

Fort Collins General Improvement District 2020 Year in Review

Since Fort Collins' earliest days, the area we call Downtown has been the heart of the community. With its distinctive historic buildings, unique shopping and dining, and beautiful Old Town Square, Downtown is Fort Collins at its finest.

In 1976, City Council established General Improvement District #1 (the GID) to fund parking, pedestrian, and street beautification improvements in the Downtown commercial area. The GID is a property tax district initiated by a petition of property owners in the district. In the 1970's, Downtown leaders recognized the need to improve the identity and appearance of the main street to enhance the area as a business and commercial area.

The GID is a major factor in the look and feel of Downtown's public spaces today. The concentration of streetscape improvements funded largely from the GID has had a dramatic impact on the appearance and attraction of the downtown area. These improvements include special pavers used in place of concrete for sidewalks, contributions to alley enhancements, renovation of Old Town Square and Oak Street Plaza, and yearly contribution to the annual holiday lights.

While 2020 was a challenging year for our community, the GID was still able to get the job done. We made significant improvements with paver replacements, addressing safety concerns as well as visual improvements, contributed to sidewalk work for some of our local businesses, and replaced several tree grates that were broken, unsightly, and not ADA compliant.

OVERVIEW OF 2020 ACTIVITIES

- **Paving and Sidewalk Work**

In 2020, Engineering provided the GID working group a prioritized list of intersections that needed repair and replacement in the GID area. The following work has been completed:

- **Mason & Mountain** – all four corners paver repair and replacement, sidewalk, ramp, curb and gutter work.
- **Mason & Laporte** – all four corners paver repair and replacement, sidewalk, ramp, curb and gutter work.
- Repaired **SE corner of College & Oak** (in front of the Museum – repaired tree curbing and reset pavers).
- Repaired **SE corner of College & Laporte** – (replaced and reset pavers).
- Repaired **SW corner of College & Maple** – (replaced and reset pavers).
- **Mountain & Mathews** - Storm Water completed the sewer work first and then pavers were replaced/reset.
- **Walrus Ice Cream** – parking and bicycle rack reconfiguration.
- **ENT Credit Union** (243 N College Ave.) – sidewalk, curb and gutter work.
- **Mason south of Mountain** – filled gravel areas in with concrete to (1) address hazard of uneven surfaces and (2) allow businesses along Mason the ability to provide outdoor dining.

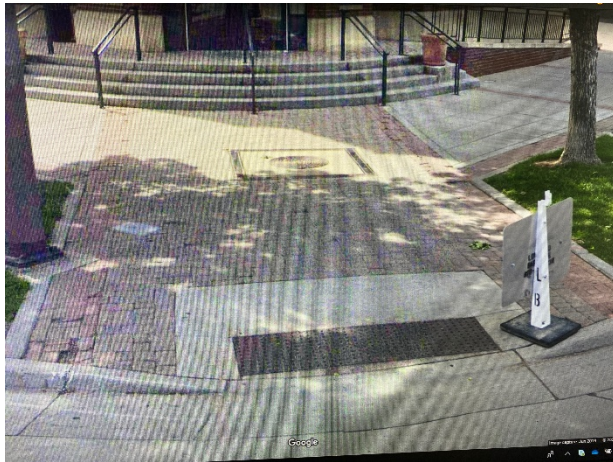
Before



After



Before



During



After



Before



After



(Please note that due to the quick turnaround on this project, not all tree grates installed at this site are ADA compliant as they came from existing stock. They will be replaced along with others within an ADA compliance program and as new trees are removed and replaced.)

- **Tree Grate Replacement**

The maintenance crew (Parks Division) did an extraordinary job replacing old tree grates with new grates to address issues such as: (1) older grates surrounding older trees being expanded over time as the trunks became larger and larger, (2) ADA standards have changed over time so many of the older grates are no longer ADA compliant and (3) the new ADA compliant grates protect the tree's roots and cut-outs from foot traffic and compaction, narrow the opening around the smaller trunks to reduce tripping hazards, and create a safe and pleasant walkable surface for residents and visitors downtown.

As you can see in the pictures, the new tree grates have smaller openings for the trees and all around, which addresses ADA requirements and improves the overall safety of the space. The Forestry Division also helped with adding grates along Mason, south of W Mountain Ave, where GID did sidewalk improvements. (Please note, the orange color is a rusty powder that will wear off quickly with use and weather.)

Before



After



- Downtown Parks Maintenance**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has repurposed a portion of its annual budget to support and operate a Business Marketing and Communications ("BMC") program previously provided by the Downtown Business Association. To offset this expense for the DDA, the GID will fund \$175,000 (a portion) of the DDA's ongoing maintenance obligations for enhanced alleyways and Old Town Square in 2020.

