



Community Planning & Permitting

Courthouse Annex • 2045 13th Street • Boulder, Colorado 80302

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 471 • Boulder, Colorado 80306

303-441-3930 • www.BoulderCounty.gov

Nederland EcoPass Public Improvement District Advisory Committee (NEPPIDAC) 2015 Summary

Committee Members

- Vera Schulte-Pelkum
- Janette Taylor
- Topher Donahue – Nederland BOT appointed member
- Michael O'Neill
- Katrina Harms

Additional coordination

- Jared Hall – Boulder County Staff Liaison
- Mayor Joe Gierlach – not a member but repeatedly involved in N-route issues and letter drafting
- Town staff (Janette & Alisha) – supporting outreach work

Key Decisions of NEPPIDAC (March–October 2015)

The Nederland EcoPass Public Improvement District Advisory Committee (NEPPIDAC) continued to strengthen the EcoPass program throughout 2015 by refining administrative processes, coordinating closely with RTD and Boulder County, evaluating fare and budget impacts, improving communication, and advancing safety concerns related to the N Bus and mountain transit operations. The committee also expanded outreach efforts and monitored key transportation initiatives, including the US-36 BRT plan and Hessie Shuttle operations.

1. Strengthening Committee Administration, Transparency, and Public Access

NEPPIDAC reaffirmed its role as an advisory body responsible for providing recommendations related to EcoPass program administration, N-Bus service, fare structures, public outreach, and transit infrastructure. Key administrative actions included:

Actions Taken

- Approval of meeting minutes at regular intervals with occasional clarifications.
- Initiation of a new NEPPIDAC webpage on the Boulder County website:
 - Posting of meeting minutes and agendas.
 - Listing future meeting dates several months in advance.
 - Development of a public comment submission form.
- Agreement that Janette Taylor will serve as the primary contact listed on the webpage.

2. EcoPass Program Updates, Fare Decisions, and Budget Planning

RTD Fare Structure Changes for 2016

- RTD approved 2016 fare and EcoPass pricing:
 - 13.3–13.4% increase for Neighborhood EcoPass (including Nederland).
 - 18.4% increase for Business EcoPasses.
 - N Bus reclassified as Regional/Express with a 2016 fare of \$4.50.
- Smart Card usage data will begin impacting contract pricing in 2017.
- Committee determined not to deactivate former-resident cards until pricing is usage-based.

Budget Considerations

- District property valuations and mill levy revenues increased approximately 14%, offsetting EcoPass price increases.
- Committee discussed the estimated \$31,400 budget surplus and weighed:
 - Avoiding public perception of unused funds.
 - Preserving a buffer for future fare increases historically averaging 8% every 3–4 years.

Key Budget Decision

- Include \$15,000 for potential bus stop improvements in the 2016 budget to allow flexibility without committing expenditures.

3. Transit Operations, Safety Concerns, and RTD Coordination

N Bus Winter Operations

Following ongoing winter safety concerns, similar to those raised in 2014, NEPPIDAC continued collaborative efforts to address:

- Driver training and preparedness for mountain driving.
- Operational challenges unique to steep grades, icy conditions, and chain-up requirements.

Mayor's Letter to RTD

- Michael O'Neill prepared talking points.
- Janette coordinated with Mayor Gierlach to finalize a letter to RTD Interim General Manager David Genova.
- The letter requests a meeting with RTD leadership and NEPPIDAC to discuss safety and operational concerns.

Infrastructure Coordination

- The East Street bus stop remained under consideration as part of the NedPeds project.
- Committee emphasized luggage-loading design if the stop is constructed.

4. Review of RTD Fare Study and US-36 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Plan

Fare Study

- RTD's pass program study scheduled to begin late July.
- NEPPIDAC monitored issues including:
 - EcoPass cost impacts from rising ridership.
 - Smart Card data inconsistencies, especially regarding non-resident passholders.
 - Rider burden caused by complex tap-on/tap-off requirements.

US-36 BRT Plan

- The plan entered its final approval phase in mid-2015.
- Committee noted remaining service issues:
 - Removal of midday BMX service.
 - No midday service to Boulder Junction.
- Recognized that overall regional service increases were offset by reductions in other areas.

5. Communication, Outreach, and Community Education

NEPPIDAC focused on increasing awareness of the EcoPass program, particularly for new residents, with goals to improve ridership and ensure understanding of program requirements.

Key Actions

- Over 2,800 EcoPasses issued since program inception.
- Committee chose not to implement a mandatory annual renewal process for 2016.
- Janette and Alisha tasked with developing a broader education and outreach campaign, including:
 - Better information for new residents.
 - Clarifying misunderstandings about pass eligibility and cost sharing.

Property-Owner Eligibility Issue

- Committee reaffirmed that EcoPasses are for full-time residents only, not non-resident property owners paying district taxes.
- Jared to distribute RTD contract language clarifying eligibility requirements.

6. Hessie Shuttle Updates and Funding Discussion

The Hessie Trail Shuttle saw major operational adjustments in 2015:

- Expansion to three buses (from two).
- Relocation of pickup to the Nederland Park-n-Ride.
- Boulder County requested \$35,000 in funding support; Town anticipated offering \$3,000–\$5,000.

Committee Discussions

- Determine whether shuttle objectives primarily serve residents or trail users/tourists.
- Explore potential new revenue or partnership models:
 - Charging shuttle fares or trailhead parking.
 - Contributions from other municipalities.
 - Onboard user surveys.
 - Increased press coverage and marketing.

VIA also requested funding for the Climb Shuttle, creating competition with Hessie Shuttle contributions within the Town's budget.

7. Technology and Data Systems Improvements

Smart Card Printer

- NEPPIDAC installed a new printing system for local card production, reducing administrative delays.

RTD Real-Time Tracking

- RTD's real-time bus information app scheduled for launch in January 2016.
- Committee identified opportunities for public outreach and promoting EcoPass usage once the app and Google integration go live.

Conclusion

Throughout 2015, NEPPIDAC built upon the foundation established in prior years by advancing program administration, expanding public outreach, evaluating fare and budget shifts, and collaborating with RTD and Boulder County to improve transit operations for the Nederland community. The committee continued advocating for safety on mountain routes, enhancing transparency through a new online presence, and monitoring major regional transit developments such as the US-36 BRT plan and Hessie Shuttle operations. These efforts helped strengthen long-term program sustainability and improve transit service quality for Nederland residents.