



THE FRASER VALLEY STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN OCTOBER 2015

PREPARED BY

RRC ASSOCIATES & EPS

WITH ASSISTANCE FROM: TOWN OF FRASER; TOWN OF WINTER PARK; WINTER PARK & FRASER VALLEY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE; FRASER VALLEY METROPOLITAN RECREATION DISTRICT



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Introduction

The Towns of Fraser and Winter Park recognize that multiple economic development opportunities exist that are best realized through mutual efforts. The Strategic Economic Development Planning process was initiated to explore and act upon the highest priority opportunities that were identified through a cooperative process. The following economic development strategy establishes goals, strategies, and actions that the towns anticipate pursuing in the next three to five years. These agreed upon strategies in no way preclude other initiatives that the individual towns may undertake to further goals or policies of the Towns of Fraser and Winter Park.

The planning process has benefitted from participation by other existing organizations in the Fraser Valley including Grand County, the Winter Park & Fraser Chamber, the Fraser Valley Metropolitan Recreation District, and members of the business community. The importance of these organizations and their contributions to economic vitality of the Fraser Valley are anticipated to continue and are identified as important to continued economic development. Representatives from these entities have been important participants in developing this Strategic Plan and they are anticipated to be valued partners in the implementation of economic development initiatives in the Fraser Valley.

In recognition of the opportunities for coordinated efforts to deal with economic development, the towns of Fraser and Winter Park joined with the supporting entities in a strategic planning effort that resulted in this Strategic Plan. Following several working meetings by a representative committee, a series of potential strategies were identified by the group and these opportunities were tested through a community-based survey and through various stakeholder discussions. This Strategic Plan results from these joint efforts.

The Strategic Economic Development Planning effort builds on the Grand Profile, a Grand County-based project that compiled and assessed a variety of economic data and metrics. An important consideration in initiating the current program is the availability of information that has been systematically compiled. These data permit the Towns of Fraser and Winter Park to move ahead rapidly without undertaking the sometimes time consuming efforts of data collection that often precede economic strategies. In effect, the Grand Profile has permitted this project to be “jump started” and relevant information from that effort has been used and cited where appropriate to support the findings and conclusions that underpin the specific strategies identified below.

In preparing this Strategic Plan it is recognized that there are a variety of ongoing efforts within the Towns of Winter Park and Fraser that overlap with economic development initiative. These include a number of strategies that are termed “community development” or planning and are documented by previous studies and reports/plans. A list of some of these documents is presented as an Exhibit to this document.

This Strategic Economic Development Plan is a short term plan that identifies specific strategies and actions that can be implemented in the next three to five years; however, in some cases, the identified efforts will begin immediately upon approval of the Strategic Plan. A brief explanation of the identified framework is presented below, followed by a series of goals and actions; each is intended to further the purposes of this Strategic Plan.

The Fraser Valley Economic Development Framework:

- The towns and supporting entities of the Fraser Valley recognize that improving the quality of life in the valley is a key component of local economic vitality. This consideration is being addressed through community development efforts by the towns that include actions related directly to economic development, as well as peripheral actions that will further broad community objectives. This Strategic Plan anticipates that the economic development actions identified herein will be tied to other ongoing community development activities and that the communities will continue to plan and invest in ways that improve the communities for residents and visitors alike.
- The towns and supporting entities of the Fraser Valley will work together to develop effective metrics to evaluate each economic development goal and their respective actions as outlined in the Strategic Plan. These metrics will also extend to a commitment to keep the data of the Grand Profile up to date, as the Grand Profile. The metrics and updates are outlined for each goal in the respective Progress & Updates sections.
- The towns and supporting entities of the Fraser Valley will work together to better use existing resources to further economic development opportunities.

Actions:

- Continue joint meetings on a periodic basis to enhance communications and coordination.
- Pursue opportunities for joint funding of initiatives with particular attention to the Actions identified in this Plan.

Framework Overview – [Click Here](#)

Progress & Updates – [Click Here](#)

Economic Development Goals

The Strategic Economic Development Plan Committee, a community-based survey and stakeholder discussions identified the following five goals as priorities for economic development within the Fraser Valley.

A statement of each goal is provided in this section of the overview, followed by a series of specific targeted actions that were agreed upon by the Strategic Economic Development Plan Committee. More detailed analysis of each goal and the corresponding actions as well as both a brief situational and competitive analysis is accessible through the Goal Overview provided below. In addition, progress reports and subsequent updates are also accessible for each strategy below.

- **Enhance transit and multi-modal transportation**

Actions:

- Sales tax initiative for funding (*In Progress - Fall 2015 for both Towns*)
- Work to expand transportation by partnering with other entities
- Assist in implementation of trails master planning efforts

Goal Overview – [Click Here](#)

Progress & Updates – [Click Here](#)

- **Increase and expand access to broadband services throughout the Fraser Valley**

Actions:

- Support for initiatives to create and expand broadband services within the Fraser Valley
- The towns will undertake additional studies to insure the implementation of best practices
- Explore public/private initiatives for funding
- Consistent with local studies, the towns will initiate construction activities to create broadband services to be financially viable and efficient

Goal Overview – [Click Here](#)

Progress & Updates – [Click Here](#)

- **Increase housing opportunities for the current and future workforce at a variety of price points**

Actions:

- Winter Park and Fraser will work together on selected aspects of attainable housing issue

- Fraser will explore a needs assessment comparable to the 2015 Winter Park Needs Assessment
- Collectively inventory and investigate vacant land parcels that might present opportunities for redevelopment or additional density
- Encourage the development of workforce housing that is accessible via public transit
- Encourage the development of additional rental units in an apartment configuration
- Improve program implementation and management services for attainable housing, taking advantage of economies of scale.

Goal Overview – [Click Here](#)

Progress & Updates – [Click Here](#)

- **Nurture and grow the tourism industry**

Actions:

- The Fraser Valley should capitalize on its proximity to RMNP (*In progress – 2015 Basecamp Initiative*)
- Partner with local trail and biking efforts, the Chamber, and other biking/trail entities to solidify position as the premier mountain bike destination in North America
- Continue to evolve the events strategy to be consistent with the branding message, as well as to attract targeted visitor segments to enhance tourism, increase resiliency to weather and outside forces, and to expand the visibility of the Fraser Valley as a location for play and work.
- Grow midweek and off-peak visitation to limit the impact of peaks and valleys within the business model
- Invest in infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience
- Focus on evolving the customer base beyond the traditional market segments

Goal Overview – [Click Here](#)

Progress & Updates – [Click Here](#)

- **Support existing businesses while also strategically recruiting businesses to the Fraser Valley**

Actions:

Business Retention

- Provide local businesses with information resources to encourage expansion and competitiveness. Insure that the towns have readily available information, including the available community data such as the Grand Profile, to explain and express support for businesses in the community

- Designate a shared business development function/position within the Winter Park & Fraser Chamber to encourage the retention and expansion of existing employers in cooperation with, and funded by, the two towns. This individual would serve multiple roles on behalf of the Towns of Fraser and Winter Park, with responsibilities that include being a business resource, an advocate, and a dedicated individual within local government to align, oversee and implement economic development strategies as determined and prioritized by the respective Town elected officials.
- Review existing regulations and fee structures in the communities to insure consistency with policy intent. Conduct a regular assessment survey of local businesses, built upon the Grand Profile, to gather information on potential expansion and contraction as well as needs and opportunities
- Support efforts of local employers to obtain a trained and skilled workforce, while recognizing that this action requires continued attention to attainable housing (see Housing Strategy above)
- Expand the Commercial Enhancement Grant Program in both communities with a targeted grant amount each year that is designed to grow the reach of the program from current levels
- Continue to make downtown improvements in both Fraser and Winter Park to enhance the sense of community identity and a sense of progress and attention to quality
- Implement the integrated brand platform through all messaging under business recruitment (see brand platform below)

New Business Development

- Develop cooperative relationships and cultivate a network of appropriate referral resources for emerging companies that includes basic industries from the Front Range such as marketing, finance, intellectual property and technology. This action is generally not intended to encourage relocation of these companies; rather, the strategic efforts will be directed at creating an awareness of Grand County as a lifestyle choice for growing companies and professionals, and particularly for the millennial age segment (aged 18 to 34 in 2015). The effort could include fostering the creation of appropriate work spaces, support services, and a refined brand message that could be something like, “You live on the Front Range, come play and work from the Fraser Valley”
- Attract diverse employers that contribute to the overall quality of the communities
- Recruit location neutral businesses and/or professionals
- Initiate a program to use community events (i.e. concerts, cultural, sports, etc.) as a place for business recruitment
- Identify missing retail or professional service companies and provide this information to residents and visitors using available sources to develop a list of target businesses

- Coordinate efforts with those in the Grand County Office of Economic Development and local realtors/commercial real estate owners to encourage publicity and use of the Grand County site selection tool to catalog available vacant land/store fronts
- Implement the integrated brand platform through all messaging under business development (see brand platform below)

Business Friendly Brand Development

- Develop an integrated brand that incorporates the dual ideas of business retention and recruitment. Messaging for business retention should stress the quality of life and business opportunities presented by the Fraser Valley. Messaging for business recruitment should reinforce the Fraser Valley brand and the identities of the towns of Fraser and Winter Park as a means of communicating the quality of life, growth opportunities, and the shared vision for the region. Consistent marketing messages should be developed to support the brand platform.
- Create a shared website to promote business retention and expansion, as a new site targeting the Fraser Valley specifically and work with the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade for business retention/expansion program support

[Goal Overview – Click Here](#)

[Progress & Updates – Click Here](#)

Economic Development Goal Overview: Enhance transit and multi-modal transportation

Current efforts by the towns of Fraser and Winter Park to fund and develop enhanced transportation services will be priority strategies in the coming years. If new funding options become available the Towns will work together to create transportation-related improvements to benefit residents and visitors. If new funding authorization is not obtained, the Towns will seek other means to support improvements. As a part of transportation efforts, the importance of trail systems is also identified. The Fraser Valley and Grand County have extraordinary trail systems. The Towns will support the efforts of organizations providing trails including Grand County, the Headwaters Trails Alliance, and the municipalities will continue to commit local resources to the development, publicity, and expanded planning to insure that the trail system provides high quality recreation and transportation opportunities to residents and visitors alike.

