



WRITTEN REPORT

To: Honorable Mayor Clark and Ridgway Town Council
From: Preston Neill, Town Manager
Date: August 9, 2020
RE: **Town Manager's Report**

INTRODUCTION

This report serves as an update to Council on key projects, activities and community issues.

RIDGWAY'S IDA DARK SKY COMMUNITY DESIGNATION

Click on the link below to listen to a recent CPR story about Ridgway's IDA Dark Sky Community designation featuring local Val Szwarc!

www.cpr.org/show-segment/ridgway-has-a-dark-distinction/

GALLAGHER BALLOT MEASURE

The Gallagher Amendment was referred to Colorado voters by the legislature in 1982 in response to voters' concerns about rising residential property taxes as a result of the state's rapid population growth in the 1970's. At that time, residential property in Colorado made up about 45% of total property value in the state, with other classes of property such as commercial property, agriculture land, vacant land, industrial property and public utilities making up the other 55%. The Gallagher Amendment proposed to freeze that ratio of the total value of residential property (45%) to the total value of non-residential property (55%) forever. Colorado voters adopted the Gallagher Amendment in 1982.

In their 2020 session, the Colorado legislature – with strong bi-partisan support – referred the following proposal to the November ballot which asks Colorado voters to repeal the Gallagher Amendment:

"Without increasing property tax rates, to help preserve funding for local districts that provide fire protection, police, ambulance, hospital, kindergarten through twelfth grade education, and other services, and to avoid automatic mill levy increases, shall there be an amendment to the Colorado constitution to repeal the requirement that the general assembly periodically change the residential assessment rate in order to maintain the statewide proportion of residential property as compared to all other taxable property valued for property tax purposes and repeal the nonresidential property tax assessment rate of twenty-nine percent?"



The legislature's proposal would do three things:

1. It would repeal the "Gallagher Amendment" which has frozen the ratio of the total value of residential property (45%) to the total value of non-residential property (55%) since 1982, thus stopping the continued formulaic erosion of the residential assessment rate and freezing it at the current 7.15% rate in the same way that the assessment rate for every other class of property has historically been frozen at 29%.
2. It would repeal the constitution's reference to a "21%" residential assessment rate which was the initial baseline rate established in 1982. (If this reference were NOT repealed, then repealing the Gallagher Amendment's "45:55" formula alone would trigger the residential assessment rate to immediately jump from the current 7.15% back to the initial 21% rate. By repealing this "21%" reference, repealing the Gallagher Amendment will simply result in maintaining the CURRENT 7.15% residential assessment rate without future formulaic decreases.)
3. It would also remove from the constitution the assessment rates for all OTHER classes of non-residential property (e.g. commercial, agriculture land, industrial property, etc.), thus leaving all property tax assessment rates to be referenced only in STATUTE rather than the constitution. The effect of only referencing all assessment rates in statute would be that the LEGISLATURE would have the authority to potentially REDUCE any of those assessment rates in the future, whereas the TABOR Amendment would still require a statewide vote of the people to INCREASE the assessment rate on any class of property.

It's important to clarify that the proposed ballot measure would NOT raise or lower any property tax rate; it would simply stop the continued formulaic reduction of the residential rate in the future.

GRANT FUNDING FOR OURAY COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT VICTIM SERVICES PROGRAM

The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice recently notified the Town that the Crime Victim Services (CVS) Advisory Board recommended the Town for funding up to the amount of \$55,768.00 in Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds! These funds will go a long way in assisting the Ouray County Law Enforcement Victim Services Program and may potentially reduce the cost to the three agencies (Town of Ridgway, City of Ouray, and Ouray County). A huge shout out goes out to Elaine Wood and Shane Schmalz for all their hard work in putting the application together for submittal.

In addition, the Town recently submitted a grant application through the Local Victim Assistance and Law Enforcement (VALE) Program. This program provides grant funding to agencies that provide services to crime victims within Local Judicial Districts. For us that's the 7th Judicial District. VALE funds are being requested in the amount of \$22,146.72 to assist the Ouray County Law Enforcement Victim Services Program.



GHG POLLUTION REDUCTION ROADMAP

HB19-1261 established science-based targets for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution 50% by 2030 and 90% below 2005 levels by 2050. Several state agencies are developing a GHG Pollution Reduction Roadmap of actions that will reduce greenhouse gas pollution. The Roadmap will establish the 2005 greenhouse gas pollution baseline and will also assess the effects of recent legislative and administrative policy changes on meeting the state's GHG pollution targets. Finally, the Roadmap will evaluate additional pathways to ensure timely progress toward the state's GHG pollution reduction goals.

The public is invited to attend a conversation about the Roadmap on August 12, 2020 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. MT via Zoom. State staff will give an overview of the Roadmap and state climate equity work with time dedicated to listening to questions and input. Registration is required. To register, please click [HERE](#).

