping.
- Water is tied to the parcel it is intended to serve and shall not be conveyed from one parcel to another.

**LEGEND**

	Top of Slope
	Edge of Water
	100-YR Flood Limits
	500-YR Flood Limits
	Edge of Wetlands
	Tree Moss Area
	Edge of Asphalt
	Edge of Concrete
	Edge of Gravel
	Flowline
	Railroad
	Building
	Building Overhang
	Wire Fence
	Chain Fence
	Gate
	Wood Fence
	Guardrail
	Existing Major Contour
	Existing Minor Contour
	Existing Cable TV
	Existing Comm Duct
	Existing Electric
	Existing Fiber Optic
	Existing Gas
	Existing Irrigation
	Existing Overhead Electric
	Existing Overhead Telephone
	Existing Storm Drain
	Existing Sanitary Sewer
	Existing Sewer Force Main
	Existing Telephones
	Existing Unknown Utility
	Existing Water
	Out Extents
	Fire Extents
	Proposed Demolition or Removal
	Drainage Flowline
	Proposed Parcel Boundary
	Proposed Easement
	Proposed Lot Line
	Proposed Right of Way
	Proposed Subback
	Proposed Tract
	Proposed Striping
	Milling Limits
	Sawcut Line
	Proposed Major Contour
	Proposed Minor Contour
	Common Utilities
	Irrigation Line
	Irrigation Service Line
	Storm Drain Line (with Flow Direction)
	Sanitary Sewer Line (with Flow Direction)
	Sanitary Sewer Force Main Line
	Sanitary Sewer Service Line
	Water Line
	Water Service Line

	Existing Manhole
	Existing Manhole
	Proposed Manhole
	Proposed Service
	Cleanouts
	Inlets
	Fire Hydrant/Elbow/Meter
	Well/Yard Hydrant/Box
	Valve/Cap/Thrust Block
	Box/Pump/Valve
	Roof Drain/Vent Pipe/Pedestal
	Utility Boxes
	Utility Pedestals
	Meters
	Utility Marker/Transformer/Valve
	Monitor Well/Borehole/Pathole
	Decid Tree/Conif Tree/Shrub
	Utility Pole/Guy Wire/Guy Pole
	Intersection Sign/Sign/Reflector
	Bollard/Light/Mailbox
	Proposed Asphalt
	Proposed Concrete
	Proposed Gravel
	Proposed Building
	Proposed Demolition/Removal
	Proposed Milling
	Proposed Riprap
	Proposed Vegetation
	Proposed Wall
	Proposed Truncated Dome
	Proposed GDS (Catch/Spill)
	Traffic Flow Direction

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ABC	Aggregate Base Course	VPE	Multi-Purpose Easement
AC	Acce	MTR	Water
ADJ	Adjacent	MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
BFS	Begin Full Superlevation	N	Northing Coordinate
BLDG	Building	NO	Number
BLM	Bureau of Land Management	NTS	Not to Scale
BM	Benchmark	OC	On Center
BMC	Begin Normal Crown	PC	Point of Curvature
BDC	Back of Curb	PCC	Point of Compound Curvature
BOW	Back of Walk	PI	Point of Intersection
BVCE	Beginning Vertical Curve Elevation	PIP	Plastic Irrigation Pipe
BVCS	Beginning Vertical Curve Station	PL	Property Line
CBC	Concrete Box Culvert	PLS	Professional Licensed Surveyor
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation	PRC	Point of Reverse Curvature
CDS	Cul-de-sac	PRELIM	Preliminary
CGS	Curb, Gutter & Sidewalk	PT	Point of Tangency
CL	Center Line CR Class	PVC	Point of Vertical Intersection
CMP	Corrugated Metal Pipe	PVI	Point of Vertical Intersection
CoSJ	City of Grand Junction	R	Radius
CY	Cubic Yard	RC	Reverse Crown
E	Existing Coordinate	RCC	River City Consultants, Inc.
EA	End Full Superlevation	RCP	Reinforced Concrete Pipe
EPS	End Full Superlevation	REC	Recallion
EGTC	Electric, Gas, Telephone, Cable	REQ'D	Required
ELEV	Elevation	RM	Rim Elevation
ELEC	Electric	ROW	Right of Way
ELEV	Elevation	SAN	Sanitary Sewer
ENC	End Normal Crown	SDMH	Storm Drain Manhole
EQAR	Edge of Asphalt	SF	Square Feet
EOP	Edge of Pavement	SH	State Highway
EN	Easement	SHLR	Shoulder
ESMT	End of Vertical Curve Elevation	SSWH	Sanitary Sewer Manhole
EVCS	End of Vertical Curve Station	STA	Station
EX	Existing	STR	Structure
FDC	Fire Department Connection	STRM	Storm Drain
FES	Flared End Section	SVC	Service
FFE	Finished Floor Elevation	SW	Sidewalk
FG	Finished Grade	SY	Square Yard
FH	Fire Hydrant	TAN	Tangent
FL	Flow Line	TBC	Top Back Curb
GB	Grade Break	YCE	Temporary Construction Easement
GCE	General Common Element	YFC	Top Face Curb
GV	Gate Valve	YOC	Top of Curb
HDPPE	High Density Polyethylene	TOP	Top of Pipe
HOA	Home Owners Association	TW	Top of Wall
HP	High Point	TYP	Typical
INC	Incorporated	UNO	Unless Noted Otherwise
INV	Invert	VC&G	Vertical Curb & Gutter
IRR	Irrigation	VC&S	Vertical Curb, Gutter, & Sidewalk
K	Design Coefficient	VC	Vertical Curve
L	Length	VPC	Vertical Point of Curvature
LC	Level Crown	VPI	Vertical Point of Intersection
LF	Linear Foot	VPT	Vertical Point of Tangency
LP	Low Point	WM	Water Meter
LS	Lump Sum	WSEL	Water Surface Elevation
LVC	Length of Vertical Curve	WQCV	Water Quality Capture Volume
MAX	Maximum	WTR	Water
MC&S	Mountable Curb & Gutter	Δ	Central Angle (Delta)
MCSS	Mountable Curb, Gutter, & Sidewalk		
MCSM	Meza County Survey Marker		
MDS	Maximum Design Speed		
ME	Match Existing		
MH	Manhole		
MIN	Minimum		

**BASIS OF BEARINGS**

The bearings hereon are based on grid north of the Dolte County Local Coordinate System (Zone "DCA").

**MCLCS ZONE "DCA"**

TRANSVERSE MERCATOR PROJECTION  
 Point of Origin (SVOI) and Central Meridian:  
 Latitude: 38°47'46.87089"N  
 Longitude: 107°44'12.48187"W  
 Northing: 500,000FT  
 Easting: 500,000FT  
 Scale Factor: 1.000244447  
 Project/Scale Factor Height: 5243FT (NAVD88)

**Project Benchmark**  
 16D

**SCALE (FEET)**  
 HORIZONTAL: 1" = 40'  
 VERTICAL: 1" = 4'

**DATUM SOURCE: DQCS Zone "DCA" (NAVD 88)**

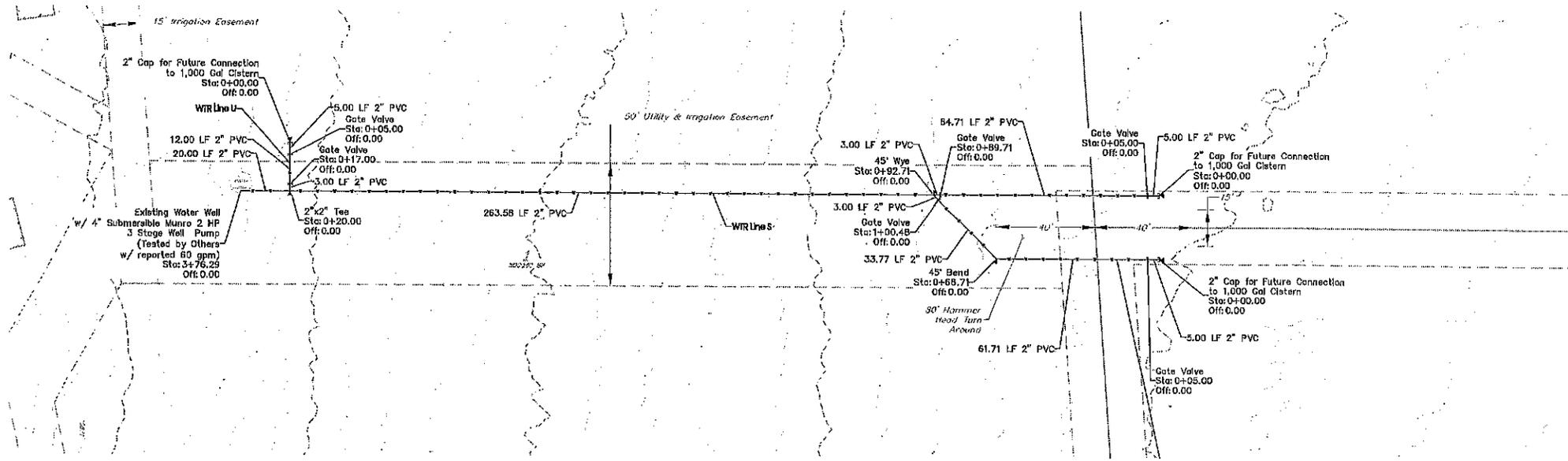
PROJECT PHASE: Issued for Construction		DATE ISSUED: 2024, July 29	
NO.	DATE	REVISION	BY

**RIVER CITY CONSULTANTS, INC.**  
 215 PEOB Avenue, Lakota, CO 81001  
 Phone: 970.241.8722  
 Fax: 970.241.8841

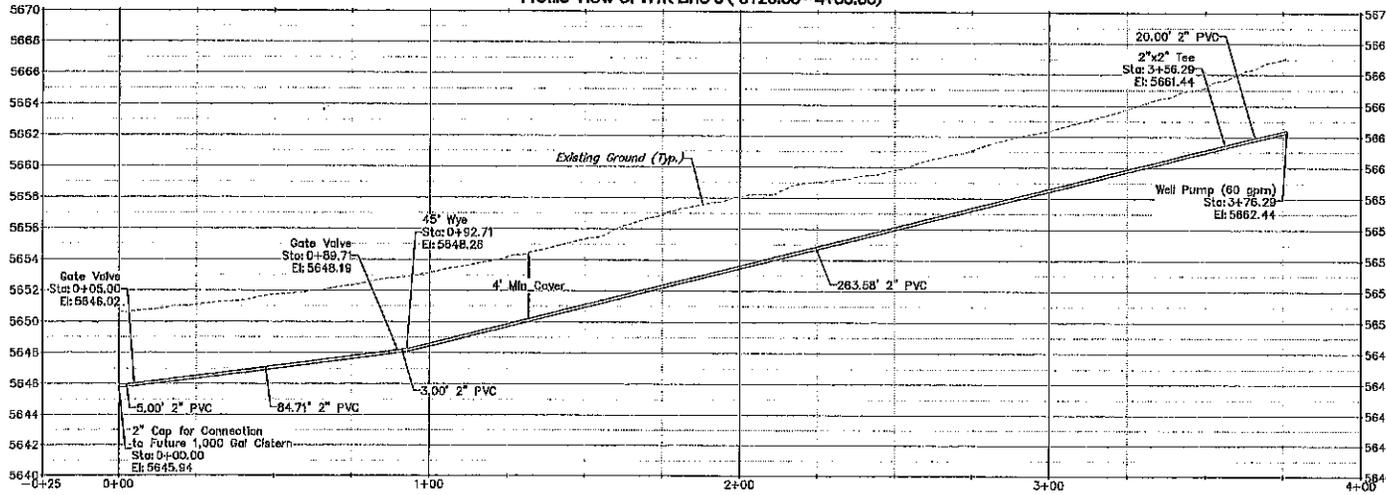
**DRAWN BY: cjr**  
**CHECKED BY: lga**  
**PROJECT: 2155-001**  
**ORIGINAL SHEET SIZE: 22 x 34**

**HIGH WIRE HOPS**  
 841 Highway 133  
 General Notes & Abbreviations

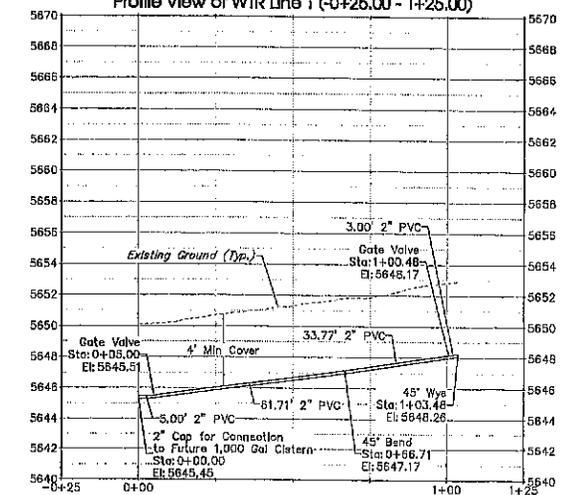




Profile View of WTR Line S (-0+25.00 - 4+00.00)



Profile View of WTR Line T (-0+25.00 - 1+25.00)



**UNCC**  
 1000 University Blvd  
 Raleigh, NC 27607  
 919.977.3000  
 www.uncc.edu

**PROJECT BENCHMARK**  
 TBD

NORTHING: --  
 EASTING: --  
 ELEVATION: --  
 DATUM SOURCE: DOLCS Zone "DCA" (NAVD 88)

**SCALE**  
 (Feet)  
 0 20 40

HORIZONTAL

VERTICAL: 1" = 4'

CONTOUR INTERVAL: 1 FT

PROJECT PHASE: Issued for Construction      DATE ISSUED: 2024 July 29

NO.	DATE	REVISION	BY



**RIVER CITY CONSULTANTS**  
 425 Pine Avenue, Suite 200  
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514      919.977.3000  
 www.rivercitync.com      Fax: 919.241.8411

DRAWN BY: cjt      PROJECT: 2165-001  
 CHECKED BY: lbg

ORIGINAL SHEET SIZE: 22 x 34

**HIGH WIRE HOPS**  
 841 Highway 133  
 Water Line Plan & Profile  
 Water Line S & T

C4



**DECLARATION OF  
COVENANTS, CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS  
FOR  
OLD HOPS FARM SUBDIVISION**

THIS DECLARATION OF COVENANTS, CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS FOR OLD HOPS FARM SUBDIVISION is made the 7 day of OCTOBER, 2024, by West Elk Land & Hops, LLC, a Colorado limited liability company, Declarant.

**RECITALS**

A. Declarant is the owner of the real property in Delta County, Colorado, platted as Old Hops Farm Minor Subdivision and legally described as:

Lots 1, 2 and 3, Old Hops Farm Minor Subdivision,  
within the SW1/4 of Section 31, T.13S., R.91W., 6<sup>th</sup> P.M.  
Town of Paonia, Delta County, Colorado

B. Declarant desires to impose a general plan for the improvement, development and maintenance of the above-described Property, and to adopt and establish covenants, conditions and restrictions upon the Property for the purpose of enhancing, maintaining and protecting the value and desirability of the Property.

C. Declarant deems it desirable to establish easements for the use of the Owners of Lots within the Property, and to establish a Colorado nonprofit corporation, Old Hops Farm Homeowners Association, to which such easements shall be conveyed.

THEREFORE, Declarant covenants, agrees and declares that the Property shall be held, sold, conveyed, encumbered, leased, used, occupied and improved subject to the following limitations, restrictions, easements, covenants, conditions, reservations, liens and charges described in this Declaration, all of which are declared and agreed to be in furtherance of a general plan for the improvement and development of the Property. All of the limitations, restrictions, easements, covenants, conditions, liens and charges shall run with the land, shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of all parties having or acquiring any right, title or interest in the Property or any part of it and the successors in interest of such parties, and are imposed upon the Property and every part of it as equitable servitudes that may be enforced by Declarant, its successors and assigns, each Owner, their successors and assigns, or by the Association, its successors and assigns.

**ARTICLE 1  
DEFINITIONS**

Section 1.01. "Articles of Incorporation" means and refers to the Articles of Incorporation of the Association, as they may be amended from time to time.

Section 1.02. "Assessment" means and refers to any assessment levied against one or more Owner(s) or Lot(s) as permitted by this Declaration or applicable law, including without limitation any of the following:

- (a) “Regular Assessment” means and refers to a charge against each Lot representing that portion of the Common Expenses attributable to such Lot, including all fees, charges, late charges, attorney fees, fines and interest arising from failure to pay when due the principal amount of such assessment.
- (b) “Special Assessment” means and refers to a charge against any Lot for certain costs incurred by the Association for materials or services furnished to the Owner or their Lot at the request of or on behalf of such Owner, or as a result of the negligence, recklessness or willful misconduct of any Owner or their employees, guests or invitees, or for excessive use or special use of the services or facilities, if any, provided by the Association, or for any other purpose for which this Declaration or applicable law specifies or permits the imposition of a Special Assessment.
- (c) “Capital Assessment” means and refers to a charge against any Lot representing a portion of the Association’s cost for the purchase, installation, construction, or expected or unexpected repair or replacement, of any capital improvement (including the necessary fixtures and personal property related to it) that is a Common Expense of the Association, plus reserves for repair or replacement of existing capital items, and acquisition, construction and installation of new capital improvements.

Section 1.03. “Association” means and refers to Old Hops Farm Homeowners Association, a nonprofit corporation incorporated under Colorado law.

Section 1.04. “Association Water” means and refers to any and all well rights, water shares, and other water rights owned or controlled by the Association appurtenant to, associated with, or used in connection with all or any part of the Property, specifically including but not limited to: (a) 1.96 shares of North Fork Farmer’s Ditch Association water; (b) 0.5 c.f.s. of water decreed to the Neighborhood Ditch in Case No. 07CW142, adjudicated on March 18, 2008; and (c) 0.14 c.f.s. decreed to the Old Hops Well in Case No. 2023CW3028 and currently permitted under Permit No. 89322-F.

Section 1.05. “Board” or “Board of Directors” means and refers to the Board of Directors of the Association.

Section 1.06. “Bylaws” means and refers to the Bylaws of the Association as they may be amended from time to time.

Section 1.07. “Common Elements” means and refers to any and all improvements, access roads, Water Facilities, equipment, and fixtures owned, leased or controlled by the Association for the common use and enjoyment of the Members.

Section 1.08. “Common Expenses” means, refers to, and includes expenditures made, and liabilities incurred, by or on behalf of the Association.

Section 1.09. “County” means and refers to Delta County, Colorado.

Section 1.10. “Declarant” means and refers to West Elk Land & Hops, LLC, a Colorado limited liability company, and its successors and assigns.

Section 1.11. “Lot” means and refers to each numbered lot of the Property described on the Plat, as recorded and amended. Boundaries of a Lot shall be as shown on the Plat.

Section 1.12. “Member” means and refers to every person or entity that holds a membership in the Association.

Section 1.13. “Owner” means and refers to any person or entity holding a fee simple ownership interest in any Lot, including contract purchasers and lessees with enforceable options to purchase, but excluding mortgagees (unless and until a mortgagee acquires record fee ownership) and those having such interest merely as security for the performance of an obligation.

Section 1.14. “Plat” means and refers to the plat of the Property by the name Old Hops Farm Minor Subdivision recorded with the County Clerk and Recorder, as it may be supplemented and amended from time to time.

Section 1.15. “Property” means and refers to that certain real property in the County described in Recital paragraph A, as further shown and described on the Plat, plus the Common Elements, all of which is subject to this Declaration or any amendment or supplement to this Declaration.

Section 1.16. “Roadway Easement” means and refers to the access easement for roadway purposes reserved over the Property and depicted on the Plat as “60’ Access Easement” and “30’ Access Easement,” extending from the northwest corner of the Property generally south and then east to the intersection of Lots 1, 2 and 3.

Section 1.17. “Subdivision” means and refers to all of the Property and the improvements on it subject to this Declaration or any amendment to this Declaration.

Section 1.18. “Town” means and refers to the Town of Paonia, Colorado.

Section 1.19. “Water Facilities” means and refers to all improvements, equipment, facilities, and other personal property owned, operated, or maintained by the Association for the purpose of delivering domestic water or irrigation water to the Lots, and shall include, but not be limited to, all wells, pumps, pipes, pipelines, connectors, controls, siphons, filters, valves, and related parts and materials located in, under, or upon easements within the Subdivision, or elsewhere outside of the Subdivision. Water Facilities shall not include the “stub out” or “lateral” pipelines which extend beyond the boundary lines of the easements within the Subdivision and into a Lot, or to the risers serving an individual Lot, regardless of where located.

## **ARTICLE 2**

### **THE ASSOCIATION**

Section 2.01. Membership. Every Owner of one or more Lots shall be entitled and required to be a Member of the Association, subject to the voting rights provisions of this Article 2. No person or entity other than an Owner of one or more Lots may be a Member. By accepting a deed to a Lot or other conveyance the acceptance of which would render the holder an Owner, membership in the Association shall be appurtenant to and inseparable from a Lot. Membership in the Association may not be transferred except in connection with the transfer of ownership of a Lot and shall be automatically transferred by conveyance of a Lot without additional action or documentation. No Owner shall be entitled to sever their

ownership interest in a Lot from membership in the Association, provided, that this shall not be construed as precluding an Owner from creating or severing a co-tenancy, joint tenancy, or any other form of co-ownership with any other person or persons.

Section 2.02. Allocation of Votes. Each Lot shall be allocated one vote in the Association. If only one of the multiple Owners of a Lot is present at a meeting of the Association, such Owner is entitled to cast the vote allocated to that Lot. If more than one of the multiple Owners is present, the vote allocated to that Lot may be cast only in accordance with the agreement of such Owners. There is agreement if any one of the multiple Owners casts the vote allocated to that Lot without protest being made promptly to the person presiding over the meeting by any of the other Owners of the Lot. If the Owners of the Lot are unable to agree, their vote will not be counted.

Section 2.03. Directors and Officers of the Association. The affairs of the Association shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of three directors, with one director representing each Lot, as more fully provided in the Bylaws. The Officers of the Association are specified in the Bylaws. Notwithstanding anything in this Declaration or the Bylaws that could be construed to the contrary, so long as Declarant or any affiliate of Declarant owns any Lot in the Subdivision, Declarant shall have the authority to appoint the Board, which may consist of a single director. The power of Declarant to "appoint," as provided in this Section 2.03, shall include without limitation the power to: initially constitute the membership of the Board, appoint members to the Board upon the occurrence of any vacancy, and for whatever reason to remove any member of the Board, with or without cause, at any time, and to appoint a successor; and each such appointment may be made for such term(s) of office, subject to the power of removal stated in this Section 2.03, as may be set from time to time in the discretion of Declarant. Declarant may voluntarily surrender the right to appoint and remove members of the Board at any time; but in that event Declarant may require that specified actions of the Board be approved by Declarant before they become effective.

Section 2.04. Duties and Obligations. The Association shall perform all duties and obligations specified in this Declaration, the Articles of Incorporation, and the Bylaws, including but not limited to maintenance and upkeep of the Common Elements so that they remain in good repair at all times.

Section 2.05. Authority. The Association shall have all rights, powers and authority specified or permitted by this Declaration, the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, and applicable law, to the extent permitted by law. The Association shall have the authority to adopt such rules and regulations as it deems necessary or convenient for the governance of the Property.

Section 2.06. Annual Budget. The Board of Directors shall cause an operating budget for the Association to be prepared no less frequently than annually, a copy of which shall be provided to the Owners before the annual meeting of the Owners. Unless at the meeting Owners representing a majority of the voting rights reject the budget, the budget is ratified, whether or not a quorum is present. If the proposed budget is rejected, the budget last ratified by the Owners must be continued until such time as the Owners ratify a subsequent budget proposed by the Board.

Section 2.07. Insurance. The Association may obtain property insurance insuring against damage to the Common Elements for broad form covered causes of loss in an amount not less than the full insurable replacement cost of the insured property less applicable deductibles at the time the insurance is purchased and at each renewal date, exclusive of items normally excluded from such policies. The Association may also obtain commercial general liability insurance against claims and liabilities arising in connection with the ownership, existence, use or management of the Common Elements, in an

amount deemed sufficient in the judgment of the Board of Directors, insuring the Board, the Association, any management agent, and their respective employees, agents, and all persons acting as agents. The Association, as attorney-in-fact, shall have authority to deal with insured items in the event casualty to them is an insured loss to the Association under its master insurance policy.

Section 2.08. Suspension of Rights. The Board of Directors may suspend a Member's voting rights and/or any benefits of membership in the Association for any period during which any Assessment against such Member's Lot remains unpaid and delinquent, and/or while a Member is in violation of this Declaration or any rules or regulations adopted by the Association.

### **ARTICLE 3 COMMON ELEMENTS**

Section 3.01. General. Declarant and its successors and assigns shall install all Common Elements, after which the Association shall control and maintain all Common Elements and may adopt uniform rules and regulations pertaining to the use and enjoyment of the Common Elements. The Association may borrow money and encumber (by mortgage, deed of trust or otherwise) the Common Elements or any part of them for the purpose of improving the Common Elements. The Association may close or limit the use of the Common Elements while maintaining, repairing or making replacements in the Common Elements.

Section 3.02. Waiver of Use. No Member may exempt themselves from personal liability for Assessments duly levied by the Association, or release the Lot owned by such Member from the liens and charges created by this Declaration, by waiver of the use and enjoyment of the Common Elements or by abandonment of their Lot.

Section 3.03. No Partition. All Owners, by their acceptance of their respective deeds or other instruments causing them to become Owners, covenant and agree that the Common Elements shall remain undivided, and no Owner shall bring any action for partition (which right is expressly waived), it being agreed that this restriction is necessary to preserve the rights of Owners with respect to the operation and management of the Property.

### **ARTICLE 4 COVENANT FOR ASSESSMENTS**

Section 4.01. Creation of the Lien and Personal Obligation of Assessments.

- (a) Each Owner of a Lot by acceptance of a deed or other conveyance for that Lot, whether or not it shall be so expressed in that instrument, is deemed to covenant and agree to pay to the Association: (i) all Assessments and charges levied against that Lot; and (ii) all fees, charges, late charges, attorney fees, fines, collection costs, interest and other sums charged pursuant to this Declaration or by any applicable law. The Association shall have the right to impose reasonable charges for late payment of Assessments, recover reasonable attorney fees and other legal costs for collection of Assessments and other actions to enforce the powers of the Association, regardless of whether or not suit was initiated, and, after notice and an opportunity to be heard, levy reasonable fines for violations of this Declaration, the Bylaws, or the rules and regulations of the Association.

- (b) Any charge set forth in this Section 4.01, from the time such charge becomes due, shall be a charge on and covenant running with the land, and shall be a continuing lien on the Lot against which each such item is assessed. If an Assessment is payable in installments, each installment is a lien from the time it becomes due, including the due date set by any valid Association acceleration of installment obligations. A valid acceleration of installment Assessment obligations may be made by the Board at any time any Assessment or Assessment installment is at least thirty days overdue. Each such charge, together with interest, costs, and reasonable attorney fees, shall also be the joint and several personal obligation of each person and entity who was the Owner of the Lot at the time when the item became due, provided, that this personal obligation shall not pass to an Owner's successors-in-interest unless expressly assumed by them.
- (c) The Association's lien on a Lot for Assessments shall be superior to any homestead exemption now or later provided by the laws of the State of Colorado or any exemption now or later provided by the laws of the United States, to the maximum extent permitted by law. The acceptance of a deed or other conveyance to a Lot shall constitute a waiver of the homestead and any other such exemption as against such Assessment lien.

Section 4.02. Purpose of Assessments. The Assessments levied by the Association shall be used exclusively for: Common Expenses; to promote the health, safety or welfare of the residents of the Subdivision; for the benefit of the Common Elements; or for any other purpose of the Association, as those purposes (as amended from time to time) are specified in this Declaration, the Bylaws, or the Articles of Incorporation; or as otherwise permitted by applicable law.

Section 4.03. Initial Administrative Contribution. The Board shall have the authority to charge each Owner that purchases a Lot (whether from Declarant or any subsequent Owner) a one-time, non-refundable payment to the Association in an amount determined by the Board that shall be used by the Association to cover administrative costs related to the change in ownership and other Common Expenses. This payment shall be collected and transferred to the Association at the time of closing of each sale of a Lot, and shall not relieve an Owner from making regular payments of Assessments when due.

Section 4.04. Date of Commencement of Assessments; Due Dates. The Board shall fix the amount of the Regular Assessments in the budget to be prepared in accordance with Section 2.06. The due date(s) shall be established by the Board of Directors. Special Assessments and Capital Assessments may be made by the Board at any time, except as limited by this Declaration.

Section 4.05. Expense Allocation. Except as otherwise stated in Section 4.06, 8.02 or 8.05, or Article 7, or as otherwise provided by applicable law, each Lot shall be allocated one-third of the Common Expenses of the Association.

Section 4.06. Owner's Negligence. In the event that the need for maintenance, repair, replacement, reconstruction or reconfiguration of any Common Element, or any other Common Expense, is caused by the willful or negligent act or omission of any Owner, or by the willful or negligent act or omission of any family or household member, guest or invitee of such Owner, such expense and all related fees, costs and expenses of or to the Association shall be the personal obligation of such Owner and may be made part of any Assessment against such Owner and that Owner's Lot(s).

**ARTICLE 5**  
**NONPAYMENT OF ASSESSMENTS**

Section 5.01. Delinquency. Any Assessment provided in this Declaration that is not paid when due is delinquent. If any such Assessment is not paid within thirty days after the due date without additional notice or demand, the Assessment shall bear interest from the due date at a rate not to exceed the maximum rate of interest permitted by law, as determined by the Board. The Association may, at its option, exercise any right or remedy available to the Association under applicable law, including without limitation bringing an action at law against the Owner(s) personally obligated to pay the same or foreclosing the lien provided in Section 4.01 against the Lot(s) for which the Assessment has not been paid; and in any case there shall be added to the amount of such Assessment interest and all costs that may be incurred by the Association in its collection of the Assessment, including reasonable attorney fees. Each Owner vests in the Association or its assigns the right and power to bring all actions or proceedings at law or in equity or to institute judicial foreclosure proceedings against such Owner or other Owners for the collection of such delinquent Assessments.

Section 5.02. Nature of Obligation and Lien. The obligation for payments of Assessments by each Owner to the Association is an independent covenant, with all amounts due from time to time payable in full without notice (except as otherwise expressly provided in this Declaration) or demand, and without setoff or deduction. The Board may prepare a written notice setting forth the amount of such unpaid indebtedness, the name of the Owner, and the description of the Lot. Such a notice shall be signed by one member of the Board and may be recorded in the real property records of the County. The recording of this Declaration constitutes record notice and perfection of the lien. No further recording of any claim of lien or assessment is required. The lien for each unpaid Assessment attaches to each Lot at the beginning of each Assessment period and shall continue to be a lien against such Lot until paid. The costs and expenses for filing any notice of lien shall be added to the Assessment for the Lot against which it is filed and collected as part and parcel thereof. Each Assessment, together with interest, late charges, costs and reasonable attorney fees, shall also be the personal obligation of each person who was the Owner of such Lot at the time when the Assessment became due.

Section 5.03. Foreclosure Sale. Any foreclosure sale related to an Assessment lien shall be conducted in accordance with those provisions of the laws and rules of the courts of the State of Colorado applicable to the foreclosure of mortgages, or in any other manner then permitted or provided by applicable law.

Section 5.04. Cumulative Remedies. The Assessment lien and the rights of foreclosure and sale under it shall be in addition to, and not in substitution of, all other rights and remedies that the Association and its assigns may have under this Declaration and then applicable law, including without limitation a suit to recover a money judgment for unpaid Assessments, as provided above, all of which rights and remedies shall be cumulative.

**ARTICLE 6**  
**IMPROVEMENT AND USE GUIDELINES**

Section 6.01. Irrigation Systems. All irrigation systems installed on individual Lots by Owners shall be approved by the Board prior to installation.

Section 6.02. Grading and Drainage. Nothing shall be done or permitted on any Lot that would block, divert or channelize the natural flow of drainage water across any Lot from adjacent Lots, as established by the original grading of the Property, without specific approval from the Board.

Section 6.03. Utilities. Underground electricity and water shall be available to all Lots. The utility companies furnishing these services shall have the easements shown on the Plat. No permanent structure shall be erected on any such easement. Neither Declarant nor the utility company or any entity using these easements shall be held liable for any damage done by any of them or their assigns, agents or employees to trees, landscaping, or improvements of an Owner located on any land subject to an easement.

Section 6.04. Fences. All fences shall be maintained by the Owner of the Lot on which it is located. If a fence separates two Lots, both Owners on either side of the fence shall share equally in the cost of maintenance, repair and replacement of the fence, unless such maintenance, repair or replacement is caused or necessitated solely by one of the Owners, or a family member, guest, licensee or invitee of an Owner, in which case that Owner shall be solely responsible for the cost of such maintenance, repair or replacement.

Section 6.05. Nuisance and Hazardous Activities. No obnoxious or offensive activity shall be conducted on any Lot, nor shall any activity be permitted that becomes an annoyance or nuisance within the Subdivision. No light shall be permitted from any Lot that is unreasonably bright or causes unreasonable glare when viewed from the street or an adjacent Lot or property. No sound shall be emitted from any Lot that is unreasonably loud or annoying and no odor shall be permitted from any Lot that is noxious or unreasonably offensive to others, as determined by the Board in its reasonable discretion. No activities shall be conducted on the Property or within the improvements constructed on or within the Property that are or might be unreasonably hazardous to any person or property.

Section 6.06. No Re-subdivision of Lots. The re-subdivision of any Lot within the Subdivision is prohibited, except by Declarant.

## **ARTICLE 7**

### **ROADWAY EASEMENT**

Section 7.01. Access. Owners and their guests, tenants and invitees may access their Lots via the Roadway Easement.

Section 7.02. Users. The Roadway Easement is for the use and enjoyment of the Owners and their guests, tenants and invitees, but is also for the benefit and use of delivery drivers, law enforcement, fire protection agencies, ambulance services, utility companies, and all other similar emergency, utility and delivery services providing aid or services to the Property, the Owners, and lands south of the Property.

Section 7.03. Restrictions. The Roadway Easement may be used only for ingress and egress to the Lots accessed by the Roadway Easement. No fencing shall block access across the Roadway Easement. Parking and the storage of vehicles, equipment, materials, or anything else on the Roadway Easement is prohibited, except temporarily for loading or unloading purposes. If the Roadway Easement is blocked by a vehicle or other obstruction the Association may have the vehicle towed or the obstruction removed and assess the Owner who caused or permitted such vehicle or obstruction to remain on the Roadway Easement for those costs.

Section 7.04. Maintenance and Repair. Each Owner shall be responsible for the surface cleaning, snow removal, upkeep, repair, replacement, and any other maintenance of or alteration to the surface of the Roadway Easement, in proportion to their use of the Roadway Easement, as follows:

- (a) For the segment of the Roadway Easement extending from the entrance from Highway 133 to the intersection with the road that heads generally south to Lot 2, costs shall be allocated equally to all of the Owners;
- (b) For the segment of the Roadway Easement extending from the intersection described in paragraph 7.04(a) generally south to the southwest corner of Lot 1, costs shall be allocated equally to the Owners of Lots 2 and 3; and
- (c) For the segment of the Roadway Easement extending from the southwest corner of Lot 1 generally east to the northwest corner of Lot 3, costs shall be allocated entirely to Lot 3; provided, however, that if Lot 2 uses any portion of that segment once the location of the driveway for Lot 2 has been determined, then the Owner of Lot 2 shall be allocated an equal portion of the costs for that shared segment with the Owner of Lot 3.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the cost of maintenance, repair or replacement of the surface of the Roadway Easement is caused or necessitated solely by one of the Owners, or a family member, guest, licensee or invitee of an Owner, that Owner shall be solely responsible for the cost of such maintenance, repair or replacement.

## **ARTICLE 8 ASSOCIATION WATER**

Section 8.01. Management of Association Water. To the extent permitted by law, the Association shall have the exclusive authority to deliver, manage and control the use of Association Water, and shall own, operate, repair and maintain the Water Facilities and all drainage facilities and any retention and detention areas. The Association's authority shall include (without limitation) the promulgation of rules, regulations, policies and procedures, not inconsistent with this Declaration, concerning the application and use of Association Water, including conservation measures and measures to reduce peak demand.

Section 8.02. Allocation and Delivery. The allocation and delivery of Association Water to the Lots shall be consistent with the following: Association Water will be divided in half at a splitter box installed by the Association within the irrigation easement behind the northeast corner of the one-story shop building on Lot 1 ("Lot 1 Splitter Box"). The Lot 1 Splitter Box will deliver 50% of the Association Water to Lot 1 and the remaining 50% of the Association Water to Lots 2 and 3 by gravity flow through a pipeline located within an irrigation easement across Lot 1, which pipeline will terminate at Lots 2 and 3. Lots 2 and 3 will divide such water evenly, each being allocated 25% of the total of the Association Water. The Owners of Lot 2 and Lot 3 shall work cooperatively to allocate their respective amounts of the Association Water, but if the Owner of Lot 2 or Lot 3 believes, in their subjective discretion, that dividing the water cooperatively is not feasible, such Owner may submit a written request to the Association that it install an appropriately engineered device to divide the water equally between Lots 2 and 3 ("Lot 2 and 3 Division Structure"). If such a request is made, the Association shall oversee the design and installation of the Lot 2 and 3 Division Structure and shall allocate the expense of such design, construction, and

installation equally to Lots 2 and 3. The Association shall be responsible for the maintenance and replacement of the water delivery system from the point of diversion from the ditch down to the point at which each Lot receives its respective portion of the Association Water, including without limitation the Lot 1 Splitter Box and, if installed, the Lot 2 and 3 Diversion Structure. The cost of such maintenance at or above the Lot 1 Splitter Box shall be shared by each Lot in proportion to its allocation of Association Water. The cost of such maintenance for the pipeline and other structures located below the Lot 1 Splitter Box and delivering water to Lots 2 and 3 shall be shared equally by Lots 2 and 3.

Section 8.03. Violations. If an Owner violates any provision of this Declaration or any rule or regulation promulgated under it related to Association Water or the Water Facilities, the Association may restrict the delivery of Association Water to such Owner's Lot, in addition to any other rights the Association may have under this Declaration or at law. The Association also may restrict the delivery of Association Water to an Owner's Lot in the event of any emergency involving Association Water or the Water Facilities.

Section 8.04. Easements for Ingress and Egress. Each Owner grants to the Association reasonable ingress and egress over, under and across all easements shown on the Plat for the purpose of operating, repairing or maintaining the Water Facilities. No Owner shall construct, erect or maintain any improvement or structure that could interfere with the Association's ownership, operation, maintenance or repair of the Water Facilities. The Association shall have the authority to remove or alter any structure or improvement that interferes with the ownership, operation or maintenance of the Water Facilities, or which could change the direction of flow of drainage channels in the easements, the costs of such removal to be borne by the Owner of the interfering improvement or structure.

Section 8.05. Irrigation Assessments. Any billings by any person or entity associated with Association Water shall be a Common Expense, which shall be shared by each Lot in proportion to its allocation of Association Water.

Section 8.06. Hazardous Drainage. Release of contaminants or hazardous materials, as defined in CERCLA, RCRA, FIFRA, the Toxic Substances Control Act, the Clean Water Act, or any other applicable federal or state environmental law, into the Property is prohibited.

Section 8.07. Maintenance. Until transfer to the Association, Declarant and its successors and assigns shall pay all water assessments on Association Water and maintain the Water Facilities and any ditch lateral serving the Property required to be maintained by any irrigation or other authority. Upon transfer to the Association, full responsibility for the Water Facilities, ditch laterals, and Association Water shall be borne by the Association.

## **ARTICLE 9**

### **DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Section 9.01. General. Except for collection and lien foreclosure actions against Owners, specifically including but not limited to actions under Article 5, all actions, disputes or claims between any Owner, the Board, the Association, Declarant, and/or their respective agents, contractors, successors and assigns, whether in contract, tort or otherwise, shall be resolved by the procedures set forth in this Article 9.

Section 9.02. Initial Notification; Negotiation. For each claim governed by this Article 9 (a "Claim" in this Article 9), the claimant ("Claimant" in this Article 9) shall give notice to the other party

or parties against whom the claim is asserted (“Respondent” in this Article 9), setting forth: (a) the nature of the Claim; (b) the basis or reason for the Claim; (c) any other material information regarding the Claim; (d) the specific relief and/or proposed remedy sought; and (e) the intent to invoke this Article 9 (the “Notice of Claim” in this Article 9). Claimant and Respondent shall use good faith efforts to resolve the Claim through negotiations following delivery of the Notice of Claim, pending mediation pursuant to Section 9.03.

Section 9.03. Mediation. If the Claim is not resolved through negotiation under Section 9.02, it shall be mediated before a mediator jointly selected by the parties. Mediation is a process in which the parties meet with an impartial person who helps to resolve the dispute formally and confidentially. Mediators cannot impose binding decisions. The parties to the dispute must agree before any settlement is binding. The mediation shall occur within thirty days following delivery of the Notice of Claim (the “Mediation Period” in this Article 9). Mediation shall be a condition precedent to the filing of a lawsuit. In the event Claimant does not participate in selecting the mediator or appear for mediation, Claimant shall be deemed to have irrevocably waived the Claim, and Respondent shall be released from any and all liability to Claimant on account of such Claim. If mediation is successful, the resolution shall be documented in writing and signed by the parties. Thereafter, if either party violates the resolution, the other party may apply immediately to a court in the County for relief. The mediation, unless otherwise agreed, shall terminate if the entire dispute is not resolved before the expiration of the Mediation Period. In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, or if Respondent does not participate in selecting the mediator or appear for mediation, then Claimant may bring an action in a court of proper jurisdiction in the County within sixty days following the expiration of the Mediation Period. If no action is filed within the specified time, Claimant irrevocably waives the Claim and any and all right to proceed to litigation regarding the Claim. If the matter is settled through the mediator, Claimant and Respondent shall share equally in the mediation costs and pay their own attorney fees, if any. If the matter is not settled by mediation and proceeds to litigation, the losing party in the litigation shall pay the prevailing party’s portion of the mediation costs and its attorney fees, if any.

Section 9.04. Limitation of Remedies. Every party subject to this Declaration disclaims and waives any claims for the following remedies and damages for any matters related to any Claim, whether a Claim is made on the basis of contract, tort or any other theory or basis at law or in equity: (a) punitive or exemplary damages; (b) claims for emotional distress or pain and suffering; and (c) claims for incidental and/or consequential damages (except as otherwise provided in this Declaration).

Section 9.05. Attorney Fees and Jury Waiver. In the event of any dispute, the substantially prevailing party shall be awarded its reasonable costs and attorney fees, including post-judgment collection costs, in addition to actual damages. All parties subject to this Declaration waive the right to a jury in any action or proceeding to the maximum extent permitted by law.

