

MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

CONDENSED BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 18, 2021

FINAL

A Regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency was held on Thursday, November 18, 2021 via Zoom at 12:00 p.m. Those in attendance were as follows:

Board: Karl Englund, Nancy Moe, Ruth Reineking, Tasha Jones, Melanie Brock

Staff: Ellen Buchanan, Annette Marchesseault, Tod Gass, Jilayne Dunn, Lesley Pugh

Public: Lauren Hutchison, Missoula Midtown Association (MMA); Emily Brock, MMA; Spider McKnight, Six Pony Hitch LLC; Brian Sippy, Apple Lane LLC (124 N. Higgins); Gwen Jones, Missoula City Council; Jane Van Fossen, Citizen; Matts Larson, Citizen; Missoula Community Access Television (MCAT)

CALL TO ORDER

12:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 21, 2021 Regular Board Meeting Minutes were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACTION ITEMS

Midtown Master Plan (URD III) – TIF Request (*Buchanan*)

Melanie Brock recused herself from voting on this item because she is working on this project.

Buchanan said the Missoula Midtown Association (MMA) gave a presentation to the MRA Board in June 2021. It included their efforts to put together the funding and define the scope of a master plan for Midtown, with the understanding they would come back to the Board with a funding request.

Lauren Hutchison, President of MMA, thanked the Board for their service and consideration in assisting MMA with financial support in making the Midtown Master Plan (MMP) a reality. The planning exercise is something Midtowners have dreamed of for a long time and it is

really exciting to see it take shape. She congratulated MRA on the USDOT RAISE Planning Grant they were recently awarded, and said that and the MMP dovetail together extraordinarily well and they are very excited to have the opportunity to do something transformative together. Hutchison said the mission of the MMA is dedicated to the enhancement, promotion and accessibility to the Midtown area as it relates to businesses, residents and the community. Their goals are to provide resources and information related to the success and growth of a healthy business community and to enhance the quality of life and place for visitors and residents alike.

Hutchison said one of MMA's goals since inception was to create this master plan and in the last year it has become a reality, thanks to Emily Brock, Vice President of the MMA, and the support of the entire MMA Board and members. Thanks to the support of the MMA Board they were able to bring on an acting Executive Director, Melanie Brock, who has been the face of the project. While the master plan is going to be finished through the MMA, they created the Missoula Midtown Foundation (MMF) which is a 501(c)(3) organization that has a really close relationship with the MMA. The MMA appointed a diverse Steering Committee with expertise and insight in land use, planning, development, public process and community engagement to help advise Melanie Brock and the MMA Board on this process. Chaired by Emily Brock, the Steering Committee consists of professionals and experts from both the public and private sectors. Hutchison thanked Buchanan for her dedication and support on this project.

Emily Brock gave a [Power Point presentation](#). She said MMA is pleased to submit their request for \$370,000 for assistance in funding the MMP. They have fundraised almost \$200,000 from 38 local entities to meet their goal and fund the Plan. They are hopeful MRA will join their coalition as the largest funder and that Buchanan will continue to provide mentorship and guidance to them. The funding request to MRA will go directly towards the planning consultant.

Emily Brock congratulated Marchesseault on the award of the USDOT RAISE Planning Grant. She said several years ago the Midtown Mojo group met with the idea to create fixed rapid transit along Brooks Street. At that time, they kept going back and forth between what they should do first – a transit plan or a master plan. They decided to push on both and not get caught up in strategy and have nothing get done. Now here they are together in a glorious dovetailing of the projects. The USDOT RAISE Planning Grant will focus on the transit piece and Brooks Street while the MMA master planning effort will merge with that timing and focus as a broader exercise.

Emily Brock said one of the goals of the MMP is to put people first. They want to provide a voice for the people who live in, work in and utilize Midtown. They want to nurture the social fabric of Midtown by promoting positive and diverse human interaction. MMA would also like to promote equitable development, ensure neighborhood balance and promote healthy urbanism. Other focuses include housing, grocery, health care, manufacturing, living wage jobs, business incubation, green infrastructure, cleanliness, healthiness, education and growth opportunities, social gathering spaces, recreational opportunities and mobility. Emily Brock said they also have the goal of promoting a sense of belonging. In this sense, she said the process really is the product. Creating a space where folks can come together and putting people first to envision what their neighborhood looks like is in and of itself

placemaking. She spoke about the MMP dovetailing with the USDOT Raise Planning Grant and said between the two, they will be well-positioned to get some federal funding for a transformative project in Midtown.

