



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
8:30 AM WEDNESDAY MAY 13, 2026
3666 UNIVERSITY AVENUE ENTRANCE

Minutes

Present: Amy Hoyt, Andrew Walcker, Brian Percy, Cesar Gomez, Cherie Powell, Chuck Beaty, Collette Lee, Jesse De La Cruz, Joe Ramos, John Adkins, Joe Guzzetta, Jungmiwha Bullock, Justin Tracy, Mario Cortez, Mark Long, Melissa Lopez, Nanci Larsen, Rachael Dzikonski, Randy Hord, Shalini Lockard, Brian Guzzetta, Steve McKinster, Sergio Aguilar, Tanner Paez

Excused: Chad Collopy, Madelyn Morgan, Sorelle Williams

Absent: Jennifer Gamble, Justin Hudson, Kristina Vanaman, Mercedes Serrano, Broc Yoshida, Philip Makhoul, Ron Loveridge, Shelby Loomis, Stan Morrison, Oz Puerta, Clarissa Cervantes, Philip Falcone, Zoe Ridgway

Ex-Officio ABP / City Council: Sarai Verduzco, Melanie Bruins, Desiree Massei

Staff: Janice Penner, Shirley Schmeltz

1) Call to Order

Andrew Walcker called the meeting to order.

2) Self-Introductions and Public Comments

Self-introductions and public comments were conducted.

3) Approval of Minutes of April 8, 2026

Motion: To Accept the Minutes of the Meeting of April 8, 2026.

Moved: Chuck Beaty **Seconded:** Joe Guzzetta

Jesse De La Cruz and Cesar Gomez abstained. Motion Approved.

4) Items for Discussion

4a) Presentation on Measure Z

Sergio Aguilar, Deputy Finance Director for the City, made the presentation. Highlights from the presentation follow:

- The police department is fully staffed for the first time in 20 years, due in large part to a strong recruitment program. The crime rate in the City dropped 25% in 2024 and dropped an additional 22% in 2025.
- The City has made significant investment into the quality of life in Riverside. There have been numerous new parks installed within the City, including a new Pickle Ball court in Arlington, and they dredged the lake at Fairmount which allowed the paddle boats to come back.
- There are also major renovations taking place throughout the City such as the Eastside Community Center, Bordwell Gym, Museum of Riverside, and Fairmount Park Armory.
- They have been working on new trash collection trucks to make pickups more reliable, as well as significant improvements to paving. The City paved about 51 miles two years ago, and an additional 50 last year, and have invested about \$26 million in their efforts to continue improvements during this year.

- About 23 hundred new businesses have emerged within the last 24 months creating good high-quality jobs within the City.
- There are two large projects currently in negotiation for the Northside; the soccer complex and water complex.
- The Fire Department has seen a 35% increase in calls for service since 2015. They went from roughly 44,000 calls in 2024 to over 47,000 in 2025 with an expected increase of over 50,000 annually. There have been no new front-line firefighter hires in about 8 years, and no new stations built in about 20 years.
 - There was a master plan conducted and its findings included response times being 7 minutes or longer depending on the area when the national safety standard is under 6 minutes. There is also the rise of overload, as there are a lot of calls coming in at the same time without having the capacity to respond to all the calls within the recommended response time. The recommendation was to hire an additional 84 firefighters and build two new fire stations.
- The City is experiencing a lower rate of revenue than expected with a higher rate of expenditures. This will cause an approximate \$27 million deficit within the last few years and growing to \$30 million without additional revenue.
- The City's proposed budget will see a \$18 million in reductions across the board so they can work within their means. There are about 30 positions that will remain vacant for some savings. The reductions combine both general costs and existing Measure Z components.
- Measure Z passed in 2016 saw a sales tax increase of 1%. The upcoming ballot includes renewing Measure Z plus a .25% increase.

Collette Lee asked how much sales tax and jobs resulted from the new businesses that have come to the community. Sergio Aguilar said there have been about 18,000 new jobs created in the last two years.

Collette Lee then asked if there was a way to direct some of the sales tax revenue specifically to police and fire. Sergio Aguilar said Measure Z is a general purpose tax and can be used on anything the Council decides is an allowable use of funds. The Council will dictate how the funds are used. With the current Measure Z, 71% goes to public safety which is police and fire and 29% goes towards road paving. Most of the general funds go towards public safety as it is a funding priority. Without taking into account Measure Z, about 56% of the general funds go towards public safety.

