

MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
CONDENSED BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 24, 2026

DRAFT

A Regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency was held on Tuesday, March 24, 2026 in the Hal Fraser Conference Room, 140 W. Pine St., and via Microsoft Teams at 12:00 p.m. Those in attendance were as follows:

Board: Karl Englund, Tasha Jones, Ruth Reineking, Melanie Brock, Jack Lawson, Mike Nugent - City Council Ex-Officio Board Member

Staff: Ellen Buchanan, Annie Gorski, Michael Hicks, Ashley Warren, Jilayne Dunn, Lesley Pugh

Public: Mayor Davis, Dale Bickell, Andy Schultz, Tyson O'Connell, Sam Oliver, Kellee Boland, Mark Sindell, Josiah Brown, Carrie Schreiber, Travis Mateer, Katie Fairbanks, Martin Kidston, Kevin Davis, MCAT

CALL TO ORDER

12:00 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[February 19, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes](#) were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Travis Mateer, resident, read a poem he wrote on Targeted Economic Development Districts (TEDD) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF). He said he does not want to see County money set the stage for annexation down the road and TIF to come in. He said a less improved Reserve Street should be part of the outreach efforts.

ACTION ITEMS

[Franklin Crossing – 1919 North Avenue West \(formerly North MRL Triangle\) \(URD III / Ward 4\) – Request for Funding Reservation \(Buchanan\)](#)

Mayor Davis said she is ecstatic that Administration can bring forward this partnership proposal to the Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA). This parcel has long been part of the redevelopment planning process and most recently MRA carried through with a City Council Resolution and directive to not only deconstruct the existing warehouses there but also undertake a redevelopment planning process. That resulted in a significant amount of community and neighborhood input. The Missoula Economic Partnership (MEP) and others have been working with the MRA and Mayor's Office to take a look at an opportunity that

Missoula Housing Authority (MHA) and United Housing Partners (UHP) have put together. It includes building a substantial affordable housing and mixed-use development including some home ownership on the property known as North Montana Rail Link (MRL) Triangle.

Mayor Davis said the City, through MRA and Parks & Recreation, purchased twelve acres from MRL in 2017. It was bought with the intention of building a park there to serve the neighborhood and make trail connections which was completed in 2019. The remaining 8 acres are poised for redevelopment. The City has the opportunity, through a partnership with MHA and UHP, to build deed-restricted affordable housing apartments ranging from 30% Area Median Income (AMI) up to 70% AMI. Currently, the project calls for 193 of those units and also includes up to 33 market-rate townhomes. She said that meets the diverse home types they heard a desire for from the public planning process which was done by GGLO. It also meets the goals of the Midtown Master Plan (MMP) and all of the City's housing policies.

Mayor Davis said most recently she undertook a Land Use Task Force approach to develop a strategy for how the City can best deploy its 45 acres that are poised for redevelopment, this site being one of them. The main strategy that came out of the task force is that they need to be looking at City lands for redevelopment as a mosaic. They are not going to meet every goal on every site, but as they look across the different sites they want to see how they can meet numerous community goals similarly. Midtown Commons is currently underway and meeting attainable housing goals, a neighborhood park and much needed community connections in that part of town. Mayor Davis said there is a complementary opportunity on this property of providing deed-restricted affordable housing with a very diverse number of incomes and home types offered, with opportunities for market-rate home ownership. Adjacent to the Bitterroot Branch Trail, it hits the mark in a number of different ways including redevelopment of the site which has been talked about for over ten years now.

Mayor Davis said Administration pivoted quickly on this opportunity when the project team brought this forward because they are taking advantage of state financing that has been made available through the Legislature for low-income revolving loan funds that complement the full package. She said Administration is requesting that the MRA put a placeholder in the Urban Renewal District (URD) III budget in order for there to be a reservation of funds showing a commitment. When the project partners can put forward a competitive proposal showing that the City of Missoula has such substantial skin in the game it increases their chance of getting funding. It is a very competitive process at the State level. Affordable housing is needed in every corner of the state. Mayor Davis said the City will not be contributing public dollars for the market-rate housing portion of the project. UHP will buy that land directly from the City and work with the private sector to build those homes.

