



# Livability



## We have a thriving art and cultural scene.

- There are over 60 nonprofit arts and culture organizations in Missoula.
- Nonprofit arts and culture provide 1,447 full-time equivalent jobs.
- Investing in the arts means investing in an industry that supports jobs, generates revenue, and is a cornerstone of cultural tourism.

## Sunday Streets



## Our deep-rooted

## history informs our present-day life.

- The City of Missoula's historic preservation program has been in place since 1986.
- Diverse historic and archaeological resources are found in the City of Missoula, such as Paleo-Indian and Native American trails and traditional places, Fort Missoula, and historic structures and land areas associated with white settlement.
- The oldest Indian artifacts found in Missoula County date from 12,000 years ago.
- The first documented entry of Euro-Americans into western Montana was the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805-1806.

## 10 HISTORIC DISTRICTS and 56 BUILDINGS listed in the NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



Missoula's name is derived from "**nmešuletkw**," the Salish word for the Clark Fork River, which translates to,

## "place of frozen water."

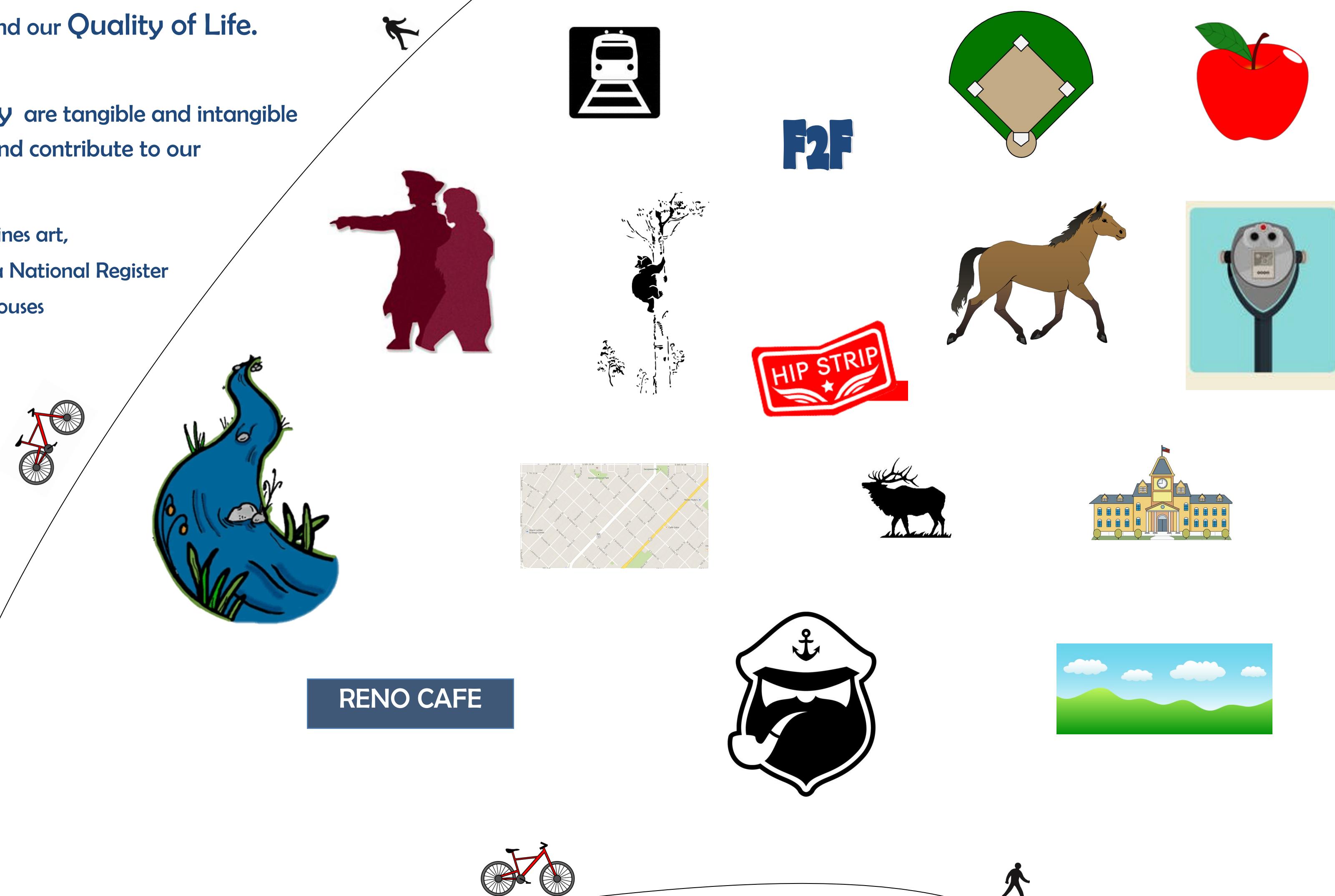
The river is a character-defining feature of Missoula, and contributes significantly to the community's

### Livability and our Quality of Life.

Arts, Culture and History are tangible and intangible qualities that define Missoula and contribute to our quality of life.

