



## A VISION FOR IONE

Today and in the future, Ione will maintain its friendly small-town feel, steeped in its rich history. The City's unique character, quality of life, and general appeal are all reinforced by longstanding commitments to its residents, agricultural protection, resource conservation, cultural resources, and mining. While Ione has experienced significant development and expansion over the past two decades, Ione's citizens have conscientiously preserved the strong, friendly small-town character that is most treasured.

Please turn to Page 2-2 for a complete listing of contents covered in this Element, with page number references.

In maintaining the community's vision for the City, this General Plan provides policies and direction that support the vision. Ione will continue to grow and this vision must continue to guide local decision making. Changes will include the expansion of the existing business base to serve the greater needs of its residents, management of growth, preservation of Ione's unique character and the surrounding setting, revitalization and enhancement of the downtown area and the provision of greater entertainment and recreation options.



# PUBLIC OUTREACH & VISION

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## ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY VISION

To gauge the community’s desires and its ultimate vision, the City distributed community surveys, facilitated workshops, and led a public outreach campaign to gain a sense of resident’s desires and the community’s vision. This outreach and input initiated the City’s public outreach process, and provided residents, business owners, developers, and visitors a chance to voice their opinions on the future of the community. The public input gained through these means was combined with existing information and resources to create a land use scenario for City leaders to consider. After significant deliberation and additional community input at public hearings, the Planning Commission and City Council established a final land use scenario on which this General Plan is based. The Vision for the City, as laid out in this section, is the result of this public process and the decisions set forth by the Planning Commission and City Council.

## COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS

The City conducted a visioning conference in September 2006, designed to set forth an identity and direction for the future growth and development of the community. Residents identified their ideas for the historical downtown, a restored Preston Castle, business viability , outstanding governance, infrastructure, mining industry, education, trails and recreation, visual corridors, open space, farmland, growth levels, and housing.

This initial vision process also identified the key strategies to be used in the General Plan update. The conference members sought to utilize all forms of communication for public outreach and engage citizens in becoming part of the visioning process. The conference members focused on developing partnerships with private, non-profit, and other public agencies to achieve goals together.





## COMMUNITY SURVEY

In September and early October of 2008, the City conducted a public survey of residents, business owners, and visitors to identify people's thoughts and goals for the future of Ione. The public survey was aimed at gathering resident input and views outside of a public workshop setting. The surveys were mailed out as part of the September 2008 sewer bill and were also available for pickup at a number of locations throughout town. Over 230 responses were received.

Through the survey and workshop polling, people identified the following as their most important and somewhat important priorities for the City:

### Important Priorities

- Manage growth
- Preserve open space and agricultural land
- Maintain small town character
- Enhance recreational facilities
- Revitalize downtown
- More activities for families and children

### Somewhat Important Priorities

- Alternative transportation to cars
  - Better/increased public transit
  - Better bicycle access, lanes, paths
  - Better trails
- Encourage more entertainment opportunities
  - festivals, nightlife, etc





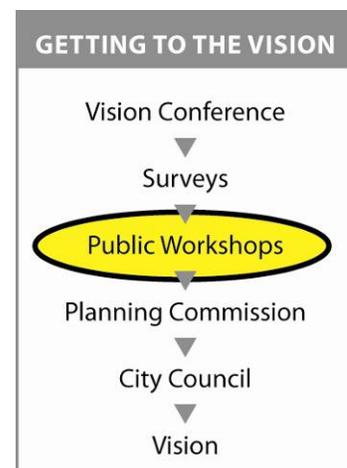
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### Community Characteristics and Concerns

- More than half of respondents have lived in Ione for less than 10 years
- Majority of respondents own their homes
- Top reasons people choose to live in Ione:
  - Small Town
  - Safe Community
  - Family Connections
  - Retirement
  - Business/Job
- Major community concerns:
  - Increased Traffic
  - Lack of Shopping
  - Age/Appearance/Quality of Buildings/Downtown
  - Development Pressures
  - Lack of Community Resources
- Half walk and half drive to work
- Many residents regularly shop outside of Ione

### PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

The City conducted three public workshops at Evalynn Bishop Hall in Howard Park. The workshops provided the public with an introduction to the General Plan process and were a forum for the public to express their ideas and concerns about the future of Ione. During all three workshops, staff conducted informal polling as part of the presentation.





