

TOWN OF RIDGWAY

2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

COMMUNITY VISION

Ridgway is a vibrant, welcoming, and community-minded small town situated in a beautiful mountain valley. We are diverse in age, background, and economic means. We share a deep connection to the outdoors, the lifelong pursuit of learning, and our railroad, ranching, and creative cultures. We are committed to being economically and ecologically sustainable.

COMMUNITY VALUES & GOALS

Achieving our vision will require us to strive to maintain certain aspects of Ridgway that the community values today, while recognizing that we will need to adapt in the face of a certain amount of growth and change over the next ten to twenty years. Our ability to adapt successfully will require a continual focus on—and balance between—five community values: healthy natural environment, sense of community and inclusivity, small town character and identity, vibrant and balanced economy, and well-managed growth.

Community Value 1

Healthy Natural Environment

From the Uncompahgre River to the Sneffels and Cimarron mountain ranges, Ridgway’s incredible natural surroundings, and the recreational opportunities they provide, are some of the top reasons residents choose to live in our community. Protecting both the scenic values and ecological functions of natural areas in and surrounding Ridgway through responsible environmental practices is something the community values strongly. Ridgway must grow in a way that is attuned to its natural environment to protect these valuable resources. Ridgway residents must also be aware of the changes to our local environment that could arise as a result of climate change.

Goals:

ENV-1: Preserve, protect, and restore natural habitats, including for wildlife and ecosystems.

ENV-2: Strengthen the Uncompahgre River corridor as a community asset and environmental resource.

ENV-3: Proactively manage and protect Ridgway’s water resources.

ENV-4: Advocate for the efficient use of resources and sustainable practices that work to eliminate harmful impacts to the health of the community or natural environment.

ENV-5: Maintain a healthy and resilient community forest.

	Healthy Natural Environment: 2023 Strategy	Responsible Party
1	Advance goals of the Town's Source Water Protection Plan including working with Ouray County on setbacks to the Town's water supplies in the unincorporated areas of Ouray County.	PW/Manager
2	Review Adequate Water Supply Rules in RMC 7-6 and update Town Code.	Manager/PW
3	Ensure the cost of water is understood and user fees are in line with costs.	Manager/Eng.
4	Make available educational materials on radon mitigation, and water and energy conservation, and periodically communicate this information via the Town website and other communication channels.	Building
5	Participate on the Sneffels Energy Board and work with the Board and EcoAction Partners to implement the objectives and supporting actions detailed in the <i>San Miguel & Ouray County Regional Climate Action Plan</i> in order to help our community continue to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions from our 2010 GHG emissions baseline.	Manager
6	Continue working with Ouray County Vegetation Management on implementation of the Town’s Integrated Weed Management Plan and to manage weeds in Ridgway more aggressively. Continue following the policy set forth in Resolution No. 22-01, Amending the Policy Relative to Noxious Weed Management. The policy now allows for the application of chemical-based herbicides when deemed necessary by Town staff and Ouray County Vegetation Management personnel, as long as the application falls in line with the Chemical Application and Protocol Recommendations found in the Integrated Weed Management Plan.	Manager/PW
7	Support and promote the Sustainability Advisory Board as members work to, among many other things, advance and encourage environmentally sustainable practices and ideas within the Town. The Sustainability Advisory Board’s priorities and work plan items for 2023 are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore a mandate for all new construction (commercial and residential) to be all-electric ready and solar ready (ELECTRIC READY). • Explore the requirements outlined in HB22-1362, monitor progress of the energy code board, and on or after July 1, 2023 recommend adoption of an energy code that achieves equivalent or better energy performance than the 2021 international energy conservation code and the model electric and solar ready code developed by the energy code board (ENERGY CODE UPGRADE). • Enhance education on regional sustainability/climate action efforts by establishing a webpage to serve as a clearinghouse of regional programs and incentives that can benefit community members and help meet regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets (EDUCATION). 	Manager

