FRUITA
COLORADO

AT HOME IN FRUITA

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT & HOUSING ACTION PLAN

DECEMBER 2025

Facilitated by
POINTS
CONSULTING

Contents

Executive Summary

Along the western end of the Grand Valley, leaders in the City of Fruita have started taking action to address the community's varied housing challenges. After identifying housing as a need in their most recent comprehensive plan, a flurry of land use policy changes and affordable housing projects were launched. The City established a local housing authority, eliminated maximum density standards in the core of downtown, created a density bonus provision in their largest residential district, and more. Time will tell the full impact but these actions have already led to several positive outcomes.

Housing Situation: Predominantly Single-Family Stock with Some Recent Variation

Around 790 new housing units are expected in Fruita over the next several years, primarily single-family home developments, with some utilizing the City's density bonus. New apartment complexes and townhomes are in process as well. The City recently supported an affordable housing project, Fruita Mews, and is partnering in a workforce redevelopment project (The Oaks) at the time this assessment was completed.

Single-family units will likely remain the predominant form of housing in Fruita, but some diversification on this front could avail more households opportunities to contribute to the economy and community. Currently, ***about 85% of housing units in Fruita are one-unit structures*** (attached and detached). The rate of homeownership is high at 81%, compared to the state (66%) and the nation (65%). Additionally, both the number and share of renter-occupied housing units have decreased since 2018. The trend has started to shift in the past seven years, but still ***75% of units permitted from 2020 through July 2025 are single-family dwellings***.

Housing Costs: Rising & Burdensome

The post-pandemic demand shock exacerbated home prices that were already increasing. The value of a typical home in Fruita was relatively consistent from 2000 through 2016 (in the range of $200,000 to $300,000). Over the last five years, however, ***the value of a typical home has increased roughly 8% every year***. As of summer 2025, the median home sold on the market reached $594,000.

Increased housing costs are now leading to affordability challenges in the community. ***About 36% of renters in Fruita are cost-burdened*** (spending 30% or more of their income on housing), significantly restricting budgets. More

renters are cost-burdened in Colorado (50%) and the U.S. (47%), but the City is at risk of quickly catching up to these undesirable averages. At the time of our assessment, the cost-burden rate is concentrated in low-income groups, 70% of which classify as cost-burdened. Additionally, ***of those who have not yet purchased a home, 87% could not afford the mortgage on the median home sold on the market***. A home in Fruita currently requires five years' worth of income to purchase, higher than the national average.

Demographics: Steady & Stable Growth

Fruita's population has grown roughly 6% in the last decade. This is slightly slower than Mesa County at 8%, but half as fast as Colorado at 12%. In-migration is the primary reason for recent growth. Looking forward, the State Demography Office forecasts Mesa County's population to pick up the speed around 2030, though still at a slower pace than Colorado overall.

Age plays a key role in housing needs, as older populations typically require more space per person than younger populations. Younger households often compromise on unit size, lot size, or even homeownership due to budget constraints. Fruita's population remains relatively balanced. To be specific, ***32% of residents are 24 or younger, 37% are in the prime working age category (25 to 54), and 31% are 55 or older***.

Comparatively, Fruita's population is younger than both Colorado and the U.S. which is a good sign for community sustainability and shows signs of a strong workforce able to support a growing elderly population.

Economy: Largely Middle-Income Roles

The regional economy in Mesa County has grown steadily over the last decade. Since 2014, Mesa County has seen 14% employment growth, on par with the U.S. (+16%) but slower than Colorado (+24%). The state projects the County will add around 21,000 jobs between 2025 and 2045, a 25% growth rate. Business establishment growth slowed in 2024 in Mesa County. However, wages have seen strong growth, with total wages increasing 65% in the last decade.

Top industries by employment in Fruita are Healthcare and Social Assistance (19%), Construction (11%), Retail Trade (10%), and Educational Services (9%). These leading industries by employment largely mirror Mesa County. Although the oil boom of the 1980s in the Grand Valley has since ended, employment in related industries is still important in Fruita. For example, mining, quarrying oil, and gas employment is six times more concentrated than at the national level.

Housing trends are impacting the regional workforce as well. Over 4,800 workers out-commute from Fruita and over 2,000 workers commute into Fruita. These figures relate to ***just 31% of the Fruita workforce living in the City and only 16% of Fruita residents working in the City***. This shows challenges for both housing and the availability of primary

jobs in the community as very few residents both work and live in the area.

Land Capacity Analysis: More than Enough Room for Infill

To accompany needs of workforce housing, our team identified land available for development. Our analysis of land capacity indicates that ***the City could accommodate about 660 new housing units***. The majority of available land is in the Community Residential district. Meanwhile, the Commercial-1 district provides the next greatest potential for housing units.

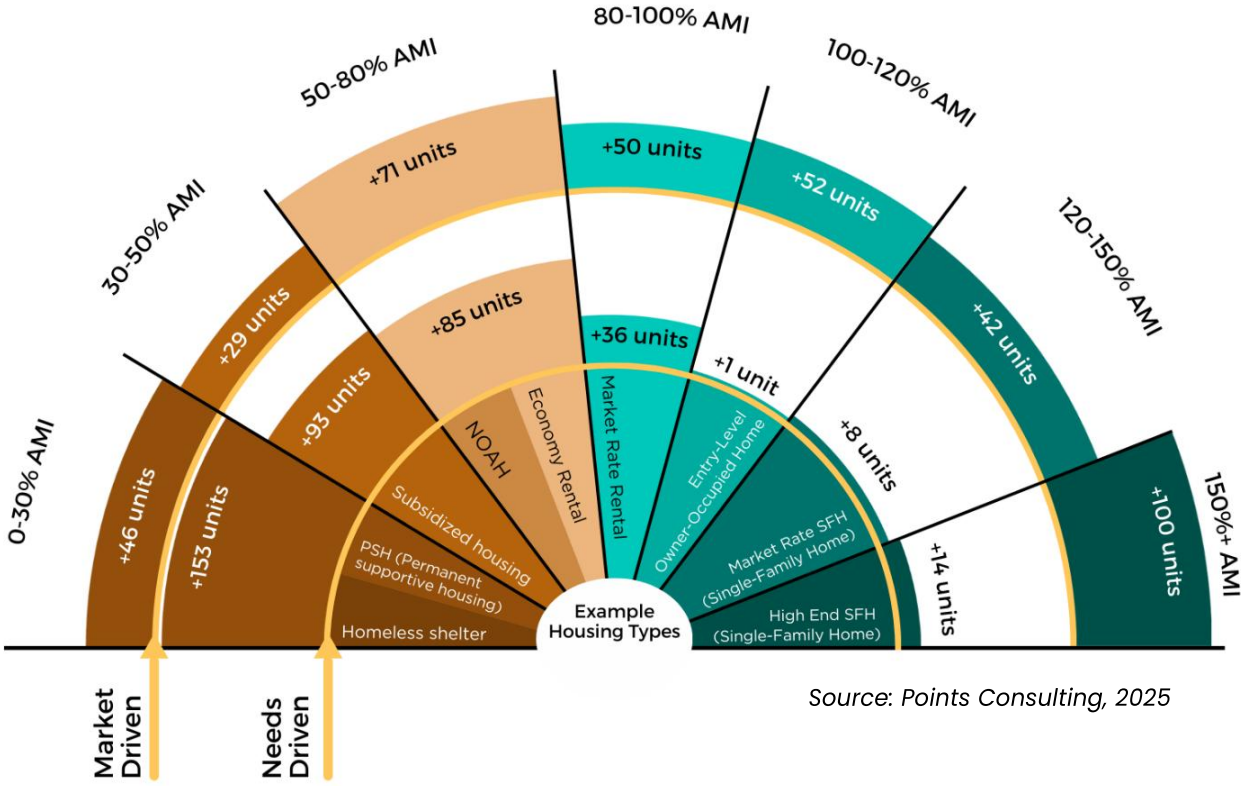
Some land is also available for redevelopment. The South Fruita Residential and Community Residential districts have 45 acres each of underdeveloped land (properties where land value exceeds improvement value). The Downtown Mixed-Use district also has 52 underdeveloped parcels, and the Commercial-1 district has 31 acres of underdeveloped land.

Population & Housing Needs Forecast

The population and housing needs forecast for the City of Fruita includes two growth scenarios: Potential and Expected. ***According to our estimates, Fruita could see between 7% and 15% population growth over the next 20 years*** (amounting to between +920 and +2,000 residents). In-migration and favorable age demographics are likely to be the main driving factors.

Regarding housing needs, the Potential Growth scenario projects ***demand for 390 new housing units over the next 10 years***, while the Expected growth scenario projects a demand of 190 new housing units. With somewhat limited land capacity, infill development and redevelopment should complement new residential development to meet diverse housing needs.

Figure 1.1: Housing Needs Forecast by AMI Level, City of Fruita



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

It is also important for housing to be affordable to all households across the income distribution. Affordable housing at all income levels is important to allow workers of many occupations and industries to be able to live in the City and ensure a balanced economy. Following our housing needs forecast, we also estimated the number of housing units needed by AMI level (Figure 1.1).

Housing Action Plan

To assist the City of Fruita in taking the next step to address housing needs, our team has identified goals and recommended strategies for the Housing Action Plan (HAP) in compliance with the Department of Local Affairs' guidelines, per SB24-174. These goals and strategies are meant to address gaps in the housing market along with identified needs in our Housing Needs Assessment (HNA). Our goals support needs identified by quantitative data, community input and engagement, and affordable housing across the income distribution. Full details on goals and strategies are detailed in the report here. The goals for the City of Fruita's Housing Action Plan are:

- **Goal 1:** Encourage Housing Diversity
- **Goal 2:** Incentivize Infill & Redevelopment
- **Goal 3:** Support Affordable & Workforce Housing

Introduction

The City of Fruita, Colorado contracted with Points Consulting (PC) in May 2025 to produce a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) and Housing Action Plan (HAP) 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 City by analyzing gaps in the local housing market, in terms of affordability and attainment. Additionally, our HAP within the HNA demonstrates Fruita's commitment to address housing needs and guides the City in developing potential legislative actions, promoting regional coordination, and informing the public of the local government's efforts to address the housing needs.

Our HNA and HAP examine the housing market conditions within the City of Fruita and whether or not it has a healthy housing ecosystem. A healthy housing ecosystem is characterized by a market in equilibrium, where the housing supply aligns with housing demand from the community. Key indicators of supply and demand include the current number of housing units, vacant and developable parcels, employment levels, and income levels.

To ensure a balanced market in the future, we utilized population and housing forecasts to measure future demand. We also conducted a Land Capacity Analysis (LCA) to help determine how much land is available for development, and whether the potential number of new housing units can meet projected demand. The report is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 1 – Executive Summary & Introduction:** Key highlights from the analysis
- **Chapter 2 – Gaps & Barriers Analysis**: Affordability gaps for renting and homeowning residents
- **Chapter 3 – Forecast**: Population and housing needs projection, including housing needs by income level and tenure
- **Chapter 4 – Housing Action Plan:** A plan to promote equitable and efficient development of housing as identified through housing goals and strategies of our Housing Needs Assessment
- **Chapter 5 – Land Resource & Capacity Analysis**: An inventory of vacant, underdeveloped, and underutilized land in the City of Fruita that may be leveraged for housing production
- **Chapter 6 – Demographic & Socioeconomic Trends**: Overview of underlying socioeconomics affecting housing demand and affordability characteristics
- **Chapter 7 – Housing Trends**: Overview of housing for both owners and renters, including affordability dynamics
- **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.

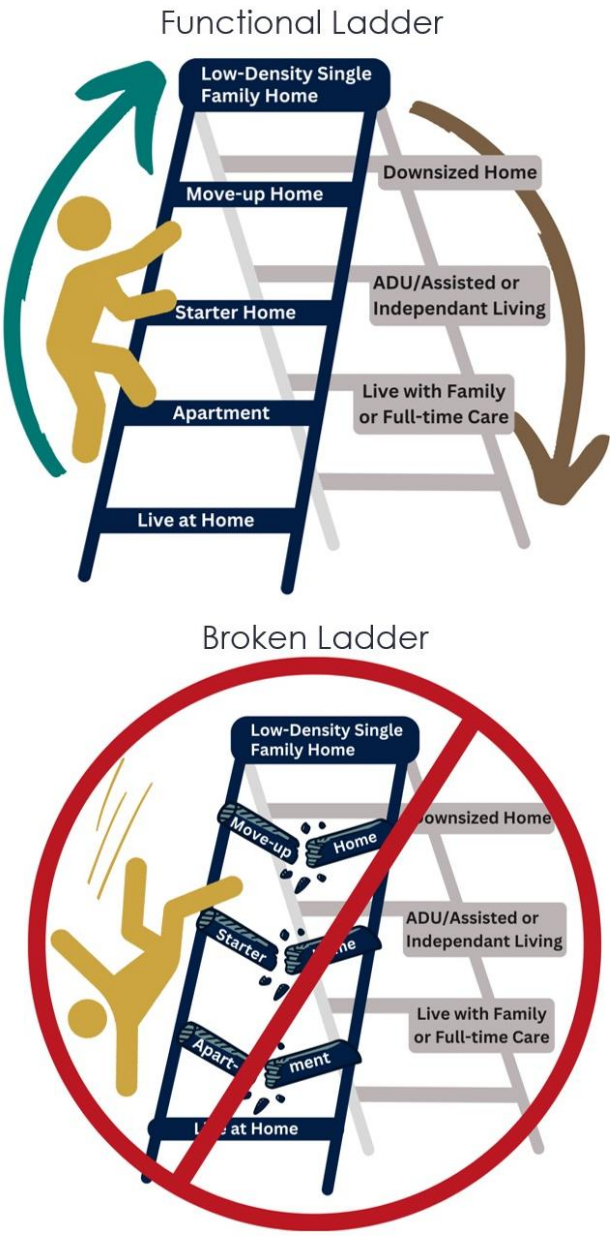
2. Gaps & Barriers Analysis

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). In this section, we measured the affordability gaps in the housing market experienced by renters, homeowners, and potential first-time homebuyers.

Housing Ladder

As mentioned above, we know that a healthy housing ecosystem is one where the housing supplied meets the housing demanded. But what does that look like? The Housing Ladder (Figure 2.1) is a useful tool to illustrate the dynamic. 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 of the main goals of our assessment is to identify where these gaps or breaks exist in the Housing Ladder in Fruita.

Figure 2.1: The Housing Ladder



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Defining Affordability

When discussing "affordability" or "affordable housing," we refer to the monthly housing costs a household experiences that is less than 30% of its gross monthly income. Beyond this point (spending greater than 30% of gross monthly income on housing), households 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 area median income (AMI) in Mesa County according to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is $94,100. A household at this income level (100% of AMI) earns approximately $7,840 per month. At this income level, a household could afford up to $2,350 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 five-year dataset (which averages data from 2018-2022) and the U.S. HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) 2017-2021 dataset.[1] Given the drastic changes between 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.

Renter Challenges

Renters in Fruita are less likely to be cost-burdened overall than other renters throughout the County, the state, and the nation (Table 2.1). In total, 36.3% of renters in Fruita are cost-burdened to some degree. In contrast, renters throughout Mesa County overall are cost-burdened at a rate of 45.4%. In the State of Colorado, renters are the most likely to be cost-burdened at 49.8%. These data indicate that Fruita renters are more well off relative to the state and county overall, but renters are still susceptible to increasing rental rates.

[1] A caveat with these data is that the Census Bureau also includes a share of households that were "not computed" in terms of what percentage of monthly income is spent on housing. Between the United States, Colorado, and Mesa County, the average percent of households that were not computed is 6.4%. However, 21.7% of renting households in Fruita did not have this statistic calculated, which may result in gaps in the analysis.

However, when separating total cost burden to cost-burdened (spending 30-50% on housing) versus *severely* cost-burdened (spending 50% or more on housing) the picture is slightly different. A high share of renters being severely cost-burdened is a sign of significant housing costs relative to local earnings.

In this scenario, local economies can struggle significantly as residents are unable to spend on much other than the necessities. In Fruita, renters are more likely to spend 30-50% of their monthly income (cost-burdened) on housing, but significantly less likely to spend 50% or more of their monthly income (severely cost-burdened) on housing.[2]

Table 2.1: Share of Cost-Burdened Renters Comparison, 2023

Region	Cost-Burdened	Severely Cost-Burdened	Total Cost-Burdened	Not Cost-Burdened
Fruita	27.8%	8.5%	36.3%	42.0%
Mesa County	23.2%	22.3%	45.4%	47.1%
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

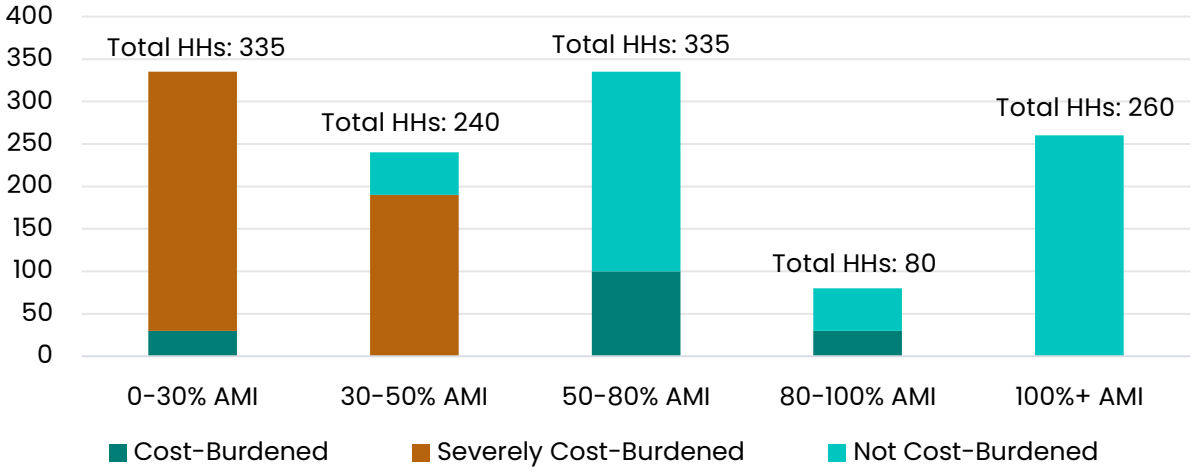
We also measured affordability issues by various AMI levels. The five AMI levels below include:

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

Figure 2.2 shows the lowest income renters in Fruita are more likely to be cost-burdened than those at higher income levels. In Fruita, 69.7% of renters who are low-income, very low-income, or extremely low-income are cost-burdened to some degree. When restricting the sample to very low-income and extremely low-income renters, the rate is even higher at 89.6%. In total, these data show that 52.4% of all renting households are cost-burdened to some degree, higher than the Census data indicate.

[2] 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 amount 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.

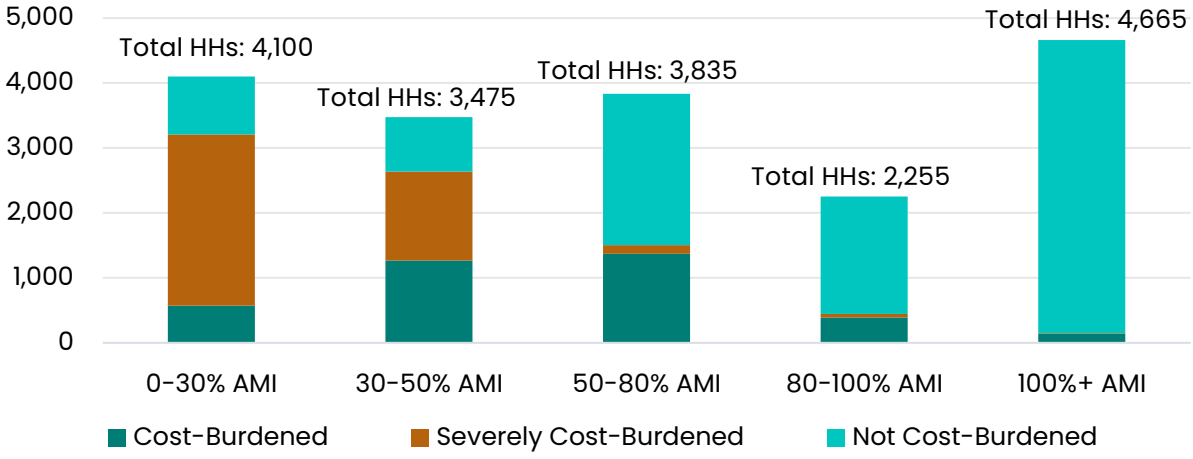
Figure 2.2: Cost-Burdened Renting Households by Income Level in Fruita



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

For comparison, Figure 2.3 shows cost-burdened renters by AMI in Mesa County. In the County overall, a similar 64.5% of low-income, very low-income, and extremely low-income renters are cost-burdened. However, only 43.3% of total renters in the County are cost-burdened to some degree, compared to 52.4% in Fruita.

Figure 2.3: Cost-Burdened Renting Households by Income Level in Mesa County



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

Homeownership Challenges

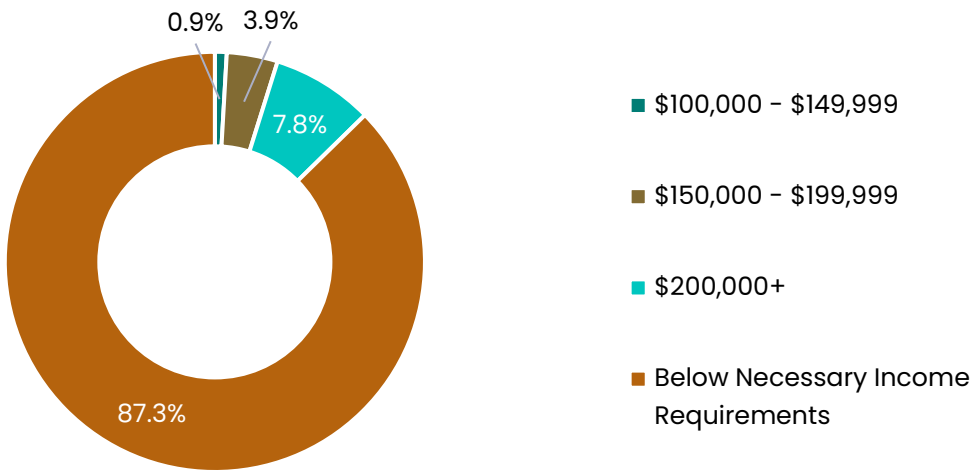
Many homeowners are also cost-burdened and may be at risk of foreclosure. Approximately 13.8% of homeowners in Fruita are cost-burdened, and another 7.2% are severely cost-burdened. Meanwhile, in Mesa County, about 13.3% of homeowners are cost-burdened and 8.4% of homeowners are severely cost-burdened.

Some homeowners in these statistics were likely able to purchase their homes years ago when prices were lower. This reality reflects that new homeowners are likely cost-burdened to a greater degree now with higher home values and mortgage rates. Considering current income levels, home prices in the region (as of July 2025), and average current mortgage rates, we estimated the percentage of potential first-time homebuyer households that can afford to purchase a home. The model was built to show households with an average credit rating, assuming the use of a conventional 30-year mortgage.

Ultimately, our estimates show that the vast majority of potential first-time homebuyers in Fruita and Mesa County cannot afford to purchase an average-priced home. Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.5 below show which income cohorts are able to afford an average-priced home, and their respective shares of the total number of households in Fruita and Mesa County.

In Fruita, a household would need an income of approximately $120,000 just to afford the mortgage payment for an average-priced home. In contrast, the median household income in the City is about $74,000. Therefore, an average household would need to earn about $46,000 more per year in order to afford an average-priced home. As a result, 87.3% of potential first-time homebuyers in Fruita cannot afford an average-priced home today (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: First-Time Homebuyers that Can Afford to Buy an Average-Priced Home in Fruita

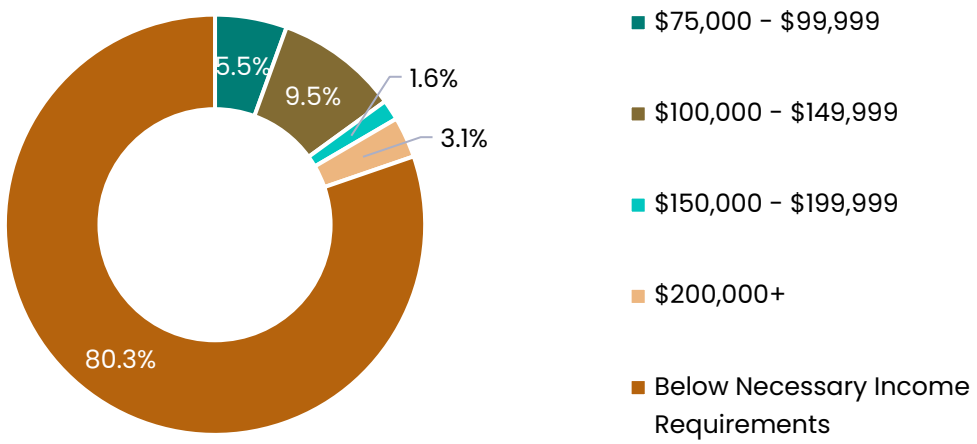


Source: U.S. Census Bureau Table S2503 5-Year Estimates, Local MLS, Realtor.com

Residents in the County are slightly better off. According to our estimates under the same conditions, 80.3% of potential first-time homebuyers in Mesa County overall cannot afford to purchase an average-priced home today (Figure 2.5). The difference is

mostly driven by home values, where the average-priced home is about $160,000 less expensive in the County overall than in the City while the median household income is only about $1,000 greater at $75,000. However, a household would need to earn approximately $87,000 to afford the mortgage on an average-priced home.

Figure 2.5: First-Time Homebuyers that Can Afford to Buy an Average-Priced Home in Mesa County



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

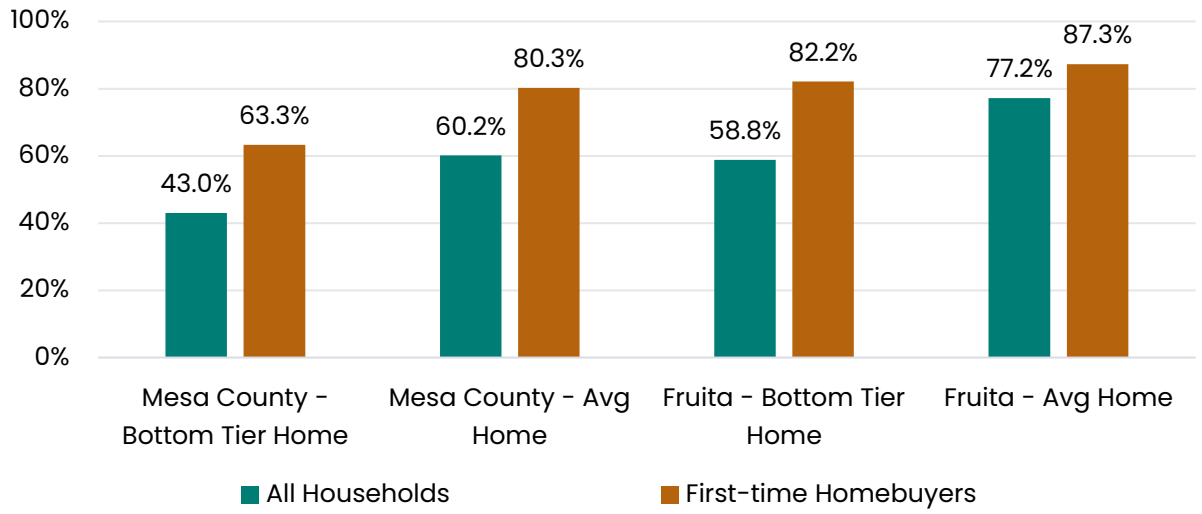
While our estimates above focus on households who do not own homes, the majority of households in both the City and the County do own homes. What would the estimates look like if these households were to attempt to purchase a home now? Figure 2.6 shows a comparison of all households versus first-time homebuyers if they were to purchase a home today.

Excluding the capital homeowning households would have access to if they sold their homes, current homeowners would fare better in Fruita, where still 77.2% of all households cannot afford to purchase an average-priced home. The effect is greater in Mesa County overall, where 60.2% of all households cannot afford to purchase an average-priced home, compared to 80.3% of potential first-time homebuyers.

But what if these first-time homebuyers are not looking for an average-priced home? Figure 2.6 also shows what percentage of households would be unable to buy a bottom tier home in Fruita and Mesa County. Both first-time homebuyers and all households fare better if they are looking to purchase a bottom tier home instead, though to varying degrees. In Fruita, 82.2% of potential first-time homebuyers are still unable to purchase a bottom tier home, better than 87.3% but not by much (due to the household income distribution). Looking to purchase a bottom tier home also exposes the household to greater risk of substandard housing. Mesa County residents are better off

when considering bottom tier homes, with 63.3% of potential first-time homebuyers being unable to afford the mortgage payment.

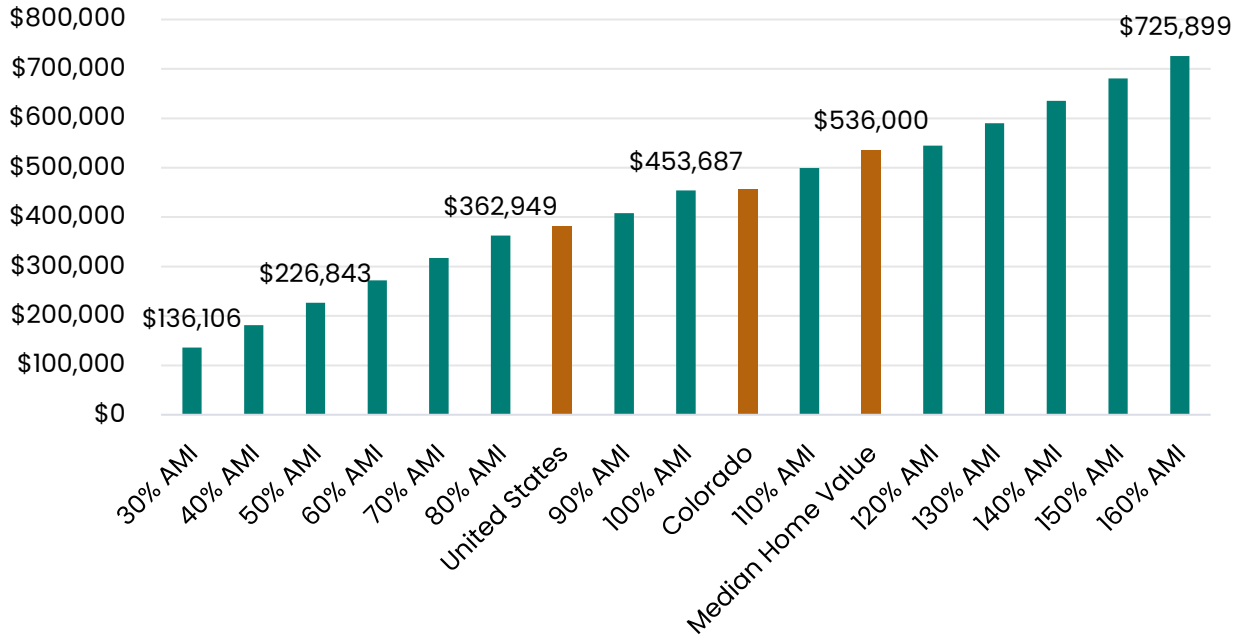
Figure 2.6: Households that Cannot Afford to Buy an Average-Priced Home Comparison



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Table S2503 5-Year Estimates, Local MLS, Zillow ZHVI, Realtor.com

As we defined affordability above, Figure 2.7 displays what home prices are considered affordable at each income level in Fruita. 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 $136,100 or lower to offer an affordable mortgage payment. At 100% AMI the home price would need to be about $80,000 lower to be considered affordable as the average-priced home in the City is about $536,000. In order to afford to purchase an average-priced home, a household would need to earn greater than 110% AMI.

Figure 2.7: Affordable Home Price by AMI Level, City of Fruita



Source: 2025 HUD Income Limits, Esri Business Analyst 2024, Mesa County MLS

3. Forecast

While forecasts are estimates of what might happen in the future, we need a baseline to project short-run and long-run housing demand. In this section, we present population and housing needs forecasts based on two growth scenarios: the **Expected** growth scenario (which incorporates relatively lower fertility rates, survival rates, age demographics, and migration) and the **Potential** growth scenario (which incorporates higher rates of fertility, survival, age demographics, and migration).

Population Forecast

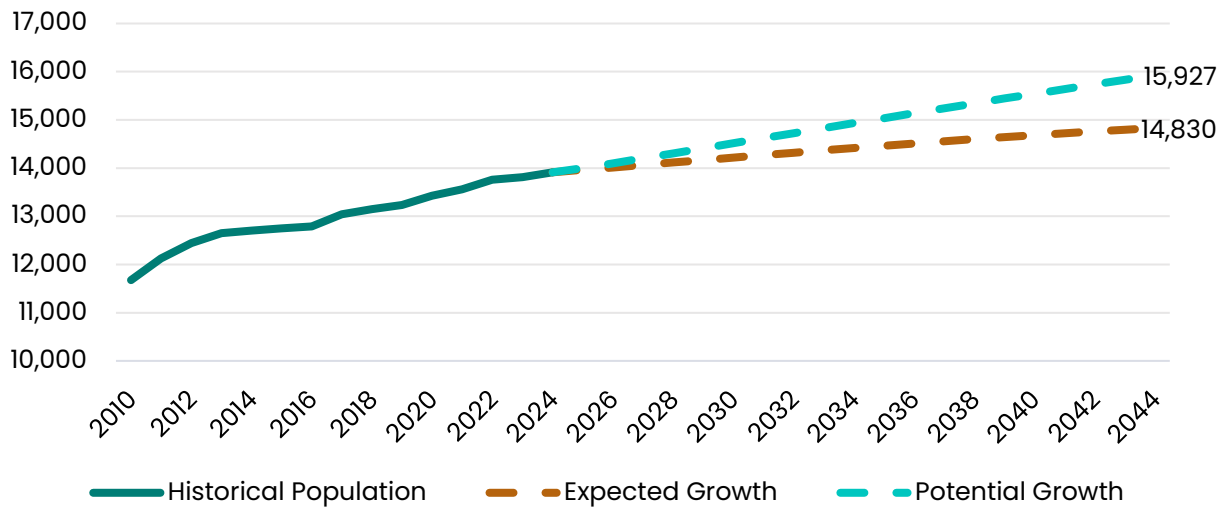
Our population and housing needs forecasts for the City of Fruita are based on an extrapolation of official population estimates from the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program (PEP). The PEP produces estimates of the population for the United States, states, metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas, counties, cities, and towns.[3] Migration rates from the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) were built into the model to account for external growth factors.

Fertility rates from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER) program were used as part of the internal demographic factors. Mortality and survival rates from the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) were built into the model as the other internal growth factor.

Each variable was included in an autoregressive moving average (ARIMA) statistical model to extrapolate various growth scenarios. The **Potential** growth scenario is based on the upper estimates produced by our ARIMA model. Meanwhile, the **Expected** growth scenario is based on the lower estimates produced by our ARIMA mode. Both population forecasts for the City of Fruita are displayed in Figure 3.1.

[3] "Population and Housing Unit Estimates," United States Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest.html.

Figure 3.1: Population Forecast for the City of Fruita, 2024-2044



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

Ultimately, we project the population in Fruita to grow by between 918 and 2,015 new residents (Table 3.1). These projections relate to a cumulative growth rate of 6.6% or 14.5% between the Expected and Potential growth scenarios through 2044. To be clear, our projection for Fruita includes residents within the official city limits, not the urban growth boundary or the planning influence area.

Table 3.1: Projected Population Growth for the City of Fruita, 2024-2044

Population Growth Scenario	2024	2029	2034	2039	2044	Pop. Growth	20-Yr CAGR	Total Growth Rate
Expected Growth	13,912	14,167	14,416	14,643	14,830	918	0.3%	6.6%
Potential Growth	13,912	14,409	14,933	15,442	15,927	2,015	0.7%	14.5%

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

Housing Needs Forecast

Built upon our population forecast, we created a housing needs forecast which reflects the housing unit need for the population projection. Particular interest of the City's was placed on the housing needs over the next two, five, and 10 years. 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 visually. As of 2023, the City of Fruita's average household size is 2.62, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Fruita's average household size is relatively high compared to state and national averages, along with a few other geographic areas in the region. For comparison, other average household sizes are shown below:

- United States: 2.54
- Colorado: 2.45
- Mesa County: 2.37
- Garfield County: 2.64
- Delta County: 2.39
- Grand Junction: 2.19
- Rifle: 2.77

Based on the 2.62 average household size in 2023, the housing unit need for the current population estimate in Fruita (13,912) is about 5,310 units. This estimate does not match the current estimate of occupied housing units in the City of Fruita, which is reported as being closer to 5,495 (Esri Business Analyst). This discrepancy could be due to the fact that average housing size is skewed towards larger households, resulting in a lower need than currently reported. Regardless, we have chosen to use the modeled estimate of 5,310 units as the baseline for our housing needs forecast.

Ultimately, we project Fruita will need between 192 and 390 new units by 2034 (Table 3.2). This translates to a total need of 5,502 units or 5,700 units. Table 3.3 reports the number of new housing units needed over the next two, five, and 10 years in the City of Fruita.

Table 3.2: Housing Needs Forecast, City of Fruita, 2024-2034

Growth Scenario	Current Units '24	Needed Units '26	Needed Units '29	Needed Units '34	New Units	Total Growth Rate
Expected Growth	5,310	5,348	5,407	5,502	192	3.6%
Potential Growth	5,310	5,381	5,499	5,700	390	7.3%

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

Table 3.3: New Housing Units Needed, City of Fruita, 2024-2034

Growth Scenario	Current Units '24	New Units Needed '26	New Units Needed '29	New Units Needed '34
Expected Growth	5,310	38	97	192
Potential Growth	5,310	71	190	390

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

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 Fruita by income level, we expanded upon our housing needs forecast to determine how many housing units are required at different area median income (AMI) levels. Utilizing Census Bureau income cohorts, Housing and Urban Development (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 Fruita, a household at 100% AMI earns about $94,100 per year, or $7,840 per month. If this household spends more than $2,350 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.

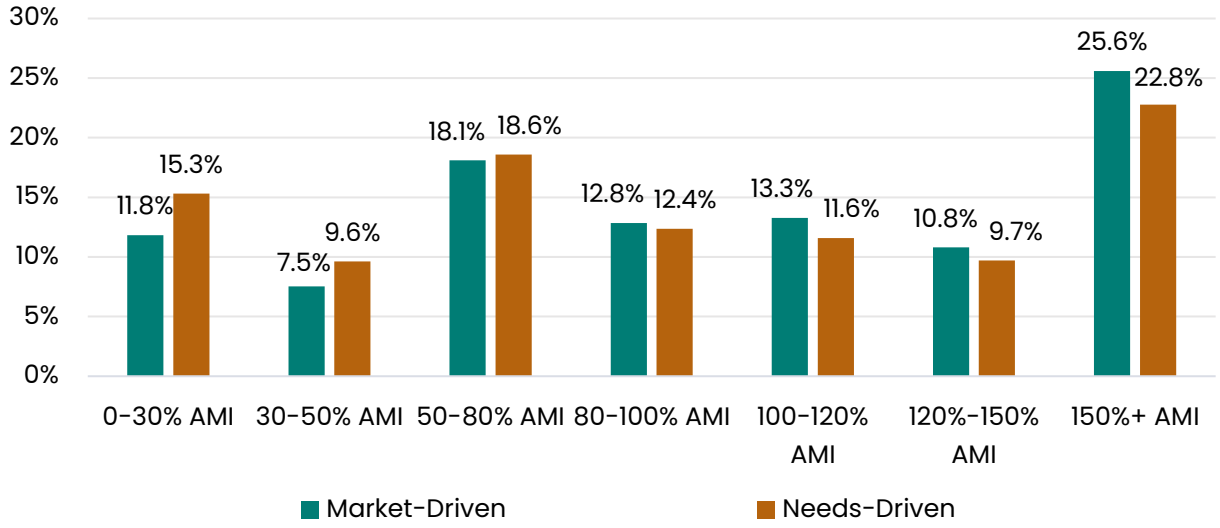
Using HUD's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, we applied the total number of cost-burdened households at each AMI level to create a target, **Needs-Driven** housing unit distribution. If new housing units in Fruita are built towards this target distribution, then the City will 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 the number of units in our housing needs forecast. We prefer this method because the City should not plan for far more units to be available than are projected to be needed, which may have adverse effects on the local government's financial position.

In addition to the Needs-Driven forecast, we constructed a **Market-Driven** forecast for comparison. The forecast will use what the market has produced thus far to see what housing unit distribution is required, and what new units will be needed based on varying income levels. The Market-Driven forecast uses current 2024 AMI levels and follows the same growth scenarios as the Needs-Driven forecast. Figure 3.2 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.[4]

[4] A detailed methodological description and in-depth data can be reviewed in Appendix A.

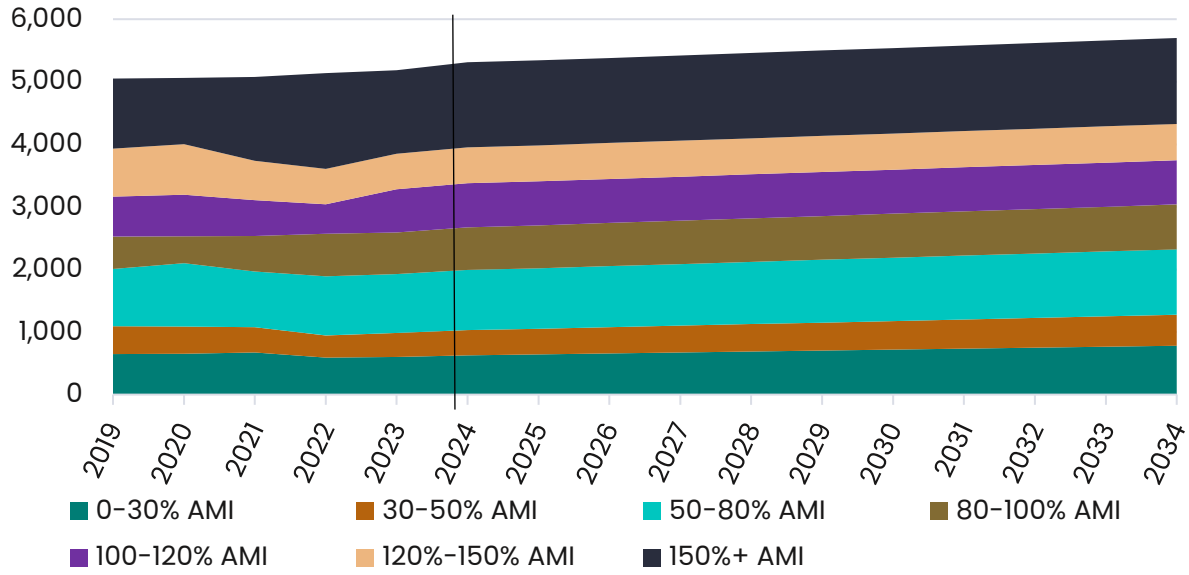
Figure 3.2: Target Housing Unit Distribution by Affordability level



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

Under the **Potential** growth scenario, the **Needs-Driven** forecast for the City of Fruita is illustrated in Figure 3.3. In this scenario, lower income levels like 0-30% AMI and 30-50% AMI are projected to be larger by the end of the forecast period than they are currently. This is due to the fact that more households at these income levels are cost-burdened than households at higher income levels. Overall, the total number of households increases in line with the growth scenario.

Figure 3.3: Potential Growth, Needs-Driven Scenario Housing Needs Forecast by AMI Level, 2024-2034



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, HUD CHAS Data, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

Table 3.4 reports housing needs by AMI level by tenure for the City of Fruita 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. Fruita generally has more owners than renters (Figure 7.2), and this is reflected in the table below.

Table 3.4: Potential Growth, Needs-Driven Housing Needs by AMI Level by Tenure, 2034

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2034
Rentals			
0-30% AMI	629	781	153
30-50% AMI	182	225	43
50-80% AMI	315	343	28
80-100% AMI	38	40	2
100-120% AMI	40	40	0
120-150% AMI	11	12	0
150%+ AMI	226	228	2
Total	**1,441**	**1,669**	**228**
Ownership			
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	218	269	51
50-80% AMI	647	704	57
80-100% AMI	644	677	34
100-120% AMI	665	665	1
120-150% AMI	563	571	8
150%+ AMI	1,133	1,145	12
Total	**3,869**	**4,031**	**162**
Grand Total	**5,310**	**5,700**	**390**

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, HUD CHAS Data, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

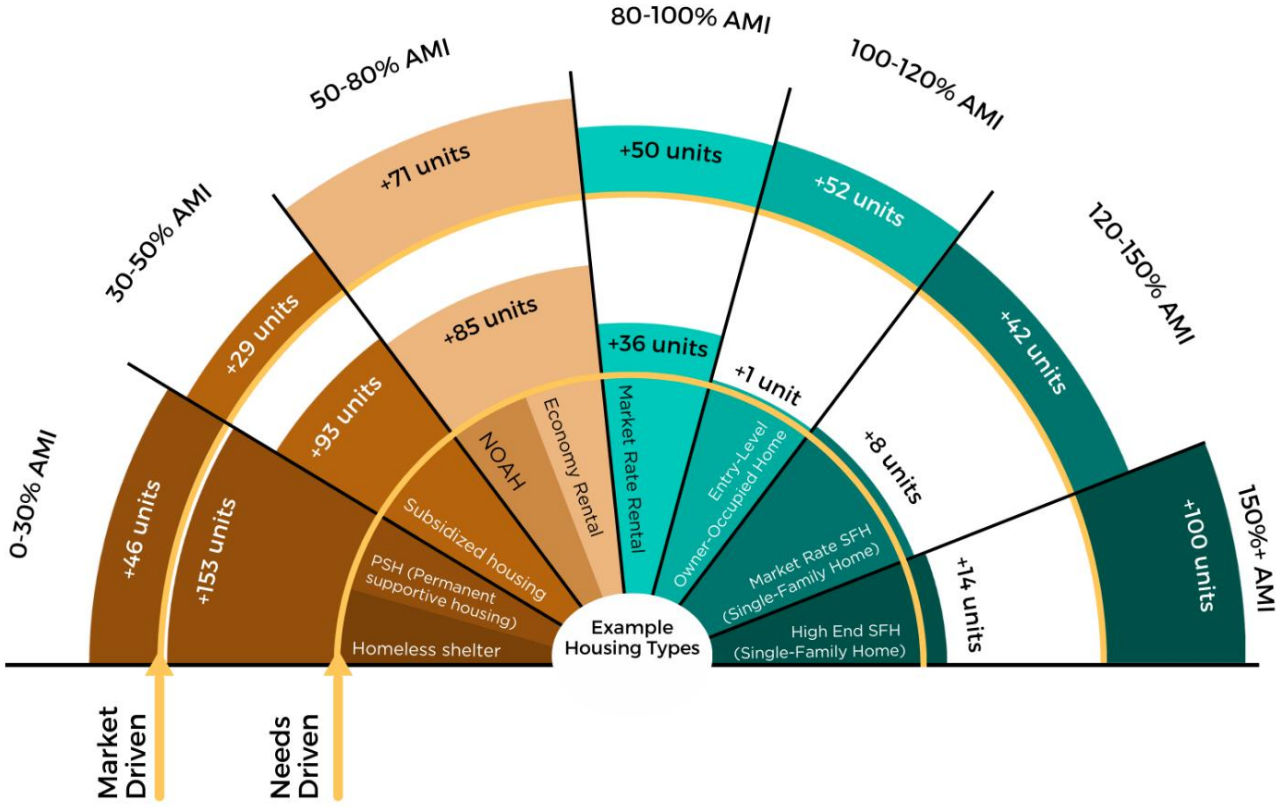
However, we also applied the assumption that it is highly unlikely households at 0-30% AMI are paying a mortgage on a home. While households at this income level may own homes due to purchasing under different market conditions or inheritance, housing costs now are largely out of reach for 0-30% AMI (Figure 2.7). Therefore, we used a 0.0% ownership rate for households at 0-30% AMI for Fruita.

The full comparison of the **Market-Driven** and **Needs-Driven** income level forecasts are shown in Figure 3.4. 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 than at higher AMI levels. However, this does not mean housing units affordable to higher AMI levels are not needed. We project as many as 23 units will be

needed at 100-120% AMI, 120-150% AMI, and 150%+ AMI in total over the next 10 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 current AMI levels where there are more high-income households and housing units affordable to them. Even in this scenario, as many as 196 housing affordable units will be needed for lower income households, particularly below 100% AMI.

Figure 3.4: Housing Needs Forecast by AMI Level, City of Fruita



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Accessible & Visitable Units

This section forecasts the accessible and visitable housing unit needs within the projected housing stock of Fruita. This estimate is based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau regarding households that include at least one person with a disability. By using a 10-year average of disability rates in Fruita, PC estimates that approximately 22.0% of households in Fruita fall into this category. Applying this percentage to the housing forecast, we estimate that the number of households with disabilities will increase from roughly 1,174 to 1,260 over the forecasted 10-year period. This will mean an increase in 86 households (Table 3.5).

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

Table 3.5: Accessible and Visitable Units Needed, 2024-2034

	2024	2029	2034	Change	% Change
Total Estimated Units Needed	1,174	1,216	1,260	86	7.3%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Supportive Units

The final 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.

Reliable data on this population is limited. 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.

Based on available data, PC estimates that in Mesa County, 209 households (or approximately 218 individuals) experience homelessness annually. Using the percentage of Mesa County's population that resides in Fruita, we estimate that 23 households (or approximately 32 individuals) experience homelessness annually in the City of Fruita. If we assume one-fourth of this population is chronically homeless, and seven in ten chronically homeless individuals are unsheltered, there is a need for four supportive housing units in Fruita. [5] By 2034, the population is forecast to grow at least 4.0%. Considering this, only one more unit will be needed by 2034.

Discussions with City staff and residents suggest that the homeless population is less concentrated in Fruita than in larger cities in the county. Therefore, it is likely that the

[5] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Health and Medicine Division, Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, et al., 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/.

need for supportive units in Fruita is less than indicated by this analysis as it would most likely be more beneficial for larger cities such as Grand Junction to provide these units and services.

Table 3.6: Supportive Units Needed, 2024-2034

	Units Needed Now	Future Needs (2034)
Total Estimated Units Needed	4	5

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

4. Housing Action Plan

Housing Action Plans (HAPs) are a traditional component of housing needs planning for communities looking to address housing related challenges. In the State of Colorado, HAPs are meant to be responsive to a jurisdiction's Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) by putting goals and actions together to address gaps and challenges identified in the HNA. In the HAP here, our team has summarized the City of Fruita's actions to address housing challenges, identified goals and recommended strategies to address housing needs, and created an implementation approach so the City may efficiently take action on our recommended strategies.

Summary of Progress to Address Housing Challenges

While the Housing Action Plan (HAP) guidance requires a summary of progress to address Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) findings, our study is the City of Fruita's first HNA and HAP in joint form. For this reason, we cannot exactly summarize the City's progress towards addressing HNA findings yet. However, we can summarize housing development trends and actions the City has taken to address housing challenges. All actions described here have been taken since approximately 2020.

One of the first actions Fruita took to address housing challenges is identifying housing as a need in the City's most recent comprehensive plan, completed in 2020. This may seem like a small step, but it is a crucial first step as it leads to further action. Specifically, in the Land Use & Growth section, the comprehensive plan identified:

- Little housing growth had occurred from 2010-2018
- Most of the residential growth had been in the form of single-family housing
- Development pressure in Fruita is primarily for housing
- Affordable housing was becoming an issue due to rising housing prices
- The project advisory committees wanted to see increased housing diversity

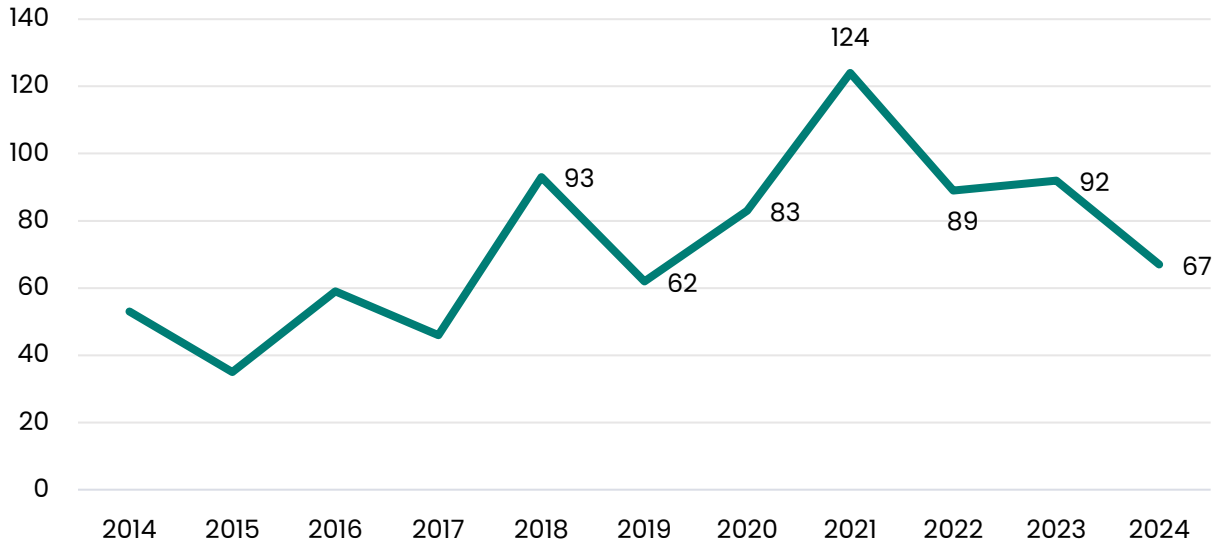
After identifying housing as a need in the 2020 comprehensive plan, City leaders took action. A local Housing Authority was established to specifically address housing related issues in the community, the Fruita Mews affordable housing development was completed (50 units at 30-100% AMI), and the City has been awarded a land banking grant as part of Prop 123. One of the uses of the land banking grant is to purchase a property to construct a second phase of the Fruita Mews development.

Several land use and planning related efforts have been made as well. Fruita passed a density bonus in the largest

zone by number of parcels (Community Residential – CR district, 63% of parcels) and second largest zone by acreage (30%, second only to the PUD district). The density bonus was designed to allow smaller lot sizes which increases the allowed density in exchange for community amenities like shared open space, trails, or a mix of housing types. Additionally, Fruita removed barriers for ADUs, supporting naturally affordable options, and removed maximum density requirements for the Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) district, leading to the development of multiple apartment buildings.

In addition to the new apartment buildings, housing development in general is strong. In fact, new housing production has seen an uptick over the last six years in particular. Since 2018, no less than 62 housing units have been constructed in a single year through 2024 (Figure 4.1). In total, 610 housing units have been produced in the last 6 years. In 2021, new residential dwelling unit production peaked at 124.

Figure 4.1: New Residential Dwelling Unit Production, City of Fruita, 2014-2024



Source: City of Fruita, 2025

Meanwhile, across seven planned developments and redevelopments (including the second phase of Fruita Mews), Fruita is expecting upwards of 790 new units over the next several years. Many of these developments are primarily single-family, but included in the 790 units are attached single-family units, townhomes, apartments, and a redevelopment project with mixed market-rate and AMI targeted units. This variety of actions taken to address housing challenges puts Fruita in a more favorable position to improve housing affordability.

Goals

Goal 1: Encourage Housing Diversity

To echo Fruita's comprehensive plan, the City needs more diverse housing options. At the time of our assessment, not much besides single-family detached housing exists in the City. For example, 80% of the City's current housing stock is specifically single-family detached housing, according to the Census Bureau. To take it one step further, 85% of the City's housing stock is one-unit buildings (both detached and attached).

With such limited housing diversity, only certain types of people and households are able to live in the community. This can have wide ranging effects, from limiting local businesses in terms of available workforce to being construed as openly restrictive. In a context of rising housing costs such as all communities in the State of Colorado are experiencing, more housing types are necessary to build a balanced community.

Additionally, the City of Fruita has an 81% homeownership rate which is significantly higher than the State of Colorado, and the U.S. (66% and 65% respectively). The issue of an undiversified housing stock is reflected in rental metrics as well. In this regard, both the number and share of renter-occupied units have fallen over the last six years. Due to these trends, rents are generally increasing. From 2019 through 2024, the median rental rate of a two-bedroom unit increased by 34%.[6]

While there has been a slight uptick in development other than single-family housing, 75% of new units permitted from 2020 through July 2025 are single-family dwellings. Such a high percentage of single-family homes will likely continue contributing to housing challenges until further action is taken by the City.[7]

To solve the issue of an undiversified housing stock, our team recommends adopting the goal of encouraging housing diversity. In general, our recommended strategies on this goal follow the allowance and incentivization of "missing middle" housing units, such as those illustrated in Figure 4.2.

[6] This is likely a low estimate as the rates PC used are from HUD's Fair Market Rents.

[7] Our team also does not see short-term rentals as one of the main issues, as only 2.8% of occupied housing units are short-term rentals. We do see that the undiversified housing stock is impacting the local workforce as well. Here, only 31% of employees working in Fruita live within the City. Additionally, only 16% of Fruita residents work within the City. Many likely commute from Grand Junction where there are different types of housing available.

Figure 4.2: Missing Middle Housing Types

Source: Daniel Parolek at Opticos Design, 2010

Building middle housing benefits both Fruita and the developer. From the private sector perspective, building in a denser pattern provides economic incentives for developers as they can build units at a lower cost per unit. This in turn benefits Fruita, as denser patterns can facilitate more housing in the City and achieve one of Fruita's primary housing goals.

States and regions that have taken the first steps on opening up more land for middle density housing have learned a few lessons that should be instrumental in Fruita's considerations. In high growth markets, allowing for more duplexes is typically not enough. A survey of middle-density housing developers from across the U.S. concluded that building costs are so high that in order for the incentive to build denser to take effect, they need to build between four to eight units per building, rather than just two.[8]

For the Fruita community, building middle density housing (and therefore more housing diversity) can increase competition in the housing market. More housing in general means there are more options overall and owners or landlords must think twice if their unit is in demand enough to justify its price. Secondly, middle density options are correlated with rental options. This will impact the rental market itself by increasing competition amongst rentals in the City, but also for homes on the market. If homes for sale are too expensive, households may choose to rent for a lower price and save for a down payment. These actions will have an impact on the for-sale market and can cause housing prices to slow or even decrease.

Goal 2: Incentivize Infill & Redevelopment

While our team sees it as a valuable goal to encourage housing diversity and increase the housing supply, not all respondents to the community survey felt the same. While many of the open-ended responses indicated desires of building no housing

[8] "Unlocking the Potential of Missing Middle Housing," Terner Center for Housing Innovation, December 2022, Accessed November 6, 2025, https://ternercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Missing-Middle-Brief-December-2022.pdf.

(affordable or otherwise), the general opinion of respondents is split. About 46% of respondents said "No," the housing supply should not increase in Fruita, while 47% indicated it should in some way (Figure 8.6). Additionally, the largest group of respondents that said the housing supply should increase indicated that an increase should have a focus on the typical low-density, single-family developments we already see in Fruita.

Additionally, respondents generally preferred to limit outward expansion. To be specific, the loss of traditionally agricultural land and overdevelopment were frequently mentioned dissatisfactions with housing in Fruita (Figure 8.10). Furthermore, the redevelopment of underutilized buildings, the desire to retain recreational and small-town character, develop in areas with infrastructure, and focus on infill development were the top actions respondents thought the City should take in order to manage growth (Figure 8.15). To complement these points, respondents were most supportive of affordable housing options on infill lots, areas zoned for mixed use, and the core triangle of the City (Figure 8.19).

Infill developments can be favorable for several reasons. For starters, infill development takes advantage of efficient use of existing infrastructure and services, reduces urban sprawl, and can enhance a community's character: all points that align with the community's desires shown in the survey results.

Incentivizing or encouraging infill also works in tandem with Goal 1: Encourage Housing Diversity. Developments on infill lots are not the typical single-family subdivision development that make up the majority of Fruita's housing options. Revitalizing underdeveloped and underused parcels are also a benefit of infill, as this spurs economic activity and can return greater property tax revenues to the City.

Fruita does have potential options for infill and redevelopment as well. In our Land Capacity Analysis (LCA), we identified underdeveloped parcels which have the highest potential for redevelopment. These parcels were identified to have greater land values than improvement values, indicating that more development could occur on them or current structures may be vacant or dilapidated. The Community Residential (CR) district offers the most underdeveloped parcels with 87. Meanwhile, the CR district and the South Fruita Residential (SFR) district offer the most acreage available with 45 acres each. The Commercial 1 (C-1) and Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) districts also offer opportunities (30 acres in C-1, 52 parcels in DMU).

Utilizing strategies to incentivize infill and redevelopment aligns with community desires, encourages housing diversity, and offers land use efficiencies for the City of Fruita.

Goal 3: Support Affordable & Workforce Housing

Encouraging housing diversity and incentivizing infill will generally encourage and facilitate naturally affordable housing options. However, many households are currently struggling to afford to live in Fruita. In several cases, direct interventions in the form of gap financing or tax credit funded options will be needed to promote affordability for the lowest income residents.

According to our community survey, the vast majority of residents feel housing in Fruita is expensive. When purchasing a home, 78% of respondents answered it was "Somewhat expensive" or "Too expensive" (Figure 8.5). When considering renting, 70% of respondents answered "Somewhat expensive" or "Too expensive." Less than 10% of respondents feel housing is affordable.