Mayor Davis said this project tees up many goals happening in the community to meet really critical price points. This gets rentals all the way from 30-70% AMI and market-rate home ownership. It bolsters the economic vitality of Midtown. She said the Missoula Midtown Association (MMA) did a process of knocking on doors of neighbors and asking them what they want to see on the site. This project really illustrates and embodies a lot of what they heard, and it is certainly what the City heard during the public process that MRA recently

conducted with GGLO. She said she is happy to bring this forward and hopes to have the MRA Board's support.

Buchanan said the project has two components, the rental project and the market-rate "missing middle" townhomes. MRA is looking at a request for a reservation of \$9.7 million which has two different components to it. One is infrastructure which is \$2.9 million to construct. The second is the gap in the funding to make the income-qualified housing pencil which is \$6.8 million. One of the things staff found in working with the Workforce Housing Program (WHP) and looking at what goes on in other communities and states is that if the City can provide a project that has a subsidy that is under \$100,000 per door then they have probably been pretty successful. She said the City's WHP applies to 60% AMI and up. In this particular project there are 132 apartments that are in that 60-70% AMI range, and if you take that and apply the subsidy it is \$51,500 per door which is a bargain in this world.

Buchanan said the Board action requested today is a little bit out of the ordinary. They are trying to demonstrate to the other funding sources the commitment the City has to this project. It will go a long way toward the development team being able to secure the needed 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and also the State's GO Housing fund, which appears to be incredibly competitive in this first round. Buchanan said LIHTC funding will not be determined until October which is in the City's Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27). She said the request is that the Board approve a set aside/commitment to the \$9.7 million in the FY27 budget. In all likelihood it will get pushed out to FY28 because once the tax credits are secured there is still about ten months' worth of work that has to be done before closing.

Tyson O'Connell, UHP, and Sam Oliver, MHA, were present to speak about the project. O'Connell thanked the Mayor and MRA staff for the summary. He said it is a very complex project and there are seventeen sources of funding to make the project work. He said it is not the way they want to do business, it is the way they have to do business. In order to make this happen they have to cobble together different resources. The City's investment is the biggest part. In April, they want to be able to tell the Board of Housing that Missoula has given them the reservation of over \$9 million contingent on them getting 9% credits. It will go a long way because there are a lot of projects across the state that will be competing for those 9% credits.

O'Connell said UHP is currently working on a rehab of the Wildflower Apartments with MHA. MHA came to UHP to see if something could be done with this site and UHP was excited about it and they have been working really hard on it. He said it seems like a great opportunity with the timing and when they mentioned it to the City they moved fast on it. Sam Oliver, MHA, said he feels extremely fortunate to be in the seat he sits in because right now a lot of public housing authorities are in shortfall and experiencing a lot of difficulties. Through very wonderful leadership preceding him, MHA is a high-performing housing authority and are positioned well to do this project. Unfortunately, they get harder and harder every year. He said to be able to partner with a developer who has done this and proven success throughout the state gives him great confidence. Everybody from the top down has bought into this and been excited to participate. Oliver said he feels fortunate and lucky for the community that they are putting together a project for Missoulians by all Missoulians at the table here. Buchanan said the fact this is in URD III, which has by and far the most capacity of the URDs and may be able to be done without issuing debt, is

another reason the stars have aligned on this. If not for the URD and TIF that can manage to support this size of a request, they would not be talking about this project today. Those that say it will get built anyway are wrong. Mayor Davis said they talk about this in theory all the time, but for folks who are living with limited means to have the opportunity to be in a vibrant community surrounded by services and adjacent to a pedestrian trail is a unique opportunity.

