



COMMUNITY CANVAS

Steamboat
Springs
Community
Plan

2025



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Steamboat Springs!

Steamboat Springs is a community that prides itself on being a bona fide western mountain town comprised of passionate residents who want all community members to thrive. Our residents value the scenic beauty of the Yampa Valley, the abundance of recreation opportunities, our shared commitment to a sustainable and resilient natural environment, the valley's rich historical roots and agricultural legacy. Residents from many different walks of life want Steamboat Springs to remain a wonderful place to live, work, recreate, raise kids, and age in place. This plan embodies the collective community's values and sets the city, and our partners, on a path toward making decisions and taking actions that ensure we live by our values.



A Bona Fide Western Mountain Town.

About this Plan

The Community Canvas Steamboat Springs Community Plan (Community Canvas) serves as the City of Steamboat Springs comprehensive plan. Per the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S. 30-28-106 and 31- 23-206), “municipalities in Colorado are authorized to develop comprehensive plans to guide, integrate, and align regulations, investments, and services with the values of the community they serve”. Beyond what the Community Canvas is as a roadmap to community development, it is also a resource to empower and inspire local elected officials, community residents, non-profit organizations, the business community, and recreation and resort organizations to co-develop, define, and contribute to the shared long-term success of the City of Steamboat Springs.

During the drafting of this plan, the state legislature adopted new regulations (Senate Bill 24-174) with respect to comprehensive plans. State statute now requires comprehensive plans include two elements: new, required Strategic Growth Element and a Water Element. The purpose of the strategic growth element is “to discourage sprawl and promote the development or redevelopment of vacant and underutilized parcels...to address the municipality’s demonstrated housing needs and mitigate the need for extension of infrastructure and public services to develop natural and agricultural lands for residential uses.” The water supply element is intended to be updated every 5 years and should be developed in consultation with entities that supply water within the jurisdiction. This element of the comprehensive plan will ensure that coordination is being conducted on water supply and facility planning. (C.R.S. 30-28-106 and 31- 23-206).

The City of Steamboat Springs will update the Steamboat Springs Community Plan by December 31, 2026, to ensure the plan is compliant with state requirements for comprehensive plans.



Past Planning and A New Approach

From November 2001 through January 2004, elected officials, Steamboat Springs city staff, consultants, community volunteers, working group members, and the public came together to update the 1995 Community Plan and develop the 2004 Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan (SSACP). The 2004 SSACP established a vision for growth and development within and surrounding Steamboat Springs, with an emphasis on directing the type, location, and quality of growth, while addressing growth's impacts and reinforcing its desired characteristics. The SSACP has served as the city's comprehensive plan for nearly two decades, with a supplement to the plan completed in 2014. The 2014 SSACP supplement was branded **Compass**, as it was intended to help the community understand "where we are and where we're going." The 2014 supplement updated demographic data from the 2004 plan, confirmed the vision outlined in the SSACP, and evaluated various growth scenarios.

The 2004 SSACP set the stage for important land use conversations that are still happening today. These include the expansion and potential annexation of West Steamboat, the function of the Urban Growth Boundary, the intertwined

relationship between transportation and land use decisions, and the importance of affordable housing for community health and vitality.

The City of Steamboat Springs has grown significantly in the past two decades (2000 to 2020), adding approximately 3,452 new residents, a 35% increase in population¹. As the population in Steamboat Springs has grown, many of the qualities that make this place special such as scenic natural beauty, access to recreation, and rural, western heritage, have remained intact; yet some critical conditions that impact day-to-day quality of life have changed, such as the rising costs of housing.

During the community and stakeholder outreach conducted during the development of this Community Canvas, it became clear that this plan should take a different approach and format from the 2004 SSACP. Community Canvas will serve as a values-driven foundation that supports informed decisions that

¹ 2000 Decennial Census, US Census Bureau & 2023 Colorado State Demography Office Estimates

reinforce community values, outlines initiatives and actions that can be taken by the city and its local and regional partners, and organizes priorities outlined in other contemporary community-wide plans. During the public and stakeholder engagement for this plan, eight core community values were identified—further described in the "our values" section of this chapter—along with three major themes that summarize the current sentiment of what is needed in Steamboat Springs, namely, "maintain resident's sense of community", "sustain the place" as it grows and continues to attract visitors from throughout Colorado and the world, and "fund the future," aligning city funds with its values and priorities. These themes are used to organize the numerous actions and initiatives that were identified as next steps in the journey to reflect enduring principles as the community responds to current challenges. The Community Canvas is the cornerstone document of a family of documents that comprise this planning effort. In addition to this plan, there is a Future Land Use District Plan that gives more detail on the vision and implementation of land use, and includes recommendations for zoning changes, public investments, and a Future Land Use Map. There is also an Implementation and User Guide that is intended to direct city staff, appointed commission members, and city councilors on how to use the plan on a day to day basis for decision making, strategic planning, and values-aligned budgeting and planning.

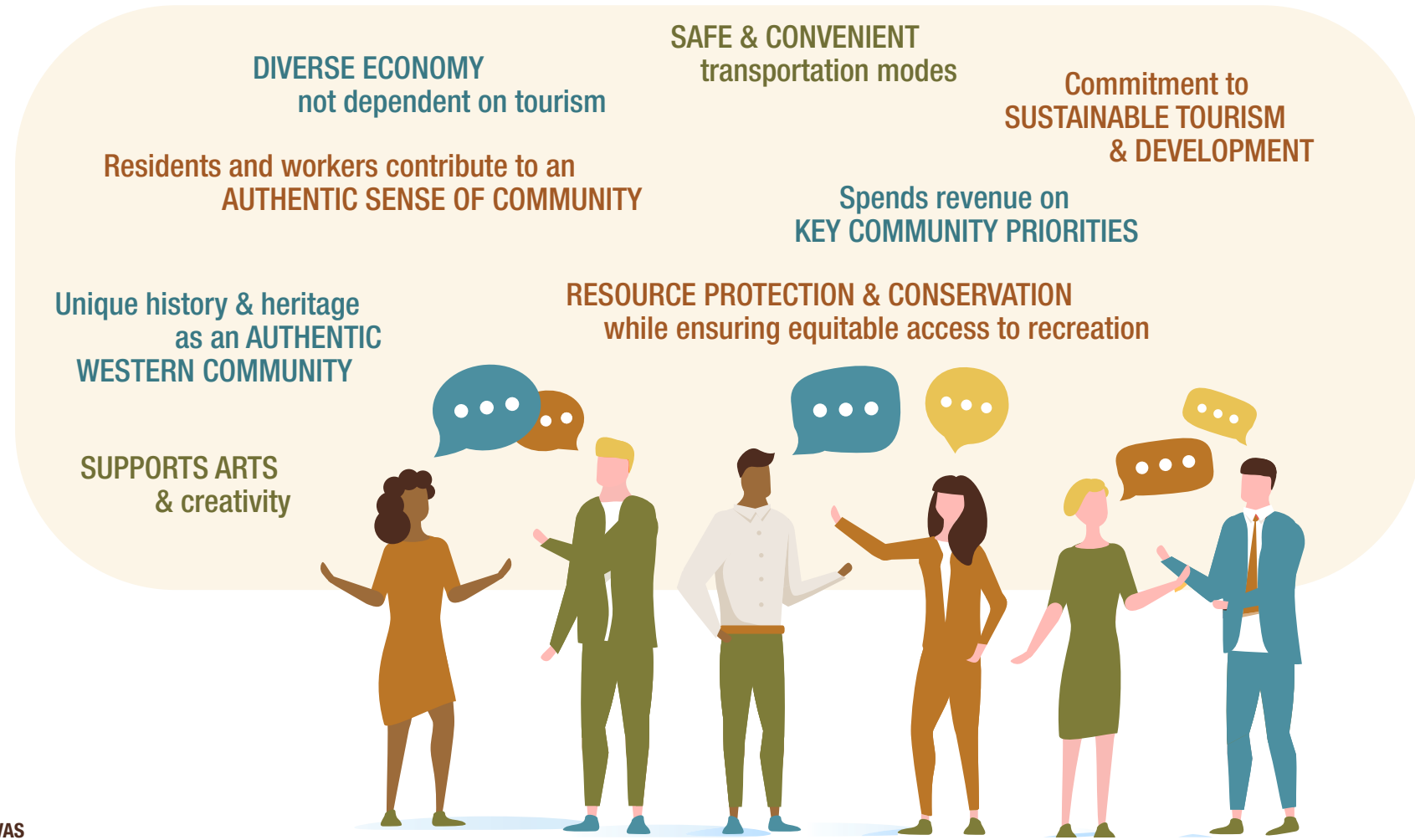


Community Canvas will serve as a values-driven foundation that supports informed decisions that reinforce community values.



Our Values

During engagement outreach for this plan, community stakeholders and residents were asked to describe the values of the community. The eight values identified are written in the “aspirational present”. What does that mean? It means that these values represent who the community is and strives to be on its best day, and who the community intends to be moving forward. Some of these values may feel more “aspirational” than “present” at the time of this plan. However, the sentiment of these values captures the way that the community wants to see itself even when there is work to do. While any value picked out on its own may not necessarily describe the values of an individual resident of Steamboat Springs, these values attempt to represent a broad encapsulation of widely held community beliefs.



Thriving Community



Steamboat Springs recognizes and supports community members and locally employed workers that all contribute to a thriving economy. These residents and workers contribute to an authentic sense of community and place year-round.

Diverse Economy & Identity



Steamboat Springs has a diverse economy that is not defined by tourism. Healthcare, arts, education, agricultural production, and light manufacturing are all key industries that contribute to and are supported by the community.

Outdoor Recreation & Conservation



Steamboat Springs residents embrace the numerous outdoor recreation opportunities available in the region from skiing to cycling to hiking, to river-based activities such as boating and fishing. The community is committed to prioritizing resource protection and conservation while ensuring equitable access to recreation where appropriate.

Sustainability & Resilience



Steamboat Springs is a sustainable and resilient community. The community has ambitious goals to reduce its climate impact, transition to clean energy, and mitigate environmental hazards such as wildfire, flood, and drought. The city and its partners have a commitment to sustainable tourism and development.

Investing in Values



Steamboat Springs spends its revenue on key community priorities and maintains essential city services at a high level of quality.

Emphasize & Honor Heritage



Steamboat Springs honors and promotes its unique history & heritage as an authentic western community with deep roots in agriculture, arts and culture, and snow sports. The community stewards its diverse types of historic properties and cultural landscapes and fosters a shared sense of history and legacy.

Vibrant Culture



Steamboat Springs is a place that supports arts and creativity in the past and present. Steamboat Springs is a welcoming community for art, culture, creative industries, and makers of all types. Steamboat Springs supports its unique cultural identity found in its historic buildings, landscapes, and community events.

Well-Connected, Multi-modal City



Steamboat Springs is well-connected by transit, bicycles, sidewalks, trails, and roadways. It is safe and convenient to get between key destinations via a variety of transportation modes.

Why Did the City Make This Plan Now?

The City of Steamboat Springs has a lot to be proud of. Steamboat Springs is home to a variety of local and national-tier businesses, a world-class ski resort, and hosts well known and loved cultural and recreational events year-round. Steamboat Springs was ranked #2 and #3 in the nation for arts vibrancy in small-sized communities over the last four years (2020-2023)².

Yet, at the same time, the city has recently reached a difficult juncture. Certain conditions associated with housing affordability, regional and local traffic and circulation issues, and a sense of imbalance between the recreational demands on the natural environment and the need for preservation, conservation, and ecological health, if left unchecked, risk further impacts to local quality of life, community character, and the health of the region.

Steamboat Springs was recently ranked #4 in the most expensive micropolitan areas in the U.S.³ and has grown in year-round residential population yet has not produced sufficient housing for the local workforce along the way. The city and its surrounding forests are seeing increased year-round visitation and are seeing some of the effects of climate change such as increased risk from wildfires and warmer Yampa River temperatures. These are just some of the factors and issues that are changing the quality of life and re-shaping the character of the community. This plan will give the community the opportunity to take a hard look at where Steamboat Springs is now as a city and community and identify informed and consistent choices that support and reinforce the community's values and identity.

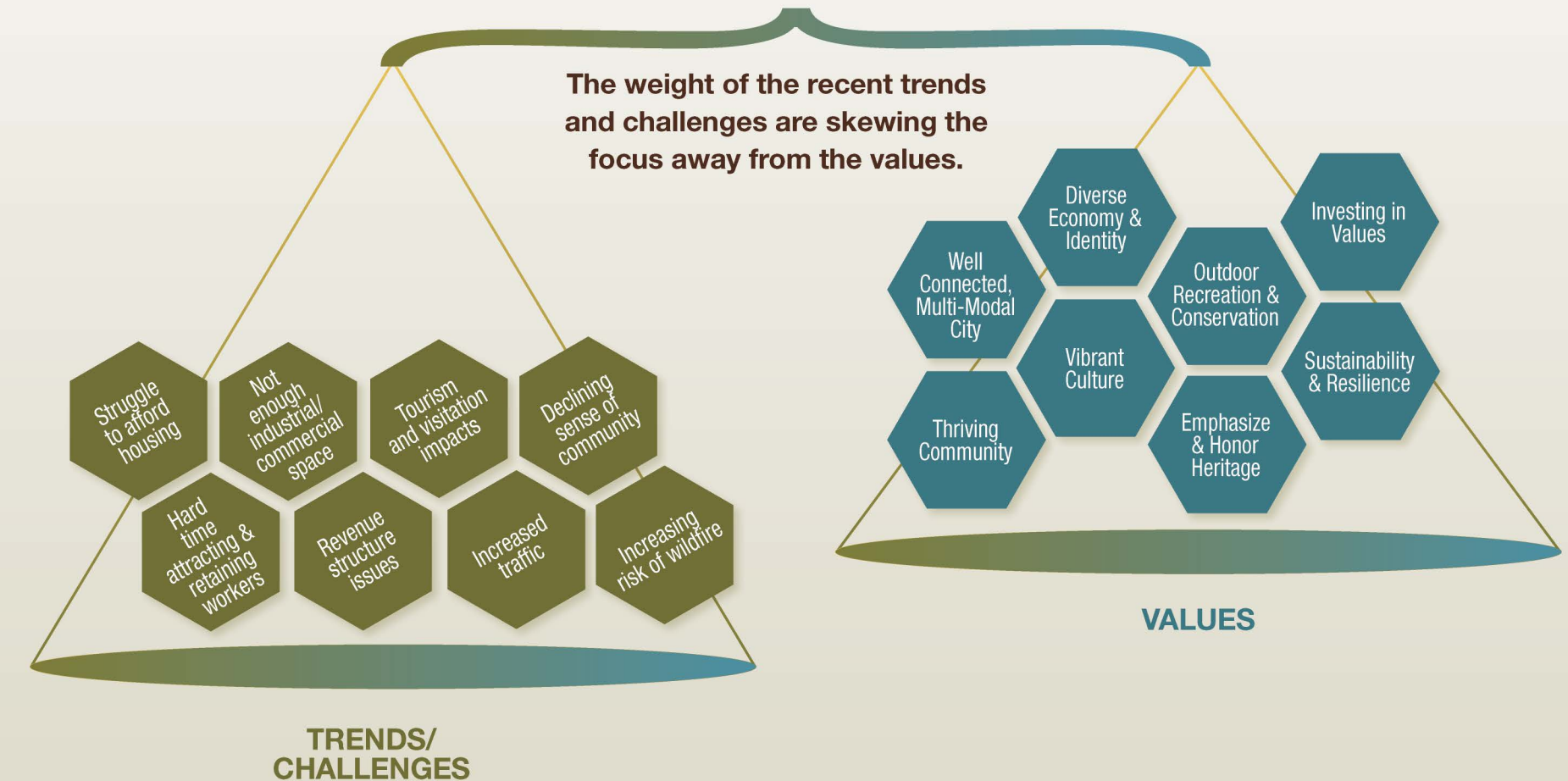
In short, there are trends and challenges that have taken hold since the last Community plan that are affecting residents' quality of life that are of such significant weight that they are taking focus away from the community's values.

² Steamboat Creates

³ Where are America's Most Expensive Towns (New York Times), 2024.

Why now?

Past planning and current conditions have us here, in a state of imbalance...



Trends and Challenges

Following the research and engagement phases of this plan's development, a form of dissonance emerged as it became clear that the many of the recent trends across all areas of life in Steamboat Springs, such as the dramatic increase recreation-based visitation, may be seen as out of line with the values of the community, as it relates to impact on natural resources. Existing conditions memorandum were completed at the beginning of the project and are in Appendix A.

Further, there are challenges that the community is facing that exhibit the signs of "wicked problems". Wicked problems are complex social issues that are difficult or impossible to solve, are usually interconnected, and often have solutions that may cause unintended consequences or create winners and losers. These types of challenges may require that an intervention to alleviate one point of conflict could create added stress in a

different area of life. For example, the city's fiscal dependence on sales tax revenue requires that visitors continue to purchase goods and services in Steamboat Springs in order to ensure that municipal services are funded, yet residents are increasingly worried about the impact on quality of life associated with increasing tourism visitation on the sense of community, the use of housing units for short-term rentals, and the experienced effect on recreation amenities.

Responding to wicked problems frequently requires solutions that acknowledge the potential "tradeoffs" that come with pursuit of a specific intervention. Tradeoffs associated with picking a policy solution that addresses one area of life such as instituting additional property taxes to diversify the city's revenue sources may have adverse effects on other areas of life, such as the financial burden that would be added to individual property owners in Steamboat Springs. Communities facing similar deliberations on the tradeoffs associated with different

policy choices, projects, or community planning initiatives to address wicked problems often experience policy development bottlenecks, making it hard to move forward or change course. While it is important to consider the tradeoffs between various interventions, over-consideration can lead to inaction. The trends and the challenges that are impacting quality of life for residents, and veering the community away from its values will not be solved by maintaining the status quo.

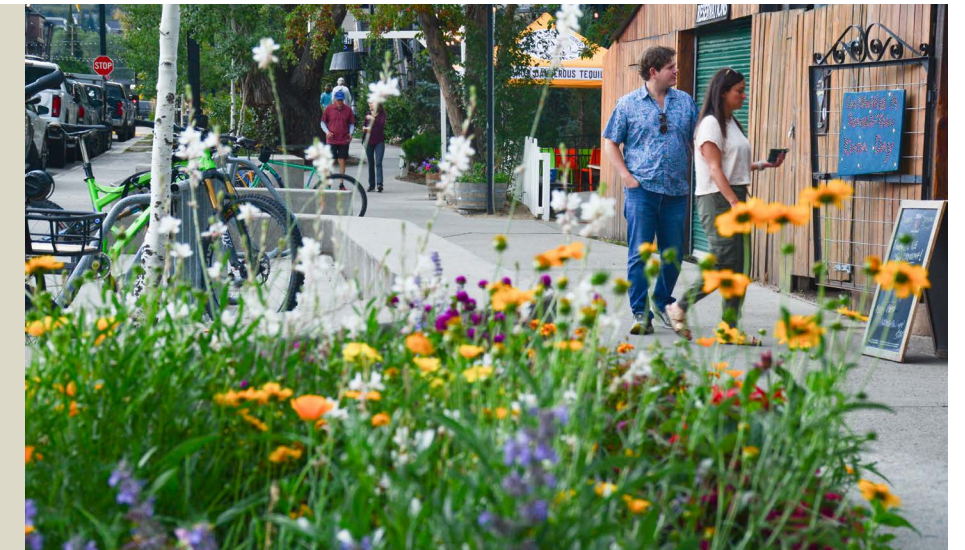
Below is a summary of the trends and challenges observed in developing the Community Canvas. When overlaid with the community's values, these trends and challenges highlight the need for making informed choices on policies, projects, and funding decisions that will result in the most quality-of-life improvement for residents, even if there are unintended consequences associated with the decision to prioritize one intervention over another. While many of these trends may seem negative, these trends and challenges are not intended to be a

mark or grade against Steamboat Springs. Rather, their intention is to be used as navigational markers to understand where the community may be veering away from its values and use these trends as ways to point towards possible actions that would reverse the trend or at the very least mitigate its most pernicious effects.

The following chapters will outline actions and initiatives that the city could take to address trends and start to alleviate turbulence by prioritizing certain initiatives. By considering, scoping, and pursuing these actions and initiatives, the city can have productive conversations between residents, elected officials, city staff, non-profit, and private sector partners in deciding what choices need to be made to allow the community to move forward on a path that is more closely aligned with its vision and values. This informed decision-making approach will not be easy, but it will be necessary to ensure that the city is able to live its values in the future.



Maintaining the status quo will not be sufficient to re-orient Steamboat Springs away from the negative trends that are pulling the community away from it's values.



Trends: A community that is heading away from its values.

- » Workers at local businesses struggle to afford to live in or near Steamboat Springs. The household income needed to afford the median home or rent price continues to increase while wages have not increased at a rate that keeps up with rising housing costs and high cost of living. In 2022, when the median home price for a single-family home was \$1.71 million, a family of four would need to earn roughly \$378,000 annually or 350% of the area median income. The 2025 Yampa Valley Housing Authority Housing Demand Study notes that the median family home price has increased at a rate of 16% per year since 2019.⁴
- » Employers have a challenging time attracting and retaining workers, primarily due to those workers having difficulty finding housing within an attainable price range. This was expressed during focus groups and informal interviews with employers.
- » Additional industrial and commercial space are not being built, and the price for existing space are becoming more

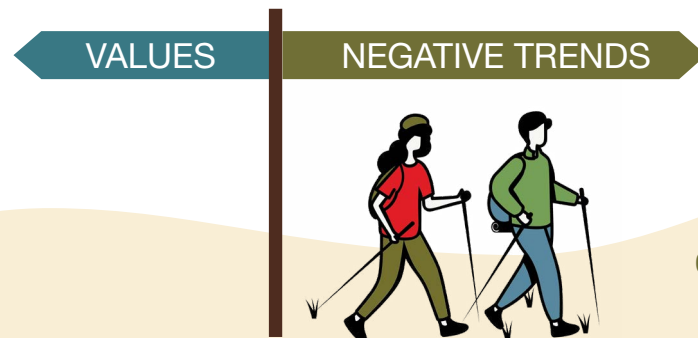
expensive, leading businesses to relocate to communities with more affordable spaces. This trend works against the community's value of having a diverse local economy that is not dependent on tourism alone, as adequate supply of commercial and industrial space is needed for current business to expand, or for new industries to find space to locate in Steamboat Springs. An example is the relocation of The Industrial Company which relocated to Lone Tree in the Metro Denver area. Since 2020 industrial space in Steamboat Springs has remained stagnant while nearby Hayden has added nearly 7,000 square-feet of industrial space since 2020.

- » Steamboat Springs has failed to leverage development and other funding mechanisms that contribute to infrastructure, services and housing, as other resort towns in Colorado have. A significant portion of the city's annual income is derived from restricted revenue sources, funded primarily by sales tax (both regional residents and visitors), to fund municipal

operations, infrastructure maintenance, and capital projects. The city's revenue structure makes it vulnerable to tourism downturns, flattening visitation, inflation, economic declines, and its ability to keep up with a high level of services as it grows.

- » Growing interest in outdoor recreation, from both a residential population that values access to outdoor access and increased recreation-based tourism visitation create issues with crowding at recreation sites, transportation resources, and is affecting the sense of community cohesiveness among year-round residents. Increased outdoor recreation in general raises conflicts between recreation groups and natural resources groups pitting the issues of access to recreation with natural resource conservation against one another.
- » Increased visitation, regional population growth, increased development, and daily commuters from outlying communities are causing increased traffic volumes within the city, particularly on US Highway 40.

⁴ <https://yvha.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/2.-Housing-Market-Demand-Study-Executive-Summary-July-2025.pdf>



MEDIAN SALES PRICE OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

2020-2021 increased by 57.8%	2018-2222 doubled \$762k > \$1.71M
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WORKFORCE TRANSPORTATION

people work in Steamboat Springs 10,896	commute in from outside the city 57.8%
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NATURAL RESOURCES

Drought costs Routt County \$3.9M	by 2050 without mitigation costs may increase up to \$21M
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Wildfire anticipated
annual costs
\$520k

- » Steamboat Springs residents are expressing that they feel a declining sense of community. During outreach efforts conducted for this plan, residents expressed that watching a growing number of their fellow community members leave Steamboat Springs out of necessity impacts their sense of community cohesion as their friends, family, co-workers, and social support networks cannot keep pace with the cost of living. In the 2022 Community Survey 81% of respondents said the sense of community was excellent or good, whereas in 2024 that rate fell to 67%.
- » There is an increasing risk of wildfire in and around the city as well as increased environmental hazard impacts associated with a changing climate, such as increasing air and water temperatures, shorter winters, and more intense periods of flood and drought. In a moderate climate change scenario, wildfire is anticipated to inflict approximately \$520,000 annually in costs to Routt County via damage to property and increased fire suppression costs.

Challenges: A community that will have to address tradeoffs and make hard choices.

Steamboat Springs’ city budget is becoming more constrained and is generally insufficient to successfully pursue all priorities. Furthermore, there is inadequate city revenue to be able to deliver on daily operations and maintenance, which will impact the functioning and lifecycle of public infrastructure. The choice, or tradeoff, is whether to grow the existing revenue in the budget (grow the pie) or re-prioritize the current revenue in the budget (reallocate the pie) and acknowledge what may not be done because of re-allocation.

The city’s general fund, which includes funding for most essential services, is 65-70% funded by sales taxes. While much of the city’s sales tax revenue collection comes from local and regional spending on goods and services, visitor spending is estimated to make up nearly 40% of sales tax generation⁵. Further, sales taxes can face resiliency challenges in the face of economic downturns when people tend to reduce their discretionary spending, including non-essential goods and travel expenses. Steamboat Springs collects limited property taxes for specific purposes such as a funding source for affordable housing and Fire and EMS services. This limited approach to municipal property tax collection is disconnecting city revenue from residential growth and development, which means population growth increases costs without necessarily generating enough municipal revenue to provide and maintain adequate public services and infrastructure. While the city collects some taxes and fees during the development process, these revenues are typically insufficient to sustain long-term municipal obligations to the public infrastructure provided to service these developments. This leads to a missed opportunity to align public investment with growth and development. Addressing city funding challenges by levying new taxes or fees to “Invest in values” will require the community to decide what funding mechanisms raise the required municipal revenue to operate and expand city services while mitigating against the externalities associated with new taxes or fees.

Advocacy groups, departments, and special interest groups are working to get their items funded and interests satisfied. This faction-like attitude can lead to dysfunction and missed opportunities for collaboration. There is a need to think

⁵ *City of Steamboat Springs 2024 Strategic Plan*

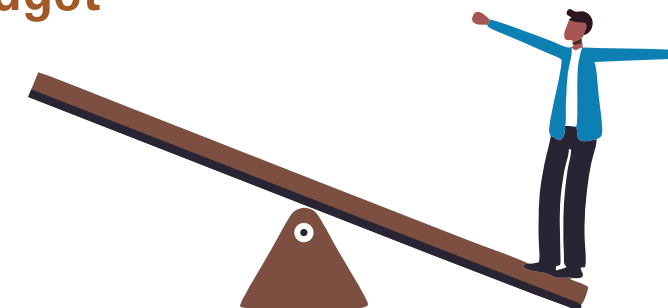
about the community from a more holistic and community-wide perspective, rather than from the perspective of special interests. This dynamic is emerging, in part, due to constrained funding causing groups to compete for limited funding (such as from Community Support Funding). To address the challenges associated with competition for limited resources, there is a need to find more opportunities for collaboration as opposed to viewing each interest in a vacuum.

Residents expressed the sentiment that increased visitation is linked to degraded quality of life as seen through increased traffic, natural resource degradation, decreased access to trails and other outdoor recreation, and increased vehicular congestion downtown. The proliferation of short-term rentals and seasonal residences in parts of the city that were previously viewed as primarily serving local housing needs, further exacerbated challenges between residents and visitors as the supply of housing units in the city is and has been insufficient to house year-round residents and workers. However, city

revenue streams and economic activities are heavily reliant on visitation, creating a tension between the quality of life of residents, the economic vitality of the community, and the fiscal solvency of the city. Importantly, not all traffic congestion is due to visitation, thousands of commuters drive into Steamboat Springs each day for work, joining residents and visitors that use the transportation network for all manner of daily trips (e.g., commuting, shopping, travel to school, etc.).

The City of Steamboat Springs has recently regulated short term rentals in the city by capping—or banning—short term rentals in parts of the city. Further, the city instituted a short-term rental tax to mitigate the challenges that short-term rentals place on a constrained housing market and will leverage this funding to support affordable and attainable workforce housing. The City of Steamboat Springs will need to find additional ways to invest in the community’s values by leveraging other funding sources beyond sales taxes to further decouple city revenue from a reliance on sustained or increasing tourism

Grow the Existing Revenue in the Budget



Re-prioritize the Current Revenue

visitation. Mountain resort adjacent communities have seen increased visitation levels since the COVID-19 pandemic, and with the increase in remote work, flexible work schedules, ski passes that give passholders access to many different mountains, and the growth in the population of the State of Colorado will likely mean that increased visitation will be the new normal for Steamboat Springs. The Steamboat Springs community will need to have conversations about how to best set visitors up for success so that they can be aware of how to recreate responsibly and be more aware of and sensitive to the community's values during their stay.

Demand to live in Steamboat Springs continues to be high, creating strong pressures for new development and growth. However, residents of Steamboat Springs like the small-town feel of the community and are weary of the effects of growth degrading environmental resources, causing more traffic, or

otherwise changing their sense of place and community. The experience of growth comes from a general increase in the number of year-round residents, along with increased visitation numbers year-round leading to more people in the city on any given day. The expansion of restaurants, shops, and services city-wide supports both the increase in residential population and visitors. Growth comes with challenges such as providing more city services and infrastructure to accommodate new growth, such as new sidewalks or wastewater treatment. Resisting growth will have the effect of increasing the value of existing property, which will benefit property owners, but the tradeoff is increasing unaffordability and socioeconomic stratification. Generally, residents see the value in building new affordable housing, but desire to see sustainable development that mitigates traffic impacts, urban sprawl, or too rapidly changing the character and urban form of the city.

Residents are feeling the impact of increasing property values. While residents who own property benefit from the increase in value if they choose to sell their property, the increase in property values can cause challenges for folks who want to stay in the community and change homes to better match their housing unit to their phase of life, or for renters who strive to purchase a home in the community, or for folks who cannot afford the increase in State assessment on real property. New residents who can afford to move into the community are typically older and wealthier than the makeup of residents in the recent past. Second and third-generation residents and local workers are finding it increasingly difficult to live in Steamboat Springs. The value of being a 'real community' is degraded as families, workers, young adults, and the middle class are finding it challenging to afford to live in or even near Steamboat Springs.

These trends and challenges informed and inspired the three themes of this plan. These are also the titles of the three primary chapters. The themes serve as the directional framework to address the trends and challenges and ultimately guide the city to live more aligned with its values.



Residents expressed the sentiment that increased visitation is linked to degraded quality of life.