Fruita residents are right to feel the burden of expensive housing. According to the Census Bureau, 36% of renters are cost-burdened, spending greater than 30% of their income on housing. This rate is lower than that of Colorado and the U.S. at 50% and 47% respectively. Being lower than the state and the nation signals that the City is acting from a position of relative strength. However, housing trends mentioned earlier show warning signs that affordability can get further out of reach. This is especially true for low-income renters, 70% of which are already cost-burdened.

In terms of purchasing a home, most who have not yet bought a home and do not have equity built up cannot afford to do so now. To be specific, we estimate that 87% of potential first-time homebuyers (those who have not purchased before) cannot afford the average priced home on the market today. If we consider a bottom tier home (worse condition with risk to be substandard), the rate is still high at 82%. This signals that income is driving the affordability challenges just as much as housing costs.

When analyzing price trends, the median house on the market in Fruita is valued at $536,000. This is a higher median than Colorado by about $80,000 and higher than the U.S. by about $150,000. At this price, a household in Fruita must earn greater than 110% of the AMI to be able to afford the mortgage. Additionally, the value of the typical home in Fruita has increased by 7-8% per year over the last 10 years.

For these reasons, our team recommends continuing to support affordable and workforce housing. Doing so will allow cost-burdened renters to have more opportunities for affordable housing. In addition, the series of strategies below can help Fruita provide affordable homeownership options to its citizens.

Strategies

Goal 1: Encourage Housing Diversity

1.1: Support and promote the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs)

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:

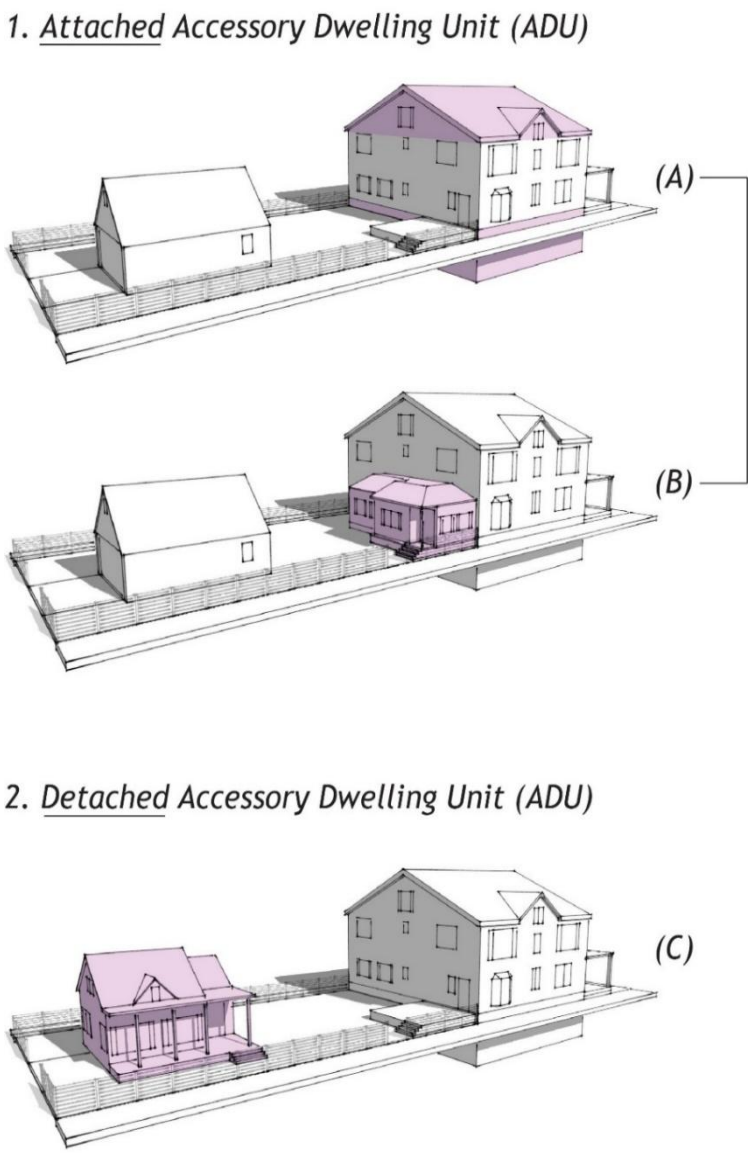
- Aging adults/seniors looking to downsize
- Professionals and young adults who cannot yet afford their own home but are looking to get away from apartments
- Part-time residents or seasonal workers who do not need a full-time single-family home to maintain

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."[9] In this example, the City is allocating $250,000 in funding to encourage ADU construction.

Figure 4.3: Attached and Detached ADUs



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

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, California. On the most basic level, a simple process encourages residents to build ADUs, thereby boosting the

[9] "City Council Approves ADU Production Program," City of Grand Junction, April 5, 2023, https://www.gjcity.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=979&ARC=1454.

housing 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 4.4: 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 City of Fruita can encourage ADUs in several other simple ways, such as waiving permit fees, or waiving parking requirements for ADUs, effectively decreasing headache and cost to any potential ADU investor.

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 City could look to the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) new Accessory Dwelling Unit Grant (ADUG) program. The program provides grants to certified ADU supportive jurisdictions for activities that promote the construction of ADUs.[10]

[10] "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.

1.2: Expand density bonuses and flexible zoning standards to allow a greater range of housing types

Housing developers are often interested in addressing creative housing solutions but self-interest combined with cost considerations and community pressures tends to keep them in their "lane" of tried-and-true housing typologies. Density bonuses are a tool that can incentivize developers to build more housing, and both can be tailored to encourage specific housing types that align with community needs.

A density bonus allows developers to exceed standard density limits in exchanges for meeting public policy goals, such as providing affordable housing at specific Area Median Income (AMI) levels or developing targeted housing types.[11] Encouraging the use of density bonuses can increase housing supply while lowering per-unit costs, ultimately making units more affordable. This approach benefits all parties. Developers reduce costs, Fruita gains more housing, and residents enjoy lower housing costs. Density bonuses can also support "missing middle" housing, which would help diversify Fruita's housing stock.

In fact, the City already utilizes a successful density bonus.[12] As shown in Table 4.1, Fruita provides residential density bonuses tied to the provision of community benefits that align with the City's community plan. Such provisions are the inclusion of open space, developing trails, using a shared driveway or alley, and including a mix of housing types.

Table 4.1: City of Fruita Density Bonus

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

Source: City of Fruita Municipal Code

[11] "Plan Implementation Tools – Voluntary, Incentive-Based," *University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point*, accessed January 31, 2025, https://www.uwsp.edu/clue/planning-and-zoning-resources/plan-implementation-tools/.

[12] "Density Bonuses," Fruita, Colorado, Municipal Code § 17.09.050, Accessed November 4, 2025, https://library.municode.com/co/fruita/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT17LAUSCO_CH17.09SPREPR_17.09.050DEBO.

The density bonus' success is due to its use by several recent developments in the City. The Copper Creek west subdivision is using the density bonus by incorporating open space and shared alley and driveway access to reduce lot sizes and increase the development's density. The Rose Creek subdivision is using the mix of housing type provision to also reduce lot sizes and increase the development's density. Our team believes the mix of housing types provision can be encouraged to a greater extent.

We recommend amending the table in the municipal code to read with the mix of housing types at the top. This shows that incorporating a mix of housing types in developments is important to the City and may encourage developers to utilize this provision first.

The amendment to the density bonus does not eliminate any of the other provisions from being utilized and continues to retain their importance to the community. However, we see the tradeoff of increasing the emphasis and importance of a mix of housing types to be worth it to the community in order to promote housing diversity and marginally increase housing attainability.

1.3: Update zoning and development codes to encourage multi-unit and "missing middle" housing, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and cottage courts

Zoning districts in the City of Fruita are not necessarily restrictive in terms of density and housing types that may be built on them. However, the zoning districts do not clearly state what is permitted, particularly which housing types are allowed. The City's zoning code does not explicitly note permitted housing types for any zoning district, besides what is written in the "Intent" description of the districts.

Fruita should consider explicitly allowing ADUs, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and townhomes (often referred to as middle density or "middle housing") in the City's key zoning districts. Allowing middle housing as a use by right can help diversify the housing options available to homeowners and renters, as well as provide more naturally affordable housing options. Allowing these uses by right can also provide more certainty for developers and reduces the risks that projects will be stalled by neighborhood

Figure 4.5: Duplex Rendering

Source: Nationwide Homes, https://nationwide-homes.com/model/bridgewater-duplex/.

opposition. The City may also consider loosening some density restrictions to ensure types of middle housing are feasible on infill lots.

Some communities ease into such situations by only allowing duplexes on corner lots or only on lots above a certain square footage threshold, for example. Twin homes, currently unaddressed in the zoning code, are another version of attached middle density housing that could be suitable. The primary difference between twin homes and duplexes is that parcels containing duplexes are split through a shared partition upon the same parcel, whereas twin homes contain multiple units in one building but two separate parcels.[13]

According to our estimates, the Community Residential (CR) district currently accounts for 63% of all parcels within Fruita's urban growth boundary, making the CR District of primary importance The district's intent statement is to allow for "moderate density detached single-family residential neighborhoods with the inclusion of other housing types such as attached dwelling units (e.g. apartments and townhouses)." Adding principally permitted uses to zoning districts will show that the middle density housing options are clearly included in the "inclusion of other housing types" rather than leaving it up to the developer's imagination. Adding principally permitted uses in other districts where vacant parcels have been identified (such as C1 and SFR) would be beneficial as well.

Marginally increasing density with these middle housing options will help bring the cost of purchasing or renting down for younger families that want to live in Fruita or want to return to Fruita. Merely allowing these housing types does not dictate that only middle housing will be developed, protecting developers' rights to continue building single-family subdivisions and retaining the community's character.

Figure 4.6: Townhouse Rendering

[13] Realtor.com, "What is a twin home? It's not just another word for 'duplex,'" https://www.realtor.com/advice/buy/twin-home-different-duplex/.

Several smaller communities in Colorado have also made this a priority. The Town of Lyons has moved code amendments through the Planning & Community Development Commission, which include duplexes, triplexes, and more as a use by right in single-family residential zoning districts along with ADU as a use by right in the same districts.[14] Other communities, like the City of Lafayette, City of Louisville, and Estes Valley all have land use code, council documents, drafted actions, and development codes that explicitly encourage these housing types.

1.4: Identify and evaluate opportunities for overlay districts or targeted rezoning to enable redevelopment of underutilized parcels

One tool to encourage mixed-use developments (another way to diversify the housing stock) is a residential-office (RO) zone or transitional zone. There are many benefits to an RO or transitional zone, including:

- Reducing land-use conflict by creating a graded transition
- Provides flexible, lower-impact non-residential uses, along with overall flexibility of land use
- Facilitates gradual density change and walkable mixed-use patterns (complementing middle housing allowances)[15]
- Enables adaptive reuse, like office to residential use (helps with incentivizing infill as well)[16]
- Creates predictable regulatory toolboxes for local governments and clear standards to speed up reviews and reduce disputes
- Parking requirements are often more limited (between commercial and single-family standards) as people are more likely to walk and bike. Often there are fewer persons per unit as well

A helpful example of a current RO district is in Moscow, Idaho. The description of this zone is as a moderately intensive zone including both offices and high-density housing. It serves as a transitional zoning district between residential districts and commercial or industrial districts.[17] The zone is meant to be applied in circumstances such as:

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[14] "Resolution 2024-10-PCDC," Planning and Community Development Commission, Town of Lyons, Colorado, Accessed November 4, 2025, https://www.townoflyons.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/13301?fileID=29683.

[15] "What Makes Mixed-Use Development Economically Desirable?" Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Qing Shen and Feiyang Sun, July 2020, Accessed November 6, 2025, https://www.lincolninst.edu/app/uploads/legacy-files/pubfiles/shen_wp20qs1.pdf.

[16] "Differences in Experiences With the Development of Mixed-Use Projects From 2004 and 2017," Frontiers in Built Environment, Jamie Metzinger, September 2021, Accessed November 6, 2025, https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/built-environment/articles/10.3389/fbuil.2021.734149/full.

[17] "Title 4 – Zoning Code," Moscow, Idaho Municipal Code, § 2-4-H, Accessed November 6, 2025, https://www.ci.moscow.id.us/DocumentCenter/View/1297/Chapter-02---Zoning-Districts-PDF.

- On the perimeter of commercial or industrial districts where they are against residential land uses
- Where transportation network use is greater than desirable for lower density residential uses
- Where landforms create sites which are reasonable accessible by transportation systems and are buffered from nearby residential areas
- Where development patterns in a neighborhood will allow development of moderate intensity to occur without producing adverse visual impact or harm to the transportation network

Our descriptions here detail the potential benefits, uses, and an example of a transitional zone. Fruita currently implements a transitional zone in the Neighborhood Commercial Overlay (NCO) zone. However, discussions with City staff indicate the NCO zone does not receive much usage. The PC team recommends some potential changes to reemphasize or encourage the use of this zone, in the following paragraphs.

Figure 4.7 displays the current area of the NCO zone, covering a portion of the City's core triangle. The zone's current intended use is to provide for additional commercial businesses in certain portions of the DMU and CR districts. It is also intended to enable small-scale businesses that fit in the neighborhood context, by allowing a diversity of business uses.[18]

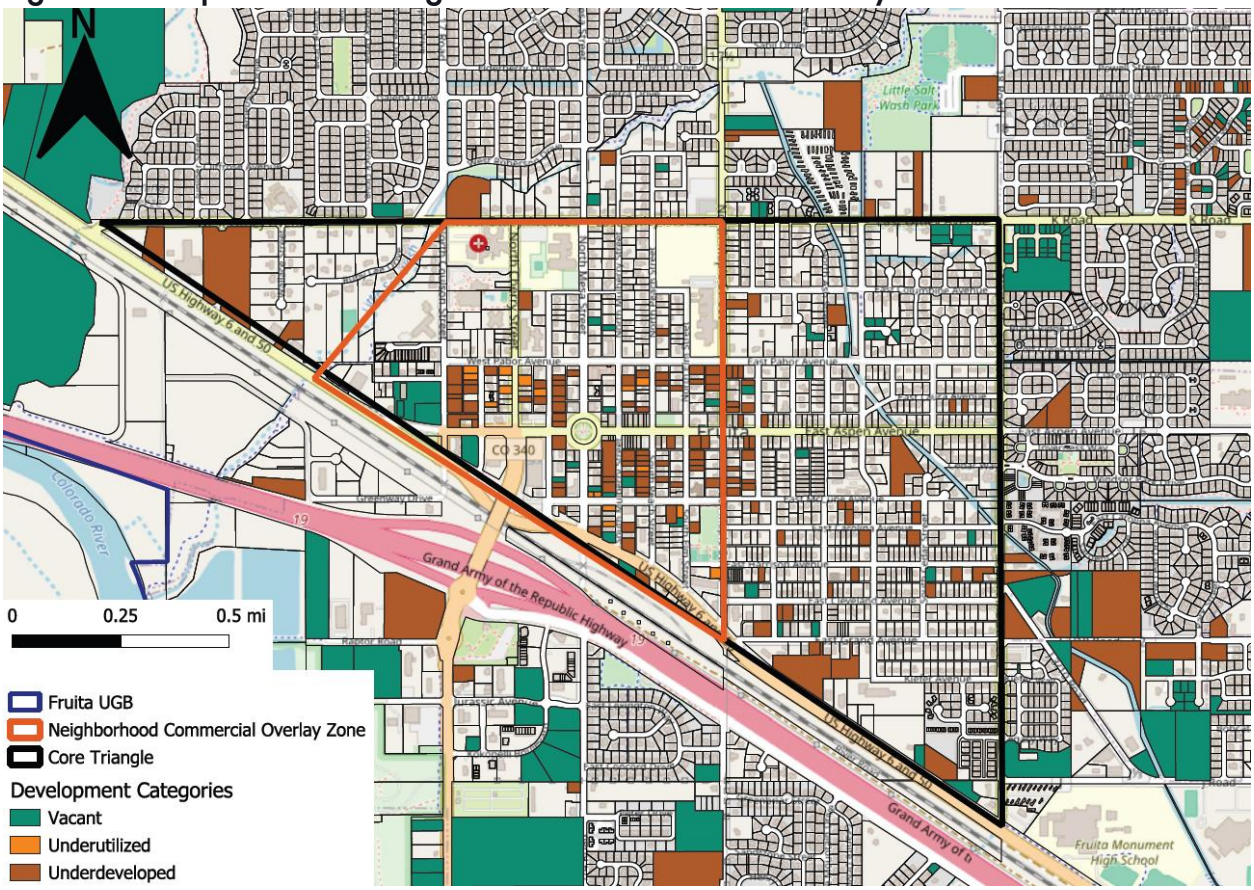
The City may take several options to enhance and reemphasize the NCO. First, the City may consider expanding the NCO to include the full extent of the core triangle. The current extent of the NCO zone is somewhat limited, and if expanded could allow mixed-use redevelopment of more parcels, as shown in Figure 4.7.

Another option the City should consider is adding a housing option or incentive for use. For example, the City may incent developers by ensuring expedited approval for specific uses or housing types. Implementing a half permit fee may be an option as well. To further utilize the South Fruita area (south of Interstate 70), the overlay may be expanded to C-1, C-2, and SFR zones.

Encouraging the use of this zone would create more housing options along with options for economic development within the City. Mixed-use developments through the NCO will contribute unique options for housing along with middle density options. PC's recommendations would help enable the City to focus inward, reduce urban sprawl, and maintain the community's character.

[18] "Overlay Zone Districts," Fruita, Colorado Municipal Code, § 17.03.090, Accessed November 6, 2025, https://library.municode.com/co/fruita/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT17LAUSCO_CH17.03ZODI_17.03.090OVZODI.

Figure 4.7: Map of Current Neighborhood Commercial Overlay



Source: PC using Mesa County GIS, Mesa County Assessor's Data, City of Fruita Zoning, FEMA, USGS

1.5: Develop community education and engagement initiatives to build understanding and support for diverse housing options and density

Many folks prefer to avoid changes in general and within their community. However some changes are required to address challenges to workforce housing availability and housing affordability. To be specific, the path to housing stability is through building more housing, not reducing housing production. By the law of supply and demand, if demand for housing continues to grow through population growth in the community, but housing supply fails to keep up with the growth in demand, the cost of housing will continue to rise further threatening affordability. Housing development is necessary, but the housing should be built in the right way to match the community where production is happening.

We recommend creating a program for community collaboration on density patterns to ensure more housing will be built according to our recommended strategies. Doing so will help support community buy-in and help reduce efforts against new housing in Fruita. As the community survey showed, Fruita residents are split on whether or not more housing should be built, and this program will help bring more residents around.

Throughout our facilitation of the HNA and HAP, we have engaged the community to feel their temperature on housing. We have also listened to their opinions on what can or should be done. But continuing education will be required to ensure the success of this action plan. Collaboration with the community will be necessary as well because zoning and land use policy changes will not take effect quickly. The Terner Center for Housing Innovation (Terner Institute) has shown this to be the case.

In 2022, the Terner Institute conducted a study to assess how the zoning and land use changes were impacting housing production at various AMI levels in different cities according to California's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA).[19] Through their study, the Terner Institute showed that even though zoning and land use changes were made in cities such as Woodland, Rocklin, Irvine, and San Jose, not all of their target units by AMI were quite being permitted through the fifth year of the RHNA. Some units at the 80-120% AMI and 120%+ AMI levels were permitted, but it was taking time to reach their full targeted allocations. Because the adoption takes time, actions should be taken to help the process along.

In an effort to speed up the adoption of new density patterns, continuing education for community members is important to maintain and create that buy-in. This program for collaboration on density patterns will help with the adoption of developers as well. Even though new development options and incentives may be available, some developers may not be aware of them. Proactively engaging with the private sector to showcase what is now possible under new policies is a powerful way to remove barriers to housing development.

Creating this program will require time from City leadership and staff, along with a marketing effort to communicate the program to the community. Points to consider in the collaboration include:

- Communication on what the zoning and land use changes mean and allow
- The zoning and land use changes do not prohibit traditional single-family housing developments
- Acknowledge community concerns related to growth management, and communicate these strategies focus inward, not on outward expansion
- More housing types create more opportunities for younger generations to return to Fruita, rather than being restricted by cost-of-living budgets

[19] "Landscape of Middle-Income Housing Affordability," Terner Center for Housing Innovation, April 2022, Accessed November 6, 2025, https://ternercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Landscape-of-Middle-Income-Housing-Affordability-April-2022.pdf.

- Expanded housing types and opportunities create more options for local employees as well, potentially allowing local businesses to expand hours of operation

Specific actions City leadership and staff could take for this program on community collaboration are:

- Including more questions on housing types and densities on community surveys (conducted every four years)
- Inviting developers and key neighborhood or community members to workshop sessions
- Displaying educational materials at community events where the City has a regular presence (e.g., Fruita Farmer's Market or local festivals)

Goal 2: Incentivize Infill & Redevelopment

2.1: Create financial or regulatory incentives (Frutia Housing Authority, DDA, Urban Renewal Authority, HRWC or local gap funding programs) to promote infill and redevelopment housing projects

Projects like The Oaks redevelopment show the City of Fruita's appetite for revitalizing properties and areas of the community that may be underused. During conversations with City staff and City Council members, the idea of a redevelopment zone or overlay came up as well. The City may have a few options on this front.

The first route Fruita could take is less intensive but may not have as large a return. In this first option, the City could draft an ordinance designating a specific area or areas as an "incentive zone" for redevelopment projects. We would recommend this potential area(s) to be where there is a concentration of underdeveloped or underutilized properties identified through our Land Capacity Analysis (LCA). This process would likely include the City utilizing traditional incentive tools to encourage redevelopment of properties that reside in priority areas. Such incentive tools could be:

- Property-tax rebates (city portion only)
- Development fee waivers
- Density bonuses (similar to that of the CR district or with different provisions)
- Expedited permitting
- Local grants/loans

Another, more intensive route would be the creation of a downtown development authority (DDA) or an urban renewal agency (URA). These authorities are types of agencies that have unique financing powers through the tax increment financing (TIF) model. The TIF is a tool that allows jurisdictions to promote economic development and redevelopment by earmarking property tax revenue from increases in assessed values

within a designated TIF district.[20] The creation of one of these two types of authorities would give the City access to another powerful tool in addition to traditional ones to catalyze more projects.

A local example of a DDA is the Grand Junction Downtown Development Authority.[21] Grand Junction's DDA is composed of the DDA and the Business Improvement District (BID). The DDA's mandate is to halt and prevent deterioration of property values within its district and to assist in the development and redevelopment of its district. This is a particularly helpful example due to Grand Junction's proximity to Fruita, but also because the DDA has assisted with housing projects as well. For example, Grand Junction's DDA received a $3.2 million state grant to support a mixed-use housing project which includes about 30 workforce housing units in addition to its ability to use the TIF model.[22]

The Durango Renewal Partnership (DRP) is the URA for the City of Durango, Colorado.[23] The DRP was formed to oversee redevelopment and reinvestment in underutilized areas of the City, working via public-private partnerships. The core functions of the DRP include facilitating public-private partnerships for redevelopment, administering TIF agreements and redevelopment plans, and supporting housing affordability, mixed-use development, infrastructure improvements, and preservation of community character. While the DDA and URA routes are a bit more intensive, they present tried and true methods for catalyzing redevelopment and reinvestment in communities, including housing and mixed-use opportunities.

[20] "Tax Increment Financing – A Tool for Local Economic Development," *Lincoln Institute of Land Policy*, Richard Dye and David Merriman, January 1, 2006, Accessed November 4, 2025, https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/articles/tax-increment-financing/.
[21] "Downtown Development Authority/Business Improvement," City of Grand Junction, Accessed November 4, 2025, https://www.gjcity.org/503/Downtown-Development-Authority-BID.
[22] "Colorado Economic Development Commission Approves Funding for Downtown Grand Junction's First Workforce, Mixed-Income Housing Project," Colorado Governor's Office, Accessed November 4, 2025, https://www.colorado.gov/governor/news/colorado-economic-development-commission-approves-funding-downtown-grand-junctions-first.
[23] "Urban Renewal Authority," City of Durango, Accessed November 4, 2025, https://www.durangogov.org/ura.

2.2: Conduct feasibility studies for redevelopment or public-private partnership opportunities (with the City leading the way) on underutilized or blighted properties within the City

In 2023, the School District 51 school board approved a resolution to close the Old Fruita Middle School, formerly the Fruita 8/9 School.[24] During our team's visit to the City in late September, we noticed the building as vacant and noted the school resides in a beneficial area of the City (Figure 4.8). The property is within the City's core triangle, surrounded by existing residential uses and the CR district, and the property is publicly owned. Full parcel details include:

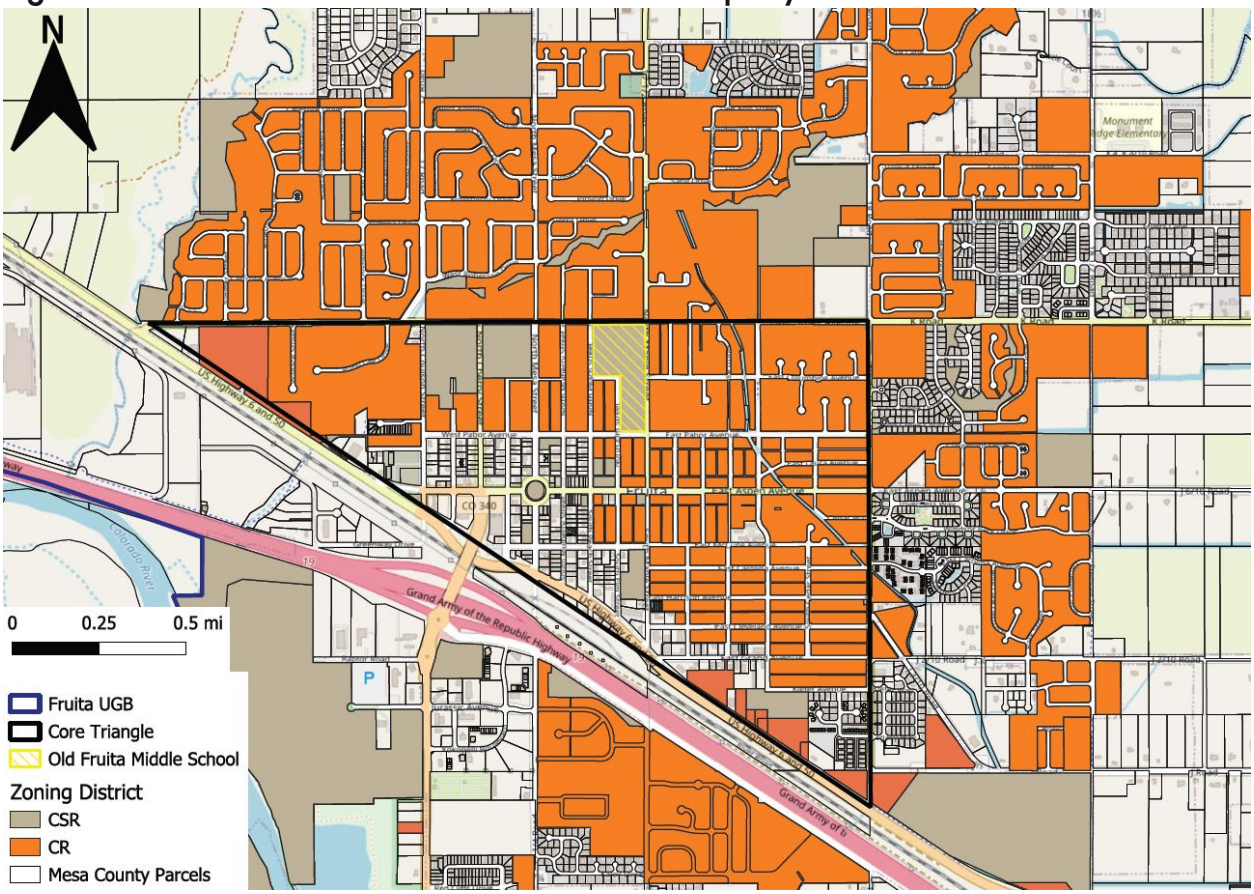
- Parcel No. 269717228001
- Zoning: Community Services Recreational (CSR)
- Acreage: 12.6 acres
- Max unit potential with full CR density bonus: 100 units
- Owner: School District 51

One of the City's current redevelopment partners, Headwaters Housing Partners, noted there could be potential challenges with redeveloping the existing structure, particularly related to HVAC and current infrastructure serving the property. Additionally, a zoning change would be required as it is currently in the Community Services Recreational (CSR) district which does not explicitly allow residential uses. Given these circumstances, a full feasibility study would likely be needed to assess the project's viability. However, given its ideal location the property possesses great potential for a mixed-use project to serve the community.

The project may also be beneficial because it provides an opportunity to leverage publicly owned, sold, or managed land. Publicly owned land offers the opportunity for local control over site development for affordable housing. The strategy can help ensure that communities can provide housing options for lower and middle-income households by directly setting criteria for developers and partners. The property could be provided to private or nonprofit developers at low or no costs in return for the developer's commitment to provide housing that meets Fruita's needs.

[24] "D51 school board approves resolution to close Fruita 8/9 School," Nathan Deal, *The Daily Sentinel*, Accessed November 4, 2025, https://www.gjsentinel.com/news/western_colorado/d51-school-board-approves-resolution-to-close-fruita-8-9-school/article_98a44d70-9eb7-11ee-bcc3-3b4314866956.html.

Figure 4.8: Location of Old Fruita Middle School Property



Source: PC using Mesa County GIS, Mesa County Assessor's Data, City of Fruita Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Goal 3: Support Affordable & Workforce Housing

3.1: Identify and pursue sustainable funding sources to support affordable and workforce housing development, including potential ballot measures or dedicated revenue streams

A dedicated revenue source for affordable housing provides a consistent stream of funding, often directed to a housing trust fund or housing authority, to support housing initiatives. Revenue can be collected from one more multiple sources and distributed in a variety of ways. While annual contributions can vary, a dedicated sources stabilizes long-term funding, reducing dependency on yearly budget approvals.

Typical sources can include linkage fees, real estate transfer taxes, document recording fees, developer fees, and demolition taxes. Other possibilities include permit fees, hotel lodgers' taxes, marijuana taxes, luxury housing fees, sales tax increments, and short-term rental fees can all be directed towards the fund. The mechanism for distributing funds can specify local goals and criteria for qualifying projects that target specific income levels, tenure types, or other housing features.

While some of these options are more viable than others for the City of Fruita, our team sees some potentially low-hanging fruit the City can take advantage of. To be specific, the City should consider allotting a portion of the Fruita Lodger's Tax to affordable housing projects specifically. The ordinance for the tax creates three funds: the Tourism Promotional Fund, the Economic Development Fund, and the Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Public Places Fund.[25] The lodging tax levied is 6% of gross taxable sale paid or charged for purchasing lodging within the City.

Currently, 50% of the tax revenue collected is directed towards the Tourism Promotional Fund, which is for the purpose of marketing and promotion of the City to tourists. For the other two funds (Economic Development Fund and Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Public Places Fund) "certain revenues" as determined by City Council are placed in them. Additionally, expenditures from the Economic Development Fund may be for the purpose of financing business incentives, matching funds for public-private partnerships, and attainable housing, as well as other purposes deemed appropriate by City Council.

While attainable housing being a part of the Economic Development Fund is a good thing, the City ought to consider giving affordable or attainable housing a larger piece of the pie. Our team is not privy to all the knowledge of where all the expenditures are going towards, and thus the City should first consider any potential consequences of shifting funds from either fund towards housing priorities.

Having a locally dedicated funding source for affordable housing would ensure that the City gets to choose exactly where the money gets spent, rather than relying on state or federal funding which require more hoops to be jumped through. When PC conversed with several of the City's regional partners, the subject of funding came up as a constant barrier to affordable housing projects. Dedicating more funding from Fruita's current lodging tax could help the City complete more projects it has already supported like the Fruita Mews and the Oaks Redevelopment.

As a successful example, the City of Wheat Ridge established the Wheat Ridge Housing Fund (WRHF) in 2023. For the fund, the City dedicated a portion of its short-term rental lodgers' tax for housing.[26] This fund enabled gap financing for Foothills Regional Housing to acquire Vance Street Lofts, providing rental units for households earning 80% or less of the area median income. The fund will also be used to support programs like the

[25] "Fruita Lodger's Tax," Fruita, Colorado, Municipal Code § 3.18, Accessed November 4, 2025, https://library.municode.com/co/fruita/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT3REFI_CH3.18FRLOTA.
[26] "Accomplishments and Action Plan," Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan, City of Wheat Ridge Senior Housing Planner, Shannon Terrell, Accessed November 4, 2025, https://whatsupwheatridge.com/housing.

City's Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) Preservation Program by providing grants and loans to projects aligned with Wheat Ridge's housing policies.

An example of a non-lodgers' tax fund can be found in the Town of Telluride. The Town's Affordable Housing Fund receives direct revenues through a 0.5% sales and use tax collection as well as two million dollars from property taxes, which were over $600,000 in 2020.[27] It is also partially funded through affordable housing mitigation payments by private development. The fund remains healthy with a reserve that will continue to build. Additionally, in 2020, the Town instituted a 2.5% Affordable Housing Short-term Rental Excise Tax for affordable housing and programs.

3.2: Develop or update affordability-oriented zoning tools to increase housing options for households earning at or below 120% of area median income (AMI)

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, these processes can be time consuming and may be a barrier to some housing developments. Expediting the permitting and approval processes can help incentivize the development of affordable housing or other high-priority community projects, particularly in a community like Fruita with a strong market and high construction activity.

As many developers in the region can attest, Fruita may be the "quickest in the Valley" with regard to permitting and development reviews. However, codifying this practice for high-priority projects or developments including units at 120% AMI or below could take the City one step further. Our team has heard that developers with current projects in Fruita are likely to work in the City again due to their quick review practices. But this may also be an opportunity to bring new developers to the area that specialize in different kinds of housing developments or affordable housing.

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.[28] 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

[27] "2021 Budget and Financial Plan," Town of Telluride, Colorado, Accessed November 4, 2025, https://www.telluride-co.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10661/Town-of-Telluride-Budget-2021?bidId=.

[28] "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=.

AMI levels.[29] 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 procedures for affordable housing.[30] 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. In the context of Fruita, 90 days may seem like an eternity. These examples do show that the strategy is in practice, and Fruita may take bits and pieces to complement their current procedures and to attract more developers.

3.3: Establish partnerships with regional housing organizations, nonprofit entities, or community land trusts to expand affordable homeownership and preserve long-term affordability

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, and remain one of the few models that work for those in the middle of the income spectrum.

Since owners of CLT properties are free to sell their homes, 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. Because of this, CLT developments typically fit better with surrounding single-family neighborhoods than renter-occupied housing.

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

[29] "Whetstone Village, Crested Butte, CO," Accessed November 4, 2025, https://whetstonecb.com/.

[30] "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.

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.[31]

- 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%)

As an example, 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.

Another example of how a similar model with a municipality/nonprofit partnership can work is the Step Up Bisbee/Naco program in Bisbee, Arizona.[32] Here, blighted and 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. A similar model could be valuable in Fruita to build new units by mobilizing wealthier community members or local businesses who are looking for an opportunity to help their community.

[31] "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/.
[32] Step Up Bisbee/Naco, https://www.stepupbisbeenaco.com/.

Opportunities for Intergovernmental Coordination to Address Local and Regional Housing Needs

While the HNA and HAP we've created here pertain to needs and goals for the City of Fruita specifically, the City need not take action alone. Joint efforts between multiple jurisdictions can enhance the services provided to residents in the region. Creating official coordination and partnerships can help facilitate the circulation of best practices and ideas so as many residents are served in the most effective ways possible.

Firstly, the City of Fruita does currently participate in intergovernmental coordination with various entities. In 1998, a Cooperative Planning Agreement between Mesa County, Fruita, and Grand Junction was established.[33] While not specifically for housing, the Cooperative Planning Agreement impacts housing as the agreements includes rules for annexation, land use, and growth management. These three areas directly impact potential housing availability in the jurisdictions.

As mentioned above, the City of Fruita also created the Fruita Housing Authority (FHA) through the Colorado Housing Authorities Law (CRS §§ 29-4-201) via resolution 2022-02.[34] Because the FHA was created by the City in this way, the collaboration is inherently intergovernmental coordination. The FHA's purpose is to assist the City of Fruita in meeting its goals of housing for all those who want to live in Fruita and maintain various types of housing within the City. Coordinating cooperation with partners within and outside of the City and creating housing through tax abatement programming are the FHA's main avenues of achieving its purpose.

Further opportunities for intergovernmental coordination mostly reside within Goal 3: Support Affordable & Workforce Housing. Key among these opportunities is the continued coordination with the FHA. With the Fruita Mews completed and The Oaks redevelopment in progress, the FHA has already demonstrated ability to assist in addressing local housing needs and the ability to continue to do so.

The City of Fruita may also look to coordination with Mesa County and other municipalities in the region, like Grand Junction. The jurisdictions could look into joint management of Prop 123 funds and credits to address regional housing needs. Douglas

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[33] "Cooperative Planning Agreement," MCA 98-11, Mesa County, Colorado, Accessed December 5, 2025, https://www.mesacounty.us/sites/default/files/2023-01/IGA-MCA%2098-11%20-%20Mesa%20County%2C%20Fruita%20City%20Council%2C%20and%20City%20of%20Grand%20Junction%20relating%20to%20Cooperative%20Planning%20Agreement%20Area%20Buffer_0.pdf.

[34] "Bylaws," City of Fruita Housing Authority, Accessed December 5, 2025, https://www.fruita.org/DocumentCenter/View/3126/Fruita-Housing-Authority-Bylaws-PDF.

County and its municipalities have taken such effort through intergovernmental agreement (IGA).[35] Such an agreement between jurisdictions in Mesa County could make them more competitive in joint efforts to address regional housing needs with larger amounts of funding designated for the entire Mesa County region, as opposed to singular municipalities.

Another opportunity for intergovernmental coordination is by forming any sort of committee, council, or group on regional housing needs with the Grand Junction Housing Authority (GJHA). The GJHA is the housing authority for the City of Grand Junction and the broader Mesa County region.[36] Fruita and the FHA could consider meeting with other agencies in the region in an attempt to share information on projects, funding opportunities, or direct partnerships on programs or projects. Meeting quarterly or semi-annually could be a beneficial model for all parties in the area to address regional housing needs.

Finally, Fruita may consider a formal partnership with Mesa County to recognize the FHA as a provider of regional housing services. While the FHA is statutorily restricted to serving residents within Fruita's city limits, Fruita residents are also Mesa County residents and it is in the County's interest to serve as many locals as possible. This could be as simple as including the FHA as a link on the County's Housing and Property Services website section, noting the housing authority as a provider of housing services.[37] Taking action here could bring more awareness to the FHA and could lead to further partnership opportunities with other housing actors in the region.

[35] "Resolution No. 24-48," City of Castle Pines, Accessed December 5, 2025, https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/2787786/B._Resolution_24-48_Approving_Prop_123_IGA.final.pdf.

[36] Grand Junction Housing Authority, Accessed December 5, 2025, https://www.gjha.org/.

[37] "Housing and Property Services," Mesa County, Colorado, Accessed December 5, 2025, https://www.mesacounty.us/resident-resources/housing-and-property-services.

Implementation Approach for the City of Fruita

Identifying goals and strategies to achieve those goals is an important phase of the process, but the most crucial activities for making real change come after the initial ideation. Many good studies have gone underutilized due to skipping this stage of the process. In alignment with DOLA's required and recommended components of the HAP, Table 4.2 outlines required actions for the City to implement our recommended strategies.

Additionally, SB24-174 dictates that HNAs and HAPs must be updated every six years. To work within this timeframe, our implementation approach includes a phased approach fitting into the six-year window. By the phased approach, strategies are recommended to be completed within one to two years, three to four years, or five to six years.

Strategies recommended to be completed within one to two years are the first phase of the action plan. These strategies are more realistic and provide up front community benefit. Meanwhile, strategies in the five-to-six-year phase will take more planning to execute.

Each strategy is also accompanied by success metrics and potential actors. The success metrics are specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) to provide benchmarks for how the strategies are being implemented. Implementation efforts should be coordinated with City staff and local or regional housing partners. The City should provide progress updates and implementation recommendations to the appropriate bodies (such as the City Council) within six months of direction.

Table 4.2: City of Fruita HAP Implementation Approach

#	Required Actions	Potential Actors/Partners	Success Metrics Legend: Housing Production / Regulatory/ Zoning change / Process Change	Phase Timeline
Goal 1: Encourage Housing Diversity				
1.1	Decide exact program, Workshop program, Draft ordinance, Public hearing, Council adoption	Planning Department, Housing Authority, City Council	ADU permits approved; Number ADU permits using pre-approved plans	1-2 Years →
1.2	Choose Extent, Draft ordinance, Public hearing, Council adoption	Planning Department	Number of developments using new density bonus	1-2 Years →
1.3	Draft ordinance, Public hearing, Council adoption	Planning Department, City Council	Number of non-SFH dwellings approved	1-2 Years →
1.4	Choose extent, Workshop with developers, Draft ordinance, Public hearing, Council adoption	Planning Department, Private Developers, City Council	Number of identified underdeveloped parcels redeveloped in overlay zone	3-4 Years →
1.5	Outline program, Choose dates for events, Workshop material, Conduct engagement	Planning Department, Housing Authority	Number of attendees at public events, Percent increase in survey response	3-4 Years →
Goal 2: Incentivize Infill & Redevelopment				
2.1	Choose method (traditional, DDA, or URA), Workshop program, Draft ordinance, Public hearing, Council adoption	Planning Department, Housing Authority, Private Developers, City Council	Number of properties redeveloped in specified zone(s), Number of housing units approved on infill properties Amount of gap funding provided	3-4 Years →
2.2	Preliminary discussions, Potential grant identification, Conduct feasibility study, Determine next steps	Planning Department, Private Partners, Housing Authority, Private Consultant	Feasibility study recommendation (go or no go)	5-6 Years →
Goal 3: Support Affordable & Workforce Housing				
3.1	Decide on existing or new source, Study potential amounts of funding, Workshop/gauge interest on projects, Draft ballot measure	Planning Department, City Manager, City Council, Private Partners	Significance of potential gap funding amounts, Potential number of housing units to be funded	3-4 Years →
3.2	Draft ordinance, Public hearing, Council adoption	Planning Department, Housing Authority, City Council	Number of housing units 120% AMI or below permitted	1-2 Years →
3.3	Find regional partner, Discuss partnership, Workshop programs	Planning Department, Private Partners, Housing Authority, City Council	Number of CLT ownership properties developed and sold	5-6 Years →

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

5. 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 City of Fruita.

Using Mesa County GIS and Assessor's Office data, along with City of Fruita 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:
    - C1 – Commercial & Mixed-Use 1
    - CR – Community Residential
    - DMU – Downtown Mixed Use
    - LLR – Large Lot Residential
    - RE – Rural Estate
    - SFR – South Fruita Residential
- **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/subdivision or redevelopment 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 (rather than Vacant) because the improvement value exceeds $10,000 but is still less than the land value.
- **Underutilized:** PC also analyzed parcels that were neither Vacant nor Underdeveloped for signs of underutilization, based on Assessor's Office data. If a parcel contains only single-family housing but is located in a zone that allows higher-density housing types (such as DMU or C1), these parcels are developed at lower density than what current zoning allows and PC classified them as Underutilized.
- Parcels excluded from analysis include:
    - Government-owned parcels (e.g., City of Fruita or Mesa County)
    - School district-owned parcels

    - Fire district-owned parcels
    - Parcels owned by other public or quasi-public entities
    - Public recreation parcels (e.g., parks and golf courses)
    - Common area parcels
    - Cemeteries
    - Churches/religious-use parcels
    - Qualified tax-exempt parcels
    - HOA-owned 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, AE, AH, and AO).
- 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 or assumed by our model.
- Assumed densities (dwelling units per acre, or dua) were adapted from current maximum density rules according to zoning codes, density bonuses, and adapted best practices from our previous experience. The assumed densities are as follows:
    - **C1:** 8.0 dua
    - **CR:** 7.0 dua
    - **DMU:** 8.0 dua
    - **LLR:** 3.0 dua
    - **RE:** 0.33 dua
    - **SFR:** 4.5 dua

Vacant Parcels

This section presents Vacant lands for the City of Fruita. 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 by 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 potential housing units are located in the Community Residential (CR) district in Fruita, which could accommodate nearly 430 housing units (Table 5.1).

The South Fruita Residential (SFR) zone has the second-highest potential, while the Commercial & Mixed-Use 1 (C1) zone could accommodate an even larger number (136 units) if residential/mixed-use development occurs.

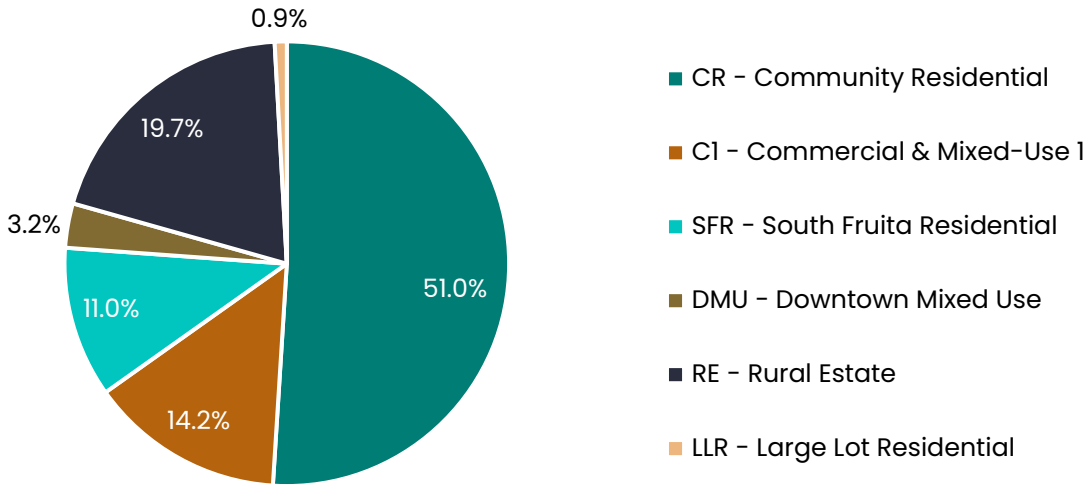
Table 5.1: Vacant Land and Potential Housing Units in Fruita

Zone	Number of Parcels	Net Acres	Adjusted Acres	Potential Housing Units
CR	133	108.5	61.0	427
C1	6	30.2	17.0	136
SFR	3	23.3	13.1	59
DMU	16	6.9	3.9	31
RE	9	42.0	23.6	8
LLR	6	1.9	1.0	3
Total	**173**	**212.7**	**119.6**	**664**

Source: Mesa County GIS, Mesa County Assessor's Data, City of Fruita Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of Vacant land by zone, based on net acres. The CR district contains the majority of available acres (51.0%), corresponding with its high housing unit potential. The Rural Estate (RE) district holds the second-largest share of available land (19.7%) but is reserved for low-density development with a maximum allowable density of 0.33 dua, resulting in a much lower potential housing yield.

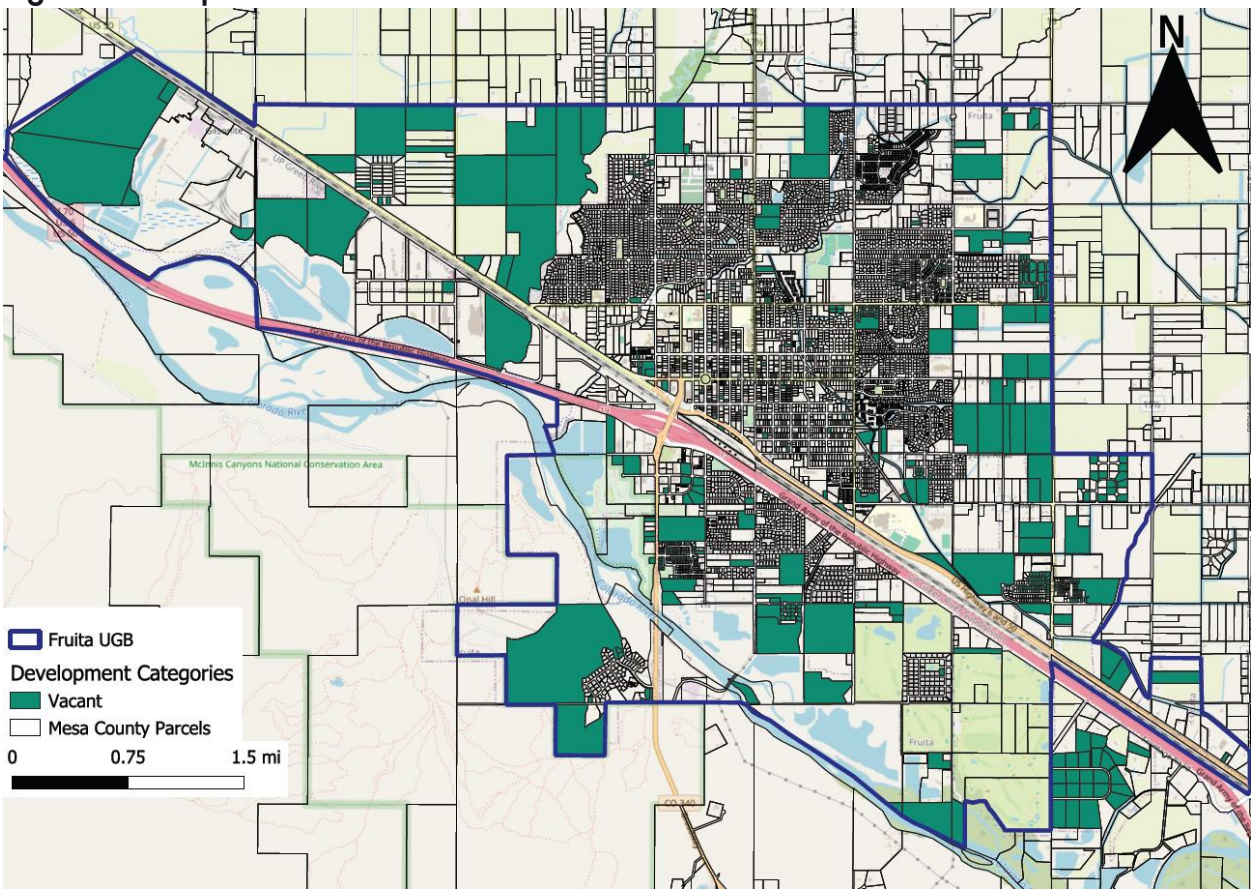
Figure 5.1: Share of Vacant Land by Zone in Fruita



Source: Mesa County GIS, Mesa County Assessor's Data, City of Fruita Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure 5.2 provides a visual map showing the location of Vacant parcels within the City of Fruita.

Figure 5.2: Map of Vacant Parcels in Fruita



Source: Mesa County GIS, Mesa County Assessor's Data, City of Fruita Zoning, FEMA, USGS

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 or redevelopment. 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.

Table 5.2 shows Underdeveloped parcels and their estimated acreage in Fruita. In total, 157 parcels are classified as Underdeveloped, accounting for 158.0 net acres and 88.9 adjusted acres. The greatest number of Underdeveloped parcels are located in the CR district, while the greatest number of adjusted acres are located in the SFR district. The DMU district also hosts a significant number of Underdeveloped parcels (52), though accounting for just 8.5 adjusted acres.

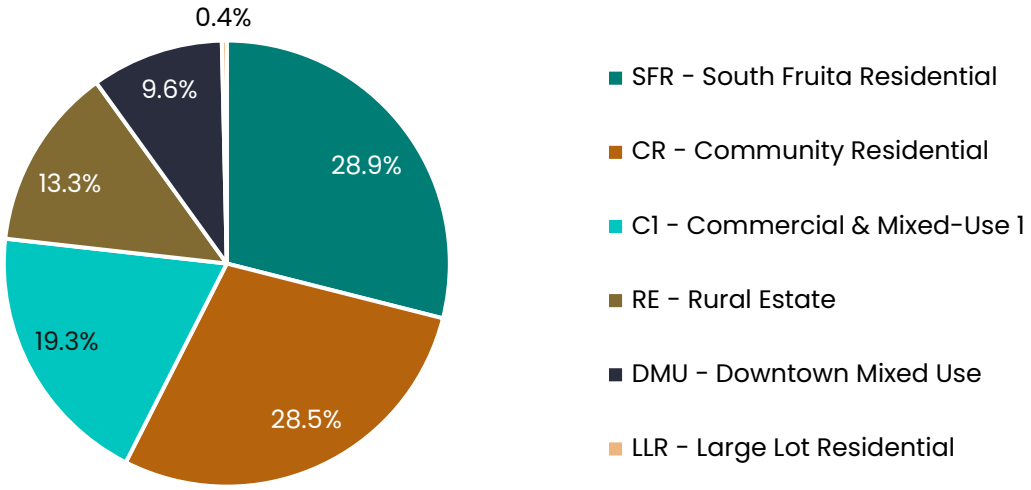
Table 5.2: Underdeveloped Land in Fruita

Zone	Number of Parcels	Net Acres	Adjusted Acres
SFR	5	45.7	25.7
CR	87	45.1	25.4
C1	7	30.5	17.2
RE	5	21.0	11.8
DMU	52	15.1	8.5
LLR	1	0.6	0.3
Total	**157**	**158.0**	**88.9**

Source: Mesa County GIS, Mesa County Assessor's Data, City of Fruita Zoning, FEMA, USGS

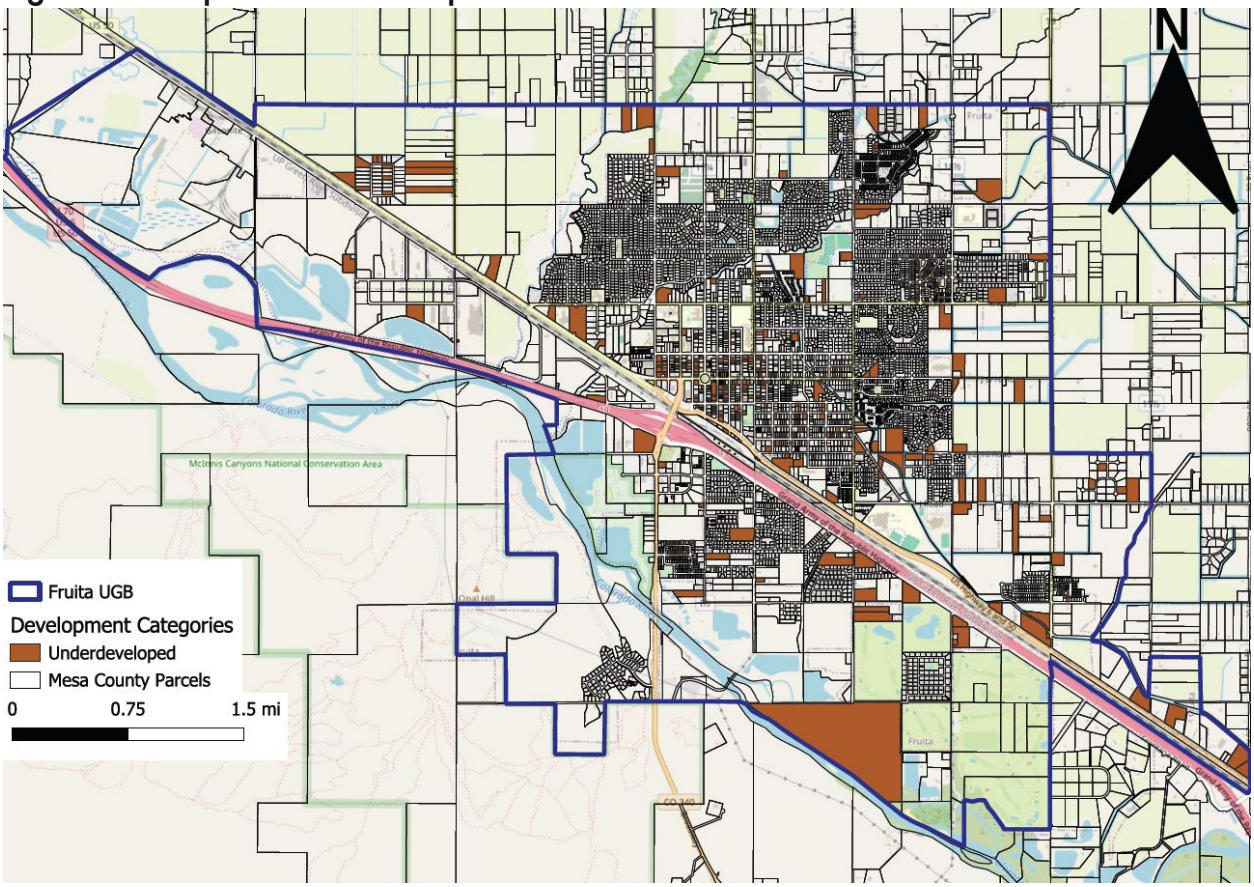
In Figure 5.3, the share of Underdeveloped land in Fruita is broken out by zone. Our estimates indicate that the SFR district has the largest share of Underdeveloped land, followed closely by the CR district (28.9% and 28.5%, respectively). The C1 district holds the third-largest share of Underdeveloped land at 19.3%. Figure 5.4 maps the Underdeveloped parcels within Fruita.

Figure 5.3: Share of Underdeveloped Land by Zone in Fruita



Source: Mesa County GIS, Mesa County Assessor's Data, City of Fruita Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure 5.4: Map of Underdeveloped Parcels in Fruita



Source: Mesa County GIS, Mesa County Assessor's Data, City of Fruita 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 developed with housing types that use land less efficiently than allowed by zoning. Specifically, we focus on single-family homes, which are traditionally the lowest density housing type and may underutilize parcels in zones permitting higher density development.

For the analysis, PC eliminated the CR, LLR, RE, and SFR districts from consideration, as they are intended to either support low-density, single-family housing or do not explicitly allow higher-density housing types. A key challenge is that Fruita lacks a dedicated middle- or high-density housing zone, so the analysis focuses on zones that permit mixed uses rather than those designated exclusively for residential development.

The C1 and DMU zones are not primarily designated for residential use, but they do allow higher-density housing types and do not explicitly allow single-family housing. With Mesa County Assessor's data, PC identified parcels in these zones that have been

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.

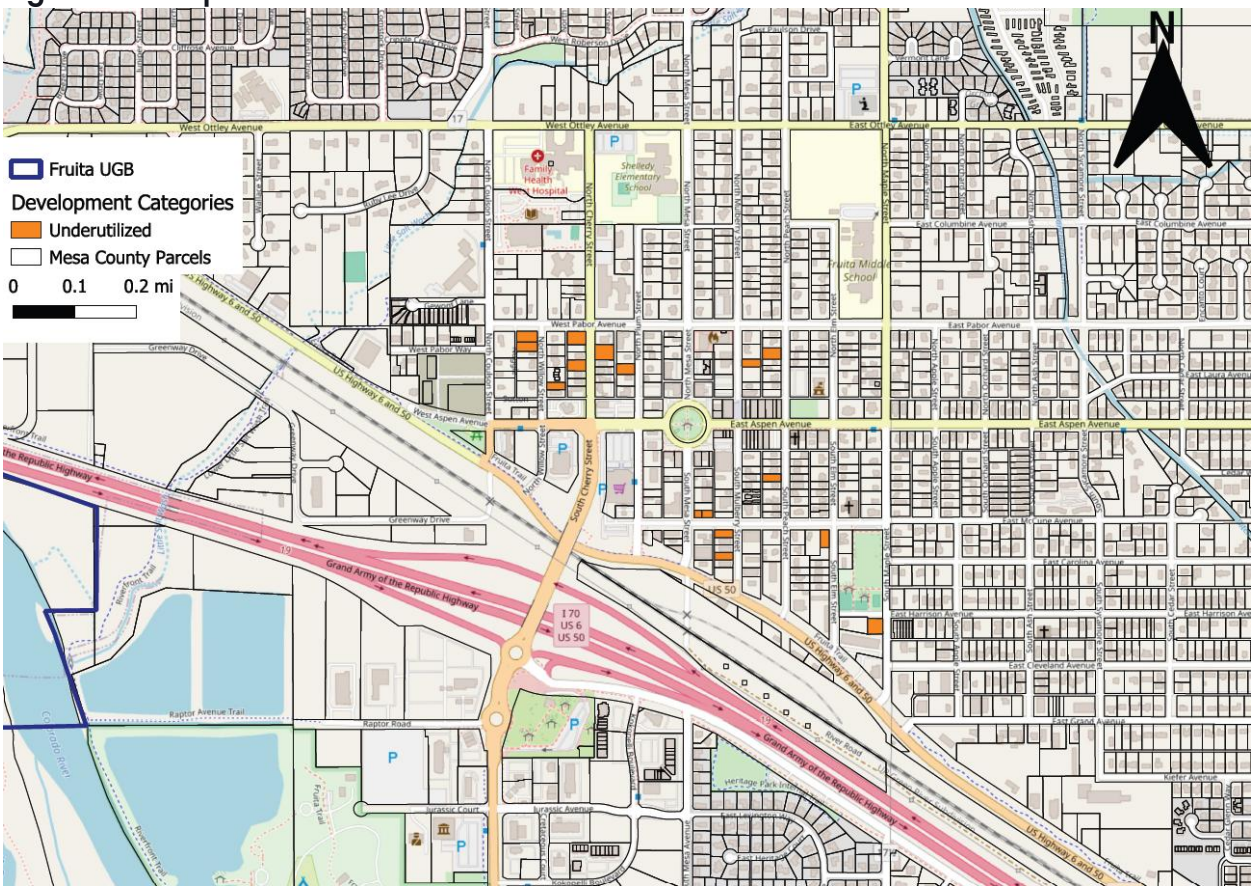
An important note to make is that our analysis did not result in the identification of any Underutilized parcels in the C1 district. However, several did turn up in the DMU district. Table 5.3 shows the parcels identified as Underutilized and Figure 5.5 displays where the Underutilized parcels are located.

