

Downtown Urban Renewal District Work Plan (as proposed February 2022)

Funding Accruals

- Limited funding is currently available for projects in the Downtown Urban Renewal TIF District, not inclusive of any outstanding taxes that remain to be paid for November 2021
 - The city estimates that approximately \$80,000 or greater in TIF accruals for the district will be available for all projects beginning in the first half of FY2023

Prioritized Projects

The Downtown Urban Renewal District TIF Advisory Board recommends the following development program prioritizations for FY2022 and FY23, and seeks to solicit applications based on these priorities:

- Infrastructure Improvement Program → Grants awards may be made for up to fifty percent match (50%) funding for projects that identify and prioritize upgrades to water, sewer, stormwater drainage infrastructure, and vehicular and pedestrian/bike transportation improvements as well as increasing fiber optic capability.
- Site Redevelopment & Public Space Activation Program → Grant awards may be made for up to fifty percent match (50%) funding for redevelopment of underutilized or underperforming properties, adaptive reuse of existing structures, demolition activities, or improvements to property aesthetics through enhanced lighting, landscaping, public art, or other creative means to better activates public-facing spaces.
- DURD Housing Program → Grant awards may be made for up to fifty percent match (50%) funding for projects that create or retain affordable housing opportunities.
- Façade Improvement Program → Approved applications would receive up to fifty percent match (50%) funding toward the cost of the façade improvement projects that promote historic preservation and/or promote designs in keeping with the character of the district.
- Marketing/Branding Project Program → Grant awards may be made for up to fifty percent match (50%) funding to establish marketing and/or branding plan with a wayfinding component and implementation strategy for the Downtown Urban Renewal District.
- Cruse Avenue Redevelopment Program → Grant awards may be made for up to fifty percent match (50%) funding to study and implement activities addressing parcel surveying, the future surplus of city-owned property, and infrastructure planning for the Cruse Avenue right-of-way to pave the way for redevelopment activities.
- Rodney Street Commercial Center Program → Grant awards may be made for up to fifty percent match (50%) funding to reinvigorate the Rodney Street Commercial Center through gateway signage, infrastructural connectivity, and public art improvements.

Additionally Recognized Eligible Project Priorities

The DURD TIF Advisory Board, having ranked all Downtown Urban Renewal Plan projects and programs, recommends additional project and program activities as being eligible urban renewal projects for tax increment financing (“Additional Projects”). Although Additional Projects are eligible as urban renewal projects, such Additional Projects expressly are not recommended at this time for funding amounts and prioritization. The Additional Projects and Programs that may eligible for funding in the event additional tax increment funds become available are listed within the Project and Program Prioritization Table once the Work Plan is formally amended and solicitations are made for projects of that type and recommended for funding.

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Goal	Objectives	Priority (High, Med., Low)	Timeframe (Short-, Med.-, Long-Term)	TOTALS	# of Respondents
Downtown Goal #1: Build a Cohesive Downtown Identity	1.1. Brand and market downtown to stimulate investment	High	Short	\$ 130,500	7
	1.2. Assemble baseline information and update to monitor change and make available to public and prospective investors. Information would include commercial and residential real estate data, occupancy rates, broadband availability, historic building inventory, building condition, resident population numbers, etc.	Medium	Medium	\$ 188,500	7
Downtown Goal #2: Add to Downtown Vibrancy with a Mix of Uses	2.1. Provide a range of housing types for a range of incomes, with an emphasis on a core of quality affordable housing for young professionals, workers, and older generations that is currently lacking in downtown	High	Short	\$ 654,000	5
	2.2. Attract new business types to downtown, such as specialty food markets, etc., that support residential uses.	Medium	Long	\$ 74,000	4
	2.3. Encourage business start-ups and incubators	Medium	Medium	\$ 118,500	5
	2.4. Complete process of rezoning Downtown area to encourage more mixed use and ground floor active use	High	Short	\$ 58,500	4
	2.5. Conduct feasibility, market, and other studies as needed prior to projects	Medium	Short	\$ 146,000	4
	2.6. Encourage ground-floor use with transparency - Street-level storefront windows, doors and entryways, courtyards, etc. that invite passersby	High	Short	\$ 190,000	6
	2.7. Add to and improve urban landscaping with public art, trees, and plantings for visual interest and shaded areas.	High	Short	\$ 283,500	8
Downtown Goal #3: Upgrade Underperforming Properties	3.1. Develop vacant lots and encourage upgrades to under-performing property gaps	High	Short	\$ 1,224,500	6
	3.2. Encourage the update and adaptive re-use of buildings for 21st century needs, such as open interiors, improvements to broadband, and for safety and market competitiveness	High	Short	\$ 178,500	4

