

**White Paper
On The
Community Recreation Initiative
From Issue to Action**

Introduction

This White Paper, prepared by the members of the Community Recreation Initiative Organizing Committee, culminates two months of work in preparing a snapshot view of how the Mesa County community feels about recreation services here in the Grand Valley. The paper offers background on the issue, information about activities of the committee, and recommendations to The Civic Forum on further action to improve the recreational opportunities and subsequently the quality of life of Valley citizens.

The organizing committee is confident that its small, initial assessment clearly indicates that *further action by The Civic Forum is required*. There is a predominant perception from community members that there are neither enough recreation facilities nor activities available to the entire population to ensure an optimum quality of life. Glaring service gaps exist that are in dire need of being filled, to improve opportunities within our community. ***One of the primary ideals that this Initiative sought to address is that the community as a whole needs to do a better job of connecting within and across its various sectors, since there are such a wealth of services and opportunities provided by these groups.***

Background

Community Programs

All across the country, recreation services and programs are being implemented, and often at local government levels, that are intended to be something more than simply fun and games, but also begin to address societal problems and changing needs. Several new initiatives have been introduced over the past few years, either as a matter of public or institutional agenda, with remarkable results toward solving several problems plaguing the country's social and economic welfare. Recreation programming that connects weak or disconnected links within a community has brought forth the need for stronger collaboration from many segments of any given community. Successful initiatives blend community resources, bring alternative funding sources, and can cause recreation service agencies to be included in the "essential services" arena. In previous times many administrators ignored trends of social system breakdowns and often failed to program to particular segments of society, among them, at-risk youth. Today programs such as the Chicago Park District's Sports Mentoring program, and Chicago Police Department's Alternative Policing Strategy, San Jose's Safe Alternatives and Violence Education (S.A.V.E.) and Project Crackdown, Alaska's Governor's Conference on Youth and Justice, to name a very few, are common examples of community partnering to provide programs to a previously under-served population. New programs, besides representing a basic increase to community recreation programming, can involve new ideas and practices of police agencies to reduce juvenile crime and to enhance community relations. Programs are also determining new responsibilities for social welfare, reallocating funding, addressing social issues and creating intergovernmental and public/private partnerships.

It is interesting to note the historical accounting of the Chicago Park District, as it relates to its role in the city's infrastructure and policy development. As described in Illinois Parks and Recreation, public parks were first used as a planning tool to help reduce urban blight, and later to help shape physical and social development within cities, eventually emerging to provide neighborhood-based public services. Recreation activities that occurred within the parks were very passive in nature, and included strolling, picnicking, lawn tennis and croquet. However, by the late 1890s, Chicago and its park system underwent reform. The established park commissions recognized that the parks had become "large pleasure grounds" for the elite and were located far away from the overcrowded tenement districts. The reform movement also advocated social reform ideas about using structured active recreation, including education elements, to improve the lives of the city's youth. In 1910, Chicago's chief planner observed, "Police records show an extraordinary decrease of youthful crimes in the neighborhood of playground parks." In the ensuing eras, recreation agencies, even in heavily populated urban areas, focused less on effecting social change and more on simply providing outlets for individuals to increase the value of their leisure time. ("History of Illinois Park Districts" 23 - 38) This account serves to show that recreation and park programs have long been a significant component in the local policy arena.

Today, mostly because of social trends and several crises impacting American youth, recreation agencies are once again helping to shape social reform and are utilizing police, social service agencies and other local community resources, and federal and state financial resources in their programming efforts. In the past few decades, the United States has realized a shift away from traditional family values, represented by such indicators as the "latchkey kids", teenage pregnancy rates, school drop-out rates, alcohol and drug use, and crisis events that indicate increased gang activity among youth, most alarmingly among pre-teenagers. Policy makers have struggled with exactly what to do to solve these problems that indicate social breakdowns. Communities have experienced gang-related activities in their parks and on their streets, and have identified cultural diversity and economic issues that they would like to address. A host of other events have presented several opportunities to recreation agencies for, as Kingdon (1995) describes, coupling solutions to problems. This is to say that recreation administration is not operating within a vacuum, but rather draws upon and is intertwined with critical dilemmas confronting the entire society (Stillman, 1992).

Recreation agencies have seen funding shift between public education, police services, and socially responsive programs, all the while trying to ascertain how they might receive a "piece of the funding pie". Through providing assistance to other agencies or to their community leaders, pooling resources, and providing benefits based programming¹, recreation agencies are beginning to bring their alternatives for solving social problems to the local agendas. Rather than ask policy makers to support independent recreation programs that in the past have only been viewed as a drain on the tax resources, administrators have developed innovative programs and external support bases. The most innovative programs that seek to develop assets in youth go far beyond midnight basketball. This innovative programming seeks to weave partnerships that offer increased potential for a broad array of services and programs to local communities. The programs are beginning to show that park and recreation agencies contribute to the achievement of central political and community goals, and can bring external funding sources to the community.

¹ Benefits Based Programming is a recreation programming philosophy and method that directly addresses problems facing society, and has been tested primarily on program and social problems associated with youth in high risk environments. It incorporates four major components, including the establishment of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation procedures, and developing an effective system of communicating the results to policy makers and media.

Models of what community-developed programs might look like include the “Overtime is Better than Sudden Death” basketball program in Kansas City, MO; the “Safe Havens” Hank Gathers Recreation and Youth Access Center renovation in Philadelphia, and recreation center development and renovation. These initiatives show that as communities search for answers to social dilemmas, and as recreation programs’ and partnering efforts’ reputations for results spread, community leaders begin to notice, become involved, and move these types of programs onto their agendas and/or structure new policy around them.

In well-publicized accounts of midnight basketball programs sweeping the country and their affects on diminishing crime statistics during their operating hours, the criticism still lingers that they have done little to decrease overall crime statistics (Rainguet, 1997). Not so in Kansas City, Missouri, where Mayor Emanuel Cleaver, II involved the local recreation professionals to develop a Night Hoops program for the city in 1992. In its first five years of existence, the program grew from involving 160 youth the first year to more than 1,500 youth at five sites in two sports (basketball and volleyball). Getting the kids off the streets was the first major objective of the program, in which it handily succeeded. As already noted, simply allowing youth an outlet for a specific recreational endeavor has not been successful overall in deterring youth from participating in negative activities at other times. That is why the K.C. program and others like it attempt to incorporate prevention efforts through non-traditional educational components such as academic excellence, employment skills, personal development, self esteem, conflict resolution, health awareness, and substance abuse prevention. Because of the Night Hoops program, the Kansas City Police Department reports an overall 25% decrease in crime since the beginning of the program, and other cities running similar programs report similar results. Thus, not only are these programs successful in fulfilling their original objectives, but they also definitely shape public policy.

