Silverton Community Assessment

October 15-16, 2012

BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES BY PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO DOWNTOWNS, COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS AND TOWN CENTERS IN COLORADO THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, INFORMATION AND COLLABORATION
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Team Members

The Silverton assessment team appreciates the invitation to get to know Silverton and to assist the community to maximize its considerable assets. The volunteers worked diligently, pre- and post-visit to provide relevant and realistic input towards the betterment of your commercial district.

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Introduction
Welcome to the downtown assessment for the historic, mountain community of Silverton, Colorado. Qualifying communities in Colorado have the opportunity to apply for assistance through Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI) and participate in a downtown assessment process partially sponsored by the USDA Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI), and completed in collaboration and with funding from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

The DCI downtown assessment and training program brings together community leaders and stakeholders to develop a structure and process that supports local businesses and creates a vibrant commercial district. The process results in a “road map” that guides community leaders in providing services and training to help local businesses thrive.

Downtown Colorado, Inc. assembled a volunteer team of professionals that included designers, planners, land use, and finance experts to work in Silverton for two days and then contribute to this final report. The assessment team appreciated the invitation to assist the community and worked diligently to provide relevant and realistic input toward the betterment of downtown Silverton.

Executive Summary
In August 2012, the Town of Silverton requested a downtown assessment from Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI) and a site visit was scheduled for October 15-16, 2012. The purpose of the assessment visit was to bring a team of consultants specializing in downtown and community revitalization to provide tools, insights and direction to assist the host community with its downtown revitalization goals. In preparation of this visit, the Town completed a comprehensive plan, organized focus groups, provided extensive background information about the history and status of Silverton’s downtown revitalization efforts and outlined the issues facing the community.

Upon arrival, team members were given a presentation on the history of Silverton and toured the historic downtown district. Afterward, the team met with town staff and then held four well-attended focus group sessions with community stakeholders and interested citizens. The purpose of the focus groups was to hear directly from citizens about the challenges facing downtown and the community as a whole; and to answer questions from team members about their perceptions, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities related to downtown Silverton.

On day two, team members gathered to discuss their observations and formulate recommendations. That evening at an open town meeting, team members presented their findings in the form of a PowerPoint presentation followed by a question and answer session. This report details the downtown assessment visit, discusses issue areas, identifies potential partners and resources that may be utilized, and establishes recommendations for community actions that can strengthen downtown.

Special thanks to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, History Colorado/ State Historical Fund, and USDA for helping to fund this report, and to all the Silverton citizens, stakeholders and team volunteers!

Issue Overview and Historical Context
The Town of Silverton lies in the heart of the San Juan Mountains, nestled at 9,318 feet at the terminus of the Million Dollar Highway. Gold was discovered in Silverton in 1860, and after negotiations with the Ute Indians, the area was opened for settlement. The Town of Silverton was platted in 1875, a year in which the Town’s population doubled from that of the previous year. The greatest boom to the area was the
construction of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad (now known as the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad) in 1882. The town of Silverton was then formally incorporated in 1885.

Mining reached its zenith between 1900 and 1912, and the population of San Juan County peaked at 5,000, with Silverton serving the metropolis of the district. Hundreds of millions of dollars of gold and silver were extracted from the mines. The last operating mine, Sunnyside Gold, closed in 1991 due to a slow market and low demand. Impacts of the mine closure included increased unemployment, an evolution toward a tourist-based economy, a developing second home market with many part-time residents, challenges for the school to retain students in various age groups, and an enlarged role for the historic, narrow gauge train in the town’s summer tourist economy.

In 1961, Silverton was designated as a National Historic Landmark District, to protect and celebrate its rich mining history and Old West past. Silverton’s main business section was built in the late 1800s. Unlike many other mining towns, Silverton never experienced a major fire, and most of the buildings are still standing. The “other side” of town was centered on Blair Street. At one time this notorious street was home to forty saloons and brothels. Almost half of these buildings are still standing today. Today’s business district (with its lodging, restaurants, shops, and galleries), is on Greene (main) Street and Notorious Blair Street, and the side streets between them.

Observations
The assessment process includes one day of focus group meetings that include the Town Council, Town Staff and Commissions, Non-Profit and Other Taxing Entities, Businesses, Residents, and a group a students from the school who served as representatives from the youth sector. The team listens to all of the comments and the following observations are a snap shot of what the focus groups participants shared with the assessment team on the first day of the downtown assessment.

Positive:
• Rich history & cultural identity
• Natural beauty and resources an asset
• Great tourist base
• Excellent educational resources
• Very growth and business friendly
• Many energetic and opinionated groups

Negative:
• Need to cultivate community cohesion
• Lacking community engagement for young people
• No clear identity or brand for the community
• Seasonal business closures
• Small, year-round population with limited pool of volunteers
• Overreliance on the seasonal Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad

Organization
The first section of this report focuses on organization, which includes developing collaboration, volunteer recruitment and management, fund-raising, and developing operational strategies. Organization involves getting everyone working toward common goals and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a downtown revitalization program. The three principal components of organization are:

• Public and media relations
• Volunteer development
• Fund-raising

A governing board and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of a volunteer-driven program. Volunteers are best coordinated and supported by a paid, full-time or part-time program director. This structure not only divides the workload and
clearly delineates responsibilities; it also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders. While a paid downtown coordinator may not currently be feasible, it is something to strive for in the future.

While this section describes a typical downtown organizational structure there exist numerous variations throughout the country that are driven largely by local circumstances. In some towns, for example, the Chamber of Commerce is strong enough to add an organizational component designated to focus on the downtown. Many “Main Street” communities develop a non-profit downtown management organization. Other towns develop some form of special district to dedicate resources and focus on downtown issues.

Regardless of the organizational structure a community chooses, one overriding factor is demonstrated time and again when undertaking a program of downtown revitalization: the most successful communities develop a solid organizational component early in the process to oversee and manage their downtown revitalization efforts. The organization needs to be established to ensure the revitalization program succeeds and achieves the desired outcomes it sets for itself.

Given these realities, we cannot overemphasize the importance of placing organizational development among the highest priorities of early revitalization activities. Most, if not all, of the recommendations in this report are made within the framework of this understanding.

**Observation:** The downtown is an asset that needs focused attention and support to thrive.

**Recommendations:**

Continue to support downtown as a priority and commit to dedicating the resources necessary to ensure its long-term vitality. The Town Board has declared the downtown improvement efforts as a priority, and this effort should be expanded. Downtown, both streets, serve as the economic, cultural and social center of a community and should provide a nexus of investment and development. Healthy communities almost invariably have a healthy and vibrant downtown at their core. Similarly, communities with struggling economies often neglect their downtown areas. Once neglect and deterioration pass a certain point, community efforts will no longer be able to save the downtown core as an asset or economic driver.