Emily Brock reviewed the project area. It is a large area and the reason for that is they are putting people first and really want to include the neighborhoods. She said Larchmont Golf Course and Fort Missoula are not in the plan area because they felt those projects need their own planning effort. There are some potential study areas they will put in the Request for Proposals (RFP), but that could change depending on what the consultants say. She noted they want to look at building infrastructure to have the space around Community Medical Center/Reserve Street be a regional medical center.

The MMA is currently wrapping up their fundraising efforts. Next, they will go into procurement and then planning, which will take about a year. After that they will go into implementation. Emily Brock said they are approaching public engagement and participation differently in their process. It is a result of what they heard from folks in the community, City and County staff. In previous planning efforts the public participation consultant was part of one contract. MMA wants to do it differently and have the community engagement specialist on the team first and dovetail that effort with the procurement of the planning and engineering consultant. She said it is a bold approach and they think it will pay dividends. The community engagement specialist will be on the team first and will help MMA select a planner and engineer. Melanie Brock will be in charge of MMP management. She is the Acting Executive Director, but is not on staff, so MMA has raised funds to pay her. Emily Brock reviewed a chart of the breakdown of funds contributed for the Plan.

Buchanan said Midtown has a number of foundational plans that MRA has been responsible for developing. Those include the Urban Renewal Plan, Urban Land Institute (ULI) Plan, Infrastructure Needs Assessment, and a number of iterations of how to deal with Brooks Street. It has culminated into the notion of a transit-centric Brooks Street that can be absolutely transformational, and getting the USDOT RAISE Planning grant is an absolute game changer. When they can layer that into the MMP they will get a lot of efficiencies between those and also a much more comprehensive look.

Buchanan likened the MMP to the Downtown Master Plans. She said MRA's investment was much smaller in those, but there were other entities that contributed large amounts of money (Business Improvement District (BID), Missoula Parking Commission (MPC), Missoula Downtown Association (MDA)). Midtown does not have a BID, MPC or MDA and the MMA is quite fledgling right now and doesn't have the resources to hire a staff the way the MDA can. She said it makes perfect sense that this ask is considerably larger than what MRA invested in the DMP because they don't have the partners for this one that they had Downtown. She also said MMA has been successful in raising more private dollars for this than were raised for either of the DMPs. They have also been successful in raising awareness in Midtown about this planning effort.

Buchanan said MRA investing funding into the MMP ties into the City's Strategic Goals on many levels including safety & wellness, opportunity and housing options, safe transportation, infrastructure, and community design and livability. It is also a framework for investment of public funds that meet the City's Strategic Goals and Plans. It gives MMA the

framework, just like the DMP gave the downtown. Buchanan said MMA is committed to the model that was used for downtown with an Implementation Committee that is serious and intentional and will march down a path and check the boxes as projects get done. The fact that the City got the USDOT RAISE Planning Grant funded in its entirety speaks volumes for the degree to which the Brooks Corridor Proposal meets the federal goals that exist right now. Buchanan said she felt like it would be funded, and was absolutely astounded that they got the full grant. It speaks really well to how competitive that project will be when they go in for \$40-\$50 million in federal transit and highways funding down the road. Buchanan said staff is recommending that the Board approve the request for a \$370,000 contribution to the MMP and authorize the Chair to sign the required documents.

Moe said the presentation made and the effort put into this by the MMA was very thorough, thoughtful and committed. She was glad to hear Emily Brock's presentation defining some of the terms that are used in what the presentation is, such as what they have all discussed as equity projects. Fair and equitable are some of the terms that Emily Brock used. Moe said she is also pleased that it is clarified that MRA's money is being contributed to the planning and engineering consultant as its own isolated area. The other two areas identified for funding are very important (public participation and master plan management) and they will all coordinate together. The Steering Group appears to be a group of broad interests and she is pleased to see that All Nations Health Center is included. Moe suggested another member of the Steering Group would be someone who is a designated resident to talk about residential concerns and perhaps get others involved.