Actions

- Sales tax initiative for funding (*In Progress - Fall 2015 for both Towns*)
- Work to expand transportation by partnering with other entities
- Assist in implementation of trails master planning efforts

Background

There are numerous economic benefits directly attributable to transit service, including access to employment, reduced demand for parking infrastructure, fuel savings and time savings from reduced congestion. In addition, some transit investments have resulted in increased real estate values due to the access to transit. Sophisticated transit networks can encourage compact land use patterns which can have significant economic benefits over time. Transit service also opens employers to a larger pool of potential employees. In areas with high demand for parking and high land values, transit provides a major benefit by reducing the number of required parking spaces.

For small towns, multi-jurisdictional transit service is particularly beneficial because it aggregates resources and ridership for those who commute between towns for work and leisure. Shared services are more economically and operationally efficient than connections between separate entities. These efficiencies transfer to the riders' fares and convenience. Programs are typically supported through combinations of fare revenues, funding from various levels of government, and dedicated tax levies.

Current Efforts

Currently, the upper Fraser Valley area has a bus shuttle system that is owned and operated seasonally by Winter Park Resort. This system has been in place for over 20 years and because it is a private system it has been ineligible for public transit money from either federal or state programs. The Town of Winter Park has been in negotiations with the Winter Park Resort (Intrawest) regarding taking over the ski area bus system and expanding to year-round

operations. The current budget for the system would be around \$1.4 million annually. The system would serve the larger Fraser Valley.

Winter Park and Fraser have initiated tax increase measures to fund the system. Winter Park has proposed a 2 percent sales tax increase. The additional 2 percent sales tax would be dedicated to transit and multi-modal transportation and is expected to generate approximately \$1.8 million annually. This would raise the total sales tax to 10.9 percent, up from 8.9 percent (2.9 percent state, 1.0 percent, county, 5 percent town). The expanded year-round bus system has an estimated budget of \$1.4 million including a \$200,000 annual contribution for capital replacements for the Winter Park Resort. The ski area has also agreed to contribute \$300,000 to operations per year for the next 10 years. Fraser has also proposed a smaller sales tax increase of 1 percent also to be dedicated to transit and trails. This increase would contribute \$400,000 in additional annual revenue. Fraser tax rate is currently 7.9 percent (2.9 percent state, 1.0 percent county, and 4.0 percent town) increasing to 8.9 percent overall (with an additional 1.8 percent on lodging).

Winter Park is also seeking around \$200,000 in state and federal funding for the transportation system. Not included in the \$2 million operating cost is a capital procurement cost of around \$600,000 to \$700,000 per year. These costs would cover the purchase of a new fleet of 18 ADA accessible buses among other things. The town also hopes to build a new maintenance facility, the cost of which is not included in current projections.

Case Studies

Roaring Fork Transit Authority

The Roaring Fork Transportation Agency was formed in 1983 through an IGA between the City of Aspen and Pitkin County to provide countywide service. Prior to the formation of RFTA, the City of Aspen operated city routes and skier shuttles and Pitkin County provided commuter services between Aspen and El Jebel, an unincorporated community in Eagle County. In 2000, RFTA was reformed as the Roaring Fork Transit Authority to provide regional transit service under the newly approved Rural Transit Authority legislation. At that time, the Authority provided service to seven jurisdictions along Highway 82 in the Roaring Fork Valley including Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Basalt, Snowmass Village, Aspen, Pitkin County, and Eagle County, with the addition of New Castle in 2004. In 2013, RFTA introduced the VelociRFTA, the first rural bus rapid transit (BRT) system in the United States. The system offers express service throughout the Valley. RFTA carries about 4.0 million passengers annually.

Rider fares and public investment provide the majority of the \$20.5 million operating budget. Each city provides a variable level of sales tax funding ranging from 0.4 to 0.8 percent determined by its level of service. About \$400,000 of the Authority's budget is allocated to trail maintenance.

Eagle County ECO Transit

Eagle County Transit, known as "ECO Transit", operates bus service between Vail, Beaver Creek,

Avon, and Edwards. In 1994 the founding partners decided to seek a dedicated funding source (Eagle County transportation sales tax) for regional transportation. As the Valley's population grew, the demands for transportation increased and this translated into a larger financial commitment from the funding partners. A ballot initiative for a dedicated funding source was approved by the voters in November 1995. The Eagle County Regional Transportation Authority was made official on January 1, 1996. The 0.5 percent county sales tax is dedicated to funding regional transportation. One-tenth of this tax goes toward funding the regional trails system.

Summit County Summit Stage

Summit Stage, operated by Summit County, offers free public bus service to Summit County, Colorado including ski areas, resorts, trailheads, town areas, shopping, medical centers, and some residential areas. Summit Stage also provides free ADA paratransit service.

The Summit Stage system was started, and initially funded, by the ski resorts for resort operations. However, it became a more broadly used amenity for visitors to the county as the system grew, and the County has since taken over operations. The transit service is an approximately \$7.3 million operation, funded largely by a voter-approved 0.75 percent sales tax. The tax is collected countywide, with more than 30 percent coming from sales in Breckenridge, approximately 20 percent from unincorporated Summit County and Silverthorne sales, and 14 and 12 percent from sales in Frisco and Dillon, respectively. Though the Stage is a county agency, it is directed primarily by a transit board, made up of representatives from the towns of Breckenridge, Silverthorne, Frisco, Dillon, the county and each of the four ski areas.

Teton County START Bus

The Teton County Public Bus Service (START bus) provides service in the Jackson Hole area. Major service areas include the Town of Jackson, Teton Village, Teton Valley, and Star Valley. Rides within Jackson are free of charge for residents and visitors. Fares are charged to and from farther destinations, such as Star Valley and Teton Valley.

The Town and County have relied on federal funding to help pay for much of the bus system. Approximately \$1.8 million, or more than half of START's day-to-day operating budget, is paid for by FTA funds out of a \$3 million annual budget. The town and county contribute approximately \$850,000 total. With plans of expansion in place, federal assistance will need to be further supplemented with local dollars. In recent discussions, the town and county are considering the option of increasing the local sales tax to support transit and housing needs.

Fraser Valley Opportunities

Providing year round transit service is clearly an important component for economic development in a regional resort setting. Vail/Eagle Valley, Breckenridge/Summit County, Aspen, and the Roaring Fork Valley all have comprehensive systems providing local area ski access and regional workforce commuter services. Provided Winter Park and Fraser approve the current proposed sales tax initiatives, a regional transportation authority can be established that would allow for the Fraser Valley to develop and operate a similar system.

Furthermore, the excess sales tax would be used to improve multi-modal transportation opportunities within the Fraser Valley.

Supporting Documentation

[Town of Winter Park Transit MOU Memo and Agreement, May 05, 2015.](#)

[Town of Winter Park Transit Service Plan, May 19, 2015.](#)

Economic Development Goal Overview: Increase and Expand Access to Broadband Services throughout the Fraser Valley

Existing broadband infrastructure presents a unique opportunity to the Towns to cooperatively initiate programs that will result in cost effective and high quality services that are competitive with and meet or exceed services in other small resort communities. The Towns will explore digital infrastructure and broadband services, both within the incorporated towns and within other areas of the Fraser Valley, where financially feasible. These efforts will draw upon prior studies, such as the Regional Broadband Strategic Plan by the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments, as necessary and when appropriate. The towns will also undertake additional studies to insure that plans for broadband services are drawing upon best practices as understood by reviewing actions in other similar communities to take full advantage of the opportunities for financially viable broadband services in the Fraser Valley.

The Towns will initiate construction activities to create broadband services consistent with local studies with an emphasis placed on financially supportable plans, designed toward timely completion of infrastructure and operating systems.

Actions:

- Support for initiatives to create and expand broadband services within the Fraser Valley
- The towns will undertake additional studies to insure the implementation of best practices
- Explore public/private initiatives for funding
- Consistent with local studies, the towns will initiate construction activities to create broadband services to be financially viable and efficient

Background

In many communities, digital infrastructure, including broadband internet access services, is most commonly most commonly provided by private telecommunications companies like CenturyLink, or cable companies like Comcast. A growing number of communities are providing digital infrastructure as a municipal utility not unlike a city electric service. Modern connection technologies include wireless and fiber optic cable. Although many cities previously deployed Wi-Fi based solutions, municipal fiber networks are increasingly popular due to the demand of increased speeds and capacity for modern audio and video applications. Fiber offers more bandwidth and flexibility than existing alternatives, and is seen as a long-term investment in keeping up with technology.

Once installed, connection to the infrastructure can be offered directly by the municipality, or facilitated by a city's investment in broadband backbone infrastructure, which can then allow for private companies to provide service at more reasonable costs.

Proponents of municipal fiber claim that it promotes high-quality job growth. For example, industries that rely on data centers, such as software companies, as well as financial services and manufacturing companies, require the ultra-wide bandwidth provided by fiber. Fast connections also facilitate complex functions from remote locations such as CAD and manufacturing. As telecommuting grows in popularity amongst employers and employees, providing high-speed internet to the home enables this option for residents in rural communities who live far from major employment centers.

Investing in fiber infrastructure has become more prevalent in smaller, rural communities in order to stay competitive with peer cities primarily because private providers have been slow to build the digital infrastructure necessary to support high capacity service. Traditional private providers, like Comcast, typically roll out connections based on existing consumer volume and on overall population density. In many rural areas, the size of the potential customer base makes investing in the backbone infrastructure needed for hard line fiber too small, making the investment financially infeasible. Consistent with traditional providers, newer services such as Google Fiber are only being offered in relatively large metropolitan areas (Austin, TX, Salt Lake City, UT, Kansas City, MO, etc.).

