

MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

CONDENSED BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 21, 2020

FINAL

A Regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency was held on Thursday, May 21, 2020 via Zoom in the Council Chambers, 140 W. Pine, at 12:00 p.m. Those in attendance were as follows:

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

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

Public: Tim Erickson, HDR Inc.; Corey Aldridge, Mountain Line; Vince Caristo, Mountain Line; Aaron Wilson, City of Missoula

CALL TO ORDER

12:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 16, 2020 Regular Board Meeting Minutes were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Englund announced the phone number and meeting ID throughout the meeting for members of the public to call into the meeting.

There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

Brooks Corridor Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Infrastructure Study (URD III) – TIF Request for Next Phase (*Marchesseault*)

Marchesseault said at the December 2019 Board meeting staff requested authorization from the Board to extend HDR Inc.'s contract to go into a second phase of the Brooks Corridor Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) study. The Board approved staff to enter into negotiations. She said staff will be requesting authorization for a fee to get started on that, and felt this was a great opportunity to present the study. The study was completed in December 2019 and has been in the process of being edited and formatted. She said

COVID-19 came along and derailed things, but they are back on track now. The intent today is to give a presentation, and the handout included with her memo hits the highlights of it. The entire study will be made available electronically on the City's website, as well as websites of the participating groups.

You can view the presentation here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jM16c_Rz9Ro

Marchesseault said she will set up the scene and hand off the presentation to Tim Erickson with HDR Inc., who is the project manager, to go through the nuts and bolts of how they arrived at the preferred solution. Aaron Wilson, City of Missoula Transportation Planning Department, and Corey Aldridge and Vince Caristo from Mountain Line were also present. They are integral partners of the Midtown Mojo group that has been shepherding the process.

Marchesseault said in 2015 a group of folks who are really interested in making a transformation on the Brooks Street corridor coalesced and attended a planning forum that was put together by New Mobility West. Out of that, a vision grew for something transformational on the Brooks Street corridor and incorporating transit and TOD. She said Mountain Line has been very interested in getting a 15-minute headway bus on the Brooks corridor. In order to make that work you have to be able to get people on and off the bus safely, as well as safely across the street so they can get to where they're going. A critical mass of population, either working and/or living in the location using the bus, will make it successful. She said that is the vision that was formed in 2015 and that group got funding from New Mobility West to do an initial study. Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA), a planning and design firm based in Denver, came to town in 2016 and did a 60,000 ft. level public engagement study to start getting some vision for how this TOD might manifest itself. She said following that, they needed to put some meat on the bones of the vision. Marchesseault said she wanted to make the point that this TOD study is a follow-on to a number of planning efforts in Midtown, and city-wide as well, that started back in 2003 to look at transit, encouraging walkability and cycling, multi-modal transportation, and compact and transit-oriented development.

Marchesseault said the TOD study being presented today was funded through a coalition of groups including MRA, Mountain Line, City of Missoula Development Services – Transportation and Land Use Planning Departments, Missoula County and Midtown Association. Collectively there is a group referred to as the Midtown Mojo group, which is a collection of representatives from city, county, Midtown Association, Mountain Line, Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), and other entities. There are approximately 15 people in the Midtown Mojo group who are collectively trying to bring the TOD vision to fruition.

Marchesseault said the study area was established in the 2016 Brooks Corridor Study. It extends for approximately two miles between Reserve Street to the southwest and Mount Avenue to the north, and approximately one-quarter mile to either side of Brooks Street. The Brooks TOD study focuses just on the Brooks Street corridor, but does look at one-quarter mile on either side with regard to things like bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, and opportunities to close some streets to consolidate curb cuts to simplify some of the traffic issues occurring on the corridor. She said a graphic in her presentation will show the 2016

study established for general nodes in the Midtown area for focused development around the MacDonald intersection, Southgate Mall, Brooks/South/Russell intersection and a fourth node at the northern end of the corridor. She said this study respects those nodes and reinforces that Brooks Street is the spine of this entire area. It looks at how to reinforce it as a spine as well as make it very porous so it does not continue to be the great divide of Midtown that it is right now.