Moe asked for more specific dates/parameters on the timeline of the MMP. Emily Brock said they decided to delay the RFP because they had a feeling the USDOT RAISE Planning Grant would come through. She said they are so glad they waited because MMA feels they will get so much more out of the processes. The RFP for the planning consultant is written and ready to go. MMA will send it out in early January after the holidays so it gets the attention it deserves from the consulting firms. There is a pre-screening criteria and the submittals will be weaned down based on those criteria. They will then bring the pre-qualified firms to the Selection Committee who will identify the ones they want to interview. Interviews will be conducted and they will select a firm along with a backup in case anything falls short. Meanwhile, they are doing a limited solicitation for the community engagement professional. That will be much shorter because that person/firm will definitely be local and should take about six weeks. By the time they actually conduct interviews for the planning consultant, the community engagement specialist will be on board and can help advise that process. Following that, MMA believes there will be an 18-month process. The Fairgrounds team has graciously agreed to step-up to do staffing for the activities like charettes which will be hosted at the Fairgrounds. Emily Brock said she feels they have the management, structure and right people at the table to push this forward.

Englund asked if there is a model MMA is following to bring on the community engagement specialist first. Emily Brock said no, they are cutting edge and will be the ones who do the presentations at the planning conferences moving forward. She said they have seen success in other plans that were done similarly with an outside group doing the engagement. She said from feedback they have received, the community engagement specialist should not be underneath the planning team because it ends up being subjugated. Brock said they know there will be some natural tension and they are okay with

that and are embracing it. They think it is a good thing and part of community discussion and they are up for it.

Englund asked if the USDOT RAISE Planning Grant has a Steering Committee. Buchanan said yes. Englund asked if there are common members in both Committees. Emily Brock said she is planning to meet with City staff regularly to ensure they are not duplicating efforts and overwhelming folks on the public participation part. Englund asked if there is enough flexibility in the requirements of the USDOT RAISE Planning Grant to where they can decide to do common graphics or things like that. Marchesseault said she doesn't know the answer yet because they have not had a formal conversation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) yet. When she wrote the application she was clear that MMA was moving forward with a master planning effort and that making these efforts occur at the same time is an advantage to everyone. Marchesseault said as she was listening to Emily Brock's presentation, she was thinking that they should be doing them together. They do know they need very robust public outreach as part of the USDOT RAISE Planning Grant and Brooks TOD (Transit-Oriented Development) and can see those running concurrently with MMA's outreach. Marchesseault applauded MMA getting the public outreach in front of the master planning. She learned a lot from doing the West Broadway Master Plan and feels they would have streamlined the process if those voices had been at the table at the beginning. Englund asked if it is probable that MMA and the City will be able to hire the same consultants to do similar work. Emily Brock said they can definitely work together on the public engagement piece and they will work it out when they do the contracting and scope of work. The fact that they are happening at the same time means they can do more and do more coordinated. Englund asked if it is included in how they write the RFP. Emily Brock said yes. Englund said if the essence of making these two separate things work together is in the writing of the RFPs and the USDOT RAISE Planning Grant is behind MMA, maybe MMA can slow down a little on issuing things until the City is sure that they can get their RFP written to dovetail with MMA. He said he would hate to see a duplication that causes confusion and affects the results. Marchesseault noted the scope of the Brooks TOD will be very focused on the corridor and those issues will have a more defined scope.

Englund asked if there has been any movement from the County to dovetail onto MMA's work. Emily Brock said no. They are developing a work plan and the County Commission needs to maintain their full decision-making power and public process authority. Englund said he was around when URD III was established and a lot of things have happened, but they've been waiting for the big stuff and this is remarkable. Moe wanted to say how this discussion makes a circle with the aims of MRA and of the City, which are stated on the cover sheet to Buchanan's memo, and part of the consideration for this, especially the advancement of the City's Strategic Plan goals and public purpose.

Melanie Brock said they did knock on a lot of doors before taking West Reserve off of the table to make sure they weren't missing anything that needed to be a part of this. MMA talked to other boards like the MPC and there wasn't any synergy of what needed to be studied. The Steering Committee was very thoughtful and are confident they are going to go out into the field with the right sized project with the right components after talking to everyone they could possibly think of. If a year after the RFP goes out and the team comes on board, someone asks why they didn't add it to the project scope, they can say why. Reineking said two things she likes about the MMP is the public engagement that is

happening in front of the engineering study. She also appreciates the MMP boundaries are so far beyond the URD and that will be important for Midtown in engaging all of the residents in that area.

REINEKING: I MOVE TO APPROVE THE STAFF RECOMMENDATION.

Staff recommendation: Staff recommends that the MRA Board approve the request from the Missoula Midtown Association to provide funding for the creation of a Midtown Master Plan in the amount of \$370,000 and authorize the Chair to sign the required agreements.

