# Town of Oak Creek's Transition Plan
# Aligning With
# Northwest Colorado Resiliency and Recovery Roadmap

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Upsize Marketing Strategies

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## Executive Summary

The Colorado Rural Resiliency and Recovery Roadmaps program ("Roadmaps Program") has been funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and administered by the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Colorado Resiliency Office in partnership with the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) and nonprofit Community Builders.

16 regional teams comprised of 150 rural communities, including the Northwest Colorado Development Council (NWCDC) actively worked with a team of state partners and consultants. The NWCDC is an intergovernmental agreement between Rio Blanco, Moffat, and Routt Counties and their seven communities to collaborate on regional economic development and to undertake the Roadmaps strategic planning process. As a member community of NWCDC, the Town of Oak Creek participated in monthly NWCDC meetings and five task forces to prioritize and strategize around shared regional objectives through a two-year planning and implementation process.

NWCDC developed and adopted a Northwest Colorado Resiliency and Recover Roadmap (henceforth called Roadmap) that will result in regionally-aligned and actionable strategies that will help its rural communities recover from COVID and other major challenges to be more resilient to future shocks and stressors. In Northwest Colorado, the sunsetting of coal and the transition of the region's two coal-fired power plants represent a significant future threat that has far-reaching consequences.

The Roadmap identified six target industries and a key economic development strategy. Those target sectors include: 1 ) health care 2) clean energy; 3) light manufacturing; 4) value-added agriculture/food processing; 5) outdoor recreation and cultural heritage tourism; 5) technology and business services; 6); and small business development. Other strategies focused on enhancing workforce development, growing options for affordable housing, and improving access to child care and regional transportation. The full Roadmap can be found here>

Under the Roadmap regional framework, Oak Creek's leaders and partners identified the target sectors that would fit the community's unique competitive advantages which emerged from a SWOT analysis (Appendix). The team (identified below) then articulated a vision and transition goals and formulated local strategies for Oak Creek that aligned with the regional Roadmap. Led by the NWCDC Project Manager Christine Rambo and John Bristol, Executive Director of Routt County Economic Development Partnership, the team discussed local economic conditions and identified key target sectors of interest, local priorities, and strategies which are outlined in the following action matrix. With its strategic location near Steamboat Springs, Hayen and Stagecoach, Oak Creek can leverage regional opportunities for its residents. Less than 30 minutes from Steamboat Springs, Oak Creek is considered a bedroom community with a population of 900 where many of its residents commute to work elsewhere. In order to support its existing small businesses and grow new sectors in light of significant economic transition, Oak Creek identified the following sectors that aligned with its competitive advantages, including health care, clean energy generation, light manufacturing, outdoor recreation and cultural heritage tourism, value-added agriculture, and technology and business services sectors. Other priorities include expanding and supporting small businesses and workforce development opportunities and options for affordable housing and childcare.

Town of Oak Creek Action Planning Participants:

- Mayor Nikki Knoebel
- David Torgler, Town Manager
- John Bristol, Executive Director, Routt County Economic Development Partnership
- Ken Rogers, District Manager, South Routt Health Service District
- Christine Rambo, CEcD, NWCDC Project Manger

**VISION:** The Town of Oak Creek will become a place that provides sustainable, affordable workforce housing and offers residents and visitors an exceptional and livable community, quality of life, health care, regional K-12 educational facilities, and economic opportunities.

**TRANSITION GOALS:** In alignment with the Roadmap, the Town of Oak Creek will leverage its strategic location and assets to support incremental growth of its existing businesses and new sectors and to attract new opportunities in Health Care, Clean Energy, Light Manufacturing, OREC and Cultural Heritage Tourism, Value-added Agriculture, and Technology and Business Support Services.

**OBJECTIVES:** Oak Creek will grow its healthcare sector to attract external healthcare dollars that support new jobs and other local businesses; backfill current vacant properties with light manufacturing and small businesses; and support outdoor recreation tourism, value-added agricultural/food processing, and technology and business services by engaging with the South Routt School District, Colorado Northwestern Community College, and economic development partners. Oak Creek seeks to attract and retain a skilled workforce and build a more livable community, including supporting affordable housing, access to child care, and regional transportation.

