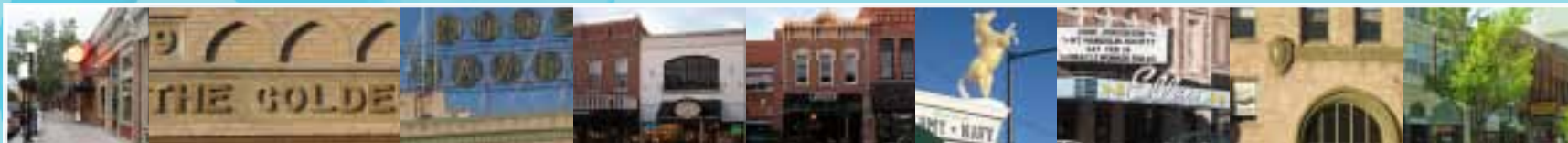


DOWNTOWN BOZEMAN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Prepared for the Downtown Bozeman Partnership and City of Bozeman
December 14, 2009



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Introduction

INTENT

This Downtown Improvement Plan is intended to guide decisions by public bodies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations for at least ten years to come. It provides a solid framework to move forward and solidify downtown Bozeman's place in the community and the region.

Over the past twenty years, Bozeman has spent considerable resources and energy making its downtown healthy, vibrant and strong. The six to eight blocks along Main Street, with its wide array of shops, services, high quality restaurants, coffee houses, and precious architecture is looked upon with envy by many communities. However, other parts of downtown Bozeman outside of Main Street are not performing as well as such areas in other, similar communities. Downtown still retains a locally-owned hardware store, drug store, and grocery store – businesses that have long ago departed downtowns in many smaller and mid-sized towns.

Often a major impediment in many communities is a lack of leadership. This not the case with downtown Bozeman where it is quite

evident from merchants who care deeply about how their business is perceived, from property owners who have invested in renovations and new construction, and from residents who continue to view downtown as their “shared” neighborhood. Just walking along the sidewalks of Main Street immediately evokes the authenticity of a genuine, close-knit town with the attributes of sociability, individual energy, and even quirkiness. The imprint of many hands and minds is palpable.

Throughout the country it has been increasingly difficult for small, local-serving businesses to operate in this age of online shopping and big-box stores. While downtown Bozeman has a tremendous group of these types of businesses, they can't help but be affected by seasonal cycles, the changing expectations and behaviors of consumers, and the current economic downturn.

Downtowns like Bozeman's used to be well supported when single family houses contained six people. Now they typically contain half that number, or less. All thriving downtowns depend upon a solid presence of residential density in close proximity – ideally within walking distance. Fortunately, downtowns all over the country have been seeing an influx of two demographic groups – people in their twenties and people in their sixties – who wish to live close to arts, entertainment, interesting shops and restaurants, and an active “street life.” These groups are fueling a demand for condominiums, row houses, lofts, flats, cottages, and many other forms of denser housing around the edges of commercial cores.

The result is a place that everyone can enjoy immensely – existing residents, new residents, shoppers, and visitors. Infill development can be designed sensitively so that the long-standing character, scale and craft of the established townscape can be maintained. This requires policies, codes, design standards, incentives, and public investments – as well as creative partnerships. Many of the strategies recommended by the plan will need additional analysis and stakeholder direction in advance of implementation. Specific development examples and opportunity sights are meant demonstrate potential sites, scales and locations, and are in no way meant to be prescriptive.

Downtown Plan Area Boundary



RELATIONSHIP TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Downtown Bozeman has been the subject of numerous plans over the last 30 years, the most recent being the 1998 Downtown Improvement Plan, also known as the MAKERS Plan. Many of the recommendations in this plan have been completed; numerous objectives remain unaccomplished yet are still relevant. While the 2009 Downtown Improvement Plan takes a broader view and suggests some fundamental restructuring of codes, policies, and operating procedures, the MAKERS Plan should still be referenced regarding additional physical improvements and the overall urban design of the downtown district. Unlike the MAKERS Plan, the 2009 Downtown Improvement Plan, once adopted by the City Commission, will

have legal status as a guiding document for downtown development as a part of the Bozeman Community Plan, the City's growth policy.

All of the recommendations contained in this plan are realistic. But in some cases, they will require more analysis of options and techniques. They may also require that various stakeholders, particularly City departments, view downtown a bit differently than in the past. This means applying different criteria than what might be found in typical manuals or regulations. The planning team firmly believes that downtown Bozeman is unique and that its vital importance to the city should be recognized in a deliberate, focused collection of efforts and actions to make it a dynamic and sustainable community center.



**BOZEMAN COMMUNITY
PLAN VISION STATEMENT**
“Bozeman’s unique identity,
characterized by its natural
surroundings, its historic and
cultural resources, and its
**downtown, which is the heart
and center of the community,**
is preserved and enhanced.”

Source: Bozeman Community Plan,
Chapter 1, *Addressing Growth &
Change*, pg 2.

Downtown Plan Area
Boundary

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

Too many downtown plans either under-perform, fall far short of their objectives, or outright fail. However well intentioned, many simply do not match the expectations so enthusiastically supported during the planning process. Why? The reasons can be many, but there are some fundamental principles that should be followed if a plan is to become successful. First and foremost, revitalizing a downtown is a highly competitive business. There is always someone, another city, a developer, or a combination thereof that wants to steal the energy that might otherwise go downtown—pulling shoppers, potential downtown residents, office tenants, and more. And, as with any business, to be successful it needs to be led, it needs to be championed, managed, staffed, capitalized, marketed, operated, and quite simply treated like the competitive business that it is. The plan is only a part. Individual projects are only parts. Success requires leadership, consistency, assertiveness, tenacity, and commitment.

While many people might say that the downtown is Main Street, in fact a healthier definition is the collection of districts that comprise the greater downtown. The retail core is the most visible with its bright lights, colorful storefronts, and heavier traffic flows. But just as important is the transit center, the nearby neighborhoods of homes that touch the edge of the retail core, the concentrations of employment, public open spaces, institutions such as the library, or cultural facilities like Emerson Center, and the other small districts that collectively comprise the larger downtown and give it its many personalities.

There is a direct correlation between the health of a downtown and the health of the city in which it is located. As a downtown moves from struggling to healthy to superior, there is generally a corresponding increase in the larger community that rises with the tide of success.



So, a great downtown helps contribute to and build a valued community that in turn attracts stable businesses and residents and visitors, and that in turn creates tax base to support the community, its amenities and services, and so continues the cycle of success.

Downtown is front line economic development.

Downtown's impact on the entire community means that any investment in downtown Bozeman has the potential to increase the

livability, attractiveness, and value of the whole City. Thus, the "balance sheet" against which investments should be judged is not just a single block or series of blocks on Main Street. Rather, potential investments should be

weighed against the value of the new investment that could reasonably occur in downtown in the next ten to fifteen years—estimated at \$120 million or more—or the market value of all property in the City—approximately \$2.4 billion. This is the asset base upon which prudent public investments can have a positive impact.

In order to realize new development on the order of \$100 million or more, the City will need to create an implementation framework with annual and multi-year targets for development, key public actions, funding commitments, responsible parties, and additional implementation strategies. Such an "action plan" will give the City the means to measure its progress toward the vision described here, and the tools to make it happen.

Enduring, durable places can realize greater revenues and appreciate over time. Strong place making principles should, properly designed and controlled, realize greater appreciation in a well-defined and rigorously controlled environment such as a successful downtown versus their counterpart in a less controlled, more suburban setting where something unfortunate might get built next door.

KEYS TO REVITALIZATION

Downtown revitalization requires property rehabilitation, new development, and injections of new capital, and these actions, in turn, require a region in which the population, employment, and incomes are healthy and growing. In fact, a recent study of the conditions needed for successful mixed use development found that the first one is “a strong local economy.”

This means that Bozeman must cultivate its regional and downtown economic drivers, including Montana State University and Bozeman Deaconess Hospital and other healthcare services; the growing technology industry; hospitality, tourism, and recreation; its extremely desirable outdoor-oriented lifestyle; manufacturing; government employment; and other business and economic clusters identified in the 2009 City of Bozeman Economic Development Plan.

A healthy business climate requires a number of variables that the private sector seeks out when making a decision to invest in a community. These are shown in the table at right.

A recent MSU graduate with a new job in the technology field adds one more Bozeman resident with the ability to live, work, shop, and play downtown. A single new high-tech business with \$5 million in annual revenues will add 97 new jobs and 97 times the new spending power to the city, according to the City’s Economic Development Plan.

The health of Downtown Bozeman and the strength of the regional economy are symbiotic, now more so than ever. In the 21st century economy, a high quality of life—of which a vibrant downtown is an important part—has the ability to attract businesses, professional workers, visitors, and ultimately drive economic growth. This represents a dramatic change from much of America’s past, when natural resources, agriculture, and transportation were the key drivers of the economy.



Private investors seek communities with:

1. Realistic plan with multiple components
2. Multi development opportunities and areas
3. Strong governmental and community leadership
4. Appropriate level of community quality of life factors
5. Available infrastructure
6. Appropriate level of governmental and community service, products, and resources
7. Appropriate balance between assistance and regulation
8. Strong partnership both public/private and private/public
9. Ability to finance needed public investment
10. Willingness of leadership and community to take calculated risks

“A strong urban core... plays a critical economic role. The urban center of metropolitan areas is the focus of cultural activities, civic identity, governmental institutions and usually has the densest employment, particularly in financial, professional and creative services. Urban cores are also the iconic centers of cities, where interaction and connections are strongest.” -- City Vitals, by CEOs for Cities, 2006.

“Support the continued economic vitality of the Downtown Bozeman business district, which is broadly recognized as one of Bozeman’s strongest assets. Continue to support and promote Downtown Bozeman as the economic and cultural center of the region, and encourage development and re-development through the use of incentives for future investment and development.”
-- Bozeman’s Economic Development Plan

NATIONAL TRENDS

Recent American downtown renaissances have been driven by new housing. This should come as some surprise since “downtown” was once largely synonymous with “central business district”—the place where employment and industry took place and most residential life did not. Some keys to understanding downtown housing in general and specifically to Bozeman include:

During the last two decades, downtown housing has grown from a tiny niche market to major national trend, largely due to changing consumer demand. Today, the national market of potential for urban dwellers numbers in the tens of millions of households. These people are seeking an active, exciting environment with abundant retail and cultural opportunities, and less upkeep and maintenance than would be required for a traditional single family home.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOZEMAN

Most urban residents fall into one of two demographic categories: first, young singles or couples in their 20s or 30s, and second, downsizing baby boomers or retirees approximately 60 or more years old. Bozeman also has a third group of potential residents: second home and vacation homeowners. According to the University of Montana, these households are typically relatively wealthy, with average annual incomes of \$100,000, and are attracted to the state by friends, family, and the beautiful natural surroundings. Along with age and household size, another key indicator for downtown residential demand is high levels of educational attainment. Nationally, forty-four percent of downtown residents hold a bachelor's or higher degree.

These three key urban residential markets hold significant promise for residential and mixed use development in downtown Bozeman. 67.2



percent, or approximately 9,000, of all City of Bozeman households are made up of one or two people. Compared to the approximately 400 households that live in downtown today, this represents a very large market, even if only a small percentage moves to downtown. Bozeman is also a relatively young city, with 16.7 percent of its population between 25 and 34 years of age, compared to 12.0 percent for the State of Montana. Within the state, only Missoula has a comparable percentage of residents in this age group. Bozeman is also an exceptionally well-educated city—52.2 percent of its residents have completed a bachelor's degree or more. This is the highest of any major city in the state, and also higher than cities such as Boise, Idaho and Spokane, Washington. Each of these demographic indicators shows that there is significant potential for residential growth downtown. By contrast, the early baby boomer demographic, now 55 to 64 years old, makes up 7.1 percent of Bozeman's population. This is lower than the state average and the level of most other Montana cities.

