

Community Design Topics, Goals & Objectives & Actions

April 7 mtg DRAFT

The following draft goals and objectives have been compiled from the November through April 7 focus group meetings along with feedback from listening session worksheets.

Guiding Principles

1. Focus Inward Vision Statement – see Focus group Guidebook
2. Community Design is intended to emphasize the physical form of our community and consider ways that land use, infrastructure systems, and design development interact:
 - a. The development and redevelopment of building forms in our community and how they relate to the transportation system and other public facilities such as sewer water and parks and open space;
 - b. The way that people interact/use community space and public facilities through consideration of community character and sense of place and that may result in guidance for development;
 - c. Connectivity (physical form) among the built environment, natural environment, and human environment;
 - d. Adaptability – prepared with resiliency for change;
 - e. The various scale of our community planning ranging from the broad Urban Service Area scale (pulling consideration of housing, transportation, transit, parks, TIF districts and efficiencies together) to neighborhood scale;
 - f. Comprehensive community plan guidance to transportation systems that inform future transportation planning; and
 - g. Waste stream management in the way that waste stream cycles, including consideration of resource efficiencies, sustainability, inform land use relationships.
3. Land Use and Transportation and Infrastructure are connected systems that should be integrated and planned together.
4. Goals and Objectives should support and encourage sustainable practices.

Topic 1: Community Character and Sense of Place

Issue: Great places offer better choices and access to live, work and play opportunities, while also being grounded in sense of purpose and direction. They are defined by their character. Community character is the distinctiveness of a place and it results from the interaction of a variety of factors such as the built form, transportation systems, parks and open space, landscape, history, people and their activities.

Missoula, as seen through comments from the Listening Sessions, already has a distinctive character. Our challenge is preserving this unique character as new development and redevelopment occurs throughout the City. Missoula's unique qualities provide the backbone to its sense of place. Building upon the assets mapping performed during Our Missoula's process, the community should identify what those aspects are and work to preserve and enhance them.

Goals

1. Protect and enhance our strong sense of place by connecting, supporting and protecting the community's existing distinctive qualities, including natural resources, the vibrant diverse community, distinct neighborhoods, and downtown.
2. Support future development that enhances the unique character of Missoula.

Objectives

1. Create policies or design standards that promote beautification of all aspects of our community.

2. Support pedestrian-scale design that encourages non-motorized transportation and social interaction, especially in areas of the City that are now predominantly vehicular-oriented (e.g., Brooks Corridor).
3. Support cohesive, distinctive, and diverse neighborhoods through residents' involvement and planning.
4. Support the design and maintenance of community gathering spaces that encourage public use and social interaction.
5. Use overlay zones to promote how development looks and interacts with the street system, higher density housing on transit corridors, and urban design to de-emphasize parking and emphasize pedestrian scale development.
5. Encourage redevelopment of downtown properties consistent with the downtown plan.
6. Promote green space and the urban forest areas, restoration of riparian restoration, and development of community gardens.
7. Integrate community gardens into neighborhoods.
8. Support programs that require the use of recycled & sustainable building materials.
9. Identify ways to plan for the effects of climate change on the community character and sense of place.
10. Develop policies to support local businesses by actively discourage big chains and box stores.
11. Encourage neighborhood plans based on historic design patterns that unify neighborhood and foster a sense of belonging.
12. Encourage the design and implementation of projects that inspire both residents and visitors to explore and learn about Missoula's unique character and history.
13. Preserve unique character of Missoula's setting by highlighting mountain views and river access.
14. Support the development of venues for community events and link these to economic development efforts.

Actions

1. Provide incentives to encourage redevelopment of downtown properties consistent with the downtown plan.
2. Incent mixed-use development so that residences are within walking distance to grocery stores and other basic necessities.
3. Incent garden space in new multi-dwelling development.
4. Develop and implement community design standards through an open community process to retain and enhance Missoula's unique character.
5. Develop design standards for higher density in-fill projects that are designed to be compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and identify examples of exemplary projects to illustrate design concepts.
6. Develop design standards for big box stores that add value and character to the community
7. Develop neighborhood plans based on historic design patterns that unify neighborhood and foster a sense of belonging.
8. Enhance "civic" spaces for public gathering downtown.
9. Develop a fair, thorough and open community process for the community to express ideas to the City.
10. Conduct workshops and seminars on place making and creating a sense of place through new developments