As the programs begin to develop reputations for obtaining results, communities begin to take heed. In Kansas City, local businesses, community leaders and other volunteers established the Friends of Mayor’s Night Hoops, as a formal support organization. Through this organization, financial support and volunteer labor are secured, as is additional community support and enthusiasm. The importance of building community support is exemplified through the Philadelphia recreation services and the development of its youth access center. Here, Mayor Edward G. Rendell set the agenda in 1993 when he created a special Task Force on Children, Families, and Communities, and created a new cabinet post around this issue. The task force ultimately recommended a reorganization of the delivery of public services, and advocated opening “family centers” and “safe havens” for citizens. Through the efforts of the Recreation Department, Health Department, and Department of Human Services, the focus turned to using existing recreation centers and programs to fulfill the objectives of the task force.

Using recreation as a base since it already attracted youth, health and social service activities were blended to help transform the issues facing Philadelphia’s youth. Collaborators include corporate sponsors, Temple University, a major medical center, the Philadelphia Housing Authority, the departments already listed above, and a number of smaller associations and community organizations. The city has also developed an extensive capital investment program that includes several public-private and city-business-neighborhood initiatives, as a result of the original program.²

² Information on these two programs was obtained from Nathaniel O. Wilkins “Overtime is Better than Sudden Death “, 1997 and Beyond Fun and Games, 1994.

Community Centers

There are an abundance of models for community recreation and family centers that might be reviewed if the Mesa County community seeks to add such a facility to its opportunities. Detroit provides one such example. In that city, in 1994 the Parks and Recreation Department came under new leadership. At that time, Detroit had just lost 8 of the city's 38 recreation centers due to lack of funds. Ernest Berkeen, the new director, immediately reopened the closed centers with funding from private business donations. The centers reopened and staff began to focus on renovations and programs that would help youth develop maturity and responsibility. Especially, they focused on the recreation centers in poorer, neglected neighborhoods and made the programs accessible to get the kids into the centers and off the streets. Older youth became sports officials and learned and developed skills to help make them productive members of society. A follow-up study was conducted to determine the impacts of the recreation centers, and found that the programs helped to counter teen pregnancy, drug abuse, and crime.

One of the comments the organizing committee heard quite often from community members of Mesa County was, "Delta has a recreation center...why doesn't Grand Junction?" Here is Delta's story, as provided by the City of Delta Parks and Recreation Department, of how that community pulled together to develop the Bill Heddles Recreation Center.

Cleland Pool, the only public swimming facility in Delta County, was deteriorating. It was a 62 year-old facility with a retractable roof that allowed for year-round use. In 1989, the City was given the ultimatum by the health department to either comply with current health standards or close the pool.

The City Council appointed a fifteen-member task force representing a cross-section of the community. This task force determined that it was not a sound economical choice to repair Cleland Pool. It was then decided to improve the quality of life in the area and build a multi-purpose recreation center. To do this, it would need the vote of the residents of the City to increase City sales tax by one percent, increasing the overall city sales tax from 2% to 3%. A sub-committee of the task force was formed to solicit support for the tax rate increase. This large group of volunteers became the "Citizens for the Bill Heddles Recreation Center." Their campaign brought about a 2-1 victory for the funding of the project.

As part of the tax referendum, it was determined that three-fourths of the one percent increase would apply to paying off the debt; i.e., the sale of bonds to fund construction. When the debt is paid in 2012, this three-fourths of one percent will be retired, which will return the city sales tax from 3% to 2 ¼%. The remaining quarter percent helps pay the cost of operations and maintenance. The total cost for construction was just under four million dollars.

Construction of the facility began in October 1991 with a two-month delay during the winter of 1992. Grand Opening occurred on March 27, 1993. The building is 52,000 square feet and houses a gymnasium, natatorium with 25 yard main pool, tot pool, and therapy pool, sauna, locker rooms, racquetball courts, weight room, aerobics and dance studio, activity room, snack bar area, conference and meeting rooms, staff lounge, and offices. In 1999, the recreation center received a \$250,000 addition to the weight room.³

In addition to providing services to residents of Delta and the immediately surrounding area, it is well known that participants from Mesa County, Grand Junction, and other surrounding areas routinely travel to Delta just to use this recreation center.

³ Article provided by Delta Parks and Recreation staff. This information has been distributed in many forms and is used for several purposes within the department.

As already mentioned, these examples of efforts in other communities can perhaps be used as lessons for the community within Mesa County. Local action might entail collaboration to effect new programming opportunities, or an elected official may champion this cause and direct one of the local recreation agencies to move forward on any program that will successfully address social problems. Or perhaps the community might support funding and construction of a community recreation / civic center. Regardless of the approach used in Mesa County, lessons can be learned from any number of these exemplary communities.⁴

The Mesa County Community Health Initiative

The Community Recreation Initiative operates under the leadership of The Civic Forum. To more fully understand the significance of the initiative, as well as the reasons for undertaking the Community Recreation Initiative in Grand Junction, it is perhaps necessary to first review the Mesa County Community Health Assessments of 1995 and 1998.

Mesa County was one of the 28 original participants in the Colorado Healthy Communities Initiative (CHCI) of 1992. The program in Mesa County, from the beginning, has sought to create a healthy community “*where people are safe, and feel safe, are well informed, feel empowered to use this information to make choices, have lasting bonds with one another, and have a sense of meaning in their lives.*”⁵ One of the goals of the Mesa County program was to reshape community health, which was not linked solely to one’s access to healthcare.

According to initial research conducted by the World Health Organization in the 1970s, and which later influenced the CHCI, community components such as safety, transportation, economy, schools and education, citizen participation, ecosystems, and health care *all* were important in the context of each local community and the quality of life of its citizens. As explained by the Colorado Healthy Communities Council (CHCC), the CHCI focused on “understanding and acting on the systematic connections and underlying causes that make communities healthy in the broadest sense of the word. The CHCI goal was to help mobilize people and resources so that communities could address the health-related and quality of life issues that were most relevant within their specific community and subsequently develop programs to meet the community needs. By focusing on each of these issues locally, bringing forth the abundance of resources within each community, and engaging citizens to find solutions to problems that affect them specifically was believed to be a critical first step toward creating healthy and sustainable solutions and communities. Positive outcomes could continue as momentum and entire communities worked together to inform and influence policymaking at local, state and federal levels.”⁶

In following the model set forth by CHCI, the Mesa County Healthy Communities Initiative (MCHCI) seeks to bring together in collaboration key community participants, from various sectors and interests. The goal is to get them all together to dialogue with community officials and leaders to identify and develop solutions to community issues (Luther, 1998: 11). Communities that follow the model set forth by CHCI, according to Luther, are particularly successful at pulling in individuals and

⁴ Several additional examples of community programming initiatives, including models and comparisons of after school programs, recreation facilities, examples of how other communities have gained public agenda access around recreation issues, etc., visit <http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/witt/index.HTM>.

⁵ From *Mesa County, Our Picture of Health: Community Health Assessment 1995*. Grand Junction, Colorado. St. Mary’s Hospital and Medical Center, 1995.