- The Missoula Art Museum combines art, Culture, and history into one: It is a National Register Listed historic structure that also houses the art museum.

We have strong community character with many distinctive neighborhoods—name them!



## We are internationally known for our outdoor recreation opportunities.

- Fishing and hunting on area streams and forests.
- Over 3,000 acres of open wildlands provide important wildlife, fish, and bird habitat, as well as encourage numerous recreational activities for citizens and visitors.
- The City has a network of bicycle and trail facilities, including the Milwaukee Trail, Riverfront Trail, and Bitterroot Branch Trail.
- The final connection of the Missoula to Lolo trail will lead to over 45 continuous miles of trail



The recently released AARP livability index for Missoula is:



The average for communities in the U.S. is 50. This Index gives higher scores to communities with diverse features that help people of all ages, incomes, and abilities—not just older Americans. Livability is about realizing values that are central to healthy communities: **independence, choice, and security.**



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## Culture, Arts & Historic Preservation

*A vibrant community creates an environment with a wide range of cultural activities for people to enjoy. Arts and cultural activities boost the local economy by attracting visitors and businesses. Missoula already has a vibrant and diverse arts community but there is a shortage of venues to meet a growing demand for performance space and cultural programs. Missoula should rehabilitate existing space and construct new venues to accommodate a variety of small and large events/programs.*

**Goal 1:** Missoula values its cultural heritage through historic preservation.

**Goal 2:** Missoula will have a diverse and vibrant arts community that fosters growth and development of cultural activities; including music, visual arts, and performance art.

**Goal 3:** Ensure that cultural opportunities are affordable and accessible to the entire community.

2. Ensure that in-fill development and high-density development are compatible with the surrounding area.
3. Require new development to contribute its proportional share of cost to improve local services and infrastructure.
4. The transportation network should accommodate new growth and redevelopment by providing options and adequate infrastructure to avoid congestion and minimize traffic hazards.
5. Plan for -and consider- the effects of parking, transportation, and mass transit on the city's character and built environment.
6. Provide incentives to redevelop older, underutilized, commercial properties.
7. The built environment should accommodate and be welcoming to people of all physical abilities.
8. Ensure an open and fair development review process.
9. Develop public infrastructure and facilities to incorporate sustainable features and be designed to encourage growth in desired areas including high-density development.
10. Preserve and support sustainable farming, urban gardening, and open space in appropriate areas.

## Objectives

1. Increase cultural opportunities and outreach to underserved demographic groups in the community, such as youth, elderly, and minorities.
2. Foster cooperative arts programs between the community, educational institutions, and visitors.
3. Provide adequate venues, educational opportunities and funding for visual and performing arts.
4. Coordinate historic preservation and cultural programs.
5. Continue to expand efforts to implement the historic preservation plan.
6. Support efforts to create public art.
7. Encourage partnerships between businesses, volunteers, private collectors, and non-profits to enhance arts and culture in the community.

## Growth Pressures/Land use/Zoning

*Missoula should consider the long term consequences of unharnessed growth. It is important that growth be fiscally and environmentally sustainable and maintain community character while accommodating the needs of an expanding and diverse population. Residents value their existing residential neighborhoods and desire to preserve the integrity of the neighborhood from encroachment of incompatible development. Existing and new residential areas should be quiet, safe, walkable, and aesthetically pleasing, with low pollution and access to natural areas. Development processes should be fair and should balance property rights with health, safety and wellness.*

**Goal 1:** Missoula will make thoughtful decisions about land use planning that supports the needs and values of residents in regards to neighborhoods and community character, parks, trails, and natural resources.

**Goal 2:** Neighborhoods should have easy accessibility to amenities and local services to meet the needs of an expanding diverse population.

## Objectives

1. Locate areas for new housing, mixed-use developments, multi-family development, and commercial nodes to provide convenient access to commercial and local services.

## Community Character/Sense of Place/Diversity/Open-Minded/Family Friendly/Community Involvement

*Missoula has unique characteristics that define the community and give it a strong identity. Attributes such as the surrounding open space with scenic vistas, natural areas (such as the river), a vibrant downtown, and traditional neighborhoods all contribute to this "sense-of-place." A diverse community, open-minded attitudes, an involved community, and a family-friendly atmosphere are other aspects that citizen's value and want to preserve. There is concern that as the community grows, Missoula will change and lose the features that make the community a livable and desirable place.*

**Goal 1:** Missoula's growth will be ever-mindful of the unique characteristics and sense-of-place that define and establish our community.

**Goal 2:** Missoula strives to involve community members to participate in decision-making processes, to volunteer, to take pride in their neighborhoods, and to respect a diverse population.

