



State of Colorado
Colorado Office of Economic Development
and International Trade

TOWN OF DILLON
Blueprint 2.0
Adaptive Reuse Initiative
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To the Town of Dillon's stakeholder team:

On behalf of Governor Hickenlooper's Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), our team would like to extend our warm thanks for your collaboration throughout our Blueprint 2.0 Adaptive Reuse Initiative. Our team has thoroughly enjoyed the process of working with the leaders in your community.

We would be remiss to not to mention your team's dedication to your other awarded initiative, the Competitive Advantage program, as well. Our hopes are that this report will complement the findings and recommendations in the Competitive Advantage initiative in a way that assists the Town of Dillon in moving forward with all of its goals in community development and resourceful reuse and development of your assets.

Within this report, you will find information comparing and contrasting your community and its challenges and strengths with other like towns throughout the Rocky Mountain West. The OEDIT team has afforded its best efforts in engaging various resources to provide the most relevant information in community development, placemaking, and adaptive reuse.

Based on our observations and research, your team has much to look forward to in the future. The Town of Dillon's economic indicators trend positively and, the continued boom of growth throughout the state will favor your community. The rise of remote workers and continued opportunities for entrepreneurs in towns like yours will attract more talent, simultaneously as the physical development of your downtown core area will attract people for a specific and unique lifestyle only offered by your town.

Please do feel free to reach out to our team with additional questions regarding your Blueprint 2.0 Initiatives and deliverables. We look forward to seeing what your team is able to continue building in the future.

With best regards,

Rebecca Gillis
Katherine Wang
Ryan MacDonald

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Background

The Colorado Blueprint is the statewide strategy to spur Colorado's economy, to help businesses grow, and to attract new jobs to the state. The priority of the program is the creation and retention of jobs and the expansion of companies throughout Colorado. The strategy was developed through a bottom-up process, where OEDIT staff and Colorado's leaders met with thousands of citizens throughout the state, focusing on key industries across all regions.

The Blueprint has given Colorado a framework to build a comprehensive economic development plan that aligns existing efforts and identifies opportunities for growth and focused investments.

Over the past year, OEDIT has hosted 13 strategy sessions throughout the rural regions of Colorado to develop the ten different initiatives that communities would find most beneficial to apply for through the Blueprint 2.0 initiative. Each initiative effort includes services not previously provided by the State, and leverages state resources and partnerships with organizations outside of the State of Colorado to provide technical assistance to regions who expressed an interest in pursuing the initiatives.

Town of Dillon and the Adaptive Reuse Initiative

As part of a long-term revitalization strategy, Dillon is attempting to leverage town-owned land in conjunction with privately-owned properties in an effort to spur redevelopment of our core area and revitalize existing structures. Leadership and the greater Dillon community have exhibited a desire to support new business, density, and revitalization through numerous community-held work sessions.

Kerstin Anderson, Dillon's Director of Marketing, Communications, and Economic Development, is the community's champion for the Adaptive Reuse Initiative and also spearheaded the community's Competitive Advantage Initiative as well.

Dillon offers a unique opportunity for developers interested in investing in dense living and work spaces within Dillon's town center. The core area can support 100,000 square feet for multi-functional retail opportunities and support at least 200 residential units.

Goals of the Initiative

Development projects should encourage year-round, full-time residents, and pedestrian traffic to drive economic vitality for new and existing businesses and provide enhanced community experiences for residents and guests. Identification of target industries and development of any of the targeted parcels or new areas of opportunity for existing buildings would be a measure of success.

The OEDIT team considers the goals of the initiative as the following: delivery and presentation of this report, as well as vested interest in the progress of the ongoing development project. The report will provide observation and recommendations about the community's strategy and goals in the Adaptive Reuse Initiative. The feedback in this report is based on community meetings with Dillon stakeholders, as well as feedback from other community development experts working in affordable housing and downtown revitalization strategies.

Meeting Agenda

February 7, 2017: Initial Blueprint 2.0 Adaptive Reuse meeting with town stakeholders and economic development team

March 21, 2017: OEDIT presents findings and recommendations in Dillon to community stakeholders

Observations: Placemaking, Regional Trends, Adaptive Reuse, and Affordable Housing

Initial Stepping Stone: Placemaking in the Town of Dillon

The following comments and recommendations are contributed from the report, "Place Value: How Communities Attract, Grow and Keep Jobs and Talent in the Rocky Mountain West."¹ Based on the OEDIT team's observations, many of the community's goals are directly correlated to the need for a stronger sense of placemaking. Stakeholders may want to consider using the Blueprint Initiative process as a means to build the community and its reputation in a fresh and new way, utilizing all of the competitive advantage benefits highlighted throughout the Blueprint projects.

Placemaking focuses on creating attractive, functional, and enjoyable public spaces. The practice is gaining traction in economic development in both rural and urban regions. Intended to serve as a community-driven approach to planning, design, and management of public spaces, placemaking utilizes many tactics that aim to create appealing and authentic places to attract people. The purpose is to build a "strong sense of place." Placemaking can be applied to parks, plazas, streets, and more, but can also be applied to entire communities as an overarching strategy for planning and economic development.²

When building a placemaking strategy, communities should take these major factors as guiding philosophies³:

¹ "Place Value: How Communities Attract, Grow and Keep Jobs in and Talent in the Rocky Mountain West," Sonoran Institute, https://communitybuilders.org/uploads/Reports/PlaceValue_11lowresa.pdf

² Place Value, The Sonoran Institute, 7.