**Why these industry sectors make sense for Oak Creek**

As NWCDC implements its regional Roadmap Plan, Oak Creek will focus on specific strategies and action steps that connect and contribute to the region's larger economic growth and diversification. Recognizing that not all communities have the appropriate assets, desire, and opportunities to attract and grow every sector in the Roadmap Plan, Oak Creek has decided to focus on the following sectors that fit its strengths and opportunities.

**Health Care** is one of the largest employers in Oak Creek and Routt County representing nearly 1,800 jobs in the County and has a location quotient of 1.01. A location quotient represents the concentration of a specific industry, and a ratio above 1 demonstrates a higher concentration in this sector. South Routt Medical Center (SRMC) is a special health services district and community healthcare center serving the population of Oak Creek which is about 860 and the surrounding South Routt County area with a population of approximately 4,100. SRMC with 10-15 employees provides primary care, women's health, pediatric care, urgent care, immunizations, in-house laboratory testing, oral health services through Northwest Colorado Health (a federally qualified health center), and physical therapy through UCHealth. Patient demand for healthcare services has outstripped the facility's current capacity to serve. The facility was built to accommodate 2,000-2,800 patients per year, but SRMC currently serves over 7,000–and over 11,300 during COVID-19. The current patient load represents a dramatic increase of +300% since 2014. Demand is expected to grow with Routt County's population projected to grow by 41.3% by 2050, and South Routt is expected to see a disproportionate share of this growth. With the increased demand for healthcare services, expanding the healthcare sector, which offers wages between $44,311 - $61,375 on average, serves multiple objectives for Oak Creek: 1) to diversify the economy while meeting the essential needs of the population; 2) to create good paying jobs; 3) support local businesses like pharmacies, medical and office supply businesses; and 4) to attract new healthcare dollars into the local economy. SRMC currently draws from South and West Routt and as far as Grand and Moffat Counties. Patients coming into Oak Creek for medical treatment will increase daytime traffic to support local small businesses including restaurants, retailers, and gas stations.

**Clean Energy Generation:** Oak Creek's proximity to Xcel Energy Hayden Station, a power generation plant located 24 miles north in the Town of Hayden, represents an opportunity for the Town. Hayden Station's transition to renewable energy, possibly to biomass, will create new job opportunities for Oak Creek residents and attract job seekers to nearby towns. Oak Creek's lower cost of living and good school district, South Routt School District, will draw new residents. The Town should engage with Colorado Northwestern Community College and Soroco High School for workforce development opportunities in clean energy.

**Light Manufacturing:** Oak Creek's industrial/commercial properties offer backfill opportunities to small to medium size light manufacturers. The Town's proximity to Steamboat Spring's expanding OREC light manufacturing sector creates opportunities to provide low-cost land for expanding operations. Routt County has a highly concentrated specialization in recreational goods.

**OREC/Cultural Heritage Tourism:** Surrounded by recreational areas, local parks, and Stagecoach State Park and its 820-acre reservoir, Oak Creek offers extensive trails and abundant outdoor activities, including hunting, hiking, biking, fishing, boating, camping, and more. Oak Creek will continue to support more outdoor recreational (OREC) tourism. With its strategic location near Steamboat Springs, a major tourism hub, Oak Creek is well-positioned to support this sector. Routt County has a high concentration of employment in the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector with 1,625 jobs and a LQ of 3.06, three times the national ratio. The tourism-related Accommodations and Food Services sector in Routt County employs 2,430 and has a 1.67 LQ – above the national ratio of 1.

**Value-added Agricultural/Food Processing:** The agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting sector employs 745 people in Routt County with a specialized concentration of 1.34 LQ, higher than the national ratio. Agriculture is embedded in the culture of Oak Creek and resonates with the community and its tradition of environmental stewardship. A focus on value-added agricultural and food processing will leverage agricultural production from producers across South Routt and Soroco High School's Ag program with its USDA meat processing facility, commercial kitchen, food science labs and greenhouses. Soroco High School students participating in this agricultural career technical pathway graduate with certificates and are job-ready for agricultural occupations. Working with NWCDC to grow the regional capacity for value-added agricultural and food processing activities, Oak Creek can support nearby ranchers and farmers and economic development and ag partners.

