

# Our Missoula Listening Sessions

## August 19, 20 and 21, 2014



## INTRODUCTION

This document contains the notes from the first eight 90-minute Our Missoula Listening Sessions, which occurred August 19, 20 and 21, 2014. Listening sessions were established based on the many topics that have a role/impact in shaping our community, 28 sessions in all. Supplemental comments received after the sessions will be compiled and posted as a separate document.

The purpose of the listening sessions is to foster open discussion with participants specifically interested in the given listening session topic. The comments recorded during these sessions are the opinions, ideas, and impressions of the individuals present and does not reflect consensus positions.

Each session was formatted similarly with three main components:

1. **ASSETS:** What do participants value about Missoula, and then what do they value specifically in regard to their expertise and session topic?
2. **CHALLENGES:** What are the challenges facing Missoula (now and in the future)?
3. **DISCUSSION:** Broaden the conversation to openly discuss ideas, recommendations, programs, policies or actions.

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## Planning Board

### **Key Topics**

- Incongruent zoning between city and county
- Infrastructure to accommodate growth; be proactive rather than reactive
- Good working relationships between contractors and city
- Agricultural land preservation
- Transportation and land use integration
- Focus Inward- more dense urban core
- Interface between built environment & natural environment
- Community design & redevelopment
- Natural resource protection
- Less emphasis on business growth & more emphasis on keeping community values
- County-City working together
- Biking, busing, walkable streets
- Open space
- Below market rate housing; how to incorporate in multi-dwelling and have better design
- Strong and appealing city center
- Social capital and civic process
- Healthy community design
- Changing demographics; fewer families; changes in development
- Apply concepts to maintain sense of place

### **City County Coordination**

- Continuity in area between city and county fringe; city and county are interconnected in this area and the city should be clear what they want
- Keep diverse neighborhood standards for areas that are in city growth areas
- Requirement for annexation to get water and sewer leaves problem areas with septic systems that should be on sewer. There should be a way to provide sewer services without annexation
- Vision of urban core; development in the fringe should also be included in the county growth policy (See wastewater service area to identify urban fringe)
- There may be areas where the county vision should also be reflected in the city growth policy
- Opportunity to have progressive city growth policy; don't have to water it down to reflect countywide concerns
- Let the city focus on the city in their growth policy (urban system); if city develops densely, there would be less impact on county and the county can maintain the rural areas in the county

### **Focus Inward – What does this mean?**

- Downtown revival; vibrant
- City entrances; people should feel like they are entering town; city currently does not have great entryways
- Increase density of housing to support transit; don't need a car to get everywhere

- Redevelop housing stock at greater densities
- Better urban design; Missing big city amenities that would be required if the city promotes more density in the core areas; for example, would need more urban parks within walking distance; performing arts center, etc.
- Cost of development is greater than market will bear for downtown high density housing; need to subsidize these types of units
- Redevelop areas for mixed use in commercial areas
- Better design for multi-dwelling: must be strategic about where to locate multi-dwelling housing
- Outreach to community to address fear factor associated with multi-dwelling housing
- Multi-dwelling should be in areas where there are already higher densities; need to be proactive to identify areas and not just wait for projects to be proposed
- Use of 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. Emphasize pedestrian scale
- There is a disconnect between how people view the city and Missoula as an urban environment. Missoula is the 2nd largest city in Montana and the growth policy should actualize focus inward ideas
- When we do redevelopment, we should have clear guidelines
- People in Montana are going to want to have a car. Can't eliminate all parking spots
- Need to move traffic: Missoula has impediments to traffic mobility such as rivers, Interstate, and diagonal streets
- Although people may have a car, they want to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) or go to one car per household; have travel schemes in place to serve all the options; we don't have the right mix of options for travel and parking yet
- View parking as a system; old parking standards don't apply
- Trends for less driving- aging, Gen Y and Gen Z drive less; sharing economy
- Development review process should consider developer relationships
- Missoula is easier to do developments than other parts of country (Although not compared to other parts of Montana); it is easier to do development in eastern Montana such as Sidney
- Projects need to meet vision; Missoula is bigger than Eastern Montana towns and is more complex so the development process will reflect this complexity.
- The existing land use map shows the Bitterroot rail line as park land; is this realistic?
- Vision needs to be implemented through land use regulations and should be reflected in growth policy land use map

### **Economic Development and Values Balance**

- New concept for growth; growth should be internal and sustainable. Don't give incentives for corporations to develop ag. land; keep community vibrant
- Help economic development to make link between housing and transportation
- Missoula will keep growing in foreseeable future; it needs jobs for the new economy
- People want to live in Missoula but wages are low and housing is expensive; there is a link between affordable housing and economic development

### **Agricultural Land Preservation**

- No processing facility or infrastructure to get product to market
- Economics favor subdivision over agriculture
- Subdivision review identifies prime soils through soil survey but there are other factors that need to be considered
- Preserve opportunities for agricultural water and other resources
- County is addressing agricultural land preservation

### **Natural Resources**

- Wildlife should also be considered
- Deer are a prey population that adapts to urban life but will attract predators such as bears and lions; this creates possible human-wildlife conflicts

### **Infrastructure**

- Big projects will need funding from Federal sources
- City projects - small and cheap (i.e. Bike path) can be done. The city doesn't have source of funds for big transportation investments
- More control over subdivision; greenfield development and big developments hasn't occurred over last few years; new developments need to follow wastewater plan
- City growth policy should clearly identify where to invest in transportation
- To subsidize/promote development in downtown, City should provide parking for residents who live in downtown
- Changing demographics- millennials want smaller units close to downtown
- Work with the University as they grow

