



## WORK SESSION MINUTES

Thursday, December 18th, 2025  
Western Vista Conference Room  
1920 Thomes Ave, Cheyenne, WY 82001

### I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 10:05 AM.

### II. ROLL CALL

**Members Present:** David Teubner (President); Brian Bau (Treasurer); Lorrell Bellotti (Secretary); Candice Wisdom; Stan Hartzheim; Janelle Rose; Jamie Winters **On Zoom:** Wendy Volk (Vice President); Jeff White, Council Appointee

**Members Absent:** Amber Nuse

**Staff Present:** Sophia Maes, DDA Executive Director; Miya Debusk, DDA Social Media Assistant; Cass Raffa, DDA Operations & Project Coordinator

**Members of the Public Present:** Larry Wolfe, Council member; Tom Cobb, City Engineer; Doug Khlan, 1% Construction; Glenn Garrett. **On Zoom:** Julie Tucker, City Council of Disabilities; Erin Fagan, Planning and Development; Jason Sanchez, City Recreation and Events; Amber Conwell, Historic Preservation Board Representative.

### III. DISCLOSURES / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Teubner acknowledged and commended Lorrell Bellotti for winning the Women of Influence Award for 2025 through the Chamber of Commerce.

Bellotti encouraged people to support Ranch Eats, located in the Western Vista building, especially during breakfast hours.

Jeff White announced that he is officially the Council Liaison for the DDA for 2026. White also announced that Councilman Laybourn, Councilman Wolfe, and he will be starting a Ward 1 Council & Coffee. The first event will take place at David Romero Park on January 3<sup>rd</sup> from 8:30 to 10:00 AM.



Larry Wolfe introduced himself as the newly appointed Ward 1 Councilman and is happy to be attending this first meeting.

Maes stated that the DDA staff wrote up some thank-you notes for the Board members to sign at this meeting. Teubner thanked Maes for getting the thank-you notes together.

Wolfe also mentioned that the council is currently working on choosing 6<sup>th</sup> Penny initiatives, and if anyone has opinions, questions, comments, etc., he would like to hear them. He stated that they have some tough decisions to make and need to carve out about \$50 million of what is being asked as of now.

#### **IV. WORK SESSION**

##### **A. Reed Rail Corridor Presentation- Tom Cobb; City Engineer**

Teubner introduced Tom Cobb and thanked him for presenting to the Board and for his continued work on this and other projects. Teubner also referenced the Sixth Penny Survey and noted that it provides an opportunity for public input to be heard.

Cobb provided an overview of the Reed Avenue Corridor project, stating that it had been in development for more than ten years and that he had led the project for the past several years. He noted that the project had involved significant challenges and learning experiences. He explained that his work with BNSF Railway required a direct, client-based approach in order to make progress, as Class I railroads are difficult to work with and require strict adherence to all regulations.

Cobb explained that the Reed Avenue Corridor improvements were first proposed in the 2014 West Edge Visionary Blueprint and later advanced in the 2018 Cheyenne MPO Reed Avenue Corridor Plan. He clarified that the original plan was based on the incorrect assumption that the City of Cheyenne owned the Reed Avenue rail corridor. In fact, in 1908, the City Council granted ownership of the corridor to BNSF, which limits the City's authority to manipulating crossings only. He emphasized that this ownership structure significantly complicates project advancement.

Cobb reported that for every \$1 of public investment in the West Edge, approximately \$6 in private investment had occurred, demonstrating strong return on investment and confidence in the area's revitalization.



Cobb described the original conceptual design project as extending from 24th Street to 15th Street. The project goals included creating an urban amenity that supports diverse land uses, extending the citywide bicycle and pedestrian greenway, improving operational safety within both City and BNSF rights-of-way, and addressing significant drainage issues, including stormwater flows from 24th Street and Reed Avenue.

He noted that the project received \$4 million in Sixth Penny funding in 2017. In 2019, prior to his tenure, Wilson & Company was hired to begin project design. After assuming the role in 2022, Cobb determined that the firm lacked the railroad experience initially represented and terminated their contract later that year. In June 2023, the DHM Design Team was selected following a careful review process.

Cobb explained that prior to 2023, no Professional Engineer (PE) Agreement existed with BNSF, and as a result, the railroad reviewed the project only as a courtesy without providing formal input or approvals. In June 2023, a funding agreement was executed with BNSF to formally engage the railroad in project review. Following this agreement, progress included a diagnostics meeting and report, as well as submission of a 30% design plan to BNSF for review. Cobb noted that it took approximately eight months to receive comments on the 30% design, emphasizing the slow pace required when coordinating with BNSF.

