



Heart of Colorado Rural Philanthropy Days

Elevating Capacity, Community & Collaboration

September 28-30, 2016 | Copper Mountain

Regional Listening Tour Report



April 4-6, 2016

Chaffee, Clear Creek, Custer, Fremont, Gilpin, Lake,
Park, Summit and Teller Counties

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Executive Summary

The Heart of Colorado Rural Philanthropy Days (HOC RPD) Listening Tour provided executive level staff from statewide grantmaking foundations an opportunity to learn more about the broad challenges and issues facing Colorado's rural communities. The HOC RPD region is comprised of nine counties: Chaffee, Clear Creek, Custer, Fremont, Gilpin, Lake, Park, Summit, and Teller Counties. The Tour was conducted in preparation for the HOC RPD conference, which is scheduled for September 28-30, 2016 in Summit County.

Where did we go? The Listening Tour took place on April 4-6, 2016. The delegation visited seven of nine counties within the region, hosting meetings in the communities of Black Hawk, Georgetown, Fairplay, Cañon City, Westcliffe, Salida, and Cripple Creek, Colorado. The 2016 Listening Tour did not stop in Summit or Lake counties, since Listening Tour Sessions took place in these counties in February of 2015. Notes from these previous sessions will be added to this Listening Tour report. A full itinerary is available in Appendix A.

What did we do? In open discussions, community leaders described the region's character, existing needs, and efforts currently underway to address those needs. Representatives working in the arts and culture, business and economic development, education, agriculture and environment, government, health care, human services, and housing sectors participated.

What did we hear? While there are clear differences among communities in the region, there are also many similarities. A number of participants used the same terms to describe the character of the region and its inhabitants: *diverse, generous, outdoorsy, supportive, vibrant, and strong culture of volunteerism*. At each stop on the tour, participants spoke of four common regional needs: building sustainable communities, access to healthcare, transient populations, and human services.

What is next? Each of the regional needs explored in this report are important and significant. The Listening Tour delegation and representatives from the Steering Committee selected issues to explore in greater depth at the upcoming HOC RPD conference, including:

- 1) *Models for Addressing Behavioral Health in Rural Communities*
- 2) *Marijuana's Impact on Human Services in Colorado*
- 3) *Affordable Housing: Models for Success in Rural Communities*
- 4) *Poverty and Access to Healthy Lifestyles*

On September 29, 2016, the second day of the HOC RPD conference, the Steering Committee will convene a gathering of executive directors, topic experts, funders, and state and local government officials for various panel discussions. Panelists will include regional and statewide experts who will discuss opportunities for growth, models of success, and strategies that communities can take to advocate for change in rural communities.

Introduction

The purpose of the Heart of Colorado Rural Philanthropy Days (HOC RPD) Listening Tour, which took place on April 4-6, 2016, was to provide executive level staff from statewide grantmaking entities an opportunity to learn more about the broad challenges and issues facing Colorado's rural communities. In 2012, during a Rural Funders' Forum hosted by Anschutz Family Foundation, statewide funders expressed a desire to better understand the region's overarching needs and the actions underway to address these issues prior to attending an RPD conference. The Listening Tour concept was developed as a means to address this information gap so grantmakers would arrive at a RPD conference better prepared to collaborate with nonprofit organizations and local governments to support community needs.

Amy Latham, Vice President of Philanthropy at The Colorado Health Foundation, and Linda Reiner, Vice President at Caring for Colorado Foundation, co-chaired the HOC RPD Listening Tour. In addition, senior leaders from Anschutz Family Foundation, Daniels Fund and USDA Rural Development, as well as representatives from Community Resource Center and the HOC RPD Steering Committee, attended the tour (Appendix B).

The goal of the Listening Tour was to allow funders to hear from community leaders—in open, candid discussions—about the characteristics of the region, existing needs, and efforts currently underway to address them. Three primary questions were asked at each meeting:

- 1. How would you describe the personality and character of your community?*
- 2. What are the challenges facing your community?*
- 3. What are the successes facing your community?*

In partnership with Community Resource Center, the HOC RPD Steering Committee organized and hosted the Listening Tour with substantial support from the local community, including: Chaffee County, Clear Creek County, Custer County, Gilpin County, Park County, Teller County, and Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments (Appendix C). Community leaders working in the arts and culture, business and economic development, education, agriculture and environment, government, health care, and human services were invited (Appendix D). The delegation met with nearly 150 people across seven meetings, visiting one community in each county, including: Black Hawk in Gilpin County, Georgetown in Clear Creek County, Fairplay in Park County, Cañon City in Fremont County, Westcliffe in Custer County, Salida in Chaffee County, and Cripple Creek in Teller County.

This report summarizes the community characteristics, issues, and needs that were heard in these meetings. It is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of all regional characteristics and needs.

Characteristics of the Heart of Colorado Region

The counties of the HOC region contain diverse communities with a wide variety of strengths and challenges. Participants described their communities as generous, supportive, outdoor-oriented, vibrant, and historic—a place where a culture of volunteerism thrives. The highly successful spirit campaign by Wet Valley Community Foundation fostered a culture of philanthropy by matching gifts made to community nonprofit organizations. In 2015, \$320,000 was given to the 66 nonprofits in the community, most of which are volunteer-run organizations. Additionally, nonprofits throughout the region are proud of their ability to collaborate utilizing meager resources. All counties expressed a need and the ability to come together and support whatever initiative are most important for the community.

Historic preservation is another significant aspect of the culture in the HOC region. The majority of Park County falls within a National Heritage Area, and is one of only 49 in the United States. National Heritage Areas are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape¹. Georgetown claims to have more historic preservation funding than any other town per capita. Recognition and appreciation for a rich history thrives throughout the entirety of the region.

The region is characterized as a significant hub for outdoor recreation. In Chaffee County, outdoor recreation tourism is the second largest industry, but it is also one of the lowest paying for residents. Georgetown recently received a \$500,000 grant from Great Outdoors Colorado to build a trail around their lake. This project is also supported by the recreation district and the county. The significant level of recreational opportunities throughout the region brings in tourists and community members who are attracted to outdoor recreational lifestyles. Lake County is proud of the work that has been done to revitalize the Arkansas River back to a Gold Water River with excellent fishing opportunities. Each of the communities throughout the region are tied to recreation and the environment.

Despite these commonalities, various additional characteristics emerged strongly on a regional level. Each county in the region relies on a different service hub. Even within counties, many communities rely on different service hubs. For example, Bailey typically commutes to the Denver Metropolitan area for services, while Fairplay frequently utilizes services in Summit or Chaffee counties. Due to the variety of characteristics, cultures, and challenges in each county, various themes arose strictly on the county level.