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## Education

### **Key Topics**

- Money for quality education
- Early childhood education
- Recycling
- Hellgate School District area growth
- How independent schools fit into overall education system
- Collectively imparted education for all
- Continued emphasis on learning and alternate transportation
- Technology infrastructure
- Continuum of education and lifelong learning

### **What do you value?**

- Low housing density; more Montana feel
- Ability to raise children in safe, affordable, livable environment
- Closeness to nature
- Culture; arts
- University community; high value on education
- Giving community; folks willing to help out
- Diversity; cultural (university), lifestyles in Missoula
- Health care
- Great downtown
- Parks; library
- Natural amenities; river, creeks, wild places
- All levels of education are now talking about economic development
- The city is doing well on bike/pedestrian travel

### **What are the challenges?**

- Lack of prime job opportunities
- Families making a living
- Cost of housing
- Define a community vision of the city so that everyone has a stake in the continuing asset; understand what a great city is all about
- Cost of childcare; second largest expense; unable to access quality childcare; best places won't take part time kids; demand exceeds supply
- Commoditization of community; profit motivated instead of serving people; need more business to serve people that are coming here
- Not enough agencies to serve those living here; the city is subsidizing tourism instead of recruiting better paying jobs; tourism is driving up cost for everyone
- Transportation; streets experience back-ups; low level of service (LOS); congestion more problematic in Missoula than other communities
- Growth is over-taxing our infrastructure

- Not “car friendly”
- Difficult to get people on same page to promote economic development
- Perception from the rest of the state that Missoula is “different”
- Growth; how are we going to grow and how to interface with rural surroundings; will we just grow or will it have a purpose to strengthen community? Any town USA? Growth needs to be more like Montana; healthy growth
- High potential for population growth
- Students require more support systems especially for special education and those with learning disabilities
- K-12 school enrollment is up; growth has exceeded past projections; schools need to prepare kids for their future; there is a need for community infrastructure to support kids and families; there is a need for primary child care and early childhood education
- Greater percent of renters in town and this will impact schools because there is a more mobile society and kids are changing schools more frequently
- Many school kids don’t come from two parent families and don't have stability at home
- Teacher ratio is not growing at same rate as young families
- Rattlesnake school population is growing
- Continuing to create affordable housing is important but it is difficult in Missoula because there is opposition to higher density development
- It is difficult to recruit teachers; big homes on big lots are not sustainable or affordable
- People move to the Bitterroot to avoid density; density will destroy qualities that make the city a special place; would rather grow from within; the people that live here are being priced out of our community
- There is a community effort to decrease waste through recycling, but it is not always economically feasible there are markets for most materials except glass; there is a lack of institutional support for recycling in schools
- Bringing broadband to public schools at reasonable cost should be a priority; there is a need for fiber to the home; service providers don't think there's a market for fiber to the home; the average age of schools is 57 years
- There are security concerns at schools
- Continue emphasis on safe transportation; cultural change to make responsible travelers
- Robotic club does not have school funds
- There is no institutional diversity
- Organized sports have taken the place of neighborhood play
- More parents are driving children to school because of safety concerns; there is no opportunity for kids to make plans for themselves; the students don't learn organizing and problem solving skills

## **Ideas, Policies, Programs, Actions, Recommendations**

- Need more funding and better resources
- Encourage communication, involvement and coordination; understanding that everyone has a stake
- Continue to encourage and expand journeys from home
- Create sustainable schools initiative; how can all schools change to increase environmental awareness; need for more sustainable buildings. (Homewood is a good example of sustainable building practices)
- More coordination between parks and schools; combine resources
- Let people in the community find their path; can't force programs on people; provide education so people can find their own path
- Encourage opportunities for school and non-profits partnerships like Missoula County Public School plus Garden City Harvest
- Everfi- rolling out to schools
- Engage elected officials and experts on school issues
- Encourage more tolerance in schools, bully awareness, LBTG acceptance
- The schools are moving towards a "zero waste" policy.
- Support more opportunity for unstructured play for kids
- Parents should be a stakeholder group for a listening session
- Establish more of a focus on prevention when it comes to early childhood development issues; there is a tendency to be reactive; many behavior problems can be traced to early childhood trauma

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## Downtown

### **Key topics**

- Implement downtown master plan
- Downtown housing/affordable housing
- Parking
- Culture
- 24-hour activity
- Art park
- Economic development and housing
- Homelessness
- Bike/pedestrian/greenspace
- Broadband

### **What do you value?**

- Livability
- Walkability
- Diversity of culture and ethnicity
- Vibrant downtown: central focus/ Caras park/ Riverfront
- Depth of community: sense of community; downtown engagement
- Small business community
- Public ownership; support
- Accessibility of downtown to all income levels
- Enjoyable outside of vehicle; easy to navigate with children
- Diversity of business mix
- Funky fun factor
- Depth of expertise; variety of expertise; community attracts people who want to live here
- Tight knit downtown
- Maintain brain trust: young people stay and start business
- Active arts community
- River: amenity and focus
- Investment in parking structures has fueled growth in downtown

### **What are the challenges?**

- Public safety of downtown; don't feel safe (perceived, won't bring children)
- In between place where big city solutions (i.e. - Portland) don't work because the city is too small, but grass roots efforts are not working because the city is too big
- There is a desire for convenient parking; people don't want to walk; people resent shifting parking patterns

