

Meeting Notes

Meeting: Livability

Date/Time: December 17, 2014 at 5:15 pm

Location: Headwaters Conference Room, Currents Aquatic Center, 600 Cregg Lane

Notes by: Leslie Schwab and Kate McMahon

Members Present: Topher Williams, Michael Dorshorst, Jessica Burson, Herbert Swick, Paul Bohan, Mike Monsos, Patricia Hogan, Katie Deuel, Deana Felix

Staff Present: Kate McMahon, Leslie Schwab

Updates and Administrative

- o Selecting Co-Chairs

Kate introduced the evening's goals and process which included appointing/selecting co-chairs for the steering committee and continuing brainstorming goal and objective statements. She also updated the group on the status of the goal statements formulated during the November meeting and let the group know that reformatting and making sense of raw objectives/goal statements will occur in January.

Steering committee: Mike Monsos and Michael Dorshorst were selected as co-chairs through a voting method. The two individuals (of the four nominated) with the most votes were selected and accepted the positions as co-chairs. Primarily, duties of the co-chairs include keeping order and moving meetings along in a timely manner and staying on topic, as well as representing the group on the steering committee.

- o On-Line Forums

Since individuals were having difficulty signing up for the on-line forum, it was suggested that someone from the city compile instructions on how to sign up. Casey Wilson will be tasked with providing group members with additional instruction on how to access the online discussion forum via Civic Plus.

Asset Mapping

Leslie Schwab, Staff Liaison to the Livability focus group, provided an update of the draft asset mapping project and associated report. Preliminary observations by the Sonoran Group showed transportation, natural resources, recreation, and culture/arts/history as values identified by



Missoulians during the study. The project is in its final stages, wrapping up in February. At that time, the final report, including recommendations, observations and a series of eight maps, will be available.

Background on Additional Topics and Goals

Ms. McMahon introduced the purpose of this agenda item, which was to determine if all topics were sufficiently covered by the various focus groups. Group members were asked to review the topic matrix and if any topics were missed she asked that the group decide which subjects/topics they should develop into additional goal statements for Livability. There was discussion about the categories that were overlooked. There was agreement to add Downtown and Parks & Recreation to the Livability group's goals.

Kate pointed out that we were still in the brainstorming stage and we just need to make sure that all topics were covered in at least one group. Historic preservation and Downtown were not addressed in Livability last meeting, and a discussion followed about why Historic Preservation and Downtown should be addressed as part of livability. Michael Dorshorst asked if our group could interface with other groups to bounce ideas around and ask questions. Kate stated that would be part of the steering committee's purpose. It was decided by the group to develop goal statements pertaining to the Downtown. It was suggested that the discussion of U of M could possibly fall under heading of Education in Livability.

Additional Goal Statements for New Topics

Following are the goal statements developed by individuals to address the topics of Downtown and Parks & Recreation:

Parks & Recreation

- Missoula has a well-distributed connected series of parks and trails that provide green/open space, play, gathering and recreational opportunities to all Missoulians.
- Ensure each neighborhood area has adequate access and opportunity to use parks and open space.
- Increase public open/green spaces as part of community identity and involvement, especially for weekday and after dark activities. Increase opportunities for all abilities/all ages and all levels of involvement.
- Missoula should have a well-maintained network of parks and "green spaces that encourage and enable all residents to enjoy outdoor recreational activities both structured (team sports) and individual recreation.
- Continue to make existing parks accessible, safe and clean. Find opportunities to add open spaces in all neighborhoods.

- All residential areas shall have within walking distance ½ mile or less access to a park no less than 200' by 200 feet of some combination of recreational activity equipment, natural grand open space, walking, gathering and sitting areas.
- Create or maintain trail system/easy access to parks and recreation opportunities – ideally connecting many neighborhoods.
- Maintain and foster open space, green space and community space for the benefit and enjoyment of our communities.
- Missoula continues to identify new parks and spaces and helps to create better connectivity between them.

Downtown

- Missoula's vibrant downtown is a hub for arts, culture and food and local business. There is adequate parking, preserved historic structures and it is pedestrian and bike friendly. It concentrates fabulous services and business and is a key component of defining and celebrating Missoula's unique character.
- Maintain downtown area as an identifiable place, with quasi-boundaries.
- Define what the essence of a vibrant, sustainable downtown Missoula is, and endeavor to communicate and support all of the many diverse aspects of it.
- The unique character of Missoula's downtown is an important element of livability. Therefore, growth policies should ensure a vibrant downtown with a mix of retail, cultural dining and housing opportunities.
- Missoula should continue to focus development in areas close to downtown and increase the accessibility for people to get there.
- Develop a clear direction and process to maintain the quality, development and history of our downtown historic district.
- Consider ways to preserve unique aspects of Missoula downtown and its structures while incorporating sustainability and healthy spaces for people to live, work, create etc.
- Strive to accommodate new growth but do not encourage growth that is not supported in terms of employment, services or the environment.
- Downtown should be a hub for diverse interests. Enhance its accessibility through alternative means of transportation. Encourage re-use of vacant and historic buildings. Make downtown vibrant 24-hours a day with a variety of uses and social services-housing, shopping, recreation, arts, other businesses.

