it's BILLINGS Chamber of Commerce

September 12, 2022

Honorable Mayor Cole and Members of the City Council,

The Billings Chamber of Commerce lends its support to the 2802 Montana Ave. TIF application put forward by Old Hardware Building Development Venture for the redevelopment of the old hardware building into mixed-use commercial and housing. We hear often from our members about the need for more housing in Billings. While we are more fortunate than other communities in the state, a lack of housing supply creates difficulty for our businesses recruiting or maintaining talent. Adding housing inventory is not only beneficial to those who need it, but it also helps to keep housing more affordable.

Additionally, this project fits squarely within the city's growth policy guidelines: infill development close to existing city infrastructure provides cost effectiveness and improves an underutilized property, proximity to public transportation provides citizens better access and options, and investments that attract and retain a strong, skilled, and diverse workforce also attracts new businesses, to name a few.

The project location, in the core of our city, provides benefit beyond the property's residents. Bringing life to a vacant property creates much more aesthetic appeal to our residents and visitors, giving the perception of a well-cared for, safe and secure city. We all benefit when the built environment of our city makes a positive impression on people.

The Old Hardware Building Development Venture project will build on the crime prevention measures in the area. Housing is a unique crime prevention asset due to the added natural surveillance. By activating a space with more "eyes on the street" you increase the potential for someone to catch offenders in the act, deterring crime. Or perhaps would-be offenders do not engage in illegal behavior at all. The planned rooftop gathering space substantially heightens surveillance due to the activation of a natural vantage point.

We encourage you to vote YES on this TIF application, providing much needed housing, an aesthetic improvement to a downtown core property, and a crime prevention benefit to the city.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



DANIEL J. BROOKS
Business Advocacy Director
Billings Chamber of Commerce