

2026

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS  
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

# RENEWAL RESOURCE GUIDE



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# ABOUT US

**Mission:** The Idaho Falls Downtown Development Corporation advances our historical downtown as the regional center for commerce, culture, and leisure activities for residents and visitors.

**Organization:** The IFDDC is a 501(c)(6) organization that also manages the Idaho Falls Historic Downtown Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The IFDDC Board of Directors (BOD) is comprised of thirteen (13) volunteers who are downtown property owners, representatives thereof or honorary members invited by the BOD. They are tasked with financial oversight and setting goals to achieve the mission.

**IFDDC Board meetings are open to the public** and held the second Tuesday of the month at 9:00 am at the Idaho Falls Arts Council, 490 A Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor board room.

**IFDDC Personnel:** The IFDDC has three full-time employees: one executive director, one operations manager and one parking ambassador.

**Contracted Resources:** IFDDC uses contractors for event coordination, bookkeeping, parking lot maintenance, snow removal, and the beautification program.



# POWER OF UNITY

The Downtown Idaho Falls Business Improvement District (BID) is more than an assessment; it is a self-funded, privately managed engine for economic growth. Since the 1990s, **BIDs have become the gold standard for urban revitalization**. They allow property owners to pool resources to provide services that the city cannot—transforming downtowns from simple streets into vibrant destinations that can compete with suburban malls and online giants.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Downtown is currently competing with high-growth suburban retail and online marketplaces. Without the BID, the funding for downtown beautification, events, lobbying, Façade Improvement, and downtown-specific marketing (local and tourism) would disappear, leaving Idaho Falls without a dedicated city and state advocate for its historic center. Renewal ensures we keep the momentum and downtown does not fall behind.

The **average \$450 annual assessment** to property owners for the abovementioned services is:

**Less than** the cost of a single 1/4-page ad in the local paper.

**Less than** the annual membership dues for local civic organizations.

**Only \$1.23 per day**—roughly the cost of a single cup of coffee per week.



# WHY RENEW?

Renewing the BID is a commitment to maintaining the momentum of the last **30+ years**. Here is why the BID is essential for your property and business:

**Collective Lobbying Power:** A BID provides a seat at the table. The IFDDC Executive Director, Board of Directors and downtown property owners and merchants act as a collective voice, lobbying the city and state to ensure downtown interests are prioritized in policy and infrastructure decisions.

**Supplemental "Clean & Safe" Services:** The BID funds aesthetics—such as the 200+ flower baskets, flowerpots, and holiday décor—and maintenance that go far beyond standard city services paid for by general taxes.

**Localized Control:** Assessments are "self-imposed" by the property owners who pay them. This ensures that the money stays within the downtown boundaries and is managed by a board (IFDDC) focused exclusively on that area's success. Property owners get to decide how they want to improve downtown rather than relying solely on city services.





**Event Promotion:** The BID provides the financial means, personnel, and volunteer coordination that is the backbone of IFDDC-hosted events. These events drive foot traffic into local shops and restaurants, which individual businesses might not have the budget to organize on their own.

**Boosted Property Values:** Historically, BIDs are proven to increase commercial property values by creating a managed, desirable environment that attracts high-quality investors, tenants and shoppers.

**Amplified Marketing Reach:** Through the IFDDC’s established trade agreements with local media and the Yellowstone-Teton-Territory, downtown businesses gain access to advertising power that may be cost-prohibitive for an individual merchant.

