

STRATEGIC PROSPERITY PLAN

Westcliffe, Colorado

SEPTEMBER, 2020



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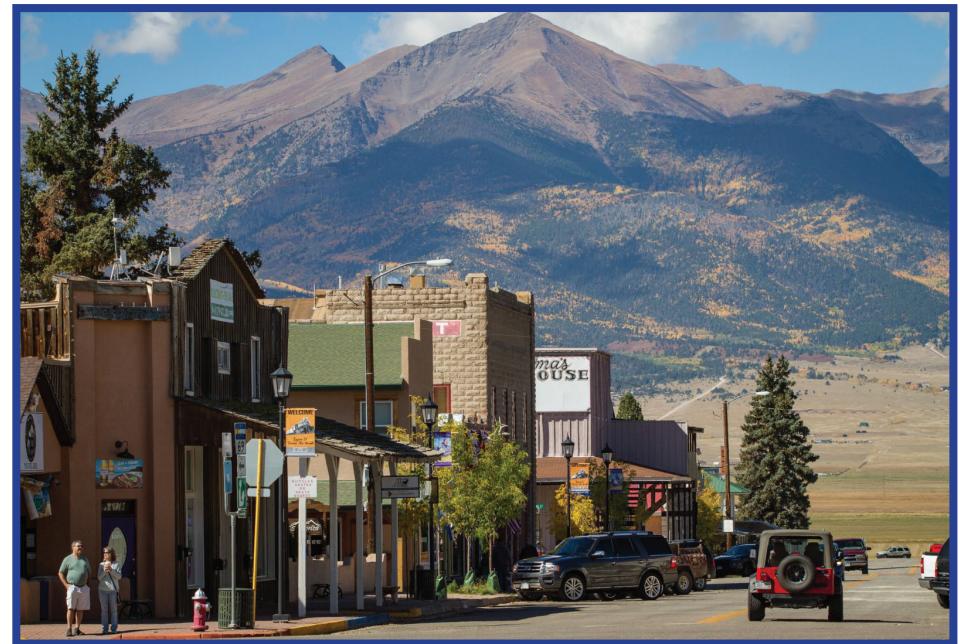
THE TOWN OF WESTCLIFFE, COLORADO

Westcliffe is a quaint and charming town with amazing views of the Sangre de Cristo mountains. With an elevation of 7,888 feet and a population of 613, the charming and historic downtown has restaurants, galleries, coffee shops, gift shops and much more. Family and outdoor opportunities abound in the area, fun activities and events are held year round and there are incredible experiences including ranch stays, hiking, biking, horseback riding, camping, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, snowmobiling and much more. Come for the dark skies and stay for the lifestyle!

MISSION

The Mission of the Westcliffe Town Board is to create an environment which achieves the following:

- o A town where people can live and raise their families in a healthy, safe, stimulating and culturally rich environment
- o Preservation of our small town Western heritage
- o Appropriate, healthy and diverse business environment
- o Responsive, financially sound and effective Town government that has a clear vision for the future.



01

INTRODUCTION

Economic prosperity is about building a vibrant, financially sustainable community with great businesses, desirable jobs, a fully accessible quality of life, opportunities for growth and attractive housing. Prosperity is not driven by the Town - it is created and nurtured by the entire community County wide.

The Town of Westcliffe has created this Strategic Prosperity Plan to focus on the most important Priorities that will create economic prosperity, and to take action on Goals and specific Objectives moving forward.



THIS PLAN INTENDS TO

DIVERSIFY the economic base to ensure Westcliffe residents and businesses are able to withstand economic downturns. This Plan does not provide 'one big solution' but rather a number of smaller-scale strategies that can adapt to change over time.

LEVERAGE local resources, including unique amenities, natural assets and existing businesses to attract additional jobs and investment. Businesses that necessitate or utilize local resources are more likely to stay rooted in Westcliffe.

SPUR ACTION and implementation from the entire community.

TOP REASONS TO LOCATE IN WESTCLIFFE



*There are many reasons
Westcliffe is a desirable
place to live, work, and play.*



Westcliffe is a unique town in a unique setting, which creates amazing opportunities for enjoying the Colorado lifestyle, raising a family, or opening a business.