8	Make available educational materials on the amended landscape regulations to encourage water conservation and require low water usage landscaping or xeriscaping.	Planner/Building
10	Perform state-mandated requirements for backflow prevention and cross-connection control outreach, reporting and tracking.	Manager/PW
11	Research and develop regulations or a policy specific to grease traps.	Manager/PW
12	Research and develop regulations or a policy specific to graywater residential use.	Manager
13	Install water meter at water tanks; test meters for accuracy; repair alarm dialer from the plant to on-call personnel.	PW
14	Repair and maintain wastewater lines; replace pond curtain; add aerator for lagoon.	PW
15	Develop a Preliminary Needs Assessment that makes recommendations for improvements to the current wastewater treatment system and identifies future needs.	Eng.
16	Remove gravel from Uncompahgre River in Rollans Park and continually improve the area.	PW
17	Evaluate results of <i>Uncompahgre River Corridor Ecological Assessment and Technical Report</i> and explore implementation of the recommended restoration opportunities and river management actions.	Manager/PW
18	To support operations and when needed, acquire roll-off bins for green waste and composting from local companies that manage organic waste.	PW
19	Ensure the Town's responsibilities, as described in <i>Resolution No. 21-09 Rights of Nature</i> , are met, and ensure good stewardship of the Uncompahgre River, its tributaries, and its watershed.	Manager
20	Work with SMPA to further explore the idea of a community solar array, or even a agrophotovoltaic system being constructed somewhere on public property, namely the remaining area of Green Street Park. Identify feasible locations and assist SMPA, as needed, in developing a formal proposal for the public to weigh in on and for the Town Council to consider.	Manager
21	Work with SMPA and Artspace to explore the idea of installing a solar/storage system, commonly referred to as a Microgrid, at Ridgway Space to Create.	Manager
22	Host annual Town Cleanup Day event and Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup events.	Manager/PW

Community Value 2

Sense of Community & Inclusivity

Another aspect of living in Ridgway that residents highly value is the community, its inclusivity, and its diversity. Ridgway's residents represent a range of age groups, income levels, cultures, lifestyles, and political persuasions, and describe each other as friendly, welcoming, and close-knit. Residents also value how the community comes together in times of crisis or need to help one another. This strong sense of community is also demonstrated in how engaged residents are with Town affairs. Trends like increasing housing costs and a lack of affordable childcare make it difficult for many people to live in Ridgway. Looking to the future, residents would like to see Ridgway remain a diverse and inclusive community, not one that is homogeneous and unwelcoming of "others." Residents want to avoid the kinds of changes that have occurred in other small mountain towns, such as an influx of second homeowners.

Goals:

COM-1: Maintain Ridgway as a community that is accessible to a range of income levels, ages, and households.

COM-2: Encourage a diversity of housing options that meet the needs of residents.

COM-3: Encourage citizen participation and dialogue with elected and appointed officials and town administration in order to foster broad-based representation and input for local government decisions.

COM-4: Strive to be a model for transparency, efficiency, and good governance.

COM-5: Encourage a range of health, human, youth, senior, and other community services in Ridgway.

COM-6: Support education and lifelong learning in our community.

COM-7: Provide public safety and emergency response services to engage and protect the community.

	Sense of Community and Inclusivity: 2023 Strategy	Responsible Party
1	Continue the process of developing an interior design/furnishing plan for the Ridgway Space to Create community room and begin implementation. Develop a usage policy for the space, as well as an application process.	Manager/Community Initiatives
2	Complete the updates to Chapter 7 “Planning and Zoning” of the Ridgway Municipal Code in an effort to, among other things, clarify the application review and approval processes and incorporate new application types to improve the development review process. Updates to the Town’s subdivision regulations and Planned Unit Development regulations will meet Action COM-1b and Action GRO-1c identified in the Town of Ridgway Master Plan.	Manager/Planner
3	Work with developers through the Planned Unit Development process to secure deed restricted workforce housing.	Planner/Manager
4	Continue efforts on workforce housing, including evaluating and recommending mechanisms or strategies for a dedicated revenue source for affordable housing; hold a Town Council workshop solely dedicated to evaluating and considering strategies and funding mechanisms; continue regular communication with regional partners.	Manager
5	Organize and facilitate one regional law enforcement training opportunity.	Marshal
6	Complete training with the Ouray County Sheriff’s Office and City of Ouray Police Department to improve skills and foster good relations across the jurisdictional departments.	Marshal
7	Complete the transition of the Ouray County Victim Services Program from the Town of Ridgway to Ouray County and continue to support, grow and promote the Program/victim advocacy and victim’s rights.	Marshal
8	Develop a community outreach and education program, including outreach on leash laws and dog owner responsibilities, securing trash containers and being bear-aware, town-wide speed limits, snow removal, etc.	Marshal/Community Initiatives/PW
9	Promote the Athletic Park Pavilion as a Town facility and community amenity that is available for rent.	Manager/Clerk
10	Provide in-kind support to the Ridgway Community Garden by helping to improve the parking area with additional gravel and weed mitigation.	PW
11	Work with Ouray County Plaindealer staff to begin implementation of monthly newspaper advertisements to showcase what’s going on at the Town of Ridgway.	Manager

Community Value 3

Small Town Character & Identity

Although they may differ on how to define “small town character,” residents feel strongly that it’s a key part of Ridgway’s identity. This small town character is evident in the size of the community, the slower and more laid back pace of life, the unpaved streets, the surrounding ranch land and associated activities, the ability of residents to easily walk from one end of town to the other, and the many activities and businesses that are geared toward locals. Although these characteristics are common among many small towns across Colorado, Ridgway stands out from other tourism-dependent communities as a town that relies on tourism to some degree—but retains its commitment to locals and still feels very much like a “real” community. Beyond small town character, this feeling is derived from a blend of Ridgway’s historic past as a western railroad town, its ranching and agricultural community, its proximity to the mountains and outdoor recreation, and its Creatives and innovative entrepreneurs.