- Resident goals & downtown goals don't always align; resident goals are taking a background; some people don't want a dense downtown; need examples of good high density design
- Keep Missoula unique; if Missoula becomes too trendy low income people will be pushed out
- Land prices and construction prices are high so old rental rates can't be supported
- Maintaining brain trust (young adults/professionals) is important; young families can't afford to purchase a home; don't want to be community of retirees
- World class entrepreneurs (i.e. Rivertop Renewables); need to attract more high tech companies
- The city has broadband challenges; businesses have to Fed-Ex large video files because that is faster than using broadband
- Rail yard and operations are a concern; hazardous materials being transported on rail is increasing
- Lack of funding for infrastructure and maintenance
- It is hard to fly in and out of Missoula; air fare is expensive
- Trucking costs are expensive
- Transportation; limited river crossings for people south of town
- There is a lack of 24 hour transit low incomes households and shift workers need expanded hours for transit
- Need transit to/from industrial areas
- Property taxes are the only sources for local government revenue; no sales tax
- Day care affordability is an issue; the state legislature has scaled back programs
- Transit system is costly
- Some gaps in sidewalks make areas less walkable
- Cost to build downtown housing is higher than the market will bare
- Downtown construction is more expensive. Land costs are more expensive. Excavation of downtown sites always yields surprises. Mobilization cost to build downtown is higher.
- There is displacement of low income households when old downtown motels are redeveloped.

#### **Ideas, Policies, Programs, Actions, Recommendations**

- Tax structure needs to change. Need local option sales tax.
- Local communities need more ability to raise mill levies to keep up with inflation
- Need data to understand sales tax impact
- Need data on gross impact sales
- Non-profit community - employment is important; non-profits bring in funding and need to work collaboratively

- There is a need to find financing for parking (Current funding source = revenue bonds + TIF); One parking structure in 10 years is not fast enough to keep up with demand
- Support free fares for transit -for the city and University of Montana; this is funded by multiple sources
- Downtown zoning needs to accommodate new development. There is a need for expansion of CBD zoning to allow for higher building heights and reduce parking requirements. Create transition zone from CBD to traditional neighborhoods, define edges
- Support quality of early childhood education: Cold Springs/Russell elementary are blue ribbon schools
- Need innovative solutions and document the cost/benefit and long term impact of decisions in support of transit
- Promote walkable neighborhoods: there should be complete streets in all neighborhoods
- Community needs to ask developer for something better than off the shelf model to reflect community character
- Need to balance development regulations with the cost of development: if it becomes too expensive to develop - developers will go somewhere else
- Use incentives to get higher standards of development
- Establish consistent permitting process; need more efficient approval processes; a shorter time to market is the best incentive for development
- Find ways to offset cost for infill; need to level playing field so brownfield sites can compete with greenfield sites
- The city should have a plan in place to deal with displaced households Like when old downtown motels are redeveloped
- Missoula art museum is putting together a concept for an art park
- Need strategies to expand and improve downtown retail environment; need parking and housing support
- Need vibrant mix of retail that is oriented to office workers
- Missoula mercantile redevelopment would be a boost to downtown
- Nurture cultural assets and tie to economic development; need to develop and implement cultural plan
- Keep library downtown
- Museums should be downtown

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## **Resource Team**

### **Key Topics**

- Neighborhood communications
- Storm water; storm quality
- Disenfranchisement of low income households - especially areas located next to industrial areas
- Police; service delivery
- Built environment; air & water quality
- Public Safety
- Good urban development; containing sprawl
- Energy conservation/sustainability
- Infrastructure cost and implementation
- Open Space, parks, trails
- Annexation; urban standards
- Sustainable multi-modal transportation
- Changes to Land Use Map

### **What do you Value?**

- Commitment to healthy downtown
- Commitment to non-motorized facilities
- Commitment to quality-of-life
- Access to trails, parks, outside activities, river recreation
- Rivers - recreation - water quality
- Sense of place-community
- Saved mountains as open space
- Local food movement-farmers market
- Good health care - high quality attracts health care professionals
- Progress - culturally/politically
- Cultural assets - entertainment arts
- University of Montana
- Inclusive of different people - diversity
- Focus on urban density; In-fill - progressive values permeate Growth Policy
- Integrated water management techniques - i.e. poplar farm for wastewater treatment is also open space.

### **What are the challenges?**

- Adequate broadband service
- Dilution of essential services through annexation and growth
- Need to pay attention to older/established neighborhood; maintain infrastructure in these areas
- Affordable housing
- Better design standards; balance with the cost to development
- Cooperation with County; identify where goals should align between city & county

- Coordinate with the County on development in the fringe area; the County reviews and approves development in these areas
- Rising energy cost that comes from dirty sources; has both health and environmental impacts
- Funding is an issue; need revenue to support city services. Currently must rely on property tax. There is no other revenue source (i.e. State legislature will not approve )local option sales tax
- Protecting rivers (Clark Fork, Bitterroot); always need to be vigilant on water quality
- Keep development out of marginal areas (i.e. floodplains, wetlands)
- Maintain stormwater infrastructure and facilities in order to not degrade water quality
- High rates of poverty among younger population & older population; the older low-income household is a growing demographic
- Homeless issue (social & public safety issue) impacts everything from water quality to economic development
- There is a need for mental health services; community lacks adequate assets to address issue
- Individual wells have water problems
- The city does not have control over the city water system
- Stormwater run-off is an issue; there is limited treatment of run-off; there is no dedicated source for stormwater revenue; Other cities have a separate assessment
- There are pedestrian issues in neighborhoods near the tracks; these areas are low on the priority lists for sidewalks and have higher number of calls for public safety service; Families live in these areas because they are affordable

#### **Ideas, Policies, Programs, Actions, Recommendations**

- Change the tax system; need local option sales tax; currently we rely on property tax and income tax
- Reevaluate gas tax on national and local level
- Identify best practice policies for growth and revise codes to reflect
- Consider health impact assessments; expand the Dept. of Public Health and Human Services health assessments to evaluate the built environment
- Articulate an annexation policy to identify what annexations are being contemplated and how they fit with the focus inward policy
- Annexation analysis should not be solely financial but should consider other goals
- Areas to be annexed should have to comply with urban standards; People in the county are using city services but do not contribute to the tax base
- Reinststitute quarterly meetings on annexation; need to be proactive on annexation - not reactive