## **ARTICLE 10**

### **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Section 10.01. Easements. Easements for the installation and maintenance of utilities, Water Facilities, access, and Association maintenance, are reserved as shown on the Plat. Within these easements no improvement, structure, planting or other material shall be placed or permitted to remain that may damage or interfere with the installation and maintenance of such utilities or facilities, as further provided elsewhere in this Declaration. The easements depicted on the Plat as “22’ Irrigation Easement” and the “30’ Emergency Access and Utilities Easement” may also be used by the Owner of Lot 1 and their

Section 10.08. Notice. Any notice or demand required or permitted by this Declaration shall be in writing and shall be: (a) hand-delivered or sent by United States first class mail, postage prepaid, to the address of the Owner of the Lot to receive notice at the address provided by the Owner for that purpose to the secretary of the Association; or (b) emailed to an email address provided by the Owner for that purpose to the secretary of the Association. If the Owner fails to provide a contact address to the secretary, notice shall be sent to the address of the Owner specified in the deed recorded in the real property records of the County by which that Owner took title, and to the street address of that Lot, if any.

Section 10.09. Severability. Invalidation of any of the covenants, restrictions or other provisions contained in this Declaration shall in no way affect or limit any other provisions, which shall remain in full force and effect. To the extent feasible, any non-complying provision and the remainder of this Declaration shall be reformed to comply with applicable law and to preserve the intent of this Declaration, including the invalidated provision.

Section 10.10. Waiver. The failure of the Association or any Owner to enforce any right under this Declaration upon any occasion shall not be deemed a waiver of such right on any subsequent occasion(s). The waiver, either express or implied, by the Association or any Owner of any of the rights, terms or conditions in this Declaration shall not be deemed as or constitute a waiver of any other rights, terms or conditions in this Declaration. Any waiver, in order to be valid and effective, must be in writing.

Section 10.11. Titles and Headings; Construction. The article and section titles and headings used in this Declaration are for identification purposes only and shall not be utilized to interpret or construe the provisions of this Declaration, which shall remain in full force and effect. Whenever required by the context of this Declaration, the singular shall include the plural, and vice versa; and the masculine gender shall include the feminine and neuter genders, and vice versa.

Section 10.12. Binding Effect. The provisions of this Declaration shall be binding upon and for the benefit of Declarant, the Association, and each Owner, and each of their heirs, personal representatives, successors in interest, and assigns.

Section 10.13. No Rights Given to the Public. Nothing contained in this Declaration shall be deemed to be a gift or dedication of any portion of the Property to the general public or for any public use or purpose.

Section 10.14. Applicability of Governmental Regulations. The covenants, conditions and restrictions contained in this Declaration are separate and distinct from any zoning, building or other law, ordinance, rule or regulation of the Town or of any governmental authority having jurisdiction over the Property that now or in the future may contain different requirements from or in addition to those contained in this Declaration or that may prohibit uses permitted in it or permit uses prohibited in it.

*[signature page follows]*

WEST ELK LAND & HOPS, LLC

*DRW*

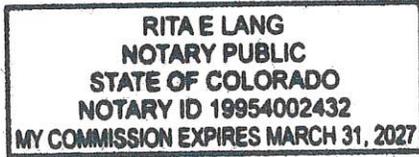
David R. Warren, Managing Member

STATE OF COLORADO )  
 ) ss.  
COUNTY OF DELTA )

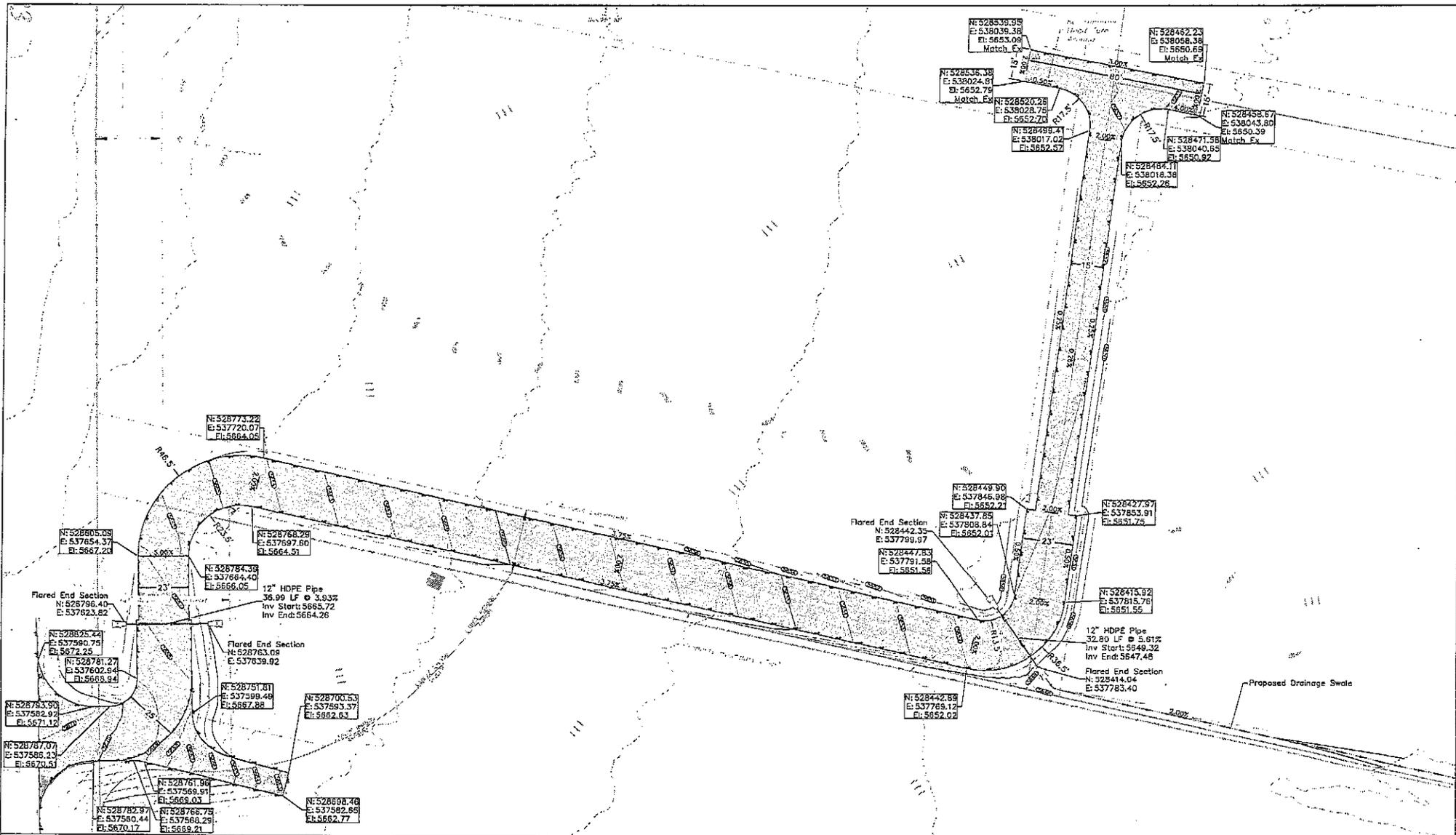
Subscribed and sworn to before me the 7 day of OCTOBER, 2024, by David R. Warren, Managing Member of West Elk Land & Hops, LLC.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

My commission expires: March 31, 2027



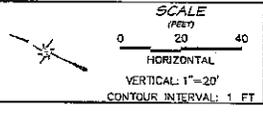
*Rita E. Lang*  
Notary Public



UNCC  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
CHARTERED 1777

Project Benchmark

NORTHING:  
EASTING:  
ELEVATION:  
DATUM SOURCE:



PROJECT PHASE: Preliminary/Design		DATE ISSUED: 30.Jul.2024	
NO.	DATE	REVISION	BY

PRELIMINARY

ATM RIVER CITY  
215 HERRING AVENUE, SUITE 201  
RIVER CITY, GA 30271  
Phone: 404.241.4722  
Fax: 404.241.4721

DRAWN BY: [Name]  
CHECKED BY: [Name]  
ORIGINAL SHEET SIZE: 22x34

**High Wire Hops**

841 Highway 133

Grading & Drainage Plan

C1

July 2024 Departmental Scorecard

Town Administrator Wynn goes over the highlights of the Departmental Scorecard.

**Actions & Presentations**

Public comments must be related to the agenda item, 3-minute time limit.

Agenda Item #1: Fence at 209 Main Avenue and Public Parking Lot

Staff provides an update on the request and Board direction.

Agenda Item #2: Appreciations Re-evaluation & Proposals - Decision on whether or not to continue the Appreciations portion of Announcements.

Trustee Swartz gives background of the 'Appreciations' and her impressions of the trial run.

Public Comment:

M. Talbot: comments in favor

A. Thliveris: comments in favor

Trustee Hunter makes a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Valentine, to approve the continuation of 'Appreciations' in the announcements at regular meetings.

The motion carries unanimously.

Agenda Item #3: Resolution 2024-11 9.0 Credit Card/Purchasing Card Policy

Town Administrator Wynn provides background on the policy and goes through it with the Board of Trustees.

Public Comment:

A. Thliveris: comments on policy

Discussion: employee gift amounts, emergency contingency plan, receipts and food purchases.

Trustee Stelter makes a motion, seconded by Trustee Hunter, to approve Resolution 2024-11 9.0 Credit Card/ Purchasing Card policy.

The motion carries unanimously.

Agenda Item #4: Consideration of Directing the Planning Commission to Evaluate Existing Parking Requirements in Chapter 16 of the Paonia Municipal Code, and To Make Recommendations for Editing the Code.

Trustee Swartz and Planning Commission Vice-Chair Lyn Howe give background on the issue and why it was brought forward to the Board of Trustee.

Public Comment:

S. Patterson: comments on potential parking places

Trustee Swartz makes a motion, seconded by Trustee Hunter, to direct the Planning Commission in October to help streamline parking requirements for businesses and to outline the information that is needed and a proposed process to look at other parking options by the end of November.

The motion carries unanimously.

## Potential Parking Options For Business Parking (no overnight)

<u>Potential Stakeholder</u>	<u>Time Potential Use</u>	<u>approx#spaces</u>
1. High country printing –	evenings	TBD
2. ATM lot -	evenings	TBD
3. Senior center –	evenings	TBD
4. Behind Dons-bank lot –	anytime	TBD
5. In front of Dons -	anytime	TBD
6. 2 <sup>nd</sup> st along street up to karate center -	anytime	TBD
7. Main street – Diagonal	anytime	TBD
8. Town lot –	anytime	TBD
9. 2 <sup>nd</sup> st along buss barn make into marked spaces -	anytime	TBD
10. Buss barn –(who owns?) -	TBD	TBD
11. More spaces can be marked out in front of the old Lizzys	anytime	TBD
12. One side of Gravel drive along RR tracks	TBD	TBD

### Steps For Determining If Use Of These Spaces Can Be Made Possible

- a. Fact finding (for all steps keep town leadership informed)
  - i. Site visits to businesses identified that have underutilized parking space or could share space during non-business evening hours.
    1. Determine parking space potential at each site
    2. Distance to down town
    3. # of spaces that could be utilized
    4. Daytime, nighttime use
    5. Develop Stakeholder list with contact info
  - ii. Contact stakeholders
    1. Introduce idea as way to continue to support economic viability.
    2. Document stake holder needs/concerns.
    3. Prioritize stakeholders based on willingness to work with town, cost, concerns, parking space potential etc.
  - iii. legal aspects
    1. Lease and terms
    2. Contracts/Recorded lease that goes with property?
    3. Liability insurance
  - iv. Determine Financial Needs and budget
    1. Cost of lease
    2. Liability Insurance
    3. Signage
    4. Repairs when needed
    5. How or if to Assign Fees
      - a. Businesses equally shared fee
      - b. Town revitalization grants
      - c. Main Street (DOLA) – Downtown revitalization
  - v. Bike corrals vs auto parking (option to small racks in front of businesses)
    1. Can accommodate for 12-14 bikes
    2. Take up 1 to 2 parking spaces and are installed in vehicle right of way along curb
    3. Grant Potential using local tradesperson/artist?



**Present parking ordinance 16-6-10 Table 16-5**

Indoor restaurants and bars	1.0 space for every 3 seats or 1.0 space for every 200 sq. ft. of floor area, whichever is greater
Retail businesses except for furniture and appliance stores	1.0 space for every 300 sq. ft. of floor area
Medical and dental offices and clinics	1.0 space for every 200 sq. ft. of floor space

**Sec. 16-6-20. - Combinations of uses.**

- When one (1) building is planned to include a combination of different uses, the minimum *parking* required will be determined by applying the above requirements based upon the floor area for each use. The minimum number of *parking* spaces required for the building shall be the sum of the requirements for each separate use.

(Ord. No. 83-116, Art. XIII, 1983; Ord. No. 2000-02, Art. XIII, 2000; Ord. No. 2014-04, § 1, 1-13-2015)

- **Sec. 16-6-30. - *Parking* requirements for uses not listed.**

For specific uses not listed, the Planning Commission shall determine the appropriate number of *parking* spaces required based upon the type of activity, intensity, number of employees and similarity to listed uses.

**Sec. 16-6-40. - Off-site *parking*.**

For any business use, the off-street *parking* requirements may also be met as follows:

- (1) Additional off-street *parking* spaces may be provided on a site within three hundred (300) feet of the lot that generates the *parking* requirements, provided that the site is owned by the owner of the *parking* generating property;
- (2) The owner of the lot generating the need for *parking* spaces may participate in a *parking* district or joint venture requiring the payment of a fee in lieu of providing on-site *parking*. The fees collected by the district or joint venture would be then used to provide off-street *parking* and assure that the Town's requirements were met. All such *parking* districts or joint ventures shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees; or
- (3) When a business use is unable to provide the required on-site *parking* and/or loading requirements, the property owner or applicant shall be required to contribute to the *Parking* Fund a sum as set forth in [Section 16-5-50](#) below per required *parking* space.

**Sec. 16-6-50. - *Parking* Fund.**

[Suspended.]

(Ord. No. 83-116, Art. XIII, 1983; Ord. No. 99-02, 1999; Ord. No. 2003-08, 2003; Ord. No. 2014-04, § 1, 1-13-2015)

**Editor's note**— \* The provisions of this Section are suspended indefinitely.



**TOWN OF PAONIA  
 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
 October 15, 2024**

<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	Agenda Item #4: Review and discussion of the October 15, 2024, revised draft Comprehensive “Master” Plan.
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Commissioner Smith
<b>DATE:</b>	October 15, 2024
<b>BACKGROUND:</b>	<p>Comments submitted regarding the June 21, 2024, version of the Comprehensives Plan have been addressed with the insertion of proposed changes into a revised draft version of the Plan dated October 15, 2024. This version includes a new element dedicated to “Housing and Neighborhoods” created by Administrator Wynn.</p> <p>Please note that there are four maps required by state statute to be included in the Plan which still need to be finalized. Administrator Wynn has the capability to finalize these maps for our future review and inclusion in the Plan. These include:</p> <p>Figure 4: Public Places and Facilities          Figure 5: Hazard Areas          Figure 6: Existing Infrastructure          Figure 7. Existing and Proposed Transportation Infrastructure</p> <p>This Packet includes two versions of revised draft Plan – one that includes all proposed changes shown in redline and strike-out and a second version which is a “clean” version meaning that all redline, and strike-outs have been addressed. Please ignore the formatting in these versions it will be fixed before teh final is approved.</p> <p>Chair Watson and Commissioner Howe submitted two sets of proposed draft text for inclusion in the October 15<sup>th</sup> draft. Both documents are included in this Packet for review and consideration.The fifth document included in this Packet is the table of comments created by Administrator Wynn. This is being included for referencing purposes and to be used as a tool to clarify which comments/proposals were addressed in the October 15<sup>th</sup> draft Plan.</p>
<b>BUDGET:</b>	n/a
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draft Comprehensive Plan - Redline and strike-out version</li> <li>2. Draft Comprehensive Plan - “Clean” version</li> <li>3. “Zoning” Plan to comply with State Statute</li> <li>4. Healthy Natural Environment</li> <li>5. Table of comments</li> </ol>

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## TOWN OF PAONIA

OCTOBER 15, 2024 UPDATE WITH TEXT PROPOSED FOR ADOPTION IN RED AND  
STRIKE-OUT INDICATING TEXT PROPOSED FOR DELETION



PHOTO CREDIT: STEVE HUNTLEY



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Town of Paonia Mayors & Board of Trustee Members

Paige Smith (Mayor) and Mary Bachran (Mayor, Retired). John Valentine (Mayor Pro-Tempore), William Brunner (Trustee, former), Walter Czech (Trustee), Lucy Hunter (Trustee) Rick Stelter (Trustee), Kathy Swartz (Trustee), Mike Heck (Trustee) David Knutson (Mayor Pro-Tempore, former), Morgan MacInnis (Trustee, former), Thomas Markle (Trustee, former)

## Town of Paonia Planning Commission

Suzanne Watson (Chair), Paige Smith, Bill Brunner (former), Lyn Howe, Peter McCarthy, Lucy Hunter, Mary Bachran (former), David Knutson (former), Steve Klisset (former)

## Town of Paonia Staff

Stefen Wynn, Town Administrator  
Samira Vetter, Town Clerk  
Ruben Santiago, Deputy Town Clerk  
Cory Heiniger, Public Works Director  
Matt Laiminger, Police Chief

## Town of Paonia Committees

Parks Committee, and Tree Board, ~~Transportation Advisory Board~~

## Consultant Team

Calla Rose Ostrander (Phoenix Rising Resources, LLC), Marissa Mommaerts (Resilience & Regeneration LLC), Molly Wheelock and Mara Mantoiu (Studio MW), Scott Brown (Active Peace), Jess Dervin-Ackerman (JDA Consulting), Shay Coburn (Urban Rural Continuum)

## Past Plans, Studies, and Work

The 2024 Town of Paonia Comprehensive Plan draws information and inspiration from the following:

- 1996 Paonia Comprehensive Plan
- Draft Paonia Master Plans including EMB Consultants (2021) and Barbara Peterson (2012)
- 2010 Highway 133 Corridor Plan
- 2010 Growth Management Agreement for the Unincorporated Areas Surrounding the Town of Paonia
- 2010 North Fork Valley Vision 2020
- 2014 North Fork Valley Heart & Soul Project
- 2017 Town of Paonia Zoning Map
- 2022 Paonia in Motion: Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan (PRTMP)
- 2022 Town of Paonia Community Strategic Planning Session
- 2023 Town of Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan

For a full list of all documents and research please see Appendix E, Reference & Resource Documents.

**This project was supported by a generous grant from the  
Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).**

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## ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Municipalities in Colorado are authorized to prepare comprehensive plans as long-range guiding documents as ~~adopted~~ prescribed in the Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) Sections 31-23-206 through 209, which refer to the development, modification, and approval of procedures for such a plan.

The purpose of the Paonia Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) is to establish a course of action for addressing the pressures of future growth and development in the area while maintaining the Town’s rural agricultural setting. The Plan is an officially adopted advisory document that outlines the community’s vision and goals for the next ten to twenty years, and beyond. However, it is also a document that should be revisited and updated every five to seven years to ensure that it continues to meet the community’s vision and goals for the future.

The Plan is comprehensive in nature—addressing issues related to land use, growth and development, community character, economic development, infrastructure needs, and tourism, parks and open space, and other topics of importance to the community. The Plan establishes goals, and policies to help achieve the community’s vision. It also provides a blueprint for future growth within the Town of Paonia and its defined boundaries to be implemented through the Town’s zoning and subdivision regulations and other regulatory tools. Achieving the vision and goals outlined in the Plan will be implemented incrementally over time through day-to-day decision-making.

According to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), the comprehensive plan “promotes the community’s vision, goals, objectives, and policies, establishes a process for orderly growth and development, addresses both current and long-term needs, and provides for a balance between the natural and built environment.” Paonia’s last comprehensive plan was adopted in 1996.

~~In late 2022, the Town of Paonia was awarded a DOLA grant to update the 1996 Comprehensive Plan and published a request for proposal (RFP) seeking a consultant; expressing particular interest in working with qualified local community members; and requesting a relatively short, concise, accessible, and user-friendly Comprehensive Plan as the outcome. In response, this consulting team of local professionals came together with diverse, complementary skill sets ranging from public policy and technical writing to architecture and planning to community engagement and facilitation, with a shared love for the community they call home.~~

The discipline of planning has evolved significantly since Paonia’s last comprehensive plan was adopted in 1996. Rather than limiting a plan’s scope to land use and physical development, the American Planning Association emphasizes sustainability, equity, responsible regionalism, and especially community participation. **The process of creating a plan is just as important as the outcome.** The initial goals for this process, which the Town established in their call for the Paonia Comprehensive Plan, were as follows:

- Develop a shared vision and a clear, accessible plan to guide our community toward a thriving and resilient future.
- Utilize a participatory community engagement process that builds trust in local government and momentum toward addressing community needs and goals.



## PLAN ORGANIZATION

### Part I: Introduction

This part includes ~~the Town of Paonia's vision and~~ a brief background on the Town of Paonia and the ~~vision articulated for the Town.~~

**Part II: Summary of Community Engagement Events** (This discussion has been relocated to a new Part numbered II)

This part provides a summary of the three public engagement sessions held in 2023 and early 2024.

### Part III: Plan Elements

Each element contains a specific vision as well as a list of values **in the form of Goals. Under each Goal is a series of** ~~The policies that~~ create a path for the community to achieve the vision and enhance the ~~values~~ **Goals.** The policies provide guidance for day-to-day and long-term decision-making for the Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, Town staff, and community. They are not listed in any particular order.

~~The Future Land Use Plan provides guidance on where and what kind of development and land uses are preferred within the Town of Paonia and surrounding areas.~~

~~For the housing element of this Plan, see the 2023 Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan. In addition to the Parks, Recreation, & Trails element within this Plan, see the 2022 PRTMP.~~

### Appendix

The appendix provides background on **several** Plan Elements, ~~and~~ resources and research used to inform this Plan.

## PLAN TIMELINE

- RFP was released in October 2022.
- Contract was awarded in March 2023.
- Kickoff meeting was conducted with the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees and existing plans and background materials were reviewed in March 2023.
- Community engagement workshops took place in April 27 and June 10, 2023.
- Future Land Use Plan public workshop was held on March 3, 2024.
- **Planning Commission Public Hearing: Infrastructure Element held on March 13, 2024**
- **Planning Commission Public Hearing: Economic Development and Governance and Community Participation Element held on April 3, 2024**
- **Planning Commission Public Hearing: Transportation and Parks & Recreation, Trails and Urban Forest Elements held on May 1, 2024**
- ~~Three public presentations were made of the draft Plan Elements with public comment during Planning Commission meetings in on March, April, and May 2024~~
- **Contractor's presented Plan information and updates to the Seven Board of Trustees at seven meetings were participated in held from December 2022 to June 2024**
- **The Contractor's final draft Plan was submitted on June 21, 2024. public comment and revisions by the Town of Paonia, was released in June 2024.**



- Joint Board of Trustees & Planning Commission Meeting: presentation of plan and determination of process and timeline for adoption held on July 18, 2024.
- Planning Commission Meeting to discuss the final draft of comprehensive plan held on July 22, 2024.
- Planning Commission Meeting to discuss the final draft of comprehensive plan held on August 5, 2024.
- Planning Commission Meeting to discuss the final draft of comprehensive plan held on August 19, 2024.
- Joint Board of Trustees & Planning Commission Meeting: Discussion & Consideration of Comprehensive (Master) Plan Completion held on September 4, 2024
- Planning Commission Meeting to discuss proposed changes to the June 21<sup>st</sup> final draft of comprehensive plan held on October 15, 2024.
- Final public hearing was held by the Planning Commission on [insert month] 2024.
- Members of the consulting team met with the Planning Commission and Town Boards/Committees, including the Tree Board and Parks Committee, multiple times throughout the process.
- The consulting team coordinated with Urban Rural Continuum; a consulting firm hired by the Town of Paonia to conduct a Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan at roughly the same time as this Comprehensive Plan.

## LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

~~The Town of Paonia is authorized to develop a community master plan (Comprehensive Plan) in accordance with Sections 31-23-206 through 209 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.), which refer to the development, modification, and approval procedures for such a plan.~~



# PART I: INTRODUCTION



PHOTO CREDIT: MICHELLE PATTISON

## PAONIA'S COMMUNITY VISION

The community vision that informs this Plan was inspired by the work of the North Fork Heart & Soul project and was further developed with the public through the Town of Paonia Comprehensive Plan community engagement process.

### VISION

Paonia is a unique and welcoming small town with strong ethics of self-reliance and care for our families and neighbors. We honor and respect Paonia's rich history and heritage, including arts, agriculture, mining, and the original inhabitants of this land, the Ute.

We **prioritize maintaining our small-town character**, ~~balance growth and development with the values of maintaining a small-town feel and dark nighttime skies~~, economic and cultural diversity, ~~and~~ creativity, ~~and~~ existing community resources **and as a Dark Sky internationally designated Dark Skies Town, the protection of our nighttime skies. Any development or growth in our community must align with and enhance these core values focusing on strategic infill, small scale projects that complement our Town's unique identity rather than large scale expansion.** We share a deep connection to our rural landscape and natural resources.

We support opportunities to cultivate ecological regeneration and stewardship, protection of wildlands, healthy living, and a thriving place-based economy.



## ABOUT PAONIA

### PAONIA

Paonia, Colorado, is a small, statutory town **approximately 500 acres in size which is situated** ~~with an estimated population of 1,474 as of 2023. The Town sits~~ in an agricultural valley nestled between the North Fork of the Gunnison River and the West Elks range of the Rocky Mountains. Known for its peaches, cherries, vineyards, cider, ranches, small farms, breathtaking views, and access to nature and the arts, Paonia is consistently ranked as one of the best small towns in **Colorado and is home to the highest density of organic farms in the state of Colorado**. Those who call Paonia home cherish and seek to protect its small-town character, rural landscape, agricultural heritage, surrounding wildlands, and self-reliant way of life.

### HISTORY & HERITAGE

The North Fork Valley was part of the ancestral homeland of the Ute people. In 1881, the US federal government closed the North Fork Valley Ute Reservation and relocated the remaining Ute people to a reservation in Utah. Soon after, Paonia was settled by Civil War veteran Samuel Wade and preacher William Clark, who had initially traveled to the area with Enos Hotchkiss. Samuel Wade officially incorporated Paonia in 1902, naming it after his favorite flower, the peony, which he brought to the settlement along with the first fruit trees. Farming, ranching, and mining became some of the Town's primary industries. **Paonia is a misspelling of the genus for peony – *Paeonia*.**

### CULTURE & CHARACTER

The floral reference to peonies of the Town's name inspires pride in the community's natural and agricultural heritage. The North Fork Valley's long history of cattle ranching, mining, and pioneering spirit remains today. Early horticulturalists living in the valley planted Paonia Town Park with trees that now, at more than 100 years old, offer a beautiful, shaded haven for both community members and tourists. Paonia Town Park is home to popular festivals and gatherings including the Mountain Harvest Festival, the BMW "Top of the Rockies" Rally, the Pickin' in the Park summer concert series, and Cherry Days—one of the longest running 4th of July festivals in Colorado.

The people of Paonia value their cultural, political, and economic diversity. Ranchers, miners, and families who have been in the area for generations share the Town with artists and creatives, entrepreneurs, organic farmers, outdoor enthusiasts, wellness practitioners, and an increasing number of people who work remotely. Neighbors with different lifestyles and political views often come together and help each other in times of need. A 2014 community-led initiative called "The North Fork Heart & Soul Project" succeeded in capturing many of the shared values of Paonia's diverse residents; those values have informed this Plan. During the engagement process for this plan, community members expressed their values related to Paonia's culture and character, including the following:

- The small-town community feel—a culture that is welcoming, safe, respectful, and inclusive
- Community resources and offerings such as a library, schools, a radio station, festivals, art and cultural creatives, churches, and nonprofits
- Honoring the history and heritage, farms and festivals, arts and creative culture



## DEMOGRAPHICS

The Town of Paonia's population has remained relatively stable over the past 40+ years; the population in 2023 is just 3.5% higher than in 1980 **with a total of 1475 residents**. Paonia's population is ~~older now~~, **has aged**, with 43% over age 55, while the percentage of adults ~~aged~~ **between** 18-54 has decreased over the past decade. However, single working adults and families are also drawn to the area because of the high quality of life, sense of community, safety, and access to both traditional and alternative forms of education.

## ECONOMY & GROWTH

Coal mining was Paonia's economic lifeblood for decades and remains a source of pride as well as a source of income for the community. In recent years two of three nearby mines have closed; however, the remaining nearby West Elk Mine in Gunnison County is currently the most productive mine in Colorado and offers well-paying mining and wholesale trade jobs. The economic impact of the other closures was strongly felt by the community and has begun to be partially offset by the growth of other industries, particularly remote work (supported by the introduction of high-speed internet in 2017) and tourism.

The 1996 Comprehensive Plan and subsequent land use planning, regulations, and codes sought to limit sprawl and preserve rural character. Over the past ~~two~~ **three** decades, Paonia's remote location and distance from downhill skiing and other high-end recreation has provided some natural buffer to the growth and development seen in many Colorado resort towns. ~~Growth is further constrained by a moratorium on new water taps that went into effect in 2020. Still, challenges related to tourism, economic and demographic shifts, and housing affordability that are common to many Colorado mountain towns are being felt in Paonia. Housing price increases have outpaced rise in wages by a ratio of 5.5 to 1, displacing residents and creating barriers for businesses looking to hire seasonal and full-time wage workers.~~

**Growth has generally been constrained since the Town's adoption of a moratorium on the sale of new water taps or other new uses of domestic water that went into effect on January 29, 2020. This prohibition on new taps limits the ability for new residential and commercial construction in the Town of Paonia and the 27 water companies (consecutive systems) in the surrounding mesas receiving water from Paonia's water treatment facility. Measuring the amount of source water available from the Town's spring fed system throughout the year will be the first step in contemplating the lifting of the moratorium and what level of growth (if any) can be supported by the available water supply. In addition, an increase in housing demand was observed **between 2020 - 2023** ~~over the past three years~~, determined mainly by the migration **of people living in** ~~from~~ urban cores **and relocating to** Paonia ~~to rural areas~~ during the COVID pandemic.**

**These two factors have greatly increased the cost of housing in Paonia.** Housing price increases have outpaced a rise in wages by a ratio of 5.5 to 1, displacing residents and creating barriers for businesses looking to hire seasonal and full-time wage workers.



## EDUCATION, CIVIL SOCIETY, & HEALTH CARE

For a small community, Paonia has abundant educational opportunities. Children have access to diverse preschools and elementary schools within the Delta County School District (DCSD) including ~~Backpack Early Learning Academy (BELA) Preschool and Paonia K-8 elementary school~~; the North Fork School of Integrated Studies (NFSIS), a Waldorf-inspired public charter school with associated ~~NFSIS BELA Backpack Early Learning Academy Preschool~~; and North Fork Montessori in Crawford. Teenagers living in Paonia attend the public North Fork High School in neighboring Hotchkiss. ~~Vision Charter Academy has a campus in Delta and provides support for individualized learning and homeschooling in grades K-12.~~

Paonia is rich in arts, as well as vocational and social nonprofits—many located in the downtown Creative District including the iconic Paradise Theatre, KVNF Community Radio, Blue Sage Center for the Arts, and more. The community is proud of its library, a hub of activity in a beautiful building constructed in 2009. Just outside Paonia is Solar Energy International, a long-running renewable energy vocational school that attracts students from around the world. Environmental, agricultural, and service organizations round out Paonia’s civil society, along with churches of many denominations. Finally, nonprofits and private businesses provide access to extracurriculars and education including healthy cooking, organic farming, art and music lessons, karate and dance classes, yoga and exercise, and nature and horse camps, to name a few.

Healthcare within the Town of Paonia is limited to private enterprises including Paonia Care & Rehabilitation Center, a licensed 60-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility, and several private practices including physical therapy, dentistry, acupuncture, chiropractic, and numerous other alternative and integrated wellness practitioners. The nearest public clinic is West Elk Clinic in Hotchkiss, part of the Delta Health system (which features multiple clinics throughout the county) and Delta County Memorial Hospital in Delta.

## ECOLOGY, CLIMATE, & WATERSHED

Paonia ~~sits~~ **is located** at an elevation of 5,682 feet (about 1.73 kilometers) and is known for its mild climate that has historically been especially suitable for growing fruit. Much of the Town of Paonia and surrounding agricultural land is green thanks to a network of privately managed irrigation systems, which are governed by local ditch companies and complex water laws. The surrounding wildlands are at a similar elevation and include dryland/high desert juniper-sagebrush ecosystems. The North Fork of the Gunnison River runs through the west side of Town, and its riparian corridor is home to abundant wildlife including beavers, mule deer, elk, fox, coyotes, and more. The Town is surrounded by vast expanses of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the US Forest Service (USFS)—which has an office in Paonia, and private ranchers with grazing permits on public lands.

The Paonia region is one of the more extreme climate hotspots in the country. According to the US Geological Survey, Delta County, most of the Western Slope, and parts of Utah have already experienced warming of more than 3.9 degrees Fahrenheit. Like the majority of the Colorado River Basin, Paonia suffers from greater drought stress and has heightened risk for catastrophic wildfire. Paonia’s municipal source water springs are located on USFS land, which is leased for cattle grazing. Irregular and decreased snowpack levels and changes in snowmelt patterns are already affecting the infiltration dynamics of the mountain springs that feed the municipal domestic water system and numerous privately managed water systems in the surrounding unincorporated areas.



# **PART II: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS**

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

### Public Engagement Session #1

The first Comprehensive Plan community engagement session was held on April 27, 2023, and attracted more than 60 participants. The main objective for this session was to gather feedback on an initial set of community values to guide the Plan. In addition, participants had the opportunity to provide input on all components of the Plan—including Vision, Goals, and Policies—through interactive ranking, brainstorming, and group-discussion activities. Some of the key issues and themes identified were

- protecting the rural, agricultural, and small-town character of Paonia;
- prioritizing the municipal water system and other key infrastructure and services;
- addressing the housing emergency;
- finding a balanced role for tourism as an economic driver;
- identifying climate resilience and ecosystem health; and
- providing transparency and improved communication between the Town and community.



## Public Engagement Session #2

The second Comprehensive Plan community engagement session was held on June 24, 2023, and had 44 registered participants. The main objectives for this session were to develop a shared community vision and dig deeper into key issues that were brought forward during the first community engagement session. The Community Vision statement and the Vision statements included at the beginning of each element were developed by the attending in this session and informed by the research conducted for this Plan. Some of the community priorities identified during this session are presented below.

### Land Use and Housing

- Preserve and increase open space and river access
- Develop and implement a housing action plan
- Regulate short-term rentals
- As appropriate, increase residential density rather than sprawl
- Conduct a zoning study
- Create design standards and preserve historic character

### Infrastructure

- Plan and implement needed water system repairs, improvements, and maintenance
- Follow the guidance of the Town engineer (or firm) to understand source water availability
- Integrate planning and maintenance for water, sewer, streets, sidewalks, and street-trees to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness

### Economic Development

- Retain the existing downtown commercial corridor
- Provide support for small businesses and entrepreneurship
- Grow Town capacity for economic development

### Parks and Recreation

- With community and partner organizations, prioritize and implement recommendations from the Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan
- Prioritize youth recreation and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, including safe routes to schools and designated nonmotorized and accessible routes

### Governance and Participation

- Facilitate engagement events to improve working relationship between Town and community members
- Improve accessibility of publicly available information
- Provide training and resources to educate the Town and the public on good governance and participation
- Hold productive and healthy Town Board meetings that enable community participation



### **Public Engagement Session #3**

The third community engagement session was held on March 3, 2024, and included 47 people. This session focused on presenting a draft Future Land Use Plan and map along with the public comment, existing planning, environmental, and geological elements that informed it. Members of the public, Town Staff, and elected officials were given worksheets to provide written comments. Members of the public expressed support for the focus on the following:

- Develop commercial property in the Downtown Core instead of along Highway 133
- Preserve culture and character of the Downtown Core and residential neighborhoods
- Create urban agricultural area designations along the river, in the Highway 133 corridor, and in specific areas of Town
- Integrate cottage industries into more business-heavy areas of Town
- Acknowledge and take wildlife corridors into consideration with all zoning and development
- Provide safe access to parks and places of education and recreation for children

Some members of the public expressed surprise regarding areas with geological hazards including land slides and flooding, and indicated they were not previously aware of these.



# PART III: PLAN ELEMENTS



PHOTO CREDIT: AARON WATSON

SKIES ΔLIVE

# LAND USE AND FUTURE GROWTH FRAMEWORK

## OVERVIEW

~~The population of Paonia has changed little since 1980. It has fluctuated over the decades with ebbs and flows of the local economy, especially natural resource extraction. An increase in housing demand has been observed over the past three 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. In response, the Town completed a Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan in conjunction with this Comprehensive Plan process which serves as an element of this Comprehensive Plan.~~

The text proposed for removal is already provided in “About Paonia”

~~Growth outside of Town limits is currently regulated by the 2011 Growth Management Agreement for the Unincorporated Areas Surrounding the Town of Paonia, Colorado, Between Delta County and the Town of Paonia, Colorado, generally referred to as the Intergovernmental Agreement or IGA. The Town of Paonia Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan also regulates growth and development outside Town boundaries.~~

~~This Future Land Use Framework contemplates growth and development in and around Paonia. It informs where and how it may occur, what types may be appropriate, and the general character.~~

Growth outside of Town limits is currently defined by the Paonia - Delta County Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA) and the Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan (see Figures 1 and 2 below). 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.

New paragraphs extracted from the previous May 2024 Plan draft

Paonia has the ability through its policies and regulations, intergovernmental agreements, and other tools to help inform where and how growth will occur in the future, the types of growth the community would like to see and guide the character and form of future development. Goals and policies ensure that future growth occurs incrementally in a manner that is consistent with Paonia’s values and maintains a commitment to the needs and desires of local residents.

## VISION

**Maintain** Paonia’s rural character and slower pace of life **that** are interconnected with the landscape, seasons, and thriving community life. **Ensure that** urban agriculture thrives; the community **continues to** feels connected to the surrounding farmland and natural landscape. Wildlife corridors, dark nighttime skies, greenways, and viewsheds are protected and cherished. **Ensure** the Town has walkable, tree-lined streets that surround a small but vibrant historic downtown. **Make sure** 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, interconnection with nature, and dark nighttime skies.~~
- ~~The Town’s rural character, historic heritage, and farming and ranching legacy.~~
- ~~Clear planning for a growing community.~~
- A diverse and accessible community of all ages, incomes, family status, race, religion, or creed. (This value for a “diverse and accessible community for all ages, etc.” is addressed in the housing, economic, and transportation elements)

## GOALS FOR LAND USE

**LAND USE 1** - Preserve open space, **agricultural land**, interconnection with nature **and wildlife habitats**, and dark nighttime skies.

**LAND USE 2-** **Maintain** the town’s rural character, historic heritage, and farming and ranching legacy.

**LAND USE 3-** Clear planning for a growing community **with well-managed, growth objectives**.

## POLICIES LAND USE

### GOAL

**LAND USE 1** - Preserve open space, **agricultural land**, interconnection with nature **and wildlife habitats**, and dark nighttime skies.

## POLICIES

**POLICY LUF- 9 1-** **Prioritize efforts to reduce light pollution in compliance with Town of Paonia Code, Chapter 19, Article 7 Outdoor Lighting Regulations in order to maintain the natural darkness (dark skies) to preserve the nighttime view of the stars and the many other benefits of dark skies.**



**POLICY LUF-8 2-** ~~Plan for~~ **Ensure** responsible growth and development **that supports open space** through ~~coordination with Delta County~~ by referring to and the regularly revisiting and adjusting **(as needed)** the Paonia Growth Management Agreement with Delta County **that applies to the 3-mile Urban Growth Boundary surrounding the Town of Paonia.** ~~for the Unincorporated Areas Surrounding the Town of Paonia, generally referred to as the Intergovernmental Agreement or IGA, and the Town of Paonia Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan. Regularly update the Town's Three Mile Plan.~~

**POLICY LU 3** -Maintain nodes of open space along Highway 133 in order to establish a clear separation between commercial development and avoid “stripping” development along the arterial.

Policy included in the 1996 Comp. Plan

**POLICY LU 4** - Ensure that new development does not significantly impair wildlife resources.

Policy included in the 1996 Comp. Plan

**GOAL**

**LAND USE 2-** Maintain the town’s rural character, historic heritage, and farming and ranching legacy.

**POLICY LUF-1 5 -** ~~Preserve Paonia’s rural character, natural resources, key wildlife habitats, riparian corridors, viewsheds, and open lands while balancing~~ Balance the need for infill, economic growth, housing and redevelopment **with the desire to preserve Paonia’s rural character.**

**POLICY LUF-3 6-** 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.

**GOAL**

**LAND USE 3-** Clear planning for a growing community **with well-managed, growth objectives.**

**POLICY LUF-2 7 -** Approach development with clear and consistent regulations and procedures that are effective and fair.

**POLICY LUF-4 8 -** Support diverse and affordable housing options, ~~for all to ensure that Paonia remains a complete and vibrant community. Housing is generally considered affordable if the monthly payment (rent or mortgage, plus utilities) is no more than 30% of gross household income (before taxes). See the Town of Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan (2023).~~

**POLICY LU 9 -** Encourage energy efficiency for residential and commercial structures.



**POLICY ECON-7 LU 10** - ~~Conduct a targeted~~ Ensure that community and stakeholder's **desires exemplified in the Future Land Use Map are considered when contemplating the engagement process** focused on annexation of properties leading up to and along the Highway 133 corridor to increase Town revenue. ~~from sales tax, in alignment with the Future Land Use Map~~

Policy moved from the Economics Element policy 7

**POLICY LUF-5 11** - ~~Prioritize development that benefits locals and the local economy. Examples include activation of~~ **activates vacant spaces and rejuvenates blighted properties.** ~~opportunities for local entrepreneurs, businesses that meet local needs, and operations that support overall local economic development.~~

**POLICY LU 12** - Ensure that development and annexation proposals result in growth that is compatible with Paonia's character and provides community benefits and enhancements.

**POLICY LU 13** - Encourage infill and redevelopment within the Town's existing limits and where infrastructure and services already exist.

