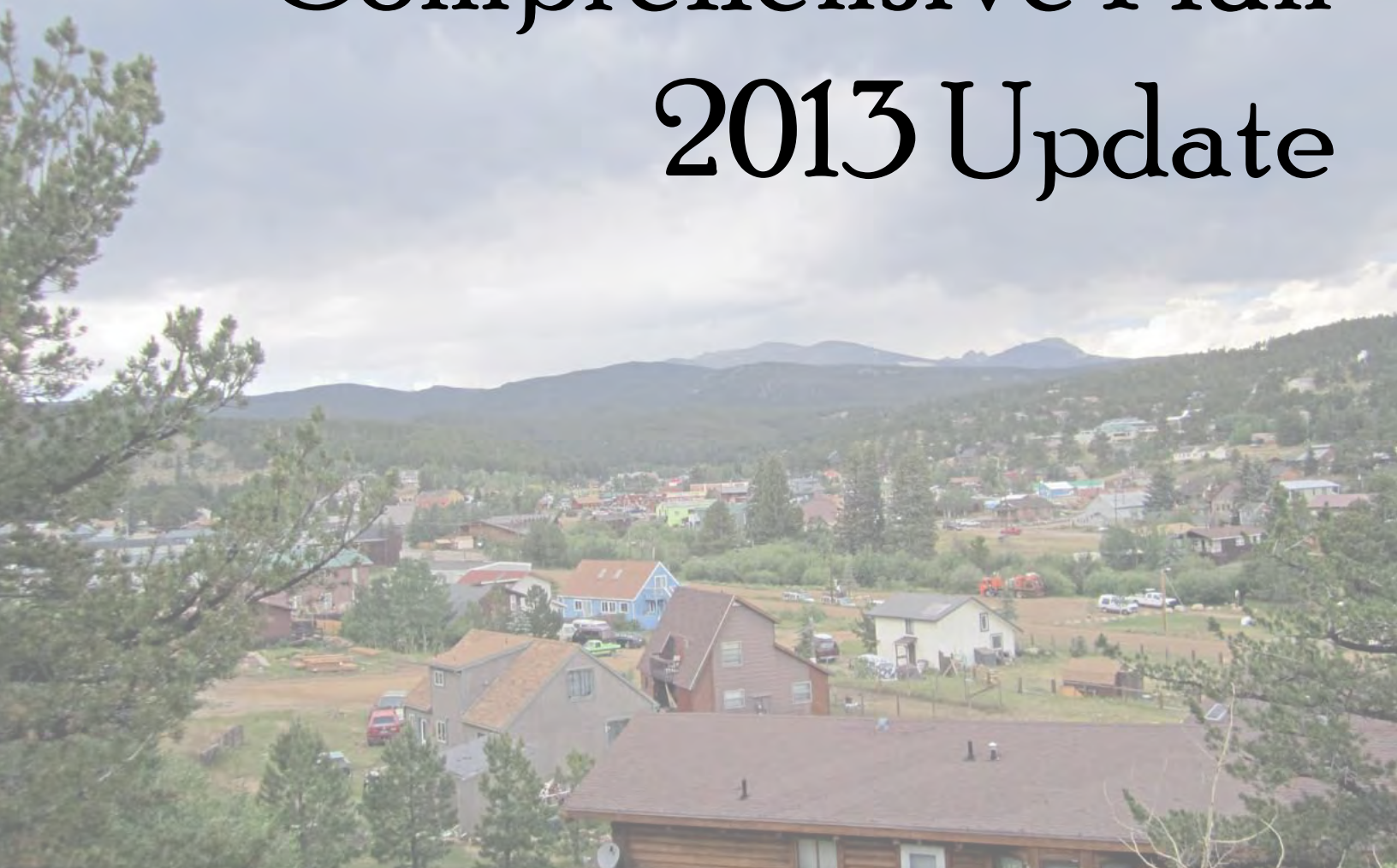


Town of Nederland



# Comprehensive Plan 2013 Update



ADOPTED BY PLANNING COMMISSION OCTOBER 23, 2013

APPROVED BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES NOVEMBER 5, 2013





# Executive Summary

This, the 2013 version of the Nederland Comprehensive Plan, is the latest iteration in a long line of comprehensive plans and builds upon them within the context of the evolving nature of Nederland, Boulder County, Colorado, the United States, and the planet. While this Plan is non-regulatory in nature, and thus serves as an advisory framework for the coming decade, it is our hope that it lays forth a framework within which Nederland can preserve and enhance that which makes it a special place to live.

We have built this document upon a variety of other documents, creating a comprehensive plan that integrates not just the ideas presented by the public, but also draws upon the hard work others have put into concurrent plans. We seek to set forth the Comprehensive Plan as the main overarching document that incorporates the ideas of Vision 2020, the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan, the Downtown Development Authority Strategic Master Plan, Nederland’s Sustainability Resolution (2011-11), Nederland Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and numerous other plans from the county and state. The Comprehensive Plan does not seek to replace any of these, but serve as a complement and unifying structure.

To that end, this Comprehensive Plan has identified six overarching policy categories that deserve special attention in the coming years.

- Community Facilities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Economy
- Utilities
- Land Use

Within each of these categories, we have established between nine and eighteen policies, ranging from specific tasks to be undertaken in the coming months, to more philosophical goals that will extend throughout the lifetime of this plan, and likely into future comprehensive plans as well. Some of these goals are carried over from previous Comprehensive Plans, indicative of their unchanging importance to our town. Others are new, as they have grown out of our changing town and ideals.

Of these changing ideals, none has had a greater impact on this plan than our increasing awareness of our impact, both individually and as a town, on the global environment. We recognize that minimizing our impact, both in the resources we consume and the waste we produce, is of paramount importance if we are to maintain the lifestyles that drew us to Nederland in the first place. The concept of sustainability has been woven into the fiber of this plan at its most basic level. Doing so hasn’t occurred without much conversation (regarding the definition of sustainability, for starters) and deliberation (regarding the role and responsibilities of a small mountain town).

During the course of updating this document, ideas and input were gathered throughout the community. Numerous public events provided opportunities for those not on the Steering Committee to introduce their ideas and viewpoints and monitor the progress of the process. The Steering Committee would like to especially thank everyone who contributed to making this document reflect the values and hopes of our community.

# Acknowledgements

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Alisha Reis, *Town Administrator*

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Special thanks to members of the Nederland community who attended public events, participated in stakeholder meetings, and provided input throughout the planning process.

*Consulting services provided by SE Group and Norris Design, both of Frisco, Colorado.*

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TOWN HALL

NEDERLAND

COLORADO

1874

45 W. 1st

MEETINGS

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### ROLE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Nederland has remained remarkably distinct, charming, and grounded, despite the astonishing growth that has occurred in much of Boulder County. Just 15 miles from Boulder, the town has a presence that seems as though it is much farther off the beaten path. This character adds a unique dimension to the fabric of Boulder County and Colorado as a whole.

The Town of Nederland has a commitment to quality of life, sustainability, and preservation of small town character. Those values are evident in the Community Vision, which was created in 2011 through the *Envision 2020* process (see Chapter 3). This Comprehensive Plan Update translates that vision into policy, as an easy-to-use, succinct, and inspiring guidebook for being a sustainable community.

The Nederland Comprehensive Plan is an important policy document for the Town. It is far-reaching and long-term, intended to add predictability about what is possible and preferable for the Nederland community over the next 20 to 25 years. As we have seen since the end of 2007, there is no certainty when it comes to changes in the economy and growth over time; yet, the Comprehensive Plan can provide a solid backbone representing the values of the Nederland community for decision-making despite the fluctuations of what is happening regionally or even nationally.

The Comprehensive Plan is a strategic, advisory document (non-regulatory) that provides the policy foundation for more detailed zoning and development regulations. It is the first check-in for decision-makers, developers, and residents to evaluate decisions that will affect the future of the community.

The Comprehensive Plan influences decisions on both public and private lands, but does not change property rights. While one development project may or may not alter the character of a town or result in lasting negative impacts on ecosystem functionality, many projects over many years collectively will. A Comprehensive Plan ensures that each project is evaluated against the community's greater long-term vision for the future.

### WHY UPDATE?

Originally written in 1987, the Nederland Comprehensive Plan has gone through a number of important updates over the years. The 1994 update broadened the scope of the Comprehensive Plan, "to include elements and issues not typically addressed in a traditional comprehensive planning process, including governmental administration, ordinance enforcement, and budgeting." Though the town now has professional administration in place to cover that

scope, it is an interesting facet of the role that the Comprehensive Plan has played in the past.

Also at that time, Nederland was at the beginning of an approximately decade-long period of strong growth pressure originating from the Boulder area. Other factors that contributed to changes in social fabric, economy and visitation were the increased interest in recreation on public lands, and the success of limited stakes gaming in Black Hawk and Central City. What once was a quiet, somewhat-isolated mountain town saw the need to look outward and add predictability to their future.

The next major update came in 2002. That update had three main objectives: 1) to delete items that had been completed or were no longer an issue, 2) add items that should be addressed in the future, and 3) reference other planning documents that had been adopted. This update also took place during the strong growth period for Boulder County.

Today is a very different planning environment than in the past. While Boulder County is still growing, pressures have dissipated somewhat and Nederland is in an ideal place to reflect on what has worked in the past, what should remain in place, and what new strategies may be required to meet our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations from meeting their own needs. The update also incorporates new thinking, such as sustainability as it relates to long-range planning, and recognizes the planning work that the community has achieved since the last update.

The State of Colorado requires that every county and municipality has a comprehensive plan in place (C.R.S. §31-23-206). Comprehensive plans are typically updated every 7 to 10 years to reflect the changes that have occurred within a community due to growth and development, as well as the shifts in public goals. Furthermore, master plans must also contain a recreational and tourism element per State of Colorado law (House Bill 01S2-1006), which coincides with Nederland's *2013 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan* update.



# PLANNING PROCESS & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

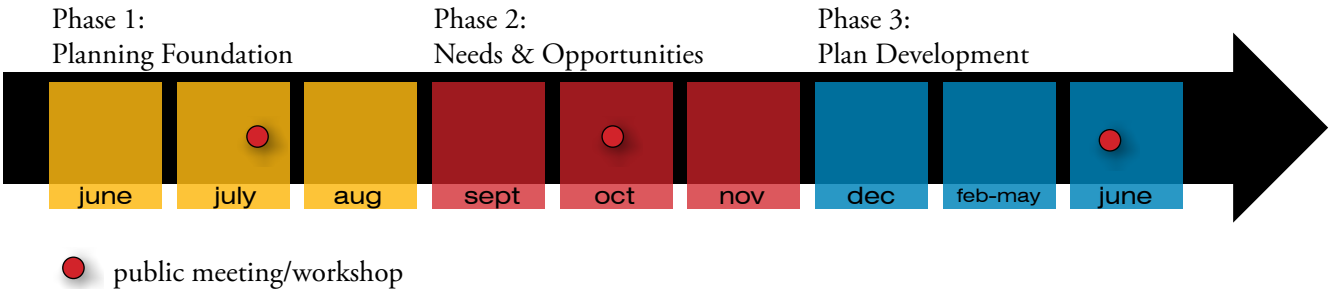
The 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update process was comprised of three phases: 1) Planning Foundation, 2) Opportunities, and 3) Plan Development. Throughout this process, there was extensive public engagement and involvement of a citizen-led Steering Committee to help ensure that the broad spectrum of perspectives in Nederland was represented and reflected in the final product. The “Planning Team” refers to the planning consultants who assisted in facilitating and carrying out the update.



Engagement tools that were used during the planning process include:

- Stakeholder interviews (30+)
- Coffee with the Planning Team
- Public Events (3, including 1 potluck)
- Steering Committee meetings (6+)
- Focus Groups
- Newspaper articles
- Project website

Please refer to the *Appendix* for a complete description of the phases and the specific public events and activities that took place.





Iron Feather  
**BOOKS**

35

# Chapter 2

## Plan Foundation

At the beginning of the update process, the Steering Committee and Planning Team discussed a series of documents and concepts that form the foundation for the 2013 Nederland Comprehensive Plan Update.

The first was the recent visioning process, *Envision 2020*. Carried out prior to the Comprehensive Plan Update, that process involved extensive input from the community, rolled up into one succinct statement of where the community would like to see Nederland in the year 2020. The results of that process greatly influenced the new and revised policies of this plan.

The second foundational concept for the Comprehensive Plan was that of *sustainability*. The Town recently adopted a *Sustainability Resolution*, and the notion of sustainability is almost synonymous with Nederland’s reputation and culture.

Finally, a new set of “*Givens*” was assembled by the Steering Committee and Planning Team as a departure point for the update process. These acknowledge that our current situation relies too heavily upon non-renewable resources, potentially compromises our ecosystems and their functionality, and provides little guidance for future generations to sustainably satisfy their needs. The Comprehensive Plan is meant to provide the guidance necessary for our community to move towards becoming more sustainable.

### ENVISION 2020

To note the foundational statements included in the *Envision 2020* document, as they relate to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan update:

In Nederland, our greatest assets are our residents—the diverse people who live, work, play and contribute to all aspects of our one of a kind mountain community.

Nederland is a complete community guided by a shared vision for reflecting community values and priorities. It is a place where our children thrive and people connect; neighbors know and care for one another, and community members are proud of our town, our deep and rich history, and a quality of life that is both deliberate and second to none.

Our community proudly maintains its small-town feel and distinct identity—a “small is beautiful, less is more” approach. While our town has grown, we have remained true to our origins while internalizing a model of sustainability in which a healthy society comes from a healthy economy and a healthy environment is essential for both.

*In 2020*, Nederland is a town recognized for its trails, natural areas and unwavering commitment to the environment. Open spaces are abundant and balanced



with active recreation areas and opportunities. Nederland's surrounding wilderness area and other sensitive natural areas are restored, protected and preserved.