For a full list of self-described characteristics, please see Appendix E.



¹ South Park National Heritage Area

Cross-Cutting Regional Issues

The Heart of Colorado is extremely diverse, with a wide range of cultures, geographies, economies, successes, and challenges. During the Listening Tour, community leaders voiced a variety of concerns, in addition to opportunities for growth and progress, including: building sustainable communities, increasing access to healthcare, working with an increasing transient population, and improving human services for the community. Each of these challenges presented themselves uniquely at each Listening Tour session, showing the diverse and specific opportunities that each county faces.

Access to Healthcare

A major theme that emerged in each of the nine counties was the need to increase access to a spectrum of health services in the region. Significant challenges include a lack of healthcare providers, most starkly for mental health services, a culture of unhealthy lifestyles, and increased substance use and abuse. Community leaders are working toward offering integrated healthcare to their communities, but many of these remote communities still struggle with creating a culture of physical and mental health within their counties.

Healthcare

Many counties struggle with providing access to quality healthcare within their communities, and counties vary widely on the services they are able to provide. Gilpin, Clear Creek, and Park counties do not have any medical facilities or practicing physicians within the county. Park County was forced to close its hospital in 1984 and has many physicians who own second homes in the region, but do not provide services. Additionally, the St. Vincent Hospital in Leadville closed in 2014 after providing services for 135 years. Gilpin County has one nurse practitioner who will be retiring shortly, but the medical clinic was closed in 2014 after serving the county for 28 years. As a response to this challenge, the County now provides on-demand services for medical transportation four days a week. Clear Creek County anticipates the arrival of a doctor this summer, which will relieve the reliance on emergency services by young families, transient populations, and the elderly. Custer County has a hospital district, but faces financial challenges with remaining open. Chaffee, Custer, Fremont, and Lake each expressed a challenge with recruiting and retaining qualified medical providers. Although Chaffee and Fremont Counties have high quality medical providers, and dental care are lacking.

In addition to the shortage of health providers in parts of the region, community members do not lead healthy lifestyles. In Fremont County, 50% of 25-35 year olds use tobacco. Additionally, community members often do not access preventative screenings and wait to see a doctor until they are very sick. The community has implemented a Public Health Improvement plan which focuses on educating the public on mental health, smoking, and pre-natal care. Custer, Chaffee, and Clear Creek counties have also completed community health assessments to identify the strengths and challenges within the communities. Summit County is working with Centura Health, the largest healthcare provider in Colorado, to develop a wellness model that would be offered as an incentive with larger employers in the county.

The high cost of insurance provides another barrier to health within the HOC region. Many community members have high deductible plans, which act as a barrier to receiving healthcare since many community members cannot afford to pay for doctor visits. Communities throughout Summit County are proud of their ability to adapt to changes from the Affordable Care Act. The community is confident in its ability move fully integrate the new system.

	Chaffee	Clear Creek	Custer	Fremont	Gilpin	Lake	Park	Summit	Teller	Colorado
<i>Uninsured Rate</i>	15.7%	9.1%	18.2%	12.1%	13.5%	23.4%	13.6%	17.7%	11.5%	13.90%
<i>Uninsured 0-18 Years</i>	10.6%	4.2%	14%	6.6%	7.8%	6.6%	5.6%	12.7%	7.8%	8%
<i>Population Enrolled in Medicaid²</i>	15.3%	11.5%	23.7%	21.8%	14%	14.8%	13.6%	6.1%	13.1%	20%

Behavioral Health

Three in ten Coloradans are in need of mental health or substance use disorder care (1.5 million people)³. Although the number of mental health providers has increased, the need is still significant. Few providers with specialized skills are willing to serve those with the greatest needs, given the current reimbursement rates. The report also demonstrates that the greatest need for providers in Colorado is in rural communities, as the majority of service providers are located in the Denver and Colorado Springs Metro areas. Despite relatively close proximity to these metropolitan areas, counties in the HOC region continue to struggle with providing adequate mental health support to community members in the region.

Due to the large geographic area of the region, many counties rely on different service providers for mental health. Gilpin and Clear Creek counties rely on Jefferson Center for Mental Health; Sol Vista serves Fremont, Custer, Chaffee and Lake counties; Aspen Ridge serves Park and Teller Counties; and Mind Springs Health serves Summit County. Each county expressed a need for additional services. Resources are limited within these communities and the need is growing regionally. All health and human services providers are in need of additional training on how to help those with a mental illness. The foundational pieces for providing comprehensive care are missing from many of these communities. Park County struggles with obtaining adequate services for its more remote communities. Towns in the northeast part of the county are better situated to receive services from metropolitan areas. A local coalition has formed to petition for additional services that cover the entirety of the county, including the county seat of Fairplay. Other communities expressed the challenge of needing consistent and regularly scheduled mental health services. In order for patients to receive adequate care, they need consistent service providers with whom they can develop a trusting relationships.

The report also states that Colorado ranks sixth among states for its rate of suicide. The HOC region echoed these concerns on the Listening Tour, expressing challenges of high rates of depression and suicide. Fremont County has the highest rate of suicide in Colorado; however, many of the suicides are attributed to the 12 jails and prisons in the community. The suicide rate is 34.17% in Fremont County verses 16.6% overall in Colorado, and is calculated by the number of suicides per 100,000 people⁴. Additionally, many individuals travel to Fremont County to use the Royal Gorge Bridge as a means for committing suicide. Custer County does not have the resources necessary to service the significant number of veterans facing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and seeking isolation in the mountains around Westcliffe.

Overcoming the stigma of receiving mental health treatment is an ongoing challenge in the region. The “rugged” and individualistic culture leads many community members to avoid obtaining the care they desperately need. Many of those who are in need of assistance are afraid of being seen at a mental health provider’s office. In order to overcome these challenges, many communities are working toward integrating mental health services into other essential services. Some successes in the region include the integration of a mental and medical health clinic by Sol Vista in Buena Vista, Heart of

² U.S. Census Bureau. (2015, July). *State & county Quickfacts: Colorado*. Retrieved April 1, 2016, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.

³ The Status of Behavioral Health Care in Colorado

the Rockies Hospital in Salida employees a psychiatrist, and many counties are working toward tele-psychiatric services. By providing these services, community members are more willing to confidentially receive services.

