

Adopted March 26, 2018

The City of Mountain Home
2018 Downtown Master Plan





Community



Recreation



History



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The compilation of this document was a collaboration of many interested and involved agencies, companies and individuals. Many thanks you to all those who participated.

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FROM THE MAYOR & CITY STAFF

VISION STATEMENT FOR DOWNTOWN MOUNTAIN HOME

“IMAGINE DOWNTOWN...”

Downtown Mountain Home is a clean, safe, walkable destination with attractive storefronts, inviting streetscapes, and exciting activities and events where people come to shop, dine and play; both day and night.

Our downtown is a business-friendly destination for residents and visitors with a healthy mix of retail, restaurant, entertainment and service businesses with a reputation of working together, welcoming and supporting new businesses, and celebrating entrepreneurship.

Close-knit and engaged citizens, of all ages, come together to volunteer, socialize and collaborate to positively impact our community.

Our vision is to celebrate our rich history, provide robust amenities and encourage downtown living, all while preserving our small town charm.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mountain Home Downtown Master Plan is a framework of proposed multi-directional improvement plans and policy amendments designed to strengthen and grow the downtown core, heightening the vitality, walkability, and aesthetic of the area. Building upon earlier planning efforts, the goal is to create a renewed downtown identity which will increase economic development, provide a robust downtown pedestrian experience and improve land use for optimized community development and redevelopment.

The Master Plan includes data compiled from an extensive planning process which included market studies, a traffic study, community charrettes, open houses, public involvement via events and online surveys, field assessments and collaboration with many public and private agencies. Based upon this extensive planning and involvement effort, the Master Plan contains details supporting the proposed capital improvements and policy recommendations, as well as provides concept level Cost Estimates and an Implementation Plan which offers a phased approach to bring the Plan to fruition.

Some of the desired outcomes, as quantified by the City and the public, and which are discussed in the Plan, include:

- Establish an identity for the central historic downtown corridor
- Provide economic growth downtown by enticing new businesses, improving business mix and promoting redevelopment
- Beautify downtown creating a welcoming pedestrian environment
- Address existing building conditions and improve building facades
- Correct deficiencies in existing, outdated infrastructure (including stormwater management, roadways and sidewalks)
- Create a “destination” location with placemaking and programming
- Mobility improvements: traffic, pedestrian and bicyclist
- Enhance wayfinding and signage



The development of this newest Downtown Master Plan has provided an opportunity to reunify local agencies and the community, prompting engagement and participation, renewing the momentum necessary to ensure that the improvements of the downtown core are finally realized. Toward that end, this Master Plan is meant to be used as a comprehensive tool, to be the catalyst document that will facilitate and guide the achievement of this downtown revitalization goal. When implemented, the results will highlight and promote Mountain Home’s unique character and charm, and will stimulate and grow development, fostering a renewed sense of pride in its citizens.

Thank you Idadrone for the picture.



BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS PLANNING

Mountain Home is a municipality with historic beginnings. Originally known as Rattlesnake Station - a stage stop in 1864 - the name was changed to Mountain Home in 1878. The downtown core has been the heart of the community since the railroad established its location in 1883, which is where it remains today.

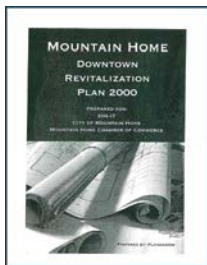
At the turn of the century Mountain Home was one of the largest wool-buying centers in the country, with buyers coming to trade from all over the world. The community is now home to Mtn. Home Air Force Base, one of the world's premier military facilities, and a major employer for the City of Mountain Home.

The City's other major employers are Marathon Cheese Corporation, Mountain Home School District, St. Luke's Regional Medical Center and In the Ditch.



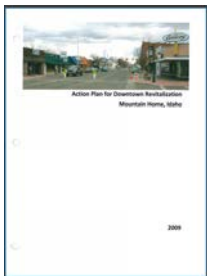
PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

With its roots set deep as the economic indicator for the entirety of Mtn. Home, the downtown core has consistently been identified as a critical part of the City's identity, as addressed in each version of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

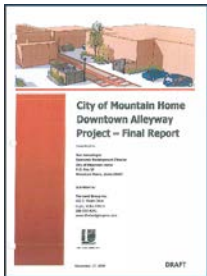


Further studies specific to the downtown core have also been commissioned by the city. During the compilation of this newest Downtown Master Plan the previous planning efforts were reviewed and considered. Previous efforts included:

- Downtown Revitalization Plan (2000)
- Action Plan for Downtown Revitalization (2009)
- City of Mtn. Home Downtown Alleyway Project (2009)
- Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report (2016)
- Main Street and N. 2nd E. Street Traffic Study (2017)



The study conducted by Roger Brooks International in 2016 ("Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report") focused 30 pages of the 92 pages on the perception of downtown, providing pointed recommendations for improvements which align with this Master Plan.



There are numerous common threads from each of the previous planning documents to those found in this Master Plan, each of which will be mirrored as critically necessary capital improvements for the revitalization of the downtown corridor.



It is apparent that the City of Mountain Home and associated agencies desire for the revitalization and renovation of the downtown corridor, as evidenced by the former planning documents, as well as by the improvements that have been accomplished to date: the Alleyway Project went a long way toward engaging the community and restoring culture and design to the downtown area, as has the beautification of the power boxes throughout the corridor, and the furnishings at Railroad Park.



PLAN AREA

The “Focus Area” of the Downtown Mountain Home Master Plan as specified by the City (Figure 1) constitutes Mountain Home’s central business district (though a formalized CBD has not been initiated). It includes all public and private properties that fall within the estimated 23 blocks contained within the boundary lines.

It is important to note that the downtown focus area has diminished in size since the “*The Downtown Revitalization Plan*” in 2000 (Figure 2) and again since the “*Action Plan for Downtown Revitalization*” in 2009 (Figure 3).

This should not be construed that less priority has been placed on the revitalization of the downtown core, but rather should be seen as a prudent reprioritization of the area that can feasibly be improved given current and future financial and funding constraints for the capital improvements.

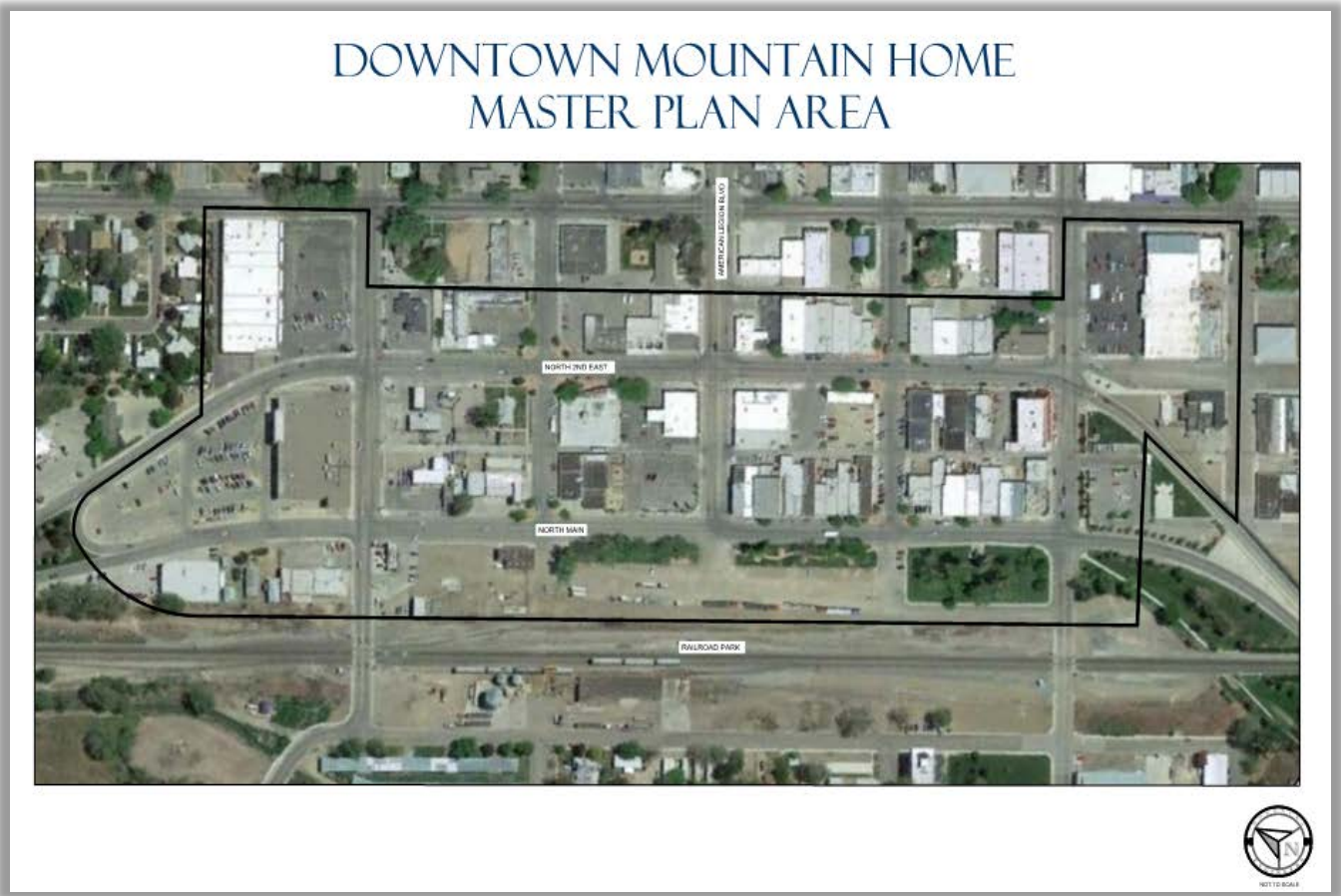


Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

VISION / OBJECTIVES

The mission of this newest revitalization plan for the downtown core of Mountain Home is to act as a mechanism for the changes and improvements that must take place in order to bring about the return of the economic vitality that Mtn. Home was once known for. The downtown core remains the central cornerstone of the community, but as more time passes, new development is taking root away from the core. Allowed to continue, this pattern of sprawl will continue to damage and hinder local commerce in the charming downtown area.

To avoid further deterioration in the focus area, there should be renewed focus on the City's Comprehensive Plan—which spoke to the long-term vision and objectives for Mountain Home.

This Master Plan directly addresses the following chapters of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan:

Chapter 5: Economic Development

Chapter 6: Community Design

Chapter 7: Housing Alternatives

Chapter 8: Natural Resources/Open Space

Chapter 10: Storm Drainage / Utilities

Chapter 11: Transportation / Bicycles / Sidewalks

Chapter 12: Parks and Recreation

Chapter 15: Land Use and Planning



The Vision and Objectives for downtown Mountain Home is that it will once again function as a retail, cultural, activity, office, dining and outdoor destination. The downtown corridor will be a safe and appealing pedestrian environment where patrons will desire to linger, where businesses will desire to operate, where developers will desire to grow and where families will desire to gather, dine and play.

THROUGH THIS MOUNTAIN HOME DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN, DEVELOPMENT IN THE CORE WILL BE DESIGNED TO:

- Establish a distinctive, well-branded and enticing downtown with walkable streets
- Create a well organized system of land uses that will promote living, working and playing downtown
- Support and foster economic and land redevelopment / development
- Rebuild the infrastructure needed to create a strong foundation for growth and progress
- Reconnect a segmented community previously broken by the perception of highway roads bisecting the core, by building avenues for safe pedestrian and bicycle traffic



PLANNING PROCESS

The Mountain Home Downtown Master Plan planning process consisted of formal and informal meetings and events over the course of the spring and summer, and included community and government agencies, public participants and consultants. A detailed synopsis of the entire Public Involvement Process & Planning Sessions can be found at Appendix 1 .

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY 2017					
	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
Kick-off Meeting	9th				
Crazee Daze Booth	27th				
Downtown Charrette		13th & 14th			
Public Open House			11th & 13th		
City Council Mtg.			24th		
Online Survey			25th	11th	
Meeting with ITD				11th	
URA Board Meeting				22nd	
Steering Committee Meeting					12th

Figure 4

KICK-OFF MEETING (ATTENDEES & OUTCOME)

The Kick-off Meeting was attended by Mountain Home Downtown Plan Steering Committee which consisted of representatives from Mtn. Home’s Urban Renewal Agency, the Mayor, representatives from City Council, and staff from the City’s Public Works and Economic Development Departments. The Committee determined the following at the Kick-Off Meeting:

- Project limits for Downtown Development Area were established
- Stakeholders for Downtown Design Charrette were identified
- Initial site assessment/walking audit of downtown was completed and issues identified
 - ⇒ Sidewalks in deteriorating condition
 - ⇒ Lack of pedestrian connectivity
 - ⇒ Speed / volume of traffic
 - ⇒ Excessive number of empty storefronts



PLANNING PROCESS

The events as shown on **Figure 4** were crucial and productive in collecting data, feedback and ideas from the residents of Mountain Home, as well as insightful in illustrating the universal improvements and changes that began to emerge from the collective.

CRAZEE DAZE BOOTH

A booth was set up at Mountain Home’s Annual Crazee Daze Festival to collect public input on their vision for Downtown Mtn. Home. Comment cards were used and notes taken during interviews with local residents.



DESIGN CHARRETTE (2-DAY EVENT)

The City of Mountain Home conducted a two-day Design Charrette with key stakeholders in June. The intent of the Design Charrette was to actively involve local stakeholders in the planning and design process for the revitalization of downtown Mountain Home. The Charrette Process was modeled after a charrette format developed by the National Charrette Institute.

Participants involved in the two-day process were hand selected by Mtn. Home’s Steering Committee for the Project. 41 local residents participated in the Design Charrette and included representatives from the following organizations:

- Downtown Business & Property Owners
- Idaho Transportation Department
- St. Luke’s Regional Medical Center
- Mtn. Home City Council
- Mayor of Mountain Home
- Mtn. Home Economic Development Dept.
- Mtn. Home Parks & Recreation Department
- Mtn. Home Police Department
- Mtn. Home Building Department
- Western Elmore County Recreation District
- Mtn. Home Urban Renewal Agency
- Mtn. Home Public Works Department

DURING THE CHARRETTE PROCESS:

- The participants broke into groups and conducted two “walking audits” to evaluate current conditions, pedestrian facilities and land uses
- Then, still broken into groups, the participants conducted a “visioning process” to define and to layout future land uses, design elements, potential attractions, future pathways and roadway alternatives
- Each group then presented their design concepts to the entire stakeholder group
- The entire stakeholder group then voted on the top three (3) design concepts they felt warranted further discussion and consideration



PLANNING PROCESS

DESIGN CHARRETTE OUTCOME

The second day of the Charrette the participants were to vote to move a single design concept forward for further input by the public; however the group was unable to reach a consensus on a single concept, so the group moved two design concepts forward for public input (**Figures 5 and 6**).

Concept 1



Figure 5

Concept 2



Figure 6

KEY CONCEPTS SHARED by BOTH PLANS:

- Development of an Event Area for Public Events
- Expansion of Railroad Park
- Establishment of a Park & Ride Lot / Bus Depot
- Creation of a “Gateway” to downtown Mountain Home
- Expansion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Creation of a Splash Pad area for children and families
- Reconfiguration of Main and 2nd Streets to create street sections that are designed to better serve residents working, living, shopping and attending events downtown; and to slow traffic to provide enhanced safety and business visibility

PLANNING / PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Beyond compiling and selecting the two concept plans that would move forward for consideration in the process, the Charrette group also discussed and reached consensus on a myriad of global improvements that they thought were integral to the revitalization of downtown Mountain Home (**Figure 7**):

1. Create Gathering Spaces
2. Improve Mountain Home's Sense of Community
3. Economic Development
4. Job Creation
5. Growth
6. Tourism
7. Family Activities
8. Positive Attitude
9. Fill Vacant Buildings
10. Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections
11. Improve Sidewalks
12. Improve shopping / retail / downtown experience
13. Improve business hours' downtown
14. Create housing downtown
15. Nightlife!
16. Create year-round activities Downtown for residents
17. Beautify Downtown / Improve Landscaping
18. Improve Arts and Culture Downtown
19. Create an Event Venue Downtown
20. Create a United Downtown Organization
21. Promote Mountain Home's Historic Buildings Downtown
22. Improve Infrastructure / Roads Downtown
23. Grow!
24. Create a Wayfinding / Signage Plan for Downtown

Figure 7

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

Upon completion of the work compiled by the Charrette group, a Public Open House was held for two days to allow the public a chance to review and comment on the Concept Plans that were developed. At the request of Mountain Home staff, a third concept plan was introduced at the Open House (**Figure 8**). This third concept was presented to evaluate whether the public wished to see significant changes to the configuration of Main Street. Of the three concept plans, 61.3% of respondents selected Concept #2 as the preferred concept, with many commenting that they would prefer not to see Main Street converted to a two-way street.

