



**Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission
2 Park Drive South, Great Falls, MT
Gibson Room, Civic Center - Via Zoom
August 11, 2020 - 3:00 PM**

UPDATES CONCERNING PROCESS OF MEETINGS

Due to the COVID-19 health concerns, the format of the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission meeting will be held in a virtual video-conferencing environment. In order to honor the Right of Participation and the Right to Know (Article II, Sections 8 and 9 of the Montana Constitution), the City of Great Falls and Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission are making every effort to meet the requirements of open meeting laws:

- Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission members and City staff will attend the meeting via a remote location, using a virtual meeting method.
- 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 comment will be taken during the meeting as indicated on the agenda with an asterisk. Public participation is welcome in the following ways:
 - Attend in person. Refrain from attending in person if you are not feeling well. The City will require social distancing at the meeting, and may limit the number of persons in the Gibson Room according to applicable health guidelines.
 - Provide public comments via email. Comments may be sent via email before 12:00 PM on Tuesday, July 28, to: jnygard@greatfallsmt.net. Include the agenda item or agenda item number in the subject line, and include the name and address of the commenter. Written communication received by that time will be shared with the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission and appropriate City staff for consideration during the agenda item and before final vote on the matter; and, will be so noted in the official record of the meeting.
 - Call-in. The public may call in during specific public comment periods at 406-761-4786. All callers will be in a queued system and are asked to remain on hold and be patient. Calls will be taken in the order in which they are received. Callers will be restricted to customary time limits. This is a pilot service to test the feasibility of expanded public participation by phone. We ask for your patience in the event there are technical difficulties

OPENING MEETING

- 1. Call to Order - 3:00 PM**
- 2. Roll Call - Board Introductions**
 - Peter Fontana - Chair
 - Charles Pankratz - Vice Chair
 - Dave Bertelsen
 - Kelly Buschmeyer
 - Tory Mills
 - Samantha Shinaberger
 - Laura Vukasin
- 3. Recognition of Staff**
- 4. Approval of Meeting Minutes - July 28, 2020**

BOARD ACTIONS REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARING

BOARD ACTIONS NOT REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARING

- 5. Weaver Addition Minor Subdivision**
- 6. West Bank TIF Funding Application.**
- 7. Amendment to the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan.**

COMMUNICATIONS – NEXT MEETING AUGUST 25, 2020

- Little Shell Annexation - Located on Stuckey Rd
- Turbo Trucking Annexation - West of Belview Palisade Subdivision
- Unified Planning Work Program

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment on any matter and that is within the jurisdiction of the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission. Please keep your remarks to a maximum of five (5) minutes. Speak into the microphone, and state your name and address for the record.

ADJOURNMENT

(Please exit the chambers as quickly as possible. Chamber doors will be closed 5 minutes after adjournment of the meeting.)

Assistive listening devices are available for the hard of hearing, please arrive a few minutes early for set up, or contact the City Clerk's Office in advance at 455-8451. Wi-Fi is available during the meetings for viewing of the online meeting documents.

Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission meetings are televised on cable channel 190 and streamed live at <https://greatfallsmt.net>. Meetings are re-aired on cable channel 190 the following Thursday at 7 p.m.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
GREAT FALLS PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD/ZONING COMMISSION
JULY 28, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission was called to order by Chair Peter Fontana at 3:01 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom.

ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE

Due to the COVID-19 health concerns, the format of the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission meeting is being conducted in a virtual video-conferencing environment. In order to honor the Right of Participation and the Right to Know (Article II, Sections 8 and 9 of the Montana Constitution), public participation is welcomed and encouraged as follows:

- Attend in person. Refrain from attending in person if you are not feeling well. The City will require social distancing at the meeting, and may limit the number of persons in the Gibson Room according to applicable health guidelines.
- Provide public comments via email. Comments may be sent via email before 5:00 PM on Tuesday, April 21, 2020, to: jnygard@greatfallsmt.net. Include the agenda item or agenda item number in the subject line, and include the name and address of the commenter. Written communication received by that time will be shared with the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission and appropriate City staff for consideration during the agenda item and before final vote on the matter; and will be so noted in the official record of the meeting.
- Call-in. The public may call in during specific public comment periods at 406-761-4786. All callers will be in a queued system and are asked to remain on hold and be patient. Calls will be taken in the order in which they are received. Callers will be restricted to customary time limits. We ask for your patience in the event there are technical difficulties.

Planning Board Members present electronically via Zoom:

Peter Fontana, Chair
Charles Pankratz, Vice Chair
Dave Bertelsen
Tory Mills
Samantha Shinaberger
Laura Vukasin

Planning Board Members absent:

Kelly Buschmeyer

Planning Staff Members present:

Craig Raymond, Director Planning and Community Development
Thomas Micuda, Deputy Director, Planning and Community Development
Erin Borland, Planner III
Brad Eatherly, Planner II
Shelley Francis, Permit Technician

Jamie Nygard, Sr. Admin Assistant

Other Staff present:

Sara Sexe, City Attorney

Mr. Raymond affirmed a quorum of the Board was present.

MINUTES

Chair Peter Fontana asked if there were any comments or corrections to the minutes of the meeting held on May 12, 2020. Seeing none, Ms. Vukasin moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Shinaberger seconded, and all being in favor, the minutes were approved.

BOARD ACTIONS REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARING

Ordinance 3221: An Ordinance amending Title 17 of the Official Code of the City of Great Falls (OCCGF): Chapter 20 Land Use, Exhibit 20-1 principal uses by district and section 17.20.6.080 regarding the distance requirements for liquor licenses in association to worship facilities governed by Montana Statute.

Erin Borland, Planner III, presented to the board Ordinance 3221 which is an Ordinance amending Title 17 of the OCCGF. It is for Chapter 20 Land Use, Exhibit 20-1 Principal Uses by District and Section 17.20.6.080 regarding the distance requirements for liquor licenses in association with worship facilities governed by Montana Statute. Ms. Borland stated that the City recently received a Conditional Use Permit request for a worship facility in the Central Business Core District. Within the past few years, the City has received requests for worship facilities to be located in commercial zoning districts instead of residential districts. As a result, a zoning text amendment was approved by the City Commission to allow worship facilities to be permitted in the C-2 General Commercial District. There has been some communication from the downtown business community that there may be some issues with the State distance requirements. Currently, a liquor license cannot be obtained if the business is within 600 feet of a place of worship. There are some downtown businesses that are concerned about new businesses wanting to come into the area, wanting liquor licenses and not being able to because of the 600 foot rule.

Ms. Borland presented Montana Code Annotated §16-3-306. She stated that the City is proposing to supplant Mont. Code Ann. §16-3-309(4) and §16-3-309(1) with respect to any type or class of liquor license and eliminate the requirement of a 600 foot distance between a licensed establishment and a church, synagogue, or other place of worship. The elimination of the distance requirement is only applicable if the licensed establishment or worship facility is or will be located within a zoning district where both uses are permitted or conditionally permitted. The statutory requirements remaining are not supplanted. Taverns located in C-1 Districts may not have indoor or outdoor entertainment. Mont. Code Ann. §16-3-309(4) permits an incorporated City to enact an ordinance that would supplant the provision. The provision does allow the City to remove or revise the distance requirement in Mont. Code Ann. §16-3-306(1). Ms. Borland presented a Land Use Chart that showed Microbreweries, Restaurants and Taverns. They are permitted in all of the Commercial Districts. Some are permitted or conditionally permitted in the Mixed Use Districts, the Airport District and the Industrial Districts. The provision is supplanted where the two different uses coexist and are permitted or conditionally permitted, so this would mainly come into effect in the C-4, C-5, M-1, M-2, and the Airport Districts. If recommended and approved through the

Planning Board and City Commission, the provision would supplant Mont. Code Ann. and the two uses would be able to coexist. The code change is not being proposed just because of the CUP that is following on the agenda, but because of the changes that the City has seen regarding where places of worship are being located. Ms. Borland stated that staff recommends that the Planning Advisory Board recommend to the City Commission to adopt Ordinance 3221.

BOARD QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Ms. Vukasin asked the staff if the Ordinance was being done specifically to address the next item on the agenda. Ms. Borland responded that because of the Conditional Use Permit that has been brought forward as well as looking forward into the future, that even if the CUP was denied the Ordinance would still need to go forward so that it stands alone. Ms. Vukasin also asked if this has been brought up before to the Planning Board and Ms. Borland responded that this is the first time.

Mr. Fontana asked if when the research in other cities in Montana was done, if there was any protest done by the worship facilities regarding the elimination of the 600 foot spacing requirement. He stated that his main goal is to protect the downtown business core. Ms. Borland responded that staff is not aware of any. She stated that Kalispell did this same thing in 2008. Mr. Fontana also asked about how Set Free Ministry works downtown. Ms. Borland responded that she was not sure, but thinks that they were already existing.

Mr. Pankratz asked if the board approves Ordinance 3221, then the next agenda item there may be significant impact in the future for any new businesses trying to open with a liquor license. Ms. Borland responded that if Ordinance 3221 is approved by the Planning Board and City Commission, the new code change would supplant the distance requirement and take it away. Even if the church CUP goes through or doesn't go through it still needs to go forward, so the distance requirement is no longer a problem. The 600 foot requirement would go away for all types of liquor licenses in conjunction with the church or synagogue, but it does not supplant the distance requirement for a school. Ms. Borland also stated that if the Ordinance is not adopted, there could be potential issues for future liquor license requests as the 600 foot rule would stay.

PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Garry Hackett, 511 Central Ave., and also the owner of two other properties on Central Ave., has a church group that meets in his building that was told by the City that they have to discontinue by September or October because they did not feel like they could go through this process to have a code change. He was curious about the door to door measurement for liquor licensing because if you measure from the door of the worship facility to the front door of the nearest establishment in a direct line, then it is probably close to 300 feet. However, if you don't jaywalk, and use sidewalks to go across the intersection, then it does not fall into the 600 foot requirement. Ms. Borland responded that the measurement is front door to front door as a crow flies.

Scott Reasoner, Great Falls, asked about gaming and if it is separate from the proposed liquor licensing exemption or will it also be subject to the proposed exemption.. Ms. Borland responded that this Ordinance does not address any of the casino gaming, or accessory gaming distancing. It only addresses liquor licenses. Mr. Fontana asked City Attorney Sexe that if you can't have a gaming license without a liquor license, then he is assuming that it is inferred that if you have a liquor license that you can have a gaming license as well. Ms. Sexe responded that addressing

gaming distance restrictions was not addressed in this proposed Ordinance. The Ordinance is specifically looking at the place of worship distance requirements in 16-3-306. There can be a tavern without a gaming license. If it is requested, the staff can research the gaming issue to determine if there would be any impact.

PROPONENTS

Ms. Borland read three emails that were received prior to the meeting. Kellie Pierce, on behalf of the Downtown Development Partnership (DDP), wrote that the DDP encourages the Planning Board to adopt Ordinance 3221. Assuming that the Planning Board adopts Ordinance 3221, the DDP would be in support of the Conditional Use Permit for 427 Central Ave. The DDP is not in support of the Conditional Use Permit if the Ordinance 3221 does not get approved.

Joan Redeen on behalf of the Business Improvement District (BID), noted that the BID represents over 180 parcels in downtown Great Falls. The BID encourages the Planning Board to adopt Ordinance 3221. If the Planning Board adopts Ordinance 3221, the BID will also be in support of the Conditional Use Permit for 427 Central Ave. The BID is not in support of the Conditional Use Permit without the passing of Ordinance 3221.

Bill Bronson, #18 6th St N. Suite 35, recommended that the board support Ordinance 3221, supplanting the language of state law concerning distance requirements for bars vs. worship facilities. He is glad that state law allows an override of provisions that were silly from the outset. He also wrote for the board to please recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit for Calvary Chapel. Mr. Saenz' church has already shown an interest in our downtown. They would be a welcome resident on that block. No one else has shown interest in the property for some time and a perpetually vacant building detracts from the character of downtown. In conjunction with Ordinance 3221, adoption of the ordinance can assist both the church as well as new entertainment businesses, for an interesting and appropriate mix in the downtown area.

Abram Baca, Potter's House Pastor, 511 Central Ave., was unaware of the code requirements when they first moved into the location, but has since been made aware. He stated that the location in relation to the shelters and the areas north and south of the area serves a large amount of people that need help and the word of God. They have had several people that have come into the Church and are currently still going that have been lifelong addicts that have been saved and their families have been taken away by CPS and are now getting their children back. Several people do not have cars so this location is a good area where they can walk to church. He stated that they are not out there disrupting any bars or walking around with signs. They just need a place where people can come and hear the word of God and be encouraged. He has seen the amount of vacancies all around the Central area as well.

Garry Hackett, 511 Central Ave., stated that Abram has been renting from him for several months and there have been no incidents between his parishioners and local residents. Due to the technology changes that have affected office work throughout the last several decades, utilization of office space has drastically been reduced. This has created a glut of unused space in the downtown area. The spaces have been abandoned and removed from the tax base. Some of the spaces are being converted into residential space but are costly and a somewhat unrealistic option due to physical structural limitations. The spaces can be used for retail, but it is nearly impossible to find businesses that want to be above ground level. Mr. Hackett stated that he has owned his building for nearly three years and has not had anybody that wanted to rent the upper floors and has had the main floor full the whole time. The residential spaces are normally rented

out right away, but commercial space usually takes three months to as much as three years to rent out. He stated that his building is 43,000 square feet and he has been able to rent out 16,000 square feet on the main floor and a small area in the basement. After paying taxes, insurance, utilities and a small mortgage, the rents do not even cover the cost to operate the building. He has to be able to find a way to use the upper floors in order to make it economically feasible. There are other ways, but most cost up to 4 times more than the cost of the building to remodel to meet the current building code. He is also in competition with other buildings that have free parking and this area does not. The cost of taxes per year per acre for example at Walmart is \$297,000.00. The cost of the core downtown area is more than 6.6 times what Walmart pays. They need help as owners in the Downtown Business District. He asks the board to please consider approving the Ordinance.

Scott Reasoner, Great Falls, owns 420 Central, is in support of the Ordinance and is in support of the use for the new church. He also asks that the issue of gaming be addressed now, so that it protects future investment with the 600 foot area. He does not want a limit on what spaces can be used for downtown. There should not be a battle to fight later. It should be included with this one.

David Saenz, Pastor of Calvary Chapel, Great Falls, stated that he is a proponent and that there should not be a 600 foot requirement.

Jolene Schalper, 405 3rd St NW Suite 203, Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA), commended staff on the diligence in finding a solution. This ordinance will allow the City flexibility as neighborhoods change and services are deemed necessary. Communities and neighborhoods do change and evolve and they do serve diverse populations. They do not want that stymied. They want to encourage all of the different types of businesses and residents to come together and have private property rights. All of the businesses downtown that have invested in their buildings and their licenses should get to continue to do so. If we do not allow this flexibility with Ordinance 3221, but we do allow a Special Use Permit, it stymies development and that does not send the right message. On behalf of the Great Falls Development Authority as well as being a property owner downtown, she is in support of this Ordinance.

Tim Peterson, LPW Architects, Enbar, and The Block, is in agreement with Mr. Reasoner, and is in favor of the Ordinance moving forward and thinks Mr. Saenz will be a great neighbor. He thinks that we need to look at the future and be thinking about gaming for future businesses.

OPPONENTS

None present

BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION

MOTION: That the Planning Advisory Board recommend the City Commission approve Ordinance 3221.

Made by: Mr. Bertelsen
 Second: Mr. Mills

Mr. Fontana inquired about the language for adding an exemption for gaming distance requirements into the Ordinance. Mr. Raymond responded that City staff can add casino language to the Ordinance but had not anticipated doing that. If the Planning Board would recommend that going forward then it can be added. Mr. Fontana asked if that was something that they could amend into the motion since additional research would have to be done. Mr. Raymond responded that the staff would need to do some research to make sure that casinos are allowed in the C-4 district. He stated that the research can be done between the current meeting and the City Commission meeting if the Planning Board desired.

Mr. Bertelsen stated that there should be a distinction between gaming and a liquor license as we don't want to assume that they will always go together. There should be a distinction in the code change.

Mr. Fontana stated that there are several businesses in the downtown corridor that do have liquor and gaming licenses.

All of the board members agreed.

Mr. Raymond asked the board what they are asking for. Are they wanting them separated or to go hand in hand? Mr. Fontana responded that he is having a hard time separating them because the Department of Revenue statutes state that you are required to have an all beverage or beer and wine license, not the cabaret license, to be able to have a gaming license. So, he is assuming that if you have a full liquor license, you would be entitled to a gaming license under the statute. Mr. Raymond responded that this may be true under the State statute, but it is not even mentioned in the liquor license statute and gaming is treated separately in the zoning ordinances. Mr. Fontana asked about new builds, because everyone else is grandfathered in, if a new business comes to downtown in this corridor and they want to open up a bar and restaurant, and they have an all beverage license, how does the city prevent them from getting a gaming license if the state allows it. Mr. Raymond responded that there are zoning regulations that allow or prohibit uses in each zoning district and so through the business licensing, Safety Inspection Certificate process, or a Code Enforcement process, the zoning ordinance can be enforced. Mr. Fontana asked if it was possible to have an all beverage license in a zone that would not allow gaming. Mr. Raymond said that it is possible. Mr. Fontana asked if the staff had discussed this issue at all. Mr. Raymond responded that it was discussed but there has not been a specific complaint or conflict that has been brought up regularly.

Mr. Bertelsen asked if there was a distance requirement for casinos as well. Mr. Raymond responded that there are requirements. He also wanted the board to know that full casinos are treated differently than accessory gaming.

Mr. Fontana asked Mr. Raymond to explain that. Mr. Raymond responded that casino gaming can be considered accessory based on square footage and number of machines. Mr. Fontana responded that he is just concerned because one of the proponents owns several bars downtown and wants to know what the future looks like. Mr. Fontana asked Ms. Sexe if they can amend the motion that was already seconded if they want to add in the verbiage to have the staff research adding a gaming distance exemption from places of worship into the Ordinance. Ms. Sexe stated that the board could do that.

AMENDED MOTION: That the Planning Advisory Board recommend the City Commission approve Ordinance 3221 and have the city staff research the possibility of adding gaming.

Made by: Mr. Bertelsen
 Second: Mr. Mills
 VOTE: All in favor, the motion carried

Conditional Use Permit for a “Worship Facility” land use upon the property addressed as 427 Central Avenue and legally described as Lot 8 and 9, Block 315, Great Falls Original Addition, Section 12, Township 20N, Range 3E, PMM, Cascade County, MT.

Brad Eatherly, Planner II, presented to the board that the applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to operate a worship facility in the C-4 (Central Business Core) Zoning District. The space was previously used as Cascade Opticians and has sat vacant for several years. The applicant, Calvary Chapel of Cascade County, already has a presence in the city and would like to have more of a presence in the downtown area. The space would primarily be used on Sundays and Wednesday nights. They are expected to have very little traffic during the peak weekday times. Worship facilities are permitted in most commercial zoning districts, but require a CUP in the C-4 zoning district.

Mr. Eatherly presented the Mont. Code Ann. §16-3-306 which denies issuance of liquor licenses within 600 lineal feet from an entrance of a worship facility. Because the proposed church’s entrance would be at the corner of 5th Street and Central Avenue, this would apply to both the Avenue and the Street. He stated that Mont. Code Ann. §16-3-309 (1) allows a city to supplant State Law and designate jurisdictions where alcoholic beverages may be sold. City staff is proposing Ordinance 3221 which would allow the City of Great Falls to allow liquor licenses to be issued within 600 feet of worship facilities in certain zoning districts. Casinos would still be prohibited from occupying a space within a radius of 600 feet.

Mr. Eatherly did present an Aerial Map and a Zoning Map of the property. He did also provide the floor plans of the building that will be occupied. The worship facility will be on the main floor for services and in the basement for office spaces and children and youth ministries. Lastly he presented a site photo. The Basis of Decision was presented. The conditional use is consistent with the City’s Growth Policy. Mr. Eatherly presented two examples. ENV2.3.1 – “In order to maximize existing infrastructure identify underutilized parcels and areas with infill potential as candidates for redevelopment in the City.” Phy4.1.5 – “Encourage and incentivize the redevelopment or adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized properties so as to maximize the City’s existing infrastructure.” The establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare. The conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood. If the City Commission adopts Ordinance 3221, the conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of the other property in the immediate vicinity, If the City Commission decides to not adopt Ordinance 3221, the conditional use could be injurious as liquor licenses would not be allowed to be issued within 600 lineal feet of the front door of the church along both Central Avenue and 5th Street. Regardless of the City Commission’s decision regarding Ordinance 3321, any new casinos would not be allowed within a 600 foot radius of the church if the conditional use is granted. The conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district. Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities have been or are being provided. Adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress designed to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets. The proposed Worship Facility is located along

two major streets, Central Avenue and 5th Street and will initially have limited service times for the congregation. The conditional use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may, in each instance, be modified by the City Commission. Mr. Eatherly stated that staff recommends approval of the requested Conditional Use Permit for the land use of "Worship Facility" in the C-4 Central Business Core zoning district.

BOARD QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Ms. Vukasin asked about the impact of parking on Sundays and Wednesday evenings and wanted to know where people would park. She also asked how the ingress and egress would be improved. Mr. Eatherly responded that the staff did look at a parking study based upon the gross floor area of 4,837 square feet which would average on a Sunday, 58 trips. There may be some congestion at peak hours, however because the highest number of trips would be on a Sunday, traffic on the adjoining roadways would be very low due to many traffic generators being closed. Therefore, any congestion would be due to multiple vehicles arriving at the proposed use at about the same time for Wednesday service. This would be expected to be brief. The applicant is going to propose to the congregants to utilize City parking garages. Mr. Eatherly also addressed the question about ingress and egress and stated that there will not be any improvements, but what is there currently is sufficient. Ms. Vukasin asked how many people were in the congregation. Mr. Saenz responded that pre-COVID there were around fifty parishioners, and post-COVID there is around twenty-five.

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

The applicant, David Saenz, pastor of Calvary Chapel of Cascade County, addressed the board. He stated that after church he encourages the congregants to hang around downtown and have lunch. He feels that this will boost the economy downtown. He also stated that there is a parking structure right behind the facility and would encourage congregants to park there. He feels like the application is consistent with the adopted Downtown Master Plan and the City Growth Plan. The space has been unoccupied for at least three years and the owner has had a hard time finding a tenant to occupy the space. The church would be looking at a three to five year lease.

PROPONENTS

Jaysen Basu, Great Falls, Elder at Calvary Chapel, stated that the parishioners typically like to enjoy a nice Sunday meal after service and feels like that would be a benefit to the community. Because of all the different ministries that are part of the congregation, this will add people to assist with activities such as city clean up and helping people that are on the streets. Having the church in this area will be a huge resource for the community.

Garry Hackett, 511 Central Avenue, 415 Central, and 609 Central, said he is a half block away from the proposed site and is a proponent. He stated that when he first bought his building, he did a survey of the parking spots within two blocks of his building and found 1800 parking spaces and would assume that it is identical for the applicant.

Mike Hallahan, Great Falls, owner of several businesses downtown, is a proponent and

believes it should be allowed.

Mr. Eatherly reminded the board of the proponents that were presented in the Ordinance 3221 public comment period from the DDP, the BID, and Bill Bronson.

OPPONENTS

Mr. Eatherly read a letter of correspondence that was received prior to the meeting. Myrl and Bonnie Nardinger, 812 13th St. N., wrote that they have concerns about the variance. The first being that at the Council 6 meeting, a Calvary Church representative stated that they have nothing against the LGBTQ Community and just do not like what they do. That in essence becomes a stated bias of people associated with the LGBTQ community. The City of Great Falls, released findings that a NDO [Non-Discrimination Ordinance] to protect this group is not needed due to existing laws for the State of Montana. Although not housing or public accommodations, it has potential as an employer and the City appears to be openly helping to create an obviously discriminatory establishment on the City's main street. Parking on Central is a challenge and having crowding on Wednesday nights and other times during the holidays may be unfair to merchants already located on Central. It limits the development of the downtown area as no new or existing restaurant/café may have a Cabaret license within 600 feet of Calvary Church (approximately 1 ½ blocks in every direction). Numerous empty buildings off of Central Avenue exist that would be possible locations for the church, that would not pose parking or Tavern/Bar/Cabaret licenses issues. A vacant church stands not that far from downtown property. In the past, a business was forced to cease building a full service bar and restaurant because a church opened its doors within the restricted distance. The financial hardship was considerable for that company. Now a variance is possible because it is downtown or just more beneficial to a property owner and the city? A precedence will be set.

Alison Fried, Dragonfly Dry Goods, 504 Central Ave, said there is a 3,000 square foot space in her building that she is looking to rent. Previously it was a restaurant and it makes sense that a restaurant would be the best fit for the space. It could also be a grocery store. Both uses would most likely be selling and/or serving alcohol. Also without the ability to sell alcohol, her chances of renting the spot are harder. She is hoping that the board considers this and looks for options to help in finding a way for her to be able to rent to an establishment that could sell alcohol.

BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION

MOTION: That the Zoning Commission recommend to the City Commission to approve the Conditional Use Permit subject to the applicant fulfilling the listed Conditions of Approval.

Made by: Mr. Pankratz
 Second: Mr. Bertelsen

VOTE: All in favor, the motion carried

Ms. Vukasin commented that the CUP is a great use of the space and a worship facility downtown is appreciated and hopes that the board can help them somehow, but also has a great concern about not being able to bring in any new restaurants or bars for a block and a half radius. She asked if it concerned any of the other board members. Mr. Bertelsen responded that with the adoption of the Ordinance 3221, it would make the point mute. Mr. Pankratz stated that this was his initial question and that it seemed in the agenda report that it appeared that there would be an impact. Mr. Eatherly explained if the Ordinance is approved, then the impact is much less. If the Ordinance is not approved and the Conditional Use Permit gets approved, then there would be an impact. If they are both approved through the City Commission then it should take care of the problem. Mr. Fontana stated that he initially had those same concerns. In order to make downtown attractive and vibrant there would have to be congruent uses downtown. He is satisfied with the passing of the Ordinance, and adding the gaming to it as well, to protect the downtown businesses and future developments.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Raymond did let the board know that there will be a couple of Agenda items for the August 11, 2020 meeting. One being the West Bank TIF request for Wayfinding and the second being the Weaver Addition Minor Subdivision.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Fontana adjourned the meeting at 4:24 p.m.

 CHAIRMAN

 SECRETARY



Meeting Date: August 11, 2020

**CITY OF GREAT FALLS
PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD / ZONING COMMISSION
AGENDA REPORT**

Item: Minor Subdivision – Weaver Addition addressed as 1715 Vaughn Road and legally described as Tract 1 of Certificate of Survey 5164, Mark 29, Section 3, T20N, R3E, P.M.M., Cascade County, Montana.

Initiated By: Amos Birky, Applicant and Land Owner

Presented By: Brad Eatherly, Planner II, Planning and Community Development

Action Requested: Recommendation to the City Commission.

Suggested Motion:

1. Board Member moves:

“I move that the Planning Advisory Board recommend the City Commission (approve/deny) the minor subdivision of the Weaver Addition as legally described in the Staff Report, and the accompanying Findings of Fact, subject to the Conditions of Approval being fulfilled by the applicant.”

2. Chairman calls for a second, public comment, board/commission discussion, and calls for the vote.

Background:

The subject property consists of approximately 3.123 acres and is a triangular-shaped tract that abuts Vaughn Road and Watson Coulee Road. The property is zoned M-2 Mixed-use transitional and currently has several improvements upon the property. A single-family house is located at the top northern tip of the tract, with the recently remodeled A Jay Concrete Pumping business in the middle of the property. A building currently being used as offices for A Jay Concrete Pumping is located at the southeast corner of the tract. Because of the parcel’s large size, several different types of uses abut the property including a roofing supply contractor, a junkyard, a small manufacturing business, a park, and several single-family homes. Several zoning districts are next to the tract as well, including PLI Public lands and institutional, R-3 Single-family high density, and I-2 Heavy Industrial. The applicant would like to subdivide the large tract into four smaller lots.

Minor Subdivision Request:

The applicant is requesting a minor subdivision of the subject property to create four lots. The proposed Lot 1 would consist of approximately 0.271 acres or 11,804 square feet. The proposed lot currently contains a single-family house. Lot 2 would consist of 1.796 acres or 78,246 square feet. The existing A Jay Concrete Pumping business is located on the proposed lot. Lot 3 would consist of 0.530 acres or 23,066 square feet. This lot would be a vacant, undeveloped lot. Lot 4 would be 0.526 acres or 22,912

square feet. The existing office for the A-Jay Concrete Pumping business is on this proposed lot. The proposed lots conform to the M-2 development standards as outlined in the Land Development Code.

The proposed subdivision layout will create what is known as a flag lot (typically a deep lot which contains only a small amount of street frontage for access. While Lot 2 of the proposed subdivision has a large amount of street frontage along Watson Coulee Road, the applicant currently utilizes the proposed 30-foot wide access portion of the flag lot. This access is key for the circulation of the large concrete trucks for his business, and the applicant would like to continue the use of this access. The creation of flag lots is generally discouraged in the City's subdivision regulations, but in this proposal such an arrangement is acceptable since legal access is available along Watson Coulee Road. Additionally, a large vehicle turn-around is also provided as needed by the Great Falls Fire Rescue Department.

Utility easements will be required in order to allow the minor subdivision request to be granted. A public sewer main that is located in the southwest corner of Lot 2 will require an easement on the final plat to allow the City to perform future possible maintenance. At the time of development on Lot 3 and Lot 4, service lines will need to be constructed from the public sewer main. These will require future easements.

The basis for a decision to approve, conditionally approve, or deny a proposed subdivision is whether it is demonstrated that development of the proposed subdivision meets the requirements of the Montana Code Annotated, is consistent with the City's zoning regulations and is in the public interest. Staff has reviewed the proposed project in relation to the City's zoning regulations. Additionally, Staff developed Findings of Fact for the proposed subdivision and concludes the subdivision meets the basic requirements provided by Mont. Code Ann. § 76-3-608(3). The full Findings of Fact are included as an attachment to this report.

Neighborhood Council Input:

Per Montana Code Annotated and the Official Code of the City of Great Falls (OCCGF) § 17.16.4.010 Table 16-2, minor subdivisions do not require public notification. As a courtesy, the City's Communications Specialist e-mailed information regarding the proposed minor subdivision to Neighborhood Council #2 members. As of the completion of this report, Staff has received no input from the council members.

Concurrences:

Representatives from the City's Public Works Department have been involved in the review process for this application. All comments provided have been addressed by the applicant, or have been noted by staff as conditions of approval.

Fiscal Impact:

The cost of site improvements, including any utility services, will be paid by the property owner or future developer. Existing public utilities can accommodate the increased capacity. Public safety services are currently being provided to the property and will not be affected.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the minor subdivision legally described as Lots 1-4 of the Weaver Addition with the following conditions.

Conditions of Approval:

1. The proposed project shall be developed consistent with the conditions in this report, and all codes and ordinances of the City of Great Falls, the State of Montana, and all other applicable regulatory agencies.
2. The applicant shall provide an amended plat of the subject property which shall be in compliance with survey requirements of this Title and State law and incorporate corrections of any errors or omissions noted by Staff
3. The proposed plans shall conform to the M-2 zoning district development standards in the Land Development Code within the OCCGF.
4. The applicant is required to dedicate easements for utilities to the satisfaction of the City's Public Works Department. Said easements must be submitted to the City Commission for approval at the same time as the minor subdivision.

