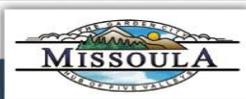


Listening Session – Challenges

From July through September, the City of Missoula conducted 29 listening sessions to obtain input for the Growth Policy update. Notes for each of these listening sessions have been posted to the OurMissoula.org. This summary was prepared as a discussion tool to provide an overview of the input that was received from the listening sessions. Comments from all of the listening sessions were coded and sorted to determine common themes/topics. The descriptions for each of these topics have been paraphrased to reflect common concerns that were expressed by listening session participants and do not reflect individual comments. Some of the comments that were mentioned as part of the discussion on challenges may also represent potential Ideas, policies, programs, actions and recommendations that could address the challenges that were identified. A complete analysis of these ideas will be summarized and presented to the focus groups in December.

November 7, 2014

Common Topics	Description	#
Transportation – Parking – Transit	Congestion on major routes and at intersections. Challenge to move traffic through town with limited river crossings. Parking requirements need to reflect changing driving trends. Coordinate transportation planning with the county and plan for growth. Parking downtown is a challenge. Safety issues with more distracted drivers on road and car-bike conflicts. There needs to be better connectivity in the road network. There is a demand for expanded transit routes and expanded hours. There should be transit service specifically to serve the aging and disabled populations. Air fares are expensive and choices of airlines are limited. There is no passenger train service.	70
Land Use – Zoning – Subdivision	Insufficient land zoned for multi-dwelling. Need to be proactive and identify multi-dwelling areas in growth policy. Form based zoning could provide for high-density developments that fit in with neighborhoods. Provide incentives for in-fill development. Densities should be higher in downtown core. Require amenities such as parks/trails with new development. Current land-use regulations are auto-centric – need less reliance on auto. There is a need for small lot zoning districts. Increased densities could change neighborhood character – this is why there was resistance to the accessory residential unit provisions. There should be more opportunity for mixed use development. Better define policies for agricultural land and annexation policies. Zoning should accommodate senior housing. Locate shopping and services close to residential neighborhoods. Over-regulation is an issue.	56



<p>Environmental Quality</p>	<p>Energy efficiency and green building trends. Promote renewable energy – less reliance on fossil fuels. Seasonal poor air quality due to wildfires. Protect water rights. More water conservation. Protect water quality. Protect river and riparian areas – less erosion. Use more native plants. Invasive species are a problem. Subdivisions need to consider wildlife – habitat protection and design to reduce human-wildlife conflicts. Respond to climate change – wildfires, drought, flooding, etc. Reduce waste. More incentives for recycling. Promote brownfield clean-up and redevelopment. Make the economic case for businesses to adopt sustainable practices. Decrease impervious surfaces.</p>	<p>49</p>
<p>Affordable Housing</p>	<p>Low wages can't keep up with cost of living and high housing costs. People need multiple jobs to be able to afford to live in Missoula. Renters can't afford to move into home ownership. Affordable housing units are in poor condition. Families are moving further out of town to find affordable homes to buy. There is a need for a variety of affordable housing types from high density multi-dwelling, medium density multi-dwelling, small lot development, etc. There is a long waiting list for subsidized housing. Land costs and the expense of developing in Missoula are barriers to building affordable housing. Seniors on fixed incomes can't keep up with rising housing expenses.</p>	<p>46</p>
<p>Growth Pressures – Sprawl</p>	<p>Plan for future population growth. The growth policy should identify areas for growth. How will growth interface with the rural areas in the county? Growth is straining existing infrastructure and services. Growth in the county puts pressure on city services. Adopt policies to discourage sprawl and leap frog development. Important to maintain the character of Missoula as the city grows. Don't subsidize growth; growth should pay for itself. Review annexation policies. Protected open space is an asset but limits where growth can go.</p>	<p>39</p>
<p>Funding</p>	<p>With limited funding it is important to set priorities for spending. There is not enough funding for arts, social service programs, major infrastructure projects, parks, etc. There is inadequate funding for maintenance of infrastructure and facilities. Inadequate funding for prevention programs. Need to look at alternative funding sources. Form partnerships to fund projects. Tax structure needs to be revised to provide more revenue streams – this would require the state legislature to act. Residential development should pay for itself. More efficient procurement policies. Need better budgeting by city</p>	<p>38</p>