Developing a municipal fiber network is not without challenges. Private providers have sometimes sued municipalities for attempting to impede on their market shares. In 2009, the Minnesota Supreme Court affirmed the right of Monticello, a suburb of Minneapolis of approximately 10,000 people, to install publically-owned fiber-optic lines, something its citizens chose in a referendum. A private company, TDS, opposed the project in court, but because the city already had issued \$26 million in bonds and planned to begin installation, the lawsuit was dropped and the city was allowed to roll out fully. Philadelphia similarly received resistance in 2004 from private companies when it set out to provide low-cost wireless internet access to its citizens. Major private companies encouraged lobbies against municipal fiber deployment in the state of Pennsylvania. Ultimately, the city was backed into a deal with a smaller, less established internet service provider for unfavorable terms and the program eventually collapsed.

In Colorado, based on the passage of SB 152 in 2005, municipalities must secure voter approval to develop municipal broadband facilities and services. The current law limits the ability of Colorado cities to provide a broad spectrum of services, including:

- Free internet service in city libraries, parks and community centers;
- Partnering with private businesses and leveraging government infrastructure to provide affordable and high-speed internet service throughout the entire community; and
- Direct provision of broadband services by municipal governments.

Municipal investments in digital infrastructure can be built and funded a number of ways. With voter-approved exemption from SB-152, cities can build and operate their own broadband system, in some cases where there is inadequate private options, and in other cases to provide

more cost competitive options. A city or town can also invest in the backbone infrastructure system and allow private providers to tap in for local service to address cost feasibility constraints. Some cities including Durango have laid out “dark fiber”, or inactive fiber, so that when private companies are looking to expand into that city, the infrastructure is ready. The most common funding sources in Colorado jurisdictions include bond measures, taxes, and enterprise funds. A challenge involved with large municipal investments is servicing the debt. In the case of enterprise funds where consumers are expected to pay a rate for the service, the program needs to be widely used and priced competitively in order to cover infrastructure costs.

Cities in Colorado with municipal networks include: Cortez, Durango, Glenwood Springs, and Longmont.

Current Efforts

At present, reliable broadband service in the towns of Fraser and Winter Park is limited to the hard-wired section of US-40 through the downtown areas. Service is provided by two the major ISPs in the state, CenturyLink and Comcast (in some areas with one provider on one side of the road and the other on the opposite), and further supplemented by two wireless companies. Historically, these areas were prioritized for private service connection because they have large concentrations of businesses. As a result, outlying areas beyond the downtowns do not have sufficient digital infrastructure for the growing population. These areas are sparsely populated and largely comprised of low density second home communities.

However, given the anticipated rate of growth and the increasing prominence of cloud-based technology in both business and home environments, Fraser and Winter Park are looking for means to improve the level of service in these areas. As a first step, Fraser and Winter Park have proposed measures on the November 2015 ballot for exemption from SB 152. If approved, the towns would be able to fund investments to expand infrastructure for broadband connection. It should be noted that Grand County has chosen not to pursue a similar ballot initiative in the November 2015 cycle, this directly impacts the outlying unincorporated areas of the Fraser Valley which are currently reliant on a County initiative or other efforts to address the unincorporated areas.

In addition to these initiatives, Grand County has formed a committee to conduct initial research towards the goal of improving countywide broadband service. Fraser, Winter Park, and Grand County are also supported on the regional level by the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (NWCCOG). The NWCCOG has developed a strategic plan to improve broadband connection throughout the region. The members include Eagle, Grand, Jackson, Moffat, Pitkin Rio Blanco, Routt, and Summit Counties and most municipalities within those counties, as well as Steamboat Springs, Glenwood Springs and Carbondale.

A regional level approach is beneficial because many of the communities face the same issues. The lack of population density, distance between population centers, and mountainous topography deters service providers that wish to create or extend their broadband

infrastructure and networks in the region. To help off-set these factors, NWCCOG is working with stakeholders, service providers, and the state to apply for funding from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) specifically set aside for broadband expansion in rural areas. In 2014, a taskforce was formed, and a full-time broadband coordinator was hired to spearhead these efforts. NWCCOG's broadband program receives funding from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs' Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Fund.

Case Studies

City of Cortez Fiber Project

The City of Cortez, Colorado's Fiber Project is a leading example of municipal broadband. The Cortez Fiber Project was initiated for economic development purposes to promote clean industry in the area, help existing businesses expand, and incentivize private providers to connect to the infrastructure. Because it began its system prior to 2005, it is exempt from the requirements of SB-152. Over time, the community of approximately 9,000 residents has become a regional fiber optic hub, receiving several grants from the state, partnerships with neighboring governments, and local investments. Cortez serves as the nexus for the western half of the Southwest Colorado Access Network (SCAN), which connects public institutions in a five-county region to fiber.

Cortez has taken a gradual approach towards developing its fiber infrastructure, beginning with an institutional network, or I-Net for local anchor institutions in 1999. In its first phase, the city installed 120,000 linear feet of fiber to support city facilities, county facilities, hospital, fire district, school district and the downtown core business district. The city's investment of \$1 million was matched by Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) for a second phase in 2015 that will add an additional 27 miles of fiber optic lines along U.S. 160 and Colorado 149, allowing an additional 400 business owners to tap into the service. The network's own reserve fund will contribute \$250,000, while the remainder will come in the form of interdepartmental loans from the city's general fund and equipment fund. Future phases over the next five years will serve homes in addition to businesses at an estimated cost of \$10 million.

City of Longmont NextLight Broadband

NextLight is the fiber-optic-powered internet service the City of Longmont is selling alongside other competitors like Comcast and CenturyLink. The city owned utility, Longmont Power & Communications, issued a \$40.3 million bond issue in 2014 to build the network to be paid back through user fees over time. By leveraging electric utility, the city obtained favorable interest rates for NextLight's voter-approved bond issue, reducing the overall cost of the associated infrastructure. The service is currently available to businesses and residents in most of the city, and is expected to expand to the remaining western portion by the first quarter of 2016. The city charges \$50 per month for residential users, which is a deliberately competitive price to other fiber providers, in order to attract at least one-third of its residential population to the service within the first five years.

Fraser Valley Opportunities

Fraser and Winter Park have the advantage of working together toward an efficient expansion of infrastructure. If Fraser and Winter Park's SB 152 exemptions go through, the next steps would determine where the needs are and what level of service is feasible for different communities and uses. A large part of this discussion entails the financing piece. Longmont, for example, is in an optimal situation because Longmont already manages its own utilities network which has an adequate fund balance which funds front-end the infrastructure. With upfront costs largely covered, user fees are freed up to fund operations. Because Fraser and Winter Park do not have density and existing infrastructure of this magnitude, they will most likely need to issue general obligation or revenue bonds which will require voter approval. Fraser and Winter Park should also continue to seek opportunities to partner with the County and NWCCOG. These partnerships are especially helpful for grant opportunities. This year, the Governor announced that building broadband infrastructure throughout the state is its top economic development priority. As a result, DOLA has already committed \$19 million throughout the state. There are also substantial sources of funds available from the federal government.

At the town level, Fraser and Winter Park can provide land, tower sites, and partnerships with private providers, and funding for fiber and dark fiber infrastructure. Due to the topographic constraints of this area's geography, a cost-effective solution will likely require a combination of wireline and wireless technologies. Because private wirelines and wireless towers are already in place along the U.S. 40 Highway, it will be cost-effective for the communities to connect to this existing infrastructure. In recent discussions, Fraser and Winter Park have looked into providing Wi-Fi along their main streets. This amenity would enhance the visitor and tourist experience, especially for the many international visitors who rely on Wi-Fi for communication when they are outside the ranges of their home networks. This program would also be eligible for DOLA matching grant funds.

Supporting Documentation

[Regional Broadband Strategic Plan. Northwest Colorado Council of Governments, December 13, 2013.](#)

Economic Development Goal Overview: Increase Housing Opportunities for the Current and Future Workforce at a Variety of Price Points

The surveys conducted in 2015 as a part of the Grand Profile and the Strategic Economic Development Plan both identify workforce housing as a significant need/consideration in the County and in the Towns of Fraser and Winter Park. The August 2015 Economic Development Plan survey found “Increasing housing opportunities for the current and future workforce at a variety of price points” as the second most important action out of a list of 13 actions prioritized by residents. This problem is acute and widely recognized, is contributing to labor shortages, and is strongly related to future economic development in the Fraser Valley.

While it is recognized that some of the opportunities and challenges related to attainable (or “affordable”) housing are unique to the individual municipalities, the Towns will work together on selected aspects of the problem. Fraser will explore the potential to develop information that complements that recently obtained by Winter Park through the Needs Assessment (September 2015), and where appropriate the Towns will seek to act together to address opportunities and needs. The Towns recognize that housing affordability problems are not defined by municipal boundaries. Further, there are potential economies available by working together to address housing needs.

Actions

- Winter Park and Fraser will work together on selected aspects of attainable housing issue
- Fraser will explore a needs assessment comparable to the 2015 Winter Park Needs Assessment
- Collectively inventory and investigate vacant land parcels that might present opportunities for redevelopment or additional density
- Encourage the development of workforce housing that is accessible via public transit
- Encourage the development of additional rental units in an apartment configuration
- Improve program implementation and management services for attainable housing, taking advantage of economies of scale.

Background

The problems of affordable housing are exacerbated by seasonality, a lack of economic diversification, and a shortage of workforce rental units. While it is important to note that the recent study focused specifically on Winter Park, it identified a number of factors that are currently contributing to the affordability and availability problems in Winter Park (and by extension to entire Valley including Fraser and unincorporated areas) including:

- Growth in jobs that are not being matched by development of workforce housing;

- The attractiveness of the Valley to Front Range residents, with commensurate pressures on rental units;
- An increase in year-round leases in summer 2015 resulting in fewer available units for winter seasonal employees;
- Long-term rental units being sold to second homeowners; and
- An increase in short-term rental activity being booked through VRBO and other on-line hosting sites resulting in less available long-term rentals for workers.