2020 BUDGET

• Revenue

The 2020 revenue budget consists of mostly of property taxes from commercial properties at 4.924 mills. The GID receives the tax on the base property tax, while the DDA receives the tax increment from that levy, which equates to about 50% of the total property tax or of about \$300k per year (this is pursuant to Ordinance 60 of 2011).

Other revenue includes revenue from the State for Auto Specific Ownership Motor Vehicle Registration (allocated based on property tax amount) and interest on GID cash balances. Actual revenue in 2020 came in about 2% under budget.

	Actual 2017	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Budget 2020	Actual 2020	Variance 2020	Budget 2021
Property Taxes	\$288,646	\$297,068	\$297,368	\$314,160	\$307,486	(\$6,674)	\$310,000
Shared Revenue	47,788	48,579	50,258	45,000	44,020	(980)	46,000
Interest Revenue	7,067	14,581	26,650	14,965	16,585	1,620	7,135
Other (unclaimed checks)	1,615	156	0	0	82	82	0
Total	\$345,115	\$360,385	\$374,276	\$374,125	\$368,173	(\$5,952)	\$363,135

• Expense

The 2020 expense budget consists of funding for pavers and sidewalks, forestry tree grate replacement, other construction needs, administrative payment to Larimer County for collection of the property tax, property tax rebates to residential property owners, contributions to downtown holiday lights, and specific to 2020 and 2021, contributions to the DDA for parks-related downtown maintenance. Actual expense in 2020 came in about 17% under budget, of which 8% is still available to spend in 2021, for a net unused budget of about 9%.

	Actual 2017	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Budget 2020	Actual 2020	Variance 2020	Budget 2021
Paver and Sidewalk Work	18,180	1,707	72,860	205,000	134,367	70,633	100,000
Forestry and Parks Work			2,949	45,000	29,940	15,060	25,000
Downtown Holiday Lights	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	-	90,000
DDA Alleys		370,000				-	300,000
DDA Parks Maintenance				175,000	165,212	9,788	125,000
Oak Street Plaza							85,000
Capital Plan Outreach							10,000
Property Tax Rebate	28,470	30,769	34,831	30,000	36,053	(6,053)	37,000
Larimer County Fee	5,773	5,942	5,951	6,500	6,133	367	6,500
Salaries, Benefits, and Other	2,523	2,489	3,474	10,500	10,092	408	30,291
Total	109,946	465,907	175,065	527,000	436,797	90,203	808,791

Note: \$150k of paver and concrete work in 2020 is in a non-lapsing business unit and \$43k remains available to spend in 2021.

- **Fund Balance/Reserves**

The past few years GID reserve balances have been between \$700-900k. 2021 planned funding for DDA Alleys, Downtown Parks maintenance and the renovation of Oak Street Plaza is anticipated to reduce the reserves just over \$400k by then end of 2021.

Reserves are accumulated over time to enable the GID to fund capital projects in the GID area. The GID is planning to present the Board with a new Capital Improvement Plan in the 4th quarter of 2021. We had intended to do it in 2020, but due to COVID, we were unable to do appropriate business outreach last year.

	Actual 2017	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Budget 2021
Prior Year Ending Fund Balance	601,584	836,754	731,231	930,442	861,818
Revenue	345,115	360,385	374,276	368,173	363,135
Expense	(109,946)	(465,907)	(175,065)	(436,797)	(808,791)
Net Profit/Loss	235,170	(105,523)	199,211	(68,624)	(445,656)
Ending Fund Balance	836,754	731,231	930,442	861,818	416,162

PLANNED 2021 ACTIVITIES

- Paving, Sidewalk, Forestry and Parks Work - the GID has \$125,000 for customary upgrades.
- DDA Alley – there is \$300,000 budgeted contribution to the DDA for the alley enhancement project planned for 2021 which includes two alleys: (1) Oak to Olive St, W of College Ave (Ace Hardware) and (2) Tenney Court to Mason Street adjacent to Civic Center Garage. The DDA's estimated project budget for development is \$3.4 million dollars.
- DDA Parks Maintenance - \$125,000 for a contribution to downtown parks maintenance to offset the additional functions the DDA has undertaken due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Oak Street Plaza - \$85,000 for Oak Street Plaza fountain system replacement.
- Downtown Holiday Lights – the GID is picking up the portion of the cost previously covered by the DBA, increasing the cost to the GID from \$55,000 to \$90,000.
- Capital Improvement Plan update – the GID is planning to produce a new capital improvement plan at the end of 2021. The GID will work with City departments, the DDA and business stakeholders to put together the priority capital projects for the next six years.
- Begin discussions for expansion of the GID area.