

Huerfano County Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) Steering Committee Introductory Call Agenda

December 18th, 2023

10.00am - 11.30am, MST

Zoom: <https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/98616415141>

Documents - [Link to Shared Google Folder](#)

- [RTAP Community Partner Brief](#)
- [RTAP Community Resource Guide](#)
- [Huerfano County RTAP Community Self-Assessment](#)

Call Purpose

- Introductions
- Overview of the planning process, roles, & responsibilities
- Defining success for this RTAP process
- Brainstorm about key partners/stakeholders
- Introduction to the community self-assessment
- Next steps

Call Participants

Facilitation Team

- Natalie Ooi - Teaching Associate Professor, CU Boulder's Masters of the Environment (MENV) program
- Matt Nunez - Program Manager, Colorado Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry (OREC)
- Guinevere Nelson - Douglas County Extension, CSU Extension

Local Steering Committee

- **Community POC:** Robert Gilbert, Management Fellow, Huerfano County
- Carl Young, County Administrator, Huerfano County
- Carlton Croft, Economic Development Director, Huerfano County
- Heather Hillis, Town Clerk, Town of La Veta
- Keri Powers, Family Engagement Coordinator, Early Childhood Advisory Council
- Sharon Jakubowski Wolz, Walsenburg Interim City Administrator, City of Walsenburg

- Michele Appel, Huerfano Parks & Rec District
- Josie Boynton, Vice-Chair, Huerfano County Parks and Rec Special District Board, Spark the Change Colorado
- Marilyn Russell, President, La Veta Trails

State Partners

- Marvin Reynolds, Huerfano County Director, CSU Extension
- Bruce Fickenschler, Southern Regional Director, CSU Extension
- Stephen Lauer, Southern Regional Food & Ag Specialist, CSU Extension
- Willie Wilkins, Mount Region Economies Specialist, CSU Extension

**Green denotes who attended the meeting*

Introductions (20 mins):

Guinevere

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- Name, role(s) within Huerfano County (or elsewhere)
 - What are you excited about for this process?

Overview of Planning Process, Roles, and Responsibilities (10 mins): Natalie

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- Purpose
 - Timeline & Phases
 - Deliverables
 - Steering Committee Role and Responsibilities
 - Scope of the Planning Process

Defining Success for this RTAP process (30 mins):

Matt/Natalie

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- What does outdoor recreation mean to you/your community?
 - What interested you in participating in this RTAP process? How will assistance at this time be useful in helping you manage/develop outdoor recreation?
 - What does success in the context of this project mean to your community?
 - Pop Up locations for equipment rentals
 - Need for jobs
 - Camping,
 - New opportunities for outdoor recreation resources
 - Outdoor Recreation Retail

- Hiking and camping
- Hunting
- Can capitalize on-Walsenburg in a gorgeous location potential for bringing access to populations like youth who may not know/have access to ORE resources
- LaVeta trails Master Plan

Pickleball Court, new playground, CDOT grant to increase crosswalks, bike lane along Oak St., bike parking in the park, bike lane from school to tracks (DOLA grant), pump track forthcoming, LaVeta is working with CPW on Rivertrail.

- Growth in the ORE industry, retail incubator in Walsenburg with funding for the next 3 years, could leverage this for ORE businesses.
- OHV business-how to keep it local, rather than traveling to a larger population center.
- OHV/human powered sports
- Cuchara ski area-
- Schools for education during the summers
- La Veta-Fairgrounds,
- In general, lots of resources.
- Race Across America
- Stonewall Ride (mid August)

What would success look like for this process?

- Jobs
- Permanent regional collaboration in Huerfano County
- Parks and Rec will be redoing their Master Plan, this will help develop that document.
- Funding streams
- County wish list item-southern loop of the Rocky Mountain Trail
- Action Plan should have short, mid, & long term goals

Brainstorm Key Partners/Stakeholders (10 mins):

Guinevere

- What has your approach to engaging your community been in the past? How have you reached out to the community to get the participation of groups who are traditionally underrepresented at planning meetings?
 - Who else should be involved in this planning process that is not already? Think about those who:
 - Represent a range of interests/constituencies – especially those that are often left out of decision-making
 - Add diverse perspectives to the planning process and make sure the action plan benefits all residents
 - Can assist with outreach and invitation efforts, or have access to implementation resources
 - Which stakeholders should we make sure to invite to the workshop?
- Bob Kennemer from Tourism
 - Brian Estrada, SBDC Pueblo
 - Cuchara Association
 - Bruce Johnson
 - SLV GO!
 - Las Animas
 - High School Seniors
 - Conor Orr
 - Town of La Veta-playground/park plan

Introduction to the Community Self-Assessment (10 mins): Matt

- What is the community self-assessment?
- Purpose and how to complete it
- When does it need to be completed by?

Next Steps (10 minutes):

Natalie

- Steering Committee to meet in early January to:
 - Complete Part 1 of the Community Self-Assessment This meeting will occur Friday January 5, 2024 @ 10 am, 30 minute check in on the self assessment. Robert will send out a calendar invite.
 - Divide out Part 2 to relevant steering committee members to complete
- *Steering Committee to complete entire Community Self-Assessment by January 21st
- Community workshop
 - Identify workshop dates between March 4th - 17th, 2024
 - Identify and book workshop location

Tentative Workshop Dates:

March 8th & 9th at Lathrop State Park, request for hybrid format due to weather

Student team to work with Robert to identify potential local sites for communities to drive to and attend the workshop virtually (e.g. local community centers). Make sure that virtual participants can interact and engage with each other - not just the community they are from to help address silo effect and share ideas across communities.

- Phase 2 begins January 16th: Graduate student planning team take over lead facilitation of the RTAP process
 - Graduate students will reach out to community point-of-contact (Robert) during the week of January 16th to connect

Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP)

Community Self-Assessment

A community self-assessment is a tool that helps communities to better understand who they are, what is important to them, and what strengths and opportunities exist, so they can craft a vision for what is possible in the future. As part of this planning assistance process, completion of this community self-assessment by the steering committee will help identify, describe, and assess existing and aspirational elements of your outdoor recreation economy and Main Street revitalization efforts. This information will help the graduate student planning assistance team to better prepare for, and tailor, the community workshop to specifically meet your community's needs. This community self-assessment (which provides a snapshot in time) can also serve as a baseline and can be revisited in the future to see where your community has made progress towards your goals. This community self-assessment has been modeled off that which is used within the US EPA's [Recreation Economy for Rural Communities \(RERC\) program](#).

What this self-assessment is

- A conversation starter.
- A learning tool for the steering committee to begin thinking about recreation economy initiatives.
- An information-gathering tool for the graduate student planning assistance team to better understand where the community is today and where it wants to go.

What it is not

- A scorecard, ranking, audit, or judgment of any kind.
- A checklist of programs and projects you have.
- A permanent assessment that cannot be revised.
- Intended to be an onerous task for the community.

Benefits for the community

- Helps the community conceptualize their current recreation economy and place-based initiatives and begin to examine the scope of possibilities and interrelated activities.
- Helps generate ideas about possible stakeholders to invite to the workshop.
- Provides a preliminary activity for the steering committee to do together.

Benefits for the planning assistance team

- Provides valuable background information on the status of the recreation economy and place-based initiatives.
- Helps clarify workshop goals and desired outcomes.
- Helps identify case studies and supplemental materials most pertinent for the community.

How to Complete Your Community Self-Assessment

To the extent possible, Part 1 of this self-assessment should be completed as a team activity to spark dialogue and discussion about key issues, opportunities, and goals. Please schedule a meeting (in person or virtual) as a steering committee to complete Part 1.

Part 2, can be divided up among the steering committee, based on interest, knowledge and expertise, with each focus area filled out by different steering committee members.

Plan for this community self-assessment to take your steering committee approximately **2 hours** to complete Part 1 and **1 hour** to complete each focus area in Part 2.

Instructions on how to complete the community self-assessment:

1. As a steering committee, complete **Part 1. Outdoor Recreation and Community Vision: Overview** together. This overview is detailed and will provide the backbone of your community self-assessment by sharing details on your community, the current status of outdoor recreation, Main Street development, and your community's vision for the future.
2. In **Part 2. Focus Areas**, there are 11 different focus areas outlined, each with their own set of questions. These focus areas are as follows:
 - a. Outdoor Recreation Asset Identification and Mapping
 - b. Recreation Infrastructure Development
 - c. Recreation Economy Support and Ancillary Services
 - d. Downtown Revitalization & Placemaking
 - e. Economic Development: Opportunities and Advancement
 - f. Local and Regional Promotion and Branding
 - g. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
 - h. Public Health
 - i. Leveraging Partnerships
 - j. Natural Resource Stewardship
 - k. Risk and Resilience
3. As a steering committee, divide up these focus areas based on individual interest, knowledge, and experience, with different steering committee members assigned to different focus areas. Naturally, some of the focus areas may have greater interest and relevance within your community. Focus on these and spend less/no time on those that are not as relevant.
4. For each focus area, steering committee members will be asked to review a checklist of best practices related to community development and the outdoor recreation economy and check

each of the strategies outlined that your community has successfully implemented or is currently implemented.

5. Within each focus area, please also provide additional information in response to the questions at the end of each checklist to summarize your community's aspirations to employ the best practices and/or any barriers to success
6. Be sure to send any current data, maps, planning or strategic documents, website links, or other information that can provide context and support your vision for growing your recreation economy to the graduate student planning assistance team along with your community self-assessment. (See pg. 28-29 for list of data you might consider compiling).

Part 1. Outdoor Recreation & Community Vision: Overview

Setting the scene

1. What is the story of your community? *When answering this question, consider the following questions:*
 - What makes your community unique (e.g. historical facts, events, people, industries)?
 - How would you describe the culture(s) and identity(ies) of your community?
 - How would you describe your community today?
2. What does outdoor recreation mean (and look like) in your community?
3. What role do you see outdoor recreation playing in a balanced local economy? How does that relate to your community?

Community Development and Vitality

4. What is your community 'known for'? Are there particular events or assets which bring visitors to the community?
5. What is the current state of your downtown/main street area?
 - What would you like to see change, if anything?
6. What is important to your community? What are your key priorities? *For example, quality of life, Main Street revitalization, attracting new businesses and residents, tourism visitation, etc.*
7. What are the key economic drivers within your community?
 - Who are the major employers?
 - Are there any risks or opportunities associated with these?
 - How has your community changed and developed over time?

The Outdoor Recreation Economy

8. What outdoor amenities does your community have (e.g. parks and open space, rivers, trails, sporting fields, campgrounds) and how are they currently enjoyed (e.g. fishing, hiking, picnicking, youth sports)?
 - What are the major natural assets? What is the land ownership mix for those assets?
 - Are there existing maps or guides that show your community's outdoor amenities, and how they are connected to your downtown? *Please include any available maps, statistics, and other relevant data you may have.*
 - Are there major outdoor assets in the broader region which your community benefits from, such as national/state parks or popular hiking trails or rivers?

9. Are there gaps in who has access to these outdoor recreation amenities? *Gaps can include physical barriers to access (.eg. lack of accommodations for people with a wide range of mobility needs or lack of transportation access) or barriers to access to information.*
 - How are these gaps impacting your community?
10. How does outdoor recreation currently contribute to your community's priorities (as identified in question 5)?