Small-town feel of the community

Value of being a 'real community'

Pressures for new development and growth

Increasing property values make it increasingly difficult to live in Steamboat Springs



Using this Plan

Plan and Chapter Structure

The three themes of “maintain community,” “sustain the place,” and “fund the future” serve as the focus of the plan’s three main chapters. Each chapter begins with a discussion of current conditions and trends related to the three chapters and details how the city and community can address observed trends that are negatively impacting residents’ quality of life.

Each chapter also includes a “Call to Action!” which spells out why proposed actions, even if difficult, should be taken if the community wants to truly live its values. The Call to Action describes the “why” behind the suggested Key Initiatives and actions that follow. After spelling out all the Key Initiatives and nested actions, there is a “Strategy for Success” section that

lists the most important initiatives and actions that must be taken in the near term to start seeing measurable progress and alignment with community values. After that is a “Game Plan” with a set of progress measures that the community can use to monitor or track that actions are working to steer the community in a direction that is in better alignment with the community’s values. These are measured on a three-year time horizon even though the over-arching plan is intended to be more long-term. Three years is a time horizon that creates urgency, but it also

allows the implementation of key actions and initiatives in each chapter to play out, so that progress is detectably measured using known indicators.

Finally, each chapter also has a top priority that supersedes all other others. For “Maintain Community” it is housing; for “Sustain the Place” it is transportation; and for “Fund the Future” it is generating more revenue.

Defining the Themes

INFORMED BY THE TRENDS, AND INSPIRED BY THE COMMUNITY’S VALUES, THREE THEMES WERE IDENTIFIED.

The themes serve as the directional framework for the community plan to identify ways to address present trends and challenges, and allow the community to live it’s values.



Chapter Structure



Connecting the Community Canvas to other Long-range Plans

The City of Steamboat Springs along with Routt County have engaged in long-range planning efforts focused on specific topics such as transportation and climate action. Following is a list of the plans that inform and intersect with this plan. Many of the initiatives outlined in these other long-range plans are underway, some are long-term or guiding in nature and are working “in the background,” and some have yet to be realized. This Community Canvas plan consolidates actions and priorities identified in Routt County plans and the city’s topical plans to ensure that the actions identified in these adopted plans remain in focus. The intention of the overall Community Canvas Plan and the associated Future Land Use District Plan is that it can guide the community for at least ten years. However, short term actions to gain momentum on key initiatives that will lead Steamboat Springs in a direction that better aligns with its values are looked at on a shorter, three-year time horizon. These shorter-term actions should be revisited every three to five years and closely coordinated with City Council’s Strategic Plan.



City of Steamboat Springs Plans and Regulatory Documents:

- » Steamboat Springs Historic Preservation Plan, 2025
- » Steamboat Springs Housing Strategy and Action Plan, 2024
- » Steamboat Springs Strategic Plan, 2024
- » Steamboat Springs 3-Mile Plan, 2024
- » Steamboat Springs Future Land Use Plan, 2023
- » Steamboat Springs Mountain Area Master Plan, 2022
- » Steamboat Springs Water & Wastewater Master Plan, 2022
- » Steamboat Springs Transportation & Mobility Plan, 2021
- » Steamboat Springs Airport Master Plan, 2021
- » Steamboat Springs Parks, Open Space, Trails, and Yampa River Master Plan, 2019
- » Steamboat Springs Downtown Plan, 2019
- » Steamboat Springs Community Development Code, 2018
- » Steamboat Springs Sidewalk Master Plan, 2016
- » Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan (SSACP) Supplement, 2014
- » West Steamboat Springs Area Plan, 2006
- » Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan (SSACP), 2004

Routt County Plans:

- » Routt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2023
- » Routt County Public Health Improvement Plan, 2023
- » Routt County Master Plan, 2022
- » Routt County Climate Action Plan, 2021
- » Routt County Health and Human Service Plan, 2020

User Guide

How should you use Community Canvas?

This plan’s intention is to serve as a roadmap for community members with varying perspectives to rally around a shared set of community values and chart a path forward to make decisions that are aligned with those values. The following groups, some acting in a professional capacity while others are acting as private citizens, will be critical to the success of this plan’s implementation. This list describes ways in which this plan can be used by these different groups in ways that mutually reinforce the implementation of this plan.

Steamboat Springs City Council. Community Canvas will be a valuable resource for elected officials when setting priorities in a Strategic Plan or to ensure policy choices align with the initiatives identified in this plan. City Council members can use the Future Land Use Map and Districts outlined in the Community Canvas Future Land Use District Plan as a review body for new development, redevelopment, rezoning requests and other land use related regulatory changes. The City Council can also use this document to inform future Council goals to ensure that short-range priorities align with the calls to action, and key initiatives described in this plan. Finally, the City Council can use Community Canvas as a reference for evaluating difficult decisions or comparing the tradeoffs associated with competing community goals. Due to this plan’s engagement process, the City Council can use the values and direction of this plan as a basis for understanding the priorities and goals of their constituents.

Steamboat Springs Planning Commission. Members of the Planning Commission will be served by the Future Land Use Map and Districts outlined in the Community Canvas Land Use District Plan as a review body for new development, redevelopment, rezoning requests and other land use related regulatory changes such as conditional use permits (CUPs). The Planning Commission can also use this document when considering new policies or amendments to the Community Development Code.

Steamboat Springs City Staff. Planning staff can use this plan for development review, future land use code and zoning updates, and for criteria for Planning Commission hearings and associated staff memoranda. It will also be important for other department staff to collaborate on policy formulation that helps implement the calls to action and key initiatives described in this plan.

Steamboat Springs Residents. The Community Canvas was informed by resident input and is designed to reflect community values and provide residents with a document to hold city elected officials and staff accountable for moving towards a future that the Steamboat Springs community collectively believes in. Additionally, implementation of this plan will include the need to have ongoing conversations where additional community input will be needed to examine tradeoffs, shape policy solutions or amendments.

Routt County and Regional Partners. The City of Steamboat Springs understands that some of the challenges that the city experiences, such as traffic and housing affordability, transcend the city’s boundaries and affect communities throughout the Yampa Valley. Steamboat Springs intends to own its responsibility to respond to issues in such a way that it reduces impacts experienced by regional partners.

Steamboat Springs Non-profit Organizations. Steamboat Springs has a robust network of non-profits that contribute to the quality of life of residents and support the local community and community members and that showcase the unique historical and cultural aspects of Steamboat Springs. The Community Canvas outlines areas where collaboration between non-profits and the government will help realize implementation of the key initiatives of this plan.

Steamboat Springs Business Community. This document identifies a vision for diversifying the local economy, creating a more resilient economic base, and seeks to find opportunities for collaboration between city staff and economic development partners to identify strategies for retaining and growing the local workforce. The business and development community may also reference the Future Land Use Map and Land Use District Plan when considering expanding business operations or relocating or opening a new commercial enterprise.

The Steamboat Springs Development Sector and Property Owners. This document outlines the desired land use and community character that future development regulations will be guided by. The Future Land Use Map and Land Use Districts described in the Future Land Use District Plan will be instructive to the development community by informing how new

development or redevelopment can contribute to the planning priorities for distinct character areas or districts in Steamboat Springs.

Steamboat Springs Visitors and Future Residents. This document signals the intention of maintaining the community’s unique identity and states what the community values about life in Steamboat Springs as it relates balancing recreation and sustainability, supporting local community members and local businesses, and embracing the community’s cultural cornerstones.

Summary of Engagement and Project Process

This plan process, like the 1995 and 2004 plans, was informed and guided by the Area Plan Coordinating Committee (APCC). The Area Plan Coordinating Committee (APCC) has a primary duty to further amend the community plan and may advise the appointed and elected officials of both the city and Routt County regarding the same. Throughout 2023 and 2024, APCC provided feedback and guidance necessary to scope the effort to create a new plan and provided direction on the contents and structure of the plan. Further, the Community Canvas plan process added an Advisory Committee, a body comprised of active and engaged residents, local business owners, and representatives from local non-profit organizations and interest groups to ensure that Community Canvas is grounded in the needs of everyday community members and those working to advance quality of life for the community.



Community Canvas is grounded in the needs of everyday community members.

The notion of maintaining community is intended to be viewed from the vantage point of the “aspirational present”—who the community is on its “best day” and who the community strives to be moving forward—mentioned in the values section of this plan. Maintaining community is about fostering a powerful sense of belonging, connection, and a shared place-based identity among residents. It also means preserving history and culture while undergoing inevitable change. This chapter explores the factors that contribute to individual and community well-being, including housing affordability, economic resilience, and inclusivity, while highlighting the city’s unique recreational, cultural, and social strengths. It underscores the importance of addressing challenges like rising costs and demographic shifts to preserve, elevate, and make accessible to all the qualities that make Steamboat Springs such a desirable place to live. By expanding access to what makes Steamboat Springs special and tackling obstacles head-on, we can ensure it remains a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable home for all.



Maintaining community is about fostering a powerful sense of belonging, connection, and a shared place-based identity among residents.

Why does Steamboat Springs need to “maintain” its community?

Sense of Community

In 2024, the city fielded a community survey that it administers every few years. Results from the 2024 survey show a decline in people’s sense of community and perceived quality of life. Two thirds (67%) of respondents said the “sense of community” in Steamboat Springs was good or excellent, but this is down from 82 percent recorded in the 2022 Survey. Sense of community is an inherently subjective measure, yet it gauges people’s feeling of belonging and their experience of social connection in their city.

During the engagement process, participants identified several trends and themes, which are supported by the data in the Existing Conditions Memoranda (Appendix A), which are contributing to the decline in sense of community. Some of those key sentiments are:

- » A lack of affordable housing for people who live here
- » Families are leaving
- » An increase in remote workers with little community connection
- » Social stratification, notably increasing wealth disparities

This decline in sense of community, and the concerns that residents have expressed in the 2024 community survey further highlight that community members, such as the city and its partners, need to be more proactive and intentional about creating and supporting the kind of community they want. This chapter lays the foundation for the initiatives and actions that the city can consider implementing to address the sentiments that residents provided related to their declining sense of community.

Cost of Housing

The cost of housing may be the single largest factor driving the declining sense of community. Throughout this plan’s community engagement process, residents spoke to concerns about friends, neighbors, themselves, or their family members being priced out of living in Steamboat Springs. Steamboat Springs residents are having to make difficult housing choices to stay in the community. The high cost of living is affecting people’s abilities to stay rooted in the community, as many choose to leave the region entirely, move to a neighboring town, or settle for housing in Steamboat Springs that does not fully meet their expectations or needs. The summary below is expanded upon in Appendix A.

- » In the 2024 Community Survey, 6% of respondents rated the availability of affordable quality housing as good or excellent, and 70% rated the cost of living as a ‘poor’ characteristic of the city.
- » From 2020 to 2021, in just one year, the median sales price

of single-family homes increased by 57.8% from \$1.08 million to \$1.71 million. As of 2022, the median price for a single-family home in Steamboat Springs was \$1.71 million, more than double what it was five years prior in 2018 (\$762,000).

- » To afford a single-family home at the median sales price in 2022, a household would have to earn 350% of the AMI (for a family of four), or roughly \$378,000 annually.
- » The community is getting older and more affluent, which is adding to the sense that the community is becoming more exclusive and less inclusive.

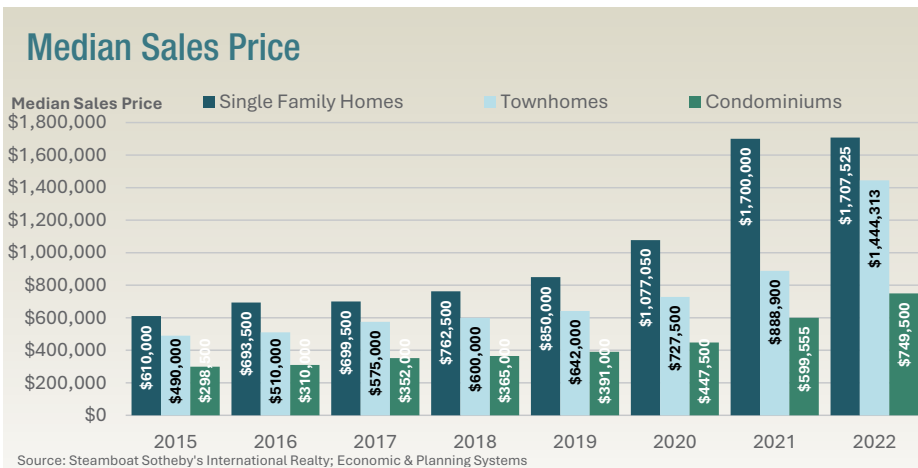
People who rent their homes are more likely to experience housing affordability and housing insecurity issues.

- » According to the 2023 ACS 52.5% of renters, compared to 37% of homeowners with mortgages, are paying more than 30% of their gross income in rent (meaning they are “housing cost burdened”. Among the 52.5% of cost-burdened renters, 26.5% percent are severely cost-burdened, paying more than 50% of their income towards rent.
- » The average household size for renters has increased from 1.9 to 2.4 since 2010, indicating that more households are pairing up with roommates or immediate and extended family members to share housing costs.
- » There are fewer households renting in 2023 (29.3%) than in 2010 (32.3%) indicating that some units may have been converted to homeownership, or to short term rentals, diminishing the size of the rental pool, even though construction of rental and homeownership units increased during that period.

Housing Market Affordability

Steamboat Springs	Factor	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Median Home Price						
Mortgaged Amount (less: downpayment)	20% down pmt	\$610,000	\$680,000	\$861,640	\$1,360,000	\$1,366,020
Mortgage Interest Rate		7.0% int.	7.0% int.	7.0% int.	7.0% int.	7.0% int.
Loan Term		30-years	30-years	30-years	30-years	30-years
Monthly Costs						
Mortgage Payment (Monthly)		\$4,058	\$4,524	\$5,733	\$9,048	\$9,088
Less: Insurance	\$4,000 / Year	\$333	\$333	\$333	\$333	\$333
Less: Miscellaneous	\$500 / Year	\$42	\$42	\$42	\$42	\$42
Total Monthly Housing Costs		\$4,433	\$4,899	\$6,108	\$9,423	\$9,463
Required Annual Income						
AMI for Family of 4	30%	\$177,334	\$195,962	\$244,300	\$376,925	\$378,527
		205%	228%	280%	412%	350%

Source: US Census; Economic & Planning Systems



Housing costs are a constraint on economic sustainability and growth of Steamboat Springs and the Yampa Valley. Housing costs also have negative downstream impacts on the environment and people’s health and safety.

- » In 2010, 29% of workers employed within Steamboat Springs commuted into the city from outside Routt County (e.g., from Moffat, Grand counties, etc.). In 2021, the most recent year commuting data are available, in-commuters increased to 36.7% of workers.
- » The commute to Steamboat Springs can be long and dangerous, particularly in winter. As more people commute from further away, there may be more highway injuries and fatalities.
- » Long commutes degrade social fabric and quality of life, as people have less time to devote to their personal lives, families, and community.
- » Transportation is the largest generator of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. Locally, 37% of emissions in Routt County are from transportation, and VMT has increased by 26% since 2018 (2023 GHG inventory). By restricting housing close to job centers in Steamboat Springs, the community is increasing its impact on climate change.
- » During stakeholder meetings for this plan, representatives of UC Health, the Steamboat Springs School District, and many small and larger businesses said that it is becoming more challenging to retain employees, especially those with young families who struggle to find adequate affordable housing nearby.



The cost of housing may be the single largest factor driving the declining sense of community.



CALL TO ACTION:

Improve residents' sense of community and address the local housing crisis!

The City of Steamboat Springs is committed to maintaining the sense of community by focusing its efforts on the following key initiatives. Many of the initiatives and actions described in this plan cannot be achieved by city staff and elected and appointed officials alone. Collective impact -- or the collaborative approach to solving complex social challenges or problems by aligning a diverse set of actors from different sectors towards a common vision or set of goals -- requires collective action; therefore, the city calls on its partners such as non-profits, the private sector, residents, peer governments, and the state to be collaborators in the vision outlined in this plan for the community. These initiatives and actions are meant to be seen as ways to correct our course and veer away from trends that are not values-aligned for the city and to guide initial implementation considerations. While all actions outlined by this plan are important to consider and implement as capacity and resources become available, the highest priority actions and key initiatives are identified near the end of the chapter in the "Strategy for Success" section. It is important to recognize that not all actions can be completed simultaneously, and it is often more effective to concentrate resources, staff capacity, and energy towards a few actions that have the most potential to make a measurable difference in the desired direction. How the success of these efforts will be measured is also explained as a "Game Plan" at the end of the chapter.

Maintain Community



Key Initiative 1: Enact best-practice strategies and regulations to support affordable housing



Steamboat Springs – and the Yampa Valley – needs more housing that will allow working people, long-time residents, families, and those with limited financial resources to live in and provide essential services to the community. Community feedback collected during the plan development process linked the decline in the sense of community to housing unaffordability – residents are either moving away to find housing that is affordable, or don't see themselves staying and investing in the community if they don't think they will be able to find suitable housing in the future. Housing that meets the needs of the community (referred to in this plan as community housing) does not include vacation homes, homes to be rented short term, or homes for non-working part time residents.

Some new housing units will need to have long-term or permanent restrictions on who may live in it to keep it available for the workforce and other residents that don't have the resources to compete for housing in the free market. Otherwise, there is a large risk that any market-rate lower cost housing that is built will be purchased as vacation homes or by part-time residents. Deed restrictions and covenants will be needed to ensure that housing built or managed through city regulations or with public money is preserved as affordable and accessible. In response to the trend of increasing housing unaffordability, the Steamboat Springs Housing Strategy and Action Plan was adopted by City Council in 2024 and contains numerous recommendations aimed at preserving existing affordable housing, creating new affordable and attainable housing, and assisting both renters and buyers. Many of the needed actions outlined below are described in more detail in the city's adopted Housing Strategy and Action Plan.

Actions that support Key Initiative #1:

Create a set of housing definitions. Create a term or set of terms to define the types of housing that Steamboat Springs will prioritize for development in its land use policies and investments, such as “community housing” proposed above.

Inclusionary housing policy. Consider implementing an inclusionary housing ordinance (IHO). The city had an IHO many years ago that was suspended in 2013 and officially repealed in 2019, but state law and best practices for implementing such a policy have changed since then. One popular way to implement an IHO is to require a certain percentage of homes in a new development to be affordable at specified income levels. An advantage to this approach is that in areas with a strong market for real estate development, such as Steamboat Springs, new affordable development will be inherently tied to new development and could produce more affordable units over time. Overall, this is an opportunity to bring additional affordable housing development to fruition that would otherwise not be provided by the market alone.

Linkage Fees. Affordable housing impact fees, or “linkage fees,” link the employment generated by a development to the demand for affordable housing and levy an equivalent impact fee. An affordable housing impact fee can be charged on residential development, non-residential development, or both. Such fees can become a valuable revenue source for the city applied to housing production or housing/community services more broadly to offset the impact of new development.

Leverage the STR tax fund. In 2022, Steamboat Springs voters passed a 9.0% tax on paid stays in short-term rentals (STRs). The revenues are dedicated to increasing and maintaining the supply of affordable and attainable housing. Recent collections

suggest the fund will generate \$15.0 million in revenue, annually. The city should continue to develop policies on how to allocate this funding and recognize the importance of this powerful funding tool. Having a dedicated funding source is one of the most important strategies for expanding affordable and attainable housing, and few communities have dedicated local funding. The State of Colorado recently passed legislation, HB25-1247, which allows Colorado Counties to raise lodging taxes to 5% and expand the allowed uses to dedicate this funding towards, including “Housing and childcare for the tourism-related workforce”. The City of Steamboat Springs should work closely with Routt County to leverage this funding to support Housing for the local workforce within Routt County.

“Bank” land for Community Housing development. The cost of land is one of the biggest impediments to the financial feasibility of affordable and attainable housing. “Land banking” is amassing an inventory of developable sites that can be used for affordable housing at no or low cost to the project. Identify under or unused property owned by the city and other public and private institutions that can contribute to Community Housing development now or at well below market cost.

Explore new housing programs. The adopted Housing Strategy and Action Plan notes several programs that have been successful in other mountain communities. A “buy down” program is a cash payment to a homeowner in exchange for a deed restriction. This is a way to produce deed-restricted units on houses that already exist and are ready for their next owner. The city should also consider down payment assistance programs for deed-restricted home buyers, in partnership with YVHA, and a rental assistance program for first and last month's rent and deposit for low- and very-low-income people.

Secondary Dwelling Units (SDU) program. SDUs can be expensive to construct. A cash incentive tied to a deed restriction may encourage some property owners to consider a SDU. Having pre-approved designs and a streamlined and simple permitting process is a critical part of a SDU incentive program.

Position the City for State Funding and Programs. In the past 5 years, new state funding programs were created that expand grant funding and low-cost financing for affordable housing. Many of these programs require that local governments adopt plans and policies defined in the statute to qualify for the funding. Examples include preparing housing needs assessments (HNAs), adopting an IHO, affordable housing impact fees; expedited review of affordable housing development proposals; a density bonus policy; and removing minimum parking requirements.

Key Initiative 2: Promote Compact Growth, Adaptive Reuse, and Infill Development



Steamboat Springs residents value the natural landscape, wildlife habitat, the region's agricultural and ranching history, and large open views around the city. People also like to feel connected to the community, and be close to shopping, dining, services, transportation and transit, and recreation. The UGB (urban growth boundary) has served as a tool to contain development into a designated area and mitigate against the impacts of developing on new land and growing in an orderly manner. The UGB will continue to serve as a tool for balancing the needs of development with land preservation. However, the UGB may need to be amended to meet community needs. In order to address the housing and economic needs of the community, the city must balance development in new areas, such as West of Steamboat, and growth through infill and redevelopment of existing land in the city. A single approach (developing new land or only developing within the current city boundary) will not meet the housing and economic needs of the community. To make efficient use of land, all growth – infill, redevelopment, or annexation – needs to make the most efficient use of limited and expensive land.

Actions that support Key Initiative #2:

Annexation and West Steamboat Housing Development. The West Steamboat area has been identified in the WSSAP, and other city plans for years as an area that is appropriate for future development. There have also been three failed annexation proposals in this area. Annexation of land in West Steamboat should be supported by the city through the provision of municipally provided infrastructure and city services when it meets the goals of creating housing that meets the needs of

the community and supporting economic vitality. The supply of land that can be used for community housing in Steamboat Springs is scarce, and the area in West Steamboat is a major opportunity to expand the housing supply and create a more inclusive community where there are opportunities for residents of various income levels to live within Steamboat Springs and not commute long distances to their jobs in the city. Additional housing in this area has sustainability benefits of having more residents near major employment centers. If property in West Steamboat is not annexed in the next five years, other options for urban services to expand beyond the municipal boundary will need to be explored.

Plan for Incremental Densification. Plan and zone for increased density in existing areas that can support additional density. Existing neighborhoods along the Highway 40 corridor have areas of low-density development, and areas of aging commercial space that will have a market for redevelopment. These areas can be zoned and planned for more mixed use and higher density development that creates community housing and new space for businesses. These areas are also well served by public transportation, which will provide people with options to reduce their dependence on cars. Similarly, existing neighborhoods may be able to support upzoning that makes it easier to permit duplexes and other multi-family residences.

Adjust Minimum Lot Sizes. The City of Steamboat Springs should adjust minimum lot size requirements by making the minimums smaller in mixed-use and residential zoning districts to allow for a more diverse array of housing types and to promote infill development opportunities.

Key Initiative 3: Housing Cost Support



Renter and homebuyer assistance programs can help people access housing. For many renters, having enough savings for the first and last month's rent, plus a security deposit, is a barrier to finding housing, even if they can afford the monthly fee. For buyers, traditional down payment assistance programs do not go far enough to bridge the gap into market-rate housing. In high-interest rate environments, even deed-restricted for-sale properties may become unaffordable due to higher borrowing costs. The Steamboat Springs Housing Strategy and Action Plan (2024) identifies strategies for supporting cost-burdened households already living in Steamboat Springs and identifying ways of supporting low-income households that need rental assistance, or up-front home buying assistance.

Actions that support Key Initiative #3:

Dedicated Grant Funding. Explore an annual pool of funding for a rental assistance grant program. The non-profit group LiftUp Routt County already does great work providing rental assistance to members of the community. This program could bolster those efforts and be limited particularly to the first and last month and security payments, to increase the affordability of renting.

Reduce Interest Rates for Buyers. Work with area housing providers and lenders to create ways to lend to deed-restricted home buyers at lower or below-market interest rates. This could be a non-profit lending entity, or a loan subsidy or guarantee to buy down interest rates.

Key Initiative 4: Pursue Mixed-use and Transit-Oriented Development



The City of Steamboat Springs provides free intra-city transit through the Steamboat Springs Transit service (SST) and is involved, along with other regional partners, in conversations to identify ways to expand regional transit services through a proposed Regional Transit Authority which would connect communities in Routt County and portions of Grand County by a regional bus network, and a proposed Mountain Rail corridor that would connect to Winter Park and the Denver Metro Area.

By leveraging opportunities to concentrate new development in areas that are served by current, and planned future public transportation service, the city would be aligning its future land use planning with transportation and climate related efforts to reduce vehicle traffic and improve rates of transit ridership and walking, which would lead to reductions in GHG emissions and other pollutants. Transit-oriented development (TOD) also contributes to the community's social fabric as neighbors are more likely to walk and interact in public spaces, resulting in more distinct and cohesive neighborhoods. TOD typically has higher densities than surrounding land uses, a tight well connected street grid; streets designed to prioritize walking and bicycling; and good high frequency transit service.

Areas in Steamboat Springs targeted for TOD include downtown, the ski base area, the Meadows Lot, and the following intersections: Highway 40 with Elk River Road, Pine Grove Road, and Angler's Drive. The City of Steamboat Springs could support private investment and re-investment in these areas by spurring public investments such as enhancing pedestrian and bicycle linkages to surrounding neighborhoods and transit service. Public amenities such as shelters at transit

stops, public seating, public art and cultural amenities, parks and gathering places, will contribute to the public realm and support local commerce.

Actions that support Key Initiative #4:

Make use of Key Transit Nodes. Using land-use regulations through the Community Development Code and the Community Canvas Future Land Use District Plan to support increased density around public transit stops especially downtown, the ski base area, the Meadow's lot, and the following intersections: Highway 40 with Elk River Road, Pine Grove Road, and Angler's Drive.

Transform Existing Commercial Corridors. Outside of the downtown area, much of the region's existing commercial development is located along Highway 40 in a "strip" development pattern. At key locations, particularly at major intersections, existing commercial development areas should evolve to become more intense in development, visually attractive, and accessible by all transportation modes, with a mixture of land uses and activities. Such sites include Mt. Werner Rd., Pine Grove Rd., Angler's Dr., and Elk River Rd. intersections with Highway 40. The City of Steamboat Springs should consider implementing a city-initiated mixed-used overlay district that is centered on Commercial Activity Nodes describing standards for character, mix of uses, development intensity, street connectivity, site layout, architectural character, and signage.

Walkable Neighborhoods. Increase the walkability and mix of uses in existing neighborhoods while using design and dimensional standards to create walkable, well-connected, and human-scaled new developments and neighborhoods. Public investment will be required to ensure that neighborhoods are "walkable". The City of Steamboat Springs should prioritize snow clearing on sidewalks and multi-use trails are well maintained so that walking and biking are comfortable and viable alternatives to driving year-round.

Mix Uses. Allow for and promote a mix of daily essential land uses like grocery stores, daycares, churches, corner stores, and coffee shops in residential neighborhoods to create complete mixed-use neighborhoods. A vertical mix of uses where one use such as a retail shop is located on the ground floor and other uses such as a small office space and residential units are stacked above the ground floor, is generally preferred in transit and commercial nodes, to facilitate higher development intensities. Transit and commercial nodes are called out on the city's Future Land Use Map.

Key Initiative 5: Expand Community & Social Service Offerings to Meet Resident Needs



During the outreach conducted for this plan, several community and social service offerings were identified as lacking or not sufficient to satisfy the daily needs of residents. Those services are the lack of a community recreation center with indoor multipurpose space, an inadequate supply of daycare/childcare facilities, and an insufficient supply of social services such as low-cost mental healthcare and temporary assistance services for families in need.

Actions that support Key Initiative #5:

Community recreation center. There are very few indoor recreation opportunities and facilities at present in Steamboat Springs. The Steamboat Springs Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Trails & Yampa River Master Plan (2019) identified gaps in indoor recreation. At present, the Old Town Hot Springs offers an option, but the facility is not meeting the needs of the whole community. Locals have also described that there can be serious crowding issues at the Old Town Hot Springs and that the demand for indoor recreation space in an active community far outside the supply of available resources. The Ice Arena is a well-loved but very busy facility, and besides these two facilities, there are very few other options besides school gyms for indoor recreation use. The demand for recreation space highlights a broader theme in Steamboat Springs at this moment in time: a small community with a medium-sized park and recreation department and the demands of a much larger city. A first step for taking action towards the development of a community recreation center would be to identify responsible parties for locating, constructing and operating an indoor recreation facility.

Recreation facilities can be owned and operated by the private sector, the public sector, or non-profit organizations. Knowing that the provision of a new indoor recreation facility is a priority for members of the community, the City of Steamboat Springs should coordinate exploratory conversations with various community stakeholders to determine a viable path towards the provision of an indoor recreation center. The city may be well positioned to determine where an appropriate location for an indoor recreation center could be located and can convene various community groups to understand what specific types of indoor recreation gaps are missing and the various private and non-profit partners that could support this effort. The city should explore opportunities for a dedicated funding source to support the development of an indoor recreation facility. Should the city manage the operations of an indoor recreation facility, ongoing maintenance revenue sources could potentially come from a recreation/arts district, bed tax, increased sales tax, property tax mill levy, or others. Funding construction and operations could potentially come from the issuing of municipal bonds, a recreation focused grant, or through a public private partnership with a developer.

Expand childcare offerings. Routt County is considered a "childcare desert"⁶ especially in the childcare service space focused on infants and toddlers. Steamboat Springs has existing resources for childcare services; however, the offerings are primarily geared toward children aged 3+. The City of Steamboat Springs is having conversations with partners around the potential construction of a childcare and housing facility, with 28 units geared towards local childcare workers and CDOT snowplow drivers. The childcare facility would hold

⁶ <https://www.kunc.org/news/2022-11-30/a-child-care-desert-steamboat-resort-opens-new-facility-to-help-workers-local-community>

10 classrooms intended to serve primarily infants and toddlers. The City of Steamboat Springs along with Routt County and CDOT would be the financial partners in this project, and the City of Steamboat Springs will own the planned facility upon completion should this project come to fruition. This will help alleviate some of the demand for infant and toddler childcare offerings in Steamboat Springs. However, it is unlikely that it will be sufficient given the lack of alternatives for parents with infants and toddlers. To help alleviate additional demand pressure, the city should prioritize working with existing early childhood care organizations to expand infant and toddler program offerings and childcare services beyond what the city currently provides to support childcare from the Community Support Funding. Other creative approaches such as grants/tuition waivers for aspiring teachers to get certified through Colorado Mountain College, or “bring your baby to work” programs for childcare workers and other appropriate jobs can help alleviate the demand for infant seats and the supply of qualified teachers.