Table 5.3: Underutilized Parcels in Fruita

Zone	Number of Parcels	Net Acres	Adjusted Acres
DMU	16	2.8	1.6

Source: Mesa County GIS, Mesa County Assessor's Data, City of Fruita Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Figure 5.5: Map of Underutilized Parcels in Fruita



Source: Mesa County GIS, Mesa County Assessor's Data, City of Fruita Zoning, FEMA, USGS

Zoning & Density Effects

Zoning codes remain of a jurisdiction's key tool for impacting the housing market. Restrictive zoning standards (e.g., large minimum lot sizes, low maximum density allowances, allowance of only single-family detached housing, etc.) can lead to poor housing market dynamics by limiting the number and types of housing eligible for development. Loose zoning standards can reinforce personal property rights by increasing eligible developments, by both number and type. In this section, PC outlines Fruita's zoning code and assesses potential impacts on housing.

An analysis of opportunities to achieve the development of higher-density and regulated affordable housing near major transit stops is also a required component of the HAP per SB24-174. A major transit stop is defined as "a station for boarding and exiting general public passenger rail, including commuter rail and light rail, or a stop on a bus route with a service frequency of fifteen minutes or less for eight hours or more on weekdays, excluding seasonal service."

Route 8 of the Grand Valley Transit (GVT) System has several stops in Fruita to transport workers to Grand Junction. However, in consultation with the Regional Transportation Planning Office of Mesa County, we determined the GVT stops in Fruita do not meet the definition of a major transit stop. Additionally, there is no access to commuter rail or light rail in the City of Fruita.

Table 5.4 reports all zoning districts that allow residential development. As shown, nine of the City's 12 zoning districts allow residential development. Four of the nine districts allowing residential development are primarily for residential land uses: Community Residential, South Fruita Residential, Large Lot Residential, and Rural Estate.

Table 5.4: Summary of Fruita Zoning Districts Allowing Residential Development

District	Abbreviation
Rural Estate	RE
Community Residential	CR
Large Lot Residential	LLR
South Fruita Residential	SFR
Monument Preservation	MP
Downtown Mixed Use	DMU
Commercial-1	C-1
Commercial-2	C-2
Future Land Use	FLU

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

The total number of parcels and acreage in each zoning district are reported in Table 5.5. The CR district is the most flexible base district in terms of residential development, and the district accounts for the majority of parcels in the City (63.1%) and the second largest share of acres (33.7%). In the CR district, the

minimum lot size is 7,000 square feet by right, resulting in a maximum allowable density of 6.0 dwelling units per acre (dua). However, Fruita also has a density bonus program associated with this district (

Table 5.18). When utilizing the density bonus program, developers can achieve a 3,500 square foot minimum lot size, resulting in 8.0 dua as a maximum density in the district.

The next largest base zoning district by number of parcels is the DMU district, but this district only accounts for 63.1 acres total. DMU allows the highest maximum density of the residential districts, but only in its core (Table 5.11). In this area, Fruita has made a land use policy change of eliminating the maximum allowable density. The LLR district is the third largest base district by number of parcels at 167, but also accounting for only 66.8 acres.

Table 5.5: Fruita Zoning Districts by Number of Parcels and Acreage, 2025[38]

Zoning District	Number of Parcels	Net Acres	Adjusted Acres	% of Parcels	% of Net Acres
CR	3,788	970.2	545.7	63.1%	30.1%
PUD	1,434	1,085.1	610.4	23.9%	33.7%
DMU	228	63.1	35.5	3.8%	2.0%
LLR	167	66.8	37.6	2.8%	2.1%
CMU	105	200.6	89.5	1.7%	6.2%
I	63	212.9	119.8	1.0%	6.6%
RE	60	244.8	137.7	1.0%	7.6%
C-2	57	82.1	46.2	0.9%	2.6%
C-1	53	151.6	85.3	0.9%	4.7%
SFR	42	98.9	55.6	0.7%	3.1%
MP	3	40.6	22.8	0.0%	1.3%
CSR	1	1.7	1.0	0.0%	0.1%
Total	6,001	3,218.4	1,787.0	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Mesa County GIS, Mesa County Assessor's Data, City of Fruita Zoning, FEMA, USGS

During our zoning and density effects analysis, we did not identify many explicit regulatory barriers. However, one of the main outcomes of our zoning review is the existence of some unclarity. Traditionally, zoning codes explicitly allow principally permitted uses. Fruita's zoning districts do not include this aspect in the main zoning district definition section of the municipal code, adding ambiguity to the code.[39]

[38] PUD stands for Planned Unit Development; I stands for Industrial; CSR stands for Community Services Recreational.

[39] "Residential Zone Districts," Fruita, Colorado Municipal Code, § 17.03.050, Accessed November 7, 2025, https://library.municode.com/co/fruita/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT17LAUSCO_CH17.03ZODI_17.03.050REZODI.

For many of the districts, the intent statement calls out a few housing types or refers to others that are allowed. But most do not note principally permitted uses. PC does not consider this a barrier, but it may result in less diverse housing types being developed.

The RE and LLR districts are most restrictive in terms of density (0.33 and 3.0 max dua allowed). However, we did not identify much vacant land within these zoning districts in our LCA. For this reason, we don't believe the density restrictions will have much impact on development potential or housing diversity.

The zoning districts allowing the highest density are DMU (core and outside core), C-1, and C-2. As mentioned earlier, core areas of DMU have no maximum density allowing maximal residential development. Outside core areas of DMU, C-1, and C-2 allow up to 12.0 dua.

The MP and FLU districts are also highly restrictive of density and housing types (0.5 and 0.25 dua respectively), but they are not primarily for residential land uses. Table 5.6 through

Table 5.15 provide key details on each zoning district, such as intent, minimum lot size, height, and more. Table 5.16 reports the details of the Neighborhood Commercial Overlay (NCO) zone while Table 5.17 reports details on PUD developments.

Table 5.6: Rural Estate (RE) District

Intent	To allow low density residential uses compatible with rural areas. Areas in this zone district serve as a transition between open and resource lands and increased development in the City. Cluster developments are not encouraged in this zone district, and city sewer is not typically provided due to the low density nature of the development.
Permitted Uses (res.)	--
Min Lot Size	2 acres
Height	35 ft
Setbacks (F,R,S)	30, 30, 10 ft
Maximum Lot Coverage	20%
Max Density	0.33 dua

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.7: Community Residential (CR) District

Intent	To allow for moderate density detached single-family residential neighborhoods with the inclusion of other housing types such as attached dwelling units (e.g. apartments and townhouses). Innovative neighborhood design is encouraged in this zone district to provide opportunities for housing diversity. This area is served by

	public utility infrastructure and is appropriate for density of 4-8 du per acre.
Permitted Uses (res.)	--
Min Lot Size	7,000 sf w/ 6 dua; 3,500 sf w/ 7-8 dua
Height	35 ft
Setbacks (F,R,S)	25, 15, 16 ft
Maximum Lot Coverage	60%
Max Density	6 dua by right.; 8 dua w/ density bonus

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.8: Large Lot Residential (LLR) District

Intent	To allow larger lot developments in the same areas as the CR zone and other areas as appropriate. Areas in this zone district are typically served by public utility infrastructure, and a density of 2-3 du per acre is appropriate.
Permitted Uses (res.)	--
Min Lot Size	10,000 SF
Height	35 ft
Setbacks (F,R,S)	25, 15, 10 ft
Maximum Lot Coverage	40%
Max Density	3 dua

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.9: South Fruita Residential (SFR) District

Intent	To allow a variety of low to moderate density residential areas compatible with existing low density development, the Colorado National Monument and the Colorado River. Due to its location near the Colorado River and in the 100-year flood plain, the area is most suitable to a density of 2-5 du per acre.
Permitted Uses (res.)	--
Min Lot Size	7,000 sf
Height	35 ft
Setbacks (F,R,S)	25, 15, 10 ft
Maximum Lot Coverage	50%
Max Density	4 dua by right; 5 dua w/ density bonus

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.10: Monument Preservation (MP) District

Intent	To provide a recreational and environmental buffer between the Colorado National Monument and Bureau of Land Management lands, and urban development with low intensity uses that preserve open space quality. This zone district should be limited to areas immediately adjacent to the Colorado National Monument. Environmentally constrained lands are not appropriate for this zone district.
Permitted Uses (res.)	--
Min Lot Size	2 acres
Height	35 ft
Setbacks (F,R,S)	25, 20, 50 ft
Maximum Lot Coverage	20%
Max Density	0.5 dua

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.11: Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) District – Core

Intent	To maintain and enhance downtown as a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented commercial and residential area and as the civic heart of the community. Mixed-use development, such as commercial on the ground floor and residential above the ground floor is encouraged within this zone. The intent of this zone with regard to housing is to allow existing residential uses and provide housing options within walking distance of commercial and civic uses without compromising the integrity of the downtown commercial core.
Permitted Uses (res.)	--
Min Lot Size	2,500 sf
Height	4 stories
Setbacks (F,R,S)	0, 0, 0 ft
Maximum Lot Coverage	50% min; 90% max
Max Density	N/A

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.12: Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) District – Outside of Core

Intent	To maintain and enhance downtown as a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented commercial and residential area and as the civic heart of the community. Mixed-use development, such as commercial on the ground floor and residential above the ground floor is encouraged within this zone. The intent of this zone with regard to

	housing is to allow existing residential uses and provide housing options within walking distance of commercial and civic uses without compromising the integrity of the downtown commercial core.
Permitted Uses (res.)	--
Min Lot Size	5,000 sf by right; 6,000 sf for a corner lot; 7,500 sf for duplex; 10,000 sf for multi-family; 2,500 sf for each townhouse unit
Height	3 stories
Setbacks (F,R,S)	Depends on structure
Maximum Lot Coverage	35% by right; 60% for mixed use buildings
Max Density	12 dua

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.13: Commercial 1 (C-1) District

Intent	For land uses that are compatible with the future vision for the State Highway 6/50 Corridor. The area is appropriate for local serving businesses such as restaurants, retail stores, and services. Multi-family residential uses are encouraged in this zone. Development should have appropriate access, landscaping, frontage improvements, setbacks, screening and multi-modal access and connectivity.
Permitted Uses (res.)	--
Min Lot Size	5,000 sf per du
Height	35 ft
Setbacks (F,R,S)	0, 20, 10 ft
Maximum Lot Coverage	80%
Max Density	12 dua, w/ 500 sf min unit size

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.14: Commercial 2 (C-2) District

Intent	To accommodate commercial development in appropriate areas with appropriate access, landscaping, frontage improvements, setbacks, screening and multi-modal access and connectivity. This zone district provides allowances for uses and dimensions that are larger in scale than those allowed downtown. This area has good access to I-70, and is appropriate for uses that serve residents, tourists, an pass-through traffic. Parcel sizes are larger than in the downtown and C-1 zone district, and may accommodate more parking.

Permitted Uses (res.)	
Min Lot Size	5,000 sf per du
Height	35 ft
Setbacks (F,R,S)	0, 20, 10 ft
Maximum Lot Coverage	80%
Max Density	12 dua, w/ 500 sf min unit size

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.15: Future Land Use (FLU) District

Intent	To enable planning for future annexations and to coordinate development pressures and planning needs with Mesa County. Development parameters are intended to support large lots and agricultural uses and allow low density residential uses compatible with rural areas.
Permitted Uses (res.)	
Min Lot Size	4 acres
Height	35 ft
Setbacks (F,R,S)	30, 30, 10 ft
Maximum Lot Coverage	20%
Max Density	0.25 dua

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.16: Neighborhood Commercial Overlay (NCO) Zone

Intent	For additional commercial businesses in certain portions of the DMU and CR Zone Districts. This overlay is intended to enable small-scale businesses that fit in the neighborhood context, by allowing a diversity of business uses.
Area	Ottley on the north; Maple on the east; Little Salt Wash on the west; and Hwy 6 on the south

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.17: Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay

Intent	Created to allow maximum flexibility in uses and dimensions in exchange for community benefits by designing quality developments that could not be achieved by strict adherence to the requirements of this Title. PUDs shall be approved pursuant to the requirements in Section 17.19.

Modification of Development Standards	At the time of zoning a PUD, the City Council may modify the specifications, standards, or requirements of this Title. The PUD approval shall indicate which standards are being modified, and any standard not listed as being modified shall be assumed to use that of the Base Zone District or Overlay Zone District.
	At the time of zoning a PUD, the City Council may modify the permitted and prohibited uses. If uses are not modified, the uses in a PUD shall comply with those of the Base Zone District and Overlay Zone District.

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Table 5.18: Fruita Density Bonus Provision Table

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

Source: City of Fruita Zoning Code

Water Capacity

Estimating the water supply needs is not a required HNA output, but is highly recommended by DOLA. Water is an increasingly important topic to discuss in Colorado due to shortages from the Colorado River. Decades of drought, climate change, and high demand from 40 million residents, agriculture, and Tribal nations has lead to potential resource scarcity.

To estimate the City of Fruita's water supply, the project team sought data from the Ute Water District. The District is the main domestic water provider to the rural areas of the Grand Valley, the Town of Palisade, City of Grand Junction, and the City of Fruita. It is the largest domestic water provider between Denver and Salt Lake City, as 90,000 Grand Valley customers relay on their services. The key questions we asked Ute Water are:

- What are the main sources of water in Fruita?
- What are the annual inflows of water into the Fruita system for those sources?
- Do Fruita's water sources currently provide enough water for all of Fruita's needs? Both Residential and agricultural?

- Are you projected to continually meet Fruita's needs for the next 30-40 years?
- Can you provide a quantitative analysis of the water supply?

On the main water sources for Fruita, Ute Water indicated they are the main domestic water provider. Though they mentioned it is possible that some residents may have a groundwater well, but they do not keep that information. According to the District's website, Ute Water mainly treats snowmelt found on the Grand Mesa, and a few other sources to make it sufficient for domestic use.[40] The District did not directly address our question on annual inflows of water to the sources providing water to Fruita.

Ute Water indicated that the District has adequate water supply for both domestic and fire protection demands, but did not respond to agricultural needs. Additionally, they conveyed that the District is constantly planning for future growth. To do so, the District employs an assessment tool called the firm yield analysis to plan for future water supply demands. Through firm yield modeling, Ute Water has determined there is adequate raw water supply available to meet demands based on population projections to 2045, with the anticipated development of some conditional water rights.

The firm yield analysis uses worst-case drought hydrology and Mesa County population projections to determine results of the firm yield analysis. Hard data on the firm yield analysis was not provided to our team. However, Ute Water explained that residential customers in their District use approximately 4,720 gallons per month per meter on average. According to their understanding of 2.3 people per dwelling unit, they estimate Fruita residents use 67.5 gallons per capita per day as well.

[40] "Our Absolute Truth," Ute Water District, Accessed November 7, 2025, https://www.utewater.org/absolutetruth.

6. Demographic & Socioeconomic Trends

Trends in Population Growth

As population grows, demand generally increases which directly impacts the housing market. This is a rational connection to the housing market as more people in the City require more housing units. However, different demographic characteristics can relate to needs of different housing types and affordability levels.

Between 2013 and 2023, the population in Fruita increased 6.0% (Table 6.1). This was slightly slower than the growth in Mesa County (8.0%) and the United States as a whole (6.7%) during the same period. Colorado's population grew 13.5%, so Fruita's growth has been noticeably slower than the state's.

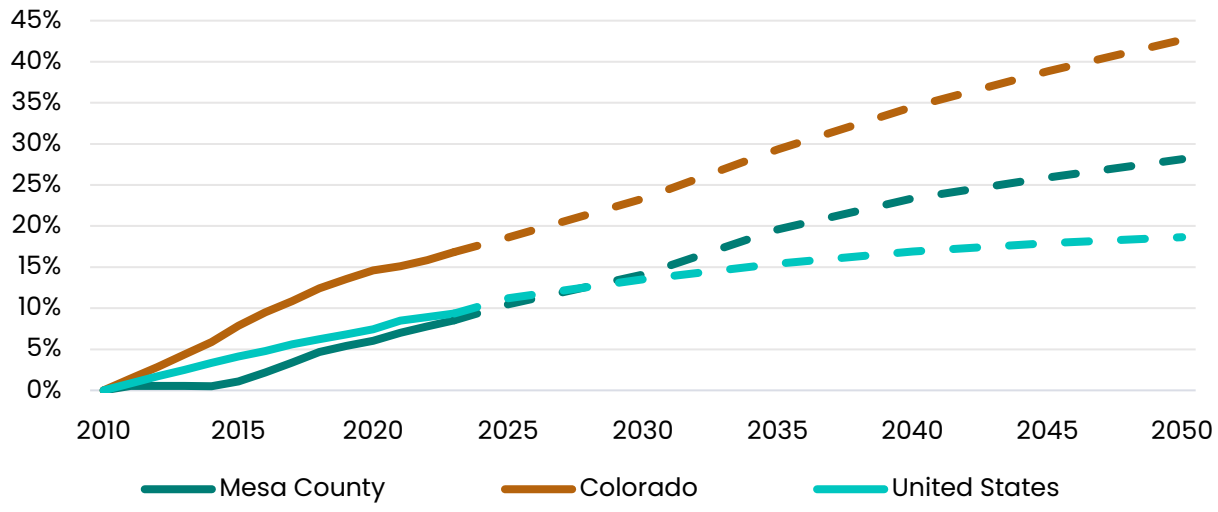
Table 6.1: Population Change, 2013–2023

Region	2013 Population	2023 Population	Numerical Change	% Change
Fruita	12,925	13,706	781	6.0%
Mesa County	147,926	159,701	11,775	8.0%
Colorado	5,270,884	5,900,420	629,536	11.9%
United States	311.5M	332.4M	20.9M	6.7%

Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs and U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

The population of Mesa County has grown at a rate similar to the United States but much slower than Colorado (Figure 6.1). However, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) projects that from 2025 to 2050, Mesa County's population will grow more rapidly than the U.S. average and at a pace closer to Colorado's.

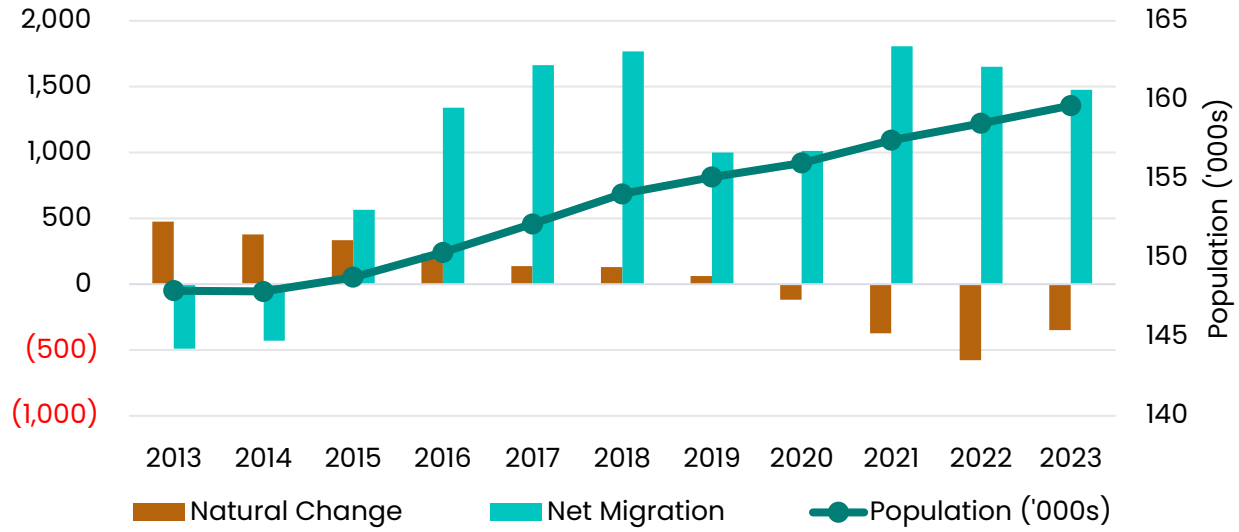
Figure 6.1: Cumulative Population Change, 2010–2050



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

Three primary components that drive population change: births, deaths, and migration. Figure 6.2 and Figure 6.3 illustrate the role these components have had in Mesa County and Colorado. Since 2015, Mesa County's population growth has been driven primarily by migration, adding over 1,000 people per year since 2016. Natural change (births minus deaths) has had a much smaller impact and, in recent years, has been a negative factor. In Colorado, population growth has been driven by both migration and natural change, though the pace of each has slowed markedly over the past decade (Figure 6.3).

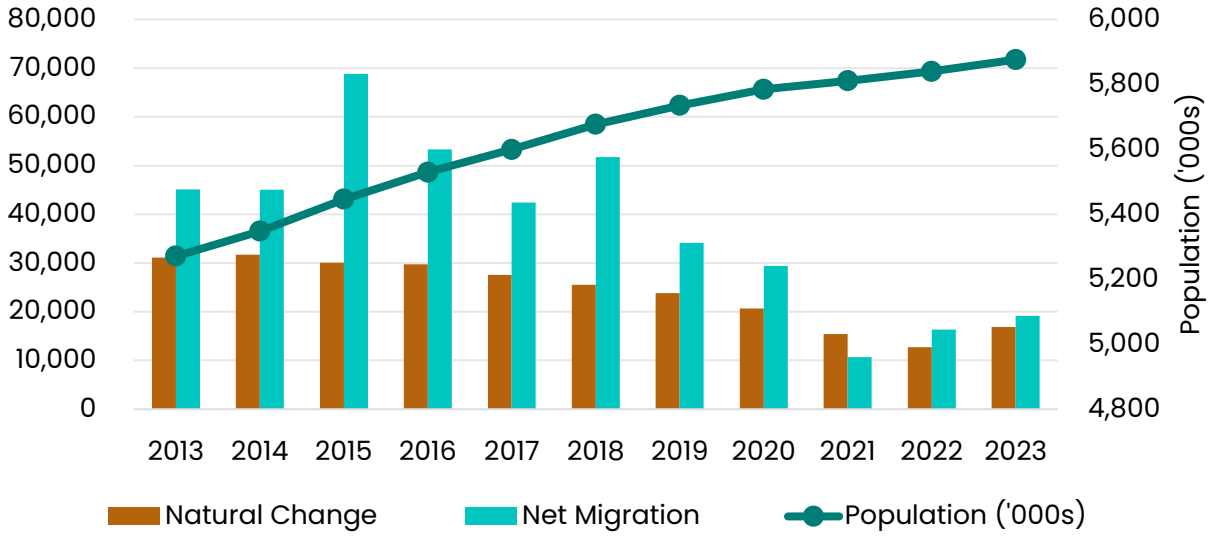
Figure 6.2: Components of Population Change, Mesa County, 2013–2023[41]



Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs

[41] For Figure 6.2 and Figure 6.3, PC used the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program. Every 10 years when the Census Bureau carries out the decennial Census, the datasets for this program are "re-benchmarked." This may result in a visual break in the population estimates from 2020 to 2021.

Figure 6.3: Components of Population Change, Colorado, 2013–2023



Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Table 6.2 illustrates migration patterns into and out of Mesa County between 2017 and 2022. Most migrants coming to Mesa County came from other Colorado counties, with California as the only other state contributing a large share. Migrants moving away from Mesa County most often moved to Weld County, Colorado, or out of state to counties in Arizona, Wyoming, Utah, and Texas.

Table 6.2: Mesa County Top In & Out Migration Counties, 2017–2022

Positive Net Migration From		Negative Net Migration To	
Garfield County, CO	837	Weld County, CO	(207)
Jefferson County, CO	760	Maricopa County, AZ	(172)
Eagle County, CO	486	Pinal County, AZ	(95)
Los Angeles County, CA	287	Laramie County, WY	(88)
Routt County, CO	271	Washington County, UT	(52)
Douglas County, CO	223	Bexar County, TX	(40)
San Diego County, CA	207	Natrona County, WY	(33)
Denver County, CO	203	Fremont County, CO	(31)
Summit County, CO	179	Delta County, CO	(19)
Gunnison County, CO	169	Mohave County, AZ	(14)

Source: IRS SOI Tax Stats, 2022

Table 6.3 and Figure 6.4 compare adjusted gross incomes among incoming, non-migratory, and outgoing households for Mesa County, with Colorado shown for context. From 2021 to 2022, non-migratory residents earned nearly $9,000 more than incoming households, and $11,000 more than those moving out. A similar pattern exists statewide, where non-migratory incomes are notably higher than both in-migration and out-migration groups.

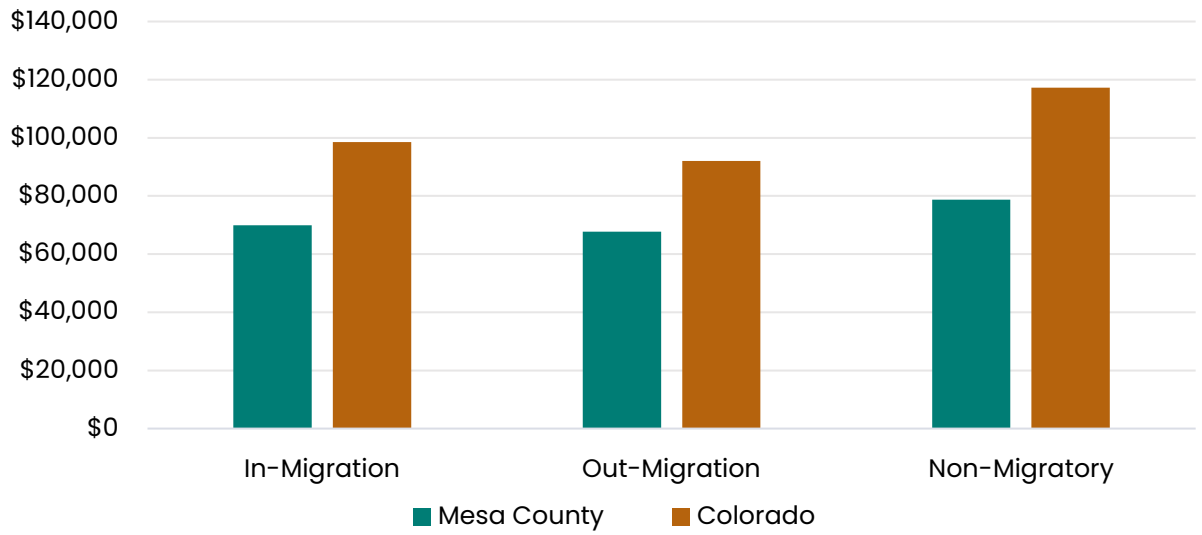
Patterns of higher non-migratory income suggest that those who are moving to Mesa County could be younger professionals looking to start a career, or relatively more affordable housing. In contrast, longer-term residents have likely established their careers and benefited from upward mobility in stable careers. Understanding these population movement patterns is important for interpreting local economic dynamics.

Table 6.3: Tax Migration 2021–2022, Adjusted Gross Income per Number of Returns

Status	Mesa County	Colorado
In-Migration	$69,892	$98,510
Out-Migration	$67,682	$91,999
Non-Migratory	$78,712	$117,265

Source: IRS SOI Tax Stats

Figure 6.4: Tax Migration 2021–2022, Adjusted Gross Income per Number of Returns



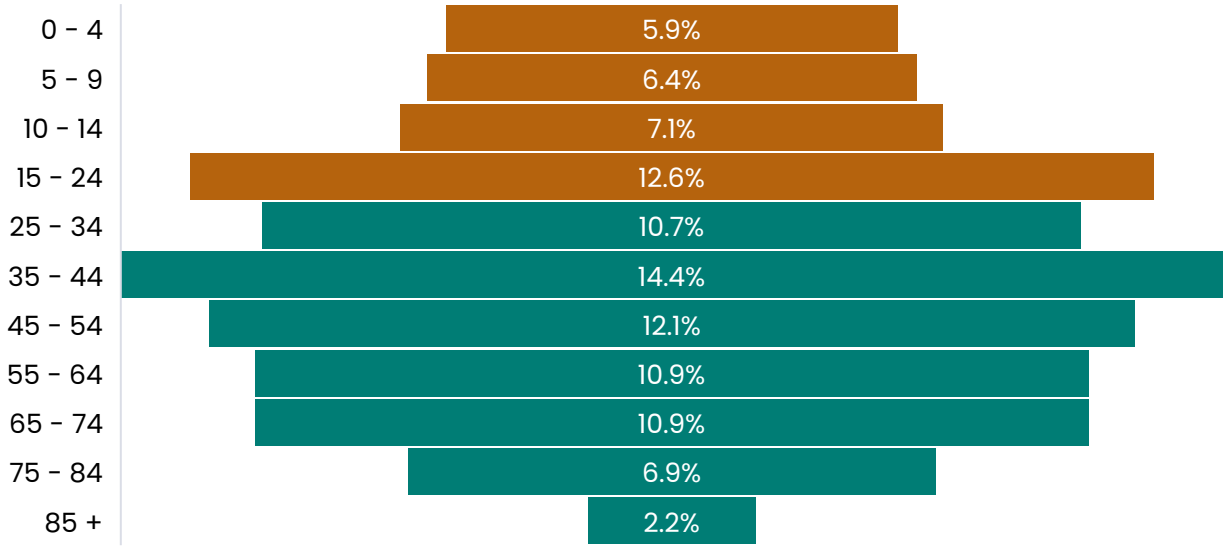
Source: IRS SOI Tax Stats, 2021–2022

Regional Demographic Data

Community age distributions can considerably influence local housing needs. Younger residents typically have had less time to accumulate wealth and therefore require more affordable or starter housing options. Meanwhile, older residents may seek to downsize, live with younger family members, or access more assistive care.

As shown in Figure 6.5, almost one-third (32.0%) of Fruita's population is 24 or younger. The largest age group, prime working-age adults (25 to 54), accounts for 37.2% of Fruita's residents. Another 10.9% are between 55 and 64, while 20.0% are 65 or older. These figures indicate that Fruita's population skews younger. This presents an opportunity for long-term growth, as younger people often seek places to settle, build careers, and raise their families.

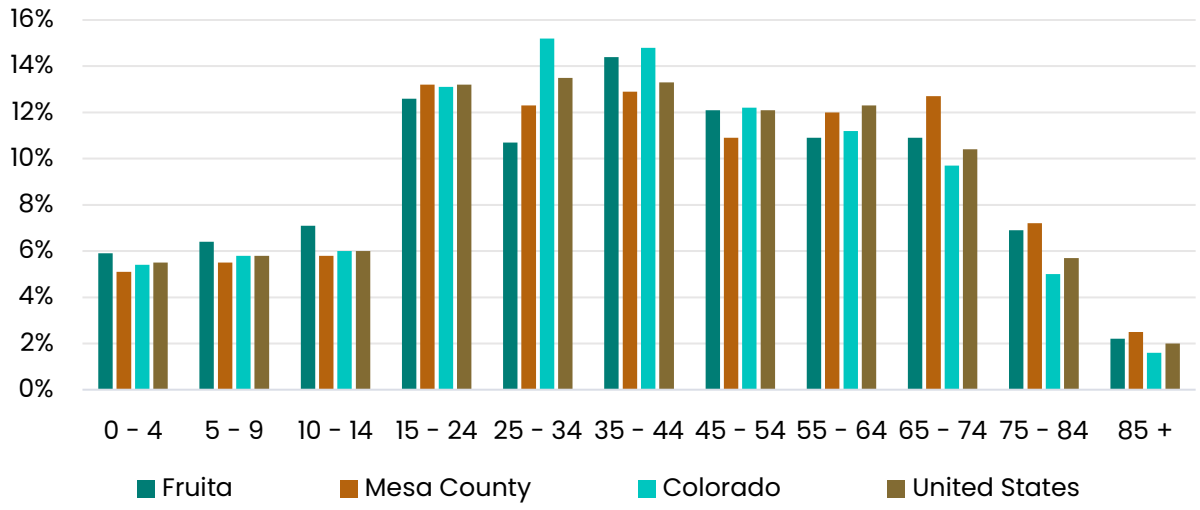
Figure 6.5: Fruita Age Distribution, 2024



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Figure 6.6 compares Fruita's age distribution to that of Mesa County, Colorado, and the nation. Fruita's larger share of younger residents is especially notable, with a higher proportion of those under 15 than all comparison regions. However, while Fruita has a large working-age population, it has a relatively smaller share of 25-34 year olds than Mesa County and the United States, and notably smaller than the state.

Figure 6.6: Population by Age Comparison, 2024



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

The racial and ethnic composition of a region reveal insights on diversity, which can impact housing needs and markets. Factors such as multigenerational living, income

levels, and household size should be considered. Table 6.4 details the racial and ethnic composition of Fruita, Mesa County, Colorado, and the United States.

Compared to other regions, Fruita has a predominantly White population, with 83.7% of residents identifying as White. This is higher than Colorado's 61.1%, and the national rate of 58.2%. Hispanic residents make up 9.4% of Fruita's population, far below both the state (28.5%) and national (19.0%) figures. Other groups including Black or African American, American Indian & Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander, are all notably smaller than state and national figures. The share of residents in Fruita identifying as Two or More Races (4.3%) is similar to the national figure of 3.9%.

Table 6.4: Race and Ethnicity Comparison, 2023

Race/Ethnicity	Fruita	Mesa County	Colorado	United States
White	83.7%	80.1%	61.1%	58.2%
Black or African American	1.2%	0.8%	3.9%	12.0%
American Indian & Alaska Native	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%
Asian	0.3%	1.0%	3.4%	5.7%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Some Other Race	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Two or More Races	4.3%	1.9%	2.4%	3.9%
Hispanic	9.4%	15.5%	28.5%	19.0%

Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs and U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

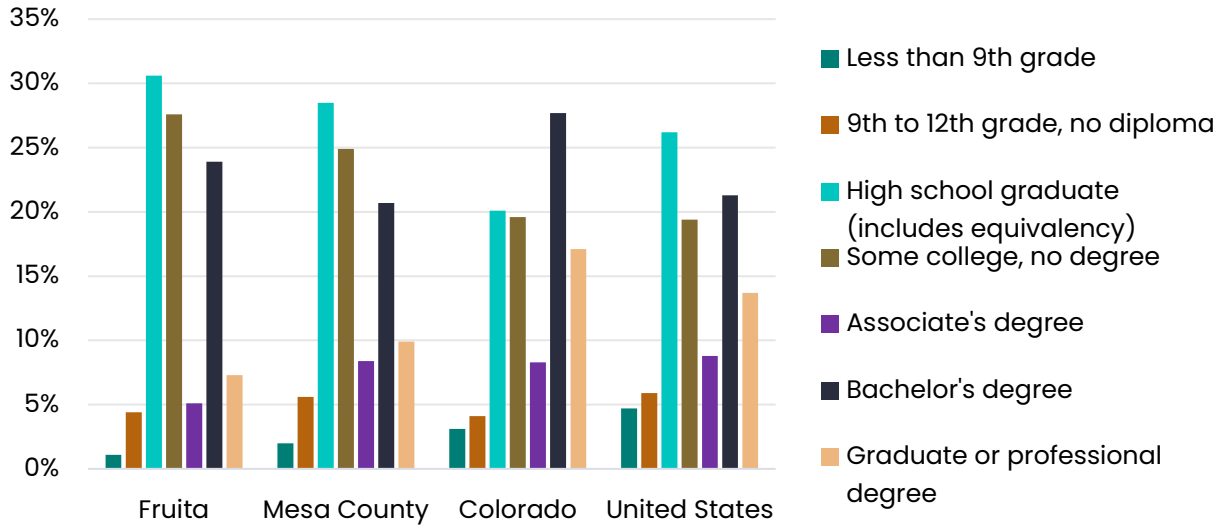
Education

Figure 6.7 shows the educational attainment of residents in Fruita compared with Mesa County, Colorado, and the United States. Fruita has a higher percentage of residents with a high school diploma or some college education than the broader state or national level. Additionally, 23.9% of Fruita residents hold a bachelor's degree. This percentage is higher than the national rate (21.3%) and just four percentage points below the state level (27.7%).

Colorado Mesa University (CMU), located in nearby Grand Junction, is the closest university to Fruita. CMU is a four-year public university offering technical certificates as well as associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees. In 2005, CMU established a branch called CMU Tech, also in Grand Junction, to expand access to two-year technical and associate degree programs.[42] These educational opportunities provide additional pathways for Fruita residents to pursue further education after high school.

[42] "History of CMU," Colorado Mesa University, accessed June 18, 2025, https://www.coloradomesa.edu/about/history.html.

Figure 6.7: Educational Attainment, Population 25+, 2023



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

Underserved Populations

Population in Poverty

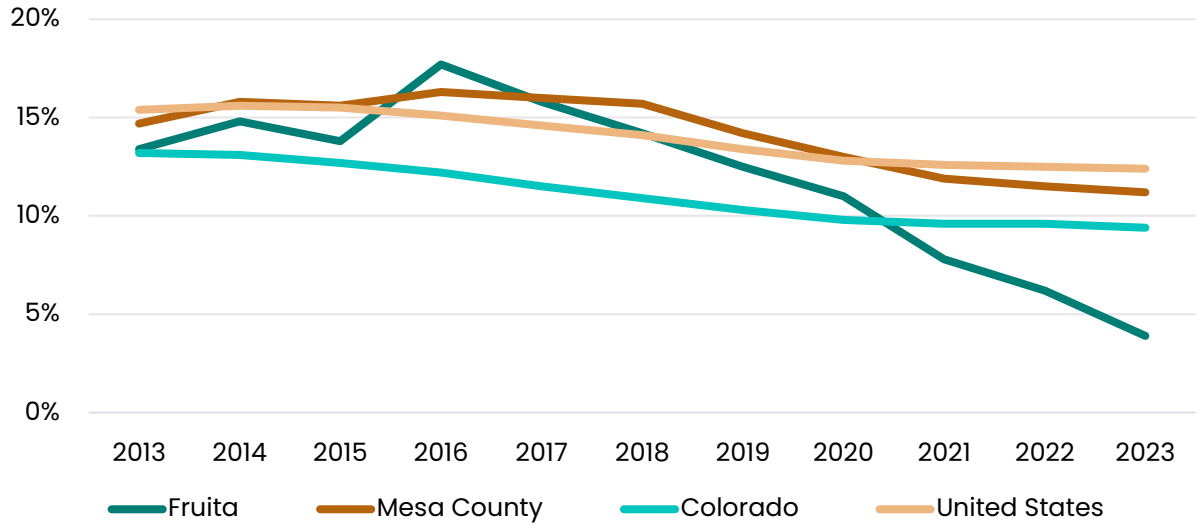
Fruita reports a lower poverty rate (3.9%) than Mesa County (11.2%), Colorado (9.4%), and the United States (12.4%). This rate is more than five percentage points below the state figure, and even lower than the national rate (Table 6.5). However, Figure 6.8 shows this has not always been the case. While poverty rates in the comparison regions have slightly decreased over the past decade, Fruita's rate was equal to Colorado's in 2013, then rose sharply and reached 17.7% in 2016. This is over one percentage point higher than the national rate at that time. Between 2016 and 2023, Fruita experienced a steep decline in poverty, reaching its current rate of 3.9% in 2023.

Table 6.5: Population in Poverty, 2023

Region	Population in Poverty	Percentage in Poverty
Fruita	521	3.9%
Mesa County	17,123	11.2%
Colorado	534,188	9.4%
United States	40.4M	12.4%

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

Figure 6.8: Percentage of the Population in Poverty, 2013–2023

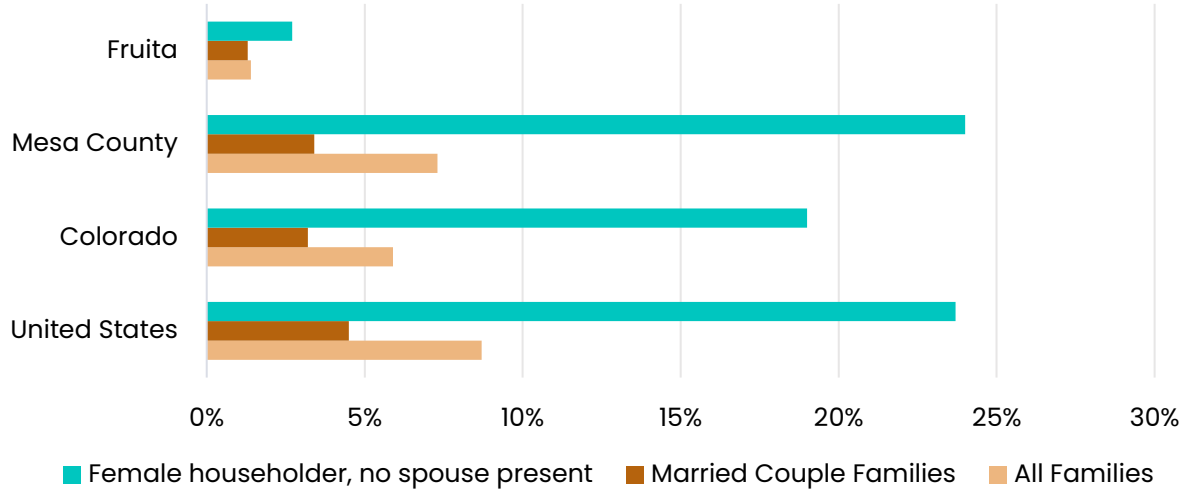


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701

Poverty rates can vary across demographic groups, as shown in Figure 6.9. Female householders with no spouse present have the highest poverty rates in every comparison region. However, these disparities are less pronounced in Fruita.

In Fruita, poverty rates for each demographic group differ by no more than 1.5 percentage points. By contrast, at the national level, the poverty rate for female householders with no spouse present is nearly three times higher than for other groups. This smaller disparity in Fruita largely reflects its very low overall poverty rate, which contributes to lower poverty rates across all demographics.

Figure 6.9: Percentage of Families in Poverty by Composition, 2023

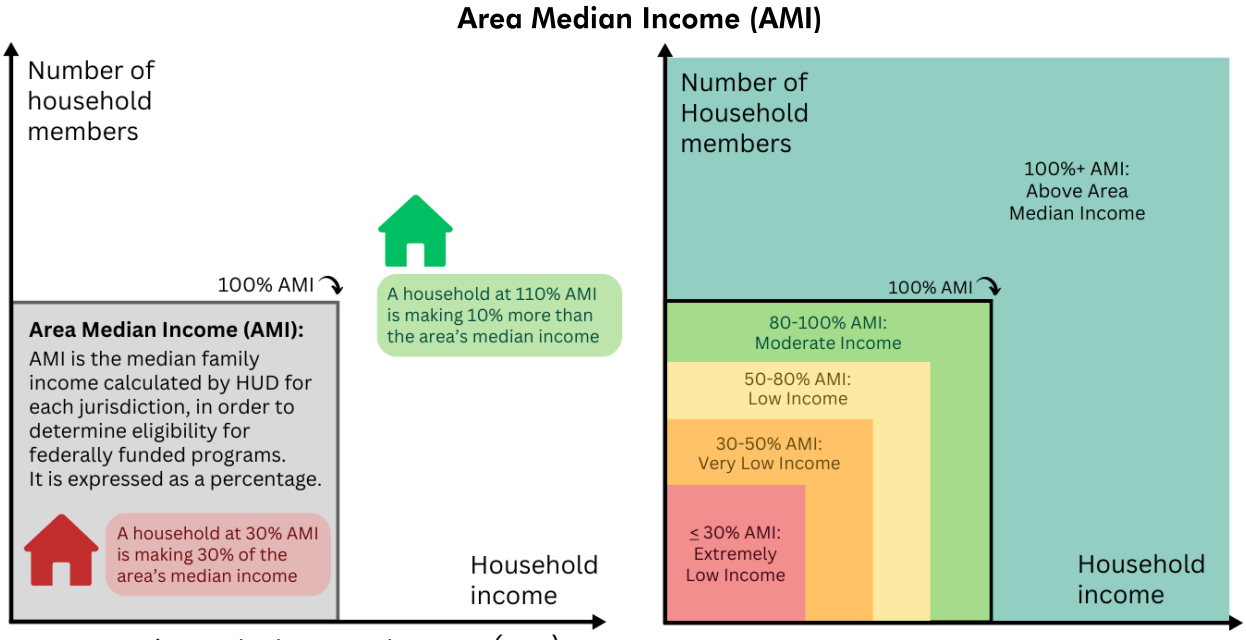


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1702

Low-Income Population Groups

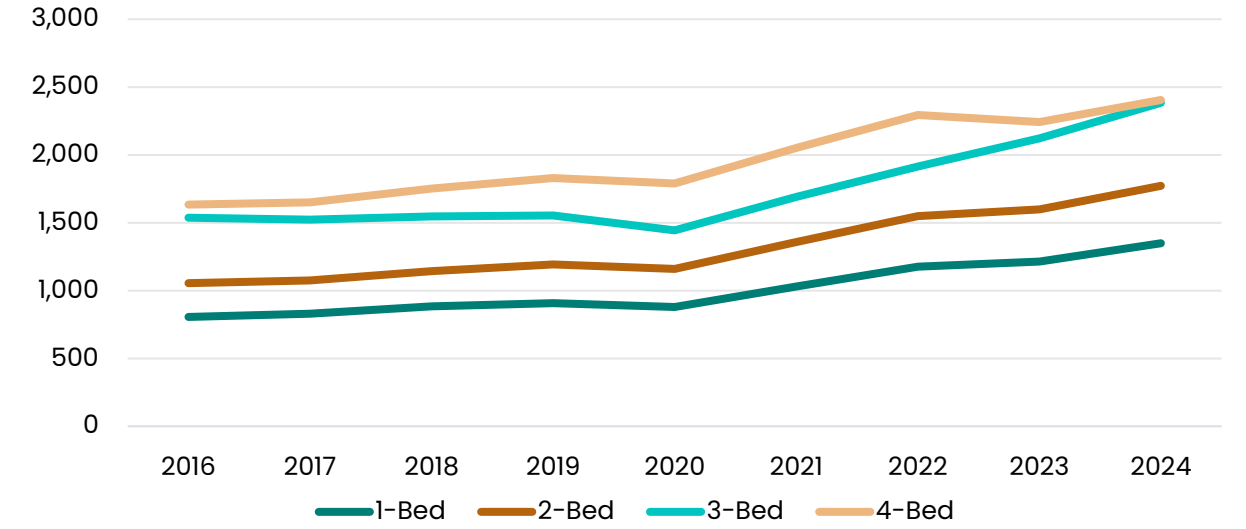
A household's level of income is typically determined by the Area Median Income (AMI), developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). AMI is used to set Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and establish income limits for HUD programs.

Figure 6.10: Area Median Income



Source: Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Figure 6.11: Fair Market Rents, 2016–2024



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

Table 6.6 and Figure 6.12 show low-income owner-occupied households in Fruita by family composition. Among owner-occupied households, Elderly Families represent the

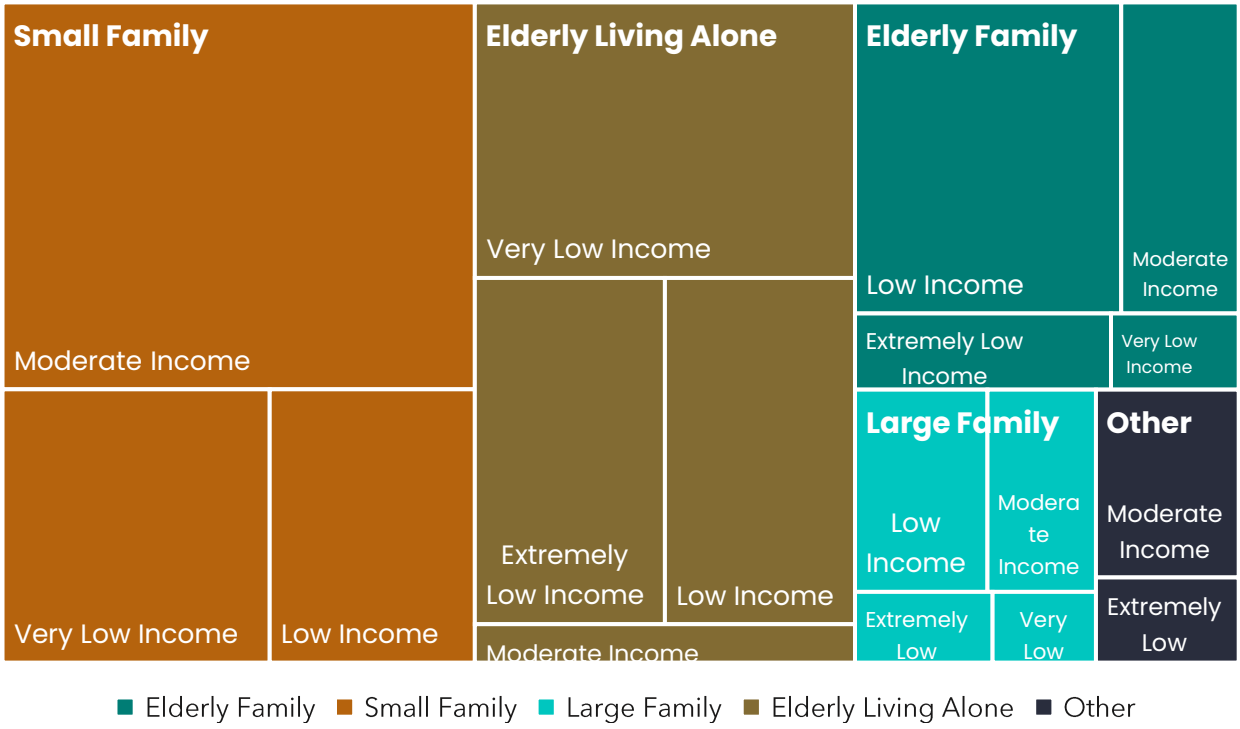
largest share of low-income households (3.4%), followed by Elderly Living-Alone families (2.7%) and then Small Families (2.3%).

Table 6.6: Composition of Low-Income Owner-Occupied Households in Fruita

Family Composition	Income Level	Households	Percent of Total Occupied Housing Units
Elderly Family	Extremely Low Income	40	0.8%
Elderly Family	Very Low Income	20	0.4%
Elderly Family	Low Income	170	3.4%
Elderly Family	Moderate Income	75	1.5%
Small Family	Extremely Low Income	0	0.0%
Small Family	Very Low Income	150	3.0%
Small Family	Low Income	115	2.3%
Small Family	Moderate Income	375	7.5%
Large Family	Extremely Low Income	20	0.4%
Large Family	Very Low Income	15	0.3%
Large Family	Low Income	55	1.1%
Large Family	Moderate Income	45	0.9%
Elderly Living Alone	Extremely Low Income	135	2.7%
Elderly Living Alone	Very Low Income	215	4.3%
Elderly Living Alone	Low Income	135	2.7%
Elderly Living Alone	Moderate Income	30	0.6%
Other	Extremely Low Income	25	0.5%
Other	Very Low Income	0	0.0%
Other	Low Income	0	0.0%
Other	Moderate Income	55	1.1%

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

Figure 6.12: Composition of Low-Income Owner-Occupied Households in Fruita



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

Table 6.7 and Figure 6.13 present low-income renter-occupied households by family composition. Similar to low-income owner-occupied groups, Elderly Families make up the highest share (3.6%), followed by Small Families (2.1%).

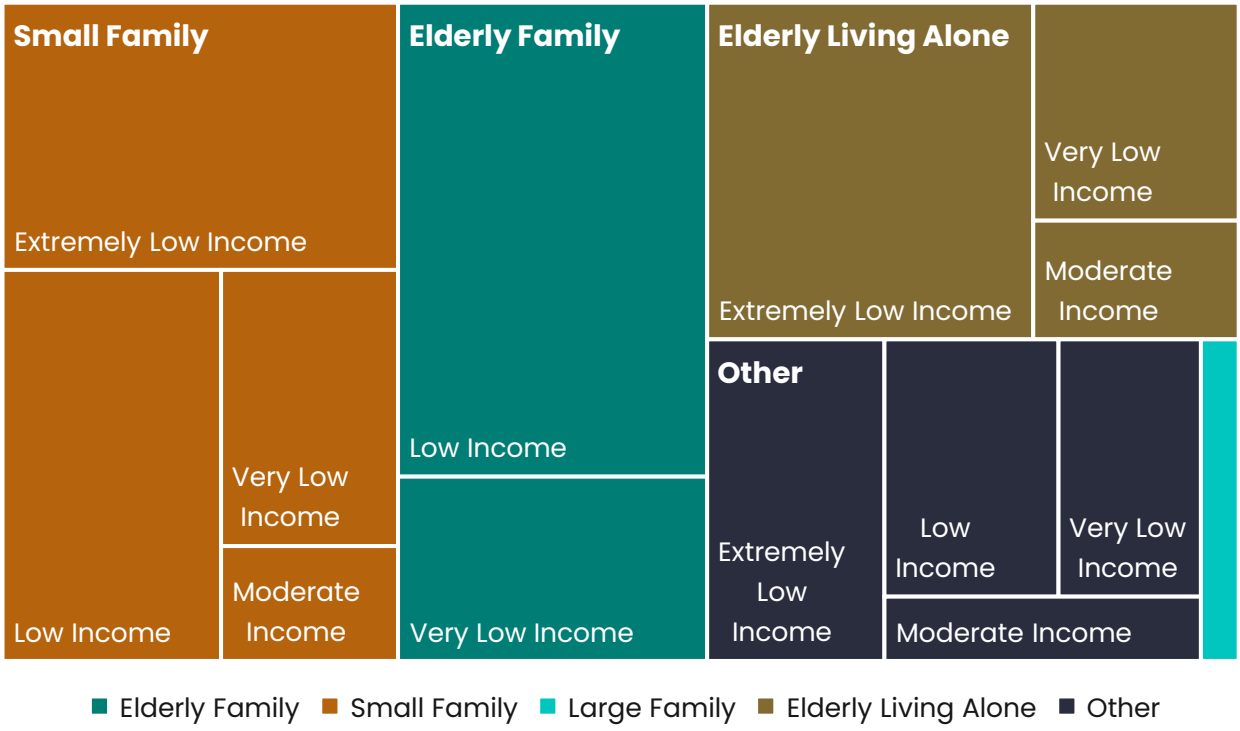
Table 6.7: Composition of Low-Income Renter-Occupied Households in Fruita

Family Composition	Income Level	Households	Percent of Total Occupied Housing Units
Elderly Family	Extremely Low Income	0	0.0%
Elderly Family	Very Low Income	70	1.4%
Elderly Family	Low Income	180	3.6%
Elderly Family	Moderate Income	0	0.0%
Small Family	Extremely Low Income	130	2.6%
Small Family	Very Low Income	60	1.2%
Small Family	Low Income	105	2.1%
Small Family	Moderate Income	25	0.5%
Large Family	Extremely Low Income	0	0.0%
Large Family	Very Low Income	15	0.3%
Large Family	Low Income	0	0.0%
Large Family	Moderate Income	0	0.0%

Elderly Living Alone	Extremely Low Income	135	2.7%
Elderly Living Alone	Very Low Income	55	1.1%
Elderly Living Alone	Low Income	0	0.0%
Elderly Living Alone	Moderate Income	30	0.6%
Other	Extremely Low Income	70	1.4%
Other	Very Low Income	45	0.9%
Other	Low Income	55	1.1%
Other	Moderate Income	25	0.5%

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

Figure 6.13: Composition of Low-Income Renter-Occupied Households in Fruita



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

Subsidized Housing

Subsidized housing units are typically funded by government agencies to ensure they are affordable, usually to households of lower area median income levels (e.g., below 50% AMI). While some are funded through federal low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC), other Housing & Urban Development (HUD) programs, or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) rural development programs, they could also be gap funded by local affordable housing programs from counties and municipalities.

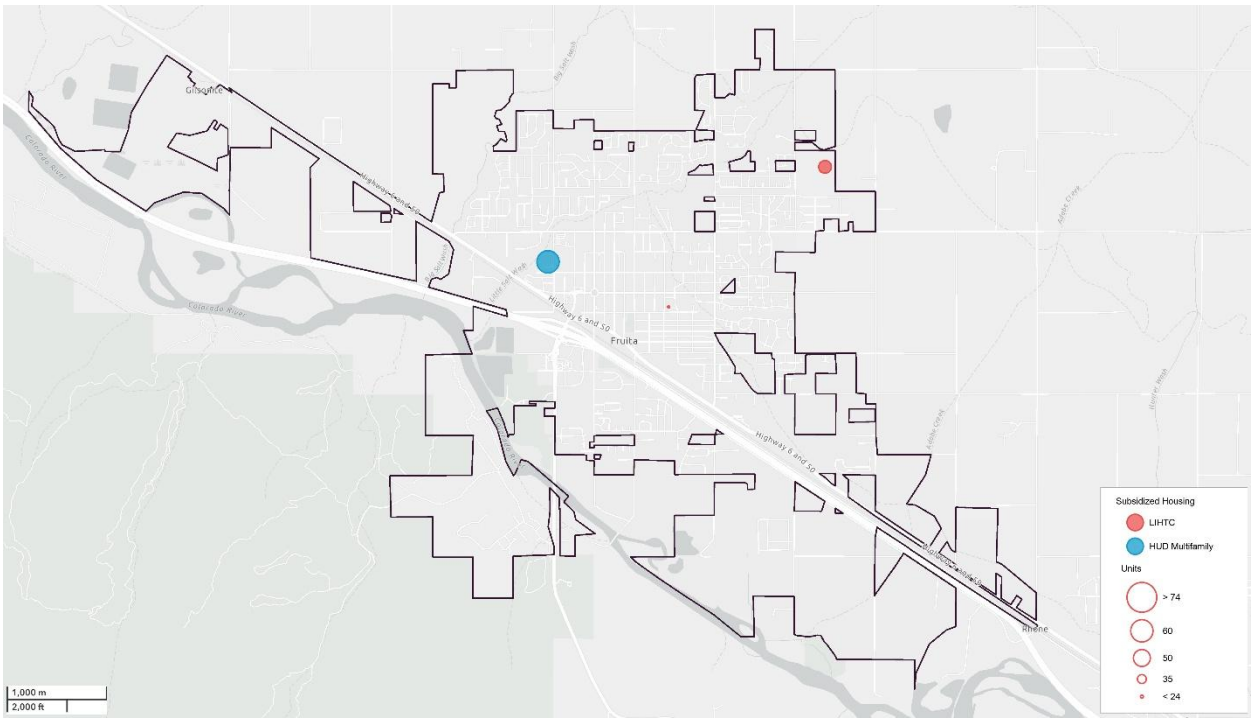
Table 6.8 lists subsidized housing in Fruita by type and number of units. These units are where families in the low-income groups above may find affordable housing, depending on waitlist numbers. Figure 6.14 presents this information visually using a heat map, showing where affordable housing units may be concentrated. In this case, however, the subsidized units in Fruita are spread out through the City.

Table 6.8: Subsidized Housing in Fruita

Property Name	Address	Type	Units
Fruita Mews	702 Makenzie River Rd, Fruita, CO 81521	LIHTC	50
Grand Mesa Apts. of Fruita	150 S Sycamore St, Fruita, CO 81521	LIHTC	24
Independence Village	225 N Coulson St, Fruita, CO 81521	HUD Multifamily	74
Total Units			**148**

Source: PolicyMap based on HUD data

Figure 6.14: Subsidized Housing in Fruita



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2025

Disabled Population

Since 2018, the number of individuals reporting at least one disability has increased in every region analyzed (Table 6.9). In Fruita, this number rose by 54.1%, the highest percentage increase among all comparison regions. In contrast, Mesa County experienced a 9.4% increase, which is lower than the state's 11.0% increase during the same period.

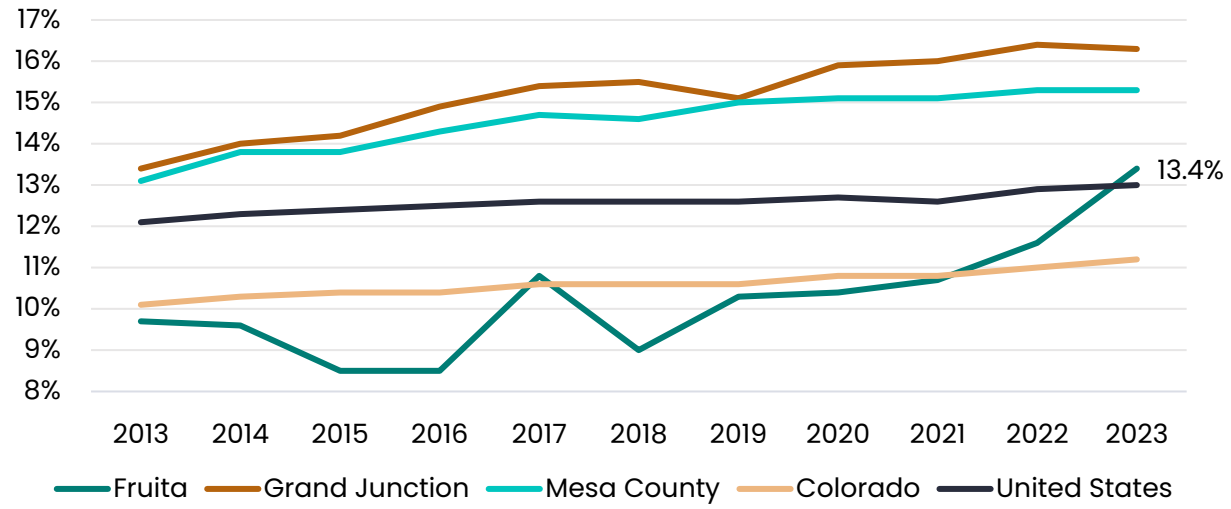
Table 6.9: Population with Disabilities

Region	2018	2023	Numeric Change	% Change
Fruita	1,175	1,811	636	54.1%
Grand Junction	9,401	10,738	1,337	14.2%
Mesa County	21,783	23,824	2,041	9.4%
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

While the number of disabled individuals in Colorado has increased at a higher rate than the nation in recent years, Colorado still has a lower percentage of its total population reporting disabilities than the nation. This trend has persisted over the entire 10-year period shown in Figure 6.15. Fruita's percentage of the population reporting disabilities remained mostly below the state level until 2022, but by 2023 it had surpassed both the state and national levels, reaching 13.4%.