Jungmiwha Bullock asked how many people have applied to the Riverside fire department versus the people who have graduated from the academy. Steve McKinster, the City's Fire Chief, said their attrition rate is less than 5%. When they go out to hire, they are able to fill the vacancies. Jungmiwha Bullock then asked if approved, what percentage of the new measure Z money would go towards claims and legal fees. Sergio Aguilar said there are two funds; one is the workers compensation fund and the other is the general liability fund. About 50% is set aside and an actuary assesses yearly. All this information can be found online, and they report annually to the Council on claims per department.

Brian Percy asked if there a breakdown of the calls for service for the year between emergency medical calls versus actual fire cars. Steve McKinster said about 70% of calls are emergency medical and 30% are other including fires. Collette Lee asked how many calls are homeless related. Steve McKinster said about 18% are related to homeless in some fashion. Brian Guzzetta, the Deputy Fire Chief, said there is an increase in homeless related calls in the downtown area and the Magnolia Corridor.

A discussion took place between the fire department's requirements to maintain ISO certified and what it means with regards to staffing and overtime.

Mario Cortez asked what assurances can be provided to show that if someone were to vote for Measure Z, the money would actually go towards hiring the 84 additional fire fighters and building the two new fire stations. Sergio Aguilar said it will all come down to the people who get elected to Council because it is a general purpose tax. There will be a lot of transparency with regards to Measure Z and it is separate from the general funds.

4b) Downtown Beautification Contribution Policy – Motion

Andrew Walcker said RDP funded beautification projects in the past on an ad hoc basis. The Executive Committee discussed establishing a policy for funding beautification projects in the future so decisions were made equitably. He said that the policy included in the Board package was developed jointly by Andrew Walcker and Brian Percy, and approved by the Executive Committee at their May 5th meeting who recommended that the Board approve the policy as put forward. The contribution amount is to be adjusted each year, not necessarily a set amount for every year. Brian Percy said \$20,000 would be the cap.

Motion: To Accept the Downtown Beautification Contribution Policy.

Moved: Brian Percy **Seconded:** Collette Lee

4c) Update on Annual Budget Process

Andrew Walcker stated RDP staff is preparing the budget for fiscal year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. The operating budget will be zero-based and include an estimate of the BID levy, an allocation for a new administrative position, and salary increases for staff. The draft will be sent to the Executive by May 20th for review prior to their June 2nd meeting. The budget sent to the Board for approval at their June 10th meeting will have any recommended changes/adjustments. Janice Penner said the salary ranges will be reviewed to make sure they are in line with the non-profit sector in California.

5) Financial Reports

5a) Approval of Financial Reports at April 30, 2026 – Motion

Nanci Larsen said the April 30, 2026 results showed a surplus of \$244,830 year to date compared to a budgeted surplus year to date of \$49,614 resulting in a positive variance of \$195,216 for the year to date. BID Levy income year to date was \$190,810 higher than budget due to the outstanding BID levy payments received and taken into income for 2025 and 2026. Overall expenses were \$292 lower than budget.

As of April 30, 2026, RDP had \$657,837 in two checking and two money market accounts with Citizens Business Bank, ICON Business Bank, and Provident Bank. RDP reserves include two CDs with Columbia Bank, two CDs with Provident Bank, and one CD with US Bank for total reserves of \$591,780.

The Accounts Receivable was \$1,816 while Accounts Payable equaled \$985. The liability for accrued staff benefits (vacation and other time) as of April 30, 2026 was \$35,060.

Motion: To Accept the Financial Report at April 30, 2026 as Presented.

Moved: Justin Tracy **Seconded:** Amy Hoyt

Motion Approved.

6) RPD Security Updates

Tanner Paez represented Chad Collopy. He said there have been a series of car burglaries in the garages over the last six months to a year. The police have finally been able to identify one of the suspects who has been linked to at least 5 of the burglaries. The suspect is not currently in custody but they are hoping to obtain a search warrant for the individual's residence soon.