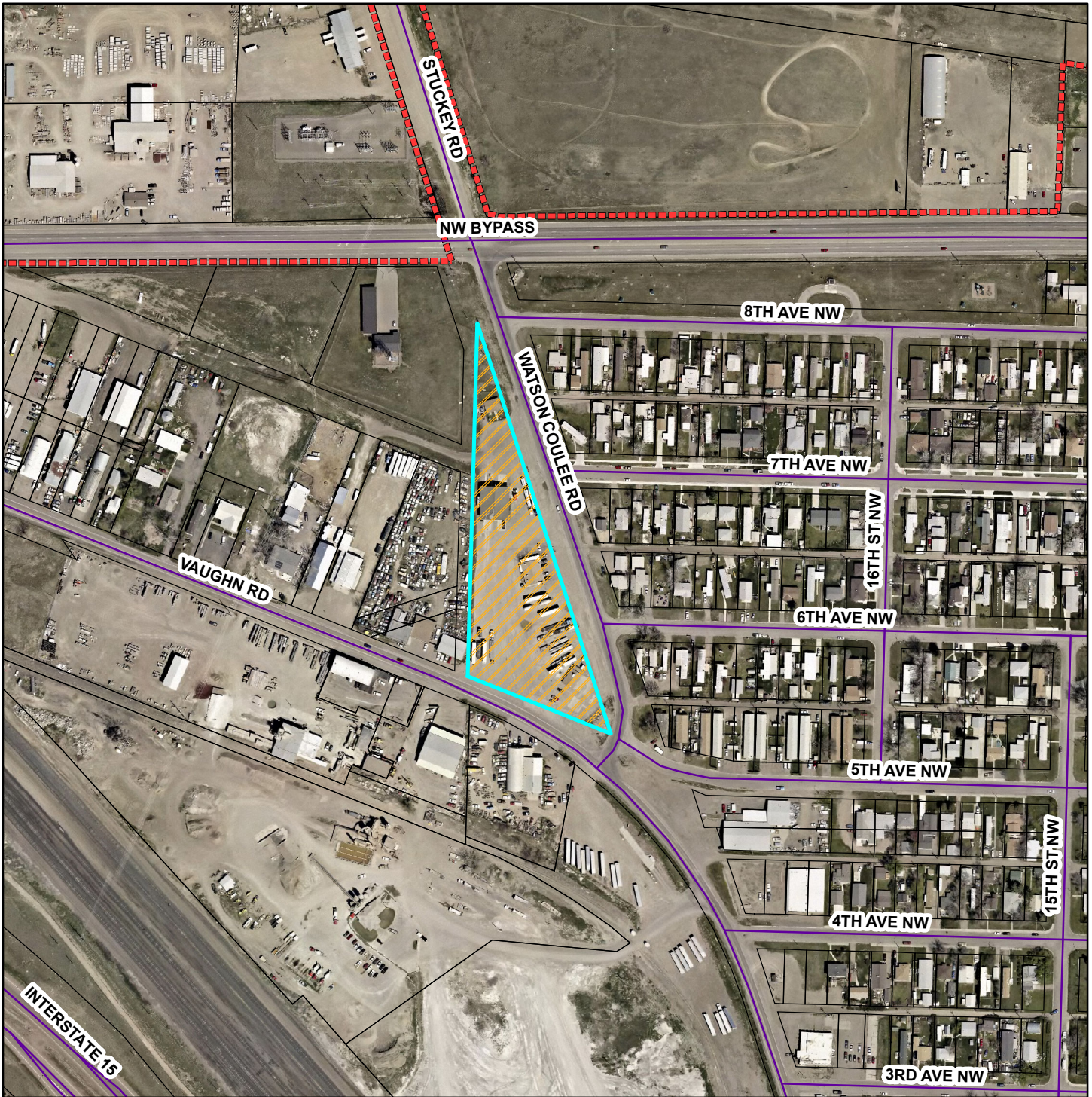
Alternatives:





The Planning Advisory Board could recommend denial of the minor subdivision. For this action, the Planning Advisory Board must provide alternative Findings of Fact to support a denial of the minor subdivision request.

Attachments/Exhibits:

Aerial Map
Zoning Map
Findings of Fact - Subdivision
Development Standards of M-2 Zoning District
Draft of Plat

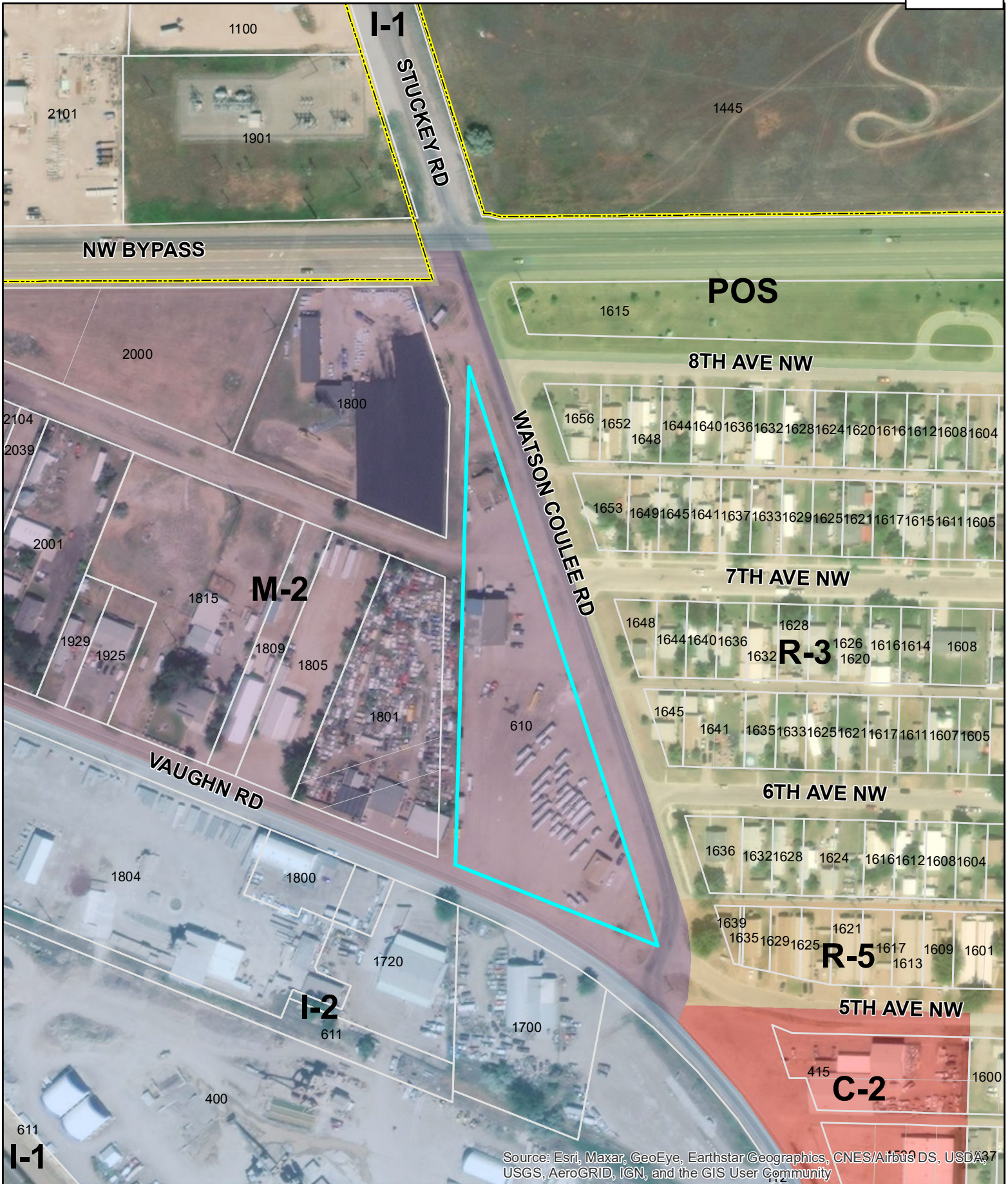
AERIAL MAP



-  Subject Property
-  City Streets
-  City Limits
-  Parcel

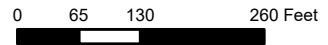


ZONING MAP

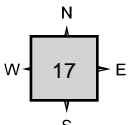


Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

- City Limits
- Parcels
- LotLines



Date: 8/6/2020



FINDINGS OF FACT/BASIS OF DECISION – MONTANA SUBDIVISION AND PLATTING ACT

Minor subdivision of Tract 1 of the Weaver Addition, located in the NE1/4 SW1/4 of Section 3, Township 20 North, Range 3 East, P.M.M., Cascade County, Montana. (PREPARED IN RESPONSE TO 76-3-608(3) MCA)

PRIMARY REVIEW CRITERIA:

Effect on Agriculture and Agricultural Water User Facilities: The minor subdivision is located on Vaughn Road and Watson Coulee Road and is adjacent to the Northwest Bypass at the northern tip of the triangular-shaped tract, which is located in city limits. The project site is surrounded by existing commercial development on the west side, public right-of-way on the west, east, and north sides. Thus, the proposed minor subdivision will not interfere with any agricultural irrigation system or present any interference with agricultural operations in the vicinity.

Effect on Local Services: Lots in the proposed subdivision are currently served or will be served from public mains or private utility lines at the time of development. The Owner will pay the cost of the service lines from these utility mains. The owners of the four lots created by the subdivision will pay regular water and sewer charges, and monthly storm drain charges. The property proposed for this subdivision is currently receiving law enforcement and fire protection service from the City of Great Falls and the subdivision does not propose any changes to the current services.

Effect on the Natural Environment: The subdivision is not expected to adversely affect soils or the water quality or quantity of surface or ground waters. Surface drainage from the subdivision will flow to Watson Coulee Road and Vaughn Road which will ultimately be integrated into existing City storm water infrastructure.

Effect on Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat: The subdivision is surrounded by existing commercial development to the west and south, public right-of-way to the east, west, and north. This is not in an area of significant wildlife habitat beyond occasional deer and migrating fowl.

Effect on Public Health and Safety: Based on available information, the subdivision is not subject to abnormal natural hazards nor potential man-made hazards. The subdivision itself will not have a negative effect on Public Health and Safety.

REQUIREMENTS OF MONTANA SUBDIVISION AND PLATTING ACT, UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR MONUMENTATION, AND LOCAL SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

The subdivision meets the requirements of the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act and the surveying requirements specified in the Uniform Standards for Monumentation and conforms to the design standards specified in the local subdivision regulations. The local government has complied with the subdivision review and approval procedures set forth in the local subdivision regulations.

EASEMENT FOR UTILITIES

The developer shall provide necessary utility easements to accommodate water mains, sanitary sewer mains and private utilities to serve all lots of the subdivision.

LEGAL AND PHYSICAL ACCESS

Legal and physical access to the proposed subdivision will be provided via a driveway that connects to Watson Coulee Road and Vaughn Road. This access, shown on the preliminary plat, will be created through the amended plat.

**Exhibit 20-4. Development standards for residential zoning districts
(see footnotes [4], [5] & [7] for general standards)**

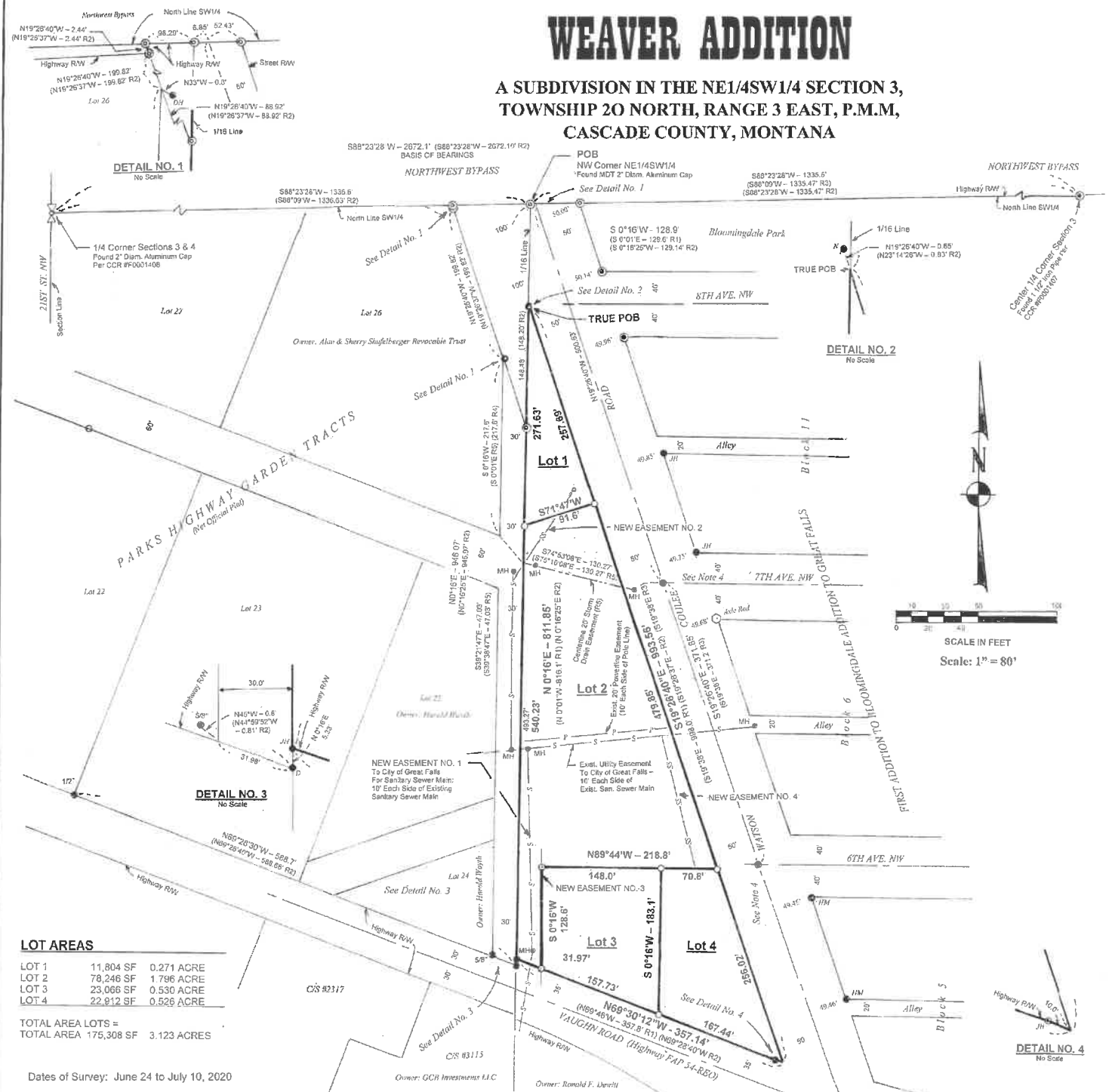
	M-1	M-2	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-4	C-5	PLI	GFIA	I-1	I-2
Residential density	500 sq. feet of lot area per dwelling unit	500 sq. feet of lot area per dwelling unit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Minimum lot size for newly created lots	7,500 sq. feet	7,500 sq. feet	7,500 sq. feet	7,500 sq. feet	7,500 sq. feet	7,500 sq. feet	7,500 sq. feet	7,500 sq. feet	7,500 sq. feet	7,500 sq. feet	7,500 sq. feet
Minimum lot width for newly created lots	50 feet	50 feet	50 feet	50 feet	50 feet	50 feet	50 feet	50 feet	50 feet	50 feet	50 feet
Lot proportion for newly created lots (maximum depth to width)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3:1	3:1
Maximum building height of principal building	65 feet except as follows: 35 feet within 200 feet of an R-1, R-2, R-3 district; 45 feet when within 200 feet to 350 feet of an R-1, R-2, R-3 district; and 65	65 feet except as follows: 35 feet within 200 feet of an R-1, R-2, R-3 district; 45 feet when within 200 feet to 350 feet of an R-1, R-2, R-3 district; and 65	35 feet	65 feet	50 feet	100 feet by right; 101 feet to 160 feet as conditional use	55 feet	100 feet by right; 101 feet to 160 feet as conditional use, except as follows; in the proposed medical district master plan	65 feet	45 feet	none

	feet when more than 350 feet from an R-1, R-2, R-3 district	feet when more than 350 feet from an R-1, R-2, R-3 district						area, 160 feet by right			
Maximum building height of accessory building	24 feet, but may not be higher than the uppermost elevation of the principal building	24 feet, but may not be higher than the uppermost elevation of the principal building	24 feet, but may not be higher than the uppermost elevation of the principal building	24 feet, but may not be higher than the uppermost elevation of the principal building	24 feet, but may not be higher than the uppermost elevation of the principal building	n/a	24 feet, but may not be higher than the uppermost elevation of the principal building	24 feet, but may not be higher than the uppermost elevation of the principal building	24 feet, but may not be higher than the uppermost elevation of the principal building	35 feet	none
Minimum front yard setback of principal and accessory buildings	none	Existing Industrial: 20 feet	15 feet	none	25 feet	none	15 feet	25 feet	25 feet	20 feet	10 feet
Minimum side yard setback of principal and accessory buildings	Commercial: none Residential: 5 feet each side	Commercial: none Residential: 5 feet each side Existing Industrial: 15 feet each side	10 feet each side	10 feet each side	15 feet each side	none	10 feet each side	10 feet each side	none	10 feet each side	10 feet each side, 15 feet when side yard abuts a non-industrial zoning district
Minimum rear yard setback of principal and	10 feet	10 feet	15 feet	1/10 of lot depth but not less than 1/10 of building height	1/10 of lot depth but not less than 1/10 of building height	none	1/10 of lot depth but not less than 1/10 of building height	1/10 of lot depth but not less than 1/10 of building height	none	5 feet	5 feet

accessory buildings											
Maximum lot coverage of principal and accessory buildings	Corner lot: 70% Other lots: 65%	Corner lot: 70% Other lots: 65%	Corner lot: 50% Other lots: 40%	Corner lot: 70% Other lots: 60%	Corner lot: 70% Other lots: 60%	100%	Corner lot: 70% Other lots: 60%	Corner lot: 70% Other lots: 60%	none	Corner lot: 85% Other lots: 70%	Corner lot: 85% Other lots: 70%

PLAT OF WEAVER ADDITION

A SUBDIVISION IN THE NE1/4SW1/4 SECTION 3, TOWNSHIP 20 NORTH, RANGE 3 EAST, P.M.M., CASCADE COUNTY, MONTANA

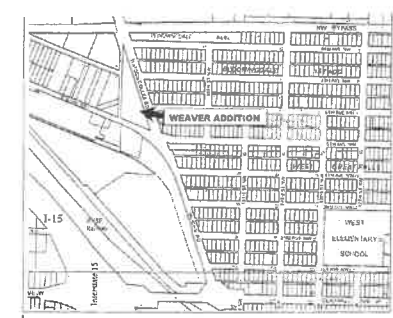


LOT AREAS

LOT 1	11,804 SF	0.271 ACRE
LOT 2	78,246 SF	1.796 ACRE
LOT 3	23,066 SF	0.530 ACRE
LOT 4	22,812 SF	0.526 ACRE

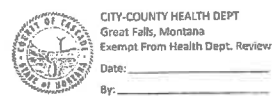
TOTAL AREA LOTS = 135,928 SF
TOTAL AREA 175,308 SF 3.123 ACRES

Dates of Survey: June 24 to July 10, 2020



- LEGEND**
- Set 5/8" x 24" IP with YPC "HODGES 4593 ES"
 - Found 5/8" IP with YPC "HODGES 4593 ES"
 - Found IP - No Cap - Size Noted
 - Found 5/8" IP with illegible YPC
 - Found 5/8" IP with 2" Aluminum MDT Cap
 - Found 5/8" IP with YPC "B201S NASH"
 - Found 5/8" IP with YPC "HENEN 2068S"
 - Found 5/8" IP with YPC "HODGES 4593ES"
 - Found 5/8" IP with YPC "M HENEN"
 - Found 1" Iron Pipe
 - (R1) Record Per R0340735WD
 - (R2) Record Per C/S #4037
 - (R3) Record Per Plat of First Addn To Blommingdale Addition to Great Falls
 - (R4) Record Per Park Highway Garden Tracts (Not Official Plat)
 - (R5) Record Per Easement Reel 319 Doc. 992
 - CCR Certified Corner Recordation
 - IP Iron Pin (Rebar)
 - MDT Montana Dept. of Transportation
 - MH Manhole
 - P- Approx. Exist. Power Pole Line
 - POB Point of Beginning
 - RAW Right of Way
 - S- Approx. Exist. Sanitary Sewer Main
 - SS- Approx. Exist. Sanitary Sewer Service
 - YPC Yellow Plastic Cap

- NOTES:**
- It was not the intent of this survey to locate or show all easements that may affect the subject property.
 - Basis of Bearings - North line of the Southwest Quarter of Section 3 between monuments found at the Center Quarter Corner, at the One Sixteenth Corner and at the West Quarter Corner. Bearing per C/S #S-0005164 CS.
 - Did not set a monument at the southeast corner of Lot 4 because it would have been in the existing concrete curb & gutter. Found reference: Iron 10.0" westerly on the south line of Lot 4 per C/S #S-0005164 CS. See Detail No. 4.
 - Found 5/8" IP with no cap flush with asphalt per C/S #S-0005164 CS
 - Found bearings and distances match those shown on C/S #S-0005164 CS.



**REVIEWED FOR COMPLIANCE WITH
SURVEY REQUIREMENTS AND ZONING
REGULATIONS PER 76-3-207 M.C.A.**

By: _____
Date: _____

CERTIFICATE OF EASEMENTS

NEW EASEMENT NO. 2: A 20 feet wide sanitary sewer service easement across Lot 2 centered on the existing sanitary sewer service from Lot 1 as shown on this plat. This easement shall run with and be appurtenant to the land described on this Plat and be for the benefit of the Owners of said Lot 1.

NEW EASEMENT NO. 3: A 20 feet wide sanitary sewer service easement across Lot 2 from the west boundary of Lot 3 to the City of Great Falls sewer main running adjacent to the west boundary of Lot 3 as shown on this plat. Location of easement will be identified when sanitary sewer service is constructed. This easement shall run with and be appurtenant to the land described on this Plat and be for the benefit of the Owners of said Lot 3.

NEW EASEMENT NO. 4: A 20 feet wide sanitary sewer service easement across Lot 2 centered on the existing sanitary sewer service from Lot 4 as shown on this plat. This easement shall run with and be appurtenant to the land described on this Plat and be for the benefit of the Owners of said Lot 4.

New Easements No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4 are to allow for the construction, maintenance, enlarging, reducing, replacing or removal of the sanitary sewer services including any above ground lids or boxes necessary for accessing the underground sanitary sewer service, together with all necessary appurtenances thereto, in, under, through and across the real property shown on this plat together with the right to excavate and refill trenches. The lot owner benefiting from the easement shall, in the event of any excavation within said easement for the purposes of maintenance or repair, be responsible for ensuring that the trench is properly backfilled and that the surface is restored to its pre-excavation condition.

Date: _____
A JAY CONCRETE PUMPING, LLC
By: Amos J. Birky, Owner

CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

I, _____, Public Works Director for the City of Great Falls, do hereby certify that I examined the accompanying plat of the *Weaver Addition* and the survey it represents, found that same conforms to regulations governing the platting of lands and presently platted adjacent land as near as circumstances will permit and do hereby approve the same.

Date: _____
Public Works Director
City of Great Falls, Montana

CERTIFICATE OF GREAT FALLS PLANNING BOARD

We, the undersigned President of the Great Falls Planning Board, City of Great Falls, Montana, and Secretary of said Great Falls Planning Board, do hereby certify that the accompanying plat of the *Weaver Addition*, was submitted to the said Great Falls Planning Board for examination by them and was approved at a regular meeting held on the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Peter Fontana, President
Great Falls Planning Board
Craig Raymond, Secretary
Great Falls Planning Board

CERTIFICATE OF CITY COMMISSION

I, Gregory T. Doyon, City Manager of the City of Great Falls, Montana, do hereby certify that the accompanying plat of the *Weaver Addition*, was duly examined and approved by the City Commission of the City of Great Falls, Montana, at a regular meeting held on the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Gregory T. Doyon, City Manager
City of Great Falls, Montana

PURPOSE

The purpose of the survey shown on this plat was to subdivide Tract 1, Certificate of Survey No. S-0005164 CS, into four lots.

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY

The undersigned property owner does hereby certify that he has caused Tract 1, Certificate of Survey No. S-0005164 CS, as filed in the Clerk and Recorder's Office, Cascade County, Montana, to be surveyed and subdivided into four lots.

DESCRIPTION: A tract in the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 3, Township 20 North, Range 3 East, P.M.M., Cascade County, Montana, shown and described as Tract 1 on Certificate of Survey No. S-0005164 CS and more fully described as follows: Beginning at the northwest corner of the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 3; thence South 0°16' West 128.9 feet along the west line of the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 3 to the TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING; thence South 19°26'40" East 993.56 feet along the west right of way of Watson Coulee Road to the north right of way of Vaughn Road (State Highway FAP 54-REO); thence North 69°30'12" West 357.14 feet along said north right of way to the west line of the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 3; thence North 0°16' East 811.85 feet along said west line to the TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING; containing 3.123 acres. Said tract to be known and designated as *WEAVER ADDITION*.

I certify that this division of land is excluded from review by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality pursuant to 76-4-125(1)(d)(i), MCA: "(1) A subdivision excluded from the provisions of chapter 3 must be submitted for review according to the provisions of this part, except that the following divisions or parcels, unless the exclusions are used to evade the provisions of this part, are not subject to review: "(d) as certified pursuant to 76-4-127;" and "(i) new divisions subject to review under the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act."

Date: _____
A JAY CONCRETE PUMPING, LLC
By: Amos J. Birky, Owner

STATE OF MONTANA }
County of Cascade } ss
On this _____ day of _____, 20____, before me, _____, a Notary Public in and for the State of Montana, personally appeared Amos J. Birky, known to me to be the person who executed the foregoing Certificate of Survey and Certificate of Easements, and he acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

Notary Public, State of Montana
Residing at: _____
My Commission expires: _____

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEYOR

I, James E. Hodges, Professional Engineer and Land Surveyor, do hereby certify that I made the survey as shown on this plat and that said survey is true and complete as shown.

Date: _____
James E. Hodges, P.E. & L.S.
Montana License No. 4593ES

CERTIFICATE OF TREASURER

I, Diane Heikkila, County Treasurer of Cascade County, Montana, do hereby certify pursuant to 76-3-207(3), M.C.A. that all real property taxes assessed and levied on the land described herein have been paid.

Date: _____
Diane Heikkila, Treasurer

Survey For: AMOS J. BIRKY

Owner: A JAY CONCRETE PUMPING, LLC

1/4	Sec	T	R
NE	3	20N	3E
Job No.	2020-10	Sheet	1
F.B. No.	11	of	1
Drawn	JEH	by	
Date	7/17/20		

DRAFT



Meeting Date: Aug 11, 2020

**CITY OF GREAT FALLS
PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD / ZONING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT**

Item: West Bank TIF Funding Application.

Initiated By: Great Falls Business Improvement District

Presented By: Alaina Mattimiro, Planner I, Planning and Community Development

Action Requested: Recommendation to the City Commission to approve an application for \$5,050 of West Bank Tax Increment Financing District funds to support funding for the Great Falls Wayfinding Plan.

Suggested Motion:

1. Board Member moves:

“I move that the Planning Advisory Board recommend the City Commission (approve/deny) the Great Falls Business Improvement District request for West Bank Tax Increment Financing District funds to assist with the Great Falls Wayfinding Plan.”

2. Chairman calls for a second, public comment, board/commission discussion, and calls for the vote.

Background:

The West Bank Urban Renewal Plan and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District were adopted by the Great Falls City Commission in 2007 and encompasses property on the west bank of the Missouri River on either side of the Central Avenue West Bridge. The purpose of creating the West Bank TIF was to address blighted conditions that had diminished the environmental, economic, and cultural well-being of the West Bank area over time and foster economic development, job creation, and improve overall environmental quality.

In June of 2020, the Business Improvement District (BID) submitted an application to request the use of Tax Increment Financing funds from the West Bank TIF to use towards a Wayfinding Signage Plan for the community. Many communities across the country, including those within Montana, have an inventory of wayfinding signs directing first-time visitors to key destinations. Implementing a comprehensive wayfinding sign plan for Great Falls has long been a community goal.

To this end, the BID was able secure a Montana Main Street Grant to fund a portion of the cost of developing a Wayfinding Plan. Several years ago, the City Commission also approved the expenditure of \$25,000 of Downtown TIF funds towards developing a Wayfinding Plan. Since then, a consulting firm (Cushing Terrell) has been hired to guide the planning process. The purpose of the \$5,050 West Bank TIF request is to complete the consultant funding request. The goal of the Plan is to establish clear and consistent signage that connects pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles towards the core of Great Falls,

including the West Bank TIF District and the Downtown TIF District. The need for a wayfinding plan comes from the challenges the City faces with linking visitors and residents with community attractions.

The Wayfinding Plan, once funded, will incorporate elements from Great Falls Tourism's branding efforts. This could include signs directing people to West Bank's many important destinations, such as the River's Edge Trail, West Bank Park, Federal Courthouse, the West Bank One and West Bank Landing mixed use developments, and the ExpoPark. The Plan will also help connect those places with the Downtown core across the river. If this request is approved and the consultant study fully funded, the Wayfinding Plan is expected to be completed within the next year. At that point, the BID would be able to work with various stakeholders, including the City, to secure implementation funding.

Review Criteria:

Preliminary Findings

After thorough review and evaluation of the Project, City staff has determined:

- No persons will be displaced from their housing by the Project or the infrastructure improvements.
- The Project and the infrastructure improvements substantially satisfy the review criteria of the funding application process and meet the purpose and goals of the State Law, the District and Plan.
- The infrastructure improvements constitute public improvements in accordance with the Act.
- A sound and adequate financial program exists for the financing of the infrastructure improvements.

Montana Code Annotated (MCA) TIF Regulations

The creation and administration of TIF Districts are governed by State Law. According to Montana Code Annotated Mont. Code Ann. § 7-15-4288, tax increment can only be used for the following purposes: The tax increment may be used by the local government to pay for the following costs of or incurred in connection with an urban renewal plan or targeted economic development district comprehensive plan:

1. Land acquisition;
2. Demolition and removal of structures;
3. Relocation of occupants;
4. The acquisition construction, and improvement of public improvements or infrastructure, including streets, roads, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, pedestrian malls, alleys, parking lots and off-street parking facilities, sewers, sewer lines, sewage treatment facilities, storm sewers, waterlines, waterways, water treatment facilities, natural gas lines, electrical lines, telecommunication lines, rail lines, rail spurs, bridges, publicly owned buildings, and any public improvements authorized by Title 7, chapter 12, parts 41 through 45; Title 7, chapter 13, parts 42 and 43; and Title 7, chapter 14, part 47, and items of personal property to be used in connection with improvements for which the foregoing costs may be incurred;
5. Costs incurred in connection with the redevelopment activities allowed under Mont. Code Ann. § 7-15-4233;
6. Acquisition of infrastructure-deficient areas or portions of areas;
7. Administrative costs associated with the management of the urban renewal area or targeted economic development district;
8. Assemblage of land for development or redevelopment by private enterprise or public agencies, including sale, initial leasing, or retention by the local government itself at its fair value;

9. The compilation and analysis of pertinent information required to adequately determine the needs of the urban renewal area or targeted economic development district;
10. The connection of the urban renewal area or targeted economic district to existing infrastructure outside the area or district;
11. The provision of direct assistance to secondary value-adding industries to assist in meeting their infrastructure and land needs within the area or district; and
12. The acquisition, construction, or improvement of facilities or equipment for reducing, preventing, abating, or eliminating pollution.

