

Appendix A: Implementation Strategy

Appendix A. Implementation Strategy

The Midtown Master Plan is the result of an extensive process which would not have been possible without the contribution of countless community members and organizations who came together to develop a clear direction for the future of Midtown. It will now take a concerted and well-coordinated effort from the Midtown Missoula Association and its many partners to realize this vision laid out in the plan.

This implementation strategy is a component of the Midtown Master Plan focused on specific steps to advance the plan's recommendations that can be championed by the Midtown Missoula Association (MMA), government agencies, private sector partners, and community stakeholders. This implementation strategy identifies and evaluates short, medium, and long-term action items, including opportunities to build momentum, collaborate with key partners, consider needed resources, and next steps. It will take a sustained effort with ongoing coordination to implement the recommendations in the Plan, beginning with the actions in this strategy and identifying new opportunities as they arise.

Implementation Framework

This implementation framework outlines the key facets of implementing the Missoula Midtown Master Plan using the classic "5 Ws" form (Who, What, Where, When, and Why). This strategy is intended to serve as the organizing mechanism for the plan's actions, with detailed considerations for sustaining momentum.

What: Framework Areas and Actions

This matrix shows a high-level summary of all **thirty-six actions** within the Implementation Strategy, which are organized in six framework areas. These framework areas directly tie back to the recommendation section of the Midtown Master Plan, with a more detailed list of actionable items for each category. Equitable development strategies are incorporated throughout the identified strategies in order to highlight the importance of integrating equitable processes and outcomes throughout all areas of the plan.

Framework Area	Actions
1. Land Use & Infrastructure	1.1 Simplify the development code to encourage more diverse types of housing development
	1.2 Remove regulatory barriers to promote commercial infill development
	1.3 Create a clear regulatory process for complex projects that require multi-phase development
	1.4 Streamline development permitting processes and reduce/clarify public approval requirements
	1.5 Review and calibrate parking policies to encourage higher-density and mixed-use development
	1.6 Leverage urban renewal funding to encourage redevelopment of key opportunity sites
2. Housing	2.1 Reduce development costs for affordable housing
	2.2 Preserve and keep housing in good repair
	2.3 Support affordable homeownership opportunities
	2.4 Enhance housing stability for existing residents
	2.5 Restructure and explore new development incentives for affordable housing
	2.6 Explore innovative, low-cost housing solutions to serve people experiencing homelessness
3. Business & Economic Development	3.1 Provide support for small businesses and entrepreneurs
	3.2 Support the development of a small-scale hotel to serve Midtown visitors and support tourism
	3.3 Enable more types of live-work, flex, and creative office space in employment-focused zones
	3.4 Support revitalization of buildings along Brooks Street

Midtown Implementation Strategy - DRAFT May 10, 2023

	3.5 Encourage incremental infill and redevelopment on larger sites in auto-oriented corridors through regulatory changes
	3.6 Encourage pedestrian street activation and business activities on South Avenue
	3.7 Provide affordable entrepreneurship opportunities in the Midtown Junction area
4. Mobility & Connectivity	4.1 Provide safe and frequent pedestrian and bicycle crossings across Brooks Street
	4.2 Redesign the Brooks Street/Russell Street/South Avenue intersection to improve accessibility for all users
	4.3 Advance the buildout of the planned greenway network throughout Midtown including the Master Plan new connections
	4.4 Apply Complete Streets planning, design, and operational principles to Midtown streets to better serve all users
	4.5 Prioritize improvements to the pedestrian environment around the core of Midtown
	4.6 Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety at critical greenway network crossings
	4.7 Enhance travel and generate pedestrian and bicycle activity along and around the Bitterroot Trail
	4.8 Expand pedestrian and bicycle access to the Central Park district
	4.9 Improve and expand Mountain Line Transit Service
	4.10 Implement parking management practices
5. Parks & Open Space	5.1 Make improvements to the trail system connecting to the Bitterroot Trail
	5.2 Create more park access in the Franklin to the Fort area
	5.3 Refine a multi-agency facilities plan for the Central Park concept and engage in a planning process for Playfair Park
6. Character Areas & Design	6.1 Integrate Indigenous history and culture in new projects
	6.2 Encourage active ground floor uses around future BRT stops and other key nodes
	6.3 Design a placemaking theme for Midtown
	6.4 Implement activation of the Festival Street concept on South Avenue

Why: Realizing the Vision for Midtown

Each section of the Implementation Strategy includes a project description and rationale for how the action helps further the vision of the Midtown Master Plan. Each action is guided by the priorities identified by community members in the engagement process and is supported by the project team's technical analysis.

Incorporating Equity

Equitable development is critical to ensuring that Midtown will be a vibrant place that serves the needs of all its residents, workers, and visitors. The Master Plan outlines a definition of equity, which this plan intentionally incorporates throughout each framework area in a range of actions that help to achieve equitable outcomes:

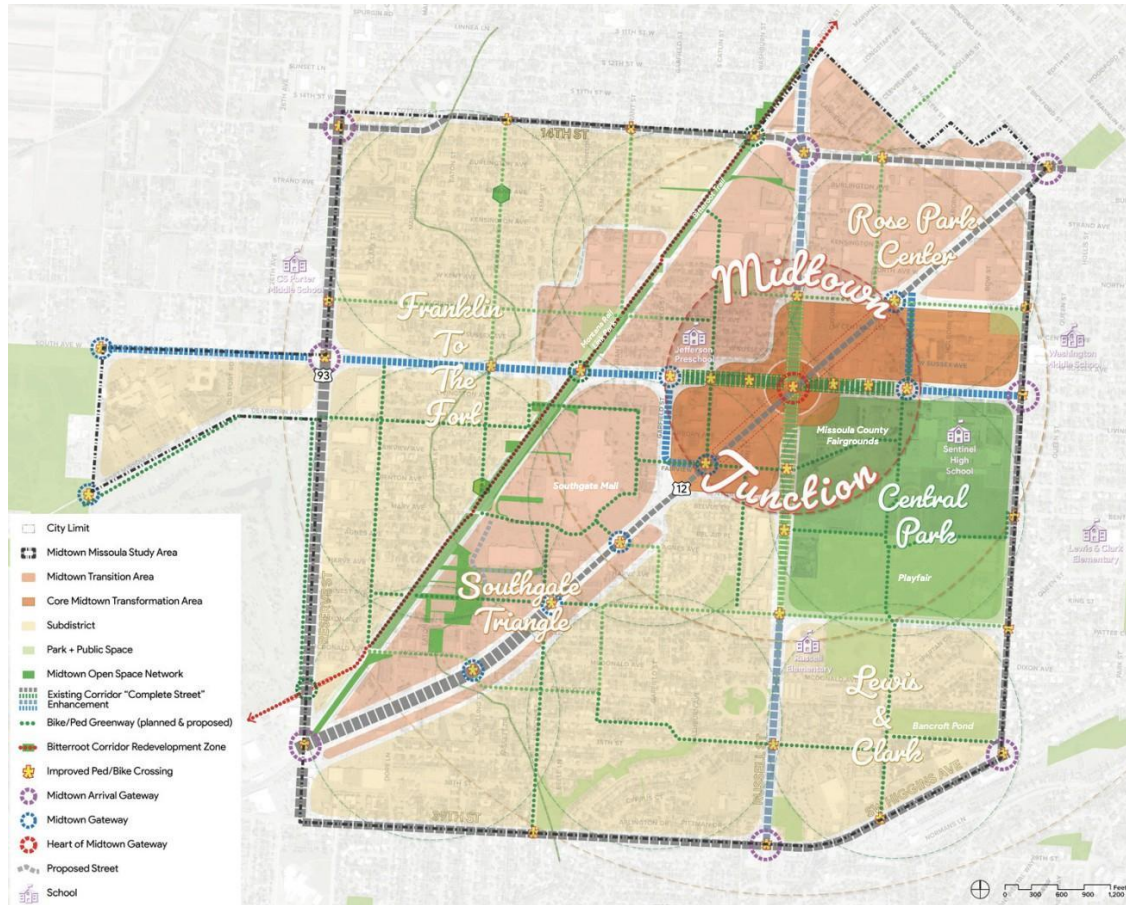
“An approach for meeting the needs of underserved communities through policies and programs that reduce disparities while fostering places that are healthy and vibrant; An effective place-based action for creating strong and livable communities; Clear expectations that the outcomes from development need to be responsive to underserved populations and vulnerable groups; In the process, lower-income residents and people of color are successfully guiding the changes that occur within their communities rather than reacting to them.”¹

¹ US EPA, “Equitable Development and Environmental Justice,” April 13, 2015, <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/equitable-development-and-environmental-justice>.

All actions include details on equity considerations, including the population served and intended outcomes of that action to equitably distribute the costs and benefits of the Master Plan. Where it is relevant, there is also an indication of specific areas where efforts should be focused for equitable results.

Where: Geographic Focus Areas

Some actions may be relevant only in one focus area, such as the Midtown Junction area, the Brooks Street Corridor, or residential areas. Some actions will apply across Midtown, and others may not yet be determined. Where this is an essential part of the action, the language specifically calls out the geographic area using the Master Plan framework.



When: Timeline and Priority

This implementation strategy uses a relative timeline of short-, medium-, and longer-term projects, organized with the following framework:

Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<p>0-5 Year Actions</p> <p>Includes actions that have a clear path forward to begin implementation with defined partners and/or urgent needs to address for the community.</p>	<p>5-10 Year Actions</p> <p>Includes actions that will require greater lead up and will build on the momentum from short-term actions.</p>	<p>10+ Year Actions</p> <p>Includes actions that are likely dependent on other projects happening or funding becoming available before they can move forward, but are important to realizing the vision for Midtown.</p>

Who: Partners

Advancing the Midtown Master Plan's vision will require work from a variety of partners, including the Missoula Midtown Association, public agencies, developers, and community-based organizations. For some actions, there may be a clear organization to lead the work, but in other cases it may be a broader coalition.

As an overarching action for this strategy, the Midtown Missoula Association should create an implementation committee and working group to advance the Master Plan following its adoption and coordinate with additional partners. This list represents some of the key organizations who may be involved with this committee, in addition to individual community members who may wish to be involved. To foster a more equitable implementation process, the MMA should also intentionally seek involvement from partners like culturally specific services, disability advocates, affordable housing providers, and other organizations for underrepresented community members.

Partner Types	Key Implementation Partners
Businesses and Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Missoula Association of REALTORS (MOR)● Southgate Mall● Private firms and businesses● Local property owners● Midtown-based entrepreneurs
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● City of Missoula● Missoula County● Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA)● Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)● Missoula County Fairgrounds● Missoula Urban Transportation District (Mountain Line)● Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)
Community Partners and Nonprofit Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Missoula Midtown Association (MMA)● Destination Missoula● EmpowerMT● Human Resource Council (HRC)● Homeward● Missoula Chamber of Commerce● Missoula Economic Partnership (MEP)● United Way● Séliš-Q̓lispé Culture Committee

Funding Sources

Not all funding sources that will fully support implementation of the Midtown Master Plan vision are yet known and more may become available during its 10-year life span. However, this strategy identifies critical first-step funding opportunities that Midtown can leverage to build momentum in coming years, including:

- **Leverage urban renewal funding and explore expanding the current urban renewal area.** Much of Midtown is already within the geographic boundaries of Missoula's Urban Renewal Area III, which is one of the greatest sources of funding available for the area. Urban renewal funds can generally be used for a variety of capital projects, but only within the plan area. The MMA should track state legislative decisions about urban renewal to understand what is possible and advocate for expanding this district to align with Midtown Master Plan boundaries. This will enable more funding options through urban renewal funding throughout the study area.

- **Leverage opportunities for incorporating bicycle and pedestrian improvements into the Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study.** The Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study, which is expected to be completed by Summer 2024, is being funded with a federal U.S. Department of Transportation grant through the Rebuilding America Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. Midtown will have the opportunity to advocate for incorporating improved pedestrian crossings, bicycle infrastructure, and other Complete Street amenities in the Brooks Street BRT design concepts.
- **Advocate for allocation of funding from the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund.** Midtown is home to a large share of the city, and it is a critical area to advocate for allocation of the AHTF.
- **Advocate for federal, state, and county resources.** Although these might be limited and sporadic, the MMA and its partners should be opportunistic about new funding sources from other levels of government such as grants and technical support. Upcoming legislature may also provide new opportunities, including HB819, which would provide grants for local organizations to help middle-income households purchase homes.

Framework Area 1: Land Use & Infrastructure

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
Action 1.1 Simplify the development code to encourage more diverse types of housing development			
<p>The City should explore and make modifications to the zoning code to support a broader range of housing in Midtown and across Missoula as part of the upcoming Our Missoula Code Reform process, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for missing middle housing types in all residential zones that do not allow for these types outright in existing residential zones. These housing types include townhomes, duplexes, cottage housing, and small multifamily plexes with up to six dwelling units. Reduce minimum lot sizes in single-family zones. Smaller footprint configurations could yield higher densities, lower costs, and more efficient use of land. This would also encourage the development of missing middle housing in current residential (R) zones. • Reconfigure development standards to support higher-density development. Commercial zones are prime areas for mixed-use residential development. In these areas, development regulations should allow for higher-density development, both through density allowances and other requirements for setbacks, height, and parcel area per unit that make mixed-use multifamily buildings feasible for developers. • Reduce parking minimums to support higher-density development, vertical mixed-use buildings, and smaller-scale housing types. ECO's development feasibility findings (Appendix X) show that a parking ratio of 0.7 to 1.0 spaces per dwelling unit can improve feasibility for these types. (<i>See Action 1.5 for details on parking requirements</i>). Consider requiring transportation demand management strategies for large, new developments that receive parking reductions. <p>Rationale: Allowing a wide range of housing options can support the City's housing affordability goals. Building smaller homes such as accessory dwelling units, townhomes, duplexes, and cottage clusters typically cost less to construct and maintain.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Diverse housing types provide opportunities for a broader range of people to access right-sized, affordable, and high-quality housing options. Historic housing discrimination and exclusionary practices have disproportionately affected people of color and reduced the range of housing choices available through restrictive zoning policies. By allowing a wide range of housing types, communities can promote equity by expanding housing opportunities and reducing the concentration of poverty in certain areas.</p>	Short	<p>Lead: City of Missoula, Our Missoula Code Reform Team</p> <p>Partners: Missoula Midtown Association (MMA), Missoula Association of REALTORS (MOR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the Our Missoula Code Reform project to ensure these land use and code recommendations get implemented. • Montana SB 323, which passed in April 2023, allows for duplex and triplex housing in local zoning. • The larger scope of the Code Reform process can explore how code changes will impact areas across Missoula and engage with community members.
Action 1.2 Remove regulatory barriers to promote commercial infill development			
<p>Along with residential code changes, the City should make modifications to commercial and industrial zones to support infill development and employment uses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify use allowances for retail, services, and light manufacturing in commercial and mixed-use zones. The focus should be on locally serving businesses and clarifying/simplifying that the use classification in the zoning code can be inclusive of smaller-scale retail and industrial uses. Seek opportunities to combine similar use designations that serve similar purposes to the community or 	Short	<p>Lead: City of Missoula, Our Missoula Code Reform Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like modifications to residential building standards, commercial zoning changes should be coordinated with the Code Reform project, which can explore implications

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>have similar site needs. For example, the City could provide the same use allowances for microbreweries, cideries, and wineries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce ground floor commercial requirements for vertical mixed-use buildings. Reducing or eliminating ground floor commercial requirements can support the viability of vertical mixed-use development. However, some scaled-down requirements should remain to support an active street environment in core areas. This will also allow the market to respond to changing times and build better pedestrian environments, while removing requirements that are not financially feasible. Although active ground floor use requirements should remain in the Midtown Junction area, they should be sufficiently flexible to not impede development in key corridors. <p>Rationale: Throughout Master Plan engagement, community members indicated they would like to see neighborhood-serving retail throughout Midtown and as a part of mixed-use development. Providing greater flexibility for development and use standards can ensure that small-scale commercial uses are feasible in mixed-use buildings.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Mixed-use infill development is important for achieving equitable outcomes for both housing and economic development priorities. Mixed-use multifamily buildings provide access to goods and services, employment opportunities, and space for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Small-scale storefronts can also help support the local economy.</p>		<p>Partners: MMA, MOR</p>	<p>across Missoula, engage with businesses, and implement specific changes.</p>
Action 1.3 Create a clear regulatory process for complex projects that require multiphase development			
<p>In addition to regulatory changes for use allowances and development standards, the City should update the code to provide flexibility in the phasing plan timeline for multiphased projects on large building permits. The current two-year maximum deadline to establish a new phase hinders the ability to construct a project in multiple phases when construction typically lasts more than 12 months for large projects.</p> <p>Rationale: Having some flexibility in the timeline for when the City would require each phased development to occur could give projects some time to better align resources and funding to support the multiphased project and build the required infrastructure needed. In recent years, supply chain disruptions and inflationary pressures have also impacted many projects and increased costs far above original estimates. Multiphase development allows greater flexibility in adjusting projects to broad economic changes.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Smaller local developers and affordable housing developers typically cannot absorb as much risk as large national firms, so collecting returns from initial development phases can make larger projects and those which operate on small margins feasible. Enabling local developers to lead the way is also more likely to ensure community needs are heard and met by firms with greater local knowledge and relationships.</p>	<p>Short</p>	<p>Lead: City of Missoula, Our Missoula Code Reform Team</p> <p>Partners: MMA, MOR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand what kind of phasing options would be most useful for large projects, the City should convene local developers and real estate professionals to gather input on phasing and timelines. • The MMA and/or MOR could be conveners to bring together key stakeholders and align policy updates with development realities.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
Action 1.4 Streamline development permitting processes and reduce/clarify public approval requirements			
<p>The City should seek to change policies and regulations around development that can slow timelines and create barriers for the types of residential and commercial development that the community wants to see in Midtown, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove restrictions from development standards related to design and clarify landscaping requirements. This should include a review of the Design Excellence Overlay, including requirements in key nodes and corridors as well as incentive structures, to remove restrictive or unclear criteria such as building materials while retaining clear open space requirements. • Provide more flexibility in the TED regulations to promote the production of new housing. This could include increasing the number of units allowed for a TED and other requirements that make infill development challenging. • Simplify change of occupancy building code to encourage redevelopment of existing commercial buildings, which would support infill development along with entrepreneurship and new locally serving businesses. • Review and amend code requirements for setbacks and stepbacks for commercial development adjacent to residential-zoned parcels. Large setbacks and stepbacks for noncommercial-zoned parcels next to residential parcels can limit the scale and redevelopment potential of these specific parcels. <p>Rationale: Permitting processes can act as a bottleneck by delaying construction and extending development timelines. Streamlining the permitting process and having clear and objective standards can minimize these delays and allow developers to avoid lengthy permitting processes navigating the regulatory maze of variances, adjustments, and permits. Streamlining the permit process can lower overall costs by decreasing risk and project expenses.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Complex and prolonged permitting processes can be burdensome for the development of affordable housing. Because affordable housing typically operates on very small margins to provide units below market rate, financial feasibility is very sensitive to factors like timeline that overextend the budget. Larger firms may be able to absorb more risk of a prolonged permitting process but tend to provide only market-rate units. To ensure that affordable housing gets built, it is important to have, at a minimum, expedited processes for these projects.</p>	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula, Our Missoula Code Reform Team</p> <p>Partners: MMA, MOR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some processes that require City review may not be able to be eliminated for health and safety purposes. The City should carefully evaluate before removing current processes and ensure that there is clarity about changes. • Administrative capacity is a challenge for expediting timelines for development. While the City is working to address these challenges and develop new resources for development, these actions could remove some current strain on permit review staff.
Action 1.5 Review and calibrate parking policies to encourage higher-density and mixed-use development			
<p>The City should revisit and consider making changes to its current regulatory parking policies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise current parking policies to formalize the City's intent regarding the role parking development and parking management will play in supporting the Midtown land use vision for more compact, mixed-use development and an augmented multimodal transportation access system. 	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: City, Missoula Parking Commission</p> <p>Support:</p>	<p>Short-term considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate findings and overall goals that come out of the citywide Parking Plan effort.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review and revise current policies and code requirements for parking requirements. Reduce or eliminate the more than eighty land use types currently requiring minimum parking. Specific configurations should take into account localized findings of the citywide Parking Plan. ● City policy should support incentives for change to encourage limited parking and more multimodal-friendly living. Right-sized parking is a key incentive for development. ● Engage in strategic data collection to quantify actual local demand ratios for current land uses (see Action 5.4 for further detail). <p>Rationale: Parking policy for new development should reflect the desired land use outcome for Midtown (to include integration of parking into the broader access vision for parking, transit, biking/walking, and Climate Action). Reducing or eliminating parking requirements, based on local parking demand data for mixed-use development, will lead to parking that is “right-sized,” cost-effective, and supportive of land use and multimodal transportation goals and objectives.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Mixed-use multifamily housing can help advance equitable outcomes in several ways. Combining residential units with commercial spaces can create opportunities for employment and access to services within walking distance, which can benefit transit-dependent households. Multifamily developments are also typically more efficient as affordable or mixed-income buildings that serve low-income households.</p>		MMA, MOR, Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA), Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Convene a Parking Work Group to develop a new and strategic policy for parking development and management in Midtown (see Action 5.4). ● Initiate strategic data collection for a range of land use types and, potentially, unique area subdistricts. <p>Medium-term considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using local demand data, calibrate new parking standards, and if minimums are continued, factor data to account for future anticipated mode split objectives. ● Adopt policies and new regulatory standards for development.
Action 1.6 Leverage urban renewal funding to encourage redevelopment of key opportunity sites			
<p>Urban renewal funding is a powerful funding mechanism available in Midtown through URA District III, which overlaps large portions of the core Master Plan study area. The MRA in partnership with the MMA should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prioritize urban renewal funding to pay for major infrastructure projects needed to unlock development potential in large key opportunity sites. Infrastructure projects could include water and sewer connections, roadway improvements and extensions, utility relocation, and remediation costs. These can often be a barrier for development, as they frequently require up-front investment from developers, particularly for projects that have lower returns such as affordable housing. ● Use urban renewal funds to purchase land for community-serving uses on large format sites. Urban renewal can be an effective way to pay for land acquisition and other capital development costs. The MRA and partners should proactively identify potential partners and ideal sites that could be used for the creation of affordable housing, new employment uses, community commercial space, or needed services. Large underutilized or superblock sites in employment mixed-use areas and neighborhood mixed-use corridors near transit and active transportation routes would likely suit these uses and address the Master Plan’s goals for creating a more vibrant and connected area. <p>Rationale: Infrastructure investments can advance projects that address community needs identified in the Master Plan. These include mixed-use projects that include new housing units, small business incubator spaces,</p>	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: MRA</p> <p>Support: MMA, MOR, City of Missoula Public Works, property owners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MRA and MMA should evaluate expanding the URD III, particularly if high-opportunity sites do not overlap with its current boundaries. ● To be eligible for expansion, the MRA must be able to identify findings of blight as defined by state statute, which may be challenging in some areas of the Midtown Master Plan boundaries. ● Monitor state legislative changes to urban renewal policy, which could significantly impact how urban renewal funds can be used.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>social services, etc. Priority for funding should be projects with community benefits which may not be feasible without gap financing but have buy-in from property owners, developers, and key partners.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Urban renewal revenue can be a critical source of funding for community improvements that address disparities resulting from historic discriminatory practices. Urban renewal can provide critical funding for capital costs associated with housing development, creating and enhancing parks and open spaces, improving transportation infrastructure and streetscape, and supporting economic development.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MMA can help to identify potential projects that would benefit from infrastructure improvements and lead conversations with property owners and businesses.

Framework Area 2: Housing

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
Action 2.1 Reduce development costs for affordable housing			
<p>Developing affordable housing to support the Midtown community over the next 10 years and beyond will take a variety of different tools. Those which reduce up-front and ongoing costs for development and operation of affordable units include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage City and urban renewal funds for required front-end infrastructure improvements for affordable housing and mixed-income development projects. • Use the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) to reduce the financial gap for affordable housing projects in Midtown. • Create a Community Reinvestment Organization (CRO) to leverage available state housing resources and identify funding sources of potential match for CRO funding. • Make public land available at a reduced price as a subsidy for affordable housing. This lowers the overall development costs and enables production of housing units at reduced rents. • Subsidize or reduce development review or fees for affordable housing, including building permit fees, planning waivers, and water and sewer fees. • Expedite development review process for affordable housing. Reducing the entitlement length process lowers costs by decreasing risk and project development expenses. • Eliminate or further reduce parking minimums for affordable housing projects near high-frequency transit and major employment areas. Eliminating parking requirements can reduce both the land required and the construction costs for building housing as well as allow greater flexibility for site design. <p>Rationale: Creating housing that is affordable for low- and moderate-income households often requires public subsidy to be feasible. Because rents or sale prices are offered below market rate, these developments are typically not able to cover costs without contributions from government agencies or mission-based organizations. Although some programs exist at the federal level (such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit), these can be competitive. Local contributions can help to enhance available funding options and provide a more sustainable source of funds for ongoing programs.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Affordable housing is critical for achieving equitable outcomes in Midtown by ensuring that lower-income households can continue to live in the area and avoid displacement as new development happens. Reducing development costs for these projects through up-front public subsidies, land donation, expedited review processes, and flexible development standards can make it feasible for developers to offer housing units at reduced rents that are attainable to households at a wider range of income levels without cost burdening.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Lead: City of Missoula</p> <p>Support: Missoula County, MMA, MEP, other government bodies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MMA and its partners should advocate for allocation of available City, County, and other resources to target affordable housing in Midtown. This should include support for new multifamily units as well as homeownership support (such as down payment assistance, home rehabilitation funds, and accessibility improvements) and financial support for the preservation of existing affordable housing. • The City uses its property by MRL Park as an emergency shelter for houseless individuals. If the City identifies a new location for an emergency shelter, this site could be available for new uses (e.g., affordable housing). • Modifications to parking requirements for affordable housing should be considered alongside Action 2.5 in line with a holistic update to development incentives for affordable development.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
Action 2.2 Preserve and keep housing in good repair			
<p>As part of broader citywide housing work, the City should seek to partner with the MMA, service providers, residents, and property owners in Midtown to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a revolving loan fund that can be used for down payment assistance, potentially using City AHTF contributions, and identifying additional local sources to help close the gap between affordability requirements and current housing prices for a range of low and moderate-income households. • Incent housing preservation of low-cost rental units by offering grants, loans, and property tax incentives to property owners in exchange for keeping units affordable. • Support existing programs for home rehabilitation, weatherization, and accessibility improvements and explore options to expand or develop new programs. These programs are critical for ensuring that existing low-income homeowners are able to make repairs to keep their homes up to code, reduce cost of utility bills, and make accessibility improvements for disabled residents and aging in place. The City and partners should proactively look for opportunities for funding that could support expanding service for these programs. • Acquire and rehabilitate both subsidized and market-rate affordable properties that are in good structural condition to increase long-lasting affordability. <p>Rationale: Although housing prices have been rising in recent years, Midtown has an existing supply of naturally occurring affordable housing. Preserving units that are already affordable ensures that residents are able to stay in their homes; this is critical for preventing displacement as new development occurs as part of the Midtown Master Plan.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: In addition to preserving affordable multifamily housing, programs for home repairs, weatherization, and accessibility help existing low-income homeowners, seniors, and people with disabilities maintain high-quality living standards. Many older adults and people with disabilities may require physical modifications to their homes due to mobility needs. Accessibility improvements such as no-step entry, single-floor living, and door widths to accommodate a wheelchair can be costly and create displacement risk, which can be alleviated with intentional programs for homeowner support. Additionally, critical home repairs can have high, unexpected costs for low-income households; providing financial support for rehabilitation projects can ensure that residents stay in their homes and can reduce the risk of being unhoused.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Lead: City of Missoula</p> <p>Support: MMA, MRA, Human Resource Council (HRC), County, existing property owners and multifamily housing operators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving existing housing helps to achieve climate goals, since rehabilitation typically produces lower greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants than new development. • Potential resources could come from the City, County, and mission-based organizations (including the Affordable Housing Trust Fund). The MMA and partners should advocate for funding that can support acquisition and rehabilitation of existing affordable rental units and augment homeowner programs.
Action 2.3 Support affordable homeownership opportunities			
<p>To make homeownership accessible to more Midtown households, the City should also work with existing organizations operating in Midtown, including the MRA, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider pursuing alternative homeownership models such as community land trusts that can provide affordable homeownership options to young families and first-time homebuyers. • Support down payment assistance and homeownership education programs. Some organizations like Homeward and HRC work already have programs for down payment assistance and homeownership support. Seeking ways to expand the reach of these programs, provide additional funding, or technical support could enhance opportunities in Midtown. 	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula</p> <p>Support: MRA, Homeward, HRC, local affordable housing developers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the short term, the MMA should assess the capacity for a community land trust in Midtown and any gaps in service from existing homeownership support programs. Identifying a potential champion organization to lead a shared

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>The City could pursue a multipronged approach which could include advocacy at the state level to reduce barriers to development, incentives in exchange for affordability requirements, innovative approaches to acquiring foreclosed homes, and exploring alternative homeownership models.</p> <p>Rationale: The barriers to development of affordable homeownership projects are myriad, from a lack of developer capacity, financing challenges for prospective homeowners, and development regulations. Alternative models of ownership are particularly challenging for small, attached housing units on single lots. These building types cannot always support fee-simple owner occupancy and are costly to develop as condos.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Affordable homeownership options are important to stabilize households and prevent residential displacement, while also allowing residents to gain equity in their homes and build wealth. In the United States, many people of color have been historically prohibited from purchasing homes or accessing housing through discriminatory practices, such as exclusion from federal housing programs and denial of financial services. The legacy of these historical practices contributes to ongoing homeownership and generational wealth disparities. Actions that make homeownership and rental housing more attainable for people of color can help address these ongoing inequities. Prioritizing areas of Midtown with higher socioeconomic vulnerability to displacement (identified in Appendix F of the Midtown Master Plan) can help slow residential displacement in these areas which also have rising housing prices.</p>			<p>ownership model is a critical first step.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMA can help to connect different service providers and businesses and promote programs.
Action 2.4 Enhance housing stability for existing residents			
<p>As Midtown anticipates redevelopment, the City and MMA should engage with community-serving organizations to identify specific unmet needs for housing, services, and technical assistance (such as homebuyer education and tenants' rights counseling) and take steps to prevent displacement, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to identify gaps and overlaps in housing services to increase capacity building for housing providers and increase programs that help people stay housed. Explore possibilities for tenant protections. This would need to happen at the city or county level and may be limited by state regulations. The MMA and partners could advocate for new protections such as caps on certain fees or notice-to-sale requirements. Programmatic options like tenant education services may be more feasible in Montana's legislative context. Consider anti-displacement strategies identified in the Equity in Land Use Report and part of the Our Missoula project. Proactively engage with community members in high socially vulnerable areas to identify unmet housing needs. Areas with higher concentrations of social vulnerability should be prioritized for developing programs that can enhance stability. Work with housing program providers to identify ways to provide eviction and homelessness prevention programs and support. This could include eviction legal counsel, rent and utility assistance, advocating for eviction protections, and more. <p>Rationale: The MMA could seek to serve as a connector with government agencies, foundations, and other organizations to advocate for additional programs and resources to address community needs.</p>	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula</p> <p>Support: MMA, HRC, Homewood, Missoula County, Missoula Housing Authority, MCES, YWCA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick wins for supporting housing stability may include increasing awareness of existing programs and fair housing rights with Midtown residents who may be more vulnerable to displacement. The MMA should also track the progress of citywide displacement risk analysis to refine its understanding of where there is greater risk for Midtown residents with consideration of real estate market changes.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>Equity Benefits: Community-serving organizations already have in-routes with many populations in Midtown who are more vulnerable to displacement risk as identified in Appendix X. Many also offer culturally specific resources and translation services for immigrants, refugees, and people with limited English proficiency. Working with these organizations is likely the most efficient way to identify needs through channels that already have a relationship and trust with community members.</p>			
Action 2.5 Restructure and explore new development incentives for affordable housing			
<p>As part of regulatory changes, the City should consider specific modifications to the code that can support regulated affordable housing, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the existing affordable housing incentive to more zoning districts. Right now, the City’s zoning code allows for the affordable housing bonus in RM2.7, RM1.5, RM1-45, RM1-35, RMH, and RM0.5 zones while several of these are applicable in Midtown today (RM2.7, RM1-45, RM1-35, and RM0.5 in small, limited areas). Creating an incentive that is applicable in all R zones and able to be used for townhome development, middle housing, and multifamily buildings would give the highest potential for a variety of new affordable housing in Midtown. • Allow for more density that builds on other zoning changes. The current code requires between 30% and 50% of units to be affordable in exchange for a 10% to 20% density bonus. The City should consider increasing the density allowance to provide a stronger motivation for developers. • When additional entitlement is created through future planning processes, implement a well-calibrated density affordable housing bonus policy. Future planning and land-use projects could recommend zoning changes and entitlement increases in Midtown. When these zoning changes occur, it is important to implement a well-calibrated density bonus where the incentives match requirements to capture value created through zone changes to support affordable and mixed-income housing in Midtown. • Review and explore other regulatory code changes that incentivize the creation of more affordable housing. <p>Rationale: The City offers a limited affordable housing bonus that applies in some of Midtown’s residential zones. It is a scaled incentive which allows a smaller parcel size and other modified building standards in exchange for up to 50% of the project developed as permanently affordable. To be eligible, units using the incentive must be affordable to households at 80% of area median income (AMI) for rental housing, or households at 120% of AMI for homeownership.</p> <p>The Midtown community has expressed the need for more affordable housing, but developers have noted that the current structure does not create a sufficient incentive for many projects to move forward, with too high of requirements for too little added benefits. Regulatory and financial incentives of a bonus program need to be calibrated to support increased utilization of the program and applied through any future zone changes as part of other planning projects.</p>	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula, Our Missoula Code Reform Project</p> <p>Support: MMA, MOR, local developers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications to the affordable housing density bonus could be incorporated in the Our Missoula Code Reform project. • The Master Plan scope did not include a full analysis of how the bonus impacts financial feasibility of affordable housing projects. The City and partners should seek further opportunities for this analysis. • The City should also work with the Missoula Organization of REALTORS and developers to better understand future changes to market trends and how to best structure incentives to maximize feasibility for affordable housing projects.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>Equity Benefits: Regulatory and financial incentives can make projects that serve low-income households feasible in more areas of Midtown where higher land costs may otherwise prevent affordable housing developments. These policies can help provide a more equitable distribution of housing opportunities and reduce the disproportionate burden of housing costs on low-income households. Incentivizing developers to create more affordable units can help residents at all income levels to have access to housing in high-opportunity areas near jobs, transit, and services.</p>			
Action 2.6 Explore innovative, low-cost housing solutions to serve people experiencing homelessness			
<p>In conjunction with nonprofit organizations and service providers, the City should explore innovative ways to provide shelter to houseless individuals such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repurposing motels for permanent supportive housing • Examining building tiny homes on publicly owned property • Building a permanent shelter with services <p>Rationale: The Johnson Street shelter operating in Midtown serves a large share of the city's houseless population and is a critical resource, particularly in winter months. However, the current shelter is only temporary and more permanent options should be explored.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Homelessness often disproportionately affects communities who are more vulnerable to residential displacement due to a variety of socioeconomic factors (detailed in Appendix X), including people of color, people with disabilities, seniors, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Meeting the need for a shelter in Midtown is an important part of addressing the continuum of housing needs and enhancing safety for vulnerable community members.</p>	Short-Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula</p> <p>Support: MMA, MRA, HRC, Missoula County, Missoula Poverello Center, Salvation Army Missoula</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the City's 10-year plan for ending homelessness. • Midtown is home to a number of service providers. Leveraging this strength and identifying a permanent viable place within Midtown that is close to resources and services should be a priority next step.

Framework Area 3: Business & Economic Development

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
Action 3.1 Provide support for entrepreneurs and small businesses			
<p>To encourage existing businesses and new entrepreneurship in Midtown, the MMA should partner with MEP and other stakeholders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage urban renewal dollars for tenant improvement programs focused on small businesses. The City should calibrate its program by conducting outreach with prospective grantees to prioritize properties, determine the investments that could have the greatest impact, and develop grant/loan criteria. This would be an extension of the existing improvement program. • Build relationships and join forces to market Midtown. This could include coordinated outreach with businesses to understand co-marketing objectives, understanding the types of businesses that are most needed in the area, developing a cohesive brand, and identifying high-impact events that the area could host each year. • Establish a business incubator in partnership with other organizations and improve technical assistance and support networks. This will ensure that Midtown becomes a hub for small businesses and entrepreneurship that can further promote economic development. • Initiate stabilization programs for existing businesses in key corridors identified in the Midtown Master Plan as part of new development, including South Avenue, Brooks Street, and existing neighborhood nodes. • Establish a construction disruption assistance program to mitigate impacts to current businesses from publicly funded construction activities in Midtown. This will likely be most applicable on Brooks Street during build-out of new transit infrastructure but could be applicable to other large future projects with intensive site work. <p>Rationale: Midtown's older building stock and commercially zoned land provide some of Missoula's most affordable options for retail spaces, offices, and services. New development could create pressure on entrepreneurs and small businesses in the area as rents increase. The MMA and its partners should prepare for these conditions by initiating programs to support businesses.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Supporting entrepreneurship can lead to more equitable outcomes because it can create opportunities for individuals who may not have had access to traditional employment or career paths. There are multiple barriers that exist for creating a new business, such as start-up capital, credit requirements, and affordable commercial or industrial space. Groups who have historically been prevented from accumulating generational wealth by discriminatory policies are often not able to access the funding and resources needed to be successful, primarily people of color. Providing resources to bridge ongoing opportunity gaps can have equitable outcomes and strengthen the local economy.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Lead: MMA and MEP</p> <p>Support: Chamber of Commerce, City of Missoula</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the short term, the MMA and its partners should look for opportunities to connect entrepreneurs and start-ups with existing programs. As the Master Plan implementation progresses, new services for entrepreneurs and small businesses may be needed. The MMA should continue to foster these relationships to understand emerging needs. • Cohort-based programs like incubators can efficiently serve multiple businesses with similar needs (such as an online retail-focused cohort, restaurant-focused cohort, etc.). These can also be tailored to provide culturally specific services like cohorts conducted in a shared language.
Action 3.2 Support the development of a small-scale hotel to serve Midtown visitors and support tourism			
<p>The MMA should take action with the Chamber of Commerce and private sector partners to support development of Midtown as a more distinct tourism destination, including:</p>	Medium	Lead: MMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Market Analysis shows that demand is likely to grow beyond the existing economy hotels in Midtown

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to attract a hotel and other services for visitors to Midtown’s many regional destinations. Properties on Brooks Street offer a combination of high vehicle traffic, easy access to major destinations, and underutilized land with redevelopment potential that could be leveraged for rehabilitation or renovation of a hotel space. • Consider using urban renewal funds to help pay for potential infrastructure improvements and help make a hotel financially viable. • Develop a branding theme for Midtown and implement the wayfinding master plan. Strong branding can be used to market Midtown for visitors and leverage its existing assets to reach a wider audience. A specific brand can also help to unite businesses and capture traffic from large events held at the Fairgrounds and sports fields. <p>Rationale: Year-round events at the Missoula Fairgrounds and other destinations bring large crowds to Midtown, but many visitors do not stay in the area due to the lack of new hotels nearby. More coordination is needed to promote Midtown as a district.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Investing in tourism can create benefits for local businesses and entrepreneurs by increasing the number of visitors to Midtown. These efforts should be done in alignment with creating a placemaking theme (detailed in alignment with Action 6.3), which reflects the whole community and history of Midtown. Celebrating Midtown’s identity, history, and culture should intentionally include work with the Séliš-Q̓lispé Culture Committee and other culturally specific organizations and should ensure that these communities benefit from growth in tourism.</p>		Support: MEP, Midtown businesses	today. Near-term opportunities could include repositioning of older economy lodging toward a more boutique lodging concept that leverages the cultural and community assets of Missoula and Midtown.
Action 3.3 Enable more types of live-work, flex, and creative office spaces in employment-focused zones			
<p>To encourage new types of employment spaces in Midtown, the City and MMA should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create definitions and promote employment uses in the code, including live-work and flex spaces • Clarify allowed uses in the northeastern employment focus areas shown in the Business and Economic Development recommendations map in the Master Plan to support employment-focused mixed-use development. • Relax standards for the share of parcel area required for nonresidential uses. Consider scaling requirements to be more tailored to parcel size and reducing the share for nonresidential uses to allow for small retail to be integrated into development. The City should retain ground floor commercial requirements in the Midtown Junction area to promote entrepreneurship and active streets. <p>Rationale: COVID-19 made a lasting impact on how people work. Many employers now demand hybrid and flexible workspaces. Some employers may choose to reposition older industrial and commercial spaces in Midtown to cater to home-based businesses started during the pandemic, start-up entrepreneurs, and shared office spaces. Opportunities for small brick-and-mortar retail and services in key corridors can ensure that new businesses also have places to scale up and continue their life cycle in Midtown while modifying ground floor retail requirements that are not achievable in the market and not likely to create needed housing and desired services through mixed-use development.</p>	Medium	Lead: City of Missoula Support: MMA, MEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developer capacity and experience with these types of spaces might be limited in Missoula today. The MMA and partners can help to increase developers’ comfort with these types of projects, hold information sessions or talks with professionals for other places, or consider organizing a best practices trip to comparable jurisdictions.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>Equity Benefits: New types of employment spaces can provide opportunities for a broad range of small businesses and entrepreneurs, while reducing commuting time and expenses for residents. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings as live-work or creative office spaces can also contribute to the revitalization of disinvested areas by repurposing underutilized or vacant buildings, attracting businesses, and creating vibrant hubs for workers and residents.</p>			
Action 3.4 Support revitalization of well-designed buildings along Brooks Street			
<p>New development around future stops of the Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study project should be oriented to support street activation through design and mixed uses, such as retail and services. Not all existing buildings along Brooks Street warrant revitalization. Supporting the revitalization of those that are well designed and oriented to support pedestrian activation should be prioritized. This includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to fund the facade improvement program. The URD III will sunset in 2040 after the life of this plan, but may begin allocating funding to other programs. The timeline for the Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study project on Brooks is still uncertain. Planning now for continuation of the program into the future can help ensure there are resources for improving the streetscape. • Develop criteria for which existing builds are appropriate for revitalization. This criteria will ensure that building characteristics (i.e., building orientation, age, quality, etc.) help support the future of Midtown while improving the building for a new life. Simplify change of use standards to encourage reuse of existing buildings and promote reinvestment. • Simplify zoning standards to provide flexibility of food carts to be parked on commercial properties to provide short-term use of a property. <p>Rationale: To support reinvestment of vacant or underutilized property along Brooks Street, small programs such as facade improvement programs and changes to zoning can help revitalize old buildings into something new without doing a full redevelopment of the site.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Revitalizing Brooks Street as it undergoes the planning process for a new BRT route will support transit-oriented development and ensure a more active street environment for pedestrians and transit users. These changes may also foster greater opportunities for local businesses to locate in the corridor and provide visibility for underrepresented entrepreneurs.</p>	Long	<p>Lead: MMA, MRA</p> <p>Support: MEP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although there has been initial discussion about locations for future Brooks BRT stops, these are not yet finalized. As planning efforts progress for the BRT project, the MMA should track whether there are significant changes to the streetscape or station areas. • The URA District III provides some tenant improvement funding for storefronts in Midtown today. The district sunsets in 2040, but the MMA should proactively look for other sources of tenant improvement funding as a supplement to current resources and as sustainable options in coming decades.
Action 3.5 Encourage incremental infill and redevelopment on larger sites in auto-oriented corridors			
<p>The City should make the following considerations as part of regulatory changes to remove barriers for infill development that support goals of growing inward, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage outpad development on surface parking lots of large format commercial uses. Infill development can help to slowly utilize parking areas of large format commercial sites like those located along Reserve Street. When outpad development occurs, support orientation and design to improve street activation. • Support Mall economic activity and incremental redevelopment. Southgate Mall is a major regional destination that brings in visitors to Midtown. Allowing buildings at a variety of heights, including 	Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula</p> <p>Support: Southgate Mall, large commercial developers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpad development can begin with temporary uses, such as food carts, pop-up retail, or seasonal uses before progressing to permanent development. • See Action 4.10 for programmatic parking recommendation details.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>single-story buildings and a broader range of businesses, can support a more walkable pedestrian environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage creative parking solutions. Shared parking can help to reduce the need for large surface parking lots, allowing land to be used for outpad development for small retail or services. The City can encourage and promote this option and help to support creative solutions. <p>Rationale: Midtown's older building stock and commercially zoned land provide some of Missoula's most affordable options for retail spaces, offices, and services. New development could create pressure on entrepreneurs and small businesses in the area as rents increase. The MMA and its partners should prepare for these conditions by initiating programs to support businesses.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Redeveloping larger sites in currently auto-oriented corridors can attract new community-serving businesses and services to corridors like Reserve Street. This can help to incrementally reduce disparities in access to goods and services based on location or income for Midtown residents near these corridors, contribute to reducing environmental impacts to adjacent communities, and support the build-out of more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly environments.</p>			
Action 3.6 Encourage pedestrian street activation and business activities on South Avenue			
<p>The MMA should champion pilot events and help to transition South Avenue to a more vibrant and pedestrian-focused business corridor, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activate spaces in front of businesses through street furniture, parklet, and outdoor dining opportunities. ● Partner with local businesses to host pop-up events such as a farmers markets, street art painting, and cultural festival events. ● Market South Avenue as a festival street and seek opportunities to connect with major seasonal events in Midtown. Major placemaking opportunities exist to convert South Avenue between S Garfield and S Russell Streets. <p>Rationale: South Avenue's existing businesses and proximity to several destinations give it potential to be activated with several activities that leverage the existing businesses and low car volume.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Street activation can create more inclusive and accessible public spaces, promote social cohesion and community building, and increase opportunities for physical activity and recreation. This action can also stimulate local business development by increasing foot traffic and attracting visitors. South Avenue is already home to some small brick-and-mortar shops with relatively affordable leases.</p>	Short	<p>Lead: MMA</p> <p>Support: Midtown businesses, MRA, MEP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider low-cost options as a first step to ensure success for activating the street. ● Coordinate with the transportation department to facilitate easy permitting process for full closure of street. ● Coordinate with the City transportation department and MDT to allow temporary installation of street furniture and outdoor dining on public right of way.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
Action 3.7 Provide affordable entrepreneurship opportunities as part of redevelopment in the Midtown Junction area			
<p>As the MMA champions implementation of the Master Plan, it should actively seek opportunities for development that meets community needs in the Midtown Junction area. Attainable, ground floor retail space can allow entrepreneurs and local businesses to thrive and add to the vibrancy of the core area, while representing the community.</p> <p>Rationale: The Midtown Junction area is intended as a mixed-use area that will serve a variety of community needs in close proximity to transit and key destinations. It is expected to see the greatest intensity of new development near the intersection of Brooks, South, and Russell.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: The Midtown Junction area is envisioned as the heart of Midtown and will likely be a highly desirable area for businesses, visitors, and residents. Ensuring that entrepreneurs and local businesses are also able to benefit from new development is key for creating inclusive, vibrant spaces. Affordable storefront space for underrepresented entrepreneurs can help to bridge opportunity barriers for small businesses owned by people of color, immigrants, refugees, and other groups.</p>	Medium - Long	<p>Lead: MMA</p> <p>Support: MEP, Community-serving orgs, affordable housing developers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A physical business incubator space located in the Midtown Junction area could provide a rotating space for new entrepreneurs with high foot traffic for exposure. • Locating retail in regulated affordable housing is often difficult because of federal funding policies, so affordable commercial space would more likely be successful as a partnership with market-rate housing.

Framework Area 4: Mobility & Connectivity

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
Action 4.1 Provide safe and frequent pedestrian and bicycle crossings across Brooks Street			
<p>The City of Missoula and its partners should provide safe and frequent pedestrian and bicycle crossings across Brooks Street that provide short crossing distances, good visibility, and reduced conflicts with motor vehicles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an immediate step, prioritize improving pedestrian crossings on Brooks, both to the north and south of the Brooks/South/Russell intersection. While there are other parallel planning processes in Midtown, the timeline for large-scale investments like the Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study are not yet determined. To support the high need for pedestrian safety, the City should pursue near-term projects that improve safety on this corridor, which may include signals, beacons, lighting, signage, pavement markings, and other best practice strategies. • Over the medium- to long-term, coordinate with the ongoing Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study to implement safe crossings that align with plans for future transit and streetscape design along Brooks Street. Continue communication with the project team to understand timing and future street design, work toward mutual goals, and identify any funding opportunities for pedestrian improvements. • Consider closing, consolidating, and/or reorienting intersecting side streets to Brooks Street to support bicycle and pedestrian crossings. Reducing the number of crossing points along Brooks Street greatly reduces the chances of collisions with vehicles and improves overall safety for everyone. <p>Rationale: There is an urgent need to improve the pedestrian environment along Brooks Street and enhance safety for those who walk and bike across this key corridor. While the Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study will propose strategies to mitigate many of the existing issues along Brooks Street, it remains a major barrier to east-west movement in Midtown due to infrequent crossing opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists that residents describe as uncomfortable. Although many intersections along Brooks Street are signalized with marked crosswalks, the existing number of lanes, traffic volumes, and skewed orientation of Brooks Street reduces crosswalk visibility and requires safety countermeasures beyond just crosswalk markings. To address connectivity challenges across Brooks Street and allow greater cyclist and pedestrian access throughout Midtown, the City must look to improve existing crossings and build new crossings at key locations.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Improvements to pedestrian crossings on Brooks Street will increase safety for all users, particularly those who walk and bike to reach their destinations or connect to transit lines. Lower-income individuals and households are more likely to depend on active transportation to travel within or outside of the area. Accessibility is also a key consideration for community members with disabilities, older adults, and families with children. These improvements can reduce the number of pedestrian accidents and encourage greater cohesion throughout Midtown. With the anticipation of the Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study, it is also important that all community members are able to safely reach station areas to benefit from investments in transit.</p>	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula (Public Works & Mobility Department)</p> <p>Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)</p> <p>Support: Missoula Urban Transportation District (Mountain Line)</p> <p>MRA, MMA, MPO, MRA Board, Mountain Line Board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City should consult national best practices and standards to implement crosswalk enhancements, such as signals and beacons, lighting, and signing and pavement markings, to make crosswalks and crosswalk users more visible to drivers. • Installing or improving bicycle and pedestrian crossings signals, such as pedestrian hybrid beacons, can be funded through local sources such as the Missoula MPO Transportation Alternatives (TA) program.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
Action 4.2 Redesign the Brooks Street/Russell Street/South Avenue intersection to improve accessibility for all users			
<p>The City and its community partners should redesign the Brooks Street/Russell Street/South Avenue intersection to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle travel, network connectivity, and safety at the heart of Midtown. Steps to improve this critical area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the short term, prioritize increasing access and safety over large-scale design solutions. The final timeline for the Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study project is unknown, but the BRT detailed planning study is scheduled to be completed by Summer 2024. Implementation will be dependent on adequate capital funding and results of the study. Although it will have implications for this intersection, the City can begin to make improvements that improve accessibility in the timeline of the Midtown Master Plan and should consider solutions that calm traffic, enhance visibility, and improve the streetscape. • As it progresses, coordinate with the Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study to understand the long-term implications for redesigning this intersection. It is critical to begin making improvements as soon as possible to create a safer and more vibrant center of Midtown. However, longer-term capital investments should consider the recommendations of the Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study in determining the appropriate phasing and configuration. <p>Rationale: A virtual walk audit conducted as a part of the Midtown Master Plan revealed that while community members use the existing crosswalks available at this intersection, it is also confusing, feels unsafe, prioritizes motor vehicles, and is not accessible for all. The intersection is not only difficult to navigate and hostile for active transportation users, but it also represents a large gap in the existing bicycle network. The Brooks Street/Russell Street/South Avenue intersection has potential to be a key community gateway and connector. The City should focus on improving this major junction.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: The Master Plan envisions the intersection of Brooks, South, and Russell as a critical area of transformation for Midtown, which should be accessible for all community members. The redesign of this area should ensure that residents, workers, and visitors of all ages and abilities are able to safely navigate this intersection and benefit from new development in Midtown Junction.</p>	Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula (Public Works & Mobility Department)</p> <p>Support: Mountain Line, MRA, MMA, MPO, MRA Board, Mountain Line Board, MDT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the redesign of this intersection, the City should consult national best practices and standards to apply appropriate intersection design principles that prioritize pedestrian and bicycle movement and safety. • The Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study should offer the community the opportunity to articulate the specific configuration for the Brooks/South/Russell intersection that increases accessibility and supports active uses at the heart of Midtown.
Action 4.3 Advance the build-out of the planned greenway network throughout Midtown, including the Master Plan new connections			
<p>In the near term, the City should advance the build-out of the planned greenway network recommended in the Bicycle Facilities Master Plan and the Missoula Connect by redesigning planned greenway streets to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities. Specific steps to support this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin expansion of the planned network starting with the Schilling Street/McDonald Avenue connection recommended in this Master Plan, which introduces an important east-west connection across Brooks Street. As a near-term step, look for opportunities to pilot new improvements such as safety lights, striping, or other features at this crossing on Brooks. • In the medium term, advance the connection on Ernest Avenue from Grant Street through Playfair Park and other greenway connections. The Ernest Avenue connection introduces an 	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula (Public Works & Mobility Department)</p> <p>Support: MMA, MPO, City of Missoula (Planning and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the longer term when the planned network is implemented, the City should consider making all greenway streets tier 1 snow clear streets to ensure usability year-round.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>important east-west connection through the Lewis and Clark neighborhood, in accordance with the Bicycle Facilities Master Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Over time, expand the currently planned greenway network to include this Plan's new connections along low-volume and low-speed neighborhood streets to close gaps in the greenway system and provide a safe, secure, and convenient pedestrian and bicycle network. <p>Rationale: A reliable greenway network will connect Missoulians to key destinations across Midtown. Continuing to establish planned neighborhood greenways will connect community members to parks and trails, sidewalks, and the city's bicycle network, which will increase opportunities for biking and walking. The recommended greenway network presented in the Midtown Master Plan supplements the existing and planned neighborhood greenways to fill in gaps and create a comprehensive greenway system.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: The City of Missoula receives a high rate of resident complaints regarding high-speed, cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets. Neighborhood greenways use traffic calming to reduce vehicle speeds and cut-through traffic, making biking and walking safer and more enjoyable for all users. Greenways can also effectively improve active transportation across Midtown, including areas which have seen less investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.</p>		Engineering, Parks and Recreation), MDT	
Action 4.4 Apply Complete Streets planning, design, and operational principles to Midtown streets to better serve all users			
<p>Apply Complete Streets planning, design, and operational principles to Midtown's boundary and connector streets, including Reserve Street, Brooks Street, Russell Street, South Avenue, Mount Avenue/14th Street, Higgins Avenue, and Bancroft Street</p> <p>The City of Missoula is considering conducting a separate process of applying Complete Street principles to streets citywide. Through this process pedestrian, bicycle, and transit benefits should be evaluated with the trade-offs for vehicle operations. Extensive community engagement should focus on communicating the Complete Streets concepts and the associated trade-offs and evaluate how to balance the bike/ped improvements with the trade-offs.</p> <p>Rationale: The Midtown Master Plan aims to reduce or eliminate serious injury and fatal crashes. Complete Streets are streets that are designed to make travel safe for everyone, regardless of mode choice, and have been proven to improve safety on traffic-heavy streets with high rates of crashes and conflicts between bicyclists/pedestrians and motorists. Implementing Complete Streets in Midtown supports multimodal transportation goals outlined in Missoula's Community Climate Action Plan and Missoula Connect 2060 Long-Range Plan.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Implementing Complete Street principles across Midtown can provide safe and accessible transportation options and create pedestrian-friendly streetscapes that can improve overall health of residents and design of the built environment. In addition, Complete Streets prioritize the safety of all users, improving access to essential services and promoting physical activity. As a result, Complete Streets by design benefit population groups most vulnerable in our society, leading to more just, inclusive, and sustainable communities.</p>	Long	<p>Lead: City of Missoula (Public Works & Mobility Department)</p> <p>Support: City of Missoula (Planning and Engineering, Utilities Operations and Maintenance), MMA, MPO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build out Complete Streets in alignment with Complete Streets recommended in Missoula Connect. ● Build out Complete Streets in alignment with City of Missoula Resolution Number 8098 (Complete Streets Policy) ● Work with the City of Missoula to create a Complete Streets Toolkit to complement the street typology plan. ● Align with the placemaking plan in Action 6.3.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
Action 4.5 Prioritize improvements to the pedestrian environment around the core of Midtown			
<p>In and around the Brooks Street/Russell Street/South Avenue intersection, incorporate countermeasures to lower vehicle volumes and speeds, attract pedestrian activity, and cultivate a vibrant pedestrian environment.</p> <p>Rationale: With the current extent of missing sidewalks and an overall lack of sufficient pedestrian infrastructure, Midtown has been unable to attract and maintain pedestrian activity. Especially in areas near the Brooks Street/Russell Street/South Avenue intersection, which serves as the most prominent north-south-east-west connector for transportation network users, traffic calming is necessary to generate pedestrian activity and encourage mode shift.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: The core area is envisioned as the center of transformation in Midtown. Integrating improvements to the pedestrian environment is critical to supporting an active and vibrant center and ensuring that all community members benefit from new investment.</p>	Short	<p>Lead: City of Missoula (Public Works & Mobility Department)</p> <p>Support: MMA, MRA MPO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with the ongoing Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study. Prioritize increasing low-cost countermeasures over large-scale design solutions in the short-term. MRA has been (and should continue to be) a partner in building out the sidewalk network in Midtown within the urban renewal area in areas with adequate rights of way or where it was possible to obtain easements. MRA should coordinate with the Public Works and Mobility Department to identify and build sidewalks to standards to achieve the vision for the public realm for Midtown.
Action 4.6 Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety at critical greenway network crossings			
<p>The City and its partners should improve pedestrian and bicycle safety at critical greenway network crossings to improve safety and accessibility throughout Midtown. Crossings along Russell Street, 14th Street, Mount Avenue, South Avenue, and Brooks Street should be a priority as the greenway network expands as a part of Action 4.3.</p> <p>Rationale: Action 4.6 is necessary to support and supplement actions 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3. A successful greenway network that encourages people to walk and bike is reliant on safe points of access that connect users to popular destinations and other active transportation facilities.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Improvements to greenway network crossings can help to ensure that all community members, regardless of their mode of transportation, can safely access and navigate important active transportation corridors. Creating safer crossings in areas with high pedestrian and bicycle traffic reduces the risk of accidents and injuries, which disproportionately affect vulnerable populations like people with disabilities, seniors, and youth. Enhancing safety at these crossings promotes equitable access to greenway networks, allowing all community members to enjoy the benefits of active transportation.</p>	Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula (Public Works & Mobility Department)</p> <p>Support: MMA, MPO, City of Missoula (Planning and Engineering, Parks and Recreation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult national best practices and standards to apply appropriate intersection design principles that prioritize pedestrian and bicycle movement and safety.
Action 4.7 Enhance travel and generate pedestrian and bicycle activity along and around the Bitterroot Trail			
<p>The City Parks and Recreation Department along with other agencies should work to enhance travel and generate pedestrian and bicycle activity along and around the Bitterroot Trail with lighting, signage, wayfinding, placemaking, and active and passive recreation opportunities for all ages.</p> <p>Rationale: The Bitterroot Trail is a major recreation destination in Midtown, connecting people across the city and region. In support of this Plan's goal to help Midtown increase the number of walking and bicycling trips, enhancing the environment along the Bitterroot Trail to be and feel safer will generate more active modes of travel.</p>	Short	<p>Lead City of Missoula (Parks & Recreation)</p> <p>Support City of Missoula (Bicycle and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align with trail system improvements in Action 5.1. Align with the placemaking plan in Action 6.3.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>Equity Benefits: The Bitterroot Trail is an important public resource for Midtown residents and people across Missoula who use it to travel and recreate, including households without cars who may be dependent on active transportation modes. These improvements can improve safety, integrate inclusive wayfinding, and benefit a variety of users.</p>		<p>Pedestrian Office), Neighborhood associations</p>	
Action 4.8 Expand pedestrian and bicycle access to the Central Park district			
<p>City departments should work collaboratively over the medium term to expand pedestrian and bicycle access to the Central Park area. As a multiagency facilities plan is developed as a part of Action 5.3, upgrading existing pathways and building new trail connections to Central Park should also be a priority.</p> <p>Rationale: As the Central Park concept advances, connectivity to and through the district will become vital for mobility on the west side of Midtown. Missoula should prioritize bicycle and pedestrian facility investments surrounding Central Park to ensure seamless connections and access to the area.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Central Park is a critical destination for major events, social gatherings, and recreation opportunities for people who live, work, and play in Midtown. Accessing the area today can be more challenging for people without cars and people with mobility impairments. Making improvements to the pedestrian environment can help ensure that people are able to safely and easily use active transportation to access Central Park.</p>	Medium	<p>Lead City of Missoula (Parks & Recreation)</p> <p>Support City of Missoula (Bicycle and Pedestrian Office)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in building out the trail network surrounding Central Park. Align with the greenway buildout plan in Actions 4.3, beginning with Ernest Avenue. Align with multiagency facilities plan in Action 5.3.
Action 4.9 Improve and expand Mountain Line Transit service			
<p>Missoula's Urban Transportation District should seek to increase the frequency of Mountain Line transit service in Midtown as new development is anticipated to increase demand. In the short term, this should include upgrading transit stops, and ensuring first- and last-mile connectivity to transit stops. Current studies are underway where the City and Mountain Line are conducting the Brooks Street BRT detailed planning study to examine how to implement BRT which includes 15-minute headways on Brooks Street; the study is expected to be completed by Summer 2024. Over the medium and long term, Mountain Line should continue to monitor ridership to make decisions on expansion.</p> <p>Rationale: As Missoula continues to grow and develop, transit service must evolve to support that growth and increased travel demands. Missoula must consider where fast-growing areas are, where transit needs to be, and determine how it should connect to the rest of the transit system.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: By providing more reliable and frequent transit service, residents can more easily access essential services, reduce transportation costs, and encourage more residents to use public transportation rather than using a car. Upgrading transit stops ensures that they are accessible by all residents, especially those with mobility impairment who might use an electric wheelchair or other devices. This ensures that there are no physical barriers that would limit them from accessing public transportation.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Lead: Missoula Urban Transportation District (Mountain Line)</p> <p>Support: MMA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the short term, upgrade bus stops to improve rider comfort. Evaluate existing ridership to inform changes to route alignments and frequency. Prioritize building accessible routes to and from bus stops.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>Action 4.10 Implement parking management practices</p> <p>In the short term, the City's Parking Commission should prioritize coordinating district management in Midtown that measures performance and demand. This should include gathering additional stakeholder input and a sounding board process with the community.</p> <p>Once this is established, implement control of the on-street parking system. Identify opportunities for shared use parking in the existing off-street supply and continue measurement of performance and demand throughout Midtown. This monitoring should continue throughout the life of the Master Plan and support analysis of future capacity, capital planning, and financing.</p> <p>Rationale: Time must be taken to establish a formal, routine, and best practices approach to parking regulation and management in Midtown. Parking plays a critical role in its influence on urban form, density, connectivity, and the successful use of alternative modes as a reasonable option to drive alone, thus reducing the demand for built parking supplies. Moving to consolidate district management, establishing clear and consensus-based policy and goal priorities, measurement of parking activity, and daily management of the public supply will serve as a foundational support system for the Midtown vision.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Parking management practices can be designed to promote equity by considering the needs and accessibility requirements of all community members and the potential cost burden of paid parking on low-income communities. In addition to meeting ADA requirements, parking infrastructure and facilities should consider universal design principles. Implementation should identify equity-oriented fee structures that offer reduced rates or exemptions for specific populations such as seniors, residents with disabilities, and low-income households.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Lead: City of Missoula Parking Commission</p> <p>Support: MMA, a newly established Midtown Parking Work Group/Advisory Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At present all on-street parking in the Midtown study zone is unregulated. All off-street parking is in private ownership. No data is available to determine actual parking demand within the Midtown District (by area or subzone), regardless of land use type.

Framework Area 5: Parks & Open Space

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
Action 5.1 Make improvements to the trail system connecting to the Bitterroot Trail			
<p>As part of the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Comprehensive Plan Update, Missoula Parks and Recreation should identify opportunities for increased access to the Bitterroot Trail from adjacent neighborhoods. This would include designing and building additional trail access points on the Bitterroot Trail.</p> <p>Rationale: The Bitterroot Trail is an important asset for local and regional recreation and connectivity in Midtown. Currently, access to the trail is intermittent and does not have sufficient connections for cyclists and pedestrians moving to, from, and within Midtown.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Leveraging the Bitterroot Trail and the surrounding trail system to the Bitterroot Trail can provide improved access to amenities, such as parks, stores, schools, the Fairgrounds, and other essential services that can be accessible by walking or biking. This improves mobility and reduces disparities among different socioeconomic groups. Completing the trail system throughout Midtown can also encourage physical activity, leading to improved health outcomes, particularly for residents who may not have access to other forms of exercise.</p>	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula (Parks & Recreation)</p> <p>Support: City of Missoula (Bicycle and Pedestrian Office), MMA, MRA, Ped/bike advocacy groups, Neighborhood associations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signage/wayfinding could be a longer-term addition that encourages better navigation
Action 5.2 Create more park access in the Franklin to the Fort area			
<p>The Missoula Parks and Recreation department should define standards for smaller neighborhood park facilities (1 to 3 acres), which would include standards for the location and adjacent uses to ensure the parks adequately reach nearby residents. This process will likely occur as part of the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Comprehensive Plan Update and should include engagement with residents in the Franklin to the Fort neighborhood to further understand specific needs. The plan should include fundings sources for these types of parks. In partnership with the MMA and the Urban Renewal District III, look for opportunities where there is vacant and or available land that could be purchased for the creation of park space.</p> <p>Once the standards are set, a real estate broker could help to identify potential properties that would be suitable and available for future parks. Then the City would acquire the property, design, and build the parks.</p> <p>Rationale: The existing conditions evaluation and feedback from the community revealed that the Franklin to the Fort neighborhood has a deficit of park space. Community members have expressed a desire for smaller parks scattered throughout the neighborhood.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Equal access to parks is important for ensuring that all community members have a high quality of life. Parks offer many benefits, including community gathering spaces, opportunities for active recreation, and mitigation of urban heat island effects. However, not all areas of Midtown have equal access to parks and green spaces today. Analysis of park space and feedback from residents of the Franklin to the Fort area indicated that there is a deficiency of open green space in the area. Improving access to parks for</p>	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula (Parks and Recreation)</p> <p>Support: Franklin to the Fort Neighborhood Association, MMA, MRA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These recommendations for Midtown should be integrated with the City's upcoming Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Comprehensive Plan Update, expected to start in 2023. This extensive effort can explore implications for access and impacts across Missoula's park system. Work through existing standards and address the lack of a standard for smaller parks, given the expressed need for these facilities. Consider ways to develop efficient maintenance plans, given concerns raised about upkeep costs for smaller parks. Look to locate parks in close proximity to the greenway system to encourage access in areas with safe

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>Franklin to the Fort can address this issue and should be done in tandem with anti-displacement strategies to ensure that residents in the area today see these benefits.</p>			<p>transportation connections for cyclists and pedestrians.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban renewal funding from the URD III could potentially be a resource for property acquisition and park development.
Action 5.3 Refine a multiagency facilities plan for the Central Park concept and engage in a planning process for Playfair Park.			
<p>Given the various ownership of the properties between Russell Street, South Avenue, Bancroft Street, and Pattee Creek Drive, the Missoula Parks and Recreation Department should convene a partnership organization to evolve the Central Park concept. This area includes key destinations in Midtown, including Playfair Park, the Missoula County Fairgrounds, and Russell Elementary and Sentinel High School. It provides opportunities for improved active transportation connections, recreation, tourism industry development, and establishing an identity for Midtown.</p> <p>The process of developing a facilities plan should include working with the Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee to develop an interpretive signage theme for this combined open space area and conversations around the "Central Park" name. This will offer an opportunity to recognize the cultural heritage that has existed in the area as well as envision the future role of the site within the evolution of Midtown. The multiagency and stakeholder organization should develop a facilities plan that includes a collective vision and goals that align with the Midtown Master Plan. It should address approaches to elements specific to this open space area, including transportation, access, shared parking, safety and security, amenities, site improvements, and other program elements. The group should identify opportunities to engage with the community to seek feedback specific to the programming of this area and refine the vision.</p> <p>Once the plan is developed, the City and County will work on implementation of the plan and identify funding sources. The City should also align the vision for this area with the development of the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Comprehensive Plan Update.</p> <p>Rationale: The Central Park concept has continued to evolve beyond the Midtown Master Plan process. Given that it involves agencies at the City and County level and presents opportunities for public investment, it should have a separate, more detailed vision and plan. Important discussions about future placemaking and design of this area in coordination with the Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee will also extend beyond the timing of the Midtown Master Plan. Further work and partnership will help to further refine the future of this area.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: This action intends to make Central Park an accessible area for people across Midtown to gather and recreate. Creating a multiagency facility plan should include participation with the Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee as well as other community-based organizations to help steer the direction of this central resource for the area to be an inclusive gathering place.</p>	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula (Parks and Recreation)</p> <p>Support: Missoula County Fairgrounds, Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term considerations: As an initial step in developing a multiagency facilities plan, the City should engage in a planning process for Playfair Park to the southwest of the Fairgrounds area. This has potential to be a key connection through the Central Park area, which serves a variety of functions for the community. Connect this area to the greenway system for a complete transportation system with safe crossings to and from Central Park. Medium-term considerations: Consider the potential of the NW corner of the property as an opportunity to contribute to Midtown Junction and the future solution to this intersection through programming, new buildings, etc. Pay special attention to the frontage along South Avenue and look for opportunities for interfacing with the public realm (e.g., existing fencing restricts access).

