

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM
418 EAST SECOND STREET
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026
5:30 PM**



To attend the meeting via Zoom and **provide live comment** attendees should go to the web link below. **Due to occasional technical difficulties, the most reliable way to participate is through in-person attendance. Electronic means are not guaranteed.**

Meeting Link: [Zoom Link](#) Meeting Number: **849 2808 8413** Password: **59937**

Raise your virtual hand to indicate you want to provide comment.

- We encourage individuals to provide written public comment; to the City Clerk, Michelle Howke at mhowke@cityofwhitefish.gov or deliver by **4:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 17, 2026**, to City Hall. Written comments should include name, address, should be short and concise, courteous, and polite. All written comments received by 4:00 p.m. will be provided to the City Council and appended to the packet following the meeting.
- Public comment by those attending the meeting "live" via Zoom or in-person will be limited to three minutes per individual.

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy - Land Use/Zoning and Subdivision Input– Alan Tiefenbach
- 3) Public Comment
- 4) Direction to City Manager
- 5) Adjourn

MEMORANDUM

To: City Council

From: Alan Tiefenbach, Long Range Planner

Date: February 17, 2026

RE: Vision Whitefish 2045 Work Session on Land Use



Honorable Mayor and members of the City Council,

Attached is the draft land use element. The Montana Land Use Act (MLUPA) requires a future land use map and written description of the proposed general distribution, location, and extent of residential, commercial, mixed, industrial, agricultural, recreational, and conservation uses of land and other categories of public and private uses, and the anticipated and preferred pattern and intensities of development for the jurisdiction over the next 20 years.

As part of the preparation of the land use element, staff and czb, LLC held three open houses and three associated online surveys with 225 in – person attendees and at least 350 people participating online. This is in addition to the early six visioning sessions that had already been done resulting in more than 250 attendees, 150 pages of responses, 19 maps and 241 individual comments.

The land use element and future land use map (called a “placetype map”) describes the general distribution, location, and extent of uses by focusing on the form, character, and function of places with 17 different placetypes rather than just the land use alone, although each place type does also very generally describe the preferred land uses, patterns and intensities of development. As required by MCA 76-25-216 of, the land use element and placetypes map is intended to be the basis for subsequent zoning regulations.

Staff notes at present the land use element is still a separate document. This is because work is still ongoing at the time of preparation of this staff report, and the draft will be incorporated into the complete community plan draft at a later date. Please also note the version of the draft land use element you have received does not contain any comments that may have been made by the Planning Commission at their February 11, 2025 work session. Any potential changes made by the Planning Commission will be summarized at your February 17th 2026 work session.

LAND USE

Growth has historically occurred through low-density residential patterns, with commercial and higher-density development concentrated downtown and along the US 93 corridor. Natural features, conservation lands, and infrastructure constraints significantly shape where and how the city can grow.



Downtown Whitefish functions as the city's primary mixed-use center, with a concentration of commercial, residential, civic, and visitor-serving uses.

5.37 square miles of land
7.3 acres of water

12.67 square miles within Whitefish City Limits

Approximately 2,000+

Additional Housing Units Projected to be needed

Land Use Trends Influencing the Future

Limited new developable land within city limits

Increasing demand for workforce and attainable housing

Infrastructure-driven growth patterns

Desire to balance growth with small-town character and environmental stewardship

The Land Use Element is the part of the Growth Policy that connects a community's vision to its physical form. It describes how different parts of Whitefish (like neighborhoods and commercial areas to open spaces and transportation corridors) fit together. The land use map must reflect the anticipated and preferred pattern of land use over the next 20 years and how housing will be accommodated.



Mixed-use development supports efficient land use by allowing residential and commercial uses to coexist in appropriate locations.

The Land Use Element is comprised of *Place Types* and *Street Types*.

Place Types are geographic categorization that **describes the intended character, form, and function of an area** within a community's future land use framework. This is not a zoning map which defines the legal regulations and permitted uses, Place Types communicate what a place should feel like and how it should perform over the long term.

Street Types define how different streets function and feel within the community—linking land use, mobility, and character. Each type combines elements like travel lanes, sidewalks, bike facilities, parking, and street trees to reflect its setting—whether a quiet neighborhood lane, a main street, or a rural connector. Together, the street types create a connected network that supports safe travel for all users and reinforces the identity of each place.

"Sensitive Infill Capacity, Infrastructure Constraints, and Housing Needs"

Indicated as trends that will influence future development patterns

GUIDING LAND USE DECISIONS TO PROTECT WHITEFISH'S CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Vision: "We will guide land use decisions to protect Whitefish's character and quality of life while supporting a diverse range of housing options meeting the needs of our residents and future generations and ensuring growth enhances our small-town identity, supports a thriving community, and preserves the natural landscapes that define our sense of place."

Introduction

Whitefish is a community shaped by its remarkable setting, strong sense of place, and deep commitment to quality of life. In recent years—particularly following the pandemic—the city has experienced rapid change as new residents, remote workers, and visitors have discovered the area's natural beauty and exceptional amenities. While this growth has brought new energy and economic activity, it has also placed pressure on housing affordability, community character, local infrastructure, and the landscapes that define Whitefish's identity.

The Land Use Element provides a framework to help the city manage this change thoughtfully and deliberately. It outlines how Whitefish can accommodate needed housing—especially for local workers—while protecting the qualities residents value most: a connected and walkable small-town environment, vibrant neighborhoods, scenic open spaces, and the feeling of authenticity that makes Whitefish unique.

Rather than allowing growth to happen haphazardly, this plan sets out a proactive approach. It identifies where development should occur, at what scale, and in what form, so new investment strengthens existing neighborhoods and makes efficient use of land and infrastructure. It also highlights places where growth should be limited to preserve sensitive lands, reduce wildfire risk, and maintain the city's relationship to its natural surroundings.

Above all, this Land Use Element seeks to balance two community priorities:

- Ensuring Whitefish remains a place where local workers, families, and long-time residents can continue to live and thrive; and
- Safeguarding the character, small-town feel, and natural environment that define Whitefish's identity and make it unlike anywhere else.

This chapter serves as a guide to shape how Whitefish grows over the coming decades, and to ensure growth supports the people, places, and values that matter most.

Land Use Element Overview

The Land Use Element is the part of the Community Plan that connects a community's vision to its physical form. It describes how different parts of Whitefish (like neighborhoods and commercial areas to open spaces and transportation corridors) fit together. The plan must reflect the anticipated and preferred pattern of land use over the next 20 years and how housing will be accommodated.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

1. Focus Growth Inward: Whitefish will prioritize growth within its existing city boundary to support walkability, efficiently use infrastructure, and protect surrounding landscapes, strengthening existing neighborhoods and community edges while considering strategic annexation only when growth cannot be reasonably accommodated within the city.

Focusing growth inward is fiscally and physically prudent given Whitefish's limited land supply. Concentrating development within existing city limits allows the City to leverage existing investments in streets, water, sewer, and emergency services. This significantly reduces the per-unit cost of new infrastructure compared to outward expansion. Infill and compact development patterns also support higher housing yields per acre, helping the City address its projected need for approximately 2,100 housing units by 2045 without consuming additional rural or natural lands.

Objectives

- a. New housing, employment, and neighborhood amenities should be concentrated in walkable areas—particularly Downtown, mixed-use districts, and key corridors—to support local businesses, reduce reliance on driving, and reinforce Whitefish's community character.
- b. Development should be directed toward vacant parcels, surface parking lots, and underutilized commercial properties within the city through clear regulations, targeted incentives, and streamlined review processes that make infill and redevelopment viable and competitive.
- c. Growth should be prioritized in locations that can efficiently use existing infrastructure and public services, including water, sewer, streets, parks, and emergency services, while avoiding areas that would require costly extensions unless there is a clear and demonstrable community benefit.
- d. Future development should be steered away from environmentally sensitive lands, wildlife corridors, hazard areas, and prominent community gateways, maintaining a clear distinction between the developed city and surrounding open space and rural landscapes.
- e. Annexation should be considered only when it advances long-term community goals, occurs adjacent to existing development, supports walkable and compact patterns, and can be served by infrastructure and services in a financially responsible manner.

2. Provide Housing Options and Affordability: Whitefish will expand access to a diverse range of housing types for residents of all ages and income levels by aligning land use decisions, incentives, and partnerships to support long-term affordability and livability.

Expanding housing options and affordability is essential given Whitefish's projected housing demand. The Montana Department of Commerce estimates the community will need approximately 2,100 new housing units by 2045, and the 2025 Housing Needs Assessment indicates that roughly 75 percent of this demand is for households earning at or below 120% of Area Median Income. This translates to a need for about 1,600 units affordable to lower- and middle-income households. Providing a broader mix of housing types—rather than relying solely on large-lot or single-product development—allows the City to meet this demand more efficiently, improve affordability through scale and diversity, and better align housing supply with the incomes of the local workforce.

Objectives

- a. A broad mix of housing types—including duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, cottage courts, accessory dwelling units, and small-scale multifamily—should be allowed and encouraged in appropriate locations to meet the needs of diverse households and support long-term housing choice.
- b. Housing development should be prioritized in walkable areas with access to jobs, schools, transit, and everyday services in order to reduce transportation costs, improve livability, and better connect residents to daily needs.
- c. The City should increase the supply of workforce and attainable housing by using zoning tools, targeted incentives, and public-private partnerships, including programs such as the Legacy Home Program, density bonuses, and strategic use of city-owned land where appropriate.
- d. Land use policies, development standards, fee structures, and infrastructure investments should be evaluated and aligned to reduce barriers to housing production and lower the overall cost of development for both market-rate and nonprofit housing providers.
- e. Existing affordable housing options should be preserved by supporting strategies that protect naturally occurring affordable housing, minimize displacement, and promote housing stability for long-term residents.
- f. Housing policies should support residents at all stages of life by providing options that allow seniors to age in place, young adults to enter the housing market, and families to find housing that meets their changing needs.
- g. The City should collaborate with employers, housing organizations, neighboring jurisdictions, and state and federal partners to advance funding opportunities, land acquisition strategies, and long-term affordability solutions.

3. Preserve Community Character and Quality of Life: Whitefish will preserve its small-town character while enhancing parks, trails, public spaces, and everyday amenities that support community connection, safety, mobility, and overall well-being.

Protecting community character and quality of life is especially important as Whitefish prepares for an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 additional residents by 2045, growth that will place increased pressure on Downtown, established neighborhoods, and everyday community spaces. With a limited land base of approximately 4,700 developable acres, even modest increases in building scale, traffic, or intensity can quickly alter the human-scale character of historic streets, residential blocks, and neighborhood gathering places. By prioritizing investments in parks, trails, walkable streets, and neighborhood amenities, and by guiding growth in ways that respect existing development patterns, the City can accommodate change while preserving the small-town culture, local businesses, and sense of community that residents value and that define Whitefish's identity.

Objectives

- a. New development and redevelopment should reflect Whitefish's desired scale, architectural character, and established neighborhood patterns through clear design standards, high-quality materials, and thoughtful site design.
- b. Downtown should continue to be strengthened as the heart of the community, with its historic character protected and human-scaled development maintained. The 2018 Whitefish Downtown Business District Master Plan should serve as the primary guiding document for planning, investment, and reinvestment within the Downtown area.
- c. The City should protect lakeshore areas, mountain views, tree canopy, water resources, and habitat corridors that contribute to Whitefish's sense of place, environmental health, and scenic character.
- d. Parks, trails, and year-round recreational facilities should be expanded and connected to support active living, access to nature, and outdoor gathering opportunities for residents and visitors.
- e. Streets, sidewalks, and crossings should be designed and improved to support safe, comfortable walking, biking, and accessibility in all seasons, enhancing safety for users of all ages and abilities.
- f. Reinvestment in established neighborhoods and commercial areas should be encouraged to ensure Downtown, key corridors, and future neighborhood centers remain vibrant, welcoming, and scaled to the pedestrian experience.
- g. Public spaces such as plazas, event areas, and civic facilities should be created and enhanced to encourage social interaction and reinforce Whitefish's strong sense of community.
- h. Development should be managed to minimize impacts on quality of life by addressing building scale, traffic, noise, and lighting in ways that protect neighborhood livability and the city's small-town atmosphere.

- i. Public art, cultural heritage, and locally inspired design elements should be supported to reflect Whitefish's history, community identity, and relationship to the surrounding landscape.

DRAFT

4. Ensure Environmental Stewardship and Climate Readiness: Whitefish will protect its mountain environment, water resources, and wildlife habitat through responsible development while advancing climate-resilient strategies that reduce emissions, manage wildfire risk, and prepare for environmental change.

Environmental stewardship and climate readiness are essential for Whitefish given its forested setting and exposure to wildfire risk. Land use decisions directly influence emergency access, evacuation routes, and the ability of fire and medical services to respond effectively as the community grows. By directing development away from high-risk areas and incorporating resilient design and vegetation management, the City can reduce wildfire exposure, protect public safety, and safeguard the natural environment that defines Whitefish.

Objectives

- a. Wetlands, streams, floodplains, steep slopes, and wildlife habitat should be identified, mapped, and protected through appropriate land use designations, development standards, and conservation tools to reduce environmental impacts and guide responsible development.
- b. Wildfire risk at the community's edge should be reduced by applying land use, building, and vegetation standards consistent with Firewise principles, directing growth away from high-risk areas, and requiring defensible space in new development. The City's commitment to the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), anticipated in late 2026, is a worthy pursuit and this plan should serve as the primary guiding document for wildfire mitigation efforts.
- c. Surface and groundwater resources should be protected through the use of stormwater best management practices, green infrastructure, riparian buffers, and responsible landscaping that supports long-term water quality.
- d. The City should partner with nonprofits, schools, and public agencies to expand education and outreach related to water conservation, habitat protection, wildfire mitigation, wildlife connectivity, and sustainable living practices.
- e. New development should incorporate green infrastructure strategies such as bioswales, landscaped stormwater facilities, permeable pavements, and expanded tree canopy to manage stormwater, improve environmental performance, and support urban cooling.

5. Support a Resilient Local Economy: Whitefish will strengthen a diverse, year-round local economy by providing space for businesses to grow, supporting workforce housing, and investing in infrastructure that reinforces community character and long-term fiscal stability.

Supporting a resilient local economy is essential given that 76 percent of Whitefish employees commute from outside the city and 43 percent of local jobs are tourism-related, creating seasonal labor and transportation challenges. Expanding workforce housing and supporting walkable, locally oriented businesses can reduce commuting, stabilize the workforce, and strengthen year-round economic resilience while reinforcing Whitefish's small-town character.

Objectives

- a. The City should ensure adequate land and appropriate zoning for small businesses, light industrial uses, and year-round employment sectors in order to prevent the loss of commercial space to non-commercial uses and support a diverse local economy.
- b. Workforce housing opportunities should be expanded and protected by supporting housing types and locations that meet the needs of local employees, helping businesses attract and retain workers while reducing regional commuting pressures.
- c. Infrastructure investments in water, sewer, transportation, and broadband should be prioritized in areas that support long-term economic activity and help reduce the cost of doing business.
- d. Economic stability should be strengthened by encouraging diversification beyond seasonal tourism, including support for industries such as outdoor products, remote work, health care, arts, and professional services.
- e. Reinvestment and redevelopment should be encouraged along key corridors, particularly US Highway 93 South and Wisconsin Avenue, to create vibrant, connected districts that serve both residents and visitors.
- f. The City should collaborate with major employers, the school district, health care providers, and community organizations to better understand workforce needs, support training opportunities, and strengthen economic resilience.
- g. Growth decisions should be evaluated for their long-term fiscal impacts to ensure that development patterns generate sufficient revenue to maintain infrastructure and public services over time.

Land Use Background

The land use plan is a central component of Whitefish's Community Plan, guiding how land is used, developed, and conserved as the community continues to evolve. As Whitefish experiences sustained growth—driven by housing demand, tourism, and regional economic shifts—this element provides a clear framework for managing change while protecting the qualities that make the community unique.

The land use plan translates Whitefish's long-term vision into a physical pattern of neighborhoods, activity areas, employment centers, open spaces, and natural lands. It identifies where future housing, businesses, civic uses, and infrastructure are most appropriate, emphasizing efficient use of land and public services while safeguarding neighborhood character, scenic landscapes, water resources, and access to the outdoors. Particular attention is given to accommodating workforce housing in ways that fit the community's scale and identity.

In 2007, the City completed a Growth Policy that included recommendations regarding preservation of community character, improved environmental regulations, preservation of rural lands, etc., all of which remain important to the community today. The 2007 Growth Policy did not recommend specific areas for growth (or a growth boundary) or focus on growth projections:

Once these community attributes were identified, the consensus was to build a plan around what the community values, and let the "numbers" (of people, or households, etc.) fall out of that. What this means for a planning approach is simply that the Whitefish community will not use population and housing projections to dictate how many people or how many homes they must plan for.

With the adoption of the Montana Land Use Planning Act (MLUPA) in 2023, land use planning in Whitefish is now closely tied to long-term population and demographic projections. In response, this Land Use Element translates community input into recommendations for targeted growth areas, positioning the City as an active partner in shaping future development. This proactive approach helps focus public investment and planning efforts where growth is most appropriate and consistent with community priorities.

Land Use and Housing

The relationship between land use and housing is central to how a community grows, who it serves, and whether it remains livable and inclusive over time. Land use decisions determine where housing can be built, what types of housing are allowed, and how housing relates to jobs, services, schools, and transportation. Zoning and future land use designations shape whether a community provides a diverse range of housing options—such as apartments, townhomes, duplexes, and small-lot homes—or relies primarily on single-family development. These choices directly influence housing availability, affordability, and the ability of residents at different life stages and income levels to remain in the community.

In a growing community like Whitefish, aligning land use policy with housing needs is especially important. Accommodating workforce and attainable housing often requires thoughtful increases in density, strategic infill, and placement of housing near employment centers, transit routes, and daily services. When land use plans limit housing types or push development outward, housing costs tend to rise and commute distances increase, placing pressure on infrastructure and quality of life. By intentionally planning where and how housing is integrated into the community, the Land Use Plan helps ensure growth supports local workers, preserves neighborhood character, and strengthens long-term community resilience.

Land Use and Transportation

The relationship between land use and transportation is a foundational principle of urban planning that shapes how communities grow, move, and function. Decisions about where housing, jobs, services, and open spaces are located directly influence travel behavior, transportation demand, and infrastructure needs. Likewise, strategic investments in transportation can support appropriate, incremental development by improving access to existing neighborhoods and activity areas. To ensure coordinated and efficient growth, land use planning should guide transportation planning—not the reverse. When new road infrastructure extends into undeveloped areas without a clear land use framework, it often induces development not originally anticipated. This pattern can increase travel demand, require additional infrastructure investment, and place long-term financial burdens on the city and its taxpayers. Aligning transportation investments with adopted land use policies helps ensure growth occurs in a deliberate, fiscally responsible, and community-supported manner.

A Land Use Plan CAN

Guide Development

Provides a framework for where and how different types of development (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) should occur, ensuring orderly growth.

Promote Sustainability

Encourages the preservation of natural resources, open spaces, and environmentally sensitive areas, supporting long-term ecological balance.

Enhance Quality of Life

Helps create well-planned communities with accessible amenities, green spaces, and infrastructure to improve residents' overall well-being.

Minimize Land Use Conflicts

Provide guidance that separates incompatible land uses (e.g., industrial areas from residential neighborhoods) to minimize conflicts and enhance safety.

Support Economic Development

Identifies areas for commercial and industrial growth, helping to attract businesses, create jobs, and stimulate the local economy.

A Land Use Plan CANNOT

Control Market Forces

Cannot dictate or control real estate market dynamics, such as property values, demand for housing, or business investment decisions.

Guarantee Development

Cannot ensure the proposed developments will occur exactly as planned, as they depend on investment, economic conditions, and other external factors.

Predict the Future Accurately

Cannot foresee all future trends, challenges, or changes in the community, which may require adjustments to the plan over time.

Enforce Regulations

The plan itself does not have legal enforcement power; it relies on zoning laws, building codes, and other regulations to be implemented and enforced by local authorities.

Ensure Community Consensus

A land use plan cannot guarantee all community members will agree with its recommendations. While it aims to reflect the community's needs and goals, differing opinions and interests mean not everyone may be satisfied with the outcomes.

Current Trends and Influences

Population Projections

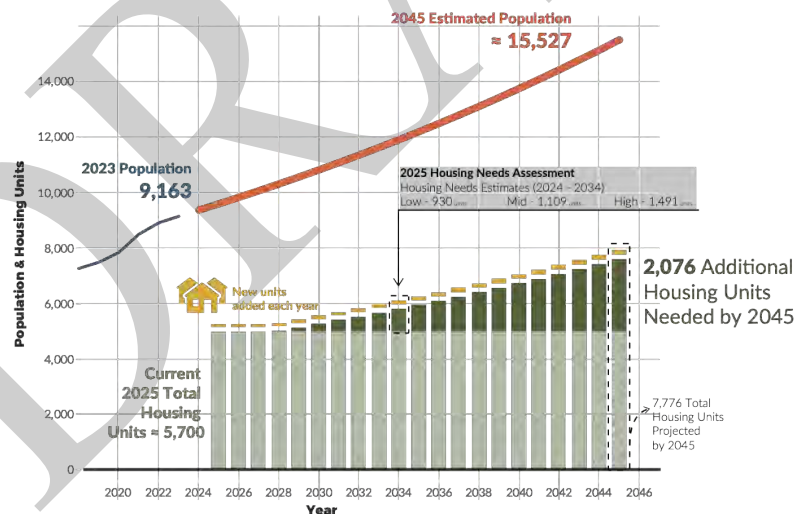
As noted in the Whitefish Demographics section of this Community Plan (p.____), the total fulltime and seasonal population of Whitefish is estimated to grow between approximately 3,000 and 5,000 people by 2045. It is important to note this number considers growth only within the existing city limits and does not account for annexations of any land within the planning boundary.

Housing Projections

Growth discussions are closely tied to the ongoing challenge of workforce housing. The Montana Department of Commerce projects the community will need approximately 2,100 new housing units by 2045, with roughly three-quarters needed for households earning less than 120% of the Area Median Income¹, according to the 2025 Housing Needs Assessment that estimated the percentages for income groups from 2024 - 2034. Extending those projections outward to 2045, in compliance with MLUPA requirements, suggests that around 1,600 of the estimated 2,100 units needed should serve lower-income to middle-income households.

Meeting this need will require increased density to improve affordability through economies of scale. But density alone won't solve the issue. The City will need to partner with the development community, consider rezoning key areas, and offer incentives—such as the Legacy Home Program, which provides bonus height or density in exchange for affordable or workforce housing. The City can also use resort tax revenues to help fund mixed-use projects that include affordable or workforce housing.

Montana Department of Commerce Housing Need Projections



Data Sources: 1) v2023 Population Estimates from the US Census Bureau. 2) v2021 eREMI County Population Projections. 3) 2022 5-year ACS (2018-2022). 4) Address Count Listing (US Census Bureau)

Current 2025 Total Housing Units	5,700
Projected 2045 Total Housing Units Needed	7,776
Additional Housing Units Needed by 2045	2,076

¹ The 2025 Housing Needs Assessment used 2025 Flathead County income limits from the Department of Housing and Urban Development which list the 100% median income for a 4-person household as \$88,400. For detailed information on households and income, see City of Whitefish 2025 Housing Needs Assessment, p. 26.

Existing Land Use Conditions

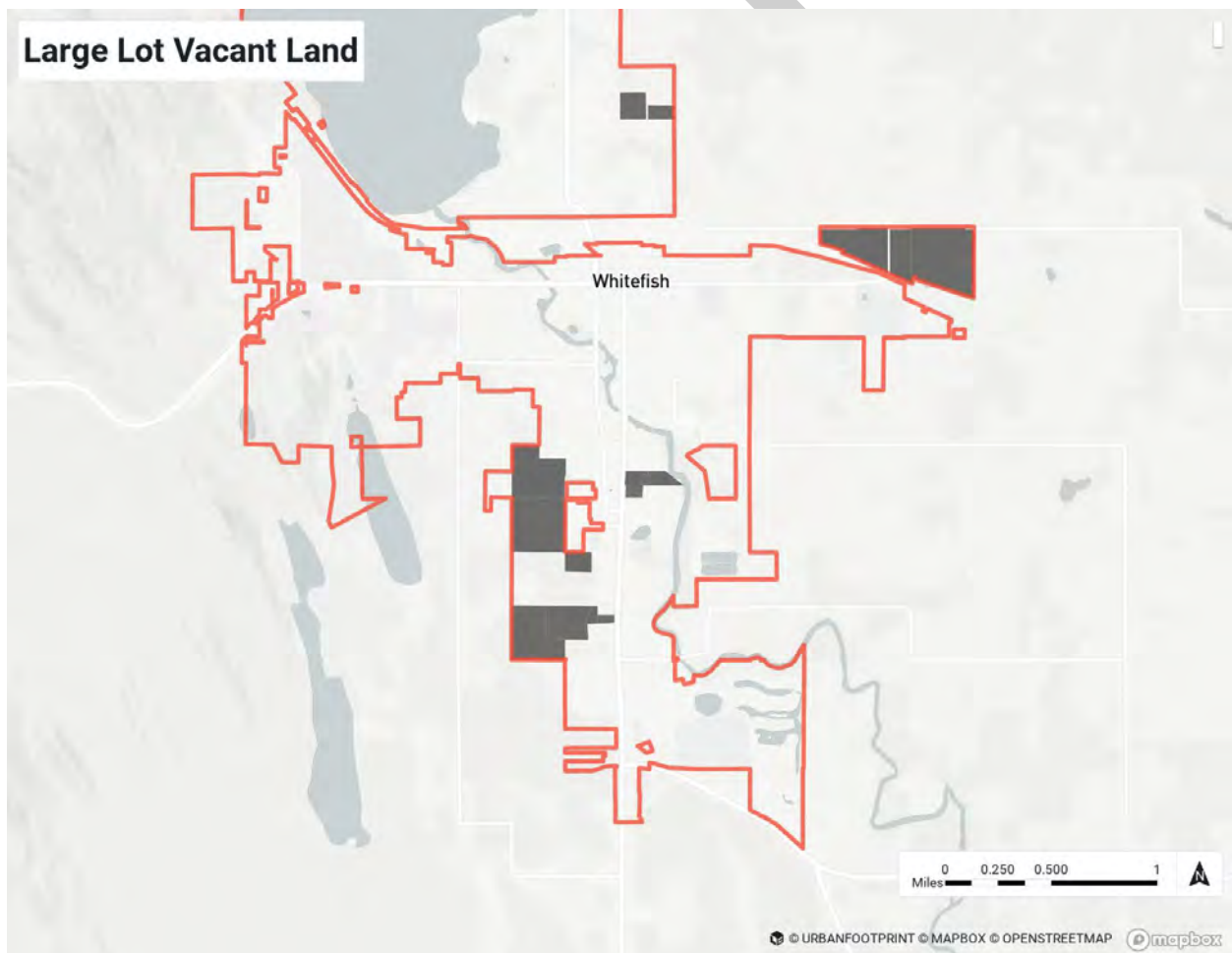
Although Whitefish's city limits total **8,107 acres**, nearly **40 percent** of that area consists of Whitefish Lake. As a result, only about **4,757 acres of land area** are available to accommodate growth, infrastructure, and community needs.

Of the 4,757 acres of land area, there are approximately **875 acres of vacant land** (nearly 20%) within the city limits.

Approximately **100 acres of the 875 acres are environmentally sensitive lands** (e.g., steep slopes, wetlands, etc.) and should be preserved in their current state.

Of the remaining vacant land, approximately **475 acres are in existing and entitled subdivisions** and another approximately **50 acres are commercially or industrially zoned** for business and economic opportunities.

There are approximately **250 acres that are relatively large lots (10+ contiguous acres) and not yet subdivided that** offer significant opportunities to absorb new growth and create new neighborhoods with a variety of housing typologies.



How To Plan for Growth per MLUPA

Pursuant to the growth estimates provided by the Montana Department of Commerce housing need projections, Whitefish must plan to accommodate an additional 2,100 housing units by 2045, the 20-year planning horizon for the Community Plan. In addition, the Economic Development element of the Community Plan includes a goal to "support local business retention and expansion and entrepreneurial opportunities." Both endeavors, residential and commercial growth, will require land use planning that will accommodate additional densities in targeted areas within the City.

Tough decisions lie ahead and achieving balance will require compromise. The ambition is to find a middle path that upholds the community's values while planning responsibly for its future. The role of the land use plan is to strike a balance among the following goals, guiding the community toward a thoughtful middle path.

Focus Growth Inward

Whitefish will prioritize growth within its existing city boundary to reinforce walkability, make efficient use of infrastructure, and protect the surrounding landscape. New development will strengthen existing neighborhoods and community edges rather than push outward into sensitive lands. When growth cannot be reasonably accommodated within the existing city boundary, strategic annexations in appropriate locations may be considered to meet long-term community needs.

Provide Housing Options and Affordability

Whitefish will expand access to a wide range of housing types—serving workers, families, seniors, and residents at all income levels. The city will encourage affordability and livability by aligning land use, incentives, and partnerships to meet long-term community housing needs.

Preserve Community Character and Quality of Life

Whitefish will preserve its unique small-town character while enhancing parks, trails, public spaces, and everyday amenities that foster community connection. Growth and reinvestment will support safety, mobility, and the well-being of residents and visitors alike.

Ensure Environmental Stewardship & Climate Readiness

Whitefish will safeguard its mountain environment, water resources, and wildlife habitat through responsible development and stewardship. The community will pursue climate-resilient strategies—reducing emissions, managing wildfire risk, and preparing for environmental change.

Support a Resilient Local Economy

Whitefish will support a diverse and resilient local economy by providing space for businesses to grow, ensuring workforce housing, and investing in infrastructure that supports year-round employment. Economic development will reinforce community character and ensure long-term financial stability for the city.

Together, these goals establish the policy foundation for directing future growth in a manner that is deliberate, coordinated, and responsive to community priorities. The Growth and Development Framework defined in this land use plan translates these goals into a spatial strategy—identifying where growth should be focused, the form it should take, and how land use decisions can be aligned with infrastructure, housing needs, environmental constraints, and economic objectives. This framework provides the organizing structure for implementing the land use plan over the twenty-year planning horizon.

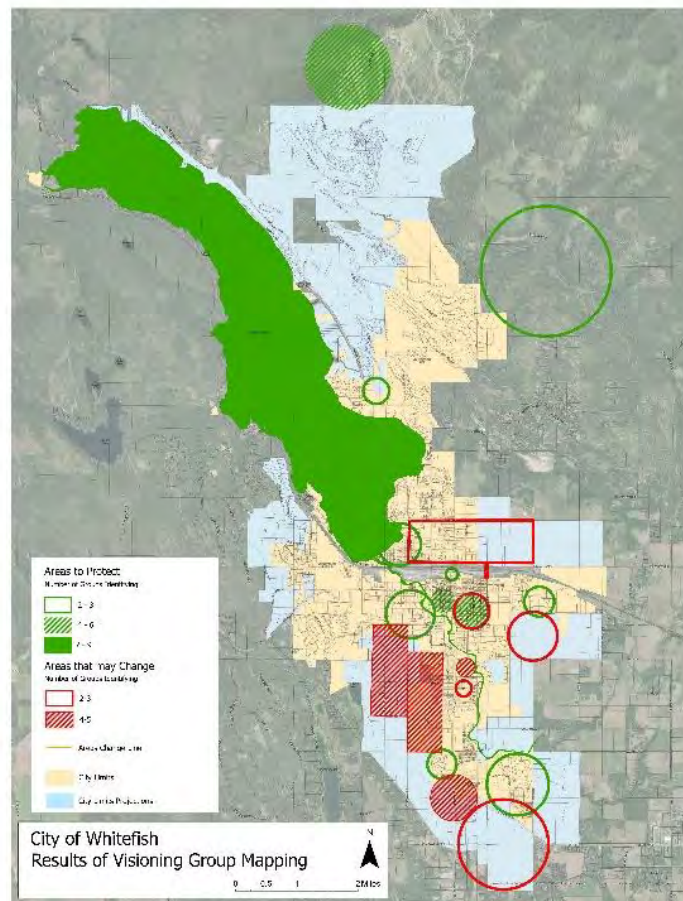
Public Engagement for the Land Use Plan

Public engagement played a central role in shaping the Land Use Plan. Engagement activities were designed to gather community input on growth, change, and land use over time—where future development should occur, what form it should take, and how it should relate to existing neighborhoods, infrastructure, and environmental conditions. Engagement occurred in multiple phases and formats, supporting early visioning as well as later testing and refinement of draft land use concepts. The Land Use Plan reflects priorities expressed consistently across these phases and balances a range of perspectives. The resulting framework guides long-term decision-making by describing desired development patterns and community character, rather than prescribing parcel-level outcomes.

Early Visioning and Community Values (February and April 2024)

Initial engagement for the Land Use Plan occurred prior to the consultant-led phase of work and focused on understanding community values, priorities, and concerns related to growth and development. City-led visioning workshops and related online engagement asked participants what they value about Whitefish, what they would like to protect, and how they view future growth over time. More than 250 participants engaged during the early visioning phase across multiple workshops and online activities, generating extensive written and mapped input that informed subsequent phases of the Land Use Plan.

Early Input from the Public Indicating Areas of Preservation vs. Change



This early input highlighted strong community interest in maintaining neighborhood character, preserving access to natural areas, and retaining a walkable, connected community. Participants also identified housing affordability and workforce housing as growing challenges, along with concerns about traffic, infrastructure capacity, and environmental constraints. These themes established a foundation for subsequent phases of land use exploration.

Building on the initial visioning work, a second visioning workshop focused on translating community values into more place-based and spatially specific input. City-led workshops used mapping exercises to explore where change may be appropriate, where stability is most important, and how different areas of the community function today.

Participants identified corridors, centers, and areas near existing services as locations with potential to accommodate future growth, while also expressing a desire to protect established residential neighborhoods. Input during this phase reinforced the importance of considering transitions between different land use intensities, as well as the need to account for environmental features, access limitations, and infrastructure capacity when planning for future development.

Participation

- February 2024 workshops: over 100 participants
- April 2024 workshops: nearly 150 participants across four sessions

Key Quantitative Findings

Across all quadrants, the most frequently cited themes (by count of written responses) included:

- Trails / walkability (highest frequency across all quadrants)
- Open space, river corridors, and lake access
- Historic neighborhoods and downtown character
- Farmland and rural edges
- Wildlife corridors and environmental protection

Common improvement concerns included:

- Transportation safety and congestion
- Lack of sidewalks or trail connections
- Parking pressures
- Housing affordability
- Corridor conditions

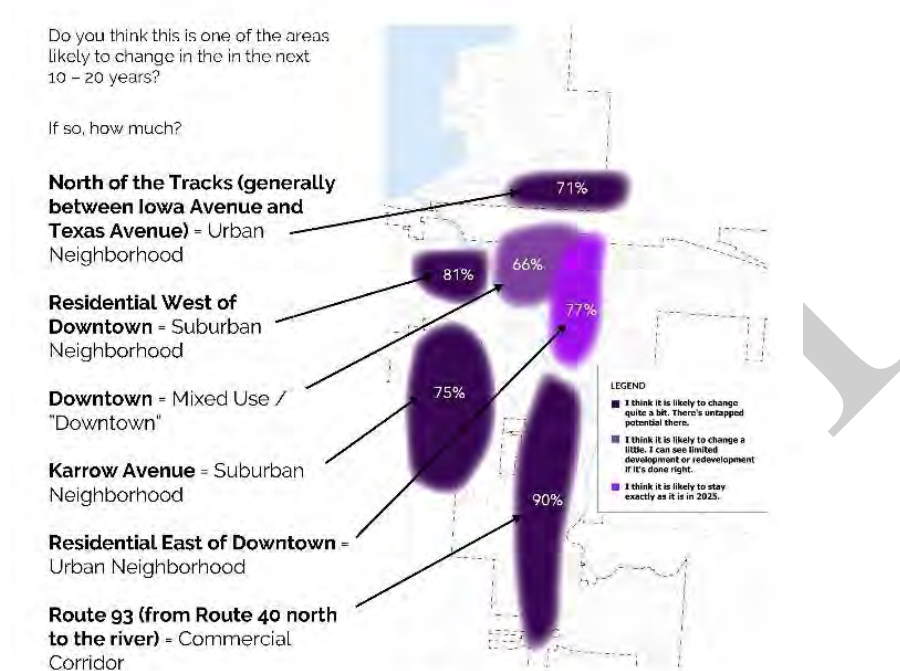
Land Use Concept Testing (September 2025) and Online Land Use Survey and Broader Validation (October 2025)

In September 2025, consultant-led, in-person land use workshops were conducted to test emerging land use concepts and place type frameworks. Across multiple workshop groups, participants identified similar spatial patterns and raised consistent questions about transportation, access, and infrastructure. Trace-paper mapping highlighted corridors such as U.S. Highway 93, Wisconsin Avenue, Spokane Avenue, and major gateways as areas where change, reinvestment, or improved multimodal access may be appropriate, while established neighborhoods and river corridors were more frequently identified as priorities for stability and protection. Discussions focused on overall development patterns rather than parcel-level zoning, providing qualitative feedback on the clarity and applicability of the place type framework.

To broaden participation and validate themes identified during the in-person workshops, an online land use survey was conducted in October 2025, with approximately 150 participants. Survey responses reinforced patterns identified earlier in the process. Respondents consistently

distinguished between areas where change is expected or supported—particularly along major corridors, gateways, and larger opportunity sites—and areas where stability and preservation are priorities, including established neighborhoods, access to open space, and areas with known environmental constraints.

Online Input Indicating Areas Most Likely to Change



The survey also documented differing perspectives related to growth, density, and pace of change, helping to illustrate the range of viewpoints that the land use plan must balance.

Participation

- September 17, 2025 workshops: over 100 participants across multiple workshop groups
- October 2025 online survey: nearly 150 respondents

Key Observations

Across tables, consistent patterns emerged:

- Support for mixed-use and neighborhood-center concepts in select locations
- Emphasis on improving multimodal corridors
- Caution around expansion into environmentally sensitive or rural-edge areas

Summary of Quantitative Results

Area / Corridor	Top Place Type or Street Type (share of responses)	Top 10–20 Year Change Outlook (share)
Downtown	Mixed-use District / Downtown (≈81%)	Likely to change <i>a little</i> (66%)
Route 93 (Route 40 to the river)	Commercial Corridors / Nodes (70%)	Likely to change <i>quite a bit</i> (90%)
Residential East of Downtown	Urban Neighborhood (≈88%)	Likely to <i>stay the same</i> (77%)

Area / Corridor	Top Place Type or Street Type (share of responses)	Top 10–20 Year Change Outlook (share)
Residential West of Downtown	Sub-urban Neighborhood (≈42%)	Likely to change <i>quite a bit</i> (81%)
Karrow Avenue	Sub-urban Neighborhood (≈55%)	Likely to change <i>quite a bit</i> (75%)
North of the Tracks (Iowa–Texas)	Urban Neighborhood (≈48%)	Likely to change <i>quite a bit</i> (71%)
Wisconsin Avenue (tracks to Big Mountain)	Community Corridor (≈56%)	—
Second Street (Kalispell to tracks)	District Corridor (≈59%)	—
Columbia Avenue (Second St to river)	District Corridor (≈55%)	—
Route 93 (south of river)	Regional / City Corridor (≈81%)	—
Route 93 (north of river)	Community Corridor (≈42%)	—

Draft Review and Public Feedback on Growth Locations (November–December 2025)

In November and December 2025, draft land use concepts and potential growth locations were presented for public review. Participants reviewed draft place type descriptions and provided feedback through dot mapping exercises and written comments on possible future growth locations. A companion online engagement opportunity in December attracted approximately 140 additional participants and presented the same materials and questions.

Feedback during this phase reinforced themes identified earlier in the process. When evaluating potential growth areas within the city, most respondents selected one of the identified opportunity sites rather than indicating a preference for no additional growth within city limits. Taken together, responses from the in-person open house and the companion online survey indicated a clear preference for directing future housing to a limited number of opportunity sites within or immediately adjacent to the existing city boundary. Within these locations, participants most often selected compact, walkable place types—particularly Mixed Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Centers—over lower-density or more dispersed development patterns.

Participation

- November 2025 in-person open house: over 80 participants
- December 2025 online survey: nearly 140 respondents

Key Quantitative Findings

- Inside the city limits, Location C clearly stands out as the preferred growth area, capturing just over half of all top-choice selections, with strong support from both in-person and online participants.
- Locations A and B function primarily as secondary options inside the city, together accounting for most second-choice votes, while opposition to additional inside-city growth remains relatively low.
- Outside the city limits, preferences are more dispersed, with Location J emerging as the leading top choice, followed closely by Locations D and E rather than a single dominant area. Responses suggest sensitivity to outward growth, with some participants preferring to limit development outside the city limits.

- Place type preferences are consistent and patterned: Neighborhood Centers align most strongly with Location C, Mixed Neighborhoods with Locations B and J, and Compact Suburban Neighborhoods with Locations A, D, and E.

Summary of Quantitative Results

	Location A	Location B	Location C	No Growth	Location D	Location E	Location F	Location G	Location H	Location I	Location J	No Growth
Top Choice												
In Person	5 6%	12 19%	46 72%	1 2%	17 27%	12 19%	3 5%	3 5%	3 5%	4 6%	20 31%	2 3%
Online	36 29%	27 22%	53 43%	8 6%	12 12%	16 16%	10 10%	14 14%	7 7%	8 8%	20 20%	15 15%
Total	41 22%	39 21%	99 53%	9 5%	29 17%	28 17%	13 8%	17 10%	10 6%	12 7%	40 24%	17 10%
Second Choices												
In Person	28 45%	15 24%	19 31%	0 0%	7 12%	13 22%	6 10%	5 8%	2 3%	7 12%	18 30%	2 3%
Online	34 31%	44 40%	27 24%	6 5%	13 14%	21 22%	11 12%	8 8%	11 12%	9 9%	8 8%	14 15%
Total	62 36%	50 34%	46 27%	6 3%	20 13%	34 22%	17 11%	13 8%	13 8%	16 10%	26 17%	16 10%

Final Review and Ongoing Engagement (January 2026 and Beyond)

The final phase of public engagement occurred in January 2026 and included a public open house and online survey. Community members provided feedback on draft land use recommendations using dot voting and written comments. Dot-voting results showed majority support for updating zoning regulations to align with the Land Use Plan, protecting the character and scale of downtown, focusing growth inward on larger opportunity sites, and prioritizing walkable, mixed-use development patterns over low-density outward expansion. For several recommendations, supportive votes accounted for roughly two-thirds to three-quarters of all dots placed, depending on the topic, indicating broad support despite differing viewpoints expressed in written comments. A matching online survey received approximately 65 responses, allowing participants who could not attend in person to review the same materials and provide input.

Participation

- January 2026 in-person open house: over 45 participants
- January 2026 online survey: over 60 respondents

Key Quantitative Findings

- Broad support for modernizing zoning and aligning regulations with the Land Use Plan. Both online and in-person participants consistently supported updating the zoning ordinance, aligning zoning with place types, and focusing growth inward within the existing city boundary.

- Downtown height and character remain the most divisive issue. While online respondents leaned toward support, in-person participants expressed significantly more skepticism, suggesting concern about whether the proposed approach truly protects downtown character.
- Strong in-person enthusiasm for process improvements and regional coordination. Streamlining conditional use approvals and coordinating with neighboring jurisdictions received some of the strongest in-person support, indicating a desire for clearer, more predictable processes and regional problem-solving.
- Annexation ideas generated caution online but stronger acceptance in person. Online respondents showed mixed support—especially for certain locations—while in-person feedback leaned more favorable, suggesting annexation acceptance may increase when discussed in a facilitated, map-based setting.

Summary of Quantitative Results

Statement	Online (Agree + Mostly Agree)	In-person support (Agree + Mostly Agree)
Zoning Ordinance Update	75.4%	67.5%
Protect the Character and Scale of Downtown	64.6%	36.6%*
Update the Zoning Map to Match Place Types	72.3%	84.6%
Create Character-based Standards (Heritage Urban Neighborhood)	61.5%	52.5%
Integrate Design & Development Standards into the Zoning Ordinance	56.9%	47.7%
Consider Updated District Naming (Commercial Zoning Intensity)	70.8%	64.9%
Refine Conditional Use Allowances by Zoning District	61.5%	84.6%
Collaborate with Neighboring Jurisdictions to Plan Regionally	—	100.0%
Grow Inward & Target Large Lot Areas (Locations A/B/C)	70.8%	88.6%
Annexation Area – Location K	60.0%	90.0%
Annexation Area – Location L	58.5%	100.0%
Annexation Area – Location M	46.2%	75.9%

* The consultant team received feedback indicating some confusion regarding this recommendation. Some participants interpreted the recommendation as a proposal to increase allowable building heights in Downtown to 60 feet. In fact, the recommendation does not seek to increase height allowances but rather outlines mitigation measures intended to protect Downtown character in response to state law requirements under MLUPA, which require the City to allow buildings up to 60 feet in height in the Downtown.

Public engagement will continue beyond adoption of the Community Plan through implementation efforts, regulatory updates, and project-level decision-making. The Land Use Plan is designed to provide long-term guidance while allowing flexibility to respond to changing conditions and continued community input.

Engagement Analysis and Use of Results

Throughout the engagement process, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to interpret individual comments in the context of broader participation trends. Early phases

emphasized facilitated discussion and collaborative mapping to identify values, concerns, and spatial patterns. Later phases paired in-person engagement with matching online surveys to validate findings across a wider audience and reduce the influence of isolated viewpoints.

Input from each phase was reviewed in aggregate, with emphasis placed on recurring themes, consistent spatial patterns, and majority responses across engagement formats, time periods, and participant groups. While individual comments and concerns were documented and considered, the Land Use Plan's recommendations are grounded in patterns that emerged repeatedly across engagement formats and over time.

Summary of Key Engagement Metrics

The table below summarizes participation levels and selected quantitative results from major engagement phases. This summary is intended to provide a clear, high-level reference for how public input informed the Land Use Plan.

Engagement Phase	Format	Approx. Participants / Responses	Key Quantitative Takeaways
Early Visioning (Feb–Apr 2024)	Workshops + Online	250+ participants	Trails and walkability most frequently cited theme across all quadrants; strong emphasis on neighborhood character, open space, and natural resource protection
Concept Testing (Sept 2025)	In-person Workshops	100+ participants	Corridors and gateways identified as different land use types; some neighborhoods prioritized for stability
Validation Survey (Oct 2025)	Online Survey	150+ responses	Respondents distinguished clearly between areas suitable for change and areas prioritized for preservation
Draft Review (Nov–Dec 2025)	Open House + Online	85+ in person; 140 online responses	93.5% selected one of three identified in-city growth locations; ~53% selected Location C as top choice; 70%+ favored compact, walkable place types at higher-intensity sites
Final Review (Jan 2026)	Open House + Online	45+ in person; 65 online responses	Majority of dot votes supported key recommendations, including zoning alignment, inward growth, and walkable development patterns

Growth and Development Framework for Land Use Planning

The growth and development framework for this land use plan reflects the community's consistent desire to balance growth with the preservation of character. Community input throughout the Community Plan process emphasized accommodating future development while protecting the Downtown as the economic hub, maintaining established neighborhoods, and preserving surrounding rural lands and natural habitat.

By prioritizing infill and reinvestment within the city's existing built footprint, this framework promotes efficient use of infrastructure, reduces the need for outward expansion beyond areas targeted for possible annexation, and supports a more compact, walkable, and fiscally responsible pattern of growth. Concentrating development inward allows the city to manage growth deliberately while reinforcing neighborhood character and environmental stewardship.

Achieving this vision will require adherence to the following three components that make up the growth and development framework for Whitefish:

***Place-Based
Growth***

***Protect and Transition
Community Boundaries***

***Preserve and Build Upon
Local Character***

Place-Based Growth

Place-based growth focuses on shaping development around the distinct character, function, and setting of different areas of the community rather than applying uniform standards citywide. In Whitefish, this approach reflects how the city already works: Downtown has evolved as a compact, walkable hub anchored by local businesses, civic spaces, and historic buildings, while surrounding neighborhoods express a range of residential patterns and character shaped by when they were constructed, access, and proximity to natural amenities.

Place-based planning builds on these existing conditions, ensuring new development responds to its context—reinforcing what makes each area recognizable and valued—rather than introducing forms or intensities that feel out of place. The intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Denver Street illustrates place-based growth, functioning as a small neighborhood node that provides locally oriented restaurants and services.

For Whitefish, place-based growth offers a practical framework for accommodating change while protecting community character. By directing housing, services, and employment opportunities to locations best suited to absorb growth—such as infill sites—the city can support workforce housing and economic vitality without eroding the qualities that define its neighborhoods or surrounding landscape.

Community Input and Direction

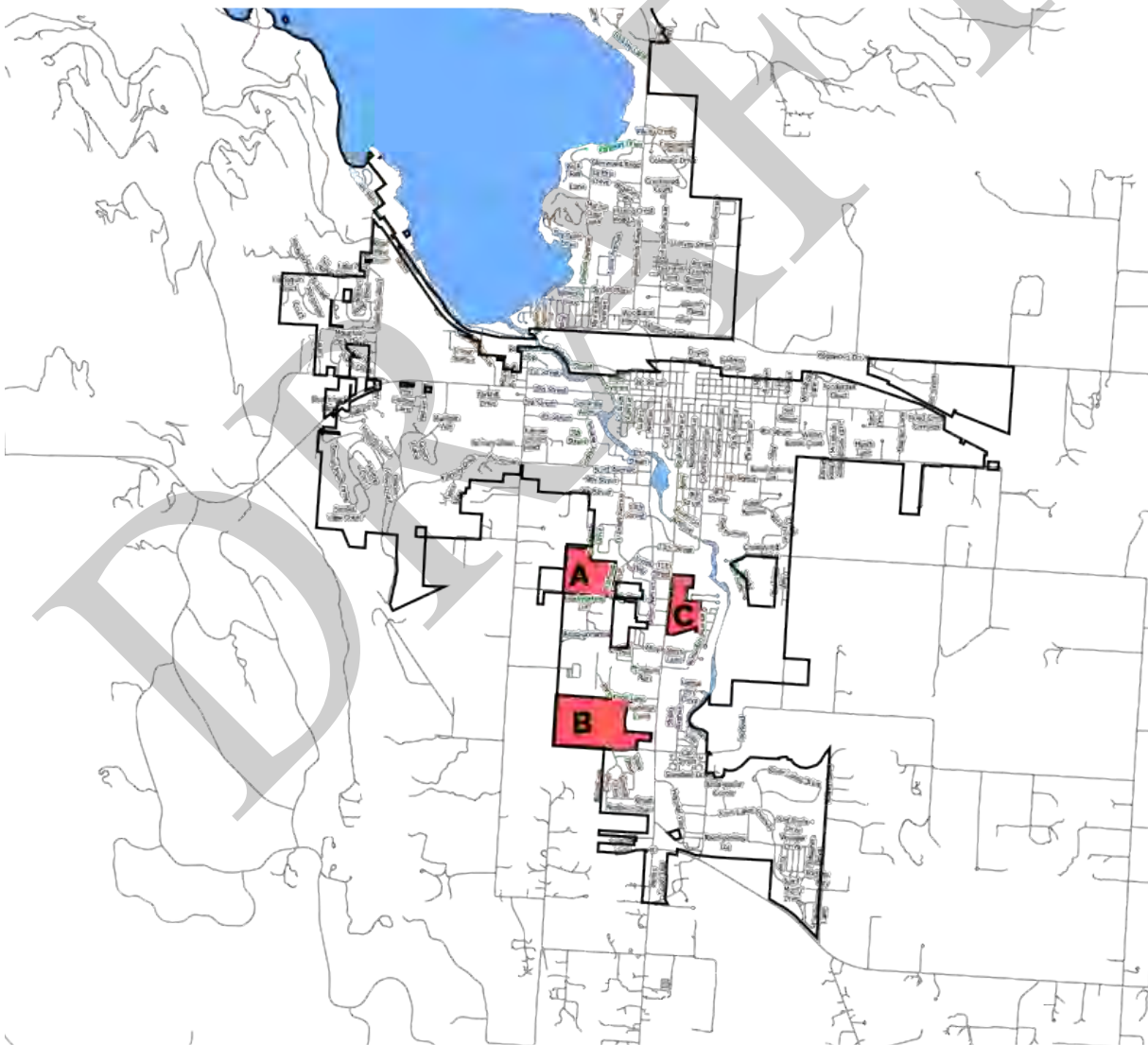
Community input during the Community Plan outreach process was extensive, particularly on land use planning issues affecting Whitefish. During engagement efforts in February and April 2024, participants identified areas where change was both likely and supportable. Building on this input and informed by the identification of large vacant parcels through the existing conditions analysis, subsequent community visioning sessions presented residents with three largely undeveloped locations within the City's existing boundaries and invited feedback on where future growth should be focused.

- Location A** – the land located north of 18th Street West and west of Flathead Avenue
- Location B** – the land to the west of US 93 and south of Park Knoll Lane
- Location C** – the mall (as a redevelopment opportunity) and the vacant land located to the north of Greenwood Drive

Community input was relatively balanced across the three potential sites, though Location C emerged as the most preferred option for future growth. Together, the three locations encompass approximately 115 acres and represent meaningful opportunities for the City to address both current and long-term growth pressures.

Accommodating this growth, however, will require changes to existing zoning classifications, as the current designations would not support the intensity or mix of development needed to meet future community needs.

Locations to Accommodate Growth Within the City's Existing Boundary



Protect and Transition Community Boundaries

Protecting and managing the community's edge is a key component of the Community Plan and land use plan under the Montana Land Use Planning Act (MLUPA). Clearly identifying where urban development is intended—and where it is not—helps the City plan for orderly growth, coordinate public facilities and services, and reduce land use conflicts at the interface between developed and undeveloped lands. In Whitefish, these edges often coincide with sensitive natural landscapes, working lands, public lands, and open space that contribute to the community's environmental quality and long-term economic vitality.

Consistent with MLUPA, the City should use land use designations such as place types, zoning districts, and development standards to establish clear and intentional transition areas between urban development and adjacent rural or natural lands. These transition areas may include lower-intensity land uses, graduated density, increased setbacks, open space requirements, or conservation-based tools such as clustering or easements, where appropriate, for edges that should be protected.

Recognizing that protecting the edges to maintain the character of the rural or natural lands is of primary importance, it is also true that some areas along the City's boundary are likely to evolve, or change substantially, over the next 20 years to accommodate growth in compliance with MLUPA. In response, the City may need to consider the strategic annexation of contiguous lands that present opportunities to establish new, well-designed neighborhoods. These areas could accommodate a range of housing types, including workforce housing, while ensuring growth occurs in an orderly manner and remains compatible with surrounding development and consistent with the City's adopted Community Plan.

Community Input and Direction

During two community visioning open houses, residents were asked to evaluate ten potential annexation areas that could accommodate future growth. Participants were invited to share their preferences regarding where growth should occur and how it could be integrated with the existing community.

These locations were identified based on their proximity to the current city boundary, feasibility of extending infrastructure and services, and input received earlier in the Community Plan outreach process. In prior engagement efforts, the community characterized these areas as "likely" or "very likely" to experience change, making them appropriate candidates for further evaluation. The ten locations are described below.

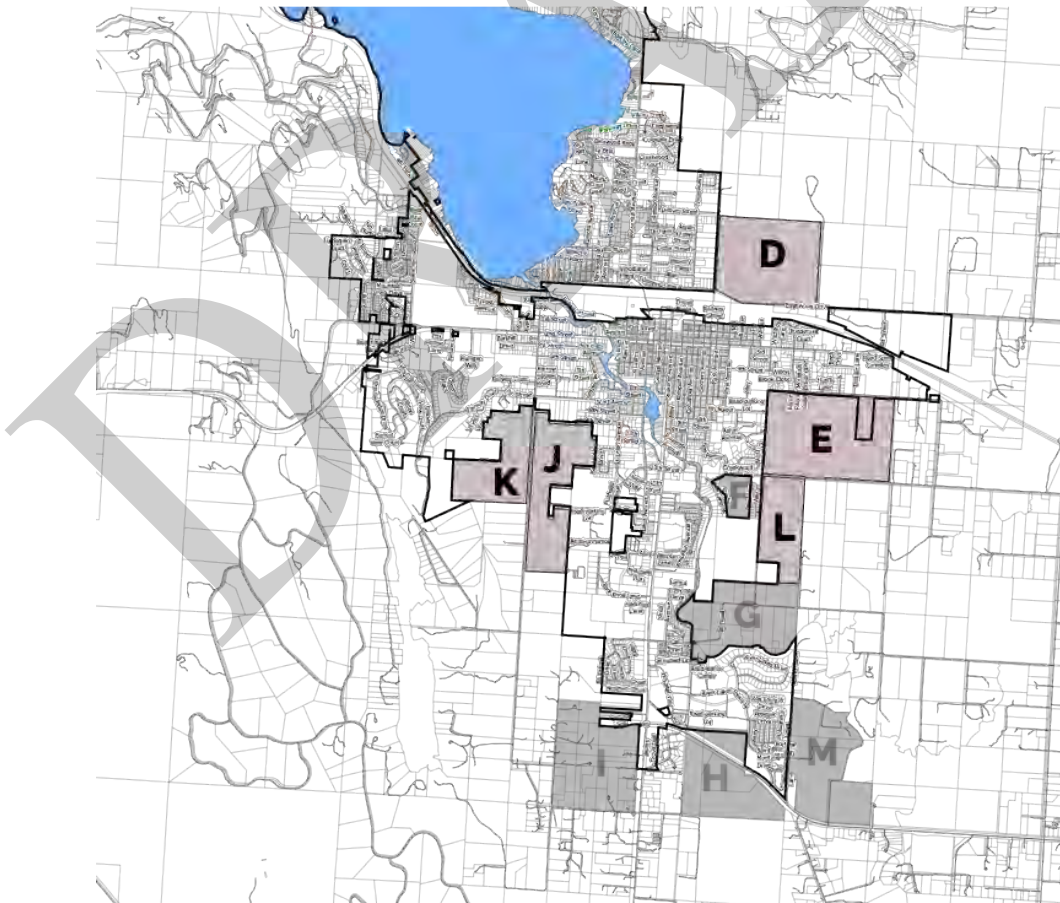
- Location D** – the land located north of the railroad tracks and east of Texas Avenue
- Location E** – the land located east of Monegan Road and north of Voerman Road, east to Armory Road
- Location F** – the land located south of Voerman Road and west of Monegan Road, to the west of the Trailview Homes development
- Location G** – the land generally surrounding the JP Road and Monegan Road intersection, on the south side of the City and northeast of the Whitefish River
- Location H** – the land on the far south side of the City, at the southeast corner of US 93 and Route 40, and east to Whitefish Stage Road
- Location I** – the land on the far south side of the City, west corner of US 93 where Route 40 intersects US 93 and west to Old Morris Trail and south to Blanchard Lake Road
- Location J** – the land on the west side of the City, east to Karrow Avenue, and north of Lamb Lane

- Location K** – the land located west of Karrow Avenue, south of Seventh Street West, and north of Lost Loon Trail
- Location L** – the land located east of Monegan Road, south of Voerman Road, and north of the water treatment plant (on the west side of the Monegan Road)
- Location M** – the land located east of Kallner Lane, north of Highway 40, and south of Kallner Lane

Community input showed the strongest support for Locations D, E, J, K, and L as potential long-term growth areas. Together, these locations encompass approximately 700 acres and present notable development opportunities due to their proximity to existing City services and Downtown (each is within roughly one mile). **While these areas may be appropriate for future expansion, development should be considered only after infill opportunities within the existing city limits have been substantially utilized**, particularly within Locations A, B, and C. Those sites should be prioritized for rezoning, increased density, and a broader mix of housing types, supported by City incentives, before outward expansion is pursued.

Any annexation of these locations should be approached deliberately and on a case-by-case basis. Given Montana's annexation requirements, each area may be considered only if its property owners support annexation and the City determines it is appropriate to meet long-term community needs.

Locations to Accommodate Growth Outside the City's Existing Boundary



Preserve and Build upon Local Character

A quick review of the ExploreWhitefish website reveals the following about the character of Whitefish:

*A Whitefish is a **small, vibrant mountain community** in northwest Montana known for its **strong sense of place, outdoor lifestyle**, and welcoming character. Nestled on the eastern shore of **Whitefish Lake** and framed by the **Rocky Mountains**, the city combines a **tight-knit small-town atmosphere** with a **lively and walkable downtown of local shops, restaurants, galleries, and community events**. Its **historic roots as a railroad and logging town** have shaped a built environment and culture that locals cherish, even as the community has grown into a **year-round recreation destination with skiing at Whitefish Mountain Resort** and abundant **access to trails, water, and public spaces**.*

Very quickly, a person who has never set foot in Whitefish can easily understand the character of the Whitefish community. And more importantly, for those who have had the opportunity to visit the community or for those who call Whitefish home, the character description is fully accurate. The tight-knit small-town atmosphere is unmistakable as is the sense of the community's historic roots as one walks down Central Avenue and into a nearby residential neighborhood – the scale of the buildings, the variety of architecture, the tree-lined streets, etc. come together to create a unique community character.

The residents of Whitefish, through various community visioning events, have been very clear that the preservation of the local character is a primary goal of the Community Plan. Preserving Whitefish's community character requires more than regulating land use through conventional zoning districts alone. While zoning establishes what is allowed, it does not fully capture the form, feel, and function that define the places residents value—from established neighborhoods and neighborhood-scale commercial areas to the downtown core and rural edges. As growth continues, the City must guide development in a way that reflects local context, reinforces distinct patterns of development, and ensures new projects contribute positively to their surroundings. This plan introduces a more place-based or place-focused approach to land use—one that considers building scale, design, connectivity, and the relationship between uses—to help ensure future development strengthens Whitefish's identity while accommodating change in a thoughtful and predictable manner.

What Are Place Types?

Place Types shape the future of the community by focusing on the *form, character, and function* of places rather than land use alone. They describe how areas are expected to look and feel—addressing building scale, streetscape elements, right-of-way design, and the relationship between development and public space. By illustrating both existing and desired conditions, Place Types help residents, decision-makers, and developers visualize how growth can occur in ways to reinforce community character while accommodating change. When mapped, a Place Type is a geographic classification that guides zoning and development standards over time, ensuring change occurs in a way to reinforce community identity, support walkability and livability, and respond to local context.

The following Place Types best describe the form, character, and function of the community. The following pages provide narrative and visual descriptions for each Place Type applicable to Whitefish.

Place Type Descriptions

Heritage Urban Neighborhood

Heritage Urban Neighborhoods feature small lots with modest mostly single-family homes—often with front porches, shallow setbacks, and alley access—that collectively form a fine-grained, walkable pattern. Blocks are short and gridded, producing frequent intersections, high connectivity, and direct links to Downtown. Sidewalks are generally continuous on both sides of most streets, complemented by mature street trees that create a cohesive canopy and convey a strong sense of history and place. Architectural design is varied but generally from the same era and maintains a compatible scale and rhythm; parking is often behind homes or on-street, supporting a pedestrian-oriented public realm.

Future State

Sensitive reinvestment—such as ADUs, rehabilitation of older structures, and context-appropriate infill—should reinforce the neighborhood's human-scale character while improving accessibility, safety, and tree-canopy health. Form requirements will be needed to ensure infill is compatible with existing character.



Typical Defining Features

- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: single-unit, duplex
 - Secondary: accessory dwelling units, schools, daycares
- **Lots**
 - Width: 25-50 ft
 - Front setback: 10-25 ft
 - Parking: on-street, side yard driveway, rear yard, front yard driveways are not the norm
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 1 ½ to 2 story / 30 ft
 - Entry feature: Porch, stoop, pediment, etc.
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Yes

Heritage Downtown Neighborhood

Heritage Downtown Neighborhoods are located at the edges of Downtown and in areas historically shaped by early residential and mixed residential patterns that supported the city's commercial core. These neighborhoods retain a strong urban residential character defined by compact blocks, walkable streets, and close proximity to shops, employment, transit, and civic spaces, and they provide opportunities for modestly higher residential intensity in a manner compatible with Whitefish's small-town character. Development may include small- to mid-scale multifamily buildings, courtyard apartments, townhome-style residences, and converted large homes, generally accommodating up to approximately four to eight dwelling units per building, with an emphasis on human-scaled massing, articulated facades, traditional roof forms, street-oriented entries, and parking located to the side or rear to support a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

Future State

Future change in Heritage Downtown Neighborhoods should support context-sensitive infill and reinvestment that adds housing choice and supports nearby employment and services without overwhelming neighborhood character. Development should reinforce walkability, contribute to housing diversity—including workforce and attainable housing—and respect established patterns of scale and form. Thoughtfully designed multifamily development in these areas provides an important transition between Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods while maintaining the architectural character and livability that define Whitefish.



Typical Defining Features

- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: single-unit, duplex, triplex, quadplex, small multi-unit (up to +/-6 units per structure)
 - Secondary: accessory dwelling units, schools, daycares, general services (e.g., professional offices, personal services, etc.)
- **Lots**
 - Width: 25-50 ft typical but larger lots for multi-unit buildings
 - Front setback: 20-25 ft
 - Parking: on-street, side yard driveway, rear yard, front yard driveways are not the norm while multi-unit buildings should have parking located behind the building
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 1 ½ to 3 story / 35 ft
 - Entry feature: Porch, stoop, pediment, or entryway for multi-unit buildings, etc.
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Yes

Urban Edge Neighborhood

Urban Edge neighborhoods blend single-family homes with duplexes and scattered small multifamily buildings, offering a broader range of housing choices that support age and income diversity. Lot sizes are generally consistent within each housing type, but block sizes and shapes are more irregular than in the Heritage Urban Neighborhood, reflecting incremental growth in the areas just outside the Heritage Urban Neighborhood. Sidewalk coverage is incomplete and streetscape elements-street trees, lighting, and setbacks-vary by block, contributing to a less uniform public realm.

Future State

Future change should focus on context-sensitive infill (including missing-middle and ADUs), completing the sidewalk and bikeway network, and targeted streetscape upgrades to calm traffic and reinforce safe, comfortable connections to nearby centers and transit.



Typical Defining Features

- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: single-unit, duplex, triplex and quadplex
 - Secondary: accessory dwelling units, schools, daycares
- **Lots**
 - Width: 25-50 ft
 - Front setback: 10-25 ft
 - Parking: on-street, side yard driveway, rear yard
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 2 story / 35 ft
 - Entry feature: Porch, stoop, pediment, etc.
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Yes

Compact Suburban Neighborhood

Compact Suburban Neighborhoods accommodate smaller lots, townhomes, cottage courts, small-lot (<2,500SF) development, and other low-rise "missing-middle" housing that gently increases density while keeping a suburban feel. Blocks are shorter and more connected than in conventional subdivisions, with continuous sidewalks, street trees, and shallow-to-moderate front setbacks that create an almost urban form at a comfortable, two- to three-story scale. Garages and parking are tucked to the side or rear where feasible, allowing active front doors and small greens or pocket parks to shape the streetscape.

Future State

Future development should emphasize context-sensitive transitions to adjacent neighborhoods, multimodal connections to nearby schools and shopping, and high-quality architecture and materials that read cohesive without being uniform.



Typical Defining Features

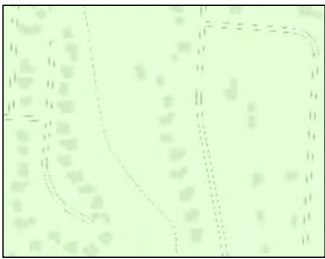
- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: single-unit, duplex, triplex, quadplex and other missing middle housing types
 - Secondary: accessory dwelling units, schools, daycares
- **Lots**
 - Width: 25-60 ft
 - Front setback: 20-25 ft
 - Parking: on-street, side yard driveway, rear yard
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 3 story / 42 ft
 - Entry feature: Porch, stoop, pediment, etc.
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Yes

Suburban Neighborhood

Suburban Neighborhoods are predominantly single-family detached areas on larger lots, with occasional duplexes at corners or along edges. Streetscapes generally follow a consistent, recognizable pattern: canopy street trees, (often) continuous sidewalk network, deeper front-yard setbacks, and homes of similar vintage, height, and massing that create a cohesive character. Blocks are typically modified-grid or curvilinear in nature, in some cases, with limited through-traffic. Neighborhood parks, schools, and places of worship often serve as anchors.

Future State

Future change should emphasize incremental infill that respects established setbacks and heights, expands sidewalk and tree-canopy coverage, and strengthens safe walking, biking, and transit connections to nearby centers.



Typical Defining Features

- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: single-unit, duplex
 - Secondary: accessory dwelling units, schools, daycares
- **Lots**
 - Width: 30-60 ft
 - Front setback: 20-25 ft
 - Parking: on-street, side yard driveway, rear yard
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 2 story / 35 ft
 - Entry feature: Porch, stoop, pediment, etc.
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Yes

Mixed Neighborhood

Mixed Neighborhoods feature a diverse blend of housing types—single-family, duplexes, townhomes, small multifamily—and selected neighborhood-serving commercial uses such as a coffee shop, a restaurant, or similar that provide daily needs close to home. Development patterns are eclectic in architectural style and setback depth, with parking typically internalized or to the side, creating opportunities to retrofit shared lots, mid-block connections, and small public spaces. While currently oriented toward the automobile, these districts are well-suited for improved bike and pedestrian connectivity, safer crossings, and transit-supportive upgrades.

Future State

Future change should prioritize context-sensitive infill (e.g., missing-middle housing above shops, small multifamily, parking lot infill, etc.), step-down transitions to adjacent neighborhoods, high-quality streetscape and tree canopy, and design standards that channel variety into a cohesive, walkable character.



Typical Defining Features

- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: single-unit, duplex, triplex, quadplex, multi-family up to 18 unit structures
 - Secondary: accessory dwelling units, schools, small neighborhood serving uses
- **Lots**
 - Width: 25-50 ft
 - Front setback: 20 ft
 - Parking: on-street, side yard driveway, rear yard
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 3 story / 42 ft
 - Entry feature: Porch, stoop, pediment, etc.
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Yes

Community Corridor

Community Corridor are auto-oriented commercial districts organized along a high-volume spine road, with deep front setbacks, large surface parking lots, and single-story buildings on individual pads or in strip formats. Streetscape quality and multimodal facilities are often inconsistent—sidewalks and bike lanes may exist in segments—but driveway frequency, wide curb radii, and limited crossings prioritize vehicle movement over pedestrian comfort. Land uses are predominantly retail, dining, and services, with occasional office or lodging; housing is limited but sites often have the depth to accommodate mixed-use or multifamily redevelopment.

Future State

Future change should focus on access management (fewer, consolidated driveways), shared parking, streetscape upgrades (continuous sidewalks, shade trees, lighting, landscape buffers), and safe bike/transit infrastructure, while encouraging taller buildings at key nodes and intersection corners to introduce mixed-use, diversify housing options, and create a more walkable, transit-supportive environment.



Typical Defining Features

- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: commercial, multi-family residential, offices, restaurants, personal services, lodging
 - Secondary: recreation, entertainment
- **Lots**
 - Width: varies
 - Front setback: 20 ft
 - Parking: double row max in front, side yard driveway, rear yard
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 4 story / 60 ft
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Yes

Downtown/City Center

Downtown (City Center) is the community's social and economic heart, characterized by a fine-grained street grid, narrow blocks, and an intact main-street that looks "historic" even without formal designation. Buildings—both legacy and infill—are typically one to three stories (occasionally four), with zero or shallow front setbacks, frequent storefront entrances, and high window transparency that support active ground floors. The public realm is distinctly urban, with defined curb-and-gutter, continuous sidewalks, street trees, on-street parking, marked crossings, and street furniture that together create a comfortable, walkable environment. Land uses are predominantly commercial—retail, dining, services, and civic—enhanced by upper-story offices and some multifamily housing; tourism plays a visible role, but everyday needs and local businesses anchor year-round vitality.

Future State

Future reinvestment should reinforce small-town scale and facade rhythm, encourage mixed-use and upper-story housing, locate parking to the side or rear with shared access, and elevate streetscape amenities and transit/bike connections to strengthen access and sense of place.



Typical Defining Features

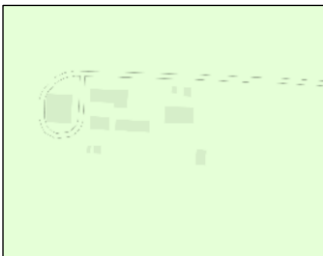
- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: retail/commercial, restaurants, mixed-use, multi-family, civic
 - Secondary: schools, churches, hotels
- **Lots**
 - Width: varies
 - Front setback: 0-15 ft
 - Parking: on-street, side yard driveway, rear yard, or no on-site parking?
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 4 story / 60 ft
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Yes

Fabrication/Flex

Fabrication/Flex areas accommodate production, assembly, maker spaces, labs, and warehousing in adaptable buildings with loading access, high bays, and flexible utility capacity. Sites are organized for safe truck circulation and service yards while screening impacts—landscaped buffers, subdued lighting, and enclosure of outdoor storage—at edges near neighborhoods or mixed-use areas. Street fronts prioritize clean, durable facades, clear visitor entries, and space for small showrooms or office components, with parking placed to the side or rear. Infrastructure emphasizes freight efficiency alongside basic multimodal access (sidewalks, last-mile bike links), with design standards for noise, hours, and environmental performance to ensure compatibility and long-term employment value.

Future State

Future change should focus on reinvestment and reuse, allowing these areas to evolve while maintaining their productive character. Design should stay clean, functional, and well-screened, with better connections for workers and freight. Edges near neighborhoods should transition softly through landscaping and compatible building forms that support small-scale maker and creative uses.



Typical Defining Features

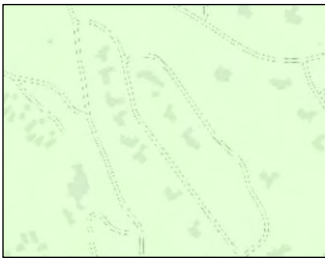
- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: light manufacturing/industrial, warehousing, supporting retail/showrooms
 - Secondary: office, microbreweries, automobiles repair
- **Lots**
 - Width: varies
 - Front setback: 30 ft
 - Parking: double row max in front, side yard driveway, rear yard
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 3 story / 35 ft
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Maybe

Mountain Neighborhood

Mountain Neighborhoods occupy steep, mountainside terrain where curvilinear roads trace the contours and lots vary widely in size and shape. Homes—mostly built within the past 25 years—range in scale and architectural style, yet the overall character is generally defined by that native vegetation that provides natural buffers, privacy, and an almost subdued, lodge-like setting. Streets function as low-speed, two-lane rural mountain roads without curb, gutter, or sidewalks, with select soft-surface trail connections running through open space to link homes, overlooks, and trailheads. The topography and vegetation frame long views while also shaping building placement, driveway access, and drainage patterns; wildfire-wise landscaping, slope stability, and dark-sky lighting are essential considerations.

Future State

Future change should emphasize preservation of native canopy and wildlife corridors, context-sensitive siting, and incremental trail and safety improvements that maintain the neighborhood's quiet, natural character.



Typical Defining Features

- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: single-unit, duplex
 - Secondary: accessory dwelling units, daycares
- **Lots**
 - Width: 130 ft
 - Front setback: 25 ft
 - Parking: on-street, side yard driveway, rear yard
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 2 story / 35 ft
 - Entry feature: Porch, stoop, pediment, etc.
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Maybe

Waterfront Neighborhood

The Waterfront Neighborhood shares the walkable, fine-grained character of Heritage Urban Neighborhoods, but the blocks are typically elongated rather than following a square pattern. Homes are generally larger with lower lot coverage, and front-yard setbacks vary widely to accommodate porches, terraces, and, in some cases, front yard parking; small multifamily buildings appear intermittently, often near key intersections or water-access points. Continuous sidewalks, mature trees, and a variable architectural style create a lively streetscape, while public access to the water anchors neighborhood identity.

Future State

Future reinvestment should prioritize context-sensitive infill, shoreline stewardship (flood resilience, native landscaping), and safe walking/biking links to adjacent neighborhood, the Downtown, and the waterfront itself.



Typical Defining Features

- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: single-unit, duplex
 - Secondary: accessory dwelling units, trails, greenways
- **Lots**
 - Width: varies
 - Front setback: varies
 - Parking: varies
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 2 story / 35 ft
 - Entry feature: varies
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Maybe

Recreation/Open Space

Recreation / Open Space areas include public and private lands dedicated to outdoor recreation, community gathering, and the preservation of open landscapes. These areas encompass parks, trail corridors, athletic fields, waterfront access, greenways, and community open spaces that support active lifestyles and provide relief from more developed parts of the city. They play a critical role in shaping Whitefish's identity as an outdoor-oriented mountain community and contribute to residents' quality of life across all seasons. Development within Recreation/Open Space areas is limited to facilities and improvements that support public use and enjoyment, such as trails, playgrounds, sports facilities, picnic areas, and small support structures. Design should prioritize natural materials, minimal site disturbance, and strong connections to surrounding neighborhoods and regional trail systems.

Future State

Future investment should focus on expanding access, improving connectivity, and protecting scenic and environmental resources, ensuring these spaces continue to serve both everyday community needs and long-term conservation goals.



Typical Defining Features

- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: agriculture, single-unit, duplex
 - Secondary: accessory dwelling units, schools
- **Lots**
 - Width: varies
 - Front setback: varies
 - Parking: on-street, dedicated lots
- **Buildings (if present for recreational use)**
 - Height: 2 story / 30 ft
 - Entry feature: Public accessway to community buildings
 - Walkway (or trail) to public sidewalk: Yes

These Place Types Exist Outside City Limits

Rural Community

Rural Community areas form the open, low-density edges of the valley where working lands, homesteads, and scattered clusters of homes blend the rhythms of rural life with small-scale agriculture. Large parcels support farmsteads, pastures, and open fields interspersed with newer agricultural-residential lots and occasional crossroads clusters that may include farm stands, feed stores, or gathering spots. Homes are typically set back from the road with barns, greenhouses, or sheds forming traditional farmyard patterns. Roadways are narrow and uncurbed—sometimes gravel or chip-sealed—with grassy shoulders, open ditches, and long views framed by fencelines, irrigation ditches, and tree rows.



Resort Recreation

Resort Recreation areas encompass destination landscapes where year-round outdoor activity, lodging, and entertainment come together in a mountain setting. Anchored by ski slopes, lifts, and lodges—or by summer trailheads, golf courses, and mountain biking—these areas mix hotels, lodges, and outdoor gathering spots near resort cores with cabins, condos, and second homes tucked into forested slopes and meadows. Architecture emphasizes natural materials, low profiles, and mountain views, while roads and trails wind through native vegetation to connect recreation hubs, trailheads, and open space systems used across all seasons.



A New Place Type Proposed for Future Development

The following Neighborhood Center place type is new to Whitefish. Based on community input, there is interest in allowing limited, locally oriented commercial activity integrated into newly developed residential neighborhoods to support daily needs and foster community connection. At the same time, some residents expressed concern that allowing retail uses outside of Downtown could unintentionally draw activity away from the city's primary commercial core, the Downtown, and weaken its economic vitality.

To ensure that Neighborhood Centers complement—rather than compete with—Downtown, commercial activity within this place type should remain clearly secondary to residential use and serve nearby residents rather than a regional market. Accordingly, the following parameters are recommended for any commercial development within a new Neighborhood Center that is not already in a zoning district that allows commercial and/or mixed-use development:

- No more than 20 percent of the total development footprint (square footage) may be occupied by commercial uses.
- No individual commercial establishment may exceed 3,500 square feet of leasable floor area.
- Commercial and service uses should be limited to small-scale, neighborhood-serving establishments, including:
 - o Non-franchise restaurant
 - o Café
 - o Butcher shop
 - o Nano brewery
 - o Farm-stand
 - o Coffee shop
 - o Bike shop
 - o Laundromat
 - o Dry cleaning shop
 - o Private postal services
 - o Day care
 - o Other, similar

These standards are intended to support walkable, mixed-function neighborhoods while preserving Downtown Whitefish as the community's primary commercial and cultural center.

Neighborhood Center

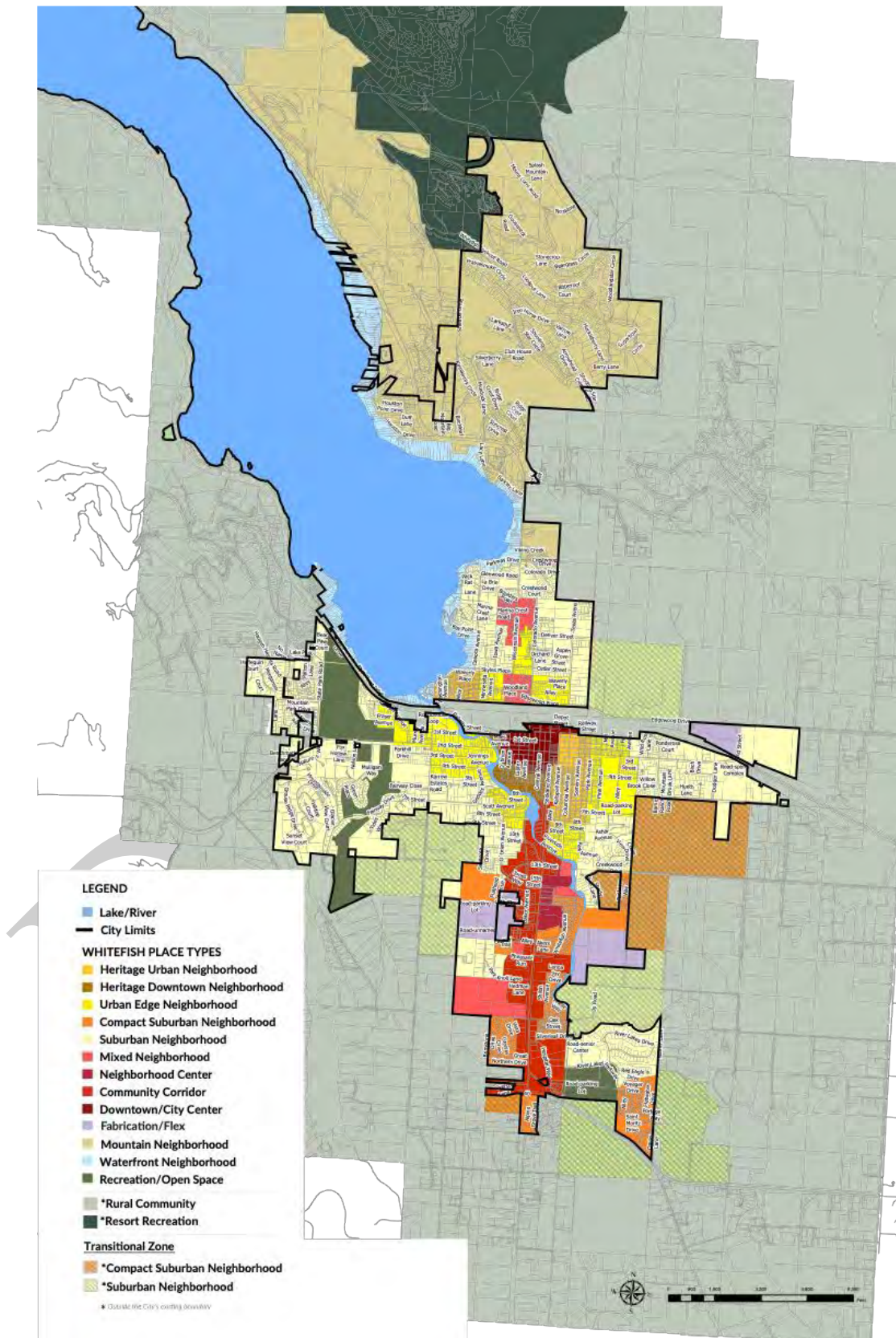
Neighborhood Centers are compact, walkable districts that blend a full range of housing types with neighborhood-serving retail, restaurant(s), services, and small civic spaces. Buildings typically rise two to four stories with active ground floors, shallow setbacks, and frequent entrances that frame pedestrian-friendly streets and small plazas; parking is located to the side or rear and shared where feasible. A connected street and trail network supports everyday walking and biking, with transit-ready design at key intersections. These areas are intended to absorb a meaningful share of new growth while maintaining a village scale—prioritizing high-quality architecture, shade trees, and public realm amenities that knit seamlessly into adjacent neighborhoods.



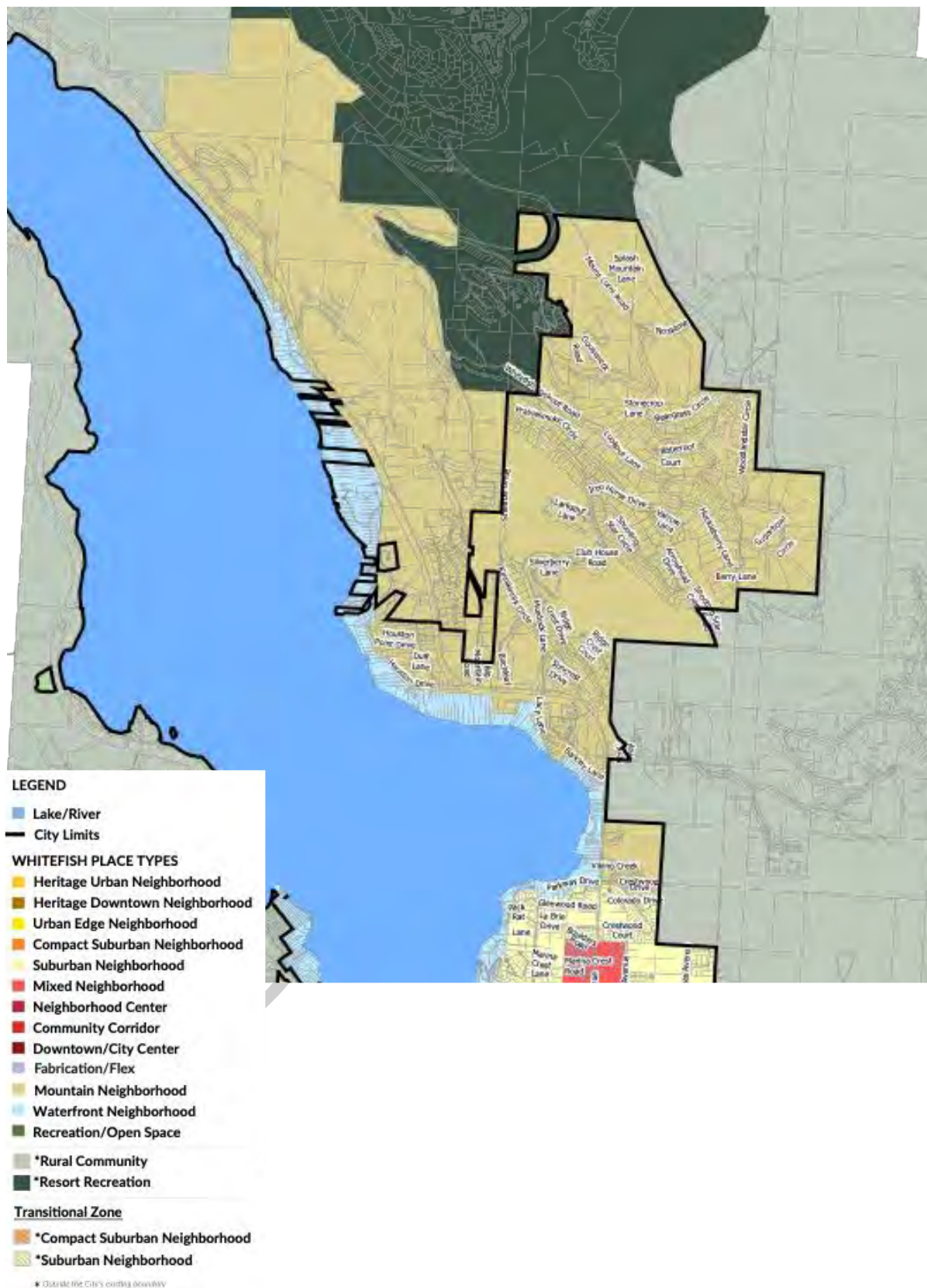
Typical Defining Features

- **Land Uses**
 - Primary: commercial, mixed-use, office, multi-family (up to 25-units per structure), civic
 - Secondary: schools, hotels, parks, trails
- **Lots**
 - Width: varies
 - Front setback: 0-15 ft
 - Parking: on-street, side yard driveway, rear yard
- **Buildings**
 - Height: 4 story / 60 ft (based upon a density/height bonus structure via the Legacy Homes program)
 - Walkway to public sidewalk: Yes

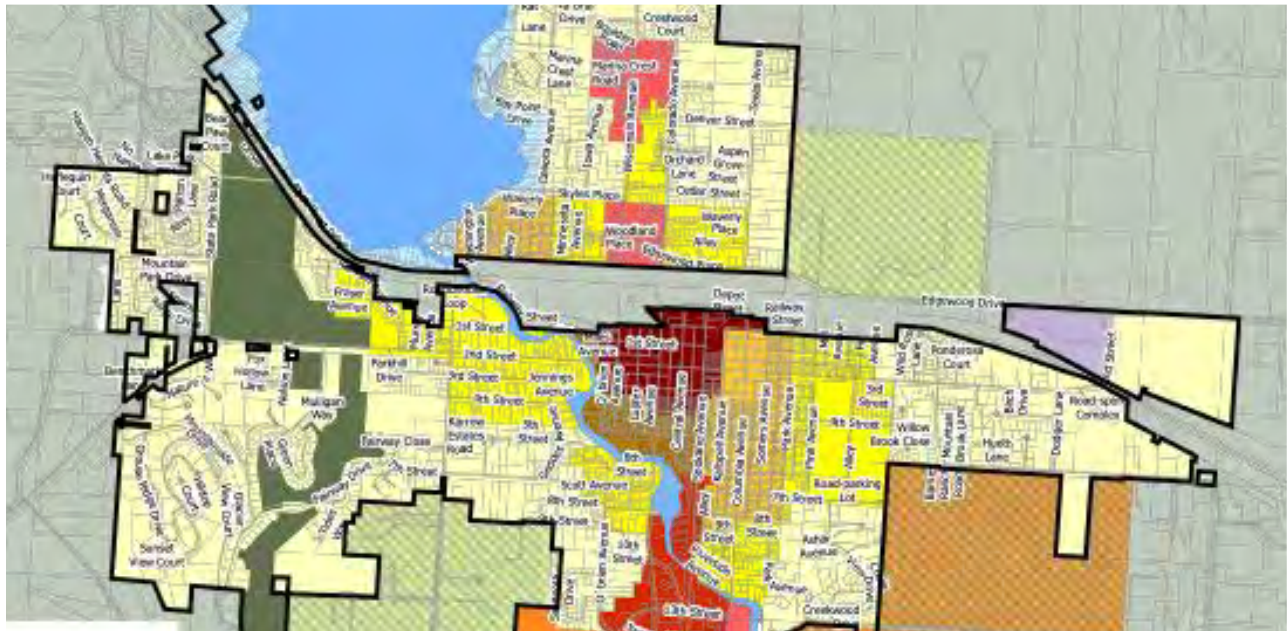
The Future Place Types Map



Northern Third of Whitefish



Central Third of Whitefish



LEGEND

■ Lake/River

— City Limits

WHITEFISH PLACE TYPES

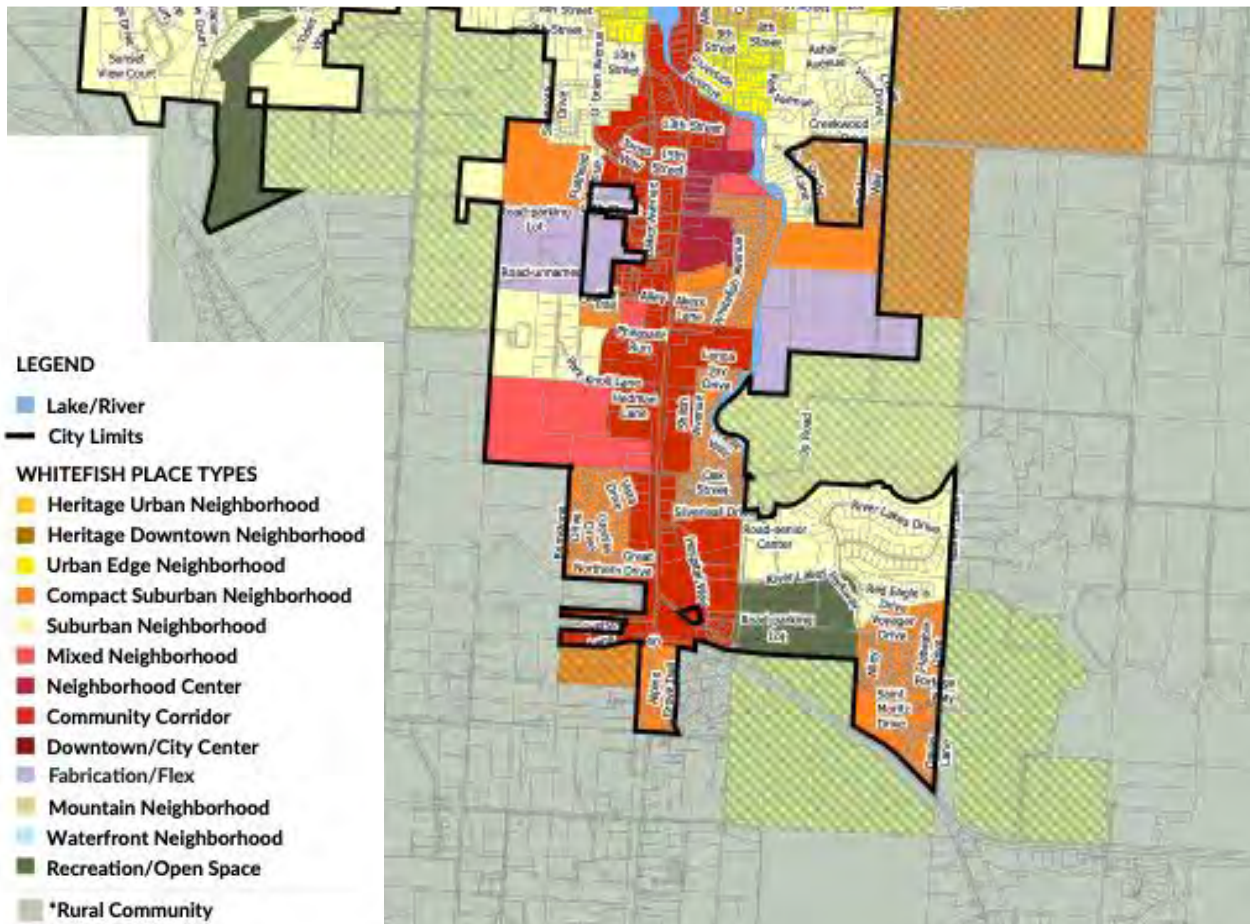
- Heritage Urban Neighborhood
- Heritage Downtown Neighborhood
- Urban Edge Neighborhood
- Compact Suburban Neighborhood
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Mixed Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Center
- Community Corridor
- Downtown/City Center
- Fabrication/Flex
- Mountain Neighborhood
- Waterfront Neighborhood
- Recreation/Open Space
- *Rural Community
- *Resort Recreation

Transitional Zone

- *Compact Suburban Neighborhood
- *Suburban Neighborhood

* Outside the City's existing boundary

Southern Third of Whitefish



Place Types and Existing Zoning

Place Types and zoning districts serve different but complementary roles in land use planning. Place Types describe the intended character, form, and function of an area, focusing on how places should look and feel over time, including building scale, development patterns, streetscapes, and the relationship between uses. They provide a flexible, long-range framework that helps the community visualize desired outcomes and guide future decisions. Zoning districts, by contrast, are the regulatory tools that implement the plan by establishing legally enforceable standards such as permitted uses, building height, setbacks, and density. While zoning answers the question of what is allowed, Place Types help answer how development should occur and how it should fit within the broader context of the community.

Translating existing zoning districts into Place Types does not follow a one-to-one relationship. In practice, multiple existing zoning districts often share similar development patterns, intensities, and character, and therefore may be consolidated into a single Place Type. This approach allows the growth framework to focus on form, function, and neighborhood character rather than legacy zoning distinctions. The table on the following page outlines the general relationship between Place Types and zoning districts recognizing that there could be exceptions to this based on the context and character of a particular area.

General Relationship Between the Place Types and Zoning Districts

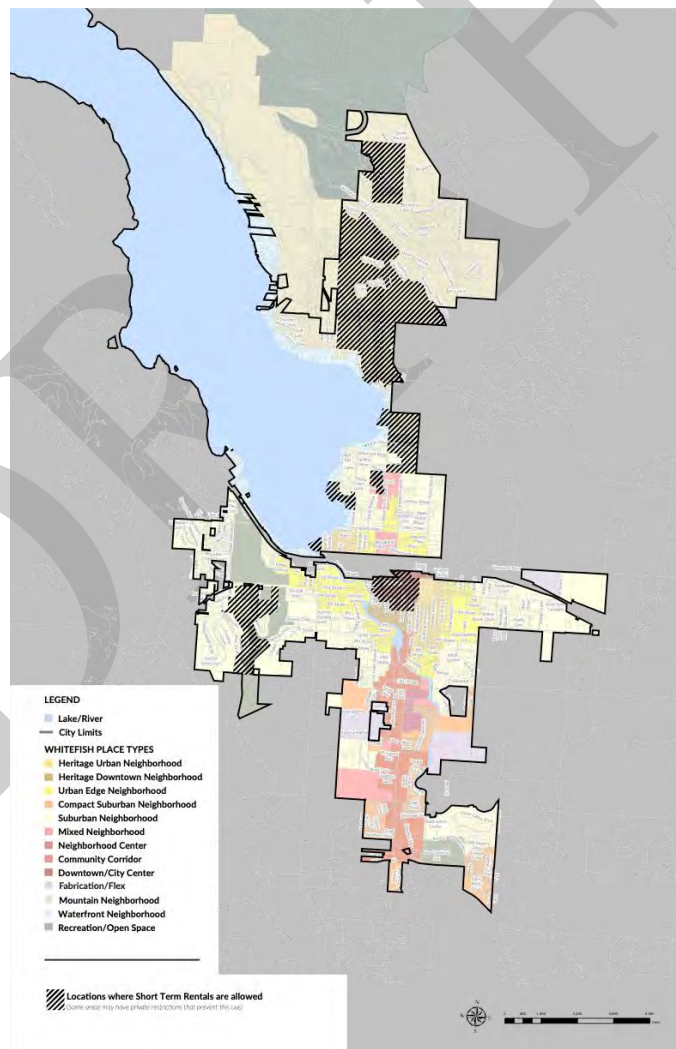
	Heritage Urban Neighborhood	Heritage Downtown Neighborhood	Urban Edge Neighborhood	Waterfront Neighborhood	Compact Suburban Neighborhood	Suburban Neighborhood	Mixed Neighborhood	Neighborhood Center	Community Center	Downtown/City Center	Fabrication/Flex	Mountain Neighborhood	Recreation/Open Space	*Rural Community	*Resort Recreation
WR-1 (One-family residential)	X	X	X	X	X										
WR-2 (Two-family residential)	X	X	X	X	X										
WLR (One-family limited residential)						X									
WSR (Suburban residential)						X						X			
WER (Estate residential)						X						X			
WRR-1 (Low density resort residential)						X						X			
WR-3 (Low density multi-family residential)							X								
WR-4 (High density multi-family residential)							X								
WPUD (Planned unit development)															
WB-1 (Limited business)								X							
WB-2 (Secondary business)									X						
WBSD (Business service)									X						
WB-T (Business transitional district)									X						
WB-3 (General business)										X					
WB-4 (Business Park)											X				
WI (Industrial and warehousing)											X				
WT-3 (Neighborhood mixed use transitional district)											X				
WI-T (Industrial transitional district)											X				
WRR-2 (Medium density resort residential)												X			
WA (Agricultural)														X	
WCR (Country residential)														X	
WRB-1 (Limited resort business)															X
WRB-2 (General resort business)															X
WBMRR (Big Mountain resort residential)															X

Short-Term Rentals and Land Use Planning

Short-term rentals (STRs), defined as lodging for periods of less than 30 days, are currently permitted in a limited number of zoning districts in Whitefish, including WB-3, WRB-1, WRB-2, WRR-1, and WRR-2. These locations were intentionally selected to accommodate visitor lodging in areas already oriented toward commercial activity, resort uses, or higher-intensity residential development. Maintaining clear geographic limits on where STRs are allowed helps to ensure that tourism activity is directed to appropriate areas while preserving the function and character of established residential neighborhoods.

