

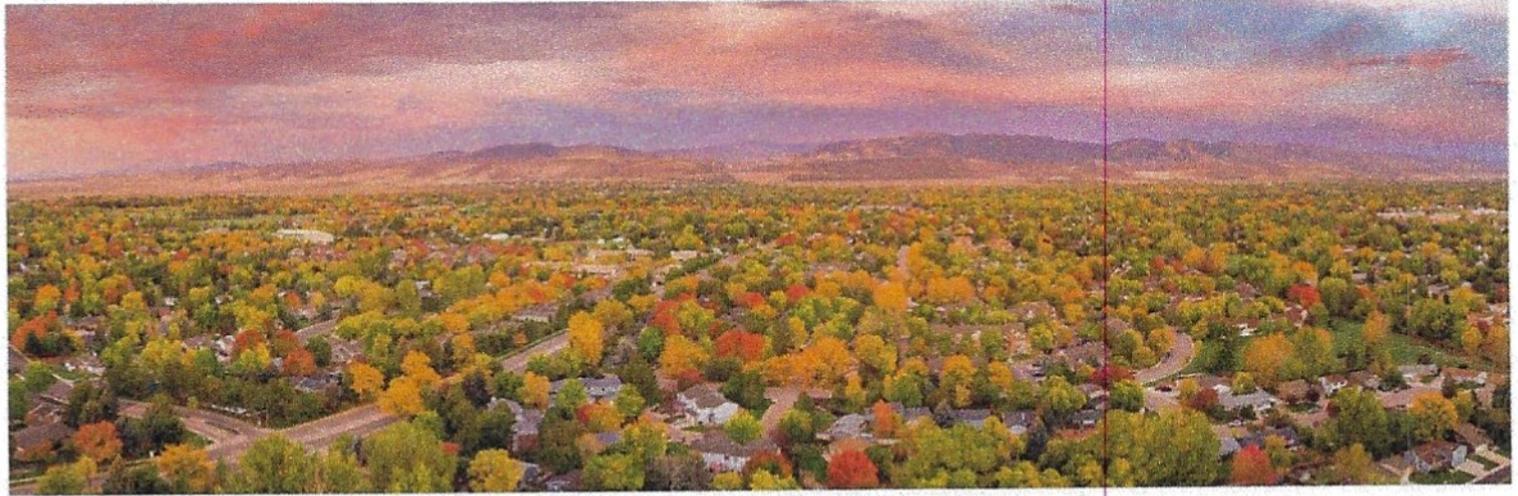
Dreaming of a backyard? Colorado's land prices put space out of reach



Sara B. Hansen

In Colorado, the spacious backyard, long seen as a symbol of the state's love for the outdoors, is

quickly becoming hard to find.



Homebuyers looking for space to play, garden, or relax under the Colorado sky are facing a tough reality: yard space now costs much more than before.

A new nationwide analysis of property listings by New Jersey Real Estate Network shows that Colorado homeowners now pay an average of \$38.77 per square foot for their backyards, making the state the ninth highest in the country for yard prices.

The rest of the top 10: California (\$80.33), Hawaii (\$77.13), New York (\$53.74), Washington (\$52.42), Massachusetts (\$48.53), Maryland (\$48.33), Oregon (\$42.34), New Jersey (\$42.01), and Florida (\$38.70).

That's more than 52% above the national average, a big

change putting pressure on the Colorado lifestyle. As backyards get smaller and prices rise, what used to be a standard part of owning a home is now becoming an expensive luxury.

This study matches recent findings from Cinch Home Services, which show how difficult it has become to own land in Colorado.

The state ranks seventh nationally for land prices, with an average acre costing \$942,200.

For most Coloradans, buying just one acre would mean saving 30% of their income for over 50 years. This makes the dream of owning a home with a yard harder to reach.

Homebuilders are reacting to Colorado's shrinking

backyards by rethinking how to design neighborhoods.

Ryan Delp, Denver market president for Oakwood Homes, said communities like Green Valley Ranch and Reunion offer buyers a variety of yard, garage, and bedroom choices to match their needs and budgets.

"Affordability is key," Delp explained, adding that Oakwood focuses on efficient, attainable homes that don't sacrifice livability.

Even as private yards are getting smaller, these neighborhoods include shared parks, trails, and clubhouses, providing families with places to gather and play.

Other developers are also focusing on shared green

spaces. At Uplands Colorado, a 236-acre community in Westminster built by Brookfield Residential and Dream Finders Homes, residents enjoy a network of parks, trails, and open spaces.

Every home is close to a pocket park, making the neighborhood feel like an extension of the backyard for both kids and adults.

Sara B. Hansen has been an editor and writer for more than 20 years. Her professional background includes editing positions at The Denver Post, The Des Moines Register, The Fort Collins Coloradoan, and At Home with Century 21. She's also the founder and editor of DogsBestLife.com and the author of "The Complete Guide to Cocker Spaniels."