**Technology and Business Services:** This sector represents a new and emerging industry in Oak Creek. The Town's broadband infrastructure has already attracted the in-migration of location-neutral workers to Oak Creek. The Town's more affordable housing options offer remote workers an alternative to Steamboat Springs' escalating housing costs. Unlike other sectors, Northwest Colorado's remote location does not pose a logistical challenge and the transportation premium is not an issue for technology and business services companies.

# TOWN OF OAK CREEK ACTION MATRIX

| Economic Diversification | Alignment Strategies | Oak Creek Tactics | Partners | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Health Care | 1. Support the growth of the South Routt Medical Center (SRMC) | Support SRMC's pursuit of funding resources as it expands its facility to serve more patients and attract new medical dollars and jobs to Oak Creek | South Routh Healthcare Special District; NWCDC; OJT/OEDIT; USDA Community Facilities; Dept of Health & Human Services | Congressional Directed Spending grants; USDA CF loans |
| | 2. Establish a strategy to attract more external dollars through health/wellness visitations | Partner with SRMC to market its healthcare services outside of Oak Creek, which brings in new healthcare dollars and supports other businesses | SRMC; NWCDC; Routt County Economic Development Partnership (RCEDP) | |
| | 3. Nurture a talent pipeline for healthcare professionals | Market Oak Creek to showcase its quality of life to healthcare professionals; partner with Colorado Mountain College (CMC) and Colorado Northwestern Community College (CNCC) to recruit graduates; Partner with S3 to develop healthcare CTE pathways | SRMC; CMC; CNCC; S3 (a coalition of 4 area school districts: Steamboat Springs, Hayden, South Routt, and Moffat Schools) | |
| Clean Power Generation | 1. Support existing energy-related companies | 1. Explore grant opportunities that support more clean energy development in Oak Creek | US Dept. of Energy; Colorado Energy Office | Colorado Geothermal Energy Grants; Colorado Microgrid Implementation Grants |
| | | 2. Leverage CNCC for workforce training to reskill energy workforce | CNCC; OEDIT | OEDIT Skill Advance Program |

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| | | 3. Support Xcel Energy's transition at Hayden Station | Xcel Energy | Opportunity Now Grants |
| | 2. Attract and support green energy, solar, wind, hydrogen, and biomass | 1. Support a collaboration with state and federal renewable energy and coal transition networks to understand new green energy trends and companies | BRECC National Network; Challenge and Coalition programs; RASEI and other research institutions | BRECC; RASEI |
| | | 2. Work with NWCDC on business attraction to recruit more green companies to the region | NWCDC | |
| | 3. Business Development Opportunities | Support the Routt County Climate Action Plan to create a circular economy | Yampa Valley Sustainability Council, RCAP | |
| | 4. Support Workforce Development Opportunities | 1. Support regional efforts to train a clean energy transition workforce | Xcel; TriState; CNCC | Opportunity Now Grants |
| | | 2. Partner with Yampa Valley Sustainability Council to establish internships with energy companies | Soroco HS, S3, YVSC, Colorado Workforce Development Council | Youth Training Resources; Apprenticeship Hub |
| Light Manufacturing | 1. Work to expand the availability of industrial space in Oak Creek to support the growth of new and expanding manufacturing companies | Identify and develop shovel-ready industrial properties for light manufacturers | NWCDC; U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA); OJT/OEDIT; DOLA | OJT/OEDIT grant |
| | 2. Attract light manufacturers to Oak Creek | Use the regional economic development website to promote industrial properties, incentives, and workforce training programs | NWCDC; OEDIT; DOLA | |