The study also found that that workers are increasingly moving further down-valley from Winter Park in order to reduce costs. The study found that only 22% of workers currently live in Winter Park, low in comparison to many ski towns. While a similar statistic is not available for Fraser, observations suggest that there is limited available housing for workers in Winter Park and that increasingly, commuting is required.

Finally, the study also noted other problems that detract from Winter Park’s evolution into a year-round community including:

- Poor condition of units, with inadequate maintenance and repair, and an aging housing stock;
- Little diversity of housing supply, with much reliance on condominiums; and
- Lack of neighborhoods in which locals occupy a majority of homes, negatively impacting the sense of community and vibrancy for permanent residents.

Together these factors present challenges that are identifiable and measurable. This Plan contemplates a series of actions related to affordable housing that will seek to address the identified problems.

Case Studies

Summit County, Colorado

Efforts to address affordable housing issues in Summit County date back over 20 years beginning with County efforts to study the situation using surveys and other analytic techniques. Over the years a series of reports were developed at the County level, complimented by analyses commissioned by various towns in the county, and by Keystone and Copper Mountain Resorts. Housing for workers was developed at both resorts as a requirement of the P.U.D.’s that guided development in both locations.

The most recent study of affordable housing by the County was conducted in 2013. Designed to build on past studies, and based on an extensive survey of County residents, the 2013 effort provided an updated benchmark of existing conditions along with a series of recommendations designed to address findings from the Needs Assessment. A link to the Needs Assessment is provided here: [2013 Summit Workforce Housing Needs Assessment](#).

The important conclusion from efforts in Summit County is a recognition that housing problems defy municipal boundaries and that some of the analysis of conditions requires a broader

examination of commuting, residential prices and job generation. In Summit County's case, data show in-commuting to jobs in the County from locations in Alma/Fairplay and Kremmling that would typically not be picked up in a study based just on a municipality. These patterns are similar to some of the commuting patterns in Grand County where workers in the Fraser Valley commute from a number of locations north of the Fraser/Winter Park boundaries. Efforts in Summit County have involved coordination between County government, a County Housing Authority, resort developers and the individual towns in the County. Together, these programs have resulted in the construction and management of a large number of housing units designed for the local workforce, and databases that have allowed conditions and potential problems to be carefully monitored over time.

Breckenridge, Colorado

The Town of Breckenridge has developed carefully conceived and periodically refined workforce housing programs dating back to the early 1990's. These programs were developed through cooperation with Summit County. The stated goal of the current program is to:

Insure that affordable housing is integrated throughout the community to provide a variety of housing options for the local workforce.

Information about the program can be found on the Town's website as listed at the end of this paper and the staff planner, an employee for over 15 years and well versed in the programs, can be reached here: [contact Laurie Best](#)

The Town of Breckenridge has adopted specific housing strategies (link to 2008 Workforce Housing Action Plan) to insure that there are opportunities for the workforce to live in Town. The Breckenridge programs are funded by several different sources including a November 2006 voter-authorized County-wide 0.125% sales tax and a development impact fee for affordable housing purposes. The sales tax and impact fee generates approximately \$600,000 annually in Breckenridge. This tax and impact fee will expire in 2017. In addition to the revenue generated through the sales tax and impact fee, the Town of Breckenridge also allocates additional funds into a Breckenridge Affordable Housing Fund.

Following the adoption of the County-wide sales tax and impact fee, the Summit Combined Housing Authority (SCHA) was formed in 2006 to represent all of the jurisdictions within Summit County. The Town of Breckenridge works closely with the SCHA to coordinate the Town's housing projects and programs with other County-wide efforts.

As summarized below, there have been over 1,100 deed-restricted units created in Breckenridge. They are often clustered in individual neighborhoods or developments and have frequently consisted of "for sale units." In addition to the developments listed, there are over 116 individual units dispersed in Town that are subject to deed restriction.

Two major rental projects were completed in 2001 (Pinewood Village) and 2000 (Breckenridge Terrace). In recent years there has been increased interest in rental units, both at the County

and Town levels with various new projects under discussion.

[Deed Restrictions:](#)

- [Wellington Neighborhood](#) (230 'for sale' units - under construction)
- [Gibson Heights](#) (40 'for sale' units - completed in 2003)
- [Vista Point](#) (18 'for sale' units - completed in 2004)
- Vic's Landing (24 'for sale' units - completed in 2008)
- [Valley Brook Neighborhood](#) (41 'for sale' units - completed in 2012)
- Kennington Townhomes (36 'for sale' units - completed in 1999)
- Monarch Townhomes (13 'for sale' units - completed in 2005)
- Pinewood Village (74 affordable rental units - completed in 2001)
- Breckenridge Terrace (180 rental units - completed in 2000)
- [Block 11](#) (up to 350 future units - rental and 'for sale')
- Maggie Placer (9 additional 'for sale' units to be completed winter 2014/2015)

As summarized below, the Breckenridge website identifies a series of studies that contain valuable information on housing efforts dating back to 2000. These reports and studies document the gradual evolution of programs and strategies that have resulted from a recognition of need and a willingness to commit public resources to a variety of programs. The Summit County program, together with efforts by Breckenridge at the municipal level, provide examples of regulatory, funding and physical design initiatives that target the ongoing challenge of creating workforce housing in high cost and high quality of life mountain communities.

Studies / Impacts:

[2014 State of Housing Report](#)

[2014 The Impact of Affordable Workforce Housing on Community Demographics, Economies, and Housing Prices and Options](#)

[2013 Housing Needs Assessment Executive Summary](#)

[2013 Housing Needs Assessment Final Presentation](#)

[2008 Workforce Housing Action Plan](#)

[2000 Affordable Housing Strategy](#)

[2003 Upper Blue Housing Needs Assessment](#)

[2006 Breckenridge Housing Need Assessment](#)

[2010 Housing Highlights](#)

[2011 Resort Demographics](#)

[Jobs and Wage / Price and Income Information](#)

[Area Median Income](#)

Workforce Housing Taxes and Fees

Affordable housing programs are now widespread in the Colorado mountain towns with a variety of different approaches undertaken in response to varying physical conditions and political realities. The "[Workforce Housing Taxes and Fees](#)" study by Melanie Rees of Rees

Consulting (2013) provides an excellent discussion of fees and taxes in Colorado communities that are being levied specifically for workforce housing. The report summarizes findings from 15 jurisdictions outlining different approaches to funding a variety of programs within Colorado communities. The study notes that revenues for programs were at a peak prior to 2008, but that the post-recession period up through 2012 caused revenues of all types to decline. In most jurisdictions, revenues started to increase in 2011 as construction started to recover. At the same time, over the period 2011 to 2015 problems of work force housing availability have again increased in many mountain communities, a result of the stronger economy.

An additional study by the same author, Melanie Rees, discusses 2011 Resort Demographics in the State of Colorado and six resort communities (Grand County and Winter Park/Fraser were not included). The study provides comparable information describing resort communities on a number of metrics. These data provide a resource for communities wanting to compare themselves to some of the other towns that are commonly viewed as the “competitive set” for winter destination resorts.

Supporting Documentation:

Town of Winter Park Housing Needs Assessment, September, 2015
[Reese, Melanie. “Emerging Trends in Colorado Resort Towns”, 2011](#)
[Town of Breckenridge Workforce Housing](#)

Economic Development Goal Overview: Nurture and Grow the Tourism Industry

Tourism has been and will continue to be one of the primary drivers of the economy of the Fraser Valley. The survey process conducted in 2015 as part of the Strategic Economic Development Plan identified continued nurturing of the tourism as one of the areas of emphasis for continued economic development in the region.

Nurturing and continuing to grow the already established primary driver of the economy will result in positive economic growth in the Fraser Valley. The towns of Winter Park and Fraser would benefit from collectively marketing the attractions and recreational opportunities of the region collectively, making the Fraser Valley one of the premier mountain destinations. The volatility created by the current state of the tourism industry can be addressed by growing visitation during the off-peak periods (summer, shoulder seasons, winter midweeks, etc.). The Fraser Valley has an extensive trail system, which can be leveraged to make the region a premier mountain biking destination as well as improve summer visitation.

Actions

- The Fraser Valley should capitalize on its proximity to RMNP (*In progress – 2015 Basecamp Initiative*)
- Partner with local trail and biking efforts, the Chamber, and other biking/trail entities to solidify position as the premier mountain bike destination in North America
- Continue to evolve the events strategy to be consistent with the branding message, as well as to attract targeted visitor segments to enhance tourism, increase resiliency to weather and outside forces, and to expand the visibility of the Fraser Valley as a location for play and work.
- Grow midweek and off-peak visitation to limit the impact of peaks and valleys within the business model
- Invest in infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience
- Focus on evolving the customer base beyond the traditional market segments

The focus of the analysis below is tourism in the Fraser Valley. Tourism obviously plays a critical role in the economies of Winter Park and Fraser, and therefore must be considered in any economic development policy or strategy. Since tourism is a broad multi-faceted topic, the focus of this analysis has been narrowed to four key areas: summer, winter, events and brand.

Summer

Background

Summer tourism has been the focus of growth opportunities in most mountain communities over the past five years. Town governments, chambers and ski area operators have attempted

to attract summer visitors to their destinations through a variety of amenity, attraction and event offerings.

In a study of ski municipalities, counties, and DMOs conducted in 2014, over 80 percent of respondents indicated that their respective community was either equally as focused on summer tourism as winter tourism or more focused on growing summer tourism than winter tourism in the last three years. These efforts have led to some summer tourism indicators to set record levels of visitation over the past three years. Most recently in 2015, DestiMetrics indicated that summer lodging occupancy in 19 mountain communities was on track to set yet another record for the months of May through October.

