



Questions posed during the Forum:

1. In relation to the now City-adopted Routt County Climate Action Plan, what do you see as the City's role in (1) making sure the CAP is implemented, and (2) some specific first steps that can be taken to ensure that we meet our emissions reduction goals?
 - a. **Blair Picard** – “Leadership - As the County’s most populous and richest municipality, hand in hand with the Routt County Board, we must promote specific action in late 2021 and early 2022 to get this ball rolling so Steamboat can meet and exceed our goals in the context of the CAP. We should start with the bigs, transportation and home and commercial building energy use. As roughly 30% each in terms of total energy and lower carbon emissions opportunity these are the low hanging fruit. We have actually done a pretty good job in recent years in lowering our per capita consumption and emissions but there is a long ways to go to meet this CAP gap.”

“Buy-In - We must get this in front of our residents and guests as to why we must all be engaged in this process and what improvements will mean for our community and our lives. Everybody is in favor of better air and water. But there will be inevitable questions and griping along the way. Walking instead of driving, reducing your lawn footprint and conserving water and leaving an area unpaved to reduce pollution runoff are the little steps that we need to take to reach a big goal. It will not necessarily always be easy and convenient. Our City and its government must first get out in front and create Buy-In. Publicize, Publicize, Publicize.”

“Give Thanks Beforehand - Numerous studies evidence that thanking in advance for a desired behavior prior to its occurrence, increase the success rate significantly. At bus stops and aboard buses, on hiking and biking trails, in parking lots, post thanks placards for not driving, or doubling up, taking the bus etc and saving car emissions and our air. Its everyone’s business, use the right tools to promote it.”

“Coordinate - Emissions don’t end at our border. Join with the County and the other Routt communities to share ideas and use all these measures in the whole County.”

“SPECIFIC FIRST STEPS - Get us out of our cars and use them more efficiently. Visitor paid parking downtown and at the Ski mountain. Locals are free at the Rodeo lot and largely reduced rates elsewhere. Use these funds to improve and promote free bus service. More bike lanes and trails and walking trails. Promote riders and walkers of the month and how much energy they are saving and pounds they are losing. Sponsor an electronic ride board. Again try to award a monthly use award. Changing habits and encouraging new ones takes time and effort. Mail 10 top ways

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to save energy to every household and post same in every Short Term Rental, hotel room and in other public places. Most of these ideas are inexpensive and easy to get rolling quickly.

- b. **Steve Randall** – “While we have no control over the natural variability of climate, we do have control over human caused changes brought on by burning fossil fuels, deforestation and poor agricultural practices. I believe the City’s role is to provide leadership and policy, specifically:
 - i. Develop regional public transportation system
 - ii. Install supplemental solar on all city buildings
 - iii. Moves towards all electric city vehicles
 - iv. Xeriscape all city property, lets quit watering lawns.
 - v. Installation of paid parking to eliminate solo automobile ridership.”

2. The greenest building is the one already built," is a quote that best describes how well historic preservation and sustainability go hand in hand. Multiple state and national studies show that building reuse creates more and better-paying jobs than new construction, and that rehabilitation projects keep more dollars circulating in the local economy. These studies also report that it takes from 10 to 80 years for a new building that is 30% more efficient than an average performing existing building, to overcome the negative climate change impacts related to the construction process. So....

Given that preserving older buildings is a key component to creating unique and attractive communities and addressing climate change, how do you think Steamboat Springs is doing in terms of saving our existing buildings and how might we do better?

 - a. **Blair Picard** – “First set high requirements in terms of energy efficiency for all greenfield construction whether residential or commercial. Don’t be afraid to tighten or adjust them as we go. State of the art technology changes frequently in this arena. Second, establish a framework and set similar standards for rehabs with some significant recognition of the fact already built is to some degree less energy intensive. We need to try and honestly level the playing field with some advantage to the already here category. Historically important structures should have their own qualifications and rebuild standards. But we must be able to try and make it largely objective to avoid I say/you say where possible. Respect history and owner’s rights.