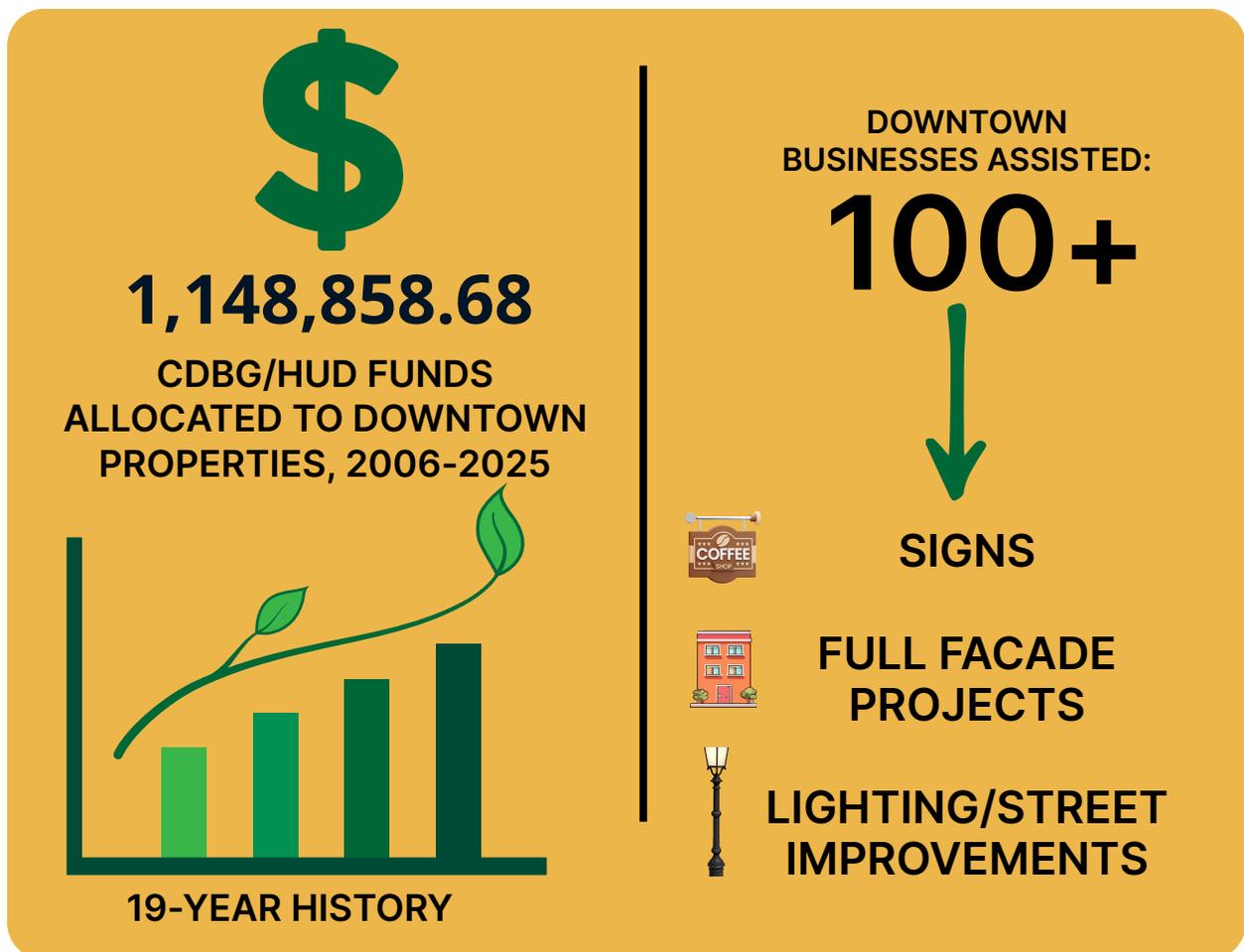
## IFDDC’s Marketing Platforms

<p><b>10,000+</b> event attendees</p>	<p><b>13,000</b> Followers</p>	<p><b>3500+</b> E-newsletter subscribers</p>	<p>Yellowstone Sign <b>21,000+ vehicles</b> every 24 hours</p>	<p><b>77% Sandhill</b> Media regional reach</p>
<p>IF Chamber of Commerce <b>550+ e-subscribers.</b> IF Magazine community calendar <b>67% readership.</b></p>	<p>Year-round promotion of downtown merchants at <b>40+ regional hubs</b> (airports, gas stations, hotels) in I.F., Rexburg &amp; Teton Valley</p>	<p>Sandwich Board <b>event promotions</b> at <b>downtown high-traffic</b> intersections.</p>	<p><b>IFDDC’s website,</b> including event calendar marketing</p>	<p><b>50-75k visitors annually/theater.</b> Movie theater screen advertising at I.F. Centre Twin &amp; Paramount &amp; Blackfoot Movie Mill</p>



# FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

**Priority Access to Funding:** BID members receive priority access to the Facade Improvement Grant, as well as other exclusive funds available only through non-profits and economic development entities.