- The current policy for sewer is to extend service outside of city if they don't protest annexation. Annexation can sometimes take 30-years. Need to have residents in these areas pay for city services (i.e. Payment in Lieu of Taxes) as part of the development agreement to extend services.
- Urban areas outside of city rely on police & fire as first responders. Due to mutual aid agreements the city must respond. This is a disincentive for annexation. Should evaluate and look at contracting to the county for services to get reimbursed for cost.
- The city needs a policy for clean drinking water; extend water system in advance to areas where you want the city to grow
- Develop an affordable housing policy; there is a gap between income and the cost of housing
- Incentivize energy efficiency in new buildings and retrofit in existing buildings
- Parking management; need parking structures downtown
- Link new housing to areas close to transit/biking/walking and can reduce parking; parking is related to affordable housing; parking raises costs of housing
- Address stormwater in Growth Policy
- Include maximum parking requirements
- Continue to support community forums for neighborhood councils
- Clean-up pollution problems in neighborhoods near railroad tracks
- Amend land use map to include zoning district for mid-range density and rezone areas to this zoning that are on transit routes
- Amend regulations to not allow high density residential in commercial areas; these areas are not near services for residents and are depleting commercial land
- Residents need good examples of high density development and the city needs to do outreach; this is a design issue. Neighbors object to higher density; it is perceived as bad
- Incorporate mixed use development in downtown area
- Parks are needed north of Russell between Reserve Street and the Franklin to Fort area; Master park plan proposes to connect existing parks
- Sidewalks in affordable housing areas should be on both sides of the street
- Coordinate open space/parks with stormwater and water quality concerns

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## Neighborhood Meeting - Library

### **What do you value?**

- Community involvement/volunteering
- People want to live here
- Ownership of the community
- Bikeable/walkability
- Free events - accessible to all income level
- Vibrant Downtown
- River - outdoor recreation
- Clean air and water
- University of Montana
- Quality work force

### **What are the challenges?**

- Not having a livable income - lack of good paying jobs
- Housing that is affordable is poor quality; dilapidated/near tracks
- Planning for climate refugees; will be a strain on assets
- Low - income areas near train tracks
- There is noise, hazardous materials being transported through neighborhoods
- Need to address blight
- It is a question of funding
- How would the Urban Renewal District in the North Russell area address blight and how does the funding work?
- Traffic mobility is an issue; need to move cars and vehicles smoothly; need to be able to transport goods through the city
- Limited options for getting traffic across river creates difficulties
- Public-private to finance projects partnerships
- Rattlesnake neighborhood has poor access

### **Ideas, Policies, Programs, Actions, Recommendations**

- The city should provide fair access to communication systems for all segments of population - i.e. hearings for golf course/community college issue & accessory dwelling unit (ADU) were not accessible to residents
- Don't subsidize growth; the community is growing too fast
- Don't preclude future choices for by-pass and transportation
- Provide more public transportation choices; not everyone can afford a vehicle and public transit is better for the environment
- Expand hours for transit services
- There is a need to identify alternate routes for crossing the river; think 20-years out and identify routes so you can preserve right-of-ways now
- Address minimum wage issue
- Harness creativity of the population
- Collaborate with non-profits

- Need a permanent long-term solution to update sewer system, streets, roads and bridges
- Plan for art center, city buildings and schools facility needs
- Move fairgrounds out to where there is now a gravel pit; new fairgrounds could be a multi-use facility that would support motor sports; redevelop existing fairground to meet city needs (housing/public facilities ...)
- Accessory dwelling units can change the character of the neighborhoods; residents don't want them
- When trailer parks are replaced by new development they need to address displaced residents
- Charge money for right-of-way instead of giving it away to developers
- Don't subsidize developers
- Need funds for rental and homeowners assistance
- Support permanent affordable housing
- More community gardens are needed
- Promote Blackstone - entrepreneurship program

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## Realtors

### **Key Topics**

- Projected growth
- How is growth happening - where is it going
- More business friendly community
- Parks, trails, open space
- New development; new business
- Streamline planning process
- Affordable housing
- Balance idealism with reality; welcoming climate for development
- Representation by all residents

### **What do you value?**

- Neighborhood close knit; safe; access to open space, sidewalks & lights
- Dark skies (Rattlesnake area)
- Individualism & innovation in housing and business
- Respect property rights (don't do eminent domain)
- River
- Good access to downtown
- Protected open space through acquisitions; ease & access to recreation
- Walkways & bike paths
- Air quality improvements since the 1960's
- Clean river and more accessible than in the past; positive changes over time
- Great shopping and entertainment
- Manufacturing is happening in Bonner because they are willing to take industry
- Parks and trails are an amenity for some people; there is a segment of the population that only have one car and prefer to bike or take transit

### **What are the challenges?**

- There is a need for cyclist education; cyclist engage in dangerous behavior
- Protect property rights; compensate for eminent domain
- Affordable housing is an issue; there is a lack of homes in the \$90,000 to \$100,000 price range so people have to move out of the area to afford a home and then have to commute
- The city is unwilling or unable to define affordable housing problems so that builders and agencies can address the issue
- Median income/wage is low and workers can't afford median home price
- The City doesn't take the economics of development seriously and there are high development costs; there needs to be a serious dialogue
- People now working full time can't afford rent; they are paying 35% or more of income for rent; this is classified as a cost burden for renters
- There are 1000 people on the waiting list for a housing authority unit

