

# CHAPTER 7 COMMUNITY SERVICES



## VISION

The Town of Limon benefits from investments by local and statewide non-profit organizations, a strong volunteer base and general civic-mindedness. Non-profits, donors and volunteers provide a range of services, including:

- social services, focused primarily on support to families, food access, public health
- cultural, entertainment and historical amenities
- youth education and enrichment activities
- economic development activities, including tourism, support to businesses and downtown vitalization
- emergency services

A special strategy session with locally-based organizations identified important issues and desired services that are and can be provided through non-governmental means, and through civic engagement. The strategy session also focused on examining strategies to increase the effectiveness of non-profit and volunteer community efforts in Limon and increase community capacity overall.

As a corollary activity, two classes of sixth graders from Limon Elementary engaged in a visioning exercise to identify what they would like to see for the future. The results from these conversations helped inject the perspective of Limon's youth into the process – in particular by identifying the kinds of activities and services the youth would like to see, and be engaged in creating in their community.

This plan element is intended to provide a path toward sustainable non-profit, volunteer and community collaboration that increases Limon's local capacity to provide needed and desired community-based amenities and services. This plan element is centered around the following goals:

**Goal C1** - Increase volunteer engagement, with a special focus on youth participation.

**Goal C2** - Increase, diversify funding for non-profit organizations and programs.

**Goal C3** - Encourage more coordination and communication among organizations.

**Goal C4** - Match programs and services to identified community priorities.



## GOAL C1 - INCREASE VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION.

### Background Information

Volunteerism in Limon is high, with a number of very active organizations. Through volunteerism, donors and non-profits' work, Limon has created an extensive and not-to-be-missed historic museum, preserved and re-purposed a historic theater, served meals to people in need and helped youth develop in healthy, happy and career-oriented ways. Limon would like to bring up a “next generation” of volunteers, and people who are invested in the future of the community. Many non-profits in particular noted their desire to engage youth. On their side, many of the sixth graders queried during the process were interested in volunteering, but weren't sure how to engage, or what the needs are. Bridging the communication gap between different aged groups, as well as providing higher visibility of volunteer opportunities throughout the year will help keep volunteerism and civic engagement strong in Limon.



**Youth Visioning Participants**

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### STRATEGIES

**Strategy A** – Promote volunteerism opportunities at the schools/in the classrooms, e.g., coordinate “non-profits day” at schools where organizations can introduce themselves to students and teachers.

**Strategy B** – Focus non-profit activities on types of events and opportunities youth are interested in – in particular developing play spaces, developed recreational areas and natural places to explore; extracurricular activities and clubs; downtown vitalization; improving housing quality; and career development.

**Strategy C** – Promote community-wide volunteerism through volunteer recruitment and thank you events as well as “Limon Volunteers!” Day of Service event. Include opportunities for families to volunteer together. Work to develop employer-based volunteering incentives or programs. Consider including volunteer information in an online “welcome packet” for people moving to Limon.

**Strategy D** – Seeing that their contributions have an effect provides one of the strongest motivations people have to volunteer. As a community, issue documentation – such as a “Limon Volunteers! Annual Report – demonstrating the impact of volunteerism and



donations. Consider a “Volunteer of the Month” and “Youth Volunteer of the Month” coordinated recognition program.

**Strategy E** – Develop a web-based “Limon Volunteers!” form online where people can submit requests to volunteer and be matched with a local organization in need of help. Allow this online form to feed information to a volunteer database that can be shared among organizations. Consider housing this within the town’s website, and identifying a stewardship or volunteer coordinator who can maintain the database and help align requests with town departments and programs or with community non-profit organizations. Build this into a web-based presence and/or e-newsletter sharing information about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. As an alternative to web-based platforms, share information through a community board (sign) outside the post office or Town Hall or printed newsletter. Use social media, as appropriate to share information.

**Strategy F** – Develop a “Limon Volunteers!” brand that can be utilized throughout the community and by non-profit organizations to promote the concept of volunteerism. Use this to brand a “Limon Volunteers!” initiative, using strategies identified in this section of the plan, which broadly engage the community.

## **GOAL C2 - INCREASE, DIVERSIFY FUNDING FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS.**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Colorado boasts a number of foundations and organizations that align with Limon’s non-profits, such as the Rural Assistance Center, ColoradoGrants.org, The Gates Family Foundation, The Chinook Fund and Startup Colorado Community Fund. There are also many local donors who contribute to Limon’s non-profits. Many local organizations are also skilled at bringing in additional funds through grants and fees for service.

Non-profits in Limon should work toward developing a funding mix that will sustain their organizations, through:

- Foundation grants – independent, corporate, family
- Individual donor drives, including online crowdsourcing
- Major gifts, planned giving
- State, federal and local governments grants
- Fundraising events
- Social enterprise, revenue-generating activities

### **STRATEGIES**

**Strategy A** - Share funding resources – such as a grants guide or major donor list – among organizations.



**Strategy B** - Consider developing a coordinated community donor drive, such as an annual day of giving (“Limon Gives!”) or pick-click-give initiatives (such as those often coordinated by United Way) to allow people to easily give while shopping online, at local outlets or at a centralized donation site.

