

Chapter 5: Growth and Development

Vision

Pagosa Springs will be known for our small town atmosphere and unique character. We will manage growth responsibly, promoting development patterns that support and retain the town's character.

Pagosa Springs is a small Colorado mountain town valued for its relaxed atmosphere, comfortable neighborhoods, friendly people, and regular community events. In the face of recent rapid growth and change, the community recognizes the need to protect valued components of this small town's character.

Our community will grow in an orderly fashion, maintaining a balance between development and the natural environment, efficiently providing essential services and facilities, and maintaining some of our long-standing character and small town qualities. The town will do this through the careful planning of areas of future growth, coordination with overlapping and neighboring jurisdictions, and by working with private landowners and the development community to achieve development that fits the community.



The image shows a historic home near downtown.

Goals and Policies



Townhomes in Lakes area are in the county but are served by Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District.

Goal G-1 Pagosa Springs will target higher intensity growth and development within an Urban Service Area.

New town-level development will occur within an Urban Service Area to promote orderly growth and development. This boundary (to be later defined) should be based on the location of the town's and Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District's (PAWSD) existing and planned infrastructure (*i.e.*, transportation, sanitation, water, and parks and trails) and the town's anticipated ability to provide services (*i.e.*, police and fire protection) efficiently. This area should accommodate all anticipated town-level development for the next 20 years.

Policy G-1(a) Town Development within Urban Service Area (USA) Boundary

New town-level development (*i.e.*, residential with an intensity of 1 unit per acre or greater and all commercial and light industrial development), should occur within the Urban Service Area (USA) boundary. The town will work with the county to limit approval of new town-level development and annexation to the town in areas outside of the USA, unless the proposed development meets all other annexation criteria.

Actions

- G-1.1 Work with Archuleta County to develop a formal Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) that describes shared town and county responsibilities and identify collaboratively preferred development patterns, services, an Urban Service Area, and implement the Future Land Use Plan and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.
- G-1.2 Continue regional growth planning and cooperation with other governmental entities and service providers, including PAWSD, to plan for the land within the Urban Service Area.

Goal G-2 The town's future commercial developments will occur in commercial activity centers.

Policy G-2(a) Major Commercial Centers and Smaller Neighborhood Centers

The Future Land Use Plan promotes most of the town's commercial and civic uses in several major centers – Downtown, the Lakes, and Sawmill—as shown on the Future Land Use Plan. In addition, neighborhood commercial development will occur in smaller neighborhood mixed-use activity centers, also shown on the plan and defined with locational criteria. The town aims to reduce future commercial development that is sprawled along highways.

Actions

- G-2.1 Approve development that is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.
- G-2.2 Revise the LUDC and zoning districts to meet the intent of this Plan.



Many downtown businesses are along Hwy. 160.

Goal G-3 The town will annex properties that provide an overall benefit to the Pagosa Springs community.

The town will annex properties in accordance with annexation policies and criteria, and will use a process to evaluate benefits and costs of proposed annexations to ensure that the annexations will offer an overall benefit to the community.

Policy G-3(a) Annexation Criteria Consistent with Comprehensive Plan

Review annexation criteria to ensure that annexation and development of properties is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan and the policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

Policy G-3(b) Fiscal, Social, and Land Use Benefits of Annexation Considered

Consider benefits and costs of annexation on a case-by-case basis. The annexation of county enclaves should take into consideration fiscal, social, and land use factors.

Actions

- G-3.1 Refine annexation criteria and implement key elements of this Comprehensive Plan (e.g. vision, goals, and policies) so annexations are considered for using new criteria based on ability to provide services, contiguity with existing town limits, net fiscal impact to the community, and other criteria.
- G-3.2 Consider benefits and costs of annexation and enclaves on a case-by-case basis, with respect to fiscal, social, and land use factors.



Higher density uses should be directed to areas with existing infrastructure, such as the downtown.

Goal G-4 The town will target investment and development in the Downtown and other “core” areas with existing infrastructure.

Promote development on underdeveloped and vacant parcels within the town in locations with existing infrastructure, such as Downtown, the Lakes, and Future Sawmill Centers. Infill and redevelopment should be compatible in scale and context with existing neighborhoods.

Policy G-4(a) Infill and Redevelopment in Appropriate Locations

Direct town-level development to areas that have the necessary transportation infrastructure in place for bicycles, pedestrians, transit vehicles, and private automobiles. Infill and redevelopment should also have adequate water for fire flows and it should be connected to the wastewater treatment system.

Policy G-4(b) Infill and Redevelopment Designed to be Compatible

Ensure compatible infill and redevelopment by considering aspects such as the scale and massing of buildings, setbacks, relationship of entrances to the street and public spaces, landscaping, sidewalks, and other broad design issues that provide consistency and compatibility of new structures with older structures.

