



## WRITTEN REPORT

**To:** Honorable Mayor Clark and Ridgway Town Council  
**From:** Preston Neill, Town Manager  
**Date:** March 9, 2021  
**RE:** **Town Manager's Report**

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### INTRODUCTION

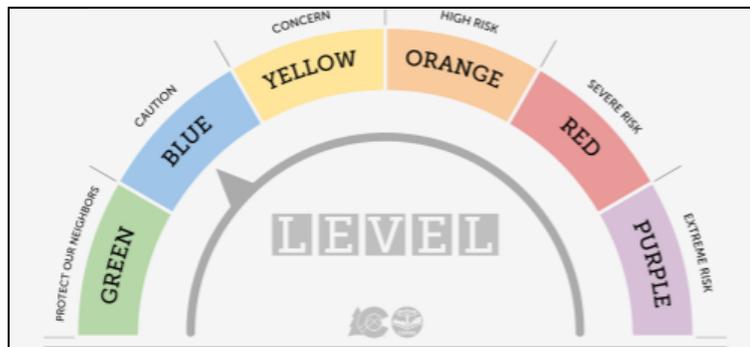
This report serves as an update to Council on key projects, activities and community issues.

### COVID-19 DIAL

Ouray County has transitioned to Level Blue on the state's COVID-19 Dial. Pursuant to Resolution No. 20-14, Ridgway Town Hall opened to the public on the morning of Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup>.

The metrics that determine the dial level changed last month. The range of disease incidence metrics have increased for all levels to better reflect a balance between disease suppression and economic activity, given the level of vaccinations occurring and decreasing COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. Additionally, instead of looking at the numbers over a 14-day period, this new dial considers metrics within a 7-day period, making the dial more responsive. When county cases are increasing, the state will not require mitigation plans but will still encourage them. Once a county hits the metrics for a more restrictive level, the state will confirm the metrics then move the county to the more restrictive level. The metrics for level transition are as follows:

- New cases
- Positivity rate
- Hospitalizations



Click [HERE](#) to visit the COVID-19 Dial Dashboard.



### **VISITOR CENTER IMPROVEMENTS**

While the Visitor Center-Heritage Park Advisory Committee continues to meet with the ultimate goal of formulating recommendations for improving the Heritage Park/Visitor Center area, staff has been working with the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce on identifying functional and COVID-19-related upgrades to the Visitor Center to undertake prior to its opening in May. Staff and the Chamber have met to confer and agree on cost allocation and responsibilities for repairs, pursuant to the existing lease agreement. The remodel work is slated to take place in the coming months.



### **YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL BLOG**

The Youth Advisory Council now has a blog where they will post summaries of their meetings and activities. Click [HERE](#) to check it out.

### **MARSHAL'S OFFICE UPDATE**

From Shane Schmalz, Marshal:

#### **Leash Regulations**

During a Council meeting last fall, an issue came up regarding dogs and leash laws in town. A resident from Solar Ranch had been affected by other dogs that were not on leash. During the meeting there was a lot of discussion about the leash laws and where they apply. After that meeting, I asked the deputies to be more proactive with education regarding leash laws in Ridgway. As part of the direction, I requested the deputies to hand out the Town's Leash Regulations Brochure (<https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/sites/townofridgway/files/2017.07.06%20%28Updated%20Dog%20Brochure%29.pdf>) and talk with residents and visitors about the regulations, if necessary.

We've made a concerted effort to contact the people we see violating these regulations while patrolling, and we'll continue to do so. The current regulations can be confusing to explain, given that in some areas of town, dogs must be under voice and sight control, but leashes are not mandatory. The leash regulations have been a hot topic, at times, and remains a sensitive subject for some. We've seen an increase in outright defiance by some residents with respect to their adherence to the leash regulations, which has made it tougher given our educational approach. We'll continue to make efforts to conduct outreach and education on our leash laws.



## **COMMUNITY INITIATIVES UPDATE**

From Diedra Silbert, Community Initiatives Facilitator:

### **Ridgway Space to Create Predevelopment**

As the finish line gets closer on financial closings, Artspace is juggling many players, documents, and funding sources. A limited number of sticking points have remained in the permit application which is still in process. Preliminary construction estimates were higher than hoped for, initiating an in-depth value engineering process to lower costs. Final construction estimates have been coming in and will be finalized shortly. Gap funding is still being sought, though this will hopefully not hold up the process. Discussions continue with Artspace and Stryker about ways to mitigate the impacts of construction on the neighborhood.

### **Heritage Park/Visitor Center Improvements**

The ad hoc Visitor Center-Heritage Park Advisory Committee has met twice and is making good progress on decisions necessary to formulate recommendations regarding options in the Heritage Park Strategic Master Plan, such as whether to build a new Visitor Center, the locations of restrooms and picnic shelter, and the empty space left by the departure of the railroad car. A three-to-five-year implementation plan with more specific phasing priorities and budget for the project will be on the docket for March/April. A Request for Bids was recently released requesting proposals from contractors to install an irrigation system paralleling Highway 62 and to plant landscaping around the current visitor Center eastward along the property. The Chamber hopes to open again in May 2021 and has proposed some intermediate improvements to the Visitor Center building to be completed in time to open.

### **Ridgway Creative District Creative Advocacy Team**

The Creative Advocacy Team has now met with four individuals from the business sector to receive their input on the proposal to further merge the community engagement elements of the Creative District and Main Street initiatives. Reception has been positive, and many ideas have been shared about increasing vibrancy downtown. Some have also expressed interest in becoming part of this new volunteer group. Through Colorado Main Street, a facilitator has been secured for May/June to lead three meetings to help the new group form an identity and establish its tasks within the context of the Town's Master Plan and the Creative Main Street work plan for 2021. C.A.T.s and community members are itching for events to happen again; First Fridays are being discussed again, and pandemic impacts still make planning unclear.

### **Heritage Energy Pilot Project**

A kick-off meeting is planned for March 10<sup>th</sup> to bring together State technical assistance representatives, the Ridgway Bank Building team, and others, as this Colorado Main Street historic preservation and energy efficiency project gets going. It will be exciting to see how this building is improved in the next few years.



### **UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

- **COVID-19 Multi-Agency Coordination Group Meeting** – March 10, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom
- **Regular Town Council Meeting** – March 10, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom
- **Third Meeting of the Visitor Center-Heritage Park Ad Hoc Advisory Committee** – March 17, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom
- **COVID-19 Multi-Agency Coordination Group Meeting** – March 24, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom
- **Planning Commission Regular Meeting** – March 31, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom
- **Special Joint Policy Group Work Session** – April 1, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

### **JOKE OF THE DAY**

As I watched a dog chase its tail, I thought to myself, “dogs are easily amused.”

Then, I realized that I was watching a dog chase its tail.