Zoning districts that allow short-term rentals may span multiple Place Types, reflecting the fact that STRs are embedded within a variety of existing neighborhood and development contexts rather than being isolated to a single type of place. As a result, STR activity can occur within areas that function as residential neighborhoods, mixed-use districts, or resort-oriented environments, depending on the underlying zoning. This reinforces the importance of carefully managing where STRs are permitted, as their impacts are experienced directly within the fabric of surrounding neighborhoods and can affect housing availability, livability, and community character across different Place Types.

Areas Where STRs Are Currently Allowed Within the City (hatched area)



** Some areas with zoning shown as allowing STRs may have private restrictions that prevent this use.*

Expanding the geographic footprint of STRs is not recommended, as doing so would likely exacerbate existing housing and livability challenges. Short-term rentals can remove housing units from the long-term market, increasing pressure on rental availability and affordability for local residents and the workforce. In addition, higher concentrations of STRs in residential areas can introduce impacts related to noise, parking, and neighborhood turnover that are incompatible with stable neighborhood environments. By limiting STRs to their current zoning districts, the City can continue to support the local tourism economy while protecting neighborhood character, preserving long-term housing supply, and aligning land use decisions with the broader goals of this Community Plan.

Moving forward, the City should consider establishing a short-term rental overlay zone rather than relying solely on individual zoning districts. An overlay approach would allow short-term rentals to be regulated with clear, consistent standards while ensuring they remain compatible with the character and development patterns of the neighborhoods or commercial areas in which they are located.

Criteria for Considering Limited Expansion of Short-Term Rental Zones

While the City does not recommend expanding the geographic footprint of short-term rentals (STRs), there may be limited and exceptional circumstances under which a targeted expansion could be considered. Any such consideration should meet all or most of the following criteria:

1. **Consistency with the Community Plan**
The proposed expansion must advance the goals and policies of the Community Plan, including housing availability, neighborhood stability, community character, and economic sustainability.
2. **Location in Areas Oriented to Visitor Activity**
Expansion should be limited to areas already characterized by commercial, mixed-use, resort, or high-intensity development where short-term lodging is compatible with surrounding uses.
3. **No Net Loss of Long-Term Housing Supply**
The proposal must demonstrate that allowing STRs will not significantly reduce the availability of long-term housing, particularly workforce or attainable housing.
4. **Infrastructure and Service Capacity**
Adequate infrastructure, parking, emergency services, and public facilities must be available to support STR activity without adverse neighborhood impacts.
5. **Demonstrated Community Benefit**
Any expansion should provide a clear public benefit, such as supporting economic goals, activating underutilized space, or contributing revenues toward housing or community services.
6. **Clear Geographic Limits and Scale Controls**
Expansion should be narrowly defined, include limits on the number or density of STRs, and avoid dispersing STRs into established residential neighborhoods.
7. **Strong Performance Standards and Enforcement**

STRs should be subject to enhanced standards for noise, parking, occupancy, trash management, and local contact requirements, with demonstrated enforcement capacity.

8. Monitoring and Sunset Provisions

Any expansion should include monitoring requirements and, where appropriate, sunset provisions or periodic review to ensure ongoing consistency with housing and livability goals.

Impact of Covenants, Codes, and Restrictions on Land Use

Covenants, Codes, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) can significantly influence land use by establishing privately enforced rules that govern how property within a development may be designed, used, and maintained. These provisions commonly address architectural style, landscaping, building height, and permitted activities, and are often intended to promote visual consistency and protect property values. While CC&Rs can enhance neighborhood character and limit incompatible uses, they may also restrict individual property rights by prohibiting uses or modifications that would otherwise be allowed under local zoning regulations.

CC&Rs are private agreements that are not created, interpreted, or enforced by the City, nor does the City have authority to regulate their adoption. Although such covenants may reduce the maximum theoretical development potential of individual properties, they are unlikely to meaningfully constrain actual development outcomes at a community-wide scale or limit the City's ability to plan for adequate housing, services, or other land uses consistent with this plan.

Steep Slopes and Wetlands

Consistent with the Montana Land Use Planning Act (MLUPA), the City recognizes steep slopes and wetlands as sensitive environmental features that warrant careful consideration in land use decisions. Development on steep slopes can increase risks related to erosion, slope instability, wildfire behavior, drainage impacts, and the cost and safety of public infrastructure and emergency access. Similarly, wetlands perform critical ecological functions, including flood attenuation, water quality protection, wildlife habitat, and groundwater recharge. The Land Use Plan therefore directs growth away from these areas where feasible and encourages development patterns that respect natural topography and hydrology.

Where development near steep slopes or wetlands is proposed, the City should apply land use designations, zoning standards, and development regulations that minimize disturbance and protect these resources. This may include limitations on development intensity, increased setbacks, clustering or site design techniques that avoid sensitive areas, and requirements for environmental review consistent with state and federal regulations. By guiding development to more suitable locations and preserving these natural features, the City can reduce long-term public costs, enhance environmental resilience, and ensure that future growth occurs in a manner consistent with MLUPA's emphasis on public health, safety, natural resource protection, and orderly development.

Connecting the Public and Private Realm

While Place Types take into account the character of the streetscape, it is helpful for the City to also have a guiding framework or adopted street typology map that clearly defines and describes the City's street types. Such a framework can establish consistent expectations for street design, function, and character across different areas of the community. When aligned with Place Types, a street typology helps ensure that streets support walkability, safety, and multimodal mobility while reinforcing the intended form and character of surrounding development.

What Are Street Types?

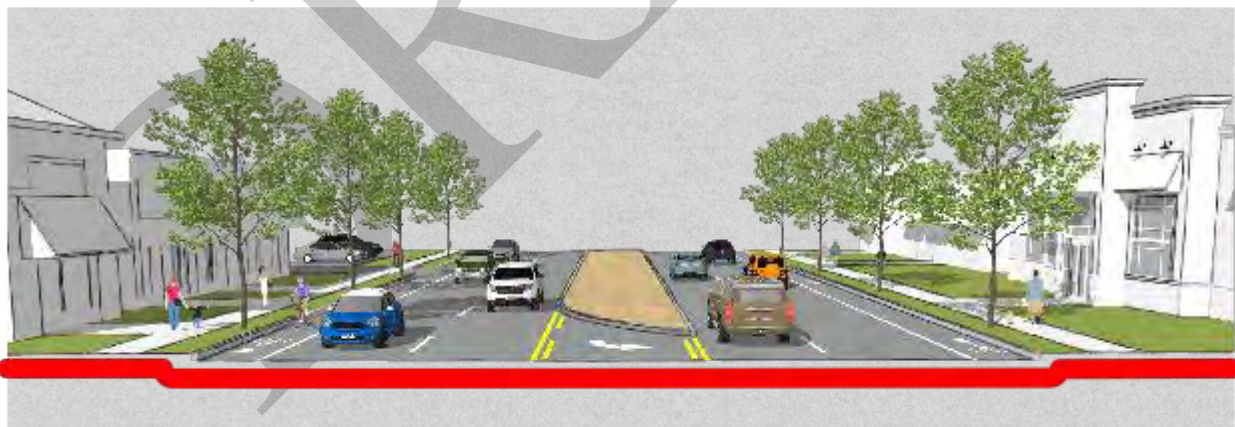
Street Types define how different streets function and feel within the community—linking land use, mobility, and character. Each type combines elements like travel lanes, sidewalks, bike facilities, parking, and street trees to reflect its setting—whether a quiet neighborhood lane, a main street, or a rural connector. Together, the street types create a connected network that supports safe travel for all users and reinforces the identity of each place.

Regional Streets

Regional streets feature the highest traffic volumes and speeds. Efficient and safe movement of all modes of travel should be prioritized heavily for this type, given the volume and speed traffic. This should be done while supporting quality of place as much as possible. Ideally, over time, most regional streets will include facilities to safely accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

Typical streetscape components:

- Travel lanes and a raised median
- Bicycle facilities
- Sidewalks
- Tree lawns and street trees



Community Streets

Community streets feature lower traffic volumes and speeds than regional streets and should be positioned toward efficient and safe movement with sensitivity to a diverse range of place type contexts. These streets typically provide on-street parking as well, particularly as they approach the City's downtown. Ideally, over time, most community streets could also include facilities to safely accommodate bicyclists.

Typical streetscape components:

- Travel lanes
- On-street parking
- Sidewalks
- Street trees with tree grates



District Streets

District streets also feature lower volumes and speeds than regional streets, but they tend to cater more to residential and neighborhood uses. The district streets often include bicycle facilities and connect intimately to residential and neighborhood streets.

Typical streetscape components:

- Travel lanes
- Bicycle facilities
- Sidewalks
- Tree lawns and street trees



Downtown Streets

Downtown streets are the streets with the most urban context. Development and streetscape elements should cater more to pedestrians and bicyclists and should include small building setbacks, street trees, high-visibility crosswalks, bicycle facilities, and other features that promote a walkable environment. A two-way cycle track on one side of a given downtown street could be utilized instead of bike lanes on both sides of a street.

Typical streetscape components:

- Travel lanes
- On-street parking
- Bicycle facilities
- Sidewalks
- Street trees with tree grates



Neighborhood Streets

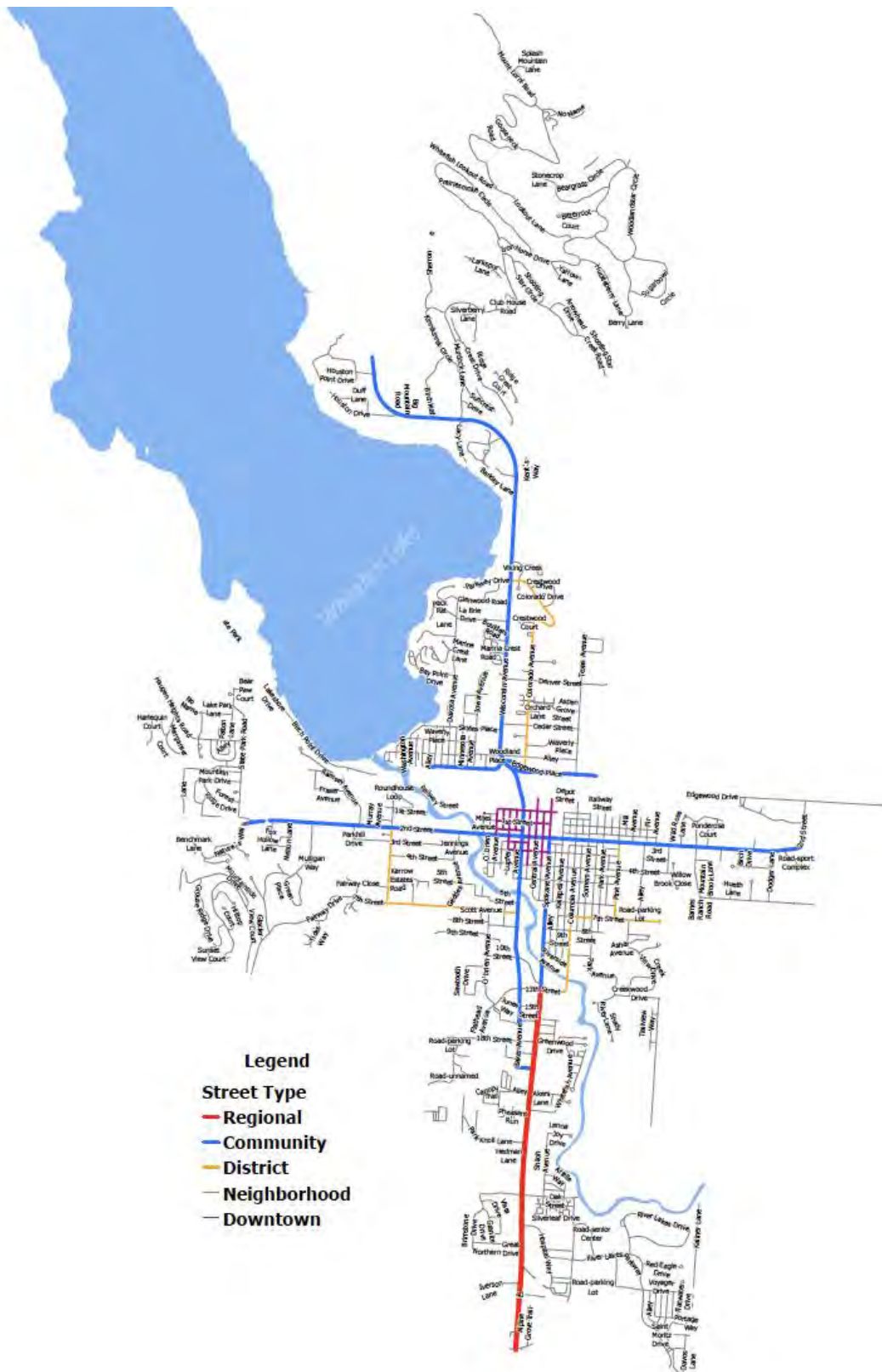
Neighborhood streets carry the lowest traffic volumes and speeds and most of the time are found in a residential neighborhood context. Development and streetscape improvements should be sensitive to a residential context and aim for a shared use of the street between motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. Many existing neighborhood streets permit and should continue to permit on-street parking on both sides. In some areas, a single 10-foot multi-use trail can substitute for sidewalks to provide pedestrian and bicycle access on one side of the street.

Typical streetscape components:

- Travel lanes
- Sidewalks/Pedestrian Space
- Tree lawns and street trees



Street Types Map



Strategies for Implementing the Land Use Plan

Zoning is the primary regulatory tool for implementing the Community Plan and should be updated to reflect the goals, recommendations, and strategies outlined in this plan. While the Community Plan provides long-term guidance and expresses the community's vision, it is non-binding in nature; without corresponding updates to the zoning code, the plan's policies cannot be fully realized or enforced through development review.

1. Zoning Ordinance Update

To fully implement the vision, policies, and place-based framework outlined in this Land Use Plan, the City of Whitefish should pursue a comprehensive update or full rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance. While MLUPA requires a city's Zoning Ordinance to be compliant with the new state statute, a coordinated and complete rewrite would provide the clearest and most effective path to aligning zoning regulations with the plan's recommendations, ensuring consistency with MLUPA, improving predictability, and better translating community character objectives into clear development standards.

Growth discussions in Whitefish are inseparable from the ongoing challenge of providing workforce housing. According to projections from the Montana Department of Commerce, the community is expected to need approximately 2,100 new housing units by 2045. The 2025 Housing Needs Assessment found that roughly three-quarters of housing demand (76%) between 2024 and 2034 is for households earning at or below 120% of Area Family Income (\$88,400). When those proportions are extended to the 2045 planning horizon, consistent with MLUPA requirements, it suggests that approximately 1,600 of the 2,100 needed units should serve lower- and middle-income households.

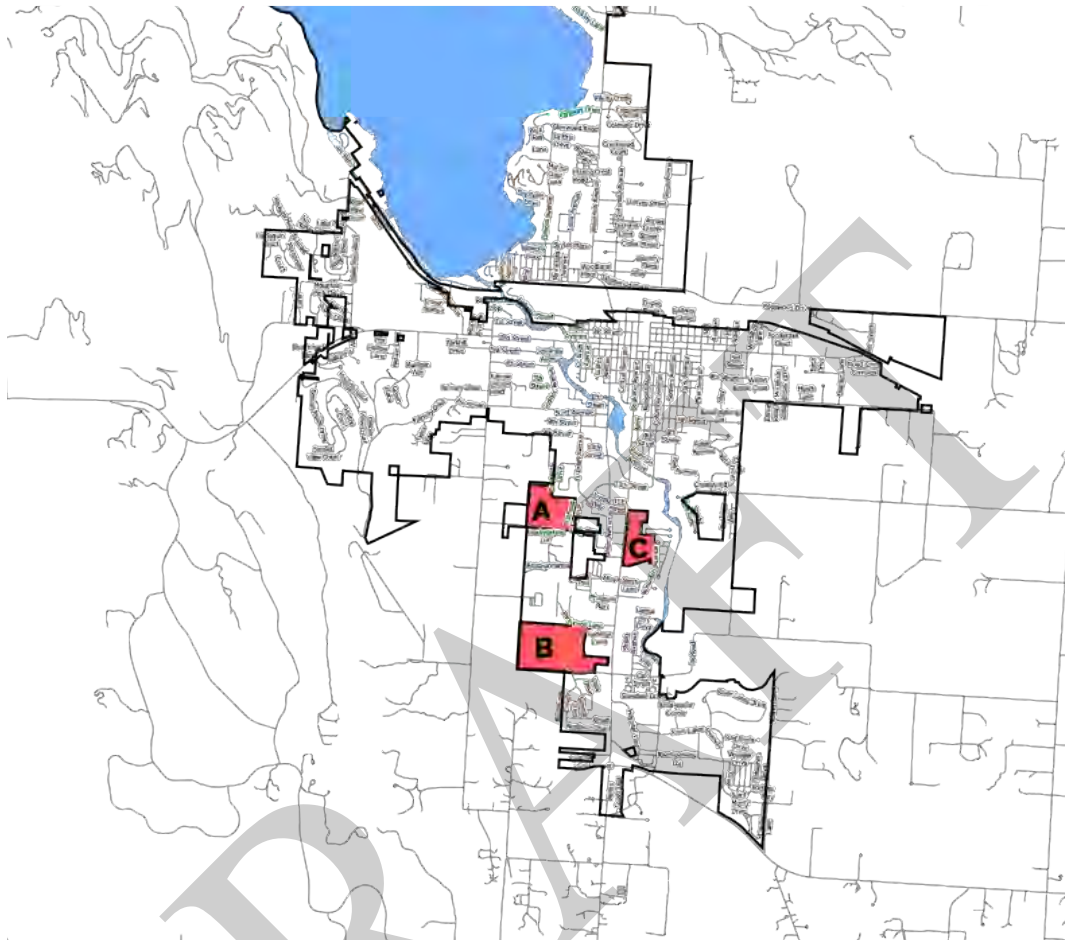
2. Grow Inward and Target Large Lot Areas for Increased Density and Housing Variety

Based on community input summarized in the Public Engagement section of this Land Use Plan, residents generally expressed support for higher-density development in newly developed neighborhoods, with preferences varying by location and place type, including Compact Suburban, Mixed Neighborhood, and Neighborhood Center development patterns. Specifically:

- Location C emerged as the most favored growth area, with more than half of participants selecting it as their top choice. Of those respondents, over two-thirds recommended the Neighborhood Center place type for this location.
- Locations A and B were most frequently identified as second-choice growth areas, each receiving support from more than one-third of participants.
 - For Location A, over 40 percent of respondents recommended the Compact Suburban place type.
 - For Location B, more than 50 percent recommended the Mixed Neighborhood place type.

Given these recommendations, Locations A, B, and C illustrated on the map are recommended as priority areas for accommodating future growth.

Locations to Accommodate Growth Within the City's Existing Boundary



Together, the three locations comprise approximately 115 acres and offer opportunities for coordinated, master-planned development that reflects the community-supported characteristics of these place types. To better understand how thoughtfully planned development in these areas could contribute to meeting Whitefish's housing needs, several illustrative scenarios were evaluated using a range of housing types and development intensities. The percentages illustrated below generally reflect the Mixed Neighborhood place type. This scenario is conceptual and may be adjusted to respond to site-specific conditions and future community input.

Overall, participants expressed a preference for a Compact Suburban place type for Location A, a Mixed Neighborhood place type at B, and a slightly more intensive Neighborhood Center place type at Location C. It is recommended that any mixed-use or commercial uses proposed within a Mixed Neighborhood place type, such as Location C, be located along US 93 or fronted toward US 93 or future Baker Avenue to ensure improved market visibility and to reduce possible traffic concerns if such uses were located deeper into the development site.

**An Example of Land Uses Within the Mixed Neighborhood Place
Type for Locations A, B, and C**

Suburban Townhome	35.0%
Small Lot SF Detached	25.0%
Standard Multi-family	15.0%
Local Commercial - Mixed use	5.0%
Garden Apartment	5.0%
Parks, Open Space, Other	<u>15.0%</u>
	100%

These inputs indicate that a thoughtfully designed, higher-density development approach on these 115 acres could produce approximately 2,000 dwelling units and support nearly 3,500 residents, reinforcing the role of targeted growth areas in meeting the Montana Department of Commerce's projected housing demand of 2,100 units by 2045.

As growth within the City's existing boundaries is realized—and only after priority infill and redevelopment areas have been substantially developed—the City may consider annexation as a longer-term growth strategy. Annexation should be approached deliberately and in a manner consistent with the Community Plan, ensuring that expansion supports orderly development, efficient service delivery, and community character. To guide this process, annexation decisions should follow a clear plan that outlines growth sequencing, identifies targeted areas, and establishes expectations for the type and form of development envisioned for annexed lands.

3. Prioritize Voluntary Annexations Based Upon Defined Criteria and Only After Targeted Areas Have Been Developed or Have Failed to be Developed

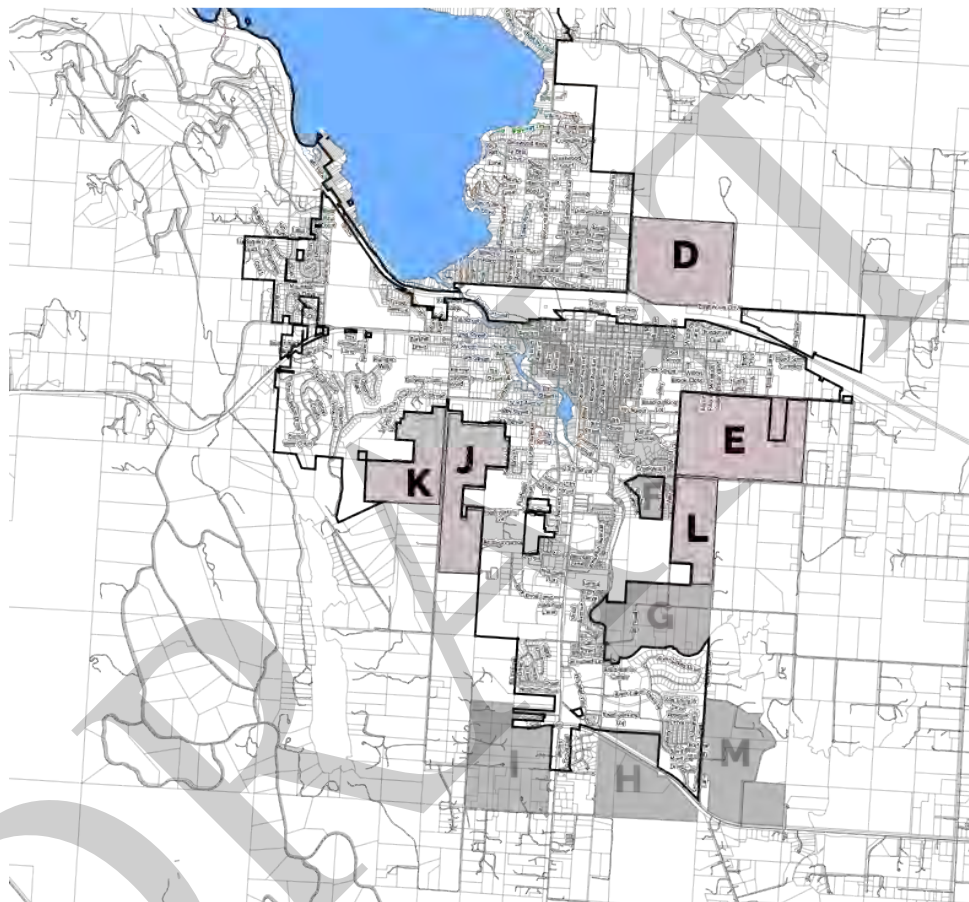
Based on community input summarized in the Place-Based Approach section of this Land Use Plan, residents generally expressed support for the Compact Suburban place type in select locations outside the City's existing boundary (identified as Locations D, E, and J on the map). This was the input from the initial round of community input in November 2025. A second round of community input in January 2026 reviewed Locations K, L, and M and resulted in majority support for Locations K and L in addition to D, E, and J.

These locations have been identified as areas with potential long-term growth and annexation opportunities due to their proximity to existing neighborhoods, City utilities, schools, transportation networks, or other logical growth factors such as topography or the presence of underutilized land. While annexation of these areas may be unlikely in the near term, over time and as the City grows, the City Council should use clearly defined criteria to evaluate annexation requests on a case-by-case basis.

All of these locations are within the recommended Transitional Zone as noted on the Future Place Types Map [on p. 35](#) and all may be considered once development has been exhausted within the City's boundary as outlined in Strategy #2 above. While future Place Types have been proposed for all ten areas considered for annexation, Locations D, E, J, K, and L should be the first five areas

considered for annexation. These Place Types are based on the contiguous or nearby neighborhood context and the Community Plan's overall support for higher density development to adequately accommodate future growth. These areas should only be considered based upon the Process and Criteria for Annexation as outlined on [page 59](#). Any consideration of annexation for these areas would be voluntary in nature and require a formal petition by the affected property owner(s), consistent with state law.

Locations to Accommodate Growth Outside the City's Existing Boundary



Locations D, E, J, K, and L encompass approximately 700 acres. Based on a scenario planning exercise that applied the Compact Suburban place type (identified by a majority of community participants as the preferred option) these areas could accommodate nearly 5,900 housing units and support a population of more than 11,000 residents. While these five locations emerged as the community's initial recommendations for potential annexation areas to accommodate growth once large lot infill has been fulfilled, there may be other areas outside the city also offer opportunities for annexation comprise the Transitional Zone included in the Future Place Types Map on page 35.

An Example of Land Uses Within the Compact Suburban Place Type for Locations D, E, J, K, and L

Small Lot SF Detached	20.0%
Medium Lot SF Detached	15.0%
Suburban Townhome	12.5%
Large Lot SF Detached	12.5%
Suburban Multifamily	7.5%
Very Small Lot SF Detached	5.0%
Garden Apartment	2.5%
Parks, Open Space, Low Intensity, Commercial, School, Other	<u>25.0%</u>
	100.0%

It is noteworthy that for Locations J and K, particularly the area near Karrow Avenue, a majority of participants indicated that if this area were to be annexed into Whitefish, it would be most appropriate for the Neighborhood Center place type. While Karrow Avenue is centrally located and received the strongest overall support for annexation among the three preferred locations (D, E, and J) in the initial round of community input, it is also the most heavily developed of the five locations, with numerous large, estate-style residential lots already in place.

Process and Criteria for Annexation

To accommodate long-term growth while avoiding sprawl, the City shall prioritize development within its existing boundaries before considering annexation. At any given time, no more than one or two annexation areas should be actively considered or advanced, ensuring that growth remains focused, orderly, and fiscally responsible. Once an area has been annexed, the City should not consider subsequent annexations until greater than 50% of that area has been built out. Annexation shall occur only after reasonable opportunities for infill and redevelopment within the City have been pursued and/or completed, and shall be prioritized based on the following general criteria:

- The proposed annexation provides transportation or roadway connections that help complete the City's planned transportation network.
- The proposed annexation facilitates critical infrastructure improvements that benefit the community as a whole
- The proposed annexation includes dedicated workforce housing units.

Development within any annexation area should be designed to ensure a logical and compatible transition between the City's existing development pattern and the Rural Community place type character that generally exists beyond the City's boundary.

As part of this approach, the City should monitor identified infill and large-lot opportunity sites. If property owners within these areas have not submitted development plans or initiated construction within three to five years of plan adoption or zoning alignment, the City

may begin to evaluate and prioritize strategic annexation areas that are contiguous, infrastructure-ready, and consistent with the Land Use Plan. This sequencing framework ensures infill development is encouraged first, while providing a clear and transparent pathway for annexation when additional land is needed to meet community housing and growth needs.

With the adoption of the new Future Place Types Map and the recommended Place Types for targeted growth areas and potential future annexation areas, the City's existing zoning map will need to be updated to align with this framework.

4. Update the Zoning Map to Match Place Types

Updating the zoning map will ensure regulatory consistency with the Land Use Plan, provide clearer guidance for future development, and support a more predictable and efficient implementation of the City's Community Plan. The City's existing Zoning Map includes numerous zoning districts that are highly use-specific, several of which may be appropriate for consolidation. Specifically, a zoning district that allows for small lot or cottage development should be developed that would align with the Compact Suburban and/or Mixed Neighborhood Place Type. In addition, the creation of new zoning districts should be considered to better accommodate locally scaled mixed-use development, particularly in support of the new Neighborhood Center place type.

The adoption of the Montana Land Use Planning Act (MLUPA) in 2023 (SB 382), followed by additional state legislation in 2025 (SB 243) requiring cities to allow buildings up to 60 feet in height within downtown, heavy commercial, and industrial districts, represents a significant shift in how land use planning is conducted in Whitefish. These state mandates require the City to accommodate additional development capacity while remaining consistent with community values. The following recommended actions are intended to ensure compliance with state law, provide a clear framework for managing future growth, and—most importantly—protect the character, scale, and quality of life that define Whitefish.

5. Protect the Character and Scale of Downtown

The Downtown area is currently zoned WB-3 General Business District and has a maximum height allowance of 45 feet (3 stories). In accordance with SB 243, the following zoning changes, individually or collectively, are recommended to ensure the character of Downtown is preserved while meeting the requirements of the new state legislation:

1. Clearly define height allowances
 - Allow a maximum of 60 feet (or 4 stories maximum) by right and use form-based standards (build-to lines, step backs, lot coverage limits, floorplate caps) that allow for up to 60', or 4 stories, but ensure the character of Downtown is maintained. Possible tools:
 - o Upper-story step back requirements, after 2–3 stories
 - o Maximum floorplate size per story
 - o Incentives for sloped roof or articulated massing requirements

- o Reduced lot coverage allowance for buildings that exceed 45 feet
- 60-foot allowance for vacant lots, subject to any/all of the tools, but 45-foot allowance remains in effect for existing buildings, including those demolished after the date of the Growth Plan adoption.
- 2. Limit "Uses" Above 45 feet or 3 Stories
 - Multi-family and Mixed-Use development allowed up to 60 feet or 4 stories
 - Commercial (inclusive of short-term rentals) shall be limited to 45 feet or 3 stories
- 3. Redefine "Downtown" into Sub-Areas (Don't Treat It as One Thing)
 - Instead of one Downtown district, create sub-districts with different intents. Some possible sub-areas for Downtown Whitefish:
 - o Historic Core (Central Avenue and Railway District)
 - Strongest character protections
 - 2-3 story prevailing height
 - o Downtown Transition Zone
 - 3-4 stories possible
 - More flexible massing
 - o Downtown Edge / Gateway Areas
 - 60 feet (4 stories) allowed subject to the appropriate transitions from single-family residential development

The Montana Land Use Planning Act (MLUPA) and subsequent state legislation require cities to allow multi-unit residential development in commercial zoning districts and permit buildings up to 60 feet in height in designated "heavy commercial" areas. To comply with these requirements while preserving Whitefish's distinct community character, the City should carefully evaluate and refine its zoning framework. This includes clearly defining the intent, function, and development expectations of each zoning district and adopting precise, descriptive district names that accurately reflect the desired scale, intensity, and character of development. Thoughtful zoning classification and naming will help ensure state mandates are implemented in a manner that is predictable, context-sensitive, and aligned with the community's long-term vision.

6. Consider Updated Zoning District Naming to Clearly Define the Intensity of the Commercial Zoning Districts

Pursuant to the new state legislation, SB 243, zoning regulations in municipalities meeting the requirements of subsection 76-2-304(4)(a), the City:

1. *Shall allow as a permitted use multiple-unit dwellings and mixed-use developments that include multiple-unit dwellings on a parcel or lot that:*
 - (i) *has a will-serve letter from both a municipal water system and a municipal sewer system; and*
 - (ii) *is located in a commercial zone.*

Recommended Action:

Recent state legislation requires municipalities to allow multiple-unit dwellings and mixed-use development in commercial zoning districts. For purposes of the legislation, a *multiple-unit dwelling* is defined as a building containing five or more dwelling units, and *mixed-use* is defined as a development combining residential and commercial uses, where the commercial component is located on the ground floor and comprises less than 50 percent of the total building floor area. The legislation, however, leaves the definition of "commercial" zoning districts somewhat ambiguous.

Within Whitefish, the WB-1 (Limited Business) and WB-3 (General Business) districts already allow a range of residential uses. To align with state requirements while maintaining local control, the City should consider revising these districts to explicitly allow residential development up to the minimum threshold required by state law (e.g., five dwelling units). Additional density beyond that baseline should be guided through the Legacy Homes Program, using incentives to direct increased intensity to locations where it is appropriate and aligned with community objectives.

The same approach should be considered for the WB-2 (Secondary Business) zoning district that currently allows multiple-unit dwellings. Any revisions to WB-2 should be carefully calibrated to ensure that the City remains an active partner in shaping development outcomes. As with other commercial districts, increased residential density in the WB-2 zoning district should be paired with incentives and standards—such as those provided through the Legacy Homes Program—to support workforce housing and ensure compatibility with surrounding areas.

Pursuant to the new state legislation, SB 243, zoning regulations in municipalities meeting the requirements of subsection 76-2-304(4)(a), the City:

2. *May not include a requirement to provide a height restriction of less than 60 feet on buildings that are located in downtown commercial, heavy commercial, or industrial zones.*

Recommended Action:

Given the lack of clarity in state law regarding the intended definition of "heavy commercial," the City should undertake a comprehensive review of its existing commercial zoning districts to ensure consistency with both statutory requirements and community character objectives. This review should evaluate whether current district classifications accurately reflect the intensity, function, and desired form of development envisioned for each area.

By way of example, the WB-2 (Secondary Business) district—which extends from the southern gateway along US 93 toward Downtown and represents the City's largest commercial zoning footprint—warrants particular attention. The City should consider reclassifying WB-2 as a "Large Lot Suburban Light Commercial" zoning district, or similar designation, to avoid the unintended consequence of continuous 60-foot-tall buildings forming a visually imposing wall along this primary gateway corridor if the zoning designation is considered a "heavy commercial" designation pursuant to MLUPA.

Based on community input, there are specific locations along or adjacent to the corridor that may be appropriate for targeted taller buildings to accommodate

growth, including much-needed workforce housing. Height allowances in these areas should be strategically calibrated and aligned with incentive programs such as the Legacy Homes Program, ensuring that increased development intensity delivers clear public benefits.

Absent such calibration, allowing 60-foot buildings by right along the US 93 corridor could result in large-scale, market-rate multifamily development without adequate mechanisms to ensure that a meaningful share of units serve workforce housing needs and contribute positively to community character.

The neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown generally fall under the Heritage Urban Neighborhood place type, and generally zoned WR-2 Two-Family Residential District, have a long history as the City's earliest neighborhoods during the railroad and logging years. Community sentiment has generally been supportive of providing some protections for these neighborhoods as concerns grow that more tear-downs-and-rebuilds will alter the original fabric and character of these neighborhoods.

7. Create Character-based Standards for the Zoning Districts that Are Contained Within the Heritage Urban Neighborhood Place Type

While the residential areas identified as Heritage Urban Neighborhoods are not formally designated as historic under Department of the Interior criteria, they represent some of the oldest neighborhoods in the city. Their relatively small lot sizes and consistent pattern of modest, small-scale homes have created a distinctly urban residential character that warrants thoughtful protection.

To preserve this character over time, the City may consider the following strategies:

- Establish a new zoning designation tailored to these neighborhoods that prioritizes compatibility with existing development patterns. Potential standards could include:
 - o Reducing maximum building height from 35 feet to 28 feet to better align with the predominantly one- to two-story neighborhood context.
 - o Limiting building footprint expansion to a maximum of 120% of an existing structure's footprint for projects involving demolition and replacement.
 - o Restricting lot size increases or lot consolidations to prevent out-of-scale development and ensure new construction remains consistent with the established neighborhood fabric.

MLUPA does not eliminate the use of conditional uses; however, it requires that permitted uses, residential uses in particular, be approved administratively and limits the use of discretionary review as a substitute for objective development standards. Moving forward, the City should evaluate where conditional uses remain appropriate and ensure that approval criteria are clear, objective, and consistent with state law.

8. Refine Conditional Use Allowances by Zoning District

Rather than eliminating conditional uses entirely, the City should modernize the use regulations in the zoning ordinance by streamlining and clarifying when discretionary review is truly necessary. This may be achieved by:

- Reducing the overall number of conditional uses in zoning districts
- Converting common, predictable, and low-impact uses to permitted uses
- Replacing discretionary conditional use criteria with clear, objective development standards to address anticipated negative impacts
- Reserving conditional use permits for site-specific or impact-driven uses, such as large-scale commercial, infrastructure, and heavy industrial activities

This approach supports MLUPA's core intent by promoting "predictable, transparent, and legally defensible" land use decisions, while still allowing the City to address impacts where discretion is warranted.

While MLUPA allows communities to continue architectural and design review based on health and safety concerns, cities can no longer use an appointed board made up of community members who are not part of municipal staff. All reviews must be completed by "in-house" staff. The legislation encourages clear, predictable design standards that are adopted through public process and applied consistently, rather than case-by-case subjective review.

9. Integrate Design and Development Standards into the Zoning Ordinance

Several core design and development standards contained in the Architectural Review Standards, recently updated in December 2025, should be incorporated into the City's zoning code. Integrating these standards would help ensure continued high-quality development, improve regulatory clarity, and meet MLUPA and other state statutes that require the removal of the Architectural Review Board.

Land use planning in and around Whitefish should be approached through a regional lens to ensure a cohesive, coordinated strategy for both development and conservation.

10. Collaborate Closely with Neighboring Jurisdictions to Plan Regionally

A regional focus allows the City to collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions, agencies, and stakeholders to address shared issues such as housing demand, transportation, environmental resources, and growth pressures. By aligning local planning efforts with Flathead County, Kalispell, and Columbia Falls, the region can more effectively manage growth patterns, protect critical landscapes, and support long-term community and economic resilience. Priority areas for coordination could include improved controls to prevent corridor sprawl, shared strategies to acquire or preserve open space, and collaborative consideration of growth boundaries or other growth-management tools.

Land Use Plan Amendment Process

The Land Use Plan is intended to provide long-term guidance for land use and growth decisions in Whitefish. While the plan should be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains relevant, amendments should be considered carefully and supported by clear findings to maintain consistency, transparency, and public trust. Requests to amend the Land Use Plan should follow the steps outlined below.

1. Pre-Application Conference

An applicant requesting a Land Use Plan amendment should first meet with City staff to discuss the proposal, applicable policies, and consistency with the overall Community Plan, the Housing Element, and MLUPA requirements. This meeting will clarify expectations, identify required materials, and determine whether the request warrants further consideration.

2. Application Submittal

Amendment requests shall be submitted in writing and include:

- A description of the proposed amendment and affected area
- The rationale for the request, including how conditions have changed since plan adoption
- An analysis of consistency with the Community Plan's goals, land use framework, and place-based approach
- An assessment of impacts on housing, infrastructure, transportation, environmental resources, and community character

3. Staff Review and Analysis

City staff will review the request for completeness and evaluate it against the adopted Land Use Plan, Community Plan objectives, and applicable MLUPA criteria. Staff will prepare a written analysis addressing whether the amendment:

- Advances the intent of the Community Plan
- Supports orderly and efficient growth
- Is consistent with infrastructure capacity and public services
- Maintains compatibility with surrounding land uses and place types

4. Public Engagement

Amendments shall be subject to public notice and engagement consistent with MLUPA and local procedures. This may include public workshops, Planning Commission hearings, or other outreach efforts, depending on the scope and potential impact of the amendment.

5. Planning Commission Review

The Planning Commission will review the proposed amendment, staff analysis, and public input, and make a recommendation to the City Council based on adopted criteria and findings.

6. City Council Action

The City Council will consider the Planning Commission recommendation and take final action on the proposed amendment. Approval should be based on clear findings demonstrating that the amendment is consistent with the Community Plan's long-term vision and supported by documented changes in conditions, policy direction, or community needs.

7. Limitation on Frequency

To maintain plan stability, Land Use Plan amendments should generally be considered no more than once per year, unless the City determines that an immediate amendment is necessary to address unforeseen circumstances, compliance with state law, or significant community impacts.

Guiding Principle for Land Use Plan Amendments

Land Use Plan amendments are intended to respond to demonstrable changes in conditions, not to serve as a substitute for rezoning or site-specific development negotiations. Amendments should reinforce the plan's place-based framework and long-term vision while allowing the City to adapt responsibly over time.

Land Use Plan Amendment Approval Criteria

In considering whether to approve a Land Use Plan amendment, the Planning Commission and City Council should evaluate the request against the following criteria. An amendment should generally be approved only when it meets most or all of these standards.

- **Consistency with Community Plan Goals**
The proposed amendment is consistent with the overall vision, goals, and guiding principles of the Community Plan, including policies related to growth management, housing, community character, environmental stewardship, and economic vitality.
- **Alignment with the Land Use Framework**
The amendment supports the adopted land use framework, including place-based patterns, transition areas, and growth sequencing, and does not undermine the integrity of the plan as a whole.
- **Demonstrated Change in Conditions**
The request is supported by evidence of changed circumstances since plan adoption, such as updated population or housing projections, infrastructure investments, environmental constraints, or changes in state law.
- **Orderly and Efficient Growth**
The amendment promotes compact, efficient development and avoids creating fragmented growth patterns or premature expansion that would increase infrastructure or service costs.
- **Infrastructure and Public Services Capacity**
Existing or planned infrastructure and public services (e.g., water, sewer, transportation, fire, and emergency services) are adequate to support the proposed change, or a clear plan exists to provide such services in a fiscally responsible manner.

- **Housing and Community Needs**
The amendment supports the City's ability to address identified housing needs, including workforce and affordable housing, without compromising established neighborhoods or community character.
- **Compatibility with Surrounding Areas**
The amendment provides appropriate transitions in land use intensity, scale, and character to adjacent neighborhoods, rural lands, or natural areas.
- **Environmental and Resource Protection**
The amendment avoids or mitigates adverse impacts to natural resources, wildlife habitat, water quality, floodplains, and scenic or recreational assets.
- **Public Input and Community Support**
The amendment has been reviewed through a public engagement process consistent with MLUPA, and community input has been meaningfully considered.
- **Not a Substitute for Rezoning or Site-Specific Relief**
The amendment is not intended solely to facilitate a single development proposal or to bypass zoning or development standards that can be addressed through other regulatory processes.

Finding Requirement

Approval of a Land Use Plan amendment should be supported by written findings that clearly address the applicable criteria above and demonstrate how the amendment advances the long-term public interest of the community.

Summary

The land use plan establishes a clear, place-based framework to guide how Whitefish grows over the next 20 years while protecting the community's character, natural setting, and quality of life. In response to post-pandemic growth pressures and the requirements of the Montana Land Use Planning Act (MLUPA), the plan shifts the focus from whether growth should occur to how and where it can be accommodated responsibly. It emphasizes directing growth inward, making efficient use of existing infrastructure, and identifying targeted areas for reinvestment, infill, and—where appropriate—voluntary annexation.

Grounded in extensive community input, the plan balances the need to address workforce housing and long-term housing demand with the desire to preserve Whitefish's small-town character and surrounding landscapes. By using place-based guidance, calibrated zoning strategies, and clear transition standards at community edges, the plan provides a predictable and defensible framework for decision-making. Together, these policies position the City as an active partner in shaping future development—supporting housing choice, environmental stewardship, and economic resilience—while ensuring that growth reinforces, rather than erodes, what makes Whitefish distinctive.

LEGEND

- Lake/River
- City Limits

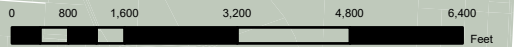
WHITEFISH PLACE TYPES

- Heritage Urban Neighborhood
- Heritage Downtown Neighborhood
- Urban Edge Neighborhood
- Compact Suburban Neighborhood
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Mixed Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Center
- Community Corridor
- Downtown/City Center
- Fabrication/Flex
- Mountain Neighborhood
- Waterfront Neighborhood
- Recreation/Open Space
- *Rural Community
- *Resort Recreation

Transitional Zone

- *Compact Suburban Neighborhood
- *Suburban Neighborhood

* Outside the City's existing boundary



Letter to Whitefish City Planning Commission and City Council

Re: Growth Policy for south Whitefish and the effect on neighboring housing.

Allowing a high-density Mixed-Use growth policy could jam another development of three-story units between Park Knoll Estates and the Great Northern subdivisions. Missing in this plan is a designation allowing for only single-family homes with lot sizes that have enough space to raise a family in the traditional Montana way of life.

The multi density developments have become a nest for out of state owners who don't want to mow lawns or shovel snow. Local small families purchase multi density housing units because of lower cost but dream of buying a single-family home with grass front and back yards and a garage.

How many of these multi density developments do we need in Whitefish? The price driven by out-of-state buyers who desire high-cost custom features does not meet the budget of most young families.

The American dream is to have a house on a lot sized for families with small children to play in and this is never addressed. Small two bedroom houses either single level or split entry would provide an affordable option and would create a very desirable neighborhood for starter homes. More multi-family developments do not meet the dreams or needs of young families.

As 35 year residents of Whitefish, we are requesting that you change the growth policy to meet the needs of young families.

Gregory and Karen Perkins, [REDACTED] Park Knoll LN, Whitefish, MT 59937

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Michelle Howke
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2026 8:28 AM
To: Nancy Persons
Cc: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: RE: Growth Policy process as a community member

Hi Nancy,

Thank you for your comments. Long Range Planner, Alan Tiefenbach will include your letter with public comment for the Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy update for the Planning Commission's consideration.

Michelle Howke

Administrative Services Director/City Clerk

PO Box 158

Whitefish, MT 59937

(406)863-2402

cityofwhitefish.gov

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From: Nancy Persons <[REDACTED]@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 5:46 PM
To: Michelle Howke <[REDACTED]@cityofwhitefish.gov>
Subject: Growth Policy process as a community member

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To Whom It May Concern:

I'm a homeowner on Lupfer Ave. I am writing to the Planning Commission as I am in opposition to this recent change in how our neighborhood is being categorized, and asking that we be categorized in the same way as Kalispell Ave, Columbia Ave, Somers Ave, and Park Ave, which are exactly the same type of neighborhood as O'Brien Ave, Lupfer Ave, and south Central Ave.

To protect and preserve the character, scale, and qualities of existing neighborhoods, the City of Whitefish shall revise the Zoning Jurisdiction Regulations and adopt "character-based" standards and "neighborhood conservation" districts.

Please keep our neighborhoods in character by maintaining the modest, well-kept single-family homes!

Respectfully,

Nancy Persons

██████████ [icloud.com](#)

406 ██████████

Don't you wish there were a knob on the TV to turn up the intelligence? There's one marked 'Brightness,' but it doesn't work. Gallagher

Nancy Persons

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Michelle Howke
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2026 8:20 AM
To: Christian Persons
Cc: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: RE: Growth Policy zoning update response as a community member

Hi Christian,

Thank you for your comment. Long Range Planner, Alan Tiefenbach will include your letter with the public comments for the Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy for the Planning Commission's consideration.

Michelle Howke

Administrative Services Director/City Clerk

PO Box 158

Whitefish, MT 59937

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From: Christian Persons <[REDACTED]me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 9:57 PM
To: Michelle Howke <[REDACTED]cityofwhitefish.gov>
Subject: Growth Policy zoning update response as a community member

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To Whom It May Concern:

I grew up on Lupfer Ave. in the 70s & 80s and now am a homeowner of that same Lupfer property. I oppose multi-family zoning (High Density Multi-Family Residential) & overbuilding potential as a "Heritage Downtown Neighborhood" near the Riverside Park area in my understanding that the Planning Commission recently changed.

The character of the Lupfer & O'Brien neighborhoods should be categorized in the same way as Kalispell Ave, Columbia Ave, Somers Ave, and Park Ave as single family residences, "Heritage Urban Neighborhoods". This categorization ensures more green space & leaves sufficient parking for river park day users & home owners in contrast to the excessive parking demands of multifamily high rise buildings/rentals. The proposed multifamily unit character would overwhelm any parking availability for river park users & home owners in the future and degrade the current, pleasing neighborly character.

Whitefish should conserve the Lupfer & O'Brien neighborhoods near Riverside Park as modest, single family homes.

Thank you,

Christian Persons

[REDACTED] Lupfer Ave
[REDACTED] [me.com](#)

406-[REDACTED]

Alan Tiefenbach

From: julie raine <[REDACTED]@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 5:22 PM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: Comments on the Heritage Downtwon Neighborhood classification in Draft Land Use Plan

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Dear Alan-

I'd like to go on record that I am opposed to a recent change in neighborhood characterization in the Draft Land Use Plan Element and believe the Obrien Ave, Lupfer Ave and Sth Central Ave areas should remain classified as a Heritage Urban Neighborhood just like Kalispell Ave/Columbia Ave/Somers Ave/Park Ave are classified. These neighborhoods share the same characteristics, and should retain the same designation- as was proposed during the Fall planning sessions that I attended.

I am not in favor of the recent change in moving the Obrien/Lupfer/Sth Central Ave. areas into a newly introduced Heritage Downtown Neighborhood classification as it will alter the character of the area, the proposed additional density cannot be easily supported with limited through street access, and there is no guarantee that this designation will contribute to workforce/affordable housing.

Thank you for your consideration-

Julie A Raine
[REDACTED] Lupfer Ave
Whitefish, MT 59937

Alan Tiefenbach

From: melissa wilson <[REDACTED]@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 8:53 PM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: Draft Land Use Plan Element

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Dear Mr. Tiefenbach,

I am writing to request that the Draft Land Use Plan Element retain the Heritage Urban description for the O'Brien Ave, Lupfer Ave, South Central Ave area. I have serious concerns about changing it to Heritage Downtown. Such a change would negatively impact the character of the neighborhood. The increase in overall density would lead to more traffic, noise, and less available parking. Further, this proposed change has come up suddenly and seemingly without proper vetting or public engagement.

We bought in this area due to its charm and serenity. Changing our neighborhood's description would threaten this solitude. We therefore strongly support retaining our neighborhood as Heritage Urban.

Sincerely,
Melissa Wilson

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Silas <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 9:04 PM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: Opposition of Land Use Adjustment

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Dear Alan,

I am writing in opposition to a recent change in neighborhood characterization in the Draft Land Use Plan Element and believe the O'Brien Ave, Lupfer Ave, and Central Ave areas should remain classified as a Heritage Urban Neighborhood. These neighborhoods share the characteristics as other neighborhoods with the same designation and should retain the designation as well - as was proposed during the Fall planning sessions. I am not in favor of the recent change in moving the Obrien/Lupfer/Sth Central Ave areas into a newly introduced Heritage Downtown Neighborhood classification as it will alter the character of the area, the proposed additional density cannot be easily supported with limited through-street access, and there is no guarantee that this designation will contribute to workforce/affordable housing.

Thank you for your consideration - Silas Smith

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Michelle Howke
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 3:41 PM
To: Alice Cabell
Cc: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: RE: Zoning

Hi Alice,

Thank you for your comment. Long-Range Planner, Alan Tiefenbach will include your letter with public comment for the Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy update for the Planning Commission's consideration.

Michelle Howke

Administrative Services Director/City Clerk

PO Box 158

Whitefish, MT 59937

(406)863-2402

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From: Alice Cabell <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 8:30 AM
To: Michelle Howke <[REDACTED]@cityofwhitefish.gov>
Subject: Zoning

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Dear Michelle, as a long time homeowner in Whitefish specifically on Lupfer Avenue 4th block before the park we beg the city to please make the zoning complete residential. It is a sweet neighborhood of people who have been long time residence and we really really hope that the changes propose do not happen!

Sincerely,

Alice Cabell Zimmerman

■ Lupfer Ave, Whitefish, MT 59937

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Michelle Howke
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 3:12 PM
To: Alice Cabell
Cc: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: RE: Public Comment for zoning commission

Hi Alice,

Thank you for your comments. Long-Range Planner, Alan Tiefenbach, will include your letter with public comment for the Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy Update, for the Planning Commission's consideration.

Michelle Howke

Administrative Services Director/City Clerk

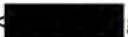
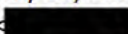
PO Box 158

Whitefish, MT 59937

(406)863-2402

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From: Alice Cabell <@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 3:02 PM
To: Michelle Howke <@cityofwhitefish.gov>
Subject: Public Comment for zoning commission

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Dear Michelle,

I'm hoping my earlier comment made it to your desk.

As a long time resident of the south end of Lupfer Ave, we ask that the proposed zoning for commercial property NOT be allowed. This is a well established community of long time residents with well loved homes and a perfectly intact community. We ask that it continue as this.

Sincerely,
Alice Cabell Zimmerman

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Lindsey Gardner <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 12:32 PM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: I want a Whitefish that works for everyone!

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Hello Planning Commission,

My name is Lindsey Gardner and I have lived in Whitefish for the past 24 years. [REDACTED] 2nd ST. East.

I am writing because I'm concerned with some of the backend stuff that has been going on with the "community character" of Whitefish and I'm afraid it will essentially price out the local workforce. This worries me! I want my community to stay AFFORDABLE and not have all the traffic in and out with workers having to commute. I'm sick of hearing about a friend having to move weekly!

I URGE you to allow more diverse, dense housing types within existing suburban neighborhoods. If we just keep building out and out it will ruin the character of our sweet town.

I also hope we can redefine "community character". We need to move from "preserving" to "enhancing" the character of our town.

To me, true Whitefish character is a mixed-income, working-class community. To restore that we NEED a plan that can accommodate the local workforce. We all benefit from having living areas close to businesses as we all support one another.

Please REJECT attempts to subvert the public process with high-priced lobbying. We need to protect the option for local-serving businesses in our neighborhoods.

Thank you for considering.

Lindsey Gardner

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Michelle Howke
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 12:19 PM
To: Richard Vaught
Cc: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: RE: Public Comment for February 11, 2026

Hi Richard,

Thank you for your comment. Long Range Planner Alan Tiefenbach will include your letter with public comment for the Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy update.

Michelle Howke

Administrative Services Director/City Clerk

PO Box 158

Whitefish, MT 59937

(406)863-2402

cityofwhitefish.gov

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From: Richard Vaught <richard. icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 12:09 PM
To: Michelle Howke < cityofwhitefish.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment for February 11, 2026

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Begin forwarded message:

From: Richard Vaught <[richard\[REDACTED\]@icloud.com](mailto:richard[REDACTED]@icloud.com)>

Subject: Public Comment for February 11, 2026

Date: February 10, 2026 at 10:45:59 AM PST

To: [\[REDACTED\]@cityofwhitefish.gov](mailto:[REDACTED]@cityofwhitefish.gov)

February 10, 2026

To Whom it May Concern:

We own the historic Jennings/Gilliland home at Spokane Avenue. It has come to our attention that a request has been made to change the zoning of our property and others in the 400 and 500 blocks of Spokane Avenue to commercial. We ask that you not consider this change. These two blocks have been identified by the National Register of Historic Places as qualifying as a Historic Residential District since the mid 1990's. These two blocks of tree lined residential properties are the first impression one sees as they enter our beautiful town. I have read one of the comments that some of the homes have become eyesores as they haven't been kept up. With the price increases that we have seen in Whitefish, one can surmise that as these properties are sold, they will be rehabilitated as we have seen in many of the neighborhoods of Whitefish. As you enter Whitefish heading north, you can see the dense commercial, some chain restaurants, gas stations, Starbucks, chain hotels etc.. Once past that, you know you are entering our beautiful little town of small, century old homes (I'd look a little shabby too if I were 100) that have greeted visitors and locals for decades.

Please read our letter to those present at the meeting. Think of 10 years from now. Those little homes so loved in the past, with the big trees (please don't cut down any more!), bought and refurbished. Or the other scenario, chain hotels, fast food restaurants, litter, the insidious march of the cheaply built commercial buildings.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vicki and Rich
Vaught Spokane
Avenue Whitefish

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Michelle Howke
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 10:57 AM
To: Patr LaTouelle
Cc: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: RE: Growth Policy Designation

Morning Pat,

Thank you for your comment. Long Range Planner Alan Tiefenbach will include your letter with Public comment.

Have a great day!

Michelle Howke
Administrative Services Director/City Clerk PO Box 158 Whitefish, MT 59937
(406)863-2402
[REDACTED]cityofwhitefish.gov

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<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cityofwhitefish.gov%2F&data=05%7C02%7Catiefenbach%40cityofwhitefish.gov%7C573191e3a07048db700c08de68cddb33%7C3c4380ae5af243c9b8edd34b6ce09d2b%7C0%7C0%7C639063430540655038%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIslIAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbCIsIldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=n8kUBY4bYw4PMi05S%2BGml39iX2cQjiNA76JDSx%2FyzJk%3D&reserved=0>. Please update if you have the website included in your bookmarks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Patr LaTouelle <[REDACTED]aboutmontana.net>
Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 10:19 PM
To: Michelle Howke <[REDACTED]cityofwhitefish.gov>
Subject: Growth Policy Designation

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Patr LaTouelle
Hellroaring Saloon & Eatery
[REDACTED]aboutmontana.net

I am writing opposing the new Heritage Downtown Neighborhood designation that is being placed on our neighborhood. I have lived in this same area since 1975. I have moved to a different house but the park and the river are very much a family friendly area. I do not see that continuing with this new designation will be a positive move forward. I purchased years ago a house in the 300 block, because the lady was being pestered to sell to someone who wanted to build a 4 flex. I moved a remodeled home onto 2 lots, that I lived in and retained for long term rental an existing home. It has had the same renters for many years and I keep the rent at \$800 so they can afford to live in Whitefish. If this new designation goes thru it will ruin the area around the park, which was the start of the path system around town. Please keep this area in the Heritage Urban Neighborhood category. It would be troublesome to loose even more of our homes to large structures that block out views and are more for visitors then it's citizens. The growth has to STOP to maintain community.

Patrice LaTouelle
Lupfer Ave

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Alan Tiefenbach
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 11:38 AM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: FW: City Staff Proposes Retail Sprawl in Growth Policy Draft Land Use Plan

From: HEART OF WHITEFISH <heartofwhitefish@134802222.mailchimpapp.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 11:03 AM
To:
Subject: City Staff Proposes Retail Sprawl in Growth Policy Draft Land Use Plan

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PO Box 1964
Whitefish, MT. 59937

City Staff Proposes Retail Sprawl in Hwy 93 South Corridor in Growth Policy Draft Land Use Plan

Time is Running Out to Speak Up for Downtown Whitefish. As they say; "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu."

IMPORTANT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING:

WHEN: THIS WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 11, 2026 AT 6PM

**WHERE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS CONFERENCE ROOM
SECOND FLOOR OF CITY HALL. View the agenda [HERE](#).**

Draft Land Use Plan Issues:

1. Expanded retail uses are proposed throughout the Hwy 93 S. Corridor in new Mixed-Use Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Center place types.
2. Mixed-Use Neighborhood and Neighborhood Center place types are big-city concepts that are inappropriate for small-town Whitefish. Whitefish does not have the population to support multiple town centers.

3. No market analysis and data has been provided to justify expanding retail uses beyond the areas where retail is currently allowed.
4. Given retail trends, there is barely enough business to support our downtown business district today.

Comments supporting these points can be read [HERE](#). These comments were prepared and submitted to the Planning Commission and City Council on behalf of the Heart of Whitefish by our downtown planners, Crandall Arambula.

What You Can Do:

1. Attend the Planning Commission meeting this Wednesday and request that the Planning Commission remove new Mixed-Use Neighborhood and Neighborhood Center place types from the Draft Land Use Plan.
2. Request that the Planning Commission focus on housing and replace these mixed-use place types with residential place types appropriate to each site.
3. Ask the Commission to focus on infill opportunities for appropriately scaled housing projects within a five-minute walk and a five-minute bike ride from Downtown. This is the industry standard for a robust bike/pedestrian-oriented downtown. No strategies of any kind for downtown vitality have been identified in the Growth Policy to date.

You can read the Growth Policy Draft Land Use Plan [HERE](#).

Thank you!

If you have questions, or would like to discuss this, please feel free to give me a call.

Sincerely,
Chris

Chris Schustrom
Heart of Whitefish Chair
c. 406 [REDACTED]



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Alan Tiefenbach

From: Michelle Howke
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 10:56 AM
To: Lee Zimmerman; Alice Cabell
Cc: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: RE: Lupfer Ave zoning changes

Morning Lee,

Thank you for your comments. Long Range Planner Alan Tiefenbach will include your letter with Public Comment.

Michelle Howke

Administrative Services Director/City Clerk

PO Box 158

Whitefish, MT 59937

(406)863-2402

cityofwhitefish.gov

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From: Lee Zimmerman <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 10:20 AM
To: Michelle Howke <[REDACTED]@cityofwhitefish.gov>; Lee Zimmerman <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>; Alice Cabell <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Subject: Lupfer Ave zoning changes

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To the planning committee-

I am a resident and homeowner in the area affected by the proposed zoning change for the south end of O'brian and Lupfer Avenues north of the river. I wish to express my opposition to any change to our zoning. Ours is an historic area and a quiet neighborhood composed of older,

smaller homes that are well kept and and highly valued by the people who live here. Opening our neighborhood to larger scale commercial development would certainly and quickly destroy it's character and would be a betrayal of trust in the city government. There are quite enough gargantuan new buildings in Whitefish that do not reflect our town's history and are antithetical to the reasons we all love Whitefish. Thanks,

Lee Zimmerman
cellist/ singer/ songwriter/ luthier
[REDACTED] leezimmerman.com
cell- 406-[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Lupfer, Whitefish, Mt. 59937

February 9, 2026

Members of the Planning Commission,

Most of you are very familiar with Park Knoll Estates, through previous written and oral comments delivered for this Growth Policy update and responding to development proposals in our vicinity over the past couple of decades.

Along with Great Northern Heights south of Area B, we have been actively involved with numerous transitions of Area B from an agricultural ranchland to the present zones. Early 2023, both neighborhoods worked positively with the current property owners (Carter Unger & Don K) to support zoning changes with significant increases in density in exchange for conditional zoning with step-downs and greater setbacks on our boundaries within the front side of the property. Later that year, the City approved rezoning* 11.12 acres within wetlands area of Carter's property. It was understood that it would provide additional density to be used via PUD on the front side of the property for a mix of single family, duplex and possible multifamily toward the south border of his property and conditional zoning providing appropriate buffering toward our neighborhood. *Minutes of WZC-23-03 & Ordinance #23-05.

Now, the Place Type proposed within the new Growth Policy raises significant concerns for our subdivision as well as Great Northern Heights on the south of Area B. There is no clear visibility of how this area will be rezoned and subsequently developed nor how the wetlands will be protected during and after. Naturally that is very uncomfortable for those in the adjacent neighborhoods.

Concerns

1. As I currently understand, "Mixed Neighborhood" does not appear to fit well for this area and urge consideration of possible other types.
 - a. Commercial Mixed Use was approved by Conditional Use permit in 2023 for the Hedman Apartments along the S 93 Corridor in front of Area B, providing for 3000 sq ft of commercial space on ground level and 18 residential apartments. There are several other commercial areas in proximity north and south along both sides of S 93.
 - b. The inclusion of additional commercial within the Mixed Neighborhood Place Type here appears redundant. Residents could access the commercial at the front of the S 93 Corridor, or others nearby businesses in either direction.
 - c. Of the 3 areas selected for focus, this issue is only present with Area B since it abuts commercial on the S 93 Corridor.

- d. I do support Heart of Whitefish's position regarding retail in areas A B & C, so this issue is additive in this case.
- 2. Beyond the commercial issue, the scale suggested in the Mixed Neighborhood (triplex, quadplex, multi-family up to 18 units, 3 story/42 ft) allows for significantly greater density than the adjacent neighborhoods north and south. That is particularly concerning on steep slopes and wetlands areas as well as the overall viewscape at the entry into the town.

Possible solutions

I respectfully urge you to consider alternative ways in which to satisfy mutually beneficial outcomes to provide for some higher density on the front side of Area B near the Community Corridor while protecting sensitive areas and bordering neighborhoods. Here are some examples:

- 1. Change Place Type to Suburban Neighborhood
 - a. Removes the commercial overlap concerns
 - b. Blends with adjacent neighborhoods
 - c. Reduced development impact on backside wetlands
 - d. Could still provide significantly greater density than is possible with the present zoning and PUD due to MLUPA base requirements.
- 2. Assign multiple Place Types with Suburban Neighborhood on the back portion and Multi-Income Neighborhood* on the front.
 - a. Removes Commercial overlap concerns
 - b. Blends with adjacent neighborhoods
 - c. Reduced development impact on backside wetlands
 - d. Provides for increased product variety on front side.
- 3. Explore other possible solutions that accomplish a more compatible fit with adjacent neighborhoods on the back side while yielding some greater density on the front side. Since rezoning is still a future activity I cannot tell if that alone could achieve the dual goals sought.
- 4. In any of these cases, I would expect to see appropriate step-downs, setbacks, tree preservation, etc. as referenced in many places in the Land Use Goals and existing conditional zoning on the properties within Area B.

I sincerely appreciate all the work you and staff and so many others in the community have done to comply with MLUPA. I wish you the best as you deliberate this complex issue. Thank you for your consideration and for your dedicated service.

David Hunt Park Knoll Ln

ShelterWF General Comments on Land Use Chapter, Map and Strategies

A Need for Equitable Growth

- The Land Use Plan recommends that Whitefish prioritizes inward growth. ShelterWF supports this recommendation, as increasing the amount of people that the current extent of Whitefish can house is compatible with affordability, multimodal transportation goals, and environmental protection.
- Unfortunately, the land use plan targets Large-Lot, **greenfield development (particularly in Strategy 2, page 55) as the primary strategy to achieve new workforce housing units.** While new community centers being created at the lots in question would be tremendous, there are numerous problems with this strategy.
 - o Targeting exclusively 3 areas to absorb the majority of new housing in Whitefish is **the exact pattern of development that has created so much controversy and animosity in the past.** New housing growth is therefore harmfully linked with destruction of open space and
 - o Pushing new developments to the outskirts of town and far away from existing residents **reinforces the unequal class structure of Whitefish,** where “poor parts of town” are seen as less important to protect from development. Whitefish risks losing mixed-income communities with this strategy.
 - o This strategy puts a lot of weight on the whims of a few developers. For myriad financial, personal, environmental, engineering, business, or other reasons, many promising areas are not developed or are not developed in a maximally beneficial way. What is the city’s plan if Lot B is developed into 5-acre single-family homes selling upmarket? Zoning rarely prohibits this “less intense” use.
 - o The land use plan states that *“a thoughtfully designed, higher-density development approach on these 115 acres could produce approximately 2,000 dwelling units and support nearly 3,500 residents.”* This is tremendous, but if these 2,000 units don’t materialize, **the land use plan immediately recommends annexation, greenfield development, and sprawl.**
- Exclusively targeting a few large lots for development and then immediately recommending annexation demonstrates a startling lack of imagination. **Instead, the Land Use Plan should target not only the most useful undeveloped lots within city limits, but underdeveloped areas of the city.**
 - o Whitefish must adopt land use strategies that allow all areas of the city to absorb housing growth. This recommendation is supported by voices as diverse as both ShelterWF and Crandall Arambula, which recommended that **75% of the growth in housing units should take place within 1 mile of downtown Whitefish.**
 - o No neighborhood should experience rapid change, and no neighborhood should experience no change. The Land Use Plan should enhance those land use types (suburban neighborhood, compact suburban neighborhood, and urban edge neighborhood) to accommodate this. **This would involve changing the “future state” narrative section of these descriptors to allow housing types like townhomes, three story buildings, and quadplex types.**
- Recommendation 7, which would include increased restrictions on development character of downtown neighborhoods, would only exacerbate these inequalities and limit development

in some of the most prime areas for workforce and affordable housing. This recommendation should be struck from the final document.

State Law Compliance

- Recommendations 5 and 6 (pages 60-62) contain recommendations that are **explicitly designed to violate the spirit and letter of 76-2-304 (4), MCA.**
 - o 76-2-304 (4) MCA states that;
 - (b) Zoning regulations in municipalities meeting the requirements of subsection (4)(a) may not include a requirement to provide a requirement to provide more than:*
 - (iii) a height restriction of less than 60 feet on buildings that are located in downtown commercial, heavy commercial, or industrial zones.*
 - 76-25-303 MCA states that*
 - (1) A local government acting pursuant to this part may not*
 - (i) enact a height restriction that would violate 76-2-304(4)(b)(iii).*
- The chapter recommends on page 60;
 - “Clearly define height allowances*
 - Limit “uses” Above 45 feet or 3 Stories*
 - Redefine “Downtown” into Sub-Areas (Don’t Treat It as One Thing)”*
 - o Conditioning approval of 60-foot buildings on use types, setbacks, massing requirements, or lot coverage ratios **violates 76-25-303 MCA by restricting effective height of downtown commercial buildings below 60 feet. All of recommendation 5 must be struck from the land use chapter or risks legal action.**
- The chapter recommends on page 62;
 - “Consider Updated Zoning District Naming to Clearly Define the Intensity of the Commercial Zoning Districts”*
 - o This recommendation inherently acknowledges that currently, WB2, WB3, and WB4 commercial zones would be subject to 76-2-304 (4) MCA. As such, the only reason for changing the definition of currently heavy commercial zones would be to avoid compliance with the law. **Changing the names of heavy commercial zones to light commercial zones ex post therefore violates both the spirit and letter of 76-2-304 (4) MCA. All of recommendation 6 must be struck from the land use chapter or risks legal action.**

SHELTER WF COMMENTS

GUIDING LAND USE DECISIONS TO ~~ENHANCE~~PROTECT WHITEFISH'S CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Vision: "We will guide land use decisions to ~~protect~~ ~~enhance~~ Whitefish's character and quality of life while supporting a diverse range of housing options meeting the needs of our residents and future generations and ensuring growth enhances our small-town identity, supports a thriving community, and preserves the natural landscapes that define our sense of place."

Introduction

Whitefish is a community shaped by its remarkable setting, strong sense of place, and deep commitment to quality of life. In recent years—particularly following the pandemic—the city has experienced rapid change as new residents, remote workers, and visitors have discovered the area's natural beauty and exceptional amenities. While this growth has brought new energy and economic activity, it has also placed pressure on housing affordability, community character, local infrastructure, and the landscapes that define Whitefish's identity.

The Land Use Element provides a framework to help the city manage this change thoughtfully and deliberately. It outlines how Whitefish can accommodate needed housing—especially for local workers—while ~~protecting~~ ~~enhancing~~ the qualities residents value most: a connected and walkable small-town environment, vibrant neighborhoods, scenic open spaces, and the feeling of authenticity that makes Whitefish unique.

Rather than allowing growth to happen haphazardly, this plan sets out a proactive approach. It identifies where development should occur, at what scale, and in what form, so new investment strengthens existing neighborhoods and makes efficient use of land and infrastructure. It also highlights places where growth should be limited to preserve sensitive lands, reduce wildfire risk, and maintain the city's relationship to its natural surroundings.

Above all, this Land Use Element seeks to balance two community priorities:

- Ensuring Whitefish remains a place where local workers, families, and long-time residents can continue to live and thrive; and
- ~~Safeguarding~~ ~~Enhancing~~ the character, small-town feel, and natural environment that define Whitefish's identity and make it unlike anywhere else.

This chapter serves as a guide to shape how Whitefish grows over the coming decades, and to ensure growth supports the people, places, and values that matter most.

Land Use Element Overview

The Land Use Element is the part of the Community Plan that connects a community's vision to its physical form. It describes how different parts of Whitefish (like neighborhoods and commercial areas to open spaces and transportation corridors) fit together. The plan must reflect the anticipated and preferred pattern of land use over the next 20 years and how housing will be accommodated.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

1. Focus Growth Inward: Whitefish will prioritize growth within its existing city boundary to support walkability, efficiently use infrastructure, and protect surrounding landscapes, strengthening existing neighborhoods and community edges while considering strategic annexation only when growth cannot be reasonably accommodated within the city.

Focusing growth inward is fiscally and physically prudent given Whitefish's limited land supply. Concentrating development within existing city limits allows the City to leverage existing investments in streets, water, sewer, and emergency services. This significantly reduces the per unit cost of new infrastructure compared to outward expansion. Infill and compact development patterns also support higher housing yields per acre, helping the City address its projected need for approximately 2,100 housing units by 2045 without consuming additional rural or natural lands.

Objectives

- a. New housing, employment, and neighborhood amenities should be concentrated in walkable areas—particularly Downtown, mixed-use districts, and key corridors—~~or create new walkable areas~~ to support local businesses, reduce reliance on driving, and ~~reinforce enhance~~ Whitefish's community character.
 - b. Development should be directed toward vacant parcels, surface parking lots, and underutilized commercial properties within the city through clear regulations, targeted incentives, and streamlined review processes that make infill and redevelopment viable and competitive. ~~This will require zoning and regulations maximizing the ability of these parcels to accommodate current and future residents. Regulations should also aim to allow gradual change over time in all neighborhoods to meet unforeseen future needs by enabling existing residential parcels to comfortably accommodate more households.~~
 - c. Growth should be prioritized in locations that can efficiently use existing infrastructure and public services, including water, sewer, streets, parks, and emergency services, while avoiding areas that would require costly extensions unless there is a clear and demonstrable community benefit.
 - d. Future development should be steered away from environmentally sensitive lands, wildlife corridors, hazard areas, and ~~prominent community gateways~~, maintaining a clear distinction between the developed city and surrounding open space and rural landscapes.
 - e. Annexation should be considered only when it advances long-term community goals, occurs adjacent to existing development, supports walkable and compact patterns, and can be served by infrastructure and services in a financially responsible manner.
2. Provide Housing Options and Affordability: Whitefish will expand access to a diverse range of housing types for residents of all ages and income levels by aligning land use decisions, incentives, and partnerships to support long-term affordability and livability.

Commented [KS1]: Given this goal, the Land Use map and/or descriptions should not include such restrictive incremental development in existing zones.

Commented [KS2]: This should either be deleted or defined.

Expanding housing options and affordability is essential given Whitefish's projected housing demand. The Montana Department of Commerce estimates the community will need approximately

2,100 new housing units by 2045, and the 2025 Housing Needs Assessment indicates that roughly 75 percent of this demand is for households earning at or below 120% of Area Median Income. This translates to a need for about 1,600 units affordable to lower- and middle-income households. Providing a broader mix of housing types—rather than relying solely on large-lot or single-product development—allows the City to meet this demand more efficiently, improve affordability through scale and diversity, and better align housing supply with the incomes of the local workforce.

Objectives

- a. A broad mix of housing types—including duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, cottage courts, accessory dwelling units, and small-scale multifamily—should be allowed and encouraged ~~in appropriate locations~~ to meet the needs of diverse households and support long-term housing choice. ~~These housing types should be allowed throughout the city to provide the maximum flexibility and chance for the city to meet its housing needs.~~
- b. Housing development ~~efficiently accommodating larger numbers of households than those mentioned in (a)~~ should be prioritized in walkable areas with access to jobs, schools, transit, and everyday services in order to reduce transportation costs, improve livability, and better connect residents to daily needs.
- c. The City should increase the supply of workforce and attainable housing by using zoning tools, targeted incentives, and public-private partnerships, including programs such as the Legacy Home Program, density bonuses, and strategic use of city-owned land where appropriate.
- d. Land use policies, development standards, fee structures, and infrastructure investments should be ~~regularly~~ evaluated and aligned to reduce barriers to housing production and lower the overall cost of development for both market-rate and nonprofit housing providers.
- e. Existing affordable housing options should be preserved by supporting strategies that protect naturally occurring affordable housing, minimize displacement, and promote housing stability for long-term residents.
- f. Housing policies should support residents at all stages of life by providing options that allow seniors to age in place, young adults to enter the housing market, and families to find housing that meets their changing needs.
- g. The City should collaborate with employers, housing organizations, neighboring jurisdictions, and state and federal partners to advance funding opportunities, land acquisition strategies, and long-term affordability solutions.

Commented [KS3]: It would be helpful if this was defined.

3. ~~Preserve-Enhance~~ Community Character and Quality of Life: Whitefish will ~~preserve-enhance~~ its small-town character while enhancing parks, trails, public spaces, and everyday amenities that support community connection, safety, mobility, and overall well-being.

Protecting ~~Enhancing~~ community character and quality of life is especially important as Whitefish prepares for an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 additional residents by 2045, growth that will place increased pressure on Downtown, established neighborhoods, and everyday community spaces. ~~With a limited land base of approximately 4,700 developable acres,~~ even modest increases in building scale, traffic, or intensity can quickly alter the human-scale character of historic streets, residential blocks, and neighborhood gathering places. By prioritizing investments in parks, trails, walkable streets, and neighborhood amenities, and by guiding growth in ways that respect existing development patterns, the City can accommodate change ~~while preserving the~~ enhancing and expanding access to the small town culture, local businesses, and sense of community that residents value and that define Whitefish's identity.

Commented [KS4]: This calculation exclusively references currently unoccupied parcels that could be slated for greenfield development. ShelterWF believes that the city should consider not only undeveloped but underdeveloped parcels in it's strategy of meeting housing needs.

Objectives

- a. New development and redevelopment should reflect Whitefish's desired scale, architectural character, and established neighborhood patterns through clear design standards, ~~high quality materials, and thoughtful site design.~~
- b. Downtown should continue to be strengthened as the heart of the community, with its historic character protected and ~~human-scaled~~ development maintained. ~~The 2018~~ Whitefish Downtown Business District Master Plan should serve as the primary guiding document for planning, investment, and reinvestment within the Downtown area.
- c. The City should protect lakeshore areas, ~~mountain views,~~ tree canopy, water resources, and habitat corridors that contribute to Whitefish's sense of place, environmental health, and scenic character.
- d. Parks, trails, and year-round recreational facilities should be expanded and connected to support active living, access to nature, and outdoor gathering opportunities for residents and visitors.
- e. Streets, sidewalks, and crossings should be designed and improved to support safe, comfortable walking, biking, and accessibility in all seasons, enhancing safety for users of all ages and abilities.
- f. Reinvestment in established neighborhoods and commercial areas should be encouraged to ensure Downtown, key corridors, and future neighborhood centers remain vibrant, welcoming, and scaled to the pedestrian experience.
- g. Public spaces such as plazas, event areas, and civic facilities should be created and enhanced to encourage social interaction and reinforce Whitefish's strong sense of community.
- ~~h. Development should be managed to minimize impacts on quality of life by addressing building scale, traffic, noise, and lighting in ways that protect neighborhood livability and the city's small town atmosphere.~~

Commented [KS5]: This is impossible to define or enforce. The architectural standards of the 2010's should not limit material choice in the 2040s.

Commented [KS6]: "human-scale development" should be defined.

i.h. Public art, cultural heritage, and locally inspired design elements should be supported to reflect Whitefish's history, community identity, and relationship to the surrounding landscape.

4. Ensure Environmental Stewardship and Climate Readiness: Whitefish will protect its mountain environment, water resources, and wildlife habitat through responsible development while advancing climate-resilient strategies that reduce emissions, manage wildfire risk, and prepare for environmental change.

Environmental stewardship and climate readiness are essential for Whitefish given its forested setting and exposure to wildfire risk. Land use decisions directly influence emergency access, evacuation routes, and the ability of fire and medical services to respond effectively as the community grows. By directing development away from high-risk areas and incorporating resilient design and vegetation management, the City can reduce wildfire exposure, protect public safety, and safeguard the natural environment that defines Whitefish.

Objectives

- a. Wetlands, streams, floodplains, steep slopes, and wildlife habitat should be identified, mapped, and protected through appropriate land use designations, development standards, and conservation tools to reduce environmental impacts and guide responsible development.
- b. Wildfire risk at the community's edge should be reduced by applying land use, building, and vegetation standards consistent with Firewise principles, directing growth away from high-risk areas, and requiring defensible space in new development. The City's commitment to the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), anticipated in late 2026, is a worthy pursuit and this plan should serve as the primary guiding document for wildfire mitigation efforts.
- c. Surface and groundwater resources should be protected through the use of stormwater best management practices, green infrastructure, riparian buffers, and responsible landscaping that supports long-term water quality.
- d. The City should partner with nonprofits, schools, and public agencies to expand education and outreach related to water conservation, habitat protection, wildfire mitigation, wildlife connectivity, and sustainable living practices.
- e. New development should **be maximized in already-developed areas and minimized in green spaces, and whenever feasible**, incorporate green infrastructure strategies such as bioswales, landscaped stormwater facilities, permeable pavements, and expanded tree canopy to manage stormwater, improve environmental performance, and support urban cooling.

5. Support a Resilient Local Economy: Whitefish will strengthen a diverse, year-round local economy by providing space for businesses to grow, supporting workforce housing, and investing in infrastructure that reinforces community character and long-term fiscal stability.

Supporting a resilient local economy is essential given that 76 percent of Whitefish employees commute from outside the city and 43 percent of local jobs are tourism-related, creating seasonal labor and transportation challenges. Expanding workforce housing and supporting walkable, locally oriented businesses can reduce commuting, stabilize the workforce, and strengthen year-round economic resilience while ~~enhancing reinforcing~~ Whitefish's small-town character.

Objectives

- a. The City should ensure adequate land and appropriate zoning for small businesses, light industrial uses, and year-round employment sectors in order to prevent ~~the loss a scarcity~~ of commercial space ~~to non-commercial uses~~ and support a diverse local economy.
- b. Workforce housing opportunities should be expanded and protected by supporting housing types and locations, ~~especially in and near commercial areas and job centers~~, that meet the needs of local employees, helping businesses attract and retain workers while reducing regional commuting pressures.
- c. Infrastructure investments in water, sewer, transportation, and broadband should be prioritized in areas that support long-term economic activity and help reduce the cost of doing business.
- d. Economic stability should be strengthened by encouraging diversification beyond seasonal tourism, including support for industries such as outdoor products, ~~remote work~~, health care, arts, and professional services.
- e. Reinvestment and redevelopment should be encouraged along key corridors, particularly US Highway 93 South and Wisconsin Avenue, to create vibrant, connected districts that serve both residents and visitors.
- f. The City should collaborate with major employers, the school district, health care providers, and community organizations to better understand workforce needs, support training opportunities, and strengthen economic resilience.
- g. Growth decisions should be evaluated for their long-term fiscal impacts to ensure that development patterns generate sufficient revenue to maintain infrastructure and public services over time.

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Michelle Howke
Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 8:25 AM
To: Shane Mcmillen
Cc: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: RE: Growth policy

Hi Shane,

Thank you for your comments. Your letter will be distributed to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Michelle Howke
Administrative Services Director/City Clerk PO Box 158 Whitefish, MT 59937
(406)863-2402
[REDACTED]cityofwhitefish.gov

Please note, our website has changed to

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cityofwhitefish.gov%2F&data=05%7C02%7Catiefenbach%40cityofwhitefish.gov%7C97d4fd5a4b764473fae508de67ef681c%7C3c4380ae5af243c9b8edd34b6ce09d2b%7C0%7C0%7C639062475087458641%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMtIlsklFOljoitWFpbCIsIlldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=zGFy3qoFtkUcDtl8cj9rM4%2FzvKK%2BhgSWLJ5bV6CJqTY%3D&reserved=0>. Please update if you have the website included in your bookmarks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Shane Mcmillen <[REDACTED]gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 8, 2026 8:12 PM
To: Michelle Howke <[REDACTED]cityofwhitefish.gov>
Subject: Growth policy

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My wife and I have lived at [REDACTED] Kalispell Ave for 12 years. I'm writing to comment on the Vision Whitefish 20 year plan that's being drafted. My main points are the following:

1) Tall buildings are out of character with our small town, and we should fight to keep them from being allowed. We are not nor do we want to be a metropolitan density, most people who live here choose to NOT live in a metro area, Whitefish doesn't need 3+ story tall buildings and should resist that becoming commonplace.

2) My neighborhood is being classified as Heritage Urban, which in theory must not allow retail or commercial uses of any type. Once you approve any commercial or retail to mix with residential you'll end up with another Cannabis shop or a coffee shop offering evening wine tastings and the second those investors face opposition they'll litigate and the city will cave (I.e. skywalk over Wisconsin or rooftop entertainment at the Firebrand). It also seems ironic that an affordable housing vision keeps trying to replace a residential lot with retail or commercial space.

3) Developers and investors with self-interest are very powerful, which is why we need to lock this down as firmly as possible and the language needs to be as specific as possible rather than vague allowing for wealthy self interest to claim their most profitable interpretation is consistent with the plan's language.

4) Preserve, Protect, Respect, etc are all terms that need to be left in the Policy.

5) The entry to Whitefish on Spokane appears residential and charming. They are not the run of the mill ultra modern Scandinavian design condos that are everywhere else in Whitefish. Second street to 7th is warm and real, which are character traits that endear our town to everyone.

6) The "Place Type " classification is supposed to determine the subsequent zoning. I'd like to see the Heritage downtown classification switched to Heritage Urban, the two neighborhoods are very similar in their proximity to downtown, their walkability and their heritage appeal.

There is no shortage of empty retail and commercial space in downtown Whitefish and it's been this way for the past few years. There's also no shortage of empty beds and homes in Whitefish either, most of them are people's second third or fourth homes and they can easily pay the "penalty" tax for keeping their vacant residence empty and ready for their personal financial

or vacation whims. I'd like to see language in this plan that makes it clearly stated these new housing units are not to be left vacant for investment or as an occasionally inhabited residence. Currently this plan seems like a dream for developers and wealthy business owners and investors all justifying their development as responsible growth yet ultimately seeing dollar signs with the City of Whitefish's best intentions. I can appreciate the resistance to urban sprawl, in the end that will happen anyways, you can see it from Missoula to Hamilton and out to Frenchtown. Our town gets so congested with school start, lunch, and finish times already with such a large number of empty residences. It seems like you're putting the cart before the horse not addressing any infrastructure upgrades before solidifying this plan. These are my preliminary thoughts and I appreciate the opportunity to share them. I also appreciate your efforts and late nights trying to guide our wonderful community in the direction most residents agree on, Shane Mcmillen.

Sent from my iPhone

Whitefish Montana

February 8, 2026

Dear Whitefish City Planning Commission,

As comment to the Planning Commission, we are opposed to the current draft of the long-term Vision 2045 land use plan for Whitefish. The list of reasoning is long, but we will be brief, just touching on some of the reasons for the draft being flawed.

Many of the long-term Whitefish Citizens did not know of the Commission's vision quest. We don't know if any information was sent to the city's property owners. Residents had no idea this extraneous rethinking was going on.

The plan as drafted is not what residents want to see. The polls conducted were clearly flooded by special interest groups and developers. If you have enough friends write in, you can be Best of the Flathead. Same with meeting attendance. We could easily get enough people attend or to push polls the opposite way. It looks as though the consultants and Planning Commission have been taken in by special interest groups and developers. Just saying it looks that way.

Someone drafting came up with vague and ambiguous land use names and definitions, crossing over each other and preying on traditional terms to change the meanings, skewing usage visions. The most objectionable is the "Mixed Use" category. This label enables a free-for-all in land use and really has no place in our city, now or in the foreseeable future. It looks very fishy that in the A & B Mixed Use designated areas, whole blocks of land, each owned by developers were given the all-encompassing designation between established and built out subdivisions. Maybe a lot like spot zoning. Looks like a lawsuit waiting to happen.

The consultants clearly mislabeled (and using their new land use definitions) many current area's uses, perhaps to soften opinion on contradictory nearby land uses. As an example, we live in the Park Knoll neighborhood. We, as a neighborhood, identify more closely by the definitions with the "Mountain Neighborhood" rather than "Suburban Neighborhood." Come look at us. Great Northern Heights is more like the "Suburban Neighborhood" by the definitions. The Mixed Use "B" land is mostly unbuildable due to grade topography and high water table with wetlands. Why would anyone designate that definitions to a plot of land that could not hold to that definition or be compatible with the already built out neighborhoods?

The "B" Mixed Use is also placed between two subdivisions that are unlike it, and between high commercial and unincorporated rural farm land. Nothing compliments a Mixed Use designation there – North, South, East, or West. So, it is as if someone just looked at a two dimensional map and said we should have "Mixed Use" here. It doesn't fit. But it is owned mostly by one

developer. And we don't see any "Mixed Use" areas visioned near Iron Horse. The A & B Mixed Use areas would better serve the citizens of Whitefish by designating them Suburban Neighborhoods, with the unbuildable areas categorized as Natural/Open space, thereby keeping with the quaint charm that is Whitefish.

The one thing we can agree with on with the draft is the future annexations. But they are flawed somewhat in that there is no visionary designation for the land use of those annexations. It would be helpful, if this was a true, 20-year, vision.

There are others. We don't see what someone was thinking with the Compact Subdivision along US 93 south of Highway 40 either. It should be visioned as commercial, don't you think? This and others have us scratching our heads, but we will leave all of those for another time.

In order to come close for us and our neighbors agreeing with the draft, eliminate the "Mixed Use" designation. It is too vague to be a true vision for Whitefish. A free-for-all that benefits no residents. We don't need commercial in our residential areas. We already have a commercial designation for that in proper places. In other cities that are of similar size as projected for Whitefish, retail and commercial are shutting down and leaving residential areas. So, there is no need to project them now in Whitefish.

Thanks for your time and dedication to correcting the draft plan. It will be much appreciated.

Mark Voelker and Kathy Grant

Park Knoll Lane, Whitefish Montana

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Jon L. Heberling <[REDACTED]@mcgarveylaw.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 8, 2026 7:39 PM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: More things to fix

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Hi Alan, Please post these comments to public comments, land use. Thanks, Jon

1. Fix commercial.

The Land Use Plan does not state the current quantity and need for commercial space. Nor does it state the impacts of adding commercial space, in violation of MLUPA 76-25-203.

Commercial zoning is a very important part of the Land Use Plan. Under MLUPA 76-25-203(1), the Land Use Plan must state the "existing conditions of economic development". It must state how much commercial area Whitefish currently has. This can be stated for downtown and areas north, west, and also south along the 93 strip. In the current draft there is no statement of "existing conditions" for commercial uses. The statement must be done at "the broadest and most comprehensive level of collecting data, identifying and analyzing existing conditions." MLUPA 76-25-102(3)(a). The long range planner often states that the Land Use Plan is just a 10,000 foot view. Every time he states this, he is wrong, per the statute above quoted. This has been pointed out before.

The Land Use Plan must also state the impacts on "economic development" "over the next 20 years". MLUPA 76-25-203(2). How much more commercial space will be necessary by 2045? We are not told. We know that the downtown has 89,000 ft.² of vacant commercial space. How does that figure in?

For housing units, the Housing Needs Assessment 2025, page 40, used projected population numbers, based on population growth rates of 1.25%, 1.5% and 2%, and then translated that into numbers of housing units necessary. No calculation like that was done for a projection of commercial space which may be needed in the future. How does population increase translate into need for commercial spaces? How do tourism projections translate into identified need for commercial space? Answers are urgently needed.

Nor do we know how much space is added per the land use map at page 41 of the Land Use Chapter. There is no map of current commercial areas to compare to the Place Types map. The "expected impacts of development" have not been analyzed, in violation of MLUPA.

A note of appreciation is in order. The Land Use Chapter done by CZB is well done, as far as it goes. Their language is elegant and clear. Observations are thoughtful. An early version of the growth policy schedule gave six months to land use. So we are now where we should have been six months ago. This is no fault of CZB. Think what they could do with another six months.

2. Fix responses.

The City is not responding to public comments, in violation of MLUPA 76-25-106(1) (b) (v) .

MLUPA 76-25-106(1) (b) (v) requires that "(b) Public participation in adoption... of a land use plan...must provide for, at a minimum...the analysis of and response to public comment." City Hall is not doing this.

At the December 3, Planning Commission meeting, there was a discussion between the Chair and the Planning Director on public comment, regarding ensuring that the Planning Commission see all public comments. There was no vote of the Planning Commission, and hence no direction from the Commission to not respond to public comments. At the December 17 Planning Commission meeting, the Planning Director stated that the staff stopped incorporating public comment, per direction. Apparently, somewhere in December the staff stopped responding to public comments. I am not sure of the procedural facts here, but they do not matter. Regardless of whether direction was given or not, the City clearly has the duty to respond to public comments.

This may be cured by an additional direction to the staff to analyze and respond to public comments, and catching up on the backlog.

3. Fix the land use chapter statement of impacts.

The Land Use Chapter does not state the "expected impacts of the development" "over the next 20 years", in violation of MLUPA 76-25-203(2) .

MLUPA 76-25-103(2) states "the land use plan must include, at a minimum, a description, map, and analysis of how the jurisdiction will accommodate its projected population over the next 20 years and the expected impacts of the development in the area of housing, local services and facilities, economic development, natural resources, environment, and hazards." The statement of impacts is not optional.

The Land Use Chapter provides a Place Types map at page 41, and zones may be done in accordance with that. MCA 76-2-304(a). The Land Use Chapter provides place type descriptions at pages 25-39, and zoning regulations may be done in accordance with that. The Land Use Chapter states the population increase, and as a consequence that 2100 new housing units will be needed by 2045. However, the Land Use Plan does not state what is the current need for housing, particularly affordable housing. In addition, the Land Use Chapter does not state what commercial space Whitefish now has, nor does it project what commercial space will result from the plan. Worse, the Land Use Plan does not address the future impacts of the plan, with all the attendant population increase, and residential and commercial construction. What are the impacts by 2045 on housing, services, economic development, traffic and hazards? We are not told. This is a violation of MLUPA 76-25-203(2) .

4 Fix public participation

Public participation for the Land Use Chapter is probably inadequate.

MLUPA 76-25-106(1) requires "continuous public participation" in the land use plan. See also Montana Constitution Article II, section 8. There is considerable case law on public participation, with which I am not familiar.

It would seem that for the public to participate, the Land Use Chapter would have to be presented in a clear understandable way. If the public cannot clearly understand a chapter, how can they meaningfully participate? Maps and figures at pages 11, 14, 16, 22, 24, 41-44, 46, 54, 56 and 58 are way too small in resolution to be understandable. This can be fixed by making each one a full page, and for certain maps to break them into the north 1/3, middle 1/3 and south 1/3. Also a pocket of maps in larger size could be included with the land use plan.

Major omissions such as the Land Use Chapter's omission of key information on commercial areas also forecloses public participation. The public needs to have the basic facts too understand the issues in the plan.

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Jon L. Heberling <[REDACTED]@mcgarveylaw.com>
Sent: Friday, February 6, 2026 5:19 PM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: Add to Land Use goals and objectives, and text

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Hi Alan, These are the comments I discussed on 2/4/26. Please post them to public comments in the land use section. Thank you, Jon Heberling, Board member, CFBF

1. Commercial sprawl.

Add as objective 1.f. : “New commercial areas on the land use plan for 2045, future place types map, page 41, must be zoned commercial gradually, not all at once. The first step will be to describe new commercial areas for the first five years. Areas to become commercial after the first five years, will remain in a “Neighborhood Centers” designation, as a placeholder. The issue may be re-examined at five year intervals.”

The increase in commercial area zoning is apparent from the line use maps. The Land Use text does not give the percentage overall increase in commercial area, or the increase in acres devoted to commercial. It should do so. Nothing in MLUPA states that Whitefish must zone for 2045 right now. The land use maps may present the goal for 2045, and zoning can be done in stages. Zoning large new areas for commercial now could lead to commercial sprawl with partially filled zones. There could be a loss of continuity, context, and character. A more gradual approach is appropriate.

2. High rises

Add as objective 2.h: “Buildings over 35 feet in height shall only be permitted in downtown commercial, heavy commercial, or industrial zones, and in said zones only a maximum of 60 feet shall be permitted.”

MLUPA 76-25-304(4)(b)(iii) provides: " (b) Zoning regulations in a municipality... may not include a requirement to provide...(iii) a height restriction of less than 60 feet on buildings that are located in downtown commercial, heavy commercial, or industrial zones.”

The additional objective 2.h above is necessary, because right now, as the growth plan stands, high rises up to 60 feet might arguably be permitted “throughout the city”. See Housing Chapter, vision, “we encourage a diversity of housing types, integrated throughout all areas of the city.”

Land use objective 2.a states that housing diversity should be “in appropriate locations”, not “throughout the city”. The Planning Commission should note the conflict, and direct that “throughout all areas of the city” in Housing Chapter, Vision, be changed to “in appropriate locations.”

3. “General services”

Eliminate “general services” at page 27. The Land Use chapter, page 27, includes for Heritage Downtown Neighborhood, a secondary land use as “general services.” This is vague, and could bring in any number of commercial uses.

4. Neighborhood Center, page 39.

Add typical defining features, land uses, lots, and buildings, as per all other place types at pages 27–38. Particularly missing is height, which should be 3 stories 35 feet.

5. Change 42 feet to 35 feet.

At page 29, Compact Suburban Neighborhood, and at page 31, Mixed Neighborhood, “height 3 story/42 feet is stated. Other residential areas like Heritage Downtown use a 35 foot maximum.

6. Impacts of the land use maps.

MLUPA 76-25-203(2) requires that the land use plan state “the expected impacts of development.” The Land Use chapter does not do this. Nor does any other chapter do this. It is a violation of MLUPA.

7. “Shoulds”

In the goals and objectives, change all “shoulds” to “must” or “will”.

The Land Use chapter repeatedly uses the verb “should” to direct action. MCA 76–2–304(1) states that “zoning regulations must be: (a) made in accordance with a growth policy.” “Should” may well be clear enough for growth policy directives , but “must” or “will” would be stronger and clearer.