Current Efforts

The location and amenities located in and around the Fraser Valley provide a competitive advantage for the area when it comes to summer tourism. The Winter Park & Fraser Chamber have marketed the region as a “summer playground” for outdoor enthusiasts, offering an extensive list of outdoor recreational opportunities and special events including but not limited to:

- Alpine slide
- Art galleries
- Biking
- Boating
- Camping
- Disabled programs
- Dog cart rides
- Fishing
- Fitness center/classes
- Golfing
- Hiking
- Hot air balloon rides
- Horseback riding
- Indoor fun
- Kayaking, rafting & stand-up paddleboarding
- Live entertainment
- Museum & historical tours
- Rodeos
- Spas & wellness
- Summer tubing
- Trains
- Zipline tours

While the activities listed above are not all unique to Fraser Valley, the area does have a competitive advantage from some amenity offerings and location. Unlike most mountain communities, the Fraser Valley is proximal to a major national park. Rocky Mountain National Park attracts approximately 3 million visitors annually. The West Portal of the park is located in Grand County and is easily accessible from the Fraser Valley. According to visitor research conducted through the Grand Profile, visitors staying in the Fraser Valley indicated that one the primary locations visited during their stay in Grand County in the summer was the Park. As a result of this research initiative, the Winter Park & Fraser Chamber instituted a marketing initiative for the summer of 2015 highlighting the Fraser Valley as the “basecamp” of Rocky Mountain National Park.

In addition to access to Rocky Mountain National Park, the Fraser Valley also benefits from an extensive trail system that attracts many outdoor recreation enthusiasts. Headwaters Trail Alliance (HTA) is an advocacy group, unique to Grand County, that promotes the quality and

connectivity of the trails in the Fraser Valley. The organization developed a trails master plan in 2015 with the assistance of the Towns of Winter Park and Fraser as well as the Fraser Valley Metropolitan Recreation District.

As a result of the extensive trails system, the Fraser Valley has been deemed “Mountain Bike Capital USA™”. The region is able to attract mountain bikers of all ability levels with over 600 miles of cross-country biking trails and two established downhill bike parks. Trestle Bike Park at Winter Park Resort has been deemed the fastest growing bike park in North America, and is only behind Whistler Blackcomb in size. In summer 2015, the region came together and established the goal of becoming the premier mountain biking destination in North America. Thus, the area continues to improve and maintain its current trails system through the new master plan as well as develop marketing materials to attract destination visitation for mountain biking.

The Fraser Valley benefits from its ease of access to the Denver Metropolitan area for summer visitation. The Valley has always had strong ties to the Colorado Front Range, with many of its second homeowners identified as Front Range residents in the Grand Profile. The proximity to the Front Range allows the Fraser Valley to not only be an attractive regional summer destination but also a destination visitor summer destination.

Competitive Marketplace

Whistler, BC

Whistler Blackcomb has traditionally been one of the premier mountain biking destinations in North America. The region boasts cross-country and paved bike trails in addition to the largest downhill bike park in North America. The bike park was developed by Gravity Logic, who were also strategic in the development of the bike park at Winter Park Resort. Programming around biking and trails has made Whistler a biking destination. In fact Crankworx Whistler Freeride Mountain Bike Festival is one of the best attended events in Whistler, with better attendance than any winter event.

Eagle, CO

New initiatives in Eagle intended to increase tourism in that part of the county are focused on biking. Improvement efforts include developing new trails, connecting trails among various communities within the county, and emphasizing the cool temperatures and dry climate to allow cyclists to ride during more months of the year, as well as the more affordable amenities.

Fruita, CO

Fruita is home to an extensive network of mountain biking trails, which include the Colorado National Monument and trails that cross over to Utah. There are trails for all ability levels, and road biking is also present in the area. Fruita is recognized as a regional biking destination; however, the area still has not developed significant tourism infrastructure and relies heavily on camping as a form of lodging.

Steamboat Springs

Steamboat is nicknamed “Bike Town USA”, partly due to being recognized as one of eighteen US cities with a gold level Bicycle Friendly Community in 2013. According to the Steamboat Chamber, biking in Steamboat includes cross-country, downhill, road biking, bike parks, and snow biking, offering a wide variety of activities and events for bike enthusiasts. Steamboat also offers special lodging/ticket/rental packages for visitors to “Bike the ‘Boat’”.

Gunnison-Crested Butte

Tourism materials focus on both road biking and mountain biking. For road biking, the Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism Association stresses the abundance of opportunities in the area as well as participation in special events like the USA Pro Challenge. Crested Butte Mountain Resort is called the birthplace of mountain biking and is home to the Evolution Bike Park, with trails for all ability levels. Mountain biking is also available in other areas of the region.

Winter

Background

Winter tourism and recreation has been and continues to be one of the primary drivers of economic development in the Fraser Valley. The dominance of winter tourism in the current economy of the Fraser Valley has created a distinct seasonality to the economy. Nowhere is this more evident than in the taxable sales collection in the Town of Winter Park, where the winter collection (November – April) eclipses summer (May – October) collection by 133%. The Town of Fraser experiences similar swings; however, the mixture of businesses in the Town of Fraser is such that the swings are not as noticeable as those in the Town of Winter Park.

From the visitor survey of the Grand Profile, the winter guest tends to be an overnight guest that stays an average of 4.6 nights in Grand County. While the winter visitor is predominantly an overnight guest (70 percent), the close proximity to the Denver Metropolitan area allows the Fraser Valley to pull visitors both regionally (from the Front Range markets) and from destination markets such as Texas. This creates a unique visitor mix for the region that is rare to find in winter mountain resort destinations.

Current Situation

Winter tourism is anchored by several winter recreational activities. One of the primary drivers of winter tourism is downhill skiing or snowboarding which are offered at both Winter Park Resort and Ski Granby Ranch. In addition to downhill skiing/snowboarding, snowmobiling, backcountry skiing/snowboarding, tubing, sledding, cross country skiing, dog sledding, hot air ballooning, snowshoeing, and disabled programs are accessible in the Fraser Valley. While not offering downhill skiing or snowboarding, Snow Mountain Ranch (YMCA) and Devils Thumb Ranch offer winter guest experiences that round out the offerings of the Fraser Valley.

The Fraser Valley benefits from having one of the largest ski resorts in North America in its backyard. Winter Park Resort, which has been in operation over 75 years, was recently rated as the 15th top resort in North America by SKI Magazine. Over the past three seasons, the resort has been improving its overall standing in the resort ratings. The resort is recognized by skiers and snowboarders as being accessible, providing good value, having kid-friendly activities, and highly rated terrain parks.

The host of winter recreation activities as well as the unique customer base create a dynamic where the Fraser Valley competes with both destination resort communities as well as regional resort communities. This visitor mix has benefited the community with a more diverse customer base than other resort communities, which has allowed the Valley to activate one market (destination or regional) over the other in low snow years or economic downturns to drive visitation.

While the visitor mix create opportunities within the Fraser Valley, it also has created some seasonality of business within the winter months. According to the respondents of the Grand Profile Business Survey, businesses cited seasonality of business as one of their primary threats. Increased visitation are associated with several peak demand periods (holidays and peak season weekends) can stress the economy of the Fraser Valley; however, the Valley struggles to drive visitation during non-peak periods (midweeks, early, late seasons).

Thus, the Fraser Valley has the opportunity to continue to refine its winter tourism strategy. In particular the entities of the Fraser Valley could look to drive off peak visitation or continue to evolve the visitation mix to introduce the unique offerings of the area to new guests.

Competitive Marketplace

Summit County, CO

Like the Fraser Valley, Summit County, CO has an economy that is dominated by winter tourism. The county takes in over sixty percent of its taxable sales in the winter months (November – April). Winter visitation is dominated by 4 distinct ski resorts (Arapahoe Basin, Keystone, Breckenridge, and Copper Mountain). Loveland and Vail Mountain are also proximal to the county. Summit County has a unique mix of destination resorts and regional resorts, and like the Fraser Valley benefits from being proximal to the Denver Front Range markets. Summit County, CO is a direct competitor to the Fraser Valley not only in the regional markets but also in some key destination markets, particularly those in the Midwest and Texas. Some of the resort communities within Summit County have been able to develop ties to destination markets via a second home market that is not as heavily dominated by Denver Front Range purchasers.

Steamboat Springs, CO

Like the Fraser Valley, Steamboat Springs has one large and well-recognized resort in its area. Steamboat was rated in the top ten of the western resort ratings by SKI Magazine. The resort is owned and operated by the same operating company of Winter Park Resort and synergies have

been created between the two resorts through season pass and lift ticket offerings. Steamboat is more remote from the Denver market than the Fraser Valley and thus does not enjoy the benefits of regional day visitation. However, the area does generate significant overnight visitation which impacts business operations differently than in the Fraser Valley where the day visitation creates added complexity and variability.

Park City, Utah

Park City, Utah benefits from its proximity to Salt Lake City. Unlike like the resort communities in Colorado, Park City can be accessed from the Salt Lake City airport in under 1 hour. While the resort community is near a large metropolitan area, it benefits from significant destination visitation generated by the ease of access through the airport. The resort community is currently undergoing significant change. Vail Resorts has taken over management of both Canyons Resort and Park City Mountain Resort in the past two years. The resort operator is combining the two resorts into what has been deemed the largest resort in the United States. In addition to this new resort; Park City is also home to Deer Valley Resort. The offering at both Park City Resort and Deer Valley, as well as the events (i.e. Sundance Film Festival) combine to make Park City a competitor in the destination winter vacation space.

Events

Situational Analysis

The Fraser Valley boasts a variety of special events throughout the year, with each event falling into one of several categories. The number of categories is reflective of the intent to attract a diverse group of visitors. Signature events held in the Fraser Valley include:

Holiday Events:

- New Year's Eve Celebration
- Lance Guttersohn's 4th of July Celebration

Food & Beverage Events:

- Winter Park Beer Festival
- Winter Park Uncorked Wine Festival

Recreation Events:

- Stagecoach Classic
- Cupid's Revenge
- Winter Park Wipeout
- Fitness in the Park
- Rendezvous Run for Independence
- Rendezvous Mountain Bike

Historical/Traditional Events:

- Resort Anniversary Celebration
- Winter Carnival
- Rocky Mountain National Park Anniversary

Music/Entertainment Events:

- Winter Park Springtopia
- Odell Brewing Concert Series
- High-Note Thursdays
- Fraser Tuesday Picnic in the Park
- Blues from the Top
- Winter Park Jazz Festival
- Winter Park SolShine Music Festival
- Winter Park Music Festival
- Zoppe Family Circus

Event offerings in the Fraser Valley are particularly strong in the recreation and music/entertainment categories and appeal to locals and visitors alike; however, additional events pertaining to food and arts and culture could be considered in the future to round out the offerings.

