



Community Planning & Permitting

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Nederland EcoPass Public Improvement District Advisory Committee (NEPPIDAC) 2021 Summary

Committee Members

- Shirin Chahal – Chair
- Vera Schulte-Pelkum
- Karen Blakemore – Newly appointed in 2021
- Tania Corvalan
- Vacant Member-at-Large Seat

Additional Individuals

- Alex Hyde-Wright – Boulder County Transportation
- Karen Gerrity – Town of Nederland
- Miranda Fisher – Town of Nederland

2021 Summary of Key Decisions

NEPPIDAC's work in 2021 focused heavily on long-term planning for the Nederland EcoPass program, including financial forecasting under utilization-based pricing, determining ballot timing for mill levy renewal, and understanding COVID-19 impacts on transit service and future contract costs. The committee also discussed broader regional fare reforms, NB service levels, and the implications of shifting ridership patterns.

1. Committee Membership and Orientation

- Karen Blakemore joined NEPPIDAC as a new appointee.
- Reviewed committee structure:
 - Four seats appointed by Boulder County Commissioners.
 - One seat appointed by the Nederland Board of Trustees.

2. EcoPass Utilization, Pricing, and Long-Term Funding Options

Financial Overview

- Pre-COVID: projected contract price of \$350k–\$400k under utilization pricing.
- COVID reduced ridership significantly, lowering the projected 2022 contract price to ~\$162k.
- Future increases depend on how quickly ridership rebounds.

Mill Levy Expiration

- Current mill levy expires end of 2023.
- Committee must determine whether to return to voters in 2021, 2022, or 2023.

Program Context

- Other EcoPass programs also facing steep increases.
- Nederland is one of the few districts funded by a dedicated property tax.

3. RTD Service Conditions and Program Considerations

- NB operating on Saturday schedule; no overloads reported.
- RTD maintaining conservative approach to service restoration.
- New GM/CEO Debra Johnson expected to revisit fares and pass programs, which could change EcoPass pricing model.

4. Timing of a Mill Levy Ballot Measure

Discussion Themes

- Voting in 2021 considered too early due to:
- Unclear post-COVID ridership patterns
- Lack of clarity on RTD service levels
- Potential countywide transportation ballot measures
- Risk of “poisoning the well” if voters receive incomplete information

Committee Recommendation

- Motion: NEPPIDAC is not ready to pursue a property tax extension in 2021.
- Motion passed unanimously.

5. Broader EcoPass Program Questions and Policy Issues

Key Topics

- Risk of losing service if EcoPass lapsed.
- Business participation: businesses pay PID tax but employees do not receive passes.
- Whether renters and homeowners can bear more responsibility for pass verification.

- Potential for needs-based programs or farebox buy-up models (complex to administer).
- Possibility of applying cost-sharing models like Lyons' \$40 issuance fee (not preferred).

6. Coordination with Eldora Mountain Resort

- Eldora exploring expanded parking capacity.
- Pre-COVID initiatives (e.g., paid parking on weekends/powder days) partially paused.
- Conversation ongoing about long-term transit strategies involving Eldora and the NB.

7. Hessie Shuttle Operations & 2021 Season Review

Boulder County presented key data on Hessie Shuttle ridership trends, efficiency, customer satisfaction, and operational challenges, showing significant growth and continued demand for shuttle-based trailhead access.

Ridership Trends (2012–2021)

- Annual boardings have increased dramatically—from 5,709 (2012) to 33,926 (2021).
- Boardings per hour rose from 4–7 (2012–2015) to 10–15+ (2018–2021).
- Boardings per day grew from under 200 in early years to over 800 per day on peak 2021 weekends.

Subsidy Per Boarding

- Subsidy fluctuated between \$6.85 and \$13.95 from 2012–2021.
- Costs trending downward in recent years due to increased ridership and operational efficiencies.

Why Shuttle Parking Returned to Nederland High School

- 2021 peak parking demand at Nederland High School (NHS):
- 120 parked cars (full lot)
- 100–120 cars parked along CR 130
- RTD Park-n-Ride has only 75 spaces, insufficient for shuttle demand.

Traffic Checkpoint Operations

- Implemented to prevent congestion in Eldora and at Hessie/4th of July trailheads.
- Staffed by BCSO/Parks/OSMP for 33 out of 54 service days.
- Turned around an average of 409 cars/day; peak of 850 cars on multiple days.

Shuttle Rider Survey Findings

- 95% of riders came to hike.
- 99% of riders drove to their shuttle stop; only 1% used RTD to reach Nederland.

Riders rated service highly across:

- Driver friendliness
- Service frequency
- Park-n-Ride locations
- Overall experience
- Top rider suggestion: extend service Monday–Thursday.

Demographics:

- Majority of riders were millennials.
- 87% white, 91% non-Hispanic, 98% with access to a personal vehicle.

Key Takeaways from 2021 Season

- Hessie visitation continues in rapid growth, driving increased shuttle use.
- Traffic checkpoint is highly effective but staff-intensive.
- Shuttle service is essential to maintaining access when parking at trailhead fills.
- 64% of weekend Hessie visitors reached the trailhead via shuttle in 2021.
- RTD's NB route frequency (every 2 hours) is insufficient to attract visitors to arrive via transit.
- Leasing Nederland High School lot is expensive, but necessary for shuttle function.

Conclusion

In 2021, NEPPIDAC concentrated on understanding long-term financial risks under utilization-based pricing, monitoring COVID-era ridership and RTD service impacts, and evaluating the appropriate timing for a mill levy renewal ballot measure. The committee concluded that the uncertainty surrounding future transit conditions made 2021 too early for a ballot question. NEPPIDAC also reviewed evolving regional transit policies, Eldora's transportation role, and extensive Hessie Shuttle data showing record visitation and increased reliance on shuttle services. These discussions set the stage for major decisions facing the district in 2022–2023 as the mill levy expiration approached.