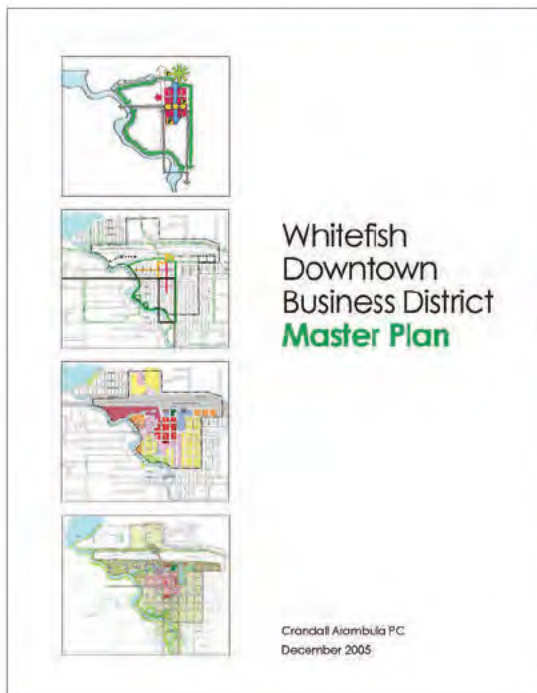
CRANDALL ARAMBULA

URBAN DESIGN | ARCHITECTURE | PLANNING

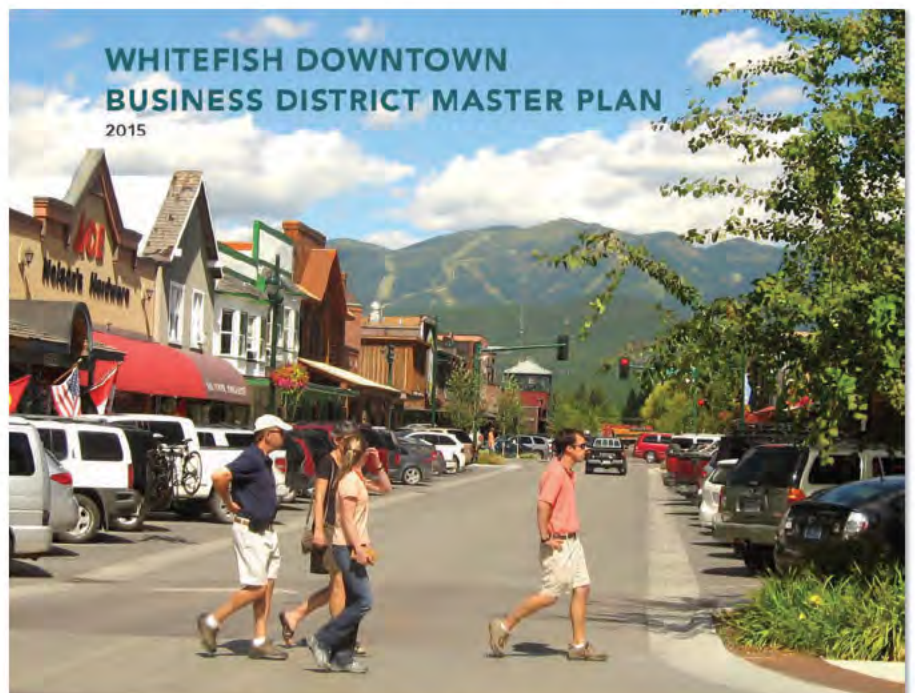
Downtown Oak Park, Illinois

Revitalizing America's Towns and Cities Since 1998

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT MASTER PLANS

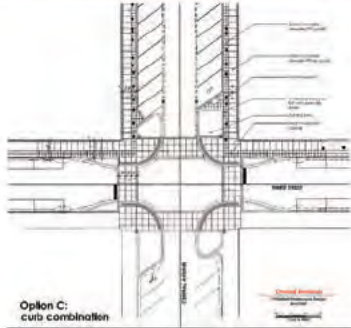


ADOPTED 2005

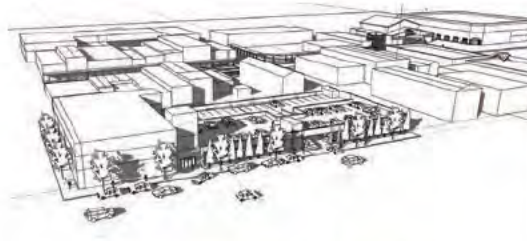


UPDATE ADOPTED 2015

ADDITIONAL DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT PLANNING & DESIGN



CENTRAL AVENUE STREETScape



CITY HALL/PARKING STRUCTURE &
2ND & SPOKANE PARKING STRUCTURE



WHITEFISH PROMENADE/
BAKER UNDERPASS & VIADUCT

WHITEFISH DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT BEFORE- 2004



Images: Crandall Arambula 2004, 2012



WHITEFISH DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT AFTER - 2025



Images: Google Earth Sep 2025



CRANDALL ARAMBULA RETAIL FUNDAMENTALS ©

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS



'Main Street' Retail

Hardest land use to get right.

- Formulaic- a science, not an art.
- Requires strict adherence to a disciplined retail formula.

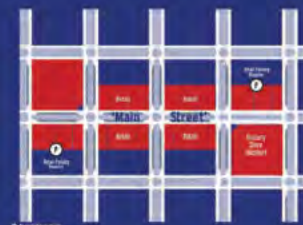
RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS



Image: Orem Station, Crandall Arambula

RETAIL DESIGN FORMULA

© Crandall Arambula



**Critical Mass – Floor Area Requirement
(100,000 - 150,000 SF)**



**Critical Mass – Floor Area Requirement
(20,000 - 30,000 SF)**

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS



Crandall Arambula

'18-Hour' Active Uses

RETAIL DEFINITION

Businesses that engage in:

- **Sale of merchandise**— clothing, footwear, sporting goods, jewelry shops, art galleries, hardware & grocery stores, etc.
- **Eating, drinking & entertainment establishments**— restaurants, cafes, bakeries, nightclubs, cinemas, etc.
- **Personal Services** such as hair salons

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

NATIONAL RETAIL 'BRICK & MORTAR' TRENDS © Crandall Arambula



RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL TRENDS

Issues:

- Reduced Need – Shift to E-Commerce
- Current Conditions – 'Ghost Boxes' reduce tax base, create visual blight & illicit activity
- Likely Future Scenario – Conversion of Retail Parcels to Multi-Unit Affordable Housing.

ARC CA DIGEST



Reimagining Spaces: Strip Malls are the Next Housing Opportunity

Opportunity

Los Angeles-based firm Opportunity is leading a coalition of local experts to identify vacant retail and commercial spaces in the city and county for conversion to affordable housing. The coalition includes Opportunity, the Los Angeles Housing Department, the Los Angeles County Housing Department, and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

A recent ARC CA survey identified several opportunities for conversion of vacant retail and commercial spaces to affordable housing. The survey found that there are a number of vacant retail and commercial spaces in the city and county that are suitable for conversion to affordable housing. The survey also found that there are a number of vacant retail and commercial spaces in the city and county that are suitable for conversion to affordable housing.

Based on the findings of the survey, Opportunity has identified several opportunities for conversion of vacant retail and commercial spaces to affordable housing. The survey found that there are a number of vacant retail and commercial spaces in the city and county that are suitable for conversion to affordable housing. The survey also found that there are a number of vacant retail and commercial spaces in the city and county that are suitable for conversion to affordable housing.



Crandall Arambula



Amazon.com

Changing Consumer Behavior

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

TYPES OF RETAIL

'Transactional' Retail

- Goods and services purchased on daily & weekly basis.
- Cost of goods and range selection are key considerations.



Include National Brand Retailers

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL TRENDS

'Experiential' Retail

- Retail environment is as important as the purchase.
- Foster local and regional retailers

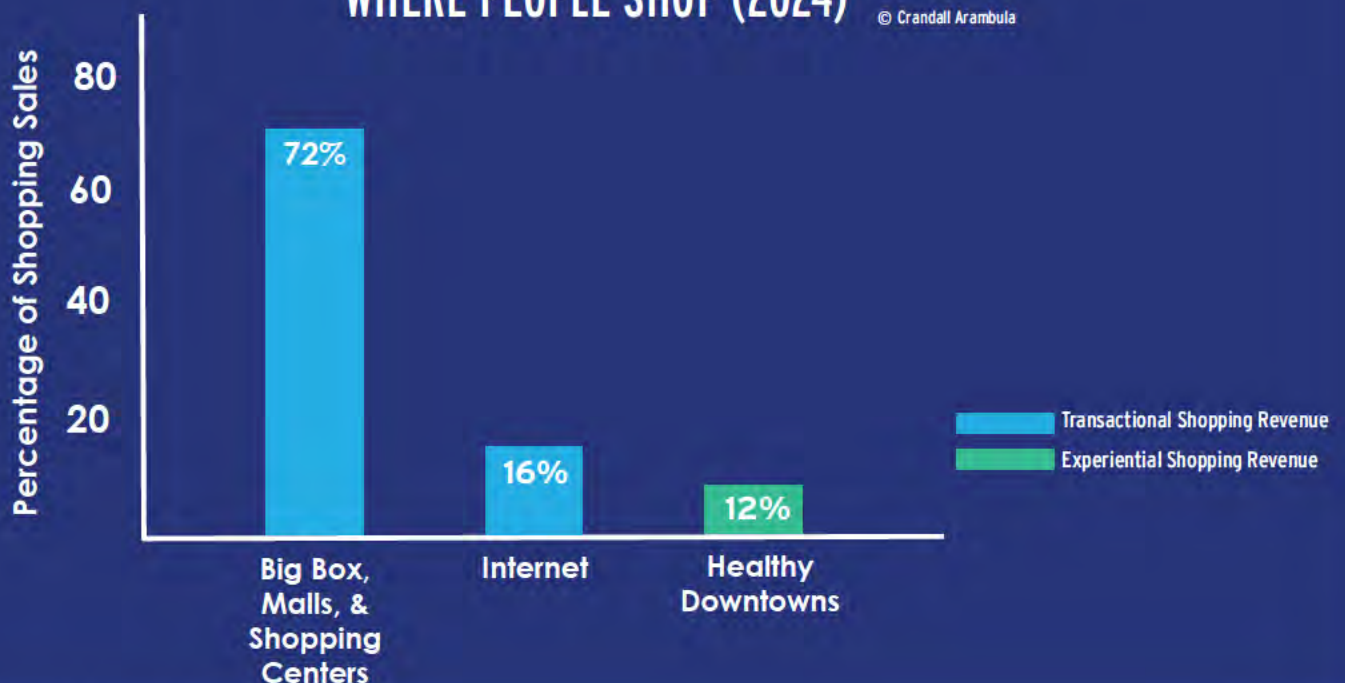


Unique, Authentic Environment

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

WHERE PEOPLE SHOP (2024)

© Crandall Arambula



RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

WHERE PEOPLE SHOP (2024)

© Crandall Arambula



RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

WHERE PEOPLE SHOP (2024)

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RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL NEEDS FORMULA

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RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL NEEDS FORMULA

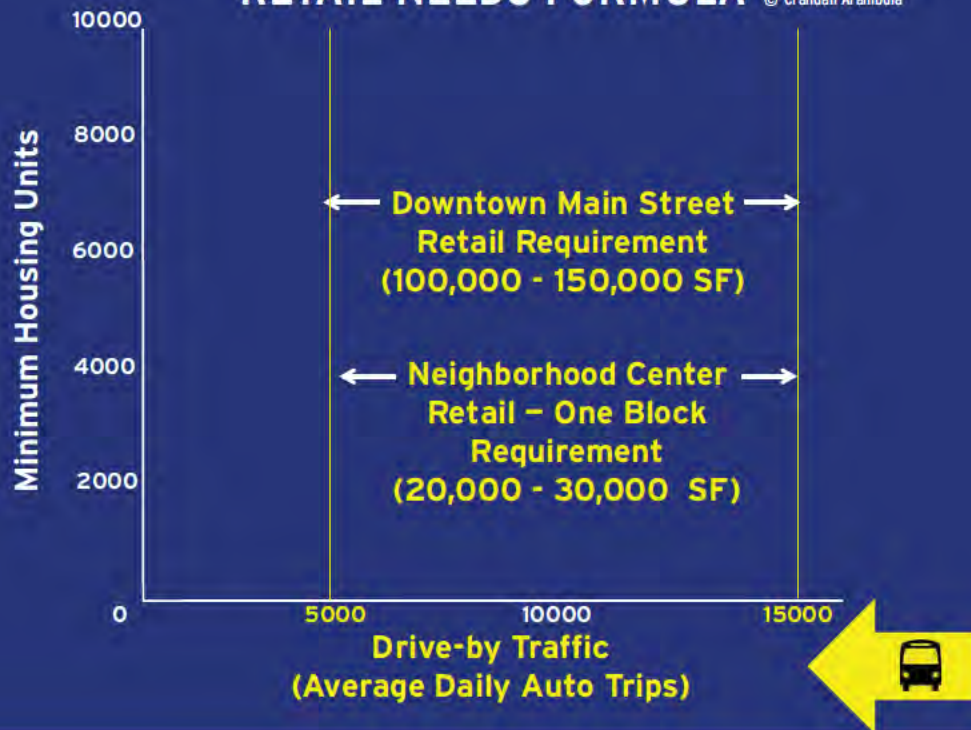
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RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL NEEDS FORMULA

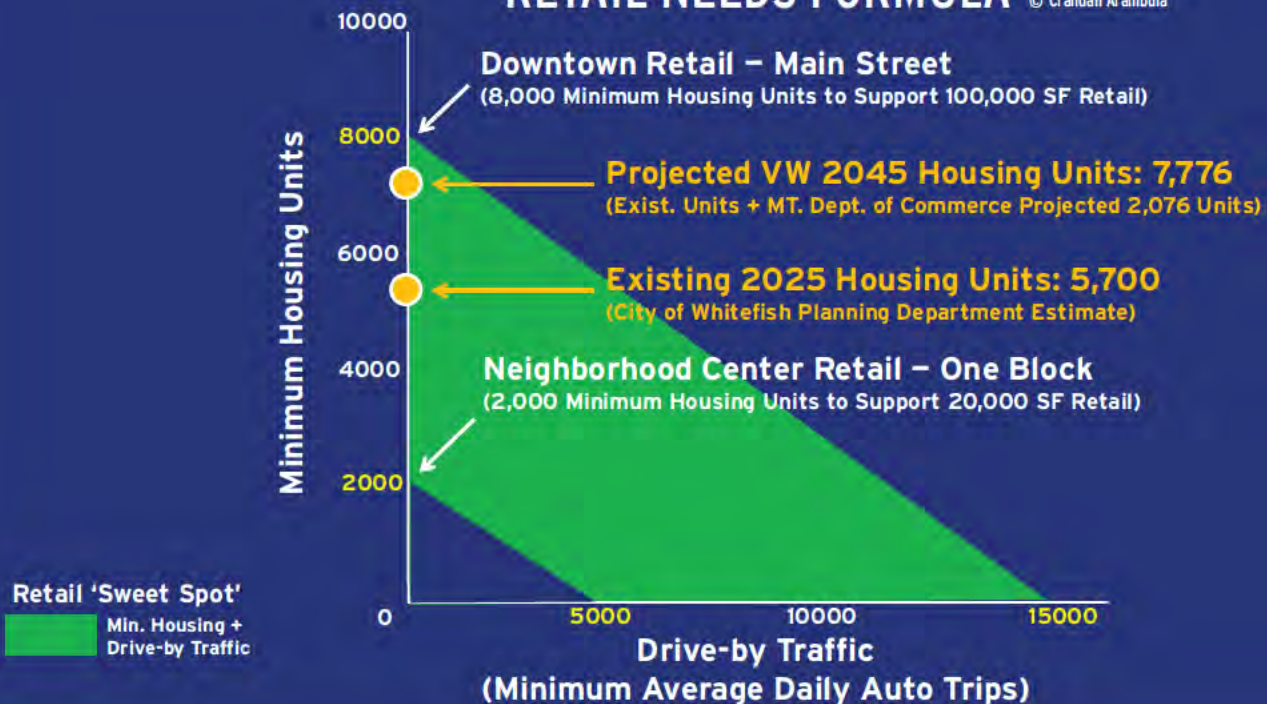
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RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL NEEDS FORMULA

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RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS



Crandall Arambula Conceptual Illustration Only. To be confirmed through detailed Retail Market Analysis

RETAIL NEEDS

Trade Area Issues:

- **Local Customers** – Whitefish's low population (8,422) is inadequate to support current retail businesses.
- **Visitors** – provide limited, seasonal benefits only.
- **Regional Customers** – retailers rely on a:
 - Primary Trade Area: 50-80% of shoppers typically are from a <20-minute driving radius.
 - Secondary Trade Area: 15-20% of shoppers typically are from a 20-25-minute driving radius.
 - Tertiary: Specialty uses such as clothing, require a significantly larger capture area.

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

TOO MUCH
TRAFFIC

15,000 ADT

TRAFFIC
JUST RIGHT

5,000 ADT

TOO LITTLE
TRAFFIC



STORE VISIBILITY & ACCESS

Out-of-Town shoppers fill the customer gap that local Whitefish population cannot meet alone.

Requirements:

- Busy Street adjacency is a must-have
- **Traffic volumes must fall into a drive-by exposure 'Goldilocks Zone':**
Average Daily Trips (ADT)-
 - 5,000 ADT Minimum.
 - 15,000 ADT Maximum.

Traffic Data Source: Traffic Count (TCDS)



ISSUES AND CONCERNS



ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

The Vision Whitefish 2045 Mixed Use Center-based (Polycentric) Growth Strategy is inappropriate for small-town Whitefish.

- As described by the American Planning Association, a polycentric mixed use center growth strategy is appropriate for communities with populations greater than 400,000 residents.
- Sub-centers typically have a population of 25,000.



Inappropriate: Big City Growth Strategy



ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER PLACE TYPE.

Housing types with **neighborhood-serving retail, restaurant(s)**. Buildings typically **rise two to four stories with active ground floors**, intersections. These areas are intended to absorb a meaningful share of new growth while maintaining a village scale.

Land Use-

- Primary: **commercial, mixed use**, office, multi-family, civic
- Secondary : schools, **hotels**, parks, trails

Buildings-

- **Height: 4 story/60 ft.**

Future State-

- Future changes encouraging **taller buildings at key nodes and intersection corners to introduce mixed use.**

Neighborhood Center



Neighborhood Centers are compact, walkable districts that blend a full range of housing types with neighborhood-serving retail, restaurants, services, and small-scale commercial buildings. Typically, they rise to four stories with active ground floors, vibrant streetscapes, and frequent pedestrian activity. These centers provide a diverse mix of housing, retail, and services, and are designed to be the heart of a neighborhood, providing a meaningful share of new growth while maintaining a village scale, prioritizing high-quality architecture, shade trees, and public realm amenities that link communities and adjacent neighborhoods.

TYPICAL DEFINING FEATURES

- Land Use
 - o Primary: commercial, mixed-use, office, multi-family, civic
 - o Secondary: schools, hotels, parks, trails
- Buildings
 - o Height: 4 story / 60 ft.
 - o Walkable to public, walkable, etc.
- Land
 - o Public realm: shade trees, public art, street furniture, etc.
 - o Private realm: walk and bicycle friendly

FUTURE STATE

Future changes should focus on dense, walkable, and vibrant neighborhoods, encouraging taller buildings at key nodes and intersection corners to introduce mixed use, diverse housing options, and create a more walkable, transit-oriented environment.

Inappropriate Uses, Form, & Massing



ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

MIXED NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE TYPE.

Mixed neighborhoods feature a diverse blend of housing types and selected neighborhood-serving **commercial uses such as a coffee shop, a restaurant, or similar** that provide daily needs close to home.

TYPICAL DEFINING FEATURES

Land Use-

Primary: single unit, duplex, triplex, quadplex, multi-family up to 18 units.
Secondary : accessory dwelling units, schools, **small neighborhood serving uses**

Buildings-

Height 3 story/60 ft.

Future State-

Future changes should prioritize context-sensitive infill (e.g. missing middle) **housing above shops.**

Mixed Neighborhood



Mixed Neighborhoods feature a diverse blend of housing types, including single-unit, duplex, triplex, and multi-family, and selected neighborhood-serving commercial uses such as a coffee shop, a restaurant, or similar that provide daily needs close to home. Development patterns are walkable, and the mix of uses and building heights is designed to be the heart of a neighborhood, providing a meaningful share of new growth while maintaining a village scale, prioritizing high-quality architecture, shade trees, and public realm amenities that link communities and adjacent neighborhoods.

TYPICAL DEFINING FEATURES

- Land Use
 - o Primary: single-unit, duplex, triplex, multi-family, multi-unit
 - o Secondary: accessory dwelling units, schools, small neighborhood-serving uses
- Buildings
 - o Height: 3 story / 60 ft.
 - o Walkable to public, walkable, etc.
- Land
 - o Public realm: shade trees, public art, street furniture, etc.
 - o Private realm: walk and bicycle friendly

FUTURE STATE

Future changes should prioritize context-sensitive infill (e.g. missing middle) housing above shops, encouraging taller buildings at key nodes and intersection corners to introduce mixed use, diverse housing options, and create a more walkable, transit-oriented environment.

Inappropriate Uses, Form, & Massing

VISION WHITEFISH 2045

GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

Downtown Business District
(Master Plan Boundary)
Permitted Retail Area:
62 acres

Commercial Corridor
(Existing WB-2)
Permitted Retail Area:
303 acres

RETAIL SPRAWL
Mixed Use Retail Area:
152 Acres



ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Retail Sprawl. New Mixed Neighborhood, Neighborhood Center, and Corridor Commercial Place Types will permit retail use. The total area of parcels where new retail will be permitted is 250 percent greater in area than the existing Business District.

PERMITTED RETAIL SUMMARY

Place Type	Area (acres)
Existing Downtown Business District	62
Existing Commercial Corridor (WB-2)	303
Retail Sprawl – Planned Mixed Use Area¹	152
Total	517

¹ Includes proposed Community Corridor areas outside existing WB-2 zoning district

VISION WHITEFISH 2045

GROWTH POLICY UPDATE



WHITEFISH, MONTANA

WHITEFISH ECONOMIC GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

PROJECT NAME: WHITEFISH ECONOMIC GROWTH POLICY UPDATE
PROJECT NUMBER: JG0303-00
DATE: JAN 11, 2024

PROJECT AND LOCATION
SAL LAKE CITY, UT 84143
P. 010303001



ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

The need for more neighborhood housing is well supported by MLUPA state mandated policies and housing needs assessment data, however **no growth policy rationale nor data has been provided to justify the need for retail use in neighborhoods.**

Lacks Sufficient Retail Economic Analysis



ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

The need for more neighborhood housing is well supported by MLUPA state mandated policies and housing needs assessment data, however no growth policy rationale nor data has been provided to justify the need for retail use in neighborhoods.

The proposed Vision Whitefish 2045 growth scenarios propose polycentric, mixed-use neighborhoods without assessing:

- Whitefish's long-term retail supply, demand, and absorption that is a best-practice community plan requirement.



Typical Community Plan Retail Market Analysis

Image: City of Sandy, Oregon



ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

The need for more neighborhood housing is well supported by MLUPA state mandated policies and housing needs assessment data, however no growth policy rationale nor data has been provided to justify the need for retail use in neighborhoods.

The proposed Vision Whitefish 2045 growth scenarios propose polycentric, mixed-use neighborhoods without assessing:

- Whitefish's long-term retail supply, demand, and absorption
- The impacts on struggling downtown retail businesses if retail is permitted in Mixed Neighborhoods & Neighborhood Centers



Vacant Downtown Storefronts & Lots



Potential Property Tax Increases

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Permitting additional neighborhood retail businesses will weaken the Downtown Business District as a destination for local and tourist shoppers, and in turn **reduce resort tax revenues.**



Heart of Whitefish Downtown Business District Inventory: December 2024

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Permitting additional neighborhood retail businesses will weaken the Downtown Business District as a destination for local and tourist shoppers, and in turn **reduce resort tax revenues.**

There is not latent demand to justify expanding current retail supply outside the Downtown Business District. Analysis indicates that:

- **Currently there are 89,750 square feet of vacant storefronts and retail sites available downtown**

VISION WHITEFISH 2045

GROWTH POLICY UPDATE



Heart of Whitefish Downtown Business District Inventory: December 2024

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Permitting additional neighborhood retail businesses will weaken the Downtown Business District as a destination for local and tourist shoppers, and in turn reduce resort tax revenues.

There is not latent demand to justify expanding current retail supply outside the Downtown Business District. Analysis indicates that:

- Currently there are 89,750 square feet of vacant storefronts and retail sites available downtown
- Vision Whitefish 2045 growth scenarios include **neighborhood center** and **mixed neighborhood place types** will permit competing retail use destinations that will 'cannibalize' retail from the downtown.

VISION WHITEFISH 2045

GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

STRONG TOWNS

What's up with all those empty commercial storefronts in new mixed-use developments?

Mishawaka, Wisconsin, where U.S. is going through a massive building phase, with new construction popping up on every corner in and around the downtown and other popular neighborhoods. If you live in any number of mid-sized cities, this is probably a familiar story. And because recent trends in urban planning have encouraged a return to mixed-use developments, these sorts of buildings dominate the new construction landscape. It has resulted in some lively new ground-level restaurants and shops emerging in areas that previously lacked commercial life.

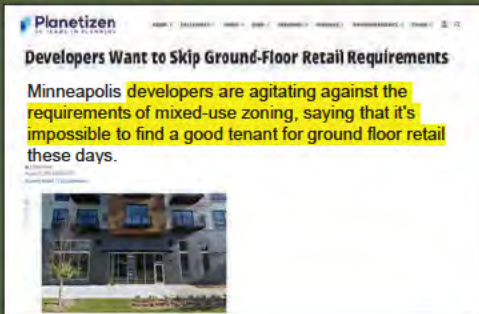
But here's the more common picture: a modern-looking five-story apartment building over a vacant commercial space. This image is probably also familiar to you if you live in one of those cities experiencing significant growth. You might expect this sort of thing to last a few months, perhaps, while the apartment units are in the process of being filled, and the building manager seeks a commercial tenant. But in fact, in many cities, it's not unusual to see commercial space sitting empty for months and sometimes years. There are buildings like this all over the place, and while they may be valuable because they do attract new residents to the area, they also tend to be a waste of money. At the end of the day, a vacant storefront makes the whole project feel neglected and undesirable, and it isn't fulfilling its purpose.



ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Neighborhood **mixed use retail** is difficult to finance and to **find tenants** and will tamper affordable housing developer interest.

Unnecessary Financial Constraints



Unnecessary Development Barriers

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Neighborhood mixed use retail is difficult to finance and will tamper affordable housing developer interest.

- Including retail use as a component of neighborhood housing place types adds unnecessary financial and design barriers to existing hard to develop affordable housing sites.



Legislation Would Open Up Commercial Areas, and Ground-Floor Spaces, to Housing

Housing advocates and developers have long argued that mandatory ground-story retail is an impediment to housing development, since retail space often remains vacant; that vacant space costs money to build and maintain but provides no revenue and can be detrimental to neighborhoods.

Seattle's zoning generally allows housing in neighborhood commercial areas, so that part of the bill wouldn't require huge changes here. But the bill would impact Seattle in a different (and, many urbanists would argue, long-overdue) way: It would also prohibit cities from requiring ground-floor retail spaces as part of new mixed-use housing developments.

Pending Washington State Housing Legislation

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Neighborhood mixed use retail is difficult to finance and will tamper affordable housing developer interest.

- Including retail use as a component of neighborhood housing place types adds unnecessary financial and design barriers to existing hard to develop affordable housing sites.
- Policies and regulations should make it easier, not harder to develop housing. Whitefish is in a housing crisis. Added 'red tape' mixed use regulations, will discourage developer interest and result in little or no housing development and in turn, threaten Whitefish's compliance with state mandated 2045 housing targets



REQUESTED ACTIONS



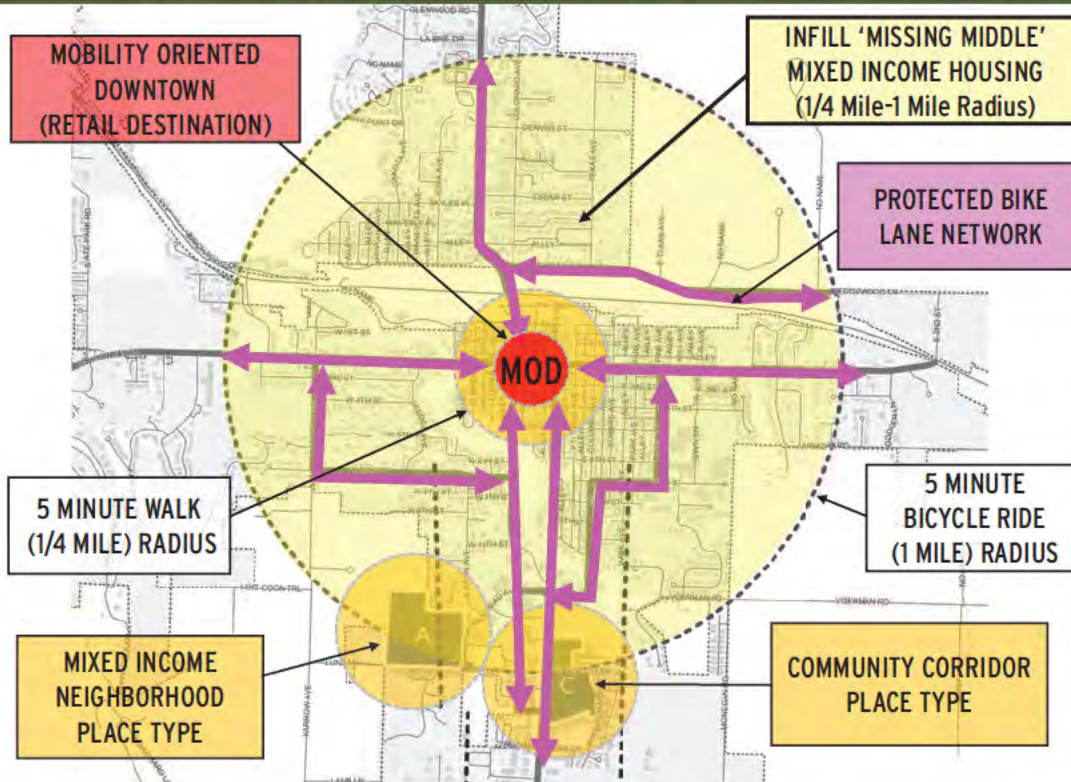
Vision Whitefish 2045 Downtown Focus

REQUESTED ACTIONS.

Focus 2045 Growth Policy on areas within a 1-mile radius of the Downtown. Ensure that the Vision Whitefish 2045 Economic Development, Land Use, and Housing element policy prioritizes the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods over outlying neighborhoods.

- **Economic Development Policy:** Continue to provide revenue for Downtown Master Plan projects such as the 2nd Street Parking Structure.
- **Housing Policy:** Target 1,635 Units within a mile radius of downtown.
- **Transportation Policy.** Build out all Connect Whitefish Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan improvements within a minimum of 1-mile radius of Downtown by 2045.

MOBILITY-ORIENTED DOWNTOWN (MOD) GROWTH STRATEGY



HOUSING TARGETS.

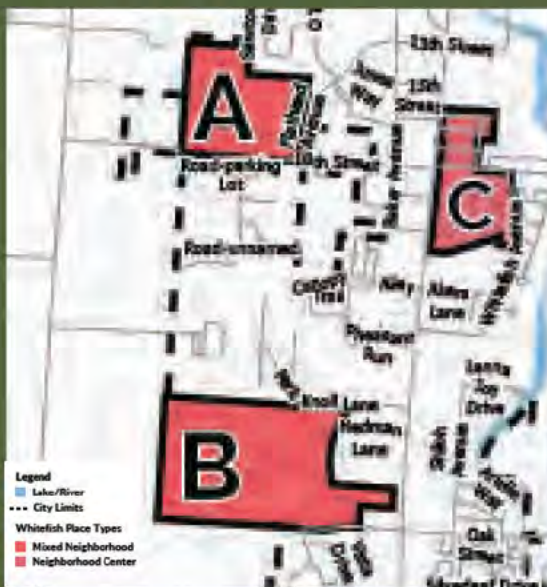
1,635 Units.

Mixed income housing comprised of 'missing middle' small lot single unit, duplexes, tri-plexes, townhomes, condominiums, & apartments.

- Pipeline Units
715 Units
- MOD Infill Housing (within 1 mile)
325 Units
- MOD Housing (within ¼ mile)
235 Units
- Areas A & C Housing
360 Units
- Downtown Retail
100,000- 150,000 SF

VISION WHITEFISH 2045

GROWTH POLICY UPDATE



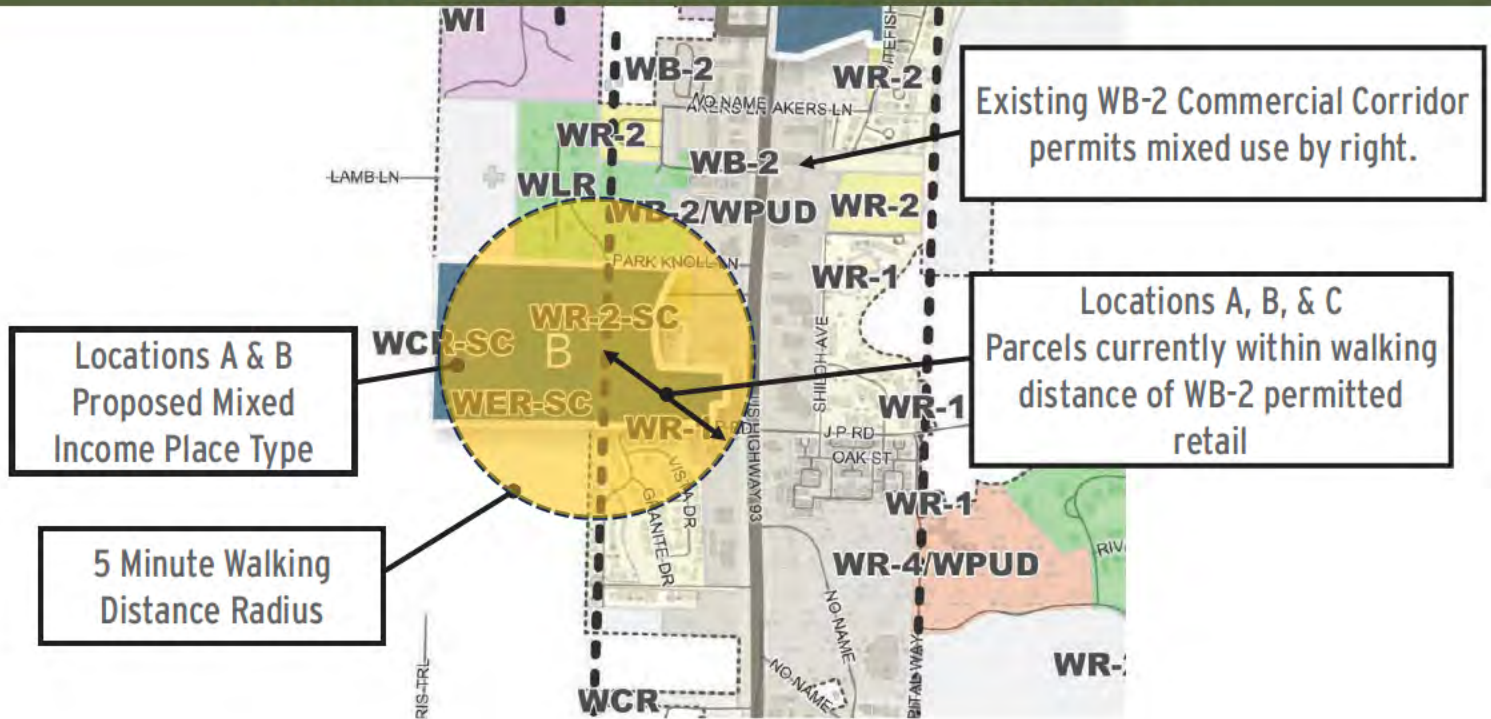
REQUESTED ACTIONS.

Remove all references to new retail permitted use in the Vision Whitefish 2045 Economic Development, Land Use, Transportation, and Housing elements' policy text and graphics.

Place Type Requested Changes:

- **A & B Locations** – Change to new 'Mixed Income' place type that emphasizes 'missing middle' (15 DU/ac maximum) small single unit and attached units that provide home ownership opportunities.
- **C Location** – Change to **Community Corridor Place Type**. Maintain existing WB-2 zoning that permits retail and multi-unit housing. Exclude the Mountain Mall from location area.

MIXED INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE TYPE



MIXED INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE TYPE



'Missing Middle' Housing

Land Use

- A mix of affordable housing and full price residential units throughout.
- Range of housing types and densities
- Parks, trails and open space integrated into neighborhood

MIXED INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING PLACE TYPE

COMMUNITY CORRIDOR (EXISTING WB-2 REGULATIONS)

Existing City Code Zoning Regulation permit retail within walking distance of proposed A & B growth locations.

11-2K-1: INTENT AND PURPOSE:

The WB-2 District is intended to **provide for those retail sales** and services the operations of which are typically characterized by the need for large display or parking areas, large storage areas and by outdoor commercial amusement or recreational activities. **Mixed-use and multi-family development is also appropriate.** This district depends on proximity to highways or arterial streets and may be located in business corridors or islands. (Ord. 19-11, 6-3-2019)

11-2K-2 PERMITTED NEIGHBORHOOD DESTINATION USES

- **Multi-family dwelling units above ground floor commercial as mixed-use**
- **Entertainment**
- **Grocery Stores**
- **Restaurants, non-formula.**
- **Theaters**
- **Vendors** (e.g., mobile food vendors)

Extracted Text: City Code of Whitefish, Montana 2025

MIXED INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING PLACE TYPE

COMMUNITY CORRIDOR (EXISTING WB-2 REGULATIONS)

Existing City Code Zoning Regulation permit retail within walking distance of proposed A & B growth locations.

1-3-43: MIXED-USE AND NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:

Building Orientation And Multi-Building Sites:

1. **Orientation: Buildings must be oriented towards the primary street frontage** and public paths and/or sidewalks. Buildings on corner lots should be oriented towards the primary intersection.
 - b. Buildings must be arranged on the site so that their orientation frames, encloses, or otherwise gives prominence to a pedestrian corridor, an outdoor gathering space with outdoor seating, a **"main street"** pedestrian or vehicle access corridor within the site, or the corners of street intersections or entry points into the development.
 - c. Buildings on corner lots should be oriented toward the primary intersection and the primary and secondary street frontages, while **parking and auto access must be located away from the primary intersection corners.**



Alan Tiefenbach

From: Mary Person
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 10:58 AM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: Growth Policy

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Allen;

Thanks for taking my call the other day and going over the Land Use Designation for my property located on Wisconsin Avenue. When I started renovations on an older home for the location of my office this was a relatively quiet residential area, but have been amazed how the neighborhood has changed in the last 15 years. Where Bonsai is now located had previously been approved for a mixed use development with residential and commercial uses including a brewery. That approved development never came to fruition but the brewery and restaurant did, as well as townhouses, and offices.

With the restaurants and commercial that are in place and thriving at this time on Wisconsin Ave I want to thank you for continuing the continuity of the Mixed Use designation. I love our vibrant downtown and I believe it will continue, but it can be congested at times and it makes sense to offer ways to disperse the traffic and provide opportunities for residents to walk or bike to the restaurants, neighborhood grocery stores, and parks that are located along the Wisconsin Ave. corridor.

We have many future challenges with growth and traffic north and south of the downtown, and I hope these challenges can be met in ways to provide connectivity to residential and commercial areas safely through this updated growth policy. Thank you for your time and efforts!

Best,

Mary Person

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Katie Sullivan Lyons <kp. [REDACTED] gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 11:34 PM
To: Alan Tiefenbach; Michelle Howke
Subject: Letter to Council and Planning Commission
Attachments: KSLFull-Comment_complete_2.3.26 2 copy.pdf

You don't often get email from kp. [REDACTED] gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello! Thank you for all your hard work. Please distribute this to the Planning Commission and the City Council respectively. I have also included some photos and screenshot that are relative to the content, if you could please ensure those get forwarded along as well, it would be much appreciated.

Best,

Katie Sullivan Lyons
Kp. [REDACTED] gmail.com
503-314-5397

Hello, my name is Katie Sullivan Lyons. My family and I reside in Park Knoll subdivision in South Whitefish. I am writing in to discuss, and oppose, the proposed Place type of Target Area Option B in the Draft proposal for the Whitefish Growth Plan. Several of my neighbors have written in and some plan to attend in person at the Land Use meeting tomorrow (Feb 4th). I also plan to attend that meeting and the City Council meeting scheduled a couple of weeks out. I promise to much, much, more briefly layout my argument in person but because there is so much to cover and so little time allotted for public comment, I thought writing in would be a way to cover some of the more personal elements of why I oppose high density, mixed use, place typing on the West side of Highway 93. There is no way for me to communicate in just 3 minutes, my love for this valley, my neighbors and my community, nor educate you on exactly what you are jeopardizing by implementing high density Place Types and eventual zoning here.

What I have to share is also relevant because in all this discussion of Target Areas and specifically Option B, it is apparent that the public, and likely many of yourselves, are unfamiliar with both my neighborhood and its own unique characteristics, as well as the characteristics, topography, geology, and natural features that will make any development of Option B challenging. You only see a small part of this actual parcel where it meets land adjacent to Highway 93. You only see what now surrounds it on that front edge. If you looked beyond ambitions of property tax revenue, beyond growth at any and all costs, and looked at the history and reality of it you might see that the "big vacant, ripe for development" piece of land, isn't as vacant as you think, isn't going to be so easy to carve up and pave over for progress, and might just hold the most value just as it is.

You are quite literally shaping the future of the quality of life for me, my husband, and my two young children in this community, and a home, that was supposed to be our forever home. I would apologize for getting personal but I'm NOT sorry. This is personal to everyone in our community and as much as we may want to make it "just business" to make it palatable and easier to digest, that simply isn't the reality. Everyone, from our elderly residents on fixed incomes, single professionals, middle aged parents with children, to our fresh faced graduates have a voice that needs to be heard and this may be my last opportunity to lend my own before this community is reshaped. My story is much the same as dozens of families that I know personally in this community, the same as the majority of my neighbors that have lived in Park Knoll for the last 20-30 years, and for many more that reside in and around Whitefish City limits. Our voices and our stories should be an important reminder of the weight of your responsibilities and hopefully a reminder to slow down, take a pause, and make sure you get it right, as you are mandated by SB 382 to do, before adopting the Growth Plan and effectively silencing us for two decades.

A little about me and my neighborhood for context: I was born in Montana. I was raised in the Flathead Valley between Kalispell and Whitefish. When I say raised I mean that I have been a resident of this Valley since 1983 and have spent all but about 12 of my nearly 45 years here and my absences have not been consecutive. Suffice it to say I have lived through and witnessed every significant change this Valley has been through and the many iterations and growth spurts of Whitefish, including the most recent. The bulk of my life experiences, my family, and my love are deeply engrained in every corner of this valley. Like many, I had a choice to make. I could either stay and continue to struggle, work multiple jobs, and scrap my way to a better life in exchange for continuing to be near family and having the luxury of access to recreation and the natural beauty of the area or I could move where wages were higher and opportunity more plentiful. It's a tough choice that generations of Montanans eventually have to make and just hope that SOMEDAY we get to come back. In 2011 I had to choose to leave for what I thought was the final time for a move out of state, to a more metropolitan area, in search of higher paying wages and better opportunities for employment and career advancement. I ended up in the Seattle-Metro area during a time period when the city was seeing an influx of people at a rate of 40,000-50,000 new residents a YEAR. My (now) husband

and lived less than 10 miles from both of our job locations and spent an hour or more each way everyday in, bumper to bumper, stop-and-go traffic. It was so crowded and chaotic in the city with the explosion in population that it was difficult to enjoy the things the city had to offer in terms of recreation and entertainment. Seattle is a very "outdoor lifestyle" city and is surrounded by both water recreation opportunities, hiking, mountain biking, you name it we had it, but even getting outside the city for an early morning hike meant you were sharing the trail with 20-30 other people and there was rarely a stretch of trail that you wouldn't encounter dozens of other humans. In 2018 after a lot of hard work and many huge life changes, a lot of things lined up and a path opened that allowed me to return, now with a husband and newborn son (at the time). Though it was a blessing, we also had to sacrifice to make it happen. I had to sacrifice my career and a nearly \$70k income, my husband could work remotely but had to take an initial pay cut until his employer felt certain it would work, and a community of people and connections that supported us and loved us. Just as those of us that leave have to sacrifice something to do so, we also have to sacrifice something to return. Everyone that chooses to live here has given up something to be here.

Having grown up here, I didn't want to go back to Kalispell and there wasn't much inventory we could afford in Bigfork near my parents. We narrowed it down to Whitefish or Columbia Falls. Being familiar with both communities, I knew what Whitefish had been, what it had become, and where it was heading I had serious reservations about living in what is truly a resort community. It has always been a place of easy access to year round recreation opportunities, even as early as 1900 but with the relative death of two of our biggest industries, the construction and opening of The Lodge, the consolidation and expansion of the local ski hill, the rapid development of multi-million dollar homes and communities and all that comes with that, Whitefish had truly committed to bolstering its tourism dollars. I also knew that Whitefish has an unparalleled reputation for philanthropy and conservation, for bolstering the Arts and education, and supporting its agricultural roots. I knew there was a ton of civic pride that is truly the reason we are consistently voted in the top 10 Best Small Towns in America. All that taken into consideration, we are a middle class income family and we were going to have to reduce that income significantly to be in Montana. Living in Whitefish, particularly, wasn't going to reduce our overall cost of living. High property taxes, high utility rates, a year round influx of tourists just wasn't my idea of economical. I was so worried that I'd be going forward to a smaller version of the chaos we were desperate to be free of. My husband, who was also raised in a small town, wanted our children to have that same experience. We both wanted a community where it felt like people still cared about one another, where they had regular community events, a safe place for our kids to play outside whether at home or when we were out and about recreating. No matter where we chose beyond the priorities I just mentioned our top priorities were privacy and peace. I didn't want to be in town. I wanted a very rural lifestyle where I didn't have to see, hear, or smell my neighbors. Somewhere I could breathe and look up and still see the stars. My husband worried our child (now children) would miss out on social and sports opportunities if we were too far out. He wanted our son to be able to possibly have friends close enough that he could safely walk or ride his bike to. He wanted him to be able to bike to school when he got older or to practices and social activities. He reminded me of the freedom we both grew up with in that respect. It was this argument that partially swayed me. We considered several other homes in both areas but the home we found in Park Knoll allowed us to find middle ground. It was the only one at the time that did so. It was outside the city limits but connected in a sense because of the sidewalks along 93 that would make it easier for us and our children to still connect with and be part activities and community functions downtown. It also had up until very recent history been very rural and backs up to a wet meadow. It certainly fit the criteria for private. Because we were so concerned with privacy and peace we asked every Realtor we dealt with if the wet meadow could ever be developed, we asked the neighbors, we asked anyone we thought might know because it would have been an absolute deal breaker. Every person we asked said it was

protected and couldn't be developed chiefly because of its wetland protected status. Imagine our shock and disappointment when 3 years later a developer named Carter Unger acquired it and began plans for high density development.

Park Knoll was established in 1980 and consists of 12 homes. It was once of the earliest parcels to be subdivided from the Morris Ranch (also known as Sunset Knoll Ranch or later Hedman Ranch). Homes were built from roughly 1981-1994. It is heavily wooded, has larger lot sizes at 1.5-1.25 acres, with decent spacing between homes. The covenants and restrictions of the small HOA are not restrictive in the sense that they prevent residents from living life and generally enjoying their property. They don't restrict paint colors or require architectural rigidity. What they DO very strictly protect is privacy, maintaining a rural feel, and protecting and respecting the naturally occurring elements of our little subdivision. For a relevant frame of reference, our neighborhood is very similar to the character of Lion Mountain and some portions of Emerald Heights, just less dense in number of houses. The majority of the home sites have some sort of steep grade, whether it is 30% or more I couldn't say, but our one and only road in and out does. We don't have sidewalks or street lights and we don't want them because in addition to privacy we also value lack of light pollution. Our privately maintained road barely fits two cars passing and all snow removal, maintenance, and repair is paid solely by the HOA members and one additional home that has easement. Prior to about 2016- 2017, when Great Northern Heights began construction, we were the sole residential development on the West side of Hwy 93. Up until that point our closest neighbors were a smattering of commercial business that were not the right fit for the downtown core, largely because of their operational needs and parking requirements, a church or two, a funeral home, the original houses of the family ranch all this land was acquired from, and the farms beyond the wet meadow on Karrow. Nobody but the people that lived here knew about us or even cared. We've always been very "out of sight, out of mind" and from all the stories I've gathered from our longest term residents, that suited us just fine. It is still my family's preference as well.

You can see how our long history, unique character, zoning, and way of life was very much rural up until recently when we were abruptly, forcibly, annexed into the city and rezoned from a County Rural Residential zone to and City Urban Residential zone. An inappropriately applied designation that we had to fight to downgrade to our current WLR zoning because it implied much smaller lot sizes and higher density than anywhere close to our actual reality. When you look at Option B from Highway 93 you are only seeing a small portion of it that just happens to abut some commercial zoning at its very front edge. If you bothered to drive up my road or walk through the thick tree line you would understand the reality of just how rural it is. Even Great Northern Heights, which is twice our size, in their marketing exalts the "rural feel and views" from the properties farther in and adjacent to the wet meadow. During my nearly 8 years in this neighborhood we have had to stand before City Council and the Planning Board to defend 40 years of history, our borders, our road from encroachment and misuse, and the development of the wet meadow over 5 times. We are hoping this will be the last time it is necessary.

None of us in Park Knoll are naive enough to think that we were going to remain untouched by the City of Whitefish's march South towards Kalispell. That has been a source of ongoing commentary in this valley since the 90's. We aren't even opposing some development around us but we are vehemently opposing high density, especially with commercial, that doesn't either fall in line with Great Northern Heights, ourselves, or a hybrid of the two on the East facing side of the ridge toward 93. We also feel that "Mixed Use" is unnecessary and redundant anywhere on this end of Highway 93 since the more robust Community Corridor is already being applied as the Place Type on the properties immediately adjacent to 93 on both sides, plus, the existing zoning already allowed for the types of businesses that your Mixed Use place type is trying to foster. Communities and business employees on both sides of Highway 93, as far out as Emerald Heights and the 93/40 project can already walk/bike to

coffee shops, restaurants, service based businesses, lodging options, grocery/convenience stores, etc. There is both empty land and empty businesses all along this route to downtown that could be used for any of those businesses if they so choose. The existing infrastructure for pedestrians could most certainly use some improvements for the benefit of pedestrian comfort and safety; like the crumbling/buckling sidewalks, deteriorating curbs, lack of dedicated bike lanes, and the over abundance of entry/exit points, and lack of dedicated pedestrian crossings. Furthermore, the future Baker Ave extension that has taken years of planning will add even more connectivity for businesses on the West side of 93 but will likely not add much value to any future home development adjacent due to traffic noise, airborne contaminants, and increased likelihood of safety concerns. The ridge (knoll) and dense tree growth on Option B provide natural protection and filtration for both Park Knoll and Great Northern Heights from exhaust fumes, dust, and other airborne contaminants but to develop it would require removal of the elements most beneficial to natural environmental barriers for such things not to mention cause significant erosion and flooding potential for the properties at the base of the ridge.. Whatever is developed here, high density or not, the developer will have to spend significant time and money just managing the environmental aspects and including the Baker extension elements into any plan.

What we also have not seen in Draft proposal thus far, but really would like on the West side of 93 and Karrow is a plan for green space, trails or a wildlife observation areas. These elements are much more inline with our predominately rural settings beyond the face of the ridge. We have them in every other area of Whitefish EXCEPT here. Do we only prioritize those things in areas of our community that might enhance a visitor's experience vs a resident's? There are already numerous housing developments from east of the Hospital to the 93 and 40 Junction all the way to the Lion's Park property. They come in all varieties of types, densities, and price points on the East side of 93, and more in the pipeline. Every one of the communities on the East side has some sort of open space/park/trail or water access either out the back door or within blocks. If the goal is to plan for them and to create dynamic and connected communities, not do so on this side of the tracks as well? Currently we either have to bike or drive to either Smith Fields or what we all call Baker Park if our kids want a park day. If we want to bike or walk a nature trail we have to drive/walk/or bike across 93 to a river trail access point or drive to a Whitefish Trail trailhead, either across the via duct or up 93 North toward Lion Mountain and Olney. The Whitefish Assembly of God church ,kindly, allows the public to use their Folf but unless you are me, with a hole right off my back fence or live in my neighborhood, you'd have to get in your car and drive there. I think everyone in residential housing West of 93 would love to not have to cross a busy road, walk adjacent to one, or have to get in the car and drive just to get a dose of activity in a natural environment. Which brings me to my next point.

We are vehemently opposed to the destruction of the wildlife corridor, between grazing land around the Whitefish river to the East and Stillwater River to the West, and vital habitat that this property has provided for generations upon generations of deer, coyotes, nesting migratory birds (including Sand Hill Cranes), eagles, hawks, owls, foxes, the seasonal bear visit, and a plethora of other small birds and ground dwelling wildlife. One reason you don't hear about "wildlife conflict" over here, or get complaints about the "overpopulation" of deer is that the wet meadow is a self sustaining entity. The deer have less obstructed movement upon leaving the meadow if traveling to Stillwater and those that stay year round are managed by the coyotes. Small ground dwelling rodents that are considered pests in town also don't create a ton of issues because they too are managed by the coyotes, foxes, a variety of hawks, owls, and eagles. The resources the wet meadow provides to all the animals that depend on it are complete and self-balanced and require very little human intervention. It currently could use some noxious weed control but that is for another day. Additionally, when you don't have an abundance of human interference and man made obstacles or depletion of resources, there is no need for the wildlife to seek other options. This area is right in the middle of the mapped

Wildlife Urban interface as well. I have personally been able to observe both wildlife activity, wildlife population growth and decline, changes in water levels and can personally attest that just because you aren't hearing about wildlife South of town doesn't mean that it isn't here, isn't vital to life and lifestyle in this area. It doesn't just deserve to be protected in areas that visitors frequent or where humans can capitalize on its existence in some way. Our wildlife and natural resources deserve equal consideration and protection across the entirety of Greater Whitefish, no matter how large or small of an area they inhabit, particularly as we continue to grow and expand and diminish habitat.

The City Council and the prior Planning Board have had a minimum of TWO opportunities now to do their due diligence, thoroughly investigate, and do something to legally protect what residents in Park Knoll, property owners on Karrow and Great Northern, have been telling them for a very long time now. For nearly a decade they have been hearing our observations of the wildlife activity/resources and the wet meadow on the parcel labeled as Option B. You now have another opportunity to do something that might protect even a portion of it for the next generations to enjoy observing and to keep the ancestral pathways to resources in the meadow and beyond Karrow open. The stream and about 100ft of boundary area are protected with a PEMA designation according to the State mapping system. This designation means that the area could be developed but will require special permitting to protect water quality and plant life, wetland mitigation requirements; specialized erosion control, vegetation management, drainage management to prevent flooding to surrounding areas, and construction techniques. Additionally since the whole area from the top of the ridge on the East side to Karrow on the West side acts as watershed, and ground water not only feeds into the stream but sits in large pools outside the boundary, the entire area would need to be addressed for water quality and drainage issues, not just around the stream bed. None of this would be inexpensive to the developer and it makes little sense to attempt to put high density housing in an area like that. As the saying goes, "Just because you can, doesn't mean you should."

Everyone involved fully grasps that the assigning of such a seemingly unnecessary, out of character, and high density Place Type is simply being used like a place holder for more aggressive zoning and density in the future but why do this here? It certainly isn't reflective of what the people that live in this area want it to look and function like in the immediate future nor in the next 20 years. It doesn't respect who we have been for 40 years or the elements that make it special. Option B is really more two separate pieces. In fact its current zoning already reflects that although it too was inflated to give the developer "room to play with density" he'd lose by not being allowed to do high density on the wet meadow and compensation for increasing the buffer zone on Park Knoll's boundary. You have already identified 2 other areas that are closer to town and satisfy both the objective of infill closer to the downtown core AND can already effectively use existing infrastructure, public services, and emergency services. Option B is currently without access to any roadway except possibly Lamb Ln/Karrow. That particular stretch of Karrow is still a narrow 2 lane county owned roadway. The city would need to first annex it from the County and then do large scale upgrades to even remotely be able to accommodate the approximately 4000 trips a year from just this parcel, and no pun intended, but I believe you've been down that road before. Isn't the point of the Target Areas to NOT have to annex anything and create new infrastructure? I've already covered extensively why it doesn't meet the goal that future development be steered away from environmentally sensitive areas (1d Goals and Objectives) That, coupled with all the extra challenges of the actual development of this parcel essentially eliminates it completely as an option as a Target Area and high density. It's certainly not the best option.

To date, we have seen no evidence that the City has relied on anything other than what the developers, both past and present, have provided themselves. No evidence, even in the extensive literature provided by Engage Whitefish, that known issues of natural hazards; potential impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat, clean water or healthy air quality have been inventoried or studied in THIS area before pushing Option B as a top choice for Targeted development. The 54 page document entitled Environment, Natural Resources and Hazards on Engage Whitefish technically may satisfy the bill requirements for inventory, maps, and descriptions of natural hazards, natural resources, and wildlife habitat for previously known areas of the community at large but does not address areas that you are actively targeting for future development which was also a requirement of the SB382, “The land use plan is intended to identify the opportunities for development of land within the planning area for housing, businesses, agriculture, and the extraction of natural resources, **while acknowledging and addressing the impacts of that development on adjacent properties, the community, the natural environment, public services and facilities, and natural hazards**”. If the public isn’t being made aware of the latter part of that quote, how are we then supposed to make educated and informed decisions about the options you’re setting forth? The report covers the importance of riparian areas, ground water, wildlife and habitat, water quality, air quality, fire and flood. There are clearly defined goals and objectives for each within that document. I have pointed to several areas of concern with Option B that are discussed and defined within the document and some of the ways that the goals and objectives are not being met for those areas as they relate to Option B. Nowhere in SB382 does it say we must only produce high density housing for the next 20 years. In fact it says that “(1) **It is the purpose of [sections 1 through 38] to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Montana through a system of comprehensive planning that balances private property rights and values, public services and infrastructure, the human environment, natural resources, and recreation, and a diversified and sustainable economy.**” It never even specifies an exact number of units required by each affected community or when whatever that number turns out to be, as determined by the municipalities themselves, has to be completed. The only timelines specified were the 3 years to complete the updated Growth Policy and to revisit every 5 years to make sure compliance of the Growth Plan in ALL of its many goals, objectives, and facets. You all have put in so much work determining the data points and compiling it. I know you are tired, I know that tensions are high this close to the finish line, I know you want to be done but I am asking you now, before assigning high density-commercial place types to this area or any like it, to do thorough due diligence on each area and comply with the goals and objectives of both SB 382 and your own compliance documentation for the Growth Plan. Communicate your findings to the public, openly and honestly, without ulterior motive so that we can make fully informed opinions and commentary instead of just encouraging people to choose the prettiest colored block on the page without full disclosure of the strengths AND challenges of said block.

As I have detailed, and then some, the proposed Place Type Option B of Mixed Use that is included in the mapping of the proposed Targeted Areas Place is grossly inappropriate and fails with or to meet the mandates of SB 382 and the objectives set forth in the Growth Plan draft documents on several important points and as such should be removed from the Targeted Areas option list. The following are just a few points, pulled directly from SB382, on which Option B’s Mixed Use designation and inclusion in the Targeted Areas would fail to meet Land Use mandates, goals, and objectives for Whitefish’s new Growth Plan.

1. DOES NOT support or include protection for wildlife and wildlife habitat, clean water, nor healthy air quality.
2. DOES NOT support or include protection of property against natural hazards; specifically flooding and potentially fire.

3. DOES NOT protect nor minimize nor avoid impacts to the natural environment within the area.
4. DOES NOT meet the requirement to include inventory, maps, and description of the natural resource characteristics, natural environment, and natural hazards (sec 13; b, c, d SB0382)
5. DOES NOT strengthen existing neighborhoods nor respect the size, scale, and characteristic of established neighboring communities and properties
6. DOES NOT minimize impacts on quality of life by with respect to building scale, traffic noise, light pollution, that protect the area's livability in respect to existing neighborhood and abutting properties.

Sincerely,

Katie Sullivan Lyons
Park Knoll Ln, Whitefish, MT











MEMO

To: Whitefish Planning Board

From: Kate McMahon

Date: 2-2-25

Re: Whitefish Growth Policy – Land Use Element

The purpose of this memo is to submit comments on the “Land Use Element” draft currently under review by the Planning Board. Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the meeting on Feb. 4th but I wanted to present my concerns and hopefully I will be able to attend the Feb. 11th workshop.

My primary concern is that the draft land use plan appears to lack mapping and other information as required by the MCA. Specifically, my concerns relate to the following MCA sections.

76-25-213. Land use and future land use map.

(c) geographic distribution of future land uses in the jurisdiction, anticipated over a 20-year planning period that specifically demonstrate:

*iii) areas of the jurisdiction that are not generally **suitable** for development and the reason, based on the **constraints** identified through the land use plan analysis;*

(d) a statement acknowledging areas within the jurisdiction known to be subject to covenants, codes, and restrictions that may limit the type, density, or intensity of housing development projected in the future land use map; and

There are no statements indicating which areas are subject to covenants, codes and restrictions that may limit housing development. Additionally, there is no map of lands unsuitable for development. Such a map should be based on the following information that the MCA requires to be in the Environment, Natural Resource and Hazard (ENRH) element.

76-25-209. Natural resources, environment, and hazards. (1) *The land use plan must:*
(c) *include an inventory, maps, and description of the natural environment of the jurisdictional area, including a summary of important natural features and the conditions of and real and potential threats to soils, geology, topography, vegetation, surface water, groundwater, aquifers, floodplains, scenic resources, wildlife, wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors, and wildlife nesting sites within the jurisdiction; and*
(d) *include maps of, identify factors related to, and describe natural hazards within the jurisdictional area, including flooding, fire, earthquakes, steep slopes and other known geologic hazards and other natural hazards identified by the jurisdiction, with a summary of past significant events resulting from natural hazards ...*

A review of the ENRH element indicates that maps on soils (other than prime farmland), topography (i.e. steep slopes), groundwater, aquifers, scenic resources, and wildlife are not included. Brownfields sites are another potential constraint that should be mapped. Any of these factors may result in development constraints. While the land use element does include an Objective 4.a, to produce additional mapping, this information is required by the MCA to be disclosed as part of the public process in development the land use plan. The public needs this information in order to submit fully informed comments about the plan. Once the land use plan is adopted there are limitations on public participation regarding development proposals. Therefore, it is crucial that this information be provided as part of the land use plan process.

One example of the importance of this information is the selection of preferred growth areas outside the city. The draft Land Use Element indicates that community input showed the strongest support for locations D,E, J, K and L as potential long term growth areas. I attended three workshops and responded to two on-line surveys where public input was solicited. Although I specifically commented at each workshop and on the surveys that there should be more information on the suitability of each development area, no maps representing any development constraints were available to the public.

Per the attachment, a printout of the USDA Soil suitability rating for dwellings without basements, indicates that three of the preferred growth areas, are rated as having severe limitations. Had this information been available at the public workshops, it might have influenced the choices of the preferred areas.

Additionally, the MCA requires that scenic resources be mapped. The land use element makes several references to scenic resources but lacking specific criteria and mapping, the objective is too vague to be enforced. The Bureau of Land Management and other

agencies have developed methods for mapping scenic resources that could be applied to Whitefish.

Development constraints should also be mapped in order to provide a basis for establishing zoning regulations and how such criteria should apply to conditional uses. The current draft proposes to limit conditional uses to “site-specific or impact-driven uses, such as large-scale commercial, infrastructure, and heavy industrial activities”. Areas with development constraints should also require for conditional uses. This requires mapping of those environmental sensitive areas.

I urge the Planning Board will take these matters under consideration and have a detailed discussion on the MCA requirements and how they apply to the current draft of the land use element. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

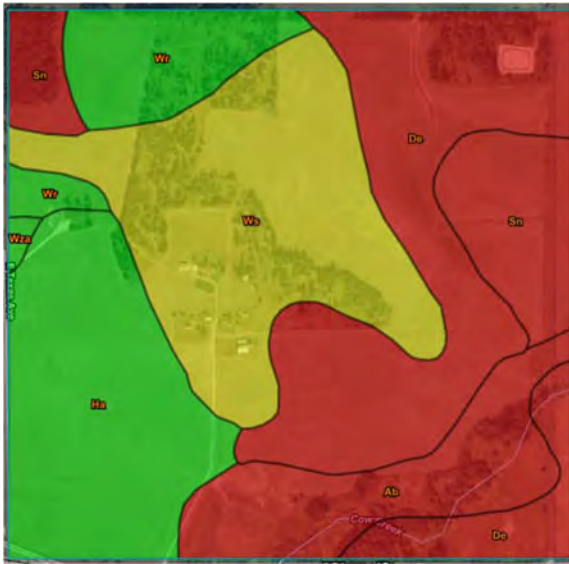
Kate McMahon

Whitefish MT

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USDA Soil Survey Ratings for Dwellings w/o basements

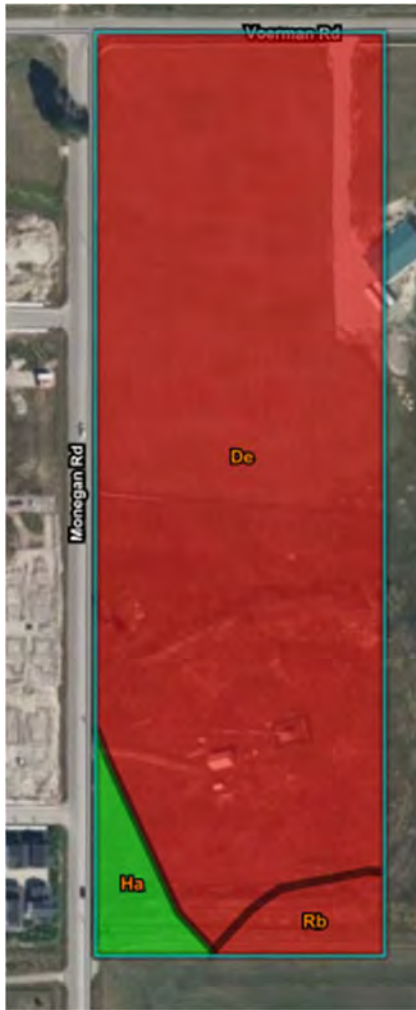
Area D



Area E



Area L



Source: <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>

Note: These maps are a screen shot of the general vicinity of the proposed growth areas and do not represent exact boundaries. They are only intended to be illustrative of potential issues. More detail should be completed as part of the land use analysis.

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Daniel Sidder <[REDACTED]@housingwhitefish.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 10:50 AM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Cc: Michelle Howke
Subject: Public Comment on Land Use Section

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Planning Commission,

Apologies for the late submission for written comments – I had been planning to attend in person tomorrow but am not longer available. My comments reiterate prior statements made to this commission:

1. When thinking about land use in the city, no neighborhood should experience rapid change, and no neighborhood should be exempt from change.
2. We need land use regulations that can allow for a nimble housing system that can respond to the challenges of the community as they change and evolve.
3. Specifically:
 - a. Allow the next increment of development in every zone.
 - b. Make it as easy as possible to convert a single-family home into a duplex or triplex.
 - c. Eliminate lot size requirements in new and existing neighborhoods - these are artificial barriers that limit construction of small homes on small lots.
 - d. Adopt all the MLUPA recommendations for land use and housing.
4. The City of Whitefish should adopt an attitude of being guides and not gatekeepers.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this process.

In service,
Daniel Sidder

Alan Tiefenbach

From: [REDACTED] shaw.ca
Sent: Monday, February 2, 2026 1:26 PM
To: Alan Tiefenbach; Michelle Howke
Cc: Delores James Ice -1
Subject: Concerns With adoption of SB 382 without Due Diligence first being provided.

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] shaw.ca. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I am a homeowner in the Park Knoll Lane neighbourhood. I am writing to provide public comment on the draft Growth Policy and Place Types map, specifically regarding the proposed Mixed Neighborhood designation on portions of the Carter Unger's property that directly abut Park Knoll and the rural properties along Karrow Road, the Great Northern Community to the West, and Agricultural Farming Community West of the Carter Unger Lands scheduled for development.

In general I support the objectives of Senate Bill 382 and recognize the City's obligation to update its land use framework to accommodate growth and housing need.

However, unless City approval takes into consideration and provides for the unique conditions of each Development on their own merit prior to approval of SB 382, the result is fundamentally changes, timing,, and nature of public review will be severely constricted by limiting future opportunity to challenge site-specific projects that are consistent with an adopted Growth Policy, as they will essentially be removed!

Prior to inclusion of conditions of SB382 there exists a requirement that development opportunities be identified **while acknowledging and addressing impacts** on adjacent properties, the natural environment, public services and facilities, and natural hazards.

My concern is that, in this location, those required considerations have not been adequately addressed.

Compatibility and Transitions

Park Knoll is designated as a Suburban Neighborhood, while properties to the south and west are designated Rural Community. A Mixed Neighborhood designation—allowing multifamily development, neighborhood-serving commercial uses, and building heights up to three stories—represents a significant increase in intensity with no meaningful step-down between Place Types.

I respectfully request that the City explicitly address, on the record, how this designation satisfies the Growth Policy's stated transition principles and SB 382's requirement to account for impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.

Environmental Constraints and Hazards

Significant portions of the subject property consist of wetlands and a protected stream corridor that provide critical drainage, habitat, and environmental

functions. SB 382 requires that where hazards cannot be mitigated, zoning regulations and maps identify areas where future development is limited or prohibited.

I respectfully request that the City identify, on the record, how environmental constraints and hazard conditions on this property were evaluated and how the proposed Place Type reflects those limitations.

Infrastructure and Service Impacts

Mixed Neighborhoods are intended to function as connected, walkable places with access to services and multimodal transportation. The areas adjacent to Park Knoll lack continuous sidewalks, transit access, and internal street connectivity. Higher-intensity development in this location will remain automobile-dependent and increase traffic on rural roads.

I request that the City document, on the record, what infrastructure and service impact analysis supports the application of a Mixed Neighborhood designation in this location, as contemplated by SB 382.

Importance of Precision Under SB 382's "Substantial Compliance" Framework

SB 382 relies on the concept of "substantial compliance" and intentionally limits later site-specific debate for projects that conform to the adopted land use plan. Because future review is constrained, it is essential that environmental constraints, infrastructure capacity, and neighborhood compatibility be fully evaluated and resolved at the Place Type stage, rather than deferred to subsequent zoning or development review.

Suggested Alternative Approach

A more appropriate and SB 382-compliant approach would be to designate developable upland portions of the property as Compact Suburban Neighborhood, while designating wetlands and stream corridors as Natural/Open Space or otherwise limiting development expectations in those areas. This approach would support growth while clearly addressing hazards, impacts, and transitions as required by statute.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the City reconsider the proposed Mixed Neighborhood designation adjacent to Park Knoll and clearly document how hazards, impacts, and transitions have been evaluated and addressed in compliance with SB 382.

A Reply would be appreciated.

Thank you,

Robert James

PO Box [REDACTED],

Whitefish, MT 59937

E: [REDACTED]shaw.ca



February 1, 2026

Commissioners and City Council,

In reviewing the recent discussions around the Vision Whitefish 2045 Community Plan Land Use we are compelled to provide additional input and perspective. Montana Coffee Traders has been a landmark of the Whitefish community for 45 years. We've employed generations of residents and relish our role as a community gathering place. Incorporating retail / commercial inclusion in residential areas is not the right thing for our community.

Our experience running a small local coffee shop is that it requires a high level of foot traffic every day throughout the year to maintain the necessary revenue. Our community has worked tirelessly to develop enough year-round business to create a vibrant downtown. Locals and visitors alike have a variety of options for dining, retail, and services, but businesses are still struggling through shoulder seasons. Whitefish businesses rely on creating places where visitors stroll and, most importantly, spend money in concentrated areas. Expanding retail options into residential areas is not a recipe for success. We want to create opportunities for small businesses to thrive, not set up new entrepreneurs to fail.

What we do need, as has been discussed at length, is a livable town where our staff can live and work in the same place. Whitefish is one of the last exceptional mountain towns that still has a local culture, steady school enrollment, and relentlessly engaged residents who want to see their barista not just in the café, but walking their dog at the dog park, dropping off their kid at school, and sharing in the passion for what makes this place speak to our souls. We've done a lot of work to ensure that our neighborhoods are for residents, and this inclusion pulls the focus away from housing.

We ask that you remove the term MIXED USE from the growth policy wherever it is suggested. Commercial uses do not belong in neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are for neighbors. Let's build more affordable neighborhoods and keep our commercial uses centrally located, where they have the best chance of succeeding.

Cordially,

Heather Vrentas

General Manager

Jessie Farnes

Regional Manager of Café Operations

5810 HWY. 93 SOUTH WHITEFISH, MT 59937 (800) 345-5282 COFFEETRADERS.COM

February 1, 2026

To the Whitefish Mayor, City Council and Planning Commission

Our names are: Douglas Loy (retired Fire Marshal for the City of Whitefish), and Sandra Loy (retired accountant).

Both of us were born in Whitefish, attended school, and worked until retirement in Whitefish. We have resided in the Park Knoll Subdivision since 2000. The lot sizes in this subdivision are all 1 acre plus, and consist of single family homes.

There are 2 types of "Place Types" suitable for the property directly to the south of us:

- Mountain Neighborhood (preference)
- Suburban Neighborhood

Under no circumstances, should Mixed Neighborhood be considered. Allowing 18 unit multiplex buildings and 3 stories absolutely does not meet the "will remain compatible with the surrounding land", or "safeguarding wildlife habitat".

The City should prioritize bringing more suitable properties into the city such as the JP Road area, as these areas wouldn't compromise any surrounding homes.

Sincerely,


Douglas Loy


Sandra Loy

Reynolds Cameron 9
Whitefish, MT 59937

reynolds.
[REDACTED]@gmail.com
January 29, 2026

Alan Tiefenbach
City of Whitefish Planning Department
418 E 2nd Street
Whitefish, MT 59937

Thomas Eddington
CZB LLC
1314 Main Street, Suite 203
Louisville, CO 80027

Dear Mr. Tiefenbach and Mr. Eddington,

I am writing as a property owner in Flathead County, immediately adjacent to the City of Whitefish, to provide targeted policy input for the Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy update—specifically regarding land use designations, neighborhood character, annexation standards, and infill housing.

My family owns Tract 2 of COS 23092 along Ice House Road (MT Forever Home, LLC), a parcel located within the City's planning jurisdiction and directly influenced by Whitefish's growth policy, infrastructure planning, and annexation standards. My recent zoning map amendment request to Flathead County (FZC-25-15), seeking a modest rezoning from R-2.5 (2.5-acre minimum lots) to R-4 (two-family residential, allowing duplexes on ~7,500 square foot lots), was intended as a textbook example of context-sensitive infill—mirroring both the prevailing zoning and built form of surrounding parcels.

However, the application was ultimately undermined by agency comments issued by Whitefish Planning & Building Director David Taylor, recommending denial based on the City's 2007 Growth Policy. Because these comments were highly influential in the County's decision-making process, they offer a useful case study illustrating how existing Growth Policy language can unintentionally block logical, modest, and community-compatible housing development.

Summary of City Agency Comments and Their Policy Implications

In his formal agency comments dated January 2026, Director Taylor recommended denial of FZC-25-15 on the following principal grounds:

1. That the proposal does not comply with the adopted 2007 Whitefish Growth Policy's Suburban Residential land use designation.
2. That Flathead County's R-4 zoning allows minimum lot sizes of 6,000 square feet, which he asserted cannot support on-site septic systems, thereby necessitating city sewer service and annexation.
3. That during annexation, the City would likely recommend WER (Estate Residential) zoning, requiring 20,000 square foot minimum lots, as more compatible with the Suburban Residential designation and nearby properties.
4. That duplex-level density constitutes an Urban land use designation, inherently incompatible with Suburban Residential.

These comments, taken together, effectively established a regulatory pathway in which modest infill density is structurally disallowed:

- R-4 is deemed incompatible with Suburban Residential;
- Smaller lots are presumed to require municipal sewer;
- Sewer service triggers annexation;
- Annexation defaults to WER zoning, thereby mandating **lower density than surrounding development.**

The result is a policy framework that **systematically suppresses logical transitional density**, even where surrounding zoning, built form, infrastructure capacity, and environmental conditions clearly support it.

Technical and Planning Concerns with the Current Framework

1. Outdated assumptions regarding septic feasibility

The assertion that lots under 20,000 square feet cannot support on-site wastewater systems reflects outdated technical assumptions. Montana DEQ Circular 4 (December 2023 edition) explicitly allows for advanced engineered systems—including mound, pressure-dosed, and alternative treatment systems—on significantly smaller lots where soils are favorable.

The subject parcel contains gravelly loam soils that are highly suitable for modern engineered septic systems. Under current DEQ standards, full R-4 density could be supported entirely on-site, without reliance on municipal sewer infrastructure. Continuing to rely on antiquated septic assumptions artificially constrains housing supply and forces premature annexation.

2. Rigid interpretation of Suburban Residential designation

The City's interpretation of Suburban Residential as categorically incompatible with duplex-level density fails to reflect:

- Existing adjacent zoning patterns,
- Established duplex and multifamily development along Ice House Road and nearby corridors,
- The transitional location of this parcel between rural and urban contexts.

When applied rigidly, the Suburban designation becomes a **static barrier rather than a flexible planning tool**, preventing reasonable evolution of transitional neighborhoods.

3. Structural bias toward down-zoning upon annexation

The presumption that annexation would necessarily result in WER zoning creates a regulatory trap: land that is already surrounded by duplex-scale development is forced into **lower density than its surroundings**, producing inefficient land use, higher per-unit infrastructure costs, and diminished housing yield.

This outcome directly conflicts with the City's stated goals related to housing availability, affordability, and sustainable growth.

Policy Recommendations for Vision Whitefish 2045

Based on this experience, I respectfully urge CZB and the City to incorporate the following reforms into the Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy:

1. Modernize the Definition of Neighborhood Character and Land Use Compatibility

Shift evaluation criteria away from rigid reliance on legacy land use labels and toward empirical conditions, including:

- Predominant surrounding zoning,
- Existing built densities,
- Parcel adjacency and street-scale character,
- Infrastructure availability.

Transitional areas should be explicitly recognized as appropriate for **incremental density increases**, including duplex and small-scale multifamily development.

2. Update Septic and Infrastructure Assumptions

Formally recognize modern engineered wastewater systems under DEQ Circular 4 as viable for small-lot development, eliminating the presumption that lots under 20,000 square feet automatically require municipal sewer.

This single change would unlock substantial housing potential in peripheral and transitional zones without imposing new infrastructure burdens.

3. Reform Annexation and Pre-Annexation Zoning Guidance

Establish clear policies encouraging **density continuity across jurisdictional boundaries**, allowing annexed parcels to retain or modestly increase existing densities rather than defaulting to lower-density estate zoning.

This would reduce regulatory friction, align land use with real-world context, and support efficient service planning.

4. Explicitly Elevate Small-Scale Infill as a Core Housing Strategy

Designate duplex and small multifamily infill as **priority housing typologies** in transitional and edge conditions, recognizing their outsized role in delivering workforce housing without altering neighborhood character.

Closing

Vision Whitefish 2045 represents a rare opportunity to correct policy structures that—often unintentionally—block rational, modest, and community-compatible housing development. My experience with FZC-25-15 illustrates how well-intentioned but outdated policy assumptions can suppress exactly the kind of **infill growth the City needs**.

I appreciate the extensive public process underway and welcome further dialogue, whether through engagewhitefish.com, public meetings, or direct discussion.

Thank you for your time, professionalism, and consideration.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Reynolds Cameron

Property Owner, MT Forever Home, LLC

Tract ■ of COS 23092 — Ice House Road Area

Michelle Howke

From: Marti Brandt <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 1:39 PM
To: Michelle Howke
Subject: Comment + Report for the Work Session
Attachments: Mixed Use.pdf

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Hi Michelle,

I apologize. I have a lot of information here, including an attached report. I'd planned to space these comments between sessions but it now seems like the right time to send the report. Could you please forward this comment and the attached document to council for their work session tonight? Hopefully the report is still legible when submitted as a PDF.

Thank you!

Marti Brandt

Dear City Council,

I'm submitting the following comment and report as a member of the public. Please consider the following issues when reviewing the economic chapter of the growth policy.

The August line-by-line review of the Heart of Whitefish draft didn't allow for other public comments—particularly those from the initial May discussion—to receive equal treatment. Because this conversation was “choose A or B,” ideas that didn't fit that framework weren't considered equally.

A theoretical example might clarify this point. If a person brought their draft of the housing element to the housing work session, the Commission read and listened to all public comment, but only discussed that one draft v the staff draft, this wouldn't be equal treatment for everyone else's comments.

The Heart of Whitefish draft shouldn't be elevated over other public comments. The following justifications need to be scrutinized.

The Heart of Whitefish draft was supported by three organizations, implying that all 1,000 + members of these organizations approved of this draft. But how is membership defined? Do members support these organizations in all issues, especially groups that cover an array of topics? How do we know members aren't double counted? These groups frequently align. The only clear way to track people's sentiments is through a petition or comment, something people sign personally. An organization's public comment should be valued for expertise, not the assumed support of members.

During the August meeting, the Planning Commission stated that the Heart of Whitefish draft should be approved because the consultant report informing the staff draft is inaccurate. Supposedly, GSBS—the firm that wrote the report—can't be trusted. It's unclear why this changed from earlier meetings—including one in June 2024—when the Commission generally approved of the GSBS report and told staff to proceed with the economic element.

GSBS worked with Whitefish for the economic development chapters of the Highway 93 South Corridor Plan and the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Plan. Without knowing specifics, it's unclear why their data can't be trusted. GSBS also can't respond and provide their supporting information.

To contrast, Shelter WF raised concerns about consultant data for the Housing Needs Assessment. They wrote a report for City Council. The consultants responded. Council will deliberate and address the concern.

Issues with consultant data should be handled with the structured process applied to the Housing Needs Assessment. This is the most ethically sound, unbiased way to handle these issues.

There shouldn't be a two-tier system with different standards for commenters. Please revert to the staff draft of the Economic Element.

Please also accept the attached report on mixed-use development. I intended to submit this document for the Transportation chapter. However, I finished it over the weekend so it could complement the Heart of Whitefish mixed-use consultant report. Because of the tight timeline, please excuse any formatting errors. I intended to have a designer review the document to make it more professional quality but couldn't because of timing. If the graphic is illegible it's easy to view it online through the footnote link.

Best,
Marti Brandt

Dear City Council,

Mixed-use development—in which commercial and residential are combined—is a concept contained in the original growth policy drafts. It was removed by the Planning Commission for the Economic and Transportation chapters.

Mixed-use development is beneficial for our community and environment. There's a wealth of research supporting these connections. Here are a few examples.

Community Benefits

Older Residents

According to Whitefish's Community Housing Needs Assessment 23% of our population is aged 65+ and this "is the fastest growing age cohort in the region."¹ Those with limited mobility—including elderly and disabled residents—need mixed-use development to access goods, services, and community connections, especially considering our limited public transportation.

Locally focused research supports this connection. Flathead County's Agency on Aging performs a Community Assessment Survey of Older Adults, which assesses livability across six dimensions. In this assessment mixed-use development is a key component for the Community Design dimension:

Livable communities (which include those with mixed-use neighborhoods, higher-density development, increased connections, shared community spaces and more human-scale design) will become a necessity for communities to age successfully. Communities that have planned and been designed for older adults tend to emphasize access, helping to facilitate movement and participation.²

This Assessment also found insufficient mixed-use development locally, with only 18% of survey respondents reporting a positive rating, for "availability of mixed-use neighborhoods where people live close to places where they can eat, shop, work, and receive services."³

On a national scale, AARP has published extensively on the topic of Livability, measuring whether people of all ages can thrive in a neighborhood. The features of mixed-use development are described as elements of their Livability index:

¹ City of Whitefish, "City of Whitefish 2025 Housing Needs Assessment" (Whitefish, Montana, August 2025), 11.

² Area IX - Flathead County Agency on Aging, "Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults" (Flathead County, Montana, 2022), 7.

³ Area IX - Flathead County Agency on Aging, "Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults," 27.

The AARP Livability Index platform measures diverse, walkable neighborhoods with access to jobs, shops, restaurants, and gathering places. Neighborhoods should support daily living that adds value to people's lives and connects residents to places.⁴

In AARP's Roadmap to Livability Economic Development Workbook, mixed-use development is featured throughout the introductory graphic for the workbook.⁵



Infographic reproduced from *The Livability Economy: People, Places and Prosperity*, AARP (2015), AARP.org/Livability-Economy

"Communities with integrated live, work and play opportunities create strong market demand. Just as people are attracted to places close to work, recreation, entertainment and transit options, employers are learning that the same quality of life benefits enhance their business's competitive position. As people and businesses make livable communities their home, these places become strong economic centers."

— *The Livability Economy: People, Places and Prosperity* (AARP)

⁴ "Neighborhood: The AARP Livability Index Categories Explained," AARP. 2025. <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/topics/livable-communities/2024-livability-index-fact-sheets/neighborhood-AARP-livability-index-categories-explained.doi.10.26419-2fppi.00230.002.pdf>.

⁵ Roadmap to Livability Economic Development Workbook," AARP, 2018, https://www.northreadingma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif3591/f/pages/book-6-roadmap-eco-dev-120718-lr_0.pdf

For more information on mixed-use development, livability, and accessibility, see “Is Your City Age Friendly” from the Municipal Research Services Center of Washington—a nonprofit organization that provides legal and policy guidance to help local governments across Washington State better serve their communities.⁶

Additional Community Benefits

Mixed-use zoning promotes physical activity and interpersonal connections, generally improving community health.

Washington State’s Department of Health specifically lists “mixed use zoning and buildings” as a feature of healthy community design, beneficial for health and the environment. Healthy community design features, “nearby places—such as schools, workplaces, faith centers, parks, stores, and hospitals—where people can easily walk, roll, or bike to.”⁷

In the book *The Anxious Generation*, Jonathan Haidt discusses the mental health crisis resulting from a screen-based childhood, as opposed to a play-based childhood. Though not the focus of the book, Haidt discusses how city planning can promote play and independence for children through mixed-use.

A world designed for automobiles is often not one that children find accessible. Cities and towns can do more to be sure that they have good sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic lights. They can install traffic calming measures, and they can change their zoning to allow more mixed-use development. When commercial, recreational, and residential establishments are more mashed up together, there is more activity on the street and more places that children can get to on foot or by bike.⁸

People of all ages enjoy walking to a local coffee shop, recreational facility, or general store. AARP conducted a nationwide survey of adults ages 18+ and—across all ages and demographics—65% of respondents felt that “housing that is located near activities and key services, such as grocery stores, recreation facilities, and healthcare facilities” is extremely important.⁹

⁶ Lisa Pool, “Is Your Community Age Friendly?”, January 31, 2024, *MRSC Insight Blog*, <https://mrsc.org/stay-informed/mrsc-insight/january-2024/is-your-community-age-friendly>.

⁷ “Healthy Community Design and Climate Change,” Washington State Department of Health,” accessed January 18, 2026, <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/climate-and-health/take-action/community-design-and-efforts>.

⁸ Haidt, Jonathan, *The Anxious Generation*, (New York: Penguin, 2024), 242.

⁹ 2024 *Home and Community Preferences Among Adults 18 and Older Chartbook*, AARP, November 2025, <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/topics/livable-communities/housing/2024-home-community-preferences-all-adults-chartbook.doi.10.26419-2fres.00831.005.pdf>.

Environmental Health

Mixed-use benefits the environment, as discussed in the Washington State Department of Health article referenced above. In addition, the EPA developed a list of Smart Growth development and conservation strategies, “that can help protect our health and natural environment and make our communities more attractive, economically stronger and resilient to climate change.” The first principle listed for Smart Growth development is “mix land uses.”¹⁰

The meaning of “mix land uses” is explained throughout the Smart Growth materials. However, the EPA’s guide *Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities and Towns* seems most applicable to our city. Under the heading “allow a mix of land uses in appropriate locations” the following description is provided:

Districts with homes, stores and services, civic places, and other land uses put residents closer to jobs and their daily needs, allowing them to walk, bike, or drive shorter distances. This convenience is particularly important for people who do not have cars. The varied uses create lively neighborhoods with a sense of place. Adjusting zoning codes to allow mixed-use districts is often a critical first step in developing these areas.¹¹

Throughout this document mixed-use zoning is encouraged, generally and as a policy tool and action. There are also suggestions for revitalizing downtowns, showing that residential and downtown commercial can coexist when managed appropriately.

For more information on mixed-use and the environment, see the blog post “Dense Mixed-Use Development is Vital to Reducing Transportation Emissions” from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.¹²

This is a small selection of sources, but there are many articles discussing the benefits of mixed-use for the environment and community.

¹⁰ “About Smart Growth,” United States Environmental Protection Agency, February 14, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/about-smart-growth>.

¹¹ United States Environmental Protection Agency, *Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities and Towns*, (Washington DC, Office of Sustainable Communities, January 2016), https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-01/documents/small_town_econ_dev_tool_010516.pdf.

¹² Alexander Jarrah, “Dense, Mixed-Use Development Is Vital to Reducing Transportation Emissions,” *ACEEE Blog*, March 20, 2023, <https://www.aceee.org/blog-post/2023/03/dense-mixed-use-development-vital-reducing-transportation-emissions>.

Mixed-Use FAQs:

During Planning Commission discussions there have been a few recurring questions and concerns about mixed-use. Our planning staff has the most knowledge on these topics and should be consulted to provide accurate answers.

Q: Will adding mixed-use to the growth policy result in mixed-use in every location?

Q: Will mixed-use undermine “small town character”?

Q: What happens if a neighborhood business fails?

Q: Has anyone made public comments in support of mixed-use?

Q: Can we just have mixed-use in Land Use? Does it belong in the Economic and Transportation chapters?

Q: Will allowing mixed-use place big box stores or franchises in neighborhoods?

In Conclusion

Mixed-use development benefits our community, both for community members and the environment. I provided a small sample of articles on this topic but many more are available.

By adding mixed-use to the drafts, we can still use this tool judiciously. Mixed-use can be incorporated in specific locations, in ways that feel appropriate for those spots and that enhance our community.

Please note that I’m submitting this document as a member of the public.

Marti Brandt

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Alan Tiefenbach
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2026 2:13 PM
To: 'Schuyler Johnston'
Subject: RE: Question regarding street type in Vision Whitefish 2045

Hi Schuyler, sorry about the delay, I was out sick all last week.

Thank you for the kind words regarding the Vision Whitefish 2045 process.

I think it would be fair to classify Armory Road as Community Street.

We are designing it with traffic calming improvements and a shared use path as we have with past Community Street improvements.

I would recommend you reach out to Craig directly for any more specificity.

Alan Tiefenbach
Long Range Planner
City of Whitefish
418 E. 2nd Street
P.O. Box 158
Whitefish, MT 59937
Ph: 406-863-2413



Help Plan How Whitefish Grows!

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 Growth Policy Update

Click to visit

www.engagewhitefish.com

From: Schuyler Johnston <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 10:45 AM

To: Alan Tiefenbach <[REDACTED]@cityofwhitefish.gov>

Subject: Question regarding street type in Vision Whitefish 2045

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: External Email - This email originated from outside the City of Whitefish. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the contents. Contact the [IT Helpdesk](#) if in doubt.

Hi Alan,

Thanks for sending out the Vision Whitefish 2045 Land Use info. Despite really wanting to attend, I haven't been able to make it to any of the public work sessions. Working full time and being a dad to two kiddos, I just don't have the bandwidth to work in mid-week evening engagements. With that said, I truly appreciate all the efforts that go into sharing all the drafts, updates, session results, etc. It has to be a herculean effort for which minimal credit/appreciation is returned. So thank you for that.

Since this has started, I've been a lurker through the email announcements, and have completed any surveys sent via email. I'm not a land use expert so I can get lost in a lot of the jargon, but for the most part I think I've followed along and understand the general motivation and direction this is headed - and for the most part, I agree. It's a delicate balance of preservation and growth accommodation. I think I lean slightly more towards growth accommodation but totally understand the desire to protect the ambiance of what Whitefish is.

I just reviewed the January Land Use Open House Posters linked in the latest email and I have a question/concern about the Draft Base Street Types that start on page 10. The road I live on (Armory Rd just south of the intersection with 2nd, before the 90 degree turn to the east) is classified as a 'Neighborhood Street' - which living on it, I completely agree with. However, growth over the last 5-7 years has seen this street receive the volume of a 'Community Street'. The street is in desperate need of updating, which the council recently approved. Craig has done a great job working with the contractor to include neighborhood feedback into the plan for the update. But, the root of the problem is volume - which he says cannot be addressed via the road improvement plan. I don't know who to raise this too. Is this something Vision Whitefish can look into? If so, the Land Use Poster should update Armory Rd to a Community Street in order to reflect reality on the ground, but that would be in conflict with the plan since there is not nearly enough space for a proper 'Community Street' designation. Or, there

should be changes in traffic accommodations to direct commuters to take 2nd Street into Whitefish - which is already designated a 'Community Street'.

In the near future I don't think this is crucial, especially with the upgrades planned this summer for Armory Rd. However, if this is a projection out to 2045, this needs to be addressed with how quickly our community is growing. It won't be long before Armory Road is ushering the same volume of traffic as 93N does from the west. And there is no way our little road can accommodate that much commuter traffic safely.

Thanks for your help with this.

-Schuyler Johnston

■ Armory Rd

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Jon L. Heberling <[REDACTED]@mcgarveylaw.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 25, 2026 7:46 PM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: Comments by Jon Heberling on the Economic Development chapter at the 1/19/26 City Council meeting

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Hi Alan, Please post these comments to the Economic Development section comments. Thanks, Jon

What the Planning Commission did on 8/20/25 on the Economic Development chapter is quite consistent with the interests of over 250 participants at the visioning sessions in spring 2024

The Planning Commission did six things:

1. Prohibited big box stores
2. Prohibited chain stores downtown.
3. Said no to a study on parking meters downtown.
4. Entered as an objective: commercial uses shall not be located in residential zones.
5. Said no to 720 new business kinds in just 20 years.
6. Added "moderate growth" to the economic development goal.

1 and 2. The Planning Commission prohibited big box stores and chain stores downtown.

On 6/2/25, the long range planner stated to the City Council that visioning session participants were nearly unanimous against big box stores and chain stores downtown. The only person to speak in favor of big box stores was the Shelter Whitefish representative on the Planning Commission, Mallory Phillips. Shelter Whitefish generally supports wide open rapid growth.

3. The Planning Commission said no to a study on parking meters downtown.

This was not an issue discussed at the visioning sessions. On 8/20/25 comments indicated that parking meters are an irritant, and harm downtown businesses. Chris Schustrom referred to studies that show that parking meters harm downtown businesses. Why would anyone want to harm downtown businesses? The planning staff's 1/19/26 PowerPoint presentation persists in pushing a study on downtown parking meters, requesting that the City Council reverse the Planning Commission on this.

4. The Planning Commission on 8/20/25 added objective j that commercial uses shall not be located in residential zones.

The Planning Staff Responses to Comments, attached to the memo of A. Tiefenbach, 2/20/25, engagewhitefish.com, state at page 5 of "Summary of Comments": "visioning session comments were very much in support of small scale neighborhood serving commercial in selected areas to reduce vehicle trips." This does not appear to be correct. The staff attached 19 pages of comments with yellow boxes around the comments related to economic development. Of a total of 50 comments, only six supported small scale neighborhood commercial. For more description on this point, see email of Jon Heberling 5/21/25, "There is very little support in the visioning sessions for locating commercial uses in residential zoned areas." Engagewhitefish.com/publiccomment/economicdevelopment.

Scott Wurster, a Planning Commission member, reported on 8/20/25 that he too reviewed the public comments at the visioning sessions, and found that very few supported commercial in residential areas, perhaps 3 to 5 depending on interpretation. In contrast, we see the 62 visioning comments viewing loss of neighborhood character as a threat to Whitefish. See "Q1: if you had to choose, what do you believe are the five biggest challenges or threats to Whitefish." See engagewhitefish.com, visioning. Moreover, at the visioning sessions "small town feel" was #1 among listed values. See engagewhitefish.com/visioning. Locating commercial uses in residential zone areas runs directly counter to the mandate from the over 250 visioning persistence to maintain "small town feel".

The planning staff has persisted in pushing for a mix of commercial uses in residential areas. The staff draft of the Transportation chapter for the 12/3/25 Planning Commission meeting included mixed commercial use in residential neighborhoods on several pages of the Transportation chapter. The Planning Commission voted against mixed use in each instance. No doubt the staff will try again with the City Council.

Mixed use is not necessary in the older neighborhoods near the downtown, because people can easily walk the 6 to 8 blocks to downtown for commercial needs. At the 12/3/25 Planning Commission meeting, Mallory Phillips, a member of the Planning Commission and also a member of Shelter Whitefish, cited studies showing that people will walk up to a mile for a commercial errand. This means there is no need for mixed use up to a mile from downtown. This one mile radius would include most of the older neighborhoods, which would be hurt the worst by mixed use. Beyond the one mile radius is mostly subdivisions with homeowners associations, which have covenants against commercial uses. So mixed use could not be imposed in these residential subdivisions.

At the 8/20/25 meeting, Chairperson Whitney Beckham pointed out that in her years on the board, commercial in residential areas has come up again and again. Each time when actually faced with commercial in their neighborhood, residents oppose vigorously.

Also at the 8/20/25 meeting, Jon Heberling presented the argument that allowing commercial in residential areas presents the problem of a slippery slope. It's very difficult to define a limit. It is better to prohibit them.

For a look at what the "avenues" area out toward the high school might look like, look at the older houses along Spokane Avenue, between fourth and sixth streets. Second Street East could become a commercial strip, with fast food joints out by the high school. Anything goes on any lot, anywhere. For more, see letter to the editor by Jon Heberling in the Whitefish Pilot 1/21/26 "Radical change may be coming to Whitefish".

Mixed use could reasonably be applied in selected areas. Such areas might include by the old hospital, near Wisconsin Ave, or east of Highway 93. It is said that the Kalispell plan has such satellite commercial areas.

Flathead Families for Responsible Growth, with over 400 members, opposes mixed use in residential areas. Citizens for a Better Flathead, with over 1500 supporters, opposes mixed growth in residential areas. Homeowners who are residents in the "avenues" area have been almost unanimous against mixed use. At the 8/20/25 Planning Commission meeting, a motion to restore neighborhood commercial in residential areas was opposed 5 to 1.

No doubt the Planning Staff will try again for mixed use in all residential areas with the City Council.

5. The planning commission said no to 720 new business client in the next 20 years.

At the 8/20/25 meeting, the Planning Commission voted 4-2 to remove from the Economic Development vision statement the goal of "a full range of goods (and) services." At first glance, a "full range" of goods and services may seem like a good thing. But it has nasty consequences. The foundation for a "full range" is in the economic consultant's report at table 5. There we find that Whitefish lacks 720 business kinds. This is hard to believe, but there it is. The goal of the planning staff version is a "full range" of business kinds. This means 100% of the 720 new business kinds by 2045. In just 20 years! According to one estimate, adding all 720 would result in doubling the size of Whitefish, to a total population of about 20,000. This would require rapid growth.

Rapid change is mentioned in the growth policy on at least two pages. In the visioning sessions, over 250 participants were asked: "What is the biggest threat to Whitefish?". The staff presented results by relative font size, showing "affordability" as first, "traffic" as second, and "growth" as third. See engagewhitefish.com/documents/visioning. But if two other categories of similar font to "growth": "Development" and "sprawl" are added to "growth", perhaps growth turns out to be the greatest concern of all. No numbers are given. It does seem clear that the growth rate is among the greatest concerns of the participants. The expressions by participants probably mean that each participant's perceived growth rate was greater than each participant would prefer.

Based on the PowerPoint presentation at the 1/19/26 City Council meeting, the planning staff is persisting in its effort to add in a "full range of goods and services," to the goals of the economic development chapter.

6. The Planning Commission on 8/20/25 added "moderate" to the economic development goal.

Based on the above discussion, the visioning participants were quite solidly opposed to the rate of growth in recent years. The Planning Commission added in "moderate growth" on a 4-2 vote. The goal should be clear and say "growth not rapid growth." Could one find a majority of voters in Whitefish who want rapid growth? I doubt it. There is no indication that the voters want rapid growth.

The Planning Commission's actions taken on 8/20/25 are quite consistent with the interests of the over 250 participants at the visioning sessions.

Sent from my iPhone

January 14, 2026

Whitefish City Council
City of Whitefish
418 E. 2nd Street
Whitefish, Montana 59937

Re: Vision Whitefish 2045 Community Plan Land Use, Economic Development, and Housing Elements

Commissioners,

Crandall Arambula, representing The Heart of Whitefish respectfully submits our issues, concerns, and proposed changes to the Vision Whitefish 2045 Community Plan. We request that the Economic Development, Land Use, and Housing Elements do not include Mixed Use or Neighborhood Center policies promoting retail use, nor zoning updates that include permitted or conditional retail use outside the Downtown Business District or other town areas where retail is currently permitted by right or conditionally.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

The need for more neighborhood housing is well supported by state mandated MLUPA policies and housing needs assessment data, however no growth policy rationale nor data has been provided to justify the need for retail use in neighborhoods. The proposed Vision Whitefish 2045 scenarios propose polycentric, mixed-use neighborhoods without assessing Whitefish's long-term supply and demand for retail, nor the impacts on struggling downtown retail businesses if neighborhood retail is permitted.

