

## **DRAFT MATERIAL Economic Health Topics, Goals, Objectives and Actions**

The following draft goals, objectives and actions have been compiled from the November through March focus group meetings along with feedback from listening session worksheets. Please note that similar statements/concepts have been combined and some statements have been sorted into either broad goal statements or more specific objective statements. Also, some statements may have been edited to clarify the meaning, provide consistency in style and format or to conform with legal concepts. Further refinement, consolidation, and even shifting of statements to other focus groups are anticipated.

### **Topic 1: Infrastructure**

Infrastructure is the backbone of economic development. In order to build and maintain a viable base economy that brings dollars into the community while paying good wages, a community needs reliable and affordable utilities, roads, and carrier services. But more and more, businesses need fast, reliable, and redundant broadband service. Missoula has just completed a phase one broadband study and is now looking at a follow up effort to implement the recommendations of that plan. Deployment of reliable broadband is seen as key to further economic development success in Missoula.

**Goal 1:** Strategically build and maintain critical infrastructure that will support economic development.

**Goal 2:** Make Missoula a state leader in next generation broadband deployment.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Promote reliable and affordable next generation broadband service city wide.
2. Continue to support, plan for, and fund---through CIP, facility master planning, and other means---the types of infrastructure most critical to economic development, including:
  - Water (treatment and distribution)
  - Wastewater (collection and treatment)
  - Power (including renewable energy sources)
  - Natural gas
  - Fiber
3. Recognize that successful economic development requires high quality infrastructure that is planned in harmony with other city support services.
4. Support compact development and mixed use developments to reduce costly expansion of infrastructure.

#### **Actions:**

1. Promote and incentivize green building infrastructure.
2. Assure sufficient water and wastewater capacity with state-of-the-art treatment to serve the existing community and to expand as necessary.
3. Implement Missoula's wayfinding system.
4. Continue to explore public/private partnership options for next generation broadband deployment.
5. Amend land development codes to require fiber development (or conduit placement at the very least) in new developments.

6. Update the CIP to identify infrastructure improvements, including next generation broadband, that can be used as an incentive to attract new businesses.
7. Create fiber ready business/office parks and promote them to high tech industry.

### **Topic 2: Labor Pool**

As expressed in the listening sessions and early focus group meetings, the main issue associated with the local labor pool is the ability of training programs to keep pace with rapidly changing technologies. There is concern that Montana's four-year and even two-year institutions are not sufficiently mobile and flexible to add new programs or change existing ones to meet industry demands. Also, alternative training such as internships, apprenticeships, and mentoring appear to be lacking in the community.

**Goal 1:** Build and maintain a reliable and skilled work force to both serve existing business and industries and to attract new ones.

**Goal 2:** Work toward a vibrant, diversified, basic sector economy with above median wage job opportunities for the Missoula community.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Explore and promote alternatives to traditional higher education in technology fields.
2. Seek more agility and better alignment between business/industry labor needs and training curricula in all educational institutions.
3. Engage youth/millennials in community development.
4. Coordinate with public schools to create a work force with skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs.
5. Encourage educational institutions to partner with businesses, industries, and trade unions and associations to establish programs in internships, vocational mentoring, and apprenticeships.
6. Assure an adequate supply of affordable housing in order to maintain a quality labor pool.
7. Protect and enhance Missoula's "quality of life" components (arts & culture, diversity, educational opportunities, clean air and water, outdoor recreation, etc.) that attract and keep a skilled and productive work force in the community.
8. Encourage the creation of jobs that will compensate above the community median wage.

#### **Actions:**

1. Promote and support associate degree programs in appropriate vocations as needed.
2. Develop relationships between businesses and educational institutions.
3. Develop networking opportunities for businesses to share knowledge and promote collaboration.
4. Work with job service, career services and economic development agencies to better advertise job opening.

### **Topic 3: Business Development**

Growth policy participants have identified a number of obstacles to starting and expanding businesses in Missoula. These can include a lack of suitable infrastructure and work force training as already discussed, but also include regulations, financing, and access to markets.