Moe seconded the motion with some slight changes so it reads:

Staff recommends that the MRA Board approve the request from the Missoula Midtown Association to provide funding for planning/engineering consultant for the creation of a Midtown Master Plan in the amount of up to \$370,000 and authorize the Chair to sign the required agreements.

Reineking accepted the changes.

Jane Van Fossen, citizen, said the letter from MMA attached to Buchanan's memo refers to the goal of building on other planning initiatives, and there is a reference to a recently adopted Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. She asked for clarification on that. Buchanan said it is the study recently completed by Missoula Economic Partnership (MEP) and has been accepted by the federal agencies that would use that kind of strategy, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) primarily, which then opened up the opportunity for regional economic development grant opportunities.

Matts Larson, citizen, said the MMP looks promising. He asked if the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) or the City JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Team are involved. He wanted to point out that he thinks it would be good to include west of Reserve Street, seeing as how Missoula's overall transportation plan for cars is pushing everything to Reserve and it has issues with traffic. Larson said what he's seeing is the strategic building up of certain locations which is in theory good, but some of the wrong locations are being picked to build up. He said the City and County could be looking at the Target Range area, which has a lot of space and has been zoned by the County as small agriculture. Larson said he is wondering where the overall equity works with Missoula as a whole when dropping tax-based funded projects in historically low-income neighborhoods like the Scott Street development and Villagio on the north side. He said the City is encumbering a lot of tax on a lot of people that have lived here for however long and paid a lot less tax prior. Larson said it would behoove them to involve the City JEDI Team and AHTF as well as west of Reserve Street because it just doesn't make sense to slough off everything at Reserve and no one has a cohesive image or imagination for the entirety of Reserve Street or transportation to and from Missoula in general. He said Missoula needs some sort of relief, like a bypass, from Reserve Street and everything around Reserve should be encompassed in this planning, especially if they are dropping a bunch more people and cars there which is the nature of the Plan as it exists now.

Gwen Jones, City Council, said she sat through a lot of meetings and public comment regarding the MMP. She said it really does go to so many overreaching goals. Every election season crystalizes issues and her takeaway from this last season was not only

housing, it is Housing with a capital H. It's an acute situation. She said the MMP addresses things including infrastructure, parking, connectivity, equity, business development, etc. in a wholistic fashion. Housing is one of those, but what she wanted to convey with the City Council viewpoint is that Missoula needs housing and as a component it needs affordable housing, but they want to do it right. They want to create a good, livable, quality situation in which there is a high quality of life and enhances Missoula. They don't just create more living units, they create a good living situation where people can have a good life. Gwen Jones said this master planning process will accomplish a lot of things, but one of her priorities is housing that's good. If they have good housing in a good livable situation, that goes to equity. She said she is very much in support of the MMP and they can't afford to not do it. The timing is excellent on so many fronts and she realizes it will be a couple of years before they get traction in terms of action based on it. This is a sweeping action that will lay the foundation for big changes.

Tasha Jones said she understands this process will be lengthy and take time. She welcomed MMA to do status check-ins with the Board sooner than one year. Englund and Moe concurred. Moe said the MRA Board should get a presentation at the point where there is a contract for the engineering portion of it or before that. Buchanan said she will also include status reports in the Director's Report.

No further discussion. No further public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention with Melanie Brock abstaining).

124 N. Higgins (Front Street URD) – Request to Proceed Without Prejudice (Marchesseault)

Marchesseault said Karen and Brian Sippy have purchased the property at 124 N. Higgins Avenue. It is currently housed by The M Store and is adjacent to Radius Gallery which is also owned by the Sippys. Brian Sippy said they were approached by the owners of The M Store building and business because without the Montana Grizzlies playing last season they were financially struggling. The Sippys were able to work with them by purchasing the building and infusing some cash into their enterprise. The M Store was able to weather the storm and keep their staff. When the Grizzlies announced they were able to play again, the Sippys extended their lease to the end of the football season. It has helped The M Store to heal their business to a point that it is under contract to be purchased and the company that is purchasing it has also identified a place near the downtown to house it.