Goals:

CHR-1: Support vibrant, diverse, safe, and well-connected neighborhoods.

CHR-2: Protect and preserve Ridgway’s historic assets.

CHR-3: Promote Ridgway’s identity as a ranching and agricultural community and preserve the rural character of landscapes surrounding Ridgway.

CHR-4: Promote Ridgway’s identity as a creative and innovative community where creative individuals and enterprises thrive.

CHR-5: Promote a range of opportunities and spaces for community gatherings and interactions.

CHR-6: Maintain and enhance Ridgway’s gateways, entry-corridors, and scenic vistas.

CHR-7: Develop an interconnected system of parks, trails, open space, and recreational facilities that meets the needs of Ridgway’s residents and visitors.

	Small Town Character and Identity: 2023 Strategy	Responsible Party
1	Expand community outreach and information sharing efforts.	Manager/Community Initiatives
2	Further implementation of the <i>Ridgway Visitor Center & Heritage Park Master Plan (Amended June 2022)</i> via the phased Implementation Plan that staff developed and presented to Town Council on September 14, 2022. Continue exploring grant funding opportunities to bring the improvements to fruition.	Community Initiatives/Manager
3	Partner with GOCO on a Youth Corps project.	PW
4	Lead <i>Ridgway Fuse, A Colorado Creative Main Street Program</i> in implementing priority Council initiatives and supporting the Ridgway Creative District and Ridgway Main Street programs. Continue efforts to Connect, Gather, Build, and Spotlight via the collectively agreed upon work plan.	Community Initiatives
5	Generate promotional pieces that communicate the Ridgway Creative District’s and Main Street Program’s value to the community, objectives, and invite potential partnerships and collaboration. Continue efforts to bolster and enhance the Ridgway Fuse website and its functionality.	Community Initiatives
6	Support and promote the Youth Advisory Council and provide its membership opportunities for input on Town projects, programs, and events.	Manager
7	Make efforts to educate and inspire residents and visitors about Ridgway’s ranching heritage; provide information about ranching activities that periodically occur in and around Town, such as cattle drives.	Community Initiatives
8	Create and maintain succession plans for all Town staff and standard operating procedures.	All Departments
9	Identify a consultant to undertake a master planning process for the Athletic Park and to develop a master plan document for the Town to follow and implement.	Manager

Community Value 4

Vibrant & Balanced Economy

Ouray County’s economy is largely centered on service industries oriented towards tourism, particularly industries such as food services and accommodation. While Ridgway’s reliance on tourism is somewhat less than the County, it is still subject to seasonal fluctuations in business activity. These service jobs tend to pay low wages that make it even more difficult for those who work in Ridgway to live here as well. Residents expressed a strong desire to diversify the local economy and to create well-paying, full-time, year-round jobs. Through its participation in the Main Street and Creative District programs, the Town has been active in promoting community and economic development in recent years. While a number of businesses and Creatives have chosen to base their operations in Ridgway for quality of life reasons, many employers struggle to hire qualified employees, find space as they grow, market their creations, and face other challenges. Larger shifts in the national economy towards telecommuting mean that workers no longer need to physically commute to an office. With fast internet speed, residents will increasingly be able to pursue job opportunities and careers in industries not currently located in Ridgway. Alternatively, home-based entrepreneurs will be able to access customers or clients located around the globe.

Goals:

ECO-1: Create a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable year-round local economy that reflects Ridgway’s social fabric, values, and character.

ECO-2: Support the retention and expansion of local businesses.

ECO-3: Balance the need to preserve the quality of life for residents with business needs.

	Vibrant and Balanced Economy: 2023 Strategy	Responsible Party
1	Continue participation in local and regional broadband initiatives, including connecting local government and anchor institution buildings.	Manager/Planner
2	Plan, organize, and manage Summer Concert Series and Love Your Valley event.	Clerk
3	Plan, organize, and manage Ridgway Independent Film Festival and other Ridgway Fuse events.	Community Initiatives
4	Continue the partnership with the regional Creative Districts and the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce to advance the Creative Corridors Initiative.	Community Initiatives
5	Partner with Colorado Creative Industries to further develop and grow the Ridgway Creative District, including consideration of feedback and recommendations from Ridgway Fuse; provide training and educational opportunities for members of Ridgway Fuse.	Community Initiatives
6	Identify and complete a priority Creative District project with the Colorado Creative Industries matching grant.	Community Initiatives
7	Partner with the Department of Local Affairs on the Main Street Program and implement priority recommendations from the Main Street Downtown Assessment focused on economic restructuring, design, organization, and promotions.	Community Initiatives
8	Oversee and manage downtown streetscape maintenance and landscaping; maintain and replace trees as needed; maintain landscaping at Heritage Park; maintain planter boxes and landscaping around Town Hall and Hartwell Park.	PW