**POLICY LUF-7 14** - ~~Ensure~~ Encourage collaboration between the Town, developers, and other relevant stakeholders to reduce the cost of that the cost of growth, like extending utilities and roads to **prospective property as much as feasible.** ~~is paid for by the developer and not the Town or residents.~~

**POLICY LUF-7 15** - ~~Ensure that prior to annexation all this includes the cost of annexation where any existing utilities or~~ **and roads to be dedicated to the Town are brought up to Town standards before approval of annexation, or that a plan is adopted ahead of annexation that ensures the roadway will be brought up to Town standards, which could include special assessments levied on properties for annexation.** ~~such dedication, so Town residents do not bear those costs.~~

**POLICY ECON-7 LU 16** ~~Build~~ Ensure Encourage that the leadership for members of relationships with other key neighborhoods and **consecutive water systems** existing in areas contemplated for annexation have been engaged in the deliberations **of annexation.** ~~districts to enable and incentivize annexation where appropriate.~~

**POLICY LU 17** - Discourage close proximity of incompatible land uses.

Policy included in the 1996 Comp. Plan

**POLICY LUF-6-18** Enhance the Town's resiliency to natural disasters and environmental hazards.



Figure 1: Growth Management Agreement for the Unincorporated Areas Surrounding the Town of Paonia

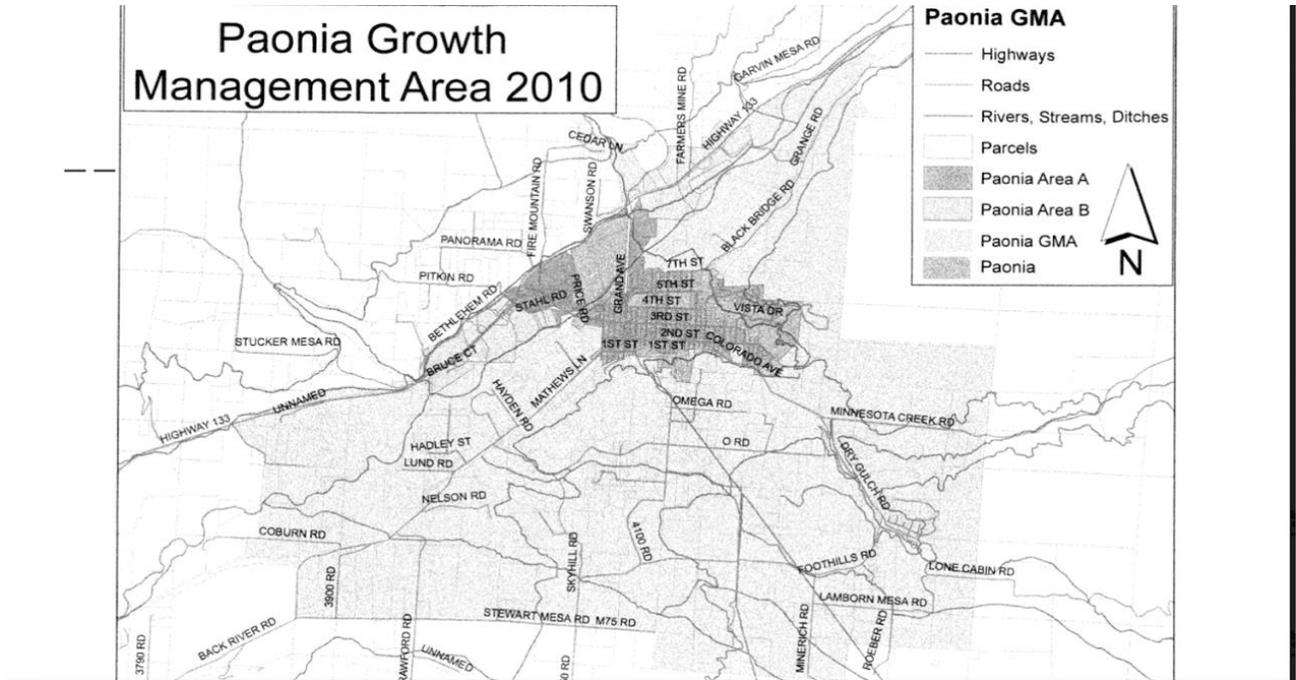
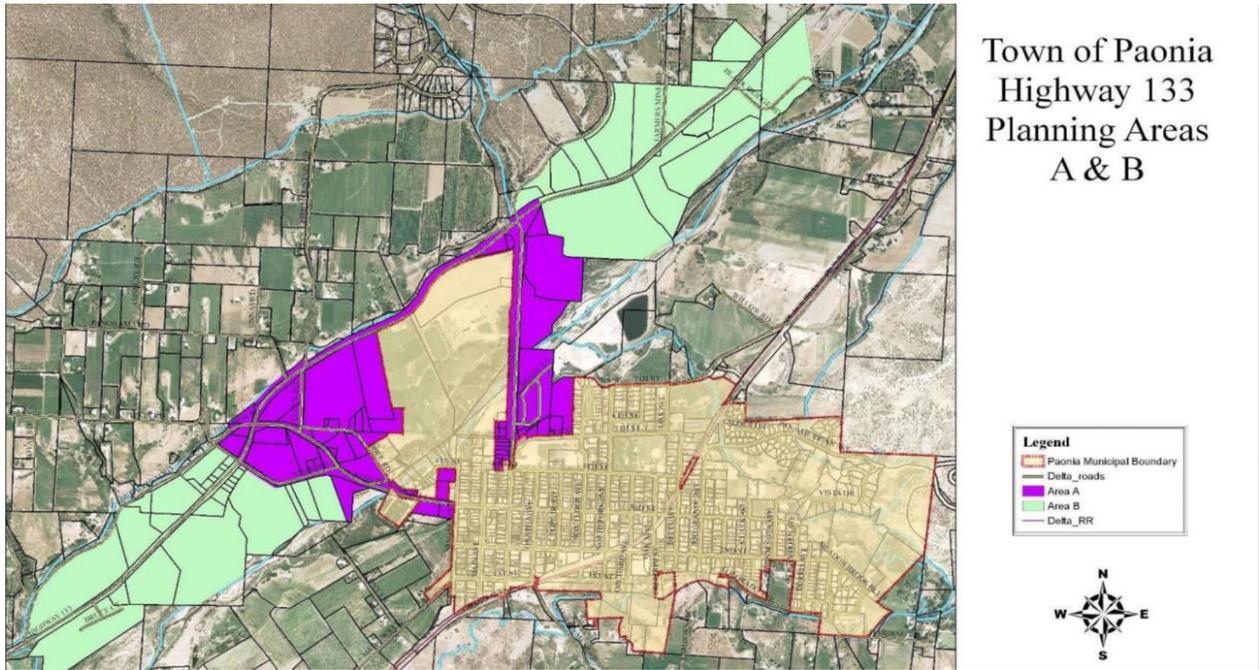


Figure 2: Town of Paonia Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan



## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This Future Land Use Plan consists of a Future Land Use Map (Figure 3 below) and various broad land use categories to inform growth and development in and around Paonia. This includes where and how growth should occur, what types may be appropriate, and how does the potentially approved growth impact the general character of the Town.

~~The Future Land Use Plan is a graphic representation of the desired future land uses in and near Paonia, as expressed by the visions, values, and policies in this Comprehensive Plan.~~

The Future Land Use Plan is **a tool to be used** ~~not a zoning map, but rather a map to help guide updates to existing zoning regulations, proposed rezonings, and the general type, location, and intensity of future development. It is a decision-making~~ **This tool is intended to be referred to when making decisions about growth in and near Paonia, and provide for consideration of the visions, goals, and policies adopted in this Comprehensive Plan. It is intended to help guide decision making** for the Town Board, Planning Commission, and staff. by:

- **Serving as a reference for day-to-day decision making with regards to physical growth in the Town limits and surrounding 3-Mile Growth Area;**
- **Guiding consideration of future rezoning and annexation requests;**
- **Informing future updates to existing zoning districts and development standards;**
- **Tracking the Town’s overall capacity for future development;**
- **Informing infrastructure and facility planning; and.**
- **Ensuring future development is supportive of the community’s vision.**

Content in red excerpted from the  
Ridgway Comp. Plan

~~The Future Land Use Plan’s key considerations, map area, map elements are described below.~~

### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Preserve Paonia’s small-town feel and rural and historic character.
- Maintain the Town’s agricultural legacy and its connection to agricultural and public lands.
- Identify areas to accommodate the increasing demand for affordable housing.
- Identify areas for gradual increases in density.
- Maintain the economic vitality of the historic downtown.
- Maintain commercial development along Grand Avenue and cluster new commercial development near the Town’s gateways, and still preserve the rural aesthetic of the gateways.



- Identify areas for creative mixed use and business opportunities.
- Preserve and increase public access to open space and the river.
- Protect wildlife habitat and riparian corridors.

## MAP AREA

Future land use categories **presented in the Future Land Use Map** have been assigned to **associated with** the land within the Town of Paonia’s boundary as well as Planning Areas A and B as designated by the Town of Paonia Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan. The future land use for land outside those areas was not discussed in detail throughout the planning process; however, feedback indicated there is a desire to preserve the existing uses and character of such land. Agricultural land, open space, and the general rural feel of these areas is valued by the community. Expansion of existing neighborhoods into areas not assigned a future land use category should be limited to those areas where it is practical to do so, like where utilities and access are readily available.

## MAP ELEMENTS

### Future Land Use Categories

#### Downtown Commercial Core

Composed of the vibrant commercial heart of Paonia with a unique historic character, this area is oriented toward local businesses and pedestrian access. Restaurants and historic buildings, including the Paradise Theater, and the small urban Polis Park, make up the gravitational center of the community. Commercial activities generally include a mix of retail, professional offices, and restaurants in existing buildings. This district helps maintain local businesses that serve the community’s daily needs and provides a core for activity and visitors. New development should respect the character of existing development, and streetscape improvements are encouraged to improve the pedestrian experience.

- Primary Uses: Retail, restaurants, offices, other commercial uses
- Supporting Uses: A range of residential uses typically mixed in with other uses, pocket parks and plazas, institutional

#### Mixed Use

These areas support a range of uses that serve and complement the Downtown Commercial Core while transitioning to residential areas. The commercial and residential mix contributes to maintaining access to services and provides diverse housing and employment options. Mixed Use areas are more auto oriented than those in the Downtown Commercial Core but should still be walkable and connected to nearby amenities. Uses should be compatible with neighboring uses by limiting nuisances and mitigating their impacts through screening or other measures.



- Primary Uses: All types of residential; commercial including restaurants, offices, art studios, and retail
- Supporting Uses: Institutional, home businesses, small-scale creative industries

### **Light Manufacturing Industry**

Proposed use of "Industry" to match the legend in the FLUM

This category supports employment opportunities within the Town that are more intense than Downtown Commercial Core and Mixed-Use areas. These areas are typically near major roads for easy access. Uses in these areas should mitigate impacts on neighboring uses, especially residential. While this category is not included in many locations on the Future Land Use Map adopted with this Plan, it is anticipated that there will be a growing interest in this use; therefore, this land use category will be available for future map updates and amendments.

- Primary Uses: Small-scale manufacturing and fabrication, commercial, creative industries
- Supporting Uses: Storage, warehousing, wholesale retail, agricultural processing, residential, institutional

### **Mixed Neighborhood**

Part of the oldest residential areas within the historic town grid, this area is predominantly defined by historical architecture styles. Residential density is slightly higher than other residential areas due to the proximity to the Downtown Commercial Core and Mixed-Use areas. Maintaining the historic character and general scale while allowing for increased density is the focus in this area.

- Primary Uses: Residential including single-family, duplex, and triplex dwellings
- Supporting Uses: Home businesses, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), institutional

### **Town Original Neighborhood**

This category encompasses the central residential neighborhood in the historic town grid, and is characterized by tree-lined streets and alleys. This area has older architecture (from turn of the century to the 1940s); this, along with its walkability and small neighborhood feel, is highly valued by the community. Development and redevelopment in this area should respect the scale and character of existing development.

- Primary Uses: Single-family dwellings
- Supporting Uses: Home businesses, ADUs, institutional

### **Traditional Neighborhood**

This category includes more recent residential development (post-1950), with mostly single-family homes not always on the Town's historic grid. It represents a transition from the historic core area toward the lower-density residential areas that border



agricultural land and open space. Residential density in this area could increase gradually over time with the addition of ADUs or duplex dwellings.

- Primary Uses: Single-family dwellings
- Supporting Uses: Duplex dwellings, home businesses, ADUs, institutional

### **Conservation Neighborhoods**

This comprises a low-density areas along the edge of Town, dedicated to preserving open space and other natural resources. These areas act as a transition between the Town and the surrounding rural land. These areas offer a pedestrian and visual connection to the Town core and the recreational areas outside the Town limits. Conservation measures such as clustered residential uses and conservation easements are encouraged here to protect natural resources and to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards, like flood and fire. Where existing agricultural uses exist, they are encouraged to continue as desired by the property owner.

- Primary Uses: Single-family dwellings
- Supporting Uses: ADUs, parks and trails, natural resource preservation, institutional

### **Urban Farmland**

This area is defined by agricultural land that supports the practice of cultivating crops, raising livestock, and agritourism. It creates a transition between Town living and the surrounding rural farmland and contributes to conserving open space and agricultural land. This category plays a critical role in preserving Paonia's rural history and character and in reinforcing its local culinary farm-to-table tradition. Development in this area is minimal but could include clustered and single-family housing to support agriculture uses and land conservation.

- Primary Uses: Agricultural
- Supporting Uses: Residential, uses that support agriculture (e.g., worker housing and small-scale retail), open space conservation, institutional

### **Historic Core**

This central area of Town is defined as approximately from Niagara Avenue to Rio Grand Avenue, and from First Street to Fourth Street. The buildings and streets in these areas reflect the original settlement of Paonia around the turn of the 20th century and into the 1940s. While not all properties are historic, this area generally displays a unique architectural character made up of a traditional street and alley grid with tree-lined streets displaying the rich historic legacy that is highly valued by the community. Redevelopment and new development in this area should be compatible with the general character and scale of the existing lots and development.



## Gateways

The two main gateways to Paonia play a crucial role in connecting the Town to Highway 133 and represent key entry points into Town. They provide opportunities for beautification, improved signage, and safe pedestrian paths.

- Samuel Wade Road represents the main access point from the highway. While some Mixed Use is desired in this area, it is crucial to preserve agricultural land and the scenic viewsheds. Any development near this gateway should be concentrated in order to maintain Paonia’s small-town, agricultural character.
- Grand Avenue is the secondary access to the Town from the highway. Any development near this gateway should focus on landscaping and beautification, integrating the Paonia River Park, and creating a safe bike and pedestrian-friendly access between the Historic Core and the Paonia K-8 School.

## Water/Wildlife Corridors

These areas consist of the Gunnison River and Minnesota Creek along with a 200-foot buffer. These areas often overlap with identified wildlife habitats and migration corridors as well as recreational opportunities. In these areas it is important to recognize and protect nature including wildlife, vegetation, habitat, and migration corridors as well as the river and creek corridors. These corridors should be the focus of further conservation and protection efforts, as well as improved accessibility for recreation where appropriate.



Figure 3: Future Land Use Map

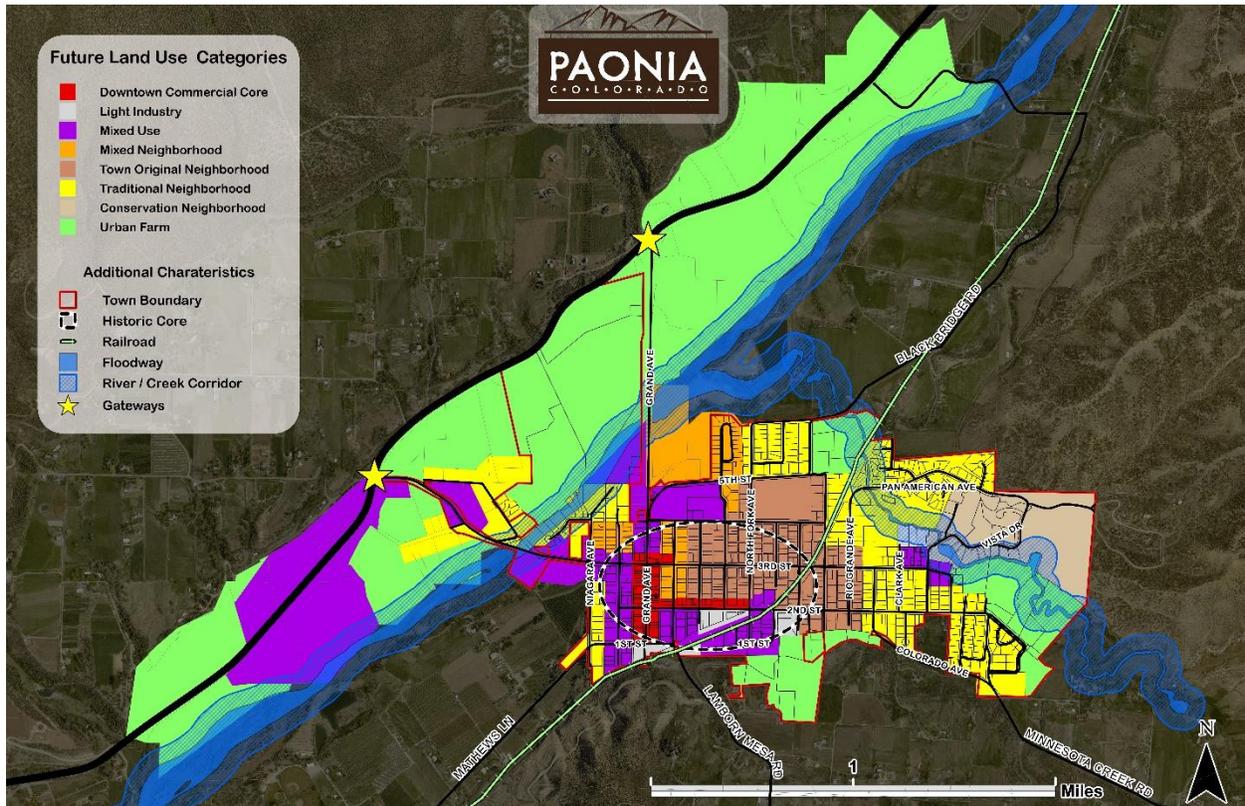


Figure 4: Public Places and Facilities

To be inserted



Figure 5: Hazard Areas

To be inserted



# INFRASTRUCTURE

## OVERVIEW

The Town of Paonia is responsible for managing key infrastructure that collectively shapes the community’s quality of life and economic viability. This includes the full water system from raw water to treated water for distribution, the collection and treatment of stormwater, and the collection and discharge of wastewater. The majority of source water infrastructure is aged and was designed prior to the impacts of desertification, long-term drought, and increasing heat.

A vital component of the Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that the Town can continue to provide enough water to adequately supply and deliver to the Town’s Residents and the extended Paonia community. The availability of water resources and utility infrastructure determines how Paonia grows and are essential considerations of future land use choices.

As a full-service community, Paonia owns and maintains its own water and wastewater utilities, manages the conveyance of stormwater from Town streets, and provides solid waste collections services. The associated infrastructure system is aging, but is still valued at \$11 million, and represents the Town’s largest asset. This system includes an operational water treatment plant, wastewater treatment plant, many miles of pipes, fire hydrants, pumps, tanks, valves and other critical infrastructure to ensure exceptional water, wastewater, and stormwater service for the Town and the extended Paonia Community.

Provision of utilities and services outside of the Town’s capability, such as energy and telecommunications, will be evaluated for adequacy and potential improvements as new development is proposed.

In 2022, the Town began a historic investment in its water utility and started designing systematic improvements to the water supply, treatment and distribution systems of the Town. Through these recent and ongoing utility planning efforts, Paonia also plans to promote water smart principles and increase sustainable planning efforts. These goals will be balanced with the need to address current market challenges while ensuring that natural resources aren’t unduly affected. The Comprehensive Plan and companion plans such as the Paonia, Recreation and Trails Master Plan (Paonia in Motion plan), Water Capital Improvement Plan, and Paonia Municipal Code, should continue to be evaluated and updated as needed to ensure alignment.

Our trees and areas of grass are an essential part of our “green” urban infrastructure. The character of Paonia and quality of life enjoyed by residents is shaped in no small part by the substantial presence of our Town’s forest. Paonia has been designated by the Arbor Day Foundation as Tree City USA.

### Water Tap Moratorium:

In January 2020 the Town of Paonia held a special election for the Citizens Initiative Petition and Water Moratorium which, upon passage, suspended the sale of all new domestic water taps that the Town of Paonia was not already legally obligated to serve. The citizen initiative arose from a critical water supply issue occurring in February of 2019 that resulted in the entire water system losing service. The decision as to if, when, and under what circumstances the moratorium should be lifted is included in the original moratorium and amendments.



Streets and sidewalks are often considered infrastructure but are included in the Transportation element of this Plan.

~~For a review of Paonia’s water and other infrastructure systems, please see Appendix B, Infrastructure.~~

## VISION

Paonia’s robust infrastructure provides high-quality and reliable service to current residents. The systems are managed proactively such that today’s needs are met while future needs are understood and planned for. The water and wastewater systems are healthy and resilient. The water supply is strong, and the wastewater system plays a positive role in regional water cycle management. Paonia’s waste recovery systems are well maintained and the people of Paonia are encouraged to participate in manufactured and organic material reuse and recycling. Paonia is home to a thriving, safe, and uniquely beloved Town forest that is both resilient and adaptive to a changing climate and the aging of individual trees within the larger canopy. All parts of Paonia’s ecology—people, plants, animals, and natural cycles—are valued and considered with each investment/decision.

## VALUES

- ~~• Infrastructure that is dependable and provides locals stability and economic prosperity.~~
- ~~• Investing regularly in quality public infrastructure and timely maintenance.~~
- ~~• Planning for infrastructure that is comprehensive, innovative, and forward thinking.~~
- ~~• A healthy watershed that supports both water quality and water production.~~
- ~~• Investing in stormwater, water treatment, and green infrastructure that support quality public services in health, water availability, and safety.~~
- ~~• Ensuring local businesses and residents can build economic prosperity and enhance food security.~~
- ~~• A wastewater utility that explores and pursues innovative solutions for capital asset development.~~
- ~~• Sanitation services that are well maintained, professionally staffed, and in compliance with all state laws.~~
- ~~• Encouraging solid and organic material resource recovery including reuse, recycling, and composting and ensuring the highest and best use of discarded materials.~~
- ~~• The wonderful quality of life, ecosystem, and increased walkability and real estate values that our town forest provides.~~



Figure 6: Infrastructure

To be inserted





*Photo Credit: Stefen Wynn*

The following goals and policies provide direction for all aspects of physical planning. Goals are defined as desired ideals and a value to be attained. Policies articulate a course of action that guides governmental decision-making to meet the goal.

### **VALUES GOALS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENT**

- INFRA – 1** Planning for infrastructure that is comprehensive, innovative, and forward thinking, and ensure current customers and new development maintain a balance between water supply and demand.
- INFRA – 2** Plan, budget, operate and maintain, construct and invest in stormwater, water treatment, and green infrastructure that support quality public services in health, water availability, and safety.
- INFRA – 3** Infrastructure that is dependable and provides locals stability and economic prosperity.



- INFRA – 4** Investing regularly in quality public infrastructure and timely maintenance.
- INFRA – 5** Support a healthy watershed that supports both water quality, water production, and groundwater recharge.
- INFRA – 6** Ensuring local businesses and residents can build economic prosperity and enhance food security.
- INFRA – 7** Provide a wastewater utility by exploring and pursuing innovative solutions for capital asset development.
- INFRA – 8** Ensure sanitation services that are well maintained, professionally staffed, and in compliance with all state laws.
- INFRA – 9** Encouraging solid and organic material resource recovery including reuse, recycling, and composting and ensuring the highest and best use of discarded materials.
- INFRA – 10** Ensure the continuation of the wonderful quality of life, ecosystem, and increased walkability and real estate values that our town forest provides.
- INFRA – 11** Protect the community from adverse flooding and pollution impacts of runoff with efficient and progressive stormwater management practices.
- INFRA – 12** Cultivate improved waste and materials management that supports source reduction, sustainable diversion, and regulatory compliance through accessible services and programs for residential and commercial land uses.
- INFRA – 13** Protect and maintain the unique quality of our dark nighttime skies through stewardship of the night sky that enhances the quality of life, our ecosystem and the economy.

## POLICIES - GENERAL INFRASTRUCTURE

### GOAL

- INFRA – 1** Planning for infrastructure that is comprehensive, innovative, and forward thinking, and ensure current customers and new development maintain a balance between water supply and demand.
- INFRA – 2** Plan, budget, operate and maintain, construct and invest in stormwater, water treatment, and green infrastructure that support quality public services in health, water availability, and safety.



**INFRA - 3** Infrastructure that is dependable and provides locals stability and economic prosperity.

**INFRA - 4** Investing regularly in quality public infrastructure and timely maintenance.

## **POLICIES**

**POLICY INFRA-1:** Ensure that all residents can obtain clean water and essential utility services.

**POLICY INFRA-2:** Prioritize investments in water, wastewater, stormwater, and reuse that builds confidence in the services and are reliable for existing users while considering future needs.

**POLICY INFRA-3:** Maintain a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to proactively prepare for infrastructure maintenance and upgrade needs as well as other capital projects into the future. Regularly use the CIP for planning and budgeting improvements each fiscal year.

**POLICY INFRA-4:** Coordinate infrastructure repairs and upgrades across utilities and other property maintenance needs. Coordinate with overlapping agencies to minimize the number and scale of excavations when completing improvements to Town infrastructure.

**POLICY INFRA-5:** Maintain utility rates that cover the costs of the service provided and consider future needs by conducting regular rate studies.



## WATER

Water is precious in the West, and especially so for Paonia. The uniqueness and age of Paonia’s water system combined with the level of investment required in the coming years for upgrades, and transitions in climate and temperature, presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to not only rebuild the old system but to also reimagine how the Town and relevant regional stakeholders can work together to preserve the performance of the water source and enhance the longevity of the watershed.

Water in Paonia flows through three distinct systems:

- the North Fork of the Gunnison River and its tributaries, which provide for vegetation and wildlife and which cool, clean, and green the region;
- the river-connected ditches and their laterals that supply water for in-town and out-of-town agricultural users and in-town landscape use; and
- the spring-fed source water system that supplies municipal households and commercial users with drinking water.

### Wildlife & Irrigation

The river and ditch systems which support Paonia’s unique local microclimate, ecology, wildlife, and agriculture are fed throughout the summer by the reserve of water in Paonia Reservoir, and from the North Fork of the Gunnison that flows from the West Elks and Ragged Mountain ranges. Paonia Reservoir currently has a total holding capacity of 14,674 acre-feet. Its capacity has shrunk 25% since 1962 due to heavy sedimentation from Muddy Creek, its main water source. The reservoir is managed by the US Bureau of Land Management and the Army Corps of Engineers.

### Municipal

The municipal system which provides Town treated water is supplied by approximately 25 springs that form five spring complexes which ring the north and west basins of Mount Lamborn. The Town owns the land for Steven’s springs, but the majority of springs are located on US Forest Service lands and private property.

### Past, Present, Future

Paonia has a unique municipal water system, unlike any other in the State of Colorado. Leading achievements in water engineering at the time it was completed, the Paonia Project—which made the Paonia reservoir, and the series of ditches and pipes constructed around the five spring complexes surrounding the north and west slopes of Mount Lamborn—fed the growth of mining and agriculture in the region. However, complexity, age, change in climatic patterns, and human-caused desertification pose substantial challenges to the viability of the water system. The spring-fed municipal water system needs extensive repair, from restoration of the watershed itself to the treatment plants and the elaborate networks of pipes and valves that deliver water into and around Town. In 2019 the Town suffered a critical water supply issue that was exacerbated by the fact that “the lower treatment plant and 1-MG storage tank were not in service during this event [thus making] half of the Town’s raw water supply, half of its treatment capacity, and 33% of its finished water storage capacity unavailable to support demand during the emergency.”



## Water Efficiency & Redundancy

While customer water use efficiency has increased in the past decade, there remains room for further gains from water efficient appliances and practices in both commercial and residential use. There are substantial efficiency gains to be had from increasing performance in the water delivery system. Approximately 23-39% of water produced is currently unaccounted for in delivery between treatment plants and customers. As of the beginning of 2024, the first steps are already underway with the implementation of the first phase of the Capital Improvement Plan and associated rate increases which will support upgrades and fixes to this system and reduce overall water loss. Due to the overall age and nature of the gravity fed system some level of leaks will remain and should be taken into account when looking at overall water availability going forward.

Exploring redundancy in the water treatment system with neighboring systems is critical to the resilience of the Town's system. Current and future proposed upgrades to address these issues including the rehabilitation conversion of the Clock treatment plant into a raw water storage and pumping facility, have been outlined in the Water Capital Improvement Plan that was started in 2023.

## Water Volume & Source Reliability

The springs that feed the Town of Paonia are highly sensitive to drought conditions due to their strict dependence upon snowfall and runoff season. While Colorado weather is already well known for its variability, the increase in severity and duration of drought, increased winter and spring temperatures, increased duration and severity of spring winds, increased rates of sublimation of snowpack and decreases in soil moisture due to vegetation degradation, and changes in precipitation patterns moving away from snow to rain mean there is and will continue to be less and less reliable or regular snowpack, and also that the moisture from melting snow is less likely to translate into liquid water run-off. The Town of Paonia recognizes these threats to its water supply.

Paonia's watershed has high groundwater recharge potential and semi-arid climates are known to be especially sensitive to changes in vegetation and surface water making the system also potentially viable for regeneration and land management intervention to support both system water retention and ongoing supply.

Precipitation type (rainfall versus snowfall), amount, and temporal and spatial distribution are important for determining the amount of recharge that a groundwater system may receive, particularly as infiltration from precipitation to the shallow bedrock groundwater systems.

Average annual precipitation determines the climate of the project Town's watershed area, and in the case of the North Fork Valley, the topographically higher terrains near Grand Mesa and West Elk Mountains are sub humid and cool and have excellent recharge potential, both from rainfall in the spring, summer, and autumn months, and from the melting of snowpack throughout the winter and early spring, especially areas covered by gravels and slope deposits.

The small water cycle is more important to local precipitation patterns than the large water cycle. In fact, it is estimated that mean global precipitation overland is 720 mm, of which only 310 mm is from the large water cycle and 410 mm comes from the repeated evaporation-precipitation process of the small water cycle. —Walter Jehne



The Town of Paonia has a designated Municipal Watershed within its broader watershed, as defined in the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Source Water Protection Plan. Most of this land lies within the Gunnison National Forest, which is managed by the US Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service (USFS). Other landowners in the protection area include the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and privately owned lands, which sit under jurisdiction of Delta County. Both BLM and USFS lease lands for grazing in these areas to private ranchers. Work to restore and regenerate the watershed will need to be conducted in concert with relevant landowners and stakeholders.

### **Water Rates**

In 2023, the Town of Paonia increased rates for water, ~~sewer and trash~~. Future increases in rates will be required to meet the base financials required to secure funding to implement the 2023 Water Capital Improvement Plan. While the Town will not wholly rely on water rate revenue, rate increases are likely essential for obtaining other funds in the form of grants and low interest loans needed to fully fund capital improvements.

## **GOALS AND POLICIES FOR WATER**

### **GOAL**

**INFRA-1** Planning for infrastructure that is comprehensive, innovative, and forward thinking, and ensure current customers and new development maintain a balance between water demand and supply.

### **POLICIES**

**POLICY INFRA WATER-1** Appropriately coordinate the Comprehensive Plan and Water Capital Improvement Plan to ensure existing and future customers have a safe and reliable water supply.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-2** Responsibly manage and conserve the Town’s limited water resources in both existing and new development.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-3** Implement water conservation strategies and use the results of the Hydrogeological Study to inform those strategies.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-4** Monitor demographic, development, water supply, and usage trends with regular reporting to the Board of Trustees and proactively identify where adjustments to the Comprehensive Plan may be needed should water use increase

**POLICY INFRA WATER-5** Strengthen the integration of land use and water planning and policies and manage growth so that the quantity, pace, and type of development does not exceed the capacity of public facilities.



## GOAL

**INFRA - 4** Investing regularly in quality public infrastructure and timely maintenance.

## POLICIES

**POLICY INFRA WATER-6** Support long-range planning that addresses replacement of aging infrastructure within the municipal water system. These planning efforts will consider projections of future development, as identified in the Future Land Use Element, to anticipate the need to increase line sizes where necessary as replacement occurs.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-7** Pursue long-term planning and development of the Town's water infrastructure to include water supply, storage and treatment options which provide the flexibility to accommodate full development within the planning area, as well as the ability to adapt to problems associated with any single water source.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-8** New water facilities shall be constructed to conform to the Town's most recent water system design and construction standards.

## GOAL

**INFRA - 5** Support a healthy watershed that supports both water quality, water production, and groundwater recharge.

## POLICIES

**POLICY INFRA WATER-9** Proactively protect the Town's source water by preventing contamination from wildfire, pollution, and ecological degradation with regional partners. Ensure that development does not adversely affect the Town's raw water sources.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-10** Take a holistic and regenerative approach to watershed health and protection, including wildfire management and mitigation, soil health, and responsible use of grazing around municipal source waters in partnership with relevant stakeholders.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-11** New development shall be connected to both the municipal water system and the Town's sewer system. Prior to connection, the developer shall prepare and submit an impact report of the proposed development. This report will address the development's impact on the existing water supply and existing sewer capacity.

## GOAL

**INFRA - 3** Infrastructure that is dependable and provides locals stability and economic prosperity.



**INFRA – 6** Ensuring local businesses and residents can build economic prosperity and enhance food security.

## **POLICIES**

**POLICY INFRA WATER-12** Require all new development within the Town’s growth management area to annex or complete a pre-annexation agreement to be executed upon the final approval of a connection or tap and the development shall include in the agreements dedication of water rights to the Town that are sufficient in quantity and seniority to meet the needs of the project being constructed.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-13** Discourage the construction of independent water or sewer systems or districts within urbanizing areas, except for the specified purpose of making improvements which will be transferred to the Town when the cost of improvements is paid.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-14** Promote water conservation in accordance with Colorado’s Growing Water Smart Guidebook. Promote community awareness programs for best landscape management of drought and small water-cycle function in landscaping, new construction, and all irrigation activities.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-15** Consider the long-term viability of source water production and explore nature-based solutions to best protect and support the Town’s springs. Conduct regional water cycle management at the watershed level in coordination with regional partners. Continue to invest in and acquire water rights with potential new partnerships and within existing agreements or collaborations.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-16** Create redundant raw water and finished water storage and explore opportunities with nearby consecutive systems for redundancy in delivery.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-17** Ensure that all Paonia owned source water is available for treatment and distribution.



## WASTEWATER

Paonia's Wastewater Treatment Plant manages wastewater collection from residential and commercial customers. The treatment plant was brought online in 2006 and consists of a manual bar screen, two aerated lagoons, a settling/polishing pond, a serpentine chlorine contact chamber and a dichlorination feature. It has a permitted rated capacity of 0.495 million gallons per day (MGD) and typically treats 0.15 MGD. Wastewater from the system is discharged to the North Fork of the Gunnison River.

The 10.5 miles of pipe that make up the wastewater collection system are entirely gravity driven and consist of service laterals, manholes, and gravity sewer mains. The collection system is composed of approximately 63% PVC piping and 37% vitrified clay piping (VCP). The majority of the clay pipe is past its expected lifetime and an estimated 20,000 ft of PVC pipe will need to be replaced in near future making the entire system in need of upgrade ~~in the near future~~.

It is worth noting that overall treatment levels of water treated are lower in the winter. The Water Tap Moratorium also has an effect here: as long as it remains in effect, ~~or even as 7-14 new homes are added as is planned in the 2023 budget~~, wastewater treatment levels are unlikely to grow materially. With an ongoing increase in winter temperatures, it is worth considering the use of green infrastructure, in particular constructed wetlands in future wastewater treatment upgrades. Studies have shown the positive impacts that wetlands have in semi-arid regions when it comes to local temperature regulation, in particular when it comes to extreme heat mitigation, as they have been shown to lower ambient temperatures by 7-14 degrees as compared to similar areas where they are not present.

### Waste Water Rates

In 2023, the Town of Paonia increased rates for wastewater. Future increases in rates will be required to meet the base financials required to secure funding to implement necessary improvements to the existing sanitary sewer collections and treatment infrastructure. While the Town will not wholly rely on rate revenue, rate increases are likely essential for obtaining other funds in the form of grants and low interest loans needed to fully fund capital improvements.

## GOALS AND POLICIES WASTEWATER

### GOAL

- INFRA - 2** Plan, budget, operate and maintain, construct and Invest in stormwater, water treatment, and green infrastructure that support quality public services in health, water availability, and safety.
- INFRA - 3** Infrastructure that is dependable and provides locals stability and economic prosperity.
- INFRA - 4** Investing regularly in quality public infrastructure and timely maintenance.



## POLICIES

### POLICY INFRA WASTEWATER-1

New development shall be connected to both the municipal water system and the Town’s sewer system. Prior to connection, the developer shall prepare and submit an impact report of the proposed development. This report will address the development’s impact on the existing water supply and existing sewer capacity.

### POLICY INFRA WASTEWATER-2

Maintain a wastewater system that returns high-quality, clean water to the North Fork of the Gunnison River and explore green infrastructure options for treatment that provide positive impacts on local temperature regulation and enhance the viability and resilience of local ecology.

### POLICY INFRA WASTEWATER-3

Consider water reuse and recycling when designing new wastewater and stormwater systems.

### POLICY INFRA WASTEWATER-4

New sewer infrastructure shall be constructed to conform to the current sewer design and construction standards.

### POLICY INFRA WASTEWATER-5

Discourage the construction of independent sewer systems or districts within urbanizing areas, except for the specified purpose of making improvements, which will be transferred to the Town when the cost of improvements is paid.

### POLICY INFRA WASTEWATER-6

Monitor the Utility Condition Index (UCI) as a measurement of the amount of useful life remaining in the utility system and use the UCI to guide the Minimally Responsible Capital Improvements Project Package.

### POLICY INFRA WASTEWATER-7

Support long-range planning that addresses replacement of aging infrastructure within the municipal water system. These planning efforts will consider projections of future development, as identified in the Future Land Use Element, to anticipate the need to increase line sizes where necessary as replacement occurs.

## GOAL

**INFRA – 7** Provide a wastewater utility by exploring and pursuing innovative solutions for capital asset development.

## POLICIES

### POLICY INFRA WASTEWATER-8

Provide service consistent with established levels of service referencing applicable requirements of state regulations, Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.



**POLICY INFRA  
WASTEWATER-9**

Prioritize public health and safety through strategic and proactive efforts to protect water quality and the environment.

**STORMWATER**

Paonia’s Stormwater program historically has been an afterthought during road construction, maintenance and repair. The Town has experienced significant flood events throughout its history and on May 28, 1993, a nearly 100-year flood event was recorded that caused erosion to properties surrounding town. At the time, the Town’s flood control facilities consisted mostly of bank armoring, and they were severely damaged by the flood event. Damage included erosion to the stone riprap at the old location of Paonia’s wastewater treatment plant, and to homes along the Huff Subdivision. In 2018, the Town experienced a significant flood event and damage to Apple Valley Park, and again experienced economic distress after flooding caused a section of Highway 133 to wash out in 2023.

The Town has no current mechanism to budget, plan and fund improvements to the Stormwater infrastructure running through Town. The only funding that can currently go towards stormwater improvements is from the highway user tax fund. In some cases, irrigation companies convey their irrigation water through the Town’s existing Stormwater system, which causes significant wear on the existing culverts, pipes, and gutters that comprise the infrastructure of the stormwater system.

**GOALS AND POLICIES FOR STORMWATER**

**GOAL**

- INFRA - 2** Plan, budget, operate and maintain, construct and Investing in stormwater, water treatment, and green infrastructure that support quality public services in health, water availability, and safety.
- INFRA - 3** Infrastructure that is dependable and provides locals stability and economic prosperity.
- INFRA - 4** Investing regularly in quality public infrastructure and timely maintenance.

**POLICIES**

**POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-1**

Establish a Stormwater Utility to fund infrastructure improvements and create and implement a master stormwater plan for the entire Town.

**POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-2**

Codify and or create standards and specifications for stormwater mitigation requirements for new development. Ensure that standards for drainage system design and construction are kept current. New development shall construct drainage systems that conform to these standards.



POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-3

Ensure that new development will preserve natural drainage courses. Where necessary, a drainage system designed by a professional engineer, may be required.

**GOAL**

**INFRA - 11** Protect the community from adverse flooding and pollution impacts of runoff with efficient and progressive stormwater management practices.

**POLICIES**

POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-4

Encourage green stormwater infrastructure measures to reduce pollutants from development and redevelopment.

POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-5

Coordinate storm drainage and flood management with appropriate agencies, including Delta County, local irrigation/ditch companies, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-6

Ensure that development and redevelopment activities are compliant with the Town's Storm Drainage Design and Technical Criteria and the State's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements.

POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-7

Establish and maintain floodplain buffers to ensure compliance with FEMA required floodplain regulations, to promote water quality and to improve riparian habitat. When possible, encourage the use of natural runoff filtration such as bio-swales, pervious pavement, etc. for on-site retention.

POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-8

Ensure the long-term financial viability and sustainability of the stormwater utility.



## SANITATION AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

The Town provides garbage collection services to approximately 900 accounts within Town limits. There are no municipal composting or recycling services. The majority of trash collection accounts are residential with a varying amount of commercial. Trash services offer 33 Gallon Cans, 2- and 3-cubic yard dumpsters and oversized items. Residents may also leave yard trimmings in bundles no bigger than 1'x3' neatly tied next to the trash bins. Many individuals compost personally or report bringing food scraps to neighbors with farms or livestock. There are at least two private recycling haulers that service Paonia. Aluminum cans may be dropped off for recycling outside of Don's Market and there are cardboard and paper recycling bins in the parking lot of City Market in Hotchkiss. Delta County supports free recycling at the Double J Recycle Center in Austin. CHT Resources operates a composting facility for organic waste in Austin.

Private recycling services combined with the free drop-off options appear to be servicing the area well. Curbside recycling and composting is unlikely to prove economical given the level of at home and on-farm composting and the small service area. However, the community ethos of self-sufficiency has led to a high individual participation rate in both manufactured and organic materials recycling.

~~According to the 2023 Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan consultant team, the average residential rates for water, sewer and trash total \$320 per month. These rates are higher than the national monthly average which is \$171 according to Energy Star and the Colorado state average which is \$241. Simultaneously, the assessment found that roughly one of every five homeowners and two of every five renters are cost burdened. While the state of Colorado offers some financial relief for heating costs through the Low-income Energy Assistance LEAP program, the high cost of water and sewer fall outside of LEAP's coverage. Rates are expected to increase in both water and wastewater over the next five years – the base rate for residential water is expected to rise from \$43.00 in 2024, to 48.30 in 2028 and wastewater rates will raise two dollars between 2023 and 2024 (and will likely need to be raised again in the coming three years).~~

### Sanitation and Resource Recovery Rates

~~In 2022, the Town of Paonia increased rates sanitation/refuse removal. Future increases in rates will be required to meet the growing cost of refuse removal. In order for the Town to improve on the sanitation service that it provides, such as adding a recycling program to its services, rate increases are likely essential for obtaining other funds in the form of grants and low interest loans needed to fully fund capital improvements.~~

## GOALS AND POLICIES FOR SANITATION AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

### GOAL

- INFRA – 8**      Ensure sanitation services that are well maintained, professionally staffed, and in compliance with all state laws.
  
- INFRA – 9**      Encouraging solid and organic material resource recovery including reuse, recycling, and composting and ensuring the highest and best use of discarded materials.



**INFRA – 12** Cultivate improved waste and materials management that supports source reduction, sustainable diversion, and regulatory compliance through accessible services and programs for residential and commercial land uses.