Figure 6.15: Percentage of Population with Disabilities, 2013–2023



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

Veteran Population

Veterans have faced housing market hardships dating back to the First World War. For some, reintegration into the economy after service can be challenging, leading to higher poverty levels and, consequently, affordability issues. Additionally, health problems related to military service can further complicate economic reintegration. For these reasons, it is important to ensure that satisfactory housing options are available for veterans.

Since 2018, the number of veterans has decreased nationwide and in Colorado. However, Colorado's decrease has been smaller in percentage terms than the national decline. Interestingly, both Fruita and nearby Grand Junction have experienced increases in their veteran populations, with Fruita seeing the largest percentage growth at 20.4% (Table 6.10).

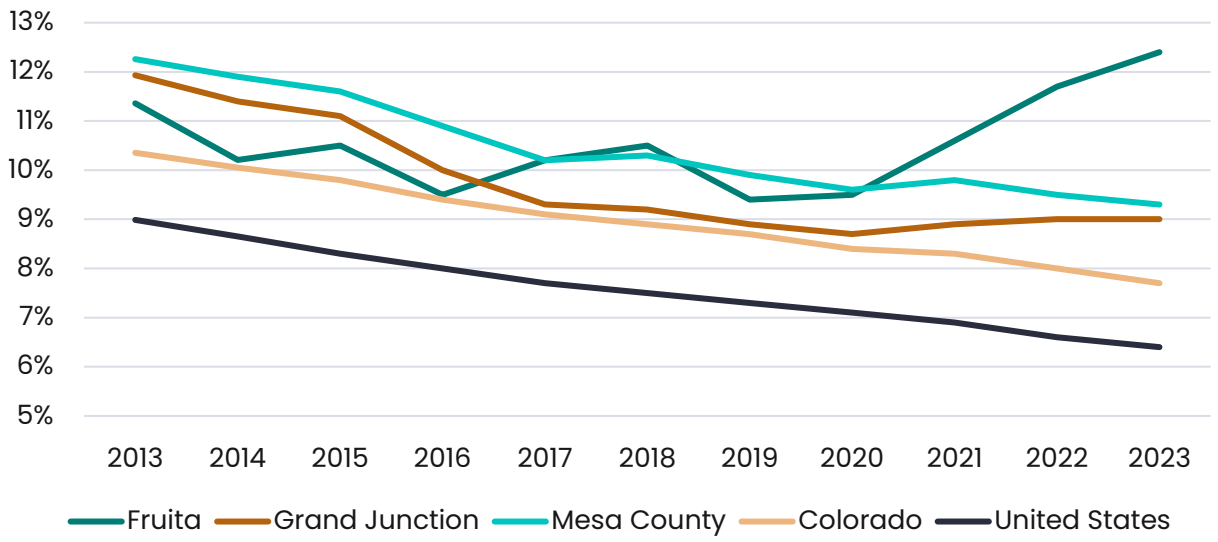
Table 6.10: Veteran Population

Region	2018	2023	Numeric Change	% Change
Fruita	1,016	1,223	207	20.4%
Grand Junction	4,483	4,929	446	9.9%
Mesa County	11,989	11,590	(399)	(3.3%)
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 that of the nation, a trend that also applies to Fruita and Mesa County over the 2013–2023 period (Figure 6.16). Between 2021 and 2023 Fruita reported the highest percentage of veterans among comparison regions, reaching a peak of 12.4% in 2023.

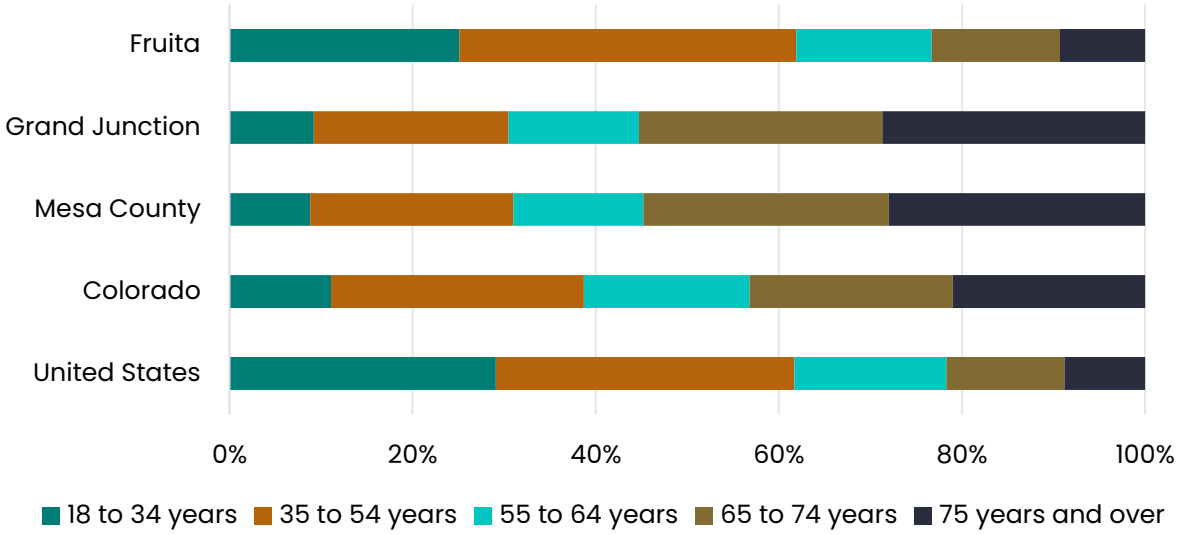
Figure 6.16: Percentage of Population that are Veterans 2013–2023



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

The percentage of veterans by age in 2023 is displayed in Figure 6.17. Compared to other regions analyzed, Fruita's veteran age distribution closely matches that of the United States. Only 38.1% of Fruita's veterans are aged 55 and older, similar to 38.3% nationally. Colorado and Mesa County report 61.3% and 69.0% in this age group, respectively.

Figure 6.17: Percentage of Veterans by Age, 2023



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

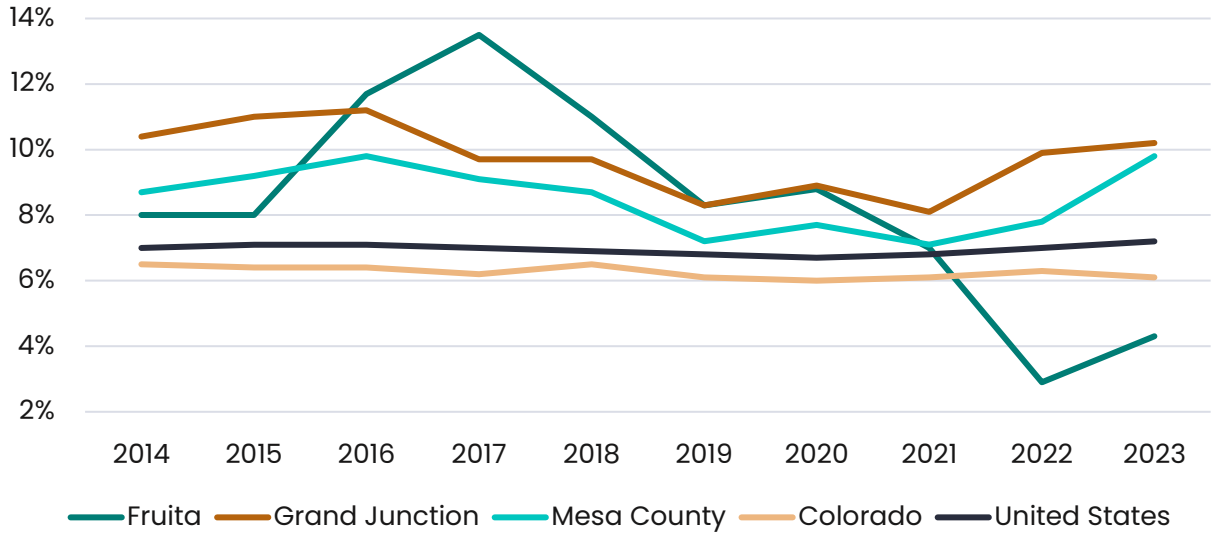
From 2018 to 2023, the number of veterans in poverty decreased in Fruita, as well as statewide and nationally (Table 6.11 and Figure 6.18). However, Mesa County and Grand Junction experienced increases in veteran poverty during this period. Fruita's veteran poverty rate peaked at 13.5% in 2017, followed by a substantial decline to a low of 2.9% in 2022. As of 2023, Fruita's veteran poverty rate stood at 4.3%, nearly two percentage points lower than all comparison regions.

Table 6.11: Number of Veterans in Poverty

Region	2018	2023	Numeric Change	% Change
Fruita	111	52	(59)	(53.2%)
Grand Junction	433	486	53	12.2%
Mesa County	1,039	1,117	78	7.5%
Colorado	23,879	21,138	(2,741)	(11.5%)
United States	1.3M	1.2M	(91,828)	(7.3%)

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

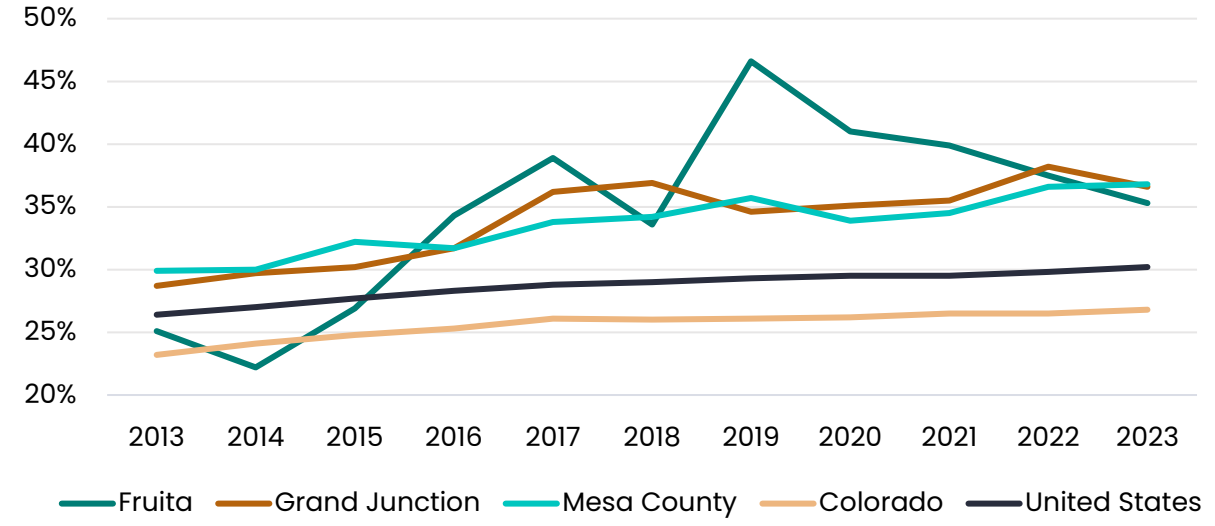
Figure 6.18: Percentage of Veterans in Poverty, 2014–2023



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

Service-related health conditions can make it more challenging for veterans to reintegrate into the economy. From 2013 to 2023, rates in the United States and Colorado remained relatively stable, with gradual increases over time (Figure 6.19). Fruita's rate generally increased as well, with a notable spike in 2019 followed by a downward trend. In 2023, Fruita's veteran disability rate was 35.3%. This is five percentage points higher than the national rate and nearly nine points higher than Colorado's.

Figure 6.19: Percentage of Veterans with Disabilities, 2013–2023

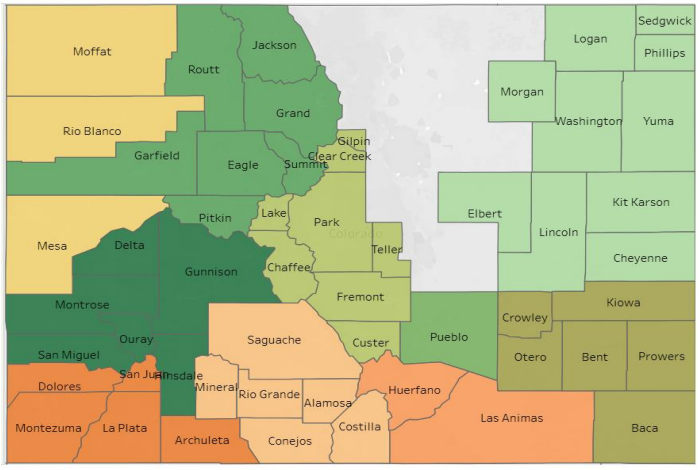


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013–2023, Table S2101

Homeless Population

Homelessness is often difficult to quantify, particularly in more rural areas. Individuals experiencing homelessness are also frequently reluctant to disclose their status to others. Both realities likely make the true extent of homelessness in Colorado more widespread than statistical analyses suggest.

Figure 6.20: Colorado Balance of State CoC Map



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

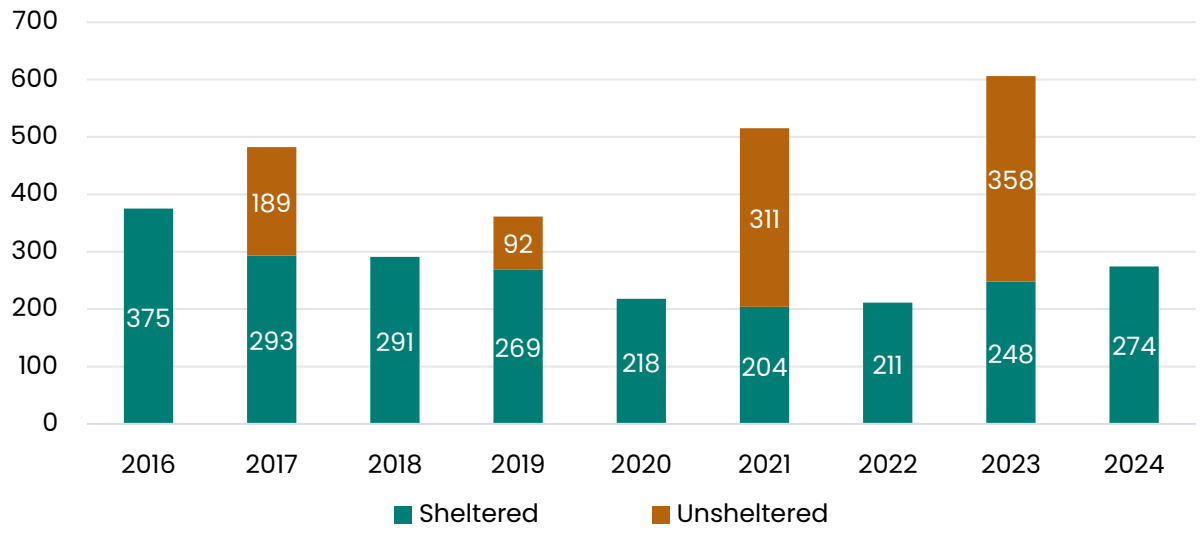
The primary method for measuring homelessness is the HUD Point-in-Time (PIT) Count. This is an annual one-night count conducted each January. In Colorado, the PIT Count is organized by the Colorado Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC), which covers the entire state except for the more urban counties of Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, El Paso, Jefferson, Larimer, and Weld, each of which has its own CoC. The figure to the right shows the counties (in color) included in the Balance of State CoC, which is further broken down into different regions. While they conduct an annual count of sheltered homeless individuals, the count of unsheltered individuals occurs only every other year. In the off years, HUD provides estimates for unsheltered homelessness.

From 2016 to 2024, to CoC provided PIT Counts broken out by county, including Mesa County.[43] In 2023 (the most recent year for which both sheltered and unsheltered homeless counts are available) Mesa County reported 248 sheltered and 358 unsheltered homeless individuals (Figure 6.21). In 2024, when only sheltered individuals were counted, the total was 274. Figure 6.22 illustrates the PIT homeless counts for the entire Colorado Balance of State CoC from 2013-2024.

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.

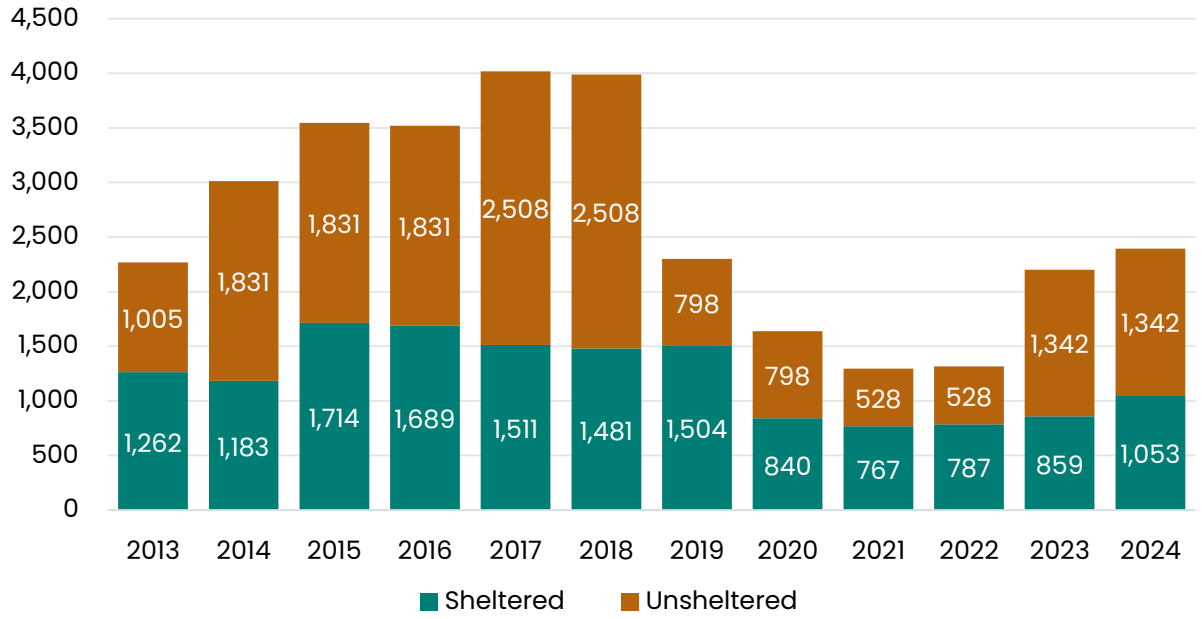
[43] Colorado Balance of State Continuum of Care, "Point-in-Time and Housing Inventory Count," Colorado Department of Local Affairs, accessed February 10, 2025, https://doh.colorado.gov/point-in-time-and-housing-inventory-count.

Figure 6.21: Mesa County PIT Homeless Count, 2016–2024[44]



Source: DOLA PIT Count Reports

Figure 6.22: Colorado Balance of State CoC PIT Homeless County, 2013–2024



Source: HUD 2007–2024 PIT Estimates by CoC

The demographics of homeless individuals are presented in Table 6.12, Figure 6.23, and Figure 6.24 at the full Colorado Balance of State CoC level rather than the county level.

[44] Note that unsheltered individuals are only counted every other year, and it should not be assumed there are zero unsheltered homeless individuals during the off years for which there is no data.

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. In contrast, the Black, African American, or African population and the American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous population consistently represented the largest proportions of non-White homeless individuals, along with those identifying as Multiracial.

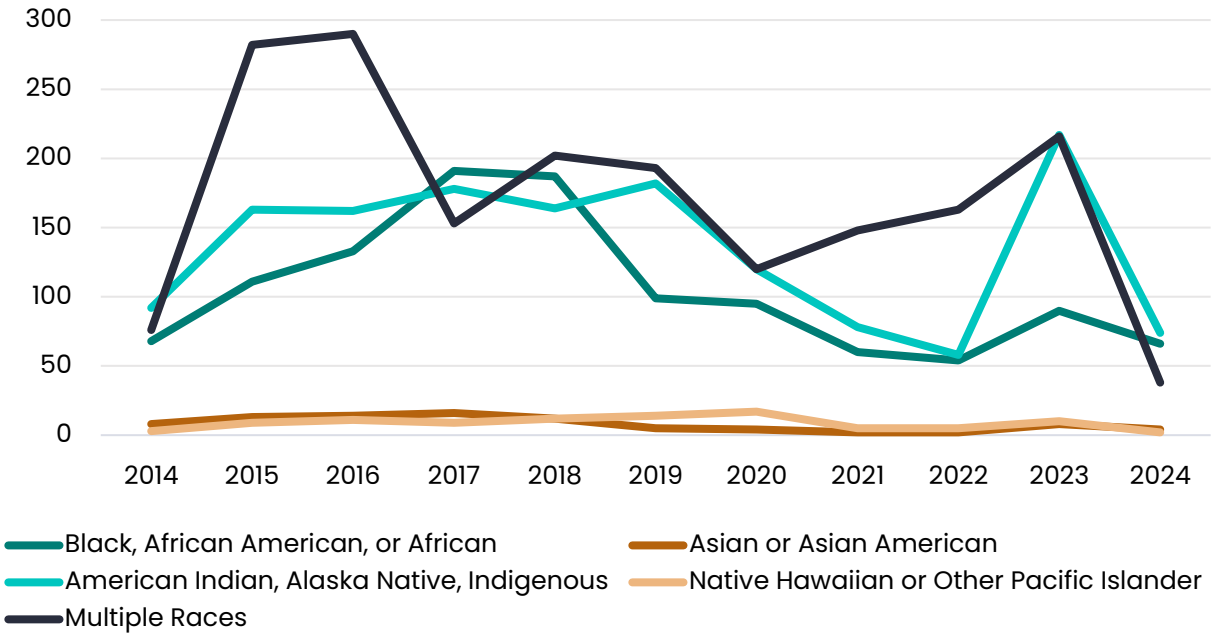
In 2024, the CoC reported that 18.9% of homeless individuals identified as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 6.24).

Table 6.12: Demographics of Homeless 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	2,967	111	13	163	9	282
2016	2,910	133	14	162	11	290
2017	3,472	191	16	178	9	153
2018	3,412	187	12	164	12	202
2019	1,809	99	5	182	14	193
2020	1,282	95	4	120	17	120
2021	1,002	60	2	78	5	148
2022	1,033	54	2	58	5	163
2023	1,660	90	8	217	10	216
2024	708	66	4	74	2	38

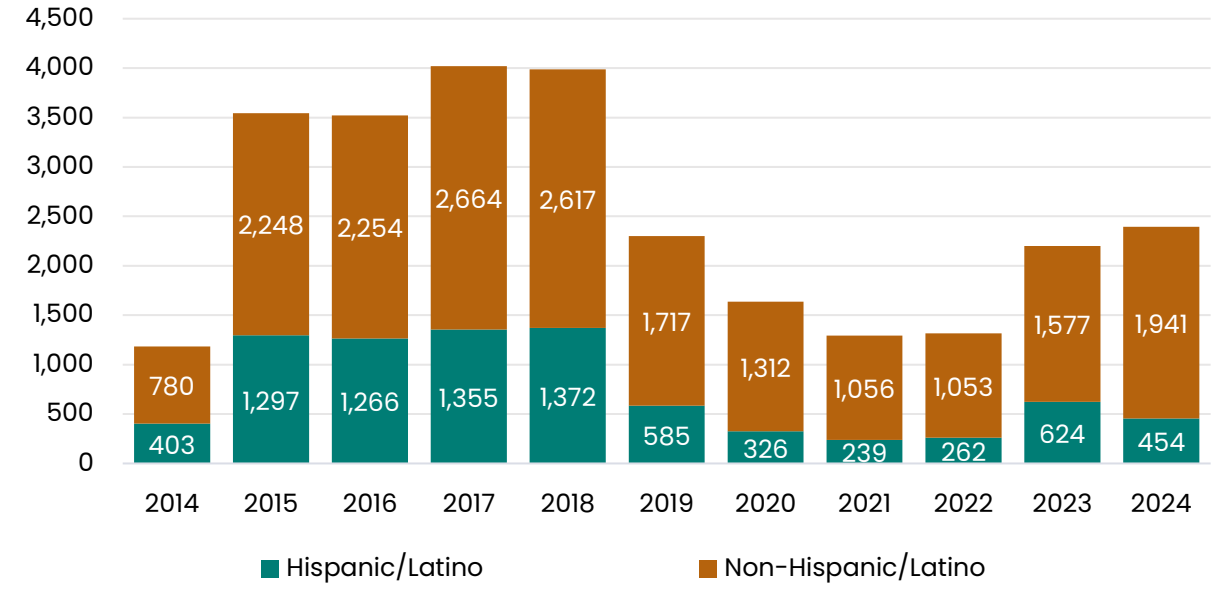
Source: HUD 2007–2024 PIT Estimates by CoC

Figure 6.23: Non-White Demographics of Homeless in the Colorado Balance of State CoC, 2014–2024



Source: HUD 2007–2024 PIT Estimates by CoC

Figure 6.24: Hispanic/Latino Homeless in the Colorado Balance of State CoC, 2014–2024



Source: HUD 2007–2024 PIT Estimates by CoC

Economic Drivers

This section examines key drivers of local economies within the surrounding region. Labor force growth and the establishment of new businesses are essential components of economic development as new workers create products or provide services in the economy and new businesses are a sign of a generally growing economy where more people can work. Specific industries with higher levels of employment and wages often serve as powerful economic drivers, partly due to the clustering effect.[45]

Clusters form when businesses in the same industry benefit from proximity, which enhances regional competitiveness. Clusters can be a driver of local economies as workers can specialize in tasks in particular industries, creating economies of scale benefits. Workers may then have the opportunity to move between employers to earn greater wages and benefits if they produce value to the industry as a whole.

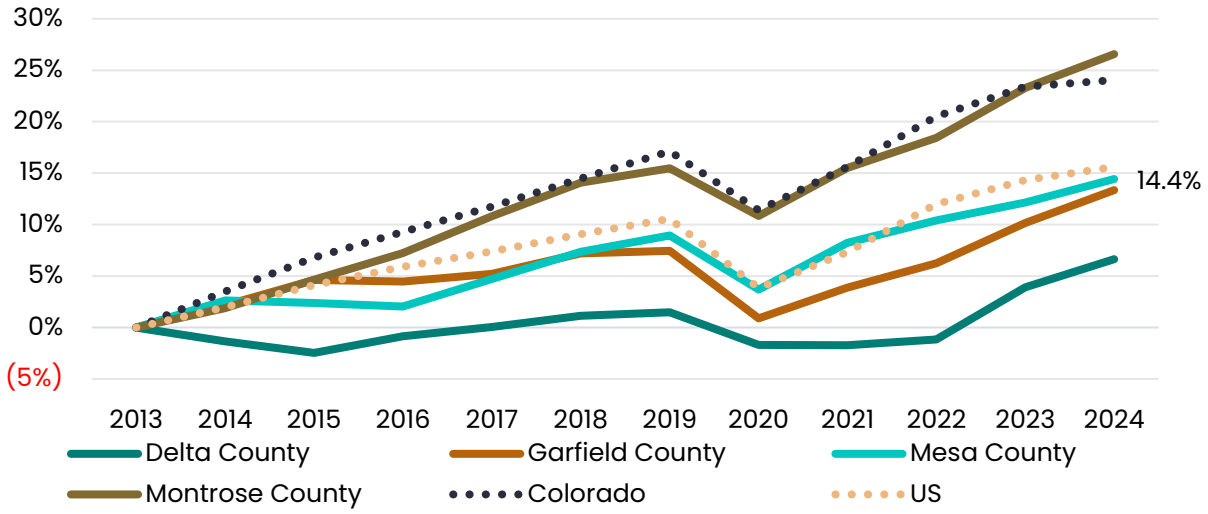
Strong and growing economic drivers also contribute to higher demand for housing. After all, everyone in the growing workforce will need somewhere to stay. Overall employment growth increases demand for housing, while variations in earnings lead to differing housing needs.

Labor Force, Earnings, and Establishments

From 2013 to 2024, labor force indicators in the Mesa County area and surrounding counties showed overall increases. With the exception of Delta County, total employment rose steadily over the past 11 years. By the end of the decade, all regions registered positive employment growth. Long-term gains were greatest in Montrose County (26.6%) and Colorado overall (24.0%). The United States and Mesa County followed at 15.6% and 14.4%, respectively. Every region of comparison experienced sharp declines in employment from 2019 to 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Except for Delta County, however, all rebounded quickly and had regained (or nearly regained) pre-pandemic levels by the following year.

[45] 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.

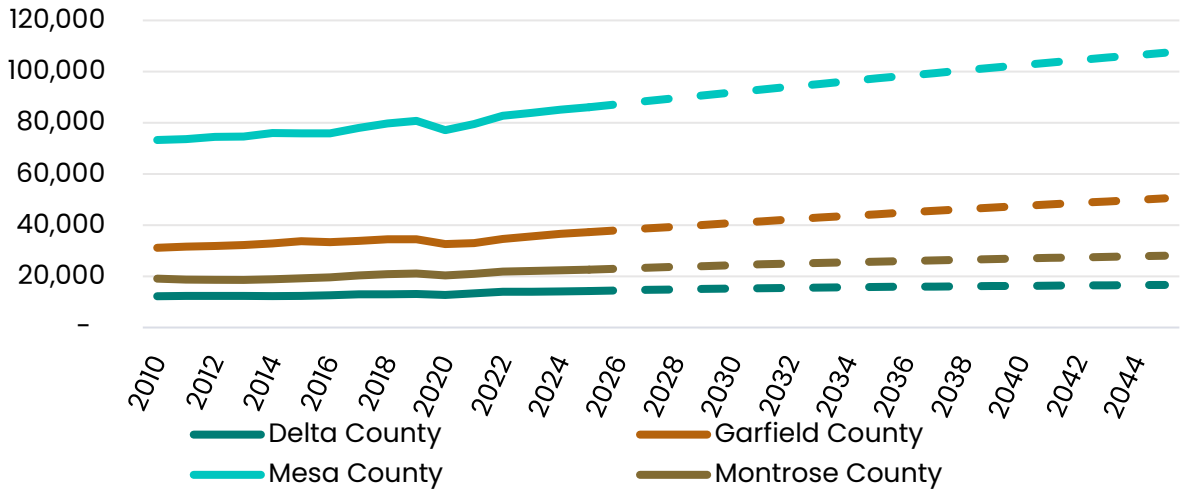
Figure 6.25: Cumulative Annual Employment Growth Rate, 2013–2024



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2013–2024

The Colorado Department of Labor Statistics projects that this growth will continue at a similar rate adding 21,000 jobs between 2025 and 2045 in Mesa County. This would be a 25.0% increase, a growth rate faster than both Delta and Montrose County (17.0% and 24.0% respectively) but ten percentage points slower than Garfield County which is projected to grow 35.0% by 2045.

Figure 6.26: Job Growth Projections, 2010-2045

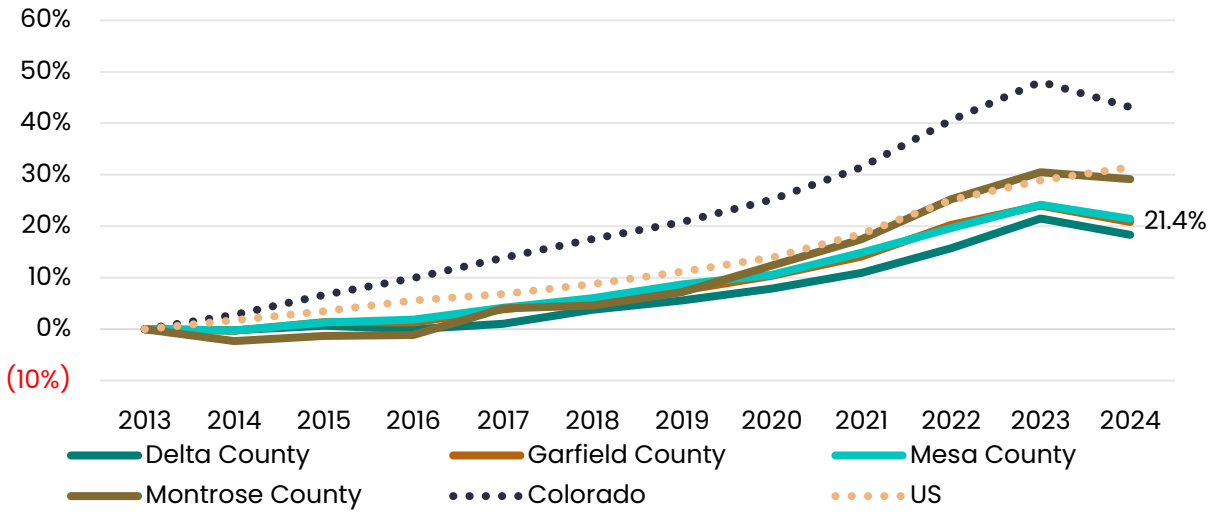


Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Like employment, the number of overall establishments operating in the region has grown steadily since 2013 (Figure 6.27). However, growth for the counties has been slower than the Colorado average, and Mesa County specifically has seen slower growth than the U.S. average (31.4%). While growth may be slower than state and

national rates, the 21.4% growth of establishments in Mesa County does show that the region exhibits positive traits for economic expansion and job creation.

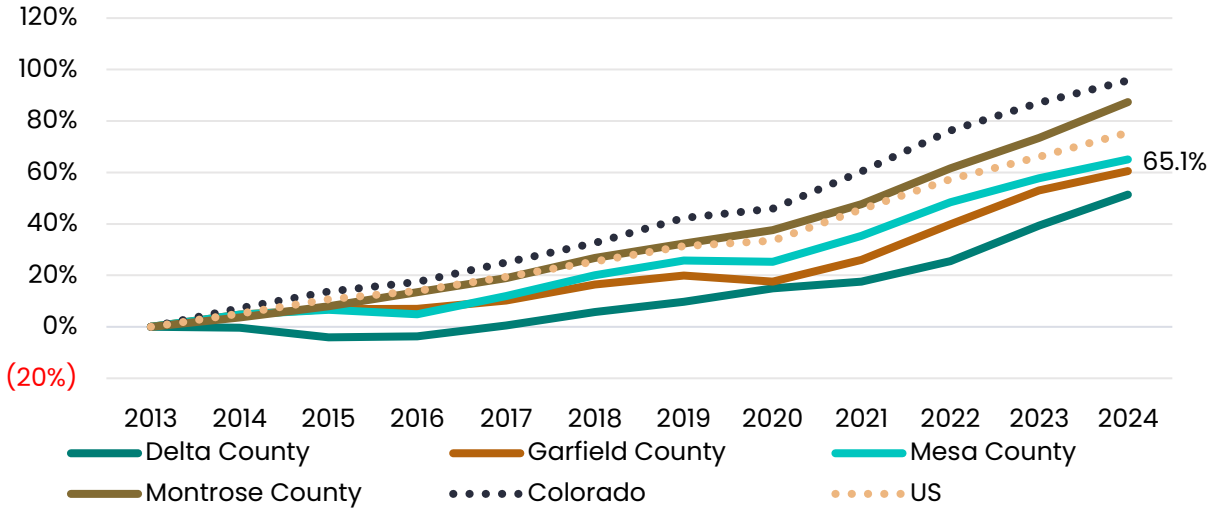
Figure 6.27: Cumulative Annual Establishment Growth Rate, 2013–2024



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2013–2024

Wages in the broader region have grown consistently over the past decade (87.4% in Montrose County), but not as rapidly in Mesa County (65.1%), which remains below state and national wage-growth rates (Figure 6.28). Nonetheless, the combination of rising wages and overall employment growth suggests the County is well-positioned for continued economic expansion.

Figure 6.28: Cumulative Annual Wage Growth Rate, 2013–2024

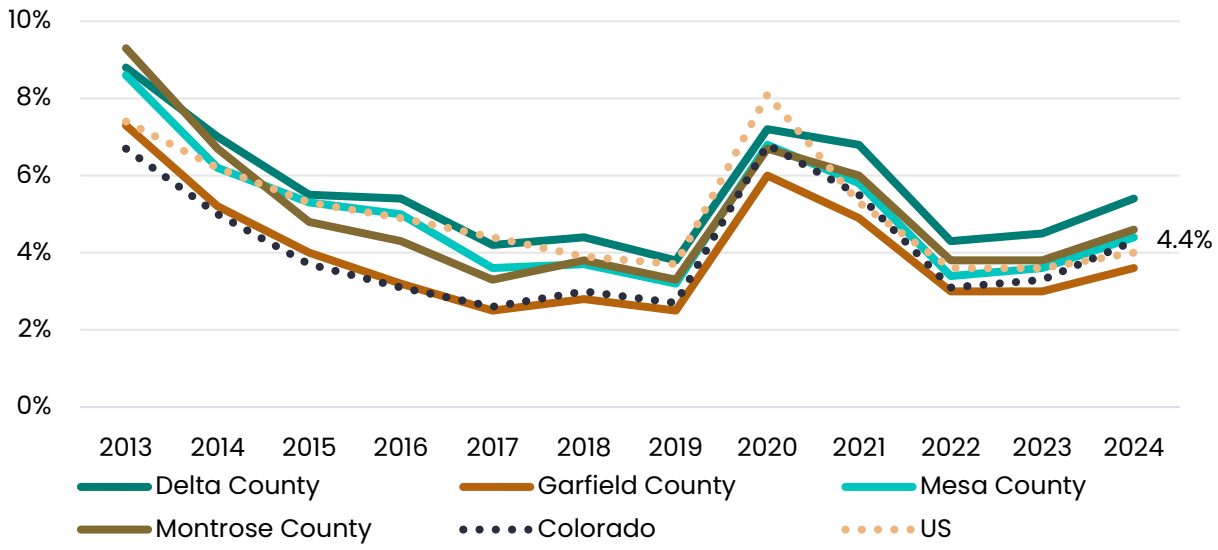


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2013–2024

As shown in Figure 6.29, unemployment fell significantly from 2013 to 2019, then surged sharply in 2020 (due to the pandemic). Returning to near pre-pandemic levels by 2022,

unemployment rates across all regions then increased from 2023 to 2024. In Mesa County, the unemployment rate stands at approximately 4.4%, closely aligning with the state average.

Figure 6.29: Annual Rate of Unemployment, 2013–2024



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

Employment by Industry

Examining employment data by industry helps identify important employment clusters in Fruita. Clusters often require different types of housing to accommodate workers in particular industries. For instance, many health care workers follow rotating or traveling schedules, spending only a few weeks or months in one location, and only needing a short-term residence. In contrast, local government employees typically prefer to live near their workplace and require permanent housing. Because different industries offer varying income levels, workers in some sectors can generally afford more expensive housing than those in others. Overall, employment by industry contributes to housing demand in Fruita.

The largest industries by employment in Fruita are:

- Health Care/Social Assistance (18.7% of employment)
- Construction (10.6% of employment)
- Retail Trade (10.1% of employment)
- Educational Services (9.2% of employment)

The remaining 16 industries make up approximately 51.0% of the remaining employment in Fruita (Table 6.13).

Table 6.13: Employment by Industry in Fruita, 2024

Industry	% Employment	LQ
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	0.4%	0.36
Mining, Quarrying, Oil & Gas	1.8%	6.00
Construction	10.6%	1.54
Manufacturing	6.7%	0.67
Wholesale Trade	3.3%	1.65
Retail Trade	10.1%	0.96
Transportation & Warehousing	7.5%	1.47
Utilities	1.7%	1.89
Information	0.5%	0.25
Finance & Insurance	1.0%	0.21
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	0.1%	0.06
Professional, Scientific & Tech	4.2%	0.51
Management of Companies	0.0%	0.00
Admin, Support & Waste Management	7.6%	1.77
Educational Services	9.2%	1.01
Health Care & Social Assistance	18.7%	1.33
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	2.9%	1.26
Accommodation & Food Services	6.3%	0.93
Other Services (Excluding Public)	0.9%	0.20
Public Administration	6.7%	1.34

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Location Quotients (LQs) compare the relative concentration of industries in an area to the national average. For example, Educational Services represents about 9.2% of employment in Fruita and has an LQ of 1.01. This means that the national share of educational workers is just below the share in Fruita.

Despite only making up 1.8% of employment in Fruita, Mining, Quarrying, Oil & Gas has an LQ of 6.00. While overall employment will be low, this industry represents a significant employment cluster compared to the national average. Meanwhile, no other LQ in Fruita surpasses 2. Compared to national average, banking & corporate services industries appear to be lacking in the area. In Fruita, Management of Companies, Information, Finance & Insurance, and Real Estate all have LQs below 0.3.

Table 6.14 compares Fruita's employment by industry to that of Mesa County, Colorado, and the United States. In both Fruita and Mesa County more broadly, Health Care & Social Assistance is a leading employer industry.

In both Fruita and Mesa County, Construction and Retail rank highly, while Education follows close behind. Statewide, Health Care & Social Assistance remains the largest

industry (12.5%). Notably, Professional, Scientific & Technical Services comprise just 4.2% of Mesa County's employment. This industry's regional LQ of 0.51 further indicates that Fruita appears behind in this sector relative to national norms.

Table 6.14: Employment by Industry Comparison, 2024

Industry	Fruita	Mesa County	Colorado	US
Total Current Employment	**6,499**	**75,310**	**3.2M**	**166.1M**
Health Care/Social Assistance	18.7%	17.0%	12.5%	14.1%
Construction	10.6%	9.7%	8.0%	6.9%
Retail Trade	10.1%	11.4%	9.9%	10.5%
Educational Services	9.2%	8.3%	8.7%	9.1%
Admin/Support/Waste Management	7.6%	3.9%	4.2%	4.3%
Transportation/Warehousing	7.5%	5.4%	4.6%	5.1%
Manufacturing	6.7%	6.1%	7.5%	10.0%
Public Administration	6.7%	4.5%	4.7%	5.0%
Accommodation/Food Services	6.3%	7.3%	6.9%	6.8%
Professional/Scientific/Tech	4.2%	6.2%	11.6%	8.3%
Wholesale Trade	3.3%	1.9%	1.7%	2.0%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	2.9%	2.0%	2.7%	2.3%
Mining/Quarrying/Oil & Gas	1.8%	1.6%	0.5%	0.3%
Utilities	1.7%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Finance/Insurance	1.0%	2.9%	4.7%	4.8%
Other Services (Excluding Public)	0.9%	4.9%	4.6%	4.6%
Information	0.5%	1.8%	2.8%	2.0%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	0.4%	1.9%	1.0%	1.1%
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	0.1%	2.3%	2.3%	1.8%
Management of Companies	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Table 6.15 highlights how income levels align with common occupations. At the lower end, those earning below $43,000, jobs include school bus drivers, secretaries, and janitors. These roles are essential to our communities, yet they often fall into the low- and very low-income categories, making it difficult for workers to afford housing near their jobs. At the more mid-income levels, people have jobs such as teachers and police officers. These are the occupations in the "missing middle" for housing who would benefit from more diverse housing options to provide the more affordable options they need.

Table 6.15: Occupations by AMI Level

AMI Range	Household Income Range	Jobs Common in the Income Range
<30% AMI Very low income	<$25,920	Fast Food Workers Bartenders Restaurant Hosts Dishwashers School Bus Drivers
30-50% AMI Low income	$25,920-$43,200	Retail Salespersons Customer Service Reps Personal Care Aides Secretaries Janitors
50-80% AMI Low-mid income	$43,200-$69,120	Office Clerks Retail Supervisors Truck Drivers Teachers Sales Reps
80-100% AMI Middle Income	$69,120-$86,400	Accountants Civil Engineers Police Officer Project Managers Mechanical Engineers
100-120% AMI High-mid income	$86,400-$103,680	Registered Nurses Construction Managers Physical Therapists Dental Hygienists Speech Pathologists
>120% AMI High income	>$103,680	Occupational Therapists Lawyers Software Developers General Managers Data Scientists

Source: Points Consulting using HUD Median Family Income 2024 & BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics

Table 6.16 reports the average annual earnings and annual employment estimates as of 2024 in Mesa County by major Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system code. In coordination with Table 6.15, 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 6.16: Occupation Group by Earnings & Employment, Mesa County, 2024

Occupation Name	Average Annual Earnings	Annual Employment
Management occupations	$121,493	2,678
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	$105,234	5,467
Legal occupations	$103,021	482
Computer and mathematical occupations	$89,735	890
Life, physical, and social science occupations	$82,505	725
Architecture and engineering occupations	$77,082	909
Business and financial operations occupations	$76,819	3,577
Protective service occupations	$60,861	1,458
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	$55,612	3,095
Construction and extraction occupations	$54,092	4,450
Community and social service occupations	$53,447	1,527
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	$52,895	722
Educational instruction and library occupations	$52,585	4,140
Production occupations	$47,406	2,491
Sales and related occupations	$46,383	7,213
Transportation and material moving occupations	$45,136	4,986
Office and administrative support occupations	$44,461	8,203
Healthcare support occupations	$39,034	3,130
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	$38,569	2,002
Personal care and service occupations	$37,495	1,268
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	$35,925	64
Food preparation and serving related occupations	$34,390	7,098

Source: DTG Employment & Wage Estimates, 2024

Table 6.17 shows employment by occupation, detailing the types of roles workers hold. The largest occupation by employment in Fruita is Management (13.0%), followed by Transportation & Material Moving (11.4%) and Healthcare Practitioner (10.3%).

Table 6.17: Employment by Occupation Comparison, 2024

Occupation	Fruita	Mesa County	Colorado	US
Total Current Employment	**6,499**	**75,310**	**3.2M**	**166.1M**
Management	13.0%	13.6%	14.7%	12.1%
Transportation/Material Moving	11.4%	7.9%	6.3%	7.5%
Healthcare Practitioner	10.3%	7.3%	5.9%	6.4%
Office/Administrative Support	9.9%	9.7%	9.2%	10.1%

Education/Training/Library	9.7%	6.1%	5.7%	6.2%
Construction/Extraction	6.8%	6.4%	4.9%	4.9%
Food Preparation/Serving	6.1%	5.3%	5.2%	5.3%
Building Maintenance	4.8%	3.0%	2.7%	3.2%
Production	4.6%	4.1%	3.4%	5.3%
Business/Financial	4.0%	4.5%	7.1%	6.3%
Architecture/Engineering	3.5%	2.7%	3.5%	2.4%
Sales and Sales Related	3.4%	8.0%	8.6%	8.5%
Protective Service	3.0%	1.7%	1.8%	2.1%
Healthcare Support	2.7%	4.0%	2.6%	3.3%
Personal Care/Service	2.2%	2.9%	2.6%	2.6%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	2.0%	4.6%	2.7%	2.9%
Life/Physical/Social Sciences	0.8%	1.2%	1.6%	1.3%
Arts/Design/Entertainment	0.8%	2.0%	2.7%	2.2%
Computer/Mathematical	0.4%	1.7%	5.5%	4.1%
Community/Social Service	0.4%	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%
Legal	0.1%	0.8%	1.2%	1.2%

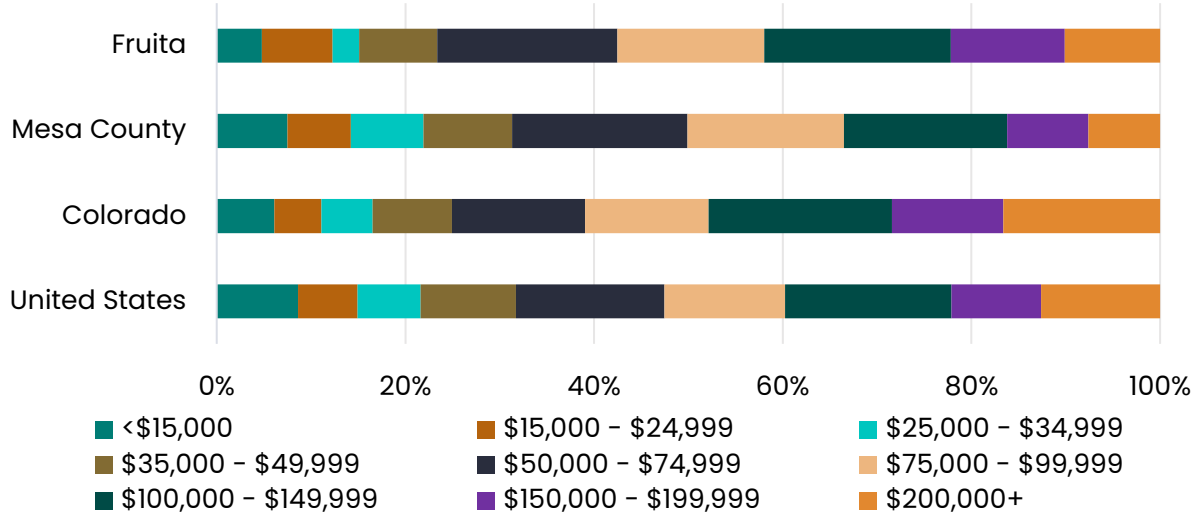
Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Income & Expenditures

Household income is another 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 more financial flexibility. As a result, regions with higher income levels tend to experience higher housing costs, and vice versa.

Fruita has a lower percentage of households earning less than $15,000 per year (4.8%) than the United States (8.6%). In terms of concentration, Fruita has higher proportion of households earning between $50,000 and $200,000 than Colorado or the United States, and fewer households outside that range, both at the very high and very low income levels (Figure 6.30).

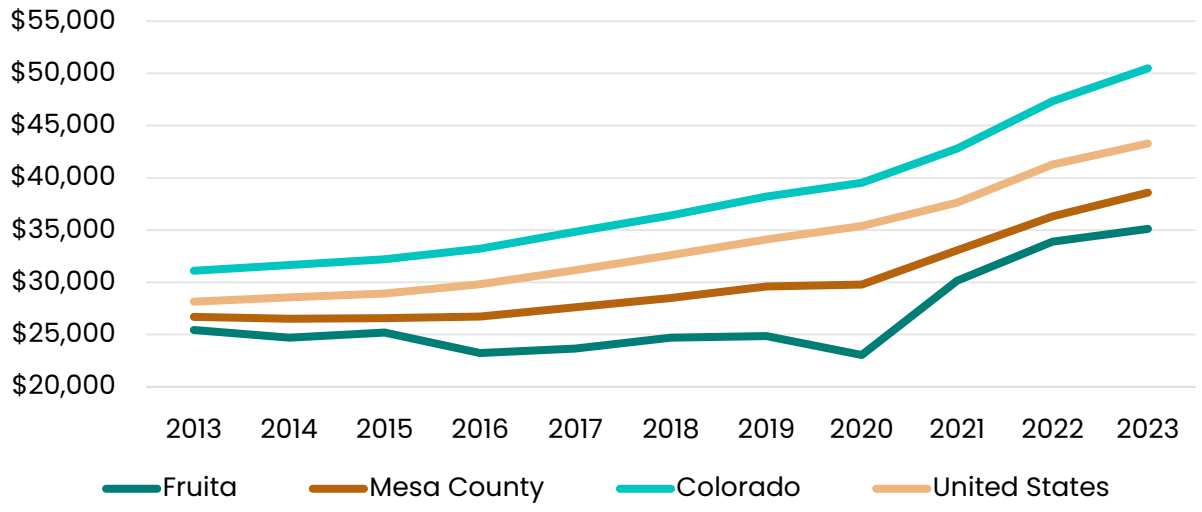
Figure 6.30: Distribution of Household Income, 2024



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

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 6.31 displays per capita income by region from 2013 to 2023. Overall, all regions have experienced growth over the past decade; however, Fruita has the lowest per capita income compared to the other regions and saw declines in 2016 and 2020, in contrast to fairly consistent growth in all other regions.

Figure 6.31: Per Capita Income, 2013–2023

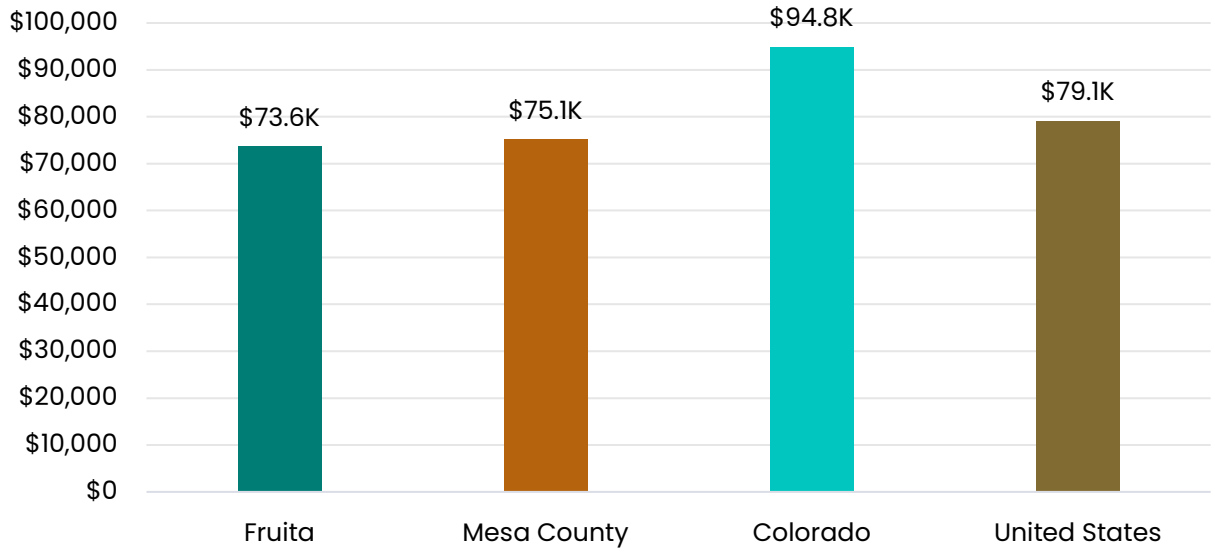


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B19301

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 Fruita, the median household income is $73.6,000 per year, which is lower than in all other regions and over $20,000 less than the median in Colorado. Lower household incomes often indicate reduced overall demand within a region.

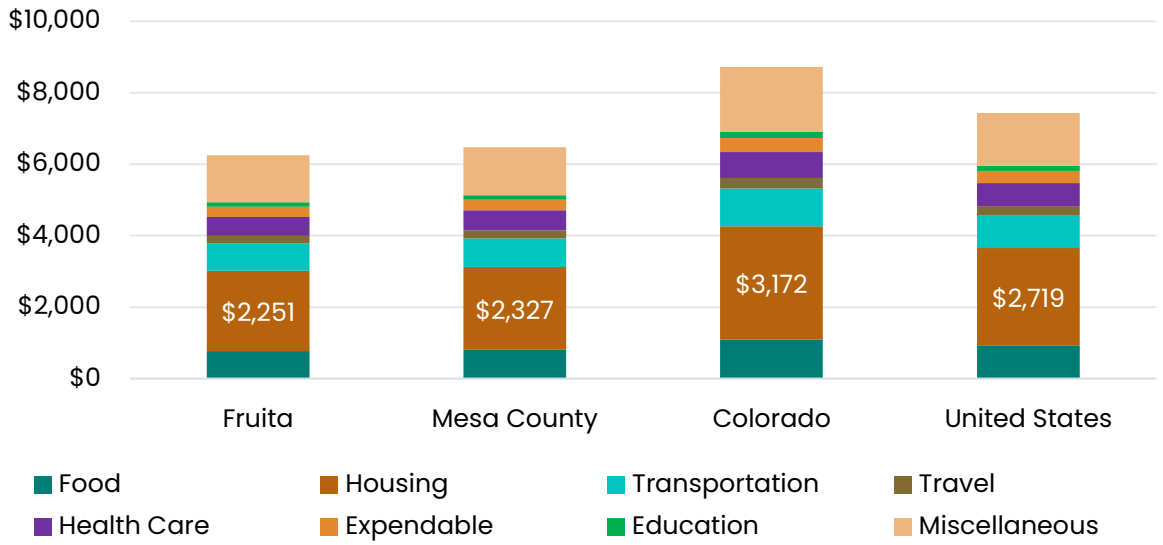
Figure 6.32: Median Household Income, 2024



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Figure 6.33 presents the monthly household budget for Fruita, as well as Mesa County, Colorado, and the United States. Monthly expenses in every category are lower in Fruita than in other regions, reflecting its lower median household income. Housing costs are also lower (by about $100 compared to Mesa County and nearly $1,000 compared to Colorado).

Figure 6.33: Monthly Budget Expenditures, 2024[46]



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

While overall expenditures are lower in Fruita, the percentage of the monthly budget spent in each category is relatively similar across all regions (Table 6.18). Households in Fruita allocate slightly smaller shares of their budget to transportation and housing but slightly more to other miscellaneous household expenditures.

Table 6.18: Monthly Household Budget Shares, 2024

Category	Fruita	Mesa County	Colorado	United States
Food	12.3%	12.4%	12.5%	12.5%
Housing	36.0%	35.9%	36.4%	36.6%
Transportation	12.1%	12.3%	12.1%	12.4%
Travel	3.4%	3.4%	3.4%	3.4%
Health Care	8.5%	8.7%	8.3%	8.6%
Expendable	4.6%	4.6%	4.5%	4.6%
Education	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%
Miscellaneous	21.2%	20.8%	20.9%	19.9%

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

[46] 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, pensions, and social security.

Commuter and Transportation Data

According to the Census Bureau's OnTheMap database, 69.3% of Fruita workers live outside the City (Table 6.19). Nearly a quarter (23.6%) of Fruita's workforce lives in Grand Junction and many others live in CDPs near Grand Junction. In addition, more than half (55.0%) of Fruita residents work in Grand Junction, while only 15.7% work in Fruita.

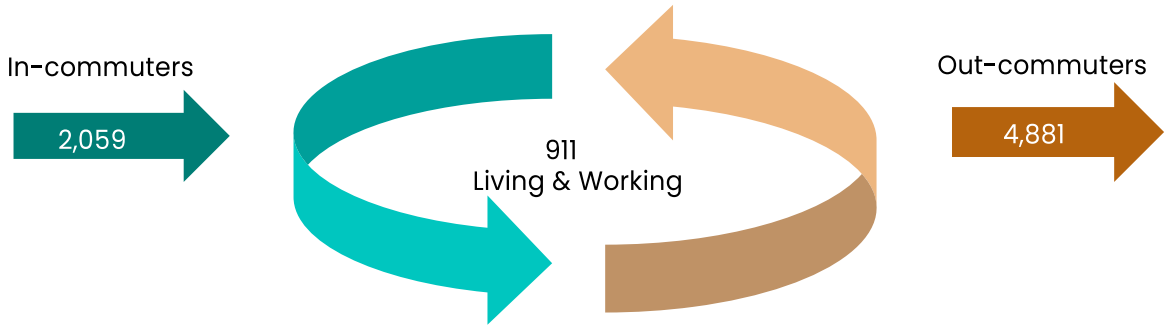
Table 6.19: Commuting Patterns, 2022

Where Fruita Residents Work		Where Fruita Workers Live	
Location	**Percentage**	**Location**	**Percentage**
Grand Junction	55.0%	Fruita	30.7%
Fruita	15.7%	Grand Junction	23.6%
Denver	3.1%	Clifton CDP	4.7%
Clifton CDP	1.5%	Redlands CDP	4.3%
Aurora	1.0%	Fruitvale CDP	2.7%
Montrose	0.9%	Loma CDP	1.9%
Fruitvale CDP	0.8%	Orchard Mesa CDP	1.6%
Colorado Springs	0.7%	Montrose	1.0%
Commerce City	0.6%	Palisade	0.6%
Lakewood	0.6%	Rifle	0.5%
All Other Locations	20.0%	All Other Locations	28.4%

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

Overall, approximately 3,000 workers are employed in Fruita (Figure 6.34). Over two-thirds of these are in-commuters, representing potential opportunities for Fruita's housing market. In contrast, about 4,881 residents are employed elsewhere which reflects employment leakage for Fruita. Additionally, 911 workers both live and work in the city.