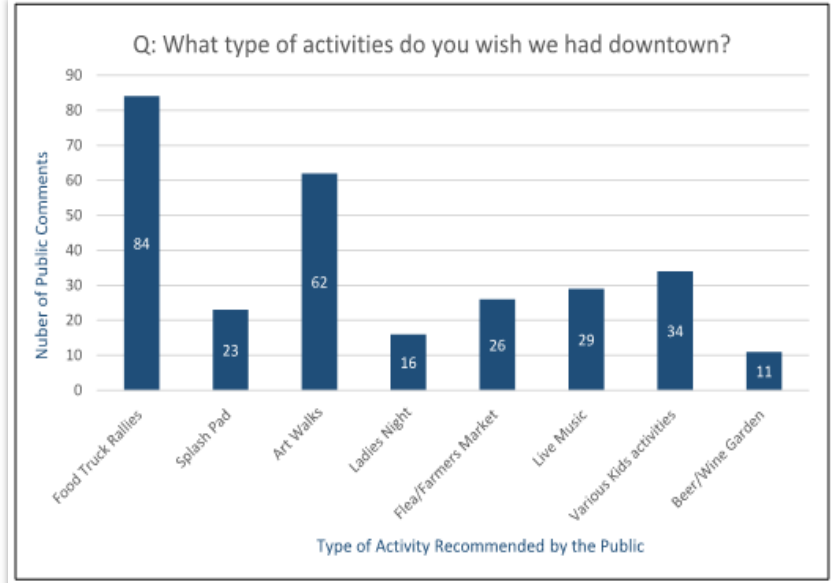
Concept 3



Figure 8

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

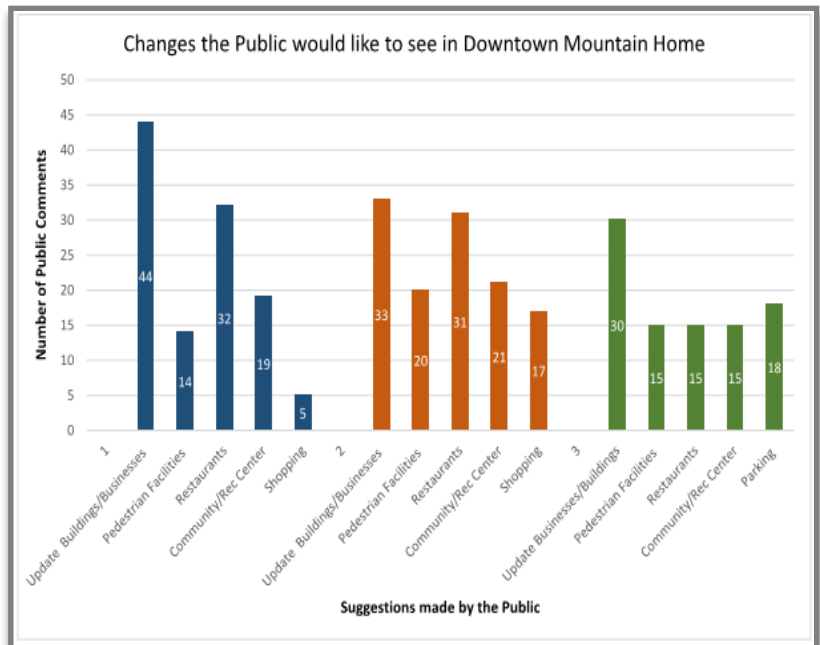
The various opportunities afforded to the public to offer input (online surveys and community events) provided valuable insights and points to consider when moving into the next phase of planning. The charts and word cloud (in the shape of the downtown district) on this page each illustrate the most-often stated desires or concerns that the public wants to see addressed during this revitalization effort; it was noted that most of the public's voiced responses align with the concepts that had been developed by the Stakeholders.



The data contained here reflects the congruent mindsets that consistently appeared through each series of public input. Following are the most common improvements citizens hope to see achieved downtown:

- Programming of Activities/Events
- Update Buildings
- More dining options
- Repair sidewalks
- Pedestrian Facilities
- Community Center
- Noise Wall at Rail Park
- Splash Pad/Fountain

Total Public Participants: 329
Total Surveys: 286



The three colors indicate the three different groups of input collected

MARKET ASSESSMENT

WHY DO A MARKET ASSESSMENT?

The purpose behind conducting a Market Assessment is to identify opportunities and strategies utilized by similar communities that have recently undertaken downtown revitalization efforts, and to examine what helped to make their downtown revitalization efforts successful. Once components of their plans were identified, the parts were aligned with the goals and visions for Mountain Home's downtown corridor, and correlated to the aspirations of the City and citizens of Mountain Home.

Selection of three communities were based on similarities with regional make-up, population, demographic and economic factors, to those of Mountain Home. Of those selected, each of the three communities solicited professional planning documents and studies to improve their downtown areas, and each of the three communities continually engaged their citizens and the public in each step of their planning and implementation processes.

The communities selected were: Sandpoint, Idaho — Meridian, Idaho — Ontario, Oregon



Recommendations when reviewing other municipalities' full planning documents:

- Look for ways they made their community "a place of opportunity"
Location - Affordability - Proximity - Accessibility
- How did they change their community's current perception?
- Did they build on the community's history, or did they choose to be progressive?
- What did they do to solve abandoned or decaying structures?
Grants - URA - Incentives
- Did they change the development pattern of their downtown?
Change densification - Amend Ordinances - Create 'Design Review' - Create an Overlay District?
- How did they target locations for investment and improvements?

LINKS to COMMUNITY PLANNING DOCUMENTS:

<http://www.ontariooregon.org/EconomicDevelopment.cfm>

<http://www.cityofsandpoint.com/your-government/departments/planning/community-plans>

http://www.ontariooregon.org/planning_main.cfm

<http://www.cityofsandpoint.com/doing-business/why-sandpoint>

http://meridiancity.org/community_development.aspx

MARKET ASSESSMENT

CITY OF SANDPOINT, IDAHO

- Population 7,984 (2016 data)
- Incorporated: 1901
- Historic Main Street
- Active railroad
- Highway running through downtown core
- Mainly single level structures along Main (a few two-story)
- Regional airport, with major airport an hour and a half away (Spokane)
- Many avenues of new development leading away from the downtown corridor
- Have an Urban Renewal Agency



Downtown Sandpoint – Prior to rerouting of Highway 2 (Photo – Aaron Qualls)



Downtown Sandpoint – After rerouting of Highway 2 (Photo – Aaron Qualls)

Sandpoint's downtown corridor and the four streets that encircle the core, similar to those in Mountain Home, were comprised of roadways that were owned, operated and maintained by the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). This ownership restricted the use and influence the City and its citizens could have on the look and feel of their downtown streets. In 2015 Sandpoint was able to reclaim its jurisdiction of those roadways, after extensive discussion and an ITD roadway project that began in 2012, which included creating a byway to reroute traffic out of the downtown core.

Once completed, the City of Sandpoint was able to implement downtown improvements including streetscape make-overs, change in circulation, updated lighting, more trees, pedestrian safety enhancements, placemaking and updated stormwater facilities. New signage including gateways were installed, as was a round-about to enhance vehicular traffic.

What helped make Sandpoint's Downtown Revitalization successful?

An important factor leading to the success of Sandpoint's revitalization was the preparation that came before the completion of ITD's roadway project. Numerous studies and plans were in place, ready to implement, which continued the momentum once the ITD project had finished.

MARKET ASSESSMENT

Significant Investments in Downtown Modality Infrastructure:

- Highway 95 Byway was completed by ITD to allow for rerouting of Highway 95
- Highway 2 traffic was rerouted to allow for the road to be reconfigured from a three-lane, one-way road to a two-lane, two-way road with diagonal parking



Plans Commissioned by City of Sandpoint:

- 2001 Downtown Revitalization Plan
- 2004 Sandpoint Downtown Revitalization Report
- 2005 Sandpoint Downtown Revenue Allocation Area Plan
- 2007 Urban Area Transportation Plan for 2025
- 2008 Sandpoint Comprehensive Plan
- 2010 Downtown Sandpoint Urban Renewal Plan
- 2010 Adoption of Sandpoint Complete Streets Policy
- 2011 Highway 2 Concept Report
- 2013 Downtown Streets Plan & Design Guide
- 2015 Quad Cities Hwy 2-200 Corridor Study



Adoption of Downtown Plans along with Public Outreach:

- A Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2009 that had a strong emphasis on multi-modal transportation, pedestrian facilities and on fostering a mix of residential, office and retail land uses
- Complete Streets Policy was adopted in 2010 which included right-sizing of travel lanes (to 11'-12' from 17'), encouraged installation of medians to direct traffic flow and to provide pedestrian refuge, and creating frequent street crossings enhancing safety

Though Sandpoint has a mere population of 7,984, the small city enjoys a healthy and robust economy. The town is home to leading and innovative companies such as Quest Aircraft, Tamarack Aerospace, Biomedical Innovations and Litehouse Foods. The business mix that comprises their downtown is typical of tourist locations: gear shops, many real estate offices, apparel, dining, salons, bars, music, floral, specialty food, a theater and home goods.

Key factors that help this city's economy thrive is engaged local government with appropriate staffing for the city's goals, updated and enforced ordinances and zoning, and engaged citizens; all of whom have sustained a unified focus on their downtown improvements. These factors have driven the city to become an award-winning downtown.

Recommendations:

- Do not lose the momentum of the Master Planning process; continue to engage citizens and businesses to actively participate in the improvements that will take place downtown
- Encourage the community as a whole to connect to the revitalization of downtown, not just those within the core
- Focus on enhancing government access and publicizing improvements via an updated and enhanced City website; Sandpoint's site is an excellent template as it is information-rich and updated: <http://www.cityofsandpoint.com/home>
- Highlight Mountain Home's Urban Renewal Agency on the City's website to promote the partnership, to allow for sharing of projects and to illustrate to developers the various avenues available to them to invest in downtown

MARKET ASSESSMENT



CITY OF MERIDIAN, IDAHO

- Incorporated: 1891
- Historic Main Street
- Active railroad which bisects Main Street
- Numerous industrial park areas within vicinity of downtown corridor
- Mainly single level structures along Main (a few two-story)
- Numerous residential structures, mainly in use as commercial space
- Churches dotted throughout the downtown area
- Many avenues of new development leading away from the downtown corridor



Meridian's downtown area has undergone a sweeping transformation over the past decade, going from a degrading downtown corridor with narrow roadways and aging buildings to a dynamic, lively and inviting central hub.

With much higher population than Mountain Home, meaning more funds available for improvements, Meridian has nonetheless had challenges. The most problematic of which has been vigorous population growth; Meridian is the state's fastest-growing city with an increase in population of 81.5% since 2000. Increases such as this impact roadways, emergency services and access, schools, and infrastructure. But even given these pressures, Meridian has been able to not only successfully manage the growth, but at the same time has effectively beautified and unified the downtown core.

What has helped make Meridian's Downtown Revitalization successful?

Significant Investments in Downtown Infrastructure:

- New City Hall building and Plaza in the core of downtown Meridian
- The reconfiguration of two key downtown streets to address traffic issues and enhance the pedestrian experience, in partnership with Ada County Highway District
- Expansion of local businesses with new or upgraded facilities, i.e. the expansion of The Boys and Girls Club as well as the new Cascade Bank branch and offices

Implementation of Planning Documents, Public Outreach and Partnerships:

- Establishment of a Downtown Overlay District (Old Town) to allow flexibility in how Zoning Code is implemented
- Adoption of Downtown Streetscapes Design Guidelines
- Adoption of Design Review process for all new development and redevelopment
- Plan emphasis on creating a mix of employers, retail, professional and housing downtown
- Funding of several key Downtown Plans by MDC and by the City
- Creation of Planning Department and MDC staff positions to support development

MARKET ASSESSMENT



Plans Commissioned by City and Meridian Development Corporation:

- 2005 Downtown Meridian Design Guidelines
- 2005 Downtown Transportation Management Plan
- 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update and Establishment of Downtown Overlay District
- 2007 Downtown Streetscape Design Guidelines
- 2009 Meridian Design Manual Adopted Establishing Design Review Process
- 2009 Destination Downtown Vision Plan
- 2014 Downtown Housing Study



While the city continues to see growth move away from the downtown area toward new outlying developments, a key factor ensuring Meridian's continued success with their downtown revitalization efforts is their sustained, public focus and prioritization of the downtown district. By staffing the departments and agencies appropriately for their planning efforts, and by creating accountability through publication of their process, the City maintains a laser-like focus on this critical component of their economy.

Much of the business mix that makes up the downtown core are unexpected, but seem to work: specialty retail, professional offices (attorney, CPA, insurance and medical), specialty dining, several funeral homes, a rustic motel, dance/art center, salons, pubs and banking. The creation of their unique Overlay District enabled the city to better plan and control the business mix that has moved into the area, and plans still call for a hotel and convention center to be developed in the core.

Most residential areas are historic, and though the 2009 Vision Plan calls for urban residential development, so far no urban residences have begun. Existing industrial properties mostly exist on the periphery of the core, with the exception of the businesses that flank the railroad tracks including the Feed/Seed Mill, which has integrated a vintage furnishings store along the frontage.

Recommendations:

- Establish a Downtown Overlay District to more closely manage how Zoning and Ordinances are implemented and enforced (including those for railway, signage, industrial and residential)
- Adopt Downtown Streetscapes and Building Design Guidelines, along with a Design Review process for all new development and redevelopment
- Supplement current staffing and/or institute paid staffing position(s) within the Mountain Home Urban Renewal Agency to avoid losing momentum, and to enhance interagency communication and productivity
- Utilize and act on recommendations made by Roger Brooks in the 2016 Assessment Findings & Suggestions Report

MARKET ASSESSMENT

CITY OF ONTARIO, OREGON

Ontario, Oregon, an historic community 55 miles west of Boise, Idaho:

- Population 11,027 (2016 data)
- Incorporated: 1899
- An historic main street that is a Highway corridor (Hwy 30)
- Active railroad which parallels Ontario's main street: "S. Oregon St."
- Numerous industrial park areas within vicinity of downtown corridor
- Mainly single level structures (few two-story)
- Churches dotted throughout the downtown area
- Most new development is away from the downtown corridor
- Railroad underpass in the vicinity of the downtown core
- Regional airport, with a major airport less than an hour away
- Military presence with Active Army National Guard at new readiness armory



Ontario's downtown core is comprised of one main corridor, which is also a state highway (Highway 30); that portion of highway is made up of single lanes of two-way traffic with no turn lane. Though the roadway is a highway, the operation of the roadway is a significant reason for Ontario's downtown success, as it allows for a relaxed and comfortable pedestrian environment.

Similar to that of Mountain Home, Ontario's downtown blocks have very long block faces. To address this, Ontario introduced wide, mid-block crosswalks which have done a great deal to add to the walkability of the core area, as well as reminding vehicular traffic that they are driving in a pedestrian zone (see Image A).



Image A

Sidewalk conditions in Ontario's downtown are contiguous and most seem to be in nearly new condition. Something to note is that none of the corners or mid-block crosswalks have truncated domes installed. Streetscapes on the main corridor and surrounding streets remain outdated (few trees, lack of pedestrian lighting, no benches or other furnishings) but are addressed in their 2009 Revitalization Plan.

What has helped make Ontario's Downtown Revitalization successful?

Significant Investments in Downtown Infrastructure:

- New sidewalk system in the entirety of the downtown core
- Visible cues to motorists of pedestrian zones
- Installation of new downtown Park on main street
- New anchor businesses with newly constructed buildings
- Many updated building facades



MARKET ASSESSMENT

Implementation of Planning Documents, Public Outreach and Partnerships:

- City of Ontario works with Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC) which is a state-sponsored Economic Development agency
- Ontario Downtown Façade Grant Partnership Program (modeled after the Nationwide Main Street Program); preparing to establish a Certified Local Government Commission
- Partnerships in alliance with Eastern Oregon Economic Development, Malheur County Economic Development and Snake River Economic Development



Plans Commissioned by City of Ontario:

- Original Ontario Downtown Plan prepared in the 1970's
- 2005 Downtown Ontario Resource Team Report
- 2005 Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- 2006 and 2007 Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) Plan
- 2006 Update to the City's Transportation System Plan (TSP)
- 2007 Economic Analysis Report and Urbanization Report
- 2009 Final Report –Ontario Downtown Revitalization Plan

Ontario is fortunate to benefit from a number of major employers:

- Heinz Frozen Food Company (formerly Ore-Ida)
- St. Alphonsus Medical Center
- Treasure Valley Community College
- State Correctional Institution
- Oregon State Police
- Government / Schools

While Ontario experiences urban sprawl, the city has successfully managed key factors in order to maintain its robust downtown: roadway operation, updated sidewalks, ample parking and business mix. With very few vacancies in store frontages, Ontario's business mix is healthy and includes: florists, salons, professional services (insurance, credit, banking, title, appraisal), jewelers, fitness, juice/coffee, dining/tavern, gaming, antiques, resale, furniture, apparel, book/gifts, bakery, cultural, computer and cell phone stores. Ontario's zoning for downtown is standard for a downtown (Central Commercial), and does not include an overlay district.