3. What are the top actions the City should be investing in for climate adaptation to prepare for current and projected changes?
 - a. **Gail Garey** – “Routt County, as noted in the Climate Action Plan, faces many climate risks including drought, extreme heat, flooding, wildfires, and shifts in seasonal weather patterns that will adversely affect our community.”

“Even if we stop emitting all greenhouse gases today, some level of global warming and climate change will continue to affect future generations. “

“The Climate Action Plan sets forth some primary recommendations for our community to take as next steps for building a more adaptive and resilient community.”

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“City Council can work collaboratively with our community partners to drive coordinated strategies as well as provide funding for identified actions, specifically those that both mitigate and adapt simultaneously to a changing climate.”

“Over the past 12 years, as a result of the ReTree project thousands of trees have been planted in the Yampa Valley. This effort increases shade along the Yampa River to reduce water temperatures, improve riparian habitat, and sequester carbon.”

“I applaud the City’s efforts to partner with the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council for a grant to the Colorado River Water Conservation District for funds to continue the Yampa River Reforestation over the next three years and, if elected, will continue to support such efforts.”

“Wildfires are an increasing threat and action needs to be taken to mitigate the risk of high intensity, long duration wildfires which impact the air quality, water quality, public health and economic health of our community. The City can play a continued role in supporting and participating in the Routt County Wildfire Mitigation Council to promote fire-safe behaviors and create defensible space in the wildland-urban interface.”

“Continued investment in locally distributed energy systems powered by renewable resources is another action that both mitigates and adapts to the changing climate because it not only lowers greenhouse gas emissions but provides back up power for critical infrastructure.”

- b. **Blair Picard** – “Per above we should endeavor to invest in the mostest with the leastest, ie invest in changes where our payback is largest and fastest. Climate change is here. The vast majority of scientific research indicates it is human caused. Whether you agree with that or not, we must be effective as a City in where and how we spend those dollars. We know reducing miles travelled personally and commercially will clean up our air and water. Vehicle emissions of gases, metals, oils, etc are the leading cause of groundwater pollution. So I think we must start with vehicular traffic first and hardest.

“Paid parking and better public transit options. As an economist I can tell you the best behavioral incentives are money based. Paid parking will to some degree reduce driving as it raises the cost. Ditto providing better free public transit. The above mentioned initiatives to increase walking biking and ridesharing are publicizing free and underutilized low polluting resources.”

“Make all possible efforts to make Brown Ranch energy efficient from the ground up. Design a greenway trail system that people will want to use. Encourage stores, restaurants and other businesses right there. Use conservation design principals to make this the pride of Colorado. It is much easier and less expensive to save energy and reduce pollution starting with a blank slate. This will likely be the biggest project

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in the history of Steamboat Springs. Strive to do it right for its residents and the whole community.”

“Start revisiting codes with an eye towards promoting best energy efficiency in heating and cooling in new construction and rebuilds. Institute a progressive fee structure on big, bigger, biggest commercial and residential structures. Trophy houses are no big problem for me but they can be energy hogs relevant to their level of occupancy and use. Recognize that.”

“We must raise our game on composting and recycling. On the surface they are not always cheap due to our low population density and long transportation runs to market. But we are way, way behind national averages on recycling. We must figure out how to do better.”

4. What do you think Destination Management ought to mean for City of Steamboat Springs and what three key initiatives/priorities would you want to see in a Destination Management Plan?

- a. **Gail Garey** – “Tourism is an important part of our economy but not at the expense of the natural and cultural assets of this community or our neighborhoods. A balanced approach is needed. The directional shift to focus on protecting the very qualities that make this a great place to live and visit is a way to distinguish our community from other mountain towns.”

“Destination management at its core is about protecting the very qualities that make this a great place to live and a great place to visit. It is about preserving and protecting our natural environment, culture and western heritage.”

