



# Downtown Cheyenne Staff Report

May 2021

Report By: Amber Ash, Haylee Chenchar, Amber Trevizo, & Gabriella Perez

## DDA INITIATIVES

**Demolition by Neglect Ordinance** – The Chair of the Historic Preservation Board and some internal City folks met on April 27<sup>th</sup> to discuss how to move forward on the Demolition Ordinance. The Board will be revamping the Ordinance and probably making some pretty major changes, including revisions/cuts to items like the economic hardship provision, the lien provisions, etc. The revamped version will be tentatively voted on by the Board and given to Alessandra with the City Attorney's Office to review in September. They hope to introduce the Ordinance to Council by September 27, 2021. In the interim, the CHPB will continue to do public outreach with the Ordinance and plan on keeping the DDA updated.

**6<sup>th</sup> Penny Proposal** – The City Council voted to include \$6+ million on the 6<sup>th</sup> Penny for downtown improvements. Here is the exact language:

*“Downtown Improvements and Maintenance Project: to improve and maintain infrastructure such as roads, parking, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and alleys, in the DDA District; to operate and maintain the Depot Plaza; and to complete and maintain the 17<sup>th</sup> Street lighting project in the amount of Six Million Seventeen Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty-Six Dollars (\$6,017,966.00)”*

**Scooters** – Amber A. has been working with Blue Pig Promotions on the scooter partnership for downtown. The scooters have arrived and Hamilton anticipates rolling them out this weekend. Amber has provided him with a key to the office so that they can charge the scooters overnight in our office.

**DDA Sign** – The DDA sign fabrication is complete and the sign is in our office. We are waiting for the Mendocino building stucco work to be completed so they can repair the stucco on the face of our building and prepare it for the sign to be hung.

**Signs for Seniors** – The banners for the 2021 Graduating Seniors are in production. There will be 45 large banners and 115 small banners for downtown. This is a slight reduction from last year. Last year, we had 56 large banners.

**#WyoWednesday** – This month's #WyoWednesday campaign was in conjunction with Historic Preservation Month and highlighted 4 historic downtown buildings (the Episcopal Church, The Plains Hotel, The Depot Building and the Nagle Warren Mansion) and their respective ghost stories. The campaign performed incredibly well and reached over 23,400 people in total.

**Placemaking Project** – We submitted our application to Wyoming Main Street for this project. A copy is included in the board packet for ratification. We were awarded the \$2500 Placemaking Grant from the Wyoming Business Council that we had applied for at the end of April. The placemaking project the grant is covering is a CHEYENNE Community Pride Sign and was determined by a committee of downtown community members. The sign letters would be made by local business Rocking-V Metalwork, approx. 5'x3' and wrapped with weatherproof vinyl material. The sign would then be installed as an in-ground structure in the grassy area on the south of Lincolnway between Central and Warren, which is owned by the State and maintained by the City of Cheyenne. The grant only covers a partial cost of this project, so the placemaking committee plans to meet later this week to determine potential sponsors to cover the rest of the project cost.

**Summertime on the Streets** - Last week Haylee and Amber T. met with Corey, Alf and Luis from the Small Businesses the Heart of Cheyenne group to plan for this year's Summertime on the Streets event. This year's event will be held on Saturday June 12th. The group is working on a letter for the businesses and will hand deliver to the downtown

businesses to generate awareness and business participation. In addition to the day, we have also coordinated with Jill Lovato, owner of Blossom Yoga, for Yoga on the Plaza to kick off the day at 9am and have also asked the breweries to consider closing off the area in front of their businesses to designate as "party zones" for the day. Marketing for this event will begin once the letter the group is drafting is finalized (hopefully by the middle - end of this week).

**Murals/WY Art Council Grant** – Steve Borin and Amber A. reached out to Like Minded Productions to see if they would be willing to come to Cheyenne on June 12<sup>th</sup> as part of the Summertime on the Streets event and paint a couple of murals. Amber A. worked with the Wyoming Arts Council to get approval to spend the remaining grant funds. In addition to Lindsey and John from Like Minded Productions, Jeremy Nichols will also be coming. Amber A. is looking for 2 high profile walls to paint.

**MS Project Funds** – We submitted our application to the Wyoming Business Council to convert the existing banners to a wayfinding project. A copy of this application is included in the board packet for ratification. We should know by June 1<sup>st</sup> whether or not this project will be funded.

**May Day Pedal Push** – We were able to partner with the Cheyenne Slow Roll bicycle group to help lead the bicycle parade around downtown. The event was well received and increased downtown visitor's that Saturday with several of the pedal push participants staying downtown for lunch after the event. We had 22 volunteers for this event. Of those, 19 came from CoreCivic. Thank you to Jonathon and Melanie for volunteering! Also, thank you to Sara. Even though she couldn't be there, she reached out to her staff and one of them volunteered to assist!