**Develop cohesive objectives for downtown**

**to synchronize efforts of different groups.** Bring together all groups to discuss the vision, objectives, and roles for the revitalization plan. A community-level ‘retreat’ event to review this report and the Action Matrix can serve to accomplish this goal by bringing together all stakeholders in a brainstorming environment. Retreats are also useful in separating all interested parties from extraneous influences and focusing their attention on addressing a common goal.

**Identify a staff position to coordinate**

**stakeholders around community objectives** (potentially combining funds from Town, County, School, Chamber, etc.). Review various existing funding streams generated via local sources from lodging tax, the Visitors Center, the Chamber of Commerce, Silverton School, and Historical Society - and assess the potential of a shared marketing, events, visitor and convention bureau function. To assist in this process consider options for engaging a VISTA volunteer, Best and Brightest intern, and Youth Core to support downtown efforts and implementation through a full time staff/volunteer/intern position.

**Consider education and training as a means**

**for enhancing participation and community engagement.** Hold quarterly education and awareness programs to inform and engage the
Develop community-wide organization of and celebrations for volunteers and civic groups in town. The Chamber “Silverton Citizen of the Year” award is a great idea but could be more collaborative in bringing together the various entities who use volunteers in the community. The idea of volunteer recruitment, management, and appreciation are important to avoid burn out. By consolidating and communicating between groups, the town will be better able to identify shared needs, gaps in skill areas, and excellence in service. Bring together all groups in a community-wide celebration to thank the most active and dedicated members of the community and to encourage continued service.

Work with the Historical Society to guide and mentor other groups in developing sustainable planning and funding. The Historical Society appears to have developed a proven and successful model for management of resources. Other organizations may seek guidance and mentoring from the Historical Society so that they can become more effective and sustainable.

Create a plan for leadership development that involves a youth representative on each project. Future community leaders can learn the essentials of local government management, community resources, emerging issues, and local cultural dynamics. Community committees might serve as great learning instruments for students interested in economic development, marketing, grant writing, etc.

Observation: Many plans have been completed but not always implemented.

Recommendation:
For every plan, create accountability with a timeline for implementation and identify responsible parties, deliverables, and milestones, etc., starting with the attached Action Matrix. The town and various groups have done their homework! The plans, surveys and research are really well thought out and
now is the time for implementation. Action plans bring responsibility and follow-through to the revitalization process, and ensure that planning efforts do not become purely theoretical exercises with little practical application. In addition, action plans ensure that planning goals will survive changes in personnel and administration, and enable subsequent staff to examine and evaluate progress towards these same goals.

Promotion
Promotion is another of the four key points in building a vital downtown. According to the National Trust Main Street Center, effective promotion sells a positive image of a community’s commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play, and invest in the Main Street district. By marketing a downtown’s unique characteristics to residents, investors, business owners, and visitors, an effective promotional strategy creates a positive image. This image can then be reinforced through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events, and marketing campaigns. These activities improve consumer and business confidence in the district and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.

There is general agreement that special events are positive for the town of Silverton. From the increase in visitors to the revenue they generate via sales tax proceeds, well planned and executed events can result in long lasting benefits to the community. Events take a significant amount of time and resources to plan for and properly execute, so it is extremely important to make sure that each one is established with clear objectives and goals in mind and subsequently evaluated via defined metrics that measure success on a number of levels.

Observation: Special events are important to the community and attract visitors, but improved pre-event planning, organization and marketing is needed. The number of event organizers and pool of volunteers is small, which has led to challenges in event selection, promotion, and quality.

Recommendations:
- Identify community event objectives and strategically plan events that focus on quality over quantity to maximize visitors, exposure and economic impact to Silverton.
- Assess all current events through an established lens of community objectives to determine the best and most efficient use of resources, with a specific emphasis on shoulder and winter seasons.
- Create an inventory of event spaces and equipment – the Town should develop a survey to collect information about existing event spaces / resources.
- Create a community calendar that lists all events. Encourage organizers to cluster events and target overnight stays.
- Plan a signature event around local volunteer groups such as the Silverton-San Juan Volunteer Fire Authority. Play off natural synergies to create a fun, educational platform for people to learn and compete (warrior-dash style).

Observation: In a small community that is experiencing volunteer fatigue, it is important to maximize all available resources, information, equipment and volunteer energy. Use the strategic events tools in the report appendices to align events with overall downtown goals. This process requires that the chamber, or coordinating entity partner with ALL community organizations to develop a community-wide effort for one, complete, conclusive, calendar of activities. This will enhance the current calendar created by the chamber to promote events in Silverton. Additionally, the strategic review of events by month can be utilized to build foot traffic during economic slow periods, attract repeat visitors, fill lodging vacancies and bring the community together.
Even in slow periods, it is important to keep some shopping, dining and entertainment options available to residents and travelers. By working together and having effective communication, retail shops and restaurants can coordinate their hours of operation with winter travel groups and strategically plan activities. Look for activities that embrace different demographics including youth and seniors.

**Recommendations:**
- Downtown must be kept vibrant and relevant year round by offering locals and visitors alike a variety of active businesses, live local music, discounts or activities (consider youth, seniors, other specialty groups).
- Work with merchants, hotels and event organizers to identify opportunities for gaining increased business from winter visitors. This should be taken beyond town staff to be a partnership effort to market the community.
- Have the Town and Chamber of Commerce work together to create an e-mail list to communicate with business owners the arrival of tour groups.
- Work to develop an ongoing music series that appeals to diverse audiences (youth, seniors, families).
- Identify businesses that have the capacity and ability to showcase local talent or events.
- Utilize local outreach mediums (newspaper, radio, cable channel, social media, website) to get the word out.
- Inform hoteliers of current and ongoing events that may appeal to their guests.
- Survey residents to see what kind of goods, services, entertainment or promotions will prompt them to patronize local downtown merchants year-round.
- Assist merchants in developing a program that provides incentives to the local community through a social media discount program.
- Utilize the renovated school facilities for special events when appropriate (consider movie nights).

- Using the Strategic Event Matrix and Calendar found in the report appendices to seek alignment of available times/amenities with goals outlined in the organization section of this report.
- Work with students to plan community events that appeal to their demographic (i.e. movies, concerts) and can also be open to the public. Consider using these special events as fundraisers for student trips or other school needs.

**Observation:** The absence of a clear brand identity (one that flows consistently through all communication and marketing materials) does not provide visitors or prospective business owners with an accurate picture of Silverton’s strengths.

**Recommendations:**
- Identify, embrace and universally promote a brand that is distinctly Silverton, unique and authentic. This brand should have widespread buy-in from community stakeholders and be easy for the entire community to use. The message that brand delivers should be integrated into all collateral material associated with the Town of Silverton. Be sure this brand message is utilized in a multitude of communication mediums. It is important to remember that it takes time and repetition to create a brand. At times, residents may feel like the same message is being repeated over and over yet for many visitors it may be their first time hearing and/or seeing it. Avoid changing or diluting the brand with sub-brands. Develop a strong message and integrate it into everything related to Silverton.

