

## MEETING NOTES

July 30, 2008

Virginia City Nevada City

Historic Site Development Plan

### STAFF LUNCHEON

1. Nevada City – This is a gated attraction. It needs housing and better parking. New storage space is needed (+/- 5K to 10K plus storage for all of the carriages). And, restrooms are needed. It would be a great location for a historic produce garden. It needs to have some ADA accessibility. Also, retail gift shop space should be added at exit locations in an existing building. Possibly change the entry if needed. Storage building should have space for maintenance/operations and management.
2. Virginia City – This town should have more window interpretation, but this should be mixed with more living history interpretation rather than continuous window displays.
3. Storage Buildings – These should be placed in both towns rather than a central location.
4. Seasonal Housing for Staff – This can be addressed by several housing types including: rehab of existing houses, new historic looking homes, offsite employee village (mancamp trailer setup), back of building exhibits after collections are moved to storage buildings, small bungalows built on State Land. MHC needs around 40 to 50 beds for employees.

### ADVISORY GROUP

Participants included: Gary Forney, Amy Sullivan, Toni James, George Means, John Ellingson, John Hamilton, Linda Hamilton, Jim Jarvis, Bill Howell, Colin Mathews, Bob Nevin and Billy Doyle.

1. Visitor Center – This could be located at Central City or near the old sewage lagoons and linked to the towns with the train. Or, it could be at the Kid's fishing pond and have bus access to the towns. But, the majority of the visitor traffic comes from Ennis, --- so the visitor center should be east of VC. Might need some smaller visitor center on both ends of town. In the past VC and NC have had problems with getting enough volunteers to man a visitor center. However, if housing is provided then volunteers could be recruited.
2. Curatorial Center – some people think that this is a visitor center and it is confusing. Better signage is needed.
3. MHC Storage Buildings – These could be placed near a visitor center at Central City. Also, private storage buildings may help with this need.
4. Information at Entries – A great need exists for Informational Center at both entries to VC
5. Kid's Fishing Pond – Restrooms are needed.
6. Private home rental rooms – These must be for a minimum of 30 days.
7. Daylight Village – this area needs to be demolished or rehabilitated due to many safety and construction problems.
8. Terrace Motel – If this could be purchased it would provide 12 units in good condition.
9. Gas Station – It is needed but folks are concerned that it won't come to town since the numbers of users are so low. Maybe it is a credit card only station
10. Shoulder Season – September and October would be great, however the spring months typically have bad weather.
11. Other Area Recreational Opportunities – Need to incorporate all the nearby recreational opportunities including, BLM, FS lands, high altitude training, birding, snowmobiling, etc.

12. Fire Fighting Access – this needs to be maintained on public lands.
13. Entry Corridors – These need to be cleaned up and the DEQ regs may easily make this possible.
14. Funding – In the past the State, County and Town has not followed through with much funding to assist the tourism marketing and improvement efforts.
15. Zoning in the County – This has been very controversial, but some control is needed for the entry corridors and hillsides.
16. Clean-Up – A great deal of old items (perceived as junk by visitors) exists on private property along the freeway and many public streets. Cleaning up of these areas would present a much better first impression to visitors.

#### TOUR OF FACILITIES WITH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1. East Entry - The most prominent location for an entry informational kiosk or center (on the east end of Virginia City) is at the old Gas Station.
2. Daylight Village – This has huge safety issues and at least 40% of the structures should be demolished. Flooding issues exist via the creek and its impact upon two historic buildings.
3. Terrace Motel – If the owner would consider selling this could provide an immediate replacement for the housing in Daylight Village.
4. Bove’s Old House – This will serve as a dorm, but needs some cleanup and safety issues corrected.
5. Brewery Park – This is to remain as a park, however, two vacant parcels to the west could become parking or other needed facility development sites.
6. The Old Church – This could become a much needed community meeting room and conference center.
7. Public Parking – The existing public lot is privately owned and currently leased by the State. This arrangement should be turned into a good long-term arrangement to guarantee its longevity. Additional land exists for parking lot expansion behind the in town MHC office.
8. Depot Parking – The parking could be designed to be much more efficient and a better trail connector should be developed to town.
9. Fishing Pond – This should be developed into an attractive Park with restrooms and adequate parking and trail connections.
10. Trail Master Plan - The City is currently working on the trail system and the MHC planning efforts should be coordinated with this effort.
11. Waste Transfer Site – The current site is detrimental to the visitor’s perception of the area. It could be moved or screened to create a more inviting entry gateway on the west side of Virginia City.
12. Employee RV Park – This could be developed to the north end of Nevada City.
13. Storage – The two most convenient sites for MHC storage appear to be east of Nevada City and at the old Bove House for Virginia City collections and storage. Storage buildings should be 2-story with vehicular access.
14. Nevada City Gift Shop – A Gift Shop should be developed for Nevada City at the exit as visitor’s leave.
15. Nevada City Parking – This is not organized and is quite unsafe. It should be designed to designated crossing and organized parking. If the majority of parking occurs on the west side the highway it will improve the visual quality of Nevada City and create a better pedestrian atmosphere.
16. Nevada City Depot – This facility has restrooms and a small gift shop. A more park like gathering area could be developed near this building.