Expand temporary assistance services. As residents transition to different phases of their lives such as assisted living, or as circumstances change such as the loss of a job, a house, or a spouse, the day-to-day need of food, shelter, clothing, and transportation for oneself and family members does not stop. For people on fixed or lower incomes, the challenge of providing daily needs during times of uncertainty or during major life transitions can be the “straw that breaks the camel’s back.” During community open house events held for this plan, participants in the open house mentioned that the need for temporary assistance in Steamboat Springs is great. As residents see their friends and family need to move away from the community due to the loss of a lease, or a job, the city should prioritize finding ways to temporarily support local

workers and residents that need a hand making ends meet to maintain the continuity of community members who wish to stay in Steamboat Springs. LiftUp Routt County is an existing organization serving the Routt County community by providing resources and assistance to help meet the basic human needs such as temporary financial assistance, clothing, food, and so forth. LiftUp is annually serving up to 17% of Routt County residents. The City of Steamboat Springs should work with partners to find resources, to supplement additional temporary services beyond what is already offered, including temporary shelters for people in need of temporary housing assistance, food banks, childcare centers, and rental assistance programs. These temporary assistance services are intended to help keep people afloat during periods of challenging times so that local workers and residents do not feel like they need to leave their community in order to find support.

Key Initiative 6: Architectural Standards and Historic Preservation 

This initiative is critical to achieving a core identified goal of this comprehensive plan: emphasizing and honoring heritage. While the city continues to grow, Steamboat Springs honors and promotes its unique history and heritage as an authentic western community with deep roots in agriculture, arts and culture, and snow sports. The community stewards its diverse types of historic properties and cultural landscapes and fosters a shared sense of history and legacy. The city works towards these goals primarily through its historic preservation process and guidelines, in addition to its community design standards.

The city’s historic preservation process requires any planning application or building permit relevant to a structure over 50 years of age to go through a mandatory planning building

historic review process. This process determines if the building or property is an “eligible resource” for historic preservation. During the mandatory review, staff evaluate the impact of changes to a property and provide feedback and suggested revisions to comply with historic preservation standards and guidelines. These guidelines allow for exterior alterations while advising on how to maintain the historic integrity of property. Compliance with feedback is voluntary. This process maintains property owner rights while also providing guidance and educational resources to encourage historic preservation and maintain unique community character. The city will continue to implement its historic preservation program and encourage residents to comply with its historic preservation design guidelines.

The city’s Community Development Code also includes a set of community design standards. These standards help define the desired scale and character of development within the city while not dictating any architectural style. They help ensure that private development contributes to a shared vision with the public, creating a comfortable, attractive, and engaging built environment. Key principles of the city’s architectural guidelines include building placement and orientation, access, building massing, roof forms, surface and structured parking, building variation and fenestration, building materials, color, and accessory structure design. The city will continue to incorporate reviews of these design standards for future development. The city should periodically review these design standards to ensure they are resulting in a built environment that reflects heritage and desired design traits, while avoiding excessive regulations that hinder design creativity or make development too cumbersome.

Actions that support Key Initiative #6:

Create a local historic district (or alternative) and increase listings of historic resources and landmarks on the Steamboat Springs Register of Historic Places. The Historic Preservation Plan DRAFT (2025) notes that reducing the barriers to list properties could help spur more properties to get listed, thus better preserving these buildings and landmarks. Some examples to reduce the barrier to entry include revising the designation forms, re-examining the qualifications for historic district property owner buy-in, or the creation a non-contiguous district of properties that have similar historic significance or architectural character.

Explore a “Neighborhood Overlay Conservation District.” This tool is useful for preserving the character of neighborhoods and buildings that may not have the specific criteria for a historic district designation. Used alongside zoning, this overlay creates a set of guidelines that regulate lot size, building height, setbacks, streetscapes, and tree protection.

Create an impact fee for the disposal of historic materials and change the demolition review process to be more onerous for historic properties. These types of regulations and fees are meant to create a deterrent to the demolition of historic properties, creating a pause to reconsider whether this route should be taken by the property owner. It could also create a direct nexus between the demolition of historic properties funding the preservation of other properties.

Strategy for Success: Key Initiatives that make Measurable Progress

The following Key Initiatives and associated actions have been identified as the highest near-term priorities for the city to undertake in the next 5 years. This list is intended to illustrate the top priorities from the Maintain Community chapter and demonstrate how these actions and initiatives identified below connect most directly to the plan's stated community values.

These actions rose to the top of the priority list due to the level of urgency, relevance to current conversations and other recent city and county planning efforts, and/or outsized ability to move towards this chapter's success measures. Tackling these priority actions in the short run may help course correct some of the trends that are moving the community away from its values, and build the momentum needed to make substantial progress on long-term initiatives and actions.

The top priority of this chapter is housing. If the supply of affordable housing is not increased, the maintenance of a sense of community, is severely threatened.

Other actions in this plan should also be integrated into departmental working plans as much as possible and not lost from view. If definitive action is not taken on these matters, the community risks further eroding residents' sense of community and quality of life and further stratifying the community between those that have secured housing and are able to access other resources that expand economic mobility and personal fulfillment, and those that either have to move away or commute a long way away to get to jobs in Steamboat Springs.

Housing Cost Support and Effective Affordable Housing Strategies



Key Initiative #1

Actions: Inclusionary housing policy, Linkage fees, Leverage STR Tax Fund, explore new housing programs, and Position the City for State Funding and Programs.

Key Initiative #2

Action: Plan for incremental densification.

Connect to the value of: **Thriving Community.**

Why is this important? Why Now?

Regulations that require or incentivize developers to contribute to affordable housing stock (through inclusionary zoning and linkage fees, or density bonuses or development agreements) will contribute additional units to what the City, affordable housing developers and the YVHA (Yampa Valley Housing Authority) are able to build on their own. Utilizing the STR Tax Fund and other revenues to build units, provide gap financing, and explore new housing programs such as buying deed-restrictions on already built units, help with rental or down-payment assistance are direct ways to keep people in their homes and ensure a long-term future for them as residents. It is also critical to stay abreast of state laws and funding opportunities such as Proposition 123 in order to leverage those opportunities and not leave money for housing on the table.

A Community Recreation Center



Key Initiative #5

Actions: Community recreation center and Expand childcare offerings.

Connect to the values of: **Thriving Community, Vibrant Culture, Investing in Values**

Why is this important? Why Now?

A Recreation Center that offers indoor recreation programs and spaces was one of the most often heard desires from engagement and outreach. A Recreation Center that has a pool, indoor classes for all ages, and other gathering spaces for clubs and groups is not only lacking currently but could go a long way towards improving the well-roundedness of recreation offerings in the community and region and be a center for community building and gathering. Some communities even use recreation centers as resource centers for seniors, a hub for social services, and even small daycares or libraries.

West Steamboat Annexation and Housing Development



Key Initiative #2

Actions: Annexation and West Steamboat housing development.

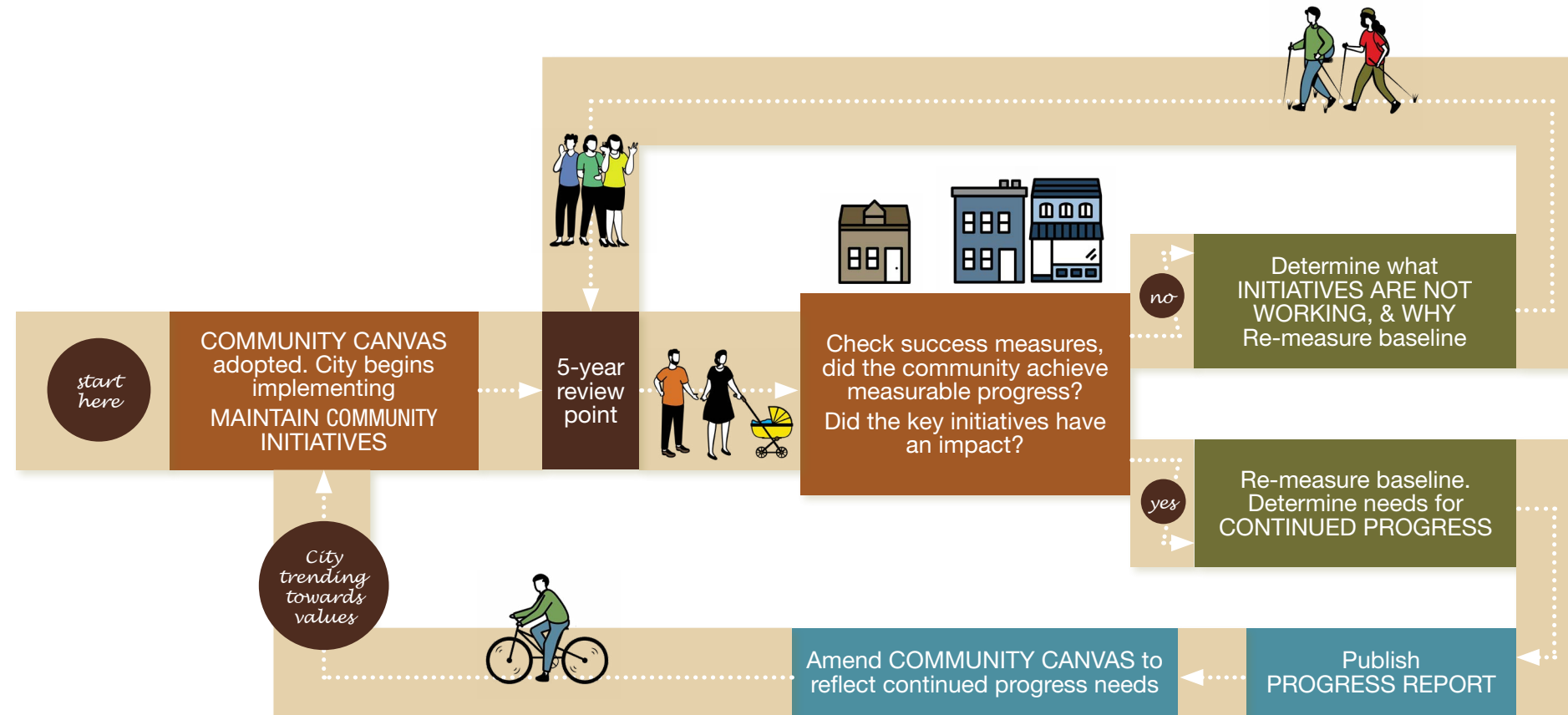
Connects to the values of: **Thriving Community and Sustainability and Resilience**

Why is this important? Why now?

Even though the Brown Ranch development and annexation was voted down during the writing of this plan, the most logical place for the City of Steamboat Springs to grow and provide more housing and commercial space is the West Steamboat Area, as outlined in the WSSAP. Continuing to work on a development plan for the Brown Ranch property that will be supported by the community should remain a top priority in the near future.

Measuring Success: The Game Plan

The initiatives and actions described in this chapter are intended to help the community orient towards its values and away from trends that are leading the community astray of its values. The City of Steamboat Springs is committed to measuring the progress the city is making over time. Three years after the adoption of the Community Canvas, the city will check on its progress towards the initiatives and actions outlined in this plan. This check in point will help the city understand if the initiatives and actions described in this plan, and the other long-range plans that support and inform the Community Canvas, are helping steer the community on a path that aligns with the community’s values or if there needs to be a plan amendment or course correction to make the type of progress that the city would like to see in maintaining residents’ sense of community.



The priority actions and key initiatives, the “Strategy for Success” if acted on first and with adequate resources and political support, have the best chance at being interventions that will enable measurable progress towards the most important issues and movement in the desired direction towards a community that is living its values.

The measurements below offer ways of tracking progress towards maintaining the community in Steamboat Springs. Each measurement is a tangible yet ambitious marker of progress in the direction towards the community’s values. These will be measured on a three-year time horizon, or as close to three years as data collection allows.

- » **Reduction in housing cost burden for residents—target reducing percent of households considered cost burdened by 5 percentage points from 2023 baseline, or from 52.5% to 47.5% for renters and from 37.0% to 32.0% for homeowners.**
- » **Decrease the percentage of units vacant for seasonal or recreational use by 5 percentage points from the 2023 baseline, from 33% to 28%, as measured by the census.**
- » **The addition of new housing units—target 475 deed-restricted units to address “catch-up demand”—providing affordable housing options to cost-burdened households, as well as local workers that are choosing to commute long distances because housing they can afford is not currently available in Steamboat Springs. The 10-year target for “catch up demand” is 2,061 units.**
- » **Increase in the percentage of residents that express satisfaction with overall sense of community in the city-wide community survey by 5 percentage points in three years, from 67% to 72% or higher.**
- » **Advance a recreation center feasibility study to at least 75% completion, including finalized needs assessments, preliminary operational models, and refined cost estimates.**

Sustaining the place means acknowledging Steamboat Spring’s position as a beloved destination with a strong tourism economy while recognizing the importance of sustaining the key elements of the place so that the impact of tourism (on residents, city infrastructure, the ecosystem) is mitigated while visitors still have a top-notch experience. Unmanaged, Steamboat Springs could become a destination ‘loved to death.’ In the 2024 Community Survey, when asked about various policy directives for the Chamber of Commerce visitor communications plan, 44% of respondents opposed marketing “destination tourism” to support the local economy. Similarly, at the Community Plan Open House in June of 2024, only one participant expressed a need for creating recreation amenities of interest to visitors, while several attendees expressed that locals are feeling like a second priority to visitors. Community Canvas focus group participants shared concerns that heavy visitation will further degrade natural resources and make traffic throughout the community even worse than it already is. An additional community concern is keeping the city’s sense of place unique, with a distinct development pattern and architectural character, and full of independent businesses and organizations rather than larger chain businesses. The unique sense of place cultivated in Steamboat Springs is part of the reason it attracts so many visitors in the first place, and why residents are proud and happy to live there.

This chapter explores key initiatives and actions that will help Steamboat Springs become a better sustained place, managed for a better experience of both living and visiting there. Essentially, this chapter spells out what it means to be “locally relevant” yet “regionally responsible” as a place - responding to the needs to local residents, as a regional economic hub, and as an international tourism and recreation destination. These initiatives include a mix of recreation management strategies aimed at dispersing people to mitigate the impacts that overcrowding can have on visitors’ and residents’ experiences and directing people towards areas that are intended for higher concentrations of recreational users, mitigating traffic, promoting sustainable development, conserving habitat, and maintaining recreational amenities. “Sustaining the place” is essential to preserving what makes Steamboat Springs special, its natural beauty, small-town character, and livability. The pressures of high visitation strain local resources, erode community identity, and make daily life more challenging for those who call Steamboat Springs and the Yampa Valley home. Recent efforts such as the STR policies and tax are an example of these strategies. Without interventions, the City of Steamboat Springs risks degrading the quality of life of its residents, the experiences of its visitors, and the physical and natural environment that are enjoyed by all. Proactive strategies to educate visitors and direct recreation appropriately, protect the ecosystems and landscapes, and support local businesses will ensure the city and region are more sustainably managed for long-term health and well-being.

Why Does Steamboat Springs Need To “Sustain Itself as A Place?”

Congestion and Parking

During the Community Canvas engagement process, concerns about transportation emerged, second only to housing, as a top concern and priority area for improvement among residents. Open House attendees identified vehicle traffic and lack of parking as critical problems. This sentiment was echoed in the 2024 Community Survey, where 71% of respondents rated the availability of parking in Steamboat Springs negatively. Finding available parking is becoming a problem as the community grows, especially downtown. Both the Downtown Plan (2019) and Mountain Area Master Plan (2022) identify a

desire for improved parking management. Managing parking and reducing the reliance on vehicles to navigate the city of Steamboat Springs by making walking, biking, and taking transit a more convenient alternative to driving for navigating daily life furthers the community value of a well-connected and multi-modal transportation system that gets people around the city safely and conveniently and without dependency on a car, and helps to reduce traffic congestion.

As year-round visitation numbers increase, and the Steamboat Springs and Yampa Valley regional population grows, more trips will be made to and from and through the city every day. Under the existing transportation system, where most of these trips are taken in private vehicles, this will lead to increased congestion and demand for parking. Given this trend, it would be tempting to run to the solution that adding more parking spaces in the city would solve this congestion and parking demand issue. However, a stronger, more sustainable solution that aligns with



“Sustaining the place” is essential to preserving what makes Steamboat Springs special, its natural beauty, small-town character, and livability.

the community value of a well-connected, multimodal city is to shift towards a transportation system in which people rely on a mix of driving, walking, biking, and taking public transit to get to their jobs and to satisfy daily needs. Many studies have demonstrated that building more parking spaces and more lanes for vehicles induces more demand for driving resulting in similar levels of traffic and parking challenges in just a few years after implementation. Buildable land in Steamboat Springs has become incredibly valuable. It would be a missed opportunity, and a move away from the community's values, to dedicate valuable space to parking or additional driving lanes that could



Steamboat Springs Transit sees approximately 1 to 1.2 million rides per year.

otherwise accommodate a mix of housing, commercial or retail space. This plan's intention of emphasizing a multimodal system is further supported by several previous planning documents, including the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Trails and Yampa River Master Plan (2019) (PROSTR), City of Steamboat Springs Downtown Plan (2019), Mountain Area Master Plan (2022), Routt County Climate Action Plan, and the Steamboat Springs Community Area Plan (2004).

Steamboat Springs currently has fare-free public transit provided by Steamboat Springs Transit (SST), as well as several existing bike paths and sidewalks. The bicycle network within Steamboat Springs comprises 13 miles of paved trails, 24 miles of on-street bike lanes, and 18 miles of signed bicycle routes. The multi-use paved Yampa River Core Trail runs through the center of the city and provides an off-street bicycle connection to many neighborhoods and downtown. However, the trail is heavily utilized, and users experience issues with overcrowding and user conflict. Expanding off-street paved trails, sidewalks, and on-street bike paths could help disperse bike and pedestrian flow away from just the Yampa River Core Trail. In the Community Survey, 73% of residents rated the ease of walking as good or excellent, while 78% rated the ease of taking transit as good or excellent. Despite relatively high ratings for the ease of transportation options besides driving, 84% of residents choose driving as their primary way of commuting, and only 52% of people ever take public transit. Only 7% of residents take public transit more than twice a week. Despite the relatively low ridership rates among residents, it is important to recognize the critical role SST plays in moving visitors and people who cannot drive around the city. SST sees approximately 1 to 1.2 million rides per year. How can the city incentivize greater resident utilization of SST? In the Community

Survey, the most important factors to induce more people to ride the bus more frequently were: "bus stops nearer to home or destination", "more frequent bus services", "if it was faster to take the bus than to drive", "if parking was inconvenient at the destination", and "if there was paid parking at the destination". Given this feedback, investing in increased transit frequency and bus stops, implementing paid parking in high-traffic destinations such as downtown and at Steamboat Ski Resort, will help make transit a more reliable, fast, and cost-effective alternative to driving. Moving towards higher utilization of public transit and other modes of transportation besides driving, such as walking or biking, will help the city reduce congestion and mitigate the need for more downtown parking.

There are several opportunities to support modes of transportation besides traveling by car. Biking is a popular activity and a way of casually getting around town in the warmer months, exploring recreation and cultural destinations and getting to school and jobs. The off-street paved trails provide

a high level of bicycle comfort, but the experience of biking on the roads is far less comfortable, due to high vehicle speeds and lack of regular bike facilities such as wide shoulders or designated lanes. In the winter, spotty snow removal and maintenance on roads can make cycling unpredictable and unsafe. As e-bikes and other forms of e-assisted mobility become more widespread, they may have the unintended consequence of reducing safety for other users that share multi-use trails or bike paths with these e-bikes or e-assisted mobility devices due to their ability to travel at much higher speeds. Addressing these new modes of transportation and increasing the network of high-comfort bike options can make biking a more feasible option for all people, including children, seniors, people with disabilities, and cyclists who are not comfortable riding on the road shoulders. While downtown and the resort base area have a tight-knit network of sidewalks, the network does not extend comprehensively to other neighborhoods and areas of the city. There are several neighborhoods with a tight-gridded urban pattern that lack the sidewalks needed for people to walk around as a safe and viable activity and form of transportation.

Community Survey Results

73% ease of walking: good or excellent

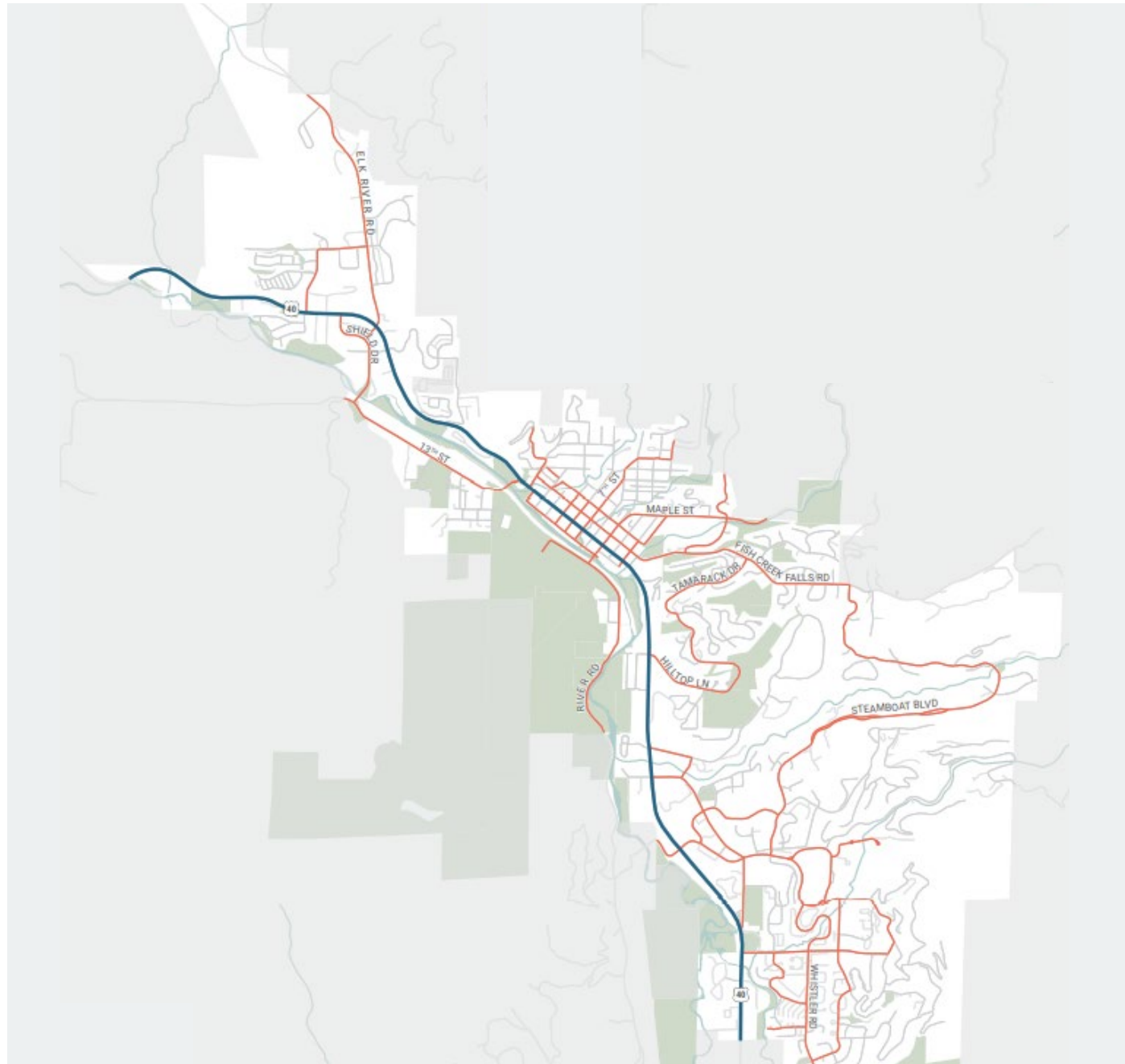
52% take public transit

7% take public transit more than 2x per week

84% choose driving as their primary way of commuting

78% ease of taking transit: good or excellent

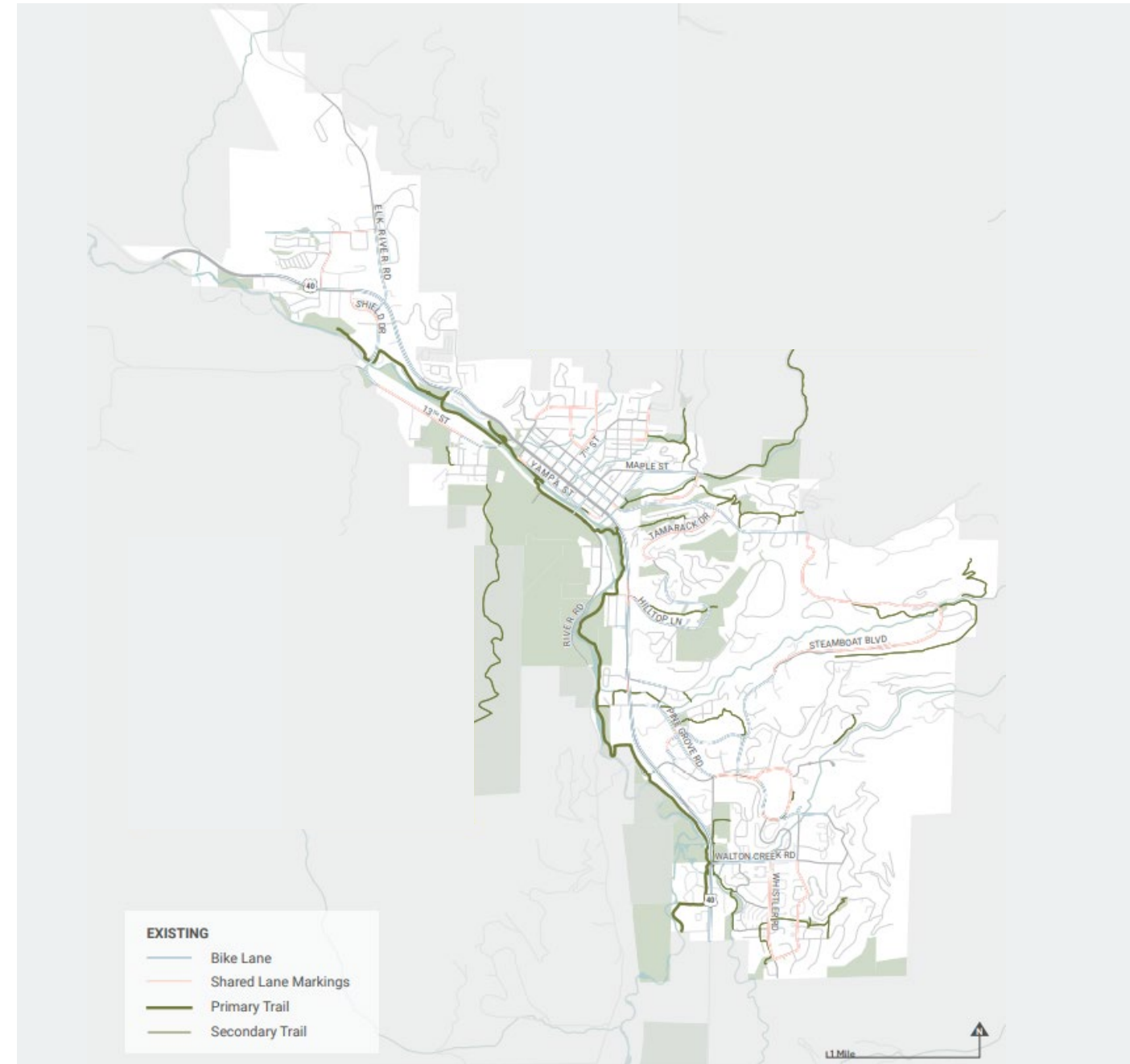




Steamboat Springs Street Network Map

The street network currently includes 75 centerline miles, classified into the following:

- » Arterials: wider streets that move more traffic
- » Collectors: connect arterials to local streets
- » Local street: lower volume, lower speed streets that facilitate direct property access



Steamboat Springs Bicycle Network Map

Steamboat Springs bicycle network comprises:

- » 13 miles of paved trails
- » 24 miles of in-street bike lanes
- » 18 miles of signed bicycle routes

Tourism

Steamboat Springs is a popular tourism destination—primarily driven by its stunning natural scenery and abundant outdoor recreation activities including winter sports, all types of cycling, camping, hiking, and white-water sports, to name a few. Steamboat Springs hosts approximately 500,000 to 700,000 guests in the Yampa Valley annually, and during high visitation weekends, visitor volumes are more than double the permanent resident population.⁷ The recent Howelsen Park User Engagement Report (2024) evaluated visitation at Howelsen Park, one of Steamboat Springs’ popular tourism destinations and a beloved park and recreation activity center for residents. While not indicative of the entire city, the analysis uncovered key visitation insights such as peak visitation in the summer, sustained high visitation throughout the fall and winter, and a lull in visitation during the spring. Steamboat Springs’ high-visitation recreational offerings include winter sports (downhill and Nordic skiing, hockey, etc.), trail races, mountain biking, camping and hiking, river sports such as fishing and boating, and enjoying the downtown environment. Further, the city is home to several cultural draws such as Winter Carnival, Winter Wondergrass, and the Steamboat Pro Rodeo Among others. These activities generate visitation and thus the city experiences spikes in the summer and winter months, with relatively fewer visitors in the months between the closing of the ski resort and the beginning of summer.

Tourism has several economic benefits for the community. The city’s general fund revenue is dependent on sales tax generation and is therefore highly sensitive to fluctuations in tourism. Meanwhile, tourism plays a major role in the local economy,

⁷ *Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Trails and Yampa River Master Plan*, 2019

accounting for 30% of jobs in Routt County in 2023.⁸ That same year, Routt County saw \$644.1 million in direct travel spending, and 5,200 residents were employed full- or part-time by the tourism industry.⁹ Moreover, the tourism economy is growing within the county, reporting a 2.5% increase in travel-related spending and an 8.5% increase in tourism-related employment for 2023 over the 2022 baseline.¹⁰

When addressing sustainability, resilience, and conservation in areas where recreation and visitation continue to increase, it is critical to manage the use of recreational resources. Increasingly, more people come to enjoy, sightsee, and recreate in the natural and scenic resources of the Yampa Valley. This necessitates management practices to ensure overuse does not degrade the natural environment and the surrounding ecosystem.

⁸ Headwater Economics, Profile of Industries That Include Travel and Tourism: Routt County, 2023.

