

Local Perspective on Economic Development

Soulsbyville Community

Characteristics and Values of the Community

The community of Soulsbyville exhibits a distinct set of characteristics and values. Initially established during the gold rush, it flourished due to the mine and gold mill. Eventually growing into a bedroom community, it has seen a notable shift, as vacation homes have transitioned to affordable permanent residential properties. The population centers, notably Willow Springs and Sierra Vista, have experienced a gradual transformation, with a demographic shift towards retirees. A number of industrial businesses exist in the center of the community.

Several concerns have developed by local residences. The community is split by the 108 Highway, which discourages individuals, particularly those on foot, to visit the other side. In addition, there has been increased traffic along 108 and a rise in commercial residences. Affordable housing has emerged as a pressing concern, in particular for middle-class housing options. It has been noted many long-standing families are departing in the process. There remains a palpable desire among newcomers for access to city amenities, underscoring the community's desire for both comfort and convenience.

Vision for the Future

The envisioned future for the community is one of balanced development, improved infrastructure, and a strong sense of identity. It's crucial to pursue development initiatives with careful consideration, ensuring they align with the community's needs and values.

A focus on improvements to traffic and accessibility, as well as development barriers, is a paramount. Due to congestion along Soulsbyville Road, strategic planning and infrastructure upgrades are needed. Improvement of bus stops and the creation of sidewalks and bike lanes will ensure safe and accessible passage throughout the area. A comprehensive review of Title 17 will streamline the development process, making it more efficient and responsive to community needs.

As this area is one of the last stops before climbing up into the mountains, this area is ideal to creating a stop along the way. Wayfinding and information efforts will help boost commerce in the area. Installing signage along Route 108 to showcase available restaurants and stores will not only benefit businesses but also enhance the overall experience for residents and visitors alike.

More attractions in the area will encourage visitors to stop and enjoy the area. A tour of the area or a "treasure hunt", emphasizing the mining history, boosted by historical photos, would highlight key points, would be a fun addition to the community. Other approaches to honor the rich history of Soulsbyville, would be an initiative to create landmarks and exhibits reminiscent of its past, such as the Silver Legacy Resort in Reno, Nevada. Establishing a visitors' bureau for Soulsbyville will promote tourism and provide valuable information about local amenities. This will once again realize a prior slogan, "Life's a Thrill in Soulsbyville!"

Needs of the Community

The community faces several challenges that impact its progress and well-being, alongside identified needs for improvement.

There's a pressing need for additional commercial and industrial developments. Its perceived however, the existing general plan doesn't actively support increased construction, raising concerns about the area's ability to accommodate growth. Other challenges include the skill level required for industrial field positions, the need for training facilities, and infrastructure limitations such as the absence of natural gas. All of which impact the attractiveness of Soulsbyville as a business location.

Collaboration with the county and other groups in the community is seen as crucial to facilitating workforce housing construction, addressing concerns about affordability and accessibility. The dilemma over utilizing available properties for short-term rentals versus long-term occupancy underscores broader discussions on housing stability and community cohesion.

Moreover, fears about intensified development exacerbating traffic congestion highlight the importance of infrastructure improvements. Such improvements would include signage, lighting, road improvements, and sidewalks.

And finally, access to essential emergency services and regular medical care, including pharmacies, clinics, doctors, and ambulance services, and full-time fire station, remains a priority for the community's well-being.

Ongoing Projects

The community is already witnessing several developments and activities that contribute to its vibrancy and convenience. Renowned for its desirable location free from heavy snowfall and rich historical heritage, it remains an ideal residential spot.

Infrastructure improvements include the installation of a cell tower near the Moose Lodge and the coming repairs to Crystal Falls Drive, reflect efforts to maintain infrastructure and enhance connectivity for residents and visitors.

The planned establishment of an AutoZone near Dollar Tree, the brewery near Papa's New Roost, as well as the opening of the Divine Market in Willow Springs, will add to the convenience of local shopping and dining options.

Housing developments like the proposed project like the condominiums on the corner of Mono and Standard suggest a growing interest in expanding residential offerings.

And a recent plan has been developed to have regular meetings to discuss local issues and projects, which would lead to more involvement and a more cohesive community.

Action Items to Bring Progress

1. Infrastructure Improvements

Infrastructure improvements include the establishment of additional and enhanced bus stops to cater to children's transportation needs, as well as the creation of lighting, road improvements, sidewalks and bike lanes to ensure safe passage throughout the area. In the future, a walking bridge over 108 would serve to join the two sides of the community together. Additional improvements, such as park-and-rides, charging stations, and public transportation stops will encourage more visitors to the area.

2. Fostering business growth

Take steps to improve Soulsbyville's visibility as a rest stop for visitors and a local business hub. Implementing signage along Route 108 to highlight available restaurants and other services. Moreover, this entails conducting an inventory of available commercial and residential spaces to attract entrepreneurs and developers, alongside rezoning efforts to facilitate more development opportunities.

3. Growing the Community's Identity

A welcome sign when entering the area will serve to identify the community. Additional landmarks and attractions that honor Soulsbyville's history will enhance navigation. And an app which explains the history, and list historical landmarks and services in the area, will serve locals and visitors alike.

4. Securing adequate funding

By actively seeking financial support from various sources, the community can ensure the necessary resources are available to bring its vision to fruition.