

Riverfront Neighborhood Council Leadership Team Meeting

January 19, 2023

Cambium Place, Old Sawmill District

The Riverfront Leadership Team (RLT) met from 3:30 - 5:00 on January 19, 2023. RLT members present at the meeting were: John Qualben, Eva Dunn-Froebig, Tristan Hustler, Tyler Horne, and Deb Bonk.

Minutes From Last Meeting: A motion was made to approve the minutes from our November meeting. This was seconded and approved.

New Business: The RLT heard presentations from two entities — Opportunity Resources and the Missoula City Transportation Planner. The highlights of these presentations are captured below:

Opportunity Resources, Inc: Joshua Kendrick, CEO of Opportunity Resources, Mike Kendrick, President of Bouchee Development, and their teams briefed the RLT on their plans to redevelop an area between South West 3rd and 4th Streets along Ash Street. Their proposal is to build a three-story, 24-unit low-income housing complex in this area. It would include a mix of one- and two-bedroom units with a commercial aspect in the location of the woodworking shop. The team noted that their intent is to make this low-income housing and that at least a quarter of the units would be for adults with disabilities. The units would be designed to better than ADA-required standards.

The team noted that the design has been done to fit into the surrounding neighborhood. No zoning or density changes would be required to complete this project. They would work with Wasteless Works to recycle what can from the current building, power lines would be buried, and surface parking for residents would be available, but hidden.

The Opportunity Resources team is looking for a way to more broadly socialize this concept with the Riverfront community and noted that the International School has agreed to have their facility used for a larger briefing or meeting for the community. They asked for our assistance in facilitating such a meeting. The RLT will explore how to do this, possibly at our next community meeting. The RLT also suggested the team explore using Engage Missoula as a way to publicize and seek input on their plans.

Overall, the RLT was impressed with the work done thus far, and the overall plan. We envision continued supportive engagement with the Opportunity Resources team as this moves forward. They are going to secure low-income housing tax credits for this project and are in the process of preparing to present this for approval to the Missoula Housing Board in May 2023 with a final decision expected by October 2023.

Higgins Avenue Corridor Plan: Ben Weiss, the Missoula City Transportation Planner, briefed the RLT on the Higgins Avenue Corridor Plan, specifically the Brooks to

Broadway Preferred Concept. Ben noted that he would be presenting this to the Missoula City Council next week for approval and adoption, and he was asking for the RLT's endorsement of this plan. If approved, his team would be able to seek federal grants for this project.

Ben noted that their plan was specifically designed to make travel safer for all users — drivers, bikers, and pedestrians. Other key features include creating a more inviting streetscape and increasing economic activity along the corridor. There would be some loss of parking between 4th and 6th Streets, but public input has been more supportive than against this proposal because of the safety aspects. The traffic models also suggest a small increase in traffic congestion at rush hour.

The Missoula Transportation Team has already done extensive public engagement on this proposal. They have publicized the plan on Engage Missoula and have met personally with all the business owners in the impacted corridor. Input from feedback received thus far is running 2-to-1 in favor of their Preferred Concept. Ben also noted that the University Neighborhood Leadership Team also supports the plan, and he asked the RLT to consider adding our endorsement as well. The RLT discussed this and decided to draft a letter of support. This was drafted on January 20 and submitted to the RLT to forward on to Ben Weiss.

Eva noted that there had not been a Community Forum meeting since November, and she had nothing to report on that front.

Old Business: The team briefly discussed the status of our letter on the sculpture park, but none of the attendees was aware of the current status of this.

The meeting was concluded at 5:00PM. Our next meeting will be on February 16, 2023, also in The Cambium Place, 945 Wyoming Street.