Downtown residents energize the rest of downtown because they support more local retailers, events, and other commercial activities than residents of other areas or downtown employees. Downtown residents tend to support three or more times as much square footage of retail compared to downtown employees. This is good not just for downtown businesses, but for all of Bozeman's citizens who value a vibrant downtown.

Over the long term, downtown residents will attract businesses downtown as well. There is an established correlation between where business executives and their employees live, and where businesses locate. When residences moved to the fringes of urban areas in the late 20th century, so too did businesses. Now, the reverse is beginning to happen.



Bozeman can expect the new housing seen in downtown to evolve and increase in scale and density. Typical early-phase downtown housing includes historic renovations, attached townhouses, and two or three story wood frame apartments. These are usually followed by more expensive and ambitious projects that include steel and concrete structures of three to five stories. This evolution takes place as developers test the market to determine the popularity of urban housing and particular preferences of the local market. While the Village Downtown and other planned developments have introduced higher density dwelling types, the current economic downturn is likely to slow or turn the clock back on the evolution of downtown housing, and generate more modest projects in the short and medium terms (within the next five years). During this time frame, it is unlikely that the current height limits in downtown will become a major constraint to downtown development.

The consultant team's initial experience-based assessment is that there is potential in the Bozeman downtown market for approximately 500 additional residential units. Approximately 200 of these would be condominium units and the remaining 300 would be apartments. Due to the still-emerging nature of Bozeman's downtown residential market, the condo projects will tend to be smaller—approximately 30 or 40 units each—while the apartment projects will tend to be larger due to the economies of scale required—ranging between 80 and 150 units each. Additional site specific and Bozeman-area market research will be needed in order to attach more specific timeframes, benchmarks, and site specific recommendations to this assessment.

Private investment follows public commitment. In other words, most developers, business owners, and others want to put their money and life's work where it will be reinforced and amplified by established public goals and investments. It is usually the public sector's goal to set the stage and standards and demonstrate that its downtown is a safe, attractive, exciting—and ultimately profitable—place to invest.



Examples of mixed-use urban development in other cities

Introduction OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES

Like many other cities, Bozeman faces challenges it must address to keep its downtown prosperous, lively, and appealing. Competition from the outward growth of retail and other commercial businesses is an ongoing struggle for downtowns as they try to remain at the center of commerce and civic life. The following is an overview of the particular issues facing Downtown Bozeman, and the opportunities – both big and small – that exist to strengthen and enhance downtown’s role as the heart of the community and the region.

ISSUES

Access and Circulation

- Vehicular circulation patterns, including the Mendenhall/Babcock one-way couplet, encourage through traffic and high speeds. One-way streets make it unnecessarily difficult for cars and pedestrians to move within downtown.
- Main Street’s truck route designation is at odds with the other functions and character of downtown’s signature pedestrian street.

Maximize Underutilized Parcels

- Many sections of the downtown district contain underutilized parcels. Such parcels are often located abruptly on the sidewalk edge and create “dead” spaces at many key locations. Considering downtown’s pedestrian focus and a finite amount of land for infill projects, these parcels should be further analyzed to determine their highest and best use, which may be redevelopment.

Lack of Vitality on Key Streets

- Currently, Main Street defines downtown’s identity because of its continuous block pattern lined with a mix of active street level shops, cafes and restaurants. Other key thoroughfares, including Mendenhall, Babcock, and north-south streets, have significant “gaps” in their development patterns. These areas lack a critical mass of activity associated with a higher concentration of development.
- The amount and quality of sidewalks, street trees and street furniture varies throughout downtown. Some areas are appealing, while many others do not encourage and support getting around on foot. The lack of a coordinated level of street design compromises the ability to establish a cohesive district identity.

Connections and Wayfinding

- Parts of downtown feel disconnected from one another. For example, downtown houses a variety of arts and cultural facilities

that is not evident on the street to a visitor. Connections need to be strengthened so that the parts can add up to a stronger and more accessible whole.

Street-level Conditions

- Downtown Bozeman contains many fine examples of traditional storefront design, with generous shop windows and ground level details that add interest and comfort to the pedestrian experience. However, downtown’s attractiveness is diminished by the design of some development and façade renovations which are not sympathetic to Bozeman’s architectural heritage.

Little Sense of “Entry”

- Key arrival points into downtown do not signify that you are entering a special district. Improvements could include big moves (anchor redevelopments, entry plazas, etc.) and modest improvements.

Regulatory Impediments

- A strong and healthy downtown requires public sector support. Clear and reasonable zoning and incentives can help remove hindrances to development under current regulations.
- Although not a zoning issue, it appears that State licensing regulations for restaurants that wish to serve alcohol present financial and procedural hurdles, making it difficult to open new restaurants in downtown. Changing this would require legislative efforts at the State level.

OPPORTUNITIES

Public Support

- Build on the commitment and support to enhance and improve downtown from all sectors of the community to advance various initiatives.



Surface parking on Mendenhall

Authentic Main Street Experience

- People are attracted to downtowns to experience the type of vitality and diversity difficult to replicate in more suburban centers. Bozeman's intact, historic core and great retail and restaurants help to distinguish the city from others in the region and should be used to increase economic competitiveness. Keeping Main Street healthy in the future will continue to draw visitors, and contribute to community livability downtown – which is vital to economic development.

Partnerships

- Attracting new development downtown can be a challenge. Public-private development can help mitigate risk and can encourage projects that otherwise might not be built. This approach should be explored, particularly for catalyst developments suggested in this document.

Recent Public Investments

- Investment and maintenance of the public realm is the foundation for a successful downtown. Recent investments, including the parking garage, library, and streetscape improvements have provided quality development, efficient use of land, and an attractive public realm to support private development in the area.

Arts and Culture

- Nationally, the role of entertainment, art, and culture downtown has been strong and growing. Bozeman has the opportunity to elevate its downtown arts and culture scene to attract more people downtown at night and on the weekends.

“Complete Streets”

- Most streets downtown are in need of improvements. Design streets to make it safe, easy and enjoyable to get around on foot and bicycle. “Complete Streets” is a transportation and planning concept that provides for all modes of use

More Housing Downtown

- Increase the limited amount of housing, taking advantage of the proximity of local services and stable residential neighborhoods nearby containing several schools and parks.



New parking garage



Retail next to the Baxter Hotel



Recent townhouse development



Vacant Kenyon Lumber site

Introduction GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles are intended to provide the philosophical foundation to the Plan and the recommended next steps. As various actions are considered, these principles can be checked to ensure that every action is accomplishing one or more of them.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1** Downtown Bozeman should be the location of buildings of the greatest height and intensity in the community.
- 2** All streets and sidewalks in downtown should be designed to make the experience of pedestrians and bicyclists safe, comfortable and visually appealing.
- 3** Downtown should be the focus of civic life, with a concentration of local, state and federal government as well as arts and culture.
- 4** The scale and character of the historic core should be protected but other downtown districts should be able to accommodate contemporary development of greater height and density.
- 5** Parking should not govern development potential; the amount of parking relative to development should decrease. Parking inventory should be managed so as to ensure convenient access for customers.





6 Transit should be expanded to serve downtown more extensively and frequently.

7 Public spaces – both large and small – should be enhanced and made active through programming or adjacent uses that can animate and oversee them.

8 Housing – for all income levels – should be encouraged by a variety of methods.

9 Sustainable methods and techniques should be applied to infrastructure, street design and redevelopment to contribute to a healthier and greener community.

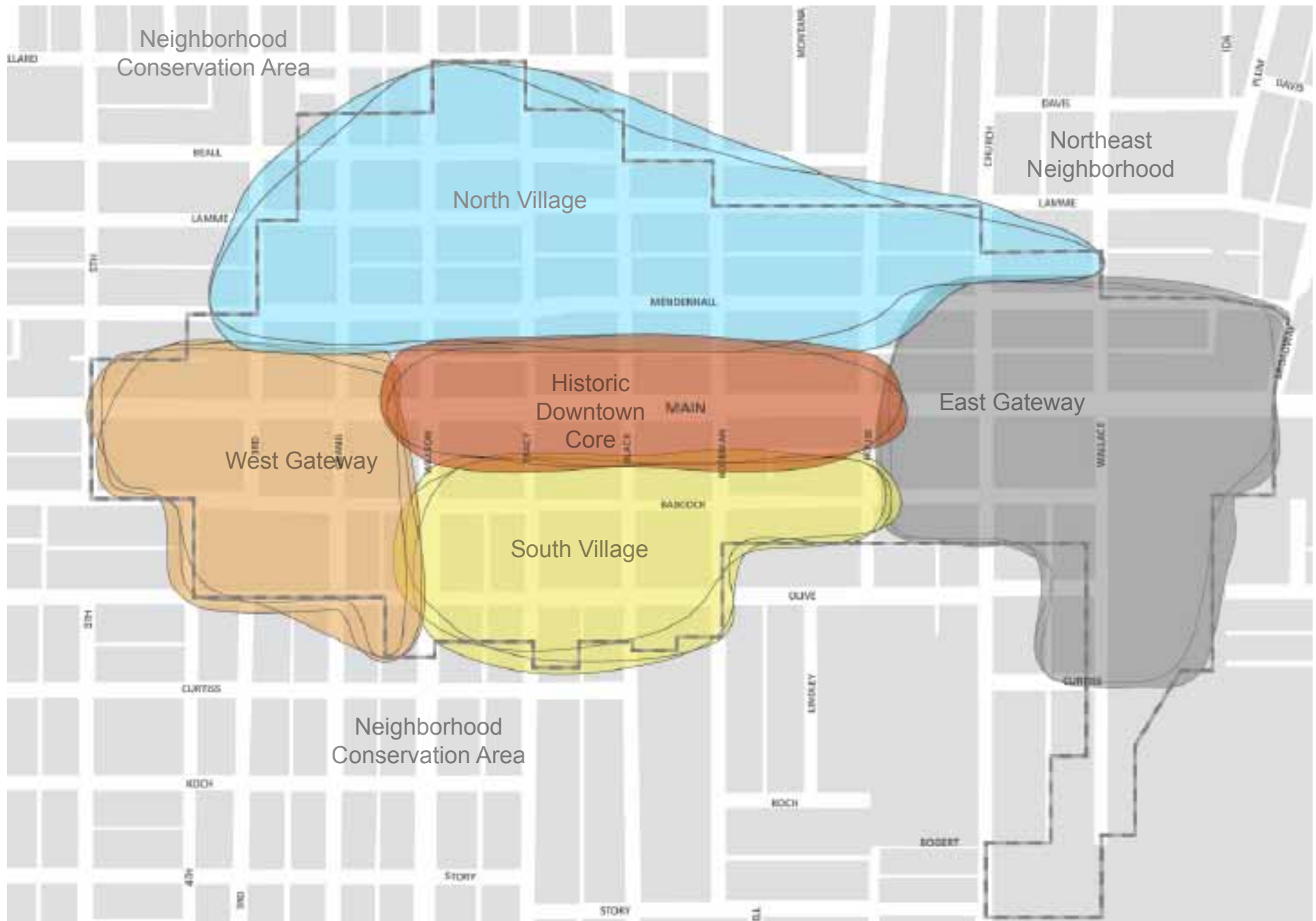
10 New buildings should be designed to the level of permanence and quality appropriate for a downtown setting.