Past Plans: Goals and Objectives

A second handout with livability-related goals and objectives was handed out. The intent was to see if any Goals and Objectives from past planning documents needed to be forwarded and further considered.

Mr. Swick asked about “Parks & Recreation” as a city dept. vs. the subject of recreation and green space. A group discussion followed.

Michael Dorshorst asked if we were expanding focus into Missoula County or if we should focus on the city only. The 2005 comp plan combined both county and city. There was a discussion on why the city and county government agencies split. An explanation of why the two were separated was offered. Topher Williams thought coordination between agencies should be addressed in the goals/objectives for this process. Kate explained that agency coordination would be part of implementation and action items, which would occur further down the road.

Mike Monsos commented that the former goals and objectives from previous plans crisply laid out the intent of historic preservation. Mr. Swick thought it only addressed physical assets and didn't address quality of life issues that went beyond the physical/built environment. Mr. Swick offered examples, including art galleries, musical events, and cultural events. Kate pointed out that those ideas and elements were captured in the previous meeting's (November) goal statements. Mr. Swick felt that the physical and cultural environments of Missoula need to be addressed equally. Paul Bohan passed out a statement (attached at the end of these meeting notes) that he authored that he felt addressed what Mr. Swick was talking about. Paul stated that the purpose (of the comp plan) was not well-defined in this process and that he had a different way of looking at what we were trying to accomplish. Mr. Bohan emphasized that it is important not to forget who we are doing this for and why we are doing it.

Kate stated that she will collect statements from tonight, November's meeting and his written statement, provide structure and then send the compilation out as a Survey Monkey in January to help identify the most relevant and feasible goals/statements for further refinement in January.

Topher Williams pointed out that a relevant/pertinent item missing from the past plans was connectivity between places/spaces and access by walking/biking should be kept in mind. It is a key component to livability. Part of livability is being able to get around in a healthy way –not vehicle dependent ways. There was agreement by the group that it crosses over into numerous focus groups/elements. It is important to make places accessible by everybody.

Review of Listening Session Summary: Recommended Ideas and Objectives Worksheet

The “Recommended Goals and Objectives Worksheet” was handed out to participants. The ten items on the worksheet were grouped in terms of MCA element or by focus group. Livability changed to Culture/Arts/History. The group reviewed #6 (Culture/Art/History), #7 (Local Services), #8 (Parks/Rec) and circled the statements to keep for consideration in the next round of objectives development. With the remaining time, individuals looked at other elements to see if they related to



Livability subjects and highlighted additional objectives that should be forwarded into January's meeting. The results from this exercise will be added to the other goal statements and then added to the Survey Monkey materials to be sifted through and refined in January.

A question was asked about a recommendation found in the Culture/Art/History section of the handout. A discussion followed about what it meant to "Change the concept of community centers": what does that mean? Multi-use community centers? Performance space? Kate speculated that this may have been an objective identified by Parks and Rec dept. Is it more of a student union concept? Perhaps it is the concept of "the commons" but not community center. Could be anything, really. Does it need to be rewritten? Or should it be left as-is and see if it makes it through the Survey Monkey process for further consideration.

A comment was made that the listening session-derived objectives (in general) do not appear to align with what the group is doing, and may not be suitable for further consideration. This will be clarified through the Survey Monkey exercise. It was important to not lose the listening session information as the process goes forward.

Members looked through other elements to pull out statements that seemed more relevant to Livability. Michael Dorshorst interjected that cross-referencing between groups would be essential. Perhaps workshopping topics being developed by other groups. One of the roles of the steering committee could be keeping dialogue going back and forth between groups on common topics and bring those ideas back to the focus groups.

Wrap-Up

Michael Dorshorst asked if individual email addresses could be shared within the group, since the Civic Plus forum was a little difficult to navigate. Michael offered to the group definitions of Livability which are attached at the end of the document. Leslie offered to assist group members in registering on the forum. Email conversations in between meetings were discouraged due to open meetings laws and the need to keep the process transparent.

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, January 28th at 5:15 P.M. in the Headwaters Conference Room

Public Comment on items not on the agenda:

None received

Livability:

There shall be a distinction between Residential and Commercial Areas to allow people to connect on interpersonal, non-professional, non-business level, to create a human community of sharing in an area without expectations of obligations or payment.