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| | 3. Create a Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) program to support light manufacturers | 1. Partner with Routt County Economic Development Partnership (RCEDP) to conduct BR&E visits with existing manufacturers and businesses | RCEDP; Manufacturer's Edge | SBDC |
| | | 2. Connect expanding companies with OEDIT incentives | OEDIT; NW Loan Fund | OEDIT Incentives; NWCDC Small Business Resources |
| | | 3. Partner with SBDC & Manufacturer's Edge for technical assistance for light manufacturers | NW CO SBDC; Manufacturer's Edge | Mfg Edge; Grand Junction SBDC |
| | | 4. Establish a Chamber of Commerce to support small businesses and light manufacturers | OJT/OEDIT capacity building grant | OJT/OEDIT grant |
| | 4. Support entrepreneurial programs for light manufacturing | 1. Partner with RCEDP's Yampa Valley Entrepreneurship Cente | RCEDP; NWCDC; NW CO SBDC; Startup Colorado | Startup Colorado; Greater Colorado Venture Fund |
| | | 2. Connect entrepreneurs to angel networks or revolving loan funds | Rockies Venture Club (RV); GCVF | Greater Colorado Venture Fund; Rockies Venture; Startup Colorado |
| | 5. Support workforce development for light manufacturers | 1. Create a talent pipeline for light manufacturing by holding career days in local high schools | CNCC; Sorocco High School; S3; YVSC | Apprenticeship Hub; Youth Training Resources |
| | | 2. Promote light manufacturing as a career using the National Manufacturing Day model | South Routt Schools; CNCC; S3; YVSC | Youth Training Resources |

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| Outdoor Recreation | 1. Nurture and grow the OREC/cultural tourism sector | 1. Build more tourism amenities to leverage OREC tourism at Stagecoach Park (e.g. AUDs for lodging, outdoor gear rental, ice rink upgrades) | Modular home builders, Colorado OREC; Colorado Tourism; Colorado Parks and Wildlife | GoCo Grants; OREC Grants; CPW Grants |
| | | 2. Support OREC ecosystem-building by partnering with RCEDP which offers support services to entrepreneurs | RCEDP, NW CO SBDC | GoCo Grants; OREC Grants; CPW Grants |
| | | 3. Create a Chamber of Commerce that leads local tourism efforts, event planning, and houses a Main Street program. | NWCDC; Colorado Tourism; Colorado Parks and Wildlife | CTO CRAFT Grants |
| | | 4. Collaborate with state and local partners to market OREC sector | NWCDC; Colorado Tourism Office; Colorado OREC | OREC Marketing Grants; CTO CRAFT Grants |
| | | 5. Support the development of a regional cultural heritage tour | Northwest Colorado Cultural Heritage Program | NW CO Cultural Heritage Program |
| | 2. Grow OREC Light Manufacturing Sector | 1. Partner with RCEDP to conduct BR&E visits with OREC light manufacturing companies | OJT will offer training and tools to create a BR&E program; OEDIT | OEDIT Programs |
| | | 2. Connect OREC entrepreneurs to technical assistance | RCEDP; SBDC; NWCDC | Small Business Resources |

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| Value-added Agriculture and Food Processing | 1. Small Business & Entrepreneurial Development | 1. Support Ag producers & processors to create more value-added ag activities by connecting them to grants and resources | USDA; CSU; CNCC; NWCDC; Flower Hill Institute; Colorado Dept. of Agriculture | USDA Grant Programs; MPPEP grants for meat processors; Colorado grant writer grants |
| | | 2. Partner with the Ag Program at Sorocco High School to help open the school's meat processing and commercial kitchen to local ag producers | South Routt Schools District, Community Ag Alliance, CSU Extension | |
| | 2. Support the growth of the regional food system | 1. Partner with Community Ag Alliance (CAA) and CSU Cooperative Extension and other ag groups to create a sustainable, local regional food system | USDA; NWCDC; CAA; Flower Hill Institute; CSU; CNCC | USDA Regional Food System Partnerships; USDA Grant Programs; |
| | | 2. Support and grow the farmers market, community gardens or greenhouses | USDA; CSU | Farmers Market Promotion Program |
| | | 3. Identify local markets for direct-to-consumer sales | USDA; CSU; Flower Hill Institute; NWCDC | USDA Value-added Producer Grant |
| Technology and Business Services | 1. Attract technology companies and remote workers | 1. Use the Town's website to promote quality of life in Oak Creek to attract talent and remote workers | NWCDC; Startup Colorado | Startup Colorado |
| | | 2. Identify or create commercial space or coworking space for tech companies or remote workers | CHFA, OEDIT, DOLA, OJT | |
| | | 3. Connect existing companies to the OEDIT remote worker program | OEDIT | OEDIT Location Neutral Incentives |