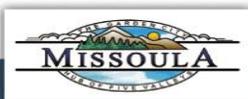


	to be more cost effective. Taxes are increasing. County residents use city services but don't pay taxes to support.	
Economy – Jobs	The area has lost manufacturing jobs and jobs in the woods product industry and these have been replaced with lower paying service jobs. There is a lack of prime job opportunities. There is a lot of “underemployment” with a skilled – educated workforce taking unskilled jobs to stay in the community. Need a more diverse economy to provide higher paying jobs. Need to retain young, educated work force in the community. Provide living wages.	35

Social Services & Education	The aging population will impact all facets of the community. There is a growing senior population that is creating more demand for aging services. There is a need for more support services for families such as affordable, quality day-care and early childhood education. School enrollment is up and this also means more demand for special ed. and other school services. It is more common that students do not come from two parent homes or that the families are renting and are more transient. Consequently, kids have less stability at home. The demand for social services is increasing and it is important to address the root causes of this need. There is a need for more mental health services in general and also a need for support services to help the prison population successfully transition back into the community. Coordinate with the University on workforce development. Agencies should do more outreach to let people know about their services.	35
Business Development	Provide incentives to attract the type of industry the community needs to diversify the base economy. Attract more high tech and manufacturing businesses. Support entrepreneurship. Support small business development. Don't rely as much on retail and tourism jobs that don't pay well. Businesses need capital to grow. Agencies and city need to work together on economic development. Need a clear vision for the city.	34
Infrastructure	Need next generation broadband infrastructure to support businesses and high tech industries. Need to find a funding source for stormwater infrastructure. Infrastructure in established neighborhoods is aging and parts of it should be rebuilt. Need to find a long-term solution to maintain and upgrade infrastructure. Review annexation policies regarding extension of water and sewer. Properties should have to annex before they can connect. City infrastructure standards	29



	are higher than the counties – this adds to cost of development. DEQ is reviewing proposed expansion of solid waste system. The water system is privately owned and has capacity for growth. Lack of infrastructure results in less developable land.	
Community Character	Maintain community identify. Keep small town feel. Don't let big box- chain stores define the town. Don't become "anytown" USA. Keep Missoula unique. Promote good urban design. Improve city entryways – gateways to provide a sense of arrival. Maintain character of diverse neighborhoods. Balance design codes with cost of development. Maintain scenic views. Poor property maintenance of rental apartments diminish overall quality of neighborhood. Design new developments to be compatible with surrounding area.	28
Development Review Process	The development processes and rules are complex. There are unwritten rules for development. It is difficult to get consistent answers on code requirements. Building fees are too high. The development process takes too long and is costly. The recent reorganization between the city and county has improved the process but more work needs to be done. The city should help businesses/ developers to navigate the rules. The city should build better relationships with the development community. Work with the development community on better processes to get affordable housing.	26
Homelessness – Poverty	Homelessness and economic disparity are issues in the community. This population lacks support services such as mental health and addiction services. Should focus on prevention to keep people from becoming homeless but there is no funding for this. There is a need for more temporary transitional housing. Homeless/transient camps are a problem. Homeless population is not just downtown. There are higher rates of poverty among younger and older population segments.	26
Neighborhood Opposition	There has been neighborhood opposition to multi-dwelling development and affordable housing development. Neighbors are concerned that higher density in-fill development will change the character of the neighborhood. Identify examples of high quality high density multi-dwelling designs and use these to address fears. The city should educate the neighbors on the development review process and do a better job of education and outreach to address concerns. People are opposed to growth but growth will happen. They need to understand how to manage change. There is negativism and lack of trust in government by some residents. There are so many diverse views there is no clear vision for the community.	25



	The media plays up conflict and makes it more difficult to address issues.	
Health & Wellness	There is a need to provide more services for older adults ranging from Alzheimer care/prevention to keeping older adults engaged in community. Increase awareness of geriatric needs and end of life issues. Promote physical activity and active lifestyles. Incorporate healthy design features into new development. There is a need for more mental health and addiction services. Focus on prevention for health problems. Provide more access to local foods & fresh produce. Support community gardens. Design housing and facilities for people with disabilities.	23