**Goal 1:** Support and provide resources for business retention, expansion, and relocations to the Missoula area.

**Goal 2:** Support strategic economic development efforts that broaden, expand, and/or diversify the base economy.

**Objectives:**

1. Support partnerships with government and business organizations to create a positive environment for starting, operating, and growing a business in Missoula.
2. Encourage our existing economic development funding programs and financial institutions to ensure that their policies and administrative practices are meeting the needs of emerging businesses and new business models.
3. Promote resources for start-ups that include incentives such as incubator space, shared facilities, technical assistance, and state-of-the-art broadband access.
4. Balance business recruiting efforts with the careful nurturing and support of existing businesses.
5. Formulate economic development policies and strategies that can be measured with statistics and benchmarks.
6. Ensure that home-based business remains a viable option in the Missoula area.
7. Encourage R&D investment for renewable energies.
8. Expand the visitation component of the local economy by focusing on heritage, cultural, business, and resource based recreational tourism.
9. Develop programs to provide incentives for desirable and strategic types of growth.

**Actions:**

1. Continue to have city agencies conduct outreach and workshops with the development community.
2. Assess Missoula's potential to become a regional center for bioscience industries.
3. Coordinate economic development efforts among the various agencies and determine roles and priorities to optimize resources and effectiveness.
4. Inventory community assets and promote them to attract businesses and top notch employees.
5. Conduct economic analyses and develop policies, programs, and strategies that can be measured with statistics and benchmarks.
6. Conduct a "branding" process to promote Missoula as a place to do business.
7. Target specific business clusters based on Missoula's community strengths and market to those industries.
8. Direct business development strategies toward university students in order to grow more local businesses.
9. Streamline business permitting processes to further encourage start-ups.
10. Explore redevelopment and building rehabilitation programs to provide affordable and accessible space for start-ups.
11. Develop a comprehensive economic development strategic plan.
12. Require periodic review of local business regulations, permitting, and fee structures for relevance, efficiency, fairness, and necessity.
13. Develop a data base of sites that can be marketed to attract new businesses.
14. Conduct a marketing campaign to promote Missoula's assets and amenities to attract tourism.

**Topic 4: Transportation/Transit/Multi-Modal**

While successful economic development depends on a good local transportation system, excessive automobile trips during the AM and PM peak hours can lead to air quality and level of service problems (congestion). A good street network must be balanced by a reliable, efficient transit system and multi-modal transportation opportunities (walking, cycling) that ease traffic congestion and contribute to Missoula's high quality of life. In turn, the quality of life afforded by the Missoula community attracts a skilled work force and top talent, which contribute to the local economy.

**Goal 1:** Provide a full range of viable transportation alternatives and modes to meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

**Objectives:**

1. Formulate land use policy that supports compact development and transit and multi-modal accessibility.
2. Support land use policy based upon transit and multi-modal transportation alternatives, and focus inward concepts.
3. Plan for a modern, efficient thoroughfare system to move people and goods safely about the community.
4. Continue working with Montana's rail freight carriers to improve upon Missoula's advantage in rail access and service.
5. Continue to build and maintain the core transportation facilities that contribute to Missoula's overall quality of life and economic advantages, including streets/roads, Interstate highway, and non-motorized trail and pathway system.

**Actions:**

1. Encourage the state to establish a matching funds and promotional program in support of improved air carrier service.
2. Continue to promote and implement a complete streets standard and plan.
3. Coordinate with Missoula County to expand transit routes to more areas of the community.
4. Support expanded hours of public transit.
5. Seek government and private sector partners to bring more air carriers into Missoula.
6. Design an educational program to make citizens more accepting of bike trails and alternative transportation.
7. Study the feasibility of light rail or trolley system.
8. Develop a city-wide greenbelt to enhance open space and to facilitate alternative transportation such as walking and cycling.
9. Increase para-transit options in the community.
10. Identify corridors to expand bike infrastructure through combining transit and cycling modes.
11. Identify and promote new transportation technologies.
12. Protect the RR right-of-way between Missoula and the Bitterroot.
13. Promote the development of more frequent airline flights to more regional hubs for better business access.
14. Support mixed use activities along major trail corridors.