**Funding Source:** Housing & Urban Development (HUD) through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) with match requirement of business/property owner. Match required from business/property owner: 25% from owner, 75% from the CDBG grant. The match from business/property owners may include updates/improvements completed to the building.

**Purpose:** Improve or eliminate conditions of Slum and Blight by Area (SBA). SBA includes areas from Memorial to Yellowstone and G Street to Broadway. Defined by SBA Study required by HUD every 10 years. Last SBA Study was 2016. City Community Development Services will complete the 2026 SBA study.

# 30 YEARS OF PROVEN SUCCESS

The IFDDC has a 30-year track record of turning BID assessments into tangible results:

## **Economic Development & Branding**

- **Local Spending:** Manage the Downtown Gift Certificate Program and other initiatives to keep dollars circulating within the district.
- **Tourism Impact:** Year-round promotion of downtown merchants through a robust online presence and a distribution network of over 40+ regional hubs (including the airport and hotels in Idaho Falls, Rexburg and Teton Valley). Additional tourism marketing through the Yellowstone-Teton-Territory.
- **Parking Management:** Taking over management and enforcement of downtown parking to allow for a tailored customer experience.
  - Refining the paid parking lot permitting process and upgrading signage in existing lots.
  - Keeping parking revenue in the downtown BID, resulting in property owners having a voice to define the experience with downtown employees and customers.
  - Continuing efforts to educate the downtown workforce on using lots to free up on-street spaces for shoppers.
  - Researching parking management opportunities for future improvements.
  - Lobbying efforts with city and county government.

## **Event Programming (13+ Events Annually)**

- **Major Signature Events:** Successfully organizing and hosting large-scale, annual community events that draw thousands of people downtown, including:
  - St. Paddy's on Park
  - Benefit Your Body on Broadway
  - Teens' Back-to-School Downtown Disco
  - Ladies' Shopping Days Retail Event
  - Oktoberfest
  - The Tree Lighting Celebration & Holiday Market
  - Three pub crawls: Easter Bar Hop, Crawl-O-ween, and Bad Santa
  - Three kids' scavenger hunts: Find the Easter Bunny, Find the Tricky Skeleton, and Find Santa's Puppy
- **Public Art Initiatives:** Sponsoring or supporting public art installations designed to enhance the streetscape, such as the "Art You Can Sit On" and "Living Walls" projects.
- **Streetscape Enhancements:** Working with the city on initiatives to improve comfort and the pedestrian experience, such as lowering streetlamps to encourage slower speeds and enjoyment of the space.

- **Extensive Seasonal Beautification:** Overseeing, financing, and maintaining downtown aesthetic features, including:
  - Installing and maintaining over 200 vibrant hanging flower baskets and ground pots during the spring, summer, fall and winter.
  - Installing festive holiday décor and wreaths on 70+ lampposts in the winter.
    - IFDDC offsets some of the beautification expenses with sponsorships that generate approximately 20% of the expense annually.
    - One ground pot, planting flowers seasonally (4 times/year, including labor, watering, and equipment rental) is an investment of approximately \$250-300 per pot, while the current average annual BID assessment is \$450 per downtown property.
  - Working with the Idaho Falls Civitan Club to decorate Civitan Plaza for the holidays. IFDDC stores most of the downtown holiday decorations.
- **Infrastructure Maintenance Oversight:** Managing and overseeing the daily maintenance of on-street parking and city-owned parking lots five days per week.
  - All of the funds generated from parking citations and parking lot permits are contractually obligated to be used for management and enforcement of on-street and off-street parking.
  - Parking revenue can also be used for public transportation or maintenance and improvement of city streets, public rights-of-way, public parking facilities, and public property as directed by the city.