Permitting additional neighborhood retail businesses will exacerbate the downtown vacancy condition, weakening the Downtown Business District as a destination for local and tourist shoppers, and in turn reducing resort tax revenues. Our initial analysis indicates that there is not sufficient latent demand to justify expanding current retail supply outside the Downtown Business District. Currently there are 89,750 square feet of storefront parcel vacancies and retail sites available downtown (Attachment A). Moreover, based on our assessment of the Vision Whitefish 2045 growth scenario housing development areas, there are 3 areas where neighborhood retail use could be technically viable, resulting in up to 90,000 square feet of competing entitled retail use (Attachment B).

Neighborhood mixed use retail is difficult to finance and will tamper affordable housing developer interest. Rather than providing developers with predictability and certainty that building workforce housing will be financially feasible, including retail use as a component of neighborhood housing place types adds unnecessary financial and design barriers to existing hard to develop affordable housing sites. Adding well-intended but poorly conceived policy and zoning to sites where retail is not viable will result in little or no housing development and in turn, Whitefish's non-compliance with state mandated 2045 housing targets.

REQUESTED ACTIONS

Crandall Arambula proposes the following actions:

- Remove all references to retail in the Vision Whitefish 2045 Economic Development, Land Use , and Housing elements' policy text and graphics. Mixed Use Neighborhood and Mixed-Use Center Place Types are removed and replaced with an alternative residential 'Mixed Income' place type(s) or other place type(s) determined by town planning staff and the community.
- Provide Downtown Retail Preservation Policy and Regulations. Preserve and strengthen downtown as the sole focus for retail shopping in Whitefish by including policies and regulations that will direct planning, design, and funding of a new downtown supportive projects identified in the Downtown Business District Master Plan such as the 2nd and Spokane parking structure, and prohibition of any changes to the character and function of Central Avenue such as removal of existing motor vehicle roadway access and parking.
- Add Transportation Element policy that directs the buildout of a robust town-wide active transportation network by 2045. Complete and supplement Connect Whitefish Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan network connections to the downtown to ensure all neighborhoods have equitable, safe, direct, and convenient access to the Downtown Business District goods and services.

Reference information:

Crandall Arambula requested actions are supported by the firm's 28-year experience in downtown revitalization, including the Whitefish Downtown Business District Plan, numerous neighborhood planning projects throughout North America, and an intimate understanding of Whitefish's unique physical, economic, and social conditions. To aid your deliberations we have included attachments that include information about downtown retail land use that we publish as part of the firm's Revitalization Series planning and design educational materials that is available upon request at our website, www.ca-city.com

Whitefish is a community that we have both have a professional pride in our role in the revitalization of the Downtown Business District, and a personal attachment to this special part of America. We provide our input with the hope that we can aid the adoption of a bold yet realistic Vision Whitefish 2045 Community Plan.

Thank you,



Don Arambula, Principal
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George Crandall, Principal
Crandall Arambula
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Attachment A

Downtown Business District Vacant Land and Storefront Vacancies. In December 2025, the Heart of Whitefish prepared a Downtown Business District assessment of vacant storefront and undeveloped retail sites within the Downton Business District.

A total of 89,750 square feet of storefronts and vacant parcels are currently available.

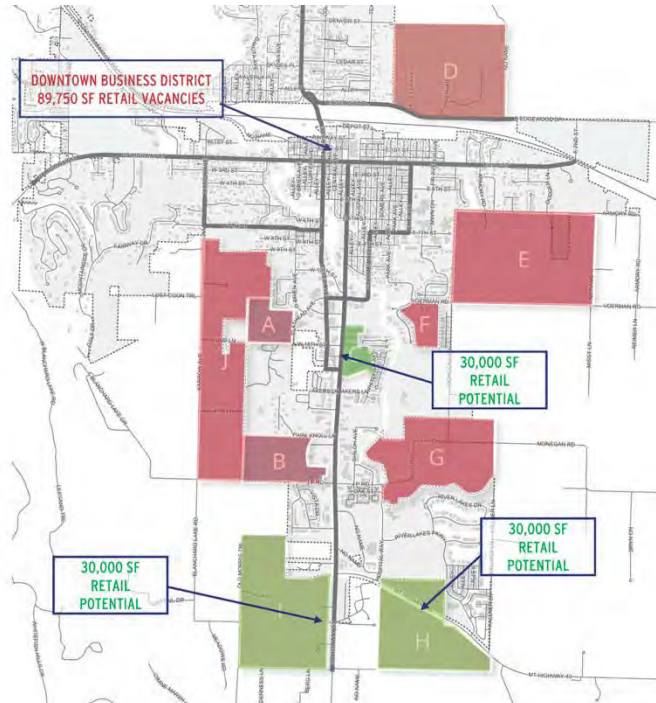


Attachment B

For the analysis of Mixed-Use Center proposals, Crandall Arambula has prepared a Main Street Retail Development assessment to determine the viability of retail, based on the firm's experience developing downtown and neighborhood plans over the last twenty-eight years. We offer the assessment as a tool to inform Vision Whitefish 2045 Place Type decisions.

The assessment indicates:

- **Punitive Development Policy.** Seven of the proposed areas identified (including areas within the current city limits and outside the city limits) will not meet drive-by traffic or population performance standards (See Attachment C) for neighborhood retail success. Any policy allowing retail by right in Mixed Neighborhood or Neighborhood Center Place Types policies will cannibalize existing downtown retail, therefore Crandall Arambula recommends that all neighborhood retail policy be removed from 2045 growth scenarios. Instead, we suggest a new 'Mixed Income' housing-only place type(s) that fosters a range of 'missing middle' unit types– townhome, duplex, tri-plex, small lot detached housing. Moreover, to provide essential walking and biking access between residential neighborhoods and retail goods and services in the downtown, we recommend robust pedestrian and bicycle network improvement policies and regulations as described in the Connect Whitefish Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (gray lines).
- **Unwarranted and Unnecessary Retail Destinations.** Areas C, H, I lack nearby existing households nor sufficient developable land area to support a neighborhood main street retail destination. However, areas C, H, and I front busy highways, and as result can meet minimum drive-by traffic performance standards. Combined, these three areas represent up to 90,000 square feet of potential entitled new retail uses that would pose significant Downtown Business District competition. As such, without a market analysis indicating demand for additional retail use, we recommend that these areas designated as Mixed Income moderate density or other place types.



MAIN STREET RETAIL DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

Performance Standards:

- VIABLE: Meets Standards
- NOT VIABLE: Cannot Meet Standards

SCENARIO AREAS

Area	Performance Standards	
	Drive-by Traffic	Population
A	NO	NO
B	NO	NO
C	YES	NO
D	NO	NO
E	NO	NO
F	NO	NO
G	NO	NO
H	YES	NO
I	YES	NO
J	NO	NO

Attachment C

The following pages include information concerning retail land use, including:

- Brick and Mortar Retail Trends
- Where People Shop
- Types of Retail Shopping
- Main Street Retail Performance Standards
- Main Street Design Standards and Guidelines

CRANDALL ARAMBULA

URBAN DESIGN | ARCHITECTURE | PLANNING

'BRICK & MORTAR' RETAIL TRENDS

America is considered 'over-retailed'. Historically, the United States communities have maintained significantly more 'brick and mortar' retail space per capita than other nations, a trend that accelerated into the 21st century due to suburban sprawl, poly-centric community plans, and de-emphasis on downtown as the focus for retail development.

Crandall Arambula's retail research indicates that 12-18 square feet of retail building floor area per capita is a sustainable target range amount for a vigorous community.

Reliance on tax revenue.

Many communities rely on retail sales to provide revenue for public services. Competition for tax revenue has had a significant effect on retail growth, primarily by driving the "fiscalization" of retail land use—where local governments make land-use decisions based on their ability to generate tax revenue with disregard of the impacts on existing retail districts that have generated the revenue. **Healthy cities ensure that tax revenues benefit the districts that generated the revenue.**



Retail Policy Consequences.

Communities often require retail as part of district and neighborhood plans to improve livability without understanding the fundamental requirements for retail success.

- **Mixed Use Mandates.** Project financing is difficult for neighborhood mixed use buildings where retail is required as a ground floor use, resulting in 'shelf plans' that are not implemented that in turn, lead to community frustration that their vision of active and vital neighborhood retail shopping destination is not realized.
- **'Ghost' Storefronts.** Where mixed use buildings are constructed without regard to retail development fundamentals, retail tenants are difficult to recruit, and if spaces are filled businesses often fail. Long-term, this results in vacant mixed use building ground floor storefronts that become an economic burden for the building owners and create inactive 'dead edges' along street frontages, resulting in visual blight and opportunities for vandalism and crime – reducing community livability, the very objective that they were intended to improve.

CRANDALL ARAMBULA

URBAN DESIGN | ARCHITECTURE | PLANNING

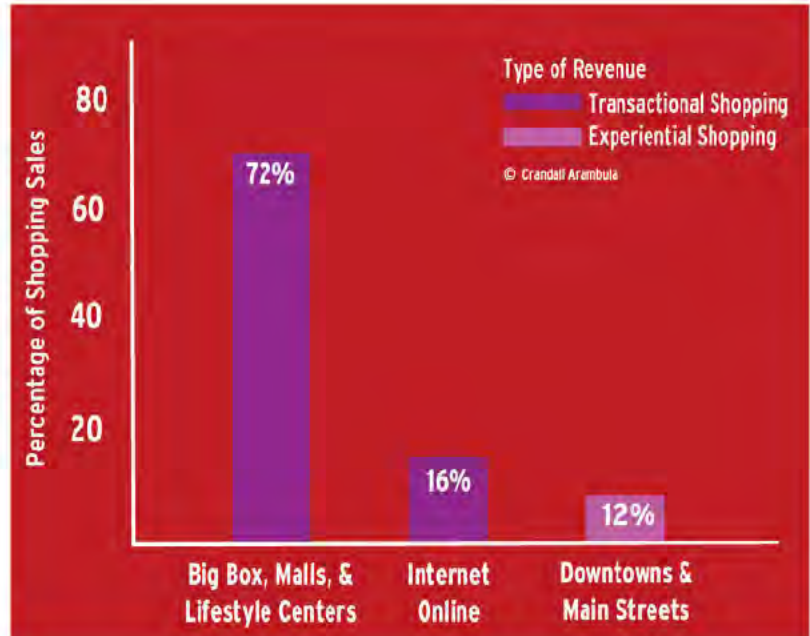
WHERE PEOPLE SHOP

Americans still primarily shop in physical 'brick & mortar' stores, but the online share of sales is rapidly increasing and is the main driver of change in the retail landscape.

Downtown and Neighborhood Main Street stores account for a small share of shopping expenditures. While some growth has occurred in this segment, this increase is not likely to result in a significant uptick in the percentage of total retail sales.

Revenue by Segment (2025)

- **BIG BOX, MALLS, AND LIFESTYLE CENTERS.** In the U.S., 72 percent of all retail purchases occurs in this segment, with big box store transactional retail spending accounting for the vast majority of segment revenue.
- **ONLINE.** The most significant change over time has been the rapid rise of e-commerce, which has grown from under 5% in 2010 to over 16% of total retail sales in 2025.
- **DOWNTOWN/NEIGHBORHOOD MAIN STREET.** A study by the International Downtown Association indicates their relative minor shopping share. Using Census and tax data the analysis found that in cities with healthy downtowns can generate up to 12% of citywide sales tax revenue.



Revenue Trends

Overall, transactional & experiential shopping trips are declining.

- **Fewer Transactional Trips on Weekly Basis.** A good indicator is grocery shopping which the single greatest generator of shopping trips. The average number of grocery store trips per person has dropped from eight per month in 2022 to around six per month in 2024.
- **Transactional Shopping Trip Consolidation.** The reduction in trips can be accounted to consumers making larger purchases per trip, an increase in shopping at warehouse membership stores such as Costco and using online ordering for supplemental utilitarian purchases such as house cleaning supplies.
- **Experiential Trip Expansion.** The broader "retailtainment" trips are projected to more than quadruple by 2035, yet the total number experiential trips will remain a small portion of all shopping trips.

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TYPES OF RETAIL SHOPPING

Retail planning must consider and address objectives of a shopping trip. Transactional retail shopping is about efficiently acquiring a product, while experiential retail shopping is about the journey – the entire interaction and feeling associated with shopping.

'Transactional' Retail Shopping

The **primary type of shopping**, it includes local independent businesses but typically are regional or national brand stores and restaurants such as Walmart, Albertsons, Costco, RiteAid, Home Depot, McDonald's, Starbucks, or Olive Garden.

Primary shopper considerations are:

- **Availability of essential household goods and services purchased on daily & weekly basis**, such as groceries. Shoppers want to get in, get what they need, get out, or have it delivered.
- **Cost of goods, range of selection, and availability** of specific features (size, color, material).
- **Familiarity and trust of brands**, especially for eating and beverage establishments.

Primary requirements are:

- **Store adjacency, visibility, and access to high volume regional serving roadways** to serve residents from a regional capture area.
- **Site auto orientation, including large parking lots** designed for peak seasonal demand.
- **Stores are typically large** and designed with consistent brand architectural elements.
- **Store drive-through window** for food and beverage establishments.



'Experiential' Retail Shopping

The **primary objective is to participate in an entertaining shopping activity**. Businesses are more often independently owned and operated, but may include a limited number of national brands. These uses appeal to local clientele, but because of their authenticity and vibe, can draw out of town visitors and tourists.

Primary shopper considerations are:

- **The 'place' is integral to a store or restaurant purchase**. Streets and storefronts are designed to foster sitting, viewing, and window-shopping.
- **Stores that offer unique goods and services, rather than mass produced, formulaic products**. High-quality, premium products with local craftsmanship over value brands and disposable imported goods.
- **Restaurants and cafes create unique 'third places'** where social interaction and activities is fostered.

Primary requirements are:

- **Store adjacency, visibility, and access to moderate volume roadways** to serve residents from a town-wide capture area.
- **Shopping along walkable 'main streets' worthy of a postcard**. Pedestrian-friendly sidewalks with street-oriented buildings.



Revitalizing America's Cities

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Designing Main Street Retail is a science. A unique and memorable retail experience requires stores be arranged in a tight knit, mutually beneficial collection of shops. Sustainable Main Street Retail requires either high populations within walking and biking proximity, or busy street adjacency. Ideally, a combination of the two should be provided.

Retail Floor Area Performance Standards

Downtown and neighborhood shopping destinations must be 'right-sized'. A 'critical mass' of contiguous retail shop floor area must be:

- **Downtown Main Street.** A minimum of 100,000 and a maximum of 150,000 square feet of floor area.
- **Neighborhood Main Street.** A minimum of 20,000 and a maximum of 30,000 square feet of floor area.

Population Performance Standards

Main Street retail floor area can be viable if adequate household population can be provided within the downtown or neighborhood. If residential population is below thresholds, Drive-by Traffic Performance Standards must be met.

- **Downtown:** 8,000 housing units are required within a town-wide retail capture area. Because downtown serves as the focus of city retail and residential development activity, more residential development must be provided to support a greater retail aggregation.
- **Neighborhoods:** 2,000 housing units are required within a neighborhood capture area, a 5-minute (quarter mile) walking distance.



Drive-by Traffic Performance Standards

Drive-by traffic increases the retail capture area where downtown or neighborhood population is not adequate to support retail shops. Minimum drive-by motor vehicle traffic ensures enough customers see storefronts. Too much traffic erodes the Main Street pedestrian atmosphere and becomes a nuisance and deterrent for window shopping and outdoor dining.

Average Daily Trips (ADT) 'sweet spot' for drive-by traffic:

- **Minimum Traffic.** 5,000 ADT provided along or perpendicular to Main Streets.
- **Maximum Traffic.** 15,000 ADT provided along or perpendicular to Main Streets.

CRANDALL ARAMBULA

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MAIN STREET DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

Main streets in both downtown and neighborhood centers require strict adherence to design requirements. The requirements are not arbitrary, nor discretionary 'rules of thumb' or 'best practices'; rather they are indisputable proven rules that are non-negotiable.

Minimum Objective Design Standards.

- **Downtown Main Street Length.** Quarter-mile maximum – a 5 minute walk
- **Neighborhood Main Street Length.** A one block maximum
- **Ground Floor Use.** Continuous, uninterrupted, edge-to-edge retail stores and restaurants fronting on both sides of the street. Prohibited uses include street-level uses including banks, offices and housing.
- **Ground Floor 'Active Edge'.** Street fronting doors and windows must be transparent (75% of ground floor facade) to foster walking and drive by window shopping, especially for restaurants. Store finished floor elevations shall be no higher or lower than 30 inches above or below the adjacent sidewalk grade.
- **Pedestrian-friendly frontage.** Buildings must be oriented to the street with parking or driveways between the front facade and property line. Store front doors must be directly accessible from the public street. Doors must be universally accessible.
- **Pedestrian-friendly Sidewalks.** Publicly accessible sidewalks between the main street building facade and street curb line must be present. Sidewalks must be a minimum of 10 feet in width.
- **Shopper-friendly Parking.** Curbside parking must be provided along streets with retail ground floor use.

Subjective Design Guidelines.

Guidelines provide aspirational design direction beyond regulatory rules are capable of describing, addressing more nuanced and more ephemeral concerns such as authenticity, compatibility, and ambiance.

Architecture

- Style
- Color and Materials

Site Guidelines

- Views
- Screening
- Publicly Accessible Space



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City Council Packet, February 17, 2026 Page 187 of 490

October 15, 2025

To: Whitefish Community Housing Committee
Whitefish Planning Commission, City Planning Staff, Land Use Plan Consultants
Whitefish City Council and Mayor John Muhlfeld

From: Whitefish Climate Action Plan Standing Committee

Climate Action Plan Committee Recommendations on the Vision Whitefish 2045 Land Use Element

Global temperatures continue to break records, with 2024 marking the first year the average temperature clearly exceeded the 1.5°C threshold set by the Paris Agreement¹. In response to this, the Climate Action Plan Committee is providing comments on the upcoming **Land Use (and by extension, Housing) Element** of the Vision Whitefish 2045 plan for consideration by the Community Housing Committee, Planning Commission, City Council, and relevant city planning staff and consultants as they prepare these elements.

Land use is a key tool for the City of Whitefish to address climate change, and is perhaps the tool that is most within the city's direct control. By promoting compact development, infill, and mixed-use neighborhoods, we can significantly reduce vehicle miles traveled and move closer to achieving the goals outlined in the **2018 Whitefish Climate Action Plan**. We urge the City to align the new Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Map with these climate objectives. Fortunately, many land use strategies that are good for the climate² are also good for the affordability of homes³, making alignment with the Climate Action Plan beneficial on multiple fronts.

The **Montana Land Use Planning Act (MLUPA)** offers a framework to manage our community's growth and presents a significant opportunity to address climate challenges. The **2018 Whitefish Climate Action Plan** contains numerous strategies for mitigating climate change through thoughtful land use, specifically in its transportation and land use section, which contains the most strategies of any section in the plan. The following twelve strategies in the plan are particularly relevant to the city's land use patterns:

TL-2.1, TL-2.2, TL-3.1, TL-5.1, TL-5.2, TL5.3,
TL-5.4, TL-5.5, TL-6.1, FW-2.2, CFW-4.2, and SD-3.1

While MLUPA provides minimum standards for accommodating growth by updating zoning, we believe the City of Whitefish can go further to achieve the ambitious goals of the Climate Action Plan. Since many climate-friendly land use practices also help increase the housing supply and make homes more affordable, we can build a more

¹ <https://climate.copernicus.eu/global-climate-highlights-2024>

² <https://ternercenter.berkeley.edu/research-and-policy/role-of-new-housing-in-reducing-climate-pollution/>

³ <https://housingmatters.urban.org/articles/how-cities-can-tackle-both-affordable-housing-and-climate-crises>

resilient, sustainable, and vibrant community by exceeding the state's minimum zoning standards.

For example, MLUPA requires cities to adopt at least 5 of 14 listed zoning strategies to improve housing affordability⁴. We recommend the city adopt as many of these strategies as feasible to meet both our housing and climate goals, and to consider additional strategies beyond those listed. When presented with the option to “eliminate OR reduce,” we strongly encourage the City to choose **eliminate** to best achieve these goals.

In conclusion, we urge the City to integrate the ambitious goals of the Whitefish Climate Action Plan directly into the Vision Whitefish 2045 Land Use and Housing Elements. By leveraging the framework of MLUPA to go beyond minimum requirements and adopt comprehensive, climate-friendly land use practices, we can create a more affordable, resilient, sustainable, and prosperous Whitefish for future generations. Thank you for your careful consideration of these recommendations and we look forward to future collaboration on specific recommendations when the time comes.

Sincerely,

Members of the Whitefish Climate Action Plan Committee

⁴ 76-25-302, MCA

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Diane Carter
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2025 12:22 PM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: How to grow

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Greetings,

I was happy to hear we have a few more bites to take at this monumental task at hand.

Thank you for the exercise in September to establish the obvious areas we are already growing into

We are still growing into the 20,000 plus people that moved into the valley in 2021 / 2022, do we know when that impact may flatten out?

People are still coming and growth is inevitable yet HOW we grow is the big question.

We want to encourage people to be in nature yet we are gobbling nature up with each scoop of dirt we move.

I want to encourage us to define Nature and what its ecosystem is and then define how to preserve it along with teaching people how to interact with Nature.

We can be a great eco-tourism place for our last best place.

Do we want to be another Aspen or Jackson Hole? I want to be the bean of how humans can co-exist with Nature.

Having the experience from Boulder CO would help us pause for a second to regroup. What was the process for Boulder when growth was rapid? How did the moratorium process go and how long did it take for the city to regroup and refocus?

If we build a wall of structures along the areas that we can we must include migratory pathways for everything other than human. Even the big fields that feed eagles, hawks and other birds are going away along with their food source. How do they hurt and eat if the open space is too small?

How do we retain a small population of fox and other underground nature?

As we take down more trees we decrease natural pest management, air filtration and temperature regulation.

We may need to go to other countries to define ecosystem/nature

How to grow with as much care put into collaboration of non-human life with resort ecotourism vision is a challenge and we need to take the time it takes to explore it.

We are unique because we are also growing just as fast throughout the entire valley. The infrastructure is coming along quickly yet, is it going to be enough if we continue to develop as rapidly as we are?

How did the process go in Park City for the one way in one way out. This is helpful info for the growth on the north side of the tracks. In the mid- 80's there was a small grocery store on Big Mountain in the Alpnesnack building for a couple of winter seasons. It was well received and easy to manage.

We seem to be a combination of all the major resort/tourism towns that became cities yet are trying to remain town friendly. This is a huge challenge and I would like to explore all the details before committing to business as usual.

Thank you for the consideration of expanding our perspective and standing unique for the crown of the continent,

Diane

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**FLATHEAD
LAND TRUST**
Conserving Our Legacy of Land and Water

January 12, 2026

Alan Tiefenbach
Whitefish Planning Department
418 E 2nd Street
Whitefish, MT 59937

Re: Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy Update

Dear Alan,

We value the opportunity to have input on the framework to guide growth in and around Whitefish for the next 20 years that is being developed to update the 2007 Whitefish Growth Policy ("2007 Growth Policy") as the Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy Update ("Growth Policy Update").

As described in the 2007 Growth Policy and draft chapters for the Growth Policy Update, Whitefish is defined by its natural resources from Whitefish Lake, the Whitefish River, the area's many streams, its mountain backdrop, and its forests, natural resources help make Whitefish a world class destination as well as a great place to live and work. We are excited that the citizens of Whitefish value clean air, clean water, scenic vistas, protection for wildlife habitat, and open space and want to preserve those values as the community grows as stated in the Growth Policy. Since 1985, Flathead Land Trust has played a critical role in protecting northwest Montana's scenic open space, important wildlife habitat and clean water that sustain our high quality of life here.

We recommend some aspects of the 2007 Growth Policy be retained in the Growth Policy Update. We support the vision described in the 2007 Growth Policy that new growth take place where the open spaces and environmentally sensitive lands that the community values can be protected. We agree with the 2007 Growth Policy that reserving natural vegetation along lakes and stream banks should take precedent over development because natural vegetation in riparian areas stabilizes stream banks, the riparian area stores flood waters, and provides vital habitat for birds, fish, mammals, and amphibians. We agree that ideally, floodplains should not be encroached upon, remain in a natural state, and continue to perform their natural functions of storing flood waters. We also agree that wetlands are some of the most valuable wildlife habitat available and are important for water quality. We applaud the future land use goals of the 2007 Growth Policy to preserve, enhance, and manage environmentally sensitive areas such as river and stream banks, steep slopes, wetlands, forested areas, and critical wildlife habitat to not be allowed to degrade water quality, alter natural stream banks and lakeshores, destroy riparian vegetation, or degrade riparian wildlife habitat.

We recognize many changes have taken place since the 2007 Growth Policy was adopted. For example, we support the stream, lake and wetland buffers and setbacks that have been adopted in



Whitefish City Code since the 2007 Growth Policy was adopted. We are thrilled that during the visioning process to update the 2007 Growth Policy, the community overwhelmingly stated the top three most important features to protect were the Whitefish River, Whitefish Lake, and overall water quality and that the draft update continues to support streamside, wetland, river, and lake buffers and setbacks to protect water quality and provide habitat for plants and animals. We also appreciate the recommendation to work with and support non-profit conservation groups or agency partners, such as the Flathead Land Trust, to preserve and maintain critical waterfront, riparian and watershed lands as open space in the Growth Policy Update.

We understand you are working on the land use planning portion of the Growth Policy Update and two of the areas that have been proposed for city expansion are near water – Location D includes a portion of Cow Creek and one of its tributaries and wetland, and Location G borders the Whitefish River. We support future expansion of the city limits but with extra protection for the streams, river, wetlands, riparian areas, and important wildlife habitat along them. Regarding Location D, as stated in the 2007 Growth Policy, Cow Creek provides a prominent open space corridor down the eastside of the city and valuable wildlife habitat, and can only be properly protected with a natural buffer plus a structural setback. We recommend maintaining a naturally vegetated buffer along Cow Creek, its tributary and wetlands in Location D if it is chosen to expand the city limits. Regarding, Location G, it looks like there is a naturally vegetated buffer of city park land along the south side of the Whitefish River and we recommend a similar naturally vegetated buffer be maintained along the north side of the river if Location G is chosen to expand the city limits. While the Whitefish City Code requires buffers and setbacks we request that the Growth Policy Update include a goal of following Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Recommendations for Subdivision Development in Montana to maintain a vegetation buffer and building setbacks of 200 feet from the Whitefish River and Cow Creek. This recommendation of setbacks will protect these riparian areas which contain important vegetation, bird and wildlife habitat, wildlife travel corridor, shallow groundwater, and are vital to the integrity, healthy function, and water quality of the water bodies.

Thank you for your consideration of our input.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Paul Travis.

Paul Travis, Executive Director

Alan Tiefenbach

From: Jenny P <>
Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2024 12:16 PM
To: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: Re: December 2024 Vision Whitefish 2045 Newsletter Alert

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Maybe court more large chain grocery stores to build south of town so you don't have to concentrate so much of the walkable population inside the city to prevent over crowding. For example, work with the county to bring in a grocery store at rosé crossing. Lower the impact fees. High density isn't necessarily good for mental health. People need yards. Don't be punishing. If they have yards they don't have to drive to parks. Put a parking garage in across from the middle school. To prevent fire escape hazard, stop high density buildings north of viaduct.

On Tue, Dec 10, 2024 at 11:04 AM Engage Whitefish <[\[REDACTED\]@engagementhq.com](#)> wrote:



Happy Holidays Everyone! Below are new updates regarding Vision Whitefish 2045.

ENVIRONMENT SECTION IS COMPLETED AND AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT

Staff is completing the Environment, Natural Resources and Hazards Element of the Plan. This will be the first complete plan element chapter draft released for review! Note that it will be just the text and does not include graphics, photos, and charts that will be in the final draft. This plan element is expected to be rather detailed (30 pages +/-) and packed with information. To make it more digestible, staff is releasing it in three sections. **THE ENVIRONMENT SECTION IS THE FIRST SECTION COMPLETE FOR REVIEW (HERE)**. The most recent versions of all completed drafts will also always be posted in the "documents" section on the website, located on the right side of the page (scroll down). This draft is scheduled for a work session with the Community Development Board at **5PM on Thursday, December 19, 2024**. If you cannot attend this work session, it will be streamed on the City YouTube Channel [HERE](#).

Natural Resources is the next section which will be released. You will receive an alert when it has been posted.

DEMOGRAPHICS CHAPTER UPDATED

The demographics chapter was reviewed and discussed by the Community Development Board at a November 21, 2024 work session. The Board, as well as the public, had comments on this

draft chapter. Revisions and comments have been incorporated and you can see the latest draft [HERE](#). You can also watch a video of this work session [HERE](#).

HISTORY CHAPTER UPDATED

The history chapter was reviewed and discussed by the Community Development Board at a October 17, 2024 work session. The Board, as well as the public, had comments on this draft chapter. Revisions and comments have been incorporated and you can see the latest draft [HERE](#).

Thanks for staying involved! You can expect an update in December.

Vision Whitefish 2045

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February 9, 2026
Whitefish City Council
418 E. 2nd Street
Whitefish, Montana 59937

Re: Vision Whitefish 2045 Community Plan Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, and Transportation Elements

Mayor Muhlfeld and Whitefish City Council Members,

Crandall Arambula, on the behalf of the Heart of Whitefish respectfully submits the following Vision Whitefish 2045 fundamental retail requirements, issues, and concerns, and requested actions expressed in the attached pdf. In addition, we implore the Council to consider the following additional points:

1. **Whitefish is a small town. Again, and again the community has voiced this concise, inspirational declaration. All policies must reinforce this statement vision as a "North Star" for defining future growth.** The Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy Update long-term goals, guiding its strategic direction, future aspirations, and desired impact over the next 20 years must ensure that the very essence of the community is strengthened and protected. Economic development, transportation, housing, and land use policies that promote excessive housing targets, incompatible neighborhood mid-rise housing form and massing, and mixed-use retail sprawl development better suited for big cities is not appropriate, is inconsistent with the community's 2045 vision for Whitefish and should not be adopted.
2. **Survey results are inconclusive and staff land use recommendations do not represent a mandate.** As stated by staff and the consultant team, public participation should be the foundation of Vision Whitefish 2045. The Growth Policy will succeed when it reflects the voices and priorities of the people who live and work here. Full online survey results are not available for public review and assessment. As a result, the reported engagement results that are driving land use policy do not provide necessary, high confidence levels required for radical change to the town's retail framework. Because most open house engagement has been driven by advocacy groups and their supporters exclusively, we believe that the results include bias and lack proper sample size and broad community representation typical of a statistically valid survey. Simply stated, we do not believe that decisions concerning growth strategies accurately represent a larger Whitefish population, which would enable reliable conclusions, and actionable insights. Lacking is meaningful stakeholder input from those the decisions will impact most, such as downtown retail business owners, employees, property owners and location A, B, and C property owners and neighbors where the burden of retail sprawl land use changes may not have been fully vetted.
3. **Reject retail land use over-reach.** The Montana Land Use Planning Act (MLUPA, Senate Bill 382) asks communities to choose a minimum of 5 from a menu of 14 housing strategies. *None of these strategies require retail land use policy.* The draft Vision Whitefish 2045 document includes unnecessary, discretionary, retail mixed use place types authored by staff and the consultant team using their independent judgement rather than following strict, predetermined rules of SB 382. Because retail uses are not necessary to meet MLUPA minimum requirements, policy that promotes new mixed-use retail should be omitted from all Community Plan elements. Nevertheless, should Council believe voluntary inclusion of retail is desirable, we request additional assessment, planning and design, and decisions made during a robust stakeholder and community engagement process after the May 17 deadline. Any changes to adopted policy could be included in an update to the Community Plan in three years.

REQUESTED ACTIONS

Finally, Crandall Arambula, on the behalf of the Heart of Whitefish proposes the following actions:

- **Remove all references to retail in the Vision Whitefish 2045 Economic Development, Land Use , and Housing elements' policy text and graphics.** Mixed Neighborhood and Neighborhood Center place types are removed and replaced with an alternative residential 'Mixed Income' place type(s) or other place type(s) determined by the community.
- **Provide Downtown Retail Preservation Policy and Regulations.** Preserve and strengthen downtown as the sole focus for retail shopping in Whitefish by including policies and regulations that will direct planning, design, and funding of new downtown supportive projects identified in the Downtown Business District Master Plan such as the 2nd and Spokane parking structure, and prohibition of any changes to the character and function of Central Avenue such as removal of existing motor vehicle roadway access and parking.
- **Add Transportation Element policy that directs the buildout of a robust town-wide active transportation network by 2045.** Complete and supplement Connect Whitefish Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan network connections to the downtown to ensure all neighborhoods have equitable, safe, direct, and convenient access to the Downtown Business District goods and services.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Arambula', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Don Arambula
Principal
Crandall Arambula PC
darambula@ca-city.com



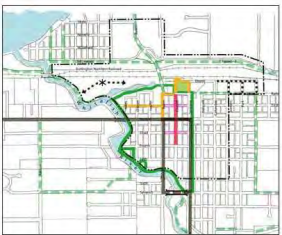
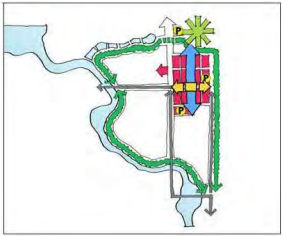
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Downtown Oak Park, Illinois

Revitalizing America's Towns and Cities Since 19

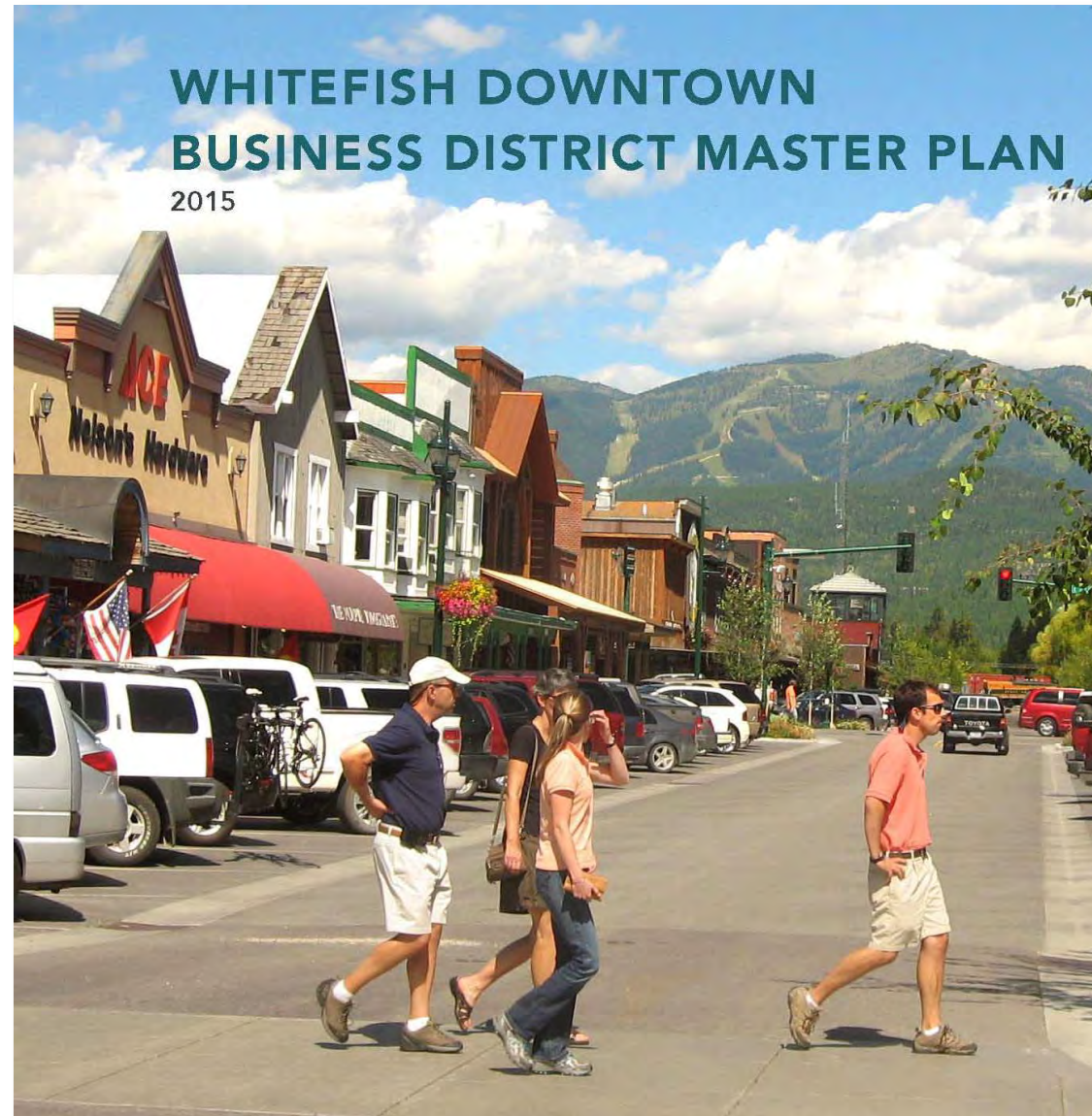
DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT MASTER PLANS



Whitefish Downtown Business District **Master Plan**

Crandall Arambula PC
December 2005

ADOPTED 2005

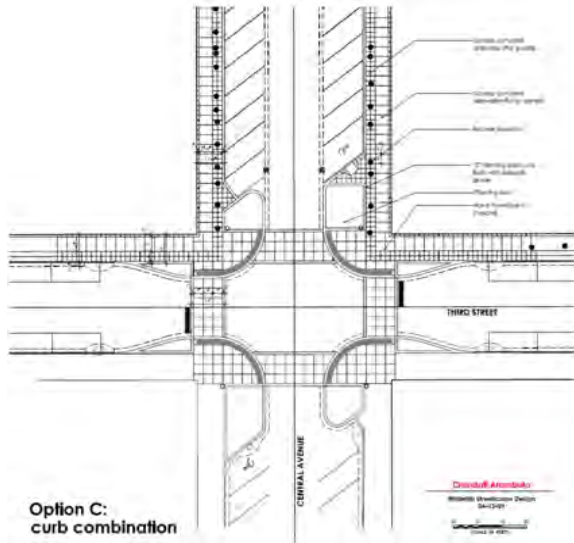


UPDATE ADOPTED 2015

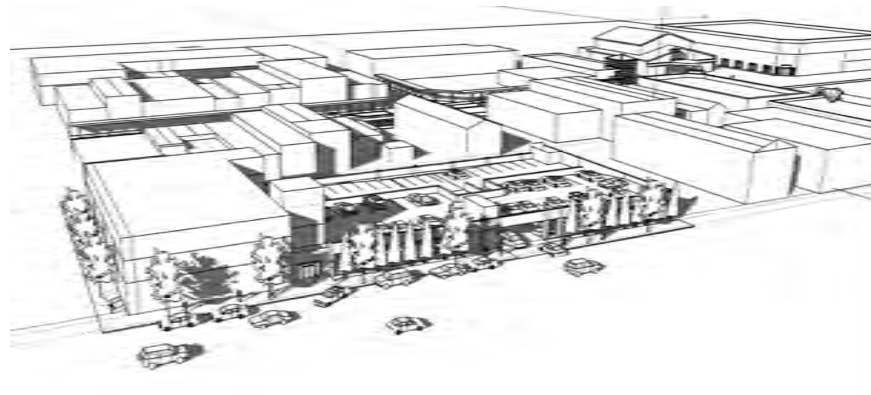
ADDITIONAL DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT PLANNING



Mosaic Architects



CENTRAL AVENUE STREETScape



CITY HALL/PARKING STRUCTURE &
2ND & SPOKANE PARKING STRUCTURE



WHITEFISH
BAKER UNDERPASS

WHITEFISH DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT

BEFORE- 2004



Images: Crandall Arambula 2004, 2012

WHITEFISH DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT

AFTER - 2025



Images: Google Earth Sep 2025

CRANDALL ARAMBULA RETAIL FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS



Hardest land use to grow

- Formulaic- a science, not an art
- Requires strict adherence to a disciplined retail formula



'Main Street' Retail

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL DESIGN



**Critical Mass – Floor Area
(100,000 - 150,000)**



**Critical Mass – Floor Area
(20,000 - 30,000)**

Image: Orenco Station Crandall Arambula

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS



Crandall Arambula

'18-Hour' Active Uses

RETAIL DEFINITION

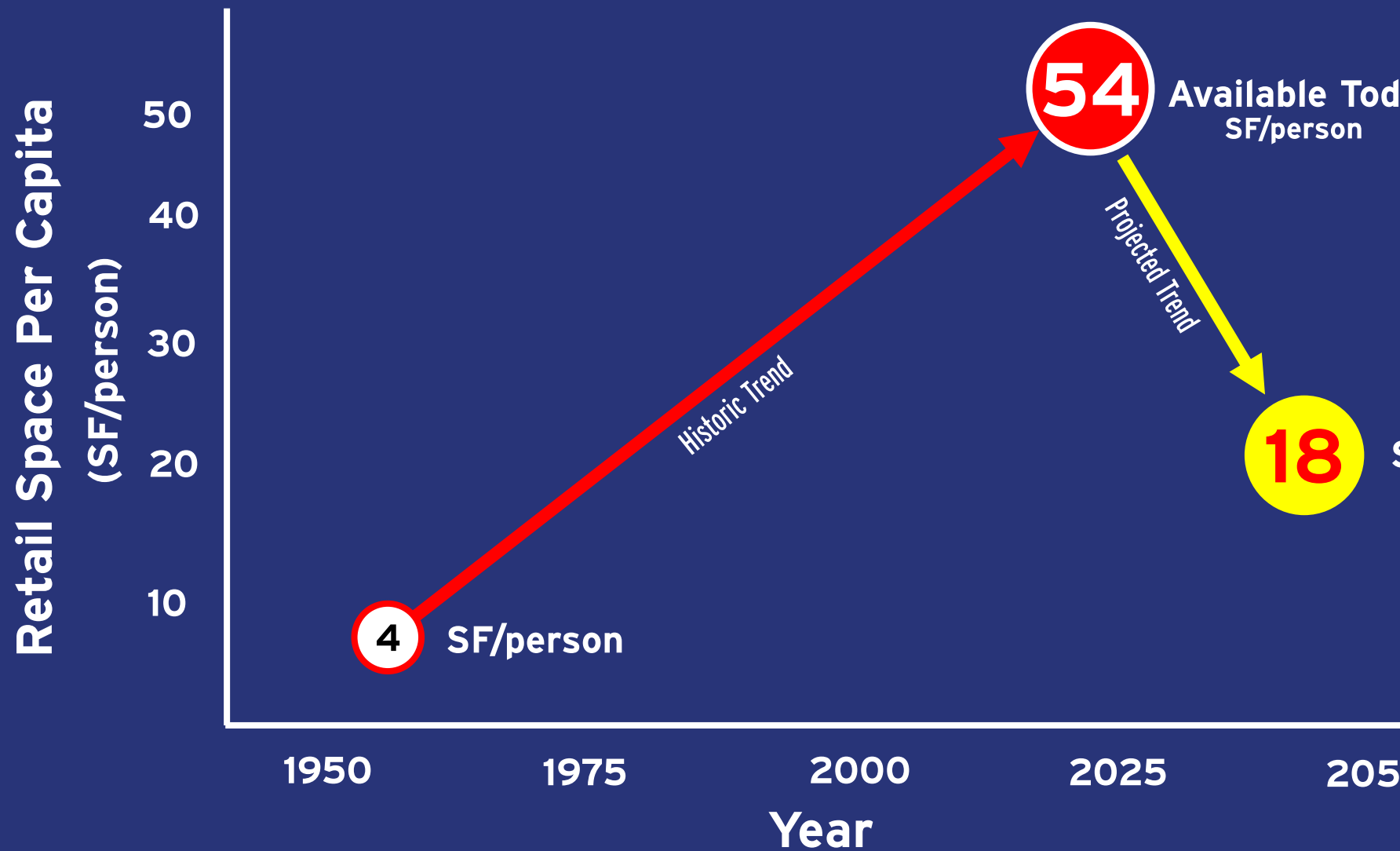
Businesses that engage in:

- **Sale of merchandise**—clothing, footwear, sporting goods, shops, art galleries, grocery stores, etc.
- **Eating, drinking & entertainment establishments**—restaurants, bakeries, nightclubs, etc.
- **Personal Services** such as salons

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

NATIONAL RETAIL 'BRICK & MORTAR' TRENDS

© Crandall Ar



RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL TRENDS

Issues:

- Reduced Need – Shift
- Current Conditions –
reduce tax base, crea
illicit activity
- Likely Future Scenario
Retail Parcels to Mult
Housing.

arcCA DIGEST



Reimagining Spaces: Strip Malls are the Next Housing Opportunity

Omgivning

Los Angeles-based firm Omgivning is widely recognized for its expertise in adaptive reuse, which it has pursued extensively in downtown L.A. and beyond. Here, the firm presents one of several case studies it has produced on adaptive reuse for particular urban typologies.

A recent AIA Firm Survey found that almost half (48%) of all projects currently being pursued by U.S. firms involve the renovation, rehabilitation, extension, or preservation of existing buildings. In fact, according to Bloomberg, for the first time in 20 years, renovations have overtaken new construction in architectural billings in the U.S.

Since its founding in 2009, Omgivning has been committed to exploring the design needs of this new era and has become increasingly convinced of the importance and urgency of reusing existing buildings. Adaptive reuse architecture breathes new life into existing structures. It makes for more sustainable construction, more thriving communities, and more creative solutions to the pressing issues found in cities everywhere.



Crandall Arambula



Amazon.com

Changing Consumer Behavior

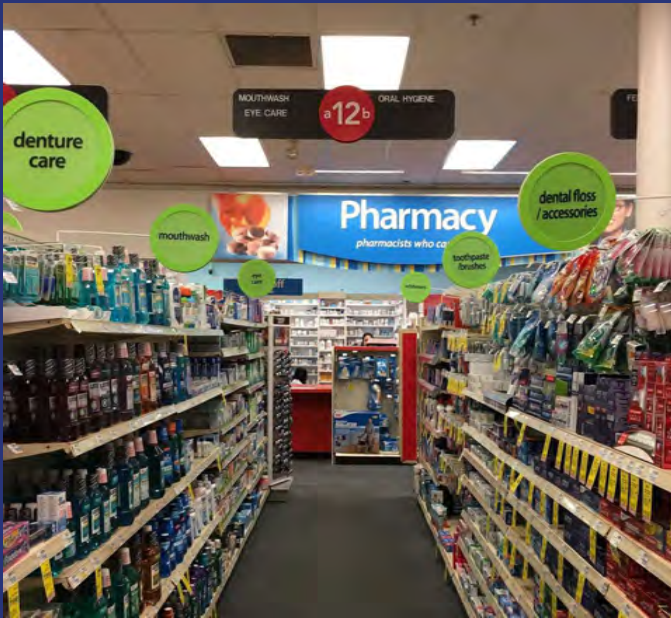
RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS



TYPES OF RETAIL

'Transactional' Retail

- Goods and services purchased on a regular & weekly basis.
- Cost of goods and range of services are key considerations.



Include National Brand Retailers

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL TRENDS

'Experiential' Retail

- Retail environment is a part of the purchase.
- Foster local and regional identity.

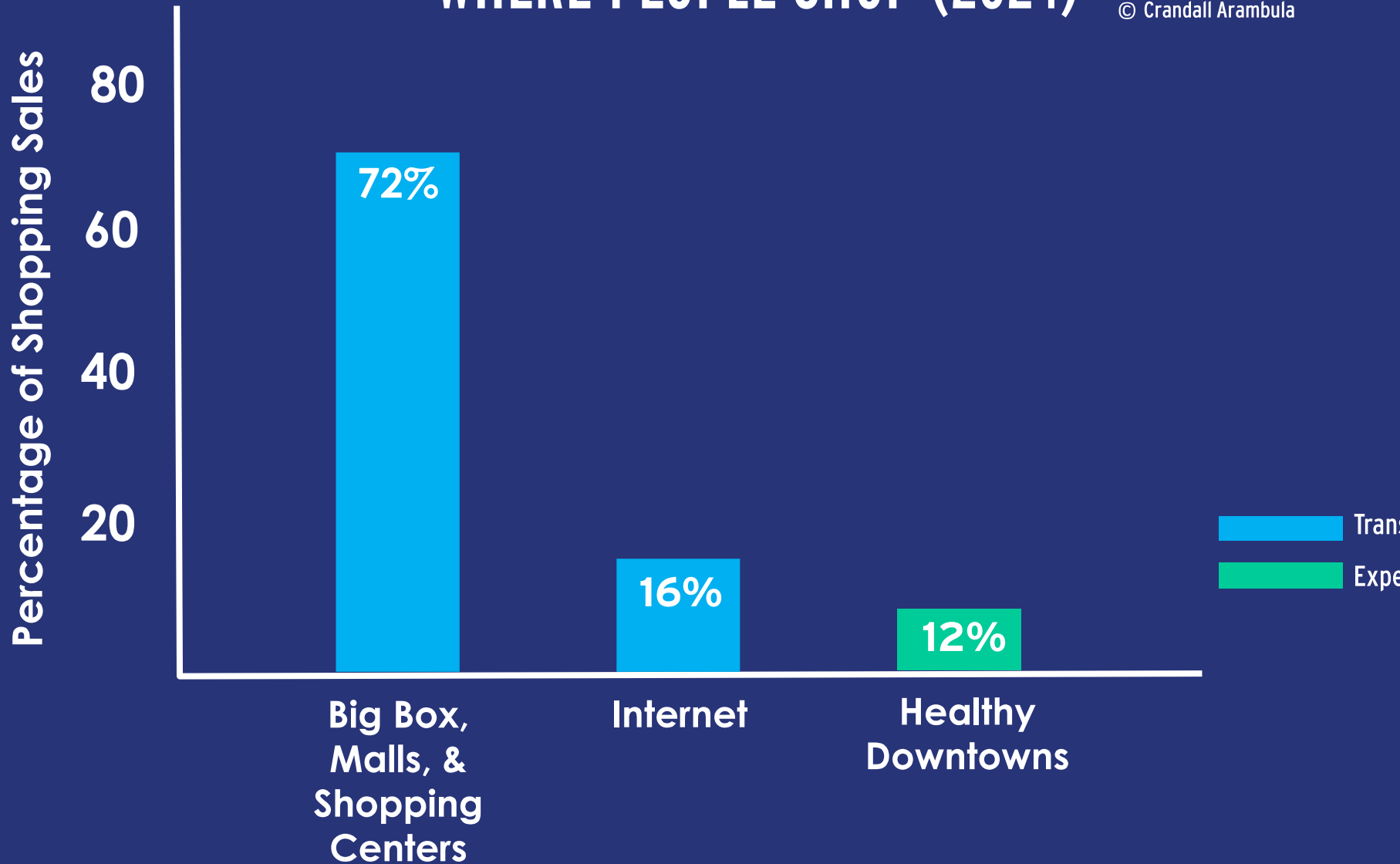


Unique, Authentic Environment

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

WHERE PEOPLE SHOP (2024)

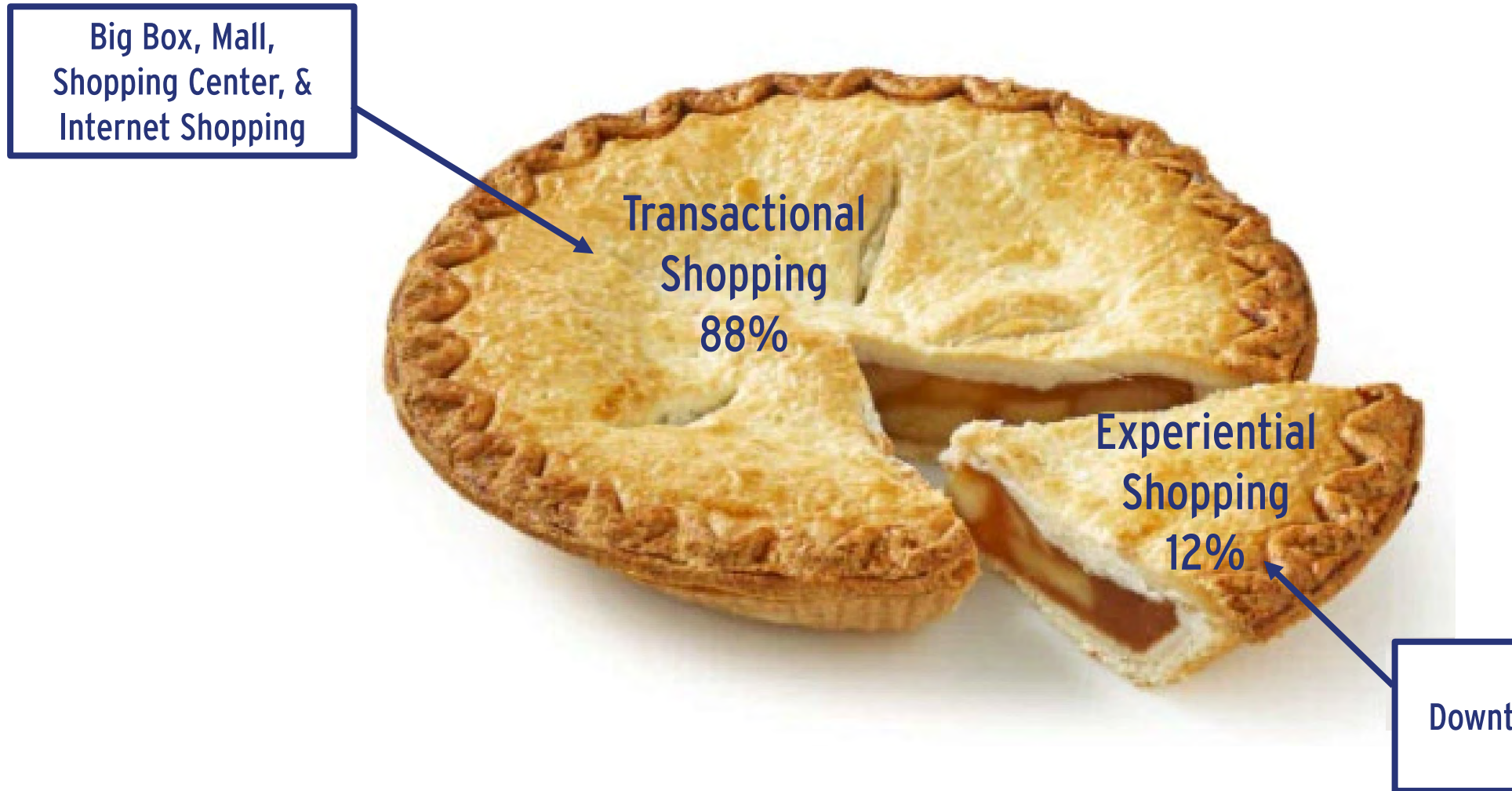
© Crandall Arambula



RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

WHERE PEOPLE SHOP (2024)

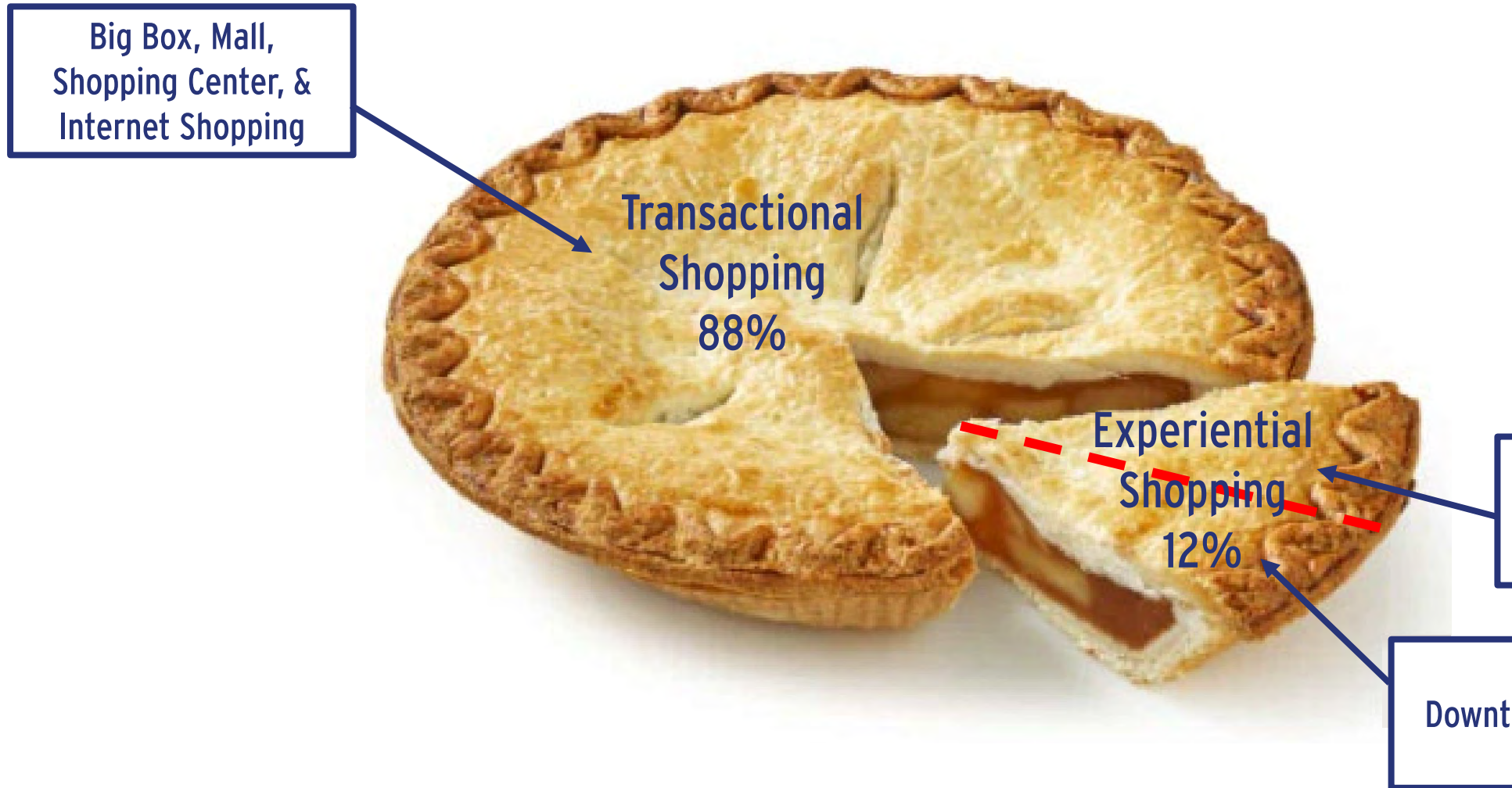
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RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

WHERE PEOPLE SHOP (2024)

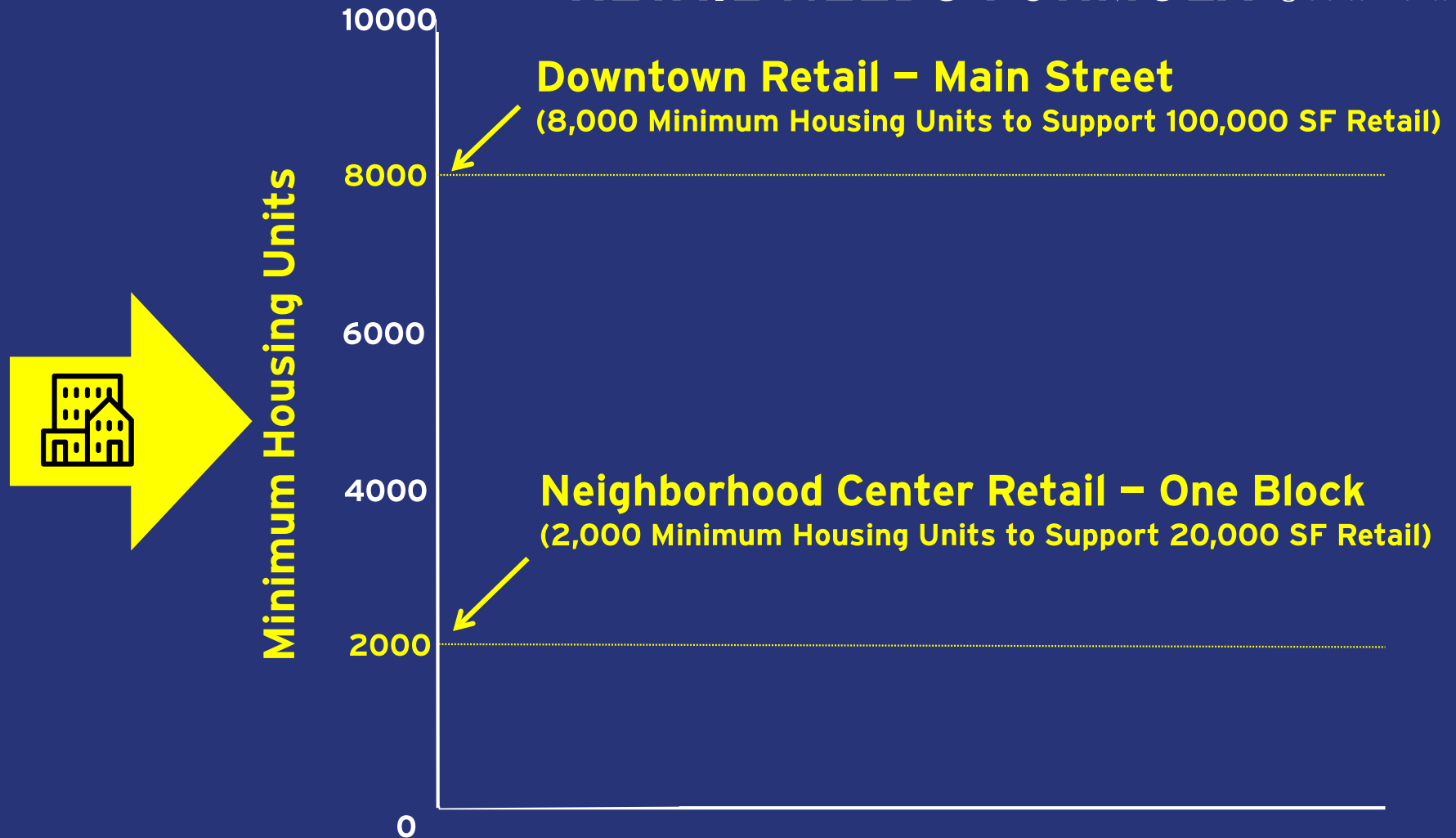
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RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL NEEDS FORMULA

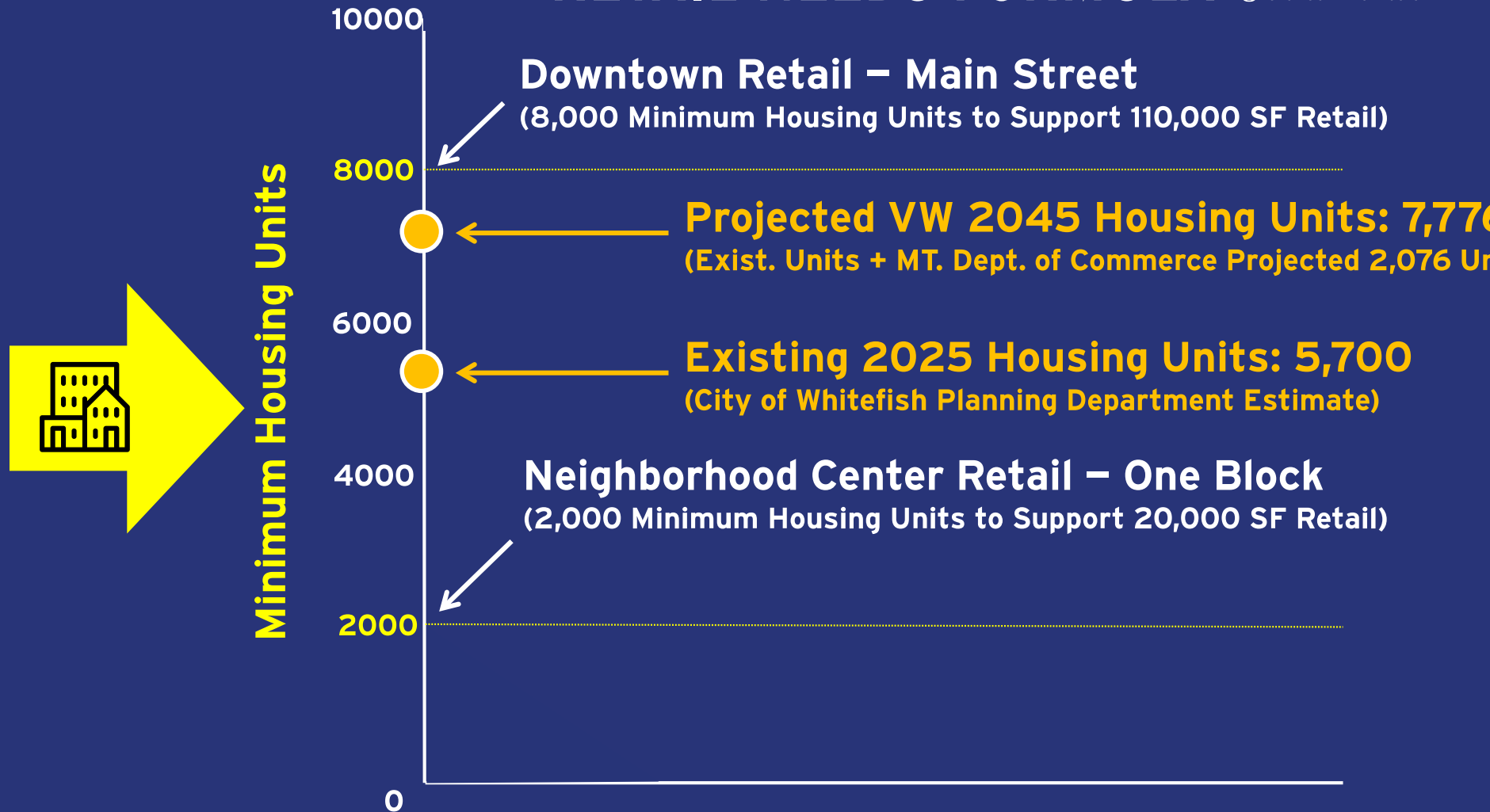
© Crandall Arambula



RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL NEEDS FORMULA

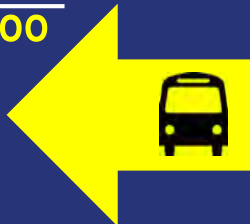
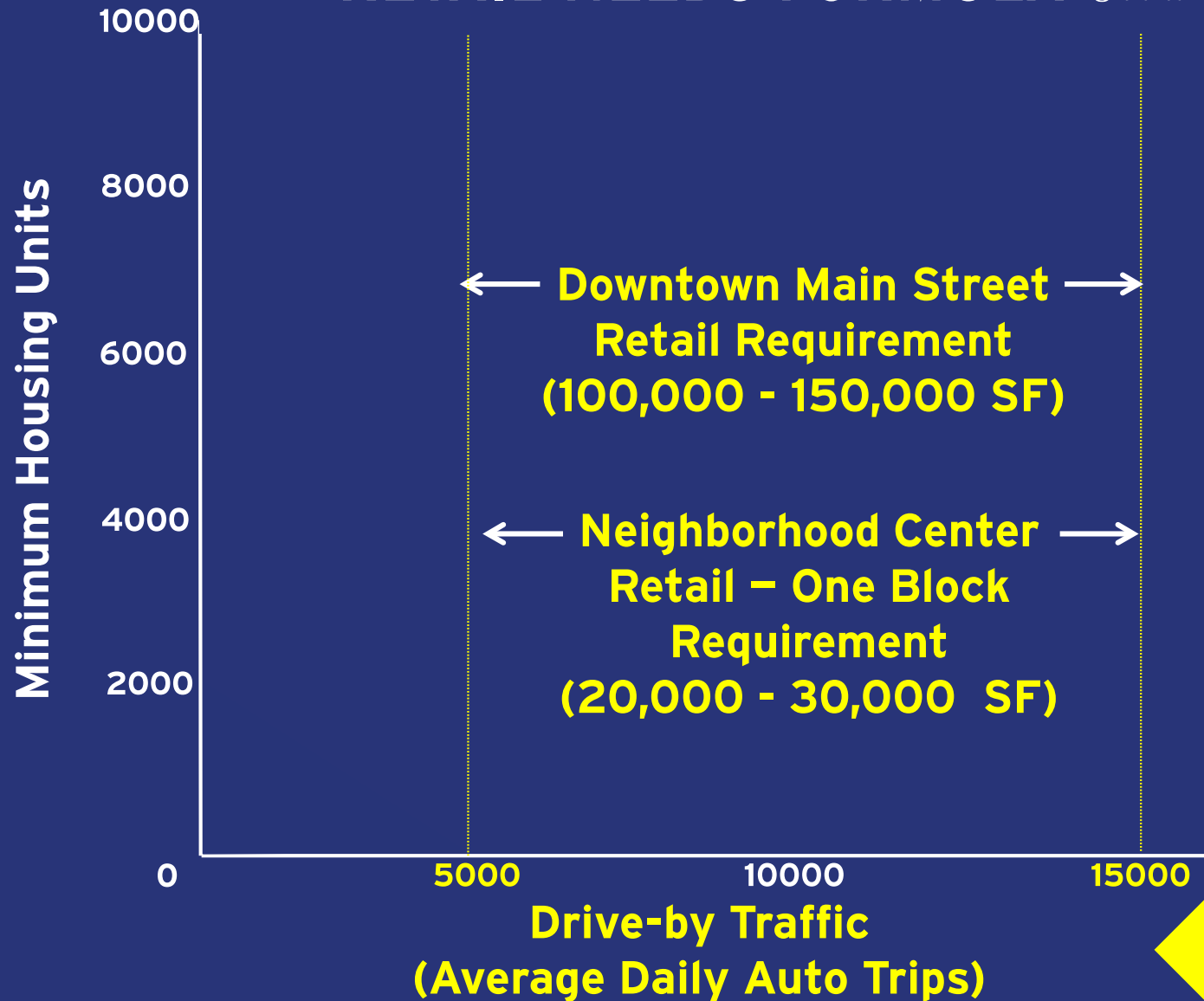
© Crandall Arambula



RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL NEEDS FORMULA

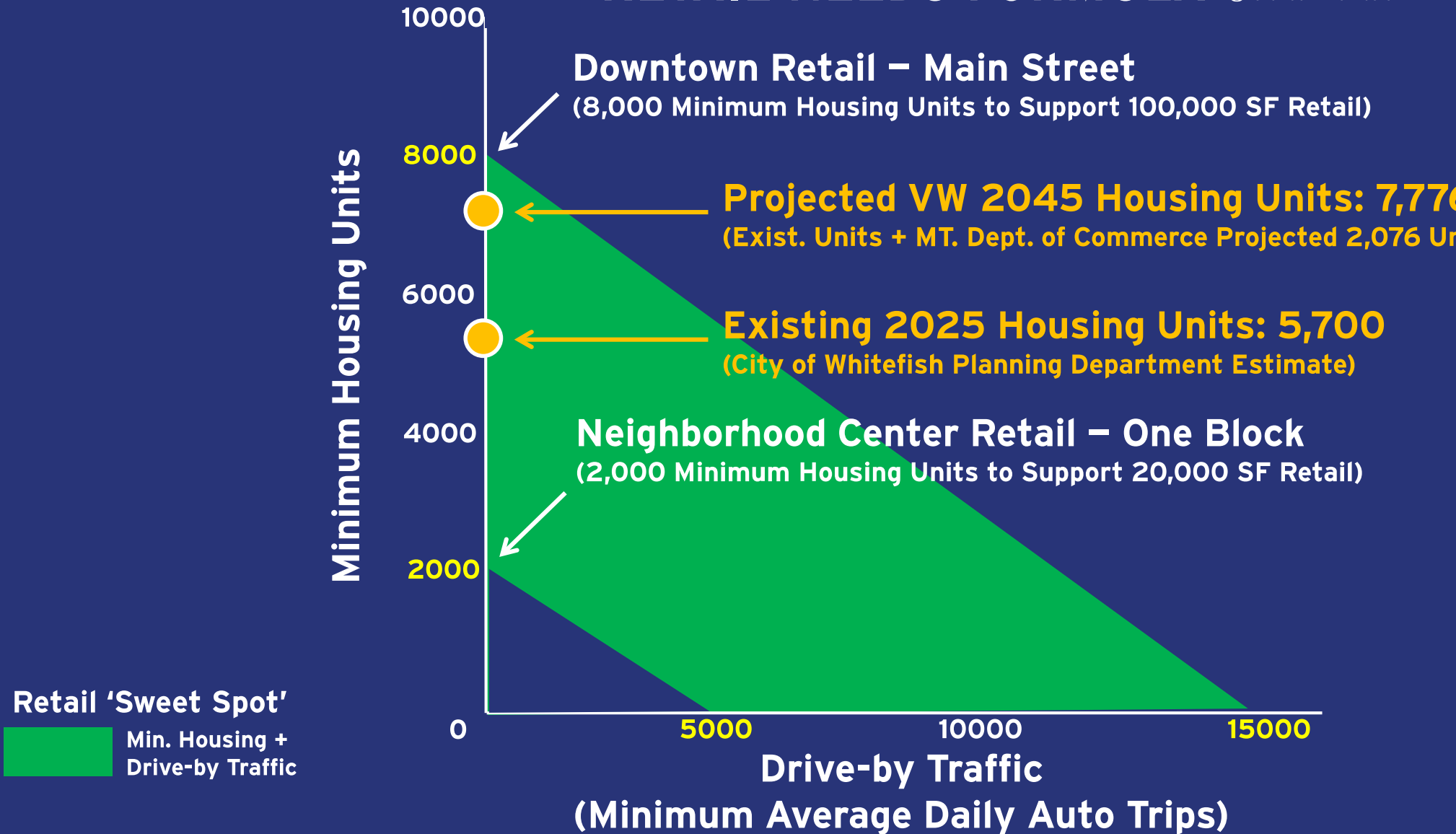
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RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

RETAIL NEEDS FORMULA

© Crandall Arambula



RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS



RETAIL NEEDS

Trade Area Issues:

- **Local Customers – Whitefish's local market (8,422) is inadequate to support retail businesses.**
- **Visitors – provide limited, seasonal demand only.**
- **Regional Customers – retailers**
 - Primary Trade Area: 50-80% of sales are from a <20-minute driving radius
 - Secondary Trade Area: 15-20% of sales are from a 20-25-minute driving radius
 - Tertiary: Specialty uses such as clubs require a significantly larger capture area.

Crandall Arambula Conceptual Illustration Only. To be confirmed through detailed Retail Market Analysis

RETAIL LAND USE FUNDAMENTALS

TOO MUCH
TRAFFIC

15,000 ADT

TRAFFIC
JUST RIGHT

5,000 ADT

TOO LITTLE
TRAFFIC



STORE VISIBILITY

Out-of-Town shoppers fill gap that local Whitefish cannot meet alone.

Requirements:

- Busy Street adjacency
- **Traffic volumes must drive-by exposure 'Go**

Average Daily Trips (A

i. 5,000 ADT Minimum

ii. 15,000 ADT Maximum

Traffic Data Source:



Traffic Count (TCD)

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATE ISSUES AND CONCERNS

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATES

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

**The Vision Whitefish 2045 Mixed Use Center-
(Polycentric) Growth Strategy is inappropriate for
town Whitefish.**

- As described by the American Planning Association, **polycentric mixed use center growth strategy is not appropriate for communities with populations less than 400,000 residents.**
- Sub-centers typically have a population of less than 100,000 residents.



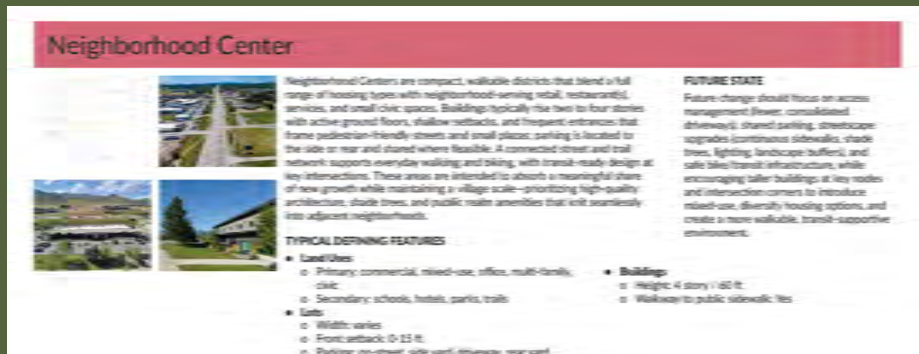
Inappropriate: Big City Growth Strategy

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER PLACE TYPE.

Housing types with **neighborhood-serving retail, restaurants, rise two to four stories with active ground floors**, intersections intended to absorb a meaningful share of new growth while maintaining village scale.



Inappropriate Uses, Form, & Massing

Land Use-

- Primary: **commercial, mixed use**, office, multi-family, civic
- Secondary : schools, **hotels**, parks, trails

Buildings-

- **Height: 4 story/60 ft.**

Future State-

- Future changes encouraging **taller buildings at key nodes and corners to introduce mixed use.**

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

MIXED NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE TYPE.

Mixed neighborhoods feature a diverse blend of housing types and neighborhood-serving **commercial uses such as a coffee shop or restaurant similar** that provide daily needs close to home.

TYPICAL DEFINING FEATURES

Land Use-

Primary: single unit, duplex, triplex, quadplex, multi-family

Secondary : accessory dwelling units, schools, **small neighborhood-serving uses**

Buildings-

Height 3 story/60 ft.

Future State-

Future changes should prioritize context-sensitive infill (e.g. **missing-middle housing above shops.**)

Mixed Neighborhood



Mixed Neighborhoods feature a diverse blend of housing types—single-family, duplexes, townhomes, small multifamily—and selected neighborhood-serving commercial uses such as a coffee shop, a restaurant, or similar that provide daily needs close to home. Development patterns are eclectic in architectural style and setback depth, with parking typically internalized or to the side, creating opportunities to retrofit shared lots, mid-block connections, and small public spaces. While currently oriented toward the automobile, these districts are well-suited for improved bike and pedestrian connectivity, safer crossings, and transit-supportive upgrades.

FUTURE STATE

Future change should prioritize context-sensitive infill (e.g., missing-middle housing above shops, small multifamily, parking lot infill, etc.), step-down transitions to adjacent neighborhoods, high-quality streetscape and tree canopy, and design standards that channel variety into a cohesive, walkable character.

TYPICAL DEFINING FEATURES

• Land Uses

- o Primary: single-unit, duplex, triplex, quadplex, multi-family up to 18 units
- o Secondary: accessory dwelling units, schools, small neighborhood serving uses

• Lots

- o Width: 25-50 ft
- o Front setback: 20 ft
- o Parking: on-street, side yard driveway, rear yard

• Buildings

- o Height: 3 story / 42 ft
- o Entry feature: Porch, stoop, pediment, etc.
- o Walkway to public sidewalk: Yes

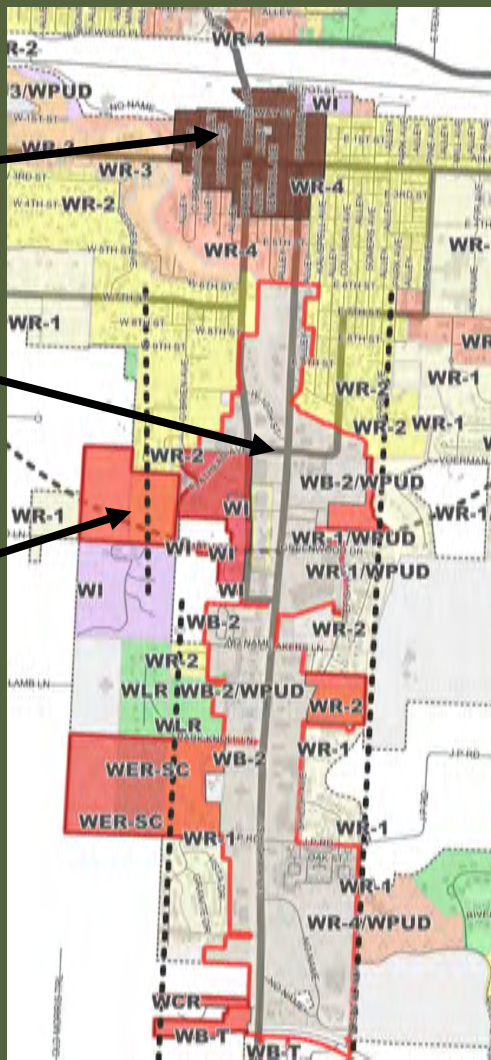
Inappropriate Uses, Form, & Massing

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATES

Downtown Business District
(Master Plan Boundary)
Permitted Retail Area:
62 acres

Commercial Corridor
(Existing WB-2)
Permitted Retail Area:
303 acres

RETAIL SPRAWL
Mixed Use Retail Area:
152 Acres



ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Retail Sprawl. New Mixed Neighborhood, Neighborhood Commercial, and Corridor Commercial Place Types will permit a total area of **parcels where new retail will be permitted that is 152 percent greater in area than the existing Business District.**

PERMITTED RETAIL SUMMARY

Place Type	Area (acres)
Existing Downtown Business District	62
Existing Commercial Corridor (WB-2)	303
Retail Sprawl – Planned Mixed Use Area¹	152
Total	517

¹ Includes proposed Community Corridor areas outside existing WB-2 zoning district

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATE



WHITEFISH, MONTANA

WHITEFISH ECONOMIC GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

PROJECT NAME: WHITEFISH ECONOMIC GROWTH POLICY UPDATE
PROJECT NUMBER: 2023.038.00
DATE: June 4, 2024

375 WEST 200 SOUTH
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84101
P 801.521.8600



ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

The need for more neighborhood housing is well supported by MLUPA state mandated policies. However, housing needs assessment data, however **no policy rationale nor data has been provided to support the need for retail use in neighborhoods.**

Lacks Sufficient Retail Economic Analysis

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

The need for more neighborhood housing is well documented in the MLUPA state mandated policies and housing market assessment data, however no growth policy recommendation has been provided to justify the need for retail in new neighborhoods.

The proposed Vision Whitefish 2045 growth scenarios promote mixed-use neighborhoods without assessing:

- **Whitefish's long-term retail supply, demand, and absorption, and best-practice community plan requirement.**

Typical Community Plan Retail Market Analysis

Image: City of Sandy, Oregon



VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

The need for more neighborhood housing is well documented. While MLUPA state mandated policies and housing market assessment data, however no growth policy recommendation has been provided to justify the need for retail and commercial in neighborhoods.

The proposed Vision Whitefish 2045 growth scenarios call for more mixed-use neighborhoods without assessing:

- Whitefish's long-term retail supply, demand, and ability to absorb more retail.
- **The impacts on struggling downtown retail businesses and the types of retail permitted in Mixed Neighborhoods & Neighborhoods.**



Vacant Downtown Storefronts & Lots

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATES

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Permitting additional neighborhood retail businesses may weaken the Downtown Business District as a destination for local and tourist shoppers, and in turn **reduce** revenues.

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Whitefish's final budget includes tax increase



Whitefish City Hall on Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020. (Casey Kroschel/Daily Inter Lake)

by **HEIDI DESCH**
Daily Inter Lake | August 19, 2024, 12:00 AM
Due to increased personnel costs and a decrease in resort tax collections, Whitefish property owners can expect a bump in their city tax bill. Whitefish City Council on Monday is expected to approve the final budget for fiscal year 2025 totaling \$53.5 million. This represents an increase in expenditures of about \$3.1 million over the prior fiscal year.

Potential Property Tax Increases

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Permitting additional neighborhood retail businesses within the Downtown Business District as a destination for local shoppers, and in turn reduce resort tax revenues.

There is not latent demand to justify expanding current retail sites outside the Downtown Business District. Analysis indicates

- **Currently there are 89,750 square feet of vacant retail sites available downtown**



Heart of Whitefish Downtown Business District Inventory: December 2024

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Permitting additional neighborhood retail businesses within the Downtown Business District as a destination for local shoppers, and in turn reduce resort tax revenues.

There is not latent demand to justify expanding current retail outside the Downtown Business District. Analysis indicates

- Currently there are 89,750 square feet of vacant storefront sites available downtown
- Vision Whitefish 2045 growth scenarios include **new neighborhood and mixed neighborhood place types will permit commercial destinations that will 'cannibalize' retail from the core**



Heart of Whitefish Downtown Business District Inventory: December 2024

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATES

STRONG TOWNS

What's up with all those empty commercial storefronts in new mixed-use developments?

Enriched Communities • June 6, 2018

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where I live, is going through a massive building phase, with new construction popping up on every corner in and around our downtown and other popular neighborhoods. If you live in any number of mid-sized cities, this is probably a familiar story. And because recent trends in urban planning have encouraged a return to mixed-use developments, those sorts of buildings dominate the new construction landscape. It has resulted in some lovely new ground-level restaurants and shops emerging in areas that previously lacked much street life.

But here's the more common picture: a cookie-cutter five-story apartment building over a vacant commercial space. This image is probably also familiar to you if you live in one of those cities experiencing an urban growth spurt. One might expect this set-up to last a few months, perhaps, while the apartment units are in the process of being filled and the building manager seeks a commercial tenant. But in fact, in my city, it's not unusual to see a commercial space sitting empty for months and sometimes years. There are buildings like this near my home and, while they may be a shade better than the derelict one-story structures or vacant lots that used to occupy the area, an empty space is an empty space. At the end of the day, a vacant storefront makes the whole street feel neglected and undesirable, and it isn't fulfilling its purpose.



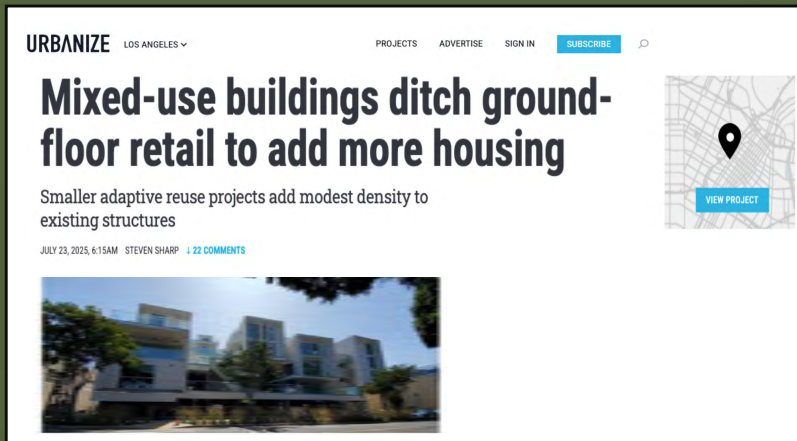
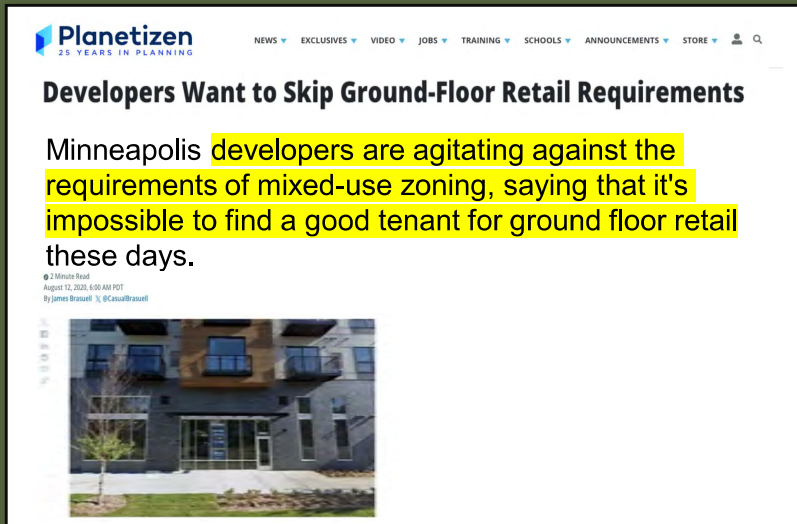
A four- or five-story apartment complex with an empty retail space on the bottom floor. How familiar is this scene?
(Source: Anthony Scapellato)

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Neighborhood **mixed use retail is difficult to find tenants** and will **tamper affordable housing interest.**

Unnecessary Financial Constraints

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATES



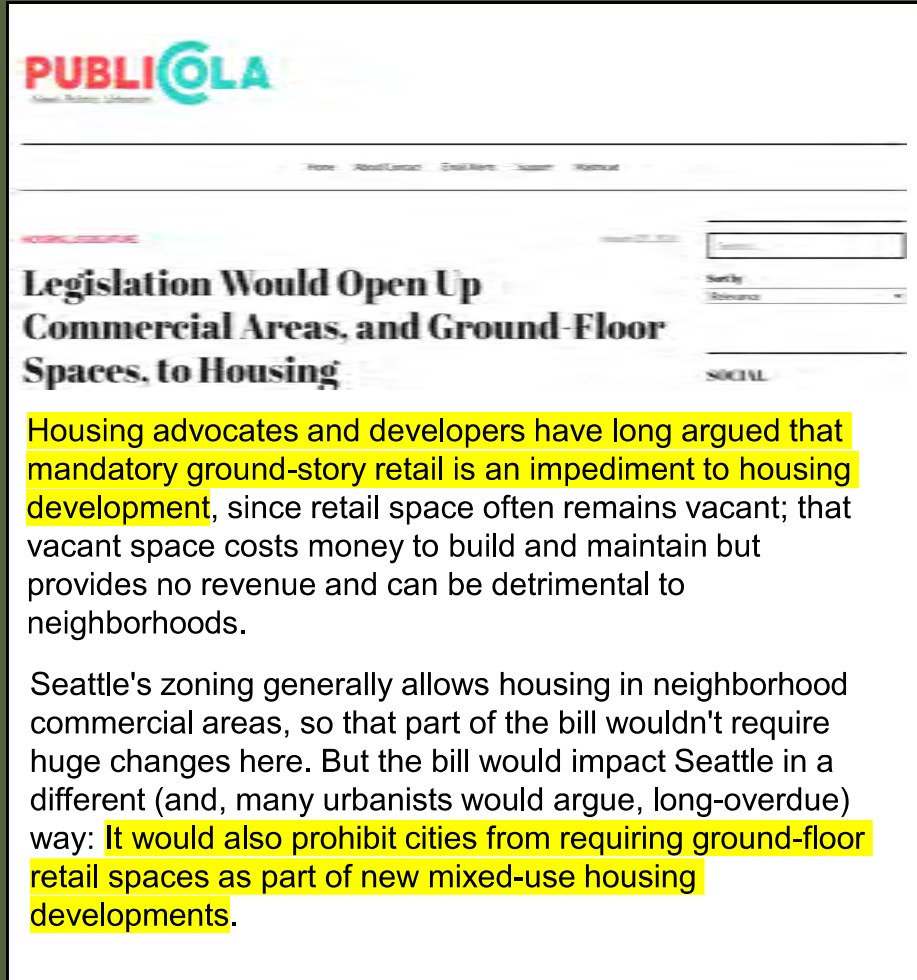
ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

Neighborhood mixed use retail is difficult to
tamper affordable housing developer interest

- Including retail use as a component of neighborhood types adds unnecessary financial and design barriers to develop affordable housing sites.

Unnecessary Development Barriers

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATES



ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

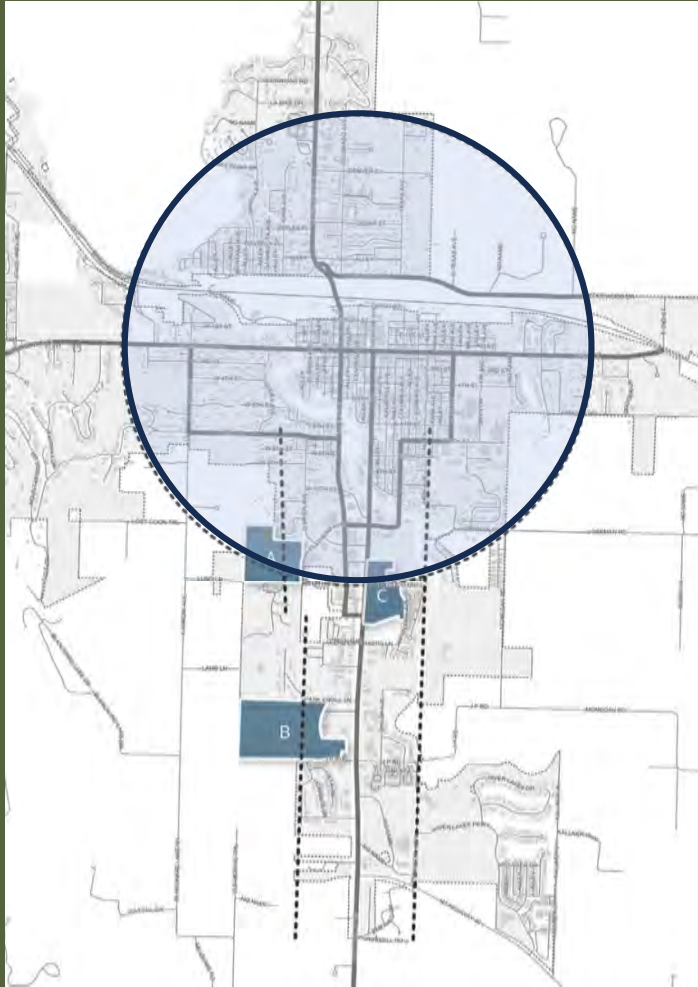
Neighborhood mixed use retail is difficult to finance and affordable housing developer interest.

- Including retail use as a component of neighborhood types adds unnecessary financial and design barriers to develop affordable housing sites.
- **Policies and regulations should make it easier, not harder, to develop housing.** Whitefish is in a housing crisis. Added 'red tape' regulations, will discourage developer interest and no housing development and in turn, threaten Whitefish with state mandated 2045 housing targets

Pending Washington State Housing Legislation

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDAT REQUESTED ACTIONS

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATES



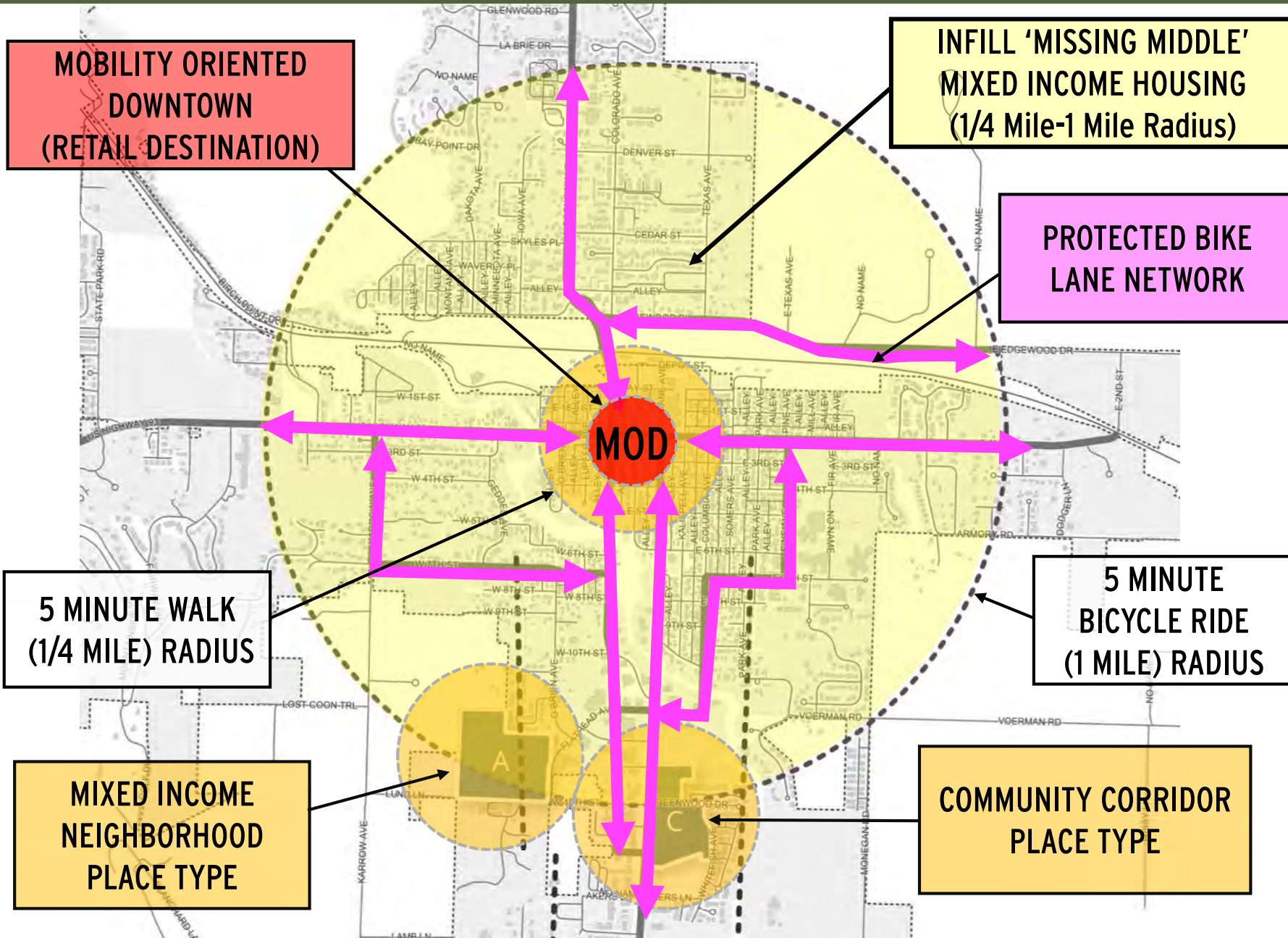
Vision Whitefish 2045 Downtown Focus

REQUESTED ACTIONS.

Focus 2045 Growth Policy on areas within a 1-mile radius of Downtown. Ensure that the Vision Whitefish 2045 Development, Land Use, and Housing element policies focus on the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods and surrounding neighborhoods.

- **Economic Development Policy:** Continue to provide support for Downtown Master Plan projects such as the 2nd Street Structure.
- **Housing Policy:** Target 1,635 Units within a mile radius of Downtown.
- **Transportation Policy.** Build out all Connect Whitefish Bicycle Plan improvements within a minimum of 1 mile of Downtown by 2045.