Tim Erickson, HDR Inc., showcased a series of slides with narrative. He said the basis was to build on the studies that have already been completed and look at publicly available information, such as cadastral, from a right-of-way (ROW) perspective. He said the ROW constraints change throughout the corridor from Reserve to Mount. HDR also took the previous studies further from a land use and development opportunities perspective and worked through those tasks and additional information to expand upon those as well. Erickson said HDR walked the corridor from a planning level study expertise area and a transit expertise area. They tried to be present to physically watch how pedestrians and vehicles are interacting within the corridor. They also looked at how approaches are functioning from an ingress and egress perspective. HDR leveraged that information to put together as much of the data as possible to bring forth to the working group as they started developing the plan.

Erickson said HDR identified five principal factors that affect operational and safety efficiency within the corridor. Those factors include long crossing distances for pedestrians, increasing the potential for vehicular conflicts; existing corridor layout which is not necessarily conducive to the community's multi-modal and walkable vision. He went on to say that overall difficulty in crossing discourages the different businesses and employers from expanding and parking to accessible multi-modal connectivity. Other safety concerns include numerous uncontrolled driveways and wide curb cuts that create opportunities for turning, and some additional vehicular conflicts. Another concern is queuing lanes, especially left turns at the intersections, and making sure they look at that with transit operations and not reducing the overall level of service and how traffic flows throughout intersections and the corridor itself.

Erickson said one thing that will be heard as this goes on and moving forward on the agenda item for the next steps, will be the need for more coordination with MDT because they own and maintain Brooks. He said that is definitely in the mix of these different factors.

Erickson said overall, with the existing conditions assessment, heavy traffic volumes, numerous driveways, high crash rates and the lack of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, really is what set the foundation for coming up with a solution that will transform the Brooks Street corridor. Marchesseault said for her, this was a really critical phrase that came through in the report. She said the corridor has so much more potential and isn't functioning up to its community resource potential and that is something important to reinforce.

Erickson said as they moved forward from identifying the existing conditions and constraints, it allowed HDR to work and develop overall project goals and objectives. He said a key one takes into consideration land use development that should come together with transportation improvements. It is for all users within the corridor as well as the

streetscape and landscape investments. It makes those places somewhere people want to be and a place where future developments want to occur. Erickson said all of that vets into the overall corridor vitality for Brooks Street.

Erickson described how the project goals were arrived at. One includes making the most effective use of existing ROW. He said there is definitely going to be further analysis needed to get a detailed account of potential ROW impacts, but the goal is to make as many improvements as possible within the existing ROW. Other goals include defining access improvements to enhance safety while also maintaining or improving overall visibility and accessibility to businesses; providing safe and more frequent pedestrian crossings on Brooks Street; creating the corridor identity through placemaking with streetscape and landscape improvements; improving the overall transit service along the corridor with 15-minute headways; and providing a balanced and healthy business and residential climate today and into the future through mixed uses and creation of primary nodes. Erickson said HDR looked at various nodes identified in previous studies for a land use perspective and how it can work with future business opportunities.

Erickson reviewed a more detailed graphic of issues that have already been mentioned including connectivity, development nodes, safety and access management, aesthetics and visual relief. He said they identified those issues in more detail and focused on actions within this plan of the transformation of the Brooks Street corridor and how outcomes of the transformation can happen. Marchesseault said the information in this presentation came directly from the report, and when the full report is made available the Board can spend more time really sifting through it. She said the important thing is the four big issues Erickson noted, which synthesize down to: addressing connectivity; development at identified development nodes; safety and access management; and aesthetics and visual relief.

Erickson reviewed more slides of how HDR started looking at alternatives and what options are available for transforming the corridor. He said that started with the basis of their design concepts including doing extensive field reviews and understanding what current constraints are, overall baseline conditions of the road and intersections, baseline traffic studies, and gathering as much information as possible from the previous studies. Erickson said overall input from stakeholders and local governing entities was also gathered from MRA and the Midtown Mojo working group. HDR also considered modal and configuration options with regard to applicability to the Brooks Street corridor.

Erickson said through the evaluation of various design concept alternatives, they came up with main objectives including the ability to promote multi-modalism, capacity to guide future growth and development of the corridor, placemaking potential, existing ROW, transportation technology and the overall potential to be transformational. Erickson said transportation technology is an important one to remember. He said they use the term "future-proofing" the corridor which incorporates understanding what technologies they know of and acknowledging that technology changes and how it may play a role in the future of transit-oriented design. He said that includes all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles.