Ontario's 2009 Revitalization Plan does call for adding residential to its downtown, which would include changes to its existing zoning; however, most of the items contained in the Plan that would be precursors to this have not been accomplished to date, and therefore, it seems unlikely that housing will be developed within the core at any point in the foreseeable future.

Recommendations:

- Work toward the expansion of Railroad Park as a pedestrian draw, and a way to beautify the downtown corridor
- Prioritize update of sidewalks and streetscapes into Phase 1 of the Master Plan; the proper infrastructure will create the safe and inviting pedestrian traffic that is critical to downtown economic development
- Strive to improve traffic circulation and operation, with the goal of improving the pedestrian experience
- Continue to work toward enticing large employers into the area; many of whom will gauge the health of the downtown core as a community indicator for potential site development

PLAN OVERVIEW

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The proposed improvement projects contained in this Plan were developed based upon a culmination of feedback and insights gathered in a community-wide effort that incorporated a multitude of methods, from a wide range of contributors, and which were designed to encourage community buy-in.

The projects were then evaluated and refined, during and after an intensive planning process. Refinement included analysis and recording of existing conditions with the completion of a Field Assessment, Traffic Study, cost and budget analysis, engineering factors, market research, analysis of potential impacts of improvements, as well as feasibility studies.

This chapter summarizes the principal projects for Downtown Mountain Home in four key categories:

- Infrastructure: Stormwater Management, Right of Way
- Multimodal: Roadways, Pedestrian Safety, Circulation
- Beautification: Streetscapes, Open Spaces, Green Spaces
- Policy: Ordinances, Land Use, Zoning

THE COMMUNITY EXPRESSED STRONG SENTIMENTS OF THEIR PREFERENCE FOR FIRST IMPROVING EXISTING CONDITIONS (BUILDINGS / PARKS / SIDEWALKS / BUSINESS MIX) OVER NEW DEVELOPMENT.

The strategy of the Plan supports that viewpoint. The public improvements emphasized throughout the plan are meant to not only enhance the pedestrian experience, but also, to set the stage for private investment and reinvestment in the downtown core.

And, as is most often the case, private development/redevelopment may not happen without a “catalyst” public improvement project; in the case of Mountain Home, it may require more than one catalyst project for investors and developers to see that the commitment of the City and community would support the endeavor they may want to bring to the downtown core.

As Mountain Home is a small town, budget considerations will likely direct the approach the Master Plan will be able to take. For this reason, the Plan prioritizes those improvements that could become the catalyst project that developers will be looking for.



PLAN OVERVIEW

PROPOSED PROJECTS BY PRIORITY / PHASE

Performance of a Field Assessment with subsequent inspections and documentation of the condition of the downtown corridor significantly impacted the order in which the improvement projects were prioritized and recommended. Whereas instinct may be to undertake beautification projects first, so that there is a visible sense of accomplishment, if the infrastructure on which any beautification project is built is failing, that improvement and future improvements could potentially be compromised.

Therefore, given the current conditions of the downtown Mountain Home core infrastructure, **Figure 9** reflects the recommended approach to capital improvement projects, by Priority and by Phase.



	Priority	Phase
	1 - High	
	2 - Med	1 - 4
	3 - Low	
INFRASTRUCTURE		
Stormwater Management	1	1
Sidewalk Replacement	1	1-4
Noise Reduction	3	3
Event Venues / Attractions	3	4
MULTIMODAL		
Traffic / Roadway	1	1
Signage / Wayfinding	2	1 - 4
Pedestrian Safety	1	1 - 4
Bicycle Access	2	2
BEAUTIFICATION		
Streetscapes	2	2
Building Facades	3	3 - 4
Open Spaces	2	2
Public Art	3	4
Green Spaces	1	1 - 2
POLICY		
Land Use	1	1
Built Spaces	2	2
Zoning	1	1
Ordinances	1	1

Figure 9

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The objective in discussing existing conditions of the downtown community is to plan and prioritize projects around the constraints and assets in the area. By identifying the positive and the negative aspects of the corridor, the process can work towards the development of solutions in infrastructure and design.



A cursory Field Assessment was conducted during the Design Charrettes with Stakeholders at the beginning of the planning process (which can be found in Appendix 2). It touches briefly on the existing conditions that the Plan will go into detail examining and discussing:

- Roadways
- Sidewalks
- Land Use/Zoning
- Furnishings
- Open Space
- Built Space
- Parking
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Areas

ASSESSMENT OF THE DOWNTOWN CORRIDOR

Upon approach of downtown, there is no “sense of arrival”; the focus area blends with the periphery with no delineating characteristics.

With (two) three-lane, one-way highways that run through the focus area, the general sense is “*there is nothing to see here, just passing through*”. This impression is counter to the needs and objectives of the downtown businesses.

The pedestrian experience has much to be improved upon: the wide roadways with highway traffic impart a feeling of urgency to get through the area as a pedestrian, which contradicts the goal of pedestrians lingering and spending time downtown.

An additional detractor to pedestrian traffic is the condition of the sidewalk system throughout downtown; at least 70% of the sidewalk system in the focus area is in need of replacement. Most of that percentage would likely not be considered to be ADA compliant.

Parking is plentiful, though not marked or regulated, which can give the impression that much of it is off-limits to the public. There is no apparent streetscape standard, with infrequent trees, planters and street lamps, in no congruent pattern.

Open and green space exist, but do not tie into the surrounding areas lending the impression of detachment to the core.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

CONSTRAINTS: ROADWAYS / TRAFFIC

- The downtown focus area consists of a grid pattern of streets, two of which are highway roadways under the jurisdiction of the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). These roadways bisect the entirety of the focus area giving the focus area a sense of a community cut off from itself
- There are currently no bicycle pathways, designated or implied, and the pedestrian network is considerably lacking
- Roads between the two main corridors are single lane, two-way roads with diagonal parking that was converted as a part of the 2000 Revitalization Plan
- A local transit bus (Treasure Valley Transit System) operates three (3) stops within the downtown corridor; discussion revealed no issues or needs for expansion or rerouting
- Pavement conditions throughout the focus area are substandard; ITD had plans for a resurfacing project in 2018, however an agreement was made between ITD and the City of Mountain Home in October 2017 to postpone the surfacing project for two years to allow the City to complete the Master Planning improvement projects



The scale of Mountain Home's downtown roadway relative to the mainly single-story structures is out of balance. The roads cut through the core and are divisive to the community. With little to no pedestrian traffic on the sidewalks, and the extra-wide traffic lanes, the overall feeling of the corridors is "empty".

With a posted speed of 25 mph, it seems that traffic is moving at higher speeds. Statistics from the Police Department show that from January through November of 2017 there were at least 236 speeding traffic stops and at least 23 vehicular accidents on the two main corridors.



RESIDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY QUESTION: "What changes would you like to see in downtown?"

"Cars slow down and give people a chance" - "Pedestrian safe areas to walk where traffic is not coming at 35mph"

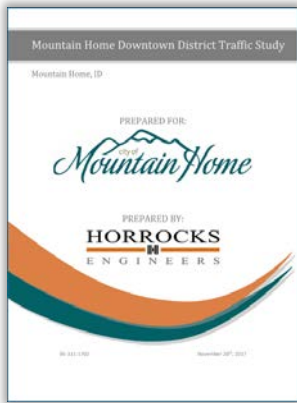
"Bike lanes" - "Safer streets for pedestrians" - "Slower traffic" - "Better accessibility for walking/crossing"

"Pedestrian/bike unsafe because drivers speed" - "More patrol stopping speeders not stopping at crosswalks"

"Better traffic flow" - "Traffic that let people cross without wondering if you're going to be run over"

EXISTING CONDITIONS

CONSTRAINTS: ACCESSIBILITY & CIRCULATION



Input from Stakeholders and the public reflected widespread request for change in road-way operation, in order to lessen the burden on pedestrians by calming traffic, to create a more cohesive downtown environment by improving circulation and accessibility, and to combat the divisiveness the highways create.

The three Concepts developed during the Charrettes and viewed during the Open Houses reflected changing traffic direction on both highways to become two-way roads, which was later determined by the Consultant's Roadway and Traffic engineers to not be feasible. The City of Mountain Home then commissioned a Traffic Study (Appendix 3) to ascertain if removing a lane from both highways would afford safety and operational improvements (a solution that had been suggested as an alternative to two-way traffic).

The report was discussed with ITD, at which time ITD placed conditions on the removal of the traffic lanes, requesting additional data from the Traffic Study team. The conditions that ITD placed upon the City were that a lane of parallel parking be removed from both Main and N. 2nd E. Streets in order to allow a through-lane of traffic, uninterrupted by vehicles parking in the parallel parking zone.

Further collaboration, planning and research was compiled in response to this condition, with strong concerns on the part of the City relative to losing parking. While field assessments show that the focus area has adequate parking for current and future needs, the public perception is such that there is inadequate parking; therefore, any loss of parking would be anticipated to be done amidst public protest.

IN ADDITION TO TRAFFIC CALMING, OTHER GOALS IDENTIFIED FOR THE CIRCULATION OF MOUNTAIN HOME'S DOWNTOWN:

- To enhance the walkability of the focus area by developing and expanding connectivity of the downtown streets to the peripheral streets, in order to encourage more pedestrian traffic, by providing easier and more direct access
- Modification of infrastructure to slow automobile traffic to posted speeds, and to enhance the comfort of pedestrians and cyclists
- To connect open and green spaces with pathways to the core business area to create more accessible business traffic and to encourage community events
- Ensure that modifications made to the roadway system can assist emergency services with greater access, or at the very least, not interfere or inhibit services
- Design an environment that enhances the operations of downtown businesses and helps to attract new businesses into the area, including expanded sidewalks, enhanced streetscapes and adding bicycle amenities
- Improve the crosswalk system within the focus area to pronounce them to motorists and to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians

EXISTING CONDITIONS

CONSTRAINTS: DRAINAGE & FLOODING

Downtown Mountain Home last experienced major infrastructure improvements in the 1960's at which time the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) installed a city drainage/stormwater management system of bubble-up channel-ways throughout the corridors of Main Street and N. 2nd Street East. This was a standard drainage system at the time and was commonly used in nearby downtown environments (Marsing, Caldwell and Nampa).

For at least the past decade watershed has begun to surpass the capacity of this drainage system, causing flooding of streets, gutters and sidewalks. Of parallel concern was that of the conditions of the sidewalks in the downtown corridor, which were felt to have contributed to the drainage issues.

As the issue of flooding had been part of the Master Planning discussions, on October 4, 2017 the City had a meeting with ITD to discuss ITD's roadway projects, Right-of-Way responsibilities (relative to sidewalk improvements), highway traffic and drainage. The outcome of the meeting can be seen at **Figure 10**.

The City solicited a proposal for a Hydrology Study as a measure to determine roots of the flooding, and to identify factors related to environmental components contributing to the flooding. **Figure 11** shows the potential watershed area that the hydrology proposal indicated to be studied.

Right-of-Way Meeting: October 4, 2017

A planning meeting was held in early October 2017 with City staff, the Mayor, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and Horrocks Engineers. The focus of the discussion was ITD's upcoming resurfacing project of Main and 2nd Streets (slated for 2019); as well as discussion of the Right of Way responsibilities in downtown, and stormwater management.

The outcome of the meeting was:

- To push ITD's resurfacing project out to 2021, to allow Mountain Home time to complete their sidewalk and infrastructure projects
- Right of Way responsibility was determined to belong to the City of Mountain Home (per a Maintenance Agreement executed in 1983)
- The topic of drainage was to be continued, following testing and research by the Public Works Department, and the possibility of obtaining a hydrology study

Figure 10

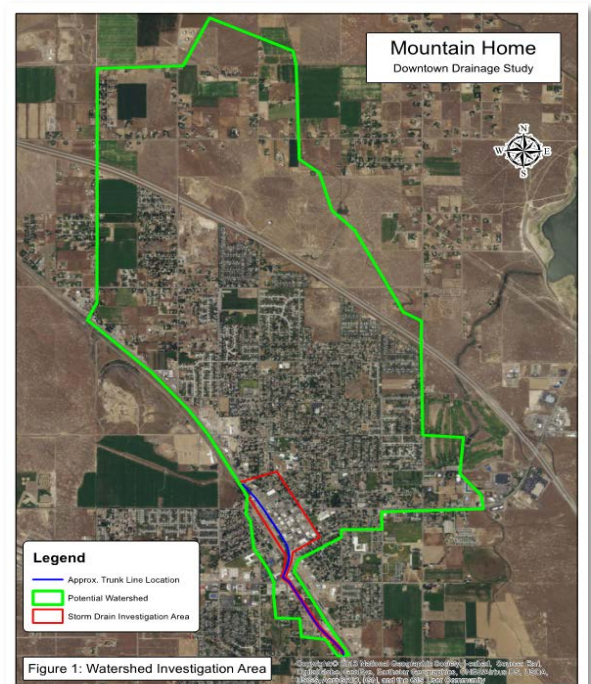


Figure 11

Subsequent to receipt of the hydrology proposal, the City's Public Works Department diligently studied the area shown in **Figure 11** to provide data to the engineering firm and to map and clear out the existing system. These steps seemed to exhibit some degree of relief, as after a period of heavy rain, there was minimal flooding in the downtown area.

With existing drainage infrastructure still an ongoing study, the Master Plan addresses possible solutions at length.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

CONSTRAINTS: DETERIORATING SIDEWALKS



A crucial constraint, one that is likely contributing to the issue of drainage, is that of deteriorating sidewalk conditions in the downtown core. Responsibility for the maintenance of these rights-of-way had been a topic of disagreement amongst local municipal agencies for decades. Without resolution as to whom the responsibility fell for the maintenance of the sidewalks over the years, most sections (at least 70%) of sidewalk system had been left to decay, and now need to be replaced. **Figure 12** shows an inventory of existing sidewalk conditions which include spalling, cracking, splitting and heaving.

It is important to note that the sidewalks system downtown is highly segmented and inconsistent in both appearance and structural make-up—there are at least four (4) different sidewalk surfaces in the focus area: flat concrete, patched asphalt and concrete, stained/stamped concrete and some type of landscape brick. The width of the sidewalk system ranges from five (5) feet wide to ten (10) feet wide in other areas. Some portions have grass or rock border, and some are without curbing. The majority are standard highway curb and gutter.

Solutions to sidewalks and drainage issues will be discussed in a later Section, which will identify options for installing multi-purpose infrastructure that can address several issues, and can provide softening streetscape aesthetics in addition to sustainable and environmentally sound installations.

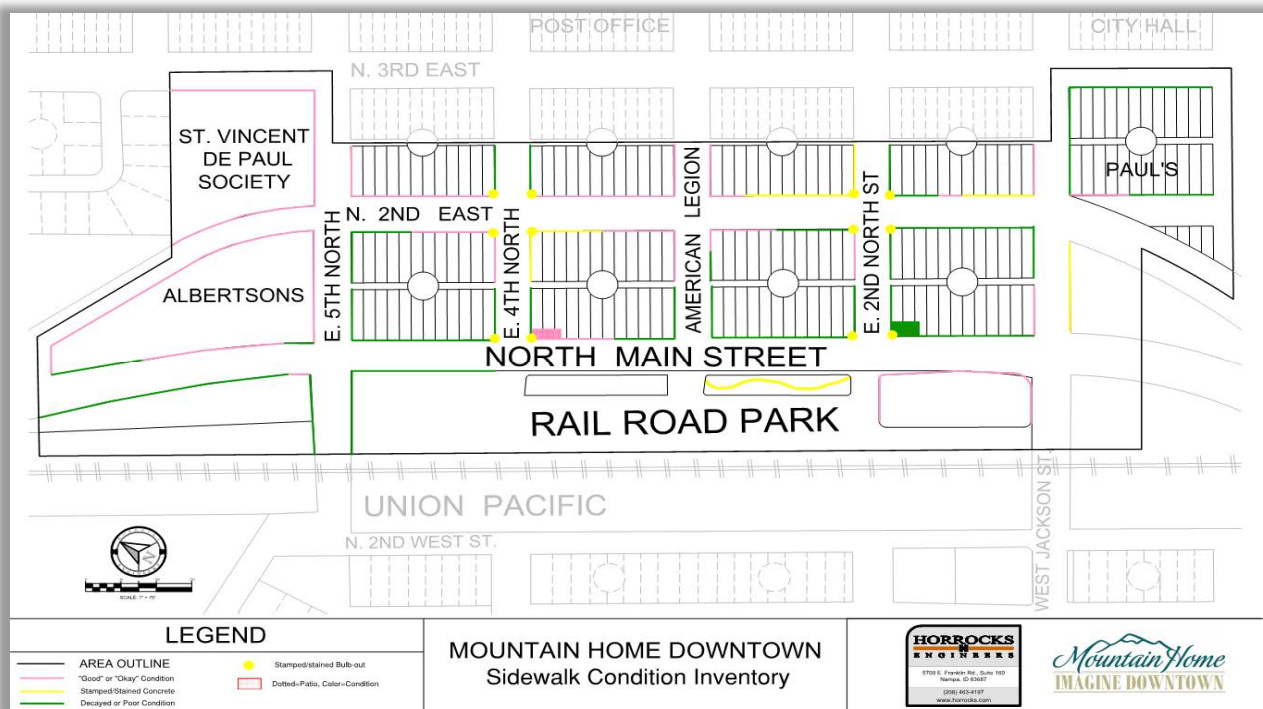


Figure 12

EXISTING CONDITIONS

CONSTRAINTS: BUILDING CONDITIONS / BUSINESS MIX / ORDINANCES

BUILDING CONDITIONS

As an historic downtown dating back over a century, the buildings that comprise the focus area are decades old, vary widely in their form and some simply don't belong in a downtown environment. Collectively, age and lack of maintenance have rendered the impression of downtown as an unappealing destination lacking in value and character. 45% of all public respondents indicated a desire to see building conditions and facades improved.