City of Great Falls TIF Review Criteria

In order for the Planning Advisory Board and eventually the City Commission to approve any TIF funding request, the request must meet the criteria recommended in the Urban Renewal Plan, as well as be eligible for TIF participation in accordance with the statutory guidelines noted in this report. To aid in this determination, the City of Great Falls' Tax Increment application Process established twelve specific criteria to assess the merits of projects against the Plan. Those criteria are:

- 1) Public Infrastructure Improvements – Public infrastructure improvements have the benefit of improving and impacting an entire district. Each district may have its own Capital Improvement Plan, which may include things such as roadway improvements, storm drains, sewer and waterlines, railroads, etc.

Staff Analysis – The proposed small expenditure of \$5,050 has the potential to add important Wayfinding Sign infrastructure into the West Bank TIF District. Although decisions have not yet been made about what entities will be owning and maintaining future wayfinding signs, the signs will likely be installed in the public right of way and direct people to public facilities.

- 2) Economic Stimulus- The amount of economic activity to be generated within a district through the development is assessed, as well as the leverage ratio of public to private investment. In general, the maximum limit of any one development is 10% of the construction/rehabilitation costs, exclusive of acquisition costs. Projects demonstrating extraordinary benefit to Districts or the community may, at the discretion of City Commission, receive additional TIF assistance for eligible items. All applications should contain credible, measurable information substantiating the project's economic stimulus in the District and the community.

Staff Analysis – The economic benefits of community wayfinding are well established. The future installation of wayfinding signs within the West Bank District will increase visitation and economic activity at key destinations within the TIF District.

- 3) Tax Generation – The increase in taxable value due to the new district development, including construction/rehabilitation, as estimated by the County Assessor's office to determine tax increment generation.

Staff Analysis – With the implementation of the Wayfinding Plan, the amount of business and traffic that the district sees will increase and spur further build out of the area. The future development within West Bank will continue to become more feasible and create additional assessed property tax valuation for the District.

4) Employment Generation – Total employment generated by the district development is assessed in terms of permanent and part-time jobs, and construction jobs.

Staff Analysis – If approved, the TIF funds will be used to complete the Great Falls Wayfinding Plan, which will not directly create any new employment other than the eventual installation of a large number of wayfinding signs. However, through spurred investment, increased tourism, and growing businesses, the Wayfinding Plan should indirectly help expand the availability of employment opportunities within the West Bank TIF District.

5) Elimination of Blight – The development’s direct and indirect impact on the physical and fiscal deterioration within the appropriate district and the community, as identified in the appropriate district plan.

Staff Analysis –The West Bank TIF District was specifically adopted to implement the West Bank Urban Renewal Plan. Additional visitation of destinations within the West Bank Urban Renewal Plan area will lead economic development opportunities to further eliminate blight within the District.

6) Special or Unique Opportunities – The extent to which the district’s development represents a unique opportunity, meets a special need, or addresses specific district or community goals. The restoration of a historic property or the provisions of an unmet community need is an example of special or unique opportunities.

Staff Analysis – Staff believes that the opportunity to leverage TIF District funds to benefit not only the Downtown and West Bank TIF Districts but create a community wayfinding plan, is a unique opportunity to meet an unmet community need.

7) Impact Assessment – The extent of both positive and negative environmental impacts, appropriateness of the developer’s project design, and impact on existing businesses or residents.

Staff Analysis – This is a difficult criterion to assess because of the nature of the applicant’s request. Over the long term, the implementation of wayfinding signs within the District will create positive impacts to existing businesses within the Urban Renewal Area.

8) Financial Assistance – Other forms of financing available to the Applicant, Lender participation, industrial development revenue bonds, and state and federal grant monies, for example are examined to assess the need for TIF assistance.

Staff Analysis – This request for TIF funds will be used in addition to \$25,000 from the Downtown Urban Renewal TIF District, \$15,000 from a Montana Main Street Grant, as well as funds committed by the BID, Downtown Development Partnership, Great Falls Development Authority, and Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce.

9) Development’s Feasibility – A determination of feasibility is made on the strength of the Applicant’s demonstration of market demand for the development in the district and is contained primarily on the pro forma and financing commitments.

Staff Analysis – Because this criterion is tailored to fit development project proposals seeking TIF funds, it is not applicable to the applicant’s request to financially support the Wayfinding Plan project.

- 10) Developer Ability to Perform – An assessment of the Applicant’s capability to undertake the relative complexities of the development based on past performance on similar projects.

Staff Analysis – As noted earlier in the agenda report, the consultant for the project has already been retained. Additionally, meetings between the consultant and the Wayfinding Plan Steering Committee are well underway. As a result, the BID clearly has ability to complete the planning process.

- 11) Timely Compensation – The feasibility of completing the development according to the Applicant’s development schedule.

Staff Analysis – Staff believes that the applicant will be able to meet the development schedule as noted within the application.

- 12) Payment of Taxes – All property taxes, special improvement district assessments and other assessments on the project property must be paid to date.

Staff Analysis – There are currently no outstanding tax issues within the district.

Concurrences:

The Applicant’s request for TIF funding has been reviewed by the City’s Finance and Legal Departments, as well as the City’s outside legal counsel from Dorsey & Whitney LLP.

Fiscal Impact:

The applicant’s request is only a small portion of what will be required to complete the Wayfinding Plan study. Additionally, the \$5,050 request is a very small percentage of the current West Bank TIF balance of approximately \$309,000.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed TIF funding request based on the findings of the required criteria.

Alternatives:

The Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission could recommend denial of the TIF funding request to the City Commission, in which case alternative findings would need to be provided.

Attachments/Exhibits:

TIF Application
West Bank TIF District Map
West Bank Urban Renewal Plan

**CITY OF GREAT FALLS
TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)
APPLICATION FOR FUNDS**



Project Name: Great Falls Wayfinding Plan

Date submitted: June 1, 2020

Name of TIF District: West Bank TIF District

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: Great Falls Business Improvement District

Address: 318 Central Avenue, Great Falls MT 59401

Telephone: (406) 727-5430

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

1. Building Address: Not applicable

2. Legal Description: Not applicable

3. Ownership: Not applicable

Address: Not applicable

4. If property is not owned by the Applicant, list leasehold interest: *(Attach evidentiary materials).*

Name: Not applicable

Address: Not applicable

5. Existing/Proposed Businesses: Great Falls Business Improvement District

Business Description:

The Great Falls Business Improvement District (BID) is the focal point of regional commerce for social, cultural, governmental, business and residential activity in downtown Great Falls. The goal of the BID is to maintain, beautify, and stimulate development in Great Falls' historic downtown district. The BID is operated by an all-volunteer Board of Directors who are property owners or their designated representatives within the district; with additional administrative support within their office setting. All board members are appointed by the City Commission.

The BID has proven itself to be a vital part of the downtown area providing for improvement and beautification. The BID has taken the lead in organizing and securing funding for the development of a Great Falls area-wide Wayfinding Plan.

6. Employment: Existing FTE Jobs: None directly by BID

New Permanent FTE Jobs created by project: None Construction FTE jobs: None

7. Architectural/Engineering Firm: Cushing Terrell

Address: 219 2nd Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59405

Representative: Nicole Olmstead

406.922.7128 NicoleOlmstead@cushingterrell.com

8. Please provide a description of the Total Project Development (attach a narrative explanation) .

The application seeks \$5,050 to complete the funding needed to develop a Great Falls area-wide Wayfinding Plan. The City Commission has supported this project by allocating \$25,000 from the Downtown Urban Renewal TIF District. The total cost of the Wayfinding Plan project is \$66,550, determined through a competitive bid process overseen by the BID with participation from City staff and the Downtown Development Partnership. Cushing Terrell was selected to develop the plan amongst eight firms that responded to the RFP.

The BID in partnership with the City secured a Montana Main Street Grant in the amount of \$15,000 for the project. The BID, the Tourism Business Improvement District, and the Downtown Development Partnership have each committed \$6,500 toward the project. The Great Falls Development Authority and the Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce have each committed \$1,000. This leaves a gap of \$5,050 to fund the project.

The City, BID and partners have been working to secure the funds for a Wayfinding Plan for many years. The need for a wayfinding plan in Great Falls stems from the challenges the City faces with connecting pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles with downtown Great Falls and adjacent destinations including the River's Edge Trail, City Parks, and other community attractions.

The primary goals of this project are to:

- 1) Establish clear and consistent signage geared towards pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles that connects residents and visitors with downtown Great Falls and the area's cultural, natural, and recreational amenities.
- 2) Incorporate elements from Great Falls Tourism's logo/branding efforts into the Wayfinding Plan.
- 3) Incorporate a variety of different types of signs (pole signs, wall signs, murals, freestanding signs, banners, kiosks, maps, etc.) that reinforce Great Falls' sense of place and identity, and give people an understanding of the layout of Great Falls.
- 4) Develop signs that add to Great Falls' aesthetic while not contributing to visual discord for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- 5) Ensure signs comply with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations pertaining to signs.

The West Bank TIF District includes and abuts a number of important destinations that need to be incorporated into a Great Falls Wayfinding Plan. These include the River's Edge Trail, West Bank Park, Federal Courthouse, West Bank One and West Bank Landing developments, and the ExpoPark. The West Bank TIF District will directly benefit from being included in the Wayfinding Plan because it will help spur further investment in the District and increase public enjoyment of the amenities offered in the District.

9. Please provide rehabilitation/construction plans (attach schematics, site and landscaping plans).
Not applicable

10. What is the development schedule or estimate completion date for the Total Project Development? The Total Project Development is best defined as the entire development, not just the TIF improvement (please include project phasing if appropriate).

Funds will be expended as the expenses occur. The project is expected to be completed within the next year.

11. Do you plan on asking for any other tax abatement, grants, tax credits or other forms of relief? If so, what type?

No, not for this project, except for the Downtown TIF funds already allocated for the project by the City Commission.

12. Please describe your funding needs and the anticipated timing schedule for your indentified Eligible TIF Activities.

The BID requests \$5,050 to complete the funds needed for the project, totaling \$66,550. The project will be completed within twelve months.

13. Please indicate the amount of Public Infrastructure Need and the amount of Public Infrastructure being request to be financed by the TIF District.

Not applicable

TOTAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT COSTS

The total project development cost is the cost to develop the entire project/site, and should include the cost of the TIF improvements.

Land and Site Preparation Improvements	\$ 0
Construction/Rehabilitation Costs	\$ 0
Equipment Costs	\$ 0
Total Project Development Costs	\$ 0

Land Acquisition

Total	Amount requested from TIF	Timing for Funds
\$0	\$0	Not applicable

Demolition and Removal of Structure

Total	Amount requested from TIF	Timing for Funds
\$0	\$0	Not applicable

Relocation of Occupants

Total	Amount requested from TIF	Timing for Funds
\$0	\$0	Not applicable

Public Improvements

Total	Amount requested from TIF	Timing for Funds
\$0	\$0	Not applicable

Fees (associated with eligible activities)

Total	Amount requested from TIF	Timing for Funds
\$66,550	\$5,050	As expenses occur

CERTIFICATION

I (we), Joan Redeen, certify that the statements and estimates within this Application as well as any and all documentation submitted as attachments to this Application or under separate cover are true and correct to the best of my (our) knowledge.

Signature Joan Redeen
Joan Redeen

Title Community Director, Great Falls Business Improvement District

Address 318 Central Avenue, Great Falls MT 59401

Date 6/1/2020

West Bank Urban Renewal Plan Great Falls, Montana



2007

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the following for their contributions to the West Bank Urban Renewal Plan:

- Great Falls City Commission
- Great Falls Planning, Community Development, Fiscal Services, and Public Works Departments
- City Manager's Office
- Great Falls Neighborhood Council #2
- Great Falls Economic Development Authority
- West Bank Area Property Owners and Stakeholders
- Great Falls Planning Board

Planning Oversight:

- Benjamin Rangel, Great Falls Planning Director

Project Consultant:

- Janet Cornish, Community Development Services of Montana

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The City of Great Falls, Montana is embarking on a program of urban renewal for the area known as West Bank, bounded on the West by 3rd Street NW/SW, on the East by the center line of the Missouri River, on the North by a point just north of 14th Avenue NW and on the South by a point just south of 5th Avenue SW. (See Figure 1, below.) The area, which has been designated by the Great Falls City Commission as the West Bank Urban Renewal District is in transition. Historically, the District was characterized by heavy industrial uses. However, as the City has grown, industrial development has shifted to the city's periphery. At the same time, the community is promoting a more diversified and integrated development within the city's core, focusing on mixed uses – recreational, commercial and residential. The West Bank's proximity to the River and associated parkland, as well as to a major roadway (3rd Street NW/SW), makes it a logical place to encourage new mixed-use development in concert with efforts to revitalize downtown Great Falls. The revitalization of the West Bank area is being undertaken in cooperation with efforts to address contamination of an area within the District, formerly occupied by a brewery and an oil refinery and currently occupied by the County Shop complex and a specialty seed mill.

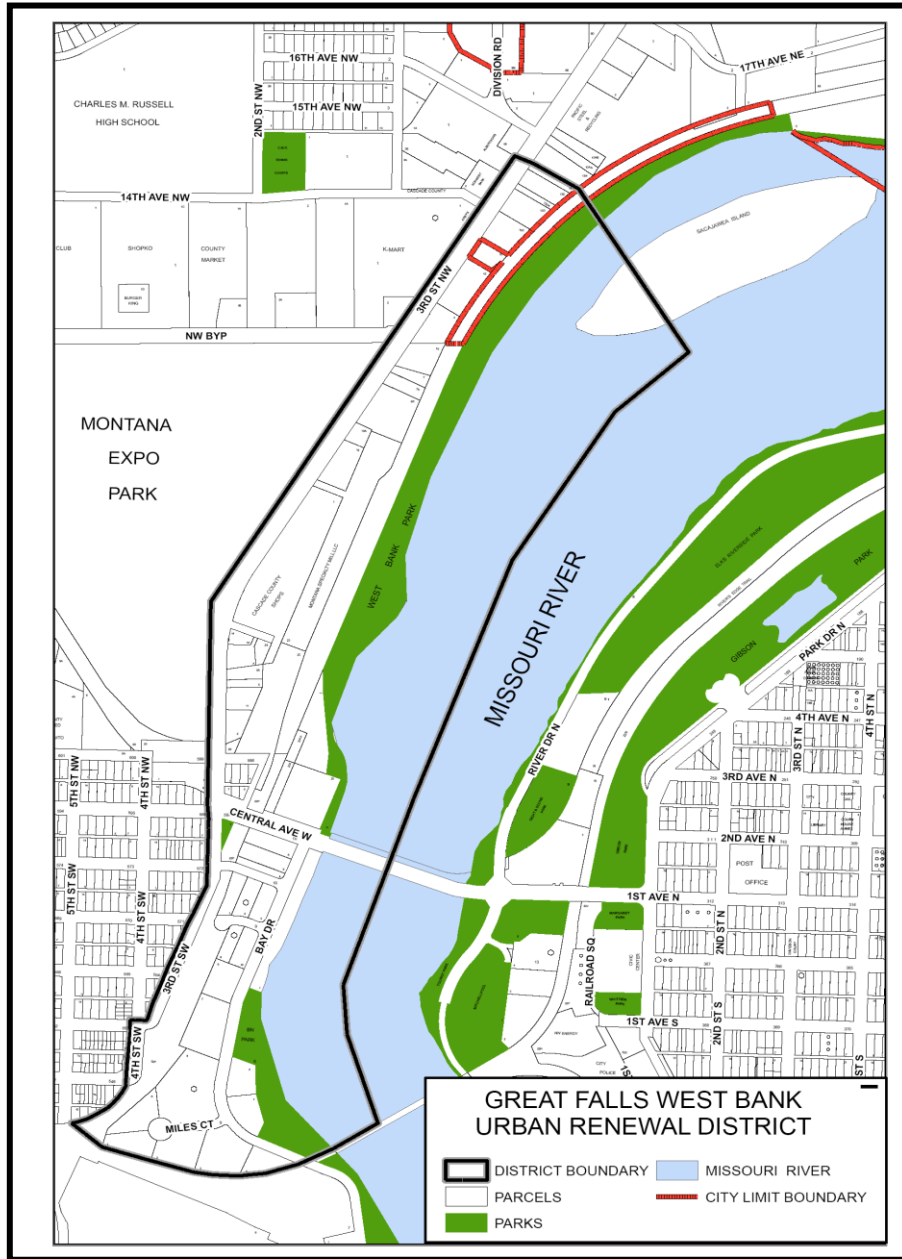
This urban renewal effort is being undertaken in accordance with the Montana Urban Renewal Law which provides for the renewal of "blighted" areas in 7-15-42 and 7-15-43, MCA, as follows:

- 7-15-4209.** Development of workable urban renewal program. (1) A municipality, for the purposes of this part and part 43, may formulate a workable program for utilizing appropriate private and public resources:
- (a) to eliminate and prevent the development or spread of blighted areas;
 - (b) to encourage needed urban rehabilitation;
 - (c) to provide for the redevelopment of such areas; or
 - (d) to undertake such of the aforesaid activities or other feasible municipal activities as may be suitably employed to achieve the objectives of such workable program.
- (2) Such workable program may include, without limitation, provision for:
- (a) the prevention of the spread of blight into areas of the municipality which are free from blight through diligent enforcement of housing, zoning, and occupancy controls and standards;
 - (b) the rehabilitation of blighted areas or portions thereof by replanning, removing congestion, providing parks, playgrounds, and other public improvements; by encouraging voluntary rehabilitation; and by compelling the repair and rehabilitation of deteriorated or deteriorating structures; and
 - (c) the clearance and redevelopment of blighted areas or portions thereof.

On November 8, 2006, the Great Falls City Commission authorized an investigation of the West Bank area. The purpose of the investigation was to determine the presence and extent of blight within the area as defined by the Montana Urban Renewal Law (7-15, Parts 42 and 43 MCA) as a first step in preparing a *West Bank Urban Renewal Plan*. The investigation culminated in a "Finding of Blight", that was adopted by Resolution 9626 (attached as Appendix A) by the Great Falls City Commission on December 5, 2006. In particular, the Resolution identified the following blighted conditions:

1. Physical deterioration of buildings and properties
 - Many of the structures in the defined area are in poor repair and properties are poorly maintained. City building permit information indicates that the majority of existing structures have not been substantially improved for at least twenty years.
2. Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings
 - The presence of existing heavy industrial uses within the defined area is incompatible with retail, commercial, residential and parkland development. This land use conflict has proven to be a disincentive to the improvement of properties within the area by private enterprise.
3. Defective street layout
 - Much of the area is without streets, sidewalks, curbs, or gutters resulting in poor traffic circulation and storm drainage problems.
4. Unsanitary and unsafe conditions
 - Portions of the defined area are included in the list of priority sites maintained by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality under the Comprehensive Environmental Cleanup and Responsibility Act (CECRA) and are designated a Brownfield site as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Contamination on the site is associated with historic industrial activity and has affected both the soil and groundwater and threatens to contaminate the Missouri River.

Figure 1. Great Falls West Bank Urban Renewal District



Statement of Purpose

Changes in land use in the West Bank area, in conjunction with the proposed removal of contamination associated with historic industrial activities, provides an opportunity for area redevelopment through public-private partnerships. The City of Great Falls has chosen to participate in this redevelopment effort through the creation of an urban renewal program, including a tax increment financing (TIF) provision to help fund public investment in the area.

This Urban Renewal Plan provides direction to the City of Great Falls in fostering the revitalization and economic development of the West Bank Urban Renewal District. The Plan provides a “platform” for redevelopment activities that will be undertaken by a variety of public and private entities over the next several decades. More particularly, this Plan recommends a series of programs and projects that will be undertaken by the local government to encourage reinvestment in the District and to address blighted conditions that have diminished the environmental, economic and cultural well-being of the West Bank area over time.

Although the Montana Urban Renewal Law recognizes that eliminating urban blight is a matter of public interest, this Plan has been developed, based on the underlying principle that it is the citizens who work, reside and own property in the West Bank Renewal District who will be engaged directly in the revitalization effort. Further, the Plan has been prepared with respect to three Guiding Principles as follows:

- The plan for the West Bank Urban Renewal District should foster economic development and job creation.
- The improvement of the overall environmental quality of the West Bank Urban Renewal District is critical.
- Protection and enhancement of the West Bank Park and the Missouri River, which form the eastern boundary of the District are key in the redevelopment of the West Bank Urban Renewal District.

The West Bank Urban Renewal Plan outlines the approach that the City of Great Falls will take in responding to blighted conditions within the District. The Plan recommends ways to comprehensively address the problems and opportunities that face the area. However, the Plan recognizes that this area is in transition and therefore prescribes a large measure of flexibility in devising solutions and provides for ongoing planning on the part of the City, the residents, the businesses and property owners.

Chapter 2. Description of the Urban Renewal District

Legal Description of the West Bank Urban Renewal District

The West Bank Urban Renewal District includes all that real property in the City of Great Falls, County of Cascade, State of Montana, which lies within the following described boundary, excluding any unincorporated property, as of October 2006:

“The POINT OF BEGINNING is at the intersection of the north right of way line of 4th Avenue SW and the east right of way line of 4th Street SW; thence northeasterly along the west right of way line of 3rd Street SW and 3rd Street NW to its intersection with the northwest/southeast projection of the north property line of the parcel of land legally described as Mark No.13, Section 2, Township 20 North, Range 3 East (Geo-code #3015-02-1-10-06); thence southeasterly along the northwest/southeast projection of the north property line of the parcel of land legally described as Mark No.13, Section 2, Township 20 North, Range 3 East (Geo-code #3015-02-1-10-06) to the centerline of the Missouri River; thence southwesterly/southeasterly along the centerline of the Missouri River to the north edge of the BNSF Railway/Missouri River Bridge; thence southwesterly along the north edge of the BNSF Railway/Missouri River Bridge and the north right of way line of the BNSF Railway main line (coincidental with the south property line of Lots 1-4, Block 9, BN Car Shop Addition to Great Falls) to its extended connection with the south end of the east right of way line of 5th Street SW (coincidental with the southwest corner of Lot 10, Block 546, 6th Addition to Great Falls); thence northeasterly along the west right of way line of the BNSF Railway spur line (coincidental with the south/southeast boundary of Block 546, 6th Addition to Great Falls) to the intersection of the south right of way line of 5th Avenue SW and the west right of way line of 4th Street SW; thence north along the west right of way line of 4th Street SW to its intersection with the north right of way line of 4th Avenue SW; thence east to the POINT OF BEGINNING.”

Area History

Historically, the west side of the Missouri River in Great Falls was the home of Montana’s largest gasoline refinery, built by the Great Falls Sunburst Oil and Refinery Company. The refinery began operations in early 1923 along the 300 and 400 block of 3rd Street Northwest and was subsequently purchased by the California Eastern Oil Company in 1927. Cascade County took possession of the property in 1936 after California Eastern failed to pay gasoline license taxes and associated delinquent fees. By 1938 Cascade County had constructed its shops (Figure 2) at the site (Great Falls Tribune, December 16, 2001).



Figure 2 Cascade County Shops

The West Bank area includes the site of the former Montana Brewing Company complex, built in 1893-94, just north of Central Avenue West, along the Missouri River. In 1933, it became the malt plant for the Great Falls Brewery, Inc., finally closing in 1968. (Figure 3.) The last remnants of the site were finally removed in July of 2006 to make way for a new 54,000 square foot Federal Courthouse (July 11, 2006, Sun River News).



Figure 3. Montana Brewery.

Existing Characteristics

The West Bank Urban Renewal District continues to be largely characterized by industrial and warehouse uses. It also contains a small number of residences and a variety of retail and service oriented businesses, including a veterinary clinic, the Cowboy's Bar and the J Bar T Tavern. The area just south of the County Shops and Montana Specialty Mills includes the site where the new Federal Courthouse will be built. South of Central Avenue West, the District is more sparsely developed, but includes the Montana Association of Electrical Cooperatives offices as well as a former highway department structure, now held privately (Figure 4). The northern end of the District is directly adjacent to a growing commercial area. It includes the Stockman Bank, built within the last few years and will include a new Walgreens Pharmacy, already under construction.



Figure 4. Former Highway Department Building

The District encompasses portions of two Census Tracts (See Table 1) and 51 parcels. A list of the properties by parcel is included in Appendix B.

Table 1. West Bank Urban Renewal District – Census Information				
Census Tract	Census Block Group	Block Number	Population	Housing Units
16	2	2000	0	0
16	2	2017*	45	15
16	5	5001	8	3
16	5	5002	0	0
16	5	5004	0	0
16	5	5005	0	0
18	3	3000*	4	2
18	3	3019**	0	0
18	3	3020*	0	0
Totals			57	20

Source: U.S. Census (2000 Information)

Notes: * Only a portion of this block is in the Urban Renewal District

** This is the parcel that is not incorporated into the City of Great Falls

Census designations are noted in Figure 5.

Zoning Designation

The City of Great Falls has zoned the West Bank area M-2, *Mixed-use Transitional*. The Great Falls Zoning Ordinance describes an M-2 zone as follows: “This zoning designation is intended to promote a transition over time to a predominately mixed-use land use pattern. Because of changing economic conditions and other factors, some current uses do not represent the highest and best use, given other more suitable areas. Current industrial uses and warehouses are not considered nonconforming. As such, current industrial uses and warehouses existing at the time this Title was adopted are allowed to expand or to be re-established, if damaged, provided development and appearance standards under the purview of the Design Review Board are met.”

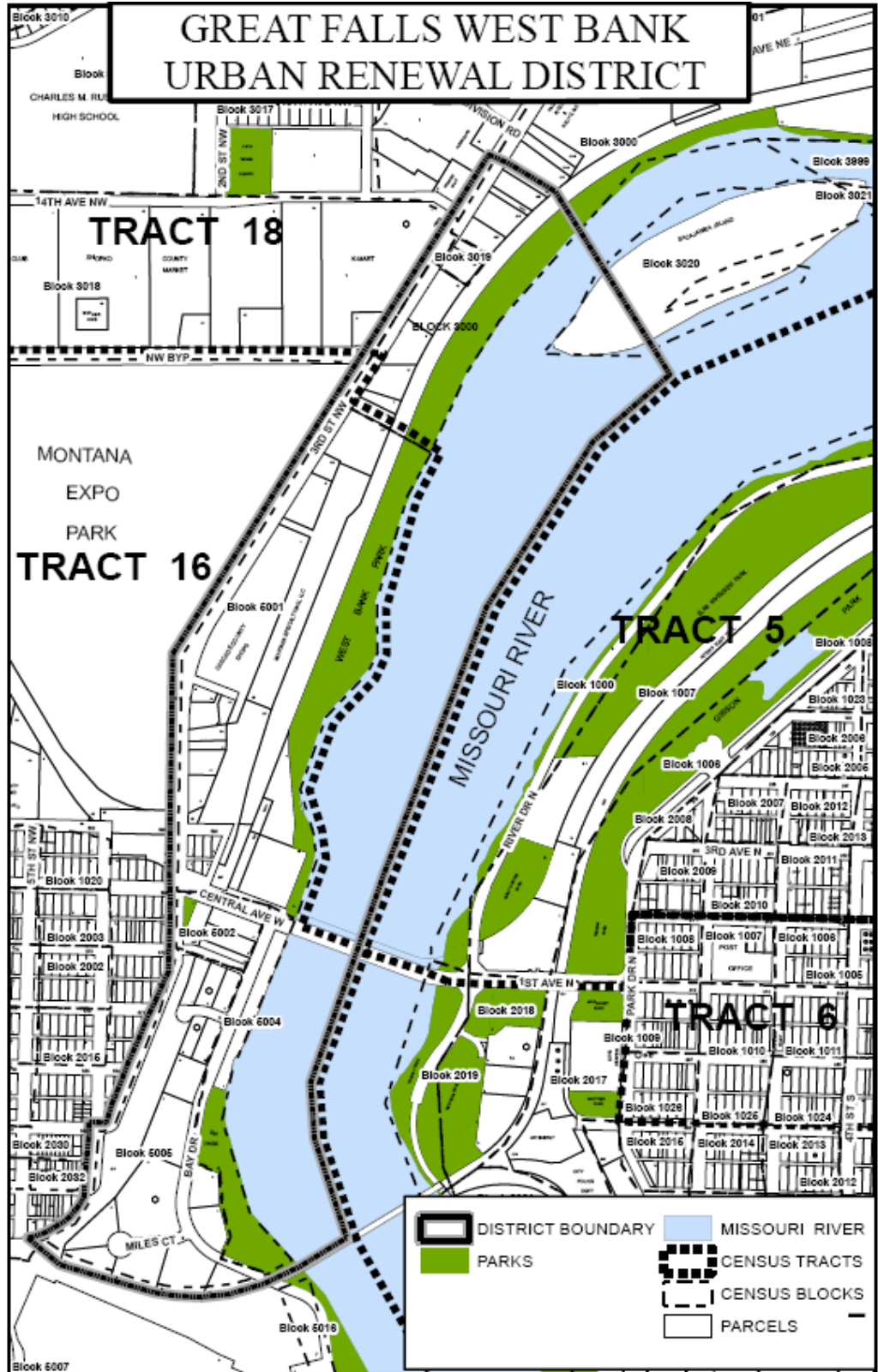


Figure 5. Census Designations

Chapter 3. Key Findings

This chapter of the Urban Renewal Plan provides an overview of the challenges and opportunities associated with the redevelopment of the West Bank Urban Renewal District. Information presented here has been gleaned from interviews and meetings with area property owners and residents, local government staff, Neighborhood Council #2 and other area stakeholders. While the West Bank Urban Renewal District can be characterized as blighted, the area has a number of recognized assets that will help foster redevelopment. For example, there is wide-spread support for area revitalization among property owners, stakeholders and the community in general.

Area Assets and Opportunities

The Missouri River and West Bank Park

The West Bank Urban Renewal District is bounded on the east by West Bank Park and the Missouri River which provide important scenic, natural, historic and recreational resources to residents and visitors. As noted in the 2004 *Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan*, the River is “a major community asset for enhanced livability, growth and economic development”. The District’s proximity to the river, in combination with West Bank Park can attract new development. The *Corridor Plan* also points out that the “Riverfront...creates real estate value [associated with its] proximity to water, views and public open space.”

Proximity to Downtown/Combating Urban Sprawl

The City’s plan to undertake the renewal of the West Bank area can be viewed as part of the overall effort to revitalize the city’s central business district and to discourage urban sprawl in general. As noted in the 2002 Great Falls Development Authority’s proposal to EPA for Brownfield Assessment grant funds, the redevelopment of “lands that have existing infrastructure...makes good planning sense, and it keeps redevelopment affordable and reduces urban sprawl. It also creates jobs in the city, close to where people live.”

Proximity to Transportation Corridors

The West Bank area is situated along two critical four-lane arterials – Central Avenue West and 3rd Street NW, which provide important links between downtown Great Falls, Interstate 15, the airport and the fairgrounds. The area has experienced increased traffic counts on 3rd Street Northwest and the Northwest Bypass, offering opportunities for successful development. The 2003 *Great Falls Area Transportation Plan* identifies 3rd Street Northwest as a major traffic corridor that is experiencing heavy traffic volumes.

Finally, railroad service is provided on an as needed basis to service Montana Specialty Mills and Montana Refining Company.