Community Vision

11. Describe your ideal vision for your community.
 - What would you like to grow or change in your community? And what role do you see outdoor recreation playing?
12. What kind of capacity or support are you looking for from this planning assistance process to help support your community vision?
 - Describe previous efforts your community has undertaken to overcome barriers or to bring in additional capacity.
13. Are there communities that are similar to yours that you find appealing? What is it about these communities that you like and would like to emulate?
14. Please share any other thoughts that are important to this program.

Priorities for this Program

15. Considering the following focus areas, which will be addressed in Part 2, please rank your priorities to address throughout this planning process. Feel free to provide any additional context in the comments column. *We recommend completing this after you have completed Part 2.*

Rank	Focus Area	Comments
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

9.		
10.		
11.		

Part 2. Focus Areas:

In this section, steering committee members (individually or in small groups) will assess your community's current status in the following categories related to the outdoor recreation economy and Main Street revitalization:

1. Outdoor Recreation Asset Identification and Mapping
2. Recreation Infrastructure Development
3. Recreation Economy Support and Ancillary Services
4. Downtown Revitalization & Placemaking
5. Economic Development: Opportunities and Advancement
6. Local and Regional Promotion and Branding
7. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
8. Public Health
9. Leveraging Partnerships
10. Natural Resource Stewardship
11. Risk and Resilience

These areas of focus demonstrate the intersectionality of the outdoor recreation economy and the ecosystem of community support that is needed to generate a thriving local economy while protecting the natural resources necessary to support outdoor recreation. For each area of focus, you will be asked to review a list of best practices related to community development and the outdoor recreation economy. Please check each of the strategies that your community has successfully implemented or is currently implementing, and provide additional information in response to the questions at the end of each checklist to summarize your community's aspirations to employ the best practices and/or any barriers to success.

I. Outdoor Recreation Asset Identification and Mapping

Of the following best practices for outdoor recreation asset identification and mapping, check all of those that your community is currently working on or has already successfully implemented. Provide any relevant notes or comments to provide more information on the status of implementation.

Common Strategy or Action:

- Your community has identified /inventoried high value outdoor recreation assets in and around your community.
- Your community knows what types of recreational activities are most popular, and where and when those activities generally occur.
- Your community understands how recreational experiences are currently supporting community priorities and the outcomes you want to see (e.g., quality of life, public health, Main Street revitalization, recruiting new residents and businesses, attracting visitors).
- Your community has maps, guides, or other materials (print or online) that show recreational opportunities and related amenities.
- Your community has identified known access points for recreation and knows where there are gaps in access to outdoor assets.
- Your community has identified cultural or historic assets that connect to and/or support outdoor recreation.
- Your community has identified areas of current or potential user or landowner conflict.

1. Of the strategies checked above, what is working well? List accomplishments to date.
2. Of the strategies checked above, where would you like to see your community focus on in the near future?
3. What are identified barriers or challenges to implementing the best practices outlined above for this area of focus?
4. Who or what has been key to the successful implementation of these best practices in your community?

2. Recreation Infrastructure Development

Recreation infrastructure, including trails and paths for hiking, biking, ATV, horseback riding and other uses; boat ramps and water access; wayfinding signs; and infrastructure for activities like climbing, archery, skiing, and other activities, supports outdoor access and opportunities. How is your existing infrastructure serving your community's goals and priorities for outdoor recreation? Are there gaps in access, connection, or type of recreation infrastructure? What are your areas of greatest need for investment? Do you have a plan and funding for areas of greatest potential and growth, as well as for maintenance and upkeep of existing infrastructure? Please attach any relevant planning, funding, or visioning documents in your response to this section.

Of the following best practices for recreation infrastructure development, check all those that your community is currently working on or has already successfully implemented. Provide any relevant notes or comments to provide more information on the status of implementation.

Common Strategy or Action:

- Your community has sufficient outdoor infrastructure relevant to your local activities (e.g., trails, boat ramps, archery ranges, etc.).
- Your community has year-round outdoor recreation activities.
- Your community has identified opportunities for new infrastructure and has created a development plan to develop and maintain those infrastructure investments.
- Your community has a sustainable source of funding for facilities and infrastructure maintenance.
- Your community understands where there are access barriers for different demographics (cultural, socio-economic, and abilities), and is invested in creating solutions.
- Your recreation infrastructure design mitigates user conflict and supports multiple types of locally relevant recreational opportunities.
- Your community is working with multiple landowners across jurisdictions where easements or acquisitions may be necessary for development.
- Outdoor recreation infrastructure is safe, accessible to people of all ages and abilities, and well maintained.
- Local government has identified gaps in walkability/bike access which may cause safety or access issues and has developed a plan to address these in the near future.
- Your community has a publicly accessible information center that consolidates updates to the status of recreational assets (closures, events, conditions, accessibility requirements, etc.).
- Recreation infrastructure is well marked, with clear wayfinding signs, including best practices for using the resource.
- Your community regularly surveys users of your recreation assets, services, and businesses to better serve interests and needs.

- Your community has an active public engagement strategy to build and sustain social and political support for recreation-related economic development.

Of the strategies checked above, what is working well? List accomplishments to date.

Of the strategies checked above, where would you like to see your community focus on in the near future?

What are identified barriers or challenges to achieving implementation of the best practices for this area of focus?

Who or what has been key to the successful implementation of these best practices in your community?

3. Recreation Economy Support and Ancillary Services

Outdoor activities support and are supported by a rich ecosystem of community amenities and complementary activities and investments. These can include direct services, like outfitter and guide operations, outdoor gear retailers, repair shops, and lodging, as well as indirect businesses and opportunities like coffee shops, restaurants, breweries, art galleries, farmer's markets, cultural and historic attractions, colleges and universities, and more.

A thriving outdoor recreation economy can support the quality of life for current residents, attract visitors, and bring new residents to a community – but access to core services is also important for success. For example, access to a qualified workforce, adequate housing, broadband, health and education services, rescue operations, adequate infrastructure (like water and sewage), and transportation are important to the overall picture and makeup of a healthy outdoor economy.

Of the following best practices for recreation economy support and ancillary services, check all those that your community is currently working on or has already successfully implemented. Provide any relevant notes or comments to provide more information on the status of implementation.

Common Strategy or Action:

- Your community has a mix of amenities for day visitors, overnight or weekend visitors, and local residents.
- Your community has businesses and services that directly support outdoor recreation users, e.g., outfitter and guides, gear and retail stores, tour operators, repair shops, rental stores, etc.
- Your community has accessible lodging and affordable housing options for visitors, those working in the recreation industry and related services, and new residents.
- Your community has adequate infrastructure to support visitation and growth including water, sewage, and broadband.
- Your community has a thriving local food scene, e.g., with local restaurants, breweries, coffee shops, farmer's market, etc.
- Your community has a mix of other attractions and services, including cultural and historic attractions, a walkable Main Street, community events, etc. that are accessible to a range of ages, abilities, and interests.
- Your community has sufficient emergency services, including search and rescue vehicles, that currently can respond to basic health and safety incidents, and the capacity to support if there is increased visitation.
- Your community has a thriving business community that regularly communicates and collaborates on projects specific to education, events, and/or peer exchange.
- Your community regularly monitors and/or measures the economic contribution of outdoor recreation to ancillary support businesses.

Of the strategies checked above, what is working well? List accomplishments to date.

Of the strategies checked above, where would you like to see your community focus in the near future?

What are identified barriers or challenges to achieving implementation of the best practices for this area of focus?

Who or what have been key to the successful implementation of these best practices in your community?

4. Downtown Revitalization & Placemaking

The outdoor economy can support Main Street revitalization and can play a key role in placemaking. Similarly, thriving downtowns will attract and support visitors, residents, and businesses. Communities can choose to purposefully connect and integrate outdoor recreation with local businesses and downtowns as well as other local attractions so that the outdoor recreation economy can help drive Main Street revitalization.

Of the following best practices for downtown revitalization and placemaking, check all those that your community is currently working on or has already successfully implemented. Provide any relevant notes or comments to provide more information on the status of implementation.

Common Strategy or Action:

- Your community has an active Main Street program or downtown association.
- Your community has a plan to target growth to the downtown and identifies goals and strategies for advancing revitalization connected to outdoor recreation.
- Your downtown is designed to foster walkability, including accessible sidewalks and crossings, safe bike routes that appeal to a range of users, and transit, and has attractive and functional streetscaping and landscaping.
- Your downtown has strong physical or visible connections to your recreation infrastructure, such as trails, wayfinding signs, branding, shuttle services, etc.
- Local guides, directories, or websites that share information on downtown identify recreation destinations and events, making it easier for people to learn about outdoor recreation.
- Your downtown offers multiple other attractions or desirable services/amenities that would attract or retain visitors or users of your recreation assets.
- Your downtown hosts live music, farmers markets, or other activities which encourage residents and visitors to spend money at local businesses.
- Your community has identified primary historic structures or features that are important to the recreation economy and actively supports their preservation or rehabilitation.
- Your community and region's natural assets and heritage are celebrated through local events, public art, festivals, etc. in downtown. *Explain the ways in which these assets and heritage are celebrated.*

Of the strategies checked above, what is working well? List accomplishments to date.

Of the strategies checked above, where would you like to see your community focus in the near future?

What are identified barriers or challenges to achieving implementation of the best practices for this area of focus?

Who or what have been key to the successful implementation of these best practices in your community?

5. Economic Development: Opportunities and Advancement

The recreation economy can help to drive economic development and growth that can sustain long-term prosperity. Once outdoor recreation has been identified as a key sector in economic development planning, policy, and programming in your community, development opportunities can include businesses and services that market directly to outdoor users as well as indirect businesses and services, manufacturing, local food and beverage options, lodging and housing development, and more. Areas of focus can include growing and retaining existing businesses, supporting small enterprises and entrepreneurs, attracting new businesses, providing job training that aligns the workforce with current needs, and ensuring that well-paying, year-round jobs are available to residents.

Of the following best practices for advancing economic development related to the outdoor recreation economy, check all those that your community is currently working on or has already successfully implemented. Provide any relevant notes or comments to provide more information on the status of implementation.

Common Strategy or Action:

- Your community has identified outdoor recreation as a driver of economic prosperity and has a clear vision for future development and growth.
- Your community regularly monitors visitor volume, characteristics, and/or impact of outdoor recreation demand and use on your local economy and quality of life.
- Local and regional plans (e.g., comprehensive, economic development, transportation, and open space/conservation plans) explicitly prioritize recreation-based economic development, conservation, and Main Street revitalization, and include goals and strategies to achieve priorities.
- Your community has identified capacity gaps and is implementing a plan to address those needs (e.g., access to capital for new and existing businesses, job training, workforce development).
- Your community has policies and financial incentives to support small businesses and entrepreneurs (e.g., revolving loan funds or microloans, reduced rent/tax incentives, marketing support, facade improvement programs, business coaching, a business incubator, etc.).
- Your community is utilizing grant funding, or capacity-building opportunities available through USDA Rural Development, Small Business Administration, Economic Development Administration, Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade, Department of Local Affairs, and other programs.
- Local residents are employed in recreation-based businesses and receive a living wage.
- Training events, classes, or other vocational development programs for residents and students exist to prepare them for jobs in outdoor recreation.
- Recreation-based entrepreneurship is encouraged through business training and/or loan programs.