Providing mental healthcare for youth is a significant concern for many community leaders. Results from a community assessment in Summit County revealed that the most significant need is for more services for behavioral and substance abuse care. Parents are overwhelmingly concerned about the emotional state of children within the community. Many communities are working toward an integrated model within schools. The Park-Teller Early Childhood Council is working to create a program to offer integrated services to children.

Substance Use Disorders

Community leaders at eight of the nine Listening Tour meetings expressed significant concern over the growing presence of psychoactive substances in the region. Law enforcement professionals reported high levels of heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana, and alcohol consumption. A significant contributor to the challenge is that many local community members have easier access to these mind-altering substances than they do to mental healthcare. Communities have seen high rates of alcohol-related traffic deaths, DUIs, binge drinking, and heroin overdoses.

Schools have observed increased rates of substance abuse as they struggle to counter a culture that has legalized recreational marijuana usage. Children are exposed to more messaging and social norming, often from their parents and family members. In Teller County, many children are smoking pot that they claim to receive from their parents. Communities are looking for strategies for interventional and education at a young age. Summit County is developing a social media campaign specifically to address marijuana use among youth. In Fremont County, 67% of child welfare cases are drug related. Additionally, 2-5 children a month are born addicted to a controlled substance, according to participants. High drug usage has led to an increase of violent crime and has led authorities in Fremont County to hire a full time drug investigator. As “Colorado’s Playground”, resort communities in the region face an influx of young adults promoting a party atmosphere, which infiltrates the permanent community and schools. Special events catered to tourism are frequent in Summit County, and are designed to encourage and facilitate this behavior in public settings. A community assessment in Summit County³ showed residents were overwhelmingly concerned about the need for additional behavioral health services. Of all parents surveyed, 75% ranked the emotional stability of children and the need for prevention and substance abuse services as a top tier issue.⁵

A significant challenge in the region is a lack of a service continuum for substance abuse. None of the communities in the region have a detox facility, and patients must be transported to the Front Range. Community members identified the need to work locally to identify and address these gaps in services. An additional challenge to providing services is that Medicaid and many private insurance companies do to cover the cost of substance abuse services. Communities throughout the region struggle with providing the services necessary to adequately address substance abuse disorders.

Mind Springs Health (MSH), a regional behavioral healthcare provider serving ten counties⁶ across western Colorado, provides services throughout the region, yet cannot fully meet the escalating need. MSH operates the only psychiatric hospital between Denver and Salt Lake City, currently providing only six psychiatric hospital beds for every 100,000 people on the Western Slope; compared to the national average of 14.

⁵Public Health Needs Assessment, Executive Summary. Summit County Public Health. Prepared By: Corona Insights. 2012.<<http://www.co.summit.co.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1620>>

⁶ Eagle, Garfield, Grand, Jackson, Mesa, Moffat, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, and Summit counties

Building Sustainable Communities

Economic sustainability is a concern throughout the HOC region; however, the needs vary widely between counties. These concerns include a lack of affordable housing for the working class, a need to diversify economic drivers within the community, shortage of qualified employees committed to the long-term growth of the community, and the need for basic public services. Each of nine counties seek to create sustainable communities for future generations.

Economic Development and Diversity

Across the board, the communities of the HOC are developing new and innovative ways to stabilize and diversify the economic landscape. Many communities expressed a need for new, creative ideas to boost economic development and diversity, asking the question, “How do we maintain the culture and charm of our community while allowing for economic development to foster?” There is a strong resistance to industry and commercial development that will detract from the natural beauty or change the culture of the county.

Gilpin, Clear Creek, Lake and Park counties each expressed challenges with offering employment within the county, reporting that the majority of their workforce commutes out of the county each day for employment opportunities. Gilpin County describes itself as a two-way bedroom community, with many community members leaving the community for work and many commuting in from Denver for employment opportunities. Additionally, having parents leave the community adds a strain on families, leaving children with a significant amount of unsupervised time.

Communities throughout the HOC region lack economic diversity. Families must inherit or start a business to remain in the area, but business owners struggle with remain viable. Larger industries do not receive a return on investment in small dispersed communities, so they are not moving into the counties most in need of economic stimulation. Current employment opportunities consist of seasonal or shift work that is associated with casinos, mines and outdoor recreation. Casinos are known for their right-to-work culture, leading to high turnover and feeding the transient nature of the communities, specifically in Gilpin and Teller counties. Lake County expressed a mismatch in the jobs available compared to the skillset within the community, stating that they have the skills for the hospitality industry, but community members must leave the community to utilize their skillset.

Despite these challenges, the HOC region remains optimistic about potential opportunities for growth. Chaffee County worked for more than five years to diversify its economy and is experiencing a growth in biotechnology and drone research. Many view telecommuting as a significant opportunity for many remote communities once broadband is more accessible. Lake County is investigating the possibility of using its high altitude location as an economic driver, potentially offering high altitude training or medical research. Ranchers in Custer County are developing a brand for high quality grass-fed, organic beef production. In Gilpin County, leaders are looking toward heritage tourism as a method for engaging the community.

Resource economies notoriously followed a boom and bust cycle that can severely impact a small community during an economic downturn. Clear Creek County is looking for opportunities to diversify its economic base with the imminent closing of the Henderson Mine. County officials shared that more than 70% of the county’s assessed valuation is tied to the Mine, and they expect a 40% decrease in the annual fund’s revenue. The county also struggles with real estate and commercial development due to the extensive number of abandoned mines. Clear Creek County is exploring how to capitalize on its proximity to Interstate 70, which is viewed as a blessing and a curse. The Colorado Visitors Center in Georgetown is the most visited in the state; however, the community continues to struggle with attracting travelers to the city center. Similarly, Lake County is working toward diversifying the economy in anticipation of the closure of the Climax Mine in 2039.

While the tourism economy can provide more stabilized opportunities, the associated hospitality and service sector jobs cannot provide a living wage or healthcare benefits, and the social sector often bears the burden of these insufficiencies. Lake County is currently in conversations to bring a resort hotel to the community, which could bring hundreds of jobs and serve as a major economic driver. While some look forward to the potential development, others hesitate to grow a resort community similar to their neighbors along the I-70 corridor.

Many of these smaller communities rely heavily on small businesses for services and employment opportunities; yet, business owners are isolated and do not receive the support needed to thrive. Accessing services provided by a Small Business Development Center is a significant need identified in Lake, Park and Summit counties. Community members in Park County were unaware of the resources available to them in neighboring counties. The inability to provide adequate housing, health care, broadband, childcare and transportation is another significant barrier to economic development in the region.