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| | 2. Encourage and support tech startups | Connect tech firms to technical assistance and startup capital by partnering with economic development partners | RCEDP; NWCDC; SBDC; Startup Colorado; USDA | RISE Grant; Rural Development Grants; Startup Colorado |
| Small Business & Entrepreneurial Development | 1. Partner with RCEDP's Yampa Valley Entrepreneurship Center and SBDC to support small businesses | 1. RCEDP's Yampa Valley and NW CO SBDC provide technical assistance and consulting to small business owners | RCEDP; NW CO SBDC; OEDIT; OJT | Small Business Resources |
| | | 2. Partner with RCEDP's Yampa Valley Entrepreneurship Center to establish regular office hours in Oak Creek | RCEDP | |
| | 2. Create a Chamber of Commerce as an advocate for small businesses | Identify a downtown space for a Chamber of Commerce that can house a Main Street Program; create a 501(c)6; identify funding | RCEDP; South Routt Economic Development Council; OJT; OEDIT | Rural Development Grants; Startup Colorado |
| | 3. Encourage and nurture youth entrepreneurship | Partner with Soroco High School and CNCC to support Youth Entrepreneurial Pathways in high school and college. | South Routt Schools; CNCC; RCEDP; South Routt Economic Development Council | Youth Training Resources; Apprenticeship Hub |
| | 4. Promote immigrant entrepreneurism | Connect immigrant entrepreneurs with SBDC for Spanish Language Entrepreneurial Classes | NW SBDC offers Spanish language technical assistance; Startup Colorado | Spanish Small Business Training Classes; Startup Colorado |

| Workforce Development | Strategies | Oak Creek Tactics | Partners | Resources |
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| Workforce Transition | 1. Ensure alignment between workforce development, in-demand jobs, target clusters, and employers | Engage in conversations with CNCC and Soroco HS to better align local workforce needs with training | South Routt School District; CNCC; S3 (local consortium of school districts); NWCDC | Opportunity Now Grants |
| | 2. Support OJT in their strategic plan for workforce transition | Connect dislocated energy workers to OJT worker support programs | Shelley Siman, OJT Transition Workforce Program Manager | Colorado Training Providers |
| | 3. Career Navigation and Pathways for Students | 1. Support career fairs at Soroco High School, CNCC, and employers | CNCC; Soroco High School | |
| | | 2. Form a local steering committee to hold career fairs at high school | South Routt School District; local employers; | |
| | | 3. Create internships with employers | Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium | Youth Training; Apprenticeship Hub |
| | 4. Target educational programs toward adult learners | Work with CNCC for noncredit courses for digital literacy and other adult learning courses | CNCC; Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium | WIOA training; Digital Literacy Training |
| | 5. Support workforce training for existing and new employers | 1. Use Colorado Skill Advance grants for employer training | OEDIT; Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium; CNCC | OEDIT Skill Advance Program; WIOA training |
| | | 2. Visits with employers to understand workforce needs and connect them to resources | RCEDP; OEDIT; CNCC; CDEL | OEDIT Skill Advance Program; WIOA training |
| | | 3. Support Opportunity Now Workforce Grants led by CNCC | NWCDC; CNCC; Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium | Opportunity Now Grants |

