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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Residents Invited to Help Map What They Love About Missoula**

City of Missoula planners are launching a brand-new, one-of-a-kind planning tool that asks citizens to share – and then see -- the things they love about their city. It's called assets mapping, and it's coming to Missoula through our partnership with the Bozeman-based Sonoran Institute as part of the Our Missoula project. Citizens can participate in it during the first few days of October.

Assets mapping combines public discussion with data visualization to result in a series of layered maps depicting areas of the city where community-identified assets are present or are lacking. The project begins with a forum for community members to share what they value about their city – its parks or historic buildings or the riverfront, natural features to human-made. The information shared during this forum gets compiled into a list, which project organizers then reference to track down existing data. That data is then overlaid on a map of the city, resulting in an assets map.

Ultimately, by depicting the accumulated assets on a single map, viewers are able to see where assets overlap, are close together, or are few and far between. The assets map will be used by City staff members to inform the Our Missoula growth policy update and to help them consider areas of the city that may be ripe for future investments.

John Lavey, a project manager with the Sonoran Institute, says the assets mapping project provides a creative outlet for people to participate in the future of their community.

“What sets assets mapping apart from other public engagement events is that citizen input gets translated into something real, something that can be seen and has a very utilitarian value.” Lavey said. “We’ll hear people talk about what they treasure about Missoula, then turn it into a map – a treasure map if you will – that depicts where those treasures exist within the fabric of the City.”

The project launches the first three days of October, with project organizers providing a range of options for people to participate.

A public open house will be held Oct. 1 and 2 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at the Rocky Mountain School of Photography Gallery, 216 N. Higgins Ave. and Oct. 3 between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the Main Lobby of the Florence Hotel. The public is invited to drop in and engage with interactive displays describing the project and its outcomes. They’ll ultimately be asked to share what they believe the city’s assets are.

Project organizers are offering two opportunities to attend a project launch meeting the evenings of Oct. 1 at the DoubleTree Hotel and Oct. 2 in the Governor’s Room of the Florence Hotel. Organizers hope that by offering the same meeting on two different nights, citizens who may not be able to make one evening can attend the other. For those unable to attend an open house or a meeting, organizers are offering an online survey, which can be found on the project website.

Laval Means, City of Missoula Planning Services Manager, says the project is a good way for people to get involved with Our Missoula.

“This promises to be a fun and worthwhile project for all our citizens,” she said. “We’re working very hard to make this accessible, and we hope people come out and share with us what they love about this city.”

For more information, please visit the project website at:  
[www.communitybuilders.org/missoulaassets/](http://www.communitybuilders.org/missoulaassets/)

**Missoula Assets Mapping – Key  
Upcoming Dates:**

- October 1, 2: Public open house. 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at 216 N. Higgins Ave. in the Rocky Mountain School of Photography Gallery (drop in)
- October 3: Public open house. 3:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. in the Main Lobby, Florence Hotel, 111 N. Higgins Ave. (drop in)
- October 1: Treasure mapping meeting. 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Double Tree Hotel conference space. 100 Madison St. (Same meeting each night)
- October 2: Treasure mapping meeting. 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the Governors Rm, Second Flr. Florence Hotel, 111 N. Higgins Ave. (Same meeting each night)

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