



Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
8:00 a.m. Oct. 21, 2025  
111 S Tejon St., Ste. 703, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

**Board members present:** Sam Clark (remote), Troy Coats, Jeff Finn, Chris Lieber, Laura Neumann, Jeremy Shirley (remote), Patrick Stephens, Ryan Tefertiller, Brandy Williams (remote)

**Board members absent:** Carrie Bartow, Jordan Empey, Jim Smith

**Staff members present:** Chelsea Gondeck, Sarah Nurmi, Pat Rigdon, Austin Wilson-Bradley, Ana Valdez

**Guests:** James Africano, Shaundy Africano, Sarah Dunmire (remote), David Neville, Jariah Walker

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## Call to Order & Welcome

At 8:01 a.m., Chris Lieber called the meeting to order.

## Public Comment

None.

## Minutes

The board reviewed minutes from the September 16, 2025, board meeting. Laura Neumann put forth a motion, Sam Clark seconded, and the board unanimously approved the meeting minutes.

## Financials

### Dated August 31, 2025

Chelsea Gondeck reviewed the financials with the board. She noted anticipated expenses for repairs to the LED screen in AdAmAn Alley. The increased costs for School District 11 and the treasurer fees are due to higher TIF receivables. Payments for Fiona and Ensley are now reflected in the TIF tracker.

Jeff Finn motioned to accept the financial statements, Laura Neumann seconded, and the board unanimously accepted the financials.

## Governance

### 2026 Meeting Schedule

Chelsea Gondeck shared the plan to move to a bimonthly meeting schedule, while retaining the 3rd Tuesday timing, moving the start time to 9:15 a.m. Calendar invites will still hold the monthly meeting cadence and it's anticipated that they will continue early in the year to support finalization of the Elevate Downtown Plan and CEO transition. However, the changes aim to allow more focused discussions, improve efficiency, and remain responsive to grant requirements while meeting statutory obligations.

## Grants

### BEF/Retail Incentive: The Urban Grocer

Austin Wilson-Bradley reviewed a Building Enhancement & Retail Incentive Grant for The Urban Grocer, a new grocery store co-located at The Warehouse Restaurant. The proposed Urban Grocer will be conveniently located on Cimarron Street near new Downtown housing, addressing a critical retail gap and increasing grocery capacity, as identified in the Downtown plan update surveys and community feedback. The concept includes a prepared food program with grab-and-go meals and subscriptions, live

butcher, seafood and deli counters, fresh pasta, an in-store barista, and toiletries—significantly expanding offerings beyond traditional corner markets.

Financially, the grant is a proposed 50/50 between Retail Incentive Grant and the Building Enhancement Grant, with a recommended contribution covering 12.3% of eligible costs. Renovations include new entrances to the event space, upgraded east and west access, signage, and painting. The Urban Grocer will occupy 25% more space than Bread & Butter and employ approximately 10 full-time and 20 part-time staff.

James and Shaundy Africano noted their consideration for connectivity to the Mill Street neighborhood and the importance of affordability. Ryan Tefertiller reported that the site is form-based zone compliant, parking exempt, and some new elements may encroach on the public right-of-way. The board expressed support and appreciation for the project's community impact and innovative approach.

Patrick Stephens motioned to approve the grant proposal, Lauran Neumann seconded, the board unanimously approved the \$50,000 Retail Incentive Grant and \$50,000 Building Enhancement grant proposal.

James and Shaundy Africano left at 8:38 a.m.

## **TIF**

### Moreno and Cascade URA

Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority Executive Director Jariah Walker shared that Moreno Avenue is a key Downtown corridor, and the Catbird Hotel will serve as a catalytic anchor project to enhance connectivity and activity in the area. He reported that the URA Board unanimously supported the plan, and the adjacent Mill Street community was engaged throughout the process. Jariah celebrated the complementary attainable housing project on the south side of Moreno aimed at maintaining neighborhood affordability.

