



COMMUNITY GUIDE TO

Civic Engagement

walking mountains[®]
sustainability

Civic Engagement

What is Civic Engagement?

Civic engagement is making your voice heard in your community and to your elected officials and policy makers. There are many ways to advocate for the issues you care about, and doing so is effective and rewarding.

Community leaders, policy makers, and elected officials represent our communities and they need the input of the community to effectively represent.

It's easy to be an advocate in your community. There are processes and systems in place for you to make your voice heard and stand up for the issues you care about. However, it can be hard to know where to start. That's why we've made this guide to walk you through the processes and provide resources to get you started.

What is the Community Guide to Civic Engagement?

The Community Guide to Civic Engagement is designed to walk you through the advocacy process. The next page will layout the various resources in the guide, including how to identify your local officials and how to write a public comment.

This guide is focused on the Eagle County community, however many of the resources can be applied other communities.

The information referenced in these resources can be ever-changing, so we've included additional places to find information. For example, you can check out the [Environmental Policy Tracker](#) on the Walking Mountains Sustainability blog to keep up with the issues in our community and beyond!

The Community Guide to Civic Engagement has been prepared by Walking Mountains Sustainability. The Sustainability Programs department of Walking Mountains Science Center acts as an agent of change to achieve local climate action goals and improve the social, economic, and environmental resilience of the Eagle County community. We serve as a resource & education hub to inspire action from local to global. You can find out more about at walkingmountains.org/Sustainability.

Civic Engagement Resources

How can I keep track of the issues I care about in my community?

1.

Want to keep track of the issues you care about? Did you recently make a public comment and want to ensure your voice is heard? Our team has compiled a list of resources to help you! Learn more from our tips for general issue tracking & public comment follow up.

Who do I take my concerns to?

2.

Knowing which level of government to take an issue is the first step in getting it resolved. In the United States, the Federal Government, the States, and local governments all have different powers and responsibilities. This document outlines the basic powers of the Federal Government, the State of Colorado, Eagle County, and local municipalities, home-rule municipalities, and metropolitan districts.

Participation in Public Meetings

3.

Engaging with your local government is one of the most effective ways to advocate for positive change in your community. One of the most accessible ways to do so is by communicating with your town or city's council and by submitting public comments. Doing so is easy and it's important - they are your elected officials and you are their constituents! Getting started and navigating the procedures is the first step.

Public Comment Resources

4.

Public comments are opportunities for individuals or organizations to give their feedback, ideas, or general support/opposition to a measure being proposed by a governmental entity. The measure could be new, could be in a stage of development, or it could be an old measure under revision. Usually, the relevant department will give notice that they are taking public comments, as well as a time period. Public comments are our opportunity to speak up and are a large part of civic engagement.

Elections in Eagle County

5.

There are over 120 positions up for election in Eagle County in 2022. Some are for Federal office, some are for State office, and many are for local offices. This document outlines when the primary and general elections take place, and what seats are up for election.

Additional Resources

6.

Check out more resources in the community!

1. How can I keep track of the issues I care about in my community?

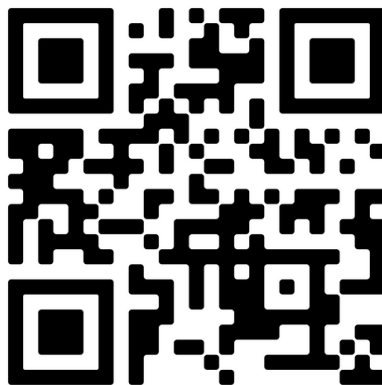
Want to keep track of the issues you care about? Did you recently make a public comment and want to ensure your voice is heard? This resource will help you to start and navigate the process of advocating, and direct you to additional resources in this guide. .

Understanding the System: Tips to keep track of the issues you care about

Before diving into how to track the issues you care about, it's important to identify what power level your issue falls into. Check out our "Identifying Who to Talk To" resource for more information.

Keeping track of general issues on a local level

Start by tracking down your town or city council's meeting. Check out the Council & Committees in Eagle County Resource for a list of all council meeting info in Eagle County. Here's some additional information for communities in Eagle County:



<https://blog.walkingmountains.org/sustainability/keep-track-of-issues>

2. Who Do I Take My Concerns To?

Knowing which level of government to take an issue is the first step in getting it resolved. In the United States, the Federal Government, the States, and local governments all have different powers and responsibilities. This resource outlines the basic powers of the Federal Government, the State of Colorado, Eagle County, and local municipalities, home-rule municipalities, and metropolitan districts.