**By renewing the Business Improvement District in 2027, we ensure that downtown remains the vibrant, competitive, and beautiful heart of the region. Let's keep the momentum going!**





# ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past 30 years, both the City of Idaho Falls and the Idaho Falls Downtown Development Corporation (IFDDC) have received several significant merits and awards for their revitalization, planning, and beautification efforts.

## Smart Growth & Planning Awards

The city has been recognized multiple times for its strategic vision in making the downtown area and its surroundings more walkable and sustainable.

**APA Idaho "Outstanding Plan" Award (2015):** The American Planning Association's Idaho Chapter awarded the City for its 2013 Comprehensive Plan, which set the framework for downtown revitalization and public art integration.

**Association of Idaho Cities (AIC) City Achievement Award (2018):** Awarded for the Community Development Services Department's innovative outreach regarding zoning and development, which streamlined improvements in the downtown district.



## Vibrancy & Economic Development

National and regional rankings often highlight the results of the IFDDC and the city's joint efforts to maintain a "vibrant" atmosphere.

**Milken Institute Best-Performing Small City:** Idaho Falls has frequently topped this list (most recently hitting #1 in 2021 and 2023). While this is an economic metric, the Milken Institute specifically credits the "vibrant downtown" and high quality of life as key drivers of the city's success.

**Mayor's Choice Awards (Annual):** While these are internal city awards, they are frequently used to recognize the IFDDC and the Idaho Falls Arts Council for specific projects, such as the Art in the Alley initiatives.





## Beautification & Environmental Stewardship

**Tree City USA (33+ Years):** Idaho Falls has maintained its status as a "Tree City USA" for over three decades. This requires consistent investment in the "urban forest," much of which is concentrated in the historic downtown area and along the Greenbelt River Walk.

**Idaho Award for Leadership in Energy Efficiency (2025):** The city was recently recognized for its efforts in utility and infrastructure efficiency, which includes the modern LED lighting and infrastructure upgrades throughout the downtown corridor.

### Key Projects Noted for Excellence

While not always a "trophy," several specific efforts have been used as statewide case studies for downtown best practices:

#### **The Snake River Greenbelt River Walk:**

Frequently cited as one of the best examples of a municipal multi-use path in the Northwest, connecting the downtown shops directly to the river.

**Downtown Pedestrian Improvements:** The "bump-outs," brick pavers, and public art (like the eagle sculptures and "art benches") have earned the IFDDC accolades from the Idaho Department of Commerce for downtown revitalization.





# LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The BID is governed by strict Idaho Statutes to ensure transparency and fairness:

- **Accountability:** The City Council has final oversight, and the IFDDC must provide annual projections, public meetings, and open books for inspection.
- **Fair Assessment:** Idaho Falls Ordinance 3125 currently caps the 2007 assessed property values at two mills (.002) with a current general cap of \$2,500 for most owners, with an average property assessment of \$450 annually.
- **Democratic Process:** The district exists by the will of the participants, ensuring the IFDDC must constantly prove its value.
- **The Assessment:** While the assessment is a self-imposed fee, it is also an investment with a high rate of return via increased foot traffic and property demand. This structure ensures that every business benefits equally from the lobbying, beautification efforts, events, and marketing of downtown.
- **Transparency:** The BID Management Agreement and the Parking Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are renewed annually with the city to ensure even greater accountability and responsiveness to downtown needs.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Q: Is the BID just another tax?**

**A:** No. Unlike a general tax that goes into the City's general fund, the BID assessment is a special assessment. By law (Idaho Code 50-2612), these funds must be spent within the downtown boundaries for projects that benefit the district. It is an investment back into your own property value and business environment.

