

Meeting Notes

Meeting: Community Design

Date/Time: 11-17-14

Location: Solstice Building conference Room

Notes by: Jana Cooper, TD&H Engineering

Attended by: Philip Maechling, Bonnie Buckingham, Jessica Hawn, Eric Hines, Don MacArthur, Jeremy Keene, Jeremy Drake, JaKob Wyder, Bob Giordano, Heather McMilin, Patricia Hogan, Caroline Lauer, Paul Bohan, Jessica Morris (Development Services Staff), Laval Means (Development Services Staff, Chase Jones

Updates

- At the next meeting the group should appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair that will also serve as representative and alternate to the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee will begin meeting in January, so that will mean a second meeting during a few months overlap with the focus group work for the person acting as a Chair or Vice Chair.
- Draft Community Profile (existing conditions) is now online at <http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/27401>.

Background

Review a few key elements of the Focus Group Guidelines

- Inspiration section:
- Overview of core pillars – they help to set up the process for this project
- Overview of the City Council Resolution – In April, 2014, the Council passed a resolution in support of the process and starting point being exploration of policies that delve into the meaning of “focusing inward” for our community.
- Draft Value Statement – this document describes the background for the focus inward concept and lists many core values to consider. This document will be revisited by the Steering Committee toward the end of this process to see whether we need to make any adjustments to the statement.
- Goal/Objective/Action section:
 - The definition and examples of goal statements are shown in the guidebook

What does Community Design mean to the Group?

Group members were asked if there are other discussion ideas, in addition to those identified by staff (land use, city-county interface, connectivity, transportation, and building form), that should be covered as a part of Community Design. The following ideas were raised:

Waste Stream – Consider productive and sustainable ways to manage waste through land use (in addition to landfills, recycling centers, composting, and gardens), resource efficiency (energy waste, resource waste, infrastructure), and comprehensively looking at land use relationships.

Broad look at planning (Big Picture) - Elements of the community are interrelated and the community design focus group is the group to pull all those elements together by balancing housing, transportation, bus lines, parks and TIF districts, etc., while considering efficiency.

Location of land use - Development tends to gravitate to the cheapest or easiest land. Like waste, it's harder to recycle and reuse than to build new. It's important to guide development to the places where it makes sense and infrastructure supports it and not be doing catch up by seeing development occur where the community would not have wanted it.

People – This plan should include the people who are living here as a top priority in how the city develops.

Walkable – It's important to preserve walkability as the community grows. New development should be walkable.

Adaptability – Consider our ability to adapt to the future.

Neighborhoods – The City should get back to developing neighborhood plans. They do make a difference. This is a way to include people and can fine tune what's going on.

Vision Zero – The State has adopted a goal of no traffic fatalities or serious injuries. Other communities have had great success in addressing that goal.

Overview of the Values and Challenges process:

For the past five months the planning group has been collecting comments from community members through many topic-based listening sessions regarding values and challenges and ideas to address the challenges. The notes from the listening sessions are available on the website. The Summaries from the notes are the tools used tonight to help guide the process of developing Goals.

Goal Development Task:

Each group member Identified key topics that they felt best relate to the focus group subject by reviewing the Summary Values material and circling five topics and reviewing the Summary Challenges material and circling five topics.

Group members shared their top priorities for the focus group from the Value topic list and the Challenge topic list.

High priority topics were chosen from the Values topics and the Challenges topics. Each group member was asked to write goal statements for any of the high priority topics (whether they came from the Values or Challenges lists).

Group members read off goal statements and some questions and clarification were discussed.

Project staff collected the goals statements and grouped them under the related topics.

The purpose of this process is to collect as many initial individual goal statement ideas and then through the next few months expect to see the statements become refined, combined, sorted and even possibly moved to another group or level of policy development (such as objective or action).

Topics Identified and number of people interested in exploring the topic:

1. Values - Potential Topics

- Friendly/Family Oriented 3

- Sense of Place 10
- Health Care 1
- Compact 6
- Bikeable/Walkable 11
- Diversity 4
- Transit 6
- Open Minded 2
- Downtown 6
- Natural Areas/Outdoor Rec 12
- Local Food 6
- Natural Resources 5
- Infrastructure 6
- Local Business 1
- Parks & Recreation 2

2. Challenges Potential Topics

- Transportation/Parking/Transit 9
- Land Use/Zoning/Subdivision 8
- Environmental Quality 8
- Growth Pressures & Sprawl 12
- Affordable Housing 8
- Bikes & Pedestrian Trails 4
- Economy Jobs 2
- Homelessness & Poverty 2
- Community Character 9
- Neighborhood Opposition 2
- Infrastructure (Done) 6
- Coordination Between Agencies 2
- Neighborhood Design 5
- Health & Wellness 1
- Funding 2

