



Sustainable Strategies for Small Cities and Rural Areas

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

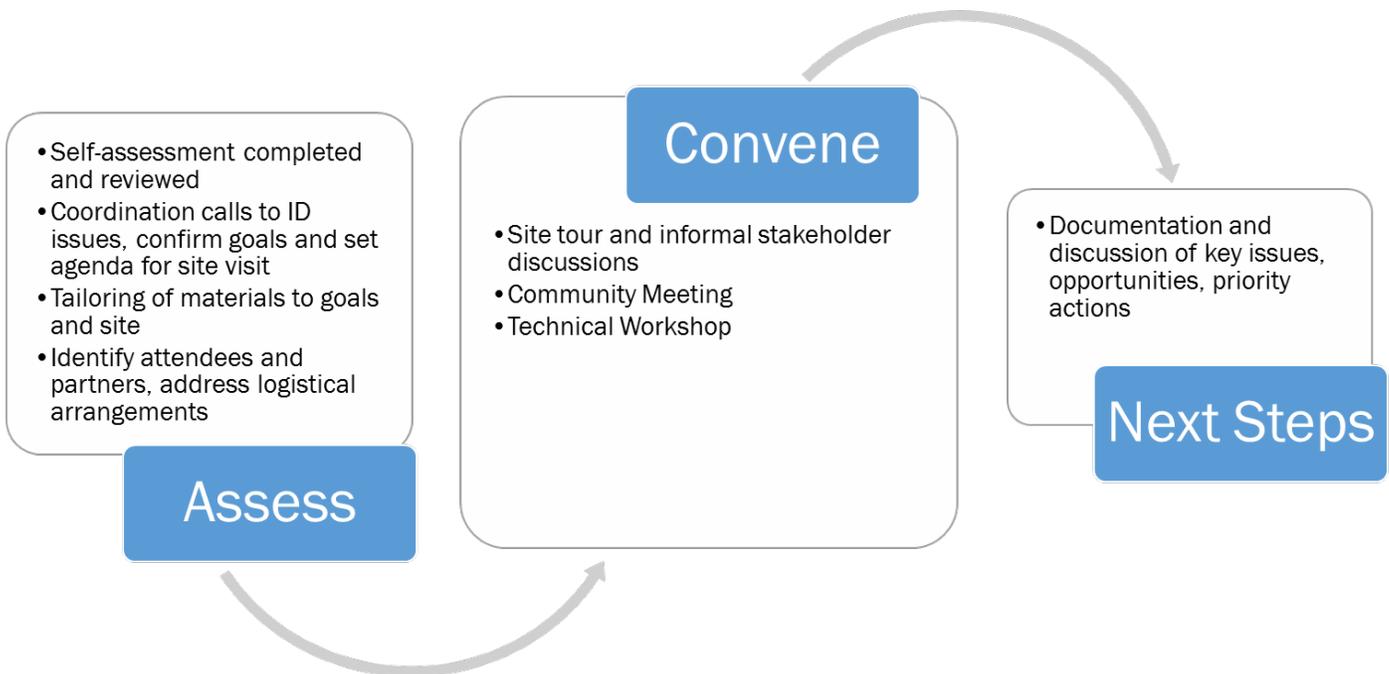
Steamboat Springs, Colorado
Next Steps Memorandum

September 30, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The core mission of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is to protect human health and the environment. EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities (OSC)—or the Smart Growth Office— helps to support this mission by working with communities to reach development goals that create positive impacts on air, water, public health, economic vitality, and quality of life for residents. OSC created the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program to provide quick, targeted technical assistance on specific smart growth development topics by bringing subject matter experts to communities. Communities request this technical assistance through a competitive application process.

The Building Blocks process is designed to move a community through a process of assessment, convening, and action planning—helping learn about a given topic and create plan to move forward on implementation. The program helps a community identify potential challenges, as well as realize opportunities that already exist to make progress. It includes a series of pre-and post-workshop conference calls, a self-assessment, and an on-site convening of stakeholders to discuss issues, next steps, and actions related to advancing the communities' specific goals. These efforts help a given community gain a deeper understanding of a particular smart growth issue and identify specific steps necessary to move them closer to implementation. The diagram below outlines the typical flow of the Building Blocks technical assistance program.



