

YAMPA VALLEY PARTNERS – NATIONAL CIVIC LEAGUE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CIVIC INDICATORS: QUANTIFYING OUR CIVIC HEALTH
ROUTT-MOFFAT COUNTY, COLORADO

The vitality of the Yampa Valley community depends on our capacity to engage effectively in mutual learning and decision making in order to maintain and improve our quality of life. We call this capacity our “civic health.”

In spring 2002, Yampa Valley Partners assembled the Civic Indicators Task Force to outline community goals for civic health and develop a list of indicators that gauge progress towards those goals. This executive summary of the task force’s final report details the types of civic indicators the task force selected to measure civic health in the Yampa Valley.

A SHARED VISION

This group of indicators is designed to measure our capacity to plan as a community and our ability to depend on local government to execute those plans. The vision indicators also attempt to assess common ground in the region and the connectedness we feel to our home. Examples of indicators include attendance at community events and the portion of community plan action items that are completed.

FULFILLING NEW ROLES FOR COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

Communities that want to keep up with changing times and produce healthy economic, social, and environmental community sectors take a participatory approach to local governance. “New Roles” indicators measure the responsibility that individual citizens and various types of organizations take for the community as a whole:

- ❖ **Citizens:** These indicators measure public participation in community governance, including voting data and citizen attendance at government meetings.
- ❖ **Local Government:** Local government indicators assess the effectiveness of government efforts to communicate with and involve constituents. Measures in this category also look at citizen perception of government responsiveness.
- ❖ **Nonprofits:** These indicators, including data on charitable funds, volunteer hours, and collaborative efforts in the nonprofit sector, gauge the health of philanthropy in our region.
- ❖ **Business:** The business community has significant power to shape and influence our civic processes. These indicators measure private sector philanthropic contributions, participation in nonprofit and government boards, and policies to facilitate volunteerism.

WORKING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY

Healthy communities value the input of all citizens, celebrating diversity and bridging differences:

- ❖ ***Diversity:*** These indicators measure our community's ability to engage members from all backgrounds, including citizens of different ages, ethnicities, socio-economic levels, education levels, occupations, marital/family statuses, and lengths of time spent in the community.

- ❖ ***Collaboration Across Borders:*** Communication and collaboration across geographic areas are important to achieving regional goals. These indicators measure the ability of various Yampa Valley jurisdictions to share information and pool resources whenever appropriate.

SHARING INFORMATION

These indicators assess the public availability of high quality information on community issues and the extent to which citizens strive to be informed participants in public debate. Measures include the number of hits to local government websites and public perception of the local media.

STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY'S ABILITY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

- ❖ ***Citizen Education:*** These indicators measure the extent to which our community instills the importance of civic participation in its citizens. Indicators evaluate the school system's role, as well as local government efforts.

- ❖ ***Building Leadership in the Community:*** These indicators ask if local leaders are effective and representative of the community. This category also includes indicators assessing local leadership development programs.

- ❖ ***Learning From Our Experiences:*** This group of indicators measures our community's ability to learn from our own past experiences, as well as from the experiences of other communities with issues similar to ours.