



**Work Session Meeting Agenda**  
**2 Park Drive South, Great Falls, MT**  
**Gibson Room, Civic Center**  
**February 04, 2025**  
**5:30 PM**

The agenda packet material is available on the City's website: <https://greatfallsmt.net/meetings>. The Public may view and listen to the meeting on government access channel City-190, cable channel 190; or online at <https://greatfallsmt.net/livestream>.

Public participation is welcome in the following ways:

- Attend in person.
- Provide public comments in writing by 12:00 PM the day of the meeting: Mail to City Clerk, PO Box 5021, Great Falls, MT 59403, or via email to: [commission@greatfallsmt.net](mailto:commission@greatfallsmt.net). Include the agenda item or agenda item number in the subject line, and include the name of the commenter and either an address or whether the commenter is a city resident. Written communication received by that time will be shared with the City Commission and appropriate City staff for consideration during the agenda item, and, will be so noted in the official record of the meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

*(Public comment on agenda items or any matter that is within the jurisdiction of the City Commission. Please keep your remarks to a maximum of five (5) minutes. Speak into the microphone, and state your name and either your address or whether you are a city resident for the record.)*

**WORK SESSION ITEMS**

1. Downtown Market Demand and Economic Vitality Transformation Strategy - Brett Doney. (estimated 15 minutes)
2. Update on GFFR Fees and Proposed Changes to Safety Inspection Certificate Program - Jeremy Jones. (estimated 15 minutes)
3. City Commission Goals for 2025 - City Commissioners. (estimated 30 minutes)

**DISCUSSION POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

*City Commission Work Sessions are televised on cable channel 190 and streamed live at <https://greatfallsmt.net>. Work Session meetings are re-aired on cable channel 190 the following Thursday morning at 10 a.m. and the following Tuesday evening at 5:30 p.m.*

*Wi-Fi is available during the meetings for viewing of the online meeting documents.*

**UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE**

City Commission Work Session -- Tuesday February 18, 2025 5:30 p.m.

City Commission Meeting -- Tuesday February 18, 2025 7:00 p.m.



# Downtown Great Falls

## Market Demand Assessment & Economic Vitality Transformation Strategy

PREPARED FOR



NOVEMBER 2024

PREPARED BY



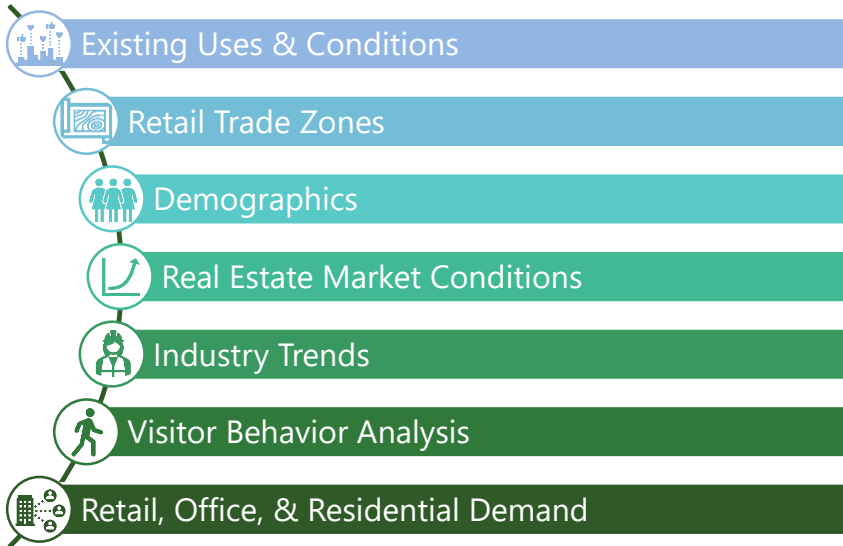
# Economic Vitality Strategy -- MainStreet Pillars

- Economic Vitality (GFDA)
- Design (BID)
- Promotion (DGFA)
- Organization (DDP)

*All four points of the community transformation strategy need to work together to build a thriving downtown*



# Market Analysis



## Economic Vitality: Building on Strengths



Continue operating **business attraction, retention, and expansion** programs



Continue operating and support expanding **Small Business Development Center** programs



Continue to **promote available funding sources** that allow investors to bring historic buildings up to code and add housing in underutilized upper stories



**Increase educational efforts** around funding, training, and other opportunities for business and workforce development



Explore opportunities to **increase funding for existing programs** and find new funding streams

## Economic Vitality: Focus on Key Areas



Identify **catalyst sites** for development



Select **priority areas** for targeted investment



**Pursue projects** on catalyst sites and/or within targeted investment areas to spur investment activity



Work with the City to pursue the **redevelopment of underutilized City-owned sites** for housing



Facilitate the full utilization of existing buildings by working with the City on **shared parking arrangements**

