



DECEMBER 2025



Ouray County
COLORADO



TOWN OF RIDGWAY & OURAY COUNTY HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT



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Glossary of Terms & Acronyms

- **ACS** – American Community Survey, an ongoing nationwide survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau to collect demographic, socioeconomic, and housing information each year.
- **ADU** – Accessory Dwelling Unit, a small, independent residential unit located on the same lot as a primary home.
- **AMI** – Area Median Income, a custom tabulation of ACS data by the U.S. Census Bureau representing the median income of a family in a jurisdiction. Typically utilized in order to determine eligibility for subsidized housing units.
- **CAGR** – Compound Annual Growth Rate, the average yearly growth rate of a variable over time.
- **CHAS** – Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data, custom tabulations of ACS data from the U.S. Census Bureau demonstrating the extent of housing problems and housing needs, particularly for low-income households.
- **CHFA** – Colorado Housing and Finance Agency, the State of Colorado's housing finance authority that helps increase the availability of affordable housing and support economic development.
- **CLT** – Community Land Trust, a nonprofit organization that acquires and holds land for long-term community benefit, typically to provide permanently affordable housing.
- **DOLA** – Department of Local Affairs, a State of Colorado agency that supports local governments and communities.
- **FHFA** – Federal Housing and Finance Agency, a U.S. government agency that regulates and oversees the housing government-sponsored enterprises Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Banks.
- **FMR** – Fair Market Rent, the 40th percentile rents for standard-quality rental housing units in a geographic area.
- **HNA** – Housing Needs Assessment, a planning document required to be completed by local jurisdictions in the State of Colorado for affordable housing strategy purposes pursuant to SB24-174.
- **HTOC** – Home Trust of Ouray County, a Community Land Trust founded to develop and manage permanently affordable housing solutions for Ouray County residents.
- **HUD** – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, a federal agency that oversees national policies and programs related to housing.
- **IGA** – Intergovernmental Agreement, a formal, legally binding contract between two or more government agencies to collaborate on shared services, projects, or responsibilities.

- **IZ** – Inclusionary Zoning, a land-use policy that requires or incentivizes developers to include a certain percentage of affordable housing units in new residential developments.
- **LQ** – Location Quotient, a measure to compare the concentration of a particular industry in a region relative to the U.S. average.
- **MFH** – Multi-Family Housing, housing units developed that include multiple dwelling units in a common structure, such as duplexes, townhomes, or apartments.
- **OC** – Ouray County
- **PC** – Points Consulting
- **PEP** – U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program, an annual program producing estimates of the population for the U.S., states, counties, cities, and towns between the decennial censuses.
- **PIT** – Point-in-Time estimates, annual surveys conducted by communities across the U.S. to count the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night.
- **PUD** – Planned Unit Development, a type of zoning designation that allows a developer to design a development that may vary from underlying zoning standards.
- **R10** – Region 10, the economic development region in Colorado including Delta, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel Counties.
- **SFH** – Single-Family Housing, housing units in the form of single-family, detached units.
- **STR** – Short-Term Rental, a residential property that is rented out for brief periods of time, typically less than 30 days rather than long-term leases.
- **ZHVI** – Zillow Home Value Index, a measure of the value of a "typical home" out of all homes in an area, not just those bought and sold. Based on the weighted average of home values between the 35th and 65th percentile.

1. TOWN OF RIDGWAY & OURAY COUNTY

Housing Needs Assessment – Executive Summary



Ouray County
COLORADO



Few places in the United States are as beautiful as Ouray County. A high quality of life and exceptional scenic beauty means that Ouray County and its communities, namely, the Town of Ridgway and City of Ouray, experience high levels of housing demand. This reality has become especially apparent following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Population & Housing Forecast: Needs Across All AMI Levels

To quantify upcoming housing needs, Points Consulting's (PC's) population and housing needs forecast for Ouray County indicates two growth scenarios, Expected and Potential, which reflect prospective shifts in future demographic and housing trends. "Expected" is the low-end baseline expectation and "Potential" could occur assuming both continued economic growth and increased housing production.

Our population model projects that Ouray County will see between 1% and 11% growth over the next 20 years (resulting in **+60 residents or +550 net-new residents**). In-migration, land, and housing availability will be the primary factors

determining where growth lands within this range of possibilities. On the high-end, Potential Growth scenario, this leads to **+375 new housing units**.

Table 1.1: Population & Housing Needs Forecast, Town of Ridgway & Ouray County

Region	Current '24	Potential	Growth
Population			
Town of Ridgway	1,281	1,585	+304
Ouray County	5,197	5,750	+553
Housing Units			
Town of Ridgway	643	849	+206
Ouray County	2,500	2,875	+375

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database

Within the Town of Ridgway, we project between **+30 and +300 net-new residents**.

This assumes that the Town captures approximately 55% of new county-wide growth, based both on historic growth

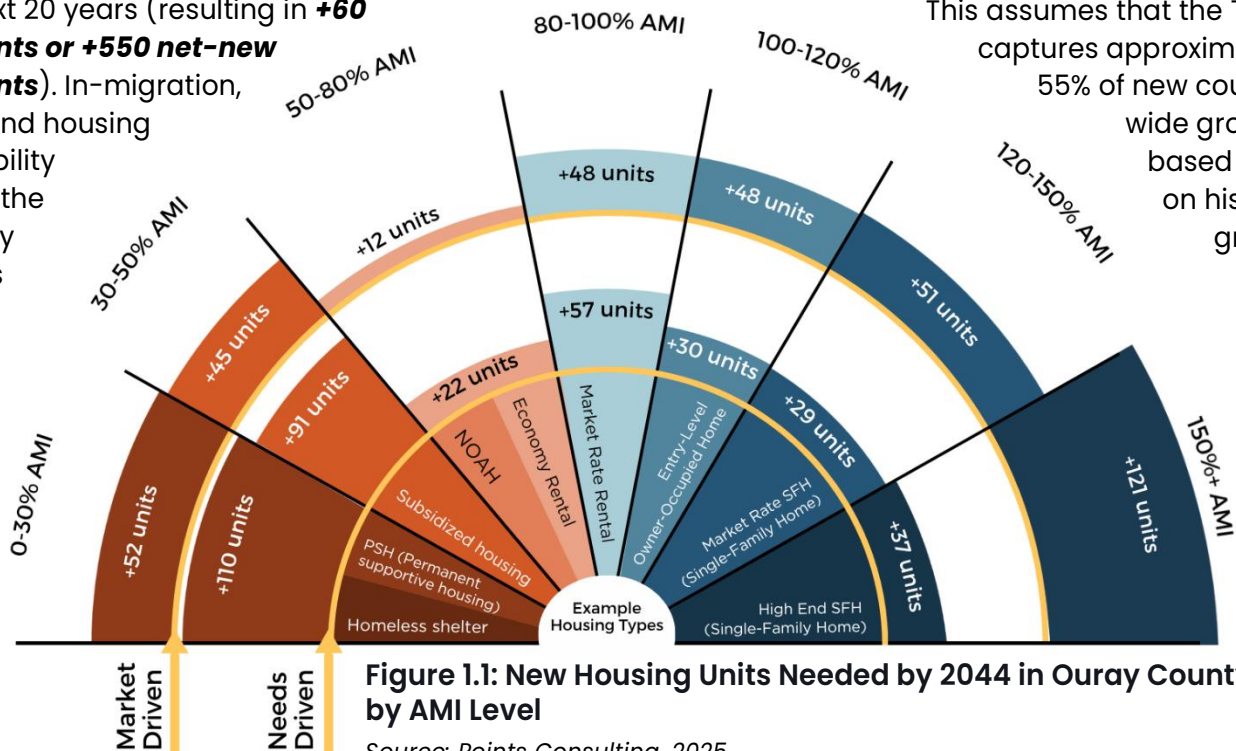


Figure 1.1: New Housing Units Needed by 2044 in Ouray County, by AMI Level

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

patterns and the existing intergovernmental agreement between the County and the Town. At the “Potential Growth” level this yields demand for up to **+206 new housing units**.

Rehabilitation and conversion of existing buildings will be part of the solution but new residential development will be necessary to meet upcoming demand.¹ This demand could be met either by private sector development of housing that new and existing residents want, or by a more regulated and subsidized model that fills gaps for what existing residents can afford. To demonstrate the breadth of these options, we provide two projection scenarios referred to as “Market-Driven” and “Needs-Driven.”

Recommendations: Assist the Local Workforce & Enhance Planning Practices

Our team compiled a list of practical steps and strategies for Ouray County, the Town of Ridgway to consider in an effort drive down the cost of housing without compromising community character. The proposed solutions are a combination of planning, grant-related, non-profit, and private sector opportunities, which in concert can help to fill the gap.

To address housing needs across all income levels, workforce assistance is required.

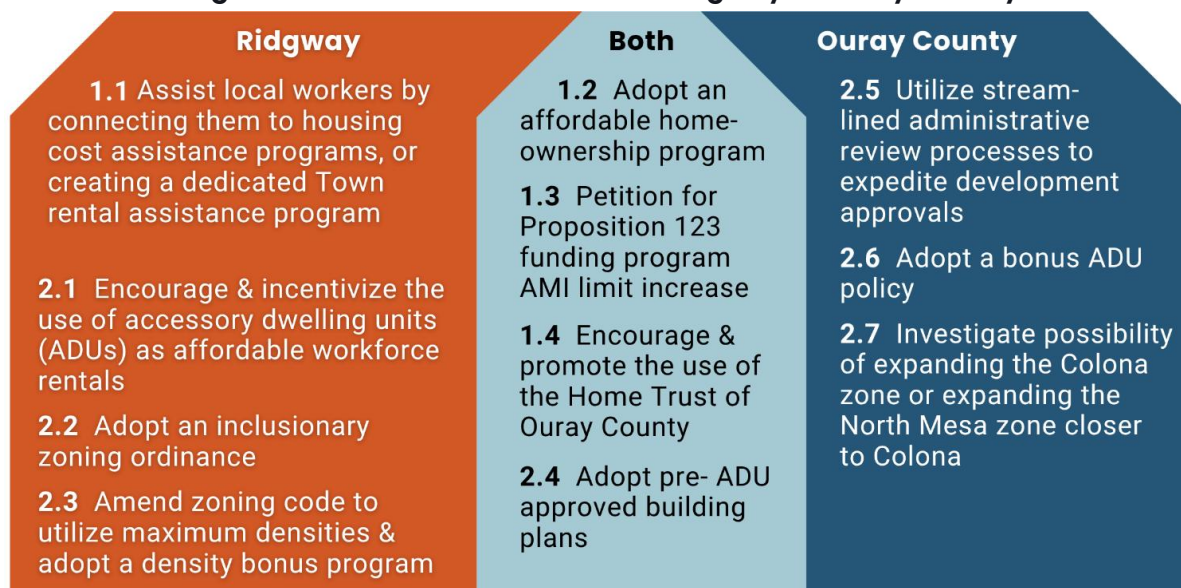
Workforce assistance can be achieved in many ways, such as connecting local workers to resources available already or even creating an affordable homeownership program. The Home Trust of Ouray County is also a key contributor to the region for workforce housing. The Town and County should do what they can to encourage use of the organization’s programs and further its mission.

Through planning and zoning practices, there is more the Town and County can do to promote more naturally affordable options. Accessory dwelling units have been absorbed by the region over the last 10 years and provide ways to naturally produce more affordable options for the local workforce. The Town could also amend its zoning code and introduce a density bonus to incentivize certain private sector production, and the County could look to zoning district changes in northern areas of the region to allow more directed growth.

Whenever possible, recommendations are accompanied by examples of other communities who have successfully implemented them, and resources to assist in implementation.² Our recommendations are split into two categories:

1. Workforce Assistance 2. Planning & Zoning

Figure 1.2: Recommendations for Ridgway & Ouray County



¹ See land availability in [Appendix B](#).

² See [Chapter 7: Recommendations](#).

Housing Costs: Rising & Burdensome

Increasing housing costs were a key component driving housing needs and recommendations. The typical home value according to Zillow's ZHVI surged to **\$820,000 by September 2022 in Ouray County**. Ridgway experienced the same phenomenon where the typical home value was \$895,000 as of October 2024. While rental data are limited, there are indications that rent prices have also greatly increased. The two-bedroom Fair Market Rent increased by 68% from 2016 through 2024, reaching \$1,770 in Ouray County.

In Ridgway, **42% of renters are housing cost-burdened**, which HUD defines as households spending 30%+ of their gross monthly income on housing. When considering low-income renters, 88% are cost-burdened showing disproportionate effects on low-income households. The situation is similar for the County overall, where 80% of low-income renters are cost-burdened.

The affordability issues persist even at high income levels. **The average-priced home is eight times greater than Ouray County's Area Median Income (AMI)** of \$94,600 for a family of four. For a home to be affordable at 100% AMI, it would have to be priced at \$503,800 or below, roughly \$320,000 lower than the typical home value in the County.

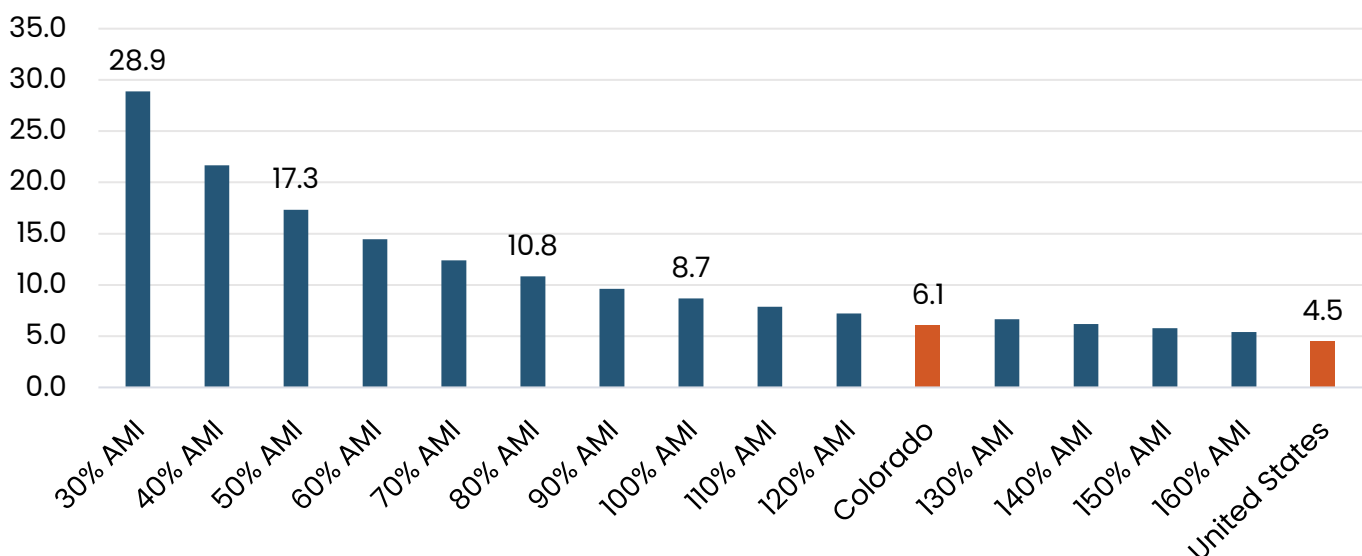
Regional Housing Stock: Slow to React to Rising Demand, But Picking Up

One factor leading to the acceleration in home prices is that the housing stock was not flexible enough to handle the increased demand for housing. Data from the Town of Ridgway show the number of approved building permits peaked in 2005 at about 50 and then declined due to the Financial Crisis from 2007 to 2009. Housing production has yet to pick up enough speed to align with increased demand.

Available homes are also predominantly single-family detached housing. In Ouray County, these homes make up 73% of the total housing stock, compared to 63% at the national level. Of all new homes permitted in Ridgway over the last 25 years, **78% have been single-family detached units**, a trend which does not align with housing density or affordability.

However, the market has begun to react to meet the increased demand. In terms of recent and planned developments, there may be a total of **up to 140 new housing units within the next three to five years in the Town of Ridgway and unincorporated parts of the County**. Specifically, there are over 100 recently built and planned units in Ridgway, with the largest development (Riverfront Village) totaling 34 new units.

Figure 1.3: Median Home Value to Annual Income Ratio, by AMI Level, Ouray County



Source: 2025 HUD Income Limits via CHFA, Esri Business Analyst 2024, Zillow ZHVI 2024

Short-term rentals (STRs) are also likely having an impact on regional housing availability as they can constrict housing supply for local workers. In Ouray County, there are nearly 300 active STRs, **accounting for 12% of the County's occupied housing units**. The impact of short-term rentals is especially burdensome in the City of Ouray, where STR's compose over one-third of occupied housing units (35%).

Demographics: Migration Playing a Key Role in an Aging Area

Ouray County's population has grown by about 14% since 2014, landing just below 5,200 as of 2024. State forecasts project the County's population to continue to grow at a steady pace. Ridgway's population has grown by 32% in the same time, reaching 1,280 residents. In contrast, the City of Ouray has declined by 3%. Growth has been driven mostly by migration in the last decade, with natural change (births minus deaths) accounting for no more than +12 residents per year.

Age plays a key role in housing needs, as older populations typically require more space per person. Younger households often compromise on unit size, lot size, or even homeownership due to budget constraints. In Ouray County, only 20% of the population is 24 years or younger, while 33% is 65+. In the Town of Ridgway 21% is 24 or younger, while only 18% is 65+. A shrinking workforce supporting a growing elderly population can create economic challenges. Although the U.S. population is aging overall, Ouray County's population skews significantly older than the nation.

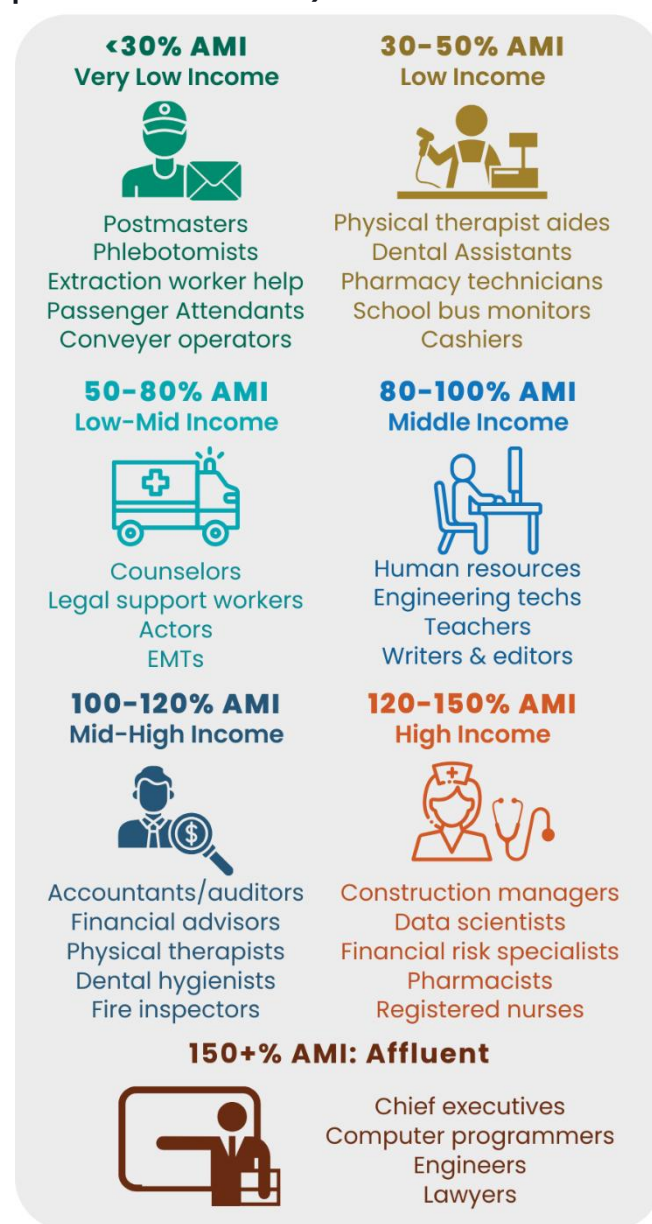
Economy: Growing Employment, but Commuting Required

The availability of jobs and the types of jobs in the region are a piece of the housing puzzle. Employment in Ouray County economy has seen strong growth over the last decade and particularly over the last five years. Employment in the County has increased 35% since 2014. The employment growth in Ouray County is mostly due to population growth as the labor force participation rate has only slightly increased since 2014.

Additionally, the rate of employment growth is faster than other counties in the region, as well as the state and nation in the same timeframe. The number of business establishments in the County and total wage growth have also grown faster than the national average.

Commuter trends are critical factors impacting the local economy. For example, **a striking 86% of workers who are employed in Ridgway live in a different community**. Even for Ouray County in general, most workers do not live in the County. These trends reflect the inability of local workers to afford to live in Ridgway or Ouray County.

Figure 1.4: Common Careers by AMI (one-person HH AMI Limits)



2. Introduction

Ouray County and the Town of Ridgway, Colorado contracted with PC in May 2025 to produce a regional Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) to meet the State of Colorado's new planning regulations pursuant to SB24-174. Our goals for the HNA are to analyze existing and future housing needs in the Town and County by analyzing gaps in the local housing market, in terms of affordability and attainment. Our HNA for the Town and County demonstrates the region's commitment to address housing needs in the community and provides crucial information to do so.

Our HNA examines the housing market within the Town of Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County to determine if the region has a healthy housing ecosystem. A healthy housing ecosystem is characterized by a balanced market, where the housing supply aligns with community demand. Key indicators of supply include the current number of housing units, along with vacant and developable parcels. Meanwhile, indicators of demand may include current employment numbers, income levels, and projected population growth.

To ensure a balanced market in the future, population and housing forecasts are used to measure future demand. A Land Capacity Analysis (LCA) helps determine how much land is available for development, and whether the potential number of new housing units can meet projected demand.

Additionally, any data point for Ouray County refers to the entire County inclusive of both municipalities. Any data point referring to the unincorporated areas exclusively will be noted as "Unincorporated Ouray County."

The report is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 1 – Executive Summary & Introduction:** Key highlights from the assessment
- **Chapter 2 – Introduction:** Establishment of the purpose of the project, our goals, and methods
- **Chapter 3 – Gaps & Barriers Analysis:** Affordability gaps for rental and homeownership
- **Chapter 4 – Population & Housing Needs Forecast:** Population and housing needs projections, by income level and tenure
- **Chapter 5 – Demographic & Socioeconomic Trends:** Overview of underlying socioeconomics affecting housing demand and affordability characteristics
- **Chapter 6 – Housing Trends:** Overview of housing for both owners and renters, including affordability dynamics

- **Chapter 7 – Recommendations:** Recommended strategies for both Ouray County and the Town of Ridgway to utilize for more affordable and attainable housing
- **Chapter 8 – Community Engagement:** Summary of overarching themes from PC’s discussions with community leaders and developers and a summary of findings from the community survey
- **Chapter 9 – Literature Review:** Overview of relevant planning documents in the geographic area and how they may impact housing.

Regional Context Overview



Ouray County is a unique destination with access to many outdoor recreational amenities. The County lies in Southwest Colorado, and is bordered by Montrose, Hinsdale, Gunnison, San Juan, and San Miguel Counties. With only two incorporated communities (the Town of Ridgway and the City of Ouray) the vast majority of County lands exist in rural, unincorporated areas. The Southern parts of the County are engulfed in the

San Juan Mountains, providing similar exploration opportunities to that of Telluride, a nearby respected tourist destination in San Miguel County. Meanwhile, Northern parts of the County feature broad mesas of the Uncompahgre Plateau region and the valley of the Uncompahgre River.

Town of Ridgway

The Town of Ridgway, located in the center of Ouray County, is known for its authenticity as a small town in the State of Colorado. The Town is an Official Colorado Main Street Community³ and has a Certified Creative District Program.⁴ These statewide programs provide capacity for the Town to increase community amenities through funding and assistance opportunities. Founded in 1889, the Town was established as a headquarters for the Rio Grande Southern Railroad and a hub for local ranchers. Today, residents and

³ "Main Street Program," Department of Local Affairs, Division of Local Government, <https://dlg.colorado.gov/main-street>.

⁴ "Colorado Creative Districts," Office of Economic Development & International Trade, <https://oedit.colorado.gov/colorado-creative-districts>.

visitors are encouraged to “Think Outside” and enjoy the varied amenities provided by the foothills of the San Juan Mountains and the Ridgway Reservoir.



City of Ouray

In the heart of the San Juan Mountains lies the City of Ouray, the “Switzerland of America.” Ouray’s history is rich with traditional mining, and the City has transitioned to becoming one of the recreational hubs of the entire State of Colorado. Activities such as hiking, hot springs, and ice climbing are just a few of the unique experiences available to residents and visitors.



Unincorporated Ouray County

The unincorporated parts of Ouray County boast breathtaking views in all directions. Restrictive zoning policies and large ranching operations are main contributors to the conservation of open space and natural beauty of the County. Residents hope to continue to preserve the openness and natural feel for generations to come, funneling growth towards incorporated municipalities like Ridgway and Ouray.



Expectations of Data Accuracy

Geographic areas with small population sizes, such as Ouray County and its municipalities, are prone to challenges in data accuracy and forecasting. Any users of public data ought to be aware of the challenges and methodological limitations of demographers and statisticians working on such processes. It is easy to fall into a mindset of wondering why the numbers are “wrong,” but they need not be thought of in this way.

Statisticians are not simply tallying up values from a perfect and esoteric spreadsheet. Rather they are modeling an array of data sources, tabulating untold different metrics, across inconsistent geographies, using diverse methods, and varied or inconsistent time periods. Therefore, some margin of error should be expected.

With that said, inaccuracies can exist which could arise from a multitude of reasons: sample size issues, geographic boundary issues, and aggregation issues, to name a few. For these reasons, it is worth local leaders’ efforts to interject their perspectives and local knowledge to the data gathering and forecasting process, particularly when those perspectives can be backed up with well-structured data points that can be incorporated into models. We have taken great care to review data points with local leaders in an attempt to ensure we are capturing trends as close to correct as possible. Moreover, we are confident to present our findings as well-constructed estimates, particularly related to housing needs.

3. Gaps & Barriers Analysis

There is often an imbalance of supply and demand in the housing market. This imbalance can manifest as either an undersupply of housing or housing that is unaffordable (high costs relative to income). For this section, PC measured the affordability gaps in the housing market experienced by renters, homeowners, and potential first-time homebuyers.

Defining Affordability

When discussing “affordability” or “affordable housing,” we refer to monthly housing costs a household experiences that is less than 30% of its gross monthly income. Households spending greater than 30% of gross monthly income on housing are considered “housing cost-burdened” and their housing is considered unaffordable to them. When people become cost-burdened, they typically begin spending more on housing than other basic needs, such as food or clothing. Housing costs increasing faster than incomes can also slow the economy because less money is able to be circulated in other industries.

For example, the current AMI in Ouray County according to HUD is \$94,600.⁵ A household at this income level (100% of AMI) earns approximately \$7,900 per month. At this income level, a household could afford up to \$2,370 per month in housing costs. If a household at 100% of AMI is spending \$2,500 per month on housing, then they are considered cost-burdened and their housing is considered unaffordable to them. In the following sections, we analyze housing costs and affordability through cost-burdened status.

To create our affordability analysis, we referenced multiple sources, including the American Community Survey (ACS) five-year dataset (which averages data from 2018–2022) and the HUD 2017–2021 dataset. Given the drastic changes in both home costs and wages between 2020 and 2022, we would prefer to use more recent statistics. Unfortunately, these are the best available data for small geographic regions. Wherever appropriate, we adjusted the statistics to reflect the current estimates of households in cost-burdened housing situations.

⁵ The 100% AMI for HUD here relates to a four-person household. While Ouray County’s average household size is approximately 2.0 (according to the Census Bureau), \$94,600 is the advertised HUD AMI. This income is done via special calculation by Census when the American Community Survey estimates are completed each year, and the calculation does not account for household size. For this reason, we believe \$94,600 is an accurate AMI measure, despite being used for four-person households.

Renter Challenges

Ridgway and Ouray County renters are more likely to be severely cost-burdened than other renters throughout the state and nation, despite overall cost burden rates being lower. This may reflect a lower proportion of renters in the Town and County, but those who do rent experience high prices relative to their incomes.

In Ridgway, 29.4% of renting households are severely cost-burdened (meaning they spend 50% or more of their gross monthly income on housing) compared to 27.5% across Ouray County (Table 3.1). However, only 12.8% of Ridgway renters and 9.8% of Ouray County renters are cost-burdened (spending 30–50% of gross monthly income on housing), compared to 25.5% in the State.⁶ Altogether, 42.2% of Ridgway renters experience housing cost burden to some degree, along with 37.3% of renters in the County.

Table 3.1: Share of Cost-Burdened Renters Comparison, 2023

Region	Cost-Burdened	Severely Cost-Burdened	Total Cost-Burdened	Not Cost-Burdened
Ridgway	12.8%	29.4%	42.2%	57.8%
Ouray	5.7%	2.8%	8.5%	73.0%
Ouray County	9.8%	27.5%	37.3%	57.1%
Colorado	25.5%	24.3%	49.8%	45.5%
United States	23.3%	23.6%	46.9%	46.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B25070

We also measured affordability issues by various AMI levels. (Note these data use 2021 AMI levels.) The five AMI levels below include:

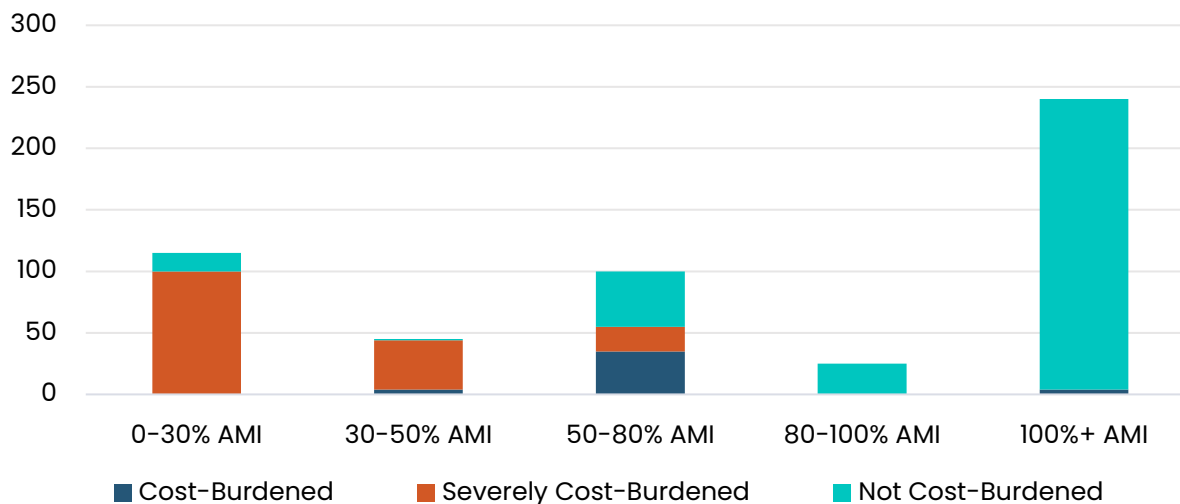
- Extremely low-income: Less than 30% of AMI
- Very low-income: 30 to 50% of AMI
- Low-income: 50 to 80% of AMI
- Moderate income: 80 to 100% of AMI
- Above median income: 100%+ of AMI

Figure 3.2 shows that the lowest income renters in Ridgway are slightly more likely to be cost-burdened than those throughout Ouray County overall. In Ridgway, 87.9% of renters who are low-income, very low-income, and extremely low-income are cost-burdened to some degree. In comparison, 79.9% of renters in the same income brackets

⁶ By HUD definitions, “housing costs” include just rent or mortgage but not utilities such as water, sewer, refuse removal, and internet, which are generally excluded from rental costs in most leases. In short, if the amounts households pay to other housing-related costs were included then the cost burden statistics would be driven even higher than what is published in our report.

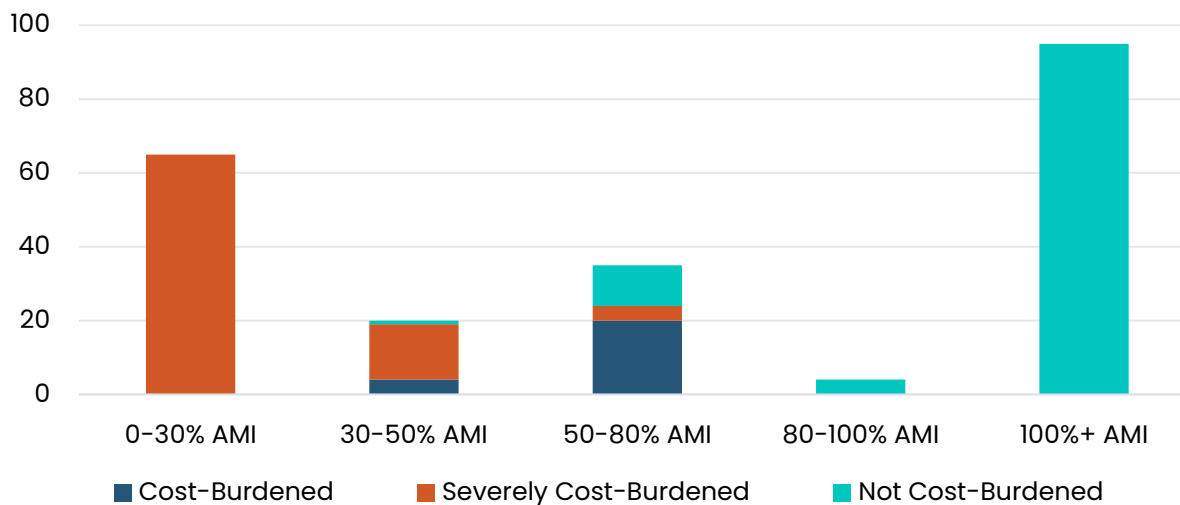
are cost-burdened to some degree in Ouray County (Figure 3.1). Estimates for the City of Ouray are difficult to trust due to small sample sizes. For example, official statistics report there are zero households at the 0–30% AMI level in Ouray (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.1: Cost-Burdened Renting Households by Income Level in Ouray County



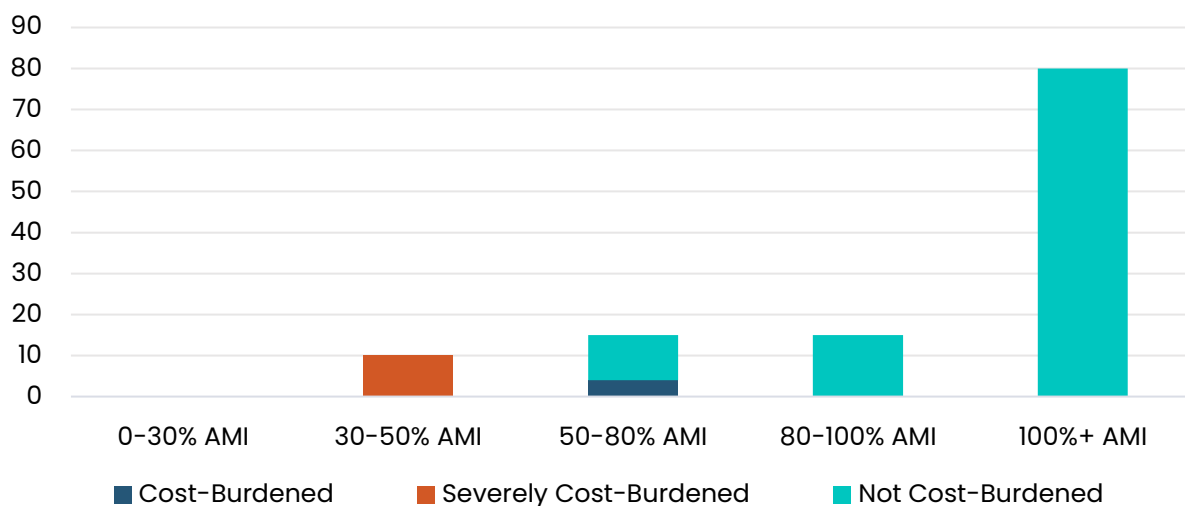
Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data, 2017–2021

Figure 3.2: Cost-Burdened Renting Households by Income Level in Ridgway



Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data, 2017–2021

Figure 3.3: Cost-Burdened Renting Households by Income Level in Ouray City⁷



Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data, 2017-2021

Homeownership Challenges

Many homeowners are also cost-burdened and may be at risk of foreclosure. Approximately 8.9% of homeowners in Ouray County are severely cost-burdened, and another 14.9% are cost-burdened. In Ridgway, about 9.1% of homeowners are cost-burdened and 18.0% of homeowners in Ouray are cost-burdened as well.

Some of the homeowners in these statistics may have been able to purchase their homes years ago when prices were lower, meaning new homeowners are even more cost-burdened now.

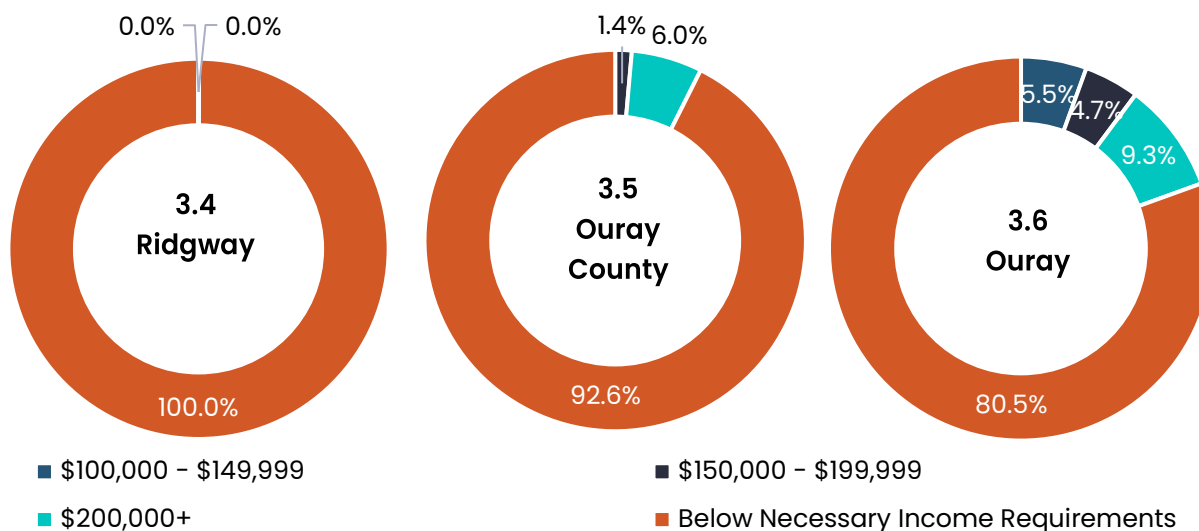
Considering current income levels, home prices in the region (as of 2024), and average mortgage rates, we estimated the percentage of potential, first-time homebuyer households that can afford to buy a home as of July 2025 (Figure 3.4-Figure 3.6). The model was built to show households with an average credit rating using a conventional 30-year mortgage. Ultimately, our estimates show that the vast majority of potential first-time homebuyers in Ridgway, Ouray County, and Ouray cannot afford to purchase a home. This leaves them sidelined in the home-buying market.

A household in Ridgway or Ouray County overall would need an income of about \$175,000 to afford the mortgage on an average-priced home. In contrast, the AMI in

⁷ Our team understands that multiple housing projects are being built to address affordability up to 120% AMI, specifically by the Home Trust of Ouray County. These projects being built indicate there likely are some cost-burdened renters at 100% AMI and above. Data provided by HUD CHAS could be off due to small sample sizes and large margins of error.

Ouray County is about \$94,600. Therefore, an average household would need to earn about \$75,000 more per year to afford an average-priced home. As a result, 100.0% of potential first-time homebuyers in Ridgway cannot afford an average-priced home today (Figure 3.4). Additionally, 92.6% of potential first-time homebuyers in Ouray County cannot afford an average-priced home today (Figure 3.5). In Ouray, the estimate is 80.5% (Figure 3.6).⁸

First Time Homebuyers that Can Afford to Buy an Average-Priced Home

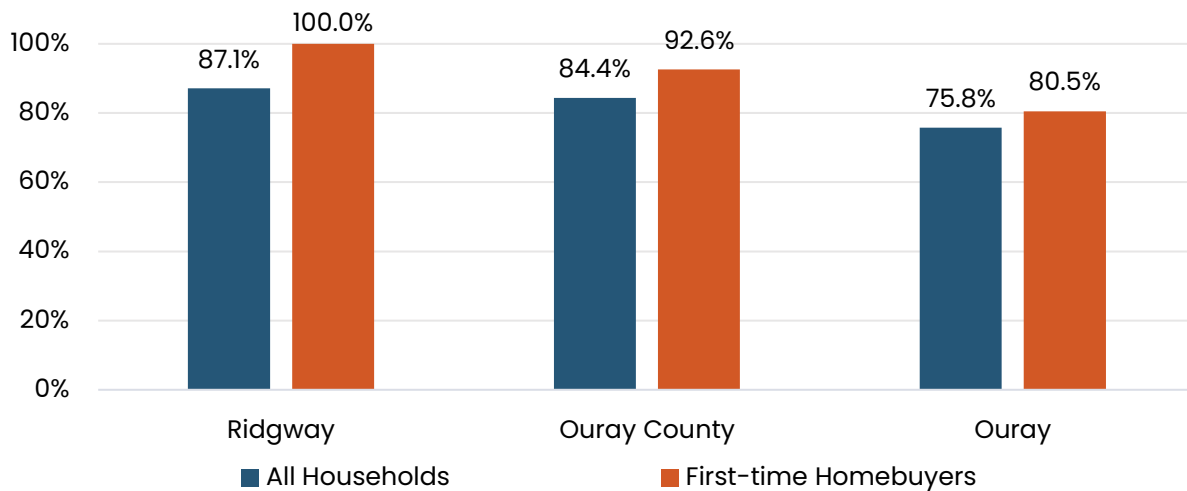


Source: U.S. Census Bureau Table S2503 5-Year Estimates, ZHVI, Realtor.com, HNA Survey Data

While our estimates focus on households who do not own homes, the majority of households in the three geographies do own homes. What would happen if these households were all to attempt to purchase a home now? Figure 3.7 shows a comparison of all households versus first-time homebuyers if they were to buy a home today. Excluding the capital households owning existing homes would have if they sold their homes, 87.1% of all households in Ridgway could not afford to purchase an average-priced home today based on their annual household income. The figure is similar in Ouray County overall where 84.4% of all households throughout the County could not afford to purchase an average-priced home today.

⁸ For Ridgway and Ouray County, all households in the \$200,000+ income cohort can afford an average-priced home in the Town and County, thus the percentages in the charts for this income cohort show the entire share of these income cohorts in the Town and County. For Ouray, all households in the \$150,000-\$199,999 income cohorts can afford an average-priced home in the City.

Figure 3.7: Households that Cannot Afford to Buy an Average-Priced Home Comparison



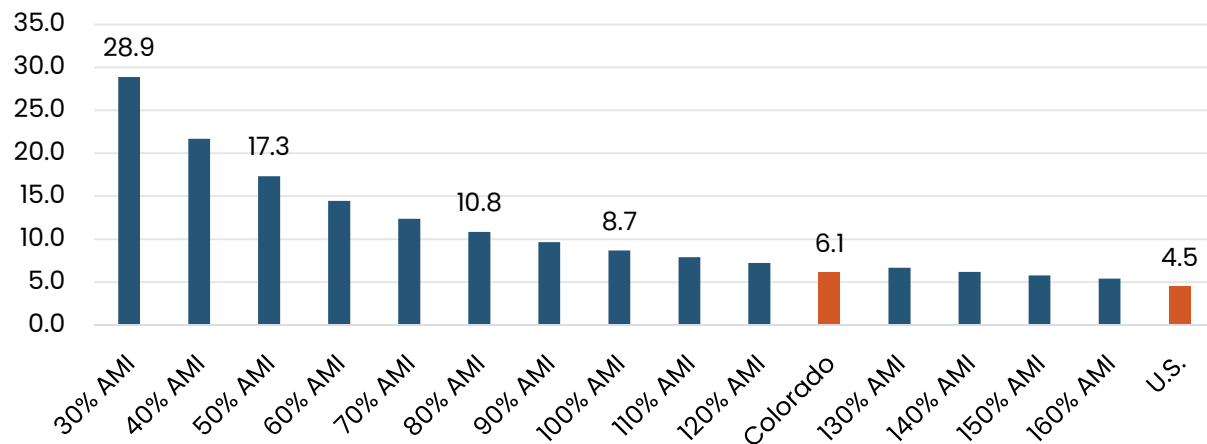
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Table S2503 5-Year Estimates, Zillow ZHVI, Realtor.com, HNA Survey Data

The State of Colorado is a high housing cost state, and Ouray County is on the extreme end of this reality. Figure 3.8 illustrates the median home value to annual income ratio which utilizes the value of a typical home in the County through the ZHVI and examines the ratio across various income levels. At the lowest end of the income spectrum (30% of AMI), the typical home value (\$820,000) is 29 times greater than what a household earns at that income level (\$31,350).

At 100% of AMI, the typical home is 8.7 times greater than what a household earns (\$94,600). At the higher end of the income spectrum (160% of AMI), the typical home is 4.9 times greater than what a household earns. This ratio of 5.4 at 160% of AMI in Ouray County is even greater than what the typical home costs the median household in the United States (4.5 times greater than income earned at 100% of AMI). The realities of high housing costs highlight the need for affordable housing in Ouray County.⁹

⁹ Note: data points for the United States and Colorado in Figure 3.8 and Figure 3.9 reflect the median household income and the typical home value in the respective geographies.

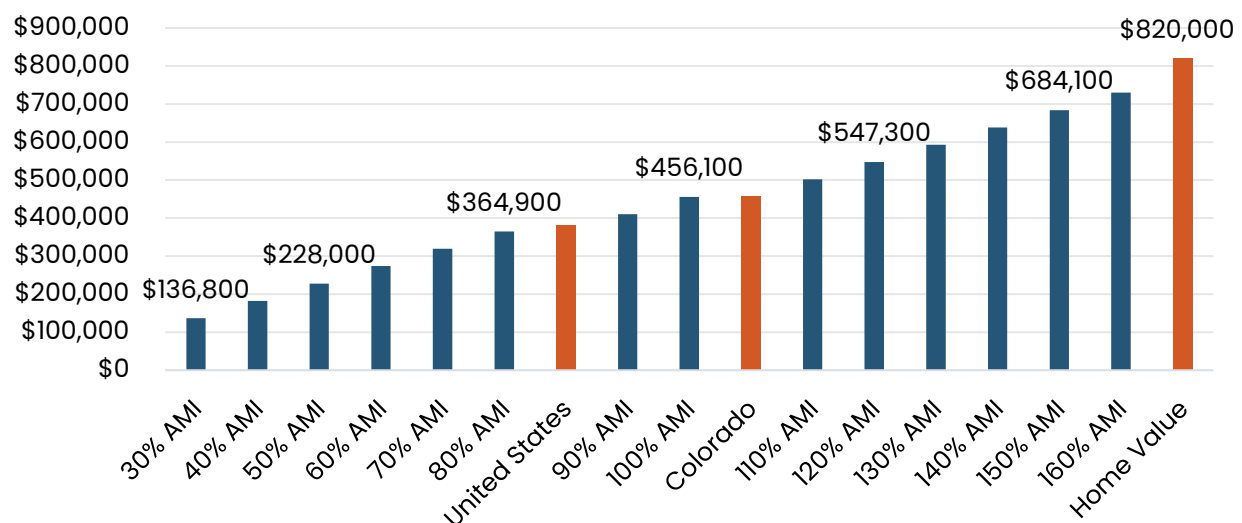
Figure 3.8: Median Home Value to Annual Income Ratio, by AMI Level, Ouray County



Source: 2024 HUD Income Limits via CHFA, Esri Business Analyst 2024, ZHVI 2024¹⁰

As we defined affordability [above](#), Figure 3.9 displays what home prices are considered affordable at each income level in Ouray County. Using the same standard (30-year) mortgage payment calculation, the dollar amounts shown indicate the full home value before a 20% down payment. At the lowest income level (30% AMI) a home would need to be priced at \$136,800 or below to offer an affordable mortgage payment. Even at 100% AMI the home price would need to be over \$300,000 lower to be considered affordable, as the average-priced home in the County is about \$820,000.

Figure 3.9: Affordable Home Price by AMI Level, Ouray County



Source: 2024 HUD Income Limits via CHFA, Esri Business Analyst 2024, ZHVI 2024

¹⁰ Esri's ArcGIS Business Analyst, <https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-business-analyst/overview>.

4. Population & Housing Needs Forecast

While forecasts are estimates of what might happen in the future, we need a baseline to project short term and long term housing demand. In this section, we present population and housing needs forecasts based on two growth scenarios: the **Expected Growth** scenario (which incorporates fertility rates, survival rates, age demographics, and lower average migration of about 1.4% of Ouray County's current population per year) and the **Potential Growth** scenario (which incorporates the same fertility rates, survival rates, and age demographics, but higher average migration of about 2.2% of Ouray County's current population per year).

Population Forecast

Our population and housing needs forecasts for Ouray County and the Town of Ridgway are based on an extrapolation¹¹ of official population estimates from the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program (PEP). The PEP produces estimates of the population for the United States, states, metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas, counties, cities, and towns.¹² U.S. "lifetables" from the Harvard Dataverse, which include survival rates by five-year age cohorts, were used to build in an age attrition factor (the likely percentage of the population in each age group to pass away each year) to the model.¹³

Population estimates from the PEP also include components of population change, such as births, deaths, and migration. We also incorporated net migration (in-migration minus out-migration, including domestic and international) in our population forecast model as the main differentiator. More specifically, the **Expected Growth** scenario incorporates average net migration per year from 2020 through 2024 and carries it through 2044.

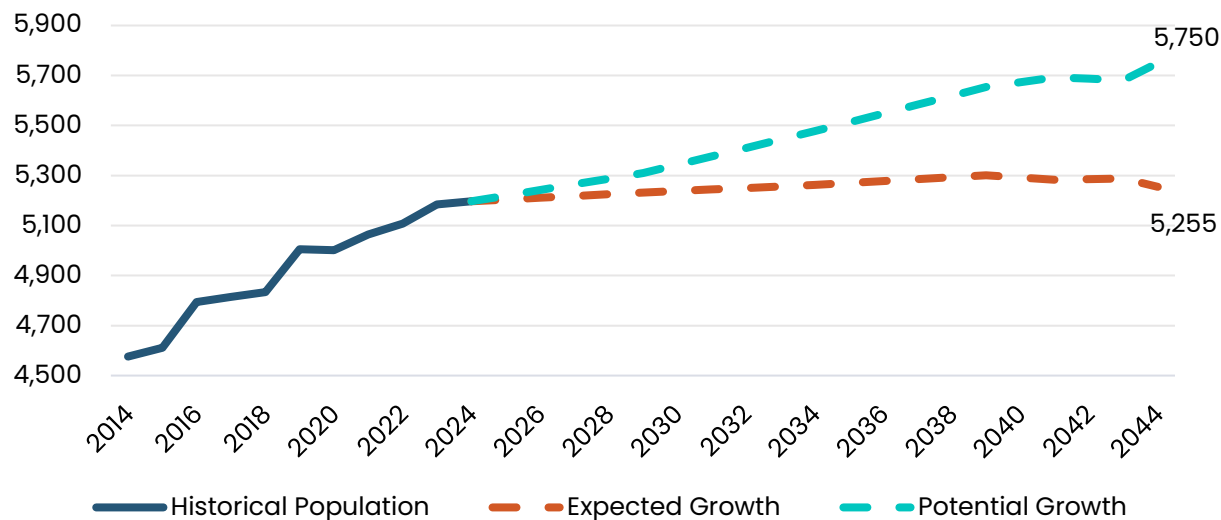
In the **Potential Growth** scenario, a higher net migration per year estimate of 115 was used. Multiple times over the last 10 years, Ouray County has experienced estimated net migration of +180 or more. These estimates form our basis for using a higher net migration estimate for our Potential Growth scenario. Our two population forecasts for Ouray County are displayed in Figure 4.1.

¹¹ Extrapolation is a statistical technique used to predict values beyond the range of known data. It involves using existing data to estimate future values or unknown values within a dataset.

¹² "Population and Housing Unit Estimates," United States Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest.html>.

¹³ Barbieri, Magali, and Celeste Winant. 2025. "U.S. County Life Tables CSV 1982–2019." Harvard Dataverse. <https://doi.org/doi:10.7910/DVN/HB8FDY>.

Figure 4.1: Population Forecast for Ouray County, 2024-2044



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database

Ultimately, we project the population in Ouray County to grow by between 58 and 553 new residents (Table 4.1). These projections relate to a cumulative growth rate of 1.1% or 10.6% between the Expected and Potential Growth scenarios through 2044. To be clear, our projection for Ouray County includes the unincorporated areas of the County, as well as the Town of Ridgway and City of Ouray.

Table 4.1: Projected Population Growth for Ouray County, 2024-2044

Population Growth Scenario	2024	2029	2034	2039	2044	Pop. Growth	20-Yr CAGR ¹⁴	Total Growth Rate
Expected Growth	5,197	5,232	5,262	5,301	5,255	58	0.1%	1.1%
Potential Growth	5,197	5,310	5,477	5,654	5,750	553	0.5%	10.6%

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database

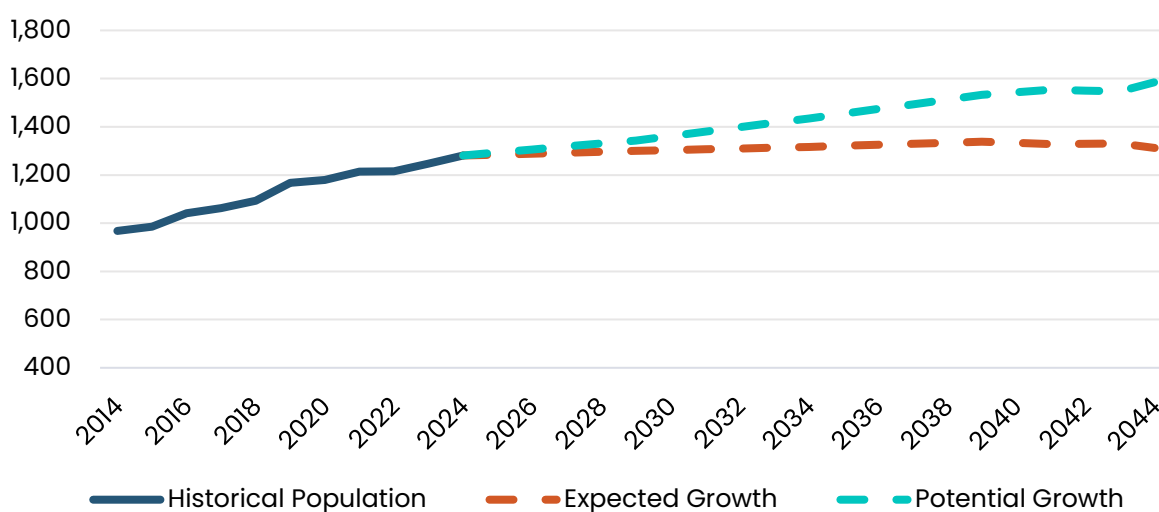
¹⁴ Compound annual growth rate (CAGR) is the average yearly growth rate of a variable over time.

Ridgway

Ouray County, the Town of Ridgway, and the City of Ouray all have an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that effectively “directs growth” to incorporated areas of the County.¹⁵ Over time, this has culminated in the Town growing to include a larger share of the Countywide population and capturing a higher share of Countywide growth. For this reason, we decided it would be more helpful to both the County and the Town if Ridgway’s population forecast were to be built as the Town capturing a certain share of projected Countywide growth, rather than creating a completely separate projection for Ridgway.

To determine what share to utilize for Ridgway’s population projection, we analyzed population growth trends from 2000 through 2024. As a result of the analysis, Ridgway’s population forecast is built assuming that the Town will capture 55% of Countywide growth each year through 2044. An in-depth analysis of these population trends can be seen in [Appendix A](#). Figure 4.2 illustrates the population forecast for Ridgway under the Expected and Potential Growth scenarios.

Figure 4.2: Population Forecast for the Town of Ridgway, 2024-2044



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database

Assuming the Town captures 55% of Countywide growth from our population projection for Ouray County, we estimate the Town to grow by 32 or 304 residents through 2044.

¹⁵ “Plans, Documents and Studies: Intergovernmental Agreements with Ouray County,” Town of Ridgway, Town Staff, Accessed September 9, 2025, <https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/resources/plans-documents-and-studies>.

These estimates represent 2.5% and 23.7% growth for Ridgway over the next 20 years (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Projected Population Growth for the Town of Ridgway, 2024–2044

Population Growth Scenario	2024	2029	2034	2039	2044	Pop. Growth	20-Yr CAGR	Total Growth Rate
Expected Growth	1,281	1,300	1,317	1,338	1,313	32	0.1%	2.5%
Potential Growth	1,281	1,343	1,435	1,532	1,585	304	1.1%	23.7%

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database

Housing Needs Forecast

We created a housing needs forecast built upon our population forecast, which reflects the housing unit need for the population projection. By dividing the population by the average household size, we estimated the housing need per year. Since we built the housing needs forecast on the population forecast, it follows the same general trend. As of 2023, Ouray County’s average household size is 2.0, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The average household size in Ouray County is relatively low compared to state and national averages, along with a few other counties in the region. For comparison, other average household sizes are shown below:

- United States: 2.54
- Colorado: 2.45
- Montrose County: 2.43
- Delta County: 2.39
- San Miguel County: 2.00

Based on the 2.0 average household size in 2023, the housing unit need for the current population estimate of Ouray County (5,197) is approximately 2,600 units. This estimate does not match the current estimate of occupied housing units in Ouray County, which is reported as 2,500. This discrepancy could be due to the fact that average household size is skewed toward smaller households, resulting in a higher housing need than currently reported. Alternatively, it may reflect the presence of many part-time households that are not full-time residents in the County, or seasonal workers, which could lead to an undercount of occupied housing units. Regardless, we have chosen to use the current estimate of 2,500 units as the baseline for our housing needs forecast.

Ultimately, we project Ouray County will need between 128 and 375 new units by 2044 (Table 4.3). This translates to a total need of 2,628 units or 2,875 units. For the Town of Ridgway, assuming that the Town captures 55% of countywide growth, there will be a need of between 70 and 206 new units by 2044.

Table 4.3: Housing Needs Forecast, Ridgway and Ouray County, 2024–2044

Growth Scenario	Current Units '24	Needed Units '44	New Units	Total Unit Growth Rate
Ouray County				
Expected Growth	2,500	2,628	128	5.1%
Potential Growth	2,500	2,875	375	15.0%
Town of Ridgway				
Expected Growth	643	713	70	10.9%
Potential Growth	643	849	206	32.1%

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database

Housing Needs Across Jurisdictions

Because this HNA is a regional assessment, our team needs to include a breakdown of housing needs across all jurisdictions in Ouray County. Table 4.4 reports the new housing units needed and the total growth rate across the region. Regional housing needs are split out between the Town of Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Unincorporated Ouray County.

Following our [methodology](#) and assumption that the Town of Ridgway will capture 55.0% of countywide growth over the next 20 years, we are assuming that the City of Ouray will account for 25.0% and unincorporated parts of the County will account for 20.0%. Ouray’s share of countywide growth has averaged approximately 21.0% from 2020 through 2024, but the City has a higher concentration of employment in the County compared to unincorporated areas. For this reason, we give greater growth to the City of Ouray.¹⁶

Table 4.4: Housing Needs Forecast Across Ouray County Jurisdictions, 2024–2044

Growth Scenario	Current Units '24	Needed Units '44	New Units	Total Growth Rate
Ouray County, Total Regional Needs				
Expected Growth	2,500	2,628	128	5.1%
Potential Growth	2,500	2,875	375	15.0%
Town of Ridgway				
Expected Growth	643	713	70	10.9%
Potential Growth	643	849	206	32.1%
City of Ouray				
Expected Growth	481	513	32	6.6%

¹⁶ It should be noted that the City of Ouray has completed its own Housing Needs Analysis in 2024 that is more specific to its community. When updating the City’s HNA to be SB24-174 compliant, housing needs estimates may differ from PC’s.

Potential Growth	481	575	94	19.5%
Unincorporated Ouray County				
Expected Growth	1,376	1,402	26	1.9%
Potential Growth	1,376	1,451	75	5.5%

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database

Housing Needs by Income Level

A crucial factor in housing needs and community sustainability is the availability of affordable housing across the income distribution. To estimate housing needs in Ouray County by Income level, we expanded upon our housing needs forecast to determine how many housing units are required at different AMI levels. Utilizing Census Bureau income cohorts, HUD AMIs, HUD cost-burdened household counts, and housing unit counts from our own forecast, the results are presented in the following figures and tables.

When discussing “needs by income level,” we refer to the number of housing units required to be affordable at each income bracket. As discussed in [Chapter 2](#), affordability is defined by the percentage of monthly income a household spends on housing. Households are considered cost-burdened if they spend 30% or more of their gross monthly income on housing costs.

Take the example from Chapter 2 when we defined cost-burden status. In Ouray County, a household at 100% AMI earns about \$94,600 per year, or \$7,900 per month. If this household spends more than \$2,370 per month in housing costs, then the household is considered cost-burdened. In our housing needs by income level forecast, we consider this situation to warrant a need for an additional housing unit *at 100% AMI*. The additional housing unit at 100% AMI would be affordable to the household that is currently cost-burdened.

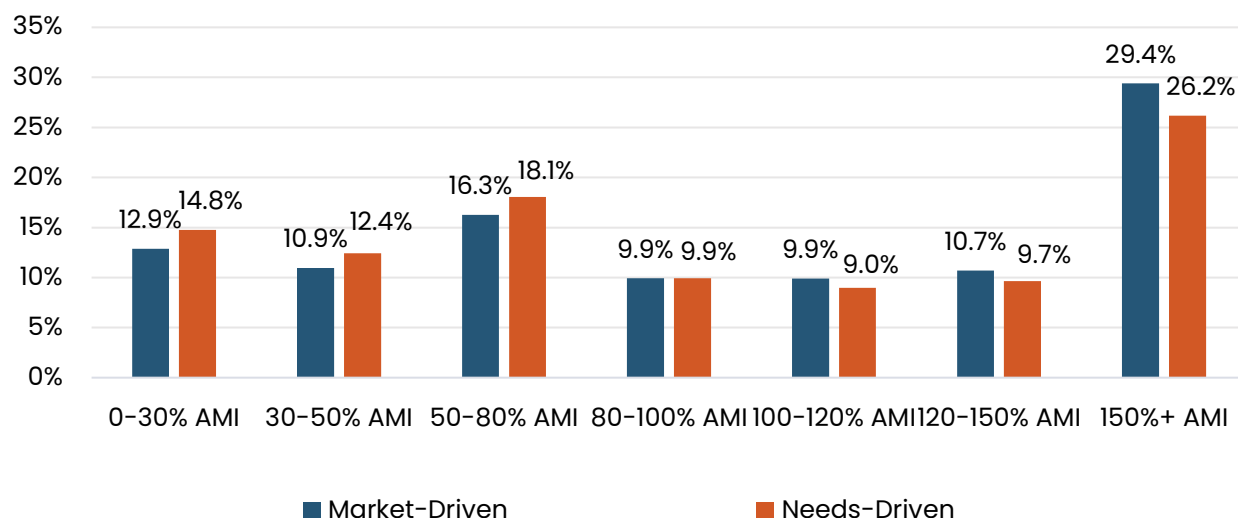
Using HUD’s Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)¹⁷ data, we applied the total number of cost-burdened households at each AMI level to create a target, **Needs-Driven** housing unit distribution. If new housing units in Ouray County are built towards this target distribution, the County will be in a good position to address housing affordability challenges. Using a target distribution, rather than a total unit number, allows us to fit the Needs-Driven distribution to our housing unit forecast. We prefer this method because the Town and County should not plan for far more units to be available than are projected to be needed, which may have adverse outcomes.

¹⁷ “Consolidated Planning/CHAS Data,” Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html>.

In addition to the Needs-Driven forecast, we constructed a **Market-Driven** forecast for comparison. This forecast serves to project housing unit needs according to what the market has produced. The Market-Driven forecast uses 2024 AMI levels and follows the same growth scenarios as the Needs-Driven forecast. Figure 4.3 shows the comparison between the housing unit distribution applied to each forecast. Basic descriptions of each income level forecast are explained below.

- The **Market-Driven** forecast applies the current AMI distribution to each growth scenario we projected.
- The **Needs-Driven** forecast applies a target AMI distribution to each growth scenario we projected. The target AMI distribution was constructed using cost-burden by AMI level counts from HUD CHAS data and the current AMI distribution.¹⁸

Figure 4.3: Target Housing Unit Distribution by Affordability Level, Ouray County, 2044

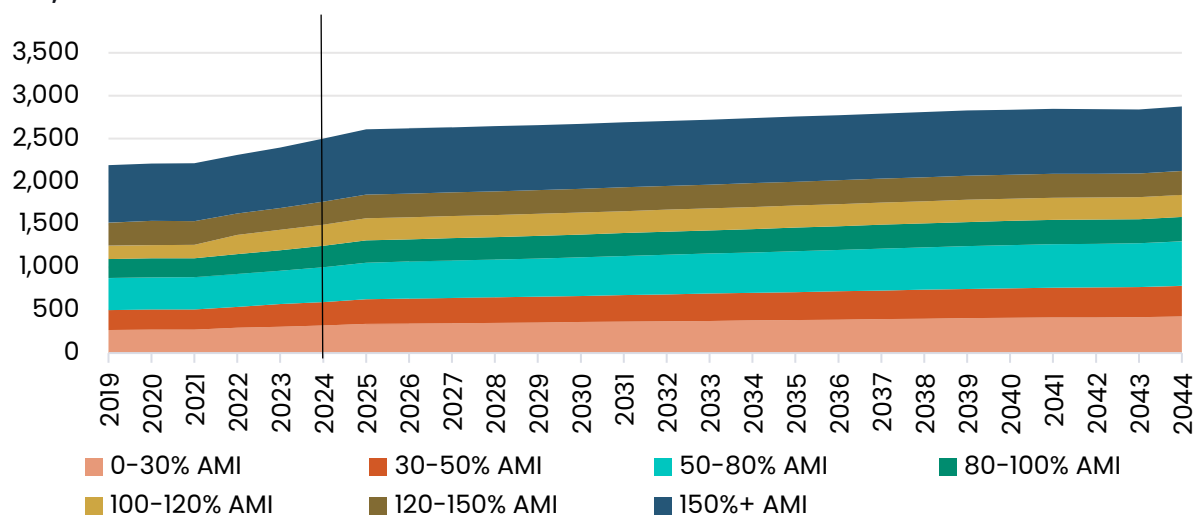


Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau and HUD CHAS Data

Under the **Potential** growth scenario, the **Needs-Driven** forecast for Ouray County is illustrated in Figure 4.4. In this scenario, lower income levels like 0-30% AMI, 30-50% AMI, and 50-80% AMI are projected to be larger by 2044 than they are in 2024. This is due to the fact that more households at these income levels are cost-burdened compared to higher income levels. Households from 0-80% AMI are also at higher risk of becoming cost-burdened due to average housing costs in both the rental and homeownership markets without intervention. Overall, the total number of households increases in line with the growth scenario.

¹⁸ A detailed methodological description and in-depth data can be reviewed in [Appendix A](#).

Figure 4.4: Potential Growth, Needs-Driven Scenario Housing Needs Forecast by AMI Level, 2024-2044



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 report the housing needs by AMI level by tenure for Ouray County under the **Potential** growth scenario and the **Needs-Driven** forecast. Using Census Bureau data, we determined the renter versus owner-occupancy rates by income cohort. These tenure rates were then applied to the income level forecast to determine rental housing needs and ownership housing needs. Ouray County generally has more owners than renters (**Error! Reference source not found.**), and this is reflected in the tables below.