11 Create strong connections between sub-districts, and from Downtown to the surrounding community.

12 Natural features and the surrounding mountain setting should be highlighted and emphasized whenever possible, strengthening the amenities unique to the city of Bozeman.

Strategies

CREATE DISTINCT DISTRICTS

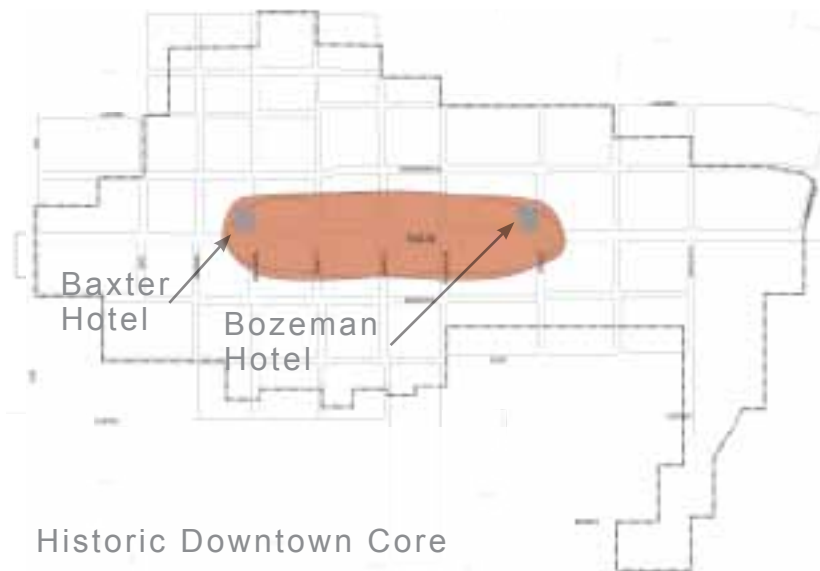


NOTE: The district boundaries have been intentionally loosely delineated because further analysis may be required.

CREATING DISTINCT DISTRICTS

Downtown Bozeman is not a single, monolithic area. It is large enough and complex enough that, a number of distinct areas have begun to emerge. It would be useful to provide a separate identity for these areas, although still keeping them firmly within the framework of downtown.

Having different districts serves a number a purposes. First, they could have regulatory implications with differing standards for height, parking, and other aspects. This approach is described in the Code section of this plan. Second, each district should be identified according to its unique character. It is common for downtown neighborhoods to take on historic or unique names that convey a character and identity. On the maps we have suggested some names, but these are intended to be place-holders. One can imagine at some point, there being a “Lindley District” at the east end, or an “Emerson District” at the west end. Such unique place names can evolve as people begin to live there and identify with them and their attributes.



Historic Downtown Core (Retail/Office)

Right now, there are great “bones” of a Commercial Core District, as it has already been given attention in the City’s zoning ordinance and other documents. This is Bozeman’s historic main street area and is one that has seen great care and investments by a wide range of people, agencies and organizations. This district should be further strengthened by a handful of strategic but delicate improvements, but it is well on its way to being lively, dynamic and solid. Only the recent tragedy of the gasoline explosion has presented a temporary setback, but recovery and infill will be forthcoming. This plan suggests some ideas for the now empty parcels, but much thinking will undoubtedly be given to healing this emotional and physical wound in the townscape. Until then there are a number of ways of enhancing the core, such as emphasizing brightly lighted display windows, unique signs, special decorative lighting, so that it is clearly seen by all as a place to use 18 hours a day.

In addition, four other districts are suggested:

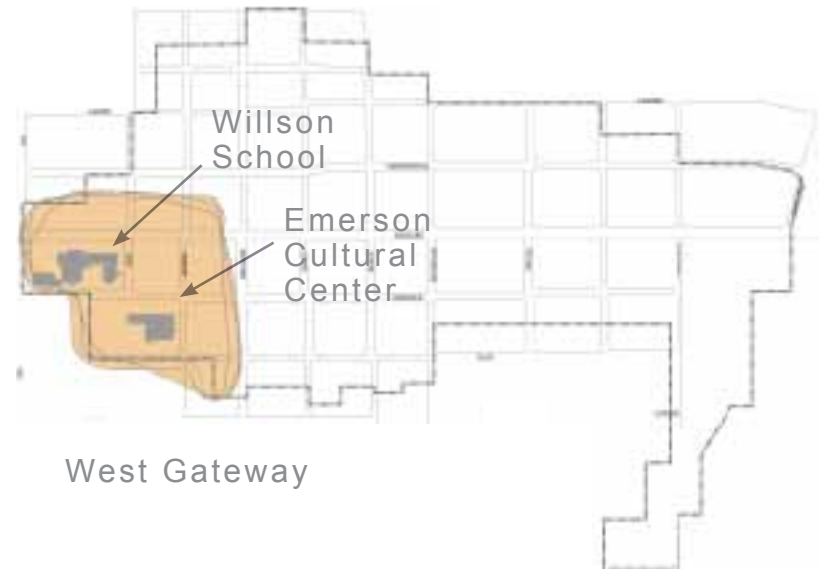
“West Gateway” (Office/Mixed Use)

This district could extend from 5th Avenue to Grand. This is a very important area that now seems somewhat ragged with parking lots, empty parcels, and vacant buildings. This area detracts from the image of downtown and needs major investment – both public and private. In addition, the streetscape should be enhanced with more trees, lighting, furnishings and seasonal planting eventually connecting to the North 7th Avenue Connectivity Plan. New buildings should adhere to design standards that do not allow setbacks but place windows and doors on the sidewalk with parking lots prohibited along the street. There is a “suburban” look to this area that could be dramatically enhanced both in the short term with streetscape and in the longer term with development.

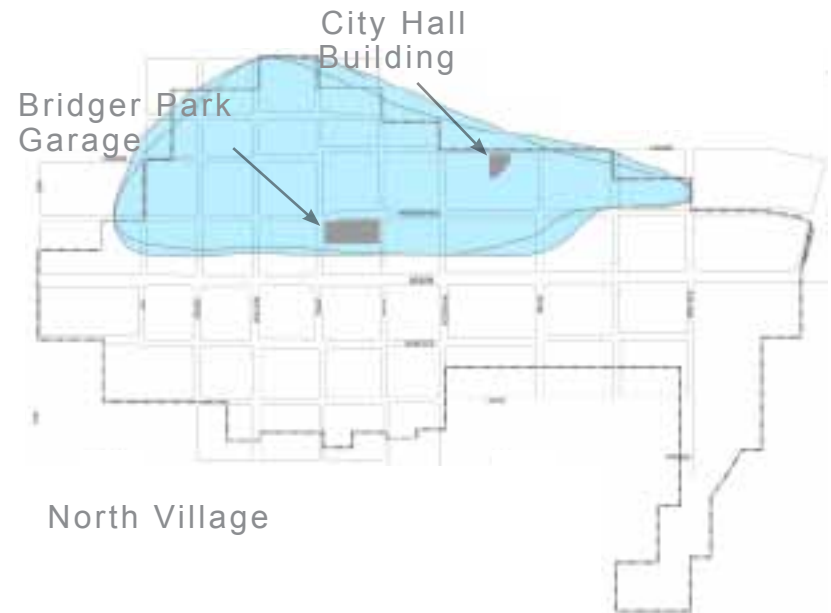
“North Village” (Residential Emphasis)

This area of downtown has the greatest potential to become a new urban neighborhood, filled with hundreds of dwelling units of all different types, unique public spaces, landscaped alleyways, and small service businesses aimed at local residents both within and near downtown. The presence of significant housing is the most critical missing piece of Bozeman’s downtown, and for it to be vital and sustainable over time, housing should be developed in great numbers and varieties, at all price-points, both rental and for-sale. This recommendation is a “cornerstone” of this plan. The very future of downtown is dependent upon the successful development of housing -- both for people in the community who wish to stay but downsize as well as for newcomers.

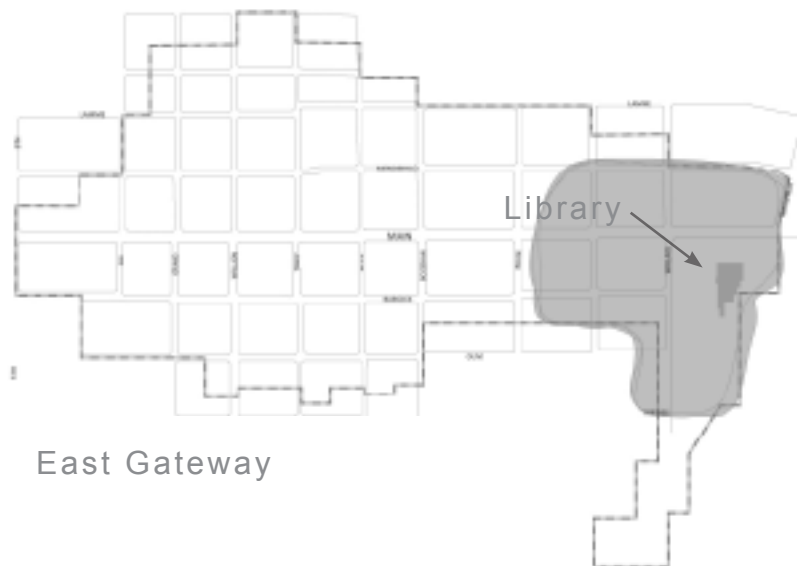
However, there is one major impediment to this happening. That is the amount and speed of traffic on Mendenhall. In order for people to want to invest there and for others to want to live there, this impediment must be changed. The current state of Mendenhall – narrow sidewalks, many in disrepair, minimal street trees, flanked with asphalt or dirt parking lots – presents an uninviting corridor between the neighborhoods to the north and Main Street. Many other cities, larger and smaller, have been successful in converting one-way couplets back to two-way without undesirable consequences (see “Tame the Traffic” page 26). This is a key recommendation that gets at the heart of downtown’s economic vitality and longevity.



West Gateway



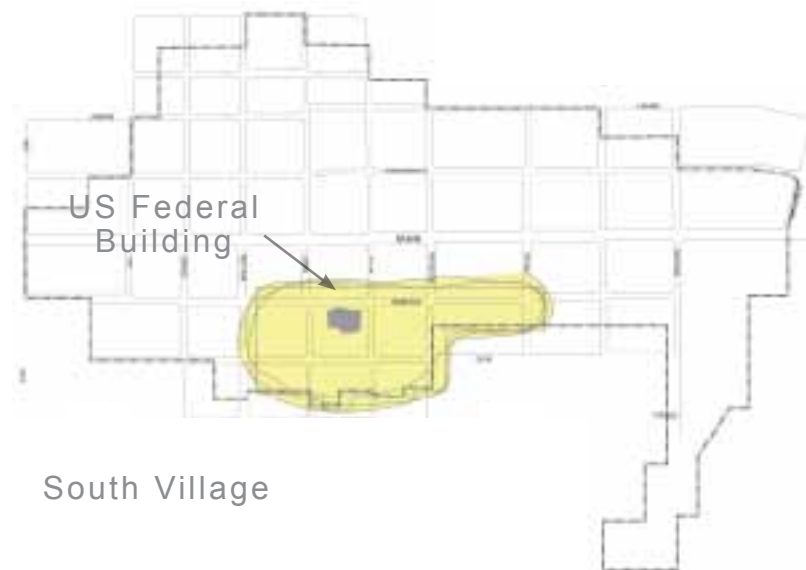
North Village



East Gateway

“East Gateway” (Office/Mixed Use)

The East Gateway is east of Rouse and centered around the library, grocery store, and Lindley Park. This district has properties that can be redeveloped to greater intensity, just as has already occurred on some. Care should be taken, however, not to attempt to extend the retailing too far east. The retail core is already long and there is evidence (closed stores and unleased space) that retail might not be the best ground floor use this far away from the core. Office space or professional services could be acceptable and still add to the vitality of downtown. There might be some pockets of retail, such as around the library, but the Main Street retail core should be kept compact and walkable. There might also be a major art feature that denotes the idea of “gateway.” One candidate location is the public space in front of the library.