## General Plan 101 Workshop

The first workshop was an introduction to the General Plan. It provided residents an overview of the General Plan Update process, and asked attendees general questions about the community. The second and third workshops gathered information about residents' ideas on development, housing, downtown, open space, and many other parts of community identity. Below is a description of the second and third workshops used to guide the City's vision.

## Guiding Principles Workshop

At the second public workshop on September 8, 2008, a mapping exercise was conducted with members of the community. The intent of this exercise was to get attendees thinking about the possible locations for future growth in and around the City. Residents were asked to place a dot on a map of Ione to represent a location for future development of residences and businesses.

In the dot mapping exercise, residents identified that the preferred locations for new residential development would be along State Route 124 east of the existing City, northwest of the Castle Oaks development (Q Ranch north of State Route 104 and Ringer Ranch south of State Route 104), and south of West Marlette Street. Preferred locations for new commercial development were identified in the Downtown area and at the State Route 88 and Buena Vista, and the State Route 88 and State Route 104 intersections. Infill development opportunities were seen in the Downtown and along Five Mile Drive near the Tertiary Treatment Plant.

The input collected from participants was used to create three separate land use alternatives maps for consideration during the third public workshop.

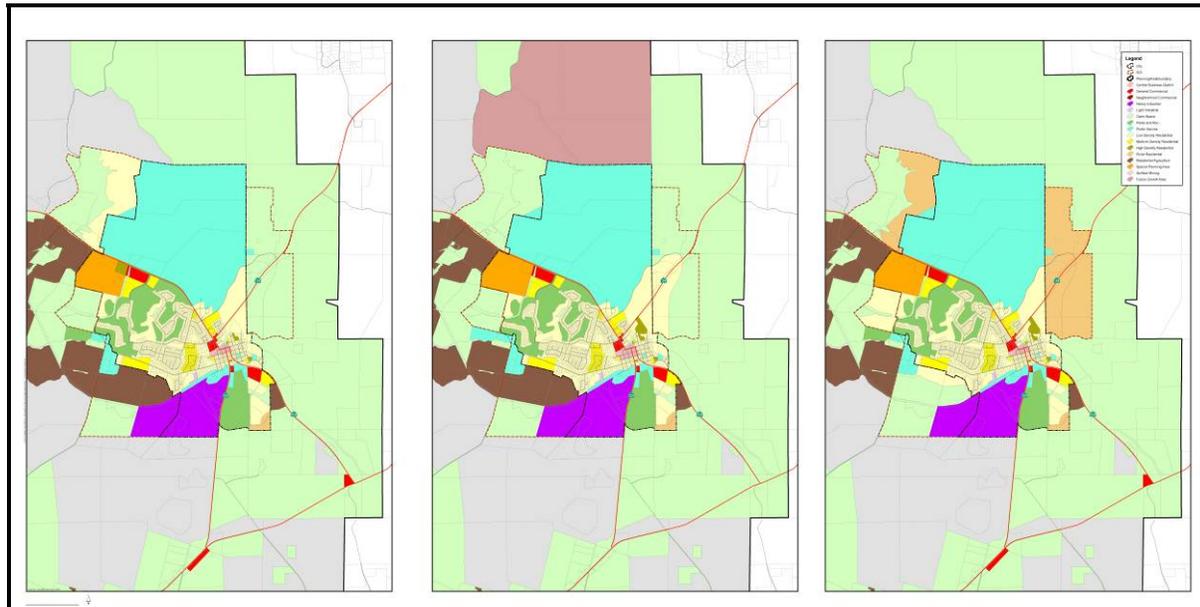


## General Plan Alternatives Workshop

The third workshop, held on November 19, 2008, focused on review and the consideration of three land use alternatives. Based upon the input gathered during public workshop 1 and 2, along with the direction of the General Plan Executive Committee, staff generated three land use alternative scenarios for the future of Ione. These scenarios characterized future growth of the community based upon location. The public workshop was used to gather input on the three alternative land use scenarios to begin to define the preferred land use plan for the future of Ione.