Powers of the Federal Government

	Delegated Power	Implied Power	Inherent Power
Definition	Powers specifically granted in Article I, Section 8 of the US Constitution. There are 27 total Delegated Powers.	Powers not specifically stated in the Constitution, but are inferred. Inferring powers are usually left up to the court system.	Powers not stated in the Constitution, but are necessary due to the existence of a Federal Government.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coin money• Regulate interstate commerce• Declare war• Raise and maintain armed forces• Establish a Post Office• 27 Delegated Powers total	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designate a Federal Minimum Wage• Impose income taxes• Institute a military draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquire territory by exploration and/or occupancy• Control immigration• Quell insurrectionists

Powers Left to the States:

The United States Constitution designates all powers not given to the Federal Governments to the states, including powers that have not been thought of yet.

	Designated Powers	Full Faith and Credit	Extradition
Definition	Powers designated to the states by the Federal Government.	States must honor the public acts, records, and civil judicial proceedings of other states. Required by Article IV of the US Constitution.	The legal process by which a state must return an accused criminal back to the state where the crime was committed. Required by Article IV of the US Constitution.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulating intrastate trade • Establishing local governments • Conducting elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver's licenses • Car registration • Marriage licenses • Business contracts 	

County Powers in Colorado:

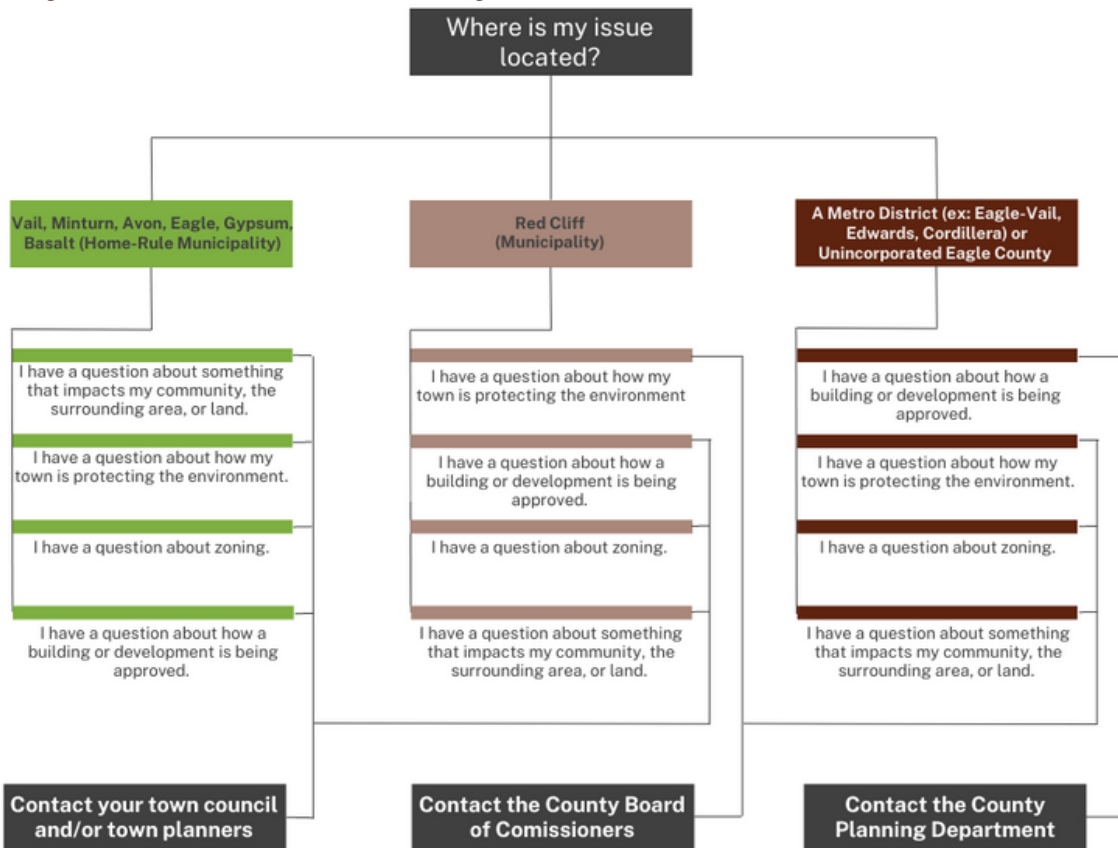
The Colorado State Constitution gives counties certain power.