- Employers are not willing or able to pay a higher wage
- There is little manufacturing (less than there used to be) and the companies that are in town have fewer employees
- There has been a growth in service industries but they pay less; the service industries are making money but not their employees
- Homelessness
- Lack of developable land
- Missoula is not attractive to developers; investment and businesses are leaving state
- Economic development priorities are wrong. Tourism jobs don't pay well. Federal government has shut down forest and the city has lost high-paying manufacturing jobs.
- The city lacks a competitive tax compensation strategy; incentives; cost and complexities of current regulation cause builders to pass on Missoula
- Citizens and litigation shut forest down
- Air transportation is inadequate; high fares and not enough flights; this is a big issue for University of Montana and large companies
- There is no follow through on planning. New ADU zoning was adopted but is not on the ground
- Problems with developing greenfields due to the preservation of agricultural land; the policy is not well-defined
- Land that is annexed is given comparable zoning and this impedes affordability; could rezone land upon annexation; needs to be addressed in the annexation policy
- Taxes drive people out of Missoula. They are driven out by affordability issues.
- Infrastructure costs are higher to meet city standards
- Focus inward can also result in high infrastructure costs. Some areas that are in-fill need to have infrastructure brought up to current standards and this is expensive.
- Land for duplexes/fourplexes is not available
- There is a in market demand for 2-story garden apartments yet these are the types of buildings that are not emphasized with a focus inward policy
- Multi-family products such as condos are difficult to finance. Multi-family projects that are rentals are commercial loans and easier to finance.
- Federal backed loans will not fund multi-use projects with residential/commercial in same buildings
- Large apartment projects are difficult to get built due to NIMBY concerns
- Accessory dwelling units (ADU) provisions have not been utilized because the process is too difficult
- Accessory dwelling units (ADU) provisions have not been utilized because the process is too difficult
- Requiring set-aside for ag land, in addition to park land requirements, would impede affordability

- Need to understand growth expectations and where there will be new housing to accommodate growth. How much land should be annexed? Decide where the city wants to direct growth and then extend the infrastructure to support. Be proactive in extending infrastructure - this will also bring down cost to develop.
- We import homeless and poverty problems from other parts of the state

**Ideas, Policies, Programs, Actions, Recommendations**

- Small lot zoning is needed and then rezone areas for it; the current Growth Policy does not show areas for this
- Development Services reorganization was a step in the right direction. Improvement is still needed.
- Encourage better communication/cooperation among non-profits to address key problems; prioritize issues and get funding from those who are profiting from low wage employees
- Income has to go up to address affordable housing
- Support better inter-county transportation
- Improve transportation accessibility which will result in more housing choice
- Address annexation policy to address initial zoning and other issues
- Extend infrastructure to areas where it wants growth
- Consider an adopt-a-park program as a way to get more small parks developed

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## Neighborhood Meeting – Lewis & Clark Village

### **What do you value?**

- The community values diversity
- Lots of small business support
- Retain character of neighborhood. Don't get swallowed up by need for more density. Need mix of small, historical-bungalows and large house
- In-town neighborhoods are assets. They are close to downtown. Walkable and people can walk around town and can bike downtown.
- Quiet neighborhoods
- Ease of access to river & trails from neighborhoods
- Open space - Mount Jumbo & Mount Sentinel. Maintain access to these areas. If you limit access, trailheads will get congested. Keep open space accessible as the city grows.

### **What are the challenges?**

- If the city is going to have taller, high density buildings, need to protect solar access and sun for gardening.
- Control sprawl; contain Missoula
- Green building - reuse of materials should be a requirement
- Quiet neighborhoods
- Need codes to protect community character
- Zone areas for multi-dwelling development so that it can't just be put anywhere and there is certainty of where it will go
- No regulations for building greenhouses; the city doesn't know how to deal with them
- Community supported agriculture where people can pick up produce should be permitted in residential areas
- Cottage use industries require a special use permit. There needs to be more flexibility; provide a way for more people to do different things from their home
- Fees for permits should reflect the scale of business. \$1200 for a variance or even \$600 for a variance is a lot for someone trying to start a home business
- Parking in older neighborhoods is a challenge. The lots were platted in 1910 and are small. There is no room for parking if you allow an accessory dwelling unit.
- What are the targets for growth? Determine what demand for accessory dwelling units will be if there is 1.5% annual growth.
- Traffic flows; reduce amount of time people are in cars; reduce congestion

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## Sustainability

### **What does 'sustainability' look like?**

- Sustainability as integrated into community; energy efficiency & reuse of building materials
- Healthy foods and community interest in healthy lifestyles
- Education; carrots & sticks.
- Sustainable local food systems
- Measureable aspects of sustainability
- Elimination of energy waste; toxic chemicals
- More renewable energy
- Sustainable policies for wildlife, forests, WUI
- Clean air and water
- Climate action plan & adaptation to climate change
- Carbon neutrality
- Intersection of climate change plan with growth policy, USFS planning & programs
- Involvement of long term residents
- Full integration into business & economic development planning & programs
- Integration of building material reuse early in building process
- Resiliency; ability to respond to changes (climate, technology, political, etc.)
- From City perspective, buildings, fleet, people (how they interact), education, healthy spaces (free of toxic chemicals from building materials)
- Forest as a carbon sink; production of biomass
- Sustainability of urban forest; threatened by age & monoculture
- Access to healthy outdoor landscape
- Use of native plants in landscaping; reduces water use; wildlife tolerant; less fertilizer & other chemicals
- Alternative transportation choices; community walkability
- Triple bottom line: environmental, social (affordable housing), and economic (students don't have to leave town to find jobs; economy needs to be viable)
- Plan for climate refugees; will cause additional growth; happening now