	Chaffee	Clear Creek	Custer	Fremont	Gilpin	Lake	Park	Summit	Teller	Colorado
<i>Labor Force</i>	8,832	5,555	1,845	20,402	3,175	3,414	11,490	17,800	12,604	2,811,701
<i>Unemployment Rate</i>	3.0%	3.1%	3.4%	5.5%	2.6%	4.2%	2.9%	3.4%	3.8%	5.4%
<i>Median Household Income</i>	\$48,528	\$68,531	\$32,261	\$40,569	\$65,851	\$44,610	\$60,800	\$63,697	\$62,559	\$59,448
<i>Poverty Rate</i>	8.7%	9.3%	17.7%	17.6%	10.3%	14.3%	8.3%	13.7%	7.2%	8.8%
<i>Nonprofit 501(c)3 Public Charities⁷</i>	192	50	75	288	29	13	111	83	198	25,560

Recruiting and Retaining Credentialed Staff

Businesses throughout the HOC region are challenged with recruiting and retaining credentialed staff. Affordable housing and livable wages are significant barriers to attracting middle class families. The demographic of many communities in the region is comprised typically of the very wealth and very poor. Middle-income families struggle to establish stable lifestyles in the region. Currently, residents must often choose between a comfortable life and the beauty of the region. Communities seek the opportunity to lift low-income community members and create a thriving middle class in the region.

A major barrier to recruiting qualified staff is the disconnect that exists between wages available and the high cost of living. Many communities in the region are seeing an increase in the cost of living, while wages remain stagnant. Many working professionals cannot afford homes, and are forced to rent or live in trailer parks. Communities in close proximity to Denver or Colorado Springs struggle to compete with the wages offered in larger cities. Park County participants estimate that 80% of the workforce travels outside the community in search of employment opportunities. Additionally, many employed community members still qualify for public services while working full time jobs. A major contributor to the high cost of living is the lack of affordable housing options. In Fremont County, citizens must earn at least \$17 per hour to afford basic housing. Second homeowners drive up the cost of living in the region. Many community members typically work 2-3 jobs in order to afford living in the region.

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. (2015, July). *State & county Quickfacts: Colorado*. Retrieved April 1, 2016, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.

Developing opportunities for workforce development is a significant need in the HOC. A mismatch between available opportunities and skills available exists in the region. In Fremont County, prisons bring both positive and negative aspects to the community. The 12 federal and state prisons are leading the nation in innovative re-entry efforts, but struggle to meet the full scope of need. Job skills training is a significant need and serves as a crucial component in lowering recidivism. Additionally, communities are working to develop a “grown your own” programs to meet their needs. Law enforcement in Fremont County will soon provide a scholarship program for local high school graduates to go into the police academy and help to address a shortage of professionals. Communities are working toward addressing the barriers that exist as a challenge to attracting and retaining credentialed staff.

Public Services: Infrastructure & Technology

A significant barrier to economic development faced by many communities is the lack of essential, public services. These services include affordable public transportation, broadband, electricity, and communications within the county. Due to the region’s dispersed population, companies see very little if any return on investment, and therefore haven’t built out the infrastructure in rural communities.

A common theme throughout the region was the lack of technological infrastructure, specifically a robust broadband internet network. Businesses in Clear Creek, Custer, Gilpin, Lake, Park and Teller counties lack reliable access to high speed internet, which is considered critical to robust economic development. Chaffee County was the one of the first counties in the state to offer redundant broadband, which has allowed for significant economic growth and vitality. Additionally, creating a desirable community has enabled community members the opportunity to attract skilled healthcare professionals. Cost and services vary widely within many counties. In Custer County, for example, high speed internet is available at a significant cost and varies depending on the geographic location. Clear Creek County has cable running through I70, but the community isn’t able to access broadband. Gilpin, Clear Creek, and Lake counties are each working toward providing broadband to the community. Custer County explained that reliable phone service is a more significant challenge and has proven to be a public safety issue within the community.

Transportation is also a significant barrier to economic development in the HOC region. Many of the communities have transportation available, but the services are insufficient to meet their needs. Gilpin County has on-demand medical transportation available; however, they are unable to provide a fixed route program or any services to youth. Custer County relies on a rotary van service for transportation needs and Clear Creek County does not have any transportation within the community. Bustang, a regional bus that travels between Glenwood Springs and Denver, does not stop in Clear Creek County, but does service Frisco Station in Summit County. A significant success in Summit County is the Summit Stage, which offers free public bus service. This public-private partnership offers service to ski areas, lodging, downtown areas, shopping, medical centers and some residential areas.⁸ The lack of services such as healthcare and shopping within these communities leads to a reliance on personal transportation to access services.

A significant and unique challenge in Park County is that only 72% of the fire district in Park County has access to the electrical grid. Although many families choose to live off the grid, others homes are unable to access basic electricity and rely on expensive propane services. School authorities estimate that approximately 30% of students do not have electricity or phone service at home. Additionally, Park County struggles with communication within the county. Many use the Summit County newspaper, list serves, or Facebook to share resources and information, but these sources do not provide adequate communication within the county.

⁸ <http://summitcountyco.gov/586/Transit-Summit-Stage/>

Affordable Housing

Providing affordable housing in the HOC region is a significant challenge. Working families cannot afford suitable homes, and many spend 30-50% of their income on housing. The working class often can only afford housing in mobile home parks, campers, or poorly built homes with high utility costs. Clear Creek County has twenty-five mobile home parks from the 1950's. What few homes are available require significant updates to become livable. Older homes also lack suitable insulation, and residents frequently pay more for heating than rent during the winter in the high altitude communities. Due to the resort nature of these communities, many available homes serve as vacation or AirBNB rentals that are not available for rent by the local communities, creating a significant strain on the workforce. In Lake County, while more affordable housing does exist, aging homes require significant maintenance and updating, which can be daunting for first-home owners or investors.

All income levels struggle to find housing, which leads to attrition from the community. A lack of land available for development in conjunction with the high cost of construction leads to a significant shortage of housing. The lack of housing availability leads to additional attrition by community members, and many teachers, police and public service providers are leaving in search of a more affordable community. Many in the region are working toward updating or developing a housing needs assessment.