THREE STAGES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (CREDIT: RENAISSANCE PLANNING)

This memo documents the key outcomes of the technical assistance for Steamboat Springs, Colorado with the Sustainable Strategies for Small Cities and Rural Areas tool, and identifies key community issues, prioritized strategies, and specific actions to support smart growth development.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Steamboat Springs is a city of about 12,000 people in rural northwest Colorado. The city's reputation for abundant snow and spectacular scenery attracts winter sports enthusiasts from across the United States and abroad to its famous ski resort. Steamboat Springs is also known for its association with Olympians; six of its residents participated in the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia.¹ The summer is also popular with tourists who come for mountain and road biking, tubing on the Yampa River, hiking in the mountains, and relaxing in the towns' thermal hot springs. Many of these visitors and locals enjoy strolling in the city's vibrant historic downtown district, which is home to dozens of local restaurants and shops. The thriving tourism industry allows Steamboat Springs to fund government services via sales tax revenues alone, with no additional property tax. It is one of only four communities in the state without a property tax.



THE YAMPA RIVER IS A POPULAR DESTINATION FOR TUBING AND SWIMMING DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS (CREDIT: RENAISSANCE PLANNING)

Despite its benefits, the city's dependence on tourism is a cause of concern among city officials and residents. The city's budget and broader economy perform well when the tourism industry is thriving. However, economic recessions can hit Steamboat Springs especially hard. While Steamboat Springs weathered the 2007-09 recession fairly well, it has during previous recessions seen fewer tourists come to the community and spend money, resulting in lower sales tax revenues and smaller budgets for the city. The housing market also rides the waves of the national economy, as absentee owners constitute a large portion of the local real estate market, and those owners tend to frequent Steamboat Springs less regularly when national economic times are tougher. Consequently, city officials are looking to diversify the local economy.

Another critical issue facing the community is affordable housing. While the city does well catering to out of town visitors, many local workers struggle to make ends meet due to the high cost of housing—or are forced to commute to Steamboat from long distances, increasing vehicle emissions in the area and decreasing quality of life for workers. High demand, especially from second-home owners, has driven prices to levels that are unaffordable for many local service and middle class workers. Growth management policies are another factor. Large lot zoning has limited development outside Steamboat Springs' municipal boundaries. While this has been an effective strategy for preserving open space and scenic vistas, it limits Steamboat Springs' options for providing affordable housing through infill development and redevelopment, and has forced a focus on the western end of the

¹ Blevins, Jason. "Colorado sending 19 athletes to compete in Sochi Winter Olympics." *Denver Post*. January 17, 2014. <http://blogs.denverpost.com/olympics/2014/01/27/colorado-sending-19-athletes-compete-sochi-winter-olympics/261977/>.

city where there is limited potential for new development. Currently, most low and mid-income workers find more affordable housing in the towns of Craig (an hour away), Oak Creek and Phippsburg (30 minutes), or Hayden (30 minutes away).

Steamboat Springs has long articulated a city-wide commitment to sustainable approaches to development. In the fall of 2014, the city council set a goal of becoming a leader in sustainability in the region. In support of this goal, Steamboat Springs opted to join the national Sustainability Tools for Assessing and Rating Communities (STAR) program, which will give the city a report of baseline conditions for several measures of sustainability. That same year, the city also reconvened its Green Team: the nickname of its sustainability committee consisting of city department representatives and residents. The emphasis on sustainability extends beyond city hall through strong support from the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council, a local non-profit group that participated in the on-site technical assistance provided by EPA.

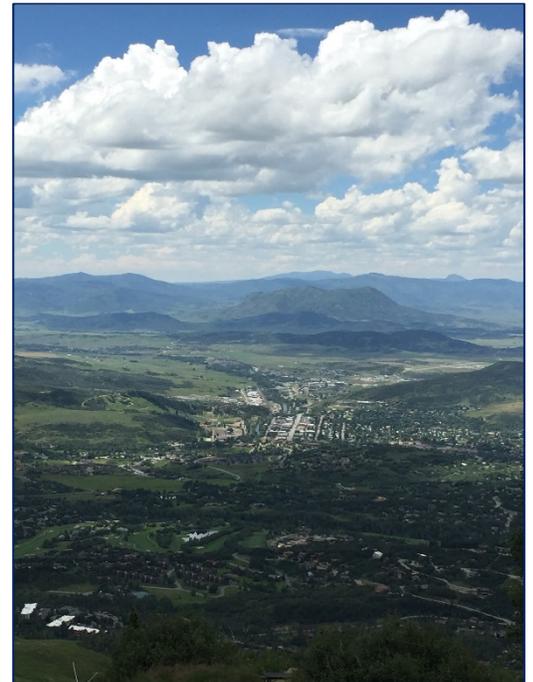
COMMUNITY CONVENING

EPA contractors from Renaissance Planning and Herd Planning & Design, with support from EPA staff, facilitated an on-site workshop in Steamboat Springs on July 13 and 14, 2015. The workshop brought together key local stakeholders to identify sustainable solutions to the city's affordable housing and economic development challenges. The city's planning department was a key local partner and assisted in the coordination of all events.

