

Sparking downtown beautification and development

Leslie Bethel | November 15, 2017



One ingredient of the Downtown Development Authority's mission is to inspire private investment with public improvements. Our public improvement projects consider how infrastructure and urban design can be paired with strategic placemaking to create and enhance public spaces. These projects contribute to a sense of place that looks and feels like Glenwood Springs.



Following phase I improvements on Seventh Street, private business invested in new amenities and upgrades. After project completion, the tax base for the area increased close to 30 %.

These shared places become centers to gather, interact and to collectively nurture a healthier, more social and economically viable community. The added vibrancy of public improvements, such as upgraded infrastructure and beautification, creates opportunities and encourages public, private and nonprofit entities to invest in their organizations and the community. The synergy between public improvements and private investments enhances the Glenwood Springs experience for all.

Though all types of commercial properties play important roles in our community, downtown is much more than shopping and dining. It is the epicenter of a city's vitality and its primary gathering place. It is often where we meet our neighbors and come together as a community. Public improvement projects such as the Grand Avenue bridge project, the downtown alley project, Seventh Street Plaza Phase 1 outdoor dining and the Seventh Street Pocket Park create and enhance shared assets. A shared asset is a long-term physical improvement, either infrastructure or utility, that raises the value and operations of our community.

Strong shared assets are the roots of our blossoming community, providing the necessary nutrients and structure for well-being and growth. They help to anchor the city with stability

and store potential for future use. Shared assets elevate the image and function of the city, enhancing the Glenwood experience, improving connectivity and spurring economic and cultural vitality.

Cohesive design of shared assets is a critical factor in business retention, development and recruitment efforts. Conveying quality of life is a central interest in downtown presentation — is it alive and viable, is it attractive and bustling? Sharing assets and improving our overlooked spaces and places serves as an incubator for new businesses, business improvement or expansion — and why we will continue to be successful in facilitating a healthy community.

Our downtown represents a significant portion of the community's tax base. As this district flourishes, property values increase. Though it may no longer be our community's dominant shopping center, it still includes some of the most unique shopping and service opportunities.

This includes being our government center, one-stop shopping for city hall, county courthouse and post office services. Our integrated projects show cohesive support and development of visible places fostering success for all parties involved. That's why it is important for the DDA to invest in shared assets.

These shared assets and downtown improvements encourage critical private investment in our city. The DDA is excited to be a part of creating a strong community for all of the city of Glenwood Springs by building on the momentum of shared assets.

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.

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