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*Alternative 1*  
*Western Growth*

*Alternative 2*  
*Eastern Growth*

*Alternative 3*  
*Southern Growth*

Participants selected one of the three alternatives presented that night that best represented what they envisioned Ione to be in 20 years. In combination with the live polling and community survey results, ideas and concepts from the other alternatives were taken to be incorporated as part of the preferred alternative. For instance, a community park was added into the preferred alternative. The highlights of the public input results are illustrated below:

- The eastward focused growth alternative (Alternative 2) was identified as the overall preferred alternative
- Development in the Q Ranch area should be at a rural residential density level
- The area along State Route 124 east of the City is appropriate for accommodating significant future residential growth.
- The southern area of the City (south of West Marlette along the railroad tracks) is not appropriate for development
- Higher density housing (e.g., apartments) is best located along State Route 124 east of the City
- The Downtown should be expanded to include additional areas
- Commercial development should not be established along the State Route 88 corridor, but rather focused within the City limits



- A community park should be located in the west side of the City
- A Future Growth Area is not supported north of the Prison
- Open space preservation should be supported north of the City
- Development of the Triangle Area between State Routes 124, 104, and 88 is appropriate

## GENERAL PLAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE INPUT

The City Council established a General Plan Executive Committee to provide direction to staff on the process of updating the General Plan. The Executive Committee composed of two Council members, two Planning Commissioners, and two Parks Commissioners, all of which are representatives from the elected officials and appointed boards of the community. The Executive Committee met twice a month throughout the update and provided regular input during the creation of this General Plan.

The Executive Committee established a General Plan Planning Area for the new General Plan. The Planning Area represents the area within which the City has a vested interest in guiding land use and circulation decisions. The Planning Area established by the Executive Committee extends from the Amador- Sacramento and Amador-San Joaquin County lines on the west, north along a series of property lines that pass near the intersection of Ione-Michigan Bar Road and Carbondale Road, south along parcels lines in a stepped pattern to just beyond State Route 88, then following parcels lines along the south side of Highway 88.

## LANDOWNER COORDINATION

During the General Plan process, the City encouraged and continually received input from landowners regarding their property. City staff received numerous comments and met with many landowners throughout the course of the update process, especially during the land use alternatives recommendation. In addition, both the Planning Commission and the City Council considered each landowner's specific request for changes that would affect their parcels.

## AGENCY COORDINATION

Throughout the entire preparation of the General Plan, City staff met with various interested and affected agencies to ensure their input and considerations were included in the process. The City met extensively with County staff, ensuring that both the City's and County's objectives were discussed and addressed in a collaborative process, as both the City and County were updating their General Plan at the same time. While the City and County General Plans may include different land use designations for properties within the Planning Area, both Plans contain policies to encourage collaboration and coordination on any potential development within the City's Sphere of Influence.

In addition, City staff consulted with all of the public service providers that are essential for providing services to residents, including the Amador Water Agency for water, Amador County



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Recreation Agency for parks and recreation, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for roadways, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) for wildfire protection.

Staff also consulted with officials from the Cal Fire Training Academy, Mule Creek State Prison, Preston Youth Correctional Facility, which are located within and have a large impact on the City.

### PLANNING COMMISSION INPUT

The Planning Commission provided input on the preferred land use alternative and on various goals and policies. During the hearing, the Commission received the results of the public workshops and community survey, along with specific landowner requests, and provided staff with further directions and provided recommendations to the City Council. The Planning Commission recommendations included a number of changes from the original scenario brought forth for consideration, and included specific direction on issues involving growth areas, inclusion of property owners in the land use process, and other changes.