⁶ For additional information on the Colorado Healthy Communities Council, formed by representatives of the participating CHCI communities and organizations, visit the CHCC Web site at <http://www.kaycee.net/chcc/>

groups who might not usually be involved, especially when they are stakeholders in a particular issue (11). The Mesa County initiative, and the subsequent workings of The Civic Forum, seeks to achieve the goal of a healthy community, as stated in the mission statement above, in bold.

Civic Forum projects and initiatives follow the principles already established through MCHCI: “closing the gap” between the initial vision for Mesa County Healthy Community and the existent environment has been paramount to all actions. Actions have included gaining stakeholder involvement, setting targets, and developing coalitions (MCHCF Challenge Grant Program request, 1999: 1). After the 1995 publication of Mesa County: Our Picture of Health, the assessment process ignited work groups and community meetings to achieve tangible progress toward closing the gaps between the vision and the actual performance in each of five target areas, that include: 1) arts & recreation; 2) mental health; 3) substance abuse; 4) teenage pregnancy; and 5) transportation. Previously, the community initiative has had success in forming, if not solutions, at least tangible progress in a number of problem areas. These include:

- ◆ successful collaboration efforts with Build A Generation (another statewide initiative) to begin to develop a comprehensive, strategic risk-focused prevention plan regarding youth;
- ◆ solid growth in membership from all sectors;
- ◆ formation of Trend Benders;
- ◆ many public forums;
- ◆ the draft and subsequent approval, by not only the county but also by Grand Junction, Fruita and Palisade, of a five-year transportation plan for the county;
- ◆ additional outreach efforts to the borders of the county to increase ethnic, age, economic, social and geographic diversity among The Civic Forum board and its membership;
- ◆ significant study on a number of issues that would be acted upon between 1997 and 2000.

Trend Benders created coordinated community action teams dedicated to “bending the trends” presented by the 1995 report. Collectively, these citizen groups were greatly responsible for many of the successes listed above.

The Civic Forum leadership believes that much has been accomplished so far already in follow-up to the very first stages of the original initiative. According to *Mesa County: Our Picture of Health – From Index to Action*, a report compiled in May, 1999, in the time since the 1998 report was published there has been significant community progress. More than 35 organizations within the county have officially adopted *Our Picture of Health* as a planning tool; a specific advisory board for community action has been established and includes 40 leaders from business, health, services, education, law enforcement, arts, government, faith and neighborhood groups; and additional focus groups, community meetings and forums, and study circles have continued to flourish. Participation in these follow-up issues forums have been improved noticeably over the years. It is in the footsteps of these other successes that the Community Recreation Initiative seeks to follow.

Beyond Our Picture of Health

There are existing programs and projects in place in Mesa County that assess the assets, needs, and identify solutions toward developing a healthier community, that can help move this community beyond Our Picture Of Health. One such program is Mesa County Build A Generation.⁷ This program also operates under a community planning process that empowers individuals and organizations within a community to work together to prevent adolescent health and behavior problems. *Communities That Care*® was developed by Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano, and identifies various risks within five specific areas, including substance abuse, school dropout, violence, juvenile delinquency and teen pregnancy. The Build A Generation program enables the Mesa County community to identify the factors that increase those risks, and then work to decrease the risks through collaborative strategies.⁸ Some of the research and strategic development already undertaken by Build A Generation is a critical complement to the work performed under the Community Recreation Initiative.

Additionally, the 40 Developmental Assets for Youth program is being implemented within the community within a variety of projects and programs. This program, developed by Search Institute, in cooperation with several other national and state organizations, programs and projects, is helping to include building blocks of healthy youth development in local community programs. Research from the Search Institute indicates that there are 40 developmental assets that help youth make wise decisions, choose positive paths, and grow up to become competent, caring and responsible adults, connected to their community. In Colorado, a specific program, *Assets for Colorado Youth*, provides leadership in the initiative.⁹ The Cities of Grand Junction and Fruita Parks & Recreation Departments, CSU Cooperative Extension/4-H, and Mesa County Build A Generation, among others, continue to discover ways to increase the number of assets within the community and within youth to positively affect young peoples' lives.

Additionally, in Colorado, Governor Bill Owens and Attorney General Ken Salazar convened a Summit on School Safety and the Prevention of Youth Violence in June, 1999. The Summit brought together children, parents, educators, law enforcement officers, youth counselors, ministers and others committed to reducing youth violence. Following in the spirit of this Summit and furthering the Governor's initiative, communities are challenged to take responsibility for find their own solutions to youth violence. The Community within Mesa County can do much to identify youth violence causes and to make changes that make a difference within the entire community.¹⁰

⁷ The Mesa County Build A Generation is a prevention effort resulting from another State initiative, and is funded by the Colorado Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice, that uses the *Communities That Care*® model. The program operates under a community planning process that empowers individuals and organizations to work together to prevent adolescent health and behavior problems. Information on the Mesa County Build A Generation may be obtained at the local office, 1129 Colorado Avenue, Grand Junction CO 81501, (970) 244 – 3843.

⁸ From Mesa County Build A Generation Youth 2000: Prevention Plan 2000 – 2003.

⁹ For additional information on *Assets for Colorado Youth*, contact them at 1580 Logan Street, Suite 700, Denver, Colorado 80203, phone 1-888-543-7871.

¹⁰ The special report from the Summit on School Safety and the Prevention of Youth Violence, including a summary of the recommendations, and related articles, may be found at http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/govnr_dir/2reader.html

A Historical Perspective on Recreation Offerings in Mesa County

It is important to make brief note of existing recreation services throughout the Grand Valley, as well as to address some perceptions of service gaps. **The City of Grand Junction** has, since the 1920s, had some semblance of a parks and recreation department in place. This department still appears to be the strongest community recreation resource today. The Department develops and maintains 52 parks, has hundreds of acres of trails and undeveloped open space, and organizes more than 900 recreation programs and activities annually.

A majority of Mesa County residents live outside of the corporate city limits of Grand Junction, and therefore are not entitled to the same services as City residents. This leaves other municipalities or service providers to address specific needs. While services from the City of Grand Junction may be extended for most recreation programs, they almost always are at a higher cost to the nonresident participant. City owned parks and facilities, while numerous within city limits, unless developed in conjunction with county or school district projects, are not provided outside of these corporate boundaries. The specific area of Orchard Mesa, an area with lower socio-economic demographics, and an area that is only partially within the City of Grand Junction limits, is rapidly developing with program and facility potential. There are currently four City-owned and operated facilities, not including cemeteries, on Orchard Mesa. 1) Dixson Park, a multi-use field used primarily for soccer games and practices; 2) the newly developed Eagle Rim Park, north of Orchard Mesa Middle School on the south bank of the Colorado River; 3) Duck Pond park, a pleasant neighborhood park; and 4) Orchard Mesa Community Center Pool, owned by the County, School District and City of Grand Junction, and operated by the City. Currently, few public recreation programs are conducted on Orchard Mesa, but there is significant potential for more. Besides City-owned facilities, the area has three school buildings and a regional county park and fairgrounds.