## **Q: What if I don't feel my business benefits from the events?**

**A:** Downtown events create a "vibe and a buzz," driving foot traffic to downtown, giving thousands of potential customers more opportunities to become aware of downtown merchants.

The BID also funds "baseline" benefits that impact every business, including:

- **Maintenance:** Keeping the parking lots near your property clean.
- **Infrastructure:** Lobbying for improved lighting and streetscapes.
- **Grants:** Eligibility for Facade Improvement and other non-profit grants that can save downtown businesses thousands in building repairs.
- **Public Image:** A high-vibrancy downtown attracts professional talent and high-quality tenants for office and service-based businesses.

## **Q: Does the assessment increase my rent?**

**A:** The assessment is capped (Ordinance 3125) to prevent extreme costs. Historically, the value added by a BID—such as increased foot traffic and a safer, cleaner environment—helps justify property values and helps businesses thrive, which ultimately stabilizes the district against economic downturns.



**Q: How is the revenue from the BID assessments collected, documented, and distributed?**

**A: The Collection (The county's role)**

The revenue for the BID comes from a special assessment on properties located within the downtown district boundaries.

- These assessments are included on the Bonneville County property tax bills.
- Property owners pay these assessments to the Bonneville County Treasurer.
- Payments are typically due in two installments: Dec. 20th and June 20th.

**2. The Transfer (The city's role)**

Once the county collects the funds:

- The county transfers the collected BID funds to the City of Idaho Falls.
- The city holds these funds in a dedicated account. This ensures government oversight and proper accounting of the public funds before they are used.

**3. The Release (To the IFDDC)**

- The city releases the funds to the IFDDC twice a year according to their management agreement that is reviewed and updated annually.
- These funds are used strictly for projects and services that benefit the downtown district specifically.

**How do I Access Financials & Documents?**

Transparency is built into the system. If you are a member of the BID or a concerned citizen, you can view exactly how much is being collected and spent through two main channels:

- You can visit the [Idaho Falls City Council website](#) to view monthly financial reports, expenditure listings, and annual budget packets.
- You can sign up to receive the official City Council Packets via the city's website. These documents are released at the beginning of every month and include detailed documentation of the BID revenue and city-wide finances.
- Annual Meetings: Per the management agreement, the IFDDC is required to hold an annual meeting for BID members to discuss goals, objectives, and expenditures.

**Q: Why can't the city just pay for these services with my property taxes?**

**A:** Municipal budgets are stretched thin and focus on city-wide essentials like police, fire, and roads. The city does not have a specific budget for "extras" like downtown events, 200+ flower baskets, holiday lamppost wreaths, a dedicated downtown marketing team, or a dedicated advocate. The BID ensures Downtown Idaho Falls doesn't just "function," but competes with nicely landscaped, high-budget suburban retail centers.

**Q: How do I know the money is being spent wisely?**

**A:** The IFDDC is required to have open books and hold annual public meetings to present their budget and goals. The Board of Directors is made up of 13 of your peers—downtown business and property owners who also pay the assessment.

**Q: How do I get involved and stay informed?**

**A:** Monthly Board of Director meetings are open to the public. IFDDC leadership also attends the monthly Merchant Association meetings. For those who cannot attend Board meetings and/or Merchant Association meetings, the executive director is available for conversation twice a month at the Wednesday District Dialogue meetings (see IFDDC e-newsletter for more information). All monthly Board of Directors meeting minutes and agendas are submitted to the City Clerk, reviewed by City Council, and available to the public. IFDDC also communicates via the IFDDC website, weekly E-newsletters, and both private and public social media pages.

**Q: What is the "Collective Voice" benefit?**

**A:** When an individual owner goes to City Hall, it is one voice. When the IFDDC executive director and board of directors speak on behalf of 200+ property/business owners, it carries significant weight, similar to the Chamber of Commerce. The BID provides the structure for property/business owners to work together on issues like parking, zoning, and safety to ensure downtown's needs are heard.