Initial Individual Goal Statements by Topic

Transportation/Transit/Parking

- Impose license fees on SOV's commensurate with the weight of the vehicle
- Make SOV's pay closer to the actual cost of their parking
- Reduce VMT (vehicle miles traveled) by 10% each year
- Emphasize transportation safety and livability over capacity
- Develop city wide parking strategy that supports compact development pattern
- Charge true cost of parking

- Create incentives for reducing parking supply & demand. Allow lower parking ratios
- Encourage developers to provide incentive to reduce car transportation
- Adopt transit-oriented development (TOD) principles and create incentives to reduce car transportation
- Develop transportation oriented zoning for major transportation corridors to promote density and efficient transportation
- Develop transit-oriented development corridor with high density land use required to support frequent service
- Come up with an individual on-demand transportation means that will allow access to a majority of residents within ¼ mile walking distance
- Strive for a mode split of, at most, 25% of all trips are single occupant motor vehicle by 2030
- Adopt programs for more transit & new modes
- Reduce parking minimums to encourage compact development and multi-modal vehicle trips.

Land Use/Zoning/Subdivisions

- Incentivize and create net zero energy districts
- Revise current land use designations (1975 still in place)
- Make sure all pavement is permeable, with none going to a treatment plant
- Develop an urban growth boundary to drive development inwards
- Develop neighborhood plans based on neighborhood character and history
- Keep people “carrying capacity” in mind the same way you think of wildlife carrying capacity, Space/Size of Montana.
- Develop urban growth boundary to limit sprawl. Plan for annexation.
- Develop TOD policies and zoning
- Develop community design standards to preserve and enhance Missoula’s character.
(Auto Zone – Boz vs. Missoula)
- Create mixed use zoning areas that allow for the growth of small manufacturing from recycled materials. (Example: Recycling Development Zone in LA)
- Provide predictable subdivision regulations that clearly protect our common values – including open space, agricultural heritage, and connection to local food access. Concentrate growth in urban core
- Redefine land use and zoning to align with a master plan for Missoula’s growth and future
- Cap future growth, outside city limits, at 15% above current population
- Allow mixed-use zoning where appropriate to encourage living/working spaces and sustainable development

Growth Pressures & Sprawl

- Redo impact fees so they recognize full impact (ie. location, efficiency, infill vs. greenfield)
- Incentivize infill development close to existing non-motorized facilities
- Don’t encourage population growth to get more federal monies. Don’t subsidize population growth. Preserve living areas for residents currently living here
- Raise impact fees to reflect the actual cost they inflict
- Incentivize & encourage urban core development using and strengthening core infrastructure
- Allow infill development where appropriate

- Develop standards for zoning and subdivisions that encourage new development where infrastructure can support and discourage “greenfield” development

Affordable Housing

- Density bonuses for affordable housing
- Increase amount of affordable housing in the urban core. Avoid pushing poor out of the city
- Encourage development of land trusts to keep housing affordable
- Incentivize infill development, particularly housing in downtown
- Commit to providing housing options that are affordable for all Missoulians
- Develop and provide incentives for energy efficient “above-code” green building and development to reduce developer and owner/tenant costs.
- Don’t subsidize new growth. Don’t encourage new growth. Find ways to solve population problem without increasing problem. Take care of people who are here
- Include incentives, building types, land uses that allow for truly affordable housing – ADU’s, inclusionary zoning
- Inclusionary zoning to insure affordable housing as community grows

Infrastructure

- Revise waste management as resource management and create the environment to maximize benefits to local economies, environment and communities
- Prioritize maintenance of existing infrastructure over new construction
- Integrate sewer service area decisions with land use and transportation for compact community
- Provide infrastructure that supports desirable land use patterns.
- Encourage and develop energy infrastructure that shifts, allows and encourages supply and demand away from fossil fuels
- Expand infrastructure services guided by a principle of resource conservation and best practices to mitigate and adapt to climate change
- Evaluate existing, strengthen and build new infrastructure that aligns with long term growth goals
- Develop transit as a community utility (or basic infrastructure)
- Revise development impact mitigation costs to community infrastructure – real fair share costs
- Guarantee that any new developments in infrastructure provide compact, livable areas with character
- Develop “complete streets” for all new roadway improvements
- Design infrastructure so as to not prevent changes and adaptability for future transportation, future uses, and future ideas. Future route of North South travel through Valley
- Keep individual transportation in mind - local and national.

Natural/Outdoor Recreation

- Keep open spaces near, within easy access by all – bus, bike, pedestrians
- Provide convenient access to trails, open space, and recreation through connected transportation system
- Develop design standards that connect communities to natural access
- Natural areas, such as the Rattlesnake, will be easily accessible via bike paths

- Preserve natural areas and access for all
- Create incentives for protection of open spaces/conservation development
- Development should protect natural resources and natural areas with a focus on the valley floor
- Recognize and strengthen preservation and responsible access/use of Missoula's outdoor resources
- Protect natural areas and outdoor recreation areas for uncrowded, uncluttered and beneficial use
- Create policy that mitigates and adapts to climate change to conserve and preserve natural areas.