MOBILITY-ORIENTED DOWNTOWN (MOD) GROWTH STR



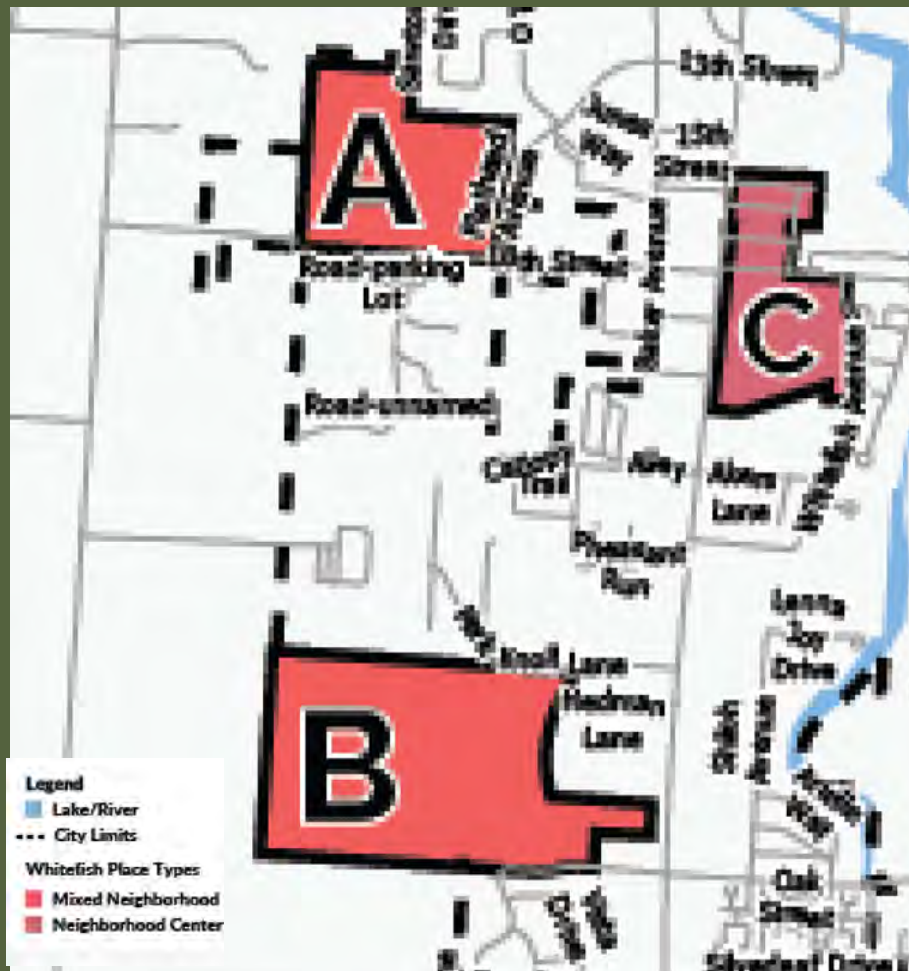
HOUSING T

1,635 Units.

**Mixed income housing
'missing middle'
duplexes, tri-plexes,
condominiums, &**

- Pipeline Unit
715 Units
- MOD Infill Housing
325 Units
- MOD Housing
235 Units
- Areas A & C
360 Units
- Downtown R
100,000- 150,000 Units

VISION WHITEFISH 2045 GROWTH POLICY UPDATES



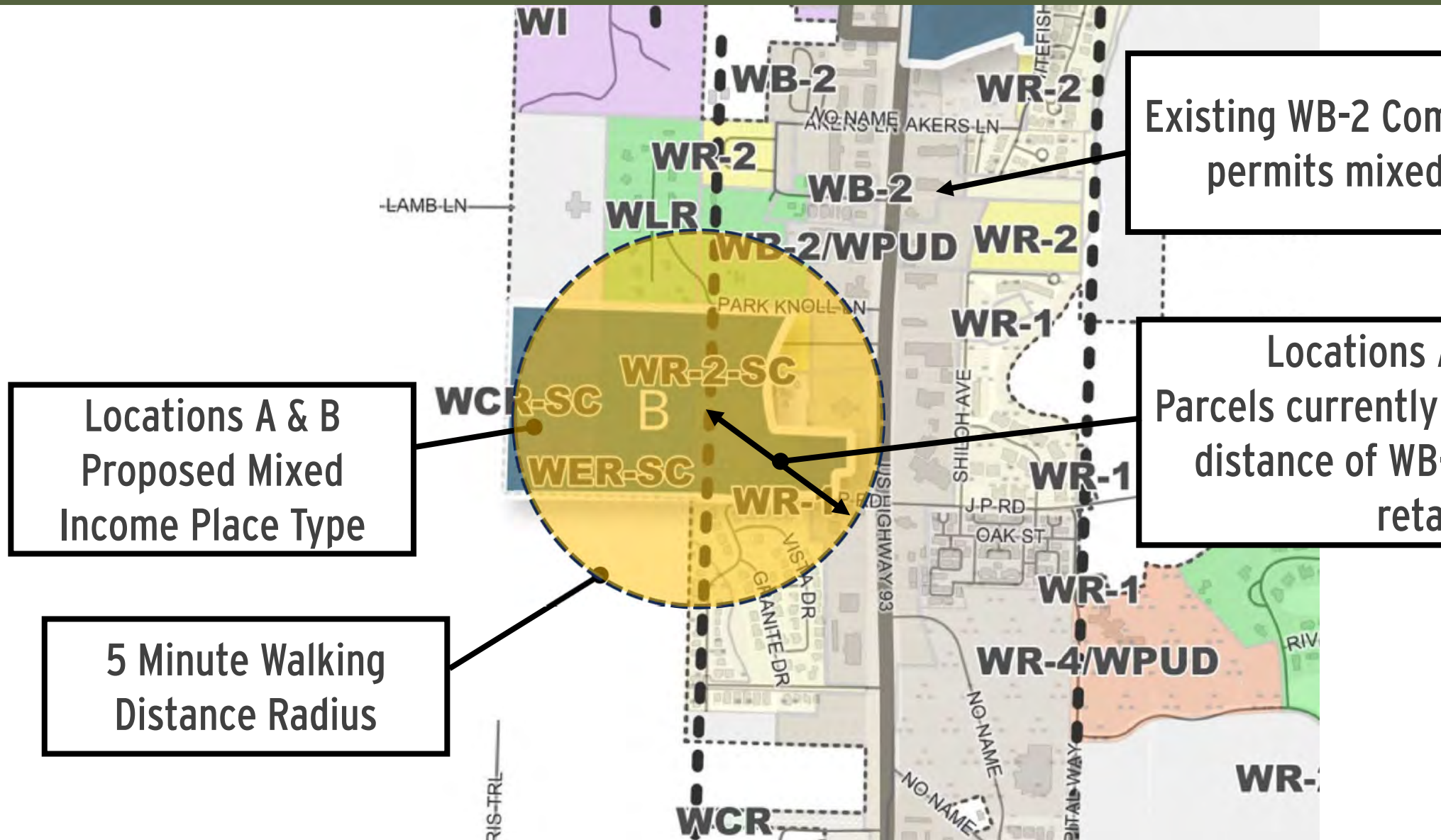
REQUESTED ACTIONS.

Remove all references to new retail permitted use in the Whitefish 2045 Economic Development, Land Use, Transportation and Housing elements' policy text and graphics.

Place Type Requested Changes:

- **A & B Locations – Change to new ‘Mixed Income’ place type** that provides a ‘missing middle’ (15 DU/ac maximum) small single unit and townhome units that provide home ownership opportunities.
- **C Location – Change to Community Corridor Place Type.** Change to WB-2 zoning that permits retail and multi-unit housing. Eliminate Mountain Mall from location area.

MIXED INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE TYPE



MIXED INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE TYPE



Land Use

- A mix of affordable housing and market-rate residential units throughout
- Range of housing types and densities
- Parks, trails and open space integrated into neighborhood



'Missing Middle' Housing

MIXED INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING PLACE TYPE

COMMUNITY CORRIDOR (EXISTING WB-2 REGULATIONS)

Existing City Code Zoning Regulation permit retail within walking distance of proposed A & B growth locations.

11-2K-1: INTENT AND PURPOSE:

The WB-2 District is intended to **provide for those retail sales** and services the operations of which are typically characterized by the need for large display or parking areas, large storage areas and by outdoor commercial recreational activities. **Mixed-use and multi-family development is also appropriate.** This district depends on highways or arterial streets and may be located in business corridors or islands. (Ord. 19-11, 6-3-2019)

11-2K-2 PERMITTED NEIGHBORHOOD DESTINATION USES

- **Multi-family dwelling units above ground floor commercial as mixed-use**
- **Entertainment**
- **Grocery Stores**
- **Restaurants, non-formula.**
- **Theaters**
- **Vendors** (e.g., mobile food vendors)

Extracted Text: City Code of

MIXED INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING PLACE TYPE COMMUNITY CORRIDOR (EXISTING WB-2 REGULATIONS)

Existing City Code Zoning Regulation permit retail within walking distance of proposed A & B growth locations.

1-3-43: MIXED-USE AND NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Building Orientation And Multi-Building Sites:

1. **Orientation:** Buildings must be oriented towards the primary street frontage and/or sidewalks. Buildings on corner lots should be oriented towards the intersection.
 - b. Buildings must be arranged on the site so that their orientation from the street otherwise gives prominence to a pedestrian corridor, an outdoor gathering space, outdoor seating, a "main street" pedestrian or vehicle access corridor, or the corners of street intersections or entry points into the development.
 - c. Buildings on corner lots should be oriented toward the primary intersection, the primary and secondary street frontages, while parking and auto access is located away from the primary intersection corners.



Alan Tiefenbach

From: Michelle Howke
Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 10:46 AM
To: Mallory Phillips
Cc: Alan Tiefenbach
Subject: RE: Land Use Chapter: Missing Middle Housing
Attachments: AARP-Missing-Middle-Housing-singles-10202023 (1).pdf

Hi Alan,

Can you forward this to the Planning Commission prior to the meeting on Wednesday? I will distribute copies to the Council for their consideration.

Thank you, Mallory, for forwarding this to us.

Michelle Howke

Administrative Services Director/City Clerk

PO Box 158

Whitefish, MT 59937

(406)863-2402

mhowke@cityofwhitefish.gov

Please note, our website has changed to www.cityofwhitefish.gov. Please update if you have the website included in your bookmarks.

From: Mallory Phillips <mphillips@cityofwhitefish.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 10:38 AM
To: Michelle Howke <mhowke@cityofwhitefish.gov>
Subject: Land Use Chapter: Missing Middle Housing

Hey Michelle,

Because I know time will be limited on Wednesday and we won't get to get as deep in the weeds as I would like, could you forward this to both the whole planning commission and city council?

With the place types suggested in the land use section and suggestions for types of housing that they suggested allowing, I wanted to share some resources ahead of the meeting so that the public and those making decisions can have an expansive amount of resources to understand the concept of allowing more housing types in different neighborhoods. I am also sharing this as a response to Daniel Sidder's comment around the concept that no neighborhood should be exempt from change, and no neighborhood should experience rapid change, and what kind of housing legalization could help us work towards this idea of incremental neighborhood change.

1. Missing Middle Housing

a. From AARP on Missing Middle Housing:

- i. A 90-page document on what missing middle housing is and reforms that can be taken at a local to enact the kind of change to get the types of housing choices that people want to see: <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/housing/2024/Expanding%20Middle%20Housing%20Option-A%20Guide%20to%20Local%20Middle%20Housing%20Regulations.pdf>
- ii. A video on Missing Middle housing

1. <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2022/2022-missing-middle-housing-colorado-video.html>

iii. General Missing Middle info from AARP

1. <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2020/missing-middle-housing.html>

i. Livability and Missing Middle

1. <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2019/missing-middle-housing-webinar.html>

ii. General resource on housing and AARP

1. <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/archives/housing/>

- b. From Missing Middle from the author Daniel Parolek of "Missing Middle Housing" **"Missing middle housing types are a great way to deliver affordable housing choices by design since they're of a scale that most communities would support. But they can also hit higher-value niche markets."** — *Daniel Parolek*. I have copied and pasted a few of the summary pages, but have also included the entire pdf from this document to make it easier to view the content.

The Characteristics of Missing Middle Housing

Because Missing Middle homes are house-scale, they typically look like and are the size of a single-family dwelling. But inside, the house contains multiple homes. Among the Missing Middle home type's other characteristics and qualities:

- The buildings fit seamlessly into neighborhoods, either because similar housing types already exist in the community or because the homes are designed and constructed to preserve or complement the streetscape's appearance and character.
- The house-sized, multiunit structures can provide a neighborhood or community with a wider range of housing options, at various price points.
- The housing types fit within — and help to generate — walkable, place-based neighborhoods with community amenities that become an extension of people's homes and serve as shared spaces where neighbors can safely get out and about and gather.
- The homes can accommodate people of all ages, physical abilities and life stages.



The AARP Home and Community Survey consistently finds that most Americans, including older adults, prefer to live in neighborhoods that offer a mix of housing and transportation options and are close to jobs, schools, shopping, entertainment and green spaces.

These preferences — coupled with the rapid aging of the U.S. population overall, the decrease in households with children and the national housing shortage — will likely boost the demand for smaller homes and affordable, quality rental housing in amenity-rich locations.

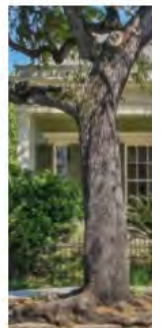
A neighborhood that includes Missing Middle Housing is well-positioned to respond. ■

An important point: Walkability is key to the benefits provided by Missing Middle Housing. With stores, services and eateries within walking distance of where people live, local businesses can thrive and car ownership by residents can be optional, thus reducing the need for a community or developer to provide parking. That, in turn, helps reduce the costs for all involved. (Learn more on pages 4 and 26.)



PHOTOS: OPTICOS DESIGN (2)

▲ Up until the 1940s, small, multiunit buildings (such as the Alameda, California, fourplex pictured here) were commonly built on standard lots within neighborhoods to provide housing for moderate-income individuals and families.



▲ Historic Missing Middle side duplex home in same level of architecture from the same era.

A Missing Middle Housing Sampler



Benefits of Missing Middle Housing

The word “middle” as used in the term “Missing Middle Housing” principally refers to the midsized housing types that exist between single-family homes and large (often high-rise) apartment or condominium buildings. But “middle” also relates to the home type’s level of affordability.

Because Missing Middle residences have historically delivered attainable housing choices for people earning 60 percent or more of an area’s median income, they are a practical and needed middle income and workforce housing option. The size and cost of Missing Middle units also benefit older adults, including empty nesters looking to downsize.

A caveat: The affordability or even attainability of Missing Middle Housing — for developers and buyers — is only possible where land and real estate prices haven’t become so inflated that building or purchasing a home is financially prohibitive.

BENEFIT: Affordability by Design

Missing Middle Housing increases supply and supports walkable living by using land efficiently; providing small yet spacious residences; employing simple, lower-cost-but-still-quality construction

methods; reducing the reliance on car ownership; and, often, providing income opportunities for owners.

All these factors result in a housing choice that is more attainable for buyers and renters than most detached single-family houses.

BENEFIT: Reduced Transportation Costs

Parking is expensive.

“It costs thousands of dollars per stall to build. It occupies valuable real estate. It is ubiquitous, accompanying nearly every building built across the United States,” says *ReinventingParking.org*. “Yet at nearly every destination, drivers don’t directly pay for the parking they use. Instead, the cost is hidden, bundled into the grocery bill, benefits package, and rent of every shopper, employee, and tenant.”¹

For an apartment dweller, a parking spot adds an average cost of \$225 per month.² According to *HomeAdvisor.com*, the cost to pave a parking lot can range from \$10,000 for a 10-car space to \$700,000 for a 300-car area.³ The cost to build a parking garage ranges from \$7 million to \$12 million, reports *Fixr.com*.⁴



I live alone. I feel safe in my neighborhood, which is active and walkable. I’m close to my gym, a small grocery store and a great coffee shop. My office is an easy bike ride away. My studio apartment is perfect for me and lets me save for my future.



We’re a couple. We share a one-bedroom apartment in a lively neighborhood where we can walk to shops, restaurants and even our jobs!



I’m a single fi
I appreciate living in a neighborhood where I can play at a local park and don’t need to car and yard on top of

Added to the costs shouldered by residents is the expense of owning and operating a car in the United States, which according to AAA is nearly \$10,000 a year.⁵ Since Missing Middle Housing is inextricably tied to walkable places — and, often, public transit options — the need for a car and parking can be reduced or outright eliminated. (See page 26 for more.)

homes can add signifi locally owned housin residential lots can p for local, smaller-sca they empower reside build equity and ben neighborhood and th

BENEFIT: Shared Land Costs

When a multiunit residence or development is placed on the same-sized lot as a single-family home, land costs can be divided among multiple households. As a result, it’s often less expensive to purchase the individual unit than a single-family home of the same overall size and quality of construction.

BENEFIT: Income, I

High housing costs ai practices (such as re: mortgage redlining a denied home owners

Because the entry-lev single-family home, M provide people of var the opportunity to liv equity while doing sc

BENEFIT: Smart Land Use

Since Missing Middle homes vary in size and can be quite small, they are able to fit on small plots of land and can more easily work around a location’s trees and natural topography. The home type is especially useful for infill lots, which are undeveloped or now-vacant plots of land in otherwise developed locations.

Filling infill and other small lots with Missing Middle Housing achieves big change through small contributions. The incremental creation of such

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FOR ENDNOTE CITATIONS SEE PAGE 31 | PHOTOS: GAILYN WOODSONG (2)

Missing Middle Housing Types

The COTTAGE COURT

Single-unit, cottage court houses are typically 1 to 1½ stories tall and are oriented around a courtyard that serves as an outdoor community space in lieu of rear yards.

Cottage (or bungalow) communities typically have shared parking areas. Many include a common building that can be used for community gatherings or reserved for private parties. Since the homes are small, the developments sometimes offer shared laundry facilities, storage spaces and secondary housing units that can accommodate guests.

This Missing Middle home-type is very compatible with houses in single-family zones. ■



▲ In 2017, the city of Ashland, Oregon, approved an ordinance to allow developments with a minimum of three and a maximum of 12 cottages. Most of the homes must be 800 square-feet or smaller. Allowing one cottage per 2,500 square-feet of lot area, the overall lot size is, at its largest, about one-third of an acre. At least 20 percent of the land must be preserved as common open space.



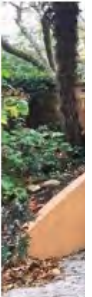
a. ▲ Located on a 1.37-acre lot in Healdsburg, California, eight detached, two-bedroom homes surround a shared community space.



▲ An attached, side-yard ADU (left, with the red door) and an attached rear-yard ADU (right).



▲ An above-garage, backyard ADU in Brevard, North Carolina.



▲ A combined ADU and main residence.

The ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT

As small houses or apartments on the same property as a single-family residence, accessory dwelling units — commonly referred to as ADUs — play a major role in addressing the national need for smaller homes and affordable, quality rental housing. A traditional home type, ADUs are reemerging as an affordable and flexible housing option that meets the needs of older adults and young families alike.

An ADU can occupy space within the main residence or be built as an addition or freestanding structure. A garage with an ADU is often known as a carriage house, a term once used for a building that housed horse-drawn carriages and stable hands at grander homes. Other names for an ADU include “guest house,” “in-law suite” or “backyard bungalow.”

Unlike the cottage or bungalow court (opposite page), or the other housing types in this publication, an ADU cannot be independently bought or sold. The unit is always part of the property it's on. However, the accessory (or secondary) dwelling can be used as a separate living space for relatives, guests or rent-paying tenants.

Since ADUs are a new type of housing, their impact is still being studied.

Many states have zoning laws that restrict the number of ADUs that can be built in a neighborhood. ADUs are still a relatively new housing type, and their impact is still being studied.



- i. Video:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMnC4Lc78po>
- i. Resource on regulations
 - <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/how-to-regulate/>
- i. Types of Missing Middle
 - <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/the-types/>

Thanks,
Mallory



Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing



TOWNHOUSE



DUPLEX

- What it is
- Where it went
- And why it's a needed housing option for people of *all* ages



ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT



MANSION APARTMENT

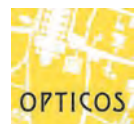


COTTAGE COURT

SEE MORE HOME TYPES INSIDE!

AARP.org/MissingMiddleHousing

By **AARP** and **Opticos Design**





AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 or older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to the more than 100 million Americans 50-plus and their families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment.

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AARP Livable Communities

The AARP Livable Communities initiative supports the efforts of local leaders and residents throughout the nation to make their communities more livable and age-friendly. Among the initiative's programs are the AARP Community Challenge, an annual grant-funding effort to support projects that build momentum for local change, and the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.

Web: [AARP.org/Livable](https://www.aarp.org/Livable)

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Opticos Design

Founded in 2000 on the belief that walkable places are critical for healthy, resilient and equitable communities, Opticos is a team of urban designers, architects and strategists focused on finding new solutions to the most challenging housing and community issues of our time. Opticos introduced the concept of Missing Middle Housing and is a leader in the development of form-based coding, a mixed-use and walkability-supportive type of zoning. As a founding B Corporation, Opticos is committed to operating with a focus on social, environmental and economic responsibility.

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102023

What Is Missing Middle Housing — and Where Did It Go?

Across the United States, there is a mismatch between the available housing stock and what the market wants and needs.

As a nation, we need a shift in how homes are designed and developed. So-called Missing Middle Housing is a critical part of the solution.

Architect and urban designer Daniel Parolek is the founder of Opticos Design and a frequent contributor to AARP. He coined the term “Missing Middle” to describe a set of residential building types that exist in the middle of the continuum between detached single-family houses and large apartment buildings.

Such midsized, often moderately priced homes are referred to as

missing because very few have been built in the U.S. since the early 1940s. The shortage is largely due to zoning constraints, the shift to car-centric patterns of development, and the challenges of financing multiunit dwellings.

That’s a problem, because the benefits of this largely missing housing type abound:

- Missing Middle homes provide the size and affordability options that people of all ages — including older adults — very much need but often can’t find.
- Since Missing Middle dwellings are house-scale, the design and size of the buildings fit comfortably among detached single-family houses.

- When a classic but too-large historic home is converted into a multiunit Missing Middle-style residence, the housing type can help preserve existing houses as well as an area’s look and feel.
- The housing type can enable family members to live with or near one another while having their own space or residence. (Find more benefits on page 4.)

Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing provides local leaders, building and planning professionals, and involved community members with information about what Missing Middle Housing is — and why it’s time to return this versatile residence type to America’s housing portfolio. ■

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▼ Turn the page to learn about this Missing Middle streetscape.



The Characteristics of Missing Middle Housing

Because Missing Middle homes are house-scale, they typically look like and are the size of a single-family dwelling. But inside, the house contains multiple homes. Among the Missing Middle home type's other characteristics and qualities:

- The buildings fit seamlessly into neighborhoods, either because similar housing types already exist in the community or because the homes are designed and constructed to preserve or complement the streetscape's appearance and character.
- The house-sized, multiunit structures can provide a neighborhood or community with a wider range of housing options, at various price points.
- The housing types fit within — and help to generate — walkable, place-based neighborhoods with community amenities that become an extension of people's homes and serve as shared spaces where neighbors can safely get out and about and gather.
- The homes can accommodate people of all ages, physical abilities and life stages.



The AARP Home and Community Survey consistently finds that most Americans, including older adults, prefer to live in neighborhoods that offer a mix of housing and transportation options and are close to jobs, schools, shopping, entertainment and green spaces.

These preferences — coupled with the rapid aging of the U.S. population overall, the decrease in households with children and the national housing shortage — will likely boost the demand for smaller homes and affordable, quality rental housing in amenity-rich locations.

A neighborhood that includes Missing Middle Housing is well-positioned to respond. ■

An important point: Walkability is key to the benefits provided by Missing Middle Housing. With stores, services and eateries within walking distance of where people live, local businesses can thrive and car ownership by residents can be optional, thus reducing the need for a community or developer to provide parking. That, in turn, helps reduce the costs for all involved. (Learn more on pages 4 and 26.)

A Missing Middle Housing Sampler



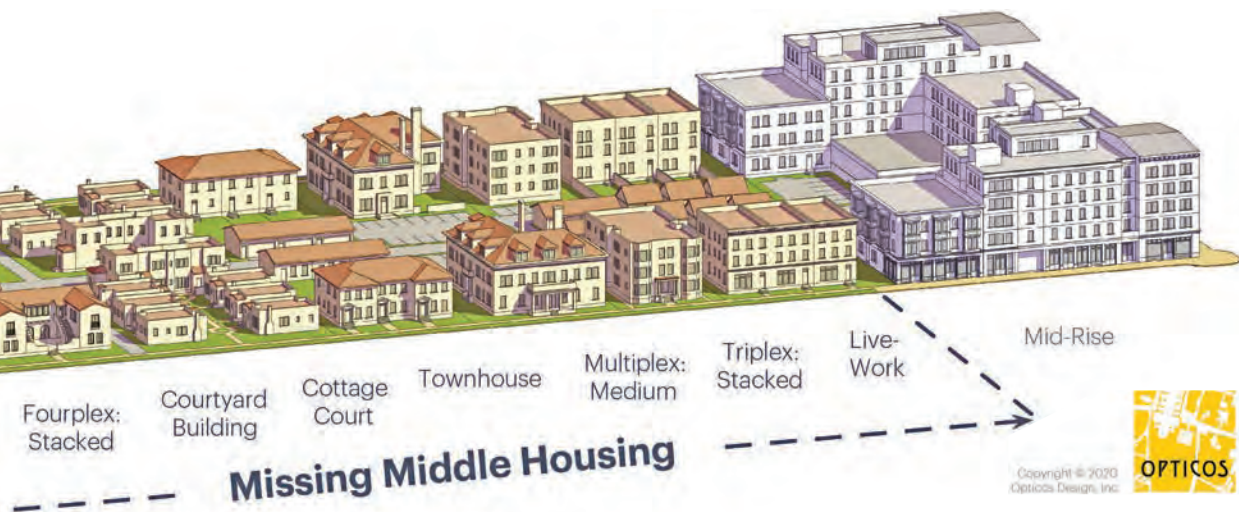
1. COTTAGE COURT

2. SIDE-BY-SIDE DUPLEX

3. STACKED DUPLEX

4. FOURPLEX

5. SIXPLEX



◀ Residential development since the mid-20th century has focused on the creation of detached single-family homes or large apartment buildings. The hard-to-find housing options in between are the “Missing Middle.”



▲ Up until the 1940s, small, multiunit buildings (such as the Alameda, California, fourplex pictured here) were commonly built on standard lots within neighborhoods to provide housing for moderate-income individuals and families.



▲ Historic Missing Middle Housing examples (like this side-by-side duplex home in New Orleans, Louisiana) often have the same level of architectural refinement as single-family houses from the same era.



6. EIGHTPLEX



7. COURTYARD



8. TOWNHOUSE



9. LIVE/WORK

Benefits of Missing Middle Housing

The word “middle” as used in the term “Missing Middle Housing” principally refers to the midsized housing types that exist between single-family homes and large (often high-rise) apartment or condominium buildings. But “middle” also relates to the home type’s level of affordability.

Because Missing Middle residences have historically delivered attainable housing choices for people earning 60 percent or more of an area’s median income, they are a practical and needed middle income and workforce housing option. The size and cost of Missing Middle units also benefit older adults, including empty nesters looking to downsize.

A caveat: The affordability or even attainability of Missing Middle Housing — for developers and buyers — is only possible where land and real estate prices haven’t become so inflated that building or purchasing a home is financially prohibitive.

BENEFIT: Affordability by Design

Missing Middle Housing increases supply and supports walkable living by using land efficiently; providing small yet spacious residences; employing simple, lower-cost-but-still-quality construction

methods; reducing the reliance on car ownership; and, often, providing income opportunities for owners.

All these factors result in a housing choice that is more attainable for buyers and renters than most detached single-family houses.

BENEFIT: Reduced Transportation Costs

Parking is expensive.

“It costs thousands of dollars per stall to build. It occupies valuable real estate. It is ubiquitous, accompanying nearly every building built across the United States,” says *ReinventingParking.org*. “Yet at nearly every destination, drivers don’t directly pay for the parking they use. Instead, the cost is hidden, bundled into the grocery bill, benefits package, and rent of every shopper, employee, and tenant.”¹

For an apartment dweller, a parking spot adds an average cost of \$225 per month.² According to *HomeAdvisor.com*, the cost to pave a parking lot can range from \$10,000 for a 10-car space to \$700,000 for a 300-car area.³ The cost to build a parking garage ranges from \$7 million to \$12 million, reports *Fixr.com*.⁴

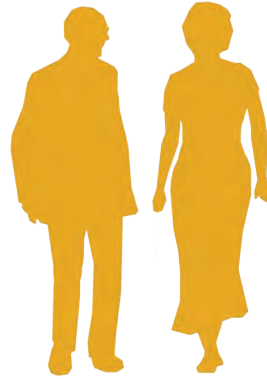


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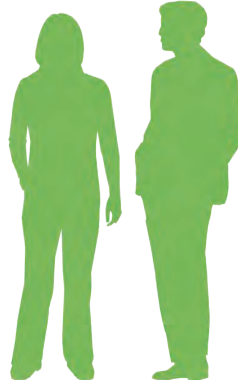




I live alone. I feel safe in my neighborhood, which is active and walkable. I'm close to my gym, a small grocery store and a great coffee shop. My office is an easy bike ride away. My studio apartment is perfect for me and lets me save for my future.



We are retirees. We're so glad we can remain in our longtime neighborhood after downsizing from the large home where we raised our children.



We're a couple. We share a one-bedroom apartment in a lively neighborhood where we can walk to shops, restaurants and even our jobs!

I'm a single father.

I appreciate living in a neighborhood where my child can play at a local park — and I don't need to care for a big house and yard on top of solo parenting.



Added to the costs shouldered by residents is the expense of owning and operating a car in the United States, which according to AAA is nearly \$10,000 a year.⁵ Since Missing Middle Housing is inextricably tied to walkable places — and, often, public transit options — the need for a car and parking can be reduced or outright eliminated. (See page 26 for more.)

BENEFIT: Shared Land Costs

When a multiunit residence or development is placed on the same-sized lot as a single-family home, land costs can be divided among multiple households. As a result, it's often less expensive to purchase the individual unit than a single-family home of the same overall size and quality of construction.

BENEFIT: Smart Land Use

Since Missing Middle homes vary in size and can be quite small, they are able to fit on small plots of land and can more easily work around a location's trees and natural topography. The home type is especially useful for infill lots, which are undeveloped or now-vacant plots of land in otherwise developed locations.

Filling infill and other small lots with Missing Middle Housing achieves big change through small contributions. The incremental creation of such

homes can add significant numbers of affordable, locally owned housing units. Because small residential lots can provide business opportunities for local, smaller-scale builders and developers, they empower residents and small businesses to build equity and benefit from improvements to a neighborhood and the broader community.

BENEFIT: Income, Equity and Empowerment

High housing costs and decades of discriminatory practices (such as restrictive ordinances and mortgage redlining against minority groups) have denied home ownership to many Americans.

Because the entry-level purchase cost is less than a single-family home, Missing Middle Housing types can provide people of various incomes and experiences the opportunity to live in quality housing and build equity while doing so.

Since federal home loans can be used to finance buildings with up to four units, buyers can qualify to purchase a Missing Middle building that contains their own unit and up to three other apartments. The rental income can help pay the loan and the owners' own housing costs. Alternatively, a smaller residence can enable an individual or family to buy a starter unit, build equity, and then potentially sell the property to purchase a larger home. ■

Missing Middle Housing Types

The COTTAGE COURT

Single-unit, cottage court houses are typically 1 to 1½ stories tall and are oriented around a courtyard that serves as an outdoor community space in lieu of rear yards.

Cottage (or bungalow) communities typically have shared parking areas. Many include a common building that can be used for community gatherings or reserved for private parties. Since the homes are small, the developments sometimes offer shared laundry facilities, storage spaces and secondary housing units that can accommodate guests.

This Missing Middle home-type is very compatible with houses in single-family zones. ■



▲ In 2017, the city of Ashland, Oregon, approved an ordinance to allow developments with a minimum of three and a maximum of 12 cottages. Most of the homes must be 800 square-feet or smaller. Allowing one cottage per 2,500 square-feet of lot area, the overall lot size is, at its largest, about one-third of an acre. At least 20 percent of the land must be preserved as common open space.



▲ Located on a 1.37-acre lot in Healdsburg, California, eight detached, two-bedroom homes surround a shared community space.

TOP: CITY OF ASHLAND, OREGON, CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN BY ARKTEK; DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE
BOTTOM: COURTESY CRAFT DEVELOPMENT/PHOTO BY KIM CARROLL, CARROLL CREATIVE



▲ An attached, side-yard ADU (left, with the red door) and an attached rear-yard ADU (above) in historic Cape May, New Jersey.



▲ An above-garage, backyard ADU in Brevard, North Carolina.



▲ A combination garage-and-interior ADU in Portland, Oregon.

The ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT

As small houses or apartments on the same property as a single-family residence, accessory dwelling units — commonly referred to as ADUs — play a major role in addressing the national need for smaller homes and affordable, quality rental housing. A traditional home type, ADUs are reemerging as an affordable and flexible housing option that meets the needs of older adults and young families alike.

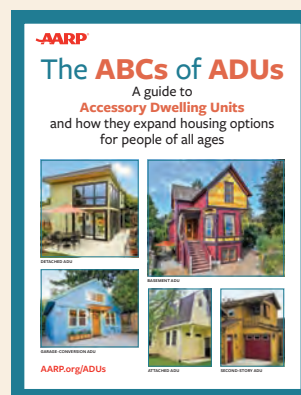
An ADU can occupy space within the main residence or be built as an addition or freestanding structure. A garage with an ADU is often known as a carriage house, a term once used for a building that housed horse-drawn carriages and stable hands at grander homes. Other names for an ADU include “guest house,” “in-law suite” or “backyard bungalow.”

Unlike the cottage or bungalow court (opposite page), or the other housing types in this publication, an ADU cannot be independently bought or sold. The unit is always part of the property it’s on. However, the accessory (or secondary) dwelling can be used as a separate living space for relatives, guests or rent-paying tenants.

Since ADUs make use of the existing infrastructure and already-developed land, their environmental impact is low. Since they are created out of existing housing, they easily fit a neighborhood’s look.

Many states and local jurisdictions have amended their zoning codes to allow ADUs. Doing so helps increase the supply and diversity of housing in neighborhoods with larger lots. Another benefit of ADUs is that they provide a softer introduction to Missing Middle Housing in areas that have been resistant to anything but single-family homes. ■

See page 10 for more Missing Middle Housing types.



AARP.org/ADUs

Find articles and resources about ADUs, including model legislation, a design guide and *The ABCs of ADUs*, a free, photo-filled, 24-page primer that’s available in print and as a PDF download.

Missing Middle Housing and Thriving, Walkable Neighborhoods

A key attraction of Missing Middle Housing is that the properties incorporate features that draw people to neighborhoods with detached single-family homes.

Due to their limited height and small footprint — and the fact that they are usually mixed among a variety of other building types — Missing Middle Housing residences challenge the image normally associated with multifamily housing.

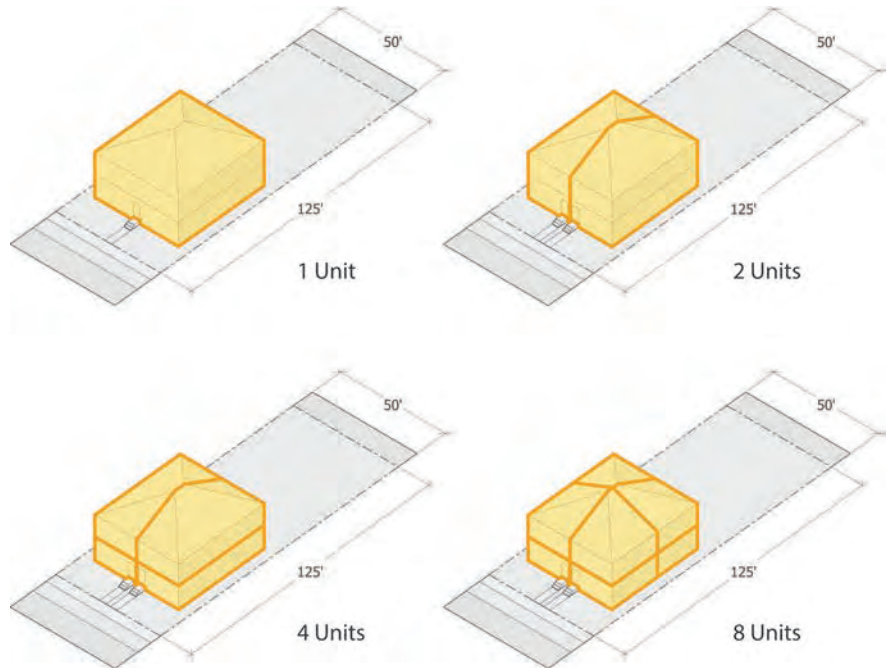
Debunking Density

Conversations can quickly go sour when a discussion turns to the topic of increasing an area's density.

This response is partly due to associating the term “high density” with large buildings that house dozens, hundreds or even thousands of people. Yet zoning that has a low-density goal is not immune to negative results.

In planning and zoning, the term “density” defines only the *number* of units, not their size. As a result, low-density zoning often leads developers to build the largest houses the market will tolerate in order to maximize their gains. Put another way, there's more profit in building and selling an oversized \$1 million house than a two-bedroom bungalow.

Regulating by density ignores the fact that many single-family homes are so large that it's easy to fill the same-sized building with multiple residences that are small, affordable and useful. Another benefit is that,



▲ The diagram shows how a differing number of housing units can fit within a residential building without changing the dwelling's overall size or placement on a 6,250-square-foot lot.



◀ In this site plan, five cottage-style homes (of about 650 square-feet each) fit on a 14,976-square-foot (or .34 acre) lot.

when more people are housed, a community's tax base expands, which helps fund public services (parks, police, libraries, schools). The residents also add to the customer base needed to support the types of thriving, commercially successful Main Streets and downtowns that

people of all ages, life stages and income levels desire.

Enabling housing that modestly increases density, rather than regulating or restricting higher density, is essential to meeting the pent-up desire for safe and economical walkable living.

Rethinking Zoning

Many of the neighborhoods that are home to Missing Middle Housing types were built prior to the advent of zoning in the early 1900s. The creation of new Missing Middle residences largely ended in the 1940s.

“Euclidean” zoning, the most common type in the United States, was designed to separate different land uses and housing types, such as single-family and multifamily homes.

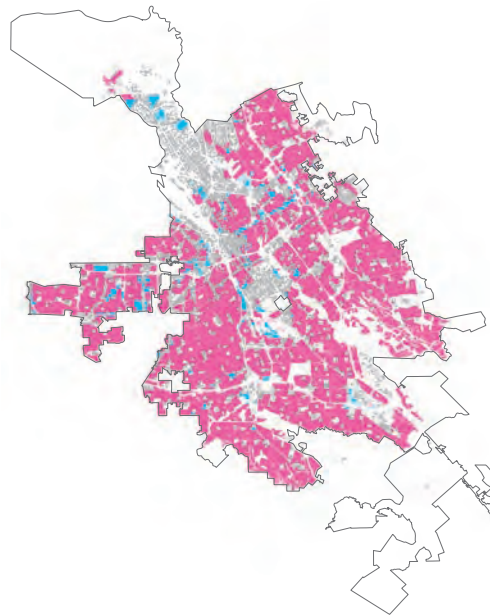
American cities also tend to regulate land use by residential density, which results in communities where residents can’t walk to stores and where people can’t downsize or even upsize into another home without leaving the community.

Zoning regulations and specifics vary by state and municipality, but few zoning codes effectively enable Missing Middle Housing.

Many state and local legislators have been pursuing much-needed changes to remove the planning and zoning barriers that prevent the creation of Missing Middle Housing.

The cities of Memphis, Tennessee, and Minneapolis, Minnesota — and the states of Nebraska, California and Oregon — are among the places that have adopted regulations more favorable to Missing Middle Housing, such as allowing three to four units on any lot, including those zoned for single-family.

(See page 21 for more about the Nebraska efforts. See page 33 to learn about the AARP guide *Re-Legalizing Middle Housing: A Model Act and Guide to Statewide Legislation*.) ■



◀ Townhouses, duplexes and apartments are effectively banned in many neighborhoods. Most U.S. cities have zoned 70 percent or more of their residential land exclusively for detached single-family houses. This image shows that 94 percent of the residential land in San Jose, California, is zoned for detached single-family housing.

Barriers for MMH in Greenville County						
Barriers to MMH	Imagine Greenville Comp Plan	Berea Plan	Brandon Plan	Conestee Plan	Monaghan Mill Plan	Cherrydale Plan
Max. Density Allowed: Too Low	●	●	?	?	●	●
Min. Lot Area: Too High	●	●	●	●	●	●
MMH Types Identified	●	2	2	2	2	2
Content is Supportive of MMH	●	●	●	●	●	●
Key:	● Barrier	? Unclear			● Not a Barrier	

▲ Unless planning efforts are undertaken with Missing Middle Housing in mind, the building types can be hindered by standards that make more sense for car-centric suburban apartment complexes than for walkable neighborhoods. The chart depicts an assessment of several small area plans in Greenville, South Carolina.



AARP
Enabling Better Places

A Handbook for Improved Neighborhoods

Order or download *Enabling Better Places: A Handbook for Improved Communities*, by AARP and the Congress for New Urbanism, to learn how small and incremental zoning and land use code changes can help achieve community-desired results.

Missing Middle Housing Types

The DUPLEX

A duplex residence consists of two units within a building that is of similar size and scale to a single-family house. In some duplexes, the units are side-by-side, sharing a common wall down the middle; in others, one unit is stacked atop the other. In either case, the entries to both units face the street.

Duplex homes benefit from many of the same advantages as single-family residences do, such as favorable financing options and zoning codes.

Since the cost of building or purchasing a duplex is on par with that of a similarly sized single-family house, while being divided among two households instead of one, the housing type offers genuine affordability advantages. ■



▲ A duplex (such as this one in Detroit, Michigan) can be so similar in form to a single-family house that sometimes the only clue is the presence of two entrances.

An Accessible Answer



◀ Few older homes meet accepted accessibility standards. In fact, historic examples of Missing Middle Housing frequently feature a raised first floor. This 5,000-square-foot building in Saratoga Springs, New York, with a zero-step entrance is an exception. Built in 1930 as office space for Skidmore College, the property is now a five-unit residence with three apartments downstairs and two up top, including two studios, two one-bedroom units and one two-bedroom unit.

Contemporary Missing Middle Housing equivalents can be built with inclusive design (also called “universal design” or UD) features that help make a home safe and livable for residents of all ages and abilities. Unlike many home-

safety products or add-ons of the past, such design elements are useful, unassuming and attractive. These can include a zero-step entry (pictured), assist or grab bars in bathrooms, and handrails on both sides of a staircase. Given

the rapid aging of the U.S. population, and the number of people who have mobility impairments on either a permanent or temporary basis, housing with well-designed accessibility features are a present and future must-have. ■



◀ A close look at the three front doors on this home reveals four unit numbers. (The center door leads to the two upstairs apartments.)

The FOURPLEX

The classic version of this housing type consists of two side-by-side units on the ground floor, with two more units stacked directly above.

Although the structure itself could otherwise be classified as a small multiplex, the fourplex residence occupies a special place in the discussion of Missing Middle Housing.

- At two stories in height and 40 to 50 feet in width, a fourplex's dimensions are comparable to those of single-family homes in countless neighborhoods across the United States.
- The ground-floor, single-story apartments contained inside offer living options for older adults or people with mobility challenges who need housing without stairs.
- Financing is relatively easy, as a conventional mortgage can be used for a building containing up to four units.
- The fourplex can fit on a smaller lot, including on infill lots (described on page 5) which often exist in locations that are supported by transit and locally serving businesses.

▼ Parking for fourplexes must be strategically handled. Ideally, no more than one off-street parking space per unit is required. This housing type works well on lots with a rear alley, which can provide direct access to side-by-side residences at the back of the parcel. Corner lots, which offer a greater supply of potential on-street parking, are also good candidates.



Yet very few fourplexes have been built in recent decades. Contemporary zoning and building codes can be obstacles to the classic fourplex type. As a result, developers favor building multistory townhouses. (Learn more on page 15.) ■

See page 14 for more Missing Middle Housing types.

Finding Missing Middle Housing

Most U.S. cities with pre-World War II housing have plentiful examples of Missing Middle Housing types in their historic neighborhoods. Surviving examples of Missing Middle Housing usually date to the 1940s or earlier.

Before the widespread use of automobiles, many of these neighborhoods were within walking distance of the urban core or were served by streetcar networks linking housing to jobs, shops and services.

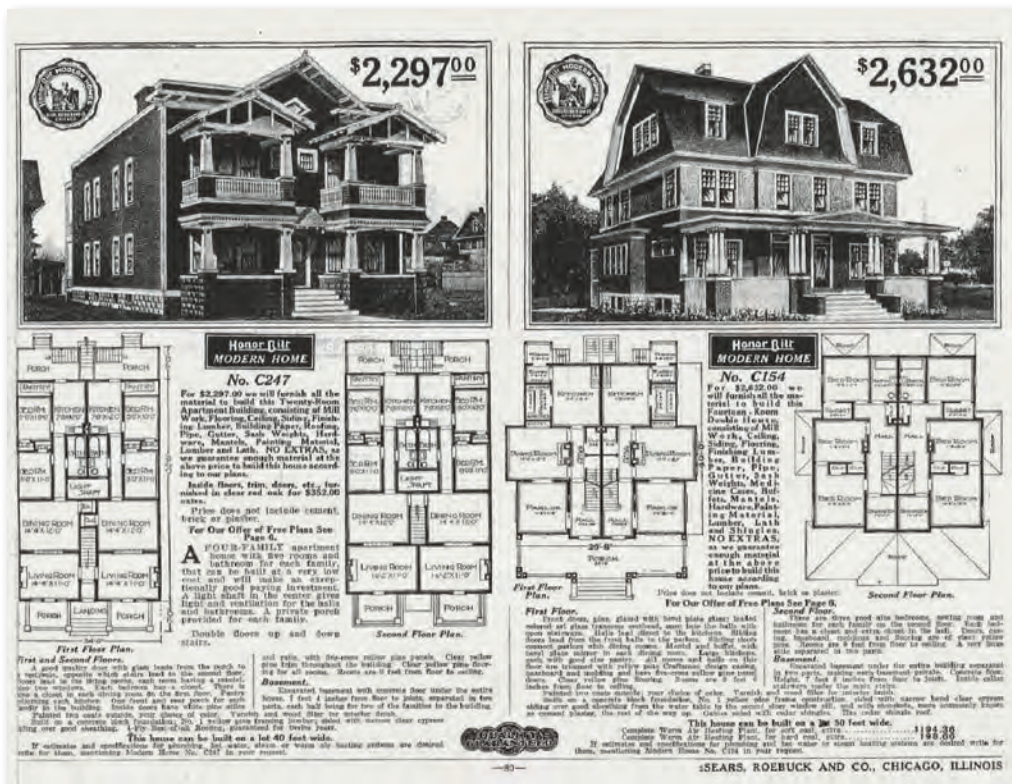
Because contemporary zoning codes usually do not allow for the creation of any (or just a few) Missing Middle Housing types in lower density zones, motivated planners and developers are forced to pursue alternative approaches, such as seeking a variance or participating in a demonstration project in order to test the building type in single-family residential areas. ■

Looking Locally

Because Missing Middle Housing types typically have a footprint no larger than a large, detached house, it is easy to integrate them into existing neighborhoods — and sometimes hard to find them!

- Online tools such as Google Maps can be useful for locating neighborhoods with Missing Middle Housing types. (See page 29 to learn about using online mapping and data resources.)
- Compact street networks with house-like buildings, possibly near historic centers or neighborhood Main Streets, are good places to look — as are locations where a neighborhood is transitioning to a higher-density, more walkable context.

- Signs of multiple units within a building include multiple front doors or pathways to doors or more than one mailbox, doorbell, gas meter or address number.



▲ In the early to mid-1900s, Sears, Roebuck and Co., sold house plans and home-building kits, some of which were Missing Middle Housing types. Home No. C247 (above left) was a four-family “apartment house” featuring five rooms plus a bathroom and porch for each family. The house could be built on a 40-foot wide lot. The slightly larger house No. C154, a 14 room “double house” (or side-by-side duplex), needed a 50-foot lot.

Because Missing Middle Housing can integrate with and complement single-family zoning, the two housing types are easily able to coexist.

There are several ways to place Missing Middle-style homes

Distributed Throughout a Block

Missing Middle Housing types can exist along a street, standing side by side and intermingling with detached single-family homes. The blended pattern of detached single-family residences and Missing Middle Housing works well because these types are comparable in form and scale.



On the End of a Block

The streets that intersect the end of a block is often a busier corridor than the streets occupied by detached single-family homes. Placing Missing Middle Housing types on the “end grain” of a block allows for the use of slightly larger buildings because the structure isn’t sitting directly next to detached single-family homes. In this placement type, the alley to the rear of the Missing Middle structure also allows for a good transition in scale to the single-family lots.



As a Commercial Corridor Transition

When a Missing Middle residence is located in an area that’s adjacent to a neighborhood Main Street, the building itself provides a gradual transition point between residential and commercial or mixed-used properties. The nearness of residents provides a customer base for local businesses and services. By serving as a type of buffer, a Missing Middle-type structure can actually keep a single-family home in a walkable area from being located directly next to, say, a restaurant or bar (or a store or office building) and the parking lots needed by the businesses’ customers and employees.



As a Transition to Higher-Density Housing

Another transition benefit of Missing Middle Housing is achieved by placing small to mid-sized multiunit housing on a few of the lots that transition from a residential side street to a more populated corridor, thus providing a transition in scale to the larger buildings on the end grain of the block along the primary street.



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Missing Middle Housing Types

The MANSION APARTMENT

Missing Middle Housing types are, by definition, house scale. But all houses are not the same size.

In locations with historic mansions or large manor houses, it can be very easy to adapt existing, oversized single-family houses or create new



▲ From the outside, these houses appear to be mansions. A closer look reveals that each house actually contains several residences. The Norfolk, Virginia, examples (top and bottom) contain apartments. The Baltimore, Maryland, property (center) hosts five townhouse-like side-by-side units.

multiunit buildings that will seamlessly blend within the context of the street or neighborhood.

A mansion apartment maintains the form and scale of a large estate house, while accommodating multiple units, typically exceeding the quantity found in fourplexes. (Such a building might also be referred to as a sixplex, eightplex, and so on.)

These buildings tend to be much larger than other Missing Middle Housing types and are composed of sunlight-filled wings rather than being deep buildings with internal corridors, as in a traditional high-rise apartment building or a dormitory or hotel.

The mansion or estate appearance is reinforced through a single, architecturally celebrated main entrance that faces the street and may be shared among several units.

Because numerous historic mansions in desirable neighborhoods have already been divided into multiple units, it can sometimes be difficult to tell where the conversions exist. A key to discovering them is to pay close attention to mailboxes, address signage and other exterior features. (See page 29 for more about these clues.) If the house contains multiples of any — such as several doorbells rather than one — the home has likely been converted into apartments.

Unlike a multiplex residential building, however, a mansion apartment building requires that the owner or developer be mindful of the structure's architectural features and possibly older mechanical systems and construction methods and materials. Details matter, especially as applied to the main entrance, windows, siding and roof.

A mansion conversion is not a utilitarian building. Many of these buildings are not wheelchair accessible, at least not without significant renovations and the installation of an elevator.

But when the subdivisions and renovations are done well, former mansions provide a generous (and grand!) living experience. ■



◀▶ Townhouses are a common residence type throughout the United States that can adapt to a wide range of contexts. However, when such developments are oversized and disconnected from needed shops and services, they contribute to sprawl and the need for more or expanded roadways and parking lots. Missing Middle Housing-type townhouses (pictured in Wheeling Heights, West Virginia, left, and Longmont Colorado, below) are efficient and attractive options for infill lots in new and existing walkable locations.

The TOWNHOUSE

Townhouses — sometimes called townhomes, rowhouses or rowhomes — can be found throughout the world and make up an important part of the original urban fabric in historic East Coast cities as well as in locations such as Chicago, Illinois; Cincinnati, Ohio; and San Francisco, California.

Townhouses represent a fast growing percentage of new housing, in fact the fastest from 2011 to 2017, far outpacing other Missing Middle types. This is largely because townhouses can be sold as “fee simple” units — meaning that, unlike ownership in an apartment building, the buyer owns both the building and the land beneath it. That makes the construction, sale and maintenance of the property less complex than it would be for a building of stacked units.

In contrast to freestanding detached houses, townhouses are connected to adjacent buildings on one or two sides via shared walls. Each townhouse has an entry that faces a street or courtyard. The homes typically include a small rear yard.

Because of their small footprints and shared walls, townhouses make efficient use of land, which means they can be constructed and sold at a lower price than a new detached house. Since townhouses are not stacked, it alleviates the concerns by some residents about noise from upstairs neighbors. A downside is that townhouses don’t typically offer the same diversity of unit mix (such as one- or two-bedroom units) or an option for one-story living.

The overall dimensions and unit makeup of townhouses vary. In neighborhoods of detached,



house-scale buildings, each run of townhouses might be limited to two or three units, with their height not exceeding two stories. In a more urban environment, a row of townhouses can occupy an entire block. In historic areas of Boston, Massachusetts, and the borough of Brooklyn in New York City, three- and four-story townhouses have been converted into apartments (and back again) as the housing market has shifted over time.

The way townhouses handle parking can make or break them in terms of their contribution to a walkable streetscape. Walking along a street lined by townhouses can be a delightful experience — but if the front setbacks are merely driveways and the ground floor facades are dominated by garage doors, the experience is much less inviting. In the best examples, parking is accessed at the rear and does not (as shown on page 26) occupy the majority of the ground floor. ■

See page 18 for more Missing Middle Housing types.

Developing Missing Middle Housing

As noted on page 9, several local governments and states are adjusting zoning codes and other regulations to allow for Missing Middle neighborhoods and residences. Here are a few examples.



▲ Lincoln Street in Prairie Queen, a Missing Middle neighborhood in Papillion, Nebraska, features live/work-style dwellings where the upper floors are residential and the street-level units are “flex” spaces that can be used as housing or for a business.

With older adults retiring and downsizing their homes, and a high percentage of adults living alone or as couples without children, **Nebraska** — like many other states — is experiencing an acute lack of housing choice and affordability.

In an effort to address both, in 2020 the state enacted the Municipal Density and Missing Middle Housing Act. The law requires Nebraska’s 11 largest cities to assess and report on the existing zoning and housing stock and then develop an action plan for implementing solutions, including Missing Middle Housing.

For cities that fail to adopt a housing action plan, the

law requires Missing Middle Housing to be allowed in any area zoned for single-family housing. AARP Nebraska worked with the targeted communities to provide information about Missing Middle Housing. Opticos founder Daniel Parolek, who was raised in Nebraska, shared a Nebraska-focused Missing Middle Housing presentation for local leaders and residents.

To provide Nebraskans with local examples of Missing Middle-style housing, the Opticos team created two self-guided walking tours: one in the historic Dundee neighborhood in **Omaha** (see page 28), the other in **Papillion**, in a new development called Prairie Queen (see page 21). ■



◀ In 2020, the city of **Memphis, Tennessee**, began implementing its Memphis 3.0 Comprehensive Plan by creating seven small area plans for priority neighborhoods, including Hollywood–Hyde Park, Highland Heights, Klondike and South City. Each plan has a strong Missing Middle Housing component featuring a range of Missing Middle types on typically sized existing lots. ■



◀ **Iowa City, Iowa**, has a long history of limiting sprawling development at its edges. In a recent comprehensive plan, the city identified 900 acres at its southern border, which it calls the South District, and created an area of targeted growth to deliver a range of Missing Middle Housing choices in a compact, walkable neighborhood. ■



▲ As an area dominated by pricey vacation homes and ski season rentals, housing options in **Teton County** and the town of **Jackson, Wyoming**, are beyond the reach of low- and moderate-income households. Because of that, workers in the tourism-rich region endure long, costly commutes. A 225-acre site that abuts the town provides an

opportunity to add much-needed attainable (or “workforce”) housing. Opticos was hired in 2020 to engage the community, propose solutions, create a detailed vision plan, and write a set of development standards to help create a mix of 1,200 for-sale and rental units of Missing Middle Housing in a new walkable neighborhood. ■

“Housing stock known as middle housing, while prominent in the early 1900s, has been largely missing in the construction of new housing in the United States since the mid-1940s.... Examining and updating municipal zoning codes and ordinances to permit varied types of housing stock will provide greater availability of affordable housing, increase residential density, promote more efficient and effective land use, and create conditions for successful mass transit, bikeability, walkability, and affordability in residential neighborhoods.”

— Nebraska State Legislature, LB866

Missing Middle Housing Types



◀▲ Live/work buildings (like those in Norfolk, Virginia’s East Beach, left, and the mixed-use Serenbe development in Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia, above) help make a town or neighborhood a vibrant and interesting place to live, work and visit.

The LIVE/WORK PROPERTY

A live/work building combines a conventional dwelling unit, usually located upstairs, with a ground-floor flex space that can accommodate a range of nonresidential uses. This apartment-style Missing Middle Housing type is well suited for a street-level retail shop, office or business.

Live/work buildings are typically clustered together, on or near a neighborhood Main Street. They work best as a transition type between residences and commercial locations and are rarely successful when located within a strictly residential block.

The work portion of the live/work property has its own frontage and street-facing entrance — often expressed as a storefront — but it also includes direct interior access to the residential portion that’s located on the same floor or directly above on the second and sometimes third floor.

The ground floor ceilings of the live/work space are usually at least 10 feet high, which can properly serve nonresidential uses. While building codes generally specify the requirements for different uses, live/work units are often addressed as a special case in order to align with the housing styles nearby. ■



▲ Live/work units in Orlando, Florida’s Baldwin Park



▲ The top two floors of this live/work building in Buena Vista, Colorado, contain a 1,400-square-foot residence. The ground floor can house a shop, office or apartment.



The COURTYARD BUILDING

A courtyard building is a medium-sized structure that consists of multiple side-by-side and/or stacked dwelling units oriented around a courtyard or series of courtyards. Often, each unit has its own exterior entrance, although up to four units may share a common stoop, staircase or entryway.

The courtyard-accessed entries — and the views into the courtyard from upper-story living spaces — are important because the shared open space is key to delivering the quality of life and sense of community that are the housing type's signature benefits. (A similarly sized building with apartments accessed from a common internal corridor does not meet the intent of this type.)

The building itself is composed of wings that define the courtyard. Because the wings are no deeper than an individual house, a courtyard building can appear to be house-scale despite typically occupying a larger lot than what's needed for a single-family home.

The wings surrounding the courtyard (or courtyards) can take various configurations: L-shaped, C-shaped, and O-shaped courtyard buildings are all common. Open-air passages through the wings can provide access into the courtyard or between courtyards.

The courtyard dimensions vary by climate but are typically about 20 to 30 feet across. Narrow courtyards are favored in hot climates for shading, while larger courtyards are suited to cooler or temperate climates to allow for both sun and shade. The height can vary in different parts of the building. ■

◀ Many courtyard buildings are inspired by the Spanish tradition, which features the type prominently.



▲ The courtyard is an ideal environment for landscaping to complement the adjacent homes.



▲ Direct access to the courtyard from the surrounding units is a key feature of this building type.



▲ The layout of courtyard housing can help build connections among neighbors.

See page 22 for more Missing Middle Housing types.

A Little Bit of Land Can Host a Lot of Missing Middle Housing

Plots of land from two to five acres are a sweet spot for smaller-scale developers constructing Missing Middle Housing. Lots within that range allow for a variety of housing types and building layouts without the need to design an entire neighborhood, which can have significant (and costly) implications for public infrastructure.

When working with a small plot of land, the challenge can be to create a strong sense of place while also generating value for home sales or rentals. This is particularly important if the site is in a context that would not otherwise generate strong interest. Good site planning is key to achieving Missing Middle objectives.

Hamilton Square: Novato, California | 2.7 acres

Located across the street from an elementary school, and a five-minute walk to a commuter train, Hamilton Square is a mix of for-sale and rental units, as well as fee simple (see page 15) versus stacked units. Proposed designs inspired community discussions about the amount of open space to provide; the ratio of and relationship between the sale and rental options; the viability of live/work units; and the trade-offs between the number of units and the desire for shared spaces and amenities. ■

▼ Developed on the site of a former gas station, Hamilton Square is an example of how contaminated land can be remediated (by removing polluted soil), restored (with clean soil) and revitalized for a new use. The site plans show different ways the space could be developed.



Housing Units: 41
Housing Units Per Acre: 15
Parking Spaces: 81

Mansion Apartments and Live/Work Units ▲



Housing Units: 58
Housing Units Per Acre: 22
Parking Spaces: 110

Courtyard Housing and Live/Work Units ▲



Housing Units: 31
Housing Units Per Acre: 11.5
Parking Spaces: 79

Tuck-under Townhouses (Option A) ▲



Housing Units: 31
Housing Units Per Acre: 11.5
Parking Spaces: 83

Tuck-under Townhouses (Option B) ▲

Prairie Queen: Papillion, Nebraska | 40 acres

After acquiring an undeveloped site in Papillion, Urban Village Development, a company that successfully renovated a collection of small, historic, multiunit brick buildings in Midtown Omaha, approached Opticos to design a neighborhood-scale apartment community of Missing Middle Housing.

Unlike a conventional suburban apartment project, the site plan features a series of blocks and tree-lined streets framed by diverse building types that will ultimately accommodate 500 to 600 units.

As of August 2023, 268 units were completed and leased. Monthly rents range from \$1,000 for a one-bedroom apartment to \$3,000 for a three-bedroom townhouse. Despite their differing prices, the units are all within the same block, which is a rarity for an apartment community. The arrangement provides economic diversity and mobility within the neighborhood.

A budget-saving innovation is that there are no large parking lots. Rather, each unit has one off-street parking space, either in a garage or off a rear alley. On-street parking is available for guests as well as residents who have more than one car.

Prairie Queen includes a mix of Missing Middle Housing types, from duplexes to mansion apartments. The architecture reflects styles drawn from Omaha's historic neighborhoods, but done in a simplified way that is economically feasible.

At its entrance, the neighborhood incorporates one block of live/work units. (See the photo on page 16.) The properties contribute to the area's walkability by housing the types of amenities that residents seek, such as a



▲ Although this photo shows a clear weather day, freezing temperatures and snow are common in Papillion, Nebraska, where Prairie Queen, a walkable, suburban development is located. The residents are fine about having just one off-street parking space per unit and first-come, first-served guest and overflow parking along the streets.

coffee shop and a shared coworking space. If commercial uses do not materialize, the flex spaces can be rented as one-bedroom apartments. A greenway connects the site to a lake, capturing valuable views and enabling residents to interact as they walk to and from the water.

To launch the project, Urban Village employed a mixed-use development agreement that challenged many city standards, including for alley design, utility hookups, parking minimums and minimum street widths.

The city of Papillion considers the Prairie Queen development to be a success. In fact, the mayor was so pleased with the project that it is used as a case study for city departments, encouraging them to reconsider engineering standards and development regulations so Missing Middle-style developments can be built more easily in the future. ■



▲▼ Although many of the buildings look like single-family homes, they are in fact multiplex structures containing two to eight residential units. Visit opticosdesign.com (and search for "Prairie Queen") to watch a video and learn more about the community.



Missing Middle Housing Types

The MULTIGENERATIONAL HOUSE

All too often, buildings are treated as static objects. Yet the people inhabiting and using them are anything but static.

What if homes were designed to accommodate the full life cycle of the people living in them? The multigenerational house is an example of a home in which different types of units serve the needs of people at different ages and life stages. Missing

Middle Housing has the added benefit of allowing incremental development and rental income opportunities, which can make it easier to finance and more affordable to build over time.

The following scenario describes just one possibility, but it illustrates a broader concept that can be tailored to the unique circumstances of individual households.

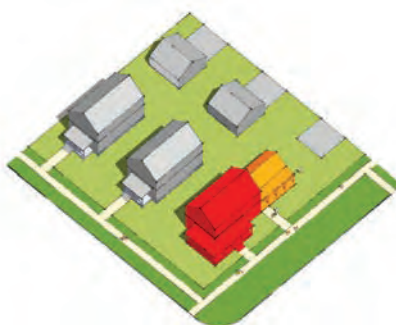


PHASE 1: The Single-Family House

The story begins with an ordinary house on an ordinary lot. A couple with young children move into a new home that has downstairs living spaces and bedrooms upstairs with one or more full bathrooms.

“Grandfamily-ing,” family caregiving for older relatives, and adult children living at home are significant trends.

— AARP Home and Community Survey



PHASE 2: The ‘Wing Unit’ Addition

The owners add a first-floor suite featuring a bedroom, living area, kitchenette and a full bathroom so a pair of grandparents can move in to help with the children while also receiving help with their own needs.

The property now contains two dwellings. A door between the two can remain open or closed and locked as needed. (A laundry room can be shared, or each unit can have its own.)

Because the wing unit is all on one level and has been designed to be fully accessible, it’s suitable for aging in place.

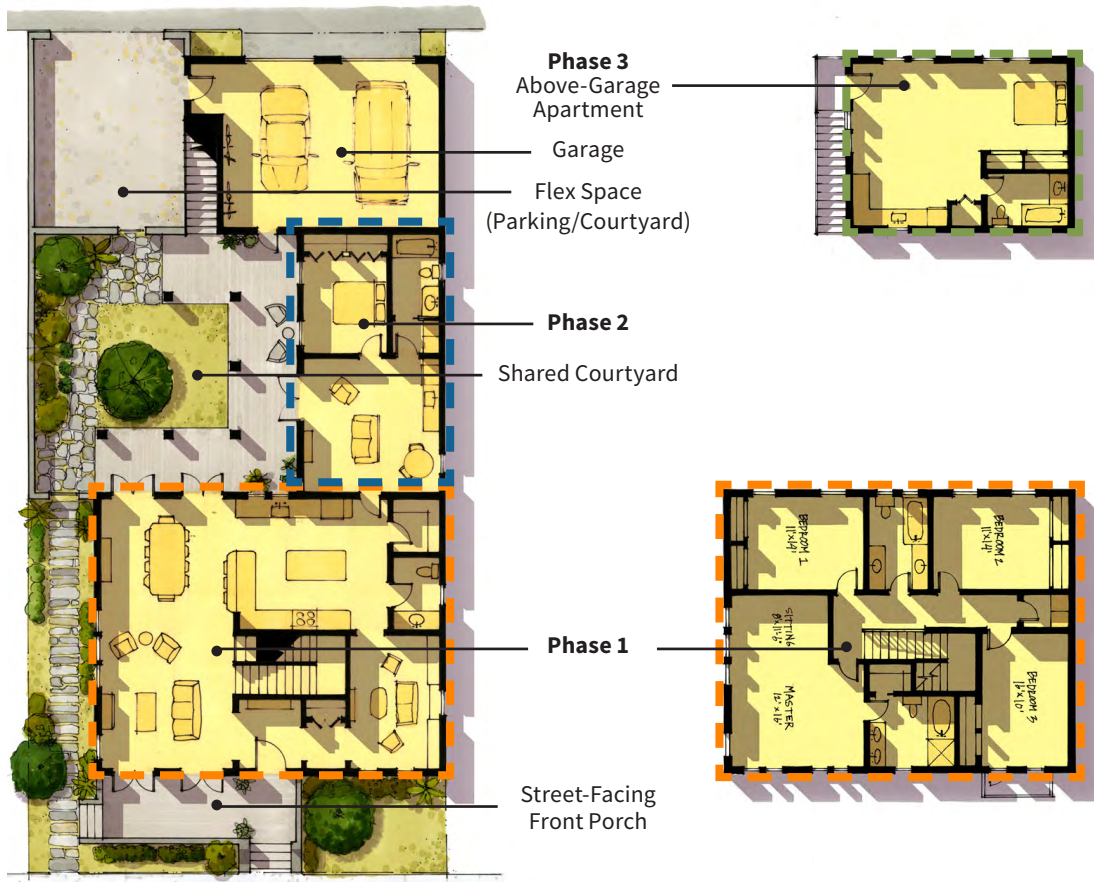


PHASE 3: The ADU Addition

As time goes on, the homeowners move into the wing unit so an adult child with a family can reside in the main house.

As the property owners reach retirement, they build a new garage (or update an existing one) to include a second-story living space.

This “carriage house” style accessory dwelling unit is rented out to pay down the construction costs and provide retirement income. The apartment can someday house an adult grandchild who needs a place to live while building savings, or to enable a hired caregiver to reside on-site. ■



◀ In the scenario for the multigenerational house, the main unit is Phase 1. The Phase 2 unit is added when the family needs more space. The Phase 3 above-garage-ADU is created to generate rental income or accommodate family members.

▼ The illustration below shows the home with both additions.



◀ In this photo, the main house is on the right. The carriage house (or above-garage accessory dwelling unit) is at left.



We are a multigenerational household.

We have room for three generations to live together. Our children are growing up with their grandparents — who have moved into the attached, single-story apartment — while we live in the main house with the kids.

See page 1 for a list of all the Missing Middle Housing types featured in this guide.

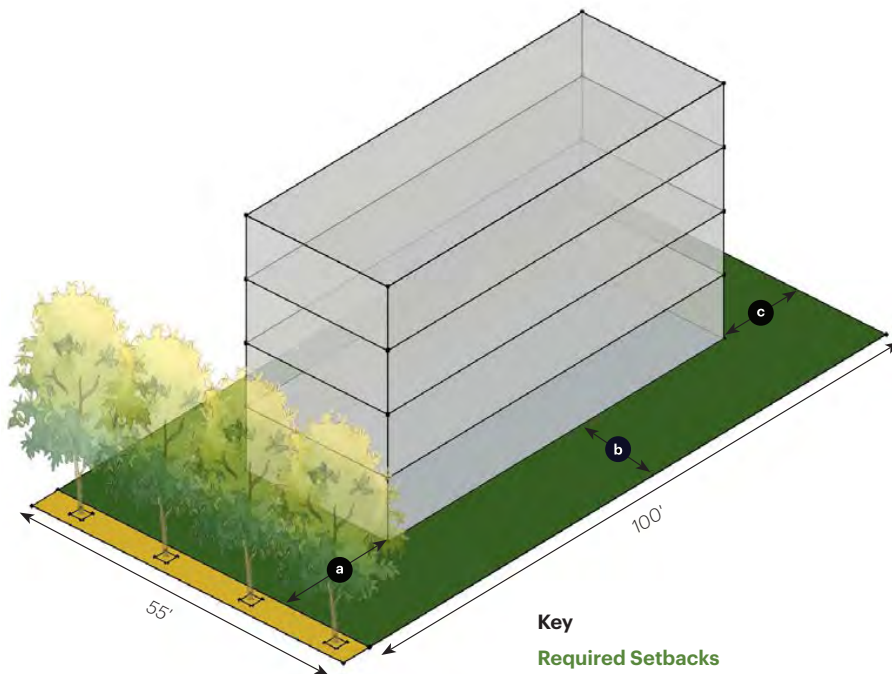
Understanding the Barriers to Missing Middle Housing

As noted on page 9, the majority of the residential land in just about every community in the United States is mapped for single-family zoning. As a result, the current codes in very few places effectively enable Missing Middle Housing.

In fact, in many cities, zoning designations jump directly from single-family (which may allow duplexes) to those permitting buildings much taller and larger than Missing Middle Housing. Few allow

multifamily or medium-density zones that can deliver small-scale buildings with multiple units on small-to-medium-sized lots. As explained earlier, “multiunit” does not need to mean big buildings on big lots.

The dominance of single-family zoning isn’t the only obstacle to Missing Middle Housing. Following are some others, including (on the next spread) the perceptions and realities about parking.



Key

Required Setbacks

- a** Front = 20'
- b** Side = 5' (min. 15' for multifamily)
- c** Rear = 15'

▲ A Missing Middle assessment for the city and county of Greenville, South Carolina, revealed that the deep setbacks required for multifamily buildings were a major obstacle to building Missing Middle homes on infill lots.

RM-2 Zone, 40' x 120' Lot Size Max. Envelope per Existing Standards

Building Form

Lot Area of Tested Lot	4,800 sf
Min. Required Lot Area	none
Max. Height	40'
Max. Lot Coverage	40%

Parking

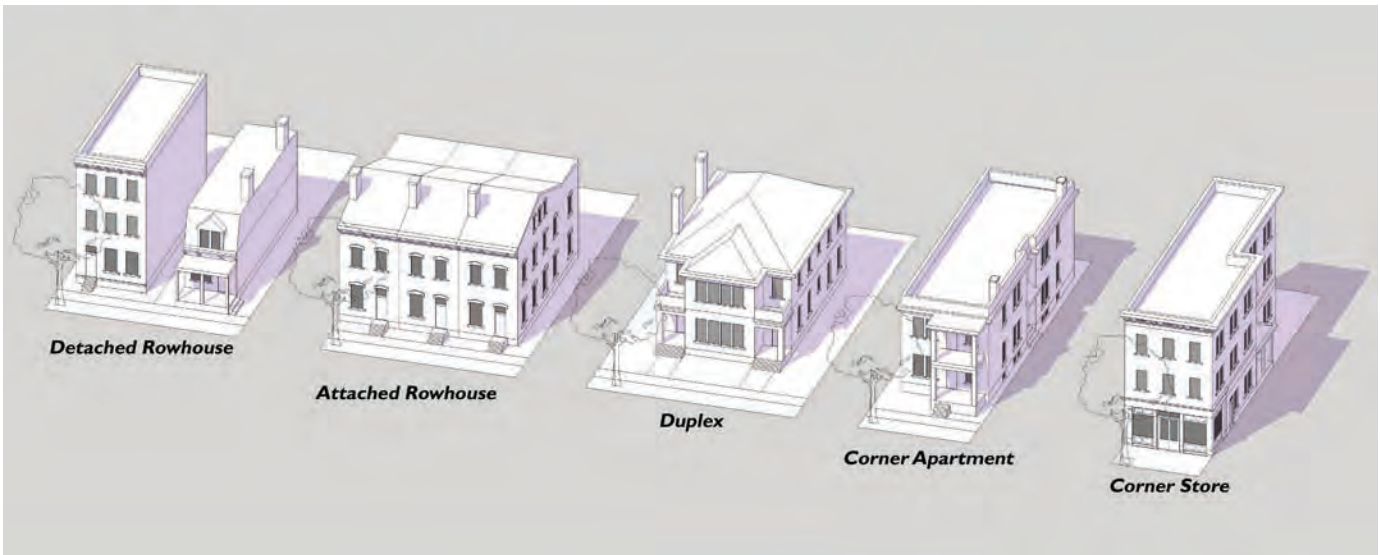
Min. Parking Spaces	2 per unit for single family; 1.5 per unit for multifamily
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Density

Max. Allowed Density	20 du/ acre
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- **Developer Fees and Incentives:** Local governments charge real estate developers impact fees to cover the cost of new or expanded public facilities and services. The fee charged per unit is typically the same regardless of the structure’s size. That means it can be more affordable, impact-fee-wise, for a developer to build one large, single-family residence rather than a similarly sized or smaller building that includes multiple dwelling units.

- **Lack of Missing Middle Housing Builders:** There are currently (as of 2022) few or no mass-production large-scale residential builders focused on delivering Missing Middle Housing. This is likely because it’s been decades since Missing Middle residences were allowed under most community zoning codes. Building professionals and industry organizations will need to adapt to focus on Missing Middle Housing and deliver more efficiencies at this scale, much as they did for vertical mixed-use projects in the early 2000s.



▲ Few, if any, residential builders are currently set up to produce Missing Middle Housing at the same scale as they are for neighborhoods of single-family houses.

- Larger Buildings Have Cost Efficiencies:** Constructing larger buildings, such as a 125- to 150-unit apartment or condominium development, provides easier-to-identify and often larger cost efficiencies (translating to a higher return on investment) than a three-, four-, eight- or even 16-unit building or series of them.
- Code Standards:** The International Building Code (IBC), which applies to any residence with more than two units, makes it challenging and more costly to build small multifamily homes as the code also applies to very large residential buildings. Most single-family and townhouse home builders are not accustomed to using the IBC. Several cities and even states are pursuing the idea of having the less restrictive International Residential Code (IRC) apply to buildings with up to six units.
- Change Is Challenging:** Current residents often don't welcome an increase in housing units. The concerns can range from fears that, with a rental, an absentee landlord won't maintain the property, to a belief that the added or smaller housing will negatively impact real estate values. Even the threat of community opposition can keep developers and public officials from considering multiunit buildings in places where the local code requires a public meeting or negotiated process for a use permit or a rezoning variance. Discussions and policies that recognize the interests of all stakeholders can help address or calm concerns. (See page 33 for information about the AARP publication *Re-Legalizing Middle Housing: A Model Act and Guide to Statewide Legislation*, which provides policy and regulation recommendations.)
- Minimum Parking Requirements:** Mandates for providing one, two or more off-street parking spots are often unattainable or unnecessary in urban settings, where the space just might not exist or where creating them wastes valuable space that could be used for housing. (Turn the page for more about parking.) ■

Because housing and parking are frequently debated topics, local leaders often have to weigh whether it's worse to have an actual affordable housing problem or a perceived parking problem.

Proposing Less Parking

Since the mid-20th century, communities nationwide have done a better job of delivering parking than housing. The result is that, in many places, parking is now so oversupplied that people can't even fathom having to pay for it. Meanwhile, the scarcity of housing has led to an affordability crisis that becomes worse with each passing year.



When shops, schools, services and other community amenities have enough people within a safe walking and cycling distance to support their operations, fewer off-street parking spaces are needed for businesses and homes.

In the tug-of-war between parking and housing, parking has been winning. A better balance can ensure that both needs are met. ■

▲ Accommodating cars by adding a garage often lifts a building an additional story, which precludes having active, community-focused spaces on the ground floor.

Placing Parking

1. Parking should not dominate or obscure the property's main entrance. When possible, it's best to locate parking behind the residence.
2. When parking is in the front, placing cars parallel to the residence helps the location feel more like a street than a parking lot. (Such parallel parking also prevents headlights from shining into homes.)
3. If parking is perpendicular to a residential building, a hedge or low wall can help obscure the headlights.

Removing the Barrier of Parking Minimums

In most places, reductions in parking requirements are necessary to enable Missing Middle Housing. Such proposals often run into opposition. Below are some of the common concerns and potential responses to them.

“People in my community don’t want to live without a car. I don’t want to live without a car.”

Reducing parking mandates is about providing more housing and lifestyle choices, not forcing anyone to live without a car. But according to the 2019 AARP Home and Communities Survey:

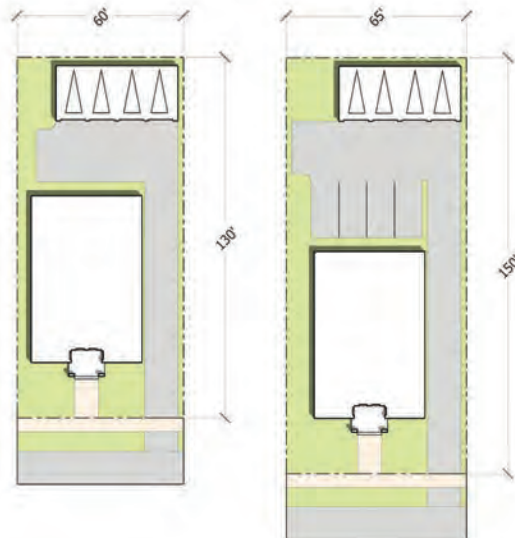
- About 6 in 10 adults ages 18 to 49, and 4 in 10 adults age 50 or older, walk or cycle to get where they need or want to go.
- More than 9 in 10 adults say it is important for their community’s streets to be safe for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.
- At least 3 in 4 adults say it’s important for a community to have affordable public transit options and special transportation services for older adults and those with disabilities.

Developers will still provide parking, but the elimination or reduction of residential parking requirements can enable the creation of housing that’s more affordable for all residents, including the growing number of households that don’t drive, want to live “car-light,” or don’t want to or can’t take on the expense of owning a car.

“We don’t have public transit in my community, so we can’t reduce parking. Also how is parking reduction even possible in communities without safe and reliable public transit?”

Eliminating or reducing parking requirements does not mean that everyone is going to have to live without a car or need access to public transit. For instance, the Prairie Queen development in Nebraska (page 21) is functioning very well with one off-street parking space per unit for Missing Middle homes.

► Off-street parking takes up a lot of space, which makes many housing types inherently impossible to design and build on small lots. In the image, a 40-foot by 60-foot fourplex is feasible, assuming a parking standard of one space per unit (as seen in the near-right site plan, with each triangle indicating a covered parking spot). If the parking is increased to two spaces per unit, as shown on the far right, the lot would need to be significantly larger (9,750 versus 7,800 square feet) to accommodate eight parking spots for the same sized building.



Prioritizing Housing Over Parking

The wait list for a senior housing unit to open up in Cutler Bay, Florida, is about three years.

To incentivize developers to create affordable, accessible housing for older adults, in 2019 the town council reduced from two to one the number of required parking spaces per unit when building senior housing. The town had noticed that many older residents owned only one car or used public transit.

“Since a single parking space can cost as much as \$20,000 to acquire and build, we’ve reduced the cost of the project for developers,” the town manager told AARP.

The land and construction costs for parking increase the price tag of development. These costs are typically passed along to renters and homebuyers.

In addition to there already being a lot of parking in most parts of the nation, demographic changes make it possible to alter the parking formulas that have been used by municipalities for decades. For instance:

- Approximately 1 in 3 households in the United States consists of a single adult, meaning that roughly 30 percent of the nation’s housing units only need parking for one car.
- More people, and especially young people, are choosing not to drive. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, as of 2020, only about 80 percent of Americans age 20 to 24 had a driver’s license. That figure is down from 87 percent in 1995.
- When streets have proper sidewalks and crosswalks, and needed shops and services nearby, people can safely walk to where they need and want to go.
- The nation’s population is rapidly aging, and many older adults no longer can, or choose not to, drive.
- By 2030, 1 out of every 5 people in the United States will be age 65 or older. By 2050, that number will increase to 1 out of every 4 people. Many older people will need smaller homes and alternative mobility choices.
- People in most parts of the country have more mobility alternatives at their fingertips than ever before. These include ride share services such as Uber and Lyft, car-sharing programs, and on-demand bicycle and scooter share services.
- Where dedicated bike lanes and other safe cycling pathways exist, bike riding can be easier for people of all ages and levels of athleticism by use of motorized, electric-assist “e-bikes,” which help riders travel longer distances, even across hilly terrains.
- In many communities, shuttle vans and on-demand ride services are available for little or no cost to older residents and people with disabilities or mobility differences. ■

Visit the [Parking Reform Network](https://ParkingReform.org) at ParkingReform.org for a map of where parking mandates have been reduced or eliminated.

The Missing Middle Housing Walking Tour

An effective way for local leaders and interested community members to advocate for Missing Middle Housing is to show neighbors, business owners, real estate professionals and other influencers what Missing Middle Housing is. Taking

people on an in-person or virtual tour through a vibrant neighborhood can demonstrate the range of Missing Middle Housing types that already exist. The participants might just become informed advocates for (and resources about) Missing Middle Housing.



◀ In Saratoga Springs, New York, the mailboxes at the entrance of a 19th century mansion are a clue that the residence now contains multiple apartments. Missing Middle-applicable fact: A plaque on the historic home explains that its original owner, a merchant and entrepreneur named John Benedict, “assisted many mechanics and laboring men to ‘obtain homes for themselves on easy terms, payable in work.’”



▲ Opticos founder Daniel Parolek (far left) leading a Missing Middle Housing tour in Portland, Oregon.



- ▲ A walking tour map created for an outing hosted by AARP and Opticos.
- ◀ The presence of multiple utility meters is an indication of multiple apartments.

How to Find and Identify Missing Middle Housing

Neighborhoods that are likely to include Missing Middle Housing are usually historic areas with homes built before World War II.

Local planning departments and historical societies may be able to suggest suitable neighborhoods. State or local chapters of the American Institute of Architects (AIA.org) might also be able to assist.

Geographic Information System Mapping data, also known as GIS, is often publicly accessible through the local government's

planning department website and may include information about lot sizes and number of units.

If GIS information is not available, an urban planner in the community may have access to Urban Footprint, which is a software program and technical tool used by planners. And, yes, Google Maps can also be a good tool for this research.

Well-designed Missing Middle Housing can require a little sleuthing to identify, as the buildings are often so similar to single-family homes.

Look for the following clues:

- Multiple mailboxes and addresses on a building
- Multiple entries
- Multiple utility meters
- Multiple trash and recycling receptacles
- Multiple parking spots, likely behind the building, possibly with numbers indicating which spot can be used by which unit

Continued on page 30 ►

Picture This



When photographing Missing Middle Housing types, showing a structure from several perspectives can help explain the buildings' usefulness and attractiveness.

1. Take front (also called facade or elevation) photos to show how tall and wide the building is.
2. Take 45-degree angle photos to show how deep the building is.
3. Take photos that include the neighboring buildings to show how the Missing Middle home fits into the streetscape.
4. Take photos of the streetscape to show how the building (and its front yard, entry and outdoor spaces) relates to the street. If doable without trespassing, take photos of the building's sides and rear exterior.
5. Take photos of the surrounding neighborhood, including any special or desirable features, such as shared green spaces, street trees, landscaping, lighting and outdoor furnishings.



Plan, Prep and Lead a Walking Tour

If examples of Missing Middle Housing do exist in or near the community, a field trip is the best way to make the case.

Suggested steps and to-dos:

1. Based on the locations and building types found, determine a walking route. A one- to two-mile tour takes about 90 minutes to two hours. The tour need not stop and start in the same location, but consider people's transportation needs at the end.
 2. Consider including both good and bad examples of multiunit buildings so participants can learn by contrasting the two.
 3. Try to build in a rest stop or a tour conclusion location at a nearby coffee shop. This will give people a chance to grab a snack or drink, use the restroom and/or discuss what they've observed. Stopping at a local eatery also demonstrates Missing Middle Housing's walkability to shops and services.
 4. Determine a tour date (and perhaps a bad weather date).
 5. Decide how the tour will be promoted, by whom and to whom. For instance, will a website page be created so people can learn more and register? Will the tour be an invitation-only event?
- Even if the tour will be open to the general public, send invitations to the people you or your organization would most like to join the walk. Such "influencers" can include:
- Local officials (from the mayor or city manager's office; city, town or county council members; planning and zoning review board commissioners)
 - Neighborhood groups
 - Housing advocates
 - Architects, developers and builders
 - Local historians
 - Involved residents



▲ Examples of Missing Middle Housing discovered while walking in (clockwise from top) Habersham, South Carolina; Annapolis, Maryland; Hudson, New York (where a house built in 1898 is now a fourplex next to a restaurant and hotel) and Providence, Rhode Island (where a Missing Middle-style apartment building stands next to, and is just a smidge taller than, a single-family home).

Look and Learn

During a Missing Middle walking tour (or an online or meeting room presentation) ask questions of the participants.

When viewing a Missing Middle example, ask them to identify, among other features:

- The building type (duplex, fourplex, etc.)
- Characteristics that help the multifamily property blend in with the surrounding single-family homes
- Number of floors and entries
- Parking locations
- Shared spaces
- Setback distances
- Lot sizes
- The frontage type (porch, stoop, zero-step entry, etc.)



▲ Missing Middle-type residences in (clockwise from top) Charlotte, North Carolina; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Providence, Rhode Island; and Saratoga Springs, New York

- If promoting the tour to the public, create and distribute outreach materials, such as printed flyers, news releases and social media posts.
- Prepare a walking tour schedule and handout with a map that shows the route. The handout can include pages for notes or sketches, as well as information and links.
- As participants RSVP, send them a confirmation and information such as contact numbers for the organizer(s); a list of what to bring (and not bring); instructions for where and when to meet; how to get to the meeting spot and where to park, etc.
- If the response to the invitation or promotional efforts is large, organize the attendees into walking tour teams, with 5 to 15 participants per tour guide. (If needed, recruit additional guides or helpers.)
- Before setting out on the tour, inform the participants about the safety protocols and etiquette. Encourage people to ask questions during the tour, share their observations and take photographs — but remind them that the homes on the tour are occupied, so any pictures taken and shared should not invade the residents' privacy.
- As a tour guide or organizer, be attentive to the audience. Go slowly and take breaks as needed.
- At or after the tour's conclusion, ask the participants to complete a survey about the experience and Missing Middle Housing. Ask whether they would like to help the community generate more housing options and encourage walkability.

If an area has more Missing Middle Housing examples than can be seen during one outing, plan additional walks! ■

Turn the page for more ways to take action. ►

Take Action

Encourage the Creation of Missing Middle Housing

Local leaders, community members and housing advocates can help spread the word about what Missing Middle Housing is — and why it's so important for people of all ages, life stages and incomes



▲ To maximize the presence of natural light on two deep, oddly-sized lots in South Jordan, Utah, the conventional townhouse is flipped on its side by orienting the longer facade along the walkway. Each two-story “mews home” (a mews is a rambling, pedestrian-only path) has its own outdoor space and direct access parking.

• Organize a ‘Missing Middle Walking Tour’

The value of such an in-person or online show-and-tell is discussed on page 28. Such an activity can be planned and led by an individual or a group, with each member taking on a different task for the event.

• Identify Community Partners

Missing Middle Housing benefits many stakeholders, from renters to homebuyers to landowners to builders. Community groups, professional associations and nonprofit organizations representing different populations can work together for the benefit of all involved.

• Seek a Change to the Zoning Code

Members of a city or county council, a planning board, or even a state legislature can be asked to pursue this option — and to do so by making specific, incremental changes rather than taking on a revamp of an entire zoning code. Learn more by reading the AARP guide *Re-Legalizing Middle Housing* (opposite), so named because although this “middle” housing type is now largely missing, it once existed and can be a common housing option again.

• Promote Pilot Projects

City-, county- or town-owned parcels, particularly in older neighborhoods, can be ideal sites to test, or pilot, Missing Middle Housing development. The results of these studies can inform needed changes to development standards and encourage private developers and lenders to pursue similar projects.

• Talk About the Need for Housing Options

As a smaller-scale home type, Missing Middle Housing is one of many housing options needed by communities and people of all ages. Point out how Missing Middle homes are especially useful for young adults entering the housing market, as well as single adults, empty nesters and retirees who don't need the space provided by (or the upkeep responsibilities of) a large single-family home.

• Spread the Word

Share this guide and other Missing Middle Housing resources (see opposite page) with local influencers, such as elected officials and real estate professionals. If you share materials via social media, please use the hashtag *#MissingMiddleHousing*.

Learn More

WEBSITE: MissingMiddleHousing.com

Information and resources, including ***Missing Middle Housing: Thinking Big and Building Small to Respond to Today's Housing Crisis***, a book by Opticos founder Daniel Parolek, published by Island Press.

WEBSITE: AARP.org/MissingMiddleHousing

Information and resources, including, ***Re-Legalizing Middle Housing: A Model Act and Guide to Statewide Legislation***, a free, downloadable resource from AARP Government Affairs.

FREE HOUSING AND ZONING PUBLICATIONS FROM AARP: AARP.org/LivableLibrary

The ABCs of ADUs:

A Guide to Accessory Dwelling Units and How They Expand Housing Options for People of All Ages

A primer for elected officials, policymakers, local leaders, homeowners, consumers and others, *The ABCs of ADUs* is an award-winning, 24-page introductory and best-practices guide for how towns, cities, counties and states can include ADUs in their mix of housing options.

Accessory Dwelling Units:

A Step-by-Step Guide to Design and Development

Featuring ADU policies and projects from Austin, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Oakland, California; and Washington, D.C., this 113-page design catalog contains information about financing and budgeting for an ADU project as well as visuals that show how ADUs can be easily designed to serve people of differing ages and abilities.

Accessory Dwelling Units:

Model State Act and Local Ordinance

This 56-page downloadable guide can be used by state and local elected officials in support of policies and legislation to allow ADUs.

Enabling Better Places:

A Handbook for Improved Neighborhoods

Small-scale land use and zoning changes can help communities revitalize and thrive. Learn how in this 24-page publication (created by AARP with the Congress for the New Urbanism) for local leaders and community advocates.

AARP HomeFit Guide

Learn how to make a house or apartment safe, comfortable and a great fit — for people of all ages. The 36-page publication and its downloadable worksheets are available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese.

Making Room: Housing for a Changing America

Filled with infographics, ideas, solutions, photographs and floor plans from the National Building Museum exhibition of the same name, this 88-page publication is a rallying cry for a wider menu of housing options.

Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing

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ENDNOTES: 1. <https://www.reinventingparking.org> | 2. <https://www.reinventingparking.org/2015/06/how-much-does-one-parking-spot-add-to.html> | 3. <https://www.homeadvisor.com/cost/outdoor-living/pave-a-parking-lot/> | 4. <https://www.fixr.com/costs/build-parking-garage> | 5. <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/loans/auto-loans/total-cost-owning-car> | 6. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/06/18/upshot/cities-across-america-question-single-family-zoning.html>



What Is Missing Middle Housing — and Where Did It Go?

Across the United States, there is a mismatch between the available housing stock and what home buyers and renters want and needs.

The nation is mostly missing (and needs) a set of residential building types that exist in the middle of the continuum from detached single-family houses to large apartment buildings. So-called Missing Middle Housing is a critical part of the solution.

Created by AARP Livable Communities and Opticos Design, ***Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing*** provides local leaders, building and planning professionals, and involved community members with information about what Missing Middle Housing is, where it still exists — and why it's time for communities nationwide to return this versatile residence type to America's housing portfolio.



FOURPLEX



COURTYARD BUILDING



LIVE/WORK

Find this publication and more at
[AARP.org/MissingMiddleHousing](https://www.aarp.org/MissingMiddleHousing)

See the cover and inside pages for more examples of Missing Middle Housing.

FROM TOP: BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA | PASADENA, CALIFORNIA | BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA (OPTICOS DESIGN)

February 10 2026

Concerning the land use proposal: Lot B is north of my property and this will be the third time this issue has been brought before City Council. I do not think this land should be developed. There are two issues with approving this area for development: environment, and accessibility. The first 13 pages of the land use documents repeatedly talk about preserving wetlands. As my documentation demonstrates, this area is a wetland. I have included the original flyover from 2017, a series of drone photographs and two hydrology reports. If this area is infilled and developed it will entirely flood my pasture land. The setbacks previously discussed in City Council meetings were insufficient in a heavy precipitation year.

To my knowledge, there is no access to Karrow on the west. There is no 310 permit from the Flathead Conservation district and no approval from the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Cheryl Watkins
143 Old Morris Trail
Whitefish MT

Public comment regarding wetlands on / near Location B

The spring of 2017 was a record breaker for precipitation and many of the small streams in the Flathead Valley were at historic flood levels. To record this event and use it for design input, we flew the property and took photos that the engineers were then able to overlay on the topographic maps for reference. The consultants were then able to work out the proposed and use map, giving consideration to these constraints.

The area of this stormwater conveyance is to be left in its current land use designation and zoning designation. This is noted on the Land Use Map.



Photo taken March 24, 2017 looking eastward over the property towards Jon K and Wright Furnace.

4.2 Wetlands

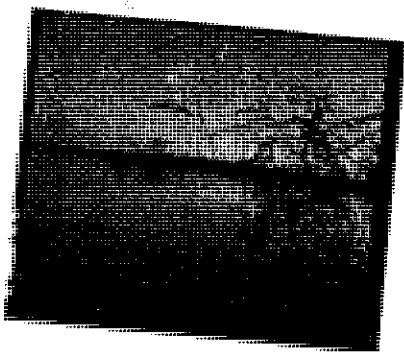
Calypso Ecological Consulting provided a wetland delineation of the property. There is approximately 14 acres of wetland along the drainage conveyance in the back third of the property. The wetlands and the associated buffer/setbacks outlined in the City's Water Quality Protection Standards are used to set the land use patterns, particularly the left in its existing land use category.

Richard pointed out with 1st

4.3 Groundwater

Groundwater monitoring will be needed across the site as the development moves to the subdivision and infrastructure development phase.

meeting - no room for mitigation / not enough room



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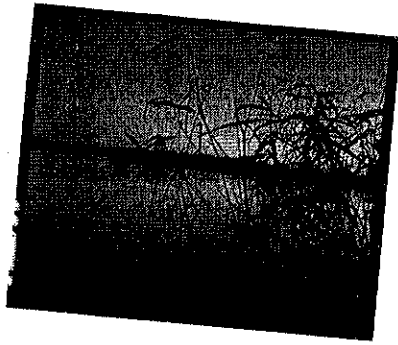
RE: Proposed Land Use Action - Whitefish 57 LLC / Eagle Enterprises

Dear Board Members,

Aquatic Resources Consulting Inc. has been asked to review, research, and comment on the natural resource issues and concerns related to the proposed amendment to the City of Whitefish's Growth Policy. We submitted our concerns with the original proposal to the City's Planning Board in a letter dated February 15, 2018. Since that time, we have continued to review and assess new proposals as they were developed as well as conduct other research and field work to assess the proposal in its current form. As a result of our research and review of pertinent information, we had developed and continue to have serious concerns about this proposal. Given the potential for significant adverse effects to our precious natural resources, we continue to believe that the proposed amendment is not in accord or agreement with the overall goals and objectives of the City of Whitefish. At a very minimum, there is the potential for significant impacts to the natural resources that the applicant has failed to consider and address. We will outline our current concerns below.

Proposal History

This proposed project has changed significantly over the last 6 months. The developer has taken essentially two different approaches to this issue. The original proposal, which called for high density residential development on both sides of the property with impacts to the central wetland/intermittent stream complex, received substantial comment and was ultimately withdrawn. A "second" modified proposal has been submitted for review. During the review process, several modifications have been submitted to arrive at what is being currently considered by the City Council. We have attempted to review each of the proposals and have done our best to make sure that this correspondence directly responds to the current proposal. However, the availability of documents for review has not been straight forward and we have to acknowledge that some iterations may have been overlooked. We have specifically tailored our comments based on the revised proposal called **"Whitefish 57/Eagle Enterprises Subarea Plan- An Amendment to the City of Whitefish Growth Policy"** which was submitted in July, 2018 (we are using the revised version dated July 31, 2018) and on the map titled **"Whitefish 57/Eagle Enterprises Sub-Area**



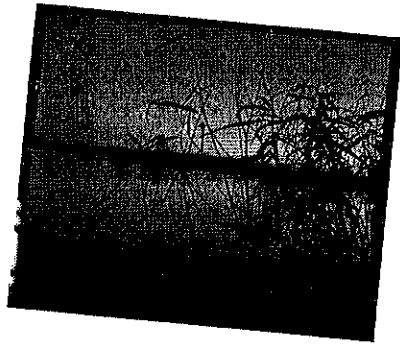
Aquatic
Resources
Consulting Inc.

In response to this issue (an implicit verification of the concern), the applicants have currently responded by modifying their proposal to exclude the wetland complex and are proposing a change in zoning only for ground east of the wetland complex (pg 11 & 12). In doing so, they argue and state that this will be handled by a future developer and application. They assert (directly or indirectly) that these areas/issues should be left out of the current discussion and proposal because they will be handled at some later date. The problem with this argument is relatively straight forward. The review process requires that proposals be evaluated to see if they are consistent with neighboring property usage. For example, if you are proposing urban residential development the existence of other similar development in the immediate vicinity is supportive of further development. In this case, the approval of the current proposal (east of the wetland complex) can be used, and it is realistic to predict that it will be used, as justification to allow for development west of the wetland complex. This is a classic divid and conquer later tactic. We can't get what we really want now (development on both sides of the wetland complex) because of adverse effects so we'll propose one half now (the east half) and build it. Then, we'll come back and propose the other half (the western half) and argue that it is consistent with existing usage and it is unreasonable to stop us solely because of some nominal impacts to a wetland complex that you already allowed us to impact.