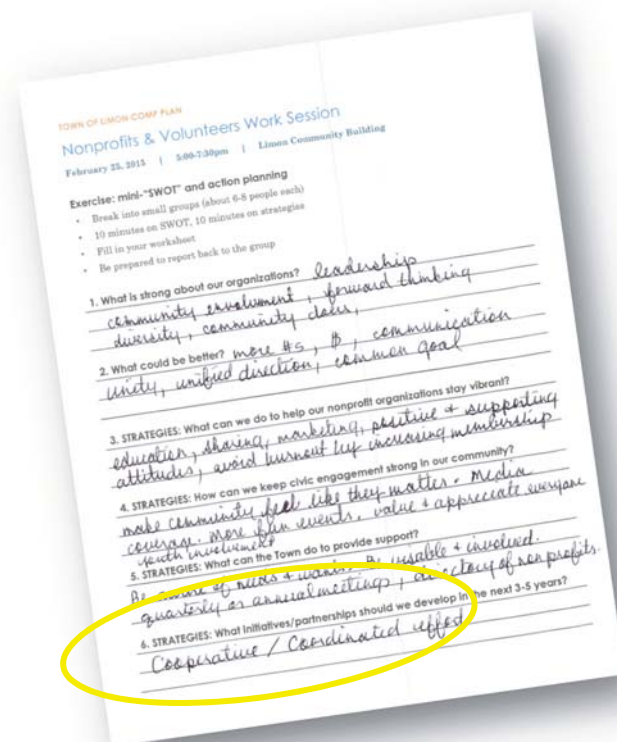
**Strategy C** - Conduct feasibility analysis or funding searches for priority community projects or events, to develop clear fundraising targets.

**Strategy D** - Make high-quality trainings about fundraising, grant management and bookkeeping geared toward non-profit organizations available at no or low-cost on an ongoing basis to promote fiscal responsibility. Include trainings on how to monetize non-profit services and programs and engage in social enterprise in order to develop additional funding streams.

## GOAL C3 - ENCOURAGE MORE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION AMONG ORGANIZATIONS.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

One of the most common themes of the non-profits work session was the desire for increased coordination and communication. In particular, participants saw a benefit in coming together and exchanging ideas more regularly, in sharing resources, and in identifying common goals. This approach is often understood as “collective impact” – an approach predicated on the idea that government, non-profits, and other organizations are most effective in addressing complex community issues when they work on a shared agenda, in a coordinated manner. For more on the collective impact model, see a variety of online resources such as [http://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact) and <http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact/>.



### STRATEGIES

**Strategy A** – Create a forum or partnership allowing all locally-acting non-profits to come together to discuss current conditions within the community and shared goals,



such as a “Limon Community Non-profits Collaborative.” Hold regular (e.g., quarterly) meetings of this group. Identify one organization (e.g., the Town of Limon) who will be responsible for convening the collaborative and sharing communications regularly.

**Strategy B** – Identify a process for the collaborative to (1) discuss and clearly identify its purpose, motivation for meeting and shared goals, and (2) identify activities to achieve the shared goals and which of the various organizations can help implement these activities. Include in this discussion particular community issues that the group would like to work to address (e.g., improving the downtown, improving services to youth, etc.) and what the measures of success will be. Document the conclusions from these initial discussions and identify agreed upon next steps.

**GOAL C4 - MATCH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY PRIORITIES.**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The strategic planning work session held with non-profits in early 2015 identified some community priorities, which are illustrated in the word cloud below. Several work session participants mentioned that they had not thought about the relationship between their organization’s mission and community-wide vision and needs, but would like to strengthen that correlation.



Additional community priorities have been identified in this Comprehensive Plan. Non-profit organizations should examine the Comprehensive Plan goals and strategies to identify ways they can support each of them. The Comprehensive Plan is a powerful tool for helping non-profits ensure that the work they are carrying out matches the most important community desires and needs.

## STRATEGIES

**Strategy A** – Use priorities identified through the Comprehensive Planning process to shape non-profit organization programs and activities. Develop a coordinated plan for how non-profits can best support community priorities.

**Strategy B** – Find ways to pilot and test low-cost or one-time programs and events to gauge interest and demand for certain types of services or activities. For example, use “pop-up” community booth approach.

**Strategy C** – Work with the Town of Limon to create a community health or livability “dashboard” that tracks key community indicators and provides non-profits with ready access to data about the community.

**Strategy D** – Build evaluation criteria into programs and events whenever feasible. Evaluations can include a follow-up short email satisfaction survey of participants, tracking the impact of the volunteer investment (e.g., miles of trail built, number of meals served, amount of money raised/donated), or counting the number of new participants.