1 Middle of Everywhere

- Crossroads of Hwy. 69 and 96
- County Airport
- 1 hour to Colorado Springs

4 Family-Friendly

- Parks
- Community events, fairs, rodeos
- Safe place to raise kids

2 Amazing Outdoor Recreation

- Hiking
- Biking
- Camping
- Fishing
- Cross country skiing
- Snowmobiling
- Horseback Riding

3 Small Town Atmosphere

- Strong sense of community
- Historical Main Street
- Rural character
- Agricultural roots

5 Quality Education

- Great schools
- Community events, fairs, rodeos
- Safe place to raise kids

6 Unique Retail Shopping and Attractions

- Galleries
- Museums
- Library
- Restaurants, Coffee Shops
- Bowling Alley
- Gift shops
- Theater

02

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

After conversations with a range of Westcliffe stakeholders about the assets and desires for economic prosperity, some key themes emerged that influence the selection of priorities and goals. The four themes are briefly described below and are included as a way to offer focus for future efforts.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

There is a strong opportunity to capitalize on the efforts already underway to market and promote Westcliffe. There are year round opportunities for tourism and outdoor recreation, but those experiences may not be well known, even to the large population in the Colorado Springs area. Wayfinding and other signage will guide visitors to great experiences. Existing strengths include the many activities and events already being held, the Scenic Byway, the Dark Sky promotion, and the work of C.A.R. T. and the Tourism Board. Many local non profits that support the arts, entertainment, music and historical heritage in the area promote Westcliffe as well.



LEVERAGE LOCAL

Westcliffe has a range of assets – some obvious and some less so – that are resources and advantages for economic prosperity. These include areas of specialized knowledge, an amazing location, local agricultural production, heritage assets, potential for significant business growth, and a significant non profit presence. Business concepts that are uniquely tied to Westcliffe through one of these assets reduce the likelihood that a successful venture will move elsewhere as it scales up. Additionally, focusing the local efforts to be effective and efficient will reduce confusion and create support and clear benefits for the entire area.



HISTORICAL HERITAGE

Westcliffe has the ability to capitalize on unique historical heritage sites that currently exist, and to expand and build on those that might need focused attention. Heritage tourism is a growing industry, and in combination with the opportunity to market and promote the area, local historical sites, buildings, ranches, businesses, events and activities can all prosper economically. There are several museums in the area that are unique and would be of historical interest. The San Isabel campground can also be a point of interest to draw visitors to Westcliffe.

TAKE INITIATIVE

Economic prosperity can falter when it lacks clear leadership. Implementation of this Plan depends on a group of strong leaders to communicate strengths and opportunities. Ultimately, the success of this Plan hinges on leaders and an organization that have the backing of the community. As this is a community Plan, the Town as an agency cannot be the only group responsible for implementation and action. As the Plan continues to evolve and change, the community can continue to suggest improvements and volunteer for critical activities.

03

PRIORITIES

OVERVIEW

Through research, community engagement and stakeholder interviews Westcliffe identified a number of Priorities to further economic prosperity. The following pages provide a brief description of each Priority and the top opportunities within each. The Priorities will guide efforts for Westcliffe into the future. The three Priorities are Business, Infrastructure, and be a strikethrough until we find new language.



PRIORITIES



Diversified Business

The quality and quantity of businesses in Westcliffe is very important for many reasons: shopping locally keeps financial resources within the community, and retail sales tax revenues help to fund other important quality of life projects. With a well supported diverse business community, Westcliffe will flourish and succeed in any situation.



Sustainable Infrastructure

The roads, sidewalks, lights, buildings and other capital projects of the Town of Westcliffe require maintenance and updating. Not only should the initial construction be of the highest quality, the Town will ensure that the financial sustainability of any project is considered in terms of cost and personnel.



Economic Opportunities

The long term financial sustainability of the Town will depend on many factors, only some of which are managed by the Town. Attraction of new business and visitors to the Town and partnering with other organizations to strengthen the economic opportunities is a key priority.





DIVERSIFIED BUSINSES

OVERVIEW

Westcliffe has a number of great retail and restaurant establishments within the town. However, data and resident feedback reveal unmet demand for certain retail goods and food services, meaning residents are spending money elsewhere to fill these needs. The opportunities in this section seek to fill gaps, generate additional employment opportunities support the gig economy, fill vacant storefronts and add amenities needed to help retain and attract people back to the Town year round.