## Objectives

1. Ensure adequate resources to support and celebrate sense-of-place and unique community character.
2. Programs and planning processes should respect the diverse population within the community and provide for an environment where community members can freely express a diverse range of ideas to address city issues.
3. Identify, document, and nurture the assets and features that contribute to Missoula's unique character.
4. Promote urban design that emphasizes pedestrian scale and considers the interaction of development with the built environment.
5. Encourage development that preserves community character and the character of neighborhoods.
6. Promote transportation improvements that are designed to reflect community character and surrounding natural areas.
7. Encourage neighborhoods to use tools and services to preserve neighborhood character.



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## Local Services/ Social Services/ Education

*Social services and education should encourage and create an environment for learning, growth, independence, and a sense of purpose as well as fostering a responsibility for ourselves and to others. Quality educational opportunities are the foundation for a community that can attract both new businesses and new employees. A comprehensive social service network is the foundation for a compassionate community that provides opportunity for self-sufficiency and independence.*

**Goal 1:** Local municipal and social services will promote a sustainable and livable community.

**Goal 2:** Missoula will encourage, care for, and create an environment for learning, growth, independence, and a sense of purpose and engagement.

### Objectives

1. Ensure basic needs of the community are met and people have opportunities for meaningful work, stable income, and an excellent education.
2. Promote and advocate for sustainable measures that lead to a more livable, resilient community such as recycling, urban gardening, and other similar practices.
3. Invest in continuing education for all people and all ages.
4. Ensure cooperative relationships between local government, K-12 schools, adult education, higher education, and local businesses so all become stakeholders for mutual benefit.
5. Ensure equal, fair, and adequate services for all children from infancy to adulthood in order to allow them to thrive as Missoula citizens.
6. Invest in technology and other infrastructure at schools so students have access to resources and can acquire skills for 21st century jobs.
7. Provide aging services to meet the range of needs of the senior population, such as mobility and housing.



## Parks & Recreation

*Parks and trails provide green space and open space that contribute to the community's identity. Additionally, parks offer opportunities for play, gathering, and recreation. Such activities promote healthy lifestyles, provide a means for citizens of all abilities to be involved in their community, and enable residents to enjoy and connect with the outdoors. Recreation events and activities in the parks attract visitors and support the local economy.*

**Goal:** Missoula will have a well-distributed, connected, and sustainable network of parks and trail systems for the benefit and enjoyment of the community.

### Objectives

1. Ensure that each community member and neighborhood has adequate access and opportunity to use parks and open space.
2. Develop a wide range of parks and open spaces from pocket parks to large open spaces to meet different functions within the park system.
3. Balance the amount of public open/green spaces with development to provide adequate access, preserve vistas, and provide recreational opportunities. .
4. Provide recreational activities and programs to accommodate the wide range of interests and schedules of the population.
5. Provide opportunities for access and recreational activities to people for all ages and abilities.



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6. Maintain and improve parks to provide accessible, safe, and clean public spaces.
7. Design adaptable park and recreation facilities to accommodate changing and current and long term recreation trends and needs.
8. Create and maintain a trail system that connects parks, neighborhoods and green space
9. Plan for parks as an integral part of a Missoula's green infrastructure system
10. Ensure that parks and trails recognize and be mindful of urban agriculture.



## Downtown

*Missoula's vibrant downtown is a hub for arts, culture, dining, transportation, housing, government offices and local business. The historic structures and the vitality that comes from the mix of activities are key components defining and celebrating Missoula's unique character. New development should be context sensitive and should consider preserving the historic character of downtown. Employers and visitors are attracted to downtowns that offer amenities and activities during the day and at night. The influx of business and people to downtown, however, can create issues regarding parking, traffic congestion and impacts on adjacent neighborhoods. It is important to develop sustainable strategies to address these issues.*

**Goal 1:** Missoula will have a vibrant and sustainable downtown with a diverse mix of cultural activities, housing and businesses.

**Goal 2:** The unique identity of downtown will be maintained by preserving the historic and cultural elements that define the area and ensure that future development is compatible and appropriate.

### Objectives

1. Review parking as part of the transportation system that accommodates multiple means of transportation including pedestrian and bicycle friendly improvements as well as vehicular traffic. And determine parking for downtown businesses and visitors in context of this system.
2. Preserve historic elements and cultural institutions that contribute to a unique and vital downtown.
3. Ensure development supports the needs of downtown workers, visitors, and residents and contributes to healthy neighborhoods in and around downtown.
4. Include a safe and healthy environment in downtown for people to live, work, create, and interact.
5. Support development in downtown that has a positive fiscal impact for the community.
6. Support downtown as a vibrant place with a variety of uses and social services.
7. Encourage compatible reuse and redevelopment of vacant sites, vacant buildings, and historic buildings as a priority over outward expansion.
8. Support higher-density development in downtown that is compatible with the community/historic character.
9. Maintain downtown as an identifiable place with identifiable edges.
10. Develop mix-used developments and live/work opportunities in downtown.
11. Encourage coordination with University of Montana on projects that will strengthen the downtown.
12. Differentiate between high intensity central business district core and lower intensity downtown areas and approve development that is compatible with the character in these areas.



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## LIVABILITY FOCUS GROUP

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