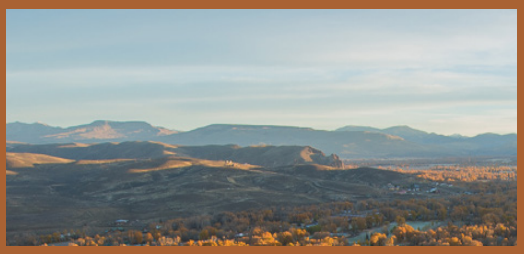

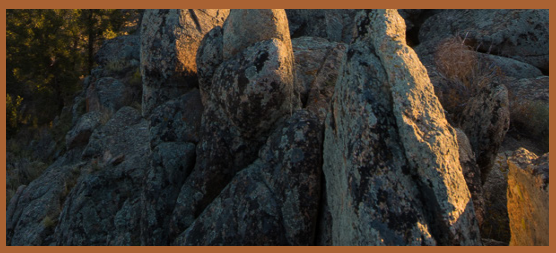

ONE VALLEY RESILIENCY ROADMAP

Gunnison Valley, Colorado

Final Plan October 20, 2023

Acknowledgements

The One Valley Resilience Roadmap provides shared goals and strategies to help regional partners work together to improve housing affordability, coordinate land use, transportation, and infrastructure planning, and increase civic capacity.

The "Colorado *COVID*-19 Regional Resiliency and Recovery Roadmaps Program" (henceforth "Roadmaps Program") has been funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and administered by the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Colorado Resiliency Office in partnership with the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), and Community Builders. Community Builders was hired to lead the Gunnison Valley Regional Team through the Roadmap process, which has resulted in this One Valley Resiliency Roadmap.

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Elk. Photo cred: Dave Kozlowski.

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Skis in snow. Photo cred: Cathie Pagano.

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OVRR
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

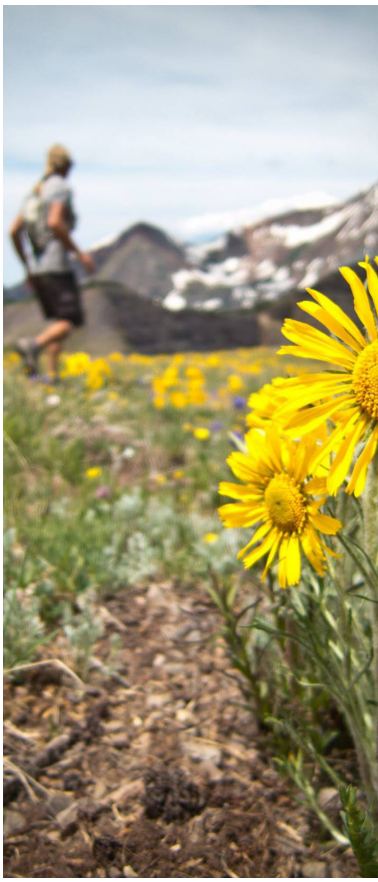


Photo: Nate Page.

WHAT IS THE ONE VALLEY RESILIENCE ROADMAP?

Gunnison County was one of the 16 rural regions to receive Resiliency Roadmap grant funding from the State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). The One Valley Resilience Roadmap (OVRR) brings together the communities of the Gunnison Valley to address the shared regional challenges that no one jurisdiction can address on their own. These include: housing affordability; land use, transportation and infrastructure planning; elevating civic capacity; taking action on climate change; advancing equity and inclusion; and maintaining and strengthening our sense of community as the valley continues to change.

OVRR builds upon successes and challenges identified in the 2016 One Valley Prosperity Project, as well as several recently completed community plans: City of Gunnison Comprehensive Plan (March 2020), the Crested Butte Community Compass (November 2022), and the Mt. Crested Butte Master Plan (January 2023).

To ensure ownership and accountability, the plan will be presented to local government entities and elected leaders for endorsement.

PROCESS

The OVRR engaged over 60 stakeholders and subject matter experts over a 12-month period to provide direction, develop goals and strategies, set priorities, and guide the work.

CLARIFY & CONNECT ON SHARED PRIORITIES

The OVRR Working Group came together to clarify what is most important to their communities by discussing what the region sees as top challenges, needs, concerns, and priorities that require regional collaboration to address effectively.

PROVIDE DIRECTION ON KEY FOCUS AREAS

Stakeholder groups for each of the three key focus areas - Housing; Land Use, Infrastructure, and Transportation; and Civic Capacity - convened to collaboratively identify goals for the future and high-level strategies to provide vision and direction.

IDENTIFY REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Action Planning Teams convened to further develop and refine specific strategies for each of the three key focus areas.

PROVIDING DIRECTION ON SHARED REGIONAL PRIORITIES & FOCUS AREAS

The issues facing our region extend beyond the boundaries of a single municipality. To collaborate effectively at the regional scale, each of the communities' long-range plans share three ***regional priorities*** which guide their decision-making. These three regional priorities (to the right) will play a crucial role in shaping and addressing the needs of our communities over the next decade.

Throughout the OVRR, the three shared regional priorities act as a lens through which through which regional planning activities are filtered to create a shared, regional roadmap to guide decision-making on issues related to the OVRR's focus areas - housing; land use, transportation, and infrastructure; and civic capacity.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES 01

BUILD & SUSTAIN COMMUNITY

Implement thoughtful long-term planning and design to support affordable housing choices, walkable streets, and thriving neighborhoods.

CREATE A MORE EQUITABLE & INCLUSIVE REGION

Create equal access to opportunity by intentionally working to level an uneven playing field

ADVANCE CLIMATE ACTION & ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCY

Take steps to protect environmental assets and adapt to the unfolding impacts of a changing climate.

REGIONAL FOCUS AREAS 02

HOUSING

Goals

Expand and diversify the supply of community housing.

Create quality, community neighborhoods.

Improve attainability of housing opportunities.

Strengthen regional collaboration & coordination.

LAND USE, INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION

Goals

Enable compact development in responsible locations.

Focus on moving people.

Create great places for people.

Care for and minimize our impact on the natural environment and agricultural resources.

CIVIC CAPACITY

Goals

Enable effective and inclusive community engagement.

Enhance coordination and collaboration.

Expand and strengthen community leadership.

BUILD COMMITMENT TO REGIONAL STRATEGIES 03

Strategies

REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY (pg 22)

Near-term Next Steps

Sustain funding for the Gunnison Valley Regional Housing Authority (GVRHA)

Coordinate on funding opportunities

Continue Regional Housing Task Force

Build the Resources and Capacity to Act

- Stabilize GVRHA
- Enable improved coordination
- Create dedicated funding

New Community Housing

- Regional Housing Supply Plan
- Advocate for Land Use Policy Reform
- Align regional planning with housing goals

Housing Preservation and Conversion Programs

- Preserve existing deed-restricted units through compliance, property management, and renovation programs
- Convert market-rate homes to community housing through Good Deeds
- Pursue opportunities to preserve manufactured housing communities (MHCs)

LAND USE, INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK (pg 55)

Near-term Next Steps

Engage key utility, infrastructure, partners

Develop a scope for 135 Corridor Plan

Community Planning Principles

- Shared principles to guide future development

Systems/Capacity for Informed Planning + Decisions

- Shared data and mapping
- Analytical tools, systems, capacity

Align Plans and Policies w. Shared Goals/Principles

- Municipal Infill Studies + Policy Reform
- Regional 135 Corridor Plan
- 3 Mile Plans and Agreements
- Coordinate Utility, Infrastructure, Transit, Facility Plans and Investment

CIVIC CAPACITY ACTION PLAN (pg 72)

Near-term Next Steps

Identify strategies in the Action Plan where it makes the most sense for your entity to directly plug-in

Improve Capacity for Community Engagement

- Shared systems and tools
- Training for local officials, staff and organizations

Understand and Address Barriers to Participation

- Use assessment of barriers to target improvements
- Build awareness of jurisdictions & organizations

Increase Capacity for Communications / Outreach

- Create tools / platform needed for effective communications

Provide Leadership Training Opportunities

- Leadership orientation
- Expand the tent of leadership

CH. 1

OVRR BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

COLORADO'S ROADMAPS RESILIENCE PROJECT

WE ARE ONE VALLEY

TOWARD A MORE RESILIENT FUTURE

Photo: Dave Kozlowski.

SECTION 1

OVRR Background and Overview

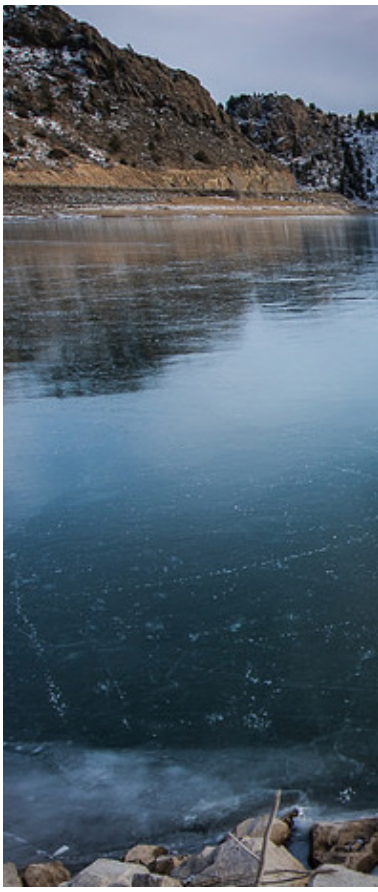


Photo: Dave Koz

Communities of the Gunnison Valley are tightly connected and interdependent - as are their natural resources, infrastructure, and community assets.

COLORADO'S REGIONAL RESILIENCY & RECOVERY ROADMAPS PROGRAM

The COVID-19 pandemic caused one of the greatest disruptions of our lifetimes, requiring Colorado communities to partner across jurisdictional boundaries in order to effectively respond to change and elevate community assets to solve shared problems.

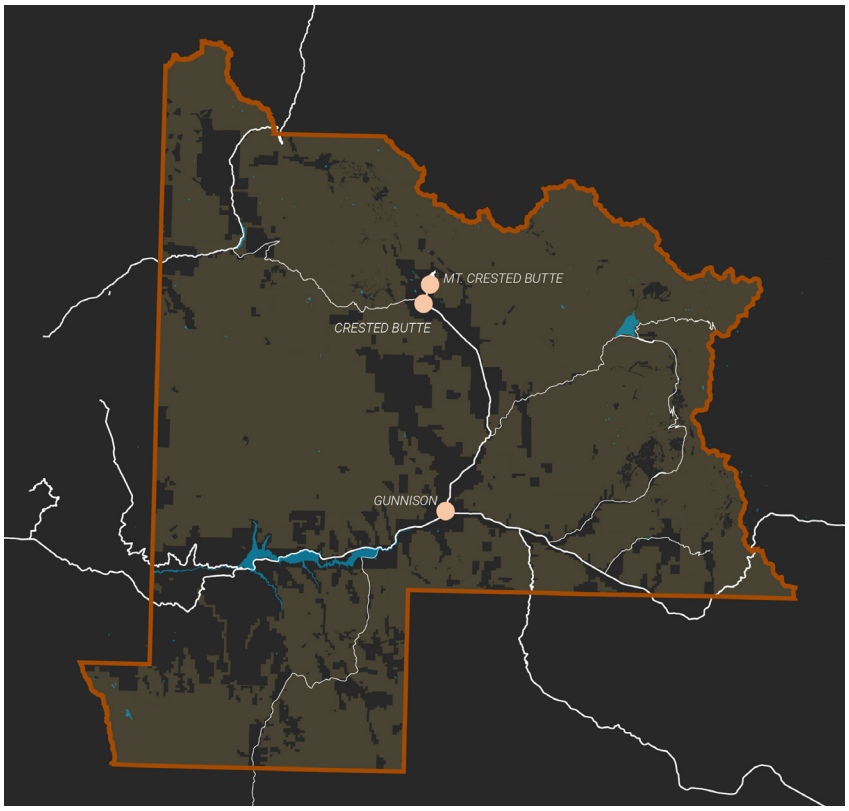
The Roadmaps Program provided 16 Regional Community Teams in rural Colorado with the opportunity to work together through a two-year planning and implementation process to support diversifying and strengthening their economies while also building regional resiliency. The planning process employs a holistic approach to community and economic development to help communities to not only recover from COVID, but to be more resilient moving forward.

Gunnison County was one of the 16 rural regions to receive Resiliency Roadmap grant funding from the State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). The One Valley Resilience Roadmap (OVRR) brings together the communities of the Gunnison Valley to address the shared regional challenges that no one jurisdiction can address on their own. These include: housing affordability; land use, transportation and infrastructure planning; elevating civic capacity; taking action on climate change; advancing equity and inclusion; and maintaining and strengthening our sense of community as the valley continues to change.

WE ARE ONE VALLEY

The communities of the Gunnison Valley are connected and interdependent. Together, they shape a connected region that is not only reliant on the contributions of each individual community, but also the natural resources,

zlowski.



The Gunnison Valley region includes four municipalities - the Town of Mt. Crested Butte, the Town of Crested Butte, the City of Gunnison, and Gunnison County.

infrastructure, and community assets they share. The action or in-action of any one community related to housing, transportation, the economy, natural resource management, social services, and more, has ripple effects up and down the valley. And, as a rural region, we share the need to make the most of limited resources and capacity. While many issues require locally specific action, there are many opportunities to pool resources, coordinate planning and investment, and collaborate on shared interests.

That our communities and future are connected, so we need to work together, is not a new idea. It is foundational to several institutions and initiatives, including the Gunnison Valley Rural Transportation Authority, Gunnison Watershed School District, the Gunnison Valley Regional Housing Authority, the Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley, the Valley Housing Fund, and others.

The One Valley idea was also the basis of the OVPP, an initiative that brought the communities of the Gunnison Valley together to create a shared vision for the future and a strategy for working together to realize that vision. All of these initiatives provide a foundation and regional collaboration that the One Valley Resilience Roadmap builds upon.

Building on the foundations of the One Valley Prosperity Project.

The OVRR builds on the momentum and approach of the OVPP, which brought the Gunnison Valley together to create a strategic roadmap to collaboratively address shared regional challenges. Completed in 2016, the OVPP strategy focused on four key areas: economic resiliency; housing; community health and equity; and sustainable tourism and recreation. Key outcomes of the OVPP process included:

- ICELab@Western to support economic resiliency

- Creation of Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation (STOR) Committee, resulting in several projects and initiatives (enhanced recreation infrastructure, restrooms, signage; stewardship education and messaging; mitigation for recreation and tourism impacts)
- Creation of the Community Health Coalition resulted in multiple initiatives, including dedicated behavioral health services, Mobile Crisis Response Team, Basic Needs Guide, Recovery Resources Guide, Opioid Response program, 2022 State of the Community Report, and more
- City of Gunnison Downtown Vibrancy Initiative resulting in placemaking projects, investment in complete streets, and downtown code updates
- Investments in regional infrastructure — RTA, airport, broadband
- Complete Gunnison Airport Master Plan
- New affordable housing units in each community
- Completed regional housing needs assessments in 2019
- Gunnison Valley Housing Authority (GVRHA) updated deed restrictions
- Expanded early childhood education
- Established a satellite clinic of the Center for Mental Health in Crested Butte

Building on other relevant local planning efforts.

In addition to the OVPP, the One Valley Resilience Roadmap builds on several recently completed community plans: City of Gunnison Comprehensive Plan (March 2020), the Crested Butte Community Compass (November 2022), and the Mt. Crested Butte Master Plan (January 2023). All three prioritize regional collaboration in housing, land use, transportation and infrastructure, and building civic capacity.

These issues are interconnected. Addressing housing needs and affordability is the highest priority in the region. However, meaningful action in housing is limited by the lack of integrated land use, transportation, and infrastructure planning at the regional scale. Furthermore, to make effective housing and land use decisions, regional collaboration requires intentional efforts aimed at building civic capacity and maintaining the trust in collaborative regional decision making.

TOWARD A MORE RESILIENT FUTURE

Resiliency as defined by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs Colorado Resiliency Office (CRO) is the ability of communities to rebound, positively adapt to, or thrive amidst changing conditions or challenges — including human-caused and natural disasters — and to maintain quality of life, healthy growth, durable systems, economic vitality, and conservation of resources for present and future generations.

The CRO 2020 updated framework explores risks and vulnerabilities across the following four themes: Climate Change Adaptation, Risks from Natural & Other Hazards, Social Equity & Unique Community Needs, and Economic Diversity & Vibrancy.