³ Place Value, The Sonoran Institute, 2.

- Jobs follow people
- Community quality is a top priority for businesses and residents
- Being in a place that can attract talented employees is important to growing business
- People on the move are looking for great places
- People are willing to sacrifice salary for the ideal community
- Housing costs are a concern for business and employees: many business owners and residents express that there are not enough housing options for a range of incomes in their communities

Consider the role of different community attributes when building a grander place value strategy: taxes, zoning, quality of life, cost of living. Taking these considerations in mind first will make it easier to create and support resilient local economies.⁴

Stakeholders may wonder what residents want in their communities when looking to build or bolster the reputation of a region. Based on a survey outlined in the “Place Value” report, the following are the major amenities and characteristics people expect from their neighborhoods and should be included in the planning phases of an economic development or placemaking plan.⁵

- Mixed-use neighborhoods
- Different types and sizes of housing
- Ability to walk to daily needs and amenities
- A shorter commute is preferred over a larger home
- Safety, sense of community, friendliness, and access to recreation are also weighted heavily in the survey results

Commercial and Mixed-Use Development Trends

Below are notable and relevant takeaways on commercial and mixed-use development trends in the Western Region of the United States. They have been collected from a report titled, “Restore: Commercial and Mixed-Use Development Trends in the Rocky Mountain West.”⁶ See the footnotes of this report for further information on the report and its publishers.

- 60% of those surveyed throughout smaller communities in the West favor a neighborhood with a mix of housing, stores, and other amenities that are within walking distance.⁷
- While some of those surveyed stated that the size of their home or yard does matter, most would compromise the size of their house for a preferred neighborhood and less commuting.⁸

⁴ Place Value, The Sonoran Institute, 1.

⁵ Place Value, The Sonoran Institute, 16.

⁶ “Restore: Commercial and Mixed-Use Development Trends in the Rocky Mountain West,” Sonoran Institute, https://communitybuilders.org/uploads/Webinar_Resources/RESTORE-Report.pdf

⁷ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 3.

⁸ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 3.

- Nationally, there has been an uptick in interest in mixed-use, but catalyzing and completing these projects presents many struggles in smaller cities and towns.⁹
- The nation's commercial and residential markets are changing. One of the largest adjustments has been a general downsizing in store size, as the requirements for storage space, and even floor space overall has been reduced in the commercial market.¹⁰
- The two dominant population cohorts in the US, Millennials and Baby Boomers, will continue to drive a shift toward mixed-use development.¹¹
- This report demonstrated that municipal planners and policymakers understand and value the benefits of mixed-use developments, but communities must ensure that development codes allow these types of developments.¹²
- Certain types of mixed-use development are more feasible in some places than others, and matching the appropriate type and size of development to the community is essential. The considerations to be made include population density, economic well being of the population, age demographics, and other factors.¹³
- A proactive approach is needed to realize opportunities in mixed-use development. Some major challenges to these projects in smaller communities include: financing, federal policies, an unwillingness amongst the pre-existing commercial community, zoning issues, and, notably, some communities simply do not have sufficient population density to justify mixed-use developments.¹⁴
- Responding to market opportunities is pivotal. A first step in developing a project is to perform a detailed market analysis and feasibility assessment to understand development potential in a given community.¹⁵ *Dillon is in the process of completing this diligence and this is reflected in its application materials and its RFP for developers and private investors.*
- Ensure that necessary zoning and policies enabling mixed-use are installed in the community.¹⁶
- Pursue public/private partnerships - this is especially important as it spreads risk and makes development projects more affordable for those interested in investing.¹⁷
- Engage the community throughout the planning and design of the project to build interest and support.¹⁸ *Has the Town of Dillon sponsored any surveys or Town Hall events to talk about amenities and development the existing community members are*

⁹ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 3.
¹⁰ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 4.
¹¹ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 4.
¹² Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 4.
¹³ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 5.
¹⁴ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 5.
¹⁵ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 6.
¹⁶ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 6.
¹⁷ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 6.
¹⁸ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 6.

most interested in having built?

Keep in mind the advantages of mixed-use for developers as the Town of Dillon is seeking investment.

- Higher-density developments lower the cost of land per square foot, making more affordable housing units achievable.¹⁹
- Mixed-use developments cannot be easily replicated and are unique in composition and structure, allowing them to potentially increase in value over time.²⁰
- Having multiple components in the development creates multiple revenue streams that help to diversify the risk of a project. A developer may also swap uses in certain cases - making the space adaptable should one use yield fewer economic benefits than expected.²¹

Please see the entirety of the “Restore” report in the Appendix for classifications of mixed-use projects and an analysis on which types succeed in different tiers of communities (based on population size, community wealth, etc).