	Administer State Laws	Manage Most Public Services	Establish County Officers
Definition	The Colorado State Constitution gives counties the power to administer state laws within a particular geographic area.	The Colorado State Constitution gives counties the power to manage most public services within a particular geographic area.	The Colorado State Constitution establishes seven county officers whose duties are established under state law.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Laws • Birth records • Death records • Marriage records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks • Hospitals • Fire/ambulance service • Libraries • Schools • Courts • Roads • Law enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioners • Treasurer • Assessor • Coroner • Clerk and Recorder • Surveyor • Sheriff

Local Powers in Eagle County:

	Municipalities	Home-Rule Municipalities	Metropolitan Districts
Eagle County Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Cliff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vail Minturn Avon Eagle Gypsum Basalt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eagle-Vail Cordillera Edwards
Definition	<p>Another name for a city or town, municipalities often have elected mayors and councils.</p> <p>Colorado State Law allows municipalities to have a broad range of powers so they can address the needs of their population through self-government.</p>	<p>Home-Rule Municipalities are different from a municipality because they are granted greater authority to regulate local and municipal matters. Generally, their ordinances pertaining to local matters supersede state laws.</p> <p>State law may supersede home-rule municipality law when the issue is deemed by a court to be of statewide concern.</p> <p>Often have elected mayors and councils.</p>	<p>Metropolitan (Metro) Districts provide a special function to a population within a particular geographic area.</p> <p>They have tax raising powers to cover the services they provide and are governed by a board of directors.</p> <p>If you live in an unincorporated part of Eagle County, the County is the most local tier of government for you., although your Metro District will have authority over certain issues.</p>
Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power to fill vacancies in municipal offices Power to appoint boards of health Power to provide ambulance and hospital services Police powers Power to finance municipal activities Power to manage land use and growth Power to prohibit offensive or "unwholesome" businesses 	<p>Allowed to regulate activities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact a community or surrounding area, Provide planned and orderly use of land Protect the environment 	<p>Must provide at least two of the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire protection Mosquito control Parks & recreation Safety Sanitation Solid waste disposal or collection Street improvement Television Transportation Water

Locally, Where Do I Take My Issue?



Under Colorado State Law, counties also have the authority to:

- Provide veteran services
- Operate emergency telephone services
- Operate mass transit systems
- Construct and maintain airports
- Lease or sell county-owned mineral and oil and gas rights
- Provide water and sewer services
- Control wildfire planning and response
- Promote agriculture research and protect agricultural operations
- Operate special districts for irrigation, cemeteries, recreation, solid waste and disposal

The County Board of County Commissioners can also control specific activities through police power or licensing requirements. Examples include:

- Marijuana
- Trash removal
- Disturbances

The County and State share authority over:

- Liquor licenses
- Landfills
- Pest control

3. Participation in Public Meetings

Engaging with your local government is one of the most effective ways to advocate for positive change in your community. One of the most accessible ways to do so is by communicating with your town or city's council and by submitting public comments. Doing so is easy and it's important - they are your elected officials and you are their constituents! Getting started and navigating the procedures is the first step.

What is the structure of these meetings?

Town Council meetings typically hold a similar format/structure no matter where you go. The meeting kicks-off, there is an opportunity for public comment, and the Council is led through the agenda for the meeting. After each agenda item has been discussed and/or reviewed by council members, the public (typically) has an opportunity to share their feedback via public comment (note: some issues or councils may not offer this opportunity. In those cases, a written comment can be submitted).

To participate in a Council meeting, there are different ways to "RSVP" depending on the town you live in. Some communities allow you to show up without registering, while others ask that folks who will provide a public comment register for the meeting. Check the 'specific guidelines' below to understand what's expected in your community.

Agendas for your town's council meeting can be found on the town's website and in their predetermined physical posting location (often at town hall). The agenda will include the time, place, and the virtual option for tuning into the meeting if available. Most councils meet twice a month on the same days of the month. See the schedule of meetings and links to the council agendas below.