- Processes for acquiring permits or licenses to operate relevant businesses follow a clear and transparent process.
- Planning, policies, zoning and other codes, and financial incentives support downtown revitalization (i.e., mixed-use development, infill development, brownfield revitalization, facade improvement programs, adaptive reuse of historic structures, etc.).
- Planning, policies, zoning and other codes, and financial incentives support the primary and ancillary businesses necessary for the recreation economy and their workforce (e.g., traditional lodging, Airbnbs, small manufacturing, business incubators, affordable housing, etc.)

Of the strategies checked above, what is working well? List accomplishments to date.

Of the strategies checked above, where would you like to see your community focus in the near future?

What are identified barriers or challenges to achieving implementation of the best practices for this area of focus?

Who or what have been key to the successful implementation of these best practices in your community?

6. Local and Regional Promotion and Branding

To activate an outdoor recreation economy, it is important to connect natural assets to local branding, marketing, and promotion efforts so that residents and visitors alike associate your community with your unique outdoor amenities and activities. Your community may also want to connect local opportunities to assets available within the region that may attract visitors and new residents and businesses.

Of the following best practices for local and regional promotion and branding, check all those that your community is currently working on or has already successfully implemented. Provide any relevant notes or comments to provide more information on the status of implementation.

Common Strategy or Action:

- Your community has a clear brand and identity that emphasizes your key natural and recreational assets, and this brand is reflected in consistent public and private marketing materials.
- Your community has identified target demographics, markets, and opportunities to promote your natural and recreational assets and quality of life.
- Your community has a tourism plan and economic development plan with goals and strategies to strengthen and promote the region's natural and recreational assets and improve the quality of life for residents.
- Your community has a webpage and an active social media presence that promotes your recreational brand and connects outdoor recreational users to relevant downtown amenities and/or businesses.
- Your community has developed outdoor recreation-related outreach, recruitment, and marketing materials that are available for residents, businesses, and others to use. These materials are accessible in multiple languages and/or to people with visual impairments.
- There are clear and consistent signs and wayfinding throughout your community that reflect your recreational brand.
- Wayfinding and promotional materials are multilingual and accessible to visitors whose first language is not English.
- Your community markets recreation and tourism opportunities through other entities, such as regional or state tourism offices.
- Your community regularly surveys visitors to understand their travel behaviors, origin of travel, and experience satisfaction to evaluate the quality and sustainability of experiences marketed to the public.
- Frontline tourism professionals and community members (hotel front desks, visitor centers, restaurant servers, etc.) are provided with education on how to guide and educate visitors of all ages and abilities to experience your community.

Of the strategies checked above, what is working well? List accomplishments to date.

Of the strategies checked above, where would you like to see your community focus in the near future?

What are identified barriers or challenges to achieving implementation of the best practices for this area of focus?

Who or what have been key to the successful implementation of these best practices in your community?

7. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Recreational amenities and the economic opportunities that flow from them will provide the greatest long-term benefits to the community when they are available to everyone no matter their identity or background, across race, gender, culture, religion, socioeconomic status, age, and physical abilities. Representing the diversity of the community in planning and policy decision-making and when designing programming and managing natural amenities can help ensure that everyone in the community has equitable access to, and can enjoy the benefits of, outdoor recreation. Outdoor opportunities and activities that reflect and harness the unique strengths, celebrate the special traditions, and build on the interests of all segments of the population are likely to be more inclusive and successful in the long term. Meaningful engagement goes beyond seeking feedback and includes inviting people from all parts of the community to help create project ideas and to lead and share responsibilities in the work.

Of the following best practices for diversity, equity, and inclusion, check all those that your community is currently working on or has already successfully implemented. Provide any relevant notes or comments to provide more information on the status of implementation.

Common Strategy or Action:

- Recreation assets and amenities are equitably distributed across the community and accessible to everyone in your community.
- Your community is actively addressing any barriers to access for trails, parks, playgrounds, and green space.
- Community planning efforts are meaningfully engaging low-income residents, residents of color, youth, and other traditionally underrepresented populations.
- Your community's plans for economic development, outdoor recreation, and Main Street revitalization involve traditionally underrepresented populations in leadership and decision-making.
- Your community has programs or organizations focused on providing greater access to outdoor recreation activities, education, job training, and/or planning.
- Your community has programs or organizations targeting youth and older adults to cultivate leadership in outdoor recreation economy planning, development, and to support a high quality of life.
- Access to technical and financial assistance, business incubators, marketing, and other support for economic development related to the outdoor economy to support community wealth generation is available to all.
- Recreation spaces, events, infrastructure, programs, and opportunities are welcoming, inclusive, and reflective of diverse cultures and identities.
- Your community prioritizes or requires the hiring of local workers at a fair and living wage.
- Outdoor recreation businesses and supporting services are committed to, and execute on, diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in their workplaces.

- Your community institutes local laws and regulations that comply with relevant indigenous rights, customs, and communal property laws that ensure local residents have access to natural and cultural sites.
- Your community has an adaptive sports recreation program that provides opportunities for people of all abilities to experience your natural resources.
- Public marketing materials and wayfinding are multilingual to provide equitable access to the outdoors.

Of the strategies checked above, what is working well? List accomplishments to date.

Of the strategies checked above, where would you like to see your community focus in the near future?

What are identified barriers or challenges to achieving implementation of the best practices for this area of focus?

Who or what have been key to the successful implementation of these best practices in your community?

8. Public Health

Outdoor recreation is directly related to public health. It is well documented that engaging in physical activity and spending time in nature supports better physical and mental health outcomes. Intentionally connecting the design and location of outdoor amenities and infrastructure with your community's priorities for public health can make a big difference for local health outcomes, and also can be an important selling point for new residents and businesses that prioritize having a healthy workforce.

Of the following best practices for public health, check all those that your community is currently working on or has already successfully implemented. Provide any relevant notes or comments to provide more information on the status of implementation.

Common Strategy or Action:

- Many in your community participate in some form of outdoor recreation.
- Your community regularly monitors and/or measures recreational activity levels and forms of participation of local residents and ties these to public health outcomes.
- Your community promotes healthy lifestyles, including through the siting and design of outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- Your community holds events or festivals that take place outdoors or include outdoor recreation as a key component.
- Your community has active clubs or groups that facilitate experiences, host events, and build community for a range of outdoor activities.
- Local schools and neighborhoods are connected to trails and green space and have programs and clubs that support outdoor pursuits.
- Health professionals in your community understand the mental and physical health benefits of outdoor recreation and recommend time in the outdoors to their patients.
- Residents generally have equitable access to social services, health care, and healthy food.
- Environmental justice issues that negatively impact public health, including access to clean air, water and green space, have been, or are being, addressed.
- Recreation businesses engage in outreach programs to recruit newcomers and under-represented groups to outdoor experiences, e.g., first time ski packages.
- Businesses in your community promote outdoor recreation through wellness programs or other incentive programs

Of the strategies checked above, what is working well? List accomplishments to date.

Of the strategies checked above, where would you like to see your community focus in the near future?

What are identified barriers or challenges to achieving implementation of the best practices for this area of focus?

Who or what have/has been key to the successful implementation of these best practices in your community?

9. Leveraging Partnerships

A successful recreation economy requires the coordination of policies and projects across land ownership boundaries and across disciplines, such as recreation, conservation, land management, community planning, economic development, public health, education, health, local services, and transportation. Partnerships across a region can strengthen each community's economy as part of a larger region. Partners may represent local, state, and federal governments; nonprofit and community-based organizations; the private sector; and regional anchor institutions.

Of the following best practices for leveraging partnerships, check all those that your community is currently working on or has already successfully implemented. Provide any relevant notes or comments to provide more information on the status of implementation.

Common Strategy or Action:

- Diverse recreation groups are working with each other to support your community's outdoor economy.
- Economic development groups and partners are working together to strengthen the recreation sector (e.g., economic development and workforce organizations, Small Business Development Centers, Chambers of Commerce, large employers, the business community, universities and community colleges, lending institutions, etc.).
- At least one collaborative stakeholder group is active and working with partners and landowners to prioritize and accomplish recreation projects and address concerns or needs.
- Your community has established partnerships with public land managers and has had meaningful input into relevant plans and projects on adjacent public lands.
- Your community is connected with neighboring communities and with services and amenities in your region that complement local offerings. Local priorities are reflected in regional plans.
- Your community is engaged in regional recreation and conservation management to minimize adverse impacts and sustain resources.
- Regional partnerships have successfully increased recreation opportunities throughout the region by offering and promoting a larger range of activities to visitors in the area.
- Good partnerships exist between educational partners and community leaders to promote a workforce pipeline

Of the strategies checked above, what is working well? List accomplishments to date.

Of the strategies checked above, where would you like to see your community focus in the near future?

What are identified barriers or challenges to achieving implementation of the best practices for this area of focus?

Who or what have been key to the successful implementation of these best practices in your community?

What partnerships/relationships are not where they need to be at the moment? What can be done to increase collaboration?

10. Stewardship of Natural Resources

Natural resources are the assets that drive the entire outdoor recreation economy. Without investing in stewardship and management, recreation assets—and related economic opportunities—will not be sustained. To ensure the longevity of economic prosperity related to outdoor recreation, communities can design recreation infrastructure, distribute use, and invest in funding and capacity for stewardship in order to protect natural resources and give back to the places and experiences that support community livability and growth.

Of the following best practices for the stewardship of natural resources, check all those that your community is currently working on or has already successfully implemented. Provide any relevant notes or comments to provide more information on the status of implementation.

Common Strategy or Action:

- Your community has a core group of volunteers and/or stewardship organizations that help to maintain outdoor assets and natural resources.
- Communication between community leaders and public land managers supports mutual understanding of stewardship capacity and needs and cooperation on high-priority stewardship projects.
- Your community's private landowners are engaged and support your community's vision for natural resource stewardship and management.
- Your community promotes 'Do Colorado Right' principles or other stewardship principles (such as 'Leave No Trace') to visitors who are using public lands
- New recreation development projects have been designed to be sustainable, and appropriate resource management plans are in place.
- Sustained stewardship funding is available to maintain and protect recreation resources and wildlife habitat and other ecological resources (e.g., donations, local bonds or tax dollars are available to address stewardship needs).
- Businesses support the implementation of sustainability practices for recreation resource stewardship and/or financially support stewardship funding needs.
- Your community has developed a plan for regenerative tourism or "volun-tourism" conservation opportunities – where visitors volunteer to help steward or restore the resource/outdoor recreation amenity they are enjoying.
- Your community has a comprehensive stewardship management strategy and/or plan to develop and manage tourism and outdoor recreation assets, including the preservation and protection of heritage and cultural sites.

Of the strategies checked above, what is working well? List accomplishments to date.

Of the strategies checked above, where would you like to see your community focus in the near future?

What are identified barriers or challenges to achieving implementation of the best practices for this area of focus?

Who or what have been key to the successful implementation of these best practices in your community?