Competitive Marketplace

Aspen Snowmass

Events listed on the Aspen Chamber website include winter mountain events such as the X Games, arts and cultural events like the Aspen Arts Festival, and food and beverage events such as the Food & Wine Classic.

Steamboat Springs

Western-themed events are prominent in Steamboat, like the rodeo series, Hot Air Balloon Rodeo, and Wild West Air Fest. The Chamber website also lists race events such as the USA Pro Challenge and the Steamboat Marathon.

Telluride

Telluride is perhaps most well-known for its summer music festivals, including the Telluride Bluegrass Festival, the Telluride Jazz Festival, and the Ride Festival. Other events focus on local food and beverage and recreational opportunities.

Vail

Vail is home to a variety of music, film, arts, and cultural events like the Vail Summer Bluegrass Series, Bravo! Vail, and the Vail International Dance Festival. The extensive list of events also includes food and beverage events, for example Gourmet on Gore and Reds Whites & Brews, as well as mountain events like Pink Vail and Spring Back to Vail.

Brand

Situational Analysis

The Fraser Valley is branded as “Colorado’s *Favorite* Playground” and aims to attract visitors with its proximity to Denver, variety of activities and events, status as “Mountain Bike Capital USA™”, and the general authenticity and comfort of the area and friendliness of its residents.

A branding study conducted in 2012 identified two key visitor segments: Front Range visitors and destination visitors. The Front Range visitors generally travel to the Fraser Valley for activities, affordable accommodations, and convenience. Affordable lodging and convenience also appeal to destination visitors, but these visitors intend to come primarily for the natural beauty. Therefore, the Winter Park & Fraser Chamber seeks to stress the abundance of things to do, natural authenticity, and quality of stay to attract potential visitors and guests.

Competitive Marketplace

Aspen Snowmass

The Aspen Chamber markets the area as a “world class destination” that is perfect for outdoor adventurers as well as arts and culture enthusiasts. The marketing also stresses the small town atmosphere but big city amenities available in Aspen.

Gunnison-Crested Butte

The Gunnison-Crested Butte region is called “Colorado’s Last Great Ski Town”, by the Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism Association with descriptors like “authentic”, “unspoiled”, and “unpretentious”, which emphasizes that Gunnison-Crested Butte is not a glitzy mountain resort. Opportunities are abundant for both relaxation and adventure.

Steamboat Springs

Steamboat Chamber marketing stresses the combination of Western culture and outdoor adventure in the town, providing a laid back experience in the “heart of the Colorado west”. Promotional materials also emphasize the unique downtown area and numerous events occurring year-round.

Supporting Documentation

[Averill, Graham. "Mountain towns capitalize on the cycle tourism book". *Mountain*, Early Summer 2014 Edition.](#)

[Benzel, Lance. "Stunning views and abundant trails await visitor who discover town near Vail". *The Gazette*, July 24, 2015.](#)

[McDonald, Kelli. "Town of Vail Special Events" C.A.S.T, Dillon, CO, January 23, 2015.](#)

Winter Park & Fraser Chamber of Commerce Branding Development Study (2012)

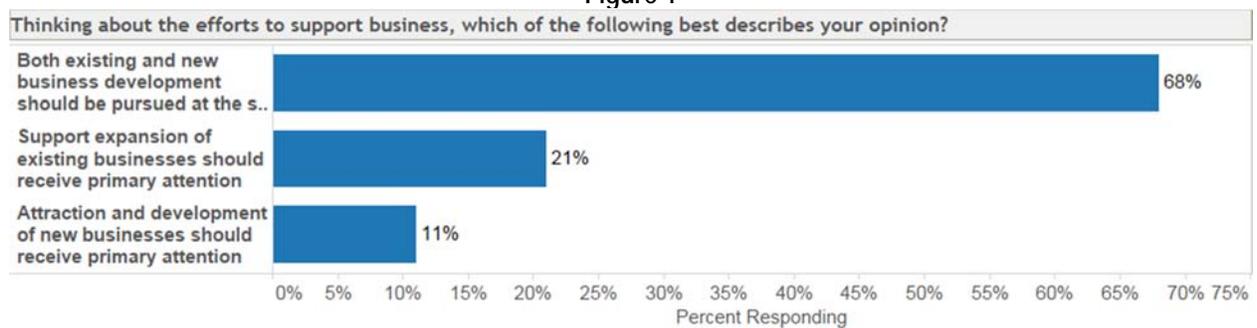
Grand Profile Visitor Analysis, 2015.

Economic Development Goal Overview: Support Existing Businesses while also Strategically Recruiting Businesses to the Fraser Valley

Surveys conducted in 2015 as a part of the Grand Profile and the Strategic Economic Development Plan both identify support for a two pronged strategy that would offer support for existing businesses while selectively recruiting new businesses. The survey respondents were clear that they favored “balanced” efforts to address both types of strategies rather than singling out one segment, i.e. either existing or new businesses, for singular attention.

Specific findings from the survey research show the following:

Figure 1



Source: Fraser Valley Strategic Economic Plan Survey, 2015

Actions

Business Retention

- Provide local businesses with information resources to encourage expansion and competitiveness. Insure that the towns have readily available information, including the available community data such as the Grand Profile, to explain and express support for businesses in the community
- Designate a shared business development function/position within the Winter Park & Fraser Chamber to encourage the retention and expansion of existing employers in cooperation with, and funded by, the two towns. This individual would serve multiple roles on behalf of the Towns of Fraser and Winter Park, with responsibilities that include being a business resource, an advocate, and a dedicated individual within local government to align, oversee and implement economic development strategies as determined and prioritized by the respective Town elected officials.
- Review existing regulations and fee structures in the communities to insure consistency with policy intent. Conduct a regular assessment survey of local businesses, built upon the Grand Profile, to gather information on potential expansion and contraction as well as needs and opportunities
- Support efforts of local employers to obtain a trained and skilled workforce, while recognizing that this action requires continued attention to attainable housing (see Housing Strategy above)

- Expand the Commercial Enhancement Grant Program in both communities with a targeted grant amount each year that is designed to grow the reach of the program from current levels
- Continue to make downtown improvements in both Fraser and Winter Park to enhance the sense of community identity and a sense of progress and attention to quality
- Implement the integrated brand platform through all messaging under business recruitment (see brand platform below)

New Business Development

- Develop cooperative relationships and cultivate a network of appropriate referral resources for emerging companies that includes basic industries from the Front Range such as marketing, finance, intellectual property and technology. This action is generally not intended to encourage relocation of these companies; rather, the strategic efforts will be directed at creating an awareness of Grand County as a lifestyle choice for growing companies and professionals, and particularly for the millennial age segment (aged 18 to 34 in 2015). The effort could include fostering the creation of appropriate work spaces, support services, and a refined brand message that could be something like, “You live on the Front Range, come play and work from the Fraser Valley”
- Attract diverse employers that contribute to the overall quality of the communities
- Recruit location neutral businesses and/or professionals
- Initiate a program to use community events (i.e. concerts, cultural, sports, etc.) as a place for business recruitment
- Identify missing retail or professional service companies and provide this information to residents and visitors using available sources to develop a list of target businesses
- Coordinate efforts with those in the Grand County Office of Economic Development and local realtors/commercial real estate owners to encourage publicity and use of the Grand County site selection tool to catalog available vacant land/store fronts
- Implement the integrated brand platform through all messaging under business development (see brand platform below)

Business Friendly Brand Development

- Develop an integrated brand platform focusing on business retention and recruitment. Messaging for business retention should stress the quality of life and business opportunities presented by the Fraser Valley. This message will be framed using information obtained from the community data source such as the Grand Profile stressing recreation, safety, locational advantages relative to other mountain towns, a small town lifestyle, a support business environment, etc.. Messaging for business recruitment should reinforce the Fraser Valley brand and identities of the towns of Fraser and Winter Park, as a means of communicating the quality of life, growth, opportunities and the shared vision for the region
- Develop a consistent marketing message as part of the brand platform that stresses the quality of life and business opportunities presented by the Fraser Valley. This message will be framed using information obtained from the community data source such as the

Grand Profile stressing recreation, safety, locational advantages relative to other mountain towns, a small town lifestyle, a support business environment, etc.

- Create a shared website to promote business retention and expansion, as a new site targeting the Fraser Valley specifically and work with the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade for business retention/expansion program support

Situational Analysis

The Grand Profile Business Survey documents perceptions among existing business owners and operators that Grand County (and the Towns of Fraser and Winter Park) is a difficult setting for conducting business. About half of survey respondents saying it is “much worse” (7%) or “somewhat worse” (44%) for business than other Colorado mountain communities.

The Grand Profile survey also indicated that finding qualified employees, employee turnover, and having the appropriate location/space for business were all specific problems that are quite widely experienced. Further, in a separate survey question, the “ease of doing business/regulations” was one of the lower rated aspects of doing business in Grand County. Taken together, these are areas where efforts by the towns, and increased sensitivity by local officials, could provide improvements in the business climate that could support successful operations by local businesses. Further, to the extent that recruitment efforts take place, the survey results identify these as areas of relative weakness that would likely be of potential concern to new businesses that are considering locating in the Towns.

Additional findings from the surveys provide quantification of business owner and resident actions and priorities. In an important finding, survey results show that the majority of current business owners report starting their businesses in Grand County (64%), as opposed to moving the business to the County (10%). This provides an indication of current circumstances and the relative rarity of new established businesses coming in from outside the County.