Mr. Sippy said the building is mid-century concrete and has good bones. They have done all the engineering and their intention is to increase the attractiveness of the façade and bring the storefront forward. They are working with Don MacArthur from MMW Architects and have been able to find some of the old images from the 1920s and 1930s façade next door at 120 N. Higgins. The Sippys are going to take advantage of that facade and apply it to 124 N. Higgins. Mr. Sippy said their plans have been approved by the Design Excellence Committee. They plan to take over the building on December 1st and would like to start their deconstruction immediately because of supply chains and the winter season. Englund asked Mr. Sippy when he thinks he'll be back with a formal request. Mr. Sippy said they can be prepared for the next Board meeting.

REINEKING: I MOVE THE STAFF RECOMMENDATION WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE IS NO GUARANTEE OF FUNDING BY APPROVING THIS PROCEED WITHOUT PREJUDICE.

Staff recommendation: Staff recommends the MRA Board approve Apple Lane LLC's request to proceed with work on certain project items for their project located at 124 North Higgins Avenue without precluding those items from being included in a future Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Program application.

Brock seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (5 ayes, 0 nays).

West Broadway Master Plan (URD II) – Request for Adoption (Marchesseault)

Marchesseault gave a presentation of the final draft of the West Broadway Master Plan (WBMP). It has gone through a public process and staff hopes to have it approved and completed by the end of the year to meet the Big Sky Trust Fund grant requirement which awarded \$25,000 to the project. She said with the help of CREW (Community Rising through Equity and Wellness) they had a good turnout for public participation. CREW are a community organizing and advocacy group focused on the Northside/Westside neighborhood. Buchanan added that CREW grew out of the North Missoula Community Development Corporation (NMCDC). Two of the key members who are also on the West Broadway Steering Committee are on staff at NMCDC. Their roll there is community outreach. You can view the West Broadway Master Plan at:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/603404d015ee487c391ec704/t/61893479dd7b427b41489126/1636381829295/Envision+West+Broadway_11052021_sm.pdf

Marchesseault said the study area was included in the Downtown Master Plan at a high conceptual level. A lot of the concepts proposed in the DMP have carried over into this more detailed WBMP area. Since the DMP was created, the City purchased the Sleepy Inn property as well as a couple of properties adjacent to the Missoula Water site. There also is now a defined plan for Missoula Water to move off site within the next 3-5 years. The City owns a significant portion of this West Broadway planning area and it gives them a fine amount of control over future development of the area. Marchesseault said that was the impetus for getting the WBMP going.

Marchesseault said five big ideas of the WBMP are to build the next great Missoula neighborhood center, be a good neighbor and respect the local businesses that currently are on site, connect to the river and complete the Ron's River Trail pass system, help solve housing and rental space affordability issues, and create a unique entry/gateway experience to urban Missoula.

The boundary for the WBMP area was drawn on the south side of West Broadway. Marchesseault said almost everybody said as a pedestrian, if you live or work in the area, or are accessing social services, that to get in and out by car is very difficult. The Steering Committee encouraged Dover, Kohl & Partners (DKP) to expand a bit in their planning recommendations. They recommended some traffic calming and mid-block crossing and

the potential of a roundabout at the Toole Avenue/California Street/West Broadway intersection. It is a Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) route. They have been at the table and recognize that this would not be included as part of Russell Street or occur immediately, but it is clear there needs to be more mitigation for West Broadway if there is to be successful development. The WBMP did not include the north side of West Broadway, but DKP looked beyond the limits of the project and made some recommendations for what might occur on the north side.

The proposed development program is for about 20,000-30,000 square feet of leasable, commercial/retail space which would be somewhere between 8-15 new shops and stores. 10,000-15,000 square feet of office space which would be 4-8 new work places. It also calls for 100,000-130,000 square feet of new market-rate townhomes and apartments, or 100-130 with 50-70 affordable units of housing and 140-160 parking spaces. Marchesseault said it does lean on transit-oriented development and the proximity of the site to downtown and planning around 30 units to the acre. The WBMP also goes through implementation recommendations and matrix of who might take the lead on the implementation of each of the big ideas and some strategies for how that implementation might occur.

Marchesseault said the WBMP has been presented to other Boards and has been approved by them. The public hearing for City Council is scheduled for December 6th with final action being taken on December 13th. A final plan will be submitted to the Big Sky Trust Fund at the end of the year.

Moe said the WBMP is very well put together and the participation in the planning was creative and the resources were well used. She said the cover sheet to Marchesseault's memo does the valuable business of stating the underlying discussion and premise of MRA projects and its working with the City to achieve its strategic goals. She suggested they be dated in the future.