- Blocks lack a cohesive look and feel
- Many flat storefronts lacking awnings or architectural features which would provide interest and pedestrian cover
- Evidence of neglect and decay / structures in need of repair
- Covered windows which send the message: "go away"



BUSINESS MIX

Most businesses are as expected in a downtown core for the most part, with the exception of a handful of business types that don't serve the overall downtown vision and image—namely automotive repair, a dated fuel service station, residential structures and churches.

Of greater concern is the quantity of vacancies in the downtown area. The City of Mountain Home, at time the 2009 Revitalization Plan was being drafted, was in the process of creating a Business Improvement District (BID) for the downtown core, clearly with the goal of acquiring an avenue of funding downtown improvements. Prior to implementation of a BID, it would be recommended to strategize ways to entice more businesses into the focus area; by postponing the BID, new business may be more amenable to launching their business downtown without facing added fees from a BID or a CBD (Central Business District).

ORDINANCES

Ordinances are an integral component to an aesthetic, functional and secure downtown environment. Ordinances in the case of built space and public rights-of-way are critical in developing, creating and enforcing what should become a branded image of the downtown district.

Mountain Home currently has ordinances in place for standard municipal statutes, but none (or few) that speak specifically to a downtown district, and the mandates that a downtown environment would imply. A later Section on Land Use will detail recommendations for the City to consider adopting.

(The photo to the right is an example showing the need for signage and sidewalk ordinances in the downtown area; this sign - with the cinder block and cat litter at the base of the sign - represents a potential danger to pedestrians and property)



EXISTING CONDITIONS

ASSETS & OPPORTUNITIES

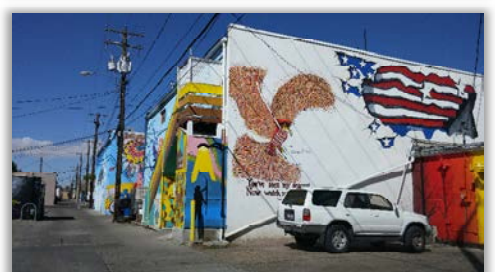
Downtown Mountain Home, with two highways bisecting the central core, with aging buildings, and with businesses that now seem out of place, is nonetheless a central and historic district with much to offer.

Unfortunately, many small downtown areas across the country have been demolished and replaced with strip malls and new development. When those central areas were removed, so was the history and the heart of each of those communities.

This Downtown Mountain Home Master Plan is meant to stimulate transformation and innovation, and to catalyze improvements in the existing core of this community; this Plan hopes to achieve, above all, the restoration and preservation of the historic heart of Mountain Home—the place that citizens visualize when someone says “home”.

Mountain Home has many assets, and therefore many opportunities, in the focus area, and in the community, that the planning and design of the improvement projects have been built upon:

- Wide roadways —which when modified will allow ample space to integrate bicycle lanes and expanded streetscape design, enhancing the look of the downtown
- Numerous areas of open space to fill with pedestrian activities and new development
- Historic roots to lend inspiration and connectivity
- Unique architectural structures which invite ideas for redevelopment
- Two-story buildings to recreate - perhaps to introduce residential/loft living to downtown
- Artistic and flavorful expressions of art, a symbol of community unity
- A military base adjacent to the core with an endless flux of new residents and visitors with whom to engage and welcome into the community
- Community-wide improvement and attraction projects that will tie into the core revitalization project seamlessly
- An engaged citizenry who participated in the planning, and who voiced strong desires to see the downtown core revitalized
- A [fairly new] government administration with active and goal-driven employees, and partner agencies, who advocate to see this Master Plan brought to fruition



IMPROVEMENTS—OVERVIEW



With the goal being to engage and entice pedestrians to visit the downtown core, while maintaining the existing traffic volume for the benefit of downtown businesses, the City should consider implementation of a “Complete Streets” program, which are designed to permit safe access to the area for all users—pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

One of the first steps in achieving a complete street (even without a formal program in place) is to design the downtown infrastructure and right of way to include secure accessibility for all travelers. This may include appropriate-sized traffic lanes, bike lanes, compliant sidewalks, frequent and safe crossing opportunities for pedestrians, pedestrian signals, curb extensions (bulb-outs), traffic medians, lanes for public transportation and more.

The roots of the newest Concept Design recommended in this Master Plan (Figure 13) is a culmination of many of the above items—a redesign of the roadways and modification of traffic flow—as the principal infrastructure improvement; this will allow for the implementation of a range of multi-faceted and innovative solutions for each of the other constraints and issues that have been identified as having had detrimental affects on the downtown core.

IN SHORT, THIS CONCEPT DESIGN OFFERS SOLUTIONS TO:

- **Traffic and Roadway Issues:** Reduction in lanes, reduction in speed, enhanced pedestrian safety, expanded business and pedestrian right-of-ways, enhanced bicycle accessibility
- **Stormwater Management / Drainage Issues:** Sustainable and environmentally responsible infrastructure to manage increasing stormwater; to prevent flooding and further damage to sidewalks, streets and buildings; and to provide enhanced landscape and safety for pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- **Walkability and Pedestrian Circulation Issues:** Improved and compliant sidewalk system linking block faces for improved pedestrian flow, enhanced crosswalks design with shorter roadway crossing distances
- **Green Space / Open Space:** Innovative gathering spaces and areas for activity—for children and adults, softening the concrete saturated district with trees and greenery, cover of bare dirt areas, shade for pedestrians
- **Bicycle Amenities:** Designated bike paths in the roadways which will connect with future bicycle paths outside the focus area, bicycle racks and areas to encourage alternate modes of transport into the downtown area
- **Beautification:** Development of new streetscape and building design standards, including installation of updated streetscapes with trees, furnishings, lighting and signage; adoption of ordinances meant to enforce and enhance the new downtown Mountain Home brand
- **Economic Development:** Recreating the downtown core infrastructure and image which will entice new/more businesses to the area, to engage in and benefit from the transformation
- **Include Pets:** Inclusion of pet-friendly areas and furnishings to welcome and accommodate companions in the downtown landscape

PROPOSED CONCEPT

NEW CONCEPT RECOMMENDATION

The design concepts as presented to the public following the Design Charrettes in the spring (Concepts 1-3, **Figures 5, 6, 8**) were conceptual templates to be used to guide the process of iterative design, and were subject to revision as the stages of planning evolved. With attention always toward the public interest, public comments and further data was collected and studied, followed by highly technical collaboration and negotiations with ITD; and the downtown concept matured into the innovative design iteration shown below in **Figure 13**.



Figure 13

While the final Concept Design proposed in the Master Plan differs from original concepts, the changes made align with and speak to the many issues and requests of both the City and public, and what they hoped to see happen (**Figure 7**).

Notable differences from Concept #2 (majority selected) to the Master Plan Design Concept are as follows:

- Public parking lot at Jackson Street between Main and N. 2nd E. Streets will remain, and not become an event area
- Restrooms will not be installed at the public parking lot at Jackson Street (that is to say they are not included in this Master Plan, but may still be a future item addressed by the City)
- Roadways (Main Street and N. 2nd E. Street) will not be converted to two-way streets
- Enhanced crosswalk design at key intersections within the core
- A sound wall/noise barrier at the railroad tracks is no longer a part of the Plan as the property is under ownership of the Western Elmore County Recreation District who has elected not to pursue this improvement

Similarities between Concepts 1-3 and this Master Plan Design Concept:

- Public restrooms recommended at Railroad Park
- Modified roadway operation of Main Street and N. 2nd E. Street for traffic calming and better access; modification includes removal of a lane of traffic on N. 2nd E. Street and N. Main Street
- Convert E. 2nd N. and E. 4th N. Streets to one-way, walkable, pedestrian-focused streets creating a loop
- Recommendation to convert old Paul's store into a community and economic development facility
- Splash pad and public plaza, as well as playground, installed at Railroad Park
- Expansion of Railroad Park to balance the green space of adjacent park area
- Addition of public parking at the rear of Railroad Park, to replace lost parallel parking, and to act as a "Park and Ride" lot

PROPOSED CONCEPT

CREATING A BOULEVARD DOWNTOWN

The most significant improvement that came from negotiations with ITD was that of the removal of a traffic lane on both main corridors downtown. Wide, expansive concrete, combined with extra wide traffic lanes and too-narrow sidewalks created an environment pedestrians wished to avoid; the ramifications of which are substantial:

Loss of sales for downtown shops, increased vacancy and therefore neglect in the downtown corridor—which causes reduced interest in development in the downtown core by investors—therefore fewer new jobs are created, followed by decreased revenues to the City, thereby decreasing the City’s capacity to improve and grow the economic vitality of Mountain Home. The revitalization of the downtown core literally creates a chain reaction of progress.

With the removal of the traffic lane came the ability and flexibility to recreate the downtown corridor into a boulevard with green space (Figure 14), with economic growth and pedestrian safety as top considerations.

Innovative and distinct design elements including linear green space and park system; expanded sidewalk system accommodating a higher level of pedestrian traffic, while allowing for a more interactive way for businesses to operate; integrated safety features built into the infrastructure creating shorter walking distances to cross the street; bicycle access with painted bike lanes; in addition to improved stormwater and drainage management system.

Creating a boulevard downtown brings back the community feel that has been lacking for so long in Mountain Home’s downtown. The new site will promote gatherings of citizens and groups, catalyzing engagement and interaction; it will inspire pedestrian lingering and encourage local events which, in turn, will stimulate economic development that downtown sorely needs.



Rendering is of N. 2nd E. Street—the updated highway corridor; see next page for street section/dimensions

Figure 14

PROPOSED CONCEPT

Figure 15 illustrates the proposed layout of N. 2nd Street E. The reacquired space from the lane removal will allow for the creation of a retention planter, offering a range of benefits, in addition to expanded sidewalk system for patio dining and event use.

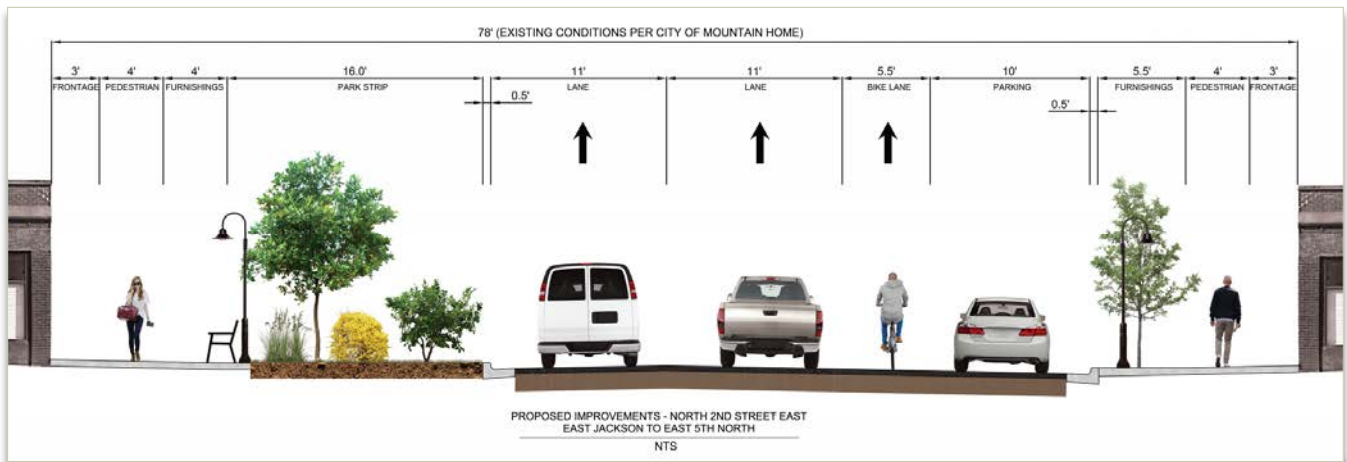


Figure 15

THE PEDESTRIAN-FOCUSED STREET

Pedestrian-focused streets are blocks planned with the comfort and use of pedestrians and community events in mind, while maintaining adequate access for vehicular traffic. These blocks are designed to pedestrian scale, and are meant to impart the desire to linger, and to meander. They can be closed for community events and gatherings with the use of removable traffic-rated bollards. Pedestrian streets are also utilized for community connectivity, integrating otherwise segregated portions of a community. Each of these three purposes are to be served in the Downtown Master Plan by E. 2nd Street N. and E. 4th Street N., as reflected on **Figures 16 and 17**.



Rendering is of E. 2nd Street N. pedestrian-focused street

Figure 16

Pedestrian-focused streets typically integrate different design elements into the streetscape including but not limited to:

- Offset landscaped areas
- Rolled curbs for venues
- Stained concrete
- Displays of public art
- Wider sidewalks
- Additional furnishings
- Accent lighting
- Amenities for pedestrians and pets

IMPROVEMENTS: MULTI-MODAL

ROADWAY / BICYCLE / PEDESTRIAN SOLUTIONS

The Plan endeavors to create a cohesive balance between pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic in the downtown core, while also enhancing safety and comfort. This involves designing all streets for the appropriate context and setting.

RECOMMENDED ROADWAY MODIFICATIONS:

- Remove one lane of traffic from Main Street and N. 2nd E. Street (**Figure 17**) to calm traffic and to reduce pedestrian crossing distance (also see **Figure 18**)
- Convert 2nd Street and 4th Street to one-way roads, creating an effective circulation loop
- Per ITD requirement, remove parallel parking lane from west side of Main & N. 2nd Streets
- Expand the sidewalk system on both Main & N. 2nd E. to allow for suitable streetscape design
- Introduce enhanced crosswalk markings as beacons to drivers that they have arrived in a pedestrian zone
- Install pedestrian safety-flag crossings at the busiest intersections
- Integrate painted bicycle lanes with sharrow symbols to intersect with City's future bicycle path plan
- Installation of vehicular and bicycle oriented wayfinding and route signage



Figure 17 illustrates the changes as described, which reaffirms Mountain Home's Downtown as the central hub of the community, balancing the needs for efficient movement of vehicles, with the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, business owners and the City.

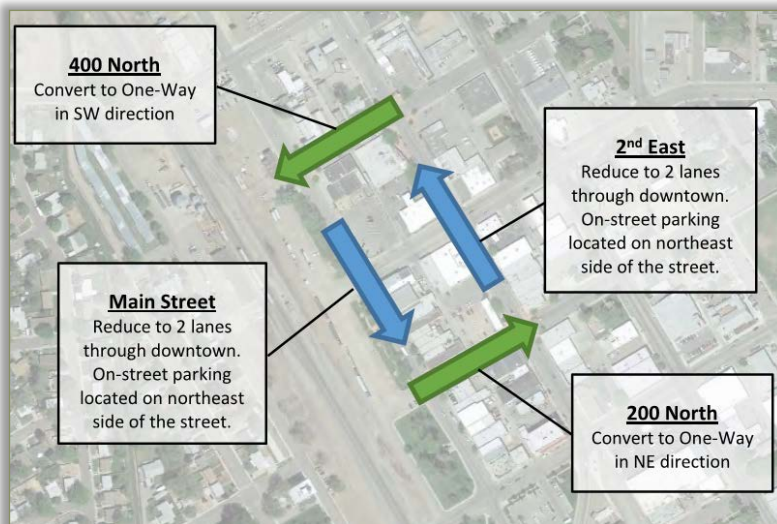


Figure 17

IMPROVEMENTS: MULTI-MODAL

ROADWAY / TRAFFIC BEHAVIOR

When traffic lanes are too wide, and/or there are more lanes than necessary, issues of speeding occur as a natural habit of human behavior. On downtown streets, most motorists drive at a speed at which they feel comfortable; that speed is set by the cues provided by the environment:



- * Are there other cars near me?
- * Are there signal lights/stop signs?
- * How wide is my lane?
- * Are people or cyclists nearby?