Mayor Davis said she wanted to address the timing because it is a multi-step timing the developers will be going through. The Board of Housing requires a Letter of Intent (LOI) that is submitted. It is due April 10th. The LOI will be submitted along with a Letter of Commitment from the City. UHP and MHA will make a presentation for the project to the Board of Housing in May along with all the other applicants. From there, the Board of Housing makes a selection on applications. She said you have to be selected to apply for the project, and then some real significant investment goes in on behalf of the developers in terms of the actual development application to the Board of Housing. That is due in August. In October, the Board of Housing makes an allocation award decision. This project will have 9% tax credits which are competitive and essential for project feasibility. She said they expect it will be approved, but if it happens to not go through it will be based solely on the competitiveness at the State level.

Reineking asked about the 9% tax credits and if there are limits. O'Connell said the maximum you can get for a project is \$8.5 million in 9% tax credits. That is what they will be asking for along with most of the other projects. He said last year there were 14 at LOI stage and they do not know how many there will be this year. If you make it to the second stage the Board of Housing narrows it down to eight or less. When they make the awards in October it is announced live in a public meeting. If they make an award but it is less than the ask they will have to figure out how to fill the gap. O'Connell said he doesn't think the Board of Housing would cut it in half or even three-quarters because that makes the project unfeasible and they know it would kill the project. Englund asked what the total amount is that the Board of Housing has to award. O'Connell said it is around \$33 million which will fund four or five projects.

Englund asked if the Board of Housing prefers to fund a small number of big projects. O'Connell said they have a lot of different criteria and like to fund both urban and rural projects, small and large projects, and rehabs and new construction. He said one of the things they have found is "bang for their buck" matters. They will be competing with other 9% projects that are after 30-45 units. By twinning this and making it into a condo, they will go to the Board of Housing and say if they give one tax credit award they can get 192 deed-restricted units in Missoula because of all the other sources. They may be looking at another project that is 30-40 units and will have to make that decision. Englund said this will become a thing where they can tell the Board of Housing they have it as locked down as they can get it right now. O'Connell said yes and that is huge. They will be presenting live against other projects to Board members who are interested in how they will invest their funds. If the Mayor can say they have a \$9.7 million commitment from the City of Missoula on a 9% award, and other Mayors are doing the same thing, they hope what they have is a very large and compelling case.

Englund asked what will be done with the \$9.7 million reserved for the project. Buchanan said several months ago a column was added to the Budget Status Reports that anticipates capital investments in future years so they didn't have to show up in the current year and possibly show the budget in the hole. If approved, it will be approved as FY27 committed funds, and in all likelihood it will move out to FY28. Englund asked if an actual proposal for approval will come to the Board. Buchanan said yes. She said it is not a final number or distribution. The numbers are based on estimates that could change and the financing will go into infrastructure and housing. There is a lot of work still to be done, but it will show the City of Missoula's commitment to the project in real numbers.

Lawson asked at what point in time the MRA will see an actual request if the developers are successful at the Board of Housing. O'Connell said it will come back very close to when they are successful, so potentially October. Englund asked if the other sixteen funding sources will just fall into line. O'Connell said by then they might. There will be tons of work and resources along with financial investments to get through August, but they will be working on them simultaneously. That is how it has to be done and it cannot wait. Buchanan said they will know about the State's GO Housing fund grant in June. O'Connell said if everything goes right, they would be targeting an August/September 2027 closing which is as fast as they can practically do it. That will be in the City's FY28.

Lawson congratulated them for working through the complicated work so quickly. He said MRA worked hard to develop a program that would allow the use of TIF for workforce housing and this feels like an incredibly powerful fit if they can get it done. He asked if the idea is that UHP will build everything. O'Connell said MHA and UHP are co-developers and co-owners. They are in this hand in hand as part of a tax credit ownership and are doing both together. UHP is not just developing it and leaving it to the MHA, they have a long-term ownership stake in it. Lawson asked if management and ownership of the apartments will also be done jointly. O'Connell said MHA may not manage this based on their current capacity. They may manage it, the deal is still two years out, but they did not want to commit to that right now. There is a third-party management company that is very good that can handle managing this property. O'Connell said UHP is buying the land at the appraised value that the townhomes will go on.

