



## Community Planning & Permitting

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# Nederland EcoPass Public Improvement District Advisory Committee (NEPPIDAC) 2023 Summary

## Committee Members

- Susie Gallaudet
- Gene Smith
- Andrew Bliss
- Vera Schulte-Pelkum (elected Chair for 2024)
- Tom Mahowald

## Town of Nederland Staff

- Miranda Fisher
- Peter Cacek

## Boulder County Staff

- Alex Hyde-Wright
- Landon Hilliard

## Key Decisions of NEPPIDAC (April–October 2023)

Throughout 2023, the Nederland Area EcoPass Public Improvement District Advisory Committee (NEPPIDAC) focused on long-range program sustainability, financial planning, the transition to RTD's new MyRide system, community engagement, and preparation for a potential 2023 ballot measure. The committee also strengthened administrative processes and continued efforts to expand equitable access to EcoPasses for residents and employees in the Nederland area.

### 1. Recruitment, Committee Administration, and Program Oversight

Recruitment for committee vacancies remained open for most of the year, with two applicants received in late June. The committee reviewed quarterly meeting notes, maintained continuity in advisory functions, and elected Vera Schulte-Pelkum as Chair for a one-year term at the October meeting. NEPPIDAC reaffirmed the importance of

consistent meeting schedules and expressed support for hybrid in-person/virtual formats to increase accessibility during winter months.

## **2. Financial Planning and Long-Term Sustainability**

A substantial portion of 2023 work focused on analyzing projected expenses and revenue for the EcoPass program through 2033. The committee evaluated multiple funding scenarios, including:

- 2% vs. 3% annual property tax revenue growth
- Impacts of adding non-resident employees to the program
- Optional annual fee revenue to support employee EcoPasses

The financial modeling informed ballot-measure discussions and shaped the 2024 recommended budget. In October, the committee approved the 2024 budget with amendments—reallocating printing costs to marketing/communications and correcting a minor fund-balance typo. Motion passed 4-0.

## **3. EcoPass Transition to RTD’s Account-Based MyRide System**

NEPPIDAC oversaw the transition from plastic EcoPass cards to RTD’s account-based MyRide app and card system. Town staff managed communication, troubleshooting, and card distribution for residents lacking smartphones. The committee supported expanded communication efforts, including flyers, email, and website notices, and discussed improving outreach to Spanish-speaking residents through bilingual materials. Boulder County and Town staff also initiated conversations with RTD about providing MyRide card stock directly in Nederland to simplify access.

## **4. Community Engagement and Survey Results**

The June 2023 EcoPass survey revealed strong community support, with approximately 70% positive sentiment. Residents praised the EcoPass program as a key benefit of living in Nederland, while also expressing concerns over bus frequency and property tax burdens. Employee and business owner feedback emphasized the need for later bus departures (e.g., after 7 p.m.) and highlighted the high cost of existing daily regional fares for non-passholders. This input guided discussions about extending EcoPass eligibility to non-resident employees.

## **5. Ballot Measure Development and Compliance with Fair Campaign Practices**

NEPPIDAC reviewed the full 2023 coordinated-election timeline and prepared a proposed ballot measure asking voters to:

- Extend the existing 1.85-mill property tax for 10 years (2024–2033)
- Allow EcoPasses for non-resident employees

- Allow the District to charge fees to help support resident and employee EcoPass programs

The Boulder County Board of Commissioners approved the resolution for the November 2024 election. Staff reviewed Fair Campaign Practices Act restrictions, clarifying that Town and County employees cannot advocate for ballot measures, while private citizens may.

## **6. RTD System Changes and Future Program Impacts**

RTD's Fare Study, tied to the System Optimization Plan, will simplify fare categories by removing Local/Regional distinctions and merging rider types. Because Nederland's contract pricing relies on utilization by rider tier, NEPPIDAC discussed potential (but likely minimal) future cost impacts, particularly given historically low Youth tier usage, despite the statewide Zero Fare for Youth initiative.

### **Conclusion**

In 2023, NEPPIDAC advanced long-range financial planning, strengthened administration during a significant RTD system transition, and prepared foundational work for a potential ballot measure ensuring program continuity. Community survey feedback, careful budget oversight, and ongoing coordination with RTD, the Town of Nederland, and Boulder County helped shape decisions aimed at improving program accessibility, enhancing communication, and supporting sustainable EcoPass services for residents and workers in the Nederland area.