

# BID starts over on vital project

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A proposal for a downtown Business Improvement District in Rapid City is back on the drawing board. The delay apparently is part of an effort to work out a peace plan between proponents and opponents of the plan.

State law allows a city to create a BID in order to raise money for improvements and promotion of a business district. The Rapid City Downtown Development Corp. had proposed a 20-cent per square foot assessment of businesses in a 40-block area in order to help finance a \$329,000 plan to improve the downtown district.

The Development Corporation plan was a good one, but several business owners have vehemently opposed it — mainly because they considered the assessment an unfair and unnecessary tax.

Now some of those opponents have been appointed to the new BID board, which will work on a new proposal. The issue of how to pay for downtown improvements will remain controversial, but maybe including opponents of the project on the board will pave the way for a compromise.

"Before we get into any of this, we have to knock down the animosity and build an atmosphere of trust, and we've got to get to know each other," said Bryan Schnell, executive director of the Downtown Development Corp.

If the board can do that, it will have accomplished something significant. Rapid City is on the verge of having one of the most attractive, vital downtown areas in the region. A Business Improvement District could help the community achieve that.