FINAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Prepared by:

WSW CONSULTING

WILLIFORD, LLC
land use & affordable housing

Rees Consulting, Inc.

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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

The City of Alamosa (City) commissioned a Housing Needs Assessment (Assessment) and Action Plan to understand current housing conditions and work towards solutions to address the housing challenges that people in the community are facing. This Assessment takes a comprehensive look at current housing conditions and the factors that are shaping the housing market. The next phase of the work will be the Action Plan, which will focus on solutions.

DEFINING WHAT HOUSEHOLDS CAN AFFORD IN ALAMOSA

This Assessment centers on the understanding of what households can afford for housing in Alamosa, and explores where their needs are being met, and where there are gaps. It uses the definition that housing is affordable when the monthly payment (rent or mortgage) is equal to no more than 30% of a household's gross income (i.e., income before taxes).

The affordable rents and purchase prices for two-person households are as follows.

Incomes and Housing Affordability

Household Income (2 people)	Percent Area Median Income (AMI)	Max Rent	Max Purchase Price
$0 to $28,400	<50%	$710	$125,200
$28,401 to $45,400	50.1-80%	$1,278	$200,400
$45,401 to $68,200	80.1-120%	$1,704	$300,600
$68,201 to $113,600	120.1-200%	$2,840	$500,900
>$113,600	>200%		

Source: HUD, Consultant team

Note: Max purchase price assumes 30-year mortgage at 5.5% with 5% down and 20% of the payment covering taxes, HOA, PMI and insurance.

DEMOGRAPHICS, THE ECONOMY AND THE HOUSING MARKET

Over the past twenty years, there has been a decline of working age people in their 30s and 40s, which is linked to employer's observations that finding and keeping qualified employees is a major challenge. A shortage of housing choices that are attractive to and attainable by working households contributes to this dynamic. With more investment in attractive workforce housing, Alamosa might entice more young working people to put down roots in the community. These "workforce" housing choices include high quality rentals priced between $700 and $1,400/month and first-time homebuyer opportunities in the $150,000 - $275,000 range.

The presence of Adams State University (ASU) and Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) contribute to a young population (median age of 28, compared to median age of 37 for Colorado). Investment in attractive and attainable housing could help to retain this potential workforce as they graduate from high school and college and begin their careers. These investments in housing could in turn support growth in area entrepreneurship, professional jobs, and economic growth.

Prior to COVID-19, jobs and wages had grown steadily since 2010. Between 2010 and 2019, jobs grew at about 1.5% per year, and average wages increased about 2.5% per year. Unfortunately, individuals and households have not been able to realize much increased quality of life from these gains, because housing prices have increased faster than wages. Many households are facing increasing burdens as rents and home prices trend upwards. About half of renters and a third of owners pay more than 30% of their income on housing.

A number of dynamics are contributing to the tight housing market and increased housing costs:

- Building of new homes has not kept pace with jobs and population growth – the rate of new residential development has only been 1.2% annually over the past 10 years.
- Low vacancy is driving increased rental rates (current average asking rent is $774 compared to $577 in 2009), and landlords are increasingly selective about to whom they will rent.
- Home prices are on the rise, and there is almost no inventory of homes for sale that are affordable to households earning local wages. The larger size of homes on the market also means higher prices. For 2019, the median sale price was $207,000. In October 2020 the median asking price is $328,950. Only eight homes were listed that would be affordable for households with incomes of less than $68,200.
- The high cost of construction means that private developers can only deliver new housing to the highest income segment of the population.
- The transition from renting to owning has become harder: with higher rents, households have fewer opportunities to save for down payments, while homeownership opportunities are growing more elusive with almost no homes available at attainable price points.
- The transition from receiving rental assistance to living in market rate housing has also become harder. Service providers observe a "cliff effect" that disincentivizes full time work and career advancement for households that are receiving public assistance for housing, food, and/or healthcare.

The addition of The Flats at Iron Horse, new proposed market rate rentals, and future Self Help Housing for homeownership through the Colorado Rural Housing Development Corporation (CRHDC) are both on track to make a positive impact for households in the 50-100% Area Median Income (AMI) range, which are typically working households.

HOUSING INVENTORY

Two major themes emerged from analysis of the housing inventory:

(1) The inventory for homeownership is lacking in quality and variety. Households of all sizes and incomes are stuck competing for similar products: mostly mid-size single family homes with three bedrooms. Homes are mostly older, with more than half built before 1980, which contributes to wear, tear, and a need for renovation. Increasing the diversity of the housing stock with more duplexes, townhouses, condos, small units for starting out and downsizing would help to create choices for buyers and differentiation within the market. Residential development anticipated in 2021 continues the trend of single family for homeownership and apartments for renters, where both owners and renters could benefit from more "missing middle" housing types and price points.

(2) A higher proportion of rental units have been added to the inventory compared to new homes for ownership in the past decade. This growth is not surprising, as it responds to market need

for additional rental inventory, and is beneficial in stabilizing rising rents and alleviating very low vacancy rates. Additional rental housing is needed for the large demographic of low-income renters (74% of renters have incomes below 80% AMI). However, Alamosa should balance new rental housing with similar levels of new homes for ownership, if retaining the historic ratio of renters and owners in the community is desired. Creating opportunities for individuals, families, and young couples to move into homeownership will also free up rental inventory for students, existing households that are struggling to find rental housing, and people moving to the area for employment.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

This Assessment delves into the existing resources dedicated to several special populations, including elderly, disabled, veterans, and homeless. Many organizations are hard at work to serve these individuals and households, and the needs in Alamosa are extensive. The organizations serving these groups have all identified housing, and housing enriched with services, as a major challenge and much needed resource for their clients. Many housing strategies are already in place, while others are being proposed and explored.

Identifying the specific needs for each special group will require a full assessment of each population, which was beyond the scope of this study. Based on interviews with special needs providers and available information, however, the following potential housing needs were identified and should be further explored:

- Seniors - Subsidized rentals for lower-income seniors are in short supply. Affordable purchase options for seniors to downsize that are in good condition are also scarce. Providing ownership and rental options for seniors to downsize can free up existing homes and apartments for families and create a more attractive choice for aging in place.
- People living with disabilities - Many persons with disabilities need assistance to upgrade their homes to accommodate their disability. The current program through the San Luis Valley Housing Coalition (SLVHC) limits assistance to $24,999 absent a waiver, whereas improvements often cost more than this. Strengthening this existing program and ensuring newly built rental housing has ample accessible units should be a priority.
- Veterans – Many vulnerable veterans in the community can benefit from additional housing support and behavioral health services. Housing combined with behavioral health and job training support can help struggling Veterans.
- Homeless - To help persons break the cycle of homelessness, Alamosa has a significant need for supportive housing, and appears well positioned to pursue this strategy. Investing in permanent supportive housing is a proven strategy to increase positive outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, and other extremely low income and vulnerable households. This approach also reduces the burden on high-cost public services. Further refinement of population(s) to be served, location, funding, and ongoing roles is recommended in the Action Plan phase. Populations to consider include youth, veterans, single people, and families with children.
- Agricultural Workers - Seasonal housing options or dorms could assist the estimated 70 migrant workers in Alamosa County (county) in 2019 and could be in the form of programs to help employers provide options. However, programs to improve local workforce reliability, motivation to undertake agricultural jobs, and help with State of Colorado (State) certification

(for higher paying cannabis jobs) could help employers hire local employees that already have housing – seasonal agricultural workforce needs are not solely housing based.

- Students – University and college students helps drive up rental occupancies in Alamosa when school is in session, which is the case in any community with higher education opportunities. Over 2,200 ASU students (about 63% of students) do not reside on campus and either live with their parents or relatives in the Valley or find homes or apartments to rent. TSJC does not provide on-campus housing, although international students may live in ASU dorms. Additional on-campus housing can reduce competition for market rate rentals in the city. Dorms are an unlikely option given that undergraduate enrollment has been declining and existing ASU dorms are not fully occupied during the school year. Family apartments, which are typically fully occupied, may be a consideration provided enrollment trends support more housing.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACTION PLANNING

As the City and local stakeholders' transition from assessing current housing conditions and needs to drafting their proposed action plan, the following should be considered:

- Between 444 to 514 housing units for residents and employees are needed by 2026, or an average of about 80 to 100 units per year. Alamosa has been adding an average of about 44 units annually since 2010. In the Action Planning phase, policy makers and local stakeholders should consider setting a goal that lands somewhere between historic production and 100% fulfillment of these needs projections, taking funding, land, and other local resources into consideration.
- Public/private partnerships are likely needed to overcome the high cost of construction compared to the rental and sale prices needed locally.
- Over the past 40 years, there has been considerable investment in subsidized housing. This approach should be balanced with investing in young workers and families to help grow jobs and create more synergy between housing self-sufficiency and economic vibrancy. A greater focus on "missing middle" housing types and price points for rent and ownership is recommended.
- Greater diversity of housing for sale and for rent is needed. This includes variations in housing size (more small units) and different housing types (more attached housing for sale, accessory dwelling units and medium density housing for rent, consideration of mobile homes and manufactured housing).
- Additional rentals for very low-income households are also needed. Recruiting and retaining additional Housing Choice Vouchers to the community can help to bridge the gap between what renters can afford and the cost to construct new rental housing. More on-campus housing would also address student housing needs, which is a distinct group competing for affordably priced rentals.
- Policy makers should be mindful to promoting diversity and inclusion in all neighborhoods to reverse historic racial and economic disparities.

Current and Projected Housing Needs

This section evaluates how many housing units are needed, and at which price points, to address housing deficiencies in the city to support residents, businesses and the economy. This section builds upon and summarizes the analysis in subsequent sections of the report.

Needs are projected through 2026 and quantified in two categories:

Catch-Up Needs – the number of housing units needed to address current deficiencies in housing based on the number of ownership and rental units needed to provide a functional housing market.

Keep-Up Needs – the number of units needed to keep-up with future demand for housing based on projected job and related resident growth and jobs that will be vacated by retiring employees. Housing shortages worsen when local job growth and the need for more workers exceeds the growth in available housing units.

CATCH-UP NEEDS (CURRENT CONDITIONS)

Unfilled jobs

Employer survey respondents reported that about 3% of jobs were unfilled. This equates to about 250 unfilled jobs in the city.

About 130 housing units are needed to house employees filling 250 jobs. Due to the recent loss of jobs due to COVID-19, as jobs come back, many will likely be filled by un- or under-employed residents in the area. Employers hiring for skilled and upper-level positions in particular, however, will benefit from having additional housing units available to help recruit new workers to the area. Although the unemployment rate dropped from a high of 9.6% in April to 5.3% in October, it is still well above the unemployment rate in October 2019 (2.9%) (see Employment section).

As the number of jobs recover, many jobs will be filled by persons living locally who are currently unemployed. If the unemployment rate drops back to 2.9%, then about 100 currently unemployed people living in Alamosa County may take jobs in the city as employment recovers. These employees already have housing in the area.

COVID-19 Employment Recovery	
October 2020 labor force in Alamosa County	9,050
# currently unemployed (5.3% unemployment rate)	476
# unemployed at 2.9% unemployment	262
Difference (available Alamosa County labor pool)	214
% of total Alamosa County labor force working in Alamosa	46%
Local labor pool that is likely to fill jobs in Alamosa	100
Housing units occupied by local labor pool (1.7 employees per employed household)	58

Source: Local area unemployment statistics (LAUS), Census LEHD, Consultant Team

Units Needed to Help Fill Vacant Jobs	
Unfilled jobs	250
Jobs per worker	1.1
Employees per employed household	1.7
Housing units needed	130
Local unemployment recovery	58
Adjusted housing units needed	72

This figure of 58 households already living in Alamosa who will return to the labor pool during the economic recovery is used to adjust the overall number of units needed to fill vacant jobs as shown at left.

Functional Rental Market (5% Vacancy)

The current rental market in the city is not functional because vacancies average less than 3%. When the vacancy rate is this low, the rental market is near capacity and cannot absorb new residents or employees moving to the area. This results in several issues:

- Renters have difficulty moving from one unit to another as their circumstances change,
- New employees struggle to find housing when hired, impacting businesses and the economy,
- Rents increase at rates much faster than incomes,
- Renters displaced due to owners selling rentals, condemnation, disasters (e.g., the recent Walsh fire destroying 20 units) or other reasons have few or no options, and
- Landlords have little incentive to make repairs and capital investments.

Rentals Needed for a Functional Market	
Renter-occupied units (2020)	2,149
Existing vacant units (2.1%)	46
Total rentals	2,195
Number of rentals if 5% vacancy rate	2,310
Difference	115
New units needed (Difference minus Existing vacant units)	69
Plus Walsh fire replacement units	20
Adjusted housing units needed	89

A 5% vacancy level, while still low, provides some choice and availability of units for residents and employees. To increase the vacancy rate to 5%, approximately 69 additional rental units are needed. To replace the 20 units lost in the Walsh fire, the need increases to 89 units.

Balanced Ownership Supply (6-month supply)

As of October 2020, there were 18 residences listed for sale on the MLS – about a 2.6-month supply. For homes priced under $300,000, the supply drops to 1.5-months. A general industry standard is that when the number of homes available for sale is below a 6-month supply, it is a seller's market – meaning that there are more buyers than homes available to purchase, resulting in rising prices. This trend is currently evident in Alamosa (see Housing Market Conditions).

For-sale Homes Needed for a Balanced Supply	
MLS sales (2019)	82
Average sales per month (divide by 12)	6.8
6-month supply	41
MLS listings (Oct. 2020)	18
Difference: Additional MLS listings needed for 6-month supply	23

Providing more housing ownership opportunities at prices that residents can purchase promotes function in the market by allowing renters to move into ownership, new employees to purchase homes, growing families to move up in housing, and empty-nesters and seniors

to down-size and free up their larger homes. This movement accommodates the housing needs of residents at various stages of life.

About 23 more homes are needed to generate a 6-month supply of for-sale housing on the MLS. Most will need to be priced under $300,000 since lower price points are in the shortest supply.

Pending Development Adjustments

As summarized in the Housing Inventory section, 57 rentals are pending construction, River Trece Subdivision has been approved for 15 more homes for sale and CRHDC builds between 6 to 8 homes for persons earning 80% AMI or below each year. These projects are poised to address some of the catch-up rental and ownership market needs. Adjustments to housing need estimates from pending development are made in the "Summary of Housing Needs" table shown below.

KEEP-UP (FUTURE NEEDS)

Job growth

Due to the COVID pandemic, jobs decreased in Alamosa by about 6% between 2019 and 2020. The Colorado Demography Office estimates that jobs will mostly recover by 2026, with an average job growth rate of 1% per year. Alamosa County recovered from the prior recession at an average job growth rate of 1.5% per year (see Employment section). Estimated needs are presented for both growth rates.

Estimates are also based on maintaining the current percentage of employees living in the city (39%). Producing more or less housing than estimated below would be equivalent to either decreasing or increasing the percentage of employees that commute into the city, respectively.

Finally, the calculation below estimates housing units needed in total to maintain pace with job growth. This estimate accounts for housing units needed for both employed and unemployed households: 36% of households in the city do not have an employed person in the home.[1]

As shown (right), an estimated 130 to 200 housing units will be needed in the city to support employees filling jobs through 2026, or between 22 to 33 housing units per year.

Housing Units Needed to Accommodate Job Growth: 2020-2026

	1% growth	1.5% growth
Alamosa jobs 2020	7,600	7,600
Alamosa jobs 2026	8,045	8,305
Yearly average growth	1.0%	1.5%
New jobs (2020 - 2026)	445	705
Jobs per employee	1.1	1.1
Employees filling jobs	405	640
Employees living in the city (39%)	160	250
Employees per household	1.2	1.2
New housing units needed by 2026	130	200

[1] 2014-2018 ACS reports that 36% of households do not have an employed person in the home and 30% of households did not report earnings from a wage, salary or self-employment income. The number of employees per occupied housing unit (which includes households with employed members and households with zero employed members) is 1.2; the number of employees per household with at least one employed person is 1.7.

Retiring employees

Employers will need to fill the jobs vacated by retirees in addition to any newly created jobs. Some retirees will likely leave the area upon retirement; however, when they sell their homes, not all will be affordable for new workers filling their jobs.

Retiring employees	
% to retire by 2026	5%
# to retire	365
Employees per employed household	1.7
New housing units needed	210

Employers in Alamosa estimate that about 5% of workers (365 total) will be retiring over the next five years. About 210 housing units will be needed to house the employees filling jobs vacated by retirees.

SUMMARY OF NEEDS

Based on estimated catch-up and keep-up needs, between 444 to 514 housing units for residents and employees are needed by 2026, or an average of about 80 to 100 units per year. Over the past 10 years, Alamosa has been adding an average of about 44 units annually. In the Action Planning phase, policy makers and local stakeholders should consider setting a goal that lands somewhere between historic production and 100% fulfillment of these needs projections, taking funding, land, and other local resources into consideration.

The extent to which identified housing needs may be addressed by the market will be influenced by changes in housing prices over time, the availability of land, developers' construction of community housing, and the presence or absence of programs to facilitate more development. These factors will be an extension of housing policy, resources and desired direction with respect to community housing. Setting this policy direction will be a goal of the development of the Alamosa Housing Action Plan.

Summary of Housing Needs

	Low*	High*
Catch-Up		
Unfilled Jobs (3% of jobs)**	72	72
Functional rental market (5% vacancy rate plus lost unit replacement)	89	89
Balanced for-sale market (6-month inventory)	23	23
Pending development adjustment	-80	-80
Total Catch-up Housing Units	**104**	**104**
Keep-Up		
New jobs (1% to 1.5% avg. growth/year)	130	200
Retiring employees (5% of jobs)	210	210
Total Keep-up Housing Units	**340**	**410**
Catch-up and Keep-up through 2026	**444**	**514**

*"Low" refers to a 1%/year job growth rate; "high" refers to a 1.5%/year job growth rate
**assumes local unemployment recovery post COVID-19

NEEDS BY OWN/RENT AND INCOME

There is a need for both ownership and rental housing in Alamosa that is available to residents and the local workforce. If the current ratios are maintained, then 42% of new units should be for ownership and 58% for rent.

This ratio, however, is somewhat dependent upon desired direction, housing policy, and the economic feasibility of new projects. Rentals can help new workers and residents get established, while ownership helps to retain workers and enable residents to build equity, achieve more stable housing and strengthen community investment.

Summary of Housing Needs by Own/Rent Through 2026

	Low	High
Units needed through 2026	**444**	**514**
Ownership	185	215
Rental	259	299

Ownership housing should be created based on the income distribution of households in Alamosa, as shown below.

- Prices for locals should range as low as about $160,000 up to about $275,000. This would provide ownership opportunities for households earning between $40,000 through $65,000 per year (between about 70% and 115% AMI). The current for-sale market is not providing a sufficient supply of homes in this price range.
- Homes affordable for households earning under $40,000 per year are also undersupplied; however, producing homes at this price will not occur without substantial subsidies or programs such as Habitat for Humanity. These households also often have trouble qualifying for loans and meeting down payment purchase requirements. Rentals are more typical options at this income level.
- Homes priced over $300,000 are oversupplied when compared to the proportion of local households that can afford to purchase these homes.

Homeowner Income Distribution Compared to Homes Availability

AMI	Household Income Range (2-person household)	MAXIMUM Affordable Price	Owner Income Distribution	For-Sale Listings (Oct. 2020)
Under 50%	$0 to $28,400	$125,200	26%	6%
50.1 - 80%	$28,401 to $45,400	$200,400	21%	6%
80.1 - 120%	$45,401 to $68,200	$300,600	27%	33%
120.1 - 200%	$68,201 to $113,600	$500,900	18%	44%
Over 200%	>$113,600	Over $500,900	8%	11%
TOTAL	-	-	**100%**	**18 listings**

NOTE: Shading indicates where there is a shortage of housing supply for residents and employees. Providing ownership priced under 50% AMI is challenging; rentals are more typical. Homes priced below $300,000 are often in poor repair; better quality and variety of homes in the 80.1-120% AMI range is needed.

There are very few units available to rent at any price point in the city. More rentals in general are needed, but in particular:

- Rentals affordable for residents are needed at both the lower income spectrum (<50% AMI), as well as for young professionals earning up to 100% AMI ($57,000).
- Subsidized properties serving lower incomes (<50% AMI) have waitlists, low turnover, and very few current vacancies. Units fill fast. A proportion of the 58% of renters earning in this income range are students living off campus, which should be differentiated from special needs households on fixed income (e.g., seniors, persons with disabilities, etc.). Student households are candidates for different rental products and do not qualify for most rent subsidies.
- There is also a shortage of units priced between $700 up to $1,400 per month (about 100% AMI or $56,000 per year) for residents and young professionals. Households at these price points desire rentals with amenities and better quality than currently provided. Improving options and availability at this price point can help attract and retain employees to the community.

Renter Income Distribution Compared to Available Rentals

AMI	Household income range (2-person household)	MAXIMUM Affordable Rent	Renter Income Distribution	Available Rentals
Under 50%	$0 to $28,400	$710	58%	25%
50.1 - 80%	$28,401 to $45,400	$1,280	16%	68%
80.1 - 120%	$45,401 to $68,200	$1,705	9%	3%
120.1 - 200%	$68,201 to $113,600	$2,840	10%	5%
Over 200%	>$113,600	Over $2,840	7%	0%
TOTAL	-	-	**100%**	**55 listings**

*Available rentals include rentals available in the city in October 2020.
NOTE: Shading indicates where there is a shortage of housing supply for residents and employees. Better quality rentals priced between $700 up to $1,400 per month are needed.

Demographics

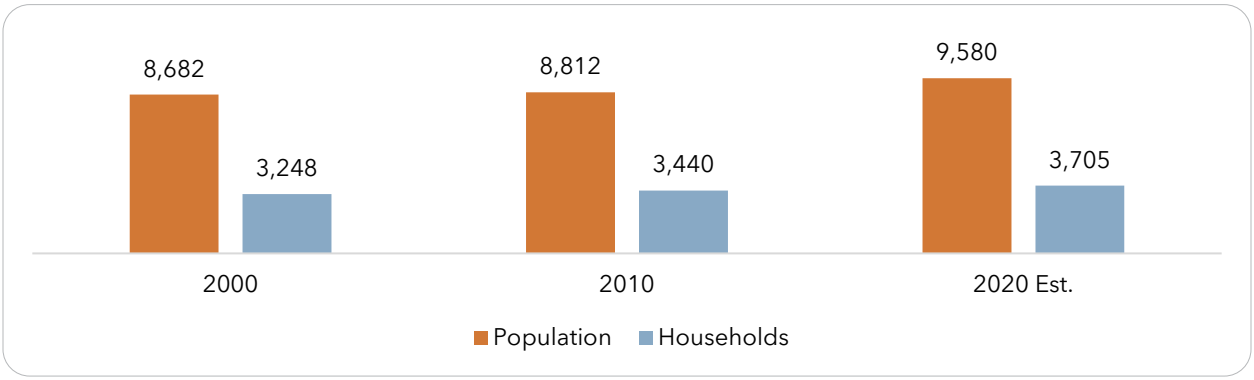
This section includes the demographic data upon which the housing demand calculations are built, including: population and household trends, household types, ethnicity and income.

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

Alamosa has experienced modest population and household growth over the past few decades:

- Alamosa has a current population just under 9,600 and represents about 59% of the county's population.
- The population has grown faster in the past 10 years (0.8% per year) than the previous 10 (0.1% per year). The State grew at 1.5% per year over the past decade, almost twice this rate, and the county grew at 0.5% per year.
- The number of households in Alamosa has also grown since 2000 to about 3,700, increasing by about 0.7% per year on average, a rate similar to population growth resulting in little change in household size in the last 10 years.

Alamosa Population, 2000-2020 (est.)



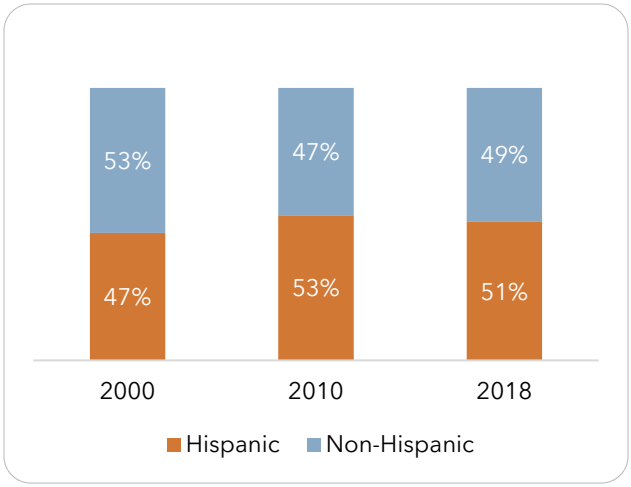
Source: 2000 Census, 2010 Census, Colorado Demography Office, ESRI, Consultant Team

Race and Ethnicity

The percentage of Alamosa's population that identifies as Hispanic or Latino (51%) is significantly higher than that of the State (22%). There was a six percentage point increase in the Hispanic population from 2000 to 2010, although the percentage has declined slightly since.

Just under half the population identifies as non-Hispanic (49%), a lower percentage than in 2000. The percentage of the population identifying as non-Hispanic white decreased by about 7 percentage points from 2000 to 2010, but has remained stable since. The non-Hispanic, non-white population has increased since 2010 and now makes up about 8% of the city's population.

Alamosa Hispanic Population, 2000-2018



Source: 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2014-2018 ACS

Alamosa Non-Hispanic Population, 2000-2018

	2000	2010	2018
Non-Hispanic White	48.2%	41.5%	41.4%
Non-Hispanic Black	1.1%	1.4%	1.2%
Non-Hispanic Native American/Alaska Native	1.1%	0.9%	2.7%
Non-Hispanic Asian	0.9%	1.1%	1.3%
Non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.6%
Non-Hispanic Other	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
Non-Hispanic, Two Races	1.6%	1.6%	1.9%

Source: 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2014-2018 ACS

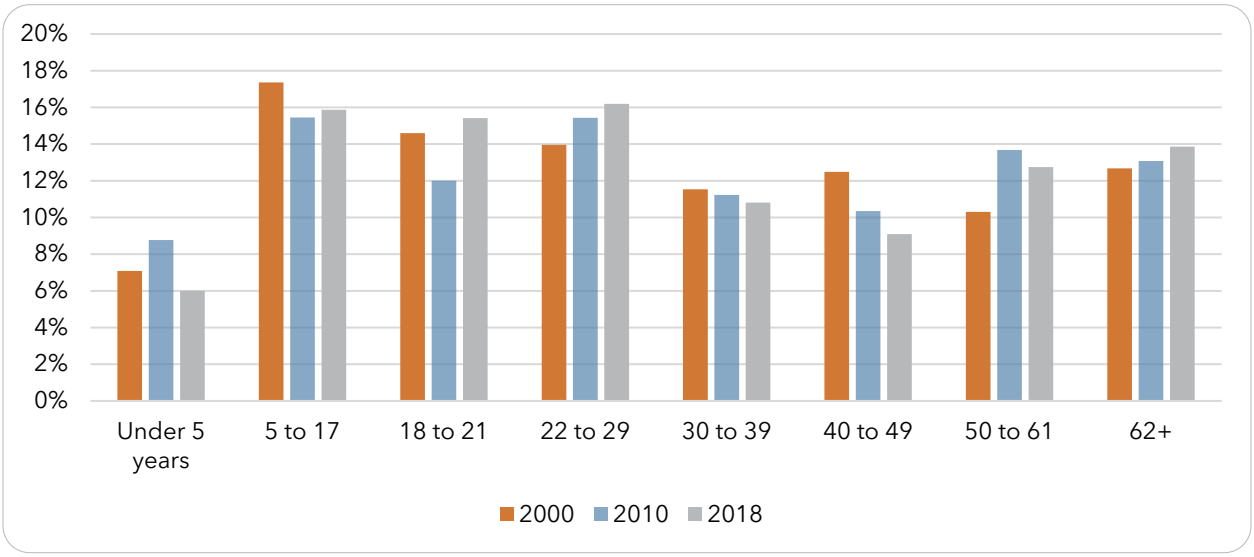
Age Distribution

The population in Alamosa is very young with a median age of about 28 (State median is almost 37). Almost one-third (32%) of the city's population is 18-29 years of age, which is about 6 percentage points higher than Alamosa County and almost 15 percentage points higher than that of the State. The University and Junior College student population is the primary reason for this difference.

Alamosa's age distribution has remained relatively stable over the past two decades. Changes since 2010 include:

- A decline in the under 5 age group and an increase in the 18-29 age group as a percentage of the population.
- The percentage of the population in their 30's and 40's has consistently declined since 2000, now only making up about 20% of the population. The declining percentage of the population in prime working years aligns with employer concerns and struggles with finding employees. (see Employment section).
- Seniors (age 62 and over) represent 14% of the population; the relative size of the senior population has been increasing since 2000.

Alamosa Age Distribution, 2000-2018



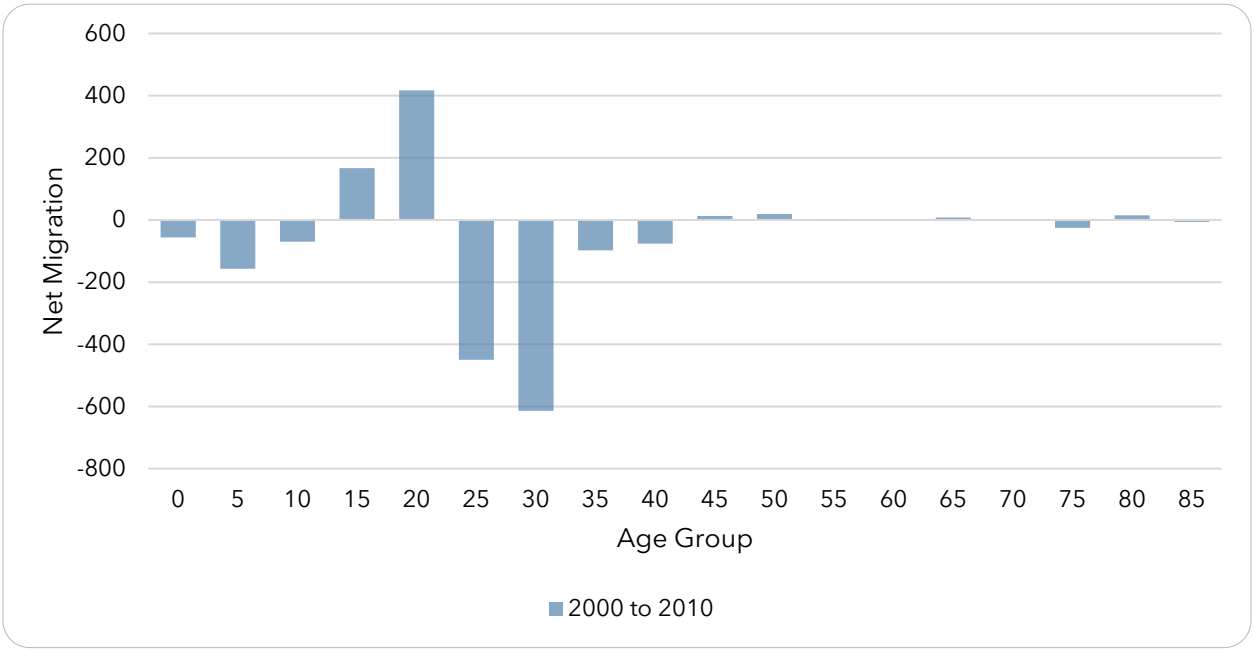
Source: 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2014-2018 ACS

Net Migration

The below chart shows net migration by age in Alamosa County between 2000 and 2010. Net migration is the sum of people moving to the county (in-migration) minus the number leaving the county (out-migration) by age group. The above data, plus interviews with employers, service organizations, realtors and property managers in the area support that these migration patterns have likely continued.

- ASU and TSJC help attract the younger 18 to 24 age group.
- The out-migration of persons ages 25 to 35 is related to the limited professional job opportunities in the area for this group. The area is not keeping a significant portion of students from the University and Junior College.
- The relatively neutral shift in persons over 65 indicates that the growth in the senior population is due mostly to persons aging in place rather than in-migration.

Net Migration by Age, Alamosa County, 2000–2010



Source: Colorado Demography Office

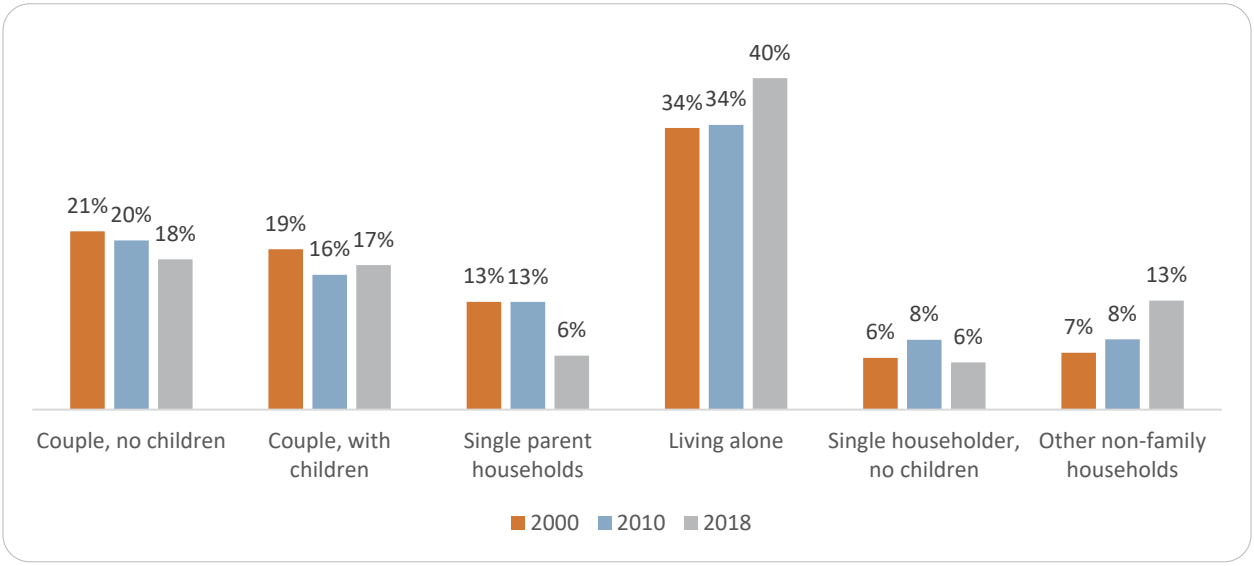
Household Size and Type

The city's households are increasingly made up of one-person and unrelated people. Again, related to the University population, only 47% of households in the city are comprised of families, compared to 56% in the county and 64% in the State.

