

# DDA's alley revitalization strategy moves forward

Leslie Bethel | April 24, 2018

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is a tax-funded district in downtown Glenwood Springs. Revenues earmarked to the DDA are used exclusively for downtown vitalization.

The board wishes to continue to share our progress and projects in the works with a monthly article. This is the sixth edition.



*I- BEFORE: The alley running between Grand Avenue and Colorado Avenue in the 700 block, prior to the existing beautification efforts.*



*II- AFTER: The 700 block alley after improvements that are now being planned for several other downtown Glenwood Springs alleys.*

In 2018, the DDA and the city of Glenwood Springs will continue facilitating the development of downtown spaces; one focus is the beautification and improvement of the downtown alley system. Alleys can be disregarded in downtowns as underutilized space, but in Glenwood Springs alleys are an important part of the downtown core contributing to the city's downtown pedestrian-friendly network.

The DDA and city's strategy is to improve downtown alleys for pedestrian and business access and to address impediments to their usage by pedestrians. Capitalizing on the potential of the city's alley system is part of the DDA's overarching vision to vitalize and energize downtown Glenwood Springs and to maintain the downtown's role as the heart of the community. The approach is to provide inviting, active places that foster social interaction with paving, benches, signage, lighting and color.

## **ALLEY STRATEGY**

Utilizing alleys to the full extent focuses primarily on two issues: Consolidating waste service and collection; and making physical and aesthetic improvements to create inviting places. This process, which began in 2011, includes detailed visual analysis, extensive stakeholder interviews, and best practice examples being used in other Colorado communities. At that time, 74 percent of the downtown business and property owners provided valuable feedback, including all of the waste management companies currently servicing the downtown.

## **ALLEY PROJECT STUDY AREA**

Priority project areas focus on improving the utility and vitality of core downtown alleys that predominantly serve commercial and retail buildings. The project study area covers the core extending from 10th Street north to 7th Street, and Blake Avenue west to Colorado Avenue.

## **ADDRESSING WASTE IN ALLEYS**

Waste consolidation, a coordinated approach to the disposal, servicing and management of trash and recycling, is a priority for improving the city's downtown alley network. The intent is to reduce the number of dumpsters through more efficient servicing by establishing a centralized location in each alley for waste collection. Several trash compactors have been purchased by the city to begin this effort. These compactors will be installed in the spring/summer of 2018.

Physical and design improvements are a second area of need addressed in the strategy. This includes a variety of steps including repaving, improving drainage, burying of utility lines, and creating inviting, attractive and clean alleys.

## **FIRST ALLEY PROJECTS**

The first renovated alley project for downtown Glenwood Springs was completed in 2013, located between Seventh and Eighth and Grand and Colorado. Decorative pavers and concrete were used to designate it as a pedestrian realm. Outdoor dining was added as were decorative pots and plantings.

Just in the last year, overhead string lighting has been added to two more alleys, between Seventh and Eighth and Grand and Cooper. The overhead lighting has significantly helped to create a more inviting, attractive and safer downtown environment.

Looking at ways to activate alleys brings warmth and builds on a strong sense of place. The DDA looks forward to continuing these and other efforts that bring vibrancy to our downtown.

*Leslie Bethel is executive director of the Downtown Development Authority. You can follow the DDA on Instagram*

*@downtownglenwoodsprings and Facebook. Early design conceptual sketches are periodically posted on Facebook and Instagram.*

<https://www.postindependent.com/opinion/columns/bethel-column-ddas-alley-revitalization-strategy-moves-forward/>