Major Housing Trends

These important indicators in housing markets are compiled from “Reset: Assessing Future Housing Markets in the Rocky Mountain West.”²² Although general, these discussion points are important to consider when planning the area’s core downtown development.

Four major housing trends in the Western Region of the US should be major factors in building community growth strategies in the medium-term.²³

- Shifting priorities for the largest demographic cohorts (Baby Boomers and Millennials)
- Declining wages and household incomes
- Uncertain employment growth
- Shrinking household sizes and changing household types

According to the report and other research cited in this Blueprint Initiative, more citizens are asking for walkable communities. The following are the largest factors influencing the development of compact walkable developments in towns of all sizes.²⁴

¹⁹ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 9.

²⁰ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 9.

²¹ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 9.

²² “Reset: Assessing Future Housing Markets in the Rocky Mountain West,” Sonoran Institute, <https://sonoraninstitute.org/files/pdf/reset-assessing-future-housing-markets-in-the-rocky-mountain-west-03132013.pdf>

²³ Reset, The Sonoran Institute, 9.

²⁴ Reset, The Sonoran Institute, 37.

- Strong rental markets
- Desire for a “sense of place”
- Openness to making trade-offs
- Convenience and connectivity

Please see the entirety of the “Reset” report in the Appendix for case studies on communities taking demographic shifts and housing market trends into consideration as guiding principles for their planning strategies.

Population Trends

According to the Sonoran Institute, the dominant population cohorts in the U.S., Generation Y (also known as the “millennial generation”) and Baby Boomers will both continue to drive a shift towards mixed-use development.²⁵ This is understandable, given that many people value walkability, the trends in the increasing popularity of online retail, and the draw of a colorful local atmosphere. Generation Y, for instance, generally exhibits a preference for walkability and have already prompted retailers and businesses in the entertainment industry to explore tactics such as “right-sizing” of real estate space and the combination of entertainment/retail/restaurant concepts.²⁶ Baby Boomers, on the other hand, prefer having the conveniences of having homes close to stores, healthcare facilities, and other needs as they face the prospect of losing physical mobility.²⁷

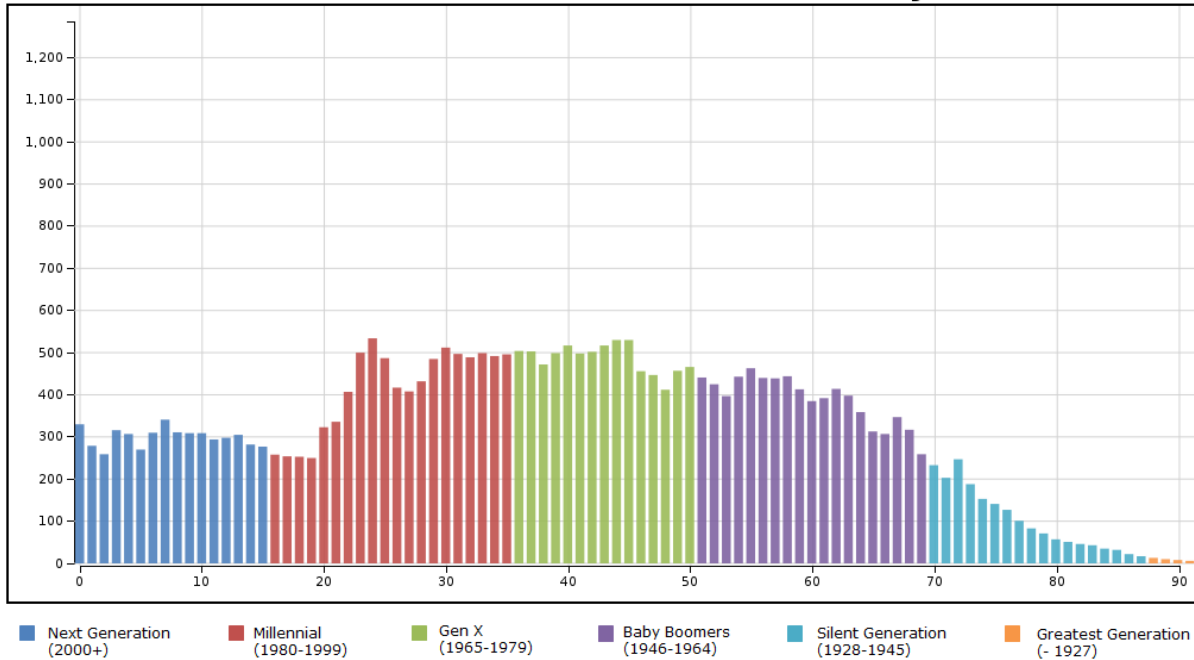
As of 2015, Summit County is estimated to have a sizeable millennial and Baby Boomer population (because of mobility of individuals in the area, we looked at data at the county-level). It is important for towns in the region to consider these trends when considering development projects.

²⁵ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 4.

²⁶ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 4.

²⁷ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 4.