**ReRide** – Amber T. worked with Breck to move the bicycles from Anthony's basement to Rock on Wheels for general maintenance. Amber T. also worked to get all of the bicycles distributed to check-out sites throughout downtown, Holliday Park and Lions Park. It looks like one of the someone took a hammer to one of the bicycles to try to remove the lock. Amber T. is working with Koloni on getting replacement parts so we can put that bicycle back into service.

**History Over Head Banners** – The History Over Head banners for the Plaza arrived in. They look amazing – thank you Sara and Shawndae! Amber A. has been in touch with Jason at the City. Hopefully, we'll be able to hang those this week.

**Planters** – 11 of the new planters are slated to arrive on Wednesday. We're still waiting for an ETA on the remaining planters. Amber T. worked with Nettie from the Botanic Gardens to determine plant material for this year. She has also ordered all of the plants for the planters. She also rented a U-Haul Truck which she is picking up May 18<sup>th</sup>. Amber T. and Gabriella will get the fill dirt from City compost and then top off the planters on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Visitor's Guide to Downtown** – The 2021 Downtown Visitor's Guide has been completed and sent to the printers. A digital copy of the Guide has also been added to our website. The Visitor's Guide highlights businesses and activities within the downtown district only and includes a brief history of Cheyenne; downtown statistics; a brief feature explaining the DDA; articles that outline family friendly activities, things to do for free in downtown, downtown's best happy hours along with an explanation for the city's open container ordinance; a calendar of events for activities in downtown through the end of 2021, and a business index guide that is relevant for downtown visitors and tourists. We also put out a call for photography bids for the project and contracted with Janelle Rose Photography, who provided over 780 photos of Downtown to not only be used for this publication but for any future marketing or promotional efforts for the DDA.

All data collection, design and editing processes were moved in-house. This project totaled 170 hours of design time.

I've shared the link with the City Council in addition to having forwarded it to the board. In addition, I shared the link with Blue Pig Promotions and asked them to send it out with their tickets. I also sent the link to Tom Hirsig asking CFD to include it with their email correspondence to ticket holders. He emailed me on May 17<sup>th</sup> to let me know it would be linked.

**Retail Leakage Study** – Amber A., Dale Steenburgen, and Heather Tupper (WBC) met with Harvey Economics to get an initial proposal to conduct a retail leakage study. The estimated cost is \$33,640. The WBC helped fund a similar study for Laramie previously. Leadership and priorities have changed; however, Amber was working with Heather to determine whether this might be a funding avenue. Information is included in your board packet.

**Website** – Amber T. continues to add businesses to the business directory as forms are received. There are currently 107 businesses listed. She is also adding events and job postings to the website weekly.

**Benefits of Owning a Business Downtown Document** - Haylee has put together a brief pdf document to aid with public education outlining all of the financial, digital and other benefits of being a property/business owner in the DDA District. The document also includes a brief description of the DDA as well as an explanation for the DDA Mill Levy Tax Rate, how it applies to downtown properties and how to calculate it. This pdf is a helpful document that can be used for general inquiries and can also be included on the DDA Real Estate page for potential buyers to review when considering the benefits of buying property in the DDA district. (document attached)

**Sponsorship Document** – Haylee is also working on a Sponsorship document to provide to interested parties who are wanting to sponsor/contribute to the DDA. Instead of sponsorship levels (i.e. bronze, silver, gold) sponsorship opportunities are outlined with physical costs as a way for potential sponsors to identify the direct impact their contribution would have.

**Laramie County Economic Development JPB** – I submitted our grant application for FY22 funding in the amount of \$20,000 for the CIG program. It will be considered at their May meeting. A copy is included in your board packet for ratification.

**P.E.O. Chapter Presentation** – Amber A. presented to the P.E.O. Chapter on April 26<sup>th</sup> on what the DDA is and what it does.

**Wells Fargo Account Close-Out** – Amy Mahoney is working with Keegan from MHP on cleaning up outstanding checks dating back to 2016. Some checks have been reissued. Some of the checks were originally issued under accounts that no longer exist. We cannot close out the account until this has been resolved. We also don't want to negatively affect the audit.

**Access** – Gabriella is currently taking an Access class through LCCC. The knowledge she obtains will help her build a functional database in Access to make annual reports easier to generate and improve data tracking.

**IT Services** – We have transferred to a new contractor at the end of April. We anticipate that this move will also result in cost savings for the DDA.