Cobb summarized the action items resulting from the diagnostics meeting with BNSF. These included updating all pavement markings, stop bars, and railroad crossing markings; removing and resetting certain signage; and installing additional “No Parking” and “No Semi-Truck Parking” signs within 100 feet of the track centerline. At the time of the diagnostics meeting, the potential full closure of the 17th Street, 18th Street, and Dillon Avenue crossings was discussed, and no additional crossing closures were addressed at that meeting.

Cobb reported that the meeting also included discussion of signal bungalow replacement requirements, including the need to relocate bungalows to accommodate the corridor improvements. BNSF expressed significant concern regarding uses within the railroad right-of-way, citing an example near 22nd Street where a private property stored aluminum and other materials. BNSF directed that any debris encroaching into the railroad right-of-way be removed, stating that all railroad property must remain clear.

Cobb then presented an overview of the 30% design plan, which proposed a pedestrian promenade on the east side of the corridor and a BNSF maintenance access road on the west side. He reported that BNSF stated it would not allow any pedestrian access on the west side of



the tracks. Cobb acknowledged that this posed challenges for businesses located along the west side of Reed Avenue. The plan also included steel fencing on both sides of the corridor, a pedestrian tunnel under Lincoln Way, and the closure of three crossings. Additional elements included signal and crossing upgrades at the remaining crossings and relocation of signal bungalows to the west side of the tracks. Both amenity renderings and technical drawings were included in the submission.

Cobb explained that when BNSF provided comments on the 30% design, it reviewed the plan as though it were a 100% complete design rather than a preliminary submittal, resulting in extensive comments and requests for additional detail. BNSF requested that landscaping elements be located farther from railroad crossings for safety and sightline reasons. While this reduced some aesthetic elements, Cobb stated that the City would work to maintain a cohesive and attractive design.

Cobb noted that the most frequent BNSF comments related to curb and sidewalk design near warning devices, signal bungalow placement and potential relocation, landscaping conflicts with sight distances, maintenance access requirements, and pedestrian safety and routing. He stated that after months of discussion, BNSF ultimately required an additional crossing closure and indicated that the project would not move forward without a fourth closure. Cobb stated that BNSF's position was that the only safe crossing is one that does not exist.

Board Member Rose asked why the 22nd Street crossing near the junkyard was not selected for closure instead of the 21st Street crossing. Cobb responded that 22nd Street serves a school and functions as a through street that will continue to carry traffic. He also noted that future closures are anticipated at 24th Street in front of the Capitol and along Capitol Avenue between 24th and 23rd Streets, making 22nd Street necessary to distribute traffic. Cobb explained that 21st Street terminates at the Municipal Building, making it the most logical closure option. He stated that staff strongly defended keeping 21st Street open through letters and multiple meetings. Dillon Avenue was identified as an easier closure, while 17th and 18th Streets, though more difficult, were selected due to low usage, with a combined daily traffic volume of approximately 200 vehicles. He added that 21st Street carried even fewer vehicles, and all closures were evaluated based on traffic patterns.

Cobb stated that he discussed with BNSF the importance of 21st Street for merchant deliveries, including semi-truck deliveries to Meadow Gold that require backing in from that street. BNSF responded that this issue should have been addressed earlier, as the maneuver impacted a



primary arterial route. Mr. Cobb stated that he did not have a sufficient rebuttal to that concern. He acknowledged that no road closure was ideal and that even the 17th and 18th Street closures affected the community, but BNSF would not allow the project to proceed without the required cross-street closures.

Board Member Wisdom asked whether Meadow Gold had been consulted regarding alternate delivery routes should 21st Street be closed. Cobb responded that discussions with Meadow Gold were ongoing and stated that he did not want to close 21st Street unless the project demonstrated sufficient momentum to move forward.

Board Member Winters asked how closing 21st Street improved project safety. Cobb responded that BNSF's position was that closing crossings increased safety and that, if given full discretion, BNSF would require closure of all cross streets. He stated that he presented multiple counterarguments, including the need to keep crossings open for emergency vehicle access, but BNSF did not change its position.