“The first step is to raise awareness about the concepts of destination management and sustainable tourism. It is incumbent upon City Council to act as the lever and work collaboratively with community leaders and stakeholders to determine what that looks like for our community.”

“The results of recent community surveys here in Steamboat Springs and Routt County indicate overall support for sustainable tourism and destination management. It is also important to establish a baseline for current sustainability policies and destination management practices, and to create an action plan that builds on that baseline and incorporates the relevant strategies and tactics outlined in the Climate Action Plan.”

“A destination management plan also needs to include ensuring the infrastructure necessary to facilitate sustainable tourism. As the plan is being developed, there are numerous straight forward actions that can be taken immediately, such as recycling and encouraging zero waste. People are accustomed to recycling and want to do the right thing when visiting our community.”

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“There is a lot of confusion about what can and can’t be recycled, so clearly communicating what can be recycled along with the proper bins is an easy first step. City Council also needs to adopt policies to ensure that all hotels and vacation properties support this effort along with efforts to encourage zero waste.”

“The creation and adoption of a community driven destination marketing plan is a tremendous opportunity to effectuate real change.”

- b. **Blair Picard** – “We are still fighting the wrong war. We already have ambassadors on the mountain, in downtown and on many of the areas’ trails. And we have 13,000 residents who are among the friendliest on earth. By and large the profile of our visitors is higher income and education. That doesn’t make them all Saints. We must tightly regulate and tax our Short Term Rentals and create and enforce stricter laws regarding behavior. Visitors are guests in our homes, we have every right to expect courtesy and good behavior. We own our City! Between the Chamber of Commerce and airline subsidies, we spend millions to bring in more visitors. Not enough visitors is not our problem. Not enough employees is! Request Chamber to spend a much higher per cent of their budget creating wage enhancement programs partnering with our merchants, increasing the availability and affordability of childcare to our workforce and working with our businesses to promote more affordable housing. Our business people are some of our best and brightest. Use their smarts and private enterprise to address these vexing issues. And redirect some airline subsidy monies in the same direction. Add fewer motorized miles and less stress with these ideas and you will be surprised how many folks are more receptive to the needs of Climate Action Plan. And how else will we really know how effective our Chamber and Airline spend really is these days? The arguments that such moves would cause us to lose huge dollars and revenues is economic hogwash. All our competitors have the same problems.”
 - c. **Steve Randall** – “To me destination management calls for a coalition of many organizations and interests working towards a common goal, ultimately being the assurance of the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism destination. How we incorporate the ideas and goals of CAP I’m not sure. Something best left to partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and the Resort for a common message.”
5. Currently our local waste diversion rate averages around 10-12%, meaning 88-90% of materials that we generate are landfilled, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of which can be recycled or reused, according to the 2018 NW Colorado Waste Diversion Study. What do you think we can attribute these low diversion rates to and what three strategies would you prioritize to increase diversion in order to achieve the Climate Action Plan target of 46% by 2030?
- a. **Gail Garey** – “The convenience of throwing things away contributes to low diversion rates. The lack of consistency among the haulers as to what items can be recycled also leads to confusion which results in lower diversion rates as well as increased contamination.”

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“The 2019 Waste Diversion Strategic Plan for Routt County sets forth a number of different priority action areas and strategies. Reviewing the plan through the lens of the recently adopted Climate Action Plan to prioritize actions is a critical first step. There are, however, efforts underway that can be supported and expanded to improve diversion efforts.”

“Developing consistent and clear policies around waste and using consistent and clear messaging with pictures is a way to engage residents and tourists and support the adoption of appropriate waste diversion practices within the community. The recycling study currently underway by the City will support and provide direction for these efforts.”

“The spring and fall community recycle events create a mechanism for hard to recycle items to be collected. However, securing stable and sustainable access to recycle different materials throughout the year would result in many more households and businesses diverting those items from the landfill.”