Summit County 2015



Feasibility

- Dillon’s economic indicators as compared to similar-sized communities are positive. Compared with municipalities located in or near mountainous regions in Colorado, Dillon has a population growth rate that is higher than the average and is ranked in the 4th quartile and has a comparatively healthy job growth rate (overall, Colorado has a 11% growth rate from 2012-2016).²⁸ This implies that there is a potential market for housing in a downtown area and there should be a supply of full-time residents. Moreover, Dillon is situated in one of the fastest growing mountain counties in Colorado and can draw people from the entire region.
- Size of town and type of mixed-use development: the Sonoran Institute categorizes communities into three types of tiers: Tier A, B, and C. Tier B communities have a mid-size population base (average 28.6K population), slower growing or shrinking populations, mid-range median and per capita incomes, youthful residents, and a strong base of residents with post-secondary education. Tier C communities share a small population base, low population growth rates or shrinking populations, low median and per-capita incomes, aging populations, and a lower number of residents with post-secondary education. While Dillon has a small population, the town could arguably fit into either Tier B or Tier C, when taking into consideration factors such as the town’s median household income or its per capita income, both of which are relatively high. For both Tier B and C, the institute recommends historic urban mixed use development and

²⁸ EMSI Q1 2017 Data.

main street commercial development.²⁹ However, because each town has a different situation, refer to the report for more information.

OEDIT has been collaborating with experts in community development, placemaking, and economic drivers throughout the Adaptive Reuse project. We were able to connect with the team at Community Builders, a registered 501(c)(3) economic development team located in Glenwood Springs, CO. The organization's mission is to help create successful, prosperous communities through training, information, and assistance.

The team at Community Builders provided thoughtful feedback on the Town of Dillon's Adaptive Reuse Initiative application and goals. Staff members are familiar with the economic and social factors in Dillon and other communities along the I-70 corridor. Their input is provided below.

- Community Builders has found that jobs follow people and that people are drawn to quality communities and great places. The Town of Dillon has some great qualities that would appeal to a range of people. Drawing people to Dillon shouldn't be too much of a challenge. The challenge is finding a place to house these folks and providing a range of housing options to meet the needs of different income levels. As Dillon's full-time population grows, a number of these folks may explore business ventures as they learn more about local markets in the Dillon area.
- The town would benefit from a focus on increasing housing stock in the core area that serves local residents. 900 full-time residents offers limited opportunity to foster a thriving, vibrant downtown. Much of Dillon's housing stock is owned by people outside of Dillon and is in use on a limited basis (for example, weekend ski trips). That presents a number of challenges to local businesses as there are major fluctuations in the Town's population. Working to grow the full-time population and getting more of those folks to live in Dillon's core would be a major step toward helping to achieve the town's goals for downtown.
- A shortage of downtown housing is not unique to Dillon. Many small communities do not have enough downtown housing to foster and then support the lively downtown areas residents want for our communities. It takes quite a few people to support successful local businesses so the more downtown residents, the better. More local residents downtown helps to grow the pool of disposable income, which in turn creates more opportunity for expenditures at local shops.
- The Colorado Mountain College campus in Dillon is a great asset and offers some interesting opportunities. The community may consider if building some sort of incubator space could create opportunities for CMC students to explore entrepreneurship. Also, it might be worth exploring if CMC would be willing to partner with the Town on developing some housing for students and teachers in the downtown.

²⁹ Restore, The Sonoran Institute, 23-25.

- Some stakeholders may see an incubator or accelerator as too risky in the first phases of the growth in the core area. Another option may be geared toward a coworking facility with leasable spaces to encourage entrepreneurialism in the community.
- A major challenge to the commercial market in downtown Dillon is competition in Silverthorne and the larger format retail area where City Market is located. Downtown Dillon has many of the qualities of great downtown but attracting people to come into the core area is challenging given all the other competition around. This further strengthens the argument for getting more people living in the downtown. If they already live there, the town doesn't have to work to draw them into downtown.
- With the lake, proximity to outdoor recreation opportunities, and other benefits, Dillon has a number of existing amenities that should be adequate for attracting new full-time residents, if additional housing opportunities are made available. It is hard to envision a vibrant downtown business environment without first getting more full-time residents in Dillon's downtown. Given our organization's understanding of the need for housing in Summit County, the demand is there to fill new housing units. Therefore, our recommendation would be to place a focus on bringing housing downtown, which in turn should help make downtown more attractive to prospective businesses.
- Unless a community has its sights set on attracting a specific business, it can be challenging to have an effective attraction program. In terms of incentive programs, the data available seems to demonstrate that incentives do not always provide the greatest return.
- If the Town is looking to invest public dollars to further amenitize the downtown, those dollars should be invested in amenities that add to the sense of place and identity in downtown Dillon. It is hard to say what those type of amenities might be without a deeper understanding of community values and vision. This is where placemaking exercises and activities galvanizing town stakeholders and residents may be valuable.

Economic Development Best Practices

Retention and Expansion

Based on the OEDIT team's experience and research, a localized focus on strengthening the economy and adding jobs by supporting businesses within a community rather than affording development efforts solely to recruiting companies can often reap greater benefits for the local economy. Company retention efforts like Economic Gardening, Small Business Development classes, and other forms of support for existing small business owners are affordable, low-risk strategies to bolster the local economy and encourage further economic development. Dedication to a robust retention program guarantees that when the community is ready to deploy a recruitment strategy, its existing business constituency will be vocal advocates for the business-friendliness of the community.