Many citizens are under the jurisdiction of **Mesa County**, which in 1983 passed Resolution MCM “83-64 that states that the County is not in the recreation business.” The County has, however, operated a specific Parks Department since 1983, during which time it has maintained a small mix of neighborhood parks and one regional park. The Parks and Facilities Department, in existence since 1997, now operates these areas, but offers no organized recreation programs or activities. With the previously mentioned resolution, Mesa County operates under the policy of providing “recreation facilities that can be operated on as high a level of self-sufficiency as can be reasonably expected.”¹¹ This holds the possibility of changing as the County looks to redefine its goals to include all the diverse needs of the county residents, and to rely upon resource sharing and innovation. The County has recently updated its Land Development Code, embarked on specific strategic plans, and conducted public meetings about park issues. Input from citizen participation efforts is being considered, and is leading to redevelopment of the County’s parks standards. The County has recently prepared a new Parks Master Plan for East Grand Valley, which includes a number of potential park development projects. Mesa County’s Parks and Facilities Department is continuing community discussion and priority project assessment in the hopes of preparing an action plan and implementation schedule. The County residents seem to be saying that they want parks within close proximity to residential areas, where residents can walk to, more active play areas for organized activities, and a higher level of coordination with other service providers, such as schools.¹²

¹¹ From the Final Draft, Public Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Mesa County, prepared by Mesa County Parks Department, 1983.

¹² From telephone interview/discussion, conducted April 6, 2000, with Mesa County Parks and Facilities Director Sue Gormley.

The **Town of Palisade** has a Recreation Committee, comprised of three members of the Town Board of Trustees. Each summer, the Committee hires a seasonal Recreation Director, who coordinates seasonal recreation programs for the town. Palisade does own and operate a small community center, available for public rental, and an outdoor swimming pool. Both facilities have very small outdoor parks that the town's Public Works Department maintains. Additionally, it owns and maintains a riverfront park and trail section.

The **City of Fruita** has dramatically increased its services within the past three years, with the establishment of a full-time Recreation Department and expansion of facilities. Existing facilities include an outdoor public swimming pool, and City programs use the local Little League complex. Program and facility development rapidly increase as the City collaborates with existing resources, such as the school district, Little League, and Colorado Health West, to name a few, within the community. These collaborative efforts are resulting in enhancements and growth to both facilities and programs, and should be viewed as successes to adapt to developing opportunities throughout the entire Valley.

Other than these few governmental players, there are few primary recreation providers that are known by the community. St. Mary's Hospital does avail its programs and (a few) facilities to the public in an outreach effort. Partners, Inc. is prominent within the community, and maintains a small youth recreation center with very limited open hours. Other key players include community nonprofits, organizations, agencies and institutions such as the Western Colorado Center for the Arts, the Museum of Western Colorado, Mesa State College, etc. Certainly the faith community provides recreation services through its membership opportunities, schools and youth groups. Additionally, businesses and senior facilities also play prominent roles in providing these services. Also, there are private recreation ventures, such as athletic, tennis, and golf clubs, gymnastic and dance academies, etc.

This touches upon one of the primary ideals that this Initiative seeks to address – that the community as a whole needs to do a better job of connecting within and across these various sectors, since there appear to be adequate services and opportunities provided by these groups.

About the Mesa County Community Recreation Initiative

One of the objectives of this and other similar initiatives is to develop a set of programs and activities that action teams, comprised of citizens, can continue with regard to creative problem solving. Outcomes of this particular project include gaining increased ability by citizens to plan, program, and increase the number and quality of community activities. The community may accomplish this either by conducting these themselves, by connecting appropriate resources, or by moving these onto the public agenda and gaining support from governmental leaders, which can lead to governmental action.

Lessons Learned and Operating Assumptions

Importance of process and defining outcomes

The process from the start of the initiative was, and continues to be, as important as the actual outcomes. It is important to continue to gather participants and encourage their involvement in the initiative and to shift activity planning away from the organizing committee to community members themselves.

Participatory action research

The process sought to utilize **participatory research**, that uses participants as the “researchers” so that knowledge among the researchers, i.e. community members, is developed that can empower and subsequently further lead to social change. In this initiative, project participants were allowed to set the research agenda by designing the research tools, project activities, and to decide what they wanted to learn and understand. In this type of research, the community would not necessarily know in advance precisely what the research findings will in fact be, and whether it will be useful as a tool of social change.

Initiative Participant Roles

It was appropriate to have a number of different types of roles for any and all individuals who would be engaged in this process, and the kick-off group discussed this during their very first meeting.

- Some community members were ready to jump in and move on the issues and were committed to forming the organizing committee.
- Others chose to be far less involved at the on-set.
- Even among members of the organizing committee, it was important that people took on active roles and worked on items that truly interested them, so that momentum was sustained and could grow.
- There was legitimacy in allowing people to evolve into action at their own pace, as individuals can be at various stages of development within the process. The goal can be to get individuals to take on larger, more complex tasks as their various skills developed, or as their specific interests were addressed, so that the initiative continues to gain momentum and experiences successes.
- Potential participants to this process brought with them varying experiences, values, beliefs, and diversities that required listening and an attempt at understanding to some degree by everyone actively involved in the process. This is one of the reasons that ground rules were such an active part of the organizing committee meetings and round table discussions alike, and points to the importance of listening among members of the group.
- During the process, it became noticeably important to communicate with these individuals so that they would stay connected to the initiative, and help by spreading the word about activities of the organizing committee.

Community Assets Map

Throughout the course of the survey distribution and collection, round table discussion, and various networking and dialogue that occurred among committee members and with citizens, the committee began to compile a “*master resource list*.”

- This list is comprised of public institutions, individuals, businesses and corporations, and associations that exist within the community – any that might be a resource to be engaged toward developing recreational assets.

The **purpose** of the asset map, or resource list, is several-fold:

- By continuing to chart the resources, the community can begin to note the leaders and the variety of other roles of the resources, and begin to see the variety of activities or facilities being provided. In doing so, it is perhaps possible that some redundancies can be reduced or eliminated, and, hopefully, partnership opportunities be identified.
- Additionally, gaps in existing resources might more easily identified. The map helps individuals, organizations, public and private agencies, businesses, and more to realize and unleash its capacities.
- Through one-on-one partnerships and larger collaborative efforts, bridges to community development can be formed, and asset based community development occurs.

Expectations for Community Recreation Services

Considerable background information has already been provided in respect to why recreation programs can have such a major impact within a community. Additionally, examples of programs that seek to address social issues within other communities have been given. Given what is known, the CRI Organizing Committee members are convinced that we in Mesa County can do much more to positively impact the community’s health by ensuring the provision of better recreation services.

