

Meeting Notes

Meeting: Housing

Date/Time: 3-24-15

Location: Montana Association of Realtors Conference Room

Notes by: Kate McMahon, Applied Communications

Attended by: Collin Bangs, Eileen Sansom, Sandy Schoonover, Katherine Brady, Sherry McLauchlan, Eric Gabster, Catharine Carey, Jan Hoem, Lori Davidson, Greg Oliver, Nancy Harte (Resource Team), Bob Oaks, Sherrie Featherly, Andrea Davis, Brenna Rietmann (Gradate Inter), Casey Wilson (Development Services Staff)

UPDATES

Collin Bangs and Katherine Brady provided an update to group regarding the meeting of the Steering Committee including an update of the discussion regarding the future land use map. Katherine mentioned that there was discussion about referencing climate change in the plan. Collin gave an overview of the map that staff had created to compile the input the land use exercise that all focus groups had completed at the February meeting. He noted that the Steering Committee discussed using a more generalized land use classification system and discussed options for addressing land use in the urban fringe areas.

REVIEW OF DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Group conducted a discussion and made the following changes to the draft goals and objectives.

Topic 5: Homelessness

Economic disparity is an issue in the community, and that disparity is highlighted in housing costs. An average rent for a two-bedroom apartment hovers around \$800, a figure that is dangerously rich for folks at the lower end of the income spectrum. A percentage of Missoulians – many are part of the 17 percent of residents who meet the federal poverty standard – are priced out of housing, and often suffer periods of homelessness because of unemployment or underemployment. The city and county of Missoula have created a 10-year plan to address homelessness, but inadequate resources area frustration for social service providers. Missoula needs more supportive housing, more affordable housing and better integration of services designed to help people secure stable housing. The 10-year plan focuses on prevention as well as housing and other services, and prevention is a far less expensive strategy for dealing with homelessness. Rental assistance programs currently help many secure housing, but Missoula needs a transitional facility for families experience episodic homelessness.

Goals

- Goal 1: Missoula will have a coordinated support strategy to help prevent people from becoming homeless.
- Goal 2: Missoula will assist people in finding suitable housing when they are homeless.

Objectives:

1. Support implementation of 10-year plan to end homelessness.

2. Encourage the concept of moving people quickly into permanent housing.
3. Develop a model of small, multi-family developments for homeless housing with services and housing subsidy.
4. Build government-private partnerships to create housing for the homeless population.
5. Work with housing agencies and nonprofits to identify strategies to assist displaced households when mobile home parks or old downtown motels are redeveloped.
6. Develop additional safe, affordable and permanent housing for low-income and homeless families.

Actions

1. Develop safe, short-term transitional housing for families
2. Continue rental assistance programs that move people quickly from homelessness into housing with support services.

Topic 6: Downtown Housing

Housing is an important component of downtown development. Downtown residents support businesses. There is a segment of the population that would prefer to live downtown but the cost to develop multi-dwelling downtown is higher and may require incentives or other programs to make building feasible.

Goals

Goal 1: There will be higher density residential and mixed-use projects in the downtown area in order to diversify housing options and allow residents to enjoy downtown amenities.

Goal 2: Development of downtown housing will increase the residential base that will support downtown businesses.

Goal 3: Maintain unique historic areas of downtown.

Objectives :

1. Develop mix of housing types in the downtown area to attract new households to the downtown area. .
2. Work with the Missoula Redevelopment Authority to offer incentives and assistance in developing affordable housing in the downtown consistent with the downtown plan.
3. Increase apartment housing for older adults in the downtown that is close to general services, medical services and shopping.
4. Amend regulations to allow higher density housing in the downtown consistent with the recommendations of the downtown plan
5. Incorporate affordable housing projects as part of the downtown plan that can be marketed to University students.
6. Provide incentives for below market rate housing units in new commercial and residential developments in the downtown area to create permanent affordable housing.
7. Protect character of traditional neighborhoods adjacent to downtown.
8. Encourage mixed use developments that allow for live-work opportunities in the downtown.
9. Work with University of Montana to coordinate facility planning that university development complements and supports the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
10. 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.

The focus group members also agreed to add an objective to the affordable housing topic regarding energy efficiency and green building. It was discussed that an objective regarding developments pay proportional share to extend infrastructure was addressed by the livability goals.

Goals and objectives from the compact development topic were combined under the “Topic 3: Land Use/ Zoning/neighborhood design by adding the following:

- Goal 3: Mid to higher density housing development will be conveniently located to nodes of retail services, transportation and parks in order to reduce cost of transportation and providing city services.
- Objectives 10: Reduce costs of transportation and providing city services through compact housing development and in-fill development.

A member of the public (Catharine Carey) asked that the focus group add the following additional objectives. It was discussed that most of these objectives were addressed by other focus groups such as the Livability group. It was agreed to record these objectives in the minutes and have the steering committee determine if these were already covered by other focus groups.

- To preserve and enhance unique neighborhood qualities and character through neighborhood involvement and planning.
- Density should be lower in urban-wilderness interface areas.
- Neighborhood plans should be a part of the new growth plan because they address specific concerns of the neighborhoods.
- Development mitigation costs should reflect true total costs to neighborhoods.
- Prioritize maintenance of existing infrastructure over new construction.
- Density guidelines should consider view sheds.

It was discussed that existing neighborhood plans would be addressed in the “Implementation” section of the Growth Policy and that the steering committee should have a discussion on how to address these.

ACTION ITEMS

The group reviewed the list of action items compiled from the listening sessions and made the following changes.

New Action Items

- Revisit planned neighborhood clusters in multi-family areas
- Review zoning for housing in downtown
- Conduct marketing study for downtown housing
- Support “Quality of Life” initiative by University of Montana
- Reduce fees for permanent affordable housing

Deleted

- Inclusionary zoning
- Research affordability factors and how to address them (i.e. different tax rates for affordable rental property.)
- Real estate transfer tax (RETT)

Edits

- Allow trailers for affordable housing types
- Link higher density to permanent affordable housing through incentives
- Outreach /Education – Document affordable housing options and aging in place best practices
- Collaborate with UM Residential life as need for more student housing arises
- Explore Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts tools in urban renewal districts. (Check legality of revolving loans)

WRAP-UP

It was announced that a Growth Policy Open House has been scheduled for April 30th from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Double Tree. Focus Groups members are encouraged to attend and the city will be looking for volunteers to staff the tables at the open house to answer questions. Other opportunities for continued involvement in the Growth Policy include Planning Board workshops & public hearings and City Council hearings. Staff will continue to send out e-mail notices to focus group members to announce dates of future meetings and asked that focus group members help spread the work about these meetings to neighbors and colleagues.

Collin mentioned that he had two questions for the group about the future land use map in regards to the land classification scheme and addressing land use in the urban fringe area. It was agreed that Collin would draft an e-mail with the questions and Casey would send them out the members of the focus group for their input.

The next Steering Committee is scheduled for April 16. The Committee will be compiling all of the goals & objectives from the focus groups and there may be additional editing from the committee. The Committee will also be working on creating a more detailed land use map.