Table 4.5: Potential Growth, Needs-Driven Rental Housing Needs by AMI Level, Ouray County, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	322	432	110
30-50% AMI	274	365	91
50-80% AMI	53	75	22
80-100% AMI	80	99	19
100-120% AMI	58	68	9
120-150% AMI	63	73	9
150%+ AMI	72	81	9
Total	923	1,192	269

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table 4.6: Potential Growth, Needs-Driven Ownership Housing Needs by AMI Level, Ouray County, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	0	0	0
50-80% AMI	353	353	0
80-100% AMI	168	206	38
100-120% AMI	189	209	20
120-150% AMI	204	224	20
150%+ AMI	662	691	28
Total	1,577	1,683	106

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

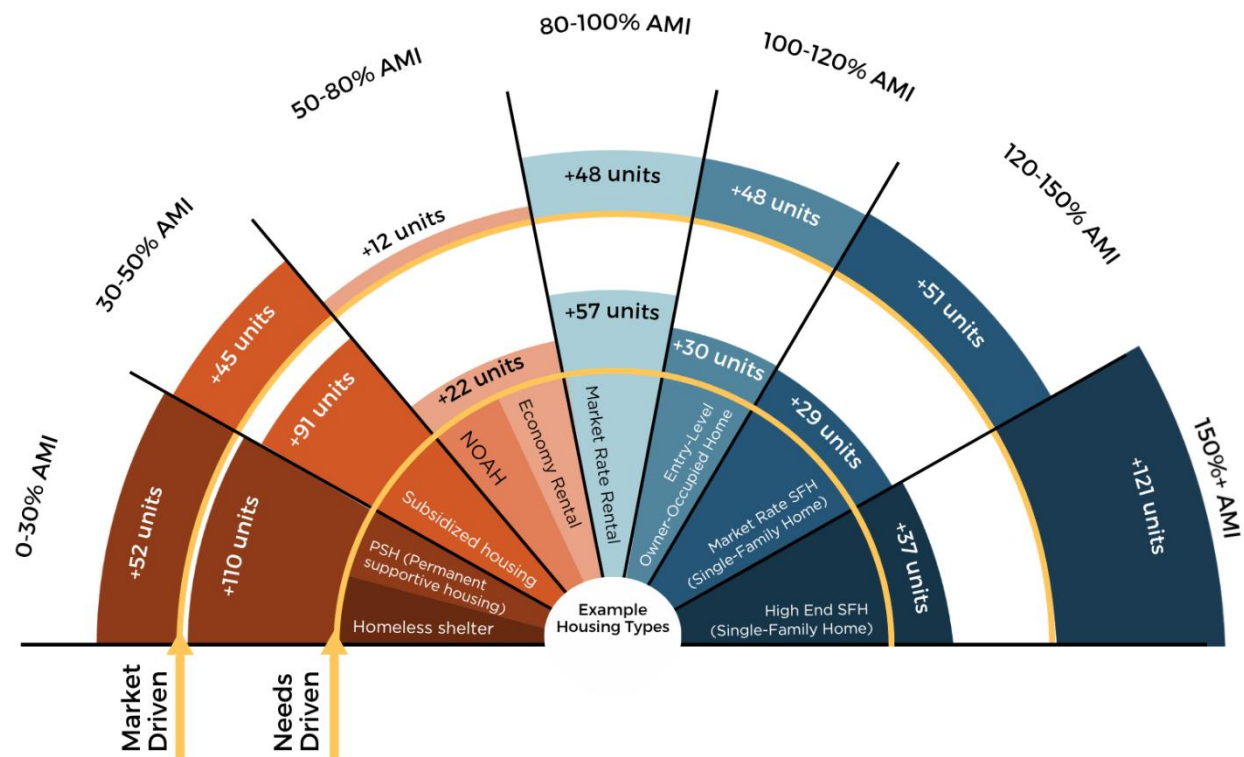
However, we also applied the assumption that it is highly unlikely that households at 0-50% AMI are paying a mortgage on a home. While households at this income level may own homes due to purchasing under different market conditions or inheritance, homeownership costs are now largely out of reach for 0-80% AMI (Figure 3.8).

Therefore, we used a 0.0% ownership rate for households at 0-50% AMI for Ouray County and specified that no new ownership units at the 50-80% AMI are needed. It is more likely that households in the 50-80% AMI group could own homes currently, either by having favorable mortgage payments or have paid them off. However, due to the cost dynamics in Ouray County, it is nearly impossible to reach affordable homeownership below 80% AMI. This remains true even if land were donated to organizations like the Home Trust of Ouray County to produce an affordable homeownership project.

The full comparison of the **Market-Driven** and **Needs-Driven** income level forecasts for Ouray County are shown in Figure 4.5. As described in the basic assumptions for the Needs-Driven forecast, the distribution is weighted heavier to the lower AMI levels as more households are cost-burdened compared to higher AMI levels. However, this does not mean housing units affordable to higher AMI levels are not needed. We project as many as 96 units will be needed at 100-120% AMI, 120-150% AMI, and 150%+ AMI over the next 20 years in the Needs-Driven forecast.

In contrast, more units will be needed at higher AMI levels in the Market-Driven forecast. In this scenario, new housing units are built according to 2024 AMI levels. The scenario projects housing will continue to be built according to current income distribution in the community, rather than to needs according to cost-burden status. Even in this scenario, as many as 156 housing units will be needed to be affordable to lower income households below 100% AMI.

Figure 4.5: New Housing Units Needed by 2044 in Ouray County, by AMI Level



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Ridgway

Table 4.7 and Table 4.8 report the housing needs by AMI level by tenure for the Town of Ridgway under the **Potential** growth scenario and the **Needs-Driven** forecast. For these counts, we applied Ridgway's housing projecting assuming the same 55% capture rate of countywide growth and the same renter versus owner-occupancy rates by income cohort. We also assumed for Ridgway that 0.0% of households at 0-50% AMI would be homeowners.

Table 4.7: Potential Growth, Needs-Driven Rental Housing Needs by AMI, Town of Ridgway, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	83	129	46
30-50% AMI	70	109	38
50-80% AMI	14	23	9
80-100% AMI	21	30	10
100-120% AMI	15	21	6
120-150% AMI	16	22	6
150%+ AMI	19	25	6

Total	237	359	122
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Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table 4.8: Potential Growth, Needs-Driven Ownership Housing Needs by AMI, Town of Ridgway, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	0	0	0
50-80% AMI	91	91	0
80-100% AMI	43	62	19
100-120% AMI	49	63	15
120-150% AMI	53	68	15
150%+ AMI	170	206	35
Total	406	490	85

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Accessible & VISIBLE Units

This section forecasts the accessible and visitable housing unit needs within the projected housing stock of Ouray County and the Town of Ridgway. This estimate is based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau regarding households that include at least one person with a disability. PC estimates that approximately 22% of households in the County, and 16% of households in the Town fall into this category. Applying this percentage to the housing forecast, we estimate that the number of households with disabilities will increase from roughly 112 to 129 in Ridgway and 566 to 622 in Ouray County over the 20-year forecast period. This will mean an increase of 27 households and 81 households respectively (Table 4.9).

This projection assumes that every household with a person with a disability would require an accessible or visitable unit, making it a high estimate. In practice, the actual number of required units may be lower, as not all disabilities necessitate physical accessibility features.¹⁹

Table 4.9: Accessible and VISIBLE Units Needed, 2024-2044

Region	2024	2029	2034	2039	2044	Change	% Change
Ridgway	112	109	116	124	129	27	24.1%
Ouray County	566	574	593	612	622	81	14.3%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

¹⁹ Supportive units needed now and new supportive units needed can be found in [Appendix A](#).

5. Demographic & Socioeconomic Trends

Demographics and socioeconomics are key components of assessing housing demand. Growing populations and economies usually constitute overall growing housing demand. Meanwhile, age and income levels can drive needs of different kinds of housing.

Trends in Population Growth

Population growth is generally a sign of increased demand for housing, as more people moving into an area requires more homes.

Since 2014, Ridgway has experienced population growth of approximately 32.3%, while the City of Ouray has experienced population decline of about 2.8% (Table 5.1). Ridgway’s growth is significantly higher than Colorado’s growth rate of 11.3% and the United States’ rate, which is even lower at 6.8%. Notably, it also exceeds the growth rate of Ouray County overall (13.6%). In terms of numerical change, Ridgway has accounted for approximately 50.4% of overall countywide growth (+313 of +621).

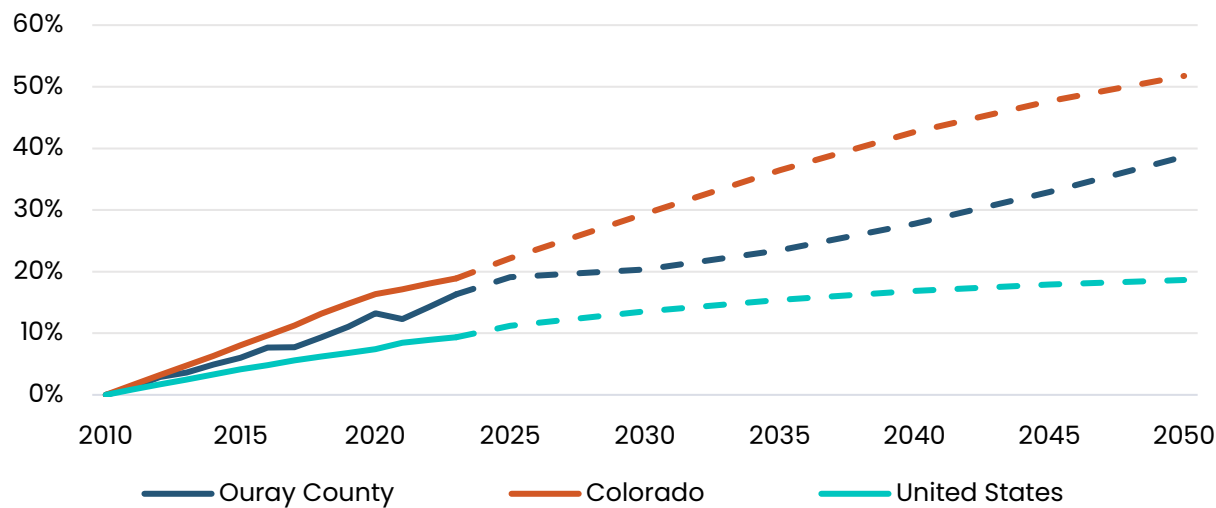
Table 5.1: Population Change, 2014–2024

Region	2014 Population	2024 Population	Numerical Change	% Change
Ridgway	968	1,281	313	32.3%
City of Ouray	938	912	(26)	(2.8%)
Ouray County	4,554	5,197	621	13.6%
Colorado	5.3M	5.9M	0.6M	11.3%
United States	318.4M	340.1M	21.7M	6.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (PEP), 2010–2020 and 2020–2024

Figure 5.1 shows the cumulative rate of population change for Ouray County compared to the state and national rates from 2010 to 2024, with projections extending to 2050. Ouray County’s population has been growing (and is expected to continue growing) more slowly than the state’s rate, but faster than the national rate.

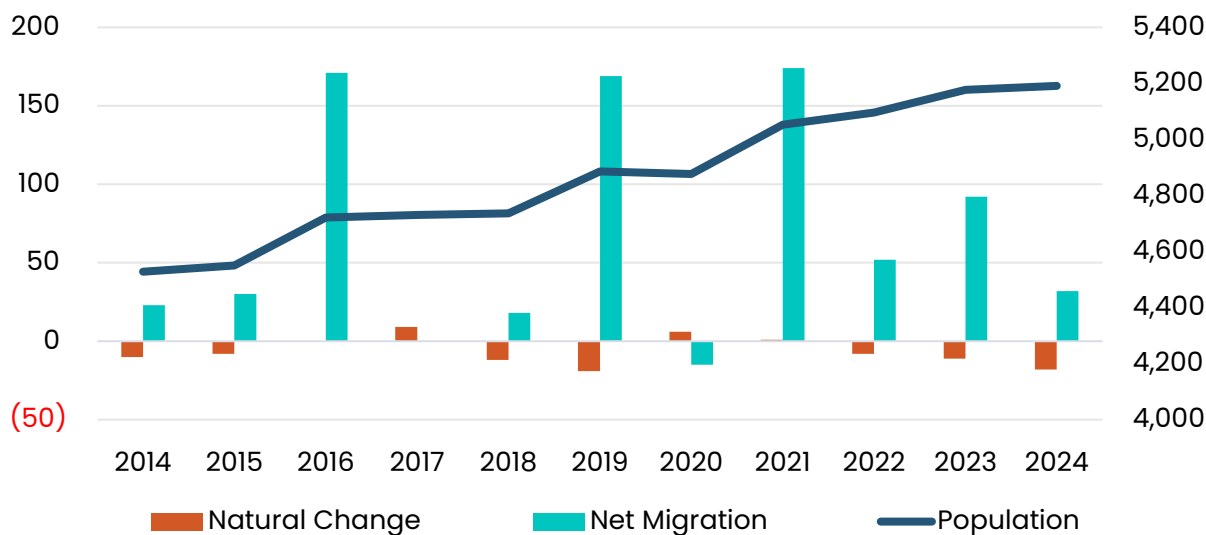
Figure 5.1: Population Estimates and Forecast, 2010–2050



Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs and U.S. Census Bureau, 2023

There are three primary sources of population change in a region: births, deaths, and migration. Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3 illustrate these sources of population change in Ouray County and Colorado. Since 2013, Ouray County has consistently experienced positive net migration (except in 2020), but the scale has varied, ranging from fewer than 10 people in some years to over 170 in others. Natural change (births minus deaths) has played a smaller role, with its greatest impact being a decrease of 19 people in 2019.

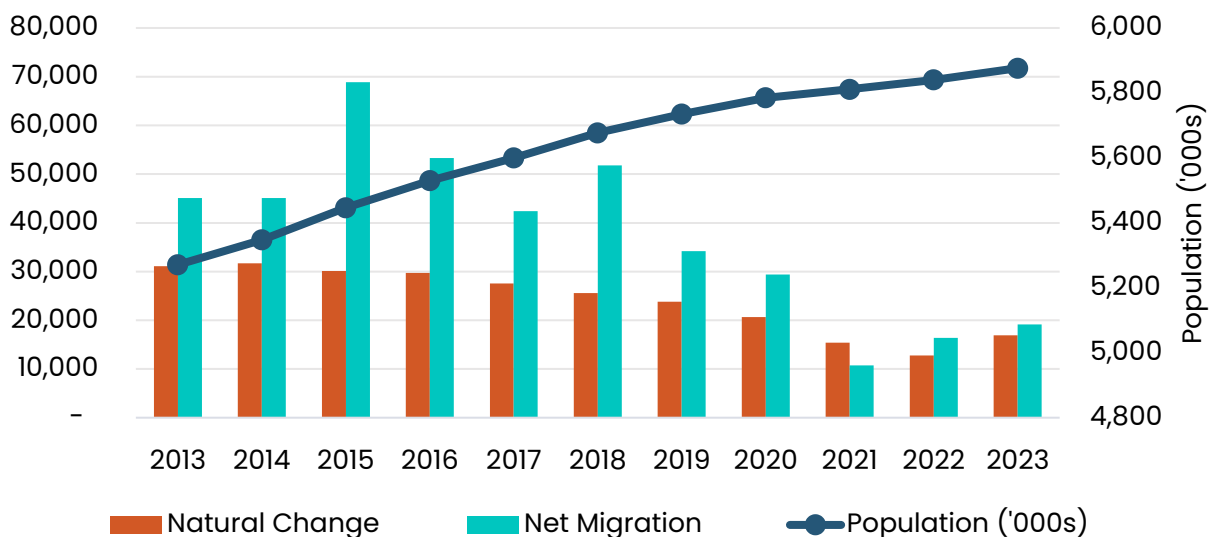
Figure 5.2: Sources of Population Change, Ouray County, 2014–2024



Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office

In Colorado, both natural change and net migration have contributed to population growth since 2013. While net migration has outpaced natural change in every year except 2021, natural change has still had a positive impact on the state's overall growth.

Figure 5.3: Sources of Population Change, Colorado, 2013–2023



Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office

Table 5.2 displays key migration trends in Ouray County from 2016 to 2020, focusing on the top 10 counties contributing to both in- and out-migration. During this period, most in-migration to Ouray County originated from Kansas, other counties in Colorado, and Oklahoma. Specifically, Sedgwick County, Kansas, was the leading source of incoming migration, followed by Larimer County, Colorado. Most out-migration from Ouray County was directed toward other counties within Colorado. Additionally, some residents relocated to Oakland County, Michigan, and King County, Washington.

Table 5.2: Ouray County Top in & Out Migration Counties, 2016–2020

Positive Net Migration From		Negative Net Migration To	
Sedgwick County, KS	+53	Boulder County, CO	-184
Larimer County, CO	+46	Montrose County, CO	-79
Muskogee County, OK	+29	Pitkin County, CO	-55
Denver County, CO	+18	Oakland County, MI	-50
Otero County, CO	+16	Routt County, CO	-45
San Francisco County, CA	+14	King County, WA	-45
Custer County, CO	+12	Orange County, CA	-33
Gunnison County, CO	+12	San Miguel County, CO	-32
Anchorage Municipality, AK	+11	Prowers County, CO	-18
Bell County, TX	+11	Salt Lake County, UT	-18

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Table 5.3 and Figure 5.4 draw from IRS migration records, offering a comprehensive overview of tax returns by geographic location. While these data are not a perfect reflection of individual households, they serve as a strong proxy for understanding migration patterns. Notably, the data highlight the intricate relationship between cost of living, housing dynamics, and migration trends.

From 2021 to 2022, higher-income households either remained in or moved to Ouray County, while comparatively lower-income households were more likely to leave. Specifically, the average adjusted gross income (AGI) of incoming households was 65% higher than those leaving. However, Non-migratory households had an even higher AGI, 17% higher than that of incoming households. A similar trend occurred at the state level: incoming households had an average AGI of \$99,000, compared to \$92,000 for those leaving the state.

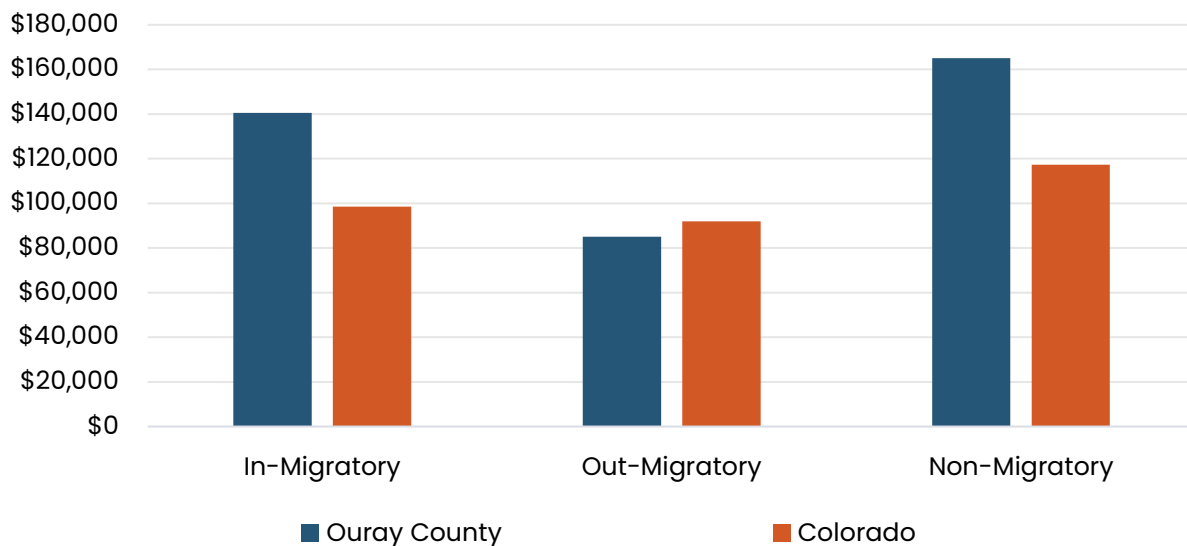
Table 5.3: Tax Migration 2017–2022, Adjusted Gross Income per Number of Returns

Status	Ouray County	Colorado
2021–2022		
In-Migratory	\$140,523	\$98,510
Out-Migratory	\$84,987	\$91,999
Non-Migratory	\$165,027	\$117,265
2020–2021		
In-Migratory	\$109,845	\$90,969
Out-Migratory	\$83,938	\$77,228
Non-Migratory	\$94,638	\$97,726
2019–2020		
In-Migratory	\$105,059	\$84,396
Out-Migratory	\$72,070	\$72,856
Non-Migratory	\$86,535	\$97,315
2018–2019		
In-Migratory	\$110,935	\$78,617
Out-Migratory	\$61,035	\$71,357
Non-Migratory	\$93,355	\$95,349
2017–2018		
In-Migratory	\$90,911	\$74,029
Out-Migratory	\$90,462	\$67,765
Non-Migratory	\$75,442	\$89,817

Source: IRS SOI Tax Stats, 2021–2022²⁰

²⁰ SOI Tax Stats – Statistics of Income, <https://www.irs.gov/statistics/soi-tax-stats-statistics-of-income>.

Figure 5.4: Tax Migration 2021–2022, Adjusted Gross Income per Number of Returns



Source: IRS SOI Tax Stats, 2021–2022

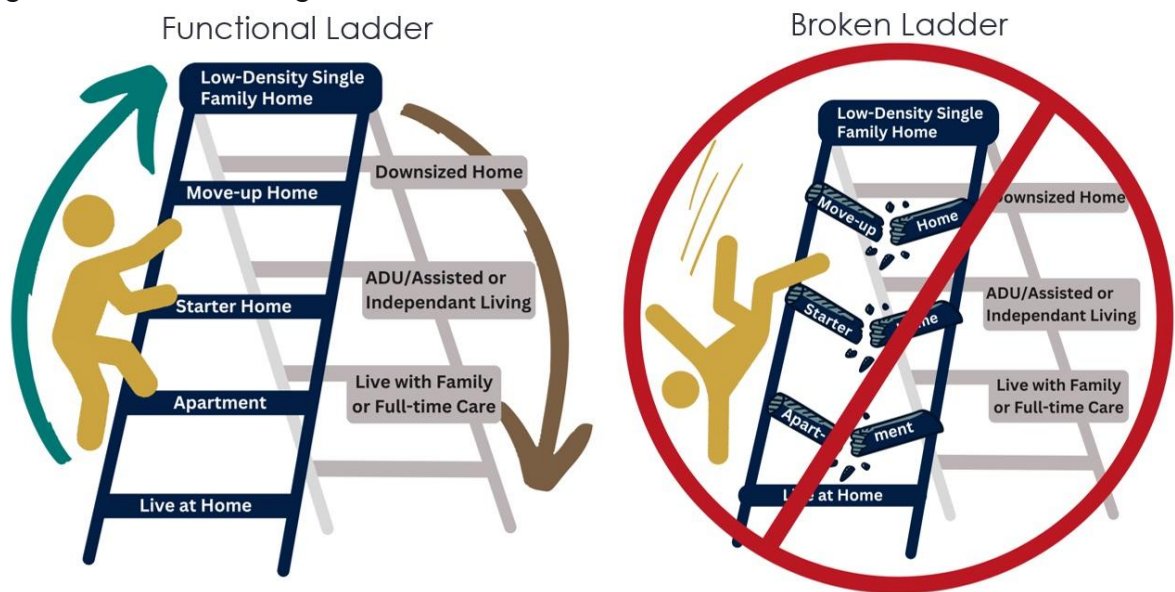
These patterns in population movements are significant because, as more affluent households move into an area, they can drive up housing costs and price out lower-income households. With limited housing stock, lower-income residents often cannot compete, prompting them to seek more affordable options elsewhere. This dynamic can lead to the geographic concentration of higher-income households, making it more difficult for lower-income households to remain in or integrate into the community.

Regional Demographic Data

Community age distributions impact local housing needs. Younger residents typically have less time to accumulate wealth and therefore require affordable or starter housing options. Older residents, on the other hand, may be looking to downsize, live with younger family members, or access more supportive care.

The Housing Ladder (Figure 5.5) is a useful tool to describe this concept and shows how different unit types are needed to support a healthy housing ecosystem. In a functioning ladder, people move up rungs as their housing needs evolve over the course of life. As life stages change, so do the types of housing that are appropriate or accessible. When any rung of the ladder is missing or broken, the system begins to fail. One goal of this assessment is to identify where these gaps or breaks exist in the Housing Ladder in Ridgway, Ouray, and Ouray County, determined by demographic and housing trends.

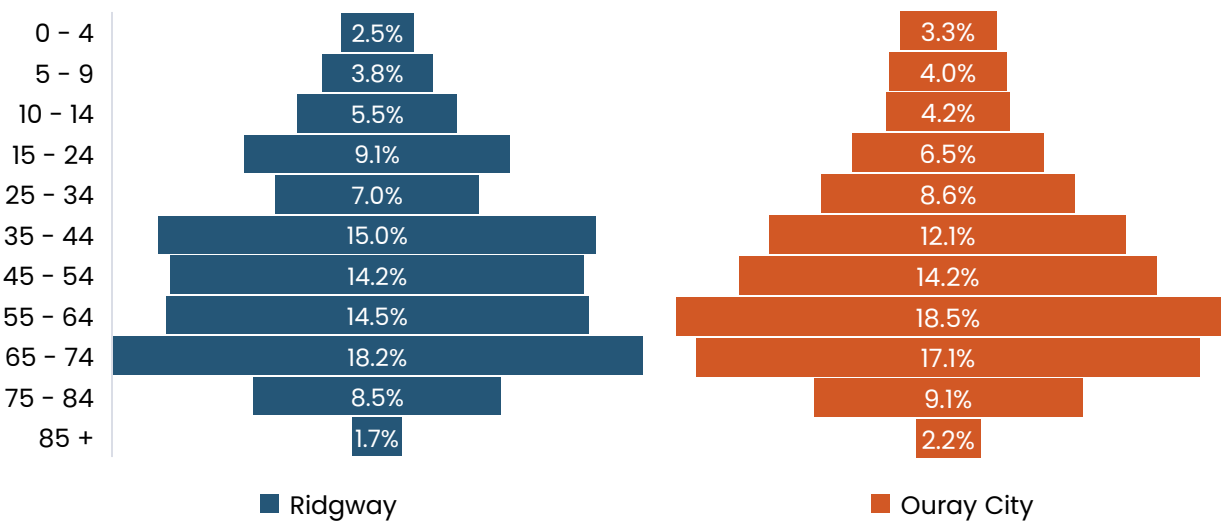
Figure 5.5: The Housing Ladder



Source: Points Consulting

As shown in Figure 5.6, only 20.9% of Ridgway’s population is under the age of 25, and just 18.0% of Ouray’s population falls into this age group. Prime working-age adults (ages 25 to 54) make up 36.2% of the population in Ridgway and 34.9% in the City of Ouray.²¹

Figure 5.6: Age Distribution, 2024



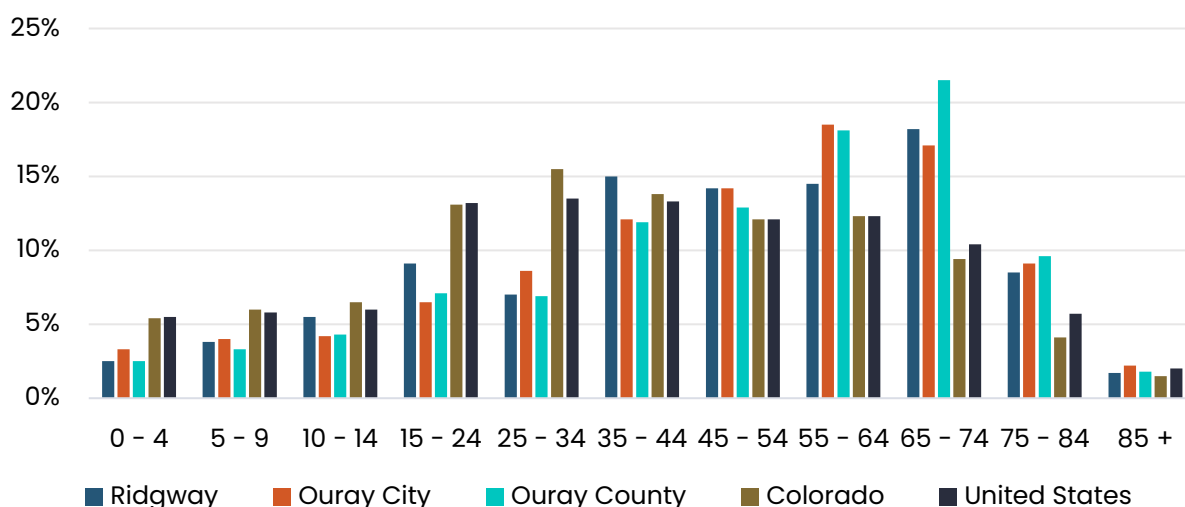
Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

²¹ The 25-54 age group is considered the prime working age group as it includes individuals who have typically completed their education and are still several years away from retirement.

Figure 5.7 compares the ages of residents in Ridgway and the City of Ouray to those in Ouray County, Colorado, and the United States. Ouray County has a notably high percentage of residents aged 55–64 and 65–74. Ridgway exceeds both the state and national averages in these age groups but falls below the County average. The City of Ouray has slightly more residents in the 55–64 age range than the County overall but fewer in the 65–74 range. This suggests that unincorporated areas of Ouray County have an even higher concentration of residents in these older age groups.

In contrast, Ouray County has a significantly lower share of residents under age 35 compared to both Colorado and the United States. Ridgway and the City of Ouray reflect a similar trend, with relatively few younger residents.

Figure 5.7: Population by Age Comparison, 2023



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Ethnicity

The racial and ethnic composition of a region provides valuable insight into its diversity, which can influence housing needs and market dynamics. Factors such as multigenerational living, income levels, and household size are closely linked to these demographic characteristics. Table 5.4 presents the racial and ethnic compositions of Ridgway, the City of Ouray, Ouray County, Colorado, and the United States.

Ouray County has a significantly higher proportion of residents who identify as White—about 30 percentage points higher than the national average. Ridgway and the City of Ouray have slightly smaller shares of White residents compared to the County, but the difference is minimal (only by about five percentage points).

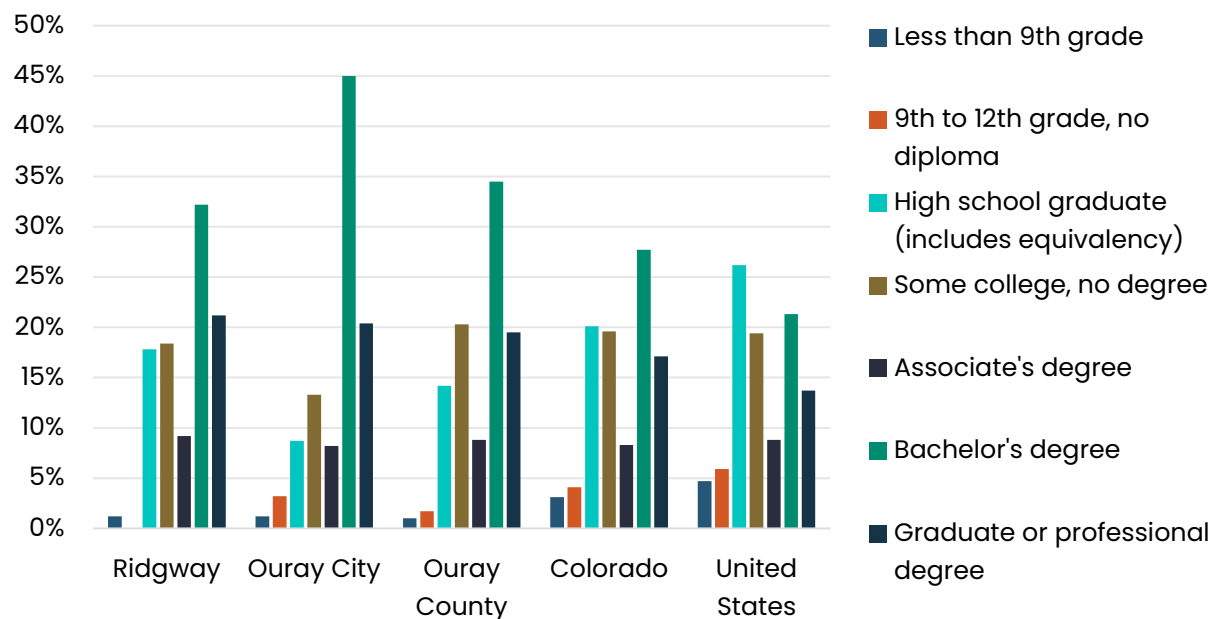
Table 5.4: Race and Ethnicity Comparison, 2023

Race/Ethnicity	Ridgway	City of Ouray	Ouray County	Colorado	U.S.
White	84.9%	85.9%	89.4%	65.7%	58.2%
Hispanic or Latino	4.7%	11.2%	4.7%	22.2%	19.0%
Black or African American	2.6%	0.0%	0.8%	3.8%	12.0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.5%
Asian	0.7%	1.1%	0.4%	3.2%	5.7%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
Other Race	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%
Two or More Races	7.1%	1.6%	4.5%	4.2%	3.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

Education

Both Ridgway and the City of Ouray have higher proportions of residents with bachelor's and graduate or professional degrees compared to Colorado and the United States (Figure 5.8). The City of Ouray, in particular, has an especially high percentage of residents with bachelor's degrees (45.0%), compared to the national average of 21.3%. In both Ridgway and Ouray over 20.0% of residents hold graduate or professional degrees, which is more than six percentage points higher than the U.S. average of 13.7%.

Figure 5.8: Educational Attainment, Population 25+, 2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S1501

Underserved Populations

While many population groups are able to meet their own housing needs, more vulnerable cohorts require special attention due to limited financial or social resources that make it difficult to afford market-rate housing. This section examines the region's vulnerable populations and their specific housing challenges.

Low-Income Population Groups

A household's level of income is typically determined by the AMI developed by the U.S. Department of HUD. HUD uses AMI to determine Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and income limits for HUD programs (Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9: Area Median Income

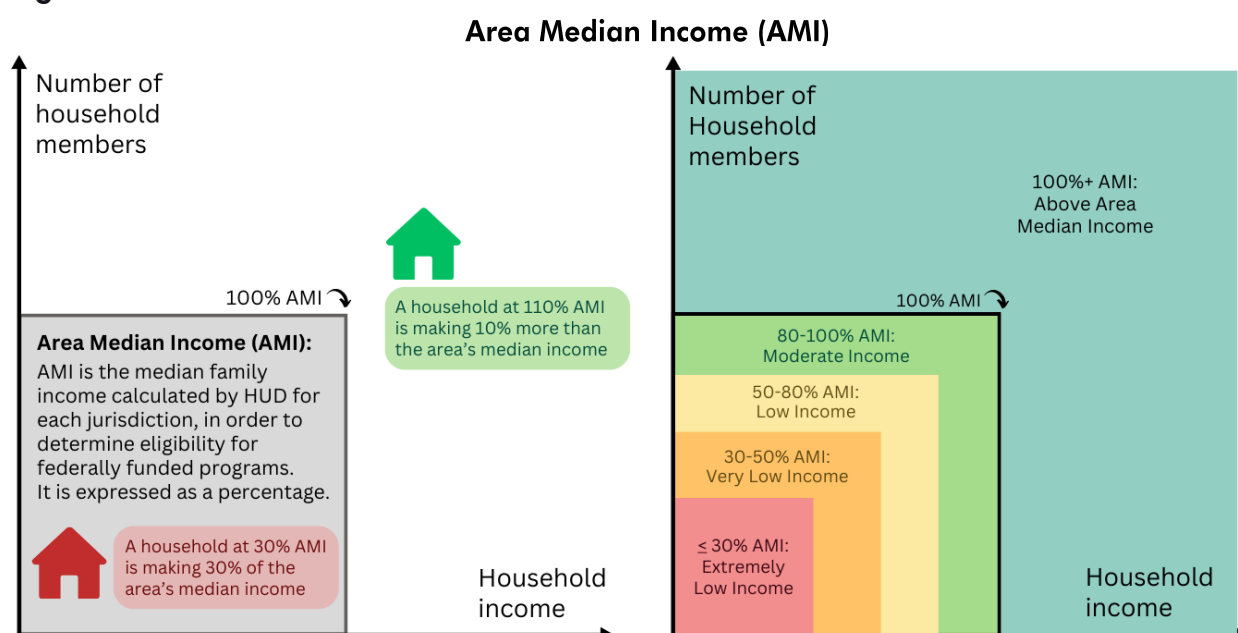


Table 5.5 reports the distribution of owner-occupied low-income households in Ouray County by family composition. Among these households, Elderly Families and Elderly Living Alone represent the largest shares (7.7% and 1.4%, respectively), while Large Families account for the smallest share (less than 0.05%).²²

In contrast, Table 5.6 reports renter-occupied low-income households in Ouray County by family composition. Unlike the owner-occupied group, Small Families make up the largest share of low-income renters (2.5%). Other Families (which may include

²² **Elderly families** are headed or co-headed by a person aged 62 or older, two or more persons aged 62 or older living together, or one more persons aged 62 or older with one or more live-in aides. **Elderly living alone** is an individual aged 62 or older who is living alone. A **small family** is a family of two or three persons. A **large family** is a family of six or more persons.

individuals living together outside of family structures, such as roommates or friends) represent the second-largest share (1.6%), while Elderly Families and Elderly Living Alone groups tie for the lowest share (0.2%, respectively).

Table 5.5: Composition of Low-Income Owner-Occupied Households in Ouray County²³

Family Composition	Income Level	Households	% of Total Occupied Housing Units
Elderly Family	Extremely Low Income	4	0.2%
Elderly Family	Very Low Income	60	2.7%
Elderly Family	Low Income	170	7.7%
Elderly Family	Moderate Income	100	4.5%
Small Family	Extremely Low Income	15	0.7%
Small Family	Very Low Income	25	1.1%
Small Family	Low Income	45	2.0%
Small Family	Moderate Income	45	2.0%
Large Family	Extremely Low Income	0	0.0%
Large Family	Very Low Income	4	0.2%
Large Family	Low Income	0	0.0%
Large Family	Moderate Income	0	0.0%
Elderly Living Alone	Extremely Low Income	20	0.9%
Elderly Living Alone	Very Low Income	135	6.1%
Elderly Living Alone	Low Income	30	1.4%
Elderly Living Alone	Moderate Income	10	0.5%
Other	Extremely Low Income	30	1.4%
Other	Very Low Income	4	0.2%
Other	Low Income	45	2.0%
Other	Moderate Income	60	2.7%

Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data, 2017–2021, County Level

Table 5.6: Composition of Low-Income Renter-Occupied Households in Ouray County

Family Composition	Income Level	Households	% of Total Occupied Housing Units
Elderly Family	Extremely Low Income	0	0.0%
Elderly Family	Very Low Income	0	0.0%
Elderly Family	Low Income	4	0.2%
Elderly Family	Moderate Income	0	0.0%
Small Family	Extremely Low Income	4	0.2%

²³ The “Other” households category indicates non-elderly, non-family households. In other words, people living alone or with unrelated individuals/roommates.

Small Family	Very Low Income	20	0.9%
Small Family	Low Income	55	2.5%
Small Family	Moderate Income	15	0.7%
Large Family	Extremely Low Income	0	0.0%
Large Family	Very Low Income	0	0.0%
Large Family	Low Income	0	0.0%
Large Family	Moderate Income	4	0.2%
Elderly Living Alone	Extremely Low Income	55	2.5%
Elderly Living Alone	Very Low Income	0	0.0%
Elderly Living Alone	Low Income	4	0.2%
Elderly Living Alone	Moderate Income	0	0.0%
Other	Extremely Low Income	55	2.5%
Other	Very Low Income	25	1.1%
Other	Low Income	35	1.6%
Other	Moderate Income	4	0.2%

Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data, 2017–2021, County Level

Population in Poverty

Ridgway reports a poverty rate just below the national average but higher than both the state and county rates (Table 5.7). The City of Ouray, however, has a very low poverty rate, more than 10 percentage points below the national rate (12.4%) and seven points below that of the State of Colorado (9.4%).

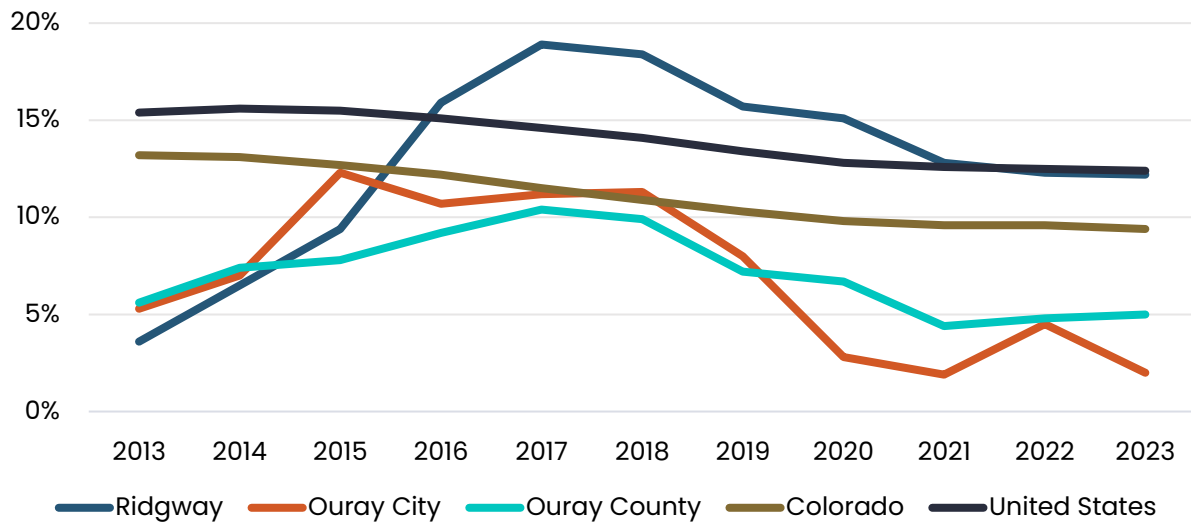
Table 5.7: Population in Poverty, 2023

Region	Population in Poverty	Percentage in Poverty
Ridgway	151	12.2%
City of Ouray	21	2.0%
Ouray County	253	5.0%
Colorado	534,188	9.4%
United States	40.4M	12.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023, 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701

Figure 5.10 displays trends in poverty rates from 2013 to 2023 in Ridgway, the City of Ouray, Ouray County, Colorado, and the United States. In 2013, Ridgway's poverty rate was even lower than that of the City of Ouray, but both rose rapidly until 2015, when the City of Ouray's rate stabilized at 12.3%. Meanwhile, Ridgway's poverty rate continued to rise until 2018, at which point poverty rates in both Ridgway and the City of Ouray began to decline significantly. These local trends contrast with those in Colorado and the United States, which both experienced a slow but steady decline in poverty rates over the same period.

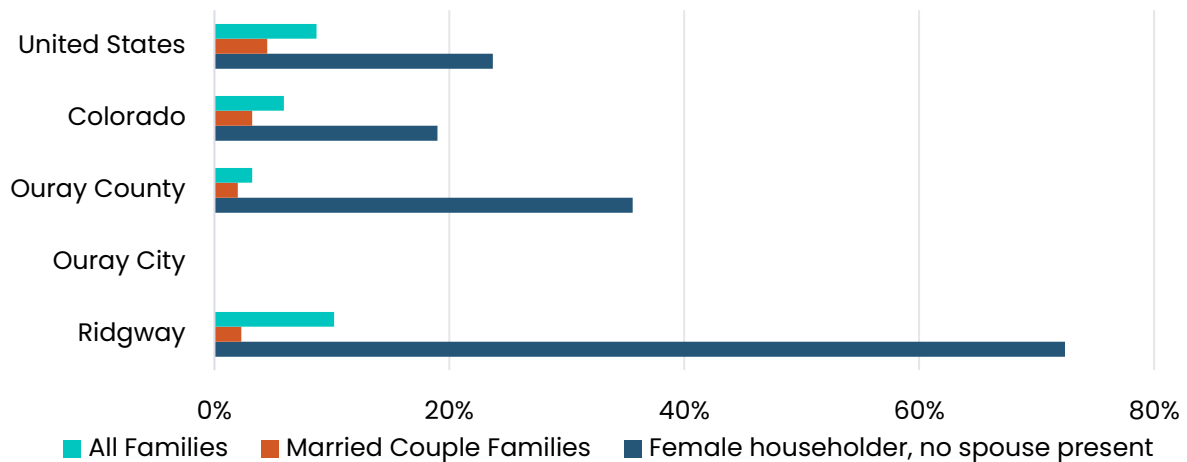
Figure 5.10: Percentage of Population in Poverty, 2013–2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023, 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701

Poverty levels can vary across demographic groups, as shown in Figure 5.11. Female householders with no spouse present have the highest poverty rates across regions of comparison. These disparities are especially pronounced in Ridgway, where 72.4% of families in poverty are Female householders with no spouse present, compared married-couple families representing just 2.3%. Please note that due the small sample size, a percentage of families in poverty for the City of Ouray is not reported here.

Figure 5.11: Percentage of Families in Poverty by Composition, 2023

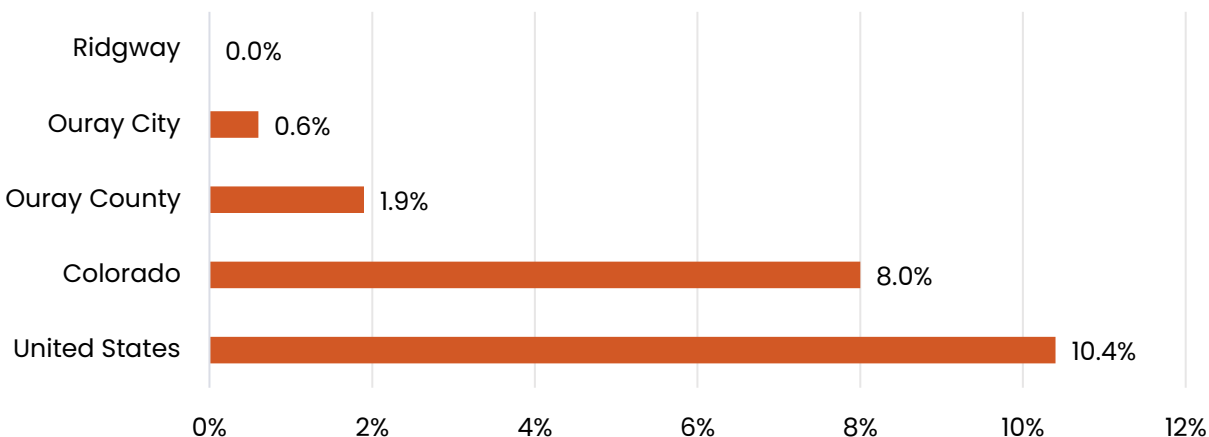


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023, 5-Year ACS, Table S1702

In Ouray County, the senior poverty rate is 1.9% (Figure 5.12). This is more than six percentage points lower than Colorado's rate (8.0%) and eight points lower than the national rate (10.4%). Please note that due to the small sample size of available data, PC

is not able to confidently summarize senior poverty figures in Ridgway and the City of Ouray.

Figure 5.12: Percentage of Seniors (65 years+) in Poverty, 2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023, 5-Year ACS, Table S1701

Subsidized Housing

There is one federally subsidized housing property in Ouray County. Ridgway Space to Create has 30 one- and two- bedroom units in the heart of Ridgway. These units are designed for creative individuals and their families.²⁴ Additional units that are subsidized or affordable via other methods are also listed in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Subsidized Housing in the Town of Ridgway

Property Name	Location	Type	Affordable Units
Ridgway Space to Create	675 Clinton St., Ridgway, CO 81432	LIHTC (1987-2023)	30
Home Trust of Ouray County	779 & 783 N. Laura St, Ridgway, CO 81432	Deed Restricted (120% AMI or below)	2
Wetterhorn Subdivision	N. Laura St, Between Otto and Fredrick	Deed Restricted (60-120% AMI)	14
Habitat for Humanity	706, 704, 702 N. Laura St, Ridgway, CO, 81432	Habitat Model	3

²⁴ "Space to Create Ridgway," Town of Ridgway Colorado, accessed June 27, 2025, <https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/i-want-to/space-to-create-ridgway>.

Riverfront Village	Riverfront Ln, Alpine Loop, & Jasper Place	General Fund- Subsidized, Deed Restricted (140- 190%)	4
Lena Street Commons	Lena Street	Deed Restricted (to be constructed)	4
Vista Park Commons	Redcliff Dr	Deed Restricted (to be constructed)	2
Total	-	-	59

Source: PolicyMap based on HUD data, Town of Ridgway²⁵

Aside from subsidized developments through federal tax credits, the Town has contributed funding for several other subsidized housing developments. Table 5.9 reports the funding that the Town of Ridgway has contributed, through either expenditures or fee waivers, through August of 2024. To that date, the Town has contributed over \$683,000 for affordable housing.

Table 5.9: Affordable Housing Development Fee Waivers and Expenditures, 2024

Development	Water Fund	Sewer Fund	General Fund	Operating Contribution
Space to Create	\$6,790	\$3,440	\$217,970	\$0
Home Trust of Ouray County	\$6,790	\$3,440	\$11,729	\$60,000
Wetterhorn Subdivision	\$101,250	\$84,000	\$144,788	\$0
Habitat for Humanity	\$12,485	\$4,880	\$12,100	\$0
RiverFront Village	\$0	\$0	\$6,000	\$0
Lena Street Commons	\$0	\$0	\$7,500	\$0
Total	\$127,315	\$95,760	\$400,087	\$60,000
Total to Date	\$683,162			

Source: Town of Ridgway Staff Data, 2025

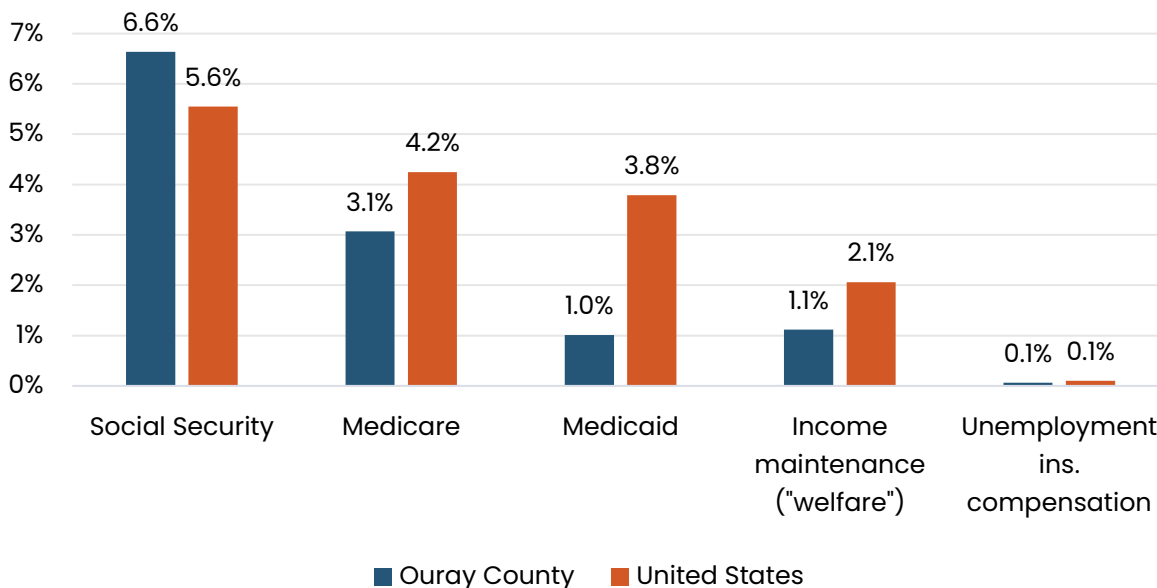
Transfer Payments

Figure 5.13 displays the percentage of Ouray County's income derived from transfer payments, compared to the United States. Age-related transfer payments (Medicare and Social Security) account for 9.7% of income in the County, just slightly below the national share of 9.8%. Hardship-related payments (Medicaid, welfare, and

²⁵ PolicyMap, <https://www.policymap.com/>.

unemployment compensation) make up 2.2% of income. This is nearly four percentage points lower than the national figure of 6.0%.

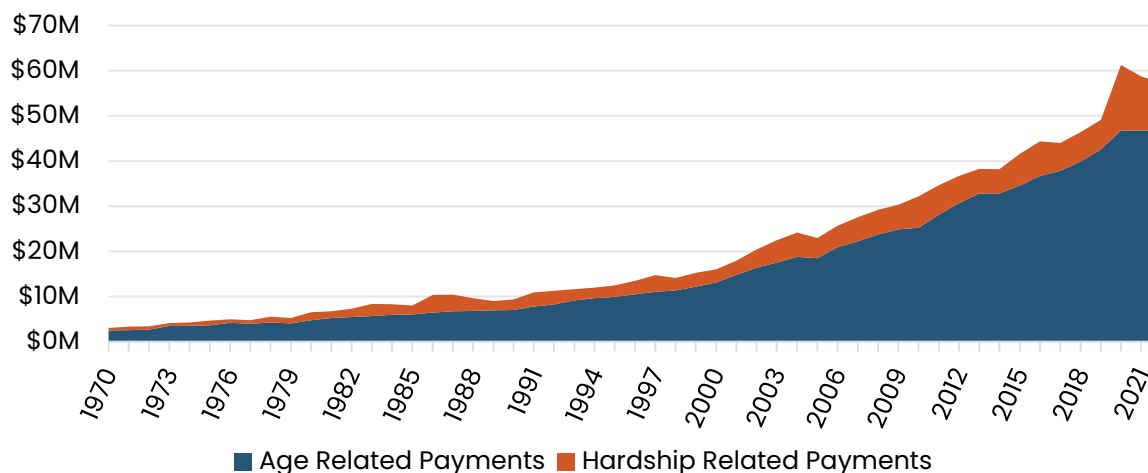
Figure 5.13: Percent of Total Personal Income from Transfer Payments, 2022



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023; Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts

As shown in Figure 5.14, total income from transfer payments in Ouray County has increased steadily since 1970. The rate of growth accelerated after the turn of the century, reflecting the effects of an aging population (a trend seen across the nation). The total income due to transfer payments in Ouray County increased from approximately \$16 million in 2000 to over \$57 million in 2022. This reflects a threefold increase in the last 22 years.

Figure 5.14: Income from Transfer Payments in Ouray County, 1970–2022



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023; Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts

Disabled Population

The number of disabled individuals has increased in every region of analysis since 2018. Ridgway experienced the largest percentage increase at 92.6%.²⁶ This was the highest percentage change of all regions of comparison (Table 5.10). Conversely, the City of Ouray had the smallest increase, at just 1.1%. Statewide, the number of disabled individuals in Colorado increased 4.4 percentage points more than the national increase over the same period.

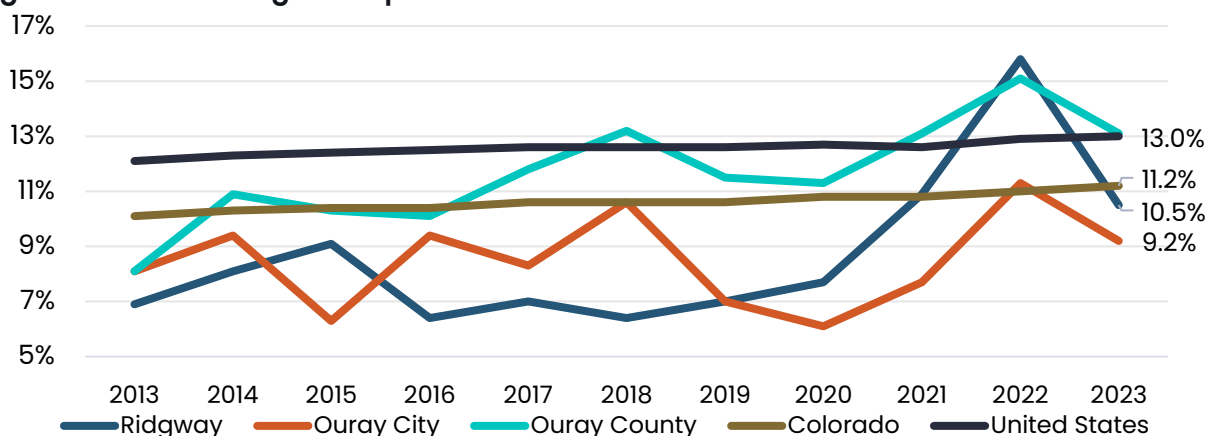
Table 5.10: Population with Disabilities, 2018–2023

Region	2018	2023	Numeric Change	% Change
Ridgway	68	131	63	92.6%
City of Ouray	94	95	1	1.1%
Ouray County	625	657	32	5.1%
Colorado	575,430	638,686	63,256	11.0%
United States	40M	42.7M	2.6M	6.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013–2023, Table S1810

Although the number of disabled individuals has increased at a faster rate in Colorado than nationally in recent years, Colorado still has a lower overall percentage of residents with disabilities compared to the nation. This trend has persisted throughout the 10-year period shown in Figure 5.15. In both Ridgway and the City of Ouray, the share of the population reporting a disability peaked in 2022 (at 15.8% and 11.3%, respectively) before declining again in 2023. With the exception of that peak year, both cities have consistently reported lower disability rates than the state and national averages.

Figure 5.15: Percentage of Population with Disabilities



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013–2023, Table S1810

²⁶ PC acknowledges that this unusually high percentage may be due to limitations in reporting, or small sample sizes in the data.

Veteran Population

Veterans have faced housing challenges dating back to World War I. Reintegration into the economy after military service can be difficult for some, often resulting in higher poverty rates and, consequently, greater housing affordability issues. In addition, many veterans experience health problems after their service, further compounding the challenges of economic reintegration. For these reasons, it is important to ensure that adequate housing options are available for this population.

Since 2018, the number of veterans has declined both nationally and in the State of Colorado (Table 5.11). However, the decrease in Colorado has been smaller than the national decline. Interestingly, the number of veterans has increased in both the City of Ouray and Ouray County, while Ridgway experienced a 17.9% decrease. This is the largest percentage change among all regions of comparison.

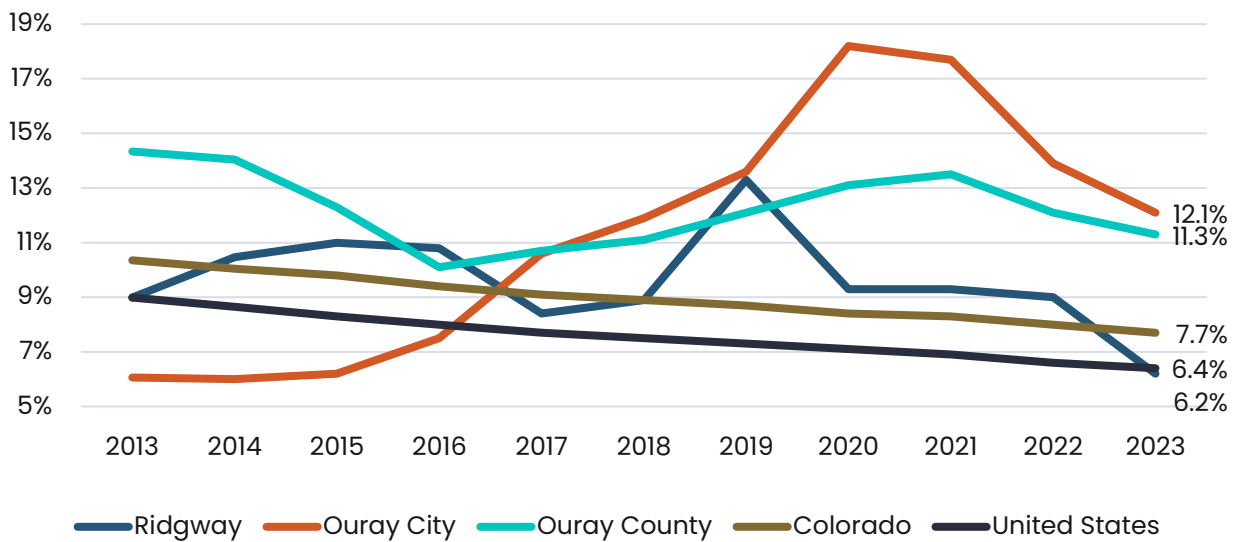
Table 5.11: Veteran Population, 2018–2023

Region	2018	2023	Numeric Change	% Change
Ridgway	78	64	(14)	(17.9%)
City of Ouray	95	108	13	13.7%
Ouray County	446	497	51	11.4%
Colorado	375,746	348,913	(26,833)	(7.1%)
United States	18.6M	16.6M	(2M)	(11.0%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013–2023, Table S2101

The percentage of veterans in Colorado’s population is higher than the national average, a trend that also holds true for the City of Ouray and Ouray County for most of the 2013–2023 period (Figure 5.16). As of 2023, 6.2% of Ridgway’s population were veterans, slightly below the national percentage of 6.4%. Among the regions analyzed, the City of Ouray has had the highest percentage of veterans over the past five years, although this has declined from a peak of 18.2% in 2020 to 12.1% in 2023.

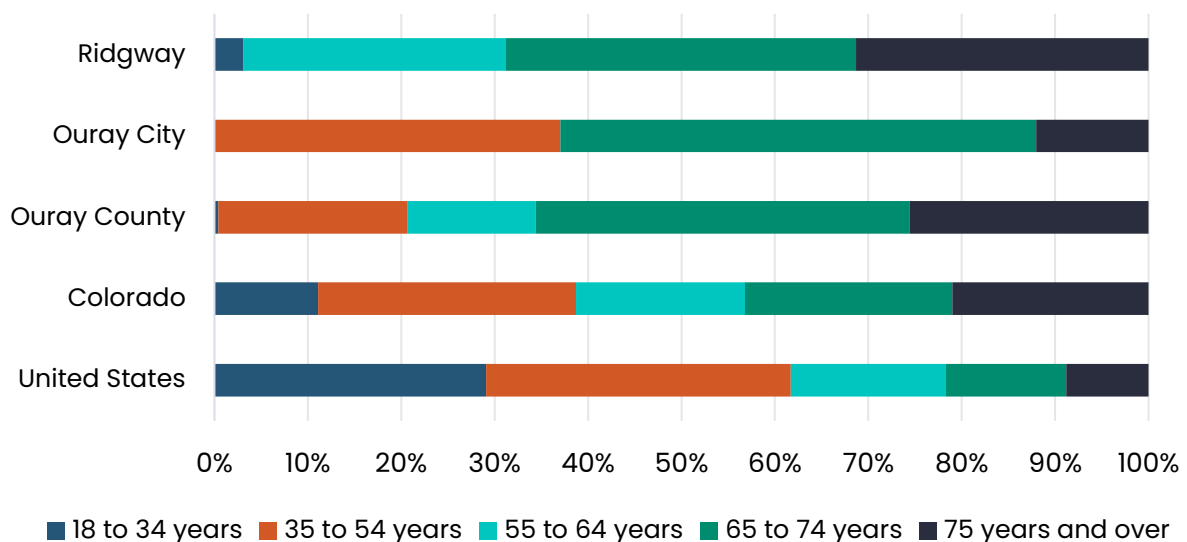
Figure 5.16: Percentage of Population that are Veterans, 2013–2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013–2023, Table S2101

Figure 5.17 displays the percentage of veterans by age in 2023. Ridgway has the highest proportion of senior veterans (aged 65 and older) among all comparison regions, followed by Ouray County and the City of Ouray. Only 3.1% of veterans in Ridgway are under age 55. Although more pronounced, these regional patterns mirror the trend in Colorado, which also has a higher percentage of veterans aged 65 and older compared to the national average.

Figure 5.17: Percentage of Veterans by Age, 2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2023, Table S2101

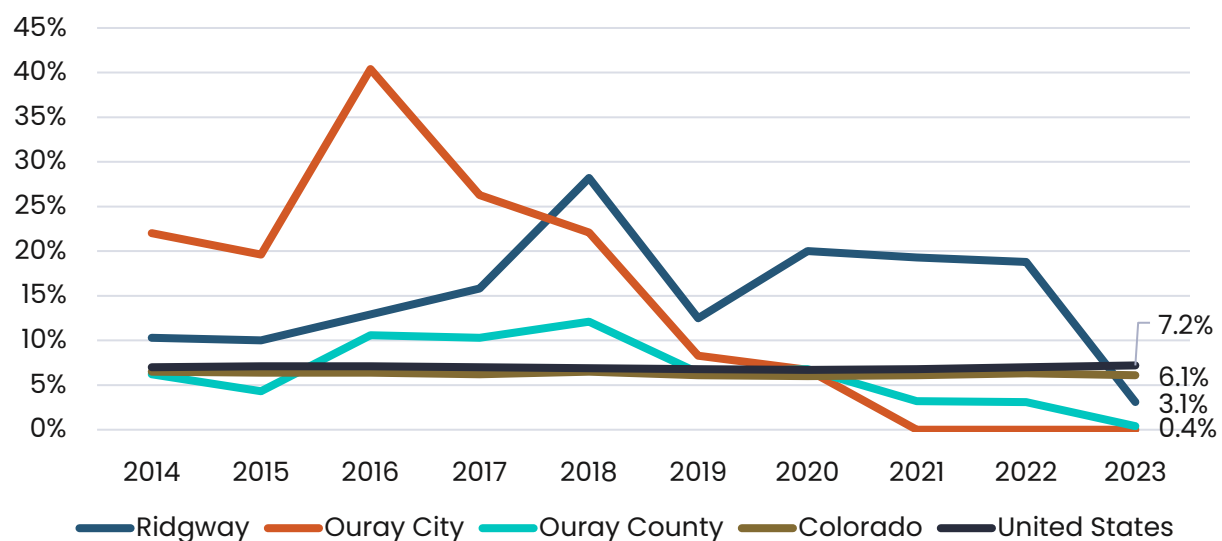
Table 5.12 and Figure 5.18 show trends in poverty rates among veterans in Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County. From 2018 to 2023, the number of veterans in poverty decreased across all regions, with reductions exceeding 90% in both Ridgway and Ouray County.²⁷ In 2023, only 3.1% of veterans in Ridgway were in poverty, and less than 0.5% were in the City of Ouray and Ouray County. These rates are well below the state and national levels of 6.1% and 7.2%, respectively.

Table 5.12: Number of Veterans in Poverty, 2018–2023

Region	2018	2023	Numeric Change	% Change
Ridgway	22	2	(20)	(90.9%)
City of Ouray	21	0	(21)	(100.0%)
Ouray County	54	2	(52)	(96.3%)
Colorado	23,879	21,138	(2,741)	(11.5%)
United States	1.3M	1.2M	(91,828)	(7.3%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015–2023, Table S2101

Figure 5.18: Percentage of Veterans in Poverty, 2014–2023



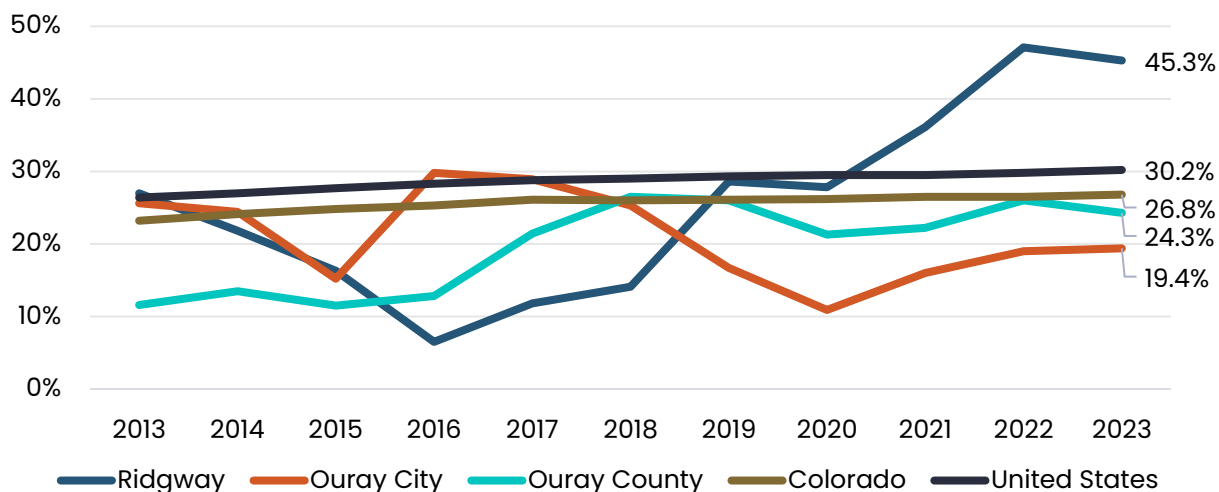
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014–2023, Table S2101

Service-related health conditions are an important consideration in the veteran population, as they can complicate veterans' reintegration into the economy. Figure 5.19 illustrates trends in disability rates among veterans across the analysis regions. From 2013 to 2023, the United States and Colorado have experienced a gradual but steady increase in disability rates. Ouray County has consistently maintained lower disability rates than both the state and nation. Ridgway's rate was significantly lower in

²⁷ Please note again the impact of small sample sizes and reporting limitations.

2016 but has since risen dramatically to 45.3% in 2023. This is 15 percentage points above the national average.

Figure 5.19: Percentage of Veterans with Disabilities, 2013–2023



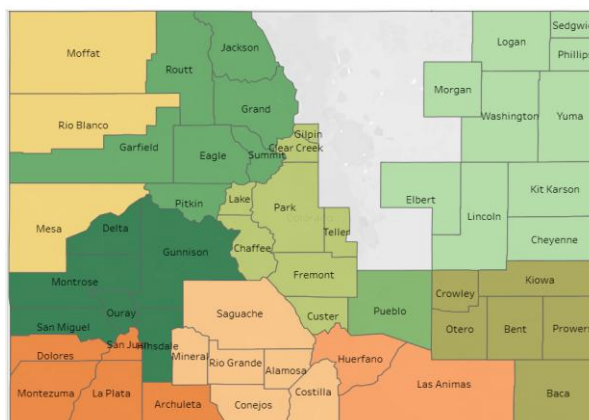
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2013–2023, Table S210

Homeless Populations

Homelessness is difficult to quantify, particularly in non-metro areas, as individuals experiencing homelessness may be reluctant to disclose their status. Consequently, as in any community, the true extent of homelessness is likely more widespread than statistical analyses suggest.