11. Risk & Resilience

Communities across the country face risks from events such as wildfire, flooding, extreme heat, drought, reduced snowfall, and other effects from a changing climate. All of these factors can impact a community's outdoor recreation economy. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to building community resilience, since the risks communities face vary widely depending on geographic context and other place-specific factors. Communities must define their own resilience goals based on local priorities. Resilient communities in general are able to bounce back more effectively from disasters and disruptions in a sustainable way and maintain quality of life for all. They are better prepared for uncertainties and able to adapt to changing conditions. Resilient communities have developed the ability to (1) prepare for anticipated hazards; (2) adjust to changing conditions; and (3) withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions.

Of the following best practices for assessing risk and building resilience, check all those that your community is currently working on or has already successfully implemented. Provide any relevant notes or comments to provide more information on the status of implementation.

Common Strategy or Action:

- Your community has identified the potential vulnerabilities and impacts of public health emergencies on the community and the outdoor recreation economy to better improve resilience.
- Your community has assessed the vulnerability of outdoor recreation assets to overtourism/overuse that can reduce sustainability and weaken resilience (i.e., invasive species, public safety).
- Your community has assessed the vulnerability of recreation assets and critical supportive infrastructure to extreme weather, recurrent flooding, wildfire, and other relevant threats in the design and/or management processes.
- Your community has evaluated community-wide vulnerabilities to extreme weather, recurrent flooding, climate variability, predicted inundation, and other anticipated natural and man-made hazards.
- Your community has assessed and implemented a sustainable local supply chain that invests in local products and local businesses that promote resiliency to disruptions in broader supply chain issues.
- Your community has developed an emergency response program and/or hazard mitigation plan that have been integrated into local plans and project development processes.
- Your community has implemented an energy efficiency program that helps residents, businesses, and local government operations save money and energy, lower carbon emissions, and reduce demands on energy during severe weather or other severe events.
- Your community has assessed the role of outdoor recreation in economic development as part of a strategy to support and incentivize the diversification of local and regional economies that are more resilient to economic downturn.

Of the strategies checked above, what is working well? List accomplishments to date.

Of the strategies checked above, where would you like to see your community focus in the near future?

What are identified barriers or challenges to achieving implementation of the best practices for this area of focus?

Who or what have been key to the successful implementation of these best practices in your community?

How did your community respond to the COVID-19 economic crisis? Describe any business support programs which were implemented between 2019-2022 as a result of the pandemic.

Additional Data

Please attach/upload any other existing plans, data, or information that might be helpful for this project, for example:

- Major local and regional employers, industry sectors, and employment rates
- Median income, percent of the population below the poverty line
- Local and regional population numbers and demographics
- Environmental or other known hazards in the area
- Age and type of housing stock, landownership, and homeownership patterns
- Location of your downtown and list of current businesses and amenities available
- Status of base infrastructure and services: water, sewage, search and rescue, etc.
- Current availability and/or quality of broadband
- Description of local food and beverage options, lodging, and other visitor services
- Description of health care availability
- Description of any climate resiliency and/or emission reduction goals
- Identification of local educational institutions, including all pre-school, elementary, middle school, high school, vocational schools, colleges and universities
- Availability of key support services, e.g., daycare
- Workforce overview and list of local workforce development and training centers or programs
- List or map of the major natural assets in your community and region, and identification of who owns or manages these assets
- Description of how outdoor assets are connected to each other and to population and commercial centers with transportation infrastructure
- Local transit data - how many cars pass through your community? Do many of your community members commute to another town/city for work?
- Any available visitation/use/revenue data--how many visitors do you have, when do they visit, what do they do, what do they spend money on currently?
- List of tourism amenities (hotels, restaurants, etc.) and whether they sufficiently meet demand for visitors

- List or map of any cultural or historic sites in your area or region
- List of any stakeholder groups that are active in land management planning, economic development, Main Street revitalization, outdoor recreation, or any other relevant activities
- A list of key partners from different sectors/fields, including
 - Public and private land management/natural resource management/stewardship and outdoor recreation
 - Main Street/downtown development
 - Economic development, business retention and attraction, and small business development
 - Local community college or university
 - Tourism and local/regional branding and marketing
 - Transportation
- Links to any relevant websites

Community partner brief: Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP)

Project proposal:

The Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) partners teams of graduate students from the Masters of the Environment (MENV) program at CU Boulder with the [Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office](#), [CSU Extension](#), and the [US EPA's Recreation Economy for Rural Communities \(RERC\) program](#) to provide planning assistance for outdoor recreation and Main Street development for three rural communities in Colorado. Graduate students will take on the role as community consultants and walk their partner communities through a facilitated planning assistance process that is based upon the RERC program, to develop a Community Action Plan for the next 12-24 months.

Project purpose and goals:

The purpose of this program is for graduate student teams to provide planning assistance to rural Colorado communities looking to develop their outdoor recreation economy. While different communities may be in various stages of developing their outdoor recreation economy, all of those selected would benefit from the creation of a comprehensive and holistic plan that outlines key community goals and targeted action items to advance development. This program provides students the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge learned in the classroom, while providing partner communities assistance with:

- Comprehensively assessing community assets and strengths through completion of a community self-assessment tool
- Identifying gaps and opportunities for outdoor recreation and Main Street development
- Community visioning and the creation of broad community goals to guide outdoor recreation economy and Main Street development
- Meaningful stakeholder engagement through the facilitation of a two-day, in-person workshop
- Sharing relevant case study examples of the various ways that other communities have developed and invested in their outdoor recreation economy
- Developing partnerships between local, state and federal offices, programs and organizations to support outdoor recreation and Main Street development
- Identifying relevant programs, partners and funding sources to assist with outdoor recreation and Main Street development
- Developing targeted action items and next steps for implementation

Program process:

The RTAP program will be broken down into the following two phases::

Phase 1. Introduction and community preparation: (mid-Oct 2023 – mid-Jan 2024)

Phase 1 is led by Natalie Ooi, Teaching Associate Professor, CU Boulder and supported by Matt Nunez, Program Manager, Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office (OREC) and Guinevere Nelson, Douglas County Extension Director, CSU Extension. It consists of:

- Introductory meeting between facilitation team and community point-of contact
- Community steering committee formation
- Introductory planning call with steering committee, facilitation team and state and federal partners
- Community self-assessment

By the end of Phase 1, the following will have been achieved:

- Creation of the community steering committee
- Workshop dates and location are set
- Community self-assessment completed

Phase 2. Community engagement and action planning: (mid-Jan 2024 – start of May 2024)

Phase 2 is led by the graduate student teams and supported by Natalie Ooi, Matt Nunez, Guinevere Nelson, and other state and federal partners. It consists of:

- Mid-January - Beginning of March:
 - Community completes self-assessment
 - 2 x planning calls with steering committee and student team
 - Goal identification
 - Workshop preparation and logistics
 - Promotion of the workshop among community members
- Beginning of March: Community tour and workshop
 - Community tour: Steering committee take the student team and state and federal partners on a tour of key outdoor recreation and supporting assets, areas for development and improvement, and places that communicate the culture and identity of the community.
 - Community workshop: Interactive 2-day workshop hosted by the student team
- March - May
 - 2 x Post-workshop planning calls with steering committee and student team
 - Mobilization of resources and community support
 - Writing the action plan
- Mid-May: Final Community Action Plan is delivered to the community
- Mid-May onwards: Support is provided by CSU Extension to assist community in implementing the Community Action Plan

By the end of Phase 2, the community will have:

- Completed a two-day, in-person community engagement and planning workshop
- A finalized community action plan
- A presentation of the community action plan
- Ongoing support through CSU Extension to implement the community action plan

Project deliverables:

By the end of the spring 2024 semester, students will have completed the following deliverables in partnership with their community:

1. **RTAP Community Self Assessment Tool and stakeholder contact list:** (the onus is on the community to complete these)
2. **Project plan:** Students teams will lay out the scope of work that will be completed alongside their project management approach. This will incorporate a communication agreement between the student team and their partner community.
3. **Facilitated community engagement workshop (in person)** that is focused on:
 - Identifying and prioritizing assets and strengths to achieve outlined priority areas
 - Identifying and prioritizing challenges and barriers that may limit the ability to achieve outlined priority areas
 - Presenting case study examples of relevant options for investing in, and developing, the outdoor recreation economy
 - Identifying and prioritizing community economic development and outdoor recreation opportunities to address identified priority areas
 - Identifying and prioritizing action items and next steps for the community
4. **Final presentation and report** that:
 - Summarizes the community engagement and project process Summarizes and analyzes community input
 - Outlines options on how the community can invest in, and develop, the outdoor recreation economy
 - Identifies relevant programs, partners and funding sources to help the community undertake next steps
 - Outlines prioritized action items for the community
 - Community recommendations for next steps
5. **Implementation funding and guidance**
 - Comprehensive list of funding sources for outdoor recreation and economic development projects from Federal, State, regional, foundation, and business partners
 - Ongoing guidance and check-ins with OREC, OEDIT, and CSU Extension
 - Possibility of implementation funding from OEDIT

Partner community expectations

For the student-community partnership to be successful, the following is expected from participating communities.

- Creation of a steering committee to help lead and implement the planning assistance process

- Appointment of a community point-person from the steering committee for direct student contact throughout the semester
 - Weekly communication (30min – 1hr) between the student team and the community point-person is expected (email/phone/video conferencing)
- Five meetings between the steering committee and the student/facilitation team (1.5 hours each)
 - Introductory meeting
 - 2 x Workshop planning meetings
 - 2 x Post-workshop meetings
- Completed RTAP Community Self-Assessment tool and stakeholder list
- Community workshop planning and organizational/logistical assistance
- Access to relevant community data, plans and other documentation that can assist student teams
- An open-mind to new and diverse perspectives and ideas
- Be a mentor! Help students gain real-world experience and build their professional skills

The steering committee will also be expected to assist with the following:

- Identification of, and outreach to, key stakeholders that represent the diversity of the community
- Obtaining community buy-in and participation into the planning assistance process and the community workshop
- Planning and organization of community tour and logistics for community workshop

Project costs:

The RTAP program recognizes that many partner communities have limited funds for planning assistance. However, there are costs associated with this project that can be categorized as follows:

1. **In-person community workshop and tour costs:** These include the costs of booking a suitable venue, hosting the community tour, and providing necessary refreshments and materials for participants across the duration of the workshop.
2. **Student facilitation and travel costs:** Students will be expected to travel to the partner community to host the in-person community workshop and participate in the community tour. Costs include 3 nights accommodation, food and mileage (calculated at the state government rate of .59c a mile).
3. **Miscellaneous costs:** Miscellaneous project costs include any costs associated with printing maps and report preparation.

Partner communities are only required to cover the cost of the in-person community workshop and tour. All student facilitation and travel costs, and miscellaneous costs, will be covered by the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office and the MENV program.

State partners:

The [Colorado Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry \(OREC\)](#) is a division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT). OREC supports the development of Colorado's economy by providing a central point of contact, advocacy, and resources at the state level for the diverse constituents, businesses, and communities that rely on the continued health of the outdoor recreation economy in Colorado. OREC is one of 14 divisions that make up OEDIT. OEDIT's role is to create a positive business climate that encourages dynamic economic development and sustainable job growth. OEDIT advances the state's economy through financial and technical programs under the leadership of the Governor and the Executive Director.