	Chaffee	Clear Creek	Custer	Fremont	Gilpin	Lake	Park	Summit	Teller	Colorado
<i>Total Housing Units</i>	10,170	5,693	4,512	19,199	3,408	4,394	14,075	29,948	12,690	2,238,624
<i>Owner Occupied Housing Units</i>	5,855	3,299	1,694	11,944	1,827	1,977	6,276	7,7572	7,835	1,295,048
<i>Renter-Occupied Housing Units</i>	1,880	804	431	4,656	636	976	908	4,182	1,776	703,266
<i>Vacant Housing</i>	2,435	1,590	2,387	2,599	945	1,283	6,891	18,807	3,079	240,310
<i>Seasonal, recreational or occasional use</i>	1,727	1,269	1,880	839	791	2,601	6,279	25,216	2,228	94,4682
<i>Average Home Price</i>	\$265,700	\$273,400	\$215,400	\$157,400	\$260,000	\$174,312	\$244,300	\$457,823	\$233,300	\$239,400
<i>Average Monthly Rental (\$/month)⁹</i>	\$817	\$795	\$692	\$697	\$1,043	\$563	\$1,087	\$1,008	\$961	\$969

Transient Populations

Each county expressed challenges working with transient populations. Park County participants estimate more than 200 individuals live in tents, trailers or vehicles. Community leaders have watched the transient populations grow, though the cause of this influx varies depending on the county. As the larger metropolitan communities implement and enforce "Urban Camping Bans" across the state, indigent populations have increasingly moved into rural communities. Many have also observed an influx of transient populations who came to Colorado for legalized marijuana. Once they arrive, they remain in the community due to a lack of resources, employment and affordable housing. In Fremont County, some indigent populations are a result of the prison system. Seasonal employment opportunities also contribute to the highly

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2015, July). *State & county Quickfacts: Colorado*. Retrieved April 1, 2016, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.

transient nature of the local community. Additionally, casino workers in Teller and Gilpin counties are very transient, creating challenges for developing stable communities.

The recent growth of transient populations in the region has put a strain on service providers. Many of these communities have not faced homelessness in the past and do not have the infrastructure to assist these individuals. In Clear Creek County, recipients of essential services increased from 800 to 1,800 per year since 2008, according to participants. Homeless camps have emerged in both city centers and remote areas of the county. These shelters range from trailers to abandoned chicken coops. Children in these transient families also suffer significantly. Many of them do not attend school and are frequently dropped off at the library or other community centers without food during the day. Communities struggle to provide adequate services to the children of transient populations.

Many communities are coming together to address these challenges. Fremont County has assigned a police officer to be a liaison to the homeless community by coordinating services and delivering emergency kits during inclement weather. Additionally, Fremont County is planning a housing development based on the Housing First Model, a nationally recognized model that prioritizes providing people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing as quickly as possible, and then providing voluntary supportive services as needed.¹⁰ Clear Creek has organized a taskforce to address the challenge of transient and homeless populations coming from Denver. Summit County is also working toward providing stability to immigrants and migrant workers. Community members recognize the value that these diverse populations add to the community and are working toward helping them integrate into the communities. Still, schools and employers face high levels of turnover.

To maintain a tourism based economy, the workforce must accommodate the needs of a seasonal service industry. This sector generally encompasses transient employees who fill temporary employment opportunities in both the winter and summer. Families throughout the region need income three to four times the federal poverty level to make ends meet.¹¹ Both subsets of this diverse workforce generally do not seek out opportunities to lay roots in the community as their length of stay is undetermined or they are working several jobs, making it nearly impossible to truly engage in the community. In addition to these more transient populations, the rural resort workforce includes individuals and families who work professional as well as service industry jobs but struggle to meet the high cost of living in the region. Small employers or those with limited capacity, like nonprofits and school districts, are often challenged to increase worker compensation to meet the living wage standards.

Human Services

Communities throughout the region are struggling to meet the human services needs in the region, influenced by high poverty rates. Schools experience high levels of free and reduced lunches, the demand for human services is increasing, and nonprofits, city officials, and police departments struggle to maintain safe and thriving communities for all. Additional challenges include youth development, senior services, veteran care, and responding to domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Despite these challenges, nonprofits are coming together collaboratively to address the challenges. The Aspen Mine Center in Cripple Creek houses many organizations, providing efficient care for those in need of services. Additionally, Canon City concentrates services in a central location to streamline care. Each county expressed a spirit of collaboration and cooperation within the nonprofit sector.

¹⁰ National Alliance to End Homelessness

¹¹ Pearce, Diana M. *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado 2011*. Prepared for: The Colorado Center on Law and Policy.

Domestic and Sexual Abuse

A significant challenge in Teller, Lake, and Fremont Counties is the significant incidence of domestic and sexual abuse. Due to the rural and isolated geography of the HOC region, domestic violence is more likely to occur and go unreported. Additionally, Fremont County officials are alarmed by the high rate of incest and sexual assault in the community. Police reported that the number of cases is increasing and they typically address 2-3 cases per week. The community also has an usually large number of sex offenders.

Early Childhood Development

The HOC region does not have available or affordable childcare options for working parents, although specific challenges vary between counties. Providers struggle to recruit and retain qualified staff due to low wages. Childcare centers need to expand to meet the needs of families in the region, but do not have the financial capacity to do so. In Chaffee County, many of the licensed childcare providers are closing. Teller County child care providers expressed a significant challenge in identifying locations for early childhood education centers that meet state regulations. The historic nature of the community presents a unique challenge to identifying locations that meet regulatory standards. The closest day care provider for Clear Creek residents is near Floyd Hill, which is half-way to Denver; however, the Recreation District provides non-infant care. Lake County has no licensed childcare centers that serve children under one year of age, and only one licensed childcare center that serves one to three year olds. Additionally, the increase in daycare rates adds significant burdens to economically challenged families. Gilpin County is proud of the community’s early childhood learning center, Eagle’s Nest. The center has offered services to the community for more than twenty years, and is one of the few early childhood centers in the neighboring communities to offer infant care. Summit County has passed a tax to support childcare, making it more accessible for all families.

Youth Services

An additional challenge in the region is the lack of opportunities for youth. Many communities have limited service providers that help youth develop and provide preventative education for youth who are at risk for addiction and other detrimental behaviors. In Park County, many youth are “homeschooled” without adult supervision. The Boys and Girls Club offers tutoring for these young adults; however, transportation to and from the Boys and Girls Club locations is challenging. Fremont County is proud of the opportunities they are able to offer the majority of students through the school district, but recognize the need to provide additional services to low-income students to help them succeed. Conversely, Chaffee County is proud that community members came together to offer enriching activities to students when the school system went to a four-day school week, demonstrating resiliency in rural. Custer County is also proud of the diverse and quality educational opportunities offered to students in the community.

Lake and Summit counties emphasized the need to grow mentorship programs to target at-risk youth and provide a support network that may not be available at home. The Mountain Mentor Program in Summit County noted the constant need for more mentors as the demand exceeds availability. Youth-serving organizations are also looking at new ways to engage parents and families in the success of the student. With parents often working multiple jobs and long hours, it is difficult for them to provide the necessary support and attention their children truly require.