Topic 2: Land Use

Issue: Cities should be resilient to emerging needs and changing demographics. Accordingly, Missoula should be ready with innovative planning tools, regulatory responses and comprehensive approaches to growth and development that provide direction, predictability and some flexibility for the future. To move forward, Missoula should look inward at the services and qualities currently available and make the best choices for potential changes while honoring existing community assets. This inward focus encourages new growth in the direction of existing infrastructure, neighborhoods and public services, which ensures a community that uses resources - from water to fuel to public funds - wisely. Land use regulations should reflect and support the directions of this growth policy.

Issue: Sprawl is straining existing infrastructure and services. The best interest of the city overall should be considered when considering development proposals including the extent of service and infrastructure needed, impacts to resources, and support of existing community character. Use of existing developable and re-developable areas within the City (areas that already receive municipal services) lowers costs. Residents value their existing residential neighborhoods, so preserving living areas is also important. There is a need to plan for growth and discourage sprawl especially if it lacks the distinctive character of Missoula.

Issue: There are currently a number of underutilized commercial and industrial spaces in the City. These are opportunities for future redevelopment and reuse that help to reduce the carbon footprint. The City should encourage and plan for this type of redevelopment.

Goals

1. Land use regulations that reflect new building trends and best practices for the 21st century while also protecting our common values and encouraging new growth in the direction of existing infrastructure and public services.
3. A proactive plan for the development of future infrastructure.
4. A more compact development pattern.
5. A transportation system planned in concert with land use goals.

Objectives

1. Preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods and open space
2. Encourage growth in the urban core.
3. Encourage integration of living and working spaces, and other flexible and sustainable development patterns.
4. Develop annexation policies that are not solely financial but that consider plan goals.
5. Require development to pay for its proportional share of services and infrastructure.
6. Encourage agricultural land use preservation.
7. Update regulations to support the future of agriculture in the City of Missoula.
8. Develop transit oriented development (TOD) policies and zoning that promote efficient transportation systems and high density land use patterns along transit corridors and major transportation corridors..
9. Encourage development that provides housing for all income levels.
10. Align policies and develop strategies to encourage repurposing commercial or industrial buildings and land.
11. Repurposed existing structures should accommodate a mix of uses including housing, neighborhood centers, civic space, reclaimed landscaping, and commercial opportunities.
12. Encourage developers to provide incentives that reduce reliance on SOV transportation.
13. View parking as a system that reflects future land use needs.
14. Ensure the entire community remains bikeable and walkable.
15. Parking strategy that supports a more compact development pattern.

Actions

1. Develop design standards for higher density in-fill projects that are designed to be compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and identify examples of exemplary projects to illustrate design concepts.
2. Educate the community about the benefits of infill development.
3. Incentivize development on vacant or under-utilized property, particularly housing in downtown.
4. Host round table discussions with housing developers to determine the barriers to developing housing in the downtown area.
5. Develop community design standards to preserve and enhance Missoula's character.