Site Tour

The workshop began with a tour of Steamboat Springs that helped familiarize the project team with local conditions. The project team visited the downtown area, ski resort, and a potential housing development area on the city's west side, among other key sites.

The city is preparing to build a new park off Yampa Street that would improve access to the Yampa River on the edge of downtown. The city also has prepared downtown design guidelines that call for improvements to downtown streets and crosswalks in an effort to make the area more walkable. Some of the streets, especially Lincoln Avenue—the main street running through Steamboat Springs' historic downtown—have an auto-oriented design that makes crossing them on foot difficult, despite the fact that there are local restaurants and shops on both sides of the street. Steamboat Springs has also invested in the ski resort base area, which is on the east side of the city. Tax increment financing funded infrastructure improvements to support new development. The city's west side holds most of the few remaining undeveloped large tracts of land in the city. A local housing non-profit organization has proposed development on a parcel in this area that would be eligible for low income housing tax credits.



DOWNTOWN STEAMBOAT SPRINGS IS VISIBLE IN THE DISTANCE FROM THE TOP OF THE SKI MOUNTAIN (CREDIT: RENAISSANCE PLANNING)

Community Meeting

The first workshop event was a community meeting on the evening of Monday, July 13. The meeting featured a presentation on the benefits of smart growth development, and a facilitated discussion about the challenges and opportunities facing Steamboat Springs. About 25 people attended, including city officials, key stakeholders, and interested residents.

Technical Workshop

The technical workshop on Day 2 allowed for more in depth discussions on goals, challenges, and opportunities related to affordable housing, sustainability, energy, and economic development. It featured a pair of three-hour work sessions attended by about 25 representatives from key stakeholders, the project team, and the local team. This group consisted mostly of invited stakeholders involved in local decision-making.

The project team presented the top challenges and opportunities that were highlighted during the community meeting and facilitated a discussion on those issues. The team then presented several strategies that could help Steamboat Springs address them. EPA's Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities was the primary source for these strategies. Of the 11 topics covered by the assessment, facilitators focused on strategies for the 3 that were most closely aligned with Steamboat Springs' primary issues. These were:

- **Housing:** Meet Housing Needs for Different Ages and Incomes
- **Energy:** Use Energy Efficiently and Provide Renewable Energy
- **Community Engagement:** Engage and Connect Community Members

By the conclusion of the morning work session, attendees had agreed to prioritize six key strategies – two in each of the three focus topics.

Housing

- Foster partnerships to build affordable housing.
- Use zoning tools to encourage affordable housing.

Energy

- Provide incentives for energy-efficient construction.
- Engage stakeholders and educate them on existing and new opportunities to increase energy efficiency.

Community Engagement



WORKSHOP ATTENDEES DISCUSS STRATEGIES FOR PROVIDING MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING (CREDIT: RENAISSANCE PLANNING)

- Establish and publicize a dashboard of sustainability measures.
- Develop a community engagement plan.

The afternoon session yielded a set of next steps in support of each strategy.

KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES

Throughout the workshop, affordable housing, communication, economic diversification, and sustainability stood out as top issues for the community. This section covers some of the highlights of the conversation during the workshop, starting with a summary of the city's strengths.

Strengths

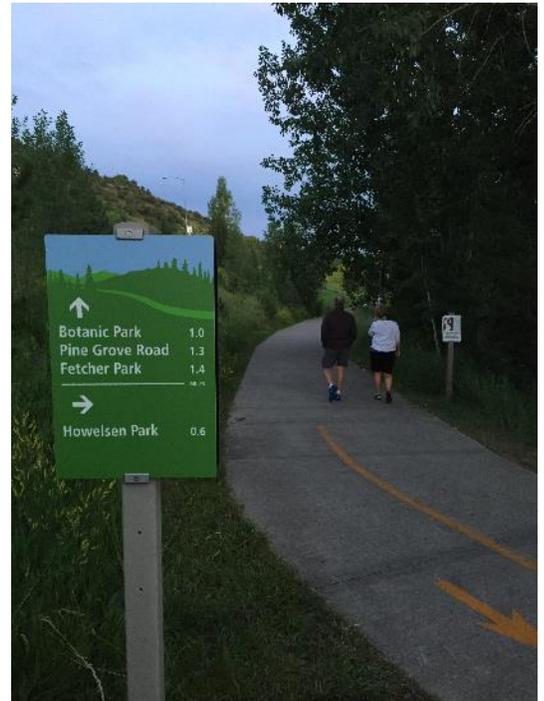
Steamboat Springs' most obvious strength is its natural beauty and the recreational opportunities provided by the mountains, snowfall, pleasant summer climate, and the Yampa River. These assets attract people from around the world to this small city in rural northwest Colorado.

