

**Downtown BID Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, December 16th, 2025 at the DMP Conference Room**

Present: Charlie Beaton, Scott Stearns, Chris McClead, Karen Sippy, Luke Jackson, and Michael Albritton

Absent: Ellen Buchanan

Staff: Linda McCarthy, Jack Hall, and Jake Treece

Guest: Morgan Valliant

Charlie Beaton called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES

There were no comments or edits to the November minutes. Karen Sippy moved to approve the November minutes. Charlie Beaton seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

PRESENTATION ON WEST BROADWAY RIVER CORRIDOR PLAN: MORGAN VALLIANT, MISSOULA PARKS & REC

Morgan Valliant provided an overview of the proposed West Broadway River Corridor Project. Public comment has closed, and the project aligns with Downtown Master Plan goals. In 2021, the City of Missoula, Missoula Parks & Recreation, and the Clark Fork Coalition acquired the irrigation ditch behind Imagine Nation, prompting broader discussions about reinvestment in this section of downtown. The project advanced in 2022 with Valliant as a lead project manager alongside Parks & Recreation, Trout Unlimited, and other partners, with visioning and planning occurring through 2023 and 2024.

Valliant highlighted the complexity of designing a park within an active river system. A master plan and basis-of-design document are nearing completion, with anticipated adoption by the MRA, City Council, and other entities in early 2026. The project area spans from the Railroad Bridge to the California Street Bridge and addresses challenges including deteriorating infrastructure, eroding riverbanks, limited transportation options, a failing boat ramp, disconnected trails, waste accumulation, and a seasonal side channel that negatively impacts wildlife.

Project goals focus on sustainable river restoration, improved in-stream function, floodplain and riparian habitat restoration, enhanced public safety, and expanded recreation. Public outreach included engagement with stakeholders, emergency responders, and law enforcement, supported by preliminary river modeling.

Key elements include reshaping islands and bridges near Imagine Nation, creating a new perennial side channel, filling existing ditches to improve water flow, expanding parkland, and reducing island access to protect habitat. The project team is leaning toward removing certain bridges, reorienting and rebuilding the boat ramp to accommodate two vehicles, and potentially creating a river put-in location. Grade control structures, a separated commuter trail along Broadway, and upland buffers are also proposed to enhance habitat and connectivity.

Ron's River Trail will be shifted farther from residences, and a recreational wave feature ("Max's Wave") and back-eddy alcove similar to Caras Terrace are proposed to improve river recreation and manage sediment. Preliminary cost estimates range from \$5–7 million, with construction tentatively planned for 2028–2029 and phased implementation anticipated.

Discussion addressed alignment with the Envision West Broadway Master Plan, shared-use path width, and stakeholder support from Imagine Nation, Western Cider, and river recreation groups. Approximately \$360,000 has been invested in planning to date. Concerns were noted regarding parking availability in the area, limited federal funding opportunities prior to 2028, and the importance of non-taxpayer funding, as demonstrated by Brennan's Wave.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The November financials were reviewed. Total current assets are \$92,794, which is lower than this time last year, and cash flow remains tighter than projected due to delayed receipt of tax assessments. Year-to-date net income currently sits at -\$164,937, which is expected for this point in the assessment cycle, with November and December assessments not yet received.

On the Profit & Loss statement, no tax assessment revenue, penalties, or interest have been posted, as assessments have been running approximately one month behind, though October assessments have been recorded. Other income includes garbage services, City contracts, and power washing.

Expenses remain within expected ranges, including rent and utilities, POV contributions to the HOT Team, maintenance equipment and supplies, gas, joint marketing, and Streetscapes Clean Team contract payments for September and October.

Holiday décor expenses reflect the remaining balance for garlands ordered in the spring, with no additional décor purchases anticipated until Downtown SAM is implemented. Current net income stands at -\$27,328, and December assessments are expected to normalize cash flow. The ratepayer database collection process is ongoing. Clean Team operating supplies include the purchase of new high-visibility vests. Business development reimbursements were also issued. Discussion took place regarding shifts in local tax structures and anticipated protests related to BID assessments.

UPDATE ON FIVE-YEAR FRAMEWORK & 2026 WORK PLAN

The Five-Year Framework has been finalized by staff and is currently under review by the DMP Executive Board. The 2026 Work Plan centers on BID programming and staffing strategies, with Downtown SAM as a prominent component. Cleanliness efforts include improving the recycling program, which staff noted is frequently contaminated and poorly maintained.

Plans also include improving project planning for maintenance and seasonal décor, elevating hanging flower baskets and holiday decorations, and investing in new equipment to improve sidewalk cleaning downtown.

Public safety discussions include reviewing the DDPO program and reassessing police partnerships related to RCRF. Economic vitality goals emphasize supporting Downtown SAM through a “pillars of support” framework, including advisory committees, enhanced communication, and the creation of a Downtown Business Resource Fund to provide small grants. While fundraising is relatively straightforward, distribution presents challenges. A similar program during COVID successfully raised and distributed \$150,000.

These efforts demonstrate active support for downtown businesses and strengthen the BID ahead of renewal. Regular coordination with contractors will continue, with Caras Park identified as a potential space for pop-ups and business activations. Opportunities to activate alleys and convert secondary entrances into primary storefronts were discussed.

Karen Sippy noted that the Downtown SAM project is expected to be less intensive than initially anticipated, with a reduced scope. City Council continues to advance project approvals despite some community pushback.

DISCUSSION ON 2026 GOALS: CLEAN, SAFE & ECONOMIC VIBRANCY

(Discussion incorporated above.)

DISCUSSION ON DOWNTOWN SAM PROJECT & PROPOSED PILLARS OF SUPPORT

(Discussion incorporated above.)

DOWNTOWN MAINTENANCE & CLEAN TEAM UPDATES

The Downtown Maintenance Team remains extremely busy with holiday décor installation, plowing, trash, and banners. Clean Team efforts have focused on leaf removal due to limited snowfall.

DOWNTOWN POLICING

Officer Castro has requested a shift change pending department approval. Officer Hardin remains on a fixed schedule and has been on light duty. Coverage has included two officers Monday through Friday, with limited weekend coverage. Officer Castro is expected to move to the Traffic Division in March. This topic will be revisited in future meetings. Scott Stearns did not comment.

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Linda McCarthy reported strong business activity, with approximately 20 new businesses opening and 12 closing. An additional 16 businesses have expanded. Sixteen major downtown buildings are currently on the market, though few transactions have closed. Approximately \$21 million has been invested in commercial properties.

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN UPDATES

No updates were discussed.

NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

No new business.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

No additional comments were shared.

The meeting adjourned at **4:56 PM**, followed by holiday treats.