

Downtown resurgence, an invitation for creative solutions

Leslie Bethel | February 8, 2018

The Downtown Development Authority 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 fifth edition.

In 2018 the DDA will focus on facilitating the development of downtown spaces, with an eye on creative and unique ways to achieve quality development throughout the downtown. Two requests for proposals are available with a deadline of Feb. 22; more information is available on the city's website.

Downtown development regenerates the core of the city. No matter the age, size or location of a city, it still needs people and businesses to grow, change, and thrive. Renewal, redevelopment, and revitalization projects are crucial to a city's success as they stimulate the economy, enhance property values, instill a sense of civic pride, reduce crime, help current businesses and attract new ones.

The city of Glenwood Springs and the Downtown Development Authority are soliciting proposals for development of the alley lot on 714 Grand Ave., on East Wing Street between 7th and 8th Streets. The development site is located adjacent to the new traffic bridge as it lands in the center of downtown Glenwood Springs. The ally lot presents new opportunities with the new beautiful new pedestrian areas adjacent to the bridge on the former wing streets.

The second development site is located west of the touchdown point of the north side of the new pedestrian bridge which links north and south downtown across the Colorado River. Both the new pedestrian bridge and the new traffic bridge are planned to be fully complete in June of 2018. These projects are the result of a \$125 million-dollar investment made by the Colorado Department of Transportation. These major infrastructure projects also received significant investment from the city of Glenwood Springs and Garfield County and mark the beginning of a new era of redevelopment and investment.

Realigning the Grand Avenue Bridge opened this lot up for redevelopment and was incorporated into the Sixth Street Corridor plan where concepts were studied.

So, why are these two smaller infill lots so important to build upon the vision? The city and the DDA are putting a high priority on creative development solutions with the end goal of contributing to the city's vibrancy.

This is not so easy, we are really challenging applicants to think outside the box. The end result for these lots includes plans that will contribute to the city's vision for downtown vibrancy as the historic center of the community and the region, while bringing a physical asset to renewed life.

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/dda-column-downtown-resurgence-an-invitation-for-creative-solutions/>