- **Natural Setting:** Steamboat Springs is internationally known for its natural beauty. It sits just west of the Continental Divide, nestled between jagged mountains and the scenic Yampa River. Its beautiful, remote setting fuels the local economy by attracting visitors from around the world.
- **Recreation Opportunities:** Steamboat Ski Resort, thermal pools, hiking and walking trails, bicycle-friendly streets, mountain biking trails, and the Yampa River are among the assets that make Steamboat Springs a year-round outdoor recreation paradise.
- **Clean Air and Water:** The sparse population has kept the region's natural assets relatively pristine. Workshop attendees named clean air and water as critical assets to preserve.
- **Engaged Residents:** Steamboat Springs has a core group of residents that are passionate about sustainability and diversifying the local economy. These people are willing to volunteer their time to participate in the city's governance and promote sustainability programs.

Steamboat Springs' popularity is driven by its natural beauty, outdoor recreation opportunities, and pristine environment. These assets are also contributing to its high cost of real estate and lack of affordable housing, though, which are challenges for the community.

Challenges

A large portion of the workshop was dedicated to exploring the challenges facing Steamboat Springs. This was an important part of the technical assistance process, as it enabled attendees to identify strategies for overcoming them. Some of these challenges fall within the purview of the city and can be addressed in the near term. Others, such as economic diversification, will require more time and a broad coalition of partners to make change happen.



THE YAMPA RIVER CORE TRAIL IS ONE OF SEVERAL POPULAR BIKING AND WALKING PATHS IN STEAMBOAT SPRINGS (CREDIT: RENAISSANCE PLANNING)

- **Affordable Housing:** Housing prices are very high in Steamboat Springs. This is a common problem in Colorado's ski resort communities, and is a significant one, as the ski resort and the adjoining town needs a local workforce to support its operations. Many workers commute long distances from more affordable towns, creating environmental, safety and quality of life issues.
- **Implementation of Policies:** The city's elected officials and staff recognize the affordable housing shortage and have tried various policy approaches to address it. The city had an inclusionary housing zoning ordinance prior to the 2007-09 recession.² However, the recession temporarily cooled the housing market, and the city placed a moratorium on its requirement that new development include affordable units. The city is now looking into other incentives it can offer, as well as zoning changes it can make, that will increase the supply of affordable housing.
- **Reliance on Tourism:** Steamboat Springs' economy depends heavily on tourism. While the industry brings substantial income and tax revenue to the city, it is also highly susceptible to economic fluctuations. Tourist visits to the city are tied to snow conditions, other weather events, and the national economy. Tourism dependency has consequences for local tax revenues. Because Steamboat Springs funds government services through its local sales tax, government services are vulnerable to economic downturns. The city recognizes this challenge and views economic diversification as a long-term solution.
- **Community Engagement:** While the city has a core group of people and organizations that are engaged in local governance, much of the population is disengaged. This may be a result of the large seasonal homeowner population, most of whom spend only weeks in Steamboat Springs in any given year, and the transient nature of the tourism-based workforce, many of whom cannot afford to actually live in the town. Regardless of the cause, residents and city officials view community engagement as a key barrier for implementing solutions in the areas of housing, energy efficiency, and the economy.
- **Downtown Walkability:** Steamboat Springs has an outstanding network of bicycle and pedestrian paths, but the city's downtown streets are less pedestrian-friendly. Lincoln Avenue, which serves as downtown's main street, is especially wide and difficult to cross on foot. The distance between marked crosswalks is long, and there are few opportunities for pedestrians to cross mid-block. This is made more difficult by the relatively consistent vehicle traffic on the road, as Lincoln Avenue is the main driving artery through downtown, as well. Lincoln Avenue also has a center turn lane running the entire length of downtown, leaving no refuge for pedestrians crossing the 70-foot right of way. The city has plans to improve the downtown



FOX CREEK VILLAGE IS DEED-RESTRICTED AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEAR THE SKI RESORT (CREDIT: RENAISSANCE PLANNING)

² Inclusionary zoning ordinances typically require development projects above a certain size threshold to include some percentage of the units to be affordable to people earning incomes below the area median.

streetscape, but these plans do not address the pedestrian crossing issue. As of mid-2015, Steamboat Springs is still trying to secure funding for implementation.

- **Opportunities for Young People and Families:** Steamboat Springs is a safe community with quality schools and plenty of outdoor recreational opportunities. Unfortunately, housing prices and the lack of economic diversification push many young people and families away. Many people come to the area to work at the ski resort or in other tourist-based businesses, and enjoy living in the area, but leave after realizing how difficult it is to own a home and plant roots in the community.