Economic Gardening Program

Economic Gardening is a strategy that aims to create jobs by helping existing businesses expand. Existing programs typically focus on established second-stage businesses, which are beyond the start-up phase and are poised for growth. Economic Gardening approaches provide tools and information to help businesses reach new customers, expand into new markets, or realize new efficiencies.³⁰

Economic Gardening can be an effective approach because it targets businesses that are established, but not fully mature. These businesses tend to have the greatest growth potential.

One blueprint for a successful Economic Gardening program can be found in Littleton, CO, where the community effort is credited with adding 15,000 new jobs and tripling sales tax revenue over 20 years without incentives or tax rebates.

Promotion of entrepreneurialism

In order to better understand the pivotal factors prohibiting economic growth in the region, the community may assess further tools and assistance needed to support start-ups and entrepreneurship.³¹

Town stakeholders may consider introduction of training and coaching services, small business financing programs, or hosting events for entrepreneurs who may gain access to capital from local lending institutions, angel investors, or a revolving loan fund in exchange for competing in the events. Many communities run their own versions of “Shark Tank” or similar competitions.

Another important step will be evaluating needs for workforce development within the Town of Dillon to begin building a more robust talent pipeline, or to retain current talent. Would the community benefit from developing a workforce development plan that provides training and education for a specific skillset for demographic?³²

All of these small business coaching programs may be a good opportunity to engage business students at local education institutions to catalyze further local business development.

Business Recruitment

Based off of the Blueprint 2.0 Competitive Advantage Initiative as well as the conclusions from the Adaptive Reuse Initiative, community stakeholders should begin developing a placemaking strategy for business recruitment and further community development. The timing of this will be

³⁰ Place Value, The Sonoran Institute, 5.

³¹ Place Value, The Sonoran Institute, 19.

³² Place Value, The Sonoran Institute, 19.

pivotal. Research cited throughout this report demonstrate that jobs follow people. It is safe to assume that the redevelopment of the core downtown area coupled with the construction of more affordable housing options will allow the community an opportunity to begin actively recruiting companies.

This brainstorming process should include a medium-to-long-term strategy about what kind of primary occupations and companies the community would best suit.

Business Development Infrastructure

Broadband has become a non-negotiable resource for entrepreneurs and communities throughout the United States. The ability to access fast, reliable, affordable Internet is pivotal for business and academia. Towns like Dillon have an opportunity to begin building relationships with private parties to increase access and enrich the economy. OEDIT has been working in conjunction with other State agencies to promote partnerships throughout the state to further regions' capabilities. See below for some interesting developments in broadband in Colorado.

Broadband access is a strategic priority for Governor Hickenlooper's administration. Within state government, the Broadband efforts span three agencies: the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), the Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT), and the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

The [DOLA program](#) supports the efforts of local governments to improve Broadband service to their constituents to achieve enhanced community and economic development.

The [OIT's Colorado Broadband Data and Development Program \(CBDDP\)](#) is a statewide broadband mapping and planning initiative. The program is federally funded and has four components: Broadband availability mapping, planning, distance learning, and address data development.

Meeker, Colorado's Broadband Project as a Case Study

[Meeker's Broadband Project](#) is a multi-year program that has galvanized the effort of public, private, and government entities in establishing Broadband at the best price, fastest speeds, and most robust access for its residents. This program was enacted as an economic development project, as community leaders recognized the importance of reliable and convenient access for business, education, and tourism.

This map provides a overview of broadband availability throughout the state: http://maps.co.gov/HTML5Viewer_2_5/?viewer=Map.

Co-working or co-location spaces for remote workers

Once the targeted core areas of the community begins filling in at year-round density, leadership may want to consider establishing a co-working space for remote workers

and entrepreneurs. This location could double as a business development center. Here is where special skill trainings and workforce development classes could take place.

Case Studies

Methodology

No two towns are truly alike. The purpose of the case studies is to illustrate certain practices and lessons adopted by communities that, at one point, shared similar goals and challenges as Dillon. Quantifiable metrics examined were population growth, job growth, location quotient, housing occupancy and percent vacancy, and whether the town was located in or near a place of recreation.

High-level observations

- Placemaking and creating a vision for your community: several communities have a unique brand. This vision of what makes the community different from others creates a sense of identity, which in turn attracts people and adds to the local atmosphere.
 - Telluride, for example, incorporates the history of the community into the architectural designs of buildings in the historical district and has worked to develop a coordinated sense of urban design in order to “enhance the overall design character of the town” and enhance its level of livability and quality of life.
 - During the Community Revitalization Partnership (CRP) Program in 2010, community members of Fraser were tasked to assess the most pertinent assets and challenges of the town, and looked to create a unique brand for Fraser, drawing inspiration from the region’s rich history.

- Hosting an event is extremely important for gaining publicity and attracting people to the area. While several mountain communities focus on winter sports, it is also important to look at summer activities and non-sporting events (for example, arts festivals, local craft fairs, music events) to create balance between winter and summer seasons.
 - Websites of several mountain communities break out events by activity type and season.
 - Telluride’s famous film and music festivals have exposed the greater public to the beauty of the community and the mountain region and has served as an important economic driver.

