



Town of Nederland
Colorado

Strategic Master Plan

Nederland Downtown Development Authority
Nederland, Colorado

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View of Nederland from the East With the Downtown Development Area (approx)

Purpose and Process

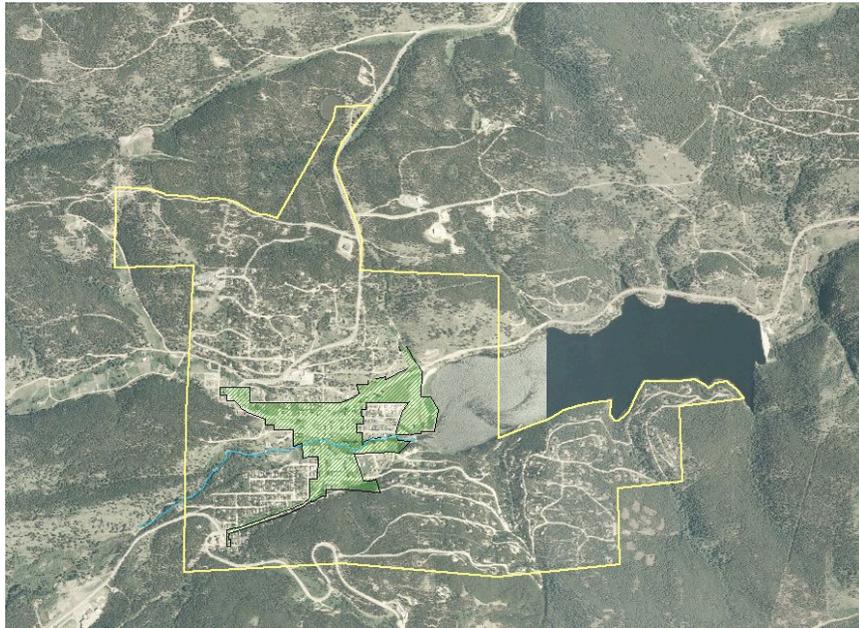
The Nederland Strategic Master Plan serves as the action guide for development activities in the DDA area. The document takes a close look at spatial, economic and cultural issues in the DDA and recommends strategies and actions for future development.

The purpose of the plan is to create a comprehensive vision to guide the Nederland Downtown Development Authority in creating a safer, more beautiful, and economically vibrant downtown. The plan will be used to facilitate funding opportunities from various sources and to coordinate efforts of the many groups undertaking the projects in and around the Downtown Development Area.

This Plan is a result of a broad consideration and detailed look at issues related to historic and cultural resources, infill development, streetscape and open space, and circulation, as they apply to the Downtown Development area. Implementation of the Plan will involve the cooperation and support of Nederland's property owners and business owners, along with the Town of Nederland and other interested parties. Where proposed plans will impact privately owned property, the Downtown Development Authority will strive to ensure that the concerns and desires of individual property owners are addressed.

The Downtown Development Authority will use the Strategic Master Plan as a guide to make policy, implement specific projects and plan expenditures through the annual budget process.

The Nederland Strategic Master Plan was created for the Downtown Development Authority under the leadership of a DDA committee comprised of residents, property and business owners and Town of Nederland Trustees. A consultant team, headed by Turnburke Associates, helped formulate the Strategic Master Plan with the DDA committee through a series of interviews, public meetings, charrettes and work sessions.



Downtown Development Authority within Town of Nederland Boundaries

This document is intended to serve as a strategic action guide to future improvements within the DDA limits and attempts to relate the DDA to the larger Nederland area. It is not meant to restrict additional ideas from being included in the plan. It is anticipated that this plan will evolve and be revised in response to future opportunities.