	Chaffee	Clear Creek	Custer	Fremont	Gilpin	Lake	Park	Summit	Teller	Colorado
<i>Young Child Population (<5)</i>	747	392	131	1,988	262	504	649	1,505	1,007	337,435
<i>School Aged Population (5-17)</i>	2,224	1,124	594	6,091	678	1,285	2,313	3,406	3,686	229,865
<i>Kindergartners Full-Day</i>	98.7%	100%	100%	100%	90%	100%	83.8%	100%	100%	74%

<i>Under 18 in Poverty</i>	400	203	174	2,229	176	475	241	623	420	206,642
<i>Free and Reduced Lunch</i>	39.7%	25.2%	38.8%	52.1%	29.50%	66.1%	32.4%	37.4%	30.8%	21%
<i>4th Graders NOT Proficient in Reading</i>	25.3%	26.4%	16.7%	32.4%	37.90%	55.9	21.3%	30.9	30%	33%
<i>HS Graduation Rate</i>	90.5%	96%	95.6%	84.3%	94.60%	76.5	95.8%	87.6	93.1%	90.4%
<i>Bachelor's degree or Higher¹²</i>	34.2%	40.8%	34.8%	15.9%	29.50%	28.1	31.6%	47.7	30.9%	37.5%

Caring for an Aging Population

Across the nation, communities are faced with a significant shift in demographics as the Baby Boomer generation continues to move into retirement. Caring for an aging population is a significant concern of community leaders throughout the region. Custer and Teller counties described the growth in the senior population as a “Silver Tsunami.” Chaffee County touts itself as the only county in the state that claims active retirees as an economic driver. Many long-time community members in Summit County moved to the community thirty years ago, but are now concerned as they address how to remain in a community without assisted living facilities.

Many of these communities have seen a growth in senior poverty. Custer County participants explained that in 2014, 111 seniors accessed the food pantry. In 2015, the number increased to 307, and more seniors are being served by the food pantry than children. In Teller County, many seniors become homeless due to a lack of affordable housing options. Many caregivers do not have the capacity to care for aging family members.

The gaps in service are expansive, including a shortage of accessible sidewalks, public transportation, affordable housing, and healthcare. There is a significant need to improve the infrastructure and care network for the aging, and an immediate need to expand home healthcare services. In these rural communities, service providers struggle to meet the senior’s desire to “age in place”. Custer County recognizes the challenge it faces with retaining the aging population due to poor handicap accessibility within the county. Affordable assisted living and transportation are the most significant needs faced by aging population. Gilpin County is working on funding for an independent living facility, since the traditional historic housing is not typically senior-friendly. In the meantime, Gilpin County is offering free medical alerts to all seniors in the community. There are no nursing homes in Custer, Lake, Park, or Summit counties, and few transportation services for seniors currently exist.

Although many of these communities are high altitude, caregivers and seniors alike are looking to develop more affordable options. Establishing family, connection, and community are more important to the health and wellbeing of the senior population.

Preserving the Environment

Protecting the natural beauty of the region emerged as a popular and consensus-building issue. With so much of the economy based on outdoor recreation, it is no wonder the majority of community leaders were in agreement that protecting public lands was essential to growth and future success. In Lake County, huge strides have been made to

¹² U.S. Census Bureau. (2015, July). *State & county Quickfacts: Colorado*. Retrieved April 1, 2016, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.

mitigate environmental damage from mining operations. Approximately 70% of Superfund sites in the county have been de-listed and are eligible for brownfield redevelopment. Similarly, pollution to the Arkansas River has been reversed, now ranking as a “gold medal” river with access to world-class fishing. Lake County is in the process of improving connectivity to public spaces from local neighborhoods, in addition to adding parks and playgrounds. This has been a collaboration between local agencies and community members who feel empowered to solve social issues as citizen groups. All of the counties boast robust Open Space programs and miles of trails. Communities are aligned to protect the environment, which drives the region’s economy, and there are certainly areas for improvement. One of the most pressing environmental issues is water conservation. Local ranchers, community leaders, and the San Isabel Land Trust are working together to preserve ranches and the environment in Custer County.

Next Steps

Each of the regional needs explored in this report are important and significant. The Listening Tour delegation and representatives from the Steering Committee selected four issues to explore in greater depth at the upcoming HOC RPD conference, including:

- 1) Models for Addressing Behavioral Health in Rural Communities*
- 2) Marijuana’s Impact on Human Services in Colorado*
- 3) Affordable Housing: Models for Success in Rural Communities*
- 4) Poverty and Access to Healthy Lifestyles*

On September 29, 2016, the second day of the HOC RPD conference, the Steering Committee will convene a gathering of executive directors, topic experts, funders, and state and local government officials for a panel of discussions. Panelists will include regional and statewide experts who will discuss opportunities for growth, models of success, and strategies that communities can take to advocate for change in rural communities.

Appendices

Listening Tour Itinerary

Monday, April 4, 2016

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM Travel to Black Hawk from Denver

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM Listening Tour with Gilpin County

- Host: Gilpin County
- Contact: Gail Watson, County Commissioner
- Location: Gilpin County Community Center

10:45 AM – 11:30 AM Travel to Georgetown

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM Lunch & Listening Tour with Clear Creek County

- Host: Clear Creek County
- Contact: Tim Mauck, County Commissioner
- Location: Clear Creek County Courthouse

1:45 PM – 3:15 PM Travel to Fairplay

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM Listening Tour with Park County

- Host: Park County
- Contact: Tom Eisenman, County Administrator
- Location: Fairplay Community Center

Tuesday, April 5, 2016

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM Listening Tour with Fremont County

- Host: Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments
- Contact: Judy Lohnes, Executive Director
- Location: City Hall

10:45 AM – 11:45 AM Travel to Westcliffe

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM Funder Delegation Lunch @ Second Street Kitchen

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM Listening Tour with Custer County

- Host: Custer County
- Contact: Lynn Attebery, County Commissioner
- Location: Jones Theater Studio 2

2:45 PM – 3:45 Travel to Salida

4:00 PM – 5:30 Listening Tour with Chaffee County

- Host: Chaffee County
- Contact: Bob Christiansen, County Commissioner
- Location: Chaffee County Fairgrounds

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM Listening Tour with Teller County

- Host: Teller County, Commissioner Marc Dettenrieder
- Contact: Marc Dettenrieder
- Location: Cripple Creek Heritage Center