- Housing challenges exist for towns located near resorts.
 - Fraser, for instance, recognized that it was in a favorable position to attract locals and second homeowners, but because of its proximity to resort destinations, challenges exist during peak summer and winter employment seasons. There is also a growing presence of second homeowners and a shortage of rentals for the workforce with few affordable ownership opportunities. To mitigate these concerns, town members looked at workforce housing needs, developed a

strategic plan, worked to build capacity to develop and oversee housing, looked to amend the town code to encourage attainable housing, among other steps.³³

- Housing affordability poses a challenge for the community in Buena Vista. To address the current and future housing needs, the community conducted a study which recommended tactics such as setting annual goals to meet 10 percent of existing and 10 percent of future housing needs, explore multifamily development, and acquire land for developing affordable housing.

Data overview³⁴

Location	Dillon	Telluride	Fraser	Buena Vista
Population (2015 est.)	955	2,480	1,169	2759
Population Growth (2010 - 2015)	1.1%	1.4%	-0.8%	1.1%
Job Growth (2012-2016)	19.6%	14.6%	12.1%	9.5%
Housing - Vacancy Rate	68.6%	57.0%	60.8%	9.6% (BV has a lower vacancy rate, but a significant percentage of homes in the community are second homes). ³⁵

Location Quotient³⁶

NAICS	Description	Dillon	Telluride	Fraser	Buena Vista
11	Crop and Animal Production	0.10	0.33	1.18	1.61
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1.62	0.99	1.09	1.47
22	Utilities	0.12	0.13	0.00	3.86
23	Construction	1.01	1.60	1.47	1.50
31	Manufacturing	0.07	0.35	0.20	0.34

³³ Town of Fraser, Housing Needs and Development Study, May 2016,

<http://www.frasercolorado.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=1279>

³⁴ Population and population growth data from DOLA 2015 Population Estimates; Job Growth data from EMSI Q1 2017 Data Set; Housing vacancy rate from the U.S. Census Bureau 2015 5-Year ACS Data.

³⁵ Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., August 2016.

<http://chaffeecounty.org/EndUserFiles/55417.pdf>

³⁶ EMSI Q1 2017 Data Set

42	Wholesale Trade	0.36	0.11	0.22	1.11
44	Retail Trade	1.02	0.92	1.65	1.21
48	Transportation and Warehousing	0.86	0.16	0.28	0.36
51	Information	0.54	0.69	0.11	0.33
52	Finance and Insurance	0.28	0.33	0.75	0.81
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3.66	4.55	1.08	1.66
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	0.38	0.62	0.39	0.66
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.00	0.06	0.05	0.02
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1.48	0.86	0.51	0.11
61	Educational Services	0.10	0.73	0.37	0.56
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	0.22	0.25	0.31	0.28
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	10.51	10.51	4.60	4.57
72	Accommodation and Food Services	2.62	3.05	3.70	2.29
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	0.92	0.91	0.55	1.15
90	Government	0.85	0.50	0.80	1.23
99	Unclassified Industry	0.11	0.25	0.06	0.00

Telluride

Telluride is hailed consistently as one of the top ski resort towns in the country and world by sources like Forbes and Ski Magazine. Because of its proximity to a ski resort, Telluride is naturally similar to Dillon in terms of having a high location quotient in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industries. Telluride’s jobs have also increased since 2012 at a rate that is similar to Dillon’s. Telluride has achieved an extremely high profile over the past decade and attracts upscale businesses in the accommodations and restaurant industries.³⁷ Despite its high profile, Telluride has humble roots as a mining town and has experienced economic slowdowns in recent decades. While Telluride has a higher percent occupancy rate than that of Dillon’s, it is still relatively low at 43.0 percent.

Currently, Telluride’s priority is to capitalize on its reputation and it continues to draw traffic through various events (World Synchronized Skiing Championships in 2017, food and arts festivals and exhibitions). In past decades, as the skiing industry grew, the town of Telluride also

³⁷ While Telluride shares its namesake with the neighboring ski resort, the resort is located in the small town of Mountain Village. The two towns are uniquely connected by a gondola, allowing for easy transport. Mountain Village attracts more upscale customers of the two, yet the entire area is often referred to as “Telluride.”

hosted its now famous music and film festivals, which helped the town gain exposure to a wider audience. The community is continuing to increase its intellectual, art, and cultural presence with conferences and symposiums.

While Telluride is associated with a high-end ski resort, however, the town has also made a concerted effort to create a distinct identity that differentiates the community from other towns situated near ski resorts and serves as an example in which Dillon can draw lessons from.

Design policies of the town focused on “preserving the integrity of the community’s historic resources and protecting the traditional character of the town at large.”³⁸ Building construction and renovations, for instance, were specifically designed to harken back to Telluride’s colorful mining history, which will in turn maintain a strong local atmosphere that is appealing to residents and visitors. In addition, Telluride utilizes basic principles of urban design to construct a pedestrian-friendly environment, which enables a degree of vibrancy in the neighborhoods.³⁹ These active efforts to design the town are intended to enhance the quality of life in Telluride, while maintaining a level of functional utility of the community as a place to live, work, and visit.