⁹ <https://www.travelstats.com/dashboard/colorado>

¹⁰ *ibid*

2023 Routt County Tourism Statistics

30% of jobs rely on tourism

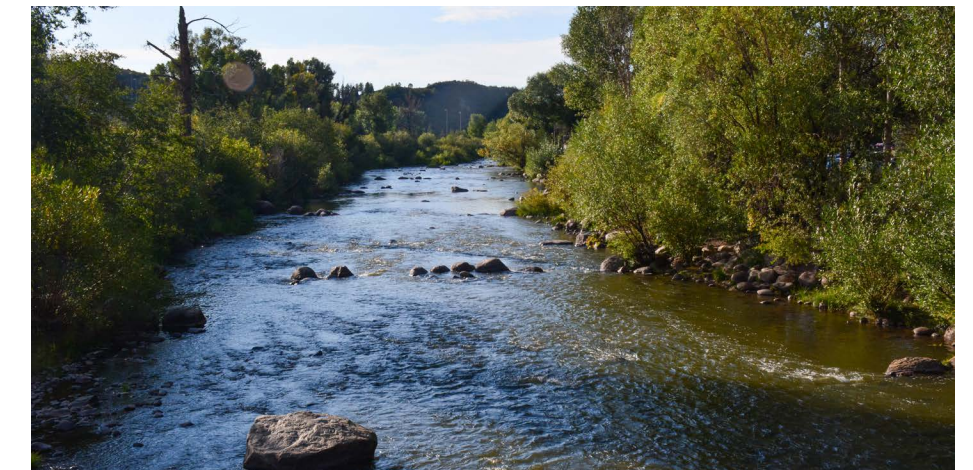
5,200 residents are employed full or part time by the tourism industry

8.5% increase in tourism related employment

Without the knowledge or awareness of appropriate etiquette for how to “recreate responsibly” visitors may unintentionally damage sensitive environments. Overuse of the Yampa River for fishing and water sports is a top concern to residents and local nonprofits. In the 2024 Community Survey, 92% of respondents said the management of the health of the Yampa River was “very important” or “essential.” The trails on Emerald Mountain and nearby U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands are also popular and heavily used, and it is a community value to steward these public lands and natural habitats for future generations. Tourism can also threaten the value of a thriving local community. At a Community Open House event held to solicit public outreach for this plan, several residents shared a feeling that visitors are prioritized over locals and that their needs don’t matter. Another common comment was that high visitation degrades the quality of recreational experiences for locals due to overcrowding and conflicts between user groups. When asked in the 2024 Community Survey, 44% of respondents opposed marketing Steamboat Springs as a tourism destination to support the local economy. These comments and survey results reveal a sentiment that tourism is “too much”, and that the city should focus more on resident needs than generating sales tax from visitors. Additionally, visitation should be better managed, and visitors educated so they have a lower impact on the ecosystem and city infrastructure, and visitation should not be intentionally driven beyond current rates.

Despite tourism’s advantages, when poorly managed it risks residents’ daily experiences living in Steamboat Springs. Damage to outdoor recreation assets and the degradation of the ecosystem, a culture and economy too dependent and focused on tourism, and a community that feels too congested with outsiders are the risks the city is taking if steps are not

taken quickly. Additionally, a tourism-based economy can be susceptible to economic swings. Avoiding the negative consequences of tourism and high volumes of visitation requires coordinated efforts to educate visitors on recreational access, etiquette, and preparedness. The vision for a well “managed destination” is that Steamboat Springs is a thriving community based on strong local connections, culture, and social capital that visitors get to enjoy and admire during their stay.



Without the knowledge or awareness of appropriate etiquette for how to “recreate responsibly” visitors may unintentionally damage sensitive environments.

Environmental Conservation, Sustainability, and Resilience

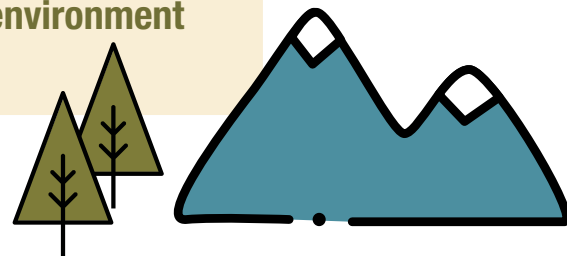
In the Community Survey, 93% of respondents said the quality of the overall natural environment was “essential” or “very important” while 82% said the same about the importance of having quality wildlife habitat. This speaks to the community’s strong values of environmental conservation and sustainability.

As the community plans for environmental protection and sustainability, it will be important to recognize that critical habitats on lands surrounding Steamboat Spring are becoming more fragile due to the stresses of increasing temperatures, increasing periods of drought, and human development pressures. New growth and development should be sensitive to wildlife habitat corridors to uphold the community value of conservation as it grows. Many of the lands within the Yampa Valley provide migration corridors for large mammals, while other areas include habitat for reproduction and winter range critical for the survival of individual species. While publicly

Community Survey Results

82% quality wildlife habitat is “essential” or “very important”

93% quality of the overall natural environment is “essential” or “very important”



owned land is abundant within Routt County and the larger Yampa Valley, property lines do not necessarily conform to natural system boundaries and, therefore, it becomes critical to develop a framework for the protection and conservation that includes both public and private lands. These goals are best achieved through regional planning in collaboration with Routt County, the Routt Recreation and Conservation Roundtable, private landowners that may be interested in protecting their land through conservation easements, and other land managers in the region such as land trusts.

A primary natural resource within the boundaries of the City of Steamboat Springs is the Yampa River. The river has been facing warming temperatures and lower river flows over the past several years, resulting in recent summer river closures to help protect the ecosystem. The 2018 Yampa River Health Assessment and Streamflow Management Plan and the 2022 Yampa River Integrated Water Management Plan are good references for river health and recommendations for stewardship of this resource. The 2019 PROSTR Plan highlights the following vision statement for the Yampa River: “The Yampa River will always be a flourishing, vibrant, biodiverse natural river corridor that is enjoyed by recreationalists, respected, and supported by its community with commitment, education, and sensible regulation.”

Stewarding this resource is part of the community’s commitment to the value of prioritizing conservation, and it will be important to formalize water efficiency efforts and increase efforts to protect natural resources.

During a community open house for this plan, and in the Community Survey, residents expressed that exposure to wildfire is a top concern. In the 2024 Community Survey 98%



“The Yampa River will always be a flourishing, vibrant, biodiverse natural river corridor that is enjoyed by recreationalists, respected, and supported by its community with commitment, education, and sensible regulation.”

-2019 PROSTR PLAN

of respondents identified Fire Services and Emergency Services as “essential” or “very important” and community safety was a top priority emerging from that survey’s results. According to the Colorado State Forest Service’s Routt County WUI Risk Info Sheet, 67% of residents of the county live in moderate- to high-risk areas of the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). The Colorado Water Conservation Board projects average temperatures across the state to rise by +2.5-5.5 degrees Fahrenheit over the 1971 to 2000 baseline, with much warmer autumns and variable precipitation resulting in more frequent droughts. As a result, conditions for wildfires will increase over the next two decades. In response to the reality of increasing wildfires, droughts, and other climate-related hazards, Steamboat Springs must sustain the place by anticipating such events and preparing for them.

Climate change remains a critical global issue, and its effects are not limited by borders. The only way to mitigate its impact is for many actors to make efforts to decrease emissions in

their domains. Globally, cities, towns, and populated areas are estimated to be responsible for approximately 75% of carbon dioxide emissions. Local governments can have a broad influence and impact on efforts to address climate change mitigation and adaptation and are an integral part of the solution to the climate crisis. In the case of Steamboat Springs, efforts should be focused on energy, transportation, land use, and waste; transportation accounts for 37% of the County’s emissions while commercial and residential buildings collectively account for 45% (2023 Routt County Greenhouse Gas Inventory). Routt County’s Climate Action Plan (2021) provides a roadmap towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing quality of life with consideration to long-term resiliency. The county and its partners have already made strides towards completing these goals across the various sectors of energy, transportation, waste, land use, and economy. Continued progress and celebrations of the wins along the way can be monitored in the Climate Action Plan Collaborative’s yearly Annual Reports.



CALL TO ACTION:

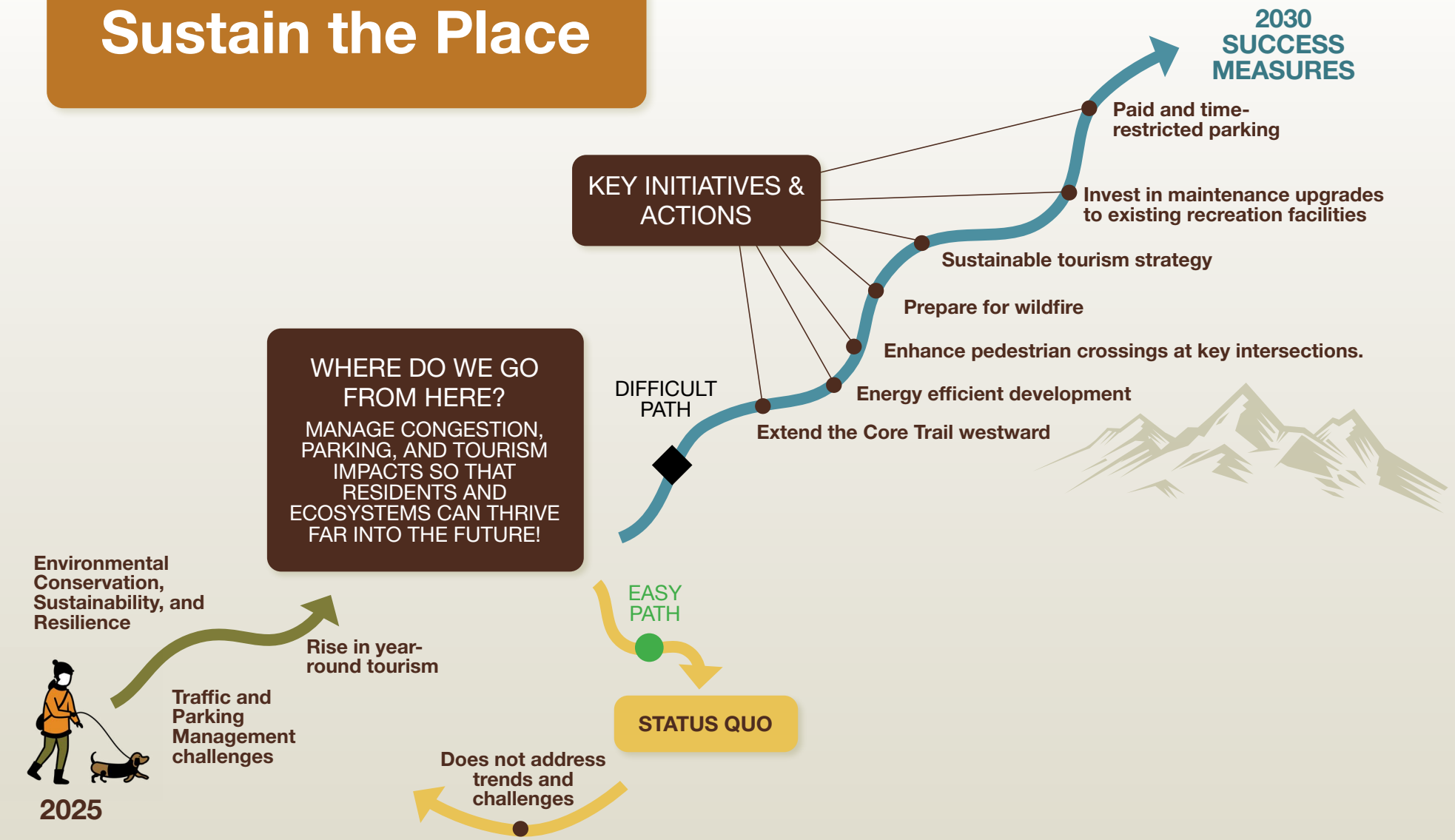
Manage Congestion, Parking, And Tourism Impacts So That Residents and Ecosystems Can Thrive Far Into The Future!

Steamboat Springs will manage the impacts of tourism, conserve the surrounding ecosystem and landscape, increase city sustainability initiatives, become resilient to rising natural hazard risks, and make improvements to transportation infrastructure that mitigate congestion and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This chapter includes initiatives and actions that will chart the city's path forward to better manage itself as a destination and a place to live. This is critical to preserving the ecosystem of the Yampa Valley, quality of life for residents, and quality experiences for visitors. If the city does not take action on this front, it risks further eroding the natural environment, making daily life less pleasant for residents, leaving the community exposed to hazards, and degrading the visitation experience.

Many of the initiatives and actions described in this chapter cannot be achieved by city staff and elected and appointed officials alone. Collective impact requires collective action; therefore, the city calls on its partners such as non-profits, the private sector, residents, peer governments, and the state to be strategic partners in this call to action for the community. Each key initiative in this chapter includes a set of actions that the city could take to move towards the vision of "sustaining the place."

While all actions outlined by this plan are important to consider and implement as capacity and resources become available, the highest priority actions and key initiatives are identified near the end of the chapter in the "Strategy for Success" section. It is important to recognize that not all actions can be completed simultaneously, and it is often more effective to concentrate funds, staff capacity, and energy towards a few actions that have the most potential to make a measurable difference in the desired direction. How the success of these efforts will be measured is also explained as a "Game Plan" at the end of the chapter.

Sustain the Place



Key Initiative 1: Parking Management



As the City of Steamboat Springs makes progress on expanding multimodal connections and opportunities, another strategy that the city along with key stakeholders, such as downtown merchants, could explore a variety of parking management strategies; parking is a limited resource and a valuable public asset, particularly in the downtown area and at Steamboat Ski Resort. Parking management refers to a set of strategies and policies that can be used to decrease parking demand and influence multi-modal travel behavior. These strategies encourage the use of non-auto modes of transportation, which improve sustainability, safety, and livability, in line with many of the city's broader goals. Parking management strategies will also help to better manage the limited and scarce resource that is parking in areas and at times when the demand is highest. The two locations with the highest demand are downtown and the ski resort. There are existing agreements between the city and the resort requiring continuous analysis of parking demand or utilization as part of the resort's development agreement. As parking demand continues to be monitored, it is important to not immediately jump to producing more parking as utilization goes up (a supply-side intervention). While in some cases adding additional parking spaces may be warranted, parking management strategies can address the demand side of the equation and help encourage more people to use other forms of transportation such as shuttles and transit. Helping reduce demand to drive can have environmental and traffic congestion

benefits. Management strategies will reduce cruising for parking, looking for more proximal or less expensive parking, which also improves congestion, safety, and sustainability. Other benefits include economic vitality by driving business activity with more available parking and a higher turnover of parking spaces in proximity to businesses. Lastly, parking pricing and enforcement can provide additional funds for transit or multi-modal infrastructure. The downsides of parking management could include increased circling for parking and pushing people to areas just outside of the downtown grid to find parking in adjacent neighborhoods, and potential confusion and frustration from members of the community, downtown business owners, and visitors. For parking management to be successful, this effort must be preceded by investments and expansion in other multimodal connections such as more frequent buses and expanded bike and pedestrian infrastructure. If parking becomes more difficult, other alternatives need to be suitable replacements.

The city can leverage a suite of parking management strategies such as time-restricted parking, paid parking, enforcement, and improved wayfinding. Measures like paid and time-restricted parking can be implemented in the short term, while other actions like developing additional parking or improving wayfinding may take more time and coordination. Steamboat Ski Resort and local businesses must be partners in designing parking management solutions.

Actions that support Key Initiative #1:

Expand time-restricted parking. Extend time-restricted parking to new areas with high parking demand to help improve turnover and availability. Consider additional enforcement of existing time-restricted parking to encourage turnover in parking spots as a first measure.

Implement paid and managed parking. Introduce paid or managed parking to help relieve demand in the most high-demand locations. For paid parking start with a low initial rate (for example, \$1 per hour with the first 20 minutes free) in the most high-demand locations and steadily increase rates based on monitoring supply and demand. A managed parking approach could entail more areas with time limits to encourage turnover and enforcement of spots with time limits or fees. It is important for the city to collect and monitor parking utilization data for both downtown and the base area. There is already an agreement with the resort requiring continuous analysis of parking utilization at the ski area, but a similar approach should be formalized downtown. Consider variable pricing to account for peak times at both locations. Keep equity in mind during roll-out of managed or paid parking programs to ensure low-income residents are not adversely affected.

Improve parking-related wayfinding. Improve parking-related signage and wayfinding systems to help drivers locate available parking more efficiently. This should include directing vehicles to less-used or more distant parking areas than their direct destination during high-demand times like during events or busy weekends.

Evaluate the need for more parking. Use ongoing monitoring of parking data to assess the necessity of increasing parking supply in the future. Consider a study of managed parking in the downtown area to understand demand and supply for specific groups of blocks for different times of day throughout the year. This will help the city understand in a more nuanced way the need for more parking and strategies to manage existing parking. Plan ahead for foreseeable needs for expanded parking in key locations and carefully evaluate the pros and cons of a downtown parking structure, especially its cost. Balance this initiative with expansions in alternative transportation improvements while recognizing that parking pressures can spark positive behavioral changes towards walking, biking, and using transit.

Key Initiative 2: Multimodal Safety and Improvements



Improving safety and multimodal connectivity city-wide is a community priority documented in multiple previous planning documents and community engagement efforts. To build momentum for multi-modal transportation improvements, the city can phase early multimodal investments focusing on transportation and economic investments in high-priority areas in Steamboat Springs where travel demand is highest. Making the street and trail network more accessible, comfortable, and inviting for people walking, rolling, and biking will shift travelers away from vehicular travel and towards non-driving modes of transportation for at least some of their trips. The level of multimodal enhancements outlined in the 2021 Steamboat Springs Transportation and Mobility Plan and further described in this plan will require the city to raise additional revenue. The 2021 TMP focuses on priority multimodal improvements in Downtown Steamboat to leverage increased connectivity and expand transportation options in the economic core of the city. Coupling this multimodal improvement initiative with others such as paid-parking downtown could allow the city to begin leveraging additional revenue in certain areas to create additional funding to support multimodal enhancements in key locations. Further, the city may need to explore larger sources of revenue generation for more complex capital projects, or other multimodal enhancements around the city through other tools such as special transportation improvement districts, grant funding, increased property taxes or others. Although downtown is important, this is also important for the entire city as travelers need to have safe multimodal connections from all parts of the region to get to downtown and other key destinations such as

schools, shopping areas, and recreation and cultural centers. Several of the actions within this initiative further the goals of that plan. A mode shift away from vehicular travel will result in lower vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and therefore benefit local air quality and achieve environmental goals identified in the Routt County Climate Action Plan (2021). A walkable and rollable environment will also help enhance the character of Steamboat Springs and improve economic vitality by increasing pedestrian access to store fronts and other key destinations. Improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and fewer vehicles traveling through key corridors increases safety for both motorists and non-motorists. Additionally, increased residential density downtown requires investment in transportation infrastructure to support the increased demand.

Actions that support Key Initiative #2:

Enhance safety at key crossings. Existing pedestrian crossings across Highway 40 at Lincoln Avenue should be enhanced to facilitate safe connections across the highway and increase access and connectivity to adjacent land uses. The city will need to collaborate with CDOT to add additional pedestrian crossings at key intersections without signalized or marked pedestrian crossings. In the near term, the City of Steamboat Springs should implement short-run recommendations that follow from the 2021 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) or evaluate the need for more in-depth safety studies at the following locations to understand the possibilities for improving long-term safety at these locations. Upon completion of safety studies, the city should work with CDOT to outline a plan for implementing these recommendations and with City of Steamboat Springs government staff and elected officials to outline funding to put towards implementation of the associated recommendations.

- » Highway 40 and Sheild Dr. intersection upgrade. The recommendations from the 2021 TMP include installing signs and pavement markings to reduce conflict points between vehicles and pedestrians. Long-term enhancements could include installing a traffic signal and the addition of a median if Highway 40 widens to 4 lanes in this section.
- » Highway 40 and Elk River Road underpass. During the existing conditions analysis conducted for this plan (Appendix A), the consultant team uncovered that most of the crashes that resulted in a fatality or serious injury occurred in north Steamboat Springs near the intersection of Highway 40 and Elk River Road. In the next year, the City of Steamboat Springs should find funding to hire a consultant to begin the initial project planning to implement the proposed underpass project that would create grade separated pedestrian crossings at these intersections that was called out as a transportation safety improvement project in the 2021 Transportation Master Plan.
- » Brandon Circle Heritage Park Preschool crossing. During a stakeholder meeting conducted for this plan, participants expressed that they felt unsafe letting their children cross Highway 40 at the Brandon Circle intersection to access the Heritage Park Preschool as people would need to cross four lanes (two through lanes, and one acceleration lane, and one deceleration lane) with no signal or crosswalk. As this location is outside of city limits, Routt County will need to play the lead role in championing this intersection improvement and working with CDOT while the City of Steamboat Springs should play an active support role to prioritize a signal at this intersection that includes comfortable pedestrian crossings and signage.

- » Lincoln Avenue downtown crossings. The 2021 TMP called out the need for an improved intersection crossing at 3rd and Lincoln. Three additional intersections that do not currently have signals or pedestrian crossings should be explored in greater detail in a safety study: 6th and Lincoln, 10th and Lincoln, and 12th and Lincoln. Intersection enhancements at these locations should be balanced with directing pedestrians to existing signalized intersections to keep traffic flowing on the main artery through the downtown. Existing signalized intersections should be studied to ensure appropriate lead times are given for pedestrians before turn signals are given and that wait times are not excessive.

Reimagine Lincoln Avenue. The 2021 Transportation Master Plan identified a need to approach traffic congestion and intersection safety on Lincoln Avenue in Downtown Steamboat Springs more holistically through a traffic and safety study. The TMP recommendation states that the traffic and circulation study should explore opportunities to move bus traffic more efficiently through downtown and reduce vehicular congestion and back-up along Lincoln Avenue. During outreach conducted for this plan, residents and community stakeholders expressed that Lincoln Ave serving both a highway and a main street feels incompatible. It is unlikely that multimodal enhancements to Lincoln Avenue will ever fully resolve this tension, however, improving the safety and comfort of the roadway, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and intersections will certainly go a long way in improving the experience and comfort of Lincoln Avenue as a “main street”. Residents expressed much dissatisfaction with the traffic congestion downtown, and how car backup and vehicles circulating downtown in the search for parking detracted from the experience of downtown. The traffic

congestion and higher speeds detract from the atmosphere of Lincoln Ave as a mixed-use walkable main street environment, and the frequent stop lights, pedestrian crossings, and activity reduce the speed and reliability in which through traffic can cross downtown from east side of downtown to the west side of downtown. The City of Steamboat Springs should move forward with a transportation circulation and safety study as outlined in the 2021 TMP, however, the goal should be to “re-imagine Lincoln Ave” in a way that emphasizes multimodal opportunities and deemphasizes vehicular throughput in order to better align Lincoln Ave with the city’s values of sustainability and resilience, multimodal connectivity, and a thriving economy.

Bicycle parking. Steamboat Springs is well served by an existing array of sidewalks, multi-use paths, and bus stops. During outreach conducted for the 2019 Downtown Plan, residents expressed that improved bike parking facilities—bike racks, bike lockers, etc.—would improve the experience of biking downtown and would encourage more frequent bicycle trips for daily activities such as going to a restaurant or running errands. E-biking is becoming an increasingly popular mode of transportation in Steamboat Springs as there are regularly long distances between destinations and e-bikes can cover ground faster than acoustic bikes. Increasing the availability of bike parking at key nodes and destinations throughout the city may further open the door to increasing the number of daily trips that are completed on e-bikes or acoustic bikes in a city that already has a culture of use. In the next year, the City of Steamboat Springs should conduct an inventory of existing bicycle parking facilities city-wide to identify where there are gaps in bike parking amenities. Additionally, the city should conduct engagement to understand where bike parking is most needed and desired. Following the inventory and outreach, the city can

outline a plan to install bike parking in the public right-of-way, and work with local businesses to offset the cost of adding bike parking near their storefronts.

Fill in missing sidewalks. Decades of new developments did not include the provision of new sidewalks, which are typically installed by developers during the construction process. The City of Steamboat Springs began requiring new sidewalks to accompany larger developments in the 1990’s, however, there is still an incomplete and disjointed sidewalk network. The 2021 Transportation Master Plan outlined 6 miles of missing sidewalk gaps community wide. Additionally, the Routt County Built Environmental Coalition Steamboat Springs Community Scan has a walk audit tool that can be used to prioritize the sidewalk gaps that need to be filled. The city should create a phasing plan that can be integrated into the capital improvement program budget over the next 10 years to outline when the city will be filling in the missing sidewalk gaps. This phasing plan should be cross-referenced with long-term plans for future development and redevelopment of existing parcels to leverage opportunities to coordinate with the private development community to construct missing sidewalk gaps where appropriate, especially in the development review process. Further the city should determine the long-term cost projections for the missing sidewalk network to outline what additional capital revenue will need to come from grant funding so that city staff can begin planning for upcoming state and federal transportation grant funding cycles. The city should additionally begin working with adjacent landowners to put easements in place to work out a long-term maintenance and snow-removal plan for these new sidewalk segments to ensure that these sidewalks are functional year-round.

Key Initiative 3: Energy-Efficient, Electrified Development



The Routt County Climate Action Plan identified that commercial and residential buildings are the largest contributors to emissions. As of 2021, Routt County has started the process of implementing the 2021 International Energy Codes, a significant step in reducing building related emissions for new development countywide. As the largest population center, and economic hub of Routt County- and as a sustainability minded community. The impacts of climate change will have adverse impacts on the health of the ecosystem and the viability of the recreation amenities that residents and visitors love, such as the long-term viability of snow at the ski resort or water in the Yampa River. The best way for people to reduce the severity of the effects of climate change is to reduce emissions output, which starts locally. For the City of Steamboat Springs to make measurable progress on climate, the city will need to reduce the emissions associated with development, redevelopment, and current buildings, especially larger buildings, which will help to improve the local air quality and long-term sustainability of the community for future generations of Steamboat Springs residents. A core goal of the Routt County Climate Action Plan is to promote the adoption of renewable energy sources for new development, increase the energy efficiency of buildings, and support efforts to electrify older buildings. That plan outlines the importance of this policy and the potential impact it could have. In an area where the electric grid may get shut down due to wildfires or threats of wildfire, community members

have expressed the desire for redundancy in energy options - wood stoves as a backup for example. These equity and redundancy concerns should be included as part of any building electrification policy.

- » In 2023, emissions from stationary energy (i.e., electricity, natural gas, wood, and propane) used in residential and commercial buildings and industrial facilities in Routt County generated 45 percent of the community’s GHG emissions. While electricity emissions will decrease over the coming 30 years as YVEA provides more low-carbon electricity to its customers, emissions from natural gas and propane will still comprise the largest share of emissions in the community in 2050, at 34 percent of the anticipated total.
- » By improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings in the County and ensuring new buildings are built to the highest possible degree of efficiency, Routt County local governments will be helping community members save money on energy bills, improving indoor and outdoor air quality, supporting local jobs, and increasing the comfort for building inhabitants.
- » By transitioning building systems that are traditionally powered with stationary fuel sources (including space heating, water heating, and cooking) to being powered by electricity, the community will realize significant emissions reductions.

Actions that support Key Initiative #3:

Lead by example. The city should and could be a role model for mountain communities around the State of Colorado for the adoption of renewable energy and energy-efficient development. The County's 2021 Climate Action Plan recommended that all member governments adopt policies to require new municipal buildings and capital energy equipment replacements (such as fleets) to require life cycle cost decision making including the social cost of carbon. The city should respond by phasing in city facilities and fleets to electric or renewable energy sources when possible and where appropriate. All new public buildings should strive to meet at least LEED Silver certification standards, and energy audits should be used to identify municipal facilities that need improvement. The city is currently working on a facilities master plan that will identify upcoming new and upgraded facilities that can be targeted for renewable energy improvements.

Locate and install EV charging stations around town – As a way of dovetailing with this plan's additional parking management approaches, the city can examine existing public parking areas around Steamboat Springs to ensure that there is an adequate supply of EV charging stations for people driving electric vehicles.

Review existing programs and partners. To prepare for renewable energy, the city will consistently review existing programs and identify potential partners to support rebate and incentive programs. The Colorado energy office provides several grant funding opportunities such as the Public Building Electrification Program, High-Efficiency Electric Heating & Appliances (HEEHA) Program, and Microgrids for Community Resilience Program. Partnering with the Colorado Energy Office

and searching for similar partnerships and programs as they come online will ensure Steamboat is poised to take advantage of opportunities and develop its renewable capabilities.

Mitigate the impacts of large homes and excessive energy consumption. The city should develop regulations to limit home size (similar to Routt County's maximum house size regulation in their updated land use code) or create an exterior energy budget or offset program, similar to the City of Aspen's Renewable Energy Mitigation Program. This program requires homes seeking to install exterior amenities (e.g., spas, pools, snowmelt, and electric heat tape) to install renewable energy to offset this energy consumption or pay into a fund. This fund could be used to support the city's energy efficiency and electrification retrofit projects to ensure existing buildings, especially income-qualified and naturally occurring affordable housing, can deliver these same benefits to the entire city.

Continually review and update building code. Building code offers an opportunity to ensure that renewable energy is supported or regulated for new development. In 2021 Steamboat Springs enacted edits to its building code, including the State of Colorado Model Electric and Solar Ready Code. Similar updates should be made as they become relevant. Steamboat Springs should continually review and modify codes to ensure new and renovated buildings are more energy efficient and use electrified sources of energy.

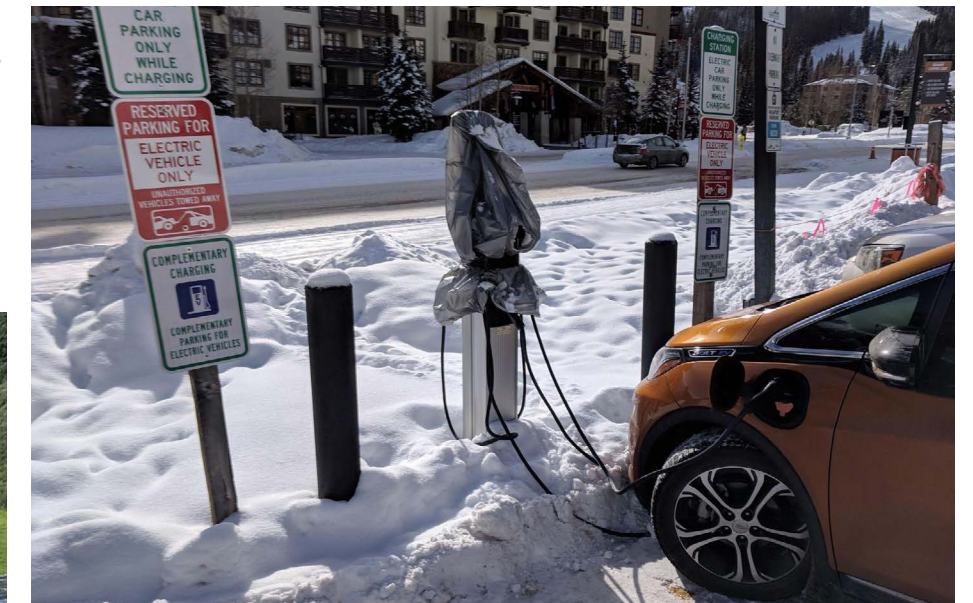
Support fuel-switching with incentives, education, and technical assistance. The city should keep track of incentive options for homeowners who would like to voluntarily switch to renewable sources of energy. In retrofit construction, replacing old systems with current electric heating and water heating systems comes at a cost premium. However, there are major

benefits to electric systems, including improved air quality (especially important for young children), and better temperature management (keeping rooms at a more consistent temperature, especially in warmer months). The city or regional partners should develop education and outreach strategies to highlight these advantages and provide technical assistance to property owners regarding Key initiative.



Basalt microgrid affordable housing project.