In a roadway environment like that currently found in the downtown core—with extra-wide lanes, with excess lanes needed for capacity, with few signal lights and with very few pedestrians or cyclists—the result is an expansive and empty downtown environment where motorists feel at ease, and therefore [frequently] exceed posted speed signs.

Statistics and studies provide evidence that removing a lane of traffic (a “road diet”), and/or narrowing traffic lanes, add direct safety benefits improving the livability of busy downtown roads such as those in the focus area. When lane diets are implemented, statistics show there is a crash reduction rate of between 19% to 47%¹, as well as improved statistics relative to speeding—those benefits are substantial. Another advantage of the road diet is that it provides the city the ability to reclaim that space for more beneficial public uses, like those shown in the Design Concept of this Master Plan. **Figure 18** illustrates new intersection operation with the lane diet applied to both N. 2nd Street E. and Main St., at American Legion Blvd.



Figure 18

¹US Department of Transportation—Federal Highway Administration: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/

IMPROVEMENTS: STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

DRAINAGE / SIDEWALK SOLUTIONS

Stormwater Management comes in many forms, and for **Mtn. Home**, **bioretention planters** are the form recommended in this Master Plan (Figure 19).

With an outdated stormwater management system currently in place, with the drainage issues of at least the past decade and with the financial constraints that an entirely new stormwater system poses, incorporation of a bioretention system will satisfy a great number of needs that exist in the downtown environment, including:

- Utilizing bio-retention planters to augment the existing system provides substantial savings, versus replacement
- Planters and swales deliver water filtration to trap and remove pollutants
- Integration of sustainable materials offers beautification, traffic barriers, shade for pedestrians and natural design elements into the expansive concrete corridor
- With regard to the proposed design concept in this Master Plan it will provide added green space and open space to draw activity, pedestrian traffic and potentially business to the downtown core
- This type of system is installed on-site and can be designed to meet any design aesthetic (trees and shrubs; zero-scaping; a grassy zone to encourage lingering; etc)
- Will utilize the excess space created by removing the traffic lane and parallel parking in a constructive manner

In addition to bio-retention planters, there are two alternative options for stormwater management, shown on the next page.

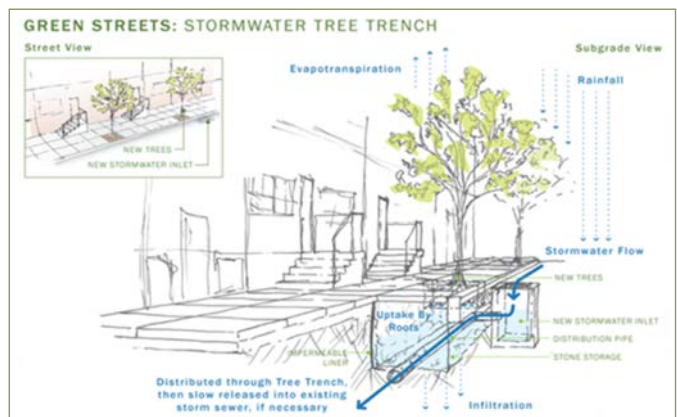


Figure 19

IMPROVEMENTS: STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

ALTERNATIVES TO BIORETENTION PLANTERS

Two alternatives for stormwater management in the downtown corridor are the installation of Silva Cells or the installation of stormwater trench drains integrated into the sidewalks. Both will augment the current system to improve drainage:

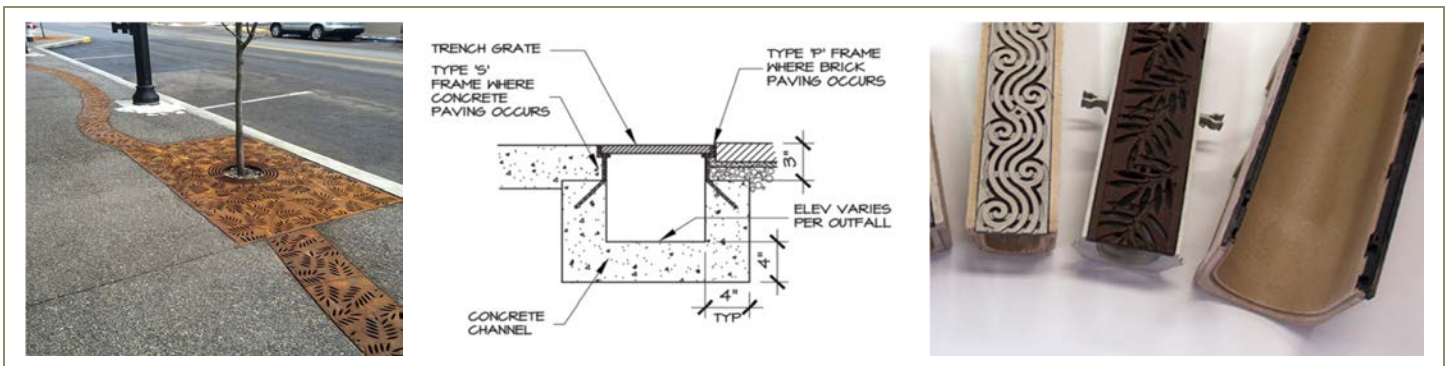
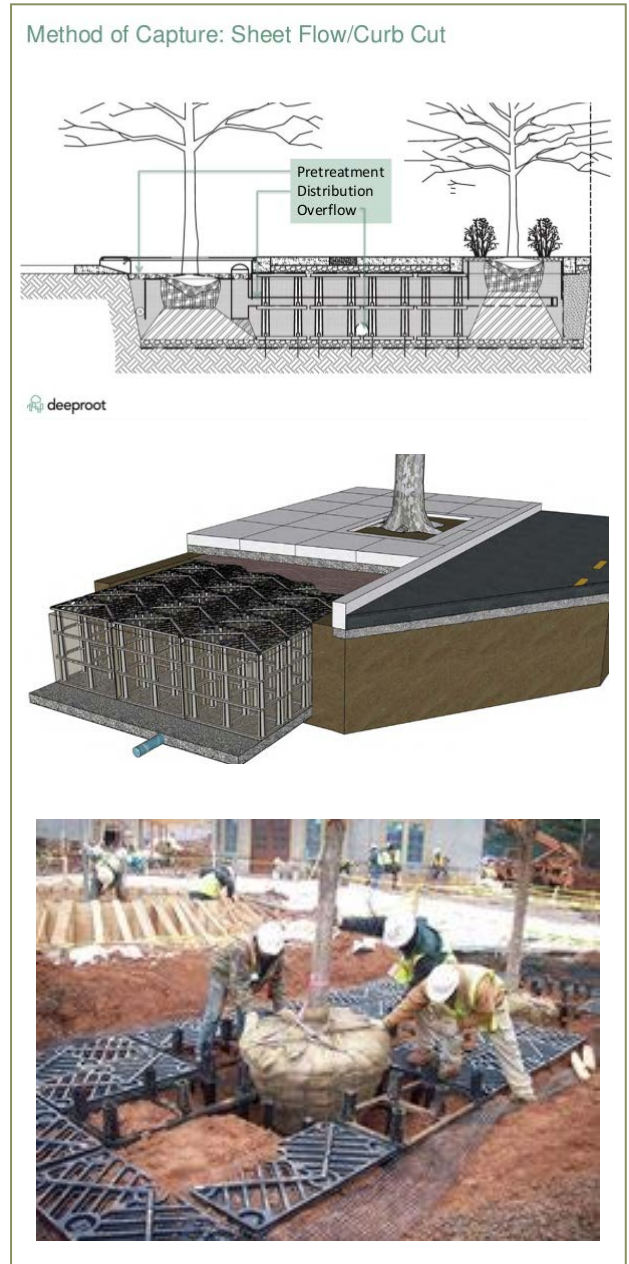
SILVA CELLS (shown on the right) are a type of suspended sidewalk system whereby the silva cell (a very strong platform of chambers made up of cylinders or columns) is installed under the sidewalk, supporting traffic loads and accommodating utilities; the soil within the chambers remains uncompacted, allowing tree roots to grow, while also managing the rate and volume of stormwater.

These are best installed with a permeable paver sidewalk system, but do work with a complete concrete sidewalk system. Tree grates must be kept in place to allow for permeation of water. These are best used in urban, high traffic environments.

STORMWATER SIDEWALK TRENCH DRAINS (shown below) are exactly that—long trench drains installed in the sidewalk to assist with collection and movement of stormwater. These are meant to supplement existing drainage systems, not to act as stand-alone stormwater management systems.

This option is a decorative option, allowing for an aesthetic that tree grates alone don't offer. A consideration is that these would add to the cost of the project considerably.

Each of the stormwater management options are practical and advantageous choices and should be discussed at length to determine the best option. All three options will require design engineering as part of the improvement project.



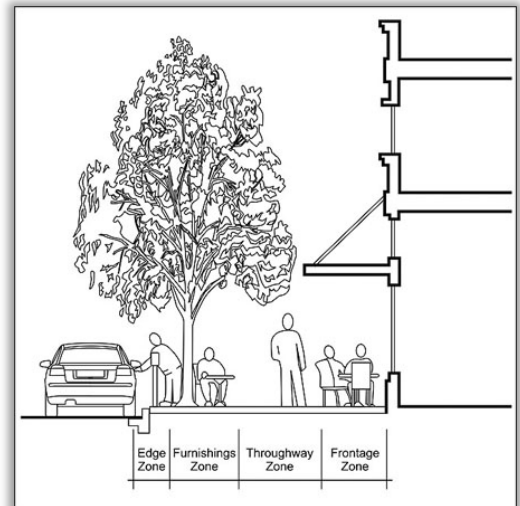
IMPROVEMENTS: STREETSCAPES

Too often rural or suburban downtowns strive to duplicate urban streetscapes, with extensive concrete, steel tree grates and little green space, when, in fact, the concept works against the goals of a charming downtown environment. Downtown Mountain Home should maintain the feel of an inviting community central core.

The current make-up of downtown Mountain Home consists of poorly maintained storefronts, decaying sidewalks, sparsely-placed trees, infrequent furnishings and busy traffic zones. Lighting, which is not to pedestrian-scale, is inadequate and sporadic. Signage in the downtown core is lacking. **The image and success of a city's downtown is a crucial economic indicator, and is usually a key factor when it comes to enticing new business into the area.**

STREETSCAPES ELEMENTS:

- Facilitation of structured streetscape zones:
 - Frontage Zone: for doorway, marketing, patio
 - Throughway Zone: for uninterrupted pedestrian traffic
 - Furnishing Zone: for trees, benches, bike racks, planters, etc.
 - Edge/Buffer Zone: for separation of vehicles from other uses
- Convert N. 2nd E. Street into a boulevard allowing green-scaping and innovative streetscape design on the expanded west side
- Expanded sidewalk widths to accommodate the new standard of streetscape design and encourage walkability
- Targeted sidewalk improvements with the inclusion of patios
- Installation of a network of trees for a softening aesthetic, provision of shade and pedestrian traffic barrier
- Enhanced crosswalks heightening the message to motorists that they are in a pedestrian environment
- Rebuild corner/sidewalk bulb-outs to shorten distance between blocks to encourage citizens to “park once” and walk between destinations, and to enhance safety
- Introduction of contemporary street furnishings including benches, bike racks, planters, street lamps and receptacles to establish an updated and cohesive downtown identity (see the recommended furnishings in Appendix 4), and to multiply the barriers that generate the feeling of a pedestrian environment
- Recommendation of signage ordinances to regulate type, size and use for signs to enhance business visibility; to administer the new streetscape standards; and to protect the image and impression of the downtown core
- Installation of pedestrian and pet amenities including drinking fountains and pet stations



IMPROVEMENTS: OPEN/GREEN SPACE

A critical component of any master plan or comprehensive plan is the element of “Open Space” or “Green Space”. Though not interchangeable by definition, both provide an important role in a “livable city”, and more specifically in a downtown environment. Open space and green space both provide a balance to an urban landscape that is necessary if the goal is to attract and retain business, pedestrians/patrons and investment.

Not only is green space integral to creating an inviting downtown and generating positive economic development, the citizens have specifically asked for more of it. At least 43% of respondents indicated the need for more green space - the following are comments from the Public Involvement Surveys:

“What changes would you like to see in downtown?”

- *Better parks for kids*
- *Splash park/pad (a large percentage of respondents requested this)*
- *More kid-friendly activities*
- *Dog park/Pet Friendly*
- *Beautification*
- *More for kids to do*
- *Somewhere kids can play*
- *Make Railroad Park more visually appealing*
- *Park with playground*
- *A green area for gathering, walking, biking, picnic, sitting and visiting, and drink coffee, etc, and let children safely run and play*
- *More landscaping/green area*

The proposed design concept for downtown Mountain Home endeavors to establish a distinct system of pedestrian pathways, greenways, plazas, and multi-use parks to not only beautify downtown, but also to strengthen the various connections within the core, creating a cohesive and well-planned downtown community. The concept includes two pedestrian-focused streets which are meant to create links between the two main corridors, and to Railroad Park.

The pedestrian streets/blocks can be closed to traffic for community events and gatherings with the use of removable traffic-rated bollards. The streets may incorporate special design elements such as offset landscaped areas, rolled curbs, stained concrete, wider sidewalks, additional furnishings, lighting and amenities for pedestrians and pets.

OTHER OPEN / GREEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS RECOMMENDED:

- Splash Pad at Railroad Park
- Public Plaza/Event Space
- Expansion of Railroad Park
- Fencing at train tracks
- Playground in Railroad Park
- Innovative “Linear Park” system spanning N. 2nd E. St.
- Pedestrian park or mini skate park at El Rancho Parking Lot
- Integration of Public Art



IMPROVEMENTS: OPEN/GREEN SPACE

BEAUTIFICATION



THE PICTURE ON THE LEFT IS THE FIRST IMPRESSION VISITORS GET OF DOWNTOWN MOUNTAIN HOME: LARGE BLANK WALLS, DIRT SURFACE LOT AND TRAIN CARS.

The revitalization of the downtown corridor should incorporate beautification elements in Railroad Park, to include a noise and view barrier; not only for the safety of residents but also to function as an inviting and enticing destination back-drop upon arriving into the area.



Find ways to solve the dilemma of expansive, blank building sides: there are many innovative and distinctive ways, which can also introduce public art.



Public Art honoring nearby Mountain Home Air Force Base, and all military, would be a memorable and likely appreciated sentiment; it could be a theme carried throughout the downtown.

IMPROVEMENTS: WAYFINDING/SIGNAGE

WHAT IS WAYFINDING?

Wayfinding is a system of information (typically signage and related markers) meant to guide people through a physical environment, to help them to navigate the area. A wayfinding system, even a simple one comprised of a few directional and landmark signs, is important in built environments as they help people to develop “mental maps” of the vicinity and contribute to a sense of arrival and security. A wayfinding system in and around the focus area will help to define the downtown core as the central hub of the community, and assist in directing both natives and visitors to destinations and businesses. Implementation of a recognizable wayfinding system will be of vital importance once the City’s planned venues around the periphery of downtown begin development.

Research confirms the benefits provided by wayfinding:

- Builds and reinforces Brand Identity for a city, a district, or a destination such as a park or venue
- Facilitates city efficiency, function and appeal
- Encourages navigation and discovery of the city, district or destination/venue
- Provides a framework to build upon for revenue generation and economic growth
- Attracts new visitors and business interest
- Creates a cohesive environment that is crucial to any district



WAYFINDING AND POINTS OF SIGNAGE RECOMMENDED:

Gateway / Landmark Signs

- On American Legion
- On Hwy. 30 (from Exit 90)
- On Air Base Road
- On Hwy. 30 (from Exit 99)

Directional / Destination

- Museum
- AFB
- Railroad Park
- Basque Park
- Splash Park

Photo Ops

- Historic Sites
- Scenic Sites

Regulatory

- Bike Lane
- Bike/Pedestrian Crossing
- Parking

Ports of Entry Signs

- From Exit 90
- From Exit 95
- From Exit 99
- From Air Force Base

Parking

- Street Parking Time Limits
- Title Surface Parking Lots
- Symbol with Arrow to Parking Lots
- Employee Parking Area(s)

Blade Signs

- All downtown businesses in central business district

Visitor / Attraction Signage

- Kiosk
- App-based Tour
- Maps/Photos

Additional elements of Signage will be discussed in Land Use/Ordinance sections.