Existing and Proposed Area Development

As noted above, the West Bank Urban Renewal District is experiencing a change in land use, from heavy industrial to mixed uses. The new Federal Building, to be located on the former brewery property and the Walgreens Pharmacy, which is under construction in the northern portion of the District, will provide two important anchors for the District. The area is also home to a number of retail and service businesses. Finally, the Montana Expo Park borders the District on the west, providing an important traffic generator, as well as a potential partner in redevelopment efforts.

Challenges

Clean-up of Contaminants

The Third Street Northwest Groundwater Site is located within the West Bank Urban Renewal District and includes the County Shops, Montana Specialty Mills, portions of the BNSF Railway spur and West Bank Park. The Site is listed on the State of Montana's "Mini- Superfund Sites" because of petrochemical related contamination. Figure 6 shows the contaminated portion of the District.

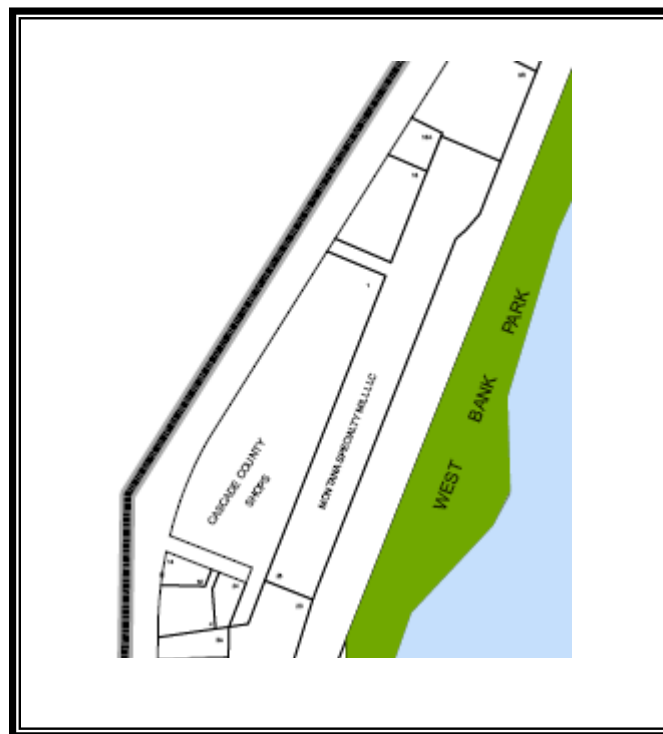


Figure 6. Contaminated Area

Clean-up of these contaminants will occur sequentially. For example, contaminants cannot be removed from West Bank Park until the County Shops and Montana Specialty Mill areas are addressed, because they are the “upstream” source of the pollutants. (See Table 2, Remediation Schedule in Chapter 4.) Redevelopment cannot occur in these areas until clean-up is complete.

Lot Size

Some of the properties within the urban renewal district are too small to accommodate new office or commercial development. Prior to significant redevelopment occurring, some of the smaller parcels of land will have to be consolidated, particularly those at the southern end of the District.

Access

While the District is adjacent to major arterials, access to and within the West Bank area is limited. In addition to the absence of roads, the railroad tracks that run north-south and parallel to the riverfront make it difficult to address the District’s transportation needs of vehicles and pedestrians. In particular, the sidetrack which currently serves Montana Specialty Mills, and which will no longer be needed once the mill is relocated, limits east-west access through a large portion of the District. Overall, the area lacks the necessary infrastructure to link recreational and commercial uses, which will ultimately be key to the successful redevelopment of the District.

Blighted Conditions in the West Bank Urban Renewal District

A Finding of Blight report for the West Bank Urban Renewal District was prepared in November of 2006. The following excerpts provide a general overview of blighted conditions in the District.

Physical deterioration of buildings

Although most of the buildings within the proposed West Bank Urban Renewal District are in use, the area generally has a deteriorating appearance. Many structures are in poor repair and properties are often poorly maintained, cluttered with refuse and waste storage areas.

According to building permit information prepared by the Great Falls Community Development Department, the majority of structures in the proposed district were constructed prior to the 1980s and many were constructed in the 1950s. While age alone does not indicate deterioration, permit information indicates that few major improvements have been made in recent decades.

Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings

The eastern edge of the West Bank Urban Renewal District includes portions of West Bank Park, an important recreation and scenic resource for the City of Great Falls. The park is located adjacent to areas that have been blighted by industrial pollution and refuse storage sites. These detract from and diminish the quality of the park. The District includes a number of retail and service establishments, reflective of the land uses on those properties adjacent to the urban renewal district. The presence of heavy industrial activities in close proximity to these less intensive uses creates incompatibilities associated with industrial noise, odor and dust.

The West Bank Urban Renewal District also includes a small number of homes. The presence of heavy industrial sites in close proximity to residences can result in the devaluation of property over time. A review of residential property values within the district indicates that while the land values have increased slightly, the value of improvements has stagnated between 2000 and 2006.

Public Infrastructure/Defective or Inadequate Street Layout

The sewer and water lines within the district were installed primarily in the 1960's and 1970's to serve the commercial and large industrial users in the area. There are also some large sewer trunk lines which traverse the area from south to north. They are generally in good condition and would be able to accommodate new commercial, office and residential development. (See Appendix C, Public Utilities.) The streets that are in the area serve the perimeter of the planning area well, but are virtually non-existent in the interior, especially on the north end of the district. Access is very poor to the area between the River and the railroad tracks. Of the roads that do exist, some require paving, while others should be realigned. The district is characterized by large industrial and heavy commercial uses and in some cases, there is no public access to individual sites via roads. For example, better access is needed to West Bank Park and the new Federal Building that is slated for construction to the north of Central Avenue West. Overall the interior of the area lacks sidewalks, curbs and gutters, landscaping and adequate lighting.

Unhealthy or Unsafe Conditions

The West Bank Urban Renewal District includes the Third Street Northwest Groundwater Site, which is listed on the Montana Comprehensive Environmental Cleanup and Responsibility Act (CECRA) listing of "Mini-Superfund" priority sites. According to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, contaminants at the site include benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene, chlorinated solvents and phenols. (Great Falls Tribune, December 16, 2001)

In 2002, the Great Falls Development Authority applied for and obtained a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment Grant as a first step in facilitating the redevelopment of the West Bank area. Brownfields are defined as those properties for which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. (<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>)

The proposal to EPA noted that the potential for in-fill development and reuse of lands in the West Bank area had been “marginalized” by the environmental pollution, creating a “lost opportunity” for reinvestment in the area. (Great Falls Riverfront Redevelopment Project...Final Grant Proposal).

Chapter 4. Goals and Strategies of the West Bank Urban Renewal Plan

This chapter presents the goals and strategies of the West Bank Urban Renewal Plan by category of concern.

Remediation of Environmental Pollutants

The West Bank Urban Renewal District includes the Third Street Northwest Groundwater Site, which is listed on the Montana Comprehensive Environmental Cleanup and Responsibility Act (CECRA) listing of “Mini-Superfund” priority sites. CECRA provides the Montana Department of Environmental Quality with similar authorities as provided under the federal Superfund Act. CECRA ranks these sites as maximum, high, medium, low and operation and maintenance priority based on the severity of contamination at the facility and the actual and potential impacts of contamination to public health, safety, and welfare and the environment. The Third Street Northwest Groundwater Site has been listed with a ranking of medium. (<http://www.deq.state.mt.us/StateSuperfund/index.asp>). According to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, contaminants at the site include benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene, chlorinated solvents and phenols. (Great Falls, *Tribune*, December 16, 2001)

In 2002, the Great Falls Development Authority applied for and obtained a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment Grant as a first step in facilitating the redevelopment of the West Bank area. Brownfields are defined as those properties for which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. (<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>). The proposal noted that the grant would help “facilitate development through completion of environmental assessments on properties in the area...and would identify the nature and severity of contamination on the properties and allow for the selection of cleanup remedies”. (*Finding of Blight Report, 2006*)

Cascade County is largely responsible for the removal of contaminants from the Third Street Northwest Groundwater Site which includes the site of the County Shops and Montana Specialty Mills (Figure 7). The clean-up of contaminants should occur sequentially. The clean-up phases are summarized below in Table 2. (Commencement dates, as provided by Cascade County, are approximate.)

Table 2. Remediation Schedule for the Third Street Northwest Groundwater Site		
Phase	Corrective Action	Proposed Date of Commencement
I	Remove contaminants from Cascade County Road and Bridge Department Shop (southern end of property)	November, 2007
II	Remove contaminants from Montana Specialty Mills site	Late, 2008
III	Clean-up Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) right of way	2009
IV	Clean-up West Bank Park area	2010
V	Remove contaminants from the Cascade County Solid Waste District Shop (northern end of property)	2007-2008
VI	Clean-up northeast area of County Shop	2007-2008

The *Great Falls Growth Policy* notes that Brownfields are currently “dealt with on a case-by-case basis, with clean-up usually funded as part of the cost of redeveloping the property”. The removal of contaminants in the West Bank Urban Renewal District by Cascade County will enable the property to be redeveloped for non-industrial uses. While the City of Great Falls is not responsible for contaminant removal, the Urban Renewal Plan must reflect the timing of clean-up activities.



Figure 7. Montana Specialty Mills

Goal: Foster development in the West Bank Urban Renewal District in phases with respect to the availability of land following the removal of contaminants.

Strategies:

- Communicate regularly with Cascade County to enable the coordination of development activities as contaminants are removed.
- Work with Cascade County in determining an approach to clean-up non-county properties including the BNSF railroad and West Bank Park.

Public Infrastructure Improvements

Sewer and Water Services

The sewer and water lines within the West Bank Urban Renewal District were installed primarily in the 1960's and 1970's to serve the commercial and large industrial users in the area. There are also some large sewer trunk lines which traverse the area from south to north. They are generally in good condition and would be able to accommodate new development. However, due to the lack of streets, curbs and sidewalks in the area, the storm drain system is inadequate and will have to be addressed.

Goal: Ensure that all land uses within the West Bank Urban Renewal District have safe water supplies, environmentally sound wastewater disposal systems, solid waste recycling/collection programs, and stormwater management systems that protect the public health, safety and welfare." (Great Falls Growth Policy, 2005)

Strategies:

- Work with the City of Great Falls Public Works Department to assure that the sewer and water infrastructure is appropriate for the scale and type of proposed development in the West Bank Urban Renewal District.
- Evaluate the current condition of the storm drain system with respect to proposed development within the West Bank Urban Renewal District and make improvements accordingly.

Area Access – Pedestrian and Vehicular

The streets in the area serve the perimeter of the Urban Renewal District well, but are virtually non-existent in the interior, especially on the north end of the District. Access is very poor to the area between the River and the railroad tracks. Of the roads that do exist, some require paving, while others should be realigned. The District is characterized by large industrial and heavy commercial uses and in some cases there is no public road access to individual sites. Better access is needed to West Bank Park and

the new Federal Building that is slated for construction to the north of Central Avenue West. In addition to the absence of roads within the District, it is difficult to access 3rd Street Northwest and Central Avenue West via a left turn from the existing roads within the District. The entire interior of the District lacks sidewalks, curbs and gutters. (*Finding of Blight Report*)

Goal: Provide a safe, efficient, accessible and cost-effective transportation system that offers viable choices for moving people and goods throughout the West Bank Urban Renewal District. (*Great Falls Growth Policy*)

Strategies:

- Identify and construct road system improvements for the West Bank Urban Renewal District that serve existing and proposed uses and address:
 - Access to and within the District
 - Sidewalks/Trails
 - Curbs
 - Gutters and Storm Drains
- Install traffic control signals and other safety features to improve access at appropriate locations.
- Work with BNSF to identify ways to provide access across the railroad right-of-way for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- Work with BNSF to determine the feasibility of removing the sidetrack rail serving Montana Specialty Mills to accommodate better access to the area.
- Provide for pedestrian access to and within the West Bank Urban Renewal District, providing links to Montana ExpoPark, West Bank Park, River's Edge Trail and nearby residential areas.

Park Development

West Bank Park (Figure 8) is an important area and community resource. Protection and enhancement of the Park is a key component in the redevelopment of the West Bank Urban Renewal District. More particularly, the Park is located within the Primary Impact Area, as defined in the *Great Falls Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan* (2004), "which includes those lands that have strong relationships to the river..." The Plan, which was called for in the 1999 *Great Falls City-County Comprehensive Plan* (now the *Great Falls Growth Policy, 2005*) presents a vision for what is possible in this corridor and includes general recommendations for access to the river, trails and the maintenance of public land. A companion document, the *Missouri River Urban Corridor Inventory & Assessment* (September 2002) characterizes existing conditions in the Corridor and makes recommendations for appropriate stabilization and recreational improvements.

The West Bank Park has also been identified by Great Falls Neighborhood Council #2 as an important neighborhood asset that contributes to the quality of life in the area and ties well to the Montana Expo Park. Area property owners have noted that West Bank Park and the riverfront help contribute to adjacent property values and provide an attractive setting for tenants and customers.



Figure 8. West Bank Park (Missouri River Corridor Plan)

Goal: Maintain and Improve West Bank Park within the West Bank Urban Renewal District.

Strategies:

- Prepare and Implement a Park Improvement Plan that addresses:
 - Pedestrian and Vehicular Access
 - Vegetation and Habitat
 - Trail & Pedestrian Use Within the Park
 - Connections to the River's Edge Trail System
 - Park Amenities and Facilities
 - Maintenance
 - Implementation Tools and Resources
- Work with adjacent property owners and developers to address Park access, visual integration with adjoining development/uses, and maintenance.

Area Design Features, Including Lighting and Landscaping

The *Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan* observes that "...there is a hodgepodge of poor quality design elements. In some areas, Quonset hut-style buildings and other structures of little aesthetic or architectural value, a surplus of unattractive and prominent signage, and a lack of unifying design details like street lighting and landscaping have resulted in a chaotic, unappealing environment. Development of this type discourages investment and upgrade to area properties." Design concepts such as buffering, shared open spaces, connection to public spaces, preservation of river views, street trees, and mixed uses are all encouraged to promote area identity, marketability and area vibrancy.

In addition, the *Great Falls Growth Policy* notes that it is the policy of the City to "encourage and promote street tree planting throughout the community and as a matter of policy, consider street trees as public infrastructure with priorities for preservation, replacement and maintenance".

Landscaping undertaken in association with development of streets, sidewalks and trails will serve to enhance the West Bank Urban Renewal District. In addition, the area will need adequate lighting to provide a safe and welcoming environment.

Goal: Urban Renewal Projects should be designed in a manner that is respectful of the area's natural and cultural setting with particular attention to landscaping and lighting.

Strategies:

- Develop and implement an urban tree planting program for the West Bank Urban Renewal District in association with the development of streets and sidewalks and in conjunction with the City Parks & Recreation Department that defines appropriate species, planting cycles and maintenance. Per the *Great Falls Growth Policy*, the City should prepare and implement a comprehensive planting, management and maintenance plan for street trees in the public rights-of-way.
- Identify an appropriate light standard that can be used throughout the District in conjunction with public improvements and private development.
- Encourage the preparation and adoption by area property owners of area-wide development standards to provide for cohesive development with a unique identity. Such standards could be used by developers when preparing plans and by the City's Design Review Board when considering proposed developments. This could be accomplished through the creation of neighborhood conservation overlay district.

Community and Economic Development

The *Great Falls Growth Policy* identifies a series of economic development goals, including the following that directly relate to the West Bank Urban Renewal District. These are:

- Diversify the base economy
- Enhance, strengthen and expand the existing economic base
- Encourage businesses and industries that will utilize existing infrastructure

The redevelopment of the West Bank Urban Renewal District can strengthen the economic base of Great Falls while taking advantage of existing sewer and water infrastructure within the urban core. This approach helps to counter urban sprawl and the associated costs in providing public services.

Fostering Private Development

The West Bank Urban Renewal Plan calls for public improvements in the West Bank Urban Renewal District in support of new investment. The role of the private sector will be critical in the redevelopment process. Private investments made in the area will, in turn, provide the City with the necessary financial resources (via Tax Increment Financing and other mechanisms) to develop public infrastructure that will contribute to the overall revitalization of the area.

This Urban Renewal Plan provides the necessary administrative structure to direct community resources to renewal activities within the District. However, it will be the private sector that undertakes specific site planning and development activities on privately owned lands. To achieve a high quality of design, representatives of private property owners, including Cascade County and area developers will work together to prepare a development master plan that will reflect the following underlying principles:

- ✓ Public access to West Bank Park and other riverfront parks will be incorporated into area design schemes.
- ✓ Lighting, street design and other landscaping features will be consistent throughout the District. Unifying architectural features and signage is also encouraged.
- ✓ Development will be phased in accordance with the contaminated soils clean-up schedule, as developed by Cascade County and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

Goal: Encourage thoughtful, well designed private development activity.

Strategies:

- Encourage the preparation of a development master plan for the West Bank District by property owners and developers that recognizes the sequential nature of the removal of pollutants from the area.
- Encourage the preparation of a development master plan that addresses the various sub-areas within the Urban Renewal District as follows:
 - The area to the south of the Cascade County Shops (including the area south of Central Avenue
 - The area that includes both the Cascade County Shops and the Montana Specialty Mills (MSM)
 - The area to the north of the Shops and MSM
- Consider the use of protective covenants in addition to existing zoning provisions to assure high quality development within the area
- Facilitate thoughtful project design that focuses on enhancing and protecting the area's natural and scenic resources
- Work with the private sector to identify public infrastructure needs for the area.
- Work with BNSF to determine the feasibility of removing the sidetrack rail serving Montana Specialty Mills to create more privately-owned land for development
- Foster cooperative efforts among public and private entities to achieve the goals of the Urban Renewal Plan
- Work with property owners and developers to identify opportunities to realign Bay Drive to facilitate redevelopment

Working in Partnership with Downtown

The City's plan to undertake the renewal of the West Bank District is part of an overall effort to revitalize the City's urban core and to discourage urban sprawl in general. The redevelopment of the West Bank District will serve to both expand and enhance Great Falls' urban center. The proposed private and public investment in the West Bank District will enable the City's core business area to encompass both sides of the Missouri River, taking full advantage of this important asset.

Goal: Coordinate the West Bank Urban Renewal program with ongoing efforts to revitalize Downtown Great Falls.

Strategies:

- Coordinate planning efforts between the West Bank District and Downtown.

- Identify joint activities, such as the creation of transportation and recreation services that connect Downtown and the West Bank District.

Historic/Cultural Resources

Historically, the west side of the Missouri River in Great Falls was the home of Montana's largest gasoline refinery, built by the Great Falls Sunburst Oil and Refinery Company. The refinery began operations in early 1923 along the 300 and 400 blocks of 3rd Street Northwest and was subsequently purchased by the California Eastern Oil Company in 1927. Cascade County took possession of the property in 1936 after California Eastern failed to pay gasoline license taxes and associated delinquent fees. By 1938, Cascade County had constructed its road and bridge department shops at the site (Great Falls, *Tribune*, December 16, 2001). The West Bank District also included the site of the former Montana Brewing Company complex, built in 1893-94, just north of Central Avenue West, along the Missouri River. In 1933, it became the malt plant for the Great Falls Breweries, Inc., which closed in 1968. The last remnants of the site were removed in July, 2006 to make way for a new 54,000 square foot Federal Courthouse (*Sun River News*, July 11, 2006).

Today, there are 51 parcels in the West Bank Urban Renewal District, including a small number of residences and a variety of retail and service oriented businesses, such as, a veterinary clinic, J Bar T Tavern, and the Cowboy's Bar. Overall, the West Bank District is undergoing a transition from heavy industrial uses to commercial and retail uses, reflective of development that is occurring on adjacent properties, particularly along 3rd Street NW/SW. As this transition continues, it will be important to take stock of the remaining historic properties and to plan carefully for their interpretation, preservation and appropriate integration into area development. For example, the Montana Cowboy's Association is interested in having the Cowboy's Bar and associated museum placed on the National Register of Historic Places. (See Figure 9, below.) Additionally, the Missouri River and Sacagawea Island are important natural, cultural and historic resources that should be included in any area assessments. Other properties may be eligible for listing as well. Most federal and state grant programs require applicants to address potential impacts on properties eligible for listing in the National Register. An inventory of historic resources would help assure more thoughtful development.

Goal: Assess, preserve and interpret historic and cultural resources within the West Bank Urban Renewal District.

Strategies:

- Conduct an inventory of historic and cultural resources within the West Bank Urban Renewal District
- Work with private property owners to preserve historic sites
- Develop a pedestrian oriented interpretive program to include information concerning:
 - Existing sites of historic or cultural interest
 - Former occupants of the area
 - Environmental history of the area
 - History of the River



Figure 9. Cowboy's Bar

Natural Resources

The Missouri River and the associated West Bank Park are the defining features of the West Bank Urban Renewal District. Not only do these resources make the area more attractive for investment and overall community renewal, but they are intrinsic to the quality of life in the City of Great Falls and the surrounding region. They offer scenic and recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors to Great Falls.

The area along the River has undergone a significant transition. As recently as 20 years ago, the current West Bank Park was the site of a construction waste dump. The area was “reclaimed” through a major effort to remove the waste and restore the river front area, providing an important recreation resource for the people of Great Falls. The Park is now part of the city wide park system and a key component of the public corridor along the Missouri River.

The Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan identifies guiding principles and “communicates a vision for economic vitality” associated with the River while, at the same time recognizing “that the River is a vital part of a large ecosystem and that the environmental integrity of the River must be protected.” The following Urban Renewal Plan Goal is taken directly from the *Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan*.

Goal: Promote beneficial, sustainable economic development that utilizes the River as an amenity while preserving and enhancing its ecological integrity and asset values.

Strategies

- Restore, enhance and protect water quality, natural shoreline vegetation and wetlands in association with improvements to West Bank Park and the River’s Edge Trail
- Assure that the environmental health of the River will not be compromised by development
- Work with property owners to develop shoreline protection programs in conjunction with their development activities

Chapter 5. Planning Approach – The Defining Elements

The design and implementation of the West Bank Urban Renewal Plan is being undertaken in a manner that is reflective of sound public policy and thoughtful planning. To this end, a number of “defining” elements have been identified that will characterize the projects and activities undertaken in connection with the revitalization and redevelopment of the West Bank area.

Sub Area Planning – Phased Development

The West Bank Urban Renewal District is likely to be developed in stages. The sequential nature of the removal of contaminants from the area currently occupied by the County Shops and Montana Specialty Mills will dictate, to some extent, which lands are redeveloped first. Given that the removal of contaminants will not be completed for approximately three years, the areas to the north and south of the Third Street Northwest Groundwater Site will likely be developed first. The building of the new Federal Courthouse to the south and the new Walgreens Pharmacy to the north provide examples of likely development patterns. Private development and public infrastructure improvements should be designed in a manner that will allow for phased implementation.

Thoughtful Design

The location of the West Bank Urban Renewal District, adjacent to the Missouri River and West Bank Park, requires that projects are designed in a manner that is sensitive to the area’s natural resources. The River and the Park add value to the lands within the District by providing an aesthetically pleasing environment within which reinvestment can occur. Urban renewal projects should serve to complement these resources rather than create a development pattern that diminishes their value. Thoughtful, well-designed development will, in turn, enhance the natural setting, drawing additional investment.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

The successful implementation of the West Bank Urban Renewal Plan will rely on cooperation between the City of Great Falls, Cascade County and the State of Montana. Cascade County, over the next several years, will be working with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality to address contaminated soils in the central portions of the West Bank Urban Renewal District. Following clean-up, the County will exercise its options regarding redevelopment of its properties. It will be important for Cascade County to be involved with other property owners in the West Bank Urban Renewal District, as well as the City of Great Falls in planning for the District’s redevelopment. The County’s participation in the development master planning

process for the area will be particularly critical. The proximity of the Montana Expo Park with the Renewal District is also a key factor in redevelopment. The Expo Park provides an important area asset that can help contribute to the District's revitalization.

Public Investment

The revitalization of the West Bank Urban Renewal District will require cooperation between the public and private sectors. As noted above, the City of Great Falls intends to invest in public infrastructure improvements in order to foster private investment. Public improvement projects will be undertaken in support of private development and with respect to area master plans developed by area property owners and investors. Funding for public infrastructure improvements will come from a number of sources including, but not limited to Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Specific projects will be undertaken in accordance with the Montana Urban Renewal Law, 7-15-42 and 7-15-43, MCA.

Planning Consistency

Conformity with the Growth Policy

This Urban Renewal Plan must conform to the Great Falls, *Growth Policy*, adopted in 2005, per 7-15-4213, MCA. Where appropriate, specific reference has been made to the *Growth Policy*, particularly in Chapter 4 of this Plan. *On February 27, 2007, the Great Falls City Planning Board reviewed this Urban Renewal Plan and found it to be in conformance with the Growth Policy, per statutory requirements.*

Other Planning Documents

In the preparation of the West Bank Urban Renewal Plan, a variety of other planning documents were consulted to assure that the Urban Renewal Plan would work in concert with other efforts to plan for the future of Great Falls. These included:

- Missouri River Urban Corridor Inventory and Assessment (2002)
- Great Falls Area Transportation Plan (2003)
- Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan (2004)

Chapter 6. Implementation

The West Bank Urban Renewal Plan sets a direction for redevelopment and revitalization of the West Bank Urban Renewal District. Upon its adoption, this Plan will serve as the official policy guide for public action. However, these policies can only be transformed to action through an effective implementation program. Key to implementation will be sound processes of administration, financing and program evaluation.

Administration

The administration of the redevelopment effort outlined in this plan will be the responsibility of the Great Falls City Commission. Under 7-15- 4232, the City Commission may choose to create a separate urban renewal agency or authorize an existing department to implement this Urban Renewal Plan. However, it is the intent of the Commission to retain the responsibility and authority for administering the West Bank Urban Renewal Program. Various city departments will be authorized by the Commission to undertake specific tasks associated with implementation as necessary.

Each year the City of Great Falls, or the authorized department will prepare an annual work program and budget and will list the activities and costs of the activities for the coming fiscal year, as well as the method of financing those activities. This program and budget may be amended during the course of the fiscal year, in light of funding and program changes. All budgets and revised budgets shall be reviewed and approved by the City of Great Falls. Urban renewal activities undertaken by the City of Great Falls will be in accordance with Montana State statute. (See specific provisions below.)

7-15-4233. Powers which may be exercised by urban renewal agency or authorized department. (1) In the event the local governing body makes such determination, such body may authorize the urban renewal agency or department or other officers of the municipality to exercise any of the following urban renewal project powers:

- (a) to formulate and coordinate a workable program as specified in [7-15-4209](#);
- (b) to prepare urban renewal plans;
- (c) to prepare recommended modifications to an urban renewal project plan;
- (d) to undertake and carry out urban renewal projects as required by the local governing body;
- (e) to make and execute contracts as specified in [7-15-4251](#), [7-15-4254](#), [7-15-4255](#), and [7-15-4281](#), with the exception of contracts for the purchase or sale of real or personal property;
- (f) to disseminate blight clearance and urban renewal information;
- (g) to exercise the powers prescribed by [7-15-4255](#), except the power to agree to conditions for federal financial assistance and imposed pursuant to federal law relating to salaries and wages shall be reserved to the local governing body;
- (h) to enter any building or property in any urban renewal area in order to make surveys and appraisals in the manner specified in [7-15-4257](#);
- (i) to improve, clear, or prepare for redevelopment any real or personal property in an urban renewal area;
- (j) to insure real or personal property as provided in [7-15-4258](#);
- (k) to effectuate the plans provided for in [7-15-4254](#);
- (l) to prepare plans for the relocation of families displaced from an urban renewal area and to coordinate public and private agencies in such relocation;
- (m) to prepare plans for carrying out a program of voluntary or compulsory repair and rehabilitation of buildings and improvements;
- (n) to conduct appraisals, title searches, surveys, studies, and other preliminary plans and work necessary to prepare for the undertaking of urban renewal projects;
- (o) to negotiate for the acquisition of land;
- (p) to study the closing, vacating, planning, or replanning of streets, roads, sidewalks, ways, or other places and to make recommendations with respect thereto;
- (q) to organize, coordinate, and direct the administration of the provisions of this part and part 43;
- (r) to perform such duties as the local governing body may direct so as to make the necessary arrangements for the exercise of the powers and performance of the duties and responsibilities entrusted to the local governing body.

(2) Any powers granted in this part or part 43 that are not included in subsection (1) as powers of the urban renewal agency or a department or other officers of a municipality in lieu thereof may only be exercised by the local governing body or other officers, boards, and commissions as provided under existing law.

Program Funding

Tax Increment Financing Provision

The implementation of the West Bank Urban Renewal Plan will include the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Under Section 7-15-4282 of the Montana Urban Renewal Law communities may establish tax increment districts for the purposes of revitalizing blighted neighborhoods and central business districts. Tax increment financing directs new property tax dollars resulting from increases in the market value of real property to the area where the real property is located. The base property tax (before any improvements to real property) continues to be distributed to the local governments and school districts. However, tax dollars that accrue from increases in property values (from rehabilitation, new construction, etc.) are available for urban renewal projects as defined by the Montana Urban Renewal Law. More particularly, costs which may be paid using TIF dollars are included in 7-15-4288, MCA. (See Appendix D.)

A tax increment program is authorized for 15 years or longer if the tax increment revenue is pledged to the payment of tax increment bonds. 7-15-4289, MCA provides for the use of tax increments for bond payments. The tax increment may be pledged to the payment of the principal of premiums, if any, and interest on bonds which the municipality may issue for the purpose of providing funds to pay such costs.

The City of Great Falls will establish a Tax Increment Financing program for the West Bank Urban Renewal District, as defined in Chapter 2 of this Urban Renewal Plan. The base year for the purposes of measuring any incremental value will be January 1, 2007.

Per 7-15-4291, MCA, the City of Great Falls may enter into agreements with the other affected taxing bodies to remit to such taxing bodies any portion of the annual tax increment not currently required for the payment of the costs listed in 7-15-4288, MCA or pledged to the payment of the principal of premiums, if any, and interest on bonds.

Other Financing Mechanisms

There are a number of financial assistance programs that can be used in the revitalization of the West Bank Urban Renewal District in addition to Tax Increment Financing. Financing strategies for addressing urban renewal needs identified in this Plan will likely include combining various funding sources. For example, a local special improvement district might be used in combination with a Montana Board of Investment Intercap loan to match federal or state dollars. The following is a summary of programs available to fund urban renewal projects

Transportation Infrastructure

This section describes funds and funding sources that are available to finance urban renewal transportation related projects. These funding methods, such as local option taxes, improvement districts and other types of bonds, enable local citizens to participate in funding projects. In general, however, the ability to use additional property tax levies to fund urban renewal is governed by Montana Statute under 15-10-402 MCA that limits taxes to 1996 levels.

A. Bridge and Road Mills (Property Taxes)

Montana law provides for cities (7-14-4101, MCA) to manage transportation infrastructure. Counties are specifically responsible for all the bridges in a county, including those within cities and towns, except those managed by the Montana Department of Transportation. Municipalities may establish a city road fund under 7-14-4113 MCA.

B. Transportation Improvement Authority

Established under 7-14-1001, MCA, the purpose of a transportation improvement authority is to blend the interests of local, state, and federal governments with the interests of the general public and the business community to build, modify, or improve transportation facilities and systems within its jurisdiction. A county and a municipality within a county may, by joint resolution, create a transportation improvement authority. The Authority may enter into contracts and accept local, state, federal and private funds to undertake transportation projects.