One interesting note is the difficulty the committee had in providing excellent examples of existing activities from other communities. While community recreation centers are certainly abundant throughout Colorado, the United States, and even the world, and their benefits are clearly noticed by the particular communities where they exist, documented benefits and other information about them is somewhat scattered. As the various “exemplary” programs are reviewed, one striking observation might be that the profiled programs that successfully address societal problems are located within large metropolitan areas. One theory about this is that many communities seem to experience shortfalls or even fail to develop grass roots and/or prevention programs before they experience societal problems. Many programs appear to come “after the fact,” often surging after some sort of crisis event, and are championed by individuals (often elected officials) within local government, as in the cases of Chicago and Kansas City, for example. It is once the champion gets involved and commits to funding collaborative community programs that cooperation and innovation take hold. Peters (1994) explains that policy development such as this often results from periodically recurring issues and crises or focusing events.¹³

Mesa County residents and the Initiative organizing committee desire to provide programs for intervention, to act on these societal factors and gaps before the area grows any larger and more complex, and before focusing events occur here.

¹³ B. Guy Peters: Agenda Setting - Problem Definition and Four ways that problems get on the agenda. From class handouts provided by Fred Rainquet in GSPA PAD 5005 Democracy and Policy Making. University of Colorado at Denver, October 1997.

During the initial stage of the Initiative, several concerns to the local community became abundantly clear and have been reiterated and verified through several means. One such concern is that the hours immediately following school, and specifically from 3 to 6 p.m., is a “dangerous” time for youth, when they are most likely to engage in negative and risky behaviors. Often this results from a lack of supervision and nonparticipation in organized activities. Another concern is that youth, especially those in middle and high school, have a perception that “there’s nothing to do!” There does not appear to be a sustained, successful effort to provide programs and/or facilities for this age group. Youth seem most inclined to “hang out” at the mall, or any other large arena where they can be with friends and not be harassed or have their activities hindered by adults. Additionally, service providers and citizens alike appear to recognize that not enough inexpensive recreation alternatives exist. Affordability is certainly a factor, given the area’s socio-economic demographics, and that many residents cannot afford extras beyond general living expenses. Along that same line, there do not appear to be too many places where younger children, those who generally do require some parental supervision and protection, can go by themselves without an accompanying adult. Therefore, if the parent cannot or will not go with them to a recreation facility, the youth is unable to attend on his or her own. This is certainly one appeal to a recreation center, which might provide a “hub” of activity and would be inexpensive enough for a larger percentage of the local population to afford this alternative. Any action taken by the community around the recreation services issue should seek to address these concerns.

What Mesa County Residents Said Through Round Tables and Surveys

Citizens responded to the organizing committee with an abundance of comments about recreation services here in Grand Junction. For a complete listing of the research compiled through these activities, see **Appendix A – Community Recreation Measure**, and **Appendix B – Round Table Discussion**. To summarize, a great majority of survey respondents rated overall recreation facilities and activities available to them as poor or only fair. Many residents do not believe that facilities and activities are available and accessible to them or to certain segments of the population, such as to those who cannot afford the regular recreation programs or cannot get transportation to them, or individuals who have a disability and require additional services. The majority of respondents rated facility and activity quality as poor or fair. Comments indicating reasons for these responses include: “I am not familiar with any; other than what’s in schools, there aren’t any; there are none; not many places that teens can get to easily; too few facilities other than parks; need more rec centers; nowhere to have fun; we need stuff closer instead of having to go to JCT (Grand Junction) or the mall; we don’t have any; and not much to do.” When questioned about facility and activity use, the responses indicated that the majority of residents do in fact appear to use those existing, although a high number of residents either do not use them or state that they have none available to use. Many use them only a few times a year to a few times a month, as opposed to weekly or daily. Residents were asked about if there were facilities and activities, how often would they use them. The majority responded that they would use both facilities and programs about equally, anywhere from a few times a month to daily.

Finally, survey respondents were asked to rank the importance of various recreation facilities and activities. Highest on the priority compilation was (a) youth and teen center(s), with a community / family recreation center coming in second. Other high rankings were given to organized sports and after-school activities, and youth arts, culture and entertainment.

Round table participants discussed many of these same items, yet tended to be individuals more inclined to participate in both recreation and citizen action activities. At the final round table, all participants agreed that they would like to see a community recreation and civic center, and thought that the amenities of gymnasiums, meeting rooms, swimming pool, aerobic/exercise components, and opportunities for intergenerational programming were most important. Of absolute interest was the creation of an active, community complex that addresses many needs at one central location. Other comments from round table participants were that *better collaboration among existing and emerging resources were vital to the community's health, and that assets and resources, especially financial, need to be clearly identified and tapped for inclusion into a Valley-wide recreation plan.*

Recommendations for meeting community expectations

Short term recommendations

As with any initiative similar to this one, that actively relies upon members of the community to take charge and keep activities and community development moving forward, it is important to set both short term and longer-range goals. This complements the discussion about individuals and the different roles that they can play, depending upon their interests, suggesting that both short-term and longer-range goals are important to full-scale mobilization. It will be important to identify a number of short term actions on which people will be able to focus heavily on and realize some success. Longer-term actions are also important, but afford greater flexibility for The Civic Forum and its participants since other information and opportunities may become available in the interim.

1) **Continue to develop community asset map** – assign this project to one individual or organization that will continue to develop it and determine further action on it. (Further action could include developing a community web site that lists contact info on each item on the map.) Some elements of this project overlap other recommendations, listed below.

- a) completely inventory all parks and open spaces and add them to the assets map. The purpose is to help notify service providers and residents about amenities that are available for use or have potential for further development.

Advantages: Some detailed discussion within this paper has already addressed many of the advantages of this recommendation. The asset map appears to be a vital part of the success of furthering this Initiative.

Disadvantages: It will take leadership of one or more individuals or organizations to successfully champion and develop this project, and to keep it current. Broad-based support by resources will be important, and time-consuming to gather.

2) **Redevelop a survey explicitly for youth** in middle and/or high school, to ensure that the community is addressing their specific perceived needs, and not just those projected upon them or expressed for them by adults.

Advantages: Youth begin to see that the community has a vested interest in their opinions, and are willing to commit to addressing specific youth needs. Youth can get excited about these recreational developments and lend their support to projects and programs. The community learns more about its own specific needs and continues to address those that are important to its residents.

Disadvantages: Youth may not recognize an importance in taking the time to complete the survey. If this is the case, the survey implementation schedule may need to be adjusted to develop participation to ensure an adequate response, or the researchers may need to adjust their expectations of having the surveys completed.

- 3) **Identify major players in community recreation, whether they are service providers, or those who have expressed support for those services, through funding, providing facilities, etc. and engage them in further discussion.** With these stakeholders, hold a forum, inviting each to share information about their existing vision, what they are doing to move forward on it, and future development plans. Additional to this, as service providers promote the activities of others, there will need to be an emphasis on non turf/ownership issues, non-denominational, etc. regardless of which facilities they are held in, and by whom.
- a) Perhaps even form a coalition from among these players, for them to meet quarterly and exchange valuable service information and brainstorm on increased opportunities.
 - b) A particular study circle could be developed from within the ranks of these stakeholders, to meet monthly, and additional action plans could be developed to continue to address the changing needs of the community.

Advantages: This in itself should help connect resources, and inspire new ideas for both short term and longer-term action. It can heighten awareness within the service provider network, and may effectively reduce replication of services, providing opportunities for shared resources and greater efficiencies.