Erickson said HDR deduced four design concepts to be evaluated. There were three initial ones that were developed and a fourth morphed out of those. He reviewed graphics of the design concepts and said they ranked those based on the criteria, goals and objectives shown on the graphics. In Design Concept 1, called the “Constrained ROW Concept”, HDR looked at infrastructure design concepts focused on the improvements to the intersections within the Mount Avenue to Reserve Street corridor limits. They also looked at providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and amenities. In this case, the overall transit would stay within the existing travel lanes. He said Concept 1 is focused more on bus stops being on either side of the road, signalized and access improvements to improve safety for all users, as well as maintaining the vehicular traffic on the corridor.

Design Concept 2, termed “The Full Corridor Bus Rapid Transit” (BRT), looks at having a center-running BRT down the middle of the corridor, where raised medians might occur. Buses would run on dedicated 15-minute headways with a dedicated travel lane. Erickson said they looked at opportunities to place very specific transfer stations. He said some of the advantages that come from this design, and one of the reasons for a center-running BRT lane, is that it reduces the path for pedestrians reduces want to get to the transfer stations in half. Instead of crossing the entire street of Brooks, they would cross half of it to get to the transfer center. Buses can be dispatched such that they can use the single lane in either direction, with certain priorities based on their timing and headways to maintain schedule. The buses can meet and pass each other at the transfer station areas. This concept looked at Reserve Street to Stephens Avenue. Erickson said the main reason it doesn’t go to Mount Avenue is the constrained ROW that is north of Stephens Avenue.

Design Concept 3 was considered mainly due to the ROW requirements of overall Design Concept 2. He said Concept 3 reduces the length of the center-running BRT to only the southern portion of the corridor. Erickson said it is approximately between Paxson Street and Dore Lane, which is a very short area. He said as HDR moved forward and analyzed this concept, they found it was not providing the overall transformation of the corridor that was the main goal and objective of the study. He said this is one of the first design concepts that wasn’t carried forward much further.

Erickson said what ended up being the preferred design concept is a mix between Design Concept 1 and Design Concept 2. HDR focused a lot on intersection improvements while also being able to incorporate a center-running BRT lane. One primary difference between Design Concept 4 and Design Concept 2 is that on the southern end, the preferred design concept actually ends at Dore Lane. They determined there could be some major complications getting a center-running BRT lane through the Reserve Street intersection, and there could be other ways for transit to service that area. He said terminating the center-running lane at Dore Lane provided some enhanced opportunities for transitioning in and out of the center-running BRT. He said Design Concept 4 morphed out of the best components and various pieces of the previous three design concepts. There are three BRT stations mapped out currently in Design Concept 4. However, there may be opportunity to add more or to identify more appropriate locations along the BRT lane. There are also opportunities mapped for bike-ped connectivity. Some of the intersections would have modifications to either removing left turn lanes or looking at opportunities to not allow U-turns. He said those details still need to be worked out, as this is a conceptual and high-level planning analysis.

Marchesseault said there are more detailed sections and perspectives for Design Concept 4 that help convey the concept. She said she wanted to step back and look at how they arrived at this concept. She said when this study started they initially thought that they needed to keep their focus within the ROW lines. Brooks Street has ample ROW south of Paxson Street. However, north of Paxson it gets really constrained. Today, there is barely room for adequate sidewalks. They started out saying they had to stay between the lines, but began to realize that maybe the blinders were on too tight. The Midtown Mojo team and HDR removed those blinders, took the limitations off, and thought broadly about what might be most transformational and what the right thing to do is long-term for this corridor. They were then able to start getting more creative and transformational ideas. Marchesseault said she thinks the center-running concept solves a lot of problems including traffic flow problems that exist on the corridor today. She said there will be some ROW impacts, although they don't exactly know where or how much at this time.