Cobb discussed a proposed pilot project intended to demonstrate progress on the Reed Avenue Rail Corridor, generate public interest, and support inclusion of the project on the Sixth Penny ballot. Two pilot locations were evaluated: one near 20th and 21st Streets and another in a triangular area near 23rd and 24th Streets. Cobb stated that the 23rd and 24th Street location was the preferred option because the City of Cheyenne owns the property and BNSF approval would not be required. He reported that approximately \$2.2 million remained in the Reed Avenue account and that the pilot project was estimated to cost \$1.4 million. He noted that the account originally contained \$4 million and stated that he had exercised fiscal restraint by spending funds only when necessary.

Cobb stated that the total estimated cost of the full Reed Avenue project was \$14.9 million, which was the amount proposed for the Sixth Penny ballot. He explained that initial consultant estimates placed the pilot project cost at \$5.5 million, which he believed was disproportionate given its limited scope. After further review by engineering staff, the pilot project cost estimate was revised to approximately \$2.2 million.

Maes asked whether the pilot project would move forward. Cobb confirmed that he was advancing the project. Maes also asked whether Cobb had consulted with Jason Sanchez, Community Recreation and Events Director, regarding long-term maintenance responsibilities. Cobb stated that he had not yet had that discussion.



Board Member Wisdom asked whether the pilot project relied on grant funding or existing funds. Cobb responded that grant funds were limited to fencing, crossing closures, and signal relocation, and that remaining funding was already available. Wisdom asked whether the Reed Avenue Rail Corridor project would be included on the upcoming Sixth Penny ballot. Cobb stated that he hoped it would be included but that the final decision was not his. He noted that if the full \$14.9 million request was not approved, difficult decisions would be required, as it was unlikely that full funding would be awarded due to competing projects. Mr. Teubner clarified that the full \$14.9 million was being requested on the Sixth Penny ballot.

Teubner stated that full funding would encourage private development and property acquisition, while partial funding would likely delay investment as stakeholders waited for additional resources. Teubner asked whether a sidewalk could be installed along the east side of the Reed Rail corridor if pedestrian access on the west side was restricted. Cobb responded that staff were exploring a narrow pedestrian sidewalk option without extensive landscaping, though no formal discussions with BNSF had yet occurred. Teubner stated that limiting pedestrian access to one side conflicted with the project's goals of walkability and safety.

Rose expressed frustration that businesses along Reed Rail had not been adequately informed about proposed closures or discussions with BNSF. She urged consideration of community impacts alongside industrial concerns and stated that she had purchased the Elevator property in reliance on the Reed Rail Corridor project. She expressed concern specifically regarding the closure of 21st Street. Cobb apologized and stated that while he believed the design team had informed businesses, he acknowledged that he should have personally ensured outreach occurred.

Bellotti stated that similar concerns had been raised by other community members and noted that the Downtown Development Authority had borne criticism for communication issues originating from the City. Cobb acknowledged that pedestrian access would be reduced due to the 21st Street closure and proposed potential mitigation strategies, including acquisition of the parking lot near WyoLotto for public use to encourage pedestrian traffic on the west side. He also stated that prior to BNSF's final decision on closures, staff had explored securing an easement for a pedestrian connection to 20th Street along the west side of the corridor. Cobb added that solutions were still needed for the closures at 17th and 18th Streets, noting that the Steam Plant had also questioned those decisions.

Wisdom asked what considerations had been made to ensure west-side businesses were not isolated from downtown. Cobb responded that pedestrian overpasses were a long-term





consideration but noted that each bridge could cost approximately \$4 million, requiring phased implementation and potentially public-private partnerships or grant funding. Wisdom stated that development on the west side would be difficult without reliable pedestrian access and funding assurances.

Board Member Volk, participating via Zoom, asked about fire and emergency vehicle access to businesses affected by street and pedestrian closures. Cobb responded that emergency access had been considered throughout project discussions and noted that the hospital currently stages ambulances on both sides of the tracks. Volk also asked whether restricted access could impact business insurance rates due to fire protection concerns. Cobb stated that he did not have a definitive answer but would look into the issue and acknowledged that some impact was possible.

Board Member Bau asked how the 15th Street Project would integrate with the Reed Avenue Rail Corridor project, recognizing that both projects were still several years from completion. Cobb responded that both interim and long-term solutions were being considered. The interim solution involved routing connections from 17th Street to Bent Street and coordinating with WYDOT on signalization to tie directly into 15th Street. For the long-term solution, Cobb stated that the pedestrian underpass had been removed from the current scope due to the complexity of coordination with BNSF and the desire to complete the project, with the underpass now envisioned as a future phase. Wisdom asked why an underpass was being considered rather than an overpass. Cobb responded that an overpass would significantly impact existing project components and that pedestrians generally avoid overpasses and seek alternate routes.

