

## Silverton GOLD Project Cover Page

### Title: The Silverton GOLD Project

**Competitor Name:** The Town of Silverton, Colorado- Partner Track

**Organization Name:** Town of Silverton, 81433, Gloria Kaasch-Buerger, Town Administrator,  
[gkaasch-buerger@silverton.co.us](mailto:gkaasch-buerger@silverton.co.us) 970-880-4087 <https://townofsilverton.colorado.gov/>

**Location of Primary Benefits:** Town of Silverton, San Juan County, Colorado, 81433, Population 695

**Short Description:** Situated in a high alpine valley at 9,318 ft elevation, the historic Town of Silverton is one of the most isolated communities in Colorado. The town is considered a Frontier and Remote Area according to US Census data. Accessed from the Million Dollar CO Hwy 550 over Red Mountain Pass (11,017 ft) from the North and The San Juan Skyway over Molas Pass (10,910 ft) from the South the Town is extremely vulnerable to the effects of increasing climate change. Extreme weather events, especially in the winter months, can cut off all vehicle access and electrical power distribution leaving the town without emergency medical, food, fuel, water and sewer access. Much of the Town infrastructure was built during the early days when the Town was a booming hub of the Silver and Gold Mining Industry in the late 1800's. The economic drivers of the community are transitioning from the mining era to a diverse model of historical tourism, outdoor recreation, telework, light industry and mining reclamation. The town has a diverse economic community with an increasing demand on the aging infrastructure. The remote and rural Town of Silverton and San Juan County are looking to move aggressively towards planning for greater resiliency and adopting clean energy to heat and power the community.

The proposed Prize funding will be used to kick off the **Silverton GOLD Project**. The Project (Goal of Less Dependency) is being formed as a model for other remote communities as a Public-Private-Utility partnership to help bring the community into the transition to a more sustainable, resilient, and clean energy future. The Town of Silverton and San Juan County (Public) will partner with Eco Action Partners (private NGO) and San Miguel Power Association (SMPA a Rural Electric Power Cooperative) to engage in four **GOLD Nugget** program initiatives.

1. **GOLD Nugget Initiative #1 Community Resilience Plan:** The Town of Silverton and San Juan County will work together to form a **Community Resilience Plan**. This plan will lay out a road map to increase the resiliency of their Emergency Medical capacity, fire protection, electric power supply, fuel supply, food supply, and water and sewer operations, with a goal of long term sustainability and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
2. **GOLD Nugget Initiative #2 Climate Action Plan:** The Town and County will engage EcoAction Partners to join neighboring Ouray and San Miguel Counties as a full participant in and adopter of their Regional Climate Action Plan. <https://www.ecoactionpartners.org/cap>
3. **GOLD Nugget Initiative #3 Beneficial Electrification Plan:** This nugget will focus on modernizing the community's energy use through a focus on beneficial electrification (BE). Heating and transportation represent the largest energy use primarily relying on outdated fossil fuel based appliances and vehicles. The tasks will include inventorying all heating and cooking appliances, educating the community on BE, and seeking grant and rebate incentives to convert fossil fuel based appliances to high efficiency technologies, both lowering resident costs and increasing local air quality.
4. **GOLD Nugget Initiative #4 Electrical Resilience and Renewable Energy Plan:** This Gold Nugget will focus on three subtasks:
  - a. **Local grid distribution modernization:** SMPA will inventory and explore possible ways to modernize the local distribution grid that serves the community.
  - b. **Behind the Meter Microgrids:** SMPA will work with the community to identify and implement small facility scale microgrids for key community anchor institutions..
  - c. **Community Solar/ Storage Microgrid:** SMPA will work to develop a locally sited Clean Energy Project that would include a community solar garden and storage microgrid to provide local renewable energy and 4-6 hours of backup power for the entire community.

**Link to 3 min pitch video here:** <https://youtu.be/Ta1LXEdSaE4>

### Project Members:

Town of Silverton - Gloria Kaasch-Buerger, Town Administrator

San Juan County- Jim Donovan, Emergency Manager

Eco Action Partners- Kim Wheels, Energy Specialist

San Miguel Power Association - Terry Schuyler, Key Accounts Executive