Colorado State University's [Office of Engagement and Extension \(CSU OEE\)](#) connects the university with communities, learning and serving together to empower individuals and create meaningful impact. For over 100 years, CSU Extension, part of CSU OEE, has been a trusted partner connecting Coloradans to actionable, research-based solutions and programming on a wide range of topic areas. Today, CSU Extension serves all 64 Colorado counties. In partnership with the State of Colorado's Outdoor Recreation Office and the University of Colorado-Boulder, CSU OEE will support Community Action Plan (CAP) implementation by connecting CAP points of contact and communities with the vast network of CSU Extension staff resources.

Federal partners:

The [Recreation Economy for Rural Communities \(RERC\) Program](#) is a planning assistance program that helps communities identify strategies to grow their outdoor recreation economy and revitalize their Main Streets. Recreation Economy for Rural Communities is sponsored by the [USDA Forest Service](#), the [Northern Border Regional Commission](#), the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) and EPA.

About the Masters of the Environment (MENV) program:

The [Masters of the Environment](#) program at the University of Boulder, Colorado is an interdisciplinary professional masters program focused on developing sustainability leaders. Through applied education, students are trained to be skilled professionals working in one of 5 specializations: urban resiliency and sustainability, renewable energy, sustainable food systems, sustainability in the outdoor industry, and environmental and natural resource policy. We are developing change-makers who can assist communities, businesses and organizations across all sectors to address complex problems.

About the course instructor:

Dr. Natalie Ooi is a Teaching Associate Professor and the Sustainability in the Outdoor Industry specialization lead for the Masters of the Environment (MENV) program. She is also the lead faculty for the Building Resilient Communities through the ORE graduate certificate in the online Masters of the Outdoor Recreation Economy (ORE) program. She is an educator and researcher who specializes in sustainable tourism and recreation, her passion lies in working with industry and communities to prepare

the next generation of leaders to contribute to an innovative, resilient and just tourism/outdoor recreation economy.

Relevant contacts:

Natalie Ooi, CU Boulder: Natalie.Ooi@colorado.edu

Matt Nunez, Colorado Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry: matthew.nunez@state.co.us

Guinevere Nelson, CSU Extension: Guinevere.Nelson@colostate.edu

Links to previous community action plans:

If you are interested in viewing previous community action plans developed by students in this course, please click on the following links:

Leadville, CO:

[Leadville Community Action Plan](#)

[Leadville Appendices](#)

Hayden, CO:

[Hayden Community Action Plan](#)

[Hayden Appendices](#)

Cripple Creek, CO:

[Cripple Creek Community Action Plan](#)

[Cripple Creek Appendices](#)

Community Resource Guide

Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP)

SPRING 2024



This Community Resource Guide is an adaptation of the 2022 Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) Community Guide

This project is supported by the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) and the CU Boulder Office for Outreach and Engagement

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Introduction

Congratulations on your community's selection to participate in the [Rural Technical Assistance Program \(RTAP\)](#). This program is modeled off the federal [Recreation Economy for Rural Communities \(RERC\)](#) program and partners with this program, alongside the [Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office \(OREC\)](#), [CU Boulder's Masters of the Environment \(MENV\)](#) program and [CSU Extension](#) to help communities develop strategies and an action plan to revitalize their Main Streets through outdoor recreation. The program is currently in its second year. Three communities received planning assistance in Spring 2023 during our pilot offering, and three additional communities will be receiving assistance in Spring 2024 (including yours)!

This Community Resource Guide provides an overview of this planning assistance program and the steps your community will follow during and after. Inside, you'll find an outline of the program's purpose, details on the two main project phases, and descriptions of each partner's responsibilities, including the leading roles your community will play throughout the process and beyond.

Use this resource guide to stay on track. Early in the process, you'll find resources like the Program Overview helpful. A sample community tour schedule and workshop agendas provide examples of how to structure these key parts of the program. You'll also find tips on conducting outreach to ensure broad participation from the community during and after the workshop.

This guide anticipates many of your questions along the way, so refer to it often throughout the planning assistance process. Starting strong and maintaining the momentum generated while creating your action plan will help your community achieve key goals for leveraging the outdoor recreation economic assets for improving your downtown and Main Streets.

We look forward to working closely with you over the next few months to define these goals and the actions that will help you achieve them!

Primary Contacts

Graduate Student team	Will reach out	
Natalie Ooi, CU Boulder	(720) 380 7688	Natalie.Ooi@colorado.edu
Matthew Nunez, OREC office	(720) 812-2181	matthew.nunez@state.co.us
Guinevere Nelson, CSU Extension	(719) 480-4342	Guinevere.Nelson@colostate.edu

Secondary Contact

Steph Bertaina, EPA	(202) 566-0157	bertaina.stephanie@epa.gov
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Cripple Creek, CO

(Image Credit, 2023 Building Community Capacity course)

Program Overview

Program Purpose and goals

The RTAP program provides planning assistance to rural Colorado communities looking to develop their outdoor recreation economy. Graduate students from CU Boulder's MENV program, in partnership with the OREC office, US EPA, and CSU Extension, will take on the role as community consultants and walk their partner communities through a facilitated planning assistance process to develop a Community Action Plan for the next 12-24 months. Each team is supported by federal and state partners who play an active role throughout the process.

This program recognizes that different communities may be in various stages of developing their outdoor recreation economy. Regardless, all of those selected would benefit from the creation of a comprehensive and holistic plan that outlines key community goals and targeted action items to advance development. This program provides graduate students the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge learned in the classroom, while providing partner communities assistance with:

- Comprehensively assessing community assets and strengths through completion of a community self-assessment tool
- Identifying gaps and opportunities for outdoor recreation and Main Street development
- Community visioning and the creation of broad community goals to guide outdoor recreation economy and Main Street development
- Meaningful stakeholder engagement through the facilitation of a two-day, in-person workshop
- Sharing relevant case study examples of the various ways that other communities have developed and invested in their outdoor recreation economy
- Developing partnerships between local, state and federal offices, programs and organizations to support outdoor recreation and Main Street development
- Identifying relevant programs, partners and funding sources to assist with outdoor recreation and Main Street development
- Developing targeted action items and next steps for implementation

Planning Assistance Process and Timeline

The planning assistance can be broken down into two key phases:

Phase 1. Introduction and community preparation (Assess): (mid-Oct 2023 – mid-Jan 2024)

Phase 1 is led by Natalie Ooi, Teaching Associate Professor, CU Boulder and supported by Matt Nunez, Program Manager, Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office (OREC) and Guinevere Nelson, Douglas County Extension Director, CSU Extension.

What to expect:

- Introductory meetings between planning assistance team and community point-of contact
- Community steering committee formation
- Introductory planning call with steering committee, planning assistance team and state and federal partners
 - Make introductions
 - Provide an overview of the planning assistance process and potential workshop formats
 - Discuss what we've heard so far and how the steering committee defines success for this process
 - Brainstorm about key partners/stakeholders
 - Discuss workshop dates
 - Introduce community self-assessment and stakeholder list
 - Discuss next steps
- Community self-assessment

By the end of Phase 1, the following will have been achieved:

- Creation of the community steering committee
- Workshop dates and location are set
- Community self-assessment and stakeholder list completed

Phase 2. Community engagement and action planning (Assess, Convene and Implement): (mid-Jan 2024 – start of May 2024)

Phase 2 is led by the graduate student teams and supported by Natalie Ooi, Matt Nunez, Guinevere Nelson, and other state and federal partners.

What to expect:

- Mid-January - Beginning of March:
 - Community completes self-assessment
 - 2 x planning calls with steering committee and planning assistance team
 - Community self-assessment review
 - Clarifying community vision for outdoor recreation
 - Goal identification
 - Workshop preparation and logistics
 - Promotion of the workshop among community members
- Beginning of March: Community tour and workshop
 - Community tour: Steering committee take the planning assistance team and state and federal partners on a tour of key outdoor recreation and supporting assets, areas for development and improvement, and places that communicate the culture and identity of the community.
 - Community workshop: Interactive 2-day workshop hosted by the community and facilitated by the planning assistance team
- March - May
 - 2 x Post-workshop planning calls with steering committee and planning assistance team
 - Debrief of community workshop
 - Community Action Plan drafting
 - Mobilization of resources and community support
 - Writing the action plan
- Mid-May: Final Community Action Plan is delivered to the community
- Mid-May onwards: Support is provided by CSU Extension to assist community in implementing the Community Action Plan

By the end of Phase 2, the community will have:

- Completed a two-day, in-person community engagement and planning workshop
- A finalized community action plan
- A presentation of the community action plan
- Ongoing support through CSU Extension to implement the community action plan

Project deliverables:

By the end of the spring 2024 semester, the planning assistance team will have completed the following deliverables in partnership with their community:

1. **RTAP Community Self-Assessment Tool and stakeholder contact list:** (the onus is on the community to complete these)
2. **Project plan:** Students teams will lay out the scope of work that will be completed alongside their project management approach. This will incorporate a communication agreement between the student team and their partner community.
3. **Facilitated community engagement workshop (in person)** that is focused on:
 - Identifying and prioritizing assets and strengths to achieve outlined priority areas
 - Identifying and prioritizing challenges and barriers that may limit the ability to achieve outlined priority areas
 - Presenting case study examples of relevant options for investing in, and developing, the outdoor recreation economy
 - Identifying and prioritizing community economic development and outdoor recreation opportunities to address identified priority areas
 - Identifying and prioritizing action items and next steps for the community
4. **Final presentation and Community Action Plan** that:
 - Summarizes the community engagement and project process
 - Summarizes and analyzes community input
 - Outlines options on how the community can invest in, and develop, the outdoor recreation economy
 - Identifies relevant programs, partners and funding sources to help the community undertake next steps
 - Outlines prioritized action items for the community
 - Community recommendations for next steps
5. **Implementation funding and guidance**
 - Comprehensive list of funding sources for outdoor recreation and economic development projects from Federal, State, regional, foundation, and business partners
 - Ongoing guidance and check-ins with OREC, OEDIT, and CSU Extension
 - Possibility of implementation funding from OEDIT

Roles and Responsibilities

Community Roles and Responsibilities

There are several tasks that are expected of the community as part of this Rural Technical Assistance Program. These tasks include:

- 1. Form a Steering Committee:** The main point of contact is responsible for forming a steering committee prior to the first of several facilitated planning calls. All members of the committee are expected to participate in the calls, which include at least two pre-workshop and two post-workshop calls. In addition, steering committee members are expected to assist in all aspects of workshop planning and participate in all workshop sessions. The steering committee should consist of around 12 people who reflect the demographic make-up of your community and are positioned to be champions for the action plan resulting from the workshop. The steering committee could include representatives from local government, community residents, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses and entrepreneurs (see list of relevant stakeholders on page 13). The steering committee should also include community members who are traditionally underrepresented in planning activities, including youth, seniors, people of color, tribal leaders, people with disabilities, people with limited access to transportation, language barriers, and others. A strong and inclusive steering committee is vital to creating an action plan that has buy-in from all community populations and produces enduring results.
- 2. Complete the Community Self-Assessment and Stakeholder List:** The main point of contact is also asked to convene the steering committee in Phase 1 of the planning process to jointly complete the community self-assessment and stakeholder list. The assessment can generally be completed within 2-3 hours. The point of contact should send the completed assessment and stakeholder list to the planning assistance team by the specified deadline and be prepared to summarize key themes on the call. The assessment helps the steering committee identify potential areas of focus for the workshop, helps the planning assistance team understand the context of the community, and is a vital component of pre-workshop planning.

