

# **Civic Indicators Project – Yampa Valley Region Yampa Valley Partners & National Civic League**

## **The Characteristics and Desired Outcomes of Yampa Valley’s Civic Health**

The following list of characteristics of civic health uses the framework of the National Civic League’s *Civic Index*. Each item in the list completes the following sentence:

*The civic health of the Yampa Valley community is enhanced to the extent that:*

### **I. Our Desired Future**

#### **A. Vision**

##### Development of a Shared Vision and Common Ground

- Shared Vision of Routt / Moffat County as our ‘region’ (regional vision is important for certain issues, but need to respect different city/town visions and data)
- Create a cycle to continue with vision of region and a forum to tackle issues
- Develop common ground through a shared vision
  
- Attitude of win/win through a shared sense of direction and purpose

##### Ownership of a Shared Vision and Plan

- Long term buy-in and ownership to a visioning and planning process

##### Development of an Action Plan to Achieve the Vision

- Action plan to achieve vision (action plan and follow through is important)

##### Implementation and Accountability of the Vision and Plan

- Accountability and follow up of a visioning/planning process
- Outline/benchmark of progress as we move towards achieving our vision
- Confidence and trust in the process and that voices are heard and outcomes will result

##### Attitude about Future

- Hope for future
- Instill importance of future

### **II. Community Governance**

#### **General:**

- Respect of differences of local areas versus the region
- Good level of voter turnout
- Community is solution focused
- Broad ownership of issues – and solutions
- Opportunities for civic involvement

#### Collaboration – Pulling Together

- High interest and belief in collaboration (sum is greater than sum of parts)
- Community pools resources to get things done
- Healthy level of collaboration (example of mental health and substance abuse)
  - Share education, information, address gaps in services

### Relationships in the Community

- Strong relationships in the community
- Strong/healthy relationships to break down perceptions of differences

### Roles of Sectors in the Community

Clear roles in the community for business, nonprofit, local government

### Economic Base – increase diversity and stability – leads to greater civic health

- A broad minded population
- Ability to live in community of choice
- Stability of civic health
- Continuity of civic participation
- Maintain a sense of community
  
- Maintain a “small town” feeling (avoiding too much elitism that resort communities can develop)
- Living in community of choice
- Average commute time

### **A. Citizens**

- Healthy citizen participation in the civic process
- Citizens feel confident that their input translates into public policy and decision-making
- “Responsible” citizen participation
- Citizens feel a sense of responsibility
- Informed citizen participation
- Healthy level of community awareness of issues
- Citizens connected to their region (and/or community?)

### **B. Local Government**

#### Citizen – Gov’t Relations

- Local gov’t facilitates and convenes citizen involvement in community decision-making
- Trust of those participating in local government to make decisions that will serve us well
- Effective use of citizen participation
  - Utilize input from the community
  - Develop avenues for shared ownership of decision-making in the community
- Effective communications with citizens
- More citizen participation in decision-making

#### Openness and Accountability

- Responsibility and accountability by the elected officials to the community
- Openness among elected leaders and city officials on how decisions are made and how input or recommendations are utilized
- Input into planning is respected by local gov’t – officials and staff
- Community plans are followed by decision/policy makers
- Open and transparent decision making process

#### Elected Officials

- Promote collective ideas/vision – avoid partisanship

- Local government (elected officials and staff) understand the issues that are important to citizens in the community

### **C. Nonprofits**

- Collaboration among organizations to maximize volunteer participation and demand for time
- Healthy number of people who are active participants in organizations and activities
- Healthy level of philanthropy in the community
- Sound viability of nonprofits finances
- Healthy number of services provided by nonprofits – eg. number of people served?

#### Coalitions/Collaboration/Communication to Address Community Needs, Duplication, and Gaps in Services

- Coalition of various interest groups to share ideas / collaborate  
ie youth issues/orgs/activities
- Collaboration of resources among nonprofits to work towards a shared vision
- Identify and address gaps in services
- Lack of duplication of services

### **D. Businesses**

#### Business Participation in Community

- Business community participates in civic activities
- Leaders of businesses in the community serve as role models in citizen involvement
- Businesses engaged in citizen participation activities (ie hold citizen mtgs at workplaces)

#### Volunteerism – Promotion by Businesses

- Businesses encourage volunteerism of employees through policies
- Businesses support volunteerism through financial support, flexible hours, offering space for community groups to meet, etc.

