



## **Castle Rock Downtown Alliance**

*A partnership between the Downtown Development Authority and Downtown Merchants Association*

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### **Castle Rock Downtown Alliance Downtown Development Authority Semi-Annual Report to Town Council 2016**

#### **Background**

The Castle Rock Downtown Alliance is a partnership between the Downtown Merchants Association and Downtown Development Authority. This partnership expands the audience and involvement of the two organizations and unifies the Downtown organizations under one roof. The two organizations share one office and one director helping to further the collective vision of a vibrant and prosperous Downtown.

The **Downtown Development Authority (DDA)** is a governmental entity that functions as an extension of the Town guided by a 7 member board that is appointed by Town Council. The DDA is charged with furthering development and place-making in Downtown Castle Rock using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and is guided by a Plan of Development. The Plan of Development provides guidance from Town Council on the mission of the DDA and encourages the DDA to pursue “development projects” which include projects to beautify downtown, increase commerce in downtown and development projects which bring physical construction of buildings to downtown.

#### **Report**

In 2016, the DDA is seeing the fruits of much of the planning and strategic initiatives that began in 2015. In 2016, the DDA continued its existing programs aimed at the revitalization and beautification of Downtown Castle Rock (listed below). The DDA also continued work on the enhancement and expansion of Festival Park in partnership with the Town Parks and Recreation Department who is lead on this catalytic project. In addition, the DDA has focused on the continuation of the Plan of Development and vision for positive development in the Downtown Core in conjunction with the enhancement of Festival Park. Information on approved and proposed development projects, as well as annual program updates are included below.

#### **Downtown Projects and Programs**

##### *Rink at the Rock*

The DDA wrapped up its fourth successful season of the Rink at the Rock with roughly 12,000 attendees at the Rink during the 87-day winter skating season. This program continues to generate excitement and activity in Downtown during the typically slower winter months. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> straight season with Rink Management Services Corporation as our managing partner, and second straight season with Zelem Construction on the setup and teardown of the Rink. This consistency (staffing, setup and tear down) has been important for an operation which is prone to fluctuations in expenses and sales due to weather and uncontrollable factors. We believe the cost of this operation is worth the activity and vibrancy that it brings to Downtown, the main goal of this revitalization project.

##### *Downtown Stakeholders Meetings*

The DDA in partnership with the DMA (the Alliance) host quarterly Downtown Stakeholders Meetings at the Philip S. Miller Library. At these meetings the public is invited to share feedback and ideas and foster a sense of community among Downtown businesses. These meetings, in addition to the public Alliance Board meetings, provide an update to the public on what is going on in Downtown. The DDA

uses these meetings as an opportunity to provide information to the public on its Downtown programs, such as accepting orders for the flowerbox program, light pole banners, façade grant program, patio program, etc., and to provide updates on DDA initiatives such as Festival Park or other development projects. In the Q1 Stakeholders meeting, the Alliance had strong attendance from Downtown businesses and great conversation about the approved and proposed development projects in Downtown. The notes for these meetings are posted online at [www.downtowncastlerock.com/downtown-stakeholders](http://www.downtowncastlerock.com/downtown-stakeholders).

#### *Banners Program*

Continuing the Banner Program that was started in 2014. In 2016, the DDA has continued its offer to Downtown businesses to purchase a banner with their logo for placement outside of their building on a light pole. This encourages the private sector, that benefits from a vibrant and active Downtown, to help support the cost of these banners and also have an opportunity for marketing. In addition, the DDA help produce banners for DMA, Chamber, and Town events.

Here is a list of the banners approved in 2016:

- B&B Café
- Maddie's Biergarten
- DMA Events: Indie Out Movie, Car Show and Street Party, Car Show, Splash in the Park, Slide the City, Boots and Brews, Goosebumps Movie, Spectre Movie, Oktoberfest, Concert and Street Party. The DDA is also working with the Chamber and the Town to produce banners for their events.

#### *Façade Improvement Program*

The DDA Board has been actively pursuing beautification projects in historic Downtown Castle Rock. In 2016, in addition to the development projects that are have pulled permits and broken ground, a handful of façade improvements were also proposed and started. The DDA approved or paid out a façade grant, matching private sector investment up to \$6,000 at these locations:

- 312 Wilcox St. (Columbine Printing Building),
- 21 Wilcox St. (Granelli's Pizza),
- 3 Wilcox St. (Union Bistro),
- 101 Briscoe St. (Blue Spruce Animal Hospital – Approved in 2015 – Paid out in 2016).

In addition, several Downtown businesses are in the process of preparing application for a façade grant at the time of this report.

Most municipalities that are actively encouraging redevelopment and revitalization often provide incentive to the private sector to improve the façade of their buildings. While it is not required that facades in Downtown Castle Rock look a certain way, the DDA can encourage an attractive look true to historic architecture with the use of incentives. The DDA has had success with several façade improvements and actively encourages more private sector partners to utilize this program.

#### *Flowerbox Program*

In 2016, the DDA partnered with the Town and Brown's Greenhouse again to place flower boxes throughout Downtown, building on the sense of small town charm and enhancing the look and feel of the Downtown environment. Efforts such as this has been shown to have an impact on business success and economic activity. This DDA flowerbox program does not use any Town General Fund tax dollars. We do partner with Town staff on the day of delivery for their expertise and equipment to deliver

flowerboxes to the private sector. The DDA also contracted with the Town to repair, restrain and repaint DDA flowerboxes for a fresh look in 2016.