The transient population has been constant in the downtown area. John Adkins said the RCC Coil School has been experiencing more aggressive homeless and the students have been verbally assaulted on multiple occasions. Their internal security is trying to get a handle on it but John Adkins was asking if the police have noticed a change which could be causing this more aggressive demeanor. Tanner Paez said his personal observation out in the field is there has been a decrease in aggression, but drugs are a major component in the behavior. Collette Lee said there are 4 homeless who continually hang around the entrance of the CVS pharmacy on Market at the night which is very scary for her and others when they go in. When she asked the cashier to call the police, the cashier said they don't call the police anymore because they don't respond. Tanner Paez said response times can vary but he has never dealt with police just not showing up to a call. Whether the police do what the caller wants them to do is another story.

7) County of Riverside Updates

Cesar Gomez is currently working with the City on the American 250 Celebration and seeing how the County can contribute.

8) Mayor's Office Update

Zoe Ridgway was not at the meeting so there was no update.

9) City Council Updates

Sarai Verduzco said there are two major events coming soon to downtown. On May 19th the Riverside Chamber of Commerce is hosting a How to do Business with the City workshop from 10 am to 11 am and will provide resources and information on how to become a vendor for the City. The South Main Street community engagement event will be held on May 21st from 6 pm – 7:30 pm at the Salvation Army. The City had received a grant a few years back to upgrade the area between the 60 freeway and the Convention Center with new landscaping and a median. It will narrow down to one lane, providing safer parking and more safety for pedestrians. The event will allow the public to provide feedback before the construction starts.

Melanie Bruins said tonight they will be having a Ward 2 Mayor's Senior Forum. Both the Mayor and Councilwoman Cervantes will be at the University Heights Middle School Gymnasium from 6 pm – 7 pm.

10) City Community Development Department Update

Desiree Massei said the vacancy rate for the downtown area shows 4.1%. Office space is at 3.7%, retail is at 1.5%, and industrial is at 7.2%. There are some new businesses scheduled to come in. The Notebook Café is moving through the process after getting through some issues which were holding them up. They are currently dealing with the Health Department, and they should be open in the next six weeks.

They will be attending a conference in Las Vegas next week to try and attract businesses to Riverside to better the entire area.

Mark Long asked what the best vacancy rate would be for downtown. Desiree Massei said it is actually really good as it stands right now. The numbers are based on the current active contracts so while there may be empty store fronts, if there is an active contract on that space it is counted as part of these numbers.

11) Committee Updates

Land Use: Brian Percy said they have not received any further news regarding parking garages one and two. They had an initial meeting with various stakeholders to discuss the issues with the homeless. The stakeholders are restrained by various State laws and mandates on what can be done. Janice Penner said the next Land Use meeting on May 2st will continue the conversation on unlicensed food vendors and the short-term and long-term issues.

Security: Janice Penner said they are pushing RTA to remove the bus stops on University Avenue near Market so transfers take place at the mobility hub. When the bus stop by Dollhouse on University near Lemon was removed, 99% of the loitering and other issues there went away. The committee is currently discussing some short-term solutions to keep homeless from loitering at the bus stop by Mezcal as well as seeing what can be done on Main Street between University and Mission Inn with regards to the tables and chairs and sun shades there.

12) Items for Information

12a) RDP News, Activities, and Other Items

Amy Hoyt said the Riverside Area Rape Crisis Center (NORA) has been serving the Riverside community for 50 years, offering services to victims of sexual abuse and their families. They are the only organization to do this in the area. They are in the midst of a new campaign called Building Hope, asking Riverside to help Riverside.

John Adkins said there are a number of events coming up at RCC, including several music performances at the Coil School and a Dance Program at Landis.

13) New Business

Chuck Beaty mentioned the Cesar Chavez statue downtown and asked what future it has when other areas around the US are removing various signs and statues connected with Cesar Chavez. Sarai Verduzco said the Mayor announced at City Council that the City does own the property where the statue is located but the statue itself is owned by the Latino Network. They are currently conducting surveys and working with various stakeholders in feedback sessions to determine a reimaging of the statue rather than simply removing it.

Jungmiwha Bullock asked if they could discuss and potentially reevaluate the Special Event Permit application as small businesses are being impacted by how these permits are being issued. She said ProAbition closed the entire street down for an event on Saturday and none of the other businesses in the area were notified in advance. Andrew Walcker said it appears to be the temporary use permits and the lack of notice with letting businesses know about closures which could impact their business. Brian Percy said staff will add this issue to the Land Use committee for further discussion.

14) Adjournment – Next Meeting Date June 10, 2026 at 8:30 am.