- 40% of households are made up of just one person living alone, a 6-percentage point increase since 2010,
- Non-family households comprised of unrelated individuals (e.g., roommates) represent 13% of all households, a 5-point increase since 2010,

- The share of households with children has consistently declined since 2000, now making up just under one quarter (24%) of all households, and
- Households in the city have 2.4 people on average, yet this differs by tenure. The average size of owner-occupied units (2.6) is higher than rental units (2.1).

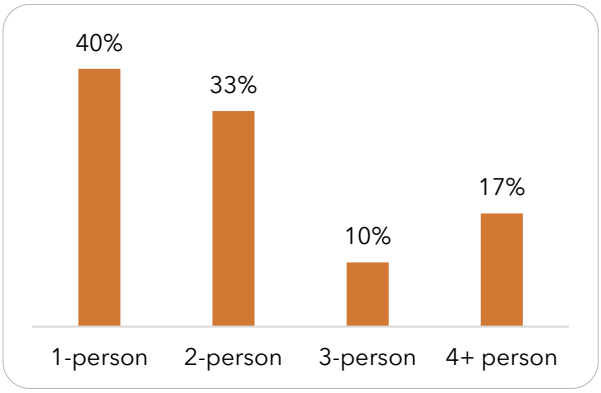
Alamosa Household Distribution by Type, 2000-2018



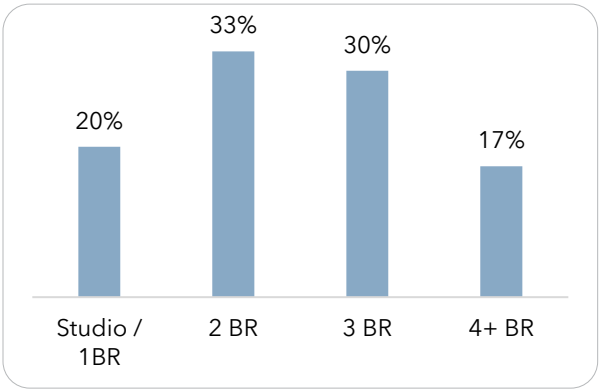
Sources: 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2014-2018 ACS, Consultant Team

Almost three-quarters (73%) of occupied homes in Alamosa have only one or two people living in them, yet only 53% of homes have two bedrooms or fewer, indicating that the existing housing stock is well suited for larger families or households, but does not provide as much choice for single-person households, small families, or those wishing to downsize.

Number of People Per Home, 2018



Number of Bedrooms Per Home, 2018



Source: 2014-2018 ACS

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

An understanding of how much money households earn through wages or other income sources is important to determining the availability and need for housing at various price prints. This section evaluates income through two common measures: the median income of all households, as reported

by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), and AMI as reported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The median household income in Alamosa is about $35,000 per year, which is over $4,000 less than that of the county and half that of the State.

- About 30% of the population lives below the poverty line, defined as the estimated minimum level of income needed to secure the necessities of life. This rate is over twice the rate of the State (14%).
- Not surprisingly, a much higher percentage of households in the city also receive public assistance monies (8%) and food stamps/SNAP assistance (29%) than in the State (2% and 8%, respectively).

Median Household Income, 2018	
Alamosa City	$34,840
Alamosa County	$39,191
Colorado	$68,811

Source: 2014-2018 ACS

Within the city, there is a wide income disparity between households who own and those who rent. Households who own have an estimated median household income of just under $50,000, whereas renter household median income is half that at about $25,700.

The income distribution of households by AMI is shown below. This is important because federal and state programs that help create or subsidize affordable housing utilize AMI to determine whether families are eligible for the program.

AMI represents the median *family* income of an area. This means that the AMI does not incorporate incomes from non-family single and roommate households, which make up 53% of households in Alamosa. As a result, the yearly AMI of families in Alamosa County ($56,800, 2-persons) is higher than the median income of all households ($35,000).

In Alamosa, the largest percentage of households are at the bottom of the income scale. Over 40% of households have incomes under $28,400; about 70% of these households rent. The high percentage of renter households is due in part to the student population.

Alamosa Household Income Distribution 2020

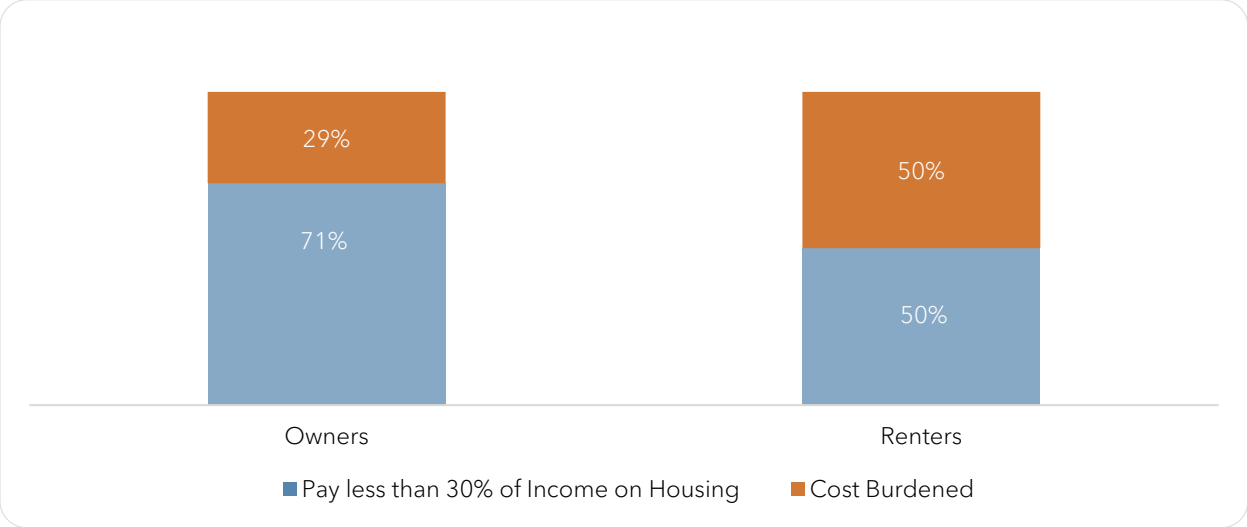
AMI	Household Income Range [1]	Percentage of Renter Households	Percentage of Owner Households	Percentage of Total Households
<50%	$0 to $28,400	58%	26%	42%
50.1-80%	$28,401 to $45,400	16%	21%	19%
80.1-120%	$45,401 to $68,200	9%	27%	18%
120.1-200%	$68,201 to $113,600	10%	18%	14%
>200%	>$113,600	7%	8%	8%
Total # households	-	2,149	1,556	3,705

Source: CHFA, Ribbon Demographics, LLC, Consultant Team
[1] based on a two-person household

HOUSING COST-BURDEN

Cost-burden indicates the extent to which housing costs exceed what Alamosa households can afford. Households are considered to be cost burdened if their housing payment[2] exceeds 30% of their gross income. Cost burdened households often have insufficient income left over for other life necessities including food, clothing, transportation and health care. ACS data shows that rentals are not priced at levels that are affordable for the majority of residents. In 2019, half of renters were cost-burdened. This compares to about a third of owners that were cost-burdened.

Cost Burdened Households, 2019



Source: 2015-2019 ACS

[2] The US Census defines "housing payment" to include rent and mortgage plus utilities.

Employment

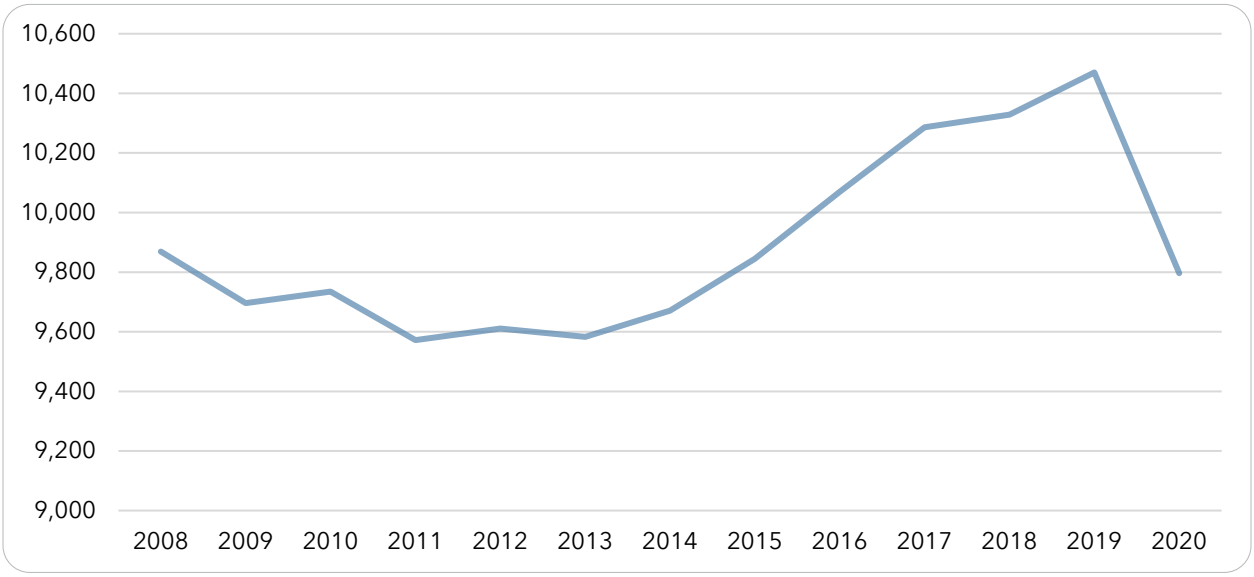
This section provides an overview of the jobs, wages and commuting patterns in Alamosa County and Alamosa. It also provides an overview of the 2020 Employer Survey and employer and stakeholder interviews, discussing the extent to which housing or other factors affects the ability for businesses to recruit and retain employees.

NUMBER OF JOBS

In 2020, there are an estimated 9,797 jobs in Alamosa County, with about 7,600 jobs (78%) located in Alamosa. Evaluating changes in jobs at the county level since 2008:

- During the prior recession, jobs declined about 3% from the peak in 2008 to the low in 2013. Jobs recovered by 2015/2016,
- Jobs had been growing an average of 1.5% per year since 2013, reaching 10,470 jobs in 2019, and
- The Colorado Demography Office estimates that the COVID-driven recession has reduced jobs by about 6% in 2020 compared to 2019. This was in line with the 2020 Employer Survey, on which employers in Alamosa County indicated their jobs declined by about 5% on average.

Alamosa County Jobs, 2008-2020



Source: Colorado Demography Office

Looking ahead to 2026, the Colorado Demography Office estimates that jobs will increase about 1% per year. At this rate, the county will recover to 2019 job levels by 2026. If job recovery happens at the same pace as following the prior recession, then there will be about 230 more jobs in 2026 than in 2019. A range is provided due to the uncertainty created by the COVID-19 impact and rate of job recovery.

Alamosa County Jobs, 2019–2026 Projections

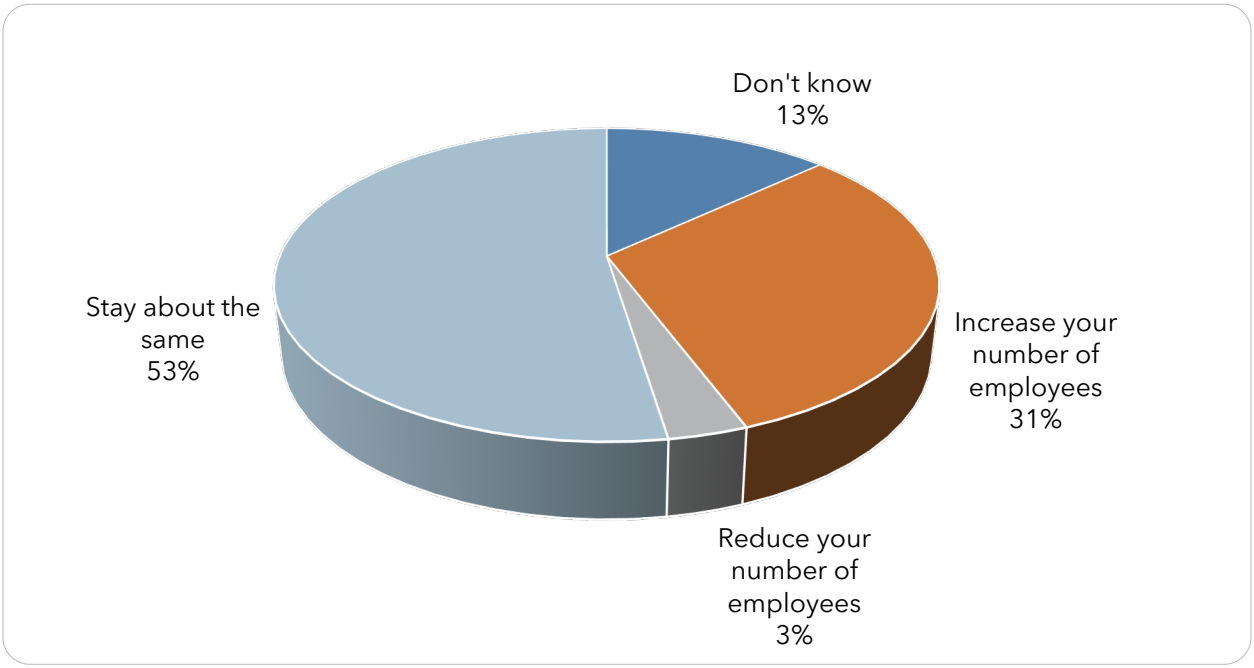
	2019	2020	2026	Average yearly growth rate (est.)
DOLA estimated growth	10,470	9,797	10,372	1.0%
Prior growth rate (2013-2019)	10,470	9,797	10,704	1.5%

Source: Colorado Demography Office; Consultant team

Employer survey responses indicate that 31% of Alamosa County employers expect to increase their jobs over the next five years. The majority (53%) expect to stay about the same.

Employers anticipating growth include tourism support jobs (e.g. food services, accommodations, retail and services), construction, real estate and finance, and health care. The number of jobs in the health care sector has been growing in the area since at least 2010.

Expected Job Growth Over the Next Five Years, Alamosa County Employers



Source: 2020 Alamosa/San Luis Valley Employer Survey

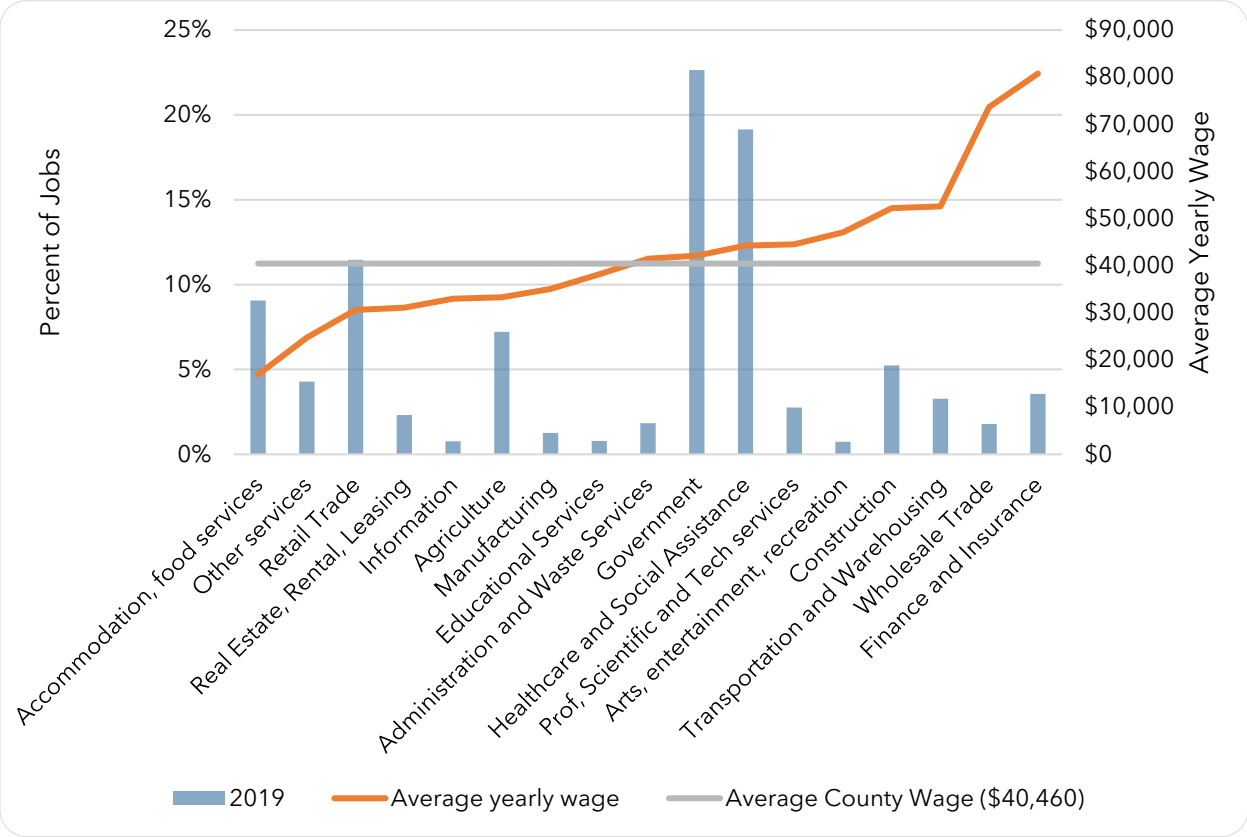
TYPES OF JOBS AND WAGES

Wages in Alamosa County have increased about 2.5% per year on average since 2010. The average wage in the county in 2020 is $40,463, which is 40% lower than the State average ($66,716). Lower comparative wages make it difficult for many businesses to recruit skilled employees in particular to the area, such as for education, skilled public service and management positions.

The largest percentage of jobs in the County are in government (including public educational institutions) (23%) and health care and social assistance (19%). These industries pay average wages that are slightly higher than the county average.

Jobs in retail (11%), lodging and food services (9%), and agriculture (7%) comprise the next highest percentage of jobs, all of which pay below-average wages.

Annual Average Jobs (2019) and Wages (First Quarter 2020) by Sector, Alamosa County



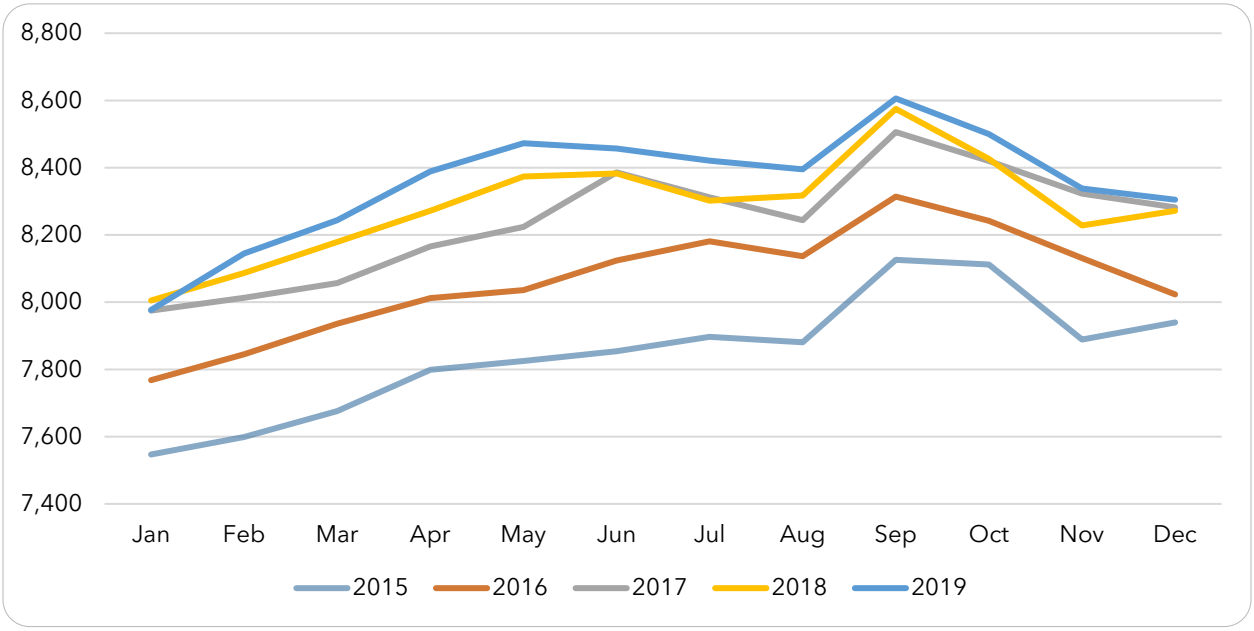
Source: Colorado Demography Office; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

SEASONALITY OF JOBS

The number of jobs in Alamosa County increases from April through October each year. Jobs increase about 5% between the low employment months of January and February and the highest employment months of September and October. The extent of this change varies by industry.

- The most significant rise in jobs is seen in September and October, which is primarily due to agriculture harvesting and processing needs (e.g., potatoes). (See Special Needs Populations section, Seasonal Agricultural Workers for more information).
- The smaller rise beginning in April is related to seasonal jobs in manufacturing, construction, tourism service jobs (arts and recreation, accommodation, food services), and also agriculture (e.g., lettuce and spinach crops).

Alamosa County Jobs by Month, 2015–2019



Source: Colorado Demography Office; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

COMMUTING

Based on the 2020 Employer Survey, about 64% of employees working in Alamosa reside within Alamosa County. This means that about 2,700 employees commute into the city for work each day from other counties. This includes 14% of employees from Rio Grande County and 12% from Conejos County. Some employers noted that several employees looking to purchase homes find options in these counties, where housing prices tend to be lower than in Alamosa.

Of employees not living in Alamosa County, employers estimate that about 40% (1,100 employees) would prefer to live in the county (nearer to their job) if suitable housing they could afford was available.

Where Alamosa Employees Live	
Total jobs	7,600
Live in:	
Alamosa County	64%
Rio Grande County	14%
Conejos County	12%
Costilla County	2%
Saguache County	1%
Mineral County	0%
Other	6%

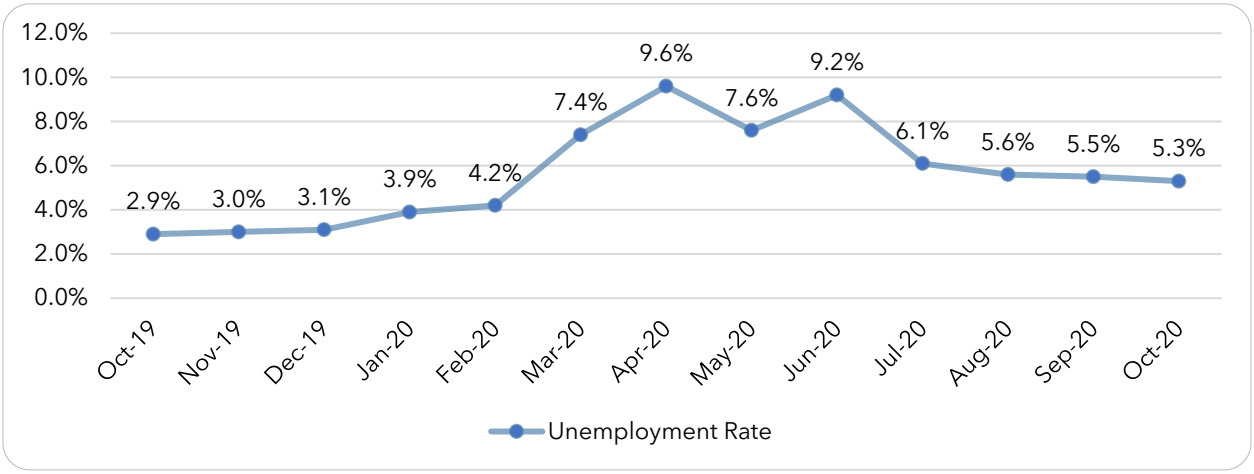
Source: 2020 Employer survey, Consultant team

UNFILLED JOBS AND LOCAL LABOR FORCE

Employers reported that about 3% of jobs in Alamosa are currently unfilled (250 jobs). Employers stated that the predominate reason for unfilled jobs was due to a lack of applicants and lack of qualified applicants. A few employers have budget constraints or a temporary hiring freeze so they cannot yet fill jobs. For others, some positions just became available.

The current unemployment rate has dropped quickly in October 2020 to 5.3% since rising to over 9% in April and June 2020. This is still well above the 2.9% unemployment reached in October 2019.

Unemployment Rate, Alamosa County, 2020



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

Despite the recent decline in jobs due to COVID, the number of persons in the labor force has remained relatively stable in Alamosa County. There are only about 100 fewer members of the labor force in the county in October 2020 as there were in October 2019. If the unemployment rate returns to the 2.9% level seen last year, this means that about 260 employees living in the county are available to fill local jobs as job recovery continues.

Labor Force, Alamosa County, October 2019 and 2020

Time period	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment rate
Oct. 2019	9,145	8,879	266	2.9%
Oct. 2020	9.050	8,574	476	5.3%

Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

Workers per household and number of jobs held per employee

Workers in Alamosa County hold an average of 1.1 jobs. There is an average of 1.72 employees per household with earnings and 1.2 employees per household in total (which includes households that receive and do not receive earnings from a job) in the county. About 35% of households in Alamosa County and 36% in Alamosa have zero workers, compared to only 22% in the State as a whole.

Alamosa County, 2020	
Total jobs	9,797
Jobs multiply held	760 (7.8%)
Jobs per employee	1.1

Source: Colorado Demography Office

Alamosa County, 2018	
Employed persons	7,602
Households with earnings	4,419
Employed persons per employed household	1.72

Source: 2014-2018 ACS

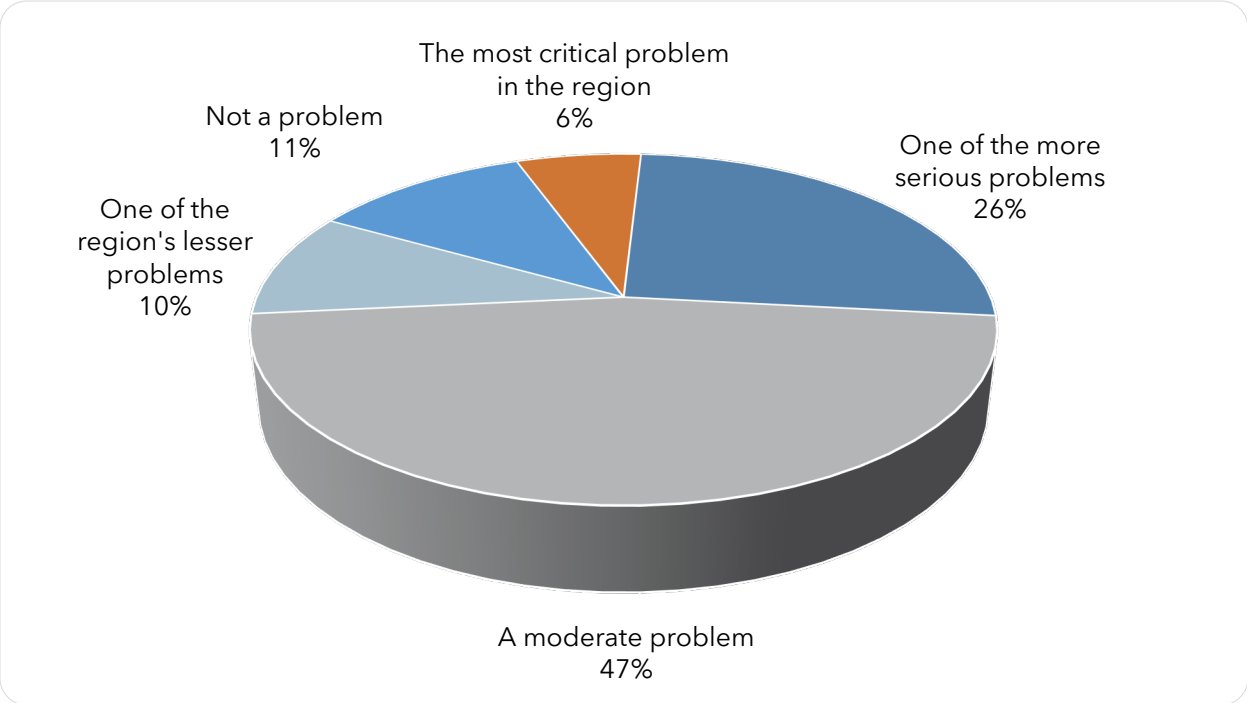
Alamosa County, 2018	
Employed persons	7,602
Total households	6,153
Employed persons per total households	1.24

Source: 2014-2018 ACS

EMPLOYER SURVEY INSIGHT

Key insights gained from employers responding to the 2020 Employer Survey are highlighted below.

"Do you feel that the availability of housing that is affordable for employees in Alamosa County is:"



Source: 2020 Employer Survey

- On average, employers noted that employees filling low wage/low skill jobs and entry-level professionals have the most difficulty locating satisfactory housing.
- Skilled labor jobs and mid-management positions followed second, with average difficulty ratings of 2.9 and 2.8, respectively.

"I frequently hear that lack of housing is a major milestone for companies to grow/recruit/relocate here. I frequently hear that there is a lack of inventory and also that prices seem inappropriate (high) in comparison with offered salaries."

- Local Realtor

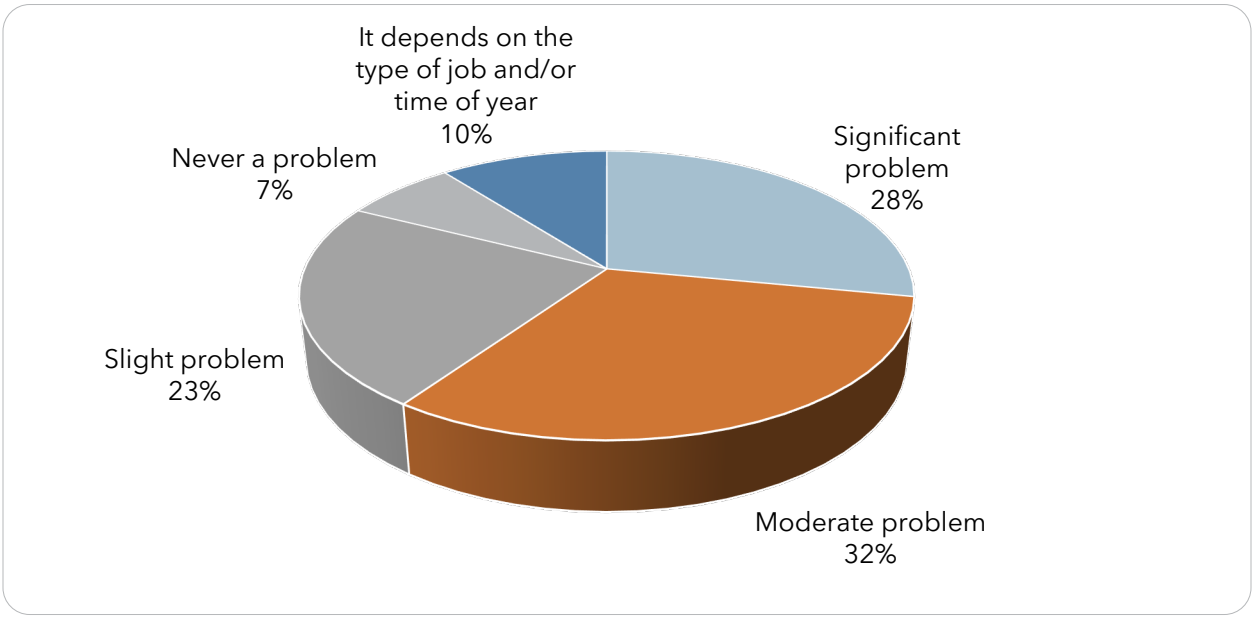
This is in line with many employer interviews. Employers noted that the current high rents affect lower wage employees, and the lack of housing choice, nicer rentals and entry-level homeownership affects entry- to mid-level employees.

When employees are hired can also make a difference for housing availability. It is harder to find rentals when university students are in town.

Ability to Fill Jobs

The majority of employers in Alamosa have moderate (32%) or significant (28%) difficulty finding and attracting qualified employees for jobs. Employers in all industries experience challenges.

"How would you rate your ability to find/attract qualified employees for your business or organization?"