**In 2020**, Nederland continues to focus planning and economic development activities on efforts that address:

- Alternative energy sources to fossil fuels for transportation
- Alternatives for building and the use of sustainable materials
- Non-motorized travel in town
- Clean air, clean water and water conservation in and around Nederland
- Connections to the outdoor environment providing active, healthy lifestyles for people of all ages
- Minimal/reduced light and noise pollution
- Focused community education programs and stewardship to reduce environmental impact fostering agricultural, economic and community sustainability

**In 2020**, Nederland's elected leaders are qualified, competent and representative of the entire community. They are committed to open and clear communication with Town staff and all citizens. They actively encourage connections between residents, service providers, businesses and government. Critical information is easily accessible to all, and residents feel included and have a sense of responsibility and ownership in the governance process.

**In 2020**, Nederland provides arts and culture, education and community activities that include the entire community and provide opportunities for youth.

**In 2020**, every student in Nederland schools is afforded the opportunity to succeed regardless of ability. Nederland's education system is strong, has high levels of parental involvement and higher than average youth retention rates.

**In 2020**, Nederland has an accessible social service system for community members. The community ensures that its aging population remains healthy, fully-integrated and an active part of the community.

**In 2020**, Nederland's economy is local, community based, self-sufficient and is characterized by diverse and essential products, services and jobs that both support the local community and are mindful of potential impacts on the environment.

**In 2020**, Nederland's economy encourages and welcomes new, non-traditional economic models, the responsible management of tourism and the stewardship of the environment. The community consistently recognizes and responsibly encourages the thoughtful and meaningful relationship between recreation, culture and the economy.

**In 2020**, Nederland supports its local businesses and works to attract new businesses that enhance local services while supporting local values, qualities and the 2020 vision.



## SUSTAINABILITY & LONG-RANGE PLANNING

### OVERVIEW

Sustainability has become a household term, yet still means different things to different people. It may be counter-intuitive to imagine growth benefiting the health of the environment or decreasing the negative impacts a community has on climate change. One might assume that more growth means more resource consumption and decreased sustainability; but given the assumption that some growth will occur, having guidelines in place to direct that growth could positively affect the sustainability of a community as a whole. In addition, long-range planning also guides the redevelopment and revitalization of existing developments when they reach obsolescence, enabling them to regenerate and function in a more sustainable manner. Communities striving to become sustainable perpetually aim to decrease their carbon footprint, minimize their impact on natural systems, and promote strong social and economic vibrancy. That is the purpose for including principles of sustainability in the Nederland Comprehensive Plan Update.

### DEFINITIONS: WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

The most widely accepted and referenced definition for sustainability was written in 1987 by the United Nations' Brundtland Commission, which defines sustainable development as:

*“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

This definition is broad enough that it has provided a useful foundation from which to ask more questions and examine the choices that we make in our everyday lives, as well as a starting point for

exploring choices for our long-term future. It is at the same time subjective, leaving the door open for the various governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, and individuals to interpret as they see fit. It can be interpreted at the personal level, all the way up to a national policy development level.

A sustainable ecosystem is one that *puts resources into the system at the same rate that it is using them*. At the community scale, people's behavior and choices are unpredictable, but the underlying message of reducing resource consumption, minimizing waste, and contributing back into natural systems holds true. Making simple choices to reduce how much one takes out of the system on a daily basis, and how much one is putting back into it, will go far in a community's overall sustainability.

Simple choices include taking the bus, growing a garden, and shopping locally. Similarly, the Town can promote best practices and resource conservation at the community scale: choosing the most resource-efficient choices in all infrastructure development and capital purchases (i.e., vehicles, trucks, equipment, roads, pipes, facilities and buildings).

Development footprint optimization and building technology will contribute to Nederland's community-wide sustainability. Infill development and redevelopment will prevent Nederland from building outward, protecting undeveloped tracts of land for open space, wildlife habitat and watershed protection. Especially if that undeveloped area is held as conservation land in perpetuity, there is an environmental net gain. If an old building with poor insulation, inefficient heating and windows, and standard plumbing fixtures is redeveloped into a building with heightened energy and water efficiency, e.g., the Nederland Community Center, the carbon and ecological footprint of that building has been reduced.



Programs such as the LEED Rating System can help inform choices, even if buildings are not certified, as is the case with the Nederland Community Library.

## **MOVING THE ARROW: SUSTAINABILITY IN MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES**

The environment is often what draws people to live in the mountains in the first place - the pristine air, beautiful surroundings, and altogether serene quality of life. The people in mountain communities generally care very much about conservation, resource protection and maintaining their small town lifestyles. That being said, living in remote, alpine settings comes with challenges that make achieving the hallmarks of sustainable communities especially difficult. Therefore, the focus must shift to moving the arrow in the direction of a healthier environment and vibrant, local community within the sideboards of what is possible for Nederland.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

One of the greatest challenges that Nederland faces is transportation. A large percentage of the town's

residents travel to Boulder on a daily basis to work, shop, see the doctor, etc. Many of those people take the bus, thanks to a valuable partnership between the Town and RTD that allows every resident to have a free bus pass. That program makes great strides to reduce the community's carbon footprint as a result of transportation, yet there is still high auto-dependence. Automobiles and trucks cannot be eliminated either, because riding a bike or walking is not always practical.

The solution then must be a combination approach that includes efforts to promote alternative forms of transportation to the greatest extent possible, as well as look at how residents could reduce their trips out of town across the board. More powerful cable/internet connections that would allow people to work reliably at home, and businesses that provide more everyday goods and services would promote this reduction.

Improving the transportation network within the town is also critically important to reducing automobile use. Pedestrian and bike improvements that are currently in



*Nederland has already made great strides in goals for sustainability. The Nederland Community Center, as a renovated school building, achieved LEED Gold Certification in 2009. Features include recycled materials, low-flow fixtures and toilets, and low-VOC paint, sealants and carpets.*

*The Nederland Community Library (left) was also built to high green building standards. Though it is not certified, it was designed for LEED Silver goals, and through advanced technology such as demand control ventilation with CO2 sensors and in-floor radiant heating, will improve energy efficiency by over 65%. The building also has an emphasis on locally sourced sustainable materials, such as stone and "beetle-kill" pine.*

place are not linked and present safety concerns for all residents, especially children and seniors.

### LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

Another challenge that mountain communities such as Nederland face is local food production. With colder, unpredictable weather and shorter growing seasons, these places are limited to the range of crops that can thrive there. Greenhouses improve conditions and extend the season, but still have limitations at high altitudes and frigid climates.

Raising animals is possible in Nederland, though climate is also an issue, and the zoning code would have to be revised to allow for such uses. Given Nederland's small land area and compact development pattern, taking this step would require a close examination of what is appropriate, or consideration of whether the community is better served by focusing on local food initiatives within the region. With Boulder's strong local agriculture and food production community, partnerships and education will continue to be an important part of the movement towards local food for Nederland residents.



*An example of an alpine community garden in Frisco, CO.  
Photo courtesy of High Country Conservation Center.*

### TOURISM-BASED ECONOMY

A third common obstacle that mountain communities such as Nederland face in achieving sustainability is the unsustainable practices that come along with being a tourism- and recreation-based economy. The Nederland community has mixed feelings about tourism. Concerns about increased traffic, parking, and fears about losing Nederland's unique character are continually expressed. On the other hand, the Town needs the revenue generated by visitors, and many local restaurants and retail businesses cannot survive solely on residents to support their businesses. People travel to this community by car to enjoy the natural environment, and spend money on disposable and non-essential items that often come from other parts of the world.

This is a real challenge because of the obvious economic benefits that tourism brings. According to the Town's tax records, between 2007 and 2012 sales tax generated from tourism accounted for an average of 20% of the total sales tax revenue. Data also points out that total sales tax generated during the summer months—the peak tourism season—are nearly double that of the rest of the year.

In order to move the arrow, mountain communities must strongly promote better practices such as compostable food packaging, carpooling and bus ridership, as well as ensure that tax dollars generated from tourism are being put back into sustainability efforts (expanded RTD service, recycling/reuse programs, etc.). Nederland should support the businesses in town that provide essential services for the greater Nederland community that, like the Town, need the income generated from tourism to complete their business plan. The Town should encourage all

businesses in town to have a sustainability plan and, by so doing, the entire community can move the arrow.

Currently, portions of Nederland’s sales tax dollars go towards the Community Center and water/wastewater debt repayment. Conservation programs such as environmental education and purchasing open space are examples of programs that can be funded through sales tax. It is important to remember as well that a sustainable community is not only one that is in harmony with the natural environment, but also has a vibrant local economy and culture. Focusing tourism-based activities in Downtown can strengthen the local businesses and limit the impacts to a smaller footprint.

#### **LOOKING AHEAD TO PLAN FOR TODAY (BACKCASTING)**

These are just a few of the unique circumstances that mountain communities face when striving for sustainability. Looking to the future, the current conditions in Nederland should be the baseline in terms of where food and products are coming from, where and how people are traveling for work and services, how people are building and heating their homes, etc., to determine how those facets of everyday life can be improved. As a regional hub, Nederland can continue to draw other mountain residents into town for shopping, recreation and entertainment, who would otherwise travel to Boulder or beyond, and thus further reduce regional carbon footprint. Nonetheless, constraints due to Nederland’s climate, setting, and remoteness require that decision-makers have realistic conversations about what is attainable and desirable for the community as it evolves.

With the topic of sustainability at the forefront of many local governments, corporations and global

decision-makers, there are a number of organizations dedicated to finding solutions. The Natural Step Network is one of these organizations, and has developed a framework that “*seeks to align business and government practices with natural cycles that support the web of life.*” Their notion of “*backcasting*” is particularly valuable for long-range planning at the community scale, suggesting that you must look forward to where you want to end up in order to plan how to get there. Applying that approach, Nederland’s *Vision 2020*, coupled with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan is the roadmap for Nederland.

This Comprehensive Plan is not meant to encourage growth, but to guide growth to be as sustainable as possible when it does occur. These principles of sustainability can be used as a starting point to making the most beneficial choices for the Nederland community in the future.





## THE GIVENS

Building upon the discussion of sustainability, there were a number of planning realities that emerged early in the planning process. These are a starting point from which to explore opportunities for the future to maintain Nederland's quality of life, visitor experience, stable economy, healthy environment and safe community, based on the assumption that some level of evolution is inevitable.

### *Volunteerism is everywhere...*

...in our schools, with our youth and elderly, at the town level on every board, in the churches, and the way we treat every citizen and visitor as having value. It's evident in our willingness to give folks without cars rides, those without homes a place to stay, feeding the hungry. That's what makes this a compassionate and thriving place to live.



### *Nederland's surrounding landscape permeates the Town's character and quality of life.*

The forest land and wilderness areas surrounding the town not only create the beautiful setting in which Nederland lies, but they also promote a widespread appreciation of natural resources and environmental health throughout the community. Some of this land is Boulder County Open Space, such as the Mud Lake Open Space Area (which was the result of a 1999 Intergovernmental Agreement with the Town), and the remaining majority of it is owned by the USFS. There are also a number of private conservation easements scattered within the area. Also, since USFS lands are managed for recreation, there will always be a flow of recreationists - from both inside and outside the community - that view Nederland as a gateway to hiking, mountain biking, skiing, camping and a myriad of other activities enjoyed there.

### *Sustainability is our "North Star" Principle.*

Sustainability is generally an idea that the community of Nederland can get behind. Residents highly value a healthy environment, a stable and locally based economy, and social equality.

### *Nederland is 15 miles west of Boulder, Colorado.*

Boulder is one of the country's most sought after communities to live in. Growth, recreationists, and tourists trickle up from there, with or without encouragement. It is Nederland's choice in how it manages new residents and whether it chooses to capture the economic opportunities stemming from that geographic relationship. While much (or even perhaps

most) of the town will remain the way it is today for decades to come, the Town should focus its efforts on implementing those changes that result in moving our community towards a more sustainable existence.

### *Downtown is the heart of the community*

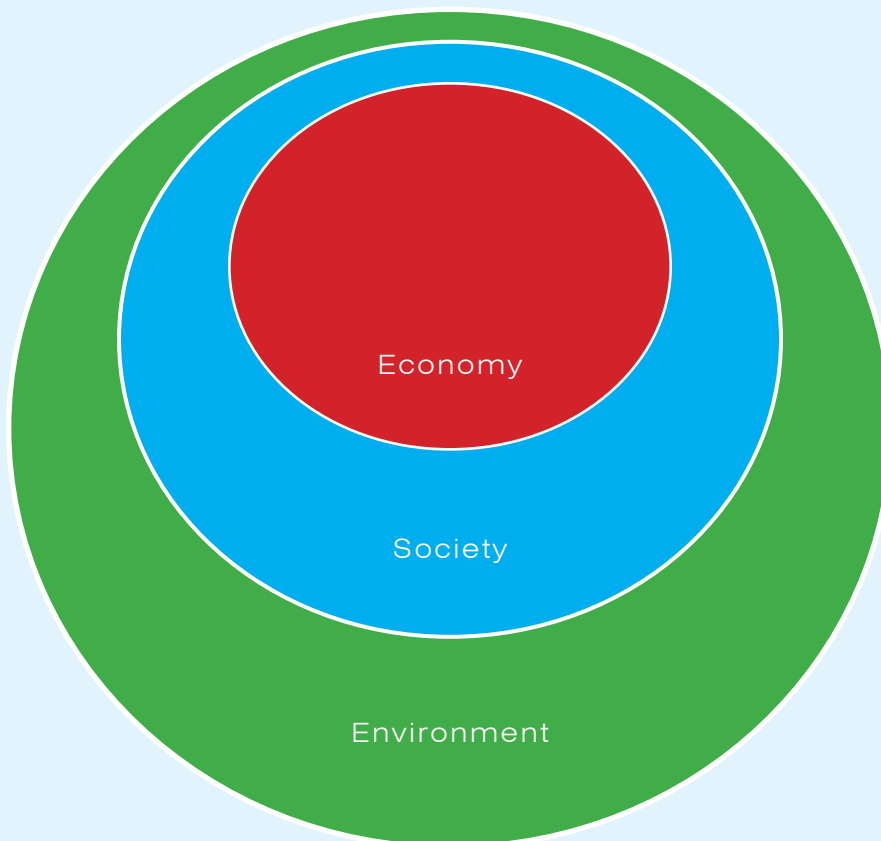
Downtown is the historic, economic and cultural core of Nederland. Preserving the character of Downtown, with its original street grid and historic properties, is critically important, but redevelopment could provide the opportunities necessary to achieve a more sustainable, vibrant community. Focused improvements in Downtown will add to its vibrancy, improve walkability and provide the framework for reinvestment in properties that are currently vacant or dilapidated. Creating more activity along the street frontage with restaurants, retail shops and local artists supports Downtown as the community heart. There are many natural amenities Downtown that add to its importance in the community, and residents and business owners alike agree that infill and redevelopment in this area are a key to a sustainable economy in Nederland.