The current brand promoted by the Chamber of Commerce is “The Heart of the High Country.” The Chamber/Visitor Center should use a public process whether that be focus groups, a social media campaign, an online photo/slogan contest to determine if this brand is recognizable, unique and authentic and if it draws visitors; or whether another brand should be considered.
Most importantly, focus on one brand. Develop a brand that incorporates Silverton’s sense of outdoor adventure as well as the resilience of its people. This new brand should effectively communicate the community’s history, the region’s natural beauty, the town’s perseverance through adversity, and the area’s renown as a center for adventure sports.

- Work together to establish, protect and reinforce the community brand that is agreed upon.
- Utilize brand guidelines and standards to craft messaging that embraces the brand in any collateral material developed and distributed concerning the Town of Silverton.
- Establish a toolbox for residents and business owners that allows the brand to be easily used and integrated with their own marketing efforts.

Observation: Silverton has unmistakable natural beauty and amenities that cannot be duplicated – use this to an advantage at every step! The town is much more than a stop for train passengers or traveling motorists. Explore how Silverton and San Juan County can generate ongoing tourism by highlighting other natural attractions and promoting the area to adventure enthusiasts. The current promotional strategy needs to be modernized and utilize a cross-platform of mediums. Silverton is well-worth the trip!

Recommendations:

- Develop strategies and measurable objectives and outcomes for attracting visitors and exceeding their expectations with the goal of having them return again for day or overnight trips.
- Develop itineraries for train travelers that appeal to different demographics (families, seniors, teens, artists, architecture enthusiasts, shutterbugs, mining/rock hounds, history/wild west buffs), which include a menu of options of what one might do in Silverton for 2 hours, 4 hours, or overnight.
- Diversify and enhance outreach mediums and markets (in cooperation with the school/students) by utilizing social media, video, and print while creating regional partnerships to attract visitors.
  - Establish a quarterly meeting with regional partners and surrounding communities to discuss joint marketing opportunities.
  - Create a “Your Friends are My Friends and My Friends are Your Friends” campaign where organizations cross promote one another on social media.
  - Utilize student “interns” to create video, post on social media, blog, etc. to keep Silverton current and “fresh in people’s minds.”
  - Identify regional community calendars to post events and travel packages.
- Develop niche strategies and target markets both by interest and geography:
  - Outdoor enthusiasts (fishermen, hikers, climbers, bikers, skiers, ATVers, snowmobilers, hunters, campers)
  - Art, Architecture, History, Western, Mining enthusiasts
  - One-day drive market (Durango, Montrose, Delta, Grand Junction, Farmington, NM)
  - Touring (RVs, scenic motorists, motorcyclists, tour operators)
  - Work with organizations or community
members to attract these markets and determine the best use of advertising dollars

• Create a “welcome packet” for these groups that includes an event calendar, coupons/discounts from merchants, sample itineraries, etc.
• Work with local enthusiasts in these various areas to identify appropriate social media/publications and encourage them to spread the Silverton brand amongst those groups.

Observation: When visitors arrive by train, consider that there are only two hours to persuade them to come back for a longer trip. Silverton’s marketing materials and presence at the Durango DSNGRR station, and local efforts to greet and guide visitors ought to be reviewed and enhanced if possible.

Recommendations:
• Pre-sell, pre-inform, pre-excite train passengers before they arrive, while on-board the train, and immediately upon their arrival in town.
• Add an interactive display at the DSNGRR station, at the new Durango Welcome Center, and on the train. Seek grants for capital expenses. Utilize student knowledge to develop high-tech programs.
• Provide Meet-and-greet info/hosts upon arrival and at departure.
  • Offer a walking tour with volunteer guides dressed in period costumes (utilize historic resources). Engage local residents including the local theater / summer camp, seniors, students, enthusiastic new residents, long-term residents, members of the Historical Society, etc. to fill this role. Departure hosts should provide information and offer to help train passengers plan to come back for longer trips.
  • Offer bike rentals and maps for active visitors to aid travel to the more distant attractions around town.

Observation: Relentlessly promote what the community has come to take for granted. The natural beauty and amenities of the area have great potential for community development and year-round tourism.
• Natural: Mountains, views, clean air/blue skies, good climate, open spaces, wildlife, fall colors, rivers and streams, and trails.
• Man-made: Victorian-era downtown, Million Dollar Highway, historic narrow gauge train, ski area(s), historic sites, mine tours, picturesque municipal parks, museums, special events and backcountry roads.

Recommendations:
• Collaborate with ski area(s) marketing and adopt niche strategies.
  • Advanced/adventure market (Silverton Mountain).
  • Family, beginner, budget minded (Kendall Mountain).
• Supplement marketing message with other area non-ski activities.
  • Skating, sledding/tubing, cross-country, snowshoeing, snowmobiling
• Identify when visitors or tour groups will be in town and coordinate with area merchants to schedule events, dining and shopping options.

Be true to the town brand and weave it into everything. Find strengths and embrace them. Make this the hook, the beginning and the finale of the visitor’s experience. It is important to be proactive about visitors coming to town. Through marketing and collateral materials, create a measure of anticipation among visitors and exceed their expectations when they arrive.

Observation: Unite around a consistent and compelling message. There should be consistent materials and a cohesive plan to attract groups to town and enhance visitor experience.
Recommendations:

- Capitalize on the history and notoriety of the Million Dollar Highway and its designation as a Colorado Scenic Byway. While it is true that many people are intimidated by the reputation the Million Dollar Highway maintains, acknowledge it and:
  - Consider incorporating the notion of your “Scenic Byway” status into the Visitor’s Center name and/or materials.
  - Create signage and other materials that announce, “you have arrived” and draw travelers to the Visitor’s Center and into the Historic District (see Design section for further ideas).
- Establish eligibility for Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) co-op promotional funding.
- Work with the CTO to identify and obtain funding options for visitor outreach.
- Expand upon growing souvenir revenue opportunities.
- Use marketing materials to reassure travelers about the safety of the Million Dollar Highway.

- Utilize Visitor’s Center staff to contact organized group sales persons, provide outreach, and create packages to support niche markets.
  - Create packages and itineraries for visitors that allow time for exploring Silverton’s diverse history and attractions.
  - Work with hotels, attractions and others to create collateral materials that package Silverton as a place to spend the night or several nights.
  - Work with the Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center staff to identify and cultivate relationships with other initiatives and groups bringing folks to Silverton.
  - Let the Chamber/Visitor Center, and Downtown Champion (whether VISTA, Best and Brightest, or other community leader) take the lead in developing partnerships with prospective tour operators and groups.