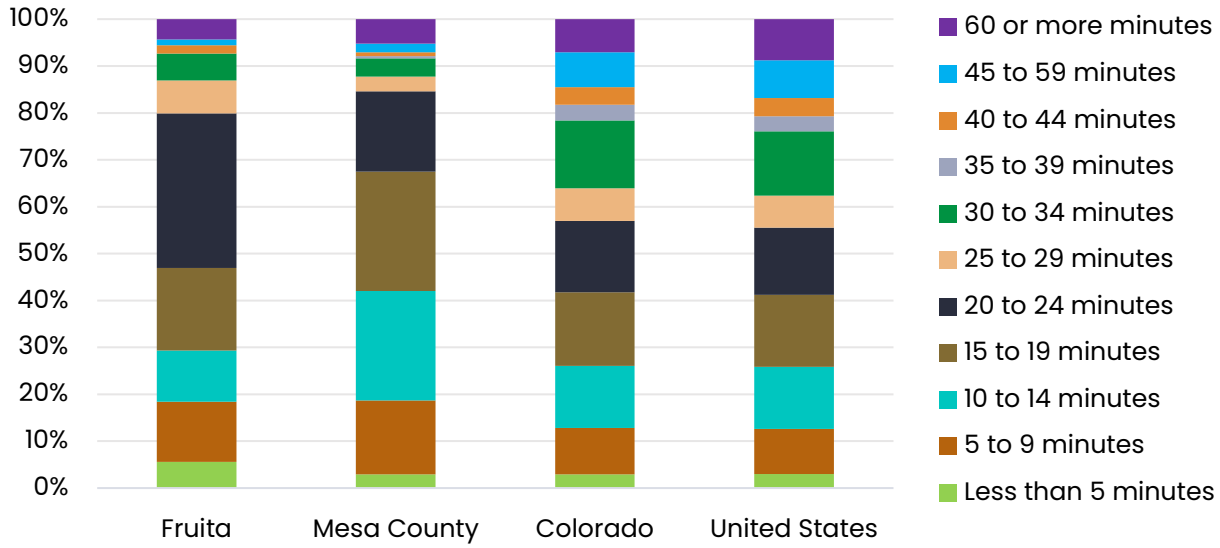
Figure 6.34: Commuter Inflow and Outflow from Fruita, 2022



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

As shown in Figure 6.35, Fruita has a notably high concentration of residents commuting 20 to 24 minutes (33.0% of its workforce). This is likely due to the large number of residents working in Grand Junction, located about 20 minutes east of Fruita.

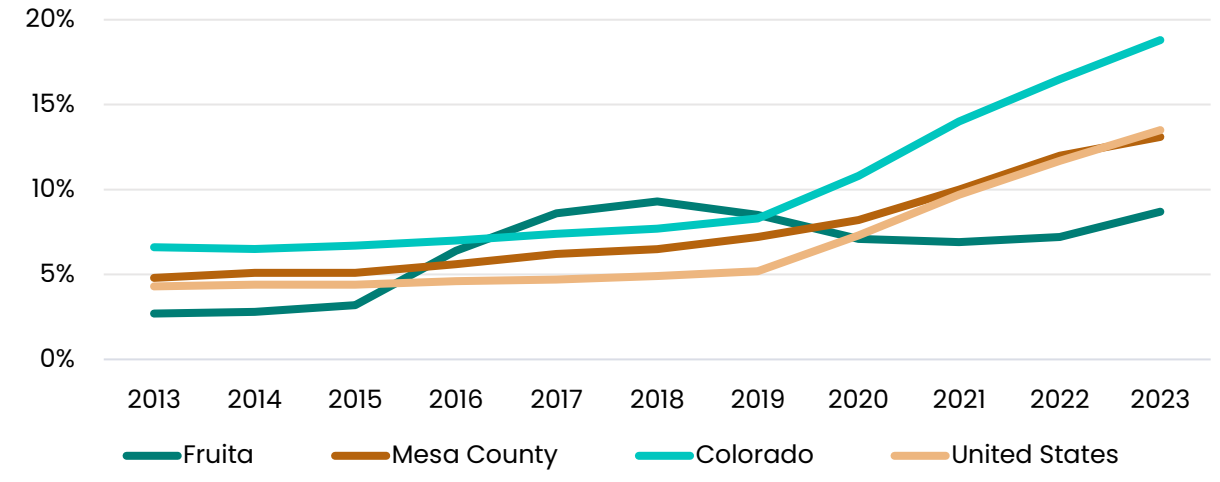
Figure 6.35: Travel Time to Work by Region, 2023



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

A different commuting trend has emerged in the United States over the past five years—not commuting at all. Working from home (WFH) became a popular option in 2020 due to COVID lockdowns, as companies sought to maintain productivity. Figure 6.36 displays this trend from 2013 to 2023 for Mesa County, Colorado, and the United States. However, in Fruita the pattern was different. The share of residents working from home rose significantly from 2015 to 2018, then declined heading into the COVID years of 2019 and 2020. Unlike other regions, Fruita did not see an increase until 2023, and even then, the percentage remained below the 2018 peak. This trend reflects work from home jobs are not common among Fruita residents, and even less so now than in 2018.

Figure 6.36: Work From Home Trends, 2013–2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2023 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 for a household with a given income, the family 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 need lower housing costs to stay afloat. They may also be restricted from purchasing a home for an extended period.

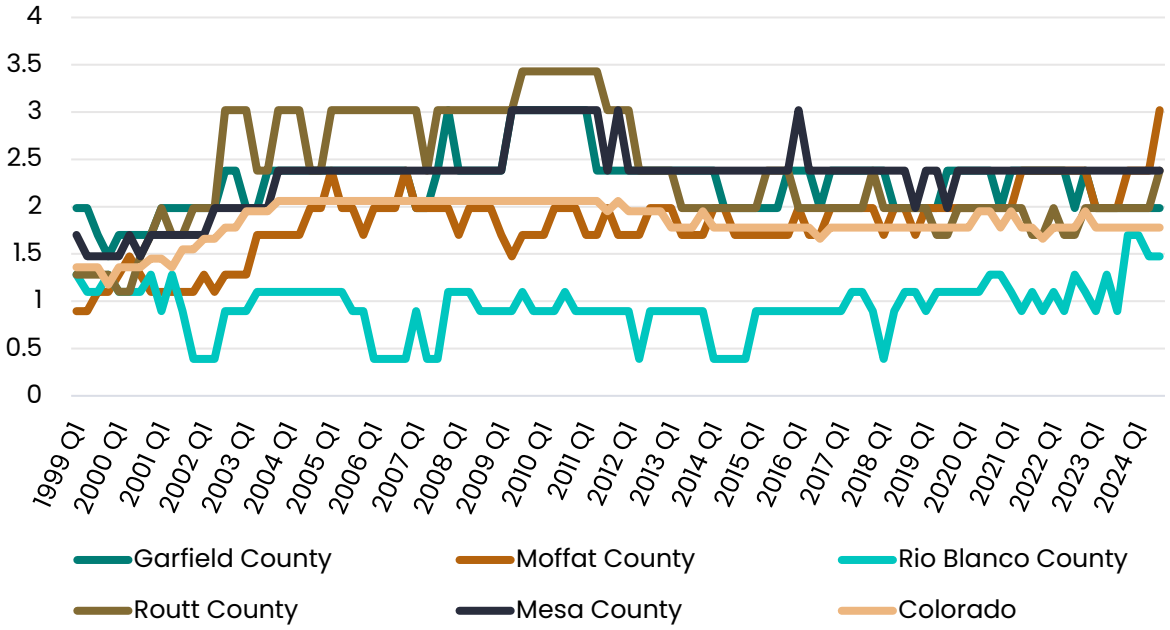
One study found that households with higher DTI ratios before the 2008 Financial Crisis experienced steeper reductions in consumption and employment during the slow recovery that followed.[47] Thus, a higher average DTI indicates potential extended hardship should another financial crisis occur.

The Federal Reserve Board publishes historical household DTI ratios for every state and county, as well as major core-based statistical areas (SBSAs), 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 6.37 displays the DTI ratios for Colorado and the Region 11 counties. Notably, Mesa County's average DTI has been slightly on the higher end of Region 11 but has remained mostly constant just below 2.5 since around 2012. Given to relatively stable DTI ratio over a decade, it is likely not a significant barrier for households in Fruita seeking financing for new homes.

[47] 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.

Figure 6.37: Quarterly Debt-to-Income Ratios, 1999–2024

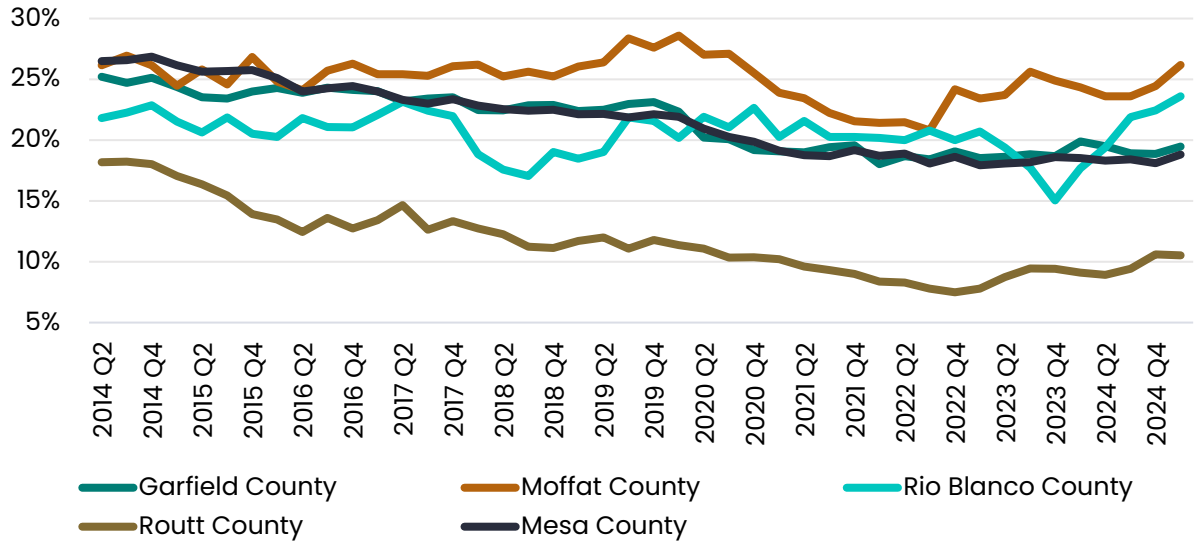


Source: Federal Reserve Board of New York Credit Panel/Equifax, June 2025

Access to credit plays a key role in measuring financial health and is often measured by 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.

Over the past 10 years, the percentage of the population with a subprime credit score has slowly declined in Mesa, Garfield, and Routt Counties. However, in Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties, the subprime credit population has begun to increase. By this measure, Mesa County has performed well, comparatively, with 18.8% of the population categorized as subprime as of Q1 2025 (Figure 6.38). The data here paint a relatively positive picture for potential borrowers in Mesa County, as less than one-fifth of the population has a subprime credit score.

Figure 6.38: Quarterly Subprime Credit Population, 2014–2024



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

Data presented in Table 6.20 come from a 2022 study conducted by the Urban Institute, which reviewed the financial health of regions across the country. A few metrics included in the study are:

- Residents with delinquent debt
- Mortgage holders with a foreclosure in the past few years
- Median credit score

By 2022, the median credit score for the Central Mesa County PUMA region (encompassing the cities of Grand Junction and Fruita) was 726, above the national average. Additionally, 22.0% of residents in the region had delinquent debts at the time of the study (lower than the United States as a whole). Less than 1.0% of mortgage holders had a foreclosure in recent years as well. These data indicate that, in general, households in the region are financially stable. However, the study was conducted three years ago and may be out of date. available At the time of PC's analysis, it remains the most current information available.

Table 6.20: 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 County (Central): Greater Grand Junction & Fruita Cities	22.0%	<0.1%	726
Colorado	23.2%	0.1%	729
U.S.	31.5%	0.1%	692

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

Displacement Risks

Displacement risks highlight which communities are more vulnerable to being displaced due to factors like rising costs, uneven wealth distribution, and racial and ethnic disparities. These disparities are a critical aspect in assessing displacement risk as they disproportionately affect minority groups (largely due to a history of discrimination and systemic oppression in the United States). This pattern becomes especially pronounced when communities face natural disasters, such as wildfire or flooding.[48] Overall, identifying which areas are at a higher risk of displacement helps policymakers and planners proactively design strategies that protect communities and ensure that growth benefits existing residents rather than displacing them.

To assess displacement risks for homeowners across Mesa County and Fruita, the PC team compiled a variety of statistics for all census tracts in the County. These figures were compared to national and state averages. Following this, PC used a percentile-based scoring methodology. For each variable, we ranked tracts using percentiles which allowed direct comparisons between tracts. We then averaged these percentiles (ranging from 0 to 100) to generate a composite risk score for each tract. A score of 100 would indicate that a tract ranks highest in displacement-related factors among all tracts in Mesa County.

The displacement risk model was created using a combination of these statistics, which are identified as relevant by the Colorado Revised Statutes and DOLA Guidelines:

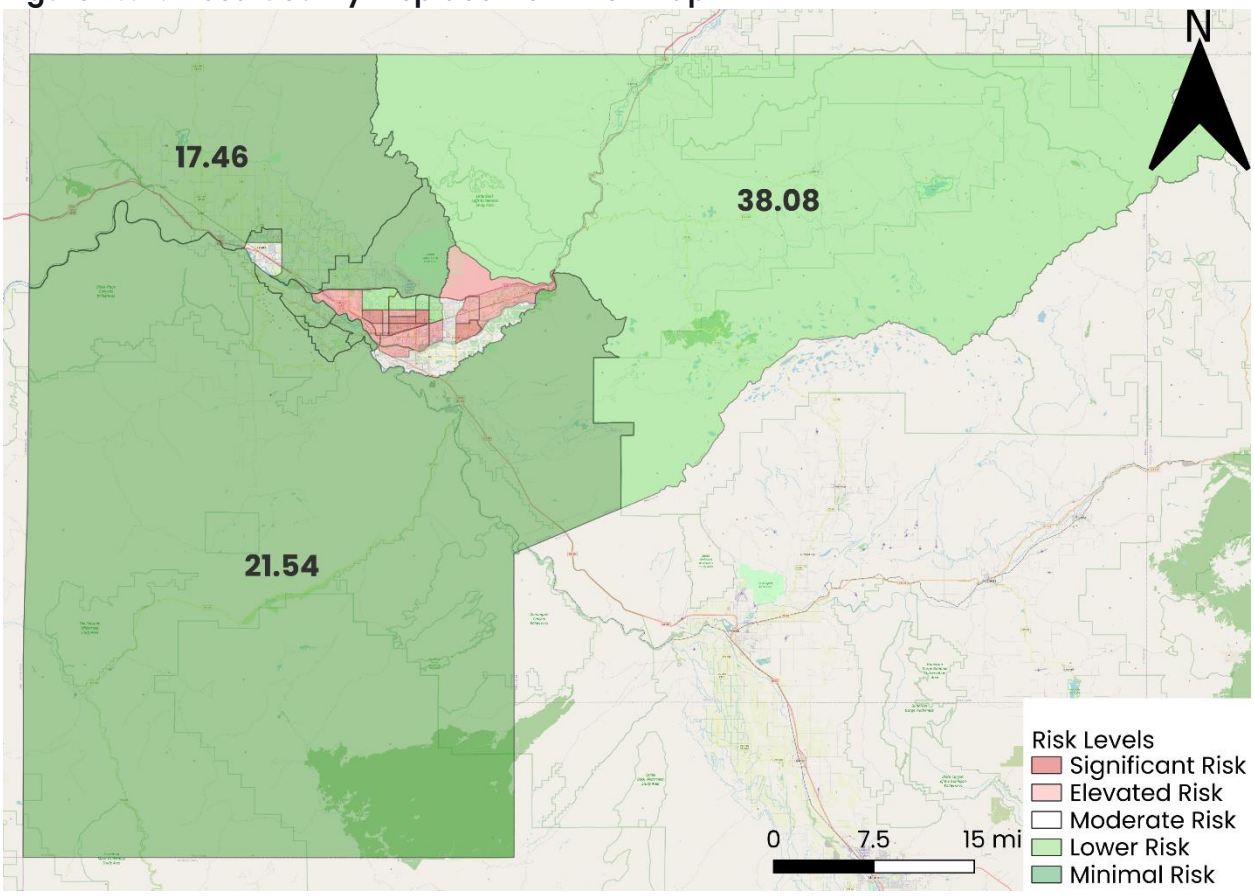
- Population 25+ with no diploma
- Population with disabilities
- Single parents
- Age 5+ with limited English
- Racial/Ethnic status
- Occupied units with more people than rooms (overcrowding)
- Housing cost-burdened units with an annual income less than $75,000
- Persons below 150% poverty estimate
- % Renter occupied households
- % of housing stock built prior to 1970

Figure 6.39 through Figure 6.41 present Points Consulting's displacement risk study findings, with each census tract's percentile score displayed within its boundaries. Overall, the rural areas of Mesa County show relatively low displacement risk compared to inner-city neighborhoods. Specifically, Census Tracts 15.02, 18, and 19 are highlighted.

[48] Ther W. Aung and Ashwini R. Sehgal, "Prevalence, Correlates, and Impacts of Displacement Because of Natural Disasters in the United States from 2022 to 2023," American Journal of Public Health 115 (2025): 55-65, https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2024.307854.

Tracts 15.02 and 19 rank among the best in the entire County, with the primary concerns being the age of the housing stock and some minor overcrowding. In contrast, the Northeast Tract (18) has a high population disability rate of 16.0%, placing it in the 65th percentile and negatively impacting its overall displacement risk score.

Figure 6.39: Mesa County Displacement Risk Map



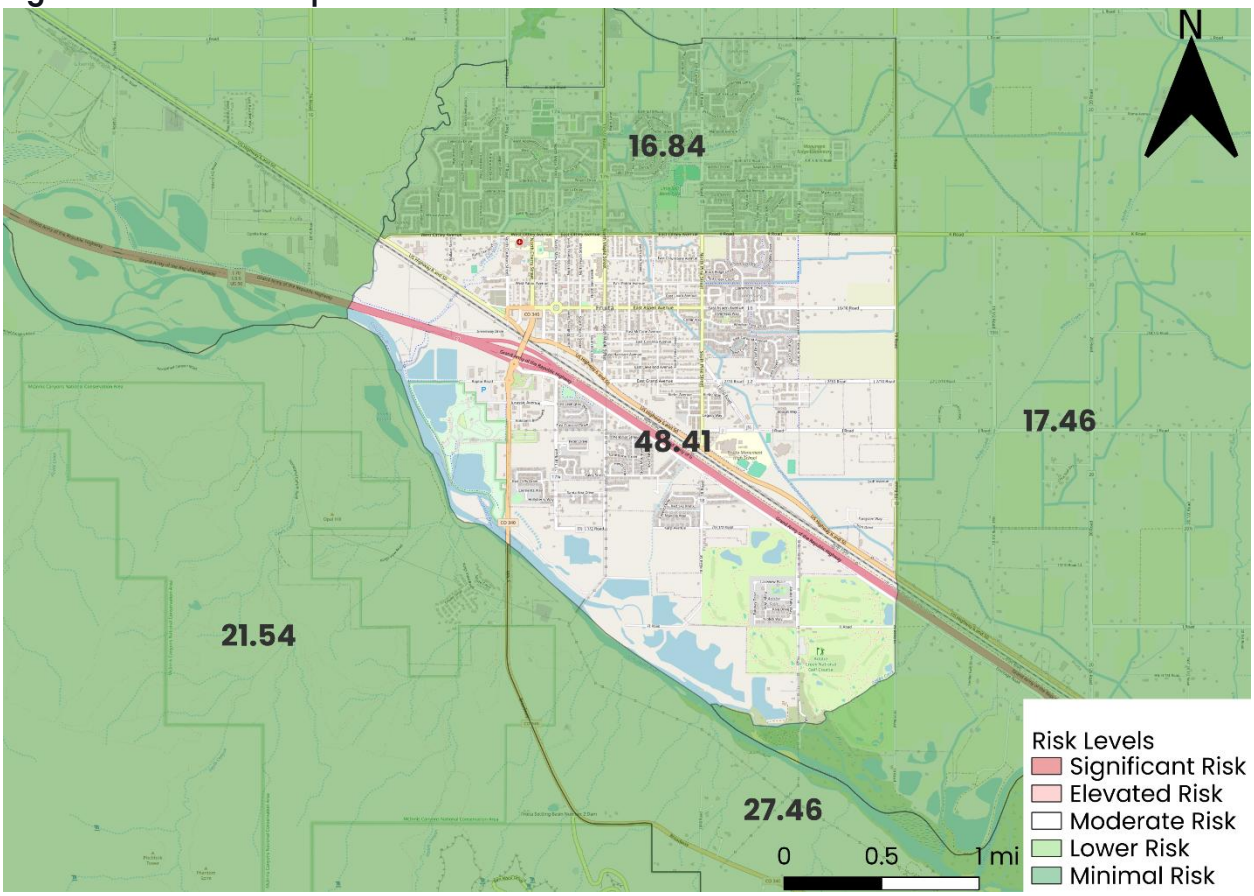
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

In Fruita, the rural surrounding Census Tracts generally exhibit a low displacement risk. However, the southern portion of the City shows a moderate displacement risk, falling in the 48th percentile. The primary contributor to this is the high rate of single-parent households in southern Fruita, which ranks in the 93rd percentile within the County. This area also experiences higher overcrowding compared to nearby tracts. According to our calculations, Fruita does not have any areas of elevated risk of displacement, reducing the need for an explicit displacement mitigation strategy.

Despite these challenges, Fruita remains better off than many densely populated towns and cities across the state. For example, Grand Junction (shown in Figure 6.41) illustrates a common pattern in dense areas, where higher concentrations of low-income families face multiple disadvantages that contribute to housing cost burdens

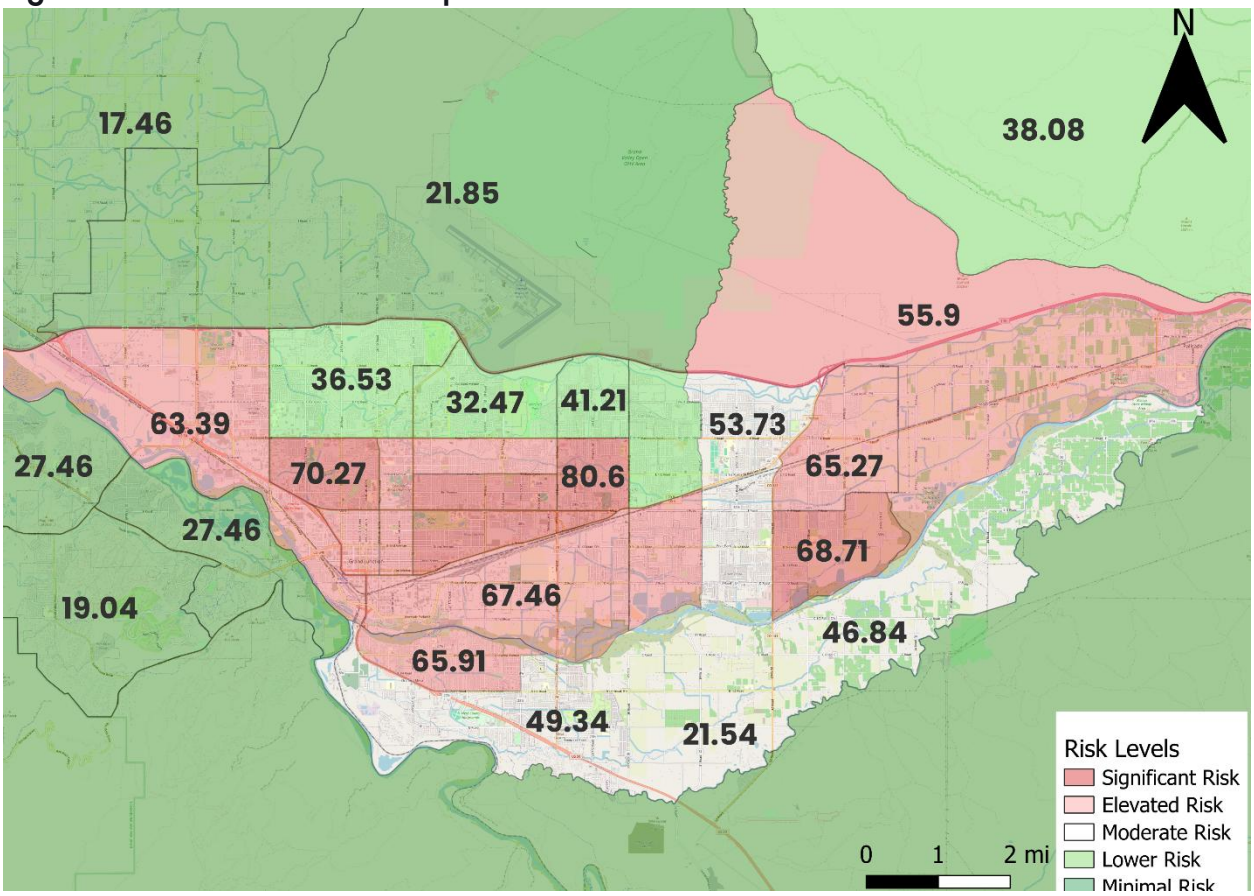
and other risks. Census tracts in Grand Junction exhibit the highest displacement rates in the County, with the inner-city areas experiencing the greatest risk.

Figure 6.40: Fruita Displacement Risks



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 6.41: Grand Junction Displacement Risks



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

7. Housing Trends

Building Types & Tenure

This chapter highlights key trends across various housing topics. Housing supply trends can be measured using multiple metrics, including 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.

Fruita's housing stock is primarily composed of detached, free-standing homes, with nearly 20 percentage points higher share of single-family detached housing than the state and national averages (Table 7.1). Detached homes are the most common housing type not only in Fruita but also across Mesa County, Colorado, and the United States. After detached homes, both Fruita and Mesa County's next most prevalent housing type is mobile/manufactured or other types. Fruita has a lower share of duplex-style (2-unit) housing compared to the state and national levels. However, it stands out with a higher proportion of 3–4-unit structures than any of the other geographies presented.

Figure 7.1 highlights the disparity in multifamily housing between Fruita and the surrounding geographies. Multifamily units comprise only 9.3% of Fruita's total housing stock, compared to over 25.0% in both state and national housing stocks.

Table 7.1: Housing Stock by Type[49]

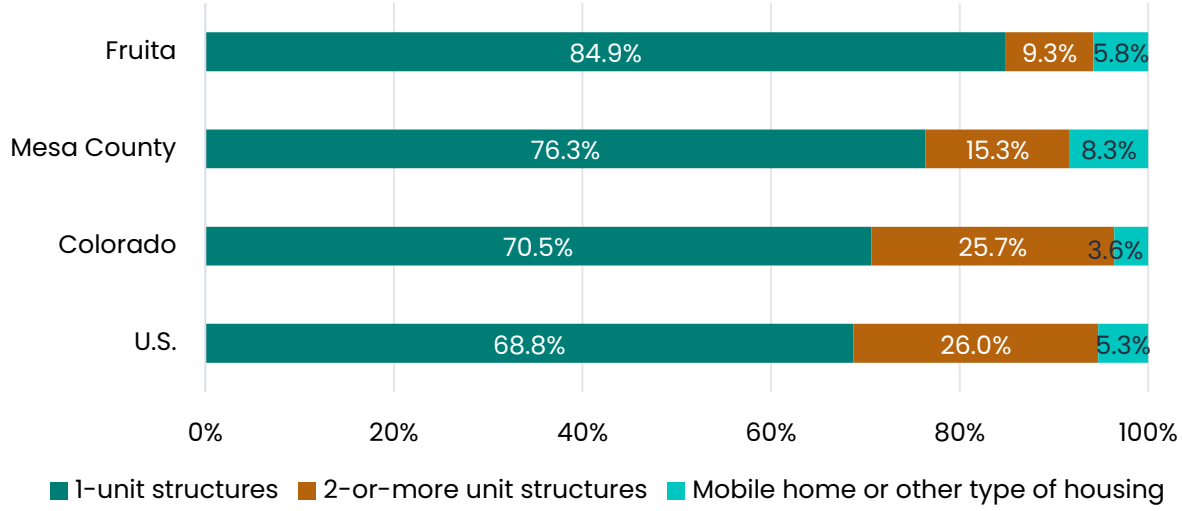
Housing Type	Fruita		Mesa County		Colorado	U.S.
	#	%	#	%	%	%
Total Households[50]	5,146	5,146	64,559	64,559	2.3M	127.48M
1, detached	4,117	80.0%	46,223	71.6%	62.9%	62.5%
1, attached	253	4.9%	3,046	4.7%	7.6%	6.3%
2 units	19	0.4%	1,233	1.9%	1.4%	3.3%
3 or 4 units	287	5.6%	3,056	4.7%	3.1%	4.2%
5 to 9 units	0	0.0%	1,615	2.5%	4.3%	4.5%
10 or more units	172	3.3%	4,023	6.2%	16.9%	14.0%
Mobile home or other type of housing	298	5.8%	5,363	8.3%	3.6%	5.3%

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

[49] The housing types are defined in accordance with the Census Bureau's "units in structure." This means data are presented in terms of the number of occupied housing units in structures of the specific size.

[50] Total households are treated the same as "occupied housing units" according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 7.1: Percent Housing by Type



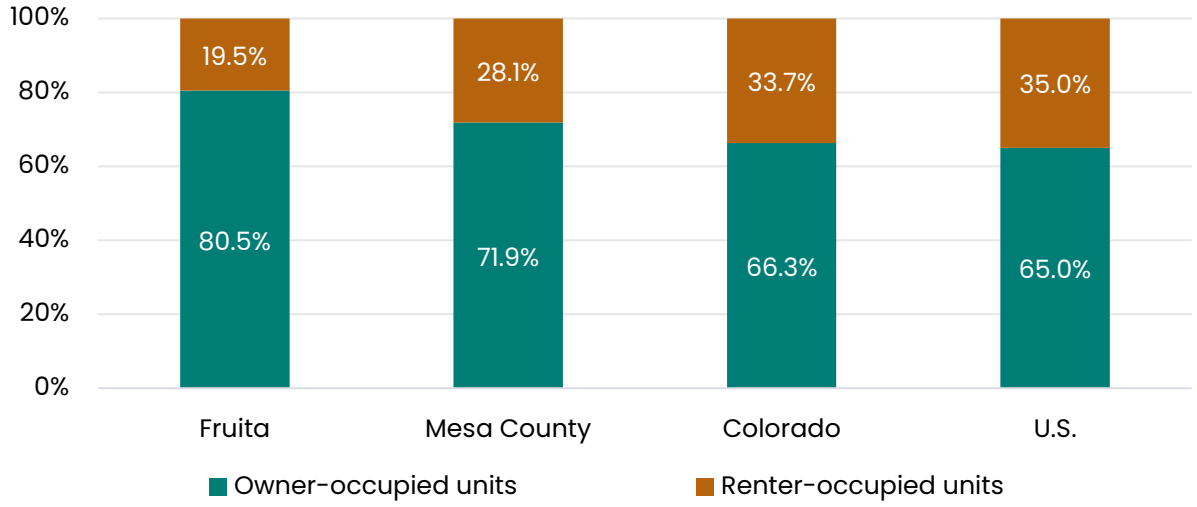
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates, S2504

Housing needs vary across age and income groups. Another way to analyze the housing supply is by examining owner-versus renter-occupancy (Figure 7.2). Nationally, homeownership and rental rates follow a roughly 65.0% to 35.0% split, a trend that Colorado generally mirrors. Mesa County exhibits slightly higher homeownership rates, but Fruita stands out over 15 percentage points higher than the national average. Only 19.5% of occupied homes in Fruita are rented, which is drastically different than most areas in the United States.

Fruita's high share of single-family detached homes, combined with its elevated homeownership rate, reflects a lack of housing diversity. This imbalance affects both affordability and accessibility, particularly for those who need smaller units or cannot afford to buy a home. A less varied housing supply may impact housing affordability through lower levels of competition as well. In general, communities with limited housing mix tend to exhibit higher home prices and foreclosure rates, as buyers overextend themselves in the absence of alternative options.[51]

[51] Chakraborty, A. & McMillan, A. "Is housing Diversity Good for Community Stability? Evidence from the Housing Crisis," Journal of Planning Education and Research 24, no. 2 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X18810787.

Figure 7.2: Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Homes



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

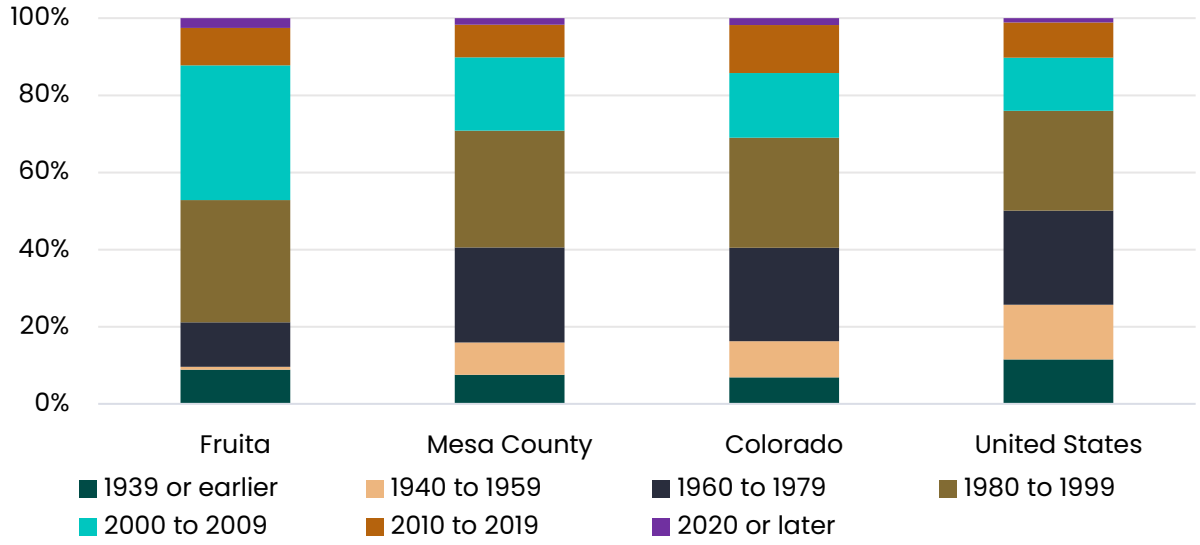
Housing Stock & Occupancy Rates

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 Figure 7.3 shows, these data also tell a broader story of past economic and development cycles.

Nationally, about half of all homes (49.9%) were built after 1980. Colorado and Mesa County skew slightly newer, and Fruita skews much newer with over three-quarters (78.9%) of the housing stock built after 1980. Regarding the oldest housing stock (built before 1939), Fruita's share is comparable to other regions, exceeding the percentages for Mesa County and Colorado but remaining lower than the national level.

However, Fruita has almost no housing stock built between 1940 and 1959 (only 0.7%) and less than half the concentration of homes built between 1960 and 1979 compared to other regions. The majority of Fruita's housing was constructed between 2000 and 2009, accounting for 35.0% of the stock. This is more than double Colorado's 16.7% and the national 9.1% for that period.

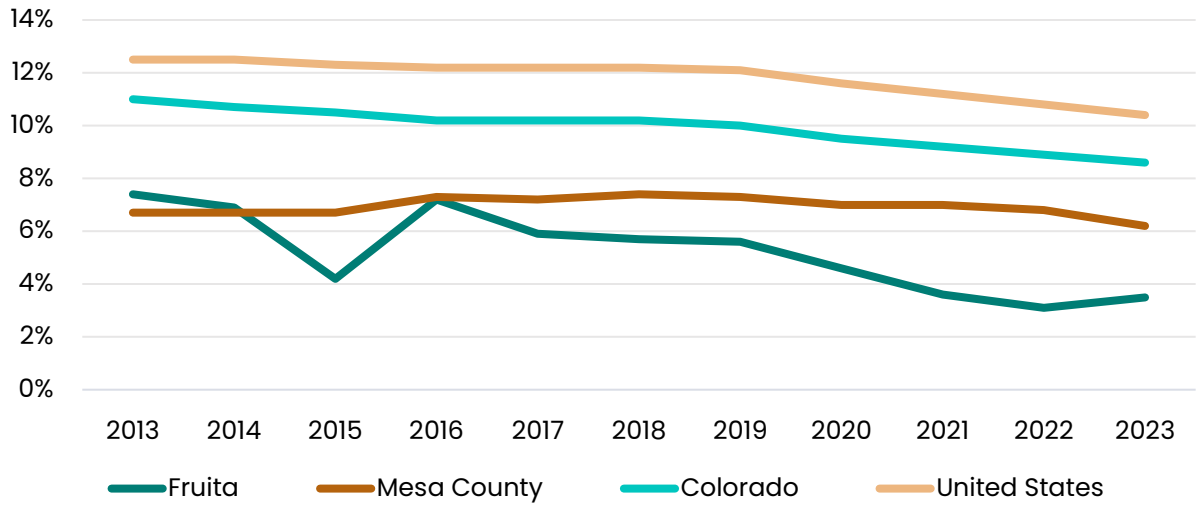
Figure 7.3: Age of Housing Stock, 2023



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

Vacancy rates reflect the balance between housing supply and demand. As shown in Figure 7.4, vacancy rates in both Fruita and Mesa County have consistently been more than two percentage points lower than the state and national levels. This gap is especially pronounced in Fruita, where vacancy rates have steadily declined from 2016 to 2022.

Figure 7.4: Vacancy Rates Over Time, 2013–2023

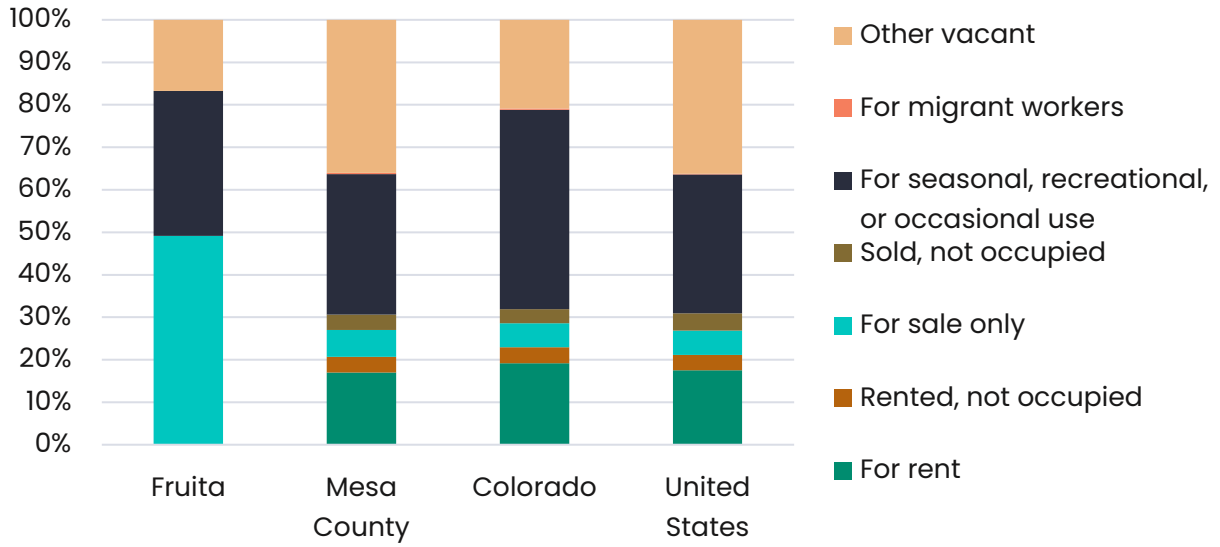


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year Estimates 2013-2023, Table DP04

Different reasons for residential vacancies also impact the housing market. Figure 7.5 compares vacancy status across Fruita, Mesa County, Colorado, and the United States.

In Fruita, two of the most common reasons for vacancies are “For sale only” and “For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.”

Figure 7.5: Vacancy Status, 2023



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

Residential Density and Overcrowding

Table 7.2 presents residential occupancy trends in Fruita for 2022 and 2023. Most residents live in homes with at least one more room than the number of occupants. However, renter-occupied units saw a significant decrease in households with 0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room, along with a smaller decline in those with 0.50 or fewer occupants per room. At the same time, there was a significant increase in the number of households with 1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room. Owner-occupied units also saw substantial growth in households with more than one occupant per room, as well as an overall increase in occupancy. In contrast, renter-occupied units experienced an 8.3% decrease in total occupancy.

For comparison, Table 7.3 presents the same data for owners and renters in Mesa County.

Table 7.2: Residence by Occupants per Room in Fruita, 2022–2023

Occupancy	2022	2023	Change	% Change
Total Occupied Housing Units	**5018**	**5146**	**128**	**2.6%**
Owner occupied	**3924**	**4143**	**219**	**5.6%**
0.50 or less occupants per room	2783	2935	152	5.5%
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	1104	1147	43	3.9%
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	37	44	7	18.9%
1.51 to 2.00 occupants per room	0	17	17	100.0%
2.01 or more occupants per room	0	0	0	N/A

Renter occupied	1094	1003	(91)	(8.3%)
0.50 or less occupants per room	651	627	(24)	(3.7%)
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	359	277	(82)	(22.8%)
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	84	99	15	17.9%
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 7.3: Residence by Occupants per Room in Mesa County, 2022–2023

Occupancy	2022	2023	Change	% Change
Total Occupied Housing Units	63,098	64,559	1,461	2.3%
Owner occupied	45,317	46,413	1,096	2.4%
0.50 or less occupants per room	35,711	36,589	878	2.5%
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	8,774	8,849	75	0.9%
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	742	879	137	18.5%
1.51 to 2.00 occupants per room	75	81	6	8.0%
2.01 or more occupants per room	15	15	0	0.0%
Renter occupied	17,781	18,146	365	2.1%
0.50 or less occupants per room	12,312	12,802	490	4.0%
0.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	4,987	4,950	(37)	(0.7%)
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room	290	316	26	9.0%
1.51 to 2.00 occupants per room	174	72	(102)	(58.6%)
2.01 or more occupants per room	18	6	(12)	(66.7%)

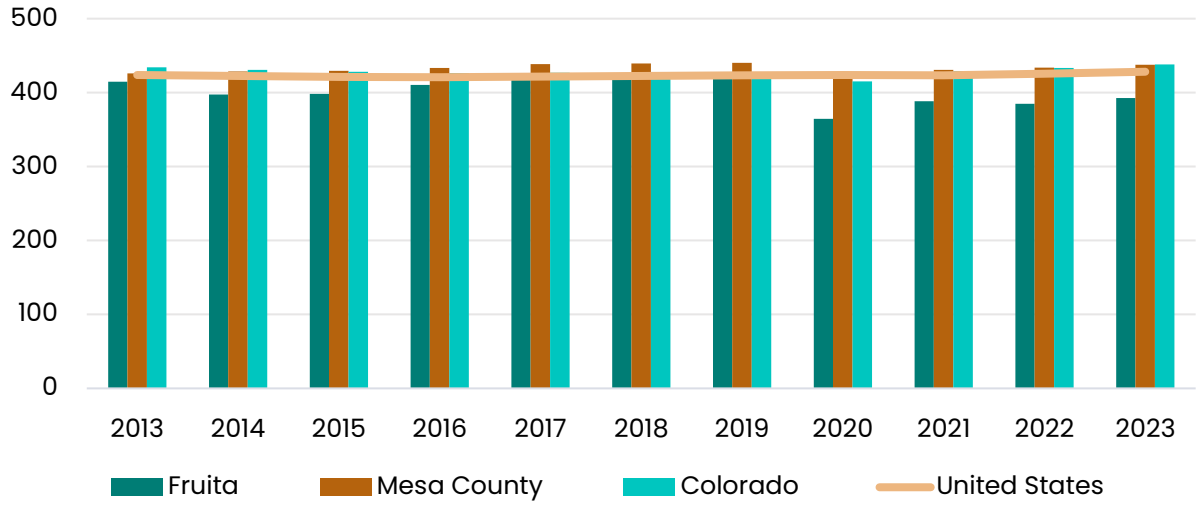
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 and 2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B25014

Residences to Employment Metrics

Housing units per 1,000 residents is a useful measure of housing supply and availability. In Fruita, this metric remained relatively stable from 2013 to 2019, with a slight dip in 2014, followed by a more significant drop in 2020. It then steadily increased over the following years and currently stands just under 400 units per 1,000 residents. Mesa County and Colorado showed similar trends but consistently maintained higher rates than Fruita throughout the period. The United States overall has remained relatively stable over the past decade.

As shown in Figure 7.6, Fruita's housing units per 1,000 residents are lower not only compared to the county, state and nation but also in absolute terms. A lower value typically signals a housing shortage. One factor contributing to Fruita's low rate (390 units per 1,000 residents) is its recent population growth. According to Table 6.1, Fruita's population has grown faster than the national population, and if housing production does not keep pace, the City may face increased housing shortages and affordability challenges.

Figure 7.6: Housing Units per 1,000 Residents, 2013–2023

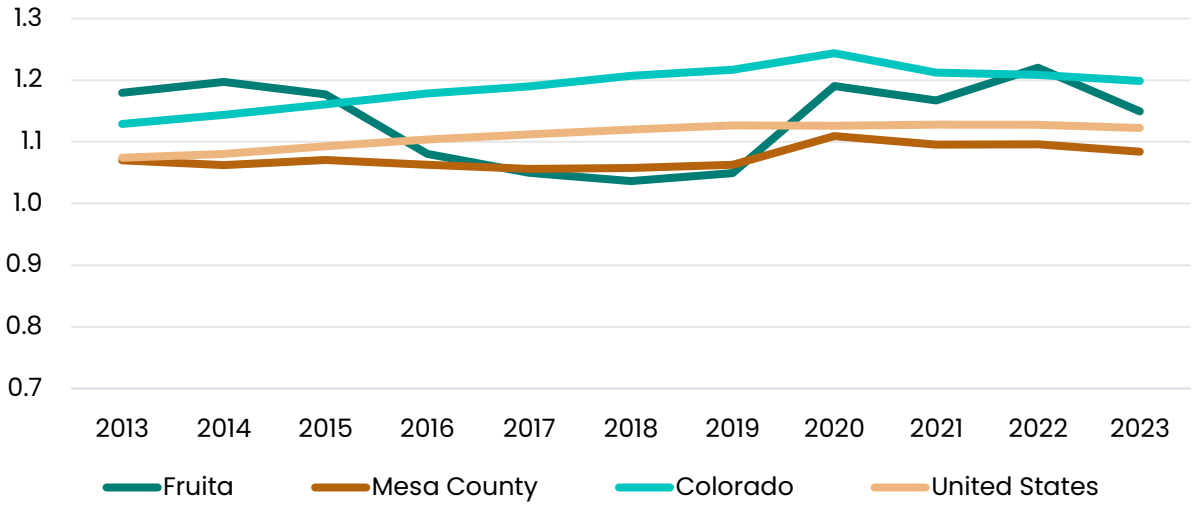


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2023 5-Year Estimates, Tables B25001 and DP05

The jobs-to-housing ratio is another key metric for assessing housing availability (Figure 7.7). In 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 often a sign of a housing shortage. Notably, the ratios in both Fruita and Mesa County have also been above 1.0 since at least 2013.

Fruita's ratio experienced a pronounced decline from 2016 to 2019 due to lower employment numbers but has since rebounded to exceed those of Mesa County and the nation. As population growth continues, employment typically increases as well, particularly in a growing city like Fruita. If this growth trend persists, housing production will need to accelerate to prevent further challenges related to availability and affordability.

Figure 7.7: Jobs-to-Housing Ratio, 2013–2023



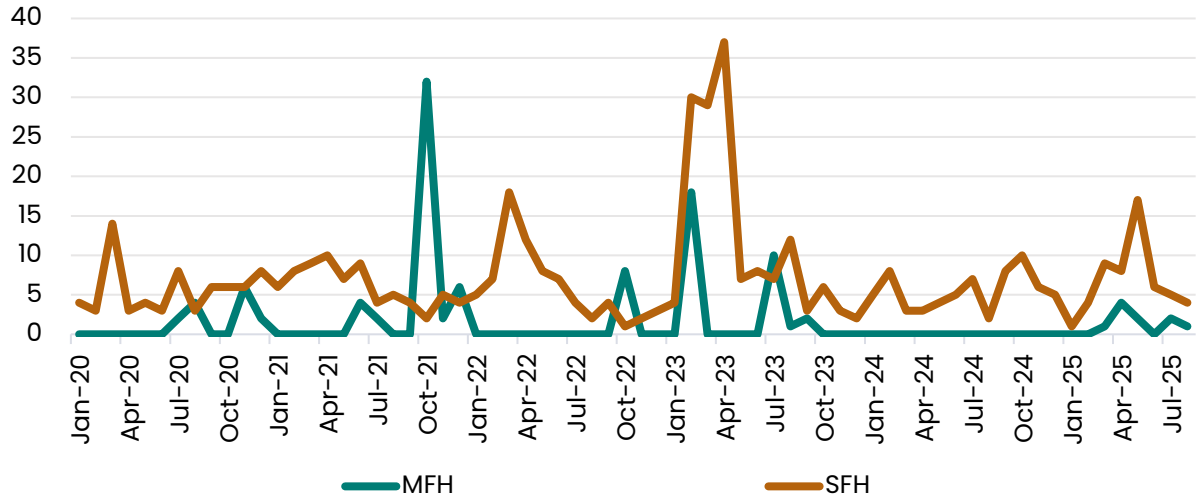
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2023 5-Year Estimates, Tables B25001 and DP03

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. Additionally, housing production in both Fruita and the broader Mesa County region influences affordability within the City.

Figure 7.8 shows housing permits in Fruita from the previous five years. Overall, newly issued permits have heavily favored single-family homes (SFH) with at least one new permit being issued per month, but often many more. Meanwhile, multi-family home (MFH) permitting has remained relatively low during the same period. MFH received a boost near the end of 2021 with the addition of over 30 new apartment units. In the beginning of 2023, both MFH and SFH permitting spiked up to 18 and 37 permits, respectively. This trend did not last though, with production of both returning to previous levels by July 2023. From October 2023 to April 2025, no new MFH were permitted.

Figure 7.8: New Residential Housing Permits in Fruita, 2020-2025



Source: City of Fruita, 2025

Table 7.4 displays the permitted housing units by unit type and count. As also shown above, single-family dwellings are the dominant housing type in Fruita, outpacing other units by a significant margin each year. In fact, 75.3% of new units permitted from 2020 through July 2025 were single-family dwellings. Duplex units have been the most consistent other style of build, but production slowed in 2021, falling from 14 units in a single year to zero by 2023. New apartment complexes were built in 2021 and 2023, although each complex built was relatively small compared to many apartment complexes across the nation. The largest complex built in Fruita was 18 units in 2023.

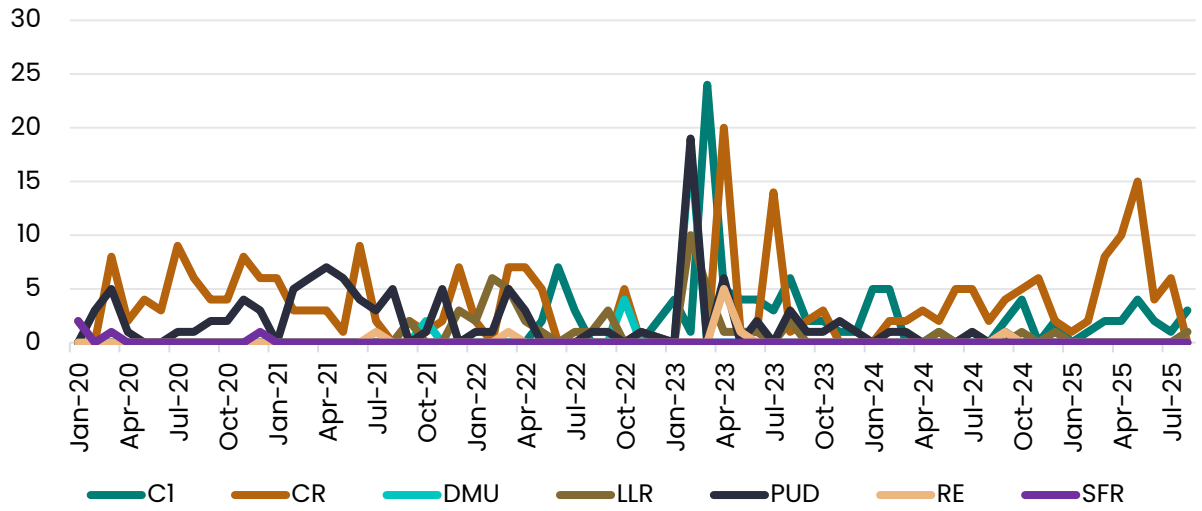
Table 7.4: New Permits by Unit Type, 2020-2025

Dwelling Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Single-family dwelling	67	57	66	121	62	46
Duplex	14	14	4	0	0	8
Townhouse	0	0	0	21	0	6
Additional dwelling unit	0	0	0	3	0	1
Mobile Home	1	1	0	6	3	1
Modular home	0	0	0	0	1	1
Multiple dwelling	0	0	0	10	0	1
Quadplex	0	0	4	0	0	0
Apartment Building	0	32	0	18	0	0
Manufactured Home	0	15	4	0	0	0

Source: City of Fruita, 2025

New residential permits by zone in Fruita since 2020 are shown in Figure 7.9. Permitting in Fruita's residential zones has varied greatly over the last five years. Commercial Mixed Use (C1) and Community Residential (CR) have taken many new housing permits, specifically in the early 2020s, although the Planned Unit Development zone (PUD) also saw a high number of permits in that period. Production across all zones peaked in early 2023, which was also observed in the total permit counts shown earlier in this section. Overall, housing permitting in Fruita's residential zones has favored many different zones at one time or another, and the distribution across zones has been fairly even outside of the early 2020s.

Figure 7.9: Housing Permits by Zone, 2020-2025

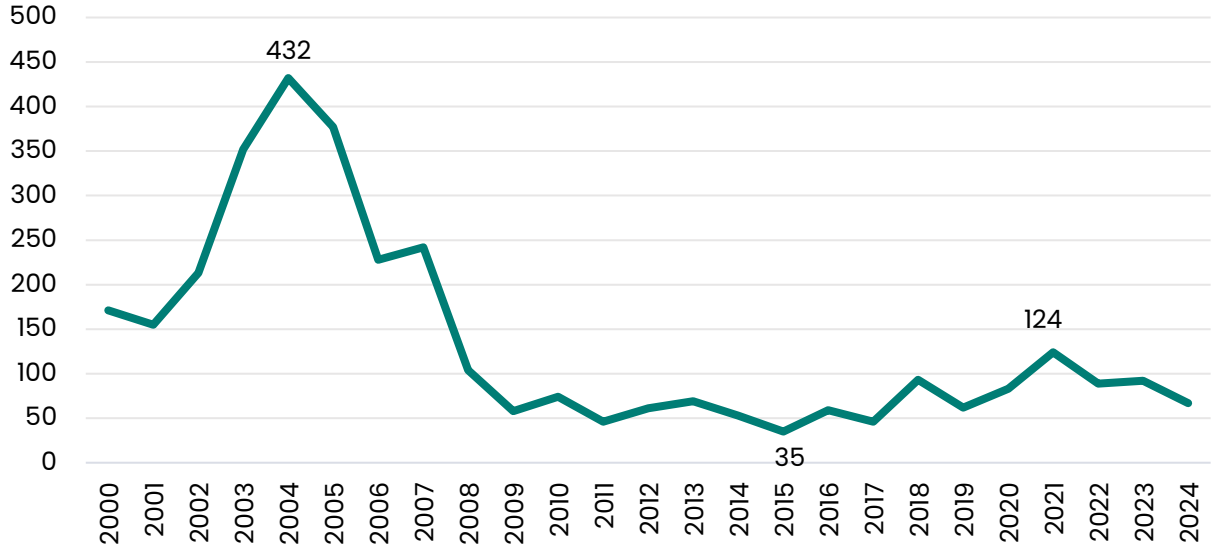


Source: City of Fruita, 2025

Figure 7.10 shows long-term housing production in Fruita.[52] Figure 7.11 displays the 10-year trend, which is notably lower in production than in the preceding decade. Production was at its highest in the 2000s, with three consecutive years climbing to over 300 units. The rate of production slipped in 2007, decreasing more than 50.0% in 2008, which could possibly be attributed to the recession. However, production never rebounded, and in the last 10 years, production peaked in 2021 with 124 new dwellings in the City.

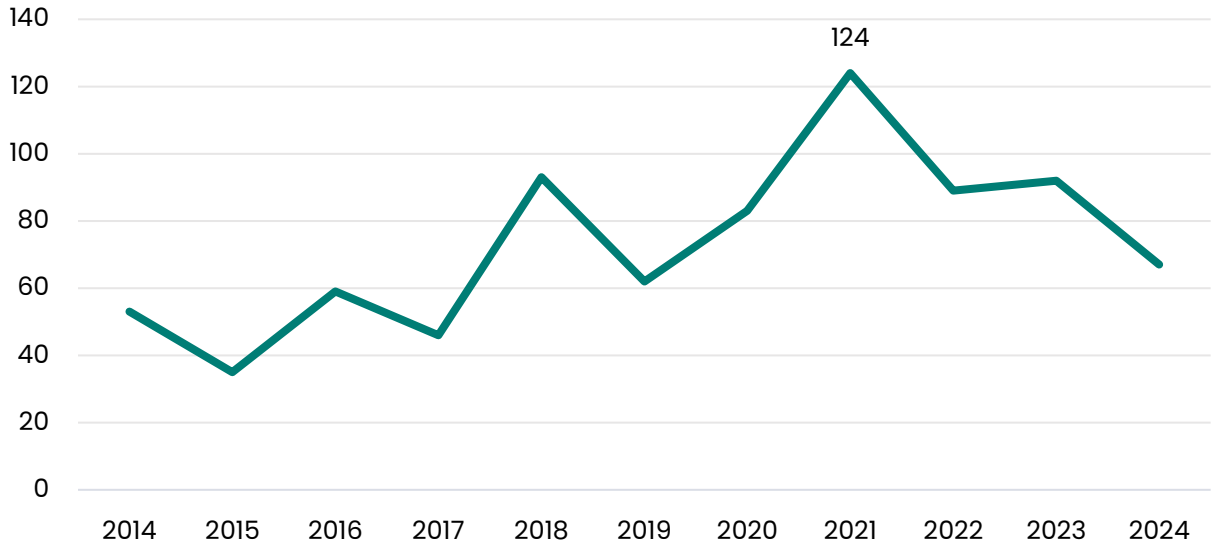
[52] Figure 7.10 and Figure 7.11 show physical production totals in Fruita. These homes have started and/or finished production. Permits do not necessarily correlate 1:1 with housing production. Also, manual tabulation between production and permit data has increased the likelihood of data errors.

Figure 7.10: New Residential Dwelling Unit Production by Year, 2000 - 2024



Source: City of Fruita, 2025

Figure 7.11: New Residential Dwelling Unit Production by Year, 2014 – 2024



Source: City of Fruita, 2025

Planned Developments and Redevelopments

Planned developments and redevelopments 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 City of Fruita, there are a litany of projects that are planned and in progress.

West Canyon: The West Canyon development is a single-family home (SFH) detached development with a few buildings that will be two-unit SFH attached units (similar to a duplex). The development is on the corner of Pine St and K Road, and will include about 50 units over approximately nine acres. As of our assessment, West Canyon is under construction with a handful of units nearly completed.

Rose Creek: Rose Creek is a subdivision going in just north of K Road and west of 19 Road. This development is planned to have mostly SFH attached units with SFH detached units on the outer edges of the property. Across about 20 acres, the development is expected to have around 130 total units. Additionally, the development may end up being mostly rental units for the community.

Prop 123, Land Banking Property: One planned development for the City is an additional affordable housing project. The City of Fruita has acquired a Prop 123 land banking grant and plans to use a portion of the funds to purchase a property across from the Fruita Mews development. In coordination with an affordable housing developer, the project is expected to have around 80 units targeted at 30-120% of area median income (AMI).

Copper Creek West: The Copper Creek West development is a planned and in-progress housing project being constructed by Copper Creek Builders. The developer has done work in the Valley previously, specifically in Grand Junction with its Copper Creek development. Being further west in the Valley in Fruita deemed their current project as Copper Creek West.

The project is a multi-filing project with Filing 1 under construction, Filing 2 in civil construction (infrastructure and utilities), and Filing 3 under review by the City. For this development, Copper Creek is utilizing the City's density bonus to allow smaller lot sizes in order to create their unique community feel. In total, the project will be around 19 acres with approximately 111 units.

Iron Wheel: The Iron Wheel subdivision is a large, homogeneous, SFH detached development. These homes will follow the traditional SFH detached subdivision style that is popular in the area. This project is also multi-filing with Filing 1 complete, Filing 2 under construction, and Filings 3 & 4 to follow for review after completion of Filing 2. In total, all Iron Wheel filings will include 271 units when completed.

Aspen Residences Multi-Family Development: The Aspen Residences are an apartment complex that was recently completed west of North Coulson St and north of West Aspen Ave. The site used to be the location of a manufactured home park, but was purchased and is in progress of redevelopment for more apartment buildings and townhomes. The property resides in DMU zoning, allowing for higher density.

When fully developed, the property is expected to host 88 total units. One 24-unit building is currently completed with residents. However, a second 24-unit building is planned along with 16 townhome units. Due to relatively lower demand for apartments in Fruita overall, the project is expected to take a bit longer to account for unit absorption in the market.

The Oaks Redevelopment: The redevelopment project of The Oaks is a great example of reusing community assets. Previously a 92-unit assisted living facility, the property had gone vacant. Now, a collaboration between affordable housing developer Headwaters Housing Partners, Family Health West, and the City of Fruita is resulting in a largely affordable project. The development is expected to include 62 units targeting 50-100% AMI for residents, and is being completed with no state or federal dollars setting restrictions.