Sources: Camus Energy (top) and Steamboatpilot.com (bottom)



EV Charger at Copper Mountain. Source: Plugshare.com



Heat pump installation in Steamboat. Source: Steamboatpilot.com

Key Initiative 4: Water-wise, Nature-Based Solutions



Steamboat Springs can expect to face increased periods of drought in the future, which have the effect of drying out soil and reducing its ability to absorb stormwater. The City of Steamboat Springs has recognized that a large opportunity for water savings could come through the mass adoption of more water-wise landscaping city-wide and finding ways to manage stormwater through green infrastructure in large developments and public projects such as parks and community centers.

Steamboat Springs should embrace low water landscaping for new development projects as part of its site review and development standards to accomplish multiple goals:

- » Reduce irrigation
- » Provide habitat and ecosystem services through encouraging pollinator species

Actions that support Key Initiative #4:

Incorporate Green Stormwater Infrastructure into Development Standards. Ensure that new large scale development projects, and public projects such as new park space incorporate green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) using requirements or incentives. Evaluate projects to ensure they address onsite stormwater management. To further this goal, and lead by example, the city should require the use of GSI in city-owned buildings and infrastructure projects to demonstrate feasibility and commitment to these practices.

Develop and Promote Water-wise Outdoor Practices.

Develop regulations to minimize water-intensive turf grass in landscapes. These regulations ideally should prohibit the installation of turf grass in residential front yards and limit “nonfunctional” turf grass, where nonfunctional means it is ornamental and not used for a recreational activity, in residential back yards and across public and commercial landscapes. Additionally, artificial turf as a substitute for turf grass lawns should be prohibited, as it degrades water quality and provides no pollinator or habitat benefits. Encourage native landscaping through policies and programs such as landscaping guides, rebates for xeriscaping conversion, native garden in a box programs, and greywater system regulations. Additional programs that help with water efficiency include outdoor irrigation efficiency audits as well as promoting QWEL “Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper” certification for additional landscapers who can support residents in increasing the efficiency of their irrigation systems, and rebates for property owners that install water-efficient irrigation systems.

Leverage current planning efforts. Reflect ongoing initiatives, such as wetland regulations, the city’s Water Conservation Plan, waterbody setbacks, and updated landscaping requirements, in policies to ensure consistency and alignment across city efforts.

Key Initiative 5: Further Prepare for Wildfire



Wildfire risk is growing, as is the magnitude of its consequences on people, structures, the environment, outdoor recreation, and the economy. According to the 2018 Colorado State Hazard Mitigation Plan, a century of aggressive fire suppression, combined with cycles of drought and changing land management practices, has left many of Colorado’s forests, including those in Routt County, unnaturally dense and ready to burn. The city must take the necessary actions to prepare for wildfire and increase the community’s resilience.

Wildfires are most likely to ignite outside of Steamboat Springs in unincorporated Routt County, and the county currently has its own Wildfire Operating Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020) and Community Wildfire Protection Plan (Updated 2023). Additionally, the Headwaters Economics Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire plan is a good resource. These plans implement cooperative wildland fire protection on all lands within the county. It is primarily the county and its partner’s role to manage lands and reduce the initial risk of wildfire. These partners include the local fire protection districts (North Routt, Yampa, Oak Creek, West Routt, and Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue), the Routt County Office of Emergency Management, the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Colorado State Forest Service. Steamboat Spring’s role is primarily to increase resilience and mitigate the consequences of wildfire to people and properties within its jurisdiction. Private property owners must also take personal responsibility to increase the resilience of their property. Most actions to make structures resilient are associated with the building itself and the home ignition zone 0-100feet from the structure.

Actions that support Key Initiative #5:

Support Home-hardening and Defensible Property Measures Through Education and Technical Assistance. The primary tools at the city’s and private property owners’ disposal are defensible site standards and home-hardening; design interventions at the site level that can keep properties safer. The city should support home hardening and defensible site standards by supporting and exploring funding of the Routt the Routt County Wildfire Mitigation Council to provide education and technical support to this end for residents of Steamboat Springs. The city should provide information to residents on ways to reduce flammable fuels on their properties, make structural modifications that improve a building’s resistance to embers and radiant heat, and incorporate fire-resistant landscaping to create defensible space around a property. However, efforts should be made to preserve urban tree canopy, both on private property and within the public realm. In 2021, the city updated its building code to incorporate elements of the International Wildland Urban Interface Code (IWUIC). The incorporated elements require all new construction to abide by certain construction practices that help to reduce risk. This is a strong initial step towards regulating necessary home-hardening and defensible property measures.

Consider Further Regulating Development in Wildfire-Prone Areas. While the city implemented elements of the IWUIC during its building code updates in 2021, it excluded several chapters of the code. The included portions of the code addressed ember-resistant construction and building materials with requirements around roofing, vents, soffits, and gutters. However, defensible space, structure location, vegetation management, and chapters defining fire hazard severity were

not retained. The city should strengthen its Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) building code by adding these missing sections and further defining the relative fire hazard severity of properties based on where they fall within certain zones relative to the Wildland Urban Interface. Additional elements that could be included in the WUI code include emergency vehicle access, water supply, and fire protection requirements like automatic sprinkler systems and spark arresters. The city may also consider complete adoption of Class 2 Requirements set forth by the 2025 CO Wildfire Resiliency Code, as adopted at the State level in July of 2025. Within one year of that adoption, all jurisdictions are required to be compliant with this code. While it is allowable that a jurisdiction can implement more restrictive zoning standards (such as an overlay), they cannot opt for a lower standard. By adopting the most restrictive standard, future steps needed to improve resiliency are minimized and potential for urban conflagration is reduced. Doing so will ensure both compliance with state law and that we are taking a more proactive step toward reducing risk.

Implement recommendations from CPAW report. In 2023 and 2024, the City of Steamboat Springs received land use planning recommendations from the Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire—a program of Headwaters Economics. This report was conducted alongside an audit of the city’s land use code, and provides specific recommendations around general wildfire reduction measures that the city can incorporate into the Community Development Code related to zoning and site standards for development such as fencing standards, set-backs, etc. as well as more specific landscaping standards to reduce wildfire risk for public and private landscaped areas adjacent to buildings. As the City of Steamboat Springs incorporates land use related recommendations from this

Community Plan into the Community Development Code, City Staff should take advantage of this opportunity to further bolster the wildfire resilience and mitigation recommendations from the CPAW report into the Community Development Code.

Continue to fund and support Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue. It is important to maintain a well-funded and supported fire department for wildfire mitigation and response. Sufficient investment in personnel, machinery, and fire drills helps keep the city prepared to respond to a wildfire event. Further, the Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue personnel play a critical role in fire prevention through assisting with development review. The city should facilitate opportunities for personnel to gain relevant experience and expertise to bolster their knowledge and skills related to fire prevention best practices and stay up to date with the new and enhanced standards. Further, the City of Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue and Public works should coordinate on updating the emergency evacuation plans and the needs from both departments to ensure that the city is prepared for large-scale evacuation should the need arise.

Key Initiative 6: Recreational Asset Development and Maintenance



Residents of Steamboat Springs highly value recreation, with 79% identifying the overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities as essential or very important. However, the city needs to maintain recreation facilities and increase the capacity of the park and recreation opportunities in Steamboat as the community grows and encounters new needs. In the 2019 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Trails, and Yampa River Master Plan (PROSTR Plan), the city identified several needs for new recreational facilities, as well as strategies and funding for the maintenance of existing assets. In 2025, many of these goals remain relevant. In addition to this plan, planning and community engagement completed at Howelsen Park in 2024 continued to identify a need for maintenance, new facilities, and increased stewardship of city parks.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City Parks and Recreation Department was able to catch up on many of the identified deferred maintenance items from the 2019 plan. While the city has made progress on the backlog of deferred maintenance projects, ongoing maintenance remains a challenge for the city. Challenges have been identified by the city in reserving time to maintain ball fields during the summer due to such high rates of usage leaving no available hours for maintenance. While maintenance remains a top priority, the parks and recreation department, as well as a 2024 Howelsen Park user feedback survey, identified a strong community desire for additional facilities. However, should the city acquire new park land, build a community recreation center, or add to its portfolio of recreation services, the city will struggle to be able to fund and maintain new facilities. Another need broadly identified was for

indoor recreation space that could include multipurpose rooms, court space, and a city recreation center open to the public for exercise. To address both ongoing maintenance and any potential further investment in new facilities, the city will need to find additional funding sources. For this reason, another major takeaway from the PROSTR plan was a need for prudent fiscal planning for recreation spending and identifying new funding sources before adding new elements to the PROSTR system.

Actions that support Key Initiative #6:

Note: These actions are adapted from the 2019 PROSTR plan. The city has generally updated the PROSTR plan on a ten-year cadence. The next PROSTR plan will likely occur within the Community Plan’s first three-year performance monitoring period.

Invest in upgrades to existing facilities. The goal of this action is to invest in upgrades to existing facilities to maintain a high-quality, safe, and accessible parks system. Funding should be prioritized for basic system-wide repairs, upkeep, and replacement. Facilities should be periodically assessed based on use, expenses, and revenues to determine if they meet financial sustainability goals. As facilities are maintained and renovated, the city should take measures to bring them into conformity with any relevant ADA accessibility requirements.

Provide a variety of recreation facilities that meet diverse needs. While maintenance remains a top priority, additional facility needs were identified by the PROSTR plan and reaffirmed in conversations with the parks department in 2024. In particular, locations, partners, and funding sources should be explored for the following facilities: a recreation center that could consist of an indoor gym with multi-purpose courts, a field house with

an indoor sports turf field and locker rooms, and a new sports complex or community park with additional sports field space.

Continue westward trail connectivity to and from the Core Trail, with the Core Trail’s extension. The City of Steamboat Springs is currently working to extend the West Steamboat Trail that will connect existing developed areas on the south side of Highway 40. The city should continue this momentum to provide enhanced multimodal connectivity east-west throughout the city, including connections that extend the facility further to the west allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to safely cross the highway. As Highway 40 is the primary corridor, safe pedestrian and bike options along and across this highway is crucial for mobility – bikes, pedestrians, and getting to and from transit stops safely.

Be effective stewards of Howelsen Hill and Park. Howelsen Park, including the city-owned resort Howelsen Hill, is a particularly large, unique, and historically significant part of the city’s parks and recreation system. Garnering 417,500 total visits per year from 123,900 unique visitors, Howelsen Park is both a locally serving amenity and a major draw for summer tourism. Because of its high rates of local and visitor use, special consideration must be given to how to maintain and steward the park. Various user groups of the park have expressed goals for upkeep and new facilities. When considering development in the park, the city should be cognizant of its role as a public steward of this space to maintain a park that is open to the public, preserves local history, and maintains a quality recreational experience. These goals may align with permitting new facilities or renovations, but proposals should be considered based on alignment with public goals. It is recommended that the city focus on improving access and circulation and improving the placemaking qualities of the park. To help manage high

visitation of the park, the city should revisit event management strategies to ensure multiple large events don’t cause periods of user-group conflict and high traffic. The city should engage in conceptual site planning to identify any improvements to the park, such as circulation and wayfinding improvements and upgrades to in-park facilities like the rodeo, Howelsen Hill, or the ice rink among other facilities.

Key Initiative 7: Visitor Use Management



This key initiative responds to the impacts of tourism on Steamboat Springs. Community members have identified feeling like a second priority to visitors and have expressed opposition towards efforts to increase visitation in the city. Trends fueled by changes in the tourism industry—such as increased participation in outdoor recreation activities nationally since the COVID-19 pandemic, and local changes such as the addition of Steamboat Resort to the Ikon pass, and new trails built at Emerald Mountain—along with new technologies (mapping apps and e-bikes are some examples) have resulted in more people recreating on public lands and engaging in new recreation activities. This, combined with a pandemic-driven influx of residents that have been able to change their living circumstances and work environment following the pandemic, such as people that are able to work remotely, or from home, and new seasonal, part-time residents who can spend more time away from their primary residences to all reaches of Routt County, has put a lot of pressure on recreational facilities in Steamboat Springs and the surrounding areas. Overuse impacts such as high traffic volumes, increased parking demand, pollution, noise, erosion, trail degradation, overcrowding, habitat loss, wildlife disruption, and water quality degradation

are affecting surrounding neighborhoods, threatening the ability to conserve sensitive lands, and diminishing the recreational experience. Despite the impact that high levels of tourism can have on day-to-day life for residents, tourism has been major part of the local economy spawning a wide variety of tourism and outdoor recreation related local businesses, and the tourism industry remains a primary source of employment for people in Routt County, a fact that comes with a variety of unique benefits and challenges.

Furthermore, tourism in the city supports a fiscal revenue structure that has allowed the city to avoid levying property taxes on its residents. The city’s reliance on sales and accommodation taxes makes it more difficult to reduce its reliance on the tourism economy. It is essential to strike the right balance between supporting tourism, mitigating its impacts, and prioritizing local needs. In the long-run, and as a way to help “fund the future,” reducing the hold that tourism, and sales tax revenue generation has on the local economy could help “take down the temperature” associated with the conversation of striking the right balance between attracting visitation and prioritizing resident experience. An additional, actionable framework to help support this balance that the city can use right-away is visitor use management. Visitor Use Management (VUM) is a commonly accepted model for discussing how to manage visitation to achieve desired resource conditions and visitor experiences. VUM speaks to a suite of actions the city, or its partners can take to help manage visitation. Many resources and community guides surround the concept of visitor use management, such as the 2024 Colorado Destination Stewardship Plan and the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council’s website, which can both be helpful resources for Steamboat Springs.

Actions that support Key Initiative #7:

Implement Access Management Strategies for:

- » **Recreation destinations:** Popular recreational destinations in and around town, such as Howelsen Park and Fish Creek Falls, often drive high levels of traffic while trailhead parking fills up fast. Full parking lots and spillover traffic can affect many blocks downtown which impacts the ability for residents to live their day-to-day life such accessing daily amenities like getting groceries or visiting the dentist, getting to work, or recreating in the community. Beyond the spillover traffic affects, the recreational experience for visitors is negatively affected when visitors and residents struggle to find parking at popular trailheads and are forced to travel further afield or create an unanticipated plan B. Finding ways to expand access to popular trailheads via transit or by expanding other active transportation infrastructure such as bike lanes or multi-use paths that connect to popular trailheads and recreation destinations such as Fish Creek Falls can help to provide alternatives beyond driving to access these high-traffic recreation areas. Additionally, the city could consider other visitor access management strategies at popular destinations such as ticketed-timed entry systems which limits when visitors can access trailheads to specific time slots by getting a ticket at a gate that limits entrance into a trailhead or parking lot, or reservation systems which require visitors to go online ahead of their planned visit to reserve a spot at a trailhead or parking lot.
- » **Event access management:** In-town tourist attractions, such as events like the Rodeo or Triple Crown Baseball, or various cultural, arts, and music events held in the city

can lead to high levels of traffic congestion and circulation for parking. To combat this, there are opportunities for better trail and multi-modal transportation connectivity to help encourage people to walk or bike to these events and reduce the impact of car-related congestion. During events, wayfinding signage should help visitors find available parking, while education and promotional materials should encourage people to walk or bike or take transit when possible. The city will explore ways to increase the accessibility of key recreation sites by improving parking and multi-modal transportation access, and extended hours on the SST to ease traffic through neighborhoods, increase access, and provide a higher quality experience. Further, the city will ensure adequately resourcing traffic control plans, measures, and funding offsets during events to ensure that the city has adequate personnel and resources to follow through with the traffic control needs as outlined in the event traffic control plans.

Sustainable tourism strategy. The Steamboat Springs Chamber is the destination organization responsible for managing tourism on behalf of the City of Steamboat Springs. The Chamber recently released its **Destination Stewardship Action Plan**, which should be continually implemented and updated every three years. The plan focuses on three broad strategic goals, including leveraging tourism to support the economy, encouraging responsible and respectful use, and protecting and enhancing the city’s cultural identity. In addition to these concepts, the strategy should emphasize capacity management for peak seasons, partnerships with public land managers, and targeted marketing to spread visitation across seasons. Coordinate with relevant land managers, regional

entities, tourism agencies, guest service providers, and trip coordinators, to determine appropriate recreation areas to recommend to visitors. Areas should have appropriate capacity and welcoming experiences for visitors. The development of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy would also serve as an opportunity to convene various tourism related services such as accommodation and food service industries, outdoor recreation focused businesses, land management agencies, the City of Steamboat Springs and other relevant partners to engage in open dialogue about the various ways that tourism can be managed to best meet the needs of these disparate groups.

Visitor education. The Steamboat Springs Chamber states the importance of promoting responsible recreation practices on the lands and rivers in the city and the surrounding region. The Chamber should continue to promote its “Know Before You Go” and “Do Steamboat Springs Right” messaging campaigns. New methods to reach visitors digitally and physically should be explored, such as through using social media or enlisting popular hospitality businesses to help spread the messaging.

Establish a community advisory board. The city should consider establishing a community advisory board to involve the community and advise on issues related to tourism and visitor use management. This board should be comprised of diverse voices and promote a collaborative approach where community members’ concerns about tourism are heard and involved in the development of tourism and management of visitation. Creating this board should allow tourism-related initiatives to reflect local values and ensure that visitation is a positive force for the community that does not supersede environmental concerns and the needs of locals.

Key Initiative 8: Habitat and Wildlife Conservation



The Yampa River Valley is a major tributary of the Green River, and a major part of the Colorado River system. The Yampa River is a relatively unique river in the western United States in that it is minimally dammed and largely free-flowing for the vast majority of its 250-mile flow. The Yampa River is a major recreational resource as well as a significant ecosystem that supports several fish and wildlife species. The Yampa River and its tributaries play a significant role in the identity, economy, and quality of life in Steamboat Springs. It has been an integral part of the region’s history, serving as a transportation route for early settlers, a source of water for agriculture and industry, and a focal point for recreational and social activities. Steamboat Springs has a unique responsibility to steward this natural resource, which is intimately linked with its history and sense of place. In recent years, efforts have emphasized water quality regulations, riparian conservation, streamflow management, and public awareness and education about the ecosystem benefits of the river corridor.

The 2018 Yampa River Health Assessment and Streamflow Management Plan identifies a long-term strategy for protecting and improving the health and resiliency of the Yampa River near Steamboat Springs. This is a strong blueprint for actions the city should take to steward the river. However, only 1.5% of the total square miles of the watershed contributing to the Steamboat Springs reach of the Yampa River are within the municipality. Therefore, partnership is essential to achieving the goals and objectives for the Yampa River. Overall, the plan’s implementation strategy prioritizes 15 actions, such as a riparian revegetation program, and actions to improve foundational

capabilities for long-term funding and decision-making, such as establishing a Yampa River Water Fund and an interdisciplinary city “stream team” to review potential projects that affect river health. Many of these initial actions have already been taken since the plan’s conception, however, 8 management objectives identified in the plan require ongoing monitoring and continued diligence.

On the matter of wildlife habitat, many of the lands within the Yampa Valley provide migration corridors for large mammals, while other areas include habitat for reproduction and areas of winter range critical for the survival of individual species. While most high-value habitat land in the region is primarily influenced by the policy of the county and US Forest Service, the city is committed to conserving important ecological lands within its borders or in its immediate proximity. The Climate Action Plan identifies three recommendations highlighting the city’s goals of conserving ecologically important lands through land use regulation, especially riparian and wetland zones. Specific management plans have been put in place to protect elk, mule deer, and a series of conservation sites designated by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). The Steamboat Springs vicinity has two primary CNHP sites. The largest site is Pleasant Valley, rated by CNHP as having a high biodiversity significance and described as a part of the extensive Yampa River riparian corridor. Soda Creek at Strawberry Park is the other primary CNHP site in the Steamboat Springs vicinity. This site is also ranked as having high biodiversity significance and includes montane riparian forests and willow cars. Several other CNHP sites are in near proximity, including a tributary to Walton Creek that contains Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, which is listed as a Colorado Species of Special Concern.

Actions that support Key Initiative #8:

Protect critical ecological areas. Implement policies that safeguard Steamboat Springs' valuable natural habitats, ensuring adequate focus on conservation goals. This may be achieved with conservation easements, conservation zoning, setbacks and buffers, and transfer of development rights programs.

Establish and maintain riparian buffers. Preserve water quality, reduce erosion, mitigate flood risk, and support fish and wildlife habitats by protecting riparian zones along the Yampa River and its tributaries through strengthened standards for waterbody set-back requirements. Restore riparian habitat in locations where conditions have been degraded.

Ensure wildlife connectivity. Collaborate with regional partners to identify and protect key migration corridors for elk, mule deer, and other species. Conservation efforts should focus on maintaining habitat connectivity, especially in areas facing development pressure.

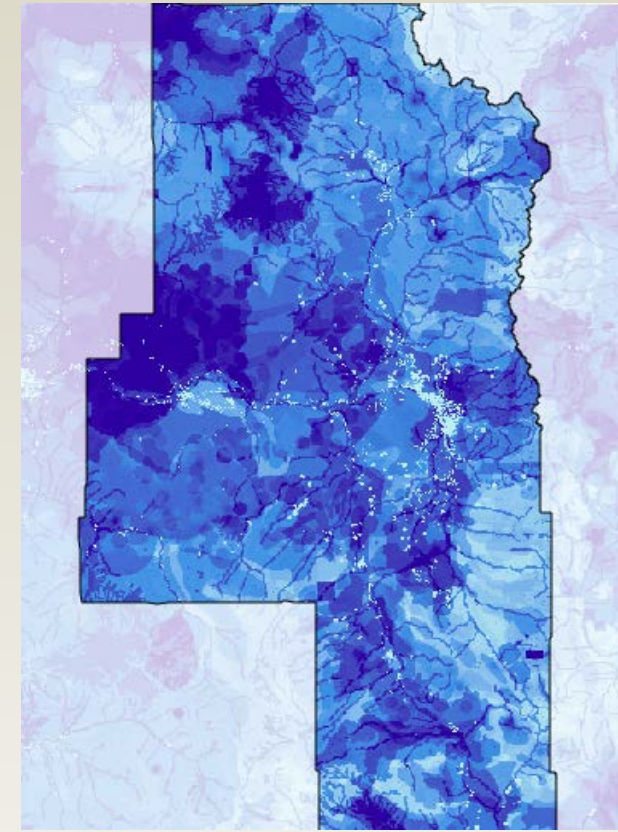
Incorporate habitat conservation into growth management.

Adopt best practices such as clustering development away from high-value ecological areas, promoting native landscaping, and integrating wildlife-friendly design standards into new developments. Additionally, protective existing natural vegetative cover from conversion is an important climate strategy for habitat conservation.

Enhance development review for ecological impacts.

Strengthen the city's development standards to include habitat preservation and ecological impact assessments, ensuring responsible growth that minimizes harm to sensitive areas.

Expand land conservation efforts. Secure long-term protection of priority ecological areas through land acquisitions, conservation easements, and partnerships with local and regional land trusts.



Conservation Values Map.

Source: routtrcr.org/routt-decision-support-tool-maps/



Canada Lynx

Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service



Colorado Pikeminnow.

Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service



Whooping Crane

Source: Audubon Field Guide



Ute Ladies'-tresses

Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service

Key Initiative 9: Water System Resilience and Efficiency Improvements



Steamboat Springs has two overarching goals for its water system and consumption: resilience and efficiency. Steamboat Springs has two drinking water providers: the City and Mount Werner Water and Sanitation District, each covering about half of the properties within city boundaries. The city and district plan for flexibility and resiliency in water supplies and the water infrastructure system in the face of prolonged drought, wildfire in the watershed, calls on the Yampa River or a Colorado River compact call, and other threats to providing safe, sufficient drinking water. Water conservation improves reliability of water supplies during disaster and emergencies and other uncertainties in the future. Water treatment and transport requires significant amounts of energy, so reduced use lowers energy needs as well. Water conservation is an important goal for several reasons including meeting environmental goals, reducing costs, and being a good neighbor to other water users in the Colorado River watershed. Water conservation demonstrates that the city is joining other Western Slope municipalities in taking the initiative to conserve water, which assists in meeting regulatory requirements to obtain permits for local and regional water supply projects. Furthermore, decreasing water demand can reduce or delay the need to invest public funds in new infrastructure, representing cost savings to local taxpayers. Finally, reducing indoor and outdoor

water use can improve river health by decreasing wastewater discharges and improving flow conditions during dry years, since less water will be diverted for municipal use. While Steamboat Springs has adequate supplies to meet long-term growth in the region, efficient water use can help improve the reliability of water supplies in times of drought and local wildfire and sustain a healthy environment. Key Initiative 4 has additional context and actions for water conservation. Key initiative 9 focuses on the developed water system and related actions.

The city and Mount Werner Water & Sanitation District adopted the **Water Conservation Plan** in 2020, which outlines water conservation targets as well as strategies to achieve those goals. This plan set forth the goal of achieving 10% demand savings by 2030 for treated water. The city should continue to monitor progress on implementing the water conservation activities identified by the plan. The following water efficiency measures have already been implemented: repairing and replacing infrastructure to reduce water loss; regulating outdoor watering schedules; implementing tiered rate structures; educating property owners about conservation actions; offering indoor and outdoor water use rebates; and partnered with the Parks and Recreation Department to reduce outdoor water use at city facilities. Educational efforts are ongoing and water rates, automatic alerts, and rebate programs must be consistently reevaluated and monitored. Staff capacity is the biggest hurdle to implementing further water conservation efforts. However,

the city could expand on its efforts for conservation by implementing the actions highlighted further below.

The **Water Conservation Plan (2020) and Water Supply Master Plan (2019)**, part of a partnership between the City of Steamboat Springs and the Mount Werner Water District, emphasized the need for water supply resilience and planning for drought and wildfire. Both also emphasized a desire for a redundant water supply system to increase resilience. The biggest natural hazard vulnerability is a wildfire in the Fish Creek watershed which could jeopardize drinking water supply and cause shortages and immediate water supply problems.

Actions that support Key Initiative #9:

Promote turf replacement with incentives. Implement a “Cash for Grass” program to encourage residents and businesses to replace water-intensive turf with drought-tolerant landscaping, reducing overall water consumption.

Distribute water-efficient products. Provide free or discounted water-efficient fixtures, such as low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators, and smart irrigation controllers, to help households and businesses reduce water use.

One-stop shop for rebates. There are existing rebate programs from the State of Colorado, federal government, and other non-profit and governmental entities for installing high-efficiency appliances, fixtures, and irrigation systems, incentivizing residents and businesses to adopt water-saving technologies

yet finding rebates and understanding what is available can be confusing for most people. The City of Steamboat Springs should develop a “rebate hub” that can be housed on its website to streamline the available rebates and incentives for residents to take advantage of.

Secondary water metering. Require separate meters for outdoor irrigation and non-potable water use to improve water tracking and encourage more responsible consumption.

Study water-system resilience needs. The city, in partnership with the Mount Werner Water District, should study opportunities to increase the resilience of the water system, with special attention to ensuring redundancy in the case that the Fish Creek watershed is contaminated by wildfire debris. The city should lead the development of an Elk River water supply study to understand the viability of this option for creating a secondary source of water supply.

Integrate priorities from the water utilities. The water utility priorities are to: implement landscaping standards that incorporate requirements for water conservation and wildfire resiliency, creating a unified City and Mount Werner Water District conservation program brand and website, promote landscape conversion to reduce outdoor water use and improve plant diversity, and to pursue water supplies and water treatment facilities on the Elk River to improve redundancy and resiliency in the case of impacts to the Fish Creek supply and to support additional growth in west Steamboat Springs.

Strategy for Success: Key Initiatives That Make Measurable Progress

The following Key Initiatives and associated actions have been identified as the highest near-term priorities for the city to undertake in the next three years. The initiatives and associated action numbers are described in greater detail previously in this chapter. This list is intended to illustrate the top priorities and demonstrate how the actions and initiatives identified below connect to community values. These actions rose to the top of the priority list during the creation of this plan either due to the level of urgency, relevance to current conversations and other recent city and county planning efforts, or outsized ability to move towards this chapter's success measures. Tackling these priority actions in the short run may help to course correct some of the trends that are moving the community away from its values, and build the momentum needed to make incremental progress on long-term initiatives and actions. Other actions in this chapter should also be integrated into departmental work plans as much as possible and not lost from view. If definitive action is not taken on these matters, the community risks further challenges associated with high levels of tourism and environmental degradation as well as increased traffic and parking challenges in Steamboat Springs.

The top priority for this chapter is transportation. If investments in reducing congestion from vehicles is not undertaken, "sustaining the place" that is Steamboat Springs is severely threatened.

Enhanced pedestrian crossings and add to the sidewalk network (downtown, other key intersections)



Key Initiative #2

Action: Enhance safety and key crossings

Connect to the values of: **Well-connected, multimodal city, Investing in values**

Why is this important? Why now?

During stakeholder and community engagement events held for this plan, people expressed a strong desire to improve the safety of crossings at several intersections, which are called out in greater detail in Key Initiative #2, especially along Highway 40 (Lincoln Ave). Several of the intersections identified in for enhancement were also reflected in the 2021 Steamboat Springs Transportation Master Plan (TMP) as high-priority safety needs.

Managed parking downtown and at Steamboat Ski Resort



Key Initiative #1

Actions: Expand time-restrict parking and implement managed or paid parking

Connect to the values of: **Sustainability & Resilience, Well-connected, multimodal city**

Why is this important? Why now?

Implementing managed, paid, and time restricted parking downtown and at Steamboat Resort in the short run has two major benefits that will help the community orient towards its values and manage itself better as a destination.

- » Residents and stakeholders have expressed significant frustration with parking at these two destinations and parking challenges are leading to frustration with visitors.
- » In the 2024 Community Survey, residents expressed that they would be more likely to take Steamboat Springs Transit (SST) more frequently and walk or bike to key destinations more frequently if parking was more difficult and if parking was not free in key destinations. In order to shift the existing transportation system towards a more multimodal future, the best first step that the city can take to get more people out of cars and find alternative modes of transportation will be to make parking paid and limited. Additionally, paid parking could raise revenue that could be directed towards supporting more transit service or better infrastructure for pedestrians and bicycles.
- » Managed parking would entail a study to determine the best locations for time-restricted, paid, or more enforcement on parking regulations. This could be done in a phased or piloted approach, to understand effects of new policies and to understand the nuances of demand.

Energy-efficient development



Key Initiative #3

Actions: Review existing and new state and local programs and partners to and mitigate the impacts of large homes and excessive energy consumption

These Key Initiatives and Actions connect to the values of: **Sustainability and Resiliency**

Why is this important? Why now?

The 2021 Routt County Climate Action Plan identified that commercial and residential buildings are the largest contributors of greenhouse gas emissions in Routt County. As the largest population center, and economic hub of Routt County- and as a sustainability minded community- the City of Steamboat Springs should be an example of a municipal leader in the Yampa Valley region on reducing building related emissions that furthers the commitments identified in the Routt County Climate Action Plan.

Extend the core trail westward



Key Initiative #6

Action: Continue westward trail connected to and from the Core Trail

These Key Initiatives and Actions connect to the values of: **Well-Connected Multi-Modal City, Sustainability and Resiliency Themes**

Why is this important? Why now?