- As a general practice, DCI encourages communities to assess the quality of existing events and determine how to increase their impact by adding useful components, rather than creating new events that may be labor intensive while meeting only one or two community objectives. In Silverton, however, there are ideas for events that could meet multiple objectives and bolster the identity of the town as identified by focus group participants. Some ideas for new special events that could draw a larger audience to Silverton include:
  - A Fire Department and Search & Rescue Event, a Warrior Dash that builds upon the strong support of the emergency services community and the rugged mountain theme to further develop Silverton’s image as a great place for extreme outdoors events. The Town could use the proceeds from the event to support a new firehouse or other needs of the emergency management community.
  - Building upon existing initiatives to encourage a stronger partnership with A Theater Group, seniors, youth groups, and the Chamber. Engage youths and seniors in doing interactive portrayals, greeting the train, and showcasing the town’s colorful history as train passengers arrive and depart the station.
  - Voluntourism Events are gaining in popularity with groups paying to come build trails, clean up rivers, paint
the town, etc. Continue to interact with groups like VISTA, Youth Corps, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, etc. and consider proposing Silverton as a location for a day of service or longer term project that would bring volunteers to town. Since a number of people who live in Silverton fell in love with the area while passing through, this could be a great way to attract some new long-term residents.

- Regionalism is important and Silverton maintains an inexorable relationship with the City of Durango. With that in mind, the community should work with the Durango Business Improvement District (BID) and the Railroad to collaboratively review the annual calendar of events. If Silverton can develop an event planning approach that contemplates and complements what Durango is doing, it may be a way to enhance each community’s annual events calendar, bringing more people to Silverton for longer periods of time, while creating a mutually beneficial regional and cross-marketing program.

- A good way to start increasing the length of average visitation to Silverton would be to develop small rack cards with sample itineraries (and maps) for durations of 2 hours, 4 hours, overnight, and the weekend. If these cards are available to people in Durango or before they purchase roundtrip train tickets, it is possible that they may choose to spend more time in Silverton. These itineraries should also be available for download from the Chamber/Visitor Center website (or the one online website that you choose to represent Silverton to the world) and when possible, and should be combined with common themes to opportunities offered in Durango.

- One simple way to engage more people with existing resources might be to include a Silverton ambassador program involving seniors or the Silverton Gunfighters Association to talk about Silverton, its history and things to do in town, during the train ride from Durango.

- Former red light districts and brothels are attractions to be flaunted, and even better if they are haunted! The Blair Street area started to build this image but the full impact is not coming across as much as it could. Think about each street and building and bring their past identities to life by giving specific reasons why each one serves as a “can’t miss” opportunity.

**Economic Restructuring**

The focus of economic restructuring should remain on assisting efforts to recruit, retain and expand opportunities for investment in downtown. This is accomplished by ensuring that investors and business owners are aware of all the entirety of resources available for assistance and benefits of choosing to locate in downtown, including the opportunities that may exist to capitalize on promotional activities. This also works to build strong relationships between downtown businesses, residents, and users.

**Observation:** There are significant untapped resources that could contribute to community development. Silverton has numerous built-in environmental and natural advantages that could be utilized to a greater extent.

**Recommendations:**

- Review and build on the Kendall Mountain Master Plan to identify ways to enhance Kendall Mountain Recreation Center (consider resubmitting to GOCO, etc. with targeted revisions to the plan). Kendall Mountain is an excellent family friendly resource that has the potential of persuading day visitors to stay overnight. Yet as the team learned, this resource is significantly underutilized. Additional opportunities are possible (adult league hockey, group conventions, outdoor festivals) and existing events could be improved to maximize the utility of this community facility. The Chamber/Visitor Center should work
in collaboration with Kendall Mountain and all destination businesses to improve winter marketing and associated business development of the area by including ski areas, snowmobile tours. Evaluate options for installing snowmaking equipment to lengthen the ski season - this might pay for itself with additional skier days. There are some options for supporting equipment purchase through cash collateral programs for business and industry that Colorado Housing and Finance Authority may be able to provide some guidance on how to use.

**Develop resident and business attraction materials highlighting the school as an asset to draw young families.** Emphasis on small class sizes and the school's unique expeditionary learning opportunities serve as unique community assets that should be included in marketing brochures.

**Utilize existing plans for the Animas River corridor and plan for the 98 acres that the town will take title to, in the process considering how these can drive community development.** In 2006, preliminary thoughts and goals were established for the entire corridor from the Lackawanna Mill to the former dumpsite. Build on this earlier activity to gain community buy-in as to future uses of the property. Re-use plans need to be evaluated to determine if they are compatible with the cleanup already accomplished, or whether additional efforts are needed. These plans could also be compatible with Kendall Mountain enhancement activities and future trail plans.

**Prioritize the acquisition and development of locations/venues for groups that contribute to the community or provide matching funds.** Certain institutions and groups are in need of space, and resources are limited. Town could prioritize support for facility acquisition strategies by evaluating proposals from the groups in need.

**Consider development strategies in the town’s economic corridor to take advantage of new infrastructure and potential sales tax revenues from travelers on Highway 550 to complement the existing business environment.** Recent capital improvements such as the water, sewer, and other public infrastructure installation along the Highway 550 corridor at the Anvil Mountain Housing site provide an opportunity for a public/private partnership. It may be possible for the County to work with the property owners and developers to plan a well-designed, mixed-use commercial area that takes advantage of the significant traffic counts along the roadway. This development could accomplish two things: getting passers-by to stop and spend or providing them with information about the resources and services available in Silverton. Adopt zoning measures to ensure that uses and services located near the highway bring in new business and sales tax, rather than negatively impact the downtown area.

**Observation:** There are insufficient financing and support opportunities for property owners and business owners.

**Recommendations:**
* Further develop the Power Plant incubator business park and encourage those businesses to develop a downtown presence. Opportunities might exist for existing and future companies located at the incubator area to market their products in a downtown location.

* Develop a downtown artists’ co-op that could include retail sales as well as work/studio space with connections to business and marketing. Consider live-work programs to create affordable housing/artist space downtown.

* Develop incentives to encourage business and property development (for example, waiving or amortizing tap fees to assist in
business start-up.) This is a business friendly strategy where fees are paid over time to minimize startup costs when available funds are tight. Establish clear criteria (i.e. generation of NEW sales tax revenue or job creation) that justify the incentives. For businesses that generate new sales tax revenue, a sales tax incentive may be offered under Colorado law.

- Consider how best to market opportunities for bartering and cross sharing of services. The idea that people barter is unique and offers a great value. See options in the organization section for creating a "skills clearing house" to help folks identify neighbors for trading opportunities.
- Collaborate with Region 9, Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Workforce Center (in Durango) to provide a menu of services, training and financing tools for local businesses.
- Ensure town, county and fire departments collaborate to offer a one-stop, consistent and business friendly permitting processes. The hiring of a planner with dual responsibilities is a step in the right direction to ensure continuity and consistency. Regulatory groups that deal with small businesses should make a collaborative effort to eliminate redundancies or contradictions in the development review process. Ensure that provisions of the International Building Code (IBC) and International Residential Code (IRC) are not only adopted but also amended so as to encourage the restoration and re-use of existing historic buildings. The Town, County and other entities are already working to hold specialized staff training, which should be an effort undertaken annually or at regular intervals.

Observation: Silverton’s economy is dependent on one seasonal source (summer tourism) but has opportunities to build on the beginning stages of diversification.