Fraser

Fraser is a mountain community with a population of 1,169 located northwest of the ski resort, Winter Park.⁴⁰ The town’s population dropped after the Great Recession, but since 2012, there has been steady growth.⁴¹ Similar to Dillon, Fraser has a high vacancy rate and has a relatively high location quotient in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industries, which is to be expected as both Dillon and Fraser are located near ski resorts. Currently, Fraser is a bedroom community that houses seasonal employees who cannot afford the cost of living in Winter Park. While Fraser has the advantage of being situated near outdoor amenities, the town’s central location also presents challenges during peak summer and winter seasons when workers need housing in the area.

To draw more residents and visitors and distinguish the community from the popular ski resort, the town has aimed to create a “cohesive, vibrant, and walkable downtown”.⁴² During the Community Revitalization Partnership (CRP) Program in 2010, the Town of Fraser, in partnership with Downtown Colorado, Inc. and the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, members assessed the strengths and challenges of the community, and worked to craft a unique and unified vision of the town for the community and for the public, one that drew on Fraser’s history and local activities.⁴³

³⁸ Design Guidelines for Building in Telluride, Winter & Company and The Telluride Community, September 1997, IN-1, <http://www.telluride-co.gov/DocumentCenter/View/126>

³⁹ Design Guidelines for Building in Telluride, Winter & Company and The Telluride Community, September 1997, IN-1, <http://www.telluride-co.gov/DocumentCenter/View/126>

⁴⁰ Colorado Department of Local Affairs, July 2015 Population Estimates, Municipalities.

⁴¹ Colorado Department of Local Affairs, July 2015 Population Estimates, Municipalities.

⁴² Town of Fraser, <http://frasercolorado.com/index.aspx?page=189>, <http://frasercolorado.com/index.aspx?page=61>

⁴³ Downtown Fraser Community Revitalization Partnership (CRP) Program, Town of Fraser, Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Downtown Colorado Inc., <http://frasercolorado.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=572>

The town looked for ways to create a vibrant town center, focusing on projects such as developing Main St., as well as exploring ways to incorporate murals and public art into the town to give it a funky and modern vibe. Additionally, the town is looking to improve the safety of US-40 and methods (such as footpaths, crosswalks, and center medians) to slow traffic through town to draw more attention to the local community.⁴⁴

Buena Vista

Buena Vista is small mountain community that has experienced a similar level of population growth compared to Dillon. Across Chaffee County, it is estimated in 2016 that there will be an increase of over one thousand jobs in a year, and there will be an increase of approximately over 500 households in the county.⁴⁵

According to Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., five to ten years ago, Buena Vista and Salida both had entire blocks of vacant buildings, but currently, the buildings are occupied with new businesses, including restaurants, bars, specialty retail stores, and boutique hotels.⁴⁶ Leaders in Buena Vista, for instance, have come together to discuss and formulate economic development priorities, such as working to ensure that commercially-zoned land exists to accommodate new businesses and that new commercial development is in line with community values, working to ensure that the town will continue supporting and expanding the tourism industry, continuing to provide community assets, and continuing to provide support for local businesses and residents (with events, providing mixed-use districts, etc.).⁴⁷

Furthermore, Buena Vista has made an effort to distinguish the community from just a “highway commercial district along Highway 24”, after developing its historic Main Street area and offering multi-modal transportation options to residents and visitors. For example, the community built on its already strong biking heritage, creating additional routes and amenities, such as aesthetic bike racks.⁴⁸ And like many mountain communities, Buena Vista looked for a common historical or architectural thread when creating a vision for its historical districts.

While Buena Vista has a lower vacancy rate than Dillon, affordability of housing poses a challenge in the community, with one in three households in Chaffee County cost burdened (an increase from one in four in the 2007 study).⁴⁹ To set a realistic goal to address current and future housing needs, the study then recommends an annual goal of meeting 10 percent of

⁴⁴ Downtown Fraser Community Revitalization Partnership (CRP) Program, Town of Fraser, Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Downtown Colorado Inc., <http://frasercolorado.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=572>

* As identified during the Community Revitalization Partnership (CRP) Program, <http://frasercolorado.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=572>

⁴⁵ Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., August 2016. <http://chaffeecounty.org/EndUserFiles/55417.pdf>

⁴⁶ Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., pg. 2, August 2016. <http://chaffeecounty.org/EndUserFiles/55417.pdf>

⁴⁷ Town of Buena Vista, 2015 Comprehensive Plan. <http://www.buenavistaco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/967>

⁴⁸ Town of Buena Vista, 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Pg. 34. <http://www.buenavistaco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/967>

⁴⁹ Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., pg. 6, August 2016. <http://chaffeecounty.org/EndUserFiles/55417.pdf>

existing and 10 percent of future housing needs ([see page 7 for details](#)).⁵⁰ In terms of land use, the study recommends exploring multifamily development, acquiring land for developing affordable housing, expanding the supply of buildable lots within municipal boundaries, among other tactics.⁵¹

Recommendations

Placemaking

- Focus on the unique and important assets to your community. Several towns and communities have a unique branding for themselves and this helps create a sense of identity and individuality for the town.
 - Defining a central theme that centers on the community's identity, and incorporating the identity into the designs (e.g., architecture, parks, streets, etc.) into the local community is an important aspect of distinguishing the community from other locations.
 - Dillon's stakeholder team provides a powerful value proposition when marketing it as a Mountain Lakestyle Community. Consider how to bolster that reputation and build a placemaking strategy with that vision as the guiding principle and goal.