The primary method for measuring homelessness is the HUD Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, an annual one-night count conducted each January. In Colorado, the PIT Count is organized by the Colorado Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC), which covers the entire state except for the more urban counties of Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, Larimer, and Weld—each of which has its own CoC. Figure 5.20 to the right shows the counties (in color) included in the Balance of State CoC, which is further broken down into different regions. Ouray County is in the Western Slope

Figure 5.20: Colorado Balance of State CoC Map



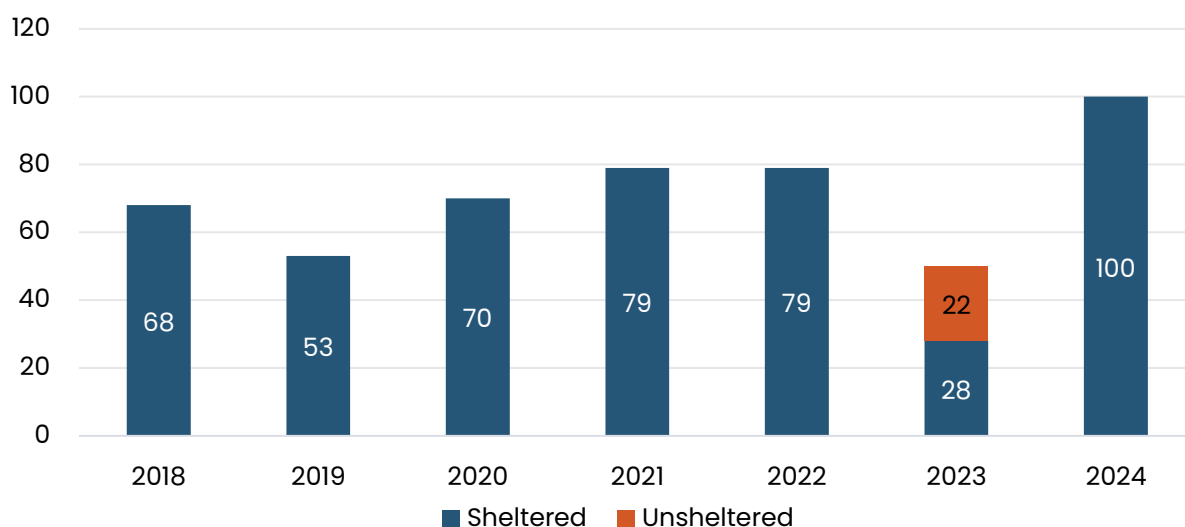
Source: DOLA: <https://doh.colorado.gov/about-the-balance-of-state-continuum-of-care>

Region, and while there are no county-level data for Ouray County, it can be helpful to look at the homeless population levels of counties in that region.

From 2018 to 2024, the CoC provided PIT Counts broken out by county, including Montrose and Delta Counties in the Western Slope Region. In 2024, the Western Slope Region reported 100 homeless individuals (Figure 5.21). Figure 5.22 shows the PIT homeless counts for the entire Colorado Balance of State CoC from 2013 to 2024.

Because the PIT Count reflects data from a single night, it does not capture the full scope of homelessness over time. Additionally, variations in counting methods, external factors such as COVID-19-related social distancing, the availability of volunteers, and fluctuations in shelter programs likely affect the reported numbers.

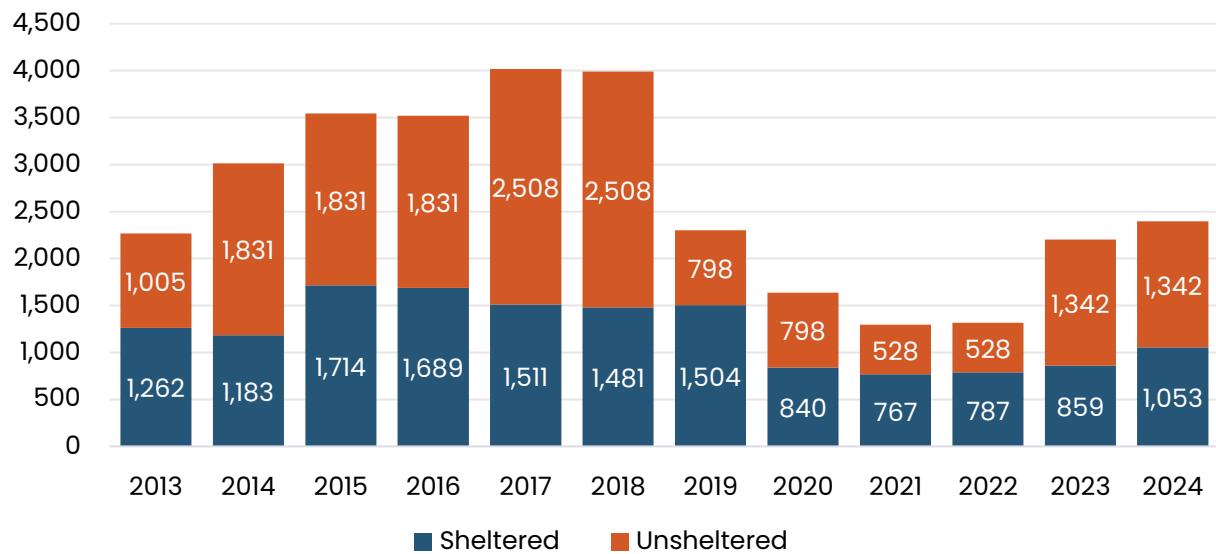
Figure 5.21: Western Slope Region PIT Homeless Count, 2018–2024²⁸



Source: HUD 2007–2024 PIT Estimates by CoC

²⁸ Note that unsheltered individuals are only counted every other year, so the absence of data in certain years should not be interpreted as the absence of unsheltered homelessness.

Figure 5.22: Colorado Balance of State CoC PIT Homeless Count, 2013–2024



Source: HUD 2007–2024 PIT Estimates by CoC

The demographics of homeless individuals are presented in Table 5.13, Figure 5.23, and Figure 5.24 at the full Colorado Balance of State CoC level rather than the county level. This approach protects privacy, as demographic data in the PIT Count are suppressed at the county level when any demographic group includes fewer than 10 individuals.

From 2014 to 2024, the Asian or Asian American and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander homeless populations remained almost negligible. However, the Black, African American, or African and the American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous populations consistently represented the highest proportions of non-White homeless individuals, along with those identifying as Multiracial.

In 2024, the Colorado Balance of State CoC reported that 18.9% of homeless individuals identified as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 5.24).

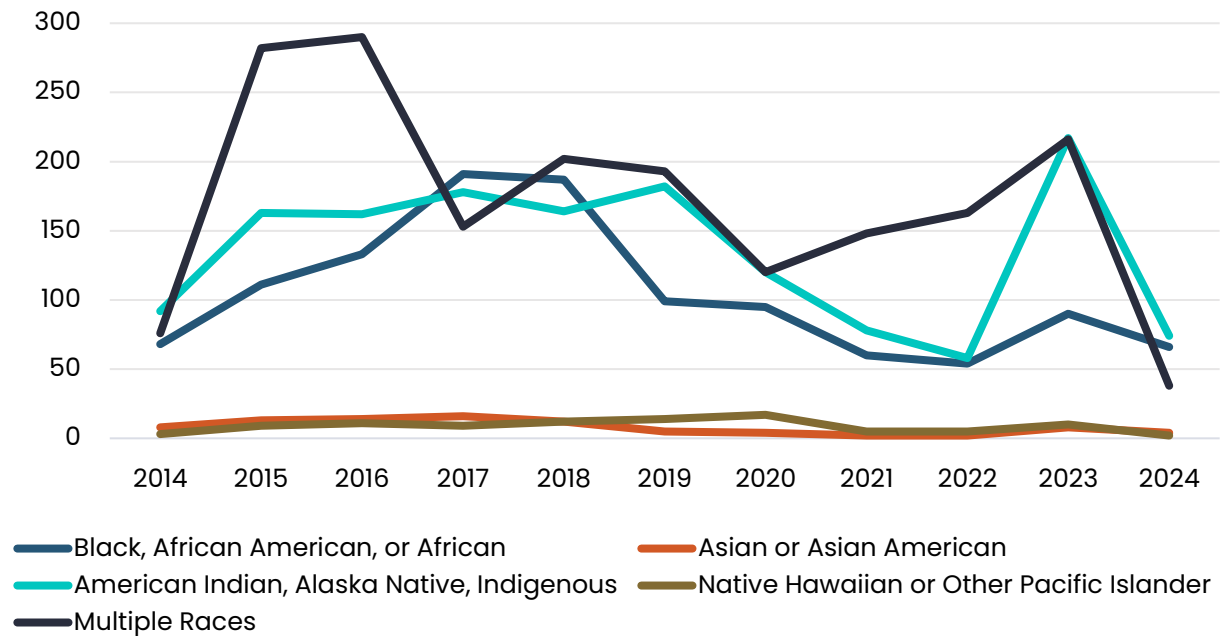
Table 5.13: Homeless Demographics in the Colorado Balance of State CoC, 2014–2024

Year	White	Black, African American, or African	Asian or Asian American	American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Multiple Races
2014	936	68	8	92	3	76
2015	2967	111	13	163	9	282
2016	2910	133	14	162	11	290
2017	3472	191	16	178	9	153
2018	3412	187	12	164	12	202
2019	1809	99	5	182	14	193

2020	1282	95	4	120	17	120
2021	1002	60	2	78	5	148
2022	1033	54	2	58	5	163
2023	1660	90	8	217	10	216
2024	708	66	4	74	2	38

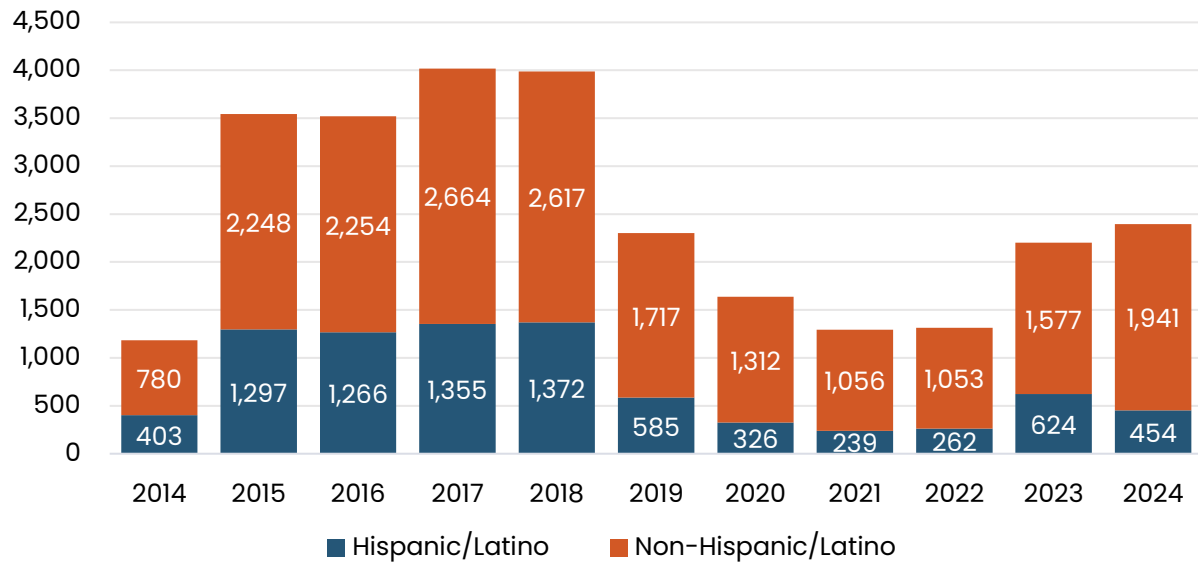
Source: HUD 2007–2024 PIT Estimates by CoC

Figure 5.23: CoC Non-White Demographics of Homeless, 2014–2024



Source: HUD 2007–2024 PIT Estimates by CoC

Figure 5.24: CoC Hispanic/Latino Homeless, 2014–2024



Source: HUD 2007–2024 PIT Estimates by CoC

Economic Drivers

This section examines key drivers of local economies. Labor force growth and the establishment of new businesses are essential components of economic development. Specific industries with higher levels of employment and wages often serve as powerful economic drivers, partly due to the clustering effect.²⁹ Clusters form when businesses in the same industry benefit from proximity, which enhances regional competitiveness.

Strong and growing economic drivers also contribute to higher demand for housing. After all, individuals need employment and income to afford housing. Overall employment growth increases demand for housing, while variations in earnings lead to differing needs for housing types.

Labor Force, Earnings, and Establishments

Ouray County (along with Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, and San Miguel Counties) is a part of Region 10 (R10), one of Colorado's 14 regional planning and economic development areas. The organization's mission is to leverage resources to help build strong communities, specifically by providing senior services, small business services, and regional development assistance.³⁰

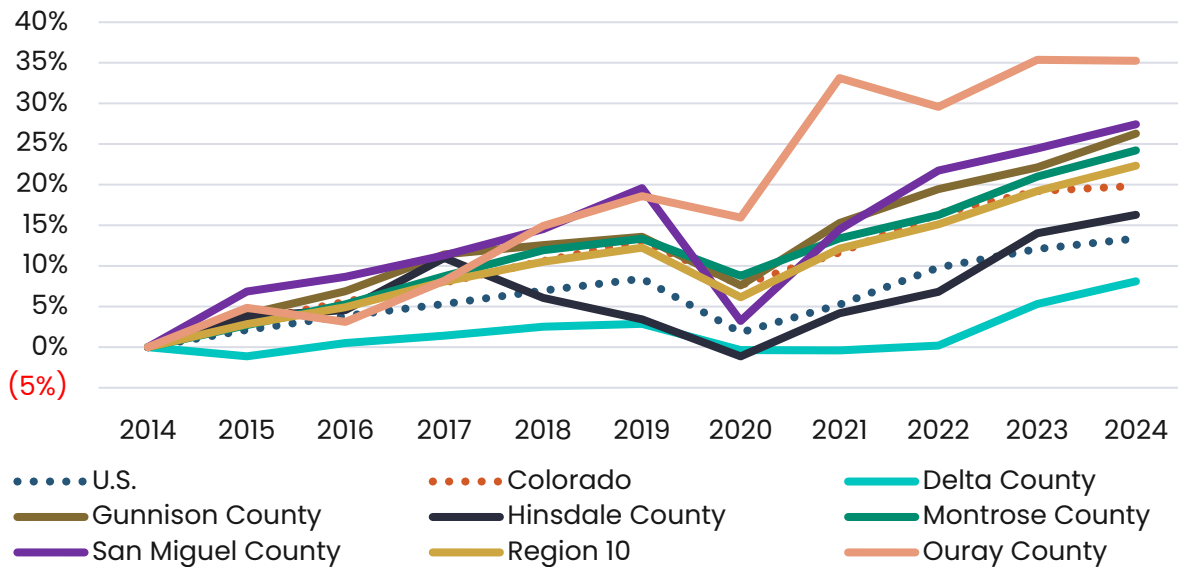
R10 functions as a naturally occurring cluster due to geographic proximity from which Ouray and the other member counties benefit. R10 is also a recognized state economic development district. Analyzing regional economic trends offers insight into how well Ouray County's economy is performing relative to its neighbors. Figure 5.25 through Figure 5.28 below analyze employment, establishment, and wage growth rates in R10 counties from 2014 to 2024. For comparison, state and national growth rates are also included.

Overall, the R10 counties have experienced varied employment growth. For instance, Ouray County leads the region, with employment growing 35.2% since 2014 (Figure 5.25), aligning with population growth trends in Ridgway and the City of Ouray. In contrast, Delta County's employment has grown just 8.1% over the same period. While all R10 counties were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, they have since rebounded, with employment increasing by an average of 22.3% over the past decade.

²⁹ Joseph Cortright, "Making Sense of Clusters: Regional Competitiveness and Economic Development," The Brookings Institute, accessed February 27, 2025, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/making-sense-of-clusters-regional-competitiveness-and-economic-development/#:~:text=The%20foundation%20of%20a%20regional,common%20competitive%20strengths%20and%20needs.>

³⁰ "Our Mission," Region 10, accessed June 5, 2025, <https://region10.net/about/>.

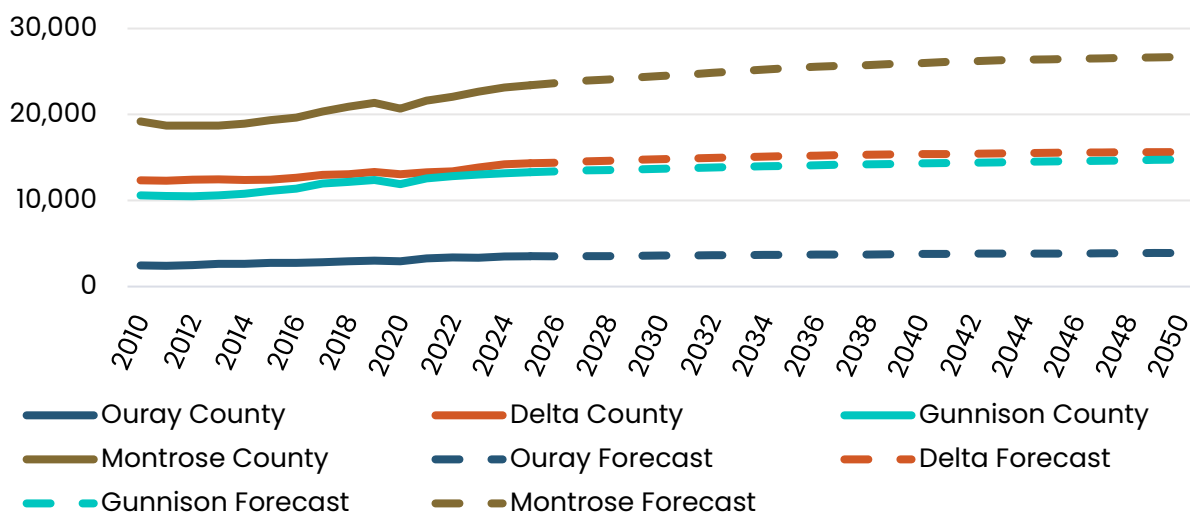
Figure 5.25: Cumulative Annual Employment Growth Rate, 2014–2024³¹



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

The Colorado Department of Labor Statistics projects that this growth will continue at a similar rate, adding 377 jobs between 2025 and 2050 in Ouray County (Figure 5.26). This would be a 10.7% increase, a growth rate higher than Delta County and slightly lower than Gunnison and Montrose Counties.

Figure 5.26: Job Growth Projections, 2010–2050

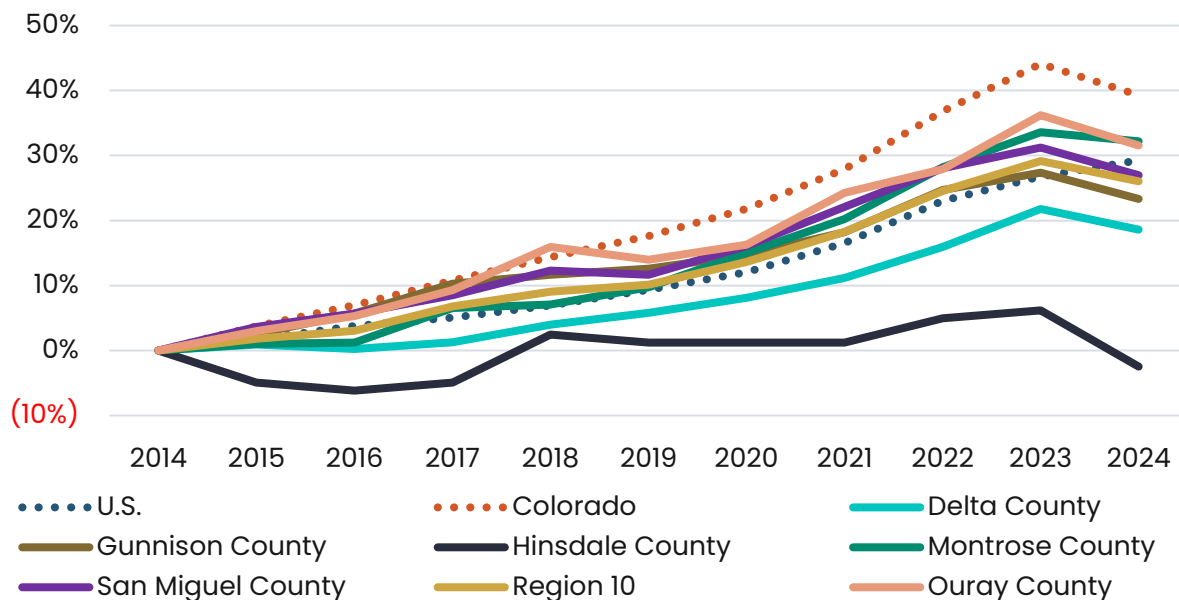


Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office

³¹ All “Region 10” series in the Labor Force, Earnings, and Establishments section are based on weighted averages of the individual counties. Specifically, values are weighted by each county’s total for the respective metric, and by total employment in the case of unemployment rates.

In terms of total establishment growth, most counties in the region have grown at a slightly slower pace than the State of Colorado since 2018, but roughly on par with the United States. The exception is Hinsdale County, where the number of establishments has declined 2.5% since 2014 (Figure 5.27). Ouray County and Montrose County lead the region with establishment growth of approximately 31.6% over the past 10 years. Ranking at the top of R10 in both employment and establishment growth is a strong indicator of economic health in Ouray County.

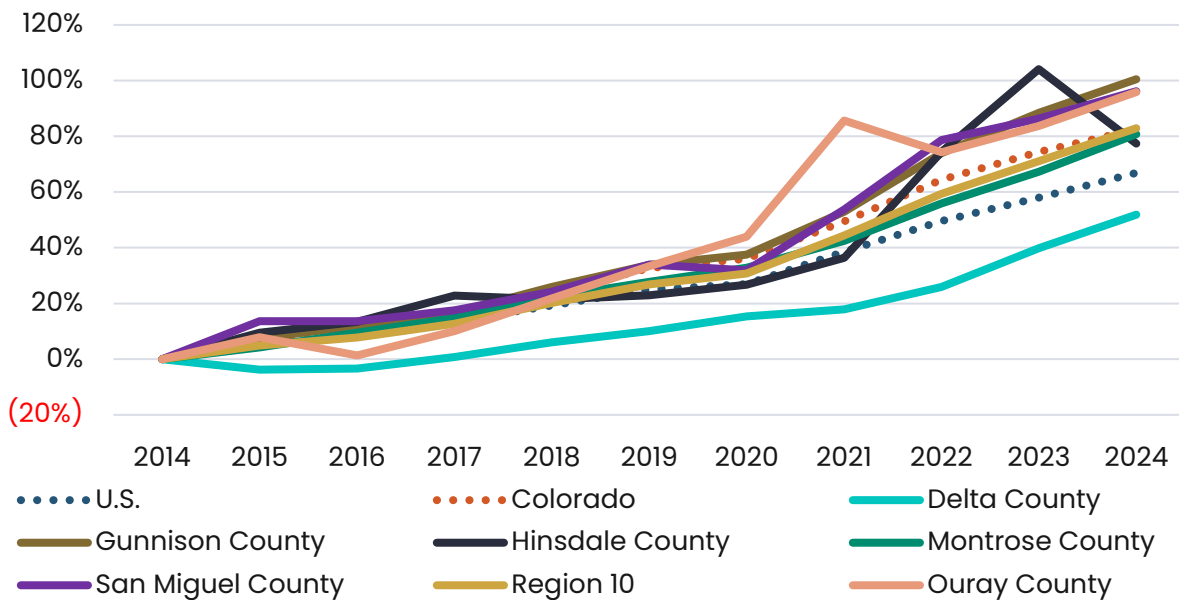
Figure 5.27: Cumulative Annual Establishments Growth Rate, 2014–2024



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Total wages has been a relatively bright spot for all R10 counties, as shown in Figure 5.28 below. Delta County again lags behind the rest of the group, but total wages have grown by 100.5%, 96.2%, and 95.9% respectively for Gunnison, San Miguel, and Ouray Counties. Additionally, wages have been growing at a faster pace than employment. This indicates that wages have not only risen with higher employment but also due to workers earning more per year than before.

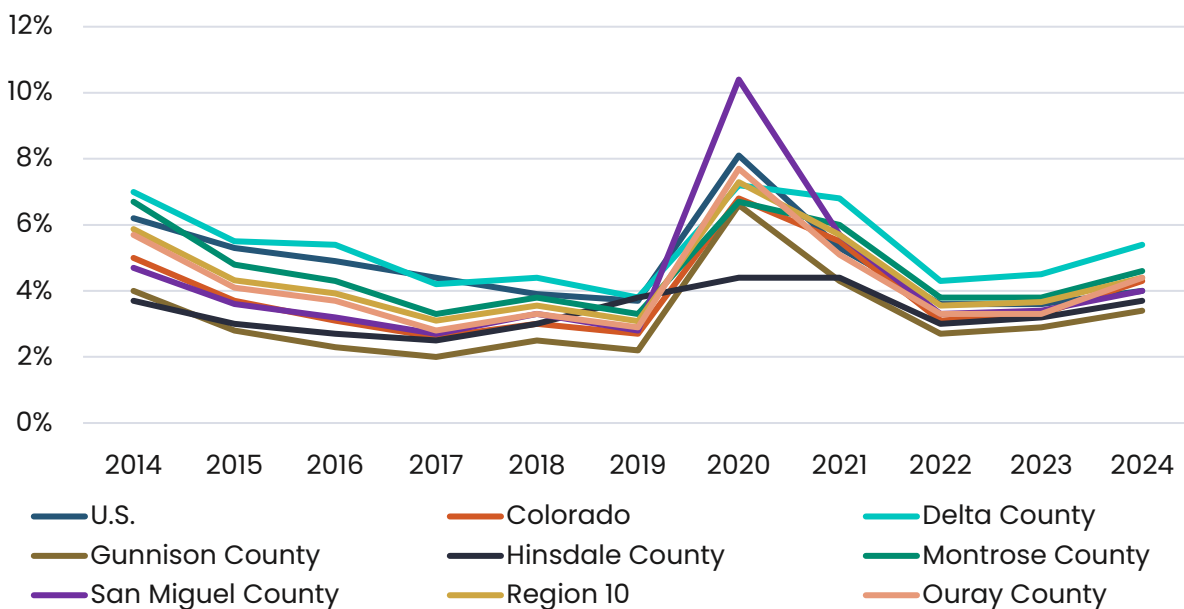
Figure 5.28: Cumulative Annual Total Wages Growth Rate, 2014–2024



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Figure 5.29 illustrates the annual unemployment rate over the same period. All R10 counties were impacted by COVID-19, with the exception of Hinsdale County. San Miguel County was hit harder than the rest of the region, experiencing a significantly higher unemployment rate than even the U.S. average. However, all regions have since rebounded, with rates ticking up just slightly in 2024.

Figure 5.29: Annual Rate of Unemployment, 2014–2024



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Employment by Industry

Examining employment data by industry helps identify the employment clusters within a region. These clusters often require different types of housing to accommodate workers in specific industries. For instance, many outdoor recreation workers are seasonal and work more during peak tourism seasons and less in the off seasons. They may not need a long-term residence. In contrast, local government employees typically prefer to live near their workplace and require permanent housing. Additionally, different industries offer varying income levels, so workers in some sectors can generally afford more expensive housing than those in others. Overall, employment by industry contributes to housing demand at various levels in Ouray County.

As shown in Table 5.14, the three largest industries by employment in Ridgway are Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (21.1% of employment), Construction (10.5% of employment), and Accommodation & Food Services (9.8% of employment).

Location quotients (LQs) compare the relative concentration of industries in an area to the national average. For example, Mining, Quarrying, Oil & Gas represents about 0.3% of employment in Ridgway and has an LQ of 1.00. This means Ridgway's share of Mining, Quarrying, Oil & Gas is right on par with the national average. As shown below, Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing has the highest LQ in Ridgway at 3.64, followed by Arts, Entertainment & Recreation at 3.04. Due to these high LQs, these industries represent significant employment clusters in Ridgway compared to the national average.

Table 5.14: Employment by Industry in Ridgway, 2024

Industry	Total Employment	% Employment	LQ
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	23	4.0%	3.64
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	41	7.0%	3.04
Utilities	14	2.4%	2.67
Professional/Scientific/Tech	123	21.1%	2.54
Construction	61	10.5%	1.52
Accommodation/Food Services	57	9.8%	1.44
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	13	2.2%	1.22
Public Administration	33	5.7%	1.14
Mining/Quarrying/Oil & Gas	2	0.3%	1.00
Retail Trade	48	8.2%	0.78
Educational Services	38	6.5%	0.71
Other Services (Excluding Public)	17	2.9%	0.63
Admin/Support/Waste Management	15	2.6%	0.60
Health Care/Social Assistance	46	7.9%	0.56
Manufacturing	28	4.8%	0.48

Transportation/Warehousing	14	2.4%	0.47
Information	5	0.9%	0.45
Finance/Insurance	4	0.7%	0.15
Wholesale Trade	0	0.0%	0.00
Management of Companies	0	0.0%	0.00
Total	582	100%	--

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Accommodation & Food Services is the largest industry by employment in the City of Ouray, employing 16.6% of the local workforce (

Table 5.15). Other major industries include Construction (10.7%) and Retail Trade (9.0%). However, the Utilities industry is relatively concentrated with an LQ of 4.22. Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Accommodation & Food Services are also relatively concentrated, with LQs of 3.30 and 2.44, respectively.

Table 5.15: Employment by Industry in the City of Ouray, 2024

Industry	Total Employment	% Employment	LQ
Utilities	18	3.8%	4.22
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	36	7.6%	3.30
Accommodation/Food Services	79	16.6%	2.44
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	16	3.4%	1.89
Construction	51	10.7%	1.55
Transportation/Warehousing	33	6.9%	1.35
Information	13	2.7%	1.35
Public Administration	30	6.3%	1.26
Educational Services	41	8.6%	0.95
Retail Trade	43	9.0%	0.86
Admin/Support/Waste Management	17	3.6%	0.84
Other Services (Excluding Public)	15	3.2%	0.70
Professional/Scientific/Tech	27	5.7%	0.69
Finance/Insurance	14	2.9%	0.60
Health Care/Social Assistance	28	5.9%	0.42
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	2	0.4%	0.36
Manufacturing	13	2.7%	0.27
Mining/Quarrying/Oil & Gas	0	0.0%	0.00
Wholesale Trade	0	0.0%	0.00
Management of Companies	0	0.0%	0.00
Total	476	100%	--

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

As expected, overall employment by industry at the county level follows similar trends to those observed in Ridgway and the City of Ouray (Table 5.16). The three largest industries by employment in the County are Professional, Scientific & Technical Services at 15.8% (in line with Ridgway); Construction at 12.5% (in line with both Ridgway and Ouray); and Accommodation & Food Services (in line with Ouray). Utilities (LQ of 3.67), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (LQ of 2.52), and Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing (LQ of 2.09) are also relatively concentrated.

Table 5.16: Employment by Industry in Ouray County, 2024

Industry	Total Employment	% Employment	LQ
Utilities	77	3.3%	3.67
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	138	5.8%	2.52
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	55	2.3%	2.09
Professional/Scientific/Tech	372	15.8%	1.90
Accommodation/Food Services	292	12.4%	1.82
Construction	296	12.5%	1.81
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	60	2.5%	1.39
Transportation/Warehousing	139	5.9%	1.16
Public Administration	133	5.6%	1.12
Information	43	1.8%	0.90
Retail Trade	200	8.5%	0.81
Admin/Support/Waste Management	70	3.0%	0.70
Educational Services	146	6.2%	0.68
Finance/Insurance	62	2.6%	0.54
Other Services (Excluding Public)	52	2.2%	0.48
Health Care/Social Assistance	154	6.5%	0.46
Mining/Quarrying/Oil & Gas	3	0.1%	0.33
Manufacturing	69	2.9%	0.29
Wholesale Trade	0	0.0%	0.00
Management of Companies	0	0.0%	0.00
Total	2,361	100%	--

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Table 5.17 compares employment by industry in Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County to that of Colorado. Notably, Colorado has a much larger cluster of employment in Health Care & Social Assistance than any of the three local areas, with 12.5% of the state's total employment. However, similar to Ridgway and Ouray County, the state's second largest industry is Professional, Scientific & Technical Services at 11.6% (still lower than the share in either the Town or the County). Colorado also has a large share of workers in the Retail Trade industry (9.9%), comparable to the City of Ouray.

Table 5.17: Employment by Industry Comparison, 2024

Industry	Ouray County	Ridgway	Ouray City	Colorado
Total Current Employment	2,361	582	476	3.2M
Manufacturing	15.8%	21.1%	3.4%	7.5%
Retail Trade	12.5%	9.8%	6.9%	9.9%
Wholesale Trade	12.4%	10.5%	10.7%	1.7%
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	8.5%	6.5%	3.6%	2.3%
Health Care/Social Assistance	6.5%	2.4%	0.4%	12.5%
Management of Companies	6.2%	2.6%	5.7%	0.1%
Utilities	5.9%	5.7%	6.3%	0.9%
Mining/Quarrying/Oil & Gas	5.8%	7.0%	7.6%	0.5%
Information	5.6%	0.3%	8.6%	2.8%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	3.3%	4.0%	3.8%	1.0%
Professional/Scientific/Tech	3.0%	2.9%	3.2%	11.6%
Accommodation/Food Services	2.9%	0.7%	0.0%	6.9%
Admin/Support/Waste Management	2.6%	7.9%	2.9%	4.2%
Transportation/Warehousing	2.5%	2.2%	2.7%	4.6%
Construction	2.3%	2.4%	16.6%	8.0%
Educational Services	2.2%	4.8%	5.9%	8.7%
Finance/Insurance	1.8%	8.2%	9.0%	4.7%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	0.1%	0.9%	2.7%	2.7%
Other Services (Excluding Public)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%
Public Administration	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Employment by Occupation

Employment by occupation, shown in Table 5.18, details the types of roles workers hold within the industries discussed above. These occupations include, but are not limited to, management, sales, and legal positions. Across Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County, over 20.0% of workers are employed in management roles, making it the largest occupational category by employment. Other notable occupations include:

- Office & Administrative Support: 8.8% in Ridgway
- Sales & Sales Related: 12.4% in the City of Ouray and 9.5% in Ouray County
- Office & Administrative Support: 7.9% in Ouray County

Table 5.18: Employment by Occupation Comparison, 2024

Occupation Type	Ouray County	Ridgway	Ouray City	Colorado
Total Current Employment	2,361	582	476	3.2M
Management	21.6%	22.9%	23.3%	14.7%
Sales and Sales Related	9.5%	5.7%	12.4%	8.6%

Construction/Extraction	9.1%	6.4%	4.0%	4.9%
Office/Administrative Support	7.9%	8.8%	9.5%	9.2%
Business/Financial	7.3%	5.3%	9.0%	7.1%
Building Maintenance	6.5%	4.3%	12.0%	2.7%
Transportation/Material Moving	5.3%	4.8%	3.4%	6.3%
Computer/Mathematical	4.2%	7.2%	3.8%	5.5%
Food Preparation/Serving	4.2%	1.9%	5.5%	5.2%
Education/Training/Library	3.5%	1.9%	6.3%	5.7%
Healthcare Practitioner	3.4%	7.0%	0.0%	5.9%
Arts/Design/Entertainment	3.3%	7.7%	1.1%	2.7%
Community/Social Service	2.8%	3.3%	2.9%	1.9%
Architecture/Engineering	2.2%	1.7%	1.3%	3.5%
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	1.6%	4.1%	0.0%	0.4%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	1.6%	2.7%	0.2%	2.7%
Healthcare Support	1.5%	0.5%	1.5%	2.6%
Personal Care/Service	1.5%	0.9%	1.5%	2.6%
Life/Physical/Social Sciences	1.4%	1.2%	0.0%	1.6%
Production	1.0%	1.0%	1.7%	3.4%
Legal	0.3%	0.5%	0.2%	1.2%
Protective Service	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%	1.8%

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Table 5.19 highlights how income levels align with occupations in Ouray County. At the lower end, those earning below \$20,000, jobs include postmasters, phlebotomists, and passenger attendants. At the more mid-income levels, people have jobs such as teachers and physical therapists. These are the occupations that would benefit from more housing in the “missing middle”. More diverse housing options can provide affordable options for those with these kinds of occupations.

It is important to note how we established occupation estimates in Table 5.19. Our data source utilizes average annual earnings estimates for each occupation (which utilizes reported earnings). We then connected these estimates to the one-person household income limits from HUD, assuming the worker is a one-person household. When making decisions on whether or not workers qualify for subsidized housing, factors such as their household size are taken into account to determine what their AMI level is.

Comparing the earnings of one occupation to the one-person household AMI limits is more appropriate than comparing to the full, four-person AMI limits to estimate where the respective occupations fall within AMI categories. Workers that are essentially a one-person household in the lower AMI levels represent most of the demand for housing units at those levels.

Table 5.19: Occupations by AMI Level, One-Person Household Income Limits

AMI Level	Household Income Range	5 example jobs in the income group
<30% AMI Very low income	<\$19,870	Postmasters and mail superintendents; Phlebotomists; Extraction worker helpers; Passenger Attendants; Conveyor operators and tenders
30-50% AMI Low income	\$19,870-\$33,110	Physical therapist aides; Dental Assistants; Pharmacy technicians; School bus monitors; Cashiers
50-80% AMI Low-mid income	\$33,110-\$52,980	Counselors; Legal support workers; Actors; Coaches; Emergency medical technicians
80-100% AMI Middle Income	\$52,980-\$66,220	Human resource workers; Engineering techs; Life scientists; Teachers; Writers and editors
100-120% AMI High-mid income	\$66,220-\$79,460	Accountants and auditors; Financial analysts and advisors; Physical therapists; Dental hygienists; Fire inspectors
120%-150% AMI High income	\$79,460-\$99,330	Construction managers; Data scientists; Financial risk specialists; Pharmacists; Registered nurses
>150% AMI Affluent	>\$99,330	Chief executives; Computer programmers; Engineers; Lawyers; Physicians

Source: Points Consulting using HUD Median Family Income 2024 & DTG Employment and Wage Estimates 2024³²

Table 5.20 reports the average annual earnings and annual employment estimates as of 2024 in Ouray County by major Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system code. In coordination with Table 5.19, this table shows which income levels individuals could pursue through different occupational roles in the region. Earnings play a large role in housing affordability, and the table below shows where more opportunities for higher pay is available.

Table 5.20: Occupation Group by Earnings & Employment, Ouray County, 2024

Occupation Name	Average Annual Earnings	Annual Employment
Management occupations	\$102,629	112
Computer and mathematical occupations	\$91,462	24
Architecture and engineering occupations	\$80,345	20
Legal occupations	\$79,474	11
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	\$75,348	39
Business and financial operations occupations	\$68,008	122

³² Data Tactical Group, <https://datatactical.group/>.

Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	\$64,817	16
Life, physical, and social science occupations	\$59,456	25
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	\$57,047	39
Protective service occupations	\$54,522	107
Construction and extraction occupations	\$53,606	132
Community and social service occupations	\$52,741	40
Educational instruction and library occupations	\$47,914	124
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	\$47,853	90
Personal care and service occupations	\$43,992	69
Sales and related occupations	\$42,286	225
Office and administrative support occupations	\$41,799	285
Production occupations	\$39,875	66
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	\$39,592	167
Transportation and material moving occupations	\$39,045	127
Food preparation and serving related occupations	\$39,033	344
Healthcare support occupations	\$37,603	21

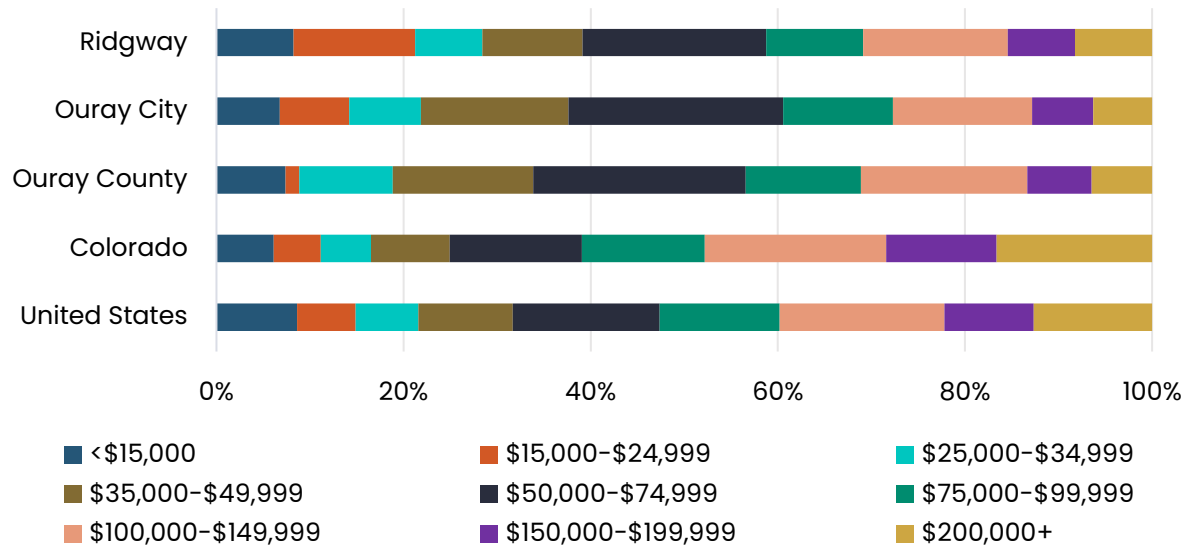
Source: DTG Employment & Wage Estimates, 2024

Income & Expenditures

Household income is a critical factor in housing demand and plays a major role in affordability. Lower-income households struggle to afford today's high housing costs, while higher-income households have greater financial flexibility. As a result, regions with higher income levels tend to experience higher housing costs, and vice versa.

Figure 5.30 presents data on household income distribution in Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County, compared to Colorado and the United States.

Figure 5.30: Household Income Distribution, 2024



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

In addition to the income distribution shown above, Table 5.21 breaks down the income limits for households by 2025 AMI level in Ouray County according to HUD. HUD considers the official AMI for the County to be 100% of AMI at the four-person household. So, the AMI for Ouray County for affordable housing policy and development purposes is \$104,500.

Table 5.21: HUD AMI Level Income Limits for Ouray County, 2025

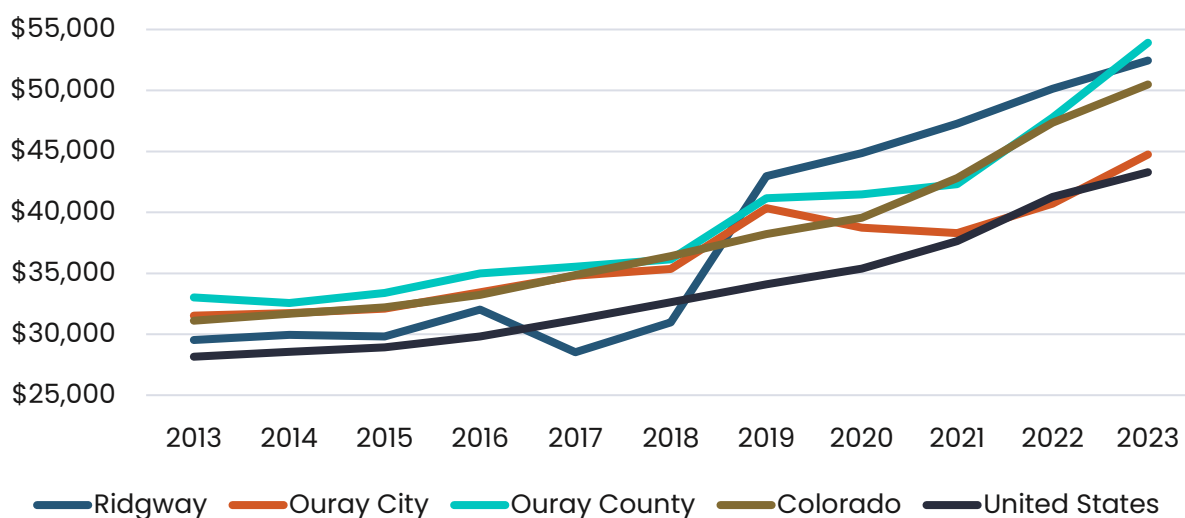
% of AMI	One-Person	Two-Person	Three-Person	Four-Person	Five-Person	Six-Person	Seven-Person	Eight-Person
30%	\$21,960	\$25,080	\$28,230	\$31,350	\$33,870	\$36,390	\$38,880	\$41,400
40%	\$29,280	\$33,440	\$37,640	\$41,800	\$45,160	\$48,520	\$51,840	\$55,200
50%	\$36,600	\$41,800	\$47,050	\$52,250	\$56,450	\$60,650	\$64,800	\$69,000
60%	\$43,920	\$50,160	\$56,460	\$62,700	\$67,740	\$72,780	\$77,760	\$82,800
70%	\$51,240	\$58,520	\$65,870	\$73,150	\$79,030	\$84,910	\$90,720	\$96,600
80%	\$58,560	\$66,880	\$75,280	\$83,600	\$90,320	\$97,040	\$103,680	\$110,400
90%	\$65,880	\$75,240	\$84,690	\$94,050	\$101,610	\$109,170	\$116,640	\$124,200
100%	\$73,200	\$83,600	\$94,100	\$104,500	\$112,900	\$121,300	\$129,600	\$138,000
110%	\$80,520	\$91,960	\$103,510	\$114,950	\$124,190	\$133,430	\$142,560	\$151,800
120%	\$87,840	\$100,320	\$112,920	\$125,400	\$135,480	\$145,560	\$155,520	\$165,600
130%	\$95,160	\$108,680	\$122,330	\$135,850	\$146,770	\$157,690	\$168,480	\$179,400
140%	\$102,480	\$117,040	\$131,740	\$146,300	\$158,060	\$169,820	\$181,440	\$193,200
150%	\$109,800	\$125,400	\$141,150	\$156,750	\$169,350	\$181,950	\$194,400	\$207,000
160%	\$117,120	\$133,760	\$150,560	\$167,200	\$180,640	\$194,080	\$207,360	\$220,800

Source: 2025 Income Limit and Maximum Rent, Colorado Counties, Colorado Housing Finance Association

Per capita income over time measures the average income per person within a given region. This metric is useful for comparing wealth and assessing economic well-being. Figure 5.31 displays per capita income by region from 2013 to 2023. Overall, all regions experienced growth during this period. Ridgway saw a decline in 2017 but recovered quickly, and by 2019 had a higher per capita income than all other regions. This trend continued until 2023, when Ridgway's per capita income fell just below that of Ouray County, though it remained higher than both Colorado and the United States.

The City of Ouray's per capita income trend differed significantly from Ridgway's. Income levels rose until 2020, then declined for two years before increasing again in the following two years.

Figure 5.31: Per Capita Income, 2013–2023

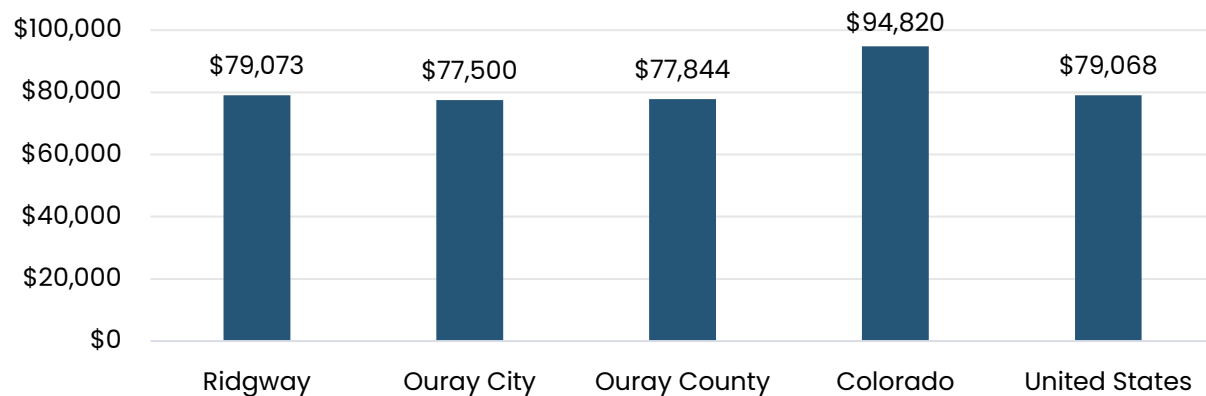


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B19301

While a region's income distribution provides insight into the full range of income levels, and per capita income reflects overall economic growth or decline, median household income offers a snapshot of how the typical household compares to those in other regions.

In Ridgway, the median household income is \$79,000 which is equal to the national median but \$15,000 lower than Colorado's (Figure 5.32). The City of Ouray and Ouray County both have a median household income of \$77,000 (just below the national figure) but again, notably lower than the state median of \$95,000.

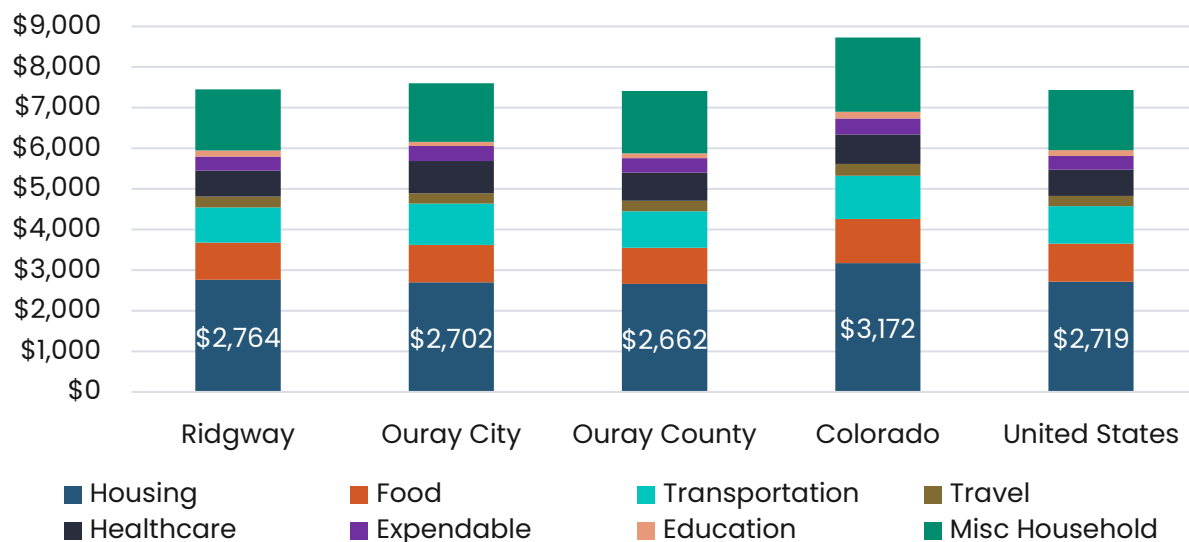
Figure 5.32: Median Household Income



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Figure 5.33 presents monthly household expenditures for Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County, compared to Colorado and the United States. The most notable difference is that, on average, residents in the State of Colorado have higher expenses across all categories. Ridgway and Ouray are very similar to each other (and to the national average) in terms of spending habits.

Figure 5.33: Monthly Household Expenditures, 2024³³



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

³³ Miscellaneous household expenditures include apparel and services, personal care products, funeral expenses, legal fees, banking service charges, accounting fees, credit card membership fees, shopping club membership fees, support payments, life insurance, and pensions and social security.

Sperling’s Best Places provides a regional cost of living index, comparing costs in various spending categories to national averages. In Table 5.22, the United States serves as the baseline, with a cost of living index set at 100.0. A value greater than 100.0 means the cost in that region is higher, while a value below 100.0 suggests the cost is generally lower.

In Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County, the overall cost of living is 121.9, meaning that, on average, goods and services are more expensive in Ouray County than in much of the United States. This is especially evident in housing, which has an index of 178.8 for Ouray County (indicating that housing costs are approximately 80% higher than the national average). This is significant, as housing costs are a major factor in overall affordability.

Table 5.22: Regional Cost of Living Comparison, 2024

Region	Overall	Housing	Grocery	Health	Utilities	Transportation
Ridgway	121.9	189.2	107.4	80.0	101.0	90.3
City of Ouray	121.9	150.1	104.1	80.0	101.0	90.3
Ouray County	121.9	178.8	105.8	--	100.6	--
Colorado	120.5	167.5	100.7	83.8	98.4	106.7
United States	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Sperlings Best Places, Cost of Living Comparison, 2024³⁴

Commuter & Transportation Data

Data on commuters and transportation are valuable tools for understanding housing demand patterns in different regions. Discussions with the Housing Needs Assessment steering committee revealed that Ridgway faces a challenge in providing sufficient housing for its workforce. Specifically, local workers often struggle to find affordable housing, and, as a result, many must commute from Montrose or other nearby areas.

Commuting patterns for Ridgway are shown in Table 5.23. According to Census Bureau’s OnTheMap database, 86.3% of Ridgway workers live outside the Town. As mentioned earlier, many commute from Montrose (16.9%). Additionally, many Ridgway residents work outside the Town. Common employment destinations for Ridgway residents include the City of Ouray (17.8%), Telluride (6.5%), and Montrose (5.6%).³⁵

³⁴ Sperling’s Best Places, <https://www.bestplaces.net/>.

³⁵ CDP – Census Designated Place, unincorporated areas that have concentrated populations.

Table 5.23: Ridgway Commuting Patterns, 2022

Where Ridgway Residents Work		Where Ridgway Workers Live	
Location	%	Location	%
Ridgway (OC)	26.1%	Montrose	16.9%
City of Ouray (OC)	17.8%	Ridgway (OC)	13.7%
Telluride	6.5%	City of Ouray (OC)	10.1%
Montrose	5.6%	Loghill Village CDP (OC)	3.7%
Mountain Village	5.4%	Portland CDP	1.6%
Denver	4.4%	Olathe	1.0%
Boulder	2.1%	Delta	0.9%
Grand Junction	1.9%	Centennial	0.6%
Portland CDP	1.1%	Denver	0.6%
Colorado Springs	0.8%	Grand Junction	0.6%
All Other Locations	28.4%	All Other Locations	50.3%
Total	100.0%	Total	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2022

The largest share of Ouray County workers live within the County; however, over half (55%) commute from other counties (Table 5.24). In addition, only 43.6% of Ouray County residents work within the County. Other common employment destinations include San Miguel County (14.5%), Montrose County (9.2%), and Denver County (5.5%).

Table 5.24: Ouray County Commuting Patterns, 2022

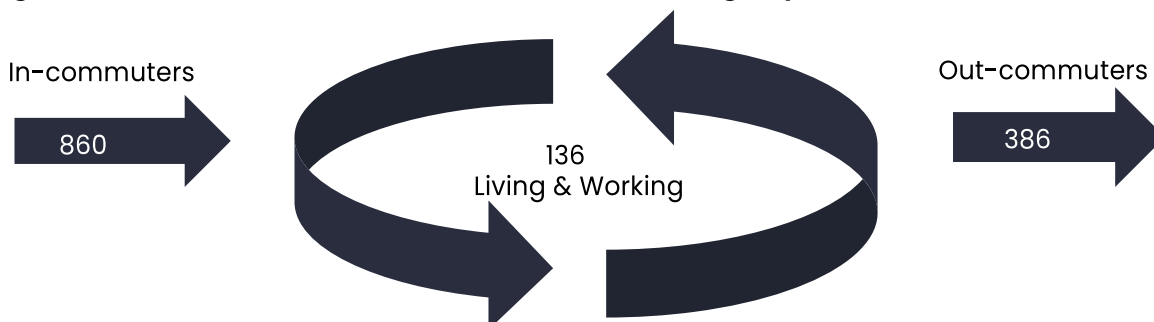
Where Ouray County Residents Work		Where Ouray County Workers Live	
Location	%	Location	%
Ouray County, CO	43.6%	Ouray County, CO	45.0%
San Miguel County, CO	14.5%	Montrose County, CO	31.6%
Montrose County, CO	9.2%	Delta County, CO	2.8%
Denver County, CO	5.5%	San Miguel County, CO	1.8%
Mesa County, CO	3.0%	Arapahoe County, CO	1.7%
Arapahoe County, CO	2.4%	Denver County, CO	1.4%
El Paso County, CO	2.2%	La Plata County, CO	1.3%
Boulder County, CO	2.1%	Mesa County, CO	1.1%
Jefferson County, CO	2.0%	Jefferson County, CO	1.0%
Adams County, CO	1.8%	Adams County, CO	0.9%
All Other Locations	13.7%	All Other Locations	11.3%
Total	100.0%	Total	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2022

Overall, approximately 1,000 workers are employed in Ridgway (Figure 5.34). The vast majority (about 860) are in-commuters, representing potential opportunities for

Ridgway to capture in its housing market. In contrast, nearly 400 Ridgway residents work elsewhere, indicating employment leakage for the Town.

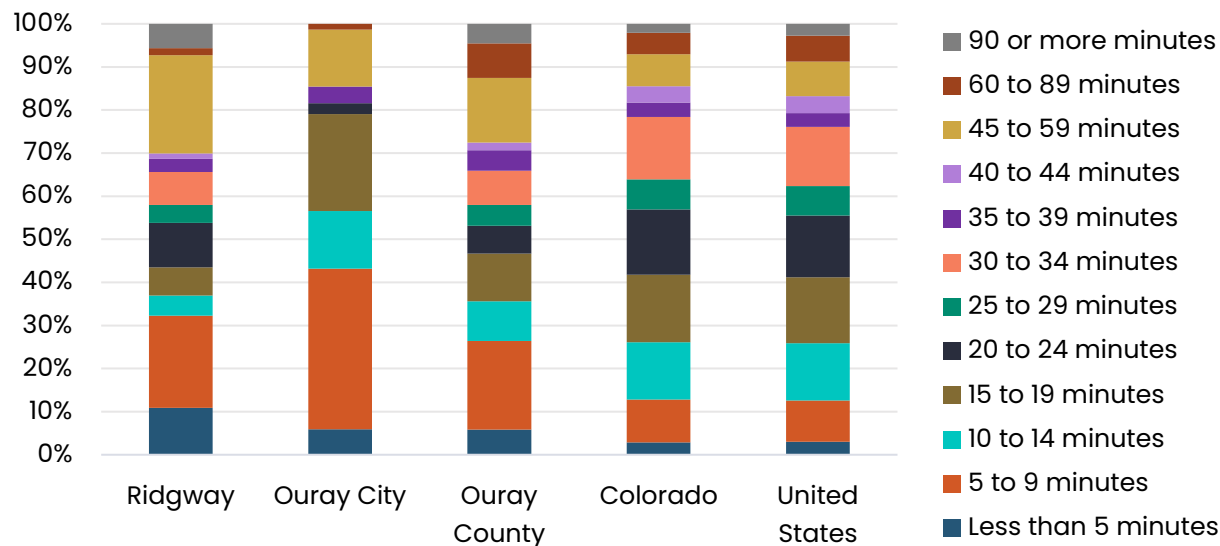
Figure 5.34: Commuter Inflow and Outflow from Ridgway, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2022

Figure 5.35 compares travel times to work for Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County with those of the state and nation. Ridgway and Ouray County have relatively large proportions of residents with 5 to 9-minute commutes, but overall, have longer average commute times than Colorado or the United States. Ridgway's average commute time is 31.4 minutes and Ouray County's is 28.9 minutes, compared to Colorado's 25.5 minutes and the United States' 26.6 minutes.

Figure 5.35: Travel Time to Work by Region, 2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B08012

A different commuting trend has emerged over the past five years: not commuting at all. Working from home (WFH) became a popular option in 2020 due to COVID-19 lockdowns, as companies sought to maintain productivity. Table 5.25 displays this trend from 2018 through 2023. In Ridgway, Colorado, and the United States, the share of WFH

workers has more than doubled. However, in Ouray County, it has only risen by a factor of 1.1.

Table 5.25: Work from Home Trends, 2018–2023

Region	% of Workers WFH, 2018	% of Workers WFH, 2023	Increase Factor
Ridgway	8.3%	20.8%	2.5
City of Ouray	9.9%	18.1%	1.8
Ouray County	14.7%	16.7%	1.1
Colorado	5.3%	18.8%	3.5
United States	4.9%	13.5%	2.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 and 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S0801

Financial Health Metrics

Household debt-to-income (DTI) is a key indicator of financial health. Monthly debt obligations can limit a household's discretionary spending for extended periods. When debt payments become difficult to manage relative to a household's income, families may choose to delay, substitute, or cancel spending on certain non-discretionary items. In short, households with high DTI ratios are more financially constrained and may require lower housing costs to stay afloat. They may also face restrictions on purchasing a home for an extended period.

One study found that households with higher DTI ratios before the 2008 financial crisis experienced steeper reductions in consumption and employment during the slow recovery that followed.³⁶ Therefore, a higher average DTI indicates potential extended hardship should another financial crisis occur.

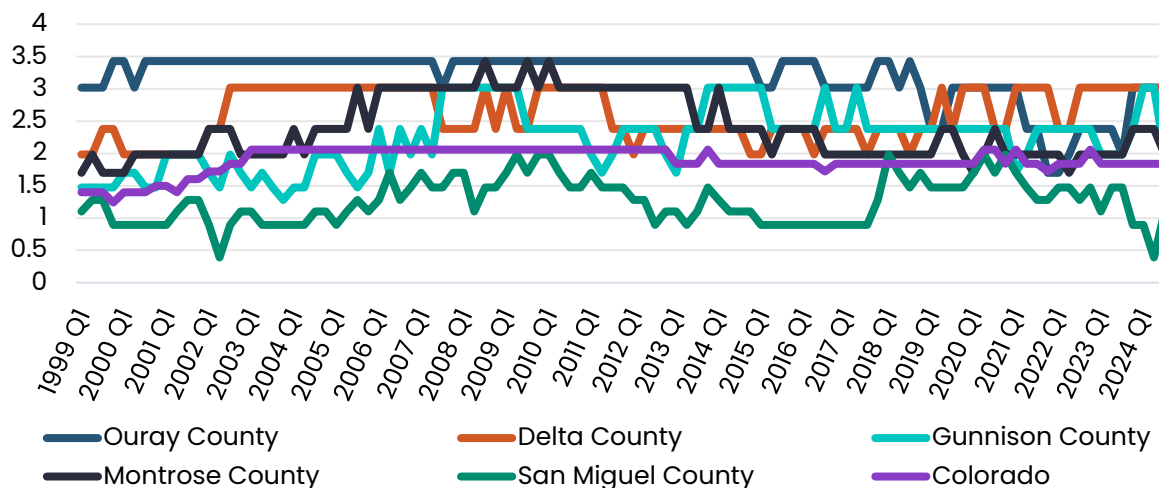
The Federal Reserve Board publishes historical household DTI ratios for every state and county, as well as major core-based statistical areas (CBSAs), using aggregated data from Equifax, the New York Federal Reserve's Consumer Credit Panel, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data reveal that regions and counties across the nation experienced varying magnitudes and paces of change in DTI ratios over the years, though the average DTI in Colorado has been mostly consistent since 2003.

Figure 5.36 displays the DTI ratios for Colorado and the Region 10 counties. Notably, Ouray County's average DTI ratio was on the higher end of Region 10 but has decreased

³⁶ Federal Reserve Board, FEDS Notes, January 11, 2018, "Household Debt-to-Income Ratios in the Enhanced Financial Accounts" by Michael Ahn, Mike Batty, and Ralf R. Meisenzahl.
<https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/household-debt-to-income-ratios-in-the-enhanced-financial-accounts-20180109.html#fig1a>.

since 2018. A lower DTI ratio relative to pre-2018 levels indicates that this metric may not currently play a significant role in households' ability to secure financing for homes.

Figure 5.36: Quarterly Debt-to-Income Ratios, 1999–2024

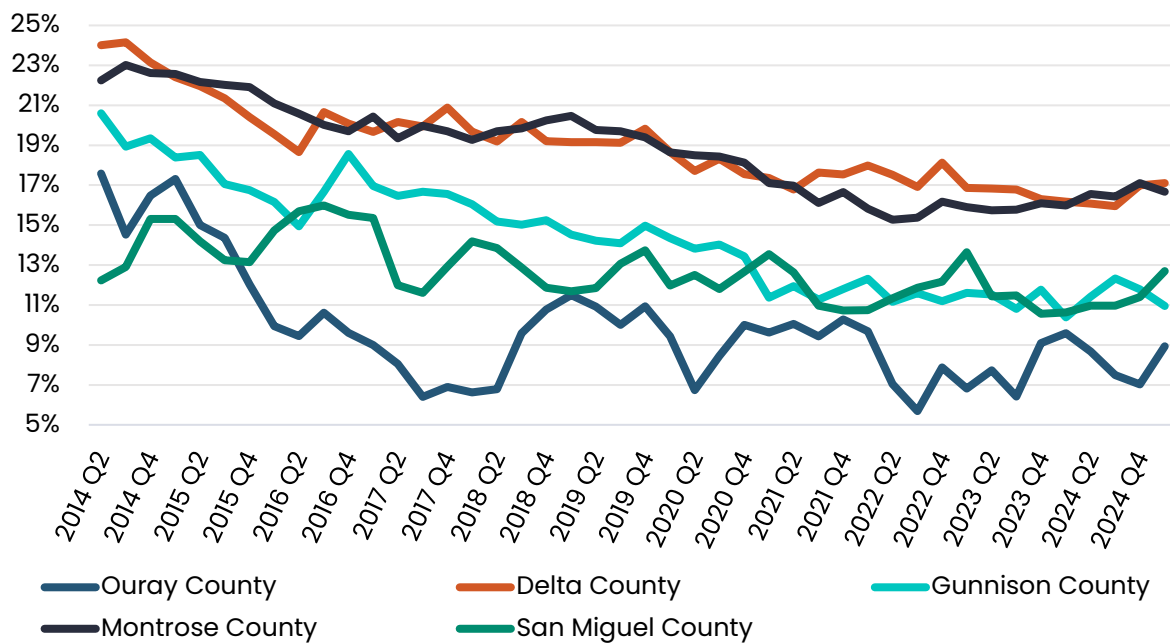


Source: Federal Reserve Board of New York Credit Panel/Equifax, June 2025

Access to credit plays a key role in measuring financial health and is often evaluated using credit scores. A “subprime” borrower is someone with a credit score between 580 and 619. Lenders typically offer subprime borrowers less favorable terms for revolving credit or loans. Equifax, one of the major consumer credit rating agencies, partners with the Federal Reserve to provide county-level data on the subprime portion of the population.

Fortunately, over the past 10 years, the percentage of the population with subprime credit scores has steadily declined in each county within R10. By this measure, Ouray County has performed the best among R10 counties, with just 8.9% of the population categorized as subprime as of Q3 2024 (Figure 5.37). This trend mirrors the findings from the DTI analysis above, suggesting that households in Ouray County may receive relatively favorable loan terms compared to those in nearby counties.

Figure 5.37: Quarterly Subprime Credit Population, 2014–2024



Source: Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED), Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

Data presented in Table 5.26 come from a 2022 study conducted by the Urban Institute, which reviewed the financial health of regions across the country.³⁷ A few of the key metrics included in the study are:

- The share of residents with delinquent debt
- The share of mortgage holders who have experienced a foreclosure in the past few years
- The Median credit score

As of 2022, the median credit score for the Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) encompassing Mesa (outside of Grand Junction), Montrose, Delta, San Miguel, and Ouray counties (PUMA 0801002) was 741, well above the national average. Additionally, only 17.3% of residents had delinquent debt, and just 0.2% of mortgage holders had experienced a foreclosure in recent years. These data suggest that households in the broader region are generally financially stable. However, it is important to note that this area covers a wide geographic range and may not fully reflect the financial conditions in Ouray County or the Town of Ridgway.

³⁷ "Financial Health and Wealth Dashboard," Zhong et al., Urban Institute 2022, Accessed November 25, 2025, <https://apps.urban.org/features/financial-health-wealth-dashboard/>.