## **POLICIES**

**POLICY INFRA  
SANITATION & RR-1** Provide consistent and quality waste collection services for all new and existing residents and ensure residential participation is commensurate with rates charged and received.

**POLICY INFRA  
SANITATION & RR-2** Utilize Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment technical assistance programs to develop and establish a recycling program.

**POLICY INFRA  
SANITATION & RR-3** Support public awareness activities and information alongside businesses that provide recycling, composting, and other opportunities to reuse and recycle material resources within the Town and county.

**POLICY INFRA  
SANITATION & RR-4** Increase reduction and recycling efforts within the Town to divert solid waste from landfills.

**POLICY INFRA  
SANITATION & RR-5** Promote the importance of recycling industrial and construction waste.



## URBAN FOREST

All urban trees require management as they mature in the landscape. To increase tree diversity and canopy resilience in Town, new tree species must be consciously curated and properly planted and cared for. To sustain the urban forest's vital functions in Paonia, funding is needed to take care of existing trees and plant new ones. As Paonia's urban forest ages and comes under increasing stress from drought, increased heat, and high winds, formalizing care for the Town forest is critical. As trees reach maturity new smaller trees must be planted adjacent to them to support successful succession. The 2021 Paonia Street Tree Inventory provides a robust framework with direction for street-tree care and the establishment of regular and professional maintenance and replacement that will support their longevity and reduce risk to the Town. However, this report is just the first step, and several follow-up actions are suggested in this Plan to establish the quality of service required to maintain our valuable urban canopy.

## GOALS AND POLICIES FOR URBAN FOREST

### GOAL

**INFRA - 10** Ensure the continuation of the wonderful quality of life, ecosystem, health, and increased walkability and real estate values that our town forest provides.

### POLICIES

POLICY INFRA  
URBAN FOREST-1

Monitor, properly care for, and carefully replace street and park trees to maintain, improve, and expand the Town's urban forest. Provide greater support and accountability for homeowners' maintenance of trees in public rights-of-way and engage and empower citizens to participate in street-tree care.

POLICY INFRA  
URBAN FOREST-2

Maintain compliance with Tree City USA designation and work to foster collaboration between the Tree Board, public, and local business community to support tree maintenance, safety, and overall beautification and shade coverage.

POLICY INFRA  
URBAN FOREST-3

Utilize the 2021 Colorado State Forest Service Inventory of Paonia's right-of-way trees and the 2024 Colorado State Forest Service inventory of trees in Town Park when assessing trees requiring removal, replacement, pruning or other management actions. Encourage updates to the inventory every three (3) years.



## DARK SKIES (THIS IS PLACEHOLDER IN THE EVENT “DARK SKIES” STAYS IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENT)

Excess light at night endangers our ecosystem by harming wildlife, and negatively affects our urban forest. Studies have shown the importance of dark nighttime skies to the health of our citizens. 80% of Americans cannot see the milky way. Areas designated as Dark Sky communities encourage ecotourism and help boost the local economies. In September of 2024, the town of Paonia was awarded the designation of an “Internationally Recognized Dark Sky Community” by Dark Sky International (IDA). To maintain this important designation, three locations continuously monitor the quality of our nighttime skies; one located below Jumbo Mountain, one at River Park and one on the roof of Paonia Town Hall. Readings from these sky quality meters help determine if there are significant changes in sky quality and how any change can be mitigated. A dark sky lighting ordinance was passed in 2022, town streetlights were replaced to meet IDA standards.

### POLICIES DARK SKIES

#### GOAL

**INFRA – 13** Protect and maintain the unique quality of our dark nighttime skies through stewardship of the night sky that enhances the quality of life, our ecosystem and the economy.

#### POLICIES

POLICY INFRA  
DARK SKIES-1

Support and foster efforts for replacing non-conforming lights with night sky friendly lights and enforce the Town’s existing Code for new construction and developments as it relates to lighting.

POLICY INFRA  
DARK SKIES-2

Meet the requirements of the Dark Sky International IDA by 2032 through replacing existing residential and town owned lights with IDA certified fixtures.

POLICY INFRA  
DARK SKIES-3

Support dark sky educational efforts; sky viewing events and encourage dark sky tourism.

POLICY INFRA  
DARK SKIES-4

Support efforts to mitigate light trespass on neighboring properties and improve light quality. Develop an assistance program designed to help Residences replace their existing light fixtures with IDA certified light fixtures.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### OVERVIEW

The 2022 median household income in Paonia was \$53,646, median earning per worker was \$49,625, and 8.4% of the population was below the federal poverty line. These figures are far below both Colorado and national averages: the 2022 Colorado median household income was \$89,930 and the US median household income was \$74,580. Residents are increasingly in need of good jobs to keep up with rising costs of living, and in particular the cost of housing. According to the 2023 Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan, one in five Paonia households is burdened by housing costs, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Of these, over 50% of those households are extremely cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 50% of their income on housing. Lack of affordable housing has been identified as a challenge by local business owners who have trouble recruiting and retaining employees in large part due to limited and costly housing stock.

“Jobs and housing are interconnected. The economic success and mix of jobs in a region inform the amount, type, and price point of housing needed to sustain the local economy. Likewise, a sufficiently diverse housing supply is needed to attract and keep quality employees that are invested in the community.”

- Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan, 2023

A strong local economy is critical to Paonia’s future; it provides respectable job opportunities for locals, a robust tax base for the Town and its infrastructure systems, and overall, a desirable and livable community. This element focuses on strengthening our local economy, supporting local businesses and local agriculture, maintaining a vibrant downtown, balancing tourism benefits with impacts, and developing a workforce that is skilled in needed areas.

A significant portion of people employed within the Town of Paonia commute from outside of Town, and a significant portion of people who reside within Town limits commute to work elsewhere. This dynamic is due in part to relatively high housing costs paired with relatively low wages in the local economy and is addressed in greater detail in the 2023 Town of Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan (source of the data in the chart below).

Commuter Type	Source	Percentage of Workforce
Employed in Town of Paonia, live outside Town	US Census	79%
Employed in Paonia CCD, live outside this area (US Census)	US Census	53%
Employed in Paonia area, live outside this area	2023 Employer Questionnaire from Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan by Urban Rural Continuum	20%



Live in Town of Paonia, employed outside Town	US Census	77%
Live in Paonia CCD, employed outside this area	US Census	71%

### Vision

Paonia’s resilient, regenerative, localized economy meets community needs by providing desired goods and services as well as reliable job opportunities that pay living wages. Our economy emphasizes the production of local food and value-added agricultural products, human health and well-being, unique educational opportunities, and the creative and trade industries. Our economy attracts and serves visitors in a way that supports locals. The Town’s revenue is strong and steady and the quality of life among residents is constantly improving.

### Values

- ~~Economic development aligns with preserving our community’s rural and agricultural character.~~
- ~~Local, independent businesses build community wealth, care for our natural resources, and provide opportunities to individuals and families.~~
- ~~There is a vibrant and beautiful downtown commercial district.~~
- ~~Economic diversity and resilience ensures the local economy is not overly reliant on one industry and provides access to goods and services that meet real community needs.~~

### Economic Goals

**Econ Goal 1** –Ensure economic development aligns with preserving our community’s rural and agricultural character **and caring for our natural resources.**

**Econ Goal 2** –Encourage **the creation and maintenance of** local, independent businesses **in order to** build community wealth, ~~care for our natural resources~~ and provide opportunities to individuals and families.

**Econ Goal 3** – ~~Create and~~ Maintain a healthy, vibrant, and beautiful commercial district on and around Grand Avenue.

**Econ Goal 4-** Encourage economic diversity and resilience to ensure the local economy is not overly reliant on one industry.



## ECONOMIC POLICIES

**Econ Goal 1** – Ensure economic development aligns with preserving our community’s rural and agricultural character **and caring for our natural resources.**

~~POLICY REC-8~~ **Policy Econ 1:** ~~Connect p~~Planning and design for trails with considerations around economic development, ~~given~~ **with consideration of** the popularity of biking and hiking trails accessible from Town.

Moved from the Parks and Recreation Element “policy 8.”

**Econ Goal 2** – Encourage **the creation and maintenance of** local, independent businesses **in order to** build community wealth, ~~care for our natural resources~~

**POLICY ECON 2** - Support the retention and expansion of locally owned businesses and increase support for entrepreneurship.

~~POLICY LUF-5~~ **ECON – 3:** ~~Prioritize development that benefits locals and the local economy. Examples include activation of vacant spaces, opportunities for local entrepreneurs,~~ **or** businesses that meet local needs, and operations that support overall local economic development.

Moved from the Land Use element “policy 5”

**POLICY ECON-1 4** - ~~With~~**Build** partnerships **that** proactively nurture a diverse and resilient economy that prioritizes local needs and is centered in agriculture, health and wellness, tourism, creative industries, and skilled labor and trades.

**Econ Goal 3** - Maintain a healthy, vibrant, and beautiful commercial district on and around Grand Avenue.

~~POLICY LUF-8~~ **ECON 5:** ~~Plan– Focus for~~ on encouraging new **compatible** commercial businesses **to build and or relocate** in the Paonia downtown core commercial area. ~~responsible growth and development of teh through coordination with Delta County by regularly revisiting and adjusting the Growth Management Agreement for the Unincorporated Areas Surrounding the Town of Paonia, generally referred to as the Intergovernmental Agreement or IGA, and~~

Both policies moved from the Land Use element “policy 8”

~~POLICY LUF-8~~ **ECON 7-** Encourage commercial development that is **inconsistent with existing commercial areas within town limits to build and or relocate to the Highway 133 corridor, and utilize the recommendations made in the Town of Paonia Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan adopted August 13, 2019. Regularly update the Town’s Three-Mile Plan.**

**POLICY ECON-8** - **Utilize design standards for remodeling or new construction of structures in the downtown corridor.**



**POLICY ECON-9** - Encourage the use of shared parking, on-street parking and other strategies to maximize the use of available resources. Use signage and other wayfinding to direct visitors to parking.

**POLICY ~~TRANS-8~~ ECON 10-** Ensure that all public buildings, businesses, ~~parks~~, and event venues plan for and include ADA parking and entrances.

Moved from the Transportation Element “policy 8.”

**POLICY ~~TRANS-9~~ ECON 11:** Encourage, enhance, and promote pedestrian access and walkability to and within the Historic Town Core.

Moved from the Transportation Element “policy 9.”

**Econ Goal 4** - Encourage economic diversity and resilience to ensure the local economy is not overly reliant on one industry.

**POLICY ECON- 5 12:** Support workforce development through skill-based education programs and other efforts ~~that build the local capacity~~ to meet more of the community’s basic needs like food production, food service, housing construction, skilled trades, energy production, education, and health care.

**Policy ECON 13** Encourage businesses that provide access to goods and services that meet real community needs.

**POLICY ECON- 4 14:** ~~Ensure an~~ Cultivate the integrated and balanced role for tourism ~~and remote workers~~ in the local economy to allow local businesses, community members, and the Town of Paonia to receive the economic benefit of tourism ~~and spending by remote workers~~ while balancing this with housing affordability and the development of year-round, well paying, place-based jobs for residents.

**POLICY ECON-6 16:** Support the continuation **and expansion** of local agricultural **production** ~~including~~ through the **establishment of** farm-worker housing, **agricultural** education, and value-added **food crop** processing infrastructure.

**POLICY ~~TRANS-13~~ ECON 17:** Work with Delta County and the North Fork Valley Airport to identify potential revenue streams and economic development opportunities, and support connectivity with regional commercial airport locations.

Moved from the Transportation Element “policy 13.”



# TRANSPORTATION

## OVERVIEW

Paonia sits to the south of State Highway 133, which serves to connect Paonia to Somerset, Crested Butte, and the Roaring Fork Valley to the east/northeast, and to the larger cities of Delta, Montrose, and Grand Junction to the west. A significant portion of people employed in the Town of Paonia commute from outside the Town, and a significant portion of people who reside within Town limits commute to work elsewhere.

Paonia is not connected to any major cities or transportation hubs by traditional public transit. The Town of Paonia supports All Points Transit a nonprofit organization that supports transit for seniors, people with disabilities, and the general public. Other than All Points Transit, public and private transit options to reach community facilities like schools and healthcare facilities are fairly limited. Lack of regional and local public transportation makes it challenging for individuals without personal vehicles to connect with larger cities and services offered there.

With its compact size and tree-lined streets, the Town of Paonia itself is a naturally walkable and bikeable community. According to Town residents, more than 50% sometimes walk and more than 30% sometimes ride a bike when ~~coming to~~ **traveling** downtown. Like many towns in the rural West, the street system in Paonia was originally a series of dirt or gravel roads with horse access and later a common speed limit for cars and yield signs at key intersections. As roads have been paved, the traffic system has not formally ~~evolved to control speed, provide stop signs or~~ **identified** pass-through/commercial traffic routes. However, some streets—in particular 3rd Street and the western portion of 5th Street—already naturally serve as informal mixed traffic, or shared streets, between multiple modes of transit. Much of Paonia’s shared transportation streets are supported by the old characteristics of the dirt road system, narrower lanes, and disrepair. These attributes naturally slow motorized traffic.

Paonia has four primary roads that run east to west and approximately 32 streets and alleyways that cross at least two of these longer thoroughfares from north to south. Collectively these equal approximately 22 miles of road, over 98% of which are asphalt roads, some concrete paved roadways, and some single lane gravel roads (largely alleyways or short dead-end branches). Only two of the four east/west streets, “2nd” and “3rd,” cross the railroad tracks that separate about one third of the Town to the east, while two thirds, including the downtown, remain to the west of the tracks. The downtown street

### Characteristics of Complete Streets

- Sidewalks
- Bicycle lanes or wide, paved shoulders
- Shared-use paths
- Safe and accessible transit stops
- Frequent and safe crossings for pedestrians, including median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, and curb extensions
- Identified wildlife crossings that connect with green corridors
- Healthy trees and stormwater management
- Lighting for nighttime visibility and safety that complies with Dark Skies best practices



is “Grand Avenue,” not to be confused with “Main” which is one street to the west of the commercial and creative downtown core.

The Town maintains roads within its boundaries: the intersection of 4th and Grand to the north, intersection of Samuel Wade and Highway 133 to the west, the intersection of Mathews Lane and Niagara Ave, intersection of 1st St and Lamborn Mesa Rd, the intersection of Colorado Ave and Meadowbrook Blvd to the south, the intersection of 7th St and Black Bridge Rd to the east. The side streets between Highway 133 and the North Fork of the Gunnison River are the responsibilities of the County.

There are two main connection points from Town to Hwy 133: 4025 Road (also referred to as the “P” Road), which enters to the west of Town and becomes Third Street, and State Highway 187, which follows a southern direction from State Highway 133 and becomes Grand Avenue. Both of these roads utilize bridges that cross the North Fork of the Gunnison River. Access routes to the Town from the south include Matthew’s Lane from the southwest, 4100 Road from the south and Dry Gulch from the southeast.

According to the 2021 Asset Inventory, while there are some recent sections of newly paved concrete road, “most sections of Paonia asphalt roads exhibit moderate to severe surface wear and defects referred to as raveling and polishing, [while] virtually all sections of the roads exhibit some type of surface cracking. The PASER scale, which is a 1-10 rating system for road pavement condition, was used in asset evaluation which showed that only 4 major street sections were rated in “excellent” condition, 17 in “good” while 68 sections received “poor” or “fair” ratings and 11 section received “very poor” or “failing”.

According to the “Paonia in Motion” Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan there are 40 miles of sidewalk area, while less than half of this area has sidewalks installed. Much of the existing sidewalk infrastructure lacks curb ramps and or ends abruptly at the neighboring yard. ~~By Town municipal code, “every owner or occupant of any premises within the Town having a sidewalk or walkway on or adjacent to the premises shall have the duty to keep the sidewalk clean of snow and ice.”~~ A sidewalk fee is currently assessed for all residents and businesses. Even with less than 50% of sidewalk areas paved, this fee does not cover annual maintenance needs. The current patchwork of sidewalk pavement is unnavigable for wheelchairs and dangerous for walking, performs poorly in heavy rain and under icy conditions, and is not designed to be copacetic with urban and street-trees as they continue to grow.

Revenue for the Town of Paonia’s Sidewalk Fund is generated by a \$3.00 per month sidewalk fee, approved in 2013, that is paid by in-town residents. The Town’s Sidewalk Fund is designated for the repair and replacement of existing sidewalks within Paonia. This fee is set to expire in December 2024 unless voters approve a renewal/extension.

## AIRPORT

The North Fork Valley airport is located 4 miles outside Paonia on Back River Road and is jointly owned by Delta County and the Town of Paonia. The airport currently services a low volume of



local and recreational flights, with potential to offer connecting commercial flights to regional airports in the coming decade. The Town should work proactively with Delta County to understand the potential to develop the Airport as both an Enterprise account and as a source of tourism income for the area.

## RAILROAD

The iconic coal train that runs through Paonia was inaugurated in 1902 as the North Fork Line of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. The route was built to service the coal industry, with the added benefit of serving the agricultural regions up and down the valley, including transport of fruit, cattle, and passengers. What is now the North Fork Branch of the Union Pacific Railroad is still utilized to export coal from the West Elk Mine in Somerset. The North Fork Branch connects Somerset to the City of Delta, where the North Fork Branch ties into the Montrose Branch. The Montrose Branch runs between the City of Montrose and the City of Grand Junction. The anticipated lifetime of the remaining active West Elk coal mine is projected to be less than 20yrs from the date of this Plan's creation. There is both state and national precedent for railways that are no longer in commercial use to be converted to trails. **Also could be converted to commuter rail after the coal mine ceases operation.**

### VISION

Paonia's streets and sidewalks are well-maintained, safe, accessible, and comfortable thoroughfares for multiple modes of transport and support a rural and easy-paced quality of life for residents. Clear and differentiated routes for commercial and pass-through vehicular traffic and pedestrian and bicycle traffic provide safety and convenience. Paonia residents can access key facilities and services without owning or operating a motorized vehicle. Transportation stakeholders understand and are responsive to the transportation needs of our community.

### VALUES

- Well-maintained streets and sidewalks that are safe and accessible with ample street tree presence.
- Core transportation routes that are comfortable and safe for all members of our community regardless of whether they drive, walk, bike, or ride horseback.
- Non-motorized routes and trails that are connected, comfortable, and safe for all members of our community to walk, bike, or ride horseback.
- Major thoroughfares and street redevelopment projects that accommodate both pedestrian non-motorized transport and work with existing and new street trees.



## GOALS FOR TRANSPORTATION

Transportation 1: ~~Ensure Well-maintained~~ existing streets and sidewalks are well maintained and are safe and accessible (including ADA accessibility) with ample street-tree presence.

Transportation 2: Ensure core identified streets and sidewalks ~~transportation routes that~~ are comfortable and safe for all members of our community regardless of whether they drive, walk, bike, or ride horseback.

Transportation 3: ~~Major thoroughfares and~~ Ensure street redevelopment projects that accommodate vehicles, both pedestrian and non-motorized transport and are ADA compliant.

## GOAL

Transportation 1: ~~Ensure Well-maintained~~ existing streets and sidewalks are well maintained and are safe and accessible (including ADA accessibility) with ample street-tree presence.

## POLICIES

~~POLICY TRANS-5~~ 1 - Prioritize, plan, and implement street and sidewalk repairs along routes that connect to local schools, parks, and other everyday destinations to improve safety and access for community members who bike, walk, or use other forms of nonmotorized transportation.

~~POLICY TRANS-4~~ 2 - Identify and integrate daily and seasonal wildlife corridors and traffic into consideration when planning and developing new streets and pathways, and redesigning Highway 133 access and in-Town crossings of motorized streets.

~~POLICY TRANS-6~~ 3 - ~~Ensure compliance with ADA for all facets of transportation within Town limits.~~ Ensure that all sidewalk upgrades meet ADA design standards and include features that meet accessibility requirements such as standardized curb ramps at intersection crossings, ample sidewalk width, and an unobstructed pathway clear of overgrowth or tripping hazards.

~~POLICY TRANS-~~ 4 - Require that new sidewalk construction and existing sidewalk repairs accommodate existing healthy trees and plan for replacement of unhealthy trees requiring removal.

## GOAL



**Transportation 2:** Ensure ~~core~~ identified **streets, alleys and sidewalks** ~~transportation routes that~~ are comfortable and safe for all members of our community regardless of whether they drive, walk, bike, or ride horseback.

## POLICIES

**POLICY TRANS-2 5** -Identify ~~and enhance~~ specific ~~transportation routes~~ **streets** for shared ~~or~~ multimodal transportation including motorized travel and nonmotorized travel (pedestrians, bikes, children, wheelchairs, strollers, and the elderly) **and enhance these routes** through the development of complete **designs** ~~streets, yield streets,~~ that can accommodate mixed-traffic ~~designated streets, and~~ **using** best practice guidelines for rural communities.

**POLICY TRANS-16 6** - Ensure the Town plans all street improvements in a manner that supports mixed-use transport in appropriate thoroughfares that align with access to parks, schools, and the downtown commercial district, and other everyday destinations.

**POLICY TRANS- 3 7** -Designate and improve appropriate nonmotorized routes for people with disabilities or the mobility-challenged, children attending school, commuter and recreational bicycling, wildlife, and nighttime safety.

**POLICY TRANS-11 8** - Increase and maintain safety of Paonia’s motorized gateways to Highway 133 and include nonmotorized access and safety in related planning and updates.

## GOAL

**Transportation 3:** ~~Major thoroughfares and~~ **Ensure street** redevelopment projects that accommodate vehicles, ~~both~~ pedestrian **and** non-motorized transport **and are ADA compliant.**

## POLICIES

**POLICY TRANS- 4 9** - Require all new streets, sidewalks, and developments to include a complete-streets approach to construction with curb and gutter collection systems for stormwater, to ensure daily travel for multimodal transportation and increase alternative transit activity to everyday destinations in Town.

**POLICY TRANS-7 10** - Identify, align, and incorporate the use of appropriate materials for sidewalks, trails, and walkways that are ADA-compliant, avoid removal of existing trees, and integrate stormwater management.



**POLICY TRANS-12 11** - Coordinate and communicate with regional transportation stakeholders, both nongovernmental and governmental, to enhance regional transportation services.

~~**POLICY TRANS-15:** Provide continuous safe and accessible routes for pedestrian and nonmotorized transport to core commercial, educational, and social activities and to accommodate residents and visitors with ADA conditions.~~

This policy seems redundant



## 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

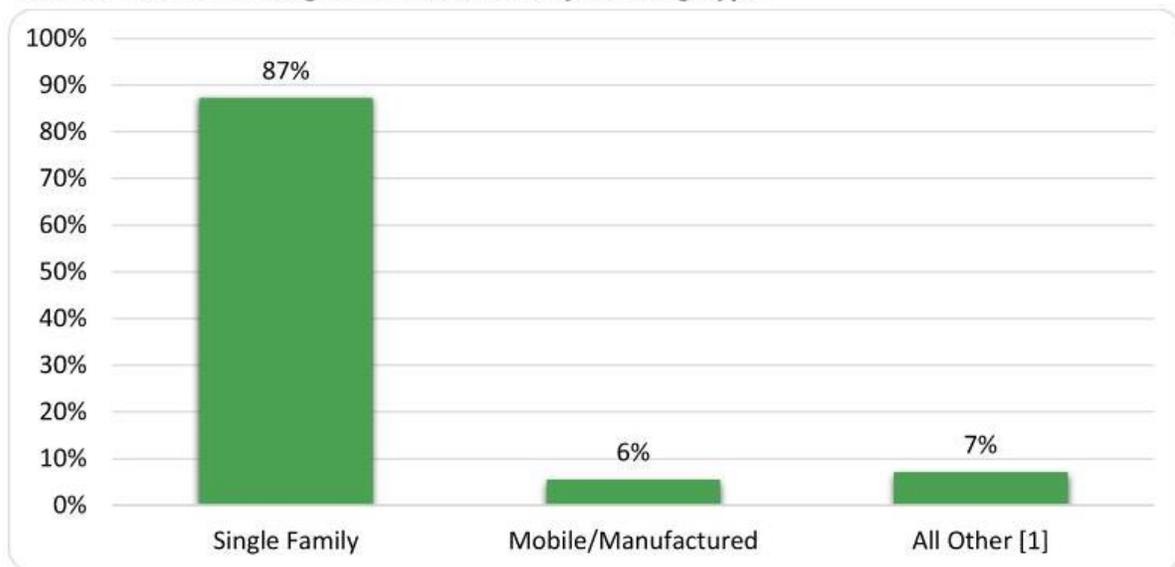


provide policy direction for maintaining and improving Paonia’s physical and visual composition, with emphasis on maintaining high-quality and diverse neighborhoods, sustaining Paonia’s strong community identity, highlighting amenities, and ensuring that a framework is established that meets the intent 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 area 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.

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

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

affordable and workforce housing. The 2023 Housing Action Plan identified allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as a top priority for the Paonia community.<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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, CRS §29-35-104.



## 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 (Consecutive water systems), 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<sup>2</sup>.
- 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 construction in any one neighborhood.

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<sup>2</sup> Census tract is defined as a small, relatively permanent geographic area within a county that is used to present data from the census and other statistical programs.



## 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<sup>3</sup> 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

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<sup>3</sup> Visitability is defined as a single-family or owner-occupied housing designed in such a way that it can be lived in or visited by people who have trouble with steps or who use wheelchairs or walkers.



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 not 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 future updates to the Town’s Land Development Code, as may be required from time to time, 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.



# PARKS, RECREATION, & TRAILS

## OVERVIEW

Paonia is home to a beautiful park system consisting of three major parks—Paonia Town Park, Apple Valley Park, and Paonia River Park (which is owned and operated by Western Slope Conservation Center, a local nonprofit)—and several smaller parks and green spaces. Volunteer Park, a popular field for youth sports, is outside Town limits on Matthews Lane, owned by Delta County, and maintained by volunteers. Surrounding the Town are undeveloped public, private, and agricultural lands with diverse wildlife populations and ample opportunities for recreation. Paonia’s access to nature and park and recreational assets are important to the well-being and character of the community. These assets provide immense value to the community and require care including long-term planning and ongoing investment.

Recreational opportunities in Paonia are growing, but are still limited for youth and elders. Amenities that support these age groups are critical to ensuring good health and well-being and maintaining Paonia’s attractiveness as a place to raise a family or retire. Area recreational opportunities—in particular hunting, mountain biking, and hiking—already attract visitors. In response to feedback from the Comprehensive Plan community engagement process, this Plan addresses tourism separate from recreation in the Economic Development element.

The 2022 **Paonia, Recreation and Trails Master Plan (PRTMP, Paonia in Motion)** convened community members and local recreation leaders to define priorities for parks and recreation. The PRTMP, **Paonia in Motion** provides a detailed plan for the development of Paonia’s parks, recreation, and trails and is considered an element of this Comprehensive Plan. ~~To date, most of the progress in implementing the PRTMP has come from the initiative of passionate and skilled community leaders and organizations collaborating with the Town.~~ The Vision, **Values Goals**, and Policies below were developed by the public in addition to the PRTMP, **Paonia in Motion**.

“Easy access to green space contributes to the quality of life that’s key to attracting and keeping residents and businesses, [and] research has shown that people who regularly use parks get more and better exercise than people who don’t. A park close by can improve the well-being of everyone from a child managing ADHD to a senior recovering from hip surgery.”  
- The Trust for Public Land

### VISION

Paonia’s parks, recreation amenities, and trail system are well-maintained, adequately funded, and recognized for the value they provide to the community first and to recreational visitors second.

## VALUES

- ~~Recreational amenities that serve and prioritize local residents.~~
- ~~Access to parks, open space, and opportunities for a full range of recreational uses.~~
- ~~Access to a green space or park within a safe 10-minute walk from each resident's home.~~
- ~~Planning and budgeting procedures for parks, recreation assets, and trails involve the public.~~

## GOALS FOR RECREATION

**RECREATION GOAL 1 - ~~POLICY REC-1:~~** Maintain, and enhance, **and increase** parks, trails, and other recreation amenities, prioritizing the needs and desires of youth, elders, and residents.

**RECREATION GOAL 2 –** **Maintain and improve safe** access to parks, open space, and opportunities for a full range of recreational uses.

**RECREATION GOAL 3 –** **Ensure that** ~~Planning and budgeting procedures for parks, recreation assets, and trails involve the public~~ **are included during the annual budgeting process.**

## POLICIES FOR RECREATION

**RECREATION GOAL 1 - ~~POLICY REC-1:~~** Maintain, and enhance, **and increase** parks, trails, and other recreation amenities, prioritizing the needs and desires of youth, elders, and residents.

**POLICY REC- ~~2~~ 1 -** Increase capacity and resources for local parks, recreation amenities, and trails through partnerships with community volunteer organizations, relevant local and regional organizations and government agencies, and private landowners.

**POLICY REC-~~3~~ 2:** - Prioritize development initiatives that preserve and enhance community access to open space.

**POLICY REC-~~3~~ 3—** **Require that new large-scale developments, and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) include recreational, greenspace and other like components within their plan.** ~~Prioritize development initiatives that preserve and enhance community access to open space.~~



**POLICY REC-3 4** - Integrate park and trail development into land use activities that take place in key areas or corridors of connectivity.

**POLICY REC- 6 5** - When developing new, or considering new uses for parks or recreational assets, collaborate with land managers and agency professionals to implement best practices that minimize the impact on wildlife (e.g., seasonal closures, habitat improvement/mitigation, and stewardship).

**POLICY TRANS-10 REC 6** - Integrate trail development and nonmotorized connectivity into development/land use requirements for properties in key transportation corridors.

Moved from Transportation Element "policy 10."

**POLICY REC- 9 7** - Focus on implementation of the ~~PRTMP~~ **Paonia, Recreation and Trails Master Plan.**

**POLICY TRANS-14 REC 8** - In alignment with Delta County's Recreation and Trails Master Plan, proactively plan and coordinate with stakeholders and other government agencies to reuse or convert the existing coal-train railroad track to regional rail or trail system that can serve members of the public and visitors should coal-train operations cease in the future.

Moved from Transportation Element "policy 14."

**RECREATION GOAL 2** – **Maintain and improve safe** access to parks, open space, and opportunities for a full range of recreational uses.

**POLICY REC- 5 9** - Increase and maintain accessibility of parks, trails, and sidewalks by ensuring ADA standards are met when appropriate and feasible.

**POLICY REC- 4 10** - Preserve and enhance safe access for all public lands that connect to the river, riparian corridor, and wildland while implementing seasonal restrictions as appropriate to protect wildlife **and avoid human/wildlife encounters.**

**POLICY REC-7 11** - Support and enhance the recreational use of rivers and creeks in local parks by improving safe public access **and while providing** advocating for sustainable flow for recreation and/or wildlife needs. Where open channels are unsafe, provide habitat mitigation and safe open water areas when re-engineering.

**POLICY TRANS-8 REC 12** - Ensure that all ~~public buildings, parks, and event venues plan for~~ and include ADA parking and entrances.

Modified from Transportation Element "policy 14."



**RECREATION GOAL 3** - Ensure that planning and budgeting procedures for parks, recreation assets, and trails involve the public are included during the annual budgeting process.

**Policy REC 13** - Discuss and decide all in-town parks and recreation amenities, including River Park additions or maintenance projects in the Town budget are adopted only after the Town has solicited public feedback typically through public meetings.

**Policy REC 14** - Ensure Town staff can reasonably manage and finance the long-term maintenance of existing parks, trails, open spaces, and facilities prior to dedicating, building, or assuming ownership or maintenance responsibilities of additional amenities.



## GOVERNANCE & COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

### OVERVIEW

Good governance and informed community participation are essential to the Town of Paonia’s ability to implement the vision and values of this Comprehensive Plan. Fostering cooperative and respectful interactions between the public and the Town at public meetings will support long-term engagement and success. Clear and regular public communication designated transparent access to decision-makers, and regular outreach by Board of Trustee members to the community will enhance trust and improve accuracy of information-sharing.

#### The four pillars of good local governance:

1. Values, ethics, and purpose
  2. Working together toward a common goal
  3. Transformational leadership
  4. Informed and ethical decision-making
- Principals, Council of Europe

### VISION

Paonia’s governance processes and operations are effective and efficient, breeding trust and buy-in from Town residents. Relevant information is easily accessed by Town residents to help them engage regularly and in constructive manner. The Town practices responsible regionalism, regularly engaging with regional partners.

### VALUES

- A culture of respect, healthy communication, cooperation, transparency, and integrity within and between Town staff, elected and appointed officials, and community members.
- Constructive and informed community engagement and partnerships.
- Regional cooperation and coordination.
- Effective and efficient professional Town staff.

### POLICIES

#### GOALS FOR GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

**Governance Goal 1** - Maintain a culture of respect, healthy communication, cooperation, transparency, **trust** and integrity **accountability** within and between Town staff, elected and appointed officials, and community members.

**Governance Goal 2** - Maintain constructive and informed community engagement, **communication** and partnerships.

**Governance Goal 3** - **Ensure town staffing is adequate, and the Town can retain qualified, professional employees.** Effective and efficient professional Town staff



**Governance Goal 4** - Engage in regional cooperation and coordination.

## **POLICIES FOR GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

**Governance Goal 1** - Maintain a culture of respect, healthy communication, cooperation, transparency, **trust** and **integrity** **accountability** within and between Town staff, elected and appointed officials, and community members.

**POLICY GOV-6 1** -Build citizen capacity through well-managed community engagement and providing volunteer pathways for interested citizens.

**POLICY GOV-6 2** - Prioritize filling any vacant elected and appointed positions such as the Planning Commission and Tree Board.

**POLICY GOV- 3** - **Ensure consistent interpretation and enforcement of existing code and resolutions to build trust in Town governance and accountability.**

**POLICY GOV-1 4** -Prioritize and **support** implementation of adopted community plans.

**Governance Goal 2** - Maintain constructive and informed community engagement, **communication** and partnerships.

**POLICY GOV-5** - Provide accessible information to the public on key issues (e.g., larger infrastructure projects and policy discussion) to promote effective participation.

**POLICY GOV-4 6** - Ensure planning and budgeting processes are transparent and informed by professionals to appropriately ~~plan and~~ prepare for the future.

**POLICY GOV-7** - **Engage with local Non-Governmental Organizations to help create platforms to engage the public and utilize the expertise that exist within the community.**

**POLICY GOV-8** - **Create dedicated public communication from the Town and members of the Board.**

**POLICY GOV-9** - **Create and publish regular, professional communication outwardly to citizens via newsletters and text messages, social media, local print media and other means of direct contact.**

**POLICY GOV- 10** **Ensure consistent usage of the Town logo, letterhead and announcements to clearly identify what is official Town business.**

**Governance Goal 3** - **Ensure town staffing is adequate, and the Town can retain qualified, professional employees.** ~~Effective and efficient professional Town staff~~



**POLICY GOV-3 11** -Build Town capacity by maintaining adequate and qualified staff and ensuring proper funding, **training** and resources.

**POLICY GOV-7 12** - Maintain a **public works and** police departments that has the staff, resources, and training necessary to provide the community with the desired level of public safety and Code Enforcement Services.

**Governance Goal 4** - Engage in regional cooperation and coordination.

**POLICY GOV-2 13** - Proactively engage with regional, state, and federal partners including but not limited to those below. Ensure local plans and policies account for and are coordinated with relevant partners.

- Delta County
- Private water companies who contract (**Consecutive water systems**) receiving Town provided treated domestic for water
- North Fork Valley Creative Coalition
- North Fork Chamber of Commerce
- **Other Local Chambers of Commerce**
- Delta County School District
- Delta County Libraries
- One Delta County
- Delta County Tourism Cabinet
- Region 10
- All Points Transit
- Delta Montrose Electric Association (DMEA)
- Gunnison Basin Roundtable
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- **Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE)**
- **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**
- **United States Forest Service (USFS)**
- **Other state and federal agencies**

# APPENDICES



PHOTO CREDIT: AVERIE CECILE

## APPENDIX A, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### PAONIA INCOME, JOBS, & WORKFORCE

Due to the nature of the food, agricultural, and entertainment businesses located here, and the associated increase in tourists that these businesses also bring in, many of Paonia’s current wage jobs are seasonal. During the public process for this plan, it was clear that the community is motivated to diversify its economic functions.

The age of residents is important to the local economy. The share of residents who are in their prime working years, those aged 25 to 54 as defined by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, has declined from 37% in 2010 to 33% in 2020. The aging population of both the state and the Town of Paonia is pronounced. The median age of residents was 41 in 2000, 44 in 2010, and 49 in 2020. This same trend is occurring in Delta County at large. A decline in the prime working-age cohort coupled with an increase in seniors creates a challenging economic environment, and local employers report difficulty recruiting and retaining workers. At the same time, industries aimed at supplying the goods and services required by a retired population are primed to thrive if they can be successfully cultivated. Housing access is another factor contributing to labor availability and is discussed in detail in the Town of Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan, an element of this Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Economic Development Capacity & Planning**

One Delta County formed in 2020 as an investor-based non-profit economic development agency for Delta County and has representation from the County and each municipality. Current key initiatives include workforce education, industrial park expansion and a large workforce housing development in the City of Delta. Beginning in 2015, its predecessor, Delta County Economic Development, commissioned an economic assessment, market assessment, and economic development strategy to better understand how to adapt to a changing economic climate. The strategy was never officially adopted, but consistent with the recommendations of the Region 10 Regional Economic Development Strategy, it argues for focusing on export-oriented sectors including organic agriculture, manufacturing, and to a lesser degree tourism.

Recently the Hotchkiss Chamber of Commerce has rebranded as the North Fork Chamber of Commerce to serve Hotchkiss, Crawford and Paonia. In addition, several industry-specific groups and shared artist spaces exist. The North Fork Chamber of Commerce and existing county-level economic development efforts like One Delta County may serve as resources for Paonia businesses if engaged regularly by Paonia leadership. In addition, some Paonia businesses take advantage of business development opportunities through Region 10.

#### **Fossil Fuel Extraction**

Historically, coal mining was a major employer and economic driver; local reserves of “clean coal” are valued for their relatively low ash and sulfur content. The town experienced significant economic impacts with the closure of two of the area’s three mines in 2004 and 2014. The remaining West Elk Coal Mine in neighboring Somerset is the most productive mine in Colorado and still employs several hundred people and has no known plans to scale back. This mine is also the largest single industrial point source of methane emissions in Colorado. Many residents are also concerned about impacts on local water quality from upstream fracking for natural gas. The importance of the fossil fuel industry



to the local economy and its simultaneous negative impacts on other industries that are dependent on stable climate and ample clean water access—in particular farming and ranching—is an ongoing tension within the economic fabric of the Paonia community.

## FUTURE ECONOMIES

### **Agriculture, Arts, & Tourism**

Paonia is known throughout the state for its excellence in organic, regenerative and biodynamic agriculture. The North Fork Valley’s West Elks American Viticultural Area (AVA) is one of only two recognized AVAs in Colorado. The draft Delta County Economic Development Strategy calls for the County to rebrand its economy as an Organic Center of Excellence as the cornerstone of a strategy focused on uplifting the entire agricultural industry and enhancing its synergies with tourism, manufacturing, and education. Though the Delta County EDS was never adopted, it provides a useful framework to inform the development of Paonia’s own agricultural economy.

A key element of this approach is investing in agritourism. Agritourism is any recreational or educational activity on a working farm or ranch which consumers can access. It is a nationally recognized entrepreneurial activity that can diversify market outlets for local agricultural businesses and simultaneously stimulate rural development of surrounding communities. The average agritourism visit provides a surplus from \$93 to \$164 per person per trip for primary purpose travelers according to data from Colorado State University. Agritourism creates economic opportunity rather than competition for agricultural producers, because an agritourism destination attracts visitors who will likely want to visit other agritourism destinations. Local restaurants and bakeries, caterers, food trucks, pop-ups, farm and farmers’ markets, and value-added businesses are positive examples of farm-to-table enterprise and retail manufacturers that serve locals and attract tourists to enjoy the rural aesthetic and purchase organic value-added agricultural products. Opportunities exist to incubate, strengthen and expand more traditional working farms as well as agritourism-related enterprises in Paonia and the NFV, including developing a regional food hub and expanding value-added food processing facilities.

The Paonia area is also home to many organic, biodynamic and climate smart or regenerative farms with highly skilled farmers. Another opportunity for economic development may lie in the cultivation of educational programs focused on these growing areas of agriculture that utilizes the existing Hotchkiss USDA and Colorado State University Organic Research Station and the knowledge and practice based in the North Fork Valley. Similar to the successful Solar Energy International, such a school could be located within Town boundaries and would increase economic value for area residents employed as teachers as well as attracted out of town visitors and students. The Colorado Workforce Development Council has indicated that agricultural and farmer education is one of its primary areas of focus and has funding available to support the development of such programming. Along this vie, the State of Colorado's 2023 Talent Pipeline Report emphasizes the agricultural sector as one of the key areas of economic development for the state. In particular, it notes that “bringing the next generation of workers into the agricultural industry is important to the sustainability of rural economies and Colorado’s agricultural sector.”

### **Wellness Tourism, Outdoor Recreation, & Retirement Services**

Tourism is a large and fast-growing industry, however unbalanced by regular year-round well-paying and placed based jobs, deplete a community and lock out locals from housing. This is a major



challenge for many communities in Colorado. However, a rapidly growing subset of tourism called, “wellness tourism” offers a less extractive and more beneficial impact on the communities that develop it. Unlike traditional tourism, wellness tourism is largely based on the authenticity of a place and the continuation of natural local attributes that our community values such as dark skies, clean water and local food. Furthermore, it has been shown to bring in more revenues and create more permanent jobs for the local population than regular tourism. Wellness tourists are high-yield tourists who bring greater economic impacts than traditional tourists and their desire for local healthy food as part of their experience can be a complement to our focus on sustaining and growing local agriculture.

Paonia boasts abundant opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts, offering a wealth of activities such as hiking, mountain biking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, backpacking, and much more. Tourists and visitors who are attracted to recreational opportunities at the North Fork of the Gunnison River, adjacent BLM land (Jumbo), Grand Mesa, Black Canyon National Park, and Kebler Pass also patronize local restaurants, wineries, lodging and gear shops. The Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan details potential economic benefits of outdoor recreation.

Colorado has the fourth fastest growing 65+ age group in the US and Paonia over the past several decades has become known as a retirement community. This is also a potentially important source of future economic activity for the Town and relates to the wellness industry with regards to trained services providers in both allopathic and complementary medicine and the food service industries. Retired seniors consume large amounts of local goods and services, and thus require a year-round workforce to support their needs. The growth in retirees will impact every age bracket in the labor force, causing robust demand for replacement workers and increased need for caregiving occupations such as direct care workers. The population of the greater Paonia CCD is also aging. Just under half (48%) of residents in this part of the valley are aged 55+, a much higher share of residents than in 2000 (29%) and 2010 (40%). Paonia currently lacks several key services that would benefit this population, including a pharmacy, walk-in clinic, and in-home care services. These services would also generate stable, year-round jobs.