Erickson continued his presentation. He showed graphical representations portraying the intent of what the center-running BRT preferred concept could look like. He said it maintains two lanes of vehicular traffic in each direction. The BRT has a single lane with traffic running both ways. It relies on the overall dispatch and operations of the transit service to be able to accommodate that. It also shows the non-motorized usage on the outside and enhancing those as well. HDR talked through a lot of options, whether it's cycle tracks, multi-use paths, a separated path from a sidewalk, and some of those features that need to be fully vetted. He said overall, the team feels the BRT concept is a great vision for what is transformational and accommodates future needs. He reviewed typical sections of what you would see at one of the BRT transfer stations and at an intersection. Marchesseault noted that they have no vision for what the buildings would look like architecturally, just that there is some sense of density and massing. That vision was established with the 2016 Brooks Street Corridor Study. She said the buildings look a little generic in the renderings provided by HDR, and that is intentional.

Moe said it appears from the drawings that the buses are going in the opposite direction of the traffic for the side of the street that they're on. She asked if this was intentional. Marchesseault noted that it can be confusing, but it is intentional and a really creative way to use the space. There is a center lane down the middle of the corridor that is approximately 15 feet wide for one bus. It is designed so buses can go both directions. She said that allows Mountain Line to be able to use the buses that they currently have in stock. If a bus were driving north on Brooks and came to an intersection where the transfer station is, instead of continuing in their flow of traffic, they would go contra-flow just at the station so that passengers could get off and on using the bus that is in the existing fleet. She said once the bus goes past the station it would get back into the single track and continue north. A bus coming south would do the opposite. Marchesseault said that is the intent so that it doesn't have to be a double lane for buses in the middle of the street. Moe said she's sure it is something they will work out, but it sounds like it adds confusion to the traffic flow.

Moe asked if there was a transition coming north on Brooks Street from Reserve Street to Dore Lane. Erickson said there is a transition. There are a few different options HDR tried to address, mainly in the text of their study, that the transitions are required. He said in

locations across the country that have center-running BRT, they work it into a dedicated phase in the signal itself which allows buses to get in and out of that center-running lane at those specific locations and also on the north end as well. He said you can set up the signals appropriately to be able to accommodate the in and out, while at the same time having minimal impact to the vehicular traffic and not cause any additional confusion or issues for non-motorized users.

Moe asked if the Board was being asked to agree with the preferred concept so that HDR can go forward based on this concept to accomplish what is stated in the motion to engage MDT and determining ROW needs and impacts. Marchesseault said yes.

Reineking said she wanted to emphasize a couple of the points that have already been made. She said one of the slides mentioned an existing conditions assessment, and Design Concept 3 mentions the difficulty in crossing that discourages both businesses and employers from expanding to take advantage of opportunities on the other side of the street. She said it is good to keep in mind that the PUMA study identified there are 2,000 businesses along the Brooks Street corridor that employ 17,000 people. Those are a lot of people that could utilize the bus system if it is running consistently as 15-minute service on Brooks Street at South Avenue. Also, in that area, there is also a population of 16,000 people for which Brooks Street is a definite corridor for accessing the other side of the street. She said Brooks Street is a barrier and the safety aspects of being able to breach that barrier are worth emphasizing. Reineking said the opportunities for economic development then, with the permanence of the bus and knowing that Missoula is going to continue to grow, are really quite great.

Reineking said what didn't get mentioned in terms of the function of Brooks Street when we think about how it functions now and say that it is functioning, studies have shown that 20 years from now it is going to be maxed out. The time to address that is now and not 20 years from now. She said she is very much supportive of this and thanked Erickson and Marchesseault for the presentation.

Buchanan said she wanted to elaborate on Moe's question about the Board adopting this plan. She said what staff is asking is to allow MRA to have the funding to refine the plan and see if there is a path forward with MDT. She said it needs to be vetted publicly and it has not yet been. She said in the form it is in now it is built on a foundation that was a very public process that was done in 2016 with the PUMA study. She said staff isn't asking the Board to say yes and that they love the plan and want to do it. There are a lot of road blocks out there that need to be navigated. Staff is asking the Board to say that this concept is worthy of taking forward and determining whether or not it is feasible to do within an MDT ROW, determine if it is publicly acceptable, and then figure out how to fund it.