Goals of the Plan

After approval of the 2006 Plan of Development (see below) for the Nederland Downtown Development Authority (DDA) by the Nederland Board of Trustees, the DDA is moving forward to implement the plan by:

- Contracting with a consultant, Turnburke Associates, Inc. to produce a conceptual development plan depicting the improvements described in the plan. This plan will be used to facilitate grant requests to funding sources such as TIP/DRCOG in November 2007.
- Working to develop partnerships with other agencies such as CDOT, RTD, Boulder County Transportation, for the purposes of achieving mutual goals and enhancing the ability for the DDA to receive funding. The DDA will also work with the Nederland Library District to facilitate location of their building within the downtown area.
- Assisting the Town of Nederland in establishing a parking fund and a comprehensive policy to parking within the DDA.

2006 PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

The following list of projects are not in any priority order because it is important that the DDA Board retain flexibility to act upon any of these projects or other projects that arise. In developing these projects, the DDA formation committee considered the input provided by participants at the past two Economic Summits, the findings and recommendations of the Market Analysis and information compiled by action groups that resulted from the two Summits.

1. Circulation

Design and build a circulation system for pedestrians, bicycles, traffic and parking so as to minimize conflicts among the modes of transportation and maximize the safety and convenience of driving to and walking in the District.

- Improve the shopping center/bank intersection
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings of Highway 119 and other main roads
- Construct sidewalks and trails
- Connect key amenities (e.g. RTD to downtown)

2. Riverwalk

Develop the Middle Boulder Creek corridor into an attractive centerpiece of the Town that connects the South and North business areas and the lakefront in an environmentally sensitive manner.

- Construct a new overpass at Highway 119 to accommodate pedestrian trails along the creek
- Provide a pedestrian path along the north side of the creek with easy access and integration with businesses
- Construct a pedestrian-friendly bridge linking Chipeta Park and East First Street
- Enhance the creek for better fish habitat and kayaking

3. Beautification - improve the attractiveness of the District.

- Place underground publicly and privately owned utility and communication lines.
- Promote attractive streetscape (e.g., lamp posts, landscaping, signage)
- Retain historical buildings and adhere to Town architectural design standards
- Incorporate art features (e.g., historical artifacts, fountains, graphics, etc.)
- Encourage and promote private and public development projects, such as parks, plazas, and landscaping throughout the District

4. Town Square

Design and build an attractive and functional gathering place for the community and visitors.

- Convert the Town-owned land behind the Visitor's Center to a town square
- Create a multi-purpose space for community gatherings such as farmer's market, festivals, arts and crafts fairs and other events
- Incorporate attractive landscaping, historical features and public art in projects

5. Promote and Support Private Developments that Create a Public Benefit

Encourage activities and services that will attract residents and tourists by broadening the entertainment, cultural, shopping and social activities and events that take place in the district.

- Participate with developer/builder if their project is highly desirable; and their project is consistent with the plans and objectives of the DDA; and their project may not be otherwise economically viable
- Plan and develop public facilities that will enhance and encourage the development of privately sponsored projects
- Encourage planning and projects which are compatible with their surroundings
- Encourage diversity of land uses in the district so that the area includes a cross-section of compatible uses
- Actively solicit and if necessary, provide sites for land uses that are important to the economic vitality of the town

Historic and Cultural Factors

Nederland is located in southwestern Boulder County, 17 miles west of Boulder. It occupies the Middle Boulder Creek Basin at an approximate elevation of 8,200 feet. The town has a rich and varied history reflecting many influences. It began as a mining settlement for the gold, silver, and tungsten mining booms in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

In the 1920's, tourism helped Nederland rebound from the bust that followed the tungsten boom of World War I. Over the following decades, the town's population ebbed and flowed as the mining industry struggled.

During the 1960's, Nederland became known as a counterculture enclave as people moved to the town seeking an alternative lifestyle. It developed into a bedroom community of Boulder, with few jobs available locally.

The 1990's saw a new demographic, with more families moving to the area looking for a small town environment. Many of these new residents came from more urban area of the country and chose Nederland for its unique, funky ambience and its proximity to recreational opportunities. During the 1990's, a number of new civic projects were completed, including a new post office, fire station, and teen center.