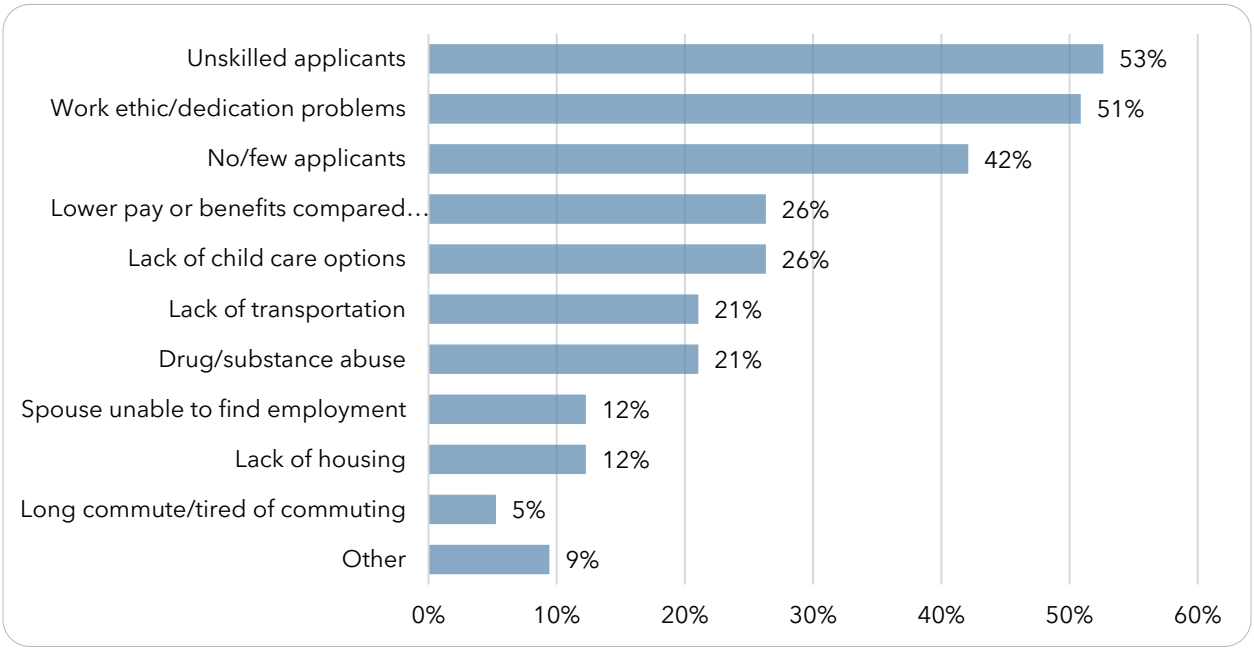
Source: 2020 Employer Survey

Employers that have problems filling jobs were asked what types of problems they have experienced. This includes:

- Unskilled applicants, work ethic/dedication problems and no/few applicants top the list. This was a recurring theme throughout employer and stakeholder interviews.
- The lower pay scale compared to other parts of the state has affected about 26% of employers. Competition with the Colorado Springs and front range area for skilled positions makes it difficult to attract workers from outside the San Luis Valley (Valley). Employees gain experience in Alamosa then move to higher paying areas after two to five years. Strategies that businesses have used to help mitigate this issue include:
    - Having housing available that new hires can occupy until they can find more permanent housing. This provides employees time to find homes they like rather than just taking what they can get. It is also cheaper than paying for hotels. It takes employees an average of 6 to 8 months to locate housing to purchase; up to 2 to 3 months to locate suitable rentals. San Luis Valley Health and ASU have housing they utilize for this purpose and find it very helpful.
    - Being picky. While waiting for the right fit can mean taking several months, or even two years, to fill skilled positions, it significantly reduces turnover and improves the quality of services provided. New hires with connections in the area or desire to live more remotely are desirable.
    - Helping potential hires "do the math." Wages are lower, but so is the cost of living in Alamosa compared to other areas.

- Problems such as a lack of child care options and limited transportation options have also affected the ability to hire and retain employees for a respective 26% and 21% of employers.
- *A lack of housing was one of the lesser-experienced issues noted by employers*. About 12% have had difficulty finding or keeping employees due to limited housing options. Employer interviews noted that housing tends to be more of a problem when recruiting persons from outside the San Luis Valley.
- "Other" issues noted include the area's remoteness, lack of reliable air service, workforce diversity and challenges when positions are seasonal or part time versus year-round.

"In the past year, have you experienced any of the following issues in finding or keeping qualified employees?"



Source: 2020 Employer Survey

Employee Housing Challenges

The largest percentage of employers feel that the availability of housing that is affordable for employees in Alamosa County is a "moderate problem" (47%). Another 26% feel it is "on e of the more serious problems "and 6% stated it is "the most critical problem."

"To what extent do your employees have difficulty locating satisfactory housing in the area"

	Average rating*
Low wage/low skill jobs	3.4
Entry-level professional	3.0
Skilled labor jobs	2.9
Mid-level/mid-management	2.8
Migratory/seasonal employees	2.7
Upper management	2.3

Source: 2020 Employer Survey
*Rating on a scale from "1 – no problem" to "5 – Major difficulty"

As shown below, while the high rents (3.4 average) and home purchase prices (3.2 average) present challenges for employees, the lack of selection/variety of homes (3.5 average) and poor condition of homes (3.3 average) present at least as much difficulty. In other words, providing additional home options that are better quality is needed.

"What are the primary housing difficulties encountered by your employees?"

	Average rating*
Selection/variety of homes	3.5
Rents are too expensive	3.4
Homes in poor condition/need repairs	3.3
Home purchase prices are too expensive	3.2
Limited community amenities	2.8
Homes not nice enough	2.8
Lack of family neighborhoods	2.5

Source: 2020 Employer Survey
*Rating on a scale from "1 – no problem" to "5 – Major difficulty"

Perceived Employee Housing Needs

Consistent with the above, employers feel that entry-level homeownership options are most needed (3.7 average). Rentals for year-round residents (3.4 average) followed second.

Seasonal/part-year rentals and move-up for sale housing followed third, but were still generally perceived as being needed in the county (3.3 average).

"In your experience, to what extent are the following types of housing for area employees lacking (in short supply) in Alamosa County?"

	% "High Need"	Average rating*
Entry-level for-sale housing for year-round employees	27%	3.7
Rentals for year-round employees	23%	3.4
Rentals for seasonal/part-year employees	23%	3.3
Move-up for-sale housing for year-round employees	15%	3.3

Source: 2020 Employer Survey
*Rating on a scale from "1 – no need/sufficient supply" to "5 – high need"

More specifically, employers noted that the following housing is in short supply for their employees:

- Rental:
  - A lack of studio and one-bedroom rentals for single persons or couples.
  - Nicer rentals, with amenities. Improving "what you get" for the price and more diverse inventory (not just apartments). Options for households that earn too much to qualify for the income-restricted rentals.
  - Rentals that allow pets.
- Ownership:
  - Better quality homes for the price.

- An increased inventory of homes priced between $150,000 up to $350,000 for first time buyers and mid-level professionals. Existing homes at these prices are old (e.g. built in the '50's and '60's), need repairs and/or are in less desirable neighborhoods.
- Help for lower income owners that need to repair homes.

Regarding other needs:

- Child care. Options are in short supply and expensive. COVID-19 increased this need.
- Transportation. This is a limitation particularly for lower-wage positions. Many that take these jobs already have housing in the San Luis Valley, but may not have the means to travel to work. This decreases the worker pool.
- Schools. Lack of choice. There is one school district and few private school/alternative options.

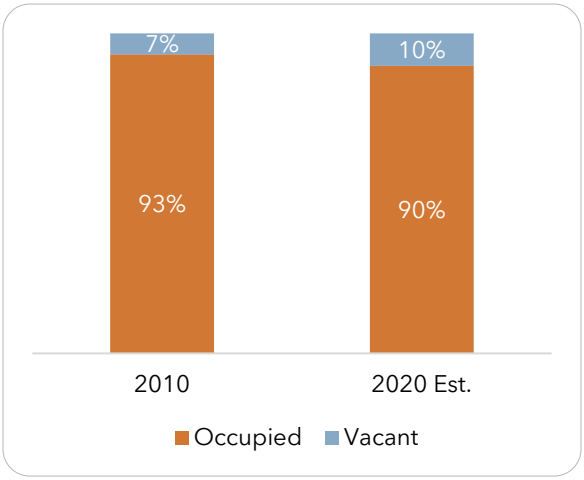
Housing Inventory

This section examines the supply of housing in Alamosa including number of housing units, tenure, type of homes, age of housing, housing created or operated with state and federal resources, and current and proposed residential development.

HOUSING UNITS

There are about 4,125 homes in Alamosa today, which includes single family homes, attached housing, mobile homes and manufactured housing. 90% of housing units in Alamosa are occupied and 10% are vacant. Vacant units include second homes, abandoned homes, and those recently built but unoccupied, as well as vacant homes for sale and vacant homes for rent. Although the vacancy rate has increased since 2010, it remains the lowest in the Valley.

Housing Occupancy, 2010-2020 (est.)

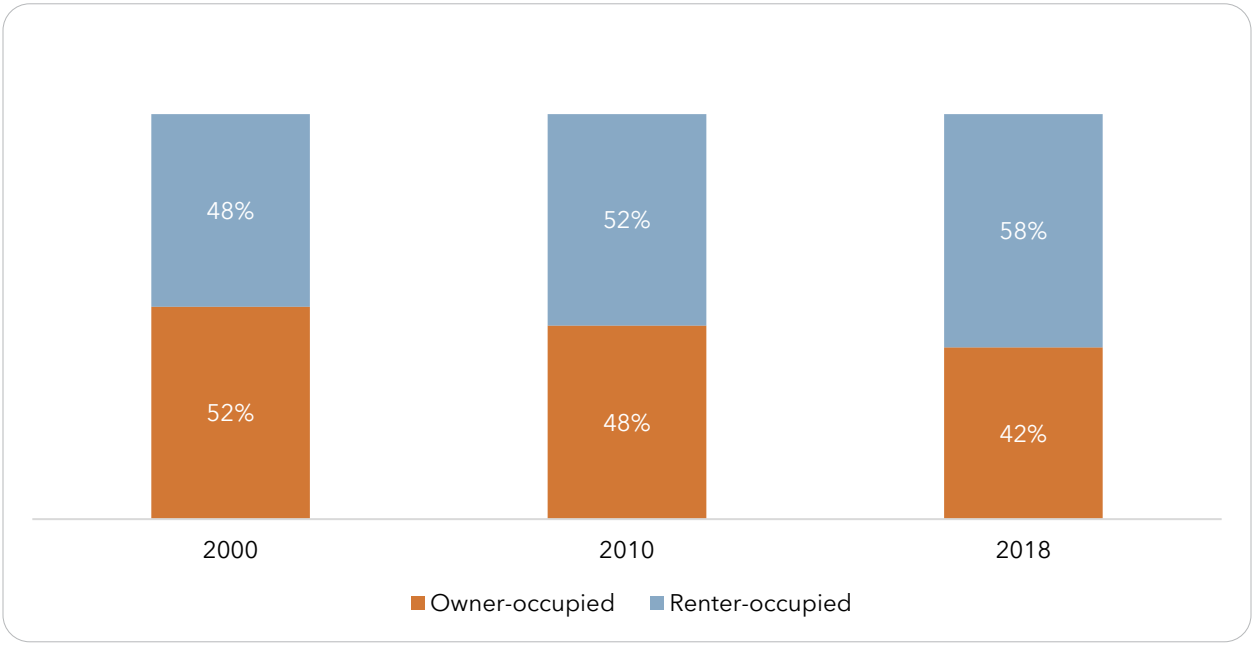


Source: Colorado Demography Office

TENURE

There has been a sizable increase in the percentage of renter households in the city over the past two decades. The percentage of renters has increased by over 5 percentage points since 2010 and just over 10 percentage points since 2000.

Household Tenure (own vs. rent), 2000-2018

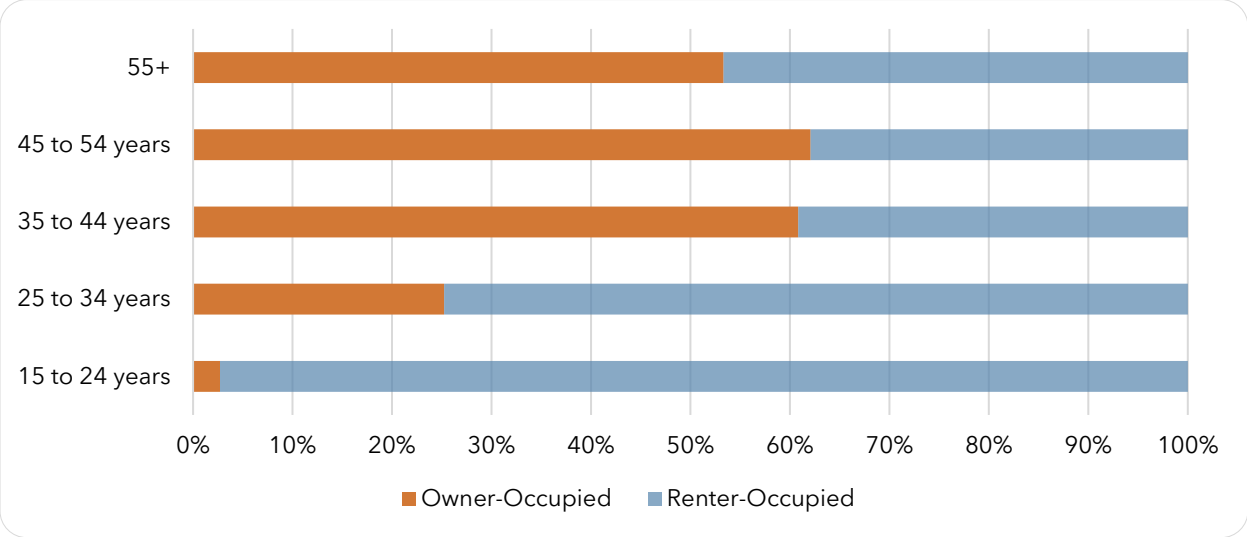


Source: 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2014-2018 ACS

Unsurprisingly, young people in the city predominately rent while middle aged and senior households more typically own their home.

- 97% of householders under 25 rent
- 75% of householders 25 to 34 rent.
- 61% of householders 35 to 54 own.

Tenure by Age of Householder, 2018

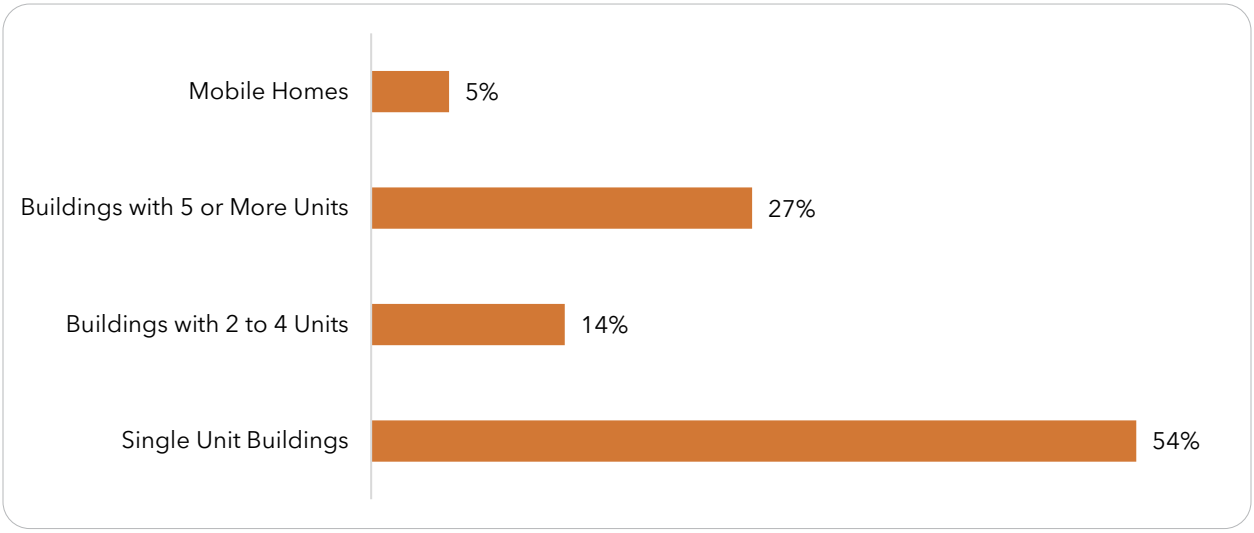


Source: 2014-2018 ACS

TYPES OF HOUSING

Over half of housing units in the city are single family homes, with another 27% in buildings with 5 or more units. Only about 5% of the housing stock is mobile homes.

Housing Unit Distribution by Building Type, 2018



Source: 2014-2018 ACS

A closer look at the distribution of housing units below highlights the following.

- There is little variety in terms of unit type for owners; only 4% of owner-occupied housing is NOT single family or mobile homes.
- 68% of rental housing is within buildings with 2 or more units.
- 28% of rentals are single family homes.

Tenure by Building Size, 2018

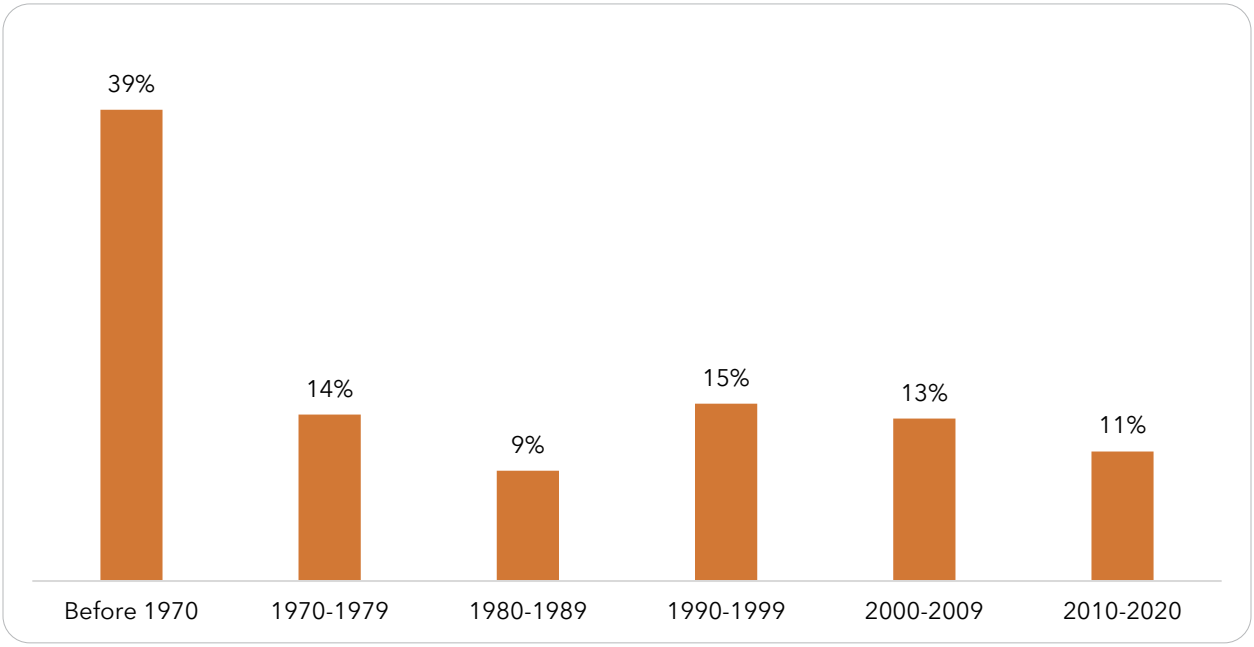
	Owner-Occupied Housing Units	Rental Housing Units
Single Unit Buildings	89%	28%
Buildings with 2 to 4 Units	0%	24%
Buildings with 5 or More Units	4%	44%
Mobile Homes	7%	4%

Source: 2014-2018 ACS

AGE OF HOUSING

Alamosa's housing stock is relatively old. More than half (52%) of all homes were built over 40 years ago. The percentage of the housing stock built in the past 10 years (11%) is lower than that built in each of the previous two decades, respectively.

Age of Homes



Source: 2014-2018 ACS, City Staff, Consultant Team

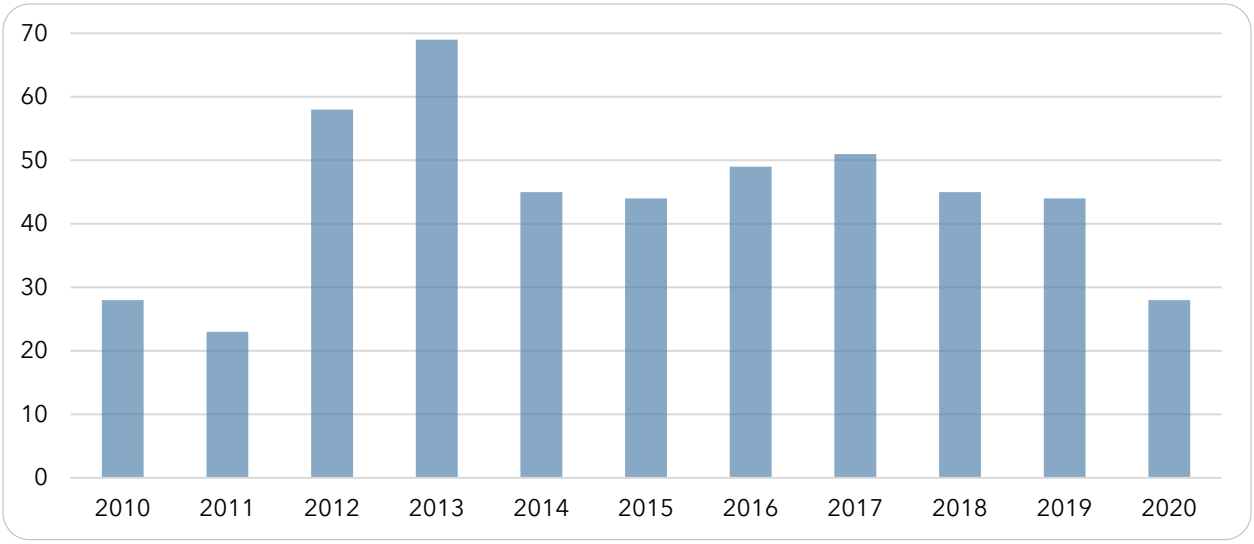
San Luis Valley Housing Coalition provides assistance to low-moderate income owners in need of upgrades to their homes for safety and habitability, and the Energy Resource Center provides weatherization services to low-moderate income owners and renters to make homes safer, more energy efficient, and more comfortable. San Luis Valley Housing Coalition notes that most homes (about 80%) need more than the cap of $24,999 worth of work to address health and safety

comprehensively. They are able to apply for a waiver to that maximum loan size, but it takes several months to get approved, which can be discouraging for applicants. For those homeowners age 63 or older with incomes at or below 30% AMI, SLVHC helps clients apply for the USDA 504 grant for up to $7,500 for safety needs in a home. Those clients not meeting the grant requirements could qualify for a USDA 504 loan up to $20,000 for additional rehabilitation needs.

NEW AND PROPOSED HOUSING

Alamosa's housing stock has grown by about 1.2% per year since 2010, adding 44 units per year on average. Recent market rate rental properties Ceilo Azul and Kiva leased quickly, have remained full, and have consistently raised rents annually. Deliveries at the start of the decade in the midst of the Great Recession were low. New construction increased significantly in 2012 and peaked in 2013 with the addition of almost 70 units. Deliveries then generally stabilized between 45 and 50 units per year until 2020. The number of new homes built in 2020 fell back to 2010 levels due to economic uncertainty, materials cost increases, and supply chain issues driven by the COVID-19 pandemic.

New Residential Units, 2010-2020



*based on a nine-month lag from building permit
Source 2014-2018 ACS, City Staff, Consultant Team

New Home Construction

In the past year, eight homes have been built and sold in River Trace in the $265,000 to $526,500 range. Price per square foot ranged from $172- $188. Continuing to meet these price points will be challenging, especially if labor and materials costs continue to escalate. One developer shared that building costs are now exceeding $190/square foot. An additional 15 low density residential lots in the River Trace subdivision are approved, and could move forward in the next few years. These homes would serve the higher end of the ownership market.

Builders and developers describe volatility and cost containment challenges with both labor and materials. Material costs had already been escalating prior to COVID-19, and supply chain problems have only been exacerbated since. They also describe finding skilled labor as extremely challenging. The market of skilled tradespeople is small. They tend to be fully booked, and may be able to make more money working outside the Valley. Labor shortages and rising material costs combined with

increasing land values and soft costs make it very difficult to profitably build housing at a price point that is attainable for local buyers. The City's new requirement for fire suppression systems on any attached homes greater than a duplex was also noted as a significant cost (about $10,000/unit) and a disincentive to building townhouses or condos.

The non-profit organization Colorado Rural Housing Development Corporation (CRHDC) is building six to eight new homes each year through their USDA Mutual Self Help Build Program. They have been able to deliver 4-bedroom homes at $189,000, which have been appraising for around $220,000, creating equity for the owners who participated in getting them built. Owners must income qualify at or below 80% AMI. They then receive favorable loans and assistance with home construction.

CRHDC is working to purchase a large parcel adjacent to their existing single-family development on the west side of Alamosa. This site would create a five-year inventory of buildable lots, but infrastructure costs of over $40,000/lot are presenting a significant challenge to maintaining affordable price points.

Single Family Pending Development in Alamosa

	Number of Units	Type of housing	Price point
River Trace	15	Single Family	Luxury
Montaña Azul	8-10/year	Single Family	80% AMI

Source: City Staff, interviews

Multi Family

Flats at Iron Horse is anticipated to begin construction in December 2020. This 41unit development is located between Walmart and the High School. The unit mix is 14 one-bedrooms, 21 two-bedrooms, and six three-bedrooms. The project is financed with 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), and will serve households from 30% to 60% of AMI. This translates to rents of $315 to $775/month, depending on number of bedrooms and household income. The project was anticipated to close on construction finance in December, but construction cost increases resulting from COVID-19 impacts have delayed the closing at this time.

A new phase of the Kiva Apartments is proposed to start in spring 2021. This will include 16 one- and two-bedroom apartments. Current rents at Kiva are $725 for a one bedroom and $825 for a two-bedroom. Rents have increased by $100/month in the past five years for both unit types.

Another phase of Ceilo Azul is being considered for 2021 as well.

Multi Family Pending Development in Alamosa

	Number of Units	Type of housing	Price point
Flats at Iron Horse	41	Apartments	Affordable rentals
Kiva – future phase	16	Apartments	Market rentals
Ceilo Azul – future phase	TBD	Apartments	Market rentals
Total	57		

Source: City Staff, interviews

Housing Choice Vouchers

The Alamosa Housing Authority, in partnership with Colorado Division of Housing, administers 35 vouchers that can be used for any rental property with a willing landlord and a Housing Quality Standards inspection. About half of the units surveyed through property managers accept vouchers. The number of vouchers available in Alamosa has declined sharply from 2009 when there were 72 available. This decline is due to voucher holders "porting out" of the area, and replacement vouchers and funding not being secured. The waitlist has not opened in two years, although it may open in a few months. The Housing authority director predicted it will likely only be open for one day given the tremendous demand for vouchers. Seeking to restore the vouchers that have been lost over the years could be considered in the Action Plan phase. La Puente and San Luis Valley Behavioral Health Group also have some vouchers, which are described in the Special Populations section.

Housing Market Conditions

FOR SALE MARKET

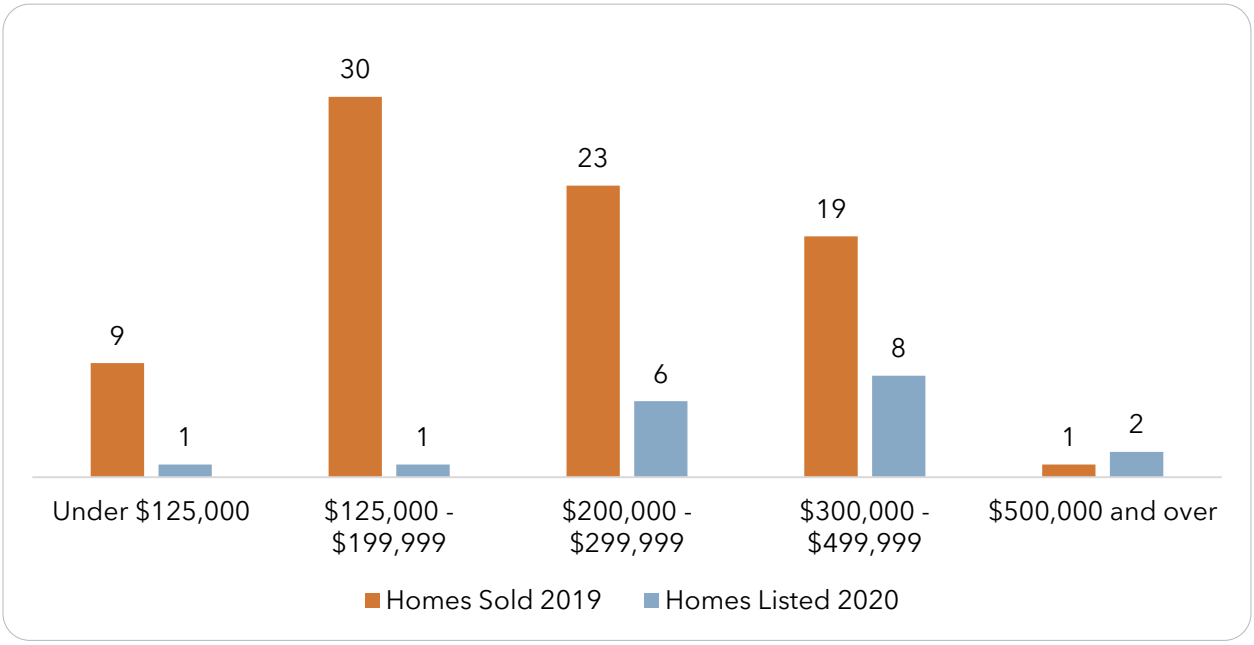
The inventory of homes for sale in Alamosa is very limited. Last year 82 homes sold in Alamosa and as of this report, there were only 18 homes listed. This low inventory (a supply of less than three months) would indicate a seller's market. Prices are on the rise and there is very little inventory of affordable and desirable housing for working households in the community. There were only eight homes listed under $300,000 as of October 2020.

The current median asking price is $328,950, compared to a median sale price of $207,000 last year. All listed properties may not achieve their asking prices, but this represents a dramatic change in the market (59% increase in one year). On a price per square foot basis, prices are only up 4%; homes available on the market are larger, significantly contributing to the higher prices. Local realtors have also observed that buyers today have far few choices compared to five years ago, when an inventory of 80-100 homes was more typical, and prices were more stable in the $180,000 to $230,000 range.

Housing Affordability – To Purchase

Home prices are moving out of reach for middle income households (80% to 120% AMI), and the supply of homes for sale is low, which exacerbates the problem. In 2019 there were more homes sold under $200,000 than in the $200,000 to $300,000 range. In October 2020, there were only two homes listed below $200,000 and six listed between $200,000 and $300,000. Proportionally, there are now more choices for high incomes buyers (i.e., more than half of homes for sale are above $300,000, compared to only 32% of sales last year). There is only a 1.5 month supply of homes under $300,000, which indicates a very tight seller's market.

2019 Home Sales Compared to 2020 Current List Prices



Source: MLS, Consultant Team

The following table shows the maximum affordable purchase price for different income levels, assuming a 30-year fixed mortgage at 4% interest, with a 5% down payment, and 20% of monthly payment going to property taxes and insurance.

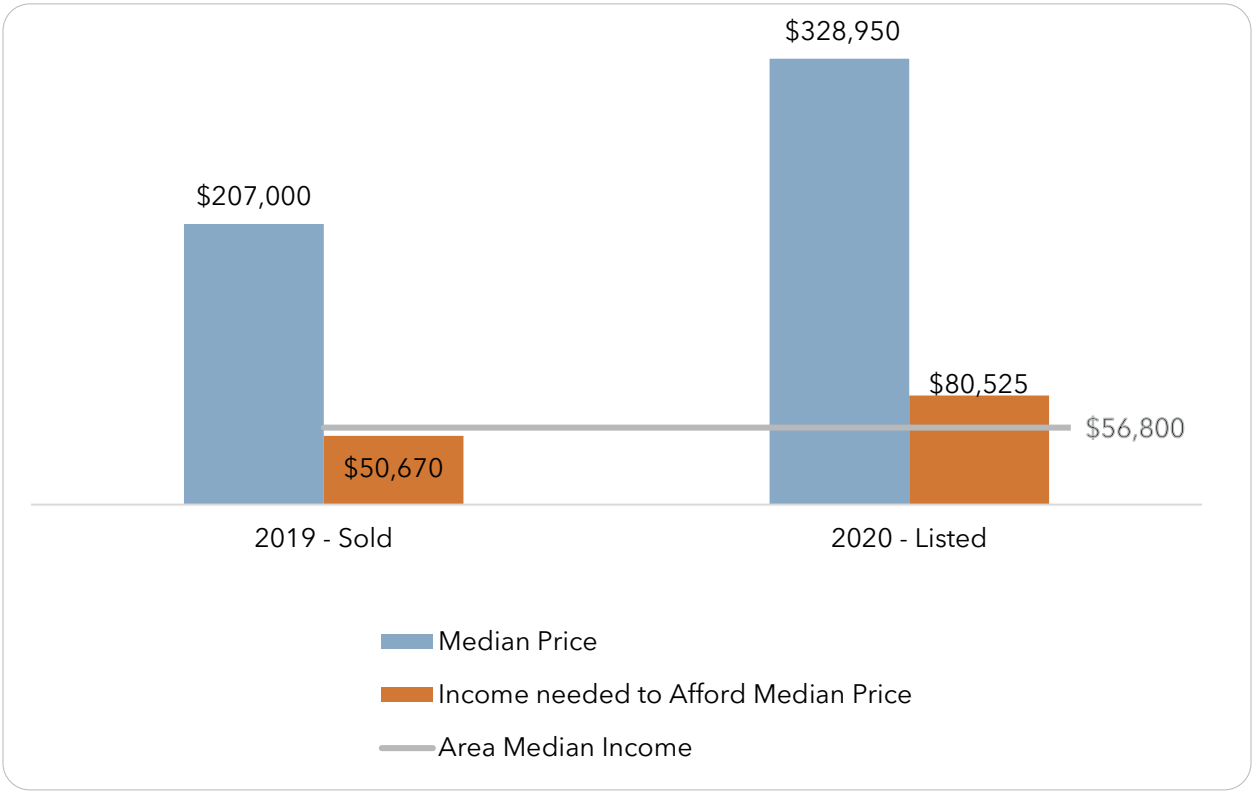
Income and Affordable Home Purchase Price

AMI	Annual income (2 persons)	Max Purchase Price	Homes currently listed
<50%	$28,400	Under $125,000	1
50% to 80%	$45,400	$200,000	1
80.1 to 120%	$68,200	$300,000	6
120.1% to 200%	$113,600	$500,000	8
>200%		Over $500,000	2

Source: CHFA, Consultant Team,

Distinctly unlike most Colorado markets, a household earning the area median income was able to afford a home priced at the median sale price in 2019. With the jump in list prices in 2020, a household would now need twice the average wage in the county and 142% of the area median income to afford the median list price. Homes for sale now are far less attainable for households making local wages than homes sold one year ago.