### *Basic safety is a core value of the community.*

There continues to be much debate over the development of sidewalks and drainage projects in Nederland, and many perspectives on the subject. One area of agreement, though, was the importance of providing focused improvements that will enhance the safety in Nederland such as safe crossings in front of schools, the library and the Community Center. Another area of agreement was the importance of understanding ecosystem functionality within the watershed and how improvements to ecosystem functionality can assist the Town in cost-effectively managing stormwater run-off.

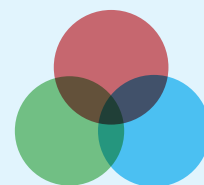
### *Foster and take care of what we have before looking ahead to future development.*

Many conversations between stakeholders centered on an appreciation for what currently exists in Nederland and the need to take care of what is there today. This was mentioned in terms of infrastructure, neighborhoods, businesses, and even the people themselves who make the community exceptional. Many of the improvements to town have been reactive; filling holes as they arise, a sort of patch-as-you-go approach. The community seems to agree that before looking too far ahead to the future, the Town should place some priority on what is here now in a holistic and measured way.



### MEASURING SUSTAINABILITY

When sustainable development has been represented as three interconnected types of capital (right), the emphasis is on the *linkages* between the economy, society, and the environment. But when a systems view is used, the emphasis shifts specifically to the *ecological limits* imposed on the economy and society. In this case, a concentric circles diagram is used to model sustainability and sustainable development. Here, the economy and society function within a larger environmental system, or biosphere, and are limited by the carrying capacity of the natural environment. This concept of sustainability speaks to the need for consideration of all forms of capital in community decision making but places prime importance on the services of natural capital that are essential to all life on this planet. This model is especially pertinent to Nederland, where the economy and quality of life are largely dependent upon the natural environment.



The systems model emphasizes the idea that many decisions or projects are interconnected, rather than trade-offs between environmental, social and economic benefits. For example, an environmental stewardship education program that fosters knowledge of, appreciation for, and action with the environment will have positive benefits to our society (healthy lifestyles, love of the outdoors, connections with nature) and our economy (innovative technologies, resource efficiency, sustainable business practices).

Measuring sustainability should be action-oriented and involve indicators that can be quantified in the future for leaders to gauge the Town's achievements. Developing actions and indicators should also involve all facets of the community to reveal common goals and shared values that will compel change.



## SUSTAINABILITY RESOLUTION

In 2011, the Town adopted *Resolution 2011-21*, the “*Sustainability Resolution*.” The resolution makes a strong statement about the Town’s commitment to sustainability, declaring that it is “an affirmation of our Town’s shift in consciousness to one of regional and global awareness, the understanding that our Town culture and its people are an integral part of our ecosystem, the need for ecological, economic, and social sustainability, and an understanding of the significance of the value of Nederland as a small town, within a mountain region reflecting this shift in consciousness when considering all projects needing approval by the Board of Trustees.” Elements of the resolution are reflected in many of the policies in this plan update to promote resource protection, ecosystem restoration, green building practices, a vibrant local economy, local food production, energy efficiency and renewable sources, and multi-modal transportation.

While many of the recommendations of the *Sustainability Resolution* are general, it encourages the Town to take steps to “develop clear and measurable tools and standards that will critically assess the environmental, social, economic, cultural, health, and energy impacts of projects under the Town’s review to meet its goals of sustainability, and protect the authentic, rustic and rural character of the town.” Chapter 5 of this plan, Implementation, speaks to how the Town can put measures in place to evaluate the tenets of sustainability in making decisions.

## IN THIS PLAN

This chapter offers background on the Nederland community’s perspective and vision for a sustainable future. Later, in Chapter 4, there are specific policies that will ‘move the arrow’ for Nederland in becoming more sustainable.

There is not a specific policy section called “sustainability” because the Town recognizes that the concept permeates all aspects of life in Nederland. Therefore, each policy topic includes a short section on “*What does \_\_\_\_ mean to sustainability?*” to further explore that topic.

## RESOURCES

For more information on sustainability, refer to the following resources:

- The United Nations and Sustainability: <http://www.un.org/en/sustainability/>
- USGBC LEED: [www.usgbc.org/leed](http://www.usgbc.org/leed)
- The Natural Step Network: [www.naturalstep.org](http://www.naturalstep.org)



# Chapter 3

## Existing Conditions

### NATURAL RESOURCES

#### OVERVIEW

Nederland is situated amidst a classic alpine backdrop: snowcapped peaks, coniferous forests, and rushing (or sometimes trickling) streams and water bodies. From its inception, this setting has strongly influenced the town's quality of life, connection to the environment, and economy.

Like most Colorado mountain communities, Nederland was first settled as a mining town. Gold, silver, and tungsten extraction were prevalent. Logging was also a thriving industry and drove the development of the town. That era is reflected in the architecture and early buildings still found today in Nederland, and relics are commonly seen in the forest alongside trails and at abandoned mine sites.

Today, natural resources are as vital as ever, though in a different light. It is primarily their conservation and enjoyment that anchors the economy and way of life, as opposed to their extraction (although mining is not extinct, it is far more limited). Natural resources in and around Nederland are also intrinsic to the public and ecological health of the broader area.

#### WATER BODIES

Two streams run through the Nederland community into Barker Reservoir: Middle Boulder Creek (picture below) and North Beaver Creek. Their riparian corridors provide wildlife habitat connectivity through town to the surrounding public lands, as well as serve the community and downstream inhabitants for storage and filtration during storm events and peak runoff.

Barker Reservoir is located on the eastern edge of Nederland and contributes to the drinking supply for the City of Boulder and the Front Range. The City of Boulder owns the reservoir, dam and facilities.





## OPEN SPACE

There are several important open space areas nearby Nederland:

- Mud Lake Open Space area is managed by Boulder County. Mud Lake, at one time called Muskee Lake, was once thought to be a crater formed by a meteorite. A study funded by the Town of Nederland and the Colorado Geological Survey in 2001 concluded that it is more likely of human origin. In 1947, researchers found some tiger salamanders at Mud Lake to be polydactyl, growing too many feet or toes during metamorphosis. This is considered the first record of mass polydactylism among amphibians.
- The Wild Bear Center for Nature Discovery, a non-profit environmental education organization, owns a 5 acre parcel at Mud Lake. Wild Bear currently uses the property for daytime, hands-on educational programs<sup>1</sup>.
- Wingate Open Space was acquired for conservation in the early 2000s to prevent the development of land along the south ridge of town. That property is approximately 13 acres.
- Reynolds Ranch and Caribou Ranch are additional Boulder County Open Space properties located nearby Nederland and are important to the area's land conservation portfolio. Caribou Ranch is northwest of Mud Lake and covers nearly 2,150 acres. Reynolds Ranch is contiguous to Nederland's eastern border and covers 389 acres.

## FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS

Public lands surround the Nederland town limits, primarily those of Roosevelt National Forest (which

is managed as part of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland). Within the forest, there are many opportunities for recreation, including developed activities at Eldora Mountain Resort, just southwest of town, as well as trail-based activities like mountain biking and hiking, and boundless opportunities for backpacking, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, and camping.

Indian Peaks Wilderness is also nearby Nederland, which is home to seven peaks over 13,000 feet. The area is managed by the U.S. Forest Service and is adjacent to Rocky Mountain National Park. It is one of the most popular wilderness areas in the country, though part of it is closed to public access as the headwaters of the Boulder Creek watershed.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2003 *Comprehensive Plan Update* was

completed following

substantial population growth in Nederland—over 21% between 1990 and 2000 (U.S. Census). Between 2000 and 2010, the Nederland population grew at a far more moderate rate of 3.7%. The average annual rate of change during this decade was also a more manageable 0.3% growth rate.

This trend was reflected throughout Boulder County, which is likely an indication of slower growth in general due to the area's increasing cost of living, the decrease in the amount of undeveloped land, and beginning in 2007, the economic downturn. It may also be attributed to limiting factors such as growth

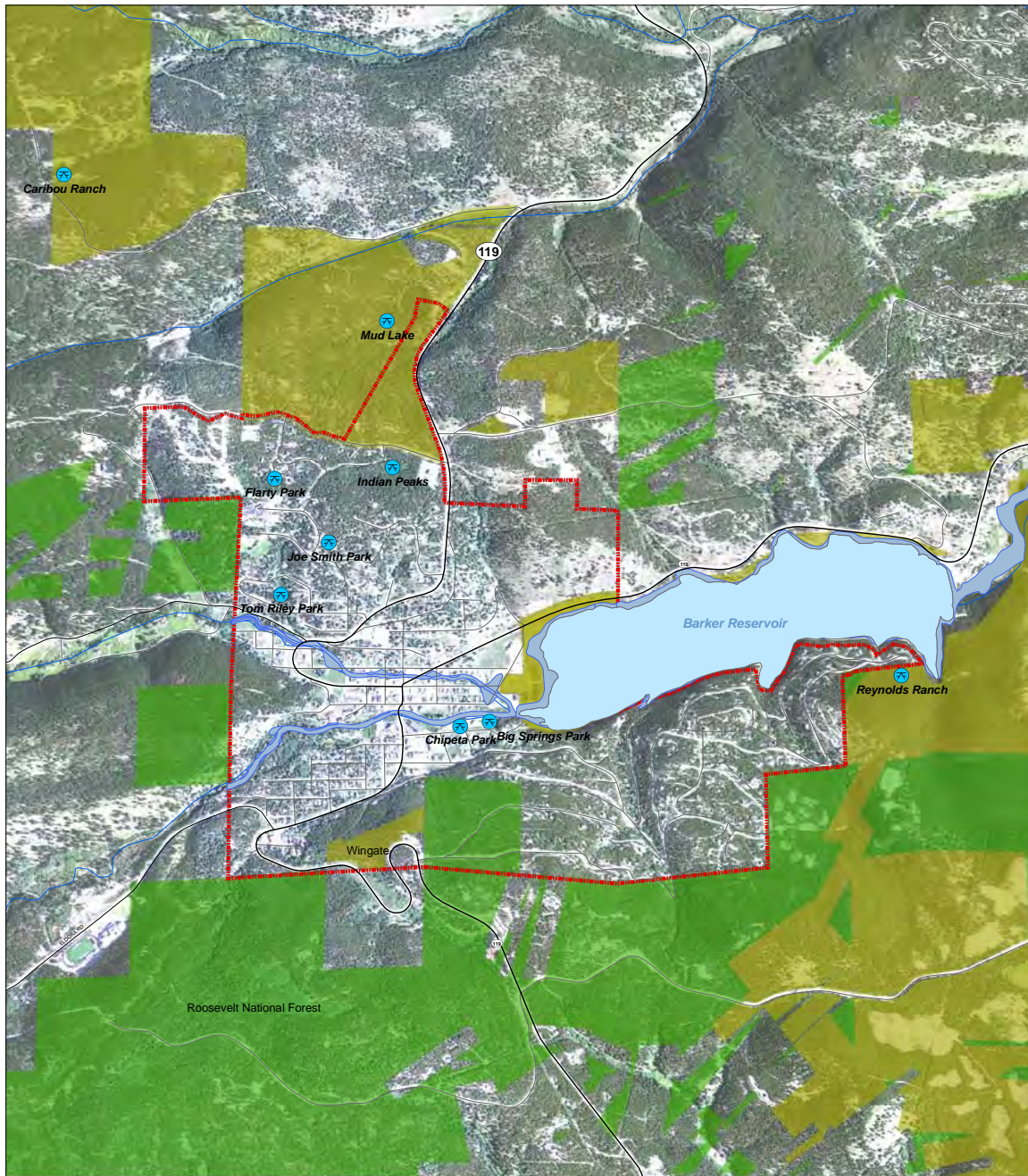
<sup>1</sup>Source: Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department, 2004. *Mud Lake Open Space Management Plan*.





# Nederland Comprehensive Plan Update

## Public Lands & Open Space



### Legend

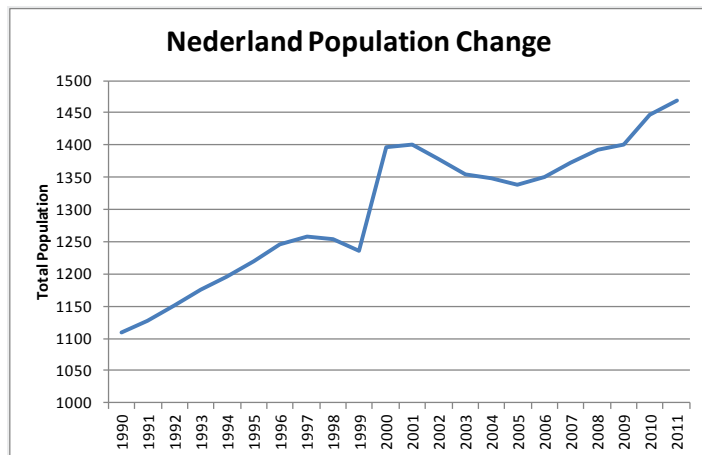
- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Nederland Town Limits | Public Lands                                  |
| Town Parks            | Roosevelt NF                                  |
| Floodplain            | Open Space (Boulder County, joint or private) |
- 0 0.25 0.5 Miles
-



boundaries that have been put in place to reduce sprawl and rapid outward growth and maintain separation between municipalities (e.g., community separators).