Affordable housing is the linchpin of many of Steamboat Springs's challenges. It is related to sustainability, economic opportunity, transportation, and community engagement. Addressing this one challenge could make it easier to solve the other challenges facing the city.

Opportunities

Several trends and assets represent opportunities for Steamboat Springs to attract residential development for all income levels and become a more energy efficient, sustainable and more vibrant community. Top opportunities described during the workshop are:

- **Wealth:** Steamboat Springs attracts many wealthy tourists and second-home owners from around the world. These residents have a stake in seeing Steamboat Springs remain a desirable destination. Wealthy second-home owners are a resource that may be willing to contribute toward the city's efforts to improve downtown and provide more affordable housing in order to keep the town vibrant and special.
- **New Communication Channels:** Many towns and cities across the country are using social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook to communicate with the public. There are several social media platforms geared specifically towards local governments that are looking to improve their public engagement. Steamboat Springs also has the potential to formally organize neighborhoods and create councils that meet regularly and serve as a forum for participation in local government.
- **Corporate Sponsorship of Affordable Housing:** Steamboat Ski Resort could benefit greatly from an expansion of affordable housing. Steamboat, like many other resorts in the state, provides some units for employees, but current demand is such that they fall short of meeting demand. The resort and other large companies and institutions in the region could serve as champions for affordable housing and provide financial support for new initiatives.
- **STAR Community Program:** Steamboat Springs is one of nearly 100 cities nationwide participating in the STAR program.³ Through its participation, Steamboat Springs will set a baseline for measures in seven categories: built environment; climate and energy; economy and jobs; education, arts, and community; equity and empowerment; health and safety; and natural systems. This will allow the city to set goals in these areas and track progress. Participation also has the potential to encourage more community engagement.

These opportunities demonstrate that, despite the challenges that are present, Steamboat Springs has many of the pieces necessary to nurture affordable housing and increase its sustainability,

³ To learn more about the STAR program, visit this site: <http://www.starcommunities.org/>

positive environmental impacts and quality of life for residents. There is strong demand for its real estate; a small contingent of passionate and engaged residents and organizations that care about the region’s sustainability; and the city is taking steps to quantify its progress toward sustainability.

NEXT STEPS

After a robust discussion about strengths, challenges, and opportunities, the project team introduced strategies that other small towns have used to address similar issues. The presentation and discussion of strategies focused on the key topics of affordable housing, energy, and community engagement. The project team presented strategies that are described in the EPA’s Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities. Through the discussion of common strategies, four in particular emerged as the highest priorities in Steamboat Springs. These were:

Housing Strategy 1: Foster partnerships to build affordable housing

The public and private sectors both have important roles to play in providing affordable housing for lower and middle income families. A local government can be in the business of building affordable housing, but often lacks the technical ability or political will to take such a step. More often, local governments partner with non-profit organizations, or even with for-profit developers, to provide affordable housing units. The actions below outline some near-term steps Steamboat Springs can take to foster stronger partnerships with non-profit and for-profit developers to tackle the affordable housing shortage. These steps will benefit local businesses that depend on quality affordable housing to attract and retain workers.

<i>Supporting Implementation Steps</i>	<i>Why is this important?</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Lead Role</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Cost & Implementation Resources</i>
Hold a strategy session with major employers focusing on how to build more affordable housing	The lack of affordable housing may be approaching a tipping point where the middle class leaves for more affordable places	Short term to identify champions to participate	City planning department with CMC, hospital, Ski Corp, and any other major employers	Chamber of Commerce, Urban Land Institute, Jackie Lewis (attorney), HUD/EPA/DOT	Moderate cost to cover organization and facilitation of strategy session
Hold a public meeting on the topic of affordable housing to solicit ideas from the public and raise awareness of the issue	There is substantial interest in the community in affordable housing. Public engagement is a key first step.	Short term	City planning department	Groups that can help spread word of the meeting	Low cost to organize and facilitate the meeting
Convene developers	To learn from	Mid-term	City	All	Low to

to discuss opportunities	local developers and share ideas	(up to 1 year)	planning department	interested developers, major employers, realtors, etc.	moderate cost to organize and facilitate meeting
Engage wealthy owners of large tracts in planning for new housing development	The town has many wealthy residents and land owners that can be part of the solution to help maintain community and community character	Mid-term (at least one year)	TBD	Chamber of Commerce	Low cost to contact them or send information about the city's housing needs
Partner with the housing authority to identify regional solutions	The region has a housing organization that can help alleviate some pressure on the city planning department for identifying solutions and bringing people together	Mid-term (at least one year)	Yampa Valley Housing Authority	Major employers, realtors, city, and county	Low cost to coordinate with housing authority
Include questions about increasing the supply of affordable housing in candidate forums for various elected offices	Questions would allow the public to learn more about each candidates ideas on this high priority topic	Mid-term (for next election)	Groups holding candidate forums		None to the city

Housing Strategy 2: Use zoning tools to encourage affordable housing

Steamboat Springs has the ability to increase the supply of affordable housing through its zoning and development codes. The city used an inclusionary zoning ordinance between 2007 and 2013 to require developers to include some affordable units in their projects. The city put a moratorium on this ordinance following the 2007-09 recession and has subsequently pursued other potential policies. The next steps listed in the table below are options for the city to consider as it looks to amend its codes.

