

HMAA

Action Item

Agenda Item 5-a

Meeting Date: Friday, May 23, 2025, 7:30 am

Location: Four intersections on Montana Avenue

RE: Montana Avenue Pedestrian flashing beacons TIFD Assistance

Background:

The Historic Montana Avenue Association (HMAA) has submitted an application for TIF funding toward the installation of four (4) more Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB) that are pedestrian activated. Previously in 2021, the Downtown Billings Partnership funded the purchase and installation of the first piloted RRFB and it was successfully installed on Montana Avenue and N 25th Street. Once approval was obtained from the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), the first unit was installed as a demo to see A) How successful can it be? and B) Does it stop or delay traffic too much?

Since then, users and business owners alike advocate for using it and can see the difference it has made. The City of Billings maintains it in times of repair needs. Now, MDT has authorized installing one unit per block so HMAA would like to install four more at the following intersections:

Montana Ave & N 26th St. (by Dickey's)
 Montana Ave & N 24th St. (between Buffalo Block & NOVA)
 Montana Ave & N 23rd St. (between Ciao Mambo & Griffin Sawyer)
 Montana Ave & N 22nd St. (by Last Chance Pub)

Historically, the first unit on Montana Ave & N 25th St. (between Craft Local & McCormick Cafe) was approved on the premise that should it be successful, MDT would fund the installation of the other units along Montana Ave when it gives it its facelift project in 2027. However, that project is now looking like it could start as late as 2029. In the meantime, business and property owners don't want to wait that long and have seen the benefit of the first unit. Additionally, they worry that a "yes" from MDT now could change to a "no" from them later if/when certain higher leadership positions change within the Department itself. Furthermore, the first unit cost a little under \$12,000, whereas now, each unit would cost \$5,000 (including labor of installation).

The Development Committee discussed the affordability of this project, its benefits on safety and walkability, however, it was also disappointed that there were no matches from HMAA, City of Billings, or MDT. In the end, it was decided that MDT's "yes" for now is a good enough contribution; the City's price of the unit and installation as well as ongoing maintenance is a good enough contribution; and the HMAA's proactive advocacy and application in trying to get this done as soon as possible are good enough contributions.

Proposal:

HMAA is requesting 100% TIF funding toward this improvement because it is purely infrastructure and traffic related along a right-of-way. If successful, its outcome will benefit the public where pedestrians feel safer, accidents are reduced, and businesses continue to thrive.



HMAA Continued..

Financials:

If recommended/approved, the City of Billings will be able to schedule installation. Depending on when this may be installed, our FY26 budget may need to get modified before adoption. Currently, it is in the proposal phase until Council's review on June 3rd. The total cost for four (4) more units would be \$20,000.

DBP board of directors may recommend, modify and recommend, or not recommend this proposal.

Motion to recommend: I make a motion to recommend this project.

Motion not to recommend: I make a motion not to recommend because/due to...

Motion to Modify: I make a substitute motion to...

