



TO: MRA Board of Commissioners

FROM: Ellen Buchanan, Director *EB*

DATE: April 11, 2026

SUBJECT: Director's Report

Downtown Safety, Accessibility, Mobility RAISE Grant – Downtown SAM

- The Project Leadership Team (PLT) thoroughly reviewed the 60% design and the most current cost estimates from Jackson. The project is still over budget in spite of reductions in scope as a result of the 30% design stage review. We have recommended further reductions in the project by identifying elements that can be done as part of later projects and that can be modified or removed from the scope without adversely impacting the grant funding. The PLT has directed the design team to work diligently with the general contractor to identify any remaining cost savings and has made a commitment to exploring additional funding that can be brought to the project. Additional TIF funding is one of those potential sources. The design team is working on 90% construction documents incorporating the reductions identified by the PLT. We will also be bidding some of the most important elements that are not currently in the base bid as alternates that can be added back to the scope if funding can be identified.
- The Working Group will meet again on April 24th to discuss the current scope of the project and how we are addressing the project budget. After the Working Group meeting, there will be an informational open house, at a date to be finalized, to share the current design of the various elements of the project and modifications necessitated by the budget constraints.

Midtown Projects & Planning Efforts

- North MRL Triangle Redevelopment/Franklin Crossing – Heritage Timber has completed deconstruction and is in the process of removing materials from the site. MRA and other City staff are working with Camp Mak a Dream and Hope Rescue Mission in their efforts to identify new locations. Missoula Housing Authority (MHA) and United Housing Partners (UHP) were able to assemble all of the necessary documents and agreements required to apply for the Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and the State's GO Housing low interest loan funding. The applications are due to the State by April 13 and there will be a required presentation to the Montana Board of Housing on May 11. The Mayor will be a part of that presentation. Awards of the GO Housing funding will be announced in June and LIHTC awards will be announced in October.

- Midtown Commons (formerly Southgate Crossing) – The City continues to work with Miramonte Companies to finalize the agreements necessary to close on the sale of the property and begin development. Miramonte’s goal is to begin construction on the residential units behind Bob Wards this summer. The Parks Department continues to refine the design of the new park that will be part of the development. Annette and the City Attorney have been successful in their work with the owners of Southgate Mall to modify some of the covenants on the property located adjacent to this development and Mary Avenue which the Board has approved TIF funding to purchase. The plan is to have a simultaneous closing where the City will purchase the property and immediately convey it to Miramonte. It would be ideal if we could also close on the sale of City owned property in Midtown Commons at the same time.

North Reserve/Scott Street URD

- Ravara – Construction of the first phase of condominiums has been slightly delayed but is nearing completion. The majority of these homes are part of the workforce housing and, as such, income qualified. Screening of potential purchasers is ongoing and the homes should be available for purchase in early summer.
- Roseburg Forest Products Property – The first phase of the Roseburg property annexation was approved by City Council in early January and the ordinance has been recorded, making the annexation official. Michael continues to work on the boundary amendment to bring the newly annexed area into the North Reserve/Scott Street URD and, with the recording of the annexation ordinance, property is now part of the City. The Resolution of Intention for amendment of the boundary and setting of the required public hearing were approved by City Council on March 30. The public hearing and final reading of the ordinance amending the North Reserve-Scott Street Urban Renewal Plan will occur on April 20.
- Reserve to Scott 2026 Master Plan – The design team led by GGLO was in Missoula April 1 – April 3 in order to gain information that will be the basis for the new master plan. They were able to meet with a number of key business and property owners in individual meetings and tour much of the site on April 2. April 2nd culminated with the first public workshop held at Lowell School and attracted over 60 people who were very engaged and interested in the planning process. The morning of April 3rd started with a meeting at the Hilton Garden Inn primarily focused on business and property owners. That meeting was attended by over 25 individuals representing some of the major businesses which either own land in the study area and/or operate business there. We were able to use these meetings to talk with owners whose property is in the County and explore the possibility of them annexing into the City in order to take advantage of being in an urban renewal district if they have plans for development of underutilized land or expansion of existing facilities.

As always, if you have questions or want information on any other projects not covered here, please contact me at buchanane@ci.missoula.mt.us or (406) 552-6156.