

Regional Governance and Collaboration Key to Sustainability in Eagle River Valley, Colorado

Among other recommendations, SDAT suggests regional visioning summit.

Summary: In late September, the AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) visited Eagle River Valley, Colo., a region approximately 100 miles west of the Denver metropolitan area and home to a collection of municipalities that include Vail, Avon, Eagle, Edwards, and Red Cliff. With projected growth expected to double the valley's population in the next three decades, the project was framed around the notion of identifying the carrying capacity of the valley and the elements needed to create a healthy regional system.

The SDAT project was led by Bob Yakas, AIA, AICP, from Portland, Ore., and included experts in water quality, land use, regional transportation, economic development, governance, sustainability, and energy. The SDAT's central conclusions identified a host of barriers to regional collaboration, including fragmentation among the existing municipalities that leads to intense competition for sales tax revenue and results in poor land use decision making.

In light of this, the SDAT's core recommendations were to form a regional organization that has the capacity to convene a visioning summit, serve as a neutral party to cross-jurisdictional negotiations, and facilitate integrated decision-making structures around regional land-use and transportation strategies. The team made a complete set of recommendations around those areas that relate to the need for regional collaboration as well.

To view the team's presentation and recommendations, [go to the SDAT Web site](#). For more information about the SDAT project in Eagle Valley, [contact Joel Mills, director, AIA Communities by Design](#).