# Economic Vitality: Training & Networking



Partner with schools & institutions to **promote training and incubator or apprenticeship programs**



**Facilitate business partnerships**



Encourage entrepreneurship through **temporary or mobile activations**



**Promote Downtown Great Falls opportunities** to developers active in higher-priced markets



## Housing on Underutilized Sites

- Concord Report shows high demand for new housing in Great Falls
- Infill housing in downtown & surrounding neighborhoods **promotes efficient use of resources**, city services
- Station Lofts demonstrates **demand for high quality rental housing** downtown
- **Parking lot redevelopment** presents biggest opportunity in downtown core

The Station Lofts



*Avg. Asking Rent: \$1,600 / \$2.24 PSF  
Opened October 2024*

## Middle Housing: Neighborhood



722 N 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Coeur d'Alene, ID



618 Westgate Avenue, Bozeman, MT

# Townhomes: Transition & Neighborhood



Delaware Street Townhomes, Denver, CO



3132 N Spiceland Lane, Boise, ID

# Garden Apartments: Transition



Creek View Apartments, Greeley, CO



19th & Graf Apartments, Bozeman, MT

# Podium-Style: Core Area



Old Town Lofts, Meridian, ID

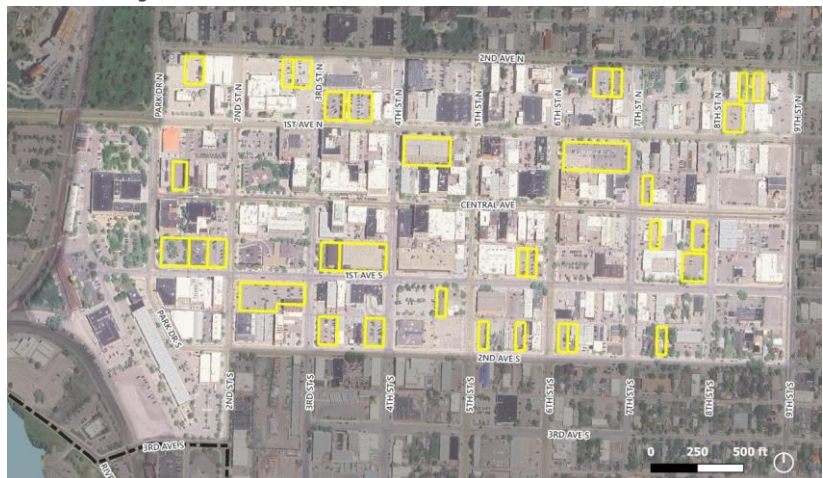


Black Olive, Bozeman, MT

# Parking Lots

- Parking Lots, particularly those that are City-owned, are **prime opportunities for housing and mixed-use development**
- Parking lot redevelopment does not require demolition of existing buildings or the relocation of tenants

Surface Parking Lots in Downtown Great Falls



Source: LCG.



## Parking Lot Development: Precedents

One11 Lofts – Bozeman, MT (122 Units, ground floor amenities, garage parking)



Hearth on Broad – Boise, ID (161 units, ground floor retail, garage parking)



Source: CoStar.

## Targeted Investment Areas

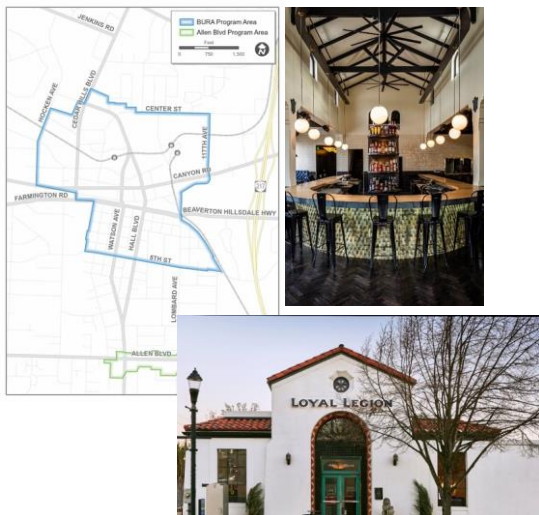
- Way to **prioritize how and where to allocate resources** to make the most impact
- Areas where there is **already significant investment** and activity, where **improvements will be most visible** by the public, as well as areas that are poised to **connect Downtown with the riverfront** or other key amenities
- **Concentrating initial investments** in these target areas will allow them to act as a showcase