### **Downtown & Creative District**

In 2013, Paonia became a Certified Colorado Creative District with a unique emphasis on arts and agriculture. A primary goal of this designation is to attract more tourists. Several organizations exist to support the arts and agriculture and to connect these sectors with the tourism industry, including the North Fork Valley Creative Coalition (which manages the Creative District designation), Valley Organic Growers Alliance, and the West Elks American Viticulture Association. The North Fork Valley Creative Coalition has contributed to the vitality of the downtown economic corridor through creative placemaking, wayfinding and signage, events and programming. In recent years new businesses, workspaces, boutiques and galleries have also opened downtown, yet as of January 1, 2024 there are approximately eight empty commercial locations along Grand or in the downtown core. At the same time, there are days when downtown food trucks’ average wait times for food range between 20-40 minutes, suggesting strong demand.

In recent years the growth of music events and festivals has grown with Big B’s summer music series and Pickin in the Park. These events bring out locals and bring in tourists from the area and around the state. They can also attract other business to come and vend in Town, however, Paonia does not currently collect sales tax for vendors who are selling in Town limits but not registered here. Lodging



businesses see boosts during these times, however the overuse of short-term rentals, especially in summer months to accommodate visitors has presented a challenge for both year-round Paonia residents and seasonal workers in need of housing.

### **Trades & Skilled Labor**

The absence of a business that provides year-round, living-wage jobs—other than the remaining coal mine—is felt in the local economy. A key growth opportunity for the local economy is in workforce development, particularly in skilled labor and trades.

Skilled labor is generally characterized by advanced training (expertise attained through experience and certifications or licenses in their specific fields) and likewise generally corresponds with higher wages. Three converging factors—an aging workforce (both Paonia and Colorado have a majority of workers in the aging category), the rural nature of the Town, and what is projected to a rapid rise in automation of the US workforce by AI technology—provide a background for a focus on developing trade and skilled labor education. Solar Energy International (SEI) offers an excellent example of this with their training program. SEI also is an example of the kind of business that brings in people year-round for training.

The State of Colorado has emphasized the need to invest in the infrastructure workforce, advanced manufacturing workforce, medical workforce to support an aging population, and rural workforce. These careers can be stable and lucrative. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, many of the fastest-growing career fields in the US are skilled trades.

“Rural communities have often had a difficult time retaining younger generations for number of reasons, including wages, education, and social issues. Communities depend on younger, more educated workers and leaders to grow and survive, this poses a serious risk.”

Report: Rural Economic Resiliency in Colorado (Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade)

### **Construction**

Since 2020, housing construction has been constrained by the moratorium on water taps. Despite the moratorium, General Contractors, carpenters, electricians, plumbers and other related trades are in demand. The Town of Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan calls for 100 new homes to be built in and around Paonia over the next five years, with 25-35 units built “as quickly as possible” after the moratorium is lifted. Further, much of Paonia’s housing stock is considered “extremely old” and will require repairs. Skilled tradespeople will be increasingly needed as construction accelerates over the coming decades.

## **CHALLENGES**

Central to the continued sustainable development of the art, service, agricultural, and tourism sectors will be policies aimed at regulating short term rentals and the creation of affordable housing to ensure that artists and wage workers can continue to reside within the community. The tension between growth in tourism and housing for locals due to the rise of short-term-rentals is detailed in the Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan.

The success of export industries such as agriculture and tourism depend largely on macro-economic and ecological trends. Both the Delta County Tourism Board Marketing Plan and the Region 10



Economic Development Strategy point to the negative economic impacts of natural disasters (fire, drought, fluvial hazards, etc.). Pollution from fossil fuel extraction and other heavy industries could seriously damage the region's reputation for organic excellence. Thus, protecting and caring for the watershed and ecosystems that underpin Paonia's economy, as detailed in the Infrastructure Element of this Plan, is an essential strategy for economic resilience.

## RESOURCES

Delta County is designated an enhanced rural enterprise zone by the State of Colorado. This designation allows local businesses to receive state income tax credits and sales and use tax exemptions for specific business investments. Taxpayers who contribute to enterprise zone projects may also earn income tax credits. Taking advantage of these tax credits and exemptions could help existing businesses become more viable as well as incentivize and lower the barrier to entry for new businesses.

The Colorado Rural Resiliency and Recovery Roadmaps program provided technical assistance and grants for regional teams of rural communities to drive economic relief, recovery, diversification, and long-term resilience.

The Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP), formerly known as Colorado Blueprint 2.0, provides free technical assistance, consulting, and funding to help rural communities create economic development strategies

The Career Development Incentive Program, or Career Development Success Program, provides financial incentives for school districts and charter schools that encourage high school students, grades 9-12, to complete qualified industry credential programs, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, and internships.

The Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center supports a more resilient, diverse, and competitive food system. This Center is designed to be a node for our region's small and mid-tier food and farm businesses and local and regional food sector development initiatives by supporting cross-regional collaboration, providing and analyzing relevant and timely data, and serving as a gateway for USDA programs and other third-party funding opportunities, with a focus on underserved farmers, ranchers, and food businesses.



## APPENDIX B, INFRASTRUCTURE

### WATER

The contents of Appendix B have been moved to the Infrastructure element. Therefore, this Appendix is proposed for deletion.

~~Water is precious in the West, and especially so for Paonia. The uniqueness and age of Paonia's water system combined with the level of investment required in the coming years for upgrades, and transitions in climate and temperature, presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to not only rebuild the old system but to also reimagine how the Town and relevant regional stakeholders can work together to preserve the performance of the water source and enhance the longevity of the watershed.~~

~~Water in Paonia flows through three distinct systems:~~

- ~~• the North Fork of the Gunnison River and its tributaries, which provide for vegetation and wildlife and which cool, clean, and green the region;~~
- ~~• the river-connected ditches and their laterals that supply water for in-town and out-of-town agricultural users and in-town landscape use; and~~
- ~~• the spring-fed source water system that supplies municipal households and commercial users with drinking water.~~

### Wildlife & Irrigation

~~The river and ditch systems which support Paonia's unique local microclimate, ecology, wildlife, and agriculture are fed throughout the summer by the reserve of water in Paonia Reservoir, and from the North Fork of the Gunnison that flows from the West Elks and Ragged Mountain ranges. Paonia Reservoir currently has a total holding capacity of 14,674 acre-feet. Its capacity has shrunk 25% since 1962 due to heavy sedimentation from Muddy Creek, its main water source. The reservoir is managed by the US Bureau of Land Management and the Army Corps of Engineers.~~

### Municipal

~~The municipal system which provides Town treated water is supplied by approximately 25 springs that form five spring complexes which ring the north and west basins of Mount Lamborn. The Town owns the land for Steven's springs, but the majority of springs are located on US Forest Service lands and private property.~~

### Past, Present, Future

~~Paonia has a unique municipal water system, unlike any other in the State of Colorado. Leading achievements in water engineering at the time it was completed, the Paonia Project which made the Paonia reservoir, and the series of ditches and pipes constructed around the five spring complexes surrounding the north and west slopes of Mount Lamborn fed the growth of mining and agriculture in the region. However, complexity, age, change in climatic patterns, and human-caused desertification pose substantial challenges to the viability of the water system. The spring-fed municipal water system needs extensive repair, from restoration of the watershed itself to the treatment plants and the elaborate networks of pipes and valves that deliver water into and around Town.~~



### **Water Efficiency & Redundancy**

While customer water use efficiency has increased in the past decade, there remains room for further gains from water efficient appliances and practices in both commercial and residential use. There are substantial efficiency gains to be had from increasing performance in the water delivery system. Approximately 23-39% of water produced is currently unaccounted for in delivery between treatment plants and customers. As of the beginning of 2024, the first steps are already underway with the implementation of the first phase of the Capital Improvement Plan and associated rate increases which will support upgrades and fixes to this system and reduce overall water loss. Due to the overall age and nature of the gravity fed system some level of leaks will remain and should be taken into account when looking at overall water availability going forward.

Redundancy in the water treatment system is critical to the resilience of the system. In 2019 the Town suffered a critical water supply issue that was exacerbated by the fact that “the lower treatment plant and 1 MG storage tank were not in service during this event [thus making] half of the Town’s raw water supply, half of its treatment capacity, and 33% of its finished water storage capacity unavailable to support demand during the emergency.” Current and future proposed upgrades to address these issues including the rehabilitation of the Clock treatment plant, have been outlined in the 2023 Water Capital Improvement Plan.

### **Water Volume & Source Reliability**

The springs that feed the Town of Paonia are highly sensitive to drought conditions due to their strict dependence upon snowfall and runoff season. While Colorado weather is already well known for its variability, the increase in severity and duration of drought, increased winter and spring temperatures, increased duration and severity of spring winds, increased rates of sublimation of snowpack and decreases in soil moisture due to vegetation degradation, and changes in precipitation patterns moving away from snow to rain mean there is and will continue to be less and less reliable or regular snowpack, and also that the moisture from melting snow is less likely to translate into liquid water run-off. The Town of Paonia recognizes these threats to its water supply.

Paonia’s watershed has high groundwater recharge potential and semi-arid climates are known to be especially sensitive to changes in vegetation and surface water making the system also potentially viable for regeneration and land management intervention to support both system water retention and ongoing supply.

“Precipitation type (rainfall versus snowfall), amount, and temporal and spatial distribution are important for determining the amount of recharge that a groundwater system may receive, particularly as infiltration from precipitation to the shallow bedrock groundwater systems.”

Average annual precipitation determines the climate of the project area, and in the case of the North Fork Valley, the topographically higher terrains near Grand Mesa and West Elk Mountains are sub humid and cool and have excellent recharge potential, both from rainfall in the spring, summer, and autumn months, and from the melting of snowpack throughout the winter and early spring, especially areas covered by gravels and slope deposits.



The small water cycle is more important to local precipitation patterns than the large water cycle. In fact, it is estimated that mean global precipitation overland is 720 mm, of which only 310 mm is from the large water cycle and 410 mm comes from the repeated evaporation-precipitation process of the small water cycle. —Walter Jehne

The Town of Paonia has a designated Municipal Watershed within its broader watershed, as defined in the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Source Water Protection Plan. Most of this land lies within the Gunnison National Forest, which is managed by the US Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. Other landowners in the protection area include the Bureau of Land Management and privately owned lands, which sit under jurisdiction of Delta County. Both BLM and USFS lease lands for grazing in these areas to private ranchers. Work to restore and regenerate the watershed will need to be conducted in concert with relevant landowners and stakeholders.

### **Rates**

In 2023 the Town of Paonia increased rates for water, sewer and trash. Future increases in rates will be required to meet the base financials required to secure funding to implement the 2023 Water Capital Improvement Plan. While the Town will not wholly rely on water rate revenue, rate increases are likely essential for obtaining other funds in the form of grants and low interest loans needed to fully fund capital improvements.

## **WASTEWATER**

Paonia's Wastewater Treatment Plant manages wastewater collection from residential and commercial customers. The treatment plant was brought online in 2006 and consists of a manual bar screen, two aerated lagoons, a settling/polishing pond, a serpentine chlorine contact chamber and a dichlorination feature. It has a permitted rated capacity of 0.495 million gallons per day (MGD) and typically treats 0.15 MGD. Wastewater from the system is discharged to the North Fork of the Gunnison River.

The 10.5 miles of pipe that make up the wastewater collection system are entirely gravity driven and consist of service laterals, manholes, and gravity sewer mains. The collection system is composed of approximately 63% PVC piping and 37% vitrified clay piping (VCP). The majority of the clay pipe is past its expected lifetime and an estimated 20,000 ft of PVC pipe will need to be replaced in near future making the entire system in need of upgrade in the near future.

It is worth noting that overall treatment levels of water treated are lower in the winter. The Water Tap Moratorium also has an effect here: as long as it remains in effect, or even as 7-14 new homes are added as is planned in the 2023 budget, wastewater treatment levels are unlikely to grow materially. With an ongoing increase in winter temperatures, it is worth considering the use of green infrastructure, in particular constructed wetlands in future wastewater treatment upgrades. Studies have shown the positive impacts that wetlands have in semi-arid regions when it comes to local temperature regulation, in particular when it comes to extreme heat mitigation, as they have been shown to lower ambient temperatures by 7-14 degrees as compared to similar areas where they are not present.



## SANITATION AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

The Town provides garbage collection services to approximately 900 accounts within Town limits. There are no municipal composting or recycling services. The majority of trash collection accounts are residential with a varying amount of commercial. Trash services offer 33-Gallon Cans, 2- and 3-cubic yard dumpsters and oversized items. Residents may also leave yard trimmings in bundles no bigger than 1'x3' neatly tied next to the trash bins. Many individuals compost personally or report bringing food scraps to neighbors with farms or livestock. There are at least two private recycling haulers that service Paonia. Aluminum cans may be dropped off for recycling outside of Don's Market and there are cardboard and paper recycling bins in the parking lot of City Market in Hotchkiss. Delta County supports free recycling at the Double J Recycle Center in Austin. CHT Resources operates a composting facility for organic waste in Austin.

Private recycling services combined with the free drop-off options appear to be servicing the area well. Curbside recycling and composting is unlikely to prove economical given the level of at home and on-farm composting and the small service area. However, the community ethos of self-sufficiency has led to a high individual participation rate in both manufactured and organic materials recycling.

According to the 2023 Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan consultant team, the average residential rates for water, sewer and trash total \$320 per month. These rates are higher than the national monthly average which is \$171 according to Energy Star and the Colorado state average which is \$241. Simultaneously, the assessment found that roughly one of every five homeowners and two of every five renters are cost burdened. While the state of Colorado offers some financial relief for heating costs through the Low-income Energy Assistance LEAP program, the high cost of water and sewer fall outside of LEAP's coverage. Rates are expected to increase in both water and wastewater over the next five years—the base rate for residential water is expected to rise from \$43.00 in 2024, to 48.30 in 2028 and wastewater rates will raise two dollars between 2023 and 2024 (and will likely need to be raised again in the coming three years).

## URBAN FOREST

All urban trees require management as they mature in the landscape. To increase tree diversity and canopy resilience in Town, new tree species must be consciously curated and properly planted and cared for. To sustain the urban forest's vital functions in Paonia, funding is needed to take care of existing trees and plant new ones. As Paonia's urban forest ages and comes under increasing stress from drought, increased heat, and high winds, formalizing care for the Town forest is critical. As trees reach maturity new smaller trees must be planted adjacent to them to support successful succession. The 2021 Paonia Street Tree Inventory provides a robust framework with direction for street-tree care and the establishment of regular and professional maintenance and replacement that will support their longevity and reduce risk to the Town. However, this report is just the first step, and several follow-on actions are suggested in this Plan to establish the quality of service required to maintain our valuable urban canopy.



## APPENDIX C, TRANSPORTATION

### OVERVIEW

Paonia sits to the south of CO State Highway 133, which serves to connect Paonia to Somerset, Crested Butte, and the Roaring Fork Valley to the east/northeast, and to the larger cities of Delta, Montrose, and Grand Junction to the west. Paonia is not connected to any major cities or transportation hubs by public transit and is difficult to access without a car. Transit between Paonia and other communities in the North Fork Valley and Delta County is limited to a few services that provide access to community facilities like schools and healthcare facilities. The Town's remote location may be a limiting factor to the Town's accessibility. However, with its compact size and tree-lined streets, the Town of Paonia itself is already a reasonably walkable and bikeable community. Town residents who responded to the 2020 Revitalizing Main Street study provided the following information on which mode of transportation they use when they visit Grand Avenue: 88% drove a personal automobile, 56% walked and 30% rode a bike. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one mode, indicating that many folks who drive downtown also visit by walking or biking.

"The size, shape and speed of automobiles have changed. There is more interest in the walkability of the Town and we see more bicycles, e-bikes, skateboards and scooters on Grand Ave. With an aging, yet active, population there are more people walking and riding bikes than ever. Sidewalks and crosswalks must accommodate wheelchairs and walkers."

- CDOT Revitalizing Main Street, Interim Report 2021

### GETTING TO PAONIA

The nearest international airports are in Denver (4.5 hours) and Salt Lake City (5.5 hours), with regional airports located in Montrose (1 hour) and Grand Junction (1 hour 20 min).

Amtrak train stations are located in Glenwood Springs (1 hour 30 min) and Grand Junction (1 hour 15 minutes).

The shortest route to reach Paonia from I-70 or Roaring Fork Valley (Aspen, Snowmass Village, Basalt, Glenwood Springs, and Carbondale) to the north is by crossing McClure Pass (elevation 8,755 ft), which is occasionally closed for hours or days due to inclement weather, particularly in the winter. In late spring/early summer 2023, damage from a sinkhole caused Highway 133 north of Paonia to be closed for nearly two months, severely impacting tourism and commuting between the North Fork Valley and Roaring Fork Valley until the highway was repaired by Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). Following this incident, CDOT began a \$33.4 million slope stabilization project to reduce erosion and improve highway safety and functionality. Alternate routes from Denver to Paonia are via Grand Junction or Gunnison, adding an additional 50 minutes to 1.5 hours of travel time.

From nearby cities, Carbondale and Delta, there are no regular public transit options available to reach Paonia, nor are there any taxis or commercial ride sharing services in Paonia or the surrounding areas. Travelers without a car can hitch, rideshare, or pay for a private ride to Delta or Glenwood Springs and then utilize the Bustang public bus service operated by CDOT, which travels along I-70 to and from Denver and between Grand Junction and Durango. Currently there are no known plans to expand Bustang service to the North Fork Valley. From Glenwood Springs or



Carbondale travelers can also utilize the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority bus system to reach Aspen Airport.

## HEALTHCARE ACCESS

Lack of regional and local public transportation makes it challenging to connect Paonia and the North Fork Valley to larger cities where hospitals are located. EMS ambulance services are provided by North Fork EMS, a local five-member board special district funded by a mill levy. The ambulance service is responsible for responding to all 9-1-1 calls in a 1,500-square-mile area over three counties as well as maintaining three stations in the region. The nearest nonemergency healthcare clinic is in neighboring Hotchkiss (9 miles/17 minutes). This location does not provide 24 hour services. The nearest hospital and emergency room with 24hr services is in Delta (26 miles/39 minutes), with more specialized care available in Montrose (50 miles/1 hour) and Grand Junction (71 miles/1 hour 20 min). Several private taxi services exist which accept insurance and Medicaid to pay for travel to healthcare visits. Health First Colorado (Colorado’s Medicaid program) operates its own Med-Ride service available 24/7 for nonemergency healthcare visits. In addition, the nonprofit All Points Transit offers low-cost trips predominantly for seniors and disabled people (healthcare visits can be covered by Medicaid) and the North Fork Senior Connections nonprofit runs Neighborly Connections, a volunteer-based program to help seniors get to their healthcare visits.

## SCHOOL ACCESS

Delta County Joint School District 50J buses students from Paonia to North Fork High School, the area’s only public high school, located in Hotchkiss (11 miles/20 minutes from Paonia); and to the North Fork Montessori School, located in Crawford (16 miles/25 minutes) from Paonia). The Paonia K-8 school and the North Fork School of Integrated Studies are both located within walking distance of downtown Paonia.

## COMMUTING

Commuting moved to Economic Development Element.

~~A significant portion of people employed within the Town of Paonia commute from outside of Town, and a significant portion of people who reside within Town limits commute to work elsewhere. This dynamic is due in part to relatively high housing costs paired with relatively low wages in the local economy and is addressed in greater detail in the 2023 Town of Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan (source of the data in the chart below).~~

Commuter Type	Source	Percentage of Workforce
<del>Employed in Town of Paonia, live outside Town</del>	<del>US Census</del>	<del>79%</del>
<del>Employed in Paonia CCD, live outside this area (US Census)</del>	<del>US Census</del>	<del>53%</del>



Employed in Paonia area, live outside this area	2023 Employer Questionnaire from Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan by Urban Rural Continuum	20%
Live in Town of Paonia, employed outside Town	US Census	77%
Live in Paonia CCD, employed outside this area	US Census	71%

## STREETS & SIDEWALKS

Streets and Sidewalks moved to Transportation element

Paonia has four primary roads that run east to west and approximately 32 streets and alleyways that cross at least two of these longer thoroughfares from north to south. Collectively these equal approximately 22 miles of road, over 98% of which are asphalt roads, some concrete paved roadways, and some single lane gravel roads (largely alleyways or short dead-end branches). Only two of the four east/west streets, “2nd” and “3rd,” cross the railroad tracks that separate about one third of the Town to the east, while two thirds, including the downtown, remain to the west of the tracks. The downtown street is “Grand Avenue,” not to be confused with “Main” which is one street to the west of the commercial and creative downtown core.

The Town maintains roads within its boundaries: the intersection of 4th and Grand to the north, intersection of Samuel Wade and Highway 133 to the west, the intersection of Mathews Lane and Niagara Ave, intersection of 1st St and Lamborn Mesa Rd, the intersection of Colorado Ave and Meadowbrook Blvd to the south, the intersection of 7th St and Black Bridge Rd to the east. The side streets between Highway 133 and the North Fork of the Gunnison River are the responsibilities of the County.

There are two main connection points from Town to Hwy 133: 4025 Road (also referred to as the “P” Road), which enters to the west of Town and becomes Third Street, and State Highway 187, which follows a southern direction from State Highway 133 and becomes Grand Avenue. Both of these roads utilize bridges that cross the North Fork of the Gunnison River. Access routes to the Town from the south include Matthew’s Lane from the southwest, 4100 Road from the south and Dry Gulch from the southeast.

According to the 2021 Asset Inventory, while there are some recent sections of newly paved concrete road, “most sections of Paonia asphalt roads exhibit moderate to severe surface wear and defects referred to as raveling and polishing, [while] virtually all sections of the roads exhibit some type of surface cracking. The PASER scale, which is a 1-10 rating system for road pavement condition, was used in asset evaluation which showed that only 4 major street sections were rated in “excellent” condition, 17 in “good” while 68 sections received “poor” or “fair” ratings and 11 section received “very poor” or “failing”.

According to the “Paonia in Motion” Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan there are 40 miles of sidewalk area, while less than half of this area has sidewalks installed. Much of the existing sidewalk infrastructure lacks curb ramps and or ends abruptly at the neighboring yard. By Town municipal



~~code, “every owner or occupant of any premises within the Town having a sidewalk or walkway on or adjacent to the premises shall have the duty to keep the sidewalk clean of snow and ice.” A sidewalk fee is currently assessed for all residents and businesses. Even with less than 50% of sidewalk areas paved, this fee does not cover annual maintenance needs. The current patchwork of sidewalk pavement is unnavigable for wheelchairs and dangerous for walking, performs poorly in heavy rain and under icy conditions, and is not designed to be copacetic with urban and street trees as they continue to grow.~~

~~Revenue for the Town of Paonia’s Sidewalk Fund is generated by a \$3.00 per month sidewalk fee, approved in 2013, that is paid by in-town residents. The Town’s Sidewalk Fund is designated for the repair and replacement of existing sidewalks within Paonia. This fee is set to expire in December 2024 unless voters approve a renewal/extension.~~

## WALKABILITY & BIKEABILITY

Like many towns in the West, the street system in Paonia was originally a series of dirt or gravel roads with horse access and then a common speed limit for cars and yield signs at key intersections. As roads have been paved, the traffic system has not formally evolved to control for speed or passthrough/commercial traffic routes. Neither has it formally incorporated other means of transportation such as biking or pedestrians. While surveys have shown that many people in Paonia ride their bikes to school, to do errands or to social outings, or reach the Mount Jumbo trail system, there are no designated bike lanes on Paonia’s streets. Likewise, there are no dedicated bike paths nor bike lanes to connect Town residents to Big B’s or other businesses along Hwy 133, nor to Volunteer Park on Mathews Lane which is heavily used for youth sport leagues and other activities. There is no continuous system of sidewalks or routes for residents to walk downtown or for children and youth to walk to school.

“Do everything possible to promote responsible, progressive, growth. Walking-friendly towns tend to promote excellent business opportunities, which is what I want to see more of in this town.”  
- Participant in the 2020 CDOT Main St Revitalization Survey

In addition to repairing and maintaining sidewalks, walkability and bikeability can be enhanced by dedicating routes and building new pathways for these modes of transport. There is a prime opportunity to support measures that encourage biking and walking along 3rd Street while funneling nonresidential vehicle traffic to 2nd Street. 3rd Street is almost entirely residential east of Onarga Avenue and is already heavily used by pedestrians and cyclists accessing the parks and schools, while 2nd Street is currently zoned commercial and light industrial from Main Street to Oak Avenue. At a Town of Paonia Board meeting in June 2023, citizens requested ToP reduce the speed limit while improving signage and enforcement for safety purposes, particularly on 3rd Street and Rio Grande Avenue near Apple Valley Park. In addition, the Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan provides recommendations for a trail along Mathews Lane to improve safety and connectivity between Town and Volunteer Park. Clearly directing vehicular and nonmotorized traffic along distinct, designated routes—supported by well-maintained sidewalks, and bike lanes, and trails; appropriate speed limits and signage; and safe crossings—would improve safety and traffic flows through Town.



## AIRPORT

The North Fork Valley airport is located 4 miles outside Paonia on Back River Road and is jointly owned by Delta County and the Town of Paonia. The airport currently services a low volume of local and recreational flights, with potential to offer connecting commercial flights to regional airports in the coming decade. The Town should work proactively with Delta County to understand the potential to develop the Airport as both an Enterprise account and as a source of tourism income for the area.

Airport and railroad moved to  
Transportation element

## RAILROAD

The iconic coal train that runs through Paonia was inaugurated in 1902 as the North Fork Line of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. The route was built to service the coal industry, with the added benefit of serving the agricultural regions up and down the valley, including transport of fruit, cattle, and passengers. What is now the North Fork Branch of the Union Pacific Railroad is still utilized to export coal from the West Elk Mine in Somerset. The North Fork Branch connects Somerset to the City of Delta, where the North Fork Branch ties into the Montrose Branch. The Montrose Branch runs between the City of Montrose and the City of Grand Junction. The anticipated lifetime of the remaining active West Elk coal mine is projected to be less than 20yrs from the date of this Plan's creation. There is both state and national precedent for railways that are no longer in commercial use to be converted to trails.

Key Takeaways from the 2020 CDOT Main St Revitalization Interim Report:

- Strong perception of inadequate parking on Grand Ave
- Lack of awareness of alternate parking options (side streets, public lots, etc.)
- General support for more trees, flowers, green space, benches, bike racks, and art in the downtown economic corridor

## PARKING & SIGNAGE

A community survey from the 2020 CDOT-funded Main Street Revitalization study identified a strong perception of inadequate parking on Grand Ave coupled with a lack of awareness of alternate parking options (side streets, public lots, etc.) as one of the main limitations of the downtown business and creative district.



# APPENDIX D, GOVERNANCE & COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

## OVERVIEW

Critical themes that emerged through this comprehensive planning process are the professional development of directors and staff, modernization of internal business practices, increased transparency in budgeting, dedicated public communication from the Town and members of the Board, and transparent planning and execution of public projects by the Board of Trustees. Proactive management of the Town's human resources, including updated job descriptions, professional licensure, incentivizing performance, and ensuring accountability all can further improve effectiveness, and efficiency. Consistent interpretation and enforcement of existing laws, codes and regulations will work to build trust in Town governance and accountability. Maintaining fully staffed and operational bodies such as the Planning Commission and Tree Board will support ongoing implementation and project execution. Finally, the public has expressed its desire for the Town to explore formal, feasible, and legal ways to engage citizen volunteers help to standardize Town processes for volunteer engagement. Engaging local NGOs to help create platforms to engage the human capital and expertise that exist within the community will help develop positive relationships and make use of the good will and expertise in the community.

Appendix D content moved to the Governance and Community Participation Element in the form of Policies. Therefore, this Appendix is proposed for deletion

## COMMUNICATION

Regular and professional communication outwardly to citizens via newsletters and text messages, social media, local print media and other means of direct contact will help to counteract an old culture of the "rumor mill" as the primary source of information regarding Town workings, plans and other formal processes. Consistent management of Town logos, letterhead and announcements will further help to solidify what is official Town business and what is not. Direct outreach to stakeholders for key Town Business planning and policy implementation will work to build trust and achieve desired outcomes.

## CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the community engagement process for this Plan the community expressed its desire to support key areas where they have expertise or passion. The City of Fort Collins offers an outstanding model for formal citizen engagement that the Town of Paonia could explore adopting or adapting. Through a strategic process working with a qualified third party and the community, the City of Fort Collins identified a mission to "promote volunteer involvement to improve services and create community" and created a Strategic Plan for Volunteer Engagement.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION

Effective regionalism requires ensuring local plans and policies account for and coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions and other relevant regional stakeholders. To achieve the goals identified in this plan, to continue to develop our local capacity, and to take on the challenges associated with the



~~restoration of Paonia's watershed, Town of Paonia should seek to designate official representatives to collaborate regularly with, and participate in, regional planning efforts.~~



## APPENDIX E, REFERENCE & RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

- American Planning Association's Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places, 2015
- Asset Inventory and Capital Improvement Plan, SGM, 2021
- Bottom-Up Delta County Economic Development Goals, 2011
- CO 133 Paonia Slope Stabilization, Colorado Department of Transportation, 2023
- CO Creative Districts
- Colorado Bike Law
- Colorado Department of Transportation Main Street Revitalization Grant Application, 2022
- Colorado Department of Transportation Main Street Revitalization Grant Town of Paonia Interim Report, 2021
- Colorado Department of Transportation Main Street Revitalization Grant, 2020
- Colorado Growing Water Smart Guidebook: The Water Land-Use Nexus
- Colorado State Demographer Office Paonia Profile, 2023
- Comprehensive Plans. Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2023
- Connected Communities: Local Governments as a Partner In Citizen Engagement and Community Building, 2010
- Delta County Economic Assessment, 2015
- Draft Delta County Economic Development Strategy, 2015
- Delta County Land Use Code & Zoning Maps
- Delta County Market Assessment, 2015
- Delta County Tourism Marketing Plan, 2017
- Developing a Sediment Management Plan for Paonia Reservoir, Kent Collins, Hydraulic Engineer, Bureau of Reclamation, Denver, Colorado
- DOLA Affordable Housing Guide for Local Officials
- Draft Paonia Master Plan, 2018
- Draft Paonia Master Plan, Barbara Peterson, 2012
- Draft Paonia Master Plan, EMB Consultants, 2021
- Economic Power of Heritage and Place
- EPA Water Quality Scorecard
- Global Energy Monitor Wiki, West Elk Coal Mine
- **Growth Management Agreement for the Unincorporated Areas Surrounding the Town of Paonia, 2010**
- Highway 133 Corridor Plan, 2010
- Impact of wetland change on local climate in semi-arid zone of Northeast China. Liu, Y., Sheng, L. & Liu, J., 2015
- JDS Hydro Water System Evaluation, 2021
- Land Use Law presentation by Leslie Klusmire
- Land Use Planning in Colorado
- Local Government Land Use Authority in Colorado
- Master Plan Primer, DOLA
- Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan for Delta County - Volume 1, 2018
- Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan for Delta County - Volume 2, 2018
- North Fork Valley and Terraces Groundwater System, Delta County, Colorado, 2013



- North Fork Valley Heart & Soul Project, 2014
- North Fork Valley Vision, 2020
- Paonia Comprehensive Plan, 1996
- PRTMP, 2022
- Paonia Municipal code (Ord. No. 2014-04, § 1, 1-13-2015)
- Paonia Tree Inventory Report Final, 2020
- Region 10 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Ridgway Master Plan, 2019
- Rural Economic Resiliency in Colorado
- Snoflo.org, 2023
- Snowpack Sublimation - Measurements and Modeling in the Colorado River Basin, 2009
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## APPENDIX E, PUBLIC COMMENTS

Please see Paonia Comprehensive Plan (2024) Public Comments Document for all public comments submitted during this planning process.



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TOWN OF PAONIA

OCTOBER 15, 2024 UPDATE “CLEAN” VERSION



PHOTO CREDIT: STEVE HUNTLEY

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **Town of Paonia Mayors & Board of Trustee Members**

Paige Smith (Mayor) and Mary Bachran (Mayor, Retired). John Valentine (Mayor Pro-Tempore), William Brunner (Trustee, former), Walter Czech (Trustee), Lucy Hunter (Trustee) Rick Stelter (Trustee), Kathy Swartz (Trustee), Mike Heck (Trustee) David Knutson (Mayor Pro-Tempore, former), Morgan MacInnis (Trustee, former), Thomas Markle (Trustee, former)

## **Town of Paonia Planning Commission**

Suzanne Watson (Chair), Paige Smith, Bill Brunner (former), Lyn Howe, Peter McCarthy, Lucy Hunter, Mary Bachran (former), David Knutson (former), Steve Klisset (former)

## **Town of Paonia Staff**

Stefen Wynn, Town Administrator  
Samira Vetter, Town Clerk  
Ruben Santiago, Deputy Town Clerk  
Cory Heiniger, Public Works Director  
Matt Laiminger, Police Chief

## **Town of Paonia Committees**

Parks Committee, and Tree Board

## **Consultant Team**

Calla Rose Ostrander (Phoenix Rising Resources, LLC), Marissa Mommaerts (Resilience & Regeneration LLC), Molly Wheelock and Mara Mantoiu (Studio MW), Scott Brown (Active Peace), Jess Dervin-Ackerman (JDA Consulting), Shay Coburn (Urban Rural Continuum)

## **Past Plans, Studies, and Work**

The 2024 Town of Paonia Comprehensive Plan draws information and inspiration from the following:

- 1996 Paonia Comprehensive Plan
- Draft Paonia Master Plans including EMB Consultants (2021) and Barbara Peterson (2012)
- 2010 Highway 133 Corridor Plan
- 2010 Growth Management Agreement for the Unincorporated Areas Surrounding the Town of Paonia
- 2010 North Fork Valley Vision 2020
- 2014 North Fork Valley Heart & Soul Project
- 2017 Town of Paonia Zoning Map
- 2022 Paonia in Motion: Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan (PRTMP)
- 2022 Town of Paonia Community Strategic Planning Session
- 2023 Town of Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan

For a full list of all documents and research please see Appendix E, Reference & Resource Documents.

**This project was supported by a generous grant from the  
Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).**

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## ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Municipalities in Colorado are authorized to prepare comprehensive plans as long-range guiding documents as prescribed in the Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) Sections 31-23-206 through 209, which refer to the development, modification, and approval of procedures for such a plan.

The purpose of the Paonia Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) is to establish a course of action for addressing the pressures of future growth and development in the area while maintaining the Town's rural agricultural setting. The Plan is an officially adopted advisory document that outlines the community's vision and goals for the next ten to twenty years, and beyond. However, it is also a document that should be revisited and updated every five to seven years to ensure that it continues to meet the community's vision and goals for the future.

The Plan is comprehensive in nature—addressing issues related to land use, growth and development, community character, economic development, infrastructure needs, and tourism, parks and open space, and other topics of importance to the community. The Plan establishes goals, and policies to help achieve the community's vision. It also provides a blueprint for future growth within the Town of Paonia and its defined boundaries to be implemented through the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations and other regulatory tools. Achieving the vision and goals outlined in the Plan will be implemented incrementally over time through day-to-day decision-making.

According to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), the comprehensive plan “promotes the community's vision, goals, objectives, and policies, establishes a process for orderly growth and development, addresses both current and long-term needs, and provides for a balance between the natural and built environment.” Paonia's last comprehensive plan was adopted in 1996.

The discipline of planning has evolved significantly since Paonia's last comprehensive plan was adopted in 1996. Rather than limiting a plan's scope to land use and physical development, the American Planning Association emphasizes sustainability, equity, responsible regionalism, and especially community participation. **The process of creating a plan is just as important as the outcome.** The initial goals for this process, which the Town established in their call for the Paonia Comprehensive Plan, were as follows:

- Develop a shared vision and a clear, accessible plan to guide our community toward a thriving and resilient future.
- Utilize a participatory community engagement process that builds trust in local government and momentum toward addressing community needs and goals.

## PLAN ORGANIZATION

### Part I: Introduction

This part includes a brief background on the Town of Paonia and the vision articulated for the Town.



**Part II: Summary of Community Engagement Events** (This discussion has been relocated to a new Part numbered II)

This part provides a summary of the three public engagement sessions held in 2023 and early 2024.

**Part III: Plan Elements**

Each element contains a specific vision as well as a list of values in the form of Goals. Under each Goal is a series of Policies that create a path for the community to achieve the vision and enhance the Goals. The Policies provide guidance for day-to-day and long-term decision-making for the Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, Town staff, and community. They are not listed in any particular order.

**Appendix**

The appendix provides background on several Plan Elements, and resources and research used to inform this Plan.

**PLAN TIMELINE**

- RFP was released in October 2022.
- Contract was awarded in March 2023.
- Kickoff meeting was conducted with the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees and existing plans and background materials were reviewed in March 2023.
- Community engagement workshops took place in April 27 and June 10, 2023.
- Future Land Use Plan public workshop was held on March 3, 2024.
- Planning Commission Public Hearing: Infrastructure Element held on March 13, 2024
- Planning Commission Public Hearing: Economic Development and Governance and Community Participation Element held on April 3, 2024
- Planning Commission Public Hearing: Transportation and Parks & Recreation, Trails and Urban Forest Elements held on May 1, 2024
- Contractor’s presented Plan information and updates to the ~~Seven~~ Board of Trustees at seven meetings held from December 2022 to June 2024
- The Contractor’s final draft Plan was submitted on June 21, 2024.
- Joint Board of Trustees & Planning Commission Meeting: presentation of plan and determination of process and timeline for adoption held on July 18, 2024.
- Planning Commission Meeting to discuss the final draft of comprehensive plan held on July 22, 2024.
- Planning Commission Meeting to discuss the final draft of comprehensive plan held on August 5, 2024.
- Planning Commission Meeting to discuss the final draft of comprehensive plan held on August 19, 2024.
- Joint Board of Trustees & Planning Commission Meeting: Discussion & Consideration of Comprehensive (Master) Plan Completion held on September 4, 2024
- Planning Commission Meeting to discuss proposed changes to the June 21<sup>st</sup> final draft of comprehensive plan held on October 15, 2024.
- Final public hearing was held by the Planning Commission on [insert month] 2024.



## ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Members of the consulting team met with the Planning Commission and Town Boards/Committees, including the Tree Board and Parks Committee, multiple times throughout the process.
- The consulting team coordinated with Urban Rural Continuum; a consulting firm hired by the Town of Paonia to conduct a Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan at roughly the same time as this Comprehensive Plan.



# PART I: INTRODUCTION



PHOTO CREDIT: MICHELLE PATTISON

## PAONIA'S COMMUNITY VISION

The community vision that informs this Plan was inspired by the work of the North Fork Heart & Soul project and was further developed with the public through the Town of Paonia Comprehensive Plan community engagement process.

### VISION

Paonia is a unique and welcoming small town with strong ethics of self-reliance and care for our families and neighbors. We honor and respect Paonia's rich history and heritage, including arts, agriculture, mining, and the original inhabitants of this land, the Ute.

We prioritize maintaining our small-town character, economic and cultural diversity, ~~and~~ creativity, ~~and~~ existing community resources and as a Dark Sky internationally designated Dark Skies Town, the protection of our nighttime skies. Any development or growth in our community must align with and enhance these core values focusing on strategic infill, **small scale** projects that complement our Town's unique identity rather than **large scale** expansion. We share a deep connection to our rural landscape and natural resources.

We support opportunities to cultivate ecological regeneration and stewardship, protection of wildlands, healthy living, and a thriving place-based economy.



## ABOUT PAONIA

### PAONIA

Paonia, Colorado, is a small, statutory town approximately 500 acres in size which is situated in an agricultural valley nestled between the North Fork of the Gunnison River and the West Elks range of the Rocky Mountains. Known for its peaches, cherries, vineyards, cider, ranches, small farms, breathtaking views, and access to nature and the arts, Paonia is consistently ranked as one of the best small towns in Colorado and is home to the highest density of organic farms in the state of Colorado. Those who call Paonia home cherish and seek to protect its small-town character, rural landscape, agricultural heritage, surrounding wildlands, and self-reliant way of life.

### HISTORY & HERITAGE

The North Fork Valley was part of the ancestral homeland of the Ute people. In 1881, the US federal government closed the North Fork Valley Ute Reservation and relocated the remaining Ute people to a reservation in Utah. Soon after, Paonia was settled by Civil War veteran Samuel Wade and preacher William Clark, who had initially traveled to the area with Enos Hotchkiss. Samuel Wade officially incorporated Paonia in 1902, naming it after his favorite flower, the peony, which he brought to the settlement along with the first fruit trees. Farming, ranching, and mining became some of the Town's primary industries. Paonia is a misspelling of the genus for peony – *Paeonia*.

### CULTURE & CHARACTER

The floral reference to peonies of the Town's name inspires pride in the community's natural and agricultural heritage. The North Fork Valley's long history of cattle ranching, mining, and pioneering spirit remains today. Early horticulturalists living in the valley planted Paonia Town Park with trees that now, at more than 100 years old, offer a beautiful, shaded haven for both community members and tourists. Paonia Town Park is home to popular festivals and gatherings including the Mountain Harvest Festival, the BMW "Top of the Rockies" Rally, the Pickin' in the Park summer concert series, and Cherry Days—one of the longest running 4th of July festivals in Colorado.

The people of Paonia value their cultural, political, and economic diversity. Ranchers, miners, and families who have been in the area for generations share the Town with artists and creatives, entrepreneurs, organic farmers, outdoor enthusiasts, wellness practitioners, and an increasing number of people who work remotely. Neighbors with different lifestyles and political views often come together and help each other in times of need. A 2014 community-led initiative called "The North Fork Heart & Soul Project" succeeded in capturing many of the shared values of Paonia's diverse residents; those values have informed this Plan. During the engagement process for this plan, community members expressed their values related to Paonia's culture and character, including the following:

- The small-town community feel—a culture that is welcoming, safe, respectful, and inclusive
- Community resources and offerings such as a library, schools, a radio station, festivals, art and cultural creatives, churches, and nonprofits
- Honoring the history and heritage, farms and festivals, arts and creative culture



## DEMOGRAPHICS

The Town of Paonia's population has remained relatively stable over the past 40+ years; the population in 2023 is just 3.5% higher than in 1980 with a total of 1475 residents. Paonia's population has aged, with 43% over age 55, while the percentage of adults between 18-54 has decreased over the past decade. However, single working adults and families are also drawn to the area because of the high quality of life, sense of community, safety, and access to both traditional and alternative forms of education.

## ECONOMY & GROWTH

Coal mining was Paonia's economic lifeblood for decades and remains a source of pride as well as a source of income for the community. In recent years two of three nearby mines have closed; however, the remaining nearby West Elk Mine in Gunnison County is currently the most productive mine in Colorado and offers well-paying mining and wholesale trade jobs. The economic impact of the other closures was strongly felt by the community and has begun to be partially offset by the growth of other industries, particularly remote work (supported by the introduction of high-speed internet in 2017) and tourism.

The 1996 Comprehensive Plan and subsequent land use planning, regulations, and codes sought to limit sprawl and preserve rural character. Over the past three decades, Paonia's remote location and distance from downhill skiing and other high-end recreation has provided some natural buffer to the growth and development seen in many Colorado resort towns.

