

Affordable and Workforce Housing in the Comprehensive Plan

Prepared by: Planning Staff

Note: "Affordable" appears 38 times in the Comprehensive Plan in various forms, including Housing Affordability, Affordable Housing, Affordable Services, Affordable to Workers, and Affordable Units.

Note: Workforce appears 13 times in reference to housing and almost always alongside affordable housing/housing affordability

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

- Loss of **Affordability**: Lyons' housing market has become significantly more expensive over the last decade due to the loss of **affordable** housing during the 2013 flood, the effects of a nationwide housing crisis, limited geography, and the high desirability of the community. Although the events are too recent to be reflected in available data sets, pressure on Lyons' housing market (and on the market in other mountain communities in Colorado and across the West) has seemingly been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and a growing prevalence of remote workers seeking a lifestyle change. If this trend continues, it will strain the ability of local businesses to attract workers and become increasingly challenging for residents on a fixed income to move to or remain in Lyons.

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CHAPTER 2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES, GOALS, & POLICIES

- Building a Thriving Year-Round Economy, Why it Matters: Residents have also expressed the desire for more diverse and **affordable** services in town. Attracting these services may involve allowing larger scale commercial areas than Lyons has previously considered. This needs to be balanced with residents' desire to maintain a focus on local businesses that "fit" Lyons in terms of their provision of essential services, scale, and ethos. Page 33
- Manage Growth and Nurture our Small-Town Character, Why it Matters: The Denver Regional Council of Governments conducts growth forecasts for the Denver metropolitan area and is projecting that an additional 500 people could reside in the Lyons region over the next 20 years. This would require approximately 180 new housing units. While not all of this growth will occur within current Town limits, land available for development in and around Lyons is limited and housing **affordability** is a growing concern. Where and how growth occurs is shaped by the community goals in this Comprehensive Plan. Accommodating the needs of current and future residents and businesses will require a mix of "greenfield" development, especially along the East St. Vrain, and targeted infill/redevelopment within Town limits. (i.e., Eastern Corridor) Ensuring that the scale and intensity of future development "fits" Lyons' small-town character is a priority for the community. The Town has a number of policies and regulatory tools in place to help guide the siting and intensity of future development, including the Future Land Use Plan, IGAs with Boulder County, the blueline, limitations on growth within the floodplain, and the zoning code. Page 45
- Goal HN-2: Expand and preserve workforce and **affordable** housing options. Page 54

- a. Continue to work with the Boulder County Regional Housing Partnership and other partners to increase awareness of **affordable** housing issues and opportunities to achieve regional targets outlined in the Boulder County Regional Housing Plan. Page 54
- Policy HN-2.2. **Affordable** Housing
 - a. Continue to seek opportunities to facilitate the development of permanently **affordable** housing units that provide options for Lyons' lower-income residents and replace units that were lost during the 2013 flood in accordance with the Town's goal of maintaining approximately twelve percent of the total housing stock within the Town limits for **affordable** housing. Page 54.
- Policy HN-2.3: Workforce housing: Work with the development community, area housing organizations, property owners, landlords, and the community to preserve and expand housing options, including existing mobile home parks, that are **affordable** to workers earning below average wages in the community. Page 55
- Policy HN-2.4: Annexation: Use annexations as an opportunity to expand Lyons' supply of **affordable** and workforce housing. Where appropriate, encourage new development to accommodate a variety of housing sizes, household types, tenure types, densities, and prices. Page 55
- Policy HN-2.5: Public-private partnerships: Continue to explore opportunities to partner with private or nonprofit developers on the construction of **affordable** and workforce housing on Town-owned and privately held land. Page 55
- Policy HN-2.6: Housing programs and resources
 - a. Collaborate with Boulder County, the state, and others on programs and projects that assist Lyons residents and workers seeking **affordable** housing options and facilitate the management and maintenance of existing **affordable** housing units. Page 55.
- What is **Affordable** and Workforce Housing?
 - a. **Affordable** Housing. Any housing that is subsidized by the federal, state and local government, or any housing where units are subject to long-term covenants or deed restrictions which require that the units be sold or rented at levels that preserve them as **affordable** housing for a specific period of time. The Town of Lyons further defines **affordable** housing as units that meet the needs of residents earning 60 percent or less of Boulder County Area Median Income (AMI).
 - b. Workforce Housing. **Affordable** housing for households with earned income that is insufficient to secure quality housing in reasonable proximity to the workplace. The Town of Lyons further defines workforce housing as units that are available to residents earning 80 percent or less of Boulder County AMI.
 - c. In Lyons, workforce housing is targeted toward workers who are vital for the everyday function of the community, such as teachers, public safety workers, first responders, Town staff, and workers in retail, food/beverage, and other core industries. Page 55.
- Policy HN-3.4: Short-term rentals

- a. Continue to support short-term rentals for residents who classify Lyons as their primary residence (i.e., they reside in Lyons at least nine months out of the year). Monitor short-term rentals to assess and mitigate the impacts of visitors and vacation rentals units on neighborhoods and **affordable** housing, and update short-term rental regulations as needed. Page 56.