Issue #2- Formal Wetland Delineation Report & Mapping

Unless there is a map that we have not seen, the applicant has failed to produce any map which clearly shows the exact location of the wetland. The City's planning staff report also states that "maps are planning level meaning field verification and additional work is necessary in order to determine the exact location of environmentally sensitive areas." In their original submittal, the applicant recognized that past developments (including Great Northern Heights Phases 1 & 2) have increased the water flowing into and the size (aerial extent) of the wetland complex (reference applicants second ecological assessment which is not dated). In their environmental assessment, the applicants make reference to a previous wetland delineation report done back in the 1990's. Do they have a copy of this report and why is it not included and made available to the public? On page 12 of their proposal (under the heading of Wetlands), the applicant states: "Calypso Ecological Consulting provided a wetland delineation of the property. There is approximately 14 acres of wetland along the drainage conveyance in the back third of the property. The wetlands and the associated buffer/setbacks outlined in the City's Water Quality Protection Standards are used to set the land use patterns, particularly the western 35 acres will be left in its existing land use category." Where is Calypso's wetland delineation report and map for review, verification, and evaluation? How can any reference made by the applicant be evaluated without this map and information? Since it has been mentioned that recent development has increased the wetland's size and the amount of water it receives, it seems that comparison of these two wetland delineations would be very important in predicting future changes as a result of the proposed development.

If the most recent wetland delineation was done in 2010 as the applicant states, a new wetland delineation could be reasonable. And, it would seem that an



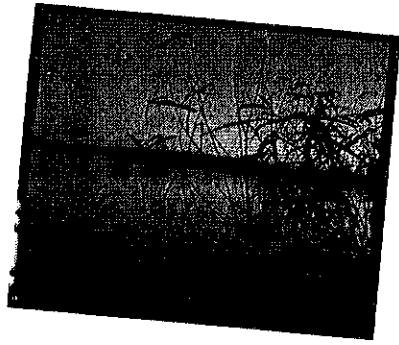
independent verification of this delineation might be warranted. We do not agree with the applicant when they assert they are in compliance with the city's Water Quality Protection Ordinance and growth policies and setbacks when they have not shown where exactly the wetland or its boundaries are. How can you possibly assess whether their proposal is in compliance with the setbacks and protections demanded by the City's Water Quality Protection Ordinance when we do not know where the wetland boundaries are, what the actual proposed setbacks are, and how these two relate to the proposed "Open Space"?

In response to this issue, the applicants have modified their proposal and are proposing development to the east of the wetland complex. The fact remains, however, that they are proposing a substantive change to zoning and to the land use immediately adjacent to this wetland complex. The wetland complex exists and has value and the City's own ordinances demand that it be incorporated into any development and that it be protected (page 3 of applicant's report). One of the simplest ways to help resolve this issue is to simply produce a formal wetland delineation for all to see and review. This would allow for anyone to quickly and easily determine if the proposed project (in whichever form) is impacting the wetland and is in actual compliance with the City's Critical Areas Ordinance. The fact that the applicant has chosen to modify the project substantively without making their wetland delineation and mapping available seems highly questionable.

Issue #3- Increases to water volume and aerial extent

If previous phases of the development in the area including Great Northern Heights have increased the volume of water delivered to the wetland complex, what will the effects of this new development be? At a very minimum, the following questions all seem relevant and reasonable to answer at this stage and to consider:

- Will this proposed development also increase the water volume delivered to the wetland complex?
- Will the current wetland increase in size?
- Since the current proposal does not include the wetland complex, is the proposed development in accord with the setbacks set forth by the City's Critical Area Ordinance?
- How can the City even make a determination as to whether the proposed housing and lot developments are in accord with the Ordinance when no official wetland delineation has been provided.
- And lastly, how can the City assure that this proposal adequately protects and buffers the wetland complex when no information has been provided to address if the aerial extent of the wetland complex increases? Remember, the applicants have already acknowledged that Great Northern Heights is increasing the amount of water delivered to the complex. It would be very reasonable to assume that the current proposal will also increase the water that is conveyed.



Issue #4- Road Extension and Impacts

There is discord within the current proposal and accompanying documents as to the planned roadways and these could have significant impacts on the wetlands. This discord must be resolved. The latest version of the applicant's "Land Use Map (Exhibit A) clearly shows to large arrows indicating a road. On the map, the southern large arrow shows the extension of JP Avenue extending westward and crossing (impacting) the wetland. The northern arrow comes off an interior road and is directed at and to the wetland. From this, it is very reasonable to say the intent is to extend into and across the wetland at either one or both of these locations (that is exactly what the map is showing). The map is in discord with the variable verbiage contained within the current proposal (revised July 31, 2018). On page 4, they say "*Development of a connection from JP to Karrow Avenue would occur in the future with some other plan and developer.*" On page 8, the revised proposal states "*In support of the City's Transportation Plans, the proposed land use map includes transportation linkages with the extension of JP Road and the extension of Baker Avenue. The proposed subarea plan proposed expansion westward rather than following the strip down Highway 93. To accomplish this goal, the developers must extend the City's infrastructure to the west as called out in the City's long range planning documents.*" On page 10, it states "*The long range transportation plan also shows an extension of JP Road west to the intersection with Karrow Avenue. However, this road alignment crosses one of the widest sections of wetland located on the subject property. The WF 57/Eagle Enterprises Plan continues to show this extension to the west but this is not anything that this developer will plan or develop.*" On page 13, they state that "slightly higher urban density may be extended to JP along the Baker Corridor but this use is separated from Great Northern Heights by the grade changes resulting from JP Road construction." Then, they assert on page 14 that "There is concern by the Great Northern Heights neighborhood over the use and extension of JP Road. It was pointed out during the neighborhood meeting that this connection is promoted and required by the Whitefish Transportation Planning Documents adopted over the last 20 years." There is a very real problem with the macro-scale transportation plan being applied to justify the micro-scale extension of JP Road. The more general transportation plan is a "broad brush" planning tool and cannot be simply applied to a much smaller scale area with site specific consideration of impacts and resource impacts. Either the transportation plan failed to look in specific detail at the natural resource impacts or the City of Whitefish knowingly and with intent has considered the wetland complex and has intentionally proposed to adversely impact a large wetland/intermittent stream complex. Given these two choices, we believe it is much more likely that the transportation document was developed on a much larger scale that lack consideration of site specific issues and considerations. Given verbiage that attempts to justify and support the extension of JP Road and the fact that this extension is shown on the applicants' map, it does not seem accurate when they assert that this will be done in the future by some other landowner/developer. A cynical interpretation could be that by including veiled references in the verbiage and maps, the groundwork is being set to later argue that this westward extension was already examined and approved.



The following questions arise based on the above issues:

- Why does the map continue to show the westward extension of JP Road?
- Why does the applicant attempt to justify the westward roadway expansion and show it on their maps?
- Why does the applicant seek to imply that this westward expansion has already been approved by the City of Whitefish based on a dated large scale planning document?

Given the above concerns and questions, the following recommendations are made:

- If it is not to be considered, then all reference to any westward extension of JP Road should be removed and stricken from the proposal, supporting documentation, and maps. And, it should be specifically set forth that no authorization for such an extension is being sought, considered, or authorized by the proposal.
- Also, any westward extension of the interior (unnamed) road should also be removed and stricken from the proposal, supporting documentation, and maps. And, it should be specifically set forth that no authorization for such an extension is being sought, considered, or authorized by the proposal.

Given that the applicant continues to reference extension of JP Road westward, the following questions should all be considered:

- What are the impacts of the required roadway?
- What are the specifics of the roadway (including top width, fill, composition, culverts, etc.)?
- What are the impacts of the culverts on water flow in the main channel?
- What efforts have been proposed to maintain unimpeded hydraulic connection through the road fill and what are the potential effects if the hydraulic connection is impeded or interrupted?
- By severing the wetland into two separate components (north and south), will the entire area continue to function at the same level and will both the quantity and existing diversity be maintained? Also, will the southern wetland, which would then be much smaller and separated from the larger northern wetland, continue to function as a wetland and will it maintain its current biological function?
- Will wildlife continue to utilize the northern wetland at the same level? Currently, there is wildlife which is proximal to the wetland and will this be driven out from the area? Will this wildlife, if driven out, continue to return to utilize the northern wetland? And, personal testimony suggests that there is a large biological component of animals that live predominately to the south of the wetland complex that currently travel to the wetland. Will this continue or will the roadway act as a barrier?



Issue #5- Stormwater Conveyance

Very little information is presented on where and how stormwater runoff and basic drainage will be dealt with. The applicant, on page 12, attempt to address this entire complex issue in 7 sentences.

Given the fact that there is a known jurisdictional wetland and an intermittent stream channel in the middle of the proposed area, the following questions should be addressed:

- Where will stormwater and drainage be collected, how will it be conveyed, and where will this water be discharged?
- What plan and efforts will be made regarding stormwater runoff for the proposed interior roads? Will this water be collected and conveyed and, if so, to where?
- If stormwater is to be discharged into the wetland complex or channel, what will the effects of this be on the wetland or channel?
- If stormwater is to be discharged into the wetland complex or channel, how will water quality be maintained? Is the developer willing to treat the stormwater on-site prior to discharge to the wetland complex/channel?

Issue #6- Re-vegetation and Weed Control

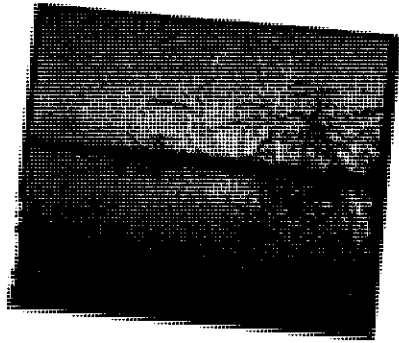
No mention in the proposal is made of any re-vegetation effort within the setback area or the wetland complex. Nor is there any mention of nor a commitment to plan for and implement a noxious weed abatement program throughout the site. Lastly, the current map shows a proposed road literally touching the boundary of the re-zoned area and is quite close to the wetland complex. Both are valid concerns that should be addressed. It would be very typical to propose adding a re-vegetation component to improve the wetland complex by adding more diverse fauna with appropriate species. At a minimum, the following should be suggested:

- Given the loss of existing, neighboring open space adjacent to the wetland complex, a rigorous re-vegetation plan/proposal that would increase diversity AND provide a vegetative buffer (visual and otherwise) would seem reasonable.
- At a very minimum, a conscious effort should be made to treat existing noxious weeds on the site and to prevent the establishment of noxious weeds on the disturbed areas throughout this project.

Issue #7- Impacts to water quality

Little information is known about the proposed development's impacts to sediment, turbidity and stormwater runoff. Much more detailed information is required to adequately assess these impacts and to insure they are minimized or mitigated. The following are all needed and should be suggested:

- More details are needed to evaluate the effects of the disturbance.
- No real mention is made as to how these unspecified and unknown effects will be dealt with.
- Given the potential aerial extent of disturbed ground it would seem prudent to have much more extensive knowledge of what provisions will be made to



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Plan Land Use Map” which is part of that amended proposal submitted (marked as *Exhibit A*).

General Setting

The basis for our evaluation of this proposal is focused on impacts to natural resources and the known wetland complex and intermittent drainage in the subject parcel. The applicant has made repeated references to the wetland complex in each of its proposals and it is accepted that this is a large jurisdictional wetland of significant value hydrologically, biologically, and socially. The applicant’s own words put this as comprising 14 acres (reference page 12). Given the size and value biologically and socially, it is extremely valid for the City of Whitefish to duly consider any and all adverse impacts to this wetland area and the City’s very own guiding documents and regulations mandate that they protect these areas and attributes.

We have included photographs of the wetland complex below and on the following page. These photographs were taken from adjoining properties looking at the subject property. In each of the photographs, there is a marked change in the type of vegetation and color of the vegetation which serves as a very good indicator for the wetland.

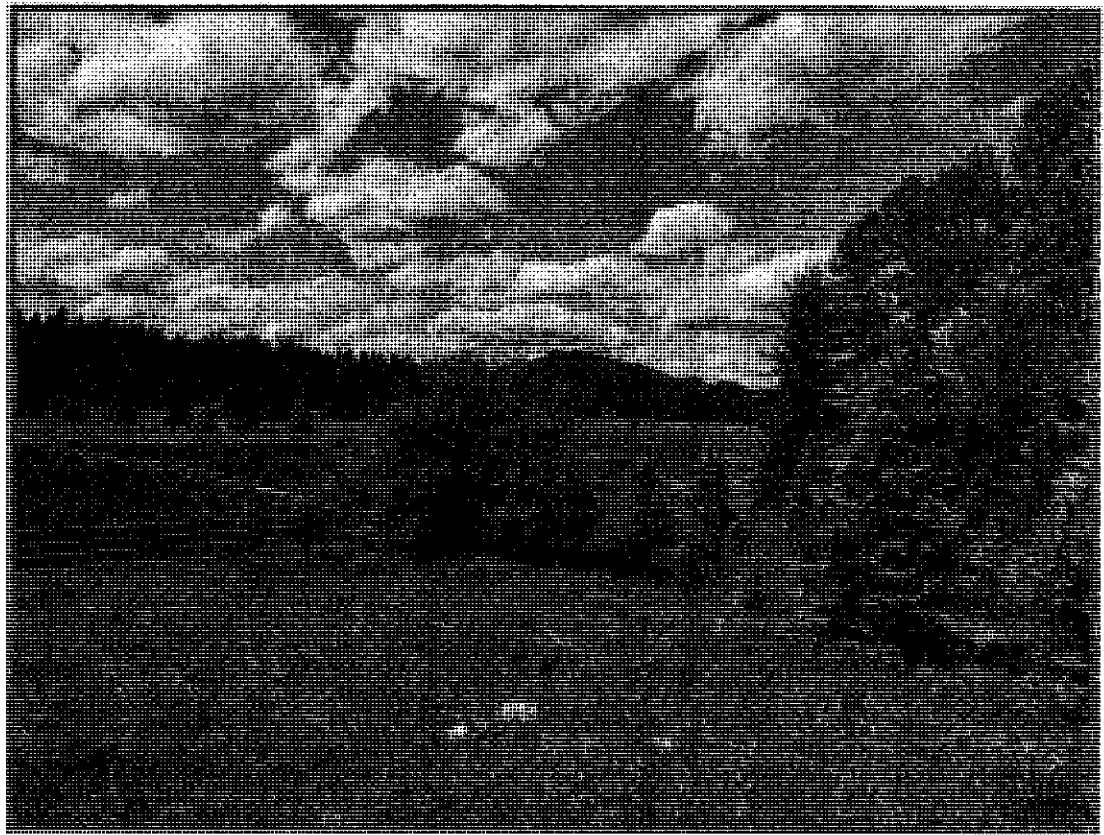
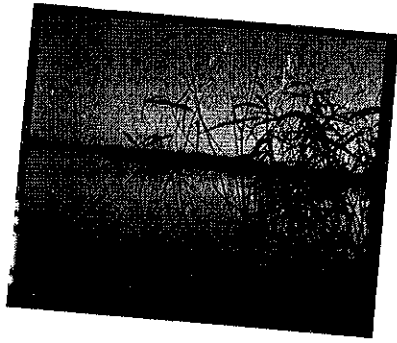


Photo Exhibit #1. This photograph was taken on June 5, 2018 from the northwestern corner of the Great Northern Heights subdivision looking in a general northwestern direction. This clearly shows the extensive wetland complex (apparent by the darker colored vegetation). Note that this is also the location of the proposed extension of JP Road.

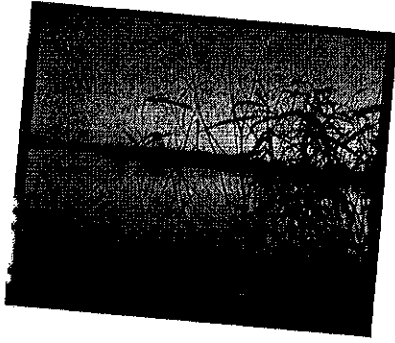


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Photo Exhibit #2. *This photograph was taken on June 18, 2018 from the northern boundary of the subject property with a view directly to the south. This clearly shows the extensive wetland complex (apparent by the darker colored vegetation). Note that this photograph shows the location of the second road location shown on the Land Use Map.*

We have also included aerial photographs of the broader wetland/intermittent stream complex which were taken on June 26, 2018 from a private plane.



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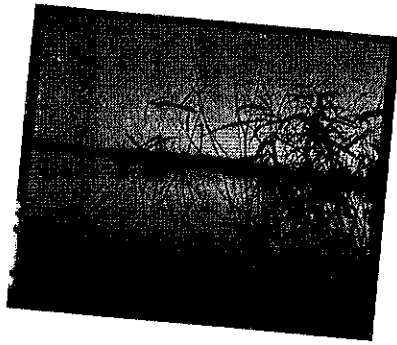
Photo Exhibit #3. This photograph was taken from the air on the morning of June 26, 2018. The central portion of the subject property is shown and the extensive wetland/intermittent stream complex is clearly seen by the darker vegetation. The northwestern portion of the Great Northern Heights subdivision and the Watkins/Gordon property are seen in the lower left portion of the photograph.



Photo Exhibit #4. This photograph was taken from the air on the morning of June 26, 2018. The central portion of the subject property is shown and the extensive wetland/intermittent stream complex is clearly seen by the darker vegetation. The northwestern portion of the Great Northern Heights subdivision and the Gordon/Watkins property are seen in the lower left portion of the photograph.

Water is contributed to this wetland complex from Great Northern Heights, the Gordon Watkins property, and from drainages on the western portion of the subject property.





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General Discussion of Changes to Proposal

The developer has modified their proposed project several times. There is a known jurisdictional wetland and intermittent drainage that bisects the property into two distinct parcels. Originally, the developer proposed to change the zoning and sought approval to have high density residential housing on both the east and western halves with JP Road being extended through the wetland/intermittent stream complex to provide access to the western portion of the development. Facing opposition and reasonable concerns, the original proposal was withdrawn and a new proposal has been brought forward.

Under the new plan, the developer has modified the proposal and is concentrating on the eastern half of the property that lies to the east of the wetland/intermittent stream complex. This revised plan still includes significant land use changes directly adjacent to this wetland/intermittent stream complex that could have significant adverse affects. Also, there seems to still exist confusion as to what the applicant is actually proposing and what the impacts to this natural resource area will be. As an example, there is the unresolved question regarding the westward extension of JP Road. At first glance, this appears to have been dropped in the latest proposal which, in places, says that this will not be done. Yet, in other locations of the proposal, it says it will be done but by a different developer at a later date. The latest proposed map shows an arrow extending JP Road across the wetland along the subject property's southern boundary and the possibility of another road crossing the wetland at the norther portion of the property. If the road and its impacts to this area have been abandoned, why is there still verbiage justifying the road still present in the proposal and why does the map still show these areas. Another example is whether the wetland area is actually been set aside and protected. The latest map makes no delineation or reference to the wetland and open space, yet verbiage in the report refers to the project having setbacks from the wetland and this area being protected.

Following are what we believe are to be the key points of the proposal as they relate to the natural resource concerns.

Issue #1- Environmental Constraints require additional study

The applicants state (*page 11*), that "Areas identified with environmental constraints require additional study to determine the feasibility and intensity of future development." How is it possible to reconcile their statement with the fact that they acknowledge the presence of environmental constraints (ex.- jurisdictional wetlands) and yet are proposing to move forward with planning without the additional study or information they say is required? The applicant may assert that the WGM Group Engineers flying over the drainage and Calypso Ecological Consulting's wetland delineation are all that is required for this level. However, their counter argument lacks credibility unless they are willing to provide the complete report and supporting documentation from both WGM Group and Calypso Ecological Consulting.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

In early 2018 Aquatic Resources Consulting Inc. was specifically asked to review natural resource related issues and concerns regarding a proposal from Whitefish 57, LLC for annexation and development of a property located in Section 1, Township 30 North Range 22 W. We submitted a letter to the City of Whitefish Planning Board on February 15, 2018.

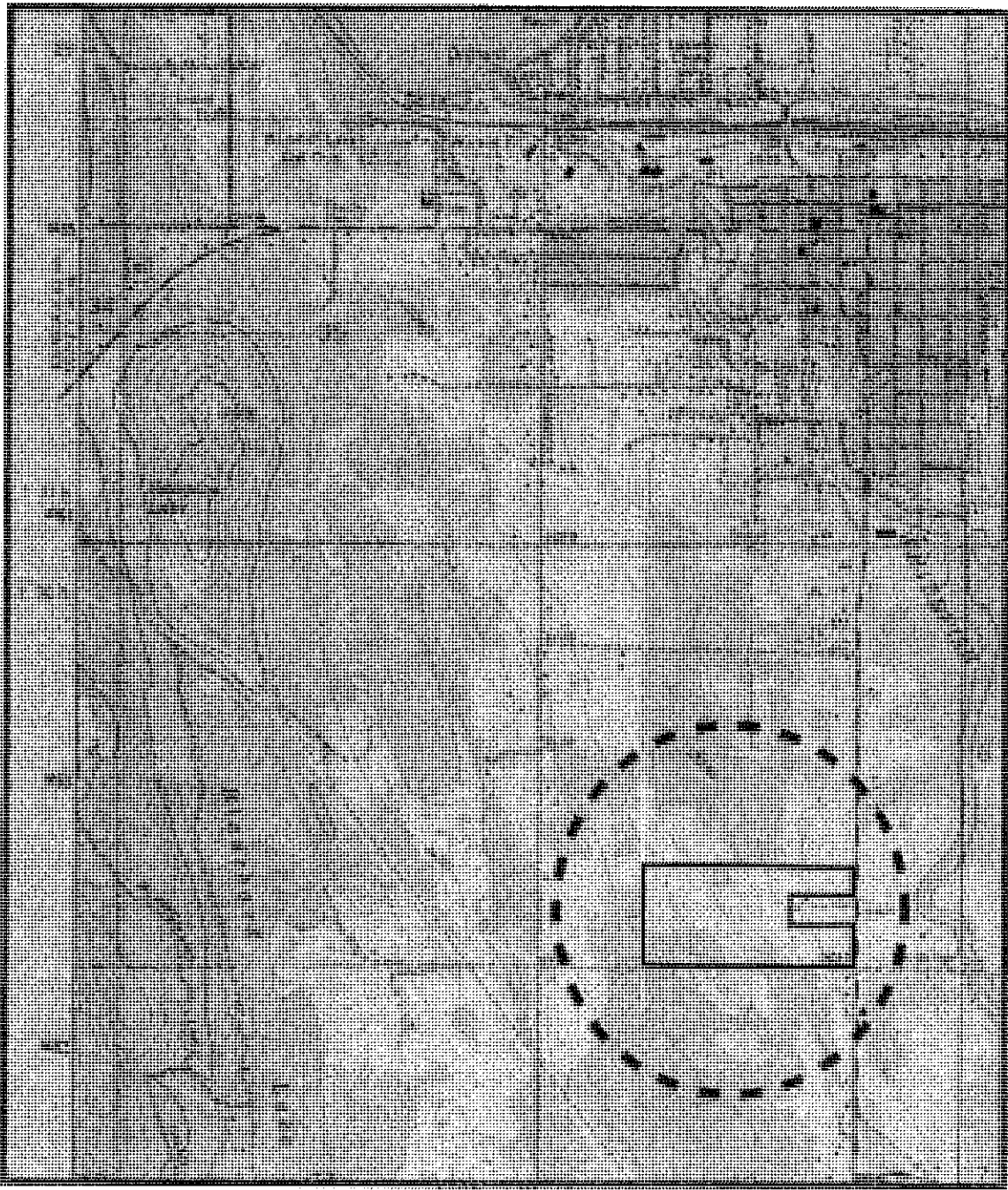
Subsequently, we were asked to study the area (research historic and public information) as well as develop new information as appropriate to accurately assess the subject property and to consider potential impacts and areas of concern as they relate to the Whitefish 57 proposal. To this end, we conducted extensive field work during the spring and summer of 2018 (multiple site inspections spanning several months) to document the existing hydrologic conditions in and around the subject property.

Several different revised proposals have been submitted to the City of Whitefish and the current proposal was forwarded to the City Council by the Planning Board without a recommendation (the Planning Board was unable to reach consensus on whether to recommend adoption or denial). We submitted a letter to the City of Whitefish City Council regarding our assessment and concerns of the current Whitefish 57/Eagle Enterprises proposal which was dated August 3, 2018. It is assumed we will continue to evaluate any new proposals for the development of the subject property.

This report constitutes the information that we have developed to date and could be supplemented as more information comes to light or additional knowledge is acquired. It should be specifically pointed out that this report does not constitute a definitive wetland delineation for or on the subject property (because we had no legal access to the subject property which would be necessary for a formal wetland delineation). Instead, this report depends on utilizing all available public information as well as specific field data collection on the properties completely surrounding the subject property.

GEOGRAPHIC SETTING & LOCATION

The general subject area is located in the S 1/2 of Section 1, Township 30 North Range 22 West in Flathead County, Montana. Below is a map showing the general location of the study area using the U.S.G.S. 7.5' Topographic Quadrangle Map (Whitefish Quadrangle) as a base. The topographic base map was published in 1962 with the original topography developed from photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken in 1956 and field checked in 1962 prior to publication. The general location of the study area is shown by the dashed blue circle and the approximate area of the Whitefish 57 proposal is shown by a solid black line.



We have also shown the general study area on an aerial photographic base map below. The base is a 2013 aerial photograph. Similar to the previous topographic map on the preceding page, we have shown the approximate boundaries of the Whitefish 57 proposal in solid black lines and the general study area in a blue dashed circle. For reference, the Great Northern Heights subdivision is seen in the lower right of the air photo, the Whitefish Assembly of God church is in the center of the photo at the upper boundary, and Highway 93 runs along the right side of the photograph.



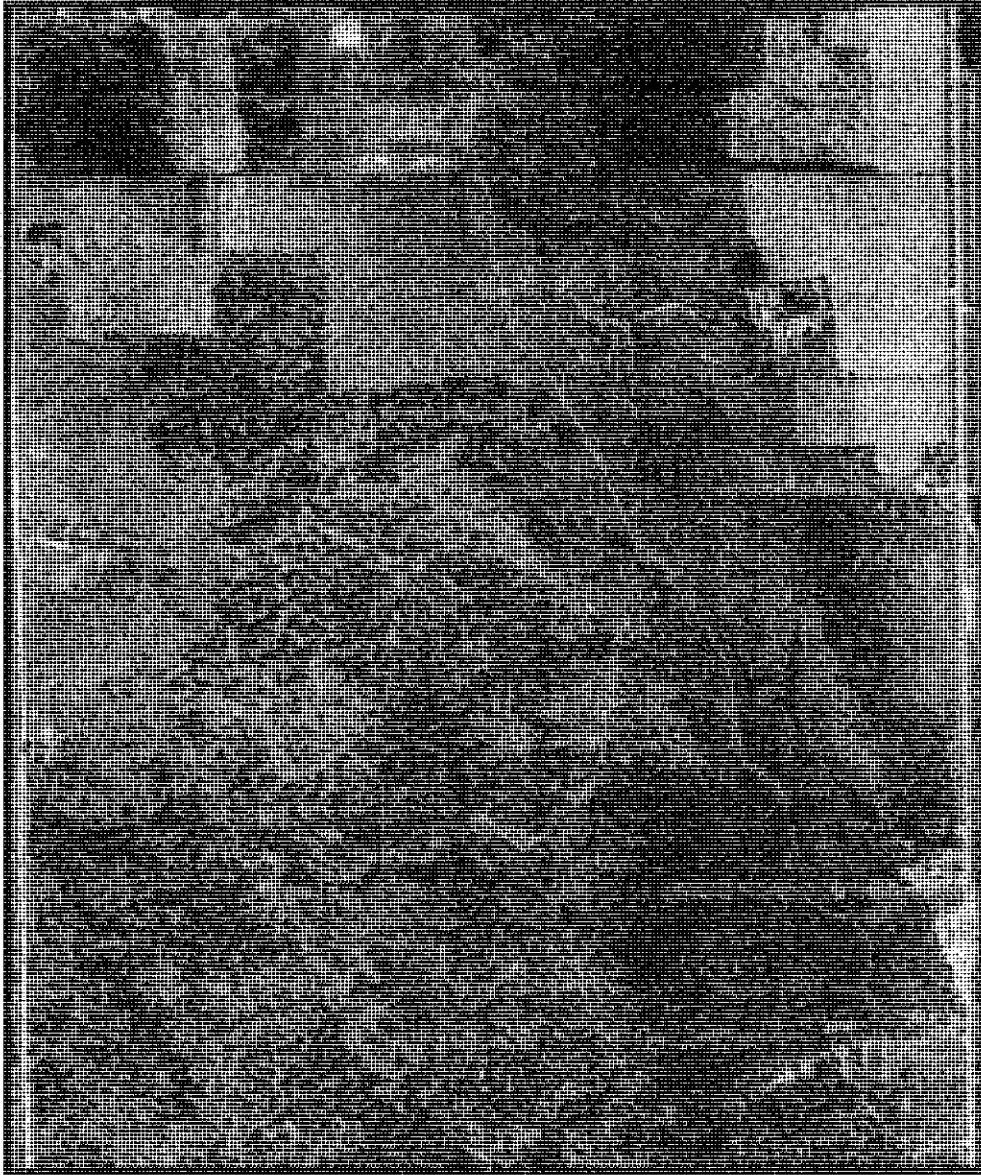
HISTORICAL AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

During the 20th and 21st century, aerial photographs were taken and can often be an excellent resource for information to document land use and natural resource attributes. For our study area, we were able to locate at various local governmental agency offices photographs going back to the 1930's at various governmental offices. Scanned copies of these photographs are found herein. There are also photographs from the 1990's to present that can be found on the Flathead County GIS database/website and these were also reviewed.

The following table lists the photographs that we were able to obtain, review, and analyze:

Year	Photo Number	Date Taken
1938	MI-1-7	5/21/1938
1946	GS-CJ #5-84	8/18/1946
1955	MI-27K-10	7/26/1955
1961	MI-2BB-208	7/26/1961
1974	A40-30029 #174-143	6/14/1974
1990	NAPP #2640-213	7/1/1990
2004	2004 Aerial Photograph	Unavailable
2005	2005 Aerial Photograph	Unavailable
2009	Aerial Photograph (LIDAR)	Unavailable
2009	Aerial Photograph (NAIP)	Unavailable
2011	Aerial Photograph (NAIP)	Unavailable
2013	Aerial Photograph	Unavailable

Each photograph has its own scale and care must be taken when comparing different photos. Where appropriate, we have tried to show the approximate location of the Whitefish 57 subject area. For brevity, we have only presented the aerial photographs that are most illuminating herein. We have included the 1955 and the 1974 aerial photograph as well as the 2013 photograph (used as the aerial photographic base map throughout this report). Although we only included the 1955 and 1974 historic aerial photographs in the report, we found no significant inconsistencies in the other aerial photographs and absolutely nothing is contained in these other photographs (not included) that is inconsistent with the statements and findings contained within this report.



***1955 Aerial
Photograph.***



***1974 Aerial
Photograph.***

SITE INSPECTIONS, FIELD WORK, AND DATA

As part of our analysis, we conducted field work and multiple site inspections during the months May through July of 2018. The timing of this field work and site inspections was intentional to try and document the situation throughout the high groundwater season. We were very specific in our attempts to document hydrologic inputs to the subject area's intermittent stream/wetland complex as well as attempting to document the outflow from the system. Again, we did not have access to the site, so we focused our data collection efforts on the adjoining properties.



Primary Field Site Locations. The above '13 aerial photograph shows the six primary field site locations where data was collected (shown by a red star). The subject property's approximate boundaries are shown with a solid black line.

The six primary field location sites are located to the north (2 sites) and south (4 sites) of the subject property. Of the four sites south of the subject property, three sites were located within

the Great Northern Heights Subdivision (southern, central, and northern) and one site was located on the Gordon/Watkins property. The remaining two field sites (both north of the subject property) were located on the Whitefish Assembly of God church property (southern and northern). The six primary field locations were each visited on multiple occasions and substantial data was collected. Other locations were utilized for general information (ex.- Luke property), but have not be specifically set forth. Additionally, during this season, we also performed an aerial reconnaissance via private flight over the site and surrounding areas to further document the situation and more clearly see the system as a whole. Besides the specific aerial photographs previously discussed, all flight photos were taken by Aquatic Resources Consulting Inc. and can be found throughout this section and are specifically referred to as flight photographs.

We have referred to this as an intermittent stream channel/wetland complex because that is the most accurate description of the area. There is a stream that flows through the area with a defined to semi-defined channel. By definition an intermittent stream does not flow year-round. In this case, the stream conveys flowing surface water within its channel boundaries for several months of the year (during the spring runoff and summer runoff months associated with snow-melt) and during the wetter fall months in direct response to rain/snow events.

The larger area (encompassing the stream channel and the surrounding area) is also saturated with groundwater during extended periods from early Spring well into the summer/late summer months. Intuitively, we understand that there is a direct connection and inter-relationship between the shallow groundwater and the surface water contained within the actual stream channel.

We have tried to characterize the geomorphology, hydrologic inputs and outflows, actual flow measurements, vegetation, and soils information into this document such that an accurate representation of the overall area is presented.

Geomorphology

The geomorphology of this area is in a state of transition within the study area. At the upper portion of the study area, throughout most of the Great Northern Heights Subdivision, the channel and associated floodplain and riparian corridor is contained in a central section between two Holocene terraces. The floodplain and riparian corridor is, elevationally, a few feet below the surrounding terraces and landforms. Being constrained by the terraces, the width of this floodplain and riparian corridor is fairly uniform and ranges from 90 feet in width to over 160 feet with an average belt width of approximately 130 feet (field verified). The narrowest areas are located immediately upstream of the culverted road crossings within Great Northern Heights subdivision and should be considered potentially altered (non-natural) widths.

As we move northward, the channel and floodplain becomes less entrenched as the terraces disappear and the system “opens” having access to the entire valley floor. This is occurring at the far northern corner of the Great Northern Heights subdivision and onto the Gordon/Watkins property. Not surprisingly, the belt width of the riparian corridor (as delineated by topography and wetland vegetation) ranges from 126 feet to 140 feet in this transition area (field verified).

By the time the channel has reached the subject property it is no longer confined by any terraces and the belt width increases dramatically. Beltwidth measurements of clear wetland vegetation indicators show widths ranging from 190 feet to 270 feet in width. Also, precise measurements of the active channel can be taken from the historic aerial photographs yielding widths of 190 feet for the channel's beltwidth (not including adjacent wetland areas beyond the active channel's migration pattern).

Similar measurements on the Whitefish Assembly of God church property were made and showed a belt width ranging from 130 feet to 180 feet.

Lastly, there is an anomalous issue that is apparent from a review of the historic aerial photographs. The active channel is overly straight and does not exhibit the standard plan view characteristics one would expect in this geomorphic setting. We suspect that sometime prior to the first aerial photograph (very early 1900's) the channel was straightened probably for agricultural reasons including an attempt at draining water from the area and increasing the agriculturally productive and useable ground. This is past channel straightening and the anomalous plan view characteristics is important to note because it would minimize the aerial extent and width of the channel, riparian corridor, and wetland complex. Stated differently, if the channel had been left unaltered or was returned to its natural plan form, the extent of the belt width of the channel and the associated wetland would actually be larger than what is currently seen.

Hydrologic Inputs

The most obvious source of water for the intermittent stream/wetland complex on the subject property is an intermittent stream channel that flows through the Great Northern Heights subdivision. However, there are multiple sources of water contributors to this intermittent stream/wetland complex. Using the same '13 aerial photograph as a base map, we have shown known hydrologic inputs to the system below.



Hydrologic Inputs. We have used the '13 aerial photograph as a base map to show the known hydrologic inputs to the system. The intermittent stream channel is shown as a blue line (solid line outside the subject property and dashed within the subject property). We have also shown by blue arrows known areas of water being delivered to the system (sources). These additional water sources generally fall into three categories: water from the Great Northern Heights subdivision (labeled GNH-E & GNH-W), water from the Gordon/Waikins property (labeled G/W #1 and G/W #2), and water conveyed to the system on the subject property (labeled WF57-S and WF57-N).

We will discuss these water sources in greater detail individually.

Intermittent Stream Channel

The intermittent stream channel (shown as a blue line on the Hydrologic Inputs map) flows through the Great Northern Heights subdivision and the northeastern corner of the Gordon/Watkins property, then enters the subject parcel (southern boundary) and runs in a general northerly/north-westerly direction to the northern property boundary where it crosses onto and is conveyed across the Whitefish Assembly of God church property. In some locations, the channel is extremely well defined and in others it is less defined. For example, the channel is relatively well defined in the Great Northern Heights subdivision, in portions of the subject property, and in portions of the Whitefish Assembly of God church property. In some areas, the channel is less defined and the stream channel and wetland seem to coalesce and the boundary between the active channel and the wetland becomes more obscure.

Great Northern Heights Subdivision Inputs

Portions of the subdivision are contributing water to the intermittent stream through natural surface water drainage, stormwater runoff drainage (collected and delivered), as well as conveyance of natural groundwater. On the map on the previous page, we have shown these sources with a dashed arrow and labeled them GNH-E & GNH-W. We have shown these as a dashed line simply because the full nature of these system inputs has not been fully characterized and quantified. Flow measurement data clearly shows that the stream channel conveys more water at the northern (downstream end) than enters at the southern (upstream end) of Great Northern Heights subdivision. As such, we can infer that this is a gaining stream reach with net system input of water from some combination of natural surface drainage, stormwater runoff drainage (human caused), and groundwater discharge to the system.

Gordon/Watkins Water Inputs

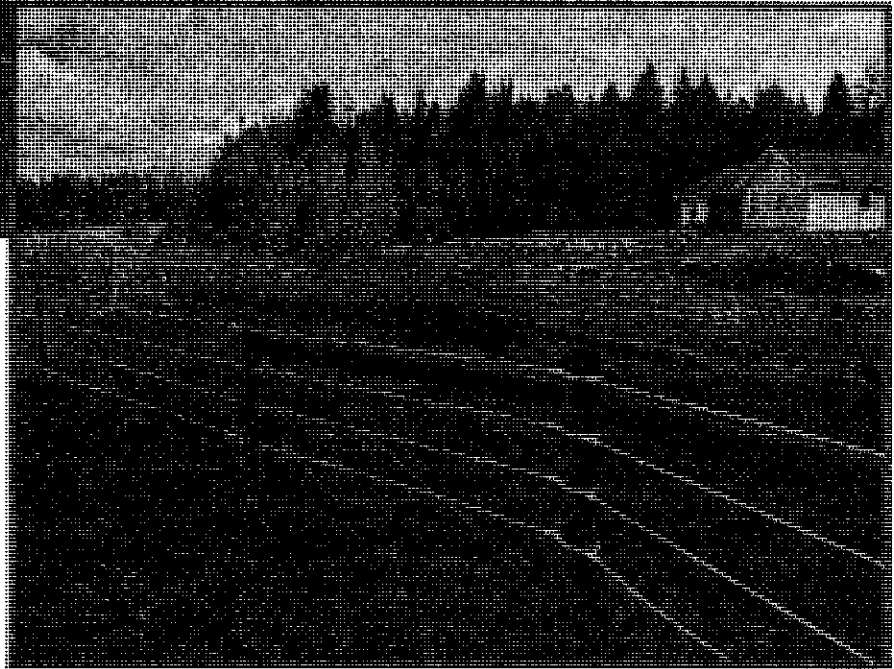
During the late spring and early summer months (April through July), water (both surface and groundwater) drains off the Gordon/Watkins property and is contributed to the system generally from the southwest to northeast direction or flow path. This surface water contribution is largely sheet flow across the landform and is not actively conveyed in a known channel. Instead, it flows across the surface topography and utilizes natural swales and depressions as it flows to the stream/wetland complex. Besides the surface water, shallow subsurface groundwater is also being contributed to the system flowing from the southwest to northeast (same general flow path as the surface water sheet flow). Groundwater input to the system from the Gordon/Watkins parcel is slightly delayed after the surface water flow; initiation of groundwater input probably lags behind surface water input by approximately 2-4 weeks, but continues long after surface water contribution has ceased. But, during the peak season (May and June), the entire area is completely saturated with shallow groundwater as well as flowing surface water all of which is delivered and conveyed to the intermittent stream and wetland complex.

A portion of this input water's flow is contained wholly on the Gordon/Watkins property and is contributed to the system as the stream channel/wetland complex crosses their property (this is labeled as G/W #1). Additionally, some of this water leaves the Gordon/Watkins property and flows across the Whitefish 57 property before entering the stream channel/wetland complex (this is labeled as G/W #2). We have tried to show this water input in the photographs on the following page. Note that these photographs were taken in early May near the onset and are not representative of the maximum flows or contributions (the photos are very conservative).



Photograph of G/W #1 Input. This photograph was taken on 5/2/2018 and shows surface water flowing from across the Gordon/Watkins property and entering the intermittent stream channel/wetland complex. At the time of this photograph, the ground was completely saturated with groundwater which was also flowing toward and into the stream/wetland system.

Photograph of G/W #1 Input. This photograph was also taken on 5/2/2018 and shows surface water flowing from across the Gordon/Watkins property and entering the intermittent stream channel/wetland complex. At the time of this photograph, the ground was completely saturated with groundwater which was also flowing toward and into the system. This photograph also clearly shows the complex as it crosses the Gordon/Watkins property on its way to the subject parcel. Note the abundance of wetland vegetation that is clearly visible.



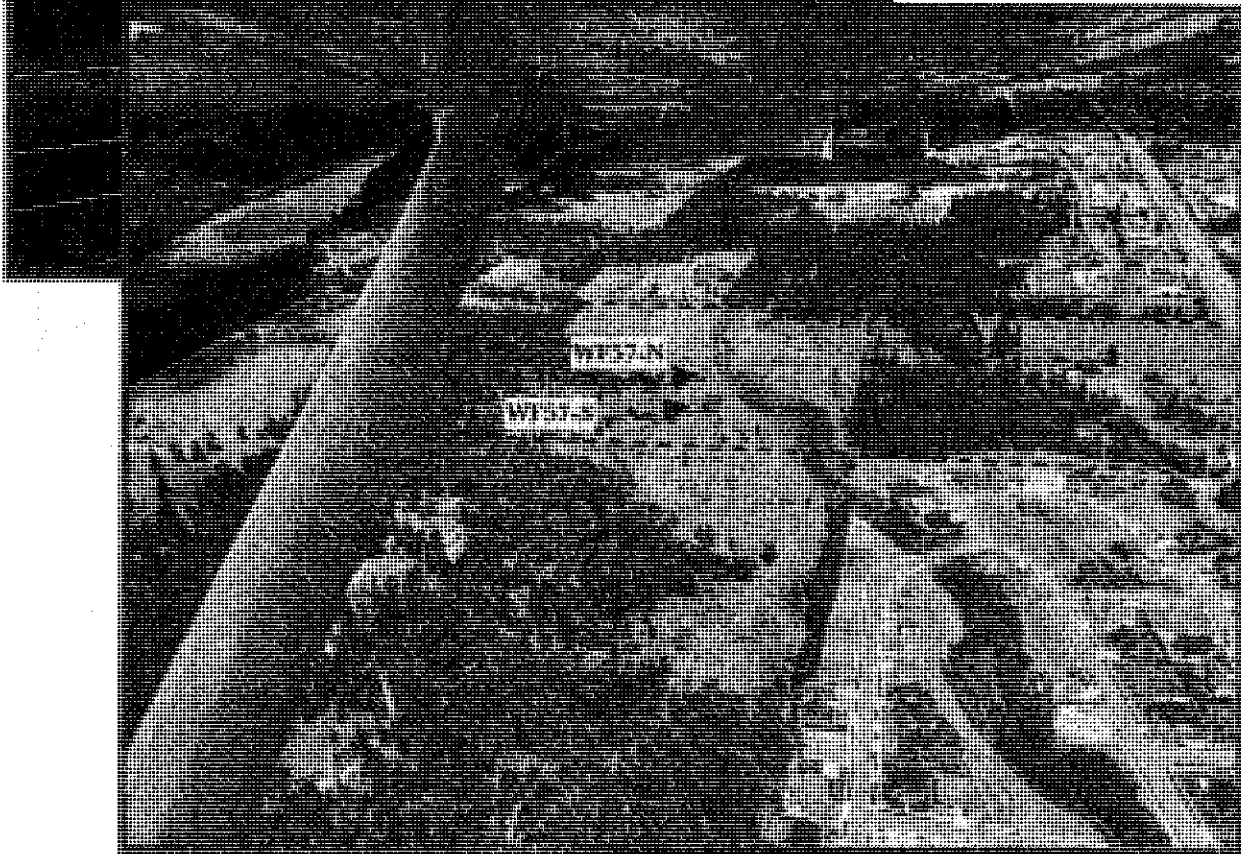
Photographs of G/W #2 Input. The photographs were taken on 5/2/2018. The photograph on the left shows surface water flowing in a northeasterly direction from the Gordon/Watkins property towards the subject property and the complex. The photograph on the right is taken at the property line with a view towards the wetland complex in the general direction of the flow path. Note that the flow on the subject parcel is beginning to coalesce into distinct conveyance channels.

Whitefish 57 Water Inputs

There are at least two additional inputs to this hydrologic system which occur on the subject parcel which we have labeled on the Hydrologic Inputs map as WF57-S and WF57-N. Aquatic Resources Consulting Inc. did not have legal access to the subject parcel, but we have attempted to show these in the photographs below.



WF57 Inputs. The photograph to the left was taken on July 18 from the northeastern corner of the Great Northern Heights subdivision looking across the wetland complex to the area contributing water which we have labeled as WF57-S and WF57-N.

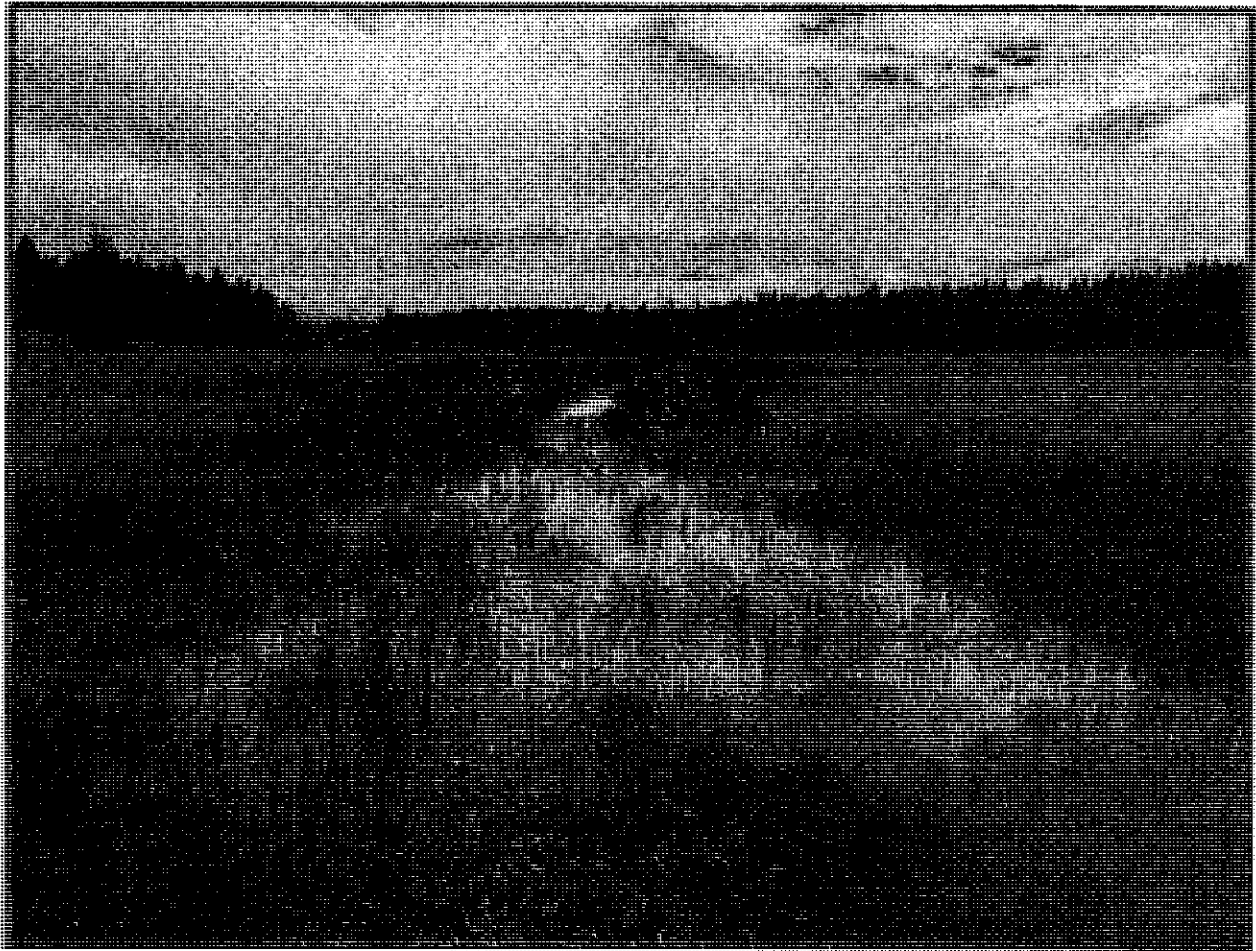


Flight Photograph of WF57 Inputs. This photograph was taken from the air on July 26, 2018. We have labeled the two tributaries as WF57-N and WF57-S. The darker vegetation clearly shows the wetland vegetation extended in "fingers" westward from the wetland complex uphill and suggests these are two areas where surface and groundwater are collecting/coalescing and flowing toward and into the wetland complex. We have shown portions of the subject property's boundaries with a dashed line because they are approximately located (for illustration purposes only).

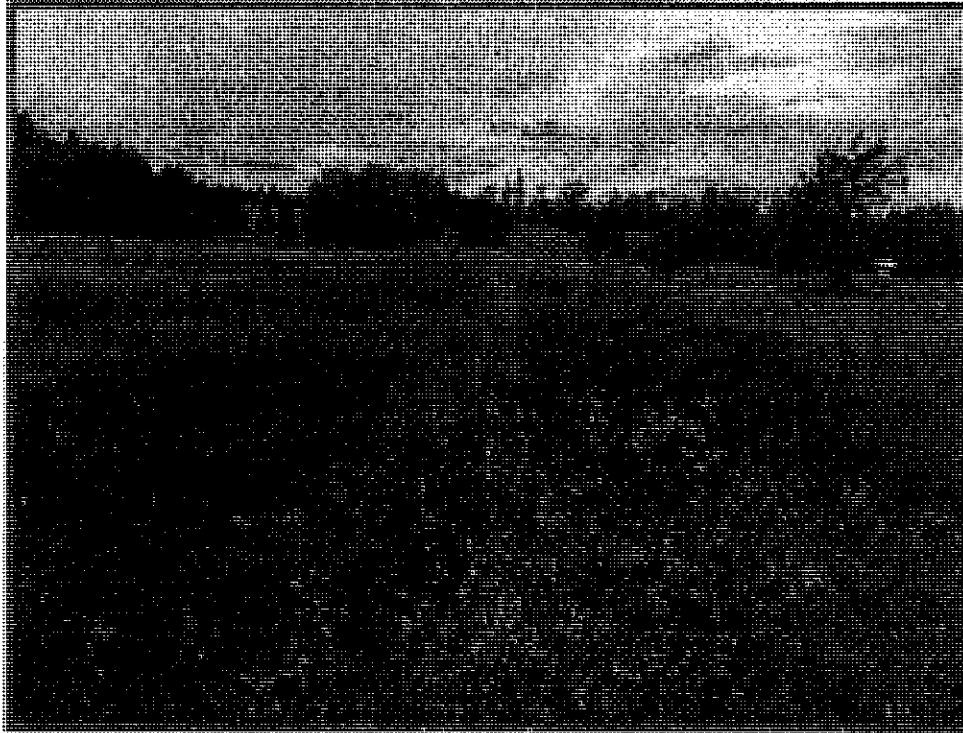
We suspect the WF57 inputs are similar to the Gordon/Watkins input and include both surface and groundwater flow. However, the clear vegetative pattern seen in the flight photographs could indicate that the WF57 flows are even more concentrated and coalesced into recognizable and defined channels and drainages. It should be noted that the upper limits of the drainage area for these flows lies on the eastern portion of the Luke property which is saturated with groundwater during the spring and summer months and has extensive, established surface water channels.

Hydrologic Output

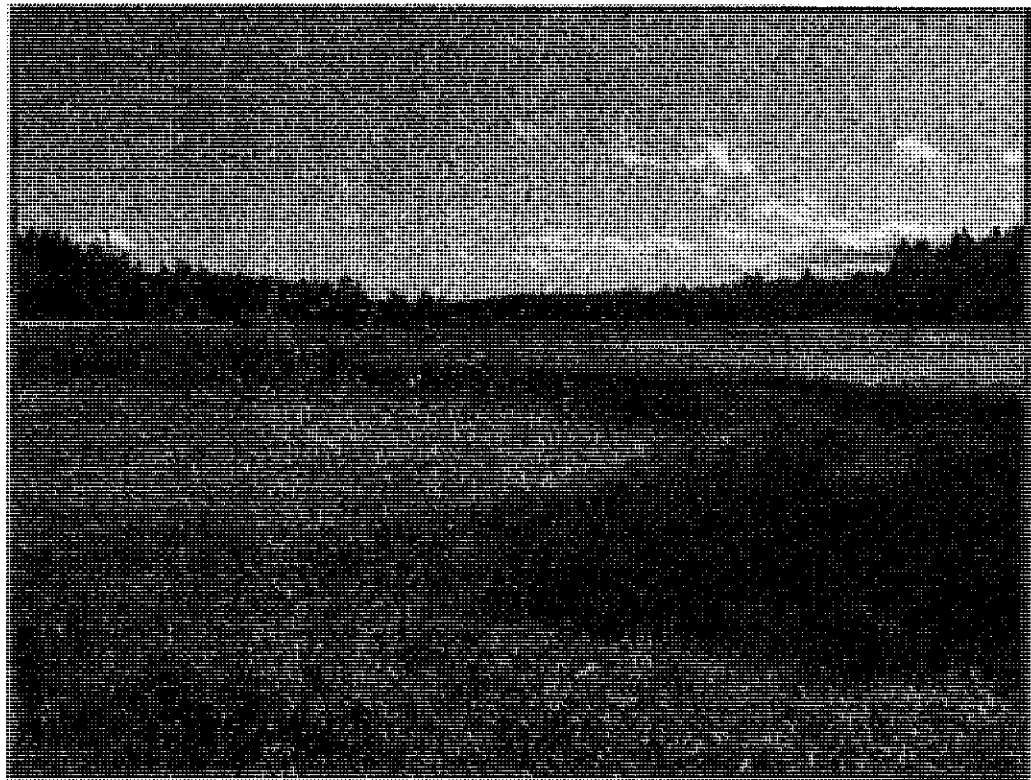
Water leaves the intermittent stream/wetland complex at the northern property boundary and enters the property owned by the Whitefish Assembly of God church (which is shown as a red star and labeled Whitefish Assembly of God-southern on the previous Field Locations map). It travels in a northward, northwestward, and then northward direction and flows through a culvert under the church's access road (shown as a red star and labeled Whitefish Assembly of God-northern on the previous Field Locations map).



Whitefish Assembly of God-southern Boundary. This photograph was taken on 5/18/2018 at the property boundary with a view to the south towards the subject property. Clearly evident is an active conveyance channel which can be seen from the foreground back up to the center portion of the photograph (near the central portion of the subject property). Wetland sedges and rushes (darker colored vegetation) can be seen encroaching into the channel in the foreground. Looking to the south, the lateral extent of complete inundation of the area is marked by the wetland vegetation on both sides of the open water channel (denoted by the darker vegetation) and can be construed as the absolute minimum extent of the wetland.



Central portion of Whitefish Assembly of God property. This photograph was taken on 5/18/2018 between the two field sites with a view northwestward. The channel is less defined but the wetland is still obvious and its lateral extent is significant ranging from 130 feet to over 180 feet in width.



Whitefish Assembly of God-northern. This photograph was taken on 6/5/18 adjacent to the church's access road with a view to the south/southeast looking back at the channel/complex. The channel and adjoining wetland complex is clearly defined by the change in vegetation (darker color). The channel is more defined in the lower portion of this photograph probably as a result of active manipulation to promote conveyance through a single culvert under the roadway.

Flow Measurements

We collected flow data on multiples dates at several locations in order to better understand the hydrology in the area. We measured the flow of water both upgradient (south) and downgradient (north) of the subject property. Specifically, we collected flow data at the following three locations: Great Northern Heights Subdivision (southern), Great Northern Heights Subdivision (central), and Whitefish Assembly of God (all shown as red stars on the previous ***Primary Field Site Locations Map***). Each of these locations are where the flow is restricted and forced into and conveyed by culverts to allow for road construction. These locations were chosen because they are easily accessible, offer accurate measurement sites, and they afford the best characterization of the flow because of the flow concentration (being forced into the culvert). Each site was visited on several occasions to provide a range of flows that we believe is representative of the flows throughout the high water season. Standard hydrologic techniques were employed to determine the flow that included characterization of the culverts (size, material, and slope), surveying the water surface elevation and depth at both the inlet and outlet of the culvert, measuring the velocity profile of the water at the culvert inlet, outlet and within the culvert, and noting any other limiting factors (ex.- vegetative flow restrictions, channel constrictions, or other flow irregularities).

We have summarized the flow information in the following table:

	5/2/18	5/18/18	6/5/18	6/20/18
G.N.H.S.-S	0.62 cfs	0.55 cfs	0.18 cfs	0.15 cfs
G.N.H.S.-C	1.27 cfs	1.65 cfs	1.58 cfs	1.30 cfs
W.A.o.G.- N	0.65 cfs	0.65 cfs	0.60 cfs	Not flowing

Vegetation and Soils Assessments

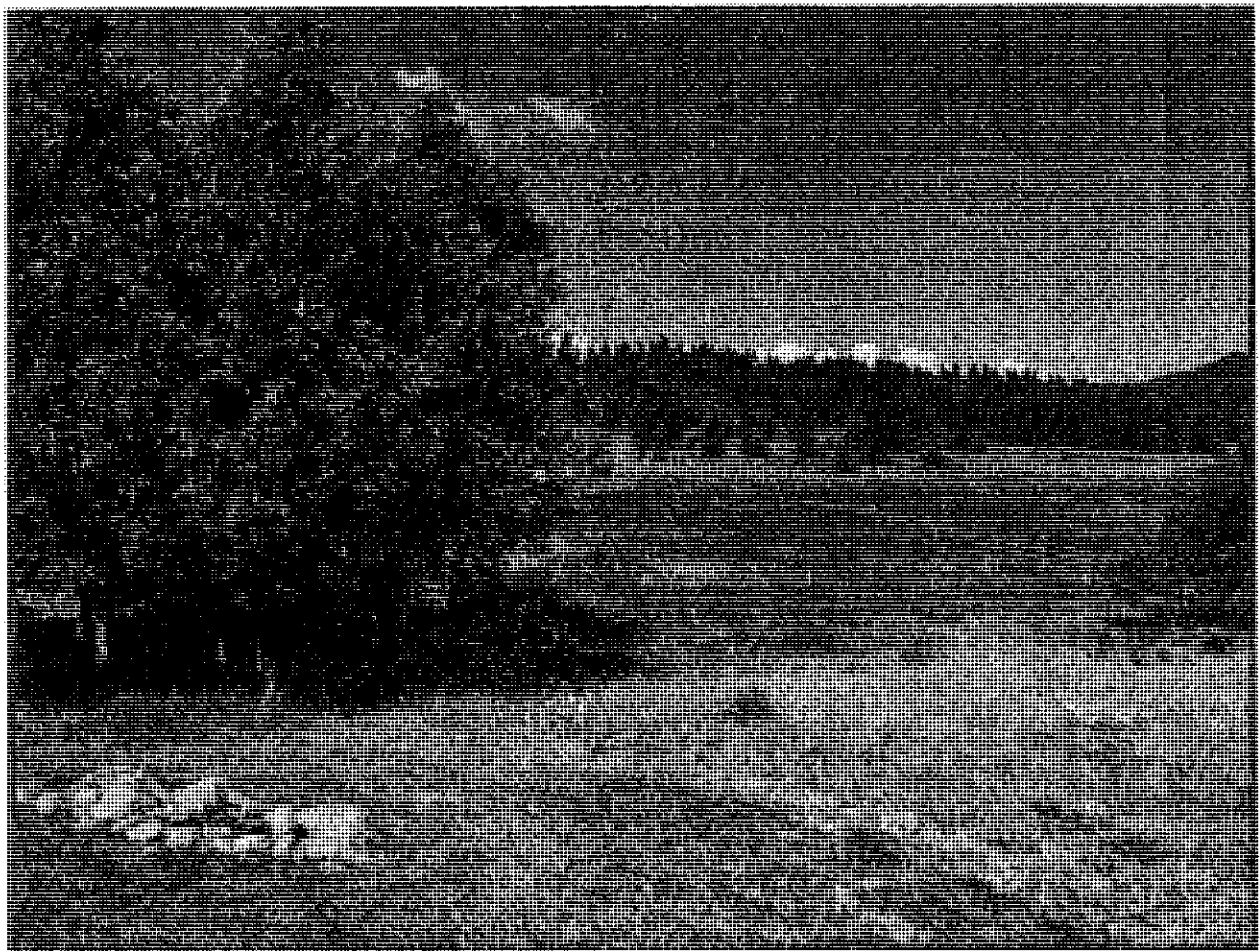
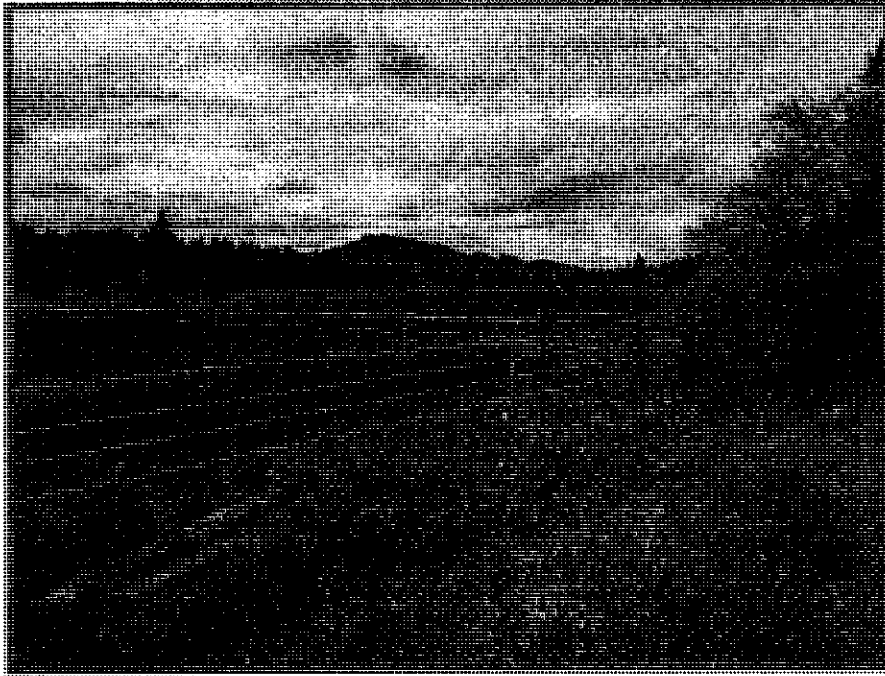
We know that there is wetland vegetation associated with this intermittent stream corridor/wetland complex throughout the study area including the subject parcel (Whitefish 57 parcel) as well as upgradient (to the south) on the Gordon/Watkins property and throughout Great Northern Heights subdivision and downgradient (to the north) of the subject parcel on the Whitefish Assembly of God Church property.



Great Northern Heights Subdivision. *This photograph was taken on May 18, 2018 and shows the channel and riparian corridor/wetland complex immediately upstream of the (southern) first culverted road crossing. As can be seen the photo shows thick wetland and riparian grasses including sedges as well as a thick brush understory comprised of riparian shrubs.*

Throughout the Great Northern Heights subdivision, the channel is constrained within a narrower corridor (between two terraces) but is marked by a defined channel and a floodplain with riparian/wetland grasses and shrubs.

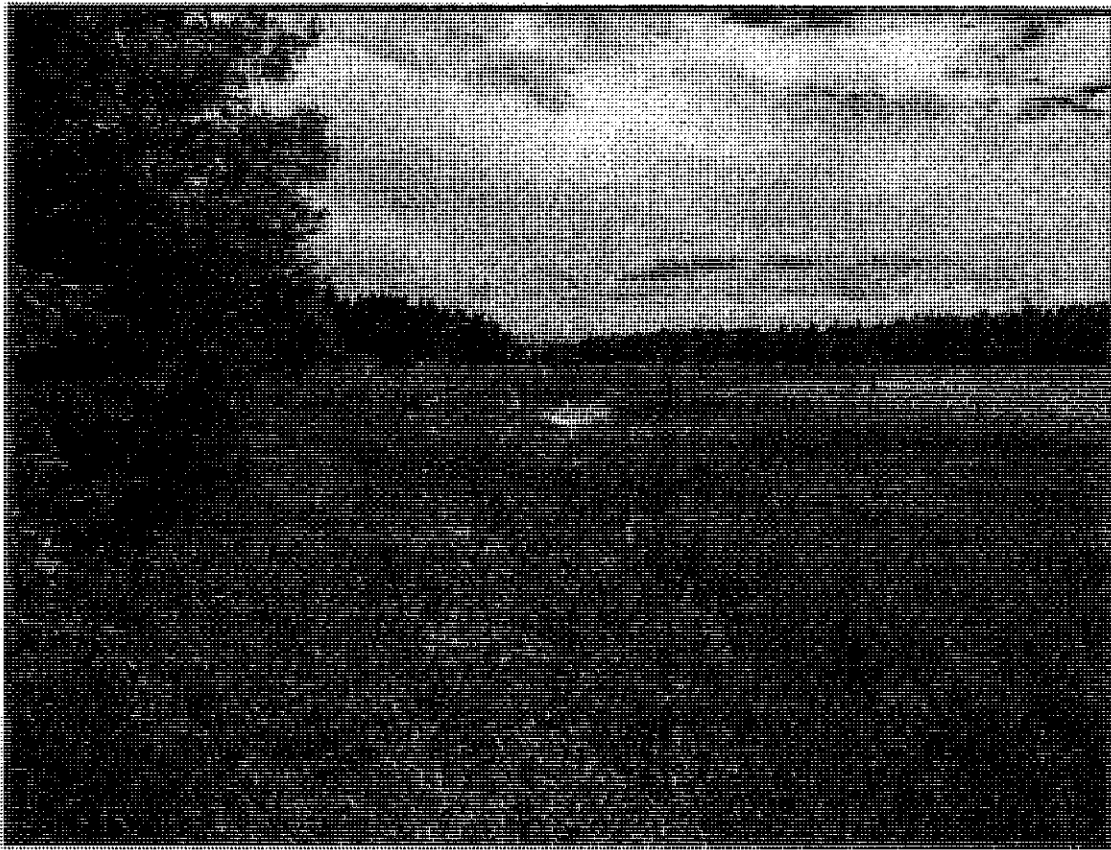
As you move northward through the Gordon/Watkins property and onto the subject parcel (Whitefish 57), the terraces recede and there is a change in vegetation. Riparian shrubs diminish and we transition to a more open wetland complex comprised of wetland grasses including



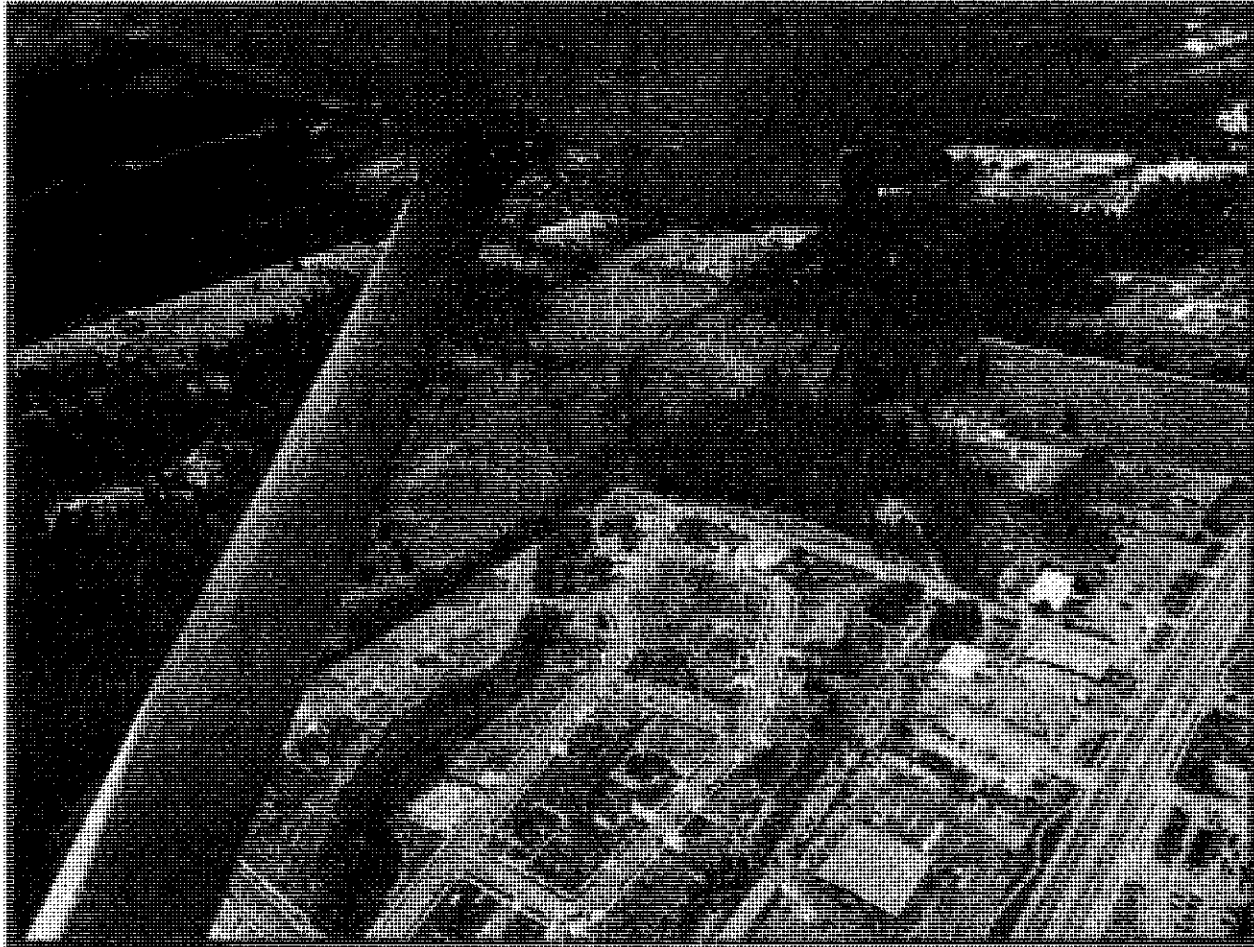
several species of sedges and rushes. This vegetative community persists throughout the southern portion of the Whitefish Assembly of God church's property. North of the church's access road, we again see the emergence of riparian shrubs.

Soil test pits were dug in locations to the south and north of the subject parcel which all exhibited the presence of hydric soils. The proposed developers of the Whitefish 57 subject property have previously acknowledged the presence of a jurisdictional wetland and our field data is concurrent with this assessment. Although we did not perform a rigorous wetland delineation, it can be definitively said that there is a jurisdictional wetland area upstream (to the south) of the subject parcel passing through the Gordon/Watkins property and the Great Northern Heights subdivision and this area meets the criteria of a jurisdictional wetland by exhibiting the known and documented presence of water, the known and documented presence of wetland vegetation, and the presence of hydric soils.

It can be definitively said that there is a jurisdictional wetland area downstream (to the north) of the subject parcel passing through the Whitefish Assembly of God church property and this area also meets the criteria of a jurisdictional wetland by exhibiting the known and documented presence of water, the known and documented presence of wetland vegetation, and the presence of hydric soils.



No evidence was seen or discovered throughout our study or fieldwork that would suggest that the subject parcel (Whitefish 57) is not equally bound by these characteristics and we are confident in asserting that subject parcel absolutely meets the essential criteria for definition as a jurisdictional wetland by meeting its three key delineative criteria: presence of water, presence of wetland vegetation, and the presence of hydric soils. The subject property's developers have previously stated that significant portions of their property are jurisdictional wetlands and we concur.



SUMMARY DISCUSSION

The developers have acknowledged that there is a wetland on the subject property several times an in numerous locations within their proposals. However, despite the fact that they assert that this delineation exists, they have failed and refuse to produce a formal wetland delineation report and map with supporting documentation for review and consideration by the City of Whitefish and the public. In two previously submitted pieces of correspondence, we have addressed our very specific concerns and issues regarding each of the proposals. We submitted our concerns

regarding the first or original proposal in correspondence to the City's Planning Board on 2/15/18 and we submitted our concerns regarding the most recent revised proposal in correspondence to the City of Whitefish's City Council on 8/3/18. Both were intended to respond directly to the developer's proposal and set forth our specific concerns regarding the proposals. They were not necessarily intended to provide new data and information.

This document is intended to provide supplemental and to shed light on the broader picture by providing information and to characterize the natural resources in our study area and the subject property. We have reviewed and analyzed as much information as possible that is available to the public as well as developed additional information and performed field work and site specific field verification and characterization. Admittedly, we were unable to access the subject property (the Whitefish 57 parcel) but were able to access adjoining parcels and remotely view the subject parcel. All of this was done to give a clear picture of the setting and natural resource attributes that will be impacted by the proposed development.

Clearly, there are important natural resource attributes that are present in the study area including an intermittent stream/wetland complex. There are hydrologic inputs and water sources that have not been set forth in any of the developer's prior submittals. In fact, it is difficult to believe that these have been duly considered or even recognized. It is obvious that there is a valuable natural resource on the subject property that needs to be protected. In fact, the City of Whitefish's own planning documents and guidelines demands that these very resources be valued, considered, and protected. The developer has failed to give these due consideration and has not presented sufficient information to assuage concerns or guarantee that these natural resource qualities will be protected.

Ultimately, it is the City of Whitefish's responsibility to protect these valuable natural resources. We hope that this document sets forth the site and site conditions and more clearly characterizes the intermittent stream/wetland complex in both its size, scope, and value to such an extent that the City or the Courts can more clearly make a determination on this matter. We encourage the City to reject the current proposal outright as not being in the City's best interest and we hope that you will protect this valuable natural resource.



July 11, 2023

Ms. Cheryl Watkins
143 Old Morris Trail
Whitefish, MT 59937

SUBJECT: Watkins Delineation of Waters of the United States and Wetlands, Flathead County, Montana

Dear Ms. Watkins,

Watershed Consulting conducted a routine delineation ("wetland delineation") of waters of the United States, including wetlands (WUS) within the 15.4-acre portion of your property (Survey Area) that lies south of, and adjacent to, a neighboring property that may be developed in the future. The purpose of this wetland delineation is to determine if WUS occur on your property, map the current boundary of any WUS, and offer an "over the fence" opinion as to whether these wetlands likely occur on the adjacent land north of your property boundary.

The wetland delineation adheres to the methodology prescribed in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Wetland Delineation Manual (Environmental Laboratory 1987), and the Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Region (Version 2.0) (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2010). As such, the boundaries of WUS are mapped where all three wetland indicators (hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology) are present. The field delineation was conducted on June 25, 2023 by Julian Colescott (SWS Professional Wetland Scientist No. 1920).

The following are attached to this delineation report:

- Attachment A, Figures
- Attachment B, Custom Soil Resource Report for Upper Flathead Valley Area, Montana, Watkins Wetland Delineation
- Attachment C, Routine 3-Parameter Dataforms
- Attachment D, Representative Photographs of the Survey Area

The Survey Area is located on the south side of Whitefish, Flathead County, Montana. This location corresponds to 48.3845° north latitude by -114.3425° west longitude (WGS84 projection from Google Earth), and the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 12 in Township 30 North, Range 22 West, Montana Meridian (**Attachment A, Figure 1**).

Environmental Setting

In 2002, maps and descriptions of the Ecoregions of Montana were prepared based on vegetation composition, soils, landforms, moisture and precipitation, and other characteristics (Woods et. al. 2002).

The Survey Area is in the Stillwater Swan Wooded Valley sub-ecoregion which lies within the Northern Rockies ecoregion (Woods et. al. 2002). This mountainous and rugged area hosts tree species that are influenced by the Pacific maritime weather. The maritime climate typically provides ample moisture (rain and snow) that runs off the adjacent mountains and collects in ponds, low-gradient streams, and wetlands. Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), western larch (*Larix occidentalis*), lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), and ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) are dominant. Wetlands consist of sedges (*Carex* spp.), rushes (*Juncus* spp.) and various grasses under overstory shrubs of thin-leaved alder (*Alnus incana*), water birch (*Betula occidentalis*), and willow (*Salix* spp.).

The Survey Area boundary was developed to include the meadow portion of your property where wetlands were most likely to occur. Based on review of aerial photography, an apparent wetland swale runs from southeast to northwest across the northeastern-most corner of your land; this swale is near the source of an unnamed stream that is a tributary of the Whitefish River. Site topography consists of a gently sloped meadow surrounded by moderately rising forested uplands. The elevation of the Survey Area is approximately 3,085 feet above sea level. Weather in the upper Whitefish Valley is relatively wet, with approximately 22 inches of precipitation falling annually as summer rain and winter snow (Western Regional Climate Center 2022).

The hydrology on the site is provided by precipitation (rainfall and snowmelt) and (likely) springs that originate offsite and flow into the site via the above-mentioned wetland swale. The exact source of the swale was underdetermined as it is outside the limits of your property. From review of aerial imagery, the source of the swale appears to come from the south, and may start in roadside ditches along US Highway 93. Waters within the swale flow north across the northeast corner of the Survey Area, across the neighboring property to the north, through southwestern Whitefish and confluence with the Whitefish River west of Baker Avenue. The Whitefish River flows south, then west to the Pacific Ocean via the Stillwater, Flathead and Columbia Rivers. The Columbia is the receiving Traditional Navigable Waterway (TNW).

The 2022-2023 winter has offered most of the state of Montana above average precipitation. However, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor (2023), Flathead County is part of a small area that is currently in a severe (D2) drought (U.S. Drought Monitor 2023). Walking the meadow with the you prior to conducting the field delineation, you exclaimed that it was as dry as you have ever seen it. The dry conditions were very apparent, especially in the wetland swale where the feature was very dry during what should be a time (early summer) where a feature with exclusive obligate and facultative wetland plants should be ponded or at least saturated. According to National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration National Weather Service data (NOAA 2023) records for Kalispel (nearest reporting station), precipitation has been below average since last October (2022), with less than 10 inches of precipitation over that time period (**Figure 1**).

The soil map units within the study area are described in the *Custom Soil Resources Report for Upper Flathead Valley Area, Montana, Watkins Wetland Delineation* (National Resources Conservation Service 2023). The National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) mapped two soil map units within the Survey Area:

- Ra—Radnor silt loam, 0-3 percent slopes
- Wr—Whitefish cobbly silt loam, 0 to 7 percent slopes

The Radnor silt loam is a hydric soil mapped in the extreme northeastern portion of the survey area. This area corresponds with the wetland swale. The Radnor silt loam soil is a poorly drained soil that occurs in

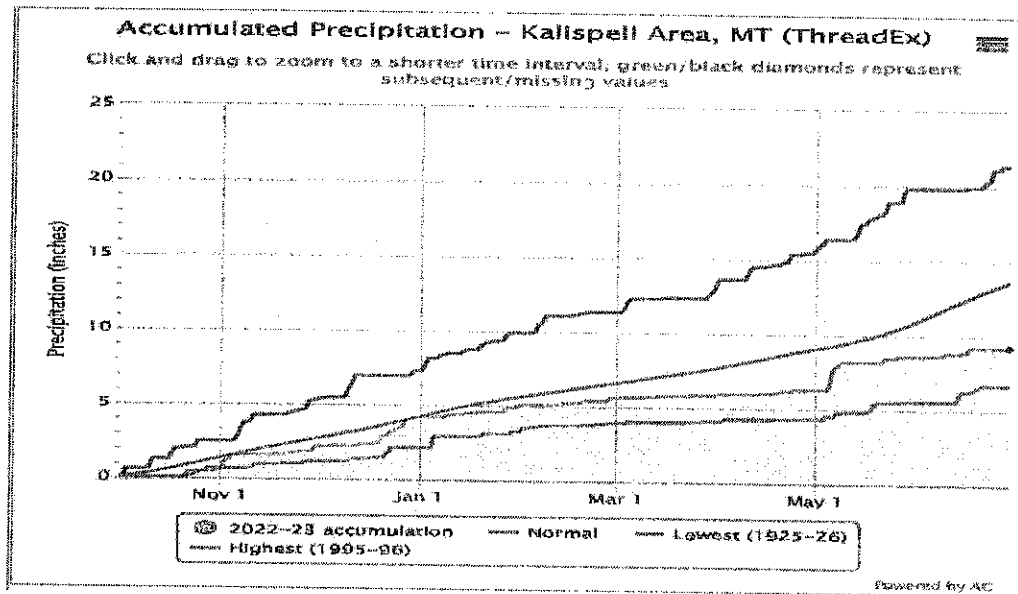


Figure 1. National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) precipitation totals for Kalispell area, October 1, 2022 to June 29, 2023.

depressions. The depth to the water table is 0 inches, meaning that typically, the soils are saturated to the soil surface. The Whitefish cobbly silt loam is a well-drained, non-hydric soil that occurs on the gentle slopes in the majority of the Survey Area including both the forested sections and the non-forested meadows outside of the swale. The Custom Soil Resource Report is attached to this wetland delineation as **Attachment B**.

Delineation Methods

Prior to conducting fieldwork, National Wetland Inventory (NWI) data, National Hydrology data, and recent aerial photography were examined to determine potential locations of wetlands or non-wetland WUS known or suspected to occur within and near the Survey Area. Field investigations were conducted on June 25, 2023 by Julian Colecott (Professional Wetland Scientist, No. 1920).

On-site routine delineation of wetlands was based on field observations of indicators for the three wetland parameters: hydrophytic vegetation, wetland hydrology, and hydric soils. This methodology is consistent with the approach outlined in the *Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual* (Environmental Laboratory 1987), and the *Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Western Mountains, Valleys and Coast Region (Version 2.0)* (COE 2010). Observations at representative locations (hereafter "datapoints") were recorded at locations in the Survey Area that had surface evidence of potential wetlands (e.g., hydrophytic vegetation, saturated soils) and on routine three-parameter data forms documenting site conditions in relation to wetland indicators. Each delineated WUS was classified according to *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States* (Cowardin et al. 1979).

Vegetation at potential wetland sites was evaluated by identifying wetland indicator status of dominant species. Wetland indicator status for plant species observed in or near the datapoints was confirmed using

Western Mountains, Valleys and Coasts 2016 Regional Wetland Plant List (Lichvar et al. 2016), and the “50/20 Rule” was applied to determine plant dominance (COE 2010). Plant indicator status types from those most likely to occur in wetlands to those not likely to occur in wetland include Obligate (OBL), Facultative Wetland (FACW), Facultative (FAC), Facultative Upland (FACU), Upland (UPL) or Not Listed (NL), which are considered upland.

Soil pits were dug to a depth sufficient to document the presence or confirm the absence of hydric soil or primary or secondary wetland hydrology indicators. Positive indicators of hydric soils were identified in the field in accordance with the criteria outlined in *Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States Version 8.2* (USDA-NRCS 2018). Soil colors were determined using a Munsell® soil color chart.

Recorded 3-parameter datapoints were described in pairs (e.g., wetland datapoint and a near-by corresponding upland datapoint) to contrast conditions found in the wetland to those in the upland, and thereby document the wetland boundary. Photographs were taken at all wetland and upland datapoints, and representative photographs were selected for reporting.

Boundaries of delineations, WUS centerlines, and datapoint locations were mapped using a Garmin GPSMap 64 with approximately 10-foot accuracy. Geographic Information System (GIS) software was used to process GPS data, calculate the extent of WUS in the Survey Area, and overlay field data on topography, and recent aerial imagery to prepare report maps. All GPS data were archived for future verification.

The different types of WUS observed were classified using the Cowardin nomenclature for wetland classification (Cowardin et. al. 1979) which labels wetlands based on the dominant vegetation structure and hydrology.

Delineation Results

A map showing the delineated wetlands is provided in **Attachment A**. **Attachment B** contains the Custom Soil Resources report for the Survey Area in Flathead County. Completed dataforms are in **Attachment C**, and representative photographs of the delineated features are provided in **Attachment D**. A total of 0.48 acre of WUS occur on the site as shown in **Table 2** and in **Figure 2 (Attachment 1)**. Datapoint types and locations are provided in **Table 1**, and Delineations size and types are provided in **Table 2**. **Table 2** is also presented in **Figure 2**.

Table 1. Datapoint type and location

Datapoint	Delineation Type	Class	UTM Zone 11N (meters)	
			Easting	Northing
DP01	Upland	NA	696,746	5,362,475
DP02	Upland	NA	696,788	5,362,455
DP03	Wetland	PEME	696,826	5,362,488

Table 2. Delineation type and size (ac.)

Delineation	Cowardin Code	Classification	Acres
1	PEME	Palustrine Emergent Seasonally saturated/flooded wetland	0.48
Total Waters of the U.S., including Wetlands			0.48

The Survey Area was developed to document the current configuration of wetlands on your property. If changes occur to these wetlands if or when the parcel to the north is developed, the report and attached map offer you a record of conditions found as of the date of this report.

One wetland was observed in the Survey Area, the “wetland swale” mentioned above. The wetland is classified as palustrine emergent (PEM) wetland (Cowardin et. al. 1979). In PEM wetlands, emergent plants (i.e., erect, rooted, herbaceous hydrophytes, excluding mosses and lichens) are the tallest life form with at least 30 percent aerial coverage. The palustrine emergent wetlands are further classified based on the length of time they remain saturated or ponded, which in this case is seasonally (PEME).

To document Wetland 1, 3-parameter data was collected in two locations that exhibited suspect wetland conditions. These datapoints (DP 01, DP 02; **Attachment C**) however, did not meet the wetland criteria. Datapoint 01 documented the presence of hydrophytic vegetation and weak indicators of wetland hydrology, but lacked hydric soils. Datapoint 02 documented hydrophytic vegetation but lacked both wetland hydrology indicators and hydric soils. Datapoint 03, placed near the upland edge of the wetland swale, documented the presence of all three wetland parameters. The vegetation in Wetland 1 is dominated by Baltic rush (*Juncus balticus*), clustered field sedge (*Carex praegracilis*), and Bebb’s sedge (*Carex bebbii*). Other hydrophytes occur deeper into the swale including mint (*Mentha arvensis*) and small-fruit bullrush (*Scirpus microcarpus*). Hydric soil criteria were met due to the mucky mineral consistency found within the upper eight inches of the soil profile. Hydrology was met with two secondary indicators of geomorphic position and Fac-Neutral test. These weak hydrology indicators reflect the current drought conditions found in the Flathead County.

The boundaries of Wetland 1 may underestimate the size of the wetland associated with the wetland swale. Under normal climatic conditions, the influence of the slow-moving waters within the swale would likely spread laterally through the soils to create a wider saturation zone (at least seasonally). Ms. Watkins’ comment about the field normally being saturated or ponded well upslope from the swale may be accurate on a seasonal basis, but no evidence was found in the soils that suggest there is frequent long-duration saturation anywhere but in the wetland swale (Wetland 1). The meadow, except for the area in close proximity to the wetland swale, slopes gentle which drain the meadow and prevents the long-duration saturation needed to develop hydric soils.

Looking “over the fence” into the parcel to the north suggests that Wetland 1 extends into the adjacent parcel. In fact, the swale appears to widen as it flows north. This is a relatively flat wetland drainage with (under normal moisture conditions) slow flows that, based on the presence of the small-fruit bullrush on the adjacent property, spread laterally over a wider area north of the property boundary. Without actually visiting the neighboring lands, no further speculation about the extent of wetlands on the adjacent parcel are possible.

Summary

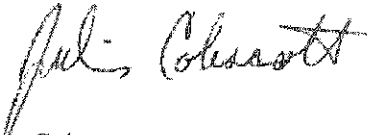
Watershed Consulting conducted a routine delineation of waters of the United States including wetlands within the Survey Area on June 25, 2023. A total of 0.48 acres of wetlands were mapped within the Survey Area consisting of a single PEME wetland swale. These WUS were mapped following the COE methodology and are depicted on **Figure 2 (Attachment A)**.

July 11, 2023

Thank you for providing Watershed Consulting with the opportunity to assist with your project needs. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me by telephone at (406) 240-7120, or by e-mail at julian@watershedconsulting.com.

Sincerely,

WATERSHED CONSULTING.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julian Colescott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Julian" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Colescott".

Julian Colescott
SWS Professional Wetland Scientist (PWS No. 1920)

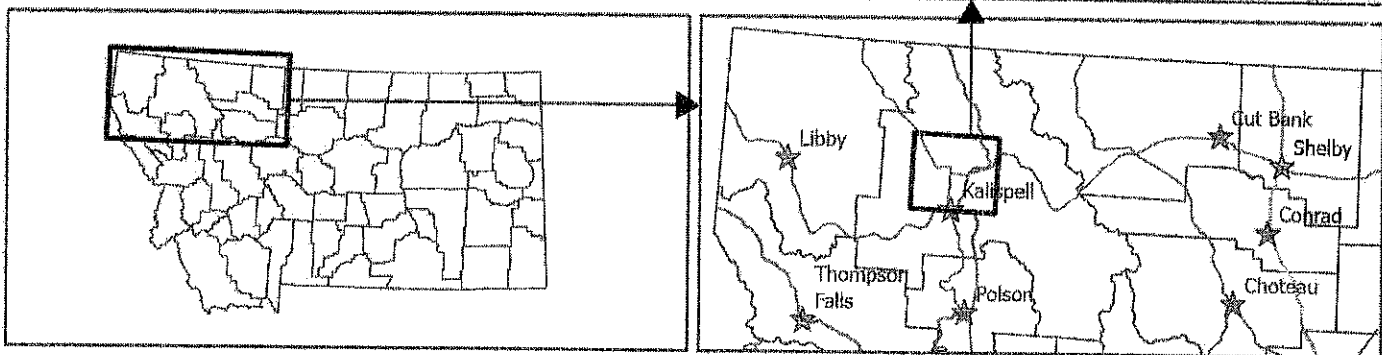
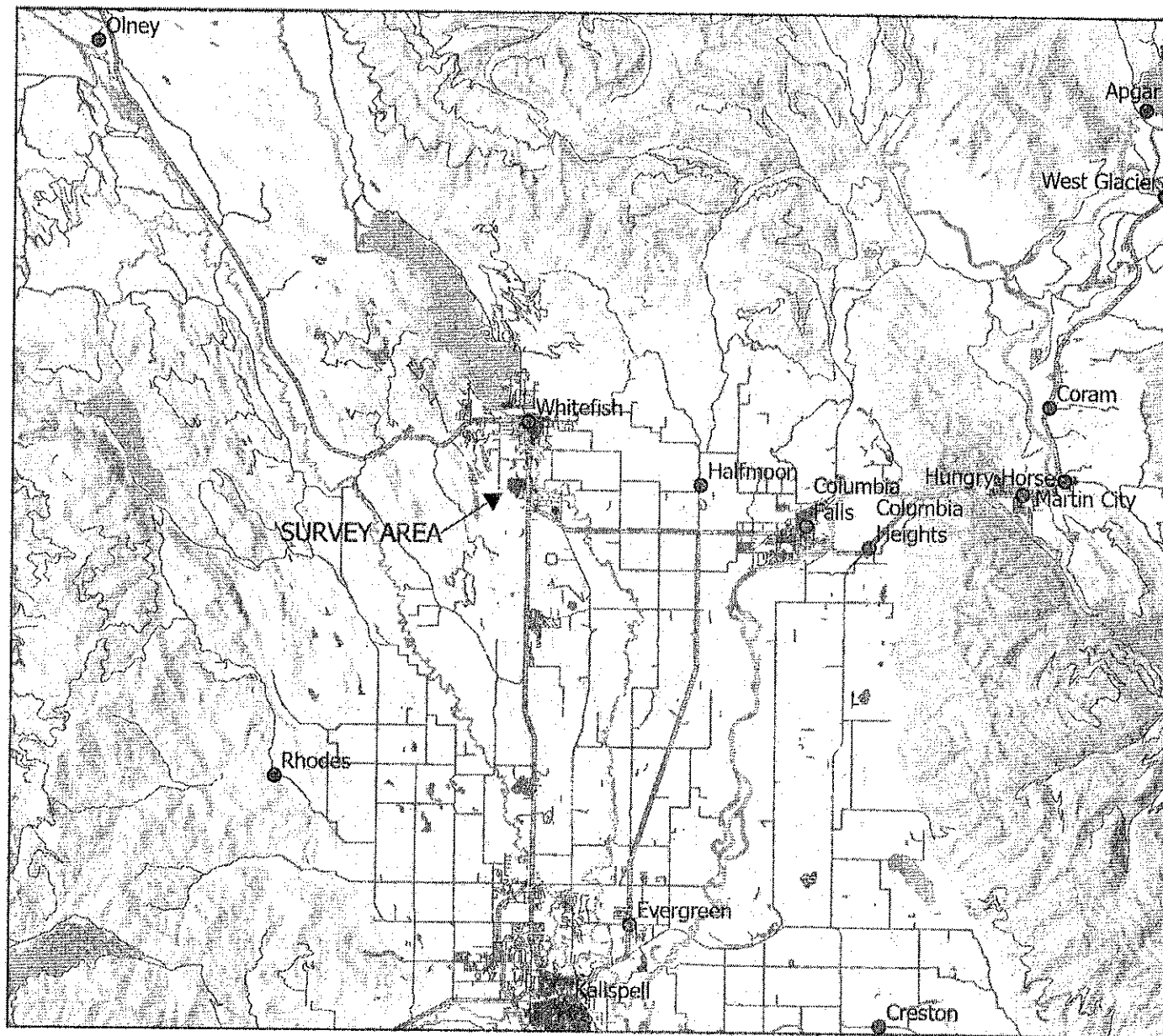
Attachments: Attachment A: Figures
Attachment B: Custom Soil Resource Report for Upper Flathead Valley Area, Montana,
Watkins Wetland Delineation
Attachment C: Completed Routine Wetland Dataforms
Attachment D: Representative Photographs

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ATTACHMENT A

Figures



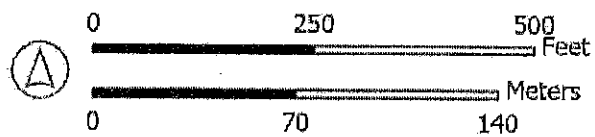
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 Central Meridian: -114.0

- ★ County Capitals
- Towns and Places
- ▭ Survey Area
- ▭ County Lines

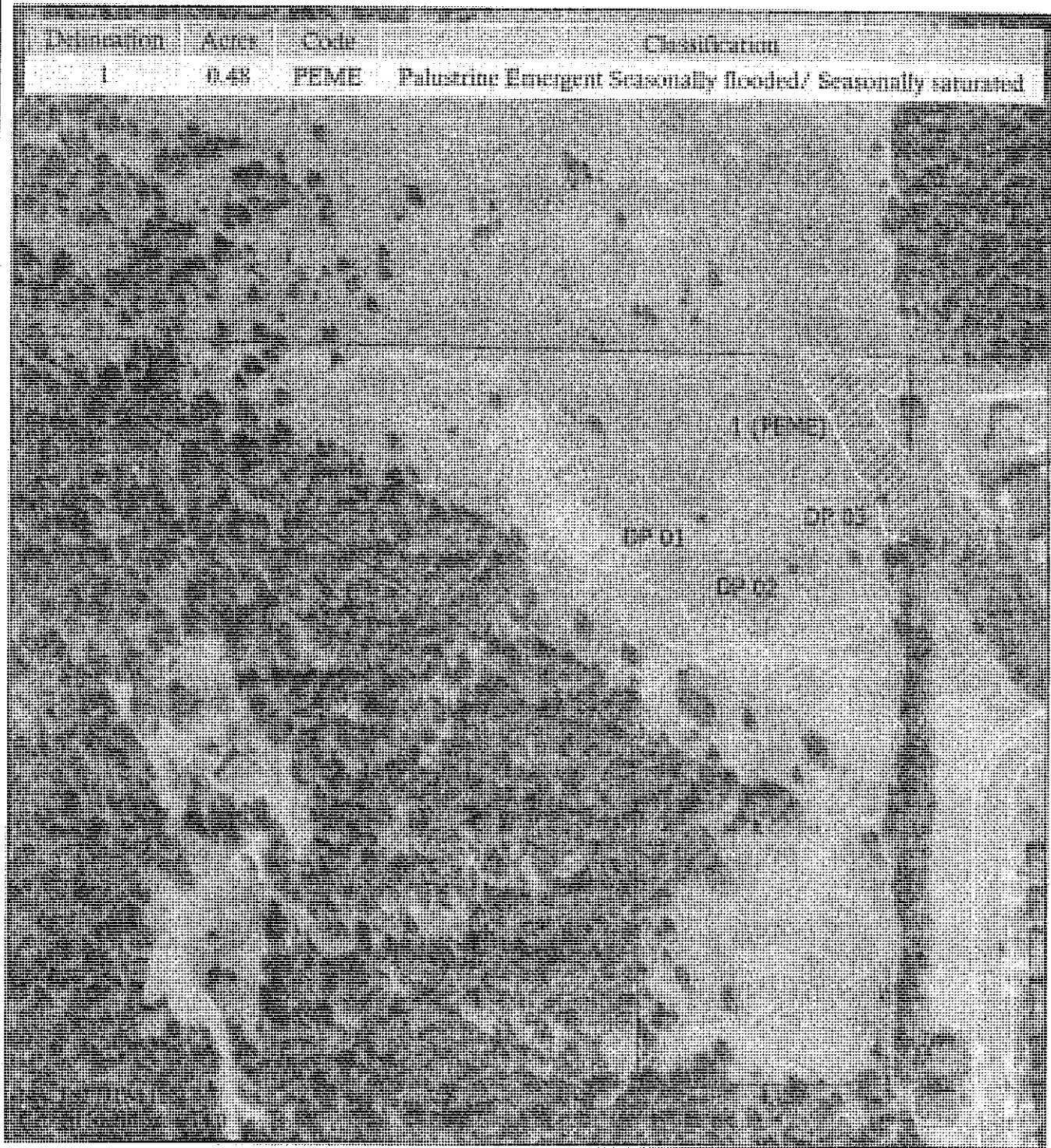
**Watkins Wetland
Delineation**

**Figure 1
Project Location**

Figure 2
Survey Area Detail and Delineations
 July 07, 2023



- Datapoints
- Survey Area Boundry (15.4 acres)
- Delineated Wetland



ATTACHMENT B

Custom Soil Resource Report for Flathead National Forest Area, Montana



United States
Department of
Agriculture

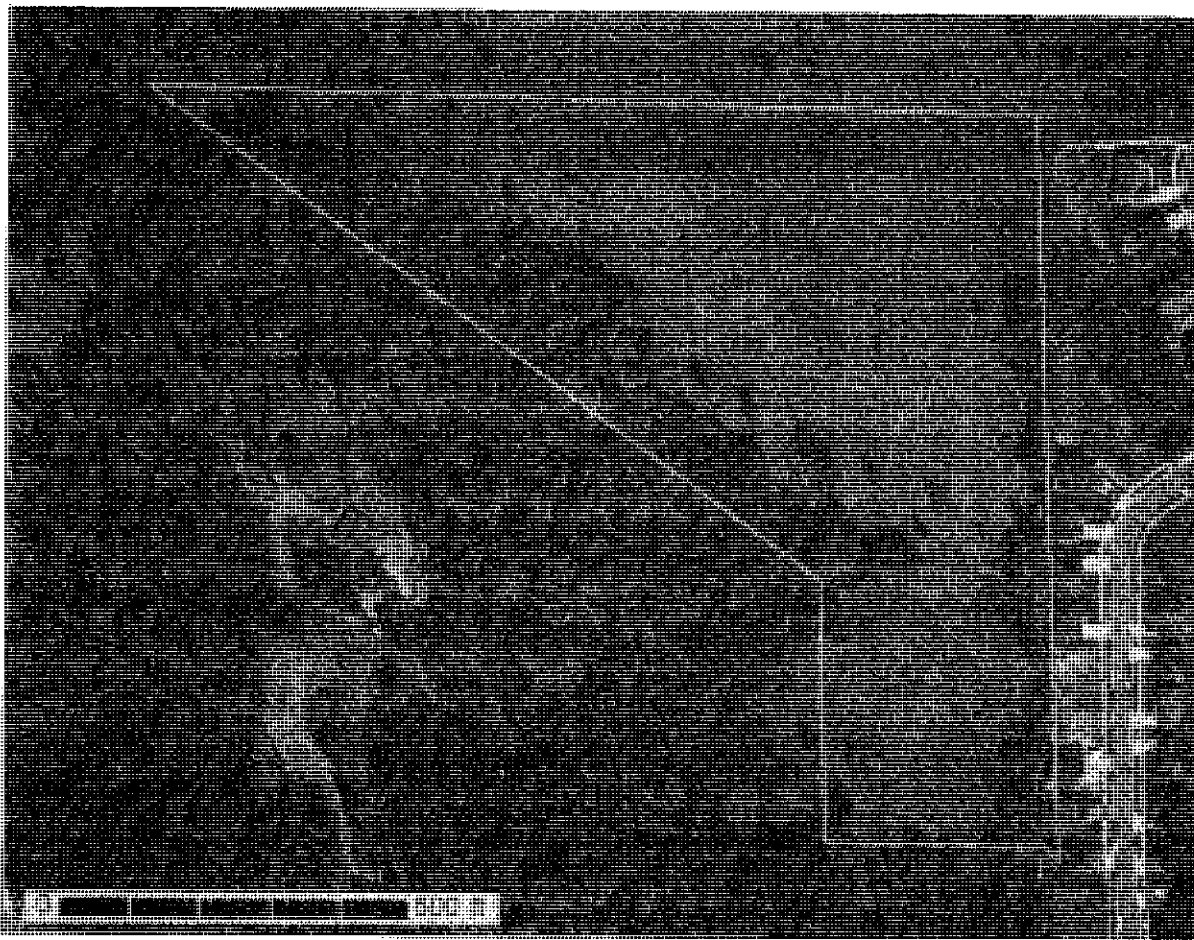
NRCS

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

A product of the National
Cooperative Soil Survey,
a joint effort of the United
States Department of
Agriculture and other
Federal agencies, State
agencies including the
Agricultural Experiment
Stations, and local
participants

Custom Soil Resource Report for Upper Flathead Valley Area, Montana

Watkins Wetland Delineation



Preface

Soil surveys contain information that affects land use planning in survey areas. They highlight soil limitations that affect various land uses and provide information about the properties of the soils in the survey areas. Soil surveys are designed for many different users, including farmers, ranchers, foresters, agronomists, urban planners, community officials, engineers, developers, builders, and home buyers. Also, conservationists, teachers, students, and specialists in recreation, waste disposal, and pollution control can use the surveys to help them understand, protect, or enhance the environment.