In 1999 Peak to Peak Healthy Communities Project (PPHCP), a community non-profit organization, organized a series of public workshops focused on determining a vision for the community ten years into the future, called Greater Nederland Vision 2010. This identified residents' desires to preserve Nederland's unique character, while creating more opportunities for outdoor recreation.

This visioning process led the town of Nederland to undertake a series of plans which looked at open space, trails, and parks in the area. The first, in 2001, was the Town of Nederland and Surrounding Areas Open Space, Trails, Parks and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan, prepared by ERO. This was followed by the General Open Space Management Plan, by ERO, and the town of Nederland Trails Master Plan, by ERO and the Architerra Group.



Trails Master Plan by ERO & The Architerra Group

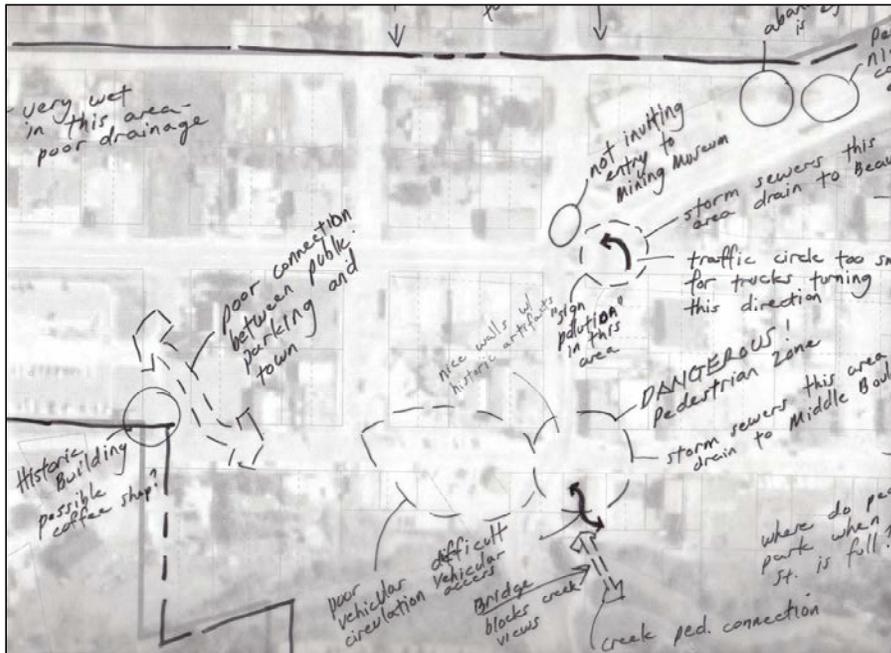
In 2002, the Nederland Area Chamber of Commerce and the Peak to Peak Healthy Communities Project hosted an Economic Summit bringing together hundreds of local residents to discuss the challenging economic environment which had evolved in the Nederland area. Local businesses were struggling, which resulted in shrinking sales tax revenues for the town. An outgrowth of this summit was the desire to have solid data on which to make a decision. A consultant, Progressive Urban Management Consultants (PUMA), was hired to prepare an economic study of the area. The study determined that local residents were spending much of their shopping dollars outside of Nederland. PUMA concluded that making the downtown more inviting for locals and tourists would generate more tax revenue. PUMA's report concluded with an action plan which included the formation of a Downtown Development Authority.

A group of interested citizens was formed to investigate the formation of a DDA. A series of public meetings showed widespread support from the business community and the public, and in 2004 voters approved the formation of a DDA by an 83% margin. The DDA received a Governor's Award of Excellence in 2006 for their progress in achieving their initial goals.



DDA Committee & Town of Nederland receives Governor's Award of Excellence Greely, CO

One of the DDA's first actions was to contract with Turnburke Associates, Inc. a local landscape architecture and planning firm, to prepare a strategic master plan. The plan was prepared through a series of public charrettes as well as numerous meetings with interested local groups.



Community input from public charrettes, Turnburke & Associates, Inc.