Englund asked if the \$30,000 gets it to those points. Marchesseault said said the team knows the things that need to be studied in greater detail to understand whether it is a feasible concept, but rather than undertaking a full study with all of those pieces, they know that there are two fundamental issues they need to understand. One is whether or not MDT will be accepting of the concept and will they come to the table as an active partner. She said right now they just don't know that. There have been representatives from MDT on the Midtown Mojo group, but in order to get them on board they need to go higher up in the

agency. The second issue is that they really need to understand what the ROW impacts are and where they occur. A detailed survey needs to be done. Marchesseault said Midtown Mojo's strategy was to take this in bite-size pieces and engage HDR to begin those conversations with MDT. She said if it looks like they are getting to a place where MDT is becoming a full partner then they can go the next step and start looking at some of those ROW issues in a more detailed manner. If those two issues can be resolved satisfactorily then Midtown Mojo feels like they can take another bite and start looking at more detailed design and engineering. Marchesseault said the long-term goal, if they move forward with a concept like this, is to look for federal funding. In order to be competitive for that you have to know that it is going to work and have the engineering to a certain degree. She said Midtown Mojo needs to know that they have MDT as a full project partner before going any further. They believe the \$30,000 is adequate. Mountain Line has also agreed to provide up to \$30,000. Collectively, that will be a \$60,000 retainer Midtown Mojo will use to engage HDR to begin the process. She said HDR has put together a scope of services.

Reineking asked when MRA expects results from what the Board is being asked to fund. Marchesseault said some of it may be open-ended, particularly with MDT. Erickson said the next step is to have discussions with MDT to inform and bring them up to speed at the district level and with headquarters in Helena. Then to continue that collaboration to ideally become a vested stakeholder. He said it will take time for HDR to make sure they do it right and they don't want to rush it. He said at the earliest, it would be three months to even have the first few conversations and more will have to occur after that. Those conversations are planned for with the scope that is in front of the Board on the agenda. Erickson said his gut feeling is that within six months HDR will have good abilities for meetings. The current situation, like the virtual meeting today, is something that is new to all of them as well. For something along these lines, in person is always better, but they want to be making progress the best they can.

Reineking said her understanding is that these two objectives are not being done concurrently and the ROW needs and impacts will not be started until meetings are complete with MDT. Erickson said they could be concurrent if that is what Midtown Mojo feels is the right path forward. He said initiating the conversations with MDT to see where the temperatures are at before they initiate the ROW studies is the right approach. Then HDR can gauge that and get started on the ROW studies. Those efforts will take less time. Buchanan said there is no question in her mind that MRA does not spend money on ROW until it is known they have a project, even if it is just a matter of surveying what they actually need. She said MDT holds all of the cards on this project. One of the other issues with timing is that none of the people who have been involved with this project through its evolution, at the local level with MDT, are there any longer including Shane Stack and Ed Toavs, who were involved and receptive to this. Therefore, there is a new cast of characters at MDT to communicate with and on some levels it is starting from ground zero.

Englund asked Dunn to put up the numbers for the public to call in and make comment.

Jones asked what type of formality Midtown Mojo is looking for from MDT in order to move to the next step of evaluating the ROW. She asked if informal assurances were needed that they will be a vested partner, or do they need an agreement in place. Buchanan said they need to be at the table as a partner. She said this project cannot be done without a large

infusion of federal funding. There is capacity in URD III to provide a healthy match, which makes it more competitive. She said every year that amount diminishes a little bit because the clock is running on that district, but there is a lot of capacity right now. They need MDT at the table supporting it publicly and in writing along the way as they refine it and go to the feds for funding. She said it is an evolutionary process as well. Jones asked if the current funding request includes the commitments to immediately proceed into the evaluation of the ROW, or if there will be a subsequent request. Buchanan said her understanding is that it gets it through ROW evaluation and some public process. Erickson said it includes the MDT coordination and ROW evaluation. Jones asked if the next level of funding will be part of a larger process of applying for and receiving federal funding. Erickson said there will be other parts of the overall larger development of the feasibility and next phases which would be much more robust including public outreach, identifying funding opportunities, and applying for those funding opportunities. Marchesseault said there is likely more funding needed to do a more extensive feasibility study before they are ready to apply for federal funding. She said Midtown Mojo will engage a consultant to put together that federal funding package. If they get past this initial step of figuring out if they have a project and MDT is on board, then they would go and fundraise to do a bigger feasibility study in the way they did to fund the initial study. She said she thinks MRA would be asked to contribute some to that greater feasibility study, but not the full burden.