**Q: What type of downtown properties are assessed?**

**A:** In Idaho Falls, BID assessments are specifically designed to target properties that benefit from the economic activity of the downtown core.

- **Commercial Properties:** All real property located within the district boundaries that is used wholly or partially for business purposes. This includes retail shops, bars, restaurants, offices, and professional services.
- **Mixed-Use Properties:** If a building has a storefront on the ground floor and apartments above, it is assessed based on the portion used for business.
- **Commercial Parking Lots:** Privately owned lots used for business purposes are included in the assessment area.

**Q: What types of downtown properties are exempt from paying the BID assessment?**

**A:** Not every building within the downtown boundaries pays into the BID. The following are typically exempt:

- **Exclusively Residential Properties:** Single-family homes or buildings used only for residential living (no business component) are exempt from the BID assessment.
- **Government-Owned Property:** Buildings owned by the City, County, State, or Federal government.
- **Non-Profit/Tax-Exempt Organizations:** Properties that are exempt from standard property taxes under Idaho Code (such as some religious institutions or charitable organizations) are also exempt from the BID assessment.

**Q: How much money is collected annually from the BID assessments?**

**A:** The annual assessment revenue varies slightly based on property valuations and the total number of parcels within the district boundaries. Currently, the BID collects approximately \$100,000 per year. These funds are restricted and must be spent exclusively on programs and services that benefit the district.



### Q: What operations does the BID revenue pay for?

A: The revenue is dedicated to services that supplement, rather than replace, municipal services. Key operations include:

- **Clean & Safe Programs:** Graffiti removal, sidewalk paver maintenance, adopt-an-alleyway or adopt-a-block programs that focus on cleaning up areas within the BID. BIDs can also fund supplemental security or hospitality ambassadors, as the BID budget allows.
- **Marketing & Events:** District-wide branding, holiday decorations, and special events to drive foot traffic.
- **Beautification:** Landscaping, weed control, planter maintenance, and public art installations. Approximately 65% of the current BID budget is invested in beautification efforts.
- **Economic Development:** Business recruitment efforts and advocacy for district property owners.
- **Baseline Operations:** IFDDC office rent, utilities, office supplies, salaries, telephone/internet, training, dues and subscriptions, hardware/software.

### Q: How is the BID money accounted for?

A: Accountability and transparency are the cornerstones of our operations. We ensure that every dollar of BID assessment revenue is handled with the highest level of scrutiny through the following **multi-layered process**:

- **Fund Collection & Disbursement:** Assessments are collected by Bonneville County via property tax bills and disbursed to the City of Idaho Falls. The IFDDC then invoices the city twice annually to access these funds for district improvements.
- **Segregated Accounting:** To ensure complete financial clarity, BID revenue is maintained in a dedicated account. These funds are never co-mingled with other revenue streams, such as parking revenue, grants, or private fundraising.
- **Professional Oversight:** Our financial records are managed by a privately contracted bookkeeper in coordination with the IFDDC Board Treasurer, providing a system of checks and balances for every transaction.
- **Monthly Board Reviews:** The IFDDC Board of Directors conducts a comprehensive review of all financial statements during our monthly public meetings to ensure budget alignment and fiscal responsibility.



- **City & Public Scrutiny:** As part of the city's broader financial record, BID accounts are reviewed monthly by the Idaho Falls City Council. These records are public and can be accessed via the city's website or by contacting the city clerk.
- **Annual Reporting:** We believe in proactive reporting. Financial summaries and strategic goals are presented annually at a City Council meeting each spring. Additionally, we share these results with our stakeholders at the Annual State of Downtown meeting.
- **Public Access:** Our records are available for review at the IFDDC office during regular business hours. We welcome property and business owners to contact us with any questions regarding the budget.

