

**Case Planner:** Aaron Wilson, Infrastructure & Mobility Planning Manager, Public Works & Mobility Department, City of Missoula

**Presentation Date:** MC Planning Board                      September 7, 2021

**Public Hearing Date:** City Council                                      TBD

**Reviewed/ Approved:** Aaron Wilson, Infrastructure & Mobility Planning Manager, Public Works & Mobility Department, City of Missoula

**Agenda Item VI. B:** Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan Conformity

**Applicant:** Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) initiated request.

**Public Hearing Legal Ad:** TBD

**Other**

- Notification:**
- Extensive Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Outreach process including various publicly advertised community and partner meetings in 2020 and 2021
  - Missoula Connect website and social media, Missoulian legal ads, numerous media reports and newsletters

**Proposal VI.B:**

**Recommendation:**

- Consider the 2021 Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan as an Issue Plan for conformance with the Missoula City Growth Policy.
- Consider the 2021 Missoula Long Range Plan for
- Recommend that the 2021 Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan as an Issue Plan is in conformance with the Missoula City and County Growth Policies.
- Recommend that the 2021 Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan as an Issue Plan is in conformance with the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy.

## **MISSOULA CONSOLIDATED PLANNING BOARD**

September 7, 2021

### **Agenda Item:**

- Consideration of the 2021 Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan as an Issue Plan for conformance with the 2035 Missoula City Growth Policy.
- Consideration of the 2021 Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan for conformance with the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy.

### **I. PROPOSAL**

The Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a comprehensive policy document aimed at guiding transportation investment within the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). The 2021 LRTP relates to comprehensive planning for Missoula through its consideration as an Issue Plan as described in the 2035 Missoula City Growth Policy. As such, the Planning Board is required to review the document for its conformance with the Missoula City Growth Policy. It is also requested that the Planning Board recommend conformance to the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy although this is not a required action by the Planning Board.

### **II. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- That the 2021 Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan, as an Issue Plan, is in conformance with the 2035 Missoula City Growth Policy.
- That the 2021 Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan is in conformance with the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy.

### **III. BACKGROUND**

Federal law requires metropolitan areas to have a fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan that is updated every five years or sooner. In order for future transportation projects within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) to be eligible for state or federal funding, they must be a part of the adopted Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). In Missoula, the Long-Range Transportation Plan is updated every four years to reflect the changing dynamics of the area. The last update was completed in 2016 and looked at a 2045 horizon-year. The MPO has recently adopted the 2021 LRTP with a horizon-year of 2050.

A Long-Range Transportation Plan sets forth a direction and strategies to help shape a region's transportation network. It considers all modes, including driving, walking, bicycling and transit to help set priorities for the future. It evaluates current and future transportation needs for all of these modes. Transportation funding and project prioritization are considered in the plan's implementation element. Public input into the planning process through surveys, workshops, online media and advisory committees were essential to plan development.

One of the primary tasks of the LRTP is to determine where housing and employment growth may occur within the MPA. The growth rates used in the LRTP were based on both the 2035 Missoula City Growth Policy assumptions within the Urban Fringe Development Area (UFDA) and land use assumptions contained within the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy. Updated housing and employment estimates from the Missoula Greater Downtown Master Plan (DTMP) were used to develop growth within the DTMP planning boundary.

The MPO contracted with the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) at the University of Montana (UM) to conduct a statistically valid Missoula Area Transportation Survey within the MPA during the fall of 2019 (9/9/19-11/15/19). This report was used to gain a broad perspective on the current state of the overall transportation system, modal characteristics, funding

priorities and alternative funding sources. The survey provided a preliminary baseline from which subsequent issue identification and prioritization would stem.

Throughout 2020 and early 2021 the MPO and its consultants, Nelson\Nygaard, held public meetings, convened technical and community advisory committees and developed a dedicated website to provide information and collect additional public comment through online forms and interactive maps. All workshops were publically noticed and regular updates were provided through both the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) and the Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee (TPCC). The resulting public input, coupled with various surveys, helped further shape the project ranking, program development, and funding prioritization. The full list of public engagement and public comment can be found in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix K](#) of the 2021 LRTP.

Following project identification and funding level assessment, three transportation scenarios were developed based community goals and values. The three scenarios developed included Enhanced Connections, New Connections, and Regional Equity. Based on feedback from committees and the community, the Recommended Scenario included all projects that were in both the Enhanced Connections and Regional Equity Scenarios. Additional projects were included from the New Connections scenario with special importance or with catalytic potential for a specific neighborhood or area. Projects in the Recommended Scenario fit within the fiscally constrained budget based on the anticipated revenue of the plan's timeframe.