Income Needed to Afford Median Priced Home



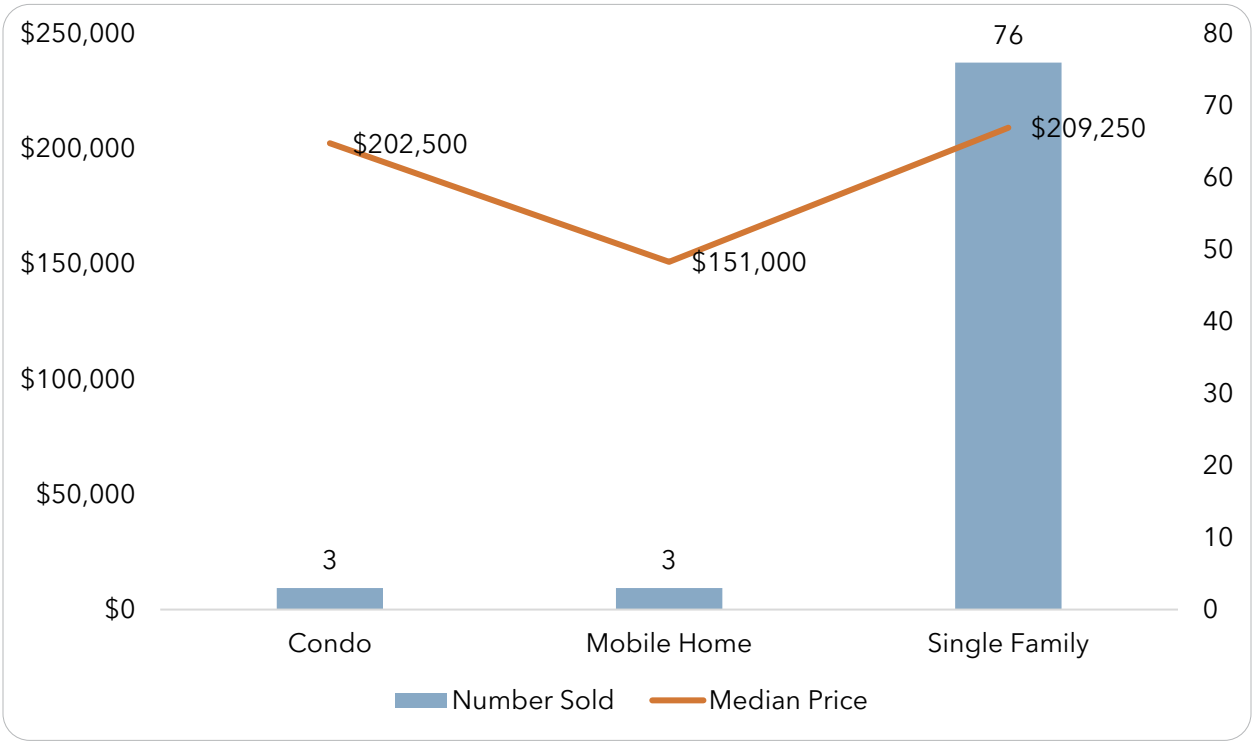
Source: MLS, Consultant Team, CHFA

Type and Size of Homes

Based on the local inventory, there are very few housing choices aside from single family homes.

- Single family homes accounted for 93% of sales last year.
- Only three condos sold, ranging in price from $170,000 to $372,500.
- Three homes listed as "manufactured/mobile" were sold on lots within Alamosa. Mobile homes are not an allowed use by right on single family lots in Alamosa, so these homes likely pre-date current zoning regulations. The median price for these was 28% lower than the price of single-family homes. Mobile homes in lot rent situations were not included because they are bought and sold similarly to vehicles.
- Current listings continue to offer few choices in home type. There is only one condo and one mobile home on the market.

Home Sales by Type - 2019

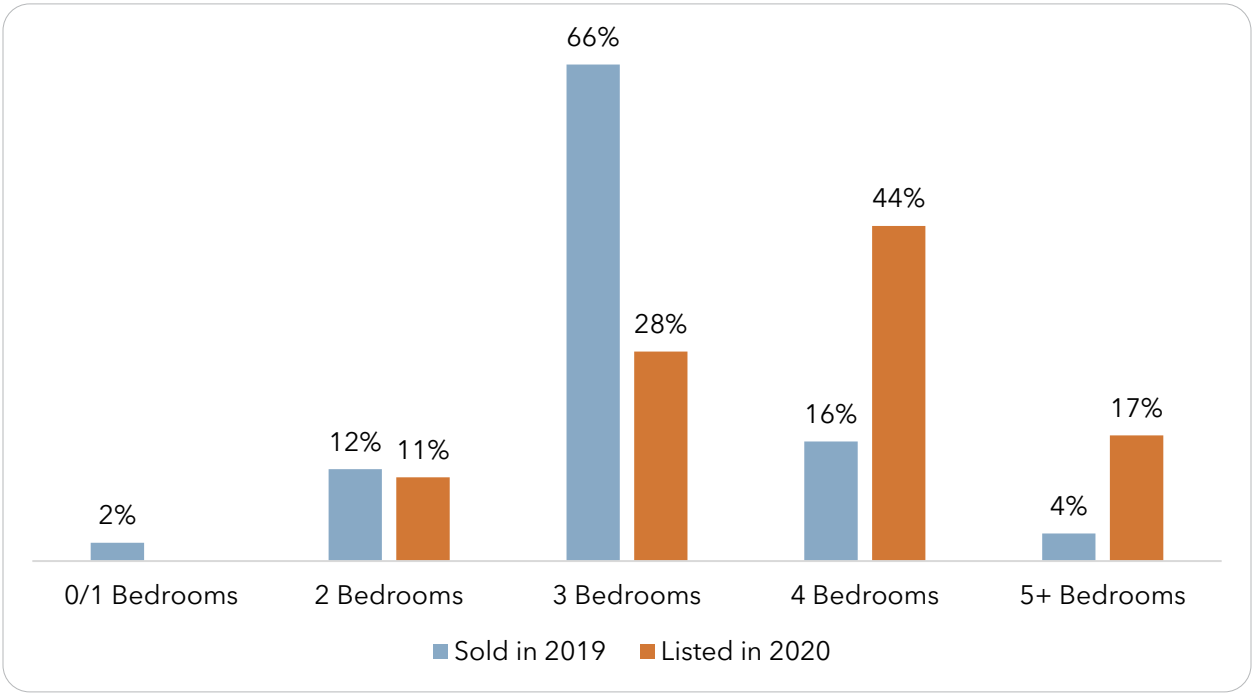


Source: MLS

Homes currently listed are generally larger and less affordable than homes sold last year. The majority (66%) of homes sold last year had three bedrooms. Current listings are predominately homes with more than three bedrooms.

The shortage of one- and two-bedroom homes combined with the prevalence of single-family homes pose challenges for older households looking to downsize, as well as young individuals and couples looking to purchase for the first time. In short, all buyers compete for the same limited and relatively homogenous inventory.

Number of Bedrooms - Sold Last Year and Current Listings



Source: MLS

Few very small and very large homes were sold last year. Almost all homes were in the 1,000 to 3,000 square foot range with a median size of 1,644 square feet. The median size of current listings (2,052 square feet) is about 25% larger than last year. Average price per square foot for homes sold last year was $131. Average list price per square foot was $137 in October 2020, a 4% increase. A major driver in the overall increase in prices for homes available this year compared to sales last year is that smaller and more affordable homes are no longer available.

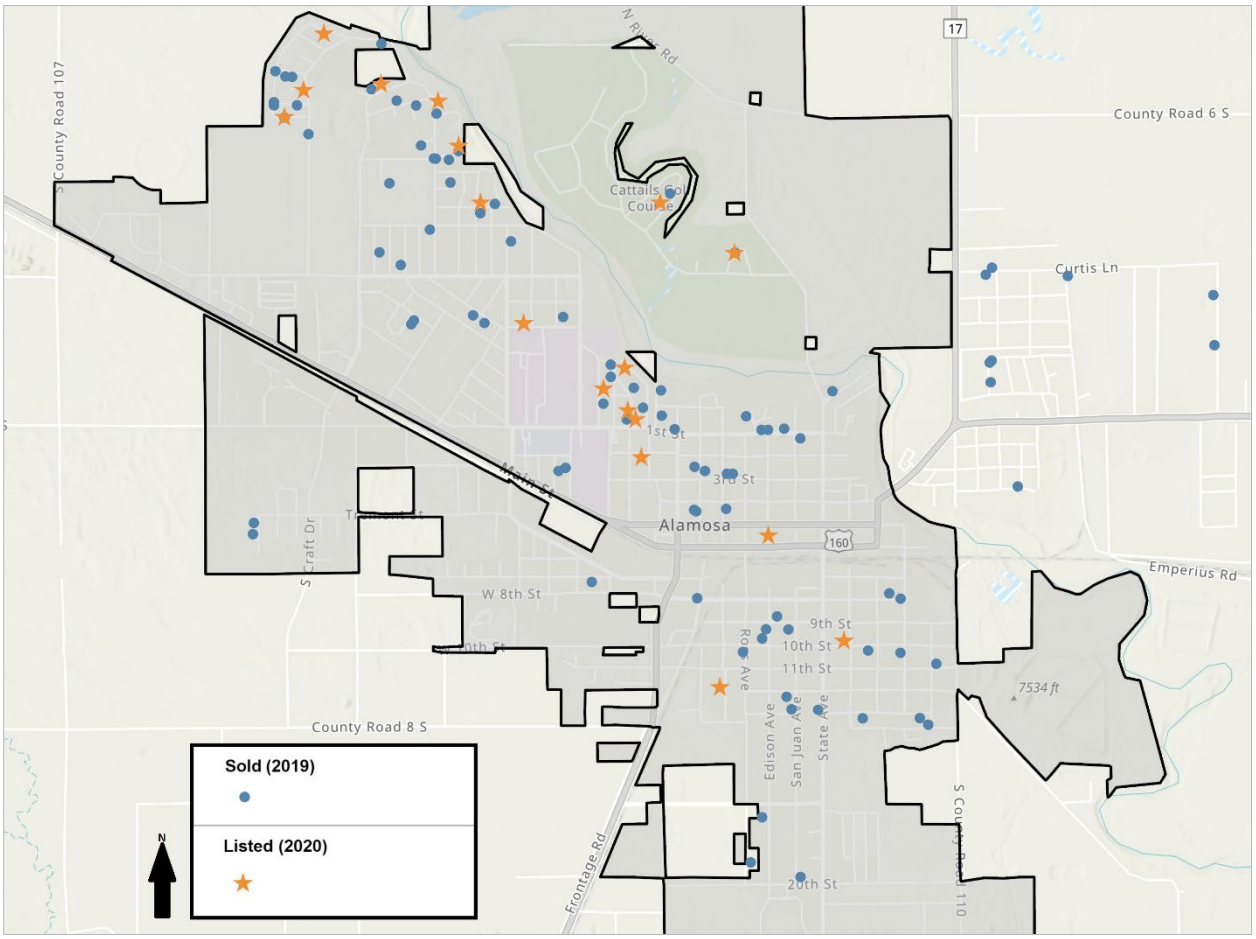
Location

The north side of Alamosa had more sales and higher prices compared to the south side of Alamosa and the surrounding county.

Last year sale prices in Alamosa were similar to those in outlying rural areas. However, homes in the unincorporated rural areas tended to have more land, with an average size of almost 12 acres compared to 0.2 acres in Alamosa. Prices are rising more quickly in Alamosa than the surrounding area. The median list price in Alamosa is up 59% compared to last year's sales, whereas outside the city list prices are up just 9%.

There are more sales at higher prices for homes on the north side of Alamosa than on the south side. In 2019, 60 homes sold on the north side and the median sales price was $252,000. On the south side, 22 homes sold with a median price of $138,500. Of 18 current listings, only two are on the south side. They are the lowest asking prices ($105,000 and $155,000) of all current listings. This discrepancy is at least in part due to a larger land area and supply of homes north of Highway 160/Main Street than south. Yet, local stakeholders identified historic patterns of racial segregation, zoning, and adjacent land uses as contributing factors to this dynamic.

Sold and Current Listings by Location



Source: MLS, ESRI, Consultant Team

Buyer Preferences

Home Size and Price. Local realtors observe the greatest demand for three bedroom/two bath single family homes with a garage. Buyers are seeking move-in ready homes priced in the $200,000 to $250,000 range. This is consistent with last year's sales trends. Homes in this price range, however, are becoming harder to find, meaning that buyers are having to stretch financially to get into homeownership. Buyers are increasingly needing to compromise on the size of the home and whether it has a garage.

Home Location. Buyers tend to prefer the north side of Alamosa. First time homebuyers increasingly need to compromise on location. Commuting from surrounding communities with lower housing costs, such as Monte Vista, is also a location tradeoff.

Type of buyer.

- The majority of buyers are from the area and looking to purchase their first home or move within the market,
- Realtors observe most buyers who are moving to the area are doing so for work, although there has been a small increase in retirees and second homeowners in recent years,

- Alamosa is attractive to seniors given the availability of medical services and inventory of one-story homes, and
- One realtor noted a small increase in inquiries from potential buyers from the Front Range who are able to work from home and are attracted by the comparatively affordable housing and small-town character.

Home Selection and Quality. Realtors observed that households looking to downsize have few choices, and that quality of homes for sale has become an increasing concern.

The low inventory and increasing prices make it difficult for current homeowners to move within the market; residents get "stuck" in their homes. It is also challenging for new people moving to the area to find a home that suits their needs.

Mortgage Availability and Lending

Several local and regional banks are providing both conventional and subsidized mortgages. Realtors and lenders observe:

- Many buyers struggle with down payments and creditworthiness, and this trend has increased as housing costs have increased. Many buyers have 5% or less saved for a down payment, and may need assistance with closing costs.
- Low wages and increasing rental rates over the past decade have made it hard to save, and hamper people's ability to qualify for mortgages.
- USDA and FHA loans are being used on approximately 50% of transactions. Using USDA and FHA for homes priced below $180,000 has become increasingly difficult, as these homes tend to be in poor condition and do not meet the quality standards for these loans.
- Comparable properties are not always readily available for appraisals, and transactions where the seller needs to assist with closing costs have appraisal risk.

RENTAL MARKET

The rental housing market is currently tight: vacancies are limited, rents have increased in recent years, and landlords have become more selective about tenants. Local property managers report that the rental market in Alamosa has been consistently strong for the past seven to ten years. Adams State University drives a strong demand for student rentals with approximately 580 ASU students living off campus or with family. Other households rent for a wide variety of reasons including very limited availability of entry-level homes for them to purchase. Fortunately, more rental units are soon to be constructed, which will improve rental availability and options.

Vacancy

Peak leasing season is in the summer, in anticipation of students returning to ASU. The vacancy rate for market rate rentals was about 3% in October of 2020, which is typically a time of year with low turnover. Vacancy is down significantly from the 2009 Housing Needs Assessment when the vacancy rate was 12%. A stable rental market tends to have a vacancy rate of around 5-7%. When the vacancy rate is higher than this, landlords are compelled to reduce rents or offer concessions to fill units; when lower, rents are likely to increase because renter demand exceeds supply – more rental units are needed.

Rental Rates

This section covers market rate rental housing. Subsidized rental properties are addressed in the Housing Market Conditions section.

Median asking rent for current apartment listings is now $774 compared to $577 in 2009. Rental rates are estimated to have increased an average of 34% over the past eleven years, or about 3% annually.

Units on the north side of town lease for $50-$100/month more on average than units located to the south, Property managers observe rents are also driven by amenities and the age and condition of the property. Most apartment rents cover basic utilities such as water, sewer, and trash, but not electric, phone, and internet.

Number of Market Rate Listings by Type and Size, October 2020

	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4+ Bedroom	Total
Apartment	2	8	11	6	-	27
Single family	-	1	10	2	1	14
Total	2	9	21	8	1	41

Asking Rent by Type and Size, October 2020

	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4+ Bedroom	Total
Apartment	$488	$606	$797	$1,110	-	$774
Single family	-	$725	$1,051	$1,000	$1,250	$1,005
Average	$488	$619	$918	$1,078	$1,250	$879

Source: Alamosa News, Apartments.com, Craigslist, Property Manager Interviews, Property Manager websites, SLV Junction, Zillow. Note the small sample sizes in this table.

In recent years, the market has responded to the demand for rental housing. Several multi-family projects have been built in the past five years, and at least two more are planned. These newer rental properties (see Housing Inventory section) have created more choices for renters, particularly renters with higher incomes. Providing more inventory at different price points gives renters options and reduces competition for available rental inventory.

The quality of the inventory is still a concern among older properties. And, service providers in the area noted that the loss of small rental units above retail has created a housing gap for very low-income individuals experiencing housing instability or homelessness. (see Special Needs section)

Property managers report that they have not seen many adverse effects from the COVID-19 pandemic to date with regard to collecting rents or leasing vacant units. The summer leasing season was slightly less tight when some students did not return. Some property managers voiced concern that more impacts from the pandemic will be seen in coming months when State and Federal assistance run out, placing local businesses under further economic strain and increasing the likelihood that households will struggle to pay rent due to reduced work hours, decreased pay, and/or layoffs.

> *"Rents for homes are oddly high for the area's income levels relative to the condition and size of the property being rented."*
>
> *- Local employer*

Housing Attainability – To Rent

Current average asking rents are affordable to households earning between 50 - 70% AMI.

Average Asking Rents, November 2020

	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom
Average asking rent	$619	$918	$1,119
Income required to be affordable at 30% of income	$24,512	$36,353	$44,312
AMI Level that can afford this rent	49%	64%	69%

Source: rental listing resources cited above, CHFA, Consultant Team

Rents at these income levels appear relatively attainable compared to urban and resort communities in Colorado markets where market rents are often upwards of 80% to 120% AMI. Alamosa, however, has 58% of renters who need housing that is affordable below 50% AMI, or about $710/month for two people.

AMI	Household Income Range	Percentage of Households	Max Rent	Renter Distribution	Market Rate Units Available for Rent
<50%	$0 to $28,400	42%	$710	58%	10
50.1-80%	$28,401 to $45,400	19%	$1,278	16%	27
80.1-120%	$45,401 to $68,200	18%	$1,704	9%	1
120.1-200%	$68,201 to $113,600	14%	$2,840	10%	2
>200%	>$113,600	8%		7%	1
	Total	100%		100%	41

Source: rental listing resources cited above, CHFA, Ribbon Demographics, LLC, STA, Consultant Team

Renter Needs and Preferences

Bedroom size and amenities. One and two-bedroom units that are priced to be affordable for one or two working adults are very much in demand. Property managers describe the greatest number of inquiries and longest waitlists for one-bedroom units. Three-bedroom houses located near the university that can be shared by students are also popular. Pet friendliness and storage are the top amenity considerations. There is also a need for very small units with rent subsidy and supportive services for individuals who have experienced homelessness (See additional information in Special Populations).

Housing costs and overcrowding. Property managers report that most tenants do not have a problem with security deposits and first month rent. Renters are often doubling up with roommates, and some property managers have concerns about overcrowding. High utility costs, particularly in older homes, creates an additional cost burden on renters. One property manager described utility costs being equal to rent in poorly insulated homes during the coldest months.

SUBSIDIZED AND INCOME RESTRICTED HOUSING

Alamosa currently has an inventory of 369 rental units that receive ongoing rental subsidies (so tenants pay 30% of their income on rent, and other operating costs are covered by a state or federal source) or were built using state or federal resources in exchange for serving households below a designated income level. Subsidized and income restricted housing represents about 14% of the current rental housing inventory.

Some of the funding sources have finite commitments for affordability requirements, which are included in the "expiration of subsidy or LURA (Land Use Restriction Agreement)." Local entities should plan for preservation of this affordability by renewing contract subsidies, purchasing the property prior to the expiration, or planning a refinance using resources such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC).

Income Restricted and Subsidized Rental Housing Inventory

Name	Address	Type of Subsidy	Who is housed?	# of Units	Manager	Year Built	Expiration of subsidy or LURA
Casita de la Luna	1410 11th Street	LIHTC, 515, HOME	Seniors and disabled	28	SLV Housing Coalition	2001	2031
Totten Manor	217 Market St.	LIHTC, USDA 515, 521	Seniors and disabled	26	Landmark Management	1994	2048
Mount Blanca View	203 Market St.	LIHTC	Seniors	24	Landmark Management	1988	2048
Casita del Sol Apartments	1405 W. 11th St.	LIHTC, 515	Families	24	Landmark Management	1998	2028
Tierra Nueva	600 S Craft St	USDA 514	Families	37	SLV Farm Worker Housing Co.	2005	2035
Sierra Vista	2303 Vigil Way	USDA 515	Families	32	Monte Vista HA	1990	2038
Alamosa HA	2000 Vigil Way	PH	Families, seniors, disabled	198	Alamosa HA	Vars.	n/a
Total				369			

Source: Interviews, CHFA and federal housing databases, Housing Needs Assessment San Luis Valley 2009
Acronyms are explained in the glossary.

These properties reported only five vacancies in the fall of 2020, for a vacancy rate of 1%. The Alamosa Housing Authority reports the greatest demand is for one-bedroom units. Currently, it takes six months to a year for an individual or family to move to the top of the one-bedroom waitlist. Households in need of two and three bedrooms usually wait 3 to 6 months. Households in need of four bedrooms may wait over a year, given the small inventory of only eight units. San Luis Valley Housing Coalition owns and manages 28 units for seniors and people with disabilities at Casita de la Luna. They report one to two units turn each year, and that they always have a waitlist.

Housing for Special Populations

This section provides information on each of the following special needs populations in Alamosa based on public data sources and extensive interviews with local service providers and organizations.

- Senior households
- Persons with disabilities
- Veterans
- Homeless
- Seasonal agricultural workforce
- College students

An overview of housing options available and a snapshot of organizations that provide housing-related services to help these populations locate, retain or secure housing is provided. The intent of this section is to help the City understand potential special housing needs and orient priorities in future housing action planning.

SENIOR HOUSEHOLDS

The senior population, defined here as persons age 62 and over, has increased over three-times faster since 2010 than the population overall in both the city and county. The senior population increased by about 670 persons in the county and 260 in the city since 2010. This growth has mostly been the result of an aging population rather than a significant influx of new seniors moving to the county. Over the next five years, the Colorado Demography Office projects that this population will continue to grow at a similar rate.

Seniors (62+) comprise about 14% of Alamosa's population and 24% of households. Seniors are much more likely to have one- or two-persons in their household than younger populations. About 39% of Alamosa seniors rent their homes, which is much higher than in the county (26%).

Population Age 62 and Over, 2020 (est.)

	Alamosa County	Alamosa City
Population	16,240	9,450
Age 62+	2,930	1,354
% 62+	18.0%	14.3%
Yearly average growth (age 62+) (2010-2020)	2.6%	2.2%
Yearly average growth (total population) (2010-2020)	0.5%	0.7%
% households with householder age 62+	28%	24%
% of households age 62+ that rent	26%	39%

Source: Colorado Demography Office, 2012-2016 ACS and 2014-2018 ACS, Ribbon Demographics, LLC, Consultant team

Senior households often have assets and savings that are not reflected in income. Based on income alone, the vast majority earn under $75,000 per year. These households would need homes priced

under $300,000 for sale and rentals priced below $1,875 per month. The largest percentage of renters earn under $20,000, meaning a payment of $500 per month or less would be affordable for these households.

Income of Age 62 and Over Households, 2020 (est.)

	Owners	Renters	TOTAL
Under $20,000	26%	56%	35%
$20,000 - $29,999	12%	8%	11%
$30,000 - $39,999	14%	8%	13%
$40,000 - $49,999	10%	4%	9%
$50,000 - $74,999	17%	10%	15%
$75,000 - $100,000	10%	4%	8%
$100,000 or more	10%	9%	10%
Total 62+ households	**522**	**336**	**858**

Source: Ribbon Demographics, LLC, Consultant team

Seniors tend to prefer units that have accessible floor plans and are low maintenance (e.g., newer and small or shared yards). Access to medical care is also important. Ensuring proper diversity of housing supply that this population can afford – both for ownership and rent – can help free up larger homes for younger families (see Housing Market section).

Smaller ownership products for seniors are in scarce supply (see Housing Market section). This includes few smaller 1- and 2-bedroom homes that are both affordable and in good condition (i.e., not requiring extensive repairs). There is a less than 2-month supply of homes priced under $300,000 and very few have less than 3-bedrooms.

Several senior housing rental options exist in Alamosa, as summarized in the below table. Options include both market rate and income restricted/subsidized units. Subsidized units are always full with a waitlist; market units on the other hand, while not plentiful, are more available. COVID-19 has impacted the operation and occupancy of some of the properties.

- The Bridge is a market rate development offering independent and assisted living. Five floor plans are available, in a mix of studio, 1- and 2-bedroom units. Rates range from $4,100 per month up to $6,750 per month. All units include meals and housekeeping services. Leases are available month-to-month. Pets are permitted for an extra $50 per month fee. Current COVID-19 policy prohibits inside visits. Only one family moved their parents out of The Bridge since the pandemic began.
- Evergreen Nursing Home and San Luis Care Center provide nursing home options, plus rehabilitation care. They meet both long- and short-term care needs, with the majority of Evergreen residents being long-term and San Luis Care being short-term. They are mostly occupied by persons over the age of 60, but provide rehabilitation care to all ages. Rates range from $228 up to $376 per day; most occupants use Medicare or Medicaid to help cover costs. Before COVID, the facilities were typically near capacity, with about 4 to 5 beds generally available. At peak periods, up to a 2-week wait list has been in place. Since COVID, both are about 50% occupied. The no-visitation restriction enacted due to COVID-19 caused many to move their parents out of the facility. Many people also placed surgeries on hold or could not receive them, meaning the need for post-surgery rehabilitation declined.

- There are another 78 units of independent living rentals in Alamosa, nine (9) of which are market rate and the rest subsidized. Subsidized units are all for 80% AMI households or lower. Rents at Totten Manor do not exceed $680/month for a 1-bedroom. All subsidized units are full with a waitlist, which is typical. At most eight (8) subsidized units per year become available.

Senior Housing Inventory in Alamosa

Housing type	Complex	Number of Units/Beds	Occupancy	Waitlist
Nursing care (market rate)	San Luis Care Center	63 residents; single and double room occupancy	35 (usu. 58 to 60)	None, typical
	Evergreen Nursing Home	52 residents; single, double and triple room occupancy	36 (usu. 48 to 50)	None, typical
Independent and assisted living (market rate)	The Bridge (age 55+)	70 units, 85 residents; studio, 1- and 2-bedroom options	5 units available	None
	Totten Manor/Mount Blanca View (age 62+)	8 units (1-bedroom)	4 vacant	No
	Casita De La Luna	1 unit	Full	Yes
Independent living (subsidized)	Casita De La Luna (LIHTC, 515, HOME)	27 units (1- and 2-bedroom)	Full	Yes
	Totten Manor/Mount Blanca View (LIHTC, 515, 521)	42 units (1-bedroom)	Full	Yes

Source: Consultant Team, property manager and key stakeholder interviews

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

About 19% of the population in Alamosa has a disability. Ambulatory (46%) and cognitive (42%) disabilities are the most common. Housing needs vary depending upon the type of disability.

All subsidized rental properties in Alamosa have ADA accessible units, though these units are typically full. In addition, the San Luis Valley Housing Coalition has resources to assist homeowners who need to make physical improvements to their properties to live safely with their disability. Their funding for this program can provide low interest loans for up to $24,999/home and they can serve about 12 homes per year. Depending on the household's income and ability to make payments, these loans may be deferred, or have small payments with low interest rates. SLVHC

Persons with Disabilities by Type, 2020 (est.)

	Alamosa City
Population	9,450
With disability	1,812
% with disability	19%
Type of disability:	
Hearing	22%
Vision	20%
Cognitive	42%
Ambulatory	46%
Self-care	13%
Independent living	25%

Source: 2014-2018 ACS, Colorado Demography Office, Consultant team

is also helping elderly clients apply for and administer the USDA 504 grant and loan programs when applying for the home rehab program.

In designing new housing or renovating older apartments, design considerations for disabilities should be incorporated. Some communities have started to incorporate technological solutions such as voice activated thermostats and appliances to support sensory, cognitive, and ambulatory disabilities. Effectively supporting individuals with more than one diagnosed disability, for example substance use disorder and mental health disability, is an important consideration in the architectural design and coordinated service plan of supportive housing projects (further discussed in Homeless Section below).

VETERANS

Veterans affairs services are available for veterans throughout the San Luis Valley. There are an estimated 3,900 veterans in the Valley, about 31% of which live in in Alamosa County. The Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley estimates that about 1,100 veterans are registered with Veterans Affairs (VA), with about $36 million in VA benefits coming into the Valley. The county Veterans Affairs Office also offers free services to veterans. Volunteers of America (VOA) also serves between 30 and 40 veterans who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness with rent assistance and service coordination. VOA currently has three clients who have been unable to find housing and are living temporarily in motels.

The Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley serves over 600 veterans per month, and estimates that 20-25% (100- 150 individuals) are homeless. In addition, La Puente serves an average of 25 veterans monthly through their rural outreach program, as well as supporting vulnerable veterans with the food bank, energy assistance, and emergency shelter.

The Veterans Coalition staff notes that homeless veterans and those not registered with the VA are at an exceptionally high risk for suicide. Access to behavioral health support is always a challenge in the area, but even more difficult during COVID. During COVID, Behavioral Health Group of San Luis Valley is only providing telehealth sessions. Since homeless and unstably housed veterans rarely have the technological resources to access telehealth, their inability to get in-person help has increased risks for this population.

The Veterans Coalition has identified a need for supportive housing designed specifically for veterans, including trauma informed design, on-site behavioral health support services, job skills development and support, and consideration of military culture in which many veterans thrive. They believe 10-12 small homes are needed, along with a shelter that is a quiet, healing environment.

Existing Veterans Housing

Housing type	Complex	Number of Units/Beds	Occupancy	Waitlist
Nursing home	Homelake Veterans Center (Monte Vista)	60 beds	-	-
Independent living with assistance	Homelake Veterans Center (Monte Vista)	48 cottages	-	-

Source: Consultant Team

The organizations in the table below assist with finding or keeping veterans in stable housing, or are considering expanding housing services.

Veteran Support Organizations

Organizations	Usage	Funding	Services
Veterans Affairs Offices (each county)	-	State organization	Access to benefits, claims assistance
Veterans Coalition of the SLV	600 visitors/month	Grants, donations, other organizations	Veteran Farmers Training program, Suicide Prevention, Health and Benefits Access
Volunteers of America	30-40 clients/year	Grants, donations, cost sharing with organizations	Homeless prevention and rapid rehousing, assistance with housing search, service coordination

Source: Consultant Team

HOMELESS

People experiencing homelessness in and around Alamosa receive supportive services and assistance with housing from several Alamosa-based organizations. Many of these services support individuals and households who are struggling to retain their housing, are experiencing housing instability or are homeless. One such organization is La Puente, a non-profit that provides a wide array of services including emergency shelter, transitional housing, eviction prevention, rent assistance, food assistance, social enterprises, energy assistance, rural outreach, street outreach (started because of COVID-19), and youth programs.

Gathering definitive data on people experiencing homelessness and housing instability is a challenge in every community. The Balance of State Point in Time Survey conducted by Colorado Coalition for the Homeless clearly understates the data on people experiencing homelessness in the San Luis Valley by a large margin. The 2020 report indicated 38 individuals were unsheltered, while interviews with service providers and shelter data indicate there are at least 80-100 people homeless on most nights in Alamosa. Per the Alamosa School District, there are about 40 households with school age children (a total of 104 children) who lack stable housing. Most of these households are living with friends or relatives in overcrowded situations. There may be some overlap between the shelter, motel, unsheltered, and overcrowded household estimates.

Homelessness has extensive costs for both the individual or family having the experience, as well as the community. Personal costs include, stress, trauma, adverse health outcomes, and increased chance of being a victim of crime. La Puente estimates that 70% of people experiencing homelessness in the community are also struggling with substance use disorders and behavioral health issues. Each year, several people die while experiencing homelessness in Alamosa. Community costs manifest in policing, hospital and jail utilization, and long-term social service needs. Stable housing and the social support services for people to remain successfully housed reduce these costs for both the individual and the community.

Shelter and Camping

La Puente's shelter has 50 beds, but COVID has reduced capacity to eight household clusters or a maximum of 30 beds. La Puente tracked data on unique individuals and households served in their shelter between August 2019 and August 2020. For this 12-month period, 742 individuals and 634 homeless households received shelter assistance. La Puente also tracks where shelter clients are from. During the same period, 87% were from the San Luis Valley, 8% were from other places in Colorado, and 5% were from out of state (mostly nearby New Mexico).

Looking at data on where clients intend to go upon leaving the shelter reveals a significant gap in housing resources: only about 11% were moving into stable long-term housing. La Puente staff observed that fewer clients are able to exit the shelter into stable housing as rents have increased in the area, small inexpensive apartments have been lost, and landlords have become more selective about tenants. The loss of 20 units in the Walsh fire further constrained the availability of small apartments with low rents. La Puente staff also indicated an interest in using their shelter as a more transitional housing resource post-COVID, where clients who have a clear path out of homelessness but are waiting for an apartment to become available could reside temporarily.