C. Community Transportation Enhancement Program

Under 23 USC 133 (d) (2) (Federal Code) 10 percent of the Surface Transportation Program monies are awarded to each state for transportation enhancements. Montana is unique in that enhancements are made available to communities under the Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) administered by the Montana Department of Transportation. The MDT distributes these funds for all counties and cities that are 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class cities, and tribal governments. Local governments are responsible for providing the required 13 percent of project costs as non-federal match for their transportation enhancement projects.

In order to receive funding, transportation enhancement projects must be included in the local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. Eligible CTEP categories include:

- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Historic preservation

- Acquisition of scenic easements and historic or scenic sites
- Archaeological planning and research
- Mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff or reduce vehicle-caused
- Wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity
- Scenic or historic highway programs including provisions of tourist and welcome center facilities
- Landscaping and other scenic beautification
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use for bicycle or pedestrian trails)
- Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities (including railroads)
- Control and removal of outdoor advertising
- Establishment of transportation museums
- Provisions of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists

Projects addressing these categories and that are linked to the transportation system by proximity, function or impact, and where required, meet the "historic" criteria, may be eligible for enhancement funding. For example, where an historic bridge must be replaced because of structural deficiencies, enhancement funds might be used to preserve the original bridge as part of an interpretive trail.

D. State Fuel Tax

Under 15-70-101, MCA, Montana assesses a tax of \$.27 per gallon on gasoline and diesel fuel used for transportation purposes. Each incorporated city and town receives a portion of the total tax funds allocated to cities and towns based on:

- 1) The ratio of the population within each city and town to the total population in all cities and towns in the State;
- 2) The ratio of the street mileage within each city and town to the total street mileage in all incorporated cities and towns in the State. The street mileage is exclusive of the Interstate, National Highway, and Primary Systems.

All fuel tax funds allocated to city governments must be used for the construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and repair of rural roads or city streets and alleys. Priorities for the use of these funds are established by the cities receiving them.

Debt Financing – All Types of Projects

Cities can make use of various kinds of debt financing to fund urban renewal projects. These include general obligation bonds, special improvement district bonds and

revenue bonds as well as Tax Increment Financing Bonds. Debt financing enables local governments to finance major infrastructure projects using future revenue from special assessments, user fees, and other forms of revenue. Under 7-7-4101, MCA, a city or town council has power to incur indebtedness by borrowing money, issuing bonds, issuing notes, entering into leases, entering into lease-purchase agreements, or entering into installment purchase contracts for the following purposes:

- (1) acquiring land for and designing and erecting public buildings;
- (2) acquiring land for and designing and constructing sewers, sewage treatment and disposal plants, waterworks, reservoirs, reservoir sites, and lighting plants;
- (3) supplying the city or town with water by contract and the construction or purchase of canals or ditches and water rights for supplying the city or town with water;
- (4) designing and constructing bridges, docks, wharves, breakwaters, piers, jetties, and moles;
- (5) acquiring, opening, or widening any street and improving the street by constructing, reconstructing, and repairing pavement, gutters, curbs, and vehicle parking strips and to pay all or any portion of the cost relating to the project;
- (6) purchasing or leasing fire apparatus, street and other equipment, and personal property, including without limitation, vehicles, telephone systems, and photocopy and office equipment, including computer hardware and software;
- (7) building, purchasing, designing, constructing, and maintaining devices intended to protect the safety of the public from open ditches carrying irrigation or other water;
- (8) funding outstanding warrants and maturing bonds; and
- (9) repaying tax protests lost by the city, town, or other municipal corporation.

The local government incurs various administrative costs in conjunction with issuing bonds. These costs include the retention of legal counsel and financial consultants, the establishment of reserve funds and the preparation of the prospectus and various required documents. These bonds provide tax-free interest earnings to purchasers and are therefore subject to detailed scrutiny under both state and federal law. The citations in the Montana Code are listed below, for each type of bond described.

A. *Special Improvement Districts*

Under 7-12-4101, MCA, cities and towns can create special improvement districts for a number of activities including:

- The acquisition, construction or reconstruction of public streets and roads
- The acquisition, construction or reconstruction of sidewalks, culverts, bridges, gutters, curbs, steps and parks including the planting of trees

- The construction or reconstruction of sewers, ditches, drains, conduits, and channels for sanitary or drainage purposes, with outlets, cesspools, manholes, catch basins, flush tanks, septic tanks, connecting sewers, ditches, drains, conduits, channels, and other appurtenances
- The construction of sewer and water systems including fire hydrants
- The acquisition and improvement of land to be designated as public park or open-space land
- The conversion of overhead utilities to underground locations in accordance with 69-4-311 through 69-4-314, MCA
- The purchase, installation, maintenance, and management of alternative energy production facilities

B. General Obligation Bonds

General obligation bonds are backed by the full faith and credit of the city and must be approved by the voters in an election. General obligation bonds are generally payable from ad valorem taxes (based on the value of property) and expressed in mills. General obligation bonds are attractive to bond buyers because they have voter approval and are not as vulnerable to fluctuations in revenue. Cities are assigned a bond debt limit based on a percentage of taxable valuation. General obligation bonds must fall within this limit.

C. Revenue Bonds

Under 7-7-4401, MCA, a city or town may issue revenue bonds to finance any project or activity authorized

Railroad Crossing Related Programs

A. STPRP - Rail/Highway Crossing Protective Devices Program

The purpose of the Federal Rail/Highway Crossing – Protective Devices Program is to identify high hazard rail crossing sites and install new rail crossing signals. MDT's Rail - Highway Safety manager is responsible for surveying, identifying and prioritizing those railroad crossings that require new protective devices or upgrading of existing devices. The funds are distributed on a statewide basis determined by a priority list ranked by a hazard index. The Federal/State ratio is 90% Federal and 10% State.

B. STPRR - Rail/Highway Crossing Elimination of Hazard Program

The purpose of the Federal Rail/Highway Crossing – Elimination of Hazard Program is to identify high hazard rail crossing sites and construct new rail/highway grade crossings. The program also uses funds to rehabilitate existing grade separations.

Grade separation projects are funded with 90% Federal funds and 10% State funds. Since funding for this program is limited, STPRR funds are often used in combination with other Federal funding sources to fund costly grade separation projects.

Eligible expenditures include the separation or protection at grade crossings, reconstruction of existing crossings and relocation of highways to eliminate crossings.

Projects for this program are selected by identifying those sites where only a grade separation will eliminate an identified hazard or where an existing grade separation exists but needs rehabilitation or replacement.

Funding for Public Improvements (Sewer, Water, Roads, Community Facilities, Parks)

A. Treasure State Endowment Program ~ Montana Department of Commerce

The Montana Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) is a state-funded program, authorized under 90-6-701 through 710, MCA, and is administered by the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC). It is designed to assist local governments in financing capital improvements to sewer and water facilities. Funds are derived from the Montana coal severance tax and made available to local governments as matching grants, loans and grant/loan combinations. TSEP also provides matching grants of up to \$15,000 to local governments for preliminary engineering study costs.

TSEP funds may not be used for annual operation and maintenance; the purchase of non-permanent furnishings; or for refinancing existing debt, except when required in conjunction with the financing of a new TSEP project. Grant requests cannot exceed \$500,000 and the local government must typically provide a dollar for dollar match that can include other grant funds. Matching funds can be public or private funds provided by a TSEP applicant to directly support the cost of eligible project activities. There are a number of ways in which local governments can provide matching funds for bridge projects. Eligible types of matching funds include:

- local general funds or other cash;
- proceeds from the sale of general obligation, revenue, special assessment or other bonds;
- entitlement or formula-based federal or state funds such as federal highway funds or payments in lieu of taxes;
- loan or grant funds from a state or federal program (including TSEP loans);
- funds expended for engineering studies, reports, and plans, or other reasonable expenses expended for the preparation of the application, directly related to the proposed project during the period 24 months prior to the TSEP application deadline;

- funds expended after the TSEP application deadline, but before being approved by the Legislature, for project management, final engineering design, and other reasonable expenses necessary to prepare the project as proposed in the TSEP application for the construction phase;
- the value of land or materials provided by the applicant, if appraised within a two-year period preceding the application deadline. The appraisal must be:
 - an impartially written statement that adequately describes the land or materials, and states an opinion of defined value as of a specific date;
 - supported by an analysis of relevant market information; and
 - prepared by a qualified appraiser independent from the applicant.
- the value of labor performed by the applicant's employees on the proposed project, after the TSEP project has been approved for funding and a TSEP contract has been signed, as long as the employee is paid at his or her standard hourly rate of pay and the time worked is adequately documented; and
- the value of machinery used in the process of constructing the project that is owned (or leased) and operated by the applicant. The value of the use of the machinery will be determined using the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) equipment rate schedules.

B. The Montana Intercap Program ~ Montana Board of Investments

The INTERCAP Program is a low cost, variable-rate program that lends money to Montana local governments, state agencies and the university system for the purpose of financing or refinancing the acquisition and installation of equipment or personal and real property and infrastructure improvements. The Board of Investments issues tax-exempt bonds and loans the proceeds to eligible borrowers. In addition to long-term financing, INTERCAP is an excellent source for interim financing.

Funding is always available with no specific cycle. Allocations of \$200,000 and under are considered and approved by the Board of Investments staff. Allocations in excess of \$200,000 are considered and approved by the Board. Funds are released on an on-going basis as the project is completed. The program provides loans at a variable rate plus a one percent loan origination fee on loans over one year and for a term of 5 or 10 years depending on the borrower's legal authority. Short-term loans of less than a year are also available. Interest and principal payments are due bi-annually (February 15 and August 15 of each year). Loans may be pre-paid without penalty with 30 days notice. Types of financing include installment purchase loans, general fund loans, general obligation bonds, revenue bonds and special improvement district and rural improvement district bonds. Gas tax revenues may not be used to service debt. Projects that will use rural improvement district payments to cover the annual debt are

limited to a total loan of \$300,000. Intercap funds may be used in association with other grant and loan programs as well as local sources.

C. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)- US Department of Urban Development (HUD)

This program provides annual grants on a formula basis to entitled cities and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. The program is authorized under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, Public Law 93-383, as amended; [42 U.S.C.-5301 et seq.](#)

HUD awards grants to entitlement community grantees to carry out a wide range of community development activities directed toward revitalizing neighborhoods, economic development, and providing improved community facilities and services.

Entitlement communities develop their own programs and funding priorities. However, grantees must give maximum feasible priority to activities which benefit low- and moderate-income persons. A grantee may also carry out activities which aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight. Additionally, grantees may fund activities when the grantee certifies that the activities meet other community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community where other financial resources are not available to meet such needs. CDBG funds may not be used for activities which do not meet these broad national objectives.

Eligible grantees are as follows:

- principal cities of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs);
- other metropolitan cities with populations of at least 50,000; and
- qualified urban counties with populations of at least 200,000 (excluding the population of entitled cities) are entitled to receive annual grants.

HUD determines the amount of each entitlement grant by a statutory dual formula which uses several objective measures of community needs, including the extent of poverty, population, housing overcrowding, age of housing and population growth lag in relationship to other metropolitan areas. CDBG funds may be used for activities which include, but are not limited to:

- acquisition of real property;
- relocation and demolition;
- rehabilitation of residential and non-residential structures;
- construction of public facilities and improvements, such as water and sewer facilities, streets, neighborhood centers, and the conversion of school buildings for eligible purposes;
- public services, within certain limits;
- activities relating to energy conservation and renewable energy resources; and
- provision of assistance to profit-motivated businesses to carry out economic development and job creation/retention activities.

D. Public Works Program ~ Economic Development Administration

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce. The purpose of the Public Works Program is to assist communities with the funding of public works and development facilities that contribute to the creation or retention of private sector jobs and to the alleviation of unemployment and underemployment. Such assistance is designed to help communities achieve lasting improvement by stabilizing and diversifying local economies, and improving local living conditions and the economic environment of the area.

Grants are awarded up to a participation level of 80 percent but the average EDA grant covers approximately 50 percent of project costs. Acceptable sources of match include cash, local general obligation or revenue bonds; Community Development Block Grants, TSEP grants and loans, entitlement funds, Rural Development loans; and other public and private financing, including donations.

Projects must result in private sector job and business development in order to be considered for funding. Eligible applicants under this program include any state, or political subdivision thereof, Indian tribe (and other U.S. political entities), private or public nonprofit organization or association representing any redevelopment area if the project is within an EDA-designated redevelopment area. Redevelopment areas, other than those designated under the Public Works Impact Program must have a current EDA-approved Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP) in place.

E. Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team

In 1982, a group of professionals from state, federal, and non-profit organizations that finance, regulate, or provide technical assistance for community water and wastewater systems, decided to start meeting in order to coordinate and enhance their efforts. This group calls itself the "Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team"

or W2ASACT for short. W2ASACT meets several times a year to find ways to improve our state's environmental infrastructure. All of the programs represented in W2ASACT have different missions and meet unique needs. However, it has been the common elements shared by the funding programs that have been the driving force of W2 SACT. These programs provide money (grants or loans), take applications from communities to fund their projects, and administer those monies once the project is funded. While W2ASACT cannot change all of the state or federal requirements, it can identify unnecessary duplication of requirements that make compliance difficult for communities.

Voluntary Programs

In some cases, homeowner associations, business groups or other property owners may finance urban renewal projects voluntary basis.

West Bank Urban Renewal Program Evaluation

The West Bank Urban Renewal Plan will be evaluated on a yearly basis in conjunction with the preparation of the annual report. Measures that may be used in evaluating program success include:

- Increases in the property tax base
- Creation of jobs within the Urban Renewal District
- Elimination of blighted conditions
- The extent of redevelopment in previously contaminated areas
- Use of the public spaces within the District including the West Bank Park and the riverfront trail system

Success will also be measured in terms of the overall guiding principles noted in Chapter 1 of this plan and restated here:

- The plan for the West Bank Urban Renewal District should foster economic development and job creation.
- The improvement of the overall environmental quality of the West Bank Urban Renewal District is critical.
- Protection and enhancement of West Bank Park and the Missouri River, which form the eastern boundary of the District are key in the redevelopment of the West Bank Urban Renewal District.

The plan provides flexibility to accommodate a variety of approaches. However, changes over time may necessitate more formal amendments to the Urban Renewal Plan. The Urban Renewal Plan may be modified by ordinance under 7-15-4221, MCA.



Figure 10. Urban Renewal Area from the north

APPENDIX A. RESOLUTION OF BLIGHT

RESOLUTION 9626

A RESOLUTION DECLARING A BLIGHTED AREA EXISTS WITHIN THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA AND THAT THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THAT AREA IS NECESSARY IN THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF THE RESIDENTS OF GREAT FALLS AND TO DETERMINE THE BOUNDARIES OF THAT AREA

WHEREAS, the State of Montana has provided for the redevelopment of those portions of its cities which constitute a menace to public health and safety, constitute an economic and social liability and substantially impair the sound growth of a municipality; and,

WHEREAS, the procedure provided in Title 7, Chapter 15, Parts 42 and 43 of the Montana Codes Annotated authorizes municipalities to exercise statutory urban renewal powers for redevelopment and rehabilitation through urban renewal plans and projects, after the municipality has made a finding that a blighted area exists that substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the city or its environs; retards the provision of housing accommodations; constitutes an economic or social liability and/or is detrimental or constitutes a menace to the public health, safety, welfare, and morals in its present condition and use; and,

WHEREAS, on November 8, 2006, the City Commission directed the study to determine the existence of blight within the urban area; and,

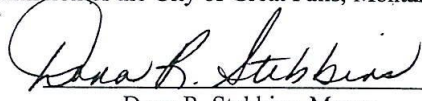
WHEREAS, the City of Great Falls has conducted the study (attached as Exhibit "A" to this Resolution) to determine the existence of blight in an area known as the West Bank and generally described as bounded on the West by 3rd Street NW/SW, on the East by the center line of the Missouri River, on the North by a point just north of 14th Avenue NW and on the South by a point just south of 5th Avenue SW and excludes any unincorporated property, as of October 2006, and in particular found:

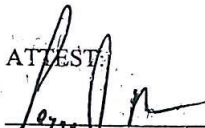
1. Physical deterioration of buildings and properties
 - o Many of the structures in the defined area are in poor repair and properties are poorly maintained. Building permit information indicates that the majority of existing structures have not been substantially improved for at least twenty years.
2. Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings
 - o The presence of existing heavy industrial uses within the defined area is incompatible with retail, commercial, residential and parkland development. This land use conflict has proven to be a disincentive to the improvement of properties within the area by private enterprise.
3. Defective street layout
 - o Much of the area is without streets, sidewalks, curbs, or gutters resulting in poor traffic circulation and storm drainage problems.
4. Unsanitary and unsafe conditions
 - o Portions of the defined area are included in the list of priority sites maintained by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality under the Comprehensive Environmental Cleanup and Responsibility Act (CECRA) and are designated a Brownfield site as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Contamination on the site is associated with historic industrial activity and has affected both the soil and groundwater and threatens to contaminate the Missouri River.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA;

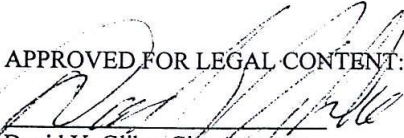
That the City Commission finds that blight exists within the City of Great Falls in the area described in Exhibit "A" of this Resolution under the definition contained in Section 7-15-4206 (2), M.C.A. and that rehabilitation and redevelopment of such area (pursuant to the Montana Urban Renewal Law) is necessary and desirable in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the City of Great Falls and that this rehabilitation and redevelopment be made with a commitment to quality improvement and a commitment to property owner and community involvement in decision making.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Commission of the City of Great Falls, Montana, on this 5th day of December, 2006.


Dona R. Stebbins, Mayor

ATTEST:

Peggy J. Bourne, City Clerk

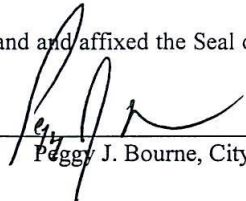
(SEAL OF CITY)

APPROVED FOR LEGAL CONTENT:

David V. Gliko, City Attorney

State of Montana)
County of Cascade :ss
City of Great Falls)

I, Peggy J. Bourne, City Clerk of the City of Great Falls, Montana, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution 9626 was placed on its final passage by the Commission of the City of Great Falls, Montana, at a meeting thereof held on the 5th Day of December, 2006, wherein it was approved by said Commission.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Seal of said City this 5th day of December, 2006.

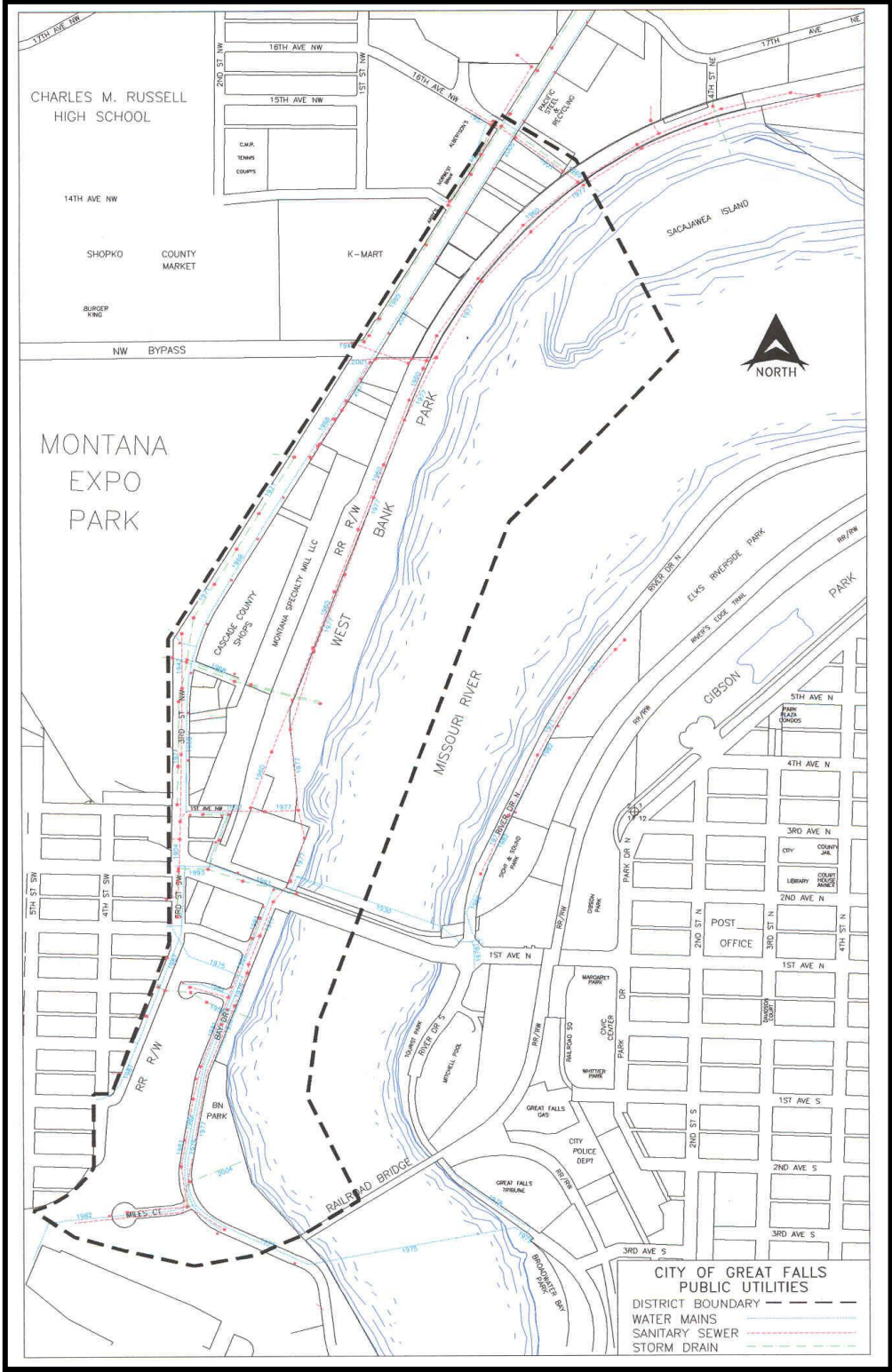

Peggy J. Bourne, City Clerk

(SEAL OF CITY)

APPENDIX B – WEST BANK URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT PARCEL DATA

OWNER OF RECORD	BUSINESS NAME/OCCUPANCY	STREET
GRH GLENWOOD LLC ETAL	WALGREENS (under construction)	3RD ST NW
CITY OF GREAT FALLS	SACAJAWIA ISLAND	
GRH GLENWOOD LLC ETAL	WALGREENS (under construction)	
GRH GLENWOOD LLC ETAL	WALGREENS (under construction)	3RD ST NW
ROGERS JEWELERS INC ETAL	ROGERS JEWELERS	3RD ST NW
BYPASS PROPERTY LLC (Outside City Limits)	BREEN OIL COMPANY	3RD ST NW
HENDERSON MICHAEL S & WILLIAM L	JOHNSON DISTRIBUTING	3RD ST NW
HENDERSON MICHAEL S & WILLIAM L		3RD ST NW
HENDERSON MICHAEL S ETAL		3RD ST NW
HENDERSON MICHAEL S ETAL		3RD ST NW
HILL RUSSELL & CATHERINE B		3RD ST NW
STOCKMAN BANK OF MONTANA	STOCKMAN BANK OF MONTANA	3RD ST NW
KRALICH JOANNE		
MONTANA SPECIALTY MILLS LLC	MONTANA SPECIALTY MILLS LLC	3RD ST NW
JOHNSON MOLLIE L ETAL	J BAR T INC	3RD ST NW
CASCADE COUNTY	CASCADE COUNTY SHOP COMPLEX	3RD ST NW
MONTANA COWBOYS ASSOCIATION INC	COWBOY'S BAR	3RD ST NW
MONTANA COWBOYS ASSN INC	COWBOY'S BAR	3RD ST NW
MONTANA COWBOYS ASSOCIATION	COWBOY'S BAR	4TH AVE NW
TALCOTT JAMES CONSTRUCTION INC		1ST AVE NW
FALLCAMP LLC		3RD ST NW
MITCHELL DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENTS LLC		CENTRAL AVE W
FALLCAMP LLC		
FALLCAMP LLC		3RD ST NW
TALCOTT PROPERTIES LLC		3RD ST NW
TALCOTT JAMES CONSTRUCTION CO		
BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE RAILROAD CO	RIGHT OF WAY	BAY DR
CITY OF GREAT FALLS (West Bank Park - South End)	WEST BANK PARK	PARK-WEST BANK
SCHUMAN HENRY & ALICE		3RD ST NW
HIGH PLAINS PIZZA INC		3RD ST NW
MYHRE ADVERTISING		CENTRAL AVE W
MONTANA DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION	RIGHT OF WAY	
BUMBARGER FRED & PATRICIA S	PAYLESS FURNITURE	CENTRAL AVE W
HOLMAN GRAIN (Brick Building)		BAY DR
JORGENSEN ROBERT F JR		2ND AVE SW
HOLMAN GRAIN COMPANY		
HOLMAN GRAIN COMPANY		BAY DR
OXSNESS BERT		2ND AVE SW
BN LEASING CORPORATION		
ROBERTSON ENTERPRISES LLC		BAY DR
MARTIN JOHN L		2ND AVE SW
CITY OF GREAT FALLS (BN Park)	BN PARK	PARK-GARDEN HOME
BN LEASING CORPORATION		BAY DR
BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE RAILROAD CO		
MONTANA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES ASSO ETAL	MONTANA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES ASSOC.	BAY DR
BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE RAILROAD CO		BAY DR
BN LEASING CORPORATION		
BN LEASING CORPORATION		MILES CT
BN LEASING CORPORATION		
BN LEASING CORPORATION		
CITY OF GREAT FALLS (West Bank Park - North End)	WEST BANK PARK	

APPENDIX C. PUBLIC UTILITIES IN THE WEST BANK URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT



APPENDIX D

ALLOWABLE USES OF TAX INCREMENT FUNDS

(Note: This is under revision by the 2007 Montana Legislature)

7-15-4288. Costs that may be paid by tax increment financing. The tax increments may be used by the municipality to pay the following costs of or incurred in connection with an urban renewal project, industrial infrastructure development project, technology infrastructure development project, or aerospace transportation and technology infrastructure development project:

- (1) land acquisition;
- (2) demolition and removal of structures;
- (3) relocation of occupants;
- (4) the acquisition, construction, and improvement of infrastructure, industrial infrastructure, technology infrastructure, or aerospace transportation and technology infrastructure that includes streets, roads, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, pedestrian malls, alleys, parking lots and offstreet parking facilities, sewers, sewer lines, sewage treatment facilities, storm sewers, waterlines, waterways, water treatment facilities, natural gas lines, electrical lines, telecommunications lines, rail lines, rail spurs, bridges, spaceports for reusable launch vehicles with associated runways and launch, recovery, fuel manufacturing, and cargo holding facilities, publicly owned buildings, and any public improvements authorized by parts 41 through 45 of chapter 12, parts 42 and 43 of chapter 13, and part 47 of chapter 14 and items of personal property to be used in connection with improvements for which the foregoing costs may be incurred;
- (5) costs incurred in connection with the redevelopment activities allowed under [7-15-4233](#);
- (6) acquisition of infrastructure-deficient areas or portions of areas;
- (7) administrative costs associated with the management of the urban renewal area, industrial district, technology district, or aerospace transportation and technology district;
- (8) assemblage of land for development or redevelopment by private enterprise or public agencies, including sale, initial leasing, or retention by the municipality itself at its fair value;
- (9) the compilation and analysis of pertinent information required to adequately determine the infrastructure needs of secondary, value-adding industries in the industrial district, the needs of a technology infrastructure development project in the technology district, or the needs of an aerospace transportation and technology infrastructure development project in the aerospace transportation and technology district;
- (10) the connection of the urban renewal area, industrial district, technology district, or aerospace transportation and technology district to existing infrastructure outside the district;
- (11) the provision of direct assistance, through industrial infrastructure development projects, technology development projects, or aerospace transportation and technology infrastructure development projects, to secondary, value-adding industries to assist in meeting their infrastructure and land needs within the district; and
- (12) the acquisition, construction, or improvement of facilities or equipment for reducing, preventing, abating, or eliminating pollution.



Meeting Date: Aug 11, 2020

**CITY OF GREAT FALLS
PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD / ZONING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT**

Item: Amendment to the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan.

Initiated By: Planning and Community Development

Presented By: Craig Raymond, Director, Planning and Community Development

Action Requested: Recommendation to City Commission for the approval of the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan amendment.

Suggested Motion:

1. Board Member moves:

“In accordance with Montana Code Annotated § 7-15-4213, I move that the Planning Advisory Board recommend to the City Commission that the proposed amendment to the Great Falls Downtown Urban Renewal Plan, as described in the Staff Report is (in conformance/not in conformance) with the 2013 Growth Policy.”

2. Chairman calls for a second, public comment, board/commission discussion, and calls for the vote.

Background:

In 2012, the City Commission adopted the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (DURP). The creation of the DURP was the result of the development and adoption of the Downtown Master Plan. The Downtown Master Plan (DMP) provides a blueprint for the revitalization and redevelopment of Downtown, and recommended the creation of an Urban Renewal District that utilizes Tax Increment Financing to help fund public improvements called out within the DMP and the City’s Growth Policy.

City staff and the City Commission have identified public safety concerns with the exterior condition of the Civic Center façade. Because the condition of the façade was not in such poor shape in 2012, the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan does not provide strategies that address the needs for the rehabilitation and preservation of the Civic Center, specifically the need for façade renovation. The proposed amendment identifies needed renovation projects for the Civic Center property, which in turn, will create the opportunity for the building and property to be considered for the use of Tax Increment Financing funds through the Downtown TIF District. The TIF funds would provide the financial capability to complete preservation and rehabilitation projects for the Civic Center.

Proposed Amendment:

Not only did the Downtown Master Plan identify the need for an Urban Renewal District Plan, it also identified the desire for preserving, restoring, and reusing Downtown’s historic buildings and sites as an objective to meet the goal of enhancing Downtown aesthetics. The Civic Center has been recognized as a primary contributing building within the Great Falls Railroad Historic District by the National Register of Historic Places. The building is also individually listed as a National Register site.

The historic Civic Center façade has been deteriorating due to moisture and oxygen infiltration. The issues have not only affected the aesthetic appeal of the historic building, but have also created potential safety issues. In fact, the east and west sides of the building have recently been fenced off to protect the public from the possibility of falling building panels. The rehabilitation project that will be proposed for Downtown TIF financing will require replacing, in-kind, the stone panels on the east elevation, replacing the concrete steps at the front along Central Avenue, as well as replacing the roofing.

To enable a pathway to finance the restoration project, the following amendments to the DURP are being proposed:

1. *Addition of Implementation Strategies targeted for the Civic Center.* The following Implementation strategies section is proposed to be added to Page 12 of the Renewal Plan.

7. Actively pursue the preservation and rehabilitation of the Civic Center.			
a. Fund and complete the Civic Center façade renovation project.	CofGF	Immediate	Capital Improvement
b. Identify and complete rehabilitation projects within the Civic Center property including, but not limited to, landscape and asphalt restoration.	CofGF	On-going	Capital Improvement
c. Determine and complete preservation projects within the Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts including, but not limited to, seat and architectural feature renovations.	CofGF	On-going	Capital Improvement
d. Identify and complete rehabilitation projects within the Convention Center including, but not limited to, upgrading lighting and architectural feature renovations.	CofGF	On-going	Capital Improvement

2. *Minor revisions to make the Plan more current and correct errors.* Throughout the current plan, there are references to out of date documents and goals. With the proposed amendment, the following revisions were made to make the Plan more current;

- Reference the 2013 Growth Policy update to replace the reference to the 2005 Plan (pg. 1 and 14);
- Insert correct Resolution number adopting the original Plan (pg. 5); and
- Update information regarding the Downtown circulation study – completed in 2013 after the Urban Renewal Plan (pg. 5).