Disadvantages: It may prove difficult to “bring everyone to the table” and keep them present in the necessary discussions.

- 4) Along with recommendations 1 and 3 (above), **gather the major public service providers (County, Cities of Fruita and Grand Junction, Town of Palisade, DeBeque, etc.) to the table so that a comprehensive analysis of service delivery plans can be shared and understood throughout the community.** This should include a complete parks, open spaces and program inventory to add to the assets map, and that can be identified for future community action, innovation, etc. (E.g. Kimwood Neighborhood Park (Mesa County) is scheduled as a 4.2 acre park in a high density residential neighborhood, opening in the summer, 2000. Park amenities are scheduled to include a perimeter trail, basketball court, playground, picnic area, BMX track, and turf field. Additional space is to be reserved for a skate park, dependent upon a neighborhood initiative to develop it.) This group could additionally be responsible for moving toward the development of an action plan for connecting cities, towns and county toward (a) valley-wide community parks and recreation plan(s), to help minimize competition for resources and replicating efforts. This recommendation simply offers a slightly different and focused effort, and may indeed incorporate elements of these other recommendations.

Advantages: Same as for the previous recommendations. It would additionally be an easier task to bring these resources together and keep them together in discussion, than are provided by the other recommendations.

Disadvantages: This group would be difficult to coordinate, although not nearly as difficult as option 3, above. Also as with that previous recommendation, it would be important to identify who or which group (e.g. Civic Forum, Recreation Oversight Committee) will take responsibility for implementing the initial meeting. It will likely prove difficult to coordinate the various schedules and get and keep the providers/stakeholders interested and vested. Additionally, with each service provider being accountable to a different interest (i.e. town board, city council, city residents, etc.) it may prove difficult to move past competition for the same program participants, program/facility resources, etc. There will assuredly be varying agendas, interests, and politics involved in work conducted by this group.

- 5) **Develop and maintain a community recreation calendar**, with a one-year and quarterly implementation schedule. Market the calendar as a central location to which all community members can look for information about community events. Develop an accompanying marketing plan to ensure broad community coverage of activities.
Advantages: Community members and service providers alike would know which recreational activities are occurring, when and by whom, and would become more aware and connected to the various resources.
Disadvantages: Would prove a large task to coordinate publicity of efforts of many service providers, and requires cooperation. Some organizations, groups, etc. may not want broad coverage of some events, and/or may want to protect their private interests and therefore would withhold information about other activities, leading to incomplete information sharing.
- 6) As an organizing committee, get behind the action of **implementing a specific number of similar after-school programs by the end of the 2000 school year**. Programs should make better use of existing school facilities, since they are common facilities to specific residential areas/neighborhoods. It would seem important, on one hand, to have each program similar in nature regardless of the location – this will help in promotion, as if to say, “coming to a neighborhood near you!”
- a) evaluate the use of these programs to determine further development
 - b) involve high school students as leaders and mentors to younger participants
- Advantages: The community can rally around a specific project, with outcomes that are very clear and positive impacts that are immediate. Similar programs are organized throughout the community, regardless of demographic factor differences. Yet, localization is still able to occur dependent upon specific needs of the neighborhood. Stronger community is yet developed as older youth aid younger youth, developing assets throughout. Additional programs can be defined and developed as the community’s needs and interests change.
Disadvantages: Utilizing school space by an organized group, Valley-wide, has the potential to disrupt other programs and their uses of the schools (e.g. scouts, informal sport play, community meetings, etc.). Decentralization of resources will create the need for greater organizational efforts than if the programs were centralized.
- 7) **Hold a public forum, that is well-publicized to gain the attention and attendance by a large, representative group of public**. The major stakeholders (identified in recommendations 1,3 & 4 above) would speak about their programs and use of resources in order to educate the community about their efforts.
Advantages: Greater public consensus about the future of the Community Recreation Initiative can be gained. The public will become more aware of needs and the overall issue, presenting greater opportunities to keep the Initiative moving forward in some way.

Long term recommendations

These represent action that should be planned on a longer time frame than those listed above, although some activities of the recommendations can be and likely should be begun either immediately or in the short-run.

- 1) **Develop an action plan for gathering community support for a community recreation/civic center or multiple centers.** At this writing, the City of Grand Junction is positioning itself to develop plans for a community recreation center and a referendum vote in the November or April election for a possible funding alternative. The Civic Forum could be retained by the City of Grand Junction to implement the community support process successfully used by The Civic Forum in other endeavors.

Advantages: If the City of Grand Junction is willing to champion this effort and move it along on the public agenda, it is imperative that it gains a strong sense of public sentiment. This recommendation would offer the City another resource to achieve this.

Disadvantages: Additional funds from the City are required to develop this recommendation.

- 2) **Construct a centralized, public community recreation / civic center.**

This appears to be one of the primary ideals emerging from the surveys, the round tables, and other discussion within the community. One or more public agency should progress on plans to develop this facility.

Advantages: Having one, centralized, public community recreation center will offer greater opportunities for many segments of the population to access the facility, especially if it is located along a major arterial and public transportation route.

The community members can be assured that positive, healthy activities are always occurring at this facility, and it additionally addresses many of the advantages that have already been expressed throughout this white paper. The public will be easily aware of a single facility, and everyone will likely know where it is.

Disadvantages: One center may not be large enough to accommodate the needs of this community. Since the Valley is large, and some individuals lack transportation, some citizens likely will still not be able to attend the center. Safe pedestrian and bike access is still somewhat limited in the Valley, further limiting access to the recreation center. Public funding will need to come from bonding or tax increases, since no existing entity has cash reserves to construct such a facility.

- 3) **Construct satellite (more than one central) public community recreation centers.**

This alternative calls for decentralization of public centers, spreading out the opportunities throughout the Valley.

Advantages: More opportunities are provided to citizens, regardless of where they live, so access is improved. Facility activities can be based on specific needs of a community.

Disadvantages: Decentralization of centers will create additional operating costs for the public entity or entities that operate them. There will be overlap and redundancy in resources within the agencies. Locating multiple centers, in specific areas can fragment and segregate the community, stalling its efforts in community building.

- 4) **Expand the STARS (summer program) concept to all days of the week and several additional locations** particularly to those areas in the Valley where youth do not have many other opportunities available to them.

Advantages: More youth, especially those in need of positive summer activities, can continue to be serviced by programs. The STARS model already in place offers opportunities for business, service clubs, school organizations, etc. to become vested in these programs and give support, including funding. This recommendation affords an excellent opportunity for furthering a solid collaboration and intervention/prevention tool, as it draws together several members from a variety of community sectors.

Disadvantages: Although low-cost, there is some cost involved to the participants. One key to the program's success as an intervention/prevention tool is knowledge by educators, other service providers, and community members.