### **What are the key sustainability issues in Missoula?**

- Legislation limits sustainability advances; focus has been on education, but laws and ordinances are needed for implementation: building material reuse requirement, water conservation ordinance, requirements or incentivized recycling
- Need incentives to promote energy alternatives (ex., small community solar)
- UM has sustainability plan, but state laws limits investment in sustainability

- No incentives or regulations for businesses to reduce solid waste
- Need city leadership (City has taken lead with waste hauler); but only one hauler in the city; put out RFP and introduce competition to drive down costs
- Climate in Missoula allows for large scale solar development
- A program like PACE can allow alternative energy investment to be paid off on tax bill; incentivizes alternative energy deployment & helps finance solar for individual home
- Net metering can be improved, but threatened every legislative session
- Small county-wide gas tax could fund some programs---if allowed
- Evaluate programs through benchmarks to ensure goals are met
- Community benefit agreement; link sustainability to economic development incentives
- Make ourselves attractive to businesses that promote sustainability
- Partner (directly) with other urban centers to be more effective in legislature.

#### **What are the challenges?**

- Current PSC antagonistic to renewable energy
- Insufficient discretionary income to invest in renewable energy systems for homes even though alt energy systems could save in housing costs

#### **Ideas, Policies, Programs, Actions, Recommendations**

- Partner with institutions to ensure a market for locally produced food
- Incentivize green building; streamline approval process
- UM & all public buildings should lead green building by example & promotion
- Identify & promote co-benefits of green buildings; reusing materials is less costly & reduces solid waste
- Promote connectivity and walking; reducing pollution & improving community health
- Explore multiple paths for sustainable technologies; keep future options open
- Explore potential for roof-top solar; some grants but limited
- Support message that energy conservation is embodied in material reuse
- Find mechanisms to make alternative energy payback more manageable; revolving loans and investment funds
- Promote 'cradle to cradle' use of building materials
- Educate to promote sustainability rather than regulations
- Change legislation to incentivize local food production; current food safety measures are not applicable to small local producers
- Agricultural land is limited in Missoula Valley; protection is voluntary & should be encouraged more through subdivision regulations
- Redevelop & clean up Brownfields

- Eliminate micro exposures to toxic chemicals in building materials; many other products expose us to toxic chemicals
- Need incentives to use fewer pesticides on food crops
- Promote proper disposal of e-waste; proper drop-off sites not well known.
- Too much household hazardous waste going to landfill
- Carbon neutrality means zero waste; need off-set projects in area; need large scale project to have effect
- Climate registry is good resource for carbon offsetting
- Educate renters on proper disposal of e-waste & home hazardous waste
- Expand local composting sites to take food waste; coordinate institutional sources to ensure needed quantities for feasibility
- Partner with schools on sustainability projects; expose students to sustainability concepts early

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## Arts & Culture

### **Key Topics**

- Education and arts as components of Growth Policy
- Cultural activities/events as regional magnet
- Culture & art as economic driver; coordination among agencies, including economic development
- Development of culture & the arts; to keep them growing
- Preservation of historic built environment & architecture
- Cultural/heritage tourism
- Cultural resources/strategic plan (attached to Growth Policy)
- Humanities; historic philosophy
- Increasing public awareness of culture/arts/historic preservation, etc.
- Urban landscape; historic resources
- What preservation has to offer the community; awareness of preservation & compatibility with contemporary built environment
- Support for artists & associations; keeping great artists in this area
- Improving venues; creating a global dance venue & artist exchange
- Planning that focuses on the arts & culture
- Prevent the diminishment of public spaces that are dedicated to and/or allow for cultural democracy; spaces for existing residents too
- More public awareness of econ impact of arts; importance of education in the arts; greater visibility; more & better performing venues

### **What do you value?**

- Aesthetics; setting (among mountains & forests); sense of community
- Core sense of downtown with river; 'rough edge' feel & character
- River as focus and corridor
- Accessibility to cultural/humanities events; wide choice & still affordable makes them accessible to locals
- Willingness to take risks; open to the new & experimental
- Great place to raise kids; accommodates diverse lifestyles & careers
- Creative population; diversity of attitudes & ideas
- High quality of artists & public appreciation of that
- Historic core; 9 distinct districts; recognize how neighborhoods evolved so that we might better guide future development
- Story behind historic preservation. knowing this encourages more connection & support
- Enterprise; people here made their own opportunities; small business driven
- People who visit and end up staying

### **What are the challenges?**

- Car-centric culture
- To come together as an arts and culture community & speak with one voice
- Economic base for developing venues & attracting artists dwindling;

limited agency budgets

- Brownfields can be opportunity in developing new venues
- Missoula is not a sustainable place for performing artists; Bonner site has potential
- Bring arts & culture to younger population while balancing needs of diverse population
- Ticket prices (that people are willing to pay) won't support performing artists
- High living costs in Missoula; best potential venues will be away from city center because of high land costs
- Resources (to support the arts) will need to come from out of state
- Need 'arts & culture' exaction to put arts and culture on par with parks & recreation
- Public spaces lack performance space
- Supporting local artists whose needs are different; dance too
- All existing venues are overbooked
- No off-hours transit makes it difficult on artists

#### **Ideas, Policies, Programs, Actions, Recommendations**

- Allow market to set parking standards (cost & control)
- Implement "cultural corridor" in downtown master plan
- Develop cultural plan
- Equate arts and culture with recreation; County moving in that direction
- Identify stable funding stream; who are most appropriate contributors?
- Develop quality venues for separate arts (some multi-use venues are necessary)
- Establish historic preservation as a cultural resources board to coordinate support programs
- Continue level of historic preservation as in the past; historic preservation plan already in place
- Look at acquiring USFS space as cultural center
- Create a non-profit for tax credits to support arts and culture
- Consider whether old trolley barns may also be suitable as cultural center
- Promote arts and culture as visitation/econ development driver
- Better promote Montana Museum of Arts & Culture
- All three museums make contributions to sense of historic preservation; buildings & collections
- Do more to attract business & industry; create a class of potential patrons with disposable income; businesses purchase blocks of tickets; give to the arts & provide sponsorships.
- Keep up the momentum; continue dialogue & address arts in culture in Growth Policy
- Encourage acquisitions & loans for public viewing; many great collections are privately held