To address concerns around homeless camping on private property and public right-of-way, the City created St. Benedict Campsite for the Homeless, which is a legal place to camp within city limits. Typically, there are 10-12 individuals using the campsite, with as many as 20 in the summer months.

Stakeholder interviews identified several suggestions and recommendations regarding sheltering:

- Separate the current La Puente shelter and soup kitchen function. The kitchen, a vital resource, does not have adequate space, and spillover into the neighborhood is of concern to neighbors. Additionally, the kitchen is more of a commercial use (i.e., people come to the facility for the meal and then leave) compared to the residential nature of the shelter and surrounding neighborhood.
- Create specific sheltering options for single women and families with children.
- Create a "low barrier" emergency shelter where people who are severely intoxicated or have disruptive behaviors can be safe, particularly in winter.

Existing Homeless Housing

Housing Type	Provider	Number of Beds	Occupancy	Waitlist
Shelter	La Puente	50	8 household groups due to COVID	Yes
Campsites	City	-	Up to 100	No

Source: Consultant Team

Supportive Housing

Two agencies have supportive housing programs that provide vouchers (state and federal resources that allow a tenant to pay 30% of their income for rent), support services, and housing for people who have experienced homelessness. Supportive housing (sometimes referred to as "permanent supportive housing" or PSH) is rental housing combined with rental assistance and supportive services to assist formerly homeless persons achieve ongoing housing stability.

- La Puente has 27 units with vouchers, and 85 households on their waitlist for their Adelante/Family Resource Center program. Of the people waiting, 21 are households with more than one person. Their portfolio includes some small apartments in stand-alone

buildings and above commercial space, as well as scattered single-family homes. The portfolio includes mostly one- and three-bedroom units.

- San Luis Valley Behavioral Health Group (SLVBHG) has 60 vouchers, which include Shelter+Care, Colorado Division of Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing vouchers. They own an 18-unit apartment property where 16 vouchers are project based. The property has 5 one-bedroom and 13 two-bedroom units. While they serve the whole Valley, all but four of their vouchers are leased up in Alamosa. The voucher coordinator observed that most clients prefer to be in Alamosa for transportation and access to services.

Existing Supportive Housing

Housing Type	Provider	Number of Units	Occupancy	Waitlist
Scattered site homes and apartments with vouchers	La Puente	27	Full	85
Apartments with vouchers	SLVBHG	16	Full	70
Vouchers to lease up in community	SLVBHG	44	Full	70

Source: Consultant Team

These service providers observe a need for more supportive housing overall. More specifically, they point to the need for additional accessible units and properties that are specifically designed with "trauma informed care" in mind. Housing that does not have a specific timeline to "transition" to market rate is needed; some households may need supportive services for a short time, while others may need them for many years or even permanently.

It is also noteworthy that the Alamosa Housing Authority is not involved in providing supportive housing since housing authorities have the ability to prioritize vouchers and other housing for homeless individuals and families. They often take a leadership role in creating housing for people who have experienced homelessness. An action plan consideration could be a more active role for the Alamosa Housing Authority with regard to homeless response, as it currently appears to be an under-utilized asset in the community.

Children and Youth

There are numerous organizations providing assistance to children and youth. La Puente works with families across many of their programs, and runs a licensed after-school and summer program for children ages 5 to 10 combating instability in their home lives (PALS). PALS has an average monthly enrollment of 25 children. The Boys and Girls Club of the San Luis Valley (BGCSLV) serves about 1,500 children and youth annually. Alamosa School District supports school age children who are unsheltered. As of October, there were 104 homeless children in the District, representing about 42 homeless households. Three quarters of children enrolled are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

All three agencies note housing instability as a major stressor for the children and youth they serve, and a rise in homeless households that include children. BGCSLV identifies a need for safe short-term housing for unaccompanied teens and is exploring options to build housing in coordination with a teen center and maker space/workforce development program. They observe the need for about 16 units for teens. Grandparents raising grandchildren was also noted as a consideration for housing families experiencing homelessness.

Service Coordination

Interviewees who are working with homeless populations expressed varying degrees of satisfaction around how well services are coordinated between agencies seeking to efficiently and effectively meet

clients' needs. Positive perceptions include the small community and strong professional network of providers. Challenges include a trend of staff turnover after 3-5 years, the need for supportive services outpacing the resources available in the community, prohibitions on meeting with clients in person during COVID, and clients lacking access to technology. Service providers also noted a lack of resources for people experiencing substance use disorders. As a result, people are often sent outside the Valley.

Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention

Rapid re-housing is a rent assistance and case management intervention designed to help individuals and families that do not need intensive and ongoing support to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. Homeless prevention is case management and rent assistance that supports individuals or families on the brink of losing their housing, for example prior to a foreclosure, or when a landlord is considering not renewing a lease or pursuing eviction.

La Puente typically receives and invests about $250,000 per year on homeless prevention and rapid rehousing rent assistance. This assistance helps about 130 households pay rent and security deposits when obtaining housing and offers funds to pay rent to avoid evictions. With COVID, the resources from the state doubled temporarily. Staff report their homeless prevention programs always have a waiting list, although some households receiving assistance have been able to un-enroll as COVID restrictions lighted up and normal employment resumed this summer.

Current initiatives

Many people experiencing homelessness remain unsheltered, stay short term with friends or family, or live in a vehicle. There is a clear need for more housing and housing choice vouchers paired with supportive services to provide a home and create stability and safety for people who have experienced homelessness. The community has a long history of leadership in this arena, and has several current initiatives underway to create additional housing and sheltering opportunities:

- The City has created the Homeless Coalition, which is a group of community stakeholders who meet monthly to understand root causes of homelessness in the community, assess the resources and gaps, and discuss strategies and responses. The group includes members of City Council, County Commissioners, veterans, people experiencing housing instability, law enforcement, business leaders, mental health practitioners, substance abuse practitioners, housing and homelessness service providers, and healthcare practitioners.
- SLVBHG recently participated in the Colorado Division of Housing Permanent Supportive Housing Toolkit, which concluded in November 2020. This intensive workshop is facilitated by experienced supportive housing professionals, and takes place with peer communities across the State. Each community brings a cross disciplinary team that is committed to learning about best practices and working to implement supportive housing in their community. SLVBHG also issued an RFP for a development consultant to further support them in selecting a site for permanent supportive housing and doing financial feasibility.
- A group of non-profit and faith-based leaders has begun to explore options for a low barrier to entry shelter for the winter months. The intention of this group is to provide crisis intervention during the harshest weather and to take pressure off the existing shelter resources in the community. After researching various options, the group is providing better quality tents and a heating source for those utilizing the homeless camp space.

Other challenges include:

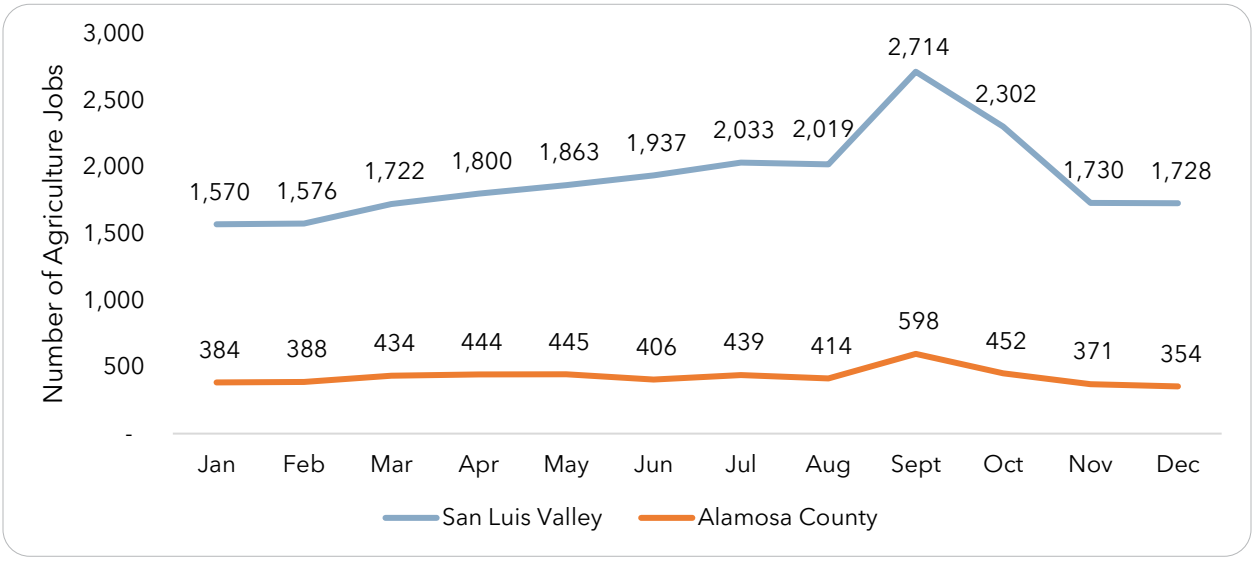
- Clients presenting with a range of behavioral and physical health issues, criminal background and lack of income and/or credit- worthiness,
- Increasing numbers of people experiencing homelessness without resources (e.g., not work or SSI ready, all ties in the community severed), and
- A lack of case managers to work with homeless individuals to access existing resources.

SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE

In 2019, there were an average of 1,916 agricultural jobs in the San Luis Valley, varying from between 1,600 to 1,700 jobs in the winter months to over 2,700 in the peak month of September. Agricultural jobs in Alamosa County represent about 20% of San Luis Valley jobs, ranging from 360 to 380 in the winter months up to about 600 in the peak month of September.

The San Luis Valley has seen a decrease in seasonal and migrant workers over the past several years. In Alamosa County, agricultural jobs declined between 2010 and 2015, but have recovered to just below 2010 levels. Peak employment typically occurs from early to mid-June through mid-October.

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting Jobs, San Luis Valley and Alamosa County, 2019



Source: Colorado Demography Office, Labor Market Information

The area added about 60% more jobs in the peak months in 2019 compared to upwards of 80% in 2010 and 2015. In 2019, over 1,000 seasonal workers were hired in the San Luis Valley, about 225 of which worked in Alamosa County. Seasonal agricultural workers may be filled by year-round residents of the San Luis Valley, H-2A Visa workers[3] and seasonal workers migrating to the area. Estimates of workers in each category are provided in the following table.

[3] The H-2A Visa program allows agricultural employers who anticipate a shortage of domestic workers that are able and willing to fill positions to bring nonimmigrant foreign workers to the U.S. to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature. Any employer using H-2A workers must have initially attempted to find U.S. workers to fill these jobs. H-2A workers must be provided housing and transportation from that housing to the job site, and provided three-meals per day at no more than a DOL-specified cost or access to facilities for workers to prepare their own meals.

Seasonal Agricultural Jobs, San Luis Valley and Alamosa County, 2019

	San Luis Valley	Alamosa County
Seasonal Jobs	1,060	225
Live in San Luis Valley year-round	615 (58%)	135 (60%)
H-2A Visa employee	343 (32%)	17 (8%)
Other migrant seasonal employee	102	73

Source: Colorado Demography Office, Employer Survey, U.S. Department of Labor – H-2A Performance Data, Consultant Team

Filling Jobs

Forty percent of agricultural employers in the San Luis Valley that responded to the survey reported that filling jobs with qualified employees is a "significant problem." The primary issues noted relate to the lack of supply of workers (few or no applicants), unskilled applicants, job dedication/reliability, and drug/substance abuse. Specific concerns include:

> *"We have had such a problem finding planting and harvest help that we have moved to using a 3rd party contract company, which is more expensive, but more reliable."*
>
> *- 2020 Employer survey*

- Too few workers available.
- Government assistance hurting the motivation or ability to work.
- Reluctance for potential workers to obtain the State certification needed for cannabis jobs.

The use of H-2A Visa employees in the valley has been increasing. Although use of such workers adds cost to the employer, it helps provide a reliable and capable workforce. Employers must ensure transportation to the worksite, housing, access to meals, liability insurance and cover the cost of acquiring the Visa. This means that an H-2A employee may cost $20/hour compared to $13 to $14 per hour for non-H-2A employees. Employers are attracted to the reliability of the workforce provided through the program. With an aging domestic farmworker population and immigration reform, South Central Workforce Development Center (Monte Vista) has observed that the domestic pool of workers has also been declining, increasing the need for H-2A employees.

Housing Options

Fifty percent of agricultural employers responding to the survey stated that the availability of housing for their workforce is "one of the more serious problems" in the Valley. No employer felt it was the "most critical" problem. In Alamosa, there are no housing options specifically for agricultural workers migrating to the area for a job. Tierra Nueva houses agricultural workers, but it is not specifically for seasonal migrant workers.

Agricultural employers felt that entry-level ownership for lower wage skilled and unskilled employees was most needed (3.1 average on a scale from "1 – no need" to "5 – high need"), followed by rentals for seasonal/part-year employees (2.9 average). The South Central Workforce Development Center noted that agricultural employers are increasingly providing housing for some of their employees or helping them cover housing costs.

Employers providing housing through the H-2A Visa program may use:

- Fixed site housing (single family homes, dorms/apartments, etc.),

- Mobile units, including RVs, campers, mobile homes,
- Hotel rooms. Fresh Harvest, an H-2A worker provider, leased rooms in a hotel in Monte Vista this year due to COVID precautions, and
- Labor camps provided by the employer.

Non-H-2A migrant workers often utilize:

- Tierra Nueva Family housing and dorms (Center, CO). The complex has 216 one-bedroom units originally constructed to serve seasonal farmworkers, but many are now occupied year-round.
- Employer-provided housing
- Tents, vans, and RVs
- Rented rooms or hotel rooms
- Family/friend connections
- La Puente shelter in Alamosa. In 2019, 37 visitors to the shelter were in the area for seasonal work and 42 were looking for work.

The South Central Workforce Development Center conducts a yearly pre-occupancy inspection of housing provided by employers to agricultural employees to ensure certain standards are met. This includes, for example, ensuring adequate square footage per employee; presence of window screens; no active leaks; no triple bunks (double bunks permissible); clean hygienic cooking areas or, if a kitchen is not provided, then employing cooks and servers for the workers.

Service Organizations

Several organizations assist both seasonal agricultural workers and employers in the San Luis Valley, which are summarized below.

- Fresh Harvest and the Workforce Development Center help match employees to agricultural employer needs.
- Fresh Harvest helps employers access H-2A Visa employees and ensure employee and employer qualifications are met.
- The Workforce Development Center is a resource for local employers and employees to advertise and find jobs. They help employers receive proper State licensing in order to hire a crew of workers. They also provide job skills training for employees, focusing on soft skills to try to improve dedication and dependability.
- The San Luis Valley Immigrant Resource Center focuses primarily on immigration legal assistance, for which most clients are year-round residents in the area. They added a crime victim housing assistance program recently and started a COVID-relief program that assists with rent, utilities and food access for those in need. They do serve migrant workers periodically. Of those assisted, many reside in the La Puente shelter; finding housing to rent for only a few weeks is very difficult.
- The La Puente shelter offers 50-beds for those experiencing homelessness. They provide over 11,000 nights of stay per year. The shelter helps a portion of migrant farmworkers in Alamosa each year – potentially over 40 workers last year based on visitor statistics.

Organizations Serving Seasonal Workforce

Organizations	Usage	Funding	Services
SLV Immigrant Resource Center	About 2,000 per year (legal assistance); 60% from San Luis Valley; growing	Grants, private donations, other organizations	Immigration legal assistance, Crime victim housing assistance, Battered immigrant assistance (VAWA) Counseling, Education
La Puente	510 unique clients sheltered (2019); 79 were seasonal workers or looking for work (an estimated 40 are migrant farmworkers)	Grants, donations, other organizations	Shelter, Meals, Other
Workforce Development Center	Number of individuals assisted up in 2020due to COVID; but job placement (core service provided) is down	State organization	Match employers and employees to fill jobs, Job skills, training, Employer license certification assistance, Employee housing inspections
Fresh Harvest (for-profit)	100 to 200 H-2A Visa agricultural workers provided to Center past 4 years	For-profit; employer-paid service	H-2A Visa application/reporting. Housing. Transportation. Labor oversight/management

Source: Consultant Team

STUDENTS

Undergraduate student enrollment at Adams State University (ASU) and Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) has been declining for the past several years. This is in line with national trends. In 2020:

- ASU has 3,039 students enrolled (online and in-person) in their undergraduate and graduate programs combined. This includes 1,790 undergraduates.
- TSJC has about 1,500 students enrolled in its two campuses (Alamosa and Trinidad). Enrollment was down about 6.5% this year from 2019, which was better than anticipated in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

TSJC does not provide on-campus housing for students. Most of TSJC students in Alamosa live with their parents or relatives, while others rent apartments or homes. For international students and some athletes, TSJC has an agreement with ASU to utilize ASU dorms.

ASU on-campus student housing can house up to 1,124 students when full. This equates only to about 37% of enrollment. Of ASU students that do not reside on campus about 580 either live with their parents or relatives in the Valley or find homes or apartments to rent, and about 1,620 attend school remotely through online learning.

- Currently 812 students are living on campus (72% of full capacity).

- Units are a mix of traditional dorm-style rooms, dorm suites and family apartments. Typical (e.g., non-COVID) occupancy rates for dorms range between 75% to 90%. Family apartments are typically 100% occupied.
- Students in the residence halls, which do not have kitchens in the rooms, are required to also purchase a meal plan ($2,300 to $2,500 per semester).
- Residence halls do not allow pets, but University apartments do allow service and therapy (e.g., emotional support) animals. About 25 apartments are occupied by families with pets.
- About 4 of the 80 family apartments are currently occupied by recent ASU hires. When units are available, offering housing helps recruit for positions and allows new hires more time to locate more permanent housing in the area.
- ASU also owns three (3) houses in Alamosa, which are used for staff. Two are rented to staff for $900 per month and the third is provided to the ASU assistant director for housing at no charge.
- For students living off campus, property managers note a location preference for properties near ASU, and utilities included in rent.

It is recognized that students help drive rental occupancies in Alamosa when school is in session. Perceived concerns from both TSJC and ASU, however, were more related to the scarcity of units for staff, which fall more in the middle-income ranges, as opposed to lower prices that students seek.

ASU On-Campus Student Housing Inventory, 2020

Housing type	Complex	Capacity	Unit type	Occupancy
Residence Halls (first year and upper-class students) (used for camps in the summer – band camp, baseball camp, etc.)	Coronado Hall Single: $2,425/semester Double: $2,125/semester Super suite: $2,525/semester	480 students	6 Super Suite single occupancy rooms; rest are double occupancy rooms; shared bathroom for every two rooms	85-90% (fall); 75-80% (spring)
	Girault Hall Single: $2,225/semester Double: $1,925/semester	188 students	Double occupancy rooms with community bathrooms	85-90% (fall); 75-80% (spring)
	Conour Hall Single: $2,125/semester Double: $1,825/semester	-	Double occupancy rooms with community bathrooms	85-90% (fall); 75-80% (spring)
University Apartments	High-Rise Apartments $2,400/semester	272 students	Two or three students per unit	-
	Petteys Hall $2,400/semester	272 students	Two or three students per unit	-
	Residence at Rex $2,650/semester	67 students	Four students per unit	-
Other options	Family Apartments 2-bedroom: $540/month 3-bedroom: $600/month	80 units	Two- and three-bedroom apartments	Typically 100% spring and fall
	Summer Housing $300/month for apartments	Typically 80 to 100 live on campus in summer		

Source: Consultant Team

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to the employers who completed the employer survey, the City of Alamosa Housing Committee, and the subject matter experts, service providers, and city and Valley leaders who participated in interviews, providing their time, insight, and data to make this Assessment possible.

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ALAMOSA STAFF

Heather Brooks, City Manager

Deacon Aspinwall, Planning and Development Specialist

CONSULTING TEAM

Williford, LLC

WSW Consulting, Inc.

Rees Consulting, Inc.

Urban Rural Continuum

Area Median Income Chart

The Area Median Income (AMI) is included throughout this report because it is a metric used by affordable housing funders. AMI is published annually by HUD for each county (Alamosa County below) and varies by household size.

	2020 INCOME LIMITS							
AMI	1 PERSON	2 PERSON	3 PERSON	4 PERSON	5 PERSON	6 PERSON	7 PERSON	8 PERSON
120%	59,640	68,160	76,680	85,200	92,040	98,880	105,720	112,560
100%	49,700	56,800	63,900	71,000	76,700	82,400	88,100	93,800
80%	39,760	45,440	51,120	56,800	61,360	65,920	70,480	75,040
70%	34,790	39,760	44,730	49,700	53,690	57,680	61,670	65,660
60%	29,820	34,080	38,340	42,600	46,020	49,440	52,860	56,280
55%	27,335	31,240	35,145	39,050	42,185	45,320	48,455	51,590
50%	24,850	28,400	31,950	35,500	38,350	41,200	44,050	46,900
45%	22,365	25,560	28,755	31,950	34,515	37,080	39,645	42,210
40%	19,880	22,720	25,560	28,400	30,680	32,960	35,240	37,520
30%	14,910	17,040	19,170	21,300	23,010	24,720	26,430	28,140

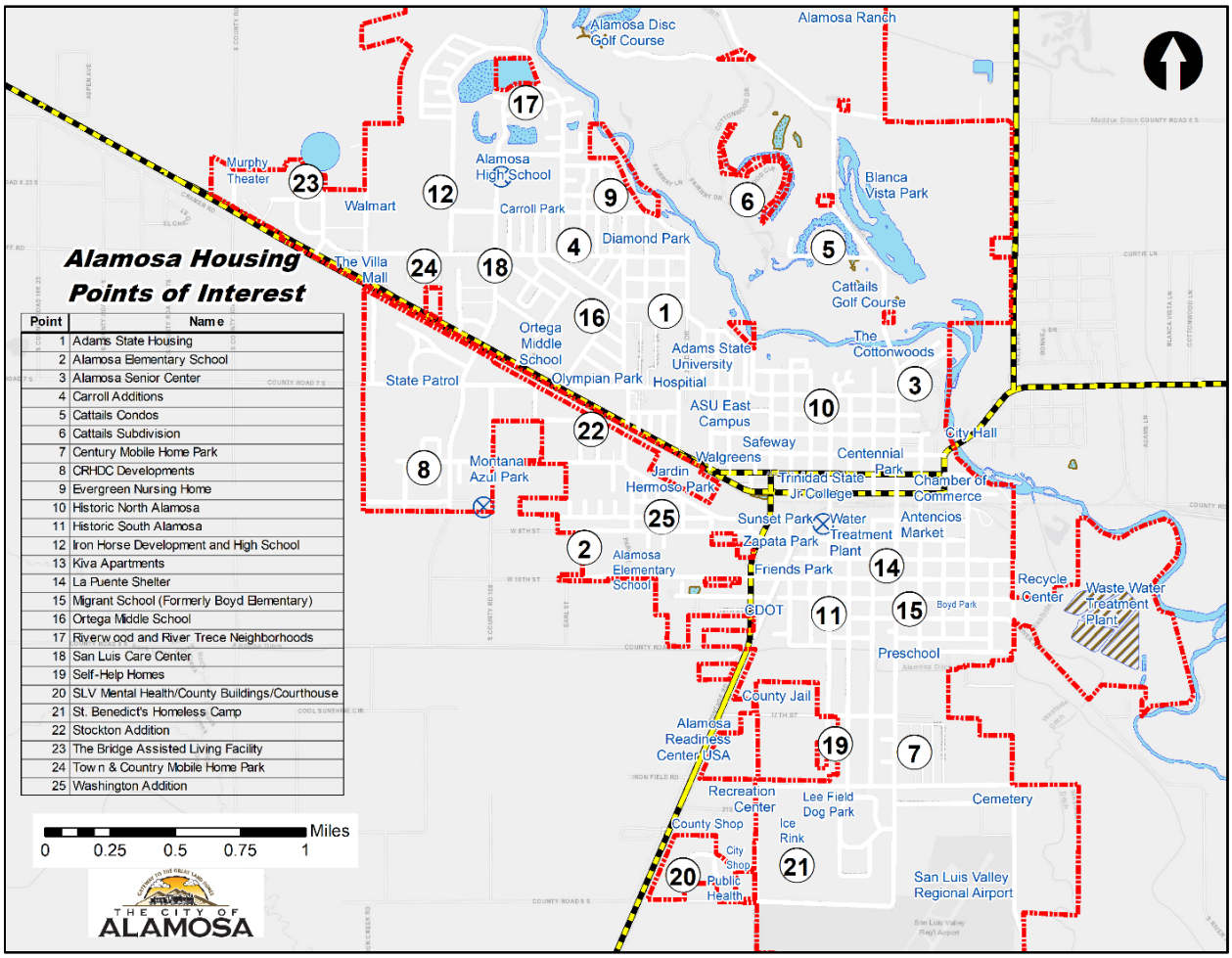
Methodology

The research in this report was conducted in coordination with a Valley-wide Housing Needs Assessment led by the San Luis Valley Housing Coalition.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

This report relied upon primary research to generate information beyond that available from existing public sources and to assist in interpretation of the secondary data.

Kick-Off Meeting and Site Visits. Early in the process we held a discussion with the City of Alamosa staff at a kick-off session to target primary housing concerns and goals from this process. Due to COVID-19 restrictions limiting in-person contact between local stakeholders and the consultant team, City staff created an annotated map of noteworthy housing sites within Alamosa and the consultant team conducted a self-guided tour in August 2020. The map below shows the location of Alamosa's housing points of interest visited by the consultant team.



Employer Survey. A short on-line survey was distributed to employers to reach large and small businesses across the San Luis Valley. The employer survey probed the number of year-round and seasonal workers (summer and winter), where workers live (commute patterns), employee retention and recruitment issues, to what extent housing for employees is perceived to be an issue, and employers' level of support for housing assistance, among other information.

The survey link was emailed to businesses through generous support from Chambers of Commerce and economic development councils, the housing working group assisting with San Luis Valley Housing Coalition, City of Alamosa staff, and community stakeholders. The survey link was also made available on several websites and advertised through newspaper publications and other media.

Survey responses represent:

- 62 businesses or about 10% of the 615 businesses in Alamosa County.
- 42 responses were from businesses in Alamosa, representing 48% of the estimated 7,600 jobs in the city.

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT AND KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Property Manager and Affordable Rental Manager Interviews. We interviewed seven managers of market rate and income- and rent-restricted LIHTC, public housing, and USDA rental properties, including the Alamosa Housing Authority. These interviews informed the rental market including rents, vacancy rates, recent trends, renter profiles and units most in demand. The income- and rent-restricted property managers also provided detailed information on their rental inventory.

Realtor, Lender, and Developer Interviews. We interviewed ten real estate subject matter experts to inform the housing market conditions section and help to interpret the residential real estate trends, including cost to build, buyer preferences, trends in sale prices and home types, and financing challenges.

Employer Interviews. In addition to the employer survey, we followed up with some employers by phone to generate a deeper understanding of issues.

Non-profit and service provider interviews. We conducted 20 interviews with community-based non-profits, healthcare, and other service providers to gain an overview of the existing services and remaining needs of populations within Alamosa beyond workforce housing. This research considered seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, youth and students, homeless, and agricultural workers.

SECONDARY AND LOCAL DATA SOURCES

A variety of sources of published information were used in the preparation of this report, including but not limited to:

- U.S. Census Bureau: 2000 Census, 2010 Census, American Community Survey data, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics
- US Bureau of Economic Analysis
- US Bureau of Labor Statistics
- State Demography Office, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

- Ribbon Demographics, LLC
- 2020 Area Median Income from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Colorado Housing and Finance Authority.
- Current MLS listings, recent home sales and historic sale trends.
- Alamosa News, SLV Junction, Zillow, Craigslist, Apartments.com, social media and local property manager websites and interviews for available rental housing listings.
- City of Alamosa building permit records
- Existing reports, including the 2009 San Luis Valley Housing Needs Assessment, 2017 City of Alamosa Comprehensive Plan.

Glossary

Affordable Housing	As used in this report, housing is affordable if the monthly rent or mortgage payment is equal to or less than 30% of gross household income (before taxes).
Area Median Income (AMI)	A term that generally refers to the median incomes published annually for counties by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). AMI is used to set income and rent limits for affordable housing programs statutorily linked to HUD income limits (e.g., low-income housing tax credit rentals). Common affordability categories used are as follows: Extremely Low Income – At or below 30% AMI Very Low Income –Between 31% and 50% AMI Low Income – From 51% to 80% AMI Moderate Income – From 81% to 100% AMI
American Community Survey (ACS)	The ACS is part of the Decennial Census Program of the U.S. Census. The survey was fully implemented in 2005, replacing the decennial census long form. Because it is based on a sample of responses, its use in smaller areas (under 65,000 persons) is best suited for monitoring general changes over time rather than for precise estimates due to margins of error.
ASU	Adams State University
Catch-up Needs	The number of housing units needed to catch up to meet the current shortfall in housing available for residents.
CDBG	Community Development Block Grants – a federal funding source used to develop and renovate affordable housing with income restrictions.
CHFA	Colorado Housing and Finance Authority - administers LIHTC and provides mortgage funding
Cost Burdened	When housing costs exceed 30% of a household's gross (pretax) income. Housing costs include rent or mortgage and may or may not include utilities, homeowner association fees, transportation or other necessary costs depending upon its application.
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019, causing 2020 global pandemic and extensive local public health precautions.

CRHDC	Community Resources and Housing Development Corporation
Employee (or Workforce) Housing	Housing intended for and affordable to employees and households earning local wages.
ESRI	Environmental Systems Research Institute - supplier of geographic information system software, web GIS and geodatabase management applications.
FHA	Federal Housing Administration, provides secondary market for residential mortgages
HOA	Home Owners Association, typically part of condominium developments
HOME Funds	Grants from HUD to states and units of general local government to implement local housing strategies designed to increase homeownership and affordable housing opportunities for low and very low-income households.
HUD	Housing and Urban Development; federal agency providing funding and regulations for low income housing.
LAUS	Local area unemployment statistics
LEHD	Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics
LIHTC	Low Income Housing Tax Credit – a federal program to stimulate capital investment in affordable rental housing, administered in Colorado by the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority.
Keep-up Needs	Keep-up refers to the number of housing units needed to keep up with job growth and retiring employees and the housing units needed to house non-employee residents and employees filling jobs through 2025.
MLS	Multiple Listing Service used for purchase and sale of residential real estate
TSJC	Trinidad State Junior College
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture – responsible for numerous affordable housing projects and programs in rural areas.
Workforce (or Employee) Housing	Housing intended for and affordable to employees and households earning local wages.

GATEWAY TO THE GREAT SAND DUNES

THE CITY OF ALAMOSA

Housing Action Plan

MAY 13, 2021

WILLIFORD, LLC
land use & affordable housing

WSW CONSULTING

URBANrural continuum

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Introduction, Purpose and Goals

Introduction and Purpose

Alamosa residents are increasingly struggling to find housing that fits their budget. The rising cost of homes to purchase or rent is affecting employers too. Local businesses, non-profits, and government are struggling to hire and retain qualified employees.

The *Alamosa Housing Needs Assessment 2021* projected a need for 445-515 homes and apartments to address current gaps in the market and support job growth over the next five years. Most of the housing need is for rent and sale prices that are lower than current cost to build, making it essential to find partnerships and funding to fill that gap.

There is a need for more housing variety including smaller homes, opportunities for seniors, and more affordable house types such as townhouses, duplexes and condos. In addition, the majority of homes and apartments were built over 40 years ago, and many are in need of improvements. The high cost of construction materials and shortage of skilled labor make building and renovating housing increasingly challenging.

Residents in Alamosa tend to agree that community housing is important. In the recent *Housing Solutions Survey*, 76% of respondents said housing for residents and local employees should be a City priority. Sixty-nine percent of respondents supported setting a goal to increase housing production. Respondents also offered strong support for doing more of the housing work that is already established in Alamosa.

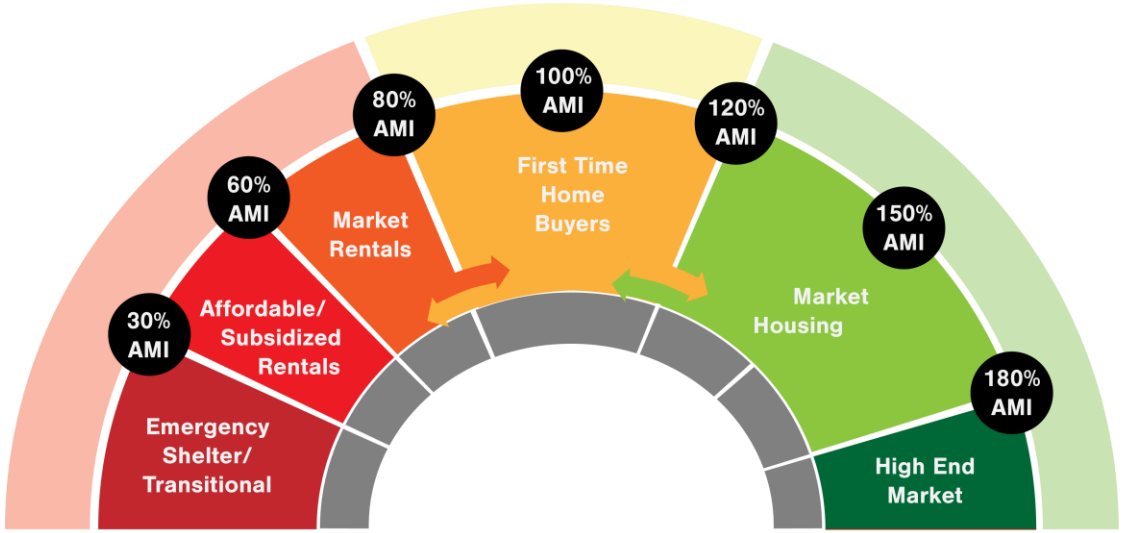
This Action Plan sets priorities and creates a roadmap to help address Alamosa's housing challenges. Agency acronyms can be found in Appendix C.