Actions

- G-4.1 Develop infill and redevelopment design standards that address aspects mentioned above.
- G-4.2 Develop a tiered fee or review system favoring infill that is beneficial to the community and that is in locations that can

be served by the necessary transportation and other infrastructure.

- G-4.3 Establish impact fees to pay for needed infrastructure improvements.
- G-4.4 Implement the Downtown Master Plan and Design Guidelines in associated downtown development.

Goal G-5 The town will achieve consistency between this Plan’s policies, town regulations, and approved developments.

The Future Land Use Plan of this Comprehensive Plan will be the guide to future development of Pagosa Springs.

Policy G-5(a) Future Land Use Plan as a Decision Guide

Future development should be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.

Actions

- G-5.1 Revise the LUDC, zoning districts, and standards to be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan and the policies of this Comprehensive Plan.
- G-5.2 Use an Implementation Workbook during development review and decision-making process for development projects to ensure consistency with this Comprehensive Plan.
- G-5.3 Improve code enforcement to improve the quality of existing neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Goal G-6 New private development will fit in with existing residential, commercial, and other areas and will incorporate principles of livable and sustainable design.

The quality of current development in Pagosa Springs is generally improving—most new commercial developments are providing landscaping, architecture, signs, and site planning. This Comprehensive Plan aims to ensure that all future private development (residential and non-residential) will contribute to furthering the development of Pagosa Springs as a sustainable and livable community and should fit the character of existing neighborhoods.



A downtown business converted from an older home contributes to the character of the community



New development should complement existing historic or distinct structures or districts within the town.



Pagosa Springs' Town Hall enhances community identity.

Policy G-6(a) Development Contributes to Positive Image and Livability of Town

Ensure that new private development (residential and non-residential) contributes to furthering the development of Pagosa Springs as a sustainable and livable community and fosters the town's eclectic and unique architectural qualities. Characteristics may be different for specific parts of the community, and new development should not lead to standard "sameness" for all buildings or all parts of town.

Policy G-6(b) Energy Efficiency and Green building Promoted

New development should incorporate design, technology, and materials to increase energy efficiency.

Actions

- G-6.1 Review and amend commercial design standards as necessary to achieve the goal of commercial development that is safe and attractive, and fits Pagosa Springs.
- G-6.2 Amend sign standards to ensure that new signs fit the highly scenic qualities of Highway 160 and promote the town's uniqueness.
- G-6.3 Retain the architectural integrity of historically significant buildings and provide standards for rehabilitation, renovation, demolition, and infill activities within historic districts.
- G-6.4 Create "Green Development" provisions for building and site planning.
- G-6.5 Consider additional incentives or non-regulatory approaches, such as a Green Building awards program.

Goal G-7 Pagosa Springs will plan for and provide attractive and inviting gateways, corridors, civic centers, and public spaces throughout the town.

Pagosa Springs will promote the development of civic buildings and public places that are attractive and inviting and that enhance our community identity.

Policy G-7(a) Exemplary Civic Buildings and Public Spaces

Continue to design and build exemplary civic and community centers with high quality architecture and landscaping. New public buildings should be attractive and inviting and enhance

Pagosa Springs’ identity. In addition, provide public spaces that are conducive to walking and connected to other parts of the community.

Policy G-7(b) Gateways and Public Rights of Ways

Work to improve major entryways or “gateways” into the town over time, retrofitting unattractive signs and development, and cleaning up or improving the visual quality of the landscape along the major highway corridors at the edge of and in town. The main town gateways of focus are:

- Along Highway 160 on the west and east sides of town, and
- Highway 84 to the south.



The town’s northern and eastern gateways along Hwy. 160 are scenic.

Actions

- G-7.1 Establish a “Gateways and Corridors Program” to plan for and design the landscaping and signs along the major highway corridors at the town’s gateways, as listed above.
- G-7.2 Coordinate with Archuleta County to create codes and improve code enforcement to address unsightly situations on private properties adjacent to these gateway areas.
- G-7.3 Establish and support public right-of-way clean up and beautification programs.

Goal G-8 Pagosa Springs will recognize differences between parts of our community—“uptown” and “downtown”—and work to address unique needs of different neighborhoods within and near the town.

The town recognizes that different residential areas and merchant areas have unique needs. The Specific Planning Areas chapter (see Chapter 15) addresses different concerns and approaches to growth and development in the following areas of the community:

- Lakes Residential Area,
- Central Residential Area,
- Downtown Residential Area,
- Eastern and Southern Gateway Residential Area,
- The West Merchant Area, and
- The Central and East Merchant Area.

Policy G-8(a) Specific Area Planning

Continue to work with subareas within the community to address specific and unique needs of neighborhoods and merchant areas.

Actions

- G-8.1 Dedicate staff time in the planning department for neighborhood planning.
- G-8.2 Establish a process to include neighborhood-identified projects in the Capital Improvements Plan, including those actions identified in Chapter 15