The 400 Block of Central Avenue in Downtown Great Falls



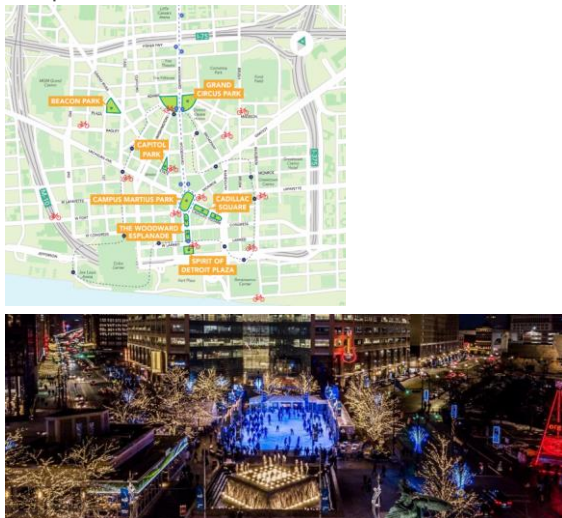
# Targeted Investment Areas: Precedents

Building Improvement Program – Beaverton, OR



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Campus Martius Park – Detroit, MI



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# Riverfront

- The Missouri River is Great Falls' biggest asset
- **Lack of connection** between the riverfront and the core of the downtown shopping district
- GFDA and its partners should utilize programming, placemaking, and financial incentives to **bridge the gap between the river and the shopping and employment district**

Rivers Edge Trail Anniversary Celebration (2016)



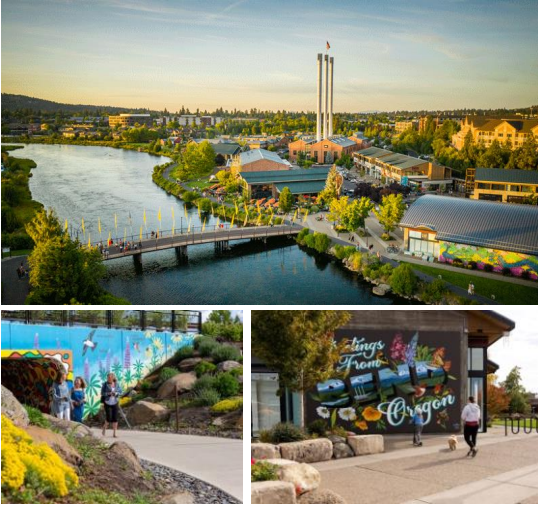
Source: TD&H Engineering.

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# Riverfront: Precedents

Old Mill District – Bend, OR



River District – Fort Collins, CO



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**President & CEO**

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## Draft for 2/4/2025 Work Session

# City of Great Falls Commission Priorities

## 2025

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### Review City Services

We will ..., we must ...

- Examine revenues and expenses for city services requiring general fund subsidies.
- Form an advisory committee to city services.
  - Host a Town Hall meeting.
  - Start by conducting a mini City 101 programs for the advisory committee to educate them on city departments and services.
- Make a decision on funding for all city services requiring general fund subsidies prior to the 2025/26 budget.

WHY? To gather input from the community and establish a city-wide philosophy regarding the level of general fund support for city services. This approach ensures the most effective use of public resources.

### Public Safety

We will ..., we must ...

- Target the funds from the 3.5 mils to public safety needs of legal and court operations.
- Develop a proposal for a Public Safety Levy – \$ amount and date.
  - Build community support to advocate for the levy.
- Explore a capital campaign for an additional fire station and a new training center.

WHY? Public safety is our top priority, and we are committed to making Great Falls a desirable place to live and work.

### Community Development

We will ..., we must ...

- Pass the Growth Policy
  - Each commissioner will attend at least one of the five scheduled listening sessions on the Growth Policy.
- Continue to strengthen the relationships with the City, GFDA and the Chamber.
- Continue to work with Planning and Community Development to streamline processes and eliminate any barriers to development in Great Falls.
- Continue to support diverse housing opportunities.
  - Focused use of CDBG money.
  - Stay flexible with zoning while maintaining safety.

WHY? To support Planning and Community Development in making policy decisions that enable diverse housing development in Great Falls.

### **Communication/Education**

We will ..., we must ...

- Continue to educate the community on what the city can and can't do.
- Explain to the community, in a variety of formats, what it means to be a charter government.
- Share success stories about the city organization on social media.
- Conduct at least two Town Hall meetings led by Mayor and commissioners focused on a community issue.
- Invite different groups/organizations to commission meetings to provide community updates.

WHY? It is important that the Mayor and Commissioners be ambassadors of the city. We recognize the challenge of communicating city challenges to the community and connecting with constituents. The City will find ways of communicating more effectively with residents about the City's accomplishments and limitations.

### **Legislative Presence**

We will ..., we must ...

- Conduct at least weekly dialogue with our lobbyist and legislators.
- Review and emphasize our highest priority legislative issues. Communicate what is in the best interest of Great Falls.
- Stay engaged with the Interim Committees of the State Legislature beyond the legislative session. This includes legislators, state agencies and the Governor's Office.

WHY? Relationships matter with the state legislators, governor and state agencies.