The city identified extending the Core Trail as a top priority as far back as 2019. Specifically, the vision for this extension would be to extend the corridor with multi-modal connections, north to Slate Creek, to connect Steamboat Springs to West Steamboat communities, including Steamboat II. During stakeholder and resident engagement conducted for this plan, people expressed frustration that the Core Trail extension has not been completed and identified this as a priority for the city.

Further prepare for wildfire



Key Initiative #5

Action: Implement recommendations from CPAW report

These Key Initiatives and Actions connect to the values of: **Sustainability and Resilience Themes**

Why is this important? Why now?

Wildfire risk is growing, as is the magnitude of its consequences on people, structures, the environment, outdoor recreation, and the economy. According to the 2018 Colorado State Hazard Mitigation Plan, a century of aggressive fire suppression, combined with cycles of drought and changing land management practices, have left many of Colorado's forests, including those in Routt County, unnaturally dense and ready to burn. Further, the evolution of land use planning, and building code best practices have evolved to better position developed areas to be more resilient to wildfire and reduce the built environments' contributing factors to the initiation of wildfire. The city must take the necessary actions to prepare for wildfire and increase the community's resilience. From 2023-2024, the City of Steamboat Springs worked with a technical assistance team, Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire (CPAW) focused on ways to build wildfire resiliency measures into the Community Development Code. The city will have an opportunity to examine the Community Development Code in greater detail following the adoption of the Community Plan. During this time, the city should prioritize the implementation of text and map amendments to the Community Development Code that would incorporate recommendations from the CPAW report such as defensible space, landscaping, and set-back requirements.

Invest in maintenance and upgrades to existing recreation facilities



Key Initiative #6

Action: Invest in upgrades to existing facilities

These Key Initiatives and Actions connect to the values of: **Outdoor Recreation and Conservation, Thriving Community**

Why is this important? Why now?

Maintaining existing facilities was one of the top priorities for residents when asked about priorities for during the 2019 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Trails and River (PROSTR) Plan. The 2019 Plan identified a long list of deferred maintenance obligations related to city parks and recreation. While several have been completed since 2019, there remains a significant backlog. The city has ambitions to acquire new parkland and add additional recreational amenities. As the city prepares to take on additional assets, it will be important to demonstrate that the city can effectively maintain and upgrade the assets that it is presently responsible for.

Sustainable Tourism Strategy



Key Initiative #7

Action: Sustainable tourism strategy

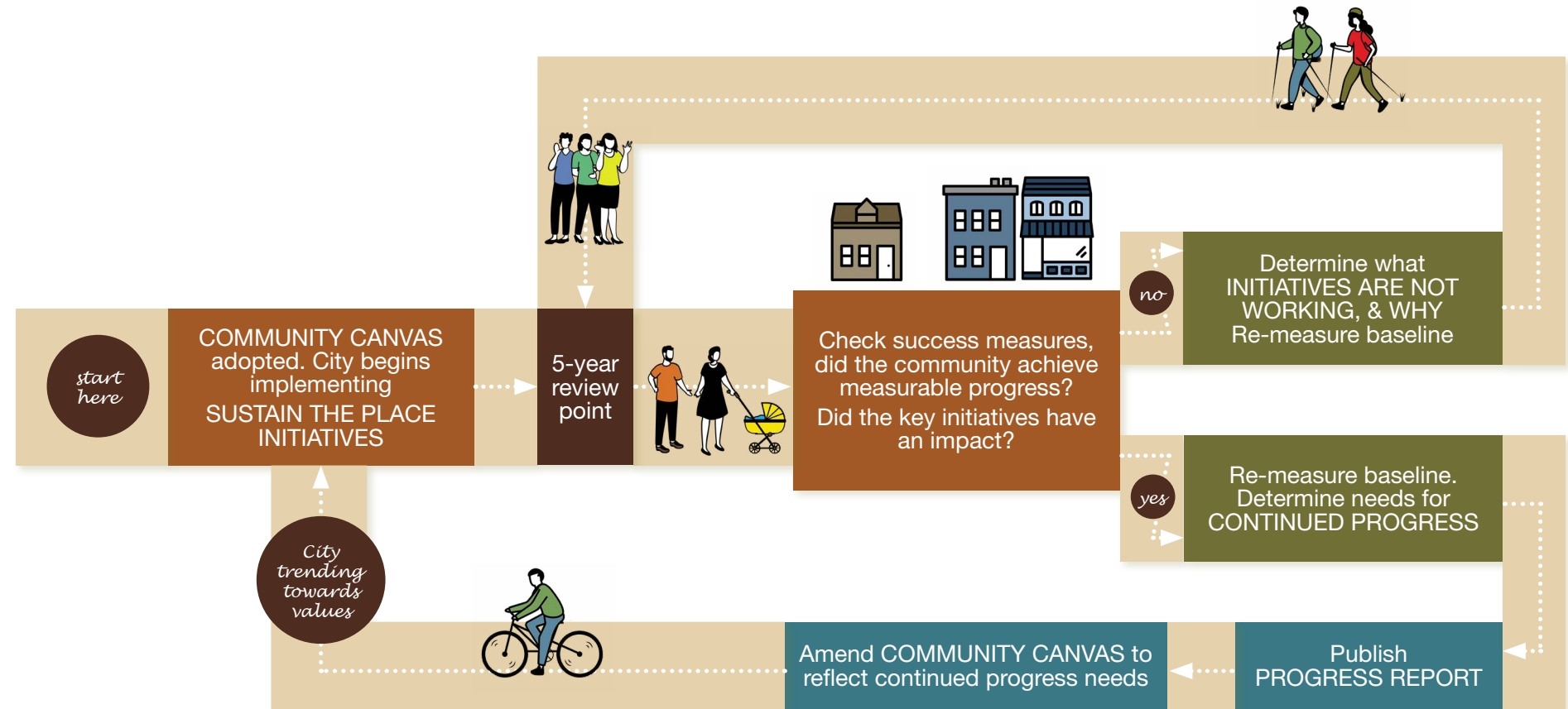
These Key Initiatives and Actions connect to the values of: **Thriving Community, Recreation and Outdoor Conservation, Sustainability and Resilience Themes**

Why is this important? Why now?

The impacts of high levels of visitation and tourism have created challenges for residents, who have been feeling as though their needs and experience in the community are an afterthought. In order to take steps to manage the heavily visited amenities in Steamboat Springs, the various groups involved in outdoor recreation and tourism should convene around a strategy that sets a shared vision for how to best manage tourism in a way that respects residents and doesn't negatively affect the economy. A sustainable tourism strategy should emphasize capacity management for peak seasons, partnerships with public land managers, environmental etiquette education, and targeted marketing to spread visitation across seasons. The development of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy would serve as an opportunity to convene various tourism-related services such as accommodation and food service industries, outdoor recreation focused businesses, land management agencies, the City of Steamboat Springs and other relevant partners to engage in open dialogue about the various ways that tourism can be managed to best meet the needs of these varied perspectives.

Measuring Success

The initiatives and actions described in this chapter are intended to help the community orient towards its values and away from trends that are leading the community astray of its values. The City of Steamboat Springs is committed to measuring the progress the city is making over time. Three years after the adoption of the Community Canvas, the city will examine its progress towards sustaining the place and moving towards better alignment with the community’s values. This evaluation process is one piece of the ongoing process to ensure that actions are making progress towards the community’s values. Each action will include their own specific approaches to evaluate and monitor results. This progress check will ensure that the initiatives outlined in this plan and other long-range plans that support and inform the Community Canvas, are helping steer the community on a path that aligns with the community’s values or if there needs to be a plan amendment or course correction to make the type of progress that the city would like to see.



The Strategy for Success section of this chapter outlines the most important actions that need to be taken first to make measurable progress.

The measurements below offer ways of tracking progress towards “sustaining the place” in Steamboat Springs. Each measurement is a tangible but ambitious marker of progress in the direction towards the community’s values:

- » **Increase the percentage of SST users who take public transit more than twice a week from the current 7% to at least 15% in three years, as measured by annual ridership data and community surveys.**
- » **Build or stripe 50 miles of new multi-use paths, sidewalks, and bike lanes. These can be completed by city or through private development.**
- » **Establish a comprehensive “rebate hub” on the city website in the first year and actively promote it, resulting in a 15% increase in the number of residents and businesses utilizing energy efficiency and electrification incentive programs for existing buildings over the three-year period.**
- » **Implement at least 75% of the land use planning recommendations from the Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire (CPAW) report into the Community Development Code by year 3, including updated defensible space, landscaping, and setback requirements.**
- » **Update emergency evacuation plans for the city in coordination with Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue and Public Works by year 2, and conduct at least one evacuation drill or public exercise by year 4 to test preparedness**
- » **Collaborate with the Steamboat Springs Chamber fully implement its Destination Stewardship Action Plan in three years, explicitly incorporating new capacity management strategies for peak seasons and targeted marketing to spread visitation across seasons.**

Funding the future is about making wise fiscal decisions, and raising and directing revenues towards improvements (physical, services, and programs) that reflect and further the values discussed throughout this plan. The City of Steamboat Springs is responsible for maintaining existing public infrastructure such as roads, parks, and sidewalks, as well as investing in public infrastructure and amenities that improve quality of life for residents and spur economic development within the community. It is also the cultural and economic hub for the entire region of northwest Colorado and has both the responsibility and honor of stewarding amenities and services that serve a larger region. The current tax structure of being mostly dependent on sales and lodging tax is not sustainable in the long term. Additionally, it is unclear whether the General Fund and current spending patterns of the city government truly reflect the values of the community and are making an impact towards the most pressing issues as discussed in this plan; however, the city will need to prioritize a more forensic or priorities based budgeting exercise in the future to align future City Strategic Plans, or departments operating budgets with values, actions and initiatives identified in this plan. The purpose of this chapter is to bring together the values, challenges, trends, key initiative and actions from the other chapters, and introduce key initiatives and actions that specifically address how the city levies fees, taxes its residents and visitors and spends its money in a way that is aligned with its values and vision for the future.



Why Does Steamboat Springs Need to Better “Fund Its Future?”

City Budget

The city’s tax and revenue structure are highly dependent on tourism and visitation. Most of the city’s revenues for operations, maintenance, and capital projects come from sales tax. Since there is not a general municipal property tax, new housing development does not generate enough new revenue to cover the cost of providing public infrastructure and services to service new homes. The negative fiscal impact of new housing is common in Colorado, but the impact is more negative in Steamboat without property tax revenue. Unless non-residential development is a sales tax generator (through retail, restaurants, hotels), it also does not generate significant new revenue. Steamboat Springs relies mostly on visitor spending, and the sales tax generated from it, to fund the city. This revenue and tax structure also makes the city vulnerable to downturns in the tourism economy, shifting recreation preferences, and climate change (e.g. altered winter and summer recreation seasons).

The 2025 City of Steamboat Springs budget theme is “navigating the seas in the boat – trimming the sails”. In practice, this budget anticipates that city services will be maintained at existing levels, but because of community growth,

demand for community services, and a lack of diversified municipal revenue sources, there will be a reduction in transit services, reductions in merit increases for city staff, and a reduction in community service officers along with a significant number of budget requests that were not able to be funded. So, how did it get to this point where a bustling, mountain community with the most diverse economy in northwestern Colorado that has grown in year-round population, has a high-median home value, and has several nationally and globally recognized businesses and cultural events must cut municipal services in 2025? The short answer is that the current structure of municipal revenue does not produce sufficient revenue to both provide new services and infrastructure that accompanies growth while also funding the required maintenance associated with past infrastructure investments and expansion, and the current demand on city services. Further, the lack of diversified city revenue has been insufficient to keep pace with the changes that have occurred in the national economy, such as rising inflation, global supply chain disruption, and the technological advancements that have divorced income generation and the purchasing of goods and services from local markets. and. This plan is meant to set a foundation for far into the future past 2025, but it is relevant to understand these current conditions as a basis for what must change.

Local Economy

Steamboat Springs and Routt County's economy is built around providing services and supplies to the Northwest Colorado region. The city and the Yampa Valley region also have a large tourism and outdoor recreation economy. It is important to maintain a balance of economic diversity outside of the recreation and tourism sectors to support well-paying jobs and to create economic opportunities for all people who currently live in or may want to live in this region. Having a diverse economy also protects the city and region against changes in the tourism market and the impacts of climate change on winter recreation. Importantly, the diverse economy also supports the community character – a genuine community – that residents value because of the diversity of people across the age spectrum that live and work here.

The City of Steamboat Springs is the economic powerhouse of Northwest Colorado and Routt County. From 2010 to 2022 Steamboat Springs added over 2,112 jobs, capturing 72.8 percent of Routt County's employment growth. Routt

Steamboat Springs Economic Statistics

2010-2022 > 2112 jobs added

72.9% of Routt County's employment growth

County's land use policies focus on development in growth centers such as Steamboat Springs. The city currently has existing infrastructure in place to support future commercial development and has been historically the economic center of this region. These factors explain why most of the job growth continues to occur in Steamboat Springs and not in other areas of the County. Approximately 23% of the Routt County jobs are comprised of a traditional economic base (natural resources, agriculture, manufacturing) and regional trade industries (trade, transportation, services, and health care). About 34% of jobs are driven by tourism, making it the largest group of industries. Demand from households comprises just under 30% of the economy, with retirees and part-time residents supporting about 20% of the jobs in Routt County. Keeping and growing those

Routt County Jobs Statistics

23% traditional economic base & regional trade industries

34% tourism driven

30% demand from households

20% supported by retirees & part-time residents

traditional economic bases and regional trade industries are critical to a diverse economy, and to supporting a labor force comprised of people that can put down roots in the community. In recent years, the local economy has grown and maintained a solid economic foundation with a strong entrepreneurial culture and economic activity attributed to creative industries. Steamboat Springs' economy has launched globally recognized brands and spun off new ventures from those. However, the entrepreneurial environment is changing and continued economic growth, and diversification will not be a "given". The cost and supply of housing and commercial real estate are restricting the region's ability to attract and retain startup businesses and the young skilled workforce that is current with the latest technologies and consumer trends.

Additionally, the number of remote workers—with relatively high incomes—and location neutral businesses have increased significantly in Steamboat Springs and in similarly positioned mountain communities across the western United States since the development of the last Community Plan.¹¹ The proliferation of remote worker residents across small, mountain communities has produced benefits and challenges. These remote workers often have high enough incomes to buy homes and contribute economically to the region through household spending patterns helping add to the local tax base and helping support the local business community. At the same time, remote workers are often able to out compete with other people in the local housing market whose jobs are tethered to

¹¹ Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, "Mountain Town Migration: Understanding the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Middle Neighborhoods in the Mountain West, 2022

the local economy. Further, there is a perception that remote workers do not engage deeply with the community, expect an urban level of amenities and services, and do not stick around for the long-term. Remote work is not going away, and it is important to recognize this sector as an important part of the Steamboat Springs economy and to not ignore the economic impact (along with issues) that it brings.



The proliferation of remote worker residents across small, mountain communities has produced benefits and challenges.



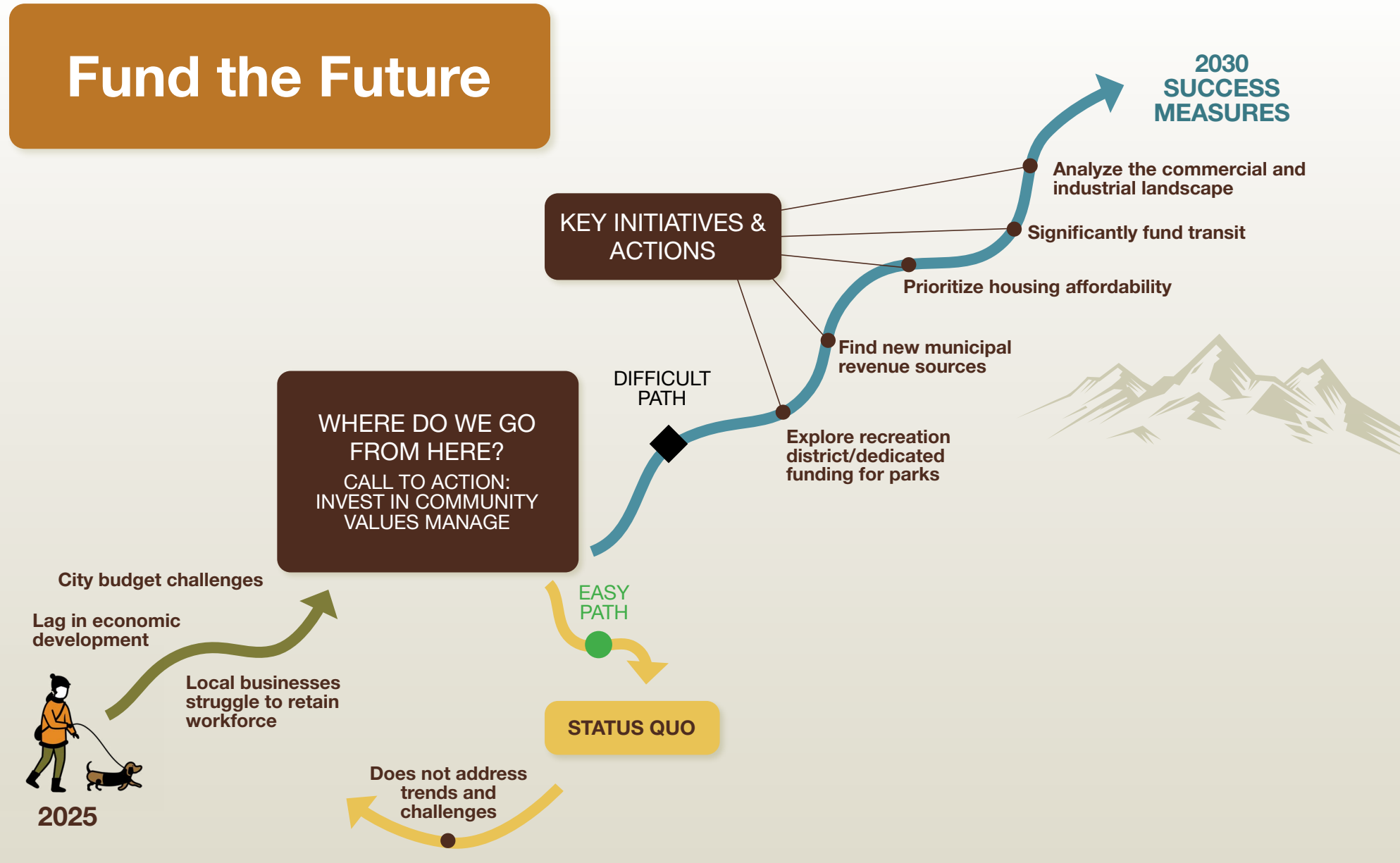
CALL TO ACTION:

Invest In Community Values by Re-Thinking How The City Spends And Raises Money And Supports The Local Economy

Economic vitality is a broad economic development strategy that recognizes the importance of place and how all the supporting elements of a balanced community support the economy. Traditional economic development is sometimes interpreted to mean putting resources into business recruitment and incentives. This approach is appropriate in some cases, but in small cities in rural areas such as Steamboat Springs, economic development needs to balance a place-based approach with traditional elements.

An economic vitality strategy creates and supports a community with quality of life and a good business environment. Entrepreneurs and skilled laborers that have choices in where they are located will be attracted to high quality places. Economic vitality strategies therefore encompass the full range of community assets and infrastructure that local government actions can support such as: housing; schools and higher education; healthcare; arts and culture; parks and recreation; and all other public infrastructure (roads, multimodal facilities, public transit, water and sewer).

Fund the Future



Key Initiative 1: Recognize Housing as a Part of the City's Essential Infrastructure



Stakeholder outreach with businesses and economic developers identified the cost of housing as a critical economic issue in Steamboat Springs and Routt County. Over the last decade, and especially the last few years, it has become more and more difficult to find, hire, and retain workers at almost all pay scales. Large employers have noted that being able to offer subsidized employer housing or a housing stipend is becoming necessary for some positions at lower pay scales. Additionally, there is a “ticking time bomb” where many workers are close to retirement age, and those workers tend to have secured housing a long time ago. In the coming years when these folks retire, there is not a pipeline of workers to back-fill those roles, nor the adequate affordable housing units for these younger workers to live in. The lack of affordable housing threatens the community’s economic diversity efforts.

Actions that support Key Initiative #1:

Continue to engage the business and non-profit community on housing issues. Engaging with and working with businesses, non-profits, and economic developers to find collaboration opportunities and build a broad coalition that supports changes in land use and housing policy needed to address the labor force constraints. Convening representatives from these sectors around housing may also result in identifying innovative solutions and partnerships between businesses and between businesses and government. This initiative is intended to signal that businesses, non-profits, and housing partners such as the Yampa Valley Housing Authority do not feel as though they are

“going it alone” on the path to find and develop housing for the local workforce. The solutions may include an employer housing pool and funding, master leasing arrangements, or other options to be identified. Some employers such as Steamboat Ski Resort and the hospital have directly invested in their own employee housing developments. Continuing to support direct investment such as this while also supporting creative financing to support businesses in these efforts is essential.

Lead a culture shift among city leadership to prioritize all policy changes and spending needed to improve housing affordability. At the writing of this plan, the current Strategic Plan lists housing (along with climate and transportation) as the most pressing issues to tackle. Although there will be new strategic plans throughout the life of this Community Plan, the city’s leadership should communicate the importance of housing as an economic issue to the community and embed this messaging in all related land use and budget decisions. An audit of the city budget will be instrumental towards understanding understand how much it is spending on housing-related matters, and what specific revenue sources (STR tax) are dedicated to housing spending. Create a “housing spending strategy” that is both broad in its support of different housing initiatives but is also targeted to make significant progress towards building new units, supporting existing residents to stay in the community through different life stages, and support employers with housing their workers can live in and afford. A specific example of how the city leadership could implement a values shift related to the spending of municipal revenue in the short run would be to change the amount and structure of how community fund dollars are allocated to be in line with this Community Plan and the Strategic Plan.

Key Initiative 2: Right-size Municipal Revenue



To support housing, parks and recreation opportunities, and other economic vitality elements the city needs to identify long-term funding solutions to change its revenue structure. In lieu of changing the municipal revenue structure, the other option would be reducing city service levels to match the city’s ability to adequately fund its infrastructure and service obligations. Community survey results, and values expressed by the community during outreach for this plan, indicate that a reduction in service levels is not the preferred option for members of the community. The recent STR tax measure is a major step forward on funding affordable housing. Other measures are needed, however, to keep up with infrastructure maintenance, city services and funding the key initiatives of this plan.

Actions that support Key Initiative #2:

Find new revenue sources. Work with a broad cross section of stakeholder groups and constituents to build support for new revenue measures that will enable the city to maintain its assets and keep up with the needs of the community. Build trust with the community by communicating the city’s budget constraints and defining how new funding measures align with the community’s values. Conduct outreach on what services and facilities residents (and visitors) would like to see added or improved. Consider new funding measures that specifically identify how the revenues will be spent to create transparency and accountability.

Enforcement of existing policies and regulations. Look for policies and regulations (i.e. parking, land use) that are currently not being enforced to generate revenue and further goals in the plan (reduced congestion, create more housing). Consider allocating additional funding to enforcement of policies and do a cost-benefit analysis of how enforcement might pay for itself through generated fee revenue.

Additional Lodging Tax. Although lodging taxes are another tourism-dependent tax, it could be a significant source of revenue that is now allowed to be spent on childcare, housing, public safety and infrastructure, all priorities for Steamboat Springs. The city should explore this lodging tax expansion collaboratively with Routt County to understand potential impacts and top priorities for project funding if implemented.

Property Tax. While certainly a controversial topic for many years, the lack of a general property tax (excluding the amount raised for YVHA and Fire and EMS services) is not only a missed opportunity for revenue for the general fund, but it also would change the negative fiscal impact of new housing units by generating new property taxes for each new unit of housing built. Adding a general property tax would also make Steamboat Springs more aligned with its peer resort communities that generate millions of dollars in property taxes that are then spent on recreation, infrastructure, housing and other community services. Small businesses are likely to be most affected by property taxes due to Colorado’s tax structure that weighs more heavily on commercial parcels. Consider reimbursements or rebates for businesses that would be particularly burdened by the implementation of such a property tax.

Build revenue consensus. Conduct outreach on the types of new revenues (taxes and fees) that the community may support. As of early 2024, the City of Steamboat Springs has begun conducting research on different types of taxes, fees, and municipal revenue generation structures are available and weighing the pros and cons associated with each type of tax and fee. This early research will be a critical foundation as the city has on-going conversations with the public, and elected officials on what forms of revenue the community will support. Work with political or economic consulting firms that can test ballot language and poll feasibility of these taxes. Understanding how much money may be raised, and what projects could be funded are an important part of outreach. How much a typical household would pay and what the benefits are crucial for education and garnering support.

Fiscal accountability and experimentation. Consider new funding measures that specifically identify how the revenues will be spent to create transparency and accountability. Explore the idea of a participatory funding exercise –which would allow members of the community to decide how to spend a portion of the city budget-- for part of the general fund budget.

Key Initiative 3: Be a Strong Regional Economic Partner



Economic vitality and economic development are rarely conducted successfully by a single entity. The labor force, businesses, and customers are indifferent to political boundaries: economic growth in Steamboat Springs can benefit other areas of the region, and vice versa.

Actions that support Key Initiative #3:

Support the Economic Development Ecosystem. Steamboat Springs and Routt County have a well-developed organizational structure around economic development comprised of the Routt County Economic Development Partnership (RCEDP); Steamboat Main Street; Steamboat Springs Chamber, Steamboat Creates, and others. The city should be an active partner in these organizations so that it is apprised of issues where it can have a role in addressing them. The city should also contribute resources when possible, such as grants, free spaces to gather, and other ways.

Think Regionally. The Routt County economy is intertwined between each area and community in the County, plus eastern Moffat County. The same labor force and community benefit from the success of each place. Each area of the County can play to its strengths to create a balanced well-functioning region by, for example, coordinating around transportation investments and facilities, such as the Regional Transit Authority, and the siting of major industry or economic development additions to the region.

Key Initiative 4: Align Land Use Policy to Support the Economy



Land-use policy has important influences on Steamboat Springs' economy. The City of Steamboat Springs has historically chosen to concentrate development within existing municipal boundaries and not sprawl, which has positive environmental benefits. Because the city focuses development within the UGB, the city has a diminishing supply of developable land for employment-centric land uses that are within the city and connected to city water and sewer. Also, residential

live work units are allowed in all areas zoned industrial which has increased the value of industrial land (due to the strong desire for housing) and is presenting challenges for industrial development. The constrained land supply makes it difficult for various types of businesses to thrive and grow.

Actions that support Key Initiative #4:

Inventory Employment Land Use Needs. Conduct a more detailed supply and demand study for employment land uses (e.g. industrial, light industrial, office services) to determine how deep demand is for these land uses in the city, and if nearby communities are meeting those needs while still benefiting the city and regional economy and labor force.

Position commercial road corridors for infill and redevelopment. Adopt land use policies and identify on the Future Land Use Map districts that create incentives for property owners to redevelop and intensify the mix of land uses in areas of the city developed with low-density single use buildings. Including areas such as the west and east Highway 40 corridor, and other areas where commercial space has high vacancies and may be reaching the end of its economic life. Support development that creates both affordable housing and new space for businesses. The incentive here is that the demand for housing is so high, the ability to create mixed-use housing where previously only commercial was allowed could be attractive to some commercial property owners and spur redevelopment.

Revisit Residential Land Use in Commercial and Industrial Zones. To balance the need for more industrial space needs in Steamboat Springs, a short-term step would be to further examine what should be regulated or prohibited in industrially

zoned areas to understand their impact on the market and to the businesses themselves. The city could take this time to understand competition between competing uses in industrial areas and use this as an opportunity to develop a long-range strategy to identify areas where residential uses should be permitted and prohibited in industrial and other mixed-use zones and consider implementing restrictions or guidelines for residential development in designated industrial or commercial zones to enable successful co-location of these uses.

Capital asset inventory. A capital asset inventory documents existing assets in a community. These inventories identify the location, current condition, needed repairs, and replacement timelines for a community's infrastructure assets. These inventories should further outline a timeline of anticipated expenses that can inform a savings plan that can be included in the city's annual budget. In order for the asset inventory and funding timeline to be accurate, a champion, likely a professional engineer in the city's public works department, should be identified to regularly update the inventory and savings plan to include maintenance performed, and current conditions. This inventory can be a valuable resource for the city to use in long-term capital budget planning. Further, this inventory can be used to test out how new major capital projects such as building a new park, or a new multi-use trail would fit into the city's existing infrastructure maintenance and budget portfolio to understand what the lifecycle costs are associated with new capital projects.

Key Initiative 5: Support The Creative Year-Round Economy



For Steamboat Springs' economy to not be overly reliant on tourism, strategies can be implemented to diversify the economy and grow industries that positively impact the local economy and community character. Arts and cultural industries not only add economic value but also contribute to a community's vibrancy, identity, and resident quality of life. Embracing art and cultural sectors in Steamboat Springs, including creative industries such as music, art, theater, and those that embrace and help preserve Steamboat Springs' unique historical heritage and western character, can help reduce pressure on recreation-centered tourism as an outsized driver of the local economy.

Actions that support Key Initiative #5:

Arts and Culture Master Plan. The city should lead, in close collaboration with community arts and cultural private sector and non-profit organizations on the development of an arts and cultural master plan to guide arts and culture related priorities and resources. Other Colorado communities including Golden, Fort Collins, and Frisco have recently adopted plans.

Support Creative Industries with Land Use Regulation.

Review the space needs of creative industries and other target sectors and update the land use code to encourage the development of workspaces and facilities.

Arts and Culture Center Feasibility. The City of Steamboat Springs has a robust arts and cultural scene. Steamboat Springs is in a place where it is appropriate to explore the economic viability of building a dedicated space to showcase arts and cultural events, performing arts, etc. Study the feasibility and needs for a designated hub or center for arts and cultural

activities like the Crested Butte Center for the Arts, Salida's Steamplant Event Center, and Aspen's Red Brick Center for the Arts and Recreation Center.

Key Initiative 6: RTA, Regional and Local Transit Solutions



Expanding and investing in regional and local transit solutions provides numerous benefits for Steamboat Springs community members, visitors, and employees. When transit is reliable, efficient, and connected to key destinations, travelers are more likely to opt out of their private vehicles and use transit. The Steamboat Springs Transportation and Mobility Plan (2021) outlined how increased transit can benefit local quality of life, however, the City of Steamboat Springs has had to begin cutting service to SST as the cost of operating the SST busses has outpaced the increase in the city's transit budget. Some of the strategies below are further actions identified in this plan. The Routt County Climate Action Plan (2021) describes how an increase in transit use and reduction in single occupancy vehicle usage reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which reduces congestion, and helps to improve local air quality and lower greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles. Additionally, a comprehensive transit system allows community members to age in place by providing access to essential destinations such as doctor's offices and grocery stores, without requiring access to a car. A regionally connected transit system (whether through bus, shuttle or rail) improves economic vitality and helps relieve housing pressures in Steamboat Springs by increasing access to jobs and making regional travel to and from the city easier, safer, and more convenient. When making decisions about funding priorities for local transit, keep in mind that it is better to have a few strategic routes that are frequent and reliable than many routes that run infrequently or spread the agency's resources too thin.