Lawson asked if the idea for the apartments is that various tiers of AMI will be sprinkled throughout. O'Connell said they have big ambitions for it and are working through it right now. They are trying to provide senior housing as part of the project in one of the buildings. It is very complex when there are this many resources. They are going to the experts to figure it out and get a formal opinion next week on whether they can do it or not. Mayor Davis called it a "regulatory vortex" where all of these things have to meet. From a conceptual perspective it all sounds good, but really, they have to meet funding requirements, Fair Housing, the balance of the tax credit equation, etc. Nugent said the senior housing would be frosting on this project. Mayor Davis said what O'Connell is talking about is dedicated senior housing. The reality of a project like this getting built is that seniors will live there. This opportunity would be something targeted specifically for seniors. Englund asked if it would be a wing of a building. O'Connell said it has to be a whole building under Fair Housing rules.

Jones said the Board understands the complexity of this because the property has been deeply studied by professionals who aided them to understand the complexity of it and engaged very deeply with the public. She said she expects that significant work has made this a very competitive project when they look at potential approval from the Board of Housing. O'Connell said he hopes so, they didn't just think this up, it is very close to what GGLO designed. The different options that were presented to the neighbors that they commented on are a little bit different arrangement, but the same concept including deed-restricted housing with for sale townhomes. Jones said from her perspective and having learned this as they went, it is that work that makes the City have this opportunity be available. It's not just the will of the Mayor and City that wants it, it is the work that has been done that allows us to be nimble in this moment to avail themselves of the opportunity. She said when they looked at the numbers it seemed very unlikely they could achieve the type of affordable housing they are looking at right now. She said it seems to her they are poised to be very competitive. O'Connell said there is an annual cycle for 9% credits, but the GO Housing is a one-time funding source. It won't be around next year, so if they don't get it this year and have to come back next year it will be a different request and they will have to have a backup plan. It will be a lesser project or require more subsidy. Jones gave kudos to the work of all the people that made this moment possible. Buchanan said one of the entities that really needs to be recognized here is MRL. They sold the City the property at 60-75% less than market value. Out of that, the City has gotten a four-acre park and is developing eight acres into 225 homes for folks in Missoula. She said when the townhomes are sold, if you apply the \$15/square foot that the City paid for the property behind Bob Ward's, about \$1.35 million is a pretty good return on investment and a great gift that MRL has given to the City. Englund went back even further and said when URD III was established this piece of property was identified as developable. For years the City tried to work with MRL. He said you don't run a railroad by giving away railroad, and so they were very cautious. One of the things MRL, Mayor Kadas and Mayor Engen did was to keep paging through that process until they reached a point where the City could secure the property and able to do so with a huge donation from MRL. Englund said it has been a systematic, business-like process from the very beginning.

Brock said as someone who has been impatient with this parcel for a long time, the business owners and residents of this neighborhood are one step closer to this certainty that for over seven years they have been hoping for in what is going to be the ultimate future of this land.

BROCK: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD APPROVE A REQUEST FROM THE MISSOULA HOUSING AUTHORITY TO ALLOCATE \$9,700,000 OF URD III TIF FUNDING AS A PLACEHOLDER FOR THE FRANKLIN CROSSING PROJECT LOCATED AT 1919 NORTH AVENUE WEST AND DIRECT STAFF TO REFLECT THAT AMOUNT IN THE URD III BUDGET AS "FY27 COMMITTED" WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PROJECT IS DEPENDENT ON MULTIPLE FUNDING SOURCES OUTSIDE OF THE CONTROL OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OR THE CITY AND THE FINAL REQUEST WILL COME BACK TO THE BOARD FOR APPROVAL AFTER ALL OF THE NECESSARY FUNDING IS COMMITTED.

Reineking seconded the motion.

Travis Mateer, resident, spoke to who would manage the property and offered resources for the age-restricted, subsidized housing. He said he has worked for the Poverello Center and Missoula Aging Services and related his past experiences and concerns for seniors' safety in mixed housing. He suggested having lawyers on staff or accessible to help older people protect themselves from the predators that exist when talking about subsidized housing.