The community input process was undertaken with two primary goals:

1. Identify areas of concern within the DDA limits.
2. Collect existing thoughts, projects and ideas for improvements.

The process revealed that pedestrian safety was a primary concern for the community. Also of concern was creating a more welcoming environment for all. The plan needs to retain Nederland's authenticity of the local community as well as serve tourist and visitors.

The ideas for community improvements were closely aligned with the DDA Plan of Development Priorities, as this plan was derived with public input. Some ideas generated from the public meetings include additional bus stops, more pedestrian crossings and relocation of the existing visitor center.



Environmental Analysis
Turnburke Associates, Inc.

Environmental Factors

Topography & Vegetation

Nederland is located in a glacial valley at the confluence of two creeks. As is typical for the region, the north facing slopes are densely wooded with lodgepole pine, spruce, and douglas fir. The low lying areas are forested with aspen, willows and alder. The south facing slopes are lightly wooded with ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, rocky mountain juniper & aspen.

Hydrology

Middle Boulder Creek and Beaver Creek flow through town on the way to Barker Reservoir, owned by the City of Boulder. The reservoir provides Boulder with drinking water. Numerous drainage ways and seasonal wetlands exist in the areas around town.

Climate

Nederland's climate, like many other mountain communities, is one of frequent change. Winter temperatures can drop as low as -20 degrees F and summer temperatures can be in the high 80's. Winter is many times accompanied by high winds from the northwest. In general though temperatures are moderate with 20's & 30's in the winter months and 60's & 70's in summer. Moisture generally comes to the town in the form of snow with the months of April and May having the most precipitation. Summers are generally dry with afternoon thunderstorms that can be brief but intense.

Current Projects

Below is an alphabetical list of current projects already underway within the DDA area:

Carousel of Happiness **COH, Inc.**
A fully restored carousel will be housed in a building providing for year-round enjoyment.

Historical Society Information Center **Nederland Area Historical Society**
The renovation of the historic Bryant House will provide information about historical aspects of the area.

Mining Museum **Nederland Area Historical Society**
When construction is complete, the museum will feature mining displays, exhibits, and a creekside boardwalk.

Nederland Skate Park **NEDSK8**
Construction of this skatepark has already begun, and when complete will provide great recreational opportunities for Nederland area youth.

Town Storage Yard Relocation **Town of Nederland**
The relocation of the town yard will result in more green space for park use.

Wastewater Treatment Plant **Town of Nederland**
The new treatment plant will replace the existing open pond system with newer technology using underground tanks, which will result in more green space for park use.