Cost of Construction

Construction costs are a key factor in assessing the housing landscape. However, data on building costs for different housing types are limited. To address this, we analyzed RSMeans data for 1,800 square-foot, 1.5 story single-family homes with wood siding and frame construction, built by non-union contractors. These cost comparisons include locations across Colorado. The RSMeans database is updated quarterly, tracking both the City Cost Index (CCI) and key building material costs.

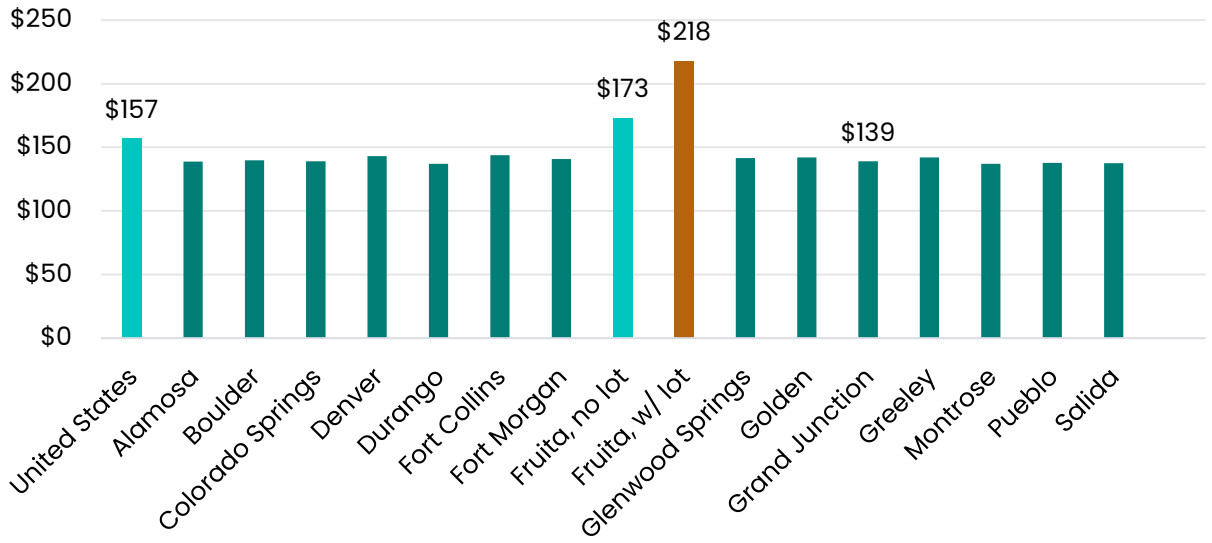
The outcomes of the RSMeans data for an average 1.5 story single-family home, are shown in Figure 7.12. In Montrose, the average cost per square foot is approximately $137, the lowest noted in the state of available places in RSMeans. Colorado's highest rate is $144 per square foot in Fort Collins.

Throughout the course of the project, we were able to obtain estimates for the City of Fruita specifically from a local developer through our project steering committee. According to a development for CWI Homes, the total cost (not including lot cost) was $310,125. The home was on par with our RSMeans comparison, as the total livable area was 1,790 square feet. At this square footage, the cost per square foot was approximately $173, higher than the U.S. average of $157 according to RSMeans.

If the lot cost were included, the cost per square foot could be around $218. The lot cost in our calculation here is between $70,000 and $90,000, according to our real estate source. The cost per square foot estimate here may even be low, as City planning staff

see the typical residential lot to be closer to $100,000. At $218 per square foot, the cost of construction is becoming a bigger barrier to housing affordability.

Figure 7.12: Cost per Square Foot for an Average Quality, 1.5 Story Home, 2025



Source: RS Means, Square Footage Estimator, 2025 Quarter 2; CWI Homes

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 following section highlights key real estate market metrics for Fruita in comparison to other regions over recent years.

In Fruita, the two largest shares of owner-occupied homes fall within the $300,000–$400,000 range and the $400,000–$500,000 range (each representing roughly 30.0% of the total). These ranges are lower than the state level, where 35.3% of homes are valued between $500,000 and $750,000. Mesa County shows a less concentrated distribution but still has $300,000-$400,000 and $400,000-$500,000 as its most common value ranges (Table 7.5).

Table 7.5: Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Value and Median Home Values, 2024

Home Value	Fruita	Mesa County	Colorado	United States
<$50K	1.9%	3.6%	2.5%	4.7%
$50K–$100K	0.4%	1.9%	1.6%	5.4%
$100K–$150K	1.3%	1.7%	1.2%	5.9%
$150K–$200K	1.9%	4.5%	1.8%	8.0%
$200K–$250K	8.5%	8.9%	2.5%	8.6%
$250K–$300K	9.6%	10.8%	3.2%	8.6%
$300K–$400K	30.6%	21.9%	10.0%	16.1%
$400K–$500K	30.0%	17.5%	15.5%	12.0%

$500K–$750K	11.3%	16.7%	35.3%	16.6%
$750K–$1M	1.4%	7.4%	15.1%	7.3%
$1M–$1.5M	1.8%	3.3%	7.0%	3.8%
$1.5M–$2M	0.1%	0.4%	2.1%	1.5%
$2M+	1.2%	1.3%	2.2%	1.7%
Median Home Value	**$386,475**	**$384,305**	**$582,777**	**$355,577**
Average Home Value	**$428,570**	**$463,149**	**$651,480**	**$459,105**

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

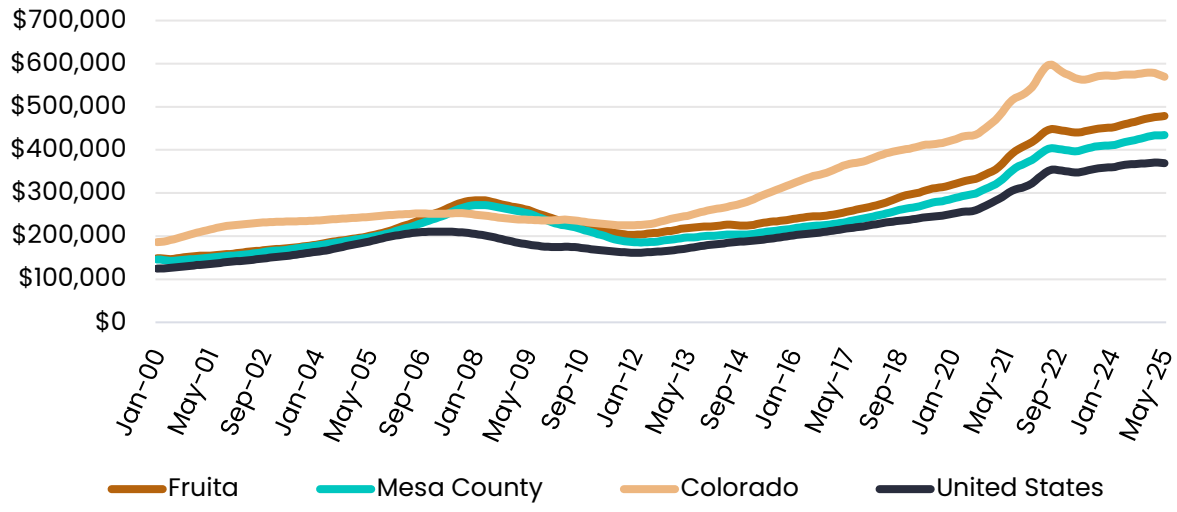
Single-Family Home Value Trends

Figure 7.13 and Table 7.6 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, it represents 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 Fruita to those in Mesa County, Colorado, and the United States. Following the Great Recession, home values declined from roughly 2009 to 2012. Since then, Fruita's home values have risen, with the sharpest increase occurring from 2020 to 2022, and continuing upward to reach $477,000 in 2025.

Although homes in Fruita are valued almost $100,000 less than the state average, they remain about $100,000 higher than the national average.

Figure 7.13: Single-Family Home Zillow Home Value Index, 2000–2025



Source: Zillow ZHVI, 2025

Table 7.6 presents dollar growth rates over the past 12 months (using May 2025 as the reference point), along with compound annual growth rates (CAGR) over the last three, five, and 10 years.

In dollar terms, Fruita's home values have grown much faster than the County, state, and nation, increasing by $19,000 in the past year alone. In percentage terms, Fruita has also outpaced the state and nation, though the gap is smaller when viewed over the three-, five- and ten-year periods.

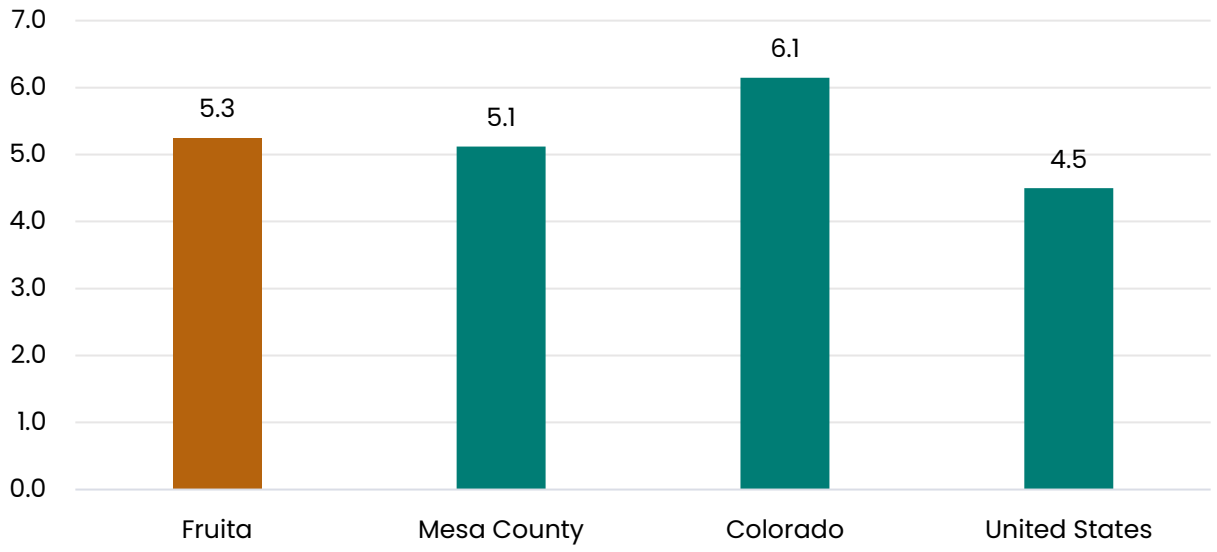
Table 7.6: Home Value Growth, 2015–2025

Region	ZHVI	Dollar Growth Past 12 Months	10-Yr CAGR	5-Yr CAGR	3-Yr CAGR
Fruita	$478,636	$19,023	7.5%	7.8%	2.7%
Mesa County	$434,390	$16,131	7.5%	8.1%	2.9%
Colorado	$569,282	($5,786)	6.7%	5.7%	(1.3%)
United States	$369,282	$3,588	6.7%	7.5%	2.1%

Source: Zillow ZHVI, 2025

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. Figure 7.14 indicates that Fruita's ratio is higher than the United States, meaning that homes in Fruita are less affordable than those in the United States overall. This ratio helps illustrate how many years of income an average family would need to purchase a median-priced home if paying in cash with no financing. In Fruita, that figure is over five times the median income, compared to about four and a half times for the median U.S. household. The higher the ratio, the less affordable the housing market.

Figure 7.14: Median Home Value to Median Household Income Ratio, 2024



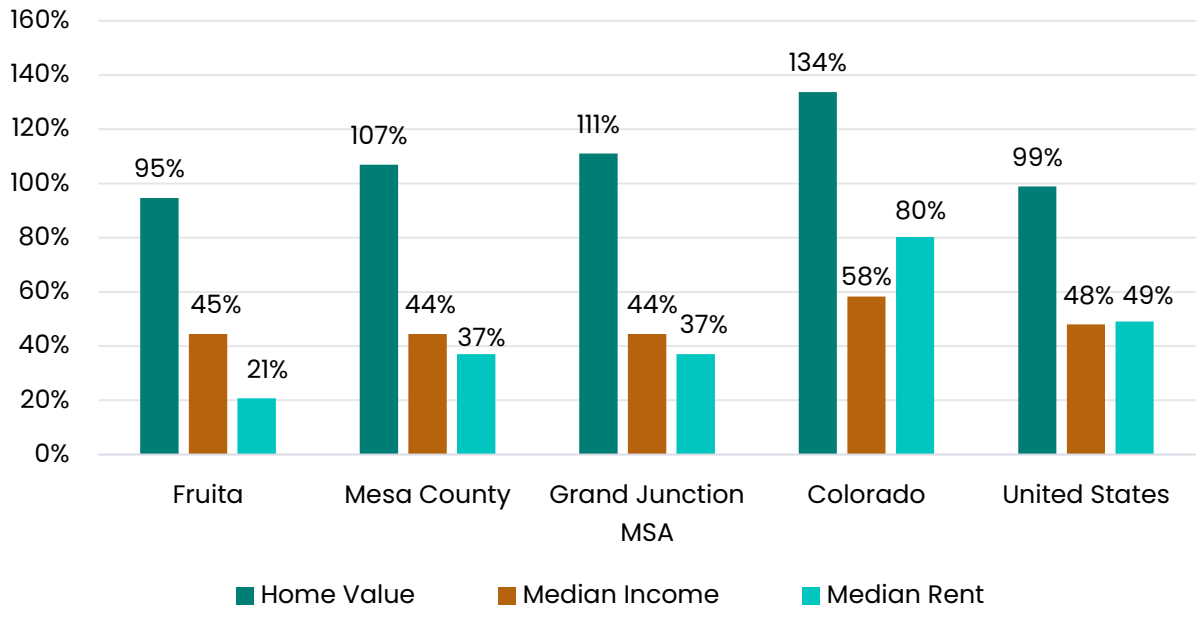
Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Figure 7.15 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. Based on mortgage data from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac since the 1970s, the index tracks changes in 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 Fruita, home values have appreciated 50 percentage points more than median income over the past decade. This gap is comparable to the national average, where home values have outpaced incomes by 51 percentage points. Colorado has seen the largest disparity among the comparison regions, with a 76-point difference.

A larger gap between home price appreciation and income growth indicates a rising barrier to homeownership. In Fruita and the surrounding region, 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 mobility.

Figure 7.15: Percent Change in Home Values, Median Income, and Median Rent, 2013 – 2023



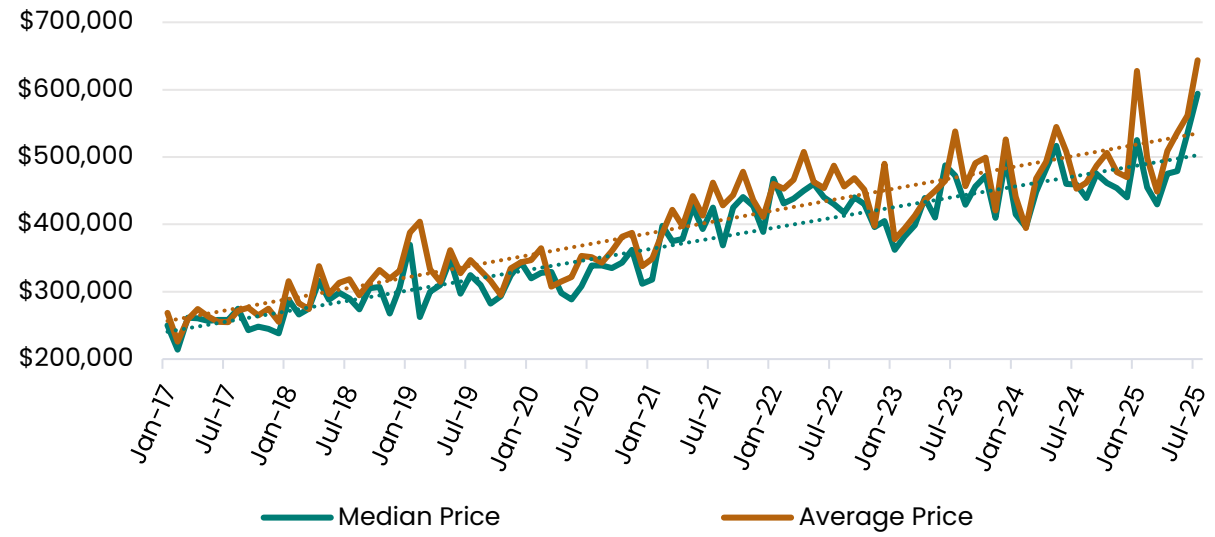
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5-Year Estimates, Tables DP03 and DP04, FHFA Home Price Index

Trends of Homes on the Market

Average and median home price trends of homes sold in Fruita are displayed in Figure 7.16. As of July 2025, the median home in Fruita sold for $594,000. This is a 138% increase

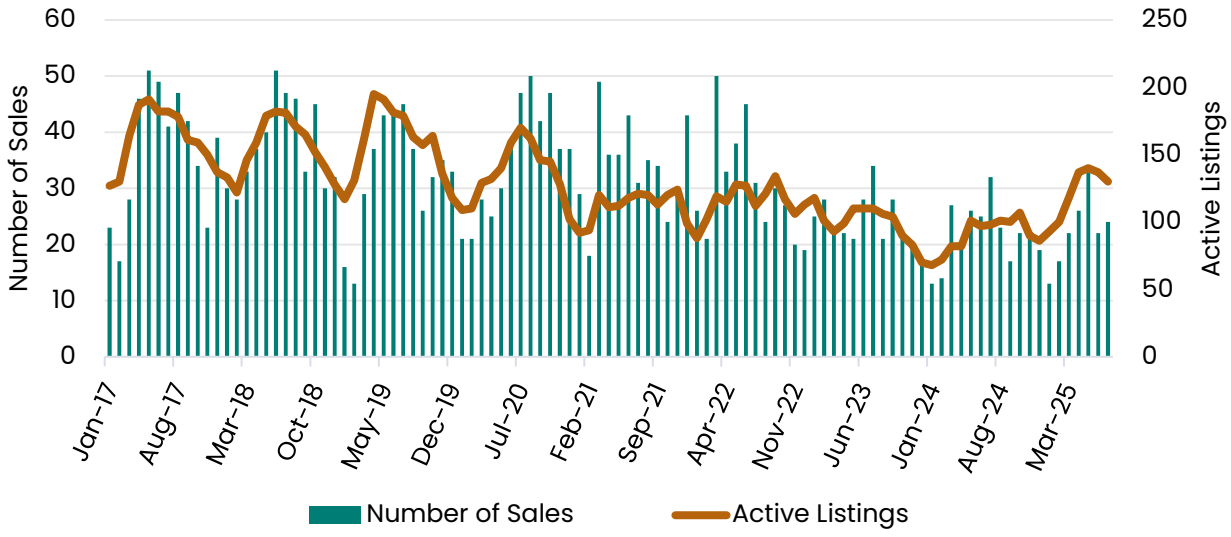
over the period from January 2017 to January 2025, and an 86% increase since just January 2020. Both the average and median home values have steadily trended upward over the past eight years, while the number of houses sold has trended downwards. Figure 7.17 also presents the number of sales over time as well as active listings.

Figure 7.16: Monthly Home Sale Price in Fruita, 2017-2025



Source: Grand Junction Area Realtor Association and Realty One Group Western Slope, 2025

Figure 7.17: Active Listings and Total Number of Home Sales in Fruita, 2017-2025



Source: Grand Junction Realtor Association and Realty One Group Western Slope, 2025

Table 7.7 also shows these trends between 2024 and 2025. Both average and median home prices have increased significantly, as well as the supply in the market. Fruita went from 3.2 months of supply of houses on the market to 4.8 months.

Table 7.7: Residential Home Sales in Fruita

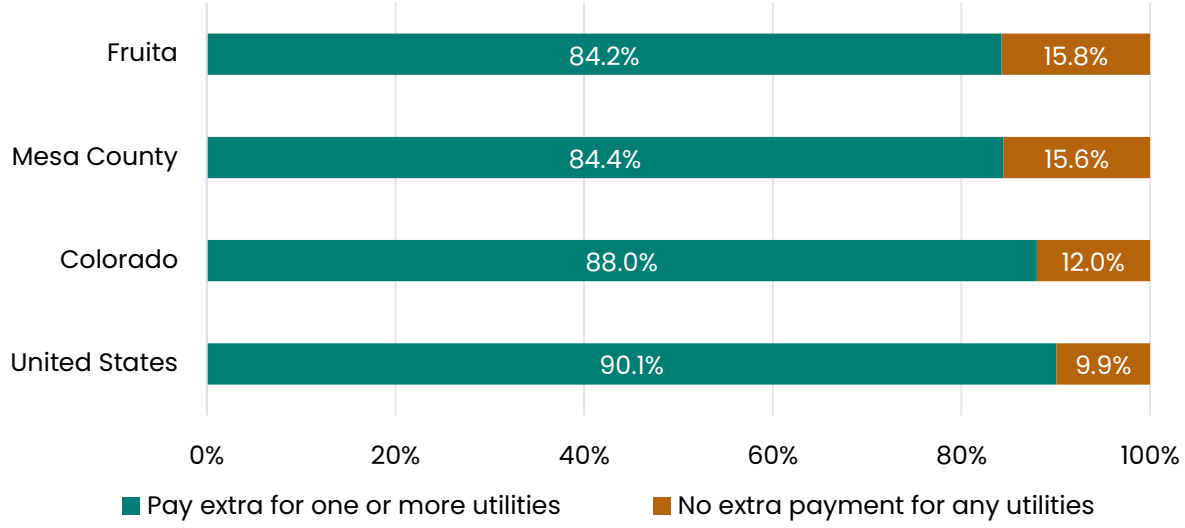
Metric	Feb 2024 3-Month Average	Feb 2025 3-Month Average	Change	% Change
Avg Home Sale Price	$434,551	$524,969	$90,418	20.8%
Median Home Sale Price	$419,650	$469,854	$50,204	12.0%
Active Listings	74	104	30	40.1%
New Listings	21	33	12	54.7%
Months of Supply	3.2	4.8	1.5	47.0%

Source: Grand Junction Area Realtor Association and Realty One Group Western Slope, 2025

Household Utility Burden

Utility costs can be a significant burden for households, whether they rent or own. Many renters pay for one or more utilities separately from their rent. As shown in Figure 7.18, the share of such households in Fruita is slightly lower than the state and national averages. However, even when utilities are included in rent, renters still cover the cost indirectly, which may push the effective burden higher.

Figure 7.18: Renter-Occupied Homes that Pay Extra for 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 7.8 and Figure 7.19 illustrate household energy and transportation costs in Mesa County, as measured by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

In terms of housing energy burden, Mesa County ranks low compared to the national average. This metric includes the costs of electricity, gas, and other fuels such as oil and wood.

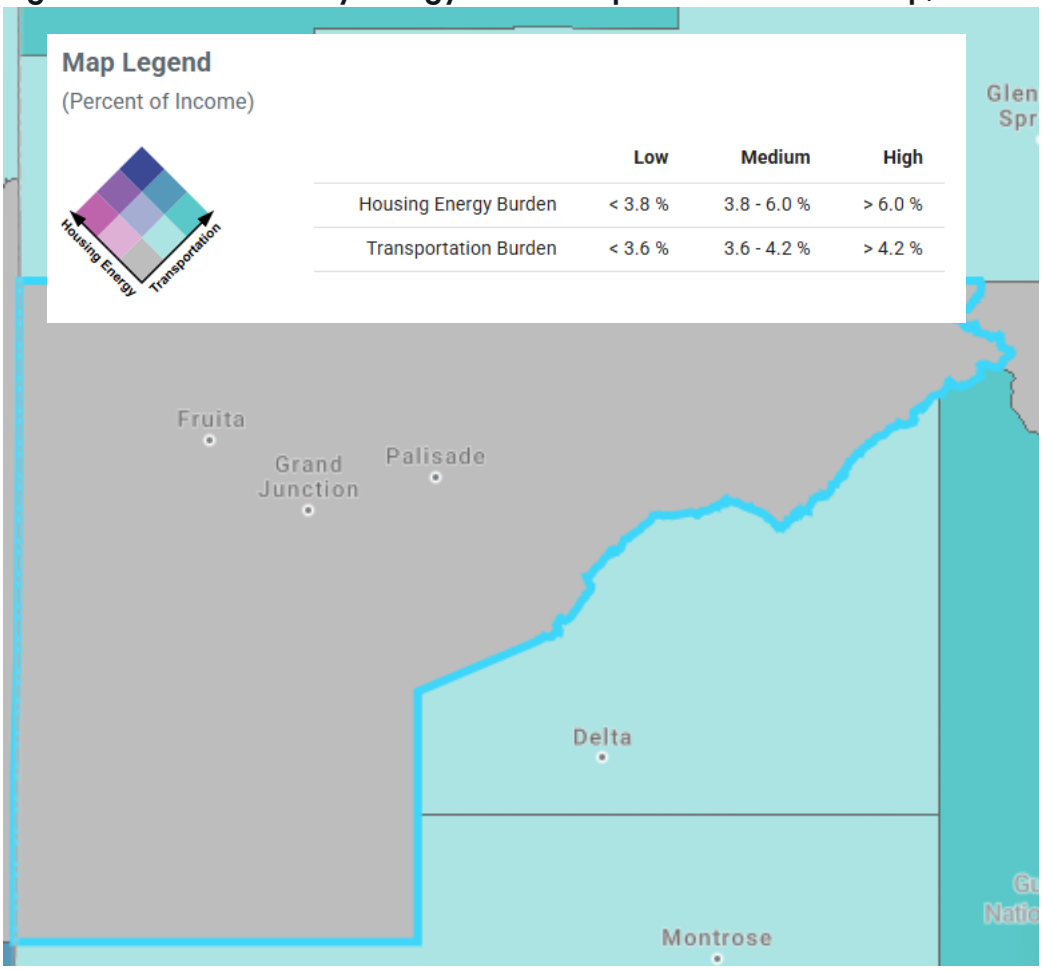
Considering transportation burden, Mesa County also ranks low at 3.24%. This metric accounts for annual household miles traveled, stock-weighted fuel efficiency (miles per gallon), and fuel prices.

Table 7.8: Mesa County Energy and Transportation Burden, 2020

Category	Value	Range
Housing Energy Burden	2.26%	Low
Transportation Burden	3.24%	Low
Total Energy Burden	5.50%	--

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

Figure 7.19: Mesa County Energy and Transportation Burden Map, 2020



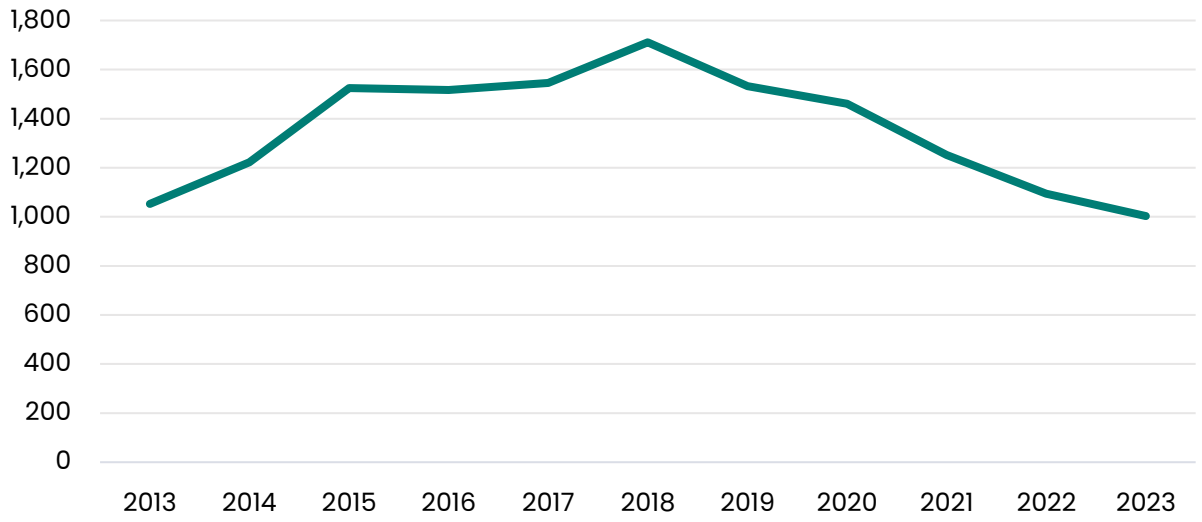
Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), State and Local Planning for Energy (SLOPE) Platform, 2020

Rent Trends

Generally speaking, there are fewer metrics available on rental markets, as it is more difficult for federal agencies to track. For-profit data providers do not have as much incentive to collect and report such information. However, there are several sources that use proprietary methods to produce reports on rental market conditions. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) also tracks rental prices to produce Fair Market Rents (FMRs) that must be used in subsidized housing built with HUD funding.

Figure 7.20 shows the trend in renter-occupied units in Fruita from 2013 to 2023. After increasing from 2013 to 2018, the number has declined to 1,003 in 2023. This reduction in rental housing stock could signal a problem for households in terms of housing affordability, as renting is often an entry point on the housing ladder. Rental options allow households to build savings and transition into homeownership, so a sustained decline could limit opportunities for those seeking to enter the market.

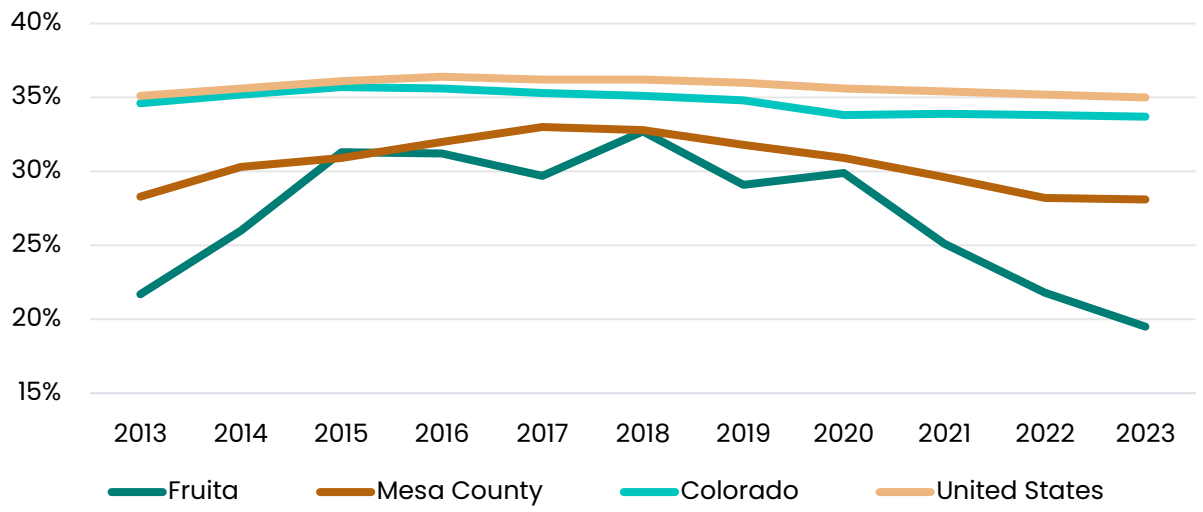
Figure 7.20: Fruita Renter-Occupied Units, 2013–2023



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

The share of renter-occupied units is depicted in Figure 7.21. This offers a useful basis for comparing Fruita's rental housing with other regions. This share rose to a peak in 2018 before declining to 19.5% in 2023, mirroring the trend in total rental units. Mesa County has followed a similar but more gradual trajectory, while Colorado and the United States have remained relatively stable, with only a slight decrease over the same period.

Figure 7.21: Renter-Occupied Unit Share of Total Occupied Units, 2013–2023



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

Though data are generally limited on rental prices, the HUD Small Area FMRs (SAFMR) generally track the same trends as private market rents, as they represent the 40th-percentile rent for standard-quality units in the FMR area. Table 7.9 shows SAFMR values for the Fruita's 81521 zip code area. Rents for all unit sizes have risen by roughly 30% or more since 2019. One-bedroom units have seen the sharpest increase, up 38.0% over the period.

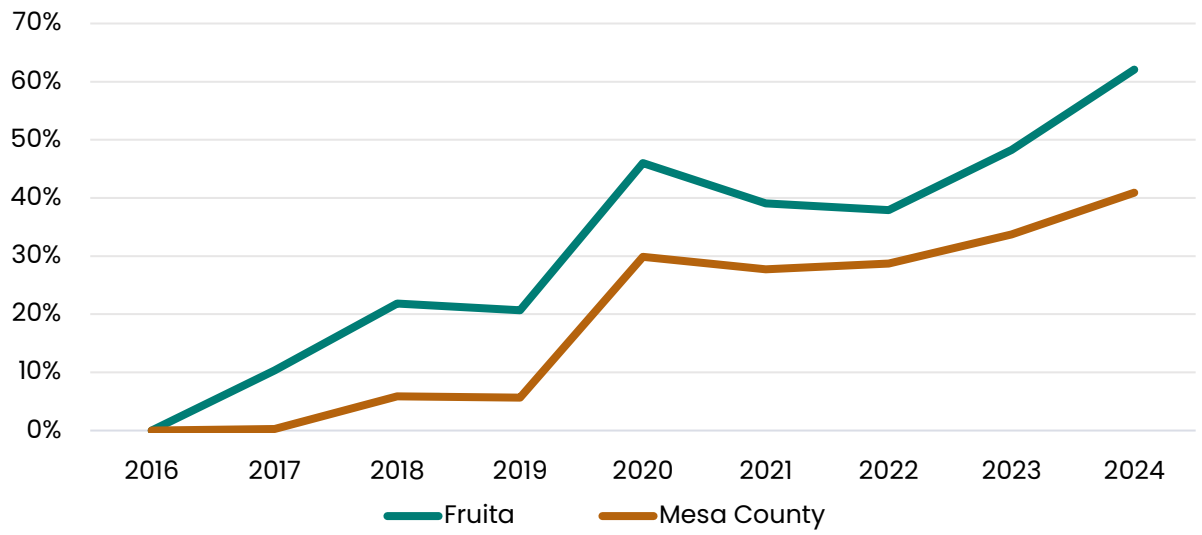
Table 7.9: HUD SAFMR Trends, 2019–2024, Zip Code 81521

Unit Size	2019	2024	Change	% Change
Efficiency/studio	$730	$960	$230	31.5%
1-bedroom	$790	$1,090	$300	38.0%
2-bedroom	$1,050	$1,410	$360	34.3%
3-bedroom	$1,520	$1,990	$470	30.9%
4-bedroom	$1,840	$2,390	$550	29.9%

Source: HUD Small Area Fair Market Rents, FY2019–FY2024

Figure 7.22 illustrates the price trends of two-bedroom units in Fruita and Mesa County according to HUD's FMRs. Since 2016, rates in Fruita have increased 62.1% overall. Mesa County has also experienced an increase (40.9%) over the period.

Figure 7.22: HUD FMR 2-Bedroom Unit Price Trends, 2016–2024

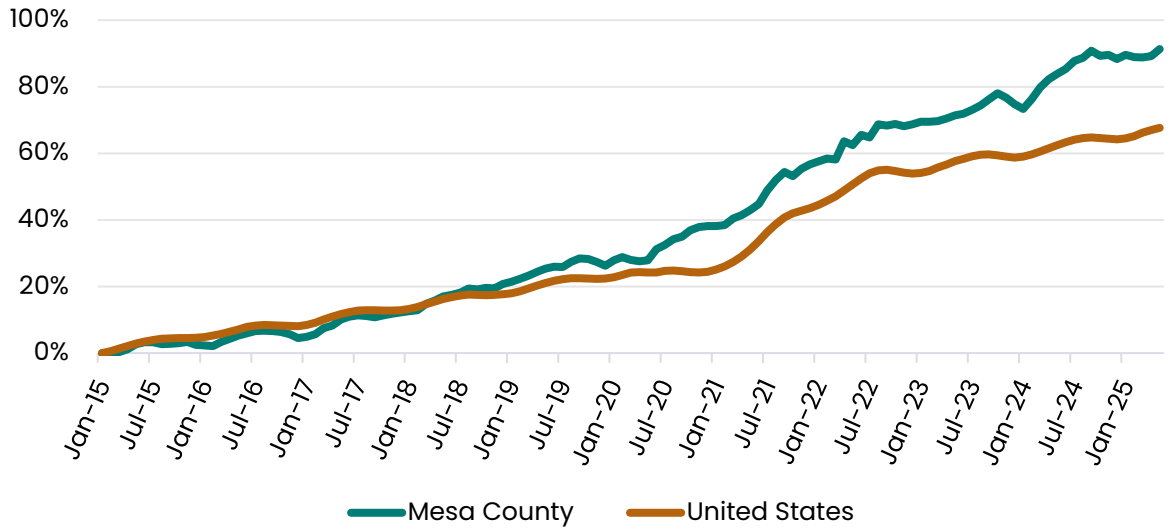


Source: HUD Fair Market Rents and HUD Small Area Fair Market Rents, FY2016–FY2024

The Zillow Observed Rent Index (ZORI) is another measure of changes in rents over time. Unlike a simple market average, ZORI adjusts for rental quality by tracking price changes for the same units over time and aggregating these differences across properties repeatedly listed on Zillow.[53] Figure 7.23 shows ZORI growth rates from 2015 to 2025. In Mesa County, rents rose gradually from 2015 to 2020, then accelerated sharply, resulting in a 91.3% total increase over the decade. For comparison, we have also included the United States as a benchmark.

[53] Clark, Joshua, "Methodology: Zillow Observed Rent Index (Zori)," Zillow, September 19, 2022, https://www.zillow.com/research/methodology-zori-repeat-rent-27092/?msockid=3f046e7c70886710238b7b3071a566c7.

Figure 7.23: ZORI Rent Rates Cumulative Growth Rate, 2015–2025



Source: Zillow Observed Rent Index (ZORI), 2025

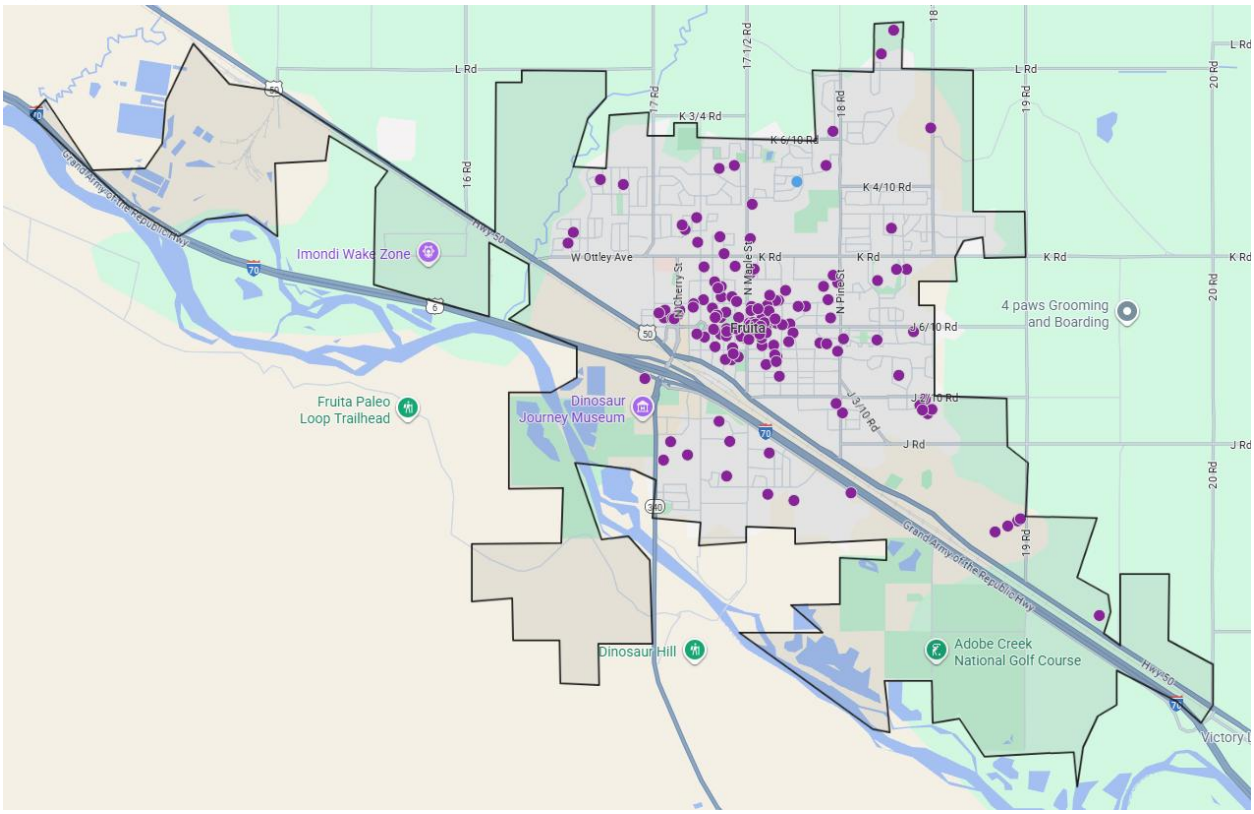
Short-Term Rentals

The short-term rental (STR) industry (e.g., Airbnb) plays an increasingly significant 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.

The City of Fruita caps the number of STRs in the downtown area at fewer than 65. STR owners in this area must obtain a permit and renew it annually with the City. Outside downtown, there are no municipal restrictions. However, many homeowners' associations (HOAs) in Fruita prohibit STRs or impose their own rules and policies.[54] Figure 7.24 shows the approximate distribution of STRs in Fruita.

[54] "Short-Term Rentals," Fruita, CO, accessed June 25, 2025, https://www.fruita.org/625/Short-Term-Rentals.

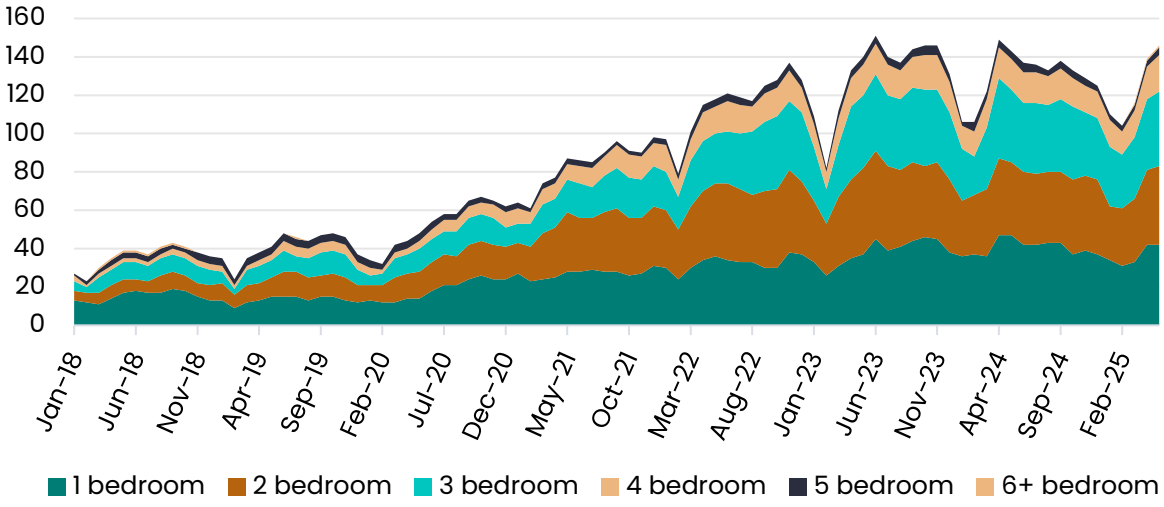
Figure 7.24: Map of STRs in Fruita



Source: AirDNA, 2025

Figure 7.25 illustrates the trend in the number of active STRs in Fruita from January 2018 to May 2025. Over this period, the total has grown from 30 to nearly 150, with especially rapid expansion between 2020 and 2022. Listings rose from 34 in January 2020 to 109 in January 2023. STR activity does tend to follow a seasonal pattern, with more listings in the summer and a sharp decline in the first quarter of each year.

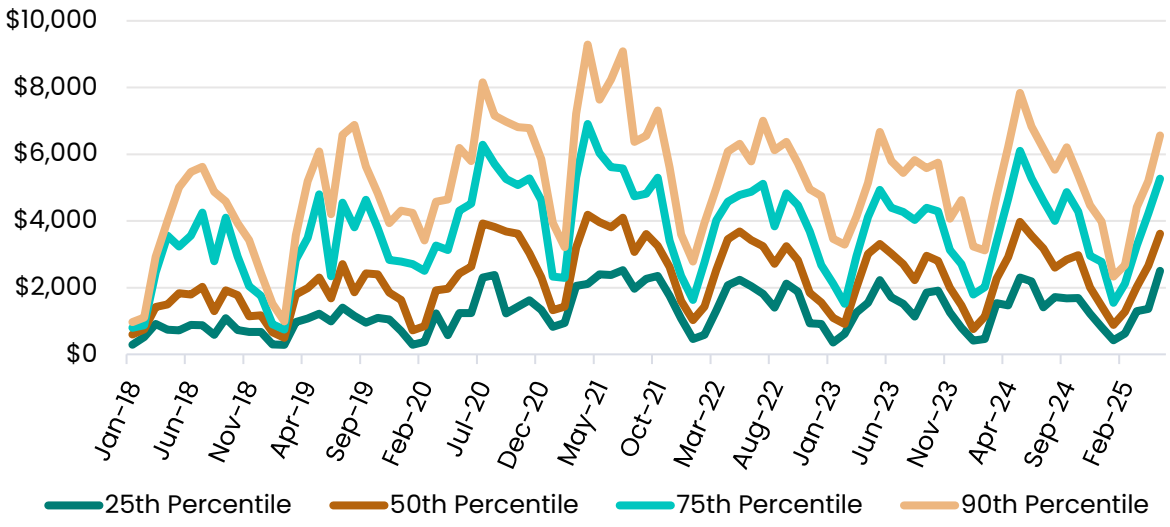
Figure 7.25: Active STR Listings by Bedroom, 2018–2025



Source: AirDNA, 2025

Figure 7.26 shows monthly revenue for STR operators across three levels: the 50th percentile (typical operators), 75th percentile (above average), and 90th percentile (top performers). Most operators earn $1,500 to 3,200 per month, while top performers earn $3,800 to $6,400. Across all percentiles, revenue trended upward from January 2018 to May 2021, with a seasonal peak in early to mid-summer each year. After reaching a high in 2021, revenues declined but began rising again in 2024.

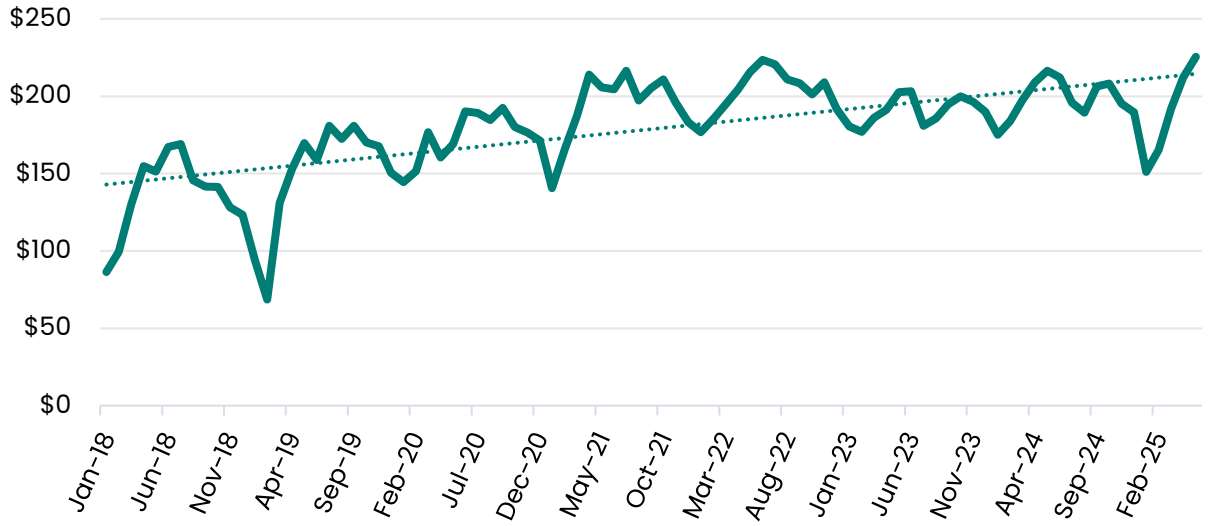
Figure 7.26: STR Monthly Revenue by Percentile, 2018–2025



Source: AirDNA, 2025

Figure 7.27 shows the trend in the average daily rate (ADR) of STRs in Fruita. ADR rose steadily from January 2018 to June 2022, after which it has remained relatively flat.

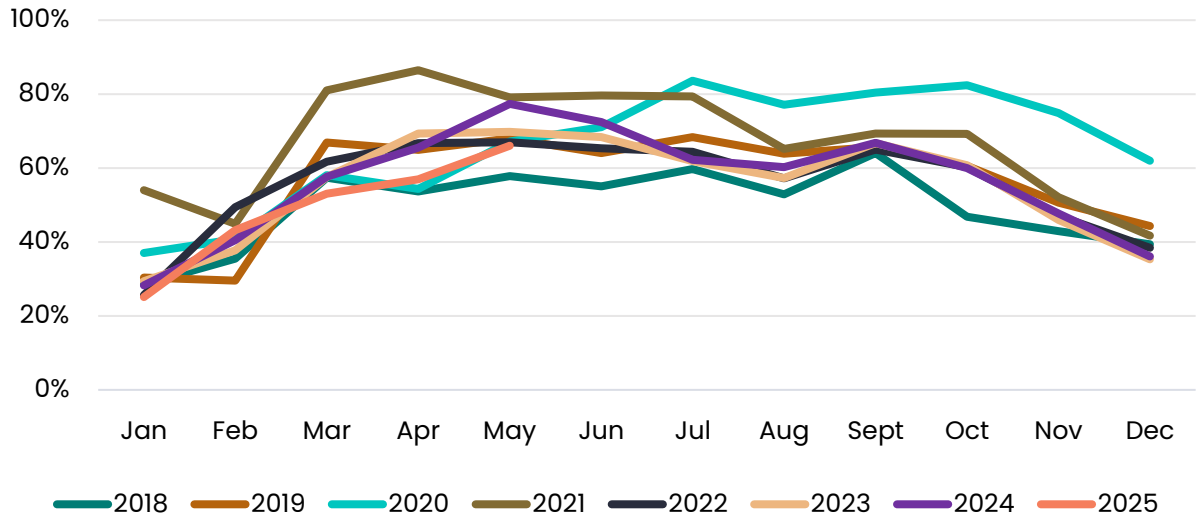
Figure 7.27: STR Average Daily Rate, 2018–2025



Source: AirDNA, 2025

The occupancy rate of a STR indicates how often it is booked each month and can help determine whether to adjust pricing. For example, a property booked 90% of the time for $100 per night might earn more revenue if booked less frequently at $300 per night. Figure 7.28 shows the monthly occupancy rates for Fruita STRs from 2018 to 2025. Rates are generally highest from March through October, dipping mainly during the winter months.

Figure 7.28: STR Occupancy Rate, 2018–2025



Source: AirDNA, 2025

Table 7.10 summarizes STR patterns for Fruita and its peer communities. Peer communities were selected based on their significant STR presence, tourism focus, and similarities in size and characteristics to Fruita. Compared to these peer communities, Fruita ranks in the middle in terms of the percentage of STR stock. STRs in Fruita are still at a much lower concentration than Moab and Glenwood Springs and is similar to Montrose.

Table 7.10: STR Pattern in Fruita and Peer Communities

Region	Occupied Housing Units	Active Short-Term Rentals	Percentage STR Stock	Median Occupancy Rate	Average Daily Rate
Fruita	5,146	114	2.2%	56%	$201
Grand Junction	29,037	397	1.4%	62%	$171
Moab	2,359	354	15.0%	64%	$406
Montrose	8,748	204	2.3%	59%	$160
Glenwood Springs	3,866	172	4.4%	59%	$301
Palisade	1,179	16	1.4%	43%	$249
Rifle	3,892	15	0.4%	42%	$174

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

8. Community Engagement

Community engagement has been a crucial strategy for this plan. To ensure needs of the community are met in the HAP, the community must be heard from and their thoughts documented. Table 8.1 summarizes all events and methods used for community engagement and this section summarizes PC's outreach efforts to the Fruita community. As detailed below, we made an effort to integrate public engagement early and continuously throughout the plan development process. This section summarizes PC's outreach efforts to the Fruita community.

Table 8.1: Community Engagement Effort Summary

Engagement Type	Dates	Attendance
City Council Workshop Session	7/21/2025	In-person
Fruita Farmer's Market Pop-Up	9/13/2025	In-person
Community Tour	9/24/2025	In-person
Stakeholder Interviews	9/24/2025 - 9/26/2025	In-person
Fruita Fall Fest Booth - Survey/Project Promotion	9/26/2025 - 9/27/2025	In-person
Community Survey	8/14/2025 - 10/15/2025	Virtual
City Council Meeting Check-in Presentation	11/4/2025	Virtual
Document Published on City Website for Public Comment	12/12/2025 – 1/20/2026	Virtual
Final Public Hearing Presentation at City Council Meeting	1/20/2026	In-person

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

City Council Workshop Session (July 21, 2025)

The PC team lead a workshop session with the City Council to kick off the project and understand some of Fruita's current situation and future goals for housing and ensure this housing assessment and plan would be a helpful guide for City Council. We also presented preliminary findings of our data gathering to that point. Our methodology on land capacity and forecasting were also discussed. This gave the Council an opportunity to ask our project team questions and ensure outcomes would meet community needs.

Community Survey (August 14, 2025-October 15, 2025)

The survey was open for two months throughout the project. It was advertised through Fruita Facebook groups and advertisements, posted flyers around town, and was pushed out through other channels such as emails from some of Fruita's larger employers to employees (such as School District 51 and Family Health West). PC closely monitored the responses as they came in to ensure that community feedback was

considered in the process. Our survey also allowed opportunity for input to folks unable to attend regularly scheduled public meetings. The full results of the Community Survey are discussed later in this chapter.

Fruita Farmer's Market Pop-Up (September 13, 2025)
The team joined the City of Fruita at their farmer's market booth to engage with community members. Conversations with community members served to increase awareness that the study was ongoing as well as answer community questions about it. Additionally, we encouraged residents to take the community survey to provide more of their thoughts.

Community Tour (September 24, 2025)
City staff took the PC team on a tour of the community to understand the extent of new and planned developments, the condition of current housing in the City, and to increase the project team's wholistic understanding of the community. The tour provided qualitative data for our team to use throughout the HNA completion and HAP creation.

Stakeholder Interviews (September 24, 2025 – October 9, 2025)
Community stakeholders met with the PC team in interviews to discuss the nuances of Fruita's housing situation. The key themes from these interviews are discussed in further detail in the Key Themes from On-site Interviews section.

Fruita Fall Fest Booth (September 26, 2025 – September 27, 2025)
The Fruita Fall Fest provided a great opportunity for the PC team to interact with community members and further promote the community survey and the project overall. The PC team also spoke to many community members about their concerns and views on housing in the City.

City Council Meeting Check-in Presentation (November 4, 2025)
The PC team presented to the Fruita City Council an update on the key findings of the study and the preliminary recommended strategies. The council was able to ask questions and give feedback on recommendations before the report was finalized.

Document Published on City Website for Public Comment (December 12, 2025 – January 20, 2025)
The plan must be posted on the City website for public comment for at least 30 days prior to the public hearing on the plan. Our project steering committee has also been continuously providing feedback and input across each deliverable date.

Final Public Hearing Presentation at City Council Meeting (January 20, 2026)
For HAP compliance, we are required to present the findings of the HNA and recommended goals and strategies of the HAP. This presentation will offer opportunity

for public comment and will include a formal vote of adoption by the City Council for the HAP.

Key Themes of On-Site Conversations

As a part of the HNA and HAP, our project team visited the City of Fruita multiple times in an effort to connect with the community. This part of our community engagement effort provided valuable insight into the thoughts and feelings of Fruita residents and stakeholders, along with important qualitative data. Throughout our conversations with local residents and stakeholders, we picked up on some key themes.

The City of Fruita is at an identity crossroads

In our meetings with stakeholders in the Fruita community, the goal of the City being a place where people can afford to live and work came up frequently. However, since about the 1980s, Fruita has become more oriented as a bedroom community of the larger metropolitan center of Grand Junction. The housing types being built in Fruita since the time of the oil boom in the Grand Valley are almost exclusively single-family homes. Additionally, the loudest voices heard by City leadership want Fruita to reduce building efforts. These same members support Fruita staying a bedroom community, restricting the community from regional workers.

Expanding on the edges of the Urban Growth Boundary is not desired

While some increase in the housing supply is required to support future goals, neither the City Council nor local residents want to see the City expand outward. A focus on redevelopment and infill is a common goal across leadership and the community at large. Rather than continuing the expansion of single-family home subdivisions, stakeholders feel looking inwards can hold the key to fostering community identity and promoting the right kind of density.

Middle density housing is generally supported, but high density does not align with the community

Another consistent message from many stakeholders is that large, high density apartment complexes do not fit with the City's identity. Residents don't feel that seeing apartment buildings pop up in places other than the downtown area will solve affordability or attainability issues. While there is support for recent policy changes, stakeholders prefer to focus on middle density and continuing to allow single-family housing to be developed as homeownership is a staple of the community.

Many local leaders believe in free market forces, and are cautious of their ability to impact affordability

The idea of the free market is alive and well in the City of Fruita. Local leaders rely on market forces when making many of their decisions. If the market incentive is pushing developers to build new housing in Fruita, they support it. Additionally, many local

leaders are unsure of their ability to really impact affordability, but they still see it as a key issue in the community

The community is skeptical of affordable housing, but is searching for solutions to serve younger family members with desire to return

Many members of the community state they support "affordable housing," but oppose it being built in Fruita, or at least where they live. The feeling our team captured is that there is an "all or nothing" attitude related to affordable housing. Either the City actively supports subsidized housing (like the Fruita Mews), or nothing else is done and single-family home subdivisions are the only housing type that should be built. At the same time, members understand that housing has become unaffordable for their children or grandchildren that may want to return to the community. As a result of this realization, they come around on general best practices to support more housing options.

Community Survey

The project team conducted an electronic survey of Fruita residents from August 14, 2025, through October 15, 2025. We collected a total of 547 surveys from residents in Fruita's city limits, urban growth boundary, and planning influence area, along with workers who commute into the City. Open to all residents and local workers, the survey included a mix of fixed-response questions (e.g., multiple-choice and scaled response) and open-ended questions.

To maximize participation, the team (working with the City of Fruita) 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 the survey was 5.5% of the adult population (aged 18+). Given the response rate and size of the population, we are confident that the survey reflects the actual sentiments of the Fruita community within a margin of error of 4.1% in either direction on a 95% Confidence Interval.

Summary of Findings

Housing Situation Questions

The highest participation rates came from within the City of Fruita, with 76.3% of respondents residing in the City (Figure 8.1). The remaining responses were split between within a 3-mile radius, within the UGB, and commute frequently for work, while 3.2% did not live or work in Fruita. We excluded these out-of-area responses from the final tabulation.

The vast majority of respondents own their homes (81.0%) while only 14.8% rent for their current living situation. These estimates line up well with owner versus renter occupancy for the City where 80.5% of residents own homes (Figure 7.2). Additionally,

76.0% of survey takers reside in single-family homes and 7.3% reside in homes on a farm or ranch underscoring the large concentration of single-family homes in Fruita. Apartments are a very small part of the housing stock, and only 5.7% of survey respondents live in apartments (Figure 8.3).

Survey respondents are relatively happy with their current living situations. About 68% of respondents reported not looking to move when asked if they had plans to do so in the next 12 months (Figure 8.4). Another 17.2% said they may be interested in moving, but not within the next 12 months. Of those looking to move, 8.8% said they were looking to move within Fruita while 6.4% said they were looking to move out of Fruita.

Housing Perceptions

PC designed the Housing Perceptions section of the survey to assess respondents' views on Fruita's housing market. The survey included questions on housing prices, availability, and overall community sentiment.

When asked to rate their perceptions of purchasing a home in Fruita, 78.4% felt like it was either "Somewhat expensive" or "Too expensive." In fact just under half of respondents (47.3%) felt that purchasing a home was "Too expensive." When asked the same question regarding renting, 69.7% of respondents reported it was "Somewhat expensive" or "Too expensive" (Figure 8.5). Of note here, 21.5% were unsure of how expensive or affordable renting was in Fruita, while only 4.1% 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, 47.3% of respondents said "yes" in some way, shape, or form. However, 46.3% said "No, I don't think the housing supply needs to increase at this time" while 6.5% were unsure (Figure 8.6). Of those that said yes, the largest concentration said "Yes, with a focus on low-density, single-family homes" (21.1% overall), followed by "Yes, but with a focus on a mix of densities" (16.5%) and "Yes, with a focus on building more dense housing options like apartments or townhomes" (9.7%).

We also asked survey takers if they had difficulty finding suitable housing within their budget in the past three years. Nearly one-third (29.8%) of respondents indicated they had problems finding suitable housing (Figure 8.7). When asked if respondents knew anyone who had been displaced in the past three years due to rising housing costs, 36.7% indicated that they knew people who had, 2.3% indicated that they themselves had been displaced (Figure 8.8).