	3.3. Encourage redevelopment of parking facilities that create gaps in downtown groundfloor retail by allowing for non-parking uses on floor level and parking on other stories	Medium	Long	\$ 89,000	4
	3.4. Facilitate façade improvements	High	Short	\$ 224,000	6
	3.5. Inventory city properties with potential for higher use and develop criteria for disposition	Medium	Long	\$ 158,500	5
	3.6. Provide for demolition and site preparation as needed to upgrade properties	High	Short	\$ 31,000	3
Downtown Goal #4: Invest in the Public Infrastructure Needed to Attract Development					
	4.1. Improve transportation infrastructure for better function and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles and include streetscape features to improve aesthetics, safety and quality of use by non-motorists	Medium	Medium	\$ 183,500	5
	4.2. Rectify issues of parcels along and within streets that were not properly surveyed during 1970s urban renewal, starting with Cruse Avenue	High	Short	\$ 391,000	6
	4.3. Address improvements needed for fire suppression water flow requirements for higher densities; improve fire engine access; and prioritize replacement of older segments of concrete and vitrified clay pipe for water and sewer	Medium	Long	\$ 213,500	4
	4.4. Facilitate storm drainage, access to pipes under buildings, and continue work to address pipe capacity and alternative detention features	Medium	Long	\$ 40,000	3
	4.5. Accommodate private underground utilities within public rights-of-way	Medium	Long	\$ 28,500	3
	4.6. Expand fiber capability	High	Short	\$ 303,500	5
	4.7. Document existing parking capacity and use; and analyze projected demand and parking alternatives including park-and-ride, mobile applications, and other approaches to parking in similar-sized communities in the nation. Manage parking for optimal efficiency and utilization, and locate parking facilities to support a mix of downtown uses without creating “gaps” in downtown, and make better use of existing parking facilities	Medium	Medium	\$ 143,500	4
	4.8. Invest in capital improvements needed to improve parks, green space, and recreational facilities in URD, and continue to use parks for attractions such as, “Alive at Five” and other functions	High	Medium	\$ 188,500	5
	4.9. Retain and address needs of existing city-owned cultural and historic facilities to improve use and function	Medium	Medium	\$ 159,000	5

Downtown Goal #5: Connections	5.1. Improve bike and pedestrian connections within the District and linkages to recreational trail systems and surrounding neighborhoods, including Carroll College	High	Short	\$ 163,500	6
	5.2. Develop a comprehensive bike network	Medium	Medium	\$ 151,000	6
	5.3. Improve vehicle circulation and access to increase retail viability	High	Short	\$ 31,000	3
	5.4. Improve gateways, wayfinding, and signage systems for downtown	High	Short	\$ 113,500	5
	5.5. Increase transit options in downtown, including easily-identified bus stops with posted schedules	Low	Long	\$ 55,000	4
	5.6. Improve pedestrian connections from parking facilities to destinations by making them more easily identified, more attractive and inviting (with trees, greenscape, viewpoints, etc. so that walking to/from parking becomes a pleasurable experience in itself	High	Short	\$ 174,500	6
Downtown Goal #6: Promote Historic Preservation to Create a Quality and Unique Experience	6.1. Promote historic preservation and context-sensitive design, and avoid demolition of historic building where feasible	High	Short	\$ 109,000	5
	6.2. Capitalize on downtown's historic assets and unique history (Distinguish Helena downtown from other places in Helena and from other cities)	High	Short	\$ 158,500	6
	6.3. Emphasize the unique and historic walking mall and make improvements to attract more businesses and activities.	High	Short	\$ -	

