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Westcliffe & Silver Cliff, CO
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COMMUNITY
REVITALIZATION
PARTNERSHIP



*BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES BY PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO
DOWNTOWNS, COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS AND TOWN CENTERS IN
COLORADO THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, INFORMATION AND
COLLABORATION*

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Introduction

Community Revitalization Partnership Program
Sponsored by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs
working in partnership with Downtown Colorado, Inc.
and the Towns of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff.

This program is partially supported by the State Historical Fund.



Welcome to the downtown assessment for the Colorado communities of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff. Colorado communities have the opportunity to apply for assistance through the Community Revitalization Partnership (CRP) program, a collaborative program between the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), Downtown Colorado, Inc., the state's non-profit Main Street affiliate, and the local community.



Downtown Colorado, Inc. assembled a team of volunteer professionals including designers, planners, land use, and finance experts to work in Westcliffe and Silver Cliff for three days and then help write this report after the visit. The assessment team appreciated the invitation to learn about and assist your community and worked diligently to provide relevant and realistic input towards the betterment of Main Street Custer County.

Participating Stakeholders

- Towns of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff Elected and Appointed Officials and Staff
- Custer County Commissioners
- Custer County Area Merchants & Chamber of Commerce
- Custer County School
- Area Non-Profits
- West Custer County Library District
- West Custer County Hospital District
- Wet Mountain Valley Fire Protection District
- Wet Mountain Tribune
- Business Owners
- Residents

Report Structure and Four Point Approach

This report is structured based on a loose interpretation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Approach. The Colorado Main Street Program is a program to revitalize traditional downtown districts within the context of historic preservation.

The program uses an approach that advocates a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of central business districts based on their traditional assets of unique architecture, personal service, local ownership, and a sense of community. This methodology addresses the following four areas and combines activities in these areas to develop a community's individual strategy for strengthening and redeveloping its central business district. The four points are:

(1) Organization – Establishing consensus and cooperation by building effective partnerships among all downtown stakeholders. The Main Street approach to central business district revitalization requires the effort of the entire community. The merchants, property owners, local government officials, and civic leaders must agree to support common goals for revitalization and join together in a partnership. Successful Main Street programs are usually structured as nonprofits guided by an active working board. The board will create four standing committees (design, organization, economic restructuring and promotion) that will develop projects and work plans for implementation. Local programs hire a paid program manager to coordinate the efforts of volunteers in implementing the program.

(2) Promotion – Creating and marketing a positive image based on the unique attributes of the downtown. The promotions of the central business district as a single, unified commercial area – in the same way that a major shopping mall is promoted – will help attract customers and strengthen Main Street's role as a viable business center. The Main Street organization can coordinate an aggressive promotion and marketing campaign that includes a program of special events, retail promotions, image promotion and on-going public relations.

(3) Design – Enhancing the unique visual quality of downtown by addressing all design elements to create an appealing environment. Good design is essential to all aspects of downtown revitalization. The Main Street design philosophy is rooted in historic preservation and seeks to use and enhance those elements of quality design which remain in our communities. Neglect and misguided improvements may have taken a toll on the appearance of downtown, affecting its perceived economic potential. Renovated facades and creative merchandising displays, appropriate landscaping and public improvements are all part of downtown's long-lasting visual appeal and a well-functioning physical environment.

(4) Economic Restructuring – Strengthening downtown's existing economic assets and fulfilling its broadest market potential. To become competitive, downtown must reposition itself. With a thorough understanding of today's market, downtown can develop strategies to enhance the competitiveness of existing merchants, recruit new businesses, create new anchors and convert unused space into new uses.