Neighborhood Parks:

All Residential Areas shall have walking distance ^{within} 1/2 mile or less access to a park no less than ¹⁰⁰ ~~100~~ x ~~100~~ feet of some combination of recreational activity equipment, natural ground open space, walking, gathering and sitting areas.

Residential Areas:

Residential Areas shall be primary in terms of Planning, Designing, and Developing the City such that the future focus of the City and it's government shall be on the Residents that live in the Community and that their individual living spaces shall be theirs, and that their Government can be counted on to represent their interests and not those who would give them secondary status in the interest of turning them into commodities to be sold to, bought from, and manipulated away from having control of their lives and the life of their community.

Preserve the integrity, with it's inherent diversity, and unique values of neighborhoods, communities, and rural areas.

Respect the elements of neighborhood patterns and work to enhance them to continue a pleasing and livable whole, keeping the aesthetically (as determined by the residents) and current functionality without reducing or taking away from the values that are present within the neighborhood.

Strive to accommodate new growth, but do not encourage Growth that is not supported in terms of employment, services or Environment.

Accommodate Growth by determining what residents want, and working to enhance new areas to accept that growth, as opposed to taking from current residents what they have already built.

A community is it's residents, Growth is to be planned for, based on the desires of the current residents, with the knowledge that growth will happen. Strive to find the best ways to accept it and make the new growth meld with the current residents, rather than forcing residents to accept something that is imposed on them for reasons of commerce, that are often self serving to others.

Community patterns should be based on mobility, safety, and environmental quality. Such areas would include low noise, low pollution, not too crowded, aesthetically pleasing natural and built areas that are designed first and foremost for Families, and Individuals, while areas of commerce should be designated as such and require that people seek them out, as opposed to accept them into their lives as unavoidable.

From Paul B
12/15/14

Livability Focus Group

“Livability means being able to take your kids to school, go to work, see a doctor, drop by the grocery or Post Office, go out to dinner and a movie, and play with your kids at the park – all without having to get in your car” - *Ray LaHood*

Sec. of Transportation

<http://www.vocativ.com/interactive/culture/society/livability-index-2014/>

<http://www.aarp.org/research/ppi/liv-com2/resources/the-livability-index.html>

<http://livable.org/about-us/what-is-livability>

<http://www.livablecities.org/>

<http://www.dot.gov/livability>

Livable.org

What is Livability?

Livability is the sum of the factors that add up to a community’s quality of life—including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities.

AARP

How a Livability Index works:

What will the Livability Index do?

The Livability Index will help users better understand their communities and make decisions about their future needs. The index can potentially be used in several ways. Here are a few examples:

A county executive wants to know how to meet the housing needs of older adults. She can see how her community performs for each of the housing metrics relative to the national average and learn about policy and programmatic interventions that could address areas of concern.

The director of a non-profit organization wants to show the need for transportation services in the community. He can view data on transit service available to various neighborhoods in the community and connect to resources explaining how transit is typically funded.

A community advocate wants to make the streets safer for those who cannot afford to drive and those who can no longer drive. She can view crash statistics and speed limits for streets in the community and link to best practices being adopted in other communities.

What are the Livability Index’s Goal and Objectives?

The Livability Index will be a tool to help inform policy development, new initiatives, and community stakeholder participation with the primary goal of improving the quality of life for community residents. The index will provide context and information to help:

- Stimulate local changes in policy, planning, and investment

- Stimulate state level policy, planning, and investment

- Brief local policy makers on key policies, investments and other community elements that will make communities more livable

- Inform residents about elements of livable communities, allow them to make informed choices and stimulate their participation in community change

Evaluation Rubric: Housing, Environment, Neighborhood, Transportation, Health, Civic Engagement, Equity & Opportunity, Recreation & Culture

Areavibes:

7 different categories including nearby amenities, cost of living, crime rates, education, employment, housing and weather.

Vocativ.com:

Demographics, Housing, Jobs, Food, Entertainment, Night Out, Getting Around, Appeal

DOT.gov:

- Provide more transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our dependence on oil, improve air quality and promote public health.
- Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- Improve economic competitiveness of neighborhoods by giving people reliable access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs.
- Target federal funding toward existing communities – through transit-oriented and land recycling – to revitalize communities, reduce public works costs, and safeguard rural landscapes.
- Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding and increase the effectiveness of programs to plan for future growth.
- Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods, whether rural, urban or suburban.

Livablecities.org:

- Rebuild community by replacing sprawl with compact, human scale urban fabric
- Recognize and combat the negative impact of our built environment on physical, social and mental health
- Adopt planning and urban design decisions that will make our cities and suburbs more livable for children and the elderly
- Emphasize ethical land use patterns to reduce extreme economic disparities
- Strengthen compact urban neighborhoods to maintain diversity of ethnic and cultural identity
- Build multifunctional town squares that, like the ancient agora or medieval marketplace, can regenerate civic engagement and democratic participation.