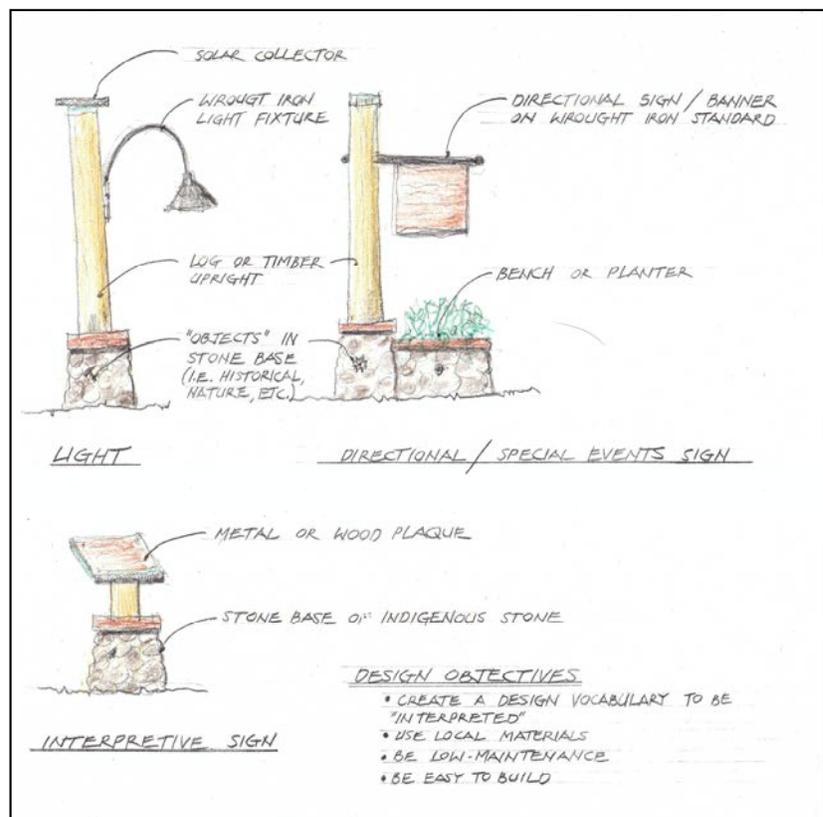
Plan Concepts

The following plan concepts are derived from the public process and the DDA's priorities:

- **Circulation**
- **Riverwalk**
- **Beautification**
- **Town Square**

Each of the concepts is explained in greater detail in the pages that follow.

Typical sketch showing sign and lighting concepts.
Tunburke Associates, Inc.



Circulation

The most consistent theme that emerged during the public input process was the importance of creating sidewalks, trails, and pedestrian crossings to enable people to move safely and conveniently through town. The plan looks at “linkages between spaces” as the organizing principle for the pedestrian circulation system. It is the intent of the plan for all pedestrian linkages to be ADA accessible as much as possible. However, mountain topography or other constraints may make this goal unfeasible in some instances.

Pedestrian Circulation

The sidewalks are proposed to be hard surface, probably concrete, six to ten feet in width with curbs and gutters. This is consistent with the approved Nederland Trails Master Plan, which identified a range of sidewalk dimensions, which could accommodate a variety of traffic types and volumes. In some key locations these sidewalks may utilize specialty paving such as stamped concrete or concrete pavers. Trails are proposed to be soft surface such as crusher fines or crushed gravel and will be used primarily in park or riverwalk areas.

The plan proposes four bridge crossings. The first, on the east, connecting Chipeta Park to First St., is planned as an emergency vehicle access bridge as well as a pedestrian bridge. Vehicular access could be controlled by removable bollards or gates. In the event of an accident making the current highway bridge unusable, the bridge will allow emergency vehicles an alternate means to cross the creek. It will also connect Chipeta Park to Gateway Park, the Youth and Family Center and the new Skate Park.

The second crossing is located between the Chipeta Park bridge and the existing covered bridge. This bridge will provide a convenient connection between the existing neighborhood and the shopping center. It will also provide a creek crossing at the east end of the business district.

The existing covered bridge is a nice visual element, but unfortunately blocks views of the creek from the road. It was suggested during the public charette process that this bridge be relocated to a new location on the western end of the business district. This new bridge would provide a connection to the RTD Park ‘n Ride lot. A new bridge crossing could be redesigned for the existing covered bridge location as part of the redesigned highway bridge.

After on-site meetings with CDOT representatives, it was decided that pedestrian crossings should be concrete. Painted crosswalks have a disadvantage of being damaged or removed by snowplows. Concrete pavers have the problem of frost heaving or differential settlement making them unacceptable for snowplows. It was determined that

some light texture would be acceptable in the concrete surface. This would be desirable to create the “rumble” effect for motorists to better perceive the crossing.

Another aspect to motorists perceiving pedestrian crossings is their speed of travel. It is suggested that the speed limit within the entire DDA area be 25mph. This will require working with CDOT to relocate existing signs.

Vehicular Circulation

The existing roundabout was the first one built in the state of Colorado by CDOT. It is undersized, with the most significant issue being that large trucks traveling from the south and heading west are forced to make a 270 degree turn and cannot safely negotiate the existing circle without their rear wheels going over the curb and into the circle. Another problem with the circle is the access points are located too close to one another for smooth traffic flow. The plan suggests enlarging the circle towards the southeast, helping traffic to flow more smoothly.

