



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Agenda item:	Missoula Downtown Master Plan amendment to the Our Missoula Growth Policy
Report Date:	9/24/2019
Project Lead:	Laval Means, Planning Manager
Public Meetings & Hearings	
Planning Board (PB) hearing:	10/1/2019
Planning Board public hearing legal ad:	Published in the Missoulian on September 15 and 22, 2019
Applicant:	Development Services initiated request on behalf of the Downtown Missoula Partnership (DMP)
Notification:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extensive public outreach process including site visits, hands-on design sessions, listening sessions, stakeholder interviews, technical meetings, surveys, tours, online engagement and two public presentations at the Wilma in January and May, 2019• https://missoulasdowntownmasterplan.com/• Two legal ads in the Missoulian

RECOMMENDED MOTION

That City Council approve a resolution to replace the existing 2009 Greater Missoula Downtown Master Plan and adopt the 2019 Missoula Downtown Master Plan as an amendment to the 2035 City Growth Policy.

I. PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Amend the 2035 Missoula City Growth Policy and replace the existing 2009 Greater Missoula Downtown Master Plan and adopt the 2019 Missoula Downtown Master Plan (Link A).

The 2019 Downtown Master Plan is a Neighborhood Plan document that establishes priorities for public-sector action while providing direction for complementary private sector decisions and serves as a tool to evaluate new development proposals, direct capital improvements, and guide public policy over the next 10 years. The 2019 plan is proposed to replace the [2009 Greater Missoula Downtown Master Plan](#) (Link E) which serves as the Downtown Neighborhood Plan in the [2035 City Growth Policy](#) (Link D). According to state law, a Growth Policy may include one or more neighborhood plans, and the plan must be consistent with the Growth Policy (MCA 76-1-601 (4)(a)). As such, the MC Planning Board is required to review proposed amendments and provide a recommendation to City Council.

II. BACKGROUND

One of the primary actions for implementing the goals and objectives of the City Growth Policy is through development of neighborhood plans. Neighborhood plans should, first and foremost, further the goals of the City Growth Policy but focus on specific issues and ideas to preserve and improve neighborhoods. Neighborhood plans allow for refinement of the goals, objectives and actions in the Growth Policy. They are an opportunity to strategically plan for ways to address neighborhood needs and priorities and help to inform other City processes.

II. BACKGROUND

By definition, neighborhood plans focus on a smaller geographic area; a subset of the overall City Growth Policy study area. Neighborhood plans are adopted as attachments (amendments) to the City Growth Policy and must be consistent with the City Growth Policy, but address matters at a finer geographic scale. Existing neighborhood plans provide additional detail and guide neighborhoods in specific action while remaining generally consistent with the overarching City Growth Policy.

Generally, long range planning information is most relevant and useful within the first five to ten years of plan adoption. Neighborhood plans should be regularly reviewed and maintained to be kept current with overall community goals and directions, meet anticipated community needs and reflect the wishes of current participants.

In 2009, the first Missoula Downtown Master Plan set an ambitious path for economic development and prosperity. The 2009 plan was used to inform the 2035 City Growth Policy update and incorporated existing neighborhood plans, and relevant policy documents into a consistent community-wide land use framework.

The 2019 Downtown Missoula Master Plan update was undertaken in response to the accomplishment of many 2009 goals and objectives, the changing conditions of the project area, the inclusion of 2009 recommendations into the City Growth Policy, and age of the existing 2009 plan. This update will build on the success of the past 2009 plan and serves to guide decisions over the next 10 years, impacting the City's historic downtown and adjoining neighborhoods, and furthering the overarching goals of the City Growth Policy.

The 2019 update is consistent with and reflects the Goals and Objectives of the 2035 City Growth Policy in a number of ways. Specifically, Goals six and eleven of the Livability Chapter state that, "Missoula's growth will be ever-mindful of the unique characteristics and sense-of-place that define and establish our community," and that, "Missoula will have a vibrant and sustainable downtown with a diverse mix of cultural activities, housing and businesses." The Economic Health Chapter, Goal ten, states to, "continue to promote downtown Missoula as the community's center for government, commerce, entertainment, arts and culture." The Housing Chapter takes it further, stating in Goal nine and ten that, "there will be higher-density residential and mixed-use projects in the downtown area in order to diversity housing options, increase the residential base that will support downtown businesses, and allow residents to enjoy downtown amenities," all while, "maintain[ing] the unique areas of downtown," and, as stated in Goal one of the Community Design Chapter, "protect[ing] and enhance[ing] Missoula's strong sense-of-place by connecting, supporting and protecting the community's existing distinctive qualities including natural resources, the vibrant diverse community, distinct neighborhoods, and downtown."

Missoula's Downtown Master Plan update is a project of the Downtown Missoula Partnership (DMP), a collaboration between the Downtown Business Improvement District of Missoula, the Missoula Downtown Association, and the Missoula Downtown Foundation, in cooperation with the City of Missoula. The DMP raised funds for this plan and completed a nationwide search through a request for proposals before hiring a multidisciplinary team of planners led by Dover, Kohl & Partners (DK&P).