Growth has generally been constrained since the Town's adoption of a moratorium on the sale of new water taps or other new uses of domestic water that went into effect on January 29, 2020. This prohibition on new taps limits the ability for new residential and commercial construction in the Town of Paonia and the 27 water companies (consecutive systems) in the surrounding mesas receiving water from Paonia's water treatment facility. Measuring the amount of source water available from the Town's spring fed system throughout the year will be the first step in contemplating the lifting of the moratorium and what level of growth (if any) can be supported by the available water supply. In addition, an increase in housing demand was observed between 2020 – 2023 determined mainly by the migration of people living in urban cores relocating to Paonia during the COVID pandemic.

These two factors have greatly increased the cost of housing in Paonia. Housing price increases have outpaced a rise in wages by a ratio of 5.5 to 1, displacing residents and creating barriers for businesses looking to hire seasonal and full-time wage workers.

## EDUCATION, CIVIL SOCIETY, & HEALTH CARE

For a small community, Paonia has abundant educational opportunities. Children have access to diverse preschools and elementary schools within the Delta County School District including Paonia K-8 elementary school; the North Fork School of Integrated Studies, a Waldorf-inspired public charter school with associated Backpack Early Learning Academy Preschool; and North Fork Montessori in Crawford. Teenagers living in Paonia attend the public North Fork High School in neighboring Hotchkiss.



Paonia is rich in arts, as well as vocational and social nonprofits—many located in the downtown Creative District including the iconic Paradise Theatre, KVNF Community Radio, Blue Sage Center for the Arts, and more. The community is proud of its library, a hub of activity in a beautiful building constructed in 2009. Just outside Paonia is Solar Energy International, a long-running renewable energy vocational school that attracts students from around the world. Environmental, agricultural, and service organizations round out Paonia’s civil society, along with churches of many denominations. Finally, nonprofits and private businesses provide access to extracurriculars and education including healthy cooking, organic farming, art and music lessons, karate and dance classes, yoga and exercise, and nature and horse camps, to name a few.

Healthcare within the Town of Paonia is limited to private enterprises including Paonia Care & Rehabilitation Center, a licensed 60-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility, and several private practices including physical therapy, dentistry, acupuncture, chiropractic, and numerous other alternative and integrated wellness practitioners. The nearest public clinic is West Elk Clinic in Hotchkiss, part of the Delta Health system (which features multiple clinics throughout the county) and Delta County Memorial Hospital in Delta.

## ECOLOGY, CLIMATE, & WATERSHED

Paonia is located at an elevation of 5,682 feet (about 1.73 kilometers) and is known for its mild climate that has historically been especially suitable for growing fruit. Much of the Town of Paonia and surrounding agricultural land is green thanks to a network of privately managed irrigation systems, which are governed by local ditch companies and complex water laws. The surrounding wildlands are at a similar elevation and include dryland/high desert juniper-sagebrush ecosystems. The North Fork of the Gunnison River runs through the west side of Town, and its riparian corridor is home to abundant wildlife including beavers, mule deer, elk, fox, coyotes, and more. The Town is surrounded by vast expanses of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the US Forest Service (USFS)—which has an office in Paonia, and private ranchers with grazing permits on public lands.

The Paonia region is one of the more extreme climate hotspots in the country. According to the US Geological Survey, Delta County, most of the Western Slope, and parts of Utah have already experienced warming of more than 3.9 degrees Fahrenheit. Like the majority of the Colorado River Basin, Paonia suffers from greater drought stress and has heightened risk for catastrophic wildfire. Paonia’s municipal source water springs are located on USFS land, which is leased for cattle grazing. Irregular and decreased snowpack levels and changes in snowmelt patterns are already affecting the infiltration dynamics of the mountain springs that feed the municipal domestic water system and numerous privately managed water systems in the surrounding unincorporated areas.



# **PART II: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS**

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

### Public Engagement Session #1

The first Comprehensive Plan community engagement session was held on April 27, 2023, and attracted more than 60 participants. The main objective for this session was to gather feedback on an initial set of community values to guide the Plan. In addition, participants had the opportunity to provide input on all components of the Plan—including Vision, Goals, and Policies—through interactive ranking, brainstorming, and group-discussion activities. Some of the key issues and themes identified were

- protecting the rural, agricultural, and small-town character of Paonia;
- prioritizing the municipal water system and other key infrastructure and services;
- addressing the housing emergency;
- finding a balanced role for tourism as an economic driver;
- identifying climate resilience and ecosystem health; and
- providing transparency and improved communication between the Town and community.



## Public Engagement Session #2

The second Comprehensive Plan community engagement session was held on June 24, 2023, and had 44 registered participants. The main objectives for this session were to develop a shared community vision and dig deeper into key issues that were brought forward during the first community engagement session. The Community Vision statement and the Vision statements included at the beginning of each element were developed by the attending in this session and informed by the research conducted for this Plan. Some of the community priorities identified during this session are presented below.

### Land Use and Housing

- Preserve and increase open space and river access
- Develop and implement a housing action plan
- Regulate short-term rentals
- As appropriate, increase residential density rather than sprawl
- Conduct a zoning study
- Create design standards and preserve historic character

### Infrastructure

- Plan and implement needed water system repairs, improvements, and maintenance
- Follow the guidance of the Town engineer (or firm) to understand source water availability
- Integrate planning and maintenance for water, sewer, streets, sidewalks, and street-trees to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness

### Economic Development

- Retain the existing downtown commercial corridor
- Provide support for small businesses and entrepreneurship
- Grow Town capacity for economic development

### Parks and Recreation

- With community and partner organizations, prioritize and implement recommendations from the Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan
- Prioritize youth recreation and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, including safe routes to schools and designated nonmotorized and accessible routes

### Governance and Participation

- Facilitate engagement events to improve working relationship between Town and community members
- Improve accessibility of publicly available information
- Provide training and resources to educate the Town and the public on good governance and participation
- Hold productive and healthy Town Board meetings that enable community participation



### Public Engagement Session #3

The third community engagement session was held on March 3, 2024, and included 47 people. This session focused on presenting a draft Future Land Use Plan and map along with the public comment, existing planning, environmental, and geological elements that informed it. Members of the public, Town Staff, and elected officials were given worksheets to provide written comments. Members of the public expressed support for the focus on the following:

- Develop commercial property in the Downtown Core instead of along Highway 133
- Preserve culture and character of the Downtown Core and residential neighborhoods
- Create urban agricultural area designations along the river, in the Highway 133 corridor, and in specific areas of Town
- Integrate cottage industries into more business-heavy areas of Town
- Acknowledge and take wildlife corridors into consideration with all zoning and development
- Provide safe access to parks and places of education and recreation for children

Some members of the public expressed surprise regarding areas with geological hazards including land slides and flooding, and indicated they were not previously aware of these.



# PART III: PLAN ELEMENTS



PHOTO CREDIT: AARON WATSON

SKIES ΔLIVE

# LAND USE AND FUTURE GROWTH FRAMEWORK

## OVERVIEW

Growth outside of Town limits is currently defined by the Paonia - Delta County Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA) and the Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan (see Figures 1 and 2 below). 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.

Paonia has the ability through its policies and regulations, intergovernmental agreements, and other tools to help inform where and how growth will occur in the future, the types of growth the community would like to see and guide the character and form of future development. Goals and policies ensure that future growth occurs incrementally in a manner that is consistent with Paonia's values and maintains a commitment to the needs and desires of local residents.

## VISION

Maintain Paonia's rural character and slower pace of life that are interconnected with the landscape, seasons, and thriving community life. Ensure that urban agriculture thrives; the community continues to feel connected to the surrounding farmland and natural landscape. Wildlife corridors, dark nighttime skies, greenways, and viewsheds are protected and cherished. Ensure the Town has walkable, tree-lined streets that surround a small but vibrant historic downtown. Make sure 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.

## GOALS FOR LAND USE

**LAND USE 1** - Preserve open space, agricultural land, interconnection with nature and wildlife habitats, and dark nighttime skies.

**LAND USE 2**- Maintain the town's rural character, historic heritage, and farming and ranching legacy.

**LAND USE 3**- Clear planning for a growing community with well-managed, growth objectives.

## POLICIES FOR LAND USE

**LAND USE GOAL 1** - Preserve open space, agricultural land, interconnection with nature and wildlife habitats, and dark nighttime skies.

## POLICIES



**POLICY LU 1** - Prioritize efforts to reduce light pollution in compliance with Town of Paonia Code, Chapter 19, Article 7 Outdoor Lighting Regulations in order to maintain the natural darkness (dark skies) to preserve the nighttime view of the stars and the many other benefits of dark skies.

**POLICY LU 2**- Ensure responsible growth and development that supports open space by referring to and regularly revisiting and adjusting (as needed) the Paonia Growth Management Agreement with Delta County that applies to the 3-mile Urban Growth Boundary surrounding the Town of Paonia and the Town of Paonia Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan.

**POLICY LU 3** - Maintain nodes of open space along Highway 133 in order to establish a clear separation between commercial development and avoid “stripping” development along the arterial.

**POLICY LU 4** - Ensure that new development does not significantly impair wildlife resources.

**LAND USE GOAL 2**- Maintain the town’s rural character, historic heritage, and farming and ranching legacy.

**POLICY LU 5** – Balance, economic growth, housing and redevelopment with the desire to preserve Paonia’s rural character.

**POLICY LU 6**- 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.

## GOAL

**LAND USE GOAL 3**- Clear planning for a growing community with well-managed growth objectives.

**POLICY LU 7** - Approach development with clear and consistent regulations and procedures that are effective and fair.

**POLICY LU 8** - Support diverse and affordable housing options.

**POLICY LU 9** - Encourage energy efficiency for residential and commercial structures.

**POLICY LU 10** -Ensure that community desires exemplified in the Future Land Use Map are considered when contemplating the annexation of properties leading up to and along the Highway 133 corridor to increase Town revenue.

**POLICY LU 11** - Prioritize development that activates vacant spaces and rejuvenates blighted properties.

**POLICY LU 12** -Ensure that development and annexation proposals result in growth that is compatible with Paonia’s character and provides community benefits and enhancements.

**POLICY LU 13** - Encourage infill and redevelopment within the Town’s existing limits and where infrastructure and services already exist.



**POLICY LU 14-** Encourage collaboration between the Town, developers, and other relevant stakeholders to reduce the cost of extending utilities and roads to prospective property as much as feasible.

**POLICY LU 15 -** Ensure that prior to annexation all existing utilities and roads are brought up to Town standards before approval of annexation, or that a plan is adopted ahead of annexation that ensures the roadway will be brought up to Town standards, which could include special assessments levied on properties for annexation.

**POLICY LU 16 -**Encourage that the leadership for members of key neighborhoods and consecutive water systems existing in areas contemplated for annexation have been engaged in the deliberations of annexation.

**POLICY LU 17 -** Discourage close proximity of incompatible land uses.

**POLICY LU 18 -** Enhance the Town’s resiliency to natural disasters and environmental hazards.



Figure 1: Growth Management Agreement for the Unincorporated Areas Surrounding the Town of Paonia

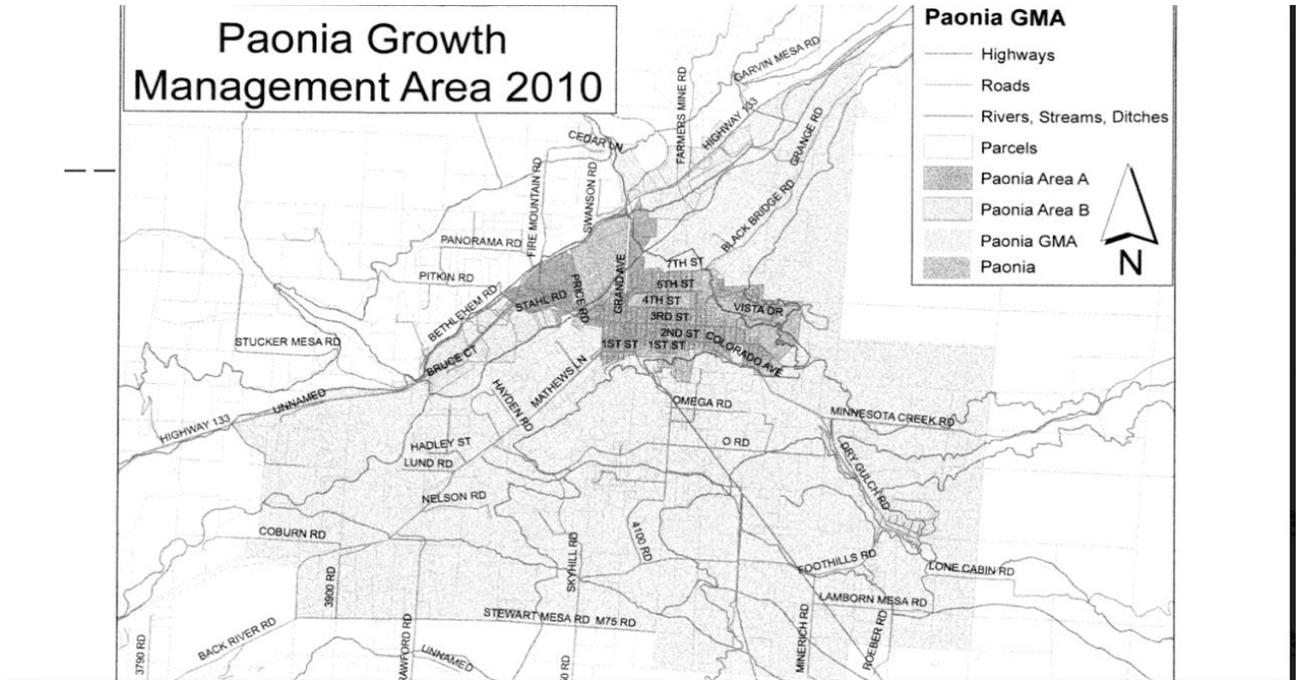
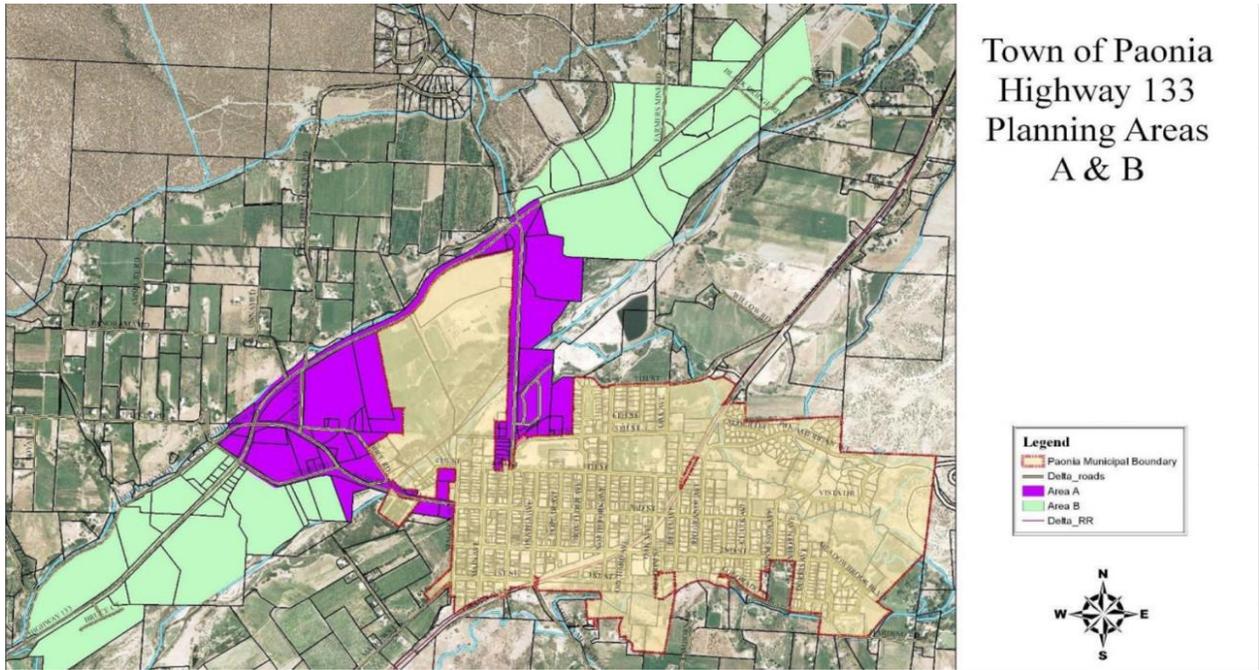


Figure 2: Town of Paonia Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan



## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This Future Land Use Plan consists of a Future Land Use Map (Figure 3 below) and various broad land use categories to inform growth and development in and around Paonia. This includes where and how growth should occur, what types may be appropriate, and how does the potentially approved growth impact the general character of the Town.

The Future Land Use Plan is a tool to be used to help guide the general type, location, and intensity of future development. This tool is intended to be referred to when making decisions about growth in and near Paonia, and provide for consideration of the visions, goals, and policies adopted in this Comprehensive Plan. It is intended to help guide decision making for the Town Board, Planning Commission, and staff by:

- Serving as a reference for day-to-day decision making with regards to physical growth in the Town limits and surrounding 3-Mile Growth Area;
- Guiding consideration of future rezoning and annexation requests;
- Informing future updates to existing zoning districts and development standards;
- Tracking the Town's overall capacity for future development;
- Informing infrastructure and facility planning; and.
- Ensuring future development is supportive of the community's vision.

### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Preserve Paonia's small-town feel and rural and historic character.
- Maintain the Town's agricultural legacy and its connection to agricultural and public lands.
- Identify areas to accommodate the increasing demand for affordable housing.
- Identify areas for gradual increases in density.
- Maintain the economic vitality of the historic downtown.
- Maintain commercial development along Grand Avenue and cluster new commercial development near the Town's gateways, and still preserve the rural aesthetic of the gateways.
- Identify areas for creative mixed use and business opportunities.
- Preserve and increase public access to open space and the river.
- Protect wildlife habitat and riparian corridors.

### MAP AREA

Future land use categories presented in the Future Land Use Map have been associated with land within the Town of Paonia's boundary as well as Planning Areas A and B as designated by the Town of Paonia Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan. The future land use for land outside those areas was not discussed in detail throughout the planning process; however, feedback indicated there is a desire to preserve the existing uses and character of such land. Agricultural land, open space, and the general rural feel of these areas is valued by the community. Expansion of existing neighborhoods into areas not assigned a future land use category should be limited to those areas where it is practical to do so, like where utilities and access are readily available.



## MAP ELEMENTS

### Future Land Use Categories

#### Downtown Commercial Core

Composed of the vibrant commercial heart of Paonia with a unique historic character, this area is oriented toward local businesses and pedestrian access. Restaurants and historic buildings, including the Paradise Theater, and the small urban Polis Park, make up the gravitational center of the community. Commercial activities generally include a mix of retail, professional offices, and restaurants in existing buildings. This district helps maintain local businesses that serve the community's daily needs and provides a core for activity and visitors. New development should respect the character of existing development, and streetscape improvements are encouraged to improve the pedestrian experience.

- Primary Uses: Retail, restaurants, offices, other commercial uses
- Supporting Uses: A range of residential uses typically mixed in with other uses, pocket parks and plazas, institutional

#### Mixed Use

These areas support a range of uses that serve and complement the Downtown Commercial Core while transitioning to residential areas. The commercial and residential mix contributes to maintaining access to services and provides diverse housing and employment options. Mixed Use areas are more auto oriented than those in the Downtown Commercial Core but should still be walkable and connected to nearby amenities. Uses should be compatible with neighboring uses by limiting nuisances and mitigating their impacts through screening or other measures.

- Primary Uses: All types of residential; commercial including restaurants, offices, art studios, and retail
- Supporting Uses: Institutional, home businesses, small-scale creative industries

#### Light Industry

This category supports employment opportunities within the Town that are more intense than Downtown Commercial Core and Mixed-Use areas. These areas are typically near major roads for easy access. Uses in these areas should mitigate impacts on neighboring uses, especially residential. While this category is not included in many locations on the Future Land Use Map adopted with this Plan, it is anticipated that there will be a growing interest in this use; therefore, this land use category will be available for future map updates and amendments.

- Primary Uses: Small-scale manufacturing and fabrication, commercial, creative industries
- Supporting Uses: Storage, warehousing, wholesale retail, agricultural processing, and institutional

#### Mixed Neighborhood

Part of the oldest residential areas within the historic town grid, this area is predominantly defined by historical architecture styles. Residential density is slightly higher than other residential areas due to the proximity to the Downtown Commercial Core and Mixed-Use areas. Maintaining the historic character and general scale while allowing for increased density is the focus in this area.



- Primary Uses: Residential including single-family, duplex, and triplex dwellings
- Supporting Uses: Home businesses, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), institutional

### **Town Original Neighborhood**

This category encompasses the central residential neighborhood in the historic town grid, and is characterized by tree-lined streets and alleys. This area has older architecture (from turn of the century to the 1940s); this, along with its walkability and small neighborhood feel, is highly valued by the community. Development and redevelopment in this area should respect the scale and character of existing development.

- Primary Uses: Single-family dwellings
- Supporting Uses: Home businesses, ADUs, institutional

### **Traditional Neighborhood**

This category includes more recent residential development (post-1950), with mostly single-family homes not always on the Town's historic grid. It represents a transition from the historic core area toward the lower-density residential areas that border agricultural land and open space. Residential density in this area could increase gradually over time with the addition of ADUs or duplex dwellings.

- Primary Uses: Single-family dwellings
- Supporting Uses: Duplex dwellings, home businesses, ADUs, institutional

### **Conservation Neighborhoods**

This comprises a low-density areas along the edge of Town, dedicated to preserving open space and other natural resources. These areas act as a transition between the Town and the surrounding rural land. These areas offer a pedestrian and visual connection to the Town core and the recreational areas outside the Town limits. Conservation measures such as clustered residential uses and conservation easements are encouraged here to protect natural resources and to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards, like flood and fire. Where existing agricultural uses exist, they are encouraged to continue as desired by the property owner.

- Primary Uses: Single-family dwellings
- Supporting Uses: ADUs, parks and trails, natural resource preservation, institutional

### **Urban Farmland**

This area is defined by agricultural land that supports the practice of cultivating crops, raising livestock, and agritourism. It creates a transition between Town living and the surrounding rural farmland and contributes to conserving open space and agricultural land. This category plays a critical role in preserving Paonia's rural history and character and in reinforcing its local culinary farm-to-table tradition. Development in this area is minimal but could include clustered and single-family housing to support agriculture uses and land conservation.

- Primary Uses: Agricultural
- Supporting Uses: Residential, uses that support agriculture (e.g., worker housing and small-scale retail), open space conservation, institutional



### **Historic Core**

This central area of Town is defined as approximately from Niagara Avenue to Rio Grand Avenue, and from First Street to Fourth Street. The buildings and streets in these areas reflect the original settlement of Paonia around the turn of the 20th century and into the 1940s. While not all properties are historic, this area generally displays a unique architectural character made up of a traditional street and alley grid with tree-lined streets displaying the rich historic legacy that is highly valued by the community. Redevelopment and new development in this area should be compatible with the general character and scale of the existing lots and development.

### **Gateways**

The two main gateways to Paonia play a crucial role in connecting the Town to Highway 133 and represent key entry points into Town. They provide opportunities for beautification, improved signage, and safe pedestrian paths.

- Samuel Wade Road represents the main access point from the highway. While some Mixed Use is desired in this area, it is crucial to preserve agricultural land and the scenic viewsheds. Any development near this gateway should be concentrated in order to maintain Paonia's small-town, agricultural character.
- Grand Avenue is the secondary access to the Town from the highway. Any development near this gateway should focus on landscaping and beautification, integrating the Paonia River Park, and creating a safe bike and pedestrian-friendly access between the Historic Core and the Paonia K-8 School.

### **Water/Wildlife Corridors**

These areas consist of the Gunnison River and Minnesota Creek along with a 200-foot buffer. These areas often overlap with identified wildlife habitats and migration corridors as well as recreational opportunities. In these areas it is important to recognize and protect nature including wildlife, vegetation, habitat, and migration corridors as well as the river and creek corridors. These corridors should be the focus of further conservation and protection efforts, as well as improved accessibility for recreation where appropriate.



Figure 3: Future Land Use Map

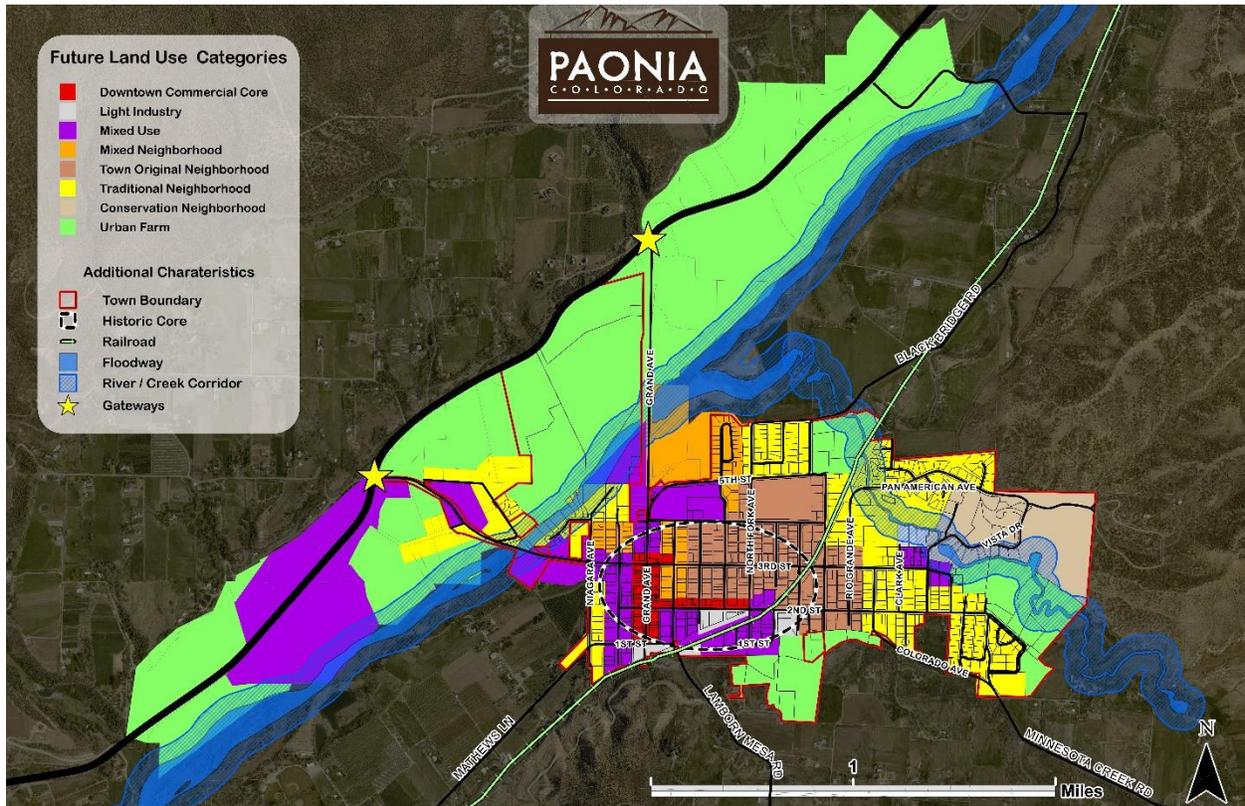


Figure 4: Public Places and Facilities

To be inserted



Figure 5: Hazard Areas

To be inserted



## INFRASTRUCTURE

### OVERVIEW

The Town of Paonia is responsible for managing key infrastructure that collectively shapes the community's quality of life and economic viability. This includes the full water system from raw water to treated water for distribution, the collection and treatment of stormwater, and the collection and discharge of wastewater. The majority of source water infrastructure is aged and was designed prior to the impacts of desertification, long-term drought, and increasing heat.

A vital component of the Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that the Town can continue to provide enough water to adequately supply and deliver to the Town's Residents and the extended Paonia community. The availability of water resources and utility infrastructure determines how Paonia grows and are essential considerations of future land use choices.

As a full-service community, Paonia owns and maintains its own water and wastewater utilities, manages the conveyance of stormwater from Town streets, and provides solid waste collections services. The associated infrastructure system is aging, but is still valued at \$11 million, and represents the Town's largest asset. This system includes an operational water treatment plant, wastewater treatment plant, many miles of pipes, fire hydrants, pumps, tanks, valves and other critical infrastructure to ensure exceptional water, wastewater, and stormwater service for the Town and the extended Paonia Community.

Provision of utilities and services outside of the Town's capability, such as energy and telecommunications, will be evaluated for adequacy and potential improvements as new development is proposed.

In 2022, the Town began a historic investment in its water utility and started designing systematic improvements to the water supply, treatment and distribution systems of the Town. Through these recent and ongoing utility planning efforts, Paonia also plans to promote water smart principles and increase sustainable planning efforts. These goals will be balanced with the need to address current market challenges while ensuring that natural resources aren't unduly affected. The Comprehensive Plan and companion plans such as the Paonia, Recreation and Trails Master Plan (Paonia in Motion Plan), Water Capital Improvement Plan, and Paonia Municipal Code, should continue to be evaluated and updated as needed to ensure alignment.

Our trees and areas of grass are an essential part of our "green" urban infrastructure. The character of Paonia and quality of life enjoyed by residents is shaped in no small part by the substantial presence of our Town's forest. Paonia has been designated by the Arbor Day Foundation as Tree City USA.

#### **Water Tap Moratorium:**

In January 2020 the Town of Paonia held a special election for the Citizens Initiative Petition and Water Moratorium which, upon passage, suspended the sale of all new domestic water taps that the Town of Paonia was not already legally obligated to serve. The citizen initiative arose from a critical water supply issue occurring in February of 2019 that resulted in the entire water system losing service. The decision as to if, when, and under what circumstances the moratorium should be lifted is included in the original moratorium and amendments.



Streets and sidewalks are often considered infrastructure but are included in the Transportation Element of this Plan.

## VISION

Paonia’s robust infrastructure provides high-quality and reliable service to current residents. The systems are managed proactively such that today’s needs are met while future needs are understood and planned for. The water and wastewater systems are healthy and resilient. The water supply is strong, and the wastewater system plays a positive role in regional water cycle management. Paonia’s waste recovery systems are well maintained and the people of Paonia are encouraged to participate in manufactured and organic material reuse and recycling. Paonia is home to a thriving, safe, and uniquely beloved Town forest that is both resilient and adaptive to a changing climate and the aging of individual trees within the larger canopy. All parts of Paonia’s ecology—people, plants, animals, and natural cycles—are valued and considered with each investment/decision.

Figure 6: Existing Infrastructure

To be inserted





*Photo Credit: Stefen Wynn*

The following goals and policies provide direction for all aspects of physical planning. Goals are defined as desired ideals and a value to be attained. Policies articulate a course of action that guides governmental decision-making to meet the goal.

### **GOALS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENT**

**INFRA – 1** Planning for infrastructure that is comprehensive, innovative, and forward thinking, and ensure current customers and new development maintain a balance between water supply and demand.

**INFRA – 2** Plan, budget, operate and maintain, construct and invest in stormwater, water treatment, and green infrastructure that support quality public services in health, water availability, and safety.

**INFRA – 3** Infrastructure that is dependable and provides locals stability and economic prosperity.



- INFRA – 4** Investing regularly in quality public infrastructure and timely maintenance.
- INFRA – 5** Support a healthy watershed that supports both water quality, water production, and groundwater recharge.
- INFRA – 6** Ensuring local businesses and residents can build economic prosperity and enhance food security.
- INFRA – 7** Provide a wastewater utility by exploring and pursuing innovative solutions for capital asset development.
- INFRA – 8** Ensure sanitation services that are well maintained, professionally staffed, and in compliance with all state laws.
- INFRA – 9** Encouraging solid and organic material resource recovery including reuse, recycling, and composting and ensuring the highest and best use of discarded materials.
- INFRA – 10** Ensure the continuation of the wonderful quality of life, ecosystem, and increased walkability and real estate values that our town forest provides.
- INFRA – 11** Protect the community from adverse flooding and pollution impacts of runoff with efficient and progressive stormwater management practices.
- INFRA – 12** Cultivate improved waste and materials management that supports source reduction, sustainable diversion, and regulatory compliance through accessible services and programs for residential and commercial land uses.
- INFRA – 13** Protect and maintain the unique quality of our dark nighttime skies through stewardship of the night sky that enhances the quality of life, our ecosystem and the economy.

## **POLICIES - GENERAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **GOALS**

- INFRA – 1** Planning for infrastructure that is comprehensive, innovative, and forward thinking, and ensure current customers and new development maintain a balance between water supply and demand.
- INFRA – 2** Plan, budget, operate and maintain, construct and invest in stormwater, water treatment, and green infrastructure that support quality public services in health, water availability, and safety.
- INFRA – 3** Infrastructure that is dependable and provides locals stability and economic prosperity.



**INFRA – 4** Investing regularly in quality public infrastructure and timely maintenance.

## **POLICIES**

**POLICY INFRA-1:** Ensure that all residents can obtain clean water and essential utility services.

**POLICY INFRA-2:** Prioritize investments in water, wastewater, stormwater, and reuse that builds confidence in the services and are reliable for existing users while considering future needs.

**POLICY INFRA-3:** Maintain a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to proactively prepare for infrastructure maintenance and upgrade needs as well as other capital projects into the future. Regularly use the CIP for planning and budgeting improvements each fiscal year.

**POLICY INFRA-4:** Coordinate infrastructure repairs and upgrades across utilities and other property maintenance needs. Coordinate with overlapping agencies to minimize the number and scale of excavations when completing improvements to Town infrastructure.

**POLICY INFRA-5:** Maintain utility rates that cover the costs of the service provided and consider future needs by conducting regular rate studies.

## **WATER**

Water is precious in the West, and especially so for Paonia. The uniqueness and age of Paonia’s water system combined with the level of investment required in the coming years for upgrades, and transitions in climate and temperature, presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to not only rebuild the old system but to also reimagine how the Town and relevant regional stakeholders can work together to preserve the performance of the water source and enhance the longevity of the watershed.

Water in Paonia flows through three distinct systems:

- the North Fork of the Gunnison River and its tributaries, which provide for vegetation and wildlife, and which cool, clean, and green the region;
- the river-connected ditches and their laterals that supply water for in-town and out-of-town agricultural users and in-town landscape use; and
- the spring-fed source water system that supplies municipal households and commercial users with drinking water.

### **Wildlife & Irrigation**

The river and ditch systems which support Paonia’s unique local microclimate, ecology, wildlife, and agriculture are fed throughout the summer by the reserve of water in Paonia Reservoir, and from the North Fork of the Gunnison that flows from the West Elks and Ragged Mountain ranges. Paonia Reservoir currently has a total holding capacity of 14,674 acre-feet. Its capacity has shrunk 25% since 1962 due to heavy sedimentation from Muddy Creek, its main water source. The reservoir is managed by the US Bureau of Land Management and the Army Corps of Engineers.



## Municipal

The municipal system which provides Town treated water is supplied by approximately 25 springs that form five spring complexes which ring the north and west basins of Mount Lamborn. The Town owns the land for Steven’s springs, but the majority of springs are located on US Forest Service lands and private property.

## Past, Present, Future

Paonia has a unique municipal water system, unlike any other in the State of Colorado. Leading achievements in water engineering at the time it was completed, the Paonia Project—which made the Paonia reservoir, and the series of ditches and pipes constructed around the five spring complexes surrounding the north and west slopes of Mount Lamborn—fed the growth of mining and agriculture in the region. However, complexity, age, change in climatic patterns, and human-caused desertification pose substantial challenges to the viability of the water system. The spring-fed municipal water system needs extensive repair, from restoration of the watershed itself to the treatment plants and the elaborate networks of pipes and valves that deliver water into and around Town. In 2019 the Town suffered a critical water supply issue that was exacerbated by the fact that “the lower treatment plant and 1-MG storage tank were not in service during this event [thus making] half of the Town’s raw water supply, half of its treatment capacity, and 33% of its finished water storage capacity unavailable to support demand during the emergency.”

## Water Efficiency & Redundancy

While customer water use efficiency has increased in the past decade, there remains room for further gains from water efficient appliances and practices in both commercial and residential use. There are substantial efficiency gains to be had from increasing performance in the water delivery system. Approximately 23-39% of water produced is currently unaccounted for in delivery between treatment plants and customers. As of the beginning of 2024, the first steps are already underway with the implementation of the first phase of the Capital Improvement Plan and associated rate increases which will support upgrades and fixes to this system and reduce overall water loss. Due to the overall age and nature of the gravity fed system some level of leaks will remain and should be taken into account when looking at overall water availability going forward.

Exploring redundancy in the water treatment system with neighboring systems is critical to the resilience of the Town’s system. Current and future proposed upgrades to address these issues including the conversion of the Clock treatment plant into a raw water storage and pumping facility, have been outlined in the Water Capital Improvement Plan that was started in 2023.

## Water Volume & Source Reliability

The springs that feed the Town of Paonia are highly sensitive to drought conditions due to their strict dependence upon snowfall and runoff season. While Colorado weather is already well known for its variability, the increase in severity and duration of drought, increased winter and spring temperatures, increased duration and severity of spring winds, increased rates of sublimation of snowpack and decreases in soil moisture due to vegetation degradation, and changes in precipitation patterns moving away from snow to rain mean there is and will continue to be less and less reliable or regular snowpack, and also that the moisture from melting snow is less likely to translate into liquid water run-off. The Town of Paonia recognizes these threats to its water supply.



Paonia’s watershed has high groundwater recharge potential and semi-arid climates are known to be especially sensitive to changes in vegetation and surface water making the system also potentially viable for regeneration and land management intervention to support both system water retention and ongoing supply.

Precipitation type (rainfall versus snowfall), amount, and temporal and spatial distribution are important for determining the amount of recharge that a groundwater system may receive, particularly as infiltration from precipitation to the shallow bedrock groundwater systems.

Average annual precipitation determines the climate of the Town’s watershed area, and in the case of the North Fork Valley, the topographically higher terrains near Grand Mesa and West Elk Mountains are sub humid and cool and have excellent recharge potential, both from rainfall in the spring, summer, and autumn months, and from the melting of snowpack throughout the winter and early spring, especially areas covered by gravels and slope deposits.

The Town of Paonia has a designated Municipal Watershed within its broader watershed, as defined in the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Source Water Protection Plan. Most of this land lies within the Gunnison National Forest, which is managed by the US Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service (USFS). Other landowners in the protection area include the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and privately owned lands, which sit under jurisdiction of Delta County. Both BLM and USFS lease lands for grazing in these areas to private ranchers. Work to restore and regenerate the watershed will need to be conducted in concert with relevant landowners and stakeholders.

### Water Rates

In 2023, the Town of Paonia increased rates for water. Future increases in rates will be required to meet the base financials required to secure funding to implement the 2023 Water Capital Improvement Plan. While the Town will not wholly rely on water rate revenue, rate increases are likely essential for obtaining other funds in the form of grants and low interest loans needed to fully fund capital improvements.

## GOALS AND POLICIES FOR WATER

### GOAL

**INFRA-1** Planning for infrastructure that is comprehensive, innovative, and forward thinking, and ensure current customers and new development maintain a balance between water demand and supply.

### POLICIES

**POLICY INFRA WATER-1** Appropriately coordinate the Comprehensive Plan and Water Capital Improvement Plan to ensure existing and future customers have a safe and reliable water supply.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-2** Responsibly manage and conserve the Town’s limited water resources in both existing and new development.



**POLICY INFRA WATER-3** Implement water conservation strategies and use the results of the Hydrogeological Study to inform those strategies.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-4** Monitor demographic, development, water supply, and usage trends with regular reporting to the Board of Trustees and proactively identify where adjustments to the Comprehensive Plan may be needed should water use increase

**POLICY INFRA WATER-5** Strengthen the integration of land use and water planning and policies and manage growth so that the quantity, pace, and type of development does not exceed the capacity of public facilities.

## GOAL

**INFRA – 4** Investing regularly in quality public infrastructure and timely maintenance.

## POLICIES

**POLICY INFRA WATER-6** Support long-range planning that addresses replacement of aging infrastructure within the municipal water system. These planning efforts will consider projections of future development, as identified in the Future Land Use Element, to anticipate the need to increase line sizes where necessary as replacement occurs.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-7** Pursue long-term planning and development of the Town’s water infrastructure to include water supply, storage and treatment options which provide the flexibility to accommodate full development within the planning area, as well as the ability to adapt to problems associated with any single water source.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-8** New water facilities shall be constructed to conform to the Town’s most recent water system design and construction standards.

## GOAL

**INFRA – 5** Support a healthy watershed that supports both water quality, water production, and groundwater recharge.

## POLICIES

**POLICY INFRA WATER-9** Proactively protect the Town’s source water by preventing contamination from wildfire, pollution, and ecological degradation with regional partners. Ensure that development does not adversely affect the Town’s raw water sources.



**POLICY INFRA WATER-10** Take a holistic and regenerative approach to watershed health and protection, including wildfire management and mitigation, soil health, and responsible use of grazing around municipal source waters in partnership with relevant stakeholders.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-11** New development shall be connected to both the municipal water system and the Town's sewer system. Prior to connection, the developer shall prepare and submit an impact report of the proposed development. This report will address the development's impact on the existing water supply and existing sewer capacity.

## GOALS

**INFRA - 3** Infrastructure that is dependable and provides locals stability and economic prosperity.

**INFRA - 6** Ensuring local businesses and residents can build economic prosperity and enhance food security.

## POLICIES

**POLICY INFRA WATER-12** Require all new development within the Town's growth management area to annex or complete a pre-annexation agreement to be executed upon the final approval of a connection or tap and the development shall include in the agreements dedication of water rights to the Town that are sufficient in quantity and seniority to meet the needs of the project being constructed.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-13** Discourage the construction of independent water or sewer systems or districts within urbanizing areas, except for the specified purpose of making improvements which will be transferred to the Town when the cost of improvements is paid.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-14** Promote water conservation in accordance with Colorado's Growing Water Smart Guidebook. Promote community awareness programs for best landscape management of drought and small water-cycle function in landscaping, new construction, and all irrigation activities.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-15** Consider the long-term viability of source water production and explore nature-based solutions to best protect and support the Town's springs. Conduct regional water cycle management at the watershed level in coordination with regional partners. Continue to invest in and acquire water rights with potential new partnerships and within existing agreements or collaborations.

**POLICY INFRA WATER-16** Create redundant raw water and finished water storage and explore opportunities with nearby consecutive systems for redundancy in delivery.



**POLICY INFRA WATER-17** Ensure that all Paonia owned source water is available for treatment and distribution.

## WASTEWATER

Paonia's Wastewater Treatment Plant manages wastewater collection from residential and commercial customers. The treatment plant was brought online in 2006 and consists of a manual bar screen, two aerated lagoons, a settling/polishing pond, a serpentine chlorine contact chamber and a dichlorination feature. It has a permitted rated capacity of 0.495 million gallons per day (MGD) and typically treats 0.15 MGD. Wastewater from the system is discharged to the North Fork of the Gunnison River.