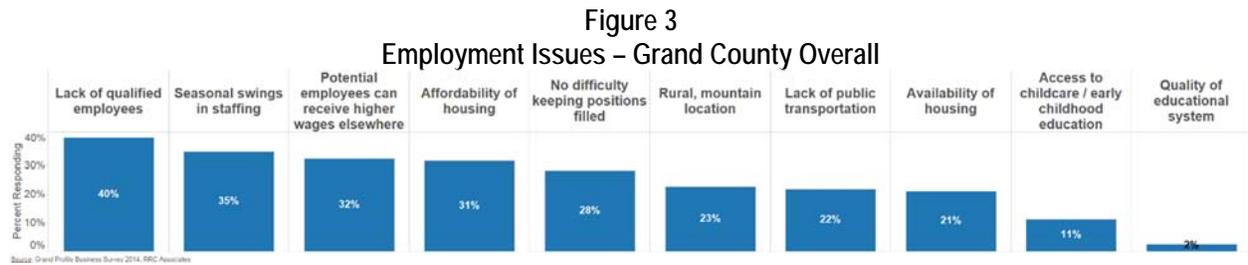
Figure 2
How Grand County business was started



Source: Grand Profile Business Survey 2014, RRC Associates

The survey also provides insight on employment related issues in the area. While “lack of qualified employees” is most frequently identified, seasonal swings, higher wages elsewhere, and affordability of housing were all frequently rated as challenges. These issues identified by

the business community provide some prioritization of topics that should be supported by local initiatives and they tie directly to a number of the identified Actions as stated in this Plan.



Stakeholder Interviews and discussions with local officials suggest that, in the opinions of some, current efforts to support business do not go far enough. However, there are also indications that some of the recent initiatives show promise and receive strong support. For example, the Commercial Enhancement Grant Program in Winter Park, and a similar program in Fraser are showing promise and there is support for expanding such efforts to get direct, visible improvements in local businesses underway. Further, there is a belief there could be more done to encourage “downtown” vitality and pedestrianization. Slower speeds through the towns, improved highway crossings, and other potential efforts to enhance the look and feel of unified business (shopping) districts are all mentioned as potential areas for cooperative efforts. While it is recognized that many of these types of physical design enhancements traditionally might fall under the auspices of the local planning or community development offices, in the Fraser Valley these programs will also be considered a part of the overall economic development strategy, with specific actions identified to further improvements in the town shopping areas.

A review of economic development activities by towns, counties and marketing organizations throughout Colorado and the U.S. indicates extensive efforts at all levels of government. Strategies to support existing businesses, and to recruit new, are long-established with many highly evolved programs being tried throughout the country. While such efforts are less established in Colorado mountain communities there are, nevertheless, examples of flourishing programs with positive results. The recruitment environment is also highly competitive and as a result, many locales have dedicated significant financial resources to such efforts, further raising the costs of competition.

The business recruitment and support environment sometimes differs in Colorado where quality of life opportunities, and the ability to market to visitors as well as residents, creates special opportunities. The result is often highly integrated programs where multiple jurisdictions and agencies are working together toward mutual goals. This is the general approach that is being suggested in this Strategic Economic Development Plan for the Fraser Valley. Several case studies have been identified below that represent examples of these types of programs in other Colorado communities.

Actions in Support of Business Retention and Recruitment

As shown above, there are a number of specific actions that have been identified to further economic goals related to business development. Most of these are interrelated with one another (for example, Transportation, Attainable Housing, and Enhanced Broadband Services availability) all combine to improve conditions of Business Retention/Recruitment. The opportunity to enhance the business brand of the Fraser Valley, and to develop complementary marketing strategies, has also been identified. These efforts should take into account the priorities of the business community and current residents as measured through the Grand Profile surveys. Brand reinforcement and marketing efforts will likely be most successful by communicating information locally obtained. These programs would stress recreation and the extensive trails network, safety, locational advantages relative to many other mountain towns, a small town lifestyle, a supportive business environment and an overall positive quality of life.

Case Studies

Eagle County and the Towns of Vail and Eagle, CO

The Economic Council of Eagle County and the Vail Valley Partnership are two organizations that have played leadership roles in Eagle County, Colorado. Dating back to post recession actions (2008), the organizations have worked on a variety of efforts that are based on six core objectives “developed to position Eagle County’s economy for long term success:

1. Build a Business-Friendly Eagle County
2. Create and Market an Eagle County Business Brand
3. Retain, Grow and Recruit Businesses
4. Protect our Natural Environment
5. Expand Opportunity in our Leading Sectors (Tourism and Recreation, Health & Wellness and Creative Industries)
6. Provide Support for a Quality Workforce (Affordable Housing, Education, Transportation and Health)

The County Plan is designed to “supplement and support (not replace) municipal level economic development efforts.” In other words, in Eagle County, economic development planning begins at the County level, and is complimented by significant efforts by the towns. (Note, this approach generally parallels the efforts in Grand County where the Grand Profile, and efforts by Grand County Economic Development (GCED) was created in 2012 out of the identified “value of a thriving economic environment that retains, expands and attracts businesses in Grand County.”) The Eagle County Plan is a 35 page document that spells out specific initiatives that will be pursued to address the identified Objectives as stated in the Plan.

Programs in Vail and Eagle, CO

Importantly, strong efforts have occurred at the local level as contemplated by the County Plan. For example, the Towns of Vail and Eagle have developed municipal- based programs that merit some consideration as Winter Park and Fraser consider future programs and the competitive environment.

Within the Town of Vail, an identified staff position titled Economic Development Manager in the Office of Economic Development was created in 2007. This individual oversees Economic development initiatives that are identified as “critical to sustaining a vibrant economy in Vail.” The Economic Development Division was added to lead marketing activities and research with the goal of attracting business to Vail to provide a year-round economy. This individual also coordinates efforts by other local organizations including:

- [Vail Economic Advisory Council](#)
- [Vail Local Marketing District Advisory Council](#)
- [Commission on Special Events](#)
- And oversees research such as the [Mountain Travel Market Update June 2015](#)

The efforts in Vail are directed at initiatives that extend beyond tourism and have provided an ongoing support system for integrated programs that address health care, quality of life and future marketing and positioning opportunities. Further, the coordinative role, helping to ensure that the multiple players in the economic development space, are communicating and coordinating presents a worthy model for consideration in Grand County. The Town of Vail developed the Vail Economic Development Strategic Plan, December, 2008 which contains a Work Plan (see pages 11 to 30) that has guided subsequent economic development efforts over the past seven years. That Plan identifies Goals, Objectives and Actions, as well as timelines and responsibilities for various actions. This Plan and the overall program in Vail represents one of the more highly “evolved” examples of integrated economic development activities in a mountain town.

Similarly, in the Town of Eagle, also in Grand County, there have been focused efforts to “drive dollars into our economy, benefiting existing businesses (1), and bringing in new businesses (2). This effort has been championed by the Eagle Chamber and has resulted in coordinated efforts with the County, attention to the central business district in Eagle, launching a CoWorking feasibility study for Eagle, and highly targeted efforts to publicize mountain biking in Eagle. These programs have resulted in improved stature and visibility for the Town and, arguably, a very rapid increase in “buzz” around the state concerning mountain biking and the overall quality of life in the small town that exists in the shadow of Vail and Beaver Creek.

Subsidy and Shared Revenues: the Eagle/Gypsum Agreement on Costco

There are a variety of tools that are used by communities to encourage various forms of business recruitment and relocation. One example was the location of a Costco store in Gypsum, CO. An agreement was created to encourage the location of the store in Gypsum near the Eagle Airport with joint cooperation from the two adjacent towns. At the time the store went in, there was limited development other than the airport in the immediate vicinity of the store, and the location was relatively removed from both adjacent towns, but the store was proposed for zoned land in Gypsum.

Typical of subsidy programs, the specifics of the Costco deal are somewhat complicated and they were originally negotiated quietly behind closed doors. Gypsum and Eagle created a

revenue-sharing agreement in 2007 that split unencumbered sales tax revenues from the Costco retail block roughly 60% Gypsum and 40% to the Town of Eagle for a period of five years. However, the arrangement included a requirement that Gypsum earmark some of the sales tax for law enforcement and the Gypsum Recreation Center debt (the “encumbered” portion) resulting in Eagle receiving about \$16 for every \$100 in sales tax revenues at the Costco site in 2011.

The original agreement expired in 2011. It called for the Town of Gypsum to rebate to Costco 38% of the sales tax generated by Costco for three years, or until a \$4.2 million cap was reached. When the original revenue cap wasn’t met in three years the town rebate dropped to 15% of the sales tax for an additional two years. This agreement was extended in 2012 for another five years at the 15% rebate level, although the payments to Eagle expired resulting in more revenue to Gypsum (estimated at an additional \$400,000 sales tax) according to an article in the Vail Daily dated 10/31/2012.

CoWorking Facilities and Services

Additionally, efforts by the Chamber and other Eagle representatives have helped to develop a coworking opportunity in Eagle. As described by the Eagle Chamber, CoWorking is a solution to the problem of workplace isolation faced by many independent, freelance and telecommuting workers. It offers a “low-cost and flexible business presence, in connection and collaboration with others, in a community of innovation, ideas and talent.”

There are now similar spaces in Frisco (two competing facilities, evo3 and ELEVATE coSpace), and a mountain coworking alliance has created reciprocal memberships in Park City, Tahoe, and Jackson Hole, etc. The idea of this types of spaces is growing rapidly and has particular appeal for millennials that appreciate shared work space and a collaborative environment, as well as the flexibility of living and working in a setting suited to an active lifestyle and work/life balance. Additionally, these spaces may also have appeal to second homeowners and visitors that may find it attractive to work from Grand County, increasing the likelihood of converting to longer stays, mid-week stays and perhaps year round residency.

Firestone

A number of other smaller communities in Colorado, and particularly along the Front Range have created aggressive economic development programs. Firestone, a small but rapidly growing town in Weld County north of Denver has targeted economic development with some success. It was the fastest growing community in Colorado between 2000 and 2010 with a 432% increase in population. The town’s website states:

“Firestone has a strong focus on business and economic development in an effort to provide new jobs and provide additional goods and services for Firestone residents. Economic development also increases the Town's tax base, which helps keep taxes low while providing necessary public services.”