Downtown TIF Project Prioritization Matrix, August 2021

Goal	Objectives	Priority (High, Med., Low)	Timeframe (Short-, Med.-, Long-Term)	TOTALS	# of Respondents
Rodney Street Goal #1: Build Neighborhood Identity	1.1. Develop on the neighborhood's foundation of an eclectic, bohemian, funky character with care to not become too sophisticated, urban, or gentrified.	High	Short	\$ 74,000	3
	1.2. Evaluate the need to develop a more robust plan for the neighborhood as part of the City's Growth Policy.	Medium	Long	\$ 68,500	4
	1.3. As needed, provide guidance in the Growth Policy to ensure zoning enables this plan's vision.	Medium	Long	\$ 63,500	4
	1.4. Develop design guidelines that incorporate historic neighborhood architecture and other elements of neighborhood character	Medium	Medium	\$ 38,500	3
	1.5. Include Rodney neighborhood-specific branding and marketing in the Downtown's marketing and branding efforts.	High	Short	\$ 88,500	4
	1.6. Incorporate green space and trees into streetscapes, using drought tolerant species and design that can mitigate drainage impacts of storm events.	Medium	Long	\$ 178,500	6
Rodney Street Goal #2: Stimulate Vibrancy with a Mix of Uses	2.1. Retain the neighborhood character, allowing for mixed uses, a variety of residential types, and a central commercial area. Buildings height should reflect what is already in the area, mostly limited to not more than three stories, with the possible exception of taller buildings in the commercial center	Medium	Short	\$ 205,000	4
	2.2. Keep the area primarily residential with a range of housing types intermixed with offices and local government uses.	Medium	Medium	\$ 54,000	3
	2.3. Increase residential capacity with a focus on vacant or under-utilized lots, particularly in the area around Cutler, State and Warren, where city of right of way has more capacity than is used for existing streets.	High	Short	\$ 213,500	5

	2.4. Retain the Rodney Street Commercial Center as the primary area for retail, with potential for housing and offices on upper floors.	High	Short	\$ 235,000	5
Rodney Street Goal #3: Reinvigorate the Rodney Street Commercial Center	3.1. Retain and build the Neighborhood Commercial Center as the “Heart of the Neighborhood” — the center for retail, commercial, and social gathering.	High	Short	\$ 150,000	5
	3.2. Improve Rodney Street functionality, infrastructure, and aesthetics between 6th and Broadway. a. Two-way traffic with on-street parking b. Wide sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians, street furniture, traffic signage, lighting c. Signage, hardscape and landscape design that improves aesthetics and visual interest and provides visual connection to businesses d. Review proposed improvements to Rodney Street between 6th and Broadway Street for compliance with this plan	High	Short	\$ 188,500	5
	3.3. Create gateways with signage, banners, and wayfinding signage at both ends of the Commercial Center.	High	Short	\$ 133,500	6
	3.4. Create better linkages between the court house complex, Myrna Loy Center and Rodney Street.	High	Short	\$ 93,500	5
	3.5. Incorporate public art that differentiates the area from downtown in a fun and funky interactive way.	High	Short	\$ 188,500	6
	3.6. Monitor parking demand and identify potential for temporary uses, like a food truck venue, events during hours of low parking use and potential longer term transition to parking structures with ground floor retail uses and parking above or below.	High	Medium	\$ 48,500	5
Rodney Street Goal #4: Upgrade Underperforming Properties	4.1. Encourage development of vacant lots.	High	Short	\$ 229,000	5
	4.2. Encourage redevelopment and building upgrades to buildings that lack adequate safety, access, or other issues that prevent highest and best use of the property.	High	Short	\$ 168,500	5
Rodney Street Goal #5: Improve Transit, Pedestrian, and Bike Connections	5.1. Improve pedestrian and bike connections in the southern portion of the neighborhood, where linkages to downtown are lacking and long blocks and irregular streets lack connectivity.	Medium	Short	\$ 63,500	4

	5.2. Improve pedestrian linkages between the Neighborhood, Fire Tower Park and the pedestrian walkway/underpass at Cruse Avenue.	Medium	Medium	\$ 186,000	5
	5.3. Provide shelter that fits with neighborhood character at transit stops on Rodney Street.	Low	Long	\$ 62,000	5
	5.4. Develop neighborhood streets as "complete" streets and review street traffic signage and intersection configurations for safety and efficiency for motorists and non-motorists.	Medium	Short	\$ 68,500	4