Figure 8.9 reports responses to housing aspects respondents were dissatisfied with in Fruita. The top three responses were that existing homes are too expensive (247), too many short-term rentals (202), and overdevelopment of areas that should be

conserved for public use (164) (Figure 8.9). Survey takers who answered open-ended "other" to this question mostly cited an excess of high density and low income housing as well as loss of agricultural land as main dissatisfaction drivers (Figure 8.10).

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 197 votes (Figure 8.11). The nest two most selected answers were that it does increase residents' property values (113) and high property values therefore support more funding for schools

The cost and availability of housing can negatively impact the economy. When we asked how, the top responses were that it increases property taxes (195), contributes to housing being converted to short-term rentals (191), and contributes to housing insecurity (178) as shown in Figure 8.13. Respondents who selected open-ended "other" frequently mentioned that the increase in housing is causing extra stress on current infrastructure and the high cost of housing is contributing to less diversity and less young families in Fruita (Figure 8.14).

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 8.17. The response with the greatest number of votes was encouraging simpler building designs (137), followed by having more duplexes and triplexes in single-family areas (116), and 111 respondents who were unsure. The least selected answer was encouraging increased density.

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 23.9% (Figure 8.21). Additionally, 23.3% of respondents feel the local government should oversee development by enforcing building code and zoning regulations, along with 19.2% who say the local government should take a hands-off approach and let the market regulate itself, and 19.0% who say it should play an active role to ensure that all housing is affordable.

Short-term rentals (STRs) have the potential to restrict local housing supply for long-term residents and workers. While they play a role in the City's tourism and recreation industries, many residents feel there are too many STRs in Fruita (Figure 8.22). Specifically, 46.2% of respondents reported there are too many STRs, 32.0% were unsure, 16.9% said the number of STRs was just right, while 4.9% felt that there were not enough.

Just over half of respondents (50.7%) believe that the city government should allow them with some type of limit on the number of STRs while 11.5% believe they should be banned altogether, and 11.0% believe they should be allowed everywhere but owner occupancy of the primary unit should be required (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. Funding housing for public service and modest income workers (131), donating property for affordable housing (117), and incentives for affordable unit development (96) were the most popular tools. Transitional housing, deed restrictions, and land banking 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:

- Townhomes
- Duplexes/triplexes
- Cottage housing
- Apartments/multi-family
- Condominiums
- Accessory dwelling units

For townhomes, the most popular response was "Nowhere" with 108 votes (Figure 8.26). Nowhere was also the top response for duplex/triplex and condominium housing types (Figure 8.27 & Figure 8.30). Cottage type housing is most supported in moderate sized single-family neighborhoods with 102 votes (Figure 8.28), apartments are most supported in high density apartment complex areas with 149 votes (Figure 8.29), and ADUs are most supported in large lot single-family neighborhoods with 128 votes (Figure 8.31).

Additional demographic questions can be found in Figure 8.33 through Figure 8.38.

Perspective Differences Among Different Demographics

For select survey questions, our team cross tabulated responses by Age, Length of Residence, Owner vs Renter Tenure, and Income. The questions we chose to examine their perspective differences on include:

- Would you like to see the housing supply increase in Fruita?
- Please rate your perceptions of purchasing a home in Fruita

In general, respondents were relatively uniform in whether or not the housing stock should increase showing about a 50/50 split regardless of age, length of residence, and

level of income. However, renters were much more likely to say yes overall (62.8%). There was also relative agreement in the yes categories of what the focus should be. All demographics were most likely to chose "Yes, with a focus on low-density, single-family homes" except for those earning less than $100K where it was a close second behind "Yes, but with a focus on a mix of densities."

Table 8.2: If and How the Housing Stock Should Increase, Cross-Tabulated by Age and Length of Residence

Survey Response	Age		Length of Residence		Overall
	Under 55	55+	10 years or less	11+ years	
Yes, but with a focus on a mix of densities (i.e. 5-8 dwelling units per acre)	18.1%	20.3%	21.5%	16.4%	16.5%
Yes, with a focus on building more dense housing options like apartments or townhomes (i.e. 6-12 dwelling units per acre)	10.4%	8.2%	13.0%	5.8%	9.7%
Yes, with a focus on low-density, single-family homes (i.e. 3-4 dwelling units per acre)	25.9%	20.3%	22.0%	23.4%	21.1%
No, I don't think the housing supply needs to increase at this time	41.5%	45.6%	37.3%	50.9%	46.3%
Not sure	4.1%	5.5%	6.2%	3.5%	6.5%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

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

Survey Response	Tenure		Income		Overall
	Owners	Renters	Less than $100K	$100K+	
Yes, but with a focus on a mix of densities (i.e. 5-8 dwelling units per acre)	17.4%	9.0%	23.2%	16.9%	16.5%
Yes, with a focus on building more dense housing options like apartments or townhomes (i.e. 6-12 dwelling units per acre)	8.5%	15.4%	10.3%	9.4%	9.7%
Yes, with a focus on low-density, single-family homes (i.e. 3-4 dwelling units per acre)	17.9%	38.5%	22.7%	23.8%	21.1%

No, I don't think the housing supply needs to increase at this time	50.4%	32.1%	38.7%	46.3%	46.3%
Not sure	5.9%	5.1%	5.2%	3.8%	6.5%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Overall, about 75% or more of respondents thought that purchasing a home was either "Too expensive" or "Somewhat expensive" across all compared demographics. Those who are under the age of 55, have lived in Fruita for more than 11 years, and who rent their home, all were relatively more likely to select "Too expensive" compared to those over 55, who have lived in Fruita less than 11 years, or are owners.

Table 8.4: Perceptions of Purchasing a Home, Cross-Tabulated by Age, Length of Residence, and Tenure

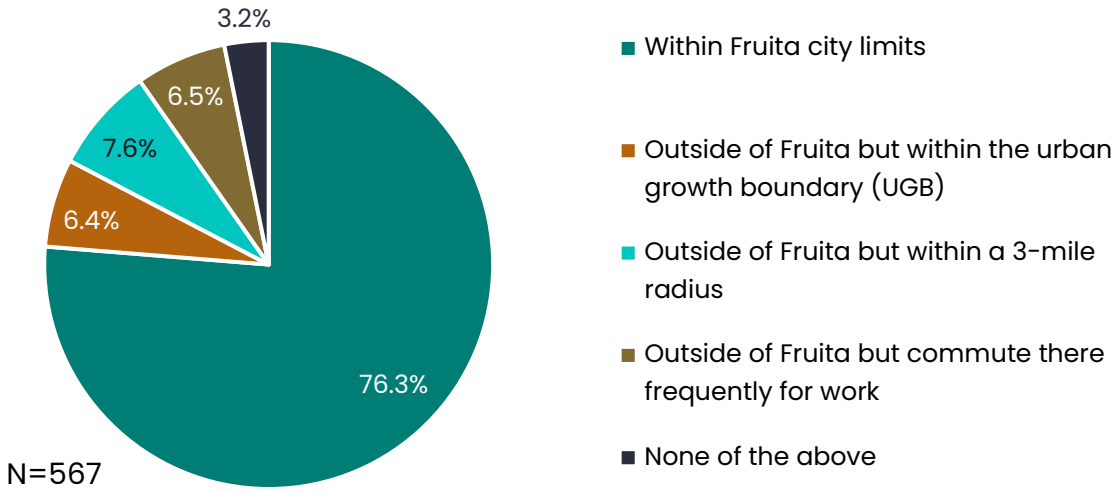
Survey Responses	Age		Length of Residence		Tenure		Overall
	Under 55	55+	10 years or less	11+ years	Owner	Renter	
Too expensive	52.8%	44.8%	37.1%	57.6%	39.7%	77.2%	47.3%
Somewhat expensive	31.8%	32.2%	37.6%	29.1%	35.7%	13.9%	31.1%
At the right price	7.2%	8.7%	11.8%	4.1%	10.3%	0.0%	8.3%
Somewhat affordable	6.7%	8.7%	9.6%	5.8%	8.9%	0.0%	7.3%
Very affordable	0.5%	2.2%	1.7%	1.2%	2.3%	0.0%	1.9%
Don't know/Not sure	1.0%	3.3%	2.2%	2.3%	3.0%	8.9%	4.1%

Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Survey Responses

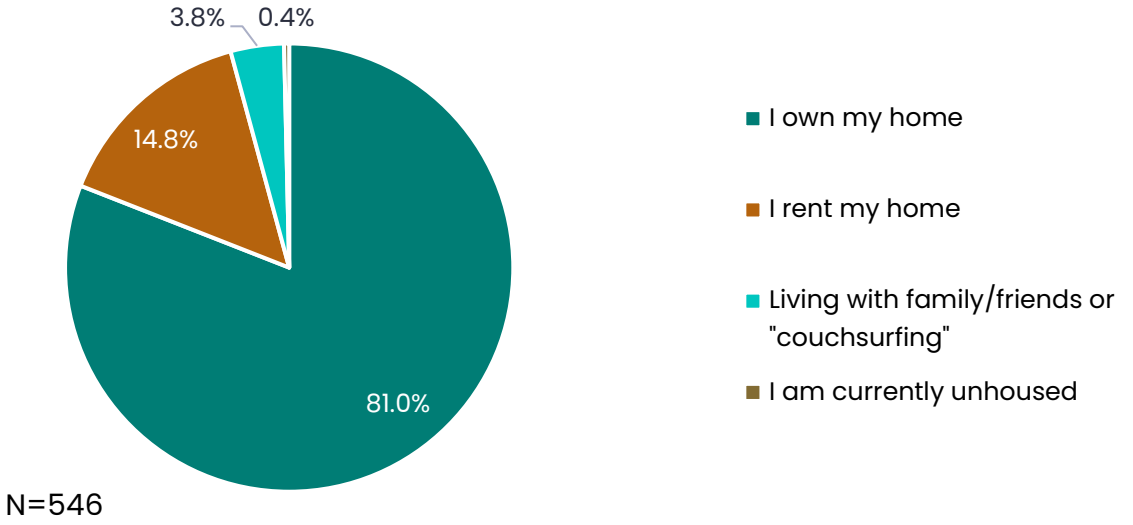
Housing Situation Questions

Figure 8.1: Where is your place of full-time residence?



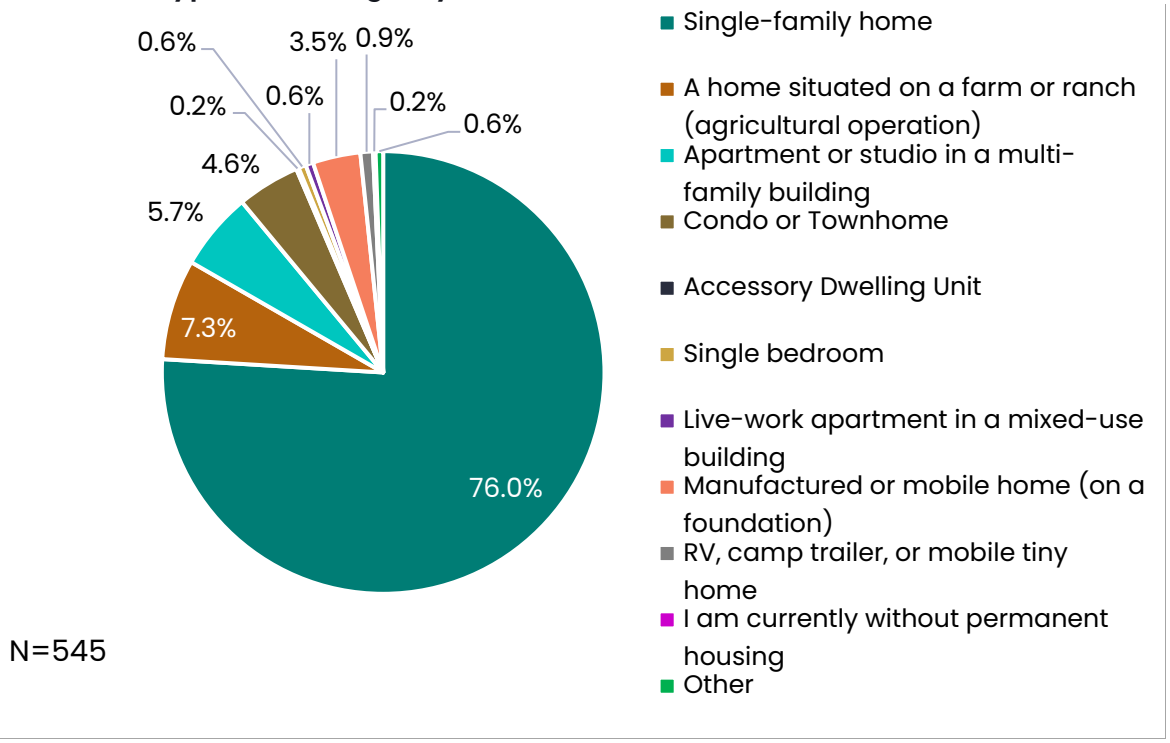
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.2: What is your current living situation?



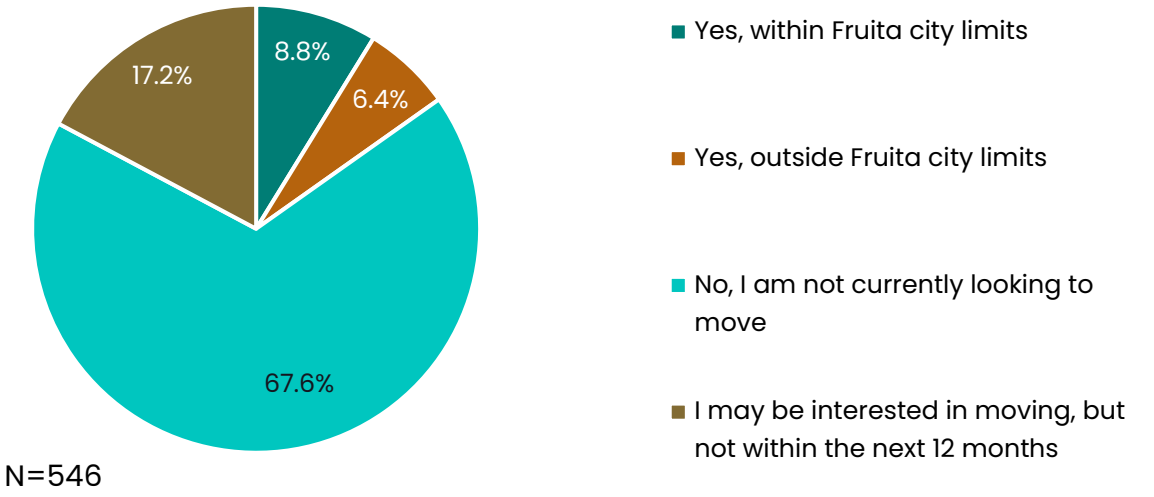
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.3: What type of housing do you reside in?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

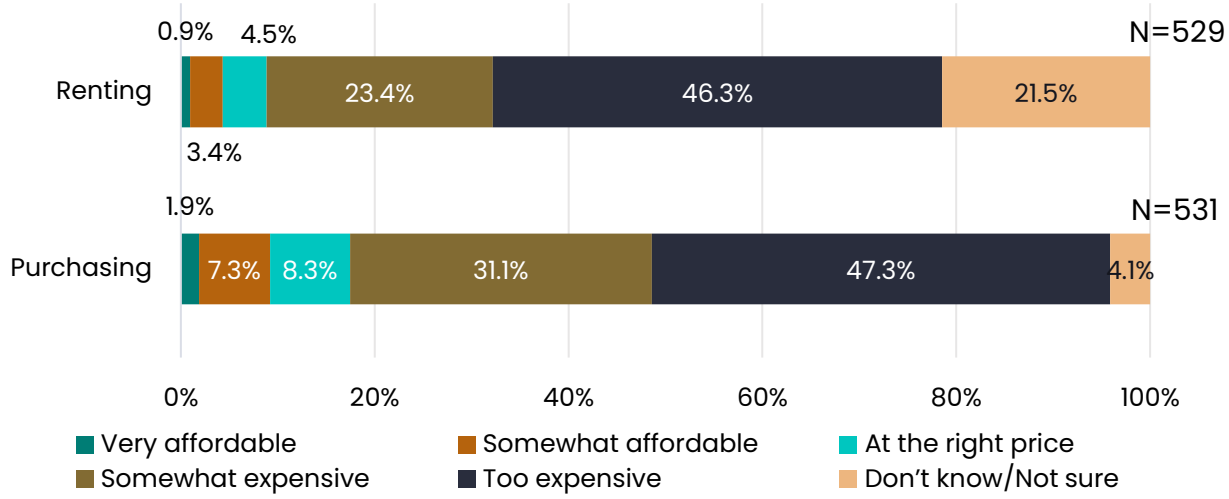
Figure 8.4: Within the next 12 months are you looking to move?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

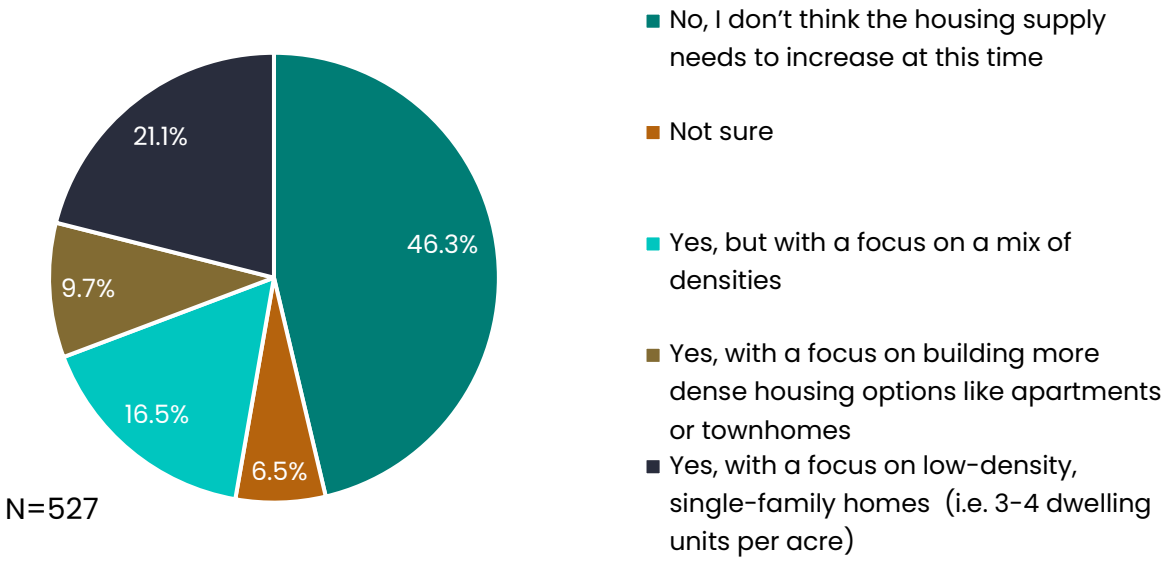
Housing Perceptions

Figure 8.5: Please rate your perceptions of purchasing/renting a home in Fruita.



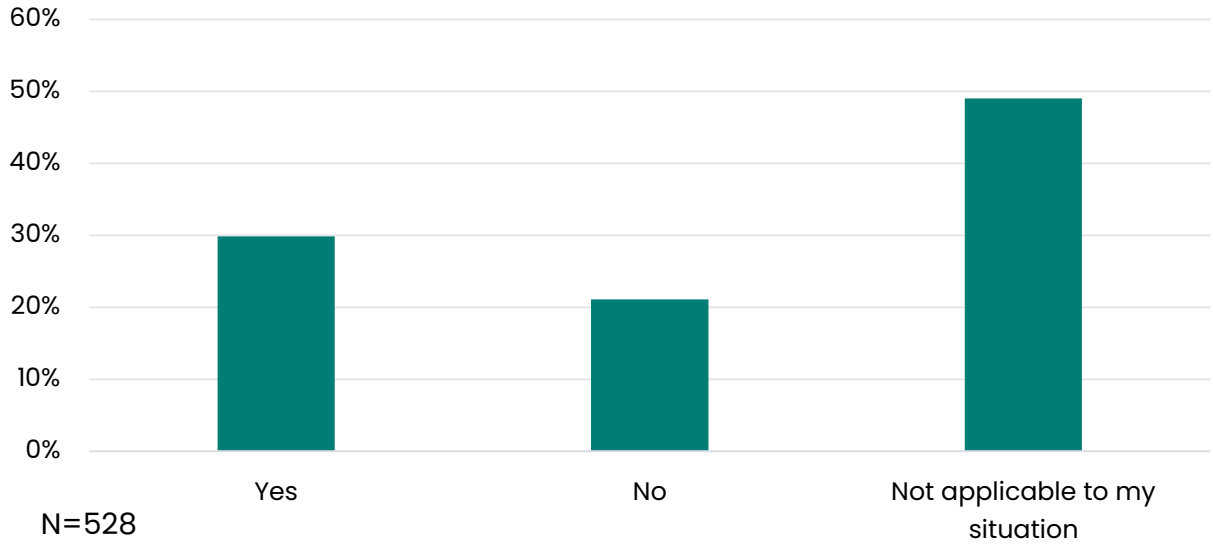
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.6: Would you like to see the housing supply increase in Fruita?



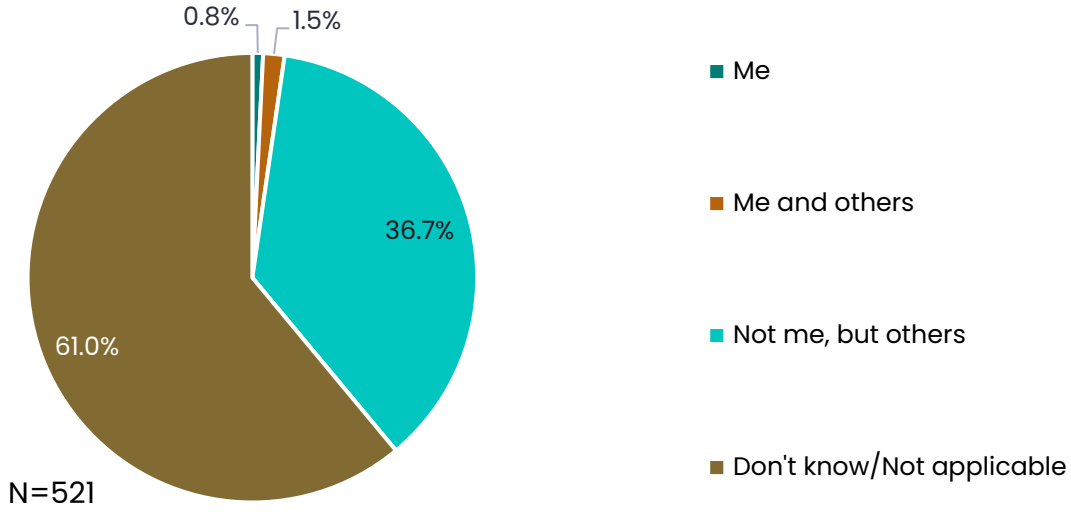
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.7: Within the past 3 years, have you had difficulty finding suitable housing within your budget in Fruita?



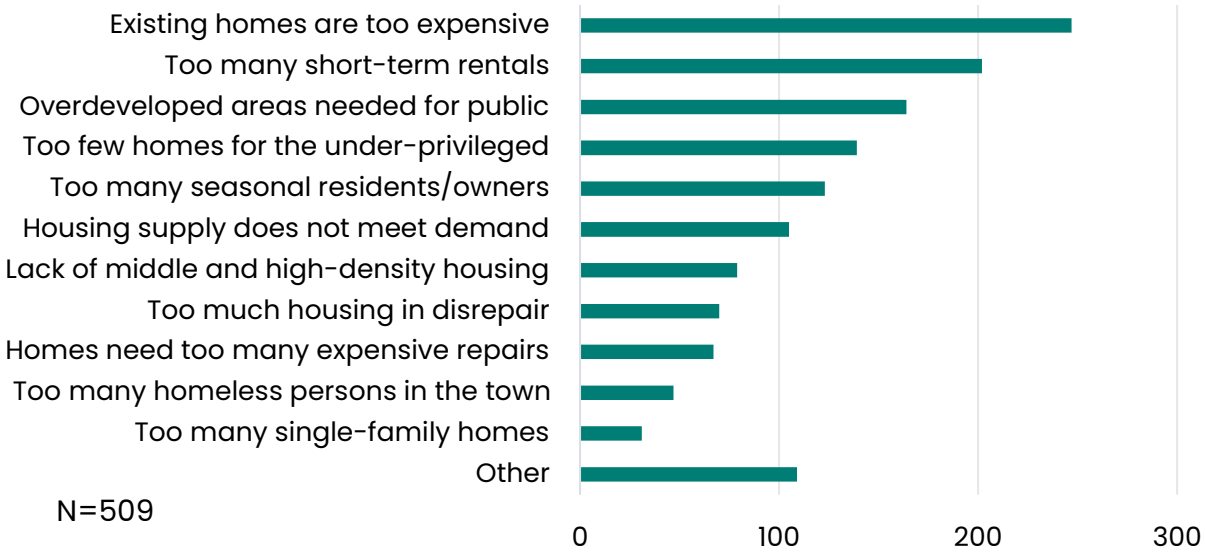
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.8: Within the past 3 years, have you or anyone you know been displaced from their home in Fruita due to rising housing costs?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

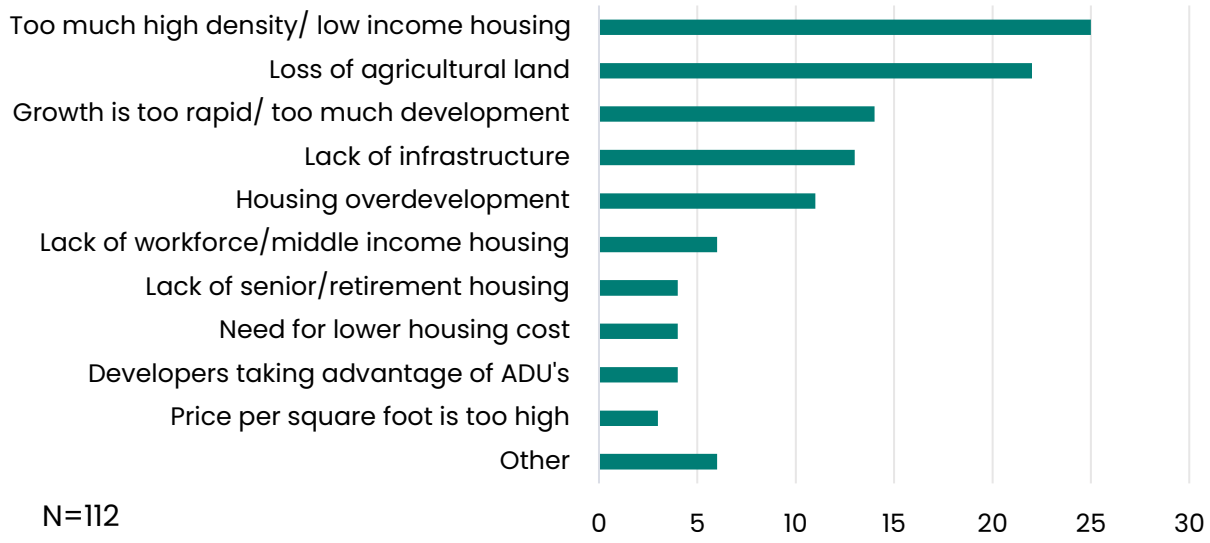
Figure 8.9: Which, if any, of the following housing aspects are you dissatisfied with in Fruita?[55]



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

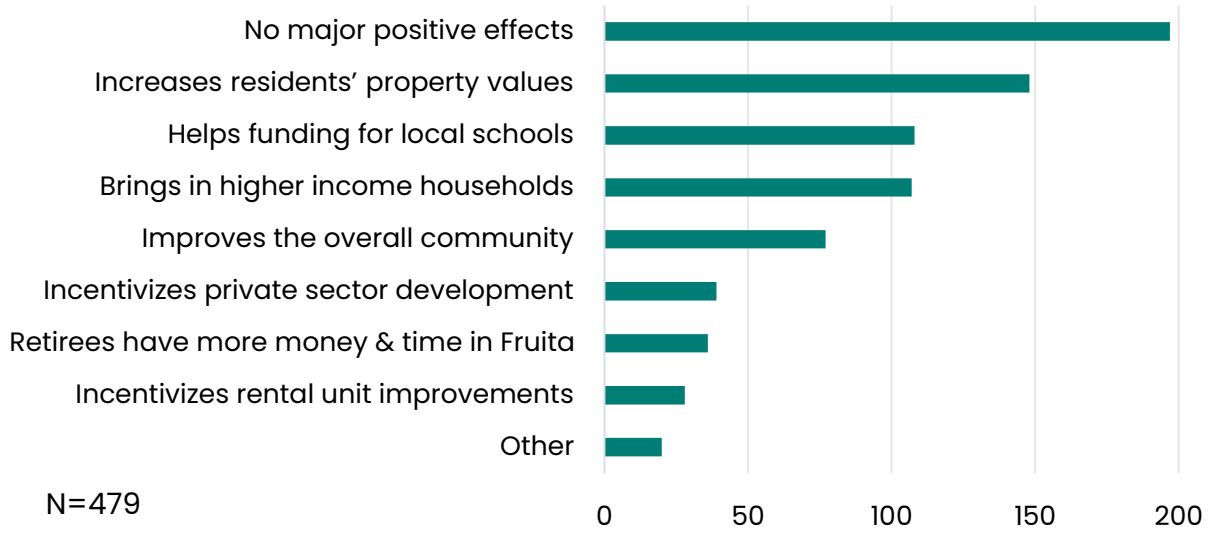
[55] Full text of "Too many short-term rentals" was printed as "Too much housing being used for short-term rentals (e.g. Airbnb, Vrbo, or vacation rentals)" in survey; "Overdeveloped areas needed for public" was printed as "Overdevelopment of areas that should be conserved for public use"; "Too few homes for the under-privileged" was printed as "Lack of housing for under-privileged and high-needs populations (i.e. low income or people with disabilities)"; "Too many seasonal residents/owners" was printed as "Too many seasonal residents and second-home owners, which erodes our sense of community"; "Housing supply does not meet demand" was printed as "There are not enough homes for the number of people who want to live here"; "Lack of middle and high-density housing" was printed as "Lack of middle and high-density housing options, like townhomes and apartments"; "Too much housing in disrepair" was printed as "Too much housing blight or too many homes in disrepair"; "Homes need too many expensive repairs" was printed as "Existing homes require too many expensive repairs and maintenance issues."

Figure 8.10: Which, if any, of the following housing aspects are you dissatisfied with in Fruita? (Other)



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

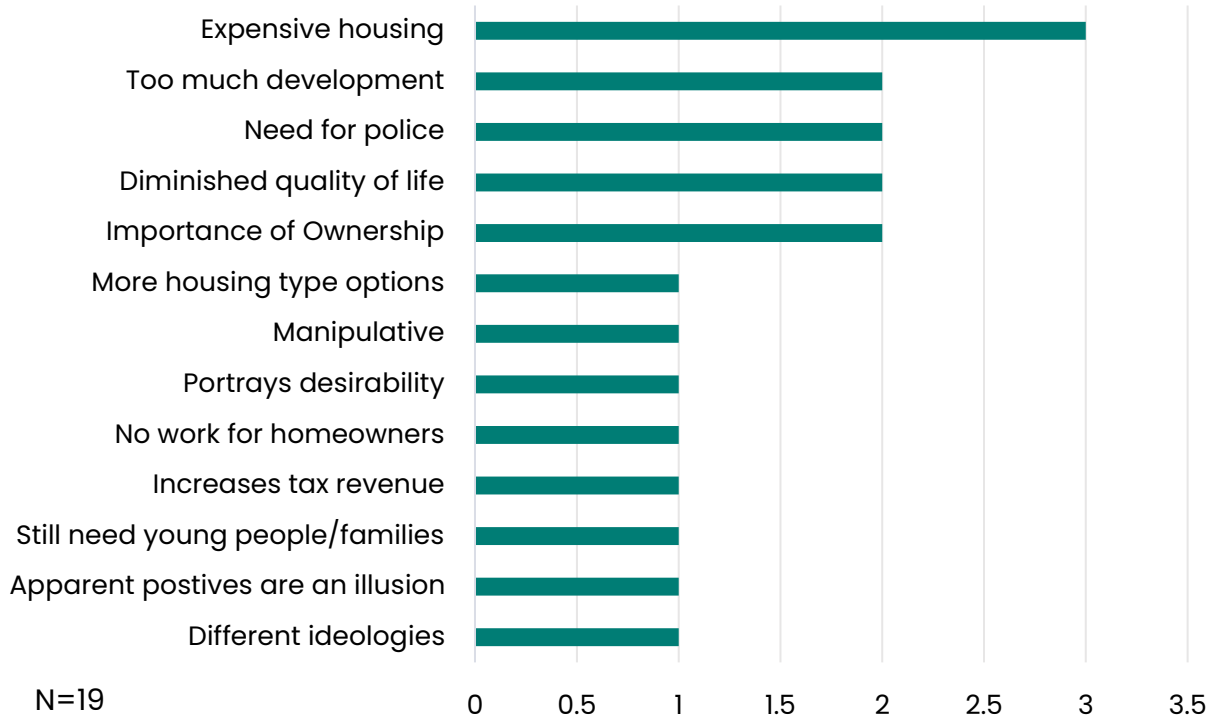
Figure 8.11: In what ways do you think the cost and availability of housing is positively affecting the economy in Fruita?[56]



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

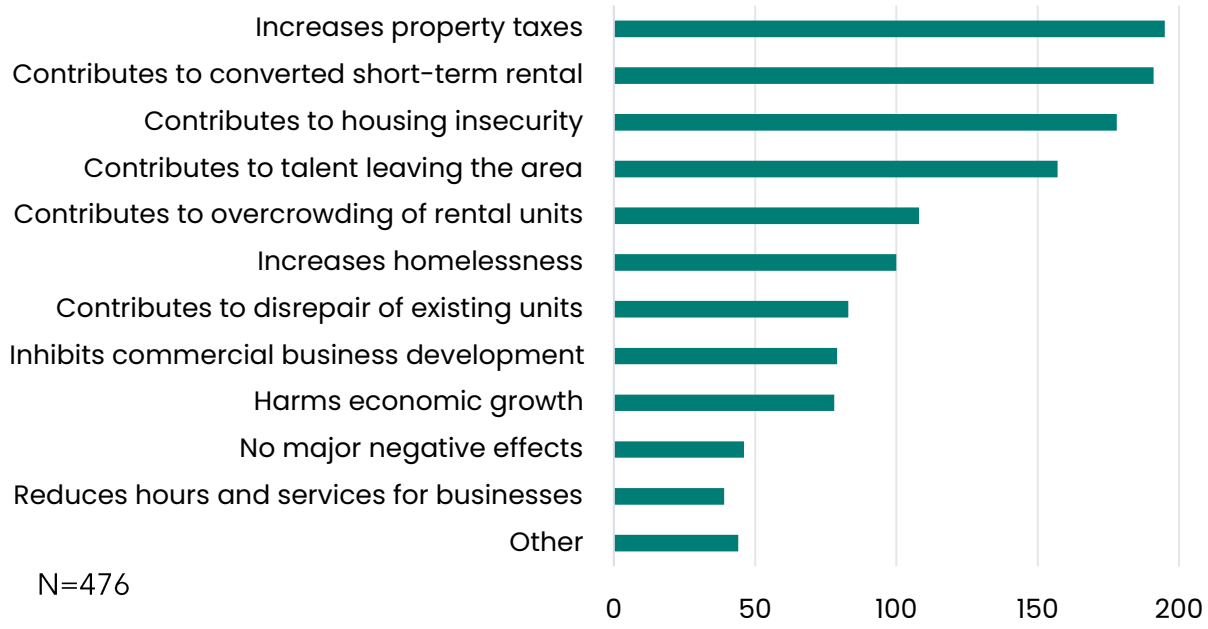
[56] Full text of "Helps funding for local schools" was printed as "Helps funding for local schools (through higher property values)" in survey; "Brings in higher income households" was printed as "Brings in higher income households who contribute positively to the economy"; "Improves the overall community" was printed as "Leads to the overall improvement of the community"; "Incentivizes private sector development" was printed as "Provides an incentive for private sector developers to build more housing"; "Retirees have more money & time in Fruita" was printed as "Second-home owners and retirees are able to spend more time and money in Fruita"; "Incentivizes rental unit improvements" was printed as "Provides an incentive for homeowners to improve and invest in rental units."

Figure 8.12: In what ways do you think the cost and availability of housing is positively affecting the economy in Fruita? (Other)



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

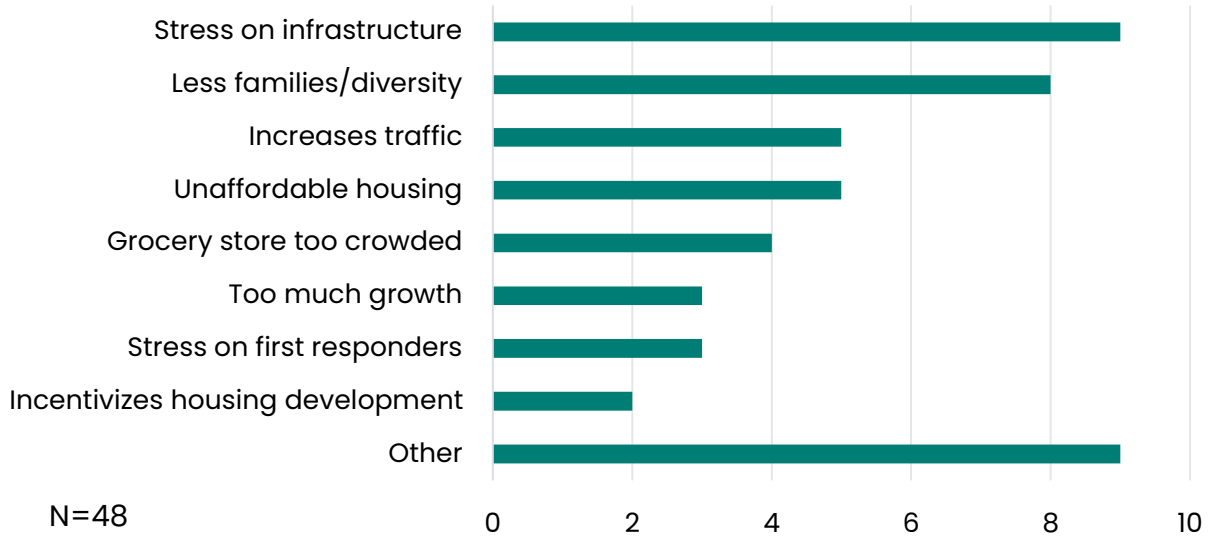
Figure 8.13: In what ways do you think the cost and availability of housing is negatively affecting the economy in Fruita?[57]



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

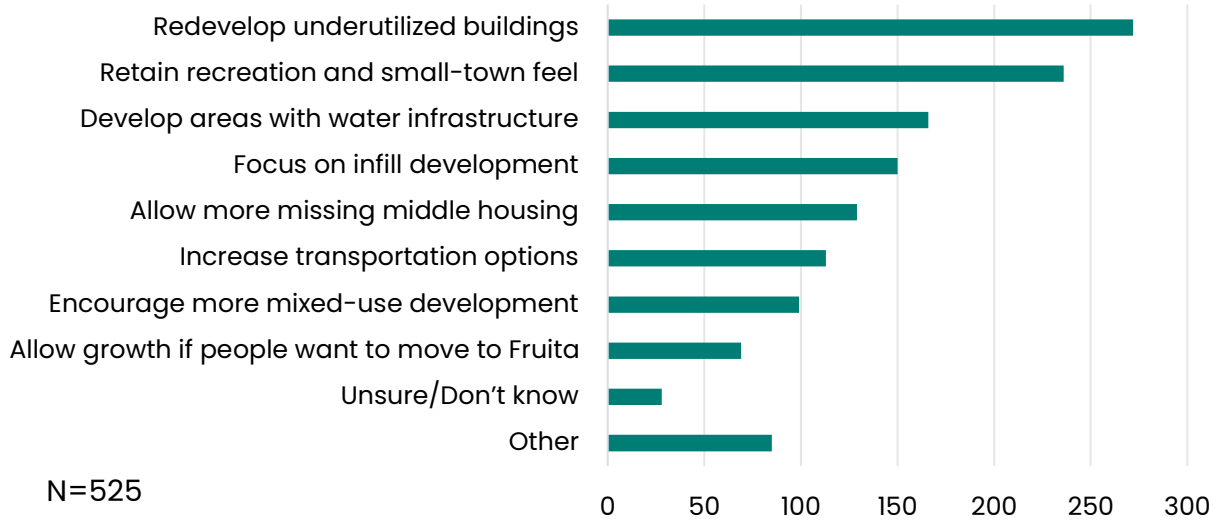
[57] Full text of "Increases property taxes" was printed as "Increases property taxes through an increase in property value" in survey; "Contributes to converted short-term rental" was printed as "Contributes to conversion of housing into short-term rentals (like vacation rentals)"; "Contributes to housing insecurity" was printed as "Contributes to housing insecurity and/or residents moving more frequently"; "Inhibits commercial business development" was printed as "Slows development of additional retail and/or commercial businesses"; "Reduces hours and services for businesses" was printed as "Contributes to reduced hours and services for local businesses."

Figure 8.14: In what ways do you think the cost and availability of housing is negatively affecting the economy in Fruita? (Other)



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

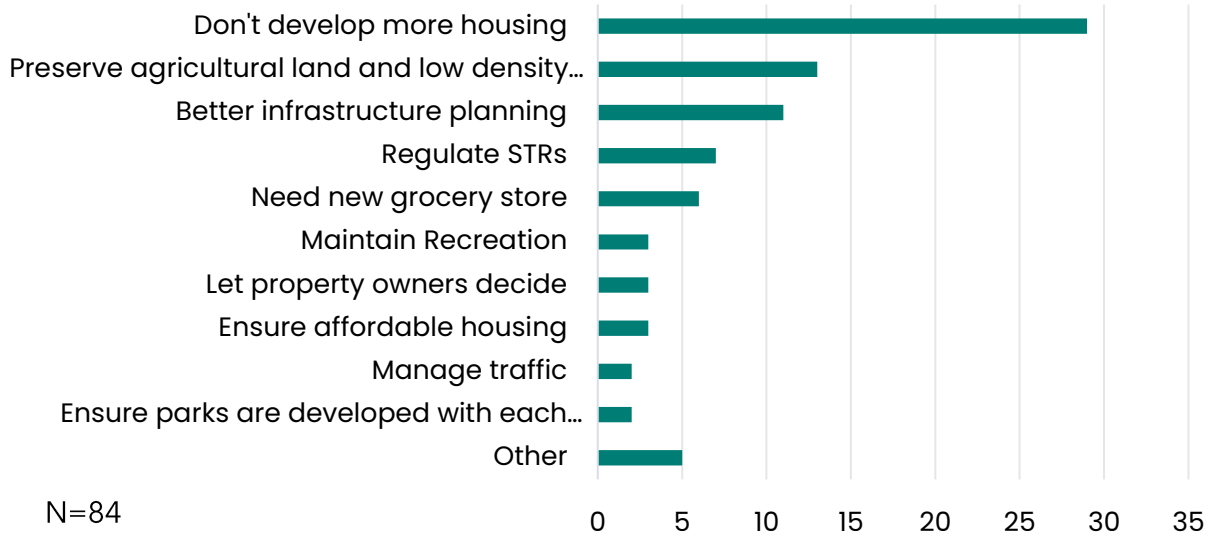
Figure 8.15: What should the City of Fruita do in order to manage growth?[58]



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

[58] Full text of "Redevelop underutilized buildings" was printed as "Encourage redevelopment/rehabilitation of underutilized or abandoned buildings" in survey; "Retain recreation and small-town feel" was printed as "Ensure culture of outdoor recreation and small-town feel is retained through more trails and open space"; "Develop areas with water infrastructure" was printed as "Encourage development in areas with existing water & sewer infrastructure"; "Focus on infill development" was printed as "Focus on infill development to prevent urban sprawl"; "Allow more missing middle housing" was printed as "Implement greater allowances of missing middle housing (i.e. duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) , tiny homes, cottage developments)"; "Increase transportation options" was printed as "Increase transportation options (i.e. greater walkability, bike lanes, bus system)."

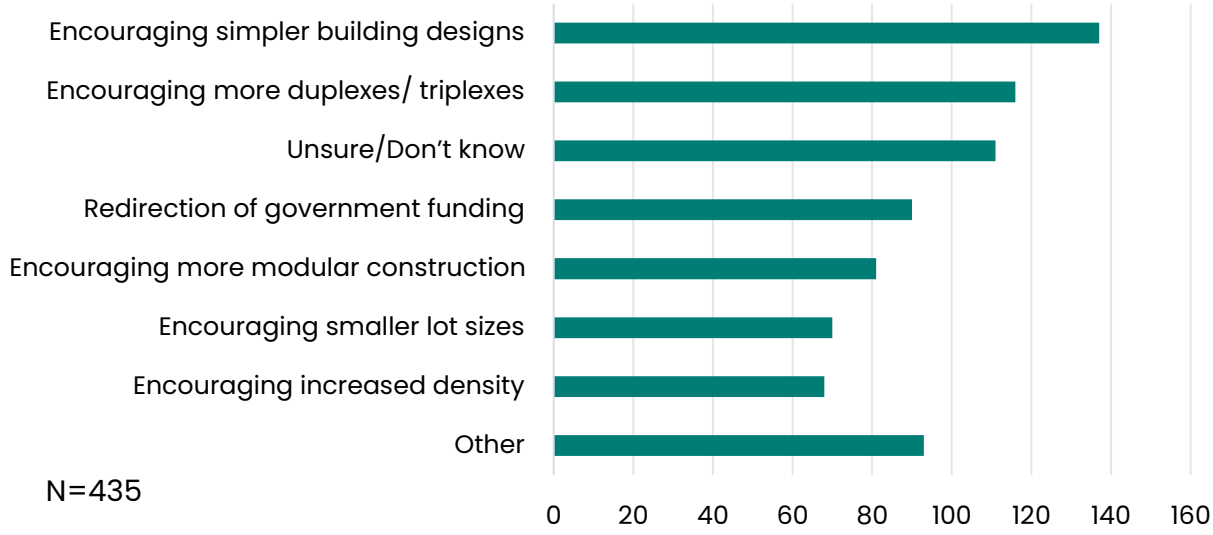
Figure 8.16: What should the City of Fruita do in order to manage growth? (Other)



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Housing Policy Questions

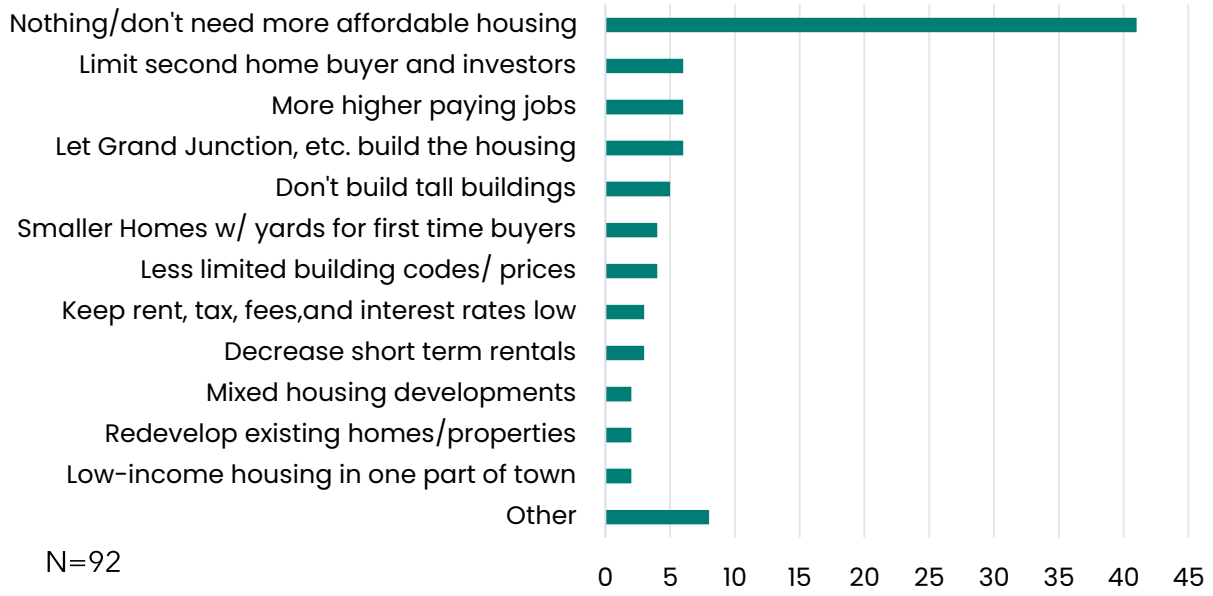
Figure 8.17: What are you willing to have change for more affordable housing?[59]



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

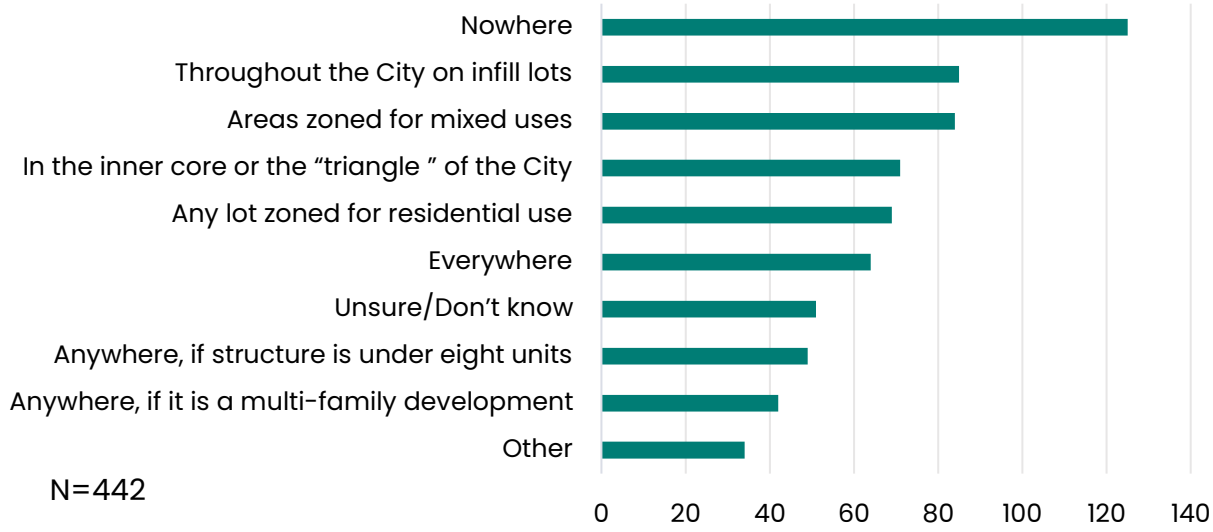
[59] Full text of "Encouraging more duplexes/ triplexes" was printed as "Encouraging more duplexes or triplexes in traditionally single-family neighborhoods" in survey; "Encouraging more modular construction" was printed as "Encouraging more modular or prefabricated construction"; "Encouraging increased density" was printed as "Encouraging increased density (i.e. taller buildings or more units per acre)."

Figure 8.18: What are you willing to have change for more affordable housing? (Other)



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

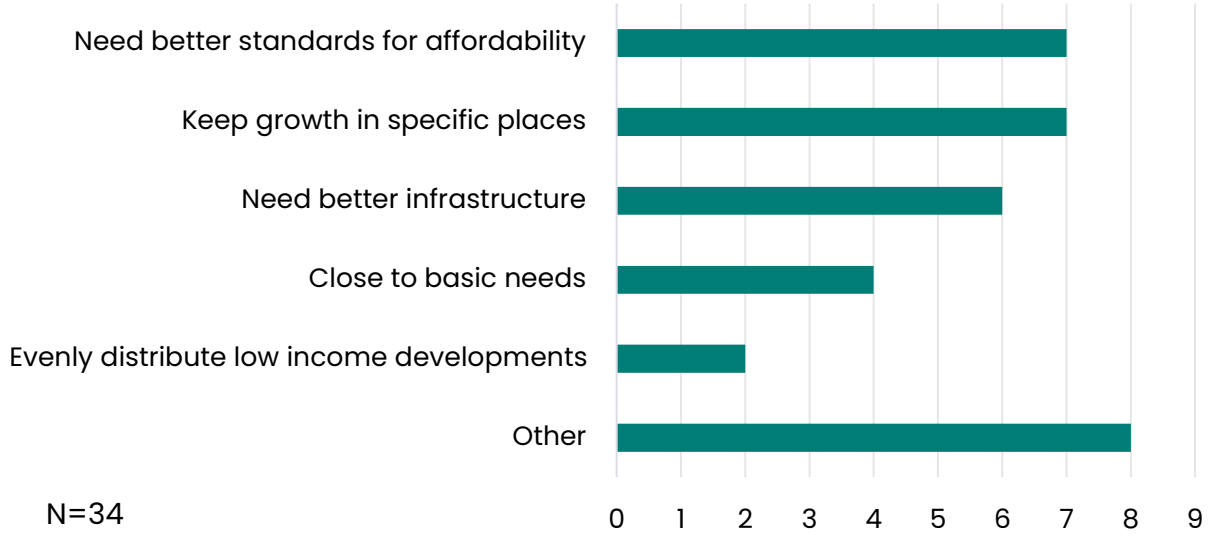
Figure 8.19: Where would you be in favor of allowing affordable housing at all income levels in the City of Fruita?[60]



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

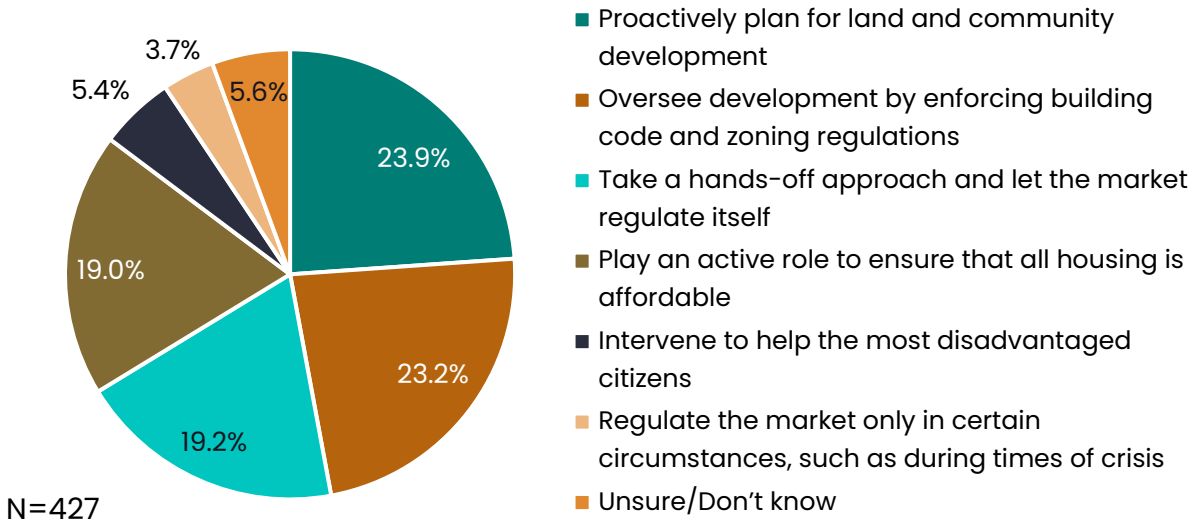
[60] Full text of "Anywhere, if structure is under eight units" was printed as "On any Community Residential lot, as long as the structure is less than eight units" in survey; "Anywhere, if it is a multi-family development" was printed as "On any Community Residential lot, as long as it is a larger, multi-family development."

Figure 8.20: Where would you be in favor of allowing affordable housing at all income levels in the City of Fruita? (Other)



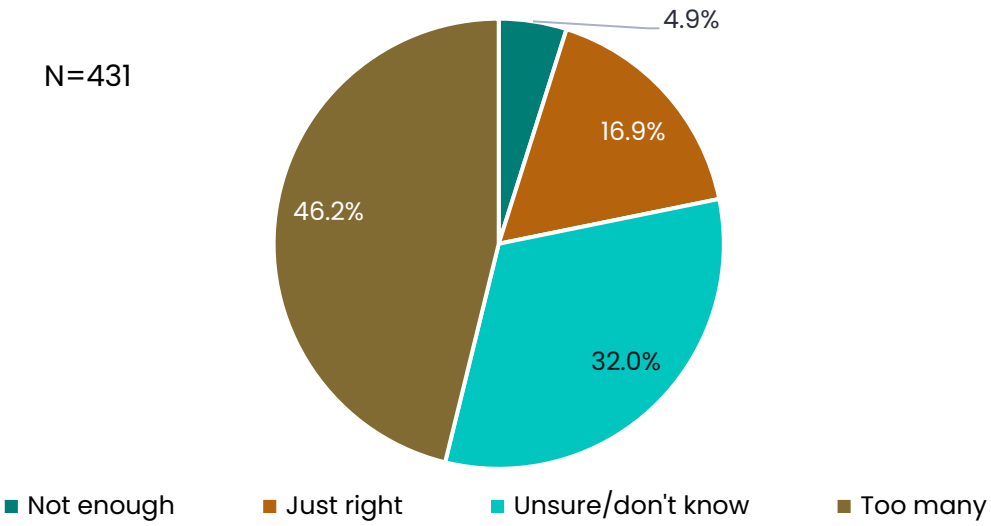
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.21: What should the city government's role be in regulating the housing market?



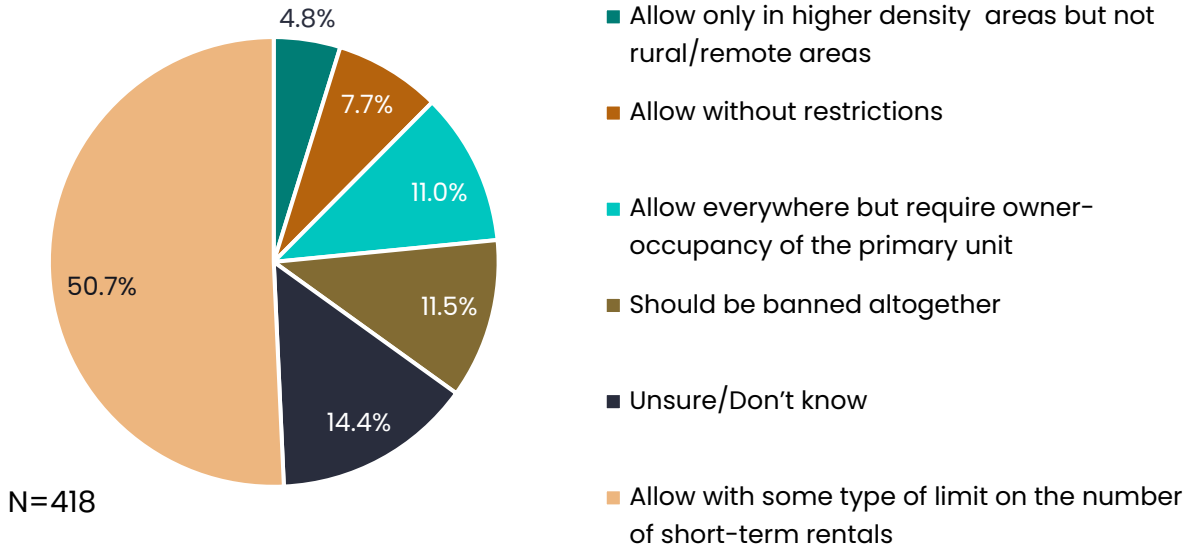
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.22: What is your opinion on the number of short-term rentals within Fruita City limits?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

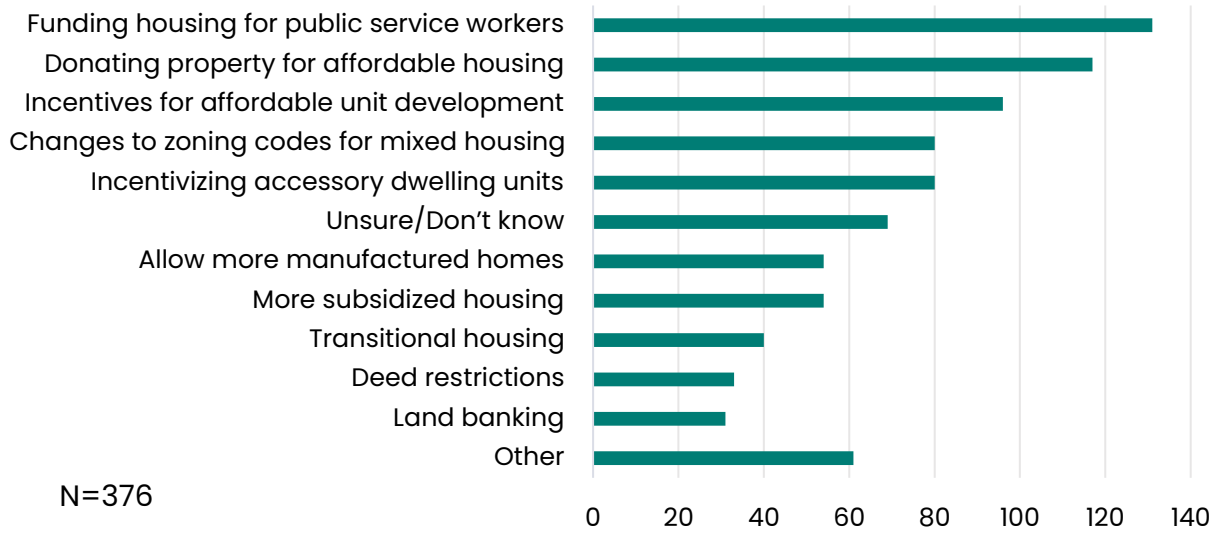
Figure 8.23: What do you believe the city government should do related to short-term rentals in the City?[61]



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

[61] Full text of "Allow with some type of limit on the number of short-term rentals" was printed as "Allow with some type of limit on the number of short-term rentals (current regulations)" in survey; "Allow everywhere but require owner-occupancy of the primary unit" was printed as "Allow everywhere but require owner-occupancy of the primary unit (with the exception of HOA limitations)"; "Allow without restrictions" was printed as "Allow without restrictions (with the exception of HOA limitations)."