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## Social Services

### **Key Topics**

- Drug prevention services
- Teen awareness programs, addiction avoidance
- Using existing resources in most efficient manner
- Permanent supported housing for the chronically addicted
- Expansion of services
- Disability avoid nursing homes
- Building in services that strengthen families
- Homeless housing first model
- More housing opportunities funding for programs that don't have now
- Family homelessness; emergency housing + long term; impact of poverty on family and individuals

### **What do you value?**

- Generous community
- Volunteerism
- Good cooperation among social service agencies
- Progressive and forward thinking; willing to try new solutions
- Tend to be non-judgmental second chances
- Outdoor recreation.
- University
- Family friendly
- Amenities for city of this size public and private
- Pretty far ahead of other communities in terms of social service

### **What are the challenges?**

- Issues on transitions to larger city (crime, infrastructure); lack resources and facilities
- Increased need and decreasing resources
- High cost of housing verses wages
- Baby boomers and longevity challenging resources
- NIMBYism
- Federal resources have decreased and state hasn't picked up slack; communities left to fend for themselves
- Gridlock in legislature; partisanship; unable to accomplish
- Lack of implementation; programs slow to develop
- Transportation; general and clients
- Need for special transit services; senior mobility needs; special transit inflexible; additional transit (Miller Creek); bus lines pulled; routing indirect; sprawl makes transit infeasible
- General congestion; poor signalization; poor level of service at intersections because of lack of turn lanes and signals

- Lack of sidewalks and poor lighting; sidewalks that are discontinuous; stairs prevent trail access
- No money for follow up medication (don't qualify for Medicaid); institutional transition, communication needed
- Lack of resources for reintegration; held up in Legislature
- Community doesn't always welcome offender back
- Lack of transitional housing
- Affordable housing in general;
- There is increasing crime due to pass-through population. Workers are passing through Missoula on their way to eastern Montana.
- The need for social services always increases and the root causes go untreated
- Out of market buyers drive up prices for homes
- Missoula unaffordable for those on fixed incomes
- All money directed at cures versus prevention
- Some demands on social services reflect national trends and problems; there are always local fixes
- Addiction rehab services are inefficient
- Poverty and addiction equal generational issues; there is no money in prevention (i.e. childhood trauma); there is a need for early intervention for families to prevent trauma
- Underemployment is an issues; skilled people taking unskilled work just to stay in the community
- There are no transitional benefits to help individuals move off of public assistance; this is a disincentive to seeking employment
- Displacement of low income residents when there is redevelopment of mobile home parks
- Affordable part time childcare is important and is hard to find
- Lack of education on cause of social need

#### **Ideas, Policies, Programs, Actions, Recommendations**

- Need Legislative reform to address energy development impacts
- Need more resources for reintegration after released from prison
- Identify funding for a housing trust fund
- Implement the 10-year plan to end homelessness; need more local buy-in for the plan
- Funds that are already committed for various programs need to be distributed
- Need more education and programs that teach needed work force skills
- Make those who profit from development more responsible for infrastructure and housing costs
- Areas that are importing labor should contribute to impacts. This would need a legislative fix in the way oil and gas is taxed.

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## Parks and Open space

### **Key Topics**

- Ballot initiative for Open Space
- Service delivery and better understanding of park and recreation benefits
- Park and trails
- Nontraditional recreation; accessibility
- Mountain bike opportunities; access
- Neighborhood parks
- Balance between developed parks and conservation/environment lands
- Process coordination with County
- Transition areas between city to county open space
- Watershed health
- Access
- Programs for all ages; Fort Missoula
- Community Center; increase indoor space; sustainability parks, forests etc.
- Recreation programs are essential quality of life factors; advocate for park and recreation system; need sustainable park and recreation system to maintain and deliver service; optimize resources with partnership; park and recreation benefit all residents
- Learn more about City's goals for park and recreation

### **Economic Benefits**

- Parks help sustain public health and improve air and water quality
- Parks increase property values
- Parks contribute to business development as long as there is reasonable ability to access parks and open space areas; Parks generate more partnerships and keep money coming back to community; Parks programs can access new sources of money
- Parks and recreation hire young people every summer and are a means for new employees to acquire valuable work force skills.
- Lack community-specific studies about economic benefits; more difficult to quantify value to business development data from 2006 bond
- Reinforce community wide values; people value and want better park systems
- Having a well-developed park system will keep people in the community to spend local dollars. Being able to host sports tournaments mean visitors will be patronizing local businesses. For example, there is an economic impact of \$700K for 2 day softball tournament.
- Park and recreation is an economic development tool; Quality of Life is attractive to businesses and potential employees want to relocate to city.
- Parks provide natural areas; access to nature and outdoors contributes to a sense of well being

### **Recreation/Wellness Benefits**

- Psychological; sense of wellbeing; health and wellness with active life; Lower stress means better productivity; family life; building community/networking
- Relates to our education about healthy diet and lifestyle
- Brings us together with community; meet-greet gather; build friendships and trust; social connections
- American Forest Resource Council (AFRC)- Benefits of healthy urban forest; emotional health; catalyst to get outside
- Business diversity; other cultures are accommodated
- Accommodates different ages/skill levels; grow in healthy way
- Strengthens partnerships with the two main providers of park and recreation services; city & county (plus federal land); Plan for one system of infrastructure of parks and open space.
- Exercise is important rehabilitation for people with heart conditions. Trails have benches spaced periodically to encourage people to walk even if they can only do a short distance at a time.
- Some doctors are writing a prescription for people to walk on the trail systems; various segments of the trails can be used to rehabilitate different injuries
- Walking and fitness releases endorphins; improves circulation
- Convenient access to parks is important. Focus on finding spaces in existing neighborhoods that can be developed as pocket parks and other types of open space