Framework Area 6: Character Areas & Design

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
Action 6.1 Integrate Indigenous history and culture in new projects			
<p>A crucial step in this action is to continue to foster a relationship between the City and the Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee through coordination that respects tribal processes and cultural significance. This may include discussion prior to identification of new projects to figure out what the Culture Committee would like to see happen in Midtown and for the City to facilitate that implementation when appropriate.</p> <p>Implementation may take the form of looking for opportunities to express indigenous history and culture through design or interpretive elements, art, storytelling, etc. This may also look different for the range of new projects in Midtown and will ideally transform existing systems to incorporate Tribal involvement in a meaningful way.</p> <p>Rationale: The Midtown Master Plan process included targeted outreach to the Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee, specifically for input on tribal history and significance for the January workshop event. The project team and community identified the importance of continued partnership and understanding how to meaningfully address indigenous history and future impact in Midtown.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: A key benefit of integrating indigenous history and culture in new projects around Midtown is the honoring and preservation of the Séliš-Qłispé culture for generations to come. In addition, it can further promote inclusivity and diversity, enhance community engagement, provide economic opportunities, reconcile past injustices, and overall strengthen relationships between the Séliš-Qłispé and the community of Midtown.</p>	Medium - Long	<p>Lead: City of Missoula</p> <p>Support: Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee MMA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes and timelines for working with Indigenous communities will look different and require different priorities than typical planning or development processes. Therefore, the execution of this action item may take a different form than other actions in the Master Plan. Look to develop a relationship that evolves the Midtown vision in a meaningful way and addresses the needs of the Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee. Elevate the importance of setting aside adequate funding for identified projects. Incorporate efforts from Action 6.3
Action 6.2 Encourage active ground floor uses around future BRT stops and other key nodes			
<p>The City should consider short and long-term potential for activation of ground floor uses. In the short term, this could include temporary installations (e.g., pop-ups, food carts, etc.) to activate key nodes while waiting for development to occur. Also in the short term, the Our Missoula Code Reform project should address code updates that encourage active ground floors, while also allowing for flexibility that encourages development. A balance of strategic but scaled requirements for ground floor uses in transformative areas can help to ensure active street environments without impeding feasibility for vertical mixed-use projects.</p> <p>Rationale: The City and MMA should continue to be actively engaged in the BRT design process to represent the Midtown vision described in the Master Plan. This includes assistance with identifying key properties near BRT station areas and other key nodes. Active ground floors should provide access to uses with locations relative to active transportation routes, including the greenway system and crossing locations along Brooks.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Active ground floor environments contribute to safer and overall improved experiences along streets and in the public realm. These improvements promote a sense of community, create</p>	<p>Short (code updates/BRT planning)/</p> <p>Medium/Long (actual development)</p>	<p>Lead: City of Missoula, Our Missoula Code Reform Project Team</p> <p>Support: MMA, MRA, Brooks Street Project Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage active ground floor uses without restricting redevelopment and offer flexibility. Consider other form-based code elements that would contribute to active ground floors.

Project Description & Rationale	Phasing	Roles	Considerations (Next Steps, Funding, etc.)
<p>opportunities for social interaction, and provide essential goods and services in easily accessible locations. For residents with limited access to transportation, providing these amenities in easily accessible locations can help to reduce disparities in access to resources and improve quality of life.</p>			
Action 6.3 Design a placemaking theme for Midtown			
<p>The City should develop a streetscape plan and wayfinding standards for Midtown to advance the vision in the Master Plan. This includes incorporating the public realm and the vision for open spaces that are part of concurrent planning efforts, such as the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Comprehensive Plan Update. The plan should include a gateway design, updated signage code, a public art plan, and identifying funding for the improvements. Preserving structures preserve the story of that place. Historic resources can help support the creation of a placemaking identity in Midtown. The process should seek additional input from the Midtown community about what they would like to see in this plan and what they would like the design elements to look like.</p> <p>Rationale: A key component of bringing the vision for Midtown to life is in cohesive design elements that identify Midtown's character. A placemaking theme can be achieved through both temporary (in the short term) and permanent installations.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: Placemaking is an important way to express the identity, history, and character of the community. A newly designed theme for Midtown should intentionally incorporate the experiences of Indigenous people, people of color, immigrants, refugees, and other groups within the community who may not be heard. Partnership with the Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee, culturally specific service providers, and community-based organizations should be a critical part of developing a theme to represent all of Midtown.</p>	Short -Medium	<p>Lead: City of Missoula</p> <p>Support: City of Missoula (Parks and Recreation), MMA, Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee, community-based organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align with Action 6.2 to bring temporary elements and energy around placemaking elements. Align with Action 5.5. for placemaking components specific to the Festival Street. Learn from Downtown efforts to activate spaces and develop a placemaking theme. Strive for authentic representation of existing Midtown culture that reflects community feedback.
Action 6.4 Implement activation of the Festival Street concept on South Avenue			
<p>To keep the momentum of the vision for Midtown going, the City should look for ways to provide short-term activation of the Festival Street concept. This could include temporary closures of South Avenue for events sponsored by MMA or other local groups, particularly on the west side of Brooks. Initially, this could also be done through a pilot project along one block or section of South Avenue through a short-term installation. Partnerships with organizations like Better Block could help to design and launch these ideas.</p> <p>Rationale: A core component of the Master Plan framework is transformation of the area defined as Midtown Junction. Part of this transformation includes development of a Festival Street along South Avenue that bolsters the placemaking opportunities in this core area.</p> <p>Equity Benefits: The Festival Street concept is intended as a way to celebrate the culture and people of Midtown through street activation programs and events. It is an opportunity to integrate culturally specific celebrations of the diverse community Midtown. Working with culturally specific organizations and local businesses should be an important part of implementing this action.</p>	Short - Medium	<p>Lead: MMA</p> <p>Support: City of Missoula, Community organizations, Midtown businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align with the placemaking plan in Action 6.3. Implementation will come in phases, with temporary installations leading the way for permanent solutions. Keeping the momentum for this concept is key.

Glossary of Terms

Area Median Income (AMI) - The U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually produces a median family income to determine affordability thresholds for a given metro area. Affordable housing projects' income limits, rent limits, loans, and other characteristics are based on this calculation.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) - High-capacity, frequent bus transit that delivers fast and efficient service that may include dedicated lanes, busways, traffic signal priority, and station areas.

Complete Streets - Streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users, including drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders of all ages and abilities.

Green Infrastructure - Infrastructure that filters and absorbs stormwater where it falls, including a network of different features which can include open park space, street trees, rain gardens, green roofs, and other elements.

Greenway - Streets which intentionally prioritize bicycle and pedestrian safety that typically include traffic calming features and connections to open space.

Missing Middle Housing - Missing middle housing refers to medium-density housing like duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, courtyard style apartments, cottage clusters, or accessory dwelling units. These types of housing developments were largely outlawed in the post-war period in favor of single-family housing units. Recent efforts call for relegalizing missing middle housing to increase density and affordability in highly walkable, opportunistic neighborhoods.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) - Intentional development located within walking distance of frequent transit networks (like BRT lines). Typically intended to create compact, mixed-use communities near transit where people enjoy easy access to jobs and services.

Urban Renewal District - An area deemed blighted by the City Council where economic growth has been impaired and there is a lack of public and private investment. These areas have defined boundaries included in an Urban Renewal District plan adopted by Council.

Appendix B: Opportunities / Challenges Report & Appendices

Opportunities and Challenges Midtown Master Plan

December 2022

Prepared for: Missoula Midtown Association

Draft Report

ECONorthwest
ECONOMICS • FINANCE • PLANNING

SERA

TOOLE
DESIGN

 **WGMGROUP**

RWC

 **bigsky**
pr

This page intentionally blank

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS	9
CREATING A COMPLETE AND CONNECTED MIDTOWN	11
OVERCOMING DEVELOPMENT BARRIERS	22
STABILIZING AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXISTING BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS	28
PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC ACTION AND INVESTMENT	33

This page intentionally blank

What Are the Key Opportunities and Challenges Facing Midtown?

Midtown is an Essential Part of Missoula's Community and Economy

Midtown is a large, centrally located area of Missoula with a prime location along major corridors which include Brooks Street, S Reserve Street, S Russell Street, and Mt Ave. About one in five Missoulians live in Midtown, and nearly a quarter of Missoula's workforce is employed in the area. Midtown is a key regional hub that attracts people to work, shop, and recreate at its regional destinations like Southgate Mall and the Missoula County Fairgrounds.



Source: SERA Architects

Midtown Faces Increasing Development Pressures

Midtown's older building stock, low rents, and large underdeveloped parcels are contributing to housing and commercial development pressures in the area. Vacancies are low for virtually every type of property, including retail, office, and multifamily housing. Rents currently remain relatively affordable compared to Missoula overall.



Source: ABC FOX Montana

However, very low vacancies are likely to put upward pressures on rent absent new construction of commercial space and residential units in Midtown. According to data from the Missoula Organization of REALTORS, the median home price has been rising quickly since 2019, increasing 74 percent by 2022 (year-to-date). While incomes are on the rise in Missoula overall (increasing 17 percent between 2010 and 2020 when adjusted for inflation), incomes in Midtown remain relatively lower. As of 2020, Midtown households made \$7,000 less than Missoula households overall.

Midtown Needs a Connected and Complete Vision to Reach Its Full Potential.

The existing development patterns in Midtown have made it difficult for the area to form a single, overarching identity. Midtown now is a diverse collection of subareas that comprise different uses and development patterns, but they are fragmented and difficult to navigate. Visitors and residents travel by car to well-known destination hubs for a specific purpose but often abruptly leave Midtown afterwards. The lack of activity clusters reinforces the auto-centric environment and presents the need for more intentional placemaking, improvements to crossings on major streets, and potential investment in transit infrastructure to address these challenges.

What are the challenges for a complete and connected vision?

- Community members want Midtown to feel more like a destination, with a sense of place and identity that it lacks now.
- There is good access to Midtown, especially by car, but travel within Midtown is difficult.
- Bike and pedestrian networks are disconnected and, in some places, non-existent.
- Transit service lacks first and last mile connections.
- Midtown's surface parking lots reduce its visual quality and walkability.
- Midtown lacks a track record for managing parking.

Midtown Could Better Align Development with Community Preferences.

Community engagement for the Midtown Master Plan process and citywide findings from the Our Missoula Growth Policy have shown strong interest in a range of housing types (including “missing middle housing” like duplexes, triplexes, and cottage clusters), mixed-use development, and small-scale, neighborhood-serving businesses. However, existing development standards in the city code, like minimum unit size and parking requirements can make it difficult for developers to create these options. Uncertain review processes, long review timelines, and an unpredictable process do not currently enable the infill options that many envision for Midtown to be built by small or local mid-sized developers.

What are the challenges for aligning development with community desires?

- Speculative new development is challenging to build for small and mid-sized developers.
- Midtown lacks accommodations for visitors.
- Midtown's zoning is too rigid with limited flexibility to attract infill development and a variety of housing types.
- Cumbersome permitting processes and variances decrease developer certainty and limit infill development.
- Aging water infrastructure could create challenges for future development.

Midtown Should Stabilize Existing Businesses and Provide Equitable Opportunities.

Midtown businesses range from large anchor retail stores like Cabela's and established regional centers like Southgate Mall to smaller local storefront businesses like those along South Avenue or tucked between commercial centers. Low vacancy rates and rising demand indicate that Midtown is on the cusp of change. Midtown can pursue strategies now to stabilize conditions and prevent displacement for its legacy businesses while allowing equitable opportunities for new businesses at different scales.

What are the challenges for stabilizing and expanding businesses?

- Commercial vacancies are low in Midtown, but few new spaces are being developed.
- Growing development pressures could displace legacy businesses.
- New development and investments in Midtown could displace current residents.

Opportunities Exist for Midtown to Overcome Barriers in the Master Plan.

As part of the master planning process, Midtown can address existing barriers ahead of fundamental changes anticipated in the area. Midtown’s growing population, large-scale investments planned in public transportation, citywide code reform, and rising demand for new types of commercial and residential spaces can all be part of a strategic effort for the area to leverage its assets and direct development to reflect the community’s desires. This report details the critical challenges that Midtown faces today and the opportunities it has to address them.

What Opportunities Does Midtown Have to...		
Create a Complete and Connected Vision?	Align Development with Community Preferences?	Stabilize and Create Equitable Opportunities for Businesses and Residents?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create “complete neighborhoods” ▪ Leverage subareas to create unique placemaking opportunities ▪ Improve connections across major streets and large blocks ▪ Center equity in transportation ▪ Expand the bicycle network onto the low-stress street network ▪ Support walking and biking by focusing on shorter trips ▪ Align land use with new transit investments ▪ Determine how shared micromobility may fit in Midtown ▪ Increase flexibility of on-site parking requirements ▪ Be proactive about parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Align zoning with broader policies ▪ Provide development incentives to increase development feasibility ▪ Leverage existing amenities to grow tourism and tourism-related development ▪ Implement simplified and flexible zoning districts ▪ Increase flexibility for community-preferred uses ▪ Create stronger affordable housing incentives ▪ Prioritize water main replacements and extensions in the near-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate strategies with the Missoula Economic Partnership ▪ Leverage urban renewal area funding for property reinvestment ▪ Join forces to market Midtown ▪ Support small business assistance programs ▪ Mitigate impacts of development construction ▪ Explore homeownership support and shared community resources ▪ Pursue low-cost housing preservation ▪ Explore community ownership models ▪ Create live-work and flex spaces

Introduction

Project Overview

Midtown is not an area that is broken and needs fixing. It is unfinished. The purpose of this Master Plan is to help Midtown evolve into a complete and essential part of Missoula.

The Missoula Midtown Association (MMA) and community partners are seeking cohesion around a vision for changes in Midtown. Through 2022 and 2023, the MMA is working with the ECONorthwest team and residents to develop a vision and Master Plan. Although Missoula is growing, Midtown residents are not yet benefitting from this growth to the same degree as residents in other areas.

As part of the Midtown Master Plan process, the area can define how to catalyze future investment in a way that reflects Midtown's values and meets the needs and future vision of the community. The Master Plan will guide the City's infrastructure investments and outline where private development could occur to create a place where residents can live, play, and work in Midtown.

The purpose of this Opportunities and Challenges report is to highlight key opportunities and challenges for facilitating more housing, employment, and transportation options. This document summarizes:

- Who lives and works in Midtown
- Current land uses and constraints
- The urban form and character that defines Midtown
- Market conditions and development opportunities in Midtown
- Infrastructure needs, including deficiencies in transportation infrastructure and public utilities
- Opportunities and obstacles to development in the area

Past and Current Planning Work

The Midtown Master Plan draws upon many previous planning studies, referenced throughout our existing conditions work. Although not all of these previous plans directly call out Midtown as a focus area, they contain key recommendations that serve as a basis for our understanding of current conditions. Among others detailed in Appendix A, these include:

- **Brooks Street Corridor TOD Infrastructure Study (2020):**
A concept design plan for transit-oriented development on Brooks.
- **Brooks Street Corridor Study (2016):**
Visioning for Brooks Street following new development projects and anticipated transit changes.

The City is also spearheading several projects in tandem with the Midtown Master Plan. The plan should anticipate this upcoming work and provide guidance that leaves room for more extensive engagement and analysis. These concurrent projects are:

- **Our Missoula: Code Reform Project:**
A process for overhauling the zoning code guided by the Growth Policy.
- **Transforming the Brooks Street Corridor:**
Federally funded advancement of the Brooks Street visioning and conceptual work.

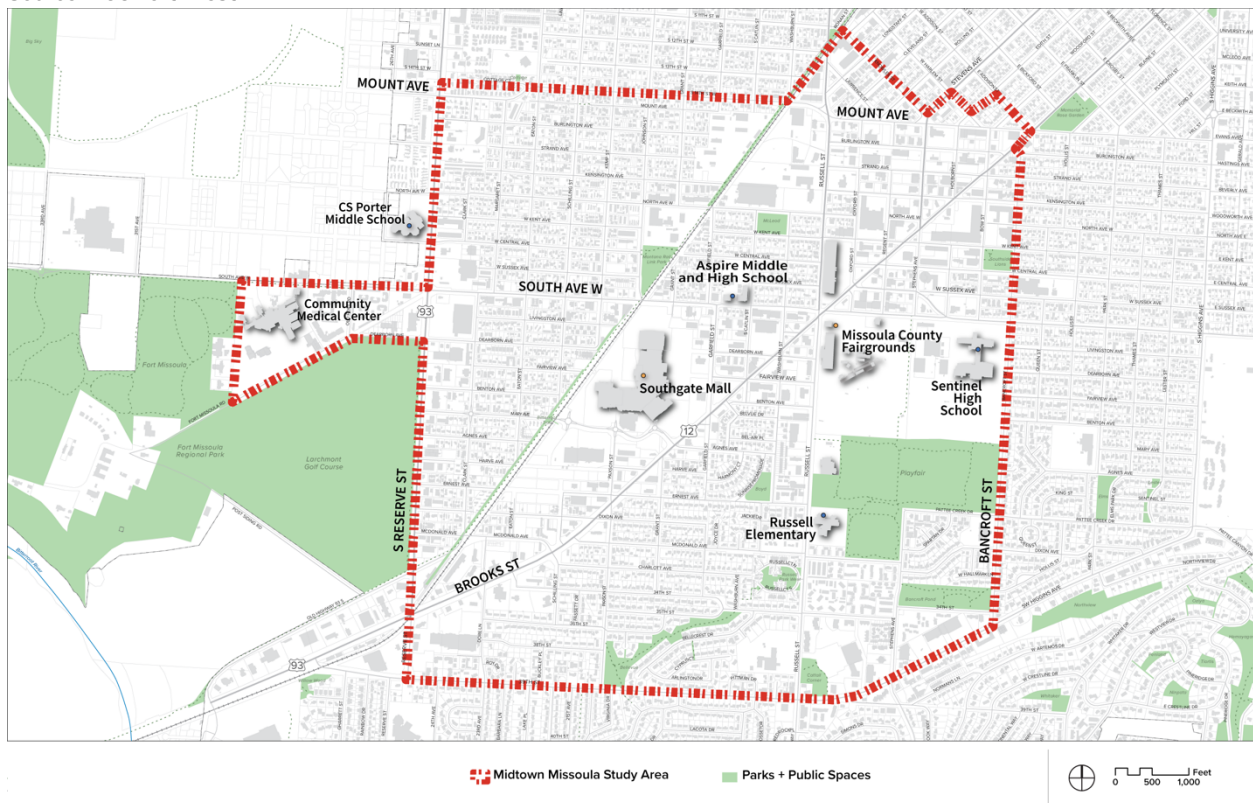
Midtown Study Area

Anchored by the Southgate Mall, Midtown is home to an abundance of retail and office businesses concentrated along Brooks Street and over 14,000 residents across four neighborhoods: Lewis and Clark, Rose Park, Franklin to the Fort, and Southgate Triangle.

The study area as illustrated in Exhibit 1 is bounded by Bancroft Street to the east, 39th Street to the south, S. Reserve Street to the west, and Mount Avenue and 14th Street to the north. Brooks Street and the Bitterroot Trail bisect the study area diagonally and serve as major transportation arterials for automobiles (on Brooks Street) and pedestrians and cyclists (on the Bitterroot Trail). Midtown is a large area of the city situated south of the Clark Fork River covering approximately 3.2 square miles, or about 9 percent of the city's total land area.

Exhibit 1. Midtown Study Area and Context

Source: ECONorthwest



Community Engagement

Community engagement has been a collaborative effort between the project team and Midtown's grassroots community engagement coordinator, Rachel Huff-Doria. With Rachel's expertise, the project team has been able to conduct engagement with the public and special population groups. The team was able to intentionally reach population groups that often don't have a seat at the decision-making table through events with youth at local schools, organizations for refugee and immigrant families, and the Missoula Food Bank, amongst others. The project team took on an intentional principle to meet people where they are for engagement opportunities. The team held tabling events at major events and set up outside popular hubs to share information and gain insight on community concerns and priorities.

Engagement Methods

Extensive community engagement has been an integral part of the team's existing conditions work. Throughout the document we reference these methods that informed our findings about opportunities and constraints in Midtown. These include:

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Coordination with Midtown Community Guides
- Community Visioning Workshop
- Online Survey
- Tabling at Events

Using a variety of engagement opportunities, both in person and online, the project team reached hundreds of individuals as well as key community leaders and organizations to discuss the opportunities and challenges in Midtown. The Community Vision Summary (Appendix B) provides details of the takeaways from each engagement activity throughout this phase of the Master Plan.

The team's engagement process through the Existing Conditions phase of the Midtown Master Plan focused on understanding how residents, workers, and visitors experience Midtown today and what direction they hope to see for Midtown in the future.

To frame these conversations at the outset, the project team also discussed a common understanding of equitable development and the implications for engagement efforts, which resulted in a working definition used by the team through these different methods.

What is Equitable Development?

An approach for meeting the needs of underserved communities through policies and programs that reduce disparities while fostering places that are healthy and vibrant; An effective place-based action for creating strong and livable communities; Clear expectations that the outcomes from development need to be responsive to underserved populations and vulnerable groups; In the process, lower-income residents and people of color are successfully guiding the changes that occur within their communities rather than reacting to them.¹

¹ US EPA, "Equitable Development and Environmental Justice," April 13, 2015, <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/equitable-development-and-environmental-justice>.

Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups

One-on-one interviews and targeted focus groups allowed the team to speak with **over 60 stakeholders**, including representatives from public agencies, city government, nonprofit organizations, business owners, landowners, developers, and residents working in retail and health and social services.

The grassroots engagement team also identified organizational stakeholders who represent or work with individuals from groups who are most at risk of being impacted by and underrepresented and/or underserved due to historical exclusion and barriers to access. This includes people who are houseless, people who are at risk of being displaced, Native Americans, tribal communities, resettled refugees, people with disabilities, people living in areas with least access to services, people with lower incomes, people who rent, families with young children, and seniors.

These conversations gave the team insight into the status of economic development, housing, transportation, infrastructure, urban design, and where opportunities are present for the future.

Visioning Workshop and Online Survey

Over 125 community members (including children) attended the Midtown Visioning Workshop held at the Missoula YMCA in September 2022. This event included a series of interactive stations that covered issues and opportunities related to neighborhood destinations, housing, commercial development, urban design, transportation, parking, and concurrent projects in the city. Attendees had the opportunity to share their thoughts and ask questions with representatives from the MMA, our team, and the city.



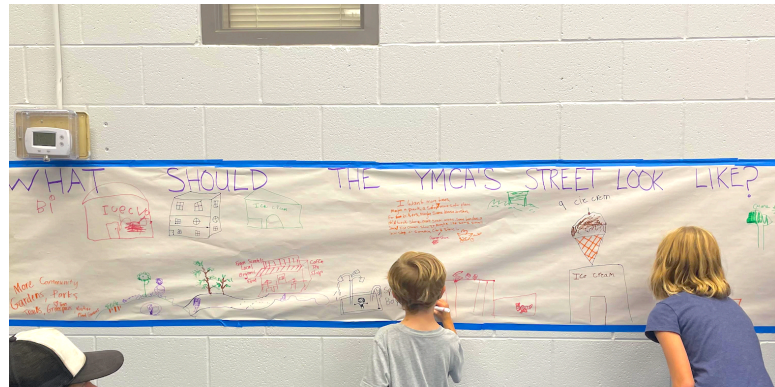
Participants at the Midtown Visioning Workshop.
Source: Midtown Missoula Association

An ongoing online survey to complement this event allowed for people who live, work, and visit Midtown to participate virtually.

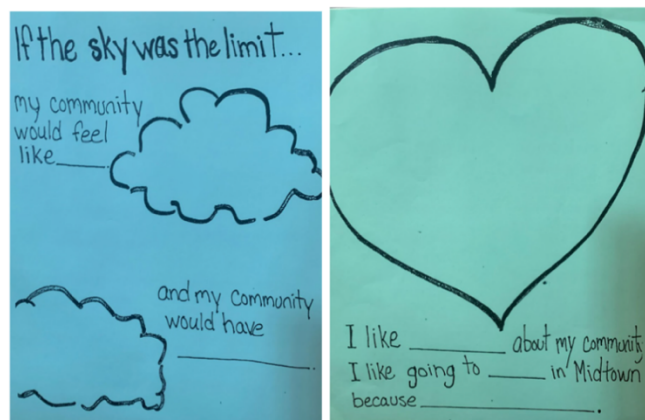
The event also included a children's activity held in tandem, where young community members could draw their ideas and vision for the future of Midtown.

Coordination with Community Guides

A group of fifteen volunteer Community Guides has been working with the project to reach special population groups where they are, further enhancing the understanding of community needs in Midtown. Activities were led at multiple events including but not limited to the Franklin to Fort Get the Scoop ice cream social on September 1st, the Lewis & Clark Sunday Streets event on September 18th, the Russell Elementary Walk-a-thon on October 19th, and the Visioning Workshop at the YMCA (detailed above).



Children's activity held alongside Visioning Workshop.
Source: Midtown Missoula Association



Community Visioning Activity Sheets
Source: Rachel Huff-Doria

In the next project phase, the grassroots engagement team will continue an iterative process with the community as we develop plan alternatives and drafts of the Midtown Master Plan.

Summary of Technical Analysis

The challenges and opportunities identified in this report are the culmination of a series of existing conditions analyses conducted by the project team. Appendices that illustrate these are:

- **Summary of Past Plans** (Appendix A) summarizes previous efforts to better understand current context. These plans are referenced throughout the report.
- **Community Vision Summary** (Appendix B) describes and summarizes the community engagement methods, activities, and input received to date.
- **Land Use & Zoning Analysis** (Appendix C) is a review of the Missoula Development Code summarizing implications for Midtown and best practices.
- **Urban Design & Development Characteristic Assessment** (Appendix D) assesses Midtown's built form, buildings, land uses, and public realm characteristics.

- **Market Analysis** (Appendix E) provides an understanding of Midtown’s demographics, market conditions, development trends, and demand drivers for different uses.
- **Multimodal Transportation Audit** (Appendix F) summarizes an audit of existing facilities for walking, biking, and transit.
- **Infrastructure Audit** (Appendix G) provides a high-level assessment of sewer and water to support high intensity development in Midtown.
- **Parking & Mobility Best Practices** (Appendix H) presents parking best practices of peer and aspirational communities.
- **Full Version Maps** (Appendix I) provides larger scale maps that are embedded in the report.

Demographic Trends

Midtown Today

About one in five Missoulians live in Midtown.

Almost 15,000 people live in Midtown, in nine percent of the city’s square mileage. This makes Midtown one of the city’s most densely populated areas. However, Midtown’s population grew slower than Missoula’s population between 2010 and 2020, potentially due to rising rents and home prices.

Midtown is not seeing the same benefits of growth as the city overall.

Midtown residents have lower incomes than the city’s average, despite the growth in household income. The median household income in Midtown is \$43,670– about \$7,000 lower than Missoula’s average. Midtown also has a slightly higher poverty rate compared to the city, by about 2 percentage points. Median income has grown somewhat for Midtown residents since 2010 but remains lower than the city average.

Compared to Missoula, Midtown has...

- **More renters than homeowners.** About 38 percent of Midtown households own their homes, compared to 53 percent of Missoula households. Since 2010, the share of renters has grown by 8 percent in Midtown (compared to 2 percent in Missoula), while homeownership has declined more in Midtown than it has in Missoula overall.
- **A larger share of children and senior residents.** In Midtown, 26 percent of households have at least one child, compared with 22 percent in Missoula, though the average household size is about the same. Residents aged 65 and over make up a slightly greater share of Midtown’s population than Missoula, while younger adults between 18-25 are a smaller share of Midtown’s population.

- **Slightly more people of color.** Midtown has become slightly more racially diverse than the city in recent years. In Midtown today, 13.4 percent of residents identify as people of color compared to 12.7 percent of Missoula overall.
- **Similar educational attainment.** The share of Midtown residents with some college, bachelor's degrees, and master's degrees or higher has increased in the past ten years, and the share of those with a high school degree or lower has declined significantly, making the area more closely resemble Missoula's average.

Over one in four Missoula employees works in Midtown.

Approximately 14,000 people work in Midtown, making up 29% of Missoula's 48,000 total employees. Although the study area only makes up about a tenth of Missoula's land area, it has a large share of the city's jobs. However, most of these individuals do not live in Midtown. Only a fraction of workers (1,128 people) are also Midtown residents. The large commuter population also increases demand for daily needs like convenience stores and quick service restaurants.

Midtown workers commute from all corners of Missoula.

Only 8% of Midtown workers also live in the study area, but most Midtown workers live in the core of the City of Missoula. Generally, Midtown workers live between Downtown and the South 39th Street Neighborhood and commute to the area. Midtown also draws in workers from throughout the region, indicating that Midtown is a critical part of the regional job market.

Midtown is an employment engine for Missoula's top industries.

Midtown's large workforce in key sectors reflects Missoula's employment trends, including retail, health care, social assistance, accommodation, and food service. Between 2010 and 2019, the study area had:

- **Large employers like Community Medical Center and Southgate Mall** that attract workers to Midtown's biggest industries. Over half (54%) of jobs overall are concentrated in retail, healthcare, and services.
- **A lower share of construction, wholesale trade, and manufacturing jobs compared to the city overall.** Despite its industrial lands and large spaces, the study area is not employing as many people to work in these sectors and may have underutilized space that could be leveraged.
- **More jobs in arts, information, and warehousing when compared to the city overall.** Midtown has an increasingly high concentration of creative and information-based jobs, also reflecting changing needs for more flex and office space.

(See Appendix E: Market Analysis for further details)

Creating a Complete and Connected Midtown

Challenge: Community Members Want Midtown to Feel More Like a True Destination with a Sense of Place and Identity.

Midtown's development patterns could hinder its future growth and evolution if they do not begin to foster a more cohesive area. Midtown today is home to destinations like the Southgate Mall, the Missoula County Fairgrounds, local schools, and community parks and trails, but it remains primarily a destination for necessities, services, and errands. Most visitors and residents in Midtown travel to destinations or activity hubs for a specific purpose but leave abruptly.

The lack of clusters of complimentary uses or amenities reinforces the auto-centric environment and creates challenges for placemaking opportunities. Community members indicated throughout engagement that Midtown had recognizable destinations but did not express a strong sense of place or identify a core area of Midtown.

Midtown is a gateway to Missoula from southern destinations in the Bitterroot Valley, but that transition into the city is easy to miss. The southwest boundary of Midtown, at the intersection of Brooks and Reserve Streets, is a key transition into Midtown and Missoula as a whole. Some visitors travel through it without realizing they have entered Midtown. For those visiting the shopping centers at this intersection, it is a

destination in itself. This area has the potential to serve as a gateway for Midtown with its own identity, but the existing built form and land uses present challenges to future placemaking features.

What We Heard: Visioning Workshop and Interviews

A major theme that emerged from the visioning workshop and individual conversations was the need for Midtown to evolve into a more 'complete' district. Community members cited the need for placemaking, open space, connectivity, and local neighborhood hubs that build on the existing assets within the study area.



View of Brooks and South Reserve Streets in Midtown
Source: SERA Architects

Opportunity: Create Complete Neighborhoods

Support the community’s desire for “complete neighborhoods” by creating affordable, livable neighborhoods within Midtown. Throughout individual conversations and visioning events, community members expressed a need for Midtown to support residents, including providing a range of housing options at various affordability levels. There is also a desire to include support for local businesses that allow Midtown to thrive. Creating more allowances for dispersed, small-scale retail and services or mixed-use spaces can help to fill in these everyday needs and increase livability in Midtown.

Striving for Midtown as a Complete Neighborhood

In a complete neighborhood, residents can access quality goods, services, and amenities needed in daily life within a walkable distance (often measured by a 15- or 20-minute walking distance).

This concept encompasses needs for everything from quality jobs and housing options at a range of price points to retail services, healthy food, parks, and schools. It also integrates convenient transit stops, sidewalks, and often bicycle infrastructure facilities that increase connectivity with the city as a whole. A combination of urban design, transportation, and land use planning is often used to work towards the goal of a “complete neighborhood.”²

Exhibit 2. Complete Neighborhoods Concept

Source: Portland Plan



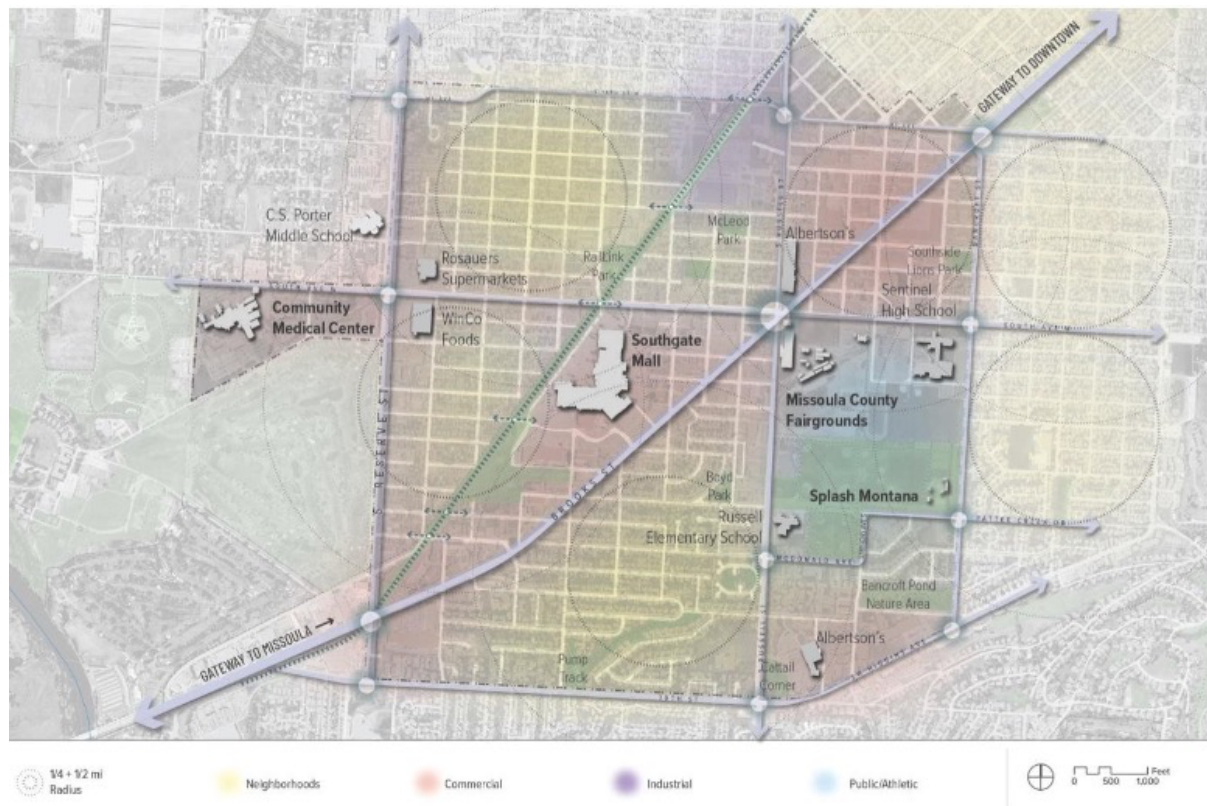
Opportunity: Leverage Subareas to Create Unique Placemaking Opportunities

Avoid a “one size fits all” approach. Midtown has unique areas like the Missoula County Fairgrounds and the Bitterroot Trail, among others, which present opportunities for placemaking. These existing areas can be jumping off points for design efforts that create space for the community to gather, socialize, and play — something that is not currently abundant in Midtown. Midtown’s distinct areas include the Missoula County Fairgrounds/Splash Montana, Southgate Mall, Tremper’s Shopping Center, Bitterroot Trail/Montana Rail Link Park, and surrounding neighborhoods (Franklin to the Fort, Southgate Triangle, Rose Park, Lewis & Clark, and Two Rivers).

² City of Portland, “My Portland Plan: What Makes a Neighborhood Complete?” www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/?a=437441, February 26, 2013, <https://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/?a=437441>.

Exhibit 3. Midtown Land Uses and 15-Minute Walk Radius

Source: SERA Architects



Community members identified several specific potential areas for placemaking opportunities. Building off of existing vibrant areas can provide excitement and enthusiasm around a given place that eventually permeates to adjacent areas. These opportunities include:

- More mixed-use development in the Franklin to the Fort neighborhood adjacent to Montana Rail Link Park
- A mini “Main Street” or food cart pod near Kent Plaza
- Vacant or underutilized areas near the already vibrant Southgate Mall subarea.
- South Avenue west of Brooks Street; near El Cazar
- More residential and mixed-use development



Large open spaces adjacent to Montana Rail Link Park
Source: SERA Architects

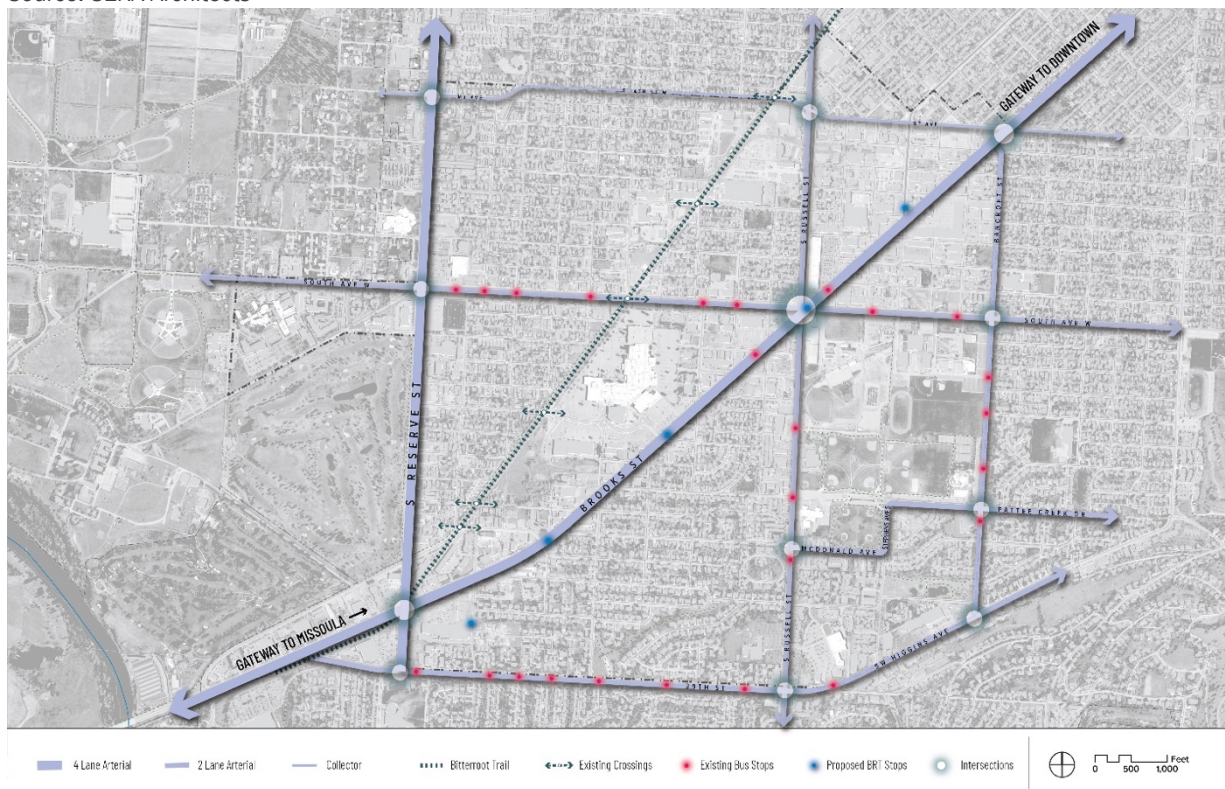
Challenge: There is Good Access to Midtown, Especially by Car, but Travel within Midtown is Difficult

Midtown's land uses are auto centric. The urban fabric is made up of large blocks that impede mobility and connectivity. Travel within the area is difficult for all modes of travel, but especially for people walking and biking. This is due to barriers created by existing development, major streets, train tracks, and suburban street pattern. Midtown's layout poses multiple barriers for residents in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Brooks Street is a regional access route that serves not only Midtown but also the Missoula region. As a result, the street has consistently high traffic volumes. Annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts in 2021 indicate AADT over 31,000 along Brooks Street. Mt Avenue, Reserve Street, Brooks Street, Russell Street, 39th Street, and South Avenue West are major corridors in Midtown with significant barriers to mobility. Due to the high traffic that these streets carry, they have been identified as high-crash corridors.

Exhibit 4. Major Street Corridors in Midtown

Source: SERA Architects



Opportunity: Improve Connections Across Major Streets and Large Blocks

Improve crossings on key corridors. To become a more connected area, the first step is to identify existing needs and address opportunities to improve the transportation system. Improving crossings at major corridors—especially Brooks Street—will help connect Midtown

to the surrounding neighborhoods and major destinations. Crossing improvements such as marked crosswalks, ADA accessibility, flashing beacons at crossings, and sufficient street lighting can help improve not only connectivity but also safety. Russell Street between Brooks and 39th Streets is an area that has had pedestrian fatalities that led to coordination with MDT and the City for a new lighting project to increase visibility and safety for pedestrians.

These investments will reduce crashes and congestion by improving intersections and managing demand and street circulation. As the city's population grows and diversifies, and the city's land use and urban landscape changes, Midtown must change with it and proactively determine how to move more people through the area safely and efficiently, regardless of their mode.

Opportunity: Center Equity in Transportation

Equity is a vital component of the Master Plan as well as existing local and regional plans. Centering equity in local transportation planning should prioritize investment in areas most dependent on active transportation and transit. Key initiatives for bicycle and pedestrian travel as well as transit improvements should reinforce a balanced transportation network that provides mobility options, accessibility, and economic vitality for all.

Challenge: Bike and Pedestrian Networks are Disconnected and, in Some Places, Non-Existent

Midtown is missing key features that promote a walkable and bikeable environment. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Midtown are limited and discontinuous, with many missing links in the network. Existing bike lanes have gaps in the network and encounter difficult intersections, especially crossing Brooks Street. East-west connections in particular are missing throughout Midtown. Due to the several major street corridors in and around Midtown and the limited facilities, pedestrian and bicycle access to neighborhoods is constrained.

What We Heard: Visioning Workshop

Attendees participated in a "virtual transportation audit" where they provided insight on specific points in Midtown. Community members indicated a desire for better infrastructure to serve cyclists and pedestrians such as bike lanes, sidewalk improvements, and street crossings. They also noted frequent confusion at some intersections and the lack of desirable landscaping in some areas.

Midtown has several neighborhood streets that are low-stress bikeways, but these streets lack wayfinding to guide bicyclists to where they need to go.

Businesses and activity nodes are disconnected from each other, without an easy way to travel within Midtown by any means other than a vehicle. In some cases, it feels safer to drive short distances (such as across Brooks Street) rather than to walk, reducing the potential for “pop-in” trips that are much easier when potential customers are walking between nearby destinations on foot.

The missing links in Midtown’s pedestrian network result in pedestrians having to share the street with fast-moving cars. This creates a high-stress environment for pedestrians and discourages residents to walk. The Bitterroot Trail is the only north-south connection that provides pedestrians and cyclists with a low-stress route away from major streets.



Difficult pedestrian crossing at Brooks Street and South Avenue.
Source: ECONorthwest

Opportunity: Expand the Bicycle and Pedestrian Network and Prioritize Safety Improvements Within Midtown

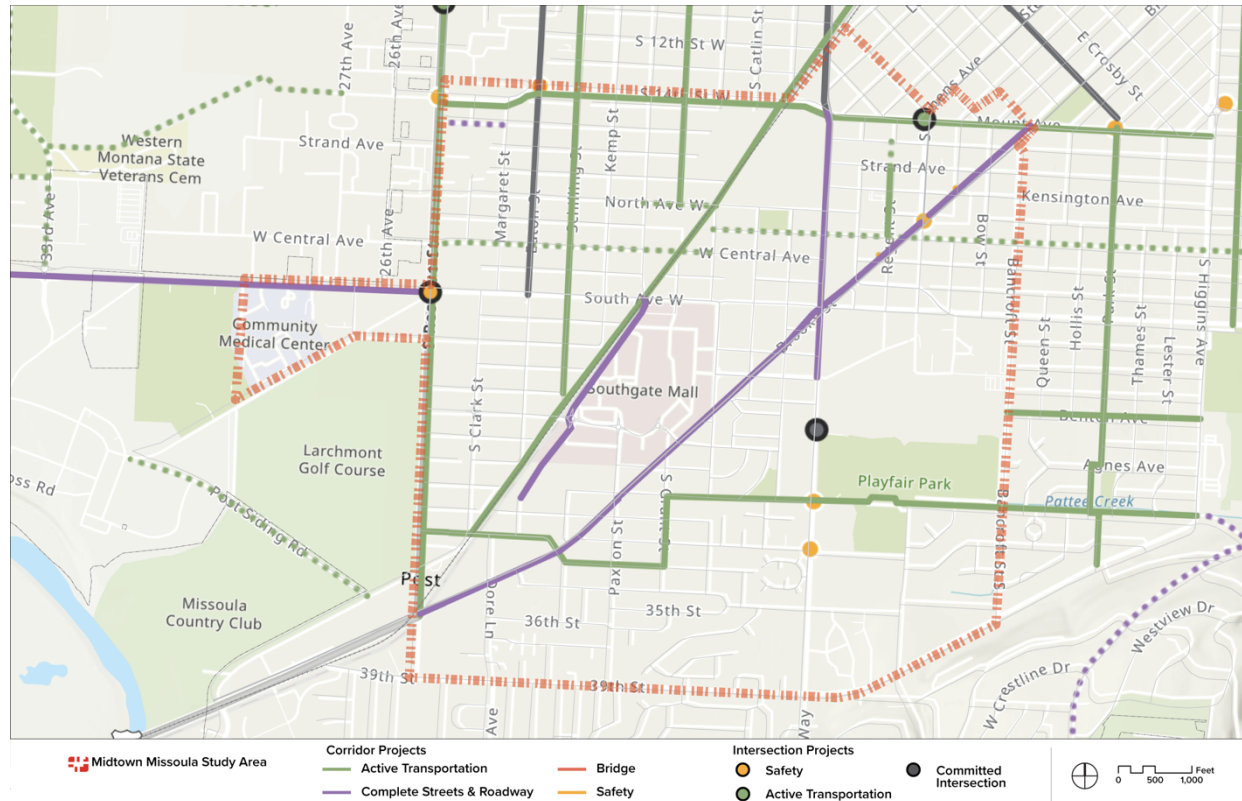
Prioritize identified and planned routes that fill the gap in the pedestrian and bicycle network. Increasing the number of dedicated and separated bicycle lanes in the northern and southwest parts of Midtown would provide better connections from trails to the existing on-street network for bicyclists. In addition, building sidewalks where there are currently none should be a citywide strategy to enhance the overall pedestrian experience. An improved pedestrian network in Midtown will help to build out complete streets in areas that connect major destinations. The City’s strategy for Midtown specifically should focus on:

- **Calming traffic and enhancing crossings on the existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities** on Midtown’s busiest and most dangerous streets.
- **Prioritizing building complete streets in Midtown** that increase the usability of major bike and pedestrian routes and greenways, while being comfortable to all ages and abilities. The City’s 2018 Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan identifies Franklin to the Fort, Southgate Triangle (in its north segment), and Two Rivers as high priority areas for such improvements.

- **Building out identified greenways and dedicated bike lanes on local residential streets and existing trails** to support the low-stress network. Local streets, which are most often low volume and low speed, offer the basics for creating ideal biking and walking environments. Implementing the projects recommended in the 2017 Bicycle Master Plan and Missoula Connect 2050 in the near-term will improve mobility for people walking and biking (see Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5. Missoula Connect Recommended Projects in Midtown

Source: Missoula Connect 2050



Challenge: Transit Service Lacks First and Last Mile Connections

Multiple bus lines serve Midtown, but their routes are often circuitous and infrequent, with many buses that arrive only once every 60 minutes. These factors increase travel times and could potentially discourage residents from taking public transit. Furthermore, bus stops lack amenities and connections from other modes of transportation such as walking and biking, which makes it challenging for many to take transit.

The Southgate Mall area serves as a central hub for many of Midtown's bus routes, indicating that the mall is a major destination across Missoula; however, the mall's extensive surface parking makes it an uninviting place to make bus transfers, or stay-and-play around the mall.

Opportunity: Support Walking and Biking by Focusing on Shorter Trips

Data indicates that most people drive to work and school when trips are more than 10 minutes long (see Appendix F, page 11). To support citywide climate change and mode shift goals (changing habits to get people to drive less and use active modes of transportation to travel), there is an opportunity to focus on shorter trips that occur within Midtown and to understand what it would take to get more people who are traveling less than 3 miles to choose active transportation (like walking or biking) over a personal vehicle. This also means creating a more efficient transit system that is connected to the active transportation network.

Current Planning: Brooks Street BRT/TOD RAISE Grant Detailed Planning Study

Starting in 2023, the Brooks Street BRT project will examine in-depth what is required to make a center-running bus lane successful on Brooks Street. This work will be an opportunity to leverage the transportation network, advance climate goals, create more equitable and accessible neighborhoods, and influence high-density development in Midtown.

Opportunity: Align Land Use with New Transit Investments.

Planning now for anticipated transit investments in the Brooks Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor can ensure that Midtown is proactively preparing for upcoming projects that will change how many people interact with the area. Targeted changes to land use allowances, densities, and design around upcoming station areas can attract development that enhances and supports these areas.

Opportunity: Determine How Shared Micromobility May Fit in Midtown

Connecting people to activity centers and transit stops through micromobility options could help to fill a gap in pedestrian connectivity. Alongside improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, shared bicycles or other human-powered vehicles could increase options aside



Station-based bike share
(including e-bikes)



Dockless bike share
(including e-bikes)



Scooter share

Shared Micromobility
Source: NACTO

from cars for short trips between Midtown destinations. Currently, the City of Missoula does not have an ordinance to allow for shared micromobility vehicles such as e-bikes and e-scooters. However, the Missoula Connect 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan provides guidance for integrating shared micromobility programs, including strategies to identify dedicated space for stations, conduct regular maintenance, and update existing policies (see Appendix F, page 21).

Challenge: Midtown's Surface Parking Lots Reduce Its Visual Quality and Walkability

Midtown's large off-street parking lots and parking regulations have created and encouraged low-density and disconnected single uses. This auto-orientation makes Midtown an easy area to access by car, but a difficult place to park once and visit multiple businesses or destinations.

Opportunity: Increase Flexibility of On-Site Parking Requirements

Consider how much parking is desirable in Midtown for both commercial and residential uses. On-site parking requirements, along with businesses providing ample parking within the commercial corridor, limit the utilization of the efficient land within Midtown. This abundance of surface parking all over Midtown affects the character of the area.



Large surface parking lot at Southgate Mall
Source: ECONorthwest

Opportunity: Align Zoning with Broader Policies

Zoning is the most commonly held basis for determining priority use of parking. Management strategies should be directly tied to the priority, such as residential and business parking permit programs for neighborhoods or industrial areas and timed or priced parking in retail and commercial areas where turnover best serves the adjacent land uses.

Challenge: Midtown Lacks a Track Record for Managing Parking

Midtown's street parking has no on-street time restrictions, meters, or enforcement. Most businesses have on-site private parking lots for their customers and employees (in part due to code requirements). The City does not perceive the on-street system to be constrained enough to warrant active management. To date, the City has developed no detailed policies, goals, or desired outcomes related to parking management in Midtown. In implementing a parking strategy as Midtown grows, the City will need to take a proactive approach to begin managing parking to support higher-density development.

What We Heard: Visioning Workshop

Community members who attended the Visioning Workshop indicated that it is relatively easy to find on- and off-street parking in Midtown. However, some noted that the large supply of parking lots can be unfriendly to pedestrians and encourage low-density and disconnected development.

Opportunity: Be Proactive about Parking and Consider How to Incorporate Transportation Demand Management (TDM) into New Development

The City will need to study parking in Midtown as part of its implementation efforts. Specifically, the City will need to know the supply and demand for parking to better develop strategies that support the City's Growth Policy goals to focus growth inward. This will provide insights into how to best manage parking and future demand from new developments. To establish a foundation for decision-making that anticipates and responds appropriately to growth, the City should take the following steps to initiate parking management in Midtown:

- **Centralize and Clearly Define City's Role in Parking.** The complexity and strategic format of any parking management plan is shaped by the role—large or small—that the City itself plays in its implementation. To achieve the City's goals for urbanizing corridors like Midtown requires changes in land use and density that are well beyond what is now the status quo for development and parking management in these corridors. In residential areas, the City may need to consider maintaining priority access for residents if demand for on-street parking from the commercial areas increases in the future, creating spillover conflicts between residents and non-resident users. Parking issues are too complex and widespread for status-quo approaches to management. The City needs to provide more focused, coordinated, and strategic attention to the daily management and delivery of near- and long-term parking solutions in Midtown.
- **Reach Consensus on Priority Users.** There should be a clear consensus on priority users of the parking system based on local land use characteristics, particularly for publicly controlled on- and off-street resources. If priority users are prevented from using the supply, then the parking resource is inefficient, which contributes to conflicts between users and is not supportive of off-street parking or alternative modes.
- **Measure Performance and Demand.** Performance monitoring is an important part of successful parking management. Many cities implement parking programs without setting aside the resources to monitor the outcome of the changes. This makes any

evaluation of the results of the program difficult, and any decisions to make changes difficult to communicate and justify.

- **Consider proactive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies.**
Transportation Demand Management can help expand travel options and create attractive alternatives to driving within Midtown. Decisionmakers should consider how TDM could be implemented through the development of new residential and commercial construction in Midtown. Example strategies that new residential apartments and commercial developments could consider offering to its residents or employees include TDM services, infrastructure, parking management, multimodal subsidies, and education.

Overcoming Development Barriers

Challenge: Speculative New Development is Challenging to Build

Vacancy rates for office, retail, and residential multifamily have remained low in the past decade, with rents increasing only incrementally over time. Limited rent growth across commercial and residential multifamily uses has made speculative development challenging to build because rents are generally not supportive of the ever-increasing costs of construction. Generally, costs for new development require top-of-the-market rents, and Midtown's market trends suggest that new development is challenging to build given the high labor, materials, and land costs.

Opportunity: Provide Development Incentives to Increase Feasibility

Several cities use incentives (e.g., density bonus, additional height, reduced parking, etc.) to encourage desired development patterns in certain locations of a city. Based on industry best practices, the most effective incentives are those that offer the potential to reduce development costs and/or increase development potential of a site, such as building the greatest number of dwelling units or total square footage that may be built. Reducing or eliminating parking minimums is one of the most effective opportunities to encourage denser development and make development more financially feasible. This report's Appendix B: Land Use and Zoning Analysis includes best practices from cities throughout the western United States, including regulatory recommendations.

Challenge: Midtown Lacks Accommodations for Visitors

Midtown's high visibility along U.S. Route 12 (Brooks Street) and regional destinations, including the Missoula County Fairgrounds, Splash Montana, Spartan Park, Playfair Park, and Fort Missoula, attract visitors from all parts of Montana. Although Midtown draws in regional visitors, the area currently lacks the level of accommodations and services that cater specifically toward leisure and tourism. While there are four existing hotels serving the Midtown area, they are generally older and categorized as economy or budget accommodations. Most new midscale and upscale hotels in Missoula are concentrated near the airport or Downtown, though conditions in Midtown would likely be supportive of a small, boutique hotel or other related hospitality uses.

Opportunity: Leverage Existing Amenities to Grow Tourism and Related Development

The year-round events in the Missoula Fairgrounds and other destinations bring large crowds to Midtown, but many visitors do not stay in the area due to the lack of new hotels nearby. For much of the past decade, the hotel market has hovered around 60% occupancy in Missoula overall, and there is a growing demand for hotel rooms in Midtown (see data on hotel demand

and methodology in Appendix E: Market Analysis). In the near term, the area's regional destinations and large events could likely support a boutique hotel along Brooks Street.

Properties on Brooks Street offer a combination of high vehicle traffic, easy access to major destinations, and underutilized land with redevelopment potential that could be leveraged for rehabilitation or renovation of a hotel space. Redevelopment of an existing economy hotel into the boutique category would also depend on additional amenities in close proximity, such as unique food options, neighborhood scale retail, and temporary activation events like pop-up markets and food carts. In coming years, new changes in Midtown may increase visitor demand for accommodations and support further development of new midscale or upscale hotels and other tourism-related amenities.

Challenge: Midtown's Zoning is Too Rigid, with Limited Flexibility to Attract Infill Development and a Variety of Housing Types

Midtown's development over time has not remained consistent with the City's land use policy recommendations. The City's Our Missoula Growth Policy is a high-level guide to land use for future residential and commercial growth, but zoning regulations do not always enable the same density and uses that it envisions.

An example of this disconnect is Midtown's northeast quadrant, composed of light industrial warehouses and flex uses with scattered office uses. This area is designated Community and Neighborhood Mixed-Use by the Growth Policy, which encourages intense commercial uses (such as offices), neighborhood-serving businesses, and medium-high or high-density residential uses. However, the existing zoning includes a combination of eight different commercial, residential, and industrial designations with varying levels of allowed uses across the same area. Some small areas of spot zoning such as the R5.4 parcels along South Avenue have restrictions do not allow for multiunit dwellings beyond duplexes. The collection of different uses (enabled by spot zoning) in the subareas makes it challenging to support the unifying goal of the land use designation.

What We Heard: Interviews

Key stakeholders in economic development and real estate echoed that needs are changing in Midtown, with growing interest in a range of low barrier and flexible spaces. Affordable offices, makerspaces, diverse retail options, shared spaces, and mixed-use development are all surfacing as important pieces of Midtown's future.

Spot Zoning in Midtown

In Midtown, the City has implemented a patchwork of about 19 different zoning designations. *Spot zoning* has exacerbated the disconnect between what the City desires for these areas and what is allowed. Spot zoning refers to when one or more parcels have special zoning regulations that differ from what the land use policy dictates. Although rezonings are now required to comply with the land use policy, zoning code updates (like the upcoming citywide Our Missoula Code Reform project) can better align underlying zoning designations and reduce the need for rezoning individual parcels. The maps below show the many zoning districts that exist within the broader land use categories. Spot zoning is an indicator that the City's current zoning regulations are too rigid.

Exhibit 6. Land Use Designations in Midtown

Source: Our Missoula Growth Policy, ECONorthwest

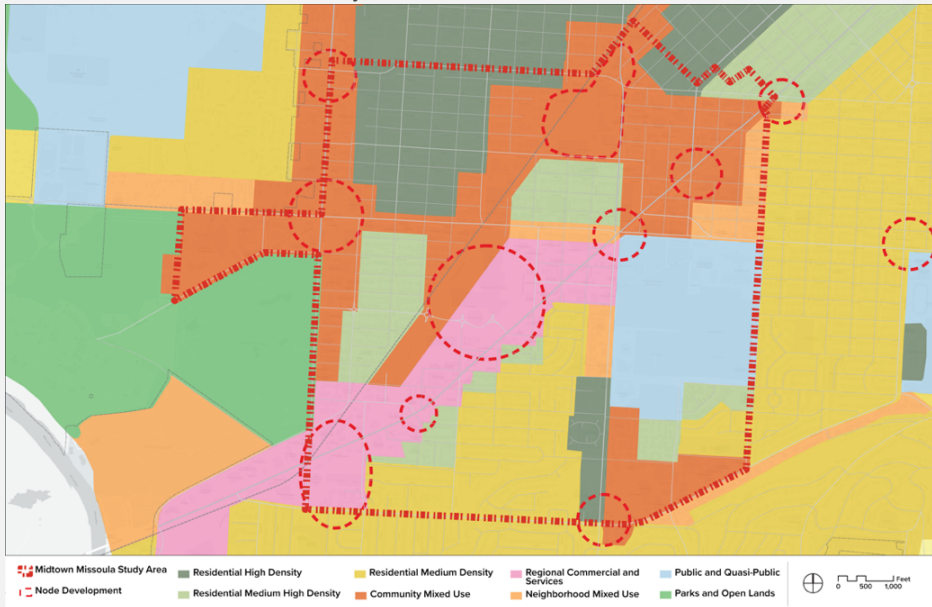
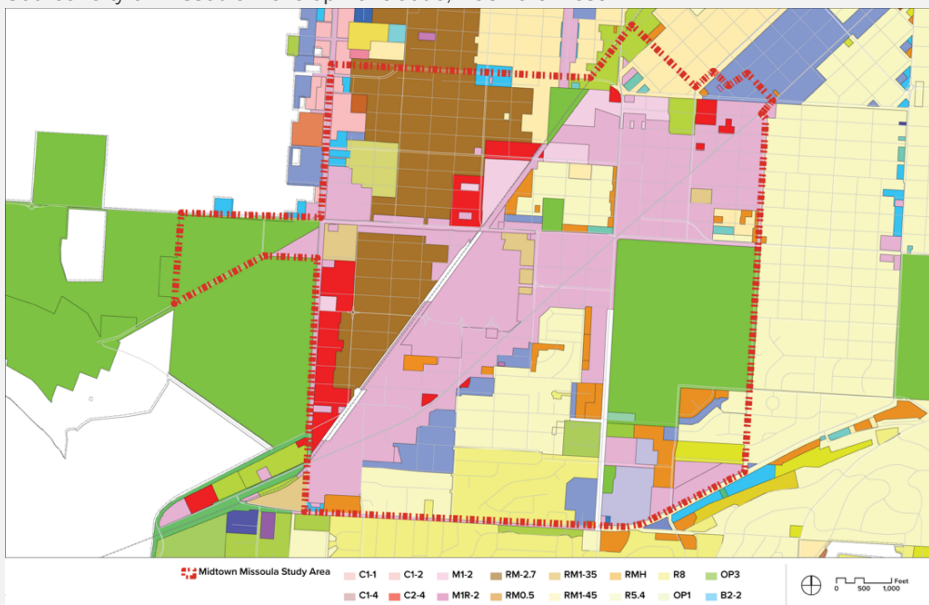


Exhibit 7. Zoning Designations in Midtown

Source: City of Missoula Development Code, ECONorthwest



Opportunity: Implement Simplified Zoning Districts

Reducing the number of residential zoning districts would provide clarity and flexibility for prospective developers. This would promote variation in housing types and increase housing density.

In 2020, the City completed a recommendations report on Subdivision and TED Regulations which identified issues and potential solutions while providing best practices and recommendations for regulations.³ While the report addressed issues across the city, many of the challenges identified are consistent with Midtown, and it provides a foundation for identifying regulatory challenges and opportunities. The report provided the framework for the Our Missoula City Code Reform Project which is an opportunity to see timely changes to address current challenges.

Current Planning: Code Reform Project

The City of Missoula is currently beginning the planning process for overhauling its building and zoning codes.

A recommendations report on subdivisions and TED regulations published by the City in 2020 identified short-, medium-, and long-term actions that could simplify the development process. The code reform project will be guided by the Missoula Growth Policy, which the City is currently working on updating through the next year. The next phase, which includes the bulk of code reform, will likely be ready to address changes to the zoning code in 2023-2024.

Opportunity: Increase Flexibility for Community-Preferred Uses

Alongside simplifying the existing number of zones in Midtown, allowing for more flexibility in the uses allowed within those zones can help to enable the types of housing, commercial, flex, and mixed-use spaces that community members have identified as part of their vision. Beyond parking requirements (detailed in Appendix G: Parking & Mobility Best Practices), Midtown could benefit from changes through the citywide code reform process. Regulations that code reform could target for updates include creating more flexibility for use allowances in vertical mixed-use buildings, increasing the density threshold for townhome exemption development, revisiting design excellence standards, and allowing more flexibility for density allowances in low-scale and medium-scale residential zones by focusing regulations more on the scale and form of building.

³ “City of Missoula Recommendations Report: Subdivision and TED Regulations,” Engage Missoula, December 2020, <https://www.engagemissoula.com/missoula-subdivision-regulations-review>.

Challenge: Cumbersome Permitting Processes and Variances Decrease Developer Certainty and Limit Infill Development

The City's layers of policies and regulations have created processes that can be confusing and inconsistently implemented for developers in Midtown. For smaller infill development, townhome exemption, or subdivision projects, the development review processes were noted as difficult to navigate, even if these uses have similar zoning requirements. For larger scale commercial and residential development, unpredictable development review can add months and major costs to projects that

are straddling feasibility. Developers need to account for these increased costs and will pass the costs on to future homeowners, renters, and commercial tenants which lead to higher costs and sometimes the end of projects when delays and costs tip projects into no longer being feasible. Unpredictable development review processes also act as barriers to developers who would even consider pursuing projects in Midtown.

What We Heard: Focus Groups

In a focus group with developers and property owners in Midtown, attendees noted that although they currently struggle with review processes, the City is making progress towards alleviating challenges. They noted that increased staff capacity for land use review will help to shorten the long timelines and remove uncertainty that some developers encounter.

At the same time, there are limited incentives in place for infill development. Without incentives for diverse housing types, the City will struggle to attract development at a density and scale that meet the City's land use intent and growth policy goals.

Opportunity: Create More Predictable Development Review Processes

There is a unique opportunity to integrate recommendations and actions from the Midtown Master Plan into the Our Missoula Growth Policy and Code Reform Project. In the interim, the City has already made updates to reduce some of the identified challenges, including providing submittal checklists and development project tracking. The code reform project could integrate further clear and objective development standards and review processes to better support predictability for community desired development in Midtown and citywide.

Opportunity: Create Stronger Affordable Housing Incentives

Effective incentives for desirable types of housing will make them more feasible and attractive for developers to provide. Small-scale, infill, and redevelopment projects are typically more easily burdened by required infrastructure upgrades and more easily deterred by regulatory requirements than market-rate single family homes. Updating regulations to include affordable housing incentives at the city level (such as density bonuses) or streamlining review processes could increase the amount of regulated affordable housing that developers provide in Midtown. This will help support equitable development goals of the Master Plan.

Challenge: Aging Water Infrastructure Could Create Challenges for Future Development

There are some infrastructure deficiencies that could create barriers for redevelopment in Midtown in the near- and mid-future, particularly around water and sewage (detailed in Appendix G: Infrastructure Audit). The most pressing challenges that could impact development include:

- **Water Main Replacements.** Approximately 16 water mains in Midtown are identified in the City of Missoula 2019 Water System Master Plan as being over 75 years old or of a non-desirable pipe material and are targeted for replacement. The City has begun replacing a few water mains within its FY18-FY22 capital improvement plan.
- **Water Main Extensions.** The City has identified 8 water main extensions within the Midtown area. These extensions help fill the gap to support a better distribution of water and support existing and new development.
- **Non-served Properties.** There are a few large properties that are not served by public utilities and will require water and sewer connections if re/development would occur.

The City of Missoula provides public utility infrastructure such as water and sewer in the Midtown study area. NorthWestern Energy is responsible for providing energy to the area, while multiple local and national communication companies provide service in Midtown.

Opportunity: Prioritize Water Main Replacements and Extensions in the Near-Term.

Prioritizing water main replacements and extensions in the near-term will set the stage for redevelopment to happen in Midtown. To help speed up the replacement and extensions of these water mains, MRA has committed tax increment financing (TIF) from Midtown's urban redevelopment area to help bridge the budgetary gap for making these improvements within the area before the plan sunsets in 2040. This type of financing for capital projects will contribute to neighborhood goals, as sewer and water improvements are included in the plan text of the URD III plan.⁴

⁴ City of Missoula, "Urban Renewal District III Plan," December 11, 2000, 25.