The current population in Nederland is approximately 1,470 people. In terms of age, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that between 2000 and 2010, Nederland experienced a decrease in people below the age of 44, and an increase in people between 45 and 75. As a result, the average age of Nederland’s population went up from 32.8 to 39.5 (the averages for Boulder County and the state are 35.8 and 36.2 years old, respectively).

There is a clear trend of an aging population in Nederland, and the community’s vision for the future takes this into account. According to the *Vision 2020* document, “*In 2020, Nederland has an accessible social services system for community members. The community ensures that its aging population remains healthy, fully integrated, and an active part of the community.*” Recent improvements that benefit residents of all age groups include the new community center, library, state-of-the-art schools, and enhancement of parks and recreation facilities.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## HOUSING & GROWTH

The 21% growth rate mentioned previously had an impact on the development of Nederland that earlier growth cycles did not. Housing became dramatically more expensive, as the value of land reflected the trends that were occurring throughout Boulder County—more demand, less available land, higher cost of living.

Nederland has become an attractive place to live for the greater Boulder community. It offers a mountain lifestyle at a slightly more affordable rate, though still much higher than the state average. The following table indicates the relative value of homes in Nederland, as compared to Boulder and statewide:

Median Home Value	2000	2009
Town of Nederland	\$216,000	\$345,000
City of Boulder	\$272,000	\$478,000
State of Colorado	n/a	\$239,000

Source: www.city-data.com

Building has slowed considerably since the boom of the 1990s and early 2000s. Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) estimates that between 1990 and 2000, Nederland averaged approximately 12 residential permits annually (117 total); between 2010 and 2011, only 2 permits were issued (4 total). This is reflective of the fact that there are no longer large land areas on which to include new developments; opportunities exist mostly in the form of infill within the town limits. Platted subdivisions that failed to be built could come back on-line as the economy improves.

In small communities, the desire to maintain character while meeting the needs of a changing population is a complex challenge. Affordable housing will continue to be something for the Town to address through partnerships with the Boulder County Housing Authority and other local and regional organizations. Incorporating affordable housing into new developments, diversifying the housing types, and exploring the expansion of mixed-use or higher density zoning may provide viable solutions in the future.

Nederland is home to many impressive green building projects—for example, its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certified Community Center, and a number of very innovative sustainably-built homes. This trend will undoubtedly continue as the need and desire for sustainable building practices continues, and will help shape future development projects in Nederland.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### UTILITIES

Nederland's water supply is diverted from Middle Boulder Creek as permitted by its water rights and plan for augmentation, which enables the Town to divert water rights year-round and to replace that water lost to "consumptive use" with the Town's senior water rights. Nederland's most critical water supply season is during winter months when stream flows are minimal. The construction of a more permanent water storage structure would better maintain raw water availability throughout the year, should the opportunity become available.

Raw water is treated at the Town's water plant located at the western boundary of Nederland, and is then

delivered to residents or stored in water tanks, which enables the Town to draw from them in times of high demand or in the event of fire. The upgraded treatment plant has a design capacity of 400,000 gallons per day.

The water distribution system has been upgraded somewhat recently, but still requires extensive improvements and repairs to continue providing water services to 769 existing properties and future growth. Maintenance and system enhancements made over time would improve the efficiency of water delivery to residents.

The Town must discourage outdoor irrigation of bluegrass lawns and non-native trees and shrubs.

The Town of Nederland should consider investing in an engineering study to develop a *Capital Facilities Plan* (CFP) for the water system, and research methods for maximizing the existing system's capabilities through conservation.

The Nederland wastewater treatment plant is located on the western shore of Barker Reservoir. The recently updated mechanical treatment plant replaced an aged aerated lagoon treatment process, which had reached the end of its maximum useful life.

Although much of Nederland is connected to the sewer collection system, many homes are on individual septic systems, which run a risk of groundwater degradation. The Town should continue to provide the option for these homes to connect to the Town system and work on a plan to transition septic users to sewer. In addition, maintaining and repairing the Town's aging collection system needs to remain a priority to both allow for additional properties to be brought on-line as well as to minimize excessive groundwater infiltration.

**TRANSPORTATION**

Nederland’s transportation system includes primary state highways, internal local and collector streets, off-street parking lots, a pedestrian trail system, and mass transit provided by the Regional Transportation District (RTD).

State Highways 119 (Peak to Peak Scenic Byway) and 72 are the main thoroughfares through Nederland and connect to nearby regional destinations: Rocky Mountain National Park, Indian Peaks Wilderness,

and limited stakes gaming casinos in Central City and Black Hawk. While valuable to the Town for tourism, commuting and export of goods, the highways do present safety and traffic challenges for the community. Continuation of projects to separate pedestrian circulation from Highway 119, creating clearly recognizable pedestrian crosswalks, and more functional and attractive highway signage will help to alleviate these issues in the future. At the same time, improvements must uphold the rustic character that is cherished in Nederland, and design parameters will be an effective tool in doing so.





Currently, there is one vehicular crossing of Middle Boulder Creek on Highway 119. At that location, there exists a covered pedestrian bridge. There is also an informal pedestrian crossing located between the Teen Center and Chipeta Park, across a weir. There has been previous analysis and a plan for a second crossing for emergency purposes, though that has not yet come to fruition. The community has raised concerns over the need for an emergency plan for the highway bridge that covers all logistics and departments for emergency situations and continues to explore options for the second crossing.

The Town's current partnership with RTD is a valuable asset to the community. Subsidized transit passes for service to Boulder enhance people's ability to work, play and travel elsewhere without relying on their cars to do so. Future expansion of service within town and to Eldora could further add to the community's sustainability and quality of life.

Trails are also inherent to everyday life in Nederland. Just outside of town are two of the region's most popular recreational trails/trailheads: the Fourth of July and Hessie trailheads. In town, there are many opportunities to better connect major activity centers with roads and trails. Some of these already exist unofficially as footpaths, which provide the framework for future trails projects. For example, finishing trails for pedestrian and bike traffic from the Sunnyside and Big Springs neighborhoods into the central core would greatly benefit the community's ability to move safely, without a vehicle, throughout town.

#### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Nederland has upgraded community facilities over time, including a new public library and the LEED-Silver Certified renovation of the Community Center.

The Town should continue to meet resident and visitor needs for adequate community facilities, including provision of additional public restrooms, and the Town should work to realize the Gateway Park Area Master Plan, adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2013. By being strategic, looking to minimize construction to the minimum level needed to meet town goals, and being deliberate in all planning efforts, the Town will continue to reduce its overall carbon footprint and that of its residents.

The Town should maintain, staff and stock an attractive, welcoming Visitor Center, primarily to provide information about Nederland's unique community including local accommodations, area recreation opportunities, entertainment, restaurants and retail outlets. In addition, the Visitors Center should focus on informing visitors about Nederland's commitment to the environment, what we've done to become more sustainable, and what we still aim to accomplish. Appropriate merchandise, such as books of local interest, topo maps, souvenir posters, etc., should be offered for sale. The Town owns the Visitor Center, built in about 1989. Before disbanding early in 2013, the Chamber of Commerce ran the Visitor Center.

#### **REGIONAL INFLUENCES**

Nederland is located approximately 15 miles from Boulder and is also reasonably close to Denver and other Front Range cities. This proximity is not always evident in the distinctive culture and quality of life that is enjoyed in Nederland, but in many ways regional influences do have substantial impacts on the community. The local economy and environment are deeply connected to the challenges and successes of nearby communities and the region as a whole.

### THE PEAK TO PEAK COMMUNITY

As a hub of the Peak to Peak community, Nederland serves as a leader in this unique region along the scenic and historic byway. From Black Hawk and Central City to Estes Park, the Peak to Peak community is enveloped by National Forest and high alpine peaks, which creates a distinctive connection between the mountain towns along this route. The communities of the region face many challenges and opportunities together, and Nederland is vital to the collaborative efforts that address transportation, forest health, and tourism for the region.

### BOULDER COUNTY

Boulder often serves as the most direct connection between Nederland and the surrounding region. As an education, employment, and population center, Boulder serves as the hub of much of the Boulder County economy, services, and way of life. Nederland is well-connected and somewhat dependent upon the much larger Boulder area because Nederland offers few job opportunities relative to its population, but is close enough to Boulder to allow residents to live in Nederland and work in Boulder. As a result of the

extensive ties to Boulder, the Nederland economy and the livelihood of many residents is inexorably tied to the Boulder area.

Nederland also provides recreation and outdoor opportunities that attract users from throughout Boulder County and beyond. Eldora Mountain Resort serves as the nearest ski mountain for the region, and the National Forest surrounding Nederland attracts year-round visitors. Nederland is a gateway community to these recreational resources.

Like Nederland, Boulder and all of Boulder County have experienced dramatic population and development growth in recent decades, which has led to even more advanced collaboration between entities to address the common challenges that growth creates. There are two intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) currently in place between the Town of Nederland and Boulder County: The ‘super IGA’ was formed in 2003 between Boulder County, the City of Boulder, Nederland, and the other communities of the county. This agreement, which expires in 2023, primarily focuses on growth controls and the preservation of rural areas and open spaces throughout the county,



including the Nederland community. The second IGA (known as the *Nederland Area Boulder County Comprehensive Development Plan*) is only between the Town and the County and applies to expansion and growth of the Town of Nederland into Boulder County and sets up policies and direction to focus development in Nederland. This 20-year IGA was adopted in 2002.

Nederland's schools are also a part of the Boulder Valley School District, which enhances the connection between the mountain community and the Boulder region. Both Nederland Elementary School and the Nederland Middle-Senior High School are part of the larger school district that is headquartered outside of nearby Boulder.

#### **THE DENVER REGION**

Nederland is also a part of the greater Denver Metropolitan Region and includes many connections to this part of the state. The influences of this relationship are evident in the number of commuters that travel throughout the area and the substantial regional tourism that Nederland receives. The natural resources, scenic beauty, and unique character of Nederland regularly attract regional tourism from Denver and the Front Range, and Nederland residents frequently travel throughout the region to work, shop, or reach other services. As a result, the issues and opportunities that Denver and the Front Range encounter will impact Nederland, whether it is transportation, water use, or economic challenges. Currently, Nederland is greatly involved in the Denver metro area as a member of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and other regional organizations and agreements. Additionally, the community is serviced by bus transit as part of

the Regional Transportation District (RTD), which connects the town to Boulder and the entire metro region, further intertwining Nederland with Denver and the Front Range.

### **RELATED PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

As Nederland has evolved over time from a mining community to a tourism and commuter town, much has changed and much will continue to develop over time. In order to address the challenges that the community has faced and ensure the preservation of Nederland's most treasured qualities into the future, numerous planning efforts and collaborations have taken place.

#### **TOWN OF NEDERLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Completed in 2003, the Nederland Comprehensive Plan Update serves as the most recent comprehensive plan for the community and the basis for this update process. The plan was written in order to respond to the wants and needs of the people of the Nederland community and to preserve, and hopefully enhance, the area's natural environments, rustic character, individualism, mining heritage, and its small mountain town identity. As a guide for establishing and maintaining a stable, efficient, environmentally sensitive structure for the community, the *2003 Comprehensive Update Plan* built upon the successes of the *1994 Comprehensive Plan* with critical revisions to bring the vision for the community into the next century.

#### **TOWN OF NEDERLAND MUNICIPAL CODE**

The Town of Nederland Municipal Code serves as the local law for governing the town. The entirety of the Code is made up of a series of ordinances and policies that have been enacted over time for the



administration of the community. One such area of policies that are included in the Municipal Code is the Zoning Code, which sets standards and laws to govern the use of land in Nederland. Through these policies, Nederland is able to empower decision makers and citizens with knowledge of acceptable land uses, restrictions on development, annexation, and other local ordinances and codes.

**NEDERLAND DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (NDDA) STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN**

The *Strategic Master Plan* created in 2007 outlines actions for promoting safety, beautification and vibrancy in the downtown area, specifically signage, improved pedestrian circulation and landscaping. Several improvements have been implemented since the adoption of the *Strategic Master Plan* including the “adopt a planter” program and installation



of sidewalks along Highway 119. The NDDA is currently in the process of designing a pedestrian improvement and stormwater management project along Highway 72 into Downtown on Second Street including connections to the bus stop on Snyder Street and Highway 119 and East Street and Highway 119. The design is dedicated to achieve measurable levels of sustainability through the use of biomimicry, permeable surfaces and bioretention. The *NDDA Strategic Master Plan* is scheduled to be updated to reflect Town resolution’s promoting sustainable development, *Vision 2020* and this revised comprehensive plan.

**NEDERLAND DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY**

The Downtown Parking Study was originally completed in March of 2009 and updated in March of 2010. The study includes a survey of the downtown area’s existing on and off-street parking spaces, typical weekday and weekend-day occupancy levels, and potential demand for future parking spaces. Potential improvements to downtown and their impacts on parking supply (such as creation of a Town Square) were addressed as part of the report, and the quantity of spaces that would be impacted were identified.

The study indicates that at the time of the study there seemed to be no shortage of parking, but rather lack of clear directional signage and inadequately marked spaces in existing lots. The study provides a great amount of research and background information related to existing and future parking needs, but does not address Nederland events and how to address parking related to future private development in the downtown area. Parking for events and development is clearly a concern for residents and business owners alike. Additionally, any new study should include methods of addressing the fact that public parking is not strategically located within the community.

## **TOWN OF NEDERLAND DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES**

The Nederland Design Standards and Guidelines were created in 2001 to serve as a tool for the Planning Commission and other Town boards when making planning and development decisions. The document communicates expectations for design of new construction to architects, developers, contractors, builders, and property owners that is reflective of community character. Both new construction and the renovation or preservation of historic properties are included in the design standards and guidelines. Furthermore, unique instructions are provided for specific districts or zoning types within the Town of Nederland. The Planning Commission and other Town boards are expected to apply these standards and guidelines as they review design plans for new construction and additions or renovations to historic buildings. Standards are mandatory; guidelines are not.