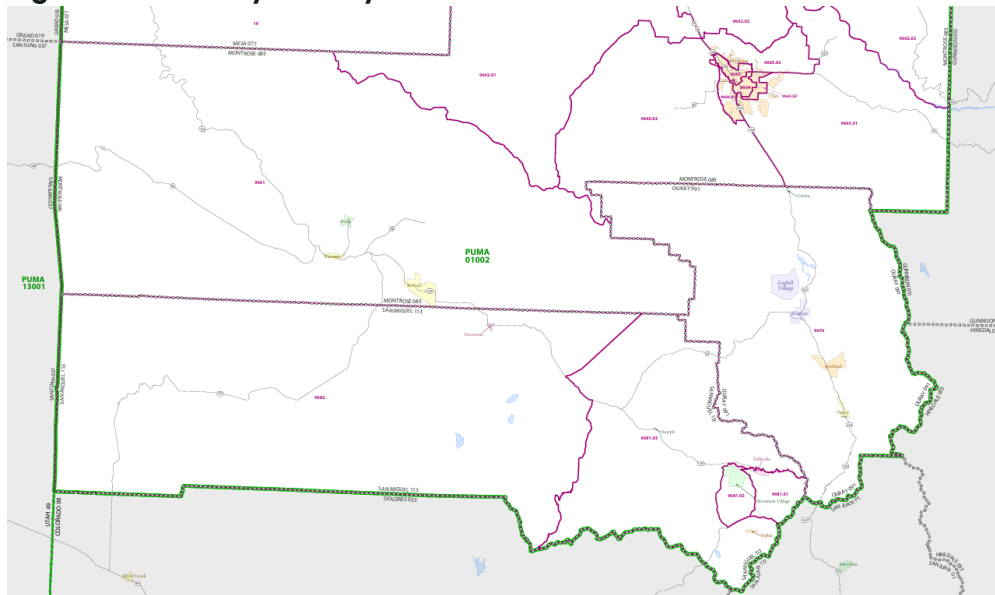
Table 5.26: Delinquent Debt, Past Foreclosures, and Median Credit Score, 2022

Region	Residents with delinquent debt	Mortgage holders with a foreclosure in past years	Median credit score
Mesa (Outside Grand Junction City), Montrose, Delta, San Miguel & Ouray Counties	17.3%	0.2%	741
Colorado	23.2%	0.1%	729
United States	31.5%	0.1%	692

Source: Urban Institute, Financial Health and Wealth Dashboard, 2022

Figure 5.38 illustrates the part of PUMA 081002 that includes Ouray County. As noted, this PUMA also encompasses Mesa County (all areas besides the City of Grand Junction), Montrose County, Delta County, and San Miguel County. PUMAs are meant to encompass geographic areas containing no fewer than 100,000 people. Rural PUMAs become large and include multiple counties to reach this population count.

Figure 5.38: Ouray County Part of PUMA 0801002



Source: 2010 Census Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) Reference Maps, Colorado

Displacement Risk

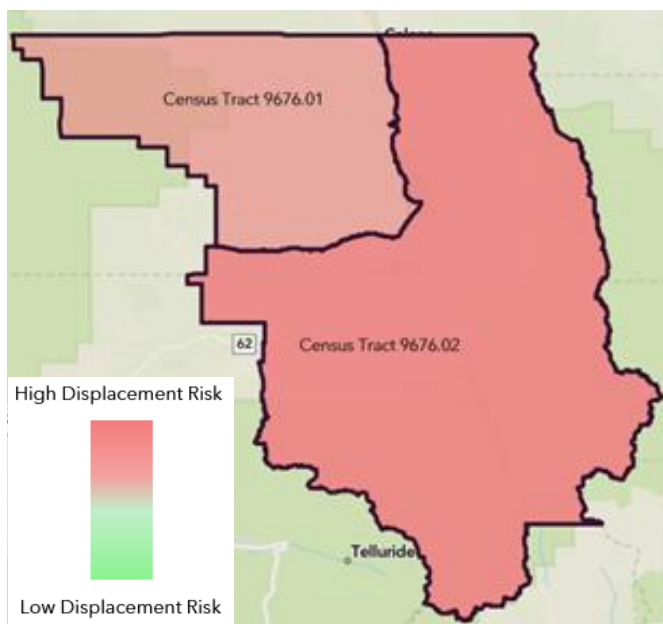
Another important element of the updated HNA Guidelines in Colorado is the evaluation of displacement risk across the study area, as required by the Colorado Revised Statutes, Section 24-32-3702(3). This analysis is essential in understanding housing needs and challenges across the study area, as it identifies populations most

vulnerable to severe housing challenges such as cost burdens, overcrowding, or housing instability caused by various factors.

Racial and ethnic disparities are a critical component of displacement risk. Minority groups are disproportionately affected, largely due to history of discrimination and systemic oppression in the United States. These disparities are often exacerbated in the aftermath of natural disasters, such as wildfires or floods.

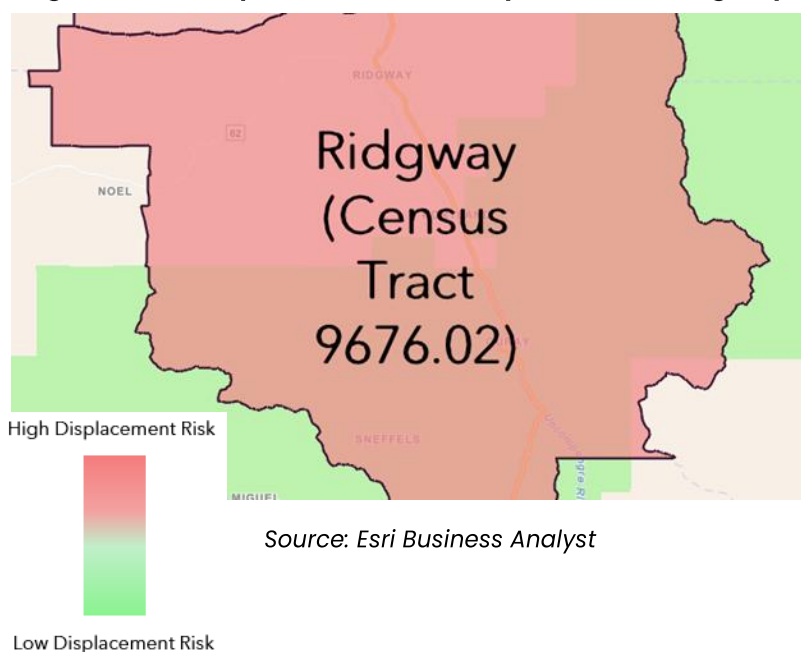
To assess displacement risks for residents across Ouray County, the PC team compiled a range of [metrics](#) for all census tracts within the County. We then compared these figures to national, state, county, and local averages. Based on these comparisons, each tract was assigned a displacement risk score ranging from 0 (least disadvantaged) to 100 (most disadvantaged).

Figure 5.39: Displacement Risks by Location, Ouray



Source: Esri Business Analyst

Figure 5.40: Displacement Risks by Location, Ridgway



Source: Esri Business Analyst

Ouray County showed mixed results in terms of displacement risks (Figure 5.39) The northern portion of the County is less disadvantaged compared to the other rural tracts.

The Town of Ridgway is part of Census Tract 9676.02. It has a higher index score of 62.5, indicating that the area has a higher risk of displacement than the northern region (Figure 5.40).

6. Housing Trends

Housing supply trends can be measured using metrics such as building permits, home values, and home sales data. These data come from various sources, each offering a different perspective on the area's housing market.

Building Types and Tenure

Table 6.1 and Figure 6.1 provide an overview of Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County's housing stock, alongside comparison data for Colorado and the United States. Detached single-family homes are the most common housing type across all observed geographies but are less prevalent in Ridgway and the City of Ouray, and more common in Ouray County. In fact, Ridgway and the City of Ouray each have over 20 percentage points fewer detached single-family homes compared to the County.

In Ridgway and Ouray County, the second most common housing type is five- to nine-unit multifamily structures. These comprise 19.9% of the City's housing stock and 8.0% of the County's housing stock. By contrast, in Colorado and the United States, the second-largest share of housing units are in buildings with 10 or more apartments. In the City of Ouray, the second most common housing type is two-unit buildings, which account for 16.2% of the housing stock. This is more than 12 percentage points higher than the County and well above the statewide and national shares.

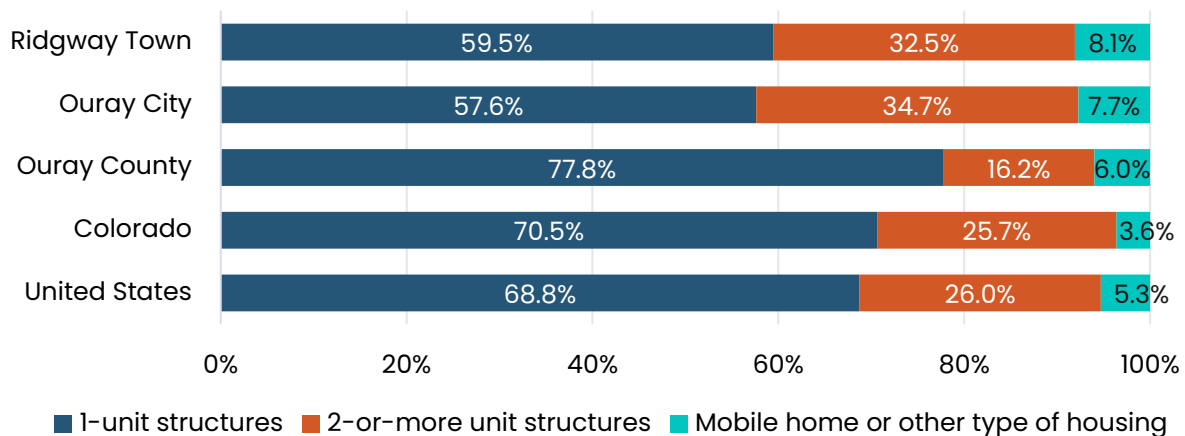
Table 6.1: Housing Stock by Type³⁸

Housing Type	Ridgway Town	City of Ouray	Ouray County	Colorado	United States
Occupied housing units	643	481	2,514	2.3M	127.5M
1-unit, detached	50.9%	52.8%	72.8%	62.9%	62.5%
1-unit, attached	8.6%	4.8%	5.0%	7.6%	6.3%
2 units	2.2%	16.2%	3.7%	1.4%	3.3%
3 or 4 units	9.3%	2.9%	2.9%	3.1%	4.2%
5 to 9 units	19.9%	8.7%	8.0%	4.3%	4.5%
10 or more units	1.1%	6.9%	1.6%	16.9%	14.0%
Mobile home or other type of housing	8.1%	7.7%	6.0%	3.6%	5.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S2504

³⁸ The housing types are defined in accordance with the Census Bureau's "units in structure." Which means data are presented in terms of the number of occupied housing units in structures of the specific size. The larger than anticipated percentage of units in five-to-nine-unit buildings is likely due to many mixed-use buildings in Ridgway, which host commercial or retail spaces on the first floor with multiple apartment-like units above.

Figure 6.1: Percent Housing by Type

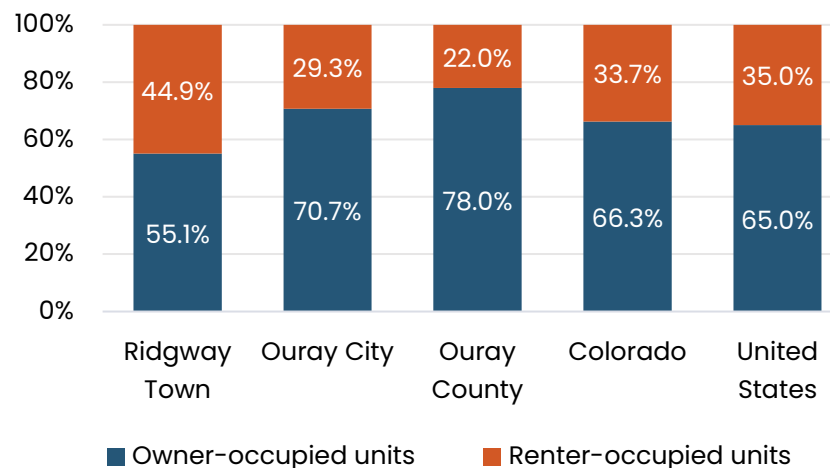


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S2504

Another way to analyze the housing supply is through examining owner- versus renter-occupancy. Figure 6.2 compares these rates across Ridgway, the City of Ouray, Ouray County, Colorado, and the United States. Ouray County and the City of Ouray have notably higher owner-occupancy rates (78.0% and 70.7%, respectively) while Ridgway's rate is much lower at 55.1%. In practical terms, about half of all homes in Ridgway are renter-occupied, compared to roughly one in four in the City of Ouray and Ouray County.

Statistics highlighted above show that Ridgway and the City of Ouray have relatively diverse housing stocks. This positions them for more flexible and potentially more inclusive growth in the future. Both communities are already accustomed to a mix of housing types, including higher-density options, rather than relying solely on single-

Figure 6.2: Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Homes



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S2504

family homes. In particular, Ridgway's higher share of renter-occupied housing means that renters make up a more significant portion of the community. This potentially gives them a stronger voice in local housing discussions and policy decisions.

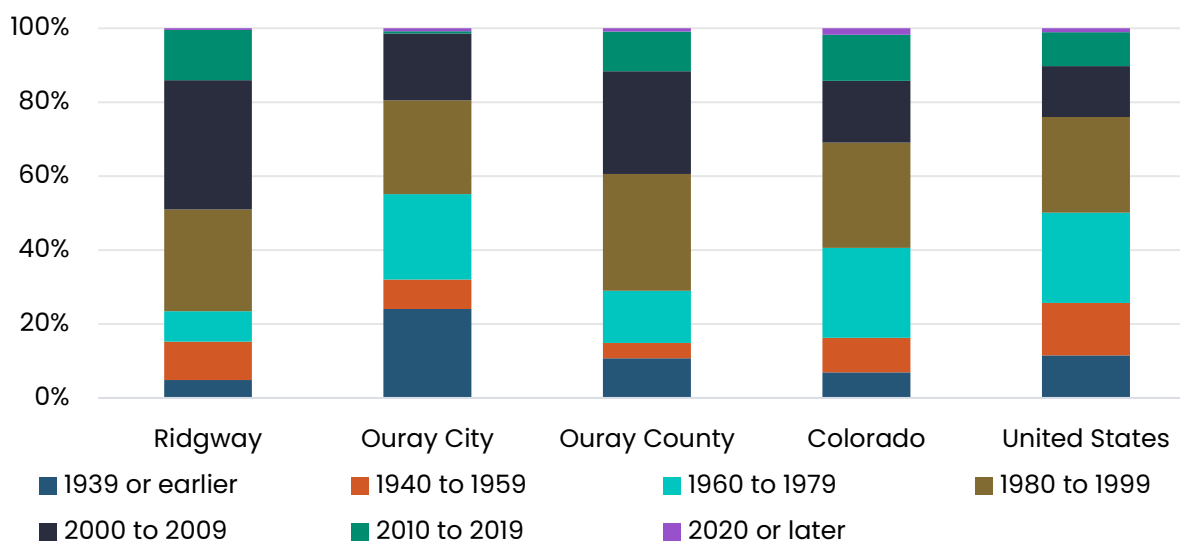
Housing Stock & Occupancy Rates

The age of a region's housing stock reveals both the physical condition of homes and their maintenance needs. Older homes require more upkeep, making housing age a key factor in long-term sustainability. As shown in Figure 6.3, these data reveal differences across the region.

Nationally, about half of all homes (49.9%) were built after 1980, providing a general benchmark. In Ridgway, more than three-quarters (76.5%) of all homes were built after 1980. This indicates Ridgway's housing stock is generally much newer than it is at the national level. In fact, about half of all homes in Ridgway (49.0%) were built after 2000. While these newer homes in Ridgway may require less upkeep, they are typically more expensive, and this contributes to affordability challenges.

The age of housing in the City of Ouray tells a much different story. Nearly one-quarter (24.1%) of all homes in Ouray were built prior to 1940. There is likely a sizable share of housing here that requires more intensive maintenance than in Ridgway. This is mostly due to the Victorian/mining-era homes that exist in the County near the City of Ouray from its mining past. In Colorado, housing tends to be older than in Ridgway, but newer than in the United States overall. Over half (59.4%) of housing units in Colorado were built after 1980.

Figure 6.3: Age of Housing Stock, 2023

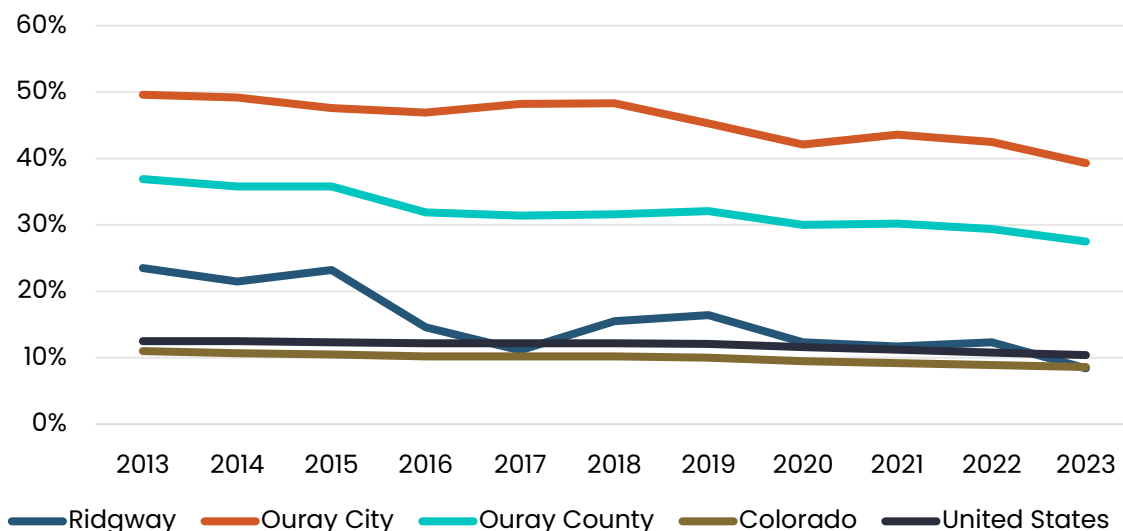


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S2504

Vacancy rates indicate the balance between supply and demand in a real estate market. As shown in Figure 6.4, vacancy rates have generally trended downward for Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County. As of 2020, Ridgway's vacancy rate was roughly in line with state and national levels. However, vacancy rates in the City of

Ouray and Ouray County have been much higher. As of 2023, the City of Ouray had a vacancy rate of 39.3% (more than four times greater than Ridgway). Ouray County, meanwhile, had a vacancy rate of 27.5% (about three times higher than Ridgway).

Figure 6.4: Vacancy Rates Over Time



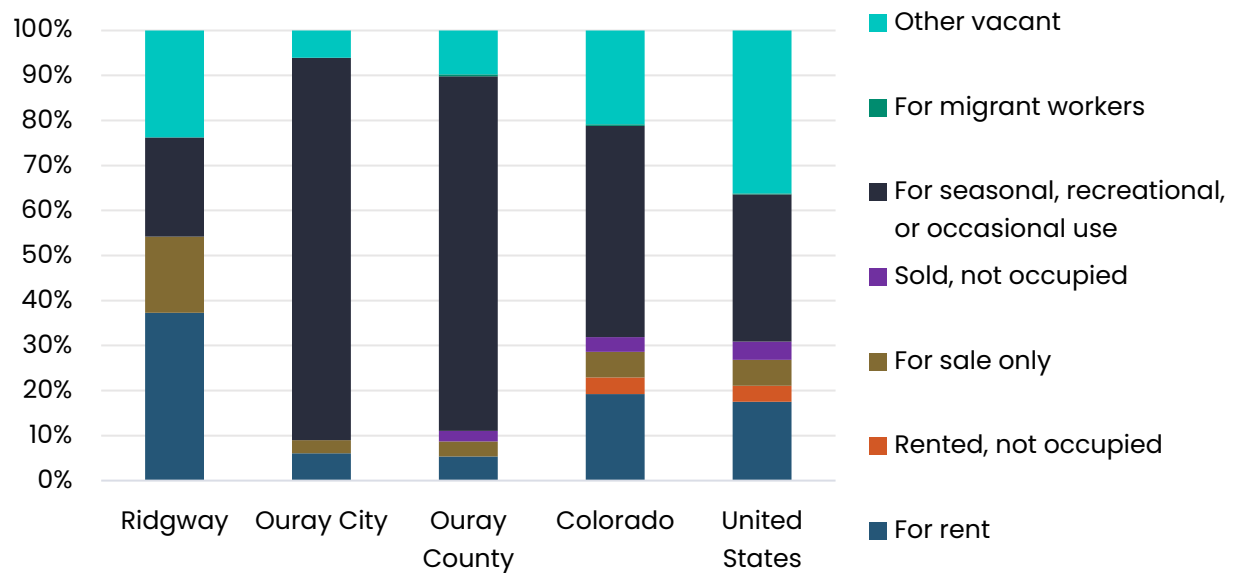
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year Estimates 2013–2023, DP04

There are various reasons for residential vacancies, each of which impacts the housing market differently. As shown in Figure 6.5, the leading cause of vacancy in the City of Ouray and Ouray County is units being reserved “for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.” Such units are generally referred to as short-term rentals (STRs).³⁹ By contrast, the primary reason for vacancy in Ridgway is units listed “for rent.”

While STRs account for some vacancies in Ridgway, the Town has enacted strict controls on them, limiting the number of operating licenses available. These regulations help reduce vacancy rates and ensure that housing units are available for residents and local workers. Such controls are likely a key reason why Ridgway’s vacancy rates align with state and national levels.

³⁹ More analysis on STRs [here](#).

Figure 6.5: Vacancy Status



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, B25004

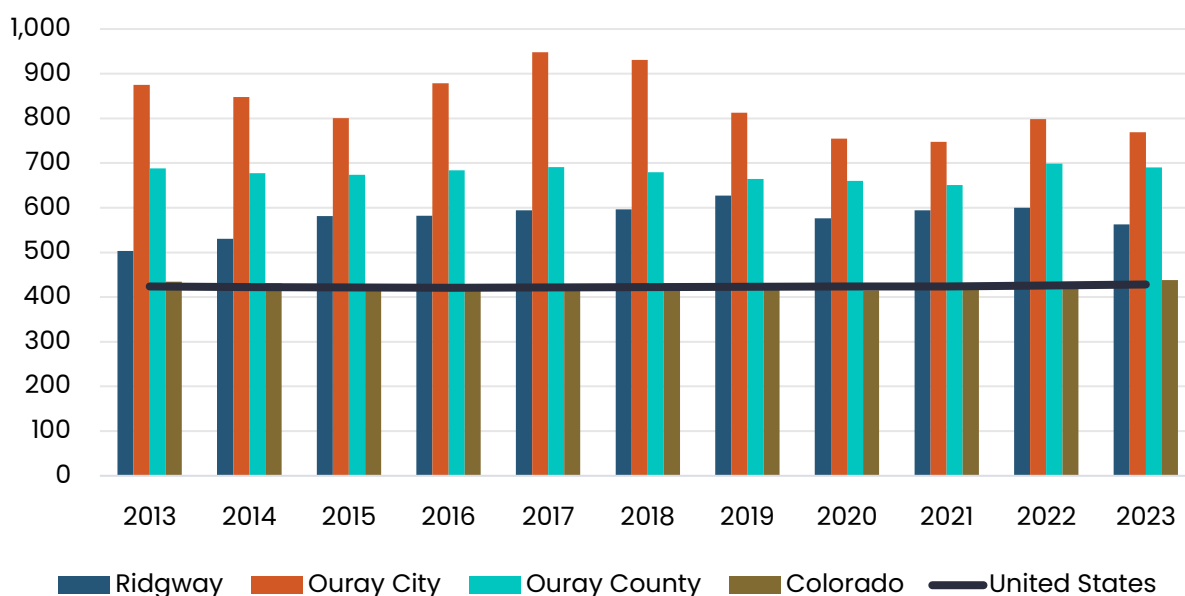
Residences to Employment Metrics

Statistics such as housing units per 1,000 residents can indicate the availability of housing supply. In Ridgway, this ratio increased from 2013 to 2019 but declined in subsequent years (Figure 6.6). The City of Ouray has shown more variability, with a decline from 2013 to 2015, a peak in 2017, and a general year-over-year decrease thereafter (except in 2022). Throughout this period, the City has consistently had the highest number of housing units per 1,000 residents. In contrast, Colorado and the United States have both remained relatively stable on this metric over the past decade.

At first glance, relatively high housing unit estimates per 1,000 residents may suggest ample housing availability. However, this metric reflects total housing units rather than occupied units. When accounting for the sizable share of homes used as STRs in the City of Ouray and the County, the effective number of housing units would be much lower (likely resembling Ridgway's estimates).

In Ridgway, estimates suggest relatively greater housing availability than at the state or national levels. There are about 550 housing units available for every 1,000 residents. However, depending on the average household size, these estimates could indicate a housing shortage.

Figure 6.6: Housing Units per 1,000 Residents, 2013–2023

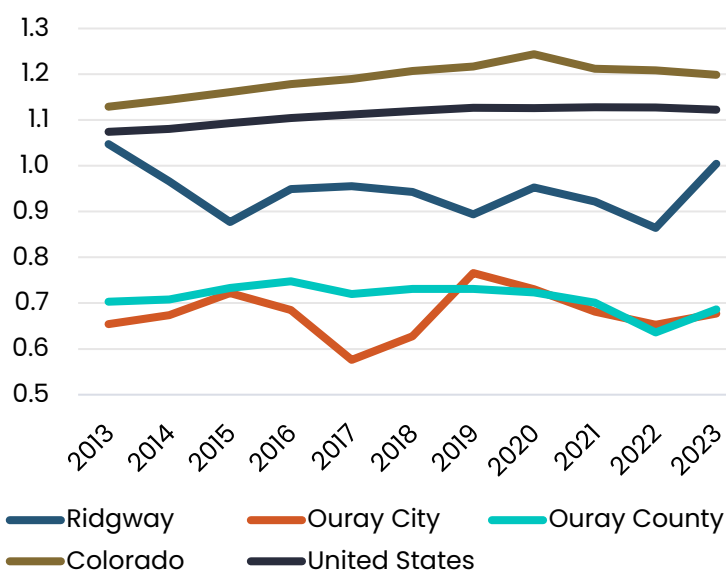


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2023 5-Year Estimates, Tables B25001 and DP05

The jobs-to-housing ratio is another helpful metric for assessing housing availability (Figure 6.7). In both Colorado and the United States, this ratio has remained above 1.0 since at least 2013, indicating that the number of jobs exceeds the number of housing units. This is a common sign of a housing shortage. In contrast, ratios in Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County have all remained below 1.0 since 2014.

As of 2023, Ridgway’s jobs-to-housing ratio has reached 1.0, placing the Town at the threshold of a relative housing shortage. Any increase in employment without a corresponding increase in housing will likely tip the Town into a shortfall. When adjusting for the number of housing units used as STRs, the City of Ouray and Ouray County may also meet or exceed this threshold. This would further indicate a broader need for additional housing across the region.

Figure 6.7: Jobs-to-Housing Ratio, 2013–2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Tables B25001 and DP03

Residential Density and Overcrowding

Table 6.2-Table 6.4 present residential occupancy trends in Ridgway and Ouray County for 2022 and 2023. Overall, most residents live in homes with at least one room per person. However, Ridgway saw a notable increase in the number of households with 2.01 or more occupants per room. This figure rose from zero in 2022 to 23 in 2023, while the number of households with more than one room per person either declined or remained unchanged.

In the City of Ouray, renter-occupancy increased by 14.6%. This is a much larger change than the less than 1% increase in owner-occupancy and suggests a possible shift toward rental residency. The shift could reflect the high cost of homeownership in the area. In contrast, renter-occupied units in Ouray County decreased by 3.2%, and Ridgway, renter-occupancy increased at only half the rate of owner-occupancy.

Overall, the number of occupied housing units increased throughout Ouray County between 2022 and 2023. This includes increases in both owner- and renter-occupied units in Ridgway and the City of Ouray, as well as an increase in owner-occupied units alongside a decrease in renter-occupied units in the County as a whole.

Table 6.2: Residence by Occupants per Room in Ridgway

Occupancy	2022	2023	Change	% Change
Total Occupied Housing Units	575	643	68	11.8%
Owner Occupied	306	354	48	15.7%
0.50 or less occupants per room	259	277	18	6.9%
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	44	52	8	18.2%
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	3	2	(1)	(33.3%)
1.51 to 2.00 occupants per room	0	0	0	N/A
2.01 or more occupants per room	0	23	23	N/A
Renter occupied	269	289	20	7.4%
0.50 or less occupants per room	230	236	6	2.6%
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	31	41	10	32.3%
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	8	12	4	50.0%
1.51 to 2.00 occupants per room	0	0	0	N/A
2.01 or more occupants per room	0	0	0	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 and 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B25014

Table 6.3: Residence by Occupants per Room in the City of Ouray

Occupancy	2022	2023	Change	% Change
Total Occupied Housing Units	462	481	19	4.1%
Owner occupied	339	340	1	0.3%
0.50 or less occupants per room	300	296	(4)	(1.3%)
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	31	35	4	12.9%

1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	0	0	0	N/A
1.51 to 2.00 occupants per room	8	9	1	12.5%
2.01 or more occupants per room	0	0	0	N/A
Renter occupied:	123	141	18	14.6%
0.50 or less occupants per room	73	95	22	30.1%
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	50	46	(4)	(8.0%)
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	0	0	0	N/A
1.51 to 2.00 occupants per room	0	0	0	N/A
2.01 or more occupants per room	0	0	0	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 and 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B25014

Table 6.4: Residence by Occupants per Room in Ouray County

Occupancy	2022	2023	Change	% Change
Total Occupied Housing Units	2,435	2,514	79	3.2%
Owner Occupied	1,864	1,961	97	5.2%
0.50 or less occupants per room	1,643	1,724	81	4.9%
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	181	177	(4)	(2.2%)
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	19	17	(2)	(10.5%)
1.51 to 2.00 occupants per room	17	17	0	0.0%
2.01 or more occupants per room	4	26	22	550.0%
Renter occupied	571	553	(18)	(3.2%)
0.50 or less occupants per room	456	427	(29)	(6.4%)
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	107	114	7	6.5%
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	8	12	4	50.0%
1.51 to 2.00 occupants per room	0	0	0	N/A
2.01 or more occupants per room	0	0	0	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 and 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B25014

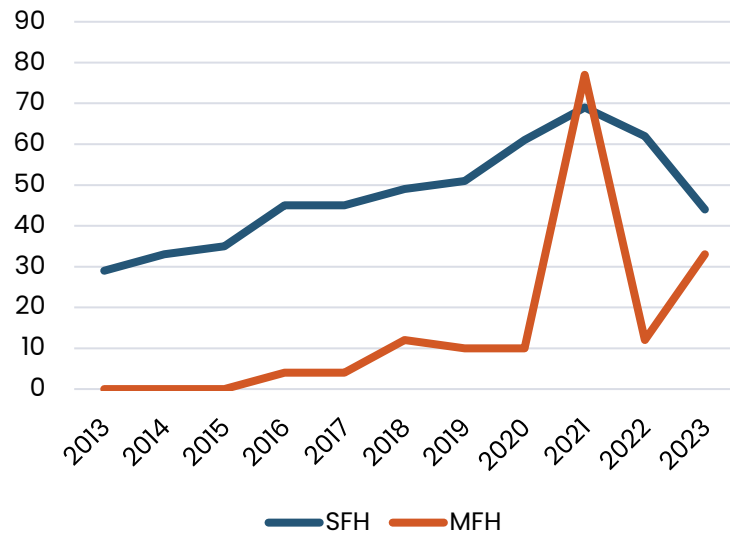
New Housing Production

Housing market outcomes depend on the interaction between housing supply and demand, with building trends and production serving as key drivers of supply. When supply fails to keep pace with growing demand, housing prices inevitably rise. Analyzing building permitting in the County and the Town can give insight into new housing production and how it may or may not be keeping pace with demand.

Figure 6.8 shows housing permits in Ouray County from 2013 to 2023. Overall, the number of multifamily housing (MFH) permits being issued has remained relatively low while single-family home (SFH) permits have steadily increased (with the exception of a slowdown occurring between 2021 and 2023). MFH permits began to increase in 2016, with 77 units receiving approved permits at the peak in 2021.

Permitting trends in Town are slightly different from the County, as shown in Figure 6.9. The figure displays building permits by type in Ridgway from 2000 through 2024, excluding permits for “tenant improvements.” Since 2000, the Town has approved 574 residential building permits, compared to 206 commercial permits, and just 15 mixed use permits. In 2005, the Town approved the maximum number of residential permits throughout this period at 53. The Great Recession resulted in significantly lower levels of residential permitting, before rising again to 32 units in 2016.

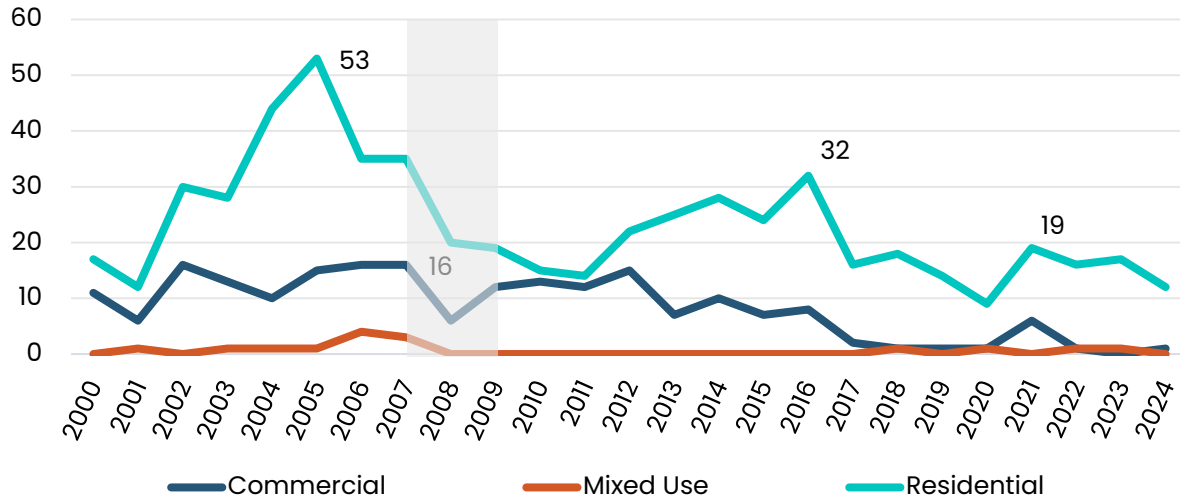
Figure 6.8: Single-Family and Multi-Family Housing Permits in Ouray County, 2013–2023



Source: U.S. Department of HUD, State of the Cities Data Systems⁴⁰

⁴⁰ State of the Cities Data Systems (SOCDS), <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/socds.html>.

Figure 6.9: Building Permits by Type in Ridgway, 2000–2024⁴¹



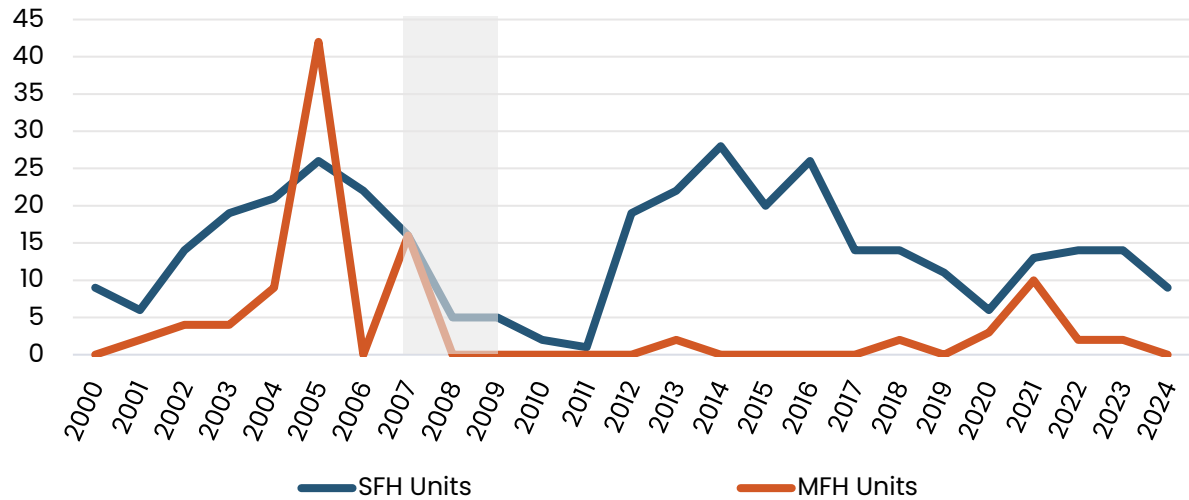
Source: Town of Ridgway Planning Department, 2025

SFH and MFH residential units permitted in Ridgway from 2000 through 2024 are displayed in Figure 6.10. For multi-family, we used a broad definition, including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhomes, and condominiums. We essentially categorized anything beyond a single-family dwelling as multi-family. In the period, 2005, 2007, and 2021 saw noticeable increases in multi-family units being permitted. But lower numbers of permitted multi-family units throughout the rest of the period show mostly single-family units being permitted and therefore built. Single-family units are typically the most expensive kind of housing units, and can contribute to higher average housing costs.

⁴¹ Shaded grey bars on Figure 6.9 through New residential permits by zone in the Town of Ridgway since 2000 are shown in Figure 6.11. The Low Density Residential (R) district and Historic Residential (HR) district have seen the highest number of new residential permits throughout the period, at 325 and 173 respectively. However, the General Commercial (GC) district has seen an uptick in the last two years, with seven and eight in 2023 and 2024.

Figure 6.11 indicate the years of the Great Recession.

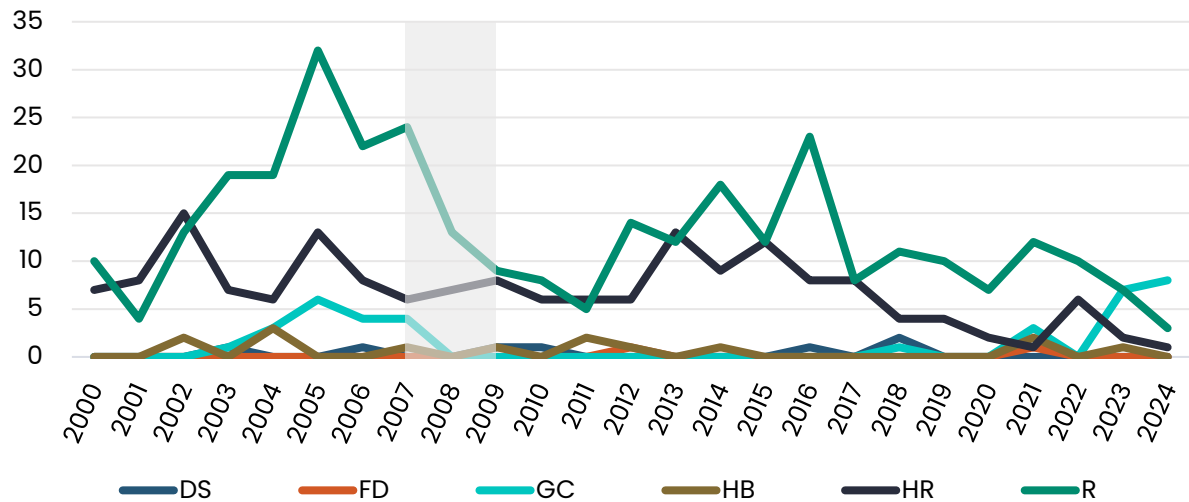
Figure 6.10: New Single-Family and Multi-Family Unit Permitting, Ridgway, 2000–2024



Source: Town of Ridgway Planning Department, 2025

New residential permits by zone in the Town of Ridgway since 2000 are shown in Figure 6.11. The Low Density Residential (R) district and Historic Residential (HR) district have seen the highest number of new residential permits throughout the period, at 325 and 173 respectively. However, the General Commercial (GC) district has seen an uptick in the last two years, with seven and eight in 2023 and 2024.

Figure 6.11: New Residential Permitting by Zone in Ridgway, 2000–2024



Source: Town of Ridgway Planning Department, 2025

Table 6.5 reports the trends of new residential permits by zone in Ridgway since 2000. The R district has remained the dominant zone for new residential permits, and the HR

district saw the second highest percentage of new residential permits from 2000–2024, and 2014–2024. However, the GC district had the second highest percentage of new residential permits from 2019–2024. Because of the recent popularity of the GC district, it represents an opportunity for the Town to increase allowances to incentivize further development.

Table 6.5: New Residential Permitting by Zone Trends, Ridgway, 2000–2024

Zone	2000–2024	2014–2024	2019–2024
DS – Downtown Service	1.3%	1.5%	0.0%
FD – Future Development	0.4%	0.5%	1.1%
GC – General Commercial	6.6%	9.3%	20.7%
HB – Historic Business	2.5%	2.0%	3.4%
HR – Historic Residential	31.0%	27.8%	18.4%
R – Low Density Residential	58.2%	59.0%	56.3%

Source: Town of Ridgway Planning Department, 2025

Recent and Planned Developments

Recent and planned developments can shed light on current levels of housing demand, but also how housing supply is changing in the short run. Additionally, these developments represent housing units that are not or may not be captured in housing unit estimates from our open-source databases. They may not be captured because data releases are often lagged by at least one year and sometimes more.

If several developments are planned, then local housing demand may be relatively strong. If there are no recent or planned developments, then housing demand may be weak or there could be other factors prohibiting new housing. In the case of the Town of Ridgway and Ouray County, there are a litany of projects that are recent and planned.

Town of Ridgway

With six recent and planned developments, the Town of Ridgway is expecting just over 100 new units in the next few years. Including planned ADUs and assuming one home per lot in the below developments, 102 units could be planned for. Riverfront Village represents the largest planned development at 34 units.

Lena Street Commons: The Lena Street Commons is a phased construction development in which one of three phases is completed. The first phase included 10 townhome units which are existing and occupied. This development will include a commercial space along with nine more townhome units. Three of the nine additional units will have AMI limits as well.

Riverfront Village: The Riverfront Village development is relatively large at 34 units. At the time of our assessment, the units are expected to come online soon as they are now

completed and are obtaining Certificates of Occupancy. Town of Ridgway staff indicate that the 34-unit project will range from one-bedroom condominiums to three-bedroom duplexes. Three units will be deed restricted to serve as workforce housing.

RidgSix: Less information is available for the RidgSix development. At the time of our assessment, the Final Plat approval has been granted and is set to include six townhomes. However, no building permit applications have been submitted yet.

Haaland-Ballantyne: A smaller development, the Haaland-Ballantyne project has a two-lot residential subdivision granted. Building permit applications are expected to be submitted any time during our assessment. The applications are expected to include a primary residence and an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) at each lot. Including the ADUs, the development may have a maximum of four units.

The Preserve: The Preserve is a planned development expected for a few years after our assessment. The Conditional Preliminary Plat is approved, but is “years out from Final Plat.” The development will consist of approximately 25 residential lots when completed.

Vista Park Commons: The Vista Park Commons is both a recent and a planned residential development as each unit is at a various stage of construction. The tiny home community will feature a total of 23 units. At the time of our assessment, Vista Park has six Certificates of Occupancy. The development also features shared parking, an HOA, and a community center.

The Vista Park Commons development is anticipated to produce housing that is relatively more affordable than other single-family homes in the region. Only two of the units are deed restricted to serve a specific AMI limit, however.

Unincorporated Ouray County

About 19 new lots are expected from planned developments throughout the County in the next few years. One unit per lot is expected, however each lot could accommodate ADUs as well. If the lot is less than three acres, then an 800-square-foot ADU could be permitted. If the lot is three acres or more, then an ADU could be up to 1,200 square feet. So, between 19 and 38 new units (including ADUs) could come online in the next few years.

Mountain Vistas Planned Unit Development (PUD): The Mountain Vistas PUD is located at CR22 & CR22B. The development is nearly completed and has six total lots.

Cimarron Ridge PUD: This PUD is located in Loghill Village between Pointe Escape Way and Bristle Cone. Cimarron Ridge will also include six total lots and has a sketch planning forthcoming at the time of our assessment.

Meadowview Limited PUD: Meadowview Limited is located on Ponderosa & Waterview Ln. The development is nearly completed and will have three total lots.

Deer Haven Limited PUD: Deer Haven is located on CR22 & Grizzley Bear Rd. This limited PUD will have two total lots. The development status is noted as Preliminary/Final Development Plan.

Croke Regular PUD: Croke will be located along CR22 and will have two total lots. The sketch plan has been completed for this PUD.

Home Value Trends

Housing discussions often focus on central estimates like averages and medians, which can obscure the full distribution of housing values and lead to missed insights. To provide a clearer picture, the tables and figures below highlight key real estate market metrics for Ridgway and the City of Ouray in comparison to other regions in recent years.

In both Ridgway and the City of Ouray, the largest share of owner-occupied homes falls within the \$500K-\$749K range (Table 6.6). This is also the largest share at both the state and the national levels; however, the second- and third-largest shares differ. In Ridgway the largest share is closely followed by homes in the \$1M-\$1.5M range and \$1.5M-\$2M ranges. In the City of Ouray, the next-largest categories are \$750K-\$1M and \$300K-\$399K.

Table 6.6: Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Value and Median Home Values, 2024

Home Value	Ridgway	City of Ouray	Ouray County	Colorado	U.S.
# Owner-Occupied Units	402	303	1,884	1.5M	88.3M
<\$50,000	0.0%	1.0%	0.7%	2.5%	3.3%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	0.7%	2.3%	0.8%	1.6%	3.5%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	0.0%	2.6%	0.7%	1.2%	3.7%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	1.8%	5.5%
\$200,000 - \$249,999	1.5%	3.0%	1.4%	2.5%	6.9%
\$250,000 - \$299,999	1.2%	0.3%	1.3%	3.2%	7.9%
\$300,000 - \$399,999	7.7%	13.5%	9.4%	10.0%	16.5%
\$400,000 - \$499,999	4.0%	9.9%	8.0%	15.5%	13.7%
\$500,000 - \$749,999	21.6%	32.3%	31.0%	35.3%	20.4%
\$750,000 - \$999,999	18.9%	14.2%	18.6%	15.1%	9.3%
\$1,000,000 - \$1,499,999	20.9%	8.6%	14.7%	7.0%	5.0%
\$1,500,000 - \$1,999,999	20.4%	4.0%	9.5%	2.1%	2.0%
\$2,000,000 +	3.0%	7.9%	3.7%	2.2%	2.3%
Median Home Value	\$762,332	\$628,472	\$721,747	\$582,777	\$355,577

Average Home Value	\$1,038,246	\$786,469	\$867,436	\$651,480	\$533,563
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Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Single-Family Home Value Trends

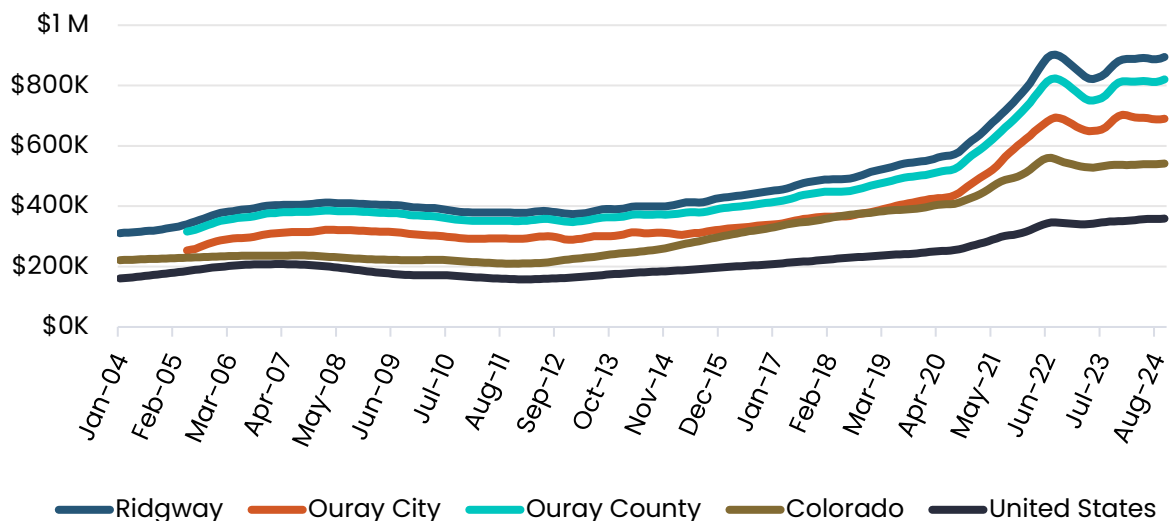
Figure 6.12 and Table 6.7 present the Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI) and its changes over time. Unlike median and average home values reported by the Census Bureau, the ZHVI represents the value of a “typical” home. Specifically, homes within the 35th to 65th percentile range. This distinction makes the ZHVI particularly useful, as it accounts for home values beyond just those currently being bought and sold.

PC compared home values in Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County to those in Colorado and the United States to understand how Ouray County compares to state and national averages. Following the Great Recession, home values declined from roughly 2009 to 2012. Since then, housing prices across the board have grown. This growth has been especially prominent in Ouray County, where values peaked in 2022 at \$824,000 for the County and \$903,000 for Ridgway.

In Colorado and across the United States, home values rose steadily from 2012 to 2020. However, the COVID-19 pandemic (coupled with policy decisions in 2020–2021 and historically low interest rates) accelerated these trends and led to unprecedented home value appreciation nationwide. Changing homeowner preferences also played a key role, as many opted to upgrade their homes when opportunities for work, recreation, and socializing became more limited.

Despite the surge in home prices and rapid growth during the post pandemic years, values have largely stagnated since mid-2022. In Ridgway and Ouray County, this meant a peak in 2022, followed by a dip and then a leveling off over the past year. Ridgway homes have consistently been valued higher than those in any other comparison region, followed by homes in Ouray County. As of 2024, Ridgway homes are valued at \$894,000 and Ouray County homes at \$820,000. These figures are both more than double the U.S. ZHVI of \$359,000 and higher than Colorado’s ZHVI of \$541,000.

Figure 6.12: Single-Family Home Zillow Home Value Index, 2004–2024



Source: ZHVI, 2024⁴²

Table 6.7 presents dollar growth rates over the past 12 months (using October 2024 as the reference point), along with CAGR over the last three, five, and 10 years.

Table 6.7: Home Value Growth, 2014–2024

Region	ZHVI	Dollar Growth Past 12 Months	10-Yr CAGR	5-Yr CAGR	3-Yr CAGR
Ridgway	\$894,268	\$23,487	8.4%	10.4%	6.3%
City of Ouray	\$689,775	\$438	8.2%	10.8%	5.5%
Ouray County	\$819,901	\$20,322	8.2%	10.5%	6.1%
Colorado	\$541,072	\$4,048	7.7%	6.7%	3.1%
United States	\$359,099	\$9,095	6.9%	8.1%	5.5%

Source: ZHVI, October 2024

In terms of dollar value, Ridgway experienced the most growth, with home values increasing by \$23,000 in the past year. When comparing growth rates, Ridgway ranks highest over the past three and 10 years, while the City of Ouray leads over the past five years. Over the five- and ten-year periods, Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County all show similar growth rates (within half a percentage point of each other) and all significantly outpace state and national rates.

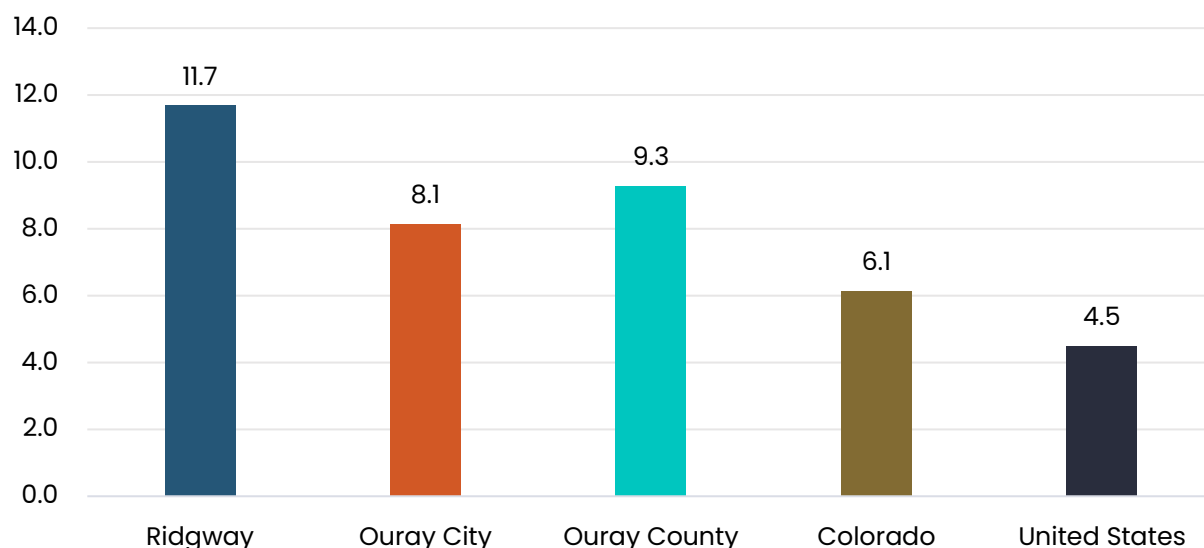
The ratio of median home value to median household income is a key indicator of housing affordability, revealing the relative cost of living in different markets. The higher this ratio, the less affordable housing is in a given region. Figure 6.13 shows that

⁴² Zillow Housing Data, <https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>.

Ridgway's ratio is higher than those of Ouray County, Colorado, and the United States. The City of Ouray's ratio is lower than Ouray County's but still higher than the state and national figures. This further emphasizes the housing affordability challenges facing Ridgway and Ouray County.

This ratio illustrates how many years of income a typical household would need to purchase a median-priced home if paying in cash, without financing. In Ridgway, a typical household would need to spend over 11 times its annual income—compared to just four and a half times for the median U.S. household.

Figure 6.13: Median Home Value to Median Household Income Ratio, 2024



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Figure 6.14 illustrates the varying rates of change in median incomes, home values, and rents between 2013 and 2023. The Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) House Price Index (HPI) provides a comprehensive measure of home value trends.⁴³ Based on mortgage data from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac dating back to 1970s, the index tracks changes in both sales prices and refinance values for the same homes over time.

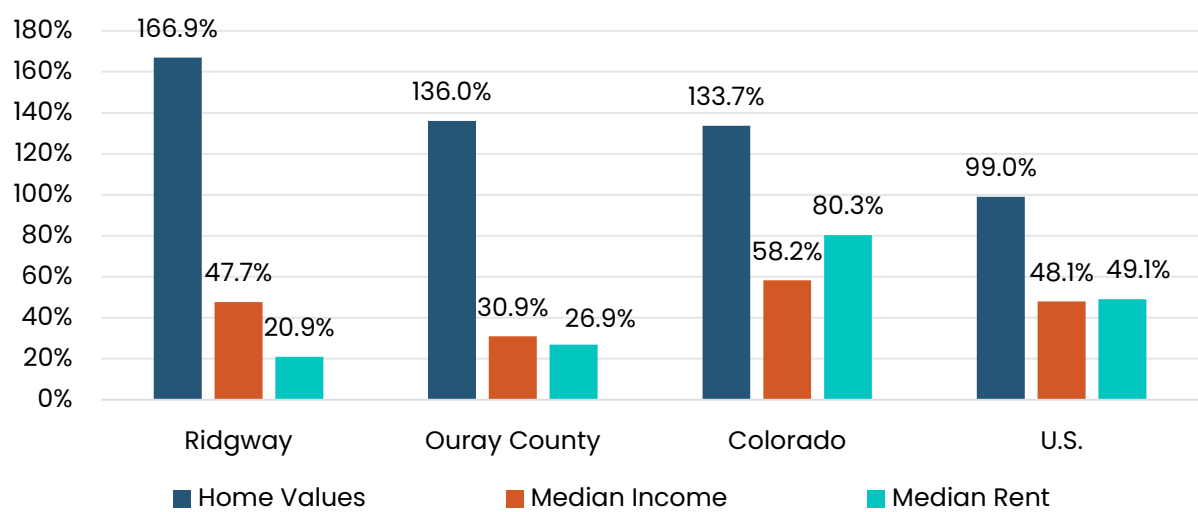
This comparative analysis offers valuable insights into the impact of home price inflation across different regions. In Ridgway, home values have appreciated by 166.9% over the past decade. When compared to median income gains (just 47.7% over the same period) this means that home prices have risen three and a half times faster than incomes.

⁴³ FHFA House Price Index, <https://www.fhfa.gov/data/hpi>.

Due to slower income growth in Ouray County overall, home price appreciation there has outpaced income gains by a factor of 4.4. In contrast, greater income gains at the state level and slower home appreciation at the national level have helped moderate affordability pressures in Colorado and the United States compared to Ridgway and Ouray County.

A growing gap between home price appreciation and income growth signals a rising barrier to homeownership. In Ouray County, this trend has made it increasingly difficult for new buyers to enter the housing market. Additionally, households that purchased homes when interest rates were lower may now find it challenging to move. This further limits housing, economic, and geographic mobility.

Figure 6.14: Percent Change in Home Values, Median Incomes, & Median Rents, 2013–2023

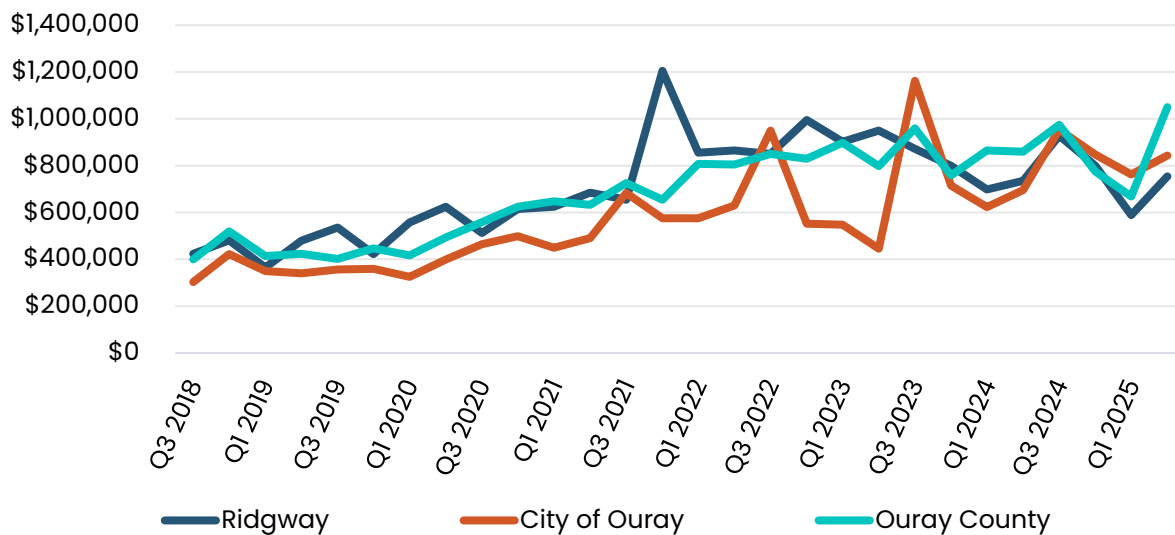


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Tables DP03 and DP04, FHFA Home Price Index

Trends of Homes on the Market

Median price trends of homes sold in Ridgway, City of Ouray, and Ouray County are displayed in Figure 6.15. As of Q2 2025, the median home in Ouray County sold for over \$1M. This is a 162.7% increase since Q3 2018. For Ridgway and the City of Ouray the median price in Q2 2025 is lower, however, each have had peaks that are higher than the median price in the County. Ridgway specifically had a median sale price of \$754K in Q2 2025, an increase of 77.8% since Q3 2018, and peaked in Q4 2021 at \$1.2M.

Figure 6.15: Median Quarterly Home Sale Price Ridgway and Ouray County, 2018–2025

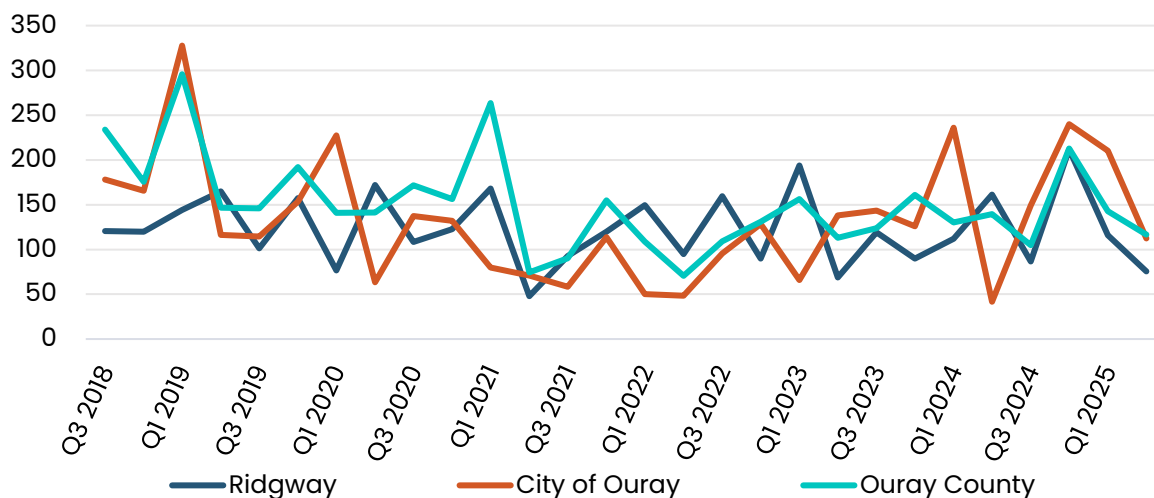


Source: CREN Integrated Solutions, Multiple Listing Service Data

Average days on market (DOM) and total home sales are shown in Figure 6.16 and Figure 6.17. These two metrics tend to have a slightly inverse relationship. When DOM decreases, home sales typically increase, and vice versa. Together they provide insight into market conditions, indicating whether the housing market is heating up or cooling down.

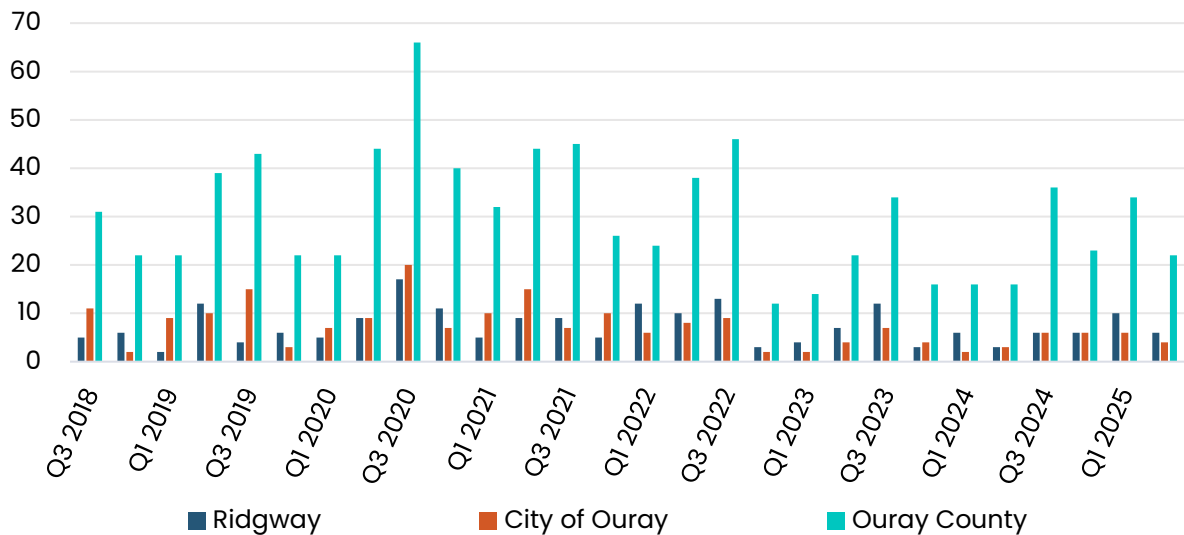
From 2020 to 2021 the housing market showed signs of speeding up, with total sales increasing and days on the market decreasing. Since then, both metrics have fluctuated but the overall trend has stayed consistent.

Figure 6.16: Quarterly Average Days on Market, 2018–2025



Source: CREN Integrated Solutions, Multiple Listing Service Data

Figure 6.17: Total Home Sales, 2018–2025

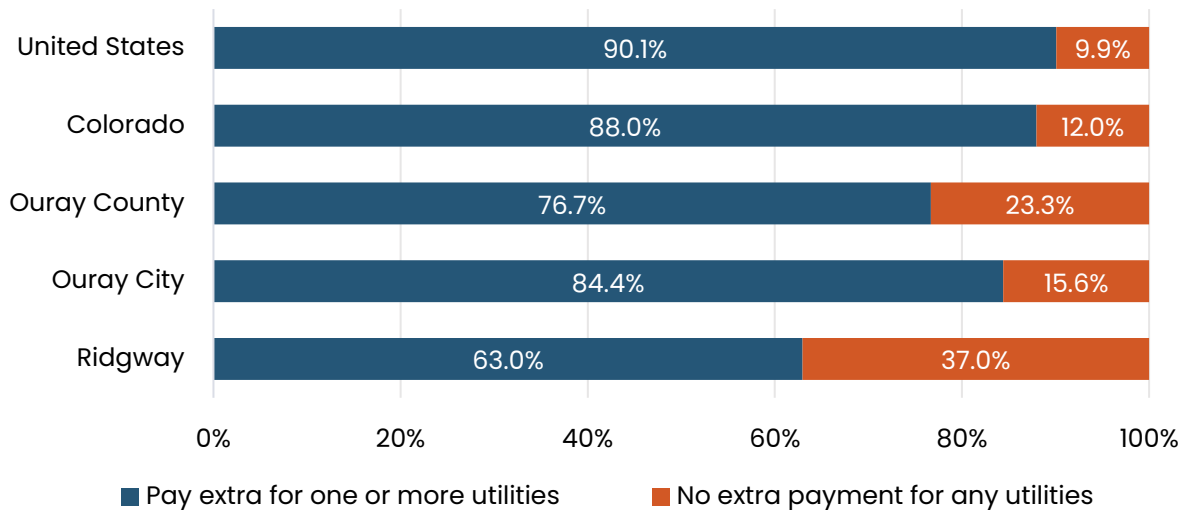


Source: CREN Integrated Solutions, Multiple Listing Service Data

Household Utility Burden

Utility costs can place a great burden on households, whether they rent or own. Many renters pay for one or more utilities separately from their rent. As shown in Figure 6.18, the proportion of households in Ridgway and Ouray County paying extra for utilities is lower than the state and national levels. However, even when utilities are included in rent, renters still cover the cost indirectly. This potentially pushes the effective burden higher than the reported figures suggest.

Figure 6.18: Renter-Occupied Homes that Pay Extra Utilities, 2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B25069

Measuring the relationship between income and utility costs provides a more accurate assessment of the financial burden on households. Table 6.8 and Figure 6.19 illustrate household energy and transportation costs in Ouray County, as measured by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).⁴⁴

In terms of housing energy burden, Ouray County falls into the medium range compared to the national average, with households spending 4.2% of their income on energy costs. This metric includes the costs of electricity, gas, and other fuels such as oil and wood.

Ouray County also ranks in the medium range for transportation burden at 4.1%. This measure accounts for annual household miles traveled, stock-weighted fuel efficiency (miles per gallon), and fuel prices.

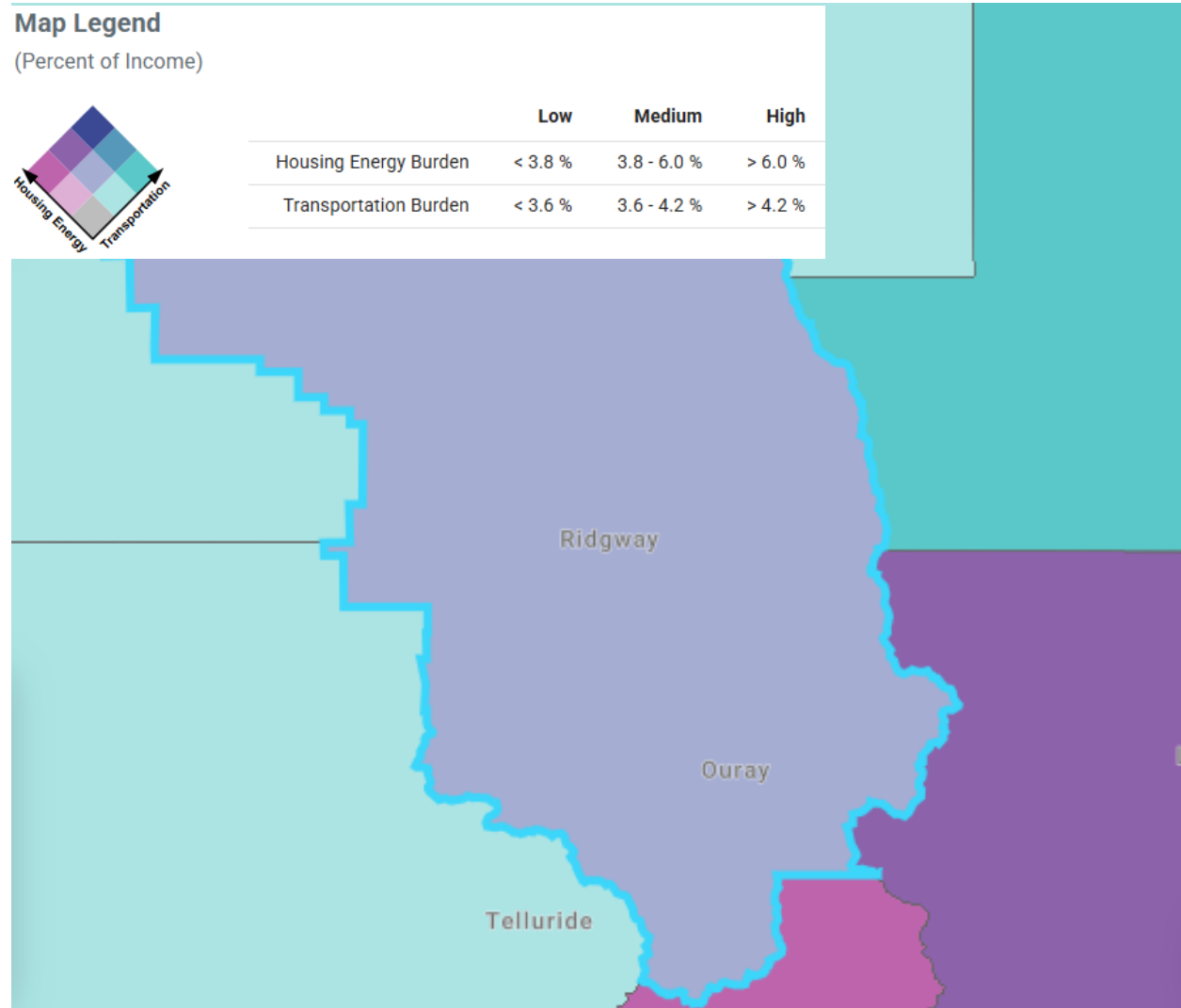
Table 6.8: Ouray County Energy and Transportation Burden, 2020

Category	Value	Range
Housing Energy Burden	4.2%	Medium
Transportation Burden	4.1%	Medium
Total Energy Burden	8.3%	--

Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), State and Local Planning for Energy (SLOPE) Platform, 2020

⁴⁴ SLOPE: State and Local Planning for Energy, <https://maps.nrel.gov/slope>.