South Village

“South Village” (Commercial/Mixed Use)

The blocks along Babcock between Wilson and Rouse contain a wide-ranging mix of uses from governmental (Federal Building) to office, to some retail, to housing, to churches, with no one use seeming to dominate. Nor is there that much property that could be converted to other uses. Nonetheless, over time parking lots especially on the north side of Babcock could have new buildings containing commercial and residential uses. As a street, Babcock deserves improvements in sidewalks and the addition of street trees as it is kind of a visual moat along the south side of downtown. Some of the parking lots associated with churches are used for parking during weekdays through private agreements. The Parking Commission should look at this parking resource more comprehensively to ensure its most effective use.

BUILD HUNDREDS OF UNITS OF HOUSING

A healthy downtown must attract people to live, work and play. Housing plays a key role in this formula for success, since attracting more people to live downtown establishes a base to support downtown businesses, allowing retailers such as restaurants and other shops to thrive. Today, Downtown Bozeman includes only a small amount of housing, with a limited range of housing types. Nationally, market-rate residential development has been a powerful force in bringing new life and economic support to downtowns. This plan includes a preliminary examination of the downtown area through this lens, identifying opportunity areas, and testing the feasibility of these locations for a range of downtown residential development types. As mentioned previously, attracting downtown residential development to Bozeman can help accomplish many goals at the same time:

- provide a new use for many downtown properties currently underutilized;
- increase the customer base for existing businesses and provide the spending power to attract new businesses and cultural activities; and
- add more people downtown at all times of the day, increasing safety, and providing an expanded base of support for future improvements, events, and activities.

HOUSING CHOICES

National trends showing a growing demand for downtown housing suggest a potential market exists in Bozeman. Numerous larger underutilized parcels in this area can be in-filled with primarily housing redevelopment. Potential downtown residents are a diverse group – from younger residents to empty nesters, demanding both rental and ownership housing, and express preferences for a range of housing types, from townhouses to multifamily dwellings, to rehabs of older buildings for lofts. Downtown Bozeman has the capacity for this and contains many of the amenities - including an attractive Main Street, cafes, shops and restaurants - that are drawing new residents to re-surgent downtowns across the county. Moreover, Bozeman has its own special qualities, including its scenic natural setting, homegrown



Examples of urban housing in other cities

business, and active social life, from which new development can draw.

The site analysis of opportunity areas downtown identified potential accommodation of as many as 500 units over five to fifteen years, with a concentration in the “North Village” district, and in particular along Mendenhall. Numerous larger underutilized parcels in this area can be in-filled with primarily housing redevelopment. The table and illustration found on page 20 and 21, highlight possible areas

and types of residential projects that may be feasible or attractive to developers and future residents. These ideas are examples intended to demonstrate the considerable potential for residential and commercial infill.

In addition to new development, there may also be opportunities to provide or renovate housing in the upper floors of buildings along Main. Making this happen may require amending the Building Code, seeking low-income tax credits, or changing height limits and requiring step-backs for added floors, as has been done in other historic districts.



Areas of opportunity



Possible Main Street infill development



Possible mixed-use development along Mendenhall



NOTE: THE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS ON THIS MAP AND ACCOMPANYING TABLE ARE INTENDED ONLY TO ILLUSTRATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFILL OF COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL USE. THEY ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS (THEORETICAL EXAMPLES)

1 BOZEMAN CREEK

10-15 higher end townhouses can breathe new life into this underutilized amenity as part of an improved Creek and trail system.

- 10-15, 2-3-story townhouse units with rear loaded garages from two access drives off the alley
- Enhanced Creek buffer with public trail through middle of site
- Density: 20 units/acre
- Parking ratio: 1/du

2 KENYON NOBLE AREA

These parcels provide opportunities to provide multifamily dwellings on Mendenhall, and smaller townhouses (1,000-1,500 SF) grouped in a neighborhood setting to transition to the surrounding single family area.

Block One Facing Mendenhall– Stacked Flats

site area: 48,000 sf (320' x 150')

- 80-110 units (2 U-shaped buildings above podium with 4 floors of 15,400 sf each)
- 1 story parking (300' x 120'): 110 stalls
- Shared Courtyard: 4,800 sf
- Mid-Block Walkway: 1,500 sf
- FAR: 2.56
- Parking ratio: 1/du

Blocks Two & Three Flanking Lamme – Townhouses

site area: 86,400 (320' x 150' and 320' x 120', respectively)

- 50-60, 2-3-story townhouse units with front and rear loaded garages off alley and Lamme Street
- Mid-Block Walkway: 3,000 sf
- Density: 28 units/acre
- Parking ratio: 1/du

3 OTHER MENDENHALL INFILL SITES

Site 1: NE Corner, Wilson & Mendenhall Stacked Flats

site area: 15,400 sf (110' x 140')

- 1 story parking: 47 stalls
- 4 stories residential above: approx. 40-45 units
- FAR: 3.1
- Parking ratio: 1/du

Site 2: NW Corner, Bozeman & Mendenhall Mixed-Use

site area: 27,000 sf (180' x 150')

- 28,800 sf office (2 floors of 14,400 sf each)
- residential (2-story, 1200 sf townhouse units above office on floors of 12,600 sf each): 12 units
- 1 story parking (180' x 120'): 66 stalls

- FAR: 2.0
- Parking ratio: 1/du; 2/1000 for office

Site 3: SE Corner, Bozeman & Mendenhall Stacked Flats

site area: 14,000 sf (140' x 100')

- 1 story parking: 18 stalls
- 2 stories residential (9,100 sf per floor): 18 units
- FAR: 1.3
- Parking ratio: 1/du

4 BOZEMAN CREEK INFILL

(where Bozeman Creek passes under Babcock Street)

site area: 9,800 sf (70' x 140')

- 8,400 sf office/retail (ground level)
- 3 Loft units above
- 8 surface parking stalls behind building off the alley for residential units and commercial.
- Parking ratio: 1/du; 2/1000 office

TOTAL:

Residential: approximately 210-260 units

A POSSIBLE CONFERENCE CENTER AND HOTEL

B POSSIBLE BOUTIQUE HOTEL

C POSSIBLE OFFICE

D POSSIBLE THEATER/ MEETING FACILITY

The City of Bozeman is surrounded by natural beauty and boasts numerous parks, trails and recreational areas. Downtown would benefit from the thoughtful integration of plazas and courtyards, the creation of pocket parks along Bozeman Creek, and the greening of streets and alleys surrounding Main Street. This Plan outlines a strategy to “green” Downtown Bozeman through the careful integration of street trees and the introduction and improvement of public spaces.

Plazas, courtyards, and alley improvements will require careful sighting and attention to solar access, and would be enhanced by creative lighting and seating solutions in order to maximize the use and comfort of such spaces throughout the year.

GREEN THE STREETS

Although neighborhoods flanking Downtown Bozeman have tree-lined streets with lush, dense, canopies, much of the downtown area is devoid of street trees. (Street trees, by definition, are always located with a “sidewalk amenity zone” directly behind the curb. Other trees may be present on private property but the longevity of those trees is never assured because of potential development and, therefore, they do not have the same role as true street trees.) As part of an integrated traffic and streetscape improvement plan, street trees should be planted throughout the downtown core area to enhance the urban environment.

Economic studies have shown the presence of trees encourage people to walk greater distances in downtown areas, therefore exposing them to more retail shops and restaurants, increasing spending along tree-lined streets. Additionally, trees provide a more relaxed ambiance, by softening busy streets and reducing the sense of traffic noise. They create safer walking environments, and have even been found to reduce perceived travel times of both motorists and pedestrians. Finally, horticultural research has shown that street trees contribute both to lowering ambient temperatures in the summer and to providing valuable urban habitats. Recent improvements along Main Street provided scores of street trees along that street. But Mendenhall, Babcock and most side streets are still largely devoid true street trees



Examples of open space in other cities



Examples of street trees



Existing street trees



Existing downtown alleys



Existing open space

TRANSFORM ALLEYS

Alleys are often an underutilized, forgotten part of the city. While they still need to provide service, delivery and emergency access, they remain unused except for a few hours a day. Many cities have recognized this and have begun to give alleys a civic or ecological function. The alleys that wrap around Main can be planted with greenery, provide natural drainage, create a unique pedestrian network, and provide usable outdoor spaces for residents and businesses. When and where possible widen sections of the alleys to improve functionality and consider adding bicycle amenities. In greening these areas, natural drainage features could be utilized, and small plazas and pocket parks tucked along the edges. These improvements would serve to provide a new, unique connection between downtown businesses and residences, and reinforce the finer scale of the downtown area.



ADD PLAZAS AND COURTYARDS

Surrounding Downtown are several parks and open spaces, but Downtown itself has very few. Courtyards and plazas should be made a priority in new development, and the city should consider working with property owners to implement a public plaza along the north side of Main Street.

Downtown would benefit from more functional open spaces that can be used and enjoyed day and night by residents, visitors, and workers nearby. Incentive-based requirements for new development to provide accessible public spaces, such as plazas and entry forecourts, could add considerably to the amount and variety of open spaces in the public realm.



OPEN UP BOZEMAN CREEK

Bozeman Creek should be revealed and made a centerpiece of a downtown open space system. An intermittent “Bozeman Creek Park” would provide a natural connection from the north and south neighborhoods to the downtown commercial area. Where the creek cannot be daylighted, such as under streets and historic buildings, its presence could be highlighted with public art or special streetscape surface treatments. Where space is available, such as through existing parking lots, public open space should be provided along the creek, complete with seating areas and viewing platforms, so that this unique natural feature can be appreciated by both residents and visitors to downtown.

Downstream from downtown, the creek is a natural system that fish and other wildlife depend on for survival. Currently run-off from streets and parking lots are draining directly into the creek, allowing it to be contaminated by petroleum products and other pollutants. The city has a buffer requirement in place and is encouraged to enforce it for the health and quality of the creek, and improved character and open space for downtown.



Open space opportunities along Bozeman Creek and alleys



Current creek condition



Examples of parks along creeks and streams

REDUCE TRUCK TRAFFIC AND INVITE BICYCLISTS TO MAIN STREET

Currently, only two types of users are accommodated on Main Street: motor vehicles, and pedestrians. Bicyclists have lanes and signed trails in other areas of the city, but aren't given any priority in the downtown core. Cyclists of all levels of experience should be welcome and invited to visit downtown, by providing bike "sharrows" (see photo) on outermost vehicular lanes and racks along Main Street. Sharrows are physical markings within a vehicular lane, indicating that the travel lane is shared between motorists and bicyclists. They help to increase the awareness of drivers to the presence of cyclists, and also communicate to bicyclists that the streets are designed for them as well.



To further reduce noise, congestion, and pedestrian and bicyclist discomfort, large through-truck traffic should be diverted around downtown on I-90. Although Main Street is currently on the National Truck Route Network, there is a procedure through the Federal Highway Administration to alter the system. (This procedure can be found in Federal Standard 23 CFR part 658).