The DDA also partnered with Brown's Greenhouse to plant the flower boxes for the patios in Downtown on site. This allows the DDA to deliver patios to Downtown almost 2 months earlier at the request of the Downtown businesses.

#### *Patio Program*

Before the DDA was created, the Town, in partnership with several interested business owners, brought in Walkable Communities Inc. to evaluate Downtown Castle Rock. This organization provided guidance to the group on building a thriving downtown which built on years of research and studies that Walkable Communities Inc. had done. One of the recommendations from this exercise was a recommendation to invest in the infrastructure of wider sidewalks in order to encourage pedestrian activity and allow shop owners to have street-side patios on the sidewalks. After the DDA was formed, and using this research, the DDA designed a way to construct temporary street-side patios similar to those utilized by other neighboring communities. The program has had great success and positive feedback from businesses and the community. Anecdotal data from one patio owner shared that patio business accounts for a third of his overall business. It was also noted that while use is very high, that even if usage was low, a patio and an umbrella act as a "giant billboard" that says "eat here" and this marketing benefit was worth the cost of the patio alone.

In 2016, the DDA delivered patios to Angie's Restaurant, B&B Café, Castle Rock Bar and Grill, Castle Rock Bike and Ski, Crowfoot Valley Coffee, Holy Smokes at the Emporium, Lost Coffee, and Tricocci's.

The DDA street side patios provide the infrastructure in Downtown for a summer pedestrian environment that encourages people to be outside in Downtown and engage with their neighbors and the Downtown community.

#### *Development Projects*

In the last year, the DDA has had several significant building accomplishments, which could not be done without the support of the Town of Castle Rock and the Castle Rock EDC, that will contribute to vibrancy in Downtown and a stronger economy for Downtown small businesses:

- **The Move – 202 6<sup>th</sup> Street**  
This tech oriented office building will retain well-paying jobs in the community, it will add more well-paying jobs in the community and it will increase the daytime population in Downtown which is the lifeblood for Downtown small businesses. This building has come out of the ground this year and is scheduled to be complete in the fall of 2016.
- **Mercantile Commons – 230 3<sup>rd</sup> Street**  
The Mercantile Commons building is a mixed use building that will provide space for restaurant, retail, office and the first new residential space in Downtown in many years. This building will impact Downtown in many positive ways including the addition of a restaurant on Wilcox Square completing the "square" and it will add residential options in the Downtown core which are an important aspect of any thriving Downtown.

- **The Corner – 221 Wilcox Street**  
This mixed use project at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Wilcox will also greatly contribute to vibrancy in Downtown adding retail, restaurant, residential and office space on an important corner and replaces a building that is beyond its designed use.
- **Proposed – Riverwalk North and Riverwalk South – 113 Wilcox Street & 215 Wilcox Street**  
In the spring, the DDA had a project introduced to the board that proposes redevelopment of 113 Wilcox and 215 Wilcox. This project fits many aspects of the Plan of Development including a more well defined street grid that encourage walkability and places parking off of the main street. It also adds much needed population density to support a vibrant Downtown atmosphere, providing a mix of one and two bedroom apartments. This location is also specifically called out in the Plan of Development as a priority, especially providing residential space nearby the proposed enhanced Festival Park project. The Plan of Development calls for the redevelopment of strip mall and this project eliminates a large 2 story strip mall.
- **Festival Park – 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Wilcox and Perry Streets**  
Before the creation of the DDA, there were community discussions about investing in Festival Park, and once the DDA was created, as a part of a Downtown design competition, there were specific plan put together for what an enhanced park could look like. In 2014 and 2015 a public process began to gather public input, as well as input from the Town Council and Alliance Board to reengage this project. The latter part of 2015 and first part of 2016 have been focused on design of construction drawings, planning, permitting and pricing in preparation to go to bid in the second half of 2016 and begin construction in 2017. Creating an “active” park is directed in the Plan of Development, and the vision for this park to add vibrancy is already being seen with the Mercantile Commons, the Corner at 221 Wilcox, and the proposed Riverwalk project before the park has even broken ground.

In addition, we have seen building ownership change hands and/or significant investment made or proposed at 309 Jerry St. (interior), 115 3<sup>rd</sup> St. (proposed new sushi restaurant), 312 Wilcox St. (façade), 21 Wilcox St. (façade and patio), 3 Wilcox St. (façade and patio), 407 Wilcox St. (façade) (some of these also noted above in façade improvement grant section).

### **Summary**

Last year, a number of strategic initiatives were started in partnership with the Town of Castle Rock in order to set the DDA and Town Council up for future success in the ability to add and create vibrancy in Downtown. In 2016, this strategic planning is paying off in the ability for the DDA and Town Council to facilitate projects without using significant General Fund dollars, including the ground breaking and construction of The Move and The Mercantile Commons, as well as DDA approval of the Corner at 221 Wilcox, and the receipt of a project introduction for the Riverwalk North and South project. With the partnership and leadership of the Parks and Recreation Department the advancement of the Festival Park Project will contribute to a more vibrant and active Downtown. The DDA has also maintained its existing programs aimed at the revitalization and beautification of Downtown Castle Rock.

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