<i>Supporting Implementation Steps</i>	<i>Why is this important?</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Lead Role</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Cost & Implementation</i>
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					<i>Resources</i>
Identify and present to the city council developer incentives and new options for affordable housing developments, including “tiny houses”, deferred fees, and a fee-per-square-foot on large homes in support of an affordable housing fund.	The market is not providing affordable housing in the absence of substantial incentives	Short term to present options (1 month)	City planning department	Sustainability Council, Green Team, Young Professionals Network	Low cost – mostly staff time – to study potential incentives. The actual incentives would have a range of costs depending on approach
Consider allowing tiny houses and co-housing as ways to increase affordable housing stock	Existing codes are an obstacle to these types of affordable housing	Short term to present options (1 month)	City planning department	Sustainability Council, Green Team, Young Professionals Network	Low cost – mostly staff time – for both research and implementation
Encourage “live-work” spaces in new development	Existing codes are an obstacle to this type of affordable housing	Short term to present options (1 month).	City planning department	Sustainability Council, Green Team, Young Professionals Network	Low cost – mostly staff time – for both research and implementation
Build parking lots or a deck on the periphery of downtown to open up additional space for infill development that includes housing	The city has few large, buildable lots remaining, especially near downtown. Relocating parking could free up land downtown to be used for affordable housing.	Short term to study the issue and draft a report. Long term to build.	City planning department and County	City engineering, Main Street	Moderate cost to study the issue. High cost to build (structured parking can run > \$20K per space). Demand may support adequate fees to fund parking expansion, but requires further study.

Energy Strategy 1: Provide incentives for energy-efficient construction

Energy-efficient construction is a strategy that supports Steamboat Springs' goals related to sustainability, economic development, and affordable housing. Energy efficiency upgrades can reduce a homeowner's or renter's monthly costs for electricity, natural gas, and other energy sources, making it easier to afford monthly rent or mortgage payments. Programs that encourage energy efficiency also support economic diversification, as implementation of new energy-efficient systems or retrofits generates new jobs.

<i>Supporting Implementation Steps</i>	<i>Why is this important?</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Lead Role</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Cost & Implementation Resources</i>
Assess various energy efficiency and sustainable building standards and identify the most appropriate for Steamboat Springs	To understand the pros and cons of different standards and get everyone on the same page	Short term (less than 6 months)	Building Dept.	City Green Buildings Program and YVSC Sustainability Council	Low cost. Mostly staff and volunteer time
Develop a strategy to pass the 2015 International Energy Conservation Code IECC standards	The new standards will substantially reduce energy use and create economic opportunity	Mid-term (after the review)	Building Dept.	Construction community, City Council, Sustainability Council, Realtors, and architects	Low cost. Mostly staff and volunteer time
Expand the city's existing rebate incentive to include commercial structures and energy-efficient remodels	The current incentives could better address retrofits and commercial buildings	Mid-term (about 1 year)	Yampa Valley Electric Association	City, County, Sustainability Council, Yampatika	High cost. Will require money to implement the incentives
Remove obstacles to building small homes via lending, zoning, planning, HOA dues, siting, and the market	Allowing smaller homes and apartments is both a strategy to create affordable units and reduce energy use on a per-unit basis	Mid-term (1 year or more)	City and County planning departments	Green Team, Sustainability Council	Moderate cost. Mostly staff time.

Energy Strategy 2: Engage stakeholders to educate them on existing and new opportunities to increase energy efficiency

Workshop attendees felt that incentives alone are not enough to improve energy efficiency. There is also a lack of awareness about new techniques and existing programs in the region that property owners and developers can use to increase the energy efficiency of their buildings. The next steps listed in the table below can help the city and stakeholders raise awareness.