In order to facilitate business development, the Town utilizes an economic development committee to assist and communicate with the business community and to facilitate the processing of development applications with fast track scheduling as may be necessary.

A stated objective of Firestone of encouraging new jobs to provide additional goods and services to residents is an element of the program that is notable. Further, the use of an “economic development committee” represents an approach that is common in successful communities that have chosen to target certain types of economic activity.

Supporting Documentation

Grand Profile Business Analysis, August 2015.

Fraser Valley Strategic Economic Development Survey, September 2015.

[Vail Economic Development Strategic Plan](#)

The Fraser Valley Economic Development Framework Overview

The Strategic Economic Development Plan was designed using a framework that would continue to foster the synergies between the Towns of Fraser and Winter Park and the supporting entities. In addition it was designed to build upon the tools and metrics used in the development of the plan. A brief explanation of the identified framework is presented below.

- The towns and supporting entities of the Fraser Valley recognize that improving the quality of life in the valley is a key component of local economic vitality. This consideration is being addressed through community development efforts by the towns that include actions related directly to economic development, as well as peripheral actions that will further broad community objectives. This Strategic Plan anticipates that the economic development actions identified herein will be tied to other ongoing community development activities and that the communities will continue to plan and invest in ways that improve the communities for residents and visitors alike.
- The towns and supporting entities of the Fraser Valley will work together to develop effective metrics to evaluate each economic development goal and their respective actions as outlined in the Strategic Plan. These metrics will also extend to a commitment to keep the data of the Grand Profile up to date, as the Grand Profile. The metrics and updates are outlined for each goal in the respective Progress & Updates sections.
- The towns and supporting entities of the Fraser Valley will work together to better use existing resources to further economic development opportunities.

Actions:

- Continue joint meetings on a periodic basis to enhance communications and coordination.
- Pursue opportunities for joint funding of initiatives with particular attention to the Actions identified in this Plan.

Strategy Overview: Mutual cooperation between the Towns of Fraser and Winter Park, with the potential for more formal Intergovernmental Agreements at some time in the future.

This discussion provides an overview of Intergovernmental Agreements as a means of formalizing municipal (or other entities) cooperation for mutual benefit. In instances where entities work together there is often an opportunity or need to formalize the basis of the relationship and commitments. Over

time, the cooperation between the Towns of Fraser and Winter Park may evolve to a point where a mutual understanding, in the form of agreements, may become appropriate.

This document is for discussion only at this time; the documentation of agreements, and the specificity of commitments between the towns will evolve with the pursuit of the actions identified in this Plan.

Background

An Intergovernmental Agreement is an agreement made between two or more governments in cooperation to solve problems of mutual concern. IGAs are created for a myriad of purposes, including development review, land use planning, and resource sharing. The agreements set forth the purpose, power, rights, obligations, and responsibilities, financial and otherwise, of each party to the agreement.

Agreements between two or more local governments to address regional issues are a common practice in Colorado. In a 2004 local government land use planning survey, 67 percent of Colorado counties reported using IGAs, up from 46 percent in 1992. By 2004, 57 percent of Colorado's municipalities had adopted a land use IGA.

IGAs are often made to create solutions between neighboring jurisdictions competing for employment centers, tax revenue generators, highway interchanges, or real estate. IGAs can include a multitude of collaborative efforts and negotiations. Revenue sharing is one form which several communities in Colorado have utilized to solve development disputes. Examples include the IGA between the City of Louisville and the Town of Superior and the IGA between the City of Thornton and the City of Westminster. While in theory they require little capital to initiate, IGAs, and in particular revenue sharing IGAs, can be controversial and challenging to negotiate when multiple entities are invested first and foremost in their jurisdiction's benefit.

Current Situation

Municipalities in this area have had a history of governmental collaboration. The Fraser Valley Metropolitan Recreation District (FVMRD), for example, was established in 1979 as a joint effort among Grand County, the Town of Fraser, and the Town of Winter Park. It operates several recreation facilities, including the Grand Park Community Recreation Center, Pole Creek Golf Course, and Fraser Valley Sports Complex. The District extends from the Town of Winter Park to the Homestead Hills Subdivision, and encompasses approximately 92,160 acres. FVMRD is considered a quasi-municipal government agency but unlike municipalities, property tax is its only tax revenue mechanism. It is funded by a district mill levy of 7.096 mills. In 2014, the District collected \$2,019,815 in total tax revenue.

An IGA between the Town of Fraser and the Town of Winter Park was signed in 2006 to form cooperative strategies for sharing common resources and directing mutually beneficial growth. In recent years, the towns have been able to cooperate to mutual advantage in several areas, including establishing a combined police force and municipal court. An IGA Working Group has since been formed to propose additional forms of cooperation. Another notable project is the

combined effort put into developing the Fraser River Trail, a 5-mile, multi-use greenway connecting the towns. The Fraser River Trail not only connects runners and skiers between the two areas, but also helps to mitigate negative impacts to the ecosystem of the Upper Fraser River. Costs for the trail project were mutually shared and partially supported by grants, including several contributions from the Colorado Lottery.

The Working Group has also considered more aggressive ideas, including annexation of Fraser by Winter Park and full consolidation. The group analyzed seven specific topic areas with respect to each of the four alternatives listed above: general government and personnel; political representation; zoning and land use; special districts; public works; public safety and municipal court; and finance and budget. Although both towns decided to take no immediate action on either annexation or consolidation, the report identifies the potential for enormous opportunities in future cooperation between the two towns. The Town of Fraser and the Town of Winter Park continue to schedule interjurisdictional coordination meetings.

Case Studies

City of Louisville and Town of Superior IGA

In 1997, the City of Louisville and its neighbor to the south, the Town of Superior, entered into a number of IGAs to address interchange improvements, library services, and revenue sharing. Of particular interest to Fraser and Winter Park is Louisville and Superior's structure of the revenue sharing IGA. The revenue sharing IGA identifies adjacent properties in both communities, primarily in the Highway 36 corridor, and stipulates that as these properties develop, sales tax revenues generated from the sites are split equally between Louisville and Superior.

Plans for Superior Town Center, a development with 1,400 residential units, a 500-room hotel, office space, and over 440,000 square feet of retail and commercial space, were introduced in 2013. The proposed center, for which Louisville ceded 80 of the 157 acres, is an example of a development which qualifies for revenue sharing between Louisville and Superior under the IGA. Based on the planned retail square footage, each jurisdiction is slated to earn approximately 1.0 million dollars per year at buildout.

Thornton and Westminster IGA

Thornton and Westminster signed an IGA in 1986 to address retail competition in the I-25 corridor. Under this agreement, sales and property tax revenue generated in a defined area along the I-25 are shared between the participants. For sales tax revenue, the city where the sale occurred retains one-third of all receipts. The remaining two-thirds of sales tax revenue are divided between the two cities based on their respective sales tax rates. This percentage allocation is determined by dividing each city's tax rate by the sum of their combined tax rate. Property tax revenues are shared in a similar fashion, whereby each municipality receives a percentage share of the total property tax receipts for the corridor area equal to its contribution to the sum of the mill levies for the two municipalities. There have been several

iterations of the original IGA since its establishment. A new IGA was approved in 2015 amending the last version from 2006 to include shared responsibilities of all right of way maintenance associated with the two interchanges including snow and ice control, street maintenance, traffic signal maintenance, and landscape maintenance.

Fraser Valley Opportunities

The Fraser Valley economy extends beyond the boundaries of the two towns to the entire Valley. Given the relatively small size of each town, there are obviously opportunities for economies of scale that provide a reason for working together on many issues, as they have in the past on the topics reviewed above. The Working Group has even broached the subject of full consolidation in the past. While there are considerable challenges to full consolidation, Fraser and Winter Park can build upon its past successes with the Fraser-Winter Park Police Department, Fraser River Trail, and Municipal Court to pursue other partnerships.

One subject worth discussing is retail competition. Until recently, most of the tourism oriented retail and restaurant space was located on Main Street in Winter Park and most of the year-round community oriented retail uses were located in Fraser town center. The Winter Park Resort has recently added retail uses at the ski area base and on the other end of town near the border. Additionally, Fraser has added community retail uses including the Foundry Cinema and Bowling Alley. Winter Park is also considering retail development on the Sitzmark property. Given their close proximity, it would serve the two jurisdictions well to establish a larger commercial district on the border of the two towns. These commercial uses draw their sales from both towns and it may be mutually beneficial to structure a commercial district within which the towns would agree to share sales tax revenues for development. This could potentially reduce competitive issues around the impacts of new development and foster a more regional approach to improving the Valley's retail tenant base.

Additional Priorities

The survey instrument developed to support the Strategic Economic Development Planning process identified support for additional strategies in August 2015. In light of the near term focus of the Strategic Plan it has been determined that these actions will not be addressed as a part of the Strategic Plan at this time. However, it is recommended that they be considered as a part of future community and economic development efforts. These strategies are:

- Improve K-12 education opportunities
- Improve access to quality healthcare in the Fraser Valley
- Pursue advanced education opportunities for post-secondary students
- Increase business recruitment
- Increase the availability of early childhood education opportunities
- Focus on creating a quality of life that is attractive to younger generations
- Increase the availability of adult education opportunities
- Increase the opportunities for seniors

Supporting Materials Documenting Past Community and Economic Planning Efforts

- Town of Winter Park Housing Needs Assessment, September 2015
- Fraser Valley Metropolitan District Needs Assessment (2014)
- Grand Profile (2014)
- Trails Plan
- Town of Winter Park Sitzmark Property Market Study (2013)
- Winter Park & The Fraser Valley Chamber of Commerce Branding Development Study (2012)
- Town of Fraser Community Revitalization Partnership (2010)
- Fraser-Winter Park Joint Working Group (2007)
- Fraser Valley Retail Market Analysis (2004)
- Public documents available through Winter Park Resort