## **NEDERLAND AREA PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN**

Adopted in February 2013, this plan articulated the needs and desires of the community related to recreation and natural assets. The plan included significant public input to devise a strategic plan for these assets for the next 10 years. Guiding ideas of the plan include:

- Highlighting the unique natural features of Nederland and outdoor recreational opportunities
- Caring for the land and promoting sustainable practices
- Improving trail connections
- Fostering lifelong recreational enthusiasts and environmental stewards
- Prioritizing projects that focus on the greatest

community needs and interests

- Managing visitor use of assets and balancing these with the needs of residents
- Leveraging resources through partnerships and alternative funding

This document is adopted by reference to this updated comprehensive plan, serving as the guiding document for recreation, a master planning element required by state statute.

## **TOWN OF NEDERLAND TRAILS MASTER PLAN**

The strategic guide was developed in 2005 to work toward the implementation of a trail network for the town of Nederland. The *Trails Master Plan*, an update of which is currently underway, is meant to support safe recreational experiences, provide routes for alternative transportation, and spotlight natural features, open space, and resources unique to the town. Through the *Trails Master Plan*, Nederland also hopes to protect and enhance the community's legacy of natural features, open space, and distinctive resources through sensitive trail development. Trails expansion is also mentioned in the Plan in order to alleviate congestion and over-use of existing trails.

## **BOULDER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The *Boulder County Comprehensive Plan* (BCCP) was developed to reflect the widely accepted principle that the myriad of future land use decisions affecting the county's lands should be made in a coordinated and responsible manner. Growth should be channeled to municipalities, agricultural lands should be protected, and preservation of environmental and natural resources should be a high priority in making land use decisions.

First approved in 1978, the *Boulder County Comprehensive Plan* has been updated as necessary

to adapt to the changing issues and opportunities present in the County and its municipalities.

Through this document, the communities of Boulder County, including Nederland have been unified with consistent policy direction that encourages the preservation of rural areas and open space, improving community facilities, providing quality residential areas and affordable housing, minimizing negative environmental impacts of transportation and development, ensuring a positive and diverse climate for business, and other efforts to improve the lives of residents.

An update of this plan is currently underway.

#### **BOULDER COUNTY LAND USE CODE**

The Boulder County Land Use Code plays a large role in determining how unincorporated Boulder County will look in the future by the way it guides new construction and development today. This Code was enacted in 2012 to protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the present and future inhabitants of Boulder County and to guide future growth, development, and distribution of land uses within Boulder County. Unique policies and guidelines were developed for the diversity of communities and land uses that exist in the County.

#### **BOULDER COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN**

In 2011, the communities of Boulder County developed the *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* (CWPP) to increase wildfire mitigation and preparedness efforts in advance of wildfires to accurately reflect the high risk and enormous costs associated with wildfire in the county. The goals of this community-driven document are to reduce

the number and severity of future wildfires so that lives are saved, damages are reduced, funds are more effectively used, and forest health is restored throughout the county.

The plan document identifies individual fire protection districts to effectively and efficiently support local needs and collaboratively reduce the negative impacts of wildfire. The Nederland Fire Protection District is further divided into smaller communities, which are rated on their level of fire danger. All communities in the Nederland district were “Very High.”

#### **NEDERLAND FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT: COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN**

This 2011 *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* (CWPP) provides a comprehensive analysis of wildfire related hazards and risks in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas of the Nederland Fire Protection District (NFPD). This report complements local agreements and existing plans for wildfire protection to aid in implementing a seamless, coordinated effort in determining appropriate fire management actions in the study area. Detailed recommendations for specific actions that will aid stakeholders in preventing and/or reducing the threat of wildfire are included.

Within the study area, the overall fire risk is high. Light, flashy fuels on south-facing slopes may ignite easily and spread quickly. North-facing slopes, as found in communities such as Big Springs are wetter but have higher fuel loads. While not as easily ignitable as south slopes, if the north slopes were to burn, the fire behavior is expected to be extreme. The high density of homes in much of the study area increases the probability of structure-to-structure ignition.



Recommendations in the report address five broad categories: public education, structural ignitability/defensible space, water supply, access/evacuation, and street and home addressing. Additional fuels reduction projects are also encouraged, especially as previous recommendations are completed.

#### **BOULDER COUNTY ZERO WASTE ACTION PLAN**

As directed by Boulder County’s 2005 *Zero Waste Resolution*, this plan sets forth a vision for attaining Zero Waste “or darn near” throughout Boulder County, including unincorporated areas as well as municipalities, by 2025. County-wide policies have been complimented by the passage of *Resolution 2011-21*, which adopts the action plan as a guiding document for the Nederland community to reduce waste over time. Goals of the plan will include construction waste recycling, curbside collection of compostable materials, increased electronic and metal recycling, changing to volume-based garbage collection, and enacting a ban on recyclables, food waste, and yard waste going to landfills.

#### **DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (DRCOG) METRO VISION 2035 PLAN**

This document is an update to the founding Metro Vision 2020 Plan established in 1997. The Metro Vision 2035 Plan includes goals and policies developed to promote regional cooperation in the areas of growth and development, transportation, and environment. The plan focuses on measurable outcomes related to increased density in centers through infill and redevelopment, reduced water and fossil fuel consumption, increased protected open space, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, increased alternative transportation options, reduced single occupancy vehicles and vehicle miles traveled per capita.

The Town of Nederland is recognized as a Rural Town Center in the plan. Rural Town Centers are encouraged through policies to support compact development in areas where infrastructure can be easily and efficiently provided, promote infill and redevelopment activity, and economic development and zoning designations that allow communities to become more self-sufficient through balancing employment and housing. New trends for the region include a focus on the aging population and meeting the needs of this rising demographic group with transportation, connectivity and housing.



# Chapter 4

## Policies

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

#### POLICIES:

1. Continue to promote the Community Center as a focal point for Nederland, as an amenity and place to gather, recreate and enjoy cultural activities for residents of all ages.
2. Continue to work with the Parks, Recreation, Open Space Advisory Board (PROSAB), and Planning Commission to ensure continuity in decision-making between the Comprehensive Plan and the *Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan* (including the component *Gateway Park Area Master Plan*).
3. Celebrate Barker Meadow and the reservoir as the eastern entrance to Nederland through continued efforts to enhance the area's natural beauty and to sustainably satisfy several of Nederland's cultural and recreational needs.
4. Continue to promote improvements to pathways for non-motorized circulation, consistent with the *Trails Master Plan*, as well as pedestrian improvements throughout the central Business District. Continue to explore the potential for a connected trail system along Barker Reservoir's perimeter eventually connecting Big Springs with the central Business District.
5. Protect the riparian corridors of Middle Boulder Creek and Caribou Creek (a.k.a. North Beaver Creek) by locating all future structures outside of the riparian zone or 100-year floodplain of live rivers, streams or lakes, to the greatest extent possible and/or in line with Town flood ordinances. Development occurring along riparian corridors should make efforts to promote re-establishment of natural vegetation. In certain circumstances, a greater setback may be required to protect the riparian zone, floodplain, waterway, wildlife habitat, or open areas.
6. Establish riparian areas as a high priority in federal, state, county or town acquisitions by trade, purchase, annexation agreements, easement, etc. Work with property owners to support conservation and protection efforts on privately owned properties along the creek corridors.
7. Work with the local historical society and other groups to research and identify, and preserve and celebrate properties of highest historical value to Nederland.
8. Promote the Nederland Community Library, which was built in 2011, as a cornerstone of Nederland. As a hub of activity for residents of all ages, ensure that it is well-connected to downtown, the Community Center, schools and neighborhoods through safe biking and walking routes.



***What Community Facilities Mean to Sustainability***

An important facet of sustainability is social well-being, and community facilities are essential in attaining that. On a global scale, social well-being encompasses broad subjects of social justice, poverty, and peace; at the local scale these translate into more specific topics like access to amenities, services, and housing, safety, preservation of cultural resources, recreation, and more. In Nederland, seniors and young people are valuable members of the community and the Town recognizes the special attention that is needed in planning for their well-being. The Comprehensive Plan supports continued efforts to provide for all members of the community in terms of community facilities, including services such as lunches for seniors at the Community Center and programs at the Teen Center, within the context of Nederland's overall desire to remain tight-knit, distinct, and culturally diverse.

9. Encourage the support of local organizations, activities and facilities (such as the Teen Center and Wild Bear Mountain Ecology Center) that provide a wide range of social and cultural experiences to the community.
10. Work with Boulder County and the City of Boulder for potential advice and funding to encourage the transition of properties within town limits from septic to Town sewer, over time and in cooperation with willing property owners.
11. The Town should maintain, staff, and stock an attractive, welcoming Visitor Center, primarily to provide information on area attractions, including recreation, culture, restaurants, retail, and accommodations. Appropriate merchandise, such as books of local interest, topo maps, souvenir posters, etc., should be offered for sale. The Town owns and operates by contract the Visitor Center, built in about 1989.

12. Continue to reduce operational dependence on non-renewable resources by developing and implementing an infrastructure sustainability action plan that results in the following:
  - a. Reduction or elimination of our dependence on fossil fuels and heavy metals.
  - b. Reduction or elimination of our dependence on synthetic chemicals that persist in nature.
  - c. Reduction of our consumption across all resource streams; encourage recycling, reuse, upcycling, and composting of material formerly recognized as waste.
  - d. Recognition of the implications of local practices to global sustainability (*think globally act locally*).
  - e. Acknowledgement of the impact of delivered energy to the Town in the form of electricity and gas and advocacy for more sustainable provision of such energy.

## HOUSING

### POLICIES:

1. Work proactively with the Mayor's Task Force on Housing and Human Services to continue to identify the present and anticipated needs for housing in Nederland, as well as to promote a range of quality, affordable, and desirable housing opportunities for residents of all ages and walks of life.
2. Continue to foster partnerships with the Boulder County Housing Authority and other appropriate government agencies to identify and provide for Nederland's affordable housing needs.

3. Promote a range of desirable and affordable housing options in Nederland, such as through encouraging mixed use development downtown and higher density residential units within walking distance of the town core.
4. Encourage additional housing in Nederland that would be conducive to seniors, such as units that are within a short distance to key destinations (grocery store, town core, library, bus stops), are one-story or contain all the elements of living on the first floor, wheel-chair accessible, affordable, have snow removal, and perhaps offer co-housing.
5. Encourage the improvement or redevelopment of properties, especially within the town core, that could better serve the community by working with property owners to identify those opportunities and find conduits and funding mechanisms to make those improvements possible.
6. Work with the Boulder County Housing Authority to promote awareness amongst property owners of resources (tax incentives, workshops, educational materials) that may be available to them for improving the livability and sustainability of their home or property.
7. In conjunction with the Colorado Historical Society and the Nederland Area Historical Society, identify and act on the historic preservation opportunities available to the town.
8. Assure that provisions for multifamily housing within the Town Zoning Code align with policies and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan.
9. Encourage the design of new housing to fit the personality and character of Nederland, which is admittedly enigmatic and eclectic. Appropriate scale, context to surrounding properties, harmony with the natural environment, and use of sustainable building practices and materials are all attributes to promote.

### *What Housing Means to Sustainability*

Housing affects a community's sustainability on all levels. From a social perspective, having the right mix of housing provides equity to residents of all income levels and life stages. From an economic standpoint, housing supports local businesses and allows people to live, work and shop locally. Environmentally, higher density housing within a walkable distance to employment and downtown further enables residents to go about their daily lives with the lowest possible impact to ecological systems. Incorporating innovative green building techniques decreases the burden that homes and buildings have on the community's carbon footprint and resource consumption. It is essential, looking forward, to recognize this inextricable tie that exists between where people live, how homes are built, and the Nederland community's sustainability.

## TRANSPORTATION

### POLICIES:

1. Continue to lead the planning and design of highway improvements from the roundabout (2nd St. and Highway 119/Bridge St.) through the Big Springs intersection (Bridge St. and Big Springs Dr.) to provide pedestrian access and safety, to facilitate the flow of vehicles through town and decrease traffic congestion, and to minimize impacts to the Middle Boulder Creek corridor.
2. Continue to identify future opportunities to improve pedestrian and drainage improvements

throughout the town, recognizing the “NedPeds” Plan that is currently (2012-2014) underway that pertains to 2nd Street as a connection between the Library, Post Office, and transit stops, specifically.

3. Prioritize parking improvements (such as recommendations found in *Nederland’s 2010 Parking Study*), including centralized parking “pods” along the outskirts of downtown that encourage people to get out of their car and explore Nederland’s businesses and amenities.
4. Continue to work with RTD to maintain and improve service to and from the community, particularly midday service, reflecting the high use of transit by Town residents.
5. Promote alternative forms of transportation that reduce auto-dependence and encourage mobility of residents of all ages, including senior citizens and school-aged youth, such as car/van pools, shuttles, and car-share programs.
6. Establish an additional emergency vehicle crossing of Middle Boulder Creek in Nederland that is not available for general traffic use or as a business district bypass.
7. Establish multiple access points to new and existing neighborhoods, primarily for emergency response and evacuations.
8. Continue to encourage the provision of bike racks for business commercial/industrial areas of town.
9. Continue to utilize existing rights-of-way for development of sustainable structures such as bio retention basins that encourage habitat and biodiversity.

### ***What Transportation Means to Sustainability***

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, approximately 28% of our country’s greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation. In cities and towns, encouraging residents to choose public transit, or walk and bike, can have dramatic impacts on the community-wide carbon footprint. In Nederland, there are two primary scales within which improvements to transportation will continue to increase the town’s environmental sustainability and decrease their consumption of fossil fuels: 1) connectivity within town, and 2) connectivity and options for travel between Nederland and Boulder. The FLU Map and Transportation policies included in the Comprehensive Plan encourage compact, infill development over outward, low-density growth; thus promoting a more walkable, less auto-dependent community. The policies also support the ongoing cooperation of the Town with RTD, the City of Boulder and Boulder County to continue to improve and increase transit service between Nederland and major employment destinations.