- 5) Similar to item 3, (Short term recommendations), **establish a volunteer, Recreation Oversight Committee**, comprised of key individuals from public, private, and non-profit sectors. Significant stakeholders would comprise the committee, and would provide diverse community representation. Too large a board would likely prove unwieldy. The Recreation Oversight Committee would work in concert with local public agencies in a coordinated effort to develop a countywide recreation master plan. Specific activities could include the following:

- a) Provide critical leadership, credibility and insight into planning processes;
- b) Educate community leaders on assets and service gaps;
- c) Develop a strategic countywide communication plan to include just in time progress reports on initiative process as well as information on existing programs, costs, and availability.
- d) Utilize existing community resources, i.e. Mesa State College, Ameri-Corp Volunteers, etc., to develop logic based measurement tools to monitor process progress. This would include mid and end point goals.

The committee would be accountable to The Civic Forum, the County, or the Cities and Towns or similar entities, and would meet on a regular basis as decided by self-imposed bylaws.

Advantages: A tool would be in place to actively track progress on this initiative and on improving recreational opportunities.

Disadvantages: This would require a large quantity and high quality collaboration and dedication of time by a group of volunteers. The effort would be successful only if the volunteers were passionate and patient about recreation program development, and if public and private service providers recognize the committee as valid. Many of the disadvantages previously listed for other collaborative effort recommendations also apply here.

Conclusion

In summary, this Community Recreation Initiative sought to identify some of the recreational needs of this Mesa County community in order to address a number of other community issues. Several activities occurred, including a community survey, round table discussions, and Organizing Committee discussion. Additionally, other resources were called upon, including actions and documentation of public agencies, community organizations, etc. All confirm that there are service gaps within the community, relative to recreation.

In the context of this white paper, the reader will find valuable information that should help give an overview of why and how recreation services can offer solutions to community problems; specific activities of the Community Recreation Initiative and its Organizing Committee; specific lessons learned and operating assumptions of the Initiative; other activities that are occurring within the community relative to recreation; and recommendations from the committee to the community.

In the past, the community has experienced failure in achieving a community-wide solution to these gaps. Yet, the time now seems right to capitalize on the momentum that is growing within the community to move toward making something happen now. We, the Organizing Committee of the Community Recreation Initiative, urge The Civic Forum to champion and to provide the necessary leadership to further develop this initial start into a full-blown initiative toward achieving more diverse, quality recreation services and opportunities to the community.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Citizen Survey: Community Recreation Measure

Appendix B – Round Table Discussion

Appendix C – Community Recreation Asset Map/Master Resource List

Appendix A - Citizen Survey: Community Recreation Measure

The surveys were designed for distribution to community members not able to attend the round tables. Surveys were designed by the end of February and distributed in a variety of ways. Some organizing committee members delivered surveys to “captive” audiences, such as that at a Clifton Elementary School activity night. Others were distributed and collected during the first two Saturdays in March, at four local City Market grocery stores. Volunteers staffed tables in front of the Fruita, Orchard Mesa, 1st and Orchard (central Grand Junction), and Clifton stores – ensuring relative valley-wide distribution.

The surveys (next page) asked respondents to identify their age group, education completed, residence zip code, and the area in which they live. (A couple of Zip Codes cover two specific areas with important socio-economic differences, so the committee believed that at some point it might be important to separate survey responses by area.) Respondents were asked 10 questions relating to existing recreation facilities (overall rating, availability/accessibility, quality and use); existing recreation activities (overall rating, availability/accessibility, quality and use); and *if there were* better opportunities for facilities and activities, how often they would use those. Finally, respondents were asked to rank, in order of importance to them, a number of activities and facilities that they would like to see added to the recreational opportunities in the area. Surveys also provided the opportunity to comment on four of the specific questions, and also allowed participants to provide general comments.

Response tabulations and comments are provided on the following pages. A brief summary of the survey response data indicates an overall dissatisfaction with existing recreation facilities and programs, often because they are non-existent, not easily accessed, or because potential participants do not know about opportunities. As survey information was compiled, it became evident that residents of the Clifton area, and this is also somewhat true of Orchard Mesa, perceive themselves to be profoundly deficient in both facilities and activities. Residents of more affluent areas, such as the Redlands and North Grand Junction, rated opportunities consistently high. When asked whether they would use recreation facilities, the majority indicated that they would use a facility weekly. Nearly an equal number of respondents replied that they would use one either a few times per month or daily. Responses nearly exactly matched these when participants were asked how often they would use organized activities. Admittedly, it is difficult to assess these responses thoroughly, since the type of facility and activities were not specified.

Of the activities and facilities ranking exercise, the most popular response seemed to indicate a need for a youth/teen center. The assumption would be that this is because there is a perception that it is most important for independent youth to have a place to go, do things, and “hang out.” Second in terms of the number of responses was a community/family recreation centers. A preponderance of comments implied that individuals and families alike are looking for a social gathering place to exercise and recreate, and that private health clubs are neither a user-friendly or a low-enough cost alternative. The third most popular activity appears to be organized after school activities. Fourth and fifth might be youth arts, culture and entertainment and then life enrichment programs. It was extremely difficult to assess the ranking responses, as nearly half of the survey participants did not follow the instructions (e.g. some ranked all facilities and activities equally important, some marked the ones they believed most important but did not rank).

Appendix B – Round Table Discussions

Round tables were scheduled for four separate evenings in March: the 14th, 16th, 28th and 30th (all Tuesdays or Thursdays). Various locations were selected, and included Clifton Elementary School, The Civic Forum (2 each), and Orchard Mesa Middle School. The round table discussions kicked off to a *very* slow start, with no citizens attending the first two, despite the distribution of 1800 fliers through 3 Clifton schools. There was however, no guarantee or assuredness by the organizing committee that the fliers actually went home with the children. Several radio public service announcements were made about the round tables in the weeks preceding them. A Civic Forum Board member, Dr. Bob Jensen, facilitated the round tables.

The Round Table model looks essentially like this:

- Introductions of citizens present
- Agenda – organization of the meeting
- Ground Rules for successful discussion
- Introduction of the Community Recreation Initiative
 - Principles governing it
 - Mesa County Healthy Communities Initiative & Our Picture of Health
 - Working definition of Recreation – common understandings
 - Anticipated outcomes
 - Guiding Questions to gather individual and collective thoughts about individual perceptions pertaining to Recreation, and visions for increased services
 - Summarization
 - Next Steps / Action Commitments

At the first successful roundtable, community members representing Orchard Mesa indicated that there simply was not enough coordination among local government and institutions, such as Mesa State College, St. Mary's Hospital, State Parks. Essentially, citizens perceive that there are significant ownership issues and failings toward a vision of community. Additionally, the programs that begin to fill some of the gaps are too small and not plentiful enough. Discussion suggested that more resources should be dedicated to advancing these programs (e.g. STARS, which is only two days per week at two separate locations).

Participants stated that Orchard Mesa is being acknowledged today more than in the past, in that there is now a public pool, parks, and pedestrian/bike trails in their area. Some residents were emphatic that a community recreation center is vital to community growth and quality of life. Participants talked about the number of families, youth, and adults who travel to either Battlement Mesa or to Delta to play at the recreation centers in those communities. Weaknesses in the existing facilities were pointed out, as an example that Canyon View Park, the City of Grand Junction's large regional park, is not on the current bus system and is difficult for youth, families and other individuals without transportation to access on their own.