Building on the state's framework, the One Valley Resiliency Roadmap identifies priorities that, if they go unaddressed, present serious risks and vulnerabilities to the region and its communities. Additionally, the OVRR recognizes that these issues intersect and need to be addressed together, through effective regional collaboration, to enable measurable and meaningful progress. While structured differently, the OVRR is aligned with the CRO's resiliency framework and its strategies and actions provide a local framework for creating a more resilient and inclusive region. Additional information, including an archive of the other Regional Community Teams' final Roadmaps, is available at www.coresiliency. com/roadmap-program.

Focus areas for collaborative regional action.

To support the region's shared commitment and alignment on these issues, One Valley Resilience Roadmap provides shared goals and strategies to help regional partners work together to:

1. Improve housing affordability throughout the region.

    The OVRR Regional Housing Strategy provides a pathway to increasing the region's capacity to create and preserve below-market housing throughout the valley.

2. Coordinate land use, transportation, and infrastructure planning.

    The OVRR Land Use, Infrastructure, and Transportation Framework outlines a shared vision and goals to guide land use, transportation, and infrastructure planning across the Valley in alignment with regional priorities.

3. Increase civic capacity to address community challenges.

    The OVRR Civic Capacity Action Plan identifies actions to strengthen collaboration, leadership, engagement, and community trust, so we are better able to respond to local and regional needs.

The Roadmap provides a strategic approach for working togeher as a region for each of these focus areas. Additionally, the Roadmap integrates shared regional priorities - the subject of the following chapter - into the strategic path forward for each focus area to ensure that as we take action together on these critical issues, we do so in alignment with broader shared interests at the center of our work.

CH. 2

SHARED REGIONAL PRIORITIES

BUILD & SUSTAIN COMMUNITY

SOCIAL EQUITY & INCLUSION

CLIMATE ACTION & ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCY

Photo: Cathie Pagano.

SHARED REGIONAL PRIORITIES

The issues facing our region extend beyond the boundaries of a single municipality. Challenges related to housing, land use, transportation, infrastructure, and civic engagement are interconnected and impact each community in the Gunnison Valley, requiring a coordinated regional approach to developing solutions.

To collaborate effectively at the regional scale, each of the communities' long-range plans share three regional priorities which guide their decision-making:

- ***Build and Strengthen Community***
- ***Create a more Equitable and Inclusive Region***
- ***Advance Climate Action and Environmental Resiliency***

These three regional priorities will play a crucial role in shaping and addressing the needs of our communities over the next decade. By identifying and prioritizing these key areas for improvement, the OVRR helps create a shared, regional roadmap to guide decision-making on issues related to the OVRR's focus areas - affordable housing; land use, transportation, and infrastructure; and civic capacity.

Photo: Dave Kozlowski.

PRIORITY 1

Build and Sustain Community

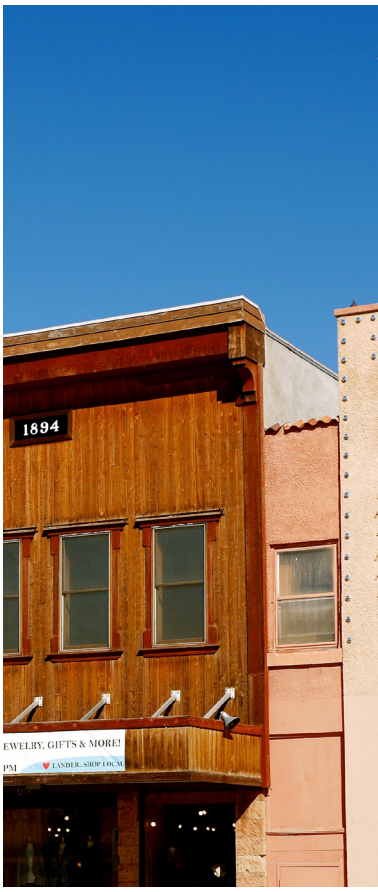


Photo: Cathie Pagano.

Fostering social cohesion requires action plans that intersect and work in parallel with different layers of community development - social, economic, political, and cultural.

The Gunnison Valley and its communities have changed significantly over the years, but the pace and extent of recent change feels particularly significant. Several trends - escalating housing costs, increased visitation, a growing second-home market, in-migration of remote workers, lack of childcare, and related increases in the cost of living - are placing great pressure on our communities.

Of course, communities are not just places. More fundamentally, they are the people who live here and the connections between them. How we plan and design our communities - buildings, streets, neighborhoods, public spaces - has enormous influence on the wellbeing of the people who live there and the connections between them. Committing to the priority of building and sustaining community is not just about the creation of places where we want to go and spend our time, but about creating communities that have greater capacity to work through disagreement, and to exchange, innovate, and incubate new ideas.

Still, it is important to recognize the critical role that community planning and development decisions have on the economic, cultural, and social dynamics of our communities.

That is why each of the OVRR's focus areas emphasize thoughtful planning and design to support affordable housing choices, walkable streets and thriving neighborhoods, quality parks and public spaces for community to gather, quality jobs and economic opportunities, successful downtowns, and strong local businesses.

Homes are where the people that make a community actually live. The Regional Housing Strategy seeks to expand opportunities for locals and full-time residents to stay in their communities. Strategies and actions prioritize building capacity to more effectively deliver and maintain community housing programs and assets across the Gunnison Valley, as well as strategies to preserve existing housing

A diversity of housing options that are affordable for locals and proximate to transportation and services, is essential to promoting and strengthening the social fabric and authentic character of our communities.

and convert market-rate units to below-market programs.

The lack of coordinated long-term planning in the valley is making important regional conversations and affordable housing projects more difficult. The Land Use, Infrastructure, and Transportation Framework outlines shared goals and strategies to ensure new development results in compact, walkable neighborhoods that offer a variety of land uses and housing types that offer opportunities for social interactions and expand access and livability to more of our community. The Framework is not meant to take precedence over each community's long-range planning efforts, but rather to lead the region in land use decisions and that promote the unique physical character and social fabric of each community.

It is incumbent upon each jurisdiction in the Valley to steward the relationship between how we plan and build our communities with the wellbeing of a community. Political divisions, community tensions, and imbalances in civic participation are challenging our ability to make the best decisions for the community. This lack of civic capacity diminishes opportunities to realize progress on complex community challenges. The Civic Capacity Action Plan identifies practical steps the region can take to enable healthy civic participation, lay the path toward more productive regional dialogue, and drive systemic reform designed to promote more effective local governance.

The Regional Leadership Team convened in Gunnison in March 2023 to disuss regional collaboration.

PRIORITY 2

Foster Social Equity and Inclusion

Equity is about creating equal access to opportunity by intentionally working to level an uneven playing field.

Regional partners engaged in OVRR are committed to creating more equitable and inclusive communities within the Gunnison Valley. This is essential to our shared priority of building and sustaining community, as well as to working together to create a more resilient region.

According to the City of Gunnison's GunniCares sustainability plan, equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. In this way, equity is about creating equal access to opportunity by intentionally working to level an uneven playing field.

Inclusive communities intentionally plan for, design, and develop to accommodate persons of all income levels, races and ethnicities, ages and mobility levels, and gender identities. There is significant work to do in this arena within the Gunnison Valley. Currently, not everyone within the Valley has equitable access to the resources and opportunities available.

Some of these inequities are easy to see. For example, few of the people who make up our workforce, many of whom struggle just to get by, have the time to participate in local planning, policy, and decision-making processes. Beyond limiting the ability of individuals to engage and influence policy, this minimizes the voice of a large segment of the community, ensuring that those with the most time, resources, and political influence will have greater say in shaping policy.

Other barriers are harder to see. For example, the preponderance of large-lot single-family zoning limits the types of housing that can be created in a community and tilts the market towards a higher-end product. This limits housing access and economic opportunity for much of the community. Similarly, Colorado is reliant on sales tax to fund critical public services - a regressive tax that disproportionately impacts lower income households.

Working to create more equitable and inclusive communities requires commitment to more inclusive processes to ensure a more complete reflection of our community can be effectively engaged in local planning and decision making. It also requires attention to shaping more equitable and inclusive outcomes by identifying and addressing barriers and disparities within the systems, policies and structures shaping our communities.

The OVRR provides ample opportunity for progress within each of its three focus areas: Civic Capacity, Housing, and Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure.

The Regional Housing Strategy provides a pathway to expand the amount and accessibility of affordable housing and shape neighborhoods where more of our community can afford to live. The ability to find an affordable home alleviates other disparities - including gaps in health, education, and productivity - and opens other doors of opportunity, such as allowing people to save or invest their resources, spend more time with family, and be more involved in their community.

A preponderance of large-lot, single-family zoning can contribute to exclusivity in our communities by limiting the opportunities and feasibility for more affordable housing products, such as duplexes and triplexes, for locals.

Modular and manufactured housing options can help diversify and expand the inventory of attainable housing for low- and middle-income residents.

The Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Framework outlines opportunities to ensure future development is strategically located, supports community housing, shapes great places for people, and creates a connected multimodal transportation system that connects communities and the region. Following through on these actions will make it easier for all people to get around in our communities, create more affordable and accessible neighborhoods, expand access to parks and other community spaces, and ultimately shape a more inclusive and resilient region.

The Civic Capacity Action Plan identifies opportunities to address barriers to participation, community leadership, and civic life. It recognizes that our current approaches to public involvement must do better at engaging marginalized members of our communities. Furthermore, it recognizes the importance of broadening the tent of community leadership to better reflect the valuable diversity of our communities.

PRIORITY 3 Advance Climate Action & Environmental Stewardship

Photo: Dave Kozlowski.

This shared value is an aspirational concept aimed at limiting and reducing the human impacts on our climate and natural resources.

The communities of the Gunnison Valley are committed to reducing climate changing emissions while also taking steps to adapt to the unfolding impacts of a changing climate. Like the two prior, this priority requires significant commitment and action. Fortunately, all local governments in the Valley have created climate action plans and highlight commitment in other local planning documents. The OVRR complements those plans. Each of the three focus areas, if implemented, help to reduce emissions and create a more resilient region.

Affordable housing is not typically identified as a strategy within local climate plans, but it should be. A lack of affordable housing near jobs increases commuting and vehicle miles traveled in the region, means more emissions. Transportation is one the most significant sources of climate changing emissions and increased commuting represents a meaningful contribution to transportation emissions. The Regional Housing Strategy, if successful, can help by ensuring there is community housing near jobs and fewer households have to commute long distances to and from work each day.

The Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Framework includes related strategies that work hand in hand with providing affordable housing near jobs. First, it calls for regional commitment to ensuring future development is strategically located, primarily within or at the edge of existing communities. Second, it encourages walkable neighborhoods, and a connected, multimodal transportation system. Together, these shape more efficient patterns of

Reducing emissions relies on making it easier for people to drive less, which is supported by actions in OVRR's Regional Housing Strategy and Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure Framework.

development, expand transportation choices that offer alternatives driving, and support more compact neighborhood design, which also reduces climate changing emissions.

Strategies in the OVRR also serve to protect and steward the valley's precious water resources. Abundant research demonstrates that compact, walkable development patterns require less water per capita and also create fewer impacts on water quality and watershed health than conventional development. Climate change heightens the need to steward and manage our water resources, particularly given the importance of ranching and agriculture to the Gunnison Valley.

Photo: Nate Page.

The Civic Capacity Action Plan aims to increase our ability to work together as communities and a region to understand key challenges and opportunities, evaluate potential responses, and take meaningful action. Civic Capacity is particularly important when taking on issues that are complex or controversial. Effective leadership, collaboration, and community engagement - all key pillars of the Civic Capacity Action Plan - will also be critical to addressing climate change.

Combined, the strategies in the OVRR provide an important complement to local climate action plans, and will help build the civic capacity needed to respond to the unfolding challenges and impacts of climate change.

Resiliency, Equity and Climate Change.

Resiliency is the ability to adapt and thrive in the face of changing conditions - natural, economic or situational. Climate change is a global issue that will affect every Coloradan, but local environmental factors, health conditions, and social factors such as income, age, and race influence the risks faced by individuals and communities. This type of framework highlights the localized nature of the impacts of climate change as well as the ways those impacts can disproportionately impact parts of our communities.

CH. 3

REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

- I. GROW CAPACITY
- II. PRESERVE EXISTING SUPPLY
- III. SUPPORT NEW COMMUNITY HOUSING

ACTION PLAN

SECTION 0 Summary of Strategies and Actions

SUMMARY OF HOUSING STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS.

Focus Area 1: Building Our Capacity to Act.

Page 28

Below-market housing requires a significant commitment of capacity and resources. We cannot expect better housing outcomes by relying upon the same resources we have in place now. Building capacity through regional collaboration is the first priority area of investment. Priorities include:

- Stabilize and grow capacity of the GVRHA.
- Enhance regional coordination & collaboration.
- Funding - Delivering below-market community housing is an inherently resource-intensive undertaking, whether for preservation, new construction, programming, or stewardship.

Strategy rcommendations are organized into three priority focus areas, beginning with the highest priority.

Focus Area 2: Community Housing Preseration and Market-Rate Conversion.

Page 36

Preservation and conversion is the second priority area for investment. Development neutral strategies offer multiple benefits in terms of cost-effectiveness, efficient use of limited resources, shorter timeline for implementation, and limited risk exposure. Priorities include:

- Preserve and maintain existing community housing assets.
- Convert naturally affordable and market-rate housing to deed-restricted programs.
- Preserve and protect manufactured housing communities.

In this report, community housing, affordable housing and below-market housing are used interchangeably, representing the various terms used locally. This plan centers on housing that is within reach for year-round residents who currently or previously earned their living in the local economy.

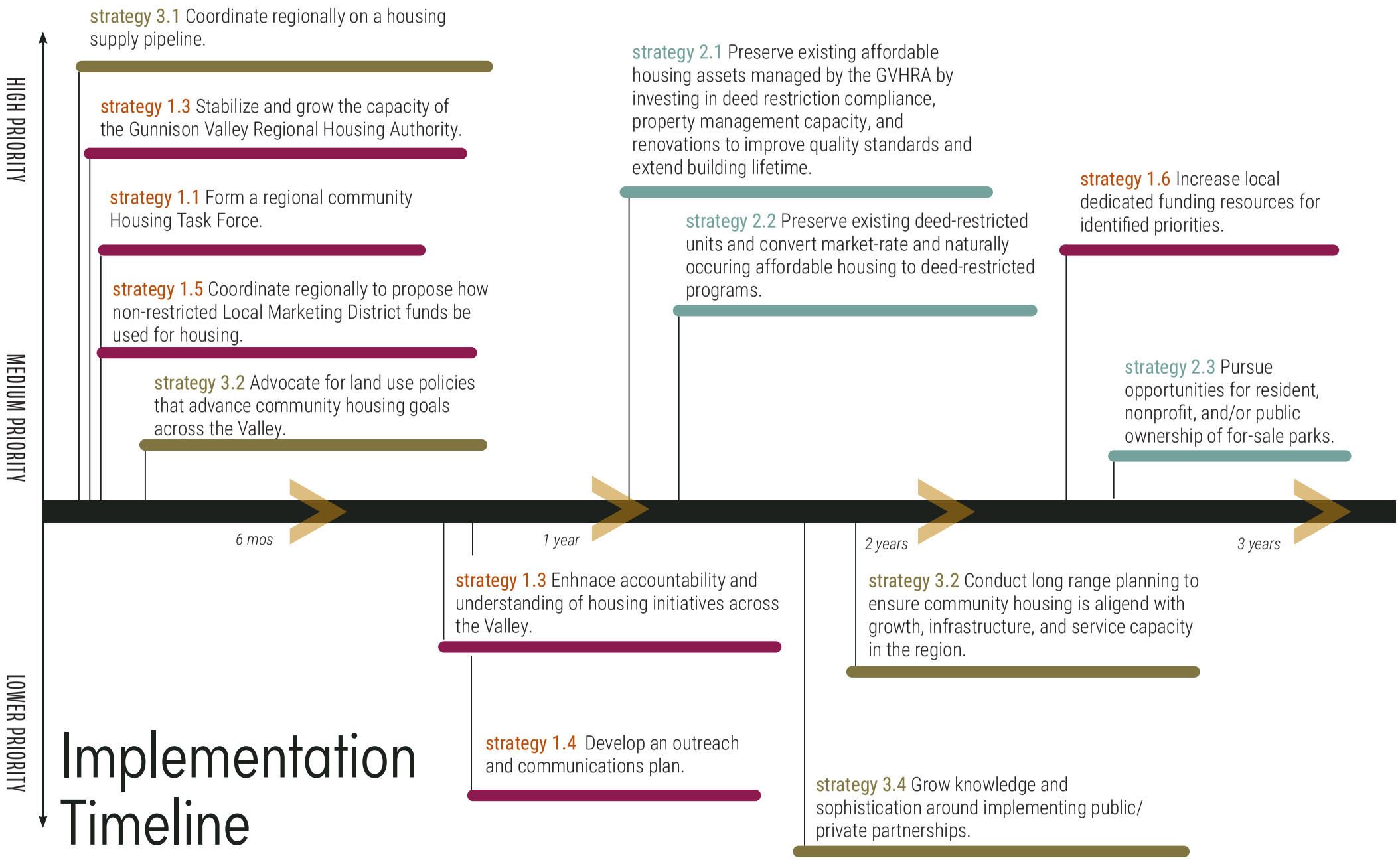
Focus Area 3: Support New Community Housing.