### Preferred Land Use Plan

On December 9 and December 15, 2008, the Planning Commission discussed the three base land use alternatives and a fourth alternative prepared by staff based upon public workshop comments. The Commission ultimately recommended Alternative 4, with modifications, as the Commission's draft preferred Land Use Plan. The Commission's input and recommendation include the following:

- Include comprehensive map revisions of existing developed properties to accurately reflect current uses and neighborhood identity;
- Consideration of each of the landowner requests and their inclusion in the preferred Land Use Plan;
- Establish the Downtown definition to include both Main Street and Jackson Street between Sacramento and Ione Streets;
- The western two-thirds of the Old Stockton Road Property South of the Railroad Tracks be designated for Rural Residential and that the eastern one-third be designated for Open Space as a buffer to the industrial uses to the east;
- the Silva Property and Ringer Ranch be designated Special Planning Areas;
- the portion of the Q Ranch property that is outside of the 100-year floodplain be designated for Rural Residential, while the portion within the floodplain is to be designated as Open Space, with the existing agricultural operations area to be designated as General Agriculture;

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- the residential area of the Preston School of Industry (home sites) designated for Low Density Residential uses;
- Designate a Future Growth Area north of the Mule Creek State Prison property, but limit the development capacity and define the type of development consistent with the overall vision for the area.

The Planning Commission's recommendations formed the basis for a revised land use map taken to the City Council for consideration. The Planning Commission's recommendations, while advisory, established the framework for the maps and exhibits provided to the Council.

## CITY COUNCIL INPUT

The City Council, as the primary decision-making group in the City, has provided direction and strategy to City staff and participants in the General Plan Update process since its beginning. The Council maintains responsibility for the General Plan, as well as the contents of each of its Elements. Following recommendations from the Planning Commission, the City Council directed staff on the preferred land use alternative and on various goals and policies. During the hearing, the Council received the results of the public workshops and community survey, along with specific landowner requests and recommendations from the Planning Commission. The City Council then approved a preferred land use plan.



## Preferred Land Use Plan

On January 6, 2009, the City Council discussed the three base land use alternatives and a fourth alternative recommended by the Planning Commission. The City Council ultimately approved the Planning Commission's recommendations with modifications, as the City's preferred Land Use Plan. The City Council's recommendations include the following changes from the Planning Commission's preferred land use plan:

- The Triangle Area be designated as a Special Planning Area;
- The existing residential properties near downtown be allowed to retain their existing rights to convert to commercial uses via a new land use category, Downtown Transition;
- A mix of light and heavy industrial, office, and commercial in the industrial park area; and
- Removal of the Future Growth Area north of the Mule Creek State Prison property, but retaining the Future Growth Area land use designation for further usage.

With the land use plan in place, the preparation of the General Plan Update moved into the phase of policy creation. Goals, policies, and programs in this General Plan are based on the Vision and



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Guiding Principles set forth below. These principles are the result of the public input process described in this section, as well as City Council direction for the future of the community.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES – THE VISION

Guiding principles provide the framework and benchmarks to direct Ione’s future, consistent with community values and desires. They provide broad statements of purpose, intent and/or direction to achieve the community vision. The principles are used to guide the General Plan update, mapping and land use alternatives process. Additionally, the guiding principles establish a set of guidelines and benchmarks for the writing and implementation of General Plan goals, policies and actions.

The guiding principles will set the overall tone/focus for the General Plan and each of the subsequent elements of the General Plan will further guide and plan for implementation of the community development. The guiding principles are outlined below.



#### **Maintain Small Town Character**

The primary desire and vision of the community is to maintain Ione’s unique and friendly small town character. Ione has a rich past steeped in agriculture, railway transport and general goods. Throughout the years, the City has established itself as a quaint, harmonious town that thrives on tradition and community togetherness. Residents have expressed their desire to preserve its high quality of small town life. Such characteristics include a local downtown core, community events, low level of development, and surrounding open space and agricultural land. The City has experienced recent growth and physical expansion with additional homes and businesses and has still been able maintain its desired small town character. It is expected that future growth, if properly managed and coordinated, can continue to maintain this much desired aspect of Ione.

This guiding principle is addressed in all seven elements of the General Plan.

#### **Manage Growth**

Residents recognize the demand and pressures for the City to expand and continue to develop. Residents have expressed their desires to accommodate new development, but in a manner that does not negatively affect their way of life and the character of Ione that makes the City so attractive. In the past two decades, Ione has experienced rapid growth of several new neighborhoods and developments. Housing growth between 1980 and 1990 in Ione was approximately four percent annually, with fluctuations year to year. Growth between 1990 and 2000 was less, at about one percent annually. Growth between 1990 and 2007 averaged approximately two percent per year.