Norwood Development Group Senior Vice President Jeff Finn presented a proposal for the Catbird Hotel project, a partnership with Sage Hospitality. Jeff noted that the project builds on the ongoing transformation of South Downtown, an area that has evolved significantly since the 1990s, through both URA and DDA investments. Community engagement has been a central focus, particularly with the Mill Street neighborhood, where residents have voiced concerns about growth pressures and housing affordability. He emphasized Norwood's continued role in supporting redevelopment that strengthens the local economy and urban fabric. He also introduced plans for Phase 2, which will add 77–115 attainable rental units for residents earning 80% or less of the area median income (AMI). Phase 2 will extend the impact of the Catbird project by introducing attainable housing alongside public infrastructure improvements. This reinforces the shared goal of creating a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable Downtown community.

Sarah Dumire of Economic & Planning Systems (EPS), Inc. gave an overview of EPS' "Moreno and Cascade Existing Conditions Survey." EPS conducted a field survey in June 2025 and concluded that the Moreno and Cascade study area meets the statutory definition of a blighted area under Colorado Urban Renewal Law. The assessment determined that these conditions collectively impair the area's growth, housing potential, and public welfare, warranting its designation for urban renewal.

Austin Wilson-Bradley outlined the DDA's role to approve the relinquishment of a portion of its tax increment financing. He noted that the DDA will continue supporting the project through marketing and coordination with the Clean & Safe program. Staff recommended that the DDA retain one of five mills. This is consistent with precedent from similar projects and accounts for higher construction costs. Board members agreed the project aligns with the Elevate Downtown Plan and will generate value that would not otherwise be realized. This project offers a strong public-private partnership opportunity.

Board members engaged in a focused discussion with Jeff on project design, financing, community impact, and implementation details. Luran Neumann asked about site capacity and zoning. Jeff explained that the site could accommodate the planned units within existing zoning and lies in a transition area that guides building height and proximity to nearby residences.

Questions turned to attainable housing and its financial feasibility. Laura asked what funding tools are being used. Jeff described using every available resource, emphasizing that market-rate attainable housing is not viable without substantial subsidy. Board members acknowledged that the effort would require public funding mechanisms to preserve long-term affordability.

Board members also discussed public space design. Chris Lieber expressed enthusiasm for the privately owned public courtyard and asked how it will engage the neighborhood. Jeff explained that the spaces will be flexible for public use and events, supporting street-level activation and aligning with nearby redevelopment efforts.

Parking, retail strategy, and neighborhood integration were additional topics. Jeff noted that Norwood is planning for about 30 public parking spaces, with contingencies for expansion if needed, and the team intends to complement retail projects. Ryan Tefertiller also clarified that the site is not parking exempt, which prompted a brief discussion on parking requirements and potential solutions. The Board concluded by affirming the project's alignment with community goals and highlighted its potential to support housing diversity and neighborhood revitalization. Board members expressed appreciation for Norwood's collaboration and responsiveness to community feedback.

Sam Clark motioned to approve pledging four of the DDA's five mills to the project, Laura Neumann seconded, and the board unanimously approved the proposal. Troy Coats and Jeff Finn recused themselves from the vote.

## **Other**

### Elevate Downtown

Chelsea Gondeck reported that the project schedule will be extended slightly to ensure the product is ready for public release. The next draft will be provided in advance of the November DDA meeting. Additional public review is scheduled for early December through mid-January, and final approval is targeted for the February DDA meeting. Chelsea noted that the team is awaiting feedback from consultants on wordsmithing improvements after the board workshop.

Chelsea left at 9:54 a.m.

### Clean & Safe Program

Pat Rigdon reported that the program has identified its core challenges. A small group of individuals remains difficult to reach due to mental health issues. There are limited housing or treatment options, which create a recurring cycle of behaviors that the Clean and Safe program seeks to mitigate. Pat emphasized that the program alone cannot solve this issue. He noted that new addiction treatment openings may provide additional support.

## **Public Comment**

None.

## **Adjournment**

Chris Lieber adjourned the board meeting at 10:00 a.m.