Stabilizing and Creating Opportunities for Existing Businesses and Residents

Challenge: Commercial Vacancies are Low in Midtown, but Few New Spaces are Being Developed

Midtown's older building stock and commercially zoned land provide some of Missoula's most affordable options for new retail spaces, offices, and services.

With low vacancy rates for these spaces, many businesses lack the flexibility to expand, move, or start new locations in Midtown. Given the steady supply of tenants and infeasibility of new developments, property owners have little incentive to redevelop even large, vacant properties. Some buildings in Midtown have faced disinvestment. Low rents and vacancies have created few incentives for property owners to invest in their buildings.

What We Heard: Focus Groups

Real estate and economic development stakeholders indicated that Midtown provides low barrier spaces that are difficult to find in other areas of the city, but there is little motivation to "fix what isn't broken." Engagement at the visioning event indicated a preference for small scale neighborhood-serving businesses.

Tremper's Shopping Center Extension



Source: ECONorthwest

Some large commercial properties like Tremper's Shopping Center on Brooks and South Avenue have added neighborhood-serving businesses, including Oddpitch Brewing, but it is not currently the norm in Midtown.

Opportunity: Coordinate Strategies with the Missoula Economic Partnership

Missoula Economic Partnership (MEP) could be a strong potential partner to build a relationship with Midtown organizations and coordinate strategies that provide more readily available commercial space in the area. Depending on capacity and funding, the organization could be a partner or leader for creating a land bank of underutilized parcels for redevelopment. Before URD III sunsets in 2040, TIF funds could also be used as a funding source for beginning a land banking program. MEP's experience with promoting catalytic projects throughout Missoula could potentially extend into an administrative role for these properties.

Opportunity: Create Live-Work and Flex Spaces

Live-work and flex spaces would likely be successful for enabling new entrepreneurs in Midtown. The area has older building stock and potential for light manufacturing space that is in short supply in other areas of the city like Downtown. The City Growth Policy also identifies areas around Midtown, particularly to the west side of Brooks Street, as an ideal location for cottage industries.

Opportunity: Leverage Urban Renewal Funding for Property Reinvestment

Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) could continue to provide targeted façade and tenant improvement programs and tax increment financing for projects in connection with Urban Renewal District III, which covers a large portion of Midtown adjacent to Brooks Street. The façade improvement program has already been leveraged during the life of the urban renewal district and offers funding for rehabilitation of commercial spaces, mixed-use, and multifamily buildings up to 25 percent of a project's cost or \$50,000.⁸ The Façade Improvement Program also

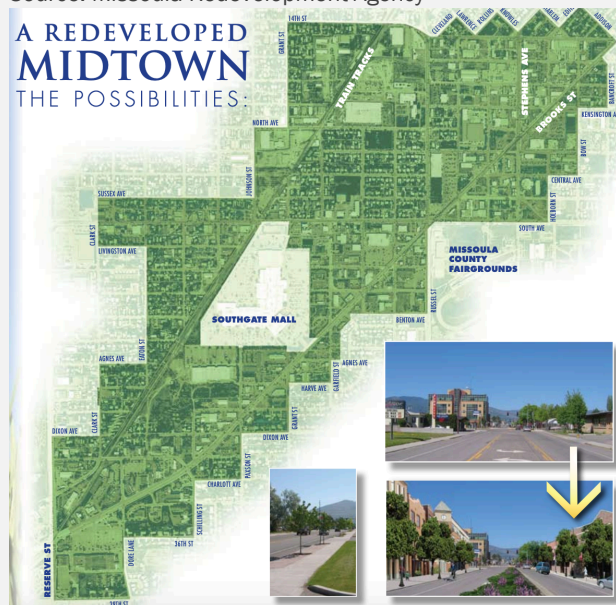
Urban Renewal District III

In 2000, City Council adopted Urban Renewal District III. It overlaps with a large portion of the Midtown study area along the Brooks Street and Bitterroot Trail corridors. The Plan sets out goals for streetscape improvements, bicycle and pedestrian amenities, park development, redevelopment of vacant and large industrial properties, and promoting a balance of retail and commercial needs through infill.⁵

In its first twenty years of the District, MRA has provided façade improvement programs, the creation of Montana Rail Link Park, bicycle lanes, and landscape improvements.⁶ Before the district sunsets in 2030, remaining revenue could support gap financing, land acquisition, workforce housing, utility extensions, or support for businesses.⁷

Exhibit 8. Urban Renewal District III

Source: Missoula Redevelopment Agency



⁵ City of Missoula, "Urban Renewal District III Plan," December 11, 2000, <https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2003/URD-III>.

⁶ Missoula Current, "City Council Changes to MRA Would Hurt Evolving District," The Missoula Current News, September 20, 2021, <https://missoulacurrent.com/midtown-evolving-district/>.

⁷ Missoula Current, "City of Missoula Eyes Housing, Infrastructure before District Sunsets," The Missoula Current News, August 4, 2022, <https://missoulacurrent.com/missoula-housing-infrastructure/>.

⁸ Missoula Redevelopment Agency, "Programs & Applications," accessed November 4, 2022, <http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2004/Programs-Applications>.

offers a 10 year no interest loan for the gap between 25% of private investment and the \$50,000 cap on the grant. This program could be deployed at high potential sites near emerging activity nodes and on catalytic improvements to existing spaces.

Challenge: Growing Development Pressures Could Displace Legacy Businesses

Midtown today has a reputation for being an affordable place where new entrepreneurs can get their start in a storefront or office space. Home-based businesses like the locally well-known Goertzen Adventure Equipment on South Avenue have gone from garages to their first storefront within the study area.

Commercial rents remain comparatively low in Midtown as of 2022 but rising prices could prevent existing businesses and new entrepreneurs from scaling up and eventually lead them to seek locations elsewhere in the city.

Storefronts on South Avenue



Source: ECONorthwest

Opportunity: Build Relationships and Join Forces to Market Midtown Through Outreach, Business Recruitment, Branding, and Events

The MMA has been extremely successful providing organizational capacity to Midtown businesses and stakeholders, and there is an opportunity to formalize the MMA's business support role longer term. The MEP is also poised to be an important partner to support the stability of current businesses and the success of future businesses in Midtown. Partnership with the MMA could help to highlight and celebrate the area's diverse destinations and increase awareness of existing legacy small businesses through:

- **Nurturing the establishment of an inclusive Midtown business group** to encourage collaboration between businesses and provide a direct communication channel with the City.
- **Creating a business attraction strategy** in coordination with MEP could help to spearhead targeted initiatives (such as a restaurant recruitment strategy) to include a strong emphasis on attracting restaurants and other kinds of businesses that support a sense of belonging for a diverse community, including culturally-specific businesses and businesses that fill gaps in project area residents' ability to meet daily needs.
- **Expansion of family-friendly programming and events** could support community members, local business organizations, and culturally-specific organizations in

providing, coordinating, and expanding culturally-specific and family-friendly programming by the City and public and/or non-profit partners.

- **Prioritize implementing the Missoula Wayfinding Plan recommendations for Midtown.** The City's existing plan for wayfinding and signage included recommendations for large areas that should be prioritized for branding strategies.

Opportunity: Continue Promoting Small Business Assistance Programs and capacity

The Midtown Missoula Association has been a champion for connecting businesses and residents with services in Midtown. Building capacity within the MMA and with partnerships (including the City, MEP, and all economic development groups) could help to coordinate efforts to assist small businesses in navigating available services. Creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) could be a route to explore between these partners. Such activities would help small businesses overcome obstacles to growth (e.g., capital, or technical assistance) and provide a connected and robust network of support that bridges across departments and organizations.

Opportunity: Mitigate Impacts of Development through a Construction Disruption Assistance Program

The City and MRA can mitigate impacts to current businesses from publicly-funded construction activities in the project area through a construction disruption assistance program. These will likely be most applicable on Brooks Street to minimize disruptions to businesses during construction of new transit infrastructure but could be applicable to other large future projects with intensive site work.

What We Heard: Visioning Workshop and Neighborhood Conversations

Discussions with community members revealed excitement about new types of businesses and housing that might come to Midtown in the future. However, there was also hesitancy about rising prices for households and how new development might lead to displacement of longtime businesses and residents.

Challenge: New Development and Investments in Midtown Could Displace Current Residents

Midtown is more affordable than other areas of Missoula, but with continued investment and removal of development barriers, the area will see increased development over time. A revitalized neighborhood could lead to longtime households being displaced by rising rents. Missoula and parts of Midtown are already beginning to see displacement due to these conditions. Stakeholder engagement identified housing stability as a priority for households that are most likely to be vulnerable to displacement. Creating stability for households vulnerable to displacement is a key challenge to supporting an equitable Midtown.

Opportunity: Explore Homeownership Support and Shared Community Resource Programs for Low-Income Households

Supporting homeownership programs can allow existing renters to purchase their first homes and ensure that longtime residents are able to stay in their current locations. There are a variety of tools that can help achieve these outcomes, including low interest loans or grants for down payment assistance to low-income buyers, home rehabilitation projects that keep building stock up to code, accessibility improvements for disabled residents or seniors, and weatherization to reduce utility costs and meet sustainability goals. Taking stock of what is available for residents through existing organizations like Homeword and NeighborWorks and streamlining access could be a first step, followed by identifying paths to fill lingering gaps. These programs could also be targeted to residents of housing types that could be most susceptible to displacement pressures such as manufactured homes.

Opportunity: Pursue Low-Cost Housing Preservation

Generally, manufactured homes are the most affordable form of naturally occurring affordable homeownership in Midtown, though there have been few sales between 2010 and 2022 (see Appendix E: Market Analysis). Many of the area's existing mobile homes are also located near large opportunity sites that have been identified as redevelopment potential. Strategies for investment should include careful consideration for impacts to mobile homes and preservation.

Rents for multifamily buildings are also quickly rising in Midtown with little vacancy, though relatively few new units have been built since 2000 (market trends and data detailed in Appendix E). Partnerships with multifamily property owners could improve stability for existing renters by improving properties and stabilizing rents within Midtown in exchange for low-interest loans or other financial incentives, including connecting with property owners through City or MRA programs.

Opportunity: Explore Community Ownership Models

Exploring options to provide community ownership of property in Midtown could include community real estate investment trusts (REITs), community land trusts for housing (CLT), or similar shared ownership models. Creating alternative structures to fee simple ownership is important to broaden the benefits of homeownership to low-income households and provide stability alongside new development. Cooperative housing models can often meet the goal of providing an opportunity to own a share of a housing unit along with stable housing costs.

Preliminary Framework for Public Action and Investment

This section provides a framework to think about the actions that MMA and its partners can take to encourage the transformation of Midtown into a complete and connected neighborhood.

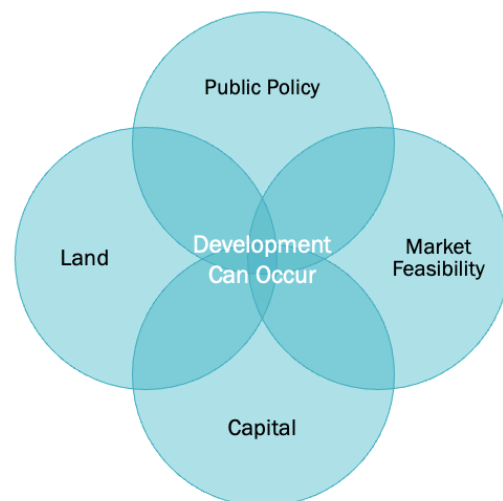
Midtown today faces several critical challenges, from rising development pressures to connectivity issues and a need for a shared sense of identity throughout the area. However, Midtown's strong existing assets and essential role in Missoula offer many ways to overcome these constraints and allow the area to thrive as a cohesive whole. A targeted implementation strategy led by public agencies and partners can reduce these barriers and guide coordinated public and private investment that will allow Midtown to grow in a way that supports an equitable and community-driven vision.

MMA and its partners can influence real estate markets and redevelopment potential using a variety of tools. These include urban renewal investments (in partnership with MRA), development regulations, incentives, infrastructure investments, and, in some cases, partnering with the private sector to improve development feasibility.

What Makes Development Happen?

MMA and the City will need to structure any public actions, like new regulations, infrastructure investments, and development incentives, to work with the market. Market-rate development occurs when the following four factors align:

- **Good market conditions.** Sufficient rents and sales prices to support a profitable project.
- **Public Policies.** Zoning, density, and design requirements—must allow developer to build a profitable project.
- **Available Land.** Developers must control the site with reasonable acquisition costs.
- **Adequate Capital.** Developers must be able to access resources for investment (e.g., equity investment, bank loans).



How Should Public Partners Best Position Their Investments?

Pursue Actions Based on Phases of Development Feasibility.

The public investment framework is a feasibility spectrum with a set of potential effective public-sector roles and related actions for Midtown as a whole and its subareas, which the following Master Plan phases for developing plan alternatives will articulate.

As rents increase relative to development costs, a project's market feasibility increases. When market feasibility reaches the redevelopment hurdle, private investment decisions also lead to new construction. MMA or the City might take different actions to incent or encourage redevelopment. Public partners can think about possible actions in Midtown's subareas in three phases of feasibility: "set the stage," "catalyze," and "support," as outlined in Exhibit 9.

Exhibit 9. Public Actions by Stage

Source: ECONorthwest

	SET THE STAGE	CATALYZE	SUPPORT
Current development activity in the area	None	Limited; the area is "on the cusp"	Recent activity, more expected
Challenge	Significant infrastructure needs, parcel assembly and coordination with property owners, market and feasibility challenges.	Market and/or feasibility challenges, cumbersome development processes	Managing growth to match future development needs.
City Role	Lay policy and infrastructure groundwork for areas that lack proven markets.	Cover infrastructure or other preliminary costs (to reduce development costs). Change regulatory framework.	Support desired types of development. Enforce codes. Maintain infrastructure.
What has been done to date by public agencies	Currently undergoing major land use and zoning code updates that may reduce development challenges	Investments from URD III providing financial support in the area for façade improvements, landscaping, open space development	N/A

As an area grows or market feasibility shifts, the relationship of public actions to private investment in an area also changes. The phases are broad and are not mutually exclusive, yet they do imply different public actions that are part of a dynamic continuum. These can change in relation to a specific opportunity site as market conditions or other factors change.

Exhibit 10. Midtown Investment Framework

Source: ECONorthwest



Ensure That Investments Are Aligned with Shared Equity Goals.

In realizing the community's vision for future development, all partners should have a shared understanding of equity goals specific to Midtown. Developing clear and consistent objectives with MMA, the City, and their partners can help build effective strategies to reduce ongoing disparities and meet the needs of underserved community members. Actively engaging in anti-displacement strategies, providing new opportunities for economic empowerment and stability, and increasing the quality of public space are opportunities to advance equitable outcomes.

Moving Forward: Position Midtown for Success

Think Big, and Also Think Like a Developer

Partners in the Master Plan should be watching the market closely for changing market conditions. New opportunities will arise that may warrant quick action (e.g., purchasing land or providing an incentive for a project that meets the plan's goals). The MMA and the City should consider the same variables that a developer would, including:

- Land price
- Zoning
- Physical features (and buildable acres)
- Transportation access for all modes
- Parking availability
- Government services
- Local attitudes
- Surrounding uses
- Environmental Impact
- Utilities

Develop Relationships with Stakeholders and Property Owners to Learn About Their Interests and Coordinate Stakeholders' Visions for Development.

The MMA and the City's role will be to learn about the interests of property owners, developers, and the community, and coordinate the visions of different stakeholders. This will allow them to clarify and articulate desired outcomes for development. This work will also involve coordinating funding, planning, and implementation with other actors.

Clarify and Articulate Desired Development Outcomes for Each Subarea

The Midtown Master Plan will identify specific public priorities for each area that remove barriers to achieving the community's goals (and attracting development). In addition, the team will identify specific benchmarks to monitor progress and coordinate funding, planning, and implementation with other public stakeholders.

A set of investment criteria that considers factors like the following could help crystallize how potential projects connect with the overall vision for Midtown, such as:

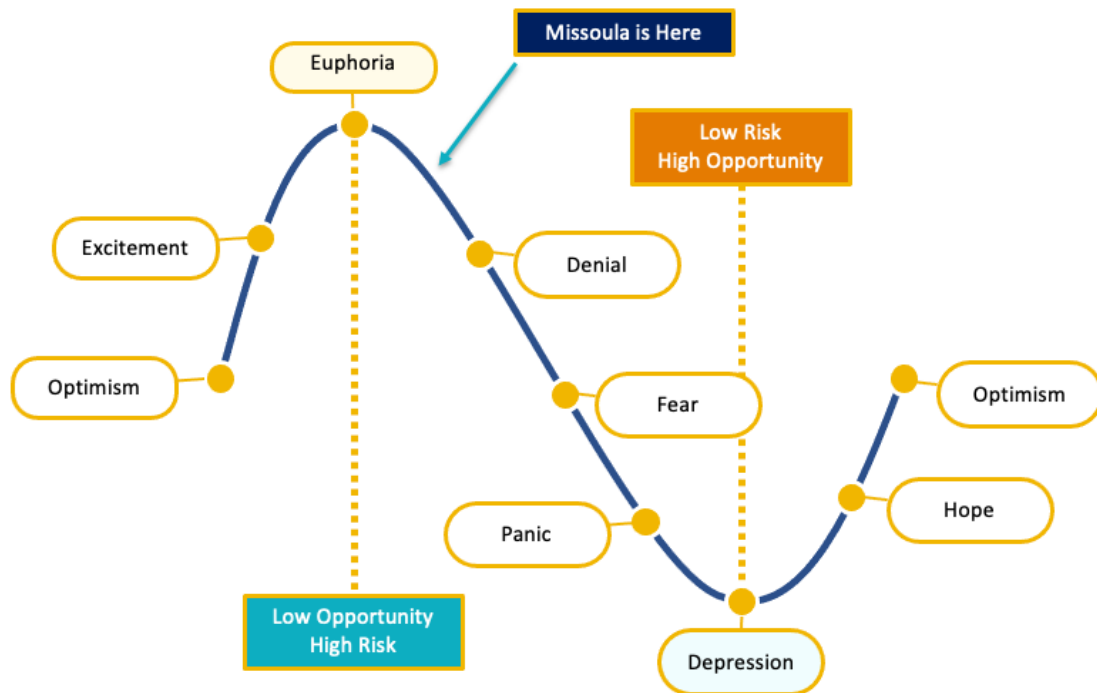
- Leverage (*City property assets, transportation or infrastructure investment*)
- Social equity
- Health outcomes
- Jobs
- Catalytic impacts
- Increase tax base
- Change perceptions
- New housing

Seize Opportunities in Every Part of the Development Cycle

The public sector often attempts to catalyze development at market peaks or shortly thereafter when risk is high. Within Midtown, key partners in implementing the Midtown Master Plan should focus on providing good infrastructure and sound incentives to help development at all points in the development cycle. To ensure effective implementation, partners can create a process to review possible actions and market realities in the context of the plan, both at the market peak (when pursuing policy objectives through public benefits) and non-peak periods.

Exhibit 11. Investment Cycle Diagram

Source: ECONorthwest



DATE: 10/7/2022
TO: Missoula Midtown Association
FROM: Erin Reome, Martin Glastra van Loon, Margaret Raimann, and Matt Craven (SERA Design)
SUBJECT: Midtown Urban Design and Development Characteristic Assessment (Task 3.4)

Summary

Purpose and Context

Historic context of Midtown Missoula suggests that the area developed in fragments, responding to the City's growth, which was accelerated by changes in modes of transportation, including rail and automobiles. Once an isolated part of the city with one anchor destination (the County Fairgrounds), Midtown evolved to be both a local and regional destination drawing residents and visitors to shopping centers, parks, athletic fields, trails, medical services, and a range of events hosted at the Fairgrounds. These anchor destinations and activity hubs are located throughout the Midtown area, though it can be difficult to navigate to, from, and between these locations.

This memo describes the observed development patterns in Midtown in terms of experience of place: building form, height, size, and relationship to surrounding public space; uses and destinations; and the features and character of the streets and paths that form the connective tissue of Midtown. This exercise helps to identify challenges and opportunities in key sub areas for further exploration in the development of plan alternatives for Midtown.

Key Challenges

Midtown's existing development patterns present a few key challenges to the future growth and evolution of the study area. These challenges emerged from both observations of the built environment as well as conversations with community members during the visioning workshop.

- **Safety and connectivity.** Midtown is missing key features that promote a walkable and bikeable area, including more marked crosswalks, ADA accessibility, flashing beacons at crossings, and sufficient street lighting. While a major connector through Midtown, Brooks Street ruptures the study area, creating a barrier between the west and east sides. Several schools are located within and adjacent to the Midtown study area, and many students and parents need to navigate safely to and from school. Currently, some students walk to school, though the lack of safe crossings make this a dangerous activity in Midtown.
- **Lack of identity and transition between sub areas in Midtown.** Midtown lacks definition of character areas, and land uses are scattered along the bisecting diagonal streets that make it difficult to navigate between sub areas. Community members identified with the Midtown area as a geographic location with recognizable destinations but neither expressed a strong sense of place nor identified a core area of

Midtown. As a visitor, this lack of clear identity and transitions make the area difficult to navigate; it's easy to lose a sense of orientation and direction among streets and development that all look similar and do not orient around a consistent development pattern (as in a predictable grid).

- **Midtown is a gateway to Missoula, but that transition is easy to miss.** The study area's southwest boundary, at the intersection of Brooks and Reserve Streets, is a key transition into Midtown. Some visitors travel through it without realizing they have entered Midtown, while for others it is a destination in and of itself for those visiting the shopping centers at this intersection. This area has potential to serve as a gateway for Midtown and offer a sense of identity, but the existing built form and land uses present challenges to future placemaking features at this location.

Key Opportunities

As Midtown continues to evolve, and the community's future vision and priorities start to emerge, we identified some key opportunities related to potential urban design solutions to implement in Midtown.

- **Sub areas in Midtown present placemaking opportunities.** Community members identified several potential areas for placemaking opportunities including more mixed-use development in the Franklin to the Fort neighborhood adjacent to Montana Rail Link Park; a mini "Main Street" or food cart pod near Kent Plaza; and vacant or underutilized areas near the already vibrant Southgate Mall sub area. Building off of existing vibrant areas can provide excitement and enthusiasm around a given place that eventually permeates to adjacent areas.
- **Improved use and connections to bike and pedestrian networks.** Brooks Street currently bisects Midtown, and future improvements should be more crossable and permeable through a hub-and-spoke network. A key component of this concept is improving the connections to the Bitterroot Trail, as it has the potential to be a driving factor in building the character of Midtown as a walkable, bikeable place. Historically a rail corridor, the surrounding area's built environment was developed to "turn its back" on the rail line. The transition to a multi-use path presents an opportunity to convert this corridor from a divider to a large-scale uniter.
- **Desire for creating affordable, livable neighborhoods within Midtown.** The community expressed a need to support the local community, including providing housing at various affordability levels. This also includes support for local businesses, and there is an opportunity to build on the existing local business community to allow Midtown to thrive.

Midtown Development Characteristics

Midtown is a diverse collection of sub areas that comprise different uses and development patterns. These areas are connected by a street network that is auto-oriented and difficult to navigate by any mode of transportation. Most visitors and residents in Midtown travel to destinations or activity hubs for a specific purpose and abruptly leave the sub area. The lack of clustered uses or amenities reinforces the auto-centric environment and presents fewer placemaking opportunities in the area.

Sub Areas

One defining characteristic of a walkable, livable neighborhood is the number of amenities or services available within a quarter-mile area. The Midtown study area can be divided roughly into 10 quarter-mile areas (Figure 1). The development patterns and uses across each of those is highly varied, and there is currently no cohesive sense of identity to knit those areas together.

Figure 1. Quarter-Mile Scale Reference, Missoula Midtown



Midtown's sub areas are defined less as areas with a distinct identity and more as areas with a specific built form (Figure 2). We identified four distinct character area typologies within the existing Midtown development pattern that contribute to the varied experience across different sub areas: Grid Residential Typology, Suburban Residential Typology, Brooks Commercial Block Typology, and Southgate Mall Block Typology. Each character area is described below with diagrams depicting an example of the typology.

Figure 2. Midtown Sub Areas



Grid Residential Typology

The grid residential typology is a result of older development in Missoula, with a more traditional grid layout. Characteristics of this typology include fine-grain parceling and block grid, walkable neighborhoods, and commercial uses along major corridors.



Suburban Residential Typology

A later development in Midtown, the suburban residential typology reflects the transition to an auto-oriented environment, where cars can easily navigate curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs. Larger driveways and garages for single-family homes accommodate more vehicles.



Brooks Commercial Block Typology

The Brooks commercial block typology also reflects the auto-centric environment, with commercial areas easily accessible by car. Rectangular blocks are bifurcated by the diagonal of Brooks Street that results in triangular blocks at varied scales. Parking lots dominate the footprint of parcels, and little to no vegetation occurs in the surrounding open spaces.



Southgate Mall Block Typology

The Southgate Mall block typology is also an auto-centric commercial environment but includes more curvilinear streets and roundabouts. Its development is shaped by the diagonal of Brooks Street and the rail corridor.



Anchor Destinations and Activity Hubs

Midtown has several anchor destinations and activity hubs scattered across the study area (Figure 3). These include commercial shopping areas, medical services, schools, and public gathering spaces. Each of these local and regional destinations add to the growing vibrancy of Midtown and has the potential to promote future placemaking opportunities. Improved urban design elements in and adjacent to these areas can also lead visitors and residents to linger in the space and navigate the area via walking or biking.

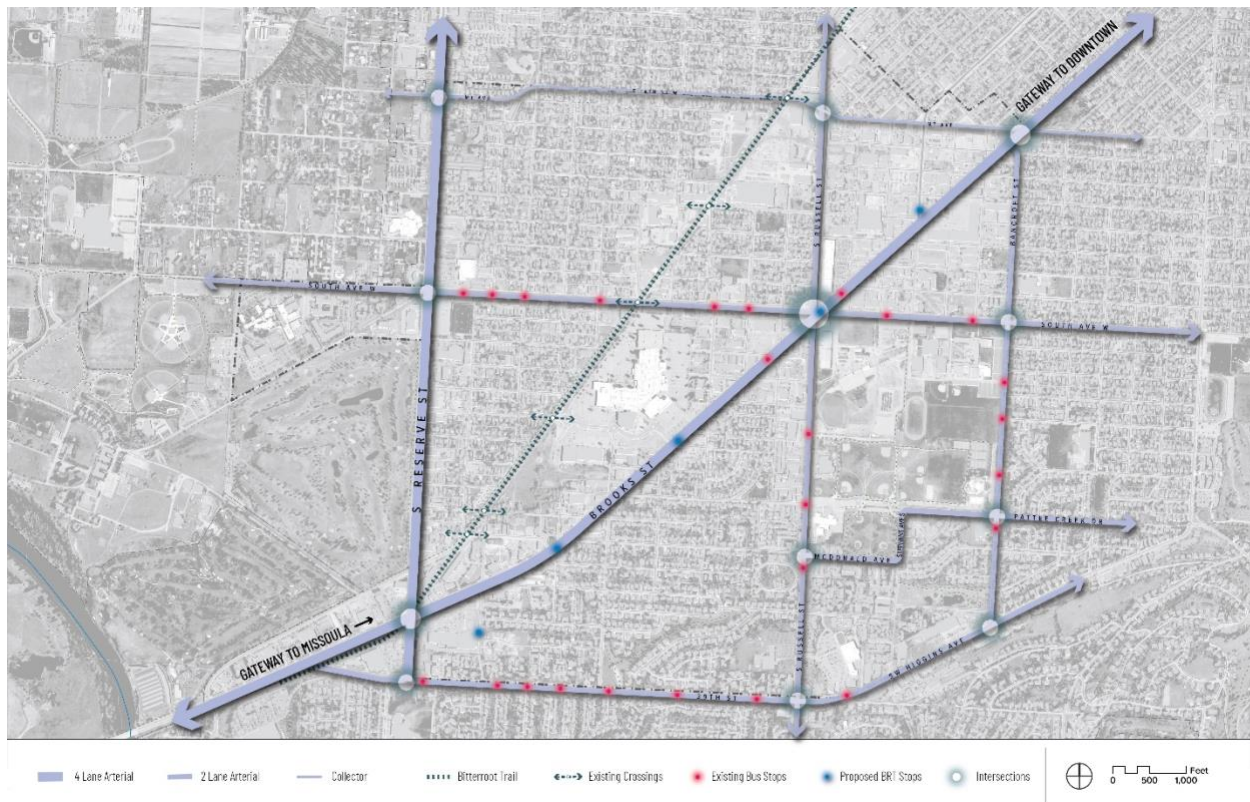
Figure 3. Midtown Anchor Destinations and Activity Hubs



Public Realm Characteristics

The major street corridors shape the development of Midtown (Figure 4). They are also key public spaces that frame residents' and visitors' experience in the area, regardless of their mode of travel. These streets are currently very auto-oriented, designed to move people through the area rather than signaling places for people to linger. They can also feel unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists, offering little protection from fast moving cars.

Figure 4. Major Street Corridors, Missoula Midtown



The development along these streets contributes to the auto-oriented feel of the area as well. In commercial areas, low-scale development surrounded by surface parking creates an environment where people feel unsafe walking and biking and are less likely to linger or gather outdoors. Creating a pedestrian-oriented street presence in the future development along these connectors to these major corridors will be key to a more distinct identity of Midtown, and there may be opportunities to activate parking areas and other underutilized areas to create short-term vibrancy in the public realm.



Brooks Street

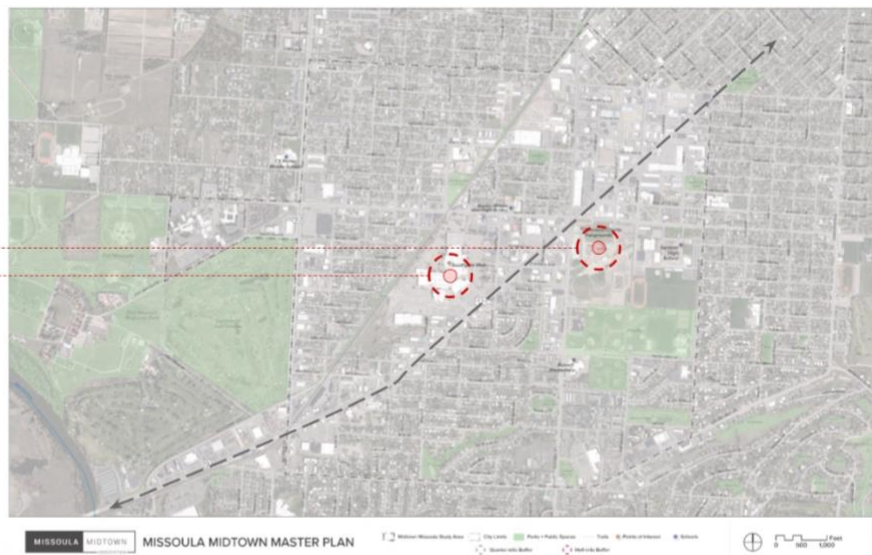
One of the major connectors through Midtown, Brooks Street, bisects the Midtown Study area. Development along Brooks Street is set back from the right-of-way, often separated by large parking lots. Sidewalks along Brooks Street leave pedestrians to navigate between large surface parking lots and traffic lanes. There is a lack of street trees, which is especially noticeable when entering the study area from the northern boundary in the transition from the Rose Park neighborhood to Midtown.



Fair Grounds



Southgate Mall



South Avenue

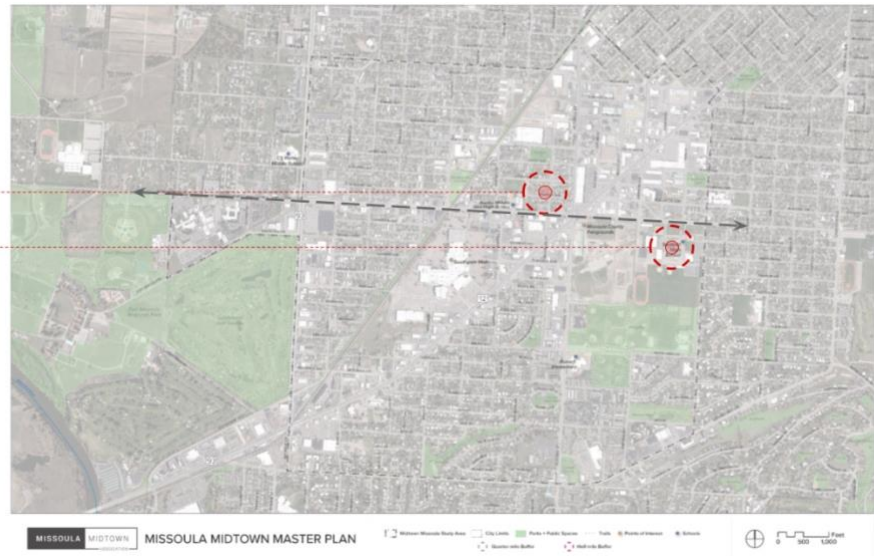
South Avenue is an east-west connector through the center of Midtown that crosses through residential neighborhoods and commercial areas. It is a route to school for both elementary (Jefferson) and high school (Sentinel) students, though its pedestrian environment is uninviting. A lack of street trees and safe crossings make South Avenue another difficult corridor for alternative modes of transportation.



Residential Area



Sentinel High School



Russell and Bancroft Streets

The north-south connectors on Midtown's eastside, Russell and Bancroft Streets, also present challenges for pedestrian travel. Both visitors to regional attractions and local residents travel through this area, though mostly by car. These streets continue the development patterns of other major corridors of Midtown, with large surface parking lots that create an uninviting environment for pedestrians.



Splash Montana



Lewis + Clark Elementary School



Bitterroot Trail

The Bitterroot Trail offers a significant opportunity as a major pedestrian and bicycle connector that could also reinforce the identity and connectivity of Midtown. Today, the Bitterroot trail, while offering a safe pedestrian and bicycle connection, lacks some basic amenities like tree canopy for shade, and could be reinforced as a landmark and wayfinding element through improvements to materiality and signage.



DATE: 10/11/2022
TO: Missoula Midtown Association
FROM: Toole Design
SUBJECT: Midtown Multimodal Transportation Audit (Task 3.6)

Transportation & Mobility

Introduction

Purpose and Context

This section summarizes existing conditions and trends related to transportation in Missoula's Midtown area. It includes key information based on an analysis of available data, a review of transportation plans and programs, and discussions with stakeholders and community members. The section focuses on trends that are pertinent to the community's goals to improve mobility, connectivity, circulation, and safety in the Midtown area as it relates to transportation.

Planning a strong transportation network that successfully, safely, and efficiently connects people and places in Midtown is critical to creating a sense of place for residents and visitors. The City of Missoula is a destination for multimodal travel, having put into motion efforts to become a top bicycling city, as well as a city known for its innovative transit system. However, the Midtown area has many transportation network barriers that hinder movement and safety.

Although Midtown is home to many community destinations, including Southgate Mall, the Missoula County Fairgrounds, several local schools, and community parks and trails, it is primarily a destination for necessity, services, and errands. There is a real desire from community members for Midtown to feel more like a true community destination with a sense of place and identity. For that to occur, the Missoula Midtown Master Plan must identify existing needs and address opportunities to improve the transportation system.

Building on a Strong Foundation of Plans, Policies, and Programs

Through work completed by the City of Missoula, Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and other regional and statewide agencies, the Midtown area and the Missoula Midtown Association have a strong transportation planning foundation that will help guide the transportation-focused recommendations in the Missoula Midtown Master Plan. Recent planning efforts—including the 2018 Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan, 2017 Bicycle Facilities Master Plan, and long-range transportation plan Missoula Connect—defined new goals for Missoula’s transportation network and identified community values to help prioritize projects and programs across Missoula.

Several themes emerged from the City’s and region’s existing plans that will influence the development of the Missoula Midtown Master Plan, from its guiding principles to the development of transportation project and network recommendations. This assessment identified nine values from existing plans and active programs to establish an understanding of transportation network conditions, barriers, and needs:

1. New & Enhanced Connections
2. Sense of Place
3. Safety & Access Management
4. Expansion of Efficient and Affordable Public Transit
5. System Maintenance
6. Development that Supports Active Transportation
7. Sustainability
8. Funding Mechanisms for Transportation
9. Innovative Parking Solutions

Together, the key themes listed above will drive Missoula Midtown Master Plan goals related to transportation and will help advance strategies for creating a future in Midtown that provides a transportation system that is safe, convenient, and efficient for all travelers.

Summary of Transportation Plans and Policies

	Name	Responsible Agency	Purpose of Plan	Common Values
Local				
Transportation	Brooks Street Corridor Study (2020)	The City of Missoula Development Services New Mobility West Missoula Redevelopment Agency Missoula Urban Transportation District Missoula Midtown Association	Identify strategies and infrastructure improvements for supporting bus rapid transit, providing ample access, and transforming Brooks Street into a transit and pedestrian friendly corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New & Enhanced Connections ✓ Sense of Place ✓ Safety & Access Management ✓ Expansion of Efficient and Affordable Public Transit
Land Use	Our Missoula Development Guide 2018-2028	City of Missoula Development Services	Provide background development information to identify areas suitable for residential use and enable planning for 15,000 new residential dwelling units by 2029 to support Missoula's steady population growth of approximately 1-2 percent per year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Development that Supports Active Transportation
Housing	A Place to Call Home: Meeting Missoula's Housing Needs (2019)	City of Missoula Housing & Community Development	Align existing funding resources to support housing, reduce barriers, and promote access to affordable homes, and leverage partnerships to create and preserve dedicated affordable homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sense of Place ✓ Development that Supports Active Transportation ✓ Sustainability ✓ Funding Mechanisms for Transportation ✓ Innovative Parking Solutions
Regional				
Transportation	East Missoula Highway 200 Corridor Plan (2021)	Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization	Pursue a complete, connected, and safe network for all modes of transportation through a redesign of the East Broadway/Highway 200 corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New & Enhanced Connections ✓ Safety & Access Management ✓ System Maintenance ✓ Development that Supports Active Transportation

	Missoula Connect (2020)	Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization	Update to the Missoula Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2045 that was adopted in 2017 (urban areas like in Missoula with more than 50,000 residents are federally required to prepare an LRTP every four years). Missoula Connect looks at all modes of transportation and identifies future priorities for projects and funding to address challenges to affordability, connectivity, accessibility, and equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New & Enhanced Connections ✓ Safety & Access Management ✓ System Maintenance ✓ Development that Supports Active Transportation ✓ Sustainability ✓ Funding Mechanisms for Transportation
	2019 Missoula Area Community Transportation Safety Plan (CTSP)	Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization	Examine transportation safety issues within the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) to address changes in safety concerns, crash trends, mitigation strategies, innovative technologies, and federal requirements that have occurred since the previous CTSP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New & Enhanced Connections ✓ Safety & Access Management
	2018 Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan	Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization	Establish a detailed strategy and project list for providing a connected, safe, and accessible pedestrian network in Missoula.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New & Enhanced Connections ✓ Safety & Access Management ✓ System Maintenance ✓ Sustainability ✓ Funding Mechanisms for Transportation
	2017 Bicycle Facilities Master Plan	Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization	Establish a detailed strategy and project list for improving bicycling in Missoula.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New & Enhanced Connections ✓ Safety & Access Management ✓ System Maintenance ✓ Sustainability ✓ Funding Mechanisms for Transportation
Sustainability	Climate Ready Missoula (2020)	Missoula County City of Missoula, Climate Smart Missoula	Mitigate effects of climate change by developing a plan for prioritizing actions and projects that reduce the contribution to climate change while building resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Development that Supports Active Transportation ✓ Sustainability

Statewide				
Transportation	Montana State Transit Management Plan (2020)	Montana Department of Transportation Transit Section Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization Great Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization Montana Telecommunications Association Federal Transit Administration	Encourage the development of innovative approaches to planning, designing, and evaluating transit services and facilities to provide access to transit options across Montana.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Safety & Access Management ✓ System Maintenance ✓ Funding Mechanisms for Transportation ✓ Expansion of Efficient and Affordable Public Transit
	Montana Group Transit Capital Management Plan (2021)	Montana Department of Transportation	Manage transit capital assets and strategically prioritize funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ System Maintenance ✓ Funding Mechanisms for Transportation
	TranPlanMT (2017)	Montana Department of Transportation Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization Great Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization	Map out a plan to address statewide transportation trends, issues, needs, priorities, and funding source concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New & Enhanced Connections ✓ Safety & Access Management ✓ System Maintenance ✓ Development that Supports Active Transportation ✓ Sustainability ✓ Funding Mechanisms for Transportation ✓ Expansion of Efficient and Affordable Public Transit

Existing Programs

Several active local, regional, and statewide programs share the same themes, values, and goals detailed in the previous section. These programs were created to inform critical decisions about the allocation of resources and policy development, identify roadway improvement projects, encourage multimodal travel, and improve roadway conditions for everyone.

Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP)

Who: City of Missoula, Public Works & Mobility Department

What: The NTMP invites residents to submit traffic safety concerns and suggestions for improvements. Submissions are analyzed and the NTMP looks for ways to improve the issue through either engineering, educational, or enforcement-based solutions. Projects are then prioritized for quick-build solutions that can be addressed within the operations budget. More costly projects that require more permanent solutions are added to the capital improvement program (CIP) project list.

Missoula in Motion

Who: City of Missoula, Transportation Division

What: Missoula in Motion uses benefits, incentives, and resources to increase the use of sustainable transportation in and around Missoula. The program supports businesses in helping their employees choose alternative modes for commuting and helps commuters make the shift to non-motorized modes. Events, like Sunday Streets Missoula, are organized by Missoula in Motion to showcase new traffic calming features and demonstrate temporary features through parklets and pop-ups.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Who: Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), Montana Transit Agency (MTA)

What: Every four years, every MPO in the country is required to collaborate with statewide transit agencies and create a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which lists transportation projects and details a short-term plan for implementation. The list may contain FHWA and FTA-funded projects, as well as non-federally funded projects previously recommended in the region's long-range transportation plan, which also must be updated every four years.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Program

Who: Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

What: In order to understand changing travel patterns in Missoula, the MPO leads the regional effort to perform bicycle and pedestrian counts twice a year with the help of volunteers. The counts began in 2010 and are performed once in the fall and once in the spring.

Travel and Safety Patterns

Commute Modes

Compared to the City of Missoula as a whole and the state of Montana, midtown area residents are less likely to drive to work and school and more likely to bike or take the bus (Table 1). A higher bicycle commute share in Missoula is a testament to the City's history of bicycling advocacy, which resulted in the League of American Bicyclists in 2012 awarding Missoula the designation of Gold Level Bicycle Friendly Community.

A smaller percentage of commuters who reside in the Midtown area walk to work and school compared to Missoula citywide. 4.6 percent of residents in the midtown area, the same as Montana as a whole, choose walking for their commute trips, while 6.2 percent in the City of Missoula choose to walk. Missoula's sidewalk infrastructure and connectivity have a large part to play. While Missoula has made significant efforts to prioritize improvements and maintenance, especially on residential sidewalks, some neighborhoods in Midtown are still at the top of the list of areas with the worst sidewalk conditions.

<i>Means of Transportation to Work</i>	Midtown Area Block Groups	City of Missoula	Montana
<i>Bike</i>	6.7%	5.2%	1.1%
<i>Walk</i>	4.6%	6.2%	4.6%
<i>Bus</i>	3.3%	2.3%	0.7%
<i>Carpooled</i>	8.9%	7.4%	9.2%
<i>Drove alone</i>	70.9%	71.5%	75.2%
<i>Other Means</i>	1.3%	0.7%	1.1%
<i>Work from Home</i>	4.3%	6.8%	8.0%

Table 1: Midtown Missoula Block Groups (Block Group 1, Census Tract 10.01, 10.02, 12, 13.03, 14.02; Block Group 2, Census Tract 10.01, 11, 12; Block Group 3, Census Tract 10.01, 11; Block Group 4, Census Tract 9.01, 12, 13.03), City of Missoula, and Montana Means of Transportation to Work. Source: US Census Bureau (2020 5-Year Estimates)

Midtown Missoula Residents Have Shorter Commutes

As presented in Table 1, Montana commuters are nearly twice as likely to work from home than residents of the Midtown area. Commute distance can be partially attributed to the midtown area's smaller share of "work from home" residents. Commute travel time data suggests that midtown area residents have shorter commutes on average. According to American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 5-year estimates, about 74 percent of midtown area residents who work outside of their homes have a commute time of 20 minutes or less (Figure 1).

However, even the shortest commute trips are primarily made by driving alone. Most commuters who drive alone have a commute time of less than 10 minutes, while most people who carpool to work have a commute time of 20 to 24 minutes. Midtown area commute trips that are 30-34 minutes in length see the most modal diversity with 20.4 percent completed by bus, 21.9 percent completed by bike, and 24.3 percent completed by carpooling. The longer the commute time (under an hour), the more likely a midtown area resident will take the bus. When it comes to biking and walking for commuting, commute times are generally short. Most people who bike to work will only bike if their

commute is less than 35 minutes, with the majority of bike commute trips being 15-20 minutes. Commuters who choose to walk also prefer shorter commutes. Most pedestrian commuters have commute times less than 10 minutes.

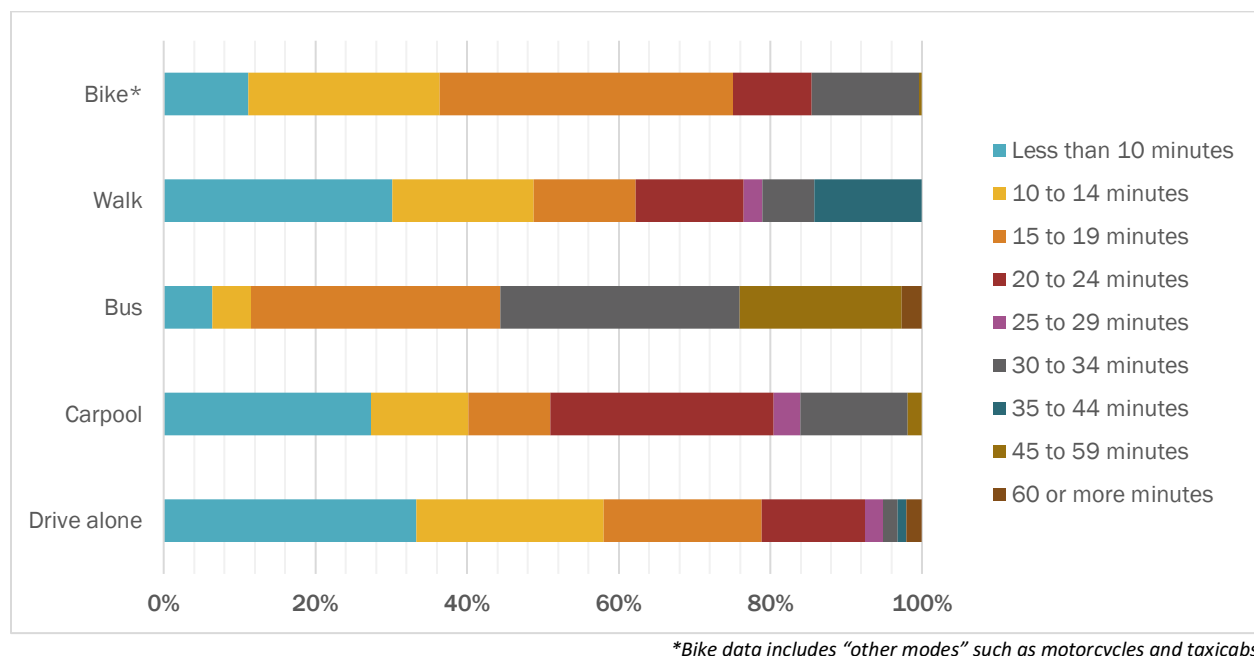


Figure 1: Midtown Missoula Block Groups (Block Group 1, Census Tract 10.01, 10.02, 12, 13.03; Block Group 2, Census Tract 10.01, 11, 12; Block Group 3, Census Tract 10.01, 11; Block Group 4, Census Tract 9.01, 12, 13.03), Means of Travel to Work by Travel Time. Source: US Census Bureau (2020 5-Year Estimates)

Vehicle Availability

While more Midtown area residents typically have shorter commutes than residents of the rest of Missoula County, not everyone has access to reliable travel modes. In the City of Missoula, 7.5 percent of working people over the age of 16 do not have access to a vehicle. In Midtown, 10.5 percent of working people over the age of 16 do not have access to a vehicle (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2020 5-year estimates). This is about twice as many people without personal vehicle access compared to Montana statewide. While Midtown residents have more opportunities to walk, bike, and ride the bus to commute compared to other parts of Montana, this reaffirms the need for more and better access to non-driving modes.

Traffic Safety

Crash Trends

From 2016 to 2020, around 9,000 crashes occurred in the City of Missoula (Figure 2). In 2020, only 3.1 percent of all crashes were KSI (Killed or Serious Injury) crashes. However, looking at crashes that occurred statewide from 2011-2020, City of Missoula crashes accounted for 7.9 percent of all crashes in Montana and 6.7 percent of all KSI crashes in Montana, making it the city with the highest contribution of crashes that resulted in fatalities or serious injuries in Montana (Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Crash Database 2011-2020).

Crashes Involving Non-Motorists

Although the number of total crashes decreased over time (Figure 2), the share of total crashes that involved a non-motorist increased from 2016-2020, nearly doubling from 2.3 percent of all Missoula

crashes in 2019 to 4.4 percent in 2020. Corridors that prioritize motor vehicle travel, such as Reserve Street, Brooks Street, Russell Street, and Mountain Avenue, experience the most crashes where pedestrians and bicyclists are involved.

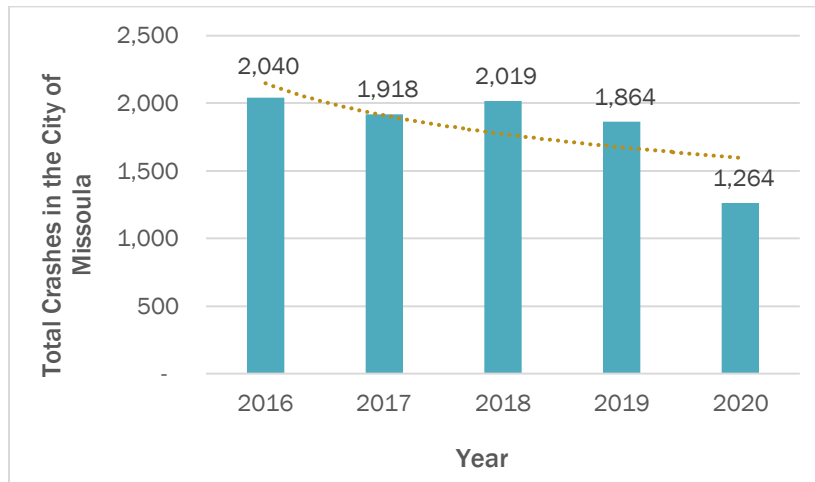


Figure 2: Total Crashes in the City of Missoula (2016-2020). Source: Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Crash Database 2011-2020.

Crashes at Intersections

There is a comparatively high concentration of crashes that occur at intersections in Missoula. 61 percent of all crashes that occurred in the City of Missoula in 2020 occurred at intersections, 10 percent more than in 2016. Statewide, only 28 percent of all crashes occurred at intersections.

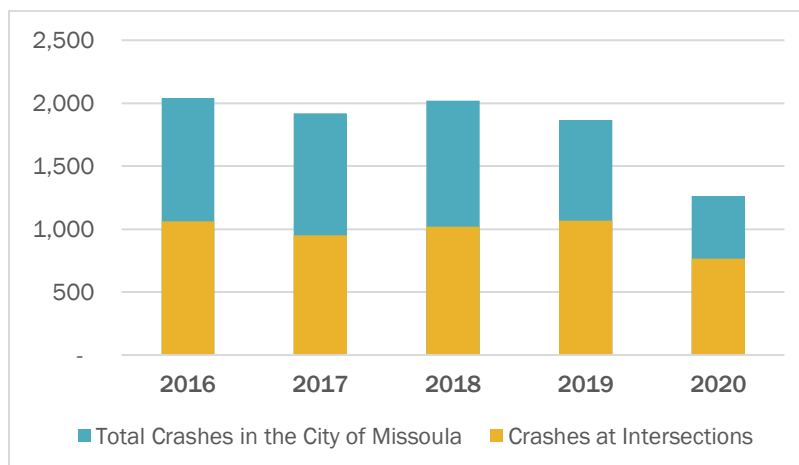
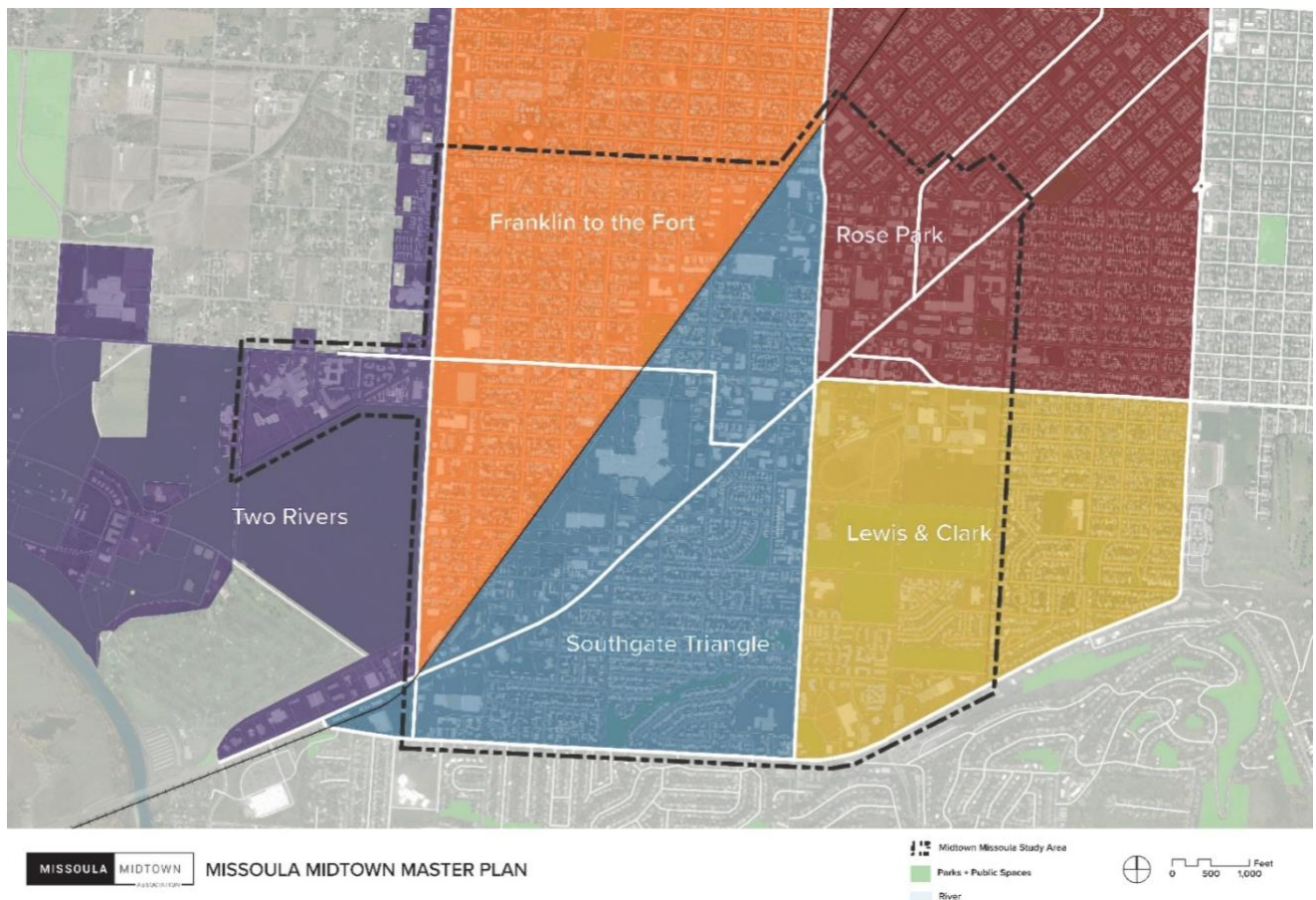


Figure 3: Share of Total Crashes in the City of Missoula that Occur at Intersections (2016-2020). Source: Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Crash Database 2011-2020.

Midtown Missoula Unique Neighborhood Contexts and Fabrics

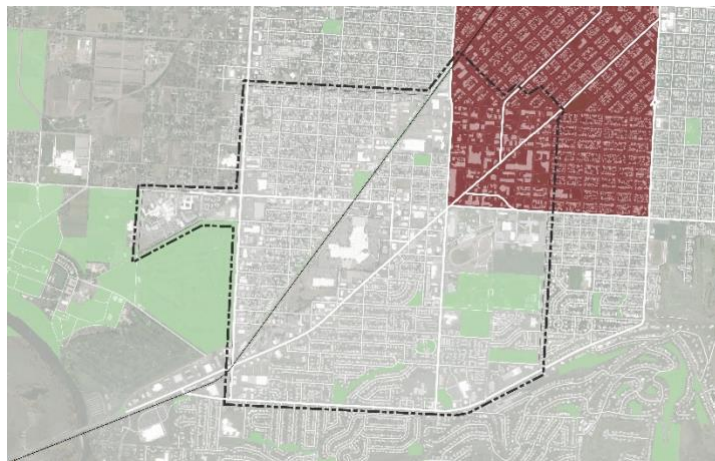
The Missoula Midtown Master Plan study area is small, but within its boundaries are a diverse mix of land uses, including five distinct residential neighborhoods: Franklin to the Fort, Rose Park, Southgate Triangle, Lewis and Clark, and Two Rivers. Considering existing land use and land use opportunities is vital to determining how future land use in the area can support transportation and a variety of modes traveling through the Midtown area. It is important to consider the contexts of each neighborhood within the Midtown area to ensure changes to the transportation network and surrounding land uses reflect the individual needs and characters of each neighborhood.



Map 1: Midtown Missoula Neighborhoods. Source: Missoula Land Use, City of Missoula Open Data, 2022)

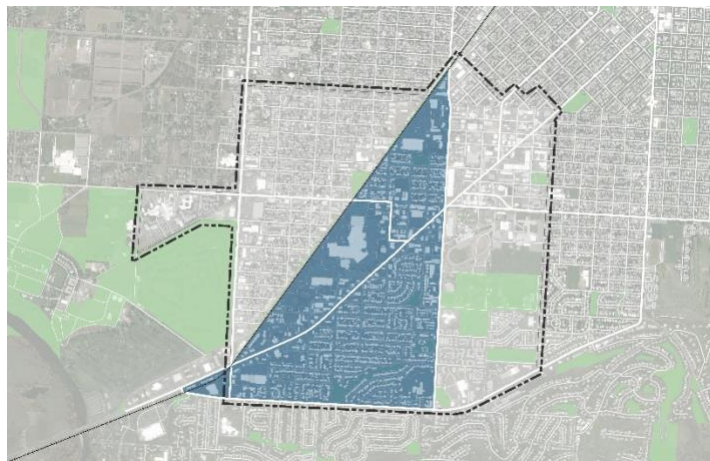
Rose Park

The Rose Park neighborhood is located between South Sixth Street West and South Avenue, and between South Higgins Avenue and Russell Street. Rose Park residents value the open space in their neighborhood such as Triangle Park. Regular park and transportation network maintenance is also important to the Rose Park community. Rose Park south of Mountain Avenue is largely industrial, while land north of Mountain Avenue is primarily residential. The residential streets within Rose Park offer generally high-quality detached sidewalks and several traffic calming features.



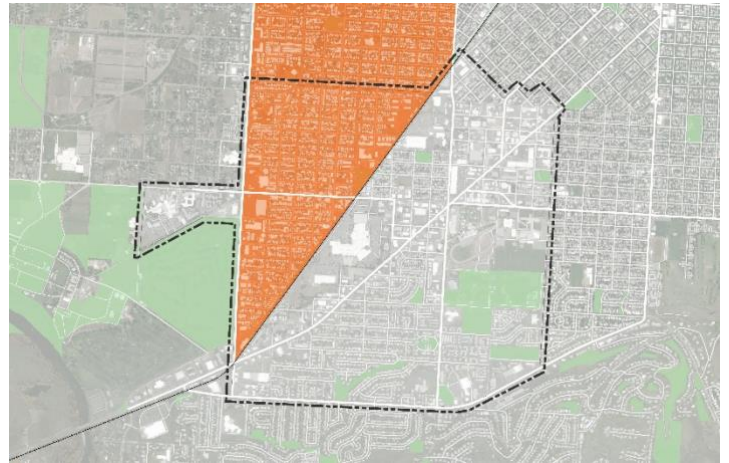
Southgate Triangle

The Southgate Triangle neighborhood is generally located west of Russell Street, north of South 39th Street, and south-east of the Bitterroot Trail and Montana Rail Link Park. Bike infrastructure, namely the bike park at Bellevue Park, is of top importance to Southgate Triangle community members, followed by roadway quality and maintenance. Southgate Triangle contains the majority of the commercial land uses in the Midtown area but has many connectivity challenges. Brooks Street, a high-volume arterial road, cuts through the middle of the neighborhood, and Russell Street, a high-crash corridor, borders the entire east side of the Southgate Triangle. Southgate Triangle is bordered to the west by the Bitterroot Trail, an excellent north-south trail connection for all active modes of transportation.



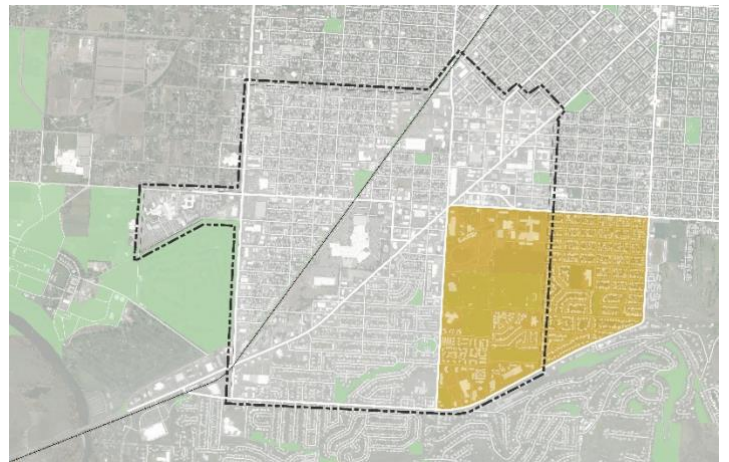
Franklin to the Fort

The Franklin to the Fort neighborhood is located in the area beginning at South Third Street West and Russell Street south to the Bitterroot Trail, following the Bitterroot Trail to Reserve Street, north along Reserve Street to South Third Street W, and along South Third Street West to Russell Street. Franklin to the Fort Residents care about sustaining housing affordability while creating an aesthetic neighborhood, through intentional development, that is safe and well connected. Franklin to the Fort has the highest concentration of missing and poor-quality sidewalks out of all other Midtown neighborhoods. The Montana Rail Link Park borders Franklin to the Fort to the east.



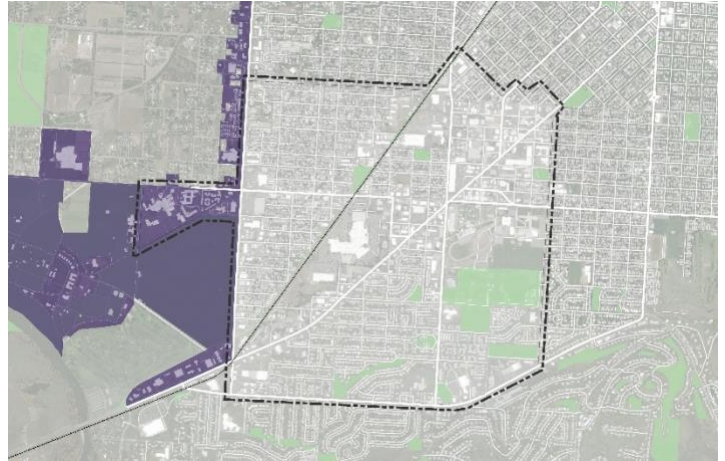
Lewis & Clark

The Lewis and Clark neighborhood is located between South Higgins west to Russell Street, and between South Avenue south to Southwest Higgins Avenue. Safety is a priority for Lewis and Clark residents whose top concerns include the neighborhood's speeding drivers and lack of marked crosswalks. Lewis and Clark residents also value local wildlife and open space, including the duck pond, Bancroft Pond. The County Fairgrounds are located within the Lewis and Clark neighborhood next to Spartan Park, one of the larger open space areas in the Midtown area. While serving as a major community destination, this area poses multiple connectivity and access issues for pedestrians and bicyclists moving west into Midtown's commercial center.



Two Rivers

The Two Rivers neighborhood is located in the area from Reserve Street West to the city limits and from the Clark Fork River to Highway 93 South. Both county and city residents who reside within Two River boundaries are passionate about mobility in their community. They care about available bus service, access to the substantial parks and available trails, and missing curbs and sidewalks in Two Rivers that prevent walkability. Two Rivers is sparsely populated, with the majority of land use dedicated to open space, commercial, industrial, and healthcare, including the Community Medical Center. Similar to Franklin by the Fort, Two Rivers has many poor-quality sidewalks.



Midtown's layout poses multiple barriers to connections, especially to residents in the surrounding residential districts. Our Missoula Growth Policy 2045 identifies the plat that includes Southgate Mall as land with the highest potential for infill and redevelopment opportunities. However, to support a more efficient transportation network, more develop opportunities across the Missoula Midtown Master Plan study area will be identified. The suburban nature of the Midtown area is reflected in many of the current transportation issues impacting how well the overall street network functions.

As the city's population grows and diversifies, and the city's land use and urban landscape changes, the Midtown area must change with it and proactively determine how to move more people through the area safely and efficiently, regardless of their mode. The Missoula Midtown Master Plan will recommend context-sensitive solutions to intentionally link transportation planning with land use decisions.

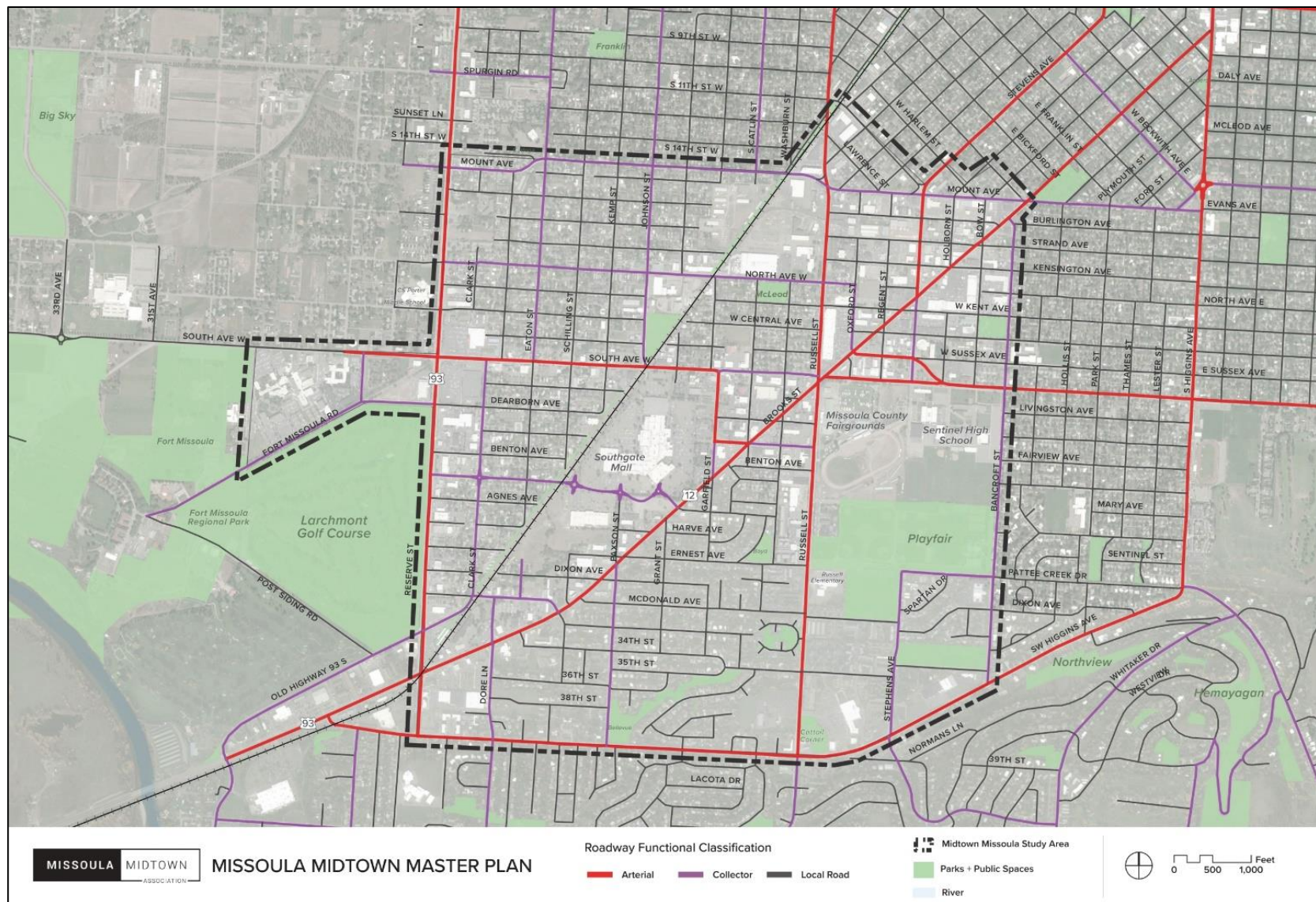
Transportation Networks

Driving in Midtown Missoula

Functional Roadway Classifications distinguish roads based on their level of mobility and access. Highways and arterials serve a high volume of motor vehicles traveling at high speeds, while collectors and local streets provide direct access to destinations, carrying a lower volume of motor vehicles traveling at lower speeds (Map 2). The Missoula Midtown Master Plan will consider how to safely connect travelers, especially pedestrians and bicyclists, across high-volume, high-speed roadways that currently act as barriers to mobility. The upcoming Brooks Street corridor plan will focus on improvements along Brooks Street itself, while the Missoula Midtown Master Plan will address ways to connect to and across Brooks Street.