Recommendations:
- Assess business workforce needs and what is required to fill vacancies in the slow season. Interface with school, Workforce Center and other entities to train the future workforce. Support internship and apprenticeship programs. Identify job niches such as summer and winter tour guides, or mine lands reclamation – that could be growing industries.
- Recognize and collaborate with mining reclamation entities for future job creation. Animas River Stakeholders group has had discussions about the area serving as a high altitude test facility for innovative reclamation technologies. Besides developing a wider presence in world markets, this may provide an opportunity for local economic development and future jobs.
- Continue to pursue workforce housing programs consistent with Silverton’s needs (e.g. deed restricted, sweat equity, weatherization programs). Develop sweat equity programs along with financing or other assistance to those who want to build or finish a home, in exchange for a deed restriction. Currently, improved lots are available at Anvil Mountain subdivision (developed by San Juan County) and it would benefit the community to have a range of housing types constructed there. This would also assist in enhancing winter livability options.
- Understand markets through point of sales survey, consumer profiles, and assessing viable market niches to better serve locals or visitors.

Observation: Installation of fiber optic technology to support the Town’s communications and information systems will change the business environment. Assuming these improvements, Silverton should implement a strategy to attract location-neutral businesses.
Recommendations:
- Attract an Internet Service Provider (ISP) to lease fiber and provide connection directly to homes and businesses. Explore the pros/cons of several approaches, including: waiting for the market to propose a solution; letting a Request for Proposal (RFP) to attract a private provider; or create a non-profit or cooperative ISP provider.
- Put together a comprehensive marketing program highlighting the advantages of living and doing business in Silverton with the aim of attracting location-neutral businesses. This should build on the business support services identified in above recommendations.

Design
Successful community design approaches take advantage of the opportunities inherent in downtown areas by directing attention to all of the physical elements present: public and private buildings, storefronts, streetscapes, signs, public spaces, landscaping, merchandising, displays, and promotional materials. It is important for a community to acknowledge the importance of design quality in all of these areas, to inform people about positive design options and to encourage improvements in the downtown. At the forefront of many community design efforts is the restoration of historic buildings to help preserve and enhance the downtown’s sense of place.

Observation: There is a lack of connection, both physical and visual, in the downtown area.

Recommendations:
- Create a cohesive package of signage and wayfinding measures that is oriented to both pedestrians and motorists. Ideas include updating all signage in terms of font and appearance to address various user types. Consult with experts to evaluate existing signage through an assessment process with people from within and outside of the community. The Visitor’s Center and the highway triangle represent a gateway entry opportunity for Silverton. Utilize native plantings and wildflowers within these areas to enhance the “front door” into the community, and consider locating implements from the mining era or other features there. Continue with repairs and improvements to the Visitor’s Center.
- A major banner or permanent overhead structure welcoming people to Silverton could be developed over Greene Street to draw people off of the highway and into downtown. If designed correctly, the banner feature could be changed to announce upcoming town events. Consider high winds that are common in the valley when designing the structure.
- Rework the “information station” signage to be user-friendlier at the three entrances into town: Visitor’s Center, train drop-off area, and ATV staging area. Clearly and concisely identify eating, shopping, and lodging facilities.
- Improve the restrooms at Columbine Park with a comprehensive, quality upgrade. Plan for on-going maintenance and use the Capital Improvements Plan budget for funding this public amenity.
- Add pedestrian scale lighting to the historic downtown (BP Zone area). Historic light poles and fixtures can begin to tie Blair Street and Greene Street together with a unified theme. Respect “dark skies” standards. Coordinate fiber optic and street lighting improvements by placing both conduits in the ground at the time.
**Observation:** Opportunities exist for seasonal beautification of the downtown area.

**Recommendations:**
- Consider seasonal planters in the downtown area and ensure they are removable during the winter season. Continue to unify the themes present on Greene and Blair Streets by installing pedestrian scale street lighting and incorporating elements of Silverton’s historic mining and railroading past.
- Winter season snow removal operations could be utilized to support a festival or event opportunity. Continue to build on the initiative of the Skijoring event and develop other events that use the snow removal as an event component. Consider a snow sculpture event for the center of Greene Street.
- Address building storefronts that are closed in the offseason. There should be an established preference for leaving store windows uncovered and lit to maintain an “occupied” business district during the winter off season. The town should consider an ordinance to better regulate and/or support seasonal business closures toward this endeavor.

**Observation:** Vacant lots detract from the overall appearance of the downtown core.

**Recommendation:**
Coordinate a community effort to address cluttered and unattractive vacant lots. Develop an ordinance to address public safety and weed control, while seeking opportunities for art exhibits, outdoor dining, pocket parks and educational displays that could utilize antique cars, trucks, and/or train-related nostalgia. Controlling weeds and planting wildflowers in these areas would be a simple way to enhance the community’s overall appearance. The State of Colorado is currently encouraging the Town and the County to work in concert to work on weed control. For harmless weeds in planters, these types of projects are something that gardening groups can volunteer to do, that school classes can be trained work on, etc.

**Observation:** While most historic commercial buildings are occupied, the condition of the buildings varies and some face deterioration or difficulties in accommodating tenants.

**Recommendation:**
- Develop a loan / grant program for building and façade improvements with the help of Region 9, USDA and the State Historical Fund. Research other community initiatives such as Golden’s Building Improvement Grant program.
- Utilize the existing downtown design standards. The community leaders have adopted standards that reflect the vision we hear from the community, but it is necessary to enforce them if you will carry that vision forward. Consider offering or requiring design assistance to ensure quality designs for projects that receive assistance. If Silverton becomes a “Main Street” candidate, DOLA Main Street may provide design assistance.

**Observation:** The community has incredible pride and excitement about the history and appearance of its downtown.
Recommendations:
• Concentrate on the restoration and maintenance of historic structures in the downtown area. Previously, Silverton used a State Historic Fund/National Park Service grant, to identify over 120 historically significant structures in town. This dual grant award allowed the Town to begin a process of surveying each individual property, but due to time limitations, only thirty or so properties were surveyed. As such, there are still nearly 100 historically significant properties that should be formally assessed – structurally and otherwise – via the completion of formal survey forms by a certified historical preservation specialist. An assessment should be done to determine the structural conditions of these buildings and an exterior façade renovation program should be considered.
• Develop a youth summer employment program that both engages kids and beautifies the downtown area. A “Silverton Rangers” program could be developed or there may be other examples like Colorado Preservation Incorporated’s Historic Corps, Southwest Conservation Corps or Lake City’s Youth Corps.
• Add historic interpretive signage to the downtown area (see Victor, CO as an example).

Observation: The youth vision statement focuses on recreation, shopping, and safety.