- 3. Secure a Workshop Venue:** The workshop venue should be able to accommodate the number of expected participants (typically 30 to 50), be accessible to people with disabilities, have sufficient seating and tables, and have projection capabilities (screen and projector). The venue should be convenient and welcoming to people of diverse backgrounds; for example, it could be held in a centrally-located place that is easy to access by a range of transportation options (including transit if it exists), close to where people live who might face barriers attending the workshop, and in a familiar community building. The venue will be needed for about 3 hours in the late afternoon or evening of day one of the workshop and a full day on day two of the workshop. The workshop may be located at a different venue each day if necessary. The workshop location and dates should be identified prior to the start of Phase 2 of the planning process. The planning assistance process does not include funding for renting a venue for the workshop or for food for meals and refreshments. Many communities find a sponsor to help pay for a venue rental (if needed) and to provide meals and refreshments for the workshop. The planning assistance team will help the steering committee create a plan for securing a workshop venue and a plan for meals and refreshments for workshop participants.
- 4. Plan a Community Tour:** On Day 1, the steering committee is asked to lead a tour of key sites that will be relevant to the topics for discussion during the workshop. The tour provides the planning assistance team and out-of-town guests with a better understanding of the context and allows community members to see the community's assets and challenges through new eyes. The tour typically takes 2-4 hours and should include outdoor recreation sites/assets and downtown/main street locations. Walking (for at least a portion of the tour) is generally preferred. If the tour will involve more distant sites, consider whether transportation options are available that could accommodate all participants together, such as a van/bus or public transportation. Tours typically start mid-morning, and ideally include a lunch stop, and will continue after lunch as needed. When planning the tour, please allow for 1-2 hours between the end of the tour and the start of the evening community meeting (day 1 of the workshop). Some tips for planning the tour are

included on page 24 of this guide.

5. **Spread the Word:** The planning assistance team will provide a workshop invitation to help promote the workshop, but distribution of invitations is the responsibility of the steering committee. Additional outreach to ensure good participation at the workshop is almost always necessary, such as personal phone calls, mailbox flyers, public advertising, etc. We strongly encourage all steering committee members to determine the best methods for inviting residents and community members and dedicate substantial time and effort to outreach. Diverse and inclusive participation in the workshop is critical to its success and is the responsibility of the local steering committee. (See the list of stakeholder groups below to consider in your outreach.) The planning assistance team will take responsibility for inviting federal and state contacts who will participate in the workshop to help identify resources for action plan implementation.
6. **Prepare a Presentation:** The workshop agenda generally allocates up to 15 minutes (max) for a community presentation. This presentation could take the form of informal comments, or it could be accompanied by PowerPoint slides. Most communities use this opportunity to set the context and make workshop participants aware of existing efforts and future plans. If more time than 15 minutes is desired, please let the planning assistance team know, so they can adjust the schedule as needed.
7. **Provide Some Workshop Supplies:** The planning assistance team will bring most of the workshop supplies. However, some materials are difficult to travel with. The planning assistance team may ask the steering committee to help gather some supplies, which include chairs and tables; a projector and projection screen; an audio PA system (if needed); extension cord; and two easels with flip charts. The planning assistance team can make alternative arrangements if any of these supplies are not readily available.
8. **Own the Action Plan:** After the workshop, the planning assistance team will write up the goals and actions discussed during workshop sessions and include them in a community action plan with specific, tangible items for the community to implement over the next 12-24 months. The

steering committee will have an opportunity to provide comments on a draft version of the plan. We strongly encourage the steering committee to plan at least one in-person meeting following the workshop to review the action plan together. The community is expected to take ownership of the final action plan and shepherd it through implementation. Often the steering committee continues to meet after the planning assistance has ended.

Typical stakeholder groups to engage (steering committee/community workshop)

Leaders / Elected Officials / Government

- City/County Manager or Administrator
- State Legislators ▪ Mayor
- City/County Commissioners or Council
- Planning Department / Planning Commission / Regional Planning Commission
- Transportation Department
- Tourism Department
- Public Health Department
- Housing authority/housing non-profits/community development groups ▪ Local Development District
- Environment/Sustainability Office
- Workforce Development Office
- Parks and Recreation
- Economic Development
- Business Incubators
- Procurement Departments
- Federal Land Managers, including Supervisors and recreation managers ▪ State and local land managers
- State Offices of Outdoor Recreation
- Tribal leaders
- Cultural and Historic preservation officers
- US Department of Agriculture Rural Development State director

- US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service state director
- National Park Service - Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program contact
- Other federal and state agencies

Community Groups

- Chamber of Commerce
- Civic clubs (e.g. Rotary, Kiwanis)
- Food Bank
- Faith-based organizations
- Health-related non-profits
- Exercise, health and wellness clubs ▪ Social services providers

Institutions

- Public schools (K-12)
- Community Colleges with recreation related education courses/curriculum or w/Small Business Centers
- Institutions of Higher Education ▪ Nursing Home/elder care/retirement living facilities
- Public housing sites/resident advisory boards

Funders / Potential Funders / Financiers

- Community Foundations
- Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFI's)
- Local Philanthropic Institutions

Local Environmental and Recreation

- Land conservation, preservation, stewardship groups
- Hunting and fishing groups
- Private landowners
- Active recreation advocates, clubs, groups (hike, bike, bird, etc)
- Youth conservation corps



Leadville, CO Community Workshop
(Image Credit, 2023 Building
Community Capacity course)

- Local land trusts
- Forest or natural resource management collaboratives
- Outdoor Alliance
- Outdoor recreation industry trade associations
- Farmers markets, local food markets/vendor

Local Businesses

- Recreation-related businesses
- Real estate developers
- Banks
- Food and entertainment hospitality industry (restaurant/retail)
- Accommodation services, hotels, bed and breakfasts, AirBnB hosts
- Grocery stores, retail markets
- Hardware/Home Improvement Store
- Planners/Architects/Landscape Architects
- Local entrepreneurs who currently own or would like to start businesses
- Local non-profit business and entrepreneur or economic development organizations and co-ops

Health

- County/City Health Department
- Health care providers/practitioners/clinicians
- Local Hospital/Health Centers
- Health-related organizations

Media

- Television stations
- Radio stations
- Newspaper/news media
- Bloggers/local reporters

Community Outreach Strategies

Robust and inclusive resident and stakeholder participation in the community workshop is a key ingredient for success in this planning assistance process. **Thus, recruiting participants is one of the most important community responsibilities.** Start by considering what has worked well in your community in the past and try to replicate those successes. Below are some simple tips for spreading the word and making sure the people who participate represent the full diversity of the community. As described above, forming a steering committee that represents all community populations, including those often left out of planning efforts, is a critical first step.

Getting Started

This program is committed to ensuring that all residents and visitors, particularly those who have not historically been engaged in outdoor recreation and Main Street revitalization efforts, have equitable access to, and can benefit from, the growing outdoor recreation economy. As you prepare to engage your community members in this process, we encourage you to explore the Together Outdoors Resource Hub as one resource for understanding the different perspectives within your community and how your outreach strategy might help everyone feel welcome in the outdoors and in your downtown!

Together Outdoors Resource Hub: <https://resourcehub.togetheroutdoors.com/>

Spread the Word

1. **Know Your People** – Begin by taking a fresh look at the demographics in your city/town, county, and region. Pull up recent Census data and explore population breakdowns by age, race and ethnicity, income, homeownership and renter status, and other socioeconomic indicators. Supplement this data by speaking with community-based organizations and social services providers who have a strong understanding of underrepresented groups. Also, consider the populations of nearby metropolitan areas and/or tribal communities. This assessment can shed light on who lives in your community and region, who lives within your tourism driveshed, who is or is not currently participating in outdoor recreation locally, and who should be at the table for the community workshop and action planning process.
2. **Tell People** – Workshop surveys indicate that a personal invitation to participate is the most effective way to generate interest. Consider setting a goal for each person on your steering committee to reach out to at least 5 people via call, text, or personal visit to extend an invitation to participate in the community workshop. Ensure that this outreach includes underrepresented groups that have traditionally

been left of planning activities to ensure that workshop participation represents a wide range of community interests, including youth, seniors, people of color, tribal leaders, people with disabilities, people with limited access to transportation, language barriers, and others.

- 3. Enlist Trusted Organizations** – The steering committee is typically an ad hoc group formed to organize and implement the community workshop and action plan. As such, it typically will not have existing communication channels. Rather than create them from scratch, consider asking long-standing and trusted institutions in your community to spread the word for you. These could include a library, museum, local government, chamber of commerce, Main Street organization, college or university, community development corporation, and nonprofits representing the community, an interest group, or a neighborhood. It is particularly important to coordinate with organizations that have existing relationships with underrepresented communities, in order to support diverse workshop participation. If those organizations are not represented on the steering committee, offer to set up meetings or phone calls with their leadership to provide information, get suggestions, and ensure that they understand the effort.
- 4. Promote through Regular Mailings** – Your county, city, or town government likely sends monthly bills for services. Consider asking them to include a promotional flyer for the community workshop (which will be developed during the planning assistance process) in their next mailing.
- 5. Post the Flyer** – Consider assigning each member of your steering committee to post 10 flyers around the community. Places where you could consider posting the flyer include buses, libraries or other public buildings, downtown storefront windows, schools, and laundromats.
- 6. Social Media** – Steering committee members could promote the community workshop via their personal and/or organization’s online social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). To ensure consistency in messaging the event, consider draft posts to share with trusted community organizations to cascade to their networks as well.
- 7. Speak with Community Groups** – Ask neighborhood associations, Main Street groups, city or town committees, and other groups with regular meetings if you can attend their next meeting to explain this planning assistance program and personally invite them to participate. Again, ensure that this outreach includes populations that are often not at the table for planning and decision making.
- 8. Prepare Promotional Materials in Multiple Languages** – If your community has a large population that speaks languages other than English you might want to consider translating flyers and invitations into those other languages. Let the

planning assistance team know as early as possible if there is a need for workshop materials to be translated.

9. **Send a Press Release to Local Media Outlets** – Announcing the workshop through a local press release can help spread the word and reach members of the public who might not otherwise know about the project.

Achieve Diverse Participation

1. **Invite Community Organizations** - Most communities have numerous non-profit, non governmental organizations that represent different groups of people or geographic areas of your community. Reaching out to these groups with an individual and targeted invitation to participate in the workshop is a good place to start. Even better is sitting down for a conversation to better understand each group's interest or relationship to outdoor recreation, including any barriers they may experience. Doing so can shape the goals of the workshop to help it better align with their work and mission. You may even want to consider inviting a representative to be a member of your steering committee.
2. **Relevant Promotional Materials** – Promotional materials for the workshop such as flyers and social media posts should be designed to appeal to a wide variety of community members. Some groups may feel alienated from the effort if it appears to be directed to a specific group or area of interest.
3. **Food and Childcare** – Providing food and childcare is a good way to attract participation, especially among people with children or those that are food insecure. While this program cannot pay for food, some communities have organized a potluck dinner or secured a food sponsor to provide a snack or meal at the community meeting. Childcare is another way to increase participation among families. Consider partnering with community organizations, such as places of worship, that are accustomed to providing childcare for events.
4. **Community Tour as Engagement Opportunity** – The community tour can be structured to obtain input from groups that traditionally are harder to reach. For example, a stop can be scheduled at a place of worship, a school, a recreation site or trail, a homeless shelter, a tribal organization, a public housing development, a senior center, or a social services organization to hear the ideas and concerns of groups that represent disadvantaged people who are less likely to have time or ability to participate in the full workshop.
5. **Provide Language Translation** – Communities with large populations that speak languages other than English might also want to consider providing language translation at the community meeting. Let the planning assistance team know as

early as possible if you think this is relevant for your community so different options for translation can be explored.