Page 42

The third element of this housing strategy is support of new below-market housing opportunities.

- Coordinate regionally on a housing supply plan.
- Advocate for land use policies that advance community housing.
- Conduct long-range regional planning to ensure community housing is coordinated with growth, infrastructure, and service capacity.

Implementation Timeline



SECTION 0 Introduction and Background

Housing is out of reach for local workers and full-time residents. Escalating prices have soared far beyond what the median wage-earner can afford. Nearly one-third of Valley households are paying too much for housing, impacting their ability to remain in the community and undermining health, happiness, and educational outcomes. Long-term rentals are scarce and sometimes impossible to find. Vacancy rates have hovered below 1 percent for the last five years.

Job growth is outpacing housing production. Jobs increased 15 percent from 2015 to 2020 while housing inventory rose only 10 percent over the same period.Based on the 2021 Gunnison Valley Housing Market Update, the community needs 960 new housing units over the next five years to catch up and keep up with the growth of jobs in the area. To meet even half of this need (480 homes over five years) will require adequate, appropriate land and approximately $40 million - $60 million in local project gap funding.

With the limited resources of four small rural jurisdictions, multijurisdictional coordination and collaboration is essential to addressing the housing needs up and down the Valley.

Purpose of this plan.

This regional housing strategy outlines shared goals and strategies to align regional housing needs with local planning efforts. The central purpose of the regional housing strategy is to:

- Facilitate a higher degree of coordination and collaboration between Valley entities on below-market housing efforts by clearly articulating roles and responsibilities.

- Provide a shared framework for directing limited housing resources in ways that have the greatest regional benefit.
- Outline a clear path forward to support jurisdictions in securing funding resources and buy-in from the public and private sectors for below-market housing initiatives.

This plan is intended to complement and enhance the individual efforts occurring at the project and jurisdiction level. Each community can participate in this regional effort while maintaining the nuance of their local preferences, policies, and market dynamics.

REGIONAL HOUSING GOALS

Over the course of this project, a team of regional housing leaders representing public, private, and nonprofit organizations worked together to develop and refine regional housing goals. The following goals act as a tool for guiding future decisions.

Goal 1: Expand and diversify the supply of community housing.

Increase the availability and types of below-market housing to provide a spectrum of housing choices that are affordable to and serve the needs of our workforce and full-time residents.

Goal 2: Create quality, community neighborhoods.

Preserve and upgrade existing affordable housing and strategically locate future community housing to prevent sprawl, maximize use of existing resources and infrastructure, and support the creation of neighborhoods full of neighbors.

Goal 3: Improve attainability of housing opportunities.

Remove policy, procedural, and financial barriers to provide greater accessibility to below-market housing options that are safe, healthy, and desirable to our full-time community.

Goal 4: Strengthen regional collaboration & coordination.

Strategically direct and share our resources and capacity to collaboratively expand the inventory of below-market housing within the region.

Housing strategies for each jurisdiction and stakeholder vary.

Governments may focus on increasing housing supply to ensure that they are able to effectively deliver governmental services, that the existing economy can function, and that current residents have a range of options to reflect needs at different stages of life. Because general growth is not a universally agreed upon goal, decisions to grow the housing supply should reflect the goals of the community and make efficient use of scarce resources, such as land, money, and staffing.The strategies of this plan are intentionally organized to emphasize taking care of our current resources and increasing our efficiency and effectiveness ahead of creating new housing inventory.

CONNECTING TO SHARED REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Each of the communities' long-range plans share three regional planning priorities (see Chapter 2). These core regional priorities guide community housing decisions, strategies and actions to ensure they are compatible with local expectations. These priorities should be acknowledged, referenced, and defended as shared regional decisions on community housing are made.

Build and Sustain Community

A lack of housing that locals can afford is eroding our community. Advancing the shared priority of sustaining community as we address housing needs means intentionally planning for community housing in ways that support and strengthen community. This includes ensuring we have:

- Safe, healthy, and accessible housing throughout the Valley
- A spectrum of housing choices that serve the diverse mix of people and families who make up the fundamental character of our communities
- Preservation of community character, vitality and authenticity
- Neighborhoods full of neighbors
- Sufficient resources and capacity to fund projects and programs needed to realize regional housing needs and goals
- Commitment to working toward greater balance in jobs and housing within the Valley

Social Equity & Inclusion

Aligning social equity and inclusion with local and regional housing efforts begins by recognizing certain fundamental realities. First, systemic inequities have persistently limited access to safe and stable housing for segments of our community. Second, today's housing market is significantly harder for the average worker to break into than in previous decades. While these realities are not specific to the Gunnison Valley, we cannot begin to create more equitable and inclusive systems without recognizing that they exist.

Commiting to social equity and inclusion as we work to address community housing means our policies and decisions prioritze:

- Stable, safe, and affordable housing options at a spectrum of income levels and stages of life
- Economically and socially diverse communities
- Preservation of existing community housing assets and naturally occurring affordable housing
- Preservation and support of manufactured housing communities

Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship

Local housing decisions can significantly impact the environment, for better or for worse. To advance the shared priorities of Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship, our housing plans, policies and programs should prioritize:

Escalating housing prices continue to displace full-time residents and workforce further from community centers - and the public services, stores, healthcare services, and amenities offered therein.

- Locating community housing near jobs and transit to reduce emissions
- Creating walkable, bikeable, and transit-served neighborhoods to reduce emissions and the environmental impacts of sprawling development patterns
- Encourage compact development patterns, primarily within or adjacent to existing communities, to reduce impacts to land, water, and wildlife habitat
- Creating inclusive communities that enable access to and enjoyment of public lands and natural areas for the many different people who make up our communities.

METRICS OF SUCCESS

Members of the Regional Housing Team worked together to identify measures of success to help partners monitor progress and impact, and adapt strategically over time. The matrix provides a start point, but additional goals or metrics can be added as needed. In addition to these overarching metrics, each strategic focus area includes goals and measures of success.

METRIC	2021-2022	5 YEAR GOAL
Decrease % of households that are cost-burdened	33%	< 30%
Increase vacancy rate in long-term rental housing	<1%	> 3%
Increase % homes occupied year-round	60%	> 61%
% of employers who feel housing is the most critical economic challenge	90%	Decrease
% of total housing inventory that is community housing (including deed-restricted)		Increase
# of housing units built or preserved for community housing annually	43	Increase
# of housing units built or preserved for community housing (total)	700	Increase
# of unfilled jobs/vacancies	400	Decrease

REGIONAL LEVELS OF COLLABORATION

Each strategy is defined with a lead agency, collaborating entities, staffing required, funding required, a timeframe and a desired position on the engagement continuum.

The Regional Housing Team (RHT) engaged over 30 stakeholders and subject matter experts over a six month period to provide direction, develop goals and strategies, set priorities, and guide the work. Three sub-committees developed strategies for the three focus areas that make up the larger strategy.

Better coordination and collaboration between partners is a foundational goal of the regional housing strategy. The group worked together to assess current versus desired levels of collaboration for existing housing initiatives. This exercise mapped initiatives across a continuum. Overall, the group saw value in greater levels of involvement, collaboration, and co-creation within several existing efforts, while noting that a higher level of engagement takes resources and must be worthwhile.

Regional Collaboration

1.4 Empower a non-governmental organization to develop a marketing and communications plan.

2.3.1 Pursue opportunities for resident, nonprofit, and/or public ownership of for-sale parks.

1.1 Stabilize and grow the capacity of the Gunnison Valley Regional Housing Authority.

3.2 Conduct long range planning to ensure community housing is aligend with growth, infrastructure, and service capacity in the region.

1.2 Form a regional community Housing Task Force.

1.3 Enhnace accountability and understanding of housing initiatives across the Valley.

3.1 Coordinate regionally on a housing supply pipeline.

CONSULT

Obtain and consider feedback or input on issues, ideas and decisions.

3.4 Grow knowledge and sophistication around implementing public/ private partnerships.

INVOLVE

Work with organizations and partners to understand issues and include them in identifying options for moving forward.

2.2 Preserve existing deed-restricted units and convert market-rate and naturally occuring affordable housing to deed-restricted programs.

2.1 Preserve existing affordable housing assets managed by the GVHRA by investing in deed restriction compliance, property management capacity, and renovations to improve quality standards and extend building lifetime.

COLLABORATE

Partner with other entities, seeking advice and innovations that become embedded in decisions.

3.2 Advocate for land use policies that advance community housing goals across the Valley.

CO-CREATE

An identified leader works with a leadership team to co-create a strategy together.

1.6 Increase local dedicated funding resources for identified priorities of preservation of existing housing, GVRHA operations, and new housing development.

1.5 Coordinate regionally to propose how non-restricted Local Marketing District funds be used for housing.

FOCUS AREA 1

Building Our Capacity to Act

The OVRR identified capacity building as the highest priority to address local housing needs. Strategies in this section build and strengthen regional and local housing capacity, including staffing, funding, & community awareness.

Below-market housing is complex and requires significant commitment of capacity and resources. Successful projects and initiatives require a strong team with multiple areas of expertise and participation from across non-profit, public, and private sectors. While communities have taken steps to increase capacity in response to intensifying housing pressures within the Valley, this process clearly identified the need for additional staffing and funding to meet current and future housing demands.

More formal and structured coordination between jurisdictions and partners is necessary for an effective regional approach. Building Our Capacity to Act is intentionally placed first in this strategy: We cannot expect better housing outcomes by relying upon the same resources we have in place now.

The following six strategies are recommended to grow our capacity.

GOALS

Increase accountability, collaboration, efficient use of resources, and effectiveness in preserving and creating community housing across the region.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

New Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) between jurisdictions and the regional housing authority

Improved reputation of the regional housing authority for partnership, advocacy, and customer service

Improved coordination of regional coordination by the public, elected officials, and the staff responsible for housing implementation

Increased investment of resources in housing in our community through public and private sources

STRATEGY 1.1
FORM A REGIONAL COMMUNITY HOUSING TASKFORCE.

The creation and ongoing stewardship of a regional community housing task force will bring implementation partners together to discuss and relay information about pipeline development projects, coordination on funding opportunities, challenges and successes, and to align regional resources behind priority projects. The HTF is a forum for dialogue, information sharing, and greater coordination in the pursuit of resources and delivery of programs and services.

Goals of the HTF are:

- Improve regional coordination on grant and funding opportunities to reduce redundancies and strengthen grant applications for housing projects that serve the Gunnison Valley.
- Discuss opportunities to support projects outside of municipal boundaries with local resources or public-private partnerships.
- Enhance regional coordination and awareness of community housing development projects, programs, and policies.

This strategy was rated as having a high degree of urgency for implementation.

The HTF will be led by a Chair and Vice-Chair, ideally representing the region holistically rather than individual jurisdictions or agencies. The group will meet 8-9 times per year to address the tasks outlined above.

Other regional collaborative efforts have demonstrated the importance of a formalized structure and paid staff to provide support and collaboration. The HTF could use a structure similar to Sustainable Tourism & Outdoor Recreation (STOR) or the Health Coalition, both of which have seen significant positive outcomes.

HTF membership is ideally representative of jurisdictions and organizations across the Valley, including:

Gunnison County

The City of Gunnison

Town of Crested Butte

Town of Mt. Crested Butte

GVRHA

Habitat for Humanity

VHF

Western State Colorado University

Gunnison Valley Health

Crested Butte Mountain Resort

Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley

KEY ACTION

LEAD

Leadership to transition to GVRHA over the next 1-2 years.

COLLABORATORS

See strategy overview

NEW STAFFING

TBD

FUNDING

$

TIMEFRAME

2024

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Co-create

STRATEGY 1.2
ENHANCE ACCOUNTABILITY AND UNDERSTANDING OF HOUSING INITIATIVES ACROSS THE VALLEY.

KEY ACTION

LEAD

Housing Task Force

COLLABORATORS

GVRHA and Valley Housing Fund (VHF)

NEW STAFFING

None

FUNDING

$

TIMEFRAME

2024

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Co-create

The OVRR process identified public outreach, awareness, and communications about community housing as significant opportunities for improvement. Steering committee leaders observed that creating a more consistent, regionally coordinated effort would be beneficial for communicating impact and building trust in local government housing efforts.

Moving forward, we seek to strengthen these communication tools by increasing the consistency and accessibility of information from public and nonprofit entities on community housing projects and initiatives. This should include communicating how public funds are invested, and when opportunities exist for potential renters, owners, and other stakeholders to support, engage, and benefit from below-market housing.

Near term tasks include updating the GVRHA website, implementing a dashboard of community housing metrics, and refining the division of communications, fundraising, and advocacy tasks between VHF, GVRHA, and CFGV.

Photo: Willa Williford.

STRATEGY 1.3
STABILIZE AND STRENGTHEN CAPACITY OF THE GUNNISON VALLEY REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY.

Local jurisdictions in the Valley have demonstrated commitment to funding and implementing programs and policies to advance community housing goals. However, their capacity is constrained in important ways, as their ability to fully fund dedicated housing staff within each jurisdiction is limited.

In response to these realities, the Gunnison Valley Regional Housing Authority (GVRHA) was created in 2012 as a regional initiative to help manage and provide affordable housing within Gunnison County.

It is managed by an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) among the City of Gunnison, Town of Crested Butte, Town of Mt. Crested Butte, and Gunnison County, each of which have representatives on the board of directors and contribute financially to the organization. The Authority appointed Andy Kadlec as Executive Director, effective October 2022.

There is significant need for the GVRHA to strengthen current programming, increase program opportunities in the Valley, and improve image and community awareness of its role and responsibility as a regional housing partner. The current level of service provided by the housing authority is not meeting the needs of the member organizations.

Member jurisdictions agree that the GVRHA should operate as a backbone institution for coordinated regional housing efforts in the Gunnison Valley, including serving as a one-stop shop for community members seeking housing assistance and resources. To meet this obligation, the organization must be adequately staffed and securely funded.

Enhancing the capacity and level of service at the GVRHA would have a significant regional impact, and steps to increase funding and staffing at the housing authority should be taken immediately. Some immediate focus areas that member organizations of GVRHA are seeking include increasing oversight of existing deed restrictions, growing property management capabilities to be more responsive to current clients and funders, and increasing leadership in regional coordination efforts.

Achieving these and other desired outcomes at the housing authority will require a higher level of collaboration between the jurisdictions and housing authority than exists today. Steps to stabilize and strengthen services at the GVRHA should be informed by collaborative processes involving representatives from each participating jurisdiction. Longer term areas for organizational growth are included in the preservation strategy.

In tandem with the OVRR project, the GVRHA began an update of its 2023 strategic plan. The strategic plan is under development and will outline the housing authority's intended growth and development timeline, including capacity challenges through current staff limitations. GVHRA's strategic planning session discussed the organizational chart below. Participants acknowledged that with current staffing, only about half the desired tasks of the organization can be accomplished.