6. Develop neighborhood plans based on neighborhood character and history.
7. Update impact fees to cover full impact of development.
8. Articulate an annexation policy that identifies growth areas in the urban fringe, establishes zoning for these areas, imposes city development standards and provides for the cost of providing services in these areas.
9. Establish an urban growth boundary to concentrate development inwards, limit sprawl, and plan for annexations.
10. Amend development regulations to allow for innovative development designs and growth in 21st century (contemporary) industries.
11. Develop new parking standards that reduce parking ratios, incentivize reduced parking supply and demand, support compact development, and recognize future land use needs.
12. Amend subdivision regulations to protect our common values including open space, agricultural heritage, and connection to local food access.
13. Incentivize infill development that is close to existing infrastructure and that can utilize non-motorized and public transportation facilities.
14. Increase accessibility by adopting updated ADA requirements and design features in new construction.
15. Incentivize new development and redevelopment that implements safety designs.
16. Incentivize development near existing infrastructure.
17. Compile good examples of medium-high density residential projects and mixed-used projects that fit in with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and create a sense of place.
18. Identify commercial areas that could be repurposed.
19. Institute consistent, transparent and streamlined development review processes
20. Review permitting fees routinely, and keep competitive with other urban areas in the state
21. Implement more neighborhood conservation overlay options.
22. Enforce building and property maintenance code for rental properties.
23. Adopt design standards and design review for commercial buildings.
24. Revise regulations to encourage non-traditional housing developments such as cottage homes, small lots and neighborhood PUDs.
25. Revise regulations to require construction meets accessibility and visitability standards.
26. Adopt form-based zoning standards for use in appropriate areas.
27. Revise CBD zoning to allow for higher building heights and reduced parking.
28. Create a transition zone between the CBD and neighborhoods.
29. Reduce parking requirements and offer other incentives for developing multi-family on appropriate transit corridors.
30. Amend regulations to prohibit high density residential use in commercially zoned areas not near services for residents and that depletes commercial land stock.
31. Recommend that City and County staff meet at least quarterly to coordinate annexation issues.
32. Articulate an annexation policy that identifies what annexations are being contemplated and how they fit with the focus inward policy.
33. Meet periodically with development community to discuss issues and promote higher standards for design.
34. Coordinate with the University of Montana on planning issues especially the relationship between downtown and campus.
35. Coordinate with the County on fairground planning.
36. Provide financial incentives to make mixed-use downtown projects feasible.
37. Provide financial incentives to off-set the cost of developing brownfields and redevelopment of older commercial properties.
38. Investigate revenue bonds, tax increment financing and other funds for another downtown parking garage
39. Conduct analysis to identify parcels that could be rezoned to accommodate higher density multi-family development.

40. Establish a process to update neighborhood plans and to support planning efforts by neighborhood councils.
41. Update park plan and coordinate with open space planning, greenbelts, and sustainability goals
42. Adopt an agricultural land preservation ordinance.

Topic 3: Transportation

Issue: Transportation of people and goods plays an important role in the overall design of a community. People lead healthier, more active lives if the community is built to facilitate safe and diverse modes of transportation, including walking, biking and public transit as complements to the existing network of roads that support motor vehicle travel and transport of goods. Missoula has a good bike and pedestrian trail system and with good access; yet, existing gaps in that system currently limit bike and walk transportation options. Missoula’s challenge is to continue to safely strengthen its bike and pedestrian infrastructure, while actively supporting public transit, and maintaining and enhancing the existing network of roads.

Goals

1. A connected, efficient, safe, and attractive transportation system.
2. A diversity of transportation options that promote healthy lifestyles and reduce reliance on automobiles.

Objectives

1. Develop a robust, thoughtful transportation system that reduces driving through the use of well designed, planned and integrated streets, pedestrian facilities and public transportation options.
2. Develop policies and support infrastructure that promote the use of active transportation (walking, biking or public transportation, etc.) and discourage the use of single occupancy vehicles (SOV’s).
3. Determine the current benchmark of total “Vehicle Miles Traveled” and establish a target to limit growth or reduce VMTs.
4. Emphasize transportation network safety and livability over capacity.
5. Consider individual transportation needs and options and ensure local and national (broader) travel options are available.
6. Maintain and increase bike-ability between and among neighborhoods and commercial centers.
7. Establish connectivity in the trail system where links are missing in order to improve ease of their use and provide direct routes to all parts of Missoula.
8. Develop design standards and pedestrian friendly infrastructure that promotes the safety of bikers and pedestrians and decreases conflicts with motor vehicles.

Actions

1. Adopt programs that promote more transit alternatives and different modes of travel.
2. Develop a bike share system to encourage bicycling
- 3.
4. Identify and strive for a mode split that decreases single occupant motor vehicle trips significantly by 2030.
5. Identify and strive for a measured goal that increases non-motorized trips significantly by 2030.
6. Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian transportation safety features with the goal of zero traffic fatalities and severe injuries (consistent with Community Safety Transportation Planning Goal).
7. Develop individual non-polluting on-demand transportation alternatives that would allow access to a majority of residents within ¼ mile walking distance.
8. Support and plan for active transportation options such as walking and biking.
9. Prioritize safety in the design of the overall transportation network.

