



**City of Gunnison**  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*

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### **City Launches Gunnison Vibrancy Initiative**

The City of Gunnison is launching a new project aimed at strengthening Main Street and downtown titled Gunnison Vibrancy Initiative: Honoring the Past / Embracing the Future.

On June 29, the entire community is invited to mark the kick-off of the Gunnison Vibrancy Initiative. The goal of the project and the event is to develop a community-driven vision for downtown, and create action-oriented strategies to meet that vision.

The kick-off event, dubbed the Kick-Off Event will run from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Western Colorado State University Ballroom.

In addition to being one of the community's most beloved places, Gunnison's downtown is the civic and economic core of the community. Enhancing the vitality of the downtown is a top priority for the City Council, as well as being one of the key economic strategies to emerge from the One Valley Prosperity Project.

"Downtown is the heart and soul of our community," said Heidi Magnus, owner of the Firebrand. "As the center of commerce, we need to be proactive and thoughtful about how downtown grows. Ultimately, we want our merchants in business and people on our streets. The Gunnison Vibrancy Initiative is our chance to come together as a community and set the stage for the downtown we want."

In April, the City Council formed the Downtown Leadership Committee to spearhead the project. The DLC is a partnership of nonprofits, business owners, and interested citizens. "One of several positive attributes of this particular initiative is the diversity of the business owner participants volunteering their time to serve on the Downtown Leadership Committee," said Roanne Rouse Houck, owner of The Main Street Clinic. "The dialogue and brainstorming among business owners, council members and city staff has been very refreshing. It is also encouraging to be part of a group intentionally focused on positive action, not just discussion after discussion."

Signs of the Vibrancy Initiative can already be seen. Several downtown businesses are hosting "Idea Boxes" to gauge resident's thoughts and ideas for downtown. Using a simple and anonymous write-in system, these Idea Boxes invite people to share what they love about Downtown. They also ask people to share their thoughts on how to improve safety, the aesthetic of the town, and general wellbeing of the community.

Current Idea Box locations include Double Shot Cyclery, Treads 'N' Threads, Firebrand, the Gunnison Arts Center and the University Center, and will remain in these locations for the month of June.

As the project advances, Leadership Committee members note that other activities will be provided to gather feedback from residents.

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A casual Coffee Chat about the Gunnison Vibrancy Initiative will be held on Wednesday, June 21<sup>st</sup> from 8:30 to 9:30am at Doubleshot Cyclery for people who have questions or concerns prior to the official kick-off.

"Listening to our community is the top priority," said Leia Morrison, Gunnison City Councilor. "We will be in coffee shops listening to and learning from anyone who wishes to participate. We are focused on developing a community dialogue, and we want to find places to come together for the good of Gunnison."

The Kick-Off Event on the 29<sup>th</sup> will provide a basis for conversation to start thinking about goals for the project to build around. There will be a short presentation to provide an overview of what has been completed to date and a summary of the context of the Gunnison Vibrancy Initiative and group exercises to envision a future for Downtown. The event is free and open to the public, and will include free food and a cash bar.

To learn more about the Gunnison Vibrancy Initiative and how to become involved, visit [www.downtowngunnison.com](http://www.downtowngunnison.com), follow @CityofGunnison on Facebook and Instagram, or contact Andie Ruggera, City of Gunnison Planner, at (970) 641-8054 or [aruggera@gunnisonco.gov](mailto:aruggera@gunnisonco.gov).

### Downtown Leadership Committee:

NAME	ROLE
Kelly Osness	Treads N' Threads
Heidi Magnus	Firebrand
Carlie Kenton	Arts Center
Roanne Rouse Houck	Main Street Clinic
Cathie Pagano	Double Shot Cyclery
Joellen Fonken	Shopper
TL Livermore	Pat's Screen Printing
Kirsten Dickey	Off Center Designs
Wayne Castka	Into the Woods
Mallory Logan	RoShambo
Erich Ferchau	Remax/PZ Commission
Leia Morrison	City Council Member
Jim Miles	City Council Member
Theresa Hanacek	PZ Commission Member
Chris Dickey	Chamber Representative
Gary Pierson	Western Representative
Jennifer Barvitski	Architect
Anthony Poponi	Business Consultant
Nancy Barnes Trimm	Gunnison Library
Lucille Lucas	Lucille Lucas Gallery
John Messner	Business Owner
Bob Mann	Silver Queen Jewelry
Janet Lucas	Boomerang
Lozen Miller	Western Student
Celeste Helminski	Chamber ED
Missy Wallin	Twisted Fork