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IMPROVEMENTS: WAYFINDING/SIGNAGE



The pictures on the left both depict the visual perception approaching the downtown area with, and without, a gateway sign. The current visage is grim and plain.

With a gateway sign installed, it becomes a signal to residents and visitors that they have arrived somewhere worth visiting.

The map below shows the recommended locations of distance marker signs, indicating direction and distance to reach “Historic Downtown Mountain Home”

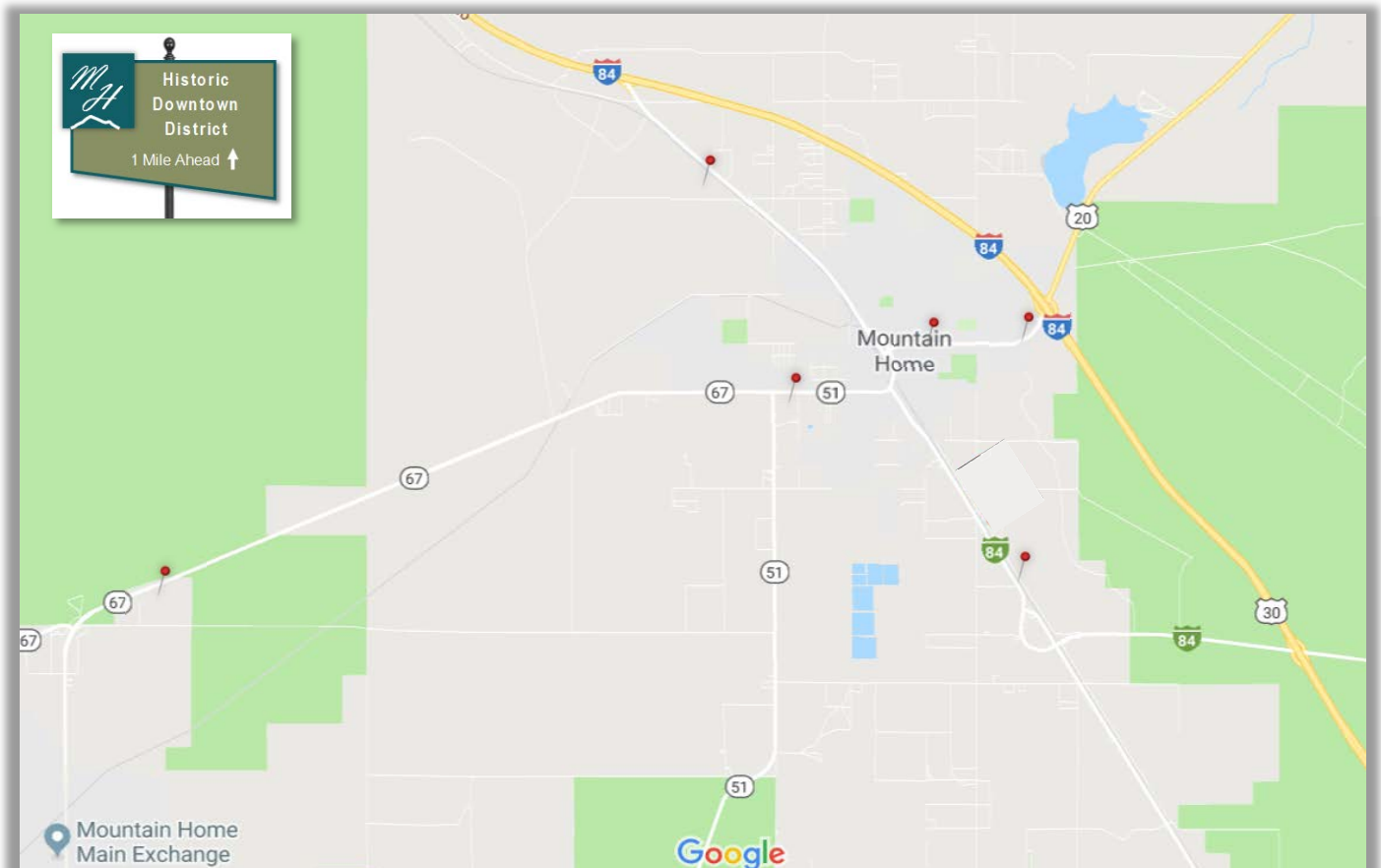


Figure 20

LAND USE: ZONING/ORDINANCE

The Focus Area of downtown Mountain Home is currently comprised of two Zoning categories: C-2 (Central Business) and C-3 (General Business) (see **Figure 21**). A small part of I-1 (Light Industrial) encroaches into the Focus Area but mainly in a roadway.

The two zoning categories are appropriate for the area in the traditional sense, however, the City envisions integrating residential housing into the downtown area, as well as intends to regulate land use more effectively with the aim of avoiding single-use zoning (“traditional”, “conventional” or “Euclidean”) which can tend to compartmentalize land use and restrict innovative development (**Figure 22** shows current Zoning). And while current zoning allows for residential use, an audit of zoning is warranted at this time

ZONING TYPE

With the anticipated changes in land use, the recommendation is for the City to move to “Form-Based Zoning Code” which, rather than dictating land use and building dimensions (which create box-like rows of buildings without character) focuses more on the form, scale and design of both structures and blocks. Form-based zoning is graphically oriented with the goal of “place-making”; it sets controls to create and reinforce a distinctive identity within the focus area. See **Figure 23** for a break-down of key differences, and **Figure 29** for a visual illustration.

An example of this type of approach would be the nearby city of Eagle, Idaho who implemented very strict and specific zoning code to enforce the look and feel that has turned the city into a recognizable brand.

ORDINANCES

When considering amending zoning code it is also important to visit existing ordinances to determine if new ordinances and/or amendments are also warranted, and in this case they are. With the goal being to create a cohesive, planned and updated downtown landscape, ordinances are a valuable and complementary tool to use to solidify and enforce the amendments.

The ordinances that should be addressed will be relative to:

- Building and business uses
- Green space and outdoor uses
- Public and private parking uses
- Right-of-way and pedestrian use

Ordinances specific to these areas will serve to further the place-making goal that form-based zoning will be working towards.

Zoning & ordinance amendment recommendations, and methods for executing changes, are each discussed on the next two pages.

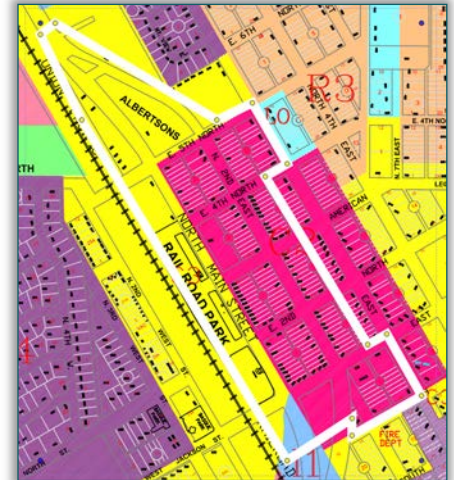


Figure 21



Figure 22

Key Differences	
Traditional Zoning	Form Based Codes
Use-based	De-emphasize use
Districts	Neighborhoods/streets
Emphasis on individual uses of property, rigid use of lot size & building placement	Emphasis on building relationships & on fitting building to its use & surroundings
Segregation of land uses	Mixed uses
Uniformity in neighborhoods	Diversity in neighborhoods
Limited ability to effect change	Ability to transform or preserve
Limited design standards	Focus on building/site form
Setbacks	Build to lines
Focus on site; little on right-of-way	Attention to street & streetscape

Figure 23

LAND USE: ZONING/DISTRICTS

Implementing the changes to zoning and modifying and/or adding ordinances, as mentioned on the previous page, can be achieved a number of ways: by adopting amendments to current C-2 zone, by introducing a new zone into existing code, or by initiating an Overlay District over the focus area.

An Overlay District is a district adopted by the City which encompasses a specified area (in this case the Focus Area), and in which supplemental regulatory standards (i.e. Design Review standards or land use zoning) are superimposed upon the existing zoning, thereby applying two sets of regulations to properties within the district. The purpose of the Overlay District is to establish a distinct area regulated to fulfill the vision of downtown as determined by the City.

Character Districts are often also integrated into a downtown master plan, however these types do not involve special zoning or land use regulations; they are subject to the zones/regulations in which they fall. The district names are meant to create an identifiable sense of place, or “character”; they describe elements that “characterize” the area such as the dominant business use and/or the dominant building type within the district.

The recommendation of the Master Plan is that Mountain Home consider adoption of an Overlay District as well as Character Districts into the downtown focus area (see Figure 24).

- Establishing the Overlay District well in advance of redevelopment will serve to ensure that the City’s goal of adopting design standards and transforming land use are both in place once redevelopment does begin to occur.
- Forming Character Districts will do much to launch the revitalization of the downtown core by creating memorable districts around existing uses and structures, and will serve to promote and engage interest by both business-owners and patrons. The districts can also serve as framework for marketing and economic development.

The map shows the proposed Overlay District and Character District boundaries as recommended.

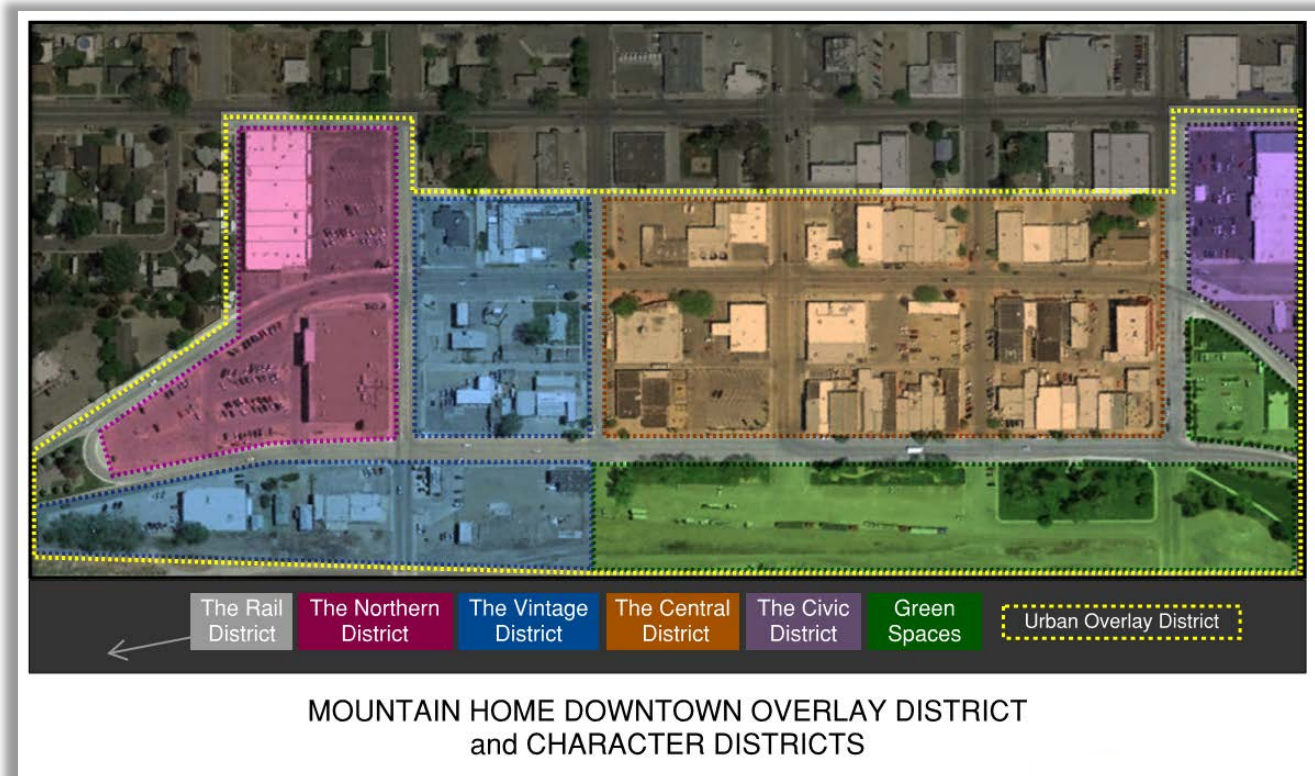


Figure 24

LAND USE: ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS / ADDITIONS RECOMMENDED

LAND USE / DEVELOPMENT / RIGHT-OF-WAY

- Establish a Design Review Ordinance as part of the development process, with design criteria that promotes desired architectural and aesthetic elements/style into all future development; this process may include a Design Review Committee that will review and approve all development applications
- Establish adopted Streetscapes Standards ordinance which defines allowable furnishings, signage, installations, trees, lighting and improvements in the downtown area; the Standards should include dimensions, sizing, colors and vendor information
- Create signage ordinances to regulate signage. The ordinances will work to ensure continuity and cohesiveness with the Streetscape Standards and will support the transition to a more branded downtown. The ordinance should address: old/unused/nonworking signage; required blade signage on storefronts in the central district with such specifications as dimensions, fonts and locations; allowable signage use in right-of-ways/sidewalks.
- Streamline the downtown development application process and requirements making it easier to develop and invest in downtown Mountain Home than on the periphery of Mountain Home, or any other city
- Define land use standards to entice more suitable business mix downtown: disallow/regulate certain business types and/or activities, as well as incentivize preferred business into the area including those that provide conveniences, entertainment, dining, services that remain open in the evening and cultural experiences
- Eliminate unnecessary zoning restrictions that may hinder development that would be beneficial to the landscape of downtown; consider allowing experimentation (approved) with temporary installations of art and improvements

BUSINESS USE / BUILDING USE

- Disallow certain building uses within the Focus Area (i.e. storage, automotive, warehousing/distribution)
- Develop Patio/Dining Standards, which should include a licensing process, for any and all patio use. This should include such guidelines as use of barriers and types, dimensions/sizing allowances, allowable service on patios (alcohol, smoking?), any entertainment/performance considerations, use of outdoor retail displays, etc. The Standards should also include the requirement of appropriate insurance coverages
- Encourage adaptive re-use of upper building stories for residential or office development by amending existing ordinances or developing new ordinances that support and encourage that type of development (i.e. a streamlined process and/or reduced LID/BIM tax rates when those are implemented)

GREEN SPACE / OUTDOOR

- Establish ordinances for all areas of public/outdoor open space and green space including but not limited to applications/licensure and rules for food-truck vendors; an application process for entities to reserve pedestrian roadways for venues, events and programming; regulations for overnight parking; and pet-related guidelines and restrictions

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARKING USE

- Develop a Parking/Access Management Plan to manage public parking, employee parking and other modes of access to downtown; the Plan should include a system and means of enforcement
- Instigate a Parking Standards (like the Streetscape Standards) which will regulate standards for all components of parking, including peripheral and frontage landscape standards, parking standards, fee regulation (if anyone starts charging), maintenance, access and signage
- Determine and establish a downtown employee parking area, prohibiting downtown employees from parking in on-street and/or public parking lots; this will ensure availability of parking for patrons
- Institute time limits and install signage for all on-street parking; this measure will help to ensure employees use the (to be determined) employee designated lot only

LAND USE: BUILT FORM / REDEVELOPMENT

The overall built environment in downtown Mountain Home can be described in one word: *Underutilized*

With the majority of structures being single story, and with a few 2-stories and a 3-story structure, many of them offer architectural characteristics that lend themselves to be adapted and modernized. Likewise, many of the surrounding land properties of the existing built space beg to be utilized to create pedestrian attractions.

A common misconception is to think that since most land downtown is already built that there is little development potential; and in the case of Mountain Home, nothing is further from the truth. The development and redevelopment potential downtown is tremendous. **Figure 25** highlights at the least, how much area exists that could be redeveloped. Special attention for development in the focus area should be towards placemaking and activity-based destinations—creating more places for community gathering and giving patrons more reasons to visit the downtown core.