11:45 AM – 12:20 PM Travel to Woodland Park

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM Listening Tour Debrief

Appendix B: Listening Tour Delegation

[Anschutz Family Foundation](#)

555 17th Street, Suite 2400

Denver, CO 80202

- Kumella Aiu, Program Officer

[Daniels Fund](#)

101 Monroe St

Denver, CO 80206

- Owen McAleer, Program Officer

[Caring for Colorado Foundation](#)

4100 East Mississippi Avenue, Suite 605

Denver, CO 80246

- Linda Reiner, Vice President

[USDA Rural Development](#)

- Pattie Snidow, Community and Economic Development Director

[The Colorado Health Foundation](#)

501 South Cherry Street #1100

Denver, CO 80246

- Amy Latham, Vice President Philanthropy
Tour Co-Chair

[Community Resource Center](#)

789 Sherman Street, Suite 210

Denver, CO 80203

- Maria Fabula, President & CEO
- Leah Rausch, Director of Rural Partnerships
- Amanda Barlow, Program Manager

Appendix C. Community Hosts & Support

Thank you to everyone who took the time and energy to make this regional Listening Tour such a great success.

Host Contacts

Chaffee County: Bob Christiansen, Chaffee County Director of General Administration

Clear Creek County: Tim Mauck, County Commissioner

Custer County: Lynn Attebery, County Commissioner

Fremont County: Judy Lohnes, Executive Director of Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments

Gilpin County: Gail Watson, County Commissioner

Park County: Tom Eisenman, Park County Administrator

Teller County: Marc Dettenrieder, County Commissioner

Heart of Colorado Rural Philanthropy Days Steering Committee Support

Abel Wurmnest, Anschutz Family Foundation

Amber van Leuken, Ark-Valley Humane Society

Autumn Dever, Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments

Beth Lenz, Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments

Butch Gemin, Wet Mountain Valley Community Foundation

Gail Watson, Gilpin County

Jenifer Visitacion, Guidestone

Judy Lohnes, Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments

Kumella Aiu, Anschutz Family Foundation

Lisa Noble, Gold Belt Build a Generation

Pat Sohmer, Park County Public Library

Ruth Mitchell, CCC Sharing Center

Susan Juergensmeier, Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

Sarah Swanson, RPD Steering Committee Event Coordinator

Tamara Drangstveit, Family and Intercultural Resource Center

Ted Borden, Aspen Mine Center

Tim Mauck, Clear Creek County

Appendix D. Community Meeting Invitees & Attendees

Chaffee County

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Amber	van Leuken	Ark-Valley Humane Society
David	Volpe	Buena Vista
Dave	Potts	Chaffee County
Brian	Beaulieu	Chaffee County Boys and Girls Club
Janine	Pryor	Chaffee County Early Childhood Council
Wendell	Pryor	Chaffee County Economic Development Council
Robert	Christiansen	Chaffee County Government
Theresa	Casey	City of Salida
Jennifer	Visitacion	Guidestone
Bob	Morasko	Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center
Julie	Melter	Public Health Department
Elaine	Allemang	Sailda Community Center
Cheryl	Brown-Kovacic	
Dara	McDonald	
Yvonne	Braden	Valley to Valley Senior Care
Karen	Lang	Young Life - Arkansas Valley

Clear Creek County

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Andy	Marsh	City of Idaho Springs
Beth	Luther	Clear Creek County
Cassandra	Patton	Clear Creek County Tourism Bureau
Cindy	Dicken	Clear Creek County
Jo Ann	Sorensen	Clear Creek County
Keith	Montag	Clear Creek County
Laura	Robertson	Clear Creek County
Mike	Hillman	City of Idaho Springs
Mitch	Houston	Clear Creek School District
Phil	Buckland	Clear Creek County
Rick	Albers	Clear Creek County
Sally	Rush	Summit Combined Housing
Tim	Mauck	Clear Creek County
Tom	Hale	Town of Georgetown
Wendy	Koch	Town of Empire

Custer County

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Mark	Paylor	C-1 School District
Ruth	Mitchell	CCC Sharing Center
Katherine	Williams	Custer County Clinic
Bob	Kattnig	Custer County Commissioners
Kit	Shy	Custer County Commissioners
Charles	Bogle	Custer County Economic Development
Shannon	Byerly	Custer County Sheriff's Office
Gary	Taylor	Wet Mountain Broadcasting Corp.
Elin	Rusher Granschow	Music Meadows Ranch
Ben	Lenth	San Isabel Land Protection Trust
Kris	Bahr	Sherriff's Department
Christy	Patterson	Town of Westcliffe Trustees
Amy	Moulton	West Custer County Library District
Jim	Little	Wet Mountain Tribune
Butch	Gemin	Wet Mountain Valley Community Foundation

Fremont County

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Terry	Hamilton	Boys and Girls Club of Fremont County
Carie	Canterbury	Canon City Daily Newspaper
Janelle	Bergant	Canon City Literacy Center
Suzanne	Lasha	Canon City Public Library
George	Welsh	Canon City Schools
Tara	Cane	Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Ed	Norden	Fremont County
Sunny	Bryant	Fremont County
Steve	Clifton	Fremont County Department of Human Services
Jeff	Blue	Fremont Sanitation District
Tabby	Selakovich	John C. Fremont Library
Dee Dee	Clement	Loaves and Fishes Shelter
Sheri	Warnack	Police Department
Paul	Schultz	Police Department
Dr. Lana	Carter	Pueblo Community College, Fremont Campus
Gwen	Ferguson	Sol Vista Health Center
Sheri	Trahern	St. Thomas More Hospital
Bob	Arnold	Starpont
Autumn	Dever	Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments
Beth	Lenz	Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments
Judy	Lohnes	Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments
Dawn	Green	Parks District
Preston	Troutman	Cañon City

Gilpin County

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Ron	Engles	Central City
Gary	Allen	Central City Fire
Katie	Martin	Eagles Nest Early Learning Center
Amanda	Skeen	Eagles Nest Early Learning Center
Dorothy	Sweet	Friend of the Library
Brandon	Daruna	Gilpin Ambulance Authority
Kathi	Lambert	Gilpin Community Center
Betty	Donovan	Gilpin County
Bruce	Hartman	Gilpin County
Linda	Eismenhart	Gilpin County
Vicki	Nemec	Gilpin County Animal Response Team
Dorothy	Conners	Gilpin County Arts
Nora	Shumate	Gilpin County Human Services
Virginia	Unsel	Gilpin County Library District
Sharon	Parea	Gilpin County Senior Living
Dave	MacKenzie	Gilpin School District
Teresa	Keller	Mountain Forum for Peace
Chris	Current	Nederland Food Pantry
Glen	Levy	Timberline Fire District
Jim	Crawford	Timberline Fire District
Jeanne	Nicholson	