TOP OPPORTUNITIES

1. Attract Diverse New Businesses and Support Existing Businesses

Restaurants in Westcliffe are limited in nature due to the lack of a year round economy, low tourism in the winter months, and a smaller population to support their services. Supporting existing restaurants and attracting more restaurants to the area will improve quality of life as well as create additional opportunities for tourism.

2. Support Business Network and Incentives

With a strong support system (including the CART, EDC and the Town) existing businesses can



continue to prosper. Incentives may be a strategy to not only attract new businesses but also to grow and strengthen existing businesses.

3. Promote the Resource Guide

Creating information to share for both new and existing businesses would be a way to communicate the value of locating in Westcliffe and supporting diverse businesses. Data and demographics about doing business in the area as well as contact information would be included.

4. Focus on Historical Preservation

The unique historical buildings in Westcliffe are an attraction for visitors and investors alike. Investing in and preserving that heritage is an important part of prosperity.



SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

OVERVIEW

With limited revenue sources and many needs, Westcliffe has a focus on quality, well maintained infrastructure that will benefit businesses, residents and tourists as well as preserve the quality of life and small town atmosphere. Infrastructure includes roads, sidewalks, street lighting, water, sewer and buildings.

TOP OPPORTUNITIES

1. Broadband

Broadband connectivity is a focus and priority County wide, and more so for Westcliffe since it is the heart of the Custer County business community. With strong broadband, more business opportunities will exist for both brick and mortar as well as on line entrepreneurs.

2. Policies and Codes

Additional focus is needed on the safety, appearance and maintenance of the downtown and entrance areas to Westcliffe.



3. Historic Preservation

The historic assets that exist in Westcliffe can be a tourism attraction, but are also important to the quality of life for residents. Higher utilization of the Museum and Rail Road buildings are one component of this Priority.

4. Partnerships

With Silver Cliff and Custer County as close partners, when infrastructure projects happen the agencies can support one another with grants, letters of support, and coordinating timing and budget issues.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

OVERVIEW

With a Tourism Board, the Town of Silver Cliff, and C.A.R.T. all focused on marketing the area, there is still a gap to fill in the area of creating tourism and informing the public about the amazing things to do and see in Westcliffe. Communicating to the local residents and business owners is also critical to spur local support and spending.

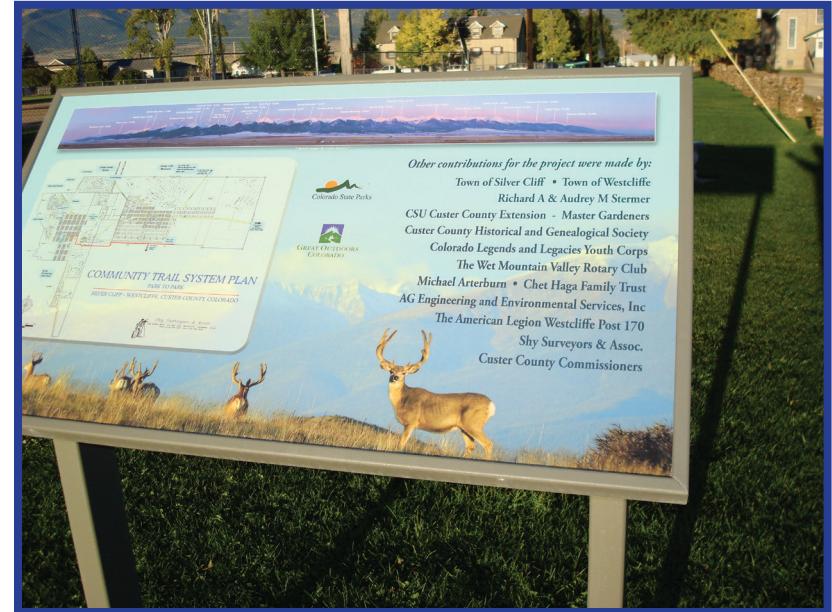
TOP OPPORTUNITIES

1. Leverage Existing Activities

There are many local non profits as well as governments and other agencies focused on marketing and promoting Westcliffe. There can be some confusion as a result of those efforts, but that also creates opportunities to educate, inform, coordinate and collaborate to better serve the entire area. Great signage can be used to drive visitors to see all the amenities in the area and to stay longer.