Action Planning Process

This Action Plan was developed by the consultant team in close coordination and collaboration with the Housing Working Group and driven by public feedback and that of the Alamosa Planning Commission and City Council. The timeline and key process steps in its creation include:

Process Step	Month/Year	Outcome
Alamosa Housing Needs Assessment 2021 published	January 2021	Documented the need for 445-515 homes and apartments to address current gaps in the market and support job growth over the next five years.
*Housing Solutions Survey d*istributed and feedback analyzed	February - 2021	Over 200 responses. Results attached in Appendix B.
Housing Working Group prioritization of actions	March – April 2021	Discussed impacts, costs, and ingredients for a plan that addresses the wide range of local needs. Framed draft goals, priorities, lead agencies, and timing.
Public Workshop discussion and input	April 14, 2021	Gathered feedback on draft goals, five priority strategies, and five programs to grow.
Planning Commission discussion and input	April 28, 2021	Feedback on code specific aspects of the draft plan.
Outreach to Economic Development Committee, Homeless Coalition, Alamosa Housing Authority, La Puente Board, Energy Resource Center	April-May 2021	Feedback on aspects of the plan specific to these committees, non-profits, and boards.
Draft Review by City Council	May 19, 2021	Discussion and feedback.
Final Action Plan to City Council	June 2, 2021	Plan adopted.

Housing Spectrum



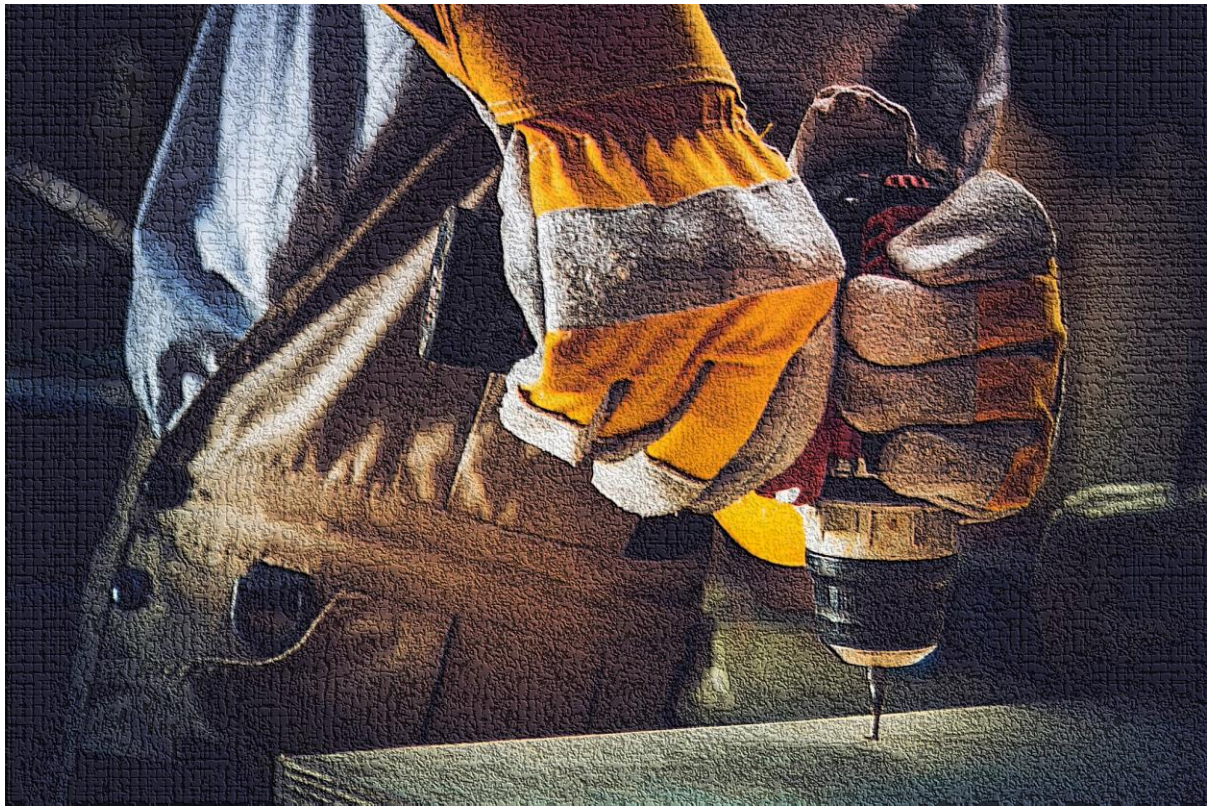
A functional housing market has adequate supply and choices for residents across incomes and life phases. Alamosa has many unmet needs in the housing market, especially for renters below 60% Area Median Income (AMI) and homeowners below 120% AMI.

A comprehensive report on the needs and gaps in the housing market is available here, or at https://bit.ly/3aqcaxH. A table of 2021 Area Median Income is available in Appendix A.

Overall Goal

"Improve the amount and diversity of housing for people across a broad spectrum of incomes and life phases to support the businesses, community, sustainability, and economic vibrancy of the area."

New Housing Production Goal



About 44 units have been constructed/year on average since 2010. To meet the production goal, new building permits in Alamosa should increase incrementally – starting with 50 units/year and growing to 80 units/year by 2026, and other tools will help provide additional homes needed.

Increase the amount of housing produced in Alamosa and encourage a diverse mix of housing types - duplexes, townhouses, condos, smaller units - to improve housing availability and options for residents to best meet their needs.

- ✓ 350 new homes built by 2026.
- ✓ Focus new housing on community priorities, including missing middle, entry level rentals, first time homeownership, senior housing, and supportive housing.
- ✓ Maintain a similar balance of owners and renters in the community (about 50/50 split) to ensure adequate rental and homeownership opportunities.

Priority Level	Types of Housing	Production Goal Range
1	• Supportive Housing • Rentals - Priced up to 60% AMI • For Sale – Priced up to 80% AMI	100-200 units
2	• For Sale/For Rent for Seniors • Rentals - Priced 60-100% AMI • For Sale – Priced 80 -120% AMI	100-200 units
3	• For Sale – Priced above 120% AMI • Rentals - Priced above 100% AMI	50-100

Preserving What We Have Goal

With over 4,000 homes in Alamosa today, investment in existing housing and neighborhoods is needed. Preservation goals include:

- ✓ Acknowledge and preserve the history of Alamosa and the eclectic buildings and homes built here over time.
- ✓ Increase home restoration and energy efficiency retrofits to make homes safer, more economical, and more comfortable.
- ✓ Ensure that restrictions and subsidies are renewed on existing subsidized properties to keep Alamosa's lowest income households in their homes and not lose ground in meeting Production Goal 1.
- ✓ Invest in mobile home parks to increase community aesthetics, safety, habitability, and address infrastructure and homes that are at the end of their useful life.

Choices for People With Unique Housing Needs

Goal: Increase the opportunities for specific populations, including seniors, those who have experienced homelessness, and youth.

Seniors - downsize opportunities – by prioritizing small homes designed for aging in place in planning approvals and infrastructure investments

By building or acquiring 10 - 20 units over the next five years

Supportive housing for **people who have experienced homelessness** or are at risk of homelessness

By building or acquiring 20-40 units over the next five years

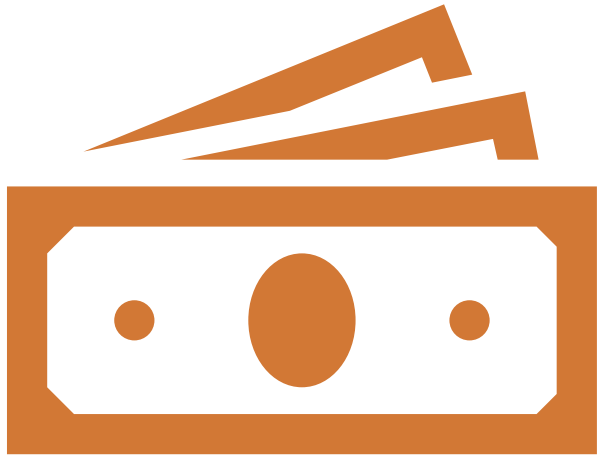
Youth - by building or acquiring living space for 6 to 10 young people who might otherwise be forced to live outside the valley

By building or acquiring 6 - 10 units over the next five years

The Capital Gap

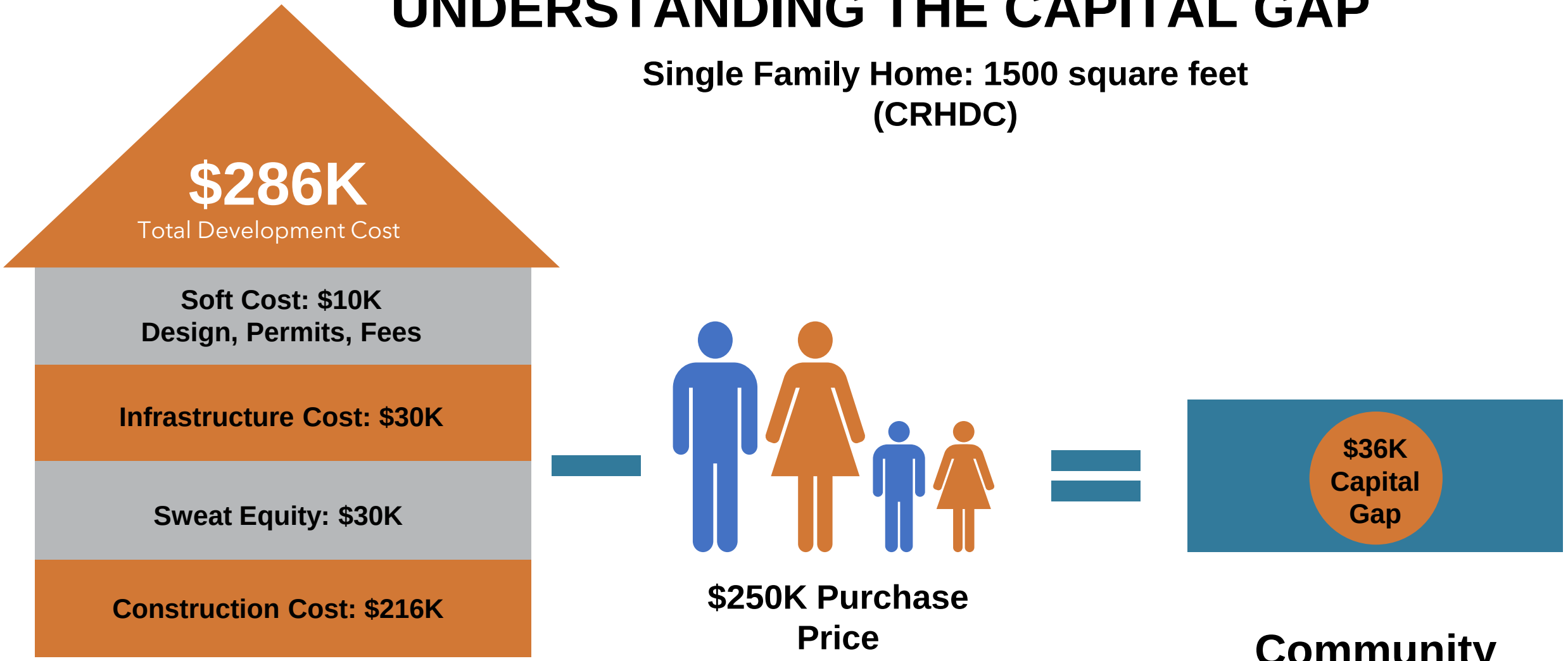
Understanding the Capital Gap

To meet the greatest housing need for what locals households can afford, creating more homes priced between $160,000 and $275,000 and rents below $700/month should be the priority. The cost to construct new housing in Alamosa is higher than what these price points. Therefore, a dedicated and concerted effort by the private and public sector is needed to help fill the capital gap. Many of the actions outlined in this Action Plan are targeted at this gap.



UNDERSTANDING THE CAPITAL GAP

Single Family Home: 1500 square feet (CRHDC)



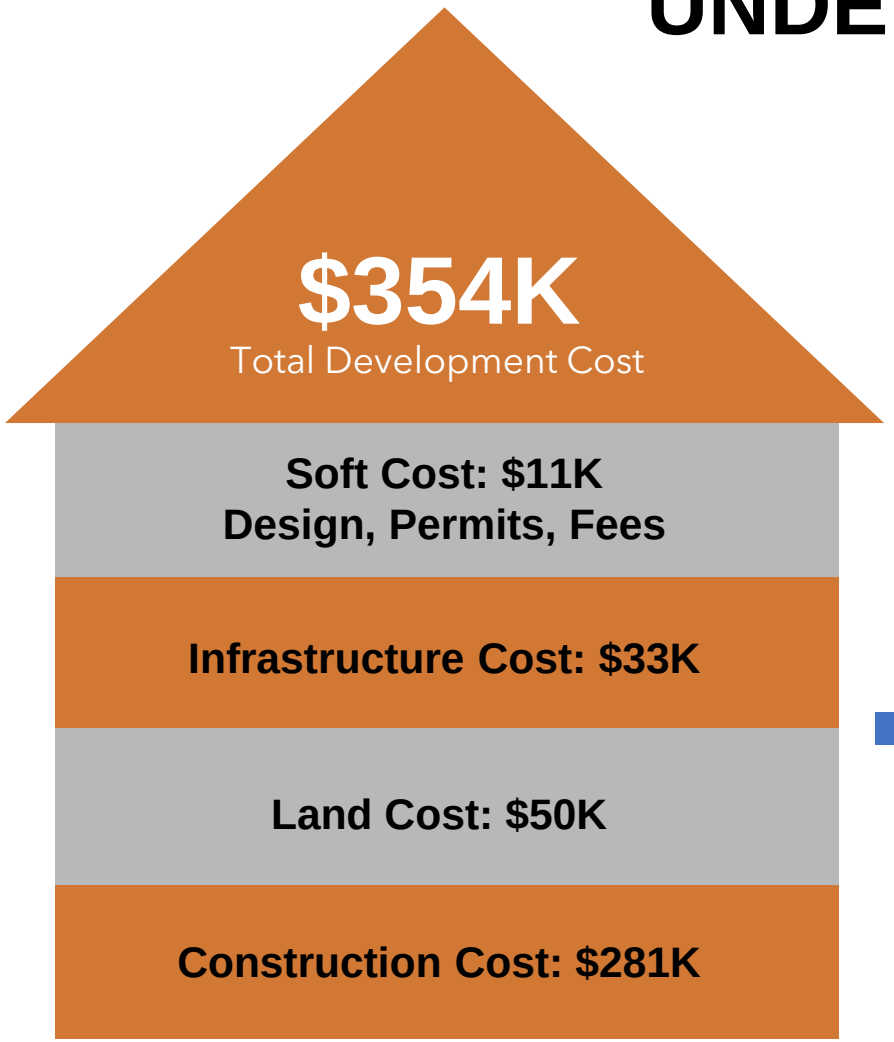
What it costs to build

Who we are trying to serve

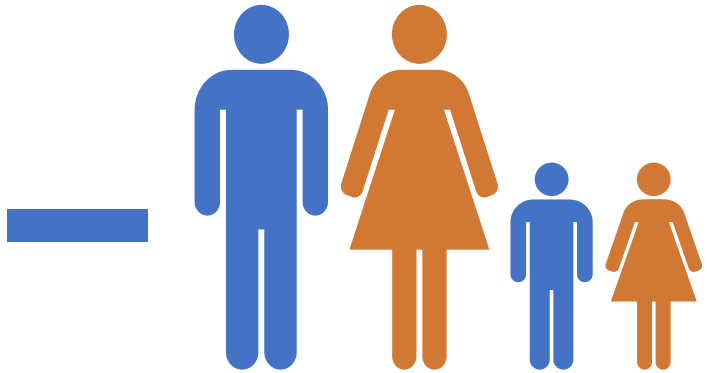
Community investment required

UNDERSTANDING THE CAPITAL GAP

Single Family Home: 1600 square feet
(River Trece)



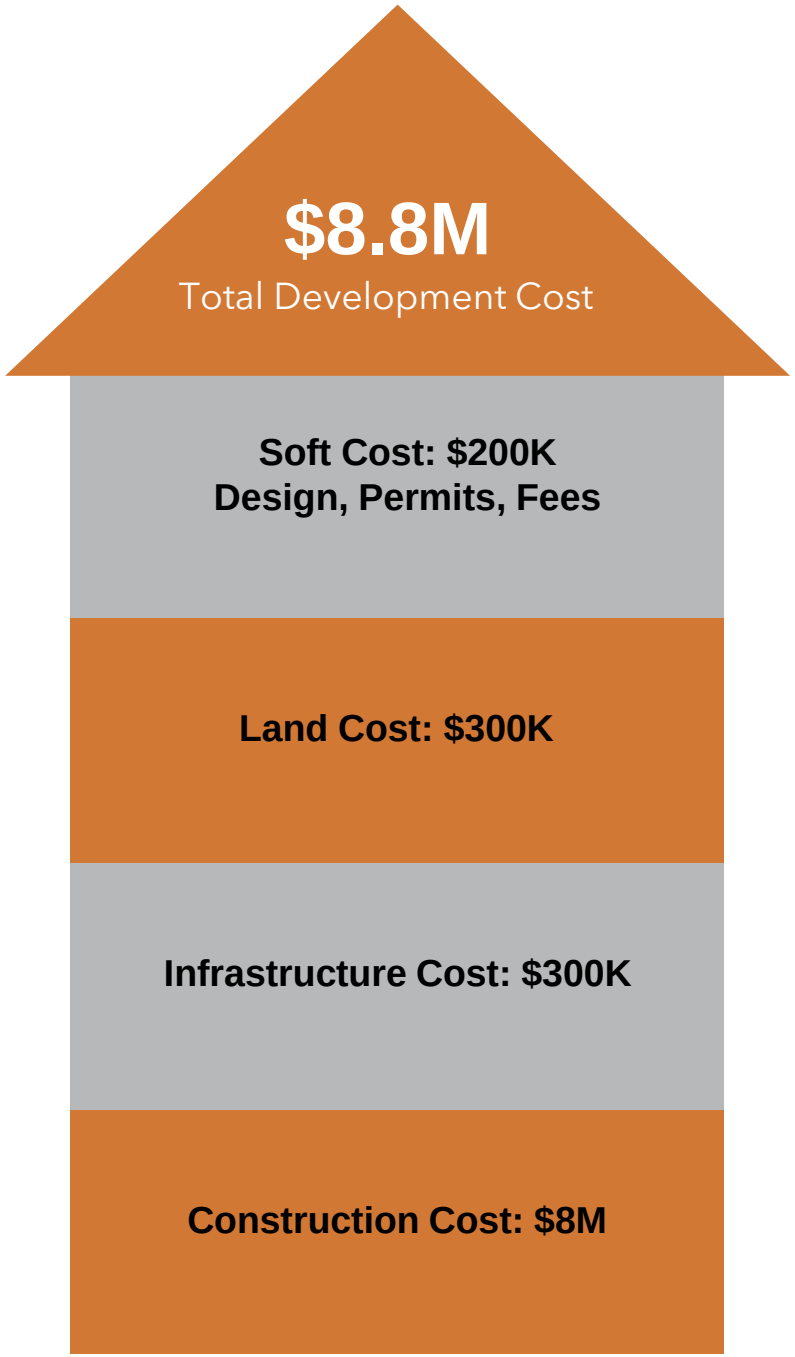
What it costs to build



$375K Purchase Price
(120% AMI)

Who we are trying to serve

No community investment required



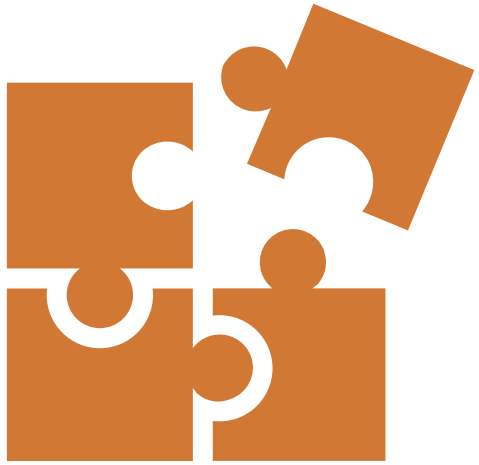
UNDERSTANDING THE CAPITAL GAP

Multi Family: 45 units, 2 bedroom, 1000 square feet each (Iron Horse - like example)

Incomes served	30% AMI	60% AMI
Monthly rent	$375	$852
Total annual rent (income)	$202,000	$460,000
Less operating costs	($150,000)	($150,000)
Net operating income (NOI)	$52,000	$310,000
Mortgage Size	$250,000	$1.2M
Capital Gap (Equity Needs)	**$8.5M**	**$7.6M**

The City's Role
&
Tasks to Start Now

How the City of Alamosa Fits Into the Puzzle



The City of Alamosa currently fits into the housing puzzle in ways that are likely to evolve as needs and market conditions change, but the City's primary function is to support and facilitate the development of housing.

- The City plays a critical role through the regulation of land use and development.
- The City plays a very important role in providing information to the community about available resources, and educating the community about why an adequate supply of housing that is affordable to local households is important to the community's long-term fiscal, economic, and social health.

Although the City does not intend to directly build housing in the short-term, community priorities may shift as the housing market and housing needs evolve. Yet, City Council may determine that more resources or a more direct role in housing production should be pursued in the future.

The following pages provide more details about the City's role and tasks to start immediately.

City Role in Housing Goals

Priority Level	Types of Housing	How the City might support (case by case basis – resources available and project merit)
1	Supportive Housing (below 30% AMI with services to support residents) Rentals - Priced up to 60% AMI For Sale – Priced up to 80% AMI Mobile Home Park Reinvestment	• Fee waivers, reductions, deferrals • Infrastructure cost sharing – greatest financial support • In-kind support with staff time, public works services • Pass through grant funding from State/Federal sources • General Fund allocation for matching funds to leverage other resources • Land, currently held by City, future landbank acquisitions, or partnerships with other institutional land holders
2	For Sale/For Rent for Seniors Rentals - Priced 60-100% AMI For Sale – Priced 80 -120% AMI	• Fee reductions, deferrals • Infrastructure cost sharing – mid level financial support • In-kind support with staff time, public works services
3	For Sale – Priced above 120% AMI Rentals - Priced above 100% AMI	• Fee deferrals • Infrastructure cost sharing – lower level or no financial support

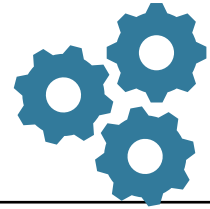
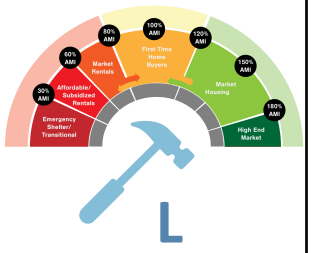
Tasks to Start Now

One Stop Shop on existing resources	Property tax exemption for affordable rentals	Preserve the affordable housing we already have
• Create and maintain an up-to-date, user-friendly and well-organized digital hub of housing and housing-related resources, inclusive of links to existing organizations and resources. • Create "at a glance" collateral that is easy to print and hand out, such as one-page brochures, to increase community awareness. • Include a "how to talk about housing" training component to address existing stigmas and shift the conversation to community well-being and community sustainability and economic resiliency. • Prepare for and facilitate conversations about how class, race, and place have divided the community and seek to increase inclusivity. • City to lead and keep current with support from other organizations including the San Luis Valley Housing Coalition and Alamosa Housing Authority.	• Alamosa Housing Authority (AHA) Board and staff, affordable development partners or owners seeking property tax exemption (PTE) • Needs AHA Board buy-in • Work session with AHA Board and Staff, show how property tax exemption can support long term affordable rents, as well as bring resources to the HA (Examples from other communities in Colorado: Rifle HA, Delta HA, Douglas County Housing Partnership, County, Gunnison County Regional Housing Authority).	• City staff and/or non-profit partner such as SLV Housing Coalition • Track contract deadlines; non imminent. Track "naturally occurring" affordable housing and acquisition opportunities

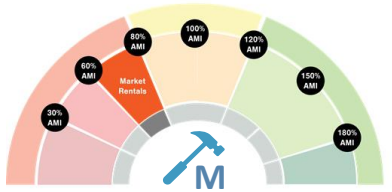
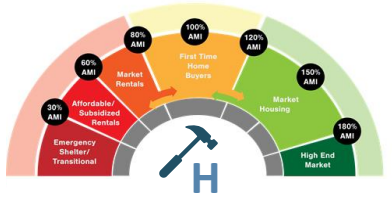
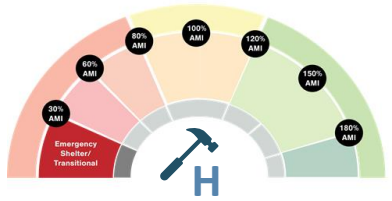
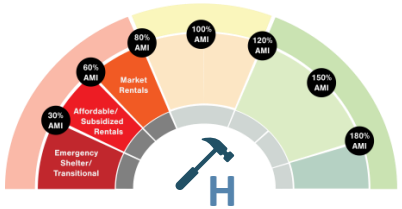
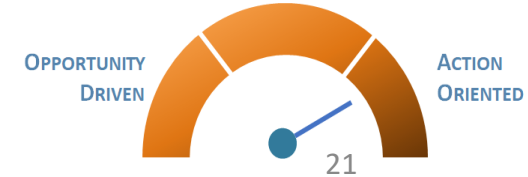
Priority Actions

Metrics Definitions

The Housing Working Group reviewed thirty potential strategies. Each strategy was given a ranking based on feedback received from the *Housing Solutions Survey*. The consultant team then worked with the Housing Working Group to assign further ranking across the factors below, and consider alignment with available resources and The *Housing Needs Assessment 2021* recommendations. The preliminary recommendations were refined through the outreach process. Action orientation compared to opportunity driven strategies were also considered, with the intent of having a balance of both. The resulting top five actions on the following pages will be the focus over the next five years.

	Low		Medium		High	
Complexity	One agency, less than 0.5 full time employees, straightforward rules, already in place	L	2-3 agencies, up to 1 full time employee, program design needed	M	Multiple agencies, could be 1 full time employee or more, many community connections needed	H 
Cost	Less than $50,000	$	$50,000 to $100,000	$$	Above $100,000	$$$
Impact Housing bridge addresses which goals this strategy supports	Support fewer than 10 households	 L	Support 10-20 households	M	Support 20-40 households or more	20H

Top 5 Priority Actions

	Complexity	Impact	Cost	
Better Align Zoning Code/Housing Goals	M		$	
Facilitate and Promote ADU Development	L		$	
Targeted Utility Infrastructure & Cost of Development	H		$$$	
Supportive Housing	H		$$$	
Mobile Home Park Improvements	H		$$$	

Better Align Zoning Code with Housing Goals

Current conditions/Local Issues

The City completed a robust code update in 2018 that was very beneficial, but experience with its implementation indicates that additional updates could further facilitate more diverse housing development, including smaller units, that would increase housing choices and assist with addressing missing price points.

Action Items

- Understand where barriers exist in the current code, particularly with regard to lot size, density, allowed uses, and storm water management.
- Address "doesn't quite work in Alamosa" items.
- Reduce residential nonconformities in old, historically mixed-use neighborhoods (like near downtown).
- Adapt code to fit with Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map and better meet community needs, including increasing opportunities for residential uses.
- Assess where zones that historically disallow housing could be updated for current economic realities; encourage mixed use and flexible zone designations.
- Assess "edge conditions" in the transition between business and residential districts.
- Seek opportunities to allow for townhouses, condos, and small multi-family buildings.
- Expand residential opportunities in commercial and business zones.
- Coordinate this work with updating the ADU standards.

Better Align Zoning Code with Housing Goals

What's needed to move it forward?

- Development Services Director hire in place with sufficient time to be familiar with community and code.
- Ability to safely hold in-person meetings with the community.

Who needs to be involved?

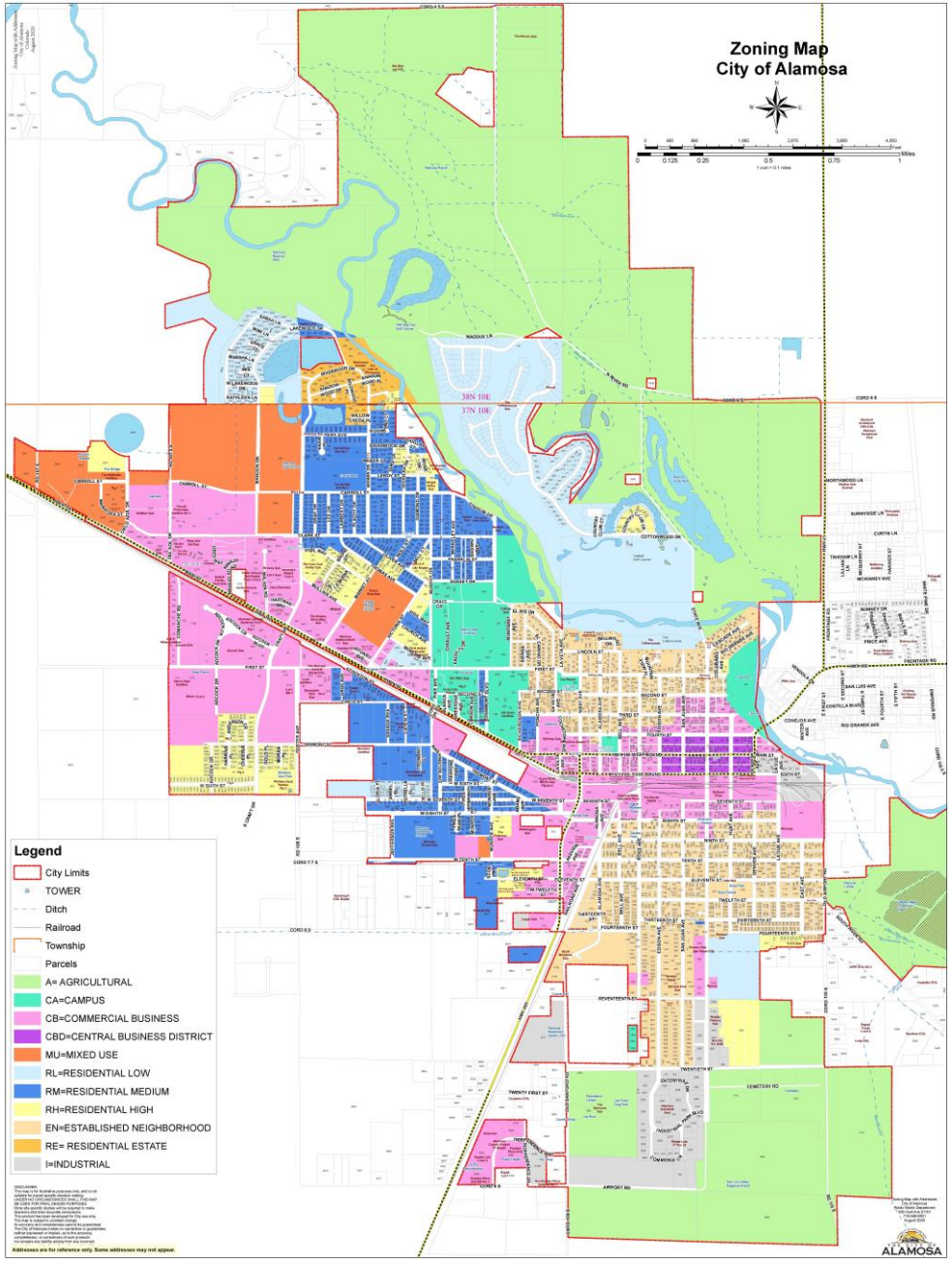
- City Staff, Development Services Director, City Council, Alamosa residents, lenders

Timing

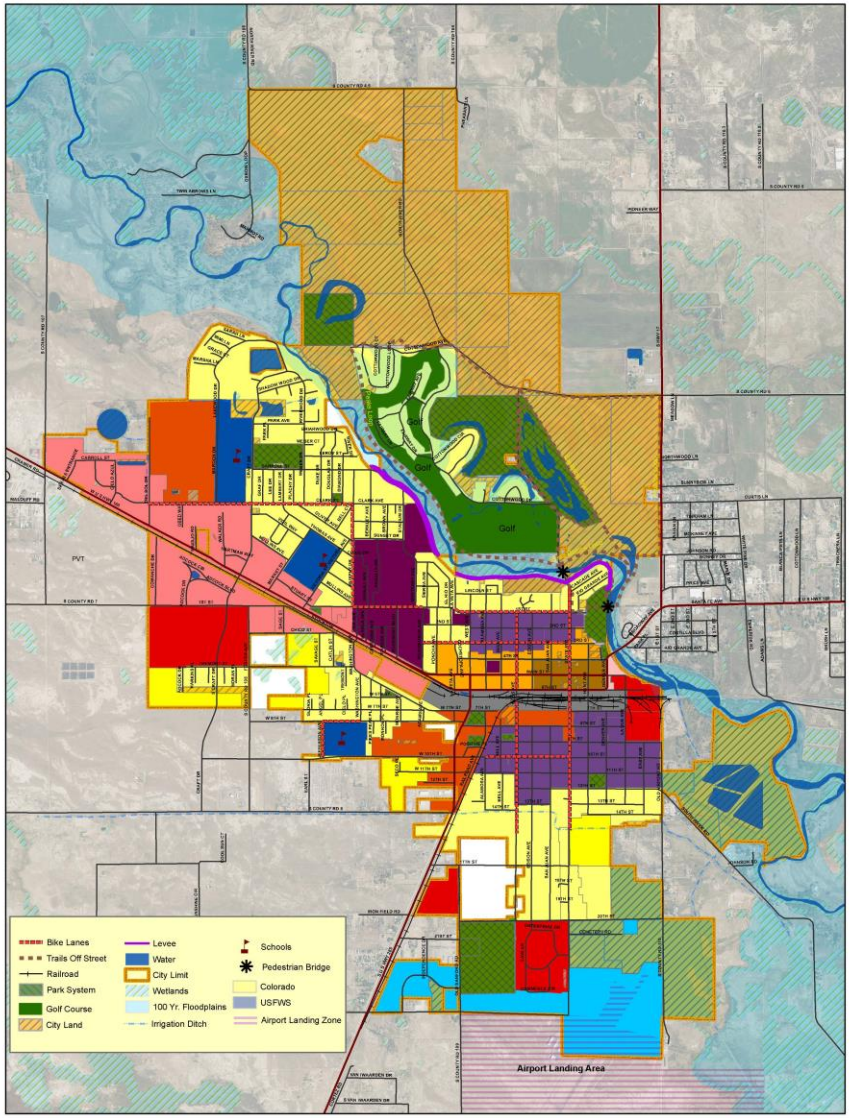
- 2022

Funding

- Fairly significant staff time commitment, but can mostly/entirely be done in-house
- Funding outlay only if consultant hired



Adapt code to fit with Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map and better meet community needs, including increasing opportunities for residential uses.