The City and residents recognize that there are development pressures within Amador County, and that development limitation in other parts of the County could place significant pressures on Ione to



significantly expand. A reasonable growth rate, as determined through public input and local decision makers, is approximately four percent annually. Since new development is necessary to the long term sustainability of the community, residents have indicated the desire for a significant portion of the new housing development to occur towards the east, along Highway 124, and a significant portion of the industrial growth towards the south of the City, also along Highway 124. Other smaller housing and commercial growth would occur through the City.

This guiding principle is addressed in the Land Use, Housing, Public Facilities, and Economic Development Elements of the General Plan.

## **Preserve Open Space and Agricultural Land**

With a rich past steeped in agriculture and mining, preserving surrounding farmland and open space is a critically important factor in community growth. Local farmers help set the tone of the City, forming a unique bond and relationship that is important to the community and residents. In addition, the aesthetic benefits of the surrounding agricultural lands and the economic benefits they bring to the community are part of our quality of life. The views of large open natural space, scenic countryside, the gentle rolling hills surrounding the community, cattle ranches, and fruits of the nearby agriculture are part of the identity of Ione.



*Agricultural Land*

This guiding principle is addressed in the Land Use and the Conservation and Open Space Elements of the General Plan.

## **Enhance Recreational Facilities**

Residents and visitors from the region enjoy the range of recreational choices available here, including various equestrian and golfing opportunities. Residents especially enjoy the soccer fields, skate park, baseball fields, and other park facilities. Little league sports, tournaments, and special events are part of the available programs in the community. Howard Park and other city facilities will continue expansions and upgrades as needed to support the expected demand for additional services. Given the growth and extensive usage, residents have expressed great interest in the creation of another large park and recreational facility, along with more neighborhood parks.

This guiding principle is addressed in the Land Use, Public Facilities, and the Conservation and Open Space Elements of the General Plan.



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### Revitalize Downtown

Ione recognizes that the Downtown area serves as a central community gathering place, where residents and visitors can enjoy and patronize local businesses. The charm of the downtown area is its historical character, locally-owned businesses, friendly feel, and convenience of being centrally located within the Ione area.

The community strongly desires revitalization and improvement of the downtown area. Revitalization envisioned by business owners, residents, and property owners includes the expansion of the downtown area, the addition of newer buildings, available parking space, and a variety of different types of businesses. Besides increasing downtown's economic development potential, downtown should be safe from potential traffic hazards.



This guiding principle is addressed in the Land Use, Safety and Noise, and Economic Development Elements of the General Plan.

### Improve Roadways and Traffic

At the time of the preparation of this General Plan, two state highways run directly through the City and Downtown, causing traffic, congestion, safety, noise, and quality of life issues. One of the key issues is truck traffic going through the Downtown area, with heavy trucks having a difficult time legally navigating the three separate 90-degree turns at key intersections with on-street parking. Residents have continually called for improvements to the roadways in and around the City.

The City, in consultation and coordination with the Amador County Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and the County, seek to devise a long-term solution to the City's traffic issues, especially the state highway traffic that passes through the City. The agencies have will continue to plan improvements to address the traffic issues in and around Ione, called the West Ione Roadway Improvement Strategy (WIRIS). The WIRIS solution includes a new major corridor just west of the City, and a potential realignment of Highway 124 that diverts highway traffic around the City west and south of the City's core (previously known as the bypass). This is intended to relieve major truck traffic passing through downtown.

This guiding principle is addressed in the Circulation, Land Use, and Safety and Noise Elements of the General Plan.



## **ACHIEVING THE VISION**

The goals and policies of this General Plan are collectively intended to achieve this community's vision and guide future decisions related to land use and development. This General Plan ensures that every important land use decision will be scrutinized and assessed for its potential to affect the quality of life, environment, and the small-town feel.