Figure 6.19: Ouray County Energy and Transportation Burden Map, 2020



Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), State and Local Planning for Energy (SLOPE) Platform, 2020

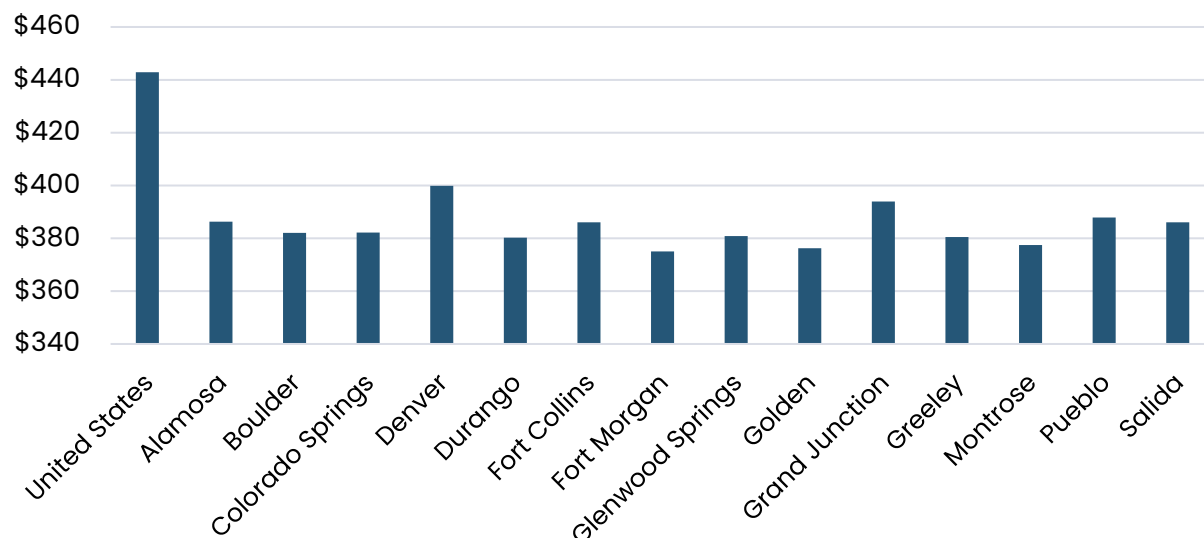
Cost of Construction

The project team analyzed RSMeans data for 1,200-square-foot, one-story, single-family homes with wood siding frames, built by non-union contractors across various locations in Colorado.⁴⁵ The RSMeans database is updated quarterly and provides City Cost Index (CCI) values and key building material costs. The Historical Cost Index (HCI) applies these updates to a historical benchmark, allowing cost trends to be indexed over time and used for forecasting, comparisons, and updates nationwide.

⁴⁵ RSMeans data from Gordian, <https://www.rsmeansonline.com/>.

Because RSMeans data for Ridgway and the City of Ouray was unavailable due to the area's small size and limited dataset, PC used information from other Colorado cities to estimate potential costs.

Figure 6.20: Average Building Costs per Square Foot for Nearby Areas, 2023



Source: Points Consulting using RSMeans Square Foot Estimator, 2025

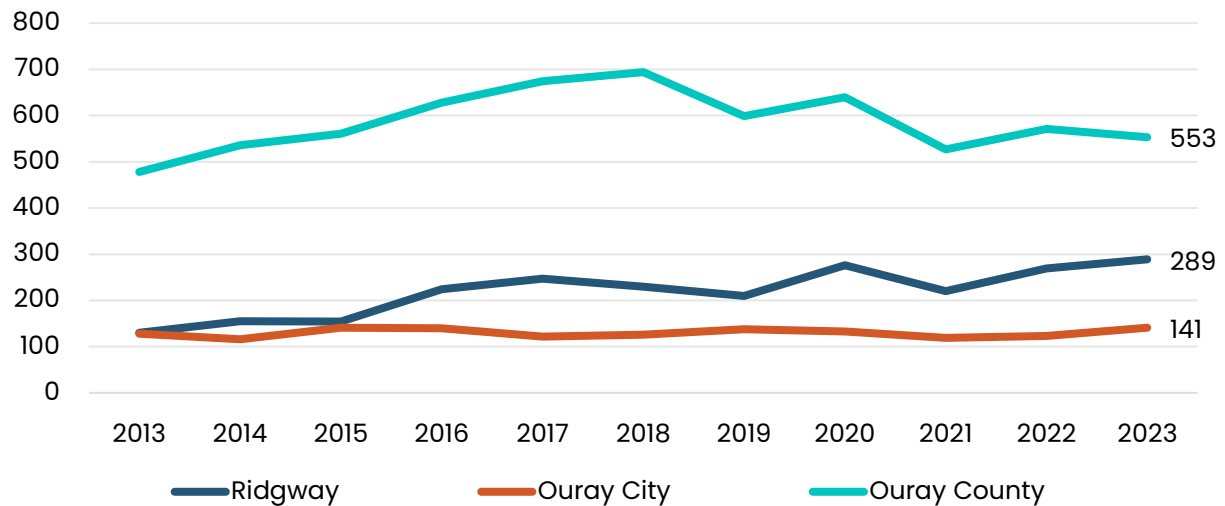
Rent Trends

Generally speaking, there are fewer metrics available on rental markets, as they are more difficult for federal agencies to track, and for-profit data providers have less incentive to collect and report such information. However, several sources use proprietary methods to produce reports on rental market conditions. HUD also tracks rental prices to produce Fair Market Rents (FMRs), which must be used in subsidized housing built with HUD funding.⁴⁶ So, although these sources differ in their methods, they tell the same story of increasing rental costs.

Figure 6.21 shows the number of rental units in Ridgway doubled from 2013 to 2023 while in the City it remained relatively stable. Ouray County experienced a significant increase, from under 500 units in 2013 to nearly 700 in 2018, but this number has declined to approximately 550 by 2023.

⁴⁶ Fair Market Rents (40th Percentile Rents), <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>.

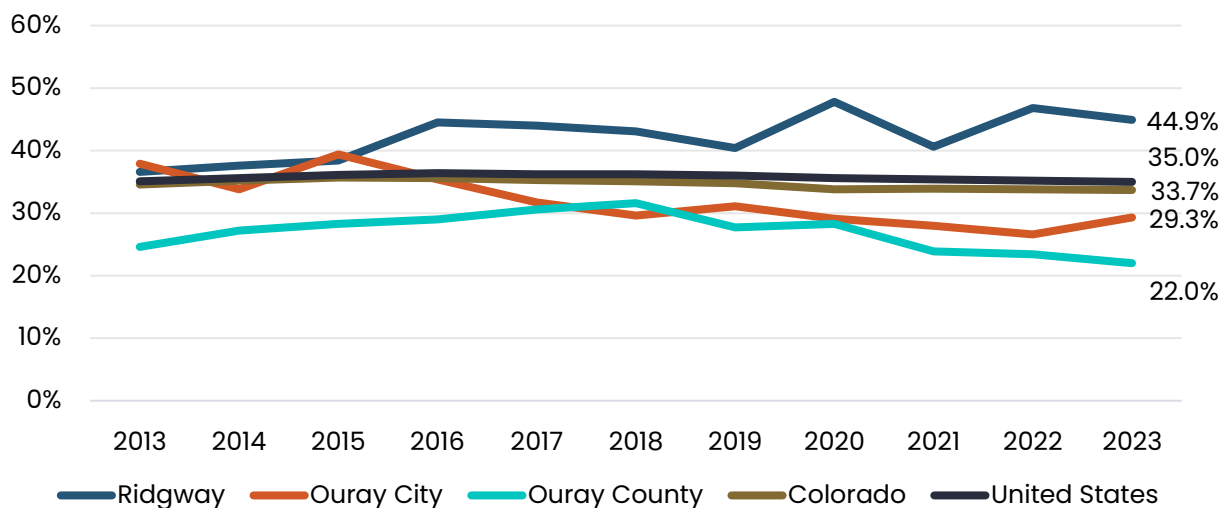
Figure 6.21: Renter-Occupied Units, 2013–2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2023 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

The share of renter-occupied units is depicted in Figure 6.22. In Ridgway, this share has consistently remained above that of Colorado and the United States, increasing from 36.6% in 2013 to 44.9% in 2023. In contrast, Ouray County has remained below both state and national levels, with the share decreasing from 24.6% in 2013 to 22.0% in 2023.

Figure 6.22: Renter-Occupied Unit Share of Total Occupied Units, 2013–2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2023 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

FMRs are traditionally calculated at the county level, as shown in Figure 6.23. However, HUD has recently begun calculating Small Area FMRs (SAFMRs) at the ZIP code level as

well. In 2025, HUD calculated SAFMRs for each ZIP code in Ouray County, shown in Table 6.9.

FMR dollar amounts in Ouray County have gradually increased over the past decade across all unit sizes. Prices for all unit sizes peaked in 2024, followed by a slight decline in 2025, except for four-bedroom units, which continued to rise. Among ZIP codes, Ridgway's SAFMR is higher than those for the rest of the County across all unit sizes (Figure 6.23).

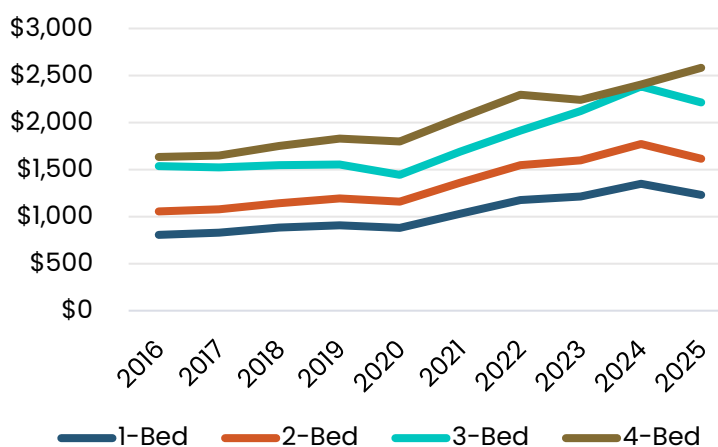
Two-bedroom rental units are a good indicator of the median rental unit, and therefore rental price, in a given geographic area. Figure 6.24 displays the growth in two-bedroom FMR in Ouray County from 2016 through 2026. While FMRs are not the same as private market rents, they follow the trend of private market rents, as they represent the 40th percentile rents for standard-quality rental housing units in the FMR area.⁴⁷ According to FMRs, rental prices in Ouray County increased substantially from 2020

Table 6.9: Small Area Fair Market Rents for Ouray County Zip Codes, 2025

ZIP Code	General Area	1-Bed	2-Bed	3-Bed	4-Bed
81432	Ridgway	\$1,330	\$1,750	\$2,340	\$2,810
81427	City of Ouray	\$1,220	\$1,600	\$2,150	\$2,170
81403	--	\$1,220	\$1,600	\$2,150	\$2,170

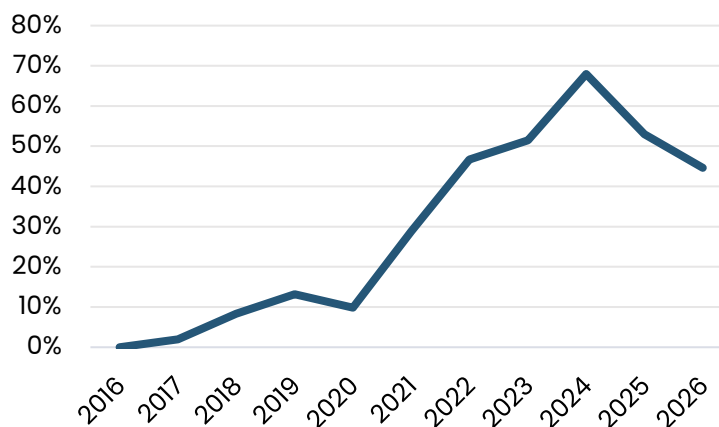
Source: HUD Small Area FMRs for Ouray County

Figure 6.23: Fair Market Rents for Ouray County, 2016–2025



Source: HUD Fair Market Rent Documentation System, 2016–2025

Figure 6.24: Cumulative Percent Change in Ouray County Two-Bedroom FMR



Source: HUD Fair Market Rent Documentation System, 2016–2026

⁴⁷ 24 CFR § 888.113, "Housing and Urban Development," Cornell Law School, accessed February 28, 2025, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/24/888.113>.

through 2024. More specifically, the median rent increased by 68.0% from 2016 through 2024. The peak two-bedroom FMR reached \$1,772 in 2024, and has since decreased to \$1,526 for 2026.

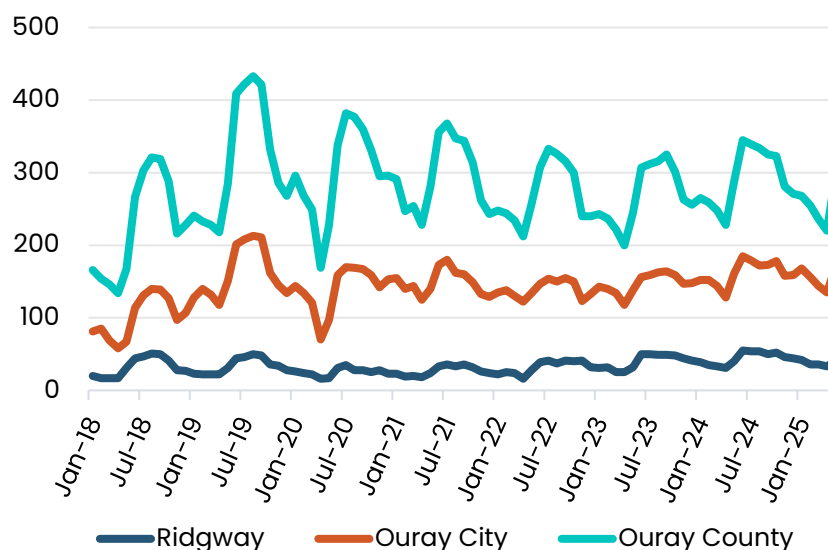
Short-Term Rentals

The short-term rental (STR) industry (e.g., Airbnb) plays an increasingly important role in local housing markets and corresponding trends. This model is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it provides a potential source of “side-hustle” revenue for existing residents. On the other hand, it can inflate home prices, as single-family homes may be valued at the same level as commercial real estate in the area.

Figure 6.25 shows the number of active STR listings in Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County between January 2018 and May 2025. STR activity follows a seasonal pattern, with more listings in the summer and fewer in the first and fourth quarters of the year. From May 2018 to May 2025 the number of listings in Ouray County has increased from 167 to 297 (an increase of about 75%). However, since 2019 there has been no notable growth in the average number of active listings. Additionally, the Town of Ridgway caps the number of STR licenses approved by the Town at 50, according to Town Ordinance No. 17-03.⁴⁸ As shown below, the ordinance has been successful in limiting the number of STRs in Town limits.

Figure 6.26 and Figure 6.27 show the monthly revenue of STR operators across various percentiles. In this context, most

Figure 6.25: Active STR Listings, 2018–2024⁴⁹



Source: AirDNA, 2024⁵⁰

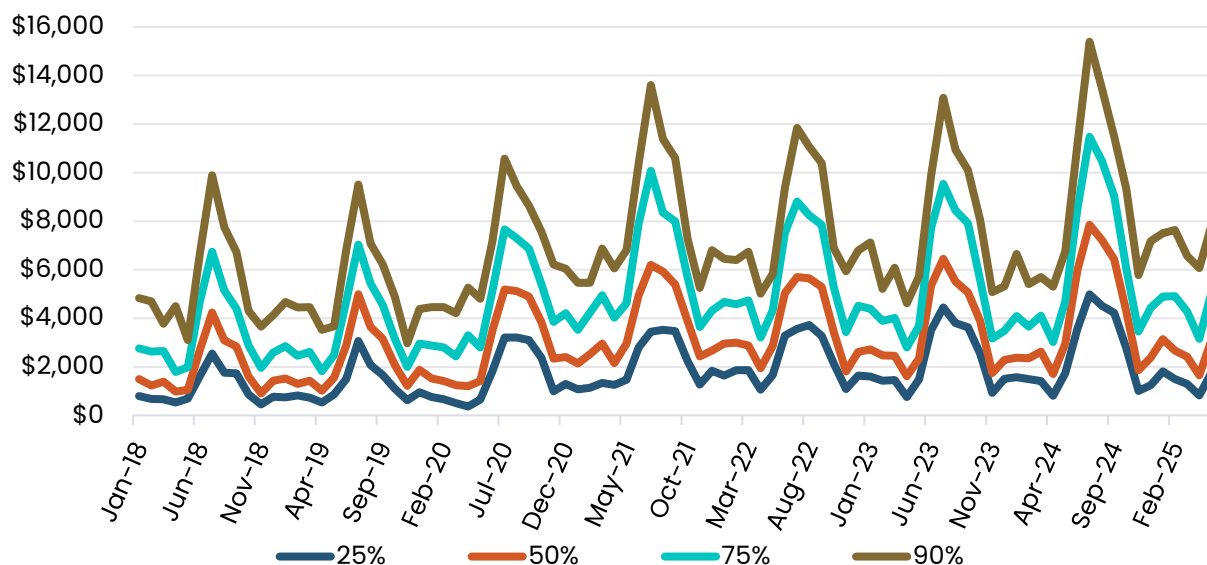
⁴⁸ Town of Ridgway, Ordinance NO. 17-03, “17-03 Short Term Rentals,” Town Staff, Accessed June 20, 2025, <https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/sites/townofridgway/files/17-03%20Short%20Term%20Rentals.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Active STR listings for Ouray County here include those active in Ridgway and the City of Ouray, resulting in an overall total for the countywide area.

⁵⁰ AirDNA STR Research, <https://www.airdna.co/>.

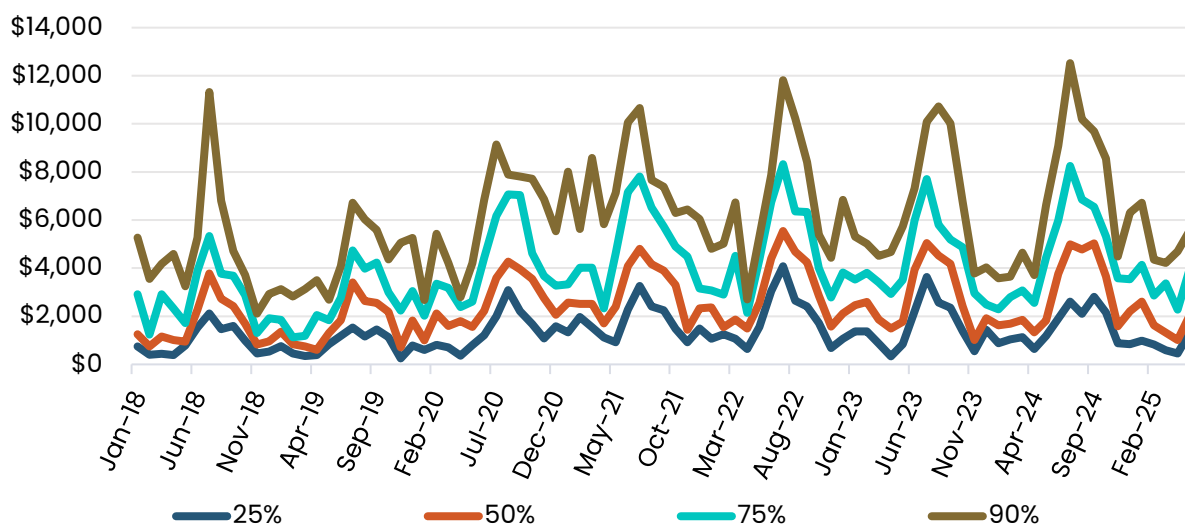
operators are shown by the 50th percentile, above-average performers by 75th percentile, and top performers by the 90th percentile. In Ouray County, most operators earn between \$1,700 and \$5,000 per month, while top performers earn between \$4,800 and \$10,000 per month. Across all percentiles, STR operators experienced an overall upward trend in revenue between January 2018 and May 2025, with a slight dip in 2022. Notable revenue spikes occurred consistently around June each year. Trends in Ridgway followed a similar pattern, though at slightly lower revenue levels.

Figure 6.26: STR Monthly Revenue by Percentile, Ouray County, 2018–2025



Source: AirDNA, 2024

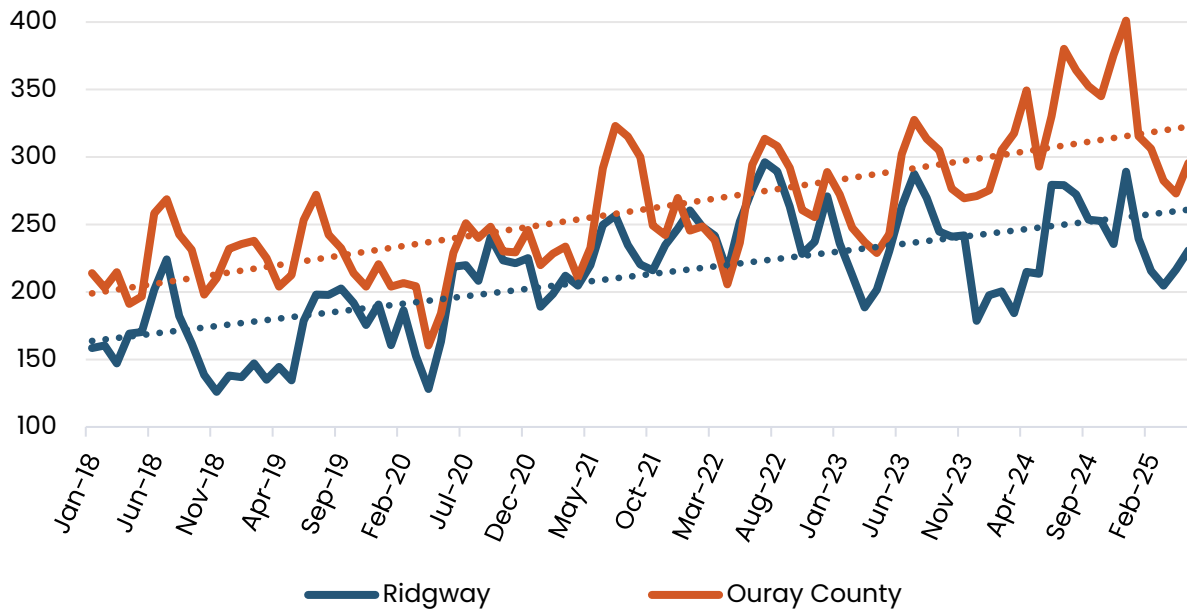
Figure 6.27: STR Monthly Revenue by Percentile, Ridgway, 2018–2025



Source: AirDNA, 2024

Figure 6.28 shows the trend in average daily rates (ADR) for STRs in Ridgway and Ouray County. Both ADRs generally increased from January 2018 until late 2019, before reaching their lowest points in April 2020 (\$160 in Ouray County and \$128 in Ridgway). ADRs then gradually increased in the following months. Notably, between January 2024 and January 2025, the ADR in Ouray County rose approximately 15 percentage points, while Ridgway's ADR increased roughly 20 percentage points.

Figure 6.28: STR Average Daily Rate

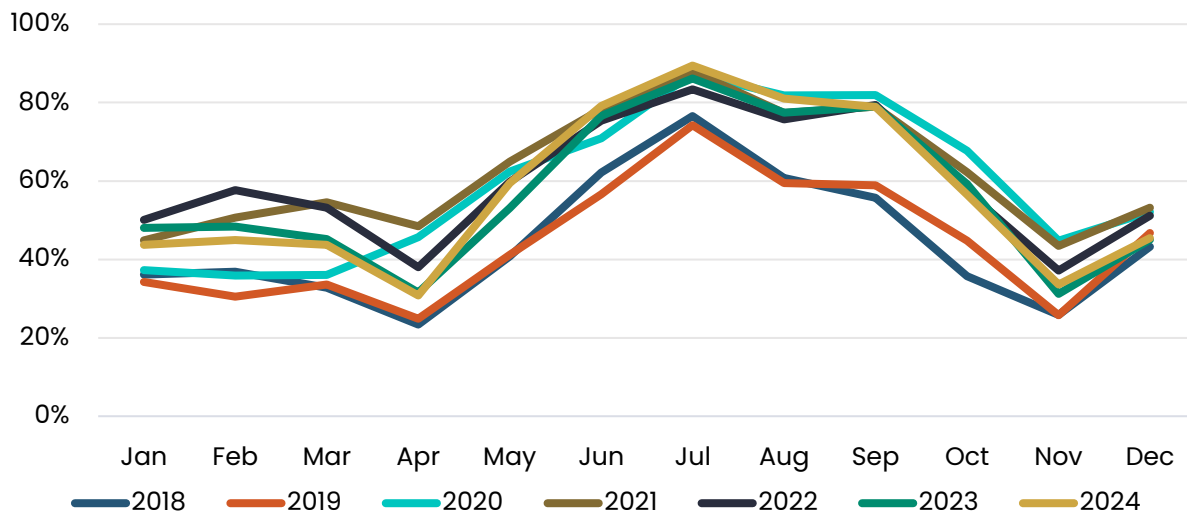


Source: AirDNA, 2024

The occupancy rate of an STR indicates how often it is booked each month. Occupancy rates can help STR operators determine whether to increase or decrease rental prices. For example, a property booked at 90% occupancy for \$100 per night might generate more revenue if rented at a lower occupancy rate for \$300 per night.

Figure 6.29 shows the monthly occupancy rate of STRs in Ouray County from 2018 to 2024. In 2024, occupancy rates followed similar seasonal trends as in previous years, with the highest rates occurring in the third quarter.

Figure 6.29: STR Occupancy Rate, Ouray County, 2018–2024



Source: AirDNA, 2024

Table 6.10 summarizes STR patterns in Ridgway, the City of Ouray, and Ouray County with Montrose and Telluride for comparison. Of these communities, Telluride by far has the largest concentration of STR stock at 44.7% of occupied housing units. This is followed by 35.3% in the City of Ouray. Ouray County (11.8%) and Ridgway (6.4%) both have much lower levels but still have a higher concentration than Montrose at 2.3%. In terms of ADR, Telluride again has the highest at \$704.64. Ouray County has the second highest at \$343.75, followed closely by the City of Ouray at \$336.67. Ridgway's ADR is noticeably lower, at just \$256.

Table 6.10: STR Patterns

Region	Occupied Housing Units	Active Short-Term Rentals	Percentage STR Stock	Median Occupancy Rate	Average Daily Rate
Ridgway	643	41	6.4%	57.0%	\$256.41
Ouray City	481	170	35.3%	59.0%	\$336.67
Ouray County	2,514	297	11.8%	60.0%	\$343.75
Montrose	8,748	204	2.3%	59.0%	\$159.78
Telluride	1,272	569	44.7%	53.0%	\$704.64

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S2504, AirDNA, 2025

The City of Ouray also limits the number of STR licenses available in its jurisdiction to 120.⁵¹ Ouray County has a limit on the number of STR licenses available in the County as

⁵¹ "Resolution No. 12 (Series 2021)," Ouray City Council, Accessed November 12, 2025, <https://cms5.revize.com/revize/cityofourayco/Resolution%2012-2021%20Short-Term%20Rental%20Policies.pdf?t=202209091046320&t=202209091046320>.

well, limiting to about 100 total.⁵² As mentioned earlier, the active STR estimate for Ouray County includes the 41 active in Ridgway and the 170 active in Ouray, so the true number of potentially active STRs in the County is about 86, within the County's limits. But we decided to include the countywide total to match up with our estimate of occupied housing units in the County for analysis of the percentage STRs make up of housing units in the County.

However, 170 active STRs in Ouray is greater than its limit of 120 licenses. There are a few reasons the number of active STRs is higher than the license limit:

- Some STRs may be double counted as our data source counts rentals listed in the area across multiple platforms
- Owners of some STRs may be choosing not to follow laws set in the City
- Enforcement may not be strong enough as the City could be understaffed

⁵² "Ordinance No. 2024-001," Board of County Commissioners of Ouray County, Colorado, Accessed November 12, 2025, <https://ouraycountyco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/20505/Ordinance-2024-001-Short-Term-Rental-Regulations-of-Residentail-Properties>.

7. Recommendations

The following recommendations are those deemed by PC to be the most worthy of consideration for improving the housing supply and increasing housing affordability and attainability for the Town of Ridgway and Ouray County. Our recommendations were developed in collaboration with Town and County planning staff, who bring years of experience, knowledge, and connections to support these efforts.

Affordable Housing Resources & Programs

Both the Town of Ridgway and Ouray County have been making strides in addressing housing challenges. Both jurisdictions have several resources available to assist affordable housing providers and incentivize affordable workforce housing. Several practices have been adopted to support and encourage more naturally affordable options as well.

Specifically, Ridgway supports gentle density of housing types (like duplexes, triplexes, attached and detached ADUs). The Town also supports townhome and condominium developments to encourage affordable homeownership opportunities. Reduction of parking minimums, inclusionary PUD requirements, and expedited review of qualified affordable housing projects are other practices the Town employs.

In support of affordable housing projects, Ridgway has a 6% lodging tax, 50% of which is eligible for workforce housing. The Town also offers grant-writing to support affordable housing developments, especially in cases related to extending infrastructure. Ridgway maintains eligibility for Prop 123 funding programs based on their commitment filing and opting-in to the program as well.

Ouray County itself has a litany of actions taken and resources available for affordable housing. Beginning in 2026, the County will also begin collecting a 6% lodging tax, 90% of which will be eligible for affordable housing. In conjunction with Ridgway, the County has also opted into the Prop 123 funding commitment. Several affordable housing projects have also been supported by Ouray County's contributions of ARPA/LATCF dollars, such as:

- Rural Homes Waterview development
- Home Trust of Ouray County's Ridgway Sherman Street Childcare and Affordable Rentals Project
- Home Trust of Ouray County's Riverwalk Rentals in Ouray

Other planning actions are also used by the County to support affordable housing. Specifically, ADUs are allowed on any buildable parcel in Ouray County. The County is also pursuing a land use code change to allow duplexes as a use by right in the

unincorporated areas of the County. In addition to these planning practices, Ouray County facilitated Prop 123 Local Planning Capacity Grant to hire the Home Trust of Ouray County as a Housing Services Administrator for all three jurisdictions.

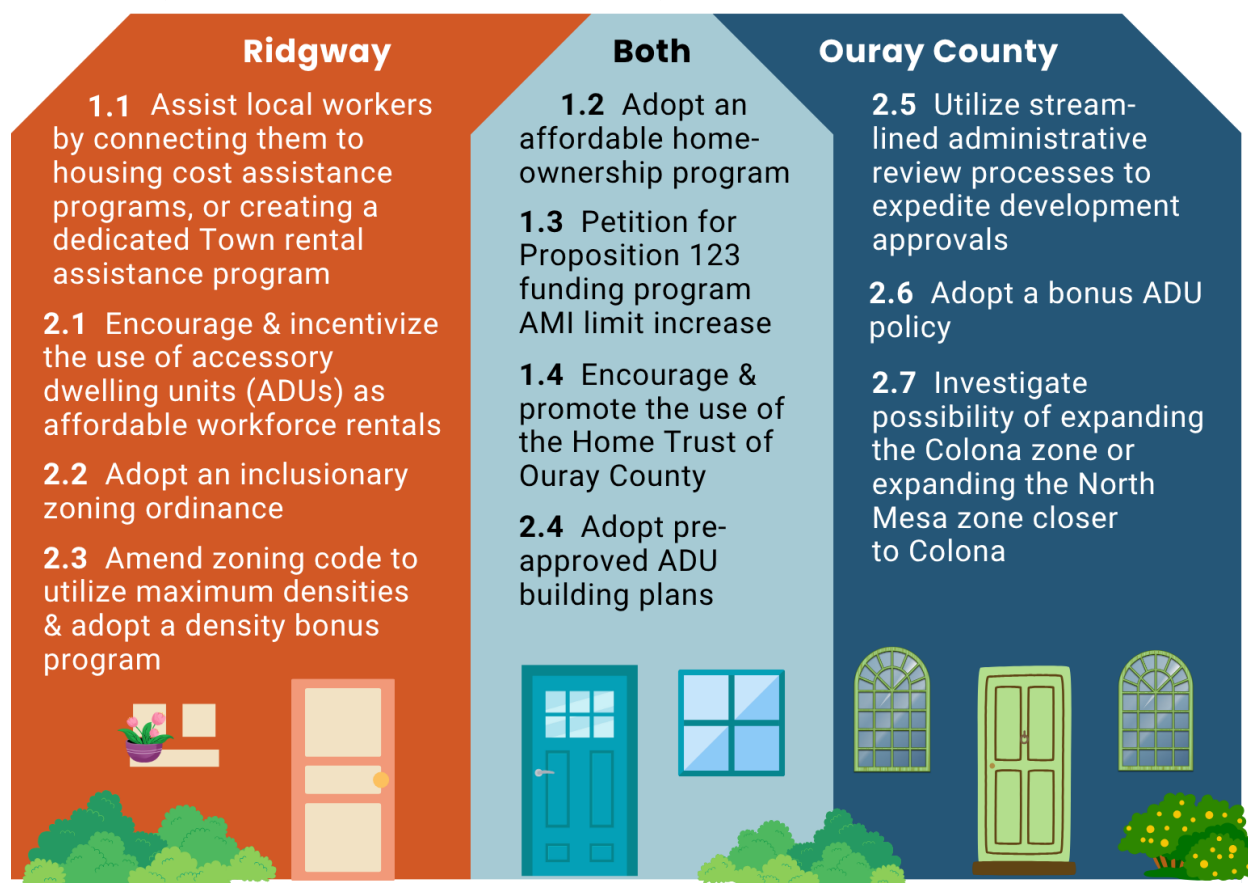
These actions taken by the Town and County to support affordable housing show their commitment to improving the housing situation. Our recommendations below are meant to complement and enhance policies already in action at the Town and County levels.

PC's recommendations for Ridgway and Ouray County are broken into two categories:

- 1. Workforce Assistance:** Taking further actions to assist workers in the County to be able to live and work in the community.
- 2. Planning and Zoning:** Planning ahead to add more capacity and/or altering land use rules to permit or incentivize more diverse housing options.

Some of our recommendations specifically relate to either the Town of Ridgway or Ouray County, while others are applicable to both (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1: Recommendations for Ridgway & Ouray County



Source: Points Consulting, 2025.

1. Workforce Assistance

1.1 Assist local workers by connecting them to housing cost assistance programs, or creating a dedicated Town rental assistance program – Ridgway

There are several housing cost assistance programs offered through the State of Colorado, such as DOLA's Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program (CERA) using Proposition 123 funds⁵³ and the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) down payment assistance grant.⁵⁴ CHFA also offers assistance to first-time homebuyers through programs such as FirstStep and FirstGeneration, which are funded via tax-exempt bonds.⁵⁵

FirstStep assists first-time homebuyers within specific income and purchase parameters with low-interest FHA loans. FirstGeneration aids first-generation homebuyers who have never owned a home and whose parents/guardians never owned a home during the homebuyer's lifetime. Raising awareness of these programs among Ridgway's workforce population, and providing links, contacts, and instruction on how to apply, can help residents seize these aid opportunities.

Locally, the Telluride Foundation offers three distinct programs for individuals living and working full-time in San Miguel and Ouray Counties.⁵⁶ Eligibility is based on employment, income, net assets, and other criteria with additional guidelines for each program. Down Payment Assistance provides forgivable loans up to \$5,000 and shared appreciation loans worth 20% of the home price up to \$50,000. The rental assistance program provides loans for security deposits at no interest as well.

The Town of Ridgway may also be able to provide funding for locally run housing assistance programs. Currently the Town allocates funds generated from their 6% Lodging Tax to two initiatives: tourism promotion/economic development and workforce assistance.⁵⁷ The funds are split 50%-50% between these two initiatives. Because potential uses for the workforce assistance funds include affordable workforce

⁵³ DOLA Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance: <https://doh.colorado.gov/emergency-rental-assistance>.

⁵⁴ CHFA Down Payment and/or Closing Cost Assistance Options, <https://www.chfainfo.com/homeownership/down-payment-assistance>.

⁵⁵ CHFA FirstStep and FirstGeneration, <https://www.chfainfo.com/single-family-participating-lenders/chfa-firststep>.

⁵⁶ "Housing Opportunity Fund," Telluride Foundation, Accessed November, 12, 2025, <https://telluridefoundation.org/impact-initiatives/down-payment-assistance-fund/>.

⁵⁷ Town of Ridgway, Colorado, Ordinance NO. 08-2023, https://library.municode.com/co/ridgway/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH3FI_S3LOTA.

housing and programs to facilitate homeownership, the Town should consider shifting the ratio of these funds to something closer to 25% for tourism promotion and economic development and 75% for workforce assistance. This would allow Ridgway to expand housing support for its workforce population, though the Town should first carefully consider top priorities and any potential consequences of shifting funds from the tourism and economic development initiative.

The Town could also consider allotting a portion of the Lodging Tax funds to assist with a Town rental assistance program.⁵⁸ Having funds on hand for emergency rental assistance can be helpful for Coloradans who have fallen behind on their rent, meet income limits and other qualifying factors, or are at risk of eviction or displacement. As an example in Colorado, Arapahoe County offers a Rent and Mortgage Assistance

“This program is about more than just rental assistance; it’s about providing stability and a lifeline to those in our community who need it most.”

– Katherine Smith, Arapahoe County Director of Community Resources⁶⁰

program for residents with an active eviction summons and income below 80% AMI.⁵⁹ The initiative was launched February 2025 using a combination of CERA and Proposition 123 funds and collaboration with other agencies to provide a comprehensive aid program for County residents.⁶⁰ Key features of the program include comprehensive application assistance and targeted outreach to underserved communities. Rental assistance programs are also provided at the State level through programs such as CERA, but having a Town fund for this as well can allow Ridgway to build on these assistance programs and tailor aid to match resident needs.

1.2: Adopt an affordable homeownership program – Ridgway & Ouray County

Homeownership in the region is increasingly expensive and out of reach for residents. As Figure 3.8 shows, households would have to earn 160% of AMI to have an equivalent home value-to-income ratio as the median American household. Additionally, the value of a typical home is around \$820,000 (ZHVI). This is out of reach by affordability standards for households even at 160% AMI (Figure 3.9).

⁵⁸ DOLA Housing Tool kit for Local Officials, Renter Support & Stability Strategies, <https://doh.colorado.gov/renter-support-and-stability>.

⁵⁹ Arapahoe County Rent and Mortgage Assistance application: https://www.arapahoeco.gov/your_county/county_departments/community_resources/housing/rent_and_mortgage_assistance.php.

⁶⁰ Arapahoe County News Post, “Arapahoe County receives additional funding for housing and supportive services”, https://files.arapahoeco.gov/news_detail_T13_R800.php.

Our community survey revealed 91% of respondents rated purchasing a home as “Somewhat expensive” or “Too expensive.” They should feel this way, as the value of a typical home in Ouray County is the sixth highest out of 62 measured counties in Colorado. The County trails only Pitkin, San Miguel, Eagle, Routt, and Summit Counties in terms of typical home value.

To mitigate these effects, Ridgway and Ouray County should implement an affordable homeownership program. These aim to increase the affordability of purchasing a home or enable existing homeowners to remain in their home when those costs become unaffordable. For markets where renters experience high cost burden, affordable homeownership programs can also stabilize households as prices rise.

A down payment assistance program is a popular strategy as it assists potential new homeowners in overcoming the barrier of large upfront costs of obtaining a mortgage. Summit Combined Housing Authority (SCHA) has a successful strategy for this model.⁶¹ Under their strategy, SCHA offers a maximum of \$40,000 loan at 2% interest to assist prospective buyers with their downpayment. Households earning 160% AMI or less are eligible for the program.

Acquisition of market-rate housing units and deed restricting them to set the rules of future ownership of the property. These programs typically take the form of a cash incentive buydown of a home in exchange for deed restricting the home ensuring its affordability in the future. Programs vary, but many involve an annual cap on resale prices, but others may choose to have no resale cap. The Town and County could coordinate with the Home Trust of Ouray County to sustain such a program. Several local Colorado examples exist as well.

One example is in Vail, Colorado where the Vail Local Housing Authority (VLHA) takes applications for their buydown program in exchange for a deed restriction on the property.⁶² Vail’s is a unique program with no appreciation cap, no income cap, and no household size requirement that has acquired deed restrictions for 178 units from 2017 through 2025. Eagle County provides another example of a traditional program. Eagle County Good Deeds provides a payment from Eagle County Housing and Development Authority (ECHDA) toward the purchase of a home in exchange for the deed

⁶¹ “Down Payment Assistance,” Summit Combined Housing Authority, Accessed October 20, 2025, <https://www.summithousing.us/lending/>.

⁶² “Vail InDEED,” Vail Local Housing Authority, Accessed November 12, 2025, <https://www.vail.gov/government/departments/housing/vailindeed>.

restriction.⁶³ The Good Deeds program includes typical requirements such as certain buyer eligibilities, eligible properties, maximum purchase prices, and annual appreciation caps.

Affordable rent-to-own programs can provide a pathway to ownership for households who may not have the capital for a downpayment or may not meet other requirements for purchasing a home. This type of program can be resource intensive if run directly by local government, so we suggest a partnership with an organization such as the Home Trust of Ouray County to organize or facilitate the program.

1.3: Petition for Proposition 123 funding program AMI limit increase – Ridgway & Ouray County

The Division of Housing within DOLA is responsible for classifying the 64 Colorado counties as “urban”, “rural”, or “rural resort”, based on the final report of the Colorado Strategic Housing Working Group as stated in House Bill 22-1304 and Senate Bill 22-159. For housing purposes, these classifications enable different AMI requirements that jurisdictions can access affordable housing funding for. In the case of Ouray County, the County is classified as rural resort.

Rural resort counties are often subject to slightly higher AMI allowances, but ultimately very similar to rural and urban counties. This dynamic is typically unhelpful for rural resort counties seeking funding to support their local workers because their local workers are often of higher income than affordable housing funding is available for. In an attempt to accommodate rural resort communities that can prove their average housing need by AMI level is higher than what is available, there is a petition process specifically for programs funded by Proposition 123.

Based on our analysis, we believe the Town and County have grounds to petition for higher AMI limits for housing developments receiving funding from Proposition 123’s Colorado Affordable Housing Financing Fund.⁶⁴ Proposition 123’s funding programs include:

- Land banking: 60% AMI for rental, 100% AMI for homeownership
- Equity: 90% AMI for rental (per project average)
- Concessionary debt: 60% AMI for rental (per project average)

⁶³ “Eagle County Good Deeds,” Housing Eagle County, Accessed November 12, 2025, <https://www.housingeaglecounty.com/gooddeeds>.

⁶⁴ “Proposition 123 – Colorado Affordable Housing Financing Fund,” Accessed October 17, 2025, <https://coloradoaffordablehousingfinancingfund.com/>.

The land banking and concessionary debt rental funding programs could be leveraged for higher than available AMI limits. With Ouray County being an extremely high-cost region and 86% of workers commuting into Ridgway, there is evidence to suggest that higher AMI limits should be granted.

According to our estimates in the Market-Driven housing needs forecast (representing current needs based on the income distribution), the weighted average overall AMI need in Ouray County is between 90-100% AMI. This provides evidence that Prop 123 programs funding projects with AMI limits below that threshold (like land banking and concessionary debt rental programs) should be raised to at least the 90-100% AMI level.

Our estimates also show that homeownership programs may warrant an increase for Ouray County. When restricting to ownership housing needs by AMI, our Needs-Driven forecast (representing current needs based on cost-burden) shows a weighted average need at least at the 110%-120% AMI level. Additionally, it could be argued that the weighted average housing need is higher based on our Market-Driven forecast. When restricting to ownership housing needs by AMI in the Market-Driven forecast, the weighted average housing need is at the 120-135% AMI level.

In July of 2025, the project team conducted an interview with the Superintendent of the Ridgway School District. The Superintendent voiced concerns about the affordability of housing in the school district, and frustrations over the fact that local teachers are unable to qualify for several deed-restricted developments in Town. They noted that the median salary for a teacher in the district is around \$65,000. Where might a teacher fall along Ouray County's AMI distribution?

- If this teacher lived alone, they would be right around 90% AMI (according to 2025 CHFA income and rent limit standards). Too high of income to qualify for a rental unit in Space to Create, a recent multi-family development meant to serve local workers and restricted to 80% AMI and below.
- If this teacher had a spouse and no children with their partner earning equivalent pay, the household would be between 150% and 160% AMI. This level is too high to qualify for a home in the Wetterhorn Subdivision of Ridgway, with units deed restricted for 120% AMI and below.
- If the teacher and their spouse had one child (a three-person household) and earned the same income, the household would be between 130% and 140% AMI.
- If the teacher and their spouse had two children (a four-person household) and earned the same income, the household would be between 120% and 130% AMI.

In all noted scenarios, the theoretical Ridgway School District teacher and their family are unable to qualify for an affordable unit in Town. Once this teacher is in a two-person household with a spouse earning equivalent income, they could range between 120%

AMI to 160% AMI. These income levels are traditionally associated with not “needing” assistance to find housing as they are served typically served by the market.

However, the median home price according to the ZHVI in Ouray County is approximately \$820,000. At this price, even a household at 160% AMI cannot afford it by technical definitions (spending less than 30% of gross monthly income on housing costs) as shown in Figure 3.9. If our theoretical household with a Ridgway School District teacher could not find an affordable unit in Town or nearby in the County, they may look to a more affordable market, such as Montrose, and commute to work 35 minutes or more each way.

In fact, according to the Census Bureau’s OnTheMap database, 86.3% of Ridgway workers do not live in the Town (Table 5.23). A deeper analysis of these commuter trends shows that 44.7% of those commuting into Ridgway earn \$3,333 per month or more, the highest monthly earnings bracket available. This means that in-commuters are likely at 60% AMI or higher (of Ouray County AMI levels).

These data show the shortfalls of current affordable housing funding available to Rural Resort counties in Colorado. While well-intentioned, and it is important to assist the lowest income residents throughout the state, current policies fail to serve Rural Resort counties and their local workforce who cannot afford the costs of housing in high-demand markets.

Summit County was able to successfully petition an increase to 100% AMI on all aspects (equity, land banking, and concessionary debt) of Proposition 123 funding.⁶⁵ They successfully showed in their HNA that their community need for housing extended to those above 100% AMI as well as those below.⁶⁶

1.4: Encourage and promote the use of the Home Trust of Ouray County – Ridgway & Ouray County

As difficult as it can be to stimulate housing production for very low-income households, middle-income households are often even harder to serve. Due to scarcity of funds, federal and state subsidies are often restricted to only the highest need audiences. Community Land Trusts (CLTs), which help bring down housing costs in multiple ways, are one of the few models that work for those in the middle of the income spectrum.

⁶⁵ “Rural Resort Income Limit Petition Process,” Accessed October 22, 2025 <https://cdola.colorado.gov/rural-resort-income-limit-petition-process>.

⁶⁶ “2023 Summit County Housing Needs Assessment,” September 2023, Accessed October 22, 2025, https://www.summitcountyco.gov/services/housing/housing_needs_assessment.php.

Since owners of CLT properties are free to sell their homes as they please, this model often serves as starter homes for families who would otherwise remain renters. Unlike apartment complexes and other rentals, maintenance of the building is the responsibility of residents.

While some CLTs own and manage rental properties as well, one of the main draws of this model is that the organizations own the land on ownership developments to remove one of the cost barriers to purchasing a home. Under the traditional model, residents purchase a home owned by the CLT and enter into a long-term lease (usually 75–99 years for a very low price) for the land on the property. Removing the land value from the cost to purchase property for a home can make the transaction much more affordable.

Long-term affordability is usually maintained using the following tactics:⁶⁷

- Use of one-time seed funding from a government, donor, or non-profit agency to develop units
- Units are built denser and smaller than average, such as attached duplexes, townhomes, or cottage clusters
- The land beneath the units are held by the trust in perpetuity, removing the cost of land from the purchase price (typically saving 10% to 30% on overall property costs)
- Limiting sales to households within specific AMI levels
- Capping home value appreciation as a portion of inflation (such as 2.5%)

The Home Trust of Ouray County (HTOC) is a successful CLT operating in Ouray County. Their first ownership project was completed in April 2025, a duplex which is now home to two families who have been able to purchase the units at half the market rate. There are more benefits that could be realized in the future as the HTOC moves toward more traditional ownership developments using the CLT model.

There are also more benefits that could derive from an official partnership between the Town or County and HTOC. One option for this kind of partnership would be establishing a town or county fund to annually contribute to the Home Trust's efforts to provide affordable pathways to homeownership.

Another example of how a similar model with a municipality/nonprofit partnership can work is the Step Up Bisbee/Naco program in Bisbee, Arizona.⁶⁸ Here, blighted and

⁶⁷ "What Is a Community Land Trust?" International Center for Community Land Trusts, Accessed October 21, 2025, <https://www.cltweb.org/resources/what-is-a-community-land-trust/>.

⁶⁸ Step Up Bisbee/Naco, <https://www.stepupbisbeenaco.com/>.

dilapidated homes are purchased by an individual or an LLC and donated to the City or Step Up, which operates as a nonprofit organization. The donator is then able to claim a tax deduction of up to 30% of the adjusted gross income, as an incentive.

For example, an LLC purchased a blighted property for \$50,000 and donated it to the city or the nonprofit and claimed a \$55,600 tax benefit. The property was rehabilitated to a total cost of \$102,000. After completion, the property was appraised for \$139,000 and sold for \$112,000 (20% below the appraisal). The \$10,000 profit was then reinvested to the partner organizations.

This specific model focuses on rehabilitation of dilapidated units, however a similar model could be valuable in Ouray County to build new units by mobilizing wealthier community members or local businesses who are looking for an opportunity to help their community.

2. Planning & Zoning

2.1: Encourage and incentivize the use of ADUs as affordable workforce rentals – Ridgway

Deploying ADUs is a common way to gradually increase density within single and dual-family districts while not significantly altering the character or home value in existing neighborhoods. They can offer a more affordable way of building than new units on undeveloped parcels, as the utilities and street infrastructure are already in place on and around these parcels.

ADUs can also combat increasing housing costs as they provide an alternate source of income for homeowners to rent out space. ADUs would mainly be focused on for-rent housing and could benefit from a number of high-need groups, including:

- Aging adults/seniors looking to downsize
- Professionals and young adults who cannot yet afford their own home but are looking to get away from apartments
- Part-time residents or seasonal workers who do not need a full-time single-family home to maintain

Firstly, some definitions are required to understand the nuances of ADUs. There are two types of ADUs: attached and detached. Attached ADUs are either discrete structures that adjoin to the main structure of the property, such as a basement or attic apartment, as seen in example A. Attached ADUs are also sometimes referred to as “integrated ADUs.” Detached ADUs are an entirely separate structure from the main building of the property (example C).

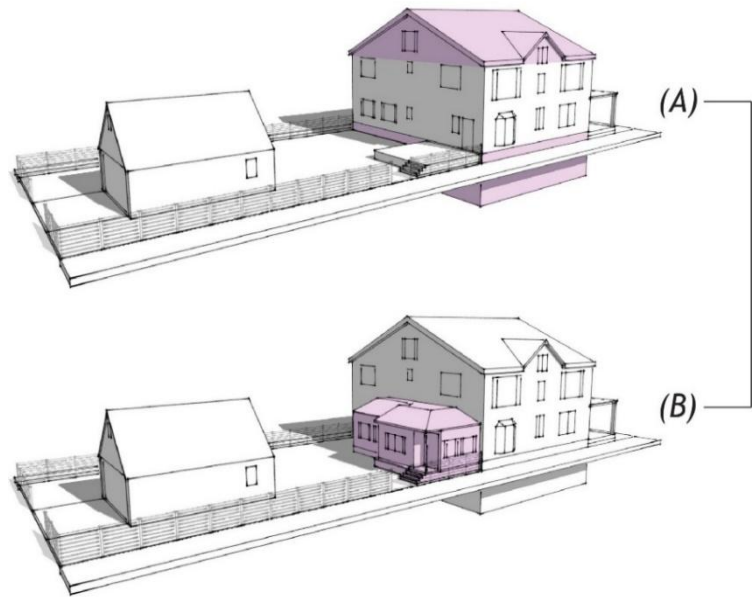
Communities such as Boulder, Grand Junction, and Durango have loosened restrictions on ADUs over the past ten years. As recently as April of 2023, the Grand Junction City Council approved an ADU production program. The program aims to “spur the creation of new ADUs to assist in alleviating the shortage of affordable housing.”⁶⁹ In this example, the City is allocating \$250,000 in funding to encourage ADU construction.

To expedite the process of building ADUs, many cities have elected to work with designers or architects to create pre-approved ADU building plans. For homeowners, this makes the process much simpler. For example, in Fremont California, homeowners looking to build an ADU pay a flat review fee of \$1,000 and have a plan approval time of seven business days, rather than the standard 15. The expectations are clear and straightforward with no surprises. Furthermore, they know that the design they have selected complies with the California Building Code and Fremont’s design guidelines.

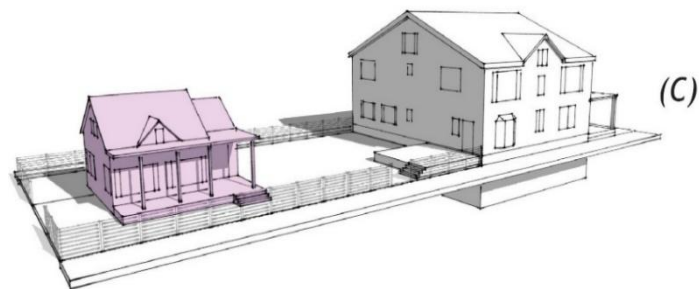
This process also has advantages for the City of Fremont. On the most basic level, a simple process encourages residents to build ADUs, thereby boosting the housing

Figure 7.2: Attached and Detached ADUs

1. Attached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)



2. Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)



Source: City of Boulder Website, accessed October 21, 2025, <https://bouldercolorado.gov/services/accessory-dwelling-units>.

⁶⁹ “City Council Approves ADU Production Program,” City of Grand Junction, April 5, 2023, <https://www.gjcity.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=979&ARC=1454>.

supply. However, it also puts less strain on local government. Boilerplate ADUs that are already ensured to be compliant require less manual curation by city employees. Furthermore, the cities can encourage certain housing aesthetics by the sorts of design they have available. Danville, California, for example, has three styles in their pre-approved ADUs: Craftsman, Mediterranean, and Modern. This is advantageous for communities looking to preserve small-town charm.

Figure 7.3: Pre-Approved ADU Plans



Source: City of Fremont Website, accessed October 21, 2025,

<https://www.fremont.gov/government/departments/community-development/planning-building-permit-services/accessory-dwelling-units-adus/preapproved-accessory-dwelling-units-adus>

In addition to making the design and approval process simpler, the Town of Ridgway could look to another strategy like waiving permit fees or development excise tax. This incentive would work in tandem with an agreement to not apply for a short-term rental license in an effort to keep the ADU for long-term rental.

Financing has the potential to become a barrier to ADU development as well with relatively heightened interest rates during the time of our assessment. To assist with implementing some of these strategies, the Town could look to the DOLA's new Accessory Dwelling Unit Grant (ADUG) program. The program provides grants to certified ADU supportive jurisdictions for activities that promote the construction of ADUs.⁷⁰

The Town could also seek a partnership with a local lender to create a program with favorable rates for ADU production as has happened in the past. Through discussions with the Project Steering Committee, our team became aware that Citizens State Bank

⁷⁰ "Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Grant Program," Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Local Government, Accessed October 21, 2025, <https://dlg.colorado.gov/accessory-dwelling-unit-grant-program>.

used to have an affordable rate program for ADU development. In an effort to revitalize this program, a multi-organizational partnership could be formed with Citizens State Bank, the Town of Ridgway, and the Home Trust of Ouray County. While ambitious, it could lead to favorable outcomes for all parties and provide more affordable housing units.

2.2: Adopt an inclusionary zoning ordinance – Ridgway

Inclusionary zoning (IZ) policies are a tool that can create dedicated affordable housing units for low- and moderate-income households in market rate housing developments. IZ policies generally require that developments over a certain threshold (e.g., six or more units) must either rent or sell a certain share of units to households at or below specified income levels.

In Colorado, IZ programs must include alternative options to producing affordable units on-site, such as a fee-in-lieu that allows developers to dedicate funds or work to provide affordable housing elsewhere. The Town of Ridgway has a similar policy in place, but it only applies to PUDs. Town code specifies that at minimum 25% of PUD units must be deed restricted to serve workers in Ouray County who earn 120% AMI or less.⁷¹

Our team understands that the Town has been considering a program like this for some time, and we believe it is a logical next step in the Town's mission to address housing challenges. Some local developers have expressed concern if an IZ were implemented, calling it a potential "project killer." They have even noted that building deed-restricted units at 120% AMI or below does not work with their targeted high-end products. However, Ridgway is clearly in a strong market where new residential development is occurring and there is demand for workforce housing.

The Town of Vail, Colorado has had an IZ policy in place for years, designed to ensure that new residential development in the Town's multi-family zoning districts provides a reasonable amount of deed-restricted employee housing for those who work in the area.⁷² Every residential development/redevelopment located in specific zoning districts is required to provide employee housing at a rate of at least 10% of the total new gross

⁷¹ "PUD Standards," Ridgway, Colorado, Municipal Code § 7-6-2, Accessed October 21, 2025, https://library.municode.com/co/ridgway/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH7LAUSRE_S6P_LUNDEPU_7-6-2PUST.

⁷² Town of Vail, Colorado Zoning Regulations Chapter 24, https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/vailco/latest/vail_co/0-0-0-12715.

residential floor area. This percentage has been revised in recent years to be even higher in certain areas of the Town.⁷³

Meanwhile in Longmont, Colorado, all residential developments must ensure that 12% of total units are deed restricted to be affordable to low- and moderate-income residents (at or below 80% AMI for homebuyers, or 50% AMI for renters).⁷⁴ Deed restrictions such as these ensure housing is available both to local employees and low-income populations in these regions.

In many cases, applicants can pay fees in lieu of providing affordable or employee housing units, but this can look different depending on the community. In Longmont, developers can also opt to donate land for affordable housing,⁷⁴ while in Denver they can opt to either donate land or contribute to the City's Affordable Housing Fund.⁷⁵ Ridgway might consider allowing developers to opt-out of their IZ requirements by donating to the Home Trust of Ouray County instead.

2.3: Amend Town zoning code to utilize maximum densities and adopt a density bonus program – Ridgway

According to the Town of Ridgway's current zoning code, middle and higher-density housing is technically supported. However, the code currently utilizes minimum lot sizes and maximum lot coverages to do so.⁷⁶ While it is positive that the 2019 Master Plan's Future Land Use section does allow densities of up to 14.5 dwelling units per acre (dua), the code could be amended to further encourage missing middle housing types and middle density by using maximum densities rather than relying on minimum lot sizes and maximum lot coverages.

Ridgway can capitalize on long-term benefits of this change. For instance, implementing this change and specifically targeting at least 15 dua can promote "missing middle" housing types. When surveying missing middle housing areas,

⁷³ VailDaily, "Vail approves first reading of West Vail overlay district with aim to incentivize housing", <https://www.vaildaily.com/news/vail-approves-first-reading-of-west-vail-overlay-district-with-aim-to-incentivize-housing/>.

⁷⁴ Inclusionary Zoning, Longmont, Colorado, <https://longmontcolorado.gov/housing/affordable-housing/inclusionary-housing/>.

⁷⁵ Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, Denver, Colorado, <https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/690/Housing/IHO%20RulesRegulationsFeb2019-FEHR-Adopted.pdf>.

⁷⁶ "Table T-4.4-Dimensional Standard Requirements," Ridgway, Colorado, Municipal Code § 7-4-4, Accessed October 21, 2025, https://library.municode.com/co/ridgway/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH7LAUSRE_S4ZORE_7-4-4ZODI.

planners and urban designers have found that 15 du/a is a threshold required for promoting vibrant neighborhood amenities and that middle housing can achieve this density.⁷⁷

To complement this policy change, the Town of Ridgway should also adopt a density bonus policy. Density bonuses are a tool that can incentivize developers to build more housing, and to specifically build housing types that align with community needs. This policy would allow developers to exceed standard density limits in exchange for meeting public policy goals, such as providing housing at specific AMI levels, developing certain typologies of housing, or creating open space and recreational opportunities.⁷⁸

Examples of density bonuses can be found throughout Colorado. For instance, the City of Fruita provides residential density bonuses tied to the provision of community benefits that align with their community plan such as the inclusion of open space, developing trails, using a shared drive or alley, and including a mix of housing types (Table 7.1). These incentives have been used by several recent developments in Fruita, namely their Rose Creek and Copper Creek West subdivisions, to create greater density and more housing types leading to more diversity in Fruita’s housing stock.

Table 7.1: Peer Example Density Bonuses, Fruita, CO

	Community Residential District	South Fruita Residential District	PUD
Base Density	6 du/a	4 du/a	Varies
Max Density	8 du/a	5 du/a	Varies
20% Open Space	+1 du/a	+1 du/a	+1 du/a
Bike and Trail Connections	+1 du/a	+1 du/a	+1 du/a
Alley/shared driveway access	+1 du/a	N/A	+1 du/a
Mix of housing types	+1 du/a	N/A	+1 du/a

Source: City of Fruita Municipal Code

⁷⁷ Tomasso, Amy Love. *Unlocking the Missing Middle: What Can Massachusetts Learn from Other States to Encourage More Missing Middle Housing?* Working Paper, Part 1, April 17 2025. Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies.

https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/research/files/harvard_jchs_missing_middle_pt1_tomasso_2025.

⁷⁸ “Plan Implementation Tools – Voluntary, Incentive-Based, Density Bonus” *University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point*, accessed October 21, 2025, <https://www.uwsp.edu/clue/planning-and-zoning-resources/plan-implementation-tools/>.

The density bonus is a unique and helpful tool because of the flexibility it offers. By implementing it, Ridgway would have the ability to incentivize amenities that matter to the community and align with their goals, giving the Town greater control over how the housing stock develops over time.

2.4: Adopt pre-approved ADU building plans – Both

With the absorption of ADUs in both Ouray County and the Town of Ridgway, this feels like a logical next step in the practice. Adopting pre-approved plans for ADUs can assist with reducing review times on administrative staff and allow units to be developed more easily and more efficiently. Property owners that want to build an ADU and who are willing to use pre-approved building plans will see immediate cost savings as the ‘plan check’ portion of the building permit fee will be waived.

ADUs have become a staple of natural processes used to develop workforce housing. Encouraging more use of ADUs does not threaten the values held by residents of protecting the County’s natural beauty, and can simultaneously offer more opportunities for households of higher AMI levels to attain affordable rental options.

Counties across the country are adopting the pre-approved building plan approach. In Siskiyou County, California, officials offer seven building plans in three architectural styles, ranging from 396-square-foot studios to 1,650-square-foot, three-bedroom homes with two-car garages. Property owners can choose from Craftsman, Farmhouse, and Modern designs for each size.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ “Siskiyou County Pre-Approved House Plans Now Live,” Siskiyou County, accessed January 16, 2025, <https://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/community-development/page/siskiyou-county-pre-approved-house-plans-now-live>.

Figure 7.4: Example of Siskiyou County Pre-Approved Building Plan



Source: Siskiyou County website, “3 Bed/2 Bath: Craftsman, Farmhouse, Modern,” accessed May 16, 2024, <https://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/community-development/page/siskiyou-county-pre-approved-house-plans-now-live>

Counties in Arizona are utilizing this strategy as well. Yavapai County runs a program called “A Home of My Own,” which provides three single-family home plans (one-, two-, and three-bedroom designs) at no cost.⁸⁰

Strong Towns, a community advocacy group, provides three recommendations to make pre-approved building plans effective in a community. For pre-approved plans to be successful, there must be inter-departmental communication during plan development. Everyone who “touches new development” must work together so that the plan aligns procedures with vision. Furthermore, the County must take responsibility to educate the public on available resources. Otherwise, the plans will not be useful. Lastly, the plans themselves should be high quality, and reflect feedback from local

⁸⁰ Yavapai County, Development Services, “A Home of My Own! Program,” Yavapai County, accessed January 20, 2025, <https://www.yavapaiaz.gov/Development-and-Permits/Development-Services/Residential-Homes/A-Home-of-My-Own-Program>.

builders and developers. This will spur community engagement and will also help ensure that the plans are consistent with the character of a community.⁸¹

Utilizing these county-level pre-approved building plan strategies for ADUs can help incentivize and encourage their use in Ouray County. These strategies, along with those in [Recommendation 2.1](#) for the Town of Ridgway, can help ensure gentle density is achieved without negatively impacting the community's ability to appreciate and enjoy the County's natural beauty.

2.5: Utilize streamlined administrative review processes to expedite development approvals – Ouray County

Based on our team's review of Ouray County's Land Use Code, we understand that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has the final say in approving or denying a PUD/development application. The PC team believes this practice has the potential to discourage potential housing development, especially any hopeful affordable housing projects. Another line of bureaucracy after development review and permitting in addition to stringent land use code will lengthen development timelines and can be viewed as overly restrictive.

We do not oppose Ouray County's strict zoning policies to protect open space and natural beauty of the unincorporated regions. However, preventing property owners from utilizing their land for housing while conforming to zoning laws will limit opportunities for housing development and may push housing costs further for residents. Additionally, respecting individual property rights is natural way for market forces to allow folks who prefer lower-density areas to flow and build housing where they prefer. This process could free up units in more dense areas (like Ouray County's municipalities) for households of lower AMI levels by opening up a potential bottleneck.

Development review and permitting processes are in place to ensure compliance with local land use and zoning laws, building codes, and public health and safety standards. However, creating a streamlined option for the approval process can help incentivize the development of affordable housing or other high-priority community projects. This could be especially useful in the surrounding areas of Ridgway and Ouray that currently have high construction activity.

If the County were to adopt and utilize streamlined review processes, property owners and potential developers would still have to conform to underlying zoning standards.

⁸¹ Edward Erfurt and Lindsey Beckworth, "Say Yes to New Housing – Before Anyone Even Asks to Build It," Strong Towns, accessed June 1, 2024, <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2023/10/27/pre-approved-building-plans>.

Because current zoning regulations allow only low-density development, the adoption of these policies will not allow any sort of dense development.

What the County can do is implement an affordable housing use by-right in the land use code, and offer the use as a way to access an expedited review process. Ouray County may amend its code to allow affordable housing as a by-right use in specific areas as well, such as Loghill Village, the North Mesa Zone, or certain areas around its municipalities to direct growth there.

Amending Ouray County's Land Use Code to make clear which uses are permitted by right may be a first step in this direction. Larimer County, for example, uses explicit language in its Use Tables that differentiate between uses permitted by-right (R), uses requiring site plan review (SP), administrative review (AS), and special review (S).⁸² The code shows uses that are indeed allowed by-right, meaning no discretionary review is required – just compliance with standards.

Multiple communities in Colorado are currently speeding up their review process as well. For example, essential housing projects are given priority over other applications being reviewed by staff, the planning commission, or the board in Gunnison County.⁸³ Priority applies to projects where at least 40% of residential units are classified as Essential Housing through deed restrictions. A key example is the Whetstone Community Housing project: a proposed 15-acre development with 252 units and 476 bedrooms. Of these units, 80% will be restricted for local workforce housing of various AMI levels.⁸⁴ The City need not implement large deed restriction practices for this strategy to work. Instead, designating some types of housing as priority or even higher AMI level units would help the community become more affordable for local workers.