Councilman Wolfe stated that the Reed Avenue Rail Corridor project was a top priority for him and that he had begun meeting with stakeholders, including Westbys and Warehouse 21, to discuss the project. He noted that significant effort was underway to place the project on the Sixth Penny ballot and bring it to completion. Wolfe stated that he welcomed conversations with community members regarding ballot priorities and encouraged feedback on issues people felt strongly about. Maes stated that she would assist in connecting individuals with Councilman Wolfe for questions or comments.

Winters asked whether there were updates on the Three Alleyways Project. Teubner suggested deferring that discussion due to time constraints but noted that it remained a high-priority project for the DDA Board. Teubner asked Councilman Wolfe whether letters of support or individual public input were preferred at this stage. Wolfe responded that he preferred individual input. He stated that Mayor Collins, Dr. Mark Rinne, and Tom Segrave were expected to propose an initial



draft of the Sixth Penny ballot. Wolfe also expressed concern for west-side Reed businesses, acknowledging the complexity of the project and the competing demands being managed.

Teubner expressed appreciation for the progress made and stated that he was encouraged by the existence of a plan. He clarified that he attended steering committee meetings as a property owner rather than in his role as a DDA Board member. Teubner stated that the original vision for the West Edge had been diluted over time and across multiple mayoral administrations and emphasized the importance of revisiting the project's background. He noted that street closures in other cities have been successfully used to influence traffic patterns and support placemaking efforts.

Maes stated that the DDA needed to clarify its role in supporting the project and that further discussion was needed. Teubner responded that for all five priority projects identified by the DDA, the organization's role was facilitation, awareness, and information-sharing. He stated that the DDA should be more diligent in attending City Council and steering committee meetings to remain informed and to effectively communicate project updates to the public.

Wolfe stated that a key challenge for decision-makers would be balancing competing priorities on the Sixth Penny ballot. He asked DDA Board members to identify their critical priorities and associated funding needs. He noted that some may suggest delaying the Reed project due to BNSF's ownership of the corridor, but stated that this was not an appropriate approach. He emphasized that Cobb had made significant progress in coordinating with BNSF and that the project would move forward. He acknowledged that business dissatisfaction was an unfortunate but necessary consequence of completing the project.

Teubner stated that if the Reed Avenue Rail Corridor project did not receive approval through the Sixth Penny ballot, it would most likely not proceed.

Wisdom and Teubner emphasized the importance of securing the full funding amount for the Reed Avenue Rail Corridor project through the Sixth Penny ballot. They stated that without full funding, BNSF would likely disengage from the project. Wisdom added that private development was more likely to proceed when business and property owners were confident that the project was fully funded through completion. Teubner stated that a lack of predictability in downtown infrastructure projects discouraged private investment, as developers were hesitant to risk capital on projects that might not be completed. He further stated that he preferred Sixth Penny projects that generated revenue rather than solely incurring expenses.





Cobb stated that BNSF currently supported the project, noting that during his most recent meeting with the railroad, BNSF expressed interest in advancing directly to a 90% design phase. He stated that BNSF's support was contingent upon the fourth crossing closure at 21st Street.

Board Member Hartzheim stated that while he was not deeply familiar with development issues, his primary concern was the potential isolation of west-side businesses resulting from the project. He noted that other cities had experienced similar issues when major infrastructure divided communities. He asked why development was not being concentrated on the west side of the tracks to promote pedestrian activity there, given that the east side would remain accessible despite the four crossing closures. Cobb responded that the east side offered more physical space between the tracks and existing buildings to accommodate infrastructure and landscaping. He reiterated that traffic volumes on 22nd and 23rd Streets were expected to increase due to the planned closures.

Wolfe stated that selection of projects for inclusion on the Sixth Penny ballot was primarily driven by public input, informed by community experience, as well as City Council knowledge and individual preferences.

#### **B. Sidewalk Improvement Program – Doug Klahn, 1% Construction**

Maes stated that, in the interest of time, discussion of the Strategic Plan would be deferred to the next meeting.

Klahn introduced himself and stated that he had been working with the DDA for some time. He reported that a sidewalk repair at 18th Street and Capitol Avenue had been completed that morning. He noted that four to five sidewalks had been repaired through the DDA and City's cost-sharing sidewalk improvement program. Klahn also discussed a proposed sidewalk patching program, noting that some patching work had already been completed the previous summer. He explained that while patching would not bring sidewalks into ADA compliance, it could address trip hazards and provide short-term improvements.