**Topic 5: Local Business**

Local businesses are valued in any community, but especially so in Missoula. Businesses that are started and operated by local people better understand the culture and values of their customer base (the community) than national and regional franchises. Also, more of the gross revenue taken in by local businesses remains in the community. In looking at the obstacles to business development in Missoula, many participants feel that local businesses are often less able to overcome those obstacles than larger national or regional firms. Therefore, programs and incentives are often seen as a way to level the playing field for local business.

**Goal 1:** Support and provide the necessary resources that facilitate local business start-ups and business retention in Missoula.

**Goal 2:** Recognize the unique challenges faced by local businesses and entrepreneurs in competing with national and regional chains and franchises.

**Objectives:**

1. Encourage local preference purchasing on the part of anchor institutions.
2. Partner with local and regional lending institutions to provide more technical and business plan assistance and better access to capital for local businesses.
3. Explore an incentives program for local “green businesses” that use reused products and renewable energy.
4. Promote energy efficiency as a local business advantage and a job creator.
5. Encourage the state, city, and county to streamline and provide consistent, predictable business regulations.

**Actions:**

1. Identify and protect appropriate locations for agricultural uses and value added production.
2. Identify appropriate locations for industrial uses and actively recruit manufacturing businesses.
3. Explore a hierarchy of home-based businesses to be incorporated into the local land development regulations.
4. Nurture businesses and entrepreneurs with strategies such as offering incubator space and other shared facilities and resources.
5. Promote arts and culture as a local business and a visitation attraction.
6. Direct business development strategies toward university students in order to grow more local businesses.

**Topic 6: Downtown**

Compared to other large communities in Montana, Missoula’s downtown is vibrant and successful, having attracted substantial public and private investment over at least the past two decades. But as communities grow and change, so do their downtowns. The challenge, therefore, is to keep downtown Missoula a vital center for government, entertainment and culture; to ensure a mix of housing, retail, and services, and to keep it a destination and economic driver that contributes to Missoula’s uniqueness and quality of life.

**Goal 1:** Continue to create and enhance downtown’s business diversity, and economic vitality, and make the urban core a competitive hub for the region.

**Goal 2:** Continue to promote downtown Missoula as the community’s center for government, commerce, entertainment, and arts and culture.

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain vibrancy and diversity, at an appropriate scale, through a combination of housing, small and large businesses, parks and trails, retail, dining and drinking establishments, and events.
2. Maintain downtown as a safe destination for residents and visitors.
3. Ensure that downtown conveys a sense of place and uniqueness.
4. Continue to implement the downtown master plan and to support its objective of a dynamic mixed environment of business, housing, and retail.

**Actions:**

1. Address downtown parking needs to provide convenient parking.
2. Develop downtown housing that can support downtown businesses.

3. Support strategic redevelopment of blighted, underdeveloped, and obsolete areas and building downtown.
4. Support “place-making” projects and improvements designed to solidify downtown’s activity niche in the community.
5. Identify properties for mixed use and mixed income development.

**Topic 7: University of Montana**

The University of Montana is THE largest economic driver in Missoula, employing over 3,000 permanent faculty and staff. However, the University is also a major trainer of the local work force, offering degree programs in many technical and professional fields. It is also a center for the arts, culture, and varsity athletic events, all of which contribute substantially to visitation. Many participants feel that the University could provide even greater community benefit in areas of transportation, housing, marketing and branding, research, and by providing more technology training that fits with the type of industry that the community wishes to attract.

**Goal 1:** Strive for educational excellence that produces globally competitive graduates.

**Goal 2:** Recognize the mutually beneficial relationship between the University and the community, and that the UM faculty, staff, and students are a vital part of the community.

**Objectives:**

1. Ensure educational efforts at UM meet demands in local and regional markets for technology and work force.
2. Ensure funding for research that will play a role in shaping the innovative industries of tomorrow.
3. Provide opportunities for the community through integrative learning experiences as well as graduating a professional and competitive work force.
4. Explore programs and other opportunities to reduce student debt.

**Actions:**

1. Partner with the University to develop workshops and curricula to encourage UM students to keep their talents in the community and start businesses in Missoula.
2. Lobby the Legislature for increased university funding and programs to reduce student debt.
3. Schedule and Integrate university events with community events.
4. Engage students with programs such as discounts and “small business Saturday” promotions.
5. Work with U of M to commercialize research ideas and to promote start-up businesses for graduating students.