#### Philanthropy in the Community

- Coordination of philanthropy in the community
- Healthy level of business philanthropy in the community
  - Dollars, in-kind, time

## **III. Working Together**

### **A. Bridging Diversity**

- Engage a broad spectrum of the community in the visioning/planning process
- Balanced/Healthy diversity in discussions
- Recognize / acknowledge differences
- People feel a part of the community
- Diversity of participants on commissions and planning entities
- Decreased confrontation/Increased tolerance
- Citizen engagement takes into account growing population and demographics of the community

#### Engagement of Diverse Perspectives/Opinions

- Diversity of opinions engaged in the community

### Engagement of Youth

- Effective participation/engagement of young/emerging leaders (20ish)
- Engagement and participation of young adults and youth in the community

### Engagement of Elders

- Participation/engagement of elders in the community

### Engagement of Minority/Ethnic Populations

- Engage Hispanic community – disenfranchised
- Appreciate cultural heritage
- Effective use and access of mutli-languages in the community
- Engagement and participation of ethnic groups in the community – Hispanic, American Indian, Pacific Islanders, etc.

### Engagement of Different Socio-Economic Status

- Address chasm in economic status

### Engagement/Involvement/Utilization of “outsiders” or newcomers

- Involve seasonal/transient workforce in decision-making / employers to involve their employees in relevant community issues/planning
- Absentee Owners – involvement in community and utilization of resources

## **B. Sharing Information**

### Effective Public Communications and Use of Diverse Methods of Communication

- Effective communication
- Use of diverse methods of communication to increase information to the public - email, web sites and print/radio media
- Effective communication of meeting information to citizens
- Effective use of web newspapers polls (to know where community stands on certain issues and can communicate with one another)
- Diverse methods of communication (not just web based)

Informed public

Informed public on discussions in the community

### Effective Regional Communications

- Effective communication between Routt and Moffat Counties – on regional information

### Access and Use of Community Information

- Healthy level of community awareness of issues
- Use of community information systems
- Access by all citizens to community information systems

### Collaboration Among Media

- Sharing information and stories among the media

### Quality and Accessible Newspaper and Media

- Quality stories in the media – based on facts – present balanced story

- Access to outside news (eg. newspapers and radio access in certain communities)
- Access to news/radio and depth of reporting in Moffat County

### **C. Consensus**

#### Create Safe Space for Discussion and Diverse Ideas

- Creation of a safe forum for discussion and dialogue
- Common areas of interest as the basis for discussion (ie. transportation, housing..)
- Listen to all ideas
- Low levels of confrontation/High levels of tolerance
- Diversity in discussions

#### Innovative and Solution Focused

- Community is solution focused
- Community takes innovative approaches to solve problems in the community
- Create an attitude – we can work out issues
- Attitude of win/win – shared ideas

### **D. Crossing Jurisdictional Lines**

#### A Greater Unified Region [overlap with vision]

- A shared vision and communication of information between the counties (where appropriate)
- Create a system for on-going development of vision and forum to tackle issues – regionally – where appropriate
- Prioritize plans that are already in place – regionally
- Integrate plans – regionally

#### Inter-organization Collaboration Across Counties

- Inter-organizational cross-county interaction and collaboration (chambers, nonprofits, business, etc.)
- Interdepartmental communication between city and county

Respect of community differences and issues (between counties and towns)

## **IV. Strengthening Our Community**

### **A. Citizen Education**

#### Citizen's Education (young and old) – Access and Opportunity

- Civics education for citizens (youth and adults) to increase understanding of the civic process, feel their opinion matters (and ultimately to increase citizen participation)
- Conflict resolution education
- Instill education on importance of public discussion to general public
- Outreach programs about how citizens can participate in government and nonprofit

#### Citizen understand decision-making in their community

- Participants in community meetings understand the overall decision-making process and the context of their involvement and input

#### Engagement and Education of New Citizens

- Educate new citizens about vision of area and orientation to rural area services/opportunities

Technical knowledge of citizens in order to access information on the community

- Effective level of technical knowledge of citizens

Innovative School Education to Engage and Teach Youth in the Community

- Community involvement in place-based education to involve and teach youth about their community

**B. Community Leadership**

- Diverse leadership (age, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic)
  - Elected leaders
  - Local gov't councils and boards
  - Boards/committees in general – eg. nonprofit
- Integration across community leaders
- Healthy numbers of citizens involved in boards, etc.
- Good representative of the community

**C. Learning from our Experiences**

Reflection and Learning from the past

- Review the past – learn the issues, health care, transportation
- Participants in community meetings build from past knowledge and discussions when appropriate and are aware of past events/documents/information/processes that are relevant to their participation
- Learn from each other; learn from past mistakes

Learn from other communities with similar issues

Use of Indicators/Data

- Use of indicators to forward change – integrate data into planning