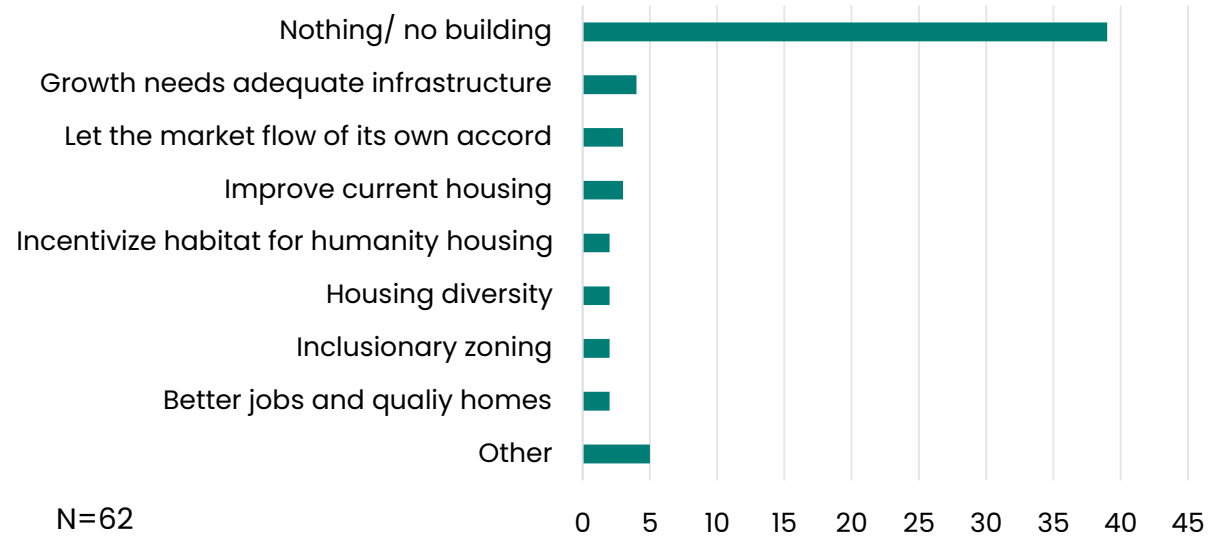
Figure 8.24: What tools would you be in favor of local government or non-profit partners using in order to facilitate more housing?[62]



Source: *Points Consulting, 2025*

[62] Full text of "Funding housing for public service workers" was printed as "Contributing funding to housing for public service and other modest income workers (such as teachers, healthcare workers, and service workers)" in survey; "Donating property for affordable housing" was printed as "Donation or low-cost transfer of land or run-down homes for re-use as affordable homes"; "Incentives for affordable unit development" was printed as "Local government incentives for development of affordable units"; "Changes to zoning codes for mixed housing" was printed as "Changes to zoning code, regulations, and requirements to allow for a mixture of housing types"; "Allow more manufactured homes" was printed as "Allowance of manufactured homes in more areas."

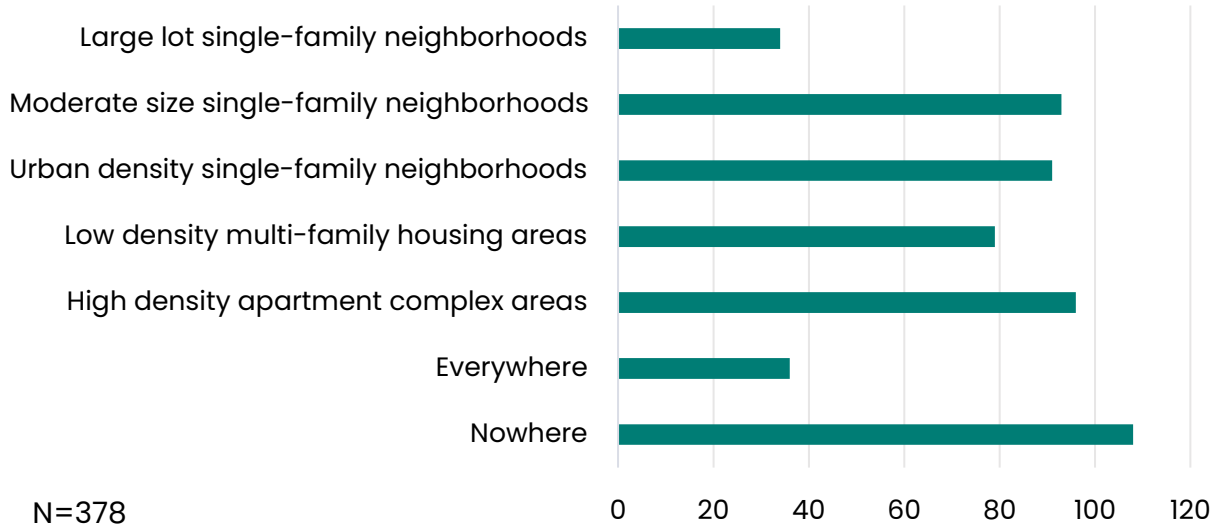
Figure 8.25: What tools would you be in favor of local government or non-profit partners using in order to facilitate more housing? (Other)



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Locational Preference Questions

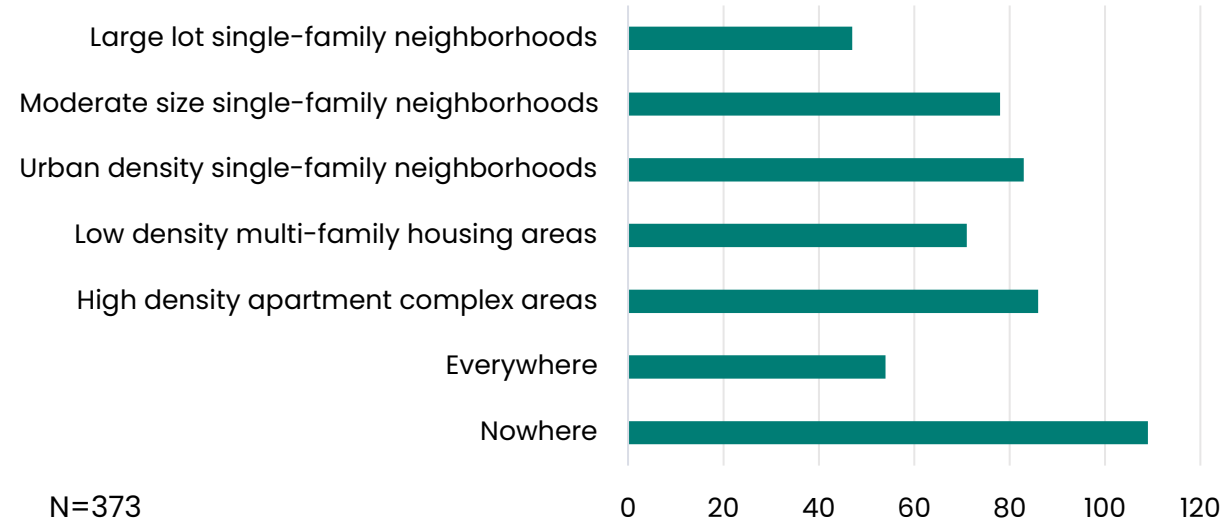
Figure 8.26: What type of neighborhoods in Fruita would be most suitable for the townhomes housing type?[63]



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

[63] Full text of "Moderate sized single-family neighborhoods" was printed as "Moderate sized single-family neighborhoods (quarter-acre to half-acre lots)" in survey; "Urban density single-family neighborhoods" was printed as "Urban density single-family neighborhoods (lots of 6,500 sq. ft and below)"; "Large lot single-family neighborhoods" was printed as "Large lot single-family neighborhoods (half-acre lots and above)."

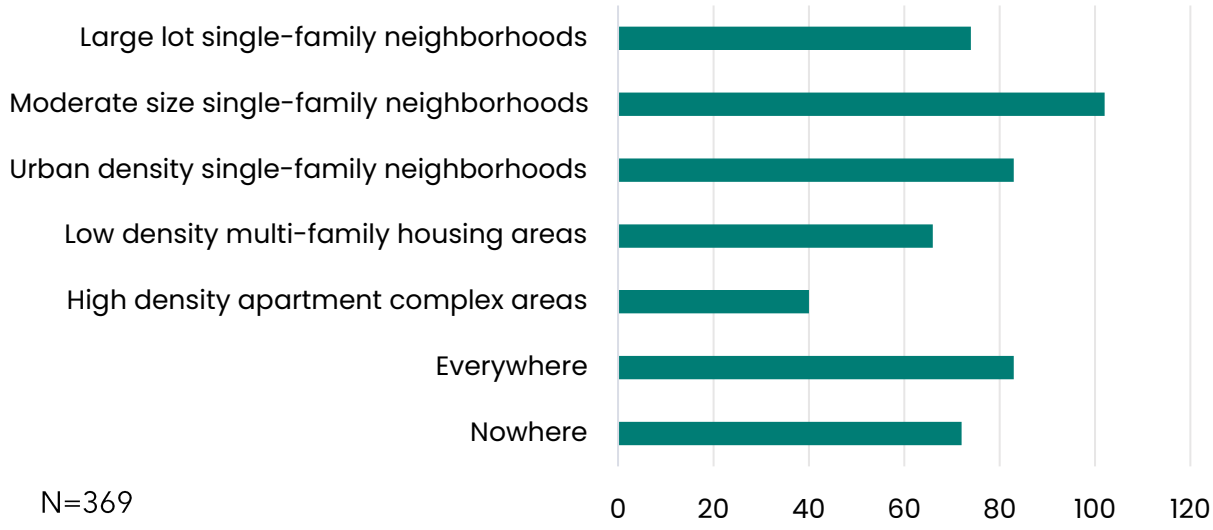
Figure 8.27: What type of neighborhoods in Fruita would be most suitable for the duplex/triplex housing type?[64]



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

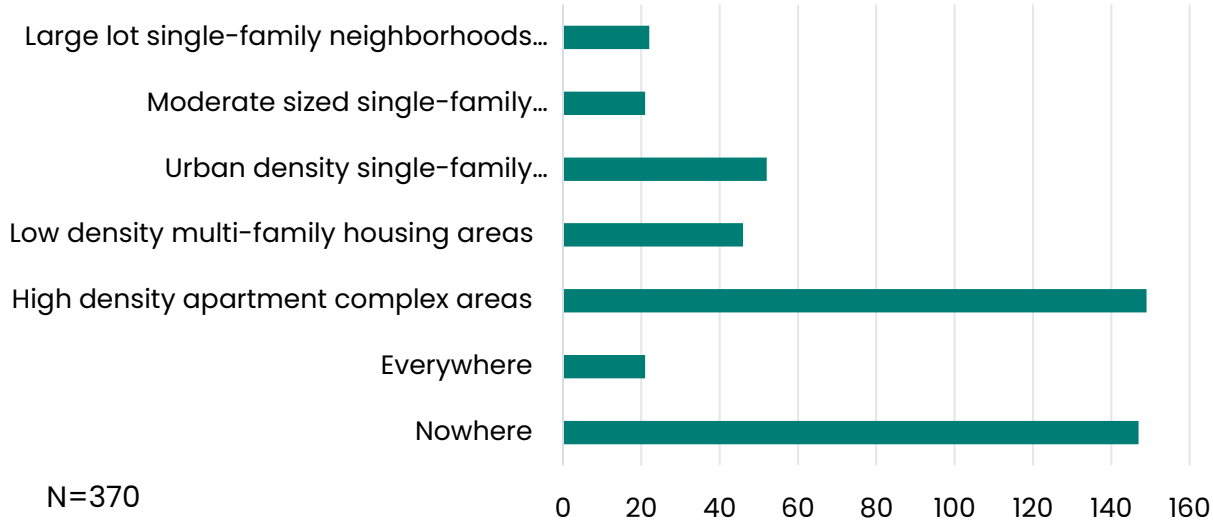
[64] Full text of "Urban density single-family neighborhoods" was printed as "Urban density single-family neighborhoods (lots of 6,500 sq. ft and below)" in survey; "Moderate sized single-family neighborhoods" was printed as "Moderate sized single-family neighborhoods (quarter-acre to half-acre lots)"; "Large lot single-family neighborhoods" was printed as "Large lot single-family neighborhoods (half-acre lots and above)."

Figure 8.28: What type of neighborhoods in Fruita would be most suitable for the cottage housing type?[65]



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

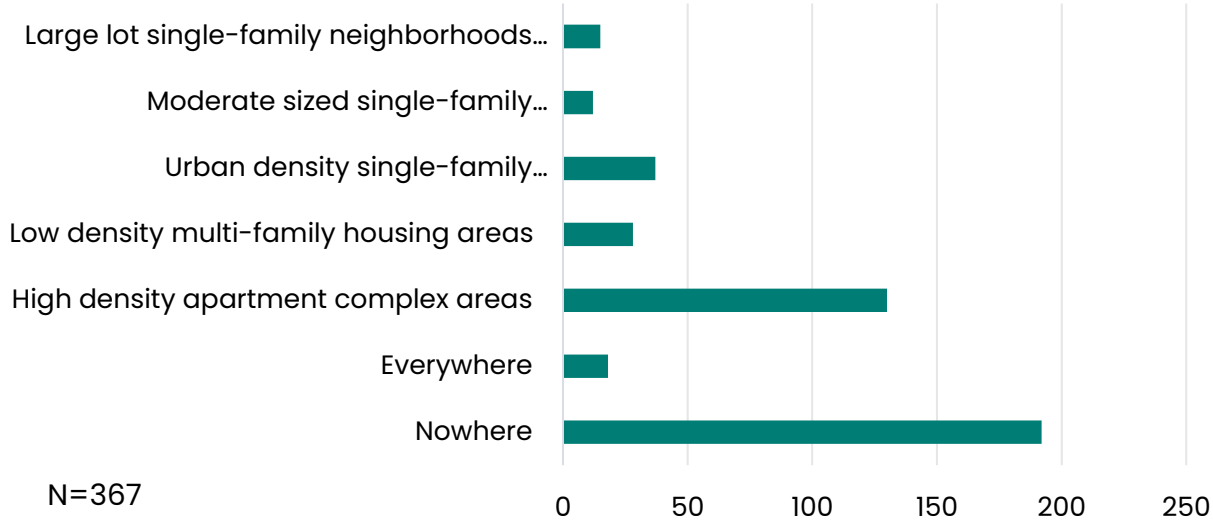
Figure 8.29: What type of neighborhoods in Fruita would be most suitable for the apartments/multi-family housing type?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

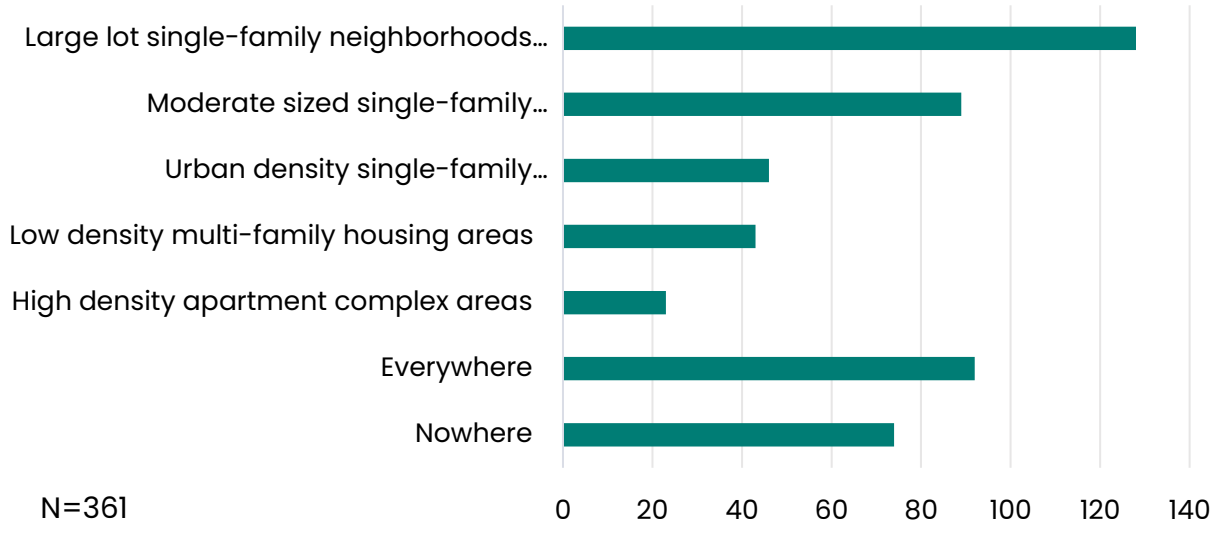
[65] Full text of "Moderate size single-family neighborhoods" was printed as "Moderate sized single-family neighborhoods (quarter-acre to half-acre lots)" in survey; "Urban density single-family neighborhoods" was printed as "Urban density single-family neighborhoods (lots of 6,500 sq. ft and below)"; "Large lot single-family neighborhoods" was printed as "Large lot single-family neighborhoods (half-acre lots and above)."

Figure 8.30: What type of neighborhoods in Fruita would be most suitable for the condominium housing type?



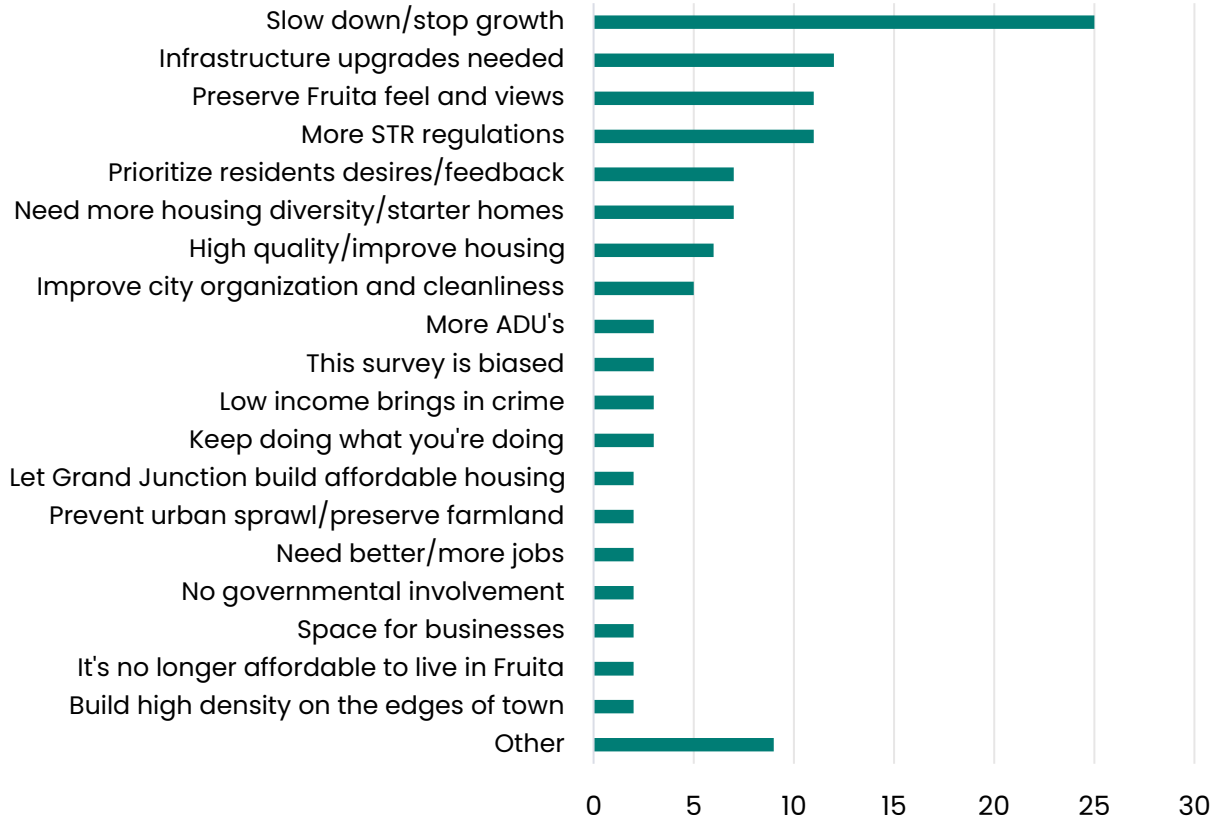
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.31: What type of neighborhoods in Fruita would be most suitable for the accessory dwelling unit (ADU) housing type?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

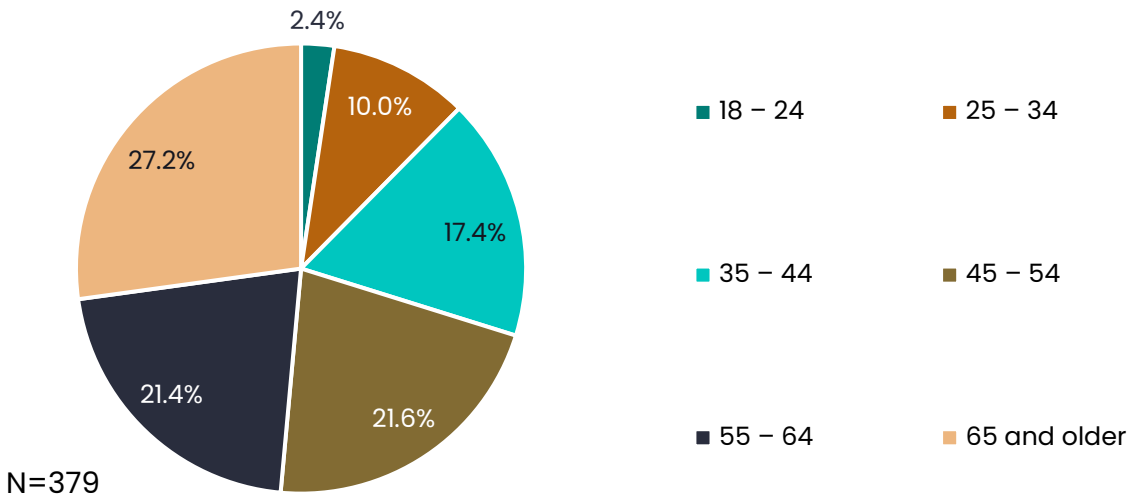
Figure 8.32: Please share any additional thoughts or comments related to housing in Fruita (Open-Ended)



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

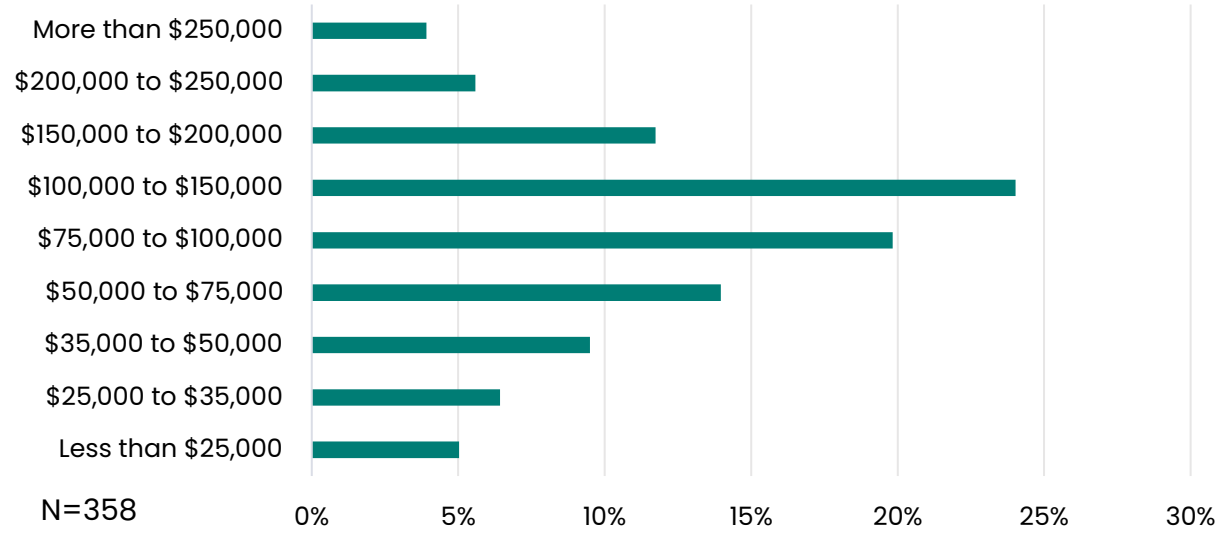
Additional Demographic Questions

Figure 8.33: What is your age?



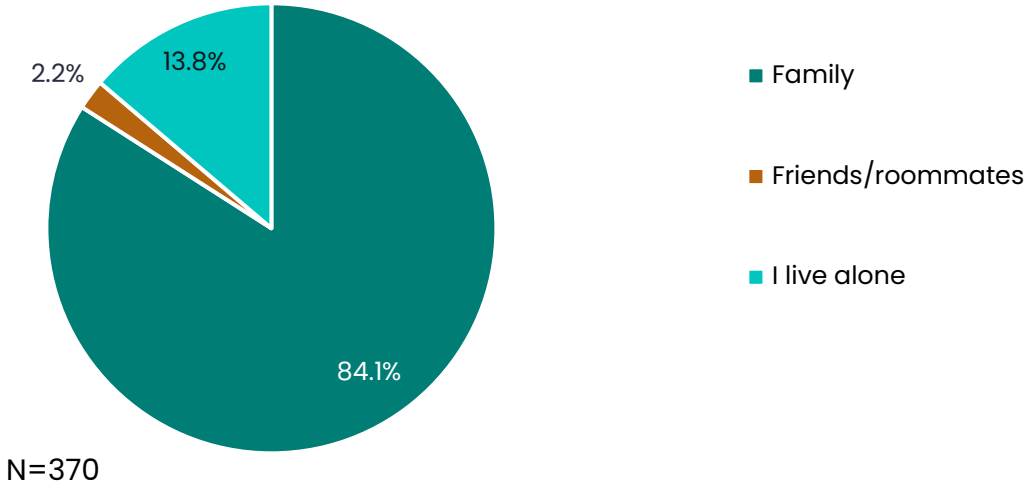
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.34: What is your household's gross annual income?



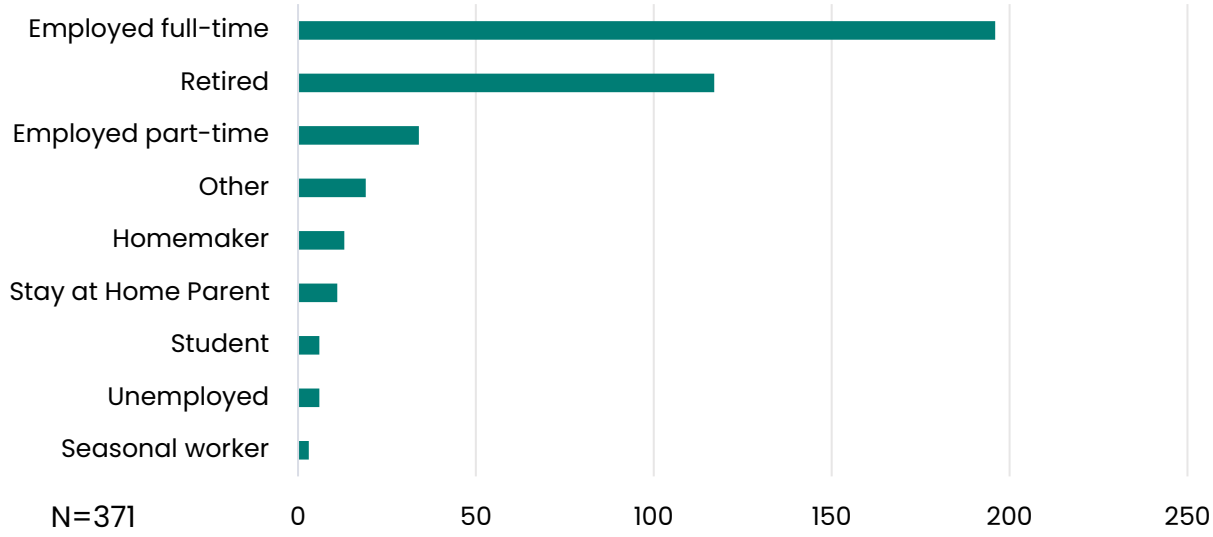
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.35: Who else lives in your home?



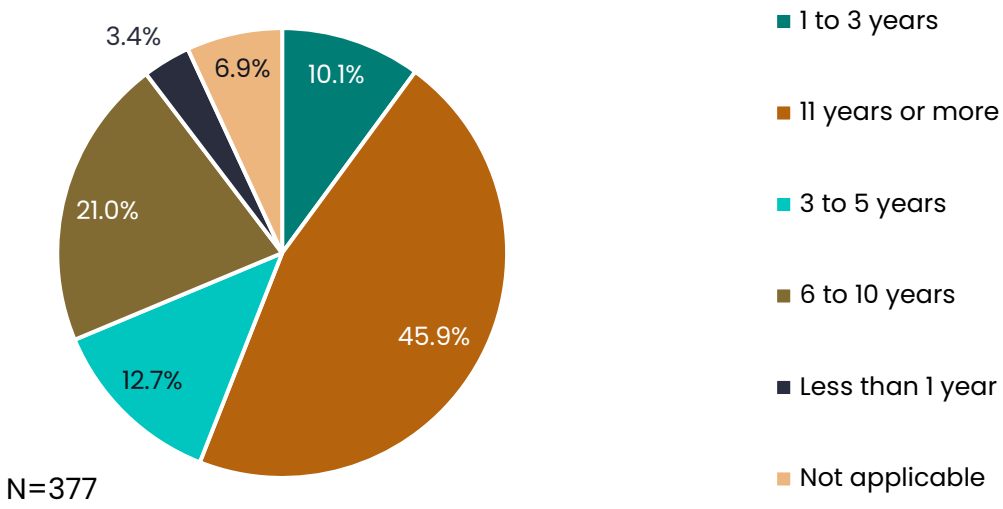
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.36: What is your employment situation?



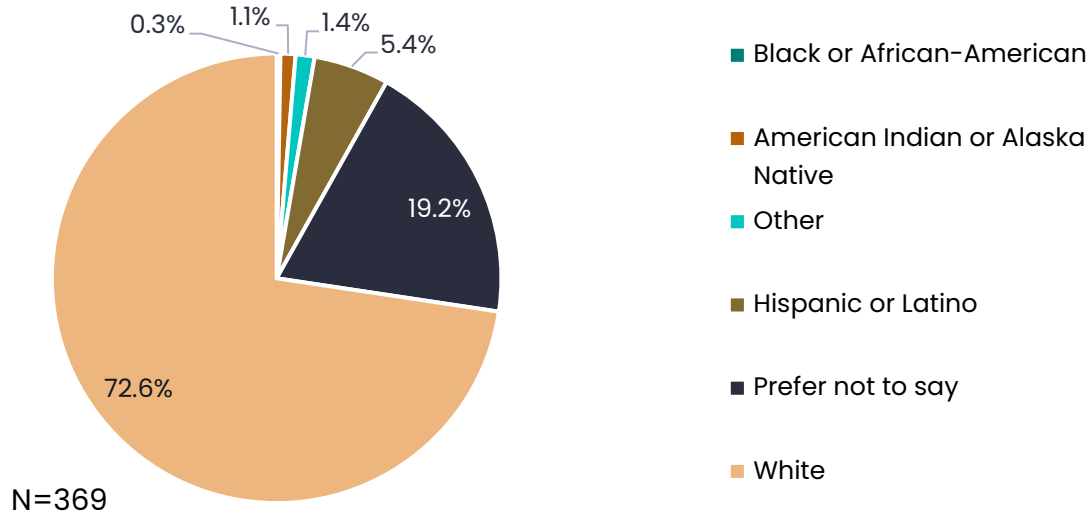
Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.37: How long have you lived in Fruita?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

Figure 8.38: What is your race/ethnicity?



Source: Points Consulting, 2025

9. Literature Review

Past Housing Study

Grand Valley Housing Needs Assessment (2021)[66]

This Housing Needs Assessment conveys demographics and projections for the City of Grand Junction and for Mesa County, which includes Fruita. The region has been a destination for economic development and population growth in recent decades but rising housing prices have outpaced income growth. This trend was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to be a challenge as housing stock remains low relative to demand. Homeownership in the County has declined from 71% in 2010 to 68%, and there is a shortage of 3,736 units for low-income renters in Mesa County.

In terms of employment, 82% of jobs in the County are in service-producing industries, while only 18% are in goods-producing industries. Projected job growth is expected to be concentrated in mid-income occupations.

Planning Documents

Fruita in Motion: City of Fruita Comprehensive Plan (2020)[67]

The City of Fruita values community, security, appreciation for natural beauty, small business support, farming, innovation, uniqueness, quality, and inclusive housing. The City is strongly influenced by agriculture and biking culture.

The key themes of this comprehensive plan are:

- Efficient development
- Community first, tourism second
- A thriving downtown
- Connectivity
- Strategic economic development

Since 2010, Mesa County has experienced major growth in the health care and manufacturing industries as its reliance on the energy industry has declined. Fruita has higher concentrations of jobs in tourism and leisure industries than Mesa County overall, as it serves both as a suburb of Grand Junction and a gateway recreation community.

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[66]Root Policy Research, *Grand Valley Housing Needs Assessment*, June 2021, accessed June 25, 2025, https://www.gjcity.org/DocumentCenter/View/3406/Grand-Valley-Housing-Needs-Assessment-PDF?bidId=.

[67] Fruita, CO, *City of Fruita Comprehensive Plan,* February 2020, accessed June 25, 2025, https://www.fruita.org/679/Fruita-Master-Plans-and-Guiding-Document.

As of 2019, outside of Community Residential zones, most zone densities were well below their maximum allowed densities. The 2020 Plan identified enough vacant acreage within the City limits and urban growth boundary to accommodate 12,810 new units at a density of five units per acre. This is more than enough to meet growth projections for the coming years. Very few downtown buildings have been constructed since 1970.

Land Use & Growth Goals:

1. Remain a freestanding community with a clear separation from other communities in the Grand Valley
2. Infill Development
3. Improve downtown
4. Diversity of housing
5. Support commercial uses in existing commercial areas
6. Revitalize State Highway 6&50 Corridor
7. Development compatibility with natural landscape

Economic Development Goals

1. Downtown Streetscape Improvements Plan
2. Explore funding options for downtown
3. Expand food and grocery options
4. Collaborate with economic development organizations
5. Proactive marketing and recruiting of businesses
6. Incentives policy for targeted industries
7. Support local business growth
8. Reserve areas for long-term commercial growth.
9. Flexibility in zoning
10. Align budget priorities with values

Public Services and Facilities: Fruita in Motion Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7 & 2025 Fruita Community Survey

One requirement of the HAP per SB24-174 is that any applicable HNAs must be considered, along with applicable regional and local plans, and any available assessments of the adequacy of public services and public facilities. The City of Fruita does not have an assessment or plan specific to public services or public facilities, but Chapter 7 of the City's Comprehensive Plan addresses services and infrastructure. PC reviewed this chapter specifically to note the adequacy of public services and facilities in the local jurisdiction.

Since the previous Comprehensive Plan Update, Fruita noted several projects had been undertaken and processes had been changed. Specific projects and changes included:

- New wastewater treatment plant constructed on the west side of the City with a new trunk line completed eastward to meet greatest pressure demands
    - The new trunk line was intended to serve the Iron Wheel development and others along 19 Road
- City departments collaborated with other regional partners, like CPW, Lower Valley Fire District, and BLM
- Impact fees were then higher for residential development than commercial development, but this did not spur significant commercial development
- The Public Works department upgraded electrical wiring downtown to limit the need for generators during community events
- The Lower Valley Fire District has been working closely with the City and was hoping to achieve a Class 3 ISO rating
- Maintaining the mountain water system was becoming increasingly expensive for Public Works
- Fruita is considered a very safe community, evidenced by the fact that many people choose to live there

Goal #1 of this chapter is to provide services efficiently to residents through collaborations with local entities and regional partnerships. This goal is included because the community values that Fruita provides quality services efficiently to its residents and businesses. However, the City is not responsible for many of the key services provided and must therefore work with local entities and partners that provide the services.

Goal #2 is to require new developments to support the provision of infrastructure and services in an efficient and sustainable manner. Reasoning for this goal was that some of the primary goals of the entire Comprehensive Plan are to promote efficient development and infill in order to keep Fruita from sprawling, especially eastward towards Grand Junction. Providing services to new homes and businesses in existing neighborhoods is much less expensive for the community than providing services to lower density sprawling neighborhoods.

Goal #3 is to keep existing infrastructure well-maintained by prioritizing maintenance projects over new infrastructure. Fruita had both a long list of deferred maintenance and new infrastructure projects on the horizon. At the time, limited funding had made infrastructure projects and implementing new projects and plans difficult. So the City needed to include a goal to provide well-maintained infrastructure to support the community.

City Services were also addressed through the City's 2025 Community Survey. Overall, residents appear satisfied with the City's services. The highest levels of satisfaction were the overall quality of garbage collection (88%), the overall quality of City Parks

(87%), the overall quality of the City's recycling program (85%), and overall quality of sewer service (83%).

Other aspects residents were satisfied with include:

- Public Safety: 73% satisfied with overall quality of pedestrian safety and crosswalks
- City Communication: 73% satisfied with the quality of the City Link quarterly newsletter
- Parks, Recreation, and Community Center: 84% satisfied with the maintenance of City parks
- Traffic Flow and Transportation: 79% satisfied with the ease of travel by car and 74% satisfied with pedestrian travel
- Public Works: 87% satisfied with overall cleanliness of City streets and other public areas, 85% satisfied with maintenance of downtown, 75% satisfied with overall availability of irrigation water, and 74% satisfied with snow removal on City streets

Overall, the City clearly has high standards for public services and facilities. Residents have voiced they are satisfied with these services at high rates as well. Additionally, the City has made clear goals to continue the adequacy and efficiency of their services and infrastructure.

City of Fruita Strategic Plan 2024-2027[68]

This plan is updated every two to four years following local elections and outlines goals for the community, economic development, and core service delivery. For economic development and opportunities to live and work in Fruita, the three primary goals are to:

1. Develop economic development models to attract and grow industries
2. Bring more housing options to Fruita
3. Review and consider future growth edges

[68] Fruita, CO, *City of Fruita Strategic Plan 2024–2027*, accessed June 25, 2025, https://www.fruita.org/DocumentCenter/View/2811/City-of-Fruita-Strategic-Plan-2024---2027-PDF.

Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)[69]

Mesa County has the largest population in the region and the most diverse economy, but it also has some of the highest poverty rates and a shortage of affordable and workforce housing.

As of 2020, the region had not yet returned to peak employment levels seen before the 2008 economic recession. Population growth has been slower than Colorado overall. Between 2010 and 2020, Colorado's population grew by 15%, while the AGNC region grew by only 5.9%. The largest concentration of jobs in the region is in Health Services, followed by Retail Trade, Government, and Construction.

The region's economic development priorities are to create a robust and resilient economy, foster vibrant and healthy communities, build a ready and willing workforce, and maintain extraordinary infrastructure.

City of Fruita 2025 Community Survey[70]

The City of Fruita conducts a community survey every four years to ensure that decisions are guided by resident priorities and opinions. Overall, residents report being very satisfied with the City. Over 90% rated their quality of life in Fruita as "good" or "excellent". Additionally, in 13 out of the 14 major city service categories, more than 50% of residents were "satisfied" or "very satisfied."

Survey analysis identified three top priorities for the City, based on importance and satisfaction ratings:

1. Managing growth and development
2. Improving traffic flow and reducing congestion
3. Enhancing the quality of city streets

When asked what influenced their decision to live in Fruita, residents most often cited the small-town atmosphere, neighborhood safety, and housing affordability. However, 70% expressed concern about rising housing prices, and 53% disagreed with the statement, "Fruita has affordable housing options for all income levels."

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[69] Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado, *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*, 2021, accessed June 25, 2025, https://agnc.org/images/uploads/2021-CEDS-Full-Document.pdf.

[70] ETC Institute, *City of Fruita 2025 Community Survey Findings Report,* June 2025, https://www.fruita.org/DocumentCenter/View/3789/2025-Fruita-Community-Survey-Full-Report.

Fruita Mews Case Study[71]

The Fruita Mews was the first Housing Tax Credit development in Fruita, built to provide the community with high-quality affordable housing. This 11-building development includes 50 all-electric units. Nine of these are one-bedroom, 31 are two-bedroom, and 11 are three-bedroom units. The development is equipped to accommodate solar power installations in the future. The total development cost was approximately $22.9 million, with an annual per-unit cost of $5,230. This is notably lower than the Mesa County average of $7,419. The Fruita Mews is widely considered a model for delivering high-quality affordable housing. Additionally, the development process was enhanced by effective community engagement and collaborative partnerships.

[71] Colorado Multifamily Affordable Housing Electrification Hub, *Fruita Mews Case Study,* accessed June 25, 2025, https://multifamily-ehub.chfainfo.com/sites/default/files/assets/case/fruita_mews_case_study.pdf.

Appendix A: In-Depth Data & Methodology

Housing Needs by Income Level Methodology

The following is a description of our full methodology for reaching our housing needs by income level forecast for the City of Fruita, Colorado. 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.[72] Our team then charted each AMI for Mesa 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.1). 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.2.

Once a baseline was established for AMI tabulation, we pulled household income distributions consistent specifically with households in the City of Fruita 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 Fruita.[73] 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.

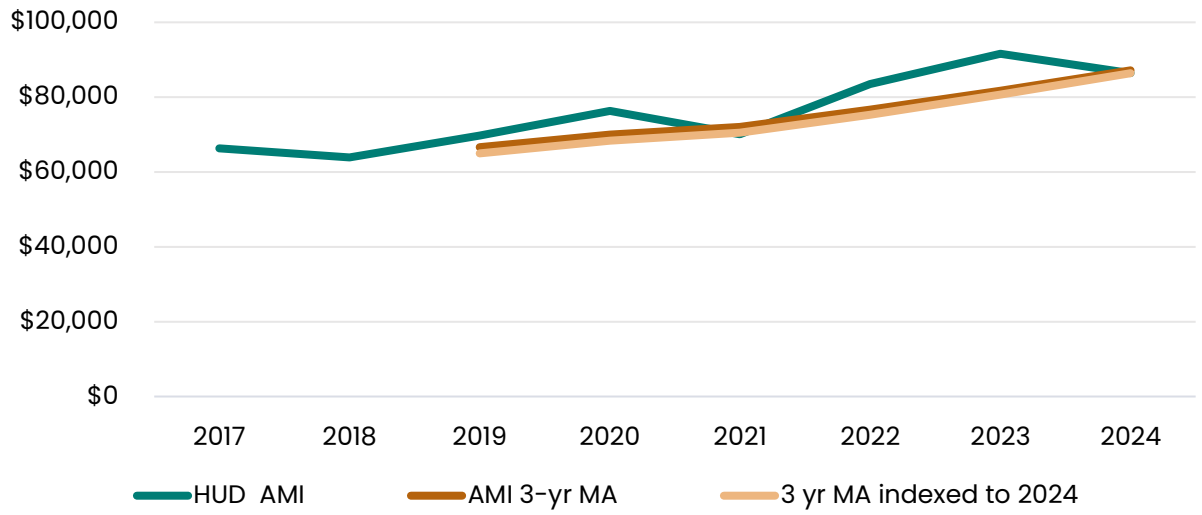
These final, current estimates then represented the number of households needed by AMI level to ensure all households were not cost-burdened. The final count for units

[72] "Income Limits," Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html.
[73] "Consolidated Planning/CHAS Data," Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html.

needed (regardless of AMI level) was approximately 868 units. This estimate did not match up with our forecast of actual needs based on demand for the next 10 years. To 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 10 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 3.2 and Figure A.3).

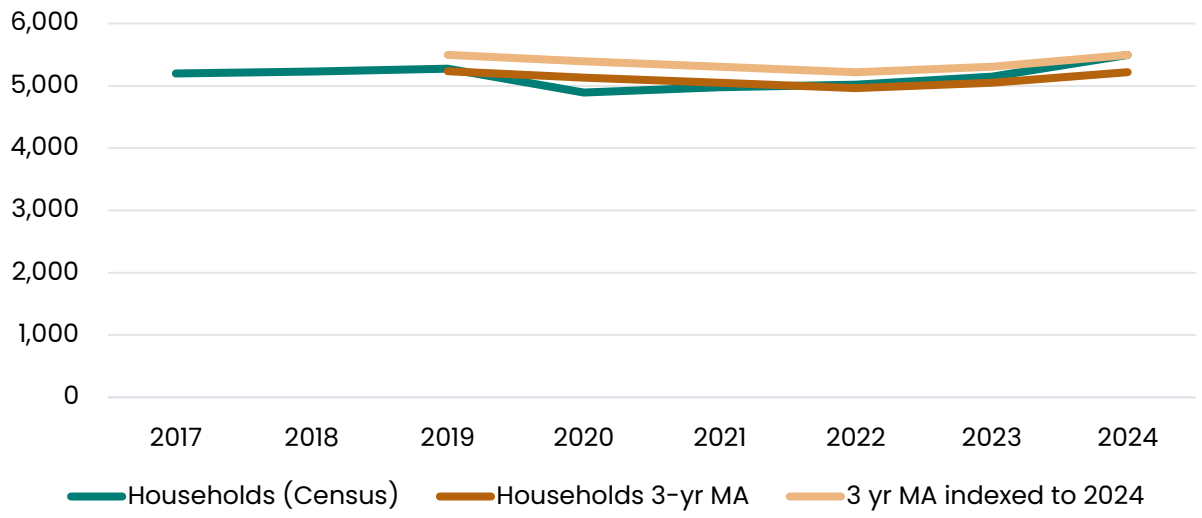
The distribution was truly what would play out based on currently cost-burdened households, while also accounting for the fact that private market development would happen alongside it. The distribution was then applied to each growth scenario housing needs forecast to fit the needed distribution to our estimates of forecasted housing demand.

Figure A.1: HUD Area Median Incomes for AMI-Level Tabulation



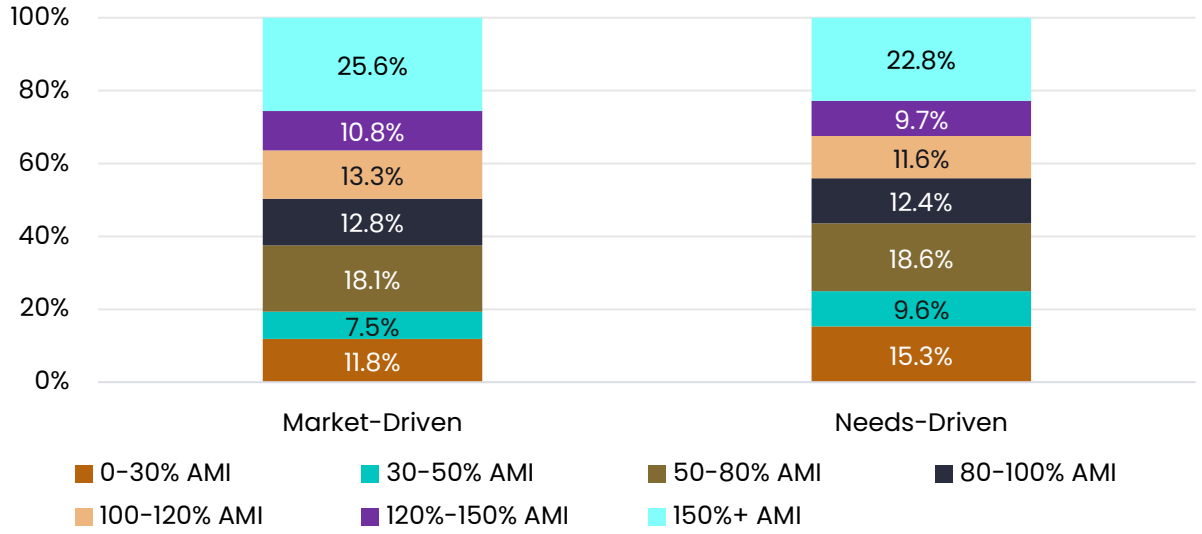
Source: Points Consulting using HUD Income Limits, 2017-2024

Figure A.2: Number of Households for AMI-Level Tabulation



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau 2017-2023, Esri Business Analyst 2024

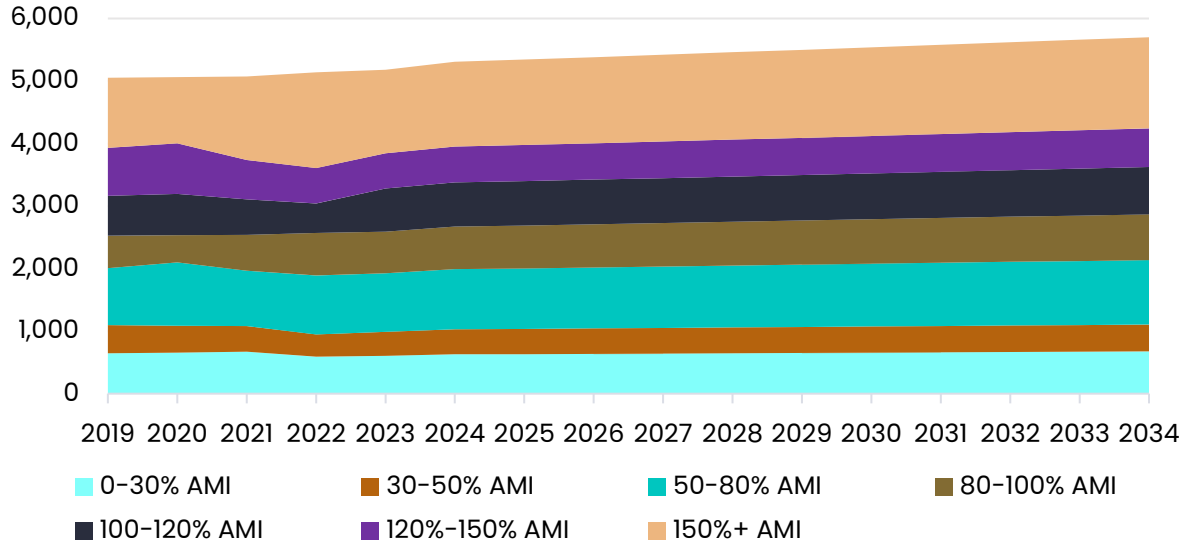
Figure A.3: Market-Driven AMI Distribution vs. Needs-Driven AMI Distribution



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

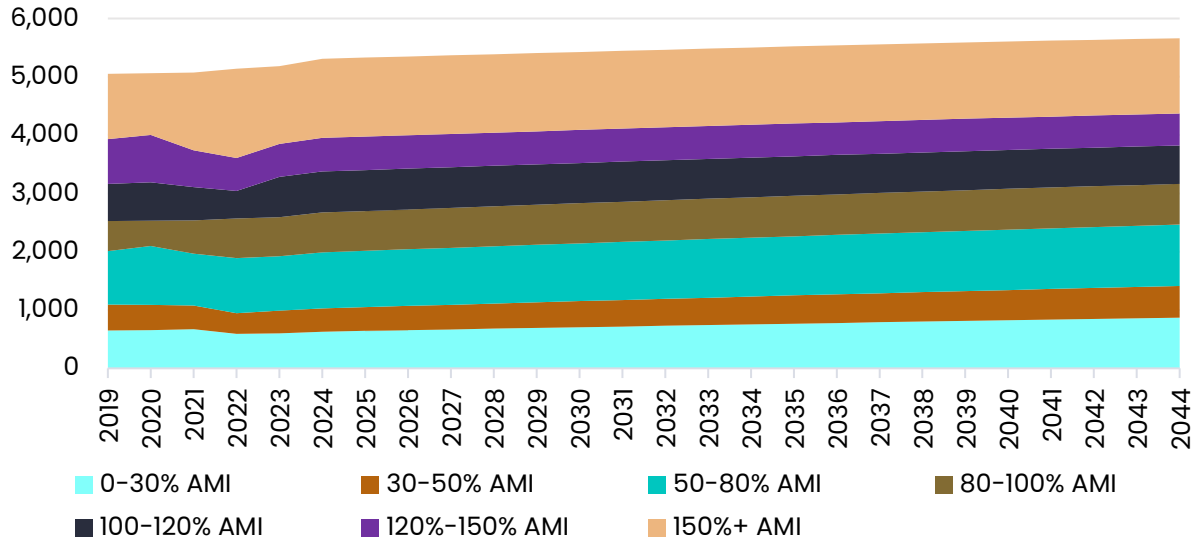
Figure A.4 through Figure A.6 illustrate additional data for the housing needs by income level forecast for the City of Fruita not included in the body of the report. Table A.1 through Table A.3 report additional data for the housing needs forecast by income level by tenure for the City of Fruita not included in the body of the report.

Figure A.4: Potential Growth, Market-Driven Housing Needs Forecast, 2024-2034



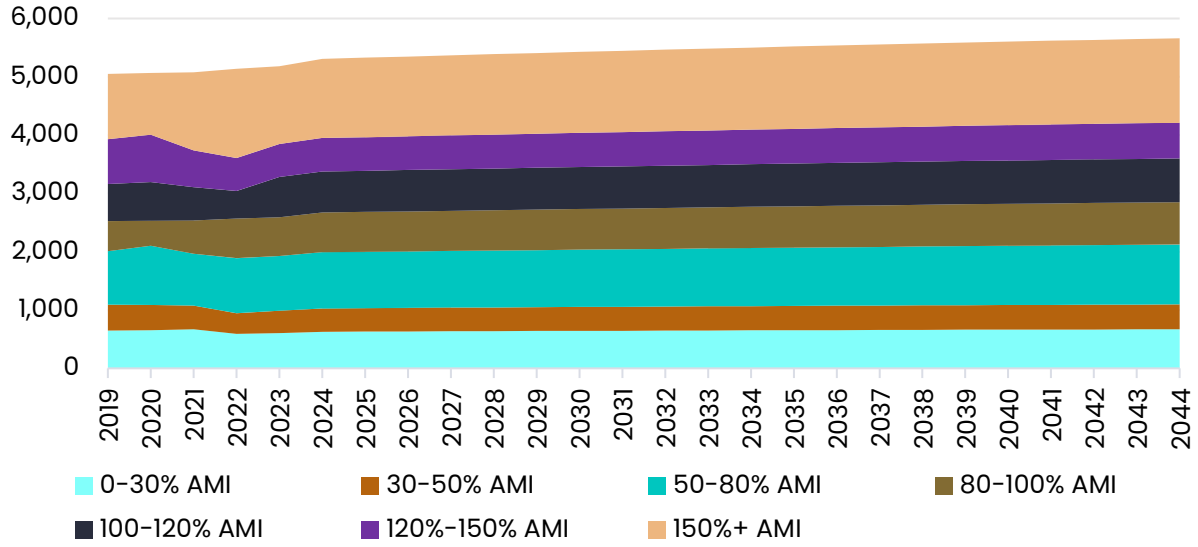
Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, HUD CHAS Data, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

Figure A.5: Expected Growth, Needs-Driven Housing Needs Forecast, 2024-2034



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, HUD CHAS Data, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

Figure A.6: Expected Growth, Market-Driven Housing Needs Forecast, 2024-2034



Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, HUD CHAS Data, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

Table A.1: Potential Growth, Market-Driven Housing Needs by AMI Level by Tenure, City of Fruita, 2024-2034

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2034
Rentals			
0-30% AMI	629	675	46
30-50% AMI	182	196	13
50-80% AMI	315	338	23
80-100% AMI	38	41	3
100-120% AMI	40	43	3
120-150% AMI	11	12	1
150%+ AMI	226	242	17
Total	**1,441**	**1,547**	**106**
Ownership			
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	218	234	16
50-80% AMI	647	694	47
80-100% AMI	644	691	47
100-120% AMI	665	714	49
120-150% AMI	563	604	41
150%+ AMI	1,133	1,216	83
Total	**3,869**	**4,153**	**284**
Grand Total	**5,310**	**5,700**	**390**

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, HUD CHAS Data, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

Table A.2: Expected Growth, Needs-Driven Housing Needs by AMI Level by Tenure, City of Fruita, 2024-2034

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2034
Rentals			
0-30% AMI	629	754	126
30-50% AMI	182	217	35
50-80% AMI	315	331	16
80-100% AMI	38	39	1
100-120% AMI	40	38	(1)
120-150% AMI	11	11	0
150%+ AMI	226	220	(6)
Total	**1,441**	**1,611**	**170**
Ownership			
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	218	260	42
50-80% AMI	647	679	33
80-100% AMI	644	654	10
100-120% AMI	665	642	(23)
120-150% AMI	563	551	(12)
150%+ AMI	1,133	1,105	(28)
Total	**3,869**	**3,891**	**22**
Grand Total	**5,310**	**5,502**	**192**

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, HUD CHAS Data, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

Table A.3: Expected Growth, Market-Driven Housing Needs by AMI Level by Tenure, City of Fruita, 2024-2034

AMI Category	Existing Housing	Projected Housing Needs	New Units Needed by 2034
Rentals			
0-30% AMI	629	651	23
30-50% AMI	182	189	7
50-80% AMI	315	326	11
80-100% AMI	38	40	1
100-120% AMI	40	41	1
120-150% AMI	11	12	0
150%+ AMI	226	234	8
Total	**1,441**	**1,493**	**52**
Ownership			
0-30% AMI	0	0	0
30-50% AMI	218	226	8

50-80% AMI	647	670	23
80-100% AMI	644	667	23
100-120% AMI	665	689	24
120-150% AMI	563	583	20
150%+ AMI	1,133	1,174	41
Total	**3,869**	**4,009**	**140**
Grand Total	**5,310**	**5,502**	**192**

Source: Points Consulting using U.S. Census Bureau, HUD CHAS Data, DOLA, CDC WONDER, and NVSS

Appendix B: Table of Figures & Tables

Appendix C: Public Hearing Notes, January 20, 2026

Henry Hemphill- Gratitude for participation of all parties in the HNA and HAP, and expression of hope that this document is helpful to guide and shape the future of Fruita's housing

Presentation following slides

Clarifying questions on Housing Needs by AMI and Rental Market slides from Council

Public Comment:

Thomas Wells: Expressed support for the HNA & HAP citing valuable data, analysis, and insights in the reports. Believes it will be a very useful document for Fruita.

Council Comments and Questions:

Hancey: With the documents provided, is there anything to provide to potential developers? The report is 200 pages so that wouldn't be helpful.

PC: 5-6 page executive summary is designed to summarize in a way that would be helpful to developers.

Purser: Fruita has more projected housing from current lots that could be developed in the next 10-15 years than identified need by the study. 790 units expected to be built over the next few years compared to the 390 needed

Purser: AMI value in the report is for the county, it would be lower for the City of Fruita

PC: Yes, The HUD AMI number is only available for the County and is based on a family of four. It is around $94K. Census median household income for Fruita is closer to $77K however this is not directly comparable as it's for an average household not family of four.

Mayor: How do available services (water, hospital, grocery store) play into the housing potential?

PC: We talked with Ute water to verify that there would be enough water for growth. This would be something to discuss with providers. Too much for the scope of this study, but work with providers to verify capacity

Mayor: What would be next steps/guidance of where to actually put this needed housing?

PC: Workforce housing tend to be needed near jobs, inner triangle is where jobs are located. It depends on land you have to work with and where it can go. Focusing on redevelopment opportunities would be useful for workforce housing specifically and can help with utility and service needs.

Mayor: Trying to balance that everyone says they want affordable housing but not in their own backyard.

Quigley: Community education can help, didn't see any examples of where this has worked. Would have been nice for residents to have during the project/community survey.

Miller: At the core we have these mixed housing types already. People just don't know that they already have it in their midst. It is our responsibility to explain this.

PC: AMI and affordable housing have become very convoluted and heated discussions. Affordable housing can mean making it affordable for average households, not just tiny apartments.

Hemphill: Open houses from the past comprehensive plan showed community goals were to diversify housing. Have seen progressive change towards meeting the goals of the comp plan. This HAP will further the good things Fruita was doing and achieve the results desired by the community.

Parrish: Housing has been a hot topic since I started on the council

Williams: Only information that isn't there but would be interested in, how many homes are secondary investments and owned by people outside of Fruita?

Purser: Henry has data from Points on STRs of where those homes would fit in the affordability levels.

Vassen: One option to find that for second homes as well would be looking at water use data. Houses not using water all year may be secondary homes.

Williams: If we did go through the data and find that we had a lot of these secondary homes, what recommendation would you have to help prevent that or deal with that kind of situation?

PC: Unsure of legality in Colorado, but could adopt a vacant and abandoned ordinance charging fees on top of property tax to those who own but don't live in the home.

Geiger: Colorado has TABER, so if Council is inclined to look into that road, it will be an uphill battle. Could be something with sewer fees, if they leave town, they can't turn it off whereas currently they can. TABER is unique to Colorado and always throws a wrench in these kinds of things.