Another example of a more efficient review process is the City of Trinidad. The City performed a comprehensive rewrite of the review procedures for their entire code. Ordinance No. 3077, adopted by the City Council in 2023, incorporated expedited review

⁸² "Land Use Code," Larimer County, Accessed October 22, 2025, <https://www.larimer.gov/planning/land-use-code>.

⁸³ "Essential Housing," Gunnison County, Division 9-600, Accessed November 4, 2025, <https://www.gunnisoncounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/2080/Essential-Housing-Linkage-Amendment-June-2006?bidId=>.

⁸⁴ "Whetstone Village, Crested Butte, CO," Accessed November 4, 2025, <https://whetstonecb.com/>.

procedures for affordable housing.⁸⁵ It stipulates that projects meeting affordable housing requirements are placed on the next available agenda for review by the appropriate body. The development plan must be reviewed and a decision rendered within 90 days of an application being deemed complete.

Bringing together by-right development for affordable housing, like Larimer County, indicates and reaffirms affordable housing as a priority for the County. Expediting review processes like Gunnison County and Trinidad help incentivize affordable housing along with allowing more to happen faster as well. Choosing specific zones or areas where these policies are allowed will also help Ouray County direct growth while benefiting workers in the County.

2.6: Adopt a bonus ADU policy – Ouray County

Along with the pre-approved building plans for ADUs, this is another step towards encouraging and increasing their use. If adopted, this policy would allow the development of a second ADU on a property and may be in the form of a duplex rather than a second detached unit. Duplexes are widely accepted as an effective middle-density housing type. Encouraging and utilizing these middle-density housing types will expand opportunities for workers to live and work in the County and promote greater competition in the housing market, potentially relieving some housing pressures.

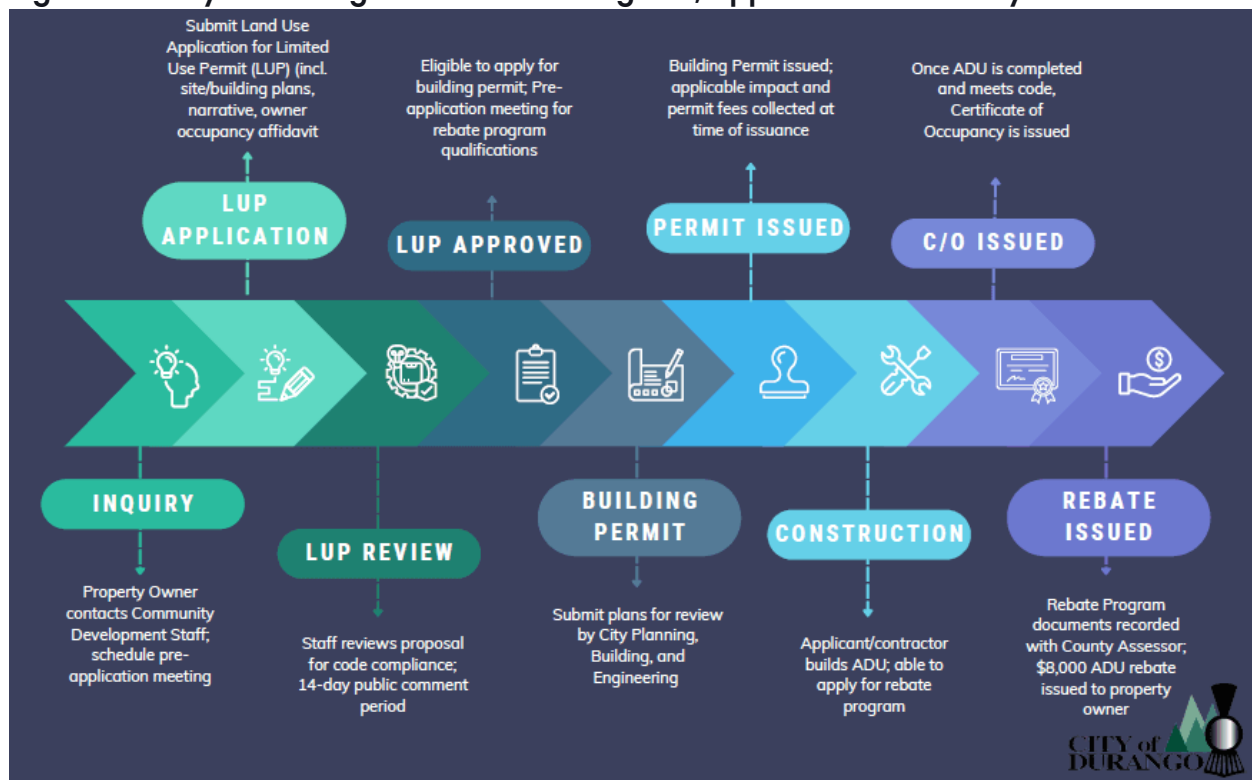
We recognize that the County has already had preliminary conversations about this concept. We encourage Ouray County to continue researching this potential policy as a use for attainable and affordable workforce housing for workers in the County.

One route the County could take for such a program is allowing the bonus ADU conditional on one of the two being rented to a local worker. For example, the City of Durango has an “ADUs for Locals Rebate Program” offering \$8,000 to eligible homeowners who build a new ADU or legalize an existing one, in return for renting it to a local workforce member (works at least 32 hours per week in La Plata County).⁸⁶

⁸⁵ “City of Trinidad, Trinidad, Colorado,” Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Trinidad, June 6, 2023, Accessed November 4, 2025, <https://cms2.revize.com/revize/trinidadco/Document%20Center/Agenda%20&%20Minutes/Government/2023/Minutes/CC%20Minutes%206.6.23.pdf>.

⁸⁶ “Durango seeks to grow workforce housing with rebate for accessory dwelling units,” Christian Burney, Durango Herald, Accessed October 22, 2025, <https://www.durangoherald.com/articles/durango-seeks-to-grow-workforce-housing-with-rebate-for-accessory-dwelling-units>.

Figure 7.5: City of Durango ADU Rebate Program, Application Summary



Source: City of Durango

Durango's program was a smaller pilot program at the time (2022) but is directly aimed at affordable/workforce rental outcomes. Additionally, Ouray County could target this program in areas where it's more advantageous to have ADUs, such as the South Mesa zone.

The Town of Crested Butte has an example of a successful program that avoids the rebate-type program. Here, the Town waives development permit fees and building review fees, along with 100% of water and sewer tap fees for any new ADU that meets certain deed-restriction commitments (for locals/long-term rentals).⁸⁷

2.7: Investigate the possibility of expanding the Colona zone or expanding the North Mesa zone closer to Colona – Ouray County

Our team understands and respects the County's and its residents' desire to maintain unincorporated lands for outdoor recreation, open space, and natural beauty. Colona is the only area of the County (outside of its municipalities) that provides any opportunity

⁸⁷ "Municipalities strategically deploy ADUs to diversify housing options," Rachel Woolworth, Colorado Municipal League, Accessed October 22, 2025, https://www.cml.org/docs/default-source/advocacy-documents/2024-legislation-session/colorado-municipalities-2024---adus-article.pdf?sfvrsn=6539f653_4.

of middle density development. Current zoning regulations allow seven dwelling units per acre, a fairly standard density for many medium density rural areas in our experience. Expanding this zone could allow for middle density clustering of housing and could provide an opportunity for higher AMI level housing development (100%+).

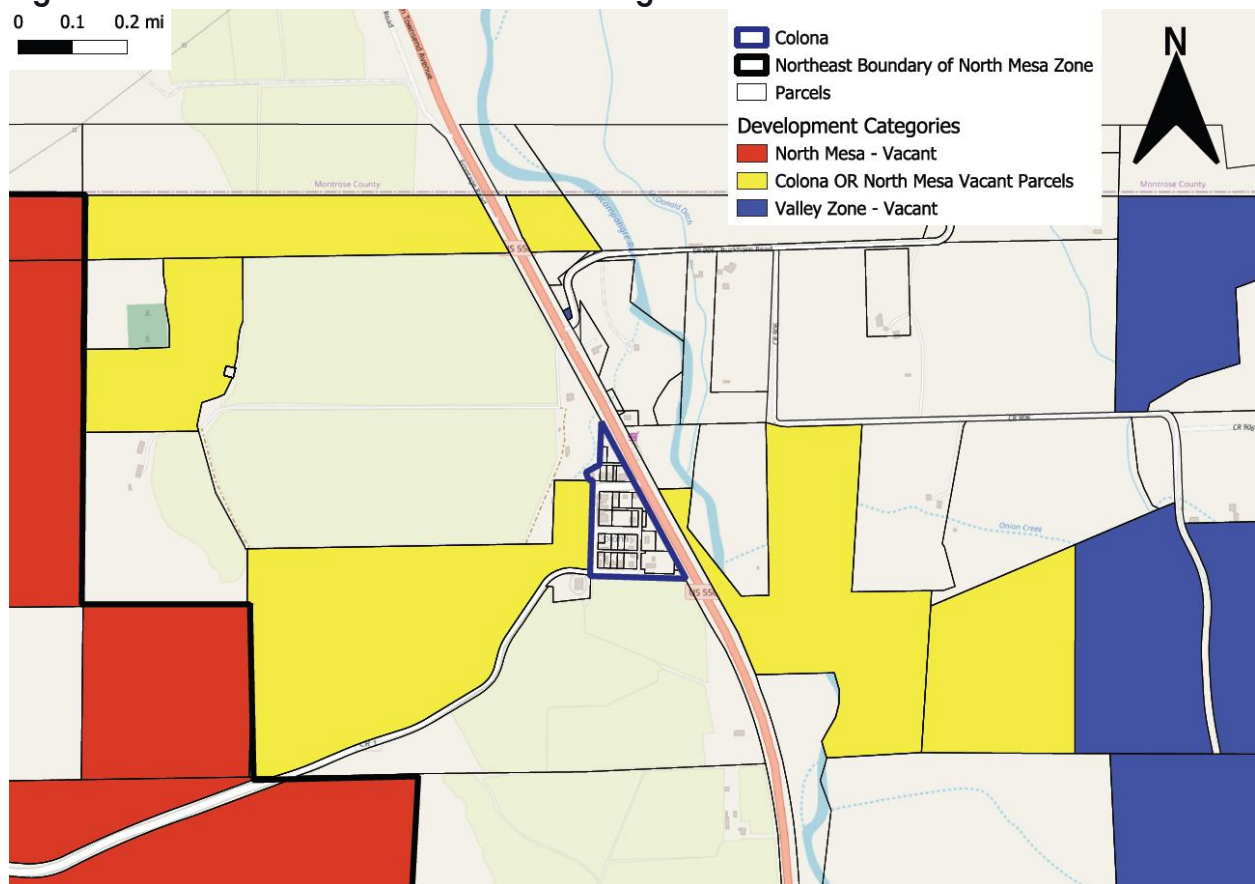
If the County would rather not expand the Colona zone, an alternative option could be to expand the North Mesa zone closer to Colona. The North Mesa zone currently allows a density of one unit per six acres, equivalent to that of the South Mesa zone where Loghill Village is located. Expanding this zoning district closer to Colona provides a slight incentive to develop housing in an area where there is already some semblance of density. Additionally, allowing slightly higher density development (seven units per acre or one unit per six acres) in one particular area can help protect open space and natural beauty of traditional areas by drawing development to a particular area rather than new housing popping up throughout the whole County.

This potential expansion offers real opportunities for housing as well. Figure 7.6 displays the current Colona zone, boundaries of the current North Mesa zone, and surrounding vacant parcels from our [Land Capacity Analysis](#). At the time of our assessment, Colona is surrounded by the Valley zone, which only allows one dwelling unit per 35 acres.

The highlighted parcels and their sizes include:

- Parcel #404118100001: 38.6 acres
- Parcel #404118100016: 24.1 acres
- Parcel #404118400009: 71.7 acres
- Parcel #404117300010: 53.0 acres
- Parcel #404117400010: 35.1 acres

Figure 7.6: Colona Area & Potential Advantageous Parcels



Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

In total these parcels account for 222.5 acres. If the County were to expand the Colona zone to include these parcels, over 1,550 housing units could be developed.

Alternatively, if the North Mesa zone were expanded to include these parcels, about 37 housing units could be developed. This is not to say housing development of this magnitude would absolutely take place, but allowing the possibility could relieve some housing pressures in Ridgway.

Many developers are targeting high-end products to be developed in Ridgway, but these developments do not accommodate local workers. Increasing the allowance of development on the parcels around Colona opens up an opportunity for those high-end units to go elsewhere, and allows more affordable or workforce housing to be developed in Ridgway.

8. Community Engagement

For the HNA process, PC conducted two on-site visits, interviewed Ridgway and Ouray County community stakeholders, and conducted a community survey. Our efforts to interview community stakeholders included private sector developers, regional workforce housing providers, and public sector leaders. Our on-site visit in July 2025 included a full tour of the Town of Ridgway and the Ouray County region, along with project and survey promotion at one of Ridgway's summer concert series events. [Key Themes](#) from our on-site interviews and results of the [Community Survey](#) can be found in this section.

Key Themes of On-Site Meetings

High amenity and high quality of life lead to high housing demand

With Ridgway residing in the foothills of the San Juan Mountains and Ouray being in the mountain range, there are breathtaking scenic views in all directions no matter where in the County folks may find themselves. An endless list of outdoor recreation options allow any resident or visitor to enjoy the natural scenery as well. Year-round festivals and local events inspire a lively feeling for the County from both municipalities.

Aside from recreational opportunities, the rural Ouray County is serviced by fiber optic internet. This provides high-income service workers to move into the County and still be able to viably continue their work. For all of these reasons and more, it's hard to find one in the "con" column for households looking to migrate to the area.

There is a strong desire for the conservation of natural beauty and historical culture throughout the County, leading to greater development interest in the Town of Ridgway

One of the most popular phrases we heard while on-site was, "I hope I am the last person to move to Ouray County!" Families who move to the area don't ever want to see it change, seeming to adopt the attitudes of long-time residents. All residents feel the scenes of natural beauty and historic agriculture with large ranches ought to be preserved, even if that means trying to stunt the growth of the region. Highly restrictive zoning policies at the County level exacerbate these attitudes, along with the authoritative review process for any housing development that may occur.

However, this has resulted in greater development interest in the Town of Ridgway and the City of Ouray. An IGA between Ouray County and the Town and City is meant to direct growth that does happen towards to municipalities. With proper communication, coordination, and partnership the policy may assist in promoting smart growth management and limit urban sprawl.

The COVID-19 exodus supercharged housing demand and home values

In nearly all of the interviews we have conducted, housing just feels different after the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic indeed supercharged housing demand and there were multiple reasons. Firstly, the lock downs combined with low interest rates made households more likely to upgrade their homes. If they were to stay inside much more often, they would like to buy a larger home to enjoy the space. If families were familiar with the Ouray County region, then they might have felt more strongly in their desire to live in the community full time.

Additionally, the community offers plentiful outdoor opportunities, where it was safer to interact with friends and families. Increased demand for those outdoor opportunities likely contributed to housing demand pressures throughout the County.

Another nationwide trend was the hollowing out of urban centers. Along the coattails of the desire to upgrade homes, families also wanted to move to areas of relatively lower density to reduce chances of contracting the virus. Communities with space and access to internet offered a perfect opportunity for workers that wanted to keep their service jobs and move to an area of lower density and more outdoor options.

Concerns with consistency of architectural design standards for incoming affordable and workforce housing developments

One of the results of the IGA between the County, the Town, and the City is that new development is taking new shapes and sizes. Long time community members haven't always been a fan of how the new developments look. Ridgway's Space to Create is the most recent example of such attitudes.

The height of the building, the roof of the building, the overall look, and even the colors have rubbed residents the wrong way. They want to preserve the ability to view the mountains and the foothills, and thus don't support larger apartment buildings. The Space to Create was built with a more modern look overall as well. Residents prefer the buildings to conform to traditional design standards. However, if future developments must follow the traditional design standards set forth by residents, then it will become a barrier to development by pushing construction costs higher.

There is a positive impression of ADUs in the Town and the County with a strong uptick in the past 10 years

ADUs are an excellent way to develop housing that may be naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH). As an additional, smaller unit on an already developed lot with a single-family home, ADUs can help increase the housing supply in multiple ways. They may be used for family, either for older members in the form of a "mother-in-law suite" or as a unit for younger family members while they work and save up to be able to afford a unit on their own.

ADUs are also often used as long-term rentals for the local workforce. Rentals are an essential segment of the housing stock for local workers to be able to work and live in the community. They also provide the primary property owner with additional income. Use as a short-term rental is also a possibility, though the Town of Ridgway limits the number of short-term rental licenses available to 50 in an effort to incentivize their use to complement the long-term housing stock.

As the Town of Ridgway now has about 45 ADUs, Ouray County is also increasing their use. Property owners are eligible to develop one primary dwelling unit along with an ADU on their property by right. The allowed size of the ADU depends on the size of the lot the property owner possesses. There are also circumstances that allow up to two ADUs to be developed in addition to a primary dwelling unit. These factors include site conditions and approvals that are granted by the Town.

The community is interested in preserving full-time residents to avoid the hollowing out that can take place in resort-heavy communities

Being in close proximity to Telluride, the residents of the Ouray County community have seen the impact a resort-heavy housing market can have on local workers. Despite desires to potentially limit growth in favor of open space preservation, residents do generally support more housing being available for local workers. The Wetterhorn Subdivision in Ridgway is a good example of this.

Homes in the Wetterhorn Subdivision are deed restricted to 120% AMI and purchase eligibility requires the owner to work within the Ridgway school district area. Community members have supported developments such as this in an effort to keep local workers in the area. Without opportunities like Wetterhorn, many households commute from other cities close by such as Montrose where housing is more affordable. Ouray County residents have voiced that they want local workers to be able to live and work in Ridgway and Ouray, but a full plan on how to make it happen would be beneficial.

Community Survey

The project team conducted electronic and paper survey of Ouray County residents from July 22, 2025 through September 15, 2025. We collected a total of 364 surveys from residents in Ridgway, Ouray, and unincorporated parts of the County. Open to all Ouray County residents, the survey included a mix of fixed-response questions (e.g., multiple-choice and scaled responses) and open-ended questions.

To maximize participation, the team (working with the Town of Ridgway and Ouray County) widely promoted the survey both online and offline. Main strategies included flyers, email, social media, and in-person promotion through interviews and on-site presence. We used thematic coding to categorize open-ended responses into similar groups.

The response rate for Ouray County residents was 8.3% of the adult population (aged 18+), including with 17.1% of the adult population in the Town of Ridgway. Given the response rate and size of the population, we are confident that the survey reflects the actual sentiments of the Ouray County community within a margin of error of 4.9% in either direction on a 95% Confidence Interval.

Summary of Overall Findings

Housing Situation Questions

To begin the survey, we asked respondents to identify where in Ouray County they resided. In addition to understanding where the weight of the survey responses were coming from, this question was instrumental to our cross tabulation work [below](#). As Figure 8.1 shows, the greatest number of survey responses came from the Town of Ridgway at 48.4%. Unincorporated areas of Ouray County followed at 31.3% with the respondents from the City of Ouray at 11.0% (40 responses). Additionally, 7.1% of respondents reside outside of the County but visit frequently for work or other reasons.

Approximately 72.4% of respondents own homes while 22.8% rent for their current living situation (Figure 8.2). These estimates line up relatively well with owner versus renter occupancy for the County where 78% of residents own homes (Figure 8.2). However, the survey data do not align with estimates for Ridgway where Census estimates approximate that 45% of residents are renters. Discussions with Town staff indicate that the survey data may be more representative of Ridgway residents in terms of occupancy though. Additionally, 65.1% of survey takers reside in single-family homes and 12.6% reside in condominiums or townhomes, showing that 77.7% of respondents reside in one-unit structures (detached or attached) as shown in Figure 8.3.

Survey respondents are relatively happy with their current living situations. About 64% of respondents reported not looking to move when asked if they had plans to do so in the next 12 months (Figure 8.4). Meanwhile, 8% of respondents said they planned to move out of Ouray County, and another 8% said they were looking to move within the County. Just 7% of respondents reported plans to move within Ridgway.

Housing Perceptions

Respondents are unified in their perceptions of the cost of housing. Regarding purchasing a home in their respective areas (County vs. City vs. Town), 91.4% of respondents indicated housing was either “Somewhat expensive” or “Too expensive” (Figure 8.5). In fact, 71.8% of respondents did indicate that purchasing a home was “Too expensive.” When we asked the same question regarding renting, 82.9% of survey takers reported it was “Somewhat expensive” or “Too expensive” (Figure 8.6). Of note here, 10.1% of respondents were unsure of how expensive or affordable renting was in their respective areas, while only 2.0% were unsure of costs for purchasing.

Increasing the housing stock has the potential to slow down the increase in housing costs or even bring them down. When asked if they would like to see the housing stock increase, the majority of respondents said “yes” in some way, shape, or form. To be specific, 69.6% of respondents answered they wanted to see the housing stock increase “with a focus on a mix of single-family and more dense housing options,” “with a focus on building more dense housing options like apartments or townhomes,” or “with a focus on low-density, single-family homes” (Figure 8.7). Of these various responses, “Yes, but with a focus on a mix of single-family and more dense housing options” had the greatest response with 38.8%. Additionally, only 21.7% of respondents did not think the housing stock should increase at the time of our assessment.

We also asked survey takers if they had difficulty finding suitable housing within their budget in the past three years. Nearly one-third (31.5%) of respondents indicated they had problems finding suitable housing (Figure 8.8). When asked if respondents knew anyone who had been displaced in the past three years due to rising housing costs, 58.1% indicated they knew people who had, 10.2% indicated they and others they knew had been displaced, and 2.9% said they alone had been displaced (Figure 8.9).

Figure 8.10 reports responses to housing aspects respondents were dissatisfied with in their respective areas. The top three responses were that existing homes are too expensive (210), too many seasonal and second home owners (176), and the fact that there are too many short-term rentals in their area (159). Survey takers who answered open-ended “other” to this question mostly cited the need for working class housing and building codes/restrictions/prices as main dissatisfaction drivers (Figure 8.11).

The cost and availability of housing can negatively impact the economy. When we asked how, the top responses were that it contributes to less permanent residency (223), it contributes to talent leaving the region (212), and it contributes to less services from businesses (171), as shown in Figure 8.12. Respondents who selected open-ended “other” frequently mentioned that the cost and availability of housing limits opportunities for the working class and restricts demographics and diversity (Figure 8.13).

High home values may contribute positively through higher property values for owners and increased property tax revenue for local government services. When we asked respondents what positive effects the cost and availability of housing have, the most selected answer was that there are “No major positive effects” at 122 votes (Figure 8.14). The next two most selected answers were that it does increase residents’ property values (113) and high property values therefore support more funding for schools (104).

Housing Policy Questions

One of the ideal outcomes of our assessment is the implementation of strategies to help with the affordability of housing. So, we asked respondents what they would be willing to have change to facilitate more affordable housing, shown in Figure 8.19. The response with the greatest number of votes was having more duplexes and triplexes in single-family areas (160), followed by smaller lot sizes and homes (142), and simpler building designs (130). The least selected answer was having taller buildings in the region.

Many residents feel differently about what the local government's role should be in the housing market. The greatest number of respondents think the local government should proactively plan for land and community development at 41.1% (Figure 8.21).

Additionally, 18.9% of respondents feel the local government should play an active role to ensure that all housing is affordable, along with 17.5% who say the local government should oversee development by enforcing building code and zoning regulations.

Another 13.2% say a hands-off approach should be taken, and to let the market regulate itself.

STRs have the potential to restrict local housing supply for long-term residents and workers. While they play a role in the County's essential tourism and recreation industries, many residents feel there are too many STRs in the region (Figure 8.22). The City of Ouray was the most frequently selected area where there are too many STRs at 128 votes, followed by the Town of Ridgway at 112 votes. Unincorporated Ouray County had the third most votes at 89, while 59 respondents felt there weren't too many STRs at all. The majority of respondents (63.7%) feel the local government should allow STRs to operate with a limit on the number of licenses available (Figure 8.23).

Local governments and non-profits have many tools available to them to address local housing challenges. Figure 8.24 displays the tools respondents were most comfortable with local governments and non-profit partners using to facilitate more housing. Funds to house public service and moderate income workers (158), incentivizing accessory dwelling units (142), and government incentives for development of affordable units (134) were the most popular tools. Transitional housing, land banking, and inclusionary zoning were less supported by survey takers.

Locational Preference Questions

For this section, we asked survey takers in what kinds of areas they would be okay with seeing different types of housing. The housing types we asked about were:

- Multi-family/apartments
- Townhomes/condominiums
- Duplexes/triplexes

- Accessory dwelling units

For multi-family structures/apartments, respondents most supported them being developed in the Town/City core with 124 votes (Figure 8.26). Town/City core was also the most popular response for townhomes/condominiums at 142 votes (Figure 8.27). Regarding duplexes/triplexes, Town/City core remained the most popular response at 112 votes (Figure 8.28). Respondents are most supportive of accessory dwelling units, as the most popular response for this housing type was “everywhere” at 155 (Figure 8.29).

Additional demographics questions can be found in Figure 8.31 through Figure 8.36.

Perspective Differences among Town, County, and Overall Respondents

For select survey questions, our team cross tabulated responses by where residents are located in Ouray County. Specifically, we examined responses of Ridgway residents versus residents in the unincorporated areas of the County. The questions we chose to examine their perspective differences on include:

- Please rate your perceptions of purchasing a home in the County/City/Town
- Please rate your perceptions of renting in the County/City/Town
- Would you like to see the housing stock increase in the County/City/Town?
- What are you willing to have change to facilitate more affordable housing?
- What should the local government’s role be in regulating the housing market?
- Are there too many short-term rentals in the Ouray County region?
- What tools would you be in favor of local government or non-profit partners using in order to facilitate more housing?
- What type of neighborhoods in the County/City/Town would be most suitable for the [multi-family/apartments], [townhome/condominium], [duplex/triplex], [accessory dwelling units] housing type?

In general, respondents from Ridgway and Unincorporated Ouray County did not differ greatly on their perceptions of purchasing a home. However, those from Ridgway were relatively more likely to select “Too expensive” compared to Unincorporated residents. “Somewhat expensive” was relatively more popular among those in Unincorporated Ouray County compared to Ridgway.

Table 8.1: Perceptions of Purchasing a Home, Cross-Tabulated

Survey Response	Town of Ridgway	Unincorporated Ouray County	Overall
Too expensive	70.7%	63.6%	71.8%
Somewhat expensive	19.0%	28.2%	19.5%
At the right price	5.7%	0.9%	3.4%
Somewhat affordable	2.3%	1.8%	2.3%
Very affordable	0.6%	1.8%	0.9%

Don't know/Not sure	1.7%	3.6%	2.0%
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Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Similar points can be made in terms of rental costs as purchasing costs. Ridgway residents were more likely to select “Too expensive” and Unincorporated residents were slightly more likely to select “Somewhat expensive.” Residents in Unincorporated Ouray County were also more likely to note they were unsure of rental costs compared to those in Ridgway and overall respondents.

Table 8.2: Perceptions of Renting, Cross-Tabulated

Survey Response	Town of Ridgway	Unincorporated Ouray County	Overall
Too expensive	63.4%	56.0%	63.2%
Somewhat expensive	18.6%	22.0%	19.7%
At the right price	5.8%	4.6%	4.9%
Somewhat affordable	1.2%	1.8%	1.4%
Very affordable	1.2%	0.0%	0.6%
Don't know/Not sure	9.9%	15.6%	10.1%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Survey respondents were relatively uniform in whether or not the housing stock should increase and how it should increase. Respondents from Unincorporated Ouray County were relatively more likely to say “Yes, but with a focus on a mix of single-family and more dense housing options.” Meanwhile, respondents from Ridgway were more likely to select “Yes, with a focus on building more dense housing options...” compared to Unincorporated residents.

Table 8.3: If and How the Housing Stock Should Increase, Cross-Tabulated

Survey Response	Town of Ridgway	Unincorporated Ouray County	Overall
Yes, but with a focus on a mix of single-family and more dense housing options	36.0%	40.4%	38.8%
Yes, with a focus on building more dense housing options like apartments or townhomes	18.0%	13.8%	17.7%
Yes, with a focus on low-density, single-family homes	13.4%	12.8%	13.0%
No, I don't think the housing stock needs to increase at this time	25.0%	22.9%	21.7%
Don't Know/Not sure	7.6%	10.1%	8.7%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

There were more differences in opinion in what residents were more willing to have change for more affordable housing. Respondents from Ridgway were more likely to support “Redirected government funding” and “Facilitating a less stringent review

process.” Unincorporated Ouray County residents were more likely to support “More duplexes or triplexes in traditionally single-family neighborhoods” and “More modular or prefabricated construction.” These perspective differences are relative to each other, rather than the overall response rates.

Table 8.4: What Respondents Are Willing to Change for More Affordable Housing, Cross-Tabulated

Survey Response	Town of Ridgway	Unincorporated Ouray County	Overall
More duplexes or triplexes in traditionally single-family neighborhoods	48.7%	56.6%	52.8%
Smaller lot sizes/homes	45.5%	47.5%	46.9%
Simpler building designs	42.2%	39.4%	42.9%
More modular or prefabricated construction	35.7%	46.5%	40.9%
More units per acre	35.7%	38.4%	38.6%
Redirected government funding	35.1%	27.3%	34.3%
Facilitating a less stringent review process	30.5%	25.3%	27.1%
Other	26.6%	19.2%	23.1%
Taller buildings	16.2%	13.1%	16.2%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Regarding the local government’s role in the housing market, Ridgway residents are relatively more supportive of a more active approach. Respondents from Ridgway were more likely to select “Play an active role to ensure that all housing is affordable” and “Intervene to help the most disadvantaged citizens” compared to Unincorporated residents. Those from Unincorporated Ouray County were more likely to select “Oversee development by enforcing building code and zoning regulations” and “Take a hands-off approach and let the market regulate itself.” However, the most popular response among both groups was “Proactively plan for land and community development.”

Table 8.5: What the Local Government’s Role in the Housing Market Should Be, Cross-Tabulated

Survey Response	Town of Ridgway	Unincorporated Ouray County	Overall
Play an active role to ensure that all housing is affordable	19.7%	12.1%	18.9%
Proactively plan for land and community development	41.4%	41.4%	41.1%
Intervene to help the most disadvantaged citizens	4.6%	2.0%	4.6%
Oversee development by enforcing building code and zoning regulations	17.1%	20.2%	17.5%

Regulate the market only in certain circumstances, such as during times of crisis	0.0%	3.0%	1.0%
Take a hands-off approach and let the market regulate itself	13.8%	16.2%	13.2%
Unsure/Don't know	3.3%	5.1%	3.6%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Respondents from Ridgway and Unincorporated Ouray County are less likely to respond “No” to the question of whether or not there are too many STRs in the region. However, respondents from both areas are more likely to respond “Yes” to their respective areas than they are to say “Yes” to each other’s respective areas.

Table 8.6: Whether or Not There are Too Many STRs, Cross-Tabulated

Survey Response	Town of Ridgway	Unincorporated Ouray County	Overall
Yes, in the Town of Ridgway	26.3%	20.7%	36.8%
Yes, in the City of Ouray	24.1%	26.8%	42.1%
Yes, in Unincorporated Ouray County	15.9%	22.0%	29.3%
No	12.1%	14.0%	19.4%
Unsure/don't know	21.6%	16.5%	29.3%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Regarding tools for local government or non-profit partners to use for more housing, the most popular response for respondents from both Ridgway and the Unincorporated County was “Contributing funding to housing for public service and other modest income workers.” Residents from Ridgway were more likely to support “Incentivizing accessory dwelling units” compared to residents in Unincorporated Ouray County. Respondents from the Unincorporated areas were more likely to support “Changes to zoning code, regulations, and requirements to allow for a mixture of housing types,” “Allowance of manufactured homes in more areas,” and “Deed restrictions” compared to respondents from Ridgway.

Table 8.7: Tools for Local Government or Non-Profit Partners for More Housing, Cross-Tabulated

Survey Response	Town of Ridgway	Unincorporated Ouray County	Overall
Contributing funding to housing for public service and other modest income workers	53.9%	50.0%	52.8%
Incentivizing accessory dwelling units	50.7%	45.8%	47.5%
Local government incentives for development of affordable units	48.0%	43.8%	44.8%
Changes to zoning code, regulations, and requirements to allow for a mixture of housing types	36.2%	43.8%	40.5%

Donation or low-cost transfer of land or run-down homes for re-use as affordable homes	38.8%	39.6%	39.8%
Grants or other incentives for remodeling/upgrading existing housing	37.5%	37.5%	38.5%
Grants or other incentives for removing underutilized/vacant buildings	33.6%	39.6%	38.1%
Allowance of manufactured homes in more areas	27.6%	36.5%	32.8%
Deed restrictions	28.9%	37.5%	30.8%
More subsidized housing	23.0%	19.8%	22.7%
Inclusionary zoning	21.7%	17.7%	20.7%
Land banking	17.1%	11.5%	15.4%
Transitional housing	7.9%	12.5%	10.4%
Unsure/Don't know	5.3%	8.3%	6.0%
Other	13.8%	11.5%	12.4%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

In general, multi-family/apartments had the lowest support among survey takers from both Ridgway and Unincorporated Ouray County. In fact, residents from Ridgway were more likely to select “Nowhere” is suitable for this housing type compared to Unincorporated residents. The difference here is that respondents from Unincorporated Ouray County were more likely to support this housing type in “Town core/City core.”

Table 8.8: Types of Neighborhoods Most Suitable for Multi-Family/Apartments, Cross-Tabulated⁸⁸

Survey Response	Town of Ridgway	Unincorporated Ouray County	Overall
Large lot single-family neighborhoods	5.1%	4.6%	5.3%
Moderate sized single-family neighborhoods	7.6%	6.9%	7.8%
Urban density single-family neighborhoods	15.2%	19.8%	18.0%
Low density multi-family housing areas	11.7%	13.7%	13.0%
Town core/City core	29.9%	37.4%	31.1%
Everywhere	9.6%	5.3%	10.0%
Nowhere	20.8%	12.2%	14.8%
Total SFH areas	49.2%	50.4%	54.1%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

⁸⁸ “Total SFH areas” is the sum of the percentage of respondents who answered, “Large lot single-family neighborhoods,” “Moderate sized single-family neighborhoods,” “Urban density single-family neighborhoods,” and “Everywhere.” This tabulation provides insight into which middle density options residents most support in traditionally single-family areas.

Townhomes and condominiums are more supported among survey takers than apartments. This is especially true among Unincorporated Ouray County residents, 33.8% of which responded this housing type are suitable “Everywhere.” These respondents were also more likely to say the housing type is suitable for “Large lot single-family neighborhoods” and “Moderate sized single-family neighborhoods.” Ridgway respondents were more likely to say this housing type is suitable for “Town core/City core” compared to Unincorporated residents.

Table 8.9: Types of Neighborhoods Most Suitable for Townhomes/Condominiums, Cross-Tabulated

Survey Response	Town of Ridgway	Unincorporated Ouray County	Overall
Large lot single-family neighborhoods	5.5%	20.8%	7.2%
Moderate sized single-family neighborhoods	11.9%	16.2%	11.7%
Urban density single-family neighborhoods	19.6%	7.7%	18.9%
Low density multi-family housing areas	14.0%	8.5%	13.4%
Town core/City core	29.8%	9.2%	30.1%
Everywhere	11.1%	33.8%	12.5%
Nowhere	8.1%	3.8%	6.2%
Total SFH areas	62.1%	86.9%	63.7%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Duplexes and triplexes were relatively more supported overall than apartments and townhomes or condominiums. Opinions were more uniform between respondents from Ridgway and Unincorporated Ouray County. However, Unincorporated residents were more likely to say this housing type is suitable for “Town core/City core” than Ridgway residents. Respondents from Ridgway were more likely to say there are suitable for “Everywhere” compared to Unincorporated residents.

Table 8.10: Types of Neighborhoods Most Suitable for Duplex/Triplex, Cross-Tabulated

Survey Response	Town of Ridgway	Unincorporated Ouray County	Overall
Large lot single-family neighborhoods	11.0%	8.1%	9.8%
Moderate sized single-family neighborhoods	16.0%	15.6%	15.7%
Urban density single-family neighborhoods	18.1%	19.4%	17.9%
Low density multi-family housing areas	11.8%	15.0%	13.6%
Town core/City core	22.4%	28.1%	23.8%
Everywhere	13.9%	10.0%	14.3%
Nowhere	6.8%	3.8%	4.9%
Total SFH areas	70.9%	68.1%	71.3%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

ADUs were the most supported housing type, overall and between residents of both areas. Respondents from Ridgway were slightly more likely to respond that this housing type is suitable “Everywhere” compared to Unincorporated respondents. The same proportion is generally supportive of the housing type going in traditionally single-family areas, though.

Table 8.11: Types of Neighborhoods Most Suitable for Accessory Dwelling Units, Cross-Tabulated

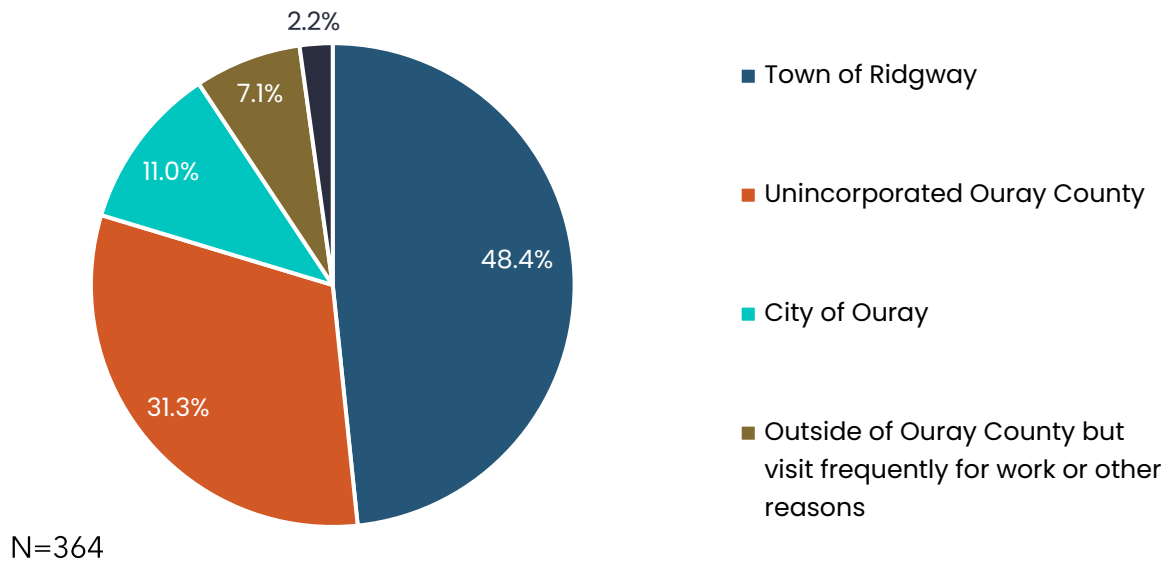
Survey Response	Town of Ridgway	Unincorporated Ouray County	Overall
Large lot single-family neighborhoods	18.1%	20.8%	18.9%
Moderate sized single-family neighborhoods	15.9%	16.2%	14.8%
Urban density single-family neighborhoods	8.4%	7.7%	8.0%
Low density multi-family housing areas	7.9%	8.5%	8.5%
Town core/City core	8.8%	9.2%	8.3%
Everywhere	36.1%	33.8%	37.6%
Nowhere	4.8%	3.8%	3.9%
Total SFH areas	86.3%	86.9%	87.9%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Survey Responses

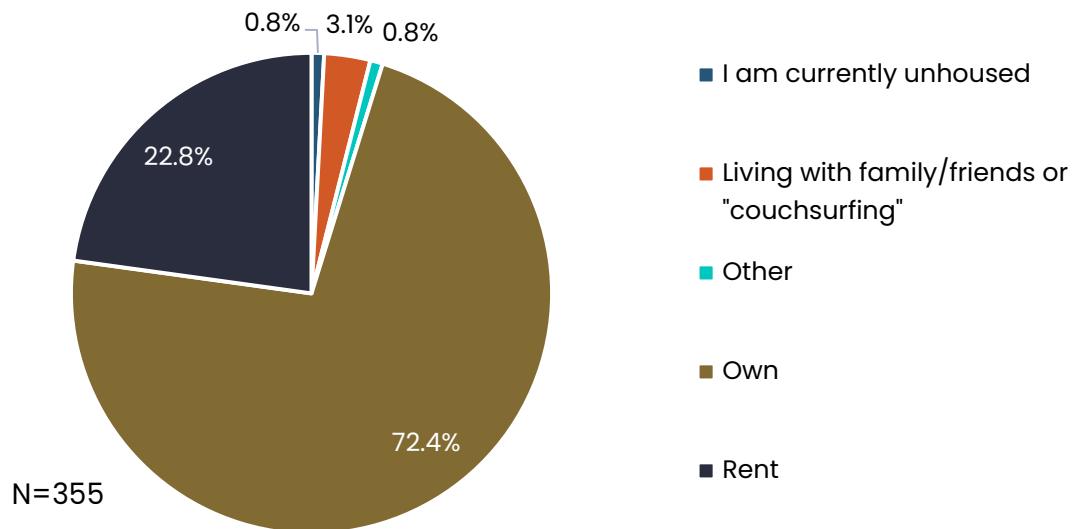
Housing Situation Questions

Figure 8.1: Where in Ouray County do you reside?



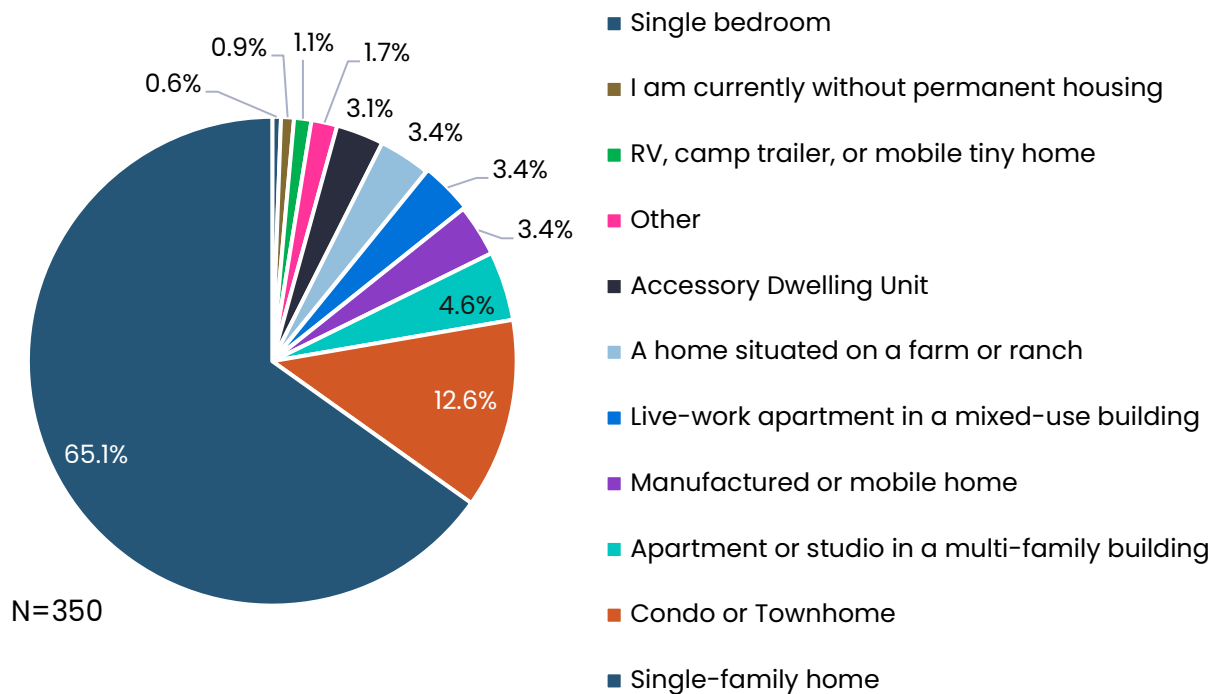
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.2: What is your current living situation?



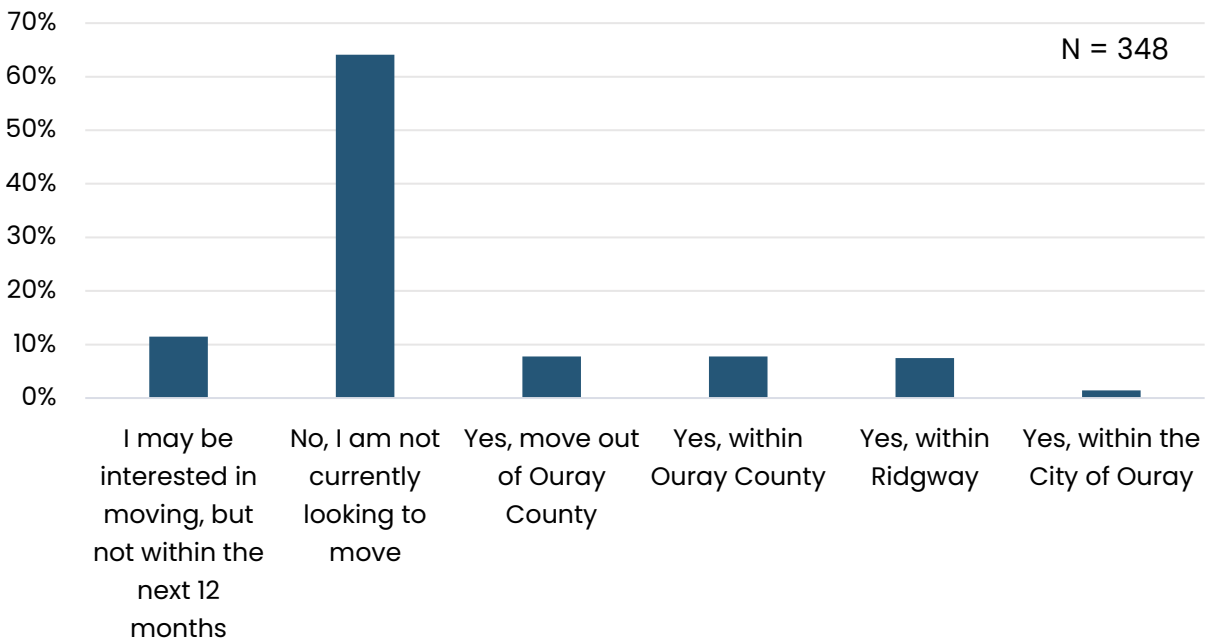
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.3: What type of housing do you reside in?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.4: Within the next 12 months, are you looking to move?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Housing Perceptions

Figure 8.5: Please rate your perceptions of purchasing a home in the County/City/Town

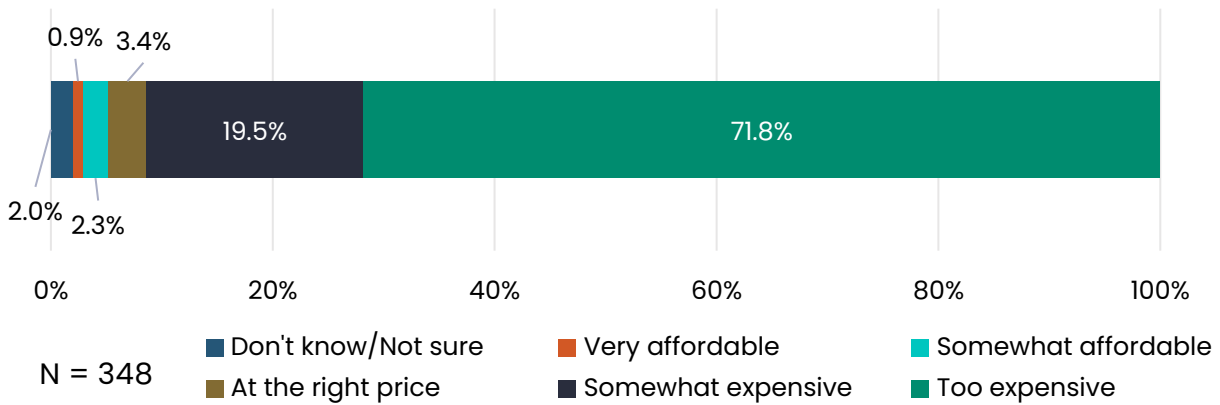


Figure 8.6: Please rate your perceptions of renting in the County/City/Town

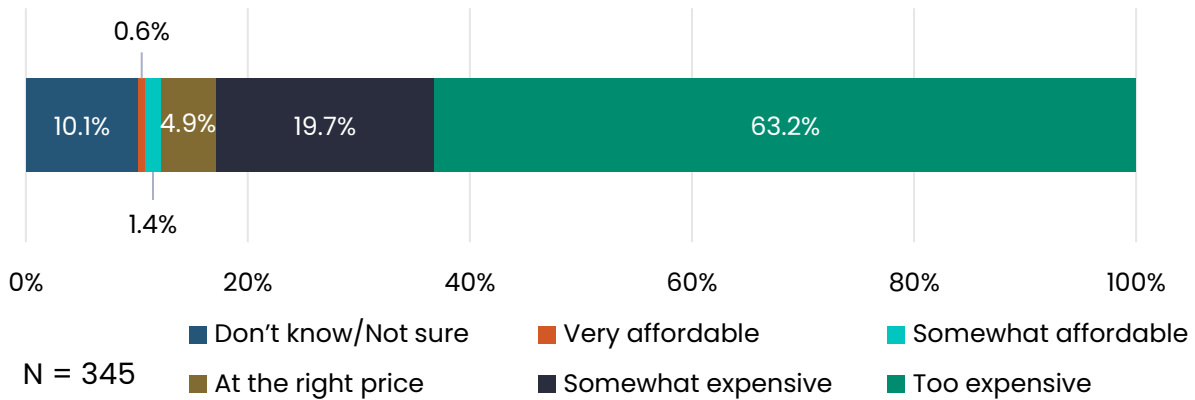


Figure 8.7: Would you like to see the housing stock increase in the County/City/Town?

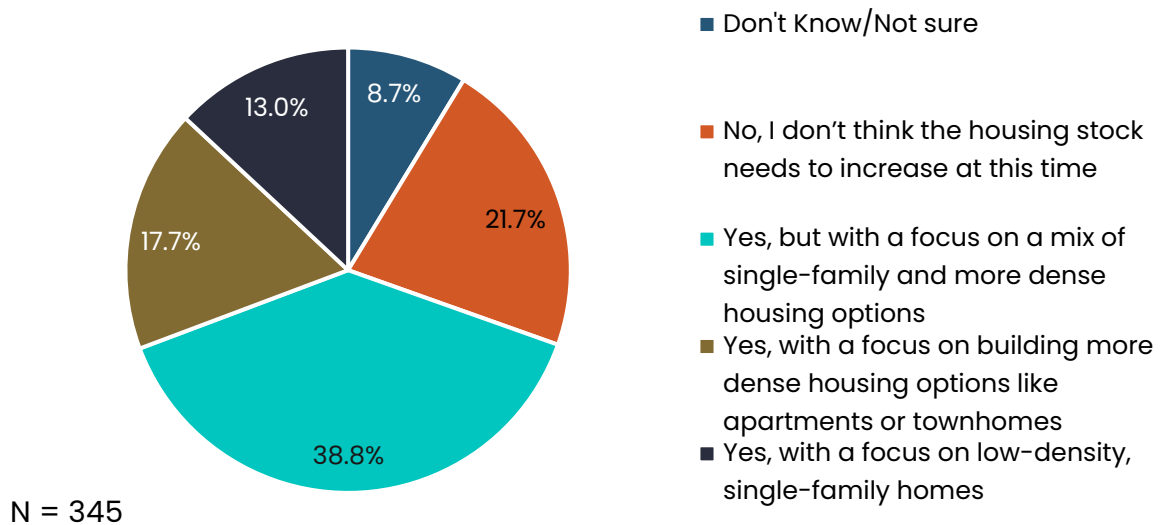
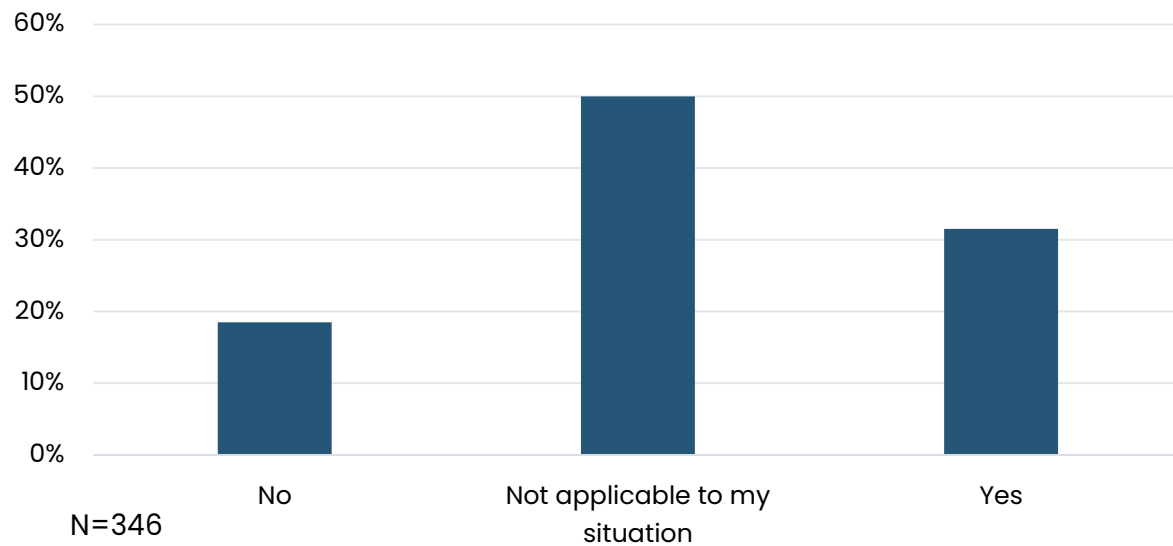
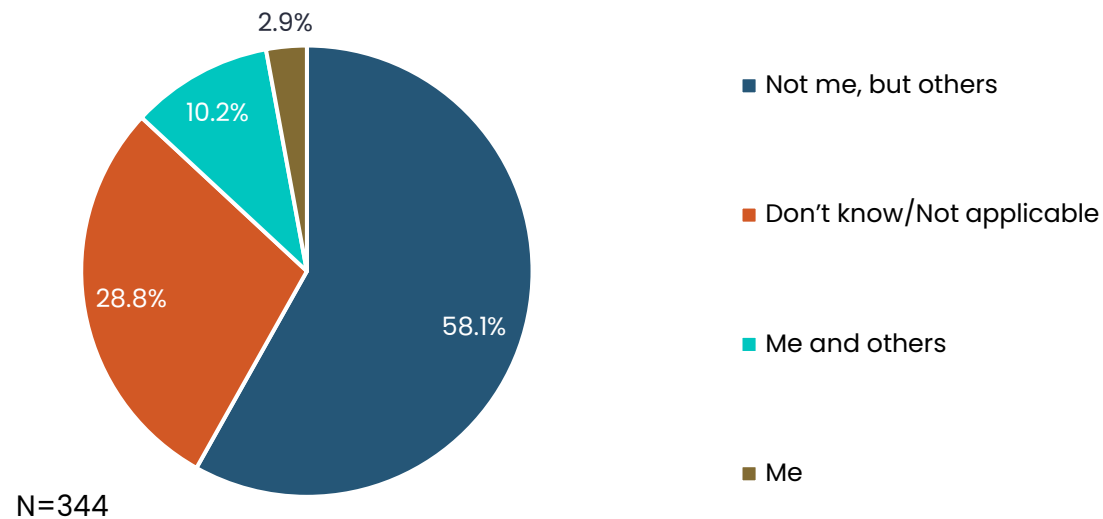


Figure 8.8: Within the past 3 years, have you had difficulty finding suitable housing within your budget in the County/City/Town?



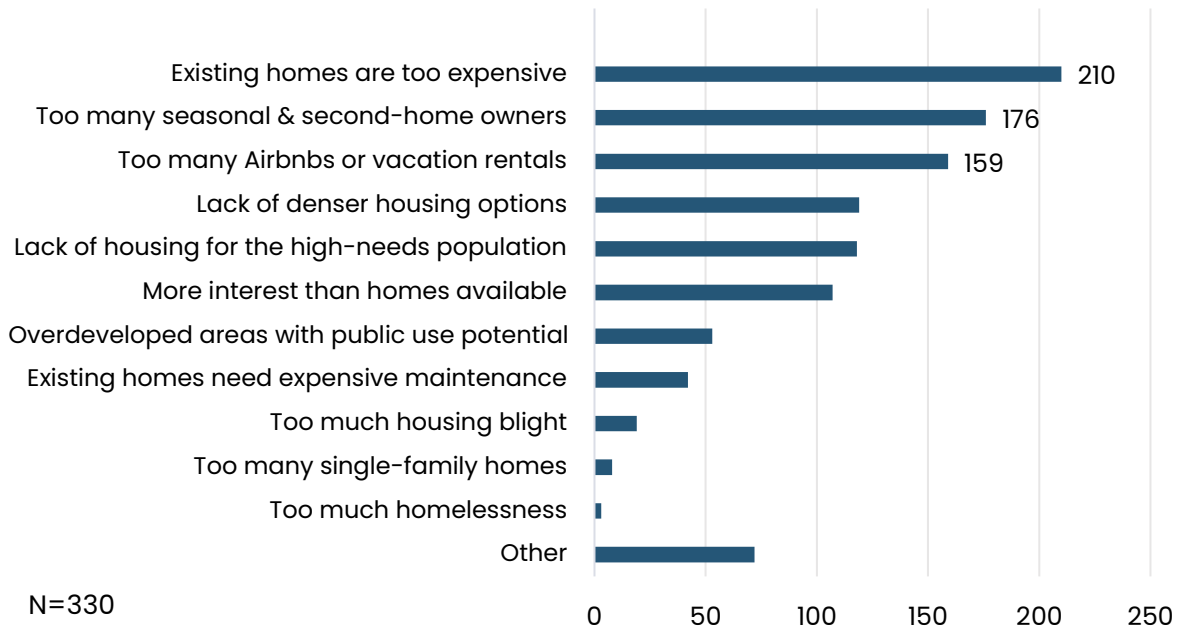
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.9: Within the past 3 years, have you or anyone you know been displaced from their home in the County/City/Town due to rising housing costs?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.10: Which, if any, of the following housing aspects are you dissatisfied with in the County/City/Town?⁸⁹



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

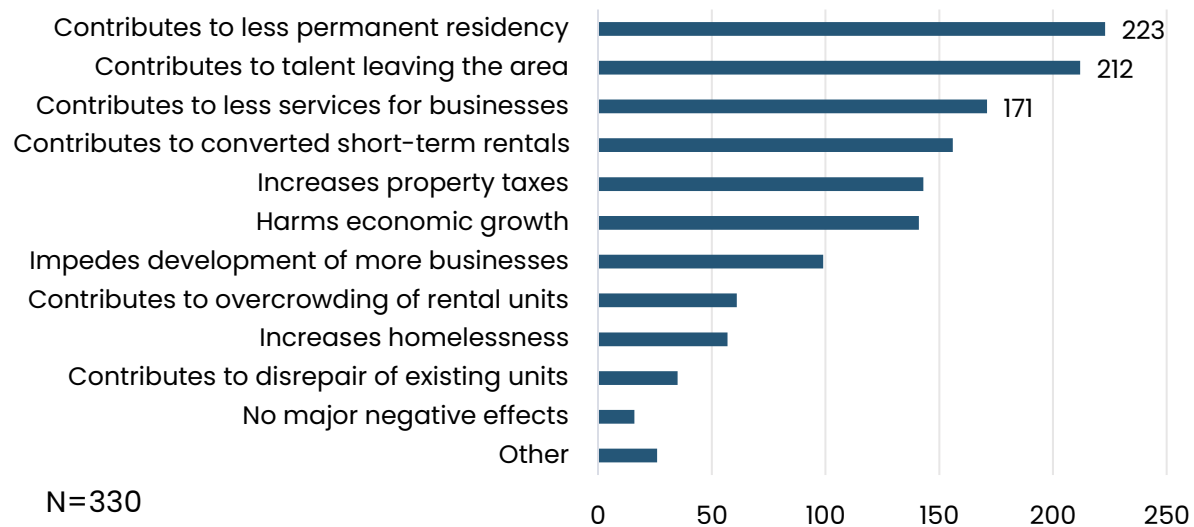
⁸⁹ Full text of “Too many seasonal & second-home owner” was printed as “Too many seasonal residents & second-home owners, which erodes our sense of community”; “Too many Airbnbs or vacation rentals” was printed as “Too much housing being used for Airbnbs or vacation rentals”; “Lack of denser housing options” was printed as “Lack of apartments, middle, & high-density housing options”; “Lack of housing for the high-needs population” was printed as “Lack of housing for under-privileged and high-needs populations”; “More interest than homes available” was printed as “There are not enough homes for the number of people who want to live here”; “Overdeveloped areas with public use potential” was printed as “Overdevelopment of areas that should be conserved for public use”; “Existing homes need expensive maintenance” was printed as “Existing homes require too many expensive repairs and maintenance issues”; “Too much housing blight” was printed as “Too much housing blight or too many homes in disrepair”; “Too much homelessness” was printed as “Too many homeless persons in the community.”

Figure 8.11: Open-Ended Other: Which, if any, of the following housing aspects are you dissatisfied with in the County/City/Town?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

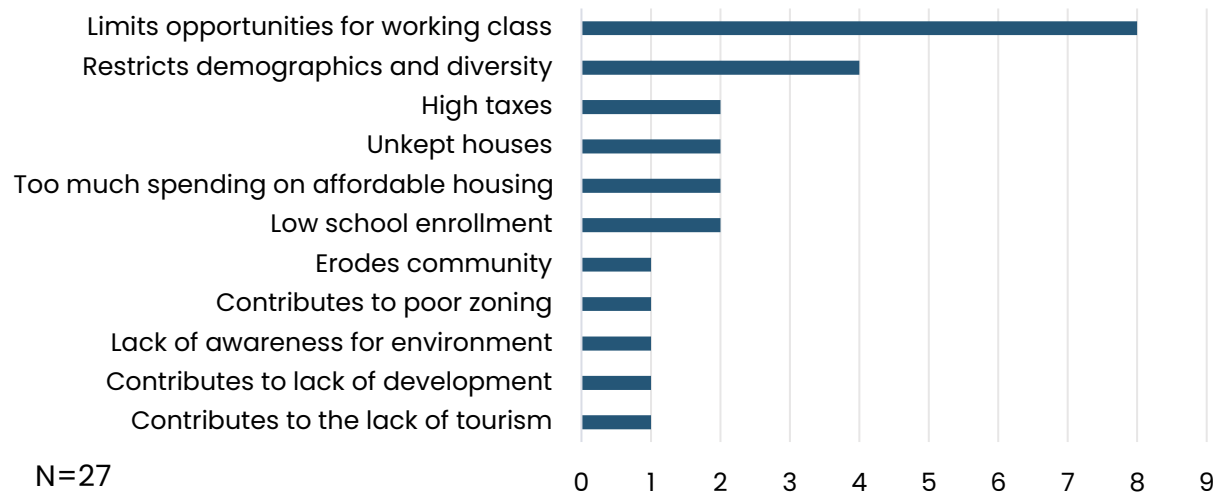
Figure 8.12: In what ways do you think the cost and availability of housing is negatively affecting the economy in the County/City/Town?⁹⁰



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

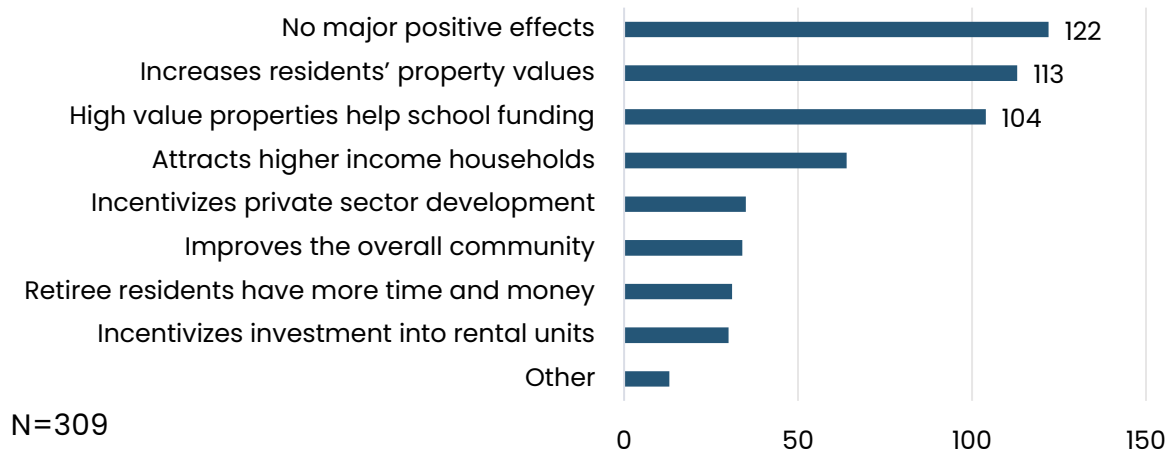
⁹⁰ Full text of "Contributes to less permanent residency" was printed as "Contributes to housing insecurity and/or residents moving more frequently"; "Contributes to less services for businesses" was printed as "Contributes to reduced hours and services for local businesses"; "Contributes to converted short-term rentals" was printed as "Contributes to conversion of housing into short-term rentals (like AirBnBs)"; "Impedes development of more businesses" was printed as "Impedes development of additional retail and/or commercial businesses."

Figure 8.13: Open-Ended Other: In what ways do you think the cost and availability of housing is negatively affecting the economy in the County/City/Town?



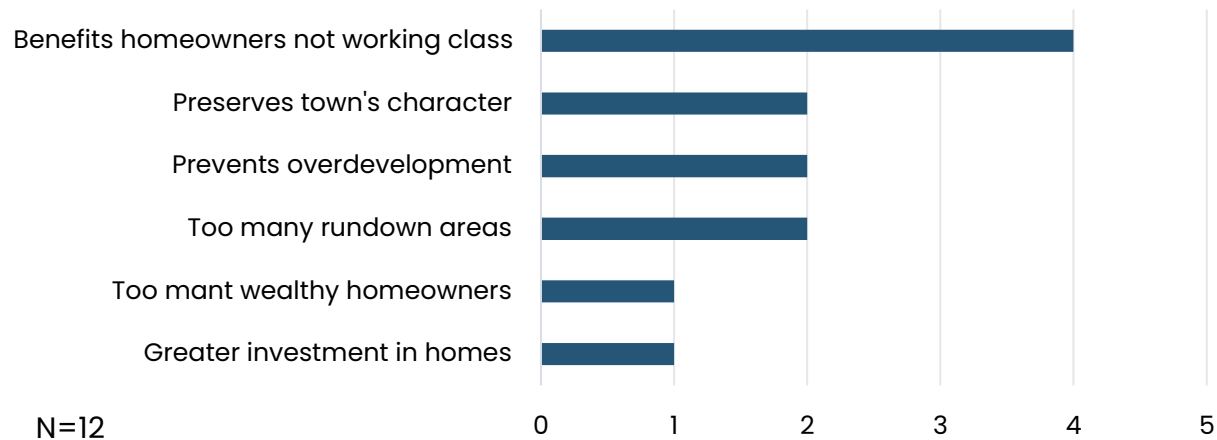
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.14: In what ways do you think the cost and availability of housing is positively affecting the economy in the County/City/Town?⁹¹



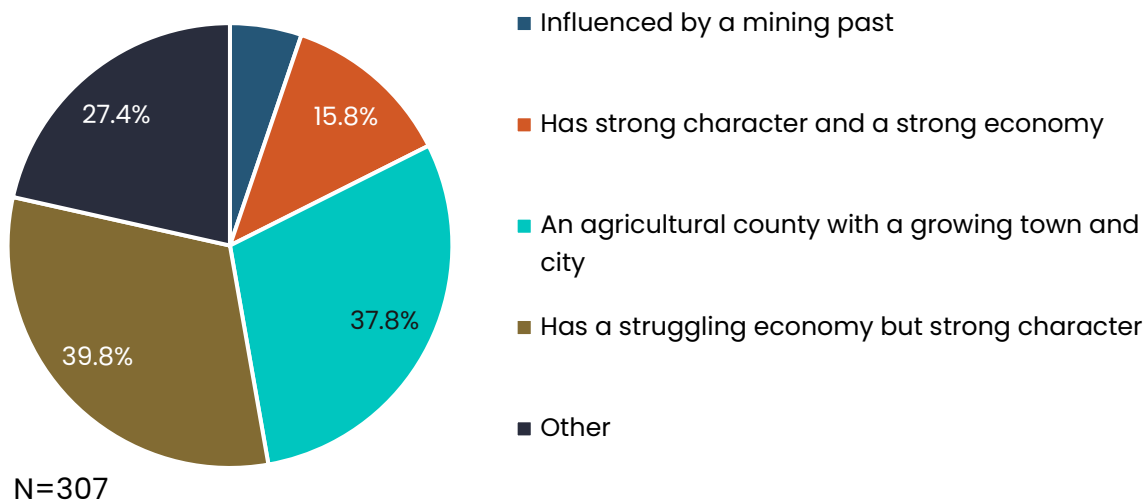
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.15: Open-Ended Other: In what ways do you think the cost and availability of housing is positively affecting the economy in the County/City/Town?