Recommendation: Actively involve youth on issues that matter to them so they will be more invested in the community. The youth vision statement expresses the need for expanded recreational and shopping opportunities as well as the continuation of a safe, small town environment. The next generation has already stated what matters to them, so now is the time to get them involved in these issues. The vision statement suggests the desire for a number of recreational projects including the construction of a skate park and improvements to the Town’s existing ice rink and soccer field. Consider organizing a youth-adult partnership to work on these projects. An example of this approach can be found in Waupaca, Wisconsin a community that implemented a youth engagement program known as “the Healthy Communities – Healthy Youth Initiative.” Since 2006, they have successfully built a new skateboard park for the town, developed volunteer opportunities for youth, created a youth-led philanthropy committee, and created voting seats for youth on the city council. (See Appendix for details and more information on youth engagement resources.)

Participating Stakeholders
• Silverton/San Juan County Ambulance Association
• Mountain Studies Institute
• Silverton School
• San Juan County
• San Juan County Sheriff’s Office
• Blair Street Historic District Association
• Silverton/San Juan County Regional Planning Commission
• San Juan County Historical Society
• Silverton Gunfighters Association
• Vidion Communications (Silverton cable company)
• San Miguel Power Association
• Silverton Mountain Events

Youth Engagement

Observation: Silverton has done a wonderful job of engaging its youth by conducting a youth survey and developing a youth vision statement. This process should be continued with a formal program.

Recommendation: Create a formal system for engaging youth in community matters, e.g., youth advisory council or a voting presence on community committees. The Durango Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council is a great model for this type of program.
Funding Mechanisms

Local Funding Sources

County Lodging Tax, 2% assessment on all lodging transactions
- Approximately $45,000 annually. Revenues are currently appropriated to the San Juan County Tourism Board, which makes recommendations to the County Commissioners on spending decisions.
- Town Lodging Fee, additional $2.00/night on hotel/motel stays; $1.00/night on all camping stays, this revenue stream brings in about the same amount each year as the County Lodging Tax –approximately $45,000.
- By resolution, revenues are restricted annually to Visitor’s Center operations, recreation and park administration needs.
- Town Business License Fees
- Consider earmarking the funds in the budget for downtown improvements.
- Severance Tax Direct Distribution
- The last two years the town received between $34,000 and $41,000 from the direct distribution of state severance tax dollars. Currently the town places these funds in the General Fund. We recommend the town allocate all or a portion or all of these funds to downtown capital improvements.
- City General Funds
- Silverton voters approved a 1% additional sales tax in 2008 for capital investments. This generates approximately $130,000 annually. Consider using a portion of this sales tax for downtown capital projects.
- Consider forming a Downtown Development Authority (DDA)*See Below.
- DDA can be a taxing district and can use tax increment financing to help market and improve downtown.
- Region 9 façade Loan Program and Region 9 Business Loan Program
- The Downtown Revitalization/Retail Enhancement program is intended to encourage the revitalization of core downtown business areas: beautification of downtown buildings, bring buildings up to code.
- The funds are targeted for building and esthetic improvements. Businesses need to be in the central business district.
- The business loan program provides lower interest loans to downtown businesses.
- Downtown Revolving Loan Fund
- Create and capitalize a locally based incentive program for commercial building investments. The fund would be targeted toward improvement projects that enhance the appeal of downtown properties.
State Resources

Department of Local Affairs
Energy and Mineral Impact Grants
• Tier I and 2 grants are available for town-owned infrastructure in the downtown district such as streetscape, Visitor’s Center (pending), Columbine Park, Kendall Mountain Recreation Center. Local match funds for these projects can be appropriated from various town sources mentioned above or from other grant awards.

The DOLA Main Street Program offers technical assistance, architectural and design services, and mini-grants (as funding becomes available) to recognized Candidate, Main Streets and Graduate Main Street communities.

Colorado Creative Industries designates creative districts and provides technical assistance and limited funding to promote economic development through a broad range of arts and creative industries.

4CORE and/or San Miguel Power Association: Their respective financial and/or technical assistance resources may be utilized toward the completion of our historic downtown lighting project.

State Historical Fund
• Silverton is a historical district as defined and recognized by the State Historical Society. Funds are available for structural assessment, acquisition, preservation and rehabilitation of historic preservation of buildings in Silverton. The State Historical Fund also finances educational and interpretive projects, including heritage tourism, as well as historic surveys.
• Historic Preservation Tax Credits: The Federal and State tax credit programs are useful to owners of historic buildings, and are often critical components in rehabilitating any sizeable building. Some owners and developers are experienced in using these credits.
• The Colorado Tourism Office Marketing Matching Grant Program provides funding to not-for-profit organizations in the State of Colorado for the purpose of promoting the state or a region as a tourism destination. For more information, visit the website http://www.colorado.com/marketing-matching-grant-program.

CDOT Enhancement Grants

GOCO funds for planning, acquisition and development are a potential funding source for renovations and/or expansion to the Town’s parks and other recreational assets, most significantly, the Kendall Mountain Recreation Area.
• The town is encouraged to pursue grants opportunities by leveraging local dollars as matching funds. It should be noted that it is an appropriate practice to concurrently submit grant applications to both state and federal grant pools in order fund one particular project. As an example, a Main Street streetscape improvement project could utilize both DOLA Energy Impact funds and CDOT Enhancement funds. In turn, the Town government and the DDA could jointly supply the necessary matching funds. If the Town doesn’t for a DDA, work with your DOLA regional manager to identify other potential sources of funds.
• Some public facilities may be able to utilize both GOCO and Energy Impact funds

Other Opportunities and Funding for Business and Economic Development

Small Business Development Centers
• Business plan consulting is available for businesses in Silverton through the services of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at Fort Lewis College.
EPA Brownfields Program
• This program provides direct funding for both brownfields assessment and cleanup.
• Colorado Brownfields Foundation can assist in securing funding for Phase I studies and provide guidance for moving forward with properties in need of remediation.

USDA
• USDA Rural Development has various programs for public facilities, energy efficiency programs and economic development, including funding for grants, loans and revolving loan funds through programs such as Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) and Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG). USDA also provides financing for home purchases, rehab or sweat equity construction.

Many Colorado Foundations accept the Colorado Common Grant application and fund a variety of projects specific to their mission. Research foundations accepting the Common Grant and attend the next Rural Philanthropy Days for Southwest Colorado.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation offers small grants ($5,000 - $10,000) for projects in Colorado.

Various funding for Arts, place making and community development – such as National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town grant or the private ArtPlace grants.

“Crowdfunding” options allow the community to identify a project (small and large) that it would like to focus on and then promote local donations, maybe directed at local business, train passengers, or others to make small to medium individual donations. The process usually works to set a goal and if the goal is not met, the funds are not drawn from donor accounts.

Recommendation: Consider creating a financing mechanism to fund long-term enhancements and management of the commercial district. While this is just one option that Silverton might pursue, the assessment team believes this option to be viable and able to assist with financing and managing the change and growth the community would like to see.

A Downtown Development Authority (DDA) enables businesses and property owners to work together to strengthen the central business district by generating funding from property and/or sales tax in the district that can be reinvested into projects and programs that benefit the area.