<i>Supporting Implementation Steps</i>	<i>Why is this important?</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Lead Role</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Cost & Implementation Resources</i>
Focus on green building in ongoing conversations through education and training	Green building is a key strategy for making the city more sustainable, but does not have much visibility	Short term (6 months)	Green Team	Construction community, Sustainability Council, Young Professionals Network	Moderate cost. Need funds or donated time to lead a workshop or develop a presentation
Organize a workshop on the 2015 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)	Build support for adopting the code in Steamboat Springs	Short term (6 months)	City Engineering & County Building Departments	Construction community, IECC state representatives	Moderate cost. Need funds or donated time to lead a workshop or develop a presentation
Organize an informational session for external audiences (e.g. builders) on existing energy efficiency programs	To raise awareness of existing incentives for energy efficient design	Short term (6 months)	Green Team	Sustainability Council, Construction Community	Low cost. Mostly staff or volunteer time to organize
Organize an informational session for internal audiences (e.g. city staff) on existing energy efficiency programs	To raise awareness of existing incentives for energy efficient design	Short term (6 months)	Green Team	Sustainability Council with city and county depts.	Low cost. Mostly staff or volunteer time to organize

Community Engagement Strategy 1: Establish and publicize a dashboard of sustainability measures

The city has made sustainability a high priority goal. Yet there is not complete consensus on what sustainability means in Steamboat Springs. The city is taking steps to define and measure sustainability

through the STAR program. Steamboat Springs expects to have data on baseline conditions for several aspects of sustainability in late 2015. This can be a starting point from which the city can track its progress over time. Tracking and publicizing progress can lead to buy-in from the public and stakeholders. The key will be for Steamboat Springs to select a small number of measures for which data is readily available, and then to communicate updates on the community's progress using the internet and social media.

<i>Supporting Implementation Steps</i>	<i>Why is this important?</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Lead Role</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Cost & Implementation Resources</i>
Define what sustainability means in Steamboat Springs, with an emphasis on environment, equity, and economics	To ensure that the dashboard tracks progress in areas that are relevant to the goals of Steamboat Springs	Short term (6 months)	City government	Green Team	Low cost, staff time
Build on the STAR communities benchmarking program to develop a concise set of sustainability goals	Enables city to track progress	Short term (6 months)	City government	Green Team	Low cost, staff time
Identify areas of progress that the local government or other organizations are already measuring (i.e. "low-hanging fruit") and identify what else needs to be measured	To measure progress towards sustainability goals against a baseline. Creates the outline of what the dashboard will include. Demonstrates progress.	Identify "low hanging fruit" measures in short term (6 months). Long-term for missing measures	City government	Green Team, students and professors at Colorado Mountain College	Moderate. Largely staff time and potentially interns
Research what similar towns have done to develop sustainability dashboards	Save time and money in developing a dashboard by borrowing best practices	Short term (6 months)	City government	Colorado Mountain College (student capstone project)	Low (for student-led effort)
Identify the technology needed to put the dashboard on the city's website	To identify cost effective technology that makes it easy to	Short term (6 months)	City government	Colorado Mountain College (student	Low for the research, especially with student help.

	create and update the dashboard			capstone project)	Moderate for the actual technology
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Community Engagement Strategy 2: Develop a community engagement plan

Steamboat Springs' city leaders would like to see more residents engaged in the local governance. A small group of residents serves as a good base, but the city would like to broaden participation and bring more perspectives to the conversations about affordable housing, sustainability, energy efficiency, and economic development. Workshop attendees identified social media as an underutilized tool. There may also be potential to engage people through more traditional outreach, such as neighborhood associations, and neighborhood meetings and events.

<i>Supporting Implementation Steps</i>	<i>Why is this important?</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Lead Role</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Cost & Implementation Resources</i>
Identify who will take the lead on preparing the plan.	Provide structure and assign responsibility	Short term (6 months)	City Council sub committee	City staff	None
Include a plan section on potential ways to set up neighborhood advisory groups	To increase citizen participation. These groups would be set up by each neighborhood	Mid-term (1 year plus)	Council Sub committee	City Manager & Planning Department	Medium cost (staff time)
Include a plan section on best practices for utilizing social media and other online tools	To reach more citizens. People use these tools daily.	Mid-term (1 year plus)	Council Sub Committee	City Manager & Planning Department	Medium cost (staff time)
Include a plan section on engaging second-home owners	To increase their support for community improvement initiatives	Mid-term (1 year plus)	Council Sub Committee	City Manager & Planning Department	Medium cost (staff time)
Identify and research tools for online platforms for engagement (e.g. mySidewalk)	Find the best practices and promising tools for engaging the community	Mid-term (1 year plus)	Colorado Mountain College class capstone project	City Manager and Planning Department	Low for the research (if students help)

APPENDIX

The self-assessment completed by the community and the workshop presentations are attached.