Various land use regulations of Federal, State, and local governments may impose special restrictions on land use or land treatment. Soil surveys identify soil properties that are used in making various land use or land treatment decisions. The information is intended to help the land users identify and reduce the effects of soil limitations on various land uses. The landowner or user is responsible for identifying and complying with existing laws and regulations.

Although soil survey information can be used for general farm, local, and wider area planning, onsite investigation is needed to supplement this information in some cases. Examples include soil quality assessments (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/health/>) and certain conservation and engineering applications. For more detailed information, contact your local USDA Service Center (<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs>) or your NRCS State Soil Scientist (http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/soils/contactus/?cid=nrcs142p2_053951).

Great differences in soil properties can occur within short distances. Some soils are seasonally wet or subject to flooding. Some are too unstable to be used as a foundation for buildings or roads. Clayey or wet soils are poorly suited to use as septic tank absorption fields. A high water table makes a soil poorly suited to basements or underground installations.

The National Cooperative Soil Survey is a joint effort of the United States Department of Agriculture and other Federal agencies, State agencies including the Agricultural Experiment Stations, and local agencies. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has leadership for the Federal part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey.

Information about soils is updated periodically. Updated information is available through the NRCS Web Soil Survey, the site for official soil survey information.

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How Soil Surveys Are Made

Soil surveys are made to provide information about the soils and miscellaneous areas in a specific area. They include a description of the soils and miscellaneous areas and their location on the landscape and tables that show soil properties and limitations affecting various uses. Soil scientists observed the steepness, length, and shape of the slopes; the general pattern of drainage; the kinds of crops and native plants; and the kinds of bedrock. They observed and described many soil profiles. A soil profile is the sequence of natural layers, or horizons, in a soil. The profile extends from the surface down into the unconsolidated material in which the soil formed or from the surface down to bedrock. The unconsolidated material is devoid of roots and other living organisms and has not been changed by other biological activity.

Currently, soils are mapped according to the boundaries of major land resource areas (MLRAs). MLRAs are geographically associated land resource units that share common characteristics related to physiography, geology, climate, water resources, soils, biological resources, and land uses (USDA, 2006). Soil survey areas typically consist of parts of one or more MLRA.

The soils and miscellaneous areas in a survey area occur in an orderly pattern that is related to the geology, landforms, relief, climate, and natural vegetation of the area. Each kind of soil and miscellaneous area is associated with a particular kind of landform or with a segment of the landform. By observing the soils and miscellaneous areas in the survey area and relating their position to specific segments of the landform, a soil scientist develops a concept, or model, of how they were formed. Thus, during mapping, this model enables the soil scientist to predict with a considerable degree of accuracy the kind of soil or miscellaneous area at a specific location on the landscape.

Commonly, individual soils on the landscape merge into one another as their characteristics gradually change. To construct an accurate soil map, however, soil scientists must determine the boundaries between the soils. They can observe only a limited number of soil profiles. Nevertheless, these observations, supplemented by an understanding of the soil-vegetation-landscape relationship, are sufficient to verify predictions of the kinds of soil in an area and to determine the boundaries.

Soil scientists recorded the characteristics of the soil profiles that they studied. They noted soil color, texture, size and shape of soil aggregates, kind and amount of rock fragments, distribution of plant roots, reaction, and other features that enable them to identify soils. After describing the soils in the survey area and determining their properties, the soil scientists assigned the soils to taxonomic classes (units). Taxonomic classes are concepts. Each taxonomic class has a set of soil characteristics with precisely defined limits. The classes are used as a basis for comparison to classify soils systematically. Soil taxonomy, the system of taxonomic classification used in the United States, is based mainly on the kind and character of soil properties and the arrangement of horizons within the profile. After the soil

Custom Soil Resource Report

scientists classified and named the soils in the survey area, they compared the individual soils with similar soils in the same taxonomic class in other areas so that they could confirm data and assemble additional data based on experience and research.

The objective of soil mapping is not to delineate pure map unit components; the objective is to separate the landscape into landforms or landform segments that have similar use and management requirements. Each map unit is defined by a unique combination of soil components and/or miscellaneous areas in predictable proportions. Some components may be highly contrasting to the other components of the map unit. The presence of minor components in a map unit in no way diminishes the usefulness or accuracy of the data. The delineation of such landforms and landform segments on the map provides sufficient information for the development of resource plans. If intensive use of small areas is planned, onsite investigation is needed to define and locate the soils and miscellaneous areas.

Soil scientists make many field observations in the process of producing a soil map. The frequency of observation is dependent upon several factors, including scale of mapping, intensity of mapping, design of map units, complexity of the landscape, and experience of the soil scientist. Observations are made to test and refine the soil-landscape model and predictions and to verify the classification of the soils at specific locations. Once the soil-landscape model is refined, a significantly smaller number of measurements of individual soil properties are made and recorded. These measurements may include field measurements, such as those for color, depth to bedrock, and texture, and laboratory measurements, such as those for content of sand, silt, clay, salt, and other components. Properties of each soil typically vary from one point to another across the landscape.

Observations for map unit components are aggregated to develop ranges of characteristics for the components. The aggregated values are presented. Direct measurements do not exist for every property presented for every map unit component. Values for some properties are estimated from combinations of other properties.

While a soil survey is in progress, samples of some of the soils in the area generally are collected for laboratory analyses and for engineering tests. Soil scientists interpret the data from these analyses and tests as well as the field-observed characteristics and the soil properties to determine the expected behavior of the soils under different uses. Interpretations for all of the soils are field tested through observation of the soils in different uses and under different levels of management. Some interpretations are modified to fit local conditions, and some new interpretations are developed to meet local needs. Data are assembled from other sources, such as research information, production records, and field experience of specialists. For example, data on crop yields under defined levels of management are assembled from farm records and from field or plot experiments on the same kinds of soil.

Predictions about soil behavior are based not only on soil properties but also on such variables as climate and biological activity. Soil conditions are predictable over long periods of time, but they are not predictable from year to year. For example, soil scientists can predict with a fairly high degree of accuracy that a given soil will have a high water table within certain depths in most years, but they cannot predict that a high water table will always be at a specific level in the soil on a specific date.

After soil scientists located and identified the significant natural bodies of soil in the survey area, they drew the boundaries of these bodies on aerial photographs and

Custom Soil Resource Report

identified each as a specific map unit. Aerial photographs show trees, buildings, fields, roads, and rivers, all of which help in locating boundaries accurately.

Soil Map

The soil map section includes the soil map for the defined area of interest, a list of soil map units on the map and extent of each map unit, and cartographic symbols displayed on the map. Also presented are various metadata about data used to produce the map, and a description of each soil map unit.

Custom Soil Resource Report Soil Map



MAP LEGEND

	Area of Interest (AOI)		Spoil Area
	Area of Interest (AOI)		Stony Spot
	Soils		Very Stony Spot
	Soil Map Unit Polygons		Wet Spot
	Soil Map Unit Lines		Other
	Soil Map Unit Points		Special Line Features
	Special Point Features		Water Features
	Blowout		Streams and Canals
	Borrow Pit		Transportation
	Clay Spot		Rails
	Closed Depression		Interstate Highways
	Gravel Pit		US Routes
	Gravelly Spot		Major Roads
	Landfill		Local Roads
	Lava Flow		Background
	Marsh or swamp		Aerial Photography
	Mine or Quarry		
	Miscellaneous Water		
	Perennial Water		
	Rock Outcrop		
	Saline Spot		
	Sandy Spot		
	Severely Eroded Spot		
	Sinkhole		
	Slide or Slip		
	Sodic Spot		

MAP INFORMATION

The soil surveys that comprise your AOI were mapped at 1:20,000.

Warning: Soil Map may not be valid at this scale.

Enlargement of maps beyond the scale of mapping can cause misunderstanding of the detail of mapping and accuracy of soil line placement. The maps do not show the small areas of contrasting soils that could have been shown at a more detailed scale.

Please rely on the bar scale on each map sheet for map measurements.

Source of Map: Natural Resources Conservation Service
Web Soil Survey URL:
Coordinate System: Web Mercator (EPSG:3857)

Maps from the Web Soil Survey are based on the Web Mercator projection, which preserves direction and shape but distorts distance and area. A projection that preserves area, such as the Albers equal-area conic projection, should be used if more accurate calculations of distance or area are required.

This product is generated from the USDA-NRCS certified data as of the version date(s) listed below.

Soil Survey Area: Upper Flathead Valley Area, Montana
Survey Area Data: Version 18, Aug 29, 2022

Soil map units are labeled (as space allows) for map scales 1:50,000 or larger.

Date(s) aerial images were photographed: Aug 31, 2021—Oct 12, 2021

The orthophoto or other base map on which the soil lines were compiled and digitized probably differs from the background imagery displayed on these maps. As a result, some minor shifting of map unit boundaries may be evident.

Map Unit Legend

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Ra	Radnor silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	0.0	0.1%
Wr	Whitefish cobbly silt loam, 0 to 7 percent slopes	15.2	99.9%
Totals for Area of Interest		15.2	100.0%

Map Unit Descriptions

The map units delineated on the detailed soil maps in a soil survey represent the soils or miscellaneous areas in the survey area. The map unit descriptions, along with the maps, can be used to determine the composition and properties of a unit.

A map unit delineation on a soil map represents an area dominated by one or more major kinds of soil or miscellaneous areas. A map unit is identified and named according to the taxonomic classification of the dominant soils. Within a taxonomic class there are precisely defined limits for the properties of the soils. On the landscape, however, the soils are natural phenomena, and they have the characteristic variability of all natural phenomena. Thus, the range of some observed properties may extend beyond the limits defined for a taxonomic class. Areas of soils of a single taxonomic class rarely, if ever, can be mapped without including areas of other taxonomic classes. Consequently, every map unit is made up of the soils or miscellaneous areas for which it is named and some minor components that belong to taxonomic classes other than those of the major soils.

Most minor soils have properties similar to those of the dominant soil or soils in the map unit, and thus they do not affect use and management. These are called noncontrasting, or similar, components. They may or may not be mentioned in a particular map unit description. Other minor components, however, have properties and behavioral characteristics divergent enough to affect use or to require different management. These are called contrasting, or dissimilar, components. They generally are in small areas and could not be mapped separately because of the scale used. Some small areas of strongly contrasting soils or miscellaneous areas are identified by a special symbol on the maps. If included in the database for a given area, the contrasting minor components are identified in the map unit descriptions along with some characteristics of each. A few areas of minor components may not have been observed, and consequently they are not mentioned in the descriptions, especially where the pattern was so complex that it was impractical to make enough observations to identify all the soils and miscellaneous areas on the landscape.

The presence of minor components in a map unit in no way diminishes the usefulness or accuracy of the data. The objective of mapping is not to delineate pure taxonomic classes but rather to separate the landscape into landforms or landform segments that have similar use and management requirements. The delineation of such segments on the map provides sufficient information for the development of resource plans. If intensive use of small areas is planned, however,

Custom Soil Resource Report

onsite investigation is needed to define and locate the soils and miscellaneous areas.

An identifying symbol precedes the map unit name in the map unit descriptions. Each description includes general facts about the unit and gives important soil properties and qualities.

Soils that have profiles that are almost alike make up a *soil series*. Except for differences in texture of the surface layer, all the soils of a series have major horizons that are similar in composition, thickness, and arrangement.

Soils of one series can differ in texture of the surface layer, slope, stoniness, salinity, degree of erosion, and other characteristics that affect their use. On the basis of such differences, a soil series is divided into *soil phases*. Most of the areas shown on the detailed soil maps are phases of soil series. The name of a soil phase commonly indicates a feature that affects use or management. For example, Alpha silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is a phase of the Alpha series.

Some map units are made up of two or more major soils or miscellaneous areas. These map units are complexes, associations, or undifferentiated groups.

A *complex* consists of two or more soils or miscellaneous areas in such an intricate pattern or in such small areas that they cannot be shown separately on the maps. The pattern and proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas are somewhat similar in all areas. Alpha-Beta complex, 0 to 6 percent slopes, is an example.

An *association* is made up of two or more geographically associated soils or miscellaneous areas that are shown as one unit on the maps. Because of present or anticipated uses of the map units in the survey area, it was not considered practical or necessary to map the soils or miscellaneous areas separately. The pattern and relative proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas are somewhat similar. Alpha-Beta association, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is an example.

An *undifferentiated group* is made up of two or more soils or miscellaneous areas that could be mapped individually but are mapped as one unit because similar interpretations can be made for use and management. The pattern and proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas in a mapped area are not uniform. An area can be made up of only one of the major soils or miscellaneous areas, or it can be made up of all of them. Alpha and Beta soils, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is an example.

Some surveys include *miscellaneous areas*. Such areas have little or no soil material and support little or no vegetation. Rock outcrop is an example.

Upper Flathead Valley Area, Montana

Ra—Radnor silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes

Map Unit Setting

National map unit symbol: 4vs7
Elevation: 2,980 to 3,260 feet
Mean annual precipitation: 15 to 19 inches
Mean annual air temperature: 39 to 45 degrees F
Frost-free period: 105 to 125 days
Farmland classification: Not prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

Radnor and similar soils: 90 percent
Minor components: 10 percent
Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.

Description of Radnor

Setting

Landform: Depressions
Down-slope shape: Linear
Across-slope shape: Linear
Parent material: Glaciolacustrine deposits

Typical profile

A - 0 to 5 inches: silt loam
E - 5 to 14 inches: silty clay loam
Btg - 14 to 30 inches: silty clay loam
Cg - 30 to 60 inches: stratified silt loam to silty clay loam

Properties and qualities

Slope: 0 to 3 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
Drainage class: Poorly drained
Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat): Moderately low to moderately high (0.06 to 0.20 in/hr)
Depth to water table: About 0 inches
Frequency of flooding: None
Frequency of ponding: Frequent
Calcium carbonate, maximum content: 5 percent
Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches: High (about 10.5 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): None specified
Land capability classification (nonirrigated): 5w
Hydrologic Soil Group: C/D
Ecological site: R043AP807MT - Subirrigated Grassland Group
Hydric soil rating: Yes

Minor Components

Nonhydric

Percent of map unit: 10 percent
Hydric soil rating: No

Wr—Whitefish cobbly silt loam, 0 to 7 percent slopes

Map Unit Setting

National map unit symbol: 4vth
Elevation: 2,900 to 3,330 feet
Mean annual precipitation: 15 to 24 inches
Mean annual air temperature: 37 to 43 degrees F
Frost-free period: 90 to 130 days
Farmland classification: Farmland of statewide importance

Map Unit Composition

Whitefish and similar soils: 90 percent
Minor components: 10 percent
Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.

Description of Whitefish

Setting

Landform: Moraines
Down-slope shape: Linear
Across-slope shape: Linear
Parent material: Glacial till

Typical profile

Oi - 0 to 1 inches: slightly decomposed plant material
E - 1 to 9 inches: cobbly silt loam
E/Bt - 9 to 14 inches: gravelly silt loam
Bt - 14 to 20 inches: gravelly clay loam
Bk - 20 to 33 inches: gravelly silt loam
C - 33 to 60 inches: gravelly silt loam

Properties and qualities

Slope: 0 to 7 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
Drainage class: Well drained
Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat): Moderately high (0.20 to 0.57 in/hr)
Depth to water table: More than 80 inches
Frequency of flooding: None
Frequency of ponding: None
Calcium carbonate, maximum content: 15 percent
Maximum salinity: Nonsaline to very slightly saline (0.0 to 2.0 mmhos/cm)
Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches: Moderate (about 8.3 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): None specified
Land capability classification (nonirrigated): 3e
Hydrologic Soil Group: C
Ecological site: F043AP909MT - Upland Cool Woodland Group
Hydric soil rating: No

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ATTACHMENT C

Completed Routine Wetland Delineation Dataforms

WETLAND DETERMINATION DATA FORM - Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Region

Project/Site: Watkins Property Wetland Delineation City/County: Whitefish, Flathead County Sampling Date: 6/25/23
 Applicant/Owner: Cheryl Watkins State: MT Sampling Point: 1
 Investigator(s): Julian Colescott, PWS Section, Township, Range: _____
 Landform (hillslope, terrace, etc.): GRASSY HILLSLOPE Local relief (concave, convex, none): CONCAVE Slope (%): 2-4
 Subregion (LRR): LRR E Lat: 46.746 Long: 5.362, 475 Datum: NAD 83
 Soil Map Unit Name: Wc - Whitefish Cobbly Silt loam 0-7% NWI classification: NONE
 Are climatic / hydrologic conditions on the site typical for this time of year? Yes _____ No X (If no, explain in Remarks.)
 Are Vegetation _____, Soil _____, or Hydrology _____ significantly disturbed? Are "Normal Circumstances" present? Yes X No _____
 Are Vegetation _____, Soil _____, or Hydrology _____ naturally problematic? (If needed, explain any answers in Remarks.)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - Attach site map showing sampling point locations, transects, important features, etc.

Hydrophytic Vegetation Present?	Yes <u>X</u> No _____	Is the Sampled Area within a Wetland? Yes _____ No <u>X</u>
Hydric Soil Present?	Yes _____ No <u>X</u>	
Wetland Hydrology Present?	Yes <u>X</u> No _____	
Remarks: <u>U.S. DROUGHT MONITOR CLASSIFIES AS SEVERE DROUGHT, PASTURE IS LIGHTLY GRAZED. DATA DOCUMENT CONDITIONS IN A SMALL DEPRESSION W/ THE LARGER MEADOWS.</u>		

VEGETATION - Use scientific names of plants.

Tree Stratum (Plot size: <u>20'r</u>)	Absolute % Cover	Dominant Species?	Indicator Status	Dominance Test worksheet: Number of Dominant Species That Are OBL, FACW, or FAC: <u>3</u> (A) Total Number of Dominant Species Across All Strata: <u>4</u> (B) Percent of Dominant Species That Are OBL, FACW, or FAC: <u>75</u> (A/B)
1. <u>/</u>				
2. <u>/</u>				
3. <u>/</u>				
4. <u>/</u>				
5. <u>/</u>				
= Total Cover				
Sapling/Shrub Stratum (Plot size: <u>10'r</u>)	Absolute % Cover	Dominant Species?	Indicator Status	
1. <u>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>FAC</u>	
2. <u>/</u>				
3. <u>/</u>				
4. <u>/</u>				
5. <u>/</u>				
= Total Cover				
Herb Stratum (Plot size: <u>5'r</u>)	Absolute % Cover	Dominant Species?	Indicator Status	
1. <u>Juncus balticus</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>FACW</u>	
2. <u>Poa pratensis</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>FAC</u>	
3. <u>Festuca idahoensis</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>FACU</u>	
4. <u>Equisetum arvense</u>	<u>10</u>		<u>FAC</u>	
5. <u>Carex diandra</u>	<u>10</u>		<u>FACW</u>	
6. <u>Potentilla gracilis</u>	<u>5</u>		<u>FAC</u>	
7. <u>Agrostis stolonifera</u>	<u>5</u>		<u>FAC</u>	
8. <u>/</u>				
9. <u>/</u>				
10. <u>/</u>				
11. <u>/</u>				
= Total Cover				
Woody Vine Stratum (Plot size: _____)	Absolute % Cover	Dominant Species?	Indicator Status	
1. <u>/</u>				
2. <u>/</u>				
= Total Cover				
% Bare Ground in Herb Stratum: _____				
Remarks: <u>VEGETATION MEETS CRITERIA BUT IS NOT STRONGLY HYDROPHYTIC.</u>				

Hydrophytic Vegetation Present? Yes X No _____

SOIL

Sampling Point: 1

Profile Description: (Describe to the depth needed to document the indicator or confirm the absence of indicators.)

Depth (inches)	Matrix		Redox Features				Texture	Remarks
	Color (moist)	%	Color (moist)	%	Type ¹	Loc ²		
0-4	10YR 3/3	100					SILTY LOAM	
4-8	10YR 5/2	94	5YR 3/4	2	C	PL	SILTY LOAM	
8-20	10YR 5/3	100					SILTY LOAM	
20+	10YR 6/1	100					SILTY LOAM	

¹Type: C=Concentration, D=Depletion, RM=Reduced Matrix, CS=Covered or Coated Sand Grains. ²Location: PL=Pore Lining, M=Matrix.

Hydric Soil Indicators: (Applicable to all LRRs, unless otherwise noted.)

☐ Histosol (A1)	☐ Sandy Redox (S5)	☐ 2 cm Muck (A10)
☐ Histic Epipedon (A2)	☐ Stripped Matrix (S6)	☐ Red Parent Material (TF2)
☐ Black Histic (A3)	☐ Loamy Mucky Mineral (F1) (except MLRA 1)	☐ Very Shallow Dark Surface (TF12)
☐ Hydrogen Sulfide (A4)	☐ Loamy Gleyed Matrix (F2)	☐ Other (Explain in Remarks)
☐ Depleted Below Dark Surface (A11)	☐ Depleted Matrix (F3)	
☐ Thick Dark Surface (A12)	☐ Redox Dark Surface (F6)	
☐ Sandy Mucky Mineral (S1)	☐ Depleted Dark Surface (F7)	
☐ Sandy Gleyed Matrix (S4)	☐ Redox Depressions (F8)	

³Indicators of hydrophylic vegetation and wetland hydrology must be present, unless disturbed or problematic.

Restrictive Layer (if present):

Type: _____

Depth (inches): _____

Hydric Soil Present? Yes _____ No X

Remarks: CRITERIA FOR F3 (DEPLETED MATRIX) AND F6 (REDOX DARK SURFACE) CLOSE, BUT NOT MET.

HYDROLOGY

Wetland Hydrology Indicators:

Primary Indicators (minimum of one required; check all that apply)

☐ Surface Water (A1)	☐ Water-Stained Leaves (B9) (except MLRA 1, 2, 4A, and 4B)	☐ Water-Stained Leaves (B9) (MLRA 1, 2, 4A, and 4B)
☐ High Water Table (A2)	☐ Salt Crust (B11)	☐ Drainage Patterns (B10)
☐ Saturation (A3)	☐ Aquatic Invertebrates (B13)	☐ Dry-Season Water Table (C2)
☐ Water Marks (B1)	☐ Hydrogen Sulfide Odor (C1)	☐ Saturation Visible on Aerial Imagery (C9)
☒ Sediment Deposits (B2)	☐ Oxidized Rhizospheres along Living Roots (C3)	☐ Geomorphic Position (D2)
☐ Drift Deposits (B3)	☐ Presence of Reduced Iron (C4)	☐ Shallow Aquitard (D3)
☐ Algal Mat or Crust (B4)	☐ Recent Iron Reduction in Tilled Soils (C6)	☐ FAC-Neutral Test (D5)
☐ Iron Deposits (B5)	☐ Stunted or Stressed Plants (D1) (LRR A)	☐ Raised Ant Mounds (D6) (LRR A)
☐ Surface Soil Cracks (B6)	☐ Other (Explain in Remarks)	☐ Frost-Heave Hummocks (D7)
☐ Inundation Visible on Aerial Imagery (B7)		
☐ Sparsely Vegetated Concave Surface (B8)		

Field Observations:

Surface Water Present? Yes _____ No _____	Depth (inches): _____
Water Table Present? Yes _____ No _____	Depth (inches): _____
Saturation Present? Yes _____ No _____	Depth (inches): _____

(includes capillary fringe)

Wetland Hydrology Present? Yes X No _____

Describe Recorded Data (stream gauge, monitoring well, aerial photos, previous inspections), if available:

Remarks: WEAK INDICATORS ARE SUFFICIENT TO MEET CRITERIA. DROUGHT CONDITIONS ~~ARE~~ CURRENTLY PRESENT, BUT A THIN LAYER OF SEDIMENT IS PRESENT ON SOIL SURFACE AND LOW ON VEGETATION.

WETLAND DETERMINATION DATA FORM - Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Region

Project/Site: Watkins Property Wetland Determination City/County: Whitefish, Flathead County Sampling Date: DP 02
 Applicant/Owner: Cheryl Watkins State: MT Sampling Point: 6/25/23
 Investigator(s): Julian Colescott, PWS Section, Township, Range: _____
 Landform (hillslope, terrace, etc.): SWALE Local relief (concave, convex, none): _____ Slope (%): 2-4
 Subregion (LRR): LRR E UTM 11N 696788 Long: 5,362,455 Datum: _____
 Soil Map Unit Name: Wt - Whitefish cobbly silt loam, 0-7% NWI classification: NONE
 Are climatic / hydrologic conditions on the site typical for this time of year? Yes _____ No X (If no, explain in Remarks.) SEVERE DROUGHT
 Are Vegetation _____, Soil _____, or Hydrology _____ significantly disturbed? Are "Normal Circumstances" present? Yes X No _____
 Are Vegetation _____, Soil _____, or Hydrology _____ naturally problematic? (If needed, explain any answers in Remarks.)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - Attach site map showing sampling point locations, transects, important features, etc.

Hydrophytic Vegetation Present? Yes <u>X</u> No _____	Is the Sampled Area within a Wetland? Yes _____ No <u>X</u>
Hydric Soil Present? Yes _____ No <u>X</u>	
Wetland Hydrology Present? Yes _____ No <u>X</u>	
Remarks: <u>SWALE DOMINATED w/ HYDROPHYTES DOES NOT MEET SOILS OR HYDROLOGY CRITERIA. - NON-WETLAND.</u>	

VEGETATION - Use scientific names of plants.

Tree Stratum (Plot size: <u>20' r</u>)	Absolute % Cover	Dominant Species?	Indicator Status	Dominance Test worksheet: Number of Dominant Species That Are OBL, FACW, or FAC: <u>3</u> (A) Total Number of Dominant Species Across All Strata: <u>3</u> (B) Percent of Dominant Species That Are OBL, FACW, or FAC: <u>100</u> (A/B)
1. _____				
2. _____				
3. _____				
4. _____				
= Total Cover				
Sapling/Shrub Stratum (Plot size: <u>10' r</u>)				
1. _____				Hydrophytic Vegetation Indicators: 1 - Rapid Test for Hydrophytic Vegetation <u>X</u> 2 - Dominance Test is >50% 3 - Prevalence Index is <3.0 ¹ 4 - Morphological Adaptations ¹ (Provide supporting data in Remarks or on a separate sheet) 5 - Wetland Non-Vascular Plants ¹ Problematic Hydrophytic Vegetation ¹ (Explain) ¹ Indicators of hydric soil and wetland hydrology must be present, unless disturbed or problematic.
2. _____				
3. _____				
4. _____				
= Total Cover				
Herb Stratum (Plot size: <u>5' r</u>)				
1. <u>Juncus balticus</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>FACW</u>	Hydrophytic Vegetation Present? Yes <u>X</u> No _____
2. <u>Carex praegracilis</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>FACW</u>	
3. <u>Carex hebbii</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>OBL</u>	
4. <u>Equisetum arvense</u>	<u>15</u>		<u>FAC</u>	
5. <u>Potentilla arguta</u>	<u>10</u>		<u>FAC</u>	
6. <u>Festuca idahoensis</u>	<u>10</u>		<u>FACU</u>	
7. _____				
8. _____				
9. _____				
10. _____				
11. _____				
= Total Cover				
Woody Vine Stratum (Plot size: _____)				
1. _____				
2. _____				
= Total Cover				
% Bare Ground in Herb Stratum <u>0</u>				
Remarks: <u>CRITERIA MET.</u>				

Sampling Point: DP 02

HYDROLOGY

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WETLAND DETERMINATION DATA FORM - Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Region

Project/Site: Watkins Property Wetland Delineation City/County: Whitefish, Flathead County Sampling Date: 6/25/23
 Applicant/Owner: Cheryl Watkins State: MT Sampling Point: DP 03
 Investigator(s): Julian Colescott, PWS Section, Township, Range: _____
 Landform (hillslope, terrace, etc.): SWALE Local relief (concave, convex, none): _____ Slope (%): 0-5
 Subregion (LRR): LRR E UTM 696, 820 Long: 5, 362, 498 Datum: NAD 83
 Soil Map Unit Name: Ra - Rednor silt loam 0-37 NWI classification: NONE
 Are climatic / hydrologic conditions on the site typical for this time of year? Yes _____ No X (If no, explain in Remarks.) DROUGHT
 Are Vegetation _____, Soil _____, or Hydrology _____ significantly disturbed? Are "Normal Circumstances" present? Yes X No _____
 Are Vegetation _____, Soil _____, or Hydrology _____ naturally problematic? (If needed, explain any answers in Remarks.)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - Attach site map showing sampling point locations, transects, important features, etc.

Hydrophytic Vegetation Present?	Yes _____ No _____	Is the Sampled Area within a Wetland? Yes <u>X</u> No _____	TIME: 1454
Hydric Soil Present?	Yes _____ No _____		
Wetland Hydrology Present?	Yes _____ No _____		
Remarks: <u>ALL CONDITIONS MET. SEE HYDRO COMMENT.</u> <u>- PEME WETLAND -</u>			

VEGETATION - Use scientific names of plants.

Tree Stratum (Plot size: <u>20' r</u>)	Absolute % Cover	Dominant Species?	Indicator Status	Dominance Test worksheet:
1. <u>/</u>				Number of Dominant Species That Are OBL, FACW, or FAC: <u>2</u> (A)
2. <u>/</u>				Total Number of Dominant Species Across All Strata: <u>2</u> (B)
3. <u>/</u>				Percent of Dominant Species That Are OBL, FACW, or FAC: <u>100</u> (A/B)
4. <u>/</u>				
= Total Cover				
Sapling/Shrub Stratum (Plot size: <u>10' r</u>)	Absolute % Cover	Dominant Species?	Indicator Status	Prevalence Index worksheet:
1. <u>/</u>				Total % Cover of: _____ Multiply by: _____
2. <u>/</u>				OBL species _____ x 1 = _____
3. <u>/</u>				FACW species _____ x 2 = _____
4. <u>/</u>				FAC species _____ x 3 = _____
5. <u>/</u>				FACU species _____ x 4 = _____
= Total Cover				UPL species _____ x 5 = _____
				Column Totals: _____ (A) _____ (B)
Herb Stratum (Plot size: <u>15' r</u>)	Absolute % Cover	Dominant Species?	Indicator Status	Prevalence Index = B/A = _____
1. <u>Sarcus balticus</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>FACW</u>	Hydrophytic Vegetation Indicators: <u>X</u> 1 - Rapid Test for Hydrophytic Vegetation 2 - Dominance Test is >50% 3 - Prevalence Index is ≤3.0' 4 - Morphological Adaptations ¹ (Provide supporting data in Remarks or on a separate sheet) 5 - Wetland Non-Vascular Plants ¹ Problematic Hydrophytic Vegetation ¹ (Explain) ¹ Indicators of hydric soil and wetland hydrology must be present, unless disturbed or problematic.
2. <u>Poa pratensis</u>	<u>10</u>		<u>FAC</u>	
3. <u>Carex praegracilis</u>	<u>15</u>		<u>FACW</u>	
4. <u>Carex bebbii</u>	<u>10</u>		<u>OBL</u>	
5. <u>Scirpus microcarpus</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>OBL</u>	
6. <u>Mentha arvensis</u>	<u>5</u>		<u>FACW</u>	
= Total Cover				
Woody Vine Stratum (Plot size: _____)	Absolute % Cover	Dominant Species?	Indicator Status	Hydrophytic Vegetation Present? Yes <u>X</u> No _____
1. <u>/</u>				
2. <u>/</u>				
= Total Cover				
% Bare Ground in Herb Stratum <u>0</u>				
Remarks: <u>PLOT INCLUDES DRAINAGE BOTTOM.</u>				

Sampling Point: PF 03

[illegible]

Indicators for Problematic Hydric Soils³:

2 cm Muck (A10)
Red Parent Material (TF2)
Very Shallow Dark Surface (TF12)
Other (Explain in Remarks)

³Indicators of hydrophytic vegetation and wetland hydrology must be present, unless disturbed or problematic.

Hydric Soil Present? Yes X No

Remarks: HYDRIC SOIL CRITERIA MET.

Secondary Indicators (2 or more required)

- ☐ Water-Stained Leaves (B0) (MLRA 1, 2, 4A, and 4B)
- ☐ Drainage Patterns (B10)
- ☐ Dry-Season Water Table (C2)
- ☐ Saturation Visible on Aerial Imagery (C6)
- ☒ X Geomorphic Position (D2)
- ☐ Shallow Aquitard (D3)
- ☒ X FAC-Neutral Test (D5)
- ☐ Raised Ant Mounds (D6) (LRR A)
- ☐ Frost-Heave Hummocks (D7)

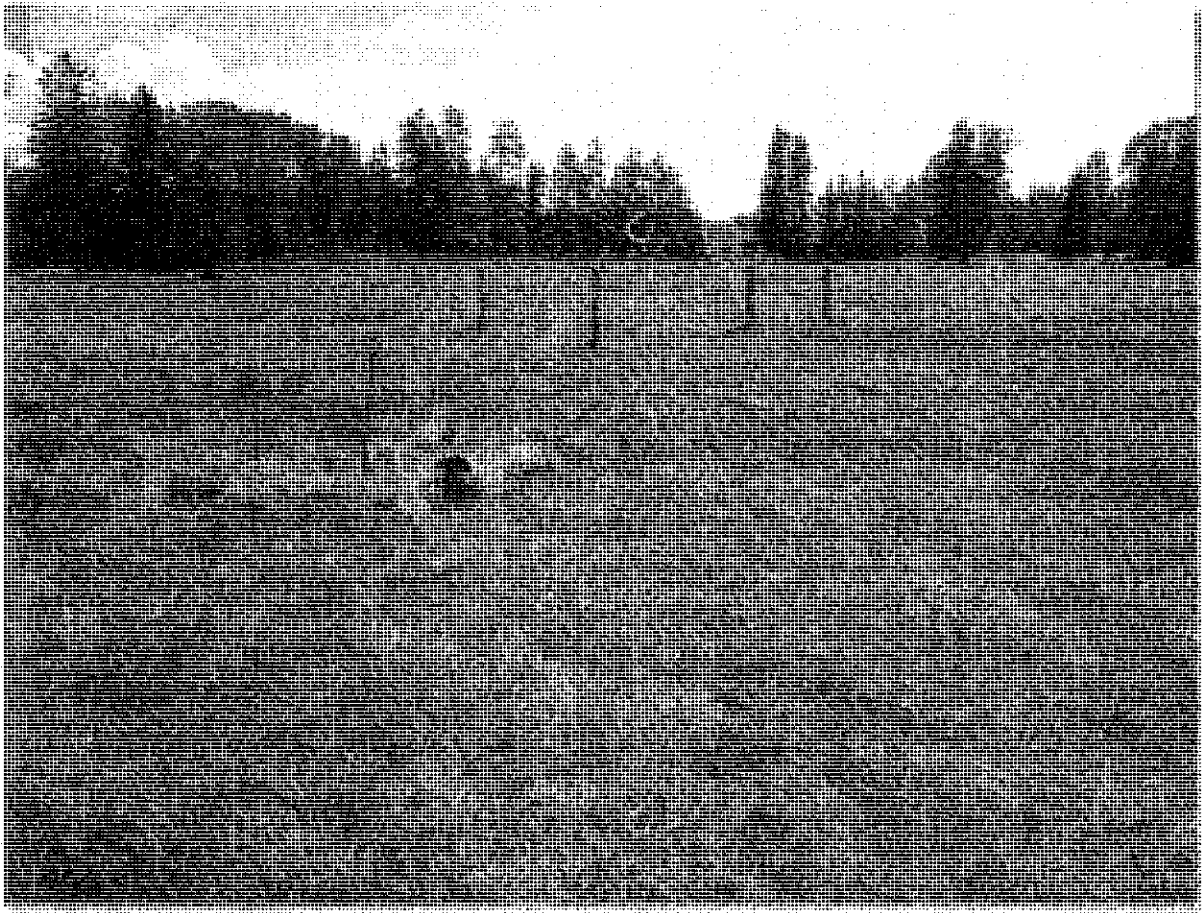
Wetland Hydrology Present? Yes ☒ No ☐

Remarks: WETLAND HYDROLOGY CRITERIA MET, JUST BARELY. SUSPECT THAT IN NON-DROUGHT CONDITION, SOILS WOULD BE SATURATED OR FLOODED.

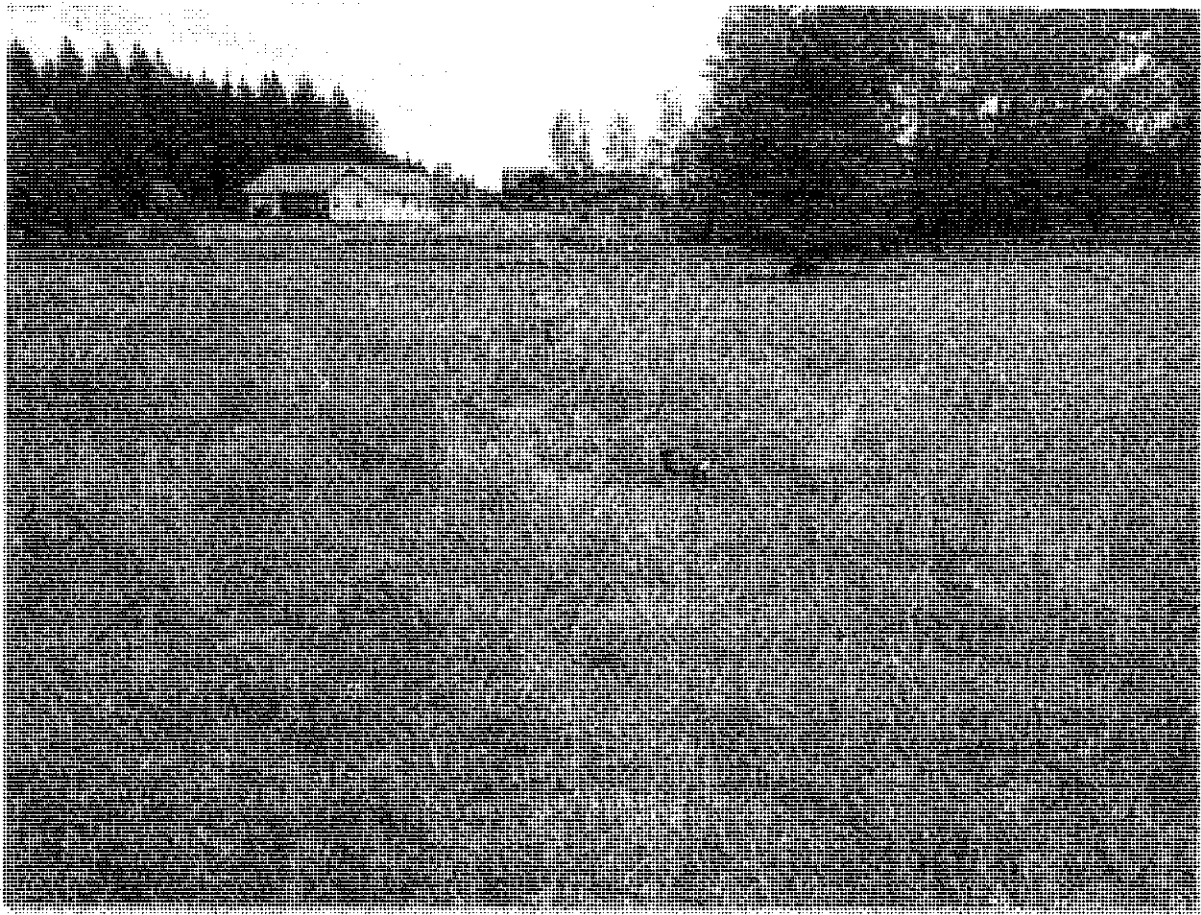
ATTACHMENT D

Representative Photographs

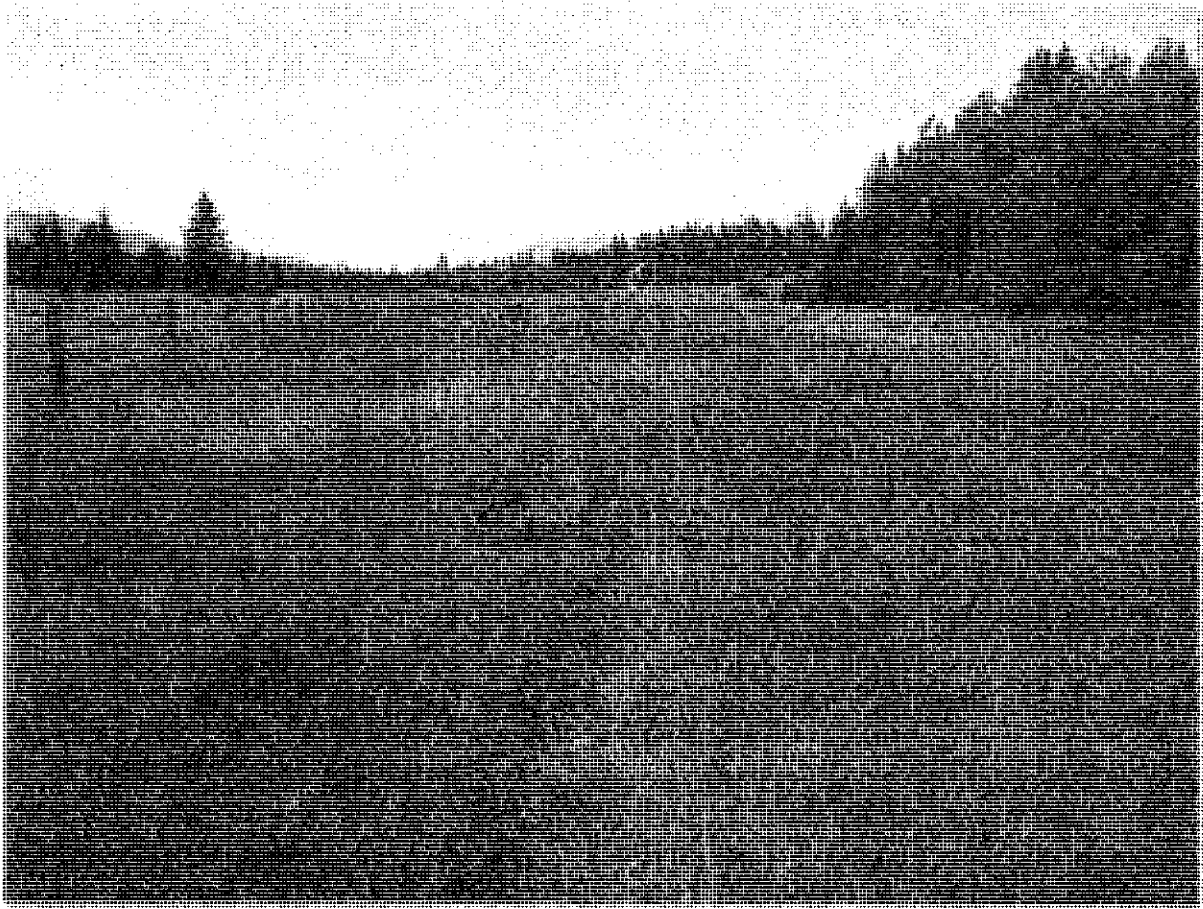
Representative Photographs Taken June 25, 2023



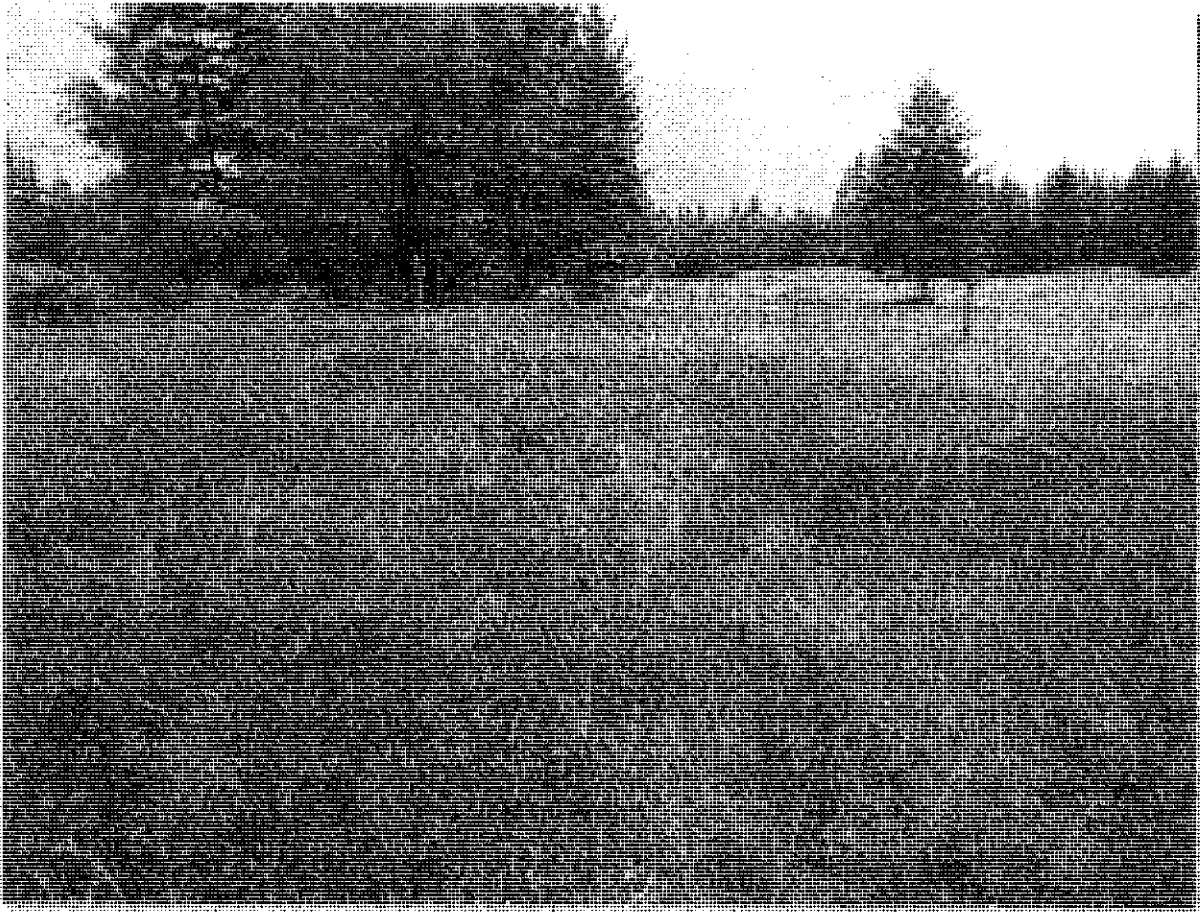
Datapoint 1 (shovel) documents that a portion of the meadow exhibiting a mix of hydrophytic and non-hydrophytic vegetation does not meet wetland criteria.



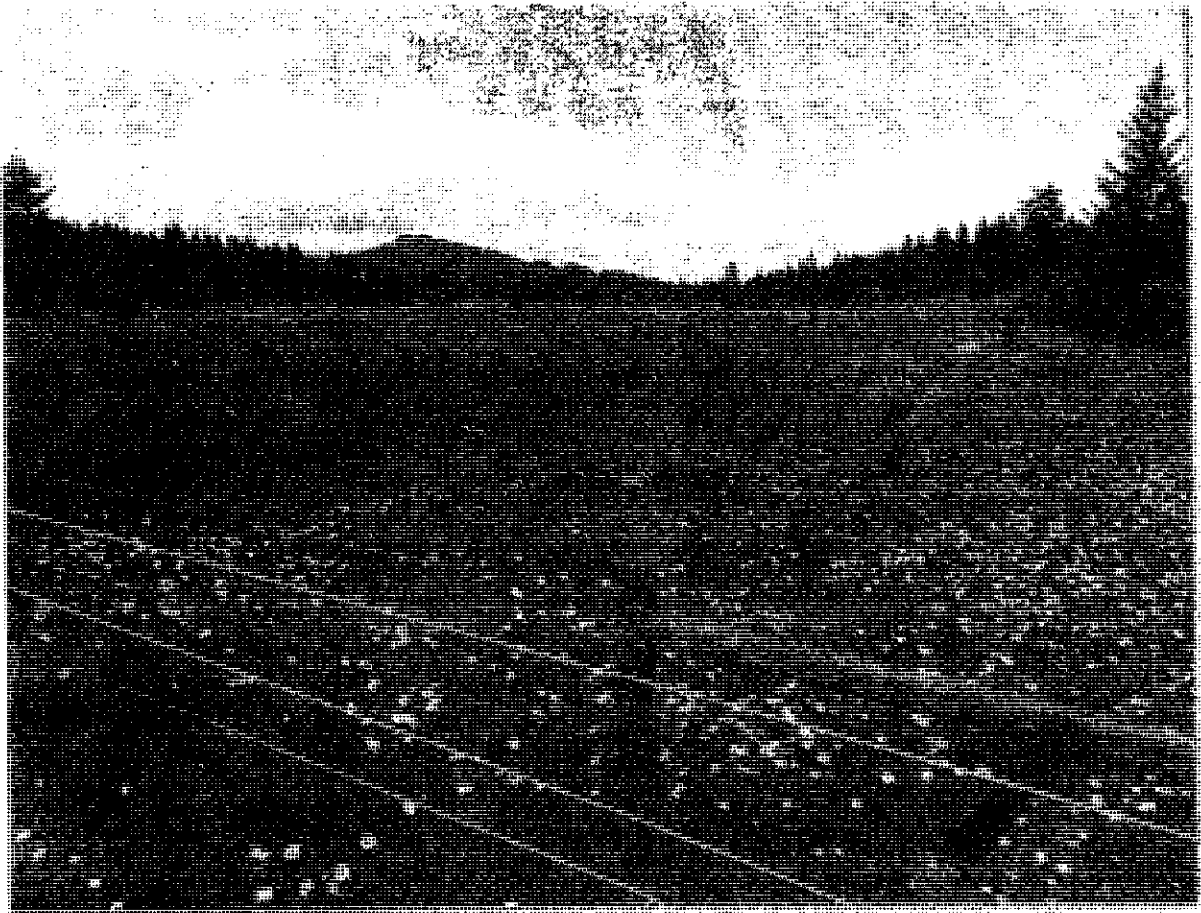
Datapoint 2 (shovel) similarly documents a suspect area just west of the wetland swale (visible beyond the fenceline) does not meet wetland criteria.



Datapoints 3 (shovel) documents the wetland swale (Wetland 1) in the northeast corner of the Survey Area. Cowardin classification PEME.



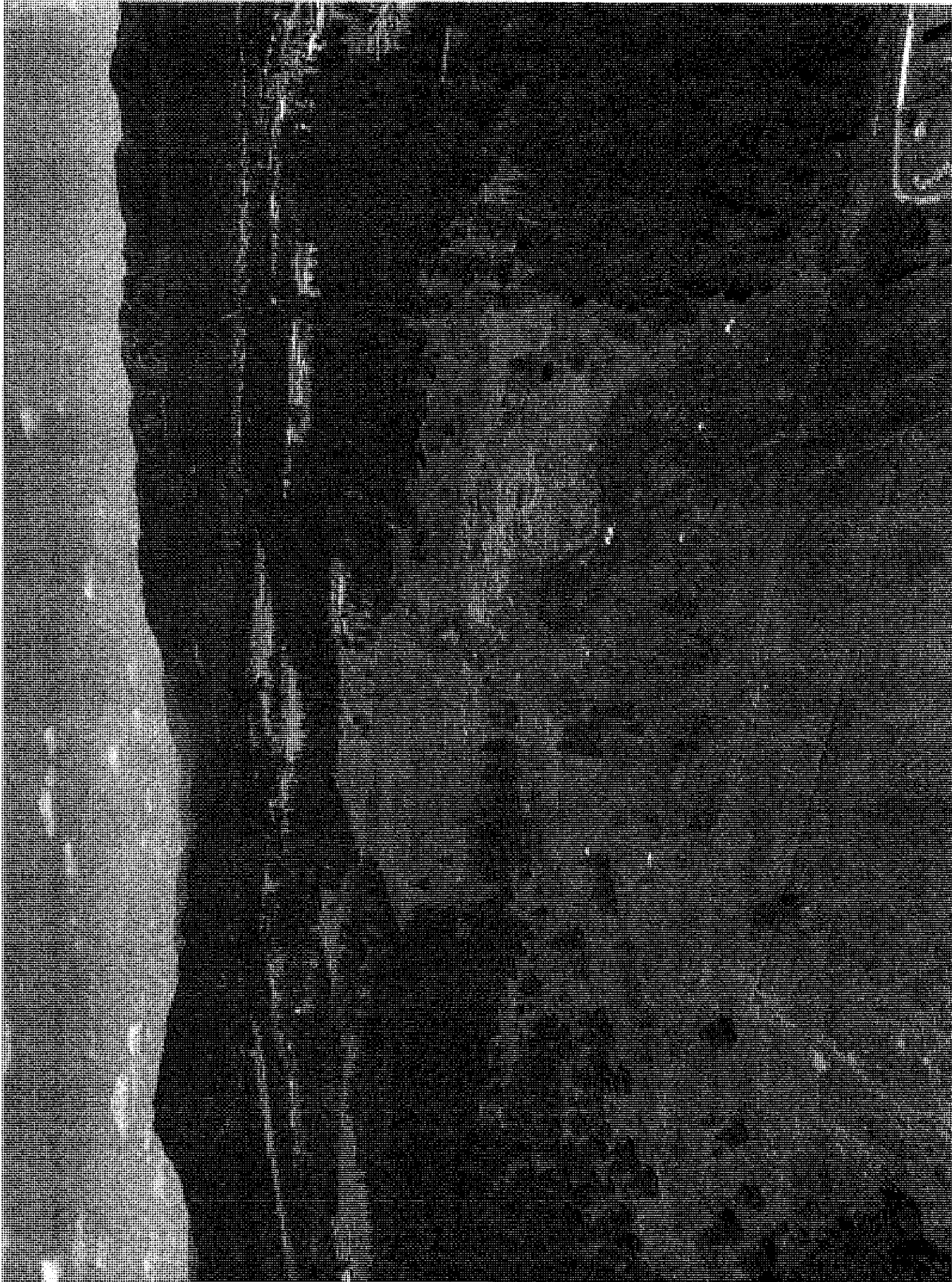
Looking south across the wetland swale at Datapoint 3 (shovel) provides another view of the wetland swale. Cowardin classification PEME.



Looking across your fenceline at the neighboring property to the north shows the same vegetation occurring in a wider swath across your neighbor's land. It is likely that the same conditions which meet the wetland criteria on your land also occur on the lands to the north.

Photographs taken in 2022 and 2023 by Omnivista Productions of Property of Carter Unger on behalf of Honor Bound LLC and Property of Cheryl Watkins and Richard Gordon.

Color photos available upon request



July 18, 2023 South to North



South & North

July 18, 2023

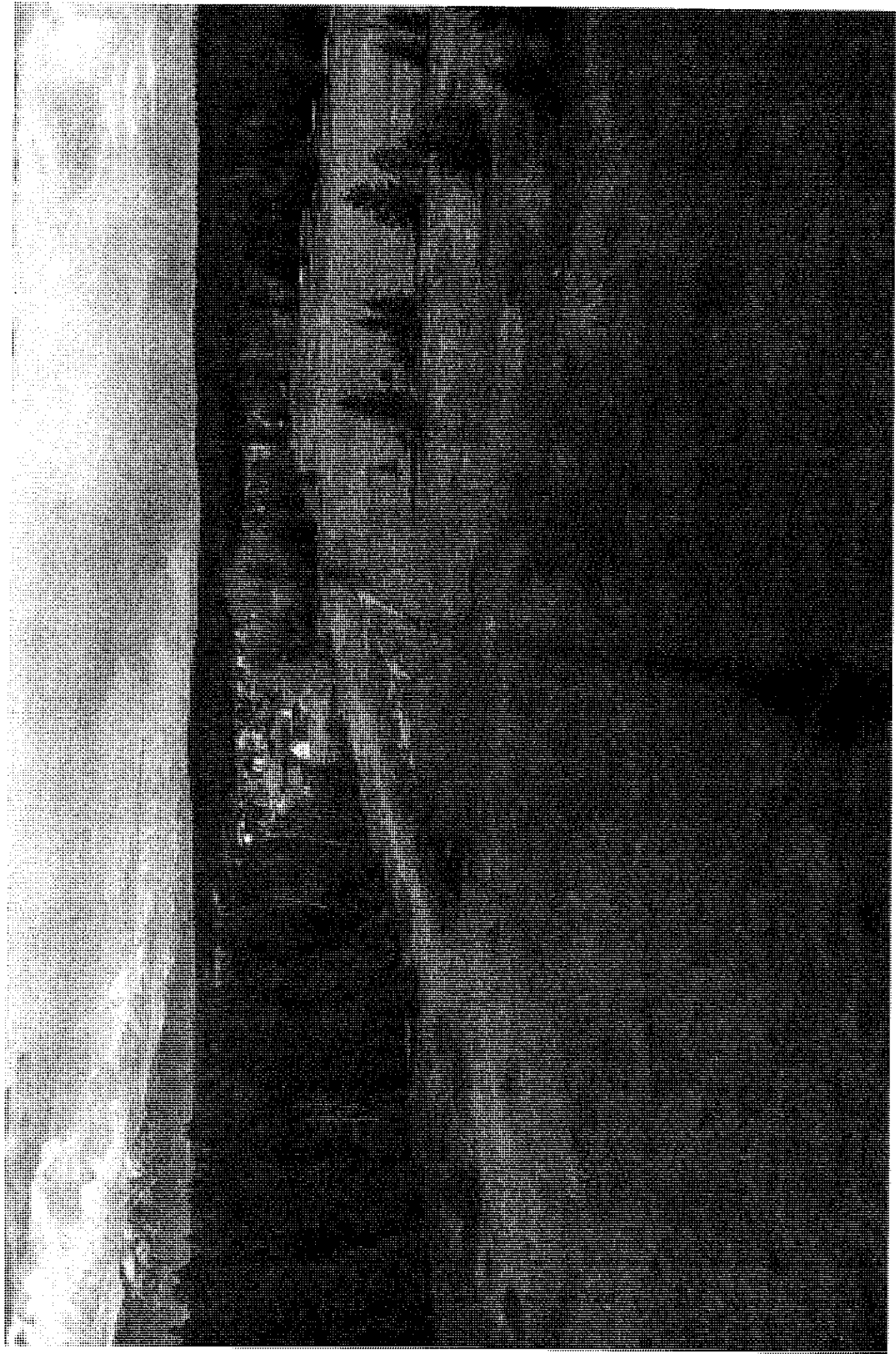


June 6, 2023 looking North to South



looking south to north

April 2023



South to North



STON
P
STON

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CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

The Following is a summary of the items to come before the City Council at its regular session to be held on **Tuesday**, February 17, 2026, at **7:10 p.m.** at City Hall 418 East Second Street, 2nd Floor
Hybrid (In-person and/or Remotely via Zoom)

To attend the meeting via Zoom and **provide live comment** attendees should go to the web link below. **Raise your virtual hand to indicate you want to provide comment. Due to occasional technical difficulties, the most reliable way to participate is through in-person attendance. Electronic/virtual means are not guaranteed.**

Meeting Link: [Zoom Link](#) Meeting Number: **849 2808 8413** Password: **59937**

NOTICE: Effective **September 15, 2025**, live streaming of meetings on YouTube will no longer be available. To watch meetings live, please use the **Zoom Link** provided above. A **recording of the meeting** will be uploaded to the City of Whitefish YouTube channel the following day.

- We encourage individuals to provide written public comment; to the City Clerk, Michelle Howke at mhowke@cityofwhitefish.org or deliver by **4:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 17, 2026**, to City Hall. Written comments should include name, address, should be short and concise, courteous, and polite. All written comments received by 4:00 p.m. will be provided to the City Council and appended to the packet following the meeting.
- Public comment by those attending the meeting "live" via Zoom or in-person will be limited to three minutes per individual.

Ordinance numbers start with 26-02. Resolution numbers start with 26-03

- 1) CALL TO ORDER
- 2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 3) COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC— (This time is set aside for the public to comment on items that are either on the agenda, but not a public hearing or on items not on the agenda. City officials do not respond during these comments but may respond or follow up later on the agenda or at another time. The mayor has the option of limiting such communications to three minutes depending on the number of citizens who want to comment and the length of the meeting agenda)
- 4) COMMUNICATIONS FROM VOLUNTEER BOARDS
 - a) Ordinance No. 26-__ ; An ordinance amending Whitefish City Code Title 2, Chapter 12, regarding membership qualifications for the Convention and Visitor Bureau Committee (First Reading) (p.381)
- 5) CONSENT AGENDA (The consent agenda is a means of expediting routine matters that require the Council's action. Debate does not typically occur on consent agenda items. Any member of the Council may remove any item for debate. Such items will typically be debated and acted upon prior to proceeding to the rest of the agenda.)
 - a) Minutes from January 20, 2026, Regular Meeting (p.396)
 - b) Ordinance No. 26-01; An Ordinance to repeal Title 2, Chapter 10, Architectural Review Committee of the Whitefish City Code (Second Reading) (p.402)
 - c) Consideration to modify side yard setback to conform to WR-1 zoning, located at 364 Shady River Lane (Lot 10) (p.403)
- 6) PUBLIC HEARINGS (Items will be considered for action after public hearings) (Resolution No. 07-33 establishes a 30-minute time limit for applicant's land use presentations.)
 - a) Resolution No. 26-__ ; A Resolution to establish an increase in the public usage fee the Whitefish City Beach boat launch (p.413)
 - b) Resolution No. 26-__ ; A Resolution approving an Amendment to the Lease Agreement and to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park (p.427)

- 7) COMMUNICATION FROM PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR
 - a) Consideration to approve Urban Forestry educational banners to be placed on light poles in the downtown district (p.445)
 - b) Consideration authorizing staff to proceed with bidding Armory Park Parking Lot and Open Space (p.447)
- 8) COMMUNICATIONS FROM PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
 - a) Consideration to approve conceptual design for Armory Road and authorize staff to proceed with final design and bidding for construction (p.467)
- 9) COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER
 - a) Written report enclosed with the packet. Questions from Mayor and Council? (p.479)
 - b) Other items arising between February 11th through February 17th
- 10) COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR AND CITY COUNCILORS
 - a) Consideration of approving the tentative FY27 Budget calendar (p.486)
 - b) Letter from Tara Zimmerman requesting additional Deer Crossing signs on Wisconsin Avenue (p.487)
 - c) Letter from Toby Scott – Action items for City to undertake (p.488)
 - d) Letter from Karin Hilding asking Council to support the vulnerable in our community (p.489)
- 11) ADJOURNMENT (Resolution 08-10 establishes 11:00 p.m. as end of meeting unless extended to 11:30 by majority)



The following Principles for Civil Dialogue are adopted on 2/20/2007 for use by the City Council and by all boards, committees and personnel of the City of Whitefish:

- We provide a safe environment where individual perspectives are respected, heard, and acknowledged.
- We are responsible for respectful and courteous dialogue and participation.
- We respect diverse opinions as a means to find solutions based on common ground.
- We encourage and value broad community participation.
- We encourage creative approaches to engage public participation.
- We value informed decision-making and take personal responsibility to educate and be educated.
- We believe that respectful public dialogue fosters healthy community relationships, understanding, and problem-solving.
- We acknowledge, consider and respect the natural tensions created by collaboration, change and transition.
- We follow the rules and guidelines established for each meeting.

Adopted by Resolution 07-09
February 20, 2007

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February 11, 2026

The Honorable Mayor Muhlfeld and City Councilors
City of Whitefish
Whitefish, Montana

Mayor Muhlfeld and City Councilors:

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 City Council Agenda Report

There will be a work session at 5:30 p.m. to review the Land Use/Zoning and Subdivision Element of the Vision Whitefish 2045 Growth Policy. Food will be provided.

The regular Council meeting will begin at 7:10 p.m.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VOLUNTEER BOARDS

- a) Ordinance No. 26-__; An ordinance amending Whitefish City Code Title 2, Chapter 12, regarding membership qualifications for the Convention and Visitor Bureau Committee (First Reading) (p.381)

A letter from Zak Anderson, Executive Director of Whitefish Convention and Visitors Bureau is provided in the packet.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff respectfully recommends the City Council adopt Ordinance No. 26-__; An ordinance amending Whitefish City Code Title 2, Chapter 12, regarding membership qualifications for the Convention and Visitor Bureau Committee (First Reading).

This item is a legislative matter.

CONSENT AGENDA (The consent agenda is a means of expediting routine matters that require the Council's action. Debate does not typically occur on consent agenda items. Any member of the Council may remove any item for debate. Such items will typically be debated and acted upon prior to proceeding to the rest of the agenda.)

- a) Minutes from January 20, 2026, Regular Meeting (p.396)
- b) Ordinance No. 26-01; An Ordinance to repeal Title 2, Chapter 10, Architectural Review Committee of the Whitefish City Code (Second Reading) (p.402)
- c) Consideration to modify side yard setback to conform to WR-1 zoning, located at 364 Shady River Lane (Lot 10) (p.403)

RECOMMENDATION: Staff respectfully recommends the City Council approve the Consent Agenda.

Item "a" is an administrative matter; Item "b" is a legislative matter; Item "c" is a quasi-judicial matter.

PUBLIC HEARINGS (Items will be considered for action after public hearings) (Resolution No. 07-33 establishes a 30-minute time limit for applicant's land use presentations.)

- a) Resolution No. 26-__; A Resolution to establish an increase in the public usage fee the Whitefish City Beach boat launch (p.413)

From Director of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services, Maria Butts staff report.

Introduction/History

In 2016, City Council approved a boat launch fee increase from \$5 to \$10 for a day pass and \$40 to \$50 for a season pass. When Council approved the fee increases, they asked staff to monitor rates to make sure they adequately pay for the city's aquatic invasive species program.

Staff have been monitoring the efficacy of those rates and have determined it is now time to propose an increase to the Whitefish City Beach boat launch fees. Proposed fee increases include both privately and commercially launched watercraft. Funds will be used to support the aquatic invasive species program including inspections at City Beach and Whitefish Lake State Park. Watercraft decontamination will continue to be free. Funds will also support boat ramp maintenance and staffing.

Current Report

The Cost of Managing AIS

The need for fee increases was assessed by evaluating the cost of City Beach boat launch personnel and supplies versus the revenues received in past years. Staff evaluated the percentage of boat launches that were single launches versus season pass launches and those that were Montana residents versus those that were non-resident launches. Additionally, staff researched fees from similar boat launches to come up with proposed fee increases.

The cost to fund seasonal staff who perform inspections, decontaminations, and facility maintenance averages \$119,000 annually. Whitefish Lake Institute contributes \$17,500 annually to the cost of running the decontamination station. Total income from boat launch passes and commercial permits in 2025 was \$32,590. Boat ramp and drive lane improvements were completed in fall of 2025 at a total cost of \$235,000. Increasing boat launch fees and commercial permits will help to better support the city's efforts to have a safe place to launch while protecting Whitefish Lake through a vigorous AIS prevention program.

Of special note is Whitefish Lake State Park. Although residents of Montana can launch for free, commercial use is permitted with a range of fees. Due to commercial permit fees and limited parking, we have seen use grow at Whitefish City Beach for both private launching and commercial use (see figure 1 of the full staff report provided in the packet).

2025 Public Boat Launch Fee Data

In 2025, City Beach sold 1,099 day passes at \$10 per launch for a total of \$10,990. Additionally, 22 punch cards were sold at \$50 each for a total of \$1,100 (commercial permit holders only). A total of 350 season passes were sold at \$50 each for a total of \$17,500. Total day use and season pass sales for 2025 was \$29,590. Day and season pass fees have not increased since 2017.

History of Commercial Boat Launch Fees

The Commercial Boat Launch Permit program was first established in 2017 with 9 permits issued that year. In 2025, there were a total of 24 permits issued. Permit holders pay a \$125 flat fee upfront, which includes one season pass or one punch card. Revenue from commercial permits was \$3,000 for the 2025 season. Fees have not increased since 2017.

Commercial permit holders use the launch heavily. In the spring and fall, boat delivery and pick up dominate the launch. During the summer, motorized watercraft rentals and guided trips are the primary commercial users of the launch. Not only does this add to the busyness of the launch during peak public use, but it also adds to the demand for parking by commercial clients.

In 2021, the Park Board established limits on the types of Commercial Use Permits issued for Whitefish City Beach: up to six permits for businesses providing guiding services and up to four permits for motorized rental delivery businesses. There are no limits on boat storage/delivery, marine service/sales, and dock service permits. Non-motorized rental delivery is not permitted at the beach but is allowed at riverfront parks with a limit of 5 watercraft per day.

The rental permit quota has been filled every year since limits were imposed. In 2025, there were 4 businesses on the waiting list. Staff have also identified other individuals renting personally owned boats on websites such as *Boatsetter* and *GetMyBoat*. Additionally, the rental of e-motorized hand launch watercraft, a relatively new form of recreation, is a potential commercial use that needs to be evaluated in the permitting process.

2025 Commercial Boat Launch Fee Data

Total revenues generated by the City Beach Boat Ramp in 2025 were \$32,590, which only covers about 27% of the costs to run the ramp and perform inspections and decontaminations at City Beach and Whitefish Lake State Park. Recently the city has made financial investments in infrastructure improvements that were not supported by revenues generated from boat ramp use. By increasing user fees directly tied to boat ramp use, the cost to operate the boat launch is passed on to both private and commercial users who utilize the amenity the most.

History of Proposed Fee Schedule

The proposed fee schedule was presented to the Park Board January 13, 2026, at their regularly scheduled meeting. The board voted unanimously to approve the fee schedule as proposed. However, there was also consensus that the board would be supportive of increased fees for non-residents and asked staff to bring data back to the board at the end of the season to evaluate the effectiveness of the fee changes.

The fee schedule was then presented to the City Council during a work session on January 20, 2026. After receiving public comments, the Council directed staff to revise the fee schedule to better cover costs associated with the management of the boat ramp, AIS inspections, and decontaminations through further increases to commercial and non-resident fees.

Current Proposed Fee Schedule

Staff revised the fee schedule based on the feedback received from the Council Work Session. The non-resident day launch fee increased from \$30 to \$50 and the non-resident seasonal pass fee from \$200 to \$250. Additionally, staff removed the inclusion of a punch card with the commercial base fee. Instead, commercial users will be required to pay the resident day launch fee for each launch. This method naturally requires commercial users to pay for the level of impact their business has at the boat launch instead of staff estimating tiered levels of use. This method will also allow staff to gather better data on the number of commercial launches at City Beach each year.

Proposed City Beach Boat Launch Fee Schedule

Category	Current Fee	Proposed 2026 Fee
Day Launch Resident*	\$10.00	\$15.00
Day Launch Non-Resident	n/a	\$50.00
Season Pass Launch Resident*	\$50.00	\$100.00
Season Pass Launch Non-Resident	n/a	\$250.00

*Resident – Watercraft is registered in Montana.

Proposed Commercial Boat Launch Permit Fee Schedule

Type of Commercial Launch Permit	Current Fee	Proposed 2026 Fee	Permit Quota
Watercraft Delivery, Dock Services, Sales, and Marina Launching	\$125 (includes one season pass/punch card) *	\$500 plus \$15 per launch	No limit
Motorized Rentals (including e-motors)	\$125 (includes one season pass/punch card) *	\$500 plus \$15 per launch motorized, or \$5 per hand launch e-motor	6 permits
Guiding	\$125 (includes one season pass/punch card) *	\$500 plus \$15 per launch	3 permits
River Non-motorized	\$125	\$250	N/A
E-motor (use of motorized mooring area on beach)	N/A	\$5 per watercraft	See rental/guiding permits
Commercial Motorized Punch Card	\$50 (5 launches)	\$75 (5 launches)	N/A

* Also paid for additional boat launch fees – single launch (\$10) or season pass (\$50).

These proposed increases will bring revenues closer in line with associated expenditures. Increasing non-resident boater fees, increasing commercial permit fees, and adding a per-launch fee structure instead of a flat annual fee for commercial rentals will all contribute to an increase in the boat ramp revenue of 60%. Fees will cover 80% of the cost to perform Aquatic Invasive Species inspections and decontaminations by city staff. Cost analysis sheets are provided in the packet for your reference.

These fees would take effect March 1, 2026, when commercial registration opens for the summer of 2026.

Financial Considerations

The implementation of the proposed fees will increase City Beach boat launch revenues to better cover associated costs of managing the boat ramp, AIS inspections, and the decontamination station.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff respectfully recommends the City Council adopt Resolution No. 26-__; A Resolution to establish an increase in the public usage fee the Whitefish City Beach boat launch.

This item is an administrative matter.

- b) Resolution No. 26-__; A Resolution approving an Amendment to the Lease Agreement and to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park (p.427)

From City Attorney Angela Jacobs staff report.

Introduction/History

Since 1936, a community baseball stadium has existed on the northeast corner of City-owned Memorial Park. Over the past sixty years, the Glacier Twins have completed several capital improvement projects on the property for the purpose of holding American Legion baseball practice and games. Though the Glacier Twins had leased the land from the City in years past, in October of 2002, the City and the Glacier Twins entered into a long-term lease and an agreement permitting the

construction of a new stadium grandstand. The base term for the lease was twenty-five years, giving the Glacier Twins the option to automatically renew it for two consecutive terms of fifteen years each.

In addition to the long-term lease with the City, the Glacier Twins entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Park Board of Commissioners on August 29, 2014, to address the construction of a Verizon cellphone tower within the leased area and the distribution of the funds received by Verizon. The MOU was last amended in 2022. Pursuant to the amendment, the Glacier Twins receive 78% of the Verizon funds received by the City for five years.

In December of 2025, the City and Verizon entered into a Second Amendment to License Agreement. The amendment extended the license granted to Verizon for the cellphone tower for five years beginning February 1, 2025, and set new annual rent of \$26,664.40.

Current Report

In the past year, members of the public have raised concerns regarding the long-term lease and the use of Memorial Field. Concerns included: (1) allegations that the Glacier Twins were misappropriating the Verizon funds dispersed by the City; (2) the school district not being allowed to utilize Memorial Field for its high school baseball and football teams; (3) the length of the lease term; (4) characterization of Memorial Field as a “private playground” for the Glacier Twins; and (5) the possibility that the Glacier Twins would continue to hold the property even if they didn’t have enough players to field a team.

City staff met several times with the Glacier Twins to discuss amendments to the MOU and the long-term lease agreement in an effort to address concerns raised by the public. One meeting, at which staff examined the last two years of the Glacier Twins’ financials, was attended by the president of JCCS as well as by City Manager Meeker who holds a CPA license. No evidence of misappropriation was found. Staff also met with representatives of the school district who informed us the school district does not desire to utilize Memorial Field at this time as they are utilizing Smith Fields.

The amendment to the MOU, which was approved by Park Board at its meeting held February 10, 2026:

- Aligns the term of the MOU with the term of the Second Amendment to License Agreement
- Creates transparency by allowing the City to hold the Verizon funds in the Memorial Park Account and to distribute the funds to the Glacier Twins upon written requests accompanied by invoices
- Obligates the Glacier Twins to provide a copy of its tax returns to the City each year

The proposed amendment to the long-term lease agreement:

- Updates the term of the lease to provide it renews only upon the written approval of both the City and the Glacier Twins
- Provides the City can terminate the lease if the Glacier Twins fail to utilize the property for baseball or related programs for more than one year
- Removes the requirement that the City inspect the property for maintenance and safety considerations on a regular basis
- Provides transparency with respect to use of the property, clarifying the Glacier Twins have priority, then the school district, then the general public with the caveat that the Twins are not required to sub-lease the property to any entity or entity with employees/contractors directly competing with its program

- Caps the amount the Glacier Twins may charge to sub-lease the property to the school district at a fee that recuperates the cost of utilities, maintenance required to be performed by the Glacier Twins during the sub-lease term, and any repairs needed for damage caused
- Requires the Glacier Twins to establish a schedule of rates charged for use of the property that is equitable and fair for similar types of uses

The Park Board also considered the proposed amendment to the long-term lease agreement. It recommended that the City Council approve it with one change to the language in paragraph 7 of Section 10, Use, redlined below:

The TWINS may limit use of the STADIUM and STADIUM Land if ~~field conditions present the activity poses an unreasonable threat to the facility. threat of excessive damage to the facilities due to weather conditions.~~ The TWINS may not unreasonably deny Whitefish School District access to the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND.

Financial Requirements/Impacts

There are no financial requirements/impacts associated with approving the Amendment to Lease Agreement and Amendment to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff respectfully recommends the City Council adopt Resolution No. 26-___; A Resolution approving an Amendment to the Lease Agreement and to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park

This item is an administrative matter.

COMMUNICATION FROM PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR

- a) Consideration to approve Urban Forestry educational banners to be placed on light poles in the downtown district (p.445)

From Park, Recreation, and Community Services Director staff memo.

The Parks and Recreation Department has submitted an application for the DNRC's Urban and Community Forestry Program Development Grant. The theme of the grant this year is "Longevity and Readiness – Planning, Risk Mitigation & Tree Health." One of the key concepts of the grant is homeowner education on general tree care and maintenance. To achieve this, staff would like to place approximately twelve educational banners on the light posts in the downtown district on existing infrastructure. These educational banners will help educate the public on the importance of watering, preventing invasive pests by not relocating firewood, and the importance of gleaning fruit trees in the fall.

Included in your packet is an example of a banner we would like to hang. All banners will be consistent with our existing sign plan, reflecting city branding through approved colors, artwork, and fonts. They will include phrases such as water young trees near the root ball, water mature trees at the outer edge of the branches, keep mulch away from tree trunks, harvest fruit promptly, and pick up fallen fruit daily.

An additional part of our educational campaign will entail partnering with the students from Whitefish High School to create educational videos. Our goals are to teach the public how to properly mulch, water, and prune small trees.

The total anticipated cost of the educational component of the grant is \$2,070 and the city is requesting \$1,158 in grant funding. The match is 3:1, and we are contributing \$912 of staff and volunteer time. Staff and high school volunteers will contribute in-kind time as well.

I am seeking Council's approval to permit staff to install tree care educational banners on light poles in the downtown district.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff respectfully recommends City Council approve the installation of banners in the downtown district to promote tree care.

This item is an administrative matter.

- b) Consideration to authorize staff to proceed with bidding Armory Park Parking Lot and Open Space Project (p.44)

From Director of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services, Maria Butts staff report.

Introduction/History

Armory Park is the City's largest park, spanning 30 acres. In 2019 the Park Board updated the Armory Park Master Plan to identify the next phases of the plan, Phase III and Phase IV. With the updated plan, staff applied for and received a Land Water Conservation grant to complete Phase III of the plan, which was completed in 2023. Upon completion, the Parks and Recreation Department continued work with RPA for the design engineering of Phase IV.

Staff, RPA, and the Park Board have identified the prioritization of Phase IV projects through community-wide surveys, collaboration with the WAG Board, and various public meetings. In October of 2024, the Park Board gave final approval of a five-year prioritization of Armory Park improvements.

Current Report

Through the design process the consultant and staff identified the primary components of Phase IV. The next two projects slated to be completed are the parking lot and open space. Staff plans to publicly bid construction of the parking lot and open space in March 2026.

Assuming staff is authorized to proceed with bidding, the following schedule is proposed for the construction of the improvements:

- March 15 & March 22 - Advertisement Dates
- March 31 - Open Bids
- April 20 - Council Award
- May 8 - Construction Window Begins
- October 30 – Substantial Completion

Financial Requirement

The current preliminary construction cost estimate is \$493,734.00

The FY26 CIP has identified \$792,000 of Resort Tax dollars for Armory Park Phase IV and \$500,000 in FY27.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff respectfully request the City Council authorize to proceed with the bidding of the Armory Park Master Plan as presented and as approved by the Park Board of Commissioners.

This is an administrative matter.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

- a) Consideration to approve final design for Armory Road and authorize staff to proceed with final design and bidding for construction (p.467)

From Public Works Director Craig Workman's staff report.

Introduction/History

Armory Road has been selected as the next project on the Resort Tax priority list. The road has surface concerns, lacks bicycle and pedestrian amenities, and has significant influences from school traffic. Council directed staff to proceed with consultant selection on April 15, 2024 with the intention of proceeding with preliminary engineering and public outreach on the project.

City Council awarded the engineering contract to Morrison-Maierle in August of 2024 and public outreach began with a project website shortly thereafter. Since then, we have sent four project newsletters, held four public meetings, and had numerous individual conversations and meetings with residents and property owners.

Current Report

Attached to this report are several figures which provide an overview of the design for Armory Road along with the current estimated construction cost. The following sections describe the highlights of this information.

Roadway Profile & Active Transportation

The City's approved Transportation Plan designates Armory Road as a "Collector Roadway". Our city engineering standard for a collector roadway is 28 feet wide and includes curb and gutter, and sidewalk/boulevards on each side (SD-8, attached). Given the many design constraints along the corridor, the design team determined a standard collector roadway profile would not be appropriate. The proposed design calls for two 11' lanes with an 8' shared use path on one side. The design will also include a raised median on the curve to help calm traffic.

Schedule

Assuming staff is authorized to bid the project, the following schedule is proposed:

- 3/1/2026: 1st Advertisement
- 3/8/2026: 2nd Advertisement
- 3/15/2026: 3rd Advertisement
- 3/19/2026: Bid Opening
- 4/6/2026: Bid Award

Lighting

As with past road reconstruction projects, staff is recommending this corridor be upgraded to include the City standard, 14-foot tall, dark sky compliant decorative LED street lighting. These lights are compliant with the City's Outdoor Lighting Standards which were adopted to protect and promote the public health, safety and welfare, the quality of life, and the ability to view the night sky. Amongst other things, the code establishes standards for exterior lighting to provide safe roadways for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians while protecting and reclaiming the ability to view

the night sky. The proposed lights will match those recently installed on E. 6th Street, Karrow, Texas, Edgewood Place, State Park Road, and Somers Avenue.

Landscaping

The Public Works Department will work with Parks and Recreation and the Tree Committee to determine a tree planting plan in the boulevard as construction nears completion. The schedule of this project has been developed to ensure adequate time to restore disturbed areas.

Traffic Control & Construction Routes

The City has experienced some issues with construction traffic patterns and traffic related control issues on past projects. Armory Road will be bid with specific traffic control plans which must be adhered to. The roadway will be CLOSED TO THRU TRAFFIC during construction. This will allow residents that live along the roadway to access their properties, while preventing other vehicles from simply driving through the construction.

Financial Requirement

This project is slated to be paid for by the Resort Tax Fund. Estimated construction costs are \$6.4M, which includes a 20% contingency.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff respectfully recommends the City Council approve the design for Armory Road and authorize staff to proceed with bidding.

This item is an administrative matter.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

- a) Written report enclosed with the packet. Questions from Mayor and Council? (p.479)
- b) Other items arising between February 11th through February 17th

COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR AND CITY COUNCILORS

- a) Consideration of approving the tentative FY27 Budget calendar (p.486)
- b) Letter from Tara Zimmerman requesting additional Deer Crossing signs on Wisconsin Avenue (p.487)
- c) Letter from Toby Scott – Action items for City to undertake (p.488)
- d) Letter from Karin Hilding asking Council to support the vulnerable in our community (p.489)

ADJOURNMENT

Sincerely,



Dana Meeker, C.P.A.
City Manager

PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS GUIDE

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th Edition) and www.jimslaughter.com

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?	RECONSIDER?
Adjourn	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	Yes
Take a break	I move to recess for	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None	No
Orders of the day	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None	No

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?	RECONSIDER?
Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority	Negative vote only
Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes
Limit / extend debate	I move that debate be limited to...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3	Yes
Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Refer to a committee	I move to refer the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Amend a motion	I move to amend the motion by...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Affirmative vote only

MAIN MOTIONS

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?	RECONSIDER?
Bring business to motion	I move that (or “to”) ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes

No order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decided immediately.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?	RECONSIDER?
Enforce rules	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	None	No
Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority	Yes
Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules which...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3	Negative vote only
Divide motion / question	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Demand rising vote	I call for a division	Yes	No	No	No	None	No
Paliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None	No
Request information	A point of information , please.	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None	No

No order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.

RENEWAL MOTIONS

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?	RECONSIDER?
Take matter from table	I move to take from the table...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Cancel or change previous action	I move to rescind / amend the motion...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or majority w/notice	Negative vote only
Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider the vote on...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority	No

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ORDINANCE NO. 26-__

An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, amending Whitefish City Code Title 2, Chapter 12, regarding membership qualifications for the Convention and Visitor Bureau Committee.

WHEREAS, the City Council established the seven-member Convention and Visitor Bureau Committee as a standing committee by Ordinance No. 06-05, adopted on March 20, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the City Council expanded the membership of the Convention and Visitor Bureau Committee from seven to up to nine members on July 2, 2012, by Ordinance No. 12-10; and

WHEREAS, the City Council amended the membership qualifications of nonvoting members to include the Whitefish Postal District (59937) on September 8, 2015, by Ordinance No. 15-15; and

WHEREAS, the Convention and Visitor Bureau Committee desires to amend Subsection 2-12-3(A) of the Whitefish City Code and the Committee's By-Laws, incorporated herein as Exhibit "A", to require Committee members to be a member of the Convention and Visitor Bureau in good standing and reduce the number of Committee members required to reside in the City of Whitefish Postal District (59937) to six members of the nine member Committee; and

WHEREAS, at a lawfully noticed public meeting on February 17, 2026, the Whitefish City Council received an oral report from the Convention and Visitor Bureau Committee, and revised and approved the requested amendment to 2-12-3(A) of the Whitefish City Code; and

WHEREAS, it will be in the best interests of the City of Whitefish and its inhabitants to approve the requested amendment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, as follows:

Section 1: All of the recitals set forth above are hereby adopted as Findings of Fact.

Section 2: Subsection 2-12-3(A) of the Whitefish City Code is hereby amended in its entirety as follows:

A. Appointment; Compensation: The committee shall have up to nine (9) members. Members shall be appointed by the city council. All committee members must be members of the Whitefish Convention and Visitor Bureau in good standing. At least ~~seven-six~~ (76) members or more shall reside in the city of Whitefish postal district (59937). ~~Two-Three~~ (23) members may reside in Flathead County, but outside the city of Whitefish postal district (59937), as long as the member has an ownership interest or managerial position at a business located and operating

within the city of Whitefish postal district (59937). The city council shall endeavor to appoint members who represent one of the following business categories, and that have broad experience in and a current understanding of the following types of businesses:

- Finance
- Large lodging properties
- Restaurant and bar business
- Retail businesses
- Small lodging properties
- Transportation business
- Whitefish Golf Course
- Whitefish Mountain Resort

The city clerk shall make a notation of a member's representation category and a member's residence to facilitate appointment to categories not represented. However, the city council shall be entitled to appoint those individuals that it determines most qualified, regardless of representation category. The city council may appoint one of its members to serve as an ex officio (nonvoting) member of the committee. Committee members shall receive no compensation. (Ord. 15-15, 9-8-2015)

Section 3: This Ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days after its adoption by the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, and signing by the Mayor thereof.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEFISH, MONTANA, THIS ____ DAY OF _____ 2026.

John M. Muhlfeld, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michele Howke, City Clerk

Exhibit A

BYLAWS of WHITEFISH CONVENTION AND VISITOR BUREAU, INC.

ARTICLE I

NAME, PURPOSE

SECTION 1: NAME: The name of this corporation shall be: The Whitefish Convention and Visitor Bureau (dba. Explore Whitefish) (the "Corporation")

SECTION 2: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Corporation is:

- (1) To be the designated nonprofit convention and visitors' bureau for the City of Whitefish;
- (2) To develop an Annual Marketing Plan and Public & Private Budgets for each fiscal year, which Annual Marketing Plan and the Public Budget will be presented to the Whitefish City Council for approval;
- (3) To submit the Annual Marketing Plan approved by the Whitefish City Council to the Montana Tourism Advisory Council and receive approval by the Tourism Advisory Council of such Annual Marketing Plan;
- (4) To contract with the Montana Department of Commerce to receive lodging tax revenues earmarked for tourism promotion and disbursed pursuant to Section 1565121, MCA;
- (5) To implement the Annual Marketing Plan referenced above, and use the proceeds distributed by the Montana Department of Commerce pursuant to the budget approved by the Whitefish City Council;
- (6) To comply with all of the provisions contained under the category "ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS" in the Regulations and Procedures for Regional/CVB Tourism Organizations Use of Lodging Facility Use Tax Revenue promulgated by the Montana Department of Commerce;
- (7) To provide recommendations and advice to the Whitefish City Council, as appropriate, regarding tourism promotion;
- (8) To solicit non-voting members residing in or owning a business located in the Whitefish Postal District (59937) if the Committee determines it to be in the best interests of the Committee and in the best interests of tourism promotion; such members may be required by the Committee to pay an annual fee for membership; and
- (9) To conduct such additional activities with regard to tourism promotion as are determined by the Committee to be in the best interests of the Committee and of the City of Whitefish.
- (10) To conduct fundraising activities, including charging a membership fee, and expend any funds raised for purposes related to the tourism promotion.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERS; NON-PROFIT STATUS; TAX STATUS; EXEMPT ACTIVITIES

SECTION 1. The Corporation shall have members in various categories as described below and approved by the Board of Directors of the Corporation. It shall be operated on a not-for-profit basis within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (6), of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended from time to time, or such other subsections of Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code as shall be determined to be applicable to the Corporation. No part of the revenue or

assets of the Corporation may inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth herein. The primary activity of the Corporation shall not be to provide services to its partners, but to promote the purpose as set forth in Article 1, Section 2 of these bylaws. The Corporation may engage in some political activity, including lobbying, that is germane to accomplishing its exempt purpose without jeopardizing its exempt purpose. That said, no substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the participation in, or intervening in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE III CORPORATE POWERS

SECTION 2. The Corporation shall have such powers as are permitted to nonprofit corporations under the provision of the Montana Nonprofit Corporation Act (the "Act") and the Code, including but not limited to the power to establish Bylaws, make rules and regulations for the management of corporate affairs, and to appoint agents and elect officers as the business of the Corporation may require. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, this corporation shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes of this corporation.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERS

SECTION 1. "Members": The members of the Corporation shall be any individual residing in or owning a business within the Whitefish Postal District (59937) as amended from time to time, or any business located within the Whitefish Postal District (59937) as amended from time to time. Members shall be non-voting. Members shall not elect the Board of Directors of the corporation.

SECTION 2. "Associate Members" have the following characteristics:

1. The associate member must provide a significant activity, experience or service that is not already provided in the Whitefish postal district (59937).
 2. The associate member must agree to all obligations and duties applicable to regular members of the WCVB.
 3. The associate member must be nominated by a convention and visitor bureau standing city committee member (board member of the WCVB) and be approved by a majority of the standing city committee (board of the WCVB).
- Associate members cannot participate in the nomination or recommendation of board positions, nor can they serve on the board. Otherwise, however, they will have the same rights as other members. (Ord. 15-15, 9-8-2015)

SECTION 3: Application and Notice of Action. Every business or organization desiring to become a member of the Corporation shall apply for membership and remain a member in good standing as long as their business complies with the parameters set in Article IV, Sections 1 & 2 and their account balance remains current. (See Article IV, SECTION 8)

SECTION 4: Observance of Bylaws and Regulations. Businesses and

organizations who consent to become a member of the Corporation, agree to fulfill and perform all requirements of membership, conform to these Bylaws and such rules and regulations as the Corporation may from time to time adopt.

SECTION 5: Right to Refuse or Revoke Membership. The Corporation shall have the right by majority vote of Board members present at a meeting at which there is a quorum to refuse the application of an organization that fails to comply with Bylaws, or the rules and regulations adopted by the Corporation.

SECTION 6: Member Requirements. Each partner shall actively maintain and provide Corporation with current information about their business, organization and/or community on an annual basis.

SECTION 7: Resignations. Members may resign from membership in the Corporation by giving notice to the Corporation. Resignation shall not relieve any member from liability from any payment(s) accrued and unpaid at the time such resignation is received by the Corporation.

SECTION 8: Noncompliance. Any member whose business or organization information is not reviewed annually or has outstanding payments for products or services received by their annual member renewal date of any year, shall be delinquent and will receive notice of noncompliance. If the account data and/or outstanding payments are not paid within three months, the member shall be deemed inactive and receive no member benefits of the Corporation until current.

SECTION 9: Reinstatement. A member whose membership in the Corporation is revoked for noncompliance, may be reinstated as a member, provided that account is viewed in compliance.

SECTION 10: Board of Directors Eligibility. Only Corporation members in good standing shall be eligible to serve on the Board of Directors, subject to the Director agreeing to be bound to the terms of any policies of the Corporation.

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

SECTION 1. The annual meeting of the members of the Corporation shall be held in Whitefish, Montana, or online by web conference, on a date selected by the Board.

SECTION 2. Special meetings of the members may be held upon resolution of the Board, or upon written request of not less than ten percent (10%) of the members.

SECTION 3. Notice of the annual meeting of the Corporation and of any special meeting shall be written notice communicated in person, facsimile, or other form of electronic, wire, or wireless communication, or by mail or private carrier to the correct address or authenticated electronic identification, as provided by Montana law, as shown in the Corporation's record of Members, posted on the Explore Whitefish website, or other electronic delivery to the members at their respective last known addresses twenty (20) days before such meeting.

SECTION 4. Members are not entitled to vote, but may make their respective positions known to the Board. Meetings of the members shall be open to the public and subject to all Montana open meeting laws. This includes the right to know, the right to participate, and the

right to privacy: No member shall be deprived of the right to examine documents or to observe the deliberations of all public bodies or agencies of state government and its subdivisions, except in cases in which the demand of individual privacy clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure. The public has the right to expect the Corporation to afford such reasonable opportunity for member participation in the operation of the agencies prior to the final decision as may be provided by law. The right of individual privacy is essential to the wellbeing of a free society and shall not be infringed without the showing of a compelling state interest.

ARTICLE VI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1. The property, affairs, activities and concerns of the Corporation shall be vested in a Board of Directors, hereinafter called the Board, consisting of up to (9) Directors. The members of the Board shall serve subject to the terms of Ordinance No. 06-05 of the City of Whitefish, as amended from time to time, and the Directors shall collectively comprise the City of Whitefish, Montana, Whitefish Convention and Visitor Bureau Committee. Members shall be appointed by the city council. At least six (6) members, or more, shall reside in the city of Whitefish postal district (59937). No more than three (3) members may reside in Flathead County, but outside the city of Whitefish postal district (59937), as long as the member has an ownership interest or managerial position at a member business located and operating within the Whitefish postal district (59937). The city council shall endeavor to appoint members who reside within the 59937 postal district, represent one of the following business categories, and that have broad experience in and a current understanding of one of the following types of businesses:

- Arts & Culture
- Large lodging properties
- Restaurant and bar business
- Retail businesses
- Small lodging properties
- Transportation business
- Recreation
- Whitefish Mountain Resort

SECTION 2. Board Members shall serve for three (3) years, although several of the terms of the initial appointees may be slightly longer than three (3) years as provided in Ordinance No. 06-05. The initial terms of the appointees shall be staggered, as provided in Ordinance No. 06-05. Members of the Board may be removed, and vacancies of the Board may be filled, as provided in Ordinance No. 06-05.

ARTICLE VII BOARD OF DIRECTORS QUORUM , MEETINGS

SECTION 1. A quorum of the Board shall consist of five (5) Directors.

SECTION 2. The Board shall meet at least every other month, or at the call of the Chairperson, or at such other times as the Board shall determine.

SECTION 3. Notice of all meetings of the Board shall be given written notice communicated in person, facsimile, or other form of electronic, wire, or wireless communication, or by mail or private carrier to the correct address or authenticated electronic identification, as provided by Montana law, as shown in the Corporation's record of Board members, posted on the Explore Whitefish website, at least forty eight (48) hours prior to the date of the meetings. If e-mailed, a notice shall be deemed delivered when delivery receipt is received or an electronic

notice of delivery is returned to the sender of the notice. If mailed, a notice shall be deemed delivered at the earliest of (i) five days after deposited in the U.S. mail, as evidenced by the postmark, if it is mailed postpaid and with the correct postage to the Director, (ii) the date shown on the return receipt if sent by registered or certified mail and the receipt is signed by or on behalf of the Director, or (iii) the date received. Any Director may waive notice of any meeting. The attendance of a Director at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a Director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Meetings of the Directors shall be open to the public and subject to all Montana open meeting laws.

SECTION 4. Not less than a quorum of the committee may transact any business before the committee. The concurring vote of a simple majority of members present shall be necessary to decide any question or matter before the committee. The committee shall adopt bylaws for the conduct of meetings consistent with statutes, the city charter, ordinances and resolutions.