Conformance with 2013 Growth Policy: Because the Growth Policy is a general land use document that covers the entire community of Great Falls, recommendations specific to the Civic Center restoration project are not addressed. However, the following policies in the 2013 Growth Policy clearly support the proposed amendment to the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan.

- **PHY4.5** – Continue the work of the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission in the identification, evaluation, and preservation of historic districts and individual properties in Great Falls and Cascade County.

- **Phy 4.5.2** – Establish incentives for the preservation, rehabilitation, and maintenance of historically or architecturally significant properties in a manner closely related to the appearance of the district.
- **Phy 4.5.7** – Identify financial resources that may be used to assist in renovating or maintaining qualified properties, resource planning, and tourism related to historic appreciation.

Staff Commentary:

The Civic Center is an iconic, historically significant building anchoring the west side of the Downtown Master Plan area. The building's condition has deteriorated to the point of becoming a public safety issue since the adoption of the Plan in 2012. The Historic Preservation Advisory Commission and City staff have made great efforts to designate the property as a National Register site. The City's 2013 Growth Policy not only supports efforts to historically designate such buildings, but also to expend financial resources to preserve and rehabilitate them as well. As a result, the proposed amendment is consistent with the Growth Policy.

Concurrences:

The Planning and Community Development Department has coordinated with the City Manager's Office, as well as the City's outside legal counsel from Dorsey & Whitney LLP throughout the process. Staff plans on presenting the amendment proposal to the Downtown Development Partnership on August 26, 2020.

Fiscal Impact:

While there is no direct fiscal impact with the adoption of the amendment of the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan, the amendment will provide a critical opportunity to utilize Downtown Tax Increment Financing bonding capability for the Civic Center restoration project.

Staff Recommendation:

In accordance with Montana Code Annotated § 7-15-4213, staff recommends that the Planning Advisory Board recommend to the City Commission that the proposed amendment to the Great Falls Downtown Urban Renewal Plan is in conformance with the 2013 Growth Policy.

Alternatives:

The Planning Advisory Board could choose to recommend that the proposed amendment to the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan be not in conformance with the 2013 Growth Policy. For such a decision, the Board should examine the analysis above and provide an alternative basis for decision.

Attachments/Exhibits:

2011 Downtown Urban Renewal Plan
 2020 Downtown Urban Renewal Plan Update (Strikethrough)
 2020 Downtown Urban Renewal Plan Update (Clean Copy)
 Downtown Urban Renewal/TIF District Map

CITY OF GREAT FALLS

Downtown Urban Renewal Plan



May 2012

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Introduction:

The City of Great Falls has embarked on an ambitious program to revitalize downtown Great Falls. In October 2011 the Great Falls City Commission unanimously adopted the Downtown Master Plan (DMP) as an attachment to the 2005 City of Great Falls Growth Policy. As an attachment to the Growth Policy, the DMP now serves as the guiding policy document for downtown. The DMP provides a strategically focused, goal driven “blueprint” for the future growth and development of downtown. The DMP creates a vision and outlines strategies, actions, partnerships and timeframes that will facilitate the redevelopment of a regional destination.

The 82 strategies within the DMP are each designed to capitalize on downtown’s assets and proactively address downtown’s issues. The strategies all seek to create a downtown that has a balance of amenities, housing and transportation options, goods and services and cultural, entertainment and educational opportunities.

The DMP recommends the creation of an Urban Renewal District that utilizes Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to fund public improvements recommended in the DMP in an effort to revitalize Downtown Great Falls. The proposed Downtown Urban Renewal District (DURP) will be the third urban renewal district established in the City of Great Falls. The Central Place Revitalization Urban Renewal Program, established in 1977, has since expired while the West Bank Urban Renewal District, established in 2006 is currently operational.

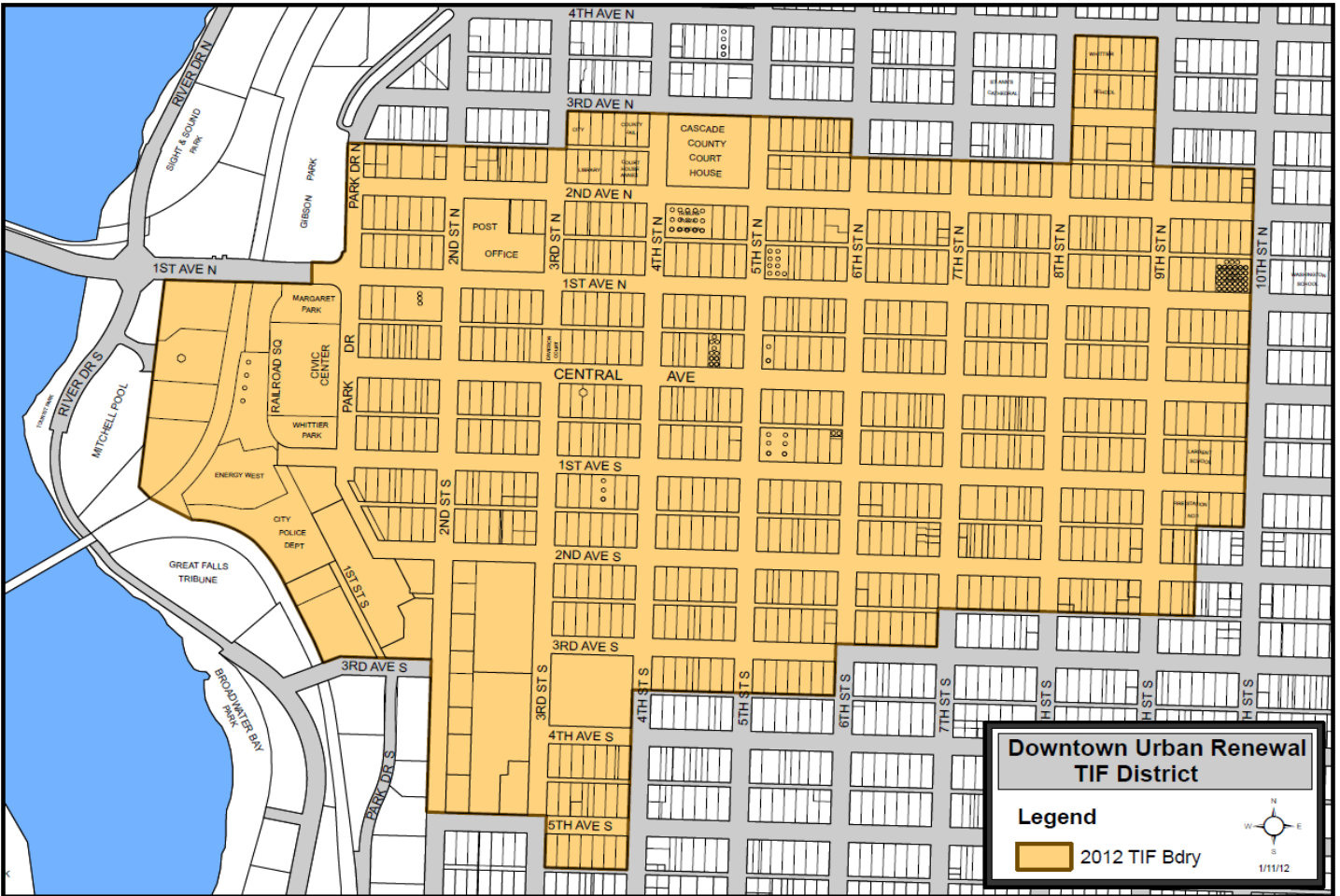
The Downtown Urban Renewal District and TIF funds generated through the improvements to property in the district are anticipated to be the primary funding sources to implement the recommendations of the DMP. Previous urban renewal districts in the City have been successful in redevelopment and revitalization efforts. It is the hope of the City of Great Falls and the Downtown stakeholders that this urban renewal district will yield the same positive results.

Legal Description of the District:

Beginning at a point that is the southeast corner of Lot 1, Block 11, of the Broadwater Bay Business Park; thence south across 3rd Ave So to the northeast corner of Lot 6, Block 9, of the Broadwater Bay Business Park; thence south along the west right of way line of 2nd St So to a point that is directly west of the southwest corner of Lot 8, of the Amended Plat of Block 453, of the Great Falls Original Townsite (GFOT); Thence east across 2nd St So to the southwest corner of Lot 8, of the Amended Plat of Block 453, of the GFOT; thence east to the southwest corner of Lot 14, Block 452, of the GFOT; thence south to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 455, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 455; of the GFOT; thence north along the west right of line of 4th St S to a point directly west from the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 420, of the GFOT; thence east across 4th St So to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 420, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 421, of the GFOT; thence north to the southeast corner of Lot 8, Block 413, of the GFOT; thence east across 6th St So to the southwest corner of Lot 14, Block 412, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 8, Block 412, of the GFOT; thence north to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 412, of the GFOT; thence east to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 411, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 3, Block 409, of the GFOT; thence north to the southeast corner of Lot 3, Block 376, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 376, of the GFOT; thence north along the west right of way line of 10th St N to the northeast corner of Lot 8, Block 258, of the GFOT; thence west to the northeast corner of Lot 8, Block 257, of the GFOT; thence north to the northeast corner of Lot 7, Block 242, of the GFOT; thence west to the northwest corner of Lot 1, Blk 242, of the GFOT; thence south to the northwest corner of Lot 14, Blk 257, of the GFOT; thence west to the northeast corner of Lot 8, Blk 254, of the GFOT; thence north to the northeast corner of Lot 7, Blk 254, of the GFOT: thence west to the northwest corner of Lot 1, Blk 252, of the GFOT; thence south to the northwest corner of Lot 14, Blk 252, of the GFOT; thence west to the northwest corner of Lot 13, Blk 250, of the GFOT; thence continuing west to a point that is located on the west right of way of Park Dr N; thence south along the west right of way of Park Dr N to the corner of Park Dr N and 1st Ave N; thence around a curve to the left to a point of tangent thence continuing west eighty feet along the north right of way of 1st Ave N; thence south on a perpendicular line to the south right of way line of 1st Ave N; thence west along the south right of way line of 1st Ave N to the northwest corner of Lot 5, Blk 13, of the Broadwater Bay Business Park Addition (BBBBP); thence southwesterly to the southwest corner of Lot 2, Blk 13, of the BBBP; thence southeasterly to the southeast corner of Lot 2, Blk 13, of the BBBP; thence continuing southeasterly to a point that is the intersection of the north railroad right of way line and the westerly boundary of Mark 22A (City of Great Falls Police Department); thence southeasterly along a curve to the right also being the north railroad right of way line to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Blk 12, of the BBBP; thence easterly along the north right of way line of 3rd Ave S to the point of beginning.

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

District Boundary



Determination of Blight:

To establish an Urban Renewal District in Montana, it must be found that conditions of blight are present in the area. Section 7-15-4206 (2) MCA defines blight as “an area that is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, and crime, that substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the city or its environs, that retards the provision of housing accommodations, or that constitutes an economic or social liability or is detrimental or constitutes a menace to the public health, safety, welfare, and morals in its present condition and use, by reason of:

- the substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential;
- inadequate provision for ventilation, light, proper sanitary facilities, or open spaces as determined by competent appraisers on the basis of an examination of the building standards of the municipality;
- inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings;
- high density of population and overcrowding;
- defective or inadequate street layout;
- faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- excessive land coverage;
- unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- deterioration of site;
- diversity of ownership;
- tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
- defective or unusual conditions of title;
- improper subdivision or obsolete platting;
- the existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes; or
- any combination of the factors listed in this subsection (2).



Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

With the adoption of Ordinance XXXX, the Great Falls City Commission found that the following conditions of blight are present in the District:

The substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential.

Vacancy, underutilization and a lack of maintenance has led to the substantial physical dilapidation and deterioration of a number of buildings within the district. Not only does this affect the aesthetic character of these buildings, and the district it also produces conditions that are unsafe, unsanitary and not conducive to economic development.



Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings.

A large amount of land within the District is currently used as surface parking for automobiles. While a certain amount of parking is necessary to support other uses within the District, surface parking lots are an inefficient use of land in the City's commercial core. This land could potentially be redeveloped as commercial, office, residential or mixed use activities that would improve the vitality of the downtown and increase the taxable value of the District.



The heavy industrial nature of the southwest area of the District is incompatible with the adjacent commercial and retail and residential uses of the area. This area has the potential to be redeveloped in a mixed-use or transitional fashion to provide a key entry corridor into the District.

Defective or inadequate street layout.

Three one-way couplets currently traverse through the district. Although a complete, formal analysis of the impact of the one-way couplets is planned for the spring and summer of 2012, multiple studies and analysis conducted across the U.S. indicate that downtown access and circulation, customer parking and property values increase when downtown one-ways are restored to two-way streets.

A primary intersection within the district - Park Drive and 1st Avenue N - is unsafe and difficult to navigate for pedestrians. Additionally, the configuration of the intersection produces inefficient conditions for automobiles, especially those making turns at high volume portions of the day.

Deterioration of site.

Vacant, underutilized or unmaintained buildings and parcels concentrated within

City of Great Falls

specific areas of the district have created pockets of site deterioration throughout the district. The deterioration of sites has often led private investment and development to move to outlying areas of the City and has also slowed redevelopment and infill efforts downtown. If site deterioration is not addressed, the exodus of commercial and residential development will continue and ultimately lead to further deterioration.

The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.

A number of buildings in the district are in conditions that could potentially endanger life of property. Multiple factors have contributed to these conditions including fire damage, the use of hazardous construction materials, negligence on behalf of a property owner and extended vacancy among others. Buildings that have reached this condition are often the target of graffiti and other forms of vandalism, leading to further deterioration in the district.

Urban Renewal Plan

The DMP will guide the urban renewal and revitalization efforts within the district. The overall vision of the DMP and the goals, objectives and strategies of the Plan provide a comprehensive framework for the redevelopment of the downtown core. The following table displays the 82 strategies of the DMP with associated timelines, categories and partner organizations.



Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Strategy	Partners	Timeframe	Category
1. CONNECTED:			
1. Improve pedestrian connectivity and safety Downtown.			
a. Ensure streetscape improvements are designed to enhance pedestrian safety and pleasure by providing sufficient space for pedestrian needs and uses.	CofGF (P&CD, PW)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Develop public/private partnerships to ensure Downtown is safe, clean and accessible for all users.	CofGF, DAA (Safety team)	Immediate	Program
c. Identify, prioritize and correct accessibility barriers to sidewalks, curbs, pedestrian signals and other pedestrian facilities.	CofGF (P&CD, PW) Accessibility group	Short	Program
2. Develop a comprehensive Downtown bicycle network to connect into a city-wide system.			
a. Prepare a complete streets policy to guide roadway construction and rehabilitation.	CofGF, GFGF, GFBC	Immediate	Regulatory Framework
b. Update the bikeway chapter of the Long Range Transportation Plan, including prioritization of improvements and routes for implementation.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R), GFBC, RTI, TWG	Short	Regulatory Framework
c. Improve and expand bicycle connections to the River's Edge Trail through signage and routes.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R), GFBC, RTI, TWG	Short	Capital Improvement
d. Ensure that bike routes link and connect neighborhoods, employment centers, amenities and destinations.	CofGF (P&CD), GFBC, RTI	Short	Regulatory Framework
e. Develop public education and marketing programs to maximize the use of the bicycle network.	RTI, GFBC	Short	Program
3. Reduce or eliminate Downtown one-ways.			
a. Conduct a one-way conversion plan to help facilitate an environment that is pedestrian and retail friendly, improves local circulation, and increase access to Downtown businesses.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), MDT	Medium	Program
b. Effectively communicate the costs and benefits of one-way conversions to all stakeholders.	CofGF, DAA (BID, DGFA)	Medium	Program
c. Develop roadway and streetscape design standards to further the intended benefits of one-way conversions for all users.	CofGF	Medium	Regulatory Framework
4. Improve connectivity to the Missouri River, River's Edge Trail, and Gibson Park for bicycles and pedestrians.			
a. Improve the attractiveness and enhance the visibility of railroad crossings and underpass tunnels that connect Downtown to the Missouri River, River's Edge Trail and Gibson Park.	CofGF (P&CD, PW, P&R), RTI	Medium	Capital Improvement
b. Identify locations and develop design options to develop an additional separated grade bike and pedestrian crossing of railroad tracks.	CofGF (P&CD, PW, P&R), RTI	Long	Capital Improvement
c. Utilize signage, pathways and striping to provide pedestrians and bicyclists with safe and efficient connections between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), RTI, TWG	Short	Capital Improvement
5. Develop a comprehensive Downtown wayfinding system.			
a. Develop a comprehensive wayfinding program.	CofGF, DAA (GFDA), Private Business	Short	Capital Improvement

b. Supplement proposed wayfinding program with printed maps and brochures, digital and audio tours and websites and apps to guide visitors throughout Downtown.	CofGF (P&CD), HPAC, CVB, TBID	Medium	Program
c. Incorporate a series of named or themed pathways that connect Downtown amenities and destinations.	CofGF (P&CD), HPAC, CVB, TBID	Long	Capital Improvement
6. Optimize Downtown parking for all stakeholders.			
a. Conduct a comprehensive parking study to guide Downtown parking program.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Improve bicycle parking facilities Downtown.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), GFBC, BID, private business	Short	Capital Improvement
7. Expand the use of public transit Downtown.			
a. Promote the use of transit for Downtown specific events.	GFTD, DGFA	Short	Program
b. Encourage expanded partnership between the Great Falls Transit District and Great Falls Public Schools to promote transit usage to reach Downtown events and activities.	GFTD, GFPS, DAA (DGFA)	Short	Program
c. Encourage Downtown businesses to work with the Great Falls Transit District to provide subsidized bus passes for employees as an alternative to Downtown parking.	DGFA, BID, GFTD, Private Business	Short	Program

DESTINATION:

1. Market Downtown's entertainment, culture, shopping and dining.			
a. Continue to actively cross-promote and package Downtown's entertainment, culture, shopping and dining facilities with Downtown events.	MT, MEC, DGFA	On-going	Program
b. Work with various groups and organizations including the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Tourism BID, Montana Expo Park and Airport Authority to promote Downtown as a tourism and convention destination to the region and Canada.	DAA (CVB, TBID), MTEP, GFIA	Short	Program
c. Develop a comprehensive and coordinated Downtown marketing campaign utilizing print, radio, television and social media.	DAA (all), TA	Immediate	Program
2. Promote a broad range of family friendly entertainment and recreational opportunities and activities Downtown.			
a. Review existing Downtown events and add free or low cost activities that engage a variety of age groups including: families, teens, young adults and older adults.	CofGF (P&R), DGFA	Short	Program
b. Promote new and exciting events in Downtown's parks, pools and recreational facilities that attract families with young children.	CofGF (P&R), DGFA	Short	Program
c. Encourage Downtown organizations and facilities to establish programs for parents to drop children off while they utilize Downtown's shopping and amenities.	Private Business, DGFA, Museum Group	Short	Program
3. Ensure Downtown is active and vibrant during the evenings and weekends.			
a. Actively pursue the development of a Downtown boutique hotel to provide quality lodging and amenities for Downtown visitors.	DAA (GFDA, CofGF), Private Business	Medium	Site Specific
b. Develop programs and events that provide opportunities for people to remain in and visit Downtown in the evening and on the weekend.	DAA (DGFA), CofGF (P&R)	Short	Program
c. Actively recruit an already successful restaurant to relocate or expand into Downtown.	GFDA, BID, DGFA	Short	Program

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

d. Work with existing restaurant and bar/tavern owners to identify, develop and promote a Downtown Dining District.	DGFA, TA, DAA (all)	Medium	Program
e. Market Downtown’s amenities and activities to current employers and employees to encourage the workforce to stay Downtown after business hours.	DAA (DGFA), TA, Restaurant owners	Immediate	Program
f. Create a year-round public market / food and arts incubator that would cater to residents, employees and visitors.	GFDA, DGFA, CofGF	Medium	Site Specific

4. Increase the utilization of the Convention Center and Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts (Mansfield).

a. Develop public/private partnerships to package the facilities at the Civic Center and Mansfield with catering and dining services and lodging facilities to enhance the attractiveness of Downtown as a convention destination.	CVB, TBID, MCPA	Medium	Program
b. Enhance partnerships with entertainment promoters to utilize the Mansfield as a concert venue.	MCPA	Short	Program
c. Educate potential users of the Civic Center and Mansfield about the opportunities available at the facility, policies and prices.	MCPA	Immediate	Program

FLOURISHING:

1. Identify and support an organization to lead and champion Downtown revitalization.

a. Establish a formal Downtown Development Agency within the City of Great Falls, in partnership with public and private entities, to foster new development and redevelopment Downtown and implement the goals, objectives and strategies identified in the Plan.	CofGF, DAA (all), Private Business	Immediate	Regulatory Framework
b. Establish a Downtown TIF and associated Urban Renewal Plan district to fund Downtown projects, improvements and organizational management.	CofGF, GFPS, CC	Immediate	Regulatory Framework
c. Update zoning and land use regulations to support recommendations of the Plan.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework

2. Improve the public realm to provide a safe, attractive and welcoming environment.

a. Encourage a partnership between Downtown organizations and stakeholders and the City Police Department to ensure a clean and safe environment.	DAA (W&S), GFPD	Short	Program
b. Establish a volunteer based Downtown clean-up day and/or program.	DAA (W&S)	Short	Program
c. Increase street level vitality by encouraging the active use of ground floor space in the Downtown core.	CofGF (P&CD), BID, DGFA	Short	Regulatory Framework

3. Identify and attract high paying employers and jobs to Downtown.

a. Develop a comprehensive Downtown business retention and development plan that focuses on successful and emerging business clusters Downtown.	GFDA, CofGF	Short	Program
b. Utilize GFDA’s business attraction and retention resources to leverage Down-	GFDA	Immediate	Program

4. Support existing and attract new commercial and retail business Downtown.

a. Establish a mentor program to pair new entrepreneurs with successful Downtown business owners.	DGFA, BID, GFDA	Short	Program
b. Utilize national research and trends to identify and attract “Downtown friendly” retailers.	GFDA, BID, NW	Short	Program

c. Conduct a Downtown market analysis to guide commercial and retail development.	GFDA, BID, DGFA	Medium	Program
d. Provide existing business owners with market research and technical and financial assistance.	CofGF, GFDA, DGFA, BID	Medium	Program
e. Conduct a Downtown business and building inventory to establish and maintain an accurate database of what is currently located Downtown and what opportunities exist for business expansion, attraction and relocation.	CofGF (P&CD), BID, DGFA	Immediate	Program
5. Attract a diverse mix of visual and performing artists to live and work Downtown.			
a. Revive and support the Great Falls Arts Council to develop and promote arts programs, events and education.	CofGF, DAA (all)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Encourage the development of lofts, studios and live/work spaces in vacant or underutilized buildings to attract artists to Downtown and increase arts and culture activity.	CofGF (P&CD), DAA (GFCC, GFDA)	Medium	Program
c. Develop a roster of visual and performing artists and craftsperson's living in and around Great Falls to utilize for Downtown programs and events.	DGFA	Short	Program
d. Capitalize on the success of Western Art Week by drawing visitors to Downtown galleries, shops and restaurants.	DAA (GFCC)	Immediate	Program
e. Continue to promote Downtown art galleries and artists through events such as the First Friday Art Walk.	DAA (DGFA)	Immediate	Program

LIVING:

1. Promote a wide range of housing choices throughout Downtown.			
a. Ensure that the proposed City of Great Falls Downtown Development Agency is a champion of Downtown housing development.	NW, CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Evaluate zoning and land use regulations to ensure policies allow for and encourage Downtown housing in the form of rehabilitation and preservation of existing buildings, infill development and new construction.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
c. Conduct a Downtown housing inventory to establish and maintain an accurate database of housing and property available for rent, ownership, and/or rehab.	NW, W&S, CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Program
2. Ensure existing housing is safe and attractive.			
a. Actively monitor the condition of existing housing and enforce the City's Property Maintenance Code.	CofGF (P&CD), W&S	On-going	Program
b. Promote and utilize the City of Great Falls Housing Rehab Loan program and Neighborworks Great Falls programs to enhance existing homes and rental properties.	CofGF, NWGF	On-going	Program
c. Develop a volunteer based residential improvement plan to ensure Downtown housing is safe and attractive.	W&S, NC	Short	Program
3. Attract private investment and financing for Downtown housing.			
a. Create new and promote existing incentive programs to encourage residential development.	NW, CofGF	Short	Program
b. Prepare a housing market study to assist developers, lending institutions and private property owners in developing Downtown housing.	Realtors, HBA, NW, GFDA	Short	Program
c. Establish a clearinghouse and/or database of residential financing options and incentives.	Realtors, HBA, NW, GFDA	Short	Program

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

4. Attract retailers and neighborhood services that cater to Downtown residents.

a. Survey Downtown residents and utilize national research to identify neighborhood based commercial, retail and services that are missing Downtown.	NW, NC	Immediate	Program
b. Encourage mixed-use development that places residents within close proximity to commercial activities.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework

AESTHETICS:

1. Preserve, restore, and reuse Downtown’s historic buildings and sites.

a. Market Downtown’s historical resources to facilitate improvements and restoration of properties through tax incentives and preservation grants.	CofGF, HPAC	Immediate	Program
b. Educate current property owners and developers of the funding programs available to make improvements to the Downtown buildings.	HPAC, DAA (BID)	Immediate	Program
c. Establish a technical assistance and incentive program to encourage the adaptive re-use, rehabilitation and preservation of historic buildings and sites.	CofGF, HPAC	On-going	Program

2. Increase the number and diversity of public spaces Downtown.

a. Actively pursue the development of an indoor/outdoor community gathering space to host activities and events and attract residents, employees and visitors throughout the year.	CofGF, Private Business	Short	Site Specific
b. Encourage diversity in the form and function of Downtown parks, plazas and gathering spaces.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R)	Medium	Regulatory Framework
c. Explore the feasibility of developing rooftop green spaces.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), Private business	Medium	Regulatory Framework

3. Promote quality design and construction in Downtown’s built environment.

a. Develop design guidelines to enhance the character of Downtown through the quality design and construction of Downtown’s built environment.	CofGF, DAA (all)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Evaluate the function, authority and scope of the City’s Design Review Board to ensure aesthetic goals of the Plan are achieved.	CofGF	Short	Regulatory Framework

4. Create attractive gateway design features that welcome residents and visitors to downtown.

a. Identify priority entrances into Downtown to construct gateway design features.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R), GFDA	Short	Capital Improvements
b. Establish a program to encourage community and/or service groups, private businesses and other stakeholders to “sponsor” the construction of gateway features.	DAA (all)	Short	Capital Improvements

5. Expand and enhance the existing downtown streetscape.			
a. Develop a comprehensive Downtown streetscape plan that prioritizes future improvements and builds upon the existing streetscape.	CofGF (P&CD, PW)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Ensure streetscape improvements are implemented in coordination with the construction of gateway design features.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
c. Work with the City Forester to establish tree planting programs throughout Downtown.	DAA (BID), NC	Short	Program
6. Actively pursue the preservation and rehabilitation of the Rocky Mountain Building.			
a. Identify an organization or partnership to lead restoration efforts including assisting in permitting process and requirements, identifying funding options, leading fundraising efforts and recruiting a mix of building tenants.	CofGF (P&CD), DAA (all)	On-going	Program
b. Encourage the current building owners to move forward with restoration improvements before weathering and damage continue to a point where rehabilitation is no longer feasible.	CofGF (P&CD), DAA (all)	On-going	Program

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Funding and Administration:

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is necessary to encourage private reinvestment within the District, create employment opportunities, implement the goals set forth in this plan and increase the tax base of the District. The Downtown Urban Renewal District is hereby established as a tax increment financing urban renewal area in accordance with 7-15-4282-4292 and 4301-4324 (MCA).

For the purpose of calculating the incremental taxable value each year for the life of the district, the base taxable value shall be calculated as current base taxable value of the district as of January 1, 2012.

Administration

The District will be administered in accordance with 7-15-4232 (MCA). The Great Falls City Commission has the authority to administer and manage the District and the implementation of the DURP. Under 7-15-4232 (MCA) the City Commission may authorize a City Department to manage the program and implement the recommendation of the DURP. It is envisioned that the Commission will receive recommendations and input from the Planning and Community Development Department in partnership with the Downtown Partnership of Great Falls (the Partnership).

Planning and Community Development Staff will work with the Partnership to prepare an annual District work plan and budget, which the Partnership will submit to the City Commission for consideration and adoption. The work plan will list the activities and cost of activities for the coming fiscal years and a method of financing those activities. The Partnership will enter into an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other form of agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities of this group in relation to the District.

The Planning and Community Development Department will provide initial staffing to assist the Partnership in preparing the annual District work plan and budget, preparing and presenting annual reports to the City Commission, and coordinating the review of proposed projects and development requesting TIF funding. It is anticipated that TIF moneys will be used in the future to fund a permanent staff position.

Planning and Community Development Staff will provide to the City Commission and the public an annual program evaluation as part of the annual report.

Conformity with the Growth Policy

The establishment of the Partnership and the Downtown TIF are both direct recommendations of the DMP - which was adopted as an attachment to the 2005 Growth Policy. Additionally, specific themes, goals and policies of the City's Growth Policy (displayed below) are supported by recommendations contained within the DURP.

- Encourage livable, walkable, visually and functionally cohesive neighborhoods that incorporate traditional design concepts (Land Use pg. 20).
- Formulate and adopt modern, flexible land development regulations in order to preserve and enhance the scale, quality, and character of existing neighborhoods (Land Use pg. 21).
- Encourage mixed land uses in new and redeveloping areas to achieve a high degree of self-containment, reduce auto dependence, and foster a strong live-work-play pattern of activity within neighborhoods (Land Use pg. 22).
- Encourage preservation of corridors of land for non-motorized transportation routes/trails and provide public investment for non-motorized transportation facilities (Land Use pg. 22).
- Review existing zoning to ensure it is consistent with neighborhood objectives, and pursue rezoning of areas where conflicts are found (Land Use pg. 23).
- Increase code enforcement activity in order to help protect neighborhoods from decay, decline and disinvestment (Land Use pg. 23).
- Allow for compatible, small-scale commercial uses that support existing neighborhoods and reduce dependence on automobile travel (Land Use pg. 24).
- Encourage public investment in parks and schools that are neighborhood focal points, consistent with the Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan (Land Use pg. 25).
- Proactively direct development through public investment in infrastructure (Land Use pg. 28).

Amendment of the DURP

The DURP may be modified at any time by the City Commission as necessary to eliminate and prevent the development or spread of blight and to encourage urban rehabilitation. The process for plan amendment shall be consistent with the procedures outlined in 7-15-4212 - 4219 (MCA).

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Conclusion:

The City of Great Falls Downtown Master Plan recommends the establishment of an Urban Renewal District that utilizes TIF funding to revitalize and rehab downtown. The Plan provides an ambitious yet obtainable framework of goals, objectives and strategies that are intended to transition this area from its current condition to a vibrant and thriving destination. The Downtown Urban Renewal District has tremendous potential to re-emerge as the commercial, cultural and entertainment center of Great Falls.