By legal definition, a DDA is a quasi-municipal corporation that is intended to halt or prevent deterioration of property values or structures in the central business districts. Funds can be generated by a DDA through a variety of options, including:
• Tax increment financing (TIF) on property
• Tax increment financing on sales
• Up to 5 mil property tax for operations

Any or all of these options may be utilized in order to maintain the operations of a DDA. Once created, the DDA can continue collecting TIF and the mill levy for up to 30 years before the district must be dissolved and a new DDA created.

Unlike an Urban Redevelopment Authority (which also captures TIF increment financing but does not allow for a mil levy), the creation of a DDA does not require a finding of blight. The only restriction imposed is on where the DDA can be established, which by law must be within the central business district and/or the area traditionally considered as such.

A Downtown Development Authority has the power to:
• Acquire property;
• Construct and equip improvements;
• Lease and sell property; and
• Establish fees, rates and charges for the use of property.

A plan of development, describing the proposed improvements, must be approved by the Town and shall include, but may not be limited to:
• Streets;
• Parks;
• Plazas;
• Parking facilities;
• Pedestrian malls; and
• Rights-of-way.

The process for the creation of a DDA, including plan development, consensus building, ordinance drafting and adoption, is likely to take at least a year from start to finish. Typically, the final day toward the establishment of a DDA is Election Day, so the creation process should start accordingly.

Once created, a Board of Directors governs the DDA with 5-11 members, including at least one Town Council member. These board members are appointed by the Town Board of Trustees and serve 4-year terms.

**Step One: Form Stakeholder Group**
Understanding that volunteer challenges exist, the Town Board may appoint a downtown/commercial district blue ribbon/steering committee (BRC) comprised of representatives from:
• Town Trustees (1-2)
• Town staff
• The Chamber of Commerce
• Business owners (2-3)
• Historical district business owner

We recommend that the committee be five-seven people to keep the process manageable. The BRC will engage the downtown business community in developing a final commercial district management and development plan, which will then be presented to Town Council. The town may consider using the one-year efforts of its ad hoc downtown revitalization group as a stepping stone in the creation of this committee and the below development plan.

**Step Two: Problem & Solution Identification**
The first meeting (within one month of Council action appointing the BRC) will be organizational in nature with co-chairs being chosen to manage meetings and delegate responsibilities. Action items will include the identification of current and future challenges the BRC perceives in improving the commercial district, whether they are physical, financial or political. Consensus on the existing “problems” ensures consistent messaging during the public engagement process. The BRC will then brainstorm on services that are to be delivered by the DDA to address the issues identified.

The second BRC meeting will be organized with the goal of developing a Plan of Development, which is the guiding document for a DDA. The Plan is really a “plan of action” for the DDA that outlines what the organization can do. The initial planning document (pre-DDA formation) should focus on summarizing the needs/problems that the community currently does not have funding nor staff resources to address and the proposed DDA solution. This initial plan should also identify effective communication tools to conduct thorough public awareness about the DDA tool, voting process, and to maximize meeting attendance and methods for data collection.

The commercial district Plan of Development should evolve over this time and incorporate public input to ensure the Plan is clear and well supported. The Town should be involved in this process, but it may be beneficial to involve outside facilitation to ensure that the diverse groups feel that they are heard. If a consultant is an option, it is suggested. If not, consider working with your DOLA Regional Manager or Downtown Colorado, Inc. to identify how to facilitate these meetings more affordably.
The district Plan of Development should also specifically identify the vision for what will be done and how funds will be allocated. A final presentation will be made to Town Board with a business district recommendation that is supported by a Plan of Development document.

Upon the Town Board’s endorsement of the business district Plan of Development (forming a DDA), the last task of the BRC will be to identify a community group that will proceed in implementing the plan. Ideally, some members of the BRC will stay on board while others, representing the community’s different interest groups, will be added.

**Estimated Revenue**

Rough estimates of the Assessed Value in a Silverton Downtown District (Boundary 8th to 14th Streets, Blair and Greene Streets): **$7,628,015.**

Each mill levy would generate $7,628. The five mil maximum mil levy would generate $38,140 annually

**Possible Uses**

The potential revenue identified above would allow the DDA to hire an executive director who would be in charge of implementing the DDA plan. It is very important to have a staff position to manage this process. Additionally, however, this position could be shared with the Town of Silverton and the DDA revenues saved could be used for other projects. The team encourages the community to consider how the school, county, and non-profit communities might also contribute to this entity that will benefit all of these community groups. The Town might consider options, like the Best and Brightest program, where the State or other sources could match the funds generated by the DDA. The DDA could also manage contracts for services to the community as long as the services fit into the Plan of Development, for example events, marketing, additional snow removal, clean up, etc.

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**Silverton Capital Projects**

**Visitor Center and Entrance to Town**

The Visitor’s Center is overdue for repairs. It may take several phases for the town to complete the necessary maintenance and renovations.

- Prepare and submit grant applications to DOLA and SHF to assist with Phase I renovations. SHF has grants up to $35,000. Work closely with CDOT.
- Phase II to include Entrance to Town.
- Utilize Town funds to leverage grants.

**Columbine Park**

Renovations to Columbine Park are long overdue. Save the historical Town Hall front facade and demolish the remainder of the building. Add vacant land to the existing Columbine Park thereby making the area a more attractive space.

- GOCO may be a funding option for portions of the improvements such as the public restrooms renovation.
- If included as part of a Main Street project, DOLA may also serve as a viable funding source.
- Utilize Town funds to leverage grants.

**Kendall Mountain Recreation Area**

Repairs to the Recreation Center will allow for the anticipated greater use. Consider a public-private partnership to allow community uses and the ability to tap into grants from DOLA and USDA. For improvements the the Recreation Area consider DOLA and/or or GOCO grants and local funds.

**Broadband and Electric Phase I**

Install fiber optics from the school to town and county buildings by using unpaved Blair and Reese Streets. Concurrently run electrical conduit beneath Greene and Blair Streets in order to service future historic lighting.

**Phase II**

- Together with stakeholders, design a sidewalk and street lighting project for both
Blair and Greene Streets.

- Seek grant funding to assist with financing for the street light project and sidewalks on Blair and Greene Streets. San Miguel Power Association has funds available for efficiency projects and to be the primary partner on efforts to use historic LED lighting.
- Further partnering for grant match dollars could come in the form of a property owner Assessment District and/or from the Town’s General Fund revenues.

Skate Park
A Skate Park would be an asset for the youth of Silverton as well as an attraction for visitors. The Kendall Mountain Recreation Area would be a good site for the skate park.

Team Member Bios

Joe Carter
Regional Assistant, Colorado Department of Local Affairs
Joe Carter has worked in public and private sector planning and landscape architecture for over seventeen years. He is a licensed landscape architect with a background in urban planning, residential and commercial land planning and landscape architecture, land use policy, and entitlement process formulation. Joe has been with the Department of Local Affairs for almost three years and works with small communities on the public and private sector interface, Energy Impact Assistance Fund and Community Development Block Grant projects, and planning technical assistance. A resident of Colorado for almost two decades, Joe enjoys working with Western Colorado communities as a partner on infrastructure improvement projects. He is a graduate of the University of Georgia with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture and is currently enrolled in the Masters of Public Administration program at University of Colorado Denver.