10. Support a system of complete streets in all neighborhoods.
11. Establish safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings in high traffic areas.
12. Provide safe connections to schools and play areas.
13. Require “complete streets” standards for all new roadway improvements.
14. Build support for transit through informational materials that document the long-term benefits of transit
15. Work with employers on an outreach campaign to promote alternative transportation to work such as transit, biking, walking and car pooling
16. Educate citizens on bike laws, trail laws, etc.
17. Develop a policy and cap on VMT thresholds, goals for reducing VMT; monitor traffic projections —especially assumptions for long range and large scale models
18. Investigate feasibility of alternative transportation such as a light rail, trolley or tram system.
19. Coordinate with Mountain Line transit on expansion of transit routes, hours of operation, fees, financing, and para-transit services.
20. Work with partners to create a car and/or bike share program.
21. Implement Missoula Active Transportation Plan.
22. Implement Transportation Safety Plan.
23. Construct roads that assure adequate access for fire and emergency equipment.

4: Infrastructure

Issue: It is difficult for many cities across the nation to maintain existing infrastructure. Pressures of growth and sprawl around the City increase the long term maintenance costs for the City. A need for a sustainable, long term solution to maintain and upgrade infrastructure is needed.

Goals

1. Build infrastructure that is sustainable and adaptable.
2. Secure locally managed access to water, sewer, energy, waste, and resource management infrastructure.

Objectives

1. The City should maintain existing infrastructure, and prioritize it over new construction..
2. Update mitigation impact fees on development so that fees cover the required infrastructure and the real costs of development are reflected.
3. Provide infrastructure that supports a more compactly designed community.
4. Ensure that all infrastructure aligns with the long term goals expressed in the Growth Policy.
5. Strategic investment in infrastructure should:
 - a. Facilitate development where appropriate
 - b. Efficiently use public resources
 - c. Discourage sprawling development
6. Encourage development in future growth areas by investing in water and wastewater system improvements in these identified areas.
7. Encourage and develop energy infrastructure that shifts supply and demand away from fossil fuels.
8. Infrastructure services which are guided by a principle of resource conservation and best practices to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
9. Develop the transit system as a community utility or basic infrastructure.
10. Prepare for the development of necessary infrastructure to allow the City to meet waste reduction goals.
11. Develop higher quality road design and construction standards that also consider various alternative roadway

construction materials.

Actions

1. Update zoning code to require space for recycling in new/redevelopment projects.
2. Explore the feasibility of using sustainable building materials in infrastructure projects, such as clay utility pipes and recycled rubber.
3. Prioritize funding for infrastructure capital improvements that supports land use and transportation patterns to create a more compactly designed community.
4. Coordinate annexation and infrastructure extension policies in developing areas of the urban fringe.
5. Prioritize development within urban service boundary before considering expansion of the urban service boundary.
6. Review regulations to eliminate barriers to adoption of renewable energy systems
7. Investigate financial mechanisms to encourage investments in renewable energy systems. (City should lead by example.) (climate action plan)
8. Lobby the state to change laws allowing larger renewable energy systems and net zero districts.
9. Convene with other Montana cities interested in renewable energy to lobby the PSC to change renewable energy laws.
10. Prioritize infrastructure investments to areas targeted for future growth.
11. Change the current policy to extend sewer to areas outside of city so residents in these areas pay for city services as part of the development agreement to annex and extend services.
12. Prioritize sidewalk investments that improve walkability and safety by constructing sidewalks where there are gaps in the system.
13. Use financing mechanisms such as special improvement districts to extend sewer to areas that are currently on septic systems
14. Using financing mechanisms such as tax increment financing to upgrade infrastructure in redevelopment areas
15. Adopt policies, regulations and construction standards to coordinate deployment of broadband infrastructure with road, water and sewer construction projects in order to achieve cost efficiencies
16. Support innovative applications such as smart grid, smart water, automation, remote monitoring with sensors and big data analysis that can conserve resources.
17. Acquire the Missoula land fill.

Topic 5: Natural Areas and Outdoor Recreation

Issue: Missoula has an extensive system of natural, open spaces that provide opportunities to recreate in and around the City. It is important to provide access to and between these important features of the community in a thoughtful, well designed manner. While increasing the connectivity to the natural areas and outdoor recreation, it is also important to ensure that open spaces remain uncluttered and uncrowded.