Many issues will become apparent during implementation of this Plan; some can be foreseen now, while others are less clear and will need to be dealt with as part of the ongoing process of implementing the Plan. For example, our efforts to address traffic issues related to highways running through Downtown involve the long-term planning necessary to create a roadway system that redirects this traffic around the City.

In this situation, as in others that may arise, Ione must respond to change and to internal and external factors in proactive ways, identifying issues before they become crises and developing innovative ways to respond on its own and in cooperation with other local and regional governmental agencies. As a result, this General Plan presents a policy framework that can and should be adjusted or adapted as needed over time.

Ensuring that the vision expressed by this General Plan is achieved will require conscientious effort on the part of citizens and City officials. In order to organize this effort, the City government will need to implement the policies of this General Plan and monitor its progress and effectiveness. The policies and actions in the Plan may have to be adjusted from time to time in order to be effective at achieving the community's vision. This process is critical to the long-term success of this Plan.

## **LAND USE**

Ione will maintain its friendly small-town feel, while accommodating new development and expanding economic development opportunities. Future land uses should not restrict a landowner's existing rights and should give them the option to exercise their rights for development at a later date. Adjacent and nearby properties designated with potentially conflicting land uses should reduce any incompatibilities and nuisances. The supply of residential commercial, office, and industrial land uses should be sufficient to accommodate development demands for the foreseeable future. The Land Use Element contains goals and policies related to the types of development allowed, including the extent and location of land uses, their intensity, development standards, as well as the community's desires for special types of development. This element also contains the official Land Use Map, which shows Land Use Designations for each parcel within the City.

## **CIRCULATION**

Ione will have a rational transportation system that is safe, efficient, and accommodates new development. The Circulation Element contains goals and policies related to the transportation system, including the extent and condition of the roadway system, roadway safety, alternative modes of travel, as well as the community's desires for major roadway improvements around the City. This element also contains the official Circulation Map, which shows the desired road network within and



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around the City. Collectively, the maps, goals, and policies in this element ensure that residents and visitors will have safe transportation choices: regional connections, roadways that will provide the highest level of service feasible while maintaining their rural character, transit, and basic modes such as walking and bicycling will be safe, attractive, and efficient.

### CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE

Ione will have an increasing number of parkland, protected open space, trails and a wide variety of recreational opportunities aimed at allowing residents and visitors to experience the area's scenic beauty and proud history and landmarks. The Conservation Element contains goals and policies related to the protection of agriculture, open space, recreation and other related uses, with an emphasis on a new large community park and open space areas.

### NOISE AND SAFETY

Ione will maintain its focus on minimizing safety risks and noise annoyances. The Noise and Safety Element contains information about potential natural and human-caused noise and safety hazards in and around the community. The element contains goals and policies aimed at improving public safety, including policies about traffic noise, mining, wildfires, local prisons and correctional institutions, flooding, and reducing noise impacts, including policies about traffic safety, compatibility of land uses, and major noise generators. Policies recognize the multiple layers of State and regional agencies involved, and highlight the role of intergovernmental coordination to articulate strategies for reducing noise and safety risks.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ione's businesses will continue to succeed and expand significantly to serve more of its residents. The Economic Development Element contains goals and policies related to the City's economy, the major employers, labor force, retail shopping needs, and Ione in context with the larger region. Collectively these goals and policies are intended to expand Ione's economic potential to serve more of its residents.

### PUBLIC FACILITIES

Ione's public facilities and infrastructure will continue to be able to adequately serve the demands of the community. The Public Facilities Element contains goals and policies related to the public facilities provided in the area, including facilities provided by the City, County, and State-owned facilities. The policies recognize the multiple jurisdictions involved in the management, ownership, and operations, as well as the needs for the facilities to adequately serve and emphasize coordination with other agencies to improve public services. This includes policies related to coordination and planning with private utility providers for television, power, and other services.



## HOUSING

Ione will have a diverse range of housing choices for the community. Existing homes and apartments in the City will be improved through rehabilitation and reuse programs. Implementation of this Housing Element will result in increased housing choice, a rise in homeownership, revitalization of existing housing, and an improvement in housing quality to meet Ione's housing needs.