Community Value 5

Well-Managed Growth

Based on projections in the Community Profile, Ridgway is expected to add between 150 and 700 new residents by 2050. In addition, growth in the surrounding region—which includes Ouray, Montrose, and San Miguel counties—will continue to have direct and indirect impacts on Ridgway’s housing, transportation system, environment, and quality of life. Growth limitations in the City of Ouray and Ouray County will further amplify growth pressures on the Town of Ridgway. Uncertainty regarding the extent of and potential impacts of future growth are of critical concern to the community. However, Ridgway has the ability through its policies and regulations, intergovernmental agreements, and other tools to help inform where and how growth will occur in the future, the types of growth the community would like to see, and guide the character and form of future development.

Goals:

GRO-1: Manage growth and development in order to maintain Ridgway’s small town character, support a diverse community, and create employment opportunities.

GRO-2: Ensure public infrastructure, utilities, facilities, and services are sufficient to meet the needs of residents and businesses as the town grows.

GRO-3: Proactively mitigate natural and human-made hazards.

GRO-4: Develop a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system, balancing needs of all users.

	Well-Managed Growth: 2023 Strategy	Responsible Party
1	Continue the process of updating the Town’s zoning and subdivision regulations to allow for administrative approvals as appropriate.	Planner
2	Update Town regulations to address shared utility taps and shared water meters.	Planner/PW
3	Complete solicitation and selection processes for new engineering consultant to spearhead development/civil review.	
4	Participate in regional transportation initiatives including the Gunnison Valley Transportation Planning Region (GVTPR) and the Ouray County Transit Advisory Council, as appropriate.	Manager
5	Continue working with the City of Ouray, Ouray County, and All Points Transit to establish and begin the rollout of the Ouray County Workforce Transportation Project.	Manager
6	Assist Ouray County and their selected contractors to update the Ouray County Community Wildfire Protection Plan and develop a Multi-Jurisdictional Evacuation Plan.	Manager
7	Explore feasibility of a roundabout at Railroad St. and Hwy 62 and recommend inclusion on GVTPR 10 Year Plan.	Manager
8	Finalize GIS database for water and sewer infrastructure, including catalog of all mechanical/fleet equipment.	PW/Eng.
9	Develop and organize volunteer efforts, focused on procedural rules, expectations, purpose, etc. for Council appointed commissions, boards, committees and task forces.	Manager/Community Initiatives
10	Implement measures to address deficiencies and ensure Wastewater Treatment Plant consistently meets permit limitations and other terms and conditions of its permits.	Manager/PW/Eng.
11	Expand efforts on official record and electronic file organization.	Manager/Clerk
12	Implement Asset Management Plan for all departments	Clerk
13	Complete the updates to the Town’s standard specifications for infrastructure that have not yet been completed.	Eng./PW
14	Address access to Ridgway Ditch and adjacent development, including building and septic setbacks, Ditch access, and land use opportunities with Ouray County to protect the Ditch.	Eng./Manager/PW
15	Explore grant funding opportunities that would provide for major improvements to the Ridgway Ditch in a way that would allow the Town to receive additional water and mitigate system loss (i.e., piping portions of the Ridgway Ditch). Repair and install additional flow measuring devices along Ridgway Ditch and at Lake O.	Manager
16	Investigate how to access potential funding opportunities for water-related projects (i.e., monitoring and improvements to the Town’s water supply system) under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act or through state funding options such as Colorado Water Plan grants or Gunnison Basin Roundtable grants.	Manager
17	Replace hydrants and valves, as needed, on water distribution system.	PW
18	Continue the phased water meter replacement program.	PW
19	Complete transition from chlorine dioxide treatment to Granular Activated Carbon filtration alternative at water treatment plant.	PW/Eng./Manager
20	Complete sewer line camera and root abatement work; remove contact chamber sludge.	PW
21	Employ methods to better manage traffic flow and safe speeds; further explore additional advisory signage, temporary pedestrian signage, and street devices to mitigate speeding vehicles on westbound and eastbound Hwy 62 and other areas of town.	Marshal/PW
22	Review Traffic Flow Plan and update, as needed.	Eng./Manager/PW
23	Partner with Browns Hill Engineering & Controls to utilize the VSaaS platform and a high-end, full-featured, cybersecurity-protected SCADA system for the water treatment plant.	Manager/PW
24	Explore retaining a consultant to assist with exploring available grant opportunities that would advance projects and initiatives that have been identified as near-term and long-term priorities, and to assist with administering awarded grants.	Manager/Clerk