Additionally, the previous street improvements along Main should be extended to 5th to meet with the North 7th Avenue Connectivity Plan

improvements, and to the east as far as the library. The library, Lindley park and the surrounding trails are regional destinations for Bozeman residents and visitors, and should be better connected to the downtown core. Users of the park and library should be drawn downtown for dinner or coffee, and the sidewalk and streetscape should be inviting and convenient to encourage this crossover of users.

Lastly, the 2007 update to the area transportation plan calls for a signalized pedestrian crossing to be added at Broadway and Main Street. This improvement will increase the comfort and safety for pedestrians visiting the library and adjacent businesses by helping to make the highway traffic approaching downtown more aware that they are entering a lively and bustling downtown district, where people live, walk, and shop. An additional mid block crossing in front of the library site would also be advantageous, to break up the long block length and better connect the library to surrounding businesses. These traffic improvements will greatly improve the pedestrian environment of the East Gateway area, and should be implemented as soon as possible.



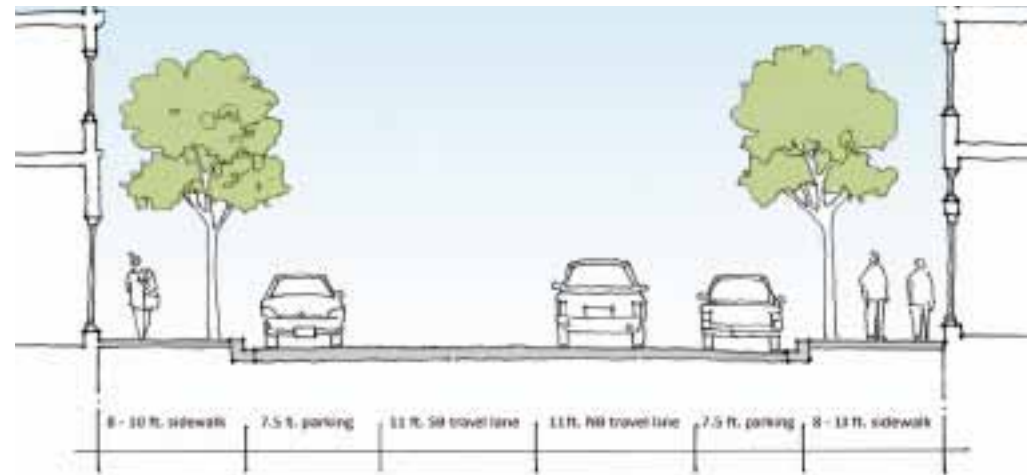
View to street from library

CONNECT BABCOCK TO LIBRARY SITE

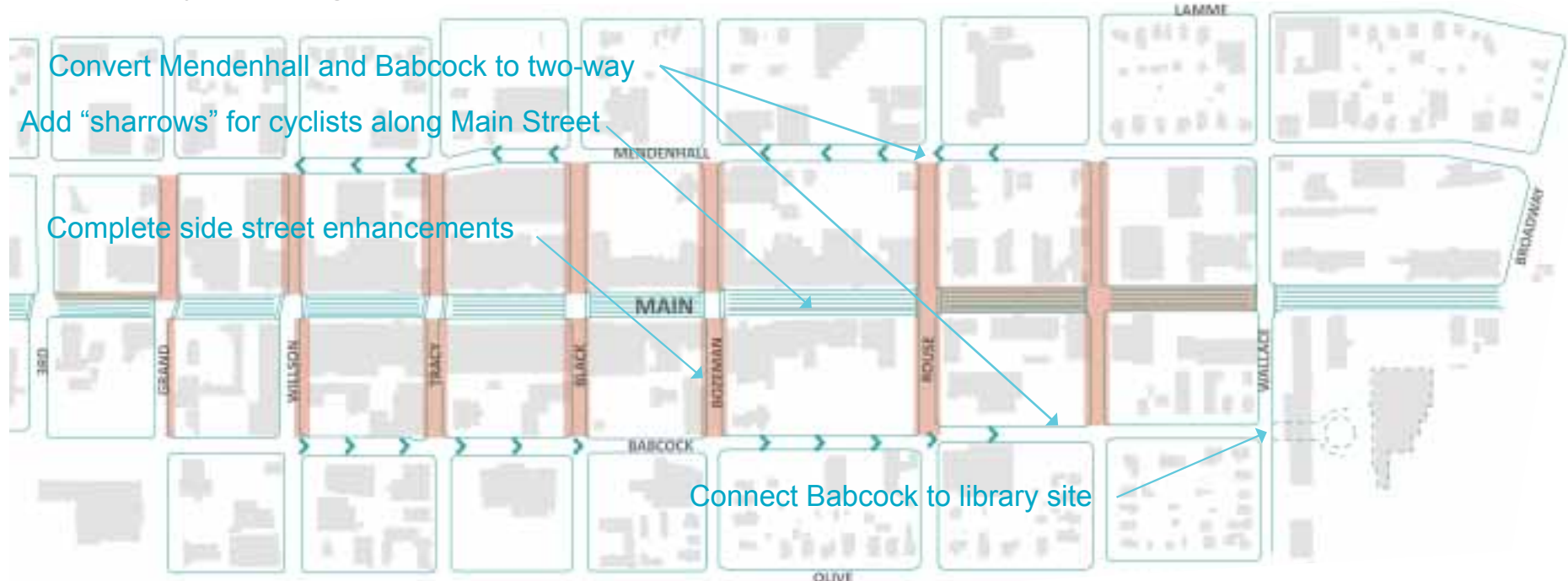
The long term vision for the site design of the library is to connect Babcock to the library's property on the west side. The City of Bozeman and Bozeman Public Library should keep this goal in mind, completing the connection when it is possible to do so in the future. Connecting Babcock to the library parking area will serve to lace the library into the existing street grid, reinforcing its close proximity to downtown.

COMPLETE SIDE STREET ENHANCEMENTS

Completing the side street enhancements that have already been developed for downtown – The Downtown Streetscape Project – will help to strengthen the connection between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, by making those streets more pleasant places to be, the businesses along those side streets will benefit from increased foot traffic as people are drawn onto the auxiliary streets along Main Street.



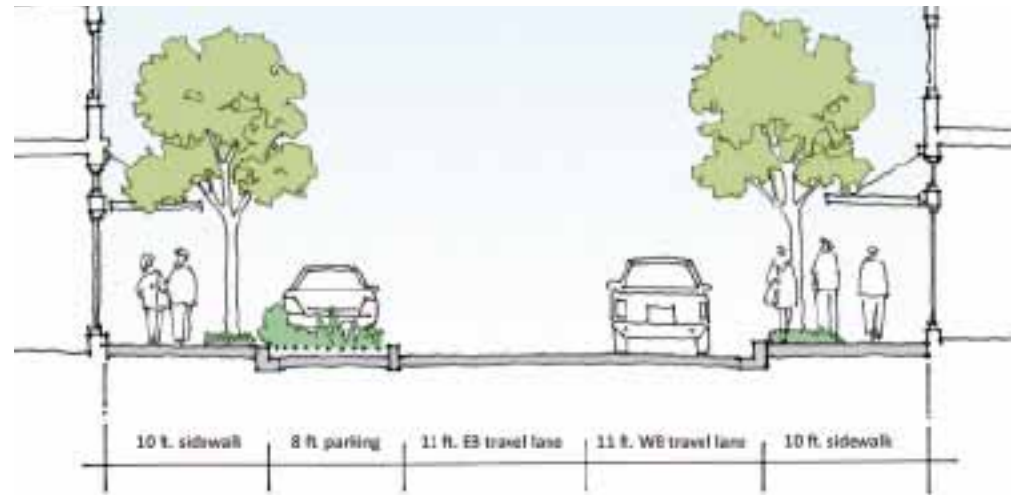
North-south side street with improvements



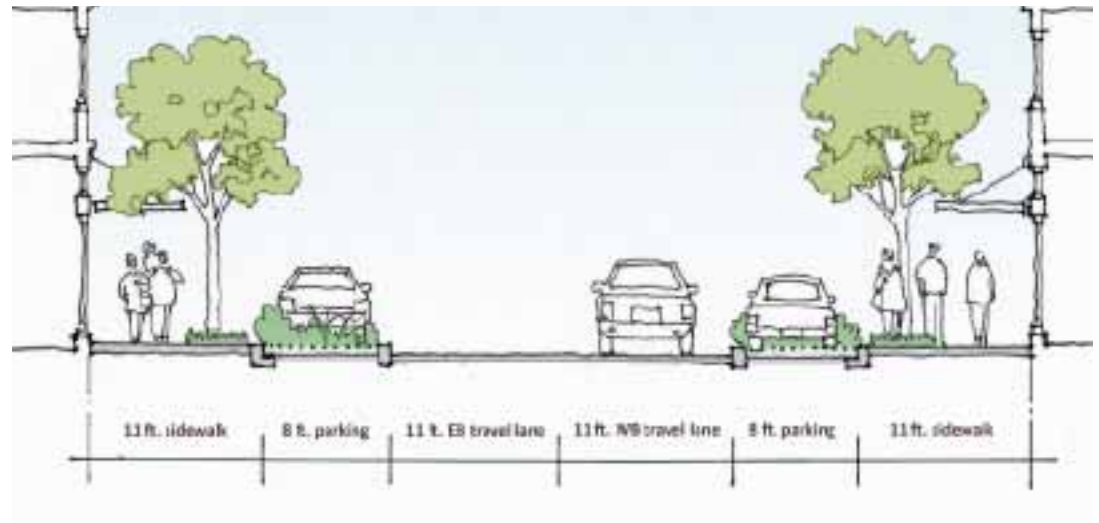
Existing conditions and opportunities

CONVERT MENDENHALL AND BABCOCK TO TWO-WAY

A major obstacle to introducing housing to downtown right now, is the one-way couplet of Mendenhall and Babcock. With most of the housing density encouraged on Mendenhall, the city must create a neighborhood-friendly environment through the form and character of the streets. Currently, Mendenhall acts more as a major through-way, getting people *through* downtown, than moving people *within* downtown. The lack of street trees and vehicular focus will likely discourage future residents from moving Downtown. People choose to live downtown because of the benefits of urban living which include close access to services, entertainment and walkability. Currently, both Mendenhall and Babcock have a very poor pedestrian environment, with narrow or inconsistent sidewalks flanked by long stretches of surface parking lots. In order to attain the future vision of denser, urban housing downtown, the city should restore the original two-way network of these streets and provide pedestrian amenities such as wider sidewalks, street trees, and safe, comfortable crossings. The 1998 MAKERS Plan originally recommended the conversion of Mendenhall and Babcock back to two-way streets in addition to transforming the pedestrian environment along these corridors.



Babcock section (50ft condition)



Mendenhall section

2-WAY STREET CONVERSION CASE STUDIES

One way streets were created when downtowns were not considered a place to live, but an employment center, and it was important to get a large volume of traffic in and out as efficiently as possible. Many cities are now recognizing the benefits of creating a balanced and comfortable environment for all modes of travel in their downtown areas as they attempt to attract other uses such as housing during revitalization efforts. Below are three cities that have successfully transformed one-way streets to two-way, effectively restoring their lively downtown grid.