17. Play Structures – Currently no play structures exist for families with young children. This could easily be added to the Brewery Park or Depot Park.
18. Trail between Virginia City and Nevada City – This could be developed as a Stage Coach Trail attraction.

#### EVENING WORKSHOP MEETING

1. Bozeman Trail – The Bozeman trail is in near the water tank up on the hill and is not currently marked. This could be an additional attraction that could be developed with interpretive information.
2. Parking for Virginia City Visitors – Two main lots could be the one by the community Center and the one above the MHC offices.
3. Restrooms – Restrooms are needed at multiple locations.
4. Boardwalk – The boardwalk has a great deal of deferred maintenance and no one entity seems to be in charge of the boardwalk. Most of it is within the ROW and either the Town of VC or the MHC needs to take charge. Most businesses would participate if they could get some matching funds to help defer costs.
5. Visitor Center – The old gas station would be a good location for a small welcoming center.
6. Old Church Building – This would be a great meeting hall, but it will need a kitchen and restrooms.
7. Commercialization – Virginia City is authentic because it is not developed with a great deal of non historic commercial entities and should stay that way.
8. Runaway trucks are a problem in town a few times per year. The MDT should look into additional signage at the top of the hill and also add another truck ramp closer to the east edge of Virginia City.
9. Parking Configuration – The Town used to have angle parking, -- now it has parallel which seems to work ok. Possibly eliminate some parking from the fronts of the MHC owned buildings? Maybe a By-pass around town for trucks?
10. 3-Season Tourism and Gas Station – They are not currently economically viable, however, they should be planned for know so that what they look like and where they are located can be planned appropriately.
11. Enforcement of Codes – A small portion of people believe that the Town does not fairly regulate its enforcement of the existing codes.
12. Signage and Marketing – Most people feel that both these items can be improved upon.
13. Scenic Byway Designation – This was attempted 3 times, but legislature turned it down for unknown reasons.
14. National Heritage Area – This designation would be required in order for the VC NC Area to be shown on the scenic byway map.
15. Main Guidelines – 1) Protect historic buildings, 2) Protect Collection and 3) Maintain a historic town for the residents to enjoy. --- These 3 guidelines should be followed closely for all planning decisions.

#### OVERNIGHT ACCOMODATIONS

1. Fairweather Inn – This Inn has 12 guest rooms and 3 staff rooms. Rooms have restrooms, but only tubs, --- no showers. Beds are doubles, not queens, no internet access or TV's, and phone is located in the lobby only.
2. Bed and Breakfasts – There are 4 B&B's in Virginia City which have a total of 20 rooms.
3. Nevada City – This area has 15 guest cabins with restrooms and one for staff. Also, the old hotel has 13 guest rooms with one for staff
4. Total Rooms - The total number of rooms in Virginia City and Nevada City combined is 60 rooms.

5. Occupancy – For the 3 month season the average only a 50% overall occupancy.
6. Number of Nights – 75% are a one night stay, some are a 2 night stay and very few are over a two night stay.
7. Websites – [aldergulchaccomodations.com](http://aldergulchaccomodations.com) and [stonehouseinnbb.com](http://stonehouseinnbb.com) – in addition the accommodations are listed on the Travel Montana gold west links.