Martin Kidston, Missoula Current, asked if the City is donating or selling the subsidized portion of the land to this project and what the estimated cost is of the subsidized portion when fully built. Buchanan said the request is that the land that is needed for the income-qualified housing would be donated to the development group. The townhomes would be sold at appraised value to UHP. The total project cost is envisioned to be around \$67 million.

Carrie Schreiber, resident, said she is encouraged by the public benefit and process, and also that Washington Corp. (MRL) sold it below market value. She asked if the third-party management company is local. O'Connell said they are a proven tax code and management company and manage many other units throughout Montana. Mayor Davis added that not just anybody gets to manage these and there are stipulations and requirements through the Board of Housing. All of this is yet to be determined. Schreiber said most of the seniors she has spoken with want to be in a mixed generation building, not isolated. She said she also hears the safety concerns that were brought up.

Nugent thanked Mayor Davis for having the foresight to create the Land Use Task Force and give the space for the City to be creative in ways like this. He also thanked MEP for being a good partner with both the MRA and the City and taking advantage of those opportunities to get the right people in the room to bring these creative ideas forward. He said the City wasn't always doing this, and sometimes people think these decisions are made in silence, but they aren't. They all interrelate with each other and the things being done in Midtown across the board paved the way for this opportunity. Englund said the other thing is that the project will go before City Council and it will be back to MRA with the details. Nugent said if this all goes through, it is 192 units of permanent, affordable housing plus market-rate workforce housing and they wouldn't be able to do any of that if the City didn't have TIF funding. He said this is a poster project in why it is important that the City of Missoula has MRA and has this partnership. Brock said it is because of Nugent and his award as "Midtowner of the Year" last year that he pushed a master plan for this and to not let that parcel sit there. She said he is part of the long list of people to thank. Englund said the neighborhood deserves this and they have put up with a lot.

No further discussion. No further public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (5 ayes, 0 nays).

[Johnson Street Water Main \(URD III / Ward 4\) – Request to Approve Soliciting Design and Engineering Services \(Dunn\)](#)

Dunn introduced this request from the Board to move forward with a water line project that hasn't already been discussed as part of the City's Community Investment Program (CIP). Staff have had several inquiries from the current owner and two different developers wanting to develop housing on a piece of property that is on the corner of Johnson Street

and Sussex Avenue. There is currently no water service to the property. The two blocks north of this at Central and Kent Avenues has the same situation. MRA has a partnership with Public Works & Mobility (PWM) and are working to connect all of the water mains to provide adequate fire suppression and fire hydrant water flow rates. Dunn said she has been working with Andy Schultz, PWM, to see what can be done to help the small parcels develop. Also, as part of the larger project at North MRL that was just discussed, there will need to be more water flow.

Dunn said Schultz has proposed this project to connect the water main that comes down South Avenue. There is a new water main that MRA installed on North Avenue, so this project will connect those two and meet all the connections to the west on Kent Avenue, Central Avenue and Sussex Avenue. That will allow all of the parcels in the area to have adequate fire suppression to move forward with redevelopment.

Dunn said the request today is for the Board to approve moving forward with solicitation of design and engineering services. It will come back to the Board after that process moves forward with a scope for design and engineering. PWM has a pre-approved short list of design engineers and Schultz will move forward with soliciting those services from one of those firms. Dunn said there is a cost estimate on page 3 of her memo. Estimated costs are approximately \$1.1 million. This would be the only project MRA would do in FY26 as far as design over the summer, construction bids over the winter and award construction in the spring of 2027.

Lawson asked if the Board typically needs to approve solicitation of design and engineering services. Buchanan said yes, the Board requested several months ago that if they are not presented in the CIP they would like to see them before MRA gets started on them.

LAWSON: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD AUTHORIZE STAFF TO WORK WITH PUBLIC WORKS AND MOBILITY TO SOLICIT DESIGN AND ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR WATER MAIN INSTALLATION WORK ON JOHNSON STREET, SUSSEX AVENUE, CENTRAL AVENUE AND KENT AVENUE.

Reineking seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (5 ayes, 0 nays).