2. Tell Our Story

Westcliffe is a unique town in a unique setting. There should be a long range vision for attracting new visitors to Westcliffe, which will increase the economic opportunities for existing businesses and residents.



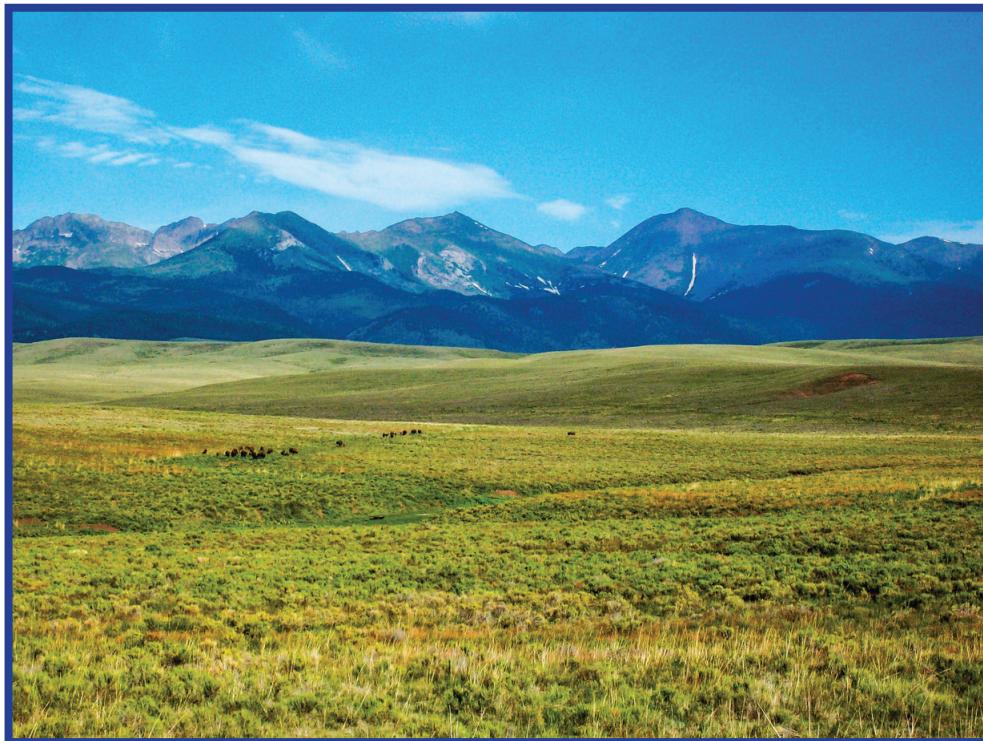
04

GOALS

Based on the main Priorities, Westcliffe has Goals to accomplish within each Priority:



05 STRATEGIES



Strategies will be the tools used to drive the Implementation and Action Plan.

- Partnerships: strong relationships with Custer County and Silver Cliff as well as agencies such as Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District, CDOT, EDC, the Tourism Board, and CART will be needed moving forward.
- Diversification: being able to attract a diverse range of businesses and visitors will help the local economy in many ways, and keeping a diverse revenue stream will enable Westcliffe to prosper through economic adversity.
- Revenue Support: communication regarding the most important issues and successes will allow Westcliffe to have support for revenue adjustments into the future.

06

MEASUREMENT

MEASURE AND SHARE PROGRESS

This Strategic Prosperity Plan was created with the help of the residents and business owners in Westcliffe, and a regular update and progress report should be shared. That report could include the following information:

- Number of new businesses
- Increase in revenue (sales and property tax)
- Number of new jobs
- New community amenities
- Marketing efforts
- Project funding
- Grants (applied for | received)

Perhaps even more important than tracking and measuring success is that Westcliffe effectively communicate and share successes with the residents, businesses, partners, and County Commissioners.



Reporting

Quarterly reports should be made as well as a once a year annual report that could be made available on the website.

To generate broad community interest and support, the annual report could be presented as a 'State of the City' event.

CONTACT INFORMATION

for more information, or to share your thoughts and comments on this Plan, please reach out to:

Town of Westcliffe
1000 Main Street
PO Box 406
Westcliffe, Colorado
(719) 783-2282