Lake County

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Greg	Labbe	City of Leadville
Jacob	Mohrmann	City of Leadville
Jaime	Steuer	City of Leadville
Lynne	Westerfield	Cloud City Conservation Center
Melanie	Maupin	Colorado Mountain College
Jason	Horning	Cornerstone Church
Peggy	Marshall	First Presbyterian Church
Alice	Pugh	Full Circle of Lake County
Mike	Bordogna	Lake County
Bruce	Hix	Lake County
Dolores	Semsack	Lake County
Katie	Baldassar	Lake County Build a Generation
Leslie	Cook-Knerr	Lake County Build a Generation
Mike	Conlin	Lake County Open Space Initiative
Jane	Heinz	Lake County Public Health
Wendy	Wyman	Lake County School District R1

Nicole	Thompson	Leadville/Lake County Economic Development
Annie	Livingston	Senior Center/National Alliance for Mentally Ill
Gloria	Perez	Wraparound Program - Dept. of Social Services

Park County

First Name	Last Name	Organization
April Dawn	Knudsen	Boys and Girls Club
Dale	Fitting	Hand Hotel
Katherine	Fitting	Hand Hotel
Jay	Hutchison	Hartsel FPD
Shiela	Skaggs	Mosquito Ranch Heritage Initiative
Cara	Doyle	Mosquito Range Heritage Initiative
Tom	Eisenman	Park County
Linda	Balough	Park County Hist. Preservation
Pat	Sohmer	Park County Public Library
Angela	Ka	Park County Recreation District
Mike	Joffee	Park County Recreation District
Julie	Bullock-Hardy	Town of Fairplay
Tina	Darrah	Town of Fairplay

Summit County

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Amy	Jackson	Advocates for Victims of Assault
Dave	Askeland	Colorado Mountain College
Candy	Elkind	Colorado Mountain College Foundation
Patty	Theobald	Colorado Mountain College Foundation
Tamara	Drangstveit	Family and Intercultural Resource Center
Brianne	Snow	Family and Intercultural Resource Center
Jen	Schenk	High Country Conservation Center
Megan	Nuttleman	Keystone Science School
Dave	Miller	Keystone Science School
Kathy	Davis	Mind Springs Health
Deb	Edwards	St. Anthony Medical Center Foundation
Sarah	Vaine	Summit Community Care Clinic
Thomas	Davidson	Summit County
Gary	Martinez	Summit County
Julie	McCluskie	Summit County School District
Christine	Scanlan	The Keystone Center
Gini	Bradley	The Summit Foundation
Laurie	Blackwell	Youth and Family Services

Teller County

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Angie	Trelstad	Aspen Mine Center
Ray	Dubois	City of Cripple Creek
Buck	Hakes	City of Victor
Debbie	Downs	City of Victor
Ted	Borden	Community of Caring
Jim		Community of Caring
Mary	Bielz	Community of Caring
Jody	Mijares	Community Partnership Teller County
Rachel	Gray	Cresson Elementary
Mike	Rulo	Cripple Creek Police Department
Lisa Noble	Noble	Gold Belt Build A Generation, Teller County
Karen	Casey-Svetich	North Teller Build A Generation
Rob	Kibble	Police Department
Les	Lindauer	School District RE-1
Marc	Dettenrieder	Teller County
Martha	Hubbard	Teller County Public Health
Mark	Platten	Teller County CSU Extension
Kim	Mauthe	Teller County Department of Social Services
Veldean	Meyer	Teller County Salvation Army

Appendix E. Characteristics of the Heart of Colorado Region

Chaffee	Clear Creek	Custer
Active	Caring	Place-based
Outdoors	Diverse	Land and water
Resilient	Outdoors, recreation	Volunteerism, Generous
Open	Historic preservation	Ranching
Creative	Welcoming	Old
Work hard, play hard	Breath-taking views	Empowering
Smart	Like living in an episode of the Simpsons	Struggling
Vibrant	Always come together at the end of the day	Hungry
Sustaining	Resilient	In transition
Successful	Unique and quirky	Supportive
Outside of the box	25% of population is 65 and older	Diverse
Cutting-edge	Miner's spirit	Opinionated
Engaged	Transforming	No place left like it in the state
Embracing change	Evolving	Friendly
Transitioning	Engaged	Beautiful
Diverse	Giving	Changing
Giving	Eclectic	Generous
Caring	Blue-collar	Complex
Volunteerism		Self-reliant
Resourceful		Independent
		Evolving
		Isolated
		Owner-operated

Fremont	Gilpin	Lake
Traditional Consistent Positive Growing Historic Agriculture Collaborative Wonderful climate Conservative Welcoming Outdoor recreation Set in its ways Beautiful Potential Home Caring Supportive Wonderful sense of community Evolving Reinventing with a sense of humor Unhealthy Volunteerism Partnerships	Gaming town North end / south end Diversity (socio-economic) A little bit weird Close-knit rural community White Well-educated Rely on going outside of the county Volunteerism and service People choose to live up here Bedroom community Tolerant Random acts of kindness Commuting Open arms Retired Independent Active Closeness Eclectic Gaming town with history Historic town with gaming Small but weird Dispersed nature Extremely active or not at all Supportive Mountain culture Comes together well Community spirit Willing to help	Athletic Diamond in the rough Diverse Energy Expectant Exquisite Fierce Hardy Independence Intellectual Nature loving Scrappy Tenacious Tough Unlimited, but unknown potential Unsinkable Vibrant Social

Park	Summit	Teller
<p>Open space Good hearted Challenging Maverick Confused Independence Ruggedness Idiosyncratic Poor residents Ruggedly independent Amazing natural resources Fourteeners Welcoming Culturally and geographically diverse Play Active Self-reliant Hardy Going through a major change</p>	<p>Active Busy Collaborative Compassionate Connections Diverse Educated Engaged Magnet Multi-employed Passionate Responsive Scrappy Supportive Working a lot</p>	<p>Exciting Times Connected (2) Caring (5) Challenging Involved (2) Collaborative (4) Sharing resources Unique characters (2) Resurgent Diverse Safe Creative Volunteerism Home Short on housing Friendly Rugged individualism Creatively energetic Spiritual Sharing Strong Amazing Impoverished Proud Independent Resourceful Youth and family Independent spirit Giving Changing Needs</p>