What are my opportunities to speak in front of the Town Council or Board?

Public Comment:

There are two means of providing public comment during Town Council meetings.

Provide a public comment about an issue not on the agenda at the first public comment period at the beginning of the meeting. This is not an opportunity for discourse with the Council, it is an opportunity for the public to share and the Council to listen. During this public comment period, some boards limit time for comment, often to 3-5 minutes.

Provide a public comment about an issue that is already on the agenda. These public comments will need to be held until the Council reaches that agenda item and has had a chance to discuss it. Though not required for all items on an agenda, most boards do allow public comment on most items they discuss in public.

Request to be on Council/Board Agenda:

Community members can also request a presentation in front of the Town Council. To do this, follow the 'special guideline' links below to find out how to put in a request to be on the agenda. Once the agenda request has been submitted, the Town Manager and Town Staff will determine if and when it will be included on the Council's agenda.

Additional outlets for more information:

1. Many towns and boards televise their meetings, and those meetings can be viewed on High Five Media's website: <https://www.highfivemedia.org/local-government>
2. Many towns have newsletters and meeting announcements that you can sign up for online so you don't have to continually remember to check agendas to see what's coming up or going on in your community.
3. Eagle County has a mix of Towns and Metro or Special Districts. If you don't live in a town, you can still participate! School Boards, Metro Districts, and other Special Districts also hold public meetings for those individuals or businesses that are within those districts. Please see your special or metro district's website to learn more about their meetings and opportunities for public comment. Not sure where you fall? Check out <https://blog.walkingmountains.org/sustainability/keep-track-of-issues!>

Final thoughts:

Giving public comments can seem intimidating! But have no fear. Mayors and board chairs are helpful and supportive during meetings for first timers giving public comment (and it's perfectly okay to admit nervousness!). Remember, boards and councils were elected to represent you and they are there to listen to your concerns.

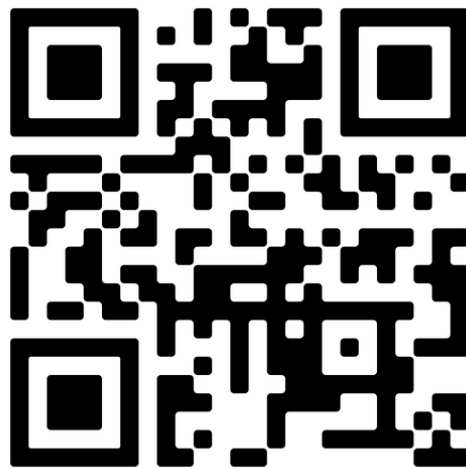
4. Public Comment Resources

Public comments are opportunities for individuals or organizations to give their feedback, ideas, or general support/opposition to a measure being proposed by a governmental entity. The measure could be new, could be in a stage of development, or it could be an old measure under revision. Usually, the relevant department will give notice that they are taking public comments, as well as a time period. Public comments are our opportunity to speak up and are a large part of civic engagement.

Because there is so much going on at federal, state, regional, and local levels of government, knowing where to find open public comments can get tricky. Here, we break down where you can find rules/measures that interest you in various government entities relevant to Colorado.

Writing or orating a public comment can be daunting, so, in this resource, we also include draft outlines for both a written public comment and an oral testimony.

Where to find legislation:



<https://blog.walkingmountains.org/sustainability/where-to-find-legislation>

Tips to Create an Effective Public Comment

1. Include the regulation name and docket number in the heading, if possible.
2. Briefly establish your credibility in the opening paragraph.
 - a. Who you are.
 - b. What credentials you have or why the issue matters to you.
3. Be specific in the items you are addressing and support your points with evidence when possible.
 - a. You could cite from the proposed rule, cite a study, cite the law, etc.
 - b. If you need to use an anecdote, keep it short and to the point. Do your best to back it up with data whenever you can.

Example

Dear Colorado Department of Transportation and Governor Polis,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction for Transportation Planning Proposed Standards, and for your efforts in this rulemaking process. I work for the sustainability department of a non-profit in Avon, Colorado and my concern for the climate crisis grows every day. Our mountain communities are suffering from increasing fires, floods, mudslides, and heat. Seriously addressing transportation emissions is an important step to mitigating these threats.