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan



CITY OF GREAT FALLS

Downtown Urban Renewal Plan



May 2012

Introduction:

The City of Great Falls has embarked on an ambitious program to revitalize downtown Great Falls. In October 2011 the Great Falls City Commission unanimously adopted the Downtown Master Plan (DMP). ~~as an attachment to the 2005 City of Great Falls Growth Policy.~~ Referenced throughout the 2013 Growth Policy Update, the DMP ~~now~~ serves as the guiding policy document for downtown. The DMP provides a strategically focused, goal driven “blueprint” for the future growth and development of downtown. The DMP creates a vision and outlines strategies, actions, partnerships and timeframes that will facilitate the redevelopment of a regional destination.

The 82 strategies within the DMP are each designed to capitalize on downtown’s assets and proactively address downtown’s issues. The strategies all seek to create a downtown that has a balance of amenities, housing and transportation options, goods and services and cultural, entertainment and educational opportunities.

The DMP recommends the creation of an Urban Renewal District that utilizes Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to fund public improvements recommended in the DMP in an effort to revitalize Downtown Great Falls. The proposed Downtown Urban Renewal District (DURP) will be the third urban renewal district established in the City of Great Falls. The Central Place Revitalization Urban Renewal Program, established in 1977, has since expired while the West Bank Urban Renewal District, established in 2006 is currently operational.

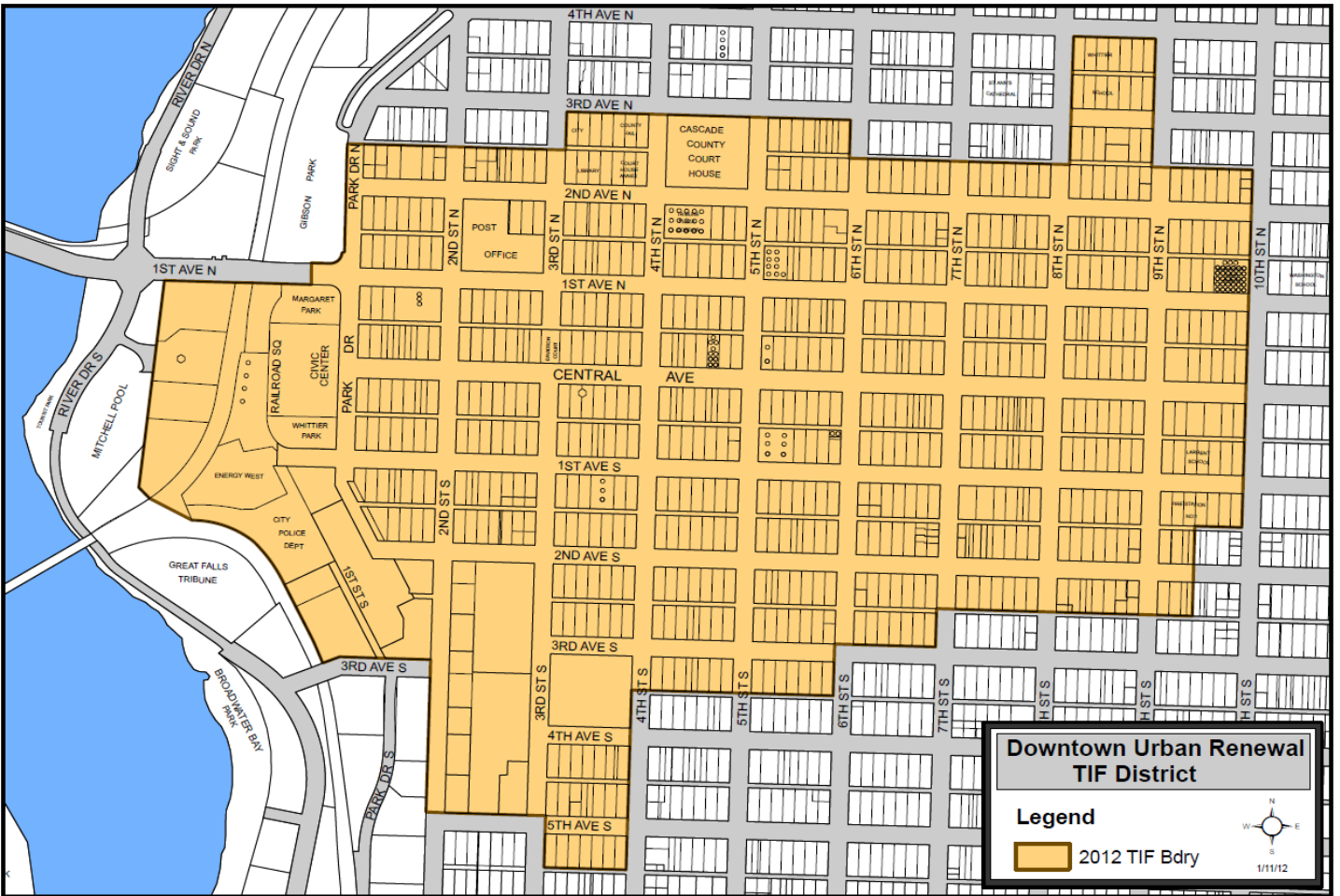
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Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Legal Description of the District:

Beginning at a point that is the southeast corner of Lot 1, Block 11, of the Broadwater Bay Business Park; thence south across 3rd Ave So to the northeast corner of Lot 6, Block 9, of the Broadwater Bay Business Park; thence south along the west right of way line of 2nd St So to a point that is directly west of the southwest corner of Lot 8, of the Amended Plat of Block 453, of the Great Falls Original Townsite (GFOT); Thence east across 2nd St So to the southwest corner of Lot 8, of the Amended Plat of Block 453, of the GFOT; thence east to the southwest corner of Lot 14, Block 452, of the GFOT; thence south to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 455, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 455; of the GFOT; thence north along the west right of line of 4th St S to a point directly west from the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 420, of the GFOT; thence east across 4th St So to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 420, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 421, of the GFOT; thence north to the southeast corner of Lot 8, Block 413, of the GFOT; thence east across 6th St So to the southwest corner of Lot 14, Block 412, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 8, Block 412, of the GFOT; thence north to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 412, of the GFOT; thence east to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 411, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 3, Block 409, of the GFOT; thence north to the southeast corner of Lot 3, Block 376, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 376, of the GFOT; thence north along the west right of way line of 10th St N to the northeast corner of Lot 8, Block 258, of the GFOT; thence west to the northeast corner of Lot 8, Block 257, of the GFOT; thence north to the northeast corner of Lot 7, Block 242, of the GFOT; thence west to the northwest corner of Lot 1, Blk 242, of the GFOT; thence south to the northwest corner of Lot 14, Blk 257, of the GFOT; thence west to the northeast corner of Lot 8, Blk 254, of the GFOT; thence north to the northeast corner of Lot 7, Blk 254, of the GFOT: thence west to the northwest corner of Lot 1, Blk 252, of the GFOT; thence south to the northwest corner of Lot 14, Blk 252, of the GFOT; thence west to the northwest corner of Lot 13, Blk 250, of the GFOT; thence continuing west to a point that is located on the west right of way of Park Dr N; thence south along the west right of way of Park Dr N to the corner of Park Dr N and 1st Ave N; thence around a curve to the left to a point of tangent thence continuing west eighty feet along the north right of way of 1st Ave N; thence south on a perpendicular line to the south right of way line of 1st Ave N; thence west along the south right of way line of 1st Ave N to the northwest corner of Lot 5, Blk 13, of the Broadwater Bay Business Park Addition (BBBP); thence southwesterly to the southwest corner of Lot 2, Blk 13, of the BBBP; thence southeasterly to the southeast corner of Lot 2, Blk 13, of the BBBP; thence continuing southeasterly to a point that is the intersection of the north railroad right of way line and the westerly boundary of Mark 22A (City of Great Falls Police Department); thence southeasterly along a curve to the right also being the north railroad right of way line to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Blk 12, of the BBBP; thence easterly along the north right of way line of 3rd Ave S to the point of beginning.

District Boundary



Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Determination of Blight:

To establish an Urban Renewal District in Montana, it must be found that conditions of blight are present in the area. Section 7-15-4206 (2) MCA defines blight as “an area that is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, and crime, that substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the city or its environs, that retards the provision of housing accommodations, or that constitutes an economic or social liability or is detrimental or constitutes a menace to the public health, safety, welfare, and morals in its present condition and use, by reason of:

- the substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential;
- inadequate provision for ventilation, light, proper sanitary facilities, or open spaces as determined by competent appraisers on the basis of an examination of the building standards of the municipality;
- inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings;
- high density of population and overcrowding;
- defective or inadequate street layout;
- faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- excessive land coverage;
- unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- deterioration of site;
- diversity of ownership;
- tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
- defective or unusual conditions of title;
- improper subdivision or obsolete platting;
- the existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes; or
- any combination of the factors listed in this subsection (2).



With the adoption of ~~Ordinance XXXX-Resolution 9961~~, the Great Falls City Commission found that the following conditions of blight are present in the District:

The substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential.

Vacancy, underutilization and a lack of maintenance has led to the substantial physical dilapidation and deterioration of a number of buildings within the district. Not only does this affect the aesthetic character of these buildings, and the district it also produces conditions that are unsafe, unsanitary and not conducive to economic development.



Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings.

A large amount of land within the District is currently used as surface parking for automobiles. While a certain amount of parking is necessary to support other uses within the District, surface parking lots are an inefficient use of land in the City's commercial core. This land could potentially be redeveloped as commercial, office, residential or mixed use activities that would improve the vitality of the downtown and increase the taxable value of the District.



The heavy industrial nature of the southwest area of the District is incompatible with the adjacent commercial and retail and residential uses of the area. This area has the potential to be redeveloped in a mixed-use or transitional fashion to provide a key entry corridor into the District.

Defective or inadequate street layout.

Three one-way couplets currently traverse through the district. ~~Although a complete, formal analysis of the impact of the one-way couplets is planned for the spring and summer of 2012;~~ Multiple studies and analyses conducted across the U.S. indicate that downtown access and circulation, customer parking and property values increase when downtown one-ways are restored to two-way streets. ~~The City of Great Falls conducted and completed a study in April 2013, which resulted in the Downtown Access, Circulation, and Streetscape Plan. Although it was never adopted, the study is used as a resource and guide for city staff.~~

A primary intersection within the district - Park Drive and 1st Avenue N - is unsafe and difficult to navigate for pedestrians. Additionally, the configuration of the intersection produces inefficient conditions for automobiles, especially those making turns at high volume portions of the day.

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Deterioration of site.

Vacant, underutilized or unmaintained buildings and parcels concentrated within specific areas of the district have created pockets of site deterioration throughout the district. The deterioration of sites has often led private investment and development to move to outlying areas of the City and has also slowed redevelopment and infill efforts downtown. If site deterioration is not addressed, the exodus of commercial and residential development will continue and ultimately lead to further deterioration.

The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.

A number of buildings in the district are in conditions that could potentially endanger life of property. Multiple factors have contributed to these conditions including fire damage, the use of hazardous construction materials, negligence on behalf of a property owner and extended vacancy among others. Buildings that have reached this condition are often the target of graffiti and other forms of vandalism, leading to further deterioration in the district.

Urban Renewal Plan

The DMP will guide the urban renewal and revitalization efforts within the district. The overall vision of the DMP and the goals, objectives and strategies of the Plan provide a comprehensive framework for the redevelopment of the downtown core. The following table displays the 82 strategies of the DMP and additional project priorities, with associated timelines, categories and partner organizations.



Strategy	Partners	Timeframe	Category
1. CONNECTED:			
1. Improve pedestrian connectivity and safety Downtown.			
a. Ensure streetscape improvements are designed to enhance pedestrian safety and pleasure by providing sufficient space for pedestrian needs and uses.	CofGF (P&CD, PW)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Develop public/private partnerships to ensure Downtown is safe, clean and accessible for all users.	CofGF, DAA (Safety team)	Immediate	Program
c. Identify, prioritize and correct accessibility barriers to sidewalks, curbs, pedestrian signals and other pedestrian facilities.	CofGF (P&CD, PW) Accessibility group	Short	Program
2. Develop a comprehensive Downtown bicycle network to connect into a city-wide system.			
a. Prepare a complete streets policy to guide roadway construction and rehabilitation.	CofGF, GFGF, GFBC	Immediate	Regulatory Framework
b. Update the bikeway chapter of the Long Range Transportation Plan, including prioritization of improvements and routes for implementation.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R), GFBC, RTI, TWG	Short	Regulatory Framework
c. Improve and expand bicycle connections to the River's Edge Trail through signage and routes.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R), GFBC, RTI, TWG	Short	Capital Improvement
d. Ensure that bike routes link and connect neighborhoods, employment centers, amenities and destinations.	CofGF (P&CD), GFBC, RTI	Short	Regulatory Framework
e. Develop public education and marketing programs to maximize the use of the bicycle network.	RTI, GFBC	Short	Program
3. Reduce or eliminate Downtown one-ways.			
a. Conduct a one-way conversion plan to help facilitate an environment that is pedestrian and retail friendly, improves local circulation, and increase access to Downtown businesses.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), MDT	Medium	Program
b. Effectively communicate the costs and benefits of one-way conversions to all stakeholders.	CofGF, DAA (BID, DGFA)	Medium	Program
c. Develop roadway and streetscape design standards to further the intended benefits of one-way conversions for all users.	CofGF	Medium	Regulatory Framework
4. Improve connectivity to the Missouri River, River's Edge Trail, and Gibson Park for bicycles and pedestrians.			
a. Improve the attractiveness and enhance the visibility of railroad crossings and underpass tunnels that connect Downtown to the Missouri River, River's Edge Trail and Gibson Park.	CofGF (P&CD, PW, P&R), RTI	Medium	Capital Improvement
b. Identify locations and develop design options to develop an additional separated grade bike and pedestrian crossing of railroad tracks.	CofGF (P&CD, PW, P&R), RTI	Long	Capital Improvement
c. Utilize signage, pathways and striping to provide pedestrians and bicyclists with safe and efficient connections between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), RTI, TWG	Short	Capital Improvement
5. Develop a comprehensive Downtown wayfinding system.			
a. Develop a comprehensive wayfinding program.	CofGF, DAA (GFDA), Private Business	Short	Capital Improvement

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

b. Supplement proposed wayfinding program with printed maps and brochures, digital and audio tours and websites and apps to guide visitors throughout Downtown.	CofGF (P&CD), HPAC, CVB, TBID	Medium	Program
c. Incorporate a series of named or themed pathways that connect Downtown amenities and destinations.	CofGF (P&CD), HPAC, CVB, TBID	Long	Capital Improvement
6. Optimize Downtown parking for all stakeholders.			
a. Conduct a comprehensive parking study to guide Downtown parking program.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Improve bicycle parking facilities Downtown.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), GFBC, BID, private business	Short	Capital Improvement
7. Expand the use of public transit Downtown.			
a. Promote the use of transit for Downtown specific events.	GFTD, DGFA	Short	Program
b. Encourage expanded partnership between the Great Falls Transit District and Great Falls Public Schools to promote transit usage to reach Downtown events and activities.	GFTD, GFPS, DAA (DGFA)	Short	Program
c. Encourage Downtown businesses to work with the Great Falls Transit District to provide subsidized bus passes for employees as an alternative to Downtown parking.	DGFA, BID, GFTD, Private Business	Short	Program

DESTINATION:

1. Market Downtown's entertainment, culture, shopping and dining.

a. Continue to actively cross-promote and package Downtown's entertainment, culture, shopping and dining facilities with Downtown events.	MT, MEC, DGFA	On-going	Program
b. Work with various groups and organizations including the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Tourism BID, Montana Expo Park and Airport Authority to promote Downtown as a tourism and convention destination to the region and Canada.	DAA (CVB, TBID), MTEP, GFIA	Short	Program
c. Develop a comprehensive and coordinated Downtown marketing campaign utilizing print, radio, television and social media.	DAA (all), TA	Immediate	Program

2. Promote a broad range of family friendly entertainment and recreational opportunities and activities Downtown.

a. Review existing Downtown events and add free or low cost activities that engage a variety of age groups including: families, teens, young adults and older adults.	CofGF (P&R), DGFA	Short	Program
b. Promote new and exciting events in Downtown's parks, pools and recreational facilities that attract families with young children.	CofGF (P&R), DGFA	Short	Program
c. Encourage Downtown organizations and facilities to establish programs for parents to drop children off while they utilize Downtown's shopping and amenities.	Private Business, DGFA, Museum Group	Short	Program

3. Ensure Downtown is active and vibrant during the evenings and weekends.

a. Actively pursue the development of a Downtown boutique hotel to provide quality lodging and amenities for Downtown visitors.	DAA (GFDA, CofGF), Private Business	Medium	Site Specific
b. Develop programs and events that provide opportunities for people to remain in and visit Downtown in the evening and on the weekend.	DAA (DGFA), CofGF (P&R)	Short	Program
c. Actively recruit an already successful restaurant to relocate or expand into Downtown.	GFDA, BID, DGFA	Short	Program

d. Work with existing restaurant and bar/tavern owners to identify, develop and promote a Downtown Dining District.	DGFA, TA, DAA (all)	Medium	Program
e. Market Downtown's amenities and activities to current employers and employees to encourage the workforce to stay Downtown after business hours.	DAA (DGFA), TA, Restaurant owners	Immediate	Program
f. Create a year-round public market / food and arts incubator that would cater to residents, employees and visitors.	GFDA, DGFA, CofGF	Medium	Site Specific

4. Increase the utilization of the Convention Center and Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts (Mansfield).

a. Develop public/private partnerships to package the facilities at the Civic Center and Mansfield with catering and dining services and lodging facilities to enhance the attractiveness of Downtown as a convention destination.	CVB, TBID, MCPA	Medium	Program
b. Enhance partnerships with entertainment promoters to utilize the Mansfield as a concert venue.	MCPA	Short	Program
c. Educate potential users of the Civic Center and Mansfield about the opportunities available at the facility, policies and prices.	MCPA	Immediate	Program

FLOURISHING:

1. Identify and support an organization to lead and champion Downtown revitalization.

a. Establish a formal Downtown Development Agency within the City of Great Falls, in partnership with public and private entities, to foster new development and redevelopment Downtown and implement the goals, objectives and strategies identified in the Plan.	CofGF, DAA (all), Private Business	Immediate	Regulatory Framework
b. Establish a Downtown TIF and associated Urban Renewal Plan district to fund Downtown projects, improvements and organizational management.	CofGF, GFPS, CC	Immediate	Regulatory Framework
c. Update zoning and land use regulations to support recommendations of the Plan.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework

2. Improve the public realm to provide a safe, attractive and welcoming environment.

a. Encourage a partnership between Downtown organizations and stakeholders and the City Police Department to ensure a clean and safe environment.	DAA (W&S), GFDP	Short	Program
b. Establish a volunteer based Downtown clean-up day and/or program.	DAA (W&S)	Short	Program
c. Increase street level vitality by encouraging the active use of ground floor space in the Downtown core.	CofGF (P&CD), BID, DGFA	Short	Regulatory Framework

3. Identify and attract high paying employers and jobs to Downtown.

a. Develop a comprehensive Downtown business retention and development plan that focuses on successful and emerging business clusters Downtown.	GFDA, CofGF	Short	Program
b. Utilize GFDA's business attraction and retention resources to leverage Downtown business investment.	GFDA	Immediate	Program

4. Support existing and attract new commercial and retail business Downtown.

a. Establish a mentor program to pair new entrepreneurs with successful Downtown business owners.	DGFA, BID, GFDA	Short	Program
b. Utilize national research and trends to identify and attract "Downtown friendly" retailers.	GFDA, BID, NW	Short	Program

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

c. Conduct a Downtown market analysis to guide commercial and retail development.	GFDA, BID, DGFA	Medium	Program
d. Provide existing business owners with market research and technical and financial assistance.	CofGF, GFDA, DGFA, BID	Medium	Program
e. Conduct a Downtown business and building inventory to establish and maintain an accurate database of what is currently located Downtown and what opportunities exist for business expansion, attraction and relocation.	CofGF (P&CD), BID, DGFA	Immediate	Program
5. Attract a diverse mix of visual and performing artists to live and work Downtown.			
a. Revive and support the Great Falls Arts Council to develop and promote arts programs, events and education.	CofGF, DAA (all)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Encourage the development of lofts, studios and live/work spaces in vacant or underutilized buildings to attract artists to Downtown and increase arts and culture activity.	CofGF (P&CD), DAA (GFCC, GFDA)	Medium	Program
c. Develop a roster of visual and performing artists and craftsperson's living in and around Great Falls to utilize for Downtown programs and events.	DGFA	Short	Program
d. Capitalize on the success of Western Art Week by drawing visitors to Downtown galleries, shops and restaurants.	DAA (GFCC)	Immediate	Program
e. Continue to promote Downtown art galleries and artists through events such as the First Friday Art Walk.	DAA (DGFA)	Immediate	Program

LIVING:

1. Promote a wide range of housing choices throughout Downtown.

a. Ensure that the proposed City of Great Falls Downtown Development Agency is a champion of Downtown housing development.	NW, CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Evaluate zoning and land use regulations to ensure policies allow for and encourage Downtown housing in the form of rehabilitation and preservation of existing buildings, infill development and new construction.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
c. Conduct a Downtown housing inventory to establish and maintain an accurate database of housing and property available for rent, ownership, and/or rehab.	NW, W&S, CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Program

2. Ensure existing housing is safe and attractive.

a. Actively monitor the condition of existing housing and enforce the City's Property Maintenance Code.	CofGF (P&CD), W&S	On-going	Program
b. Promote and utilize the City of Great Falls Housing Rehab Loan program and Neighborworks Great Falls programs to enhance existing homes and rental properties.	CofGF, NWGF	On-going	Program
c. Develop a volunteer based residential improvement plan to ensure Downtown neighborhoods are clean and safe.	W&S, NC	Short	Program

3. Attract private investment and financing for Downtown housing.

a. Create new and promote existing incentive programs to encourage residential development.	NW, CofGF	Short	Program
b. Prepare a housing market study to assist developers, lending institutions and private property owners in developing Downtown housing.	Realtors, HBA, NW, GFDA	Short	Program
c. Establish a clearinghouse and/or database of residential financing options and incentives.	Realtors, HBA, NW, GFDA	Short	Program

4. Attract retailers and neighborhood services that cater to Downtown residents.

a. Survey Downtown residents and utilize national research to identify neighborhood based commercial, retail and services that are missing Downtown.	NW, NC	Immediate	Program
b. Encourage mixed-use development that places residents within close proximity to commercial activities.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework

AESTHETICS:

1. Preserve, restore, and reuse Downtown’s historic buildings and sites.

a. Market Downtown’s historical resources to facilitate improvements and restoration of properties through tax incentives and preservation grants.	CofGF, HPAC	Immediate	Program
b. Educate current property owners and developers of the funding programs available to make improvements to the Downtown buildings.	HPAC, DAA (BID)	Immediate	Program
c. Establish a technical assistance and incentive program to encourage the adaptive re-use, rehabilitation and preservation of historic buildings and sites.	CofGF, HPAC	On-going	Program

2. Increase the number and diversity of public spaces Downtown.

a. Actively pursue the development of an indoor/outdoor community gathering space to host activities and events and attract residents, employees and visitors throughout the year.	CofGF, Private Business	Short	Site Specific
b. Encourage diversity in the form and function of Downtown parks, plazas and gathering spaces.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R)	Medium	Regulatory Framework
c. Explore the feasibility of developing rooftop green spaces.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), Private business	Medium	Regulatory Framework

3. Promote quality design and construction in Downtown’s built environment.

a. Develop design guidelines to enhance the character of Downtown through the quality design and construction of Downtown’s built environment.	CofGF, DAA (all)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Evaluate the function, authority and scope of the City’s Design Review Board to ensure aesthetic goals of the Plan are achieved.	CofGF	Short	Regulatory Framework

4. Create attractive gateway design features that welcome residents and visitors to downtown.

a. Identify priority entrances into Downtown to construct gateway design features.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R), GFDA	Short	Capital Improvements
b. Establish a program to encourage community and/or service groups, private businesses and other stakeholders to “sponsor” the construction of gateway features.	DAA (all)	Short	Capital Improvements

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

5. Expand and enhance the existing downtown streetscape.			
a. Develop a comprehensive Downtown streetscape plan that prioritizes future improvements and builds upon the existing streetscape.	CofGF (P&CD, PW)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Ensure streetscape improvements are implemented in coordination with the construction of gateway design features.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
c. Work with the City Forester to establish tree planting programs throughout Downtown.	DAA (BID), NC	Short	Program
6. Actively pursue the preservation and rehabilitation of the Rocky Mountain Building.			
a. Identify an organization or partnership to lead restoration efforts including assisting in permitting process and requirements, identifying funding options, leading fundraising efforts and recruiting a mix of building tenants.	CofGF (P&CD), DAA (all)	On-going	Program
b. Encourage the current building owners to move forward with restoration improvements before weathering and damage continue to a point where rehabilitation is no longer feasible.	CofGF (P&CD), DAA (all)	On-going	Program
7. Actively pursue the preservation and rehabilitation of the Civic Center.			
a. Fund and complete the Civic Center façade renovation project.	CofGF	Immediate	Capital Improvement
b. Identify and complete rehabilitation projects within the Civic Center property including, but not limited to, landscape and asphalt restoration.	CofGF	On-going	Capital Improvement
c. Determine and complete preservation projects within the Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts including, but not limited to, seat and architectural feature renovations.	CofGF	On-going	Capital Improvement
d. Identify and complete rehabilitation projects within the Convention Center including, but not limited to, upgrading lighting and architectural feature renovations.	CofGF	On-going	Capital Improvement

Funding and Administration:

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is necessary to encourage private reinvestment within the District, create employment opportunities, implement the goals set forth in this plan and increase the tax base of the District. The Downtown Urban Renewal District is hereby established as a tax increment financing urban renewal area in accordance with 7-15-4282-4292 and 4301-4324 (MCA).

For the purpose of calculating the incremental taxable value each year for the life of the district, the base taxable value shall be calculated as current base taxable value of the district as of January 1, 2012.

Administration

The District will be administered in accordance with 7-15-4232 (MCA). The Great Falls City Commission has the authority to administer and manage the District and the implementation of the DURP. Under 7-15-4232 (MCA) the City Commission may authorize a City Department to manage the program and implement the recommendation of the DURP. It is envisioned that the Commission will receive recommendations and input from the Planning and Community Development Department in partnership with the Downtown Partnership of Great Falls (the Partnership).

Planning and Community Development Staff will work with the Partnership to prepare an annual District work plan and budget, which the Partnership will submit to the City Commission for consideration and adoption. The work plan will list the activities and cost of activities for the coming fiscal years and a method of financing those activities. The Partnership will enter into an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other form of agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities of this group in relation to the District.

The Planning and Community Development Department will provide initial staffing to assist the Partnership in preparing the annual District work plan and budget, preparing and presenting annual reports to the City Commission, and coordinating the review of proposed projects and development requesting TIF funding. It is anticipated that TIF moneys will be used in the future to fund a permanent staff position.

Planning and Community Development Staff will provide to the City Commission and the public an annual program evaluation as part of the annual report.

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Conformity with the Growth Policy

The establishment of the Partnership and the Downtown TIF are both direct recommendations of the **Downtown Master Plan**. ~~DMP which was adopted as an attachment to the 2005 Growth Policy.~~ Additionally, specific themes, goals and policies of the City's Growth Policy (displayed below) are supported by recommendations contained within the DURP.

- Encourage livable, walkable, visually and functionally cohesive neighborhoods that incorporate traditional design concepts (Land Use pg. 20).
- Formulate and adopt modern, flexible land development regulations in order to preserve and enhance the scale, quality, and character of existing neighborhoods (Land Use pg. 21).
- Encourage mixed land uses in new and redeveloping areas to achieve a high degree of self-containment, reduce auto dependence, and foster a strong live-work-play pattern of activity within neighborhoods (Land Use pg. 22).
- Encourage preservation of corridors of land for non-motorized transportation routes/trails and provide public investment for non-motorized transportation facilities (Land Use pg. 22).
- Review existing zoning to ensure it is consistent with neighborhood objectives, and pursue rezoning of areas where conflicts are found (Land Use pg. 23).
- Increase code enforcement activity in order to help protect neighborhoods from decay, decline and disinvestment (Land Use pg. 23).
- Allow for compatible, small-scale commercial uses that support existing neighborhoods and reduce dependence on automobile travel (Land Use pg. 24).
- Encourage public investment in parks and schools that are neighborhood focal points, consistent with the Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan (Land Use pg. 25).
- Proactively direct development through public investment in infrastructure (Land Use pg. 28).

Amendment of the DURP

The DURP may be modified at any time by the City Commission as necessary to eliminate and prevent the development or spread of blight and to encourage urban rehabilitation. The process for plan amendment shall be consistent with the procedures outlined in 7-15-4212 - 4219 (MCA).

Conclusion:

The City of Great Falls Downtown Master Plan recommends the establishment of an Urban Renewal District that utilizes TIF funding to revitalize and rehab downtown. The Plan provides an ambitious yet obtainable framework of goals, objectives and strategies that are intended to transition this area from its current condition to a vibrant and thriving destination. The Downtown Urban Renewal District has tremendous potential to re-emerge as the commercial, cultural and entertainment center of Great Falls.

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan



CITY OF GREAT FALLS

Downtown Urban Renewal Plan



May 2012

Introduction:

The City of Great Falls has embarked on an ambitious program to revitalize downtown Great Falls. In October 2011 the Great Falls City Commission unanimously adopted the Downtown Master Plan (DMP). Referenced throughout the 2013 Growth Policy Update, the DMP serves as the guiding policy document for downtown. The DMP provides a strategically focused, goal driven “blueprint” for the future growth and development of downtown. The DMP creates a vision and outlines strategies, actions, partnerships and timeframes that will facilitate the re-development of a regional destination.

The 82 strategies within the DMP are each designed to capitalize on downtown’s assets and proactively address downtown’s issues. The strategies all seek to create a downtown that has a balance of amenities, housing and transportation options, goods and services and cultural, entertainment and educational opportunities.

The DMP recommends the creation of an Urban Renewal District that utilizes Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to fund public improvements recommended in the DMP in an effort to revitalize Downtown Great Falls. The proposed Downtown Urban Renewal District (DURP) will be the third urban renewal district established in the City of Great Falls. The Central Place Revitalization Urban Renewal Program, established in 1977, has since expired while the West Bank Urban Renewal District, established in 2006 is currently operational.