10. Access control should be implemented by discouraging driveway cuts on all state highways and requiring new developments to minimize the number of access points to the highway systems, consistent with the *Colorado Department of Transportation Access Management Plan*.

## **ECONOMY**

### **POLICIES**

1. Strive to identify and meet the needs of Nederland residents through the provision of basic services and facilities as efficiently and economically as possible. While it is important to generate



sufficient revenue to provide community services, the town should be mindful to not detract from the town's character, quality of life and environment when making development decisions that would increase that revenue.

2. Endeavor to achieve a sustainable, diversified economy by exploring alternative economic opportunities for the community.
3. Encourage local shopping, reduce trips to neighboring communities, and prevent tax leakage.
4. Promote a mix of businesses in Nederland, especially within the downtown core, that balance the needs of residents with the desires of visitors.
5. Encourage businesses and economic activity that contribute positively to the character and culture of the Nederland community, as well as integrate environmentally sustainable practices.
6. Aim to reduce the cost of doing business in Nederland, as well as its impact on the environment.
7. Continue to rely on user fee structures that promote conservation and disincentivize waste.
8. Support the existing DDA's investment of tax increment financing (TIF) funds in improvements to community infrastructure that promotes:
  - Safety
  - Energy and resource efficiency
  - Non-motorized travel
  - Best practices regarding sustainable infill development
9. Strive to have new growth pay its own way with implementation and maintenance of impact fees

and other tools. Develop measures that would ensure that new development contributes to the cost of providing new public services, such as fiscal impact analysis requirements as part of development reviews that include the following:

- Population generated
- Public service costs
- Projected tax and other local revenue generation
- Comparison of costs vs. revenue to identify the shortfalls and how to address them\*

#### *What Economy Means to Sustainability*

A sustainable Nederland community requires a vibrant local economy that provides a wide variety of employment opportunities, access to goods and services, and investment in community-based small businesses. Tourism employs a great number of residents, primarily focused around recreation and the natural beauty that brings visitors to Nederland. Protecting that beauty and ensuring that visitors are aware of the community's sustainability goals, through composting and recycling containers for example, is important to Nederland's future. The Comprehensive Plan policies reflect maintenance and enhancement of a sustainable economy through additional small business collaboration, sharing of uses and resources, and cross-promotion of local businesses offerings. The Comprehensive Plan also addresses attracting and/or retaining new businesses and industries that provide additional non-tourism based jobs and do not detract from the town's character, quality of life and environment. Non-tourism based jobs are essential for maintaining sustainability while providing an economy that is multi-faceted.

\*EPA. 2012, *Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Zoning, and Development Codes.*

10. Continue to promote Nederland as a center for art, culture and music through public art and music spaces, local artist galleries and coop's, festivals, events and branding. Encourage the temporary use of vacant and underutilized public space downtown to generate vibrancy.
11. Increase the local employment base by promoting cottage industries and home-based businesses, such as small-scale food production, small-batch products, and telecommuting through optimizing use of the existing fiber optic network.
12. Support improvements to infrastructure in the downtown area that enhance pedestrian safety and encourage alternative forms of transportation.
13. In conjunction with the Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan, promote locations within town that would be ideally suited for the siting of alternative energy generation and conservation demonstration sites, such as solar arrays, wind turbines, water collection/re-use, and community gardens.
14. Encourage the establishment of independent businesses of local character and limited space requirements as opposed to businesses of national orientation and/or large space requirements.
15. Support business that provide essential services and have a sustainability plan.
16. Continue to recognize the importance of the Eldora Mountain Resort to the Town's economic well-being.

*What Recreation Means to Sustainability*

The provision of recreational facilities to meet residents' needs promotes environmental sustainability by reducing automobile trips to recreational venues outside of town and by concentrating recreational development in an urban area already designated for human use. This promotes economic sustainability, by keeping residents close to home and drawing in residents of surrounding mountain communities to recreate. Once here, they will often remain to shop and dine at local establishments before returning home. The close proximity of recreational opportunities also promotes healthy lifestyles.

By designing these facilities to accommodate users while also retaining their environmental integrity, they will help promote awareness while also introducing users to sustainable features firsthand. Allowing direct interaction with nature encourages the type of stewardship integral to the Town of Nederland's character.

## UTILITIES

### POLICIES

1. Water and sewer policies and infrastructure should make use of best management practices in environmental protection and provide incentives for conservation.
2. Continue to promote an understanding of water resources, and ways to conserve water, through educational outreach programs.
3. Ensure that user fees and tap fees are aligned with Town goals that encourage conservation and stewardship of water resources, discouraging waste.
4. Continue to require that Town water mains, service lines and interior water lines are properly installed and insulated to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, the winter practice of “bleeding” lines.
5. Explore opportunities for water collection pilot projects, conservation and reuses, especially within new development, to promote more efficient use of water resources at the community-level.
6. Encourage continual dialogue between the Town and private utility companies to notify one another in projects or plans that may impact demand for or availability of services, such as cable, electricity, and telephone.
7. In the Town’s service structure, requirements, costs and fees, continue to allow for the special needs of the low income and elderly members of the community.
8. Under emergency management conditions, continue to work with the Boulder County Sheriff’s Department Emergency Communications Center, the Nederland Fire Protection District, and the State Forest Service to improve the reliability and adequacy of emergency communications, preparedness and notification to the public within the Nederland area.
9. Encourage upgrades in the delivery of television, internet and radio service, including the addition of high speed lines in addition to the existing fiber optic network, increasing redundancy, a principle of biomimicry.
10. In cooperation with the Boulder City/County Health Department, regulate the installation and maintenance of individual septic disposal systems to ensure effluent quality in those systems. Emphasis of attaching new development or failed systems to new and expanded sewer lines should be a priority.
11. Continue to work closely with the Boulder County Department of Public Works, EcoCycle and others in developing and maintaining a convenient, safe, environmentally sound and full range solid waste disposal and recycling facility. Additional opportunities for composting sludge from waste water should be explored.
12. In cooperation with affected property owners and to the extent reasonable, extend water and/or sewer services to areas within the community service area which presently have only one of these two primary services.



13. Continue to promote recycling and minimizing solid waste on a variety of levels (Town operations, public areas, restaurants, private residences, schools, etc.) within Nederland.
14. Prioritize the ongoing engineering and construction of Nederland’s storm drainage system, in cooperation with other agencies concerned with storm drainage planning and development.
15. In land use decision-making, protect natural drainageways and prevent erosion in order to minimize damage of flooding to public and private property and to maintain surface water quality.
16. Ensure that storm drainage is properly accommodated in all existing and future land development projects in Nederland.
17. Establish a storm drainage utility to address storm drainage from a comprehensive standpoint and ensure there are resources dedicated to doing so.
18. Prioritize the engineering and legal work needed to pursue, in an ecologically and environmentally sensitive manner, a reservoir west of Nederland that would allow the Town to better meet its water storage needs.

***What Utilities Mean to Sustainability***

There are many existing systems that provide utility services to Nederland residents, and future decisions regarding those systems need to consider overall community sustainability goals. Ongoing maintenance and management of existing infrastructure is critical to ensuring efficient use of resources, including energy use and costs to communities. Storm drainage will continue to be an important topic as traffic continues to grow on Highways 119 and 72, and the Comprehensive Plan policies support improvement efforts that reduce the amount of sediment and pollutants that enter the creek and reservoir. Many residents do not rely on Town water and sanitary, rather they utilize well and septic systems. These “decentralized” systems may be supportive of sustainability goals, and should be confirmed during strategic planning for any infrastructure improvements. Ensuring that any new development can be supported within planned infrastructure improvements for water and sanitation, and promoting use of grey water systems to the extent permitted under Colorado water law, can improve the overall utility system efficiency. Policies in the plan also promote the use of alternative forms of energy to support the needs of both existing and future buildings.

## LAND USE

### POLICIES

1. Promote a compact, sustainable land use pattern in Nederland that emphasizes infill and redevelopment of existing developed land, is well-connected and encourages decreased auto-dependence, incorporates green building technologies, and is in harmony with the natural environment and character of the community.
  2. Encourage a variety of land uses that meet the needs of a diverse array of residents, including neighborhoods, goods and services, and business and employment. The Future Land Use Map conveys the cohesive view of how those uses can promote a vibrant and sustainable future in Nederland and should be used as guidance for where to encourage future improvements in-town.
  3. Promote a variety of locally based businesses that align with the Economy policies of this plan in appropriate areas of town, as identified on the Future Land Use Map. Locations of businesses must fit the context of the surrounding properties and the role of that site or area in the greater view of the community.
  4. Ensure that the town's zoning ordinances are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and update as necessary.
  5. Utilize best practices in sustainable neighborhood design to reduce the negative impact of industrial, commercial, and special events/festival uses adjacent to residential properties. Where they are adjacent, encourage the use of landscape buffers or screening to protect respective privacy and uses.
- Downtown properties are an exception, where the coexistence of commercial and residential properties (mixed use development) is at times preferred.
6. Encourage the protection of environmentally sensitive areas through open space acquisition and management. Continue to work with partners such as the Wild Bear Mountain Ecology Center, Boulder County and local land trusts to make this possible.
  7. Prioritize efforts to acquire, through a variety of methods and partnerships, public use lands and open space, especially lands of particular environmental value such as riparian corridors, and scenic viewsheds surrounding town.
  8. Require that any proposed land use or development must identify hazardous areas, i.e., floodplains, drainage areas, steep slopes, and geological hazards and with intention to either avoid those areas altogether or in some cases, where feasible, mitigate those hazards.
  9. Discourage light pollution that interferes with dark skies and the character of town. Exterior lighting should be at a minimum for safety and security.
  10. Encourage infill development and redevelopment as the primary response to growth in Nederland. Such projects must be careful to consider the context of surrounding properties, which might be rustic, historic, and small in scale.
  11. Promote the Nederland Downtown Development Authority's goals for downtown revitalization and assist them in prioritizing efforts to create a safer, more ecologically sound and more economically vibrant downtown.

12. Require that the community’s shared vision and goals are reflected in DDA policy and planning.
13. Require new construction permits to begin with meetings with Town staff to identify any potential inconsistencies with the *Comprehensive Plan*, *Zoning Code*, and other relevant policy documents prior to formal development review by the Planning Commission.
14. Promote and refine the *Nederland Public Process* (NPP) that was adopted in March 2012 for all public decision-making processes.
15. Preserve, maintain and enhance the natural vegetation features of the highway corridors leading to and through the town in order to protect the indigenous nature of the mountain environment.
16. Protect natural drainageways, prevent erosion, minimize impacts of storm drainage and flooding on private and public property, and maintain surface water quality by reviewing development within the flood zone and riparian corridors. Consider the use of focused infrastructure improvements where the greatest hazards exist. Encourage the installation of indigenous plant materials, and the removal of dead or diseased trees to improve drainage conditions to prevent erosion throughout Nederland.
17. Promote increased ecosystem functionality through implementation of biomimicry principles that result in passive systems that manage stormwater runoff, reduce erosion and creek sedimentation, and grow over time with increased biodiversity.
18. Maintain an up-to-date database of geospatial mapping data (GIS) for planning purposes and land use decision making; data layers should include parcel boundaries and assessor’s data, environmental resources and protected areas, historical and cultural features, recreational assets, current land use, future land use, and zoning. Work with partner organizations such as DRCOG and Boulder County to ensure that files remain current.

#### *What Land Use Means to Sustainability*

A compact and walkable land use pattern is a key element to a community’s long-term sustainability. The Comprehensive Plan encourages that growth be directed towards infill and redevelopment parcels in the downtown core, rather than outlying areas of Town that have limited access to existing infrastructure. The land use within the downtown core should continue to be mixed, promoting a live-work environment, walkability and use of existing utility systems. Promoting Historic preservation is another way to encourage sustainable land use. Through the re-use of existing buildings, construction costs and waste is significantly reduced, and community heritage is conserved. The Comprehensive Plan also addresses land use as related to the integration of affordable housing and senior housing within Nederland’s downtown core, allowing walkable access to goods and services, and near-by to transportation and community facilities. The FLU Map identifies potential redevelopment parcels within the downtown core that can accommodate some of these potential uses, along with others as discussed in the plan.

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP & OPPORTUNITIES

### ***“Downtown Core”***

The Downtown Core is the focal point of Nederland. It is within the Downtown Development Authority’s boundary and is the epicenter of where improvements to walkability, public art, traffic, drainage, and experience should occur. This is not a fixed area, but it diffuses outward from this point. Right now, the area shown is home to the Visitor Center, Town Hall, the Library, a parking area and many local shops and restaurants. From a tourism standpoint it is the jumping-off point to explore Nederland. From a local’s standpoint, it is where many everyday activities occur.

### ***“Civic Heart”***

The Community Center is already a hub of activity in Nederland. Based upon the strong community input that was heard in the planning process, that would be taken a step further by aiming to increase the programming there, rehabilitating or replacing the west side of the building, and exploring further opportunities for recreation. Connectivity from the Elementary School and Downtown should be enhanced to promote walkability and safety.

### ***“Green Enterprise”***

Green enterprise is a future land use opportunity that is light on the land and promotes environmental sustainability. Examples would include a renewable energy site such as a solar array or wind turbines, composting operation, or living machines<sup>1</sup>. No habitable structures would be permitted; only accessory buildings such as barns, sheds or greenhouses with no utility lines or major ground disturbance (i.e. foundations). There would still need to be some connection to the grid or batteries in the

<sup>1</sup> *Living Machines are complete regenerative systems that use a closed-loop process to produce viable products such as aquaculture (fish), produce, and flowers.*

case of a renewable energy site, but keeping the equipment modular and temporary is desired. These sites could range in size from very small (one wind turbine) to several acres (community garden).