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| Workforce Support | 1. Create a talent attraction program | Continue to use Oak Creek's website and social media to promote living in Oak Creek to attract talent | RCEDP; NWCDC | |
| | 2. Expand networking, and outreach to young professionals | Survey young professionals to understand their needs | South Routt Economic Development Council (SREDC) | |
| | 3. Work with major employers to address their workforce issues | Connect employers with economic development and workforce development resources | SREDC; RCEDP; NCDC; Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium; Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) | |
| **Housing Affordability** | **Strategies** | **Oak Creek Tactics** | **Partners** | **Resources** |
| Development Capacity | 1. Support developers interested in adding more affordable housing | 1. Conduct a housing needs assessment and use it to attract more affordable housing developments to Oak Creek | CHFA provides funds for housing needs assessment | CHFA SHIP grant; |
| | | 2. Consider incentives and public/private partnerships to encourage the development of attainable housing | P3; Colorado Division of Housing (DOH); CHFA; NWCDC Housing Summit | Public Private; Partnerships; DOH grants |
| | 2. Develop Town of Oak Creek's Tramway site for workforce housing | Partner with a for-profit or nonprofit developer to create more affordability housing; consider establishing a housing authority | CHFA; Division of Housing; Habitat for Humanity, Yampa Valley Community Foundation | CHFA Developer Guide; DOH training; SBDC/CDOT Training |
| | 3. Reach out to nonprofit affordable housing developers | Support the expansion of Habitat for Humanity in northwest Colorado and connect with local K-12 to increase construction trades training | NWCDC; Habitat for Humanity Roaring Fork | |

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| Housing Workforce | 1. Strengthen workforce for construction trades | 1. Encourage more K-12 CTE pathways in construction by partnering with South Routt School District | Soroco High School; CNCC | Opportunity Now Grants |
| | | 2. Support a certificate program in construction | Soroco High School; CNCC | NCCER |
| | | 3. Encourage local construction employers to offer apprenticeships in construction | Yampa Valley Sustainability Council (YVSC); S3; Colorado Workforce Development Council | Apprenticeship Hub |
| | 2. Housing for construction workers | Identify temp housing for construction workers; consider modular housing | | |
| **Childcare** | **Strategies** | **Oak Creek Tactics** | **Partners** | **Resources** |
| Support existing childcare providers through BR&E services | 1. Expand and support the Town's After School and Full Day Friday and Summer Camp Programs for school-age children. | Continue to provide and expand the Town's programs funded through local, state, and special interest grant programs. | Dept of Early Childhood; Craig Scheckman Family Foundation | Goodwill Colorado |
| | 2. Support regional efforts to reduce regulatory hurdles for childcare | Create a legislative agenda to reduce regulatory hurdles for childcare providers | NWCDC | |
| | 3. Support professional development opportunities for the early childhood education workforce | To ensure a quality childcare workforce, share information about state professional development programs and CNCC early childhood academic programs | Colorado Dept. of Early Childhood; (CDEC) workforce programs; CNCC's Early Childhood Education | Emerging and Expanding Grants pay for professional development; CDEC Workforce Programs |

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| Public-Private Partnerships | 1. Explore creating a childcare center at the Tramway housing development as part of a public-private partnership | Form a coalition of employers, including South Routt Schools interested in supporting additional childcare capacity | CDEC; EPIC technical assistance for Employer-based Childcare Facility Grants; P3 | EPIC Design Lab; Public Private Partnerships |
| | 2. Connect childcare entrepreneurs with resources, technical assistance, and mentorship | 1. Colorado Dept. of Early Childhood has a slate of programs and grants to support childcare entrepreneurs | CDEC; NW CO SBDC; First Impressions coordinates E&E grants | Emerging and Expanding Grants (E&E); SBDC Childcare Training |
| | | 2. Licensed childcare providers can receive state universal preschool payments through Local Coordinating Organizations | First Impressions is the Local Coordinating Organization for Routt County | Universal Preschool |
| **Regional Transportation** | **Strategies** | **Oak Creek Tactics** | **Partners** | **Resources** |
| Capacity Building | Support the creation of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to address transportation connectivity | RTA which includes the Cities of Steamboat and Craig, Routt County, and the Ski Resort will study the feasibility of creating a RTA which will be funded by a tax | City of Steamboat Springs, Routt County, City of Craig, Steamboat Transit, CDOT | |
| | Increase transit options to serve tourists, students, seniors, and nondrivers | Advocate for the need for more public transit routes from Oak Creek to Steamboat Springs | City of Steamboat Springs; Routt County; City of Craig; Steamboat Transit; CDOT; RTA | |
| | Identify opportunities for EV chargers in downtown Oak Creek | EV charging stations attract visitors to specific locations and can be strategically placed to increase tourism spending in downtown Oak Creek | CDOT; Colorado Energy Office; YVEA | Charge Ahead Colorado |
| | Create a wayfinding program to direct more tourists and visitors to Oak Creek | Increase signage on Highway 131 to highlight Oak Creek's amenities | DOLA; OEDIT/OJT; Colorado Tourism | |