Future Land Use Designations

Future Land Use Designation		
Campus	East Hwy Gateway	Residential Opportunity Area
Commercial Opportunity Area	Historic Townsite Residential	Schools
Developed Residential	Local Govt Facilities	Unincorporated Enclave
Downtown	Mixed Use Opportunity Area	West Highway Corridor
Downtown Periphery	Parks	
	Railroad Gateway	

THE CITY OF ALAMOSA
Community Plan

RPI consulting

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Facilitate and Promote Accessory Dwellings

Current conditions/Local Issues

- Allowed with a SF detached home
- Max accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is 500 SF
- Lot area requirements must be met
- Community awareness of this opportunity is lacking
- High cost of construction is a barrier
- Prefabricated accessory structures are allowed, must meet the 2015 International Building Code
- Small dwellings ("tiny homes") are allowed, but few have been market tested to date.

Action Items

- Minor code adjustments as part of broader zoning update
- Increase community outreach and education
- Work with local banks to promote available financing
- Host an ADU workshop or conference with local leadership, homeowners, lenders, builders

What is needed to move this action item forward?

- Development Services Director hired
- Ability to safely hold in-person meetings with the community

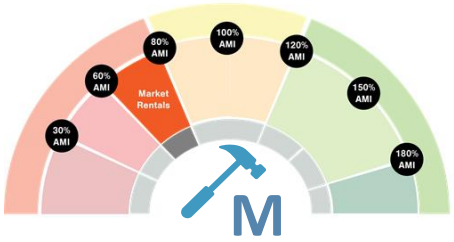
Who needs to be involved?

- City Staff, Planning Commission, Council, local lenders, community housing advocates, people with experience building small units in Alamosa, CHFA representative

COMPLEXITY

COST

IMPACT



Facilitate and Promote ADU Development

Timing

- Education and promotion: can begin now. See Ridgway example.
- Code adjustments: 2022, at the earliest as part of broader alignment with housing goals
- Working with financial institutions: to be determined, depending on staff capacity.

Funding

- Can mostly/entirely be done in-house
- No funding outlay needed unless the City seeks outside consultant assistance or decides to help underwrite construction costs

Communities Who Have Done It Well

- Ridgway, Durango, Crested Butte, Fountain, Leadville (also in process of creating opportunities now), Portland, OR

Other Resources

ADU Resource Packet, Book, Podcast by Kol Peterson
Workshops

Infrastructure & Development Partnerships

Current conditions/Local Issues

- Infrastructure costs are a factor in cost of housing outpacing household housing budgets.
- Streets Trust Fund (½ percent sales tax) in place through 2029.
- Master Utility Plan in process, sanitary sewer component done by year end. This study will help identify sequencing and scale of investments needed.
- Washington Addition upgrades are a priority commitment already in the planning process; full funding will take several years.

Action Items

- Pursue a combination of supporting existing neighborhoods and creating capacity for new housing in infill and greenfield locations.
    - Upgrades to existing infrastructure as funding is available
    - Install infrastructure where growth is desired (may need to be City owned or through development agreements)
    - Contribute funds through fee waivers, reductions, and deferrals, with possible cost recovery (per Iron Horse) on priority community housing projects (see page 17)

What's needed to move it forward?

- Master Utility Plan components completed
- Evaluation of costs to extend in infrastructure in priority areas
- Evaluate potential funding sources
- Design/engineer needed improvements
- Bid and construct

Infrastructure & Development Partnerships

Who needs to be involved?

- Public Works and Development Services staff, City Council, developers, community stakeholders
- Fairly significant staff time commitment, but can mostly/entirely be done in-house at the City
- Consultant assistance on some tasks

Timing

- Underway - five year project
- Infrastructure improvements as funding allows
- Fee waivers evaluated on an opportunity driven basis, aligned with community housing goals (see City Role matrix)

Funding

- Seek Colorado Department of Local Affairs funding
- Track federal rescue stimulus funding for infrastructure
- General fund contributions
- Utility fees from Enterprise Fund

Peer Communities who have done it well

- Boulder, Gunnison, Crested Butte, Eagle County

Supportive Housing

Develop 20-40 rental units specific to people who have experienced homelessness.

Current conditions/Local Issues

- *Housing Needs Assessment* found significant need for this type of housing to help break the cycle of homelessness and increase positive outcomes for extremely low income and vulnerable households. At the time of this report, 78 individuals were seeking housing through La Puente, and the School District is serving about 40 households with school age children.
- Over100 very affordable single room occupant and small apartments have been lost over the past several decades.
- At least two strategies are needed to better address housing for people who have experienced homelessness:

  (1) **Permeant Supportive Housing** (PSH) – which combines supportive services, housing choice voucher assistance, and housing built with trauma informed design. This approach serves the most vulnerable people, through a coordinated entry data management approach. It is proven to reduce the burden on high-cost public services, and is currently a priority for State and Federal funding.

  (2) **Other supportive Housing** - less intensive/expensive interventions for people who have experienced homelessness, and need an affordable rent and so some assistance navigating health care, benefits, employment and other sources available in the community to stay housed.
- San Luis Valley Behavioral Health Group (SLVBHG) is leading the PSH initiative and has selected a development partner and is currently searching for suitable sites
- La Puente is leading the other supportive housing initiative, which ties to updating zoning regulations, and increasing the supply of rental housing more generally.

Supportive Housing

Develop 20-40 rental units specific to people who have experienced homelessness

What's needed to move it forward?

PSH

- Committed case management and services coordination plan and ongoing funding
- Cultivate development capacity and partnerships between outside entities with experience and financial backing, and local groups with long term commitment to serving the community.
- Secure land, entitlements and funding
- Early City involvement and conversations about potential sites (zoning, infrastructure), fee waivers, etc. to mitigate roadblocks and reduce uncertainty/risk early in process

Other Supportive Housing

Seek opportunities to replace lost small affordable units through acquisition, renovation, and new construction.

Who needs to be involved?

- SLVBHG, La Puente, Alamosa Housing Authority, City of Alamosa, Alamosa County Human Services, SLV Housing Coalition, other service providers and veterans groups.

Timing

- Multi-year process, already underway

Other Considerations

- Further discussion needed on participation in coordinated entry and how waiting lists are managed.

Funding

- Possible sources include CHFA Low Income Housing Tax Credits, conventional or subsidized loan, social impact funding, Colorado Division of Housing grants and vouchers, local sources.

Peer Communities Who Have Done It Well

- Grand Junction, Durango, Fort Collins, Boulder, Denver
- In predevelopment: Jane's Place in Salida, Hilltop in Montrose, High Plains in Greeley

Mobile Home Parks

preservation, improvements and affordability

Current conditions/Local Issues

- About 5% of Alamosa housing stock is mobile homes, this is the most attainable "naturally occurring" affordable housing in the community.
- Only allowed in licensed manufactured home parks/manufactured home subdivisions
  - 9 Parks in Alamosa County
  - 2 within City limits; Town N' Country (about 62 lots), and Century (about 185 lots)
  - Town N' Country residents recently received notice of sale
  - Group desire is to work on both parks within city limits starting this year.
- Infrastructure serving the sites and many homes are at the end of their useful lives.
- New state laws require notice to residents and additional time to move a home if lot rent is terminated.
- Residents: strong community, but fear of speaking up, concern for retaliation, justice and/or status challenged.
- Homes have been sold/rented in uninhabitable condition. Homes manufactured before 1976 present additional challenges due to changes in HUD code.

What's needed to move it forward?

- SLV Housing Coalition has expressed willingness to lead – stakeholders to support various efforts within the overall strategy include ERC, City of Alamosa, School District, and La Puente
- Identify the owners, and start to build a relationship with them.
- Begin resident outreach and engagement around safety, tenants rights, and their desires and preferences.
- Further define desired outcomes such as: increase aesthetics, health and safety, keep lot and home rents attainable, keep communities intact.
- Consider re-zoning for preservation of the mobile home use on Town N' County site.
- Explore adding more pocket parks and green space for play and gardening.
- Seek funding and partnerships for infrastructure upgrades, home repairs and replacements.
- Analyze, update and communicate City code requirements for replacement of homes and ensure codes are appropriately flexible for replacements given new trends.

Mobile Home Parks
(preservation, improvements and affordability)

Who needs to be involved?
- Mobile Home Park Owners, Mobile Home Park Residents, City staff, Non-profit/faith based, or other community advocates, funders
- San Luis Valley Housing Coalition, La Puente, and Energy Resources Center have begun some coordination
- CHFA

Timing
- Multi-year process, already underway

Funding
- Potential funders include Colorado Division of Housing, ROC USA, Colorado Health Foundation, Colorado Trust, Latina Foundation for Colorado, CHFA, Habitat for Humanity, ERC-Weatherization Assistance Program, USDA Mobile Home Mortgage Program, and KaBoom.

- ERC has two grants that could help the energy retrofit aspect of this strategy, one through Energy Outreach Colorado (EOC) and the other with the Colorado Energy Office (CEO). The Colorado Health Foundation might also be a consideration for home repairs if in regards to dwelling condemnation due to health safety requirements.

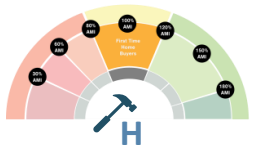
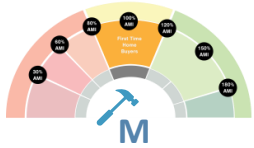
Communities who have done it well
- Ponderosa Mobile Home Park and Mapleton Mobile Home Park, Boulder, Canon City, Longmont. Montrose is currently working on a similar initiative.

This priority is not about creating new mobile home parks, it's about increasing quality, community, livability, aesthetics and fairness in the ones we have: Century Mobile Home Park and Town N' Country Mobile Home Park.

Existing Programs to Grow

Programs to Grow and Expand

Alamosa Housing Solutions Survey respondents indicated strong support for growing existing resources that help to solve the housing gap in Alamosa. The following programs are the top five priorities for expansion.

	Complexity	Impact	Cost	
Increase Homeownership counseling and financial readiness *Addresses Missing Middle*	L		$	
Support CRDHC and Habitat to produce more "Self help" housing *Addresses Missing Middle and Production*	M		$$$	
Grow down payment assistance programs to support more first-time homebuyers *Addresses Missing Middle*	L		$$	
Support the use of housing choice vouchers through partnerships with landlords *Addresses Equity and Attainable Rentals*	L		$	
Increase renovation and energy improvements assistance *Addresses Preservation and Missing Middle*	L		$$$	

Programs to Grow and Expand

Existing Programs to Support and Expand	Current Level	Desired Outcomes	Considerations for Growth	What resources are needed?	Does anyone else need to be included?
Homeownership financial readiness	About 12 people/ month	More first time buyers ready to purchase new and existing homes	• Start junior high and high school level; explore working with Trinidad State Junior College SLV campus students, Adams State University- Married Housing occupants, people receiving TANF, LEAP, SNAP. • Host classes more often than 1x/month. • Host some classes outside Alamosa. • Renters to build better credit, CHFA is doing a pilot. • Post close classes – support successful homeownership. • CRHDC is providing financial literacy and homebuyer to public at no charge, and would like to continue to grow these services.	Materials Funding to pay teachers	CRHDC, Habitat and SLVHC, local banks, CHFA
More "Self help" housing	8-10 homes/year	10-12/homes/year create more inventory	• Clients in rental properties, outreach to bridge that first time homeownership. • Grow Habitat funding, and capacity of construction volunteers. • Add education on the programs to our partnerships and resources information website.	Partnerships, funding, education, volunteer and staff capacity	CRHDC, Habitat, USDA Rural Dev, NeighborWorks
Down payment assistance	12 at 80% below AMI 6 up to 100% AMI/ per year	More buyers able to reach the first rung of homeownership	• Recently expanded to 100% AMI • Could we expand to 120% AMI? Prices are out of reach for many qualifying buyers. Cost of living is going up, especially with young kids in childcare. • Stronger education and outreach might help (link to resources hub and financial readiness classes). • Make buyers more aware of lending opportunities; good housing at different levels will help people transition. Rent = more than mortgage sometimes.	SLVHC needs 1 more staff person to implement. CRHDC currently revamping; they will know more soon. More loan and grant funding.	CHFA, local lenders Foundations If we show we can use more in the existing tiers, we could pull more in.

Programs to Grow and Expand

Existing Programs to Support and Expand	Current Level	Desired Outcomes	Considerations for Growth	What resources are needed?	Does anyone else need to be included?
Housing choice vouchers - partnerships with landlords	AHA - 35 vouchers SLVBHG -	Use vouchers effectively, create opportunity to bring new vouchers to the community	• Engage with landlords, explore providing assurances around security deposits/risk share. • Mitigate "golden ticket to nowhere" effect. • Payment standards set by voucher funders are too low for current market conditions.	Engagement from AHA, other voucher administrators, DOLA and City	AHA, SLVBHG, and La Puente , Colorado Division of Housing, local property managers and landlords
Home restoration and energy retrofits	ERC serves 350-400 households/year across the valley, most below 80% AMI There is a 500 person waitlist. SLVHC provides retrofit loans, assistance with health and safety, and funding for wells repair	Serve more households.	• Current funding typically allows less than $10,000/unit; many homes need more. Leverage different funding sources to serve the same household. • Building code: energy code restrictions can be challenging. Electrical standards also driving higher costs • State law: use energy code – limits upgrading existing properties • Cliff effect on income limits; explore opportunity to serve slightly higher incomes.	Additional funding and staff ERC - with funding from Colorado Energy Office - WAP, Energy Outreach CO, CARE, Colorado Renu, etc Rocky Mtn SER Monitor American Rescue Plan or other federal and state infrastructure resources	ERC EOC – multifamily solar SLVHC – safety and habitability loans Could the City or others sponsor some # of homes?

Actions to Take as Capacity Grows

Actions to Take as Capacity Grows

Four actions were identified as those that should be reviewed and considered as City and partner capacity expands over time.

	Complexity	Impact	Cost	
Purchasing and renovating run down or abandoned homes *Addresses Missing Middle and Preservation*	H		$$$	
Renovating and repurposing vacant or underutilized buildings for rental housing *Addresses Attainable Rentals and Preservation*	H		$$$$	
Build homes on suitable and available public- and institutionally-owned land *Addresses Production, Attainable Rentals, and Missing Middle*	M		$	
Purchase land and hold for future housing development *Addresses Production, Attainable Rentals, Missing Middle*	L		$$$	

Purchasing & renovating

run down or abandoned homes

Current conditions/Local Issues

- Community supported this as a mid-tier priority in the *Solutions Survey* (appendix B).
- Would support economic development, community aesthetics, and housing goals.
- As cost to build new continues to increase, renovating existing may become more cost effective.

What's needed to move it forward?

- Considerable staffing/capacity growth needed – could be at City, CRHDC, SLV Housing Coalition, or other.
- Inventory of run down/abandoned homes in the City.
- Program development to determine funding, eligibility, price point, construction management.

Timing

- TBD – when capacity becomes available or unique opportunities arise.

Risk points

- Old buildings and renovations can be complex and have unexpected costs.

Funding proposed

- DOLA has funded Monte Vista program. Rehab/weatherization funds may also pair well with this action.

Peer Communities who have done it well

- Similar program underway in Monte Vista.

Renovating & repurposing vacant or underutilized buildings
for rental housing

Current conditions/Local Issues
- Community supported this as a mid-tier priority in the *Solutions Survey* (appendix B).
- Would support economic development, community aesthetics, and housing goals.
- As cost to build new continues to increase, renovating existing may become more cost effective.
- Buildings of a scale suitable for multi-family with willing sellers may not always be available; would be helpful to be ready when opportunity presents itself.

What's needed to move it forward?
- Considerable staffing/capacity growth needed – could be at City, SLV Housing Coalition, AHA, or other.
- Inventory of run down/abandoned homes in the City.
- Program development to determine funding, eligibility, price point, construction management, seller negotiations.

Timing
- TBD – when capacity becomes available or unique opportunities arise.

Funding proposed
- CHFA, DOLA, Conventional finance, local fundraising

Build homes

on suitable and available public- and institutionally-owned land

Current conditions/Local Issues

- Review of City owned parcels was conducted for the St. Benedict camp site selection, and that work could be a starting point in the future. Site at northwest corner of 20th Street and Airport Road has water, sewer, solar farm, and development potential.
- Institutionally owned sites (ASU, churches, school district, hospital etc.) have not been inventoried, but may have potential for housing.
- Other considerations include zoning, infill, and high cost of infrastructure.

What's needed to move it forward?

- Work with other institutional land owners to create comprehensive inventory of land opportunities.
- Create criteria to evaluate, priority uses, and process to select development partner(s).

Who needs to be involved?

- City, County, ASU, School District, Hospital, Churches.

Timing

- TBD – likely 3-7 years out.

Funding proposed

- CHFA, DOLA, local banks, City/County, special district, foundations, etc

Purchase land and hold for future housing development

Current conditions/Local Issues

- Not a high priority at this time, but land suitable for residential with willing sellers may not always be available; would be helpful to be ready when opportunity presents itself

What's needed to move it forward?

- Point person at a local agency.
- Monitor tax lien sales.
- Cultivate relationships with local real estate brokers.
- Due diligence and project feasibility, once a site is identified.

Who needs to be involved?

- City, CRHDC, SLV Housing Coalition. AHA would also be good resource to hold land, as they are tax exempt, and legislatively enabled to do this type work.

Timing

- TBD - when capacity becomes available or unique opportunities arise.

Funding proposed

TBD – entitlement negotiations, land donations, one time appropriation of local funds, and/or grants/loans.

COMPLEXITY

L

COST

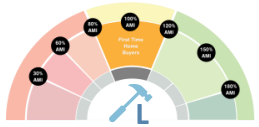
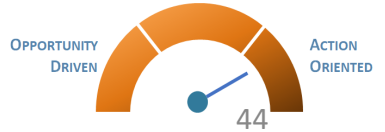
$$$

IMPACT

Tools for Future Consideration

Tools for Future Consideration

The following housing tools are not current priorities but should be considered as the housing market and City and partner capacity and resources evolve.

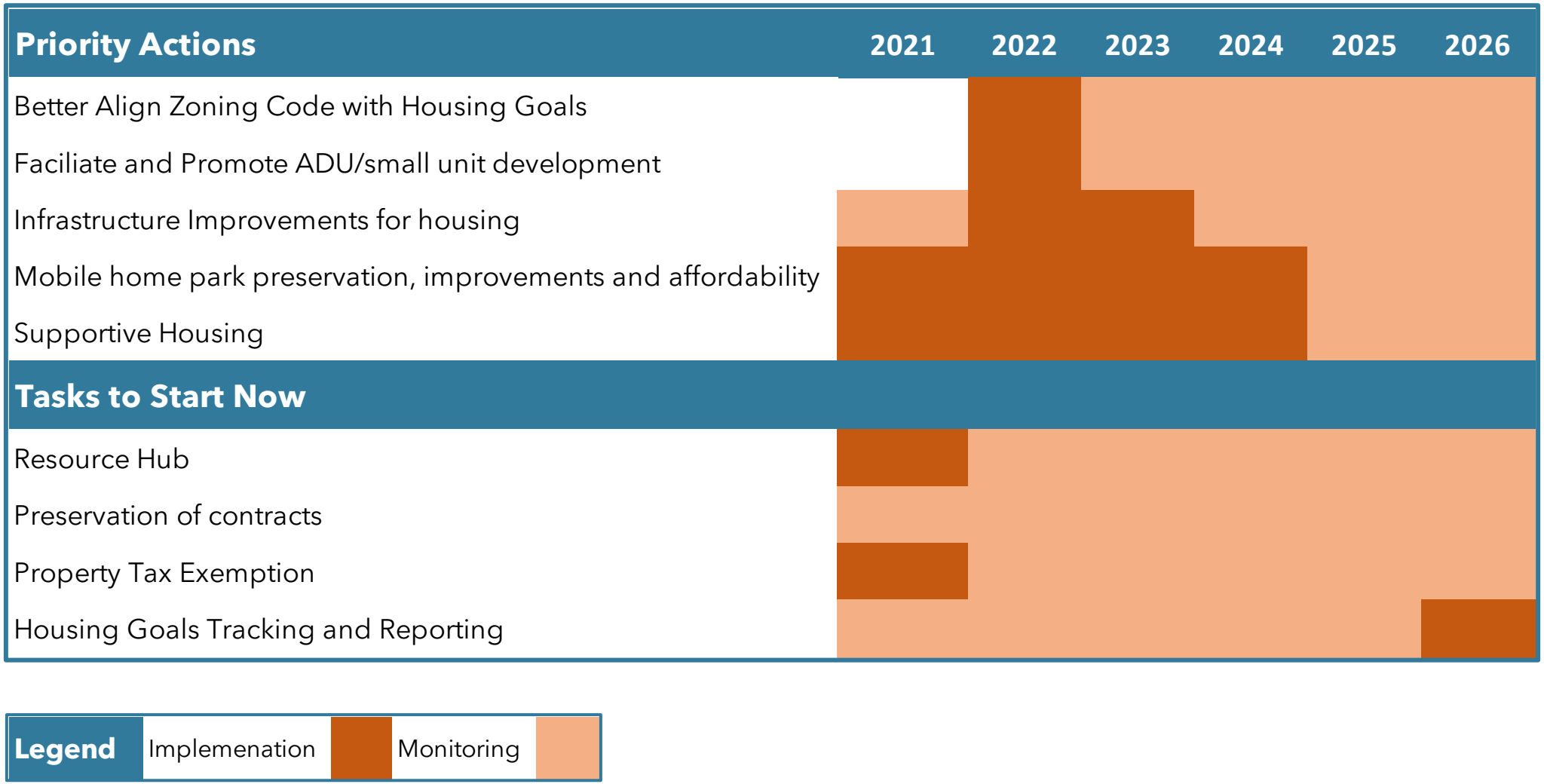
	Complexity	Impact	Cost	
Support for landlords to make repairs and improvements to rentals *Addresses Attainable Rentals and Preservation*	L		$$	
Building code enforcement and residential inspections *Addresses Preservation*	L		$	
Purchasing homes and deed restricting them so they will be affordable to local residents permanently *Addresses Preservation and Missing Middle*	M		$$$	
Allow parking reductions for development producing homes that local residents can afford to reduce the cost of development *Addresses Production, Attainable Rentals, and Missing Middle*	L		$	
Employer help with housing *Addresses Public Private Partnerships*	M		$	
Local funding sources dedicated to community and workforce housing *Addresses all aspects of this Plan*	H		Unknown	

Timeline and Lead Agency

Tasks by lead and supporting agency

Lead Initiative	Supporting Agencies	Plan Topic
City of Alamosa		
Better Align Zoning Code with Housing Goals	N/a	Priority Actions
Faciliate and Promote ADU/small unit development	CHFA	Priority Actions
Infrastructure Improvements for housing	N/a	Priority Actions
Resource Hub	SLV Housing Coalition	Tasks to Start Now
Goals Tracking and Reporting	SLV Housing Coalition	Tasks to Start Now
SLV Housing Coalition		
Mobile home park preservation, improvements and affordability	La Puente, City, CHFA, CDOH, CRHDC	Priority Actions
Homeownership and financial readiness	CRHDC, CHFA	Programs to Grow
Down payment assistance	CRHDC, CDOH	Programs to Grow
Preservation of existing contracts	City, AHA	Tasks to Start Now
SLV BHG		
Permenant Supportive Housing	City, CHFA, CDOH, AHA, La Puente	Priority Actions
La Puente		
Other housing for people who have experienced homelessness	City, CHFA, CDOH, AHA, SLV BHG	Priority Actions
CRHDC		
More “Self help” housing	Habitat for Humanity, USDA Rural Development	Programs to Grow
Senior Housing	NeighborWorks America	Programs to Grow
Multi-family - new and acquisitions	NeighborWorks America	Programs to Grow
Mark rate "missing middle" for sale	NeighborWorks America	Programs to Grow
Alamosa HA		
Housing choice vouchers partnerships with landlords	City	Programs to Grow
Property tax exemptions for priority rental housing	City	Tasks to Start Now
ERC		
Renovation and energy improvements assistance	SLV Housing Coalition	Programs to Grow

Timeline


Priority Actions
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
2026
Better Align Zoning Code with Housing Goals
Faciliate and Promote ADU/small unit development
Infrastructure Improvements for housing
Mobile home park preservation, improvements and affordability
Supportive Housing
Tasks to Start Now
Resource Hub
Preservation of contracts
Property Tax Exemption
Housing Goals Tracking and Reporting
Legend
Implemenation
Monitoring

Acknowledgements and Appendices

Acknowledgements

This Action Plan is the product of the time, dedication, and effort of individuals and organizations with a common commitment to providing safe, quality housing that local households in Alamosa can afford. This work was guided with an eye toward the long-term sustainability and economic vibrancy of the City. Funding for the Plan was provided by Colorado Division of Housing, Colorado Housing and Finance Authority, and Colorado Health Foundation.

Alamosa County
Alamosa Housing Authority
City Council
Colorado Division of Housing
Colorado Housing and Finance Authority
Colorado Health Foundation
Community Resources and housing Development Corporation
Energy Resource Center
Housing Working Group
Homeless Coalition
La Puente Home, Inc.
Planning Commission
San Luis Valley Housing Coalition

A special thank you to the residents of the City of Alamosa for helping create this plan, participating in the Housing Solutions Survey *and attending the public meetings.*

Appendix A – Area Median Income

The Area Median Income (AMI) is included throughout this Plan because it is a metric used by affordable housing funders. AMI is published annually by HUD for each county (Alamosa County below) and varies by household size.

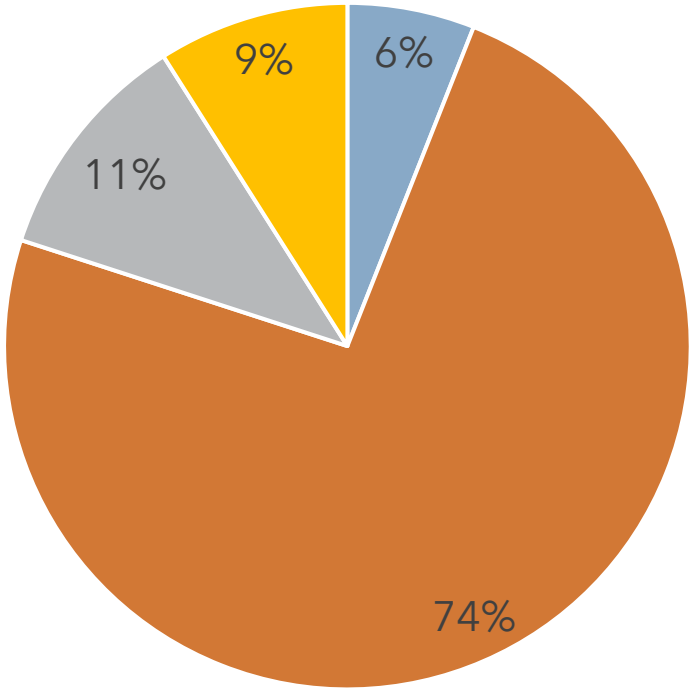
2021 Income Limits

AMI	1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person	8 Person
120%	61,800	70,560	79,440	88,200	95,280	102,360	109,440	116,520
100%	51,500	58,800	66,200	73,500	79,400	85,300	91,200	97,100
80%	41,200	47,040	52,960	58,800	63,520	68,240	72,960	77,680
60%	30,900	35,280	39,720	44,100	47,640	51,180	54,720	58,260
50%	25,750	29,400	33,100	36,750	39,700	42,650	45,600	48,550
40%	20,600	23,520	26,480	29,400	31,760	34,120	36,480	38,840
30%	15,450	17,640	19,860	22,050	23,820	25,590	27,360	29,130
20%	10,300	11,760	13,240	14,700	15,880	17,060	18,240	19,420

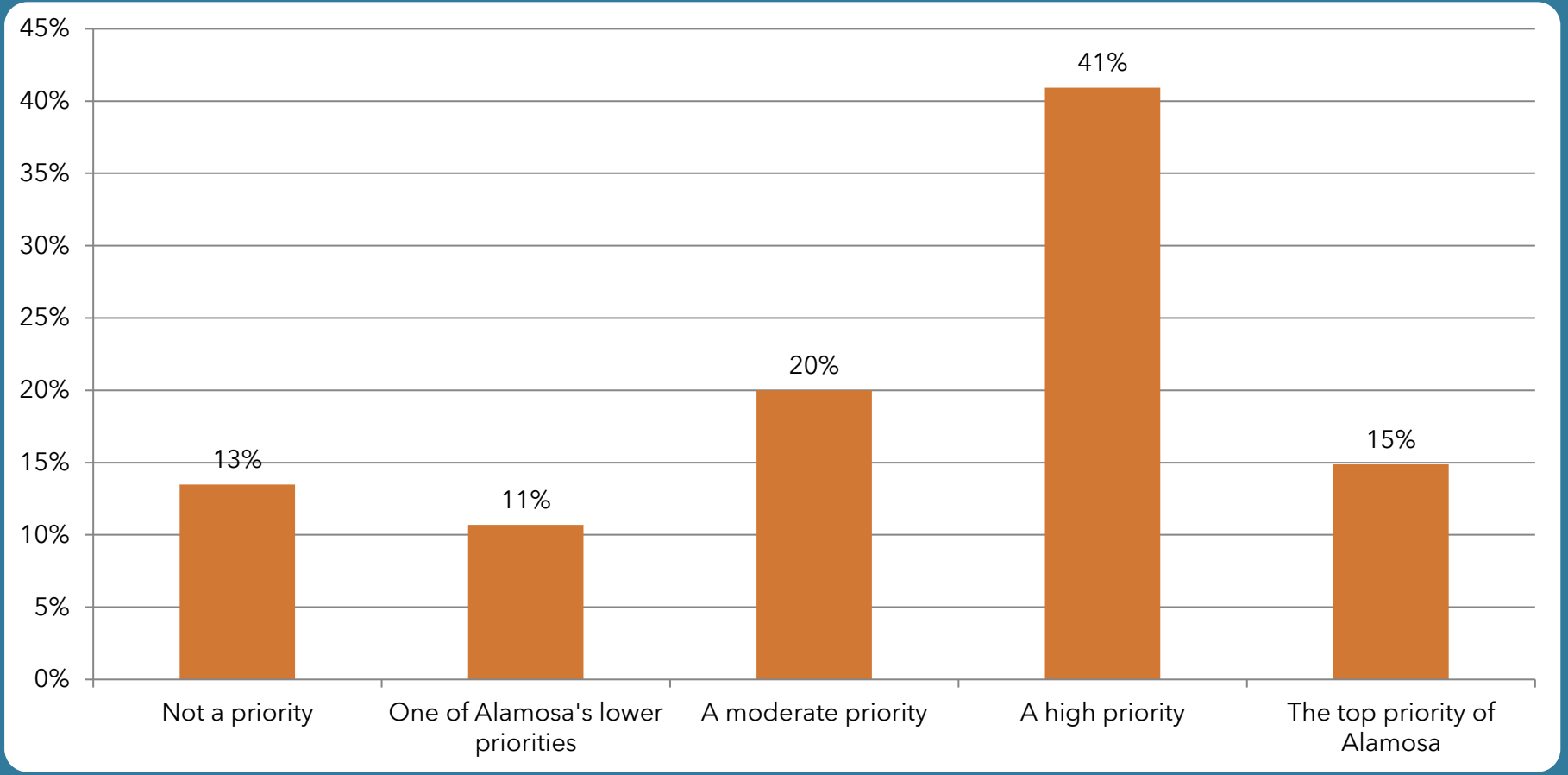
Appendix B – Solutions Survey Results

Over 200 households responded to our *Housing Solutions Survey*, hosted in February 2021 online and with paper surveys mailed. This strong participation helped inform the housing actions proposed in this Plan, but is not a representative sample of the community. As shown below, many more homeowners participated than renters.