### ***“Mixed Use”***

The community expressed the need for more housing—especially affordable and senior—within a walkable distance to the Downtown Core. The two sites that are identified on the FLU present vacant land where this might be possible. Both are especially suitable for high density housing because of their proximity to the Post Office and Library, transit stops, and Downtown in general. The site at the Post Office has room to potentially accommodate a Green Enterprise use as well, such as a small garden or on-site renewable energy to support the building. Together with the Post Office, the future gateway park and Teen Center, a Mixed Use building—with residential units and ground floor commercial—could infuse vibrancy into this area of Nederland. Similarly, the site next to the Library and across from the RTD Park and Ride would reinforce the existing neighborhood and add a new dimension for housing close-by the Community Center.

### ***“Local Innovation”***

Nederland has a strong entrepreneurial spirit and the desire to have a more sustainable economy. The Local Innovation opportunity would encourage light industrial uses that promote Nederland’s culture and do not heavily impact environmental resources. This may include high-tech, computer based businesses, food products, and cottage industries like outdoor clothing manufacturing. The Wolf Tongue site is identified as a potential place for Local Innovation, through the rehabilitation of the mining structure, as well as within the vicinity. Other historic properties, with careful attention to their historical value, might have similar potential.

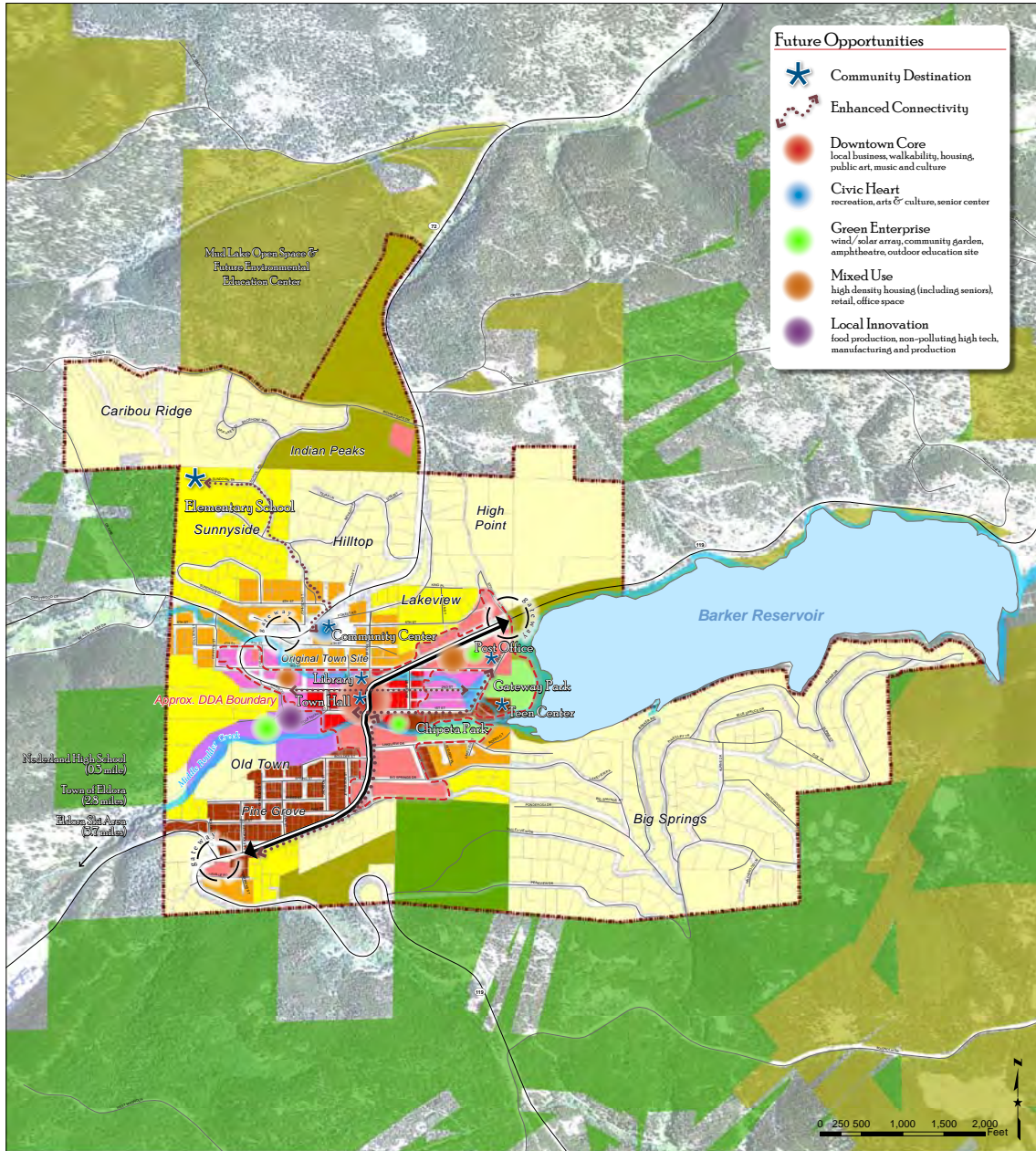


The Future Land Use Map is intended to be viewed on-screen or printed 24x34 inches.



# Nederland Comprehensive Plan Update

## Future Land Use



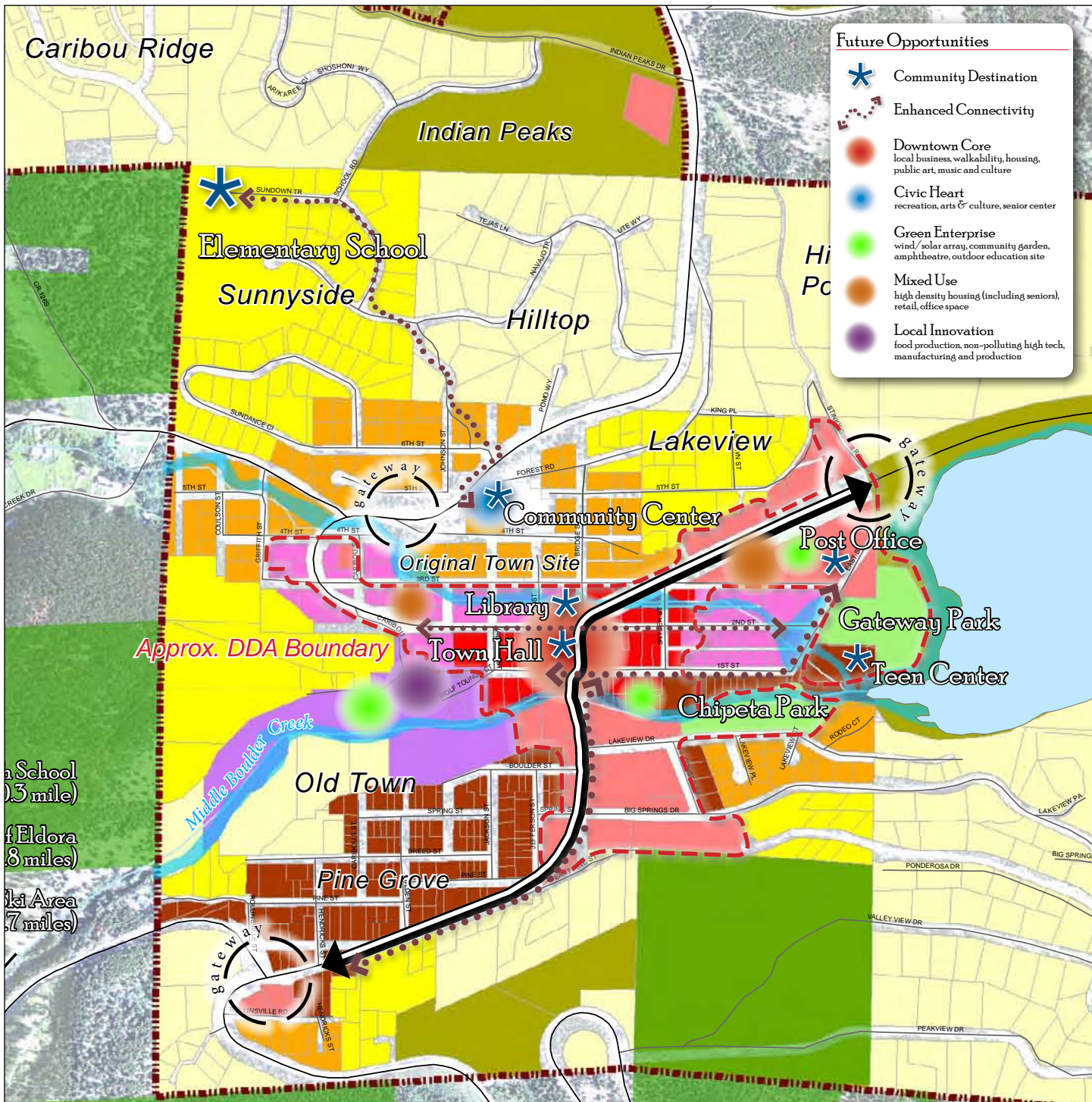
Map is intended to be printed at 24 x 34 inches.

### Legend

- |                       |                           |                            |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Nederland Town Limits | Zoning                    | High Density Residential   |
| Floodplain            | Central Business District | Medium Density Residential |
| Public Lands          | General Commercial        | Low Density Residential    |
| US Forest Service     | Neighborhood Commercial   | Mountain Residential       |
| Local Open Space      | Industrial                | Park                       |
|                       | Public                    | Open Space/Forestry        |



Future Land Use Map detail.





# Chapter 5

## Implementation

### PURPOSE

The full benefit of the Comprehensive Plan will be realized only if the Town completes and follows the planning activities, policies and action items identified herein and if the Town proactively uses the Plan as a basis for evaluation in reaching all applicable decisions.

The *2013 Nederland Comprehensive Plan Update* identifies numerous subsequent planning activities and action items, which must be completed if this Plan is to be achieved. These planning efforts must be prioritized and completed, when funding becomes available. It is suggested that the Town should recognize and draw upon the many talents and capabilities of those in the Nederland community in meeting these needs. Further, for specific implementation, these actions will need to be further clarified with specific metrics and a system of annual (at a minimum) reviews of progress will ideally be established. Methods for doing so include the creation of specific action plans (i.e. the *Nederland Environmental Sustainability Action Plan*) as well as specific system plans (i.e. the *Master Infrastructure Plan*). It is strongly suggested that the Town formalizes a process of reviewing progress to date and allowing for revision and alteration to address the most current desires and needs of the Town.

Actions are described as short-term (1 to 2 years), medium-term (1 to 5), and long-term (5+); or more specifically where possible. They are also overarching and there is cross-over between the topics.

Action	Who	When
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>		
Hold joint work sessions periodically between all of the Town’s advisory boards.	Town	Quarterly, or as needed
Create a sustainability action plan to reduce the negative impact of facilities, e.g., adding recycling bins to parks.	Town	Short-term
Identify safe routes throughout Town, including to the Library and schools; map and install appropriate signage to promote knowledge of those routes.	Town/Public Works/partner organizations	Short-term
Explore grant opportunities to make improvements to recreation and community facilities and programming in Nederland.	Town/Partner organizations	Quarterly, or as needed



Action	Who	When
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES (CONTINUED)</b>		
Evaluate the offerings of the Visitor Center, and its facilities, to ensure that they align with the policies stated in the Comprehensive Plan and are meeting the needs of visitors.	Town	Annually
Identify, map and describe all historic resources in Nederland. In conjunction with the local and state historic societies, seek funding for the preservation of these assets.	Town, with volunteers or partner org.'s	Moderate
Town leaders meet regularly with the administrators of the Community Center, Library and Teen Center to ensure that all opportunities to best utilize each facility are being identified.	Town	Ongoing
Town Board and Staff work with DDA, CDOT, and Boulder County on current and future NedPeds projects to create non-motorized pathways that provide safe walking and bicycling opportunities, especially making connections to the High School, Library, Post Office, and parks.	Town/DDA	Ongoing
<b>HOUSING</b>		
Update the Town Municipal Code to reflect the guidance of the Future Land Use Map, encouraging focused development and redevelopment of mixed use and multi-family housing projects. Update Town development regulations and zoning codes to align with the policies and objectives of this plan, and to provide regular code enforcement.	Town	Short-term
Meet with property owners in the town core to understand challenges and opportunities for adaptive re-use of existing historic structures and/or potential for redevelopment of property.	Town/DDA	Annually
Identify incentives for improving energy efficiency (e.g., new windows, solar panels, etc.).	Town/ Boulder County	Annually
Work with Task Force for Housing and Human Services to complete a community assessment on designing for an active and aging population (DRCOG has examples of these for review).	Town	Moderate
Identify, map and reach out to owners of properties with highest priority for redevelopment or preservation (due to safety concerns, historic or economic value).	Town	Moderate
Meet regularly with the Task Force for Housing and Human Services and Boulder County to explore options for understanding the quantity and type of affordable housing that may be needed in the community. Proactively develop partnerships with Boulder County, other government agencies, and the private sector to secure funding for Nederland's affordable housing needs.	Town/County	Ongoing
Explore creative housing concepts to meet the community's affordable housing needs, including small-scale housing (e.g. cabin zoning concepts), accessory dwelling units, multi-generational development, etc. Review the Town zoning code to prepare for changes to allow for such concepts.	Town	Short-term
Review Town codes for any barriers to high-efficiency building materials, e.g. pre-manufactured panels, etc.	Town	Short-term