Englund said years ago MRA had a TIF request from some people to build a cider tasting room in a funky old tire store. They understood they were moving into a very challenging situation and promised to try and make a success of their business and stay involved in the community as things changed. It seems like the folks at Western Cider have done just that and Englund said he thinks it is a wonderful example of how the little bit of funding MRA gave them builds and builds over the years and gets to a point of where the neighborhood is today versus back when they started and it is a cool thing. The fact they stayed involved in the whole process is even better. Marchesseault said that is an excellent observation and Western Cider has been engaged. They offered up their business as a place to hold an in-person forum for the planning process. She said it was clear through the planning process that they are a valued part of that neighborhood. Buchanan said the same can be said for Imagine Nation Brewing. Englund concurred.

Englund asked if today's approval makes it an official MRA plan. Marchesseault said it's less an MRA plan. She said what they are asking from City Council is to make the WBMP an amendment to the DMP which is an amendment to the City Growth Policy. As one of the primary funders, staff is asking the MRA Board to endorse/approve the WBMP and recommend to City Council that they approve it as an amendment to the DMP and as an amendment to the City Growth Policy.

BROCK: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD ADOPT THE ENVISION WEST BROADWAY COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN IN ITS FINAL FORM AND DIRECT STAFF TO FORWARD THAT ACTION TO CITY COUNCIL PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 6, 2021.

Jones seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (5 ayes, 0 nays).

NON-ACTION ITEMS

MRA Communications Plan – Discussion

Dunn said staff has been working with Six Pony Hitch (6PH) on implementing some items identified in the Communications Plan. One of those was a strategic process with City Council and Administration to talk about MRA priorities. That process has been going on and Englund and Moe have been representatives on that committee. There hasn't been anything written that has come out of that process, partially because COVID happened and nothing was able to be solidified between the groups to this point. Dunn said MRA needs to move forward with two informational pieces staff has engaged 6PH to do. One of those pieces is a TIF explainer and the other is case studies of MRA projects that support current priorities. Staff has also asked Spider McKnight, 6PH, to come up with a draft outline for Engage Missoula of how MRA can take the priorities and put them out on the website and gather community feedback. The other two pieces are more informational and educational, which staff feels are very important to put on the MRA website and have available to City Council and other City staff in electronic and print forms to show to the public.

Dunn said staff is looking to have a discussion and dialogue with the Board to identify MRA priorities to use in the communication pieces. She said staff got together and looked at state law, projects MRA has historically done, and how projects are evaluated as they come through the door. Dunn showed a drawing of what staff came up with that shows what MRA does and how it supports the strategic goals of the City that have already been adopted. The drawing resembles a flower and at the center of it is Community Livability. Staff feels it is the #1 City strategic goal that MRA supports because everything MRA does, including the Urban Renewal District plans, supports making an area better and a more livable space.

Dunn said the coming off the Community Livability center of the flower are petals that represent what MRA looks at in projects and are supported by state law. They include historic preservation, parks and trails, environmental quality, streets and sidewalks, housing, support of publicly owned facilities, infrastructure such as water/sewer/power, reinvestment in the built environment (MRA Façade program), economic vitality, and social and cultural investment. At the bottom of the flower are public/private partnerships which have to happen at the beginning of a district in order to support some of the public benefit projects that are done down the line. Dunn said staff wants to keep the priorities simple and narrow them down.

Dunn reviewed graphs and charts on MRA's website that are there for the public to see where funds are being spent for the last two fiscal years. A large percentage of funds were

spent on public buildings, housing, and parks and trails and infrastructure. MRA also spent a good percentage of money on plans like the one Marchesseault presented for the WBMP. Staff worked with 6PH to narrow down the priority categories. Two main priorities are housing and infrastructure. Infrastructure is very broad and staff felt it would be better to break that out into pieces because not everybody thinks of infrastructure the same way.

Dunn said staff has broken down the priorities to housing, parks and trails, economic vitality, infrastructure (streets, sewer, power), publicly owned facilities, and historic preservation. Buchanan said in an effort to stay as laser-focused as possible, staff tried to reduce the number of categories they tried to represent graphically. She said there is an argument to be made for all of the things on the flower graphic. She said the challenge will be how to take the breadth of what MRA does as an agency and what it invests in and boil it down to sound bytes that are easily digestible and understandable by the public. It is no easy task just because of the range of things MRA does and the impacts those have. In this effort the one thing she wants to stress is that without the public/private partnerships none of the public projects are built because the public/private partnerships are where the money comes from to do the public projects. Buchanan said it is difficult to hear people say MRA shouldn't invest in things like The Merc or AC Hotel because if it doesn't invest and be a catalyst for those things happening, and happening better, then MRA doesn't have the revenue to build another section of trail or another bridge across the river. She said if there is one central message in this and if there is one piece of misinformation out there, it is that MRA should not be doing those private projects. If MRA shouldn't be doing the private projects then it shouldn't be pretending to have tax increment.