The 2021 LRTP was recommended for adoption by TTAC on June 3, 2021, and TPCC adopted the Plan on June 15, 2021. The final fiscal constraint and air quality conformity requirements were approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) on July 26, 2021.

#### **IV. AGENCY AND PUBLIC COMMENT**

Agency and public comments were considered and incorporated as appropriate into the LRTP throughout the public workshop meeting process. The public process and comments are included in Appendix A of the document.

#### **V. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

None at this time

#### **VI. REVIEW CRITERIA**

The 2021 Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan is an "Issue Plan" as defined in the 2035 Missoula City Growth Policy. As such it should conform to the Growth Policy:

"Issue plans provide detailed analyses and policy guidance on specific infrastructure, facilities, development, or conservation issues identified in the Growth Policy. Examples include the *City Master Parks and Recreation Plan for the Greater Missoula Area* and *North Reserve-Scott Street Master Plan*. Issue plans should conform to the Growth Policy but Issue Plans are not adopted amendments to the Our Missoula Growth Policy."

Goals and objectives from the Growth Policy lay the foundation for a consistent and more-detailed vision developed in the LRTP. The following Growth Policy objectives are supported in the LRTP:

- The transportation network should accommodate new growth and redevelopment by providing options and adequate infrastructure to avoid congestion and minimize traffic hazards while complying with Missoula's Complete Street Resolution;

- Plan for, and consider, the effects of parking, transportation, accessibility, and transit on the city's character and built environment;
- Ensure basic needs of the community including affordable permanent housing, stable income, excellent education, effective and efficient transportation, environmentally-sound waste system, secure water system with adequate capacity, and a sense of safety;
- Develop a system of connected active transportation and transit routes in the community including connectivity between neighborhoods and community spaces such as schools, shopping centers, and parks;
- Promote safety of all transportation systems including vehicular, active transportation, and transit options through education and infrastructure improvements;
- Formulate land use policy that supports compact development and transit and multi-modal accessibility;
- Support land use policy based upon transit and multi-modal transportation alternatives, and Focus Inward concepts;
- Plan for a modern, efficient transportation system to move people and goods safely about the community;
- 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;
- Increase transportation options for people who are unable to drive;
- Support pedestrian-scale design that encourages non-motorized transportation and social interaction, especially in areas of the city that are now predominantly vehicular-oriented (e.g., Brooks Corridor);
- Consider ways to address how development looks and interacts with the street system, higher density housing on transit corridors, and urban design to de-emphasize parking and emphasize pedestrian scale development;
- Develop transit oriented development (TOD) policies and zoning that promote efficient transportation systems and high density land use patterns along transit corridors and major transportation corridors
- Encourage developers to provide incentives that reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicle (SOV) transportation;
- Ensure the entire community remains bikeable and walkable;
- Provide well designed, convenient, and well maintained access to trails, parks, open space, and recreation areas through a connected transportation system;
- The City should maintain existing infrastructure, and prioritize maintenance and upgrades over new construction;
- Develop high quality road design and construction standards that also consider various alternative roadway construction materials;
- Develop a robust, thoughtful transportation system that reduces driving through the use of well designed, planned and integrated streets, pedestrian facilities and public transportation options;
- Develop policies and support infrastructure that promote the use of active transportation

(walking, biking or public transportation, etc.) and discourage the use of single occupancy vehicles (SOV 's);

- Determine the current benchmark of total vehicle miles traveled and establish a goal to reduce VMT
- Emphasize transportation network safety and livability over capacity;
- Consider individual transportation needs and options and ensure local and national (broader) travel options are available;
- Maintain and increase bike-ability between and among neighborhoods and commercial centers;
- Improve the ease of using trails and provide direct routes to all parts of Missoula through the trail system;
- Develop design standards and pedestrian friendly infrastructure that promotes the safety of people that bike and walk and decreases conflicts with motor vehicles;
- Reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and continue support for the expansion of public transportation and cycling/walking systems;
- Expand and improve the public transit system, including bus stop infrastructure that make the system more efficient;
- Ensure new development has a variety of land uses, services, and active transportation options;
- Encourage consideration of health impacts and air quality when reviewing and formulating policy for transportation, development regulations, and industrial development;
- Improve infrastructure such as parking, toilets, information kiosks, and roads at access points to parks and open spaces; and
- Ensure that the bike/pedestrian trail system provides access to natural areas;

Conclusion: The 2021 Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan's stated goals, objectives and funding strategies are consistent with, and conform to, the overarching goals, objectives and actions from the 2035 Missoula City Growth Policy and 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy.

## **VII. LINKS**

- A. [2021 Missoula Connect Long Range Plan Update](#)
- B. [2021 LRTP Final Document](#)
  - [Appendices](#)
- C. [2021 Recommended Scenario](#)