Moe said in consideration of Buchanan's comments, this is a little early to have the discussion on the District because she doesn't have enough information to know what that capacity is going to be, whether it's consistent with the capacity that the District has generated in the past, or what the COVID-19 pandemic effect on tax collections is going to be. She said maybe there is some information she is not aware of. Moe said she appreciated Reineking's comments and agrees with her. She thinks that the subject of the Brooks corridor needs to be addressed and is in favor of doing it with this initial study. She also thinks at some point, as tax collections become more obvious and establish a trend, they are going to need to look at all of the districts and be careful about what MRA's position is for allocation of funds. Englund said what they've seen from Helena, this is the way the state is operating right now and it is too early to predict.

Englund asked what happens if adequate preparation is done and HDR makes the pitch to MDT and they say absolutely not, there is no way they would ever consider anything like this. Marchesseault said they would have to go back to the drawing boards. She said that is why they believe they need to take this in bite size pieces and they know that MDT is the first bite. Reineking said to date when the Midtown Mojo group has been talking with MDT they have not said no. They have said you have to address certain concerns. Midtown Mojo has started to address those concerns so she doesn't really anticipate an absolute no. She said she anticipates more of a process to address concerns and changes to get to a yes. Buchanan said one ace in the hole the analysis says is that if they leave Brooks the way it is today, at some point it hits failure.

MOE: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD APPROVE THE REQUEST FOR UP TO \$30,000 IN URD III TIF FUNDS TO PARTIALLY FUND A RETAINER FOR HDR TO BEGIN EXAMINING THE FEASIBILITY OF THE BROOKS CORRIDOR TOD INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY BY: 1) ENGAGING MDT AS A PROJECT PARTNER, AND 2) DETERMINING

THE RIGHT-OF-WAY NEEDS AND IMPACTS OF THE PREFERRED CENTER-RUNNING BRT CONCEPT.

Reineking seconded the motion.

Behan said the proposed center-running BRT where the buses cross over to a lane that looks like it is opposing the oncoming traffic, so that the doors open up on the proper side, seems to work very well at the Mountain Line bus station downtown. He said he's never seen any kind of a traffic or other interaction problem and he rides the bus frequently. Englund said there are four way stops there that probably slow people down somewhat.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (5 ayes, 0 nays).

URD II 2nd and 3rd Sidewalk Project MRL Crossing – Request Authorization to Enter Into Agreement (Gass)

Gass shared a graphic of the project area that was attached to his memo. He said last month the MRA Board awarded the construction contract for the URD II 2nd and 3rd Street Sidewalk Project to Shadow Asphalt, Inc. He said part of that project includes improving the sidewalk crossing across the MRL tracks at 4th Street. That crossing will consist of prefabricated cement panels that will be installed through the railroad bed. Montana Rail Link (MRL) rules and regulations don't allow MRA's contractor to perform work in the railroad bed. MRL is agreeable to allowing MRA to improve the crossing at 4th Street. MRA has come to an agreement with MRL and the provisions of that are that MRA will purchase the prefabricated cement railroad crossing panels and provide the funding to transport those panels to the construction site. MRL will provide the labor to install the panels through the railroad bed. Gass said that work will occur outside of the Shadow Asphalt, Inc. construction contract. MRL has provided an estimate for purchasing those panels and transporting them. That estimate is \$5,741.25 and staff recommends the Board authorize MRA to enter into an agreement with MRL for MRA to purchase and transport the prefabricated cement railroad crossing panels in an amount not to exceed \$5,741.25, with the understanding that MRL will supply the labor to install the cement panels at the 4th street railroad intersection, and also to authorize the MRA Board Chair to sign the agreement.

Englund asked Dunn to put up the numbers for the public to call in and make comment.

Moe asked Gass if this reduces the Shadow Asphalt, Inc. construction contract. Gass said no. MRL has showed MRA where to stop its sidewalk construction work and they will pick it up at that point, go across the railroad tracks, and MRA will pick it up on the other side.

REINEKING: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD AUTHORIZE STAFF TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH MONTANA RAIL LINK FOR THE MRA TO PURCHASE AND TRANSPORT PREFABRICATED CEMENT RAILROAD CROSSING PANELS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$5,741.25, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT MRL WILL SUPPLY THE LABOR TO INSTALL THE CEMENT PANELS AT THE SOUTH 4TH STREET RAILROAD TRACK INTERSECTION, AND AUTHORIZE THE MRA BOARD CHAIR TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT.