Vancouver, Washington: Since the switch of three streets in the downtown Main Street area of Vancouver, Washington, many retailers have reported an increase in pedestrians, and “drive-by” traffic at their stores. The three streets, each extending roughly 10 blocks, cost the city \$612,000. The project was completed in September of 2007, and was closely tied to additional work done by their local transit agency as part of the revitalization effort. Contact: Bill Whitcomb, Deputy Transportation Manager. (360) 487-7702

Sacramento, California: Began a conversion of 5 streets to two way in February of this year. Two of the streets have been successfully converted and two additional streets were narrowed and bikes lanes were added. There were no street closures during the construction, and residents and business owners are already declaring the conversion a success. Contact: Fran Halbakken, Operations Manager. (916) 808-7194.

West Palm Beach, Florida: A community of a population of 80,000 converted their historic retail street back to two-way, and two State roads. The retail street previously sat at an 80% vacancy rate, with rents as low as \$6/sq ft. After the conversion, rental rates increased to \$25/sq ft and vacancy rates went down to 10%.

Additional cities that have reversed one-way couplets:

Fairfax, VA

Population: 23,349

Project Description: Two streets were converted to two-way (Main and North Streets) as part of a larger street enhancement project.

Contact: Alexis Verzosa, Transportation Director,
(703) 385-7889

Norfolk, VA

Population: 234,403

Project Description: Two streets converted in 1998.

Contact: Brian Townsend, Planning,
(757) 664-4752

Toledo, OH

Population: 316,851

Project Description: Two streets were converted in 1997.

Contact: Joe Moran, Downtown Toledo Vision,
(419) 244-3747

Austin, TX

Population: 743,074

Project Description: Ceasar Chavez Avenue was turned from a one-way street to a two-way street in 2008 as part of a Great Streets Master Plan.

Contact: Rick Colbrunn, Project Manager,
(512) 974-7089

Chattanooga, TN

Population: 168,293

Project Description: The conversion of M.L. King Boulevard and McCallie Avenue from one-way to two-way traffic was completed in 2003.

Contact: Todd Womack, Communications Director,
(423) 757-5168

For more information on one-way to two-way conversions, visit http://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/circulars/ec019/Ec019_f2.pdf

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

Downtown Bozeman is fortunate to have numerous intact historic structures, many of which are well-maintained. Over the years though, some of the buildings have been updated with new or restored facades, while others have been less well maintained. It is important that all frontages along Main Street be preserved or enhanced and maintained, in order to retain and strengthen the quality historic character of the district. Facades that cover or obscure the original structure or detailing should be removed. The Downtown Partnership and the City of Bozeman should start a grant and technical assistance program to help shopkeepers and business owners with these restorations. The City of Bozeman is encouraged to support any such program by offering incentives like expedited approval.

The City of Billings has been very successful in encouraging the renovation of facades and buildings through grant programs. One program offers funding for design assistance. Another provides financing for improvements



This historic brick facade was covered with additional brick work.



While the business provides a useful service to the neighborhood, the facade doesn't do much for the character of Main Street.



The US Bank building was at one time a structure similar to the Baxter Hotel or The Bozeman, but has been completely covered. The original windows are still intact behind the black glass paneling.



The Ellen Theatre is an excellent example of preservation and restoration.



The modern renovation to this facade complements the existing style and structure well.



Large, opaque, dome awnings obscure historic details, as well as windows and entrances. Less bulky awnings are encouraged. Refer to the Secretary of Interior's Historic Guidelines for guidance.



SIGNAGE PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Historic Main Street has many building signs that likely date back to the early decades of the 20th Century. These signs help to tell the story of Bozeman, as well as add to the pedestrian environment and interest on the street. Bozeman should encourage the preservation of historic signs, as well as encourage new and unique pedestrian scale signs. New and historic signs add to the vibrancy of Main Street as a place to shop, browse, work or play. In some cases historic reproductions or representations of original signs may be appropriate.

Artistry, detail and even playfulness should be encouraged in new signs to promote energy and activity in the pedestrian environment. The existing sign code for the downtown district should be reviewed to determine whether unique sign designs are being unnecessarily curtailed, or whether incentives could be offered for unusual graphic design.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Many cities provide technical assistance grants for renovation and preservation. The grants can be used by property owners, developers or tenants, to hire technical advisors to help them with studies, improvements, and other types of assistance. The City of Bozeman and the Downtown Bozeman Partnership should consider implementing financial and technical assistance programs within the Downtown Plan area for facade improvements.

BILLINGS MONTANA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BANK

The City of Billings Montana has implemented a Technical Assistance Bank, overseen by the Downtown Billings Partnership. The program provides up to 70 hours of consultant time for such services as:

- Facade improvement assistance
- Feasibility studies
- Preliminary building assessment
- Restoration and renovation opinions
- Renovation and reuse studies
- Site selection assistance
- Landscape/Hardscape Improvements and Code analysis

Design and construction work is not eligible for assistance through this grant, but is eligible through the facade improvement grant.

In 2006 the Billings TIF awarded \$44,500 in Technical Assistance grants which resulted in \$356,000 in private investment. This represents a return of \$8 of private investment for every assistance dollar awarded.

BILLINGS MONTANA FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

The Billings Facade Improvement Grant is also overseen by the Downtown Billings Partnership and is intended to assist in the maintenance and reuse of buildings in the downtown area and to “encourage a higher level of quality and design.” In order to be eligible for the grant monies the facade improvements must support the Billings Framework Plan.



EMPHASIZE “LOCAL AND UNIQUE”

The City of Bozeman was first settled in 1864, and by the end of the year, a hotel, and a smattering of cabins and shops lined the wagon trail that is now Main Street. Many of those buildings remain today and local businesses still persist. Additionally, downtown Bozeman has strong roots in culture and community that started with opera houses and festivals and continue today with the Downtown Art Walks, Emerson Cultural Center, the recent revitalization of the Ellen Theatre, and numerous galleries and artists. All of this is tucked into a breathtaking natural setting with virtually limitless opportunities for recreation. These characteristics should be highlighted and emphasized through preservation, architecture, art, and urban design, and made accessible to the public through their integration with the downtown public realm

One of the positive attributes of Downtown Bozeman is that it attracts a wide variety of locally-owned, family-owned businesses, some of which have been in the community for decades. There are no national brands, fast food places, or large consumers of floor space. Instead, are small businesses that each provide their own individualized style of merchandising and service. This is reflected in interesting storefronts, unique signs, well-maintained facades, and many indications of a place being cared for. This is what distinguishes downtown Bozeman from other retail areas and, indeed, from other downtowns.

ATTRACTING START-UPS

The community needs to find ways to build upon the strength by nurturing start-up businesses. Some of these might be users of office space such as high tech firms. Others might be seedling retailers who could eventually grow into larger spaces. The City could offer incentives to attract these businesses, or even offer inexpensive space to operate. Some existing structures in downtown could be adapted to provide smaller spaces. Or new structures could be built with basic, loft-like spaces for start-ups. The idea would be to let them grow, get familiar with being downtown and then help them find other spaces in buildings above shops. This is not unlike how the Emerson Arts Center functions: small spaces at reasonable rates.



BUILDING OFFICE SPACES

Although this plan places great emphasis upon providing housing within the downtown, it is also important to make sure that space for office users is available. While many office users are small and can fit into existing buildings, some are not. It is useful for the City to look at properties that can accommodate new buildings with larger footprints. One possibility is to encourage this type of development in the East and West Gateway districts, or on a City owned lot Downtown. If the latter is done, it would be an excellent opportunity to make full use of the parking garage and could provide an income stream to help cover the facility's operating costs.

DECREASE PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFICE USE

Just as high parking ratios are an impediment to building housing downtown, so are they for office users. Again, downtowns attract workers who live nearby and can walk or bike. Others take transit. Bozeman is investing in transit precisely to alter the mode split of travel patterns. So it makes little sense to continue requiring parking

ratios closer to what one sees in outlying areas. But an automatic, across the board reduction might not be the only method. Some cities have allowed reductions when a developer or user submits evidence of a "parking management program" which involves escalating fees for parkers, providing transit passes, or preferential spaces for carpools, or shared cars for daytime use. The current parking requirement seems to be standing in the way of attracting some potential office users and should be lowered. The recommended "as of right" requirement should be reduced to 2 parking stalls / 1000 sf.

ELIMINATE PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL RETAILERS

Within a downtown like Bozeman's, with a "tight pack" of historic buildings, it is almost impossible for small businesses to provide for parking on site. In fact, this would be largely undesirable because it would carve up potential buildings and leave "missing teeth" in the streetscape. As it is, the parking standards are producing large fields of asphalt on the streets parallel and perpendicular to Main, which is detracting from income and tax revenue streams by keeping land in unproductive use. It also creates a moat around the downtown core. Parking requirements should be eliminated for any retail or food/drink establishment for the first 3000 sf of floor area. This will require a method to ensure that on-street parking spaces are available for customers and workers should not be allowed to occupy these spaces.



EFFECTIVELY MANAGE PARKING

Parking plays a role in every aspect of downtown. Cooperative efforts should be made to maintain the availability of convenient public parking for customers, employees, and visitors throughout the downtown district. The variety of public parking resources—on-street spaces, surface lots, and the Bridger Park Garage—should be

managed and maintained to provide a flexible assortment of parking options for all downtown patrons.

The Bozeman Parking Commission, in coordination with the Downtown Bozeman Partnership, should conduct regular parking studies determine and track the inventory of on-street, surface and structured parking spaces in addition usage patterns and trends. Periodically, the Parking Commission and Downtown Partnership should consult with the business and property owners to discuss anticipated future parking demand and parking management strategies.



The public parking lots should be enhanced with pedestrian scale lighting, way-finding signage, and aesthetic elements such as screening and landscaping. These improvements were proposed in the 1998 MAKERS Plan but have yet to be implemented.

Public parking inventory, the 2-hour free spaces both on-street and in the public lots, must be managed for customer and visitor use. Business employees, owners, and residents should be encouraged, and perhaps incentivized, to utilize one of the many leased parking options downtown, including spaces in the public lots and the Bridger Park Garage.

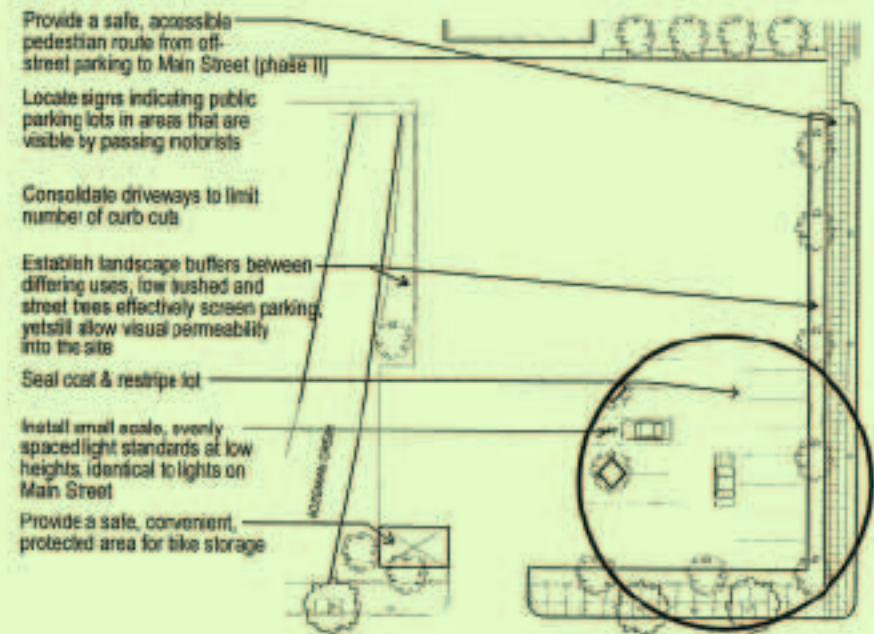
The 2-hour free parking spaces in downtown necessitate enforcing the rules. Effective parking management involves enforcing the rules while promoting downtown as a friendly place to shop, live, work and do business. A primary role of all parking employees operating in the downtown district should be to serve as ambassadors that are knowledgeable about downtown and helpful to citizens and visitors. When performing enforcement duties, parking staff should be empowered to exercise good judgment and common sense.