Englund asked what the Board was being asked to do. Dunn said staff is asking the Board to agree on the priorities because they don't want to start creating pieces of information to communicate with the public without the Board saying they agree. The priorities are: housing, infrastructure (streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, water, sewer, power, fiber optics), parks and trails (including the bridges), economic vitality (encompasses all public/private partnerships), publicly owned facilities, and historic preservation. McKnight said the problem they're trying to solve is that people think that sometimes MRA projects are arbitrary, or the word cronyism has been used, and they don't really understand how projects are picked. It is to put a process to something MRA already does and communicate that process. When MRA looks at a project and the priority it fits is Economic Vitality, people really don't get that because it is just one big umbrella. If they can look at projects that address infrastructure or historic preservation or public buildings then they start to see what priority it addresses and the plan and process it fits with. McKnight added that 6PH is also doing an Engage Missoula process to put it out there for the community and get feedback on that so there is buy-in from the community. McKnight said MRA should have a priority list that is understandable to the public and yet broad enough to incorporate the projects being done.

Reineking asked if Engage Missoula will be sort of an invitation of what kind of projects MRA wants submitted. Dunn said MRA wants to put the priorities on Engage Missoula and show how projects are vetted. The priorities support the overall goals of the City and what is important to the City and community as adopted by the [City's Strategic Plan](#). Staff will be asking for the public's feedback in a variety of ways on Engage Missoula. The recommendation from 6PH is to provide feedback through Engage Missoula. Citizens can

comment on what is presented, provide feedback through City Council representatives by contacting them and letting them know how they feel about MRA's priorities and how projects are vetted, and/or attend a Board meeting and engage in the MRA process itself. McKnight said the most important thing to do now is let the public know MRA went through the process of getting a Communications Plan and got feedback from them, and now this is what MRA is going to do about it. MRA wants to be more transparent and show the priorities it works with now based on input from the City and additional ways the public can have input if they see things MRA is not addressing. Reineking said it's an educational piece on MRA's priorities and criteria. McKnight said the piece 6PH is building includes how TIF works and how it relates to MRA's priorities. It will show that MRA is not just randomly giving money to friends, but really focuses on where money goes and the graphics will invite them to look at where the money has gone. It all fits together and makes sense.

Moe asked if MRA is going to be trying to invite participation or trying to easily explain the basis for MRA projects when people go to the website. She asked if they are trying to get people in the door or explain what MRA has done. Dunn said both. MRA is trying to do a better job of communicating how projects are vetted that come in the door and also internal priorities when they're looking at internal projects. She said sidewalks and infrastructure are a priority for the Board in the URDs if you look at the projects that have been done in URD II and URD III. Moving forward, when the priorities are more locked in place, MRA can develop more graphically and through staff memos to implement the recommendations in the Communications Plan in a way that down the line is going to be even easier for the public to understand. Staff is trying to re-engage with the community about what MRA does and help educate them about that and how it works. Then, MRA can ask them to respond and provide feedback through Engage Missoula or other methods. McKnight said MRA already has priorities and if you look at the data that is very clear. It's just that the public isn't clear on what those priorities are. She said she is trying to get past the fact that what MRA does is not arbitrary.

Englund said in the initial discussions with City Council, they heard that Council wanted to make sure MRA's priorities were housing and infrastructure, and infrastructure was defined quite broadly. His understanding is that infrastructure included such things as parks and trails, public buildings, and historic preservation, with an understanding that MRA has to have money to do it in a viable economy. He said this does fit in with what MRA was hearing from City Council. Buchanan agreed and said she thinks it's gotten broader than the discussions she recalls with that working group. She said there seemed to be a laser focus on housing and infrastructure in those meetings. How you define infrastructure may be part of the key to that. Englund said those are also discussions about where MRA goes in the future which might be more of a laser focus on housing, but MRA is not just talking about the future when they talk about how they're presenting stuff on the web page, they're also talking about stuff they've done in the past so that people understand what MRA has done. He said at one time the primary focus was trails, among other things. Moe said part MRA's analysis has also included jobs and when they look at the economic impact of a project it is something that they looked at.