Jones seconded the motion.

Englund asked if MRL not wanting people to work in their ROW is them being particular or a regulatory issue. Jones said she thinks it is both. She said all crossings are federally regulated by the Federal Railroad Association (FRA), and because of that, certain work rules and practices apply, as well as safety regulations that would not generally be known to local contractors. She said as far as she understands it, it is both a preference and a regulation.

Englund said this comes to the MRA Board because staff has long had a \$5,000 limit on the amount of expenditures they can approve. He said that limit was put in place a long time ago and it may be a good time to think about whether or not the Board should raise that, commensurate with what \$5,000 was whenever this limit was approved, to a number that represents that in today's money. He asked for the Board and staff thoughts.

Jones said there are likely some ordinances or rules in place relative to other city agencies that might be good for MRA to know when it considers raising the amount. She said it seems to her like raising the amount is appropriate, but there might be an opportunity to reconcile that policy with any policies that are applicable to other city committee's agencies, or such.

Englund asked Buchanan if she knew when the \$5,000 limit was put into effect. Buchanan said she talked with Behan about it and it seems that when Geoff Badenoch was Director there were limits that were considerably higher than that, relative to a specific program. She said staff has not chased back when or how the \$5,000 limitation came into play. She said staff can do that. She said it doesn't seem that there is a simple answer. Reineking said she recalls that limit was raised temporarily at one point. Buchanan said it was changed for Silver Park so staff could approve change orders and keep the project moving forward.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (5 ayes, 0 nays).

NON-ACTION ITEMS

Continued from above discussion:

Englund said the Board would consider raising the \$5,000 limit and consider Jones' suggestion that MRA look at what other branches of city government are doing, as well as try to figure out how long the \$5,000 limit has been in effect so it can be brought to a current rate. He said that can be put on the Action Item agenda when that information is known.

Behan said there were no day-to-day limits when Badenoch was Director, but there were limits on certain programs. Badenoch could approve up to \$20,000 for the Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program (CRLP) and Code Compliance Program (CCP) without Board approval. He said the \$5,000 limit was something that was started as Buchanan became director. The history of that number is 16 years.

Future Virtual Board Meeting Protocol

Dunn said there was discussion at the staff meeting last week on how the Zoom meeting would run as far as public comment because there can be a lot of public comment at the beginning of the meeting and people waiting for a long time. City Council has made some adjustments to when they take public comment. Buchanan wanted the Board to have the opportunity to discuss if they want to change any of its protocols as far as when general public comment is taken. She said this item is on the agenda in case the Board wants to have any further discussion on it.

Englund said he thinks at the last meeting when there was public comment that it worked well. He said there hasn't been any today, but when there was some it seemed to be pretty short. He said he doesn't see a great need to change anything.

STAFF REPORTS

Director's Report

Brock asked if the Board will get a Drift or Hotel Fox update. She said she is curious how that will unfold now. Buchanan said staff can ask. She said she is not sure how anybody can answer that question right now. Englund asked if there was a deadline for it. Behan said the next hard deadline is in November. There was a schedule set out with things that were to happen in June, July and August in terms of approvals. Work will not be started by November, so there is time for Nick Checota, developer, to figure out what he is going to do with his employees as he starts reopening his other businesses and what will happen to the music, entertainment and hotel business in America, Montana and Missoula. Behan said staff can see if Checota has any sort of a schedule to put things back together again. He said there will be a time when he needs to make some decisions on whether the City should extend that November deadline. City Council will have to approve that after an MRA Board recommendation. Buchanan said Checota's interest in building the hotel was predicated on the performance venue. She said she doesn't think there is anybody out there that can say what will happen in that world. Englund said he presumes everything is on hold. Buchanan said that is staff's understanding.

Brock wanted to express the MRA's support still being there and the Board looks forward to the update when the time is right. Jones said the greatest avenue of support is to give that development group time for things to stabilize and be patient with them as they process through the ramifications of this, and be optimistic but not too pushy.