A traffic circle has been proposed for the intersection between the bank/hardware store and the shopping center. This circle would require numerous signs and would be similar in size to the existing traffic circle. Other more feasible alternatives would be widening the road to incorporate left hand turn lanes or acquiring additional land to reconfigure the secondary streets into a four-way intersection with stop signs.

Public Transportation

The existing bus route through town has one stop within the DDA limits, at the Park ‘n Ride lot. It is suggested that two more stops be added to the route to provide better access to the bank and shopping center. The plan also addresses public transportation by creating pedestrian linkages between the Park ‘n Ride lot and various town destinations.

Parking

An analysis of existing parking in Nederland revealed that there are a number of smaller parking areas in Nederland that are underutilized. Much of this parking is poorly signed and often has no indication of actual spaces, but is simply a gravel or dirt lot. The plan proposes better signage of these areas along with the installation of wheel stops and or curbs to better delineate parking spaces. The plan also calls for the creation of new parking areas to supplement the existing parking supply.

Riverwalk

Although Middle Boulder Creek flows through the middle of town, many people are barely aware of its presence. The proposed Riverwalk will help people to become more aware of this beautiful natural resource and provide an alternative experience for downtown visitors. An important component of the Riverwalk will be the ability of pedestrians to cross underneath the highway bridge on both sides of the creek. This will require a redesigned bridge with trails on both sides of the creek, as well as walkways above on both sides of the road. Any redesign of this area will take into account the existing Peace Garden in this area, and attempt to minimize disturbance, or if necessary, work to relocate the garden.

Any development of trails along the creek must be done with consideration of the natural environment and wildlife habitat. The intent is to provide a trail which meanders close to the creek in some areas and away from the creek in more sensitive areas. Additional ideas for the Riverwalk include improvement of the creek for fish habitat and/or the creation of a kayak course for recreational boating.



An example of a pleasant riverwalk in Estes Park, CO.

Beautification

The plan addresses the beautification of the town in many ways. One aspect of beautification is the under-grounding of above ground power lines. This will need to be considered as future infrastructure improvements are undertaken.

The creation of an attractive streetscape will be done as part of the design of pedestrian walkways. The streetscape will include lighting, bicycle racks, signage, seating, public art, and landscaping.

Community input identified a concern that this beautification could result in Nederland becoming “another Vail or Aspen”. It is the intent of the plan that all aspects of beautification attempt to reflect Nederland’s history and ambience. To help accomplish this it is suggested that local artists and artisans be included in streetscape improvement projects as much as possible. It is also suggested that these improvements reflect Nederland’s unique heritage rather than being a generic, “anywhere in America” streetscape.

Lighting will need to provide for safe, attractively lit spaces while also respecting “dark sky” guidelines. The creation of a distinctive light fixture for the downtown area would be beneficial in creating an identifiable image for the town. These light fixtures could incorporate brackets for special event signage or banners.

The incorporation of bicycle racks at key locations is vital to providing multi-modal transportation throughout the town. These key locations should also include seating areas that provide for resting, meeting and information gathering. The plan identifies seating kiosks located throughout the DDA. These kiosks are envisioned as back-to-back benches with a double-sided bulletin board and roof structure for shade and protection from the weather.

Signage is another concern for beautification as signs can produce visual clutter and be unattractive if not properly designed. Any proposed signage should be located in strategic locations to provide necessary information and assist in route finding. It could also be designed to be complimentary to the town ambience by incorporating natural materials.

The addition of areas for public art is also important in the creation of a vibrant streetscape. The plan calls for sculpture locations throughout the DDA with the recommendation that the sculptures be kinetic, which would be activated by the frequent winds. It is also suggested that local artists be involved in the creation of these sculptures, possibly through a competition.