Actions that support Key Initiative #6:

Expand Regional Transit Coverage. During community and stakeholder outreach conducted for this plan, community members expressed a strong desire to increase transit opportunities to or from communities in the region. Steamboat Springs is the economic and cultural hub of Routt County and the Yampa Valley and should play a key role in supporting the funding, planning, and leadership of developing a regional transit service that would create additional transportation options to folks that live outside of Steamboat Springs, but need to commute to Steamboat Springs for work, services, or recreation. If approved through a ballot initiative, a Regional Transit Authority could collect revenue from a variety of funding sources –including new taxes dedicated to regional transit-- to create regional transit services such as a high- frequency Craig-Steamboat Springs bus and HDN Airport to Steamboat Springs ground transportation, as well as fund improvements for roadway and transit infrastructure such as exploring commuter rail. While the City of Steamboat Springs should take a leadership role in the planning and funding of an RTA as the economic hub of the Yampa Valley, the city will need to work in close coordination with other local governments and Routt County, along with major partners such as Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation to find appropriate funding and coordinating transit routes, stops, and staffing. Finding agreement on funding and outlining a detailed plan for connecting communities in the region should be a critical short run priority for the city to ensure that the city is investing in its values and making significant progress towards the multimodal and climate related strategies to maintain community and sustain the place. An additional regional transit opportunity that the city will need to plan for is the proposed Mountain Rail which would seek to connect

Denver to Steamboat Springs by expanding upon an existing rail corridor that connects Denver to Winter Park and leveraging existing rail corridors owned by Union Pacific Railroad Company and the front range Regional Transportation District. This Mountain Rail project is still in the planning stages. The City of Steamboat Springs should dedicate city staff time to be involved in the planning and coordination efforts with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to ensure that the city is represented in the planning efforts as this project could provide a variety of economic benefits and connect a much larger region of people to and through Steamboat Springs.

Improve Transit Stops. Add transit stop amenities including waste receptacles, benches, shelters, informational displays, and bike racks to improve transit experience for all riders. Using an equity lens, the city should implement improvements in order of priority based on stops that serve historically disadvantaged and low-income populations first then work through additional stop improvements on an as needed basis based on a conditions analysis of current transit stops. While transit stops are currently priority areas for snow plowing and shoveling, transit riders can face difficulties navigating sidewalks, streets, intersections on the way to stops. Ensuring that adequate plowing and shoveling is maintained at a high level will help transit riders as they are walking to get to their stops at the appropriate time and ensure that riders feel more comfortable and safe navigating to and from transit stops.

Expand Transit Capacity. Implement local transit service improvements such as the addition of new bus stops, extending existing routes, and increasing the frequency of existing services, examine changes that could be made to service hours to best align with rider needs, and examine opportunities to

standardize the service levels between winter and summer. People utilize transit more often when it is convenient, which is often a function of frequency, connecting key destinations, and safety. Steamboat Springs Transit is currently funded through a mix of local funding sources and state and federal funding support for rural transit agencies. Paid parking downtown could also be a dedicated revenue source, as could allocating a new source of city fees or taxes dedicated towards improved or expanded transit service.

Implement opportunities for improving, consolidating, and streamlining shared mobility services. There are currently several private on-demand shuttle services that serve different lodging accommodations and ski resort visitors. These operators provide mobility options to passengers that are traveling to the resort as well as other parts of the city. The city and the ski area have recognized an opportunity to consolidate or coordinate services amongst these private shuttle operators and will begin a formal study in 2025 to understand what possibilities exist for coordination and consolidation of these entities. Further, the Steamboat Springs Redevelopment Authority along with the Steamboat resort have recently entered into a public improvement agreement to design and construct a new Gondola Transit Center and improvements to the Meadows parking lot. These plans received public and stakeholder feedback and will be a significant improvement to the visitor experience at Steamboat resort as well as enhance connectivity between the resort and the rest of the city. The city should work with private partners, and the Steamboat resort to realize recommendations from these plans and studies upon completion.

Key Initiative 7: Parkland Acquisition



Starting in early 2024, the City of Steamboat Springs Parks and Recreation department identified a need for acquiring additional park land to keep pace with a growing population and meet future community needs such as updating recreation programs and offerings to meet the needs, desires, and expectations of the community. The Parks and Recreation department has initiated a framework to guide the identification of significant properties in and around the Steamboat Springs Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) that meet certain criteria (e.g., connectivity and contiguity; habitat value; active recreation features; etc.) for becoming future parkland. The 2024 City of Steamboat Springs Strategic Plan identifies strategic objectives related to expanding the park system through land acquisition: (1) “creating a plan to provide equitable access to cultural and recreational facilities across the system, with particular focus on the west end of the city as the future growth area”; and (2) “identify consistent funding source dedicated to land acquisition to create a saving account that is able to be utilized as properties become available”. The city is ahead of the curve through the development of the city’s parkland acquisition strategy, and a process for acquiring land for parks, however, the lynchpin for implementation of this acquisition plan will be the availability of funding to purchase lands as they become available, or are identified and agreed upon by the city, and the property owner. Currently, once parkland is acquired, there isn’t funding or a strategy for the capital improvements that will be needed to build, program, develop, and maintain the park.

Actions that support Key Initiative #7:

Land acquisition funding support. Acquiring new parkland to expand the city’s portfolio of parks and recreation space requires significant capital investment. There are a variety of funding mechanisms available to support the city’s capital expenditure budget. The following are a menu of funding tools:

Grant funding. There are specific grants available focused on the purposes of land acquisition to support land conservation, wildlife corridors, and public recreation, watershed health and greenways. There are several parks and recreation focused grant opportunities in the U.S. and Colorado, however, there are only a handful of land acquisition focused grants. Examples of such grants include Great Outdoors Colorado land acquisition grant, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants. Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grants Program.

Create a dedicated fund for parks and recreation through city taxes or fees. The City of Steamboat Springs should examine finance mechanisms to acquire and improve properties to be added to the city’s parkland portfolio (e.g. sales taxes, property tax, excise tax, etc.) and propose the preferred mechanism to the electorate. It is unlikely that creating a new park and recreation focused fund from a new tax or fee would result in the necessary up-front capital to be able to purchase new parkland without additional financial support from grants or land conservation partners. This strategy could also create the required on-going revenue to ensure that the city’s Parks and Recreation department will have the necessary “savings” to maintain and manage the current portfolio of parks and recreational amenities in Steamboat Springs, while also being able to plan for the new staff, equipment, and regular funding required to maintain new parks. This recommendation could

be considered alongside the issuance of municipal bonds that could be used for one-time parkland acquisition.

Create a parks and recreation district. There are currently no special districts associated with parks, recreation, or public spaces in Steamboat Springs. Special districts are authorized by the Colorado Revised Statutes and can levy taxes related to specific services or geographic areas such as parks, public improvements, or central business districts. A parks and recreation district can be a tool that is applied to one or more parks based on geographic interest (i.e., downtown) or that may require special management (i.e., a playground or recreation center). Major advantages to instituting a parks and recreation district would include the ability to raise on-going revenue that would be dedicated solely to parks and recreation that could be used for both parkland acquisition and the regular maintenance and programming of parkland after the acquisition is completed. The “costs” associated with parkland acquisition do not stop after the purchase of land is complete, the on-going costs of maintenance and upkeep can be significant and would require that the city plan for these on-going costs in their long-term parkland acquisition planning. If no other municipal taxes are levied to add money to the general fund that could then be distributed to the Parks and Recreation department, the department would need to figure out how to prioritize maintenance, planning and programming for new parks with roughly the same budget. Leveraging the taxing power of a special district has the advantage of reducing the long-term financial planning for both the acquisition and long-term maintenance and management of new parklands by having the district operate as the bank account for both the acquisition and the long-term maintenance of new parklands.

Strategy for Success: Key Initiatives that Make Measurable Progress

Now that all the recommended initiatives and actions have been identified, the following key Initiatives and associated actions have been identified as the highest near-term priorities for the city to undertake in the next three years. The initiatives and associated action numbers are described in greater detail in this chapter. This list is intended to illustrate the top priorities and demonstrate how the actions and initiatives identified below connect to community values. How a city spends its money is the clearest depiction of what it cares about. However, Steamboat Springs has been a victim of trying to do many things at the same time (an important job of a city!), moving many things forward in tiny increments rather than putting large sums of money and staff effort towards a few large initiatives or issues and have a major impact. The intent of this section is to bring together the values, challenges, trends, initiatives and actions that are discussed throughout this Community Plan and give the city a roadmap of how to “fund its future” in a way that makes a big impact the most pressing challenges.

Conversations about new taxes (and, or fees) are never easy and will negatively affect some groups while benefiting others. This plan urges the city to not shy away from these hard conversations and subsequent decisions and to “dig deep” on a more values-based budgeting and taxing strategy that will benefit the larger community. If definitive action is not taken to adjust how the city spends its money and collects revenue, the community risks not making measurable, positive change on its most pressing issues and changing course to ensure the community realizes its desired future. **Adding more sustainable and dedicated revenue streams is the top priority of this chapter.**

Lead a culture shift among city leadership to prioritize all policy changes needed to improve housing affordability.



Key Initiative #1

Action: Prioritize all policy changes needed to improve housing affordability

These Key Initiatives and Actions connect to the values of:
Investing in Values, Thriving Community

Why is this important? Why now?

Although the city and region are taking housing issues seriously and working together, along with the YVHA, to make meaningful impact on new and preserved affordable housing units, this plan recommends that this becomes even more of a priority, because without housing issues being solved, many of the other issues cannot be resolved. Housing is seen as the root of how to “maintain community” and it is inextricably linked with transportation, quality of life, and economic prosperity. Aligning city and regional priorities and budgets to tackle housing as important issues, even if it means delaying other priorities, could be an effective way to make some meaningful impact.

Find new revenue sources, conduct outreach around new taxes, and experiment with the budget.



Key Initiative #2

Actions: Find new revenue sources, Build revenue consensus, and Fiscal accountability and experimentation

These Key Initiatives and Actions connect to the values of:
Investing in Values, Diverse Economy and Identity

Why is this important? Why now?

These recommendations are at the heart of “funding the future” by raising revenue to invest in the values of the community. Although new taxes are never fun for anyone, tough conversations about how to pay for housing, transportation, and other investments that prioritize quality of life for residents must be conducted.

Analyze the commercial and industrial business landscape to better understand the market, zoning, and balance of residential, commercial and industrial uses in the future.



Key Initiative #4

Actions: Inventory employment and land use needs, Position commercial roads for infill and redevelopment, Revisit residential land use in commercial and industrial zones

Connects to the values of: **Diverse Economy and Identity, Thriving Community**

Why is this important? Why now?

The balance of commercial, industrial, and residential lands is important for keeping businesses in the city, expanding housing options, but also creating “better places” as the city grows and redevelops. Specific recommendations for these areas are in the Land Use District Plan document created alongside the Community Plan.

Arts and Culture Master Plan



Key Initiative #5

Action: Arts and culture master plan

These Key Initiatives and Actions connect to the values of: **Diverse Economy and Identity, Thriving Community, Vibrant Culture, Emphasize and Honor Heritage**

Why is this important? Why now?

The completion of an arts and culture master plan is a crucial element in the city’s strategy to support a year-round economy that is not entirely reliant on tourism. This type of plan enhances the community character that already exists and elevates the arts organizations and events that are already doing important work in the Steamboat Springs area. Arts and culture are incredibly important to enhancing community vibrancy and quality of life and reinforce Steamboat Springs’ identity.

Significantly fund transit, both local and regional



Key Initiative #6

Expand regional transit coverage, expand transit capacity, implement opportunities for improving, consolidating, and streamlining shared mobility services

These Key Initiatives and Actions connect to the values of: **Well-Connected Multi-Modal City, Thriving Community, Sustainability and Resilience, Investing in Values Themes**

Why is this important? Why now?

Steamboat Springs is the major employment and economic hub for all northwestern Colorado. Traffic congestion has become a major issue, both for people trying to get around the city and those that are coming in to access services and employment. Better local and regional transit that make it easier or less expensive for people to use than using a vehicle is a key way to reduce congestion and the GHGs associated with automobiles.

Explore a recreation district and, or dedicated funding source for parks and recreation



Key Initiative #7

Action: Create a dedicated fund for parks through taxes, fees, or creation of parks and recreation district

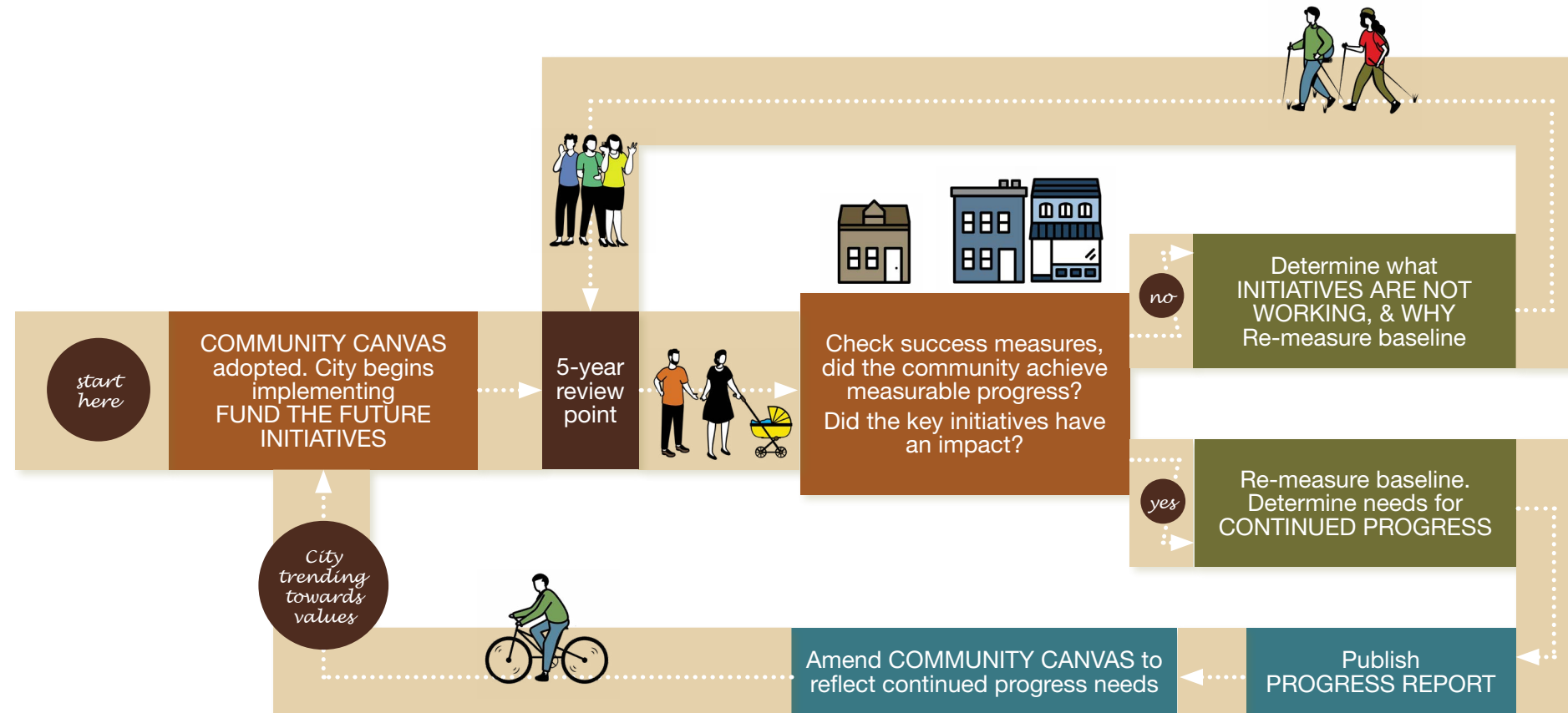
These Key Initiatives and Actions connect to the values of: **Investing in Values Thriving Community, Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Themes**

Why is this important? Why now?

The pressing need for better recreation assets was noted over and over in the engagement and outreach process for this plan. The creation of a district will create an entity that has its own revenue stream and could potentially draw regionally, not just from the city boundary itself. A district structure could provide a mechanism to raise money for additional indoor fitness facilities, as well as better long-term planning for capital improvements and maintenance not subject to the whims of the sales-tax funded general fund.

Measuring Success

The initiatives and actions described in this chapter are intended to help the community orient towards its values and away from trends that are leading the community astray from its values. The City of Steamboat Springs is committed to measuring the progress the city is making over time. Three years after the adoption of the Community Canvas, the city will ask the following questions to see how well it is funding the future: Has the city implemented new sources of revenue? Has it created dedicated funding streams or re-allocated existing funding to the most important values-oriented initiatives and actions spelled out in this Community Plan? The answers to these questions will help the city understand if the initiatives described in this plan, and the other long-range plans that support and inform the Community Canvas, are helping steer the community in a path that aligns with the community's values or if there needs to be an intervention, plan amendment, or course correction to make the type of progress



that the city would like to see in funding the future. As described in previous chapters, this evaluation process is one piece of the ongoing process to ensure that actions are making progress towards the community's values. Each action will include their own specific approaches to evaluate and monitor results.

The measurements below offer ways of tracking progress towards funding the future in Steamboat Springs. Each measurement is a tangible but ambitious marker of progress in the direction towards the community's values:

- » **Values-aligned budget audit is 100% complete and budget allocations have been shifted to be in alignment with values by 2028. This process is documented clearly.**
- » **By 2028, Steamboat Springs will have completed a comprehensive audit of city budget allocations and dedicated revenue sources (e.g., STR tax) related to housing, adopted a new “housing investment strategy” to target spending in new affordable housing units and support for existing residents. This will result in the new units and reduced cost burden discussed in the Maintain Community chapter.**
- » **Decrease by 3% the number of workers in Steamboat Springs that travel by single-occupancy vehicle in three years. This will reflect investments in transit, carpooling, paid parking, and multimodal enhancements.**
- » **100% completion status of an arts and culture master plan and feasibility study of a dedicated space for arts and cultural events. This includes a detailed analysis of locations, cost, funding models, and ways to support arts and culture into the next few decades in Steamboat Springs.**

FUTURE LAND USE DISTRICTS

About

This Future Land Use Districts chapter is a guide for how development and future land use considerations in Steamboat Springs should take shape. It documents further policies and priorities outlined in the other chapters of this plan, specifically as it relates to growth and development, meeting the land use needs of the community, and offering guidance for public and private investment in the City of Steamboat Springs over the next 10-20 years. It enhances the other chapters of the plan by giving more detailed guidance on land use, zoning, and standards that implement the actions and policies. This chapter consists of a district map and associated district-type category descriptions. The “districts” on the map and described within this chapter are similar to yet distinct from previous plans’ terms describing zoning or land use categories.

These districts go beyond merely providing guidance on lot size, design characteristics, and land use. They are more holistic in how they look beyond zoning categories and regulations. The districts described in this plan point to the type of investments in public infrastructure or public improvements the City of Steamboat Springs should make to further the goals of the Community Canvas Plan and complement private development or (re)investment in the built environment.



Using The Districts

This Future Land Use Districts chapter outlines a broad vision for the future of land uses in Steamboat Springs. Land Use Districts are distinct from zone districts or designations and do not replace zoning. Individual parcels in Steamboat Springs will fall into both a zone and a Future Land Use district. Zoning in Steamboat Springs is recorded in the Community Development Code (CDC), and all parcels within Steamboat Springs are subject to the regulations outlined within that regulatory document.

To help further the aspirational goals and desired outcomes of any of the Future Land Use Districts, re-zoning may be required when some properties develop or redevelop. This depends on the location of the project and the nature of the change and could either be initiated by a property owner or an authorized representative such as a developer, or the City of Steamboat Springs. If the Future Land Use District boundary does not follow an existing parcel line, the determination of the appropriate land use district will be determined at the time of a proposed rezoning and development submittal.

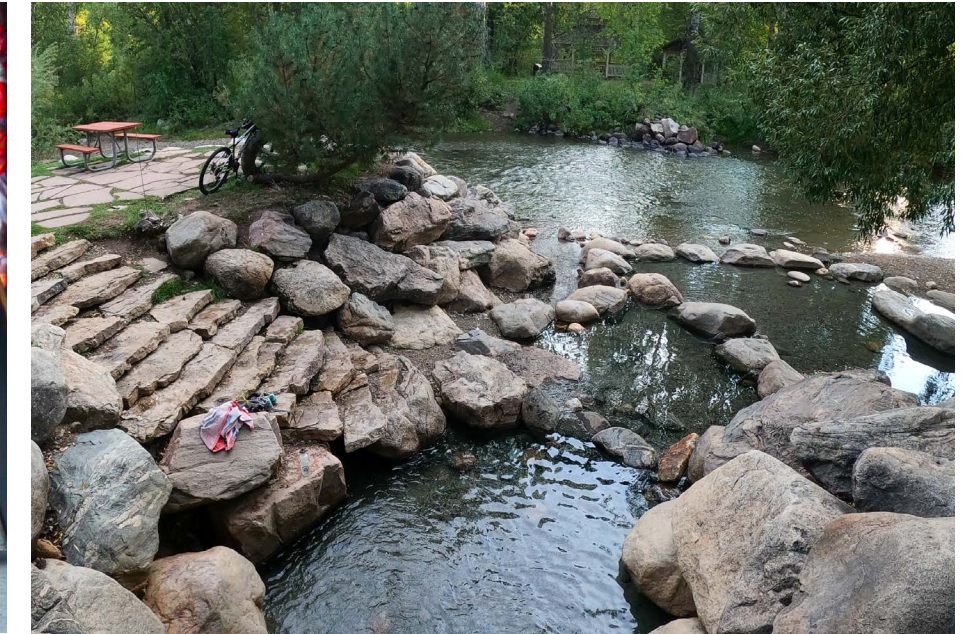
The City of Steamboat Springs Community Planning Staff, Planning Commission, and City Council have broad authority to exercise their interpretation over whether proposed changes to

the underlying zoning classification of given parcels will help the community realize the principles, goals and policies contained in the Community Canvas Community Plan or other city-wide or county plans such as the Routt County Climate Action Plan, Routt County Wildfire Protection Plan, or the Steamboat Springs Transportation and Mobility Plan. This Community Canvas Future Land Use Districts should be considered in conjunction with the initiatives, actions, and community values outlined in the community's long-range plans as well as the broader implications that land development has on associated values expressed by the community such as increasing multimodal transportation opportunities, reducing the number of structures in hazard-prone areas, or reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The land use districts herein are informed by the existing characteristics of place types (height, scale, form, lot size, density, land use mix, adjacent transportation uses) in Steamboat Springs today and describe which attributes of land use and form help to define each district. Each district includes a description of planning and development considerations for that district, as well as highlighting top priority considerations and lists the most frequently occurring "prevalent" uses and the "complimentary" uses which are less common but are a natural pairing and are often supporting the prevalent land uses in each



district. In the case of areas where current characteristics are subject to major change or there is significant new growth, such as West Steamboat or along commercial corridors, the planning and development considerations describe how the area may transform over time to embody the character of the desired district. Other neighborhoods may already be more built out, and the planning and development considerations will include iterative changes and developments that may occur slowly over



time. Regardless of whether change and growth happen quickly or slowly for a given area, the district descriptions offer a way in which these places may evolve and provide direction to the private development community and the City of Steamboat Springs as to what type of investments and infrastructure improvements are needed to help realize this transition from today's land use conditions to the desired future conditions of tomorrow.

City-Wide Goals

Each district has general and long-range planning considerations that are applicable to its unique character area and geography. This plan also recognizes that there are city-wide objectives that are broadly applicable across the implementation of the chapters of this plan and the land use objectives of the City of Steamboat Springs.

These city-wide objectives connect back to the three themes of the Community Canvas Community Plan of (1) maintain resident's sense of community; (2) sustain the place; and (3) fund the future.

Maintain Community

- Increase residential density in already developed areas to grow the city's stock of available housing units in a sustainable, predictable manner that balances the need to grow with the preservation of surrounding natural resources and landscapes.
- Identify and make space for community serving amenities that generally improve the daily quality of life of Steamboat Springs residents and ensure that residents can access daily resources in an efficient manner.
- Preserve existing naturally occurring affordable housing, which refers housing that is affordable without the requirement of government subsidies or affordability mechanisms, like the mobile home parks as they contribute to the city's stock of diverse housing typologies and more attainable housing options.

Sustain the Place

- Increase the uptake of multimodal transportation options beyond the use of personal vehicles city-wide amongst both residents and visitors. Land use patterns fundamentally shape transportation demand by determining the spatial distribution of origins and destinations, with compact, mixed-use development generating shorter trips and supporting efficient transit systems, while less-compact, single-use development creates longer trips and greater automobile dependence. The reciprocal relationship means transportation infrastructure investments also influence development patterns over time, as transit oriented "nodes" attract higher densities and car-oriented corridors encourage lower-density development, creating a feedback loop that perpetuates over time and leads to sprawling and inefficient land use patterns. This plan acknowledges that both higher-density, compact development and lower-density development are both important land use

characteristics of the City of Steamboat Springs and identifies areas (districts) of the city where increased density and significant investment in transit supportive infrastructure (nodes) are necessary to achieve the community's value of a "well connected, multimodal city".

- The Steamboat Springs community values outdoor recreation and conservation. The district plan outlines areas shown on the Future Land Use District Map as "Riparian Conservation/Recreation Corridors". These corridors indicate buffers around streams, and rivers within the City of Steamboat Springs where new developments—excepting small scale recreational amenities such as interpretive signage or water access features—will be discouraged, and where water body setbacks, and natural resource conservation will be prioritized over other planning and development considerations associated with the underlying district.

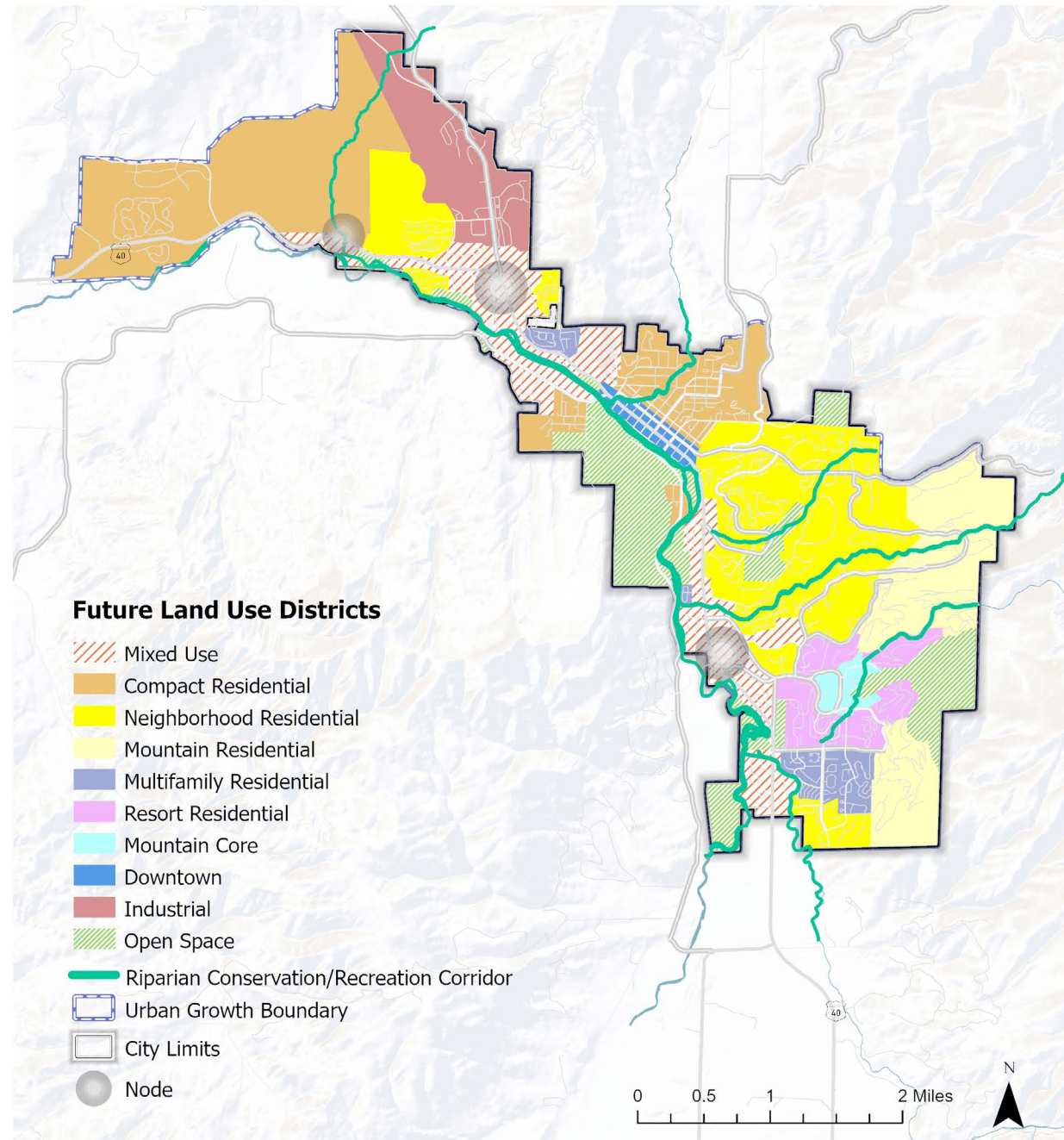
Fund The Future

- Funding the future is about making the best use of limited resources on the part of the city government. While most development and redevelopment projects are done by private citizens or developers, the City of Steamboat Springs is on the hook to provide some infrastructure and services for new development. Cities must ensure that new development generates sufficient tax revenue to cover the long-term costs of maintaining the infrastructure and services it requires, as the municipality inherits perpetual responsibility for roads, utilities, parks, and public safety

regardless of whether the initial development fees and taxes can sustain these obligations over multiple replacement cycles. Fiscally unsustainable growth patterns, particularly low-density sprawl that spreads infrastructure costs over a larger area, can create structural deficits that burden existing residents and compromise the city's ability to maintain service levels as infrastructure ages and require costly replacement. Currently the City of Steamboat Springs has insufficient revenue to maintain and service its existing responsibilities. The city is also being asked to add new residential development and services such as childcare, parks, and business space to sustain the needs of the community and grow the economic base. This district plan identifies opportunities for more efficient use of existing land by encouraging denser development where appropriate and mixing uses to maximize the value of the land uses to the underlying value of the land to ensure that new development reduces fiscal strain to the City of Steamboat Springs.

- This Land Use District Plan recognizes that the city will, in some cases, need to make investments of public amenities in certain districts—such as bus stops or multi-use trails—to help spur interest in the private development community to add the types of development desired in these districts over time and to allow the city to grow in the right places to balance the two competing needs of adding development that is needed in the community while not overburdening the city's budget.

Future Land Use District Map



District Descriptions

Compact Residential

Vision

The compact residential district describes residential neighborhoods with a close-knit feel, owing to its small lot sizes and mix of housing types including detached single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes, manufactured homes, and multifamily developments with 12 or fewer units. In addition, the compact residential district will allow for additional, subtle residential density by allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and divided single-family homes housing multiple households, including unrelated individuals. These neighborhoods are shaped by a walkable gridded street pattern, which may have intermixed small-scale retail and neighborhood-scale services such as hair salons or small retail/food establishments and typically are within walking/biking distance of larger-scale services, amenities, and transit.