“As Chair of the Organics Task Force, we worked collaboratively to support the effort to bring composting to our community. Making composting more accessible and affordable is an easy strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the landfill. Organics recycling needs to be integrated into the recycling infrastructure, and if elected, I will support efforts to achieve that goal.”

“I would also support requiring events to be zero waste through the event permitting process.”

- b. **Blair Picard** – “Once outside the city limits and to some extent within, our problems are population density and transport distances. It is hard for us to be efficient, but our landfill dependence must be reduced. We need to tap on the Mountain for coaching. They have reduced their production of garbage enormously. How did they do it? No one can argue packaging isn’t out of control. Get recycling up up and net landfill bound garbage down down. I haven’t figured out how to do that, but I bet Chamber of Commerce(again, fight the right war) could tap into merchants’ brains on how to reduce trash. And I am sure there are economic incentives and disincentives we can put in place to improve our percentages.”
6. Agriculture is a large water right holder in the Yampa Basin and a rich part of the cultural heritage of the City of Steamboat Springs. The annual volume of flow in the Yampa River has declined, decreasing from approximately 1.5 million acre-feet annually a century ago to 1.1 million acre-feet annually today. Research is pointing towards further decreases with climate change, coupled with an increase in demand for water. (1) What do you believe should be a top focus for increasing water conservation within the City and (2) how can the City collaborate with all water users to promote sustainable management of our water resources?
 - a. **Blair Picard** – “Water and carbon emissions are our top 2 sustainability issues. Here are a few ideas. Like the energy saving placard, every Short Term Rental, hotel room

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and public bathroom should have on display 10 best ways to save water. New builds and remodels must have xeriscaping. If needed, this is extended to existing properties over a long time horizon. Reduce existing turf by 25% over 10 years to save water. Look at graduated higher water and sewer rates to incent less use/overuse. As in energy conservation, design Brown Ranch to be just as good re water consumption. I spent 40 years in the ag business. Work with the county and ag organizations and golf courses to reduce usage. This might be tough or it might be easy. But be prepared to spend some money to buy down ag and golf course use. This could well be the cheapest way to conserve.”

“The other half of that coin is groundwater and runoff management. Street runoff in particular is a huge pollution source for our streams and rivers. The Yampa watershed is a pretty snug ecosystem. We must keep it cleaner. Permeable paving works much better. And be less willing to pave over gravel and dirt. We have the highest concentration of high slung 4wd vehicles in the country. (OK, I guessed at that.) So we can get away with fewer paved roads. Replant trees and better assess runoff conditions in building excavation plans.”

- b. “Hornets’ nest of a question, over all policy is better management of water rights; 40% of agriculture usage is for non-food production. But let’s start at the city level where we can make some headway
 - i. Xeriscape city properties where appropriate, let’s stop watering lawns.
 - ii. Implement and enforce drought imposed water restrictions.
 - iii. Reduce water usage for all non-food agriculture
 - iv. Continuous water system maintenance, reduced leakage.”

7. Final Comments

- a. **Steve Randall** – “We are 90% in agreement on how to tackle.”

“What separates me from my colleagues are 3 things

- i. My Geology degree and background in chemistry, biology, physics and earth science gives into the scientific process that affects climate change.
- ii. My MBA with a finance concentration helps me understand the broad reaching financial impact of climate change along with the economic tradeoffs we must make as a society.
- iii. My 30 years experience in the energy business. I understand the transition from fossil fuels to renewables and their impact on business and society. I am probably the only candidate that has done an energy audit, designing an energy portfolio to match a growing metropolitan’s needs. The city doesn’t need to hire consultants I do it.”

“Finally I am an outdoorsman, member of Trout Unlimited who is committed to protecting the crown jewel of the valley, the Yampa River. Thank-you for your time, if you see me on the river I’m the guy in cowboy hat and the big smile. Always willing to talk clean water and alternative energy over a beer.”