Functional Roadway Classifications

The Midtown area has a relatively dense grid of streets in the northern residential neighborhoods north of South Avenue West. However, many streets in the Midtown area, especially moving southeast, are curvilinear or are wide, high-volume arterials and collectors. Data suggests that connecting by vehicle to routes that move people in and out of the midtown area is especially challenging in the southern neighborhoods.



Map 2: Roadway Functional Classification. Source: Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Crash Database 2011-2020.

Walking in Midtown Missoula

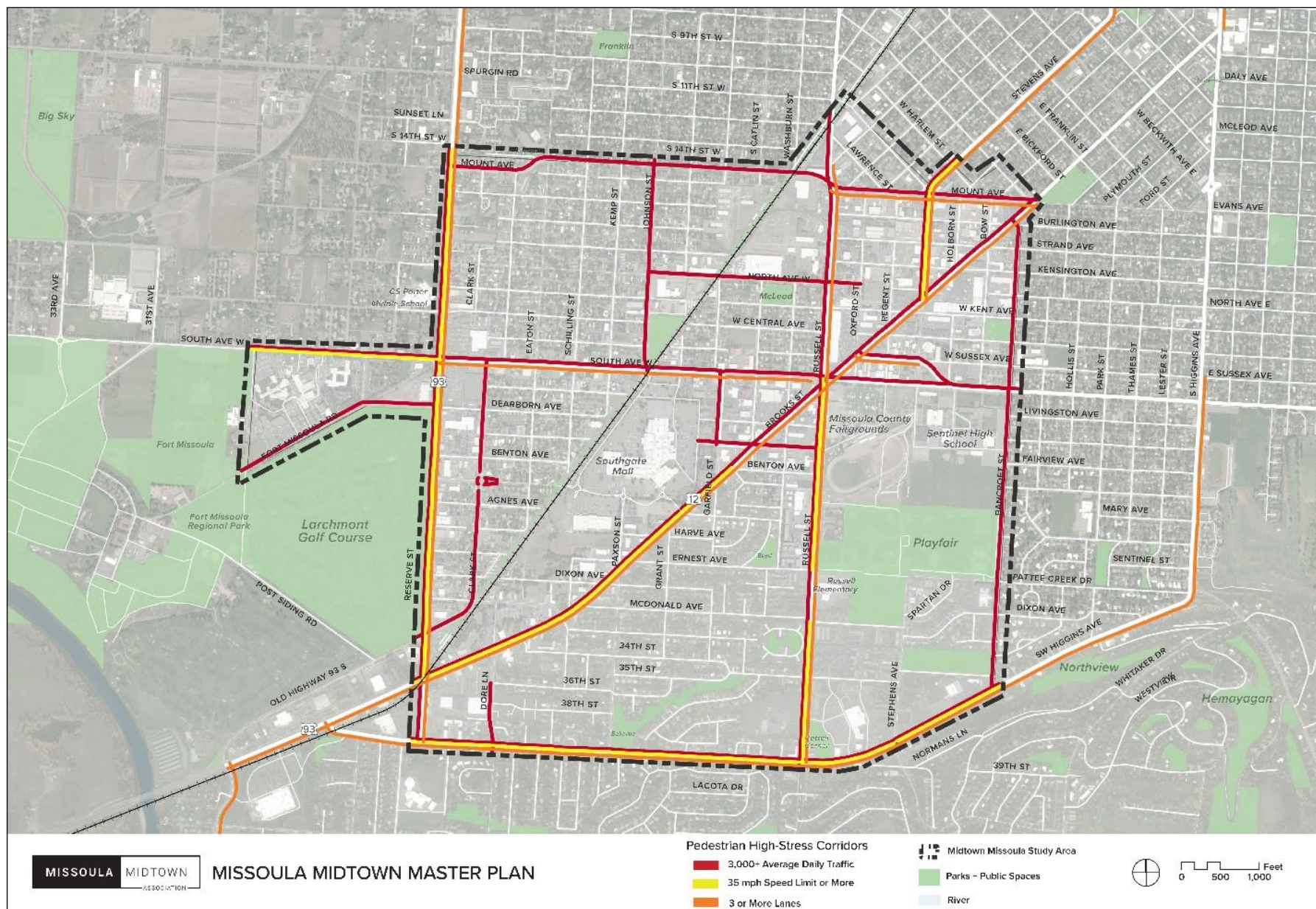
The existing pedestrian network reveals many opportunities to optimize connectivity and access for those walking and using assistive mobility devices, such as wheelchairs. There are many missing links in the Midtown area's pedestrian network.

Sidewalks

Missoula Connect (2021) reported that only 40 percent of Missoula city streets had sidewalks on at least one side. Today, there are several pockets of missing and inadequate sidewalks across the city, especially in the midtown area. As of the 2018 Missoula Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan, neighborhoods with the highest rates of lower quality sidewalk conditions included Two Rivers (3 percent poor-quality or failing sidewalks and 13 percent fair-quality) and Franklin to the Fort (1 percent poor-quality or failing and 34 percent fair-quality). The 2018 Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan designated Franklin to the Fort and Southgate Triangle as high-priority areas based on a Pedestrian Priority Needs Assessment.

High-Stress Pedestrian Corridors

Much of the pedestrian data available for this review is not substantial nor recent enough to devise a methodology for determining Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress. However, Map 3 uses roadway speeds, average daily traffic volume, and number of lanes to illustrate which corridors have features that may contribute to stressful pedestrian environments. The characteristics of Reserve Street, Brooks Street from Reserve Street to Denton Avenue, Russell Street, and Stevens Avenue have the highest speeds, average daily traffic, and number of lanes of any corridor in the midtown area. This aligns with crash data spanning 10 years from 2007-2017 that reveals that most crashes involving pedestrians during that time frame occurred on Russell Street and Brooks Street (2007-2017 *Missoula Crash Data, City of Missoula*).



Bicycling in Midtown Missoula

Missoula's bicycle facilities earned the City a Gold-Level Bike Friendly Community designation in 2012 (awarded by the League of American Bicyclists). However, there is still a need, especially in the Midtown area, to improve conditions for bicycling.

Bicycle Facilities

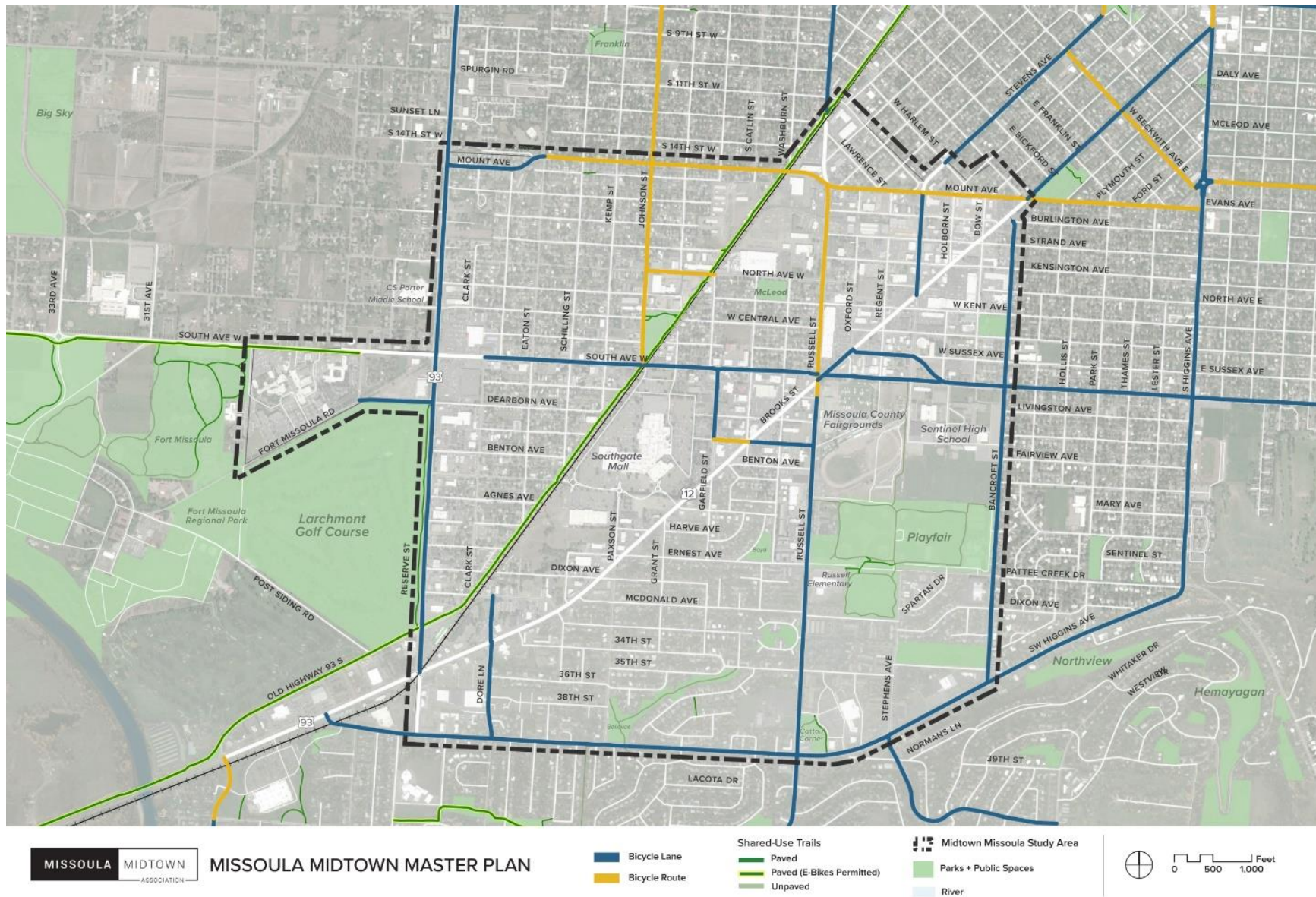
The 2018 Missoula Bicycle Facilities Master Plan introduced the Low-Stress Bicycle Network Connectivity map for the City of Missoula and showed no existing facilities labeled as "high-comfort." Map 4 displays the Midtown area's bicycle facilities as they exist today. There are evident opportunities to increase the number of dedicated and separated bicycle lanes in the northern and southwestern parts of the Midtown area and provide better connections from trails to the existing on-road network.

Bicycle Level of Stress

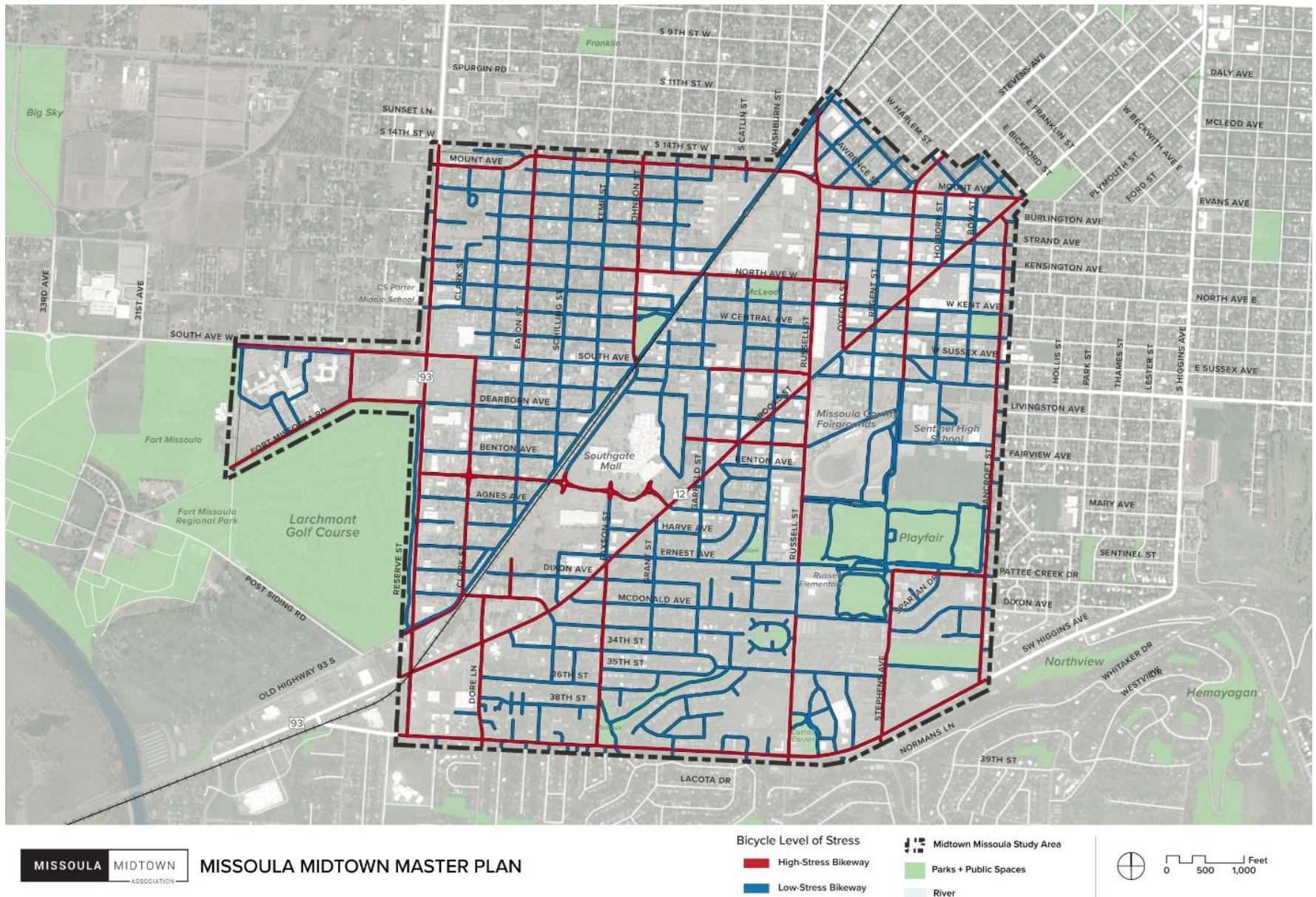
A Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) analysis was completed for the bicycle network and is illustrated in Map 5. The LTS analyzes roadway conditions in relation to the bicycle network. The analysis considered:

- Presence of a bicycle facility and facility type
- Number of adjacent roadway lanes
- Presence of adjacent roadway centerline
- Average Daily Traffic Volume
- Presence of street parking on adjacent roadway (assumed)
- Speed limit of adjacent roadway

Several of the corridors in the midtown area identified as high-stress align with crash data that reveals that the majority of crashes involving bicyclists from 2007-2017 occurred on Mountain Avenue, Reserve Street, Brooks Street, Russell Street, and South Avenue W (*2007-2017 Missoula Crash Data, City of Missoula*). Shifting focus away from high-traffic arterials and collectors and onto local roads and off-street trail expansions will help build out the low-stress network.



Map 4: Existing Bicycle Network. Source: Missoula County, 2022.



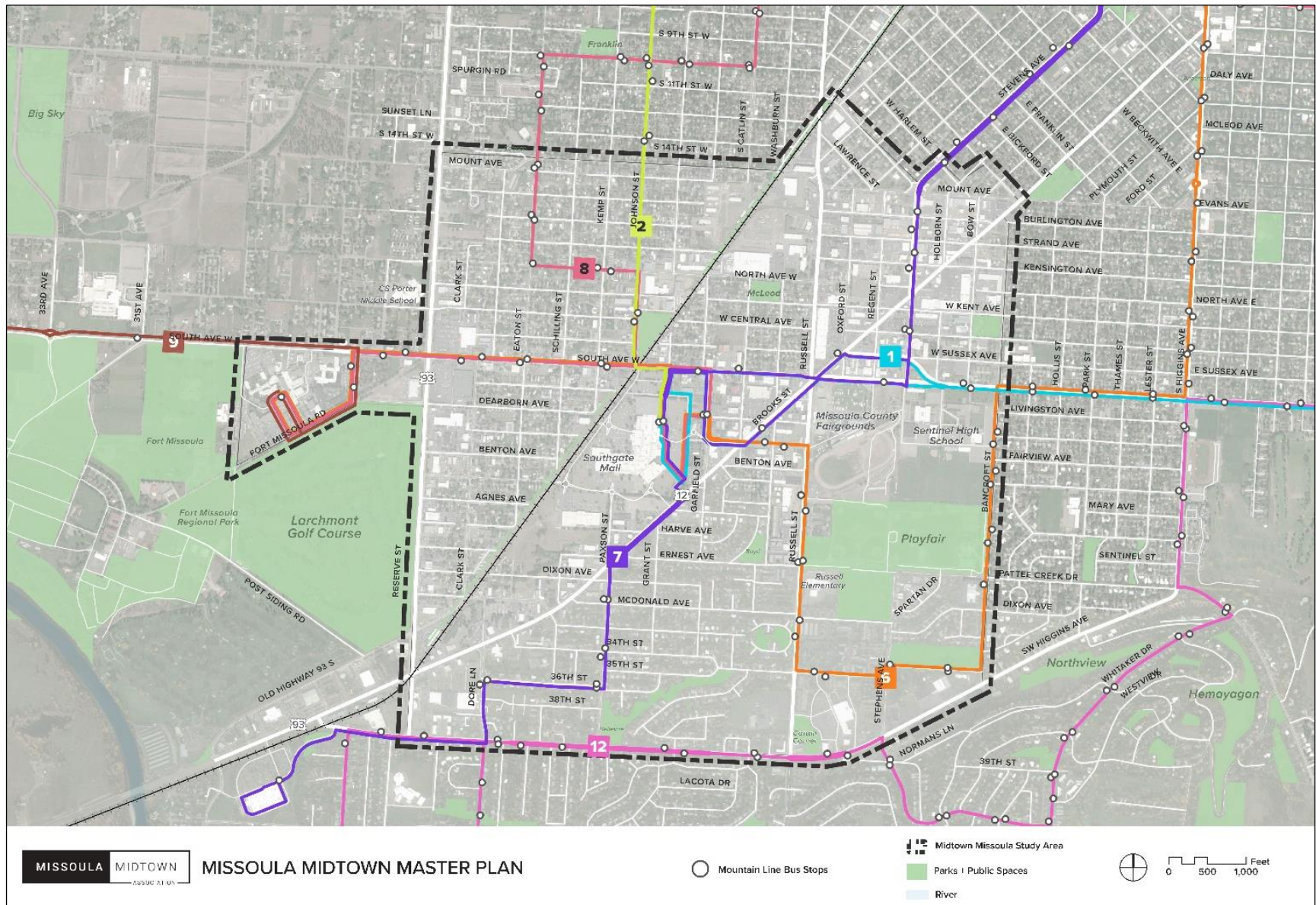
Map 5: Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress. Source: Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2022..

Riding the Bus in Midtown Missoula

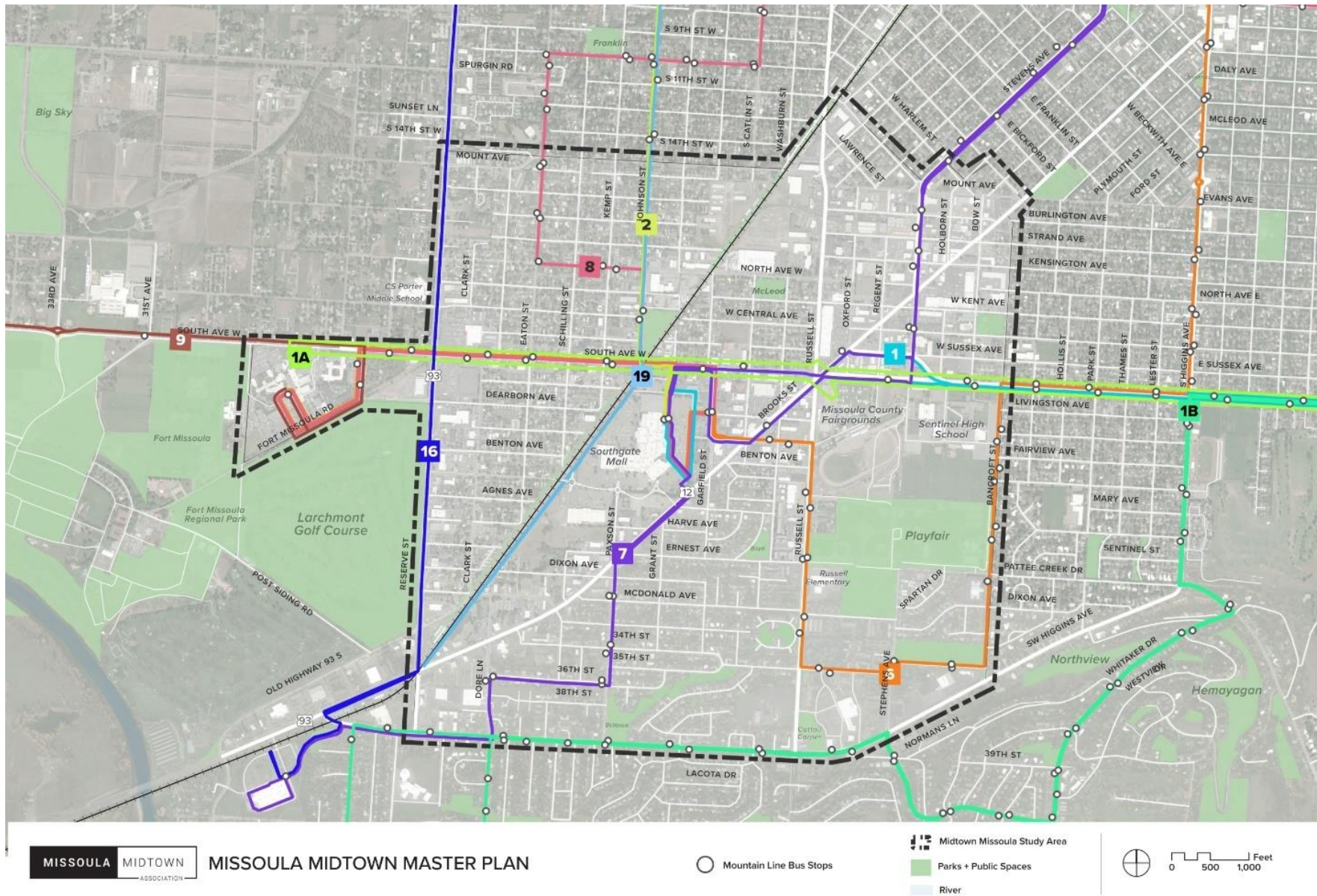
Missoula's transit system, the Mountain Line, is operated by the Missoula Urban Transportation District (MUTD) is an impressive staple of the community. Its 2021 Outstanding Public Transportation System of the Year award is a tribute to the effort the agency has put forth to expand the system over the last decade. The Mountain Line was introduced in 2012, followed by zero-fare service that began in 2015 and increased ridership by 70 percent. Mountain Line has 12 routes (7 operating through the Midtown area (Map 6)) and offers Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service and a Senior Van. Nearly 90 percent of Missoula residents live within a half-mile of a bus stop, and the Mountain Line is working towards improving bus service and access significantly over the next several decades.

In 2022, Mountain Line added six electric buses, officially making its fleet of buses 40 percent electric. A \$10 million grant that was awarded to Mountain Line in August 2022 will allow the agency to add 10 more electric buses. In 2022, Mountain Line also began its first Sunday service, increasing overall service by 30 percent, and it plans to expand many of the existing MUTD routes, adding 9 new routes to the system by 2043 (Map 7). This is made possible by the mill levy increase that passed in November 2020, which estimates that \$3 million will be raised annually to support the Mountain Line sustain Sunday service, expand current weekday and Saturday service, increase frequency, enhance the Zero-Fare Program, and support purchases of electric buses.

Sixty-eight new accessible boarding areas are being added to existing Mountain Line stops across Missoula, and many bus stops are planned to be relocated to optimize safety for passengers traveling to and from their stop.



Map 6: Existing Transit Routes and Stops. Source: MUTD, 2022.



Map 7: Planned Transit Routes. Source: MUTD, 2022

Key Findings

The analysis of the street, active transportation, and transit networks, and findings presented in this document, highlight barriers to mobility in the Midtown area. Safety, connectivity, and accessibility barriers include:

- High-traffic, high-crash corridors and intersections.
- Missing and intermittent sidewalks throughout the study area, especially in Franklin to the Fort.
- Auto-centric land uses and large blocks that impede mobility and connectivity.
- Adequate access but poor connectivity from existing trails to other local trails and to on-road road facilities.
- Lack of connections from active transportation facilities to bus stops.

Opportunities for System Improvements

Expanding the Bicycle Network onto Low-Stress Network

Reassess how to expand the existing bicycle network to the low-stress network using greenways and dedicated bicycle lanes recommended in the 2017 Bicycle Master Plan and Missoula Connect. Local streets, which are most often low volume and low speed, offer the basics for creating ideal biking and walking environments. Most of the Midtown area's bicycle facilities occur on some of the area's busiest, most dangerous streets. There is an opportunity to enhance the bicycle facilities on these streets to support traffic calming and expand connectivity. However, focus on potential new facilities should be shifted to local residential roads and existing trails to support the low-stress network.

Advancing Mode Shift by Focusing on Shorter Trips

Data indicates that most people drive to work and school when trips are less than 10 minutes long. To support citywide climate change and mode shift goals (changing habits to get people to drive less and use active modes of transportation to travel), there is an opportunity to focus on shorter trips that occur within the Missoula Midtown Master Plan study area and to understand what it would take to get more people travelling less than three miles to choose active transportation over a personal vehicle. This also means creating a more robust transit system that is connected to the active transportation network.

Improving Connections Across Major Roadways

Mountain Avenue, Reserve Street, Brooks Street, Russell Street, and South Avenue West are just some of the major corridors in the Midtown area that are significant barriers to mobility. There is an opportunity to identify ways to better connect people along and across these arterial corridors.

Other Opportunities in Midtown Missoula

- Reduce crashes and congestion by improving intersections and managing demand and roadway circulation.
- Determine how shared micromobility may fit in the Midtown area to connect people to activity centers and transit stops.
- Identify new routes that connect trail systems to existing or planned on-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Key Findings

- Eight water main improvement projects that will provide service to non-served properties and improve fire flows for some of the limited flow hydrants have been identified.
- The City of Missoula 2019 Water System Master Plan identified approximately 16 water mains in Midtown as being over 75 years old or of a non-desirable pipe material and are targeted for replacement.
- There are no sewer projects within Midtown identified in the City of Missoula 2019 Wastewater Facility Plan.
- The majority of the Midtown consists of gravel soils, overlain with loam. These soils are conducive to use of infiltration sumps for stormwater disposal in accordance with City Standards.

Public Utilities Review

In order to understand the available public utility services in the Plan Area, available information was reviewed, including maps of existing sewer, water, and storm drain facilities as well as the current City of Missoula Facility Plans.

Existing Facilities Overview

Public Water Supply

The City of Missoula provides the public water supply within the Plan Area. Source water comes from multiple groundwater supply wells, and distribution is through a network of mains. The area is within the City's South Pressure Zone, served by elevated storage reservoirs located outside of the Plan Area. Water mains, of various size, exist throughout the Plan Area and the majority of the properties are connected to City water service. Water distribution consists of a series of looped water mains with some dead-end mains.

The majority of existing fire hydrants have flows of greater than 1,500 gallons per minute. Fire hydrants off dead-end, six-inch main have limited flows ranging from 1,000-1,500 gallons per minute with some hydrants having flows less than 1,000 gallons per minute.

Many of the water mains in the area are six-inch mains. Larger water mains are generally located in Russell Street, South Avenue, the Southgate Mall Area, and a main located west of the mall, running north-south through various streets. These mains range in size from 10-inch to 16-inch.

The Missoula Redevelopment Agency has reviewed the water distribution network in URD III with City Public Works and has identified eight water main improvement projects that will provide service to non-served properties and improve fire flows for some of the limited flow hydrants.

The City of Missoula 2018 Water System Master Plan defines planning criteria and projected water demands for the City water system. The Master Plan identified approximately 16 water mains in the Plan Area as being over 75 years old or of a non-desirable pipe material and are targeted for replacement.

Wastewater

The plan area is within the City of Missoula Wastewater Service Boundary and sewer service is provided by the City. The collection system generally consists of eight-inch sewer mains providing service to most of the properties in the Plan Area. Larger truck lines or sewer interceptors are located in Reserve Street, South Avenue, Russell Street, Pattee Creek Drive, and a short portion of McDonald Avenue. All sewer lines lead to the City of Missoula Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The majority of the area that may be conducive for redevelopment or infill is served by gravity sewer mains. A large existing residential area in the southern portion of the Plan Area is served by STEP sewer mains. The City of Missoula is generally not in favor of new STEP sewer connections.

The City of Missoula 2019 Wastewater Facility Plan defines planning criteria and projected wastewater flows for the City wastewater system. There are not sewer projects within the Plan Area identified in the Sewer Facility Plan.

Stormwater

There is no regional storm drain collection system serving the Plan Area. The only storm drain collection lines are located in Reserve Street, the southern portion of Brooks Street, the southern portion of Higgins Avenue, and the Pattee Creek line running through Pattee Creek Drive/Russell Street/39th Street. For the majority of the Plan Area, storm runoff is handled with infiltration sumps. The majority of the Plan Area consists of gravel soils, overlain with loam. These soils are conducive to use of infiltration sumps for stormwater disposal in accordance with City Standards.

Electrical and Natural Gas

Electric and gas service for the Plan Area is provided by NorthWestern Energy. Electrical service is generally provided with overhead lines with some buried lines, mostly around the Southgate Mall Area. Three phase electricity is available and used by some of the commercial buildings within the Plan Area.

Existing gas mains are located throughout the plan area. One-inch gas mains generally provide service to properties in the Plan Area, with larger gas mains located and providing service for

most of the properties within the Plan Area. Larger, four-inch to and eight-inch mains located along Russell Street, Brooks Street, Paxon Street, South Avenue, and 39th Street.

Communication

Nine different communication companies currently have facilities or provide service in the Missoula area. These providers offer a range of telephone and internet services, including wireless, DSL, satellite, cable, and fiber optic. Both wired and wireless infrastructure is ultimately connected to the internet backbone, which runs along Interstate 90. Broadband network corridors within the Plan Area have been identified on Reserve Street, Brooks Street, Russell Street, and the western portion of South Avenue. Service providers in the Missoula area include:

- AT&T Mobility LLC
- Blackfoot Communications, Inc.
- Verizon Wireless
- Charter Communications, Inc.
- Cybernet1, Inc.
- Level 3 Communications, Inc.
- Rocky Mountain Internet
- SpeedConnect LLC
- CenturyLink

DATE: 09/21/2022
TO: Midtown Missoula Association
FROM: WGM Consulting Engineers
SUBJECT: Midtown Infrastructure Audit (Task 3.7)

Key Takeaways

- Eight water main improvement projects that will provide service to non-served properties and improve fire flows for some of the limited flow hydrants have been identified.
- The City of Missoula 2019 Water System Master Plan identified approximately 16 water mains in Midtown as being over 75 years old or of a non-desirable pipe material and are targeted for replacement.
- There are no sewer projects within Midtown identified in the City of Missoula 2019 Wastewater Facility Plan.
- The majority of the Midtown consists of gravel soils, overlain with loam. These soils are conducive to use of infiltration sumps for stormwater disposal in accordance with City Standards.

Public Utilities Review

In order to understand the available public utility services in the Plan Area, available information was reviewed, including maps of existing sewer, water, and storm drain facilities as well as the current City of Missoula Facility Plans.

Existing Facilities Overview

Public Water Supply

Public water supply within the Plan Area is provided by the City of Missoula. Source water comes from multiple groundwater supply wells and distribution is through a network of mains. The area is within the City's South Pressure Zone, served by elevated storage reservoirs located outside of the Plan Area. Water mains, of various size, exist throughout the Plan Area and the majority of the properties are connected to City water service. Water distribution consists of a series of looped water mains with some dead-end mains.

The majority of existing fire hydrants have flows of greater than 1,500 gallons per minute. Fire hydrants off dead-end, six-inch main have limited flows ranging from 1,000-1,500 gallons per minute, with some hydrants having flows less than 1,000 gallons per minute.

Many of the water mains in the area are six-inch mains. Larger water mains are generally located in Russell Street, South Avenue, the Southgate Mall Area, and a main located west of the mall, running north-south through various streets. These mains range in size from 10-inch to 16-inch.

The Missoula Redevelopment Agency has reviewed the water distribution network in URD III with City Public Works and has identified eight water main improvement projects that will provide service to non-served properties and improve fire flows for some of the limited flow hydrants.

The City of Missoula 2018 Water System Master Plan defines planning criteria and projected water demands for the City water system. The Master Plan identified approximately 16 water mains in the Plan Area as being over 75 years old or of a non-desirable pipe material and are targeted for replacement.

Wastewater

The plan area lies within the City of Missoula Wastewater Service Boundary, and sewer service is provided by the City. The collection system generally consists of eight-inch sewer mains providing service to most of the properties in the Plan Area. Larger truck lines or sewer interceptors are located in Reserve Street, South Avenue, Russell Street, Pattee Creek Drive, and a short portion of McDonald Avenue. All sewer lines lead to the City of Missoula Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The majority of the area that may be conducive for redevelopment or infill is served by gravity sewer mains. A large existing residential area in the southern portion of the Plan Area is served by STEP sewer mains. The City of Missoula is generally not in favor of new STEP sewer connections.

The City of Missoula 2019 Wastewater Facility Plan defines planning criteria and projected wastewater flows for the City wastewater system. The Sewer Facility Plan identifies no sewer projects within the Plan Area.

Stormwater

There is no regional storm drain collection system serving the Plan Area. The only storm drain collection lines are located in Reserve Street, the southern portion of Brooks Street, the southern portion of Higgins Avenue and the Pattee Creek line running through Pattee Creek Drive/Russell Street/39th Street. Storm runoff, for the majority of the Plan Area, is handled with infiltration sumps. The majority of the Plan Area consists of gravel soils, overlain with loam. These soils are conducive to use of infiltration sumps for stormwater disposal in accordance with City Standards.

Electrical and Natural Gas

NorthWestern Energy provides electric and gas service for the Plan Area. Electrical service is generally provided with overhead lines with some buried lines, mostly around the Southgate Mall Area. Three phase electricity is available and used by some of the commercial buildings within the Plan Area.

Existing gas mains are located throughout the Plan Area. One-inch gas mains generally provide service to properties in the Plan Area with larger gas mains located and providing service for

most of the properties within the Plan Area. Larger, four-inch to eight-inch mains located along Russell Street, Brooks Street, Paxon Street, South Avenue, and 39th Street.

Communication

Nine different communication companies currently have facilities or provide service in the Missoula area. These providers offer a range of telephone and internet services including wireless, DSL, satellite, cable, and fiber optic. Both wired and wireless infrastructure is ultimately connected to the internet backbone, which runs along Interstate 90. Broadband network corridors within the Plan Area have been identified on Reserve Street, Brooks Street, Russell Street, and the western portion of South Avenue. Service providers in the Missoula area include:

- AT&T Mobility LLC
- Blackfoot Communications, Inc.
- Verizon Wireless
- Charter Communications, Inc.
- Cybernet1, Inc.
- Level 3 Communications, Inc.
- Rocky Mountain Internet
- SpeedConnect LLC
- CenturyLink

DATE: 09/21/2022
TO: Missoula Midtown Association
FROM: Rick Williams Consulting
SUBJECT: Midtown Parking and Mobility Best Practices (Task 3.8)

This memo provides an overview of existing parking conditions within Midtown, along with a review of several best practice examples from peer and aspirational communities. Parking supply and management strategies are presented for consideration and discussion.

Summary of Existing Conditions

The following information was compiled through interviews with city staff as well as the project discovery roundtable meeting.

Review of Previous Plans

Brooks Street Corridor Study, 2016

Parking was identified as a challenge in just a few specific locations in the Brooks Street Corridor. In general, the locations where parking is most problematic today are southeast of Brooks Street where major employers are located on constrained parcels that abut residential development. As redevelopment and infill occur, additional parking challenges can be anticipated.

To address these concerns over time, we recommend a more proactive approach to parking supply and management throughout the corridor, with alternatives to the parcel by- parcel approach. Now is the time to put in place the tools.

- **Shared parking is allowed and can continue to be part of the long-term solution as vertical mixed use becomes more prevalent.** Both shared parking and provision of cross-access between individual lots should become the norm in the Brooks Corridor. We recommend requiring cross-access in all new parking lot development.
- **Create parking district to manage the parking supply, and to create a mechanism for fee in-lieu payments** on parcels where adequate parking cannot be practicably accommodated. Payments can be earmarked to acquire property, and construct parking, and support alternative transportation solutions in the corridor.
- **Identify priority locations for structured parking** and move to acquire and construct these as revenue from the parking district allows.
- **A Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategy** should be developed for the Brooks Street Corridor. The Midtown Association should consider a TDM program to help educate employees, residents, and users of the corridor about transportation options that do not require automobile parking, such as walking, bicycling, and the use of the future expanded transit.

Context and Character

Midtown is generally an auto-oriented area with very limited pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, especially east-west connections across Brooks Street. This auto-orientation makes Midtown an easy area to access by car but a very difficult place to park once to visit multiple businesses or destinations. There is a perception that businesses and activity nodes are disconnected, without an easy way to travel *within* Midtown by any means other than vehicle. In some cases, it feels safer to drive short distances (such as across Brooks Street) rather than to walk, reducing the potential for “pop-in” trips that are much easier when potential customers are walking between nearby destinations on foot.

Southgate Mall and the Fairgrounds/sports fields are key regional destinations, but there are few other destinations for regional visitors to eat, stay, or recreate. However, as Midtown continues to grow, there will be opportunities to better connect the area and create a more defined sense of place moving forward. Infill development, additional housing, and new small-scale retail and restaurants, if combined with improved pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and fewer large, underutilized parking, lots may help to create a destination for regional visitors to come, stay, explore, and enjoy.

Parking Management

Parking is not currently regulated in Midtown. In other words, there are no on-street time restrictions, meters, or enforcement of any kind. Most businesses have on-site private parking for their customers and employees (in part due to code requirements), and the on-street system is not perceived to be constrained enough to warrant active management. A detailed catalogue of on and off-street parking within the study area has not been completed, and an occupancy study would be needed to assess peak demands. It is likely that the on-street system is largely unconstrained and could be considered an underutilized asset, likely with some capacity to absorb additional demand, if needed, from additional small-scale development with little to no off-street parking.

Just as there is currently no on-street parking management in the commercial areas, the same is true in the residential neighborhoods within the study area. Maintaining priority access for residents may need to be considered if demand for on-street parking from the commercial areas increases in the future, creating spill over conflicts between residents and non-resident users.

Code and Parking Requirements

Missoula is one of only a handful of small to medium sized cities in the U.S. that have eliminated minimum parking requirements for new development within Downtown. In downtowns, this is generally considered a parking management best practice, as it provides developers with the flexibility to build the amount of parking needed to meet local demands.

Outside of the Central Business District, Missoula has a detailed list of minimum parking requirements by land use. More than 80 land use types are listed across five categories: Residential, Public/Civic, Commercial, Industrial, and Transportation Terminals.

Table 1 provides a small sample of common land use types. In some cases, the table shows different units than what is provided in code to allow comparisons more easily (for example, 4.2 stalls per 1,000 ft² Gross Floor Area instead of 1 space per 240 ft² Gross Floor Area, as listed in code).

Table 1: Example Minimum Parking Requirements by Land Use

Land Use Category	Ratio	Units
Residential		
Detached	1.0 – 2.0	Per dwelling unit
Multi-unit	0.5 – 2.0	Per dwelling unit
Commercial		
Restaurant	0.25	Per seat
	+ 0.5	Per employee
Grocery	2.1	Per 1,000 ft ² GFA
Retail sales	2.8	Per 1,000 ft ² GFA
General office	2.1	Per 1,000 ft ² GFA
Medical office	4.2	Per 1,000 ft ² GFA
Hotel	1.0	Per room
	+ 0.5	Per employee
Industrial		
Manufacturing/Production	1.0	Per employee

Maximum Parking Allowed

Non-residential uses requiring 100 or more parking spaces may not provide more than **4.3 spaces per 1,000 ft²** gross leasable floor area (GLA).

General Reductions

The following reductions are available to all development, regardless of the specific zone or overlay district:

- **Long-Term Bicycle Parking Credits¹:** Projects that provide more bicycle parking than required by code may reduce the required off-street parking by 0.125 stall for each long-term bicycle parking space in excess of requirements, *up to a 25 percent reduction*.
- **Shared Parking (Different Use Categories):** Applicants may provide a shared parking agreement demonstrating how parking will be shared among different users, and received *one* of the following reductions:
 - *20 percent reduction* to the retail sale-related use if shared with an office use.
 - *30 percent reduction* to residential parking requirements if shared with a retail sales-related use (excluding lodging uses, eating, and drinking establishments and entertainment-related uses).

¹ Chapter 20.60.010.C.5.

- *50 percent reduction* to residential parking requirements if shared with an office use.
- **Shared Parking (Different Hours of Operation):** *Up to 90 percent* of the required parking for a daytime use (such as administrative offices or daytime retail sales), may be supplied by a nighttime or Sunday use (such as religious assembly facilities or entertainment venues).

The bicycle reduction may be combined with one of the shared parking reductions; however, *only one* shared parking reduction may be used. Alternatively, an applicant may elect to prepare a shared parking analysis to demonstrate a need for even less off-street parking. Subject to certain limitation, some projects may be able to use off-site parking located within 500 feet of the entrance as part of the shared parking supply.

Site-Specific Reductions

The zoning officer may approve exceptions and waivers to minimum off-street parking ratios in the following cases:

- Rehabilitation or reuse of buildings on the National Register of Historic Places
- Buildings designated as local cultural resources
- Contributing buildings in National Register Historic Districts
- Buildings in locally designated historic districts.

Within Midtown, portions of the Missoula County Fairgrounds and Fort Missoula are included on Missoula's National Register Historic Districts.

Zoning and Overlay Reductions

Several parking reductions are available within certain zones or overlay districts. Within Midtown, the following reductions are applicable.

B1 Zoning

- **Retail Sales Reduction:** No off-street parking required for the first 1,000 ft² GFA of a project.²

Design Excellence Overlay (Corridor Typology 1, 2, and 3)³

- **On-Street Parking Credits:** On-street spaces that immediately abut the property and are 23-feet in length may count towards off-street requirements.
- **Adaptive Reuse:** *No parking is required* for the adaptive reuse for non-residential purposes of any existing building that is both 4,000 ft² or smaller (GFA) and at least 50 years old.

² Chapter 20.60.010.C.2.

³ Chapter 20.25.080 - /DE, Design Excellence Overlay

- **Small Non-Residential Projects:** When calculating required parking, *no off-street parking is required for the first 1,500 ft² of a project*; however, the project must provide at least 50 percent of the overall parking requirement by the base code standards).
 - Only applicable to Corridor Typology 1 and 2
- **Transit Reduction:** Projects located with 1,250 feet of a transit stop may reduce the required off-street parking *by 10 percent (Corridor Typology 3) to 15 percent (Corridor Typology 1 and 2)*.
- **Bike Lane Reduction:** Projects located adjacent to a bicycle lane may reduce the required off-street parking *by 15 percent (Corridor Typology 3) to 20 percent (Corridor Typology 1 and 2)*.
- **Bike Parking Reduction:** Projects that provide more bicycle parking than required by code may reduce the required off-street parking 1 stall for each bicycle parking space in excess of requirements, *up to a 25 percent reduction*.

Case Studies

The consultant team, in coordination with the Missoula Midtown Association and area stakeholders, selected **three** peer cities to review their parking environments and parking management policies and practices. Peer cities were selected for their relative similarity to Missoula Midtown, characteristics such as size, proximity to downtown, prominent university community, commercial corridor focus, limited parking management, and abutting residential neighborhoods.

The evaluated peer cities were:

- Moscow, Idaho
- Flagstaff, Arizona
- Bellingham, Washington

Table 1: Case Study Summary Matrix – Similarities to Missoula

City	Population (2021)	University/ College	Commercial Corridor	Area	Large Attractions
Missoula, MT	74,829	University of Montana	Brooks Ave.	2.2 miles ²	The Missoula County Fairground; Southgate Mall; Fort Missoula
Moscow, ID	25,763	University of Idaho	Highway 95	>1 miles ²	Vacant land, grain silos, industrial uses
Flagstaff, AZ	76,038	Northern Arizona University	S. Milton Rd/ Route 66	1.4 miles ²	Flagstaff Aquaplex; Northern Arizona University
Bellingham, WA	92,289	Western Washington University	Barkley Blvd/ Woburn St.	>2 miles ²	Regal Barkley Village, Haggen Grocery Store, Cascade Joinery

Locational Context

Moscow, ID

The Urban Mix Commercial Zone area is located between the Downtown (east) and the University of Idaho (west). The changes to policy and code of the zoned area are intended to help create a transitional geographic area between the more urban/dense Downtown and the area around the University of Idaho.

Prior to 2005, this area was known for vacant lots, railroad tracks and an old grain silo. In order to change that landscape, a new zoning designation was instituted which reduced parking restrictions, incentivizing compact parking (spaces), and incentives for increased bicycle parking in an effort to encourage building development and promote transportation options.

Flagstaff, AZ

The more suburban-style commercial corridor is located just south of Flagstaff's bustling downtown district. The area is separated by a major mainline railroad (which causes vehicle backs up traversing the alignment several times a day) and a (famous) busy state highway, Route 66.

The area abuts Northern Arizona University (to the south), home to nearly 30,000 students. The corridor is also surrounded by neighborhoods with both single and multifamily family housing.

Bellingham, WA

Located a few miles to the east of downtown Bellingham and Western Washington University, the Barkley Village has a number of zoning designations. Currently undergoing a Master Planning effort, the area is envisioned to become more pedestrian friendly in the future, with fewer surface parking lots and more mixed-use development.

In the 1970s, the 250-acre area was largely vacant land and agricultural uses. Over time, Barkley Village connected with the downtown via large roadways including E Sunset Drive and Barkley Boulevard. In the 1980s, large retailers, industrial uses and some apartments/condos anchored the auto-centric development. The area is currently viewed as ripe for development and along with the master plan effort should result in parking reductions if transportation demand management elements are provided.

Parking Practices of Note

For the purposes of this review, rather than listing out all the elements of each peer cities approach to parking management, the team thought it would be more effective to share the outstanding or unique components of their parking practices. The following parking practices are broken out into topic areas; each practice's corresponding city is noted at the beginning of each paragraph.

Urban Renewal/Zoning

- **[Moscow]** In 2008, 'The Legacy Crossing *Urban Renewal*' district was established in this area to accelerate development. The 163-acre district targeted this underutilized blighted area to spur more rapid land use, transitioning the area into something more compact and economically vibrant.

District revenues are designated for annual beautification and livability development, which includes street trees, pedestrian scale lighting, signage and wayfinding amenities, and street furniture.

- **[Moscow]** In 2012,⁴ Legacy Crossing Overlay District Design Guidelines were created for the area. The standards require “an increased level of attention and consideration of site ingress and egress; building architectural style, placement and massing; public streetscape design and function; internal vehicular and pedestrian circulation; parking provision and management.”

Off-street parking requirements followed which reduced code requirements.

Furthermore, the design overlay plan encourages minimizing the amount off-street surface lot parking in favor of building parking “underneath, behind or to the side of all principal structures, or within parking structures.”

- **[Bellingham]** Barkley Village Urban Plan (similar to a master plan) is an effort which will result in established guidelines that more accurately reflect a unified vision of the district with the hope of spurring redevelopment.

Developments will be able to waive the off-street parking requirements either 1) on-street parking adjacent to the development is built/available, or 2) a parking plan and/or district is created.

Code/Parking Requirements

- **[Moscow]** Within the Urban Mixed Commercial Zone, specific land uses have reduced or eliminated parking minimums:
 - Residential – 50 percent of standard requirement
 - Hotels – 1 stall per room
 - Convention/meeting space – 1 per 10 fixed seats + 1 per 100 sf² space without seating
 - Office, retail, and other uses – no minimum parking specified
- **[Moscow/Bellingham]** Parking standards allow for a reduction in minimum required parking in the form of “joint use” or shared parking for specific complementary land uses (non-conflicting peak use periods⁵).
- **[Flagstaff]** Residential developments built after 2017 must provide adequate parking onsite. Residents are not eligible for on-street permits
- **[Bellingham]** *Unbundled Parking*⁶ means that parking required of a project is not assigned (or “bundled”) into a building square footage lease; rather is sold or leased separately. In other words, the parking built can then be made available to any on or off-site use, on a fee or lease basis, to provide more opportunities to satisfy the local parking demand, particularly if the built parking is underutilized by site tenants.

⁴ Later amended in 2015.

⁵ As long as there is no substantial conflict between the principle operating hours of the buildings, structures or uses.

⁶ This option is only available in commercial and industrial zones.

- **[Bellingham]** Parking reductions are allowed through additional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs such as implementation of a shared car service (i.e., ZipCar), enhanced bike storage facilities, purchase of WTA transit passes, installation of covered transit shelters and off-site pedestrian infrastructure improvements.

Permits

- **[Flagstaff]** Residential Neighborhood Zones were established where half the block is for residential permits and the other half is either time-limited or no limit depending on the area. This helps to balance competing access for residents and other users (employees, customers/visitors).
 - Zones must be initiated by resident petition
 - 1 permit per water meter (at no cost to residents)
 - Additional permits = \$250 per year (very few takers)
- **[Flagstaff]** Employee permits are \$45 per month—though reduced during COVID to encourage more usage by merchants and employees
 - Permits can be used off-street in designated lots and in some select on-street locations

Enforcement

- **[Flagstaff]** Enforcement is necessary to ensure compliance with neighborhood zone restrictions. Hours of enforcement are shifted later than typical municipalities, beginning at 9:00 AM and extending until 8:00 PM⁷ on Fridays and Saturdays.

Transportation Demand Management

- **[Flagstaff]** Public transit—VIP Commuter Pass—transit free to downtown employees (also eligible for employee parking permits, not either/or). This program is paid for using parking meter revenues in partnership with transit agency. This is seen as a “win-win” for the city and transit agency.

Revenues

- **[Flagstaff]** Twenty percent of parking revenues go into a “lockbox” account that can only be used for new supply. Rather than building a new facility outright, they intend to partner with a developer to incorporate additional public stalls as part of a private

⁷ Used to extend until 10:00 on Friday and Saturday nights before COVID. Regular enforcement ends at 5:00 PM Sunday through Thursday.

project. They will be opportunistic when the right circumstance/location/opportunity comes along.⁸

- **[Bellingham]** To encourage the development of residential units, in particular affordable housing within urban villages, the City of Bellingham provides a property tax exemption credit for multi-family housing. The program provides incentive of either an 8 or 12-year property tax exemption on the assessed improvements that create 4 or more additional housing units. The 8-year option is for all market rate housing. The 12-year option is offered for projects that designate at least 20 percent of the units as affordable.

Shared Advice

Parking professionals within the peer cities were asked to share words of advice for other communities considering refinements to their parking practices (i.e., policies, management, code). Some of those comments are shared here.

- **Be patient**, development takes time even with development-friendly code/policy changes
- **Be flexible**, to ensure code/policy is reflective of the desired goals and guidelines of the affected community
- **Incent change** to encourage limited parking and more multi-modal-friendly living
- **Engage** the business community (e.g., downtown business alliance) in terms of understanding their needs, issues, and how to best support their enterprises—a critical element for success
- **Public transportation** key to alleviating parking/traffic congestion, thereby saving spaces for visitors and/or customers
- **Embrace active on-street parking** for short-term visitor parking.
- **Build complete streets** to create a pedestrian oriented environment, complete with sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, etc.
- **Market trends** should drive off-street parking development (not high minimums).

⁸ This concept is very similar to an off-street shared use parking opportunity program in Portland, Oregon's NW Parking Management District.

Summary of Viable Strategies

To date, no detailed policies, goals, or desired outcomes related to the management parking have been developed for the Midtown area, though the *Brooks Street Corridor Study* (2016) referenced the need for a well-distributed parking supply, consideration of creation of a parking district, and exploring the locations for structured parking. Design guidelines for parking, and other uses, were provided in the *Missoula County Fairgrounds Design Guidelines* (2018), but these do not extend to the larger Midtown area. The code standards (**Code Section 20.60.020**) regulating the amount of parking required for new land use development provide some flexibility for developers, but a minimum amount of parking is required for all new projects.⁹

Discussions with the Missoula Parking Commission indicate the Commission is interested in evaluating more strategic parking management strategies within Midtown as economic and vehicle demand growth evolve. The Commission currently consolidates the management of public parking assets downtown in a best practices format, with a central organization coordinating parking management services under a single parking manager.

A framework for effective parking management begins with five key elements:

- Priority Users
- Zoning Role
- Measuring Performance and Demand
- City's Role in Parking
- Coordinated Management

Arriving at consensus on each of these key elements is critical to the selection and implementation of various parking management tools. How cities and communities approach these elements provides context and definition to what tools are employed and how parking management integrates into the vision for a corridor. It will be very important for the City to work toward internal consensus related to these parking elements and then facilitate consensus through the stakeholder process within each of the corridors to formalize agreement on these elements.

The following strategies provide a sequenced best strategies approach to initiating parking management in the Midtown study area in a manner that establishes a foundation for decision-making that anticipates and responds appropriately to growth.

Strategy 1: Reach Consensus on Priority Users

There should be clear consensus on priority users of the parking system based on local land use characteristics, particularly for publicly controlled on and off-street resources. With a clear

⁹ Minimum requirements should be periodically reviewed and calibrated with local demand data to ensure that at no point along the area's development spectrum would the code require more parking than actual demand. This supports an on-going economic environment in which more compact, efficient, and vital land uses can occur.

understanding of who has priority to a particular spot (on or off-street), policies and strategies can be implemented to “get the right user to the right space.” The on-street parking supply is generally fixed but is also often preferred by most user types (visitors, employees, and residents) when it provides the most convenient access to street-fronting buildings. If priority users are prevented from using the supply, then the parking resource is inefficient, which contributes to conflicts between users and is not supportive of off-street parking or alternative mode options.

This process of consensus-building around priority users generally leads to the creation of “Guiding Principles for Parking Management,” in this case for the Midtown Master Plan area. Guiding Principles (priority outcomes) for key areas of parking management can be discussed with consensus agreement. Areas included in priorities can include key management elements that might include:

- Management and Administration
- Policy and Code
- On-street Parking Operations
- Off-street Parking Operations
- Integration with Other Transportation Modes
- Residential Parking Operations
- Communications and Outreach

Priorities should be developed with active participation by those affected by any new Midtown parking management strategies that might be implemented in the future. Many cities accomplish this through facilitated sessions with an advisory committee or work group, comprised of area stakeholders (businesses and residents), a representative business association or Chamber, City staff, City leadership, and other access mode providers (e.g., transit, bicycle community, or Transportation Management Association).

In many best practices cities, similar groups formed to establish priorities and desired outcomes for parking management continue as formal parking advisory committees who periodically review the performance of the public parking system, serve as a sounding board for issues, and act as a liaison to the broader stakeholder community as changes related to parking management priorities are implemented.

Key Challenges

- Establishing and continuously supporting a Midtown Parking Advisory Committee to develop consensus priorities and, subsequently, continuing to serve as a sounding board for implementing priorities and strategies and monitoring outcomes. This would require staff and other resources not currently allocated to the Midtown Master Plan area.

- Midtown is a very large area, which may require establishment of “parking management sub areas” to better reflect unique growth and access patterns over time (see also **Strategy 3**).

Key Opportunities

- A well represented Parking Advisory Committee can assist the City’s Parking Manager in establishing key parking and access management performance measures that would be routinely quantified and tracked.
- Priorities established through community consensus provides the “buy in” necessary when performance and growth thresholds are met and more aggressive parking management strategies become necessary.

Strategy 2: Let Zoning Inform Priorities

Zoning is the most commonly held basis for determining priority use of parking. For instance, if base zoning in an area is residential, then the “priority” for access to any on-street parking in the zoned area would be residents and their guests. If the area is zoned commercial or mixed use, with requirements for active ground floor uses, then the “priority” would be for short-term visitor access to ground floor uses. If an area were zoned industrial, the priority could be for long-term employee parking associated with industrial businesses. Of course there are variations to this, but zoning remains a very simple platform from which to begin the process of prioritizing parking. To this end, management strategies should be directly tied to the priority (e.g., residential/business permit programs for neighborhoods/industrial areas and timed/priced parking in retail/commercial areas where turnover best serves the adjacent land uses).

Key Challenges

- Conflicts with this approach most commonly arise where zoning changes mid-block between commercial and residential.
- This approach can lead to conflict in areas where long-term (non-resident) parkers have become accustomed to parking in neighborhoods for free, where the on-street priority (by zoning) would be residents and their guests. Conversely, in commercial areas, the priority users are generally short-term customers and visitors rather than employees,¹⁰ which requires strategies to move employees off-street.

Key Opportunities

- Simplifies decision-making.

¹⁰ Currently, the “Design Excellence Overlay” allows all projects (residential and non-residential) within the overlay in Midtown to offset on-site parking within adjacent on-street parking. For example, for office and mixed-use residential projects in *commercial districts* (i.e., long-term parkers). Continuing to allow the office and residential offset (versus just an off-set for a site’s visitor demand, could lead developers/owners to interpret the off-set for employee and resident parking as a long-term entitlement to parking on-street, which may not be sustainable in a more constrained future scenario when the priority user of the on-street system may be defined as the short-term visitor.

- Provides an intuitive nexus between a recommended strategy and established user priorities for on-street parking management.

Strategy 3: Measure Performance and Demand

Performance monitoring is an important part of successful parking management. Many cities implement parking programs without setting aside the resources to monitor the outcome of the changes. This makes any evaluation of the results of the program difficult, and decisions to make changes difficult to communicate and justify. The first mistake that is made is not to collect accurate data documenting conditions before the change was enacted. The second mistake is to make so many changes at once, that it is not clear which change is responsible for which impact. A third problem that occurs is that outside influences, such as the state of the economy, other construction projects, or changes in local land use, can mask the results and make it hard to understand what is really happening. A good monitoring program should abide by the following steps:

- Develop a monitoring program prior to implementing any changes in parking policies. Be sure that data is relevant to the dependent and independent variables being monitored.
- Collect solid baseline data of “before” conditions prior to implementing changes.
- If possible, design the parking program and monitoring plan in a way that allows analysis to isolate the impacts of specific policy changes.
- Practice regular (e.g., annual, biennial, etc.) parking data collection and analysis.
- Analyze data within the context of changes in population, employment, and economic activity in a study area.
- Use the monitoring plan and data to help revise and update parking policies as needed.

Key Challenges

- Cost of data collection.
- Midtown is a very large area, which may require establishment of “parking management sub areas” to better reflect unique growth and access patterns over time.

Key Opportunities

- Tracking and communicating system performance, illustrating change between measured operating years, and adjusting strategies in areas where performance targets have been achieved or not met can be a catalyzing element of any city’s parking management program.
- Good data leads to good decision-making. This is especially true when data is tied back to zoning and continued management to accommodate priority users. The City should have a clear sense of its commitment to data collection as appropriate to the parking management district (in this case, Midtown).

Strategy 4: Clearly Define City’s Role in Parking

The complexity and strategic format of any parking management plan is shaped by the role—large or small—that the City itself plays in its implementation. Achieving the City’s goals for urbanizing corridors like Midtown requires changes in land use and density that are well beyond the current status quo for development and parking management in these corridors.

To successfully address these challenges, the City of Missoula will have to play a larger role and take on greater responsibilities than it has historically in this area. This can include policy guidance, adjustments in regulatory standards, active supply management, development of parking supply, and funding. Clear guidance from the City on its role and responsibility in these areas will be necessary to enable appropriate strategy choices going forward.

There are three potential approaches for how to manage parking supply and demand in emerging corridors. The approach that the City selects will have *direct implications for the type of parking strategies that can be implemented over time.*

1. **Status Quo:** Continue the current approach to providing a small amount of on-street parking management and regulate off-street parking through minimum and maximum parking requirements with only minor adjustments.
2. **“Right-size” the System:** In this approach, the City enhances its management of the on-street parking system and provides financial resources as available to facilitate the private sector in providing shared off-street parking. The City also would regularly evaluate parking requirements (minimums and maximums), creating a favorable environment for the private sector to take the lead on providing parking. The City’s role would be limited to actively managing the on-street parking supply (e.g., enforcement, shorter time stays), adjusting regulatory requirements, and providing incentives (both regulatory and financial) to private development.
3. **City Lead:** The City commits to becoming an active owner and manager of shared parking, strategically providing parking on *and off-street* to support redevelopment and existing land uses.

As stated earlier, the City has played a key role in parking management and parking development in the downtown, but not in areas outside the downtown. Clarifying the City’s parking management role will be a key determinant of which strategies get developed and implemented over time in these emerging areas.

Key Challenges

- May require more active management by the City and an Advisory Committee.

- If 2 or 3 (above), will require levels of funding and funding package options that are not currently in place.¹¹

Key Opportunities

- Knowing the City's role in parking (its management and development) sets clear expectations by the development community as regards how the City might, or might not, participate in the development of future parking. This creates a "level playing field" for developers, eliminating project by project evaluations of development that often occurs in other cities.

Strategy 5: Centralize Parking Management

Parking issues are too complex and widespread for status quo approaches to management. The City needs to provide more focused, coordinated, and strategic attention to daily management and delivery of near and long-term parking solutions in Midtown. The success of any multi-faceted parking system is dependent on administration, management, and communication of the City's parking program as is currently in place downtown. This includes daily management of facilities, oversight of third-party vendors, financial accounting and reporting, marketing, communications, customer service, community liaison, and strategic and capital planning.

Key Challenges

- All parking strategies likely to emerge from the new Midtown Master Plan will require a significant level of support, coordination, commitment, and resource identification across various departments, which will be difficult with the current structure in place that is focused solely on the downtown.
- Currently, no revenue is derived from parking within the Midtown Master Plan area. Creating a new, or expanding an existing, organization to manage parking will require upfront resources from other sources. This can be recovered over time.

Key Opportunities

- Ideally, after consideration and consensus derived through Strategies 1–4, the current downtown parking management organization can be realistically expanded to include a growing Midtown.
- As the Midtown Master Plan vision becomes a reality, how parking is provided and managed will serve as a mechanism to promote a more vital and compact mix of land uses or, adversely, limit the desired urban form.

¹¹ See, for instance, the Flagstaff, AZ case study example for using public parking revenue as a source to incent private development of parking (page 8 above). Urban renewal, bonding, general fund contributions, and other non-parking revenue are just some of the sources of funds that cities have used to partner in developing new parking.

Appendix C: Community Visioning Summary



www.rachelhuffdoria.com

November 7, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

- A. Key Findings
- B. Engagement Overview

VISIONING REPORT

- A. Pt. I. Community Vision Activities
 - 1. Round I | Overview of Activities
 - 2. Round I Summary of Visioning Activities
 - 3. Round II | Overview of Activities
 - 4. Round II Summary of Visioning Activities
 - 5. Understanding Stable Housing
- B. Pt. II Organizational Stakeholder Interviews
 - 1. Overview of Interviews
 - 2. Summary of Challenges
 - 3. Summary of Mobility
 - 4. Summary of Assets & Opportunities

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Key Findings

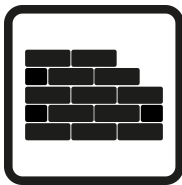
The Priority | Safety

Walking & Biking is Dangerous



“Most people **travel by car**. I'd be **really nervous** having my kid walking around.”

Brooks St. is a WALL



Crossing Brooks St. is **#1 mentioned barrier** to safety *and* accessing community-centric public and private spaces most often on the East side.

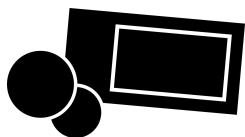
The Challenge | Mobility & Affordability Compounding Inequities

Robust, Reliable Public Transportation Needed



“Although Mountain Line does a good job, Midtown is one of those areas where you really can find yourself **far-away from public transportation** -- especially if you have **mobility issues** or **it's winter or really hot out**.”

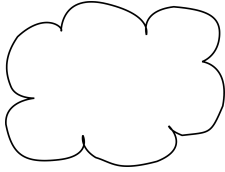
Affordability is Key



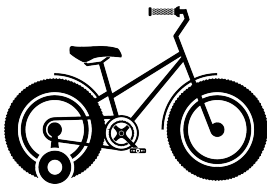
“Everywhere it is a **free or low cost** barrier to gather communally.”

“I'm a senior. Finding an **affordable apartment** that doesn't exceed 35% of my income...so I can make allowance for utilities, inflation for food.”

The Opportunity | Underutilized Spaces for Community



“There's so many **funny little strip malls**. The one that has Odd Pitch in it could be really cool if it had a **community center**.”



“I like **bike trails** in my community. I like going to **Splash** in Midtown because it's fun.”

The Fear | Rising Costs of Housing & Displacement



“I live in a trailer court, so the **land that it's on can be sold**... I'd probably have to **look out of town**, I can't afford much here. I don't even know if I can afford an apartment looking at the prices.”

The Vision | All of Us Belong in Midtown



“No matter who you are, how old you are, what your abilities and capacity are, you can **navigate with ease** and feel like **you have a place**.”



“Lots of **affordable housing** with **multigenerational families** of all colors and abilities.”

Engagement Overview

The Community Vision Summary was developed based on the outreach of the Grassroots Engagement Consultant (GEC), volunteers, including members of the Missoula Midtown Association, and the Midtown Community Guide Committee listed below:

MENODORA LEMASTER	ANDREA BEATY	MEGAN THORNTON
ELIZABETH MILLS-LOW	MATT THOME	MADELINE ALPERT
MARK MILANICK	JOHN RHOADES	JENNIFER MEYER
LAURA BAXTER	RAJIEM SEABROOK	HANNAH KOSEL
DAVID GRAY	ALLY MABRY	PAIGE PAVALONE

Phase 0 | Framing & Defining | Defining community engagement priorities and pathways as it relates to MMA's vision and goals, and stakeholder's insight.

- ✓ 2 visioning sessions on community engagement process with the MMA Board & MMP Steering Committee.
- ✓ 2 listening sessions on community engagement process with Franklin to Fort | Neighbors in Action and Southgate Triangle Leadership Team.
- ✓ 8 background conversations with engagement specialists and key stakeholders.

Deliverable: A community stakeholder report, map, and slide deck. A community engagement action plan.

Phase I | Recruitment, Research & Analysis | Building stakeholder awareness of Masterplan and building targeted community outreach

- ✓ 3 community presentations with neighborhood and school leaders to build awareness of engagement opportunities —:
 - Franklin Elementary PTA
 - Rose Park Neighborhood Meeting
 - Southgate Triangle Neighborhood Meeting
- ✓ Email invitations for the Community Vision Night and Midtown Masterplan survey sent to 8 Neighborhood Council Leadership Teams, 5 schools in the Midtown area, and over 80 community partners and advocates.