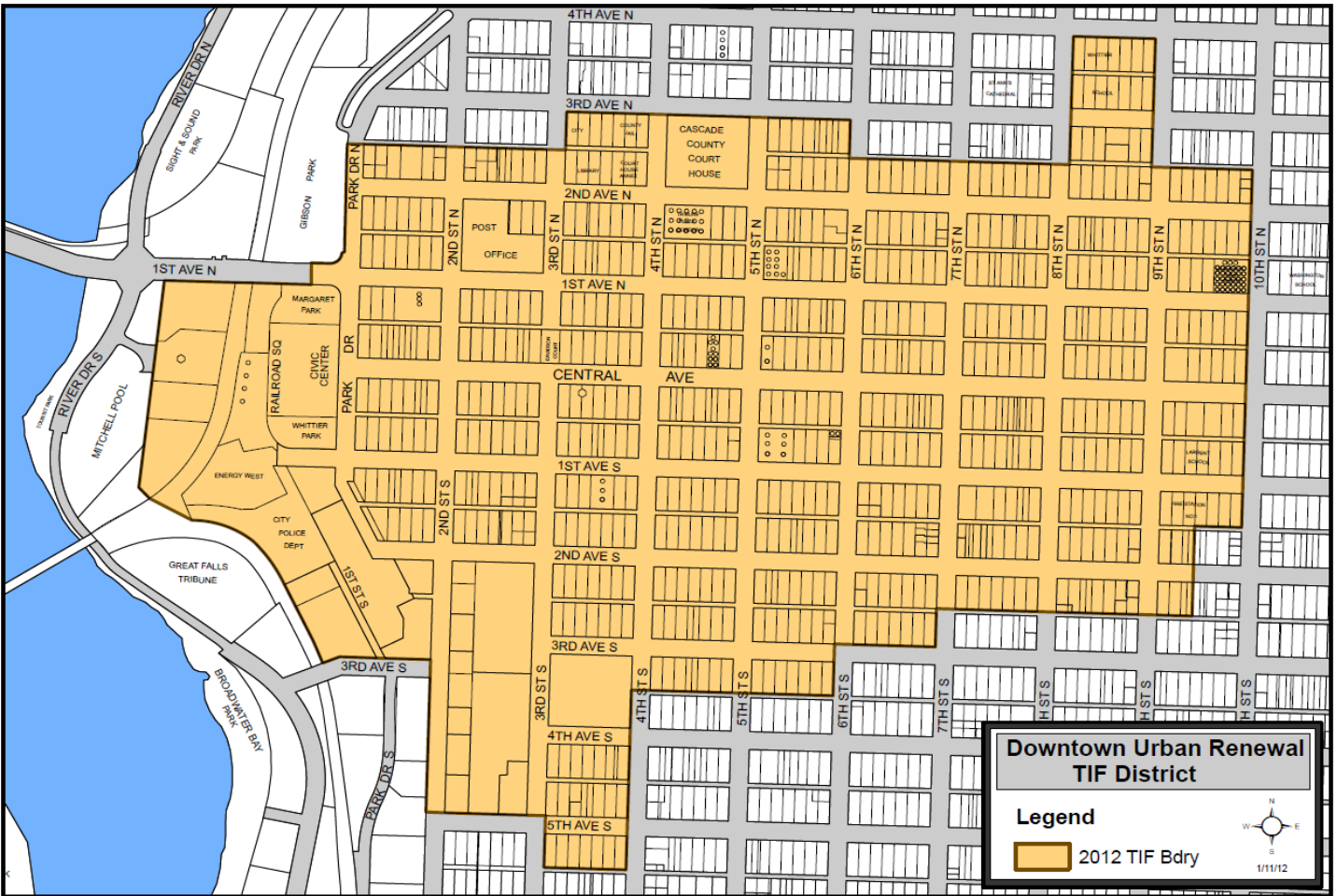
The Downtown Urban Renewal District and TIF funds generated through the improvements to property in the district are anticipated to be the primary funding sources to implement the recommendations of the DMP. Previous urban renewal districts in the City have been successful in redevelopment and revitalization efforts. It is the hope of the City of Great Falls and the Downtown stakeholders that this urban renewal district will yield the same positive results.

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Legal Description of the District:

Beginning at a point that is the southeast corner of Lot 1, Block 11, of the Broadwater Bay Business Park; thence south across 3rd Ave So to the northeast corner of Lot 6, Block 9, of the Broadwater Bay Business Park; thence south along the west right of way line of 2nd St So to a point that is directly west of the southwest corner of Lot 8, of the Amended Plat of Block 453, of the Great Falls Original Townsite (GFOT); Thence east across 2nd St So to the southwest corner of Lot 8, of the Amended Plat of Block 453, of the GFOT; thence east to the southwest corner of Lot 14, Block 452, of the GFOT; thence south to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 455, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 455; of the GFOT; thence north along the west right of line of 4th St S to a point directly west from the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 420, of the GFOT; thence east across 4th St So to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 420, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 421, of the GFOT; thence north to the southeast corner of Lot 8, Block 413, of the GFOT; thence east across 6th St So to the southwest corner of Lot 14, Block 412, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 8, Block 412, of the GFOT; thence north to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 412, of the GFOT; thence east to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 411, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 3, Block 409, of the GFOT; thence north to the southeast corner of Lot 3, Block 376, of the GFOT; thence east to the southeast corner of Lot 7, Block 376, of the GFOT; thence north along the west right of way line of 10th St N to the northeast corner of Lot 8, Block 258, of the GFOT; thence west to the northeast corner of Lot 8, Block 257, of the GFOT; thence north to the northeast corner of Lot 7, Block 242, of the GFOT; thence west to the northwest corner of Lot 1, Blk 242, of the GFOT; thence south to the northwest corner of Lot 14, Blk 257, of the GFOT; thence west to the northeast corner of Lot 8, Blk 254, of the GFOT; thence north to the northeast corner of Lot 7, Blk 254, of the GFOT: thence west to the northwest corner of Lot 1, Blk 252, of the GFOT; thence south to the northwest corner of Lot 14, Blk 252, of the GFOT; thence west to the northwest corner of Lot 13, Blk 250, of the GFOT; thence continuing west to a point that is located on the west right of way of Park Dr N; thence south along the west right of way of Park Dr N to the corner of Park Dr N and 1st Ave N; thence around a curve to the left to a point of tangent thence continuing west eighty feet along the north right of way of 1st Ave N; thence south on a perpendicular line to the south right of way line of 1st Ave N; thence west along the south right of way line of 1st Ave N to the northwest corner of Lot 5, Blk 13, of the Broadwater Bay Business Park Addition (BBBP); thence southwesterly to the southwest corner of Lot 2, Blk 13, of the BBBP; thence southeasterly to the southeast corner of Lot 2, Blk 13, of the BBBP; thence continuing southeasterly to a point that is the intersection of the north railroad right of way line and the westerly boundary of Mark 22A (City of Great Falls Police Department); thence southeasterly along a curve to the right also being the north railroad right of way line to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Blk 12, of the BBBP; thence easterly along the north right of way line of 3rd Ave S to the point of beginning.

District Boundary



Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Determination of Blight:

To establish an Urban Renewal District in Montana, it must be found that conditions of blight are present in the area. Section 7-15-4206 (2) MCA defines blight as “an area that is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, and crime, that substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the city or its environs, that retards the provision of housing accommodations, or that constitutes an economic or social liability or is detrimental or constitutes a menace to the public health, safety, welfare, and morals in its present condition and use, by reason of:

- the substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential;
- inadequate provision for ventilation, light, proper sanitary facilities, or open spaces as determined by competent appraisers on the basis of an examination of the building standards of the municipality;
- inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings;
- high density of population and overcrowding;
- defective or inadequate street layout;
- faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- excessive land coverage;
- unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- deterioration of site;
- diversity of ownership;
- tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
- defective or unusual conditions of title;
- improper subdivision or obsolete platting;
- the existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes; or
- any combination of the factors listed in this subsection (2).



With the adoption of Resolution 9961, the Great Falls City Commission found that the following conditions of blight are present in the District:

The substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential.

Vacancy, underutilization and a lack of maintenance has led to the substantial physical dilapidation and deterioration of a number of buildings within the district. Not only does this affect the aesthetic character of these buildings, and the district it also produces conditions that are unsafe, unsanitary and not conducive to economic development.



Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings.

A large amount of land within the District is currently used as surface parking for automobiles. While a certain amount of parking is necessary to support other uses within the District, surface parking lots are an inefficient use of land in the City's commercial core. This land could potentially be redeveloped as commercial, office, residential or mixed use activities that would improve the vitality of the downtown and increase the taxable value of the District.



The heavy industrial nature of the southwest area of the District is incompatible with the adjacent commercial and retail and residential uses of the area. This area has the potential to be redeveloped in a mixed-use or transitional fashion to provide a key entry corridor into the District.

Defective or inadequate street layout.

Three one-way couplets currently traverse through the district. Multiple studies and analyses conducted across the U.S. indicate that downtown access and circulation, customer parking and property values increase when downtown one-ways are restored to two-way streets. The City of Great Falls conducted and completed a study in April 2013, which resulted in the *Downtown Access, Circulation, and Streetscape Plan*. Although it was never adopted, the study is used as a resource and guide for city staff.

A primary intersection within the district - Park Drive and 1st Avenue N - is unsafe and difficult to navigate for pedestrians. Additionally, the configuration of the intersection produces inefficient conditions for automobiles, especially those making turns at high volume portions of the day.

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Deterioration of site.

Vacant, underutilized or unmaintained buildings and parcels concentrated within specific areas of the district have created pockets of site deterioration throughout the district. The deterioration of sites has often led private investment and development to move to outlying areas of the City and has also slowed redevelopment and infill efforts downtown. If site deterioration is not addressed, the exodus of commercial and residential development will continue and ultimately lead to further deterioration.

The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.

A number of buildings in the district are in conditions that could potentially endanger life of property. Multiple factors have contributed to these conditions including fire damage, the use of hazardous construction materials, negligence on behalf of a property owner and extended vacancy among others. Buildings that have reached this condition are often the target of graffiti and other forms of vandalism, leading to further deterioration in the district.

Urban Renewal Plan

The DMP will guide the urban renewal and revitalization efforts within the district. The overall vision of the DMP and the goals, objectives and strategies of the Plan provide a comprehensive framework for the redevelopment of the downtown core. The following table displays the 82 strategies of the DMP and additional project priorities, with associated timelines, categories and partner organizations.



Strategy	Partners	Timeframe	Category
1. CONNECTED:			
1. Improve pedestrian connectivity and safety Downtown.			
a. Ensure streetscape improvements are designed to enhance pedestrian safety and pleasure by providing sufficient space for pedestrian needs and uses.	CofGF (P&CD, PW)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Develop public/private partnerships to ensure Downtown is safe, clean and accessible for all users.	CofGF, DAA (Safety team)	Immediate	Program
c. Identify, prioritize and correct accessibility barriers to sidewalks, curbs, pedestrian signals and other pedestrian facilities.	CofGF (P&CD, PW) Accessibility group	Short	Program
2. Develop a comprehensive Downtown bicycle network to connect into a city-wide system.			
a. Prepare a complete streets policy to guide roadway construction and rehabilitation.	CofGF, GFGF, GFBC	Immediate	Regulatory Framework
b. Update the bikeway chapter of the Long Range Transportation Plan, including prioritization of improvements and routes for implementation.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R), GFBC, RTI, TWG	Short	Regulatory Framework
c. Improve and expand bicycle connections to the River's Edge Trail through signage and routes.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R), GFBC, RTI, TWG	Short	Capital Improvement
d. Ensure that bike routes link and connect neighborhoods, employment centers, amenities and destinations.	CofGF (P&CD), GFBC, RTI	Short	Regulatory Framework
e. Develop public education and marketing programs to maximize the use of the bicycle network.	RTI, GFBC	Short	Program
3. Reduce or eliminate Downtown one-ways.			
a. Conduct a one-way conversion plan to help facilitate an environment that is pedestrian and retail friendly, improves local circulation, and increase access to Downtown businesses.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), MDT	Medium	Program
b. Effectively communicate the costs and benefits of one-way conversions to all stakeholders.	CofGF, DAA (BID, DGFA)	Medium	Program
c. Develop roadway and streetscape design standards to further the intended benefits of one-way conversions for all users.	CofGF	Medium	Regulatory Framework
4. Improve connectivity to the Missouri River, River's Edge Trail, and Gibson Park for bicycles and pedestrians.			
a. Improve the attractiveness and enhance the visibility of railroad crossings and underpass tunnels that connect Downtown to the Missouri River, River's Edge Trail and Gibson Park.	CofGF (P&CD, PW, P&R), RTI	Medium	Capital Improvement
b. Identify locations and develop design options to develop an additional separated grade bike and pedestrian crossing of railroad tracks.	CofGF (P&CD, PW, P&R), RTI	Long	Capital Improvement
c. Utilize signage, pathways and striping to provide pedestrians and bicyclists with safe and efficient connections between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), RTI, TWG	Short	Capital Improvement
5. Develop a comprehensive Downtown wayfinding system.			
a. Develop a comprehensive wayfinding program.	CofGF, DAA (GFDA), Private Business	Short	Capital Improvement

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

b. Supplement proposed wayfinding program with printed maps and brochures, digital and audio tours and websites and apps to guide visitors throughout Downtown.	CofGF (P&CD), HPAC, CVB, TBID	Medium	Program
c. Incorporate a series of named or themed pathways that connect Downtown amenities and destinations.	CofGF (P&CD), HPAC, CVB, TBID	Long	Capital Improvement
6. Optimize Downtown parking for all stakeholders.			
a. Conduct a comprehensive parking study to guide Downtown parking program.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Improve bicycle parking facilities Downtown.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), GFBC, BID, private business	Short	Capital Improvement
7. Expand the use of public transit Downtown.			
a. Promote the use of transit for Downtown specific events.	GFTD, DGFA	Short	Program
b. Encourage expanded partnership between the Great Falls Transit District and Great Falls Public Schools to promote transit usage to reach Downtown events and activities.	GFTD, GFPS, DAA (DGFA)	Short	Program
c. Encourage Downtown businesses to work with the Great Falls Transit District to provide subsidized bus passes for employees as an alternative to Downtown parking.	DGFA, BID, GFTD, Private Business	Short	Program

DESTINATION:

1. Market Downtown's entertainment, culture, shopping and dining.

a. Continue to actively cross-promote and package Downtown's entertainment, culture, shopping and dining facilities with Downtown events.	MT, MEC, DGFA	On-going	Program
b. Work with various groups and organizations including the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Tourism BID, Montana Expo Park and Airport Authority to promote Downtown as a tourism and convention destination to the region and Canada.	DAA (CVB, TBID), MTEP, GFIA	Short	Program
c. Develop a comprehensive and coordinated Downtown marketing campaign utilizing print, radio, television and social media.	DAA (all), TA	Immediate	Program

2. Promote a broad range of family friendly entertainment and recreational opportunities and activities Downtown.

a. Review existing Downtown events and add free or low cost activities that engage a variety of age groups including: families, teens, young adults and older adults.	CofGF (P&R), DGFA	Short	Program
b. Promote new and exciting events in Downtown's parks, pools and recreational facilities that attract families with young children.	CofGF (P&R), DGFA	Short	Program
c. Encourage Downtown organizations and facilities to establish programs for parents to drop children off while they utilize Downtown's shopping and amenities.	Private Business, DGFA, Museum Group	Short	Program

3. Ensure Downtown is active and vibrant during the evenings and weekends.

a. Actively pursue the development of a Downtown boutique hotel to provide quality lodging and amenities for Downtown visitors.	DAA (GFDA, CofGF), Private Business	Medium	Site Specific
b. Develop programs and events that provide opportunities for people to remain in and visit Downtown in the evening and on the weekend.	DAA (DGFA), CofGF (P&R)	Short	Program
c. Actively recruit an already successful restaurant to relocate or expand into Downtown.	GFDA, BID, DGFA	Short	Program

d. Work with existing restaurant and bar/tavern owners to identify, develop and promote a Downtown Dining District.	DGFA, TA, DAA (all)	Medium	Program
e. Market Downtown’s amenities and activities to current employers and employees to encourage the workforce to stay Downtown after business hours.	DAA (DGFA), TA, Restaurant owners	Immediate	Program
f. Create a year-round public market / food and arts incubator that would cater to residents, employees and visitors.	GFDA, DGFA, CofGF	Medium	Site Specific

4. Increase the utilization of the Convention Center and Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts (Mansfield).

a. Develop public/private partnerships to package the facilities at the Civic Center and Mansfield with catering and dining services and lodging facilities to enhance the attractiveness of Downtown as a convention destination.	CVB, TBID, MCPA	Medium	Program
b. Enhance partnerships with entertainment promoters to utilize the Mansfield as a concert venue.	MCPA	Short	Program
c. Educate potential users of the Civic Center and Mansfield about the opportunities available at the facility, policies and prices.	MCPA	Immediate	Program

FLOURISHING:

1. Identify and support an organization to lead and champion Downtown revitalization.

a. Establish a formal Downtown Development Agency within the City of Great Falls, in partnership with public and private entities, to foster new development and redevelopment Downtown and implement the goals, objectives and strategies identified in the Plan.	CofGF, DAA (all), Private Business	Immediate	Regulatory Framework
b. Establish a Downtown TIF and associated Urban Renewal Plan district to fund Downtown projects, improvements and organizational management.	CofGF, GFPS, CC	Immediate	Regulatory Framework
c. Update zoning and land use regulations to support recommendations of the Plan.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework

2. Improve the public realm to provide a safe, attractive and welcoming environment.

a. Encourage a partnership between Downtown organizations and stakeholders and the City Police Department to ensure a clean and safe environment.	DAA (W&S), GFDP	Short	Program
b. Establish a volunteer based Downtown clean-up day and/or program.	DAA (W&S)	Short	Program
c. Increase street level vitality by encouraging the active use of ground floor space in the Downtown core.	CofGF (P&CD), BID, DGFA	Short	Regulatory Framework

3. Identify and attract high paying employers and jobs to Downtown.

a. Develop a comprehensive Downtown business retention and development plan that focuses on successful and emerging business clusters Downtown.	GFDA, CofGF	Short	Program
b. Utilize GFDA’s business attraction and retention resources to leverage Downtown business investment.	GFDA	Immediate	Program

4. Support existing and attract new commercial and retail business Downtown.

a. Establish a mentor program to pair new entrepreneurs with successful Downtown business owners.	DGFA, BID, GFDA	Short	Program
b. Utilize national research and trends to identify and attract “Downtown friendly” retailers.	GFDA, BID, NW	Short	Program

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c. Conduct a Downtown market analysis to guide commercial and retail development.	GFDA, BID, DGFA	Medium	Program
d. Provide existing business owners with market research and technical and financial assistance.	CofGF, GFDA, DGFA, BID	Medium	Program
e. Conduct a Downtown business and building inventory to establish and maintain an accurate database of what is currently located Downtown and what opportunities exist for business expansion, attraction and relocation.	CofGF (P&CD), BID, DGFA	Immediate	Program
5. Attract a diverse mix of visual and performing artists to live and work Downtown.			
a. Revive and support the Great Falls Arts Council to develop and promote arts programs, events and education.	CofGF, DAA (all)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Encourage the development of lofts, studios and live/work spaces in vacant or underutilized buildings to attract artists to Downtown and increase arts and culture activity.	CofGF (P&CD), DAA (GFCC, GFDA)	Medium	Program
c. Develop a roster of visual and performing artists and craftsperson's living in and around Great Falls to utilize for Downtown programs and events.	DGFA	Short	Program
d. Capitalize on the success of Western Art Week by drawing visitors to Downtown galleries, shops and restaurants.	DAA (GFCC)	Immediate	Program
e. Continue to promote Downtown art galleries and artists through events such as the First Friday Art Walk.	DAA (DGFA)	Immediate	Program

LIVING:

1. Promote a wide range of housing choices throughout Downtown.			
a. Ensure that the proposed City of Great Falls Downtown Development Agency is a champion of Downtown housing development.	NW, CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Evaluate zoning and land use regulations to ensure policies allow for and encourage Downtown housing in the form of rehabilitation and preservation of existing buildings, infill development and new construction.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
c. Conduct a Downtown housing inventory to establish and maintain an accurate database of housing and property available for rent, ownership, and/or rehab.	NW, W&S, CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Program
2. Ensure existing housing is safe and attractive.			
a. Actively monitor the condition of existing housing and enforce the City's Property Maintenance Code.	CofGF (P&CD), W&S	On-going	Program
b. Promote and utilize the City of Great Falls Housing Rehab Loan program and Neighborworks Great Falls programs to enhance existing homes and rental properties.	CofGF, NWGF	On-going	Program
c. Develop a volunteer based residential improvement plan to ensure Downtown neighborhoods are clean and safe.	W&S, NC	Short	Program
3. Attract private investment and financing for Downtown housing.			
a. Create new and promote existing incentive programs to encourage residential development.	NW, CofGF	Short	Program
b. Prepare a housing market study to assist developers, lending institutions and private property owners in developing Downtown housing.	Realtors, HBA, NW, GFDA	Short	Program
c. Establish a clearinghouse and/or database of residential financing options and incentives.	Realtors, HBA, NW, GFDA	Short	Program

4. Attract retailers and neighborhood services that cater to Downtown residents.

a. Survey Downtown residents and utilize national research to identify neighborhood based commercial, retail and services that are missing Downtown.	NW, NC	Immediate	Program
b. Encourage mixed-use development that places residents within close proximity to commercial activities.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework

AESTHETICS:

1. Preserve, restore, and reuse Downtown’s historic buildings and sites.

a. Market Downtown’s historical resources to facilitate improvements and restoration of properties through tax incentives and preservation grants.	CofGF, HPAC	Immediate	Program
b. Educate current property owners and developers of the funding programs available to make improvements to the Downtown buildings.	HPAC, DAA (BID)	Immediate	Program
c. Establish a technical assistance and incentive program to encourage the adaptive re-use, rehabilitation and preservation of historic buildings and sites.	CofGF, HPAC	On-going	Program

2. Increase the number and diversity of public spaces Downtown.

a. Actively pursue the development of an indoor/outdoor community gathering space to host activities and events and attract residents, employees and visitors throughout the year.	CofGF, Private Business	Short	Site Specific
b. Encourage diversity in the form and function of Downtown parks, plazas and gathering spaces.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R)	Medium	Regulatory Framework
c. Explore the feasibility of developing rooftop green spaces.	CofGF (P&CD, PW), Private business	Medium	Regulatory Framework

3. Promote quality design and construction in Downtown’s built environment.

a. Develop design guidelines to enhance the character of Downtown through the quality design and construction of Downtown’s built environment.	CofGF, DAA (all)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Evaluate the function, authority and scope of the City’s Design Review Board to ensure aesthetic goals of the Plan are achieved.	CofGF	Short	Regulatory Framework

4. Create attractive gateway design features that welcome residents and visitors to downtown.

a. Identify priority entrances into Downtown to construct gateway design features.	CofGF (P&CD, P&R), GFDA	Short	Capital Improvements
b. Establish a program to encourage community and/or service groups, private businesses and other stakeholders to “sponsor” the construction of gateway features.	DAA (all)	Short	Capital Improvements

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5. Expand and enhance the existing downtown streetscape.			
a. Develop a comprehensive Downtown streetscape plan that prioritizes future improvements and builds upon the existing streetscape.	CofGF (P&CD, PW)	Short	Regulatory Framework
b. Ensure streetscape improvements are implemented in coordination with the construction of gateway design features.	CofGF (P&CD)	Short	Regulatory Framework
c. Work with the City Forester to establish tree planting programs throughout Downtown.	DAA (BID), NC	Short	Program
6. Actively pursue the preservation and rehabilitation of the Rocky Mountain Building.			
a. Identify an organization or partnership to lead restoration efforts including assisting in permitting process and requirements, identifying funding options, leading fundraising efforts and recruiting a mix of building tenants.	CofGF (P&CD), DAA (all)	On-going	Program
b. Encourage the current building owners to move forward with restoration improvements before weathering and damage continue to a point where rehabilitation is no longer feasible.	CofGF (P&CD), DAA (all)	On-going	Program
7. Actively pursue the preservation and rehabilitation of the Civic Center.			
a. Fund and complete the Civic Center façade renovation project.	CofGF	Immediate	Capital Improvement
b. Identify and complete rehabilitation projects within the Civic Center property including, but not limited to, landscape and asphalt restoration.	CofGF	On-going	Capital Improvement
c. Determine and complete preservation projects within the Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts including, but not limited to, seat and architectural	CofGF	On-going	Capital Improvement
d. Identify and complete rehabilitation projects within the Convention Center including, but not limited to, upgrading lighting and architectural fea-	CofGF	On-going	Capital Improvement

Funding and Administration:

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is necessary to encourage private reinvestment within the District, create employment opportunities, implement the goals set forth in this plan and increase the tax base of the District. The Downtown Urban Renewal District is hereby established as a tax increment financing urban renewal area in accordance with 7-15-4282-4292 and 4301-4324 (MCA).

For the purpose of calculating the incremental taxable value each year for the life of the district, the base taxable value shall be calculated as current base taxable value of the district as of January 1, 2012.

Administration

The District will be administered in accordance with 7-15-4232 (MCA). The Great Falls City Commission has the authority to administer and manage the District and the implementation of the DURP. Under 7-15-4232 (MCA) the City Commission may authorize a City Department to manage the program and implement the recommendation of the DURP. It is envisioned that the Commission will receive recommendations and input from the Planning and Community Development Department in partnership with the Downtown Partnership of Great Falls (the Partnership).

Planning and Community Development Staff will work with the Partnership to prepare an annual District work plan and budget, which the Partnership will submit to the City Commission for consideration and adoption. The work plan will list the activities and cost of activities for the coming fiscal years and a method of financing those activities. The Partnership will enter into an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other form of agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities of this group in relation to the District.

The Planning and Community Development Department will provide initial staffing to assist the Partnership in preparing the annual District work plan and budget, preparing and presenting annual reports to the City Commission, and coordinating the review of proposed projects and development requesting TIF funding. It is anticipated that TIF moneys will be used in the future to fund a permanent staff position.

Planning and Community Development Staff will provide to the City Commission and the public an annual program evaluation as part of the annual report.

Downtown Urban Renewal District Plan

Conformity with the Growth Policy

The establishment of the Partnership and the Downtown TIF are both direct recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan. Additionally, specific themes, goals and policies of the City's Growth Policy (displayed below) are supported by recommendations contained within the DURP.

- Encourage livable, walkable, visually and functionally cohesive neighborhoods that incorporate traditional design concepts (Land Use pg. 20).
- Formulate and adopt modern, flexible land development regulations in order to preserve and enhance the scale, quality, and character of existing neighborhoods (Land Use pg. 21).
- Encourage mixed land uses in new and redeveloping areas to achieve a high degree of self-containment, reduce auto dependence, and foster a strong live-work-play pattern of activity within neighborhoods (Land Use pg. 22).
- Encourage preservation of corridors of land for non-motorized transportation routes/trails and provide public investment for non-motorized transportation facilities (Land Use pg. 22).
- Review existing zoning to ensure it is consistent with neighborhood objectives, and pursue rezoning of areas where conflicts are found (Land Use pg. 23).
- Increase code enforcement activity in order to help protect neighborhoods from decay, decline and disinvestment (Land Use pg. 23).
- Allow for compatible, small-scale commercial uses that support existing neighborhoods and reduce dependence on automobile travel (Land Use pg. 24).
- Encourage public investment in parks and schools that are neighborhood focal points, consistent with the Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan (Land Use pg. 25).
- Proactively direct development through public investment in infrastructure (Land Use pg. 28).

Amendment of the DURP

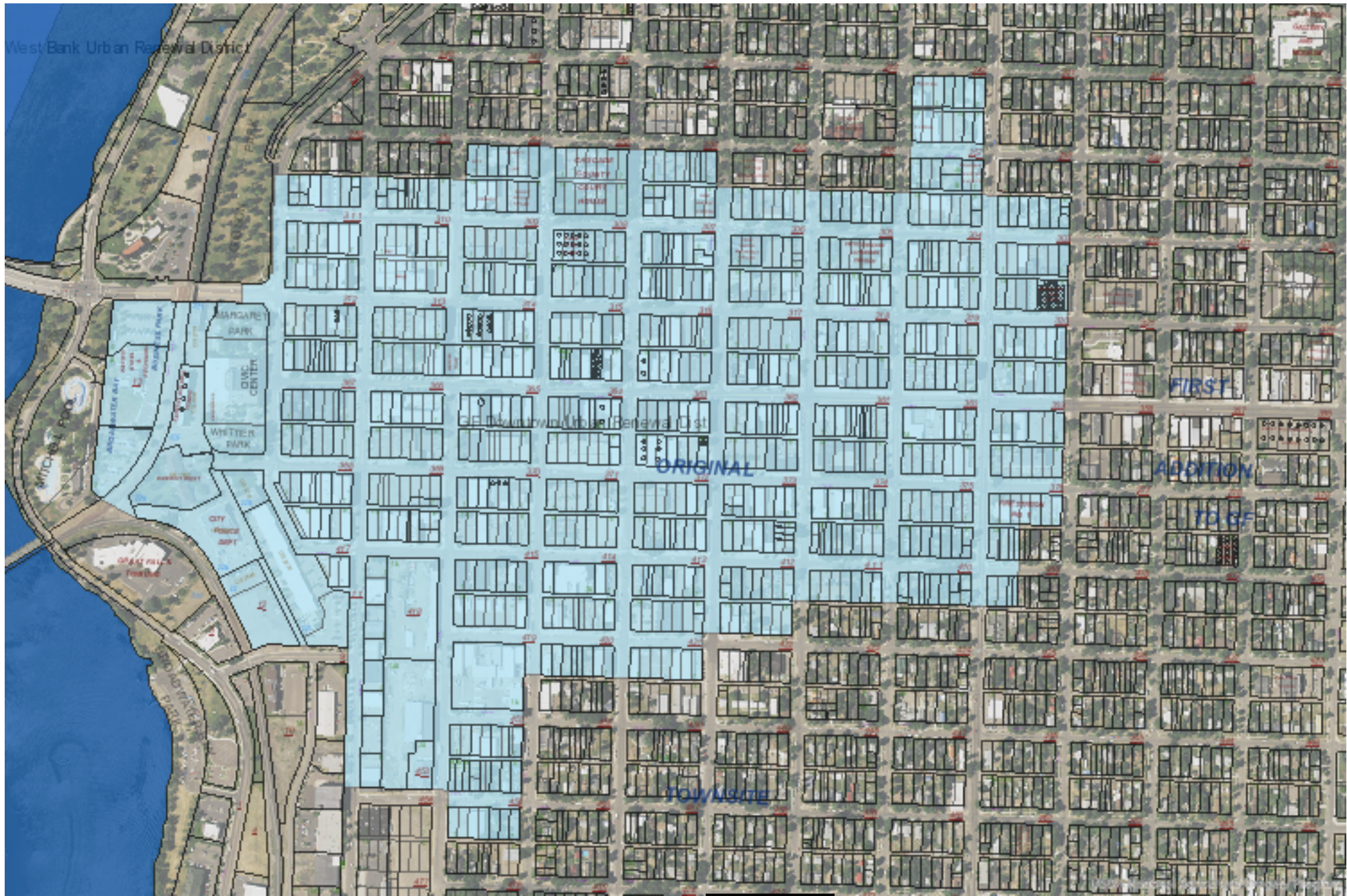
The DURP may be modified at any time by the City Commission as necessary to eliminate and prevent the development or spread of blight and to encourage urban rehabilitation. The process for plan amendment shall be consistent with the procedures outlined in 7-15-4212 - 4219 (MCA).

Conclusion:

The City of Great Falls Downtown Master Plan recommends the establishment of an Urban Renewal District that utilizes TIF funding to revitalize and rehab downtown. The Plan provides an ambitious yet obtainable framework of goals, objectives and strategies that are intended to transition this area from its current condition to a vibrant and thriving destination. The Downtown Urban Renewal District has tremendous potential to re-emerge as the commercial, cultural and entertainment center of Great Falls.

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1 inch = 100 ft



The City of Great Falls uses the most current and complete data available. However, GIS data and product accuracy may vary. GIS data and products may be developed from sources of differing accuracy, accurate only at certain scales, based on modeling or interpretation, incomplete while being created or revised, etc. The City of Great Falls reserves the right to correct, update, modify, or replace, GIS products without notification. The City of Great Falls cannot assure the accuracy, completeness, reliability, or suitability of this information for any particular purpose. Using GIS data for purposes other than those for which they were created may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The recipient may neither assert any proprietary rights to this information nor represent it to anyone as other than City Government-produced information. The City of Great Falls shall not be liable for any activity involving this information with respect to lost profits, lost savings or any other damages