Ken Charles
Regional Manager, Colorado Department of Local Affairs
Ken Charles began his career with the Department of Local Affairs in 1988 in the Department’s Durango Office. He works with local governments in the Southwest Region, which includes eight counties. His responsibilities are tied to the needs and issues the local governments are experiencing and fluctuate as the issue change and acts as the liaison for the Department with local governments. This includes individual project development, budget and financial management, elections, various land use management and planning roles, goal setting and counsel to local governments. Additionally, he manages the Department’s grant contracts in the region. Ken particularly enjoys assisting local governments with developing projects, be it a capital project or planning, or helping draft intergovernmental agreements and resolutions, or assisting with Town/county manager recruitment processes, to highlight a few. He has received training at the Nation’s Emergency Management Institute in Recovery from Disaster and in Public Assistance. He managed the Governor’s Rural Healthcare Initiative for the Department.

Marc Cittone
Main Street Specialist, Colorado Department of Local Affairs
Marc Cittone, AICP joined the Colorado Department of Local Affairs as a Main Street Specialist in May 2011. Prior to this position, Marc served as historic preservation planner and worked on downtown revitalization and land use planning issues for the City of Loveland, Colorado. Marc managed several rehabilitation grants for housing, commercial and heritage tourism sites; managed a downtown zoning update process; oversaw downtown market and parking assessments; and supported various land use planning projects. Marc has also worked in affordable housing and in open space outreach for the City of Boulder.
Katherine Correll  
**Executive Director, Downtown Colorado, Inc.**  
Katherine Correll has experience spanning the fields of community outreach to advance downtown and community development, not-for-profit administration, project development and management, local government planning, marketing, financial and economic development services, and education. Katherine joined Downtown Colorado, Inc. as the director of communications and operations in 2006; in 2007 she became the executive director. Born and raised in Denver, Colorado, Katherine has worked with development initiatives in Denver, New York, Chicago, and the former Soviet Union. Her focus on strategic planning and organizational development and management includes building viable and sustainable private, public, and non-for-profit institutions and programs. Prior to her current position, Katherine managed the American Councils’ portfolio for the Republic of Moldova, focusing on building civil society initiatives, education, and public administration reforms. She was also responsible for management and growth of the American Language Center, language and professional training school. Katherine received her master’s degree in Public Administration from Rutgers University and her bachelor’s degree in Politics with a minor in Urban Studies from New York University.

Bob Kunkel  
**Special Events and Business Coordinator, City of Durango**  
Bob Kunkel has been actively involved in resort and community development since moving to Colorado in 1971. In his professional career he has worked in all three areas of public education, private business and civil service. After several years as a classroom teacher and administrator for Denver Public Schools he spent 30 years in Colorado’s expanding resort and tourism industry. After 8 years in numerous management positions at Copper Mountain, Bob moved into Vice President position for the next 16 years at Winter Park and then Vail/Beaver Creek. Bob then started a tourism consulting business serving clients in Colorado and in Austria. He then joined a new ownership/management team as Senior Vice President for Durango Mountain Resort. His broad range of experience in resort operations, tourism marketing and community development led him into his third career with the City of Durango managing the Central Business District. Bob has served on numerous Boards at the state and local levels. Bob did his graduate work at CU Boulder in commercial recreation. He also has an MBA and certificate in international business from CU Denver.

Kimberlee McKee  
**Executive Director, Longmont Downtown Development Authority**  
Kimberlee McKee has been the Executive Director of the Longmont Downtown Development Authority since 2011. Prior to taking this position, she was the President of the Downtown Akron Partnership, a Special Improvement District in Akron, Ohio. Through her experience in both a DDA and SID, she has worked with a diverse group of stakeholders and municipal leaders to develop projects, programs and events. Throughout her career she has specialized in strategic programs, marketing and event management.

Jon Schler  
**Historic Preservation and Urban Design Consultant**  
Jon has worked on hundreds of community-based projects over the past thirty-two years, providing technical and community development assistance to Colorado’s rural communities. He advocates as well as works on historic preservation, downtown improvement, regional and community partnerships, the inclusion of art & culture, heritage tourism programs, trails as well as Scenic and Historic Byway use. He has worked extensively with the national Main Street model for the last twenty years, working on
organizational development, design, economic restructuring, marketing and promotion. Mr. Schler is presently on the Board of the Colorado Historical Society. He is a past president of Colorado Preservation, Inc. and was a commission member of Grand Junction’s Art on the Corner for 15 years. He is presently the president of both the Western Colorado Botanical Society and the Western Colorado Interpretive Association. For nine years, Jon was an ex-officio member of the board of the Downtown Colorado Inc., as well as a state advisor for the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Mark Walker  
Project Manager, Colorado Brownfields Foundation  
Mark joined Colorado Brownfields Foundation in 2009 after leaving state employment to continue his work in the Brownfields arena. Mark was employed for 20 years with state and local health departments in Colorado, and formerly coordinated Colorado’s Voluntary Cleanup Program since its inception in 1994. He also served on a national task force of the states dealing with issues unique to voluntary cleanup and brownfields programs. Prior to joining Colorado’s Voluntary Cleanup Program, Mr. Walker worked for three years with Colorado’s Underground Storage Tank Program. In the early years of the Brownfields Initiative, he completed an assignment with the EPA Region 8 Brownfields Program. Most recently he served in a liaison capacity with other state agencies and non-profits in promoting Brownfields and economic development. Mark holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Microbiology and a Master’s Degree in Environmental Health from Colorado State University.

Emerging Leader Team Support

Crystal Edmunds  
OSM/VISTA Coal Creek Watershed Coalition  
Crystal is from Perrysburg, OH and attended Ohio University in Athens, OH. She graduated with a BS in Journalism with a concentration in Asian Studies, and made it to CO for graduate school at the University of Denver to study global finance, trade and economic integration with certificates in geographic information systems and humanitarian assistance. Her degree is part of the Masters International program, and she intends to serve as an agriculture and forestry volunteer in the Peace Corps after working with the Coal Creek Watershed Coalition. She is currently a watershed coordinator with the Coal Creek Watershed Coalition in Crested Butte, Colorado, which is part of the Western Hardrock Watershed Team.

Isabel Waldman  
OSM/VISTA Downtown Colorado, Inc.  
Isabel Waldman is a graduate of the University of Oregon where she received a bachelor’s degree in International Studies with a concentration in Environmental Studies and a minor in Planning, Public Policy, and Management. Her field of study gave her the opportunity to study community development and resource planning in Chile and Bolivia. Isabel grew up in Colorado and is currently serving as the OSM/VISTA for Downtown Colorado, Inc., which is part of the Western Hardrock Watershed Team.