✓ 1000 postcards distributed and online invitations for the Community Vision Night or Survey sent through a variety of networks including:

- Neighborhood councils via Missoula's Office of Neighborhoods
- Students and parents through Native American specialists at MCPS
- UM Homecoming Parade
- Sentinel High School
- Russell Elementary PTA
- Franklin Elementary PTA
- Franklin to Fort Neighbors in Action
- University of Montana
- Local businesses

✓ Midtown Masterplan Community Vision Night hosted at the YMCA with 150 people participating in visioning input throughout the week, including 25 kids participating in visioning activities.

✓ 13 interviews with advocates from organizational stakeholders who represent or work with key communities in Midtown.

✓ 1 interview with the Homeless Outreach Team with the Poverello Center and Emergency Winter Shelter on Johnson St.

✓ "Changes, favorite places & big ideas" drawing activity at the Franklin to Fort | Get the scoop ice cream social (completed by 37 people).

✓ "Changes, favorite places & big ideas" drawing activity at the Lewis & Clark | Sunday Streets (completed by 38 people).

✓ "Changes, favorite places & big ideas" street mural activity at the Russell Elementary "Walk-a-thon" (the whole school!)

✓ "Changes, favorite places & big ideas" conversation with young people at Soft Landing Missoula (with 8 people.)

✓ Survey collection and interviews with 14 Missoula Food Bank clients using the virtual survey tool and interview format.

✓ "What should our streets look like" visioning activity and community conversation at Sentinel High School.

✓ "What should our streets look like" visioning activity and community conversation with pickleball with residents near MT Rail Link Park.

✓ “What should our streets look like” community conversation with Business Networking Group and Missoula Works.

✓ Interviews with Southgate Triangle parents.

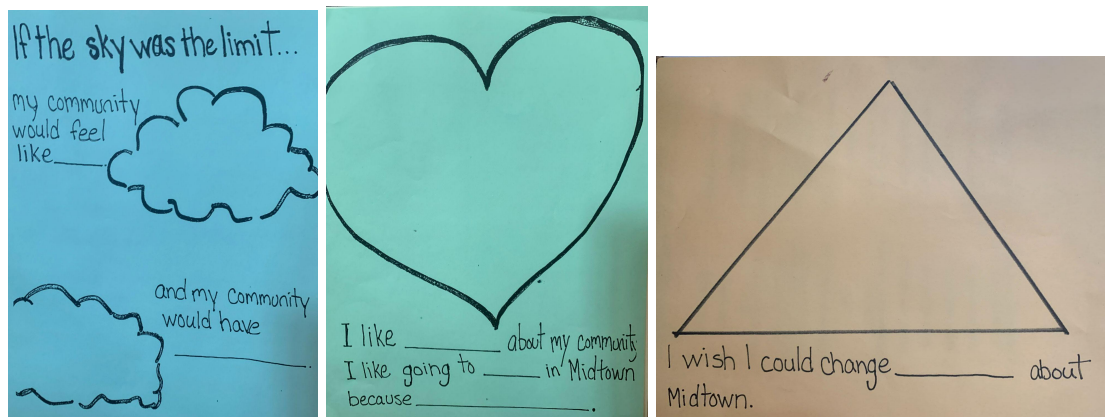
VISIONING REPORT

Community Vision Activities

Round I | Overview of Activities

Three activities were planned in coordination with the planning firm and design leads, ECONorthwest and SERA Design to elicit conversation and expansive thinking about what individuals love about Midtown, would change about Midtown, and vision for the future of Midtown. These activities were designed to:

- Be guided by community leaders, rather than design/planning experts;
- Elicit ideas from children and adults;
- Have a community-friendly look and feel.



Round I: Summary of Vision Activities

Activities were led by community leaders at the Franklin to Fort I Get the Scoop ice cream social on September 1st (37 participants), the Lewis & Clark Sunday Streets events on September 19th (38 participants), and at the Community Vision Night at the YMCA on September 27th (16 participants, with an additional 10 working on an additional activity). Primary communities included Franklin to Fort and surrounding area residents, Lewis & Clark and surrounding area residents, and children ages 3-15 across Midtown/Missoula area, respectively. Community leaders guiding the activities included MMA Board members, Midtown Community Guide Committee members, and the Grassroots Engagement Consultant (GEC).

The most common phrases and words included:



Midtown priorities by theme included:

Safe	Activities & Events	Climate
Welcome	Kid & all age friendly	Public Transportation
Inclusive	Vibrant (Fun, Beautiful, Buzzing)	East to West Mobility
Houseless		More Space for Higher Density
Affordable Housing	Outdoors (Parks, Animals, Nature)	Parking
Biking	Trees & Plants	Food
Walking	Health & Wellness	

Top “Midtown Priorities” Overall:

Vibrant (Fun, Beautiful, Buzzing)

Outdoors (Parks, Animals, Nature)

Safe

Top “Midtown Priorities by Community/Event *(Links to photos of activities below):*

<i>Franklin to Fort</i>	<i>Lewis & Clark</i>	<i>YMCA (Kids Only)</i>
Safe	Vibrant (Fun, Beautiful, Buzzing)	Vibrant (Fun, Beautiful, Buzzing)
Outdoors (Parks, Animals, Nature)	Safe	Kid & all age friendly
Vibrant (Fun, Beautiful, Buzzing)	Biking	Activities & Events
Kid & all age friendly		

Top Theme Descriptions & Quotes:

Safe

Safety primarily concerned *street safety* with a focus on pedestrian and biking improvements like speed mitigation, sidewalk improvements, bike lanes, and safe crossings. However, safety comments also included broader neighborhood safety concerns stemming from pesticides used on public lands, intimidation, lack of inclusion and safety due to racism and transphobia, crime, and concern for safety of those who are unhoused, as well as concern for/perception of safety for oneself because of proximity to individuals who are unhoused.

- “More widely available mental health assistance”
- “Feel safe and accepting no matter the condition”
- “Please finish sidewalks along all side streets. It's dangerous to walk safely.”
- “More public transportation and safe pedestrian routes.”
- “I want speed mitigation on streets. Especially on streets being used to race at night.”
- “Need more sidewalks in school and pedestrian zones and a protected pedestrian crosswalk across Reserves in the 7th st area.”
- “Improve bike crossings; consult Missoula in Motion maps; big vehicles trucks; trucks/drivers intimidating bikers - accelerating at intersections to scare bikers; Traffic control on Mount Ave - roundabout opened it up to lots of traffic; Higgins biking”
- “A bike/ped bridge over malfunction junction.”
- “Not as safe as it used to be; homeless at parks; thefts and vandalism in yards”
- “No racist people, homophobic, transphobic and sexist people”
- “Safe and healthy; public lands managed without synthetic pesticides and fertilizers”

Outdoors (Parks, Animals, Nature)

Love of existing parks and the desire for more small, neighborhood parks is mentioned with most frequency. Franklin, Playfair, Boyd, Splash, and the bike park in Midtown are listed as favorites. Playground equipment, as well as trees and green space are a highlight.

Water features and play

- “I like the folks in my community. I like going to parks in Midtown because being outside rocks! (picture of swings, splash pad, biking park, lots of people.)”
- “I like bike trails in my community. I like going to Splash in Midtown because it's fun. (picture of water slides).”
- “I like the irrigation ditch in my community (picture of a duck).”
- “I want a pool across the street from Franklin.”

Animals

- “My community would feel like a cloud of love. My community would have dog parks and kitty play places - meow.”
- “I like the Bunny in my community and the bunny case and bright spot behind door.”
- “My community would have a robot dino.”

Vibrant (Fun, Beautiful, Buzzing)

Vibrancy topics focused on fun places and activities, the aesthetic of Midtown, and having a close-knit and engaged community with opportunities to connect.

- “My community would have people who genuinely care about one another; affordable housing; bike paths; completed sidewalks; abundant kid-friendly places.”
- “I like that my community is active; events and efforts to initiate changes; recent changes to parks/clean up maintenance of park to make it more clean and family oriented.”
- “My community would be close-knit and walkable and have indoor food court and quick food options.”
- “My community would be meeting people and socializing and would have a cafe - coffee shop near Bancroft Pond.”
- “I like walking in my community. I like going to parks in Midtown because it's beautiful.”
- “I like smaller, more affordable houses; I like going to Franklin Park because it's a nice older park.”

Data can be [found here](#).

Additional Youth Input:

At the September 27th Community Vision Night youth created a collaborative mural, answering the question, “What should the YMCA street look like?”

At the October 19th Russell Elementary Walk-a-thon youth again created a collaborative mural, focusing on the questions, “What do you love about your neighborhood?” and “What would you want to add or change on Russell ST or in your Midtown neighborhood?”

Mural ideas included:

Ice cream shops

Trees

Walking bridge to
Tremper

Splash pad at Boyd Park

Parks

Splash pad at Playfair

Card store

Organic food store

Pet store

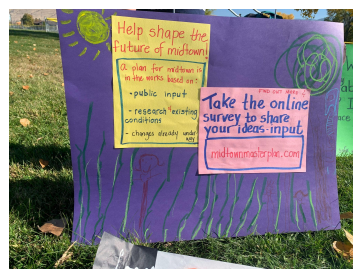
Coffee shop

Playgrounds

Zoo

Community garden

Safe place for bikers

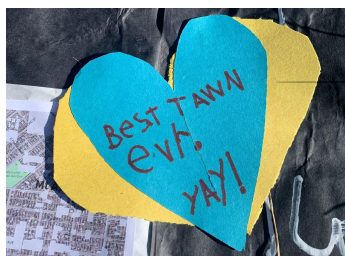


Most beloved places included:

Russell Elementary School

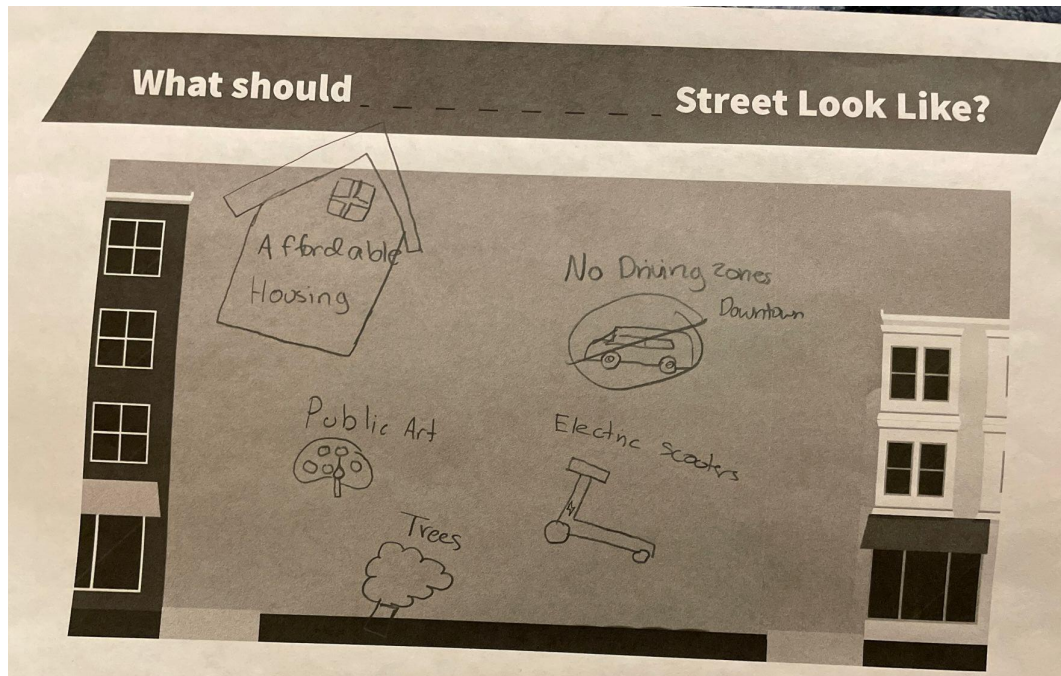
Boyd Park

Splash Montana



Round II | Overview of Activities

Community Guide Committee Members were trained in facilitating conversation and guiding visioning activities by the ECONorthwest and SERA design team in conjunction with the GEC at a design workshop. Committee Guide Members spearheaded community engagement through a “What should our streets look like?” visioning activity, 1 on 1 interviews with friends and neighbors, and through group conversations with organizations they participate in or lead, including young father groups, staff meetings, clubs, etc.



Ex: of "What should our streets look like" visioning activity designed to elicit conversation and big picture ideas of community needs, hopes, and values.

Round II activities were led by community guide committee members and/or the GEC at the following locations/events or with the following groups:

Russell Elementary Walk-a-thon

Sentinel High School

MT Rail Link Park | Pickleball

Poverello Center | Homeless Outreach Team

Soft Landing Youth

Business Networking Group & Missoula Works

Interviews with Southgate Triangle Parents

Missoula Food Bank Interviews & Surveys

Round II | Summary of Vision Activities

Round II activities shared similar themes to activities from Round I – including the community priorities of safety, outdoors, and vibrancy. Additional themes and nuances also began to form.

The following themes took shape:

Safe

Biking, Walking

Lighting

Outdoors (Parks, Animals, Nature)

Nature, everywhere

Parks that meet people's needs

Vibrant (Fun, Beautiful, Buzzing)

Cultural reflection & representation

Art and music

Affordable community-building spaces

Affordable Housing

Accessible

Public transportation

Public services

Top Theme Descriptions & Quotes:

Safe

Biking, Walking

- “It's a nightmare if you're a biker. <From South/Higgins to Trempers> It's really scary. You don't really have a lane at all. You have a main bike path but the way it goes you'll always have to switch off.”
- “Brooks is a dangerous intersection with lots of accidents. Maybe an overpass. I would like to see at least two protected crossings.”

- “I want street lights for biking safely. Fix the sidewalks, add ramps for wheelchairs.”
- “Too many cars”
- “More crosswalks by the mall”
- “Bikeable, walkable, safe, unique and local character” -<Midtown resident’s vision>

Lighting & Space

- “The bike path is not lit up nearly enough. I have bad eyesight and I'm like ‘what am I going to run into.’”
- “Lighting over Brooks” <is needed>
- “We have folks who are constantly concerned about their surroundings. When you can't see what's coming around the corner, they could react negatively.”

Family friendly

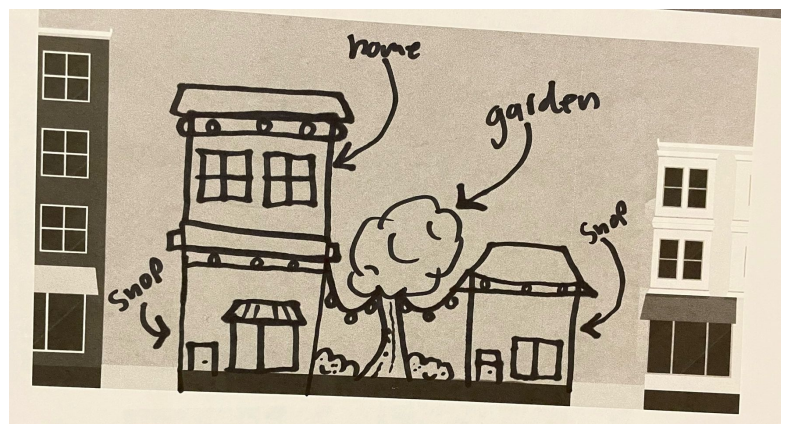
- “It’s too industrial feeling, and caters to ‘adult entertainment’ (casinos, liquor stores, strip clubs).”
- “We are riddled in this area with strip clubs, fast food.”
- “Please take the ADAM and EVE sign down. It’s not even open. Please, that is at the top of my list.”
- “Streets should be safe for kids”

Outdoors (Parks, Animals, Nature)

Nature, everywhere

- “I want to see much more and bigger trees on the residential streets. It feels like there is no shade, ugh.”
- “Add trees”
- “Native plants”

Parks that meet people’s needs



There is a strong desire to see more parks in areas that lack them and for existing parks to include more amenities that serve everyone.

- “More garbage containers, sharp containers”
- “Access to public restrooms is something our city struggles with.”
- “It’s easy to get out to recreate but when you are impoverished and living in the central location, that opportunity becomes less...”
- “I love my hammock, there is almost no where do they put trees close enough -- throw up posts or something to hang up on hammocks”
- “I want to see a park/green space (this was where a skate park was attempted) on the west side of Bob Wards in that field, and connect this to the bike trail.”
- “We had a group of people who used to go to the park... and they said, ‘they took it away just because we were homeless.’” <referring to removal of picnic tables and benches at MRL Park.>
- “Drinking water with water refill stations”

Vibrant (Fun, Beautiful, Buzzing)

Cultural reflection & representation

- “People stare at us on the bus like we’re going to take something. We need more black bus drivers.”
- <l’d like to see> “more culturally appropriate stores and food.”
- “I think we all co-exist really well. We have an eclectic mix in this area... The next step is cohesiveness”

Art and music

- <l’d like to see> “music, dancing, kids doing art in public spaces.”
- <l’d like to see> “different color crosswalks.”
- “Can we make something like Caras park for this area, live music, etc.”

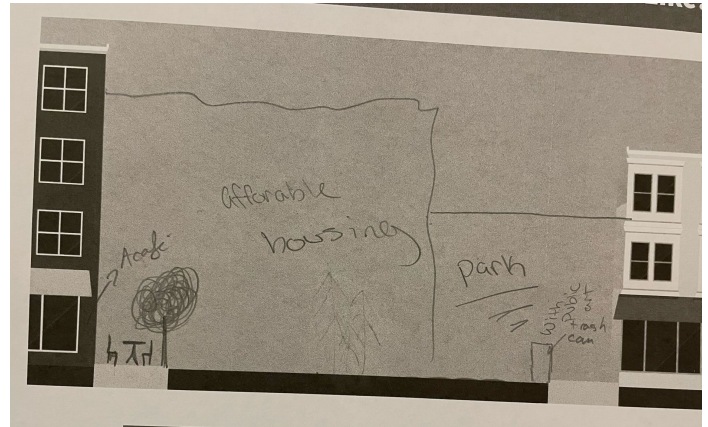
Affordable spaces to build community (indoor & outdoor)

- “Mall is the only indoor place for teens to go but it’s too expensive... you just sit there with friends.”
- <l’d like to see a> “warm places to hang in winter.”

- <l'd like to see an> “outdoor skating rink.”
- <l'd like to see> “shared co-working spaces.”
- “A neighborhood coffee shop, maybe in an old house!”

Affordable Housing

- “Needs more affordable housing in general. Wherever they want to put that is good... I need that. If my private landlord wanted to do something I don't know what I'd do.”



Accessible

Mobility & Public transportation

- “Most of our folks walk, bike, or take public transit. Do we have ramps getting up on the sidewalks for folks? We're seeing more wheelchairs and walkers as our population ages.”
- “If you're trying to get to and from work, a store, if you don't have a vehicle, it is more difficult in the area.”
- “The bus is too far – we have to walk a lot from the bus stops”

Public services & amenities

- “Also a library branch in Midtown, maybe at the Fairgrounds”
- “Downtown is far away enough. It feels harder to access so – feeling like Midtown has everything we need.” <as a vision>
- “There are a lot of businesses around here but actually resources that they need or appointments they have – that's not as much as Midtown.”
- “I stay on this part of town <Riverfront> for services -- Food Bank, Salvation Army. It would benefit everyone to have a branch on that side <Midtown>, like the Food Bank. Missoula has grown.”

- “There's an opportunity to do something here <Johnson St. Shelter> that could benefit the whole facility -- maybe an all year round drop in center.”

Understanding ‘Stable Housing’

The GEC and Midtown Community Guides completed 14 online surveys/interviews with Food Bank clients and visitors. Survey data is included in the rest of the online survey information. The following additional interview questions on housing stability as affordable housing and displacement is a priority of the community –

- In an ideal world, what does stable housing look like or mean to you?
- How stable do you feel in your housing now? Why is that?
- Where would you go if you were to look for other housing?
- How does your Midtown community, including friends, family, or services you get in Midtown relate to your stability?

Themes on what stable housing means include...

Affordable

Secure

Safe

Has space

Can support full-range of needs, including physical & emotional

Top themes and quotes from stable housing are below:

Affordable

- “Affordable - can pay rent without living paycheck to paycheck and provide family's basic needs.”
- “I'm a senior. Finding an affordable apartment that doesn't exceed 35% of my income...so I can make allowance for utilities, inflation for food.”

Secure

- “One year leases and less evictions”

Safe

- “Safe and in good repair”

Has Space

- “Less apartment buildings. I don't like the idea of being stacked on top of each other.”
- “Little yards”

Can support full-range of needs, including physical & emotional

- “There are a lot of places that are not pet friendly. There are a lot of disable people on that list. My daughter has an emotional support animal and the landlord refuses to let her have it.”

Themes on what displacement means...

Leaving Midtown and Missoula

- “Rent in Missoula is insane. I don't know that we could stay here because it's so crazy high right now. I know there's such a huge long wait for it as well.”
- “I'd probably have to look out of town, I can't afford much here. I don't even know if I can afford an apartment looking at the prices of the apartments.”
- “Not in Missoula - it's too expensive.”

Organizational Stakeholder Interviews

Overview of Interviews

Based on Phase 0 work, the GEC identified potential organizational stakeholders who represent or work with individuals from the following groups who are most at risk of being impacted by and also underrepresented in the Midtown engagement process due to historical and current barriers within our broader and more local society and systems.

This includes people who are houseless, people who are at risk of being displaced, Native Americans, resettled refugees, people with disabilities, people living in areas with least access to services, people with lower incomes, people who rent, families with young children, seniors, people working in retail, people working in health & social services.

There were many organizations and individuals in Missoula who met 1 on 1 with the GECt to provide insight on Midtown, outreach, and support promotion of Midtown engagement by circulating event and outreach information to get robust representation and involvement throughout the whole process.

Individuals from the following organizations participated in an interview:

All Nations Health Center

MT Women Vote

Common Good

Poverello Center

Forward MT Foundation

SEIU 775

Human Resource Council

Zero to Five Missoula

Missoula Aging Services

Soft Landing

Missoula Food Bank

Neighborworks

Missoula County Health Department

Poverello Center - Houseless Outreach Team (HOT)

The following questions were asked:

- What's your organization's relationship to Midtown? What about the folks you serve or represent -- what is their relationship to Midtown?
- What challenges does your community experience living, working, playing, or using services in Midtown?
- Are there any particular areas (looking at map) that they experience those challenges more intensely? In what way?
- Are there areas in Midtown that your community uses more regularly? Do you know how they typically travel?
- When folks go to and from Midtown -- are there areas outside of Midtown they're typically connecting from or to?
- What areas of Midtown provide the greatest sense of community for the folks you serve/represent? Why is that?
- Where is there existing vibrancy in Midtown? What does that look and feel like?
- Are there particular areas you feel have a lot of potential? Areas that with some investment could have a large impact on the community?
- Think about Midtown in 20 years from now? How do you want it to feel for the folks you serve and represent?
- Anything else?

Summary of Challenges

The most common phrases and words when asked about challenges include:



Themes around challenges included:

Public transportation

Confusion - wayfinding

Affordable & adequate housing

Greater vibrancy (green space, art, community)

Major roads and RR acting as barriers

Lack of public service

Safety - walking & biking

Welcome and inclusion

Top “Challenges”:

Public transportation

Affordable & adequate housing

Major roads and RR acting as barriers

Top Challenge Descriptions & Quotes:

Stakeholders discussed the interconnectedness of public transportation, affordable and adequate housing, and how major roads and RR act as barriers. They also noted the impact on other concerns – like confusion and wayfinding, and lack of nearby public services.

“Lack of affordable housing here plays into transportation too. It's a lot easier to access services when you live in Midtown which is not a possibility here. 'It's not affordable but it's not unaffordable' is what the guy who wants to buy our building said. Gentrification is happening. Renting is not secure -- your apartment can be sold at any time.”

“Although Mountain Line does a good job, Midtown is one of those areas where you really can find yourself far away from public transportation -- especially if you have mobility issues or it's winter or really hot out.”

“I'll tell you my story of 'islands of poverty.' The busy roads will trap people into their neighborhoods so they don't feel safe walking to the store or to the park. “

“It's not that they're making minimum wage -- some of them are making close to \$14/hour. But they're not getting full time work. Weekly take home is minimal. They rely on public assistance. We need to make sure that they can get public assistance in this area.”

“Sometimes people who live in dense housing work all the ends of the day -- not M-F, not 9-5. Being able to meet people where they're at is more challenging than have lower incomes and different work scenarios. Fewer people seem to be unemployed yet people are working multiple jobs and still not meeting their basic needs. That overlaps with the work we do and the most affordable housing.”

“Bus stop is only one block away but it's one big block away if you're carrying a huge box of food. You take a trunk full of food. If you're on a bike or walking or taking a bus. Frequency of using services is directly connected to transportation.”

Most Mentioned Barriers

- Crossing Brooks St.
- Crossing Russell
- Crossing Reserve; lack of public transportation on Reserve

Most Mentioned Islands

- Mall Area (+Big Dipper, Dram Shop additions)

- ### Top Areas for “Sense of Community”

- “Parks are really important. A lot of caregivers bring their clients to the park to walk, get exercise, fresh air.”

Top Areas of “Vibrancy”

Fairgrounds

Businesses near Mall

Tremper

Sense of Vibrancy Quotes & Description:

There was a great deal of consensus that you could see “sparks of vibrancy” in Midtown – there is a lot to build on. Three major areas had a similar theme – a mix of nostalgic Missoula or Montana-based businesses/spaces that have been recently renovated or include something new and exciting at them.

- “The new shopping center by Albertsons has some of that vibrancy. Old holdouts like the Book Exchange, Paul’s, Ace -- Tremper is doing a great job.”
- “I feel that in the Tremper area - people seem to love the Book Exchange, Paul’s, and Ace. I'm trying to think of where people hang. I think there’s an eclectic, great mix of small businesses there.”
- “Fairgrounds when there is a big event people are excited about. The fair but also queer prom.”
- “International Food Market, Big Dipper and Dram Shop there's a little bit of vibrancy.”
- “Fairgrounds -- it's all new and shiny.”
- “Walking to and from different places, there's the Dram Shop and ice cream. There's a lot of potential and you see some sparks of vibrancy. Even as malls are becoming obsolete there is potential.”
- “The mall with the local businesses -- Dram Shop, Big Dipper, Bridge. The new where Odd Pitch is. That's kind of cool.”
- “Fairgrounds is a community builder.”

Themes for “Potential for Impact”

Spaces are currently underutilized for community needs

Need for multi-use indoor spaces

Need for more affordable housing

Bike trail

Potential for Impact Quotes & Description:

Stakeholders made the connection between spaces that have been or still are underutilized (including public & private spaces) and how they can fill community needs for affordable housing and shared community spaces, particularly indoors.

“There's so many funny little strip malls. The one that has Odd Pitch in it could be really cool if it had a community center.”

“Fairgrounds is not utilized -- it's only for very specific things for very specific people. I want the ice skating rink to be a roller skating rink. A dog park at the fairgrounds. A playground. There's just so much grass.

“Fairgrounds for a long time was dead space for most of the year and that's shifting to be more of a community resource year round. That's exciting.”

“If you ask parents, and we have – a space where you can play indoors in the winter is one of the top desires families have had.”

“Deliberate planning for and supporting an intergenerational engagement... We think that's just going to happen organically if they live next to each other but it doesn't. We have to create those things.”

“I loved when the winter market took place at the mall. That energy, energy of markets that happen downtown, happening in the mall. Art Fairs in the mall -- utilizing the local community to do what it does really well outdoors in the summer to bring it into the indoor space.”

“Winter spaces and activities -- the Y is such a good space. Recreational spaces -- dry, warm spaces people can take kids to.”

“Anywhere there's outdated or dilapidated buildings. I think of the Women's Club. That would be a really good space for housing.”

“With regard to affordable housing, Larchmont Golf course is one of the best opportunities to build affordable housing.”

“The biking trail to MT Rail Link park is starting to feel like a thing that could pull people into the experience of the neighborhood that's cool and interesting and not about driving to a retail store. Especially because that path goes through and touches really different types of housing -- not just for transportation.”

Themes for “Midtown Vision in 20 Years”

Safe

- Pedestrian friendly

Green

- Trees
- Gardens
- Less cement

Purposeful, shared space

- Intergenerational spaces
- Blending of residential and commercial
- Re-use of parking lots, vacant lots, indoor areas for housing & community needs

Belonging for all

- Easy to navigate
- Art
- Indigenous knowledge woven throughout
- Affordable housing
- Affordable business & shopping
- Accessible
- Welcoming
- Public transportation
- Kid and family friendly

Quotes & Description for “Midtown Vision in 20 Years”

Stakeholders envisioned a beautiful, green Midtown in which everyone felt safe and belonged. There is a clear vision of belonging, cultural reflection and equity made possible through design – art, language, signage, accessible businesses, parks, architecture, mobility and transportation, shared public spaces and routes for diverse people – including Indigenous people, people with

different abilities, seniors, families with young kids, people who currently live here and are facing displacement due to high cost of housing, people of different incomes, and people without houses.

- “Midtown is the center of the Missoula Valley too. Along with Indigenous knowledge, it's a part of it -- it's not just one spot. Similar to when you're driving through the reservation, the whole language. It's interwoven.”
- “Just a community that values art. Makes me feel safe.”
- “Biggest issue is still affordability and accessibility.”
- “Knowing that more change will come -- ensuring that change isn't just about gentrification. That Midtown remains a community with a spectrum of incomes and ages types of family.”
- “Lots of affordable housing with multigenerational families of all colors and abilities. Working together, living together, moving together with access to local foods and clean water. Arts and culture. Education, health. It's its own little utopia and a dog park.”
- “Plans were made to improve the area for all Missoulians, not just Missoulians with a roof over their head.... Rather than eliminating the possibility of being in space, figuring out how we can be there together.” <Referring to removal of benches at MRL Park near Johnson Shelter.>
- “Continuing to invest in public transportation so there are a lot of routes to service people; nice if routes ran every half hour. Invest in sidewalk and sidewalk repair.”
- “It can be done -- people integrated with business and residential - which we have to do because as this community grows there's an ethic about let's not all move to Frenchtown.”
- “No matter who you are, how old you are, what your abilities and capacity are, you can navigate with ease and feel like you have a place.”

Appendix D: Midtown Alternatives and Workshop Themes Memorandum

DATE: March 28, 2023
TO: Missoula Midtown Association
FROM: Erin Reome, Martin Glastra van Loon, and Margaret Raimann (SERA Design)
SUBJECT: Midtown Alternatives and Workshop Themes Summary (Task 4.3 / 2.2)

This memorandum provides an overview of the four alternatives developed as part of the Midtown Master Plan process. SERA vetted these initial alternatives with the Project Management Team and Steering Committee prior to a design workshop held on January 26th, 2023. Beginning with an urban design framework that was informed by initial outreach and the Project Charter and Compass, SERA developed four alternatives—Southgate Triangle Center, Brooks Backbone, Russell/South Center, and Bitterroot Backbone. SERA designed these distinct alternatives to inspire creative feedback and guidance toward a preferred alternative in the final Master Plan. The feedback gathered about these alternatives is summarized at the end of this memorandum and in Appendix B.

Context and Purpose

A key desired outcome of the Midtown Master Plan process is community support for the vision for Midtown. The visual representation of this vision will communicate through a final plan alternative that builds on the initial plan alternatives. To develop community support for the final plan alternative, it was crucial to hold the design workshop before further advancement of a final alternative. The goal of the workshop was for the community to identify key elements of each of the four alternatives that they would like to see in the final plan alternative.

Framework

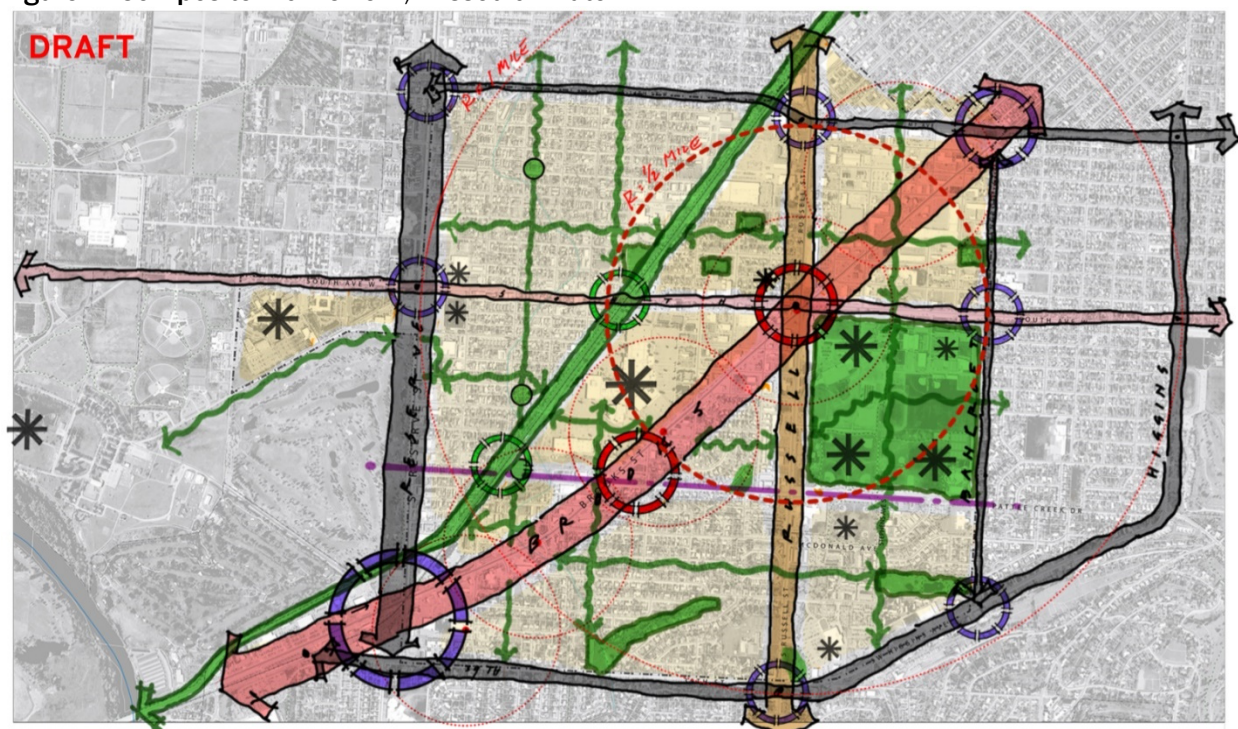
Prior to developing the initial alternatives, SERA created a visual representation of the framework elements that make up the existing and potential future condition of Midtown. Appendix A. Framework Elements provides the isolated maps of each element of the framework, and the composite framework is shown in Figure 1. The framework elements include transportation corridors, character areas, natural and open spaces, gateways, destinations, and connectivity.

The **transportation corridor** framework (Figure 6) represents the existing hierarchy of streets in Midtown and considers an enhanced condition for South Avenue. Brooks, Reserve, and Russell Streets will maintain the characteristics of higher traffic, major thoroughfares that connect Midtown via vehicular modes of transportation. Bancroft and Higgins are additional north-south connectors serving the area. South Avenue maintains its status as a major connector, and the future vision for this street is a more "complete" street with safe multi-modal connections. The **connectivity** framework layer (Figure 11) provides a suggested grid of greenways for multi-modal transportation based on planned improvements as well as logical enhancements that promote safer travel in Midtown beyond the major transportation corridors.

Another layer of the framework—**character areas** (Figure 7)—define existing subdistricts within Midtown. These areas have distinct characteristics and any future development in these character areas will need to consider those defining features. Some of the defining amenities of these character areas are the **natural and open spaces** (Figure 8) that serve residents and visitors throughout Midtown. The Bitterroot Trail serves as a north-south connector for regional bike and pedestrian users, and smaller parks and regional open spaces are scattered across Midtown, but there is a visible lack of open spaces in the Franklin to the Fort neighborhood west of the Bitterroot Trail. The framework for natural and open spaces suggests a few locations (shown in green circles) that may help to fill this gap.

Finally, **gateways** and **destinations** help to establish transitions and an identity for Midtown. The **gateways** in the framework (Figure 9) are represented by three different symbols—gateways to Midtown (purple), gateways to the existing core of Midtown (red), and gateways to the Bitterroot Trail (green). The size of the gateways indicates gateways that are more (or less) recognizable as transitions to Midtown, while smaller gateway symbols indicate more subtle transitions or transitions to different character areas within Midtown. Some of these gateways are anchored by local and regional **destinations** (Figure 10), including Southgate Mall, the Fairgrounds, Tremper’s Shopping Center, and Playfair Park/Splash Montana. Enhancing the identified **gateways** will help to establish a strong identity for Midtown that is still anchored on the key **destinations** while creating space for new ones.

Figure 1. Composite Framework, Missoula Midtown



Initial Alternatives

SERA developed the initial alternatives using the urban design framework presented in Figure 1. SERA considered three broad themes that were informed by the Project Compass priorities:



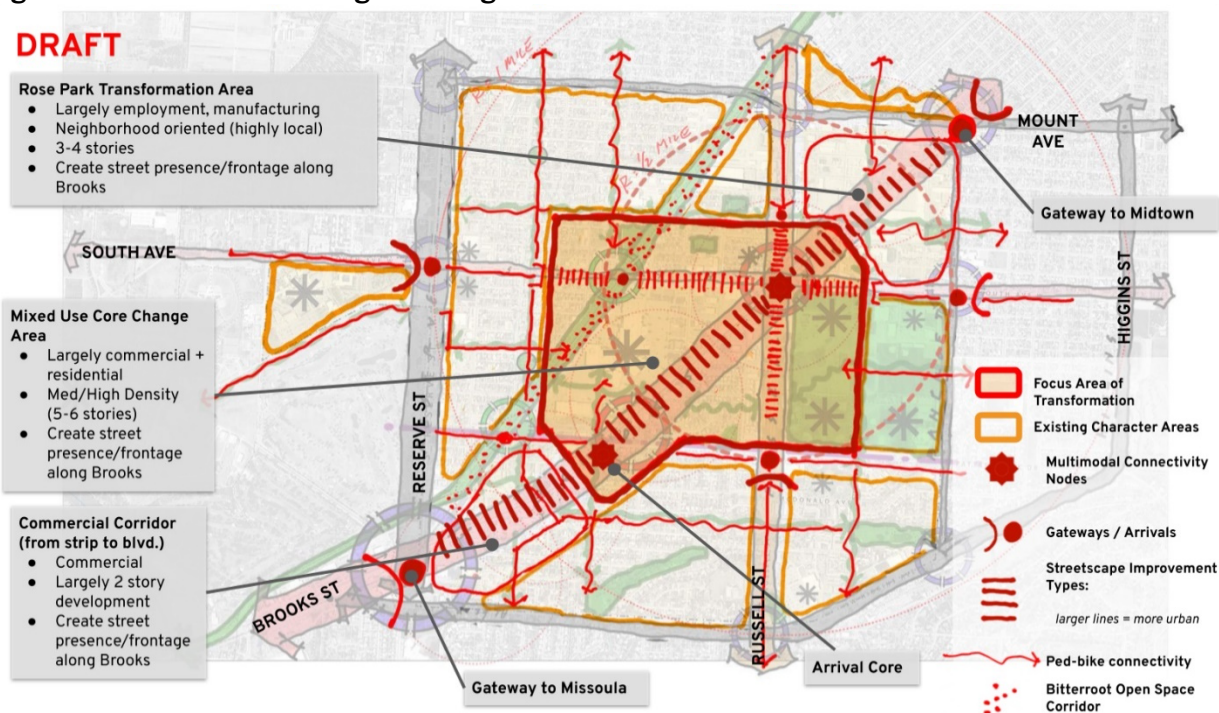
- **Areas to Live and Work**
 - Land Use and Scale
 - Housing
 - Business and Economic Development
- **A Mobility Network for All**
 - The Bitterroot Trail
 - Major Corridors
 - Key Connections
 - Supporting Street Network
 - Parking
- **Streets and Trails as the Heart of Public Space**
 - The Bitterroot Trail
 - Regional Destinations
 - Neighborhood Parks

The four initial alternatives presented in this section identify geographic areas for change, where the biggest transformations or priorities for investment are expected. These areas are outlined in red with a transparent orange fill. Areas surrounding these core areas (outlined in light orange) may also see changes occur, but to a lesser degree and would maintain many existing neighborhood characteristics. Each alternative also identifies the locations for multimodal connectivity nodes, gateways, streetscape improvements, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity improvements, and open space corridors.

Alternative 1: Southgate Triangle Center

The Southgate Triangle Center alternative, shown in Figure 2, focuses on the geographic heart of Midtown, encompassing part of the Southgate Triangle Neighborhood and Southgate Mall, from Kent Avenue to Ernest Avenue and Eaton Street and Stephens Avenue. Development along streets in this area would be fronted with higher density buildings adjacent to sidewalks, creating a livelier street presence along Brooks Avenue.

Figure 2. Alternative 1: Southgate Triangle Center



The character areas would include:

- The **Mixed-Use Core Change Area¹ (Southgate Triangle Center)** would transform Midtown with mixed use, commercial and residential uses in five- to six-story developments.
- The **Rose Park Transformation Area** (at the northeastern gateway to Midtown) would focus on local services and amenities in a neighborhood-oriented district with three-to four-story buildings.
- The **Commercial Corridor** (at the southwestern gateway to Midtown) would maintain commercial land uses with two-story development and an enhanced street presence along Brooks with streetscape improvements and buildings built to the street edge.

¹ The Core Change Area is expected to see the most transformation and is the focal point of the future vision for Midtown. Adjacent areas also see change but serve as transition areas to the character areas (or subdistricts) outside of the core change area.

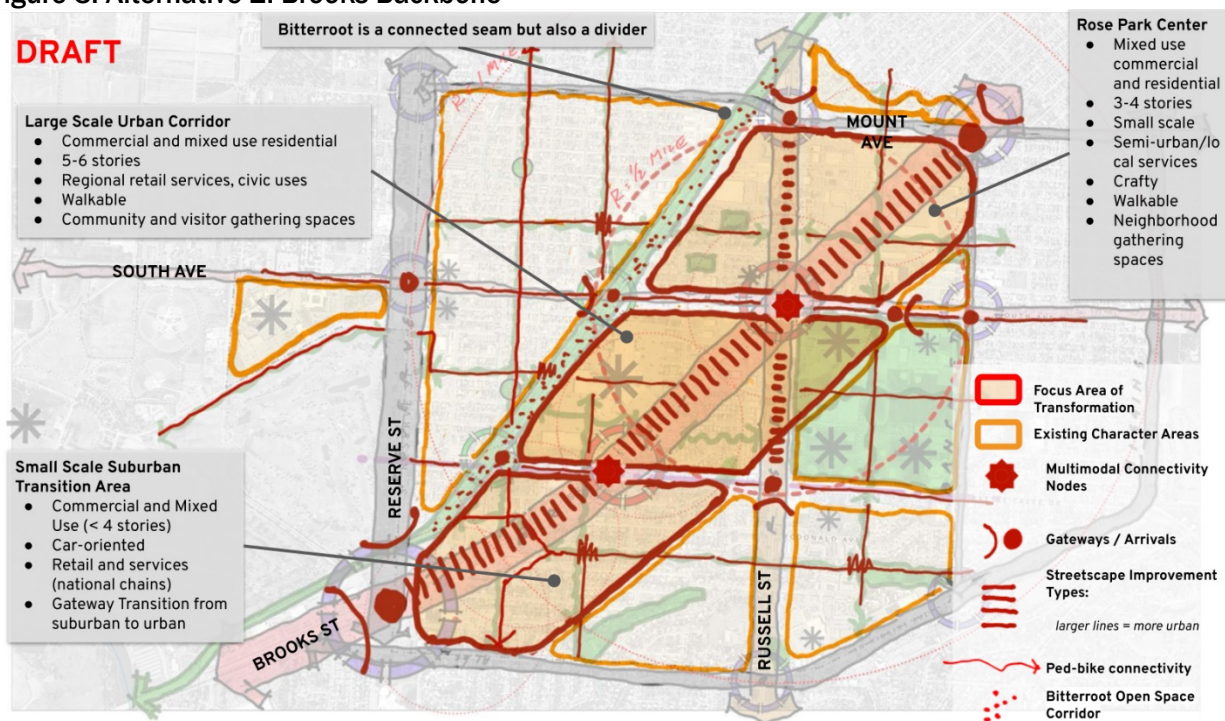
Two key connectivity nodes, or enhanced intersections, within the Southgate Triangle Center, one at the southern end of Southgate Mall and another at the Brooks/Russell/South intersection. These connectivity nodes would provide safe access across the intersection for all modes of travel. They also serve as points of transition to different areas of Southgate Triangle Center.

Alternative 2: Brooks Backbone

This alternative is organized around the Brooks Avenue corridor, roughly aligned with the planned Bus Rapid Transit project. The Bitterroot Trail forms a natural boundary between the transformation area and the Franklin to the Fort neighborhood and would be the western boundary for the Focus Area of Transformation (outlined in dark red) in this scenario. The surrounding character areas, or subdistricts with distinct characteristics, would maintain the existing land use patterns with improvements that complement development in the Brooks Backbone.

Streetscape improvements would occur along the entirety of Brooks Avenue and pedestrian and bicycle connections would complement this core area with key connections to surrounding character areas.

Figure 3. Alternative 2: Brooks Backbone



There would be three distinct sections along the Brooks Backbone:

- **Rose Park Center** would focus on commercial and residential uses, buildings with 3-4 stories, semi-urban local services in a crafty, walkable neighborhood.
- **The Large-Scale Urban Corridor** in the heart of Midtown would include mixed uses at 5-6 stories with regional retail and civic uses.
- **The Small-Scale Suburban Transition Area** would include commercial and mixed uses at 2-4 stories with retail and services similar to the current condition. While the Small-Scale Suburban Transition Area may continue to be more car-oriented than the Large-Scale Urban Corridor or Rose Park Center areas, key improvements for pedestrian and bicycle facilities would be made throughout.

Alternative 3: Russell/South Center

This alternative prioritizes change and transformation around the Brooks/Russell/South intersection, making it the new heart and hub of Midtown. This intersection currently bisects Midtown. Transforming this intersection would improve the four quadrants or “petals” that form around the intersection.

Figure 4. Alternative 3: Russell/South Center



These four character areas would evolve into distinct areas to reestablish the core and heart of Midtown at this iconic intersection:

- **The Franklin to the Fort Center** would include buildings of 4-5 stories with mixed-uses and an emphasis on affordable housing options.
- **The Rose Park Center** would include mixed uses with an emphasis on employment and local business, mixed with residential uses at less than 4 stories.
- **The Urban Core** would include mixed uses of commercial and retail services at 5-6 stories in a walkable, transit-oriented development district. Finally, the transformation area would link directly to the planned revitalization of the Fairgrounds, which would include enhanced civic and community gathering spaces.

Alternative 4: Bitterroot Backbone

Rail corridors have long presented barriers to pedestrian and bicycle, as well as vehicular, connectivity and development has typically been oriented to face away from the tracks. When no longer in use for rail, however, these trails can offer unique opportunities for safe pedestrian and bicycle travel along alignments with few vehicular crossings. The Bitterroot Backbone alternative seeks to capitalize on the Bitterroot Trail as a primary pedestrian and bicycle spine, which can also offer a new frontage for development. This alternative experiments with the Bitterroot Trail as a connected seam between Franklin to the Fort and the core of Midtown, allowing for development opportunities on both sides of the trail.

Figure 5. Alternative 4: Bitterroot Backbone



This alternative includes two character areas:

- **The Urban Mixed Use Area** of the Bitterroot Backbone alternative includes development at 4-5 stories with affordable housing and commercial space opportunities, extending on either side of the Bitterroot Trail and toward Russell/Brooks to the west.
- **The Core Change Area** would include mixed uses at 5-6 stories and residential infill around Southgate Mall. The Urban Mixed Use area includes commercial and residential uses at 4-5 stories.

Workshop Feedback: Key Themes

The summary below provides the key themes that resulted from the community workshop held on January 26th, 2023. The workshop included a presentation of the draft alternatives shown in the previous section followed by a small group facilitated discussion to gather community input. The purpose of this exercise was to document the community's response to the alternatives and understand what elements of each alternative that they would like to see in the final master plan. Beyond general feedback, facilitators also asked questions related to specific framework themes that applied to each alternative: Streets and Trails as the Heart of Public Space, A Mobility Network for All, and Areas to Live and Work. The purpose of the workshop was to gather feedback on key elements from the alternatives that should be considered in the final alternative (rather than select a final alternative).

The input is summarized according to key theme. The summary below incorporates feedback gathered in meetings held by the Missoula Midtown Association with key stakeholder groups as a follow-up to the workshop.

Appendix B provides a transcription of the notes taken at the January 26th community workshop.

Key Themes

- **Mobility for Bikes and Pedestrians**
 - This is important for people to be able to get to places in Midtown.
 - There are safety issues related to mobility, and a lack of implementation plans.
 - Improved mobility could look like a series of typologies rather than treatments for specific intersections.
 - The Bitterroot Trail is not the right spot for near-term solutions, as there are too many unresolved questions about the future condition of it.
- **Better Connections between Midtown Neighborhoods**
 - This is especially important at Brooks Street.
 - Near-term options are needed to improve Brooks/South/Russell intersection.
 - There is a need for a street-level improvements (versus elevated).
- **Desired Development Character**
 - New development on Brooks should not turn its back on the corridor but embrace it.
 - Building heights bring up concerns related to views. Some see increased heights as losing views, others see them as an opportunity to contain growth and preserve views that do not look like sprawl.
 - Midtown needs more public and private 'third spaces' for socializing, like public libraries, farmers markets, restaurants, galleries, etc.

- **Housing**
 - There are a few key opportunity sites for medium-density housing in Midtown.
 - Affordable housing and diverse housing types are needed for many population segments, including older adults, current low-income residents, and Midtown workers.
- **Midtown Identity**
 - The plan should address temporary solutions as a means of activation of Midtown.
 - Brooks/South/Russell investment makes sense to enhance identity, connections, and alignment with existing strong destinations of Midtown.
 - The focus on 15-minute neighborhoods seems right for Midtown.
- **Transition Areas**
 - The plan should highlight transition areas and link them to the Growth Policies.
 - These areas should show transitions between density, uses, etc.
 - Greater densities near mall and along future BRT corridor makes sense and transitioning to lower densities outside of this area.

Appendix A. Framework Elements

Figure 6. Transportation Corridor Framework, Missoula Midtown

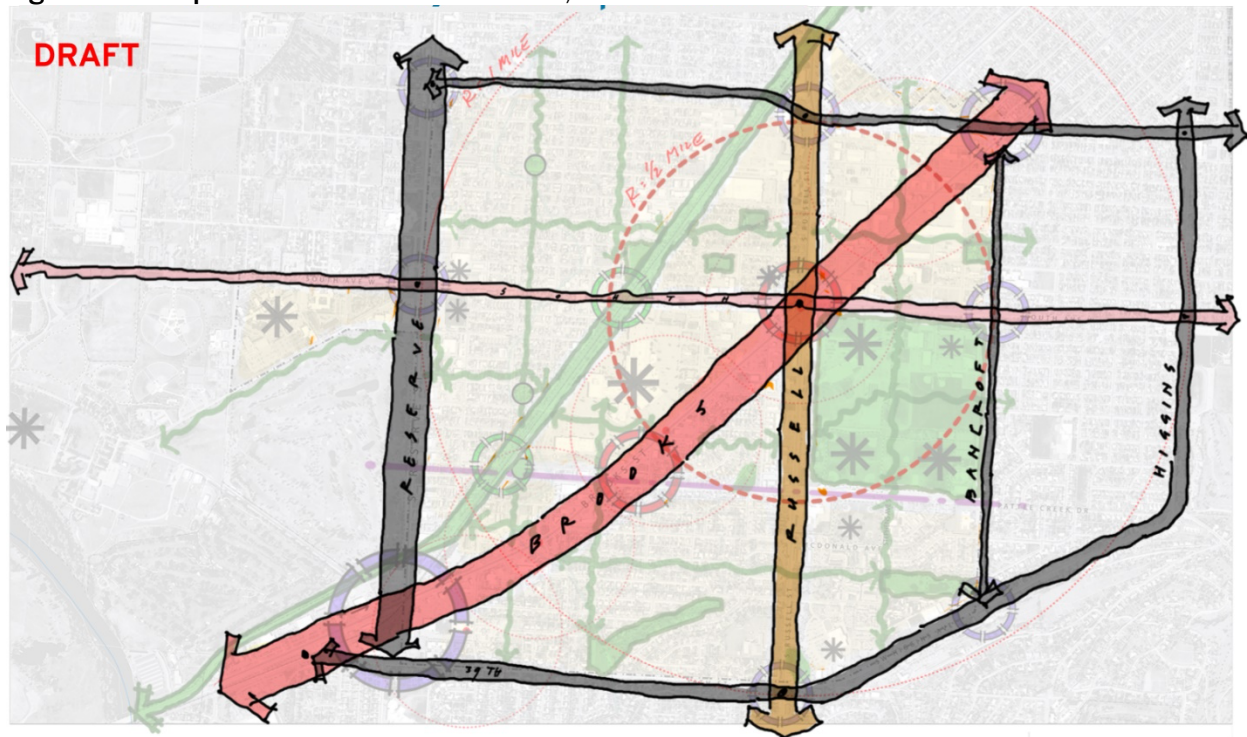


Figure 7. Character Areas Framework, Missoula Midtown



Figure 8. Natural and Open Space Framework, Missoula Midtown



Figure 9. Gateways Framework, Missoula Midtown

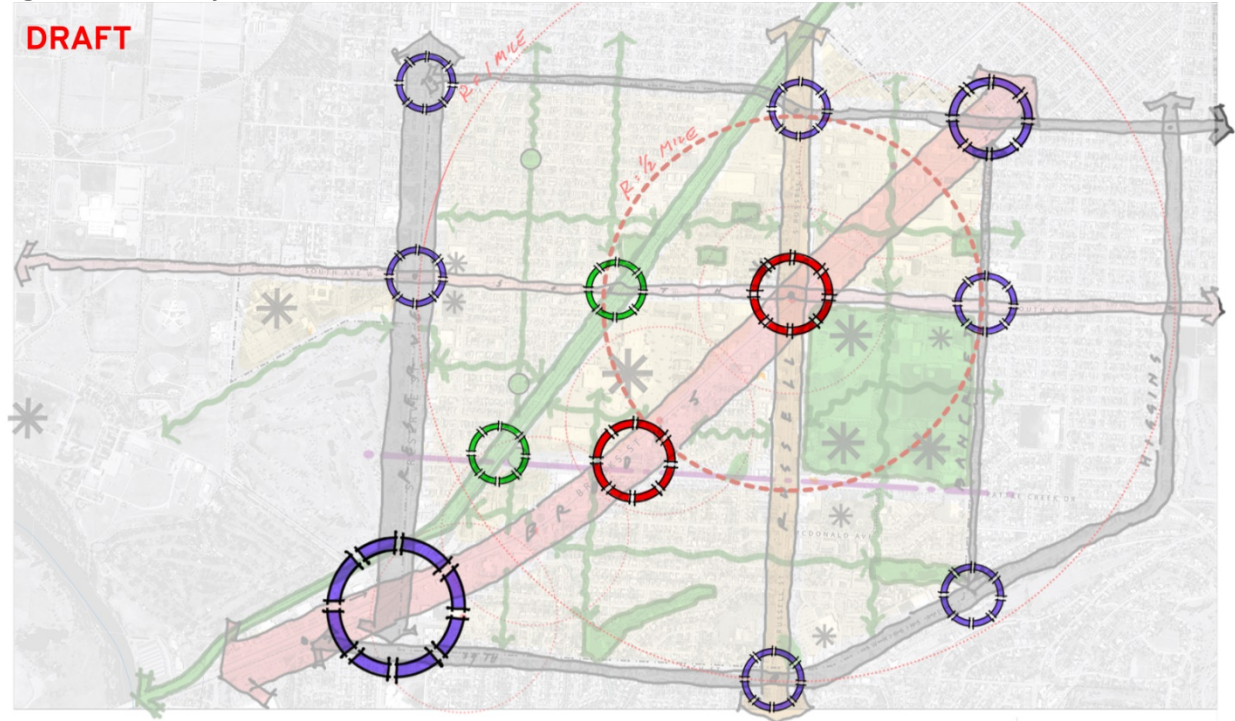
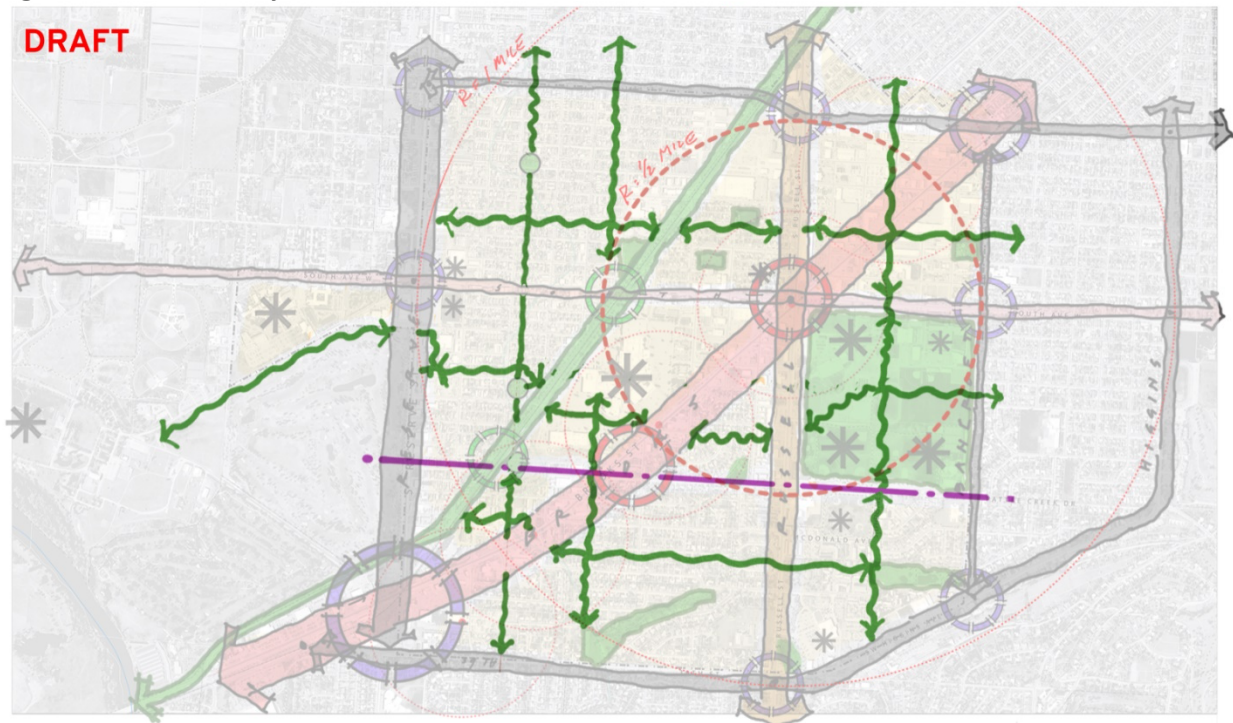


Figure 10. Destinations Framework, Missoula Midtown



Figure 11. Connectivity Framework, Missoula Midtown



Appendix E: Development Feasibility Memorandum

Development Feasibility Analysis

Missoula Midtown Master Plan

March 2023

Prepared for: Missoula Midtown Association

Final Report

ECONorthwest
ECONOMICS • FINANCE • PLANNING

Overview

Why conduct pro forma analysis of these development prototypes?

Midtown Missoula has a quickly evolving real estate market related to its changing local demographic and employment conditions and broad economic trends. As a large, centrally located part of Missoula, the area has rising demand for housing that is affordable to range of income levels, public amenities, and space for a variety of commercial activities. Combined with an older building stock, low rents, low vacancies, and large underdeveloped parcels, this means that development pressures have been steadily rising in Midtown.

As a part of refining alternative concepts for the Midtown Master Plan, ECONorthwest tested the development feasibility of seven different site prototypes with variable factors that will likely influence future development in Midtown. The prototypes represent a range of development types that may occur in Midtown, including residential, mixed-use, and commercial buildings.

Using financial pro forma, we evaluated whether current market conditions would make these prototypes viable for developers to pursue these types of development in Midtown and identify possible regulatory changes that currently prohibit such developments to be built today. What the market is able to deliver is a critical precursor to shaping the future of Midtown and creating a Midtown Master Plan that aligns with market realities.

How did we define the prototypes?

The seven prototypes included in this analysis reflect development types that we heard frequently mentioned during community visioning and workshop activities in the Midtown Master Plan process.

Most homes in Midtown today are single detached units, with some moderate density interspersed. However, residents indicated that a broader range of housing types such as townhomes, middle housing, and multifamily buildings could meet the needs of more households than current options available. Commercial vacancies are also generally low in Midtown, with more space needed in Midtown for businesses ranging from small local startups to anchor destinations. The development prototypes evaluated in this analysis include:

- Townhomes
- Fourplex
- Sixplex
- 3-Story Multifamily
- 4-Story Mixed Use
- 6-Story Multifamily
- Food Hall/Makerspace

In some cases, the prototypes analyzed do not completely align with what is allowed under current zoning regulations in Midtown Missoula. However, they are also not far departures from existing development standards. The prototypes presented here reflect best practices that could be implemented with upcoming changes to the city's code update, but still represent the desired character of Midtown.

Summary of Feasibility Analysis

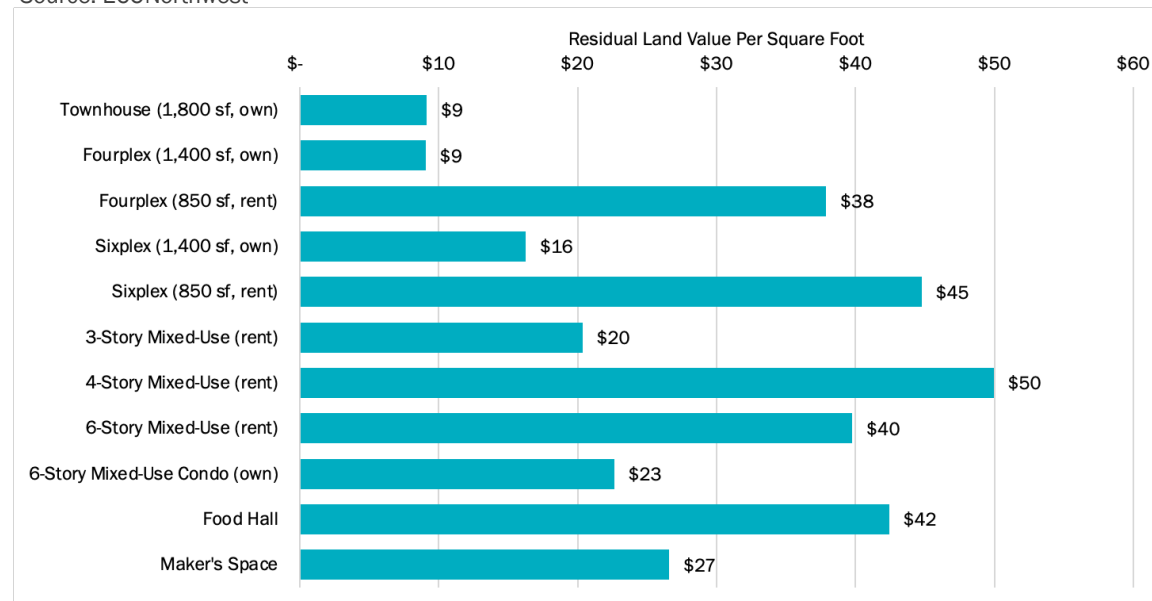
Our analysis shows that **most of the prototypes could be financially feasible to develop in Midtown based on best practices that align with desired types of development that community members identified during the Master Plan engagement process.**

Although the assumptions used for our model do not completely align with the current code, they reflect industry best practices for missing middle housing, mixed-use multifamily development, and creative commercial redevelopment.

Exhibit 1 shows the results of pro forma testing for each prototype, sometimes including slightly different site configurations for ownership or rental products. In general, larger multifamily development types offered as rental units tend to have a higher RLV per square foot compared with smaller scale buildings or middle housing types. The four-story mixed-use multifamily prototype shows the highest RLV of any development type, likely performing better than the three-story building with fewer units and the six-story building with podium parking. While middle housing and creative commercial types had moderate RLV, they were typically lower per square foot than most of the multifamily types but still provided sufficient return on costs to be feasible.

Exhibit 1. Summary of Residual Land Value Per Square Foot by Prototype

Source: ECONorthwest



What is Residual Land Value?

Residual Land Value (RLV) is a value that shows what a developer would be able to pay for land by finding the remainder between total development costs and total value (rents, sales revenues, etc.). A higher RLV per square foot is generally an indicator that a project will be financially feasible. See 'Pro Forma Modeling' section below for details.

Key Takeaways

Our pro forma analysis shows that most types of development that we tested could be financially feasible in Midtown. However, not all of these types are functionally possible in the area today, with existing challenges related to regulatory barriers, land use review processes, and other considerations.

Each prototype would require some level of regulatory changes to be built as they are shown in this analysis and may also be contingent on additional factors like current developer capacity or land prices. **Critical changes that could enable these development types to occur in Midtown include:**

Zoning Requirements

Use allowances for middle housing types in more residential zones. In Midtown today, all residential and commercial zones currently allow for townhomes outright (although some barriers for townhome development are noted in 'Land Use Processes'). Other middle housing like fourplexes and sixplexes would count as multifamily dwellings and are not permitted in some of Midtown's residential zones – including RT2.7, R5.4, or R8 zones which comprise a large share of the Southgate Triangle neighborhood and the core area around the intersection of Brooks, South, and Russell.

Reduced parking requirements and allowances for shared parking solutions. Our prototypes assume several parking conditions which are not currently covered in the city's code, including shared parking scenarios for mixed use buildings, use of on-street inventory, and lower parking ratios across the board than the code currently specifies. We used an industry best practice of between 0.7-1.0 spaces per dwelling unit depending on the development type, while assuming that the market may still sometimes choose to over-supply parking to meet demand from residents.¹ Existing code requirements would require at least 1.0 spaces for small units in multifamily buildings and up to 2.0 spaces for townhomes. Overall, this would take approximately a 50 percent reduction to match the parking configurations shown in the prototypes.

Minimizing the impact of adjacent site requirements. Since the prototypes we tested are not site-specific, our analysis does not account for regulations that would apply for residential development adjacent to lower density parcels. In the current code, these regulations can alter standards for setbacks and maximum building height if a parcel fronts on the same street as a lower density lot. The feasibility of any prototype could change if these more restrictive standards were to apply, by requiring developers to purchase a larger parcel than

¹ The Design Excellence Overlay currently allows a lower parking ratio in some areas of Midtown, but only in areas that are within designated corridors and nodes.

anticipated or limit either the size or number of units that can fit on a parcel.

Reduced requirements for commercial square footage in mixed-use buildings. Our prototypes assume a different ratio of commercial space than what is currently required for vertical mixed-use buildings. Currently, the zoning code would require that a vertical mixed-use building of the scale shown in our pro forma would need nonresidential uses to account for twenty percent of the parcel area or more, as the parcels modeled have greater than 50 feet of street frontage.² Even for a parcel with a smaller frontage, a mixed-use building would be required to have 800 square feet or 25 percent of the parcel area (whichever is greater), dedicated to nonresidential use. These requirements could significantly alter the feasibility of mixed-use developments and prohibit small-scale neighborhood-serving retail services.

Relaxed density requirements. Density requirements can limit development of middle housing types and multifamily buildings even in areas where they are permitted outright and match land use types in the City's Growth Policy. Our prototypes show industry best practices that apply for the types of townhomes, fourplexes, sixplexes, and mixed-use multifamily buildings that would be relevant in Midtown based on conversations with developers and community members. Unit sizes in our prototypes range from 850 to 1,800 square feet, and in general, they would require changes to

current required minimum parcel area per unit to fit on the parcels included in our model.

Land Use Processes

Shortened review timelines. Long timelines that some developers have described for land use, design, and other city review processes can reduce financial feasibility. Waiting for weeks or months for approvals can stall projects and add costs beyond what we are accounting for in our pro forma models. In general, this includes additional costs for developer overhead and labor, as well as pushing out the timeline for developers to receive sales revenue or rental income.

Flexibility for phased development. The city's building permit process is not designed to accommodate larger projects which often require multiple phases over the course of several years. Current procedure requires that developments are completed entirely on the same permit, which can preclude larger scale development like the six-story podium prototype included in this analysis.