The 10.5 miles of pipe that make up the wastewater collection system are entirely gravity driven and consist of service laterals, manholes, and gravity sewer mains. The collection system is composed of approximately 63% PVC piping and 37% vitrified clay piping (VCP). The majority of the clay pipe is past its expected lifetime and an estimated 20,000 ft of VCP pipe will need to be replaced in the near future making the entire system in need of upgrade.

It is worth noting that overall treatment levels of water treated are lower in the winter. The Water Tap Moratorium also has an effect here: as long as it remains in effect, wastewater treatment levels are unlikely to grow materially. With an ongoing increase in winter temperatures, it is worth considering the use of green infrastructure, in particular constructed wetlands in future wastewater treatment upgrades. Studies have shown the positive impacts that wetlands have in semi-arid regions when it comes to local temperature regulation, in particular when it comes to extreme heat mitigation, as they have been shown to lower ambient temperatures by 7-14 degrees as compared to similar areas where they are not present.

### Waste Water Rates

In 2023, the Town of Paonia increased rates for wastewater. Future increases in rates will be required to meet the base financials required to secure funding to implement necessary improvements to the existing sanitary sewer collections and treatment infrastructure. While the Town will not wholly rely on rate revenue, rate increases are likely essential for obtaining other funds in the form of grants and low interest loans needed to fully fund capital improvements.

## GOALS AND POLICIES WASTEWATER

### GOALS

- INFRA – 2** Plan, budget, operate and maintain, construct and Invest in stormwater, water treatment, and green infrastructure that support quality public services in health, water availability, and safety.
- INFRA – 3** Infrastructure that is dependable and provides locals stability and economic prosperity.



**INFRA – 4** Investing regularly in quality public infrastructure and timely maintenance.

## **POLICIES**

POLICY INFRA  
WASTEWATER-1

New development shall be connected to both the municipal water system and the Town’s sewer system. Prior to connection, the developer shall prepare and submit an impact report of the proposed development. This report will address the development’s impact on the existing water supply and existing sewer capacity.

POLICY INFRA  
WASTEWATER-2

Maintain a wastewater system that returns high-quality, clean water to the North Fork of the Gunnison River and explore green infrastructure options for treatment that provide positive impacts on local temperature regulation and enhance the viability and resilience of local ecology.

POLICY INFRA  
WASTEWATER-3

Consider water reuse and recycling when designing new wastewater and stormwater systems.

POLICY INFRA  
WASTEWATER-4

New sewer infrastructure shall be constructed to conform to the current sewer design and construction standards.

POLICY INFRA  
WASTEWATER-5

Discourage the construction of independent sewer systems or districts within urbanizing areas, except for the specified purpose of making improvements, which will be transferred to the Town when the cost of improvements is paid.

POLICY INFRA  
WASTEWATER-6

Monitor the Utility Condition Index (UCI) as a measurement of the amount of useful life remaining in the utility system and use the UCI to guide the Minimally Responsible Capital Improvements Project Package.

POLICY INFRA  
WASTEWATER-7

Support long-range planning that addresses replacement of aging infrastructure within the municipal water system. These planning efforts will consider projections of future development, as identified in the Future Land Use Element, to anticipate the need to increase line sizes where necessary as replacement occurs.

## **GOAL**

**INFRA – 7** Provide a wastewater utility by exploring and pursuing innovative solutions for capital asset development.



## POLICIES

### POLICY INFRA WASTEWATER-8

Provide service consistent with established levels of service referencing applicable requirements of state regulations, Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

### POLICY INFRA WASTEWATER-9

Prioritize public health and safety through strategic and proactive efforts to protect water quality and the environment.

## STORMWATER

Paonia’s Stormwater program historically has been an afterthought during road construction, maintenance and repair. The Town has experienced significant flood events throughout its history and on May 28, 1993, a nearly 100-year flood event was recorded that caused erosion to properties surrounding town. At the time, the Town’s flood control facilities consisted mostly of bank armoring, and they were severely damaged by the flood event. Damage included erosion to the stone riprap at the old location of Paonia’s wastewater treatment plant, and to homes along the Huff Subdivision. In 2018, the Town experienced a significant flood event and damage to Apple Valley Park, and again experienced economic distress after flooding caused a section of Highway 133 to wash out in 2023.

The Town has no current mechanism to budget, plan and fund improvements to the Stormwater infrastructure running through Town. The only funding that can currently go towards stormwater improvements is from the highway user tax fund. In some cases, irrigation companies convey their irrigation water through the Town’s existing Stormwater system, which causes significant wear on the existing culverts, pipes, and gutters that comprise the infrastructure of the stormwater system.

## GOALS AND POLICIES FOR STORMWATER

### GOALS

**INFRA – 2** Plan, budget, operate and maintain, construct and Investing in stormwater, water treatment, and green infrastructure that support quality public services in health, water availability, and safety.

**INFRA – 3** Infrastructure that is dependable and provides locals stability and economic prosperity.

**INFRA – 4** Investing regularly in quality public infrastructure and timely maintenance.

### POLICIES

### POLICY INFRA STORMWATER-1

Establish a Stormwater Utility to fund infrastructure improvements and create and implement a master stormwater plan for the entire Town.

### POLICY INFRA



STORMWATER-2 Codify and or create standards and specifications for stormwater mitigation requirements for new development. Ensure that standards for drainage system design and construction are kept current. New development shall construct drainage systems that conform to these standards.

POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-3 Ensure that new development will preserve natural drainage courses. Where necessary, a drainage system designed by a professional engineer, may be required.

## GOAL

**INFRA – 11** Protect the community from adverse flooding and pollution impacts of runoff with efficient and progressive stormwater management practices.

## POLICIES

POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-4 Encourage green stormwater infrastructure measures to reduce pollutants from development and redevelopment.

POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-5 Coordinate storm drainage and flood management with appropriate agencies, including Delta County, local irrigation/ditch companies, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-6 Ensure that development and redevelopment activities are compliant with the Town’s Storm Drainage Design and Technical Criteria and the State’s Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements.

POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-7 Establish and maintain floodplain buffers to ensure compliance with FEMA required floodplain regulations, to promote water quality and to improve riparian habitat. When possible, encourage the use of natural runoff filtration such as bio-swales, pervious pavement, etc. for on-site retention.

POLICY INFRA  
STORMWATER-8 Ensure the long-term financial viability and sustainability of the stormwater utility.



## SANITATION AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

The Town provides garbage collection services to approximately 900 accounts within Town limits. There are no municipal composting or recycling services. The majority of trash collection accounts are residential with a varying amount of commercial. Trash services offer 33 Gallon Cans, 2- and 3-cubic yard dumpsters and oversized items. Residents may also leave yard trimmings in bundles no bigger than 1'x3' neatly tied next to the trash bins. Many individuals compost personally or report bringing food scraps to neighbors with farms or livestock. There are at least two private recycling haulers that service Paonia. Aluminum cans may be dropped off for recycling outside of Don's Market and there are cardboard and paper recycling bins in the parking lot of City Market in Hotchkiss. Delta County supports free recycling at the Double J Recycle Center in Austin. CHT Resources operates a composting facility for organic waste in Austin.

Private recycling services combined with the free drop-off options appear to be servicing the area well. Curbside recycling and composting is unlikely to prove economical given the level of at home and on-farm composting and the small service area. However, the community ethos of self-sufficiency has led to a high individual participation rate in both manufactured and organic materials recycling.

### Sanitation and Resource Recovery Rates

In 2022, the Town of Paonia increased rates sanitation/refuse removal. Future increases in rates will be required to meet the growing cost of refuse removal. In order for the Town to improve on the sanitation service that it provides, such as adding a recycling program to its services, rate increases are likely essential for obtaining other funds in the form of grants and low interest loans needed to fully fund capital improvements.

## GOALS AND POLICIES FOR SANITATION AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

### GOAL

- INFRA – 8** Ensure sanitation services ~~that~~ are well maintained, professionally staffed, and in compliance with all state laws.
- INFRA – 9** Encouraging solid and organic material resource recovery including reuse, recycling, and composting and ensuring the highest and best use of discarded materials.
- INFRA – 12** Cultivate improved waste and materials management that supports source reduction, sustainable diversion, and regulatory compliance through accessible services and programs for residential and commercial land uses.

### POLICIES

- POLICY INFRA  
SANITATION & RR-1** Provide consistent and quality waste collection services for all new and existing residents and ensure residential participation is commensurate with rates charged and received.



POLICY INFRA  
SANITATION & RR-2 Utilize Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment technical assistance programs to develop and establish a recycling program.

POLICY INFRA  
SANITATION & RR-3 Support public awareness activities and information alongside businesses that provide recycling, composting, and other opportunities to reuse and recycle material resources within the Town and county.

POLICY INFRA  
SANITATION & RR-4 Increase reduction and recycling efforts within the Town to divert solid waste from landfills.

POLICY INFRA  
SANITATION & RR-5 Promote the importance of recycling industrial and construction waste.

## URBAN FOREST

All urban trees require management as they mature in the landscape. To increase tree diversity and canopy resilience in Town, new tree species must be consciously curated and properly planted and cared for. To sustain the urban forest's vital functions in Paonia, funding is needed to take care of existing trees and plant new ones. As Paonia's urban forest ages and comes under increasing stress from drought, increased heat, and high winds, formalizing care for the Town forest is critical. As trees reach maturity new smaller trees must be planted adjacent to them to support successful succession. The 2021 Paonia Street Tree Inventory provides a robust framework with direction for street-tree care and the establishment of regular and professional maintenance and replacement that will support their longevity and reduce risk to the Town. However, this report is just the first step, and several follow up actions are suggested in this Plan to establish the quality of service required to maintain our valuable urban canopy.

## GOALS AND POLICIES FOR URBAN FOREST

### GOAL

**INFRA - 10** Ensure the continuation of the wonderful quality of life, ecosystem, health, and increased walkability and real estate values that our town forest provides.

### POLICIES

POLICY INFRA  
URBAN FOREST-1 Monitor, properly care for, and carefully replace street and park trees to maintain, improve, and expand the Town's urban forest. Provide greater support and accountability for homeowners' maintenance of trees in public rights-of-way and engage and empower citizens to participate in street-tree care.

POLICY INFRA  
URBAN FOREST-2 Maintain compliance with Tree City USA designation and work to foster collaboration between the Tree Board, public, and local business community to support tree maintenance, safety, and overall beautification and shade coverage.



POLICY INFRA  
URBAN FOREST-3

Utilize the 2021 Colorado State Forest Service Inventory of Paonia’s right-of-way trees and the 2024 Colorado State Forest Service inventory of trees in Town Park when assessing trees requiring removal, replacement, pruning or other management actions. Encourage updates to the inventory every three (3) years.

**DARK SKIES (THIS IS PLACEHOLDER IN THE EVENT “DARK SKIES” STAYS IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENT)**

Excess light at night endangers our ecosystem by harming wildlife, and negatively affects our urban forest. Studies have shown the importance of dark nighttime skies to the health of our citizens. 80% of Americans cannot see the milky way. Areas designated as Dark Sky communities encourage ecotourism and help boost the local economies. In September of 2024, the town of Paonia was awarded the designation of an “Internationally Recognized Dark Sky Community” by Dark Sky International (IDA). To maintain this important designation, three locations continuously monitor the quality of our nighttime skies; one located below Jumbo Mountain, one at River Park and one on the roof of Paonia Town Hall. Readings from these sky quality meters help determine if there are significant changes in sky quality and how any change can be mitigated. A dark sky lighting ordinance was passed in 2022, town streetlights were replaced to meet IDA standards.

**POLICIES DARK SKIES**

**GOAL**

**INFRA – 13** Protect and maintain the unique quality of our dark nighttime skies through stewardship of the night sky that enhances the quality of life, our ecosystem and the economy.

**POLICIES**

POLICY INFRA  
DARK SKIES-1

Support and foster efforts for replacing non-conforming lights with night sky friendly lights and enforce the Town’s existing Code for new construction and developments as it relates to lighting.

POLICY INFRA  
DARK SKIES-2

Meet the requirements of the Dark Sky International IDA by 2032 through replacing existing residential and town owned lights with IDA certified fixtures.

POLICY INFRA  
DARK SKIES-3

Support dark sky educational efforts; sky viewing events and encourage dark sky tourism.

POLICY INFRA

Support efforts to mitigate light trespass on neighboring properties and



DARK SKIES-4

improve light quality. Develop an assistance program designed to help Residences replace their existing light fixtures with IDA certified light fixtures.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## OVERVIEW

The 2022 median household income in Paonia was \$53,646, median earning per worker was \$49,625, and 8.4% of the population was below the federal poverty line. These figures are far below both Colorado and national averages: the 2022 Colorado median household income was \$89,930 and the US median household income was \$74,580. Residents are increasingly in need of good jobs to keep up with rising costs of living, and in particular the cost of housing. According to the 2023 Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan, one in five Paonia households is burdened by housing costs, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Of these, over 50% of those households are extremely cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 50% of their income on housing. Lack of affordable housing has been identified as a challenge by local business owners who have trouble recruiting and retaining employees in large part due to limited and costly housing stock.

“Jobs and housing are interconnected. The economic success and mix of jobs in a region inform the amount, type, and price point of housing needed to sustain the local economy. Likewise, a sufficiently diverse housing supply is needed to attract and keep quality employees that are invested in the community.”  
- Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan, 2023

A strong local economy is critical to Paonia’s future; it provides respectable job opportunities for locals, a robust tax base for the Town and its infrastructure systems, and overall, a desirable and livable community. This element focuses on strengthening our local economy, supporting local businesses and local agriculture, maintaining a vibrant downtown, balancing tourism benefits with impacts, and developing a workforce that is skilled in needed areas.

A significant portion of people employed within the Town of Paonia commute from outside of Town, and a significant portion of people who reside within Town limits commute to work elsewhere. This dynamic is due in part to relatively high housing costs paired with relatively low wages in the local economy and is addressed in greater detail in the 2023 Town of Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan (source of the data in the chart below).

Commuter Type	Source	Percentage of Workforce
Employed in Town of Paonia, live outside Town	US Census	79%
Employed in Paonia CCD, live outside this area (US Census)	US Census	53%
Employed in Paonia area, live outside this area	2023 Employer Questionnaire from Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan by Urban Rural Continuum	20%



Live in Town of Paonia, employed outside Town	US Census	77%
Live in Paonia CCD, employed outside this area	US Census	71%

## Vision

Paonia’s resilient, regenerative, localized economy meets community needs by providing desired goods and services as well as reliable job opportunities that pay living wages. Our economy emphasizes the production of local food and value-added agricultural products, human health and well-being, unique educational opportunities, and the creative and trade industries. Our economy attracts and serves visitors in a way that supports locals. The Town’s revenue is strong and steady and the quality of life among residents is constantly improving.

## GOALS AND POLICIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### GOALS

- ECON GOAL 1** –Ensure economic development aligns with preserving our community’s rural and agricultural character and caring for our natural resources.
- ECON GOAL 2** –Encourage the creation and maintenance of local, independent businesses in order to build community wealth and provide opportunities to individuals and families.
- ECON GOAL 3** – Maintain a healthy, vibrant, and beautiful commercial district on and around Grand Avenue.
- ECON GOAL 4**- Encourage economic diversity and resilience to ensure the local economy is not overly reliant on one industry.

### ECONOMIC POLICIES

#### GOAL

- Econ Goal 1** – Ensure economic development aligns with preserving our community’s rural and agricultural character and caring for our natural resources.

#### POLICY

- Policy Econ 1:** Plan and design trails with considerations around economic development, with consideration of the popularity of biking and hiking trails accessible from Town.



## GOAL

**Econ Goal 2** – Encourage the creation and maintenance of local, independent businesses in order to build community wealth and provide opportunities to individuals and families.

## POLICIES

**POLICY ECON 2** Support the retention and expansion of locally owned businesses and increase support for entrepreneurship.

**POLICY ECON 3** Prioritize opportunities for local entrepreneurs, or businesses that meet local needs, and operations that support overall local economic development.

**POLICY ECON 4** Build partnerships that proactively nurture a diverse and resilient economy that prioritizes local needs and is centered in agriculture, health and wellness, tourism, creative industries, and skilled labor and trades.

## GOAL

**Econ Goal 3** Maintain a healthy, vibrant, and beautiful commercial district on and around Grand Avenue.

## POLICIES

**POLICY ECON 5** Focus on encouraging new compatible commercial businesses to build and or relocate in the Paonia downtown core commercial area.

**POLICY ECON 7** Encourage commercial development that is inconsistent with existing commercial areas within town limits to build and or relocate to the Highway 133 corridor, and utilize the recommendations made in the Town of Paonia Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan adopted August 13, 2019.

**POLICY ECON 8** Utilize design standards for remodeling or new construction of structures in the downtown corridor.

**POLICY ECON 9** Encourage the use of shared parking, on-street parking and other strategies to maximize the use of available resources. Use signage and other wayfinding to direct visitors to parking.

**POLICY ECON 10** Ensure that all public buildings, businesses, and event venues plan for and include ADA parking and entrances.

**POLICY ECON 11** Encourage, enhance, and promote pedestrian access and walkability to and within the Historic Town Core.

## GOAL



**Econ Goal 4** Encourage economic diversity and resilience to ensure the local economy is not overly reliant on one industry.

## **POLICIES**

**POLICY ECON 12** Support workforce development through skill-based education programs and other efforts to meet more of the community's basic needs like food production, food service, housing construction, skilled trades, energy production, education, and health care.

**Policy ECON 13** Encourage businesses that provide access to goods and services that meet real community needs.

**POLICY ECON 14** Cultivate the integrated and balanced role for tourism in the local economy to allow local businesses, community members, and the Town of Paonia to receive the economic benefit of tourism-while balancing this with housing affordability and the development of year-round, well paying, place-based jobs for residents.

**POLICY ECON 16** Support the continuation and expansion of local agricultural production through the establishment of farm-worker housing, agricultural education, and value-added food crop processing infrastructure.

**POLICY ECON 17** Work with Delta County and the North Fork Valley Airport to identify potential revenue streams and economic development opportunities, and support connectivity with regional commercial airport locations.



Figure 7. Existing and Proposed Transportation Infrastructure



# TRANSPORTATION

## OVERVIEW

Paonia sits to the south of State Highway 133, which serves to connect Paonia to Somerset, Crested Butte, and the Roaring Fork Valley to the east/northeast, and to the larger cities of Delta, Montrose, and Grand Junction to the west. A significant portion of people employed in the Town of Paonia commute from outside the Town, and a significant portion of people who reside within Town limits commute to work elsewhere.

Paonia is not connected to any major cities or transportation hubs by traditional public transit. The Town of Paonia supports All Points Transit a nonprofit organization that supports transit for seniors, people with disabilities, and the general public. Other than All Points Transit, public and private transit options to reach community facilities like schools and healthcare facilities are fairly limited. Lack of regional and local public transportation makes it challenging for individuals without personal vehicles to connect with larger cities and services offered there.

With its compact size and tree-lined streets, the Town of Paonia itself is a naturally walkable and bikeable community. According to Town residents, more than 50% sometimes walk and more than 30% sometimes ride a bike when traveling downtown. Like many towns in the rural West, the street system in Paonia was originally a series of dirt or gravel roads with horse access and later a common speed limit for cars and yield signs at key intersections. As roads have been paved, the traffic system has not formally identified pass-through/commercial traffic routes. However, some streets—in particular 3rd Street and the western portion of 5th Street—already naturally serve as informal mixed traffic, or shared streets, between multiple modes of transit. Much of Paonia’s shared transportation streets are supported by the old characteristics of the dirt road system, narrower lanes, and disrepair. These attributes naturally slow motorized traffic.

Paonia has four primary roads that run east to west and approximately 32 streets and alleyways that cross at least two of these longer thoroughfares from north to south. Collectively these equal approximately 22 miles of road, over 98% of which are asphalt roads, some concrete paved roadways, and some single lane gravel roads (largely alleyways or short dead-end branches). Only two of the four east/west streets, “2nd” and “3rd,” cross the railroad tracks that separate about one third of the Town to the east, while two thirds, including the downtown, remain to the west of the tracks. The downtown street is “Grand Avenue,” not to be confused with “Main” which is one street to the west of the commercial and creative downtown core.

### Characteristics of Complete Streets

- Sidewalks
- Bicycle lanes or wide, paved shoulders
- Shared-use paths
- Safe and accessible transit stops
- Frequent and safe crossings for pedestrians, including median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, and curb extensions
- Identified wildlife crossings that connect with green corridors
- Healthy trees and stormwater management
- Lighting for nighttime visibility and safety that complies with Dark Skies best practices



The Town maintains roads within its boundaries: the intersection of 4th and Grand to the north, intersection of Samuel Wade and Highway 133 to the west, the intersection of Mathews Lane and Niagara Ave, intersection of 1st St and Lamborn Mesa Rd, the intersection of Colorado Ave and Meadowbrook Blvd to the south, the intersection of 7th St and Black Bridge Rd to the east. The side streets between Highway 133 and the North Fork of the Gunnison River are the responsibilities of the County.

There are two main connection points from Town to Hwy 133: 4025 Road (also referred to as the “P” Road), which enters to the west of Town and becomes Third Street, and State Highway 187, which follows a southern direction from State Highway 133 and becomes Grand Avenue. Both of these roads utilize bridges that cross the North Fork of the Gunnison River. Access routes to the Town from the south include Matthew’s Lane from the southwest, 4100 Road from the south and Dry Gulch from the southeast.

According to the 2021 Asset Inventory, while there are some recent sections of newly paved concrete road, “most sections of Paonia asphalt roads exhibit moderate to severe surface wear and defects referred to as raveling and polishing, [while] virtually all sections of the roads exhibit some type of surface cracking. The PASER scale, which is a 1-10 rating system for road pavement condition, was used in asset evaluation which showed that only 4 major street sections were rated in “excellent” condition, 17 in “good” while 68 sections received “poor” or “fair” ratings and 11 section received “very poor” or “failing”.

According to the “Paonia in Motion” Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan there are 40 miles of sidewalk area, while less than half of this area has sidewalks installed. Much of the existing sidewalk infrastructure lacks curb ramps and or ends abruptly at the neighboring yard. A sidewalk fee is currently assessed for all residents and businesses. Even with less than 50% of sidewalk areas paved, this fee does not cover annual maintenance needs. The current patchwork of sidewalk pavement is unnavigable for wheelchairs and dangerous for walking, performs poorly in heavy rain and under icy conditions, and is not designed to be copacetic with urban and street-trees as they continue to grow.

Revenue for the Town of Paonia’s Sidewalk Fund is generated by a \$3.00 per month sidewalk fee, approved in 2013, that is paid by in-town residents. The Town’s Sidewalk Fund is designated for the repair and replacement of existing sidewalks within Paonia. This fee is set to expire in December 2024 unless voters approve a renewal/extension.

## AIRPORT

The North Fork Valley airport is located 4 miles outside Paonia on Back River Road and is jointly owned by Delta County and the Town of Paonia. The airport currently services a low volume of local and recreational flights, with potential to offer connecting commercial flights to regional airports in the coming decade. The Town should work proactively with Delta County to understand the potential to develop the Airport as both an Enterprise account and as a source of tourism income for the area.

## RAILROAD

The iconic coal train that runs through Paonia was inaugurated in 1902 as the North Fork Line of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. The route was built to service the coal industry, with the added benefit of serving the agricultural regions up and down the valley, including transport of fruit, cattle, and



passengers. What is now the North Fork Branch of the Union Pacific Railroad is still utilized to export coal from the West Elk Mine in Somerset. The North Fork Branch connects Somerset to the City of Delta, where the North Fork Branch ties into the Montrose Branch. The Montrose Branch runs between the City of Montrose and the City of Grand Junction. The anticipated lifetime of the remaining active West Elk coal mine is projected to be less than 20yrs from the date of this Plan's creation. There is both state and national precedent for railways that are no longer in commercial use to be converted to trails. Also could be converted to commuter rail after the coal mine ceases operation.

### VISION

Paonia's streets and sidewalks are well-maintained, safe, accessible, and comfortable thoroughfares for multiple modes of transport and support a rural and easy-paced quality of life for residents. Clear and differentiated routes for commercial and pass-through vehicular traffic and pedestrian and bicycle traffic provide safety and convenience. Paonia residents can access key facilities and services without owning or operating a motorized vehicle. Transportation stakeholders understand and are responsive to the transportation needs of our community.

## GOALS FOR TRANSPORTATION

### GOALS

**Transportation 1** Ensure existing streets and sidewalks are well maintained and are safe and accessible (including ADA accessibility) with ample street-tree presence.

**Transportation 2** Ensure core identified streets and sidewalks are comfortable and safe for all members of our community regardless of whether they drive, walk, bike, or ride horseback.

**Transportation 3** Ensure street redevelopment projects accommodate vehicles, pedestrian and non-motorized transport and are ADA compliant.

## POLICIES FOR TRANSPORTATION

### GOAL

**Transportation 1** Ensure existing streets and sidewalks are well maintained and are safe and accessible (including ADA accessibility) with ample street-tree presence.

### POLICIES



**POLICY TRANS 1** Prioritize, plan, and implement street and sidewalk repairs along routes that connect to local schools, parks, and other everyday destinations to improve safety and access for community members who bike, walk, or use other forms of nonmotorized transportation.

**POLICY TRANS 2** Identify and integrate daily and seasonal wildlife corridors and traffic into consideration when planning and developing new streets redesigning Highway 133 access and in-Town crossings of motorized streets.

**POLICY TRANS 3** Ensure that all sidewalk upgrades meet ADA design standards and include features that meet accessibility requirements such as standardized curb ramps at intersection crossings, ample sidewalk width, and an unobstructed pathway clear of overgrowth or tripping hazards.

**POLICY TRANS 4** Require that new sidewalk construction and existing sidewalk repairs accommodate existing healthy trees and plan for replacement of unhealthy trees requiring removal.

## GOAL

**Transportation 2** Ensure core identified streets and sidewalks are comfortable and safe for all members of our community regardless of whether they drive, walk, bike, or ride horseback.

## POLICIES

**POLICY TRANS 5** Identify specific streets for shared multimodal transportation including motorized travel and nonmotorized travel (pedestrians, bikes, children, wheelchairs, strollers, and the elderly) and enhance these routes through the development of complete designs that can accommodate mixed-traffic using best practice guidelines for rural communities.

**POLICY TRANS 6** Ensure the Town plans all street improvements in a manner that supports mixed-use transport in appropriate thoroughfares that align with access to parks, schools, and the downtown commercial district, and other everyday destinations.

**POLICY TRANS 7** Designate and improve appropriate nonmotorized routes for people with disabilities or the mobility-challenged, children attending school, commuter and recreational bicycling, wildlife, and nighttime safety.

**POLICY TRANS 8** Increase and maintain safety of Paonia's motorized gateways to Highway 133 and include nonmotorized access and safety in related planning and updates.

## GOAL

**Transportation 3** Ensure street redevelopment projects accommodate vehicles, pedestrian and non-motorized transport and are ADA compliant.

## POLICIES



**POLICY TRANS 9** Require all new streets, sidewalks, and developments to include a complete-streets approach to construction with curb and gutter collection systems for stormwater, to ensure daily travel for multimodal transportation and increase alternative transit activity to everyday destinations in Town.

**POLICY TRANS 10** Identify, align, and incorporate the use of appropriate materials for sidewalks, trails, and walkways that are ADA-compliant, avoid removal of existing trees, and integrate stormwater management.

**POLICY TRANS 11** Coordinate and communicate with regional transportation stakeholders, both nongovernmental and governmental, to enhance regional transportation services.



## 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

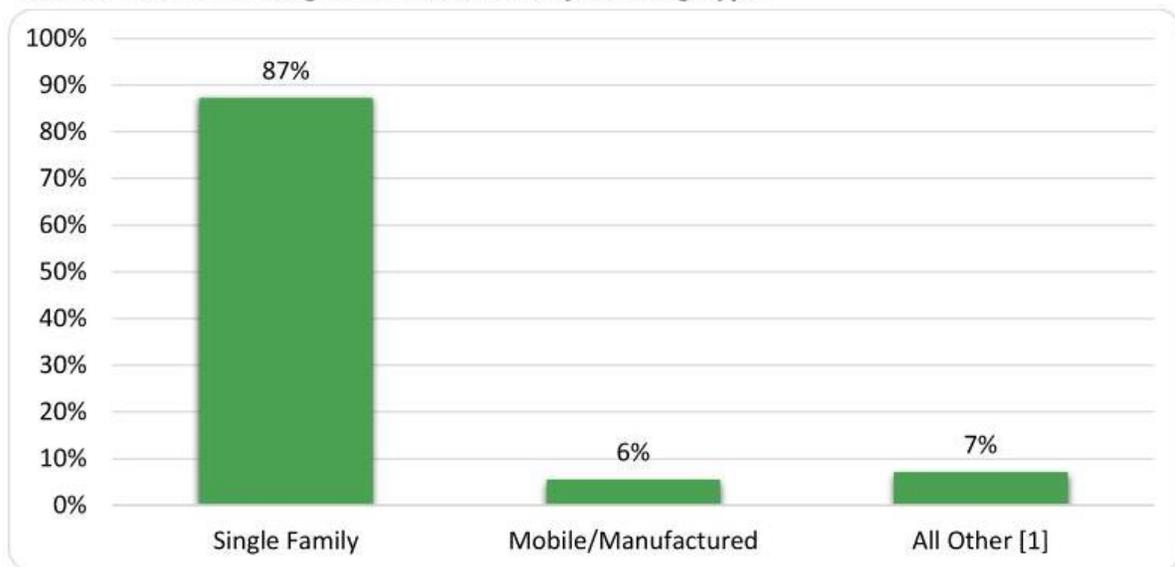


provide policy direction for maintaining and improving Paonia’s physical and visual composition, with emphasis on maintaining high-quality and diverse neighborhoods, sustaining Paonia’s strong community identity, highlighting amenities, and ensuring that a framework is established that meets the intent 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 area 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.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

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.

<sup>1</sup> 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, CRS §29-35-104.



## 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.

## 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 (Consecutive water systems), 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<sup>2</sup>.
- 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 construction 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.

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<sup>2</sup> Census tract is defined as a small, relatively permanent geographic area within a county that is used to present data from the census and other statistical programs.



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<sup>3</sup> 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.

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<sup>3</sup> Visitability is defined as a single-family or owner-occupied housing designed in such a way that it can be lived in or visited by people who have trouble with steps or who use wheelchairs or walkers.



## 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 not 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 future updates to the Town’s Land Development Code, as may be required from time to time, 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.
- 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.



# PARKS, RECREATION, & TRAILS

## OVERVIEW

Paonia is home to a beautiful park system consisting of three major parks—Paonia Town Park, Apple Valley Park, and Paonia River Park (which is owned and operated by Western Slope Conservation Center, a local nonprofit)—and several smaller parks and green spaces. Volunteer Park, a popular field for youth sports, is outside Town limits on Matthews Lane, owned by Delta County, and maintained by volunteers. Surrounding the Town are undeveloped public, private, and agricultural lands with diverse wildlife populations and ample opportunities for recreation. Paonia’s access to nature and park and recreational assets are important to the well-being and character of the community. These assets provide immense value to the community and require care including long-term planning and ongoing investment.

“Easy access to green space contributes to the quality of life that’s key to attracting and keeping residents and businesses, [and] research has shown that people who regularly use parks get more and better exercise than people who don’t. A park close by can improve the well-being of everyone from a child managing ADHD to a senior recovering from hip surgery.”  
- The Trust for Public Land

Recreational opportunities in Paonia are growing, but are still limited for youth and elders. Amenities that support these age groups are critical to ensuring good health and well-being and maintaining Paonia’s attractiveness as a place to raise a family or retire. Area recreational opportunities—in particular hunting, mountain biking, and hiking—already attract visitors. In response to feedback from the Comprehensive Plan community engagement process, this Plan addresses tourism separate from recreation in the Economic Development element.

The 2022 Paonia, Recreation and Trails Master Plan (PRTMP, Paonia in Motion) convened community members and local recreation leaders to define priorities for parks and recreation. The PRTMP, Paonia in Motion provides a detailed plan for the development of Paonia’s parks, recreation, and trails and is considered an element of this Comprehensive Plan. The Vision, Goals, and Policies below were developed by the public in addition to the PRTMP, Paonia in Motion.

**VISION**  
Paonia’s parks, recreation amenities, and trail system are well-maintained, adequately funded, and recognized for the value they provide to the community first and to recreational visitors second.

## GOALS AND POLICIES FOR RECREATION



## GOALS FOR RECREATION

**RECREATION 1** Maintain, enhance, and increase parks, trails, and other recreation amenities, prioritizing the needs and desires of youth, elders, and residents.

**RECREATION 2** Maintain and improve safe access to parks, open space, and opportunities for a full range of recreational uses.

**RECREATION 3** Ensure that planning and budgeting procedures for parks, recreation assets, and trails are included during the annual budgeting process.

## POLICIES FOR RECREATION

### GOAL

**RECREATION 1** Maintain, ~~and~~ enhance, and increase parks, trails, and other recreation amenities, prioritizing the needs and desires of youth, elders, and residents.

### POLICIES

**POLICY REC 1** Increase capacity and resources for local parks, recreation amenities, and trails through partnerships with community volunteer organizations, relevant local and regional organizations and government agencies, and private landowners.

**POLICY REC 2** Prioritize development initiatives that preserve and enhance community access to open space.

**POLICY REC 3** Require that new large-scale developments, and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) include recreational, greenspace and other like components within their plan.

**POLICY REC 4** Integrate park and trail development into land use activities that take place in key areas or corridors of connectivity.

**POLICY REC 5** When developing new, or considering new uses for parks or recreational assets, collaborate with land managers and agency professionals to implement best practices that minimize the impact on wildlife (e.g., seasonal closures, habitat improvement/mitigation, and stewardship).

**POLICY REC 6** Integrate trail development and nonmotorized connectivity into development/land use requirements for properties in key transportation corridors.

**POLICY REC 7** Focus on implementation of the Paonia, Recreation and Trails Master Plan.

**POLICY REC 8** In alignment with Delta County's Recreation and Trails Master Plan, proactively plan and coordinate with stakeholders and other government agencies to reuse or convert the existing coal-train railroad track to regional rail or trail system that can



serve members of the public and visitors should coal-train operations cease in the future.

## GOAL

**RECREATION 2** Maintain and improve safe access to parks, open space, and opportunities for a full range of recreational uses.

## POLICIES

**POLICY REC 9** Increase and maintain accessibility of parks, trails, and sidewalks by ensuring ADA standards are met when appropriate and feasible.

**POLICY REC 10** Preserve and enhance safe access for all public lands that connect to the river, riparian corridor, and wildland while implementing seasonal restrictions as appropriate to protect wildlife and avoid human/wildlife encounters.

**POLICY REC 11** Support and enhance the recreational use of rivers and creeks in local parks by improving safe public access while providing for sustainable flow for recreation and/or wildlife needs. Where open channels are unsafe, provide habitat mitigation and safe open water areas when re-engineering.

**POLICY REC 12** Ensure that all parks include ADA parking and entrances.

## GOAL

**RECREATION 3** Ensure that planning and budgeting procedures for parks, recreation assets, and trails are included during the annual budgeting process.

## POLICIES

**POLICY REC 13** Discuss and decide all in-town parks and recreation amenities, including River Park additions or maintenance projects in the Town budget are adopted only after the Town has solicited public feedback typically through public meetings.

**POLICY REC 14** Ensure Town staff can reasonably manage and finance the long-term maintenance of existing parks, trails, open spaces, and facilities prior to dedicating, building, or assuming ownership or maintenance responsibilities of additional amenities.



## GOVERNANCE & COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

### OVERVIEW

Good governance and informed community participation are essential to the Town of Paonia’s ability to implement the vision and values of this Comprehensive Plan. Fostering cooperative and respectful interactions between the public and the Town at public meetings will support long-term engagement and success. Clear and regular public communication designated transparent access to decision-makers, and regular outreach by Board of Trustee members to the community will enhance trust and improve accuracy of information-sharing.

#### The four pillars of good local governance:

1. Values, ethics, and purpose
  2. Working together toward a common goal
  3. Transformational leadership
  4. Informed and ethical decision-making
- Principals, Council of Europe

### VISION

Paonia’s governance processes and operations are effective and efficient, breeding trust and buy-in from Town residents. Relevant information is easily accessed by Town residents to help them engage regularly and in constructive manner. The Town practices responsible regionalism, regularly engaging with regional partners.

## GOALS AND POLICIES FOR GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

### GOALS

**Governance 1** Maintain a culture of respect, healthy communication, cooperation, transparency, trust and accountability within and between Town staff, elected and appointed officials, and community members.

**Governance 2** Maintain constructive and informed community engagement, communication and partnerships.

**Governance 3** Ensure town staffing is adequate, and the Town can retain qualified, professional employees.

**Governance 4** Engage in regional cooperation and coordination.

## POLICIES FOR GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

### GOAL



**Governance 1** - Maintain a culture of respect, healthy communication, cooperation, transparency, trust and accountability within and between Town staff, elected and appointed officials, and community members.

## POLICIES

**POLICY GOV 1** Build citizen capacity through well-managed community engagement and providing volunteer pathways for interested citizens.

**POLICY GOV 2** Prioritize filling any vacant elected and appointed positions such as the Planning Commission and Tree Board.

**POLICY GOV 3** Ensure consistent interpretation and enforcement of existing code and resolutions to build trust in Town governance and accountability.

**POLICY GOV 4** Prioritize and support implementation of adopted community plans.

## GOAL

**Governance 2** Maintain constructive and informed community engagement, communication and partnerships.

## POLICIES

**POLICY GOV 5** Provide accessible information to the public on key issues (e.g., larger infrastructure projects and policy discussion) to promote effective participation.

**POLICY GOV 6** Ensure planning and budgeting processes are transparent and informed by professionals to appropriately plan and prepare for the future.

**POLICY GOV 7** Engage with local Non-Governmental Organizations to help create platforms to engage the public and utilize the expertise that exist within the community.

**POLICY GOV 8** Create dedicated public communication from the Town and members of the Board.

**POLICY GOV 9** Create and publish regular, professional communication outwardly to citizens via newsletters and text messages, social media, local print media and other means of direct contact.

**POLICY GOV 10** Ensure consistent usage of the Town logo, letterhead and announcements to clearly identify what is “official” Town business.

## GOAL

**Governance 3-** Ensure town staffing is adequate, and the Town can retain qualified, professional employees.



## POLICIES

**POLICY GOV 11** Build Town capacity by maintaining adequate and qualified staff and ensuring proper funding, training and resources.

**POLICY GOV 12** Maintain a public works and police departments that has the staff, resources, and training necessary to provide the community with the desired level of public safety and Code Enforcement Services.

## GOAL

**Governance 4** Engage in regional cooperation and coordination.

## POLICY

**POLICY GOV 13** Proactively engage with regional, state, and federal partners including but not limited to those below. Ensure local plans and policies account for and are coordinated with relevant partners.

- Delta County
- Private water companies who contract (Consecutive water systems) receiving Town provided treated domestic for water
- North Fork Valley Creative Coalition
- North Fork Chamber of Commerce
- Other Local Chambers of Commerce
- Delta County School District
- Delta County Libraries
- One Delta County
- Delta County Tourism Cabinet
- Region 10
- All Points Transit
- Delta Montrose Electric Association (DMEA)
- Gunnison Basin Roundtable
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- United States Forest Service (USFS)
- Other state and federal agencies

# APPENDICES



PHOTO CREDIT: AVERIE CECILE

## APPENDIX A, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### PAONIA INCOME, JOBS, & WORKFORCE

Due to the nature of the food, agricultural, and entertainment businesses located here, and the associated increase in tourists that these businesses also bring in, many of Paonia’s current wage jobs are seasonal. During the public process for this plan, it was clear that the community is motivated to diversify its economic functions.

The age of residents is important to the local economy. The share of residents who are in their prime working years, those aged 25 to 54 as defined by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, has declined from 37% in 2010 to 33% in 2020. The aging population of both the state and the Town of Paonia is pronounced. The median age of residents was 41 in 2000, 44 in 2010, and 49 in 2020. This same trend is occurring in Delta County at large. A decline in the prime working-age cohort coupled with an increase in seniors creates a challenging economic environment, and local employers report difficulty recruiting and retaining workers. At the same time, industries aimed at supplying the goods and services required by a retired population are primed to thrive if they can be successfully cultivated. Housing access is another factor contributing to labor availability and is discussed in detail in the Town of Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan, an element of this Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Economic Development Capacity & Planning**

One Delta County formed in 2020 as an investor-based non-profit economic development agency for Delta County and has representation from the County and each municipality. Current key initiatives include workforce education, industrial park expansion and a large workforce housing development in the City of Delta. Beginning in 2015, its predecessor, Delta County Economic Development, commissioned an economic assessment, market assessment, and economic development strategy to better understand how to adapt to a changing economic climate. The strategy was never officially adopted, but consistent with the recommendations of the Region 10 Regional Economic Development Strategy, it argues for focusing on export-oriented sectors including organic agriculture, manufacturing, and to a lesser degree tourism.

Recently the Hotchkiss Chamber of Commerce has rebranded as the North Fork Chamber of Commerce to serve Hotchkiss, Crawford and Paonia. In addition, several industry-specific groups and shared artist spaces exist. The North Fork Chamber of Commerce and existing county-level economic development efforts like One Delta County may serve as resources for Paonia businesses if engaged regularly by Paonia leadership. In addition, some Paonia businesses take advantage of business development opportunities through Region 10.

#### **Fossil Fuel Extraction**

Historically, coal mining was a major employer and economic driver; local reserves of “clean coal” are valued for their relatively low ash and sulfur content. The town experienced significant economic impacts with the closure of two of the area’s three mines in 2004 and 2014. The remaining West Elk Coal Mine in neighboring Somerset is the most productive mine in Colorado and still employs several hundred people and has no known plans to scale back. This mine is also the largest single industrial point source of methane emissions in Colorado. Many residents are also concerned about impacts on local water quality from upstream fracking for natural gas. The importance of the fossil fuel industry



to the local economy and its simultaneous negative impacts on other industries that are dependent on stable climate and ample clean water access—in particular farming and ranching—is an ongoing tension within the economic fabric of the Paonia community.

## FUTURE ECONOMIES

### **Agriculture, Arts, & Tourism**

Paonia is known throughout the state for its excellence in organic, regenerative and biodynamic agriculture. The North Fork Valley’s West Elks American Viticultural Area (AVA) is one of only two recognized AVAs in Colorado. The draft Delta County Economic Development Strategy calls for the County to rebrand its economy as an Organic Center of Excellence as the cornerstone of a strategy focused on uplifting the entire agricultural industry and enhancing its synergies with tourism, manufacturing, and education. Though the Delta County EDS was never adopted, it provides a useful framework to inform the development of Paonia’s own agricultural economy.

