

Lander Economic Development Association
Half Cent Economic Development Tax
Recommendations to the City of Lander
November 26, 2024

Funds Available: \$ 667,316.38

Summary

- LIFT received 3 applications that were eligible for funding. Total funding request of all applications \$566,822.
- LIFT Committee recommends funding 3 projects for a total of \$427,617.

Breakdown of Applications and Recommendations:

NOLS Fest 60th Anniversary Celebration:

- Requested \$60,000 of total project cost of \$213,460
- Project Description
 - o In September 2025 NOLS will commemorate their 60th anniversary by holding a festival in Lander, the birthplace of NOLS.
 - o The festival will take place over six days including a faculty summit, outdoor skills workshops, and community-building events, fostering connections between alumni, students, staff, faculty, business partners, and the Lander community.
- Vision
 - o This is the largest NOLS event ever held. It will showcase Lander to hundreds of faculty and staff from around the country and the world. It will also bring in high profile speakers, and partner organizations such as the University of Wyoming, University of Utah, Black Diamond, MSR, North Face, and Patagonia; all who have a strong interest in outdoor recreation.
 - o The NOLS Fest will culminate in a large park event and community dinner, fostering meaningful connections among 500+ participants.
- Economic Benefit
 - o The event will attract visitors and participants from across the country and world. Visitors will require lodging, meals, and transportation, and will provide a boost to local hotels, restaurants, and retail shops. The average attendee will stay at least 3 to 4 days.
 - o Nearly all of the costs of the NOLS Fest will stay in Lander. NOLS will engage local vendors, a project manager, caterers, and service providers for food, equipment rentals, and logistics.
 - o NOLS expects that Lander's outdoor attractions such as hiking trails and climbing areas will encourage attendees to explore the region, resulting in longer or recurring stays and increased local spending.
- Discussion
 - o There was discussion that this project will result in a continued development of positive relationships between NOLS and the larger Lander community.

- Recommendation
 - o LIFT scored project at 65
 - o LIFT recommends that project be funded at 100% = \$60,000

Lander Girls Softball League Complex Improvements:

- Requested \$456,822
- Project Description
 - o The only fields available to the Lander Girls Softball League (LGSL) are in dire need of upgrade.
- Vision
 - o The softball fields have been in decline for several years causing safety concerns. Issues include non-functioning scoreboards, a lack of storage for equipment, backstops and fencing that are in disrepair, poor lighting for the fields including leaning light poles, and dugouts with large cracks that are trip hazards. In addition they would like to improve the playground (which is a sandpit often full of wasps) and want to create some shade for spectators.
- Economic Benefit
 - o The LGSL has been growing rapidly over the past few years, taking six teams to the State tournament this year, which resulted in one team championship and three placing as runner-up. The dream of the LGSL is to eventually field a high school team. Fields are also used by a substantial number of adult leagues during the summer.
 - o The state of the fields currently does not allow Lander to host tournaments or have evening games. Since Lander is centrally located, tournaments would be well attended, bringing in hundreds of players and fans staying multiple nights in Lander.
- Discussion
 - o There was discussion about the ownership of the property, which is leased by the City of Lander. If there are concerns about putting permanent improvements on leased property, perhaps a long term agreement could be negotiated with the School District.
 - o The LGSL is a totally volunteer organization with passionate players and parents, who try to keep registration fees within reach of all girls wishing to play, leaving very limited funds for the basics such as uniforms, equipment, etc.
 - o If the City Council has a ceiling on the amount to award, LGSL has a budget list by priority. A small amount of this budget includes items such as a storage container and shelving that would be portable.
- Recommendation
 - o LIFT scored project at 53
 - o LIFT recommends the project be funded at 75% = \$342,617

Lander Spin Zone Arcade

- Requested \$50,000 of total cost of \$62,096
- Project Description
 - o Purchase of 14 arcade machines to go into a new business holding an arcade, study lounge, and laundromat.
- Vision
 - o The Lander Spin Zone will include an arcade, a place for teens and young adults to hang out in a safe and positive environment. There is a resurgence of arcade popularity due to both retro and modern interactive gaming.
 - o Also included in the 2520 sq. ft. building will be a separate room with a comfortable study lounge, and another room with a laundromat and kids play area.
- Economic Benefit
 - o The business will provide 3 – 5 new jobs.
 - o The arcade will be used by tourists, families and youth in town for sports tournaments, something that is not currently available in Lander.
 - o It will contribute to the quality of life in Lander.
- Discussion
 - o The applicant is expecting to close in the next few days on funding through the Wind River Development Fund. They have an agreement for the purchase of land and a contractor lined up to erect a metal building Total project cost is expected to be around \$400,000..
- Recommendation
 - o LIFT scored project at 44
 - o LIFT recommends project be funded at 50% = \$25,000