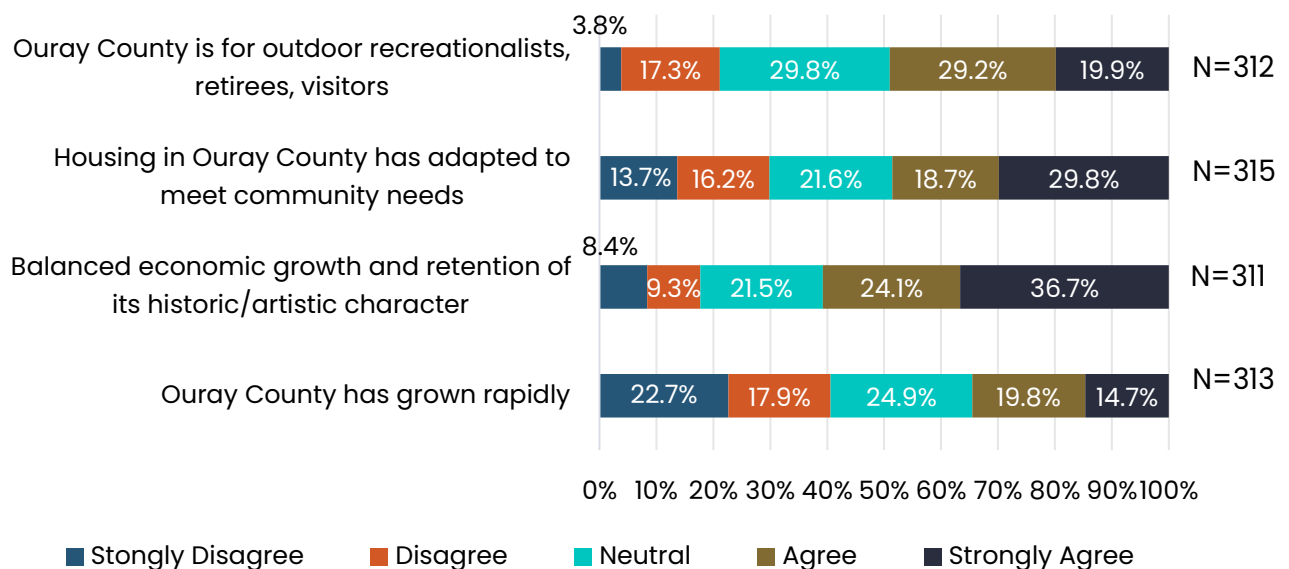
⁹¹ Full text of "High value properties help school funding" was printed as "Increased property values helps funding for local schools"; "Attracts higher income households" was printed as "Brings in higher income households who contribute positively to the economy"; "Incentivizes private sector development" was printed as "Provides an incentive for private sector developers to build more housing"; "Improves the overall community" was printed as "Leads to the overall improvement of the community"; "Retiree residents have more time and money" was printed as "Second-home owners and retirees are able to spend more time and money in Ouray County"; "Incentivizes investment into rental units" was printed as "Provides an incentive for homeowners to improve and invest in rental units."

Figure 8.16: How would you describe Ouray County's community identity now?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

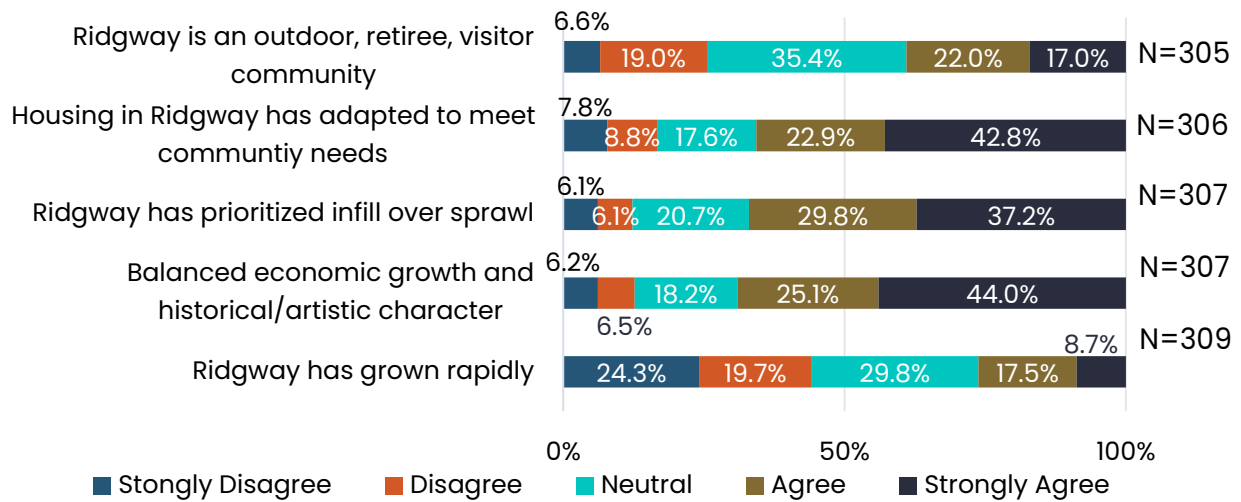
Figure 8.17: Ten years from now, what phrases do you want to be characteristic of Ouray County?⁹²



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

⁹² Full text of "Ouray County is for outdoor recreationalists, retirees, visitors" was printed as "Ouray County remains largely a community for outdoor recreationalists, retirees, and visitors"; "Balanced economic growth and retention of its historic/artistic character" was printed as "Ouray County has thoughtfully balanced the priorities of economic growth and retention of its historic and artistic character".

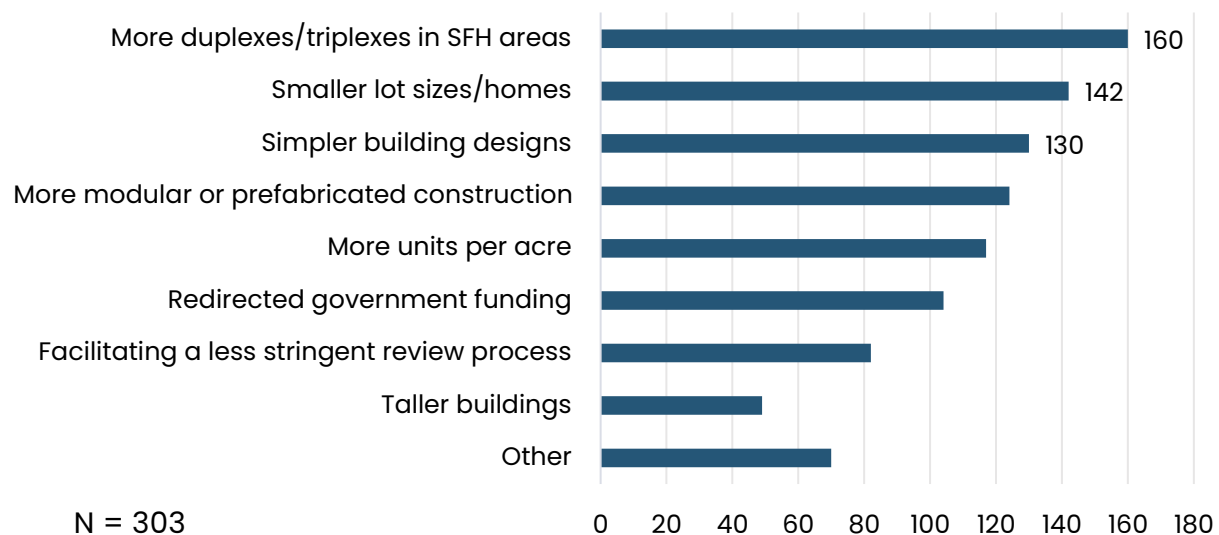
Figure 8.18: Ten years from now, what phrases do you want to be characteristic of the Town of Ridgway?⁹³



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Housing Policy Questions

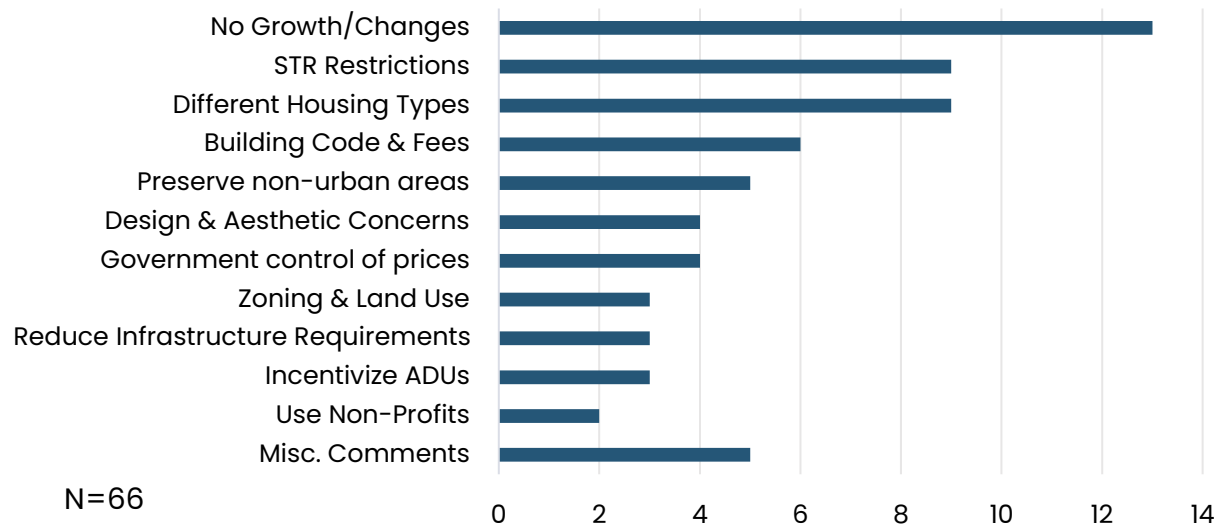
Figure 8.19: What are you willing to have change to facilitate more affordable housing?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

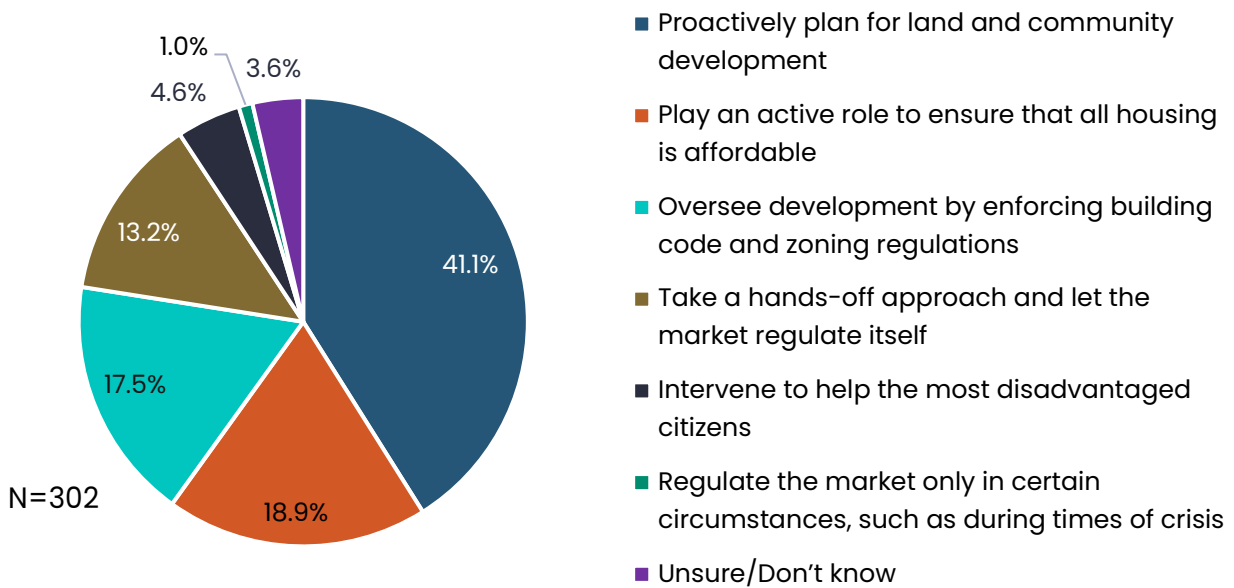
⁹³ Full text of "Ridgway is for outdoor recreationalists, retirees, visitors" was printed as "Ridgway remains largely a community for outdoor recreationalists, retirees, and visitors"; "Ridgway has prioritized infill over sprawl" was printed as "Ridgway has managed growth by focusing on infill of vacant lots rather than urban sprawl"; "Balanced economic growth and retention of its historic/artistic character" was printed as "Ridgway has thoughtfully balanced the priorities of economic growth and retention of its historic and artistic character".

Figure 8.20: Open-Ended Other: What are you willing to have change to facilitate more affordable housing?



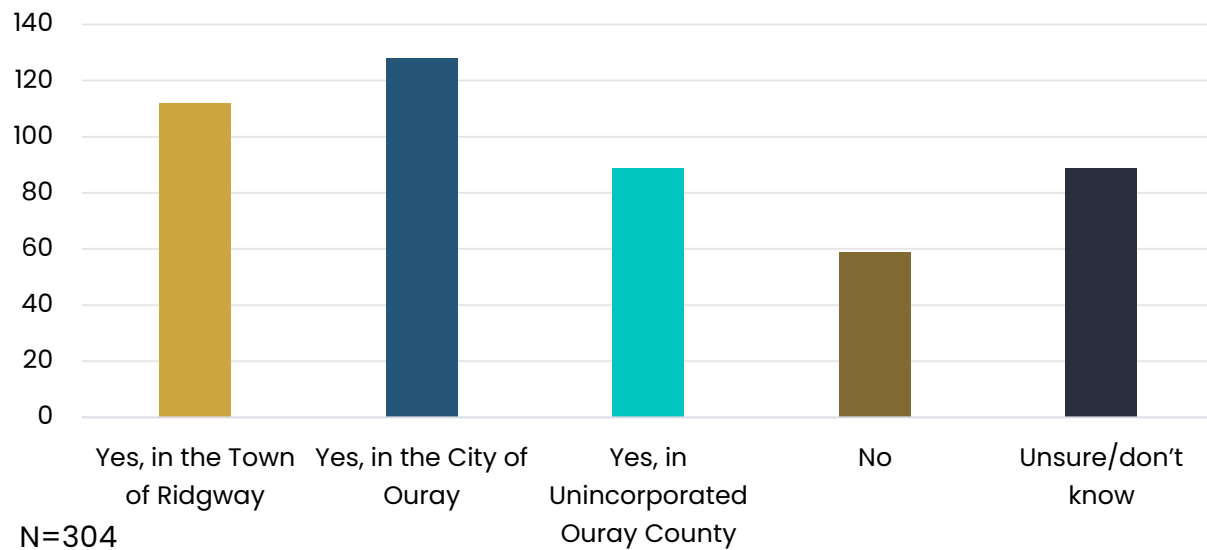
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.21: What should the local government's role be in regulating the housing market?



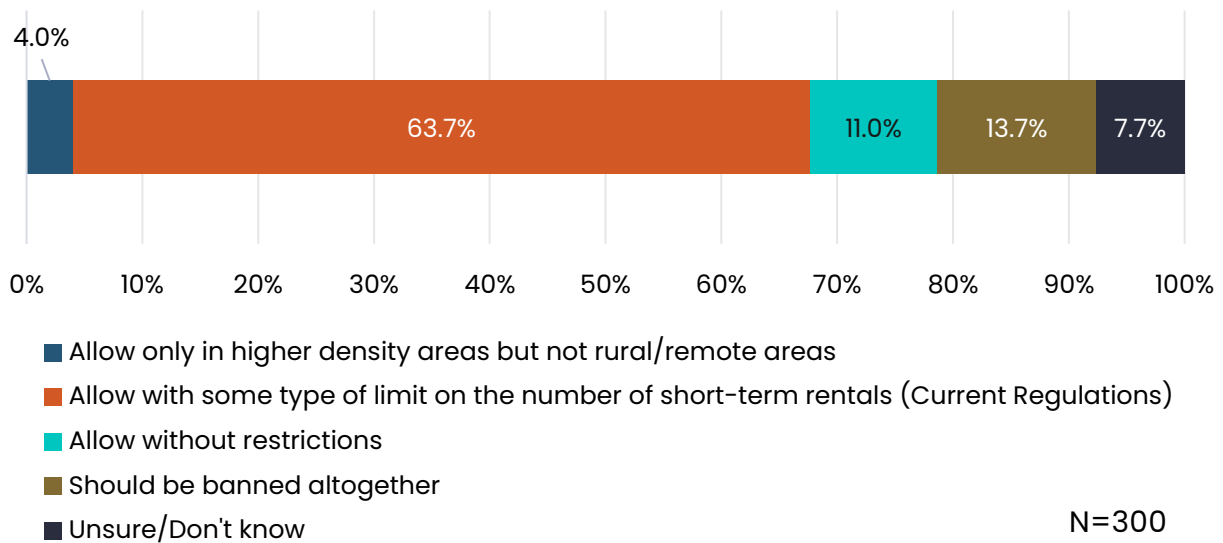
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.22: Are there too many short-term rentals in the Ouray County Region?



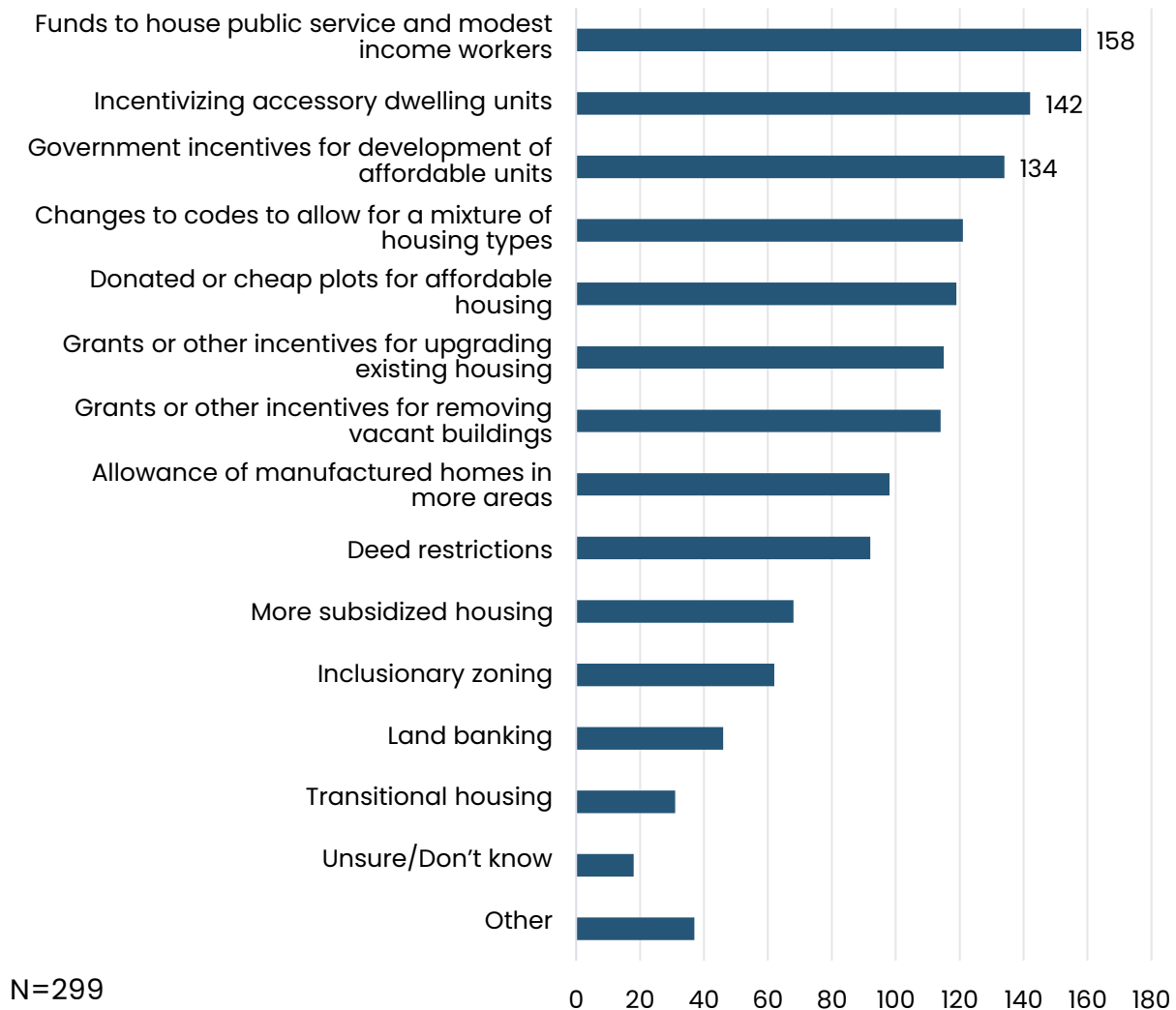
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.23: What do you believe the local government should do related to short-term rentals in the City, Town, and County?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

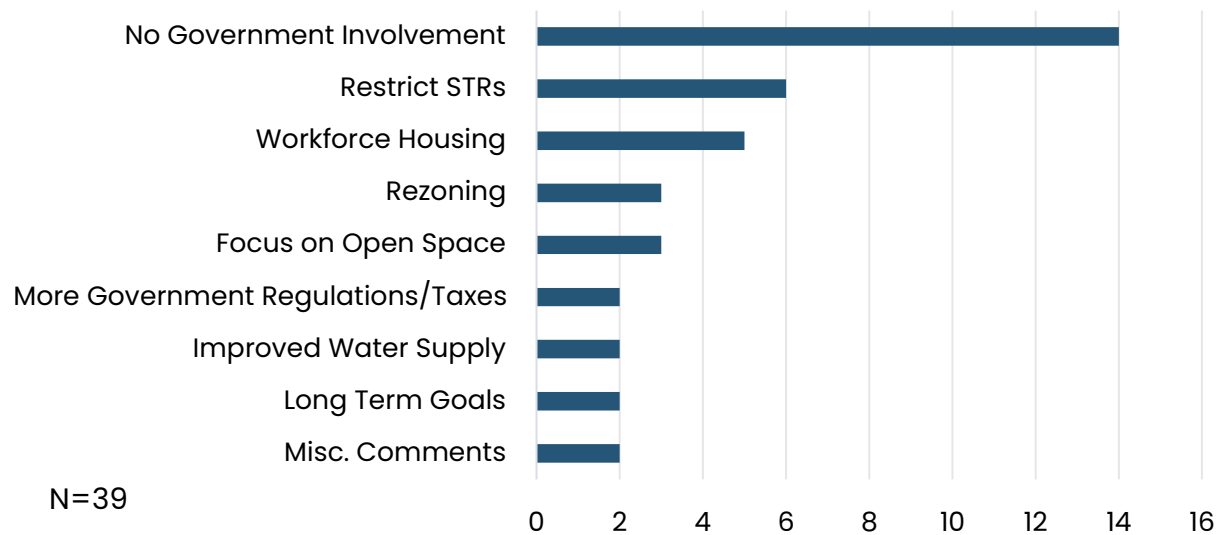
Figure 8.24: What tools would you be in favor of local government or non-profit partners using in order to facilitate more housing?⁹⁴



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

⁹⁴ Full text of "Funds to house public service and modest income workers" was printed as "Contributing funding to housing for public service and other modest income workers (such as

Figure 8.25: Open-Ended Other: What tools would you be in favor of local government or non-profit partners using in order to facilitate more housing?

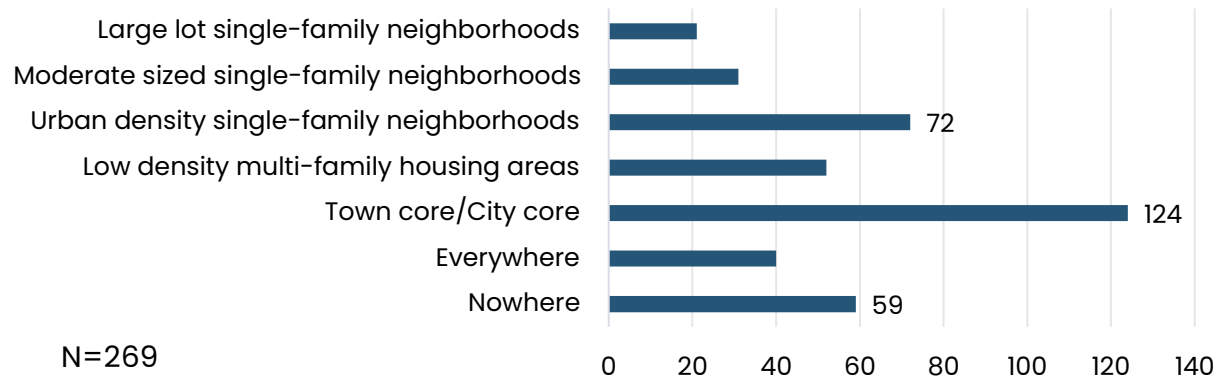


Source: Points Consulting, 2025

teachers, healthcare workers, and service workers)”; “Government incentives for development of affordable units” was printed as “Local government incentives for development of affordable units”; “Changes to codes to allow for a mixture of housing types” was printed as “Changes to zoning code, regulations, and requirements to allow for a mixture of housing types”; “Donated or cheap plots for affordable housing” was printed as “Donation or low-cost transfer of land or run-down homes for re-use as affordable homes”; “Grants or other incentives for upgrading existing housing” was printed as “Grants or other incentives for remodeling/upgrading existing housing”; “Grants or other incentives for removing vacant buildings” was printed as “Grants or other incentives for removing underutilized/ vacant buildings.”

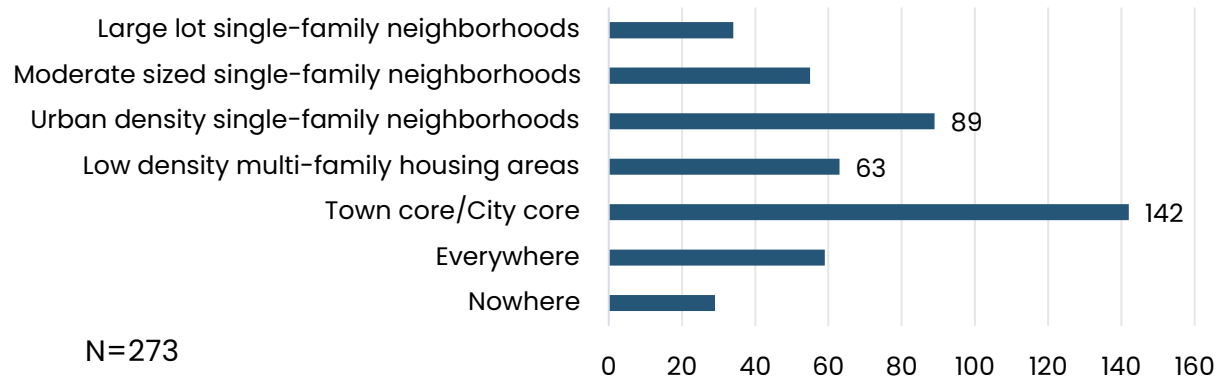
Locational Preference Questions

Figure 8.26: What type of neighborhoods in the County/City/Town would be most suitable for the multi-family/apartments housing type?



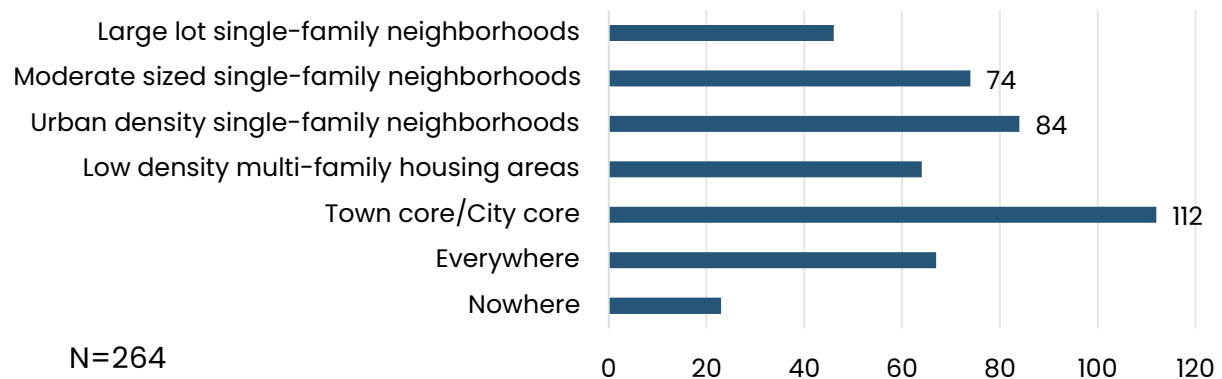
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.27: What type of neighborhoods in the County/City/Town would be most suitable for the townhome/condominium housing type?



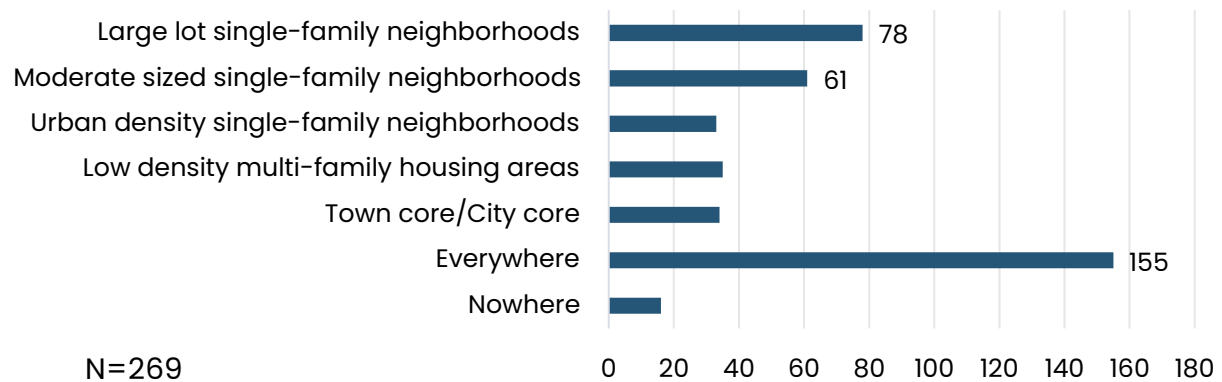
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.28: What type of neighborhoods in the County/City/Town would be most suitable for the duplex/triplex housing type?



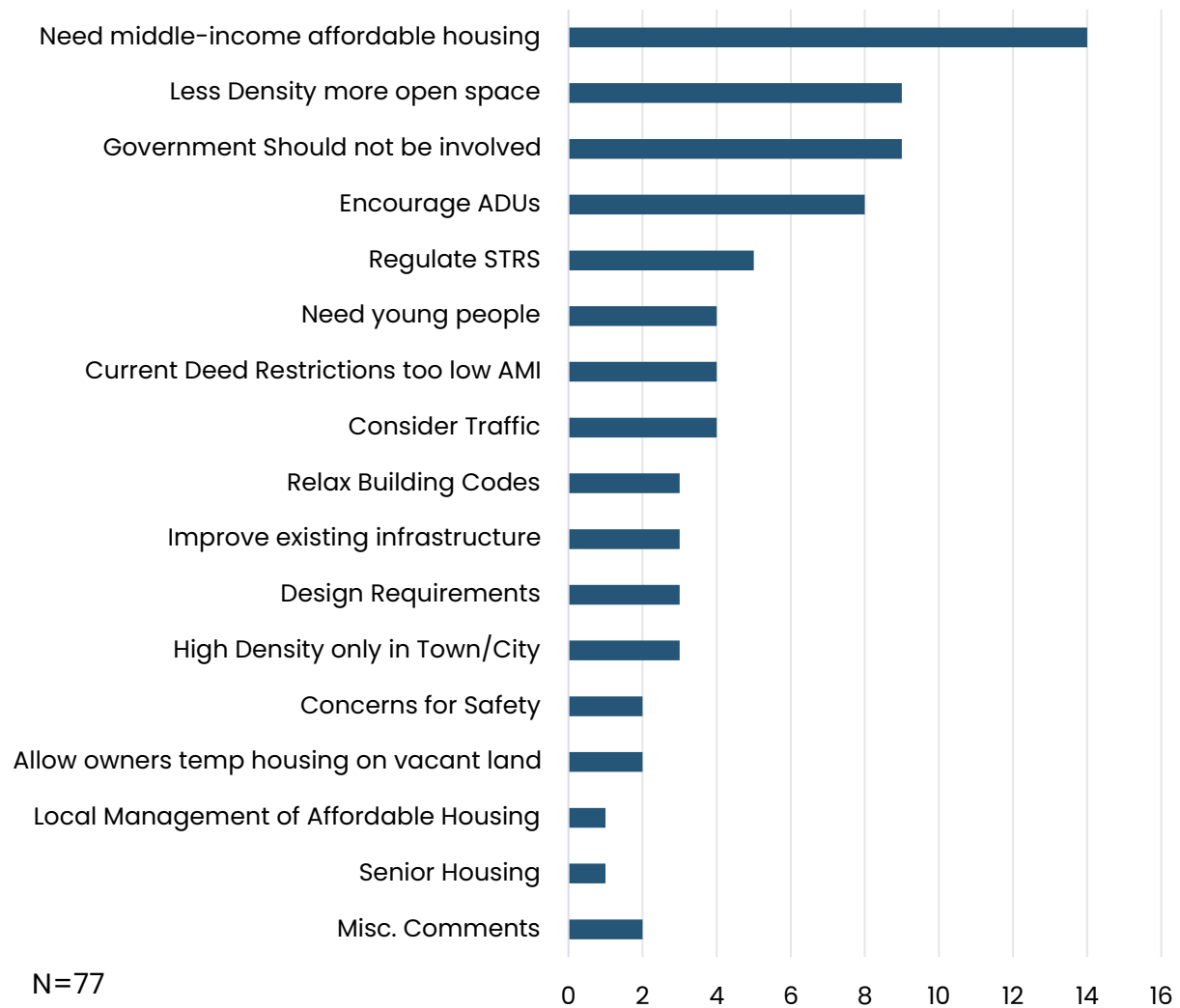
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.29: What type of neighborhoods in the County/City/Town would be most suitable for the accessory dwelling units?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

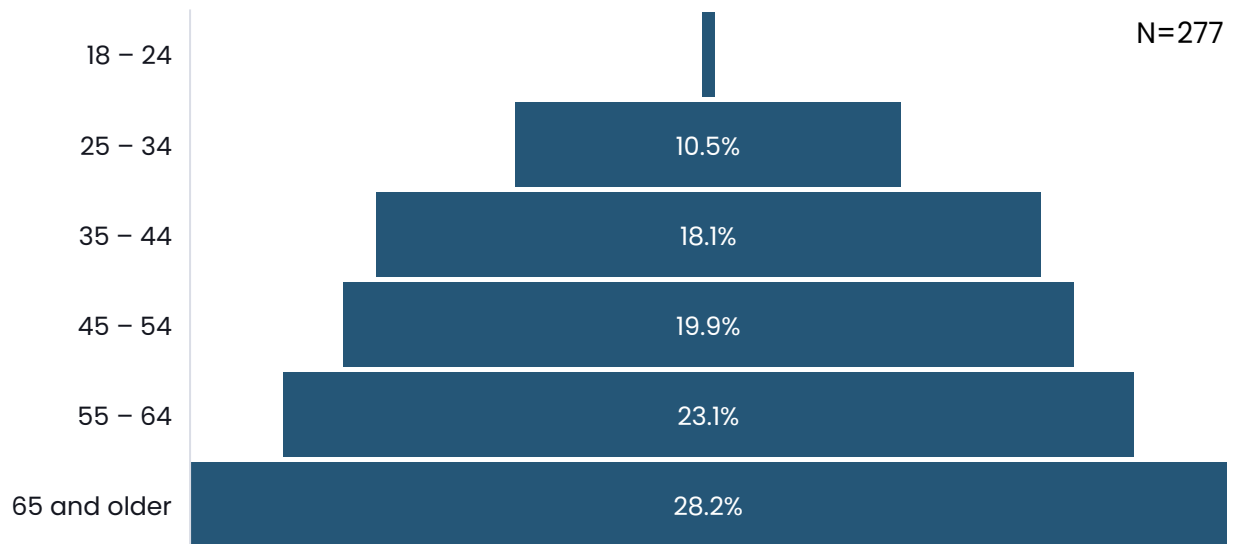
Figure 8.30: Please share any additional thoughts or comments related to housing in the County/Town/City (Please specify):



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

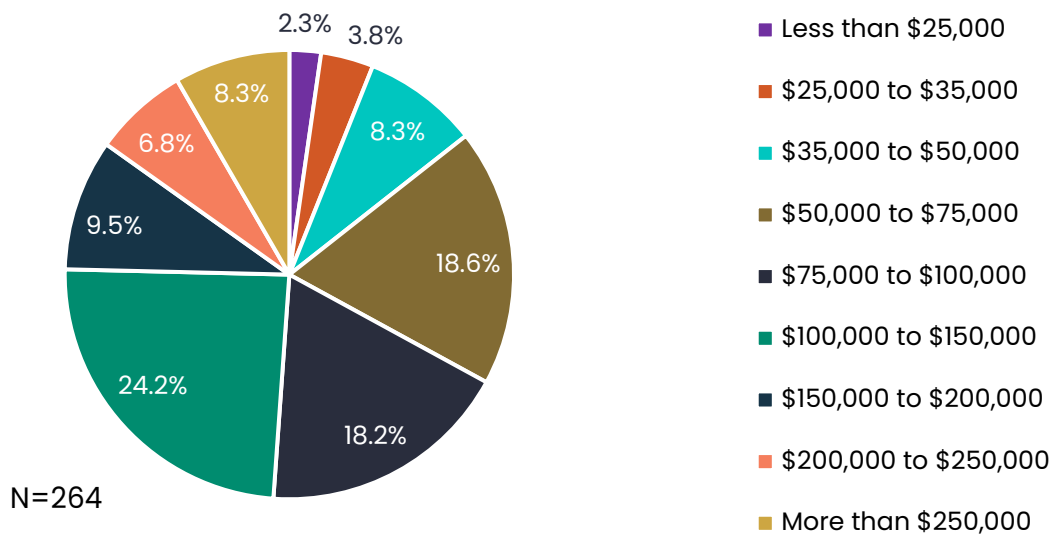
Additional Demographic Questions

Figure 8.31: What is your age?



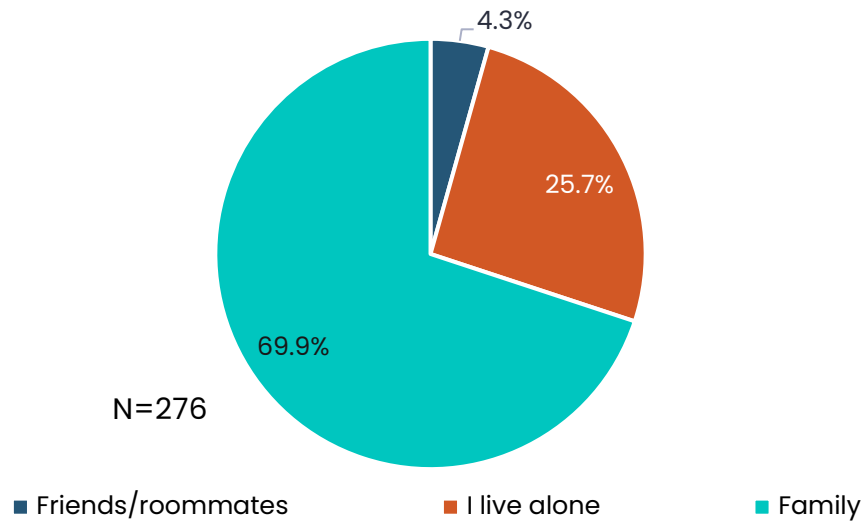
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.32: What is your household's gross annual income?



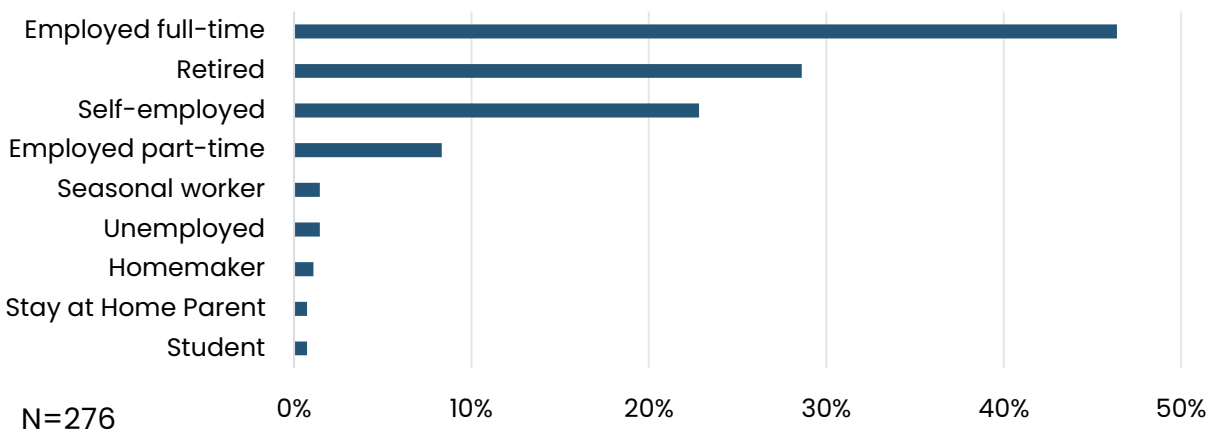
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.33: Who else lives in your home?



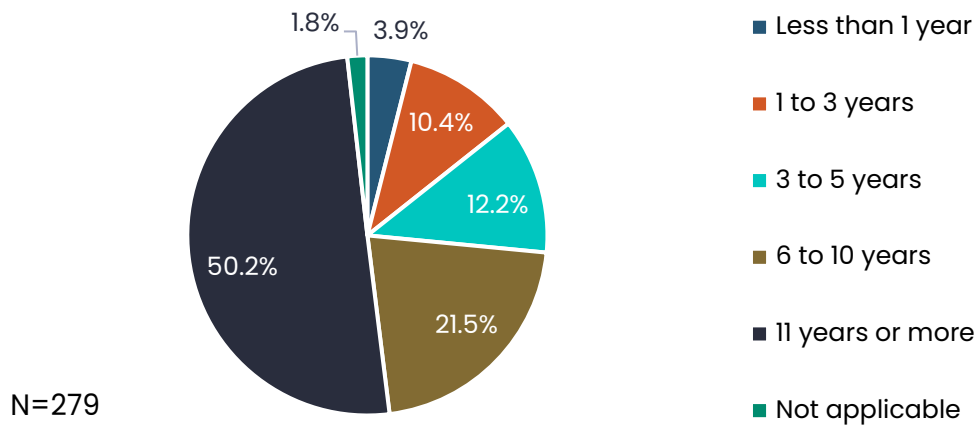
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.34: What is your employment situation?



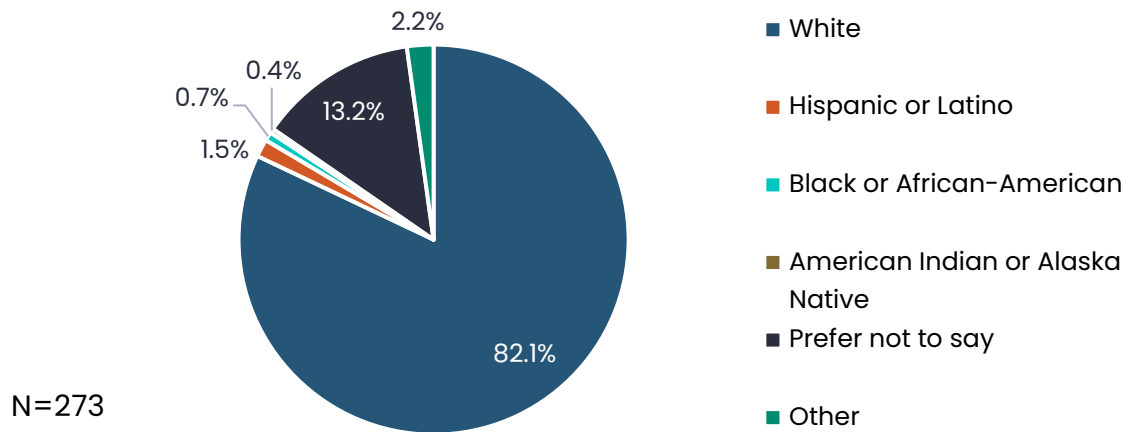
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.35: How long have you lived in the County/City/Town?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.36: What is your race/ethnicity?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

9. Literature Review

Past Housing Studies

2024 Ouray County Rental Housing Demand Analysis⁹⁵

Home Trust of Ouray County sponsored an Employee Housing Questionnaire. About 70% of homeowners said they live in a single-family home, and only one-third of renters do. About a quarter of renters live in apartments or condominiums, and approximately 8% live in hotels, RVs, vehicles, or tents. Homeowners were more likely to be satisfied with their housing than renters, and 74% of renters said that finding affordable housing that met their needs was either moderately difficult or very difficult.

Among respondents who said they are likely to move within Ouray County, almost all listed a single-family home as their first-choice housing type. The most common second choices were manufactured homes, townhomes, or apartments. Most of those planning to move want to live in Ridgway, while the next largest group prefers the City of Ouray. All except three of those likely to move to the Town of Ridgway indicated a need for homes with fewer than two bedrooms.

Region 10 Mind the Gap Workforce Housing Study⁹⁶

Region 10 includes Ouray, Delta, Gunnison, Montrose, San Miguel, and Hinsdale counties. The report estimates that 6,600 housing units will be needed over the next 10 years to meet projected housing demand. Jobs in the region have grown at twice the annual rate of housing supply, indicating that housing construction has not kept pace with demand over the past decade.

Planning Documents

Town of Ridgway Master Plan (2019)⁹⁷

The population of Montrose, San Miguel, and Ouray counties is projected to double between 2016 and 2050, with the Town of Ridgway expected to add between 150 and 700 new residents. The City of Ouray's growth potential is limited by topographic

⁹⁵ Home Trust of Ouray County. *Ouray County Rental Housing Demand Analysis*. Accessed October 20, 2025. https://ouraycountyco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/20574/F-1----FINAL_OurayCountyRentalDemandPlus_July2024.

⁹⁶ Region 10. *Mind the Gap: Evaluating Workforce Housing in Colorado's Region 10*. 2022. https://region10.net/community-resources/community-development/mind-the-gap-housing-needs-assessment/#flipbook-df_12358/1/.

⁹⁷ Town of Ridgway. *Town of Ridgway Master Plan*. June 12, 2019. https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/sites/townofridgway/files/2019.06.12%20Ridgway%20Master%20Plan_Reduced.pdf.

constraints, while the Town of Ridgway has more room to grow but lacks the infrastructure and services necessary to support major new development. The Master Plan outlines the community's vision and values and consolidates various planning efforts into a single comprehensive document. The core community values include: a healthy natural environment; a strong sense of community and inclusivity; small-town character and identity; a vibrant and balanced economy; and well-managed growth. All goals and action plans in the Master Plan are centered on these values.

***Ouray County Master Plan (2025)*⁹⁸**

The four pillars of this Master Plan are: the natural environment, land use, infrastructure, and economic development. The natural environment is especially important due to its impact on quality of life, its potential to attract tourism, and the resources it provides for agriculture in the County. Ouray County has diverse topography, with different regions varying in their suitability for development based on terrain and existing infrastructure. There are currently 116 active farms in the County, and agricultural use represents the primary demand for water in the region.

The City of Ouray's 2024 Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) concluded that 270 workforce housing units will be needed in the County by 2032. The assessment also identified a capital gap in housing for households earning between 60% and 140% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

The primary transportation infrastructure in the County is the road network. A new public transit system began operating in 2024. This system offers service to a limited number of locations within and outside of the County. However, funding remains a major barrier to maintaining and improving transportation infrastructure.

***Town of Ridgway Economic Implications of Land Use Summary Memorandum*⁹⁹**

The key findings of this report are that, if the Town of Ridgway grows as projected by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, fewer than 200 new residents will be added by 2050. At the current residential density, Ridgway would have more than enough vacant land to accommodate this level of growth. However, real estate professionals

⁹⁸ Ouray County. *Ouray County Master Plan*. February 2025.

<https://www.ouraycountyco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21045/OC-2025-Master-Plan-Final-021225?bidid=>.

⁹⁹ Town of Ridgway. *Economic Implications of Land Use Summary Memorandum*. September 19, 2024.

<https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/sites/townofridgway/files/documents/06%20EOP.Ridgway%20PC%20Memo%202024%200919.pdf>.

interviewed for this project anticipate that Ridgway will grow faster than these projections, which would create a need for higher residential densities and greater demand for townhomes, multifamily housing, and similar options.

They also expect job growth to accelerate, potentially requiring increased commercial development densities as well.

Region 10 CEDS (2021–2026)¹⁰⁰

The Region 10 area includes the counties of Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel. As of 2021, the region had a population of 107,387, representing a 7% increase since 2010. By 2030, the population is projected to grow by another 10%. Ouray County had a population of 4,874 in 2021, an increase of 11.5% since 2010, and is projected to grow another 6.8% to 5,204 people by 2030.

Ridgway is designated as a “Space to Create” community, which provides more opportunities for long-term affordable workforce housing and spaces for employment in the creative sector. However, tourism remains the leading base industry.

The five strategies for economic growth identified in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) are:

- Small business & entrepreneurship support
- Strengthen primary industry clusters in agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing
- Create vibrant and livable communities
- Support development of robust and resilient infrastructure
- Develop and retain a skilled and resilient workforce

Alternative Futures for the Telluride Region, Colorado¹⁰¹

This study forecasted nine different alternatives in the next 20 years in the region. These were based on different levels of population growth and public policies. The high growth scenario predicts that all the private developable land in the region will be built on in the next 20 years, and the low growth scenario predicts this will be in the next 40 years. These forecasts indicate that changes to policy and stronger communication between municipalities are needed if the character of the Telluride region is to be maintained.

¹⁰⁰ Region 10. *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2021–2026*.

https://region10.net/community-resources/community-development/regional-economic-development-planning/#flipbook-df_12368/1/.

¹⁰¹ Telluride Foundation. *Alternative Futures for the Telluride Region, Colorado*. May 2010.

https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/sites/townofridgway/files/Telluride_Alternative_Futures_Web_Report_May2010.pdf.

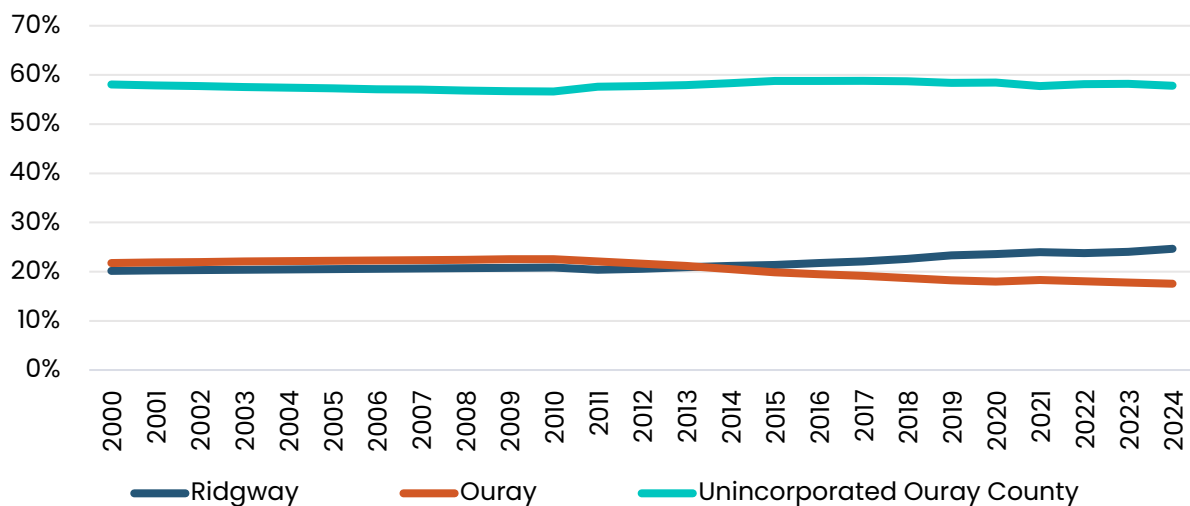
Appendix A: In-Depth Data & Methodology

This appendix presents in-depth data and methodological details not explicitly included in the main body of the report. The information here reflects findings from the population and housing needs forecasts, supportive housing unit forecast, migration data, and displacement risk.

Population & Housing Needs Forecast

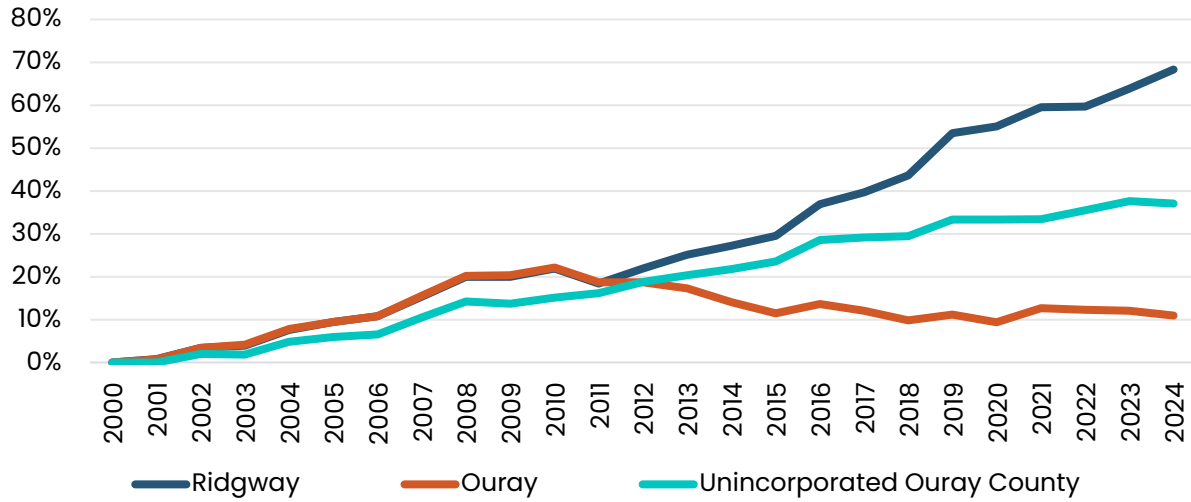
The following figures illustrate the regional population trends our team analyzed to come to our assumption of countywide growth for the Town of Ridgway. Figure A.3 through Figure A.5 had particular bearing on our assumption. Several times in the past 25 years, Ridgway has accounted for 50% or more of Ouray County's growth. Ridgway's share of countywide growth has picked up particularly over the last five and ten years. Using the qualitative data of the Town and County's intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to direct growth to urban areas, we felt Ridgway could realistically drive countywide growth by 55%, on average over the next 20 years.

Figure A.1: Regional Share of Countywide Population, 2000–2024



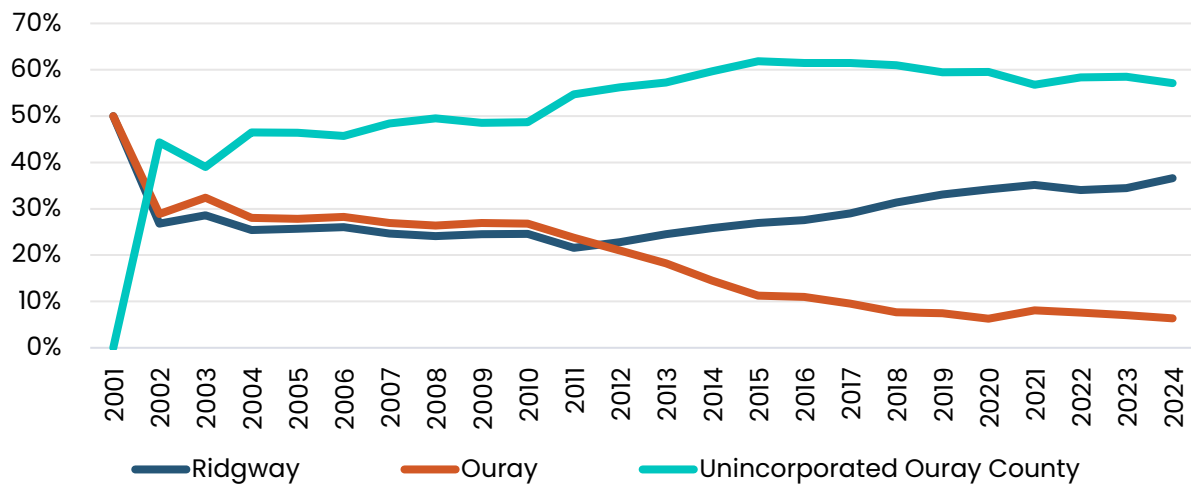
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

Figure A.2: Cumulative Population Growth by Region, 2000–2024



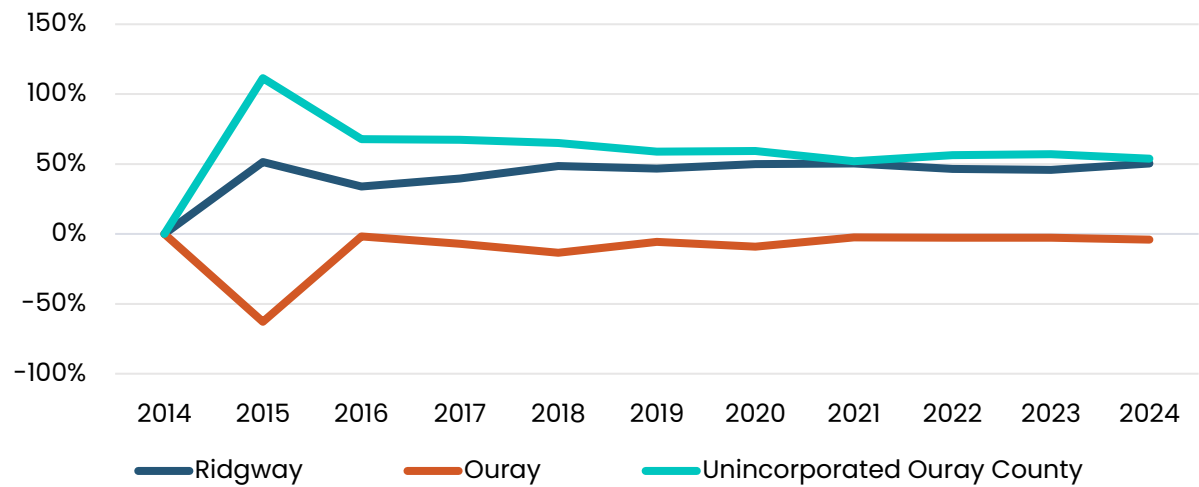
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

Figure A.3: Share of Countywide Population Growth by Region, 2000–2024



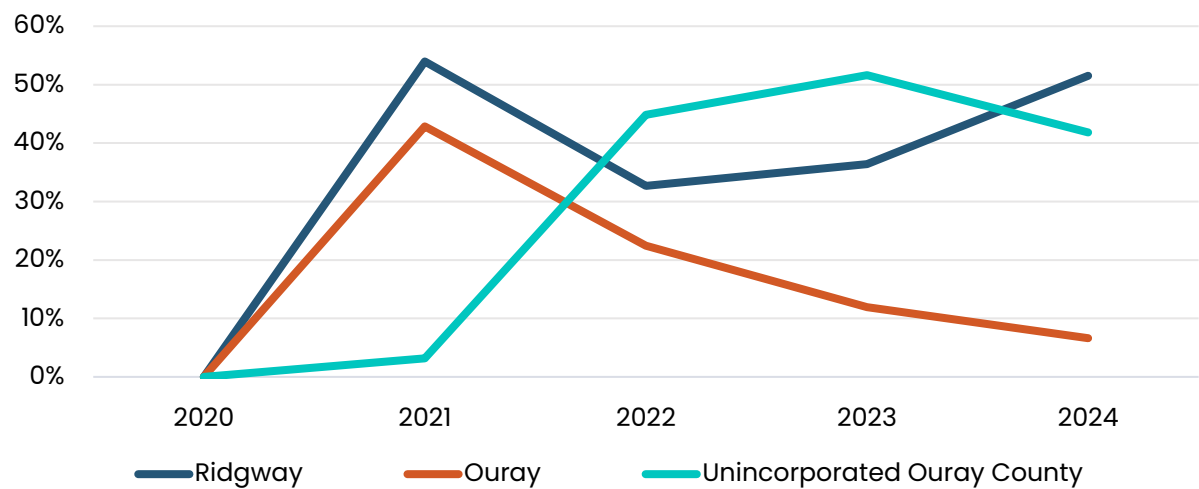
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

Figure A.4: Share of Countywide Population Growth by Region, 2014-2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

Figure A.5: Share of Countywide Population Growth by Region, 2020-2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

Housing Needs by Income Level Methodology & Additional Data

The following is a description of our full methodology for reaching our housing needs by income level forecast for Ouray County and the Town of Ridgway. The first step was determining what the current AMI is and what the past AMIs were to establish a baseline, along with doing the same for the number of occupied housing units.

We pulled HUD AMIs from the official website with their query tool.¹⁰² Our team then charted each AMI for Ouray County from 2017–2024. To smooth the values, we calculated a three-year moving average (MA), found the year-over-year percentage change in that three-year MA, and indexed the three-year MA to 2024 using the percentage changes to ensure the trend matched the current year AMI (Figure A.6). We carried out the same process for the number of households as well, using Census Bureau data and Esri Business Analyst data for 2024 (as Census had not yet released housing unit estimates by the time of our assessment for 2024) shown in Figure A.7.

Once a baseline was established for AMI tabulation, we pulled household income distributions from the Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates, Table S1901. We then connected the bucketed income distributions to the AMIs in each year to reach our **Market-Driven** AMI distribution percentages for the forecast. The Market-Driven distribution was then applied to our housing needs forecast estimates for both the **Expected Growth** and **Potential Growth** scenarios to fit the distributions to our estimated needs.

Our **Needs-Driven** forecast was built on HUD’s Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data. For these tabulations, we pulled data from their official site as well, specifically for Ouray County.¹⁰³ These data are always a few years out of date compared to Census Data because they require more in-depth analysis of raw ACS data. We then further broke down the 100%+ AMI level to 100–120% AMI, 120–150% AMI, and 150% AMI according to survey data we collected. To bring the data current, we multiplied the percentage of households that are cost-burdened by AMI level by the most recent number of occupied households.

These final, current estimates then represented the number of households needed by AMI level to ensure all households were not cost-burdened. The final count for units needed (regardless of AMI level) was approximately 684 units. This estimate did not match up with our forecast of actual needs based on demand for the next 20 years. To

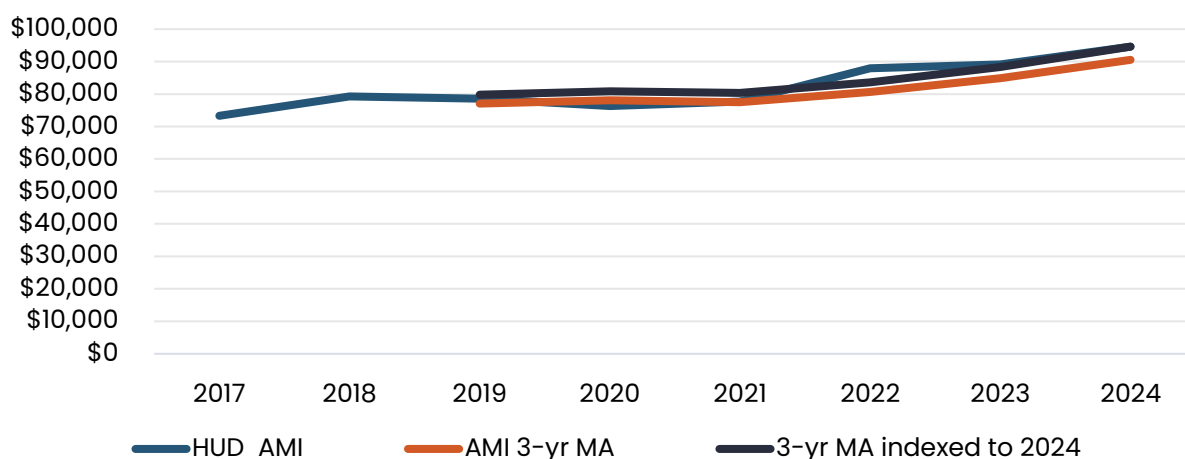
¹⁰² “Income Limits,” Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html>.

¹⁰³ “Consolidated Planning/CHAS Data,” Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html>.

reconcile this difference, we played out a scenario where these units by respective AMI level were built in addition to what the current AMI distribution was. We also felt that this was not necessarily a safe assumption (that all housing units built in the next 20 years were based on cost-burden need), so we applied a weight to account for private market development. These factors put together resulted in our Needs-Driven distribution (Figure 4.3 and Figure A.8).

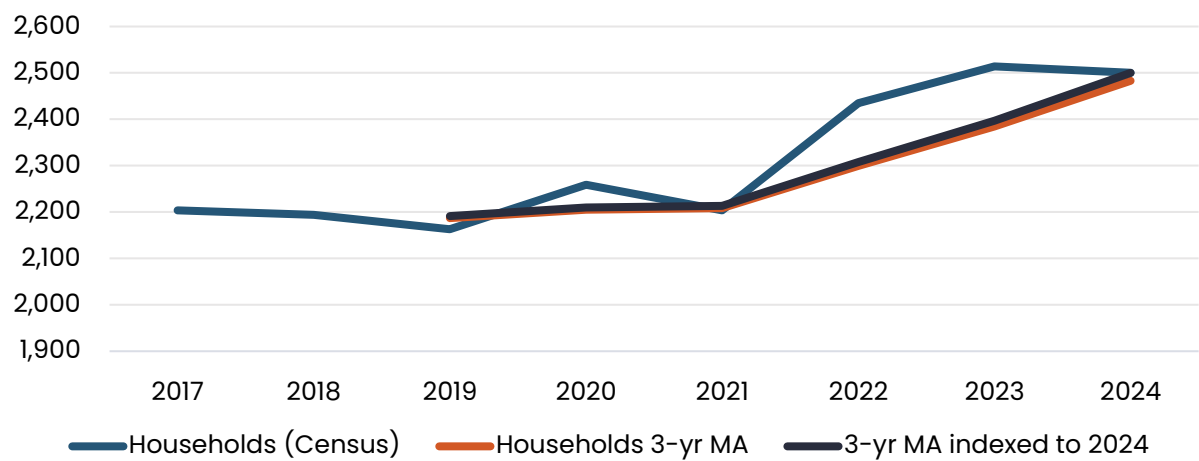
The distribution was truly what would play out based on currently cost-burdened households, while also accounting for the fact that private market development would happen alongside it. The distribution was then applied to each growth scenario housing needs forecast to fit the needed distribution to our estimates of forecasted housing demand.