6. **Hold Focus Groups or Listening Sessions** – If there are groups or specific demographics in the community that are harder to reach, who do not traditionally attend these types of events, or who are not benefiting from the recreation economy, consider convening a separate listening session with them. Listening sessions, or focus groups, are good ways to get input in a smaller, safer setting. These events can be organized or co-hosted by trusted community organizations. If you think this effort would be useful, your planning assistance team can work with you to develop some protocol questions and facilitation instructions.
7. **Compensate participants for their time** – Like food and childcare, the offer of some form of financial compensation for those who participate in the workshop can be an effective incentive. It can be especially meaningful for participants from lower-income communities who otherwise may not be able to afford to attend the workshop on a voluntary basis. This program cannot provide funding for this compensation, but some communities participating in these types of workshops have been able to offer compensation using sponsors, grants, or local funds. Please raise this with your planning assistance team if you feel that there will be barriers to participation in your community.
8. **Provide Transportation** – If your community has a transit system, work with the local transit agency to provide free transportation. If your community doesn't have transportation, consider a school bus, church van or local rental agency to provide transportation access to the workshop.
9. **Look to Recreation Users Outside the Community** – Nearby metropolitan areas might be home to affinity groups of recreationists of diverse backgrounds who are already recreating in your region or who could potentially do so. These users could provide valuable feedback during the workshop or a pre-workshop call or meeting. National organizations with local chapters or ambassadors include OutdoorAfro, LatinoOutdoors, and Hunters of Color, for example.

The Community Workshop

The on-site workshop is the key element of the convening phase of this planning assistance program. Over two days, the steering committee; community stakeholders; federal, state, and other partners; and the planning assistance team meet and work together to develop a community action plan. The action plan will be a roadmap to achieving the goals you've worked to identify during the pre-workshop planning calls and that will be revised and affirmed with the community during the workshop. A sample workshop agenda is provided below to give you an idea of what to expect over the course of these two days.

During the workshop, one of the steering committee's main responsibilities is to plan and lead a community tour for out-of-town project participants. We've included a sample tour agenda to give you ideas as you begin to plan your own tour. Tours can be on foot, by vehicle, or a combination of both. They can include formal or informal stops at key community sites. We ask that you plan ahead and have a firm set of locations to visit. This helps everyone stay on schedule during a very busy two days!

This section of the guide additionally includes a selection of tips to help you make the most of the workshop's action planning sessions. On Day 2, we will engage in a full day of brainstorming and planning to develop a set of strategies, helping you achieve your identified community goals. On the afternoon of Day 2, we will be working in groups to complete Action Tables for each goal. This exercise helps define the actions needed to achieve goals and identify the key information needed to move forward. The tips included will prepare you for this activity and help you make the most of our time together.

Sample Workshop Agenda

When	What	Where	Description
<p>Day 1 - Afternoon</p> <p>Approximately 10:00 AM - 3:30 PM with a stop for lunch.</p> <p>(Recommended Time: 2-4 hours)</p>	<p>Community Tour</p>	<p>Walking/ Driving</p>	<p>Visit key physical locations in the community that are important to understand the context for the workshop, including community assets and challenges (stops could include a walking tour of downtown/main street/ neighborhoods; key recreational assets). This is an opportunity for the steering committee to share key aspects of the community with the planning assistance team in advance of the community meeting.</p> <p>Note: there should be at least 1-1.5 hours between the community tour and the workshop to allow the planning assistance team time to prepare.</p>
<p>Day 1 - Evening</p> <p>Exact times to be determined,</p> <p>(Recommended Time: 2.5 hours in addition to time for a shared meal, if provided)</p> <p>4:00-6:30 PM Or 5:00-7:30 PM Or 6:00-8:30 PM Or 6:30-9:00 PM</p>	<p>Session One</p> <p>Role of the Recreation Economy and Community Values, Vision, and Goals</p> <p><i>Purpose: "Where are we now and where do we want to be?"</i></p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>Purpose of this session is to introduce everyone to the project and engage in exercises that reveal community values and vision. This session includes short presentations by the planning assistance team and local leaders and incorporates interactive exercises to gather community feedback. This is a "show and tell" session where people learn from each other and that sets the stage for more detailed work the following day on these goals/focus areas that have been identified by the steering committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshop Goal 1 ● Workshop Goal 2 ● Workshop Goal 3 <p>If community members can only attend one session, they are encouraged to come to this evening event, which is designed as an overview, learning, and listening session. The following day's events will focus on developing more detailed actions and solutions.</p>

When	What	Where	Description
Day 2 - Morning 9:00AM - Noon (3 hours)	Session Two Strategies for Boosting the Recreation Economy and Revitalizing Main Street <i>Purpose: "What do we want to happen?"</i>	TBD	The purpose of this session is to explore strategies for accomplishing the goals and vision developed the previous night. This session involves a short presentation with case study examples, an exercise(s) to help the community identify how the recreation economy fits into and connects with the greater community, and begins to develop ideas for specific strategies the community is interested in. The session ends with a brainstorming session on next steps and actions to prep for the afternoon session.
Day 2 - Lunch Noon - 1:00 PM (1 hr)	Lunch Break	Open	Lunch is open. Meals can be provided (if a sponsor is identified to cover the cost) or can be ordered in (and people pay on their own) to help manage time. If lunch is off-site, reconvene at 1:30 PM.
Day 2 - Afternoon 1:00PM-5:00PM (4 hours)	Session Three Moving Forward: Action Planning <i>Purpose: "How will we make it happen?"</i>	TBD	This final work session will identify specific actions needed to achieve the goals identified in the workshop. The resulting Action Tables will include details for each action, including timelines, milestones, financial and human resources needed, roles and responsibilities, and next steps. Emphasis will be on near term and implementable next steps needed to move forward. The session concludes with a plenary debrief, closing statements, and next steps.

When	What	Where	Description
<p>Day 3 - (Optional) Virtual Workshop Follow-Up Session</p> <p>(3 hr virtual work session scheduled about one week following the workshop)</p>	<p>Session Four</p> <p>Action Plan Detailing</p> <p><i>Purpose: “How will we make it happen?”</i></p>	<p>Zoom Meeting, link to be provided</p>	<p>Holding a virtual working session shortly following the in-person workshop allows for workshop participants to add details to the Action Tables. Everyone who attended the workshop and signed in/registered online will be invited to a zoom meeting event.</p>

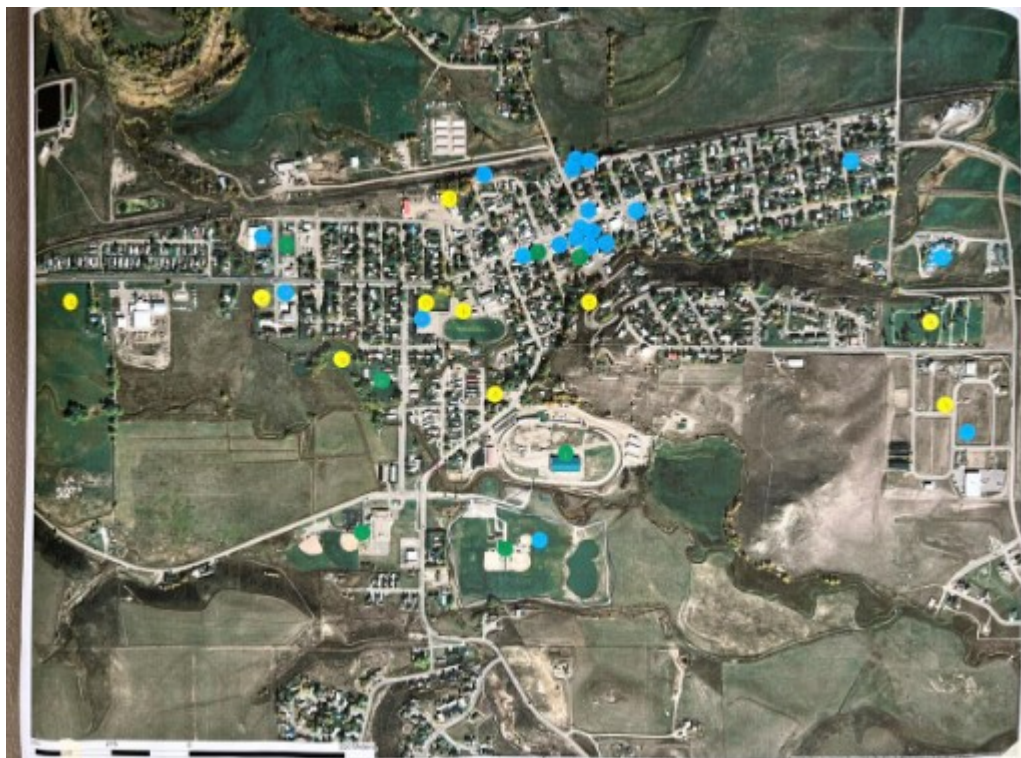


Cripple Creek Day 1 workshop
(Image Credit, 2023 Building Community Capacity course)

GOAL: Physical + Informational Access to Recreation Opportunities

Specific action	Why is this important? What is it?	Initial next steps and deadlines (Present >24 mos.)	Measures of success?	Lead role	Supporting cast	Potential needs and resources
Communicate the goal to the community	Write letter to community to present and discuss the goal	Conduct interviews with community members	Track the number of people who attend the meetings	Public & Community Outreach	Public & Community Outreach	Public & Community Outreach
Conduct surveys	Design and distribute surveys to the community	Conduct surveys with community members	Track the number of surveys returned	Public & Community Outreach	Public & Community Outreach	Public & Community Outreach
Develop a plan	Develop a plan based on the survey results	Develop a plan based on the survey results	Track the number of people who attend the meetings	Public & Community Outreach	Public & Community Outreach	Public & Community Outreach

Hayden Community workshop planning
 (Image Credit, 2023 Building Community Capacity course)



Hayden Asset Mapping
 (Image Credit, 2023 Building Community Capacity course)

The Community Tour

The community tour is an important feature of the two-day workshop. It allows the planning assistance team and other out-of-town partners to hear from residents and community leaders to share about that community's recreation economy and main street goals. These insights can provide important context, can facilitate an opportunity for additional community input, and can inform workshop discussions. Note that tours can take anywhere from 2 hours to 6 hours, depending on the workshop schedule and the community's needs. Each tour is specific to each community!

