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# NEWS RELEASE

## Durango Recognized for Sustainability Leadership, Receives 3-STAR Community Rating

**Durango, CO:** The City of Durango is pleased to announce that it has been formally certified in the STAR Community Rating System (STAR). The City earned a Certified 3-STAR Community Rating and has been recognized for sustainability leadership. Durango is the 3<sup>rd</sup> community in Colorado and the 61<sup>st</sup> nationwide to achieve certification from STAR Communities, a nonprofit organization that evaluates and certifies sustainable communities. Fort Collins and Steamboat Springs are the other STAR-Certified Colorado communities.

STAR is the nation's leading framework and certification program for evaluating local sustainability and recognizes achievements both by local government and the wider community.

Durango was awarded points in a total of 163 performance measures across STAR's seven goal areas: built environment; climate and energy; economy and jobs; education; arts and community; health and safety; and natural systems. With a final score of 275.9 points, Durango far exceeded the minimum 200 points required for a 3-STAR Community Rating.

Some highlights of the City's application include:

- **Built Environment:** Access to high quality parkland, open space and public transit contributed to a high score in the Built Environment goal area.
- **Economy & Jobs:** In recent years, the economy of Durango has experienced growth. Over 1,200 new businesses were established from 2013-2015 and unemployment has also dropped over that same time period.
- **Equity & Empowerment:** Childhood poverty has steadily decreased in Durango since 2012 and between 2014 and 2015 there was a 9% decrease. This progress is supported by City programs such as the Food Tax Rebate and the Utility Refund, which reduce the financial burden of basic needs.

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- **Health & Safety:** Durango's access to quality parks and open spaces provide residents with diverse opportunities to be active. This led the City to score well in the Active Living objective by reporting 88% of residents as being physically active in the past month.

"Sustainable cities provide a healthy environment, support a strong economy, and continually improve the well-being of the community," said Hilari Varnadore, Executive Director of STAR Communities. "We commend the leadership in Durango for prioritizing data-driven decision making and are proud to award the City with the Certified 3-STAR Community Rating."

Over the coming months, the City will work with community partners and Durango citizens to identify priority action areas, enabling the City and others to direct resources efficiently and effectively to the greatest areas of need.

To review Durango's STAR results, visit <https://reporting.starcommunities.org/communities/123-colorado-durango>.

To learn more about the STAR Community Rating System, visit the STAR Communities website at [www.STARcommunities.org](http://www.STARcommunities.org).

For information about the City of Durango's sustainability initiatives, contact Imogen Ainsworth at [imogen.ainsworth@durangogov.org](mailto:imogen.ainsworth@durangogov.org), or visit [www.durangogov.org/sustainability](http://www.durangogov.org/sustainability).

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