2020 CENSUS UPDATE

The Census Bureau began their Non-Response Follow-Up (NRFU) operation in Colorado last week. NRFU enables the Census Bureau to ensure that they achieve a 100% count in communities by reaching folks who have not yet self-responded to the 2020 Census. The easiest way to avoid having a Census enumerator visit your residence is to self-respond TODAY.

The Town of Ridgway's self-response rate currently sits at 61.5%. The self-response rate includes responses from households that responded to the 2020 Census online, by mail, or by phone. Colorado's self-response rate currently sits at 66.5% and the national self-response rate is at 63.2%. Response rate rankings are featured at <https://public.tableau.com/profile/us.census.bureau#!/vizhome/2020CensusSelf-ResponseRankings/RankingsDashboard>. Ridgway is currently tied for 8,613th place in the "Rankings by City."

PLANNING UPDATE

From Shay Coburn, Town Planner:

Building Permits

It appears as if building permits are holding somewhat steady. As of the end of July in 2019 we had issued 22 permits total. That number is exactly the same for 2020. However, in 2019 of those 22 permits there were 14 new single-family homes plus 2 ADUs and for 2020 there were only 8 new single-family homes plus two ADUs with a lot more residential additions and remodels.



Park Pavilion

The Pavilion has taken shape! The initial framing work shows the massing and scale of the building. Framing will continue for another few weeks. We are seeking volunteers to help stain the T & G decking that will make up the ceiling inside the Pavilion. Please spread the word!

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES UPDATE

From Diedra Silbert, Community Initiatives Facilitator:



Ridgway Space to Create

Architectural concept drawings have recently been updated to conform again more fully with Planning Commission intent and requirements. Responses to Artspace's request for bid for investors to purchase the low-income housing tax credits awarded to the project indicated that investors are a bit jittery in this election and pandemic-impacted year. (Investors' purchase of the tax credits provides the liquid funds necessary to pay for construction costs.) Groundbreaking seems more likely in the spring than this fall because of this.

Business Grant Program

As of August 3rd, and the close of applications for this grant, 30 applications were approved and funds awarded, totaling \$9,068, to assist businesses with restarting/reopening costs due to the pandemic. The remaining funds from the \$10,000 grant will purchase additional hand sanitizer and PPE to be made available for businesses, organizations, and the community. Our small businesses and organizations expressed their gratitude to the Town and Colorado Creative Industries for these repurposed funds.

Heritage Park/Visitor Center Improvements

The 2020 Main Street mini-grant (\$5,000), to be completed by the end of the year, is still being planned in conjunction with the Ridgway Chamber and according to the Heritage Park/Visitor Center plan. If you have any thoughts about specific 2020 priorities for the implementation of this grant, please let Diedra or Preston know.

Colorado Creative Corridor

A subcommittee of the Creative Advocacy Team selected these three Creatives to be filmed in early September: Cimarron Art Glass, Bluecorn Beeswax, and Alice Billings. Filming will focus on sights and sounds more than words. In addition to highlighting these Creatives representing Ridgway in this short video about the Creative Corridor, filming will take place on Clinton St. and feature Ridgway's dark skies as well.



Ridgway Independent Film Festival

Short films are still being sought by September 25th for the sixth year of this local film festival. Though it will likely need to be a virtual festival in early November because of the pandemic, the RCD Creative Advocacy Team subcommittee still intends to make it happen with the Sherbino as a partner. Films can be submitted at <https://filmfreeway.com/ridgwayindependentfilmfest>.

PUBLIC WORKS UPDATE

From Chase Jones, Public Works Services Administrator:

Stormwater Standards

The Stormwater Standards are going through their final staff review. Staff is looking to have a draft out for public comment shortly and be in the position to adopt the document at the September Town Council meeting. This is being done so the public has a number of weeks to read the standards before adoption, as was requested with the other recently adopted standards.

Lena Street Utility Replacement Project

Replacing the water and sewer main in Lena Street between Otto St. and Charles St. is underway. The contractor started at Otto St. with the sewer line and are working south. One block and a manhole are complete. The second block is halfway done and by the release of this update will likely be complete. Using elevations shot in during this first phase, the engineer will need to confirm the water line plans. Once this is complete the contractor will begin on the water main. A temporary water line will be installed for residents while this main is being replaced. Disruptions should be very minimal and only occur while services are being transferred from the water main and the temporary water line. Construction is about one week behind schedule with an anticipated completion date in late August or early September.

Water Restrictions

Despite recent rains, the Colorado SW region is still in either a Severe or Extreme in a drought. Voluntary water restrictions are in place. Please conserve water where possible. For more information about the drought please visit <https://www.drought.gov/drought/states/colorado> or <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/drought>.



Athletic Park Baseball Field

The Town has been working with local parents and coaches to improve the baseball diamond at the Athletic Park. To improve the infield surface, new soil and bases have been brought. To the right is a photo of Jeff Rivera working on the project.



UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- **Regular Town Council Meeting** – August 12, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom
- **Joint Policy Group Work Session** – August 20, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom
- **Planning Commission Regular Meeting** – August 25, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom

JOKE OF THE DAY

I'd like to give a shoutout to sidewalks for keeping me off the streets.