Parks & Open Space	There is a need for more park land to keep up with growth. It is expensive to acquire land. In-fill development puts pressure on urban parks. With higher density development there is a need to expand urban parks or find places to create new parks. There should be a sustainable long-term revenue source for parks. Increase awareness about the benefits of parks, recreation and open space. There should be a long-term vision for parks. Open space in, and around, the city is an important part of the park system. Coordinate with the county and public land agencies to develop a cohesive system of parks and open space. There is a need for more indoor space for gathering, events, and performing arts. Preserve and improve access to the river.	22
Housing - Neighborhood Design	Design new housing and public facilities for aging population and people with disabilities. Housing design should incorporate features for “visitability” and “staying in place” for the senior population. Incentivize “green building”. Trend towards more energy efficient housing. There is a demand for “micro-apartments”. Promote “safe” designs that promote public safety. Require amenities and design features that promote “healthy lifestyles”. There is a need for a diversity of housing types in the same neighborhoods to accommodate different household sizes and encourage multi-generational neighborhoods. Plan for more people working at home – telecommuting. Allow community gardens in neighborhoods. In-fill development should be compatible with the existing neighborhood and should not create over-crowding.	21
Public Safety, Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Services	Some neighborhoods lack adequate access for emergency response and evacuation. Narrow streets are a challenge for fire equipment to access new subdivisions. Issues with	19



	<p>development in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) include difficulty with emergency response due to terrain and plans for evacuation. Wildfires are becoming more frequent. New development may adopt fire safe construction standards but these are generally not maintained by homeowners. There is development in the county that does not go through a subdivision review process and fire safe standards are voluntarily adopted. Due to mutual aid agreements, there is a cost to the city to provide services in unincorporated areas. Congestion on Reserve Street is a challenge for emergency responders. More hazardous materials are moving through town on the railways and Interstate. Need training for first responders to deal with a spill. A major spill would be a challenge. Other hazards include flooding due to ice jams and avalanches.</p>	
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<p>Bikes- Pedestrians – Trails</p>	<p>There are still gaps in the bikeway and sidewalk system that should be addressed. Sidewalks near schools are a priority. Trails and open space are so popular that there is beginning to be some overcrowding. The public should understand the cost of building and maintaining a trail & open space system and should be supportive. (i.e. bond issues) Businesses are supportive of the trails. Urban design standards should accommodate pedestrians. Design trails for safety. Cyclist education is needed to promote safety. Design sidewalks and trails to be accessible for people with disabilities. There are frequent bicycle-auto conflicts. Maintenance of sidewalks/trails in the winter is an issue.</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>Crime</p>	<p>The city will have to increase law enforcement capacity as the city grows. The jail is at capacity. There are higher crime rates in public housing. There is a perceived public safety issue in downtown because of panhandlers and the visible homeless population. There have been incidents of violence in homeless camps. There has been an increase in crime from workers that are in transit to the oil fields in North Dakota. Require proper lighting as a deterrent to crime. Police Dept. will be stretched thin as the city grows and crime increases.</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>Housing Demand</p>	<p>There is insufficient land zoned for multi-dwelling. The city should be pro-active in zoning for multi-dwelling and not wait for proposals. We need to be strategic and identify the land most suitable for higher density. Missoula has a higher number of renters than other communities and there is a demand for garden style apartments. There is resistance for families to live in attached single-family (townhouse) units. It</p>	<p>15</p>



	<p>is hard to get financing for mixed-use projects and higher density condominium projects. There is a segment of the population that would like micro- apartments in the downtown area. The cost to develop multi-dwelling downtown is higher than the market will bear so it may be necessary to subsidize downtown housing.</p>	
<p>Coordination Between Agencies</p>	<p>City & county should work together to address growth challenges and coordinate on providing services in unincorporated areas adjacent to city. More public-private partnerships are needed – especially with funding challenges. Partner with the University of Montana on community issues. Coordinate with the County Growth Policy process and identify where city/county goals align. The arts community should come together and speak with one voice. Form more partnerships with other non-profits & faith based communities to provide social services. Partner with other urban centers to lobby more effectively in the legislature. Residents of Missoula are potential partners and should be consulted and involved in decisions. Volunteers can bring valuable skills.</p>	<p>15</p>