## **BUSINESSES OPENING/EXPANDING/CLOSING**

**Opened:** PearMac

**Coming:** Ike's Bar and Grill (2021), Annex Gaming Café (June 2021), Lola West Bistro & Cabaret (June 2021), Project Chupacabra Partner (June 2021)

**Still Looking to Expand/Currently Expanding:**

**Potential Business:**

**Closing/Closed:**

**Net Business Openings (since July 1st):** 19 (23 New – 4 Closures this FY)

**Net Job Creation:** 86 (Missing The Lincoln & EQ Capital)

*\*Note – as part of the Visitor's Guide, Gabriella, Amber T., and Haylee conducted a lot of cross-checking on the list of businesses. Through that process, we learned that some businesses have closed or relocated outside of the district. The bulk of these were attorneys, insurance agents, or accountants. The database will need to be updated accordingly. It's unclear when they closed and whether they should be included in this year's or in last year's numbers.*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

**Project CP** – Unfortunately, this project is not advancing. During the due diligence process, it was determined that there was too much deferred maintenance that when coupled with expenses surrounding fire sprinkler suppression and other necessary building upgrades made the project unfeasible.

**Project Phoenix 3.0** – This property went under contract in February of 2021. Amber and Betsey have met with the potential developers along with the seller and his agent. We are looking at a potential Brownfield Assessment on the property. Amber reached out to the property owner on May 17<sup>th</sup>. The buyer has exercised the extension on due diligence through the end of June. It is tentatively proposed to be residential housing with commercial on the main level.

**Artspace** – A revised pro forma has been completed and 100% of financing has been identified less the land acquisition. Amber A. is working with Steve Borin on getting the property owner to the table to begin negotiations and put the property under contract so that due diligence including Brownsfield Phase I and Phase II assessments.

**Reed Rail Corridor Project** – The Reed Avenue Rail Corridor Steering Committee met on December 4, 2020, to discuss Urban Use Overlay Zoning District Regulations; specifically, parking requirements, setbacks, pedestrian zones, bicycle parking, and industrial uses. A work session is planned for the Planning Commission in January and City Council in February. If all goes according to plan, it will be introduced in March and adopted in May of 2021.

**Bell Building** – Haylee and Amber attended the February Brownfield meeting via Zoom. The project is making substantial headway. All remediation has been completed. Roof repairs are complete.

**Westby Edge** – Haylee and Amber toured the project site in February. They are finalizing approvals with the City. They anticipate having a bar/restaurant along with office space. In addition, they'll be building several upscale townhome apartments for rent.

**REV Development Hotel Development** – Last contact was June 18, 2020. Project will need PACE and TIF to move forward.

**Project Phoenix** – On hold pending outcome of Phoenix 3.0.

**Project Chupacabra** – This is a local, organic project that has enormous potential. One of the partners on this project is anticipated to open in the building in June. This mixed-use proposal will have industrial, retail, and residential components.

## MAIN STREET UPDATES

Amber A. will be attending the Wyoming Main Street Conference in Saratoga the first week of June. Since the conference is a week before Summertime in the Streets, everyone else will stay in Cheyenne to finalize preparations for the event.

## FIP/CIG Programs

At this point, no further FIP applications will be accepted until City funding is restored or the DDA becomes more financially stable. The DDA did offer to restore the program if City restored funding to the \$290,000. However, the budget only provides for \$250,000. The application has been removed from the website.

### ***2019 Outstanding FIP projects:***

- Pursuant to the award letter, FIP applicants have one year to complete their projects which was May 31, 2020.
- The platform for masonry work on the Mendocino has been set up and work has commenced.
- On the Goodyear Building, we are still waiting for the parklet to be finished for final payout. The lot was occupied by a hail dent repair company and is now vacant.

**2020 FIP projects:**

OTEL Building – Work has begun to replace the windows. Edwards Construction has had the interior windows since 9/28. Ongoing work and hunting season has delayed the start. Greg repaired and readied the plaster on the windows jambs and prime painted them. Five-R Construction awaits re delivery of the windows for the 3rd and 4th levels.

**Outstanding CIG Projects:**

The tree for the Bell Building is still outstanding.

- The CIG application for the Hawthorn Tree signage is complete. We are waiting for the invoice.
- The CIG application for Ike's Bar and Grill for an outdoor patio including egress is on your agenda today for approval.
- The CIG application for 309-311 W. 18<sup>th</sup> for new awnings is in progress. The Design Committee requested that the existing signage be removed to clean up the Façade at the April meeting. The bid was submitted and the Committee approved that revision this month.

**Potential CIG Projects:**

- JazMinn's Events & Décor – 110 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Street (old Reformation Dance studio), new sign face or potentially a new sign
- Frontier Building – Exterior Painting of Annex (anticipate March application)
- Alexis Drake – Signage for New Location