Reineking asked Buchanan about the Scott Street Redevelopment project. She said when the Board approved the due diligence it included a risk analysis. She said she thought there would be a presentation or report to the Board. The Director's Report states that the environmental review didn't turn up anything that was unexpected. Reineking asked for clarification on what was found and if there will be more costs for that and what it will become. Buchanan said there have been several environmental efforts on that property over the decades. WGM Group went back and put everything together in a package so the City knows what is out there and what has been done. She said there is nothing they found that hadn't already been discovered. The westernmost nine acres are still being worked on. The easternmost 10 acres already have a Record of Decision and have been cleaned up to residential standards. She said staff can ask WGM Group to make a presentation to the Board. She said it is a due diligence thing the City needed to do. Huttig is on the hook to

do all of the remediation and nothing has changed with that. Reineking said she wasn't necessarily asking for a presentation, she was more concerned if more remediation would need to be done or if the existing conditions were confirmed and the City is ready to move forward with the development as discussed a few months ago. Buchanan said that is correct.

Englund asked if the purchase of the Sleepy Inn property changes Scott Street at all. Buchanan said they are in two different districts with two different funding sources. She said it doesn't change the need for redevelopment of those properties. They are both in Opportunity Zones and that opens up a lot of additional possibilities. Englund said he wondered if now that the City owns the Sleepy Inn property they would be less interested in redeveloping the Scott Street property. Buchanan said staff has not heard that at all. She said the Scott Street property allows Public Works to consolidate their operations in a contiguous manner which then opens up land adjacent to the Cemetery that can also be redeveloped.

Buchanan said Moe sent the Board a link to the North Riverfront Parks and Trails Plan. It is a great site and there are a series of short videos that have great graphics for each segment of that proposal. She encouraged the Board to look at it and make comments if they have any. It can be found at: <https://missoulasdowntownmasterplan.com/>

Buchanan said Dover, Kohl & Partners have done a masterful job in what they have managed to do in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. She said she loves the videos because it doesn't command reading pages and pages of text.

Budget Reports

Dunn reported that the financial reports show the new projects that have been approved and when you look at the URD II contingency you will see that number is now negative because of the Sleepy Inn motel purchase. She said that is because MRA looked at its cash and realized the timing of the other projects in that district are such that they are going to be delayed and there will be enough time to make that Sleepy Inn purchase. She said all of this information was reviewed in detail at the last meeting when that purchase was approved.

Dunn said she's also had discussions with Buchanan as far as looking at next year's budget and how to approach it, and whether at this point if they should approach it any differently than they have in the past. She said right now MRA's approach will be the same in that it will consider revenue streams to be the same as this fiscal year until further information is provided that would indicate they should look at a lesser percentage of tax increment receipts. However, for now they will assume the same revenue amounts from the prior fiscal year.

Buchanan said one of the approved projects in URD II is the Partnership Health Center satellite clinic at the Missoula Food Bank & Community Center. She said she saw in the Missoulian that Missoula County has pulled their funding on that for this fiscal year because they can't meet the timeline due to the pandemic. She said that project was planned for FY20 and will now not happen until FY21.

Reineking said many of the projects are listed as ongoing, however it looked to her like some of them were completed. She asked if some of those will be removed before the end of the fiscal year, specifically Wyoming Street. Buchanan said staff is working hard to get everything closed out that is completed. Gass said Wyoming Street is done, the funds just haven't been transferred.

Staff Activities Reports

COMMITTEE REPORTS

OTHER ITEMS

Englund asked if next month's meeting will be virtual. Buchanan said she thinks that what staff is hearing from the administration and City Council is that by and large they would like to continue to do virtual meetings. She said with certain boards, like the MRA Board, where there are complicated or difficult discussions that need to take place, there are advantages to having people in the same room together. She said they will have to figure out a way to do that with social distancing and it could be done in the Council Chambers. She had a conversation with the City Clerk's office and they are trying to set up multiple Zoom rooms. The Hal Fraser Conference Room and Jack Reidy Room may become those. She said it will be dependent on subject matter and the comfort level of the Board and staff. Englund said he believes that everybody has the right to have arrangements made if they are not comfortable meeting in person. He said he heard that Massachusetts lifted their stay-at-home order and the governor's say in that was not stay-at-home, but rather safer-at-home. He said he thinks Missoula is still operating under that.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lesley Pugh