General Planning & Development Considerations

Character

- New private development, or redevelopment, in existing neighborhoods should draw inspiration from the surrounding architectural character and scale of development. New development and redevelopment will also be subject to relevant historic preservation guidelines/requirements.

- New development will maintain a pattern of close together, small scale, and typologically diverse housing styles.
- Investment in neighborhood-scale parks and public amenities such as playgrounds, dog parks, and recreation centers contribute to a more active and vibrant sense of community and can provide “close to home” amenities to the residents of this district.

Density

- Most development is intended to occur on small (less than 8,000 SF and down to 3,000 SF) to medium (12,000 to 18,000 SF for smaller-scale duplexes and triplexes) sized lots that support a mix of development densities. Larger, single-family housing developments (exceeding 18,000 SF) should be avoided in this district to maintain a consistent pattern and scale of development.
- This district will have small setbacks that minimize the distances between buildings and property lines, allowing structures to be positioned closer to lot boundaries while accommodating space in the front or rear for yards, outdoor storage, and gardens.
- Lots in this district intend to maximize lot coverage, which permits buildings to occupy a larger percentage of the total lot area, these strategies enable more intensive development on smaller parcels.

Transportation

- These smaller lot neighborhoods tend to be highly walkable areas and are most desirable when built next to transit or neighborhood-scale commercial uses. People living in compact residential districts should be able to walk to a bus stop within about 15 minutes or bike to bus stops within about 5 minutes.
- City investment in expanded intracity transit, sidewalks, and multi-use trails connecting these districts to other areas within the city could increase multimodal choice and enhance quality of life for people living in these districts.
- Parking should be prioritized in off-street locations such as alleys, or driveway cuts with minimal on-street parking to make space for cycling infrastructure and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, where appropriate, and to maximize available roadway space given narrower widths of roadways in compact residential neighborhoods.

Sustainability/Resiliency

- New developments will incorporate the current County/State/Local best practices in energy efficient design and construction.
- Low-water landscaping will be encouraged for new and redevelopment projects to encourage efficient water use.
- Wildfire mitigation best practices should be incorporated into all new development in this district. Guidelines can be found in the “Land Use Planning Recommendations to Improve Wildfire Resiliency” report, and the Routt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, as well as the Routt County Regional Building Department.

Long Range Planning Considerations

The following list outlines the highest priority planning and development considerations in this district when evaluating new development proposals, considering variances or rezoning requests, evaluating impacts/tradeoffs of proposed development, or planning for new public investment. These considerations express the desired “goals” for this district and its evolution over time.

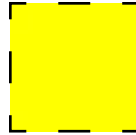
- Add new residential units to existing neighborhoods.
- Supporting multi-modal transportation and transit-oriented development goals by connecting trails, creating walkable and safe pedestrian and bike environments, and routing transit within a short walk of residents.

Prevalent uses: Single-family residences, ADUs, two-family residences, and multi-family residences including triplexes, townhomes, converted single-family homes, cottage courts, manufactured homes, and multifamily housing with 12 or fewer units.

Complimentary uses: Small-scale commercial businesses such as cafes and salons, small-scale offices, places of worship, public institutions (like post offices and schools), parks and recreational facilities.



Examples of existing places within Steamboat Springs that embody this district’s character and vision



Neighborhood Residential

Vision

The neighborhood residential district describes residential neighborhoods with single- family residential homes as the most common use, supported by two- and multi-family residential buildings including housing types like ADUs, tri/duplexes, townhomes, subdivided single-family homes, manufactured homes, and cottage courts. The neighborhood residential district is differentiated from the compact residential district by a lower overall density, owing to its larger lot sizes and reduced emphasis on multi-family residential development. Many existing neighborhoods in this district are generally built- out but may see development or redevelopment such as adding ADUs, splitting large lots, or redeveloping properties into duplexes or other muti-family residential uses. Existing neighborhoods in this category may have gridded street patterns or curvilinear suburban street patterns, but future neighborhoods or subdivisions within this district are encouraged to develop gridded streets and small lot patterns that may encourage new duplexes and to promote connectivity and walking to support current and future multi- modal transportation goals.

General Planning & Development Considerations

Character

- New private development, or redevelopment, in existing neighborhoods should draw inspiration from the surrounding architectural character and scale of development. New development and redevelopment will also be subject to relevant historic preservation guidelines/requirements.
- Investment in neighborhood-scale parks and public amenities such as playgrounds, dog parks, skate parks, and recreation centers contribute to a more active and vibrant sense of community and can provide “close to home” amenities to the residents of this district.

Density

- Appropriate residential building types include single-family residences, two-family residences, cottages, single-family homes divided to accommodate multiple households, ADUs, and small-scale, multi-family buildings with less than 5 units. Larger lot developments should be avoided to prevent buildings whose size and scale do not match the existing scale of development.
- Generally, lot sizes in this district are intended to be larger than compact residential (intended range of 13,000 to 28,000 SF).
- Moderate setbacks in this district provide distance between buildings and property lines, creating a balance between maximizing buildable areas and maintaining adequate spacing for privacy, landscaping, and visual separation. This approach allows for reasonable development intensity while preserving some open space around structures for yards, driveways, and buffer zones.

- Lot coverage in this district allow buildings to occupy a moderate percentage of the total lot area, this strategy provides flexibility for various housing types and site designs. The result is developments that make efficient use of land while still maintaining neighborhood character and providing space for outdoor amenities and green areas.

Transportation

- The City of Steamboat Springs will compliment private investment in sidewalks and multi-use trails by further building out sidewalks, and trails that “fill in gaps” of pedestrian and bicycle linkages to surrounding neighborhoods and transit service. This public investment will support the goals of the district being a walkable, multimodal place.
- Sidewalks should be located on one side of the street allowing space for on-street parking and passing widths between two-way traffic.
- Parking should be primarily accommodated through driveway cuts, and garages, and on-street parking.

Sustainability/Resiliency

- New developments will incorporate the current County/ State/Local best practices in energy efficient design and construction.
- Water-wise landscaping requirements will be encouraged in all new developments in this district.

- Wildfire mitigation best practices will be incorporated into all new developments in this district. Guidelines can be found in the “Land Use Planning Recommendations to Improve Wildfire Resiliency” report, and the Routt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, as well as the Routt County Regional Building Department.

Long Range Planning Considerations

The following list outlines the highest priority planning and development considerations in this district when evaluating new development proposals, considering variances or rezoning requests, evaluating impacts/tradeoffs of proposed development, or planning for new public investment. These considerations express the desired “goals” for this district and its evolution over time.

- Add residential density in existing neighborhoods.

Prevalent uses: Single-family residences, two-family residences.

Complimentary uses: Multi-family residences (3-5 units per building), manufactured homes, ADUs, schools and public services, parks, and recreational amenities.



Examples of existing places within Steamboat Springs that embody this district's character and vision



Multifamily Residential

Vision

This residential district describes high-density residential neighborhoods comprised almost entirely of multi-family residential buildings such as condominiums and apartment complexes. An existing area that embodies this district is the “Condo Land” area south of Walton Creek Road. This district is distinct from the Resort Residential District in that the multifamily housing developments are geared more towards full-time residents with limited short-term rentals and lodging for visitors. Development in these districts is envisioned to continue primarily through infill development on unbuilt parcels.

General Planning & Development Considerations

Character

- To create a more comfortable, and less imposing built environment large developments in this district should utilize the architectural technique of articulation which breaks up large building masses by varying the facade design, materials, colors, or depths to create visual interest and reduce the appearance of bulk. Stylistic elements such as varied window patterns, material changes, or varied rooflines that create shadows and depth. The intention is more human-scale components rather than one overwhelming mass that feels less imposing and better integrated with its surroundings, even when the overall building footprint remains large.

- Building scale, massing, and orientation should take cues from the surrounding built and natural context to ensure new developments reflect the scale of surrounding development, and existing topographic and natural features and preserve viewsheds.
- Investment in neighborhood-scale parks, common spaces associated with multifamily development, and public amenities such as playgrounds, dog parks, and recreation centers contribute to a more active and vibrant sense of community and can provide “close to home” amenities to the residents in this district.

Density

- New development projects should provide opportunities for a mix of uses that provide additional commercial space in addition to residential units to support short-trip opportunities for residents, and visitors in these districts to access amenities without having to commute across the city. New multifamily developments that include first-floor retail, commercial, or office space may be allowed to increase their allowable height above the maximum specified in the Community Development Code.

Transportation

- City-supported and operated transit services and associated amenities (bus stops, shelters, seating, etc.) should be provided alongside any new development if there is not already at least one bus stop within a ¼ mile.
- The City of Steamboat Springs will compliment private investment in sidewalks and multi-use trails by further building out sidewalks, and trails that “fill in gaps” of pedestrian and bicycle linkages to surrounding neighborhoods and transit service. This public investment will support the goals of the district being a walkable, multimodal place.
- Sidewalks will be located on both sides of major streets, and at least one side of minor streets.
- New developments should encourage pedestrian scale interaction with the ground floor of multi-story developments by providing transparency on the ground floors of commercial buildings fronting primary public and private streets, and gathering areas, as well as along building frontages to separate vehicles and pedestrians.
- New development and redevelopment should include the addition of or expansion of pedestrian connections from building to street.
- New developments should maximize the lot coverage by locating parking spaces under buildings in structured parking garages.

Sustainability/Resiliency

- New developments will incorporate the current County/ State/Local best practices in energy efficient design and construction.
- Green infrastructure techniques such as rain gardens, bioswales, or permeable pavement can improve local water quality, and reduce runoff and stormwater impacts on surrounding lands and development and should be encouraged in larger new development projects.
- Low-water landscaping will be encouraged for new and redevelopment projects to encourage efficient water use.

Long Range Planning Considerations

The following list outlines the highest priority planning and development considerations in this district when evaluating new development proposals, considering variances or rezoning requests, evaluating impacts/tradeoffs of proposed development, or planning for new public investment.

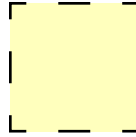
- Continue to develop multi-unit residential buildings through infill on unbuilt parcels.

Prevalent uses: Multi-family residences

Complimentary uses: Small-scale retail, restaurants, and cafes, parks and recreational facilities



Examples of existing places within Steamboat Springs that embody this district's character and vision



Mountain Residential

Vision

The mountain residential neighborhood district type describes residential neighborhoods built in mountainous environments, characterized with dynamic topography. Due to the more challenging terrain, these neighborhoods are characterized by large lot sizes, low density, and large detached single-family homes and estates. The Mountain Residential Neighborhood intends to be less urban with access to open space, and a priority to maintain scenic vistas. This district may see new development and redevelopment on an incremental basis, where land, topography, and infrastructure availability allow.

General Planning & Development Considerations

Character

- Lower density development patterns, with large lot (around 13,000 SF) single-family homes contiguous with open space, or natural areas and a preservation of views.
- The houses are placed on the lots to enhance views yet also be in alignment with the landscape (not putting a house on top of the highest point for example).

Density

- The more rural context of this district is supported by lower lot-coverage percentages and large setbacks of the buildings from the lot lines to facilitate more wild/open landscaping.
- Building scale, massing, and orientation should take cues from the surrounding built and natural context to ensure new developments reflect the scale of surrounding development, and existing topographic and natural features.
- Building heights and rooflines should not visually compete with existing natural and topographic features to preserve viewsheds.

Transportation

- This district is defined by lower-density, larger lot sizes and is less conducive to efficient transit service and should be a lower priority area for expanding transit coverage.
- The more rural, less dense nature of this district leads to lower volumes of vehicular traffic. This district is intended to be a low priority for sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure expansion, however, road designs that encourage shoulder space, wider travel lanes, and lower speed limits could increase the safety and comfort of walking and biking in these districts and enhance quality of life for residents living in these districts as pedestrians and cyclists will be sharing more of the roadway with vehicles.

Sustainability/Resiliency

- Wildfire mitigation best practices should be incorporated into all new development in this district. Guidelines can be found in the “Land Use Planning Recommendations to Improve Wildfire Resiliency” report, and the Routt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, as well as the Routt County Regional Building Department.
- Low-water landscaping will be encouraged for new and redevelopment projects to encourage efficient water use.
- New developments will incorporate the current County/State/Local best practices in energy efficient design and construction.
- Green infrastructure techniques such as rain gardens, bioswales, or permeable pavement can improve local water quality, and reduce runoff and stormwater impacts on surrounding lands and development and should be encouraged in larger new development projects.

Long Range Planning Considerations

The following list outlines the highest priority planning and development considerations in this district when evaluating new development proposals, considering variances or rezoning requests, evaluating impacts/tradeoffs of proposed development, or planning for new public investment. These considerations express the desired “goals” for this district and its evolution over time.

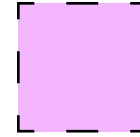
- Maintain scenic views and access to nature
- Preserve open character
- Limit development in environmentally sensitive areas

Prevalent uses: Single-family residences

Complimentary uses: two-family residences, parks, open space, and recreational facilities



Examples of existing places within Steamboat Springs that embody this district's character and vision



Resort Residential

Vision

The resort residential district describes high-density residential neighborhoods comprised almost entirely of multi-family residential buildings such as condominiums and hotels. These neighborhoods are typically built near the Steamboat ski resort, and primarily serve to efficiently house, or accommodate, large numbers of people close to the ski area base. This district supports many hotels and short-term rentals but may also house long-term residents in apartments or condominiums. Development in these districts is envisioned to continue primarily through infill development on unbuilt parcels.

General Planning & Development Considerations

Character

- To create a more comfortable, and less imposing built environment large developments in this district should utilize the architectural technique of articulation which breaks up large building masses by varying the facade design, materials, colors, or depths to create visual interest and reduce the appearance of bulk. Stylistic elements such as varied window patterns, material changes, or varied rooflines that create shadows and depth. The intention is more human-scale components rather than one overwhelming mass that feels less imposing and better integrated with its surroundings, even when the overall building footprint remains large.

- Building scale, massing, and orientation should take cues from the surrounding built and natural context to ensure new developments reflect the scale of surrounding development, and existing topographic and natural features, and preserve viewsheds.
- City and private development should plan for active public spaces by adding amenities such as park space, landscaping, outdoor seating, art installation/murals, etc. as these public enhancements can contribute to an overall sense of place and communicate Steamboat Spring's creative culture in a highly visited areas such as the drop-off and entry zone around the ski resort base.

Density

- Projects that are mixed in use and provide additional commercial space in addition to residential units to support short-trip opportunities for residents, and visitors in these districts to access amenities without having to commute across the city should be prioritized in this district.
- New development and redevelopment should include the addition of or expansion of pedestrian connections from building to street.

Transportation

- The City of Steamboat Springs will support pedestrian and bicycle linkages to surrounding neighborhoods and transit service. This public investment will support the goals of the district being a walkable, multimodal place and may help decrease dependence on private vehicles and increase the use of public transit services by visitors staying in this district.
- City-supported and operated transit services and associated amenities (bus stops, shelters, seating, etc.) should be provided alongside any new development if there is not an existing bus stop within ¼ of a mile.
- Sidewalks should be located on both sides of major streets and at least one side of minor streets.
- New developments should encourage pedestrian scale and interaction by providing transparency on the ground floors of commercial buildings fronting primary public and private streets, and gathering areas, as well as along building frontages to separate vehicles and pedestrians.
- New developments should maximize the lot coverage by locating parking spaces under buildings in structured parking garages.

Sustainability

- Green infrastructure techniques such as rain gardens, bioswales, or permeable pavement can improve local water quality, and reduce runoff and stormwater impacts on surrounding lands and development and should be encouraged in new development.

- Wildfire mitigation best practices should be incorporated into all new development in this district. Guidelines can be found in the “Land Use Planning Recommendations to Improve Wildfire Resiliency” report, and the Routt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, as well as the Routt County Regional Building Department.
- New developments will incorporate the current County/State/Local best practices in energy efficient design and construction.
- Low-water landscaping will be encouraged for new and redevelopment projects to encourage efficient water use.

Long Range Planning Considerations

The following list outlines the highest priority planning and development considerations in this district when evaluating new development proposals, considering variances or rezoning requests, evaluating impacts/tradeoffs of proposed development, or planning for new public investment. These considerations express the desired “goals” for this district and its evolution over time.

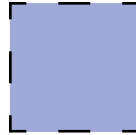
- Maintain consistent mountain resort look and feel.
- Continue to develop multi-unit residential buildings through infill on unbuilt parcels.
- Require minimum densities to support a vibrant base area.

Prevalent uses: Multi-family residences, hotels

Complimentary uses: Small-scale retail, restaurants, and cafes, parks and recreational facilities



Examples of existing places within Steamboat Springs that embody this district’s character and vision



Downtown

Vision

The downtown district represents a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use place that serves as a hub for regional commerce, culture, and social life. This district features workplaces, services, arts and cultural events, entertainment, dining, retail, and residential living, creating a lively mix of uses. Steamboat Springs' existing old town commercial core exemplifies this district type, with attached buildings and activated storefronts along walkable sidewalks. Strong transit and multi-use path connections within this district ensure easy access from other parts of the city. Where there are existing historic segments of downtown, they should be conserved to maintain the historic western feel and pedestrian environment.

General Planning & Development Considerations

Character

- New private development, or redevelopment, should enhance the mix of economic and cultural activities, create additional housing in proximity to transit and commercial activity, and maintain the district's intention of functioning as a mixed-use economic and social center.
- Building and site designs should promote an active streetscape and contribute to an activated public realm with transparent commercial ground floors.

- Public amenities such as shelters at transit stops, public seating, public art and cultural amenities, parks and gathering places, will contribute to the public realm and support local commerce by making downtown a vibrant, safe place to be.
- Historic resource preservation guidelines will allow private sector developers to better comply with and contribute to the sense of authentic western heritage.
- This district will have a mix of architectural styles from new to historic.
- Parking should be oriented towards the rear of the development so that building facades are prioritized towards the roadway and sidewalks.

Density

- The most appropriate developments in this zone are mixed-use buildings with commercial ground floors and offices or housing above with a general height limit of 45 ft.
- Buildings in this district should have zero, or very small setbacks from the lot line to maximize the lot coverage and facilitate a more walkable built environment.

Transportation

- The City of Steamboat Springs should support pedestrian and bicycle linkages to surrounding neighborhoods and transit service within this district. This public investment will support the district's goals of being a walkable, multimodal place. This district should be a top priority for snow clearance after storms so that it remains walkable and transit accessible.
- New parking should be discouraged as this district is well-served by existing city-provided transit services, multi-use paths, and sidewalks. In the case where the new development demonstrates a significant need for additional parking beyond what is currently available, new parking should be located behind or under the building to preserve continuous frontage with adjacent buildings and promote an active pedestrian environment.

Sustainability/Resiliency

- New developments will incorporate the current County/State/Local best practices in energy efficient design and construction.
- Low-water landscaping will be encouraged for new and redevelopment projects to encourage efficient water use.
- Green infrastructure techniques such as rain gardens, bioswales, or permeable pavement can improve local water quality, and reduce runoff and stormwater impacts on surrounding lands and development and should be encouraged in new development.

Long Range Planning Considerations

The following list outlines the highest priority planning and development considerations in this district when evaluating new development proposals, considering variances or rezoning requests, evaluating impacts/tradeoffs of proposed development, or planning for new public investment. These considerations express the desired "goals" for this district and its evolution over time.

- Supporting the development of diverse economic opportunities and industries
- Supporting multi-modal transportation goals through sidewalk connectivity, creating a walkable and safe pedestrian environment, and contributing to transit-oriented development goals.
- Enhancing the public realm through the provision of public amenities such as seating, public art installations, and street trees.
- Fostering arts and culture, and elevating the sense of place through architecture.

Prevalent uses: A mix of retail, civic, office, food and drink, and cultural uses

Complimentary uses: Hotels, public spaces, multi-family residences



Examples of existing places within Steamboat Springs that embody this district's character and vision



Mixed Use

Vision

The mixed-use district describes areas where various commercial, office, institutional (places of worship, government services), and multifamily housing uses come together. These mixed-use districts are often adjacent to key transportation corridors, such as US-40 and other major arterials, and are distinct from the areas of mixed use around downtown and the ski area. These districts take advantage of proximity to major transportation corridors to provide key services such as banks, grocery stores, gas stations, retail, and restaurants. The current areas that fall within the mixed-use district are comprised of lower-intensity, auto-oriented uses; however, the transition of these areas to a more transit-supportive pattern of development is strongly encouraged as infill/redevelopment occurs, particularly where high-frequency transit exists or is planned, in particular around the strategic nodes outlined in the Future Land Use Map where future transportation improvements could facilitate more intense densities of mixed uses.

General Planning & Development Considerations

Character

- Development should be oriented towards major transportation corridors to increase visibility. Parking should be oriented towards the interior or rear of the development so that the building façade is oriented towards the roadway and sidewalks.

- Encourage walkable storefronts and public infrastructure improvements that merge the needs of people driving and of those walking/biking/taking transit.

Density

- Permit proposals that increase density around key transit nodes and corridors.
- Encourage a diverse mix of commercial uses and daily essentials to accompany residential development.
- Desired future densities for this district include a two-story minimum, with residential or office uses located above commercial and retail uses.

Transportation

- These districts rely on frequent car transportation to sustain themselves, but in the future strive to become more integrated into a walkable multi-modal transportation system where patrons access these businesses by car, bike, transit, or walking. The city should support pedestrian and bicycle linkages to surrounding neighborhoods and transit service, prioritizing transportation improvements in the strategic nodes outlined in the Future Land Use Map.
- The City of Steamboat Springs should encourage shared parking agreements with developments in this district to allow for the maximization of the existing parking spaces amongst different uses.

Sustainability/Resiliency

- New developments will incorporate the current County/State/Local best practices in energy efficient design and construction.
- Low-water landscaping will be encouraged for new and redevelopment projects to encourage efficient water use.
- Green infrastructure techniques such as rain gardens, bioswales, or permeable pavement can improve local water quality, and reduce runoff and stormwater impacts on surrounding lands and development and should be encouraged in new development.

Long Range Planning Considerations

The following list outlines the highest priority planning and development considerations in this district when evaluating new development proposals, considering variances or rezoning requests, evaluating impacts/tradeoffs of proposed development, or planning for new public investment. These considerations express the desired “goals” for this district and its evolution over time.

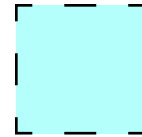
- Permit new development that brings daily essentials to residents.
- Encourage a diverse mix of commercial uses and daily essentials to accompany residential development.
- Encourage walkable storefronts and public infrastructure improvements that merge the needs of people driving and of those walking/biking/taking transit.
- Permit proposals that increase density around key transit nodes and corridors.
- The City of Steamboat Springs should support pedestrian and bicycle linkages to surrounding neighborhoods and transit service.

Prevalent uses: Commercial uses like grocery stores, retail, restaurants, gas stations, banks, offices, and business services.

Complimentary uses: Multi-family residences, live-work art/creative studio spaces



Examples of existing places within Steamboat Springs that embody this district’s character and vision



Mountain Core

Vision

The mountain resort core district describes the high-density mixed-use development present around the base of the ski resort. This district includes retail, restaurants, and other commercial activities aimed at supporting the activities of the ski resort and capturing economic value from tourism. This district may include hotels and large condominiums, especially as incorporated into mixed use buildings that create an activated ground floor. New development or redevelopment is envisioned to happen on an incremental scale as the market experiences shifts in demand for goods and services in the area. Plaza areas and other public spaces should be incorporated.

General Planning & Development Considerations

Character

- New development, or redevelopment, in the mountain resort core districts should prioritize maintaining a consistent architectural character and provide public amenities that contribute to the enhancement of the public realm.
- City and private development should plan for active public spaces by adding amenities such as plazas, landscaping, small park space, public gathering spaces, outdoor seating, art installation/murals, etc. as these public enhancements can contribute to an overall sense of place and honor Steamboat Spring’s creative culture in a highly visited portion of the city.

- Building scale, massing, and orientation should take cues from the surrounding built and natural context to ensure new developments reflect the scale of surrounding development, and existing topographic and natural features.

Density

- This district is anchored by high-density mixed-use buildings that are largely accommodating the destination tourism industry such as hotels, and condominiums where short term rentals are accommodated in greater numbers than other districts in the city.
- Commercial buildings are intended to be relatively small scale (less than 5,000 SF) as these commercial uses are focused more on restaurants, retail, and amenities.
- Residential uses in this district will largely be in mixed-use, or multifamily buildings as opposed to single family, stand-alone homes and will be smaller in size and scale (less than 6,000 SF).

Transportation

- These districts often are high-trafficked areas and are places where large numbers of people congregate for events or to access the ski resort amenities. Availability of parking, parking management, and efficient transportation to and from this district is of high importance for visitation management.

- The City of Steamboat Springs should support pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding neighborhoods and transit service within this district. This public investment will support the district’s goals of being a walkable, multimodal place.

Sustainability/Resiliency

- New developments will incorporate the current County/State/Local best practices in energy efficient design and construction.
- Low-water landscaping will be encouraged for new and redevelopment projects to encourage efficient water use.
- Green infrastructure techniques such as rain gardens, bioswales, or permeable pavement can improve local water quality, and reduce runoff and stormwater impacts on surrounding lands and development and should be encouraged in new development.

Long Range Planning Considerations

The following list outlines the highest priority planning and development considerations in this district when evaluating new development proposals, considering variances or rezoning requests, evaluating impacts/tradeoffs of proposed development, or planning for new public investment. These considerations express the desired “goals” for this district and its evolution over time.

- Mixed-use development with a diverse array of residential and commercial uses.
- Maximize use of land via minimum density requirements.
- Supporting multi-modal transportation through trail connectivity, creating a walkable and safe pedestrian environment, and contributing to transit-oriented development goals.

Prevalent uses: Restaurants, cafes, bars, multi-family residences, condos, hotels, retail, outfitters, public gathering/event spaces.

Complimentary uses: office space, institutional and administrative uses such as maintenance facilities or places of worship.



Examples of existing places within Steamboat Springs that embody this district's character and vision



Industrial

Character & Vision

The industrial district describes areas dedicated to more intensive work processes, or that require large amounts of space for manufacturing, processing, or distribution of goods and services. The industrial district is envisioned to be an area of relative change that may see new uses or expansion of existing uses over time depending on the economic needs of the community. Potential phasing out of residential or commercial uses may occur in this district to maximize the availability of space to accommodate the community's industrial and business needs.

General Planning & Development Considerations

Character

- The Industrial district's primary purpose is to serve the economic needs of Steamboat Springs. This district is represented by industrial land uses such as, but not limited to, manufacturing, assembly plants, warehouses, outdoor storage facilities, and distribution facilities.
- This district may include land uses that logically cluster in industrial areas based on the spatial requirements of their business operations but may not necessarily be thought of as traditional "industrial" uses such as auto-repair and sales, indoor climbing gyms, breweries, flex space for small start-ups, or maker space for artistic/creative industries.

- Screening techniques –fencing, vegetation, etc.– should be utilized to create visual buffers between the surrounding transportation network and industrial buildings.

Density

- This district will experience varied density with generally large lots per primary use.
- Building heights should take into consideration the preservation of scenic viewsheds.

Transportation

- Transportation facilities (roadways, sidewalks, transit) should primarily promote efficient movement of commercial truck traffic.
- Ensure ease of access for large vehicles to and from primary roads and eliminate on-street parking over time.

Sustainability/Resiliency

- New developments will incorporate the current County/State/Local best practices in energy efficient design and construction.
- Low-water landscaping will be encouraged for new and redevelopment projects to encourage efficient water use.

- Green infrastructure techniques such as rain gardens, bioswales, or permeable pavement can improve local water quality, and reduce runoff and stormwater impacts on surrounding lands and development and should be encouraged in new development.
- Appropriate filtration and air quality monitoring equipment should be utilized to ensure minimal impact on the community, and the region's air quality.

Long Range Planning Considerations

The following list outlines the highest priority planning and development considerations in this district when evaluating new development proposals, considering variances or rezoning requests, evaluating impacts/tradeoffs of proposed development, or planning for new public investment. These considerations express the desired “goals” for this district and its evolution over time.

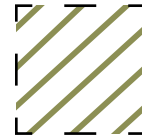
- Permit development that furthers a diverse set of economic opportunities and industries.

Prevalent uses: Industrial land uses such as manufacturing, assembly plants, primary metal and related industries; vehicle-related commercial uses; warehouses, outdoor storage yards, and distribution facilities; and flex space for small, local startups as well as national or regional businesses.

Complimentary uses: Minimal allowance for complimentary uses such as restaurants, grocery stores, or convenience stores.



Examples of existing places within Steamboat Springs that embody this district's character and vision



Recreation, Open Space, Trails, and Natural Areas

Character & Vision

This district describes natural areas primarily used for landscape conservation and recreation. Parks, open spaces, and natural areas can vary in size, level of programming, maintenance and management, and level of infrastructure development. The level of infrastructure development in this district can range from highly developed to include amenities such as playground equipment, courts, fields, restrooms, and signage to minimal development depending on the intended use and context of the park, open space, or natural area.

General Planning & Development Considerations

Character

- These areas can serve a range of roles depending on their location, characteristics, sensitivity of the landscape/habitat, and management priorities such as whether to emphasize outdoor recreation or wildlife habitat.
- Enhancing multimodal connectivity to and from parks, open space, and natural areas in and around Steamboat Springs through expanded multi-use trail networks should be prioritized.
- Environmentally sensitive areas such as steep slopes, riparian areas, floodplains, etc.

Density

- This district will experience varied density with generally large lots per primary use.
- Building heights should take into consideration the preservation of scenic viewsheds.

Transportation

- Transportation facilities (roadways, sidewalks, transit) should primarily promote efficient movement of commercial truck traffic.
- Ensure ease of access for large vehicles to and from primary roads and eliminate on-street parking over time.

Sustainability/Resiliency

- New developments will incorporate the current County/State/Local best practices in energy efficient design and construction.
- Low-water landscaping will be encouraged for new and redevelopment projects to encourage efficient water use.
- Green infrastructure techniques such as rain gardens, bioswales, or permeable pavement can improve local water quality, and reduce runoff and stormwater impacts on surrounding lands and development and should be encouraged in new development.
- Appropriate filtration and air quality monitoring equipment should be utilized to ensure minimal impact on the community, and the region's air quality.

Long Range Planning Considerations

The following list outlines the highest priority planning and development considerations in this district when evaluating new development proposals, considering variances or rezoning requests, evaluating impacts/tradeoffs of proposed development, or planning for new public investment

- Balance conservation, open space, and passive space with active space and recreation city-wide.
- Encourage diversity in the types of open space and park areas.
- Enhancing multimodal connectivity between existing and planned neighborhoods, downtown, and core commercial areas to parks and open spaces to reduce vehicular traffic and trailhead crowding.

Prevalent uses: Parks, open space, greenways, natural areas, wildlife habitat and corridors, outdoor recreation, and community separators.

Complimentary uses: Recreation centers, vending services.



Examples of existing places within Steamboat Springs that embody this district's character and vision



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