Figure A.6: HUD Area Median Incomes for AMI-Level Tabulation



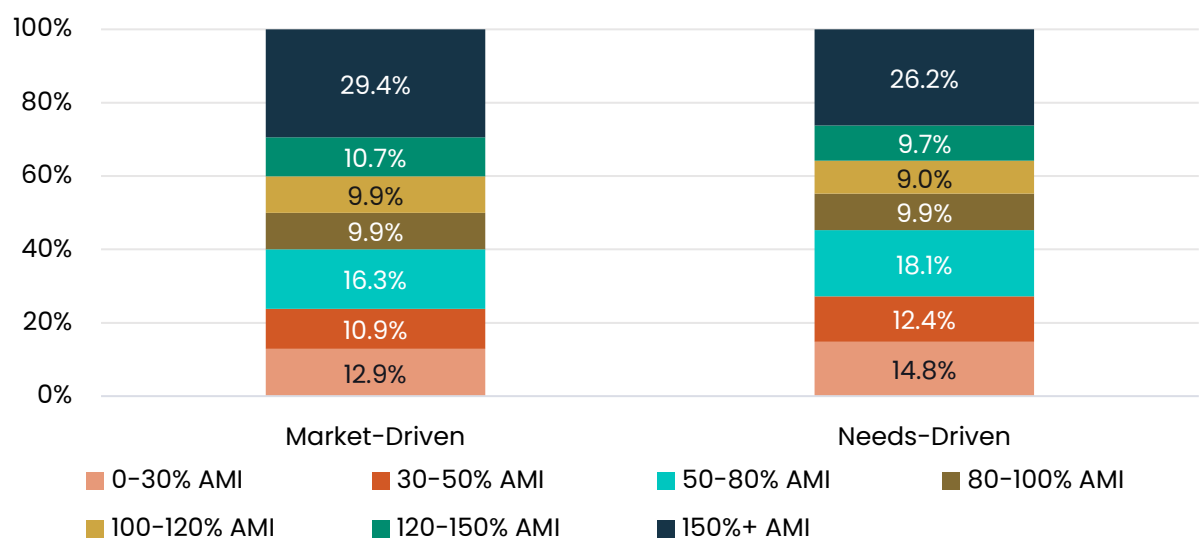
Source: Points Consulting using HUD Income Limits, 2017-2024

Figure A.7: Number of Households for AMI-Level Tabulation



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau 2017-2023, Esri Business Analyst 2024

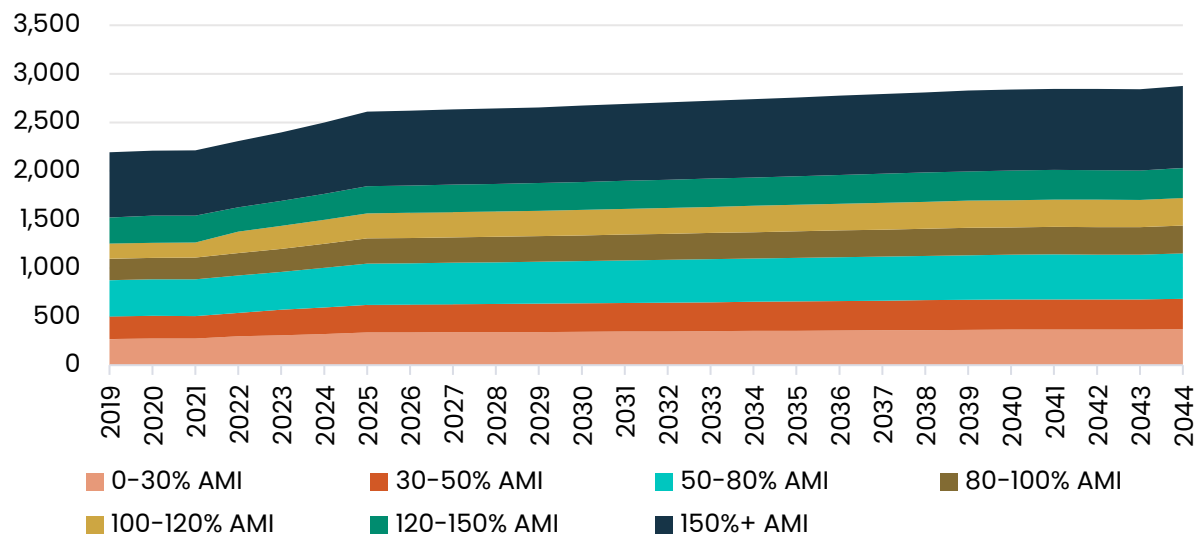
Figure A.8: Market-Driven AMI Distribution vs. Needs-Driven AMI Distribution



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau and HUD CHAS Data

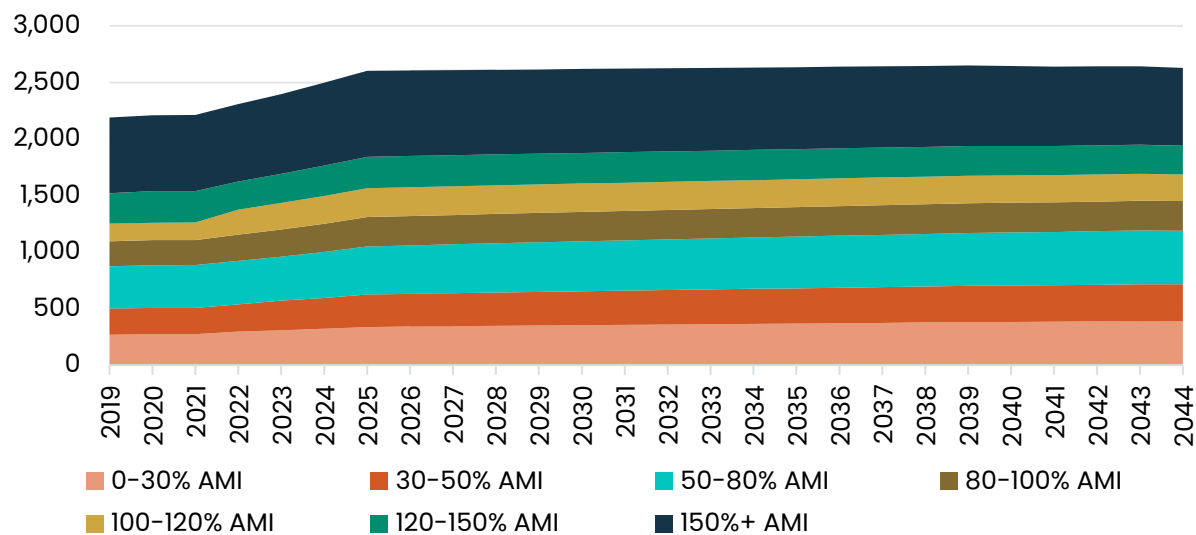
Figure A.9 through Figure A.11 illustrate additional data for the housing needs by income level forecast for Ouray County not included in the body of the report. Table A.1 through Table A.12 report additional data for the housing needs forecast by income level by tenure for both Ouray County and the Town of Ridgway not included in the body of the report.

Figure A.9: Potential Growth Market-Driven Housing Needs Forecast, 2024-2044



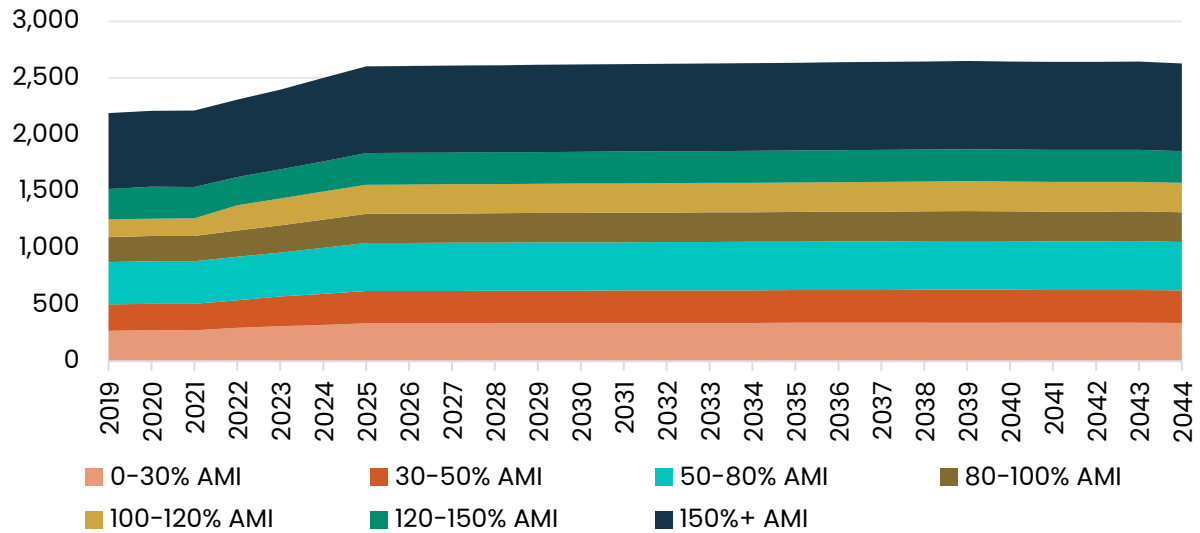
Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Figure A.10: Expected Growth Needs-Driven Housing Needs Forecast, 2024-2044



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Figure A.II: Expected Growth Market-Driven Housing Needs Forecast, 2024-2044



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.I: Potential Growth, Market-Driven Rental Housing Needs by AMI Level, Ouray County, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	322	374	52
30-50% AMI	274	318	45
50-80% AMI	53	65	12
80-100% AMI	80	96	16
100-120% AMI	58	71	13
120-150% AMI	63	77	13
150%+ AMI	72	87	15
Total	923	1,088	165

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.2: Potential Growth, Market-Driven Ownership Housing Needs by AMI Level, Ouray County, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	353	353	0
50-80% AMI	168	168	0
80-100% AMI	189	221	32
100-120% AMI	204	239	35
120-150% AMI	662	700	37
150%+ AMI	1,577	1,683	106
Total	3,154	3,364	210

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.3: Expected Growth, Needs-Driven Rental Housing Needs by AMI Level, Ouray County, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	322	392	71
30-50% AMI	274	331	57
50-80% AMI	53	67	13
80-100% AMI	80	88	8
100-120% AMI	58	60	1
120-150% AMI	63	64	1
150%+ AMI	72	72	0
Total	923	1,075	152

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.4: Expected Growth, Needs-Driven Ownership Housing Needs by AMI Level, Ouray County, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	0	0	0
50-80% AMI	353	353	0
80-100% AMI	168	184	16
100-120% AMI	189	187	(2)
120-150% AMI	204	201	(3)
150%+ AMI	662	627	(35)
Total	1,577	1,553	(24)

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.5: Expected Growth, Market-Driven Rental Housing Needs by AMI Level, Ouray County, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	322	340	18
30-50% AMI	274	289	15
50-80% AMI	53	57	4
80-100% AMI	80	85	5
100-120% AMI	58	63	4
120-150% AMI	63	68	5
150%+ AMI	72	77	5
Total	923	979	56

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.6: Expected Growth, Market-Driven Ownership Housing Needs by AMI Level, Ouray County, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	353	353	0
50-80% AMI	168	168	0
80-100% AMI	189	200	11
100-120% AMI	204	216	12
120-150% AMI	662	675	13
150%+ AMI	1,577	1,613	36
Total	3,154	3,225	71

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.7: Potential Growth, Market-Driven Rental Housing Needs by AMI Level, Town of Ridgway, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	83	111	29
30-50% AMI	70	95	25
50-80% AMI	14	20	6
80-100% AMI	21	29	9
100-120% AMI	15	22	7
120-150% AMI	16	24	7
150%+ AMI	19	27	8
Total	237	328	91

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.8: Potential Growth, Market-Driven Ownership Housing Needs by AMI Level, Town of Ridgway, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	91	91	0
50-80% AMI	43	43	0
80-100% AMI	49	66	18
100-120% AMI	53	72	19
120-150% AMI	170	191	21
150%+ AMI	406	464	58
Total	811	927	116

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.9: Expected Growth, Needs-Driven Rental Housing Needs by AMI Level, Town of Ridgway, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	83	105	24
30-50% AMI	70	89	20
50-80% AMI	14	17	5
80-100% AMI	21	23	4
100-120% AMI	15	15	2
120-150% AMI	16	16	2
150%+ AMI	19	18	0
Total	237	284	55

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.10: Expected Growth, Needs-Driven Ownership Housing Needs by AMI Level, Town of Ridgway, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	0	0	0
50-80% AMI	91	91	0
80-100% AMI	43	51	7
100-120% AMI	49	51	3
120-150% AMI	53	55	3
150%+ AMI	170	172	2
Total	406	420	15

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.11: Expected Growth, Market-Driven Rental Housing Needs by AMI Level, Town of Ridgway, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	83	93	10
30-50% AMI	70	79	8
50-80% AMI	14	16	2
80-100% AMI	21	24	3
100-120% AMI	15	17	2
120-150% AMI	16	19	2
150%+ AMI	19	21	3
Total	237	268	31

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Table A.12: Expected Growth, Needs-Driven Ownership Housing Needs by AMI Level, Town of Ridgway, 2024-2044

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2044
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	91	91	0
50-80% AMI	43	43	0
80-100% AMI	49	55	6
100-120% AMI	53	59	7
120-150% AMI	170	177	7
150%+ AMI	406	425	20
Total	811	850	39

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, Harvard Dataverse Fertility and Mortality Database, HUD CHAS Data

Supportive Units

One more component of the housing forecast is an estimate of the number of supportive housing units needed for the chronically homeless population. This group includes individuals who have experienced homelessness continuously for at least one year or have had four or more episodes of homelessness within the past three years. Many also face disabilities such as physical impairments, mental illness, or substance use disorders. Supportive housing is designed to help these individuals transition out of unstable living conditions, often in conjunction with programs that address addiction, employment, and other barriers to self-sufficiency.

Discussions with County and Town staff revealed there are no real concentrations of homeless individuals in the Town or County. As a very rural, un-urbanized county, Ouray County is much less likely to see large concentrations of homelessness as rural communities don't have the resources and infrastructure such as homeless shelters or public transportation that can be more accessible in larger cities. The nearest shelters to Ridgway are in Montrose, and these shelters would be most likely to be able to respond to needs of any homeless individuals that may be in Ouray County.

Reliable data on this population is limited, especially for rural counties. The State of Colorado conducts a Point-in-Time (PIT) count of individuals in emergency shelters and transitional housing each year, and a count of unsheltered homeless individuals every other year. However, this count is conducted on a single night, meaning it may not fully capture the number of people experiencing homelessness over time.

There is no PIT count data collected for Ouray County specifically. The only data available for Ouray County is for the Western Slope region as a whole, including Montrose, Delta, Gunnison, Ouray, Hinsdale, and San Miguel counties. From the PIT

counts for the Western Slope, PC estimates that 92 households (or approximately 141 individuals) experience homelessness annually. If we assume one-fourth of this population is chronically homeless, and seven in ten chronically homeless individuals are unsheltered,¹⁰⁴ there is a need for 16 supportive housing units. By 2044, the population is forecasted to grow around 16%. Considering this, three more units will be needed by 2044.

Table A.13: Supportive Units Needed, Western Slope Region, 2024–2044

	Units Needed Now	Future Needs (2044)
Total Estimated Units Needed	16	19

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Migration Data

Table A.14: Ouray County In & Out Migration Counties, 2016–2020

Positive Net Migration From		Negative Net Migration To	
Sedgwick County, KS	53	Boulder County, CO	184
Larimer County, CO	46	Montrose County, CO	79
Muskogee County, OK	29	Pitkin County, CO	55
Denver County, CO	18	Oakland County, MI	50
Otero County, CO	16	Routt County, CO	45
San Francisco County, CA	14	King County, WA	45
Custer County, CO	12	Orange County, CA	33
Gunnison County, CO	12	San Miguel County, CO	32
Anchorage Municipality, AK	11	Prowers County, CO	18
Bell County, TX	11	Salt Lake County, UT	18
Delaware County, PA	10	Mesa County, CO	16
Jefferson County, CO	8	San Juan County, CO	16
Marion County, IN	8	Solano County, CA	9
Lane County, OR	7	Comal County, TX	8
Grand County, UT	7	Stephens County, TX	7
Contra Costa County, CA	6	Vernon County, WI	7
Santa Barbara County, CA	4	Waushara County, WI	6
Garfield County, CO	4	Tulsa County, OK	2

¹⁰⁴ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Health and Medicine Division, Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, Policy and Global Affairs, Science and Technology for Sustainability Program, Committee on an Evaluation of Permanent Supportive Housing Programs for Homeless Individuals, Permanent Supportive Housing: Evaluating the Evidence for Improving Health Outcomes Among People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness (Washington, DC: National Academies Press (US), 2018), 2, accessed April 21, 2025, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK519590/>.

Logan County, CO	4	Sedgwick County, CO	1
Adams County, CO	3		
Park County, MT	3		
Maricopa County, AZ	2		
Travis County, TX	2		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Displacement Risk Methodology

The PC team developed the final displacement risk model using a combination of eight indicators identified as relevant by the Colorado Revised Statutes and DOLA Guidelines. These variables are:

- Individuals without a high school diploma
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with limited English proficiency
- Households below 150% of the federal poverty level
- Minority status
- Single-parent households
- Crowded households
- Cost-burdened households (abbreviated in Table A.15 as “CB”)

After conducting a basic comparison of these indicators across different geographic areas and categories, PC calculated the median and standard deviation for each variable. We then assigned an equal weight to each risk factor. Using this information, we calculated a raw score for each census tract based on how many standard deviations each category deviated from the median. Finally, we normalized these scores to a user-friendly 0–100 scale. Table A.15 shows the results.

Table A.15: Detailed Statistics of Displacement Risks

Census	No HS Diploma	Dis-abled	Limited English (5+)	>150% poverty	Min-ority	Single - Parent	Crowded	*CB	Index Score
9676.01	1.9%	17.8%	0.6%	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%	5.3%	22.9%	37.5
9676.02	2.8%	14.2%	1.6%	0.3%	10.8%	2.8%	13.8%	23.3%	62.5
Ouray County	2.50%	15.1%	1.3%	0.2%	9.2%	2.0%	11.6%	23.2%	51.0
CO	7.5%	11.0%	5.3%	2.6%	35.0%	2.5%	15.8%	26.5%	–
U.S.	10.8%	12.9%	6.2%	4.4%	43.0%	3.5%	20.5%	26.2%	–

Source: Points Consulting

Appendix B: Land Resource & Capacity Analysis

The housing market and its outcomes are determined by two sides: supply and demand. A key factor of housing supply is the amount of land available to develop new housing and meet future housing demand. To measure the true potential supply of future housing, Points Consulting (PC) developed a full Land Capacity Analysis (LCA) for the Town of Ridgway and Ouray County. With limited zoning data, PC developed a limited LCA for the City of Ouray as well.

Using Ouray County GIS and Assessor's Office data, along with Town of Ridgway zoning data, PC categorized land as Vacant, Underdeveloped, and Underutilized. Below are the assumptions underlying the analysis:

- Parcels in zones permitting some form of residential development were considered for the LCA. Those zones include:
 - DS: Downtown Service
 - FD: Future Development
 - GC: General Commercial
 - HB: Historic Business
 - HR: Historic Residential
 - MR: Mixed Residential
 - R: Low Density Residential
 - North Mesa
 - South Mesa
 - South Slope
 - "All Other Zones" for the County (Alpine, Colona, High Mesa, Public Lands, and Valley)
- **Vacant:** PC classified parcels with an improvement value of less than \$10,000 as Vacant. This category includes parcels with no improvements on them (truly vacant) and those with limited improvements on them (effectively vacant).
- **Underdeveloped:** PC classified parcels as Underdeveloped if they were not considered Vacant and had an improvement-to-land value ratio of less than 1.0. These parcels may be suitable for further development or subdivision to accommodate additional housing. The improvement-to-land value ratio PC used is equivalent to a 50% improvement-to-total value ratio.
 - For example, if a parcel has a total value of \$200,000, and an improvement value of \$75,000, then the land value is \$125,000. This parcel would be classified as Underdeveloped because the improvement value exceeds \$10,000 (so it is not vacant) but is still less than the land value.

- **Underutilized:** PC also analyzed parcels that were neither Vacant nor Underdeveloped for signs of underutilization. If a parcel contains only single-family housing (based on Assessor's Office data) but is located in a zone that allows higher-density housing types (MR, for example, which permits duplexes or triplexes, or HR, which permits multiple housing typologies) PC classified it as Underutilized. In other words, these parcels are developed at a lower density than what current zoning allows.
- Parcels excluded from analysis include:
 - Government-owned parcels (e.g., Town of Ridgway or Ouray County)
 - School district-owned parcels
 - Fire district-owned parcels
 - Parcels owned by other public or quasi-public entities (e.g., San Miguel Power Association)
 - Public recreation parcels (e.g., parks and golf courses)
 - Common area parcels
 - Cemeteries
 - Churches/religious-use parcels
 - Qualified tax-exempt parcels
- PC determined net acreage by eliminating acreage from parcels covered by steep slopes (greater than 15 degrees) with USGS digital elevation model (DEM) data and FEMA floodways and hazard zones (Zones A and AE).
- PC applied a 25% reduction to net developable acreage to account for public uses and rights-of-way. In other words, if the land were developed, PC assumes that 25% of it (after removing steep slopes and flood zones) would be needed for roads, utility easements, and other non-residential infrastructure.
- PC made another 25% reduction to account for other market factors. There are several potential limitations, including unwilling sellers, landowners placing properties into conservation trusts, or development occurring at lower densities than permitted by zoning regulations.
- Assumed densities (dwelling units per acre, or dua) were adapted from current minimum lot rules and maximum density rules according to zoning codes. The assumed densities are as follows:
 - **DS:** 4.4 dua – Assumed density from minimum lot size
 - **FD:** 0.03 dua – Assumes one unit per 35 acres.
 - **GC:** 4.4 dua – Assumed density from minimum lot size
 - **HB:** 4.4 dua – Assumed density from minimum lot size
 - **HR:** 11.6 dua – Calculated max density based on minimum lot size
 - **MR:** 12.7 dua – Calculated max density based on minimum lot size
 - **R:** 7.3 dua – Calculated max density based on minimum lot size
 - **North Mesa:** 0.13 dua – Assumes one unit per six acres.

- **South Mesa:** 0.13 dua – Assumes one unit per six acres.
- **South Slope:** 0.13 dua – Assumes one unit per six acres.

All Other Zones (Alpine, Colona, High Mesa, Public Lands, Valley): 0.03 dua – Assumes one unit per 35 acres.

Vacant Parcels

This section presents Vacant lands for Ridgway, Ouray County, and the City of Ouray. The acreage includes parcels in zones that allow residential development and have improvement values below \$10,000. PC estimated the potential number of housing units on these acres using the density assumptions outlined previously. **Net acres** represent the total parcel area minus physical constraints (e.g., steep slopes and flood zones), while **adjusted acres** reflect the land actually eligible for development after accounting for public uses, rights-of-way, and market factors.

The vast majority of housing unit potential is located in the Low Density Residential (R) district in Ridgway, which is able to accommodate almost 375 housing units (Table B.1). Other residential zones, such as Mixed Residential (MR) and Historic Residential (HR) could also accommodate a significant number of housing units at 90 and 47 units, respectively.

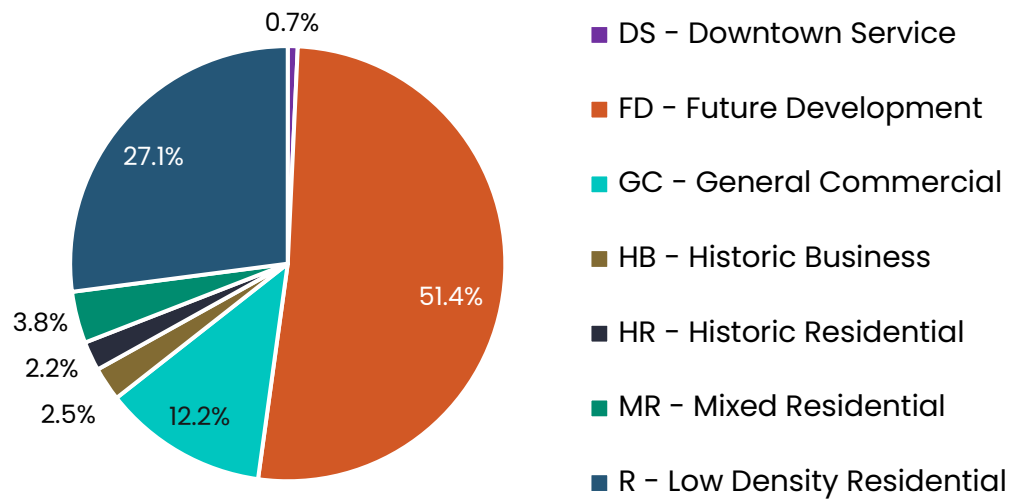
Table B.1: Vacant Land and Potential Housing Units in Ridgway

Zone	Net Acres	Adjusted Acres	Potential Housing Units
DS – Downtown Service	2.4	1.4	6
FD – Future Development	169.3	95.2	3
GC – General Commercial	40.3	22.6	99
HB – Historic Business	8.2	4.6	20
HR – Historic Residential	7.2	4.0	47
MR – Mixed Residential	12.6	7.1	90
R – Low Density Residential	89.1	50.1	366
Total	329.1	185.1	630

Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure B.1 shows percentage of Vacant land by zone, based on total net Vacant acres. The R district holds a significant share of the acres, in addition to potential housing units (27.1%). However, the Future Development district (FD) holds the majority of available Vacant land (51.4%). The General Commercial district (GC) has the third largest share of available Vacant land for potential residential development (12.2%).

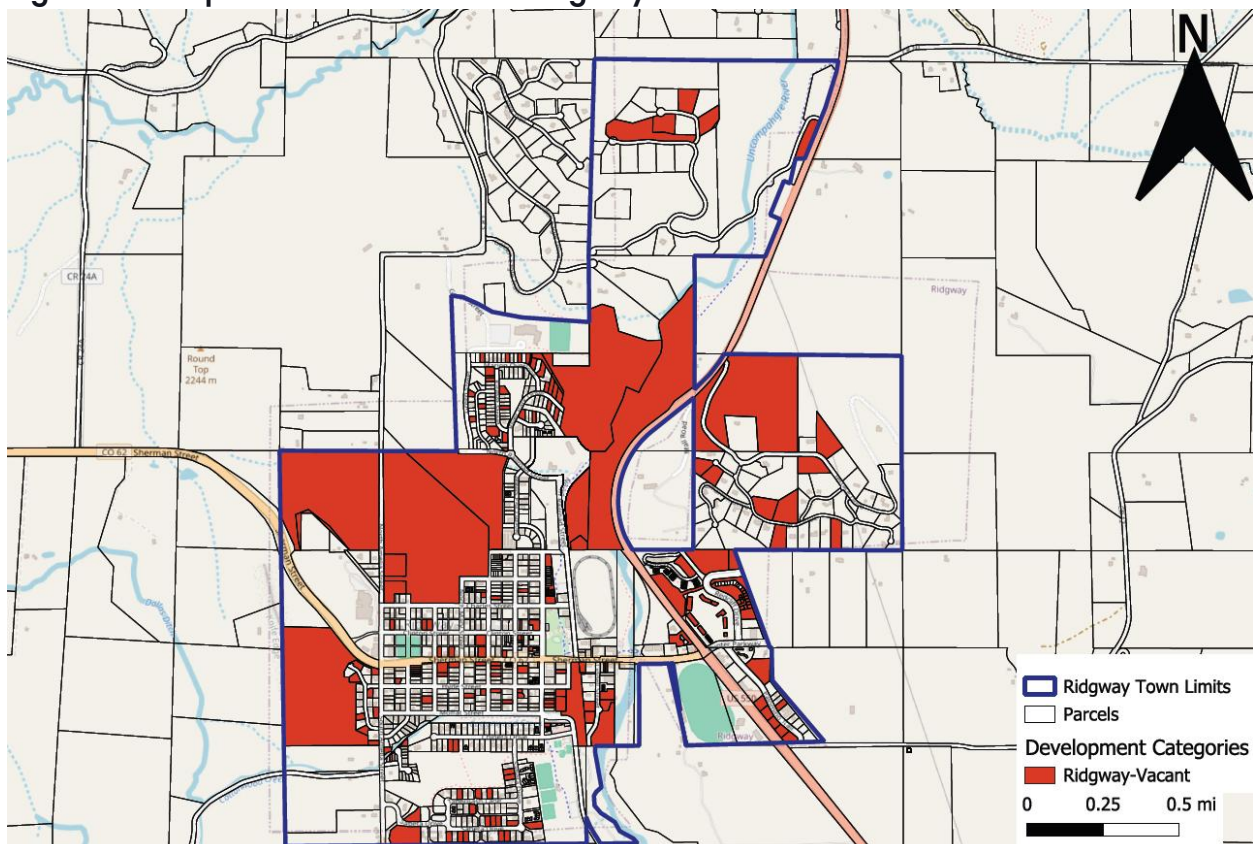
Figure B.1: Share of Vacant Land by Zone in Ridgway



Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure B.2 provides a visual map showing the location of Vacant parcels in the Town of Ridgway.

Figure B.2: Map of Vacant Parcels in Ridgway



Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

For Ouray County, PC tabulated land differently. The County includes three zones that allow a slightly “higher density” (one dwelling unit per six acres) compared to the standard one dwelling unit per 35 acres. These three zones are North Mesa, South Mesa, and South Slope. To provide more meaningful findings, PC separated these higher-density zones and grouped the remaining zones (Alpine, Colona, High Mesa, Public Lands, and Valley) together. In summary, current zoning standards suggest that Ouray County could accommodate nearly 1,300 new housing units in the unincorporated parts of the County (Table B.2).

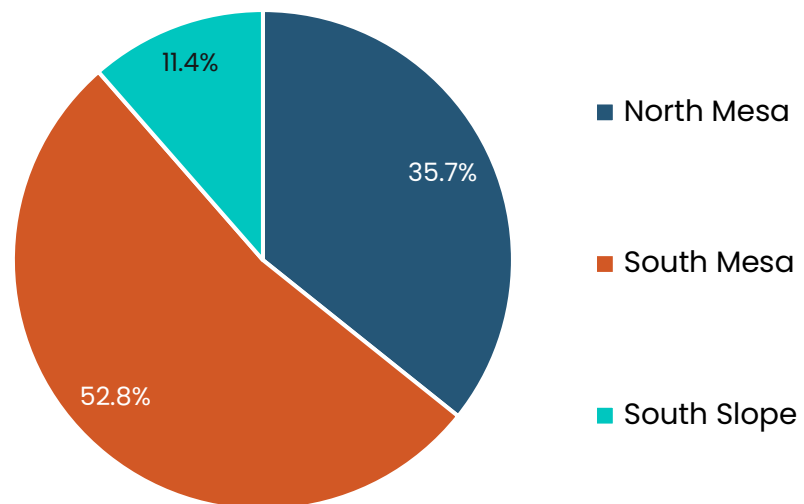
Table B.2: Vacant Land and Potential Housing Units in Ouray County

Zone	Parcels	Net Acres	Adjusted Acres	Potential Housing Units
All Other Zones	1,853	63,626	35,790	1,074
North Mesa	38	1,073	603	78
South Mesa	377	1,586	892	116
South Slope	41	343	193	25
Total	2,309	66,628	37,478	1,293

Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor’s Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure B.3 shows a breakdown of Vacant land for residential development by zone. The South Mesa holds the majority of available land at 52.8%, with North Mesa accounting for about one-third (35.7%). The South Slope zone has the smallest share of Vacant land available (11.4%).

Figure B.3: Share of Vacant Land by Zone in Ouray County¹⁰⁵

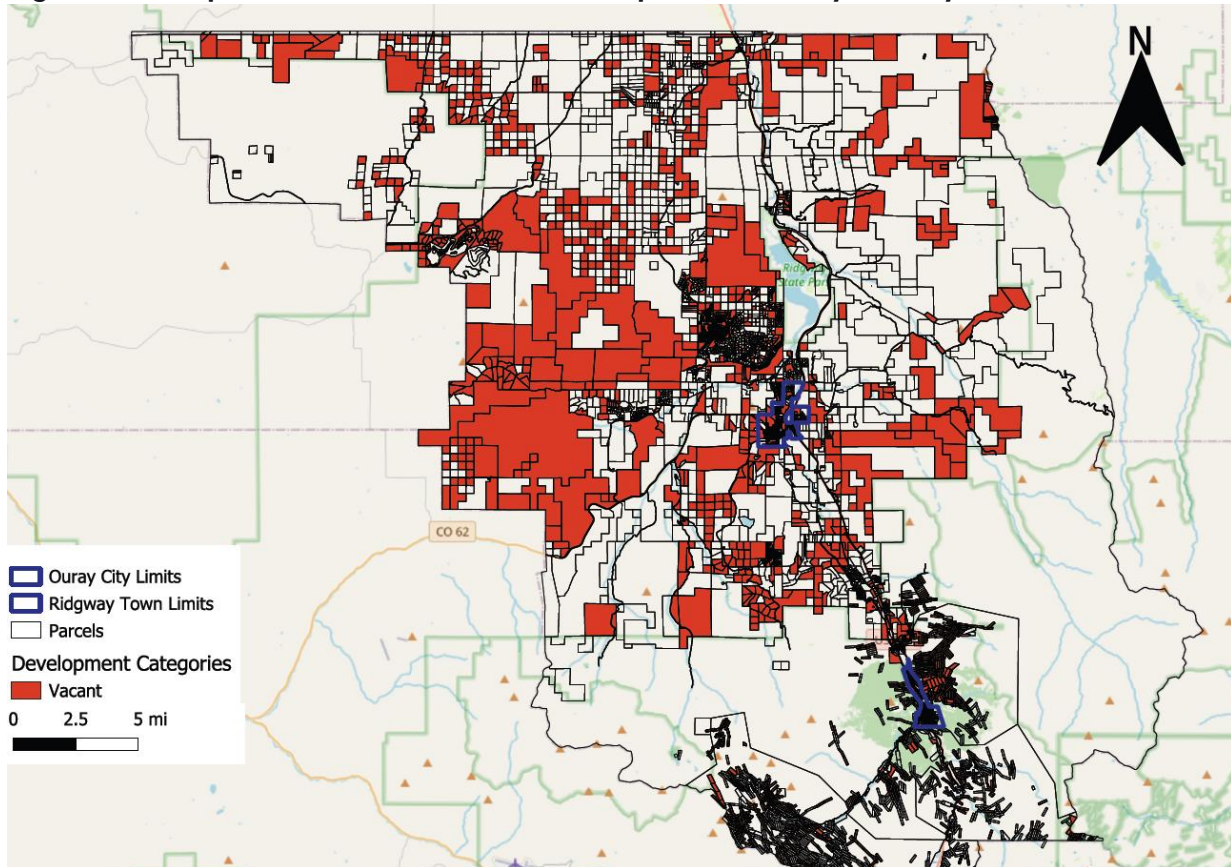


Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor’s Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

¹⁰⁵ Excluding lands reserved for extremely low-density development.

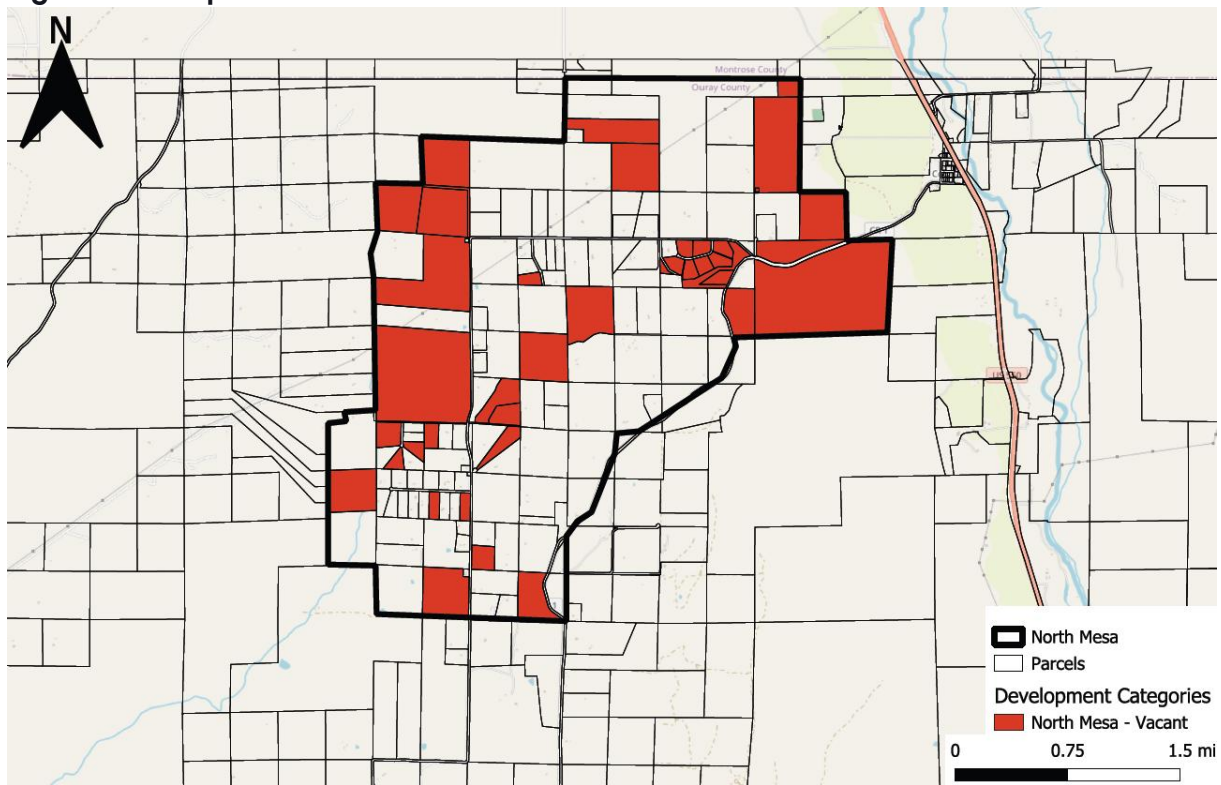
Figure B.4 through Figure B.7 visually depict Vacant land in Ouray County. Figure B.4 provides a county-wide overview of Vacant land locations and includes the Town and City limits for Ridgway and Ouray as reference points. The following three figures zoom in on Vacant parcels within each of the three zones that allow slightly higher density development.

Figure B.4: Map of Vacant Parcels in Unincorporated Ouray County



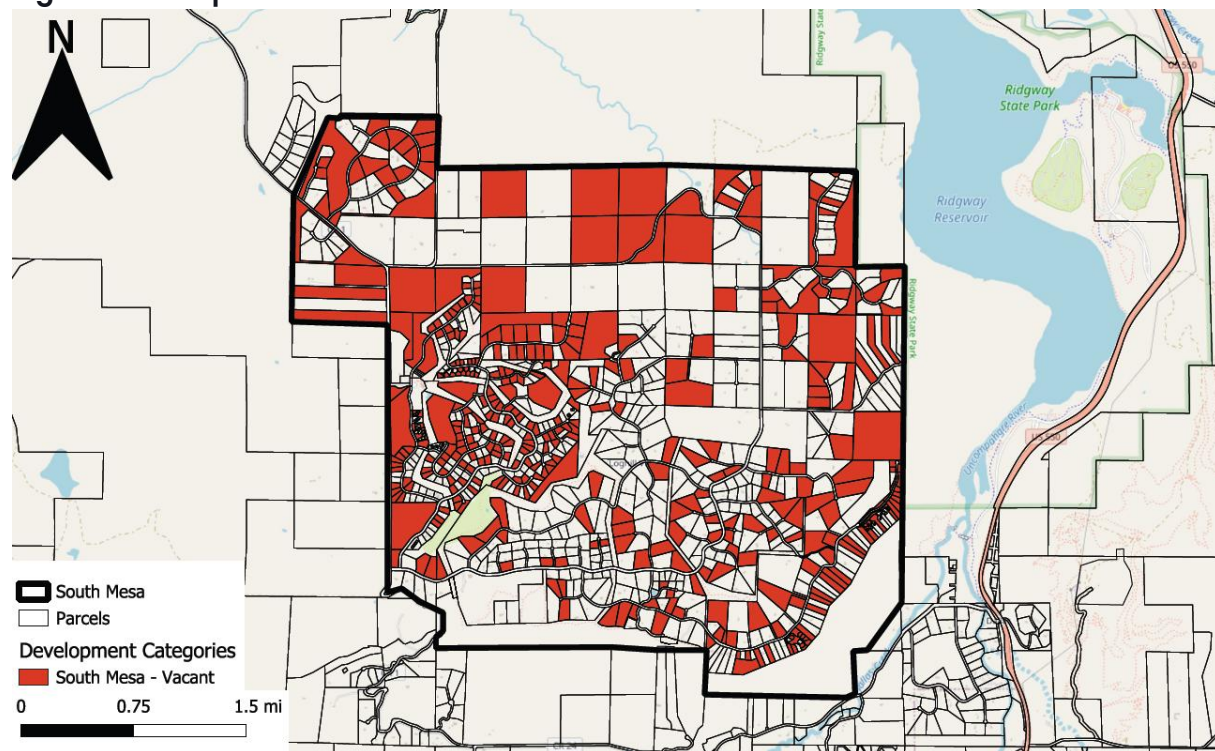
Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure B.5: Map of Vacant Parcels in the North Mesa Zone



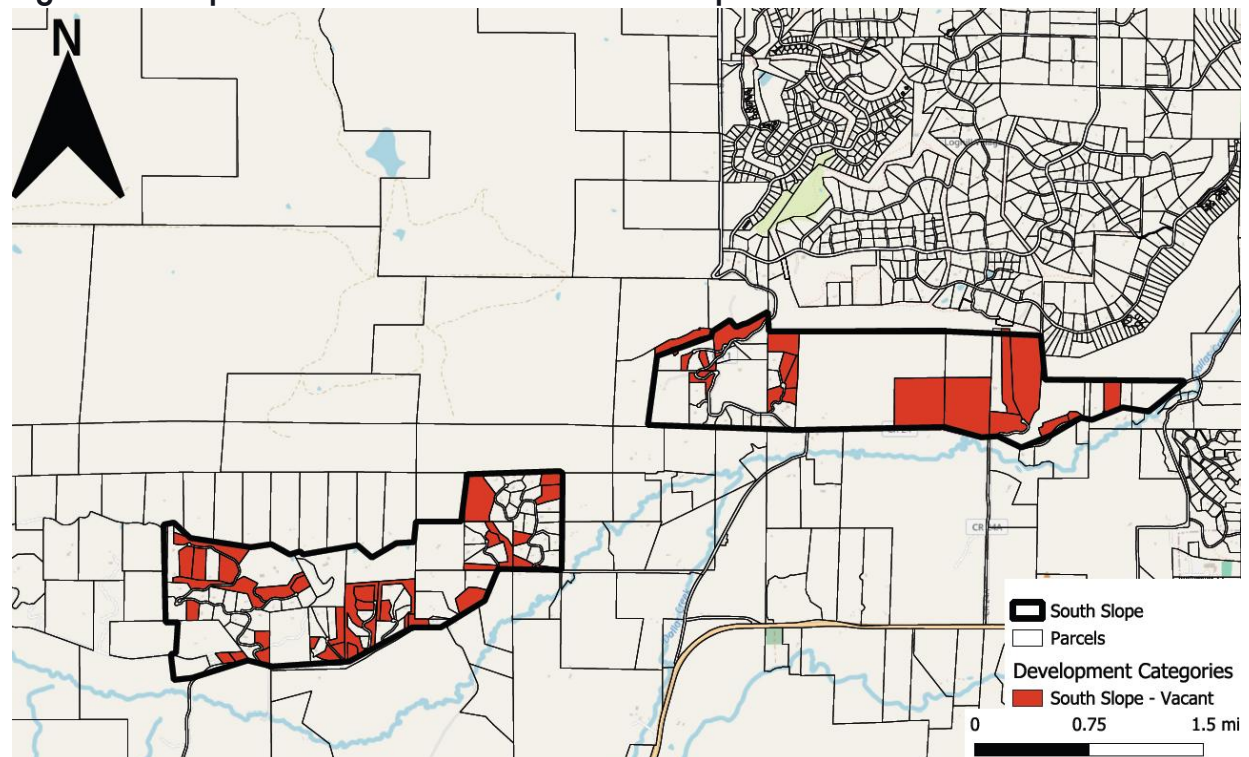
Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure B.6: Map of Vacant Parcels in the South Mesa Zone



Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure B.7: Map of Vacant Parcels in the South Slope Zone



Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

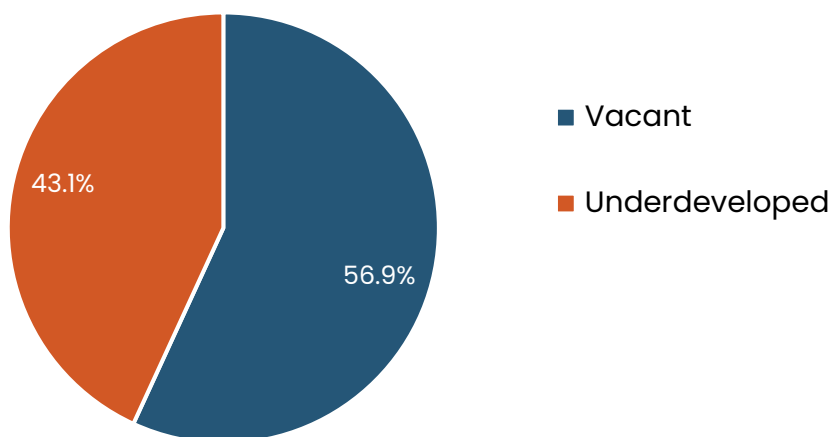
As noted earlier, limited zoning data for the City of Ouray resulted in a narrowly scoped LCA. While we identified Vacant and Underdeveloped parcels, we could not estimate the number of potential housing units due to the absence of zoning data needed to apply density assumptions. Table B.3 presents Vacant and Underdeveloped land in Ouray, Figure B.8 shows the share of land available for further development by category, and Figure B.9 provides a map of this land.

Table B.3: Vacant and Underdeveloped Land in Ouray

Category	Parcels	Net Acres	Adjusted Acres
Vacant	135	44.3	24.9
Underdeveloped	86	33.6	18.9
Total	221	77.9	43.8

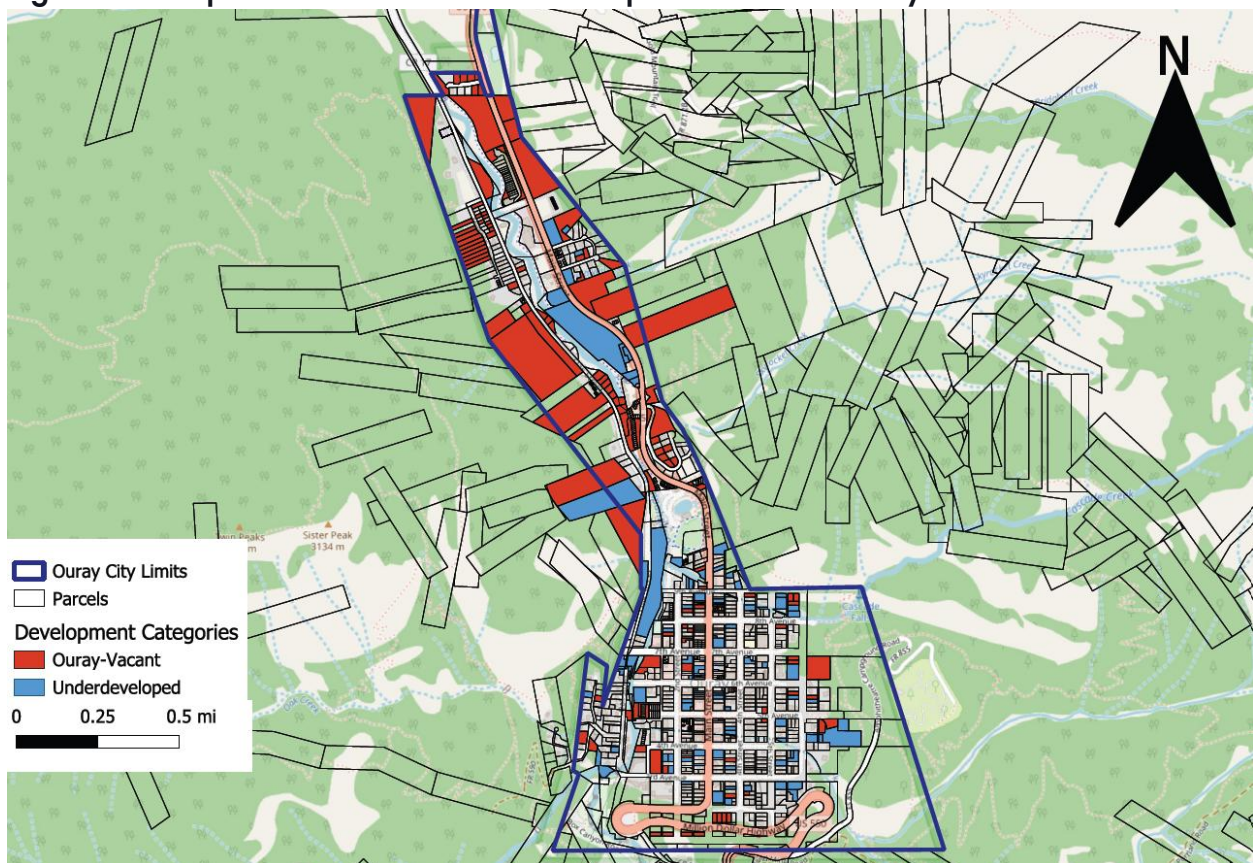
Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure B.8: Share of Eligible Land for Further Housing Development in Ouray by Category



Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure B.9: Map of Vacant and Underdeveloped Parcels in Ouray



Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

The City of Ouray had a Housing Needs Analysis completed in January of 2024, and this HNA included a Land Resources chapter. To supplement our limited land capacity analysis for Ouray, we have included the main table regarding land capacity in Ouray that was included in the 2024 HNA (Table B.4). As of 2022, the City had approximately 80 acres available as undeveloped land for housing. The 80 acres could accommodate up to 916 new dwelling units.

Table B.4: Undeveloped Land by Zoning District (City Staff Analysis, June 2022)

Item	Variable	Zoning District				
		C-1	C-2	R-1	R-2	All Zones
A	Total Lot Area Calculated (Sq. Ft.)	137,006	1,466,141	675,690	1,100,766	3,379,603
B	Total Lot Area Calculated (Acres)	3.15	33.66	15.51	25.27	77.59
C	Total Lots Possible (conforming to Zone)	36	206	93	149	463
D	Total Dwelling Units Possible (conforming to Density)	N/A	413	193	310	916

E	Percent Share of Total Dwelling Units Possible	N/A	45%	21%	34%	100%
F	Total Lodging Units Possible (conforming to Density)	N/A	1,239	Use Not Allowed	930	2,170
G	Percent Share of Total Lodging Units Possible	N/A	57%	Use Not Allowed	43%	100%

Source: Ouray Housing Needs Analysis and Strategy, Economic & Planning Systems, 2024

Underdeveloped Parcels

By definition, Underdeveloped parcels are not considered Vacant, because their improvement values exceed \$10,000. However, these improvement values may still be low relative to the land values, indicating limited existing development and potential for further development. In such cases, the land value exceeds the improvement value, signaling that additional density could be supported. PC does not estimate potential housing units for these parcels, as individual property owners may choose not to pursue further development. Instead, these estimates help highlight which zones have been developed less efficiently relative to their capacity.

An important note is that Underdeveloped parcels were not calculated for the unincorporated areas of Ouray County. Rural development patterns in these areas typically consist of single-family homes on large parcels, often large enough to support agricultural uses. As a result, many parcels could technically be classified as Underdeveloped, even though they align with traditional rural land use patterns. For this reason, estimating Underdeveloped land in unincorporated areas is not appropriate—particularly where development is intentionally restricted to very low densities.

Table B.5 shows Underdeveloped parcels and their estimated acreage. In total, 137 parcels are Underdeveloped, accounting for 53.5 net acres and 30.1 adjusted acres. The greatest number of Underdeveloped parcels and acres are located in the HR district. The R district has the second largest number of Underdeveloped parcels at 20, while the GC district has the second largest number of Underdeveloped acreage at 13.0.

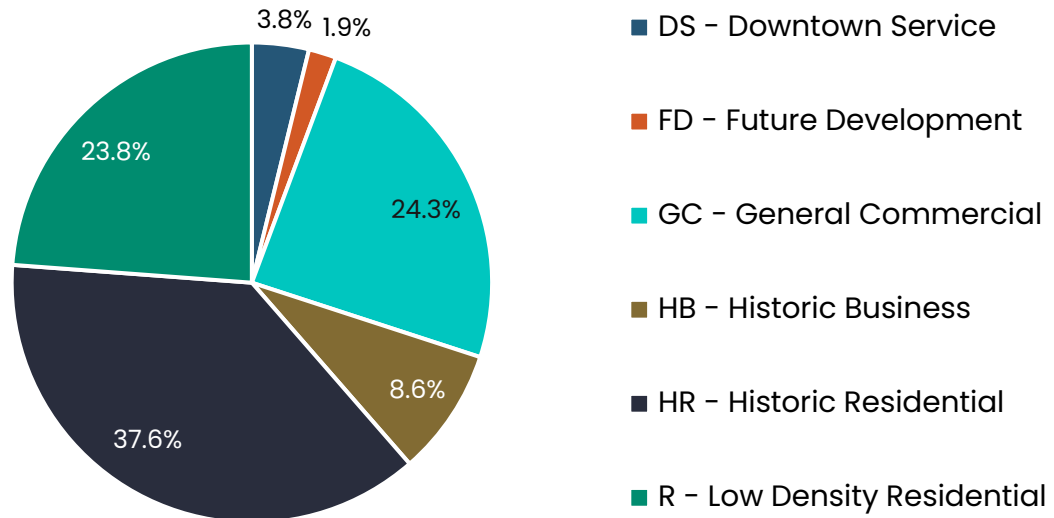
Table B.5: Underdeveloped Land in Ridgway

Zone	Parcels	Net Acres	Adjusted Acres
DS	7	2.1	1.2
FD	1	1.0	0.6
GC	17	13.0	7.3
HB	16	4.6	2.6
HR	76	20.1	11.3
R	20	12.7	7.2
Total	137	53.5	30.1

Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

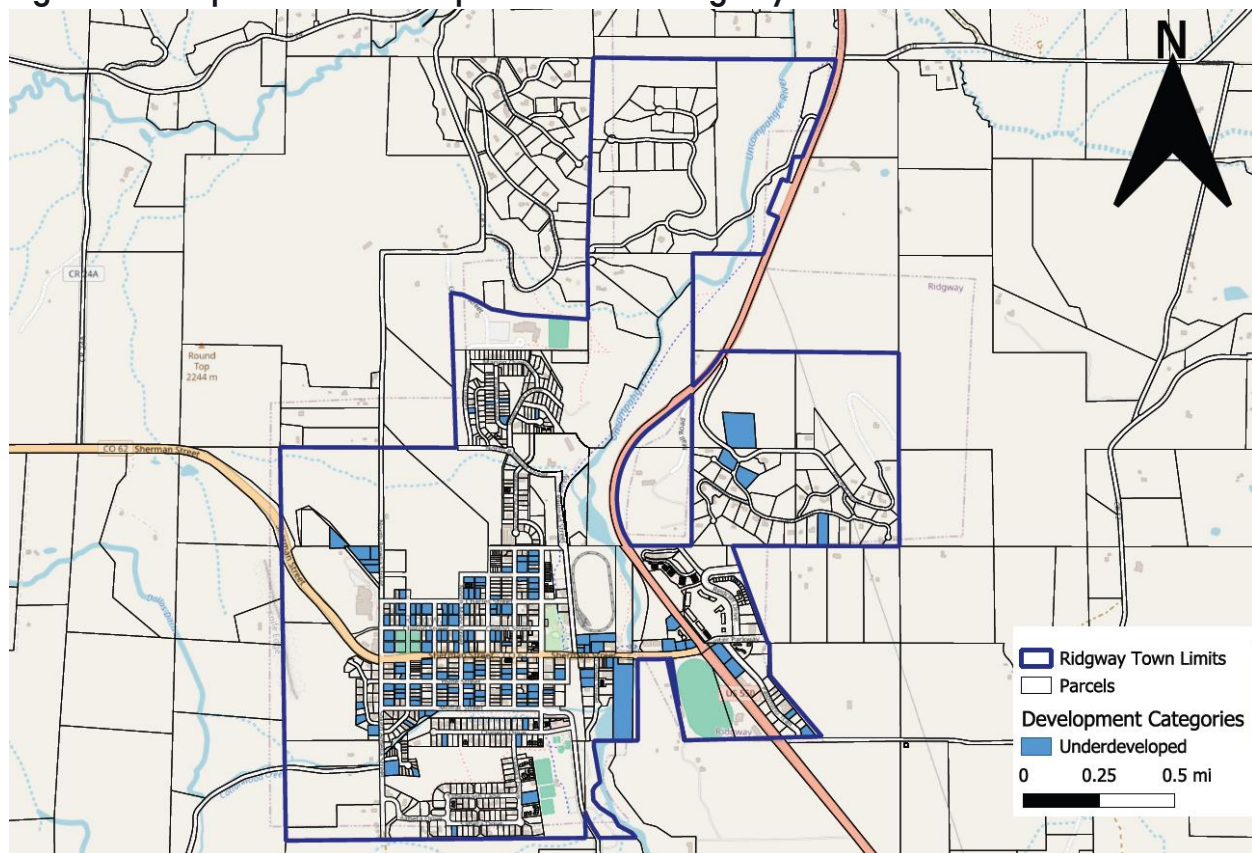
In Figure B.10, the share of Underdeveloped land in Ridgway is broken out by zone. PC's estimates indicate that the HR district has the largest share of Underdeveloped land in Ridgway at 37.6%, followed by 24.3% in the GC district, and 23.8% in the R district. Figure B.11 displays a map highlighting the Underdeveloped Parcels within Ridgway.

Figure B.10: Underdeveloped Land by Zone in Ridgway



Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure B.11: Map of Underdeveloped Parcels in Ridgway



Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Underutilized Parcels

By PC's standards, Underutilized parcels are generally considered fully developed, unlike Vacant or Underdeveloped parcels. However, this category adds an important layer to the LCA by identifying parcels that are developed with housing types that use land less efficiently than allowed by zoning. Specifically, we focus on single-family homes, as they are traditionally the lowest-density housing type and may underutilize parcels in zones that permit higher-density development.

For the analysis, PC eliminated the R district from consideration, as its primary purpose is to support low-density, single-family housing. We also removed the MR zone from consideration because it primarily allow single-family development. A key challenge in this analysis is that Ridgway lacks dedicated middle-density or high-density residential zones. As a result, our focus is on zones that permit mixed uses, rather than those designated exclusively for residential development.

The GC and HB zones are not primarily designated for residential use, but they do allow middle-density housing types and do not explicitly allow single-family housing. Town staff also indicated that the HR and DS zones are seeing redevelopment and denser

infill. For these reasons, we included HR and DS in the analysis. With input from the Town of Ridgway, PC identified parcels in these zones that have developed with single-family housing. These parcels are not being used for middle-density residential, mixed-use, commercial, or retail purposes; instead, they are occupied by low-density housing and are therefore considered Underutilized. Table B.6 shows these parcels identified as Underutilized.

For similar reasons discussed in the [previous](#) section, we did not analyze Underutilized parcels located in the unincorporated parts of Ouray County. Rural development patterns typically lack the infrastructure and services needed to support middle- or high-density housing. In Ouray County, zoning standards limit residential development to a maximum of one dwelling unit per six acres in the North Mesa, South Mesa, and South Slope zones. As a result, conducting an Underutilized parcel analysis is not appropriate for unincorporated areas of the County. Additionally, the absence of GIS zoning data prevented us from analyzing Underutilized parcels within the City of Ouray.

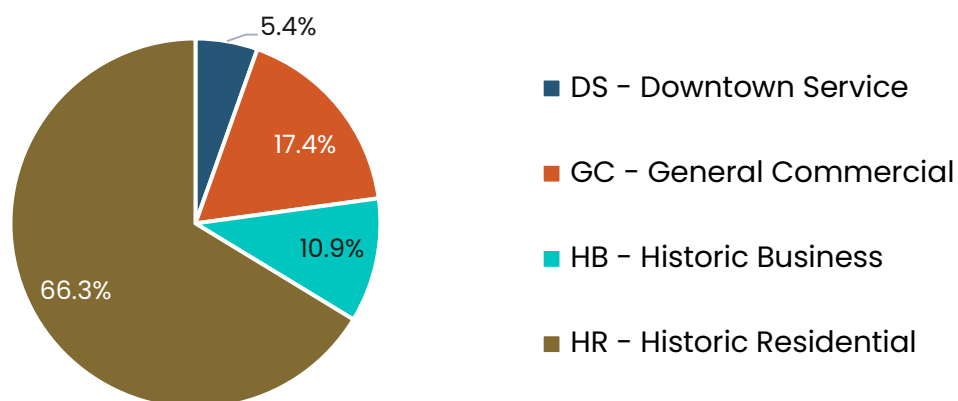
Table B.6: Underutilized Parcels in Ridgway

Zone	Parcels	Net Acres	Adjusted Acres
DS	5	1.0	0.6
GC	16	1.5	0.9
HB	10	0.9	0.5
HR	61	10.6	6.0
Total	92	14.1	7.9

Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, Town of Ridgway Data, FEMA, USGS

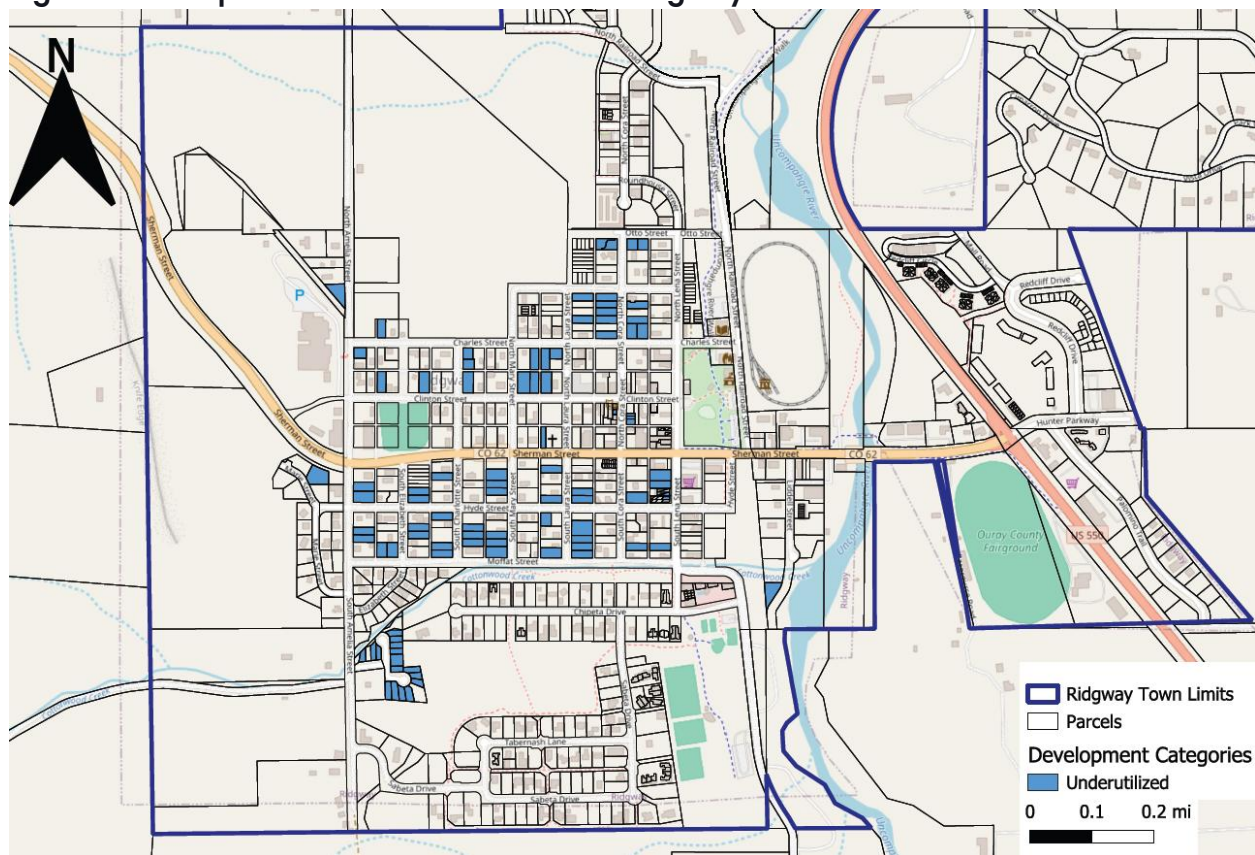
Figure B.12 below shows the share of Underutilized parcels in Ridgway by zone. Additionally, Figure B.13 displays a map of where the Underutilized parcels are located.

Figure B.12: Underutilized Parcels by Zone in Ridgway



Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, Town of Ridgway Data, FEMA, USGS

Figure B.13: Map of Underutilized Parcels in Ridgway



Source: Ouray County GIS, Ouray County Assessor's Office, Town of Ridgway Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Water Usage and Trends

In 2022, the Town of Ridgway worked with LRE Water to analyze the historic and current water situation in Ridgway. The PC team used this study to evaluate whether Ridgway will be able to handle an increased population and housing supply in the context of our own forecasts. Therefore, this section will detail the findings of LRE Water's study and use the findings against our own population and housing forecasts.

Background

The Town of Ridgway's ability to accommodate future housing growth is closely tied to the capacity of its municipal water system. This system that supplies water to the town primarily draws from two sources, Beaver Creek (Ridgway Ditch) and the Cottonwood Creek (Happy Hollow Ditch). Storage of water occurs in Lake Otonowanda and operational balancing to control speed and flow of water happens in small, pre-sedimentation ponds. While these sources have historically met the needs of Ridgway's population, projected growth and changing conditions present important considerations for future development.

Ridgway's water demand consists of potable water for domestic needs and raw water for irrigation in parks and large open spaces. Potable water demand changes over time as the population grows and more houses are installed. Raw water demand remains mostly static over time, only changing as open space water needs change. Based on production data produced from 2016–2020, average potable water demand was estimated to be 211 acre-feet (AF), while raw water demand was approximately 104 AF. This demand was derived from the average indoor water usage of 125 gallons per capita per day, which LRE Water acknowledged was on the high end for comparable mountain towns. However, the Town of Ridgway also acknowledged potential system losses, or leaks, in the supply which means that actual consumption may have been close to 70 gallons per capita per day. Outdoor summer irrigation nearly doubles per capita potable water demand.

Demand and Supply

Using the previous findings as a baseline for water consumption, LRE Water modeled three growth scenarios through 2050:

- Low Growth: +23% Population (1,415), total demand rises to 388 AF
- Medium Growth: +37% Population (1,575), total demand rises to 418 AF
- High Growth: +81% Population (2,080), total demand rises to 512 AF

For comparison, PC's forecast projects a maximum increase of approximately 600 residents in Ouray County by 2044, meaning that even the "low growth" scenario in this water forecast encompasses the likely growth for the area.

Ridgway's average physical water supply is approximately 1,000 AF/year. Around 675 AF of this supply come from the Ridgway Ditch, or Beaver Creek, and 330 AF comes from Cottonwood Creek, on average. Wetter and drier years can greatly affect the water supply year to year. As will be reviewed later, there are only a few scenarios produced by LRE Water where growth will outpace the supply of water, and only on dry years.

Storage in Lake Otonowanda (capacity of 756 AF) allows seasonal carryover and helps smooth short-term imbalances from dry years. The pre-sedimentation ponds also provide a small amount of further flexibility. However, in the driest years, total supply can drop to 610 AF, which greatly tightens the margin between supply and demand.

Ridgway holds the senior water rights on Beaver Creek, meaning that theoretically the Town could gain an addition 175 AF for a total of 800 AF (during an average rainfall year). This full entitlement figure expands and contracts by the level of rainfall and snowmelt each year. So, in a dry year the full entitlement to water from Beaver Creek will be lower in the Town. Actual deliveries of water are constrained by the carrying capacity of Ridgway Ditch and by current diversion practices in winter months. Similarly, the Happy Hollow Ditch supply is reduced by the senior Tidwell Ditch right. As a result,

legal entitlements exceed what is currently delivered, which means that operational improvements could add supply resilience without acquiring new rights.

Using the information provided with both the supply and demand of water in Ridgway, LRE Water produced a model that evaluated a wide range of possibilities. These ranged from scenarios such as low population growth in wet years up to high population growth in dry years. Climate change was also factored into the model to create a diminishing water supply over time.

Under current operations, both low and medium population growth scenarios' water demands were met except for potential extreme situations where water dips below levels ever seen historically in both creeks and the lake. The high growth scenario pushed the model to its limits, finding that certain cases strained the water supply to extremely thin margins. These cases specifically are low-to-medium rainfall years with a 2.5% system loss rate (from leaks) at the current operational level (not with increases to full entitlement). More specifically, with the current operational capacity and 2.5% loss model, the maximum demand that could be met was 427 AF, which corresponded to the demand needed in 2039 in the high growth model. According to LRE Water, In order to meet high growth demand, the Town will need to operate the Ridgway Ditch at a maximum, or full legal entitlement, to reach its 2050 demands at high growth. This could also be achieved by minimizing system losses. It should also be noted that potable water demand was always met through each simulation, meaning that hypothetically homes would always have water in each scenario.

Climate change could produce greater impacts on the water supply depending on the future severity of the issue. In multiple simulations with climate change factored in, there were shortages of over 100 AF. This shortage was found with current operational levels and no leaks, meaning that operations with leaks would affect the supply further. The overall findings of the climate change study showed that even if the Town were to invest in making its delivery and storage system as efficient as possible, it would still not be able to fully meet the 2050 high-growth demand scenario during a dry year. To avoid this, the Town would need to operate at full legal entitlement and maintain a large enough non-irrigation supply in the lake for that year.

For planning purposes, Ridgway's water system can comfortably support low and medium growth scenarios without significant risk of shortage, even considering climate change. The high-growth scenario would require securing additional supply, improving efficiency, reducing per capita use, or expanding storage to maintain reliability. The seasonality of demand from farming and park irrigation means housing type and landscaping policies will directly influence water availability for new development. Denser, water-efficient development patterns can extend the system's effective

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