The following is an excerpt from the 1998 Downtown Bozeman Improvement Plan—the MAKERS Plan.

Parking Lot Improvements

Upgrade public parking areas with the following improvements:

- Seal coat, reconfigure, and restripe existing parking areas.
- Install landscape buffers and planting areas where appropriate, including along Bozeman Creek.
- Upgrade security lighting for late afternoon and evening users.
- Improve access signage for new customer convenience.
- Add new, secure bicycle parking lockers in selected lots.
- Plan for artwork and possible footprint inlays to designate public parking.
- Improve parking-lot-to-Main Street access.



CAPITALIZE ON BOZEMAN AS A REGIONAL HUB

Downtown benefits greatly from the fact that Bozeman serves as a regional service and educational hub in addition to a national tourism destination. Bozeman's proximity to three national parks (Yellowstone, Grand Teton and Glacier) and three downhill ski areas (Bridger Bowl, Big Sky and Moonlight Basin) brings considerable



economic activity to the area. Institutions such as Montana State University and Bozeman Deaconess Hospital function as significant economic engines for the community.

The Downtown Partnership should develop a strategic plan to capitalize on the regional and national economic drivers unique to Bozeman. This might include implementing a comprehensive local and regional way-finding sign plan. Such a plan could consider a creative marketing strategy that would not only target local residents but also regional visitors.

As a side note, much can be learned by analyzing the best and worst practices of downtowns similar to Bozeman's such as Ketchum, ID; Burlington, VT; Boulder, CO; and Missoula, MT.

COORDINATE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

While reliable and safe core infrastructure is critical for redevelopment, the disruption of maintenance and improvements cost businesses losses of revenue. Considerable time and effort should be invested to balance the need for infrastructure work and the resulting disruptions. To this end, public works and utility infrastructure should be assessed and a comprehensive maintenance and upgrade plan should be devised. All parties should regularly coordinate efforts to minimize construction and disruption in the downtown core.

The Downtown Partnership, as the representative of business and property interests, should play an active role in the planning of infrastructure projects. The City of Bozeman should consider higher standards for infrastructure integrity and upgrades for downtown as extra expense may be justified to preserve and enhance the community's historic core.



POSSIBLE CONFERENCE CENTER

Few investments stimulate a local economy over the long term as much as conference centers do. In fact, it's somewhat curious that Bozeman does not already have such a center, given its national reputation. It is also noted that the city does not have a "first class" hotel. Unfortunately, this class of hotel often only comes to a community if there is a high quality meeting facility. Occasionally, conference centers are tied to a hotel and they are built as a package. But since this means it is a for-profit business, all users of the center must pay full-price for use. Often, communities see the value in helping fund such a center so that local, non-profit and civic groups can make use of it on a reduced-fee basis. In such centers,

there is usually one large space that is designed for larger events such as banquets, big celebrations, and important civic events. In a sense, many conference centers are not unlike community centers in which something interesting is happening all day and evening – every day. And that is precisely how the successful ones operate: with a continual mix of private and public events – sometimes even at the same time in side-by-side spaces. Furthermore, such centers attract user groups from a wide region, business and professional organizations book them on a cyclical basis over years – assuring a continual income. Most communities also recognize that visitors to conference centers spend hundreds of dollars every day they are in town, using restaurants, hotels, shops, and other attractions. The result, in terms of business income and tax revenue, typically offsets any initial public investment within a few years. The City should explore the market demand and economic feasibility of a conference center, as many other communities have done. It also appears that the City’s room hotel room/bed tax could be increased to be more consistent with the other communities; the resulting income stream could help fund not only this study, but an eventual center.

A conference center could also be a joint effort between the City, MSU, and Deaconess Hospital. In that way, multiple sources of funding could be used, and a wide range of users would be attracted.

“BOUTIQUE” HOTEL

In some ways it is surprising that a community of Bozeman’s stature does not already have a small 50-80 room, “four star” hotel. The university, the hospital and other corporate entities report that such a hotel is needed for many types of visitors. One impediment, as indicated above, is that often such hotels want to see a conference center they can use or at least plans to build one in the near future. But other impediments may exist as well. A highly visible, well-located property of sufficient size may be hard to find. Required parking might be a barrier. Or even height limits could be a factor, as views are often a consideration. Often communities will actively solicit proponents of such hotels, offering them assistance with aspects that may be preventing the development. It is recommended that the City or the

TIF District fund a study of the feasibility and possible sites for such a hotel and explore financing and property assembly options.

The addition of a conference center or hotel to downtown Bozeman will require a more detailed study to help determine the size, location and form most appropriate for the current and projected market demands.



DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS

The City should adopt a set of regulations that are tailored to downtown and the various districts that are suggested. But first, the very nomenclature should change. Rather than having merely a “B-3” designation, which might be anywhere, the word “Downtown” should be used in all titles. This indicates its importance, that downtown is different than any other part of the community, and that totally different methods and standards will be used.

Basic development standards, such as building heights, minimum and maximum FAR, and parking requirements, should be considered “entitlements” that are not subject to modification by the City Commission. They should be presented clearly as measurable regulations used in a predictable review process to meet the desired urban form. Design standards and guidelines should supplement these basic standards and are best written in a way that offers choices and allows for projects that are innovative, creative, and of superior design as individual buildings while also contributing to a cohesive Downtown district.

BUILDING HEIGHTS

This plan does not recommend any changes to allowable height for downtown districts. However, a new code should consider reducing heights for some small distance where a downtown district abuts a single family district. This is a common technique used in many cities to ensure a comfortable transition from greater intensity to lower intensity. The horizontal dimension for this transition might be in the range of 50 to 100 feet and the height might be equivalent to what is allowed in the residential district or perhaps slightly higher. There also might be additional screening requirements. The City might also consider allowing additional height to developments in downtown if

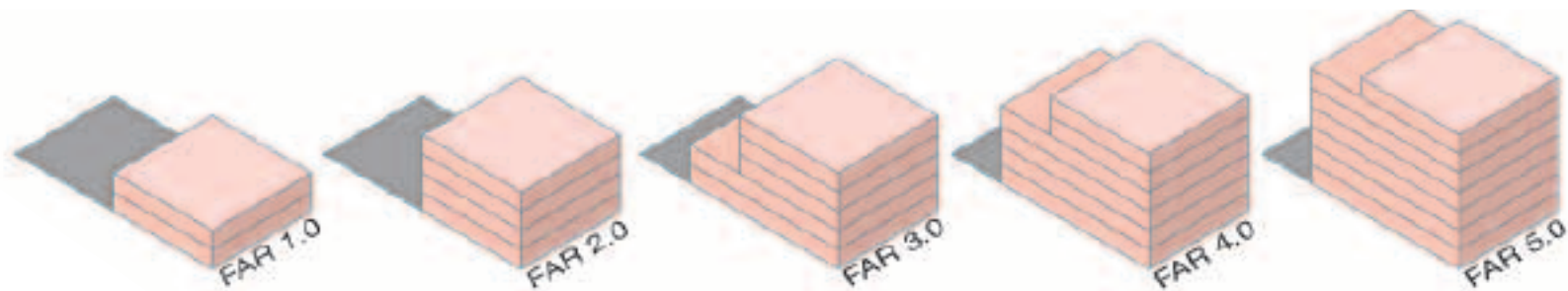
it provides an extraordinary item of public benefit that involves extra cost, such as a live theatre, public meeting rooms, a public park, a high level of sustainable features, or if it has unique functional requirements. Downtown Bozeman already has a few buildings that exceed the current height limits and they serve as landmarks. It is also a common device not to allow new development within a downtown to compete with long-standing landmark structures.

MIX OF USES

Beyond the naming, the regulations should reflect a very different approach than is typically used for zoning regulations. First, since all downtown districts are intended to allow a mixture of uses, there is little point to having a long list of permitted and conditional uses. With a handful of exceptions (e.g. storage yards), every use should be allowed – especially if they are contained within buildings. Downtowns typically accommodate the widest range of uses and so long as standards are being met, there should be no special permitting process other than design review to ensure compliance with such standards.

FLOOR AREA RATIO

The development community has a terminology that is well-accepted throughout North America. That is Floor Area Ratio or FAR. Although sounding complicated, it is not. It is simply a factor that, when multiplied by the lot size, gives an immediate indication of yield in square feet. Many cities, particularly in their downtowns, use FAR because developers want to know the basic yield on a site so they can do necessary financing pro-formas. Floor Area Ratios are not discretionary; they are contained in the basic code and provide a certainty to investors and even the public as to what can be built in a given district. It is also possible to vary FAR's by different districts



and to set up an “incentive system” so that added FAR is granted if public amenities are provided. FAR and associated bonus systems are increasingly used to guide development in downtown areas. For a downtown of the size, nature, and development pattern of Bozeman’s, floor area ratios in the range of 3.5 to 5.0 (not including parking) are recommended depending on the district. The transition areas in the outer edges of downtown may have lower FARs. Development standards should include a minimum FAR to ensure that new development achieves a building form and level of intensity appropriate to a downtown setting.

PARKING STANDARDS

One of the aspects of the current code is that relatively high parking ratios are required. This factor adds significant costs to new development – both as a result of expensive structured parking and because a “cash in lieu” is frequently triggered. Many downtowns across the country have no parking requirements, others have reduced them dramatically, and still others have low requirements for commercial and none for residential. Even some have maximum parking standards that are quite low. Currently, the parking requirements in the code present a real limitation on development intensity, which is not the purpose of parking standards. Moreover, it is widely recognized that accommodating automobile storage for every use does not make economic or fiscal sense for downtowns, since many customers walk in, bike, take transit, or park once in shared lots or garages and then walk to multiple destinations. The City should also seriously consider eliminating the “cash in lieu” provision altogether, as it – by itself – is presenting a barrier to downtown development. At the very least the parking requirement for downtown should be reduced to one parking stall per unit for residential, two stalls per 1000 sq ft of office, with no parking requirement for the first 3000 sq ft of retail and restaurant spaces.

PARK FEE

It is very unusual for development within any downtown to be charged a fee for parks. This is for several reasons. First, parkland is most usually needed on the outer edge of a community where families with children are settling. Downtowns do not typically attract that de-

mographic and thus if development is charged such a fee, in a sense it is subsidizing edge development. This is contrary to planning principles involving infill. Second, downtowns usually already have, or are close to, existing parks with sufficient capacity for more use; rarely are entirely new parks needed. Finally, the people who live in, work in, and visit downtowns use public space differently. They tend to use the sidewalks, cafes and coffeehouses for relaxing, passive recreation and socializing. In some ways parks are superfluous.

We recommend this fee be specifically dedicated to the downtown district and used as a funding source for the “green” strategies outlined in this plan; improving sidewalks, greening streets and alleys, creating small parks along Bozeman Creek, and creating or improving other public spaces and facilities within the downtown.

DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

It is vitally important that downtown development be guided by a sound set of design standards and guidelines. Downtown is currently governed by a set of guidelines, but these are principally applicable to the core and not other areas. A set of standards and guidelines should be created to help inform new development outside of historic Main Street. Some should be numerical and fixed (such as set-to lines, heights, upper level step-backs, and requirements for storefront windows.). But most can be descriptive and inspirational and use graphics to explain (such as encouraging overhead canopies, artful signs, rich details, etc.) These need not be onerous or lengthy but should be displayed in a concise, highly-illustrated, user-friendly document. Finally, by their very nature, design guidelines (in contrast to standards) are intended to allow flexibility and choices, producing many different solutions, so long as their intent is fulfilled.



A STRATEGIC PLAN AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

Bozeman has already made progress on at least one of the most important requirements for great downtowns—it has a plan, now in your hands.

Now, the City needs to be sure that its leaders—including elected leaders, business executives, nonprofit managers, and active citizens of all stripes—get behind it and work to see that its strategic goals are implemented in the days and years to come.

A strategic plan recognizes that some things will change. Not every recommendation or prediction made here will take place exactly as envisioned—and that's okay. There is both great value and danger in the details that inform a strategic plan. One danger is that the details drag all stakeholders down into debates about the minutia—for example, details in the zoning code or the precise number of housing units that will be built by 2030. A strategic plan, on the other hand, is about the big picture, and staying true to the vision is of the utmost importance. For this plan, the big picture is about Making a Great Place. This big goal is reinforced by 12 Guiding Principles on pp. 12 and 13 that will steer more specific actions.

Committed leadership is essential in order for this plan to succeed and maintain and grow Bozeman's healthy, vibrant downtown. Downtown must be a priority for the City Commission and other key public bodies that support the commission. Downtown's status as a priority should be reflected in attention to the redevelopment of key sites, funding allocation, marketing and public outreach, streetscape and infrastructure improvements, attention to more specific planning efforts that will deal with parking, transportation, individual sites, and more. The best downtowns are a source of pride for citizens, mayors, and city commissioners, who are their most visible advocates.

SIMPLIFYING THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

One of the barriers to downtown development may be the process of reviewing and making decisions on development proposals. Frequently, projects being reviewed are seeking multiple “deviations” from the code and that triggers review by advisory boards, public hearings, and even City Commission involvement.

Any City that desires to see its downtown develop must offer a clear and smooth decision-making process for projects. And such a process cannot trigger uncertainties caused by political considerations. Confusing or unpredictable review processes can deter new development from occurring.

The City should restructure its review and decision-making procedures. All development proposals should be reviewed administratively with advice, if needed or required, by appointed bodies having specified expertise such as the Design Review Board. Minor deviations should be able to be reviewed and approved (or not) administratively. Only major deviations should require scrutiny by boards. If more than one board is involved, there should be a consolidated review including representatives from both groups. This avoids a proponent receiving conflicting directions. The City Commission should rely upon its fine professional staff and skilled boards to make development decisions.

The test of any review should be: “Does it comply with adopted City standards?” Project design should not be subject to widely varying personal opinions. The standards should be adopted by the City Commission, upon recommendation by an appointed body such as the Planning Board or DRB. The standards must be carefully crafted to reflect community concerns such as quality and compatibility with adjacent, existing development. The review of a specific project is not the time to debate these; the issue during review should be whether the project comports with current standards.

It is possible that one reason that many projects seek deviations is that the current standards do not reflect building forms and dimensions commonly associated with contemporary development. As

indicated elsewhere in this plan, standards for downtown buildings outside of the historic commercial core should be developed to allow modern forms of residential and mixed-use development and not attempt to recreate older patterns as is more appropriate within the core.

The review process must be objective, open, and offer ample notice to affected and interested parties. The standards must be clear and available for anyone to read and see how the project complies. There could be improvements to public notice, such as erecting a very prominent sign that announces the application and gives pertinent information and contacts. It should be noted that the recently completed economic development plan contains similar recommendations

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Public-private partnerships (PPP) are an important tool that have been used to advance downtown revitalization efforts in cities across the country, by combining the individual strengths of the public and private sectors. Partnerships have produced breakthrough, catalyst real estate developments in a wide range of locales—from small town downtowns up to the nation's biggest urban centers. Typically, public sector strengths—such as leadership, advocacy, convening, planning, infrastructure investment, and more—are combined with private sector strengths—such as site-specific design, real estate



development, market analysis, and financing—to produce a deal that delivers both public benefits and a reasonable return on investment. Although this section applies mostly to Partnerships in an urban real estate development context, there are many other types of partnerships, such as ones that build infrastructure or build organizations. For example, the Downtown Bozeman Partnership can be consid-

ered a PPP, since it brings together contributions of time, effort, and funding from both public and private sources.

Public-private partnerships are important to this plan and the long-term success of downtown Bozeman for the following reasons. Public-private partnerships:

- Implement the vision. The additional development envisioned as part of this plan—including new housing, office, hotel, retail, and other uses—will only take place if private investment is attracted to supplement public efforts.
- Provide community amenities beyond a single project. While individual projects serve their residents and users, they also build a better downtown by including community amenities such as plazas, fountains, improved streetscapes, and active retail facades.
- Allow the City and other public sector partners to strategically target and leverage their funds. No city has enough funds to implement all its visions. Thus, cities seek to strategically direct public funds to the sites and uses that will leverage the most private investment. Over the course of a multi-phase downtown redevelopment, the ratio of public to private dollars will ideally be in the range of 1 public for 4 or 5 private dollars. The investment leverage realized on individual projects, however, varies widely depending on levels of risk, scale, and more.
- Help to manage public and private risk and enhance project feasibility. For the public sector, partnerships increase the likelihood that projects will be attractive, and built and managed at a high quality. For the private sector, they mitigate risk associated with project approvals, funding, and political barriers. Public-private partnerships can enable projects that would not otherwise be built, accelerate investment timelines, and overcome the five types of development barriers: physical, market, financial, regulatory, and political.

STRATEGIES FOR INCORPORATING SUSTAINABILITY

- Low Impact Development (LID). Bozeman is currently in the process of adopting LID regulations. Green Infrastructure and Green Streets can serve as the foundation for future development downtown, and a key contributor to community development. Innovative approaches, such as porous pavement, rain gardens, reduced hardscape and preserved native vegetation can protect water resources, restore the urban forest, and promote sustainable design in the public realm.
- Integrate into Development Regulations.
 - Removing barriers to sustainable development, such as excessive parking requirements for mixed-use development, is a first step to enabling sustainable development to occur.
 - Consider allowing demonstration projects that provide model development techniques and showcase new green building technologies
 - Provide incentives, such as FAR bonuses for LEED silver or gold certification
 - Consider new approaches to requirements, such as landscaping and incentives for adaptive reuse, in ways to better meet sustainability goals and policies.
 - Encourage higher residential densities downtown.
- Livable and Complete Streets to safely accommodate all users of all ages – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. In some cases, street standards and policies would likely need to be revised.





CREATING A SUSTAINABLE DOWNTOWN

Above all, this plan for downtown Bozeman is intended to ensure that it is sustainable over the long term. A truly sustainable place requires attention to three spheres of activity equally and at the same time: environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, and social sustainability – an approach that is sometimes referred to as the “triple bottom line.” The plan addresses all three subjects and establishes clear and explicit directions -- some dramatic, some less so. They require a wide range of stakeholders, including the City, the Downtown Bozeman Partnership, property owners, merchants, and even residents to accomplish; no one person or group can do it all.

These elements – environmental, economic and social – are also intertwined. For example, recommended changes to traffic patterns and street design affect the microclimate, livability and pedestrian appeal, the marketability of properties, and ultimately tax revenues resulting from new development occurring in a more accommodative setting. No one recommendation stands on its own, but accomplishes multiple objectives. Choosing to not pursue such a direction would affect many other aspects of downtown and threaten its sustainability.

Downtown Bozeman is an amazing place. It is cared for, revered and valued by many individuals and organizations. This plan will strengthen its unique place in the community and the region and will carry it well into the Twenty First Century. The Plan will allow downtown to flourish and attain an even deeper diversity and vitality over the next several decades.

NEXT STEPS

The “Next Steps and Top Priorities” described on the following page were developed by the consultant team and the Downtown Bozeman Partnership to help guide the users of this document through the process of accomplishing the strategies and recommendations outlined in this improvement plan. This list should be reviewed and discussed by the City of Bozeman, the downtown community, and stakeholders, to confirm the priority established for these objectives.

Successful downtowns have multiple projects and programs occurring at the same time. Some are short in duration, others require more time and consideration. Pursuing a number of actions simultaneously can help ensure a positive outcome.

PRELIMINARY NEXT STEPS

- **Adopt the Downtown Bozeman Improvement Plan**
- **Establish Technical Assistance Programs**
Finalize TIF programs providing financial and technical assistance for complete redevelopment project analysis and façade improvements.
- **Prepare Code Revisions**
Initiate UDO modifications regarding: parking regulations; design guidelines; and development regulations and entitlements.
- **Parking Study/Analysis**
Conduct regular parking studies determine and track the inventory of on-street, surface and structured parking spaces in addition usage patterns and trends.
- **Perform a Downtown Success Audit**
A Downtown Audit examines the economic health of downtown, both from an income/cost perspective and a tax revenue perspective. It looks at vacancies, mix of tenancies, “missing” businesses, and ways to specifically support various market sectors.

- **Create “Greening Downtown” Plan**
Better identify opportunities to green the alleys, establish pocket parks, and enhance Bozeman Creek.
- **Implement the Downtown Streetscape Project**
Complete the plans to make the following improvements along the side streets between Church and Grand Avenues: install new sidewalks, street lamps, pedestrian benches, trash receptacles, and bicycle racks.
- **Initiate Exploration of Possible Development Sites**
Identify specific properties and evaluate the uses that could likely be marketed on them. Begin to seek out development companies and financial institutions that could take on projects of varying types and sizes. Begin discussions with the City on the potential disposition of parcels they currently own.
- **Analyze Traffic Calming Methods**
Full Cost and Benefit study: social, economic, and traffic considerations for one-way street conversion, shared lanes, streetscape improvements, and truck route modifications.



NEXT STEPS MATRIX

Objective	Completion Goals	Lead Entity	Potential Partners	Nature of Objective
Adopt Downtown Improvement Plan	November 2009	City of Bozeman	Downtown Partnership	Administrative
Establish Technical Assistance Programs	November 2009	Downtown Partnership		Administrative & Financial (TIF Funding approved)
Prepare and Adopt Code Revisions	January 2010 July 2011	City of Bozeman	Downtown Partnership	Administrative (COB staff time)
Parking	January 2010		Bozeman Parking Commission	
Review/Approval Process	June 2010		Economic Development Advisory Board	
Design Standards	July 2011			
Conduct Downtown Success Audit	January 2010 (repeat annually)	Downtown Partnership	Montana State University City of Bozeman	Administrative
Conduct Parking Inventory/Use Study	March 2010 June 2010	Parking Commission	Downtown Partnership	Financial & Administrative (prepared by consultants)
Prepare “Green Downtown” Plan	January 2011	Downtown Partnership	Gallatin Valley Land Trust	Financial & Administrative (prepared by consultants)
Implement Streetscape Project	Ongoing	Downtown Partnership	City of Bozeman	Administrative & Financial (may require future SID)
Explore Public-Private Partnerships	Ongoing	Downtown Partnership and City of Bozeman		Administrative & Financial (may involve consultants)
Develop Traffic Calming and Streetscape Projects	Ongoing January 2012	Downtown Partnership and City of Bozeman	Western Transportation Institute	Financial & Administrative