Klahn stated that staff is exploring purchasing materials in bulk to reduce costs and evaluating labor requirements. He explained that he did not have full authority to implement the program and that City Council approval would be required. The DDA was considering reimbursing the City for labor and material costs associated with the patching program. Klahn stated that a cost-effective approach would involve purchasing materials by the pallet, with approximately 60 bags per pallet. He estimated that two pallets of materials combined with five days of labor would cost



approximately \$13,000 and would allow for repairs to numerous minor sidewalk issues downtown. He noted that sidewalks in severe condition would not be good candidates for patching, as repairs would likely fail.

Klahn stated that he would like the DDA to provide a prioritized list of sidewalks to guide where repairs should occur. Teubner asked whether the patching program would require a 50% business match. Klahn clarified that the patching program would be fully funded by the DDA and would not require a property owner match.

Bau expressed appreciation for the effort to stretch available funds and stated that the patching program could provide significant benefit without detracting from other projects. Cobb stated that while funds could be allocated to patching, the City would still need to comply with municipal code. He noted that code amendments might be required, as current regulations place responsibility for sidewalk repair on adjacent property owners and do not allow repairs without a defined project.

Wisdom asked whether the patching program would free up resources to address sidewalks with significant underlying structural issues, such as deteriorating extended basements beneath sidewalks. Maes stated that she would like to discuss with the Board the potential creation of a new grant program specifically targeting extended basements beneath sidewalks. Klahn stated that a comprehensive program addressing these issues would consume a substantial portion of available funds in the current sidewalk repair program and cited The Crown as an example, noting that repairs there would likely exceed \$50,000.

Winters stated that a new legal interpretation from the City Attorney might be required, as his understanding was that the DDA currently lacked authority to fund repairs to infrastructure not located within the public right-of-way. Maes stated that under state statute, mill levy funds could only be used for voter-approved purposes, and agreed further discussion with the Attorney may include below grade repairs underneath the right-of-way since it still supported public access. She emphasized that the DDA would need to determine whether to allocate most remaining sidewalk funds toward patching, particularly ahead of summer and America's 250th anniversary, as this could provide visible benefit. She further stated interest in exploring, with City Council, a legally compliant grant program with a lower property owner match and higher funding cap to address underground sidewalk infrastructure issues. She noted that she had heard from property owners that high match requirements were discouraging participation. She also emphasized that failure



to address unsafe sidewalks could result in greater liability for property owners if injuries occurred or if the City was forced to intervene.

Wisdom asked whether the City maintained a list of properties with unsafe extended basements or infrastructure. Cobb stated that staff had attempted to compile such a list but noted that a likely long-term solution would involve constructing walls at building lines and filling in basements that extend beneath sidewalks. He acknowledged that this raised additional challenges, including utilities located within those spaces that could not be disconnected. Wisdom questioned why property owners were expected to bear repair costs when extended basements beneath sidewalks could be considered public property. Cobb responded that this legal ambiguity was a primary reason these issues had remained unaddressed for many years.

Teubner recommended exploring a new infrastructure project and potentially prioritizing it for 2026. He stated that the existing 50/50 Sidewalk Improvement Program had not progressed as quickly as hoped and that new approaches were needed.

Maes stated that she intended to bring forward a proposal at the January meeting to shift the current sidewalk program toward a patching-focused approach and potentially introduce a new infrastructure grant program. Wisdom stated strong support for the patching program but emphasized the need for a solution that addressed major underlying infrastructure issues rather than temporary fixes. Klahn stated that while sidewalks were not at immediate risk of collapse, removing concrete could expose unsafe conditions, as many sidewalks were supported by wood structures with little or no beam support.

Cobb asked whether infrastructure repairs could be handled by an on-site contractor rather than City staff. Klahn responded that this approach would still require oversight to ensure compliance with specifications and would increase costs, as contractors could not warrant the work and would charge more than standard concrete repairs.

Teubner thanked Cobb and Klahn for their time and contributions.

### **C. 2026 Meeting Location**

Maes inquired about 2026 Board meeting location preferences. Teubner recommended discussion via email as the meeting had run out of time.



## CHEYENNE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



2101 O'Neil Ave., Room 202  
Cheyenne, WY 82001



(307) 433-9730



[cheyennecity.org/dda](http://cheyennecity.org/dda)

---

### V. ADJOURNMENT

Work Session adjourned at 12:10 PM