**Q: How can the BID budget or boundaries be increased to allow for more services?**

**A:** There are generally two ways the BID budget can be increased:

- **New Development:** As new properties, with the exception of exempt properties, are built or renovated within the district, the assessment base naturally grows.
- **BID Amendment:** Any change to the established BID parameters (boundaries, cap, mill, and/or assessment rates) requires a formal amendment to the Business Improvement District, which can only be accomplished during the 10-year renewal period. The renewal process, and any changes to the established BID parameters, involves a vote by the IFDDC Board of Directors, a new petition and balloting process among the property owners, the adoption of a resolution by City Council, and a statutorily required public hearing.

**Q: How often is the Downtown Idaho Falls BID renewed?**

**A:** Every 10 years. This renewal cycle was intentionally established to ensure the BID remains relevant and fiscally sound. It provides an opportunity to update assessment rates to account for growth and inflation, ensuring we can continue providing the high level of service our downtown property owners expect.

**Q: What is the timeline and process for the 2027 BID renewal?**

A: Below is general timeline for the BID renewal.

**The Road to Renewal: 2026–2027 Timeline**

*Note: This is a draft timeline; dates and activities are subject to change.*

**Phase 1: Planning & Alignment (Early 2026)**

- Step 1: Process Determination (January 2026)
  - Collaborate with City officials to define the renewal process and legal roles.
- Step 2: Leadership Alignment (February – March 2026)
  - Brief the Board on district goals and organize the BID Renewal Committee.
- Step 3: Property Owner Outreach (February – March 2026)
  - Update the owner registry and collect feedback from property and business owners to guide the next 10 years of priorities.

**Phase 2: Defining the Future (Spring 2026)**

- Step 4: Goal Synthesis (March/April 2026)
  - Align IFDDC goals with feedback from the city and property owners.
- Step 5: State of Downtown Meeting (March/April 2026)
  - Hold the annual public meeting to share data and inform stakeholders about the upcoming renewal vote.
- Step 6: Formal Board Vote (March/April 2026)
  - The Board officially votes on key BID parameters, including boundaries, assessment rates, the 10-year term, and potential ordinance changes.
- Step 7: City Council Update (March/April 2026)
  - Present the annual progress review to the Mayor and City Council.



### **Phase 3: Community Engagement (Summer 2026 – Early 2027)**

- Step 8: Stakeholder Communication (Spring/Summer 2026)
  - Share IFDDC accomplishments and the proposed future goals across all platforms.
  
- Step 9: Statutory Compliance (January/February 2027)
  - Formally initiate the renewal request in accordance with Idaho law.

### **Phase 4: Formal Petition & Adoption (2027)**

- Step 10: Petition Collection (March – Fall 2027)
  - The BID Committee meets with property owners to secure the necessary petition signatures for submittal to the City.
  
- Step 11: Resolution Adoption (April 2027)
  - The Mayor and City Council adopt a resolution and set a date for a formal public hearing.
  
- Step 12: Public Hearing & Final Vote (May – June 2027)
  - The Public Hearing: A formal hearing is held for property owner testimony
  - Final Ordinance Adoption: The City Council officially adopts the ordinance to renew the BID for the next decade.



# KEY COMPARISONS

## With BID Renewal

- Marketing: Regional TV/Radio Ads & Social Campaigns
- Beautification: 200+ Flower Baskets, Holiday Wreaths, Art
- Grants: Priority Access to Facade/Non-profit Grants
- Events: 15+ Signature Events (High Foot Traffic)
- Representation: Full-time advocate at City Hall

## Without BID Renewal

- Each business pays 100% of their own marketing
- Basic city sidewalk maintenance only
- Limited or no downtown-specific grants
- No coordinated downtown festivals
- Individual owners must lobby for themselves

# CONCLUSION

As business owners, we recognize that the environment outside our front doors is just as important as what happens inside them. The Business Improvement District is the insurance policy for your investment. Without it, we lose the collective power that keeps this area safe, attractive, and competitive. We cannot afford to go backward to a time when every shop was an island. We're asking property owners to renew this district—not just to maintain the status quo, but to ensure that the value we've built together remains protected for decades to come.



# CONTACT INFORMATION

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Hours of Operation:

Monday - Thursday, 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

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