CHAPTER 3: FUTURE LAND USE AND THREE-MILE PLAN

- Future Land Use and Three-Mile Plan: About This Chapter: Proactively establishing and maintaining a plan to guide future growth is essential to support the community's goals related to housing **affordability**, environmental protection, economic vitality, and the visual character of the Town. Page 64
- Central Neighborhoods
 - a. **Affordable** Housing. The Town worked with Habitat for Humanity in 2018 to build six **affordable** homes and is currently working with the Summit Housing Group to build 40 **affordable** units near Lyons Valley Park off of McConnell Drive. The 2021 Community Survey showed that the community was split on whether additional **affordable** housing units were needed, but there was universal agreement that living in Lyons has become increasingly difficult due to rising housing costs. Local businesses expressed concerns that hiring workers has become difficult because they are not able to pay wages that would allow their employees to live in Lyons. Page 95.
- Future Land Use Considerations (East St.Vrain): Mixed-Use: A mix of residential, commercial, and employment uses is encouraged. Highway frontage should be reserved for commercial uses, with smallscale apartments or townhomes located behind. As one of the last greenfield sites remaining in Lyons, **affordable** or workforce housing should be a priority. Page 102

CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION

- Future Land Use and Three-Mile Plan: Annexation Criteria
 - a. • Consistency with Comprehensive Plan. Annexations should advance the visions, goals, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, including opportunities to diversify the Town's economy, provide **affordable** or workforce housing, and support tourism. Page 120
- Goal AC-1: Create opportunities for art, art education, and artists to thrive
 - a. AC-1e: Create a live-work development that can provide **affordable** housing for artists and musicians, as well as a space to incubate their trade and business. Page 131.
- Goal LU-4: Implement ecologically sustainable, low-impact planning solutions in public and private development and land management
 - a. LU-4n: Support the creation of energy-efficient **affordable** housing stock that includes on-site energy generation. Page 143.
- Goal HN-1: Expand and preserve workforce and **affordable** housing options. Page 147

- a. HN-1d: Review and update the Town's subdivision standards to encourage/incentivize a mix of housing types and establish formal criteria for community benefits, such as **affordable** or workforce housing
- Goal G-2: Nurture Lyons' culture of collaboration, volunteerism and inclusivity.
 - a. G-2c: Work with Boulder County to: share and utilize Geographic Information System data and maps, consider revenue sharing and cooperate to achieve common goals such as regional trail construction, **affordable** housing, implementation of the Boulder County Sustainable Energy Plan, using healthy air, water and land management practices, hazard mitigation, etc. Page 149.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Community Profile
 - a. Housing Costs and **Affordability** 164, Page 154
- Housing
 - a. Total housing units. While Lyons had a net gain of 65 housing units between 2010 (798) and 2019 (863), this does not account for the nearly 100 housing units that were destroyed in the 2013 Flood. Lyons total housing units peaked at 961 in 2013. While some of the units that were lost have been replaced, and some new construction has occurred, a deficit of 98 housing units remains. In 2021, the Town approved a proposal for the construction of 40 small-lot single-family and attached single-family units as part of the Lyons Valley Park (Summit Development Group) **affordable** housing project. Page 163
- Housing Costs and **Affordability**
 - a. Home values. Lyons median home value in 2019 was \$577,200, which was \$80,000 more than Boulder County and much higher than Colorado as a whole. In 2010, just 11 percent of homes were valued over \$500,000, in 2019 this rose to 65 percent of homes. Page 164
- One reference on Page 164 that is hidden
- Appendix B: Community Survey Summary
 - a. The Community Survey asked respondents about their hopes and fears for the future, to identify issues and opportunities, and to assess how they felt Lyons' was performing in key areas. This document summarizes the results of the Lyons Community Survey, which will be used to identify the most critical issues and opportunities facing the community.
 - b. Part 1: Issues and Opportunities. Includes respondents' opinions on issues and opportunities in Lyons regarding housing and **affordability**, community health, culture and education, sustainability and resilience, parks and recreation, the built environment, transportation, and economic health. Page 188

Workforce

CHAPTER 2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES, GOALS, & POLICIES

- Goal HN-2: Expand and preserve **workforce** and affordable housing options. Page 54

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CHAPTER 3: FUTURE LAND USE AND THREE-MILE PLAN

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CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION

- Goal HN-1: Expand and preserve **workforce** and affordable housing options.
 - HN-1d: Review and update the Town's subdivision standards to encourage/incentivize a mix of housing types and establish formal criteria for community benefits, such as affordable or **workforce** housing. Page 147

- Not included in the **workforce** housing search but other Strategies under the Goal HN-1 (Expand and preserve **workforce** and affordable housing options) include (Page 147):
 - HN-1a: Consider incorporating employee housing in future public buildings and facilities.
 - HN-1b: Update the 2014 Housing Needs Assessment to reflect changes in the regional market and Lyons' housing supply (e.g., approval of the Summit Housing project) and identify specific needs. Align future housing projects and initiatives with identified needs.
 - HN-1c: Work with regional housing partners, residents, and property owners on strategies to allow residents of existing mobile home parks and other lower income housing in the Lyons Planning Area to remain in the community