Landscaping in the DDA is currently very minimal and needs to be improved. One of the areas that was noted in public comments as being very attractive was the Peace Garden, located near the former Laura’s Bakery location. Created by the Mountain Forum for Peace and maintained by volunteers, this pocket park incorporates sculpture and is landscaped with appropriate native and xeric plants. It is suggested that two other pocket parks be created on small parcels at the two other entries into town.

It is important for any proposed landscaping to be appropriate for the altitude and climate and to provide an attractive wintertime appearance. The plan suggests that a short-term goal for landscaping could be the creation of an “Adopt a Planter” program for local businesses to sponsor a large planter. These could be planted with flowers and small trees which would be able to grow until a suitable location could be identified.



An example of incorporating historic artifacts in a wall (Wolftongue Square, Nederland)

Town Square



Existing Conditions

The area of the proposed Town Square is viewed as the “center” of town. It contains the existing town offices, a parking lot, the visitors center, and various retail and office locations. The plan calls for the relocation of the existing visitors center, since it’s current location is problematic for any significant changes. The visitors center has served as a bus stop for the RTD, although it no longer is a bus stop. The stop has moved to the new RTD Park ‘n Ride facility.



Discussion of Town Square studies at public charrette 6-5-2007.

After a presentation of the three town square alternatives, there was much discussion of the pros and cons of each. It was decided by the DDA that no single alternative could be selected and that future study of this area was needed to arrive at the best approach for this important area. It was also noted that the town's future plans regarding their current location would be key in developing a plan.

This town square charrette was the culmination of a six month public input process. This involved the community by making individual presentations of the initial concept plan to the following groups:

- Town of Nederland
- Nederland Chamber of Commerce
- Nederland Area Historical Society
- Nederland Open Space Advisory Board
- Teens Inc.
- Ned Sk8
- Carousel of Happiness
- Nederland Area Seniors
- Mountain Forum for Peace

These face-to-face meetings generated many of the creative ideas incorporated into the final plan.

N e d e r l a n d S t r a t e g i c M a s t e r P l a n

Implementation Strategies

The DDA is planning to submit a TIP grant application to the DRCOG in September 2007. This grant, if approved, would help fund sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and other improvements along the state highway corridors throughout town. This is a long range objective since the grant cycle is expected to take 2-3 years. They are also working with CDOT to identify potential grant sources for the redesigned traffic circle.

There are several new developments planned within the DDA in the near future, which will generate additional revenue due to the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) aspect of the DDA. Through TIF, the additional real estate tax revenues, above 2006 levels, generated by new development will flow to the DDA, creating opportunities for the partial funding of future projects.

It is the goal of the DDA to identify smaller projects within the DDA that could be accomplished in a relatively short time frame. It is important that the community see tangible results from the DDA in the near term. Some of these ideas include:

- The construction of a small segment of sidewalk, curbing, and pedestrian crossings to serve as prototype for future work.
- The “Adopt a Planter” program for local businesses to participate in the beautification of Nederland.
- Partnering with CDOT to place banner brackets on existing light and utility poles to promote local events.
- Working with the local art community on kinetic sculptures throughout the DDA.
- Working with the town to create a viable, shared vision for the Town Square area.
- Helping to create easements on private land for the creation of the two identified pocket parks.
- Increasing the visibility and functionality of existing parking through better signage and added wheel stops.

These are just some of the projects that could be achieved in the near future. The DDA looks forward to continued community input to help with their efforts in creating a better Nederland.

Acknowledgements

Client: Nederland Downtown Development Authority
Teresa Warren, Chair
Ken Adler
Bunny Spangler
Steve Culver
Kim Culver
Ron Mitchell
Will Guercio
Kristopher Larsen, Nederland Board of Trustees

Project Partners: Town of Nederland
Colorado Department of Transportation
Boulder County Department of Transportation
Nederland Chamber of Commerce
Nederland Historical Society
Nederland Open Space Advisory Board
Teens Inc.
Ned Sk8
Carousel of Happiness
Nederland Area Seniors
Mountain Forum for Peace

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