Action	Who	When
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
Update Municipal Code Chapter 16, Article VIII, Off-Street Parking and Loading, to reflect design standards and guidelines recommendations on parking requirements, materials and lot design (as recommended by Town Board in Ordinance 707).	Town	Short-term
Prepare outreach materials that can be available at Town Hall and information kiosks, or online, describing the various ride-sharing and public transit options available for the community.	Town/ volunteers	Short-term
Pursue a detailed analysis and evaluation of the feasibility, funding and construction of a second crossing of Middle Boulder Creek. In conjunction, develop a back-up plan to respond to emergencies on the highway bridge, and the potential expansion of the informal weir crossing.	Town/CDOT/ Boulder County	Short-term
Town Board and Staff work with DDA to prioritize, fund and construct current and future NedPeds projects that provide safe walking and bicycling opportunities, especially making connections to the High School, Library, parks, and Post Office.	Town/DDA	Short-term/ Ongoing
Conduct a survey to assess the current and future needs of Nederland transit-riders.	Town/RTD/ County	Moderate (every 3–5 years)
Work with CDOT to optimize traffic flow through town.	Town/CDOT	Ongoing
Create a "Bike and Ped Friendly Nederland" map that describes safe bike routes and locations of bike parking in Nederland, including walking trails between neighborhoods and central town. Consider the establishment (and location for) of a "bike library" that would allow bike sharing for residents and visitors, located centrally in town.	Town/partner org.'s	Long-term

Action	Who	When
<b>ECONOMY</b>		
Work with Planning Commission, Town Staff and BOT to study revisions to the municipal code, specifically the mixed use zoning requirements that may present a barrier to redevelopment or infill in the Downtown Core.	Town	Short-term
In conjunction with the Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan, identify and map locations within town that would be ideally suited for the siting of alternative energy generation and conservation demonstration sites, such as solar arrays, wind turbines, water collection/re-use, and community gardens.	Town	Short-term
Encourage the utilization of the existing fiber optic system, as possible.	Town/ Boulder Valley Schools	Short-term
Continue to work with the Mayor’s Economic Development Task Force to explore alternative economic opportunities for the community.	Town	Short-term/ Ongoing
Work with local business owners on an ongoing basis to identify how local stores could better meet the needs of Nederland residents.	Town	Short-term/ Ongoing
Encourage business owners to form collaborative partnerships that may reduce the cost of doing business in Nederland and as well as its impact on the environment, such as food/product delivery, marketing programs, employee retention, etc.	Town	Short-term/ Ongoing
The DDA should continue to develop an annual action plan that is presented to the public and approved by the BOT. The continued interaction with the public and BOT can help to improve transparency and future plans for DDA-led projects.	Town/DDA	Annually
Conduct a survey and/or alternative analysis to identify the existing and future business needs of Nederland residents to better focus business opportunities.	Town	Moderate
Evaluate how current TIF and mill levy is being allocated; measure that against the priorities of the communities for possible new places to distribute funds (open space, redevelopment, etc.), per DDA and Town strategic/master plans.	Town	Moderate
Continue to support the Community Center as business incubator space for food products. Generally, encourage cottage industry in town and ensure the Municipal Code supports this.	Town	Ongoing
Meet regularly with the leadership of Eldora Mountain Resort to ensure a continuous dialogue between the two of plans and programs that might affect the other (e.g., transit, shuttle, tourism initiatives, and resort improvements).	Town/Eldora Mountain Resort	Ongoing

Action	Who	When
<b>UTILITIES</b>		
Review and document opportunities within the Town's upcoming <i>Master Infrastructure Plan</i> to address the community's goals for sustainability within the infrastructure systems. Continue to review these goals for sustainable infrastructure annually.	Town/Task Force	Short-term
Review and revise the Municipal Code to ensure that it allows for impact analysis for proposed development.	Town	Short-term
Review Nederland's water system on a regular basis, especially in regards to raw water storage and diversion, and identifying and stopping leaks, as well as water lines prone to freezing.	Town	Annually
Conduct a rate study for water and sewer services regularly, including among the rate goals for water conservation.	Town	Bi-annually, or as needed
On a yearly basis, inventory any known problems that have occurred with septic systems and meet with Boulder County to assess programs and funding that could be used to encourage homeowners to transition to Town sewer and to reach the goal of improved water quality.	Town/County	Annually
Research the effectiveness of measures to further reduce waste, such as a plastic bag ban, as seen in other small mountain communities, and aligning with the Boulder County Zero Waste Initiative, to which the Town signed on in 2012.	Town	Moderate
Draft the <i>Master Infrastructure Plan</i> to evaluate current water, wastewater, storm water and roads systems for conditions and needs.	Town	Ongoing
Work closely with local organizations and volunteers to promote recycling and other waste-reduction efforts in Nederland, through education and outreach materials available to residents and tourists.	Town/partner org.'s	Ongoing
Research how water collection pilot programs could be implemented in Nederland, pursuant to Colorado HB 09-1129 and future legislation in regards to opportunities for rainwater harvesting and grey water use.	Town/intern	Long-term



Action	Who	When
<b>LAND USE</b>		
Conduct a detailed review of the Municipal Code to ensure that it is congruent throughout, and to identify barriers to investment that may exist; revise the Code as needed.	Town	Short-term
Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update, assemble a GIS database of land use data, including parcels, future land use, hydrology, and environmental resources/ ecological areas of interest. DRCOG and Boulder County both may be of assistance with this task.	Town/ partners	Short-term
Develop a set of measurable criteria for evaluating development projects in terms of sustainability, including environmental, social, and economic.	Town/Sust. Advisory Board	Moderate
Update and enforce the Municipal Code as it relates to downward indirect lighting in residential and commercial districts.	Town	Short-term
Map riparian corridors, areas of higher biodiversity and other areas that feature important ecosystem functionalities (i.e., alpine meadows, wetland system, etc.) to accompany the FLU Map. Work to develop better guidelines for development within creek corridors, based on this inventory of the town’s natural resources and functions.	Town/ research asst.	Short- term/ Ongoing
Revisit and update the Town's Design Guidelines so that they constantly evolve and reflect the design objective of the community.	Town	Moderate (revisit every 2–3 years)
Identify high priority land for conservation, including open space, environmental education, and passive recreation. Work with partners such as land trusts and Great Outdoors Colorado to secure funding for those properties.	Town/ partners	Ongoing
Incorporate into land use plans review analysis against Source Water Protection Plan, water availability, infrastructure capacity, and other resource limitations.	Town	Ongoing
<i>See previous Actions in all sections, especially Community Facilities, Housing, and Economy.</i>	n/a	n/a





# Appendix

## Public Engagement

### PHASE 1: PLANNING FOUNDATION

The first phase of the Comprehensive Plan Update allowed the planning team to gain an understanding of what the community has already accomplished in articulating their goals and objectives for future growth and sustainability in Nederland. Much work has gone into planning in this community, so it was important to first get grounded in documents such as the *2002 Comprehensive Plan*, the *Nederland Vision 2020*, the Downtown Development Authority's (DDA) *Strategic Master Plan*, and the *Nederland and Surrounding Areas Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan*. A summary of these documents and others, as they relate to the Comprehensive Plan, can be found in Chapter 3.

The Planning Foundation phase was primarily aimed at listening. Listening to community members who have lived in Nederland for decades, those who have been involved in planning efforts in recent years, those who just moved there recently, those who are raising families, running businesses, or are a part of a local organization. Hearing from a wide swath of community members helped give this update process a jump-start in the direction of improving the Comprehensive Plan to reflect today's values and goals for the future.

The broader Nederland "community" entails people who may or may not live within municipal limits, but have a deep appreciation for the town. Each one of the dozens of stakeholders who were interviewed by the planning team had a unique story to tell about how they got here and how they have seen Nederland evolve (for better and for worse). While their perspectives were varied, they are bonded through their love of being a part of this special place. One resident summed this up when he said, "*we don't care how long you've lived here, only how long you want to.*"





## MEET THE PLANNERS

A handful of people joined the planning team over coffee at Salto Café in Nederland on Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The casual setting lent itself well to good conversations about planning and development in Nederland. General topics of conversation included:

- The importance of community ‘hubs’ such as Salto
- Concerns about illegal shooting in terms of safety and noise
- Enthusiasm for Nederland and the desire to carry forward the traits that make it so special
  - People
  - Diversity
  - Authenticity
  - Community pride (“raised in Nederland”)
- Many individual stories of how people decided to move there
- Interest in making the Town more sustainable:
  - Promoting locally produced items, local business
  - Improving circulation and the pedestrian experience
  - Promoting green energy use within town
- Discussions about affordable housing and what that means in a place like Nederland
- Does Nederland lend itself to more aggressive affordable housing strategies like other mountain communities?
- Interest in improving the gateway experience to town
- Concerns about runoff/drainage downtown
- How to promote business and employment opportunities that fit the fabric of Nederland
- Interest in a waterfront park or improved connection with the reservoir

- How can Nederland optimize the use of land already within town limits that is under-utilized currently?

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Over a two-day period in July 2012, the consultant team interviewed approximately 30 stakeholders from the Nederland area, revealing a wide range of perspectives, goals, and priorities for the Comprehensive Plan Update. The interviews were all conducted on an individual basis. All of those invited to participate in the stakeholder interviews provided constructive input and were pleased to be a part of the Comprehensive Plan Update process.

*Key themes that were heard over the course of the interviews included:*

- Balancing the needs of locals and tourists
- Sustainability
- Consistency and enforcement of Town regulations
- Growth, development and land use
- Emergency access/safety/streets
- Downtown Nederland
- Economy
- Parks and recreation

## PUBLIC MEETING #1: OPEN HOUSE

The Community Open House took place at the Nederland Community Center from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, and was attended by approximately 20 people. Attendees included Town staff, residents, and business owners. Mayor Joe Gierlach and Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Mueller, as well as several other current or former Planning Commissioners or Town Board members also attended.

The main objectives of the meeting were to inform the community about the Comprehensive Plan Update and to get their initial insight on how to make the document stronger, more relevant, and more reflective of Nederland's current vision (*Envision Nederland 2020*). Approximately 20 poster boards were arranged around the room for attendees to read and offer input on, including the existing *Envision Nederland 2020* Vision Statement and the existing Plan Elements and Policy Statements. Green dots provided indication of the statements that were supported by those who attended, to help the planning team gain an understanding of what worked well and remains pertinent today.

In addition to information from the existing Comprehensive Plan, there was a computer station set up with a laptop for people to take a "Sustainability Quiz." Impressively, the results showed 50% of attendees bike/walk or ride transit to work, while the remainder drive their cars.

The results of the boards reflected many of the same sentiments that were voiced throughout the stakeholder interviews. Policies that are aimed at protecting environmentally sensitive lands and drainageways were supported, as well as policies that are aimed at strengthening a year-round and sustainable economy, exploring options for additional emergency access in the event of natural disasters, preservation of historical resources and more.

Attendees also noted policies that have been achieved or are in the process of being achieved, including the broadening of youth programs, establishment of partnerships for emergency and environmental efforts with Boulder County and others, the creation of a Housing Task Force, to name a few.

## PHASE 2: OPPORTUNITIES

The Opportunities Phase of the planning process was to identify the best ways to accomplish the vision for Nederland's future, as conveyed in the *Vision 2020*. This included the exploration of *policy* opportunities to guide decision making, and *physical* opportunities within town to help direct improvements, redevelopment/development and conservation projects. The following tools were used to accomplish this.

### PUBLIC MEETING #2: FALL INTO PLANNING WORKSHOP AND POTLUCK

The Fall Into Planning Public Workshop & Potluck took place at the Nederland Community Center from 12 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, and was attended by approximately 25 people. Attendees included Town staff, residents, and business owners. Both residents of various neighborhoods within Nederland and from the outlying area around the town were represented at the workshop, including both long-time and recent Nederland locals.

The meeting was designed as an opportunity to delve further into various planning topics, such as economic development, housing and neighborhoods, and natural resources, in order to inform the writing of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The format of the meeting was intended to allow opportunities for all those in attendance to develop 'big ideas' and opportunities for Nederland, while also encouraging the community members to recognize the various facets of the community must be balanced in the decision making process.

Following the potluck lunch, the planning exercise began. Workshop participants were split into three

small groups, which then rotated between five stations, spending about ten minutes at each. The stations were: Environment & Open Lands, Economic Development, Connectivity, Neighborhoods, and Culture & Community Fabric. After a brief introduction on some underlying constraints and feedback that the planning team had heard during the first meeting and stakeholder interviews, the groups explored their ‘big ideas’ for that topic. The *Vision 2020* document also helped guide the discussion of where residents would like to see Nederland in the future. After about an hour and a half of brainstorming, each small group developed their own Framework Concept and presented it back to the group as a whole. Many of the ideas heard during this workshop are found in the Comprehensive Plan policies and Future Land Use Map, such as enhanced pedestrian connectivity, resource conservation areas, Nederland as a cultural center, parking pods, support for locally based cottage industries, senior housing within walking distance of downtown, and many more.

#### **PLAN AMBASSADORS**

In order to engage the greater community into the plan update, members of the Steering Committee also served as Plan Ambassadors. Plan Ambassadors were assigned to their particular topic of interest or expertise and were liaisons to the community. They reached out to people who they knew of or people who expressed interest in those topics to review policies and opportunities, particularly during Phase 2 of the process. They met with folks both individually or as small groups to facilitate discussion around these topics. Their efforts and dedication ensured that the Comprehensive Plan Update reflects the values of the community.

#### ***Newspaper Articles***

Prior to the “Fall into Planning” potluck and workshop, Planning Commissioner and Steering Committee member Kris Larsen wrote an op-ed for the Mountain-Ear, Nederland’s local newspaper. In it, Kris described the importance of the comprehensive planning process and how it related to the recent *Envision 2020* process.

Additionally, public workshops were advertised and covered by the Mountain-Ear.

### **PHASE 3: PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

The final phase of the comprehensive plan update process was the plan’s development and review by the community.

A public meeting was held on the evening of June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013, for the Town and consultant team to present the Draft Comprehensive Plan Update to community members, highlight its improvements and main additions since the last version, and to request final feedback on the document. Approximately 20 people attended that meeting. Following the presentation, a community members asked questions about specific details and then broke into an open house format to examine the Future Land Use map and plan recommendations.

A comment period on the draft plan was held over the next month, as well as additional review from the Steering Committee and the Sustainability Committee. The 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update was presented for adoption to Planning Commission on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