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| | Support new uses of rail as coal begins to sunset | Maintaining the UP right-of-ways is important for economic development and to preserve transportation options for future industrial businesses | Union Pacific; DOLA; OEDIT/OJT | |
| Advocacy & Public Policy | Advocate for road improvements to Highway 131 | Support the regional legislative agenda that includes transportation maintenance funding and personnel | NWCDC, CDOT, congressional delegation | |

# APPENDIX

SWOT Analysis

## SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis evaluates a community's internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats. When an alignment is found between a community's strengths and opportunities, an economic strategy emerges. In contrast, internal weaknesses constrain economic growth and limit an ecosystem's ability to leverage new opportunities. Internal weaknesses must be addressed. Threats originate from outside the community and are often outside of leaders' control. Strategies to diversify and create more resiliency within an economy can reduce a threat's impact on the community.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
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| ● Proximity to Steamboat Springs<br>● South Routt Medical Center Health Services District<br>● Soroco High School<br>● RISE grant funds Soroco High School's Agricultural program<br>● Existing daycare programs for school-aged children<br>● Access to I-70 to the south<br>● Many annual community events and activities<br>● Developable residential land near Stagecoach<br>● Broadband service<br>● Attractive main street that attracts residents and visitors<br>● Nice retail and restaurants<br>● Good parks and recreation<br>● Good quality of life<br>● Industrial district for light industrial/commercial development<br>● Routt County Economic Development Partnership<br>● 11 historic sites throughout Oak Creek<br>● Affordable housing costs | ● Limited housing development capacity<br>● Limited Town of Oak Creek staff capacity<br>● Small population of 895<br>● Limited local job opportunities<br>● Landlocked, need for more land to develop for residential growth<br>● Low daytime traffic and visitation<br>● Limited funding for economic development, capital improvements<br>● Lack of economic diversity<br>● Diminishing tax revenue due to the mine closures and potential power plant closure |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| ● Growing OREC tourism sector near Stagecoach Reservoir<br>● South Routt Medical Center expansion increases daytime traffic to support small businesses<br>● Forecast of population growth in Routt County<br>● Sorocco High School's FFA programs, commercial kitchen, and plant sales | ● Coal mine closure<br>● Potential Excel power plant closure<br>● Rising cost of housing<br>● New affordable housing developments at Brown Ranch, Hayden, and Craig may divert Steamboat out-migration away from Oak Creek<br>● Other states allowing marijuana |

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| ● Recruit a local planner/community developer<br>● Establish a Chamber of Commerce<br>● Create a Main Street program<br>● Create more tourism events to drive traffic to Oak Creek<br>● More engagement and closer ties with CNCC for workforce development and continuing adult learning<br>● Tax incentives, expediated zoning and permitting to attract new businesses<br>● Annexing new land around Oak Creek<br>● Develop an event space/venue<br>● Fire & Ambulance District<br>● Regional Transportation Authority<br>● Grow the creative industries: concerts, museum, arts<br>● Creative placemaking<br>● Work with RCEDP on Business Retention and Expansion Program | ● Inflation<br>● Wildfires threaten agriculture, OREC economy and quality of life<br>● Outdoor marijuana grow operations |