KEY ACTION

LEAD

GVRHA staff & board

COLLABORATORS

Jurisdictions, funders, Valley Housing Fund (VHF)

NEW STAFFING

.5 FTE to achieve stability, 2 FTE to grow programs

FUNDING

$$

TIMEFRAME

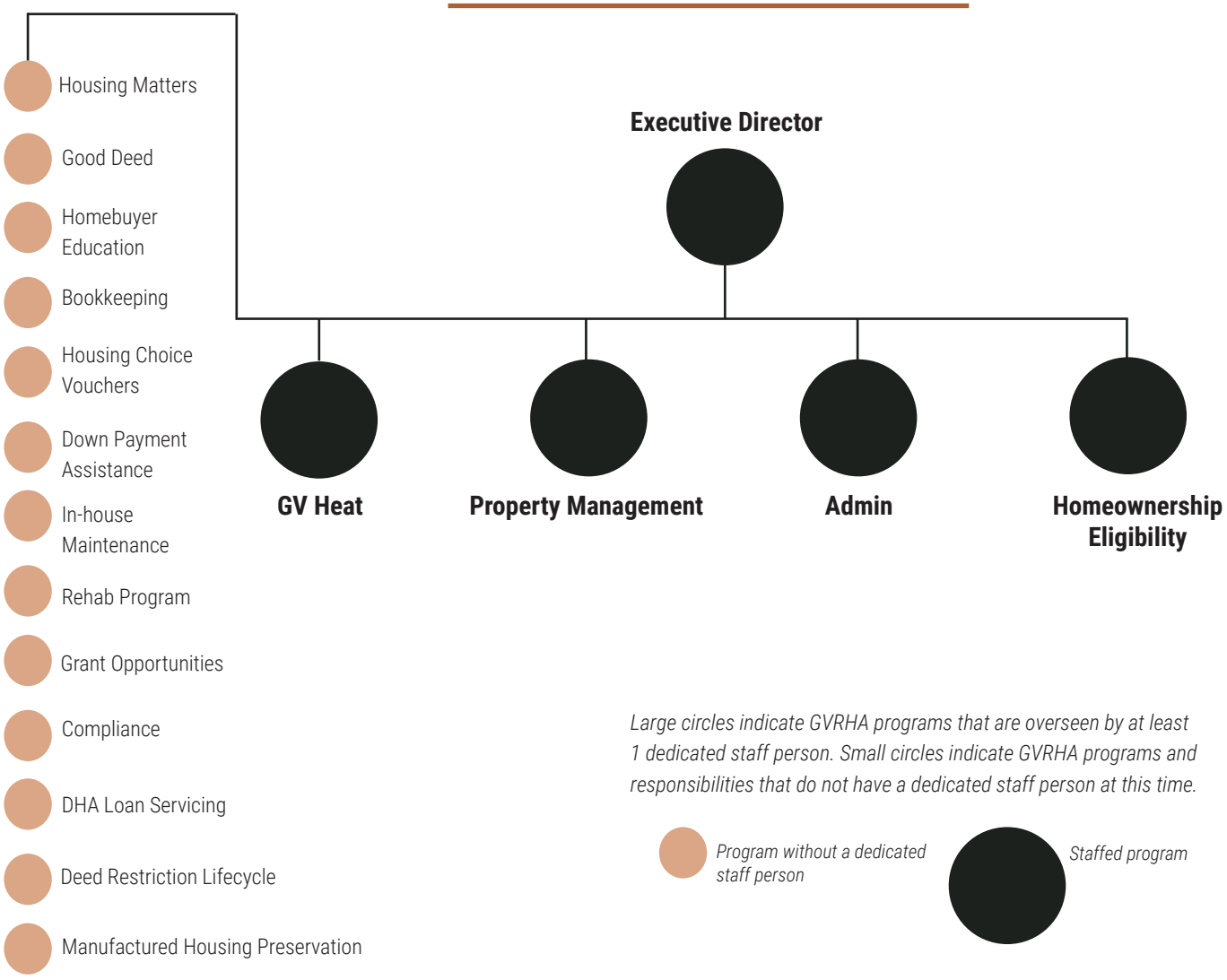
2024

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Co-create

STRATEGY 1.3 *(CONT.)*
STABILIZE AND GROW CAPACITY OF THE GUNNISON VALLEY REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY.

GVRHA ORGANIZATION CHART*



Large circles indicate GVRHA programs that are overseen by at least 1 dedicated staff person. Small circles indicate GVRHA programs and responsibilities that do not have a dedicated staff person at this time.

Program without a dedicated staff person

Staffed program

**Current staffing and unmet capacity needs as of summer 2023.*

STRATEGY 1.4
DEVELOP AN OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN.

Empower a nongovernmental organization to build political and public support for housing projects and increase opportunities for philanthropic and private financial support. This plan should be closely coordinated with the work around enhanced accountability and shared understanding of current housing initiatives, but is distinct from government.

KEY ACTION

LEAD
Valley Housing Fund (VHF)

COLLABORATORS
Housing Task Force (HTF) and GVRHA

NEW STAFFING
0.2 - 0.3 FTE

FUNDING
$-$$

TIMEFRAME
2024

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT
Involve

Photo: Willa Williford.

STRATEGY 1.5

COORDINATE REGIONALLY TO PROPOSE HOW NON-RESTRICTED LOCAL MARKETING DISTRICT FUNDS BE USED FOR HOUSING.

KEY ACTION

LEAD

GVRHA and HTF

COLLABORATORS

Board of County Commissioners

NEW STAFFING

None

FUNDING

$

TIMEFRAME

2023

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Co-create

In 2022, the voters approved the allocation of up to 40 percent of funds collected by the Local Marketing District to support housing, early childhood education, and other community-oriented services beginning in 2024. This initiative passed by a strong margin of nearly 67 percent. The 2023 budget season is the first opportunity to implement the voter's directive.

The County collected $3.49 million in LMD funds in 2021 and more than $2 million in 2022. The dollar amount of potential unrestricted LMD funds that will be available in 2023 is not yet known, however it is anticipated to be lower than the two previous years. For 2024, an estimated LMD collection of $1.8 million could have as much as $720,000 directed to housing. While this amount may not be large in the face of our housing problems, even limited resources can be strategically leveraged to have great regional impact. Directing LMD to housing demonstrates political support and local investment in community housing, and unlocks additional funding opportunities.

The regional housing team rated this strategy as having a high degree of potential impact and urgency, as there are only a few months remaining in the 2023 budget season at the time of this plan's publication.

Housing advocates and staff should encourage a coordinated and collaborative approach regarding the potential reallocation of LMD funds to housing. This would allow direct collaboration about the potential for deploying those funds towards identified housing priorities.

Early childhood education is also an important community asset that is closely linked with housing and supports local residents ability to participate in the workforce. Coordinating funding requests for early childhood education and community housing could offer strategic benefit and positive community impacts. This may not be possible in the first year, but could become a part of the process in the future.

All below-market projects in the Valley are currently facing financial headwinds that LMD funds could help to alleviate. See development pipeline on pgs. 49-50.

STRATEGY I.6
INCREASE DEDICATED LOCAL FUNDING FOR IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES.

Delivering below-market community housing is an inherently resource-intensive undertaking, whether for preservation, new construction, programs, or stewardship. The 2022 Community Housing Report identified the need for more resources and several strategies within this section start to address that, including a proposal for LMD funds, philanthropy, attracting more funds from external sources, and investing current local funding with more accountability.

Even with all of these tactics in place, a sizable gap between local housing needs and available resources will remain. Dedicated local funding is a powerful tool for filling financing gaps due to its flexibility and ability to leverage additional resources.

The housing team ranked creation of dedicated regional funding as having a high level of potential impact on community housing needs and also viewed dedicated funding as an urgent need. However, creating dedicated local funding usually requires the community to pass a ballot initiative. It is recommended that the housing task force revisit the question every two years, in coordination with the GVRHA Board, to consider current community needs and perceptions, capacity, competing community priorities that might be on the ballot, and progress on capacity and accountability since the publication of this plan.

KEY ACTION

LEAD
GVRHA and HTF

COLLABORATORS
Jurisdictions and Valley Housing Fund (VHF)

NEW STAFFING
None

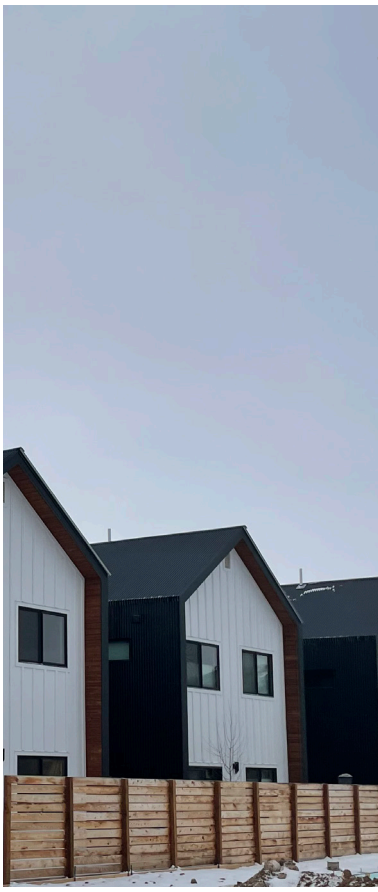
FUNDING
$

TIMEFRAME
Long-term (revisit every 2 years)

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT
Co-create

FOCUS AREA 2

Preservation and Conversion



Preserve existing housing supply and convert market-rate units to below-market housing.

New housing supply will continue to play an important role in addressing housing needs in the Gunnison Valley. However, there are political, social, environmental and fiscal concerns regarding the effects of focusing on building more housing as a means to addressing affordability challenges. Local jurisdictions generally agree that the Valley cannot "build" its way out of its housing problem, particularly in the northern Valley, which is more impacted by the luxury market. Considering these realities, the regional housing strategy recommends the development-neutral strategies of preservation and conversion of existing units to below-market housing programs, as the second priority area for investment.

Of greatest import is the preservation of existing deed-restricted housing to ensure previous public subsidies are retained and preserved for future generations. Other top priorities include reinvestment in existing community housing assets and preserving the attainability of naturally occurring affordable housing by moving them into deed-restricted or shared-equity programs. These development neutral strategies offer multiple benefits in terms of cost-effectiveness, efficient use of limited resources, shorter timeline for implementation, and limited risk exposure.

GOALS

Preserve existing units through acquisitions and voluntary deed restrictions, reducing the loss of naturally occurring affordable housing.

Ensure that buyers and renters are well educated and able to acquire and retain their housing.

Ensure that deed restricted units are occupied by qualified households.

Preserve and enhance manufactured housing communities.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Increase the vacancy rate to 5 percent to achieve a functional rental market.

Compliance on deed restricted portfolio improves.

Increase the percentage of total homes that are preserved via deed-restriction.

Community perception of deed restriction programs improves.

City of Gunnison and Gunnison County utilize the Manufactured Housing Strategy to apply stabilization and infrastructure quality mechanisms with all 16 MHCs.

Increase the number of Manufactured Home (MH) owners and renters participating in energy efficiency and habitability upgrade opportunities with GVHEAT.

STRATEGY 2.1
PRESERVE EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING ASSETS MANAGED BY THE GVRHA AND BEYOND.

The GVRHA's 2023 Strategic Plan has prioritized improved management and compliance of deed restriction lifecycles by investing in a scalable technology platform and focused improvements in community outreach and communications. The housing authority aims to undertake full compliance outreach and auditing of deed-restricted units and prioritize resolution of non-compliant units within one year. The housing authority and member jurisdictions also identified strengthening the Property Management arm of GVRHA as a top strategic priority in 2023-2024. Renovation programs in improving quality standards and extending building lifetime and initiatives to support homeowners with education and downpayment assistance are also prioritized in the plan. For further information, see strategy 1.1

There are other affordable housing assets in the community beyond the GVRHA portfolio that need capitalization and improved property management. The HTF will track opportunities to preserve and enhance these assets.

KEY ACTION

LEAD
GVRHA

COLLABORATORS
Housing Task Force (HTF)

NEW STAFFING
1 FTE

FUNDING
$$

TIMEFRAME
2026

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT
Involve

The Palisades Apartments serve community members at 30-50% of the area median income (AMI). Much-needed rennovations to the property could help preserve 60 affordable housing units within the community.

Homelessness has ticked up in many mountain and resort communities as destination-area living costs have exceeded local wages.

Housing gaps - Homelessness Resolution and Prevention

Emergency housing services, homelessness prevention and resolution, and transitional and permanent supportive housing are housing gaps in the region that public entities do not have the capacity or leadership to address at this time.

Currently, the Gunnison County Department of Health and Human Services, community outreach liaisons in local governments, and area nonprofits, such as the Hispanic Affairs Project, provide the bulk of emergency housing services and resources. As jurisdictions complete earlier strategies to strengthen capacity, staff should revisit and reconsider opportunities to fund and administer these essential services.

STRATEGY 2.2
PRESERVE EXISTING DEED-RESTRICTED UNITS AND CONVERT MARKET-RATE AND NATURALLY OCCURING AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO DEED-RESTRICTED PROGRAMS.

In 2021, the GVRHA and regional jurisdictions worked together to lay the foundation for Good Deed, a deed restriction program that preserves existing housing units that are well-suited for workforce housing. The Good Deed program funds a portion of the appraised value of a home in exchange for a deed restriction requiring at least one occupant be a full-time employee in the local workforce. Good Deed was originally conceived to be a regional program that would be implemented and administered by GVRHA with a committee to evaluate potential units, predictable and transparent buydown pricing, and a single form of deed restriction that simplifies and streamlines GVRHA's compliance burden.

Based on the Town of Crested Butte's experience placing the first five Good Deed restrictions, local staff was best equipped to work with interested parties, particularly when other affordable housing incentive tools were at play. However, the roles of each jurisdiction and the GVRHA in program administration need to be better defined.

To fully launch Good Deed, the program will require the following:

- Funding
- Creation of a review committee
- Market testing of the buydown percentage
- Marketing and educational outreach to the community, local lenders, and real estate brokers
- Additional GVRHA staffing capacity for deed administration and compliance as the program grows as well as buydown negotiations/ coordination depending on the needs of each jurisdiction.

KEY ACTION

LEAD

GVRHA

COLLABORATORS

Jurisdictions, realtors, brokers

NEW STAFFING

Ongoing compliance needs to be scaled with portfolio

FUNDING

15-20% of market value; $75k a unit maximum

TIMEFRAME

2026

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Involve

Manufactured Housing Preservation and Rehabilitation

MHC preservation is a regional priority, but the OVRR was unable to identify an agency best positioned to lead and fund preservation efforts at this time.

The GVRHA, City of Gunnison, and the County should work toward developing the capacity, resources, and leadership to address MHC needs in the next 3-5 years:

- Connect MHC residents with state financial and technical assistance resources for resident organization;
- Develop programmatic pathways at the GVRHA for manufactured housing replacement for income-eligible residents.

STRATEGY 2.3
PURSUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENT, NONPROFIT, AND/OR PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF FOR-SALE MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITIES.

KEY ACTION

LEAD
GVRHA*

COLLABORATORS
City of Gunnison and Gunnison County

NEW STAFFING
.25 FTE

FUNDING
$$$$ for assets
$$ for staffing

TIMEFRAME
2026

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT
Involve

* If GVRHA is unable to stabilize and perform current commitments, another lead will need to be identified.

Manufactured housing communities (MHCs) have long served as housing that is affordable without government interventions. In recent years, MHCs across the mountain west have been lost to gentrification and speculative land plays. Once these resources are lost, they can rarely be recovered.

Many manufactured homes in the Valley were built in the 1960s and 1970s and have reached obsolescence or require substantial rehabilitation to address health and safety risks. Many manufactured home owners are unable to afford improvements to aging structures, and financing for manufactured housing often includes unfavorable terms such as higher interest rates and shorter loan terms. Identifying replacement housing for households living in manufactured homes that have exceeded their functional life is critical to retaining these essential members of our community.

The City of Gunnison Comprehensive Plan identifies mobile home park preservation as a priority within the housing chapter, and Gunnison County has invested in supporting mobile home park preservation in recent years. Within Crested Butte, the two existing mobile home parks have strong stewardship measures in place. Mt. Crested Butte does not have mobile home park inventory.

Manufactured housing rehabilitation, preservation, and unit replacement requires substantial funding, technical knowledge, and dedicated staff capacity. While MHC preservation is a regional priority, the RHT was unable to identify an agency best positioned to lead preservation efforts at this time. This document identifies site control as the highest priority tactic.

In response to increased speculative transactions, land flipping and gentrification, the Colorado legislature has been active in developing policies and programs to protect current MHC residents and create opportunities for community ownership of parks.

In 2020, the Colorado General Assembly passed House Bill (HB) 20-1201: Mobile Home Park Residents Opportunity To Purchase. The legislation is intended to create opportunities for park residents and other locally invested entities to purchase MHC properties when they are listed for sale.

Obtaining site control of MHC assets is one way local entities can preserve these communities, long-term recapitalization planning with resident owners and opportunities to pursue grants for infrastructure.

When park owners are ready to sell a property asset, there is a need for local entities to be ready to invest in community ownership of the land and management of the MHC. As an anchor institution, GVRHA can support by coordination of local partners, contribute to the identification of local, state and federal funding, and distinguish a community ownership structure that is best suited for each MHC and viable partner(s).

Manufactured housing communities provide some of the only remaining naturally occuring affordable housing in the Gunnison Valley.

STRATEGY 2.4
STRENGTHEN REGULATIONS TO SUPPORT PRESERVATION AND CONVERSION OPPORTUNITIES.

Jurisdictions should update or amend land use and development codes to remove barriers to adaptive reuse projects and support building rehabilitation at the local level.

Reuse and rehabilitation offers potential for greater speed-to-market than new construction and the ability to adapt more quickly to changing market conditions. Barriers for adaptive reuse projects, such as hotel and motel conversions to extended stay or long-term housing, include outdated or inflexible zoning and building codes, one-size-fits-all parking requirements, and a lack of adequate financing opportunities or incentives for developers.