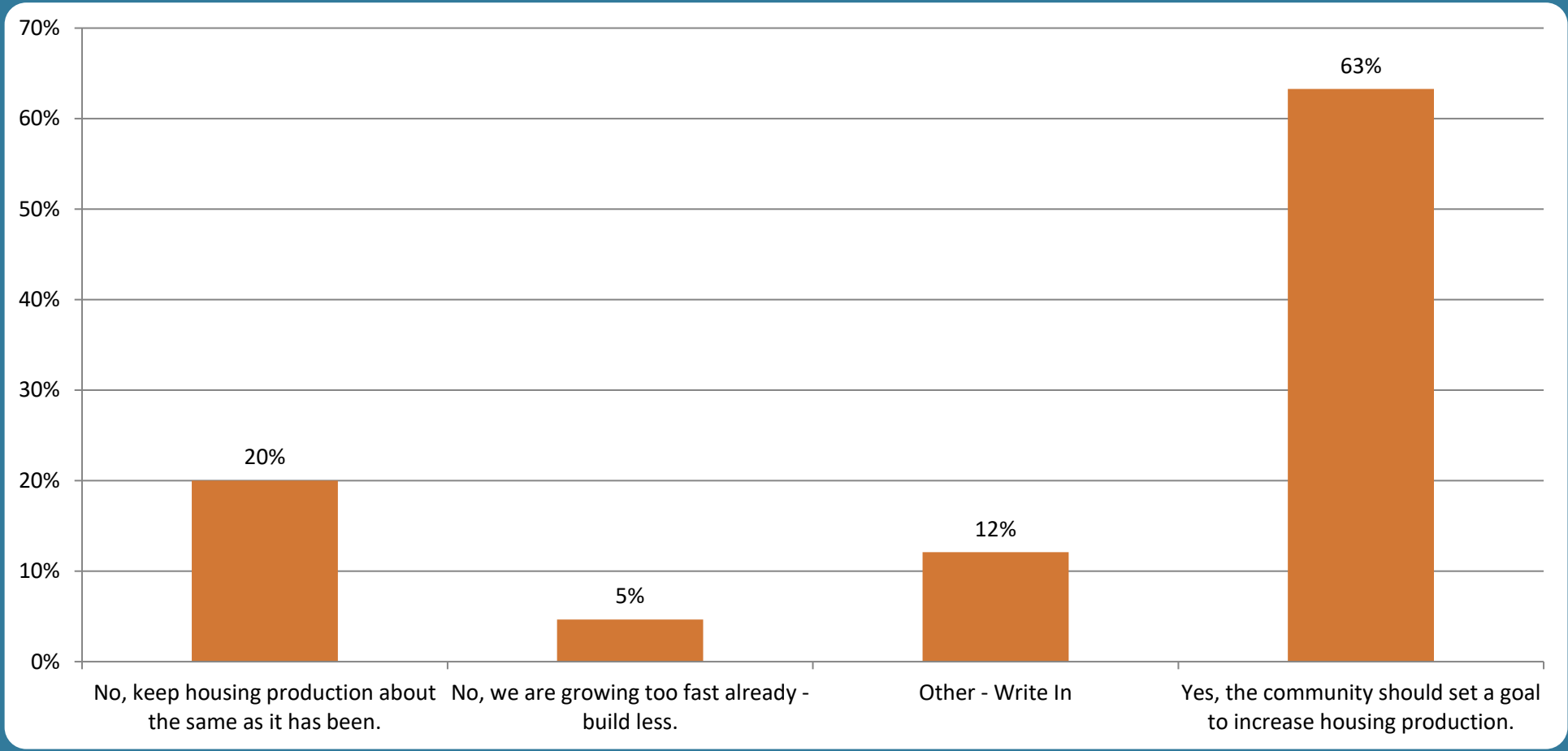
"To help us understand a little about your responses, what is your current housing situation?"



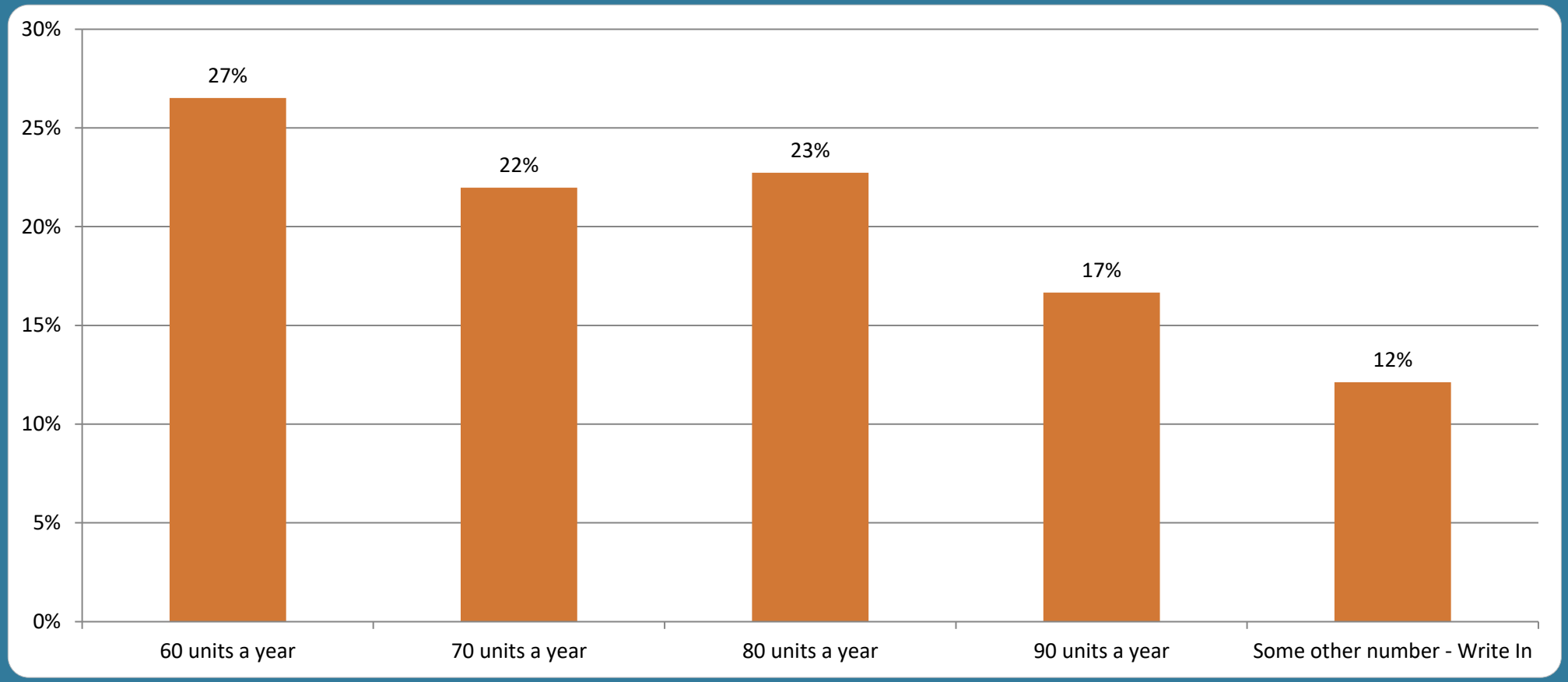
Historically, the City has not played an active role in housing. We are now considering taking a more active role, including supporting our community partners as they pursue housing. What priority should community housing (housing for residents and local employees that costs no more than30% of their income) be in Alamosa?



The Needs Assessment found that between 445 and 515 new homes and apartments are needed over the next five years to provide the community with housing opportunities and help employers fill jobs. Over the past ten years, about 44 new homes and apartments have been built each year in the city. At this rate about half the housing need would be satisfied over the next five years. Should the community set a goal to increase housing production?

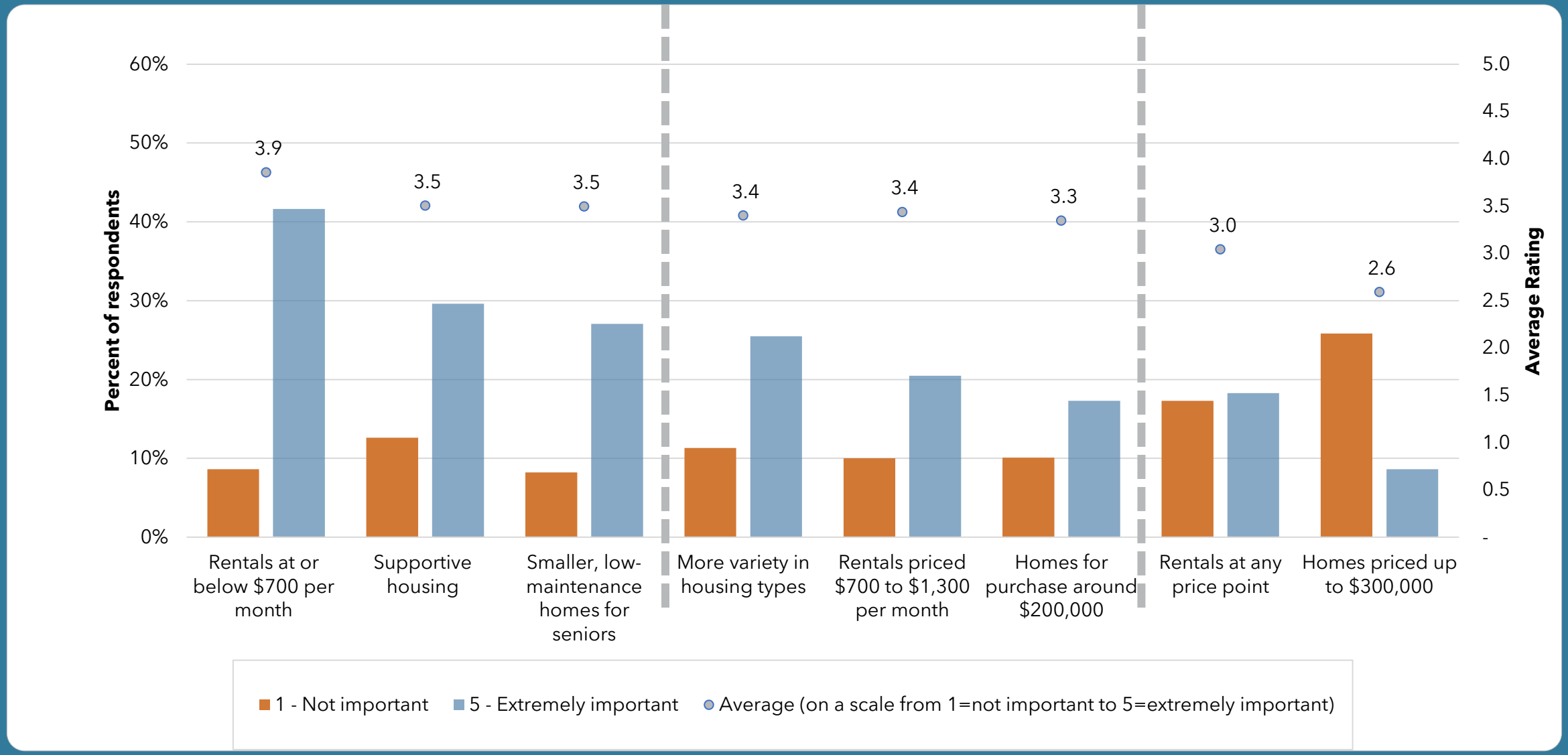


What should we shoot for?

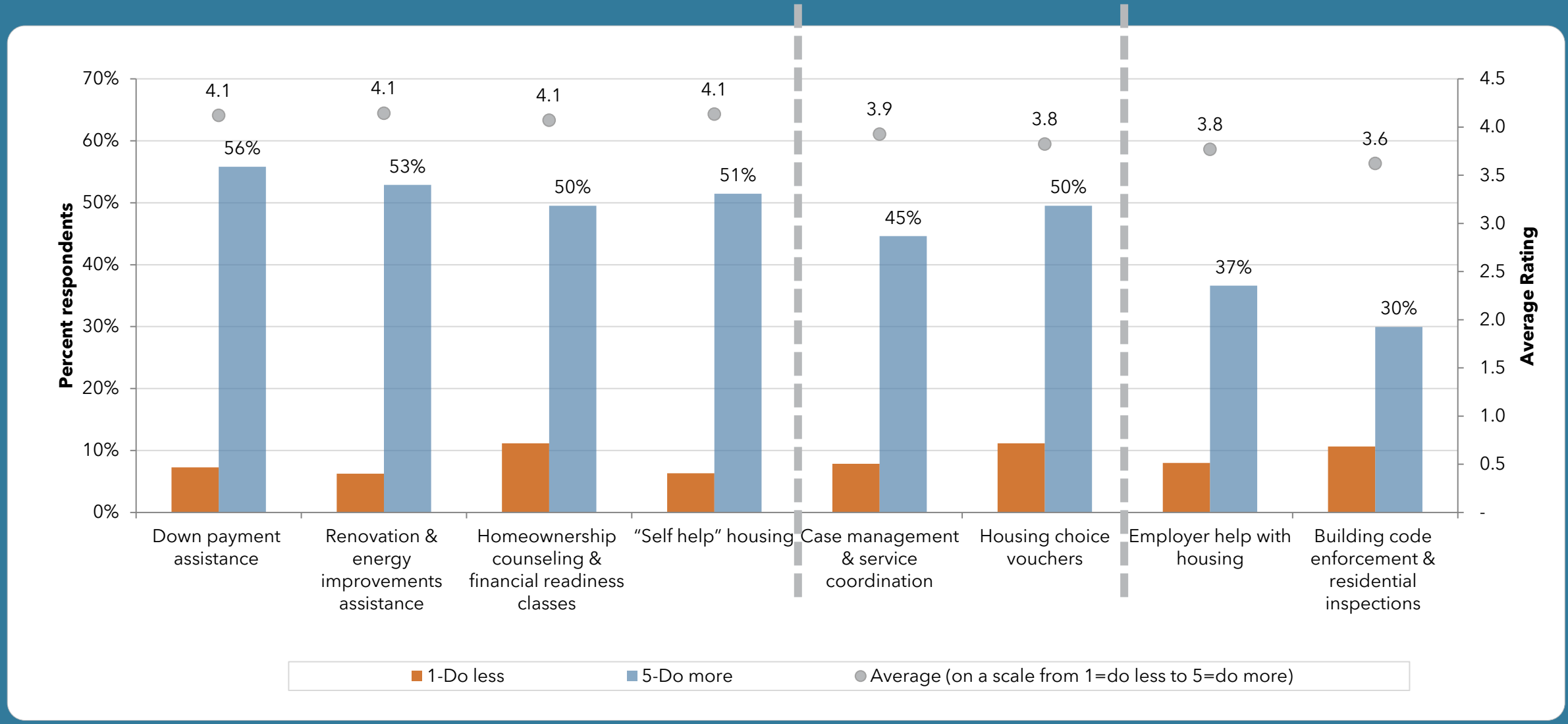


Comment: start with 50 units/year add onto that number each year to build capacity.

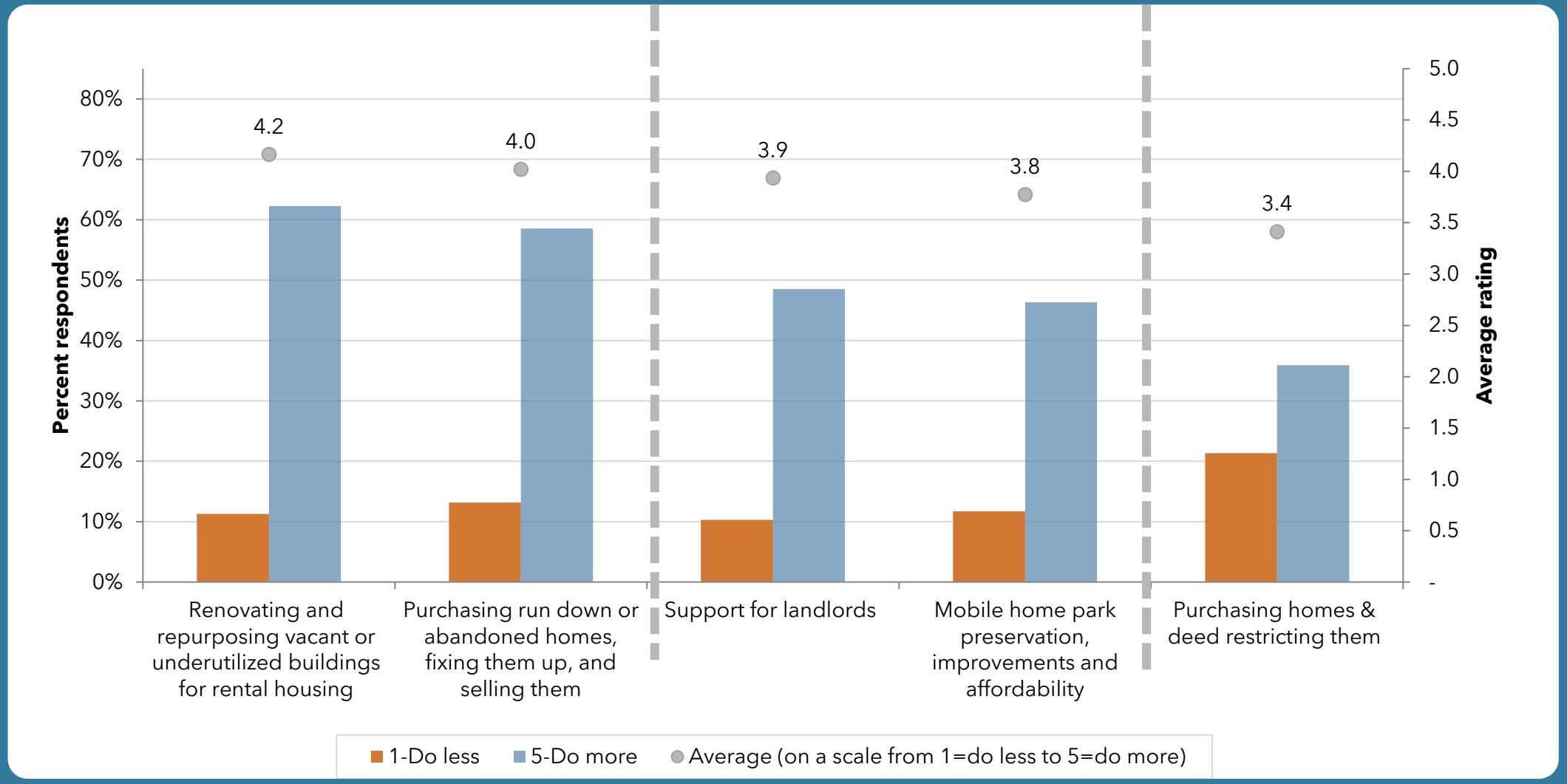
Priorities and Price Points – rank order



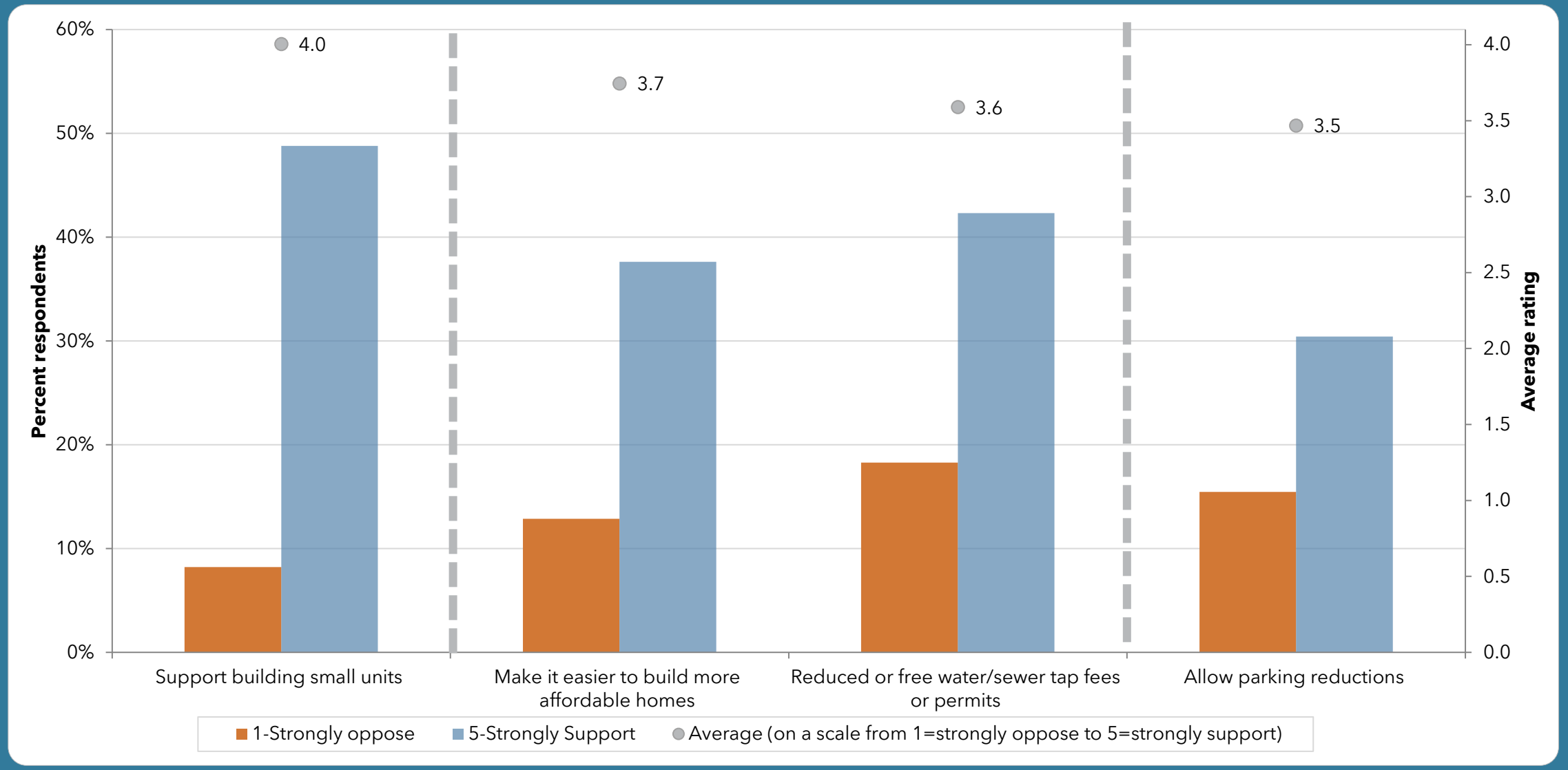
Existing Programs – rank order



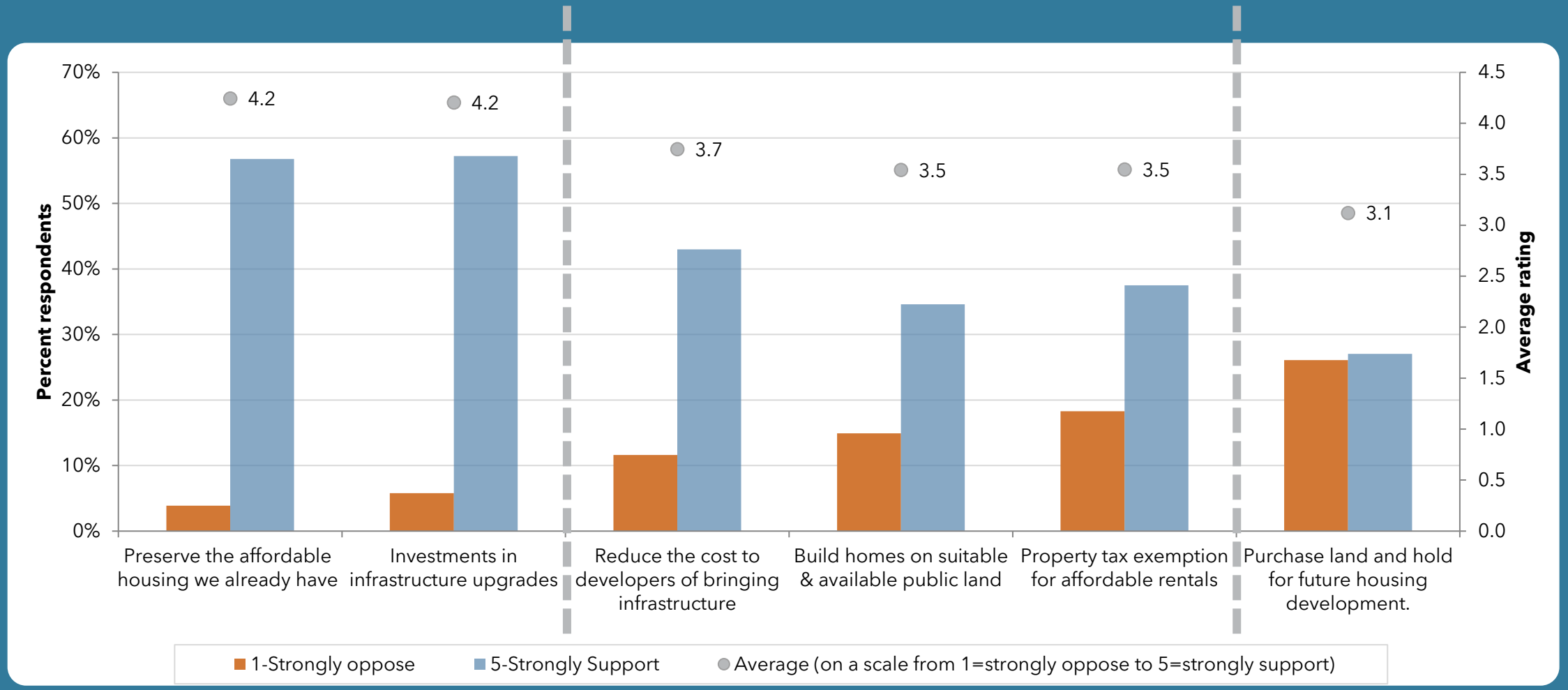
New Programs – rank order



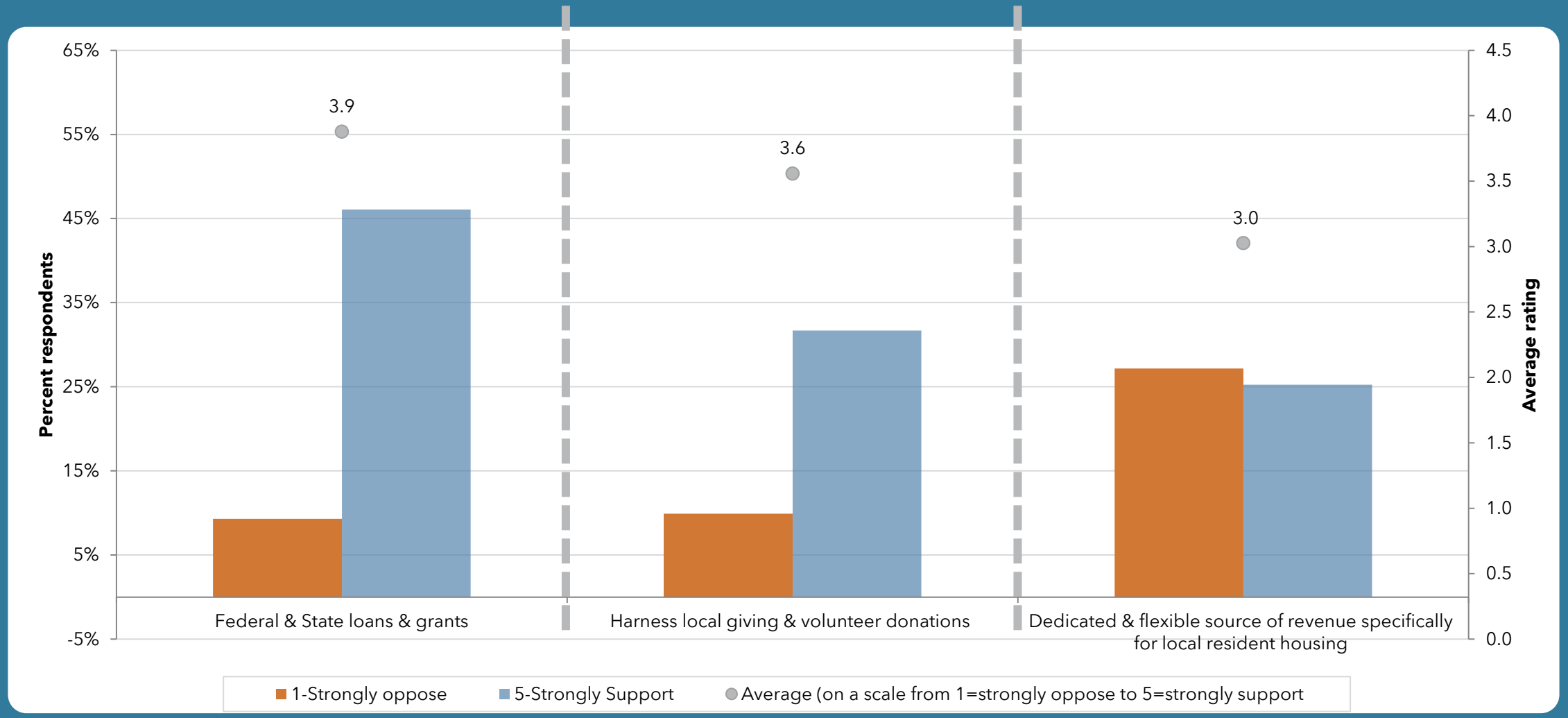
Incentives – rank order



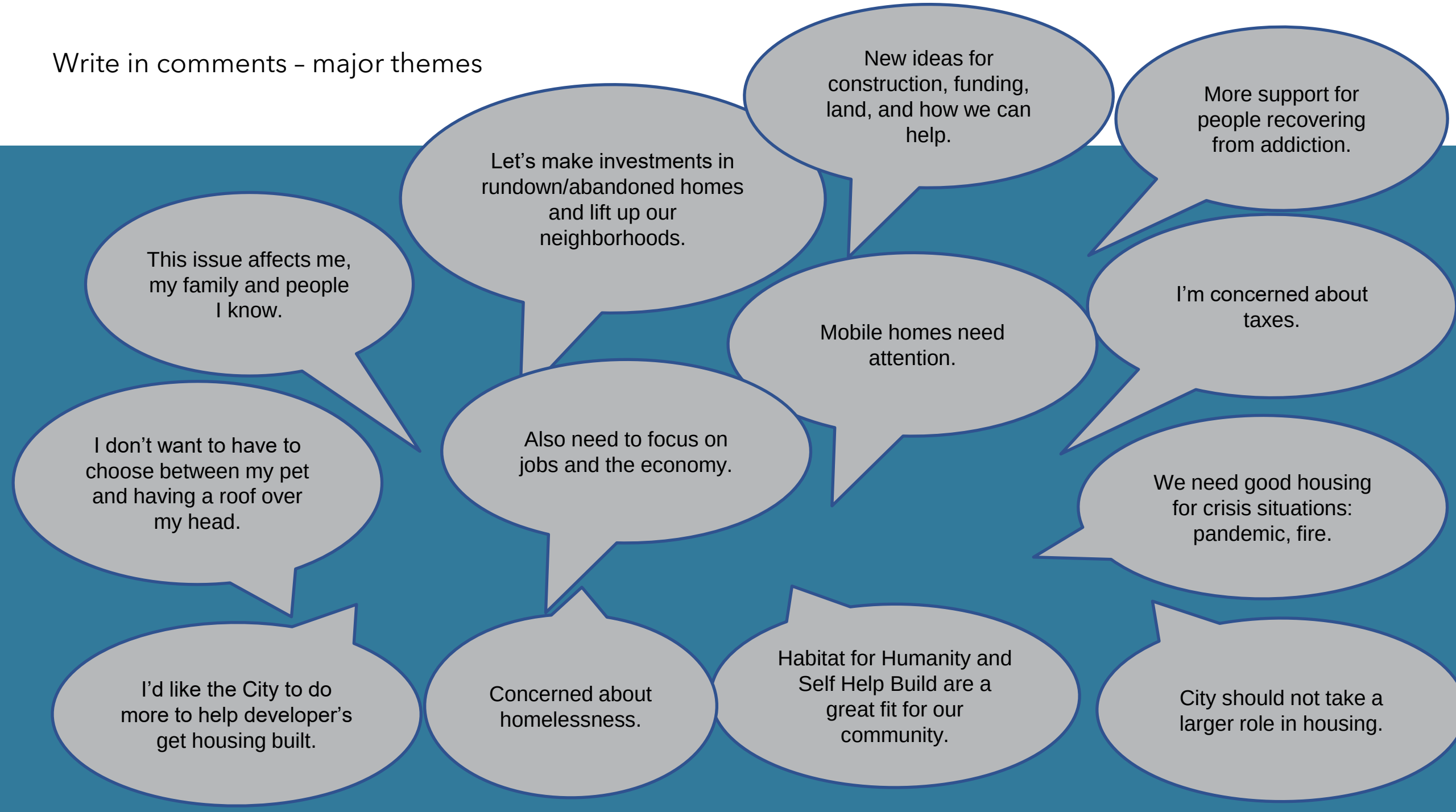
Public/Private Partnerships – rank order



Funding – rank order



Write in comments – major themes



Appendix C - Glossary

Affordable Housing	As used in this plan, housing is affordable if the monthly payment is equal to or less than 30% of gross household income (before taxes).
ADU	Accessory dwelling unit – casita, garage unit, lock off, small apartment associated with primary home
AHA	Alamosa Housing Authority
AMI	Area Median Income -published annually for counties by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). AMI is used to set income and rent limits for affordable housing programs statutorily linked to HUD income limits (e.g., low-income housing tax credit rentals). See Appendix A.
ASU	Adams State University
CDBG	Community Development Block Grants – a federal funding source used to develop and renovate affordable housing with income restrictions.
CHFA	Colorado Housing and Finance Authority - administers LIHTC and provides mortgage funding
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019, causing 2020 global pandemic and extensive local public health precautions.
CRHDC	Community Resources and Housing Development Corporation
EOC	Energy Outreach Colorado
ERC	Energy Resource Center
FHA	Federal Housing Administration, provides secondary market for residential mortgages
HOME Funds	Grants from HUD to states and units of general local government to implement local housing strategies designed to increase homeownership and affordable housing opportunities for low and very low-income households.
HUD	Housing and Urban Development; federal agency providing funding and regulations for low income housing.
LIHTC	Low Income Housing Tax Credit – a federal program to stimulate capital investment in affordable rental housing, administered in Colorado by the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority.
MLS	Multiple Listing Service used for purchase and sale of residential real estate
SLVBHG	San Luis Valley Behavioral Health Group
SLVHC	San Luis Valley Housing Coalition
TSJC	Trinidad State Junior College
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture – responsible for numerous affordable housing projects and programs in rural areas.
WAP	Weatherization Assistance Program

THE CITY OF ALAMOSA

GATEWAY TO THE GREAT SAND DUNES

City of Alamosa Contact

Deacon Aspinwall
daspinwall@ci.alamosa.co.us
(719)-589-6631

WILLIFORD, LLC
land use & affordable housing

WSW CONSULTING

URBANrural continuum