While there was no clear consensus about what the next step(s) should be for the Initiative Organizing Committee, nearly every round table participant indicated a willingness to become involved in any future activities

The second successful roundtable, and the final one held, took a slightly different approach. During introductions of participants, it was expressed that every single participant believed that Grand Junction, or at least the Grand Valley, should have a public recreation center. Participants then were asked what amenities should be included in such a center. Responses included these, listed in no

particular order: Childcare/early childhood activities; a swimming pool capable of accommodating rehabilitation as well as instruction and leisure, and a diving pool; a performing arts area, inclusive of sound and stage, auditorium, and area for dance instruction and musical performances; an aerobics and exercise area; basketball/sport courts; racquetball courts; weight room; wrestling area; community meeting rooms; gymnastics equipment; senior activities, with an expanded library/media center; and an indoor track. Additionally, a very strong sentiment evolved from the group that this center would be a civic center, capable of drawing community together, and that it would be developed as a community complex within a park setting, complete with outdoor trails, picnic and activity areas. After the activities were listed, participants were given 5 self-stick dots and asked to place those dots next to the five items each individual believed were most in need of being developed. Clear favorites were the swimming pool, the performing arts section, basketball/sports courts, and community meeting rooms. Next favorite use areas, and worthy of mention, included a weight room, senior area, aerobic/exercise area, childcare and track.

In addition to this exercise, round table participants were then queried on *if a community recreation center were to not be developed*, what elements would be important to develop to improve the recreational opportunities within the community? Many points very similar to those of the previous round table emerged. The first was that the community needs to do a better job of capitalizing on buildings that are not being highly used, and that publicly-owned buildings cost too much to rent or are not accessible for community use at all. A second was to use the community's existing resources, whether financial, service, or other, to develop stronger programs and facilities (e.g. tap St. Mary's Hospital for financial resources to help develop community outreach efforts). Still other comments indicated that the community as a whole needs to do better on its promotion of existing programs, so that the entire community knows about them and scheduling them so that more people can take advantage of them. Finally, participants suggested that young people and seniors alike can be relied upon as resources, much more than what is occurring today. Participants seemed to believe that cross-generational programs should be used more heavily, and that participants of all ages could learn from one another.

Appendix C – Community Recreation Asset Map/Master Resource List

Community Non Profits

4-H/ CSU Cooperative Extension
Chipeta Girl Scouts
Western Colorado Boy Scouts
Partners, Inc.
Saber Grad
FACT Foundation
Museum of Western Colorado
Dinosaur Valley Museum
Doo Zoo Children's Museum
Mesa County Historical Society
Grand Valley Audubon Society
Lower Valley Heritage Chapter
Western Colorado Botanical Society/Gardens
Western Colorado Center for the Arts
Performing Arts Conservatory
Service Clubs – there are several
Little League
Western Slope Girls Softball Assoc.
Mesa Co. Jr. Basketball Assoc.
Mesa Co. Jr. Women's Basketball Assoc.
Mesa Co. Jr. Football Association
Grand Valley Jr. Golf Association
Mesa County Little Britches Rodeo Assoc.
Mesa County Jr. Cheer Association
Mesa County Tennis Program
Buddy Werner Skiing
Powderhorn Race Club
Grand Mesa Youth Soccer Association
Thunder Mountain Soccer Association
Grand Junction Volleyball Club
Ice Skating, Inc.
Western Slope Wheelmen
School Corps

Local Business

Rainbow Roller Rink
Bowling Alleys
Movie Theaters
Kidzplex/GJ Gymnastics Academy
Tumble Bus
Summit Canyon Mountaineering
Mesa Lakes Resort
Powderhorn Resort
Over the Edge Sports
Tompkins Cycle Sports
Gene Taylor's Sporting Goods
The Bank of Grand Junction
Coors Ceramics
City Market
Art Depot
Artistic Combinations
Music Stores

Colorado West Dance
GJ Academy of Dance
Cabaret Academy of Performing Arts
Rimrock Adventures
Common Grounds – Alive Tonight
Hobby Hut
Rock of Ages Climbery
Rocky Mountain Archery and Paintball
Whitewater West
Western Anglers
Target Stores
Barnes and Noble Booksellers
Hastings Books and Music
Board & Buckle
Bicycle Outfitters
Community Coalitions / Special Programs
Youth Alternatives – Mike Bambina
SAFE NIGHT
Rock the Rage / School Corps
Just For Fun Promotions (teen activities)
Cancun Club
Pour House Teen Club
Mesa Theater Teen Nights
Riverside Community & Cultural Center
Drug Free Mesa County
JUCO
Bookcliff Barbershop Harmony Chorus
Sweet Adelines
Thunder Mountain Pipe Band
GJ Symphony
La Mexicana Ballet Folklorico
Watercolor Society
Western Slope Large Scale Model Railroaders
Western Colorado Horseshoe Club
Thunder Mountain Camera Club
Quilters Guild
Colorado Plateau Mountain Trial Bike Association, Inc.
Grand Valley Children's Choir
The Spirit Express
CO Discover Ability Adaptive Ski Program
GJ Tennis Club
American Girls Club
Grand Junction Cantoline Flyers
Grand Junction Gem and Mineral Club
Italian Cultural Society
Mesa Fiber Arts Guild
Celtic Society
Sons of Norway
Embroiders Guild
GJ Modeleers
Grand Valley Blacksmith Guild
Thunder Mountain Camera Guild

Community Recreation Initiative
White Paper
May, 00
Task Force for Grand Junction Community Center
Grand Junction Senior Theater
Community Concert Association
Wataluna's Swing Club

Government / Education / Institutional

Fruita Parks & Recreation Department
Palisade Recreation Commission
Palisade Chamber of Commerce
Grand Junction Parks & Recreation Department
GJ Commission on Arts and Culture
GJ Downtown Association
GJ Downtown Development Authority
GJ Visitors and Convention Bureau
GJ Chamber of Commerce
Riverfront Commission
School Districts #51, R-5
National Park Service
US Forest Service
US Bureau of Land Management
Colorado State Parks
Colorado Division of Wildlife
Mesa County Public Library District
Interfaith Council
US and CO National Guard
Glade Park Volunteer Fire
– Summer under the Stars

Walker Memorial Field
Bright Beginnings
Early Childhood Connections
Hilltop

St. Mary's Hospital
Community Hospital

Physical Locations / Sites

Municipal Parks
County Parks
Lincoln Park Barn
Mesa State College
Schools
Churches

Colorado State Parks

US Forest Service lands
US Bureau of Land Management lands
Cross Orchards Living History Farm
Public and Private Golf Courses
Colorado Welcome Center

Media

KJCT Grand Junction
MIX 104.3
KKCO
KREX
CPR – KRFM, KAFM
KMSA 91.3
The Daily Sentinel

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**White Paper
On the
Community Recreation Initiative
From Issue to Action**

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