Business Retention and Recruitment

- Consider enacting a unique and targeted Economic Gardening Program to grow existing, high-potential companies in the region.
- Work with the local higher education institutions (students studying business or finance) and community stakeholders to build more support for local entrepreneurs: classes for specific skill development, planning events or competitions to encourage entrepreneurialism, etc.
- Community stakeholders should begin developing a placemaking strategy for business recruitment and further community development. Part of this process will include what kind of jobs and companies the community wants to host. This strategy may be developed based off of feedback provided through each of the Blueprint 2.0 Initiatives.

Creating a Sustainable Seasonal Balance

- Hosting an event is extremely important for gaining publicity and attracting people to the area. While several mountain communities focus on winter sports, it is also important to look at summer activities and non-sporting events (for example, arts festivals, local craft fairs, music events) to create balance between winter and summer seasons.
 - Break out events listed on town websites by activity type and season.

⁵⁰ Chaffee County Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., pg. 6, August 2016. <http://chaffeecounty.org/EndUserFiles/55417.pdf>

⁵¹ Town of Buena Vista, 2015 Comprehensive Plan. <http://www.buenavistaco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/967>

Investigate Affordable Housing

- Dillon is already taking steps to look into workforce housing and its affordability. As Community Builders and other studies have discussed, a town such as Dillon would benefit from having more housing stock in the core area that serves local residents. Having more full-time residents would mean greater support for local businesses and create more opportunities for entrepreneurs and create a vibrant downtown environment. As current trends indicate, jobs follow people. Therefore, it is important for a community such as Dillon to assess strategies to help ensure that housing is more affordable.

Next Steps

It is pertinent that feedback from both the Competitive Advantage and Adaptive Reuse Initiatives are tied together and applied toward the grander economic development goals of the community. The strategies noted below come from OEDIT's conclusion of the Blueprint Competitive Advantage Initiative:

- Strategy 1: Improve the overall appearance of the core area and instill a sense of pride in the Dillon community.
- Strategy 2: Diversify and expand tax base in order to reinvest in public amenities, including parks, amphitheater, Marina, and community programs and events.
- Strategy 3: Increase density and foot traffic by providing a diverse mix of businesses, event programming, and community amenities.

Taken holistically, the findings and recommendations in the Competitive Advantage and Adaptive Reuse Initiatives are complementary and provide steps for the formulation of a medium-to-long term strategy in community building.

Galvanize community leadership to consider feedback provided from both Blueprint 2.0 Initiatives won by the Town of Dillon. As a group, decide which points of observation and recommendations are the most pertinent priorities for the leadership and residents of the area.

- Consider placemaking strategies and ensure that those qualities highlighted as unique and valuable are kept in mind as the community grows.
- Develop a timeline with quantifiable goals (number of units of affordable housing, number of small businesses supported, number of full-time residents attracted, etc).
- Ensure that community members and stakeholders are engaged to provide input and are active participants in the development of a placemaking strategy: business owners, residents, students, community leaders, and others. Consider developing a community

asset survey and using survey results coupled with resident feedback as a guide for what the downtown area may look like in the future.

- Review provided case studies of comparable communities. Decide what strategies may be deployed in your community, while still being able to differentiate your Town from others in Colorado with similar assets.

Continue working with developer candidates through the Request For Proposals (RFP) process for the construction of affordable housing and mixed-use real estate in the downtown core area.

- Stress the importance of the community's reputation and how stakeholders and residents want the the region to look, what kind of industry and workforce it wants to attract, and the distinguishing characteristics it wants to highlight to welcome both permanent residents and tourists. Ensure that the assets highlighted support year-round and sustainable traffic in the community.
- Continue working through regional demographic trends and research on mixed-use and affordable housing developments provided in this report and the additional materials. Using this information about the Town, decide what kind of development best suits the community and its goals.

Consider innovative and progressive opportunities to support existing businesses in Dillon. Leverage local business success as an opportunity to recruit companies in the future.

- Business recruitment should be taken as a second priority, as research within this report verifies that jobs follow people, rather than vice versa. Establishing the Town of Dillon as a business-friendly environment will be an organic and powerful marketing opportunity for business recruitment.
- Brainstorm about how to engage and support entrepreneurs throughout the region.

Additional Resources

- [Place Value: How Communities Attract, Grow and Keep Jobs and Talent in the Rocky Mountain West, Community Builders](#)
- [Reset: Assessing Future Housing Markets in the Rocky Mountain West, The Sonoran Institute](#)
- [Restore: Commercial and Mixed Use Development Trends in the Rocky Mountain West, The Sonoran Institute](#)



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