Cities across Colorado are coming up with creative and innovative approaches to make building reuse easier and more likely. Solutions include reducing or recalibrating parking requirements, promoting or adopting new uses or a greater diversity of uses to provide more opportunities for reuse and redevelopment, and raising awareness of exsiting incentive programs at the state and federal level for building resuse.

KEY ACTION

LEAD
County and municipalities

COLLABORATORS
Housing Task Force

NEW STAFFING
None

FUNDING
$-$$

TIMEFRAME
May vary by jurisdiction

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT
Collaborate

GLENWOOD SPRINGS CODE AMENDMENTS IMPROVE OPPORTUNITY FOR HOTEL-MOTEL CONVERSIONS TO COMMUNITY HOUSING

The City of Glenwood Springs, CO, adopted a code amendment in 2022 to make it easier for developers to convert existing hotels to workforce housing. The ordinance seeks to address the city's critical workforce housing shortage by streamlining process timelines and reducing development costs for hotel conversions to help facilitate the creation of new housing options for long-term residents.

Through conversations with developers, city staff identified the high cost of system improvement fees, long processing timelines, and parking requirements as the primary regulatory barriers to hotel conversions.

To mitigate these challenges, the City amended its commercial lodging code to include a new use category, Extended Stay Hotel, allowing property owners to rent hotel rooms for longer-term stays (up to 180 days). The code change also extends the timeline for fire suppression system improvements by up to 90 days and exempts extended-stay hotels from the additional parking requirements under existing lodging codes. To qualify, an extended-stay hotel must implement rental agreements with deed-restrictions requiring 20 percent of units be leased to households earning an average of 80 percent AMI.

The City also amended codes for residential uses to reduce processing time for hotel conversion projects resulting in housing:

- Waiving the requirement that conversion projects be presented to and approved by planning commission and city council
- Exempting hotel conversions from a 20 percent common open space requirement

In the first year since the ordinance was passed, the City has received two conversion project submitalls totaling 106 prospective rental units.

FOCUS AREA 3

Support New Community Housing

The third priority area covers strategies to support new community housing opportunities that align with community values and criteria.

The third element of this housing strategy document is support of new below-market housing opportunities. This strategy is intentionally put in third position, as there are numerous challenges, risks and costs associated with new development projects.

New housing production is constrained by finite material and labor resources and a scarcity of developable land. Layered political dynamics complicate or prevent individual projects as well as broader advances in programs or policy. These political dynamics - including outright opposition - are not always unfounded. Increased traffic, what areas are suitable for growth, the role of free market and below-market housing, the capacity of local schools and community facilities; these are practical concerns. There are equally important concerns and tradeoffs related to inaction. Gaining clarity around what these are and how they can be addressed is likely to create a more productive community dialoug than a zero-sum perspective that views actors as either pro-housing or NIMBYs.

GOALS

Increase supply of community housing to support basic functions of local government and improve economic resiliency.

Ensure a range of housing options to respond to the various stages of life and economic capabilities of the current community.

Use scarce resources efficiently and effectively through regional coordination and collaboration.

Influence land use planning to support strategic placement of community housing and reduce rural sprawl and environmental impacts.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Bring to the ratio measuring the number of jobs in comparison to the number of community housing units to 1.5.

Decrease the vacancy of commercial buildings.

Increase the vacancy rate to 5% to achieve a functional rental market.

Increase the percentage of homes that are occupied year-round.

Increase the percentage of total homes that are preserved via deed restriction.

Note: The metric "jobs vs community housing units" must include the number of community housing units, occupied housing units, and total housing units. Some of these points are not readily available. The HTF will work with local utility providers to devise a cost-efficient. accurate means of collecting this data. This metric is critical to understanding how local housing stock is being used, as well as whether OVRR housing efforts are better serving community need.

STRATEGY 3.1
COORDINATED REGIONAL HOUSING SUPPLY PLANNING.

As part of this planning effort, the housing action team created a summary of current community housing development and preservation in progress across the valley ***(see the Development Pipeline at the end of this Chapter)***. The team also developed a proposed set of criteria ***(pg. 42-43)*** that would help establish what projects align with the goals of this plan and support thoughtful land use decisions and allocation of resources across the valley.

Early recommended tasks of the Housing Task Force are:

- Develop a high-level grading rubric for shared the criteria developed to evaluate pipeline of community housing projects, support resource allocation, competitive funding applications, and infrastructure investments that are aligned with our community housing development pipeline.
- Use a shared regional housing pipeline coordination process to increase opportunities for jurisdictions to understand each other's efforts and priorities, and to support impactful projects with local resources across jurisdictions, including investments in infrastructure, preservation, predevelopment funding, and gap finance.
- Coordinate and submit recommendations as a region for state and federal funding resources like TAHG, Prop 123, LIHTC, etc. The most competitive funding applications should receive support from multiple jurisdictions within the valley. Seek to capture outside funding to assist our local efforts whenever possible. For example, a competitive LIHTC application for new housing or preservation would be appropriate every 3-4 years. Use the housing task force forum to ensure that all funding opportunities are understood, the most viable and criteria aligned projects are promoted, and the valley is able to leverage outside funding to the greatest extent possible.

KEY ACTION

LEAD
Housing Task Force

COLLABORATORS
Employers, developers, funders and jurisdictions

NEW STAFFING
None

FUNDING
$

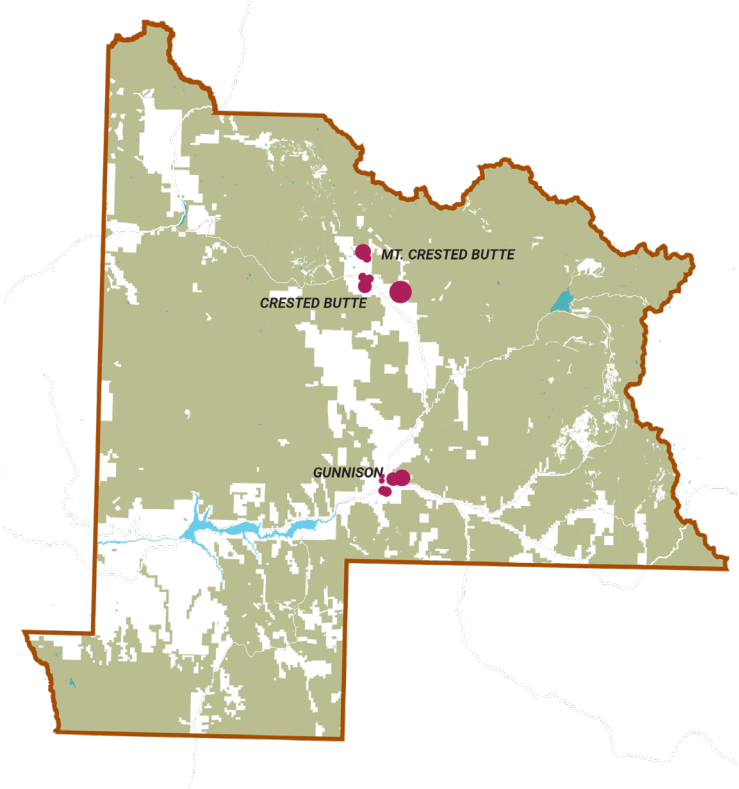
TIMEFRAME
2024

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT
Co-create

This process can also be a helpful place to vet new land acquisition, landbanking, and preservation opportunities, and help developers and employers who want to move forward with community housing work to connect with resources. In the long term, this group could also explore hosting a predevelopment revolving loan fund to help catalyze new community housing projects and support projects that might not otherwise be feasible.

I. Coordinate and maintain a shared community housing project pipeline.

Based on the 2021 Gunnison Valley Housing Market Update, the community needs 960 new housing units over the next five years to catch up and keep up with the growth of jobs in the area. To meet even half of this need (480 homes over five years) will require adequate, appropriate land and approximately $40 million - $60 million in local project gap funding.



II. Establish shared criteria to align supply pipeline with regional housing goals.

The following development crtieria, based in the OVRR's shared regional priorities and the RHS's regional housing goals, will support the HTF and its partners in evaluating pipeline community housing projects and prioritizing projects and opportunities for interjurisdictional investment.

Housing Need

Are we responding to the full spectrum of workforce and local housing needs in the valley, as documented in our Housing Needs Assessment? We seek to support projects that have a strong alignment between the local market need and the housing type, size, and price point provided.

Geographic Diversity

Are our investments being made equitably across the geographic area? Our initial priority is to support development and preservation of housing in each of the municipalities. Support for projects in the unincorporated county area will depend upon access to infrastructure (water, sewer, streets) and ability to meet the other project criteria such as value and housing need. Other geographic considerations include proximity to jobs, transportation, and services.

Value and Fiscal Responsibility

How do we ensure we have the biggest impact and creat the most value with regard to funds invested/units created? Considerations include the value of predevelopment funds, gap financing, fee waivers, property tax and sales and use tax exemption, and the ability to leverage other grants and resources like LIHTC. With limited resources, we seek to make impactful investments that catalyze projects that could not otherwise happen. We seek to make investments that will contribute to long term affordability in the community and have sound stewardship and property management plans in place.

Infill & Colocating Community Housing near Infrastructure

Local governments should prioritize housing projects that have access to infrastructure.

Partner Experience

What unique attributes and successful track record make the potential partner the best suited to working in Gunnison Valley? We seek to create successful partnerships where each partners' role is clearly defined and a successful outcome could not be achieved without them.

Community Planning and Public Engagement

What processes have been used to ensure there is public engagement and strong alignment with community documents such as master plans, comp plans, and land use code? Have these processes been inclusive of groups that are most impacted by the housing shortage? We seek to make investments where there has been robust public engagement and strong alignment with community values.

Environmental Stewardship

How are energy efficient and low carbon building techniques being used? Is the property transit and pedestrian friendly? Is it clustered in already developed areas, helping to preserve open space and support a responsible wildlife/urban interface? We seek to support resource efficient, environmentally sustainable housing.

STRATEGY 3.2
ADVOCATE FOR LAND USE POLICIES THAT ADVANCE COMMUNITY HOUSING GOALS ACROSS THE VALLEY.

The governance of land use is one of the most powerful tools municipal governments and Counties have in influencing the need for, and number of, below market housing. The following policies are recommended for Crested Butte, Mt Crested Butte, the City of Gunnison, and Gunnison County to consider implementing (if they have not already).

No. 1: Increase preservation of existing inventory by tracking, regulating, taxing and limiting short-term rentals.

Growing speculative investment in short-term rentals and vacation homes has removed units from the naturally occurring long-term rental and local ownership pool, reducing housing options for full-time residents and the local workforce. While rental vacancies are less than 1 percent, general vacancy of homes exceeds 40 percent, indicating a substantial portion of Valley homes are only seasonally occupied as second homes for much of the year (Community Housing Report, 2022). Each regulatory jurisdiction in the County should consider having some form of regulation that manages the guarantee of STR licenses to diminish the speculative nature STRs give the housing market. Consistent STR licensing requirements throughout the Valley would equalize STRs, so they are not concentrated in the jurisdiction(s) that do not regulate.

No. 2: Co-locating housing with infrastructure and multimodal transportation.

Building new municipal infrastructure and utilities to support sprawl is costly, fiscally unsustainable to maintain, and environmentally damaging. Allowing housing in areas with existing, or easily extended infrastructure, or along existing transit routes is fiscally responsible and allows new residents mobility choices where they are not dependent on the automobile.

No. 3: Infill incentives to minimize sprawl and concentrate density in already developed areas to protect current natural and agricultural/ranch lands.

Each jurisdiction should consider providing incentives to increase affordable housing density around existing infrastructure and transit and make it more challenging to develop in areas distant from municipal infrastructure and transit service, where additional growth is not appropriate.

No. 4: Create mobile home park zone districts in local ordinances and rezone existing parks to protect them from speculative interests.

In recent years, mobile home parks across the mountain west have been lost to gentrification and speculative land plays. Once these resources are lost, they can rarely be recovered. Mobile home zone districts can support preservation of this important housing resource, and should allow for flexibility for future improvements of manufactured housing and potentially upgrading to more permanent structures such as prefabricated homes or other building types on foundations. Jurisdictions should also adopt discrete architectural standards for manufactured housing types to preserve affordability of new units.

No. 5: Adequate land zoned for residential development that can support affordability.

Each jurisdiction should conduct (or continue working on) an infill study, that includes land use and infrastructure, that identifies large potential infill areas as well as small infill areas in neighborhoods that are appropriate for affordable housing. Concurrently, the County should consider developing an integrated land use, transportation, and infrastructure plans unincorporated areas of the County in collaboration with existing infrastructure and transit providers. Upon completion of infill/land use plans, zoning, development codes, design standards and guidelines should be updated to realize the outcomes of the studies.

No. 6: Predictable, expedited review, appropriate by jurisdictions.

Modifications to development review regulations and procedures should be based on the outcomes of the municipal infill studies and the County's integrated land use, and transportation plans. Each municipality and the County should consider revising development regulations and review procedures to simplify the entitlement process.

Further, each jurisdiction (if they haven't already done so) should modify their development review procedures to prioritize and expedite community housing initiatives. This will be required to receive Prop 123 funds. One approach is to shift from a discretionary review to a by-right approval for developments utilizing a "preapproval playbook" consistent with adopted plans and for those that further housing goals.

No. 7: Make a diversity of housing types an allowable use in all residential zone districts.

Each jurisdiction should consider revising zoning regulations and development codes to allow for a variety of housing types in all residential zone districts to meet different needs and incomes. Further, each jurisdiction should consider disallowing single-family homes within zone districts which allow higher densities. These modifications would allow housing types that are less expensive to construct than single family homes as an allowable use may reduce opportunities risk, predevelopment costs, and the reality that desirable free market, or community housing projects, get derailed by special or conditional review processes.

The OVRR also recommends strengthening land use and development regulations to support preservation and adaptive reuse. See strategy 2.4.

KEY ACTION

LEAD
County and municipalities

COLLABORATORS
Housing Task Force

NEW STAFFING
None

FUNDING
$-$$

TIMEFRAME
May vary by jurisdiction

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT
Collaborate

STRATEGY 3.3

CONDUCT LONG RANGE, REGIONAL-LEVEL PLANNING TO ENSURE COMMUNITY HOUSING IS COORDINATED WITH GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND SERVICE CAPACITY.

KEY ACTION

LEAD

County and municipalities

COLLABORATORS

Partners

NEW STAFFING

None

FUNDING

$$

TIMEFRAME

Variable by jurisdiction

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Collaborate

The County should lead the development of integrated land use, transportation, and infrastructure plans for both the north and south valleys in collaboration with Mt Crested Butte's, Crested Butte's, and City of Gunnison's three-mile planning efforts, Valley-wide infrastructure providers, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Mountain Express, and Gunnison County Rural Transportation Authority (RTA).

These integrated land use plans would identify where and when future transportation and infrastructure investments should be spent along with the anticipated location and density of future growth that are in alignment with community expectations. These studies should outline anticipated impacts on all public and quasi-public entities' facilities and programming, including the School District, parks and recreation, traffic and transit, water and wastewater, and the need for community housing.

STRATEGY 3.4

GROW KNOWLEDGE AND SOPHISTICATION AROUND IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

KEY ACTION

LEAD

Jurisdictions

COLLABORATORS

TBD

NEW STAFFING

None

FUNDING

$-$$

TIMEFRAME

May vary by jurisdiction

LEVEL OF REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Collaborate

Public private partnerships are essential to creating and preserving community housing and have been the primary tool used to advance each jurisdictions' housing goals and initiatives. Each partnership tends to be slightly different, depending on the context, capacity of the various partners and community needs and desires. The housing team recommends that we use the forum of the Housing Task Force as an information sharing and problem solving platform for lessons learned and creative innovations. The HTF will host at least one P3-focused session annually.

The opportunity zone in the City of Gunnison is a great example of how specific financial incentives can help bring private sector players to the table to address community housing needs. Throughout the Valley we have other excellent examples of innovatives partnerships as well as lessons learned and pitfalls to avoid.