Sense of Place

- Actively discourage big chains and box stores – support local businesses
- No more box stores and/or limited size
- Come to a local business agreement to prevent the arrival of chains (or vote on it) (Cambridge MA does this)
- Support local businesses
- Unify neighborhoods, create a sense of belonging
- Sense of place should come from the people who live here. It should not be forced upon them
- Sense of place includes: Geography, topography, distances from other places, people or things, equality in decision making, why people have moved here, why they left the place they lived before
- Develop a smart urban design process
- Develop neighborhood plans based on historic design patterns
- Provide public spaces/realms that reflect the unique character of Missoula and Missoulians and encourage citizens and visitors to explore the city
- Enhance public “civic” spaces to gather downtown
- Preserve unique character of Missoula's setting by highlighting mountain views and river access
- Missoula will maintain its strong sense of place – Uniquely Missoula, with a strong connection to our natural resources, vibrant, diverse communities and downtown
- Identify and protect community assets
- Capture and define community character and assets to build on and emphasize
- Provide opportunities for community involvement that include all members of the community

Bikable/Walkable

- Provide a highly connected trail, sidewalk, and transit system
- Connect all existing trails in order to improve ease of their use and provide direct routes to all parts of Missoula
- Implement/create a connected efficient, affordable, safe, and attractive system of bike and pedestrian facilities that encourage use of active transportation
- Develop robust non-motorized systems with a goal of 20% of all trips non-motorized by 2030
- Enhance bike and pedestrian infrastructure to promote healthy lifestyles and transportation options
- Encourage walking by building pedestrian friendly transportation infrastructure
- Zero people walking or people bicycling hit by motor vehicles
- 100% of arterials and collectors with safe bike lanes, safe sidewalks and safe crossings
- Provide safe connections to schools and play areas for our children

- Incentivize development near existing infrastructure, strengthen and ensure the entire community remains bikeable/walkable
- Develop bike share to reduce single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips and encourage trips by bike
- Establish connectivity where links are missing or between new development
- Establish pedestrian/bicycle crossings in high traffic areas
- Maximum of 3 travel lanes (1 in each direction with center turn lane) for safe pedestrian crossings
- Transportation should draw people from their cars not impose and force others to pay what they would not voluntarily pay to do. Choices should be based on purpose not blanketed everywhere.

Parking Lot

Several members asked about having a community forum or way to connect with each other outside just the monthly meeting. Group members felt that there wasn't going to be enough time for discussion on the topics. Members asked about a homework requirement to help provide additional information in-between the meetings.

Discussion Notes:

Members of the group asked if the group was going to be developing goals for all the elements listed (example: city-county interface). If the group doesn't get into a particular topic, is that okay? At points in this process, staff will check in with the steering committee and get guidance from them. However, through this broad process of reviewing topics, it's very likely we will get to all the topics listed in one way or another (goal, objective, and/or action). We also noted that some of the elements may be covered in another focus groups.

Ideas should include thinking long term for the future of the city and consider alternatives like building a gondola system between major places. Think of solutions and think out of the box.

The following are clarifying questions and discussion among focus group members regarding some of the goal statements:

Develop local business agreements

- This is a tool that Cambridge, Mass. developed to consider new businesses, including chain stores and franchises, in a particular part of Cambridge. Proposals are reviewed by a local business coalition that make recommendations by majority vote to the City Council for their final review and consideration. There was a question about how feasible this would be in Missoula; the group suggested this might be one of those "homework" tasks to have someone look into more thoroughly.

Think of transit as a community utility

- Transit in total is a utility for everyone so we should think of it like the way we plan for a sewer system with boundaries that get evaluated and we should consider compactness, which would mean more efficiency and easier service. Developers need to consider transit as part of any proposal and should help to pay for it. Plan it as development happens and make development work with it.

Transportation should serve local and national (broader) needs

- Remember that we are 200 miles away from other large places. We need to recognize that we use the vehicle to get to a lot of places outside the community. Trains will be most efficient and economic way to travel in the future. We should plan for all modes of transportation and not just for trains or other ride-sharing modes. We shouldn't limit ourselves to no vehicles in the future. Cars will be needed to get to the airport or outside amenities and other locations.

Revise development impact fee system

- This is about considering fair share costs to assess impact fees based on (1) life cycle costs to impacts or (2) based on location (similar to paying more for bus when further away). The response was impact fees should be whatever the costs are, for example the costs to transit should be paid more fairly by developers that put additional stress on the system. Currently, impact fees are based on square footage or number of units.

Next Steps

At December meeting: select chair and vice chair; review information from Asset Mapping project; review & discuss topics and goals statements from November focus group meeting; report on topics being covered by other focus groups; and move on to developing objectives.

Next Meeting Date: December 15, 2014 5:15 to 7:15, same space (Solstice Building Conference Room)

Public Comment on items not on the agenda:

None received