NON-ACTION ITEMS

[Reserve to Scott Master Plan – Update from GGLO](#) [GGLO Power Point Presentation](#)

Gorski said in January the Board approved a contract with GGLO for the Reserve to Scott Master Plan. They were present online to provide a quick update. She highlighted that the public engagement for the project is taking off. There is an open house planned for April 2nd at Lowell Elementary School from 5:00-6:30pm. For those interested, they can refer to Engage Missoula for more information.

Mark Sindell, GGLO, congratulated MRA for the movement on the North MRL Triangle property. He said it is exciting to see it come to life in its next iteration.

Sindell said GGLO has been working on Reserve to Scott for the last six weeks. They have had a strong start and good engagement with Story House and Roseburg and are optimistic about them as partners. GGLO will be doing a lot of outreach and engagement at the end of March through the beginning of April.

Josiah Brown, GGLO, gave an overview of what they have been up to so far. They are analyzing conditions of the study area and looking at transportation improvements, market conditions, TIF generation, infrastructure improvements and overall development and implementation strategies. GGLO has a number of goals for this project including understanding what the community wants to see here including the landowners, stakeholders and the broader community. They also want to understand what is feasible from a market standpoint and physical planning standpoint. Brown said they hope to cast a vision for this area of what it can become. To achieve that, GGLO will be recommending infrastructure improvements and creating a clear roadmap so the plans can become a reality.

Brown said the project will happen in four phases and they are currently in Phase 1 analysis. They are gathering information and will be taking that input and starting to draft the Master Plan during Phases 2 and 3. The final phase will be adoption. All along the way there will be opportunities for stakeholders, technical experts and community feedback. GGLO visited in February and had meetings with City and County departments, utility companies, Mountain Line and Montana Department of Transportation. Their next trip will continue meetings with Roseburg and Story House and include a community open house and a business and landowners' open house.

Brown said all along the way the Master Plan will be informed by three different areas: stakeholder input, market demands and realities, and infrastructure needs and possibilities. All of them work together to create a feasible Master Plan. Part of this project is Phase 1 of the annexation being completed earlier this year, and at the conclusion of this Master Plan project there are plans for a Phase 2 annexation of the remaining property into the City. GGLO will also be looking at land use and how they can apply the 2025 Land Use Plan to this site.

Sindell said it is a gem of a site, and they will be looking at drone footage and 3D modeling to convey to the public. He said a strong partnership and working closely with Roseburg and Story House will be important. Transitions, edges, connectivity and placemaking will be very important components. It will be important for GGLO to think through all of it holistically as connections and transportation components are a pretty big deal.

Jones said GGLO is very important to MRA's processes and is very valuable to the project being proposed at North MRL Triangle. She said GGLO is so helpful in communicating very complicated issues in a way that is consumable to everyone because there are so many people that are important to the processes. Jones thanked Sindell and Brown for the way they also make sure what they are doing is feasible. It is so important so that when opportunities arise the City and its partners are poised to act.

Carrie Schreiber, resident, said she appreciates there will be a separate open house for business and landowners. She said they found through the Southgate Triangle and Midtown Commons process that the area stakeholders really would like to be involved and have a seat at the table. She asked if any of the open space will be preserved in the development process. Sindell said that in the details GGLO will spend part of the next several months sorting out.

STAFF REPORTS

Director's Report

Buchanan said the NRSS URD boundary amendment will go to City Council next week and a public hearing will be set for April 20th. Hicks said it will center on the Phase 1 annexation property which was recently approved by City Council and includes the parcels owned by Story House and Roseburg.

Ravara Contingency

Gorski said the project is moving forward. Applications are open through Front Step for the Community Land Trust homes through April 10th. Phase 1 completion of the home ownership project is anticipated in June.

FY26 Budget Status Reports

Dunn noted MRA should be sitting at 50% of its tax increment receipts but is not. It is related to the City receiving accurate reports from the County. The cash may actually be sitting over there but if the reports don't tie out then they can't make the deposit into the appropriate funds. Buchanan noted the Business Improvement District (BID) is dealing with the same issues.

FY26 Staff Activities Reports (12/13/25 – 2/7/26)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

OTHER ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lesley Pugh