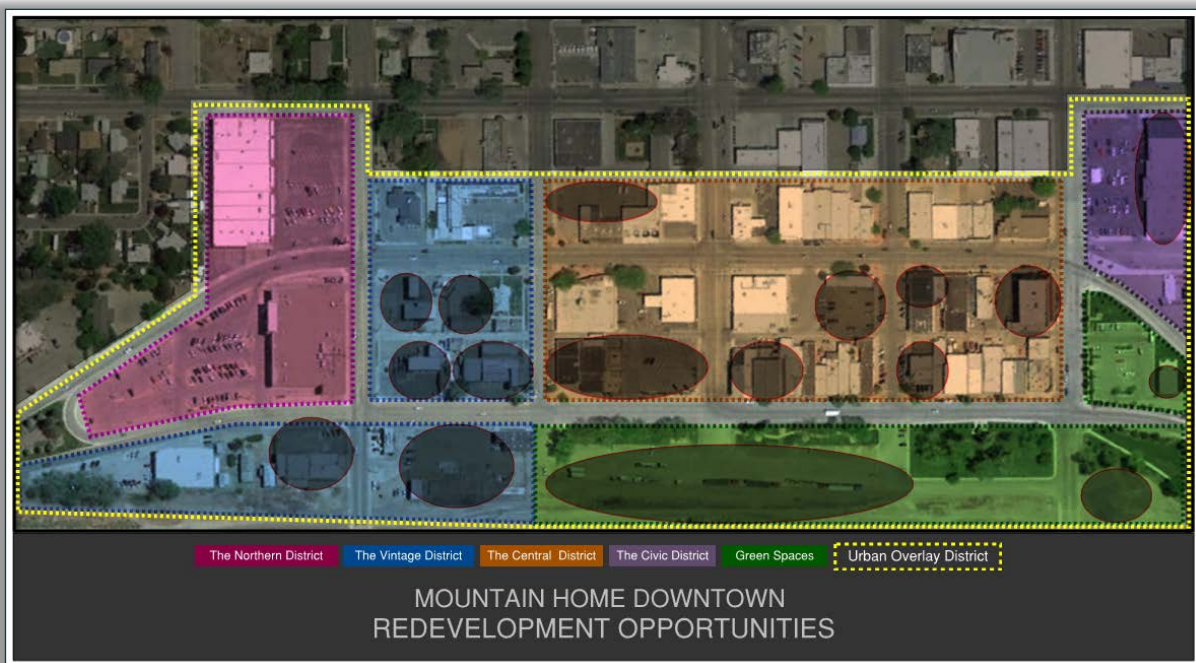


Figure 25

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT:

- Work with building owners to offer vacant stores for use to local clubs, trade shows, art shows, craft shows; and work with the Chamber of Commerce to plan a tour of the vacant space for rent. These events will encourage people to come downtown, building momentum for existing businesses and future businesses
- Collaborate with the appropriate City Department to better manage the weeds and aesthetic maintenance of sidewalks, gutters and parking areas; developers will refrain from investing in the core if they sense that the City isn't doing their part to adequately maintain downtown
 - * Curb appeal accounts for up to 70% of first time retail sales in a downtown area
 - * Beautified vs. non-beautified retail sidewalk space can net a 35% increase in sales
- Survey downtown businesses to garner their input on priority projects, what type of businesses they feel would complement theirs, who their target market is, etc, in order to develop marketing strategies and campaigns



LAND USE: REDEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT:

- Market the City’s Façade Improvement Grant Program to encourage building and business owners to invest in the revitalization; this could spark interest in others investing their own businesses downtown
- Publish an RFP to agencies that may find value leasing the vacant Paul’s building, providing incentives to whomever leases the premises. Suitable uses for the size/scale of the structure may be a satellite secondary educational institution (U of I/BSU) or an executive suite combined with a convention/meeting center
- Promote creative reuse and redevelopment of buildings that “don’t belong” in the downtown core, in the classic sense of the word; **the below photos** depict an old automotive repair shop turned into a gourmet casual dining attraction which sparked “knock-offs” through-out the region. The same could be done to several of the existing structures on the northwest end of the focus area; based on surveys, this redevelopment would be popular
- Find ways to provide incentives to the types of small businesses that thrive in downtown destination locations, and that encourage walking the downtown corridors:

Local Library Branch	Civic Offices	Tailors / Cleaners	PC/Gaming	Bridal Shop
Gourmet Shops/Bakery	Specialty Spa / Retail	Vitamin / Health Store	Tutoring/Education	Art Gallery
Ceramics/Art Studio	Book / Music Store	Boutique Lounge/Bar	Florists	Instrument Sales
Different Dining Flavors	Real Estate Firms	Jewelers	Antique Shop	Photographer
Brewery	Marketing/Advertising	Liquor Store	Coffee Shop/Cafe	Yogurt/Ice Cream



ABOVE: This automotive shop-turned restaurant played on its former life bringing automotive elements into the facility and dining area. Notice the full window garage doors (which create open-air dining when opened), the automotive seating and the actual classic cars as décor.



LAND USE: REDEVELOPMENT

MANY OF THE LOCATIONS IDENTIFIED AS POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE FOCUS AREA, AS REFLECTED ON THE MAP AT FIGURE 25, ARE SHOWN HERE WITH REDEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS.



Residential units on 2nd and 3rd floors with rooftop deck



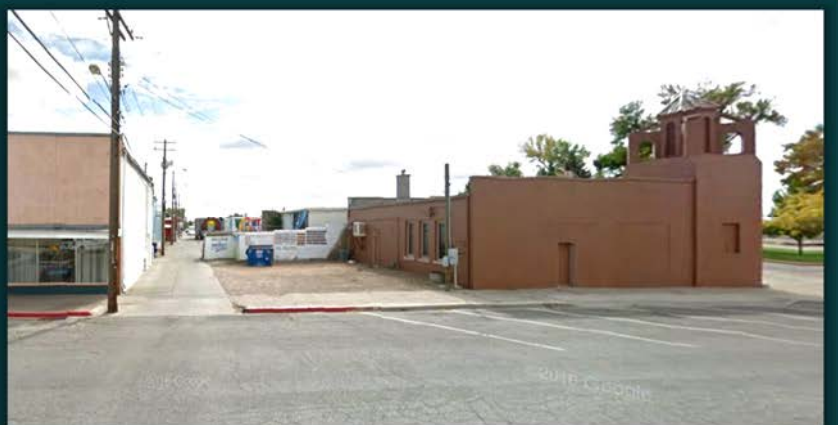
Residential lofts or office space on 2nd floor



Small convention center with outdoor, covered patio (offer meeting catering)



Residential lofts with street level commercial, or a park



The front AND rear of this structure can be transformed: indoor/outdoor dining, covered patio space, green space with pergola...

LAND USE: PARKING

Parking is universally one of the most discussed topics in downtown environments by business owners and patrons, and Mountain Home is no different. Though a high-level parking study has not been conducted preliminary assessments suggest parking supply is adequate to accommodate current and future demand in the downtown core.

Most capacity issues that have been raised to date can be more accurately described as *perception issues*; in other words, it doesn't "seem" like there is enough parking in the downtown corridor to business owners and patrons when, in reality, there is.

Location and/or accessibility of existing public parking, including street parking (parallel) and public surface lots, *seems* limited due, in part, to lack of signage and wayfinding related to parking:

- There are no time limits assigned to on-street parking, either by meter or by signage, and therefore employees of the downtown businesses utilize the majority of spaces, making it appear that there is inadequate on-street supply.
- Similarly, public surface parking lots' signage either doesn't exist or is poorly placed (out of view), giving the impression that they are prohibited and/or are not available for public use (see page 10 of Appendix 5 for an example)

The wayfinding/signage Appendix (#5) gives various recommendations for signage in and out of the downtown corridor. If a signage and wayfinding plan is implemented in the focus area, along with an enforced Parking Management Plan, the public perception of lack of parking should subside substantially.

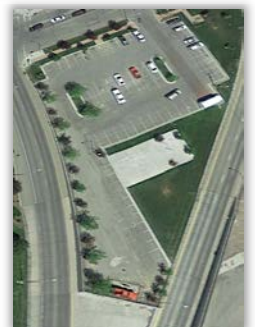


The map above illustrates the ample supply of parking downtown—even with much of the available parking not highlighted, and some areas of parking assigned to specific to businesses.

Figure 26



The photos shown above and to the right illustrate the ample supply of parking in downtown Mountain Home. These photos were taken during the work week.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: OVERVIEW

The 2018 Downtown Master Plan is intended to be a 5-10-year strategic plan for revitalizing and renewing the Focus Area. It is important to note that this Plan is meant to be a guide to decision-makers, but it is not policy. Therefore how this Plan is executed may look very different than what is contained here. The images and language contained in this document are meant to illustrate the possibilities, reflecting the best and highest uses for existing conditions within the core, however the results of completed projects will likely differ.

With the goal of revitalizing the downtown core for its best and highest use, this Plan is comprised of ambitious goals with an extensive list of investment projects that exceed current funding levels. Successful follow-through will require setting priorities based on a strategic approach to phasing and funding.

The Implementation Plan concentrates on four areas:

- Strategic Roles
- Phasing
- Action Plan
- Concept-level Cost Estimates

The compilation and development of the Downtown Master Plan was a collaborative process, amongst numerous agencies and community leaders, and has been designed to continue to be facilitated through continued cooperation. The range of projects and improvement areas will be directed by the City, and the Urban Renewal Agency; however, at present these two agencies do not have the resources or man power necessary to fulfill the entirety of the Plan. Therefore, **Figure 27** below is a proposed framework that illustrates a structured approach, one that has been shown to produce effective results. The Group Leaders are suggested based on existing roles.

A final note regarding roles: It is strongly recommended that the City consider hiring at least one more staff to work on the fulfillment of this Plan; or for the URA to hire a paid staff person. If this is not feasible, it is advised to not assign mission critical tasks to volunteers, but to paid staff. When there is a vested interest in the process, with accountability and ways of measuring performance, the results are proven to show a higher incidence of completion and success.

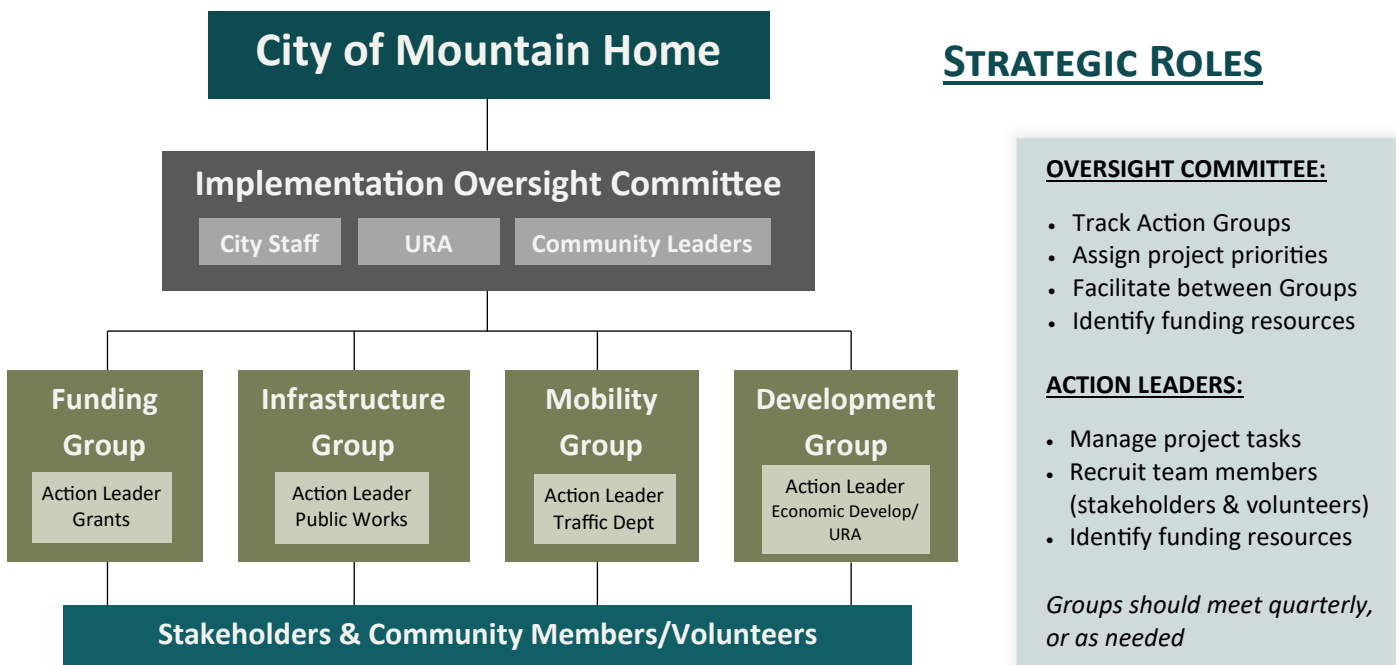


Figure 27

IMPLEMENTATION: PHASES

Figure 28 illustrates phasing recommendations for completion of projects; the recommendations are based on several factors, including but not limited to:

- Priorities (shown in **Figure 9**)
- Public Input
- Need / Best Approach
- Visual Impact

Funding will be a key determining factor in the actual tactic taken by the City in completing the projects, so the goal of this Master Plan is to outline the projects in an order that allows projects to be built upon one another, while keeping in mind and attempting to minimize the impacts to affected businesses and citizens.

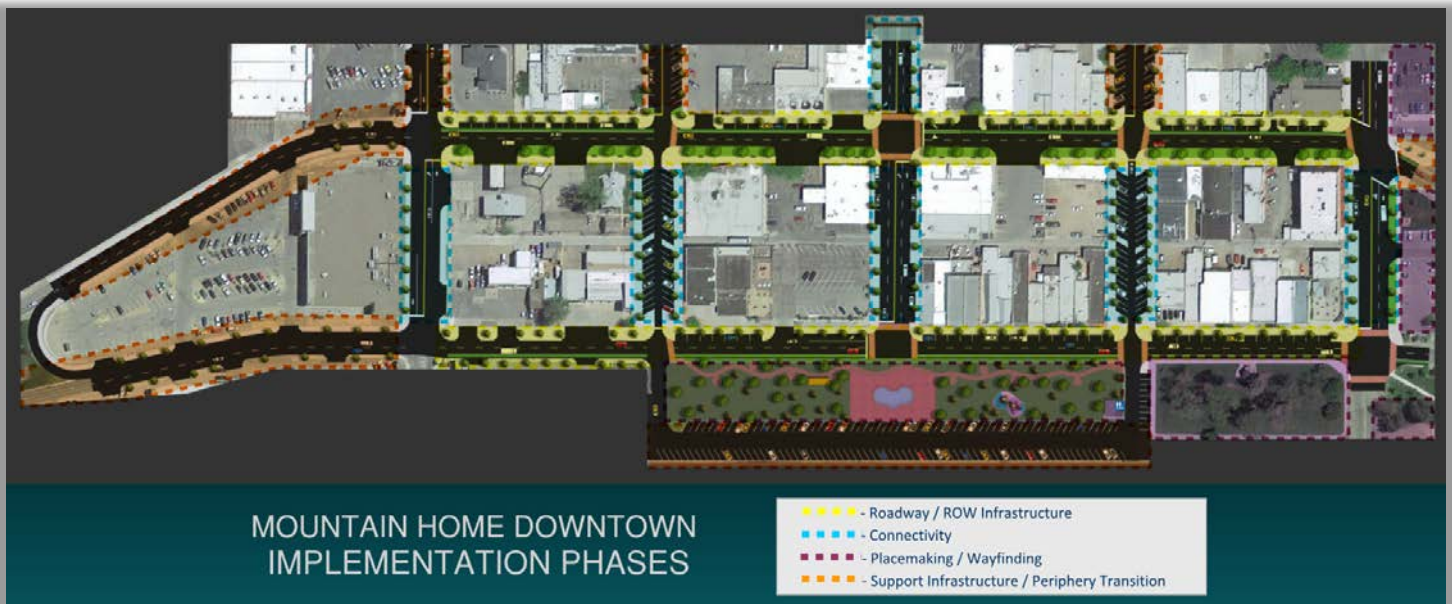


Figure 28

PHASE 1

Roadway / Right-of-Way Infrastructure

- Removal of traffic lane on N. 2nd E. and Main St.
- Replace sidewalks along highway corridors
- Foundational for streetscapes & connectivity

PHASE 2

Connectivity

- Connector street improvements
- Creating cohesive connections between Railroad Park and businesses within highway corridors

PHASE 3

Placemaking / Wayfinding

- Installation of destination attractions/venues
- Expansion of green space / open space
- Implement signage strategies

PHASE 4

Support Infrastructure / Periphery Transition

- Install improvements at outlying portions of focus area, creating a unified appearance
- Setting markers identifying downtown and districts

IMPLEMENTATION: ACTION PLAN

The following Implementation Action Plan represents action items as discussed in various sections of the Master Plan. It should be used as a tool for prioritizing projects, assigning tasks to teams, pursuing funding and municipal planning. The order in which the Action items are completed will be dependent upon various factors and as determined by the City; the designation of priority shown in the table below either correlates to the Priority and Phase of items as shown on **Figure 9** (pg. 18), or to best approach. See Abbreviation Table and Notes at end of Section.