Community Tour: What We Saw and Heard

Stops along the tour

- Iron Wheel Trading
- The Granary
- The Fairgrounds
- The Hayden Center
- One Man Barber Shop & NW CO Skate Dream
- Yampa River State Park
- Hayden Heritage Center



Community Tour Outline for Hayden, CO

(Image Credit, 2023 Building Community Capacity course)

Tips for planning the community tour:

- Use the tour as an opportunity to hear from and engage the community. Choose specific stops along the way that allow the planning assistance team to hear from community leaders, businesses, and residents, including youth and other key populations of interest.
- Consider holding stakeholder interviews with key people or groups at one or two of the stops that will help to inform the workshop and the resulting action plan.
- Consider inviting potential funders to the community tour for them to see the community and the project (or projects) of interest firsthand.

Community Workshop Action Planning Tips

The goal of the workshop’s afternoon action planning exercise is to complete Action Tables for each of your community’s goals. To facilitate this process, workshop participants will either break into small groups or work as a large group (dependent on the number of participants) to refine actions brainstormed during the morning session and to fill in each of the six elements for every action. When developing actions for each goal, participants should remember that this is a short-term, catalytic action plan and should focus on actions that can take place in the next 12-24 months. Therefore, it is critical that we focus on actions that directly contribute to the success of the goal and that are SMART:

- Specific,
- Measurable,
- Achievable,
- Relevant, and
- have a Time-frame

GOAL:

Specific action <small>Actions should contribute to the success of the goal and be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and have a Time frame. In completing this table, assume the future reader has little to no background information about this action plan.</small>	Why is this important? What is it? <small>How will this action help achieve the goal? Provide detail on what this action is, who benefits, etc.</small>	Initial next steps and deadlines (Present >24 mos.) <small>When should work on this begin? How long should it take? Consider listing phases or key milestones towards progress.</small>	Measures of success? <small>How will you know when the action is completed? How will you track progress along the way?</small>	Lead role <small>Who is the primary responsible organization and person to champion this action? If they are not present today, identify them and someone to reach out to them.</small>	Supporting cast <small>Who else can help or advise?</small>	Potential needs and resources <small>What are possible funding, human, or other resources needed? What are their possible sources? Value all resources by listing them, even if they will cost little to nothing.</small>
				<small>Write out the full name of persons listed (if known) and names of organizations rather than acronyms.</small>		

The six elements of the matrix are described in detail below.

SMART actions achieve goals: Each group will be working from a set of action ideas the larger group of workshop participants has brainstormed. Often, the larger group will vote on these ideas to prioritize them and advance them to action planning. Action planning groups may use these priorities as a guide, but it is up to your discretion to determine the final set of actions, and how they are phrased, to advance to the Action Tables. Some tips:

- Often similar actions can be grouped together under a more general idea that will have even broader support. For example, suggestions like “Hold a design competition for a community logo” and “Organize a 5k run on the new trail” could be grouped together as “Implement programs, activities, and branding that will help activate the new trail system.”
- Make sure that each action is a logical first/next step given where the community is in its planning. If an action proposed seems overly ambitious, suggest more immediate, achievable steps that would move the community towards the goal. For example, “Establish a shuttle between downtown and the lake trail system” can be overwhelming and is unlikely to help move the community forward. Instead, consider the first steps to achieving this longer-term goal. Better actions might be “Convene a meeting with the city and transit operators to explore how to provide better transportation to the lake” or “Hire a contractor to conduct a feasibility study for expanded transportation options to the lake.”
- **Use active language.** For example, the statement “wayfinding signage” can be rephrased as an action such as “Create new wayfinding signage that can be posted downtown so people know where key recreation assets, or ancillary services, are located.”
- **Why is this important? What is it?** Sometimes we feel like the importance of an activity is self-evident and we have trouble articulating the reasons why it’s important. Verbalizing these reasons often helps increase the sense of urgency to complete the action, helps identify reasons not everyone had thought of, or reveals that perhaps the action might not be as important as initially believed. If you find that no one in your group can articulate the importance of an action, it might not be worth pursuing! It is also important to put some text down (bullet or narrative) on what the action is in descriptive text. When people are talking and describing what is taking place, this should be captured so that it is clear and understood what needs to happen and what it looks like. For example, if an action is “Program a series of fun, community events to activate the new trail system,” the what-this-is might be: “Hold plant identification group walks, a Halloween Costume 5k, and a children’s scavenger hunt. Different members of the steering committee could take turns hosting events. These events would get more people using the trail system and would broaden ownership and an understanding of the value of this beautiful asset.”

- **Initial next steps and deadlines.** The community action plan is intended to guide your community over the next 12-24 months. It is important to think about whether your action can realistically be achieved in that time frame. If not, there may be other actions, or earlier steps in the process that first need to be achieved. If an action timeline is too long, consider breaking this into phases, e.g., “Phase I: Convene a committee to meet monthly: 0-2 months; Phase II: Identify 3 possible locations for trail to cross the creek with a pedestrian bridge, 2-4 months; Phase III...” You are encouraged to be ambitious (but realistic) about what your RERC group can achieve over the time frame. This is particularly important if a small number of people are responsible for completing multiple actions. Be patient and celebrate your successes – small steps lead to big results!
- **Measures of success.** For each action, think of things that are relatively straightforward and easy to measure, like monthly visitors to the welcome center, as well as things that could require a broader effort like the increase in sales for downtown businesses during key days of community events. Ideally, the measures you identify should connect to the things your community cares about and that drove your interest in pursuing the goal in the first place. Measures can be quantifiable or qualitative.
- **Lead role and supporting cast.** For each action, your group should identify a specific person (not just an organization) to take the lead for each action. Often, the most logical lead for an action is not in the room and hasn’t been part of the planning assistance process. If this is the case, identify an individual present who is responsible for reaching out to that potential lead and soliciting his/her participation. Follow the same procedure for any supporting individuals or organizations. Remember that this action plan cannot come to life unless individuals step forward to take ownership of goals and/or actions. You can help this process along by developing achievable actions and identifying the right people for the job. Don’t forget to let them know they will have the support of the steering committee and other community participants. People are often more willing to step in and help if they sense that there is a strong leader who will take charge. Write names and organizations where possible. If names are not known a list of possible organizations is fine.
- **Potential needs and resources.** For each action, there will be associated costs (either monetary or otherwise) and resources that may be available to support the action. It is important to remember that this does not need to be a detailed accounting of potential expenditures or an official budget. This element is included to provide you with a general sense of what is needed to help you accomplish each action. For example, some actions may only require an individual’s time. Other

actions, such as capital improvement projects, may have high monetary costs. The goal of this element is mainly to get you thinking about what types of resources you might need to achieve actions and goals. Federal, state, and other public agency partners are on hand to provide specialized knowledge about potential funding and planning assistance opportunities and the planning assistance team can provide information on best practices and creative funding partnerships from other communities with similar goals. Your community action plan will also include an appendix with numerous resources and funding programs that may be useful to you as you work towards achieving your community goals!

Post Community Workshop Tips

What happens when the workshop is over?

The community workshop will build a lot of excitement and enthusiasm around your goals and the action plan. In some cases, it will reignite interest and hope in initiatives that have stalled. It will promote change and a commitment to follow-through on what has been discussed and decided upon by the people involved.

Whether or not assigned a specific responsibility in the community's action plan, workshop participants will want to stay connected to the process and informed of progress. They will want to know their participation in the workshop was time well invested and that their input was heard and incorporated into the action plan. News of the workshop will spread, and those unable to attend it will seek ways to engage in the implementation phase. Continued community engagement and frequent communication is critical to building trust, collaboration, and support for the community's action plan process. Below are sample strategies from other communities to consider for the weeks, months, and years following their workshop.

Share the Action Plan

1. **Host an Action Plan Launch Party** – The action plan will be refined by the steering committee in the weeks following the workshop. Hosting a launch party for the action plan is a great excuse to bring folks together again soon after the workshop, to celebrate the community's effort, and to share the final product. Some communities use this event to identify more resources and/or support for specific action items or as a kick-off for a targeted action. Invite everyone that attended the workshop and spread the word to anyone else who might be interested.
2. **Circulate the Action Plan** – Email the action plan to everyone who attended the workshop and encourage them to share it with their personal and professional networks. Include any reminders of their next chance to get involved with implementation and/or how to share ideas in support of action items in the future. Post the report on an appropriate community organization's website. Announce the report's availability through social media.
3. **Create and Maintain Web or Social Media Presence/Group** – Some communities create a webpage on an existing website as a 'landing place' for their planning effort through this program. While this is not required, if this planning assistance process has an easily-accessible website or landing page, it can help provide updates and keep the momentum going. If a website or landing page is too much to manage, other options include setting up a Google Group listserv, or a Facebook Group (private or public).

4. **Add it to the Agenda** – Consider possible standing events and mailings where you can share progress on your action plan with the community. Ask organizers to add an update on the Community Action Plan as an agenda item every few months. If you have local elected officials' involvement, see if they will include periodic progress updates on their meeting agendas (e.g., Town Council, Board of Supervisors).
5. **Create an Executive Summary** – Consider making a one-pager of the effort that lists the goals and actions. You might convert the community workshop flyer into a handout that summarizes what the workshop participants accomplished. Share it via social media, email, personal correspondence, etc.
6. **Distribute a Press Release** – Consider writing a simple one-page press release and sending it to local newspaper, television stations, and radio stations. Include a copy of the action plan and photos from the workshop.
7. **Invite More Participation** – The action plan is a next steps plan, and some of the items of this 'to-do' list will be accomplished quickly in the months following the workshop. It is important to frame this action plan as the start of a continued effort that can be added to and built upon in subsequent events. Many future partners might not have participated in the workshop, so encourage and invite people to get involved as the action plan implementation proceeds.

Sustain Community Engagement

1. **Continue to Meet** – Many steering committees continue to meet on a regular basis after the planning assistance process has concluded. These meetings provide an opportunity to check-in on action plan progress and can include anyone involved or interested in supporting the community's goals. In some cases, sub-committees form temporarily to address a specific goal or item.
2. **Keep Communication Flowing** – Identify in-person and online communication channels through which steering committee members can share action plan progress and solicit input from stakeholders. Provide a clear and simple way for community members to offer suggestions, resources, and feedback. See web/social media advice above.
3. **Activate Change Agents** – Community action plans need many hands and many ideas to be successful. Consider opportunities to invite people out to experience neighborhood improvement at a specific location, to tour a business, to meet a local entrepreneur, or to participate in any new opportunity created because of the action plan.
4. **Celebrate Achievements** – Different action items and goals will be completed at various times. Don't miss any opportunity to celebrate each with an announcement or in-person gathering, be it as informal as a happy hour,

luncheon, or community potluck.

5. **Engage with CSU Extension** - CSU Extension have agents across the state who can help you to implement action items and help identify relevant funding sources and resources as relevant. They are a fantastic resource with roots in your community and access to a statewide network of expertise and knowledge!

Stay Connected with the Building Community Capacity Program

1. **Visit the EPA Smart Growth Website** - Get the latest information on EPA community revitalization and smart growth publications, webinars, case studies, tools, and planning assistance opportunities. You can also subscribe to the Community Revitalization Listserv by sending a blank email to epa_cmtty_revital-subscribe@lists.epa.gov.
2. **Share Your Successes with the planning assistance team** - Let the planning assistance team know how implementation of your action plan progresses. Being able to share program successes helps build support for the program across the state and will help CU Boulder, OREC office and CSU Extension know who to connect with funding and assistance opportunities that become available.