Additional Resources

U.S. EPA Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities

- <http://www.epa.gov/dced/buildingblocks.htm>

Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities

This tool is a comprehensive compilation of strategies that villages, towns, and small cities in rural areas can use to evaluate their existing policies to create healthy, environmentally resilient, and economically robust places. Hundreds of resources are included, organized by 11 common goal areas. This tool is identical to the self-assessment that communities use through the Building Blocks technical assistance.

- <http://www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities>

Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities: Madison County (2015)

This report demonstrates why and how Madison County, New York applied the Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities. It includes a case study of Dryden, NY and useful resources in footnotes and citations.

- <http://www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities-madison-county>

Federal Resources for Sustainable Rural Communities (2012)

This publication highlights federal resources rural communities can use to promote economic competitiveness, protect healthy environments, and enhance quality of life. It provides information on funding and technical assistance opportunities from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), EPA, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), as well as examples of how rural communities across the country have put these programs into action.

- <http://www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/federal-resources-sustainable-rural-communities>

Defying the Odds: Sustainability in Small and Rural Places (2013)

This briefing paper offers short case studies and lessons derived from a minority of small communities who made strides protecting the environment and promoting local economic competitiveness and community revitalization.

- <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4568/issue-brief-defying-the-odds-sustainability-in-small-and-rural-places/>

Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Zoning, and Development Codes

This publication provides smart growth policy options that small towns and rural communities can implement to ensure that their development is fiscally sound, environmentally responsible, and socially equitable. This report is especially useful for rural communities on the fringe of fast growing metropolitan regions.

- <http://www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/essential-smart-growth-fixes-communities>

How Small Towns and Cities Can Use Local Assets to Rebuild Their Economies: Lessons from Successful Places (2015)

This report includes case studies of small towns and cities that have successfully complemented business recruitment by emphasizing their existing assets and distinctive resources. These case studies illustrate successful tactics that other communities can use.

- <http://www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/how-small-towns-and-cities-can-use-local-assets-rebuild-their-economies>

Planning for Prosperity in Small Towns and Rural Regions (2015)

A clearinghouse of materials for rural regions and small towns, with publications, webinars, workshop materials and other information on a variety of topics including economic resilience, entrepreneurship, community engagement, downtown redevelopment and food systems.

- <http://ruralplanning.weebly.com/>

Cultivating a Competitive Advantage in Rural Counties (2014)

This report highlights how rural counties are pursuing asset-based economic development initiatives that create jobs and build wealth while preserving rural landscapes, culture, and heritage.

- <http://www.naco.org/resources/cultivating-competitive-advantage-how-rural-counties-are-growing-economies-local-assets>

U.S. Department of Transportation's Rural and Small Community Planning page

One-stop shop for resources about transportation planning in rural and small communities on the Transportation Planning Capacity Building website. It includes links to publications, legislation and guidance, recent peer events, upcoming calendar events, and related websites.

- https://www.planning.dot.gov/focus_rural.asp

Rural Planning Organization of America's website

Website of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Rural Planning Organizations of America network. Website includes resources, reports, and information about rural transportation events.

- <http://ruraltransportation.org/>

Workshop Attendees

Name	Affiliation
Cindy Cody	US EPA Sustainability Coordinator - Denver
Scott Conner	Green Team
Don Crane	Atmos Energy
Sarah Dale	US EPA - Washington
George Danellis	The Vector Group
Stacey Eriksen	US EPA Region 8 Urban Watershed Revitalization Coordinator
Jonathan Flint	City of Steamboat Springs, Transit Manager
Penne Fugate	Atmos Energy Corp
Tyler Gibbs	City of Steamboat Springs, Planning Director
Molly Goldberg	Ski Corp Board of Directors/Amnesty International
Bruce Hamilton	Yampa Valley Medical Center
Guadalupe Herrera	US Housing and Urban Development - Denver
Deb Hinsrark	City Manager
Sarah Jones	Executive Director, Yampa Valley Sustainability Council
Bob Keenan	City of Steamboat Springs, Senior Planner
John Lanterman	CU Boulder/Environmental Design
Jacqueline Lewis	Ski Corp
Chrissy Lynch	Park and Rec Commission
Megan Moore-Kemp	Yampa Valley Electric Association
Anne Mudgett	Community
Kelly Romero-Heaney	City of Steamboat Springs, Water Resources
Bridget Roth	President, Historic Routt County
Pattie Snidow	USDA-Rural Development
Roger Steen	Green Team
Arianthe Stettner	Steamboat Springs Historic Preservation Commission, Chair
Paul Stettner	
Sally Testrake	Green Courte Partners
Steph Traylor	Owner of Ski Butlers
Bill Wallace	Wallace Futures Group
Kady Watson	Parks and Rec Commission
Tim Winter	Routt County, Facilities