I strongly support a robust GHG standard for future transportation projects because such standards will help the state reach its emissions reduction goals, encourage multimodal transportation methods that reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled, and improve the health and safety of all Colorado residents.

Thank you,
Jane Smith
Climate Action Collaborative
Walking Mountains Science Center

Draft Outline for a Written Public Comment

Further information can be found in: *Communications for DC Advocates: How-to's and lessons learned over 15 years by Susie Cambria.*

First Paragraph:

1. If you represent an organization, start with a statement about your organization, including what geography you are representing.
2. Briefly explain why you are writing. Include a short statement about the consequences of doing nothing (keep to one/two sentences).
3. Thank the official for taking an interest in the issue (if applicable).

Middle Paragraphs:

1. Solutions/recommendations, action you want taken, edits, updates, etc. Be specific.
2. What it will take for the solutions/recommendations to be implemented—funding, policy change, practice shift, compliance with existing law.
3. Party responsible for implementing changes.
4. Consequences of doing nothing.
5. How you will know changes have occurred. Be sure to include measurable outcomes.

Last Paragraph:

1. Summarize the issue and action you want taken.
2. Offer assistance and be sure to provide your phone and email.

Draft Outline for an Oral Testimony:

First paragraph:

1. Testimony typically includes the opener “Good morning Chairman Smith OR Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee on XYZ.”
2. If you represent an organization, start with a statement about your organization including which geography you are representing if you are a resident.
3. Briefly explain why you are speaking. Include a short statement about the consequences of doing nothing (keep to one/two sentences). Be sure to include a list of the agencies/divisions involved.
4. Example: Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee on (rest of committee name). I am (your name) and I am the (your title or role) at (organization). (Organization's mission). We are located in (fill in) and serve (brief description of population and number served last year or the last quarter).

Middle Paragraphs:

1. Details about the problem. Include analysis, data, charts, and tables.
2. Solutions/recommendations, action you want taken. Be specific.
3. What it will take for the solutions/recommendations to be implemented—funding, policy change, practice shift, compliance with existing law.
4. Party responsible for implementing changes.
5. Consequences of doing nothing.
6. How you will know changes have occurred. Be sure to include measurable outcomes.

Last Paragraph:

1. Summarize the issue and action you want taken.
2. Thank the chair and the committee for the opportunity to comment.
3. Offer assistance. In testimony, include a statement such as “If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them.” If you are submitting a statement for the record, include the names of people who can respond to questions as well as the phone numbers and email at which they can be reached.
4. Example: Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Should you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them. Feel free to contact me after the hearing with questions; my phone is (telephone number, note if cell) and my email is (email address).

Public Comment Template

My issue: _____

For or Against: _____

I am testifying to: _____

First Paragraph:

Middle Paragraphs:

Last Paragraph:

5. Elections in Eagle County

There are over 120 positions up for election in Eagle County in 2022. Some are for Federal office, some are for State office, and many are for local offices. This document outlines when the primary and general elections take place, and what seats are up for election. Note that some municipalities hold elections at different times than the state-wide election dates, and the general election typically has additional ballot questions.

Need to register to vote or verify your voter registration? Register to vote online at coloradosos.gov/voter.

	Election Date	Who is on the Ballot?
Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: June 28, 2022 • General: November 8, 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 US Senate Seat • 8 US House Seats
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: June 28, 2022 • General: November 8, 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor • Lieutenant Governor • Attorney General • Secretary of State • Treasurer • 17 State Senate Seats • 65 State House Seats • 8 Appellate Court Judges (Retention Election)
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: June 28, 2022 • General: November 8, 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eagle County Commissioner District 3 • Eagle County Clerk & Recorder • Eagle County Treasurer • Eagle County Assessor • Eagle County Sheriff • Eagle County Surveyor • Eagle County Coroner • Town of Gypsum - 3 Council Members & Mayor • Red Cliff - 2 members of the Board of Trustees • Minturn - 1 Council Member • Avon - 3 Council Members & Mayor • Basalt - 2 Council Members • Possible ballot initiatives

6. Additional Resources

We encourage you to keep learning and using your voice!

There are tons of additional advocacy resources for our community. Check some out below.



<https://blog.walkingmountains.org/sustainability/civic-engagement-additional-resources>