Eliminating discretionary criteria. Discretionary criteria in land use and zoning can make it difficult for developers to accurately anticipate costs and timelines. The most often cited example of discretionary criteria by developers is the recently implemented Design Excellence Overlay, which applies to parcels along many of Midtown's major corridors, including South Avenue, Brooks Street, Russell Street, Reserve Street, and Higgins Avenue.

² Missoula Municipal Code Section 20.100.010.

Design Excellence includes incentives intended to encourage projects that align with its goals, including options for on-street parking substitution, off-street parking reduction, landscaping reduction, no density restrictions on vertical mixed-use buildings, and activity area reduction. There are also mandatory requirements which vary between the different typologies of nodes and corridors in the program, related to materials, landscaping, façade design, and more. Following guidelines to receive incentives or meet requirements can be challenging without clear communication and standards.

Other Factors

Increased developer capacity. Since these types of development included in these prototypes can be difficult to build under current standards, there has not been as much opportunity for local developers to cultivate familiarity with middle housing and mixed-use multifamily types. In addition to regulatory barriers, there is also a subsequent lack of experience with these project types for those working in or near Midtown.

Clarity on land costs. Overall, it can be difficult to know the estimated cost of land for infill sites in Missoula. Access to assessor data and real estate reporting is limited in Montana, and developers might not always have a good understanding of land costs for small or irregularly shaped sites. Without a clear understanding of approximate costs, developers may choose not to pursue development of these parcels, particularly local developers who may not have the same ability to absorb risk as large national firms.

Pro Forma Modelling

What is included in a pro forma?

In order to evaluate the financial viability of the proposed development prototypes, we used a range of inputs necessary for financial pro forma modelling (displayed on the right).

ECONorthwest and SERA Architects developed a **building program** for each prototype using typical existing parcel dimensions and typologies in Midtown as well as industry best practices for each development type. These inputs sometimes deviate intentionally from current zoning allowances to show how the City might think about updating some of its standards in the future. For example, parking ratios for middle housing and mixed-use buildings are reduced in our model compared with existing requirements.

Working with local developers, architects, and property owners, we defined and vetted what expected **development costs** would be for properties in this area. This includes a combination of hard cost and soft costs, both of which experience changes over time and by geographic area. Local trends discussed with stakeholders also informed our assumptions for **operating revenue**, including sale prices, rents, and operating costs for different building types.

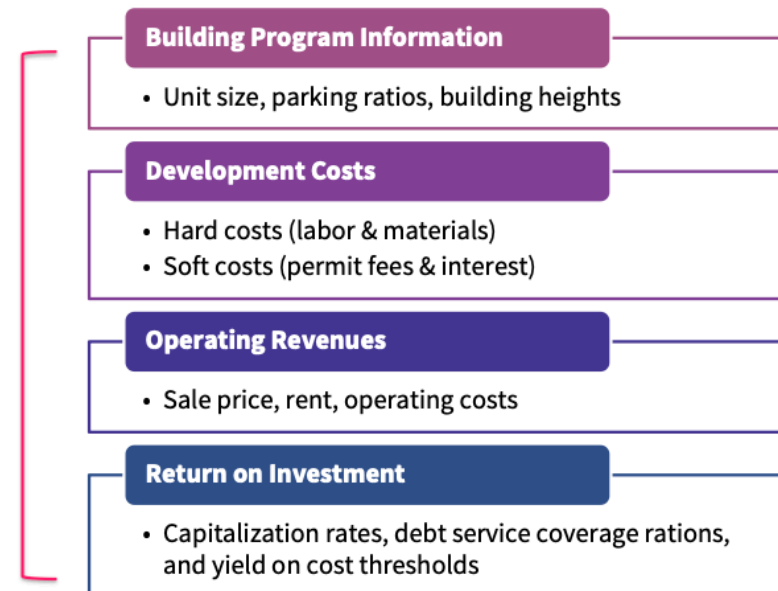
Return on Investment (ROI) is a key performance metric used to evaluate investments such as real estate developments. It is calculated as a percentage of gains on an initial investment, with a higher rate typically creating more incentive to pursue

a project. If the estimated rate is below an investor's target, it makes the development less likely to occur.

Residual Land Value (RLV) is a value that estimates what a developer would be able to pay for land given development inputs. This is critical for determining whether a project will be feasible, or if it would fail to cover the costs of development and operations.

Exhibit 2. Pro Forma Model Inputs

Source: ECONorthwest



Performance Metrics

Why do we use performance metrics?

While planning for the future of Midtown, it is critical to understand economic realities that might exist for certain types of development identified during the planning process. Pro forma work can help decision-makers understand what is currently possible to begin identifying what levers are available to increase feasibility of development types desired by the community.

Performance metrics like Residual Land Value (RLV), and Return on Investment (ROI) are important for understanding whether new development is likely to occur, depending on the type of new construction and financing structure.

What if a project does not perform well with these metrics?

Some types of projects are less likely to meet minimum expectations related to these metrics for market rate investment. For example, affordable housing that offers below-market rents is typically unable to provide a sufficient return on investments. However, affordable housing is also a critical need in many communities. Typically, these projects are achieved by providing subsidies from local, state, or federal funding sources or mission-based foundations. If projects do not perform well with these metrics, it does not necessarily mean that they cannot happen, but that they will require some kind of additional financial support. Regulatory

changes can also impact development feasibility and have implications for what projects are able to be built.

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program offered through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development is a primary funding source for many affordable housing projects. The program comes with strict income limits for affordable units and has become an increasingly competitive program for affordable housing. Many states and local governments also offer different types of programs and funding opportunities for affordable housing, as well as private philanthropic foundations and nonprofit organizations.

Development and use standards in local zoning codes can also impact how developments perform with these metrics. For example, standards like lot coverage, parking requirements, and setbacks can make it necessary for developers to purchase a larger parcel relative to the number of units, driving up land costs. Policy changes at the city level can help to improve the feasibility of different development types like affordable housing and mixed-use buildings by allowing greater flexibility in the code.

Residual Land Value

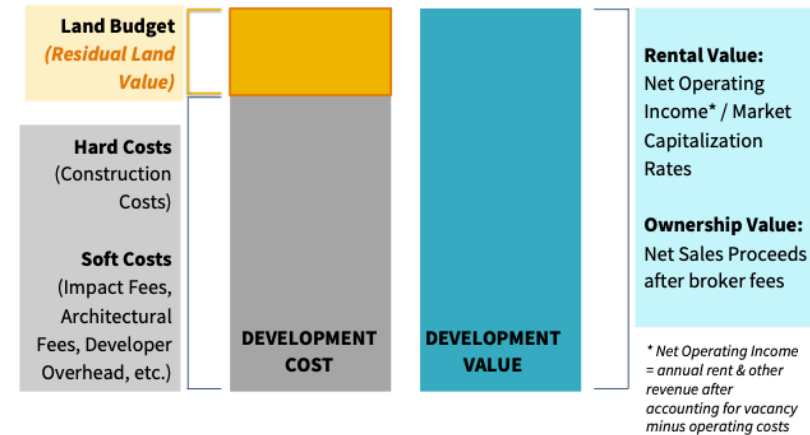
Residual Land Value (RLV) is a strong indicator metric of the relative likelihood that development will occur for both rental and ownership products: it demonstrates whether a developer will be able to purchase land and if there is a market incentive for investment. RLV is calculated as the remainder between a development's value and the cost it takes for development as shown in Exhibit 3.

The value of a development project is projected somewhat differently for rental or ownership products. For rental properties, the value is reflected in its **Net Operating Income (NOI)**, which is the property's annual rental income (from residential or commercial tenants), and any additional revenue after accounting for vacancy rates and operating costs (such as property management and maintenance). For ownership products, the value is the **Net Sales Proceeds** after broker fees.

Development costs are a combination of hard costs (like construction and labor for new construction) and soft costs (including impact fees, design, overhead expenses, and more). If the value of a development is higher than the total costs, this remainder is the RLV.

Exhibit 3. Feasible Development Example

Source: ECONorthwest



Higher RLV relative to existing land prices indicates that a developer will be able to purchase land, and that a project is likely to be successful.



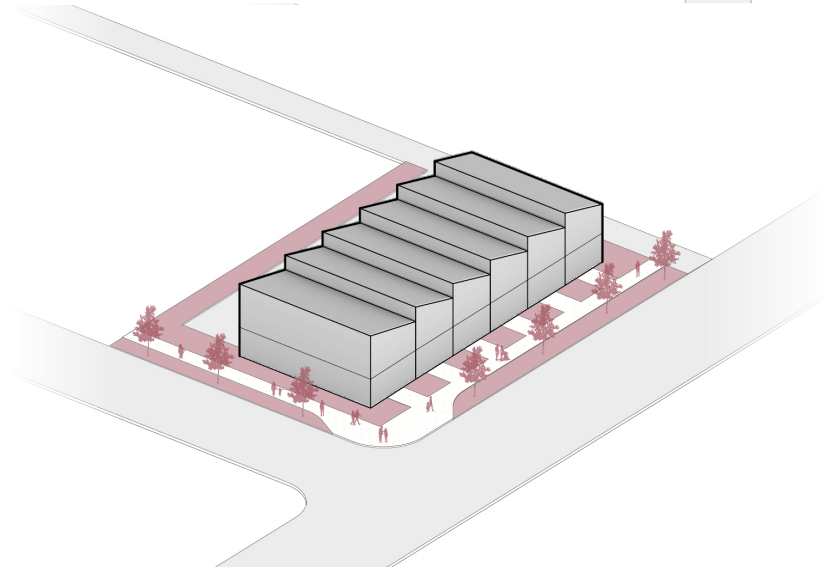
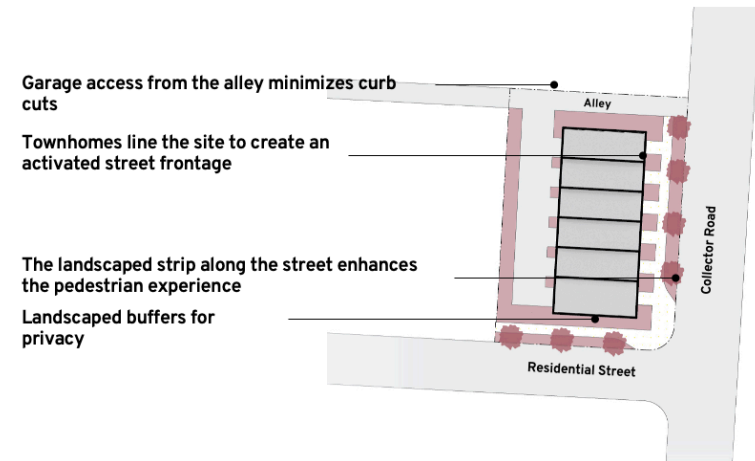
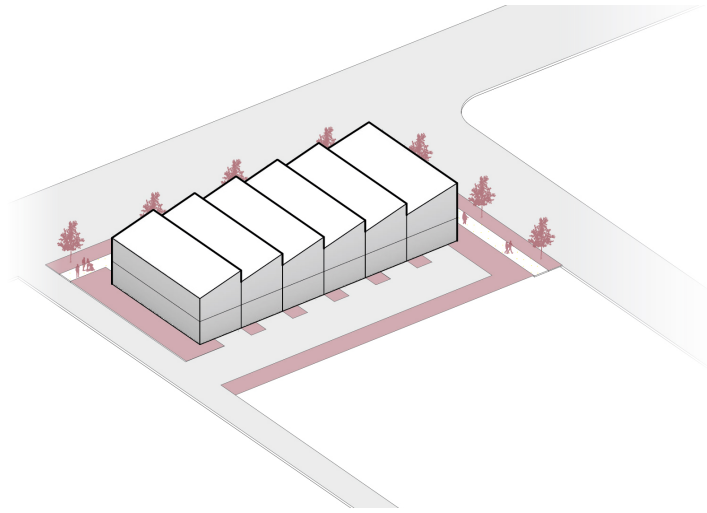
If a project has lower RLV relative to land prices, it may be difficult to secure financing for the project. Likewise, if the development's value is lower than costs, it is not financially feasible without some form of subsidies. To pursue these types of projects with low or no RLV, developers may be able to identify sources of gap financing targeted towards projects with community benefits, like affordable housing.

Prototype 1: Townhomes

This site transforms a parcel with a single-family home into Six Townhouses. The densification of this site creates a micro-community. Each townhome has an 18' x 50' footprint with 1,800 sf over two levels. This fills in the site and creates an urban edge to an anchor site at the end of the residential block while connecting to its context. Each home has a private garage with access from the alley to reduce curb cuts along the street. This enhances the pedestrian experience by tucking car access to the rear of the site.

Prototype 1: Townhomes (6 Units)

New Construction		Parking	
Residential Area (SF)	10,800	Residential Ratio	1.0
Commercial Area (SF)	0	Commercial Ratio	N/A
Amenity Area/ BOH	0	Total Spaces	6
Gross Floor Area	10,800		

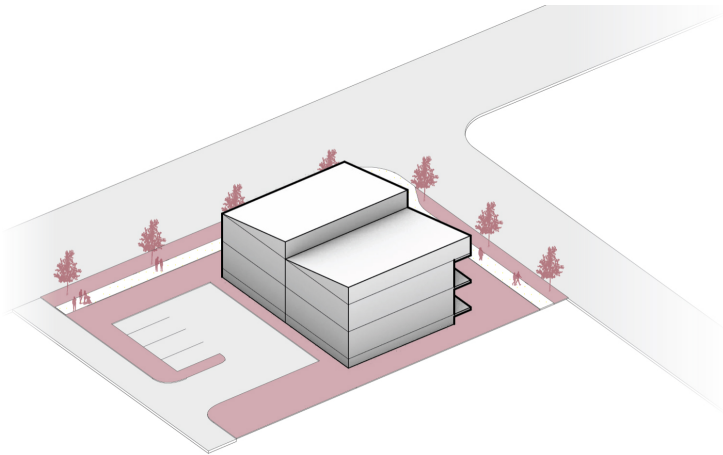


Prototype 2: Fourplex

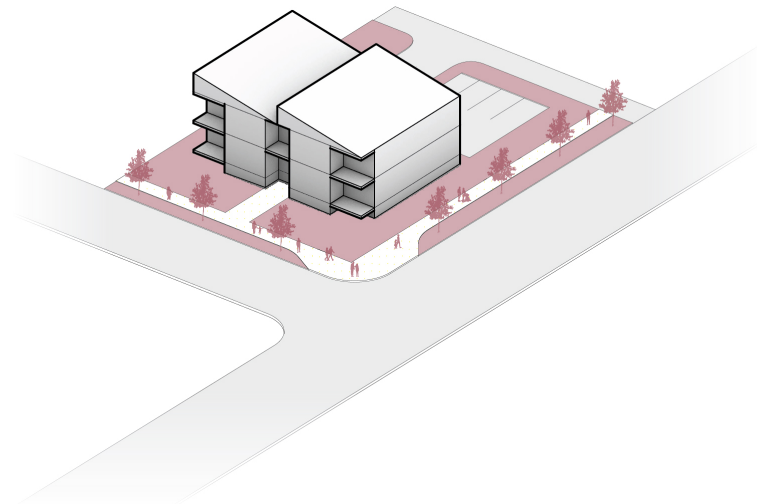
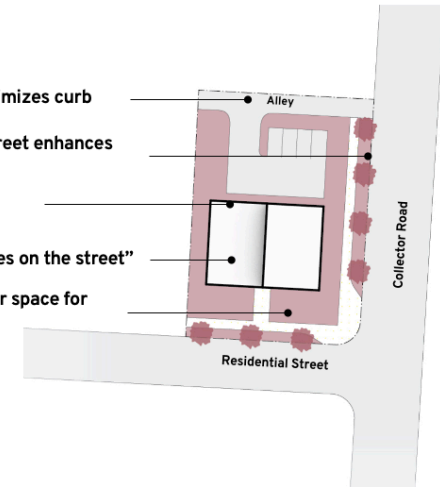
This site transforms a parcel with a single-family home into a fourplex multifamily building. Each unit is 850 or 1,400 sf (depending on tenure type) with a private balcony overlooking the street. Each apartment has a dedicated parking space with access from the alley to minimize curb cuts along the streetscape. This model anchors the corner of a residential street while integrating into the lower density context.

Prototype 2: Fourplex (4 Units)*

New Construction		Parking	
Residential Area (SF)	3,789 (rent) 6,240 (own)	Residential Ratio	1.0
Commercial Area (SF)	0	Commercial Ratio	N/A
Amenity Area/BOH	0	Total Spaces	4
Gross Floor Area	3,789 (rent) 6,240 (own)		



- Garage access from the alley minimizes curb cuts
- The landscaped strip along the street enhances the pedestrian experience
- The apartments face the street adding activity to the urban environment
- Balconies on the front create "eyes on the street"
- Landscaped buffers offers outdoor space for the residents as well as privacy



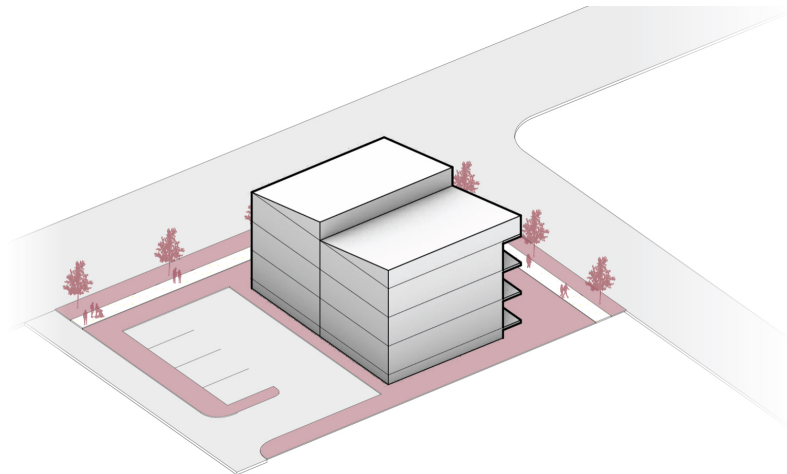
*Note: We tested a slightly different site configuration with larger lot and unit sizes for an ownership fourplex compared with a rental product, assuming that households tend to select for features differently depending on tenure type.

Prototype 3: Sixplex

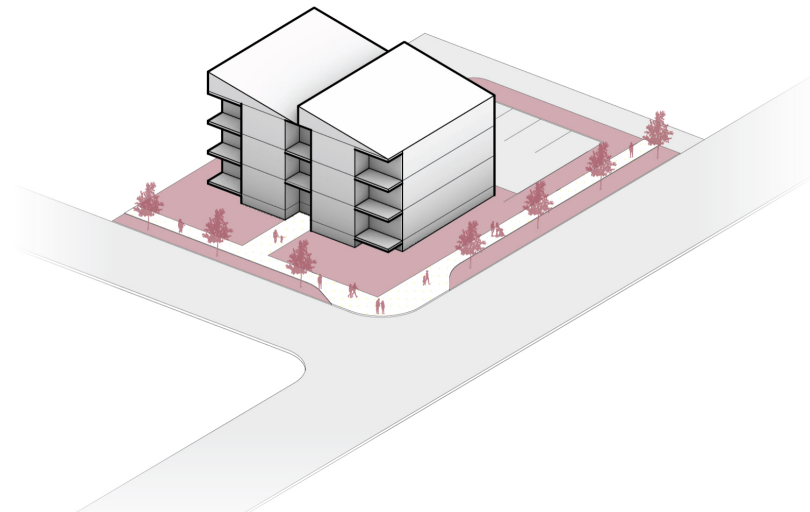
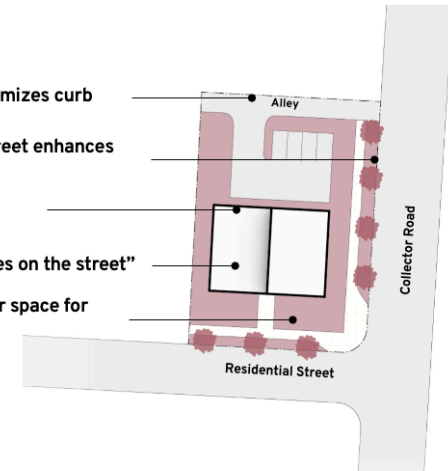
This site transforms a parcel with a single-family home into a sixplex multifamily building, similar to the fourplex with an additional two units. Each unit is 850 or 1,400 sf (depending on tenure type) with a private balcony overlooking the street. Each apartment has a dedicated parking space with access from the alley to minimize curb cuts along the streetscape. This model anchors the corner of a residential street while integrating into the lower density context.

Prototype 3: Sixplex (6 Units)*

New Construction		Parking	
Residential Area (SF)	5,570 (rent) 9,360 (own)	Residential Ratio	1.0
Commercial Area (SF)	0	Commercial Ratio	N/A
Amenity Area/BOH	0	Total Spaces	6
Gross Floor Area	5,570 (rent) 9,360 (own)		



- Garage access from the alley minimizes curb cuts
- The landscaped strip along the street enhances the pedestrian experience
- The apartments face the street adding activity to the urban environment
- Balconies on the front create "eyes on the street"
- Landscaped buffers offers outdoor space for the residents as well as privacy



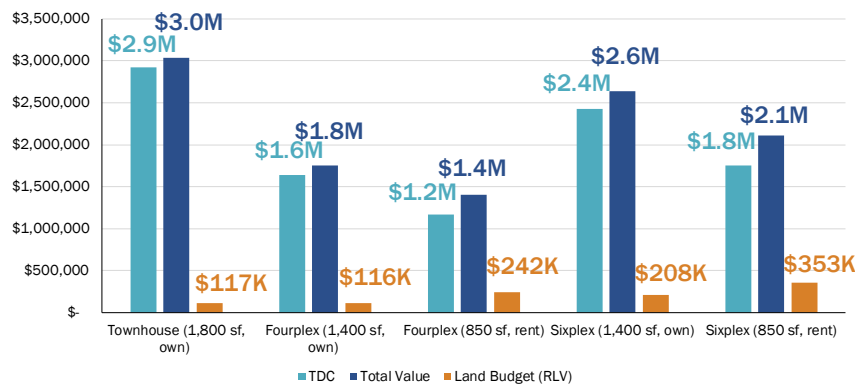
*Note: We tested a slightly different site configuration with larger lot and unit sizes for an ownership sixplex compared with a rental product, assuming that households tend to select for features differently depending on tenure type.

Prototype Findings: Missing Middle Housing

Pro Forma Analysis

Exhibit 4. Middle Housing Pro Forma Results

Source: ECONorthwest



Key Findings

The chart above generally indicates that middle housing infill development types (including townhomes, fourplexes, and sixplexes) are feasible under current market conditions for both rental and for-sale housing in Midtown.

Based on our analysis, residual land value (RLV) exists for missing middle housing prototypes ranging from \$9 to \$35 per square foot. RLV is generally higher for for-sale product types than rental housing mostly due to the higher sale prices that could be achieved on the market.

Several reasons exist for why these types of missing middle development may not yet be occurring in Midtown, including regulatory and procedural land use challenges. Current barriers that may be contributing to less frequent development of middle housing include:

Use Allowances. In Midtown, all residential and commercial zones currently allow for at least a lot line house or two-unit townhome to be built outright. However, fourplex and sixplex types would currently count as a multifamily house or multidwelling building, which are not permitted in Midtown's RT2.7, R5.4, or R8 zones. These zones (particularly R5.4) comprise a large share of the Southgate Triangle neighborhood and the core area of the Master Plan around Brooks, South, and Russell.

Density Limits. Density requirements can limit development of middle housing types even in areas where they are permitted outright as multifamily dwellings. Our prototypes show industry best practices that apply for the types of townhomes, fourplexes, and sixplexes that would be relevant in Midtown based on conversations with developers and community members. In general, they would require changes to current required minimum parcel area per unit in some residential zones that cover large portions of Midtown, including the R5.4 and R8 zones, which currently require 5,400 and 8,000 square feet of parcel area per unit respectively.

Parking Ratios. Current parking regulations for townhomes of this size would also likely require a greater parking ratio than modeled in this prototype, requiring 2 off-street spaces per unit. Fourplexes and sixplexes would likely be required to include 1.5 spaces per unit unless they met affordable housing criteria.³ Our townhome, fourplex, and sixplex prototypes all assume a reduced amount of parking needed at only 1 space per unit.

Townhome Exemption Development (TED). TED standards in the city's zoning code would hypothetically enable the type of small-scale townhome development shown in Prototype 1 in most of Midtown, including all residential as well as commercial B and C zones.⁴ However, the City and developers have identified a number of procedural issues with current TED processes in the 2020 Subdivision and TED Regulations Recommendations

Report, including inconsistencies in review, lack of clarity in code interpretations, and lack of communication materials.⁵ The City has been working to address these issues and released an expedited process, which may begin to encourage more townhome development as process issues continue to be resolved.

Developer Capacity. Since these middle housing types are difficult to build under current standards, there has not been as much of an incentive for local developers to cultivate familiarity with middle housing types. In addition to regulatory barriers, there is also a subsequent lack of experience with infill project types for those working in or near Midtown. Although there has been some townhome development in Missoula, it may be particularly challenging to start fourplex and sixplex development.

³ For ownership products, this means that 25% of units are affordable to households at 120% AMI. For rental products, 75% of units must be affordable to households below 60% AMI, or 25% of units affordable to households below 80% AMI. (See Missoula Municipal Code Section 20.100.010)

⁴ Missoula Municipal Code Section 20.40.180.

⁵ City of Missoula, "Recommendations Report: Subdivision and TED Regulations," December 2020, <https://www.engagemissoula.com/missoula-subdivision-regulations-review>.

Prototype 4: Three-Story Multifamily Mixed-Use

This site transforms a parcel with a small, car-forward drive-up retail building into an integrated three story mixed-use multifamily building. This mixed-use development establishes a new urban edge along the main street while providing parking on the slower streets.

Prototype 4: Three-Story Mixed Use (27 Units)

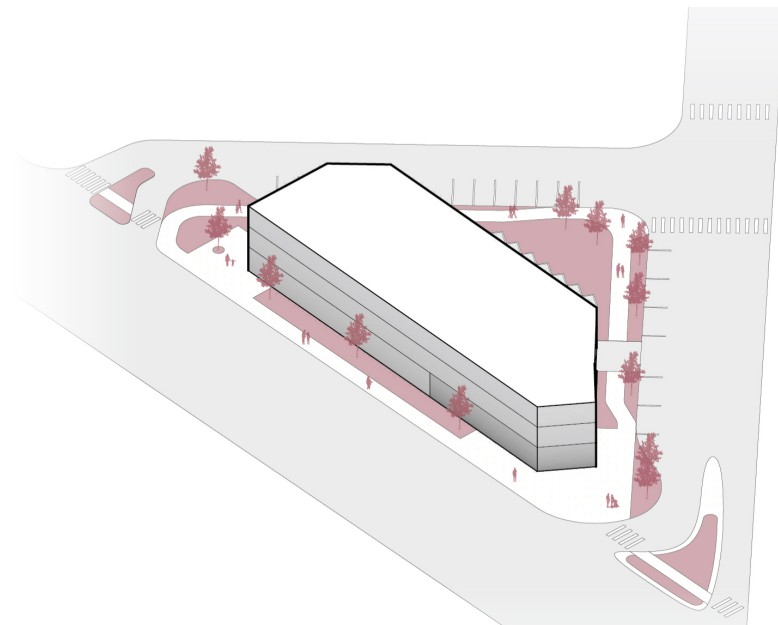
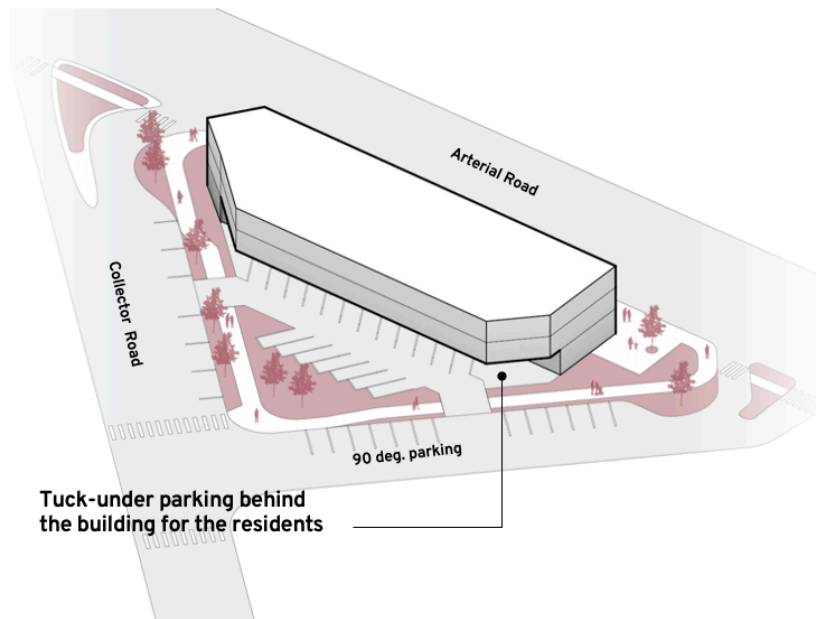
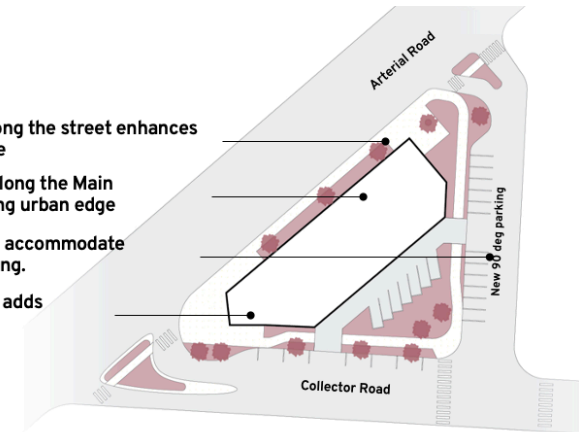
New Construction		Parking	
Residential Area (SF)	23,233	Residential Ratio	0.7
Commercial Area (SF)	3,482	Commercial Ratio	0
Amenity Area/ BOH	1,200/600	Total Spaces	19
Gross Floor Area	28,515		

The landscaped buffer along the street enhances the pedestrian experience

Elongated building face along the Main Connector creates a strong urban edge

Rework one side street to accommodate additional on-street parking.

Retail on the main corner adds activity to the site



Prototype 5: Four-Story Multifamily Mixed-Use

This site transforms a parcel with a small, car-forward drive-up retail building into an integrated four story mixed-use multifamily building, similar to the three story prototype with an additional story. This mixed-use development establishes a new urban edge along the main street while providing parking on the slower streets.

Prototype 5: Four-Story Mixed Use (39 Units)

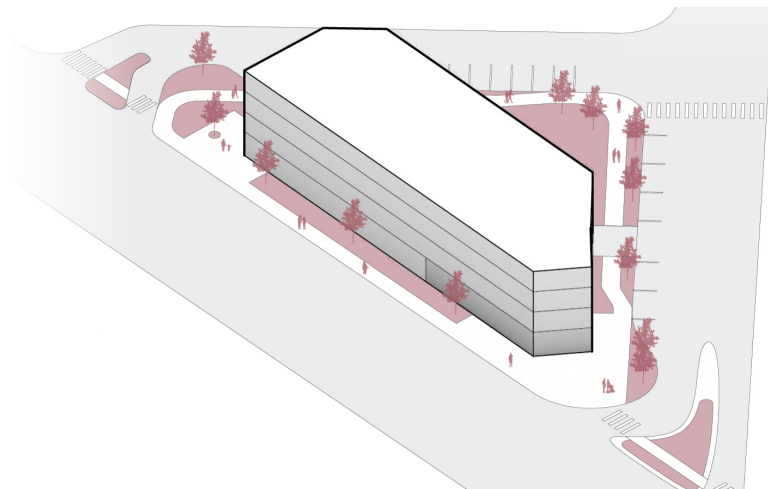
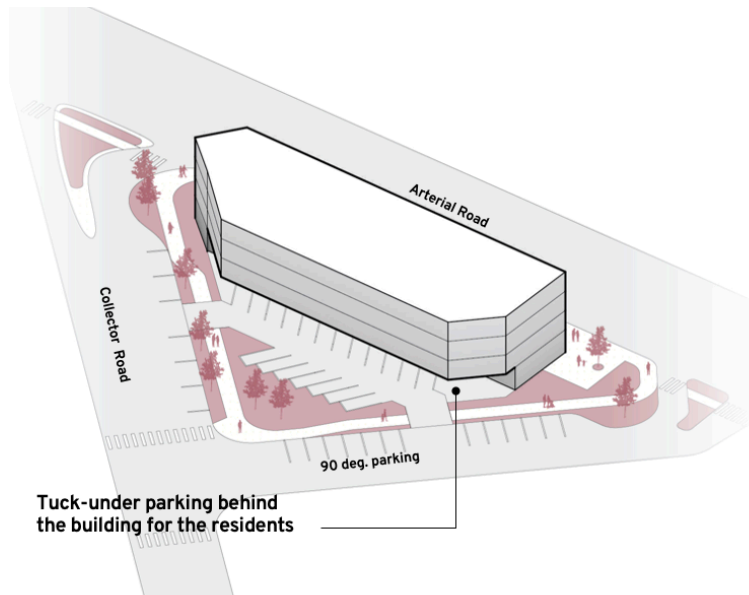
New Construction		Parking	
Residential Area (SF)	32,989	Residential Ratio	0.62
Commercial Area (SF)	3,482	Commercial Ratio	0
Amenity Area/ BOH	2,000/600	Total Spaces	24
Gross Floor Area	39,071		

The landscaped buffer along the street enhances the pedestrian experience

Elongated building face along the Main Connector creates a strong urban edge

Rework one side street to accommodate additional on-street parking.

Retail on the main corner adds activity to the site

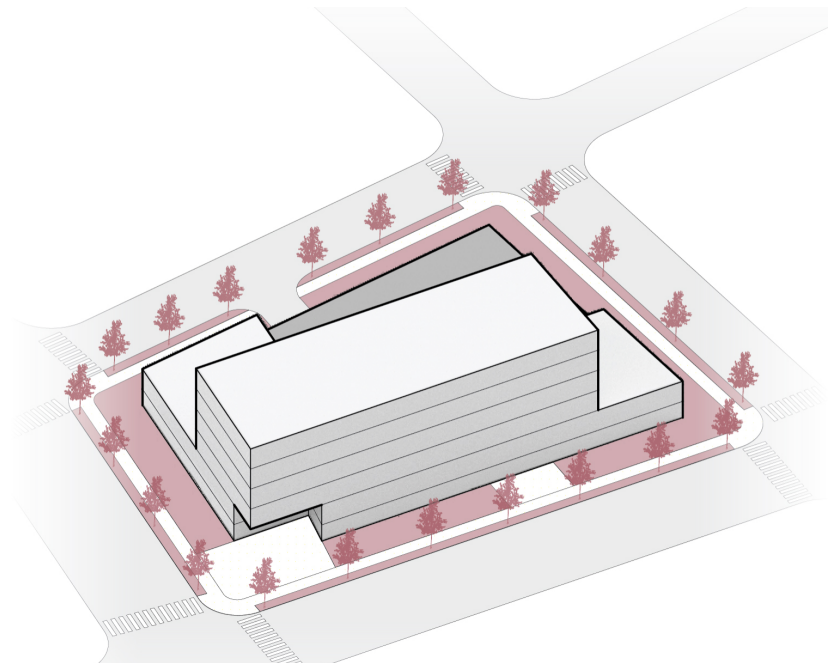
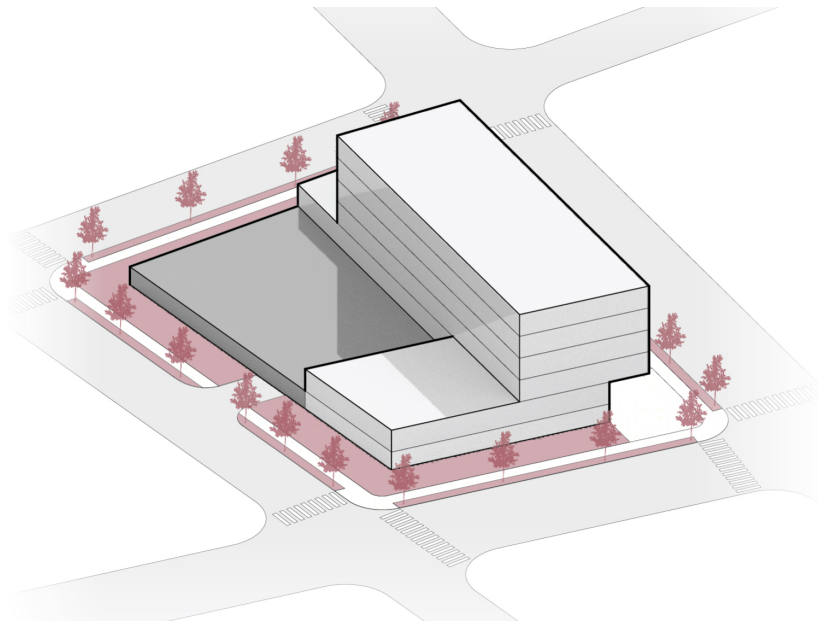
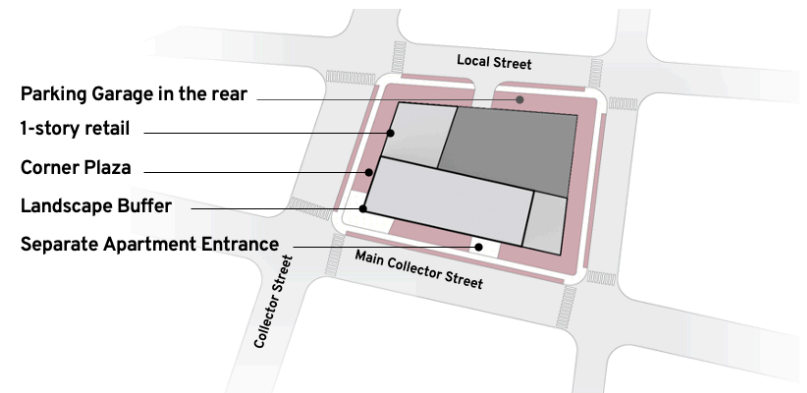


Prototype 6: Six-Story Multifamily Mixed-Use

This site transforms a large, empty lot into a 6-story building. A larger apartment building would require a parking garage to provide parking for all units. The residential building fronts the major streets while moving the parking garage entrance to the back of the lot.

Prototype 6: Six-Story Multifamily (84 Units)

New Construction		Parking	
Residential Area (SF)	70,980	Residential Ratio	1.0
Commercial Area (SF)	3,000	Commercial Ratio	0
Amenity Area/ BOH	3,660/ 1,000	Total Spaces	84
Gross Floor Area	78,640		

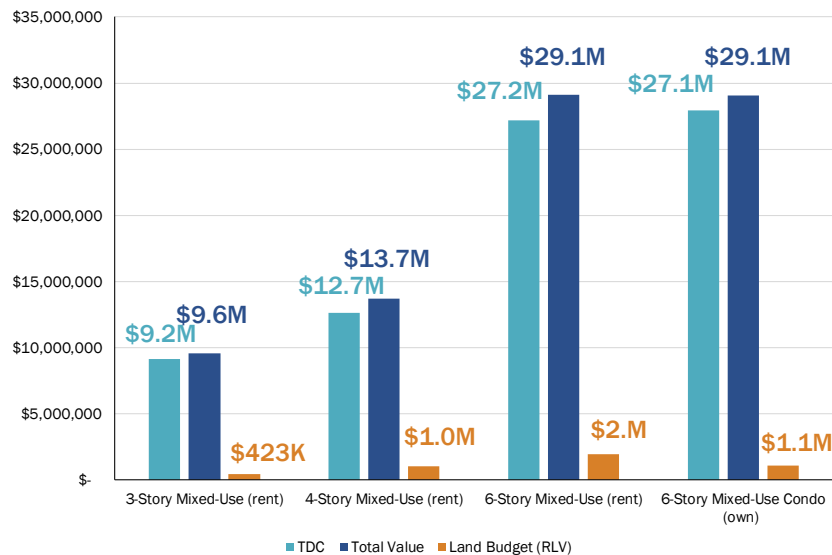


Prototype Findings: Multifamily Mixed-Use 3-6 Stories

Pro Forma Analysis

Exhibit 5. Multifamily Mixed-Use Pro Forma Results

Source: ECONorthwest



Key Findings

Based on our analysis, RLV for the various multifamily mixed-use prototypes vary substantially, with differing implications for financial feasibility. These include \$20 per square foot for a smaller three-story building, \$50 per

square foot for a taller four-story building, and \$40 to \$50 per square foot for a six-story podium development depending on targeted tenure type. In general, the larger the RLV value, the higher land costs that a developer would likely be able to afford for the project.

The estimated development costs and development value shown in Exhibit 5 are based on current market conditions, including recent development projects in Missoula. Several recent and proposed mixed-use projects in the area are achieving average rents above \$2.60 per square foot, which is roughly the break-even point for new higher density multifamily housing.

The growing strong performance of housing in the area, (especially multifamily rentals) has led to increasing rents that can sometimes support the overall development costs of mixed-use multifamily types where land acquisition and soft costs are low.⁶ For the larger, six-story multifamily prototype, there is a high estimated RLV of \$40 to \$50 per square foot. However, from a return on costs metric, the six-story multifamily mixed-use prototype may not yet be able to support standard lending requirements.

⁶ Development costs have been ground-truthed with developer interviews in the area.

On a typical 20,000 square foot triangle lot like the one modeled in Prototypes 4 and 5 (which reflects common site conditions on the Brooks Street corridor), a small residual land value (RLV) exists to produce a medium sized multifamily project. The RLV that exists for this product type could generally pay a maximum of \$20 to \$50 per square foot in land costs respectively. However, from a return on costs metric, both the three- and four-story multifamily mixed-use prototypes would fall just short of being able to support a standard lending requirement of 5.5 percent, estimated at 5.2 and 5.4 percent respectively.

Local financial institutions might support a lower return on costs threshold which would make the three- and four-story prototypes feasible, but the six-story development would likely still need significant gap financing to pencil. In addition to these feasibility metrics, there are regulatory barriers that could also create challenges for developing multifamily mixed-use buildings as shown in our prototypes, including:

Parking Requirements. The larger and more stories in a mixed-use multifamily development, the more parking it will require by city code regulations, as well as structured parking to be able to accommodate both the required parking and total development build out within the site. Current parking minimums would require new construction to provide between 1 to 1.5 parking spaces per unit for these multifamily prototypes.

Structured parking significantly impacts the feasibility of development. As shown in Exhibit 5, development costs increase substantially from a four-story to a six-story mixed-use project, mostly due to the structured parking that is built as part of the four-story mixed-use project.

This prototype deviates from current development standards by having a lower parking ratio of between 0.62 to 1.0 parking stalls per dwelling unit. Reducing or eliminating parking minimums and identifying shared parking opportunities are ways that can help make development more feasible and increase the number of residential units that could be built on site.

Commercial Uses. Adding a small amount of first floor commercial uses does not substantially impact the overall feasibility of these mixed-use prototypes, and the commercial rental value is only a small fraction of the total value. However, mixed-use residential projects can help produce much needed housing while providing neighborhood retail services desired in Midtown within walking distance to complimentary uses.

Reducing ground floor commercial requirements in vertical mixed-use buildings can help create viable commercial spaces for smaller retailers. Currently, the zoning code would require that a vertical mixed-use building of this scale would need nonresidential uses to account for twenty percent of the parcel area or more.⁷

⁷ Missoula Municipal Code Section 20.100.010.

For the three- and four-story prototypes, this would translate to 4,160 feet of retail space, and for the six-story prototype, 9,844 square feet would be required. These requirements could significantly alter the feasibility of each type and reduce the amount of space available for residential use.

Phased Development. The city's building permit process is not designed to accommodate larger projects which often require multiple phases over the course of several years. The six-story prototype or a larger multifamily mixed-use building may need to be done in multiple phases to allow a developer to secure financing and begin collecting some return on costs from residential and/or commercial rents.

Current procedure requires that developments are completed on a shorter timeline and entirely on the same building permit. This can preclude larger scale development, particularly from local developers who may not have the same resources as large national firms.

Prototype 7: Creative Commercial (Makerspace/Food Hall)

This site transforms a small, car-forward drive-up retail building into a creative shared retail format (either a food hall or maker's space in our models). The existing parking is designed to have a landscaped buffer to separate the pedestrian entrance from the parking lot. The parking lot can transform into a small outdoor event space.

Prototype 7: Creative Office/Makerspace (0 Units)

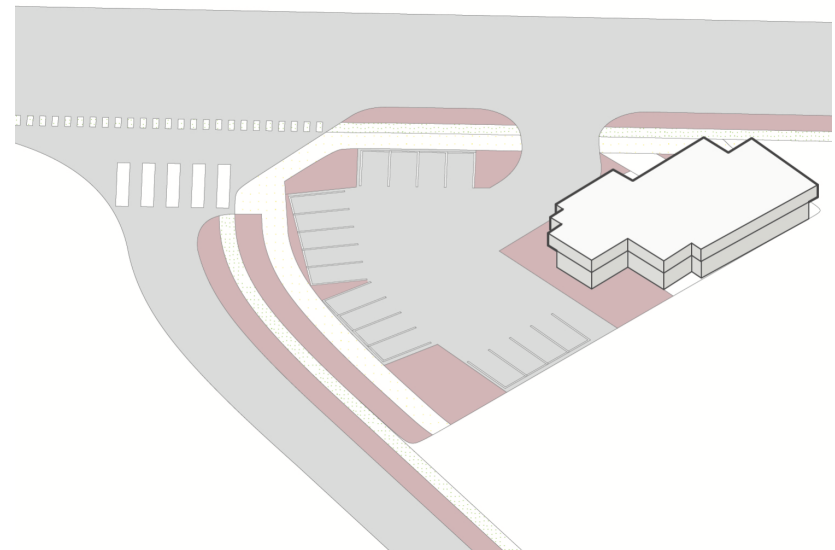
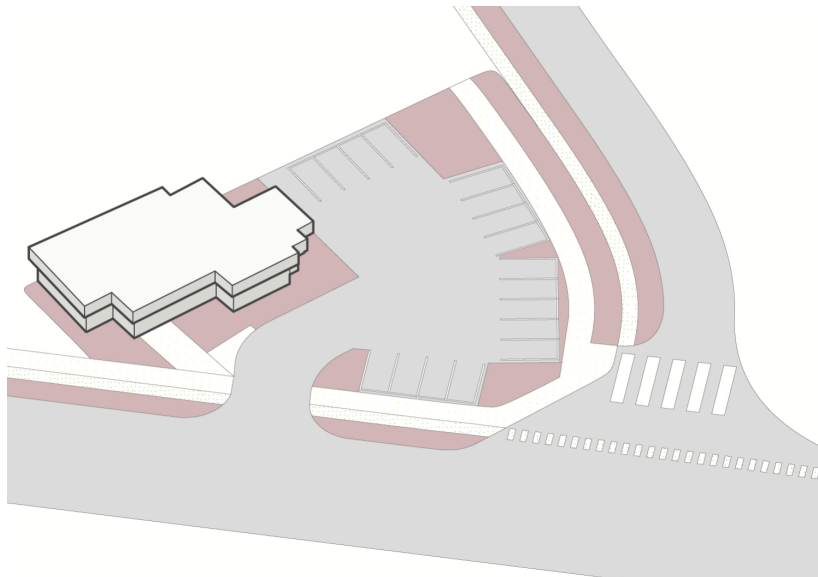
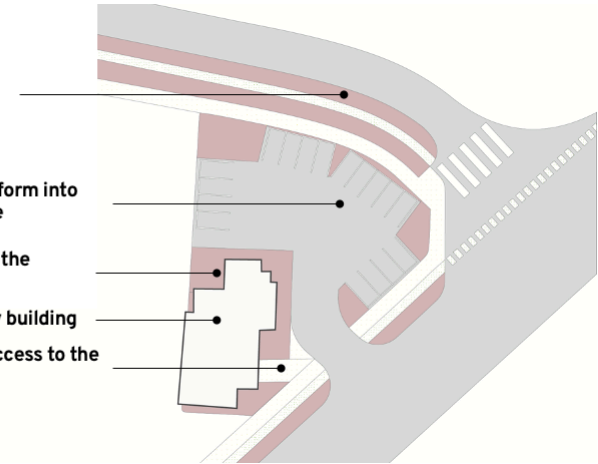
New Construction		Parking	
Residential Area (SF)	0	Residential Ratio	N/A
Commercial Area (SF)	15,000	Commercial Ratio	
Amenity Area/ BOH	2,000	Total Spaces	45
Gross Floor Area	17,000		

Landscaped streetscape

Parking lot could transform into an outdoor event space

Landscape buffer from the parking

Adaptive Reuse 1-story building
Prioritize pedestrian access to the building

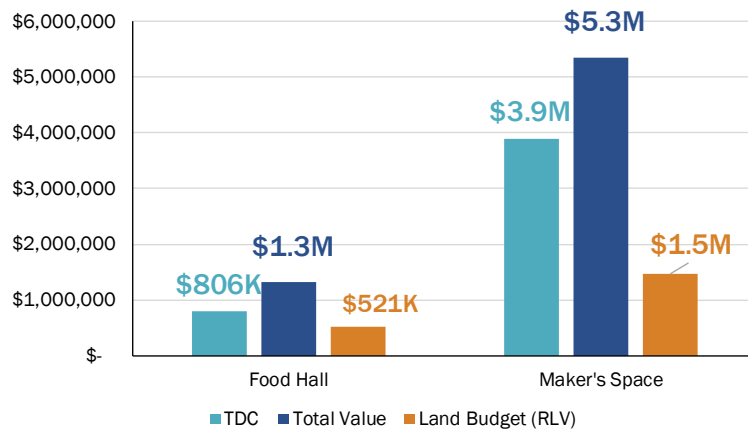


Prototype Findings: Creative Commercial

Pro Forma Analysis

Exhibit 6. Creative Commercial Pro Forma Results

Source: ECONorthwest



Key Findings

Both the food hall and makerspace prototypes that we tested for creative commercial redevelopment would likely be feasible. Although the makerspace use has a much higher total value, the combination of hard and soft costs needed for development give it a lower RLV at approximately \$27 per square foot. The food hall use performed better using this metric at \$42 per square foot, making it one of the most feasible development types in this analysis. The return on costs anticipated for these types is higher than any residential

type we tested and meets standard industry requirements at 8.2 and 6.8 percent respectively.

Although these types have not yet been built in Midtown, restaurants and offices are use types that are permitted outright in commercial (B and C) zones that cover large portions of the area, as well as Midtown's highest density residential zone (RM1-35). The triangular parcel type shown in the prototype is a common site condition along Brooks Street, one of Midtown's key corridors lined with compatible zoning where the intensity of development is anticipated to grow in response to new federal infrastructure investments.

Development standards in the code for commercial buildings would align with the site configuration shown in this prototype, though adjacency to low-density residential zones could place additional restrictions on setback and building height regulations. If a specific site were fronting on the same street as an abutting R zoned parcel, it would be required to match the actual front or street side setback of the building (or meet at least 50 percent of the setback that would apply if the parcel were vacant). In these instances, rear setbacks also must be 25% of the parcel's depth or 20 feet.⁸ This could limit feasibility even for these relatively low-density commercial types or create delays for land use review for irregular parcels.

⁸ Missoula Municipal Code Section 20.10.030.

Conclusions

Middle Housing (Townhomes, Fourplex, Triplex)

Few buildings similar to the middle housing prototypes (including townhomes, fourplexes, and sixplexes) have been built in Midtown to date, despite our pro forma analysis findings that they would likely be financially feasible. Current zoning restrictions are likely a primary reason that the market has not delivered many of these projects to date, including use allowances in some residential zones, maximum densities, parking requirements, and design standards.

Aside from zoning restrictions, lack of familiarity with these product types among the developer community in Missoula may be a reason that they are not being built in Midtown. Developers also indicated issues with permitting and review processes, particularly for townhome development and achieving incentives which are available through the Design Excellence Overlay.

Multifamily Mixed-Use (Three-, Four-, and Six Story)

A larger six-story multifamily mixed-use building is unlikely to be feasible under current conditions in Midtown, but three- to four-story developments might be possible with support from a local lender or favorable changes in the market. Although some areas of Midtown have already been upzoned to allow for new housing and mixed-use development types (such as vertical mixed-use buildings and larger multifamily buildings), requirements related to parking, square footage of

commercial space, and square footage per dwelling unit may be preventing development that aligns with community desires and provides small-scale neighborhood services.

For mixed-use multifamily buildings, relaxing current requirements for square footage of ground floor retail space could also be a critical next step to make projects more successful at integrating active ground-floor uses and providing housing in key corridors for future public investment.

Creative Commercial Redevelopment (Food Hall and Makerspace)

Adaptive reuse for a creative commercial uses like food halls and makerspaces is a specialized type of development. Although our analysis shows that they would be feasible in Midtown's abundant commercial or industrial zoned areas, many developers working in Midtown may not be familiar with this type of project.

There are parcels throughout Midtown that could be candidates for this type of redevelopment, but the extent of spot zoning in Midtown may create regulatory barriers for sites adjacent to residential parcels.

Missoula Midtown Master Plan Market Analysis

November 2022

Prepared for: Missoula Midtown Association

Draft Report

This page intentionally blank

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE	1
DATA AND METHODS.....	1
ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT	1
2. MARKET AREAS FOR ANALYSIS	2
3. ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS	3
MIDTOWN DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS	3
MIDTOWN EMPLOYMENT TRENDS.....	12
MIDTOWN VISITOR TRENDS	18
4. MIDTOWN MARKET CONDITIONS AND TRENDS.....	20
OFFICE SUBMARKET.....	20
RETAIL SUBMARKET	23
INDUSTRIAL/FLEX SUBMARKET.....	25
RESIDENTIAL SUBMARKET	27
6 MARKET ASSESSMENT OF LAND USES.....	31
7 FINDINGS AND MARKET POTENTIAL	37
WHAT DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS MAY DRIVE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN MIDTOWN?	3
WHAT EMPLOYMENT TRENDS WILL DRIVE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN MIDTOWN?	4
WHAT IS THE MARKET DEMAND FOR DIFFERENT USES IN MIDTOWN?	38

This page intentionally blank

1. Introduction

Background and Purpose

ECONorthwest is leading an effort to assist the Missoula Midtown Association (MMA) in developing a Master Plan that reflects the values of those who live, visit, and work in Midtown. The project aims to support the unique character, culture, and economic activity of the community in Midtown. This report provides detailed context on demographic and market trends that are critical to understanding the type and scale of real estate development likely to be viable in Midtown.

The purpose of this market analysis is to:

- Provide an understanding of demographic and economic trends in Midtown and how they compare to Missoula overall.
- Provide an understanding of current market conditions that are relevant to supporting desired uses in Midtown.

Data and Methods

We drew from a variety of data sources to compile an understanding of Midtown's commercial and residential real estate market. Source citations can be found on each page where quantitative data is presented.

Organization of This Report

This report is organized into the following chapters:

- **Market Areas for Analysis.** Describes the geographic areas utilized for real estate analysis and from which demand for different uses will be derived.
- **Economic and Demographic Trends.** Provides information about the economic and demographic trends in Midtown and Missoula.
- **Midtown Market Conditions and Trends.** Presents information about the commercial and residential markets.
- **Market Assessment of Land Uses.** Provides a summary assessment of land uses likely to be demanded in Midtown that can support new development.
- **Findings and Market Potential.** Summarizes the key demographic and economic trends likely to influence demand for different land uses and future development in Midtown. This chapter also provides a high-level assessment of the overall market trends and demand potential in Midtown.

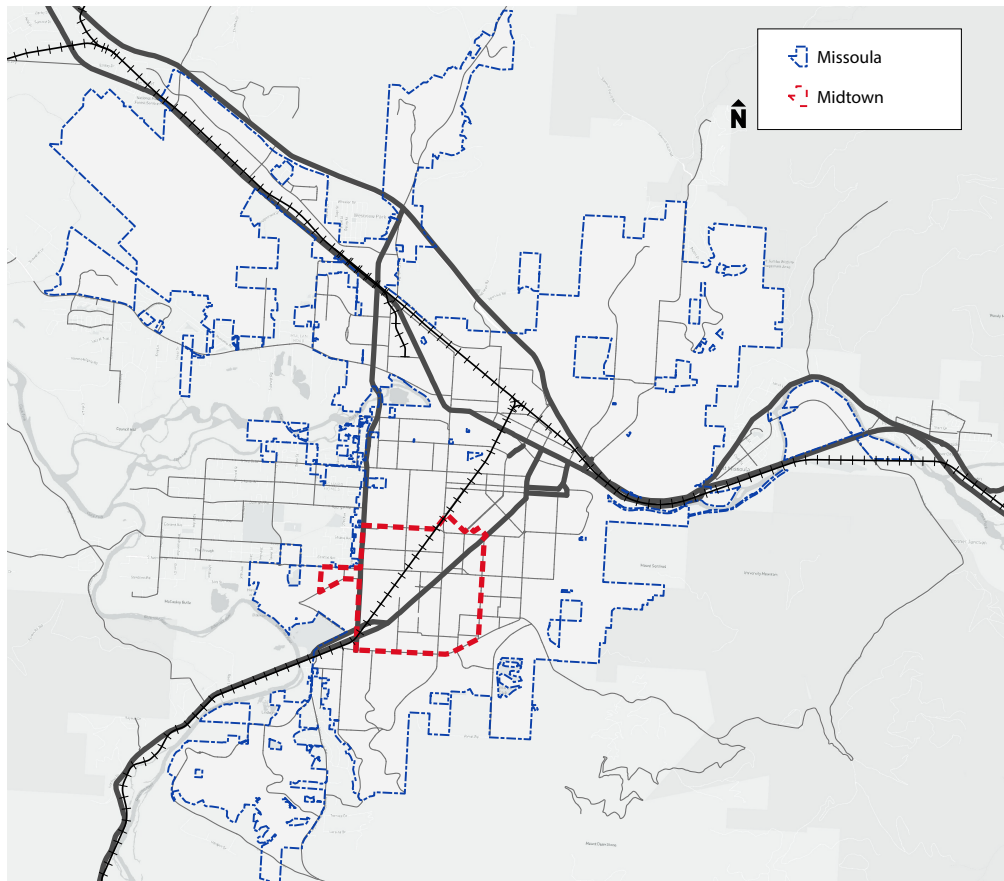
2. Market Areas for Analysis

For this assessment, we analyzed Midtown and the City of Missoula to evaluate market conditions; existing supply of commercial, industrial, and residential real estate; and types of development that are likely viable in the area. We selected Midtown and Missoula as our market areas, as both represent large geographies that relate to broader demand within the County and the region. The following describes in detail the two market areas:

- **Midtown Market Area.** The Midtown study area is roughly 3.2 square miles in size and includes the core of Midtown’s commercial area and portions of four neighborhoods, which are the Lewis and Clark, Rose Park, Franklin to the Fort, and Southgate Triangle neighborhoods. The Midtown market area is bounded by 14th to 39th Streets to the north and south, Bancroft Street to the east, and Reserve Street to the west.
- **Missoula Market Area:** The city of Missoula spans about 35 square miles along the Clark Fork River and Bitterroot Rivers at the junction point of five mountain ranges.

Exhibit 1. Boundary of Midtown and Missoula Market Areas

Source: ECONorthwest Analysis



3. Economic and Demographic Trends

This chapter provides an overview of the economic and demographic trends in Midtown and Missoula as a whole. The analysis also includes historical data for both geographies from 2010 to illustrate the change that has occurred over the past decade. To evaluate opportunities and challenges, it is helpful to understand how the population of Midtown compares to the city.

Midtown Demographic Trends

The data in this section cover two geographies and two time periods from the American Community Survey (ACS)'s 5-year estimates. The Midtown market area represents block groups that overlap Midtown's boundary, though some of these block groups fall partially outside of our identified market areas. Block group designations also change over time with political redistricting, creating some changes to their coverage between the historical and most current ACS data. We have aligned these as closely as possible between our two time frames, but we assume that this may account for some of the variation from 2010 and 2020.

Some data was not available at the block group scale for the 2010 period. Where this was not available, we substituted for higher-level census tract data to determine distribution of educational attainment levels and median household incomes. These may capture some residents of surrounding neighborhoods, but they still provide a general picture of conditions in Midtown.

Summary of Demographic Trends

What demographic trends may drive future development in Midtown?

- **Midtown remained denser than most of Missoula between 2010 and 2020.** The population of Midtown made up about 20 percent of Missoula's overall residents within 9 percent of the city's square mileage, indicating a higher relative density. However, the population of the area grew at a lower rate than the rest of the city between 2010 and 2020.
- **The educational attainment of residents in Midtown is roughly comparable to that of the city.** The share of Midtown residents with some college, bachelor's degrees, and master's degrees or higher has increased in the past ten years, and the share of those with a high school degree or lower has declined significantly
- **Midtown has slightly more children and seniors than the city.** In Midtown, 26 percent of households had at least one child in 2020, compared with 22 percent on average in Missoula, though the average household size was about the same. Residents aged 65 and over also made up a greater share of Midtown's population than Missoula in 2020.

- **Midtown has more renters than homeowners.** A higher share of Midtown residents rent their homes compared to the average rate across Missoula. In the past ten years the share of renters has grown, with homeownership declining more in Midtown.
- **Median income was lower in Midtown than it was for Missoula overall.** When adjusted for inflation, MHI increased 6 percent for Midtown residents between 2010 and 2020 but remained about \$7,000 lower than the city overall. Midtown also had a slightly higher poverty rate compared to the city.
- **Midtown's race and ethnicity composition is similar to that of the city but has become slightly more racially diverse since 2013.** In 2020, the majority of Midtown residents identified as White (87%) and the rest as people of color (13%).
- **Midtown residents in general have similar commute times and travel modes compared with Missoula overall.** Most Midtown residents drive to work, with a much smaller share carpooling, bicycling, walking, or taking public transit.

What employment trends will drive future development in Midtown?

- **Unemployment rates in Missoula are lower than the United States overall.** Although data are not available at the level of the Midtown study area, trends show that Missoula had lower unemployment than the nation throughout the 2010s. Missoula's unemployment rate remained comparable with Montana as a whole in the same time period.
- **Missoula's unemployment rate is rebounding from 2020.** Missoula's sharp spike in unemployment in 2020 was consistent with national trends during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, though it remained lower in the city and state than the nation overall. Between 2020 and 2021, unemployment rates went back down and became close to their prepandemic levels.
- **Midtown and Missoula both have a high share of jobs in retail, health care, accommodation, and administrative support.** Between 2010 and 2019, the share of health-care jobs increased more in Midtown than it did for the city overall, becoming the top sector for the area as retail trade employment declined.
- **Midtown has a higher concentration of jobs in arts, information, and transportation/warehousing.** These sectors have fairly high shares of employment in Midtown but account for a lower proportion overall in Missoula.
- **The most common commute destinations for Midtown residents are in Downtown, the University Neighborhood, and Midtown.** Similarly, the largest concentration of Midtown workers lives in the core of Missoula, generally between Downtown and the South 39th Street Neighborhood.

Population

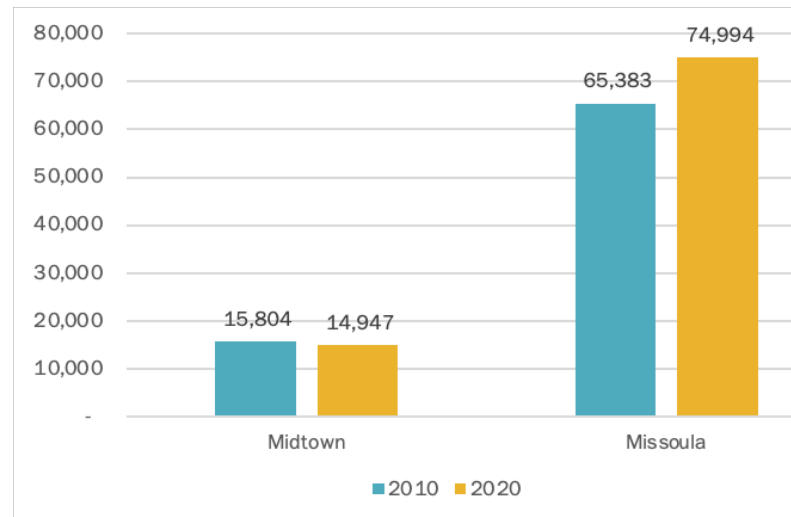
Midtown had a population of almost 15,000 residents, making up roughly 20 percent of the city's total population in 2020.

In the past decade, Midtown has slightly decreased in population, while the city has grown by almost 10,000 residents. However, Midtown does remain denser than the city on average.

Midtown is densely populated with about 4,620 people per square mile, compared to 2,150 people per square mile citywide.

Exhibit 1. Total Population, Midtown and Missoula, 2010 and 2020

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table B01003



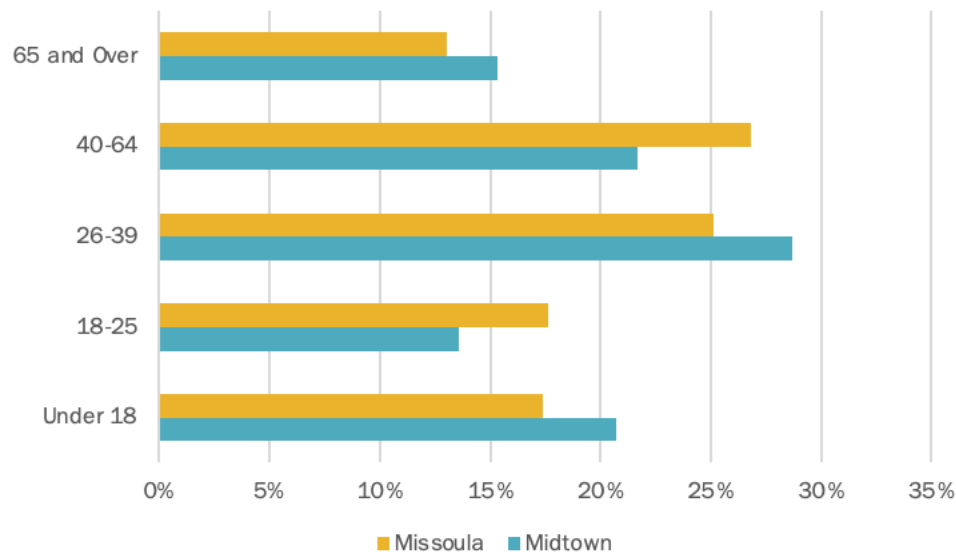
Age

Midtown has a relatively young population, with an average median age of 33.8 in 2020. This aligns approximately with the average age in the City of Missoula as a whole, which has an average age of 33.1.

Compared to the City of Missoula, Midtown had a higher share of population under the age of 18, in the 26-39 age range, and ages 65 and older. This distribution of age characteristics indicated a higher share of households with children and more households who were parents under 40.

Exhibit 2. Age Distribution of Midtown and Missoula Residents, 2020

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table B01001



These age characteristics indicate that there has been a recent shift in household composition in Midtown with more younger families moving into Midtown as older residents have left the area. These characteristics indicate that many of the ownership housing choices in Midtown have recently been financially accessible to younger adults (26-39) and younger families as first-time home buyer opportunities. At the same time, the share of the population of adults aged 40-64 has declined in Midtown since 2010 from 27 to 22 percent.

Household Size

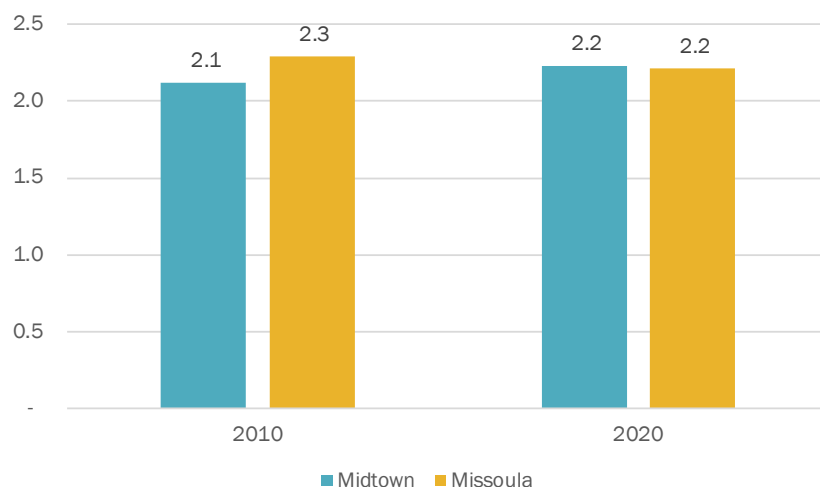
In 2020, Midtown had an average household size of 2.2, which was the same as the city overall.

There has only been a slight change in household sizes for Midtown since 2010.