Dunn said staff tried to pick categories that would pretty much cover everything. Jobs would be economic vitality, so if a project came in and MRA had to vet it through the priorities, they'd say it meets housing and also meets economic vitality because it's creating jobs.

You can see the checks in a graphic form. Right now MRA doesn't have any graphics, so having those pop out and not have to drill down into the memos to get the information and public benefits is something MRA wants to try to highlight.

Englund asked if staff wants the Board's feedback on whether or not they agree with the priorities listed in the flower graphic. Dunn said yes. She said one of the pieces staff has asked 6PH to create is a complement to the TIF informational piece. That piece shows what the MRA priorities are and how the projects that have been completed in the past have supported those and then moving forward in a way the new projects can be vetted. Dunn provided examples of how that can be used on Engage Missoula.

Tasha Jones said conceptually being able to show the new City Council members the work MRA has done will be very helpful. Buchanan said she put together a list of projects this community values. It was parks, affordable housing, trails, investment in social services community, etc. She said it is an impressive list she put together for City Council members. That list will also be available and she will add projects that have occurred since it was created. It gives a broad picture of the things MRA has invested TIF funds in that this community values. MRA has all the pieces, they're just not in a form that is easily digestible in today's world. Nobody wants to sit and read a list of projects on the website, they want to see pictures.

Buchanan suggested a working group with staff, the Board and McKnight to drill into this or said if the Board is comfortable with it they can give staff direction today. Tasha Jones said she is very comfortable with what has been presented. She said it makes sense, some projects will hit more than one or two categories, but the six presented seem to encompass the big ones. She likes the other representation as well that has a few other discreet areas that could be considered semi-priorities. She urged staff to move forward.

Englund said he thinks the word "jobs" needs to be included in the priorities somewhere. Especially in this climate where people are looking for employees, which is pretty unusual. Buchanan said it would be easy enough to name it "Economic Vitality and Job Creation". Buchanan said job creation is asked on the application form for every project that comes in. Reineking suggested also asking about sustainability practices with every project. She said in public conversations recently that has maybe not been a priority for MRA is equity. They heard a lot about that with the Midtown Association and she appreciates they are looking at that and that it is going to be a priority for them. She wondered if in the future it would be something for MRA to consider as well. Buchanan said sustainability and equity should underpin everything MRA looks at. MRA needs to formalize that and say sustainability and equity are underlying goals that projects need to address and meet certain standards. Moe said she agrees with what has been said. She said sustainability needs to include environmental quality. Equity is a difficult word because it doesn't automatically mean infrastructure, streets, sidewalks, etc. It may be housing, but definitely needs a definition. She said she doesn't feel qualified to decide how this is presented. She does agree with the limited categories and presenting them on the website and when they are up and people are trying them out, seeing what they can find and navigate, or if it means anything to them. There are a lot of different audiences including investors, residents, innovators, etc., and the question is how to define those. Moe said the categories seem fine to her. Reineking said jobs, sustainability and equity are not being brought up to delay this process. She would

like to see this process move forward, and if they do it with those six priorities, it is a good starting point and she wants to get it out there.

McKnight said Reineking made a great point. There are initial priorities for types of projects and it is also important that somewhere on the website or the TIF information pieces 6PH is creating, that they include general criteria within each project and they can be looked at through different lenses such as sustainability or equity. They are priorities for types of projects. Englund said he agrees with the idea that in order to make sense of what MRA is doing they need to categorize things and he thinks the categories are great. Reineking added to the extent they can tie them in with the City's Strategic Goals, although they may not be delineated or identified either.

STAFF REPORTS

Director's Report

Buchanan said she was happy to answer any questions from her report.

FY22 Budget Status Reports

Dunn said she did a summary memo on the reports and was happy to answer any questions. MRA did get the final mill levies and that is the biggest change seen on the documents in the "Adjusted" column. She said they are still waiting on any appeals adjustments from the Department of Revenue and those are expected by the end of November.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Englund said he and Moe met with City administration and are moving forward with work on the Resolution. There were a lot of questions on the idea of the cap and the notion of how to go about it. He said the cap maybe wasn't the right approach, but no one has another idea for what might be the right approach. He said Oregon's law caps the percentage of land. It is still an ongoing discussion and Englund said it is clear to him there is general agreement that MRA is the "hero".

OTHER ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lesley Pugh