III. AGENCY AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Agency and public comments were considered and incorporated as appropriate into the 2019 Downtown Missoula Downtown Master Plan through an extensive public engagement and outreach process. More than 3,000 individuals participated in the planning process, and over 800 written comments were submitted by Missoulians. Most comments were appreciative of the planning effort and many included detailed suggestions per chapter. See the [2019 Missoula Downtown Master Plan, Appendix 5: Missoula Inclusiveness](#) (Link C) for a full report on public outreach and engagement.

IV. REVIEW CRITERIA

The 2035 City Growth Policy outlines review criteria for updates to current neighborhood plans and considers:

The plan must be modified to fit the Neighborhood Plan Template.

The plan fits the Neighborhood Plan Template. As a “Choice Worthy City” it describes and encourages the elements needed to be a great neighborhood. The vision for the area is outlined through five major themes with associated assets, issues and opportunities described for each theme. A chapter is dedicated to implementation.

The plan will not address changes to land use, however, the plan may continue to provide greater detail that guides and remains consistent with the Future Land Use Map that is a part of the City Growth Policy.

All illustrative planning is consistent with the City land use map as part of the City Growth Policy.

The plan must address the Residential Allocation associated with the area.

“Residential Allocation” has been replaced by the concept of Suitability in the Our Missoula Development Guide (OMDG). The OMDG document identifies the downtown area as having a high Suitability for residential development. The plan recognizes this as it relates to high residential suitability and addresses inclusiveness, regional affordability and housing in Chapter 6. Downtown for Everyone, specifically in 6.5, Retaining and Building Affordable Housing, and 6.7, Missing Middle Housing. One of the five major themes of the document is, “Create a Downtown for Everyone,” which is referenced throughout the document, specifically the development of the Railyard and Sawmill districts, and calling attention to adaptive reuse and naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH).

The plan shall address sustainability measures.

The plan addresses sustainability measures in Chapter 5. Enhance Parks & Public Spaces, & Better Utilize the River, specifically in 5.14, Green Infrastructure and 5.16, Becoming a Great City. One of the five major themes of the document is, “Stay Original, Stay Authentic, Be Green and Create Opportunity.” Chapter 4. Improve Mobility, Health and Safety, describes the need for greening existing places, specifically calling attention to multi-mobility transportation.

Prioritization on addressing updates to neighborhood plans is based on the following:

Existence of any potential plan variations.

The establishment of 2019 master plan update was undertaken in response to the changing conditions of the project area and accomplishment of many 2009 goals and objectives. Recent development has led to variations from the 2009 plan, and could potentially limit or alter some of the 2009 recommendations. The 2019 plan utilizes many of the remaining recommendations that the 2009 plan calls for, and reconfigures those actions to meet the contemporary need and infrastructure of the downtown. These recommendations include the revitalization of East and West Broadway, the development of the Riverfront Triangle and Railyard housing, realignment of Front and Main streets, neighborhood character protections, parking solutions, transportation alterations with an emphasis on multi-modal planning, and parks and trails improvements.

Extent of development activity occurring or anticipated.

General goals accomplished from the 2009 plan include major development east of Higgins, including ROAM student housing with mixed use retail and a new parking structure with mixed use retail on Main St., the Lee Gordon low-income housing and new library project on Front St., and adapted new uses of structures located along east Spruce for housing and commercial. Other major actions that have been realized include the new development of the Mercantile Marriott hotel on Higgins Ave and Front St., the development of the Sawmill

IV. REVIEW CRITERIA

District along Wyoming St., and commercial revitalization and building updates along the Hip Strip.

The City anticipates rebuilding the Higgins Ave Bridge to enhance pedestrian travel, continuing development in the Sawmill District, and continuing development east of Higgins Ave including the new AC Marriott Hotel and the Wren Hotel on the corner of Main St. and Pattee St.

For future development, the 2019 master plan will continue the foundations of the first plan, balancing the fundamental concepts of planning for the public realm and the private realm by considering gateways, streetscapes, connectivity, safety, transitions, design, use, economic development and general place making. Additionally, they account for concepts of transition, flexibility, and partnership as a way to be responsive to changing economics and the reality of the existing context. Overall, the plan is divided into five main themes which guide the document throughout:

- Downtown needs to be more than one postcard street
- Improve mobility, health and safety
- Stay original, stay authentic, be green and create opportunity
- Enhance parks and public spaces, better utilize the river
- Downtown for everyone

The plan focuses heavily on revitalizing what makes Missoula unique with details such as underpass murals and trail connections, and provides a deeper dive into the major issues the public expressed concern about including housing, transportation, parking and parks.

Interest from the neighborhood.

Community outreach for the project suggested a strong interest from the neighborhood and Missoulians in general, with nearly 4,000 individuals and comments submitted from the public and well attended outreach and surveying events. Over the past year there has been 60 public stakeholder meetings and/or conference calls, letters, surveys, meetings, a 10-week public comment period to absorb feedback from the community, and several public presentations which drew between 200 and 400 citizens concerned about reinvigorating downtown.

Age of the plan

The 2035 City Growth Policy recommends updating neighborhood plans every ten years. The current Greater Missoula Downtown Master Plan was established in 2009 and meets that recommended threshold.

V. LINKS:

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|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. | 2019 Downtown Missoula Master Plan Draft – to be adopted |
| B. | 2019 Downtown Missoula Master Plan Extended Report |
| C. | Additional Resources and Appendices |
| D. | 2035 City Growth Policy |
| E. | 2009 Greater Missoula Downtown Master Plan |