### **Environmental/Conservation benefits**

- Benefits of parks include air and water quality; raises consciousness of environmental quality; The Clark Fork River is 'Over-Loved'; increased use results in human-wildlife conflicts and impacts wildlife habitat
- Consider how parks and open space contribute to the larger landscape

### **What are the challenges?**

- Homeless population negatively impacts park resources
- 'Invasive' species are a problem
- There are growing maintenance issues
- Sustainable economics; need a sustainable revenue source for acquiring new park land and maintenance of parks. We have an ad hoc approach now with bonds and different resources
- Land acquisition for parks competes with development and other profitable uses of land
- Neighborhoods are good partners for parks; but citizens can only do so much
- Missoula parks system is relatively safe; trail system most challenging
- Subdividing eliminates conveyance ditches

- There is a lack of awareness and appreciation of park and recreation efforts
- Having a long-term vision; beyond 20 years; realize we are benefiting from decisions made ~70 years ago; stronger public/private partnerships
- Haven't met all of open space acquisition goals. There are still goals for valuable habitat left to be acquired
- Ongoing educational programs in parks; different students every three years
- Use of parks and recreation is a choice; have to keep getting message out for sustain over time
- Need more indoor space; gatherings; events, festivals + other programs ( five season)

### **Ideas, Policies, Programs, Actions, Recommendations**

- Establish a long term sustainable structure identified with parks that is well known by community
- Need more sharing of resources and facilities
- Develop brand for visibility; improve messaging
- Develop partnerships and support volunteerism; consider them readily available resource
- Develop coalitions; support connections and relationships
- Need a complete hierarchy of parks and open spaces from pocket parks to large open spaces
- Build more multi-generational capacity; unmet need in Missoula
- Build adaptive facilities that can evolve over time as technology and preferences change
- Articulating consistent message of parks and recreation benefits is critical to finding a sustainable solution
- Need long term commitment to parks to gain the full benefits
- Need stronger public/private partnerships
- Partner with irrigators for cleaner water; unused water rights could be put to use in parks
- Promote crime prevention through design
- There is a need for more resources in order to provide and maintain open space
- Need a tool box of maintenance resources
- Develop a long-term strategy for a comprehensive approach to bonds and different resources

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## Planners and Engineers

### **Key Topics**

- City Planning should coordinate with county planning
- Key values represented; reflect city goals rather than profit motive
- Planning for outdoor amenities
- Growth policy should steer decisions to get what we want to see; link goals to implementation

### **What do you value?**

- Access to rural/natural areas
- Walking community
- Multi-modal transportation (bus, bike, etc.)
- River
- State Park in Bonner - but it is not accessible
- Long established neighborhoods; low density; unique quality and culture-sense of place
- Parks are good
- Convenience; can bike anywhere in about 15 minutes
- Hub of two highways, I-90 and US 93
- Free bus service- transit priority
- Good water/sewer system; high environmental quality
- Bike/Pedestrian system
- Education; support from public bonds
- Old sawmill district is a good development example

### **What are the challenges?**

- Newer areas need more park land
- Access to the River is limited- no parking on roads leading to river
- River bank erosion from people accessing river
- No emergency access along heavier travelled River access points like in the East Missoula area
- Access to river in East Missoula is too small for use
- Protecting natural resources
- Maintain small community feel as we grow
- Accommodate current residents
- Extending bike paths/trails- need funding
- Planning for outlying areas need to coordinate with county-(i.e. planning for extending paths)
- Growth outside city limits; if city is too restrictive can drive growth out to county; limited zoning in county, growth may not be compatible with what city wants
- Strong demand for development in city but expensive to build in city (i.e. Multi-dwelling housing on Mullan); greenfield development is cheaper due to lower land costs, ownership of land parcels not segmented, and less regulations

- Complexity of development review; review is somewhat easier in county. Development services division has streamlined
- Staying ahead of development - i.e. Reserve Street not well planned
- No county-wide transportation plan
- Address land use - transportation link
- Consider how transportation infrastructure can be an incentive
- In-fill development needs to have a better collector road network
- Bitterroot and Idaho growth affect transportation network
- There is a big inventory of approved lots; market is slowly absorbing them but no big greenfield development in pipeline
- Plans say focus inward and green space but development doesn't match this goal

### **Ideas, Policies, Programs, Actions, Recommendations**

- Update the Missoula urban area plan
- Need to address taxes in the city since they are a disincentive for people moving into the city from the county
- County has variety of towns and areas that it has to plan for
- Support City/County coordination
- Continue coordination with County on parks
- Continue to support joint City/County Boards like air quality, health, public health, environmental health and sanitation
- Be pro-active rather than reactive when it comes to sewer and transportation; public infrastructure drives growth
- Need to account for unintended consequences
- Support an open process for development review
- Inventory of approved lots will need to be redone for demand for small lots in the future (this could be viewed as an opportunity); market changed with recession; not as much demand for large lots.
- Growth Policy needs to be clear to provide direction for development
- Should give priority to developers that want to do the right things, that are meeting the goals of the plan
- Work with developers that want to build to higher standards to determine ways to promote development
- Need to follow growth policy
- Should update the park pan since it's 10 years old
- Community voice needs to be represented better at public hearings

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