SECTION 4

Summary of Strategies and Actions

FOCUS AREA		STRATEGY	OVERVIEW	$	LEAD	LEVEL OF COLLABORATION
BUILD OUR CAPACITY TO ACT	1.1	Form a regional community Housing Task Force.	Co-creation and stewardship of a regional community housing task force to facilitate dialogue, information sharing, and coordiation between jurisdictions and partners.	$	VHF/ Williford LLC. intially; transition to GVRHA in 1-2 years	Co-create
	1.2	Enhance accountability and understanding of housing initiatives across the Valley.	Strengthen communication tools by increasing the consistency and accessibility of information from public and nonprofit entities on community housing projects and initiatives.	$	HTF	Co-create
	1.3	Stabilize and grow the capacity of the GVRHA.	Enhance funding and staffing of GVRHA to Increase oversight of existing deed restrictions, grow property management capabilities to be more responsive to current clients and funders, and ehance organizational leadership in regional coordination efforts.	$$	GVRHA	Collaborate
	1.4	Develop an outreach and communications plan.	Identify non-governmental organization to lead marketing efforts to build political and public support for housing projects and increase opportunities for philanthropic support.	$-$$	VHF	Involve
	1.5	Coordinate regionally to propose how unrestricted LMD funds be used for housing.	Coordinate regionally to propose unrestricted LMD funds be used to expand capacity at the GVRHA and invest in community housing projects with regional impact.	$	Jursidictions	Co-create
	1.6	Increase local dedicated funding resources for identified priorities.	Create a dedicated regional funding source to help finance community housing efforts.	$	TBD	Co-create

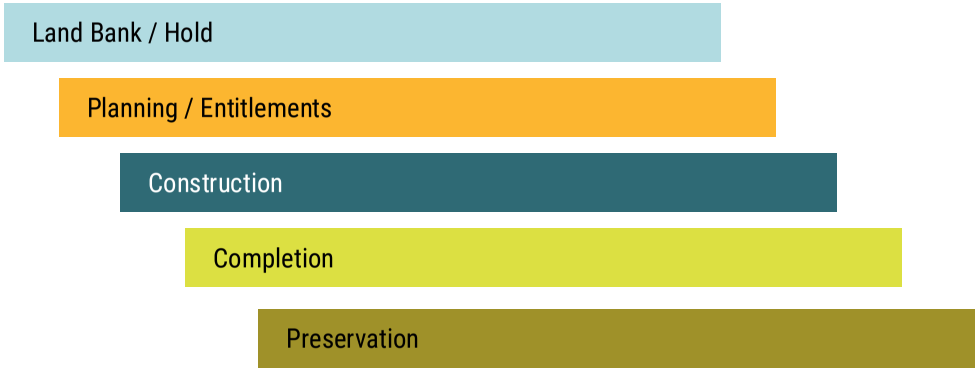
FOCUS AREA		STRATEGY	OVERVIEW	$	LEAD	LEVEL OF COLLABORATION
PRESERVE EXISTING HOUSING SUPPLY & CONVERT MARKET-RATE UNITS TO BELOW-MARKET HOUSING.	2.1	Preserve existing affordable housing assets managed by the GVRHA by investing in deed-restriction compliance, property management capacity, and renovation programs.	Prioritize improved management and compliance of deed restriction lifecycles by investing in and a scalable technology platform, and focused improvements in community outreach and communications.	$$	GVRHA	Involve
	2.2	Preserve existing deed-restricted units and convert market-rate and naturally occuring affordable housing to deed-restricted programs.	Fully launch Good Deed program with adequate funding, a review committee, market testing, marketing and educational outreach, and staffing at the GVRHA.		GVRHA	Involve
	2.3	Pursue opportunities for resident, nonprofit, and/ or public ownership of for-sale manufactured housing communities.	Pursue opportunities for resident, nonprofit, and/or public ownership of for-sale mobile home parks.	$$$$	GVRHA or TBD	Involve
	2.4	Strengthen regulations to support preservation and conversion.		$	Jurisdictions	Consult

FOCUS AREA		STRATEGY	OVERVIEW	$	LEAD	LEVEL OF COLLABORATION
SUPPORT NEW COMMUNITY HOUSING	3.1	Coordinate regionally on a housing supply plan.	Establish what projects align with the goals of this plan and support thoughtful land use decisions and allocation of resources across the valley.	$	HTF	Co-create
	3.2	Advocate for land use policies that advance community housing goals across the Valley.	Land use policies at the local level should regulate housing and development in alignment with regional goals to collectively move the needle on below-market housing across the Valley.	$		Co-create
	3.3	Conduct long-range regional level planning to ensure community housing is coordinated with desired growth, infrastructure, and services across the region.	Conduct Land Use and infrastructure planning for the valley and infill studies for municipalities.	$$	OVLC	Collaborate
	3.4	Grow knowledge and sophistication around implementing public-private partnerships.	Use the forum of the Housing Task Force as an information sharing and problem solving platform for lessons learned and creative innovations in public-private partnerships.	$	HTF	Consult

COMMUNITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE 2023-2030

The below community housing development pipeline summarizes community housing development and preservation in progress across the valley at the time of this plan's publication. All numbers below are subject to change.

PIPELINE TOTAL	LOCATION	INCOME	OWN/RENT	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	EST. TOTAL
New Rental Units Occupied this Year				18	64	70	60	45	47			311
New Ownership Units Occupied this Year				28	97	1	1	10	9			146
MHC own home/lot rent												0
Housing Preservation Achieved this Year				12								12
Potential Total Housing Occupied this Year				**58**	**161**	**71**	**61**	**55**	**56**			**469**



PROJECT	LOCATION	INCOME	OWN/RENT	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	EST. TOTAL
Sawtooth Phase 1	Gunnison	Under 200% AMI	Rent	18								**18**
Lazy K	Gunnison	80-140% AMI	Own	28								**28**
Sawtooth Phase 2	Gunnison	Under 200% AMI	Rent		30							**30**
Paradise Park - Build Out	Crested Butte	Under 200% AMI	Own		13							**13**
TP-3	Crested Butte	Under 200% AMI	Rent		16							**16**
Homestead	Mt. CB	80-160% AMI	Own		22							**22**
Mineral Point	Crested Butte	Under 60% AMI	Own		34							**34**
Habitat for Humanity	Gunnison	Under 80% AMI	Own		1	1	1	1	1			**5**
Frontier MHC	Gunnison	NOAH - under 40%	Rent	12								**12**
Whetstone Phase 1	North Valley	TBD	Rent			60						**60**
Whetstone Phase 2	North Valley	TBD	Rent				60					**60**
Whetstone Phase 3	North Valley	TBD	Rent					45				**45**
Whetstone Phase 4	North Valley	TBD	Own					10	9			**19**
Whetstone Phase 5	North Valley	TBD	Rent						47			**47**
Seasonal Housing RMBL NV	Mt. CB	TBD	Rent			10 (year-round) 40 (seasonal)						**10-50**
The Village @ MT. CB	Mt. CB	TBD	TBD				TBD	TBD	TBD			**85**
Gunnison Rising	Gunnison	120-140% AMI	Own		64							**68**
Wilson Site	Gunnison	TBD	TBD						TBD			**0**
TP-1	Crested Butte	TBD	TBD					TBD				**0**
Housing Matters	Scattered	TBD	Rent	TBD	TBD							**0**
Green Deed	Scattered	TBD	Both	TBD	TBD							**0**

CH. 4

LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK

SUMMARY OF GOALS & STRATEGIES

BACKGROUND & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

REGIONAL STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

ACTION PLAN

Photo: Hillary Seminick.

SECTION 0 Summary of Framework Goals and Actions

Land use, infrastructure and tranpsortation should align with regional priorities (Chapter 2) as well as community values.

Summary of Framework Goals.

Goal setting provides an opportunity for regional leaders to work together, to build consensus and develop a shared agreement on a path forward in realizing the shared regional priority of implementing integrated land use, transportation, and infrastructure policies, regulations, and decisions. While each community or jurisdiction does not have to agree on everything, by working together, they can identify a set of shared goals that provide a framework for moving forward. Over the course of this planning process the working group, action teams and regional leaders representing public, private, and nonprofit organizations worked together to develop and refine the following land use, transportation, and public infrastructure goals for the Valley that could help guide future decisions. These goals evolved from the Valley's shared priorities of building and strengthening community; fostering social equity and inclusion; and advancing climate and environmental resiliency.

Goal 1: Enable compact development in responsible locations.

Future development should be designed to shape compact, walkable neighborhoods. New growth should take place in areas that are served, or can be efficiently served, by transit, public utilities, and community services.

> *The Gunnison Valley will continue to grow and change. It is not a question of if, but how? If we want to protect and sustain the things that matter most to us - the environment, ranches and rural character, our communities and the people who live in them and a strong sense of place - then we should work together to guide development to strategic places in a shape and pattern that is more compact and efficient than our previous generation of growth.*

Goal 2: Focus on moving people.

Strengthen local and regional transportation systems by prioritizing and enhancing multimodal connections between neighborhoods, communities, and the region.

> *Our transportation systems shape our communities and how we live in them. It is essential to proactively expand of our transit system and limit the size of our highways to promote more compact development in areas that can be efficiently served by public infrastructure and where people are provided a range of mobility choices - including, walking, biking, transit and driving - that connect our communities and the region.*

Goal 3: Create great places for people.

Prioritize the design of new development that includes parks and new streets to enhance social exchange, where the utility of the public infrastructure is matched by the livability of the community.

> *Continued growth and change in the Valley are inevitable. How we design new development is critical to building and strengthening our community. It is important to note, cities and towns exist to minimize travel and maximize economic and social exchange. The most livable communities provide the most opportunities for human interactions. We in the Valley can work together to ensure new development and public investments create great places that reflect our values where the public realm, streets and parks allow for social interactions, where people want to linger, meet their neighbors and run into their friends.*

Goal 4: Care for and minimize our impact on the natural environment and agricultural resources.

Ensure local land use, transportation and infrastructure decisions minimize impacts on the natural areas and actively support ranching and agricultural activities.

> *The Valley's natural landscape and recreation amenities are the reasons we live here and contribute to the Valley's economy and high quality of life. Agricultural and the local ranching families of the Gunnison Valley are the backbone of the Gunnison Valley, reflecting the community's heritage, contributing to our economy and preserving open land. Poorly planned growth – in both urban and rural areas – endangers what we value in our natural and agricultural landscape, impacting the health of rivers and watersheds, fragmenting wildlife habitat between residential, recreational and agricultural operations, and places greater pressure to convert agriculture to development.*

Framework Strategies.

These strategies were created with the action team, regional leaders, and working group in direct response to the regional goals. The strategies and actions to accomplish them are described in detail on the following pages.

Strategy 1: Commit to OVRR Community Planning Principles.

Strategy 2: Build Systems and Capacity to Enable More Informed Planning, Policy and Development Decisions.

Strategy 3: Enhance Multijurisdictional Planning & Coordinate Investment in Infrastructure & Transit.

Strategy 4: Align Plans, Policies, and Procedures with Shared Regional Goals and Planning Priorities.

SECTION 1

Background And Strategic Context

A lack of coordinated long-term planning in the valley is making important regional conversations and affordable housing projects more difficult.

The Gunnison Valley and its communities are changing. Colorado's rural resurgence, speculative investments, and the increase of remote work due to COVID-19, has contributed to an influx of residents within the Gunnison Valley. As a result the year-round population is growing as are tourism and visitation levels, creating new challenges where longstanding community values are starting to conflict. Examples of these conflicts include ever expanding recreational expectations vs. goals for natural and agricultural resource protection and expanding affordable housing needs vs. community character and agricultural preservation. These challenges caused by growth and a lack of a shared regional planning framework are impacting the Gunnison Valley's public infrastructure and valued resources - from roads, parks, and schools to agricultural land and natural resources.

The lack of long-term planning in the valley is making important regional conversations about affordable housing projects more difficult because there is not shared agreement on an outcome. While each jurisdiction has plans and policies guiding land use and transportation decisions, greater coordination and collaboration is needed to manage negative impacts caused by growth. While regional leaders are aware of the issues surrounding growth, there has not been a shared vision to guide growth and ensure it fulfills the needs of its residents and businesses.

The existing concern surrounding growth and development - and the perception that there is not a clear regional framework to guide the integration of land use, transportation, and infrastructure systems - is disrupting agreement and progress in many areas, including the development of workforce housing, and infrastructure expansion. Land use, infrastructure, and transportation decisions shape the valley's communities and economies, with tremendous impact on our fiscal health, agriculture, neighborhoods, and community relations - and should not be made in haste.

CONNECTING LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO SHARED REGIONAL PRIORTITIES

Each of the communities' long-range plans share three regional planning priorities (see Chapter 2). These regional priorities provide lenses on how future growth should occur in the valley and guide specific land use, transportation, and infrastructure strategies and actions to ensure they are compatible with local expectations. These priorities should be acknowledged, referenced, and defended as shared regional decisions on land use, transportation, and public infrastructure are made.

Build & Sustain Community

Intentional integration of land use, transportation, and public infrastructure enables thoughtful interaction between the design of our streets, parks, buildings, and neighborhoods that support social interaction , physical and mental health, and foster a sense of community and belonging.

For example, building safe, walkable streets that are fronted by homes with porches rather than garage doors encourages informal social interaction. Design that creates a community where walking and biking are viable travel alternatives benefit physical and mental health as compared to an environment that is unsafe or impractical for walking or biking. Land use decisions that isolate different income levels reduce social interaction compared to neighborhoods that provide options for different people.

To advance this priority, land use, transportation, and infrastructure decisions should:

- Create places that bring people together and encourage interaction
- Expand transportation choices to make it easier for different people to get around
- Design public spaces that feel comfortable and welcoming for all
- Prioritize the wellbeing of our people and our ability to interact as a whole community
- Expand choices, accessibility, and opportunity for the people who make up our community

Foster Social Equity & Inclusion

Inclusive communities are those that intentionally plan for, design, and develop to accommodate persons of all income levels, races and ethnicities, ages and mobility levels, and gender identities. Thoughtful integration of land use, transportation, and infrastructure can help to promote equity for all members of our community. For example, locating residential development in areas proximal to existing services, infrastructure, and community centers can improve access to economic opportunity, promote social equity and reduce transportation burdens on those that may be most vulnerable.

To accomplish this priority in the Gunnison Valley, land use, transportation, and infrastructure decisions should prioritize:

- Transit and housing options that serve a spectrum of income levels near where people work
- Access to transportation choices for all persons
- Accessible neighborhoods that are home to the diverse mix of people who make up our community

Land use, infrastructure, and transportation systems are the powerful - but often invisible - shapers of our communities and our relationship to the environment.

Advance Climate Action & Environmental Resiliency

Advancing climate and environmental resiliency is necessary for the Valley to retain and improve the very reason we all love this place - our natural environment and agricultural landscape.

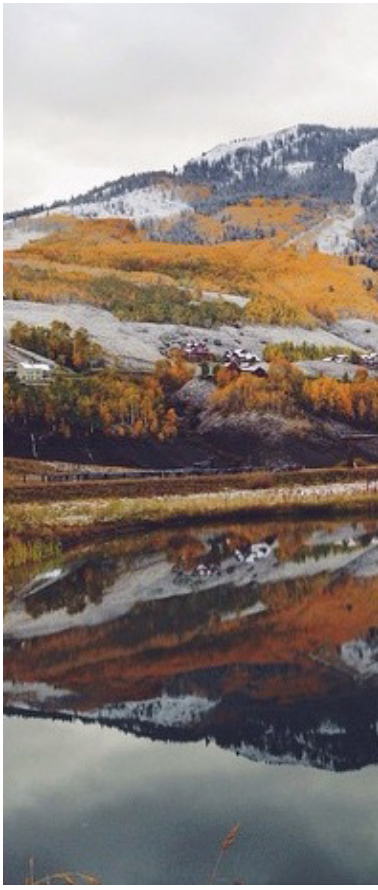
The Valley can employ both incentives (carrots) and disincentives (sticks) which prioritize climate and environmental resiliency in our policies, regulations, and capital investments to guide more coordinated and integrated land use, transportation, and infrastructure decisions. By locating jobs, housing, and amenities in areas with existing infrastructure and transit, people are more likely to use public transportation or walk/bike to their destinations, reducing traffic congestion, air pollution, and the need for expensive infrastructure improvements like new highways or expanded roads.

To accomplish this prioroity, land use, transportation, and infrastructure decisions should prioritize:

- Stewardship of wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, and the health of our watersheds
- Reduction of traffic congestion and air pollution
- Development patterns that give residents opportunities to walk, bike, and ride the bus
- Development patterns that exert lesser strain on municipal services such as water, sewer, snow removal and public safety and serve more homes with fewer road miles
- Reduce disparities in access to services, employment, and other opportunities

Photo: Dave Kozlowski.

SECTION 2 Regional Strategies And Actions



All communities in the Valley want to discourage sprawl, make the most efficient use of existing resources, shape healthy communities, and minimize environmental impacts such as VMT, GHG emissions, wildlife impacts, disruption to agricultural operations, wildfire risk, and decreased water quality.

STRATEGY 1
COMMIT TO OVRR COMMUNITY PLANNING PRINCIPLES.