Goals

1. Recognize and strengthen preservation and responsible access/use of Missoula's outdoor resources.
2. Maintain and expand access to Missoula's trails, parks, open space and recreational areas through a connected system.
3. Improve the community's urban outdoor amenities, and prioritize the creation of more public spaces (e.g., more plazas downtown, more neighborhood parks).

Objectives

1. Provide well designed, convenient access to trails, open space, and recreation through connected public transportation system.
2. Preserve and protect Missoula's natural resources and natural areas for the entire community.
3. Conserve and protect open space and conservation during the development process.
4. Mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Actions

18. Improve signage at trails, open space and recreation areas.
19. Prioritize and develop standards that preserve and protect Missoula's natural resources and natural areas.
20. Create incentives for conserving and protecting open space and conservation during the development process.
21. Create policy that mitigates and adapts to climate change.
22. Provide conveniently located park space for all neighborhoods, and
23. Review existing parks and improve access where needed.
24. Provide connectivity between parks through trails and greenways systems.
25. Develop a master plan for public gathering spaces and outdoor amenities.
26. Hold community design charrettes to get public input into a master plan for public gathering spaces and outdoor amenities.
27. Review existing neighborhood plans for opportunities to develop outdoor amenities and public gathering spaces.

Topic 6: Affordable Housing Opportunities

Issue: Opportunities for housing to meet the needs of a variety of people is key to a successful city. In Missoula, about half of the working population cannot afford to buy a home. In addition, demand for smaller, more easily maintained housing options that are close to services has grown due to demographic changes, energy costs, climate change, and more. It is important to have a diverse selection of housing integrated throughout the City including affordable housing options near the urban core where there is easier access to the public transportation system, shopping, employment and other basic needs. Consideration should also be given to housing design so that the established character of the community is preserved.

Goals

1. Promote opportunities for well-designed affordable housing for all Missoulians.
2. Provide opportunities to develop a variety of housing types to meet the needs of a diverse population in regard to age, income, abilities and family size.

Objectives

1. Prioritize policies that incentivize development of affordable housing such as density bonuses, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), land trusts, land use patterns, building types and inclusionary zoning.
2. Promote affordable housing in the urban core that avoids pushing people with low to moderate incomes out of the City.
3. Develop and provide incentives for energy efficient "above-code" green building and development to reduce developer and owner/tenant costs.
4. Encourage redesign of vacant lots in approved subdivision for affordable smaller lot development.
5. Promote the development of a range of affordable housing types to meet the needs of different households sizes, age and income levels.

Actions

1. Modify land use regulations to provide more options for affordable housing with tools such as revised minimum lot size and inclusionary zoning.
2. Offer density bonuses and other incentives for mixed-use developments and affordable housing.
3. Conduct analysis to determine costs –benefit of regulations to the development and their effects on affordable housing.

Topic 7: Sustainable Development

Goals

1. All new and re-development within the City should use sustainable design and green building practices.
2. Support sustainable, “green” initiatives for new development & redevelopment within the City.

Objectives

1. Promote sustainable design initiatives and “green” building practices for all new and redevelopment within the City.
2. Encourage incorporation of green building design into all public buildings.
3. Explore development of a green best practices/building code.
4. Identify and promote the benefits of green buildings such as the reuse of building materials.
5. Incentivize green building through a streamlined approval process.

Actions

1. Identify the appropriate strategies to incentivize the growth of small manufacturing using recycled materials. (Example: Recycling Development Zone in LA)
2. Promote net zero energy districts through incentives.
3. Consider changes to land use regulations in order to reduce the impervious surface of developments and incorporate such practices into the remodeling, expansion or rehab of existing developments as well.
4. Revise regulations to allow for alternative energy options such as roof-top solar and investigate financial mechanisms to encourage investment in such systems.
5. Revise codes to allow green building materials, (such as permeable pavement and glass aggregate, etc.), innovative techniques that promote goals for energy conservation, affordable housing and lower maintenance cost.
6. Develop standards for zoning and subdivisions that encourages new development where infrastructure can support it and discourages “greenfield” development.
7. Explore the merits of and strategies for encouraging green space within redevelopment of commercial buildings where appropriate.
8. Require all future municipal building projects to be at least LEED Silver certified.