Households in Midtown are also slightly more likely to have children, with 26% having at least one child under age 18 compared to 22% of the city overall.

Exhibit 3. Average Household Size in Midtown and Missoula, 2010 and 2020

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table B25003



Household Tenure

Midtown had a higher share of households that were renters compared to the City of Missoula as a whole. While tenure type has not changed significantly for Missoula overall, the share of homeowners in Midtown has decreased since 2010 by eight percent. This could have several possible implications, including that more households could be choosing to rent likely due to not being able to afford to purchase homes in the neighborhood.

Exhibit 4. Tenure Type for Households in Midtown and Missoula, 2020

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table B25003

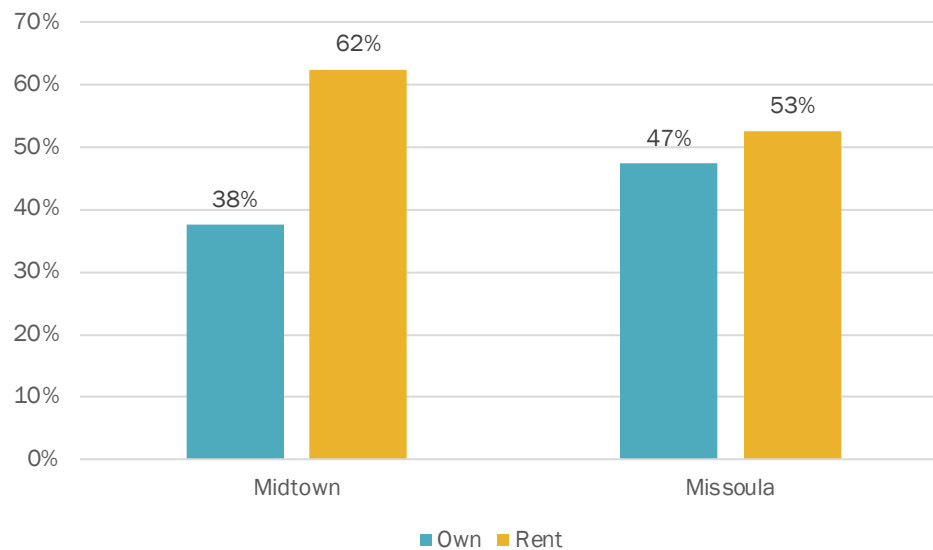
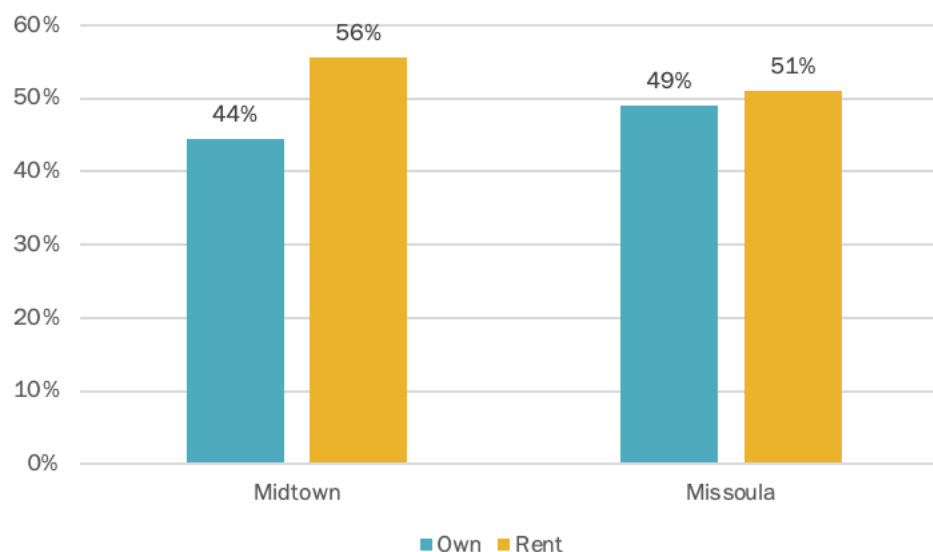


Exhibit 5. Tenure Type for Households in Midtown and Missoula, 2010

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table B25003



Household Income

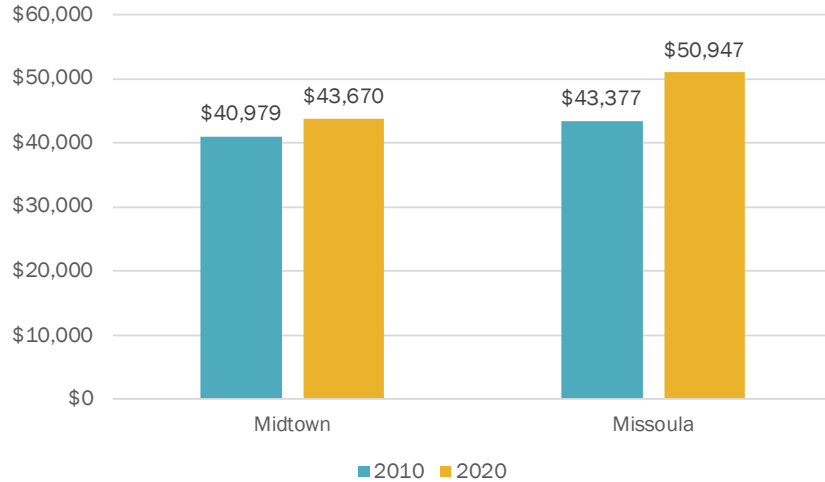
Between 2010 and 2020, Midtown and Missoula residents' incomes have grown, but Midtown's median income remains relatively lower.

Midtown's median household income increased slightly but about \$2,500 (adjusted for inflation to 2020 dollars), while citywide incomes also grew.

However, incomes in Midtown overall remained over \$7,000 lower than Missoula in 2020. This likely reflects the more affordable housing prices in Midtown compared to other areas of Missoula.

Exhibit 6. Median Household Income in Midtown and Missoula, 2010 and 2020 (in 2020 dollars)

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table B19013



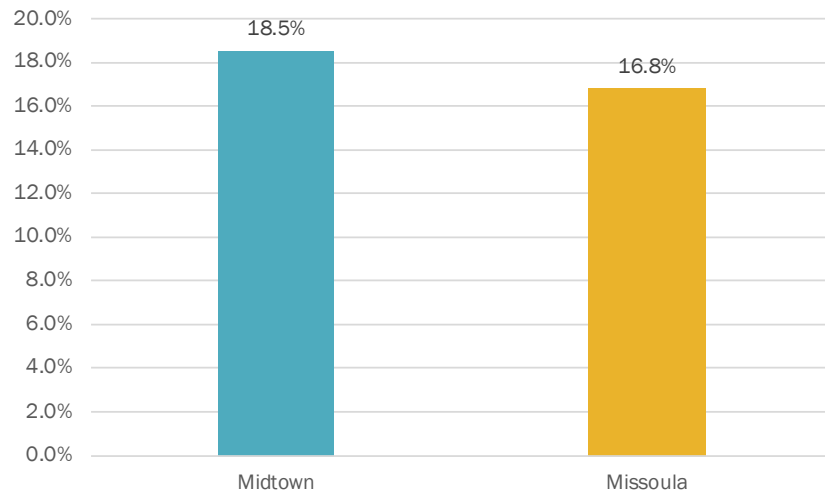
Poverty Level

The poverty level in Midtown was slightly higher than Missoula in 2020.

18.5 percent of Midtown residents fell under the federal poverty limit compared with 16.8 percent of Missoulians.

Exhibit 7. Share of Population Under Federal Poverty Limit in Midtown and Missoula, 2020

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table C17002



Race and Ethnicity

Generally, Midtown's race and ethnicity composition in 2020 was very similar to that of the city with the majority of Midtown residents identifying as White (87%) and the rest as people of color (13%). The study area had a lower rate of Asian and Hispanic/Latino residents, but a slightly higher rate of Black/African American residents compared to the city overall. Midtown also had a slightly higher rate of people who identify as having two or more races than the city.

In the past ten years, Midtown has become slightly more racially diverse due to an increased share of the population who are Black/African American or two or more races. However, in the same period the share of American Indian and Alaska Native residents and Hispanic or Latino residents of any race decreased.

Exhibit 8. Race and Ethnicity, Midtown and Missoula Residents, 2010 and 2020

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table B03002

	2010		2020	
	Midtown	Missoula	Midtown	Missoula
Not Hispanic or Latino	96.6%	97.1%	97.3%	96.1%
White Alone	89.7%	90.1%	86.6%	87.3%
Black/African American Alone	0.4%	0.5%	2.1%	0.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	2.8%	3.0%	2.0%	1.4%
Asian Alone	0.9%	1.2%	0.7%	2.0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or Another Race Alone	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%
Two or more races	2.6%	2.2%	5.7%	4.2%
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race	3.4%	2.9%	2.7%	3.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100%

Educational Attainment

The educational attainment of residents in Midtown in 2020 was comparable to that of the city with only a slightly lower percentage of individuals who finished a bachelor's degree and slightly less individuals who pursued an advanced degree. Midtown also had a higher share of residents with some college but no diploma.

The share of those with bachelor's degrees and master's degrees or higher has increased in the past ten years in Midtown more than the city as a whole. At the same time, the share of those with only a high school degree or lower has declined significantly, with over half of Midtown residents holding at least an associate's degree. This indicates that as turnover in the housing market has occurred, newer residents are likely to come to the neighborhood with higher levels of educational attainment than residents before them.

Exhibit 9. Educational Attainment of Population 25 and older, Midtown and Missoula, 2020

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table B15003

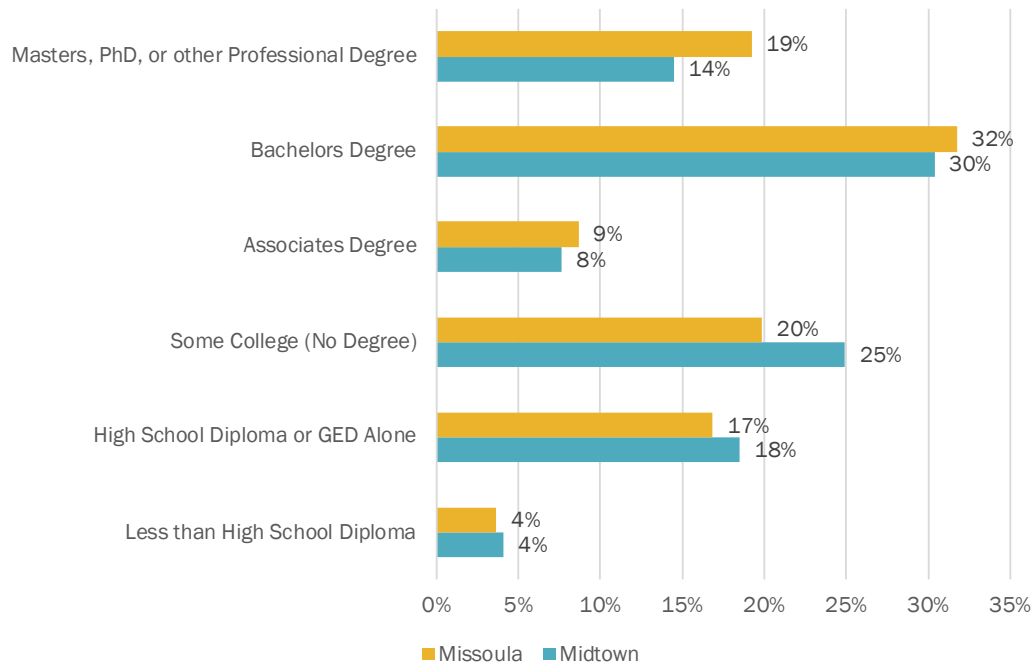
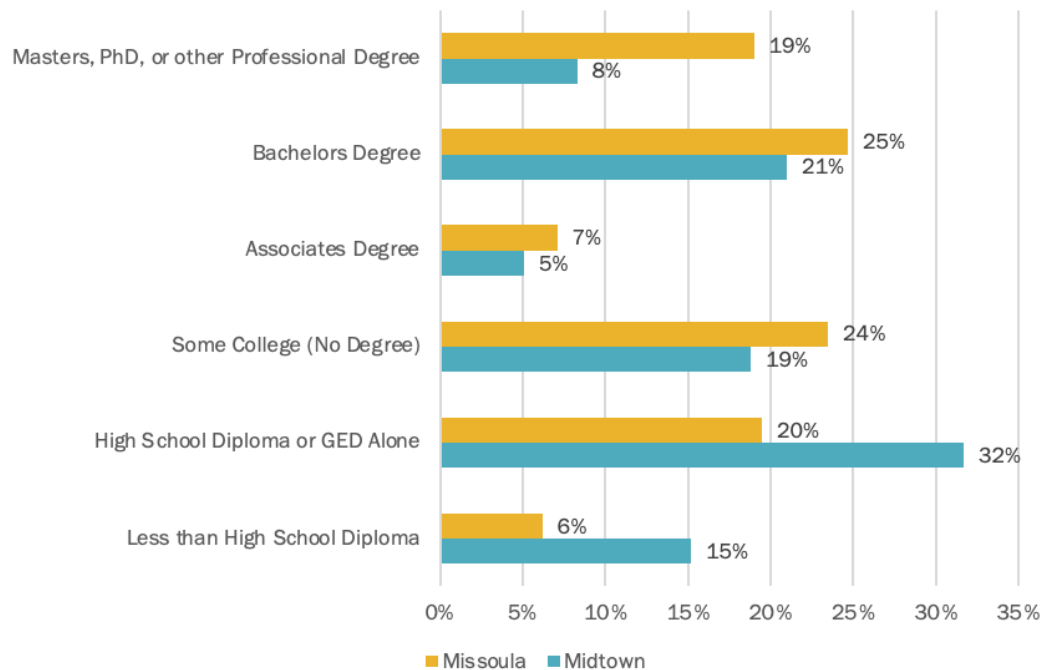


Exhibit 10. Educational Attainment of Population 25 and older, Midtown and Missoula, 2010

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table B15003



Limited English Proficiency

Midtown's population has the same share of people with limited English proficiency as the city, with about 8 percent of the population for both geographies. This indicates that Midtown's population linguistic diversity matches that of Missoula.

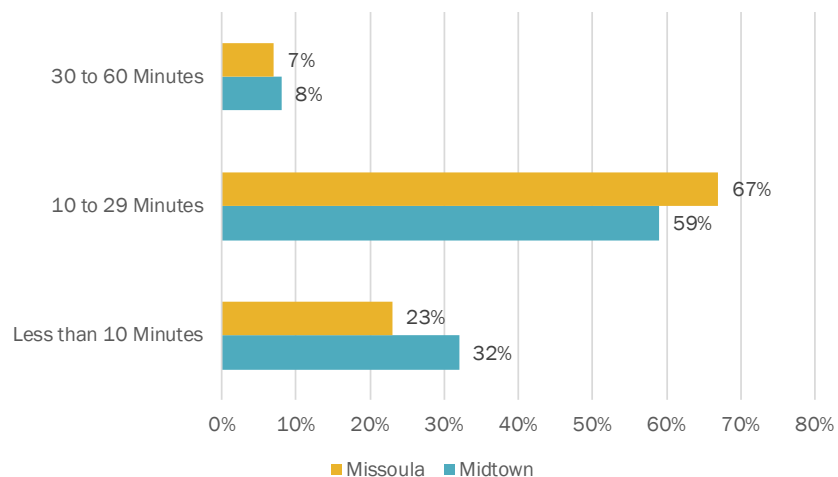
Travel Time to Work

Midtown residents in general had similar commute times with Missoula overall.

However, more city residents had a commute under ten minutes than those living in Midtown.

Exhibit 11. Travel Time to Work for Midtown and Missoula, 2020

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table S0801

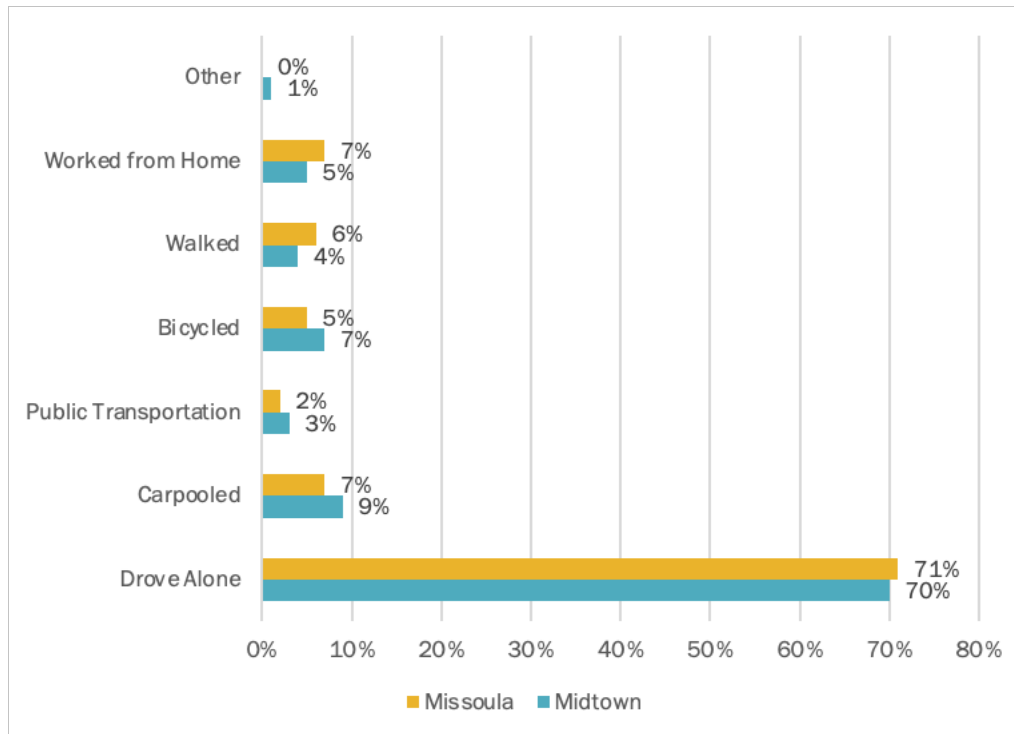


Mode of Transportation to Work

The majority of Midtown residents in 2020 commuted to work by car, with 70 percent making their trip to work by driving alone, but they were also more likely to bike, take public transit, and carpool to work than commuters across Missoula. The next most popular modes of commuting to work were carpooling (9%), biking (7%), walking (4%), and riding on public transit (3%). A slightly lower rate of Midtown residents worked from home (5%) compared to the city (7%), though it is likely that there have been changes to work-from-home patterns between 2020 and 2022 in line with larger national trends.

Exhibit 12. Mode of Transportation to Work, Midtown and Missoula, 2020

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table S0801



Midtown Employment Trends

To understand employment trends in Midtown, this section summarizes unemployment rates, employment by industry sector, and commute patterns. We also compared the study area with the city to see how these employment trends match up with Missoula overall. In instances where data was not available at the level of the Midtown study area or census tracts, we compare Missoula with the State of Montana and the United States.

This section draws from different data sources, including the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Local Area Unemployment and the Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics data sets. We include data from 2010 and the most recent information available from these sources to compare change over time. Some data sets were only current through 2019 and may not capture structural changes in line with employment trends after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Summary of Employment Findings

- **Unemployment rates in Missoula were lower than the United States overall.** Although data are not available at the level of the Midtown study area, trends show that Missoula had lower unemployment than the nation throughout the 2010s. Missoula's unemployment rate remained comparable with Montana as a whole in the same time period.
- **Missoula's unemployment rate is rebounding from 2020.** Missoula's sharp spike in unemployment in 2020 was consistent with national trends during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, though it remained lower in the city and state than the nation overall. Between 2020 and 2021, unemployment rates went back down and became close to their prepandemic levels.
- **The most common commute destinations for Midtown residents are in Downtown, the University Neighborhood, and Midtown.** The University of Missoula, Providence St. Patrick Hospital, and services in Downtown are likely attractors for Midtown workers. The largest concentrations of where Midtown workers live is in the core of Missoula, generally between Downtown and the South 39th Street Neighborhood.
- **Midtown and Missoula both have a high share of jobs in retail, health care, accommodation, and administrative support.** Between 2010 and 2019, the share of health-care jobs increased more in Midtown than it did for the city overall, becoming the top sector for the area as retail trade employment declined. Community Medical Center and large shopping centers like Southgate Mall are destinations for these employees in Midtown.
- **Midtown has a higher concentration of jobs in arts, information, and transportation/warehousing.** These sectors have high shares of employment in Midtown but account for a lower proportion overall in Missoula.

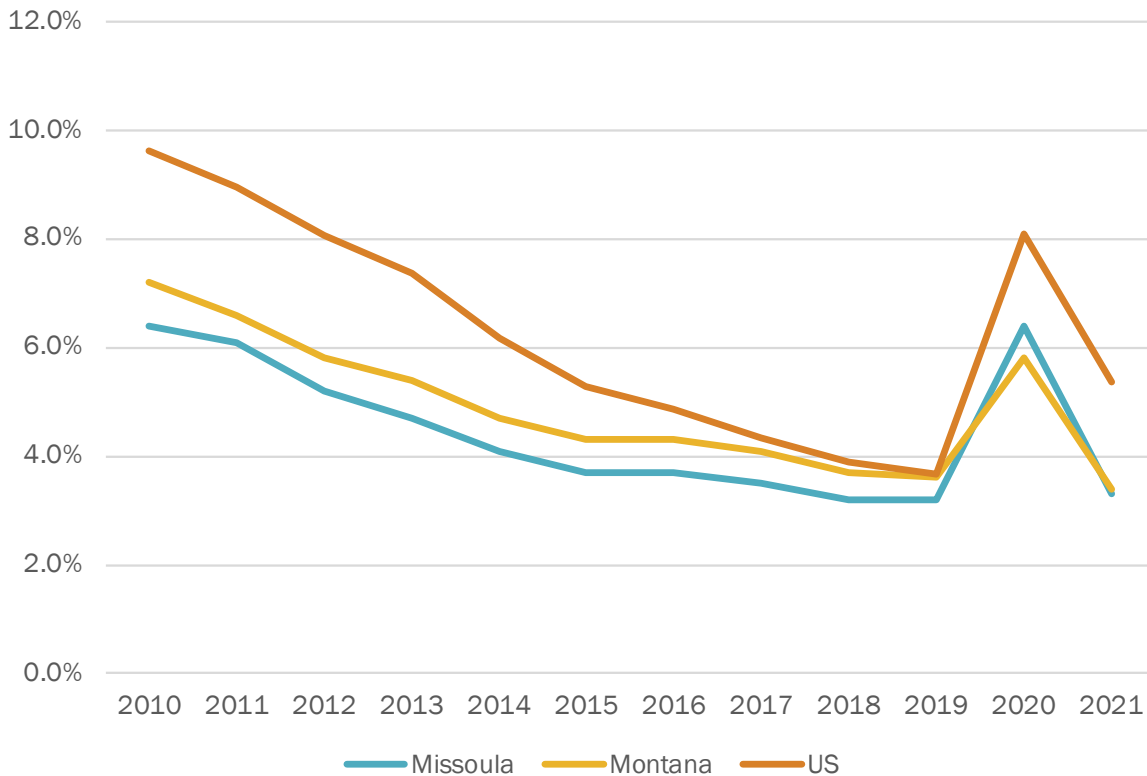
Unemployment Rate

Unemployment rates steadily declined in Missoula during the 2010s, with a 50 percent decrease from 2010 to 2019. However, during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, unemployment rose back up to its highest level in ten years, peaking at 6.4 percent. Data from 2021 suggest that this trend is reversing in Missoula, with only 3.3 percent of job seekers unable to find work. Extremely low unemployment rates in Missoula starting in 2014 reflect the challenges related to recruitment and hiring across industries in Missoula.

Although data is not available on a scale as small as Midtown, these trends for the city are likely to have impacted unemployment rates for residents of the area as well. Even with a sharp peak in unemployment in 2020, unemployment in Missoula and Montana remained below that of the United States overall.

Exhibit 13. Unemployment Rate, Missoula, and the US Annual Average, 2010-2021

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



Employment by Industry

Midtown has a similar distribution of top industries by employment as Missoula, with a higher concentration of jobs in arts, information, and transportation/warehousing. Since 2010, Midtown's employment base has shifted from being oriented toward retail service jobs to health care and professional services. Between 2010 and 2019, the share of health care and social service jobs increased more in Midtown than it did for the city overall, becoming the top sector for the area as retail trade employment declined.

Exhibit 14. Share of Total Jobs by Industry, Midtown, 2010 and 2019

Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Dataset (LEHD), 2010 and 2019

Sector	2010	2019
Health Care and Social Assistance	22.3%	25.1%
Retail Trade	22.3%	17.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	9.3%	10.8%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	8.6%	6.4%
Finance and Insurance	5.8%	7.2%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4.9%	4.6%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	4.5%	5.7%
Transportation and Warehousing	3.5%	2.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3.3%	2.7%
Public Administration	3.2%	2.5%
Construction	2.9%	2.6%
Educational Services	2.7%	3.7%
Wholesale Trade	2.3%	1.8%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.6%	1.6%
Information	1.5%	3.6%
Manufacturing	0.7%	0.9%
Utilities	0.4%	0.6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.2%	0.3%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.0%	0.1%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Most of the top employment sectors were the same for the Midtown study area and Missoula as a whole in both 2010 and 2019. The sectors of retail trade; health care and social assistance; accommodation and food services; and administrative support, waste management, and remediation all ranked in the top five for both areas in this time period.

Compared with the city, Midtown had a higher share of employment in arts, entertainment, and recreation; information; and transportation and warehousing in both years. Though the share of workers in arts and warehousing is declining, the share who work in information is growing. In the same time frame, the study area had a lower share of employment in construction, wholesale trade, and manufacturing than Missoula overall.

Commute Destinations of Midtown Residents

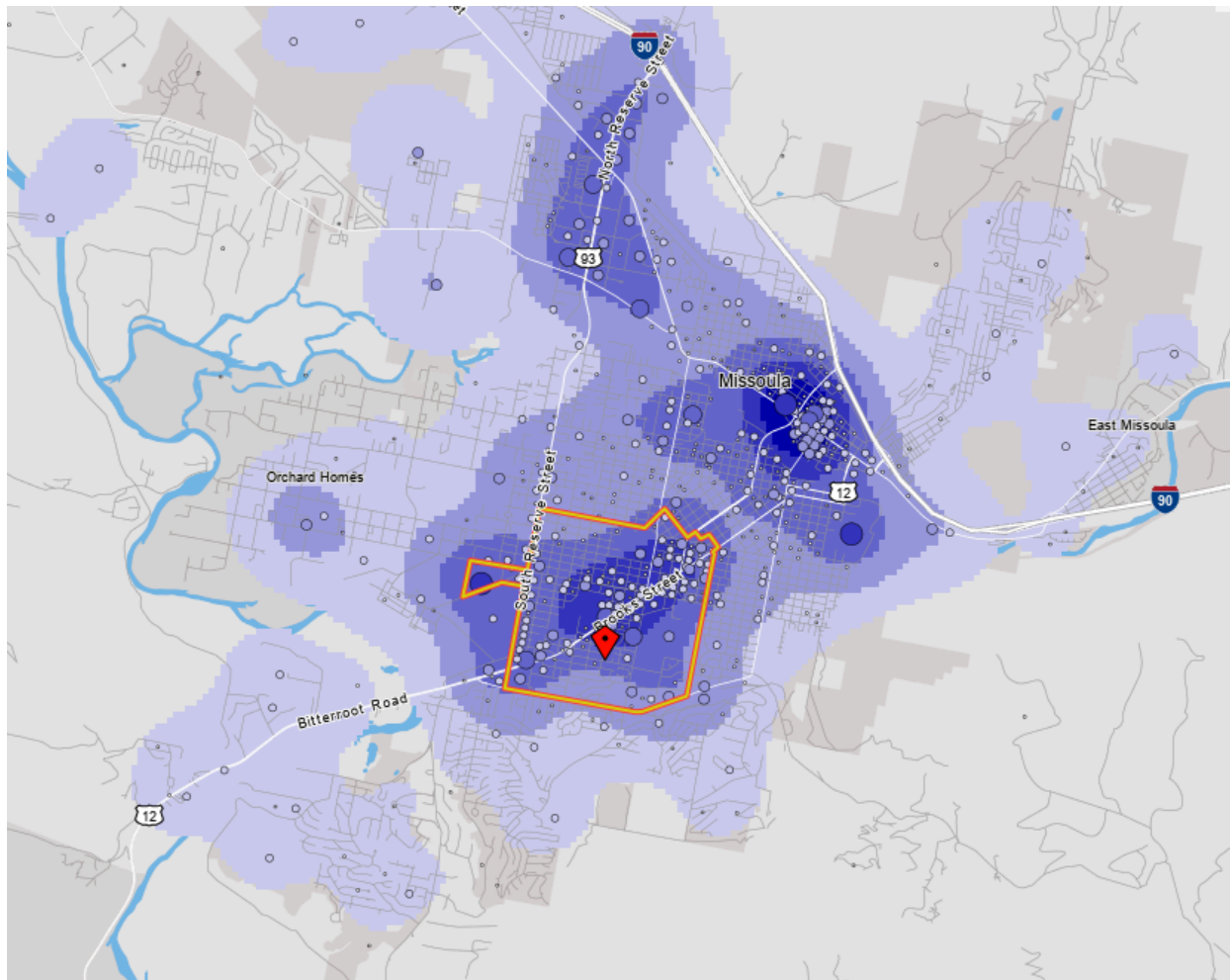
The largest concentrations of commute destinations where Midtown residents work are clustered in Downtown, the University Neighborhood, and in Midtown itself.

Approximately 1,230 residents both live and work in Midtown.

Major employers that may be drawing Midtown residents out of the area include the University of Montana, Saint Patrick Hospital in Downtown, Fort Missoula Medical Center along Highway 93, or a concentration of offices in Downtown. Community Medical Center is another major employer just outside of the study area boundary to the west of Reserve Street that is likely a large employer of workers in the growing health-care field.

Exhibit 15. Commute Destinations of Midtown Residents, 2019

Source: LEHD On the Map, 2019



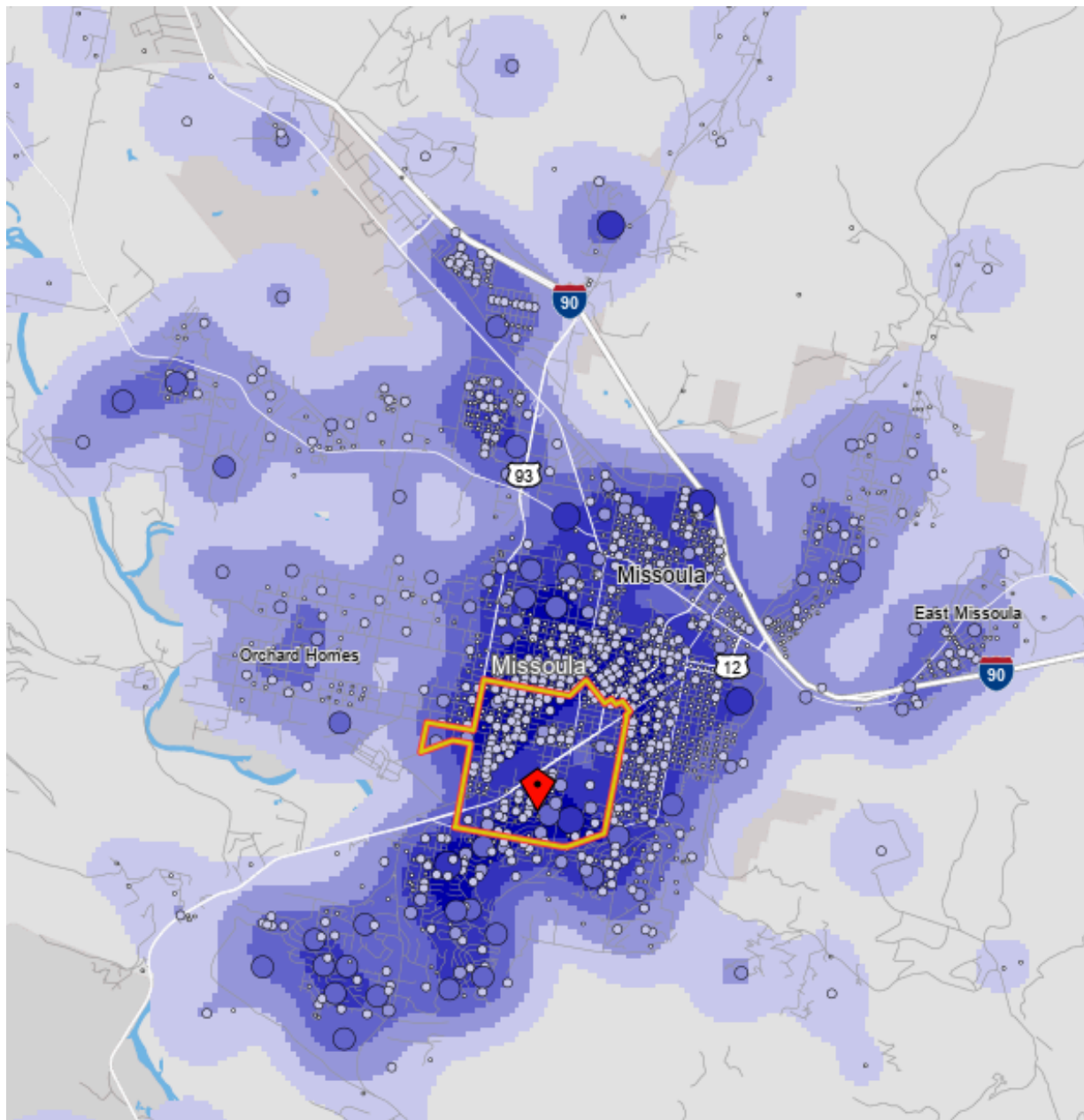
Home Locations of Midtown Employees

The largest concentrations of Midtown workers live in the core of Missoula, generally between Downtown and the South 39th Street Neighborhood. Although this describes some people who also live in the primary study area, the total amount of workers in Midtown is much larger at 14,128 people.

Midtown draws in a large number of workers from most areas of the city, including those who live in the area, Downtown residents, and other neighborhoods. This indicates that Midtown is a critical part of the job market in Missoula.

Exhibit 16. Home Locations of Midtown Employees, 2019

Source: LEHD On the Map, 2019



Midtown Visitor Trends

Regional destinations located in Midtown like the Fairgrounds and Southgate Mall attract visitors to the area from across the region. ECONorthwest used data from Placer.ai to evaluate visitor and tourism trends in Midtown and compared it to the rest of the City. Placer.ai is a traffic analytics platform that uses proprietary artificial intelligence to estimate the number of visitors created in their user interface.¹

Exhibit 17 below shows the seasonal trends of visitors to Midtown, downtown Missoula, and Missoula. Visitor trends are generally seasonal, with visitations peaking during the summer month of July and declining during the fall and winter months. However, because Midtown serves both seasonal tourism visitors and regional visitors to retail and other destinations, the seasonal impact is less intense than what is observed in Missoula as a whole or in Downtown. Based on Placer.ai data, Midtown on average sees around 1,000,000 trips from visitors per month across the year. It is important to note that this data reflects unique trips into Midtown and that many “visitor” trips are from residents across Missoula County and the region who travel to Midtown for retail, personal services, and professional services that may not be available elsewhere in the region. This data highlights the importance of Midtown as a regional destination.

Exhibit 18 below shows changes in visitor count compared to 2019 Q1. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted visitation and tourism to Missoula and Midtown. However, unlike many other towns and cities, Missoula rebounded quickly with visitations in the fall of 2020 back to pre-pandemic levels. Compared to 2019 visitor trends, Midtown and Missoula saw a growth in visitors in 2021, while downtown experienced fewer visits.

¹ Placer.ai uses anonymous mobile phone location data to estimate visitation. A “visit” is triggered in Placer.ai’s database when a cell phone seeks two Wi-Fi signals five to fifteen minutes apart (this range differs by cell phone operating system; e.g., an Android phone scans for Wi-Fi every three to seven minutes). **Note that a “visit” can count the same phone several times in a specified location. This is to say that “visits” do not uniquely identify a visitor.**

Exhibit 17. Visitor Count, Midtown, Downtown, and Missoula, January 2017 - July 2022

Source: Placer.ai

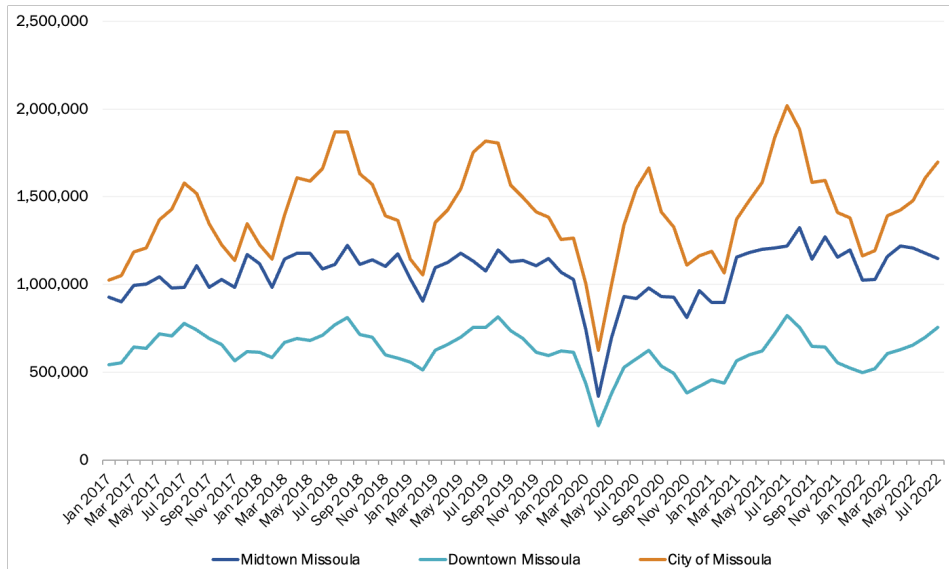
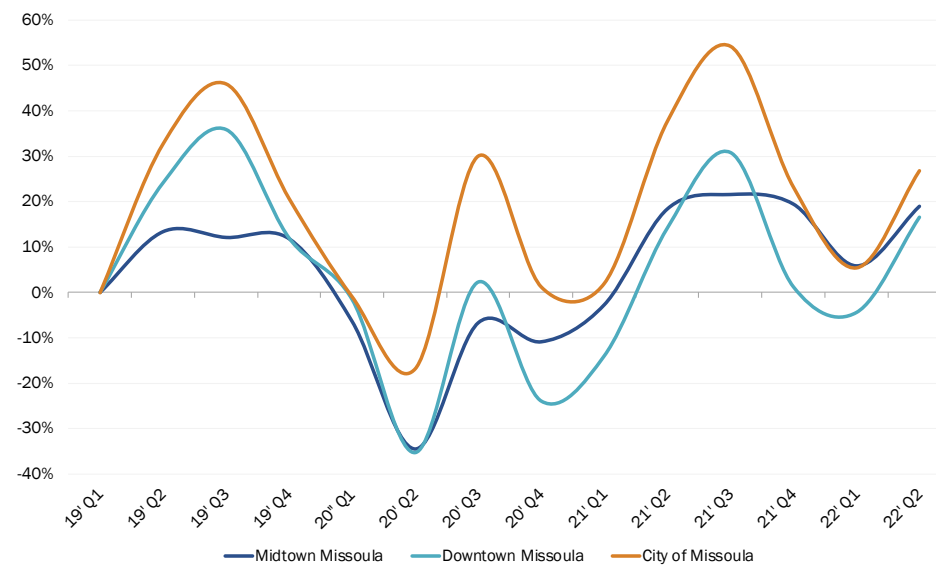


Exhibit 18. Indexed Change in Visits Relative to 2019 Q1

Source: Placer.ai



4. Midtown Market Conditions and Trends

This section details Midtown and Missoula's commercial real estate conditions and identifies market drivers and trends that will influence the market appeal and viability of commercial and residential uses in the area. The market for new development in the Midtown study area is divided into *commercial* and *residential* real estate sectors.

- Commercial real estate is any nonresidential property used for commercial profit-making purposes. It includes office, industrial, flex space, retail, and hotel building types.
- Residential real estate includes any product type that is developed for people to live in. It includes rental and ownership housing, including apartments, condominiums, single-family homes, town homes, manufactured homes, and student housing.

The exhibits in the section below show historical trends in Midtown single-family, condo/town house, multifamily, office, retail, and industrial/flex real estate submarkets. We provided the average effective rent rates and average annual vacancy rates for the analysis. In some exhibits, Missoula is included as a comparison geography. In general, the analysis shows trends in Triple-Net (NNN) rents, vacancy rates, and deliveries (these are described below).

- **Triple-Net (NNN):**² Represents annual rents on a per-square-foot (sf) basis, not including any pass-through expenses such as taxes, insurance, and utilities or maintenance costs.
- **Vacancy Rates:** Represent how much space on a per-square-foot basis is vacant in a submarket.
- **Deliveries:** Represent the total amount of new square feet of each product type that has been added to the market on an annual basis.
- **Net Absorption:** Represent annual net square feet of new occupancy or vacancy of space accounting for deliveries.

Office Submarket

The Missoula office submarket has enjoyed a decade-long period of stability but has not observed increases in achievable office rents that are observed across the City of Missoula as a whole. Since 2007, vacancy across Missoula has remained below 5 percent, while Midtown's vacancy rate has averaged 4.6 percent. Office rents in Midtown have largely tracked citywide trends, however, at a much lower rate. Office rents in Midtown have reached \$16.25 per square foot in 2022 year to date, while in Missoula rents have reached \$20.61 per square foot. Compared to Missoula, Midtown has seen very few leasable office deliveries in the market. Approximately 54,000 square feet of office was delivered to the market between 2007 and 2022 year to date, with 28,000 square feet absorbed.

Midtown has seen stable rent growth, a tightening in the supply of office space, and positive net absorption—which indicate a stable market and growth for office space in Midtown. While the office market in Midtown observed slight negative impacts from the COVID-19 Pandemic and subsequent changes in tenanting behavior compared to the City of Missoula, rents are starting to increase as postpandemic lease-up conditions change. Midtown’s current office vacancy rate is around 4.3%, which is likely to continue to decrease, putting more upward pressure on rents and increasing demand for additional office space in the future.

Office rents in Midtown have mirrored Missoula’s office rents fairly closely, only diverging in recent years.

Compared to Midtown, the Missoula market has had the highest rent growth. Between 2007 and 2022 YTD, office rents in Missoula have increased 58 percent (\$7.55), from \$13.06 per square foot in 2007 up to \$20.61 per square foot in 2022 YTD.

Between 2007 and 2022 YTD, office rents in Midtown have increased 28 percent (\$3.52), from \$12.73 per square foot in 2007 up to \$16.25 in 2022 YTD.

Generally, office vacancy rates in Midtown have trended upward since 2015. In recent years, the vacancy rate in Midtown has been decreasing, ending at about 4.3 percent in 2022 YTD. The low supply of office space will put upward pressures in office rents in both Midtown and Missoula.

Exhibit 2. Average Office Rent per Square Foot, Midtown, and Missoula, 2007 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar

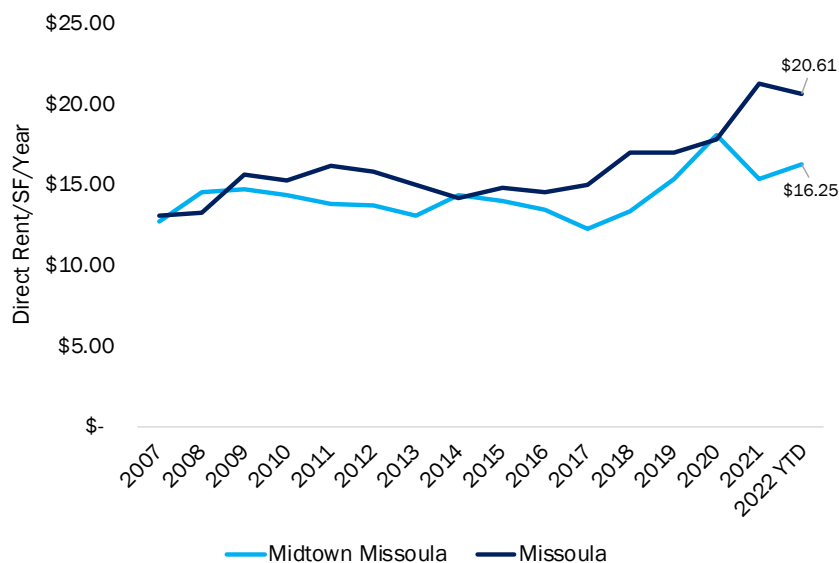
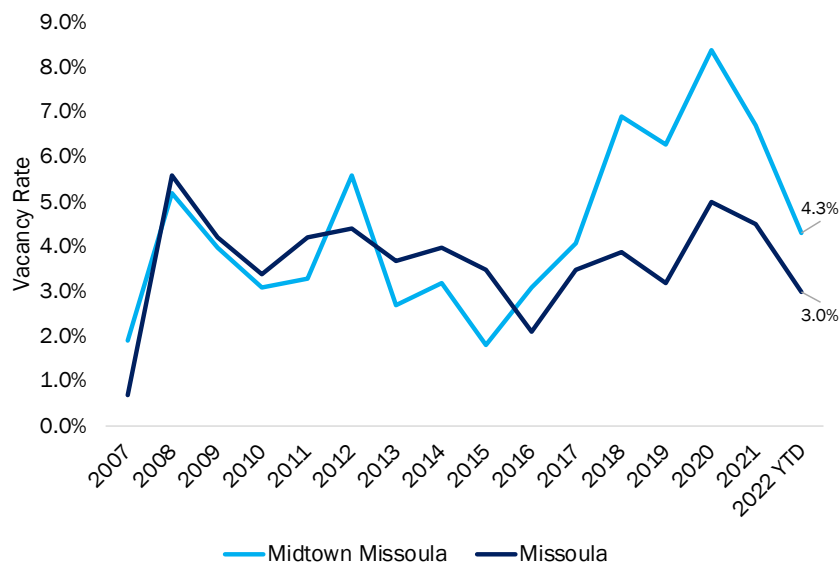


Exhibit 3. Average Office Vacancy Rate, Midtown, and Missoula, 2007 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar

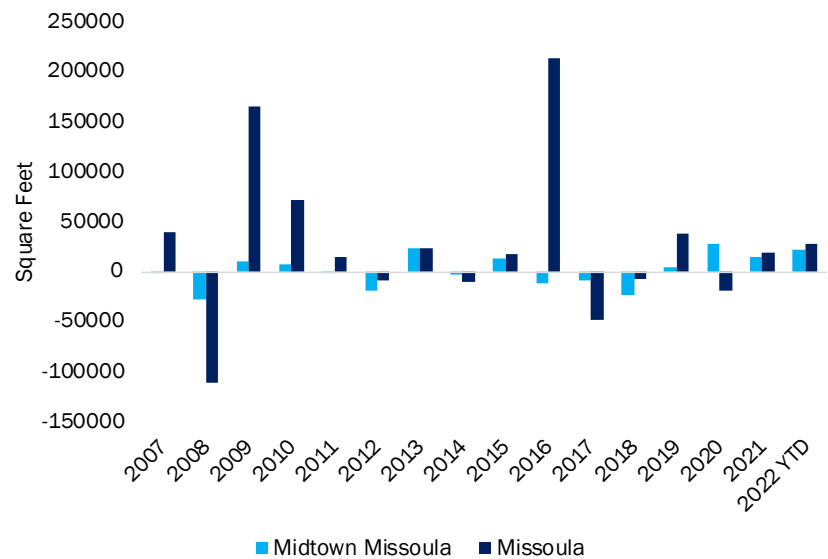


Net absorptions for office space in the Midtown market have been a mix of positive and negative absorption. 2008, 2012, and 2018 saw the biggest drops in absorption (-27,787, -19,414, and -23,775 square feet, respectively).

Similarly, net absorption for Missoula has fluctuated between positive and negative—resulting in an average office vacancy rate of about 4 percent between 2007 and 2022 YTD.

Exhibit 4. Office Net Absorption, Midtown, and Missoula, 2007 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar

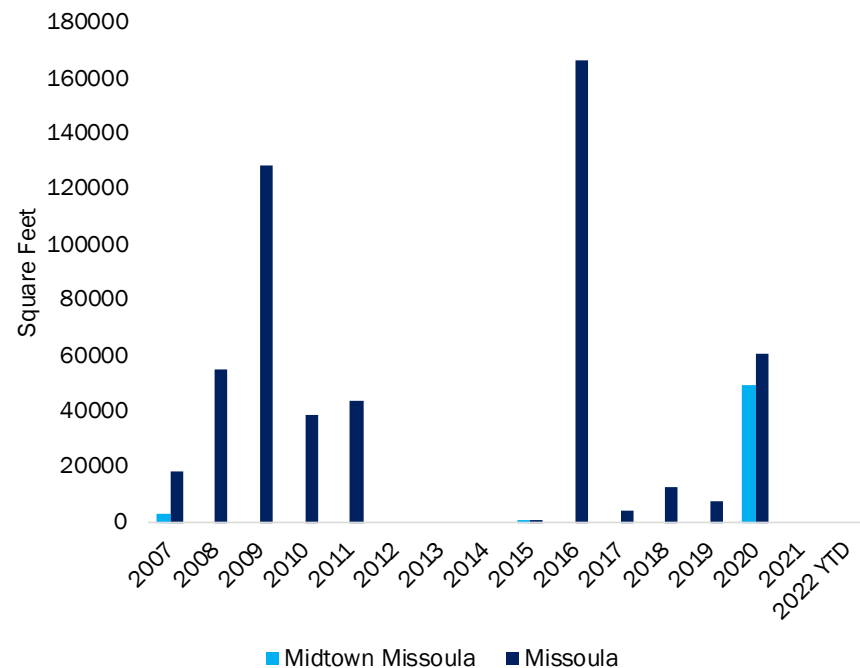


In the past decade, Midtown has seen almost no office deliveries. However, Missoula has seen more years with office developments than without, totaling approximately 537,400 square feet.

While there has been some recent build to suit office development in Midtown, about 53,920 square feet of leasable office space was delivered in Midtown between 2007 and 2022 YTD.

Exhibit 5. Office Deliveries, Midtown, and Missoula, 2007 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar



Retail Submarket

Retail rents have generally been on the rise over the last decade. In 2022, Triple-Net (NNN) retail rents in Midtown reached \$14.66 per square foot, while rents across Missoula reached \$17.07 per square foot. Vacancy rates have ranged between 1 and 3.5 percent since 2007, and currently vacancy is at 2 percent in Midtown and 1.7 percent citywide. Besides the large AMC theater, Midtown has seen minimal deliveries of retail space with fluctuations in net absorption. Approximately 103,000 square feet of retail space was delivered to Midtown's market (a majority of it being the 89,000-square-foot AMC theater), with 90,000 square feet absorbed. Despite the growing influence of the e-commerce sector, factors such as increasing rents, low vacancy rates, and limited delivery of retail space in the Midtown area indicate a growing demand for retail space. Midtown has uncharacteristically low retail vacancy rates compared to other similar auto-oriented corridors in communities across the West. This likely reflects strong demand for future retail as either stand-alone retail developments or future mixed-use development.

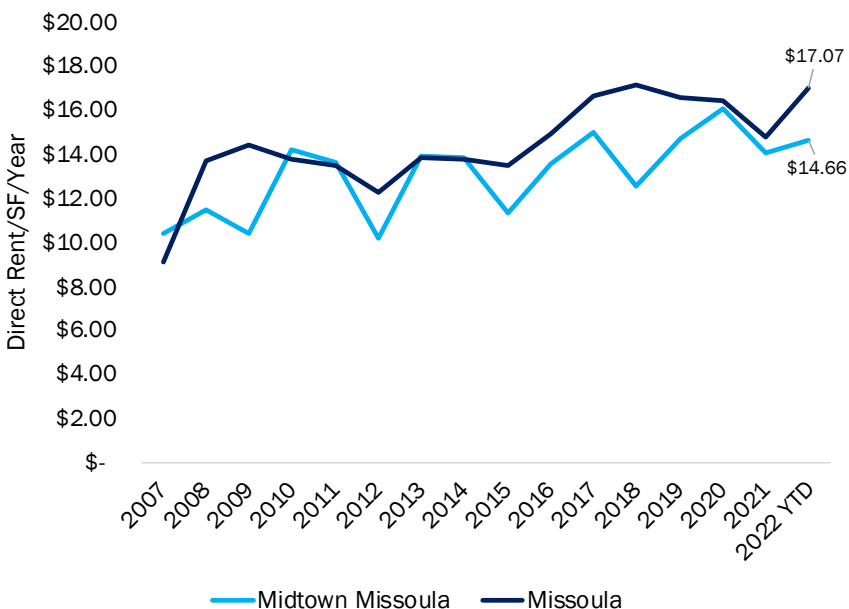
Since 2007, retail rents in Missoula have almost doubled—surpassing rents in Midtown.

Between 2007 and 2022 YTD, retail rents in Midtown have increased 40 percent (\$4.19), from \$10.47 per square foot in 2007 up to \$14.66 per square foot in 2022 YTD.

During this same period, rents in Missoula have increased 87 percent (\$7.93), from \$9.14 per square foot in 2007 up to \$17.07 per square foot in 2022 YTD.

Exhibit 6. Average Retail Rent per Square Foot, Midtown, and Missoula, 2007 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar



Since 2007, both the Midtown market and Missoula have experienced very low retail vacancies averaging about 2.3 and 2.4 percent, respectively. As demand for retail space increases and supply decreases, rents often tend to increase to keep up with demand.

Generally, a healthy retail market will have a vacancy rate between 5 and 7 percent. Vacancy rates lower than 5 percent suggest a constrained market supply and create upward pressures on rents. Rates higher than 7 percent indicate possibly a weak market or an oversupply of retail space.

Generally, net absorption has fluctuated between positive and negative absorption in Missoula and Midtown. Since 2007, roughly, 90,000 square feet of retail has been absorbed in the Midtown market, while in Missoula, 213,000 square feet has been absorbed.

Exhibit 7. Average Retail Vacancy Rate, Midtown, and Missoula, 2007 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar

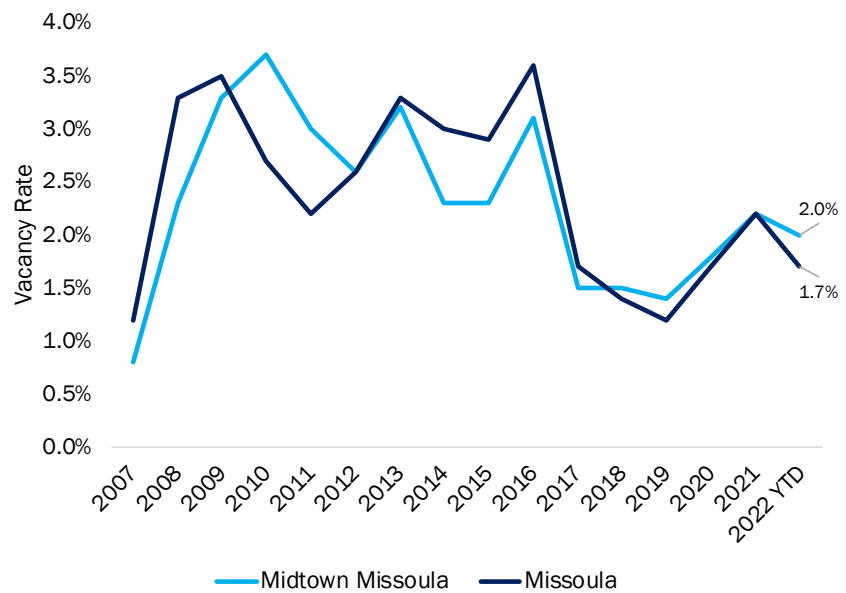
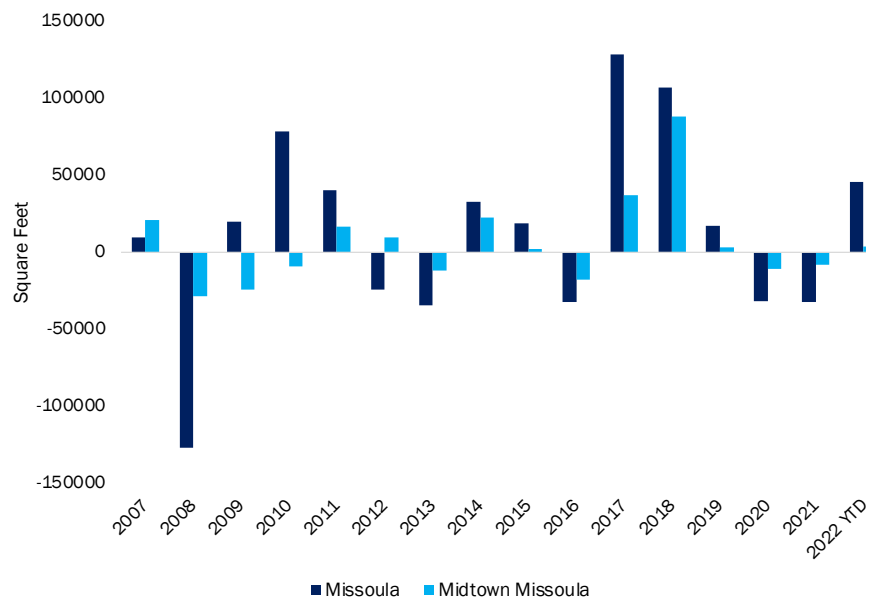


Exhibit 8. Retail Net Absorption, Midtown, and Missoula, 2007 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar

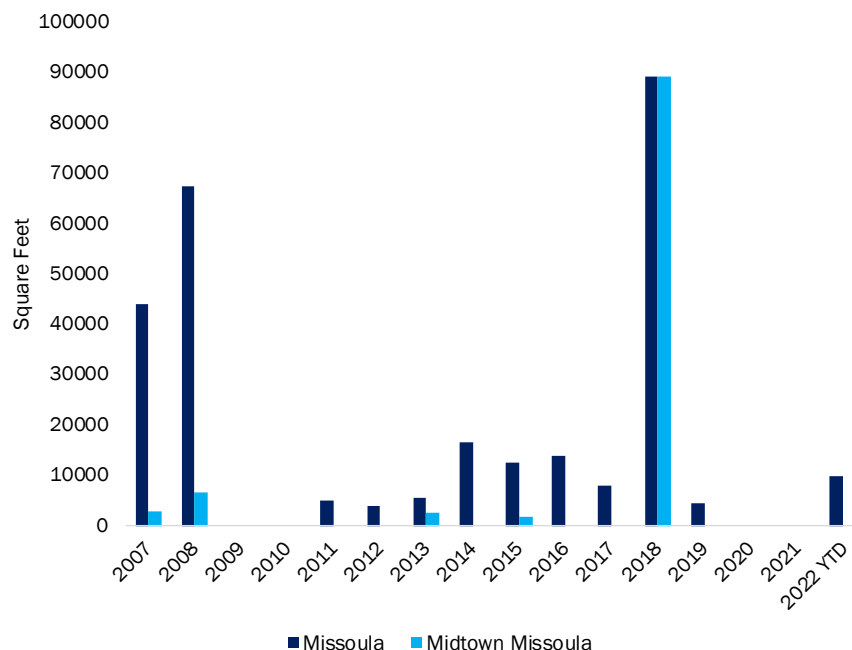


Between 2007 and 2022 YTD, about 103,470 square feet of retail space has been built in the Midtown market, while 280,695 square feet of retail space has been built in Missoula. In addition, there is approximately 2,500 square feet of retail space under construction or planned in Midtown.

- In 2015, a 1,900-square-foot Starbucks was built in Midtown.
- In 2018, an 89,000-square-foot AMC Southgate building was built in the Midtown market.

Exhibit 9. Retail Deliveries, Midtown, and Missoula, 2007 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar



Industrial/Flex Submarket

Generally, industrial/flex rents in Midtown have decreased in the past decade and vacancy has fluctuated between 2.9 percent and 16 percent. On the other hand, Missoula has experienced stable rent growth with relatively low vacancies. Between 2010 and 2022 YTD, net absorption has fluctuated between positive and negative. Since 2010, a total of 2,700 square feet of industrial/flex space has been delivered to Midtown's market, with a net absorption of 5,080. Midtown's industrial/flex space has been challenged with high vacancy rates in recent years and low rents suggesting that there are other better opportunities for industrial space elsewhere in the city that meet the needs of industrial users.

Since 2007, industrial/flex rents in Missoula have almost doubled—surpassing rents in Midtown.

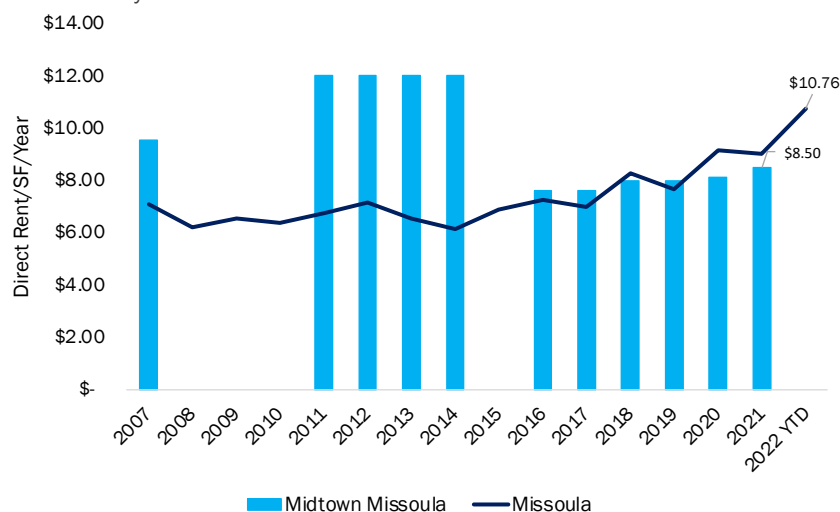
Between 2011 and 2021, industrial/flex rents in Midtown decreased 29 percent (\$3.55), from \$12.05 per square foot in 2011 down to \$8.50 per square foot in 2021.

During this same time period, rents in Missoula increased 33 percent (\$2.26), from \$6.78 per square foot in 2011 up to \$9.04 per square foot in 2021.

Exhibit 10. Average Industrial/Flex Rent per Square Foot, Midtown, and Missoula, 2007 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar

Data Note: The Midtown area only has 12 industrial/flex buildings, much less than Missoula's 145. Because of this, the data is sporadic, with some years not having any data. Thus, the Midtown data below has been changed to a bar graph to make it obvious which years did and didn't have data.



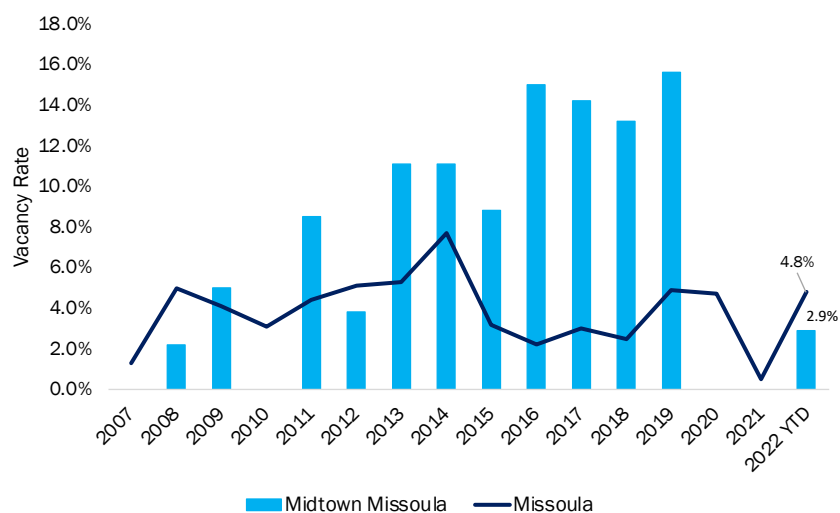
Since 2007, the Missoula market has experienced low industrial/flex vacancies averaging about 3.4 percent. As demand for industrial space increases and supply decreases, rents often tend to increase to keep up with demand. Midtown on the other hand has seen a spike in industrial/flex vacancy rates, averaging 24.3 percent from 2016 through 2019.

Typically, when vacancy rates are low, rents tend to increase with greater demand. However, when vacancy rates are high, rents tend to be low, indicating not much demand for this space.

Exhibit 11. Average Industrial/Flex Vacancy Rate, Midtown, and Missoula, 2007 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar

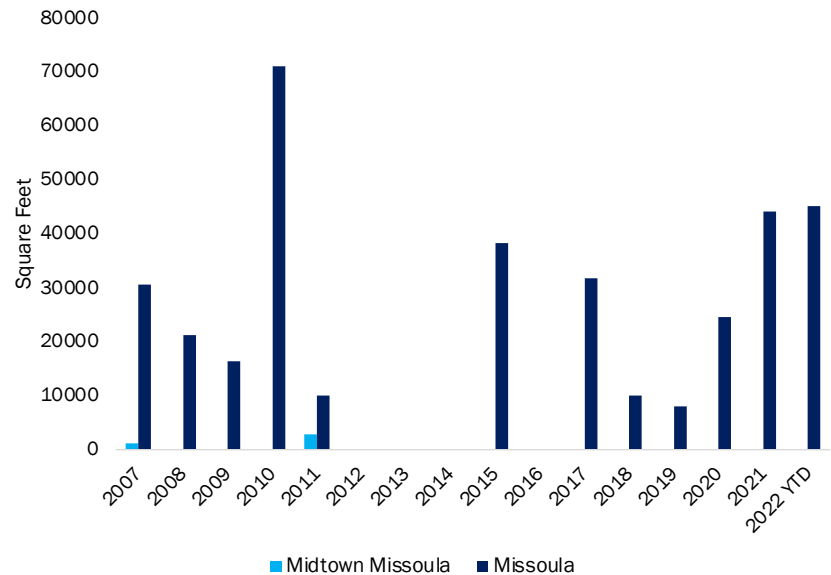
Data Note: See Exhibit 6 note.



Between 2007 and 2022 YTD, about 3,840 square feet of industrial/flex space has been built in the Midtown market, while 351,028 square feet of industrial/flex space has been built in Missoula. There is currently no industrial/flex space under construction or planned in Midtown.

Exhibit 12. Industrial/Flex Deliveries, Midtown, and Missoula, 2007 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar



Residential Submarket

Residential trends show a strong and growing demand for multifamily rental housing. The effective rent per square foot for multifamily residential in Midtown and Missoula has steadily increased since 2007. In 2022 YTD, the effective rent per square foot for multifamily rental was \$1.12 in Midtown, compared to \$0.76 per square foot in 2007. Vacancy rates have generally been declining since 2007 and peaked in 2018 when 36 units were delivered to the Midtown market and 606 units were delivered to the Missoula market. Since then, vacancy has declined again as these units were absorbed. Missoula saw a recent spike in vacancy in 2022 YTD with another 673 units delivered. Midtown has extremely low multifamily vacancy rates, which indicate unmet demand for additional rental housing in the area. Without additional multifamily housing supply added to the market, these extremely low vacancy rates are likely to put near-term upward pressure on rents as households and individuals are struggling with recent increases in rent and the increasing cost of household needs due to inflationary pressures. Additional multifamily housing is critical in Midtown to help compensate for high demand and low supply.

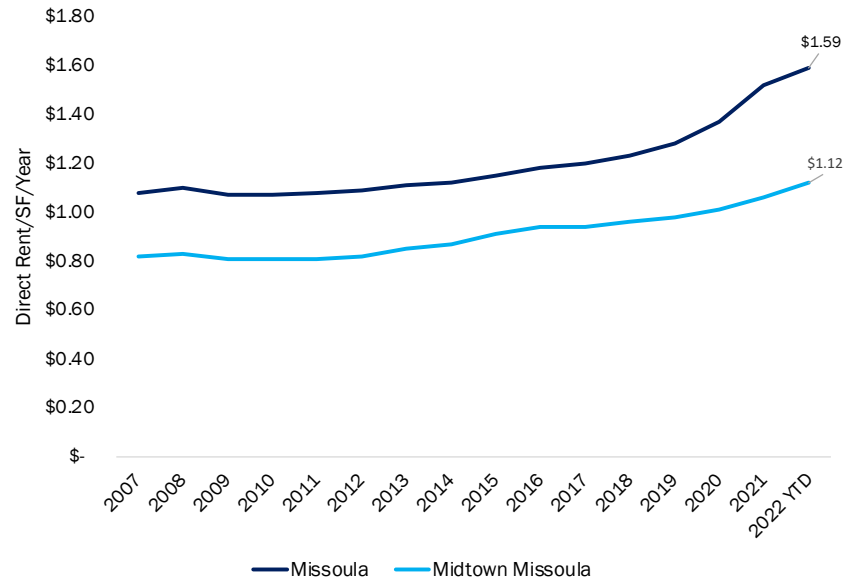
Multifamily

Between 2007 and 2022 YTD, multifamily rents in Missoula have increased 47 percent (\$0.51), from \$1.08 per square foot in 2007 up to \$1.59 in 2022 YTD.