A key element of this approach is investing in agritourism. Agritourism is any recreational or educational activity on a working farm or ranch which consumers can access. It is a nationally recognized entrepreneurial activity that can diversify market outlets for local agricultural businesses and simultaneously stimulate rural development of surrounding communities. The average agritourism visit provides a surplus from \$93 to \$164 per person per trip for primary purpose travelers according to data from Colorado State University. Agritourism creates economic opportunity rather than competition for agricultural producers, because an agritourism destination attracts visitors who will likely want to visit other agritourism destinations. Local restaurants and bakeries, caterers, food trucks, pop-ups, farm and farmers’ markets, and value-added businesses are positive examples of farm-to-table enterprise and retail manufacturers that serve locals and attract tourists to enjoy the rural aesthetic and purchase organic value-added agricultural products. Opportunities exist to incubate, strengthen and expand more traditional working farms as well as agritourism-related enterprises in Paonia and the NFV, including developing a regional food hub and expanding value-added food processing facilities.

The Paonia area is also home to many organic, biodynamic and climate smart or regenerative farms with highly skilled farmers. Another opportunity for economic development may lie in the cultivation of educational programs focused on these growing areas of agriculture that utilizes the existing Hotchkiss USDA and Colorado State University Organic Research Station and the knowledge and practice based in the North Fork Valley. Similar to the successful Solar Energy International, such a school could be located within Town boundaries and would increase economic value for area residents employed as teachers as well as attracted out of town visitors and students. The Colorado Workforce Development Council has indicated that agricultural and farmer education is one of its primary areas of focus and has funding available to support the development of such programming. Along this vie, the State of Colorado's 2023 Talent Pipeline Report emphasizes the agricultural sector as one of the key areas of economic development for the state. In particular, it notes that “bringing the next generation of workers into the agricultural industry is important to the sustainability of rural economies and Colorado’s agricultural sector.”

### **Wellness Tourism, Outdoor Recreation, & Retirement Services**

Tourism is a large and fast-growing industry, however unbalanced by regular year-round well-paying and placed based jobs, deplete a community and lock out locals from housing. This is a major



challenge for many communities in Colorado. However, a rapidly growing subset of tourism called, “wellness tourism” offers a less extractive and more beneficial impact on the communities that develop it. Unlike traditional tourism, wellness tourism is largely based on the authenticity of a place and the continuation of natural local attributes that our community values such as dark skies, clean water and local food. Furthermore, it has been shown to bring in more revenues and create more permanent jobs for the local population than regular tourism. Wellness tourists are high-yield tourists who bring greater economic impacts than traditional tourists and their desire for local healthy food as part of their experience can be a complement to our focus on sustaining and growing local agriculture.

Paonia boasts abundant opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts, offering a wealth of activities such as hiking, mountain biking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, backpacking, and much more. Tourists and visitors who are attracted to recreational opportunities at the North Fork of the Gunnison River, adjacent BLM land (Jumbo), Grand Mesa, Black Canyon National Park, and Kebler Pass also patronize local restaurants, wineries, lodging and gear shops. The Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan details potential economic benefits of outdoor recreation.

Colorado has the fourth fastest growing 65+ age group in the US and Paonia over the past several decades has become known as a retirement community. This is also a potentially important source of future economic activity for the Town and relates to the wellness industry with regards to trained services providers in both allopathic and complementary medicine and the food service industries. Retired seniors consume large amounts of local goods and services, and thus require a year-round workforce to support their needs. The growth in retirees will impact every age bracket in the labor force, causing robust demand for replacement workers and increased need for caregiving occupations such as direct care workers. The population of the greater Paonia CCD is also aging. Just under half (48%) of residents in this part of the valley are aged 55+, a much higher share of residents than in 2000 (29%) and 2010 (40%). Paonia currently lacks several key services that would benefit this population, including a pharmacy, walk-in clinic, and in-home care services. These services would also generate stable, year-round jobs.

### **Downtown & Creative District**

In 2013, Paonia became a Certified Colorado Creative District with a unique emphasis on arts and agriculture. A primary goal of this designation is to attract more tourists. Several organizations exist to support the arts and agriculture and to connect these sectors with the tourism industry, including the North Fork Valley Creative Coalition (which manages the Creative District designation), Valley Organic Growers Alliance, and the West Elks American Viticulture Association. The North Fork Valley Creative Coalition has contributed to the vitality of the downtown economic corridor through creative placemaking, wayfinding and signage, events and programming. In recent years new businesses, workspaces, boutiques and galleries have also opened downtown, yet as of January 1, 2024 there are approximately eight empty commercial locations along Grand or in the downtown core. At the same time, there are days when downtown food trucks’ average wait times for food range between 20-40 minutes, suggesting strong demand.

In recent years the growth of music events and festivals has grown with Big B’s summer music series and Pickin in the Park. These events bring out locals and bring in tourists from the area and around the state. They can also attract other business to come and vend in Town, however, Paonia does not currently collect sales tax for vendors who are selling in Town limits but not registered here. Lodging



businesses see boosts during these times, however the overuse of short-term rentals, especially in summer months to accommodate visitors has presented a challenge for both year-round Paonia residents and seasonal workers in need of housing.

### **Trades & Skilled Labor**

The absence of a business that provides year-round, living-wage jobs—other than the remaining coal mine—is felt in the local economy. A key growth opportunity for the local economy is in workforce development, particularly in skilled labor and trades.

Skilled labor is generally characterized by advanced training (expertise attained through experience and certifications or licenses in their specific fields) and likewise generally corresponds with higher wages. Three converging factors—an aging workforce (both Paonia and Colorado have a majority of workers in the aging category), the rural nature of the Town, and what is projected to a rapid rise in automation of the US workforce by AI technology—provide a background for a focus on developing trade and skilled labor education. Solar Energy International (SEI) offers an excellent example of this with their training program. SEI also is an example of the kind of business that brings in people year-round for training.

The State of Colorado has emphasized the need to invest in the infrastructure workforce, advanced manufacturing workforce, medical workforce to support an aging population, and rural workforce. These careers can be stable and lucrative. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, many of the fastest-growing career fields in the US are skilled trades.

“Rural communities have often had a difficult time retaining younger generations for number of reasons, including wages, education, and social issues. Communities depend on younger, more educated workers and leaders to grow and survive, this poses a serious risk.”

Report: Rural Economic Resiliency in Colorado (Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade)

### **Construction**

Since 2020, housing construction has been constrained by the moratorium on water taps. Despite the moratorium, General Contractors, carpenters, electricians, plumbers and other related trades are in demand. The Town of Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan calls for 100 new homes to be built in and around Paonia over the next five years, with 25-35 units built “as quickly as possible” after the moratorium is lifted. Further, much of Paonia’s housing stock is considered “extremely old” and will require repairs. Skilled tradespeople will be increasingly needed as construction accelerates over the coming decades.

## **CHALLENGES**

Central to the continued sustainable development of the art, service, agricultural, and tourism sectors will be policies aimed at regulating short term rentals and the creation of affordable housing to ensure that artists and wage workers can continue to reside within the community. The tension between growth in tourism and housing for locals due to the rise of short-term-rentals is detailed in the Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan.

The success of export industries such as agriculture and tourism depend largely on macro-economic and ecological trends. Both the Delta County Tourism Board Marketing Plan and the Region 10



Economic Development Strategy point to the negative economic impacts of natural disasters (fire, drought, fluvial hazards, etc.). Pollution from fossil fuel extraction and other heavy industries could seriously damage the region's reputation for organic excellence. Thus, protecting and caring for the watershed and ecosystems that underpin Paonia's economy, as detailed in the Infrastructure Element of this Plan, is an essential strategy for economic resilience.

## RESOURCES

Delta County is designated an enhanced rural enterprise zone by the State of Colorado. This designation allows local businesses to receive state income tax credits and sales and use tax exemptions for specific business investments. Taxpayers who contribute to enterprise zone projects may also earn income tax credits. Taking advantage of these tax credits and exemptions could help existing businesses become more viable as well as incentivize and lower the barrier to entry for new businesses.

The Colorado Rural Resiliency and Recovery Roadmaps program provided technical assistance and grants for regional teams of rural communities to drive economic relief, recovery, diversification, and long-term resilience.

The Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP), formerly known as Colorado Blueprint 2.0, provides free technical assistance, consulting, and funding to help rural communities create economic development strategies

The Career Development Incentive Program, or Career Development Success Program, provides financial incentives for school districts and charter schools that encourage high school students, grades 9-12, to complete qualified industry credential programs, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, and internships.

The Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center supports a more resilient, diverse, and competitive food system. This Center is designed to be a node for our region's small and mid-tier food and farm businesses and local and regional food sector development initiatives by supporting cross-regional collaboration, providing and analyzing relevant and timely data, and serving as a gateway for USDA programs and other third-party funding opportunities, with a focus on underserved farmers, ranchers, and food businesses.



## APPENDIX B, TRANSPORTATION

“The size, shape and speed of automobiles have changed. There is more interest in the walkability of the Town and we see more bicycles, e-bikes, skateboards and scooters on Grand Ave. With an aging, yet active, population there are more people walking and riding bikes than ever. Sidewalks and crosswalks must accommodate wheelchairs and walkers.”

- CDOT Revitalizing Main Street, Interim Report 2021

### GETTING TO PAONIA

The nearest international airports are in Denver (4.5 hours) and Salt Lake City (5.5 hours), with regional airports located in Montrose (1 hour) and Grand Junction (1 hour 20 min).

Amtrak train stations are located in Glenwood Springs (1 hour 30 min) and Grand Junction (1 hour 15 minutes).

The shortest route to reach Paonia from I-70 or Roaring Fork Valley (Aspen, Snowmass Village, Basalt, Glenwood Springs, and Carbondale) to the north is by crossing McClure Pass (elevation 8,755 ft), which is occasionally closed for hours or days due to inclement weather, particularly in the winter. In late spring/early summer 2023, damage from a sinkhole caused Highway 133 north of Paonia to be closed for nearly two months, severely impacting tourism and commuting between the North Fork Valley and Roaring Fork Valley until the highway was repaired by Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). Following this incident, CDOT began a \$33.4 million slope stabilization project to reduce erosion and improve highway safety and functionality. Alternate routes from Denver to Paonia are via Grand Junction or Gunnison, adding an additional 50 minutes to 1.5 hours of travel time.

From nearby cities, Carbondale and Delta, there are no regular public transit options available to reach Paonia, nor are there any taxis or commercial ride sharing services in Paonia or the surrounding areas. Travelers without a car can hitch, rideshare, or pay for a private ride to Delta or Glenwood Springs and then utilize the Bustang public bus service operated by CDOT, which travels along I-70 to and from Denver and between Grand Junction and Durango. Currently there are no known plans to expand Bustang service to the North Fork Valley. From Glenwood Springs or Carbondale travelers can also utilize the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority bus system to reach Aspen Airport.

### HEALTHCARE ACCESS

Lack of regional and local public transportation makes it challenging to connect Paonia and the North Fork Valley to larger cities where hospitals are located. EMS ambulance services are provided by North Fork EMS, a local five-member board special district funded by a mill levy. The ambulance service is responsible for responding to all 9-1-1 calls in a 1,500-square-mile area over three counties as well as maintaining three stations in the region. The nearest nonemergency healthcare clinic is in neighboring Hotchkiss (9 miles/17 minutes). This location does not provide 24 hour services. The nearest hospital and emergency room with 24hr services is in Delta (26 miles/39 minutes), with more specialized care available in Montrose (50 miles/1 hour) and Grand Junction (71 miles/1 hour 20 min). Several private taxi services exist which accept insurance and Medicaid to pay for travel to



healthcare visits. Health First Colorado (Colorado’s Medicaid program) operates its own Med-Ride service available 24/7 for nonemergency healthcare visits. In addition, the nonprofit All Points Transit offers low-cost trips predominantly for seniors and disabled people (healthcare visits can be covered by Medicaid) and the North Fork Senior Connections nonprofit runs Neighborly Connections, a volunteer-based program to help seniors get to their healthcare visits.

## SCHOOL ACCESS

Delta County Joint School District 50J buses students from Paonia to North Fork High School, the area’s only public high school, located in Hotchkiss (11 miles/20 minutes from Paonia); and to the North Fork Montessori School, located in Crawford (16 miles/25 minutes) from Paonia). The Paonia K-8 school, and the North Fork School of Integrated Studies are both located within walking distance of downtown Paonia.

## WALKABILITY & BIKEABILITY

Like many towns in the West, the street system in Paonia was originally a series of dirt or gravel roads with horse access and then a common speed limit for cars and yield signs at key intersections. As roads have been paved, the traffic system has not formally evolved to control for speed or passthrough/commercial traffic routes. Neither has it formally incorporated other means of transportation such as biking or pedestrians. While surveys have shown that many people in Paonia ride their bikes to school, to do errands or to social outings, or reach the Mount Jumbo trail system, there are no designated bike lanes on Paonia’s streets. Likewise, there are no dedicated bike paths nor bike lanes to connect Town residents to Big B’s or other businesses along Hwy 133, nor to Volunteer Park on Mathews Lane which is heavily used for youth sport leagues and other activities. There is no continuous system of sidewalks or routes for residents to walk downtown or for children and youth to walk to school.

“Do everything possible to promote responsible, progressive, growth. Walking-friendly towns tend to promote excellent business opportunities, which is what I want to see more of in this town.”

- Participant in the 2020 CDOT Main St Revitalization Survey

In addition to repairing and maintaining sidewalks, walkability and bikeability can be enhanced by dedicating routes and building new pathways for these modes of transport. There is a prime opportunity to support measures that encourage biking and walking along 3rd Street while funneling nonresidential vehicle traffic to 2nd Street. 3rd Street is almost entirely residential east of Onarga Avenue and is already heavily used by pedestrians and cyclists accessing the parks and schools, while 2nd Street is currently zoned commercial and light industrial from Main Street to Oak Avenue. At a Town of Paonia Board meeting in June 2023, citizens requested ToP reduce the speed limit while improving signage and enforcement for safety purposes, particularly on 3rd Street and Rio Grande Avenue near Apple Valley Park. In addition, the Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan provides recommendations for a trail along Mathews Lane to improve safety and connectivity between Town and Volunteer Park. Clearly directing vehicular and nonmotorized traffic along distinct, designated routes—supported by well-maintained sidewalks, and bike lanes, and trails; appropriate speed limits and signage; and safe crossings—would improve safety and traffic flows through Town.



Key Takeaways from the 2020 CDOT Main St Revitalization Interim Report:

- Strong perception of inadequate parking on Grand Ave
- Lack of awareness of alternate parking options (side streets, public lots, etc.)
- General support for more trees, flowers, green space, benches, bike racks, and art in the downtown economic corridor

## PARKING & SIGNAGE

A community survey from the 2020 CDOT-funded Main Street Revitalization study identified a strong perception of inadequate parking on Grand Ave coupled with a lack of awareness of alternate parking options (side streets, public lots, etc.) as one of the main limitations of the downtown business and creative district.



## APPENDIX C, REFERENCE & RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

- American Planning Association's Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places, 2015
- Asset Inventory and Capital Improvement Plan, SGM, 2021
- Bottom-Up Delta County Economic Development Goals, 2011
- CO 133 Paonia Slope Stabilization, Colorado Department of Transportation, 2023
- CO Creative Districts
- Colorado Bike Law
- Colorado Department of Transportation Main Street Revitalization Grant Application, 2022
- Colorado Department of Transportation Main Street Revitalization Grant Town of Paonia Interim Report, 2021
- Colorado Department of Transportation Main Street Revitalization Grant, 2020
- Colorado Growing Water Smart Guidebook: The Water Land-Use Nexus
- Colorado State Demographer Office Paonia Profile, 2023
- Comprehensive Plans. Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2023
- Connected Communities: Local Governments as a Partner In Citizen Engagement and Community Building, 2010
- Delta County Economic Assessment, 2015
- Draft Delta County Economic Development Strategy, 2015
- Delta County Land Use Code & Zoning Maps
- Delta County Market Assessment, 2015
- Delta County Tourism Marketing Plan, 2017
- Developing a Sediment Management Plan for Paonia Reservoir, Kent Collins, Hydraulic Engineer, Bureau of Reclamation, Denver, Colorado
- DOLA Affordable Housing Guide for Local Officials
- Draft Paonia Master Plan, 2018
- Draft Paonia Master Plan, Barbara Peterson, 2012
- Draft Paonia Master Plan, EMB Consultants, 2021
- Economic Power of Heritage and Place
- EPA Water Quality Scorecard
- Global Energy Monitor Wiki, West Elk Coal Mine
- Growth Management Agreement for the Unincorporated Areas Surrounding the Town of Paonia, 2010
- Highway 133 Corridor Plan, 2010
- Impact of wetland change on local climate in semi-arid zone of Northeast China. Liu, Y., Sheng, L. & Liu, J., 2015
- JDS Hydro Water System Evaluation, 2021
- Land Use Law presentation by Leslie Klusmire
- Land Use Planning in Colorado
- Local Government Land Use Authority in Colorado
- Master Plan Primer, DOLA
- Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan for Delta County - Volume 1, 2018
- Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan for Delta County - Volume 2, 2018
- North Fork Valley and Terraces Groundwater System, Delta County, Colorado, 2013



- North Fork Valley Heart & Soul Project, 2014
- North Fork Valley Vision, 2020
- Paonia Comprehensive Plan, 1996
- PRTMP, 2022
- Paonia Municipal code (Ord. No. 2014-04, § 1, 1-13-2015)
- Paonia Tree Inventory Report Final, 2020
- Region 10 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Ridgway Master Plan, 2019
- Rural Economic Resiliency in Colorado
- Snoflo.org, 2023
- Snowpack Sublimation - Measurements and Modeling in the Colorado River Basin, 2009
- Spatial variation of snowmelt and sublimation in a high-elevation semi-desert basin of western Canada, Scott I. Jackson, Terry D. Prowse, 2009
- Summary of Town of Paonia Community Strategic Planning Session, 2022
- Summary of Town of Paonia Draft Water/Wastewater Capital Improvement Plan
- Town of Paonia Community Strategic Planning Session, 2022
- Town of Paonia Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Action Plan, 2023
- Town of Paonia Source Water Protection Plan, 2010
- Town of Paonia Zoning Map, 2017
- Water for the Recovery of Climate – A New Water Paradigm, Kravčík et al., 2007
- Water from air: an overlooked source of moisture in arid and semiarid regions Theresa A. McHugh, Ember M. Morrissey, Sasha C. Reed, Bruce A. Hungate & Egbert Schwartz, 2015
- What Matters Most: Voices & Values of CO's NFV (Heart & Soul Project), 2014

# APPENDIX D, PUBLIC COMMENTS

Please see Paonia Comprehensive Plan (2024) Public Comments Document for all public comments submitted during this planning process.



# ZONING

## OVERVIEW

The zoning plan is the primary tool to implement the town's Master Plan, to set standards that provide for compatibility of neighboring land uses, ensure future development is supportive of and consistent with the vision of the Master Plan, land use code, zoning code, annexation considerations, parking requirements, lodging locations and uses, energy and sustainability considerations and maintains our International Dark Sky Community status.

## VISION

A rich history in agriculture, arts, mining, a connection to a rural and natural landscapes requires the Master Plan to look beyond land use alone and consider a character-based approach to planning, density, layout, scale and form to maintain the heart and soul of our small town feel and the vision of our communities, rural and wild landscapes. The zoning goals and policies should help guide smart future development, rezoning and annexation and inform overall land use, comply with existing zoning districts, overall development plans, facility planning and desired infrastructure types, usage and locations.

The following goals and policies provide direction for all aspects of physical planning. Goals are defined as desired ideals and a value to be attained. Policies articulate a course of action that guides governmental decision making to meet the goal.

## GOALS & POLICIES – ZONING (ZON)

### GOALS

- ZON -1: Comply with (CRS § 38-30-168) to allow access to alternative solar energy sources.
- ZON -2: Track the Town's overall infrastructure and capacity for future development.
- ZON -3: Ensure future development is supportive of and consistent with the vision of the Master Plan.
- ZON -4: Revise present land use code with standards that support the town's housing needs.
- ZON -5: Annexation shall conform to the Master Plan and land use codes. Criteria applied by the town shall be for good land use, planning and logical smart growth patterns.

### POLICIES

#### POLICY ZON – 1:

- Structure zoning and land use codes to protect solar access of buildable lot area of neighboring properties. Height, setback, ridgeline location and orientation should be considered. The height and location of trees and other vegetation shall not apply to existing buildings, structures, trees or vegetation except for new growth on such vegetation.
- Throughout the planning, design and construction of new and remodeled structures, special attention should be given to conservation of energy, taking advantage of solar use without impacting solar access of adjacent lots.

#### POLICY ZON - 2:

- Development is supportive of the land use plan.
- Development considers economic impacts to our downtown businesses, streets and walkways, our water supply/water system capacity. Landscaping should include low water plantings and water retention designs.
- Development is limited, strategically designed and planned for in areas of natural hazards.
- Ensure appropriate locations and access to vehicle charging stations.

#### POLICY ZON - 3:

- Encourage a diversity of housing options that meet the needs of residents, is defined and allowed in locations designated for residential uses by the land use code.
- Review and update the towns zoning regulations and maps.

- Develop a “pay in lieu of” parking program for the downtown, allow for lease agreements between business owners/tenants and other properties with larger available parking spaces.
  - Identify locations for lodging/short term rental uses that are sensitive to local neighborhoods and in compliance with zoning regulations.
  - Develop fundamental site planning principals to protect the value and use of surrounding properties while allowing gentile density. Small accessory dwelling units should be compatible with lot size in scale, with existing neighborhoods and at a scale that maintains affordability, town aesthetics, implements water cycle solutions and allows for landscaped areas.
  - Ensure residential and commercial uses of the downtown commercial core is clearly defined and described in the zoning code to provide local stability and contribute to economic prosperity.
- POLICY ZON – 4:
    - Balance water conservation with preservation and addition of critical green spaces and water sensitive landscapes.
    - Ensure growth is sensitive to existing viewsheds, is appropriate for the community, is based on land use code revisions section E - Land Use Code Regulations Review.
    - Take care of towns’ investments and assets by maintaining safe streets, pathways, dark nighttime skies, health of our towns’ urban forest, parks, and trails.
    - Create development that plans for and preserves the existing and desired rural character of our town and its gateways.
    - Expand and maintain the towns collection of GIS data related to the natural environment, urban forest and wildlife.
    - Update land use and building codes to remove barriers that support affordable housing, sustainable and alternative green building. Adopt codes and create ordinances to include the IRC provision for tiny homes. Consider zoning for live/work spaces in residential neighborhoods to support home-based entrepreneurs. Focus on smart growth and sustainable strategies to support the rural landscape, keeping dark nighttime skies, working lands viable, conserving natural lands and building lively and enduring neighborhoods for a more balanced, sustainable economy, balancing built structures with green infrastructure, balance hardscapes with softscape growing elements.
    - (Refer to part 2: housing action plan c. Actions to start next (years 3-5).

POLICY ZON -5:

- Annexation will be undertaken with the goal of maintaining or improving existing public services, including but not limited to, water, sewer, police, administrative services, fire, ambulance, schools, public works, recreation.
- Annexation requires a binding overall land use plan, consistent with the Master Plan, for the entire property to be annexed and for the proposed zoning.

From Chair Watson and Commissioner Howe  
**HEALTHY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (ENV)**

**Urban Forest Overview ENV - 1**

Our town is recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation as a “Tree City USA.” Our urban forest is valued as an essential element of our infrastructure and environment. Our tree-lined streets and parks can act as part of the first line of defense in urban climate mitigation and adaptation and are an ecosystem asset. City forests in the United States provide \$18.3 billion in benefits per year, and this number is expected to grow as urban areas continue to expand.

Goal ENV-1.1

Trees help manage rainwater runoff and provide green space, which is associated with positive impacts. Forests deliver enormous utility-like benefits in cities and towns. A study in the Journal of Forestry puts the [benefits of urban trees in the U.S.](#) at a value of \$18.3 billion annually. Tree-lined streets and parks are part of the first line of defense in urban climate mitigation and adaptation and is an ecosystem asset. Urban forests deliver enormous utility-like benefits in cities and towns, in the larger regions around them, and in the global climate .

Goal ENV -1.2

Our urban “green infrastructure,” is an interconnected web of natural elements and spaces that should be evaluated and maintained and recognized as providing services such as storm water reduction, carbon storage, energy savings, public health benefits and air quality improvements.

**Goals**

Goal ENV -1.3

- Recognize the Energy Savings. Trees planted in cities can dramatically reduce annual expenditures on air conditioning and heating by buffering against extreme temperatures, cold winds, and extreme weather.
- Recognize the role of Storm water Management. Urban forest can reduce annual storm water runoff by 2-7% and a mature tree can store 50-100 gallons of water during large storms
- Recognize the role of Energy Savings. Trees planted in cities can dramatically reduce annual expenditures on air conditioning and heating by buffering against extreme temperatures, cold winds, and extreme weather
- Recognize the value of capture and storage of carbon. The continuous expanse of all urban trees in the United States store about 770 million tons of carbon valued at \$14.3 billion.
- Recognize the value of the role of urban forests in air pollution removal. Trees are capable of removing pollutants such as ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter from the air.

- Recognize Reducing the Heat Island Effects. Trees and vegetation lower surface and air temperatures by providing shade and through evapotranspiration. Shaded surfaces may be 20-45% cooler than the peak temperatures of unshaded material. Evapotranspiration can help reduce summer temperatures by 2-9 degrees.
- Recognize Reduction of road maintenance costs. Tree shade has been proven to reduce pavement fatigue, cracking rutting shoving and other distress, saving on repair costs.
- Recognize the role of Water Quality. Trees reduce runoff, rainfall intensity, and impacts on storm water management systems. All of these effects can ultimately lead to changes in water quality.
- Recognize the health benefits. Urban forests have been strongly linked to health, with trees showing significant benefits in watersheds. Improvements in people’s well-being.
- Recognized Wildlife and biodiversity that urban forests help create and enhance animal and plant habitats. They act as reservoirs for endangered species, migrating and nesting birds and connect wild ecosystems.

**Policies**

Policy ENV -1.1

- Explore carbon capture City Forest Credits developed as an Impact Scorecard (<https://www.cityforestcredits.org/impact-certification/impact-standards/>). This endeavors, for the first time to identify the attributes of equity, health, and environmental impacts of urban forest projects. New funding sources and economic potential may be available.

Policy ENV 1.2

Urban forests are not static entities that remain unchanged throughout time. Like all natural systems, they face a host of problems, pressures, and potentially life- altering changes to their environment. For this reason we must commit to an active program to ensure the future health of our urban ecosystem. For this reason we must commit to an active program to ensure the future health and ensure a regenerative Create a plan and follow recommendations of 2021 tree survey by Colorado State Forest Service See appendix [https://townofpaonia.colorado.gov/sites/townofpaonia/files/2021-03/paoniatreeinventoryreport\\_final\\_2021.pdf](https://townofpaonia.colorado.gov/sites/townofpaonia/files/2021-03/paoniatreeinventoryreport_final_2021.pdf).

Policy ENV 1-3

Parking of vehicles, trailers and any equipment should be adequately planned for and not impact the tree growing zones.

For appendix.

## **Dark Skies Overview – ENV -2**

Excess light at night endangers our ecosystem by harming wildlife, and negatively affects our urban forest. Studies have shown the importance of dark nighttime skies to the health of our citizens. 80% of Americans cannot see the milky way. Dark sky places encourage ecotourism and help boost the local economies. In September of 2024 the town of Paonia was awarded the designation of an “Internationally Recognized Dark Sky Community” by Dark Sky International (IDA). To maintain this important designation, three locations continuously monitor the quality of our nighttime skies; one located below Jumbo mountain, one at River Park and one on the roof of Paonia town hall. Readings from these sky quality meters help determine if there are significant changes in sky quality and how any change can be mitigated. A dark sky lighting ordinance was passed in 2022 , town street lights were replaced to meet IDA standards.

### **Goals**

Goal – ENV 2.1

The unique quality of our dark nighttime skies helps foster the stewardship of the night sky and enhances the quality of life, our ecosystem and the economy.

### **Policies**

Policy ENV - 2. 2

Support and foster efforts for replacing non-conforming lights with night sky friendly lights. Enforce lighting ordinance for new construction and developments.

Policy ENV - 2.3

Enforce the dark sky lighting ordinance. Our IDA status requires that all Residential and town owned lights must meet dark sky requirements by 2032. Replace non-conforming lights with IDA certified fixtures.

Policy ENV – 2.4

Support dark sky educational efforts, sky viewing events and encourage dark sky tourism.

Policy ENV – 2.5

Support efforts to mitigate light quality decreases and light trespass on neighboring properties.

## **North Fork of the Gunnison River Corridor ENV - 3**

Overview

The corridor runs thru the town of Paonia The Paonia River Park is the product of community collaboration and partnership. Once an in-stream gravel mine, the North Fork River Improvement Association (now the Conservation Center) worked hard to reclaim the river, restore riparian habitat, and make the park a family-friendly recreation area. With the help of the

Minnesota Ditch & Reservoir Company, the Conservation Center completed the Paonia River Park Restoration Project in 2013, transforming the former in-stream gravel mine into a healthy aquatic ecosystem. In 2016, the park expanded to include an interpretive trail system. This expansion allows visitors the opportunity to explore the riparian habitat even further along the corridor without disturbing precious wildlife habitat.

### **Goals**

Goal - ENV 3.1

The park is one of only two public access points along the North Fork river. Over 95 percent of land along the river is privately owned. The Conservation Center is committed to connecting the community to the river, maintaining a balance between natural and built structures, and ensuring project sustainability through public participation.

### **Policies**

Policy ENV -3.1

Work with the community, the Conservation Center and private property owners to create a cohesive vision for the protection, management and use of the River Corridor

Policy ENV – 3.2

Ensure concerns from all stake holders are heard to balance the protection of the riparian zone, floodplain, waterway and wildlife habitat

Comment Number	Page Number	Paragraph/Sentence Begins With	Comment/Question	Commentor	Include in draft for Adoption?	Consultant Reasoning for Inclusion or Exclusion
1	General	General statements throughout the document	Strike Adjectives. Provide Clear statement on the moratorium, lack of effort, possible [possible] solutions, see 1996 plan	W. Brunner	These comments to be addressed in the yet to be created water element.	
2	General	Footnotes	There were footnotes included in the May 2024. These should be inserted where still applicable.	P.Smith	Investigate further by checking the May 2024 footnotes	
3	General	Add an Element	Plan needs an element devoted to Housing which include "projections of population growth and housing needs to accommodate the growth." (CRS 31-23-206 (j)). The 2023 Housing Needs Assessment/Housing Action Plan (HNA/HAP) needs to be incorporated into the final document in some fashion. There are currently 14 references to this document in the June 21st draft.	P.Smith	Does the final HNA/HAP need to be modified by the Trustees prior to incorporation and if so, is this version then returned to the Planning Commission for review prior to incorporation?	
4	General	Add an Element	Plan requires the identification of "areas containing steep slopes, geological hazards, endangered or threatened species, wetlands, floodplains, floodways, and flood risk zones, highly erodible land or unstable soils, and wildfire hazards." (CRS 31-23-206 (k)). A map of these areas occurring in and around Paonia needs to be included. The originally provided list of six main elements from the contractor included "Risk, Resilience and Emergency Preparedness." It's unclear why it wasn't created, and should this be the section to fulfill this statute?	P.Smith	Yes and need the map	
5	General	Additional Maps Needed	Plan requires inclusion of a map identifying "the general location, character, and extent of existing, proposed, or projected streets, roads, rights-of-way, bridges, waterways, waterfronts, parkways, highways, mass transit routes and corridors..." (CRS 31-23-206 (a)).	P.Smith	Yes	
6	General	Additional Maps Needed	Plan requires inclusion of a map identifying "the general location of public places or facilities, including public schools, culturally, historically, or archaeologically significant buildings, sites, and objects, playgrounds, squares, parks, airports, aviation fields, military installations, and other public ways, grounds, open spaces, trails, and designated federal, state, and local wildlife areas." (CRS 31-23-206 (b)).	P.Smith	Yes to map and important to include the airport	
7	General	Additional Maps Needed	Plan requires inclusion of a map with "the general location and extent of public utilities terminals, capital facilities, and transfer facilities, whether publicly or privately owned or operated, for water, light, sanitation, transportation, communication, power, and other purposes, and any proposed or projected needs for capital facilities and utilities, including the priorities, anticipated costs, and funding proposals for such facilities and utilities and ((d) (I)) The general location and extent of an adequate and suitable supply of water." (CRS 31-23-206 (c)).	P.Smith	Yes	
8	General	Additional Clarification Needed	Include a narrative or other vehicle to addresses "A zoning plan for the control of the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises. Such a zoning plan may protect and assure access to appropriate conditions for solar, wind, or other alternative energy sources. regulations and restrictions of the height, number of stories, size of buildings and other structures, and the height and location of trees and other vegetation shall not apply to existing buildings, structures, trees, or vegetation except for new growth on such vegetation." (CRS 31-23-206 (f)).	P.Smith	Yes, include in future land use	
9	General	Additional Clarifications Needed	Does the final plan require the inclusion of the "Paonia Growth Management Area" which was included in the May 2024 version? -- Does the final plan require the inclusion of the Town of Paonia Highway 133 Corridor Master Plan was included in the May 2024 version?	P.Smith	Probably should be included. Would like to know why consultant didn't include?	

10	General	Structure and Revisions Question:	Overarching comment. At this point, I would recommend that each Element contain a single vision statement and then convert "values" into "Objectives" and reorganize the Policies to coincide with a specific Objective.	P.Smith	Yes, but after the missing elements are included.
11	Ack.	Acknowledgements	Add New Planning Commission members, remove Bachran, Knutson, Klisset; remove all town committees	W.Brunner	Yes - PC
12	Ack.	Acknowledgements - Town of Paonia Mayors & Board of Trustee Members	Revise: Town of Paonia Board of Trustees: Add Paige Smith (Mayor); move Mary Bachran (Mayor Ret.) to the end, move David Knutson (Mayor Pro-Tempore, Ret.) to the end; move Morgan MacInnis (Ret.) to the end; move Thomas Markle (Ret.) to the end; add Bill Brunner; and add Mayor Pro Tempore to John Valentine; add Walter Czech.	P. Smith	Yes - PC
13	Ack.	Acknowledgements - Paonia Committees	Transportation Advisory Board - I haven't heard of this committee. Please describe or remove.	P. Smith	? Determine if this Advisory Committee exists? Maybe thos should be teh airport advisory committee
14	Ack.	Acknowledgements - Town of Paonia Staff	Provide Titles for each employee	P. Smith	Yes - PC
15	Ack.	Acknowledgements - Past Plans, Studies and Work	The Introduction to the Plan requires more explanation of the purpose of the Comp. Plan	P. Smith	Yes - PC
16	1	About the Comprehensive Plan	Strike, "the process of creating a plan is just as important as the outcome."	W. Brunner	PC will investigate
17	1	About the Comprehensive Plan	Strike, "the process of creating a plan is just as important as the outcome."	W. Brunner	redundant comment
18	1	Plan Organization: Elements	The policies are hopelessly vague and self contradictory. FLUP is short sided, lacks specifics, includes land use categories Paonia does not have without explanation	W. Brunner	N/A
19	2	Plan Organization: Appendix	Appendix should not be part of the plan	W. Brunner	no
20	2	Summary of Community Engagement Events	I'd suggest placing the Community Engagement in the Plan as its own Section in the Document and titled "PART II SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS"	P.Smith	yes
21	2	Timeline	Include: Plan sent back for redo by Wynn w/o consulting PC after meetings were scheduled for adoption	W. Brunner	N/A
22	2	Timeline	Include: revised plan presented July 18, 2024	W. Brunner	N/A
23	2	Timeline	Include: previous version included breakdown of in town/out of town at community engagement events. Include number here.	W. Brunner	N/A
24	2	Public Engagement Session #1: Not legit subject for land use docment	Strike (remove): providing transparency and improved communication between the Town and community	W. Brunner	No, don't strike
25	3	Public Engagement Session #2	Strike (remove): Create design standards and preserve historic character... See Scott's notes, pg. 72, only got 3 dots	W. Brunner	No, don't strike
26	4	Public Engagement Session #3	Strike (remove): With Community and partner organizations, prioritize and implement recommendations from the Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan	W. Brunner	No, don't strike
27	4	Governance and Participation	Strike (remove) the section in its entirety, not legit subject for Land use plan	W. Brunner	No, don't strike
28	4	Public Engagement Session #3	Strike (remove): Develop commercial property in the Downtown Core instead of along Highway 133; ie. Do not develop gateways!	W. Brunner	No, don't strike
29	4	Public Engagement Session #3	"urban ag areas" no such zone, prime housing space in town core, 1 acre estates not comparable with urban ag.; Integrate cottage industries into more budiness-heavy areas of Town	W. Brunner	No
30	4	Public Engagement Session #3	incude live/work concept in industrial zone	W. Brunner	no
31	4	Public Engagement Session #3	"Acknowledge and take wildlife corridors into consideration with all zoning and development" -- How does this work, designated area splits parcels, zoning lines are to go by parcel, road, etc.	W. Brunner	no
32	5	Legislative Authority	Include: PMC 2-6-10 through 50	W. Brunner	?
33	7	Paonia's Community Vision	Big Issue here!! -- 2014 Heart and Soul project not legit basis for 2024 comp plan! Town doesn't even seem to have a copy! Documents sent from town do not contain any product from heart and soul project, are strictly intro documents and rfp type documents.	W. Brunner	no

34	7	Paonia's Community Vision -- We balance growth and development with values of maintaining a small-town feel and dark nighttime skies, economic and cultural diversity and creativity, and existing community resources.	<i>We should not be balancing growth with our town values. We should prioritize our values. Growth is ambiguous. We want infill growth but not giant tracts of homes. The type of growth matters.</i>	P. McCarthy	Agreed upon revised text for 2nd paragraph in the vision statement on page 7: "We prioritize maintaining our small-town character, economic and cultural diversity, creativity, existing community resources and as a Dark Sky Internationally designated Dark Skies Town, the protection of our night time skies. Any development or growth in our community must align with and enhance these core values focusing on strategic infill small scale projects that complement our Town's unique identity rather than large scale expansion. We share a deep connection to our rural landscape and natural resources." <b>PC will add some language regarding water.</b>
35	8	Paonia's Community Vision	No mention of tourism This is significant. Should be noted in rest of plan	W. Brunner	PC will address
36	8	Paonia's Community Vision	Strike: "A 2014 community-led initiative called "The North Fork Heart & Soul Project" succeeded in capturing many of the shared values of Paonia's diverse residents; those values have informed this Plan -- Who's idea is this? Is a fundamental flaw.	W. Brunner	no, don't strike
37	9	Demographics, Economy & Growth, Education, Civil Society & Health Care	Big Issue Here!! -- "Growth is further constrained by a moratorium on new water taps that went into effect in 2020." -- Make a clear statement, growth envisioned by plan is impossible until moratorium lifted. Reason of moratorium is all existing studies conclude water system is at capacity or over sold in terms of firm yield from last century. current climate is drying. infrastructure improvements or strategies not yet contemplated will be necessary to provide water for growth.	W. Brunner	PC will address that the economy is dependent on water
38	9	Economy & Growth	<i>Inadequate Consideration: "Housing Price increases have outpaced rise in wages by a ratio of 5.5 to 1, displace residents and creating barriers for businesses looking to hire seasonal and full-time wage workers." State: is national/global problem. Local policies not always effective.</i>	W. Brunner	See #40
39	9	Economy & Growth: "abundant educational opportunities"	<i>Paonia has lost significant educational resources, closing of schools,</i>	W. Brunner	No
40	12	An increase in housing demand has been observed over the past three 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.	<i>Short term rentals are what is driving the affordability crisis in Paonia. The document calls out urban people relocating and the water moratorium. Neither of those two things have had as big an impact as short term rentals (50+ homes). This document should call this out as THE major contributing factor.</i>	P. McCarthy	Discussion on STRs. Commissioner McCarthy wants STRs addressed with further revision
41	18	FLUM and Land Use Categories	<i>FLUM and the Land Use categories -- need to be sure this map reflects what Paonia wants to follow over the next 2 decades. Need to reconcile "light industrial" term on the map and "light manufacturing" in the narrative. In addition, I'd recommend the Land Use section and FLU include more detail on how it is intended to be used.</i>	P. Smith	PC to address
42	19	Ensure an integrated and balanced role for tourism and remote workers in the local economy to allow local businesses, community members, and the Town of Paonia to receive the economic benefit of tourism and spending by remote workers while balancing this with housing affordability and the development of year-round, well-paying, place-based jobs for residents.	<i>Remote workers are residents. We should balance the needs of remote workers (aka locals) with tourists. We should prioritize locals over tourists unless doing so benefits the town as a whole more.</i>	P. McCarthy	Yes, with PC wordsmithing
43	37	Appendix B, Infrastructure -- Water	<i>Be sure the Comp. Plan adequately addresses (CRS 31-23-206 (d)(ii)) the water supply element: "The planning commission shall consult with the entities that supply water for use within the municipality to ensure coordination on water supply and facility planning, and the water supply element must identify water supplies and facilities sufficient to meet the needs of the public and private infrastructure reasonably anticipated or identified in the planning process."</i>	P. Smith	Yes

44	37	Appendix B, Infrastructure -- Water	Ensure that the water supply element include water conservation policies, to be determined by the municipality, which may include goals specified in the state water plan adopted pursuant to section 37-60106.3 and may include policies to implement water conservation and other state water plan goals as a condition of development approvals, including subdivisions, planned unit developments, special use permits, and zoning changes. A municipality with a master plan that includes a water supply element shall ensure that its master plan includes water conservation policies at the first amending of the master plan that occurs after September 14, 2020, but in no case later than July 1, 2025.	P.Smith	Yes
45	18	Growth Framework/Values	Open space, agricultural land, interconnection with nature, <u>support and maintain street and park trees, and dark nighttime skies.</u>	L. Howe	TBD
46	18	Growth Framework/Values	• <u>Clear planning for a growing community with well managed, realistic growth objectives.</u>	L. Howe	TBD
47	24	LUF Policies	<u>POLICY LUF-2: Approach development with clear and consistent regulations and procedures that are effective and fair.</u>	L. Howe	TBD
48	24	LUF Policies	<u>POLICY LUF-4: Support diverse and affordable housing options for all to ensure that Paonia remains a complete and vibrant community, increase energy efficiency and ease greenhouse gas emissions.</u>	L. Howe	TBD
49	24	LUF Policies	<u>Policy LUF-8: Evaluate all development and annexation proposals to understand the expected economic impacts, the Town's capacity to meet the demand for services, the impact to water and infrastructure resources, and if the proposal is compatible with Paonia's character, improves connectivity, and provides significant community benefits or enhancements</u>	L. Howe	TBD
50	24	LUF Policies	<u>POLICY LUF-9: Prioritize effort to reduce light pollution in compliance with Paonia's lighting ordinance in or to. Maintain the natural darkness (dark skies) to preserve the nighttime view of the stars and the many other benefits of dark skies</u>	L. Howe	TBD
51	25	Economic Development	<u>POLICY ECON-3: Create and maintain a healthy, vibrant, and beautiful economic downtown corridor on and around Grand Avenue. Support the use of shared parking, on-street parking and other strategies to maximize the use of available resources and support local business. Use signage and other wayfinding to direct visitors to</u>	L. Howe	TBD