The Gunnison Valley will continue to grow and change. While each jurisdiction has its own plans and policies, it is increasingly important that all of our communities align around basic planning principles that are foundational to each of our plans and also critical to shaping a healthy and resilient region. The principles below are intended to provide shared direction related to how the Gunnison Valley's communities approach future growth and development to ensure we work together to shape more livable communities today, and a more sustainable future for the region. By bringing them together, we can agree on direction and highlight the alignment in our approaches to community planning, while also allowing each jurisdiction to take its own approach to moving them forward. Endorsing the OVRR provides a formal indication of support for these principles, which were developed collaboratively by OVRR partners, and reflect principles and best practices within adopted local plans.

No. 1: Informed Planning & Decision-making

Successful community and regional planning in the Gunnison Valley relies on making sound decisions based on quality information about relevant issues, trends and tradeoffs. Regional partners should consistently collaborate to build shared understanding through data sharing and analysis, and ongoing dialogue between local partners and the community at large.

No. 2: Transportation Choices and Acessibility

Transportation policies and investments should create a connected multimodal system that links neighborhoods, communities and the region with a range of mobility choices, including a Gunnison circulator bus, and car/

bike share programs. This requires a shift away from conventional projects that prioritize vehicles over other modes of transportation and towards an integrated system designed to support a more balanced transportation network where walking, biking, transit, and cars are equal partners in mobility.

No. 3: Location-Efficient Development

Where we grow matters. Local plans, policies and investments should guide development to appropriate locations, discourage sprawl, and avoid growth in unsuitable/hazard areas such as resource areas with landslides, wetlands, floodplains, and wildlife habitat. Most development should be concentrated in and around existing municipalities and the Crested Butte South Metropolitan District. Development outside these areas should be limited, well-planned, and only occur where services (such as grocery, schools, medical offices, household goods, etc.) transit and other infrastructure exist or can be efficiently extended.

No. 4: Transportation Should Shape Strong Communities

Transportation systems shape our communities and how we grow. Conventional, auto-centric transportation systems are not just a symptom of sprawl, they create it. Local governments, along with CDOT, Mountain Express, and the RTA should ensure that Highway 135 stays a single lane highway designed not only to move people between communities, but also build and never divide communities. This will require more innovative context sensitive transportation investments and a commitment to improve transit in our future. Transportation planning must align with local community planning goals to help shape strong and vibrant downtowns, neighborhoods, and communities, while preserving our surrounding natural environment and agricultural landscape.

No.1

No.2

No.3

No.4

No. 5: Community Housing Choices and Affordability

Land use, transportation and infrastructure decisions must support local and regional efforts to improve housing affordability within the Gunnison Valley. Our region must commit to creating more community housing, which is housing that is protected to ensure it is available and affordable to the people who live and work in our communities, through preservation, conversion, and new supply. Each of these relies on supportive land use, transportation and infrastructure plans, policies, and investments.

No. 6: Complete, Inclusive Communities

All planning and development decisions should serve an overarching goal of creating complete inclusive communities. Complete inclusive communities integrate housing choices, quality jobs, schools, parks and trails, community gathering places, civic facilities, and strong local businesses. The result is more livable, equitable and accessible communities that offer a sense of place and belonging to residents, employees, and visitors. Complete inclusive communities stem from realizing all of these principles.

No. 7: Agricultural Preservation

As stated in the OVPP plan, the agricultural industry and the local ranching families of the Gunnison Valley are the backbone of the Gunnison Valley. The food, water, and landscapes that ranches provide all benefit the Gunnison Valley. While the industry and available jobs are a small percentage of total employment, agriculture's impact on the local economy is significant. Numerous studies have shown that many visitors come to the Gunnison Valley because of the open space that is a result of the contiguous landscapes of ranch land. It is unique in Colorado to have such large tracts of open land between communities and something that residents expressed a desire to preserve.

No. 8: Compact Community Design

Local plans and policies should encourage a compact form of development to shape healthy, walkable communities, minimize impacts to land, water and agriculture, and make the most efficient use of resources. Much more than simply increasing building densities, compact design relies on an integrated planning that harmonizes design of buildings, streets, and neighborhoods to create healthy, walkable places.

STRATEGY 2
BUILD SYSTEMS AND CAPACITY TO ENABLE MORE INFORMED PLANNING, POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS.

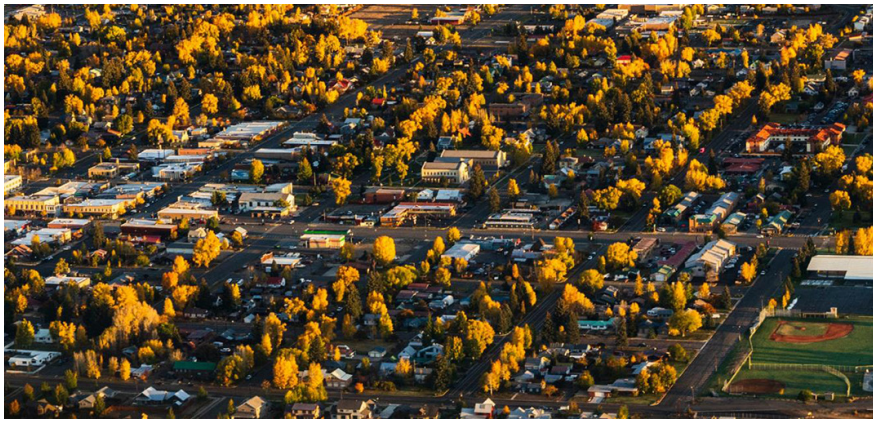
In order to plan for growth in responsible locations and discourage growth that is difficult to serve, each jurisdiction should have an understanding of existing plans and proposed and approved developments to gain a better understanding of current reality and where we are headed without intervention. This should be the first step of the three-mile planning process. Actions should include:

A. Regional Geographic Information Systems. For future ongoing collaboration and coordination, create a shared Valley-wide GIS, or other analytical system/resource database, for land use, housing, transportation, and infrastructure data that regional partners can use to evaluate and have informed discussions about growth and development.

B. Build a Shared Exisiting Conditions Basemap. Using this system, jurisdictions should work together to map existing conditions, including approved or entitled development, areas currently served by infrastructure and services, areas proximate to transit accessibility, and related information that can help create a shared understanding and base for future planning.

C. Planning and Decision Support Systems. Develop staff capacity to use decision-support systems that allow regional partners to create and assess alternative scenarios and have a set of shared criteria (building on the values and principles in the OVRR) that can be used to evaluate different planning or policy options.

D. Support Informed Dialogue. Seek opportunities to integrate information and systems within this strategy into strategies and actions in the Civic Capacity Action Plan; specifically, to support informed community dialogue and decision making.



Aerial view of the City of Gunnison. The City is updating the Three-Mile Plan, which will guide development for key areas of the County and City over the coming decades.

STRATEGY 3
ENHANCE MULTIJURISDICTIONAL PLANNING & COORDINATE INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSIT.

Multi-jurisdictional land use planning promotes efficient and effective use of land, encourages shared decision-making, improves environmental management, and enhances regional competitiveness. If some jurisdictions do not commit to playing a role in guiding future growth to sustainable locations, those jurisdictions may continue to grow at a more rapid rate and may have negative environmental impacts for the region such as increased VMT, GHG emissions, wildlife impacts, wildfire risk, and water quality. Capital investments in infrastructure (including utilities), transportation systems, parks and facilities, shape our communities and how they function. They shape land use and growth, and when done properly reduce sprawl. Actions include:

A. Shared Framework and Collaboration. Create a shared framework on how the jurisdictions will coordinate and collaborate on projects of regional significance (see Civic Capacity Action Plan in Chapter 5). Steps should include:

1. Identify the stakeholders
2. Define project scope
3. Establish communications protocols and outline how we engage the community
4. Develop a project plan
5. Assign roles and responsibilities
6. Monitor and evaluate progress
7. Address conflicts

B. Develop a Highway 135 Corridor Plan. The County should lead the development of a Highway 135 Corridor Plan in collaboration with Mt. Crested Butte's, Crested Butte's, and City of Gunnison's three-mile planning efforts, Valley-wide infrastructure providers, Colorado Department of

Transportation (CDOT), Mountain Express, and Gunnison County Rural Transportation Authority (RTA). Primary components of this plan should include:

1. Limiting the size of the highway, incorporating transit, and addressing land use, transportation, and infrastructure plans for all jurisdictions in their three-mile area, and unincorporated areas of the County.

2. Identifying where and when future transportation and infrastructure investments should be spent along with the anticipated location and density of future growth and discouragement of sprawl in inappropriate locations that are in alignment with community expectations.

C. Land Acquisition Prioritization. Prioritize areas for land acquisition for future civic uses such as schools, libraries, parks, or landscape preservation.

D. Update Outdated Infrastructure.

1. Update water and wastewater service plans and 201 studies to identify appropriate areas for expansion.

2. The City of Gunnison should continue to improve its outdated infrastructure (sewer, electric, and sidewalk connections) in order to facilitate new infill development.

3. Improve the availability of broadband throughout the valley.

E. Develop a Regional Transit Plan that includes:

1. Decreased headways, increased hours of operation, and increased service in existing areas that have high population density;

2. Consideration for a circulator bus system in the City of Gunnison that connects to the regional transit system;

3. Improved first and last mile connections to transit; sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus stops where needed;

4. Improved trail connections to and from bus stops to provide access to recreation using transit;

5. Investigation of alternative transit technologies, including electric bikes, to expand into the communities in addition to the Highway 135 corridor.

STRATEGY 4

ALIGN PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES WITH SHARED REGIONAL GOALS AND PLANNING PRIORITIES.

Many of our jurisdictions' existing policies create barriers to accomplishing the type of projects or development we want to implement in the region. Updating our plans and policies by removing policy and procedural barriers and inconsistencies, as well as rewarding the type of development we want, will help our jurisdictions grow more sustainably. Actions include:

A. **Commit to Plans and Policies that Discourage Sprawl.** Each jurisdiction should commit to playing a role in guiding future growth to sustainable locations and discouraging sprawling development, with an emphasis on areas within existing municipal service boundaries. Partners should investigate and adopt strategies for appropriate infill, redevelopment and revitalization in key areas and modify regulations that enable sprawl growth in inappropriate areas, in addition to a commitment to modifying codes to accommodate these changes.

B. **Update and Simplify Policies.** Revise policies to be more predictable and simplify and expedite the development submittal process for compact and affordable development in appropriate locations and make it more challenging to develop in areas distant from municipal infrastructure and transit service, where additional growth is not appropriate. One approach is to shift from a discretionary review to a by-right approval for developments utilizing a "pre-approval playbook" for projects that advance housing goals.

C. **Conduct Infill Capacity Studies.** Each jurisdiction should conduct (or continue working on) infill capacity studies that include integrating land use, transportation, and infrastructure decisions and identify appropriate areas for higher density development.

D. **Update Design Standards and Guidelines.** Upon completion of the infill studies, land use plans, and the integrated Highway 135 corridor plan, the County's LUR and municipal zoning, development codes, and design standards and guidelines should be updated to realize the outcomes of the studies.

E. **Adopt Three-Mile Plans.** Based on the outcomes of the municipal infill studies and the County's integrated Highway 135 Corridor Plan, each municipality and the County should adopt the three-mile plans, revise development regulations and review procedures to simplify the entitlement process and execute an Intergovernmental Agreement outline that commits to shared responsibilities.

SECTION 3 Action Plan

Photo: Cathie Pagano.

	ACTION	LEAD / SUPPORT	ESTIMATED TIMELINE
STRATEGY 1: COMMIT TO OVRR COMMUNITY PLANNING PRINCIPLES			
1.A	Agree on direction and highlight the alignment in our approaches to community planning, while also allowing each jurisdiction to take its own approach to moving them forward. Endorsing the OVRR provides a formal indication of support for these principles, which were developed collaboratively by OVRR partners, and reflect principles and best practices within adopted local plans.	Local jurisdictions	2023
STRATEGY 2: BUILD SYSTEMS AND CAPACITY TO ENABLE MORE INFORMED PLANNING, POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS			
2.A	**Regional Geographic Information Systems.** For future ongoing collaboration and coordination, create a shared Valley-wide GIS, or other analytical system/resource database, for land use, housing, transportation, and infrastructure data that regional partners can use to evaluate and have informed discussions about growth and development.	Gunnison County GIS Manager *County Staff*	2024
2.B	**Build a Shared Existing Conditions Basemap.** Using this system, jurisdictions should work together to map existing conditions, including approved or entitled development, areas currently served by infrastructure and services, areas proximate to transit accessibility, and related information that can help create a shared understanding and base for future planning.	Gunnison County GIS Manager *County Staff*	2024

	ACTION	LEAD SUPPORT	ESTIMATED TIMELINE
STRATEGY 2: BUILD SYSTEMS AND CAPACITY TO ENABLE MORE INFORMED PLANNING, POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS (CONT.)			
2.C	**Planning and Decision Support Systems.** Develop staff capacity to use decision-support systems that allow regional partners to create and assess alternative scenarios and have a set of shared criteria (building on the values and principles in the OVRR) that can be used to evaluate different planning or policy options.	Gunnison County GIS Manager *County Staff*	2024
2.D	**Support Informed Dialogue.** Seek opportunities to integrate information and systems within this strategy into strategies and actions in the Civic Capacity Action Plan; specifically, to support informed community dialogue and decision making.	Gunnison County GIS Manager *County Staff*	2024
STRATEGY 3: COORDINATED INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSIT, AND UTILITY PLANNING			
3.A	**Shared Framework and Collaboration.** Create a shared framework on how the jurisdictions will coordinate and collaborate on projects of regional significance.	Municipalities and County	Ongoing
3.B	**Develop a Highway 135 Corridor Plan.** The County should lead the development of a Highway 135 Corridor Plan in collaboration with Mt. Crested Butte's, Crested Butte's, and City of Gunnison's three-mile planning efforts, Valley-wide infrastructure providers, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Mountain Express, and Gunnison County Rural Transportation Authority (RTA).	Municipalities and County	2028
3.C	**Land Acquisition Prioritization.** Prioritize areas for land acquisition for future civic uses such as schools, libraries, parks, or landscape preservation.	Municipalities and County	Ongoing
3.D	**Update Outdated Infrastructure.**	Municipalities and County	Ongoing
3.E	**Develop a regional transit plan.**	Municipal and County Public Works/ Community Development Departments	2026

	ACTION	LEAD SUPPORT	ESTIMATED TIMELINE
STRATEGY 4: ALIGN PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES WITH SHARED REGIONAL GOALS AND PRINCIPLES			
4.A	**Commit to Plans and Policies That Discourage Sprawl.** Each jurisdiction should commit to playing a role in guiding future growth to sustainable locations and discouraging sprawling development, with an emphasis on areas within existing municipal service boundaries.	Municipal & County Community Development Departments	2025
4.B	**Update and Simplify Policies.** Revise policies to be more predictable, and simplify and expedite the development submittal process for compact and affordable development in appropriate locations; and make it more challenging to develop in areas distant from municipal infrastructure and transit service, where additional growth is not appropriate.	Municipal & County Community Development Departments	2025
4.C	**Conduct Infill Capacity Studies.** Each jurisdiction should conduct (or continue working on) infill capacity studies that include integrating land use, transportation, and infrastructure decisions and identify appropriate areas for higher density development.	Municipal & County Community Development Departments	2025
4.D	**Update Design Standards and Guidelines.** Upon completion of the infill studies, land use plans, and the integrated Highway 135 corridor plan, the County's LUR and municipal zoning, development codes, and design standards and guidelines should be updated to realize the outcomes of the studies.	Municipal & County Community Development Departments	2024 -2027
4.E	**Adopt Three-mile Plans.** Based on the outcomes of the municipal infill studies and the County's integrated Highway 135 Corridor Plan, each municipality and the County should adopt the three-mile plans, revise development regulations and review procedures to simplify the entitlement process, and execute an Intergovernmental Agreement outline that commits to shared responsibilities.	Municipal & County Community Development Departments	2024 -2027

CH. 5

CIVIC CAPACITY ACTION PLAN

SUMMARY OF GOALS & STRATEGIES

BACKGROUND

REGIONAL STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

ACTION PLAN

Photo: Cathie Pagano.

SECTION 0 Summary of Goals and Strategies

SUMMARY OF GOALS.

The One Valley Resiliency Roadmap emphasizes the importance of collaboration, leadership development, trust in institutions, and participation and engagement from diverse community members. These are all essential elements of a healthy and resilient community that is able to effectively address complex challenges and work toward shared goals through increased civic capacity.

OVRR sets three goals aimed to strengthen civic capacity in the valley.

Goal 1: Enable effective and inclusive community engagement.

Our shared ability to engage our communities - and the many different people and perspectives within them - is essential to our realizing progress within the OVRR or any other substantial initiative. Strategies are recommended to address systems and structures that create unequal access to power and agency, improve public trust through accountability and transparency, and strengthen our ability to collectively work through complex issues.