During this same time period, rents in Midtown increased 37 percent (\$0.30) from \$0.76 per square foot in 2007 up to \$1.12 per square foot in 2022 YTD.

Exhibit 13. Average Multifamily Rent per Square Foot, Midtown, and Missoula, 2000 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar

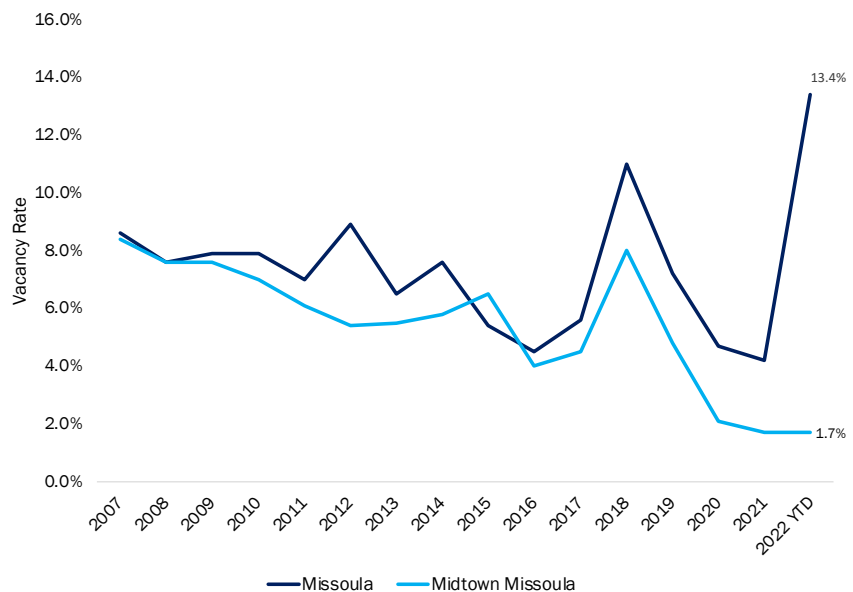


Multifamily vacancy rates in the Midtown market have mirrored those in Missoula, except for the most recent year, where Missoula multifamily vacancy rates spiked.

Generally, since 2007, multifamily vacancies have declined to an all-time low of about 2 percent in Midtown, while vacancy in Missoula spiked in 2022 due to 700 units delivered to the market.

Exhibit 14. Average Multifamily Vacancy Rate, Midtown, and Missoula, 2000 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar

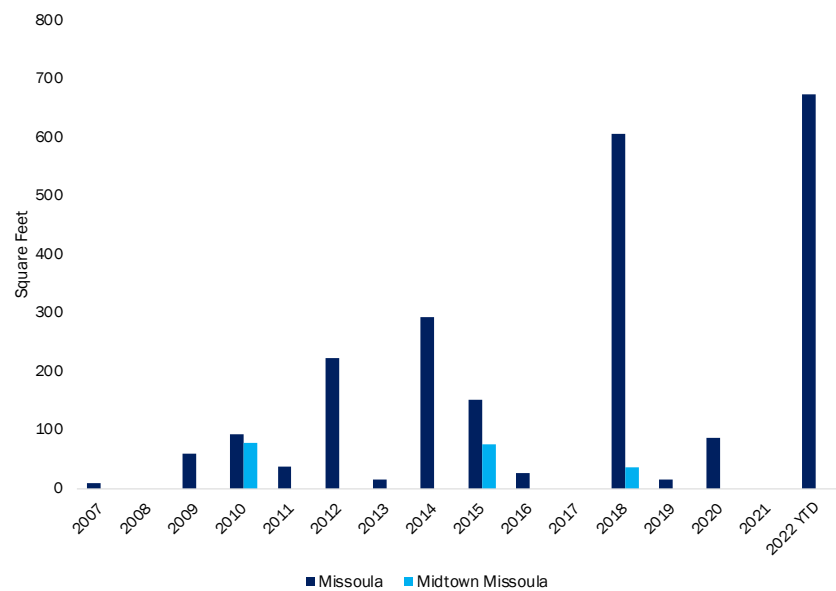


According to CoStar, there has been relatively little construction of multifamily apartments in the Midtown market in the last decades. Approximately 190 units have been delivered between 2007 and 2022 YTD. Most recently, constructed in 2018, the Crestmont Heights Apartment delivered 36 units to the Midtown market.

Missoula has seen about 2,288 new units built in the last decades.

Exhibit 15. Multifamily Deliveries, Midtown, and Missoula, 2000 to 2022 YTD

Source: CoStar



Single-Family

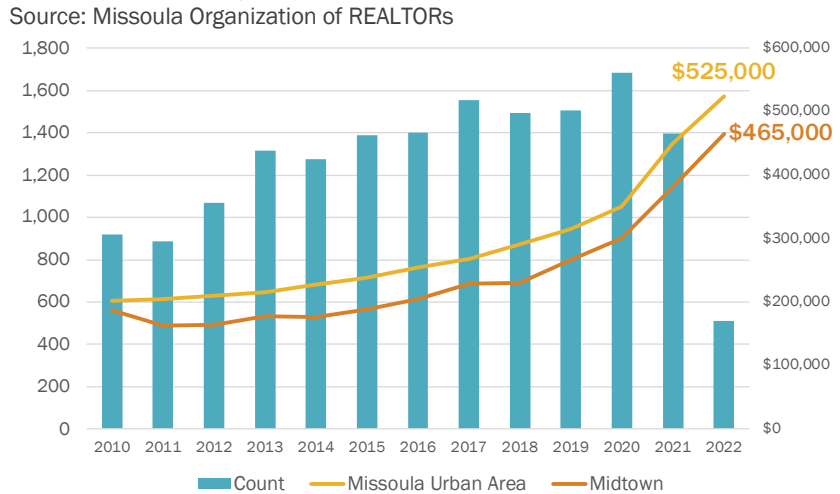
Like the rental market, single-family residential real estate trends indicate a growing demand for homeownership. Home prices for residential ownership products have been steadily increasing since 2010. So far in 2022, the median price for a home in Missoula is \$525,000 and \$465,000 in Midtown. Generally, condos and town homes have been a more affordable ownership product type compared to detached single-family homes since 2010. However, in 2022, condos and townhomes reached a price that is comparable to a detached single-family home in Midtown. Despite a low overall number of sales in this time period, mobile homes remain the most affordable housing type in Midtown.

Between 2010 to 2022 YTD, Missoula and Midtown experienced a rise in home prices.

In 2022 YTD, the average price for a home in Missoula was \$525,000, compared to \$465,000 in Midtown.

In the past three years (2019-2022) the median price for homes in Midtown neighborhoods has risen 74 percent from \$266,900 to \$465,000.

Exhibit 16. Count of Home Sales and Median Price, Missoula Urban Area and Midtown, 2010 to 2022 YTD
Exhibit 33. Count of Home Sales and Median Price, Missoula Urban Area and Midtown, 2010 to 2022 YTD
 Source: Missoula Organization of REALTORS



Most sales in Midtown since 2010 have been single-family homes.

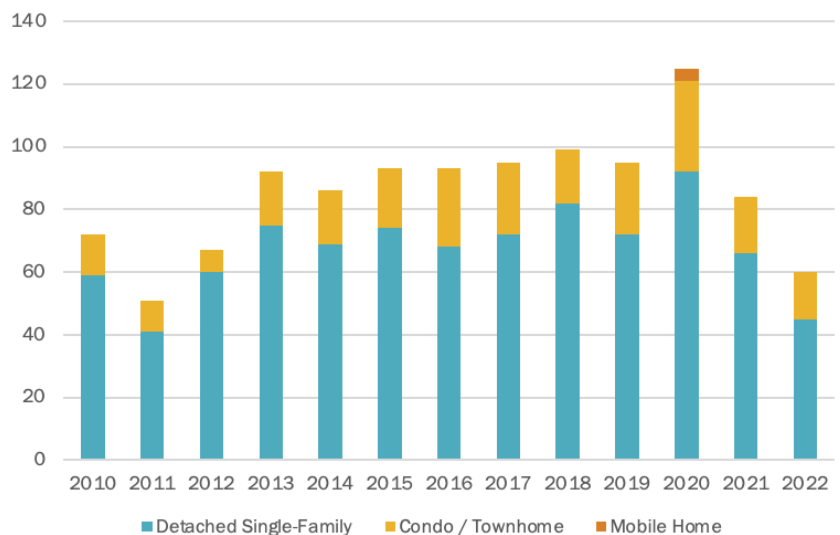
In 2022 YTD, 75 percent of the sixty homes sold in Midtown were single-family detached residences.

Although there are mobile homes in the study area, very few were sold since 2010, accounting for less than one percent of sales overall.

The share of condos and townhomes sold has increased slightly in recent years, but still remains comparatively lower than detached homes.

Exhibit 17. Count of Home Sales by Type, Midtown, 2010 to 2022 YTD

Source: Missoula Organization of REALTORS



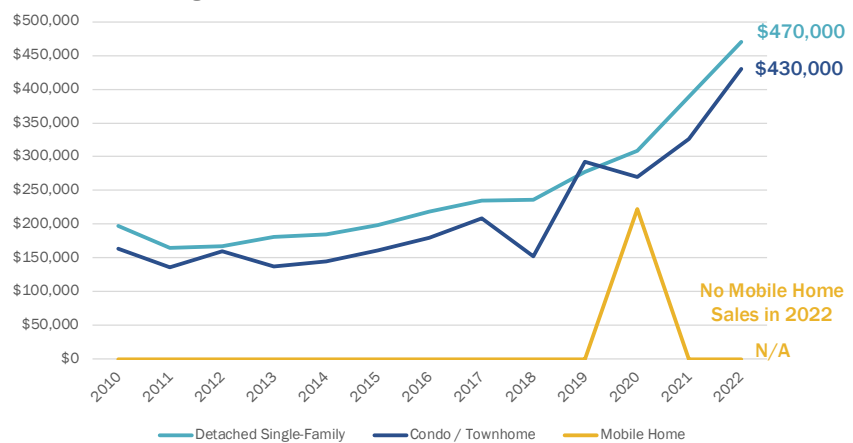
In most years since 2010, detached single family homes were also the most expensive type of home.

The median price for detached single-family homes in Midtown has typically been slightly higher than the median for condos and townhomes.

Although there were only a few mobile home sales in the study area, the median price for those sales was nearly \$50,000 lower than the median for condos and townhomes in Midtown.

Exhibit 18. Median Price by Home Type in Midtown, 2010 to 2022 YTD

Source: Missoula Organization of REALTORS



5. Market Assessment of Land Uses

The Midtown study area has numerous competitive advantages that could make it appealing for a variety of uses. The Midtown area has high visibility from direct and convenient access to US Route 12 (Brooks Street), which is one of the main thoroughfares for accessing downtown, University of Montana, and other main destinations. Annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts in 2021 indicate AADT of over 31,000 along Brooks Street. The High traffic count has been an asset to the area, with a large concentration of retail uses in the area. The high concentration of retail would be an advantage for a mixed-use center within Midtown. Proximity to several regional sports facilities is an advantage for potential tourism-related industries to draw people to Midtown. This section describes some of the potential land uses that may be suitable for Midtown.

Office

Real estate market trends for Midtown show positive market conditions for several commercial uses. Employment in Midtown is mostly concentrated in services which need the most office space. Stable employment growth in this sector could demand new office space. Market trends indicate that small amounts of office space could be supported by Midtown's market, likely within mixed-use buildings that support either office or retail and residential uses.

Retail

Market trends suggest there is demand for additional retail space within the Midtown area. ECONorthwest used Claritas data to assess local retail spending and local and regional leakage. Retail leakage occurs when residents do not have competitive opportunities to purchase goods locally and must travel outside the market area (or purchase online) to find desired products. The retail gap represents the difference between demand and supply within the specific market area. A positive value represents leakage of retail opportunity outside the market area. A negative value represents a surplus of retail sales, a market where customers are drawn in from outside the market area.

The exhibit below shows that there is an observed retail surplus across all retail categories. This retail demand analysis indicates that Midtown serves as a retail and service destination for residents across Missoula and the region who patron businesses in the area to meet both daily needs and larger expenditure items. This analysis also indicates that large-format retailers (national chains) and Southgate Mall are meeting much of the existing need today for retail across Missoula.

Exhibit 19. Summary of Retail Gap, Midtown and Missoula, 2022

Source: Claritas Retail Market Power Report

Retail Store Type	NAICS	Midtown	Missoula
Furniture and home furnishings stores	442	-16,513,028	-28,402,374
Electronics and appliance stores	443	-6,816,903	-16,867,559
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	444	-28,517,347	-98,871,415
Food and beverage stores	445	-23,357,898	-46,775,976
Health and personal care stores	446	-10,645,841	13,068,306
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	448	-26,820,244	-13,253,491
Sporting goods/hobby/musical instr/bookstores	451	-21,956,771	-62,741,305
General merchandise stores	452	-78,653,469	-263,568,407
Miscellaneous store retailers	453	-11,447,802	-32,080,302
Food services and drinking places	722	-31,426,829	-50,797,686

However, while Midtown and the greater Missoula market area are well served by retail—mostly due to the presence of the mall and other major big box retailers—there are some opportunities for local retailers in Midtown. This analysis of retail real estate trends indicates that there is additional demand for retail and services in the area to serve both the local community as well as customers that come to Midtown from across the region. This retail and

service demand is likely to be increasingly for more “experiential” retail and services like recent businesses that have located in Midtown, including Dram Shop, Big Dipper, and Mustard Seed. These kinds of businesses are likely to demand types of retail space that are limited in Midtown today and could support the renovation or development of smaller-format spaces to better serve this growing segment of retail demand.

Exhibit 28 shows the retail opportunities that could be supported in Midtown. Generally, these are opportunities for local businesses to fill the gap that exists in Midtown. They include local retail stores such as a:

- Supermarket
- Boutique men’s and family clothing store
- Luggage and leather good products
- Arts and crafts store
- Music instrument store
- Specialty cuisine restaurants and food carts

Exhibit 20. Summary of Retail Opportunities, Midtown and Missoula, 2022

Source: Claritas Retail Market Power Report

Retail Store Type	NAICS	Midtown	Missoula
Convenience stores	44512	941,025	7,645,353
Fish and seafood markets	44522	78,073	635,745
Fruit and vegetable markets	44523	135,630	1,104,978
Men's clothing stores	44811	180,618	1,605,007
Clothing accessories stores	44815	187,407	1,682,041
Luggage and leather goods stores	44832	460,989	3,854,977
Musical instrument and supplies stores	45114	102,076	500,711
Special food services	7223	1,065,264	9,501,334

Hospitality

Midtown’s high visibility along US Route 12 (Brooks Street) and central location to many regional sports fields would be supportive of a small hotel or other hospitality uses that cater toward leisure and tourism. While there are four existing hotels serving the Midtown area, they are generally older and categorized as economy and midscale.

Most of the hotels in Missoula are concentrated in downtown and near the airport. There are roughly 13 hotel properties in Missoula that have been built in the last 25 years and three hotel properties that are under construction or proposed. The new hotels will be constructed near the airport. For much of the past decade, the hotel market has hovered around 60% occupancy,

which we can reasonably assume is the region's natural occupancy rate. Increases in supply of hotel rooms between 2015 and 2021 appear to have been reasonably absorbed in the market.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the hospitality market as much as any real estate market sector. 2020 saw declines across all performance metrics. Missoula and Midtown's hospitality market recovered quickly and experienced growth in average daily rates while occupancy has remained stable. In 2022, Missoula's average daily rate (ADR) increased to \$149 while occupancy was 62%, recovering to prepandemic levels. Midtown's hospitality trends followed similar trends in increases in both ADR and occupancy rates.

Prior to the pandemic, Missoula's hospitality market exhibited steady growth year over year, and in recent years ADR has experienced substantial growth likely due to the new upper-scale hotels delivered to the market. The lack of newer hotel inventory in south Missoula, where several regional sports activities are hosted year-round, could signal potential demand for a hotel opportunity. In the midterm, hospitality could be viable in Midtown; however, there should be a buildup of critical mass of tourism to attract travelers and tourism to the area. In the near term, there are likely opportunities for creating more choice of hotel and hospitality types in Midtown to better meet the range of visitor types. Near-term opportunities could include repositioning of older economy lodging toward a more boutique lodging concept that leverages the cultural and community assets of Missoula and Midtown.

Exhibit 21. Hotel Inventory in Midtown, 2022

Source: CoStar

Name	Rooms	Year Built	Class
Brooks Street Motor Inn	61	1958	Independent
Super 8 Missoula/Brooks Street	63	1977	Economy
Fair Bridge Inn & Suites Missoula	80	1984	Midscale
Sleep Inn Missoula	59	1996	Midscale

Exhibit 22. Hotel Properties Built in the Last 25 Years in Missoula, 2022

Source: CoStar

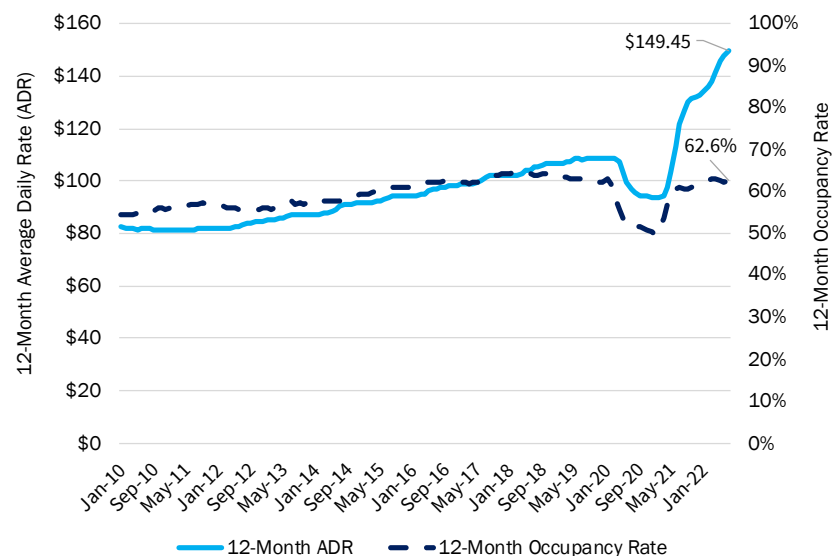
Name	Rooms	Year Built	Class
Motel 6 Missoula	65	1997	Economy
La Quinta Inns & Suites Missoula	80	1999	Upper Midscale
C'mon Inn	119	1999	Independent
Wingate by Wyndham Missoula Airport	100	2003	Midscale
Hilton Garden Inn Missoula	146	2006	Upscale
Staybridge Suites Missoula	101	2008	Upscale
Stone Creek Lodge Missoula	101	2009	Independent
Holiday Inn Express & Suites Missoula Northwest	82	2011	Upper Midscale
TownePlace Suites Missoula	90	2014	Upper Midscale
My Place Hotel Missoula	63	2015	Upper Midscale
Residence Inn Missoula Downtown	175	2019	Upscale
AC Hotels by Marriott Missoula Downtown	105	2021	Upscale
Wood Spring Suites Missoula	122	2021	Economy
Hampton by Hilton Missoula	90	2024	Upper Midscale
Home2 Suites by Hilton Missoula	75	2024	Upper Midscale
Homewood Suites by Hilton Missoula	99	2024	Upscale

Occupancy rates in Missoula have remained steadily around 60% since 2018. With the onset of COVID-19, occupancy rates dipped to a low of 50% and quickly rebounded a year and a half later in summer of 2021.

12-month ADR has been on a steady increase over the years. In recent years ADR has spiked to about \$150 with the recent opening of the AC Hotel in Downtown Missoula.

Exhibit 23. Hotel Average Daily Rate (12-Month) and Occupancy Rate (12-Month), Missoula, January 2010-October 2022

Source: CoStar

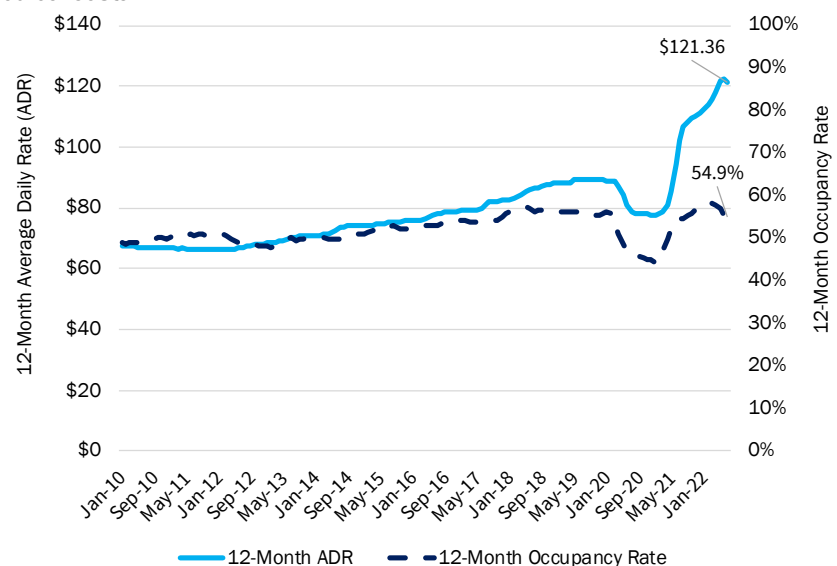


Hotel trends for Midtown mirror those in Missoula but with a slightly lower average daily rate. In October of 2022, average daily rates in Midtown were \$121 and occupancy rates at 54.9%.

The lower average daily rate and occupancy rates observed in Midtown are likely due to the older and lower-rated star hotels that exist in the area.

Exhibit 24. Hotel Average Daily Rate (12-Month) and Occupancy Rate (12-Month), Midtown, January 2010-October 2022

Source: CoStar



Industrial/Flex

The Industrial/flex market trends generally indicate a weak market for new industrial space in Midtown. Both modern and traditional industrial space demand is not aligned with the goals for the Midtown Master Plan. However, flex/maker-space type businesses could be a viable interim use as industrial space in Midtown gets repurposed or redeveloped for higher best uses.

Flex/maker-space uses could serve the market and create a destination place for Midtown. Some examples such as adaptive reuse of industrial space could include architectural salvage or antique stores, brewery and distillery, or other small local manufactures to support entrepreneurship in the area.

Residential

Residential market trends indicate strong demand for a variety of both rental and ownership residential housing in the area. The Midtown area has a mix of households with varying incomes that could support different types of housing. Specific emphasis should be put on the construction of new multifamily rental housing to mitigate for a demand/supply imbalance as well as on opportunities to create workforce/middle-income ownership housing opportunities through the allowance of additional housing types that better meet the diverse needs of current and future Midtown residents.

6. Findings and Market Potential

Below we summarize key metrics that real estate professionals think about when considering building in different market areas. The findings are focused on Midtown, which provides a key understanding of market potential for different land uses.

What Is the Market Demand for Different Uses in Midtown?

Figure 25. Summary of Market Potential in Midtown, 2022

Source: ECONorthwest Analysis

Land Use	Area Suitability	Market Trends	Market Potential
Office	Strong High state highway visibility and proximity to large population center.	Stable Escalating rents coupled with low vacancy. New office deliveries have been easily absorbed.	Moderate Stable employment growth in the service sector and lower cost of land compared to downtown. Market potential for a mixed-use building with office, retail, and or residential.
Retail	Strong High state highway visibility and traffic counts. Proximity to other major retailers and suitable land for pad or infill development.	Stable Escalating rents coupled with low vacancy. Residential growth has slowed. Limited new construction has occurred, and net absorption has fluctuated between positive and negative.	Moderate to Strong Market potential for small local retail space within a strip retail format building or mixed-use building. Local retailers include supermarket, boutique clothing store, luggage and leather good products, arts and craft store, musical instrument store, specialty cuisine restaurants and food carts.
Industrial/Flex	Moderate Strong access to workforce and highway access. Limited opportunities for large uses.	Weak Declining rents and generally high vacancy. Limited new construction has occurred.	Low Expectation of new industrial/ flex construction is low. Rent levels currently would not justify new construction.
Multifamily Residential	Strong Growing population and proximity to several transit and commercial amenities.	Strong Escalating rents coupled with low vacancy. New delivery of units has been absorbed well.	Strong Growing demand for rental residential but current levels would not justify new construction.
Hospitality	Strong High visibility from state highway and proximity to recreation and regional sport attractions. View Corridors.	Mixed Market has recovered quickly from COVID-19 pandemic and ADR has increased. No future construction anticipated in the area.	Moderate Intermediate-term opportunity if other uses in attract tourism to the area.

Appendix F: Socioeconomic Vulnerability Assessment

DATE: April 28, 2023
TO: Midtown Missoula Association
FROM: ECONorthwest
SUBJECT: Midtown Socioeconomic Vulnerability Assessment

What is socioeconomic vulnerability to displacement?

Displacement risk describes when pressures in the real estate market force households to relocate due to rising housing costs or increased redevelopment potential. Given the larger district scale of the Midtown Master Plan project, ECONorthwest focused our analysis on evaluating a combination of different socioeconomic factors to understand in what areas vulnerability to displacement is the most concentrated today, and who may be at greatest risk of indirect displacement from future development or increasing rents in Midtown in the future. We did not evaluate risk for direct physical displacement, which typically focuses on the impact of specific infrastructure or redevelopment projects within an area.

Why look at socioeconomic vulnerability in Midtown?

As part of the Opportunities and Challenges Report completed for the Midtown Master Plan project, we found that home sale prices and rents in Midtown and across Missoula have risen quickly in recent years, while incomes in Midtown have remained lower than average compared to the city as a whole. Throughout our engagement work, we heard frequently from residents who were concerned about displacement that could happen with the increasing intensity of development.

The Midtown Master Plan is intended to guide Midtown towards realizing the community's vision for future investment and transformation of the area. ECONorthwest performed this analysis of socioeconomic factors so that we can intentionally recommend strategies that support this vision, while proactively incorporating anti-displacement strategies for Midtown residents in tandem with other transformative actions and policies.

Who is most likely to be vulnerable?

Displacement can affect both renter and owner households, and there are a number of social vulnerability factors that we look at when considering who is at risk. Householders who face disadvantages or discrimination in the real estate market are often more vulnerable due to inability to absorb price increases, including:

- **Low-income, cost-burdened renters** are at greatest risk of being forced to move due to rising rents, since they have little ability to pay higher prices that come with rent increases and may already be facing trade-offs between paying rent and covering other basic needs for their household.
- **Adults without college degrees** have less ability to increase their income to cover higher housing costs and may have to work multiple low-wage jobs to make ends meet.

- **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)**—particularly people who are Black, Indigenous, and/or Latinx—tend to face greater housing discrimination and may have a harder time finding other housing if they are forced to move.
- **Seniors and people with disabilities** may have specific housing needs (e.g., accessibility features) that may make it harder to find another suitable place to live if they are forced to move.
- **People who do not speak English, immigrants, and refugees** may have more difficulty asserting their rights as tenants if the landlord is seeking to make them move.
- **Residents who are a part of the LGBTQ+ community** may face greater housing discrimination due to a lack of state protections around sexual orientation and gender identity.

How do we determine where there is high socioeconomic vulnerability?

We began with identifying groups that are inequitably burdened by housing costs, meaning that these groups have higher rates of cost burden compared to all households. First, we developed a weighted vulnerability indexing analysis, based on 2021 Public-Use Microdata Survey (PUMS) data at the state level to identify demographic groups that are unequally burdened by housing costs. This means that a given group's share of the state's cost-burdened households is greater than its total share of all state households. For example, households with a Hispanic/Latino head comprise 2.8% of the Missoula region's households, but 5.9% of the region's cost-burdened renter households – a difference of 3.1% points.

Our analysis identified six demographic groups that were most disproportionately burdened in the Missoula area (listed here in descending order of disproportion):

1. Households earning less than 80% of the region's 2021 Area Median Income (AMI) (\$60,150)
2. People 25 years and older who have an educational attainment of less than a Bachelor's degree
3. People of Hispanic/Latino origin, any race
4. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), neither White non-Hispanic, nor Hispanic/Latino people are included in this group
5. People five years and older who speak English "not well"
6. People with one or more disabilities

ECONorthwest rank-ordered these six vulnerable demographic groups based on the degree of disproportionate burdening. We used the rank (1 through 6) as a weighting factor and apply it to tract-level shares of the region's six demographic groups. This share was then converted to decile ranks, and each decile rank was multiplied by the rank-ordered weighting factor. These

“scores” were then summed for each tract, with total scores ranging between 21 to 210¹. Lastly, this score was then divided by the maximum possible value to compute a more intuitive percentage value, with “100%” indicating tracts with the **highest** levels of **all** vulnerable demographic groups.

The result of this analysis is identification of census tracts with lower and higher percentages of people across multiple vulnerable groups. Census tracts with higher vulnerability levels would indicate places where it is more likely that not only current, but where future housing cost burdening and possible displacement are more likely to occur.

Data Limitations: What about LGBTQ+ residents?

The LGBTQ+ community often faces greater barriers in securing rental housing and homeownership due to blatant discrimination and biases based on sexual orientation and gender identity.² While recent Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts across the country aim to counteract both individual and institutional homophobia and transphobia, additional work on the local, state, and federal level are required to further protect LGBTQ+ rights, including fair housing policies. There are no state laws within Montana protecting the LGBTQ+ community from housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. The current state law, Montana Human Rights Act, which protects race, sex, religion, and age, does not protect LGBTQ+ Montanans from being denied housing or evicted.³

Compared to most of the state, Missoula has more protections for LGBTQ+ households and individuals. In 2010, Missoula City Council voted in favor of Ordinance Number 3428 which added protections from housing discrimination based on “actual or perceived...sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.”⁴ However, Missoula is only one of few cities in Montana with these city-level protections, the others include Bozeman, Butte, Helena, and Whitefish.⁵

This legal minoritization of LGBTQ+ protections within Montana has implications for our socioeconomic vulnerability analysis. Given the higher chance of housing discrimination against LGBTQ+ households, it is important to understand where there may be a greater concentration of vulnerability to displacement to prioritize resources. However, due to the lack of available data and routine data collection on sexual orientation, gender identity, and variations in sex characteristics, there is not sufficient local data to accurately evaluate where there is higher vulnerability for LGBTQ+ residents within Missoula city.⁶ Due to these widespread data issues for analyzing cost

¹ Example: If a tract contains 8% of the region’s low-income households, the highest share among all tracts, placing in the **10th decile**. Since low-income households are the most disproportionately burdened subgroup, this subgroup receives a weighting factor of **six**. This tract would therefore earn **60 points** (10 x 6) towards its composite score.

² LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance, “Discrimination and Its Impacts on LGBTQ+ Community: Real Estate Professionals and Consumers,” April 2022, <https://realestatealliance.org/lgbtq-real-estate-alliance-report-shows-significant-discrimination-remains-despite-growth-of-industry-wide-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-efforts/>.

³ ACLU of Montana, “Non Discrimination Ordinances,” June 23, 2016, <https://www.aclumontana.org/en/non-discrimination-ordinances>.

⁴ City of Missoula, “LGBTQ Info & Resources: Ordinance 3428,” April 2010, <https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2334/LGBTQ-Info-Resources>.

⁵ ACLU of Montana, “Non Discrimination Ordinances.”

⁶ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/collecting-data-about-lgbtqi-and-other-sexual-and-gender-diverse-communities/>

burden and obtaining consistent demographic data for the LGBTQ+ population, this analysis is not able to include LGBTQ+ populations.

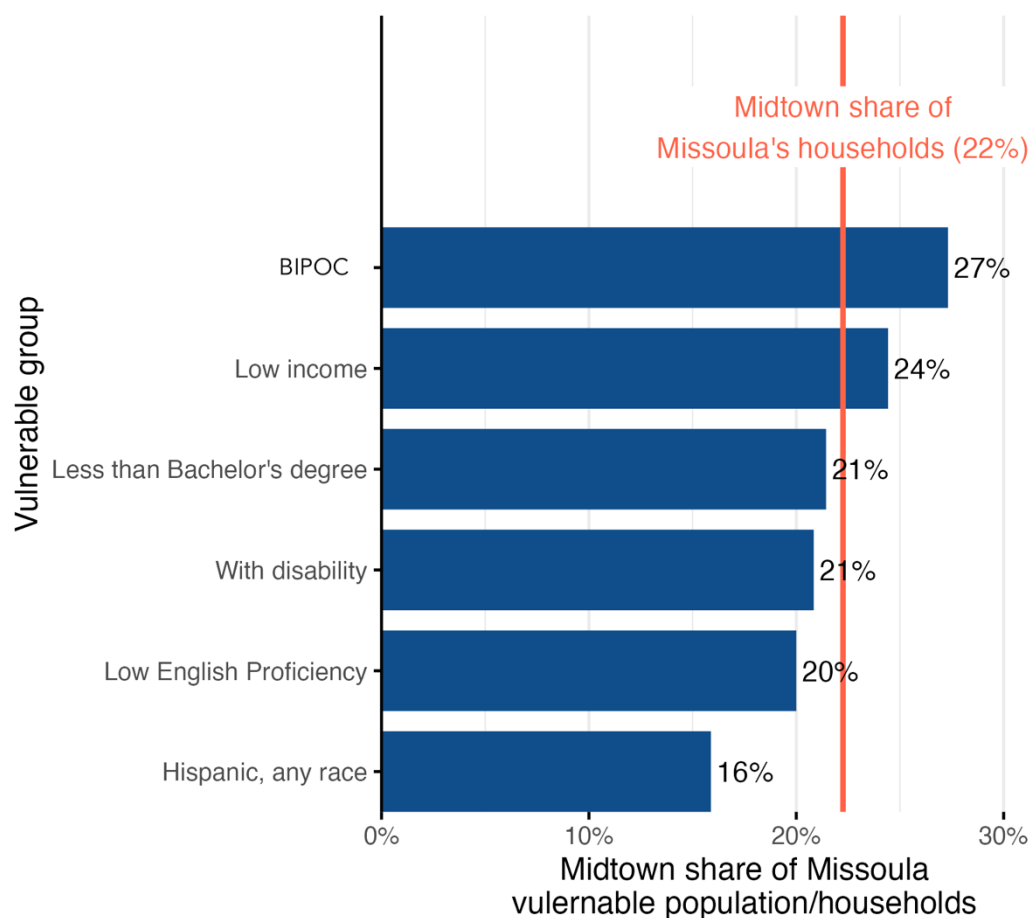
As data collection on sexual orientation and gender identity improves and becomes available, future analyses of socioeconomic vulnerability to displacement in Missoula should seek to include the LGBTQ+ population to better understand the ways new development and local real estate market pressures could impact LGBTQ+ households – especially those who are forced to relocate out of the city, where protective laws for LGBTQ+ community do not yet exist.

Where did we find social vulnerability to displacement in Midtown?

The results of our analysis indicate that Midtown has a higher share of some vulnerable populations compared to Missoula as a whole. The Midtown study area contains about 22 percent of Missoula’s households, yet 24 percent of Missoula’s low-income households (defined as those earning below approximately 80 percent of area median income). The area also has 27 percent of the city’s BIPOC households, but only 16 percent of the city’s Hispanic or Latino-headed households.

Exhibit 1. Midtown Share of Vulnerable Population/Households in Missoula

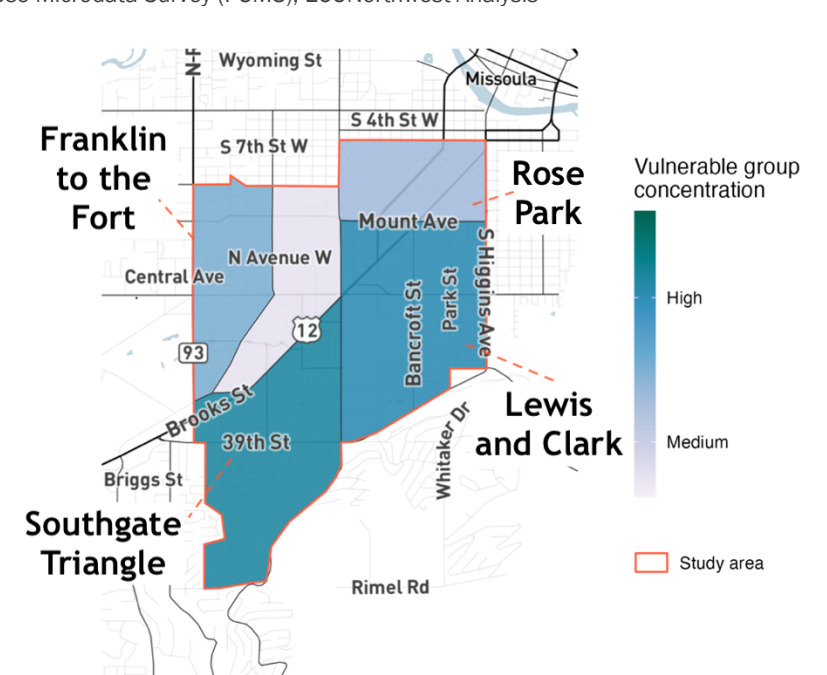
Source: 2021 Public-Use Microdata Survey (PUMS), ECONorthwest Analysis



Social vulnerability compared to Missoula as a whole is not evenly distributed across the study area. Tracts in the southern end of the Midtown have a higher concentration of vulnerable populations overall compared to the rest of the study area, and moderately more vulnerable than the central city tracts and southeast of I-90. Tracts along the city's western and northern borders show up as the most vulnerable overall.

Exhibit 2. Composite Concentration of Vulnerable Groups by Census Tracts, Midtown Study Area

Source: 2021 Public-Use Microdata Survey (PUMS), ECONorthwest Analysis



The southern census tracts in Midtown have above-average concentrations of nearly all six subgroups. The composite results show the combination of six demographic subgroup concentrations which are broken out by category in Exhibit 3.

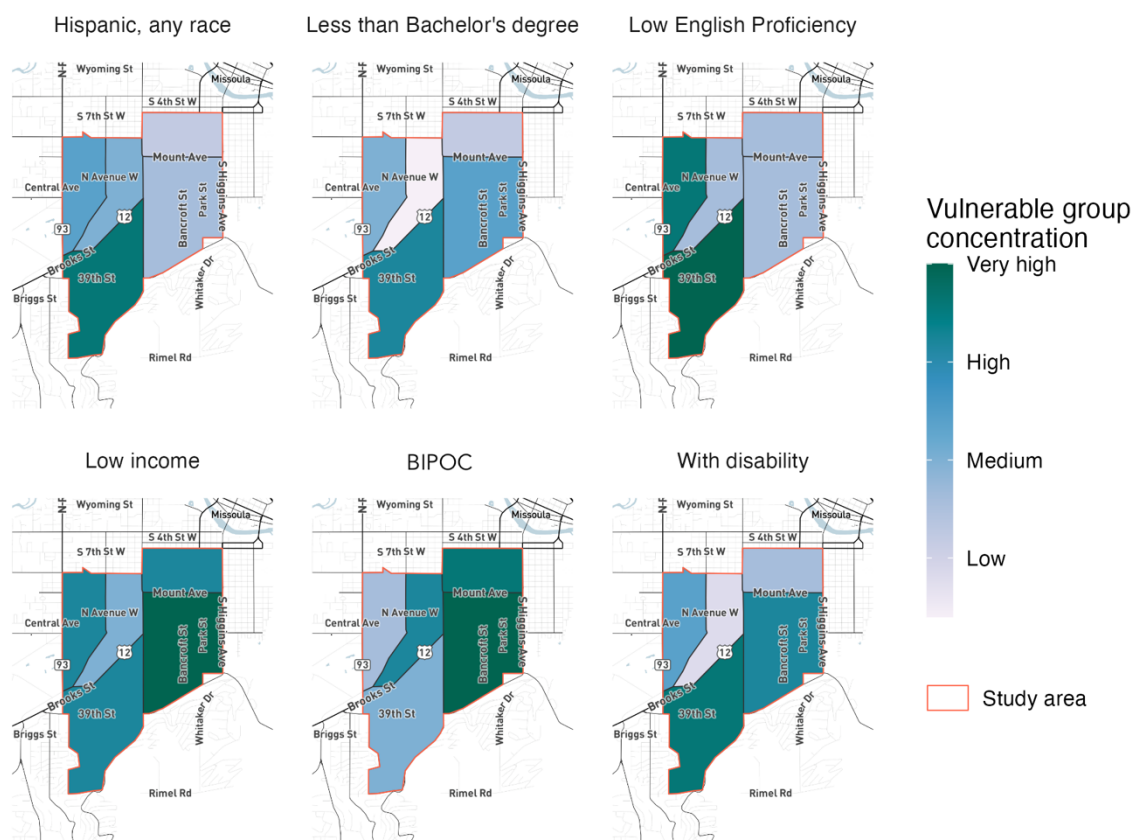
The tract to the southwestern end of the study area which overlaps the **Southgate Triangle** neighborhood has the highest concentration of people Hispanic or Latino residents (of any race), adults over 25 with less than a bachelor's degree, people with low English proficiency, and people with at least one disability. The tract to the southeast of the study area which overlaps the **Lewis and Clark** neighborhood, and the Missoula Fairgrounds has the highest concentration of both low-income households and BIPOC residents.

To the northwestern quadrant of the study area two census tracts roughly overlap the **Franklin to the Fort** neighborhood. Notably, the Bitterroot Trail separates these two tracts, and shows that more people with low incomes and low English proficiency tend to live on the western side of the trail, and more BIPOC residents live to the eastern side.

The northeastern census tract above Mount Avenue roughly corresponds with the **Rose Park** neighborhood. This area shows a higher-than-average concentration of low-income households and BIPOC residents but had a relatively low composite concentration of vulnerable groups overall in Missoula.

Exhibit 3. Concentration of Vulnerable Groups by Census Tract

Source: 2021 Public-Use Microdata Survey (PUMS), ECONorthwest Analysis



What market trends in Midtown could affect vulnerable populations?

ECONorthwest conducted a market analysis as part of the Midtown Master Plan Opportunities and Challenges Report, which documented development trends which could have implications for displacement, particularly in areas with higher concentration of vulnerable populations. Our analysis found that there is a **strong and growing demand for both multifamily rental housing and homeownership in Midtown**. As demand has continued growing in Midtown, incomes in the study remained lower than Missoula overall, with the average household in the study area making \$7,000 less than the city as a whole in 2016-2020. The combination of rising housing prices, low vacancies, and relatively low incomes compared to Missoula overall could intensify displacement risk for vulnerable populations and, in some cases, may already be causing households to relocate.

The effective rent per square foot for multifamily residential in Midtown and Missoula has been steadily increasing since 2007. In 2022, the effective rent per square foot for multifamily rentals showed a 67 percent increase since 2007, rising from \$0.76 up to \$1.12. Vacancy rates have also generally been declining since 2007 in Midtown. Currently, multifamily vacancy rates are extremely low, indicating unmet demand for rental housing in the area. Without additional multifamily housing supply added to the market, these extremely low vacancy rates are likely

to put near-term upward pressure on rents as households and individuals are struggling with recent increases in rent and the increasing cost of other household needs due to inflation.

Like the rental market, single-family residential real estate trends indicate a growing demand for homeownership. Home prices for residential ownership products have been steadily increasing since 2010. As of December 2022, the median price for a home in Missoula was \$525,000 and \$465,000 in Midtown. Generally, condos and town homes have been a more affordable ownership product type compared to detached single-family homes since 2010. However, in 2022, condos and townhomes reached a price that is comparable to a detached single-family home in Midtown. Despite a low overall number of sales in this time period, mobile homes remain the most affordable housing type in Midtown, which are concentrated in the Franklin to the Fort neighborhood to the west of the Bitterroot Branch Trail.

What does this mean for the Midtown Master Plan?

Increasing intensity of new development could have the highest potential to create displacement risk in the areas of Midtown that have the highest concentration of vulnerable populations. According to our analysis, the southern end of the study area has the greatest share of most groups who could be at greater risk from redevelopment projects and increasing housing costs.

Context: How does this fit in with other local planning efforts?

The Midtown Master Plan is a community-level planning effort that took a closely focused approach to understanding where there is socioeconomic vulnerability within the Midtown area. The Our Missoula Code Reform project is currently working towards a broader Equity in Land Use report, which will take a more comprehensive countywide approach to identifying displacement risk and policies to advance equitable outcomes across Missoula.

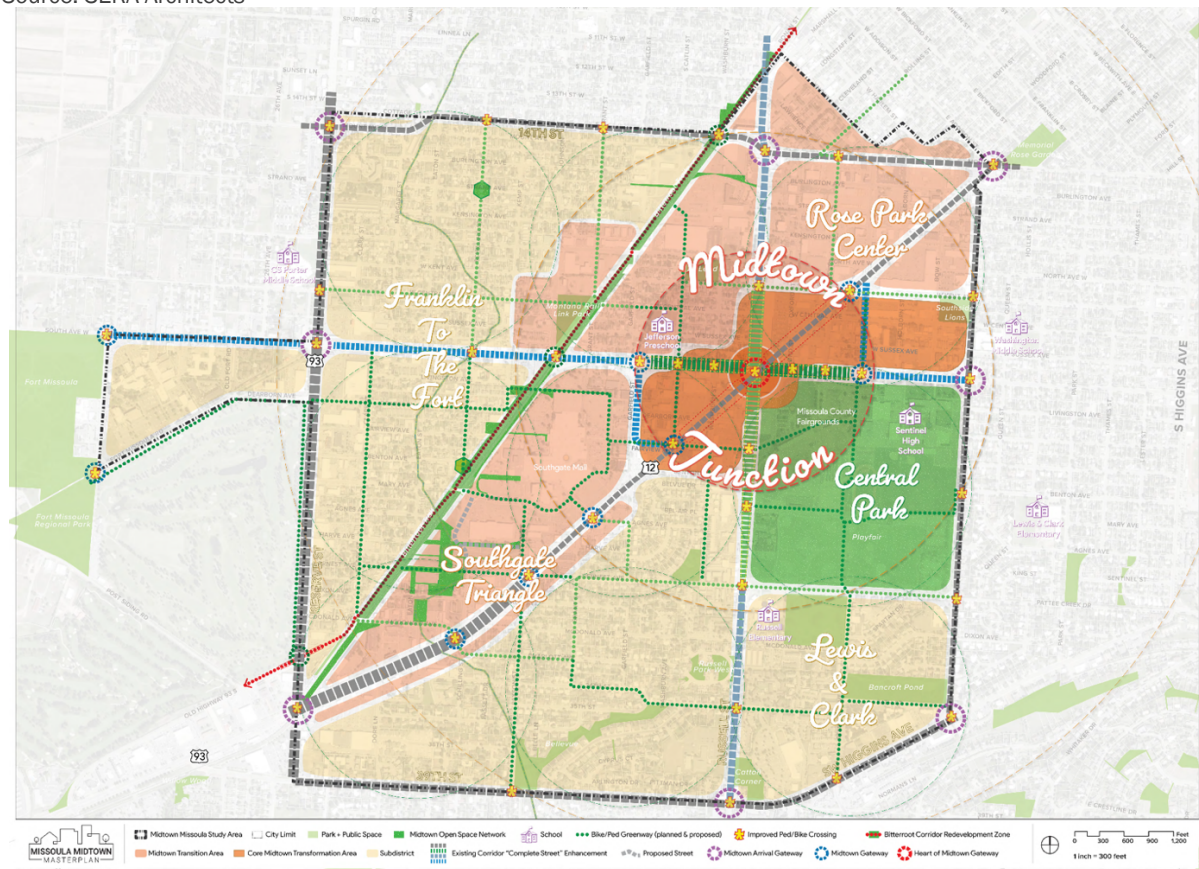
The Equity in Land Use report is one of a set of analytical reports conducted for the Our Missoula Growth Policy and Code Reform project. The report evaluates Missoula's land use policy and zoning regulations based on how well they support social equity goals, including advancing housing affordability and reducing the barriers that contribute to the segregation, exclusion and displacement of historically disadvantaged populations. The report proposes six principles that must be adhered to in order to effectively advance equity in land use reforms:

- 1) Distribute opportunities for affordable housing types broadly throughout the city.
- 2) Enable density levels that open up the possibility for smaller units, which tend to be more affordable to moderate- and low-income households.
- 3) Avoid concentrated upzoning in vulnerable neighborhoods.
- 4) Provide zoning incentives for income-restricted affordable housing that are feasible and attractive for private developers to use.
- 5) Focus regulations more on the form of buildings, less on the number of units in the building.
- 6) Design reforms that increase opportunities for adding amenities and services within a walkable distance of all households.

Compared with the preferred vision for Midtown developed by our team during the Master Plan process, the area highlighted for the highest intensity of new development is around the **‘Core Midtown Transformation Area’** at the intersection of Brooks Street, South Avenue, and Russell Street (shown in orange in Exhibit 4). The area between the Bitterroot Trail and Brooks Street as well as parcels fronting on these corridors are proposed as the **‘Midtown Transition Area’** (shown in salmon), which overlaps partially with most neighborhoods in the study area.

Exhibit 4. Midtown Preferred Alternative

Source: SERA Architects



Compared with what we have heard from conversations during community engagement, we would expect that the area to the west of the Bitterroot Branch trail would also show higher concentrations of vulnerable groups. This area’s lower composite score for social vulnerability may indicate that some displacement is already occurring, causing fewer households with the characteristics that we tested for to show up in 2021 data.

During the next phase of creating the Midtown Master Plan, our team will further refine the implications for land use and housing and how they fit in with this overarching concept for future development. This analysis will inform our set of equitable development strategies, where we can seek to prioritize actions to proactively prevent displacement where higher intensity areas overlap with social vulnerability metrics. In particular, this will mean thinking carefully about recommendations for the southern end of Midtown and the areas along the key corridors that will likely see the greatest change in coming years.

Appendix G: Midtown Alternatives Compass Evaluation

DATE: 4/7/2023
TO: Missoula Midtown Association
FROM: Margaret Raimann, Erin Reome, and Martin Glastra van Loon (SERA Design)
SUBJECT: Midtown Alternatives Compass Evaluation (Task 4.4 Scenario Testing)

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize SERA's evaluation of the Midtown alternatives as part of the broader Midtown Master Plan project. The alternatives are ideas for transformation of Midtown's future development, public realm improvements (e.g., streetscape enhancements, improved bike and pedestrian crossings, new or expanded open spaces, etc.), and overall identity. The plan alternatives served as a preview of the range of potential elements that could be included in the final plan alternative, with the intention of reflecting the stated community vision and goals and to spark further community input and ideas for advancing the final plan alternative. Given these parameters, the goal of the development of the plan alternatives was not to choose one alternative, but to choose elements from the alternatives based on community and stakeholder support.

To better inform discussions with the project team, SERA's evaluation compared each plan alternative's desired uses, connectivity/mobility improvements, and urban design using the Project Compass developed at the outset of the Plan. The process of developing and evaluating the plan alternatives included background analysis, engagement touchpoints with the community, and qualitative analysis.

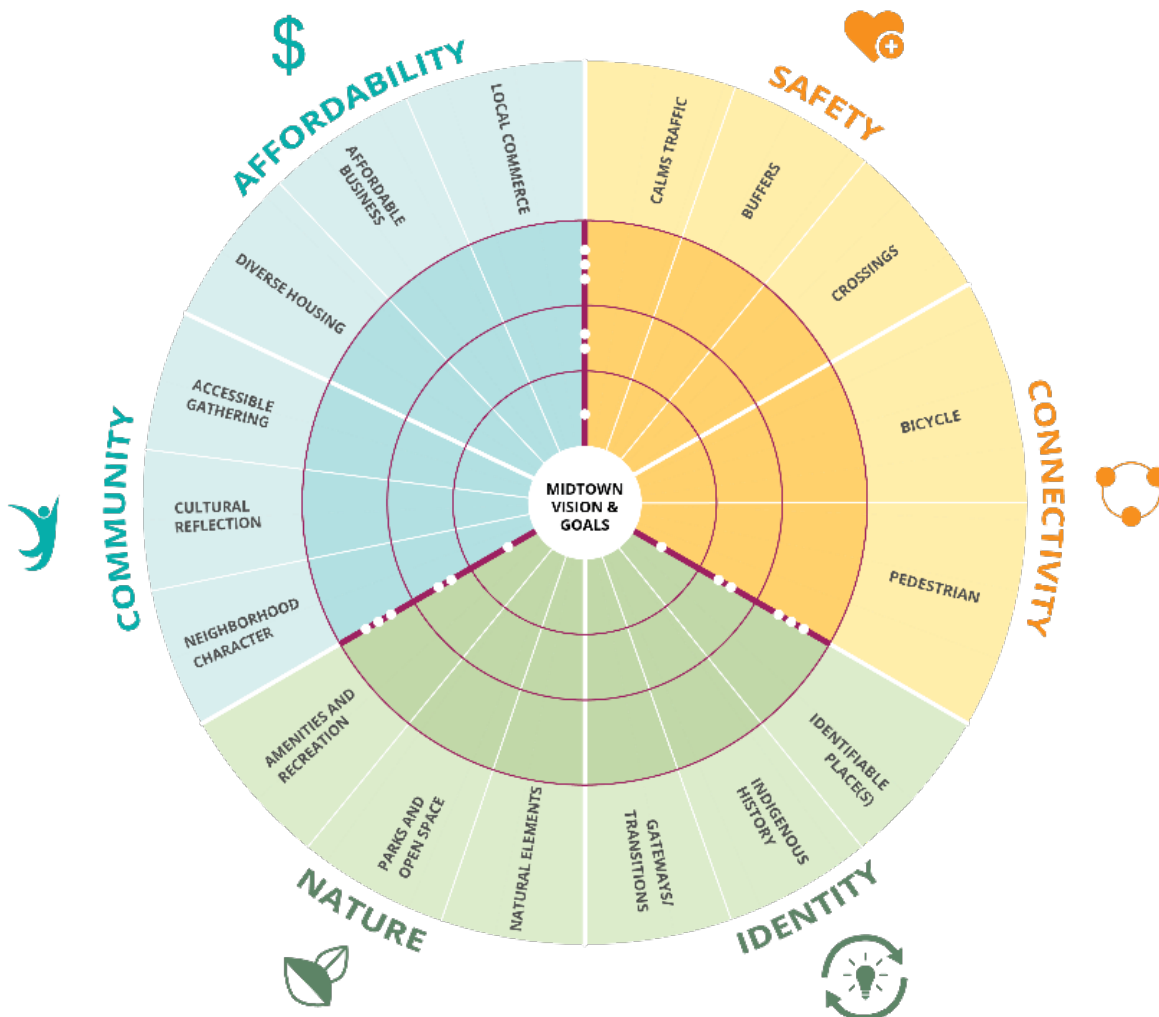
Project Compass

The Project Compass is a tool to visually represent the community's vision and goals for the Master Plan. To develop a preferred alternative for the final plan, SERA used the Project Compass to evaluate the draft plan alternatives, along with drawing key themes from community feedback, discussions with the Project Management Team, and review by the consultant team.

The broad themes of the Compass include affordability, community, nature, identity, connectivity, and safety (Figure 1). Each broad theme has subcategories that reflect the objectives of the Project Management Team, Steering Committee, and the community. Because the draft plan alternatives were intended to provide preliminary ideas for the future transformation of Midtown, the project team determined that the six broad themes would provide a sufficient framework for evaluation of each alternative. The final plan alternative and implementation plan will allow for a deeper understanding of how the Compass subcategories are addressed.

The Midtown Missoula Association (MMA) can use the Project Compass a living document to check against the Plan's vision and goals throughout implementation. The MMA may need to modify the Compass as new objectives arise as part of implementation efforts. However, during the process of developing the Midtown Master Plan, the Compass continued to align with the feedback from the Midtown community.

Figure 1. Project Compass, Missoula Midtown Master Plan



In addition, the consultant team completed further analysis to understand how the final plan could address issues of housing and business affordability. ECONorthwest developed a displacement risk analysis, attached as Appendix A to this memorandum.

Compass Evaluation of Alternatives

SERA used the subcategories to describe the differences between each of the plan alternatives. The Project Compass includes:

Three potential scores: improved (●), better (●●), and exemplary (●●●). The qualitative evaluation revealed that each of the draft alternatives met a baseline of an “improved” score for each broad theme.

Themes: The themes are organized by three groups that reflect the vision for Midtown:

- Equity (affordability and community)
- Active transportation (safety and connectivity)
- Vibrant placemaking (nature and identify)

SERA used this Compass framework to evaluate the alternatives according to how the envisioned urban design elements would improve Midtown.

Draft Plan Alternatives Evaluation

Each figure below shows the Project Compass evaluation for each draft alternative. The evaluation is shown visually in the gray spider chart overlaid on the Compass. The spider chart is pulled to a score for each broad theme in the compass, the inner magenta circle indicates a score of “improved” the middle magenta circle indicates a score of “better,” and the outer magenta circle indicates a score of “exemplary.” At the end of this memorandum Figure 10 shows a summary of the evaluation for all four alternatives.

Southgate Triangle Center

Focus: Builds on existing community assets, keeping the heart of Midtown centered on Southgate Mall as the core area. Investment in development would focus on opportunities in the core area and areas directly adjacent.

Evaluation Summary

Equity: Leverages existing community assets and promotes opportunities for affordable housing and local business growth.

Active Infrastructure: Works within existing and planned mobility network to provide safer bike/ped infrastructure and opportunities for more efficient connections.

Vibrant Placemaking: Enhances existing parks and natural systems in the core area, identifies new opportunities for open spaces in adjacent character areas, and rebrands core area as Midtown Central to enhance sense of place.

Figure 2. Compass Evaluation for Alternative 1, Southgate Triangle Center, Missoula Midtown Master Plan

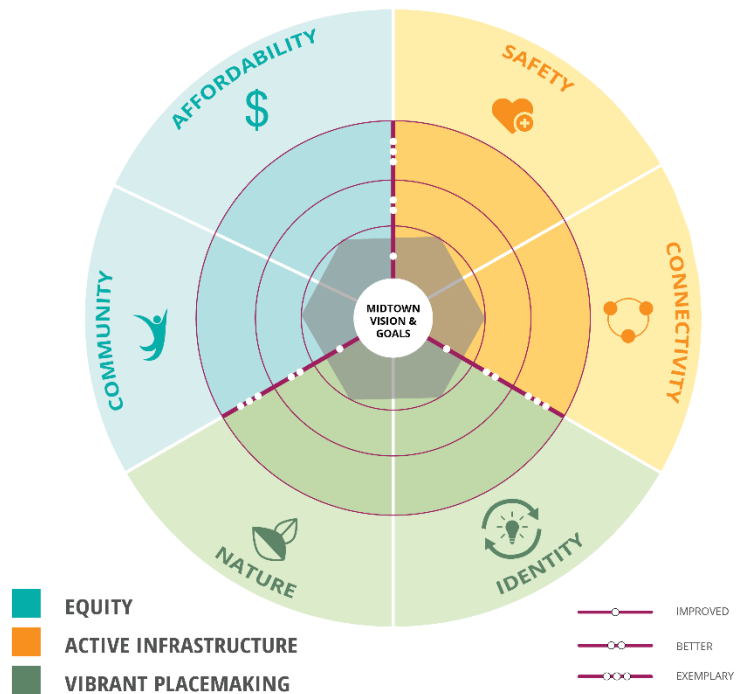


Figure 3. Alternative 1: Southgate Triangle Center



Brooks Backbone

Focus: Extends the core area of change along the extent of Brooks Street in Midtown. This would provide better opportunities for investments in connectivity along the corridor as well as for additional affordable housing and commerce.

Evaluation Summary

Equity: Promotes higher densities for housing and opportunities for local business growth along the entirety of Brooks Street. Connects existing destinations and community assets with gateways to Midtown.

Active Infrastructure: Builds safer crossings, lighting, and infrastructure for bikes/peds along existing corridors. Provides efficient movement through Midtown that works within plans for future BRT, and the Bitterroot Trail is a connected spine along the boundary of the core area.

Vibrant Placemaking: Allows for existing parks and natural systems to continue and provides additional open spaces in character areas outside core. Rebranding of Midtown Central brings a sense of place and identity to the existing assets.

Figure 4, Alternative 2, Brooks Backbone, Missoula Midtown Master Plan

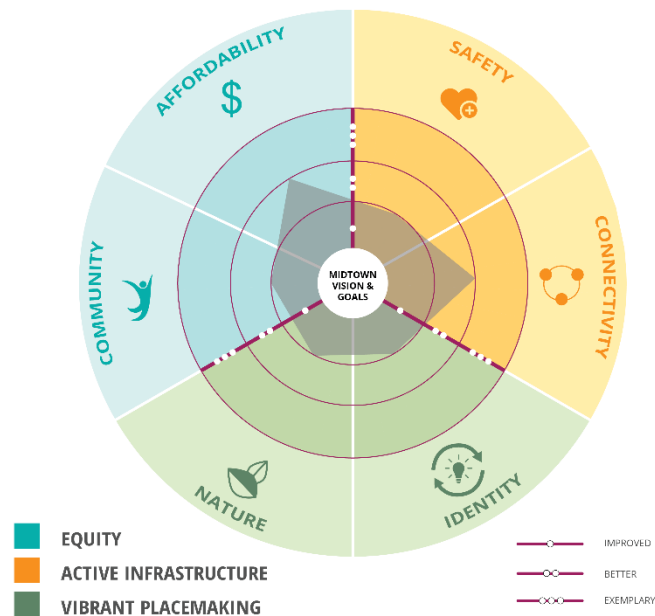


Figure 5. Alternative 2: Brooks Backbone



Russell / South Center

Focus: Offers a reimagination of the iconic intersection at Brooks Street, South Ave, and Russell Street

Evaluation Summary

Equity: Promotes higher densities in core change area with a greater focus on affordable housing and community economic development. Opportunities for local business growth. Strengthens community assets through development of Festival Street.

Active Infrastructure: Reimagines dysfunction junction to bring a safer multi-user experience to Midtown's busiest intersection. Promotes better connections for all users through dysfunction junction and a walkable urban core.

Vibrant Placemaking: Brings in Bitterroot Trail as key asset to the core area. Festival Street adds to Midtown's strong list of community assets.

Figure 6. Alternative 3, Russell / South Center, Missoula Midtown Master Plan

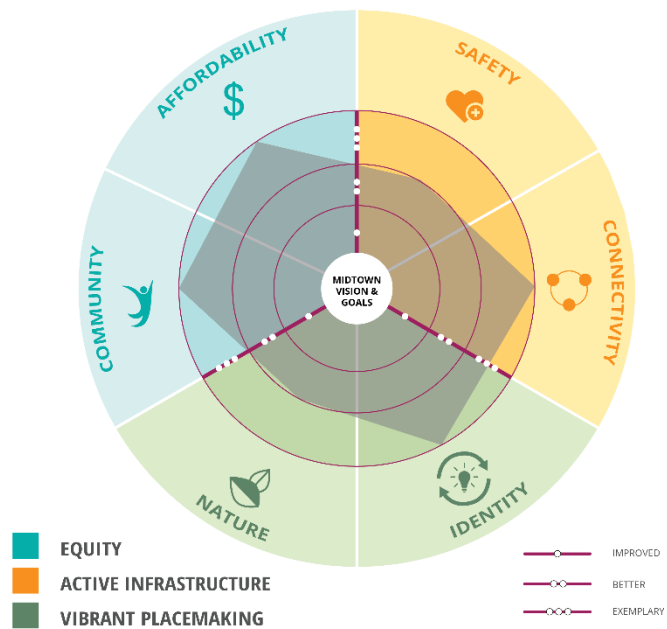
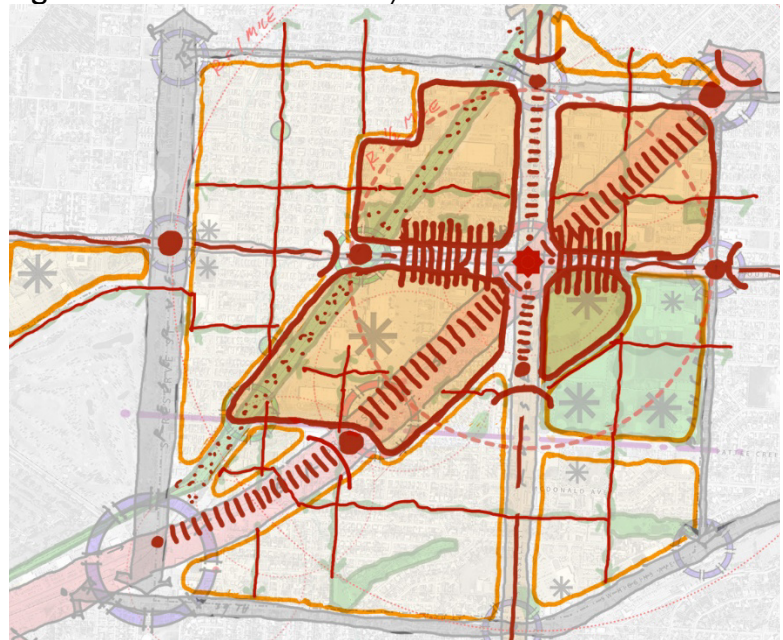


Figure 7. Alternative 3: Russell/South Center



Bitterroot Backbone

Focus: Creates a vision for Midtown centered on connectivity and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists along the Bitterroot Corridor.

Evaluation Summary

Equity: Emphasizes middle housing growth in character areas with increased densities in the change area. Centers Bitterroot Trail as new focal point for community gathering in Midtown.

Active Infrastructure: Brings bike and pedestrian traffic to multi-use path that provides safer crossings. Avoids major thoroughfares, providing better connections off of the Bitterroot Trail for bikes/peds.

Vibrant Placemaking: Promotes additional open spaces/parks in addition to the Bitterroot Trail open space asset. Offers a rethinking of Midtown's asset of the Bitterroot Trail to bring a bike/ped friendly identity.

Figure 8. Alternative 4, Bitterroot Backbone, Missoula Midtown Master Plan

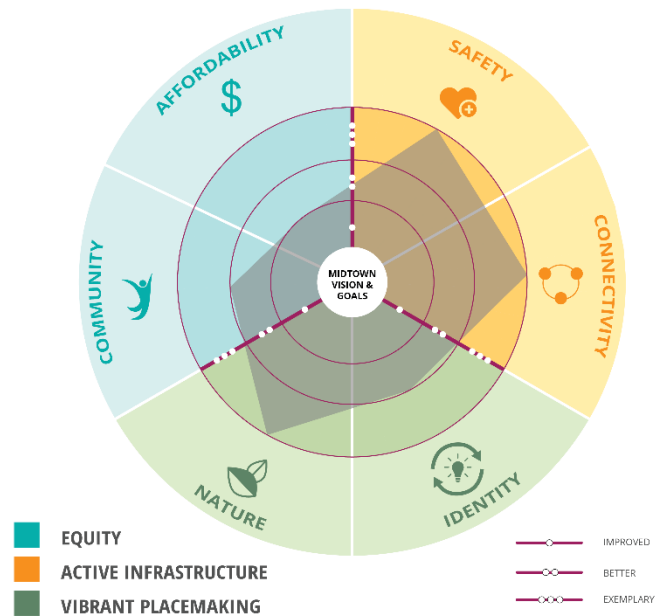


Figure 9. Alternative 4: Bitterroot Backbone



Evaluation Summary

Figure 10 presents the alternatives listed above according to each broad Project Compass theme. The qualitative evaluation (according to the scale shown in the Compass legend **Error! Reference source not found.**) offers one of the many tools used to develop the final plan alternative, supplemented by community outreach, conversations with key stakeholders, and further analysis (including the displacement risk analysis presented as an Appendix to this memorandum).

The purpose of this evaluation was to summarize the focus areas of each plan alternative and how the alternatives align with each broad theme in the Project Compass. The four plan alternatives present four different areas of focus, which affects the scale of development, types of streetscape improvements, and relationship to existing assets and open space. As a result, the final plan alternative will take key elements from this range of options to develop a more refined version.

The evaluation of each of the draft plan alternatives presented in this memorandum was a useful tool in development of the final plan alternative. In addition to the Compass evaluations, SERA reviewed and incorporated feedback from the January community workshop, targeted outreach conversations with key stakeholders, and conversations with the MMA and consultant team. This assessment will result in a refined plan alternative that will be incorporated into the final master plan, along with further discussion of the key components of the plan alternative (land uses, housing, economic development, mobility and connectivity, open spaces, etc.).