<u>Priority Level</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Possible Partner(s)*</u>	<u>Phase</u>
High	Adoption of Downtown Master Plan	City	Pre
High	Establish a joint Capital Improvements Plan with the URA to fund and set priority projects together	URA	Pre
High	Prioritize approach to projects by Type: Policy / Code / Capital Improvement	URA	Pre
High	Prioritize approach to projects by Criteria:	URA, WECD	Pre
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs • Funding/Grants • Partnerships • Need • Staffing • Timelines / Scheduling 	City, Outside Agencies	Pre
	<u>Timelines</u> : Begin calendaring projects with a focus on seasonal restrictions on construction, as well as timelines necessary for the RFQ/RFP/Bidding process; an effective approach is to “backward plan” from desired completion date, working back, in order to determine deadlines for funding/grants and public noticing	City, URA, Outside Agencies	Pre
High	Identify and assign/recruit members that will assemble to create the Oversight Committee, each of the Action Groups and Community Stakeholders (see Figure 27)	City, URA, Arts Council, WECD, Chamber of Commerce	Pre
High	Finalize Roadway Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and submit ITD permitting applications • Begin creating Traffic Management Plan • Start planning for temporary barriers to acclimate residents to upcoming changes 	City, ITD, Consultants**	1
High	Development of Policies and Processes. Examples mentioned in the Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Standards • Design Review Process • Development • Patio Use Standards • Streetscape Standards / Signage Standards • Parking Management Plan/Standards 	City, URA, Consultants	1
High	<u>Design Standards</u> : Develop Form-Based Code and design standards such as: defining and limiting allowable architectural styles, specifying building setbacks that compliment the downtown brand, regulating building height based on stories versus measured heights, prohibiting certain design components and dictating allowable materials and finishes. The design standards should be consistent with the desired character, brand and image that Mountain Home is hoping to achieve. See Figure 29 on page 51 for an illustration of Form-Based Code	City, URA, Consultants	1

IMPLEMENTATION: ACTION PLAN

Priority Level	Action	Possible Partner(s)*	Phase
High	<u>Design Review Process/Development:</u> Formation of policies and processes that expedite and streamline the development process, creating a competitive environment that will entice developers and investors to pursue downtown more than any other area of town (i.e. DR approval, fee waivers)	City, URA, Consultants**	1
High	<u>Patio Use Standards:</u> Create regulations of allowable right-of-way (sidewalk) usage by businesses including dining standards and retail/business standards; these regulations should include such directives as allowable dimensions of usage, methods and manner of closing off portions of the right-of-way, allowable furnishings, hours of operation, allowable type of service (i.e. alcohol, smoking, music) and must include renewable licensure and application through the City as well as required insurance coverages. The City and URA should determine which entity will responsible for processing and tracking the process	City, URA, Consultants	1
High	<u>Design Review Process/Development:</u> Formation of policies and processes that expedite and streamline the development process, creating a competitive environment that will entice developers and investors to pursue downtown more than any other area of town (i.e. DR approval, fee waivers)	City, Consultants	1
High	<u>Streetscape Standards:</u> Compile allowable furnishings, signage and fixtures, with specifications and dimensions stated, in the form of a Streetscapes Standards Manual; this Manual will dictate all manner of allowable improvements as well as installation specifications and vendor	City, URA, Consultants	1
High	<u>Signage Standards:</u> Must be put in place to regulate the type and use of all manner of signage in the downtown corridor including, but not limited to: blade signage requirements to meet the new Streetscape and Design Standards, allowable placement of signage (banners, A-frame, etc.), timelines on temporary signage, broken signage as well as an ordinance requiring the business to provide proof of insurance upon request—for any signage placed in the right-of-way.	City, URA, Consultants	1
High	<u>Parking Management Plan/Standards:</u> It is important to establish municipal regulations regarding parking as the revitalization begins. The Plan should include such ordinances as designating an employee-parking area, establishing on-street/parallel parking time limits, regulations on over-night parking, ordinances for food-truck parking, as well as Standards for all surface/public parking lots (which should include signage requirements and landscape and visual barriers)	City, Consultants, Treasure Valley Transit	1
High	Perform a land use audit to identify codes to revise and to add that will encourage desired development	City, URA, Board of Realtors Planning & Zoning	1

IMPLEMENTATION: ACTION PLAN

<u>Priority Level</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Possible Partner(s)*</u>	<u>Phase</u>
High	Amend Zoning Code and Ordinances; see “Land Use” Section for recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested approach to execute amendments is to work with Sterling Codifiers as a first step, sharing the desired updates: as a provider to countless cities, they should have standard language for the proposed additions/changes to add to those for Mountain Home • Have City Attorney review Sterling Codifiers’ recommendations to ensure language specific to goals of Mountain Home and Master Plan are included (ensure the added or modified items are not generic in their form but focused to Mtn. Home) 	City, Sterling Codifiers, Planning & Zoning Board	1
High	Consider implementation of an Overlay District to complement new and augmented zoning ordinances	City, Sterling Codifiers	1-2
High	Establish Character Districts—the establishment of which will be a valuable tool in generating community interest and can be used to produce a dynamic marketing campaign which can propel development in the downtown corridor	City, URA Consultants**, Planning & Zoning Board	1-2
High	Develop Interagency Partnerships and execute Development Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) as applicable	City, URA, ITD, Art Council, WECRD	1-2
High	Submit applications for grants (<i>this should be a continual and ongoing process</i>)	City, Consultants, URA	1-4
Med	Create a Planning Department within the City to collaborate with the Economic Development Department in the fulfillment of this Master Plan; alternatively, hire a paid staff person within the Urban Renewal Agency to partner with the City. Inadequate staffing is a key factor in the failure of cities to fulfill revitalization plans.	City, URA	1-2
Med	Begin a campaign to establish downtown as the focal point for outdoor festivals, the farmers market and community events. During events market downtown revitalization efforts at a booth staffed with City staff, including soliciting donations	City, Chamber of Commerce, Arts Council, Community Groups	1-4
Med	Develop a market plan that includes desired development, then create a promotional campaign that incentivizes investment; compile RFPs for developers to bid on projects in the market development plan	City, URA, Chamber of Commerce	2-3
Med	Depending upon feedback from potential developers and investors, consider commissioning a Housing Study as well as a Parking Study; these can be helpful tools in both enticing interest and in overcoming objections or concerns while negotiating new development	City, Local Universities or Colleges	3
Med	Cultivate a coordinated Wayfinding strategy as projects are completed and interest in development begin to occur; this should include highly visible signs for public parking areas, as well as directional signage to visitor locations	City, ITD, URA, Chamber of Commerce, State Tourism	3
Med	Begin planning for updated Maintenance and Operations of new infrastructure	City	3

IMPLEMENTATION: ACTION PLAN

<u>Priority Level</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Possible Partner(s)*</u>	<u>Phase</u>
Low	Create a Downtown Business Association with a focus on supporting and promoting downtown growth, including being a single-point of contact collaborating with local business owners and property owners	City, URA, Chamber of Commerce, Consultants**	3-4
Low	Once growth and development exhibit momentum, and with no more than 25% total vacancy in the downtown corridor, establish Improvement Districts in the Focus Area (Local Improvement District or Business Improvement District—or both); the LID could provide stable funding for downtown improvements and maintenance, and the BID could provide funding for architectural improvements to buildings and facades. Either/both would be managed through the Downtown Business Association	City, URA, Consultants, Local Universities	3-4
Low	Integrate adoption of Master Plan and newly created or amended policies and zoning / ordinance into the Comprehensive Plan; consider commissioning an entire update to the Comprehensive Plan	City, URA, Consultants	3-4

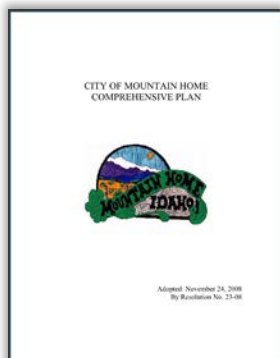
Abbreviations / Notes

*	“Possible Partners” are groups or individuals that have the potential to become partners in this Plan; inclusion of their name does not imply that partnerships exist, or that partnerships will be executed
**	“Consultants” is defined as anyone or any group working on an Action Item that are not City staff or other organization-specific staff
PRE	Meaning “Pre-Phase” - any task that is meant to occur prior to the Phases of the Plan being started
URA	Urban Renewal Agency
WECRD	Western Elmore County Recreation District
ITD	Idaho Transportation Department



Figure 29

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATES/RECOMMENDATIONS



An integral first step of any Implementation Plan is that of correlating the Goals, Objectives and Action Steps of the Comprehensive Plan to the strategies and approach of this Master Plan's Implementation Plan; this will work to ensure that every task and action taken may be to the benefit and accomplishment of both.

Review of the 2008 Mountain Home Comprehensive Plan illustrates parallel goals and objectives to that of this Master Plan. Many of the recommendations in this Master Plan will be implemented—in part—through amendments to existing ordinances, and will therefore need to be incorporated into applicable chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

The sections below detail recommended updates to the Comprehensive Plan that should be considered when integrating the various components of this Master Plan. When doing so, the code provisions should include:

Clear definition of mandatory code requirements and guidelines, and should state when conformance to the code is mandatory; graphics with examples of “desirable and undesirable” development; clarifications of delegation of decision-making responsibilities between City staff, City Council, and any other relevant enforcement bodies.

SECTION 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Subsections 5.3 Action Steps / 5.5 Downtown:

- Consider establishing a downtown BID or LID (Business / Local Improvement District) and/or a CBD (Central Business District) - each of which are defined areas of downtown where additional tax dollars are invested back into the district. This would assist with continued improvement and development.
- Consider forming Task Forces comprised of paid staff to head up projects, versus utilizing a single group or volunteer groups, to fulfill projects; this ensures accountability and completion of projects.
- See SECTION 15/Land Use on next page for additional Economic Development recommendations.

SECTION 6: COMMUNITY DESIGN

Subsections 6.1 Goal / 6.2 Objectives / 6.4.1 Downtown Revitalization Efforts:

- Articulate a more defined and specific goal that will illustrate more specifically the definition of “Community Design”.
- Avoid/remove the concept of utilizing themes throughout the community. Themes tend to lose appeal over short periods of time, which thereby create updates that must be addressed sooner than if classic, consistent and cohesive community design were utilized; additionally themes tend to cost more up-front and in their upkeep. Both increase costs over time to the City.
- Add more emphasis/content to downtown within the Section; Mountain Home’s downtown is the heart of the community, but more importantly is what investors and developers focus on when considering investing funds. A well-designed and maintained downtown will reap economic benefits more than investment in any other area of Mountain Home.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATES/RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTIONS 8 and 12: NATURAL RESOURCES/OPEN SPACE & PARKS and RECREATION

Subsections 8.1 Goal / 8.2 & 12.2 Objectives / 8.3 & 12.3 Action Steps:

- Convey a clearer description of the goal: by being more deliberate in the description, more thought may be put into the Objectives and Action Steps, thus a better outcome may result.
- Include as an Objective partnering with local agencies to expand on opportunities to develop more natural resources and open or green space; i.e. Western Elmore County Recreation District.
- Institute Action Steps that would include working in partnership with local land owners (in or near the periphery of downtown) as well as agencies; such partnerships could instigate agreements that could benefit the public good.

SECTION 10: PUBLIC SERVICES

Subsections 10.5.2 Stormwater / 10.13.3 Utilities:

- Add plans to include Sustainability in the Objectives of stormwater management; this will serve the City on a public health level as well as possibly serving to qualify City projects for grants and other funds.
- An Action Step that could be included would be the inclusion of improving existing utilities during periods of capitol project investments; an example would be to convert power-line utilities from the downtown alleys to buried under the roadway during the highway improvement project included in this Master Plan.

SECTION 11: TRANSPORTATION

Subsection 11.1.1 Goal / 11.2.1 Streets and Highways:

- Expand on the Goal to include language that communicates provision of safe accessibility throughout the community, for all modes transportation
- Include as an Objective integrating a Complete Streets Program (CSP) in the downtown corridor, to perhaps then branch out to adjacent corridors. A CSP will serve to address each one of the subsections in the Transportation Section, and will tie into the new system of transportation and circulation proposed in this Master Plan.

SECTION 15: LAND USE AND PLANNING

Subsection 15.4 Commercial Land Use / 15.4.3 Action Steps:

- Consider contracting a Parking Study of the downtown Focus Area; perception of the public and business-owners is that there is inadequate parking available in the downtown core. This perception could harm prospective development in the area. By obtaining a Parking Study, it will neutralize any fear for potential developers as well as prove to be a strong tool for economic development and marketing efforts.
- Consider procuring technical data on at least the downtown core, including mapping, GIS data, survey and land records; having this information will assist in capital projects costing less and taking less time, in addition to being a strong tool for developers to utilize for their developments in the downtown area.

IMPLEMENTATION: COST ESTIMATES

The following **Concept-Level Cost Estimates** represent project items as discussed in various sections of the Master Plan. The cost estimates are concept-level only and may not represent actual project costs for the Adopted Plan, or for work that will actually be completed. Concept-level cost estimates are for construction costs (they do not include design engineering costs) and have been prepared based on combination of estimates for similar projects, and based on public information for similar projects in other nearby jurisdictions.

The figures should be used as a tool for prioritizing projects, pursuing funding and municipal planning.

#	ITEM	QTY.	TOTAL	PHASE
1	Demolition and Removal of Existing Sidewalks/Curb/Gutter/ Signs/Asphalt/Trees (N. Main St. and N. 2nd E. Street)	(12)Block Faces (24) Corners	\$ 560,000	1
2	Demolition/Removal of Existing Sidewalks/Curb/Gutter/Signs/ Asphalt/Trees (Jackson, E. 2nd, American Legion, E. 4th, E. 5th)	(9) Block Faces	\$ 420,000	2
3	Install Sidewalk / Curb / Gutter / ADA corner (N. Main St. and N. 2nd E. Street)	(12 Block Faces)	\$1,500,000	1
4	Install Sidewalk / Curb / Gutter (Jackson, E. 2nd, American Legion, E. 4th, E. 5th)	(9) Block Faces	\$1,125,000	2
5	Item Costs (Installation of Trees every 28'-32' on Main St. and N. 2nd E. Street) (required Frames, Grates, Irrigation and Electrical)	(12) Block Faces approx. 100 each	\$ 460,000	1
6	Item Costs (Installation of Trees every 25'-28' on 2nd, American Legion, 4th, and 5th Streets) (required Frames, Grates, Irrigation and Electrical)	(9) Block Faces approx. 75 each	\$ 345,000	2
7	Bioretention Planters (includes landscaping)	(4) Block Faces broken up	\$ 160,000	1
8	Up-charges for vaults under sidewalks Estimated at: (10' x 10' X .5' x 6 sides to a closed box X 3 = 33CY)	(3) Total Vaults	\$ 15,000	1
9	Repairs to roadway Estimated: Roadway Limit 1,580 ft. X (11+11+5.5+10)ft = 60,000	—	\$ 200,000	1-2
10	139 Space Parking Lot at Rear of Railroad Park (by train tracks)	—	\$ 338,000	4
11	Concrete Noise Barrier Wall (ITD Standard)	700 lf X 18' high	\$ 693,000	4
12	Vinyl Noise Barrier Wall (Engineered)	800 lf X 18' high	\$ 300,000	4
13	Infrastructure Required for Water Feature at Railroad Park	Water, Power	\$ 210,000	3
14	Infrastructure Required for Restroom Facilities at Railroad Park (4 person restroom)	Water, Power, Sewer	\$ 250,000	3
15	Hawkeye Signal - no existing pole	(1)	\$ 150,000	4

IMPLEMENTATION: COST ESTIMATES

#	ITEM	QTY.	TOTAL	PHASE
16	Installation: Small Pedestrian Park (see image page 35) ~75' x 40' 6 concrete blocks 3'X10'X4' = 30CY concrete, 2840 SY landscape	Skate park \$45 SF Pedestrian park \$400CY concrete	\$ 190,000	3
17	Gateway Sign over American Legion Blvd.	1	\$ 75,000	3
18	Landscape remainder of Railroad Park (sod, trees, sprinkler, furnishings, lighting, estimate for restroom)	—	\$ 750,000	3
19	Playground in Railroad Park	—	\$40-75,000	3
20	Crosswalk Painting (high visibility)	18 @ \$3,500 ea.	\$ 63,000	1
21	Crosswalk Painting (standard, white only)	18 @ \$750 ea.	\$ 13,500	1
22	Bike racks	75	\$ 8,250	1-3
23	Park Benches	45	\$ 45,000	1-3
24	Large Planters	100	\$ 65,000	1-3
25	Trash Receptacles	45	\$ 40,500	1-3
26	Tree Grates (\$860 each for 4'x4')	TBD (estimate 100)	\$ 86,000	1-3
27	Removable Bollards	24	\$ 24,000	3
28	Pet Station	5	\$ 1,000	2-3
29	Street Lamps (does not include installation cost)	75	\$ 187,500	1-3
30	Orange Pedestrian Crossing Flags	100	\$ 545	3-4
31	Wrought Iron Fencing at Gateways	1,000 l.f.	\$ 30,000	4
32	Wayfinding / Signage System (downtown and approaches)	TBD based on Qty		3