Goal 2: Enhance coordination and collaboration.

Local leaders clearly articulated the need to improve in this area going forward. Effective collaboration is not easy. It requires time, resources and capacity, as well as a commitment to the process of working together. Strategies supporting this goal aim to provide better scaffolding for collaboration within the Valley.

Goal 3: Expand and strengthen community leadership.

Effective community leaders are essential to realizing progress on any type of local or regional issue. Building the capacity of existing or emergent leaders - and working to bring new voices and perspectives into local leadership - is foundational to being able to tackle today's challenges, and to having the leadership in place for those that will come.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES

The Civic Capacity Action Team engaged more than 30 stakeholders and subject matter experts over a six month period to provide direction, develop goals and strategies, set priorities, and guide the work moving forward.

STRATEGY 1: Increase local capacity to design and deliver effective community engagement.

STRATEGY 2: Address barriers to participation in community processes, leadership and decision making.

STRATEGY 3: Strengthen communication between jurisdictions, partners, and the public to improve trust, engagement, and awareness.

STRATEGY 4: Grow capacity and clarify the role and responsibilities of the One Valley Leadership Council.

STRATEGY 5: Expand leadership opportunities through a dedicated leadership program.

METRICS OF SUCCESS

Greater diversity in community participation. Expanded representation and diversity of individuals participating in community processes, leadership roles, and local and regional decision-making, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location.

Improved accessibility and inclusivity of community engagement efforts. Evaluate the availability of multiple engagement channels (such as online platforms, public meetings, and community events) that cater to different needs and preferences.

Improved representation in leadership positions. Monitor the composition of boards, committees, and task forces to ensure they reflect the community's diversity. Track the number of individuals from underrepresented groups who have transitioned into leadership roles as a result of targeted efforts to address barriers.

Increased number of cross-sector partnerships. Share best practices and lessons learned from participants engaged in public-private partnerships to structure and pursue future partnerships that grow our local capacity for action.

Enhanced knowledge sharing and training participation. Increase the number of organizations participating in workshops, conferences, webinars, and other platforms aimed at exchanging knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned.

City of Gunnison. Photo: Cathie Pagano.

SECTION 1

Introduction and Background

CIVIC CAPACITY MATTERS

Political division and declining trust in institutions, including local governments, have hindered progress on important issues in the Gunnison Valley over the last several years. These dynamics reflect national trends, including increased political polarization, decreased capacity to agree on a shared set of facts, and apathy towards those we don't agree with.

Civic capacity is the ability of a community to work through difficult issues, collectively provide for community goods, and progress under changing conditions. Communities that have strong Civic Capacity have the tools, processes, and social capital to come together, discuss concerns, evaluate potential solutions, find consensus for action, and operationalize a course forward in the best interests of the community.

Weak civic capacity hurts communities in several ways. People are less informed and less likely to get involved. Fewer people pursue formal or informal roles in community leadership. Parts of the community form sides and an "us versus them" mentality. Other community members become frustrated with the tension and apathetic towards being involved.

Building and strengthening civic capacity is work that needs to happen within each community, but is also an area ripe for regional collaboration. The One Valley Leadership Council should be a lead in moving this work forward. Building Civic Capacity will take time and commitment. It also requires a willingness to understand and address inequities - including systems and structures that create unequal access to power and agency - within our communities. This Civic Capacity Action Plan provides practical first steps for moving this work forward.

Photo: Cathie Pagano.

CONNECTING CIVIC CAPACITY TO SHARED REGIONAL PIRORITIES

Each of the communities' long-range plans share three regional planning priorities (see Chapter 2). These core regional priorities guide community processes, decisions, strategies and actions to ensure they are compatible with local expectations.

Build and Sustain Community

Strong civic capacity creates a virtuous cycle that both supports and relies on a strong sense of community. It includes a sense of belonging and connection, interest in the well-being of others in the community, a desire to be engaged and help support community progress, a willingness to lead, a respect for others, and a commitment to doing the work it takes to tackle community challenges.

To accomplish this priority in the Gunnison Valley, jurisdictions should commit to developing programs to building social capacity and advance community engagement and outreach efforts which guide public planning initiatives to ensure everyone in the valley can share their thoughts, be heard, and have the opportunity to influence the outcome of every community decision.

Social Equity and Inclusion

Our communities should be places where all people, regardless of income, race, or background, have the opportunity to belong, feel connected, and engage in the work of shaping the community. Unfortunately, many in our community face barriers to participation and have limited access to access, influence within in local planning and decision making. In addition to marginalizing part of the community, this diminishes our capacity to make sound decisions that reflect the needs and interests of the whole community.

Building Civic Capacity includes working to undo systems and structures that create unequal access to power and agency within the community, and working to ensure that all of our community can participate equally in leadership, decision making, and civic life.

It also requires a commitment to effective communication and outreach, and building systems that support productive and inclusive engagement, dialogue, and community leadership.

Climate Action and Environmental Resiliency

Resiliency is a community's ability to adapt and thrive in the face of changing conditions - natural, economic or situational. Communities with civic capacity have the social capital and tools to proactively navigate uncertainties, address disparities, and foster sustainable growth. By building the capacity to collaborate, innovate, and respond to changing conditions, communities can cultivate a strong foundation for long-term resiliency and collective wellbeing.

SECTION 2 Strategies and Actions

STRATEGY 1
DEVELOP CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

Inclusive and effective community engagement is an essential component of strong Civic Capacity. Despite good intentions, most community engagement processes can be improved to be inclusive and address barriers to access and power within parts of our community.

Engagement Toolkit. Build a simple on-line engagement toolkit that can serve as a repository for basic engagement tools and systems that can be used by local governments or other institutions and organizations.

Facilitation and Engagement Training. Offering training opportunities in facilitation and process design, focused on sharing expertise and building foundational skills and knowledge, will help partners with their own engagement efforts and also increase our collective capacity for productive and inclusive meetings and processes. This can link with the engagement toolkit; local partners can learn from each other as they share resources.

KEY ACTION

Deliver engagement and facilitation training. Provide training for local staff and organizations involved in facilitation and process design.

Collaborate in developing an online repository of engagement tools and frameworks. Create a basic system to collect and share engagement tools and resources for use by all local partners.

STRATEGY 2

CREATE COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS AND CAPACITY TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY TRUST, ENGAGEMENT, AND AWARENESS.

Effective communication is key to building trust, providing accurate information, and enabling inclusive engagement and informed decision-making. Though communication was critical to the One Valley Prosperity Project, there was no investment in communications systems or capacity afterward. As a result, the public is largely unaware of past and current efforts, and resources and momentum from OVPP were lost.

Building basic communication systems and capacity will improve public engagement and awareness, and provide a platform for monitoring progress and sharing information, resources, and successes.

It is not realistic or necessary for One Valley partners to manage extensive communications work. The need is for basic, easy-to -manange communication systems that can provide clear and consistent information, house relevant resources and information, and keep the community informed. At this time, there are two key elements to move forward.

One Valley Communications Strategy. One Valley partners should develop a basic communications strategy that is simple and realistic. The resources and capacity needed to carry it out should be minimal. The Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley is well-positioned to take responsibility for hosting regional communications, utilizing funds provided by the OVLC.

One Valley Website. The OVLC should commit funds to building and sustaining a One Valley website that serves as an online platform for this work. The site can be simple and built on a platform - such as wordpress - that enables easy editing and management. As above, the Community Foundation is well positioned to host this site at this time. As the One Valley partnership evolves, it may make sense to transfer this responsibility, particularly if a supporting One Valley entity is formed.

KEY ACTION

Communications strategy, tools/platform, and resources. Create a basic strategy and build the necessary tools and resources to carry it out.

Create a website for One Valley communications. This work - the One Valley initiative - needs ts own dedicated website to host resources, provide information, and share the ideas and direction of past, current, and future One Valley work.

STRATEGY 3

ADDRESS BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP.

Throughout the OVPP and again in the OVRR, regional leaders emphasized the need for community engagement in the Gunnison Valley in order to 1) better respond to the diverse needs and interests of the community, and 2) expand the tent of leadership to better represent and reflect the diversity of our communities. However, to enable more inclusive engagement and leadership, we need to understand and work to remove barriers to access, influence, participation, and leadership.

Barriers Assessment. As a first step, the OVRR Civic Capacity Action Team worked to identify key barriers to participation and leadership, and provided initial guidance on improvements for each barrier. This assessment, presented on the following page, provides a roadmap and starting point for working to undo barriers and truly enable inclusive and representative participation and leadership in the Gunnison Valley. Further work is needed to expand understanding and awareness of the many inequities in the Valley and how they influence our communities, economy, and civic life.

KEY ACTION

Utilize Participation and Leadership Barriers Assessment. The barriers assessment on page 79 provides a starting point that each community can use. The Civic Capacity Action Team should work to revisit and refine this tool, and use it as a guide to working on barriers.

ONE VALLEY PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP BARRIERS ASSESSMENT

Several barriers hinder participation, leadership, and our ability to build civic capacity in the Gunnison Valley. These barriers create inequties and imbalances that place undue burdens on parts of our community, while giving others greater levels of influence and opportunity. These barriers reflect and reinforce broader inequities, including:

- Racial inequality and discrimination
- Gender inequality and sexism
- Erasure of Indigenous heritage, culture, & life

This graphic proposes strategies to effectively eliminate obstacles to participation.

Resources

Municipalities may not have updated information on their platforms, and those with lower digital capability or access may not be informed.

Remedy: Provide consistent, accessible communication on public websites.

Childcare

Without reliable childcare, caretakers, mostly women, are unable to effectively participate. Even if events are kid-friendly, they must split their attention.

Remedy: Provide childcare or at least child-friendly food. Extra outreach to parents will help them feel welcome.

Compensation

It is a privilege to spend valuable time without compensation. Many of those who need to be consulted the most have the most demanding work and familial schedules.

Remedy: Provide compensation for those who need it most.

Language

Language barriers create an unwelcoming environment for many in the Valley.

Remedy: Understand the languages that are spoken in the community and offer multilingual services. Keep language simple and jargon-free.

Awareness

When community members aren't aware of an event or given the information on how to attend, they won't participate.

Remedy: Use multiple forms of communication to provide info. Research shows 4X the people attend events that are part of a series.

In-Person

People are busy, and while they may want to participate, many obstacles can prevent them from showing up in-person.

Remedy: Broadcast the meeting virtually, provide a recording, or create online engagement to collect input from those unable to attend.

Location

Certain locations for engagement can spark distrust. Meetings located further from homes or jobs, may be more difficult to attend.

Remedy: Use neutral spaces such as libraries in both the North and South ends of the Valley.

Welcomeness

Public meetings tend to have unofficial rules on how to behave and participate as well as how the meeting is run.

Remedy: Develop tools and leaders so they feel more comfortable coming to meetings despite barriers.

Accessibility

Disabled people can face both physical and intellectual barriers. The meeting location, facilities, and technology should help them participate.

Remedy: Consider the varied needs of physically and neuro-diverse people.

Organizer Blinders

Event organizers who are unaware of the barriers people face when deciding to attend may not provide all the possible tools.

Remedy: Be aware of blinders. Develop tools & empower leaders to feel comfortable attending, despite barriers.

Time

Not all community members have the time, capacity, & resources to attend and respond to all engagement requests.

Remedy: A variety of time frames should be provided to facilitate different schedules.

Understanding

People have varying levels of access to education. Without the right context and content participants won't have an equal understanding.

Remedy: Keep it welcoming, simple, and jargon-free and provide the tools to understand.

KEY ACTION

OVLC will work to update and/or clarify its purpose, structure, roles, staffing, and related questions.

Create a civic capacity working group to move this and related community engagement and civic capacity work forward.

STRATEGY 4
STRENGTHEN CAPACITY FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION.

OVRR is rooted in - and aims to support and build - regional collaboration. The Gunnison Valley has a strong foundation in this area, but additional work is needed to fully realize the potential of 'One Valley' regional collaboration. Regional leaders reaffirmed this at the begining of OVRR, identifying the need to strengthen collaboration as a critical need and opportunity for this work.

OVRR identifies numerous ways to improve collabortion within each of the three action areas. The following actions are specific to building our overall capacity for effective regional collaboration moving forward.

Update the OVLC. The One Valley Leadership Council (OVLC), formed from the One Valley Prosperity Project (OVPP), coordinates regional collaboration and progress on One Valley projects and priorities. OVRR reaffirmed the importance of the OVLC, as well as the need to adapt and improve it. Building on work prior to the pandemic, the OVLC should clarify, update, or create language addressing its: purpose, principles, roles and responsibilities, decision-making processes, and structure. Additionally, the OVLC should address questions related to membership, funding, and staffing needs.

Additionally, once these steps are complete, the OVLC should step back to think about the long-term vision and intent of the One Valley work. In other areas, these types of initiatives have evolved into a structured entity - often a nonprofit - to dedicate more capacity and resources to regional work.

Create a Civic Capacity Working Group. OVLC members identified the need for continuted work and coordination to move civic capcity actions forward and recommended forming a civic capacity working group. It should include staff from local agencies or organizations working on related work and be designed to be nimble and productive. It would report to the OVLC, which will take a lead role in guiding OVRR's civic capacity work forward.

KEY ACTION

The OVLC and CFGV will work together to advance local leadership training. Outline near-term priorities for proramming and how to move forward.

Dedicate resources to restart or reinvent the State of the Valley products and events. Integrate with the engagement and communications work in strategies 1 and 2.

STRATEGY 5
PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Expanding and strengthening community leadership can help increase civic capacity by building a more engaged and connected community that is better equipped to tackle shared challenges and achieve shared goals. Leadership training gives community members the tools needed to address complex issues and achieve positive outcomes.

Leadership Trainings. The Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley will coordinate, working with other partners, efforts to provide leadership training and development opportunities. The CFGV is well-positioned to intiate and bring together resources for this work and the Civic Capacity Working Group could provide additional capacity.

Restart State of the Valley (SOV) Reports and Events. The SOV reports and associated community meetings provided a useful touchpoint for bringing the region together to assess progress, discuss key issues, and reaffirm a commitment to working regionally to solve shared problems. This work supports broad community leadership and engagement.

Succession planning in community and public leadership.

Succession planning is the process of identifying and developing individuals within an organization to fill key leadership positions in the event of retirements, resignations, or other departures. It is a proactive approach to ensure that the organization is able to maintain continuity and stability during times of change.

This is an important part of expanding and strengthening community leadership. Strategies to expand and diversify community leadership, if successfull, will ensure the Gunnison Valley has a robust, sustainable pipeline of individuals who understand and can advocate for priorities, proomote and strengthen community vision, and support the long-term success of the organization and the community as a whole.

SECTION 3 Action Plan

	ACTION	LEAD / SUPPORT	ESTIMATED TIMELINE
STRATEGY 1: DEVELOP CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT			
ACTION	**Deliver engagement and facilitation training.** Provide training for local staff and organizations involved in facilitation and process design.	Jurisdictions	2024
ACTION	**Collaborate in developing an online repository of engagement tools and frameworks.** Create a basic system to collect and share engagement tools and resources for use by all local partners.	CFGV	2024
STRATEGY 2: CREATE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS AND CAPACITY TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY TRUST, ENGAGEMENT, AND AWARENESS			
ACTION	**Communications strategy, tools/platform, and resources.** Create a basic strategy and build the necessary tools and resources to carry it out.	OVLC, CFGV, & One Valley partners	Ongoing
ACTION	**Create a website for One Valley communications.** This work - the One Valley initiative - needs ts own dedicated website to host resources, provide information, and share the ideas and direction of past, current and future One Valley work.	OVLC, CFGV, & One Valley partners	2024
STRATEGY 3: ADDRESS BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP			
ACTION	**Utilize Participation and Leadership Barriers Assessment.** The barriers assessment on page 80 provides a starting point that each community can use. The Civic Capacity Action Team should work to revisit and refine this tool, and use it as a guide to working on barriers.	One Valley partners	Ongoing

	ACTION	LEAD / SUPPORT	ESTIMATED TIMELINE
STRATEGY 4: STRENGTHEN CAPACITY FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION			
ACTION	**OVLC will work to update and/or clarify its purpose, structure, roles, staffing, and related questions.**	OVLC	2024
ACTION	**Create a civic capacity working group to move this and related community engagement and civic capacity work forward.**	OVLC	2024
STRATEGY 5: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL LEADERSHIP.			
ACTION	**The OVLC and CFGV will work together to advance local leadership training.** Outline near-term priorities for proramming and how to move forward	OVLC & CFGV	Ongoing
ACTION	**Dedicate resources to restart or reinvent the State of the Valley products and events.** Integrate with the engagement and communications work in strategies 1 and 2.	OVLC, CFGV, & One Valley partners	2024