SECTION 5: Resignation. Any Board member may resign at any time by giving written and/or verbal notice to the Corporation. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified in the resignation; and, the acceptance of this resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

SECTION 6: Removal Of Member: A member may be removed from the committee by majority vote of the city council for cause upon written charges and after a public hearing. Wilful disregard of this chapter and the rules of procedure or bylaws of the committee, or absences from three (3) consecutive meetings, including regular and special meetings, or absences from more than fifty percent (50%) of such meetings held during the calendar year, shall constitute cause for removal. Circumstances of the absences shall be considered by the city council prior to removal. Any person who knows in advance of his or her inability to attend a specific meeting shall notify the chairperson or secretary of the committee at least twenty four (24) hours prior to any scheduled meeting.

SECTION 7. Vacancy. Any vacancy on the committee shall be filled by the city council acting in a regular or special session for the unexpired term of the position wherein the vacancy exists. The city council may appoint one of its members to serve as an ex officio (nonvoting) member of the committee as provided in Ordinance No. 06-05.

SECTION 8: Compensation. Board members do not receive financial compensation for their services on the Board or any activities related to Board duties or operations outside of Board meeting related travel expense reimbursements. Board meeting travel reimbursement is determined and reviewed yearly by the Executive Committee and is not guaranteed year to year.

SECTION 9: Participation by conference telephone call or similar remote communication shall constitute presence in person at a meeting. Remote communication shall include communication made by conference telephone call, internet, electronic, remote technology, or similar communication through which all participants in the meeting have the opportunity to read or hear the proceedings substantially concurrent with their occurrence, vote on matters submitted to the Members, pose questions, and make comments.

ARTICLE VIII OFFICERS

SECTION 1. The officers of the Corporation shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary/ Treasurer.

SECTION 2. New officers shall be elected by the Board at its first meeting after the initial appointment of Board Members by the Whitefish City Council, and thereafter at its first meeting after June 1 of each year. The officers so elected shall serve for a term of one (1) year. The Board, by majority vote, shall fill all vacancies that may occur, with the appointee to hold office until June 1 following such appointment.

SECTION 3. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the members and the Board and perform the duties customarily required of such office and shall be the chief executive officer, subject to the discretion of the Board.

SECTION 4. The Vice Chairperson shall perform all the duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson and such other duties as may be assigned by the Board.

SECTION 5. The Secretary/Treasurer shall insure all monies and other valuable assets in the name and to the credit of the Corporation are in such depositories as may be designated by the Board of Directors. The Secretary/Treasurer shall assist in overseeing the management of the financial affairs of the Corporation subject to the acts, instruction and approval of the Board of Directors. The Secretary/Treasurer shall present reconciled financial reports to the Board of Directors. Secretary/Treasurer shall ensure that the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors are to be kept and recorded. The records of the business of the Corporation shall be safeguarded in the office of the Corporation and another location to be determined by the Secretary/Treasurer.

SECTION 6.: Resignation. Any Officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors. Any such resignation shall take effect at the time specified and the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

SECTION 7. Vacancy. The Board of Directors shall fill all Officer vacancies that may occur, and the person so chosen shall hold the office for the unexpired term of his or her predecessor. The Board of Directors may elect a successor officer by a majority vote after nominations have been duly received from the executive and/or Nomination Committee to replace any person who has resigned, refused to serve or is removed from office or who otherwise ceases to be an Officer of the Board before their current term of office has expired.

SECTION 8. Removal. Any officer or agent may be removed by the persons authorized to elect or appoint such officer or agent by a quorum vote whenever in their judgment the best interests of the Corporation would be served thereby. The removal of an officer or agent shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the removed officer or agent. Election or appointment shall not of itself create contract rights.

SECTION 9. Each Director and officer who signs any articles, statement, report, application or other document filed with the Secretary of State known to such Director or officer to be false in any material respect shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof may be fined in any amount not exceeding \$500.

ARTICLE IX COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. The Board may provide such committees as may be deemed necessary and may determine the selection of committee members and prescribe their duties. Each Committee must be composed of at least 2 voting board members. A quorum of a committee is equal to at least 60% of its members.

SECTION 2. The designation and appointment of such committees and the delegation of authority shall not operate to relieve the Board or any individual Director of any responsibility imposed by law.

SECTION 3. Executive. An Executive Committee of the Board shall exist to provide direction, as requested, to the Executive Director between Board meetings. This committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson with suggested membership composed of, but not limited to, the current Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and the Secretary/Treasurer.

SECTION 4: Committee Manner of Acting. The provisions of these Bylaws which govern meetings, manner of acting, action without meetings, notice, waiver of notice, and voting requirements of the Board shall apply to committees of the Board and their members.

ARTICLE X STAFF SUPERVISION

SECTION 1. The Board shall have no supervisory control and shall not direct city staff in the performance of their official duties the terms of Ordinance No. 06-05 shall control.

ARTICLE XI AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. The Board shall have the power to make, alter, amend, and repeal the Bylaws by affirmative vote of a majority of the Board at any regular or special meeting, provided that the proposed action is inserted in the notice of such meeting. No amendment to the Bylaws shall be valid and effective, however, unless approved, in writing, by the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana. In the event of a conflict between the terms of these Bylaws and the terms of Ordinance No. 0605 of the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, the terms of Ordinance No. 06-05 shall control.

ARTICLE XII AGENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES

SECTION 1. The Board may appoint such agents and representatives with such powers and to perform such acts or duties on behalf of the Corporation as consistent with these Bylaws, to the extent authorized or permitted by law.

ARTICLE XIII CONTRACTS

SECTION 1. The Board, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, may authorize any officer or agent to enter into any contract, or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to a specific instance; and unless so authorized by the Board, no officer, agent, or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the corporation by any contract or engagement, or to pledge its credit, or render it liable monetarily for any purpose or to any amount.

ARTICLE XIV

CHECKS, DEPOSITS AND GIFTS

SECTION 1. All payments, except from the petty cash account or by such approved electronic means for Private funds (those coming from membership to the Corporation per ARTICLE I Section 10), shall require the signature of at least two (2) persons; one person to be a board member of the Corporation with check signing privileges as determined by the Board of Directors and/or the other shall be the Executive Director. All payments from Private funds (those coming from the Department of Commerce per ARTICLE I Section 2) shall require 1 signature from an authorized Board member of the Corporation or Executive Director.

SECTION 2. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks or other depositories as the Board may select.

SECTION 3. The Board may accept on behalf of the Corporation any contribution, gift, grant, bequest or devise for any purpose of the Corporation.

ARTICLE XV PROHIBITION AGAINST LOANS AND SHARING IN CORPORATE EARNINGS

SECTION 1. Loans to or guaranties for Directors and officers are prohibited.

SECTION 2. No member, Director, officer, employee, committee member, or person connected with the Corporation shall receive at any time any of the net earnings or profit from the operations of the Corporation. This shall not prevent the payment to any such person of reasonable compensation for services rendered to or for the Corporation in effecting any of its purposes as shall be fixed by the Board. No person shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the Corporation's assets upon the dissolution of the Corporation. All members of the Corporation shall be deemed to have expressly consented and agreed that upon such dissolution, whether voluntary or involuntary, after all debts have been satisfied, the remaining assets of the Corporation shall be distributed, transferred, conveyed, delivered, and paid over to an organization with a similar mission and exempt purpose within the meaning of section 501c(6) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the City of Whitefish or a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of Flathead County, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

ARTICLE XVI INVESTMENTS

SECTION 1. The Corporation shall have the right to retain all or any part of any securities or property acquired by it in whatever manner, and to invest and reinvest any funds held by it according to the judgment of the Board of Directors, without being restricted to the class of investments which a Director is or may hereafter be permitted by law to make or any similar restriction; provided, however, that no action shall be taken by or on behalf of the Corporation if such action is a prohibited transaction or would result in the denial of tax exemption under the Internal Revenue Code as it now exists or as it may be amended.

ARTICLE XVII EXEMPT ACTIVITIES

SECTION 1. See Article 2, Section 1.

ARTICLE XVIII
FISCAL YEAR

SECTION 1. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall coincide with the State of Montana's fiscal year, presently July 1 through June 30.

ARTICLE XIX
LIABILITY

SECTION 1: Nothing herein shall constitute partners of the Corporation as partners for any purpose. No partner, Officer, Director, agent or employee of the Corporation shall be liable for the acts or failure to act on the part of any Officer, Director, Partner, agent or employee of the Corporation; nor shall any Partners, Officers, Directors, agents of employees be liable for their acts or failure to act under these Bylaws, except for actions or failures to act arising out of their willful misfeasance.

SECTION 2: The liability of Directors of the Corporation for monetary damages shall be eliminated to the fullest extent permissible under Montana law. Any amendment, repeal or modification of the provisions herein shall not adversely affect any right or protection of a Director of the Corporation existing at the time of such amendment, repeal or modification. Appropriate general and professional liability insurance shall be maintained for the Board and Corporation staff.

SECTION 3: Indemnification of Agents and Representatives.

(a) The Corporation shall indemnify each director and each officer who was or is party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative (other than an action by or in the right of the Corporation) by reason of the fact the he/she/they is or was a director or officer of the Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a director or officer of another Corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him/her in connection with such action, suit or proceeding if he acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Corporation and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not, of itself create a presumption that the person did not in good faith and in a manner which he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Corporation and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful. (b) The Corporation shall indemnify each director and each officer who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action or suit by or in the right of the Corporation to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact that he is or was a director or officer of the Corporation as a director or officer of another Corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against expenses (including attorneys' fees) actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the defense or settlement of such action or suit if he acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Corporation, except that no indemnification shall be made in respect of any claim, issue or matter as to which such director or officer shall have been adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance or his duty to the Corporation unless and only to the extent that the court in which such action or suit was brought or such judgment rendered shall determine upon application that, despite the adjudication of liability but in view of all the circumstances of the case, such director or officer is

fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for such expenses which such court shall deem proper. (c) To the extent that a person who is or was a director or officer of the Corporation, or of any other Corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise with which he is or was serving in such capacity at the request of the Corporation, has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit or proceeding referred to in sections (a) and (b) of this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue or matter therein, he shall be indemnified against expenses (including attorneys' fees) actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection therewith. (d) Any indemnification under sections (a) and (b) of this Article (unless ordered by a court) shall be made by the Corporation only as authorized in the specific case upon a determination that indemnification of the director or officer is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in sections (a) and (b). Such determination shall be made (1) by the Board of Directors by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of directors who were not parties to such action, suit or proceeding, or (2) if such a quorum is not obtainable or, even if obtainable but a quorum of disinterested directors so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion, or (3) by a majority of the non-director members. (e) Expenses incurred in defending a civil, criminal, administrative or investigative action, suit or proceeding, director or officer in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding as authorized by the Board of Directors in the specific case upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the director or officer to repay such amount unless it shall ultimately be determined that he shall be indemnified by the Corporation. (f) The indemnification provided by this Article shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which a director or officer seeking indemnification may be entitled under any statute, provision in the Corporation's Articles of disinterested directors and otherwise, both as to action in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office, and shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a director or officer and shall insure to the benefit of the heirs, personal representative, and successors of such a person. (g) The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision in this Article shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining provisions of this Article.

ARTICLE XX

CONFLICT OF INTEREST; INTERESTED DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

The Board shall adopt and periodically review a conflict of interest policy to protect the Corporation's interest when it is contemplating any transaction or arrangement which may benefit any Director, Officer, employee, Member, or member of a Committee with Board-delegated powers. No contract or transaction between the Corporation and one or more of its directors or officers, or between the Corporation and any other corporation, partnership, association, or other organization in which one or more of its directors or officers are directors or officers, or have a financial interest, shall be void or voidable solely for this reason, or solely because the director or officer is present at or participates in the meeting of the Board of Directors or a committee thereof which authorizes the contract or transaction, or solely because his or her, or their votes are counted for such purpose, if: (a) The material facts as to his/her or their interest and as to the contract or transaction are disclosed or are known to the Board of Directors or the committee, and the Board or committee in good faith authorizes the contract or transaction by a vote sufficient for such purpose without counting the vote of the interested director or directors; or (b) The material facts as to his/her or their interest and as to the contract or transaction are disclosed or are known to the shareholders entitled to vote thereon, and the contract or transaction is specifically approved in good faith by vote of the members; or (c) The contract or transaction is fair as to the Commission as of the time it is authorized, approved or ratified by the Board of Directors, a committee thereof, or the members. Interested directors may be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the Board of Directors or of a committee which authorizes the contract or transaction.

ARTICLE XXI
PREVAILING LAW

In the event of a conflict between any of the provisions or terms of these procedures and the provisions or terms of the Act or the Code, the provisions or terms of the Act, shall prevail unless such terms would violate any provision of the Code applicable to the Commission.

ARTICLE XXII
DISSOLUTION

In the Event the Corporation is dissolved, or ceases to conduct activities, the net assets shall be distributed in accordance with Article XV Section 2.

ARTICLE XXIII
RECORD MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION RIGHTS

SECTION 1. The Corporation shall keep as permanent records in written form, or in another form capable of conversion into written form within a reasonable time, minutes of all meetings of its members and Board of Directors, a record of all actions taken by the members or Directors without a meeting, and a record of all actions taken by committees of the Board of Directors. The Corporation shall maintain appropriate accounting records. The Corporation shall keep at its registered office a record of the names and addresses of its members.

SECTION 2. All books and records may be inspected by any member or his/her agent or attorney for any proper purpose at any reasonable time, if a member gives the Corporation written notice at least five (5) business days before.

SECTION 3. Without consent of the Board, a membership list, in full or in part, may not be obtained or used by a person for any purpose unrelated to a member's interest as a member. Without consent of the Board, a membership list, in full or in part, may not be (a) used to solicit money or property for other than corporate purposes, (b) used for any commercial purpose, or (c) sold to or purchased by any person.

SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATE

I, the undersigned, hereby certify:

That I am the duly elected and acting Secretary of WHITEFISH CONVENTION AND VISITOR BUREAU, INC., a Montana non-profit corporation; and

That the foregoing Bylaws, consisting of _____ () pages, this page included, were duly adopted by a majority of the members of the Board of Directors at a lawfully called meeting at which a quorum was present, on _____ day of _____, 20____, and are currently effective.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have subscribed my name and affixed the Seal of the Corporation hereon this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Rhonda Fitzgerald, Secretary



Dear Mayor and Members of the Whitefish City Council,

I am writing to respectfully request consideration of a proposed amendment to Ordinance No. 06-05 related to the appointment criteria for the Whitefish Convention and Visitor Bureau Board of Directors.

The intent of this proposed change is to provide additional flexibility to the City Council when appointing board members, while continuing to ensure that the Board reflects the diverse industries and business types that contribute to Whitefish's economy.

The two changes that are being requested include allowing one additional member to be a resident of the county (up to 3 instead of up to 2) and the requirement to be a member of the WCVB in good standing.

Our bylaws now reflect all the changes made since 2006 and the WCVB will be in alignment with the City.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this proposed ordinance amendment. I appreciate the City Council's continued commitment to thoughtful governance and to ensuring that City-appointed boards reflect the needs and realities of the Whitefish community.

Zak Anderson

Zak Anderson
Executive Director
Whitefish Convention & Visitors Bureau
director@explorewwhitefish.com

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WHITEFISH CITY COUNCIL

January 20, 2026

7:10 P.M.

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Muhlfeld called the meeting to order. Councilors present were Qunell, Feury, Davis, Sweeney, and Norton. Councilor Caltabiano was absent. City Staff present were, City Clerk Howke, City Manager Meeker, City Attorney Jacobs, Finance Director Gospodarek, Planning and Building Director Taylor, Public Works Director Workman, Parks and Recreation Director Butts, Police Chief Kelch and Alan Tiefenbach. Approximately 35 people were in the audience and 9 attended virtually.

2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Muhlfeld asked Chris Schustrom to lead the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC– (This time is set aside for the public to comment on items that are either on the agenda, but not a public hearing or on items not on the agenda. City officials do not respond during these comments but may respond or follow-up later on the agenda or at another time. The mayor has the option of limiting such communications to three minutes depending on the number of citizens who want to comment and the length of the meeting agenda)

([YouTube Video 1:22](#))

Daniel Sidder reported that Housing Whitefish has now helped 100 households, nearly 200 people, through the Workforce Rental Assistance program, distributing about \$320,000 in aid. The average \$277 per household goes back into the local economy. The program now involves 72 employers and 55 landlords.

He thanked the Council and noted they are close to meeting their matching goal for the year. Regarding the Depot Park Townhomes, he said the main barrier is the lien on the property. Housing Whitefish cannot move forward without a clear timeline for removing it and wants the Council to ensure that issue is resolved before issuing an RFP.

Julio Delgado, Karrow Avenue, raised concerns about how the Glacier Twins use Memorial Field and the money they receive from their long-term \$1-per-year lease and the cell tower revenue. He believes their financial reports show questionable expenses, misuse of funds meant for field improvements, and a lack of transparency. He argued the agreement gives the Twins too much control, limits public access, and harms local student athletes. He urged the Council to take back oversight, review the agreement, and require accountability, saying he can prove the Twins have not acted in good faith and that he will continue pursuing a remedy.

Ryan Keifer, Baker Avenue, urged the Council not to repeal the Architectural Review Committee (ARC). He said the ARC is essential for maintaining Whitefish's architectural quality and preventing poorly designed, corporate-style buildings. He explained that the committee regularly helps applicants improve designs to fit the community's character. Removing the ARC would eliminate enforcement, allow unchecked development, and harm the town's appearance. He asked the Council to protect Whitefish and reject the ordinance.

Eric Payne urged the Council not to repeal the ARC. He said his decades of experience working with the committee showed that it helps developers create projects that reflect Whitefish's character, not block

them. As a local contractor and architect, he values the ARC's collaborative approach and noted that similar committees exist in other mountain towns. He emphasized that the ARC's volunteer makeup keeps it connected to the community and its goals.

Mary Beth Moran, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, Geddes Avenue, supported Housing Whitefish's request to issue an RFP for the Depot Park Townhomes now, even with the lien still in place. Habitat for Humanity needs enough time for its homeowner selection and construction process, which takes several months. She is confident the lien will be resolved and urged the Council to circulate the RFP soon. She thanked them for their transparency and use of an RFP process.

Leanette Galaz urged the Council to stop cooperating with DHS, ICE, and CBP. She cited reports of civil and human rights violations in Minneapolis and said similar agencies operate locally. She shared her own negative encounter with CBP and argued that these federal agencies should not use city resources or be involved in local policing. She asked the Council to take a stance of non-cooperation to protect the community.

Reverend Jon Umdenstock, Somers Avenue, seconded the same proposal that Leanette said. He urges non-compliance.

Ray Queen shared how important Memorial Field was to him growing up and how deeply the community once supported local kids and baseball programs. He said it breaks his heart that Whitefish Bulldogs haven't been able to use the field for nearly three years and urged the Council to prioritize reopening it for the kids. He believes restoring city control of the field and putting children first—above politics or disputes—will rebuild community pride and give local youth the support they deserve.

Bella Brown raised two main points. First, she asked the Council to incorporate strong climate action into the growth policy—supporting mixed-use development, better transportation options, and fewer cars on the road. Second, she urged the Council to avoid cooperating with Border Patrol, saying the agency has shown incompetence and the city's resources should instead support priorities like climate action.

Avery, W. 7th Street, spoke on behalf of Whitefish students, supporting Leanette's call for the city to stop cooperating with ICE, CBP, and DHS. He said many Whitefish High School students share this view and believe non-compliance is the best way to protect the community.

Keegan Siebenaler praised city staff—especially Alan Tiefenbach—for their hard work on the growth policy. He then commented on the ARC repeal, noting it is required by state law. Shelter WF supports ending the ARC because its aesthetic rules increased housing costs, limited business flexibility, and prioritized building appearance over people. He urged the city not to move ARC standards into zoning and instead focus on creating a community based on broader values, not narrow aesthetic preferences.

Chris Schustrom, Chair of Heart of Whitefish, urged the Council to be cautious with the growth policy's economic section. He said proposals like expanding commercial uses in neighborhoods and adding paid parking are not ideas but direct policy changes. He asked the Council not to include mixed-use or new retail outside downtown unless supported by real market data, noting downtown already has 89,000 square feet of vacant retail space and significant public investment.

He emphasized protecting downtown, improving bike and pedestrian connections, and basing decisions on solid analysis. He also clarified that Heart of Whitefish's suggested edits came from community input and are part of the public record.

[\(YouTube Video 34:10\)](#)

Mayre Flowers, Citizens for Better Flathead (CBF), asked the Council to improve accessibility at work sessions by providing additional monitors or digital text for the audience. She reported on the county's lakeshore protection workshop, noting strong public support for updating regulations and requesting feedback on CBF's 19 recommendations—especially concerns about “equilibrium beaches” on Whitefish Lake.

She also informed the Council about an upcoming county hearing on septic regulations and urged support for requiring advanced septic systems, especially in floodplains, to protect water quality.

Finally, she asked the Council not to disband the ARC or at least delay the decision and consider alternatives such as keeping it in an advisory role.

Zee criticized the Council for what she believed was an attempt to censor her protected speech at the January 5 meeting. She argued that even offensive speech is protected under the First Amendment and reminded officials they cannot control the content of public comment. She also said the Council failed to acknowledge the racial profiling and wrongful detention of Beker Rengifo Del Castillo, stating that accountability is overdue. She closed by quoting Malcolm X, saying truth is on the side of the oppressed.

Paul McCann praised the visioning sessions, Planning Commission, staff, and consultants for their work on the growth policy. His main concern is the economic future of downtown. He noted several local businesses have left or closed, making downtown feel more tourist-oriented while everyday services are shifting south of 13th Street. He believes workforce needs and basic services are increasingly located in south Whitefish and thinks zoning and economic planning should reflect that trend.

Jill Davis said Whitefish needs more economic diversity and more places locals can afford to eat, as downtown feels geared only toward tourists. She wants mixed-use planning restored in the growth policy and wants local workers' voices valued as much as business owners. She also supports the call for the city to avoid cooperating with ICE, CBP, and DHS.

Richard Hildner announced two upcoming wildfire-related lectures at FVCC hosted by Firesafe Flathead. Dr. Erica Fischer will speak on January 21 about structural resilience to wildfire and other hazards, and Dr. Paul Hessburg will speak on February 3 about wildland fire. He encouraged Council and staff to attend.

Rhonda Fitzgerald urged the Council to use realistic population projections in the growth policy, noting that state data shows Whitefish growing much more slowly than the draft assumes. Inflated projections lead to inflated housing and short-term rental numbers and distort planning for a community that is mostly year-round, not tourist-driven.

She encouraged the Council to read the public visioning comments, which consistently value downtown, neighborhoods, and small-town character—and oppose sprawl, rapid growth, and short-term rentals. She warned that “mixed-use” is a technical term meaning large multi-story buildings, not small neighborhood shops.

She also noted that most shopping now happens at big-box stores or online, so downtown must be planned for locals who live here year-round. Finally, she said the market alone won't create needed housing; deed restrictions and partnerships will be necessary to ensure residents can afford to live in Whitefish.

Anna Aster-Pulsifer, North Valley Drive, said she wants to return to Whitefish as an adult and supports Miss Zee's comments. She believes the city should never censor residents who care about the community's future. After living here 18 years, she values Whitefish's inclusive and progressive spirit and urged the Council to support local activists and reject cooperation with ICE. She wants Whitefish to remain a community she can be proud to come home to.

Unity Loveless, Columbia Avenue, supports earlier comments opposing cooperation with ICE and DHS. She said Whitefish students understand what is happening nationally and locally, and they know who to hold accountable. She emphasized that these federal actions do not reflect Whitefish's values and urged the Council to ensure the city does not cooperate with ICE in any way.

Marti Brandt explained that she submitted her own mixed-use research because she wants the Council to have solid information and because she can only participate with the time and resources she has. She said not everyone can afford consultants, and public input shouldn't favor those who can. She urged the Council to ensure equal treatment for all voices in the growth policy process and avoid creating a system where some comments are privileged over others.

Nathan Dugan, Kalispell Avenue, attended virtually attempted to provide comment. Due to technical difficulties his comments were not heard in the meeting.

4) COMMUNICATIONS FROM VOLUNTEER BOARDS

None

5) CONSENT AGENDA (The consent agenda is a means of expediting routine matters that require the Council's action. Debate does not typically occur on consent agenda items. Any member of the Council may remove any item for debate. Such items will typically be debated and acted upon prior to proceeding to the rest of the agenda.)

- a) [Minutes](#) from January 5, 2026, Special Session (p.588)
- b) [Minutes](#) from January 5, 2026, Regular Meeting (p.589)
- c) [Consideration](#) of a request for Final Plat for Hope Corner Subdivision, a 2-lot subdivision located at 1150 Wisconsin Avenue, zoned WR-2 (Two-Family Residential District) (WFP 26-01) (p.598)

([YouTube Video 1:05:09](#))

Councilor Sweeney made a motion, seconded by Councilor Feury to approve the Consent Agenda as provided. The motion carried.

6) PUBLIC HEARINGS (Items will be considered for action after public hearings) (Resolution No. 07-33 establishes a 30-minute time limit for applicant's land use presentations.)

None

7) COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY

- a) [Ordinance No. 26-01](#); An Ordinance to repeal Title 2, Chapter 10, Architectural Review Committee of the Whitefish City Code (First Reading) (p.629)

([YouTube Video 1:05:30](#))

City Attorney Angela Jacobs explained that state law no longer allows Whitefish to require Architectural Review Committee (ARC) approval unless the standards directly relate to health or safety. Because of this, the city's current ARC process is not compliant and must be repealed or changed. Staff will need to rewrite architectural standards within zoning, so they meet the new legal limits.

Council members discussed keeping the ARC as an optional, advisory group—similar to a free design-consultation service—so developers can still get expert feedback without it being mandatory. They noted concerns about losing the committee's knowledge but agreed mandatory review is no longer legal. The Council may postpone the decision and consider creating a voluntary, one-year trial version of the ARC to see if it is used.

Councilor Qunell made a motion, seconded by Councilor Davis to postpone until we have a more concrete idea of what we replace it with. Davis said he wants to hear the ARC's opinion on making the committee optional and suggested trying it for a year while working to change the state law. He argued the state bill was poorly designed, doesn't lower housing costs, and mainly harms local oversight of commercial buildings.

Feury added that since the ARC can't be required anymore, the current system is unusable. He sees little reason to delay repealing it and believes the city should end it now and focus on creating a new approach that still gives the community some influence over development.

Councilor Qunell withdrew his motion, Councilor Davis agreed. Sweeney made a motion, seconded by Feury to adopt Ordinance 26-01 on first reading. The motion carried 4-1, Qunell voted in opposition.

8) COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER ([YouTube Video 1:29:29](#))

a) Written report enclosed with the packet. Questions from Mayor and Council? (p.632)

None

b) Other items arising between January 14th through January 20th

None

9) COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR AND CITY COUNCILORS ([YouTube Video 1:30:10](#))

a) Consideration to appoint a member to the Climate Action Plan Committee to complete the term ending December 31, 2026 – Mayoral Appointment (p.634)

Mayor Muhlfeld appointed, with confirmation of the Council, Ryan Walther to serve on the Climate Action Plan Committee and to complete the term ending December 31, 2026.

b) Letter from Citizens for Better Flathead regarding population projection per MLUPA requirements (p.635)

Mayor Muhlfeld suggested continuing the broader discussion at the February 17 work session. Qunell added that the population estimate is the foundation of the entire growth policy and changing it now would require professional review because every part of the plan was built on that number.

Council Comments ([YouTube Video 1:33:32](#))

Norton noted that sign content is protected speech and governments can't censor it, though meeting time limits are allowed if applied consistently. She raised questions about civil rights and whether the city can refuse cooperation with ICE. Attorney Jacobs explained that while local police cannot enforce immigration law, they *are* required to cooperate with federal agencies.

Chief Kelch added that Whitefish police treat everyone with dignity, have no history of excessive force, and have long worked with federal partners without problems. He emphasized that national incidents don't reflect local practices and that communication with federal agencies is part of effective community policing.

Norton also stated that the ARC not only looked at individual projects, but they actually looked at the skyline and how things blended together in our town. She doesn't know how we recreate that without someone that has that kind of eye. It will be sad if we lose that. After some discussion council directed staff to reach out to the ARC to see if they have ideas and if they would be willing to meet as a service-based group.

Davis thanked everyone who came to the meeting and said public participation is vital. He emphasized that free speech, even speech that feels unpleasant or offensive, is essential to democracy. While meetings must stay orderly, he believes people should be given broad freedom to criticize the government and express their views.

Sweeney agreed that public comment can be uncomfortable but said Whitefish has always allowed very broad public input, more than most communities. He emphasized that nothing has changed in how the city handles public comments and thanked everyone for showing up, saying more participation is always better.

Qunell said the high school baseball team should be playing on a field next to the school and urged the city to help make that happen. He then spoke about free speech, saying the First Amendment is essential but also comes with responsibilities. He strongly objected to signs comparing Whitefish police to the KKK, calling that inappropriate and inaccurate, and said such statements cross the line for civil dialogue in council chambers. People are free to criticize government, he said, but they should still follow meeting rules and respect context.

Attorney Jacobs said the city had productive talks with the Glacier Twins. They are working on updating the agreement tied to Verizon funds for more transparency. The city is hopeful the Twins will reopen the long-term Memorial Field lease so Whitefish High School can use the field for baseball and football. The Twins seem open to it, but nothing is guaranteed and depends on their cooperation.

10) ADJOURNMENT (Resolution 08-10 establishes 11:00 p.m. as end of meeting unless extended to 11:30 by majority)

Mayor Muhlfeld adjourned the meeting at 9:09 p.m.

Mayor Muhlfeld

Attest:

Michelle Howke, Whitefish City Clerk

ORDINANCE NO. 26-01

An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, repealing Title 2, Chapter 10, Architectural Review Committee, of the Whitefish City Code.

WHEREAS, Title 2, Chapter 10 of the Whitefish City Code establishes an Architectural Review Committee, the purpose of which is to review and make a recommendation to staff on applications submitted to the City by individuals or entities proposing to construct commercial, industrial, public or municipal buildings, or two-unit townhouses or multi-family residential; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 407, passed by the Montana Legislature in 2023, prohibits municipalities from requiring review from an external board with respect to compliance with local design review criteria; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the City and the inhabitants thereof to repeal Title 2, Chapter 10 of the Whitefish City Code and abolish the Architectural Review Committee in order to be in strict compliance with Senate Bill 407.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, as follows:

Section 1: Title 2, Chapter 10 of the Whitefish City Code is hereby repealed.

Section 2: This Ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days after its adoption by the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, and signing by the Mayor thereof.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEFISH, MONTANA, ON THIS 2ND DAY OF FEBRUARY 2026.

John M. Muhlfeld, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michelle Howke, City Clerk

Date: February 10, 2026
To: Whitefish Mayor and City Councilors
From: Wendy Compton-Ring, AICP, Senior Planner
Subject: 364 Shady River Lane (Lot 10) – side yard setback

Background:

Shady River Estates was approved by the Whitefish City Council October 21, 1985, subject to 21 conditions of approval. The Final Plat was subsequently recorded on July 30, 1986. On the face of the plat, a note is made for a 20-foot side yard setback off the entire south property line for Lot 10 (364 Shady River Lane).

This 20-foot setback was not a City Council condition of approval, is not a utility easement nor are there public utilities within this area. In review of the file, it is unclear why an additional 10-feet was applied to only this lot in the subdivision.

The property is zoned WR-1 (One-Family Residential District) which requires a 10-foot side yard setback. The owners have requested the WR-1 side yard setbacks be applied to this lot, as they pursue approval of a building permit.

Action:

No action is required by the Council, as it was not a condition of the plat. As such this memo and attachments are informational only.

The property owner will record the attached notice on this lot, as it only affects Lot 10 of Shady River Estates to alert future owners of the setback and enable the current property owners to pursue a building permit.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Wendy Compton-Ring](#)
Subject: 364 Shady River
Date: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 1:33:54 PM

[You don't often get email from higgins1jen@hotmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

ATTENTION: External Email - This email originated from outside the City of Whitefish. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the contents. Contact the IT Helpdesk <<mailto:help@cityofwhitefish.gov>> if in doubt.

Hi Wendy,

We would like to proceed with removing the 20 foot setback to the south side of our property at 364 Shady River Lane. Making the set back consistent with the perimeter at 10 feet.

Thank you for all your help.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Higgins
Scott Pinckney

Return to:
City of Whitefish
City Clerk
PO Box 158
Whitefish, MT 59937-0158

**NOTICE OF
SUBDIVISION SETBACK**

On February 17, 2026, the Whitefish City Council affirmed the zoning setbacks for 364 Shady River Lane, Whitefish, MT 59937 and more particularly described as Lot 10, Shady River Estates in S5 T30N R21W as 10-feet on the south property line and not the 20-feet noted on the face of the plat.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 20__.

Printed Name: _____

Printed Name: _____

STATE OF MONTANA)
 : ss
County of Flathead)

On this _____ day of _____, 20__, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for the state aforesaid, personally appeared _____, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he/she executed the same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Notarial Seal the day and year last above written.

(SEAL)

Notary Public for the State of Montana

[print or type name of Notary]

Residing at _____

My Commission expires: _____

STATE OF MONTANA)
 : ss
County of Flathead)

On this _____ day of _____, 20____, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for the state aforesaid, personally appeared _____, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he/she executed the same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Notarial Seal the day and year last above written.

(SEAL)

Notary Public for the State of Montana

[print or type name of Notary]

Residing at _____

My Commission expires: _____



Box 158, Whitefish, Montana 59937 (406) 862-2640

RECEIVED

OCT 29 1985

REGIONAL
MENT OFFICE

October 28, 1985

Mr. Herbert Knuth
1011 Park Avenue
Whitefish MT 59937

RE: Preliminary Plat Approval - Shady River Estates

Dear Mr. Knuth

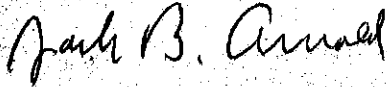
The City Council approved the Preliminary Plat of Shady River Estates at their October 21, 1985 meeting with the following conditions:

1. The drainage, sewer, and water plans meet the approval of the City of Whitefish and the State of Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences.
2. All required improvements be completed prior to the approval of the final plat or a subdivision improvements agreement be entered into between the applicant and the City of Whitefish at the time of final plat application to secure the successful completion of any uncompleted improvements.
3. Cash in the amount of \$5,195 be accepted in lieu of parkland dedication and shall be so certified on the face of the final plat.
4. A detailed drainage plan providing for run-off calculations, settling of sediments, and storm water retention facilities be submitted. Drainage for Lots 102-118 be submitted and approved by the Whitefish City Manager before approval of final plat.
5. The covenants be amended to include temporary erosion and sedimentation plans to be implemented during construction. These plans shall meet the approval of the City of Whitefish prior to the final plat.
6. A 10' strip be left on each side of Cow Creek to protect stability and handle water run-off. This wording shall be included in the covenants.

7. All retention ponds and water bodies shall be placed in drainage easements. A minimum width of ten (10) feet is required by Section 111.A.14 of the Whitefish Subdivision Regulations.
8. Permits be obtained from the Flathead Conservation District where applicable.
9. The proposed intersection of Shady River Lane with Voerman Road be approved by the County Commissioners.
10. Shady River Lane shall be a public street with pavement width and other specifications to be approved by the City Manager and shown on the final plat.
11. All common areas including the Homeowners' Park, boat ramp, retention basins and drainage facilities be maintained by the Homeowners' Association and/or developer.
12. All utilities shall be underground.
13. The applicant enter into an agreement mutually acceptable to both the city of Whitefish and himself to extend water from the present city mains down Park Avenue to East boundary of Shady Lane. Sewer line extension to point on east boundary as determined by City Staff.
14. The cost of extending water and sewer lines to serve the subdivision be borne by the applicant.
15. The covenants be amended to include the statement that all amendments to the covenants be approved by the City Council and that the covenants be recorded with the County Clerk and Recorder's Office.
16. All delinquent taxes be paid prior to final plat approval.
17. Lot and block numbers be put on the face of the final plat in accordance with Appendix B, Section 2.C of the Whitefish Subdivision Regulations.
18. A variance be granted on the lots which do not comply with Section 111.A.6f of the Whitefish Subdivision Regulations which states that no lot shall have an average depth greater than its average width. Lots 109, 111, and 113 do not meet this requirement.
19. A 40' construction and 20' maintenance easement be shown on the final plat, for river interceptor.
20. 10' public easement agreed to and provided along Cow Creek and shown on final plat.

21. No construction will be allowed in the old or new sewer easement along the river except Lot 125 and this setback will be established by final plat approval.

Sincerely



Jack B. Arnold
City Manager

cc: WMW Engineering
Flathead Regional Development Office

JBA:rg

Owner: Herbert E. Knuth

Date: May 5, 1986

A SUBDIVISION PLAT OF

SHADY RIVER ESTATES

Gov't Lot 1 Section 1, T. 30 N., R. 22 W., P.M., M., Flathead Co.
Gov't Lot 1 Section 6, T. 30 N., R. 21 W., P.M., M., Flathead Co.
NW 1/4 NW 1/4 Section 5, T. 30 N., R. 21 W., P.M., M., Flathead Co.

By: F & H
Land Surveying Co.
431 E. Second St.
P.O. Box 114
Whitefish, MT 59937
862-2386

CERTIFICATE OF DEDICATION

I, Herbert E. Knuth, the undersigned property owner, hereby certify that I have caused to be surveyed, subdivided and platted into lots as shown by the plat and Certificate of Survey hereunto included, the following described tract of land, to wit:

Those portions of Government Lot One (1) of Section One (1), Township Thirty-North (T.30 N.), Range Twenty-two West (R.22 W.), and Government Lot One (1) of Section Six (6), Township Thirty North (T.30 N.), Range Twenty-one West (R.21 W.), and the Northwest one-quarter of the Northwest one-quarter (N.W.1/4 N.W.1/4) of Section Five (5), Township Thirty North (T.30 N.), Range Twenty-one West (R.21 W.), Principal Meridian, Montana, Flathead County, Montana, described as follows:

BEGINNING at the northwest corner of said Section 6 (T.30 N., R.21 W.); thence N 89° 53' 13" E and along the northerly boundary of said Section 6 a distance of 546.94 feet to the Northwest corner of said Section 5 (T.30 N., R.21 W.); thence S 89° 52' 00" E and along the northerly boundary of said Section 5 a distance of 125.50 feet to the westerly boundary of Voerman Road, a 50.00 foot deeded county road; thence S 00° 08' 00" W and along said westerly boundary a distance of 25.00 feet to the southerly boundary of Voerman Road; thence S 89° 52' 00" E and along the southerly boundary of Voerman Road a distance of 40.79 feet; thence S 42° 47' 23" W a distance of 27.64 feet to the beginning of a 380.00 foot radius curve to the right; thence southwesterly and along said curve through a central angle of 25° 12' 37" a distance of 167.20 feet; thence S 68° 00' 00" W a distance of 52.42 feet to the beginning of a 770.00 foot radius curve to the left; thence southwesterly and along said curve through a central angle of 12° 00' 00" a distance of 161.27 feet to the beginning of a 110.00 foot radius compound curve to the left, having a radial bearing of S 34° 00' 00" E; thence Southwesterly and along said curve through a central angle of 32° 01' 41" a distance of 61.49 feet; thence S 50° 00' 00" E a distance of 574.12 feet; thence S 08° 30' 00" E a distance of 680.00 feet to the southerly boundary of the N.W.1/4 N.W.1/4 of said Section 5; thence N 89° 48' 14" W and along said southerly boundary a distance of 317.00 feet to the Southeast corner of Government Lot 1 of said Section 6 (T.30 N., R.21 W.); thence S 89° 54' 53" W and along the southerly boundary of said Government Lot 1 a distance of 170 feet more or less to the easterly bank of the Whitefish River; thence northerly and along the easterly bank of the Whitefish River a distance of 1573 feet more or less to the northerly boundary of Government Lot 1 of said Section 1 (T.30 N., R.22 W.); thence S 89° 59' 45" E and along the northerly boundary of said Government Lot 1 a distance of 50 feet more or less to the point of beginning and containing .6617 acres of land more or less. All as shown hereon.

The above described tract of land is to be known and designated as SHADY RIVER ESTATES.

The lands included in Shady River Lane and Shady River Court are hereby dedicated to the public forever.

The undersigned hereby grants unto each and every person, firm, or corporation, whether public or private, providing or offering to provide, telephone, telegraph, electric power, gas, cable television, water or sewer service to the public, the right to the joint use of an easement for the construction, maintenance, repair, and removal of their lines and other facilities, in, over, under and across each area designated on this plat as "Utility Easement", to have and to hold forever.

The area included in the two Homeowners Parks and the private roadway easement along the easterly boundary of Lot 19 is to be divided equally among all of the 22 lots and this share (1/22) is to be added to the net area of each lot for tax purposes (see acreage information).

Dated this 6th day of June, 1986.

Herbert E. Knuth
Herbert E. Knuth

STATE OF MONTANA)
SS
County of Flathead)

On this 6th day of June, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public for the State of Montana, personally appeared Herbert E. Knuth, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument and acknowledged to me that he executed the same. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Notarial Seal the day and year first above written.

Robert H. Hays
Notary Public for the State of Montana
Residing at Whitefish, Montana
My Commission expires JAN 14, 1988

CERTIFICATE OF CITY COUNCIL

We, Carroll E. Amass, Mayor of the City of Whitefish, Montana, and Kay Beller, City Clerk of the City of Whitefish, Montana, do hereby certify that the accompanying plat of SHADY RIVER ESTATES was duly examined and approved by the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana at its regular meeting thereof held on the 26th day of July, 1986.

We do hereby further certify that the following order was made by the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana at its regular meeting thereof held on the 26th day of July, 1986, and entered into the proceedings of said Body, to-wit: "Inasmuch as the dedication of park land within the platted area of SHADY RIVER ESTATES, is undesirable for the reasons set forth in the minutes of this meeting, it is hereby ordered by the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, that land dedication for park purposes be waived and that cash in lieu of park land, in the amount of Five Thousand One Hundred and Ninety Five Dollars (\$5,195.00), be accepted in accordance with the provisions of Title 76, Chapter 3, M.C.A.

Carroll E. Amass
Carroll E. Amass, Mayor
City of Whitefish, Montana

Kay Beller
Kay Beller, City Clerk
City of Whitefish, Montana

CERTIFICATE OF CITY ATTORNEY

I, Leo W. Tracy, City Attorney for the City of Whitefish, Montana, do hereby certify that I have examined the Certificate of Title, issued by a licensed Title Company, attached hereto, of the land described in the Certificate of Dedication of the annexed plat of SHADY RIVER ESTATES, in the City of Whitefish, Montana, and find that the owners in fee simple have consented to the platting of said subdivision.

Dated this 29th day of July, 1986.

Leo W. Tracy
City Attorney
City of Whitefish, Montana

CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

I, Ralph Freedman, Public Works Director for the City of Whitefish, Montana, do hereby certify that the accompanying plat conforms to the adjoining plats in the City of Whitefish, Montana, already platted, as near as circumstances will permit.

Ralph Freedman
Public Works Director
City of Whitefish, Montana

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEYOR

Philip A. Helps
Philip A. Helps
Registration No. 4739 S

CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINING LAND SURVEYOR

Approved: 4th day of June, 1986.

James H. Burton
James H. Burton
Registration No. 5428 S

STATE OF MONTANA)
SS
County of Flathead)

Filed for record on this 30th day of July, 1986, at 10:05 o'clock A.M.
8621110050

Susan W. Havenfield
Susan W. Havenfield
Clerk and Recorder
Flathead County, Montana

BY: Dwight C. Kauffman
Deputy

Abst 831

10-6-22

Owner: Herbert E. Knuth

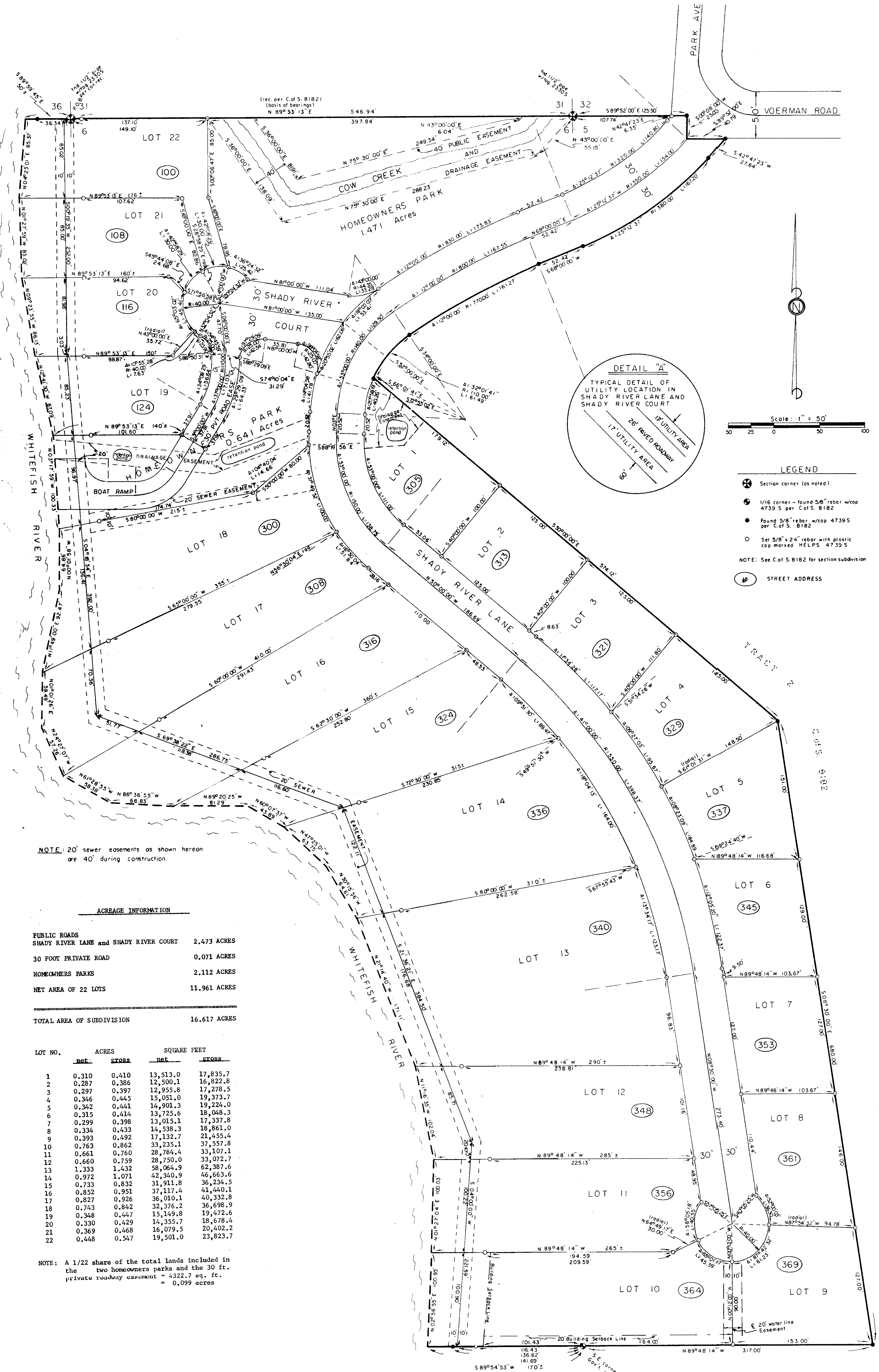
A SUBDIVISION PLAT OF

SHADY RIVER ESTATES

Gov't Lot 1 Section 1, T. 30 N., R. 22 W., P.M., M., Flathead Co.
Gov't Lot 1 Section 6, T. 30 N., R. 21 W., P.M., M., Flathead Co.
NW 1/4 NW 1/4 Section 5, T. 30 N., R. 21 W., P.M., M., Flathead Co.

Date: May 5, 1986

By: F & H.
Land Surveying Co.
431 E. Second St.
P.O. Box 114
Whitefish, MT 59937
862-2386



NOTE: 20' sewer easements as shown hereon are 40' during construction.

ACREAGE INFORMATION

PUBLIC ROADS	
SHADY RIVER LANE and SHADY RIVER COURT	2.473 ACRES
30 FOOT PRIVATE ROAD	0.071 ACRES
HOMEOWNERS PARKS	2.112 ACRES
NET AREA OF 22 LOTS	11.961 ACRES
TOTAL AREA OF SUBDIVISION	16.617 ACRES

LOT NO.	ACRES		SQUARE FEET	
	NET	GROSS	NET	GROSS
1	0.310	0.410	13,513.0	17,835.7
2	0.287	0.386	12,500.1	16,822.8
3	0.297	0.397	12,955.8	17,278.5
4	0.346	0.445	15,051.0	19,373.7
5	0.342	0.441	14,901.3	19,224.0
6	0.315	0.414	13,725.6	18,048.3
7	0.299	0.398	13,015.1	17,337.8
8	0.334	0.433	14,538.3	18,861.0
9	0.393	0.492	17,132.7	21,455.4
10	0.763	0.862	33,235.1	37,557.8
11	0.661	0.760	28,784.4	33,107.1
12	0.660	0.759	28,750.0	33,072.7
13	1.333	1.432	58,064.9	62,387.6
14	0.972	1.071	42,340.9	46,663.6
15	0.733	0.832	31,911.8	36,234.5
16	0.852	0.951	37,117.4	41,440.1
17	0.827	0.926	36,010.1	40,332.8
18	0.743	0.842	32,376.2	36,698.9
19	0.348	0.447	15,149.8	19,472.6
20	0.330	0.429	14,355.7	18,678.4
21	0.369	0.468	16,079.5	20,402.2
22	0.448	0.547	19,501.0	23,823.7

NOTE: A 1/22 share of the total lands included in the two homeowners parks and the 30 ft. private roadway easement = 4322.7 sq. ft. private roadway easement = 0.099 acres

C. of S. 3612

Sheet 1 of 2 Sheets

25
100

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RESOLUTION NO. 26-__

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, to establish an increase in the public usage fee for the Whitefish City Beach boat launch.

WHEREAS, §§ 7-1-4123(7) and 7-6-4013, MCA, empower municipalities to impose a fee for the provision of a service and grant municipalities the authority to regulate, establish and change fees and classifications that are imposed for services, which must be reasonable and related to the cost of providing such a service; and

WHEREAS, § 7-16-4201, MCA, and §§ 2-2-4, and 7-3-1, Whitefish City Code, authorize the Board of Park Commissioners to protect, manage and control City parks and grounds and to make all rules for the use of the parks by the public; and

WHEREAS, following notice, public comment, and review of staff reports, at a lawfully noticed public meeting on January 13, 2026, the Board of Park Commissioners reviewed past fees for the use of the Whitefish City Beach boat launch and recommended a fee schedule increase for all boat launch fees, having determined such fees to be reasonable and related to the cost of providing City services; and

WHEREAS, as required by § 7-6-4013, MCA, notice of a public hearing before the City Council at its February 2, 2026, meeting with respect to the proposed increase to boat launch fees was published on January 21, 2026, and January 28, 2026 in the *Whitefish Pilot*; and

WHEREAS, due to a lack of quorum, the City Council meeting scheduled for February 2, 2026, was canceled; and

WHEREAS, at a lawfully noticed public hearing on February 17, 2026, after receiving public comment, reviewing staff reports, and having considered the cost of operation and equipment and the use of public parks, facilities and grounds, the Whitefish City Council reviewed the recommendations made by the Board of Park Commissioners with respect to an increase in the boat launch fees and found the fees to be reasonable and related to the cost of providing City services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, as follows:

Section 1: The increased boat launch fee schedule is hereby adopted as set forth on Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 2: Subject to the effective dates set forth in Exhibit A, this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the City Council and signing by the Mayor thereof.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
WHITEFISH, MONTANA, ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 2026.

John M. Muhlfeld, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michelle Howke, City Clerk

EXHIBIT A

2026 City Beach Boat Launch Fee Schedule

Category	2026 Fee
Day Launch Resident*	\$15.00
Day Launch Non-Resident	\$50.00
Season Pass Launch Resident*	\$100.00
Season Pass Launch Non-Resident	\$250.00

*Resident – Watercraft is registered in Montana.

2026 Commercial Boat Launch Permit Fee Schedule

Type of Commercial Launch Permit	Proposed 2026 Fee	Permit Quota
Watercraft Delivery, Dock Services, Sales, and Marina Launching	\$500 plus \$15 per launch	No limit
Motorized Rentals (including e-motors)	\$500 plus \$15 per launch motorized, or \$5 per hand launch e-motor	6 permits
Guiding	\$500 plus \$15 per launch	3 permits
River Non-motorized	\$250	N/A
E-motor (use of motorized mooring area on beach)	\$5 per watercraft	See rental/guiding permits
Commercial Motorized Punch Card	\$75 (5 launches)	N/A



January 26, 2026

Mayor Muhlfeld and City Councilors
City of Whitefish
Whitefish, MT

Recommendation to Adopt Resolution 26- , Adopting a New Fee Schedule for City Beach Boat Launch

Introduction/History

In 2016, City Council approved a boat launch fee increase from \$5 to \$10 for a day pass and \$40 to \$50 for a season pass. When Council approved the fee increases, they asked staff to monitor rates to make sure they adequately pay for the city's aquatic invasive species program.

Staff have been monitoring the efficacy of those rates and have determined it is now time to propose an increase to the Whitefish City Beach boat launch fees. Proposed fee increases include both privately and commercially launched watercraft. Funds will be used to support the aquatic invasive species program including inspections at City Beach and Whitefish Lake State Park. Watercraft decontamination will continue to be free. Funds will also support boat ramp maintenance and staffing.

Current Report

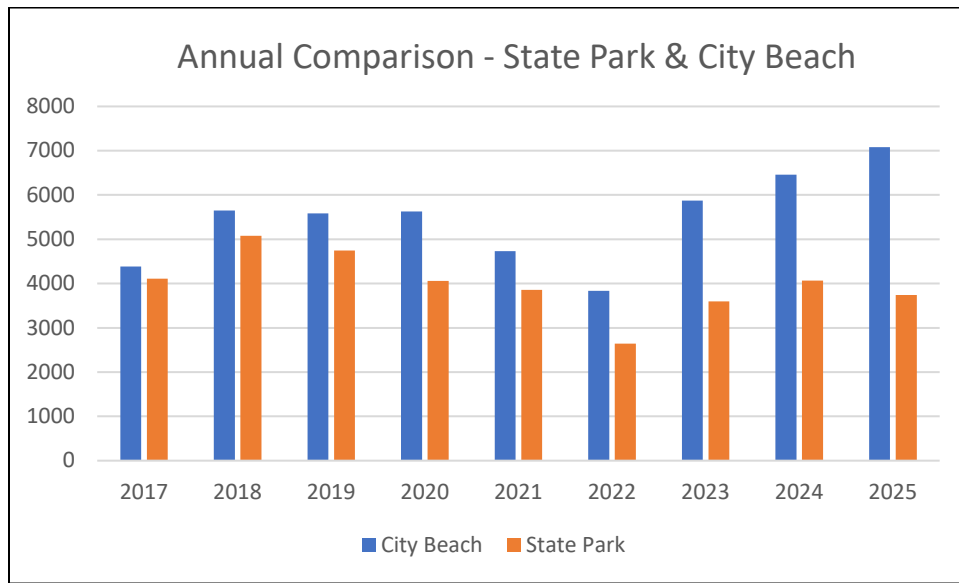
The Cost of Managing AIS

The need for fee increases was assessed by evaluating the cost of City Beach boat launch personnel and supplies versus the revenues received in past years. Staff evaluated the percentage of boat launches that were single launches versus season pass launches and those that were Montana residents versus those that were non-resident launches. Additionally, staff researched fees from similar boat launches to come up with proposed fee increases.

The cost to fund seasonal staff who perform inspections, decontaminations, and facility maintenance averages \$119,000 annually. Whitefish Lake Institute contributes \$17,500 annually to the cost of running the decontamination station. Total income from boat launch passes and commercial permits in 2025 was \$32,590. Boat ramp and drive lane improvements were completed in fall of 2025 at a total cost of \$235,000. Increasing boat launch fees and commercial permits will help to better support the city's efforts to have a safe place to launch while protecting Whitefish Lake through a vigorous AIS prevention program.

Of special note is Whitefish Lake State Park. Although residents of Montana can launch for free, commercial use is permitted with a range of fees. Due to commercial permit fees and limited parking, we have seen use grow at Whitefish City Beach for both private launching and commercial use (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Whitefish Inspection Station Visits



2025 Public Boat Launch Fee Data

In 2025, City Beach sold 1,099 day passes at \$10 per launch for a total of \$10,990. Additionally, 22 punch cards were sold at \$50 each for a total of \$1,100 (commercial permit holders only). A total of 350 season passes were sold at \$50 each for a total of \$17,500. Total day use and season pass sales for 2025 was \$29,590. Day and season pass fees have not increased since 2017.

History of Commercial Boat Launch Fees

The Commercial Boat Launch Permit program was first established in 2017 with 9 permits issued that year. In 2025, there were a total of 24 permits issued. Permit holders pay a \$125 flat fee upfront, which includes one season pass or one punch card. Revenue from commercial permits was \$3,000 for the 2025 season. Fees have not increased since 2017. Commercial permit holders use the launch heavily. In the spring and fall, boat delivery and pick up dominate the launch. During the summer, motorized watercraft rentals and guided trips are the primary commercial users of the launch. Not only does this add to the busyness of the launch during peak public use, but it also adds to the demand for parking by commercial clients.

In 2021, the Park Board established limits on the types of Commercial Use Permits issued for Whitefish City Beach: up to six permits for businesses providing guiding services and up to four permits for motorized rental delivery businesses. There are no limits on boat storage/delivery, marine service/sales, and dock service permits. Non-motorized rental delivery is not permitted at the beach but is allowed at riverfront parks with a limit of 5 watercraft per day.

The rental permit quota has been filled every year since limits were imposed. In 2025, there were 4 businesses on the waiting list. Staff have also identified other individuals renting personally owned boats on websites such as *Boatsetter* and *GetMyBoat*. Additionally, the rental of e-motorized hand launch watercraft, a relatively new form of recreation, is a potential commercial use that needs to be evaluated in the permitting process.

2025 Commercial Boat Launch Fee Data

Total revenues generated by the City Beach Boat Ramp in 2025 were \$32,590, which only covers about 27% of the costs to run the ramp and perform inspections and decontaminations at City Beach and Whitefish Lake State Park. Recently the city has made financial investments in infrastructure improvements that were not supported by revenues generated from boat ramp use. By increasing user fees directly tied to boat ramp use, the cost to operate the boat launch is passed on to both private and commercial users who utilize the amenity the most.

History of Proposed Fee Schedule

The proposed fee schedule was presented to the Park Board January 13, 2026, at their regularly scheduled meeting. The board voted unanimously to approve the fee schedule as proposed. However, there was also consensus that the board would be supportive of increased fees for non-residents and asked staff to bring data back to the board at the end of the season to evaluate the effectiveness of the fee changes.

The fee schedule was then presented to the City Council during a work session on January 20, 2026. After receiving public comments, the Council directed staff to revise the fee schedule to better cover costs associated with the management of the boat ramp, AIS inspections, and decontaminations through further increases to commercial and non-resident fees.

Current Proposed Fee Schedule

Staff revised the fee schedule based on the feedback received from the Council Work Session. The non-resident day launch fee increased from \$30 to \$50 and the non-resident seasonal pass fee from \$200 to \$250. Additionally, staff removed the inclusion of a punch card with the commercial base fee. Instead, commercial users will be required to pay the resident day launch fee for each launch. This method naturally requires commercial users to pay for the level of impact their business has at the boat launch instead of staff estimating tiered levels of use. This method will also allow staff to gather better data on the number of commercial launches at City Beach each year.

Proposed City Beach Boat Launch Fee Schedule

Category	Current Fee	Proposed 2026 Fee
Day Launch Resident*	\$10.00	\$15.00
Day Launch Non-Resident	n/a	\$50.00
Season Pass Launch Resident*	\$50.00	\$100.00
Season Pass Launch Non-Resident	n/a	\$250.00

*Resident – Watercraft is registered in Montana.

Proposed Commercial Boat Launch Permit Fee Schedule

Type of Commercial Launch Permit	Current Fee	Proposed 2026 Fee	Permit Quota
Watercraft Delivery, Dock Services, Sales, and Marina Launching	\$125 (includes one season pass/punch card) *	\$500 plus \$15 per launch	No limit
Motorized Rentals (including e-motors)	\$125 (includes one season pass/punch card) *	\$500 plus \$15 per launch motorized, or \$5 per hand launch e-motor	6 permits
Guiding	\$125 (includes one season pass/punch card) *	\$500 plus \$15 per launch	3 permits
River Non-motorized	\$125	\$250	N/A
E-motor (use of motorized mooring area on beach)	N/A	\$5 per watercraft	See rental/guiding permits
Commercial Motorized Punch Card	\$50 (5 launches)	\$75 (5 launches)	N/A

* Also paid for additional boat launch fees – single launch (\$10) or season pass (\$50).

These proposed increases will bring revenues closer in line with associated expenditures. Increasing non-resident boater fees, increasing commercial permit fees, and adding a per-launch fee structure instead of a flat annual fee for commercial rentals will all contribute to an increase in the boat ramp revenue of 60%. Fees will cover 80% of the cost to perform Aquatic Invasive Species inspections and decontaminations by city staff. Cost analysis sheets are provided in the packet for your reference.

These fees would take effect March 1, 2026, when commercial registration opens for the summer of 2026.

Financial Considerations

The implementation of the proposed fees will increase City Beach boat launch revenues to better cover associated costs of managing the boat ramp, AIS inspections, and the decontamination station.

Recommendation

Staff respectfully recommends that the City Council adopt this Resolution, approving the 2026 City Beach Boat Launch Fee Schedule.

Sincerely,
Maria Butts
Director of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services

Current Fee Structure

Boat Launch Passes	Resident	# Sold	Resident Total	Non- Resident	# Sold	Non- resident Total
Per Launch	\$10	1099	\$10,990			
Season Pass	\$50	350	\$17,500			
Punch Cards	\$50	22	\$1,100			
Subtotal			\$29,590			\$0
					Total	\$29,590

Commerical	Permit Fee	# Sold	Total
City Beach	\$125	22	\$2,750
River Parks	\$125	2	\$250
		Total	\$3,000

Boat Launch Passes	\$29,590
Commerical Permits	\$3,000
WLI Contribution	\$17,000
Total 2026	\$49,590

Work Session Proposal

Boat Launch Passes*	Resident	# Sold	Resident Total	Non- Resident	# Sold	Non- resident Total
Per Launch	\$15	934	\$14,010	\$30	165	\$4,950
Season Pass	\$100	297	\$29,700	\$200	53	\$10,600
Punch Cards	\$50	22	\$1,100			
Subtotal			\$44,810			\$15,550
					Total	\$60,360

Commerical	Permit Fee	# Sold	Total
City Beach	\$500	19	\$9,500
	\$750	1	\$750
	\$1,000	2	\$2,000
River Parks	\$250	2	\$500
		Total	\$12,750

Boat Launch Passes	\$60,360
Commerical Permits	\$12,750
WLI Contribution	\$17,500
Total 2026	\$90,610

*15 % Non-Resident, 85% Resident

New Fee Structure Proposal

Boat Launch Passes	Resident	# Sold	Resident Total	Non- Resident	# Sold	Non- resident Total
Per Launch	\$15	873	\$13,095	\$50	154	\$7,700
Season Pass	\$100	315	\$31,500	\$250	55	\$13,750
Subtotal			\$44,595			\$21,450
					Total	\$66,045

Commerical	Permit Fee	# Sold	Total
City Beach	\$500	22	\$11,000
Per launch	\$15	150	\$2,250
River Parks	\$250	2	\$500
		Total	\$13,750

Boat Launch Passes	\$66,045
Commerical Permits	\$13,750
WLI Contribution	\$17,500
Total 2026	\$97,295

*15 % Non-Resident, 85% Resident

100% AIS Program Support

Boat Launch Passes	Resident	# Sold	Resident Total	Non-Resident	# Sold	Non-resident Total
Per Launch	\$15	873	\$13,095	\$50	154	\$7,700
Season Pass	\$100	315	\$31,500	\$250	55	\$13,750
Subtotal			\$44,595			\$21,450
					Total	\$66,045

Commerical	Permit Fee	# Sold	Total
City Beach	\$1,500	22	\$33,000
Per launch	\$15	150	\$2,250
River Parks	\$250	2	\$500
		Total	\$35,750

Boat Launch Passes	\$66,045
Commerical Permits	\$35,750
WLI Contribution	\$17,500
Total 2026	\$119,295

*15 % Non-Resident, 85% Resident

Michelle Howke

From: Michelle Howke
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2026 9:59 AM
To: Michelle Howke
Subject: FW: Boat ramp fee schedule for 2026

From: david utt <sunsethillsboy@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2026 3:18 AM
To: Carla Belski <cbelski@cityofwhitefish.gov>
Subject: Boat ramp fee schedule for 2026

You don't often get email from sunsethillsboy@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: External Email - This email originated from outside the City of Whitefish. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the contents. Contact the [IT Helpdesk](#) if in doubt.

I am a full time resident of Whitefish and support an increase for the City Beach boat ramp. My wife and I have always opted for the season pass in prior years and typically enjoy the lake 6-7 times per Summer. I do however, oppose doubling the season pass to \$100.

Our ski boat is 19ft long and no where near the size of many of the increasing numbers of wake and surf boats that measure 25ft in length.

Please consider a graduated fee schedule for the season pass based on boat length for 2026.

Example:

18-20 feet.....	\$75
20-22 feet.....	\$85
22-24feet.....	\$100
24 and above.....	\$115

Thank you for your time,
David

From: [david utt](#)
To: [Carla Belski](#)
Subject: The bigger the boat. Please read.
Date: Monday, January 26, 2026 6:41:33 AM
Attachments: [IMG_2817.png](#)

You don't often get email from sunsethillsboy@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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6:36 AM Mon Jan 26

100%



Ask Imagine



Does the risk of AIS increase with boat length?

Yes, the risk of spreading or transporting aquatic invasive species (AIS) generally increases with boat length. This is primarily because larger boats (e.g., over 20-28 feet) tend to have greater hull surface area available for fouling organisms like mussels or algae to attach, more complex onboard systems (such as livewells, engine cooling systems, or ballast tanks) that can harbor and transport planktonic or waterborne invasives, and a higher likelihood of longer-distance travel patterns that facilitate spread between water bodies.

For example, studies on recreational boating in regions like the Great Lakes indicate that power-driven boats in the 21-40 foot range contribute more to AIS propagule pressure (the number of invasive organisms transported) compared to smaller vessels under 12-16 feet, which often lack such systems and are used for shorter trips. Manually propelled craft like kayaks or canoes pose even lower risk due to minimal water retention.

To mitigate this, practices like thorough hull cleaning, draining all water compartments, and complying with inspection requirements (especially in areas like Montana) are recommended, regardless of size. If this isn't the AIS context you meant, could you clarify?

46 Sources



2 /

Ask Anything

Auto

Speak

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RESOLUTION NO. 26-__

**A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, approving a
Amendment to Lease Agreement and to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land
at Memorial Field.**

WHEREAS, the City owns property located at the intersection of East Second Street and Pine Avenue known as Memorial Park; and

WHEREAS, since 1936, a community baseball stadium has existed on the northeast corner of Memorial Park; and

WHEREAS, over the past 60 years, the Glacier Twins have completed capital improvement projects at Memorial Park for the purpose of holding American Legion baseball practice and games; and

WHEREAS, in October of 2002, the City and the Glacier Twins entered into a long-term lease agreement for ten acres of Memorial Park for the operation of a baseball stadium and allowing the Glacier Twins to construct a new stadium grandstand, attached hereto as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the base term of the long-term lease agreement was 25 years, giving the Glacier Twins the option to automatically renew it for two consecutive terms of 15 years each; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the long-term lease agreement, the City and the Glacier Twins entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to address the construction of a Verizon cell phone tower on the Glacier Twins' leased area and the distribution of funds received from Verizon; and

WHEREAS, in December of 2025, the City and Verizon entered into a Second Amendment to License Agreement which extended the license granted to Verizon for the cell phone tower for five years and set new annual rent; and

WHEREAS, the City and the Glacier Twins re-negotiated the Memorandum of Understanding to align its term with the Second Amendment to License Agreement and to provide transparency with respect to the distribution of the funds received from Verizon; and

WHEREAS, at a meeting held February 10, 2026, the Whitefish Board of Park Commissioners met and approved the amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding, attached hereto as Exhibit B, and recommended approval of the long-term lease agreement with one change; and

WHEREAS, the City and the Glacier Twins have negotiated an amendment to the long-term lease agreement to update its terms, clarify its original intent, and provide transparency; and

WHEREAS, on February 17, 2026, at a lawfully noticed public hearing, the City Council reviewed the amendment to the long-term lease agreement, received a report from staff, invited public comment and thereafter voted to approve the amendment to the long-term lease agreement; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the City and its inhabitants for the City Council to approve the amendment to the long-term lease agreement and authorize the City Manager to sign the same.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Whitefish, Montana, as follows:

Section 1: The Amendment to Lease Agreement to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park, attached hereto is Exhibit C, is hereby approved.

Section 2: The City Manager is hereby authorized to execute the Amendment to Lease Agreement to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park.

Section 3: This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the City Council and the signing of the Mayor thereof.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEFISH, MONTANA, ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 2026.

John M. Muhlfeld, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michelle Howke, City Clerk

LEASE AGREEMENT
(Glacier Twins, American Legion Baseball, Inc.)

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into this 7TH day of OCTOBER, 2002, by and between THE CITY OF WHITEFISH, a municipal corporation, hereinafter called "CITY" and the GLACIER TWINS AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL, INC., ROOSEVELT POST #108, a non-profit corporation, hereinafter called "TWINS".

WITNESSETH:

Whereas, the Twins, a Montana non-profit corporation, have constructed numerous improvements and intend to construct and own a new stadium grandstand, known as the Glacier Twins Stadium (hereafter called the "STADIUM"), located at Memorial Park, on real property owned by the CITY, which real property is described on Exhibit "A", attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference; and

Whereas, the TWINS have agreed to operate and maintain the "STADIUM", with the CITY entering into a long term lease with the TWINS, providing that the TWINS may use and operate the STADIUM, as set forth herein; and

NOW THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. **DEFINITION:** The term STADIUM, as used herein, shall refer to and include those improvements constructed by the TWINS pursuant to an agreement executed concurrently by the parties, including restrooms, concession stand, equipment and storage building, grandstand bleachers and other facilities within the perimeter fence line as shown on Exhibit "A". The term STADIUM shall also include any fixtures or other items attached to the STADIUM, including lights, ventilation pipes, windows, signs and any other fixtures or items. The stadium grandstand has not yet been constructed. The term STADIUM LAND, as used herein, shall refer to and include the real property described on Exhibit "A", as well as all improvements currently located on such real property, such as dugouts, utility lines or pipes, fences, irrigation system, playing fields, restrooms, and similar existing facilities, all of which are owned by the City.
2. **LEASE OF THE STADIUM LAND:** The CITY does demise, lease and let to the TWINS, and the TWINS do agree to lease and rent from the CITY, the STADIUM LAND under the following terms and conditions.
3. **BASE TERM:** The Base Term of this Lease shall be for a term of twenty-five (25) years, beginning from the date of occupancy, which parties agree begins on January 1, 2003.
4. **OPTION TERM:** The CITY grants to the TWINS the option to renew this Lease for two (2) consecutive terms of fifteen (15) years each, commencing after expiration of the base Term. The TWINS shall exercise each option Term in writing to the CITY not less than one hundred eighty (180) days prior to the expiration date of each existing term. At termination of the final option term the parties may meet to discuss whether to further extend the term of the Lease.
5. **CONSIDERATION:** The TWINS shall pay to the CITY, as rent during the Base Term and Option Term the sum of One Dollar and No/100 (\$1.00) per year in advance, with first rent payment due on January 1, 2003. Rent for each subsequent year of the Base and Option Term of this Lease is due and payable on the annual anniversary date hereof.

EXHIBIT A

6. INSURANCE: During the construction of the STADIUM, the TWINS shall maintain general liability insurance with respect to the STADIUM, and the City shall maintain general liability insurance with respect to the STADIUM LAND. After construction of the STADIUM, The CITY shall maintain general liability insurance with respect to the STADIUM and the STADIUM LAND. During and after the construction of the STADIUM, the TWINS shall maintain fire, property damage, and extended coverage insurance with respect to the STADIUM, and the City shall maintain similar insurance with respect to the STADIUM LAND. All of such insurance shall be in the full replacement value of the property covered.
7. UTILITIES: It shall be the sole responsibility of the TWINS to provide for water and sewer, electrical and gas supplied to the STADIUM and the STADIUM LAND, and all other utility services. The TWINS shall also provide and pay for refuse removal from the parking lot(s).
8. MAINTENANCE OF THE STADIUM AND STADIUM LAND: The TWINS shall maintain the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND in good condition during the term of this Lease. The TWINS obligation to maintain shall include the repair and replacement, as needed, of all improvements, including but not limited to all fixtures, walls, windows, roof, plumbing, electrical, heating and cooling located on the STADIUM LAND.
9. MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY INSPECTIONS. Throughout the term of this Lease the TWINS shall maintain the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND in a good and safe condition, and shall not allow any unsafe condition to exist thereon. The STADIUM and STADIUM LAND will be inspected by City staff for maintenance and safety considerations on a regular basis. If the STADIUM or STADIUM LAND is found to fall below acceptable standards, the TWINS will receive written and verbal notification from the CITY within 24 hours of the inspection. The TWINS are obligated to address the unacceptable conditions within thirty (30) working days (five calendar days if safety is involved) of receiving notification. If the TWINS fail to respond, the TWINS will be invoiced \$25.00 for every hour city crews are needed to restore accepted maintenance standards. All supplemental maintenance will be documented and be available upon request.
10. USE: The TWINS shall have exclusive rights to use the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND as it deems necessary to conduct its programs. The TWINS may also use the facilities for special events and fundraisers with an approved City special events permit for any activities other than those directly related to the sport of baseball. Use of the facilities by other amateur or professional baseball clubs shall require the approval of the TWINS with provisions for use defined in a sub-lease agreement.
11. ADVERTISEMENTS: All advertisement rights and privileges displayed within the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND are to be determined and controlled by the TWINS, subject to the CITY'S sign ordinance.
12. ASSIGNABILITY: This Lease is not assignable without prior written approval of the PARK BOARD and CITY COUNCIL.
13. SUBLEASE TO BABE RUTH BASEBALL ("BABE RUTH"): The TWINS shall make the facilities available, by sublease, to BABE RUTH on a limited basis. The TWINS shall be

responsible for preparing the baseball field for BABE RUTH games and make available to BABE RUTH; bases, lighting, clean dugouts and related facilities. The TWINS shall be entitled to determine whether or not the field is in a condition to be used, and if not shall notify BABE RUTH as soon as possible. The TWINS shall retain any proceeds from the concession stands. BABE RUTH shall retain all gate fees.

14. SUBLEASE TO WHITEFISH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.44 ("SCHOOL"): The TWINS shall make the facilities available, by sublease, to the SCHOOL, for Fall football use only. The TWINS shall be responsible for making available to the SCHOOL; lighting, football bleachers, concession and restroom facilities and the immediate surrounding area used during the football season beginning on August 20 of each year and ending with the completion of the football season of each year. The SCHOOL shall retain any proceeds from the concession stands. The SCHOOL shall retain all gate fees. If prior to June 15 the SCHOOL notifies the TWINS in writing that it will not use the facilities for the coming season, the SCHOOL shall not be required to pay any compensation to the TWINS for that season.
15. ALTERATIONS OR IMPROVEMENTS: Prior to making alterations or improvements to the STADIUM or STADIUM LAND, the TWINS shall first notify the CITY, in writing, of the proposed changes, and shall provide sufficient detail in order to permit the CITY to evaluate the proposed changes. The CITY may request additional information concerning the proposed changes. The CITY shall within thirty (30) days of receipt of all necessary information, indicate its approval or disapproval of the proposed changes. The CITY shall not unreasonably withhold its approval.
16. TERMINATION: This Lease may be terminated by either party giving to the other party one hundred eighty (180) days written notice, however in the case of the CITY such notice of termination shall only be for (1) delinquency in the payment of rent, (2) violations of State law or CITY ordinances or any covenant herein contained, (3) abandonment of the STADIUM by the TWINS, or (4) if the TWINS ceases to exist as an organization; which condition continues for forty-five (45) days unabated. Upon termination of this Lease or expiration of the Lease term, ownership of the STADIUM shall automatically revert to the CITY.
17. NON-PROFIT QUALIFICATION: Throughout the entire term of this Lease, the TWINS shall remain a non-profit corporation, qualified as such under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The failure to maintain qualifications as a non-profit corporation under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code shall be considered a material breach of this Lease.
18. TWINS BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The TWINS agrees that during the term of this Lease, the CITY shall be entitled if it desires, to have a representative from the CITY attend the TWINS Board of Directors meetings as a non-voting CITY representative. The representative appointed by the CITY, if any, shall be either a Council member or a member of the City staff.
19. NO NUISANCE: At all times during the term of this Lease, the TWINS shall operate the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND in a manner so as not to create or maintain a public nuisance.
20. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS: The TWINS shall at all times comply with all applicable ordinances, laws and regulations with respect to the operation and management of the

STADIUM and STADIUM LAND, including laws prohibiting discrimination, and shall apply for and obtain all required governmental permits in a timely manner.

21. INDEMNIFICATION: Except from claims arising out of acts or omissions of the CITY, the TWINS shall indemnify, defend and hold the CITY harmless from any and all claims, lawsuits or causes of action for which the CITY has no insurance coverage, or which exceed the amount of the CITY'S insurance coverage under the CITY'S general liability and/or property damage insurance acting against the CITY, whether for damages or otherwise, and shall include the obligation to pay attorney's fees and other legal cost on behalf of the CITY.
22. ATTORNEY'S FEES: In the event of any litigation to enforce or interpret the provisions of this LEASE, or to remedy a breach thereof, the prevailing party shall be entitled to reasonable attorneys' fees as fixed by the court.
23. ENTIRE AGREEMENT: Except with respect to other agreements referenced herein, This Lease contains the entire agreement of the parties hereto, and supersedes any prior written or oral agreements between them concerning the subject matter contained herein. There are no representations, arrangements, or understating, oral or written, between the parties hereto relating to the subject matter contained in this Lease which are not fully expressed herein. The provisions of this Lease may be waived altered, amended or repealed in whole or in part only upon the written consent of all parties to this Lease.
24. PARTIAL INVALIDITY: Each term, covenant, condition or provision of this Lease shall be viewed as separate and distinct, and in the event that any such term covenant, condition or provisions shall be held by a court of component jurisdiction to be invalid, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.
25. GOVERNING LAW: The construction of this Lease, and the rights and liabilities of the parties hereto, shall be governed by the laws of the State of Montana.
26. SUCCESSORS IN INTEREST: Subject to the restrictions against assignment as herein contained, this Lease shall inure to the benefit of, and shall be binding upon, the assigns, successors in interest, personal representatives, estate, heirs, and legatees of each of the parties hereto.
27. NECESSARY ACTS: Each party to this Lease agrees to perform any further acts and execute and deliver any further documents that may be reasonably necessary to carry out the provisions of this Lease.
28. NO OBLIGATION OF CITY: During the term of this Lease, the CITY shall have no obligation to maintain, repair or replace any part of the STADIUM or the STADIUM LAND; nor shall the CITY be obligated to provide any free utility or other service.
29. EXECUTION OF LEASE: Concurrent with the execution of this Lease, the parties have executed an agreement providing for construction of the STADIUM by the TWINS.

WHITEFISH PARK BOARD

By: Ron Brunk
Ron Brunk, Chair

ATTEST:

Dan Keyes 11-4-02
Dan Keyes, Parks Director

CITY OF WHITEFISH

By: Andy Feury
Andy Feury, Mayor

ATTEST:

Necile Lorang
Necile Lorang, City Clerk

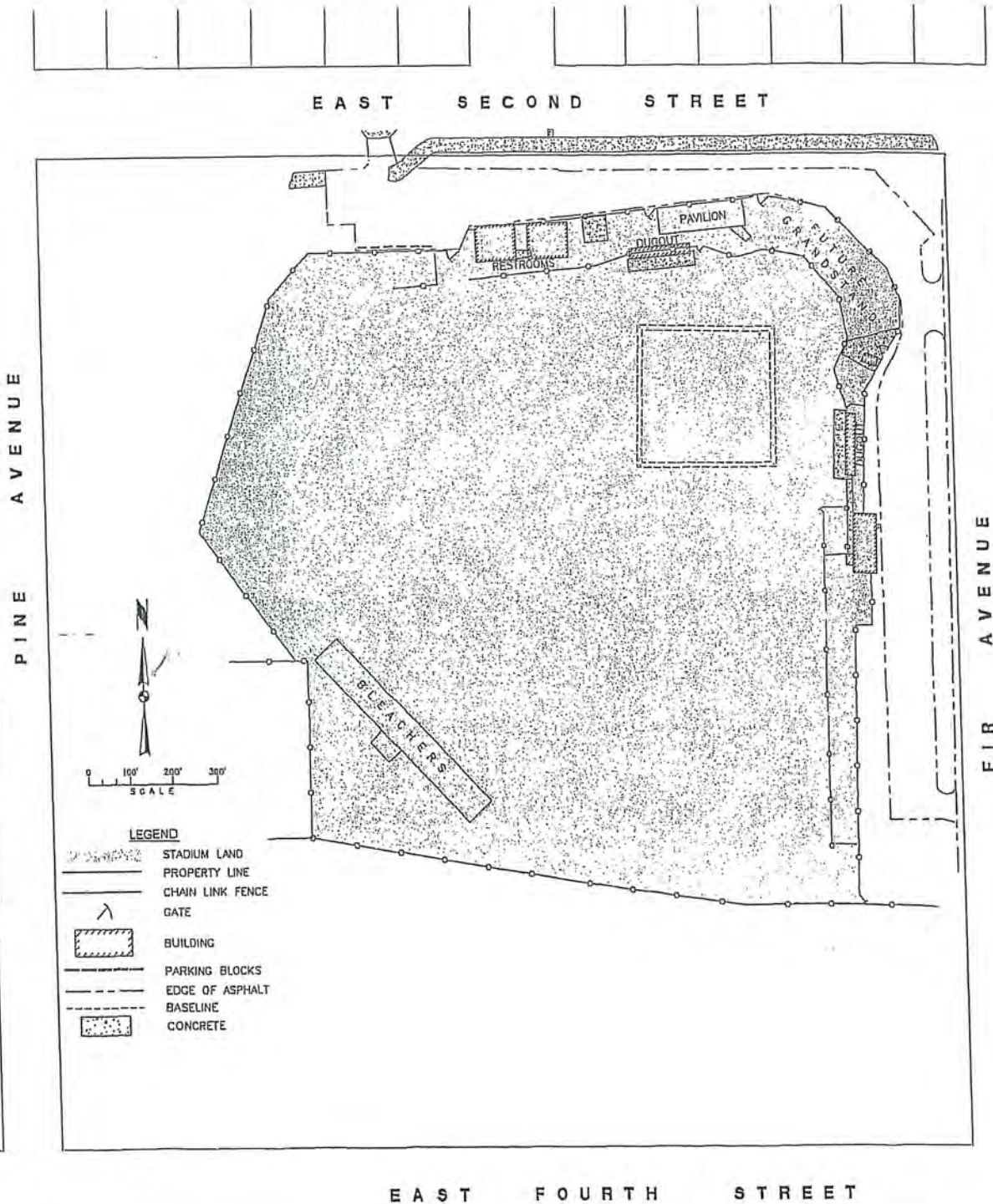
GLACIER TWINS AMERICAN LEGION
BASEBALL, INC., ROOSEVELT POST #108

By: Doug Golden 10-9-02
Doug Golden President

ATTEST:

Rita Hanson
Rita Hanson, Secretary

EXHIBIT "A"



DESCRIPTION

THE CITY BLOCK SHOWN ABOVE IS LEGALLY DESCRIBED AS LOT 5D OF THE SW 1/4 NW 1/4 OF SECTION 32, TOWNSHIP 31 NORTH, RANGE 21 WEST, FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA.

Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding

This Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by and between the City of Whitefish and the Whitefish Board of Park Commissioners, 418 E. 2nd Street, PO Box 158, Whitefish, MT 59937 (City), and Glacier Twins American Legion Baseball, Inc., Roosevelt Post No. 108, a Montana non-profit corporation, PO Box 2007, Whitefish, MT 59937 (Glacier Twins).

WHEREAS, by Resolution No. 02-51, the City approved a long-term lease and construction agreement with Glacier Twins for the construction and use of a community baseball stadium located on the northeast corner of Memorial Park; and

WHEREAS, the City subsequently reached a license agreement with Gold Creek Cellular of Montana Limited Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless which allowed Verizon to construct and maintain a cellular tower on the portion of Memorial Park leased by the Glacier Twins; and

WHEREAS, on August 29, 2014, the City and the Glacier Twins entered into a MOU to provide annual disbursements of the funds received from Verizon under the license agreement to the Glacier Twins for maintenance of the leased baseball stadium; and

WHEREAS, the five-year term of the original MOU expired on August 28, 2019; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the Glacier Twins and the City entered into another MOU providing for disbursements of the funds received by the City from Verizon; and

WHEREAS, in January of 2025, the City's license agreement with Verizon expired; and

WHEREAS, the City and Verizon have entered into a Second Amendment to License Agreement for the Use of City Property which will change the amount of funds received by the City as well as the term of the license agreement; and

WHEREAS, both parties desire to amend their 2022 MOU to be consistent with the terms of the Second Amendment to License Agreement for the Use of City Property and to achieve transparency in the disbursement of the funds received by the City from Verizon.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE 2022 MOU BETWEEN THE GLACIER TWINS AND THE CITY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

- (1) The "TERM" provision of the MOU is replaced by the following provision:

TERM: This MOU begins on the date of signing thereof and is effective through February 1, 2030, unless Verizon or the City terminate the Second Amendment to License Agreement for the Use of City Property at an earlier date. The City grants the Glacier Twins an option to renew this MOU for one (1) five (5) year term unless Verizon or the City

terminate or fail to renew the Second Amendment to License Agreement for the Use of City Property.

- (2) The "MAINTENANCE PLAN" provision of the MOU is replaced by the following provision:

MAINTENANCE PLAN: The Glacier Twins will submit on an annual basis, no later than November 1st of each year, an annual report, budget, and proposed maintenance plan (Maintenance Plan) for the City Park Board's review. Maintenance Plans must include itemized details of anticipated expenditures associated with the facility such as utility costs, maintenance projects, or capital improvement projects anticipated to be completed and paid for using Verizon funds within the following fiscal year.

The Glacier Twins may, no more than monthly, request in writing distributions of the Verizon funds held in the Memorial Park Account from the City. Such requests must be accompanied by invoices paid by the Glacier Twins or invoices to be paid by the Glacier Twins for items identified in the approved Maintenance Plan. Any deviations from the approved Maintenance Plan must be approved by the Park Board before the Glacier Twins request funds from the City.

Any Verizon funds spent that do not comply with the approved Maintenance Plan must be returned to the City within 30 days.

If the Glacier Twins do not spend all the Verizon funds in a fiscal year, the City will hold the funds in the Memorial Park Account for potential projects in future years. However, Verizon funds not expended within five fiscal years will be retained by the City and used for other maintenance or improvements to Memorial Park, unless an extension is approved by the Park Board. The Maintenance Plan must explain how the funds are proposed to be used in the following fiscal year(s).

- (3) The following sentences are added at the end of the "NON-PROFIT QUALIFICATION" provision of the MOU:

The Glacier Twins must submit a copy of its Form 990 tax returns filed with the Internal Revenue Service to the City by April 30th of each year.

- (4) All remaining terms of the 2022 MOU between the Glacier Twins and the City remain in full force and effect.

Whitefish Board of Park Commissioners

Glacier Twins American Legion
Baseball, Inc., Post No. 108 and 72

By: _____
Melissa Hartman, Chair

By: _____
_____, President

Date: _____

Date: _____

The City of Whitefish

By: _____
Dana Meeker, City Manager

Date: _____

Amendment to Lease Agreement and Amendment to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park

This Amendment to Lease Agreement and Amendment to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park is entered into by and between the City of Whitefish, 418 E. 2nd Street, PO Box 158, Whitefish, MT 59937 (CITY), and Glacier Twins American Legion Baseball, Inc., Roosevelt Post No. 108, a Montana non-profit corporation, PO Box 2007, Whitefish, MT 59937 (TWINS).

WHEREAS, by Resolution No. 02-51, the CITY approved a Lease Agreement with the TWINS for the use of a community baseball stadium located on the northeast corner of Memorial Park; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 22-08, the CITY approved an Amendment to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park which amended Sections 6 (Insurance) and 10 (Use) of the Lease Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the parties desire to further amend the Lease Agreement and the Amendment to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park to address various concerns raised by members of the community, provide transparency, and ensure public access.

NOW, THEREFORE, the CITY and the TWINS agree as follows:

- (1) Provision 4 of the Lease Agreement is replaced by the following provision:

OPTION TERM: The CITY grants to the TWINS the option to renew this Lease for two (2) consecutive terms of fifteen (15) years each, commencing after expiration of the Base Term, upon the written approval of both parties. At the termination of the final option term, the parties may meet to discuss whether to further extend the term of the Lease.

If the TWINS cease to utilize the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND for baseball or related programs for more than one year, the CITY may terminate this Lease.

- (2) Provision 9 of the Lease Agreement is replaced by the following provision:

MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION: Throughout the term of this Lease, the TWINS shall maintain the STADIUM in good condition and shall not allow any unsafe condition to exist thereon. The CITY may perform an inspection of the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND upon request with 48 hours written notice. If the STADIUM or STADIUM LAND is found to fall below acceptable standards, the CITY will notify the TWINS within 24 hours of inspection. The TWINS must address any unacceptable conditions within thirty (30) working days (five calendar days if safety is involved) of receiving notification. If the TWINS fail to respond, they will be invoiced for the CITY's staff time and any supplies or materials cost that is necessary to restore accepted maintenance standards.

- (3) Section 10 of the Amendment to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park is replaced by the following provision:

USE: The TWINS shall have exclusive rights to use the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND as it deems necessary to conduct its programs. The TWINS may also use the facilities for special events and fundraisers with an approved City special event permit for any activities other than those directly related to the sport of baseball. Use of the facilities by other organizations or entities shall require the approval of the TWINS and the Whitefish Park Board with provisions for use defined in a sub-lease agreement.

The TWINS will have priority for use of the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND. When the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND are not being used by the TWINS, first priority will be given to the Whitefish School District followed by the public and area non-profits.

The TWINS will sub-lease the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND to the Whitefish School District for school sanctioned athletic programs at a fee that recuperates the costs of utilities (lights, electric, sewer, water, garbage), maintenance required to be performed by the TWINS during the sub-lease term (equipment, labor, materials), and any repairs caused by damage occurring from the use.

The TWINS will make a meaningful effort to provide access to the public at no or a break-even cost.

The TWINS are not obligated to sublease the STADIUM or STADIUM LAND to any entity or entity with employees/contractors, including the Whitefish School District, directly competing with its program.

The TWINS will establish a schedule of rates charged for use of the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND that is fair and equitable for similar types of use. With its annual report to the CITY, the TWINS will submit a list of sub-leases entered into in the prior year and the rates charged for each.

The TWINS may limit use of the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND if field conditions present threat of excessive damage to the facilities due to weather conditions. The TWINS may not unreasonably deny Whitefish School District access to the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND.

- (4) Section 14 of the Lease Agreement is deleted.

- (5) All remaining terms of the 2002 Lease Agreement and the 2022 Amendment to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park between the TWINS and the CITY remain in full force and effect.

City of Whitefish

Glacier Twins American Legion
Baseball, Inc., Post No. 108 and 72

By: _____ :
Dana Smith, City Manager

By: _____
President

Date: _____

Date: _____

Staff Report



To: Mayor John Muhlfeld and City Councilors

From:  Angela Jacobs, City Attorney

Date: February 11, 2026

Re: Amendment to Lease Agreement and Amendment to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Field

Introduction/History

Since 1936, a community baseball stadium has existed on the northeast corner of City-owned Memorial Park. Over the past sixty years, the Glacier Twins have completed several capital improvement projects on the property for the purpose of holding American Legion baseball practice and games. Though the Glacier Twins had leased the land from the City in years past, in October of 2002, the City and the Glacier Twins entered into a long-term lease and an agreement permitting the construction of a new stadium grandstand. The base term for the lease was twenty-five years, giving the Glacier Twins the option to automatically renew it for two consecutive terms of fifteen years each.

In addition to the long-term lease with the City, the Glacier Twins entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Park Board of Commissioners on August 29, 2014, to address the construction of a Verizon cellphone tower within the leased area and the distribution of the funds received by Verizon. The MOU was last amended in 2022. Pursuant to the amendment, the Glacier Twins receive 78% of the Verizon funds received by the City for five years.

In December of 2025, the City and Verizon entered into a Second Amendment to License Agreement. The amendment extended the license granted to Verizon for the cellphone tower for five years beginning February 1, 2025, and set new annual rent of \$26,664.40.

Current Report

In the past year, members of the public have raised concerns regarding the long-term lease and the use of Memorial Field. Concerns included: (1) allegations that the Glacier Twins were misappropriating the Verizon funds dispersed by the City; (2) the school district not being allowed to utilize Memorial Field for its high school baseball and football teams; (3) the length of the lease term; (4) characterization of Memorial Field as a “private playground” for the Glacier Twins; and (5) the possibility that the Glacier Twins would continue to hold the property even if they didn’t have enough players to field a team.

City staff met several times with the Glacier Twins to discuss amendments to the MOU and the long-term lease agreement in an effort to address concerns raised by the public. One meeting, at which staff examined the last two years of the Glacier Twins' financials, was attended by the president of JCCS as well as by City Manager Meeker who holds a CPA license. No evidence of misappropriation was found. Staff also met with representatives of the school district who informed us the school district does not desire to utilize Memorial Field at this time as they are utilizing Smith Fields.

The amendment to the MOU, which was approved by Park Board at its meeting held February 10, 2026:

- Aligns the term of the MOU with the term of the Second Amendment to License Agreement
- Creates transparency by allowing the City to hold the Verizon funds in the Memorial Park Account and to distribute the funds to the Glacier Twins upon written requests accompanied by invoices
- Obligates the Glacier Twins to provide a copy of its tax returns to the City each year

The proposed amendment to the long-term lease agreement:

- Updates the term of the lease to provide it renews only upon the written approval of both the City and the Glacier Twins
- Provides the City can terminate the lease if the Glacier Twins fail to utilize the property for baseball or related programs for more than one year
- Removes the requirement that the City inspect the property for maintenance and safety considerations on a regular basis
- Provides transparency with respect to use of the property, clarifying the Glacier Twins have priority, then the school district, then the general public with the caveat that the Twins are not required to sub-lease the property to any entity or entity with employees/contractors directly competing with its program
- Caps the amount the Glacier Twins may charge to sub-lease the property to the school district at a fee that recuperates the cost of utilities, maintenance required to be performed by the Glacier Twins during the sub-lease term, and any repairs needed for damage caused
- Requires the Glacier Twins to establish a schedule of rates charged for use of the property that is equitable and fair for similar types of uses

The Park Board also considered the proposed amendment to the long-term lease agreement. It recommended that the City Council approve it with one change to the language in paragraph 7 of Section 10, Use, redlined below:

The TWINS may limit use of the STADIUM and STADIUM Land if ~~field conditions present the activity poses an unreasonable threat to the facility. threat of excessive damage to the facilities due to weather conditions.~~ The TWINS may not unreasonably deny Whitefish School District access to the STADIUM and STADIUM LAND.

Financial Requirements/Impacts

There are no financial requirements/impacts associated with approving the Amendment to Lease Agreement and Amendment to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park.

Recommendation

Staff respectfully requests that the City Council Approve the Amendment to Lease Agreement and Amendment to Glacier Twins Long-term Lease of Stadium Land at Memorial Park.

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City of Whitefish
Parks and Recreation Department
418 E. 2nd Street
Whitefish, MT 59937
(406) 863-2470

January 26, 2026

Mayor Muhlfeld and City Councilors
City of Whitefish
Whitefish, Montana

Approval to Hang Tree Education Banners in Downtown District

The Parks and Recreation Department has submitted an application for the DNRC's Urban and Community Forestry Program Development Grant. The theme of the grant this year is "Longevity and Readiness – Planning, Risk Mitigation & Tree Health." One of the key concepts of the grant is homeowner education on general tree care and maintenance. To achieve this, staff would like to place approximately twelve educational banners on the light posts in the downtown district on existing infrastructure. These educational banners will help educate the public on the importance of watering, preventing invasive pests by not relocating firewood, and the importance of gleaning fruit trees in the fall.

Included in your packet is an example of a banner we would like to hang. All banners will be consistent with our existing sign plan, reflecting city branding through approved colors, artwork, and fonts. They will include phrases such as water young trees near the root ball, water mature trees at the outer edge of the branches, keep mulch away from tree trunks, harvest fruit promptly, and pick up fallen fruit daily.

An additional part of our educational campaign will entail partnering with the students from Whitefish High School to create educational videos. Our goals are to teach the public how to properly mulch, water, and prune small trees.

The total anticipated cost of the educational component of the grant is \$2,070 and the city is requesting \$1,158 in grant funding. The match is 3:1, and we are contributing \$912 of staff and volunteer time. Staff and high school volunteers will contribute in-kind time as well.

I am seeking Council's approval to permit staff to install tree care educational banners on light poles in the downtown district.

Sincerely,

Maria Butts
Director of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services

Care For Our Trees



Trees need supplemental water, especially during the hottest and driest months of July, August, and September.



Watering Matters



February 10, 2026

Mayor Muhlfeld and City Councilors
City of Whitefish
Whitefish, Montana

Authorization to Bid Armory Park Parking Lot and Open Space Project

Introduction/History

Armory Park is the City's largest park, spanning 30 acres. In 2019 the Park Board updated the Armory Park Master Plan to identify the next phases of the plan, Phase III and Phase IV. With the updated plan, staff applied for and received a Land Water Conservation grant to complete Phase III of the plan, which was completed in 2023. Upon completion, the Parks and Recreation Department continued work with RPA for the design engineering of Phase IV.

Staff, RPA, and the Park Board have identified the prioritization of Phase IV projects through community-wide surveys, collaboration with the WAG Board, and various public meetings. In October of 2024, the Park Board gave final approval of a five-year prioritization of Armory Park improvements.

Current Report

Through the design process the consultant and staff identified the primary components of Phase IV. The next two projects slated to be completed are the parking lot and open space. Staff plans to publicly bid construction of the parking lot and open space in March 2026.

Assuming staff is authorized to proceed with bidding, the following schedule is proposed for the construction of the improvements:

- March 15 & March 22 - Advertisement Dates
- March 31 - Open Bids
- April 20 - Council Award
- May 8 - Construction Window Begins
- October 30 – Substantial Completion

Financial Requirement

The current preliminary construction cost estimate is \$493,734.00

The FY26 CIP has identified \$792,000 of Resort Tax dollars for Armory Park Phase IV and \$500,000 in FY27.

Request for Authorization

Parks and Recreation will complete review of the final designs for the Armory Park Master Plan Phase IV prior to advisements to bid are publicized. The 90% design packet is attached to this staff report for your review. This is one of the Council goals for FY26 and a necessary step to completing the Armory Park Master Plan.

Staff respectfully requests authorization to proceed with the bidding of the Armory Park Master Plan as presented in this report and as approved by the Park Board of Commissioners.

Sincerely,

Maria Butts
Director of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services

Armory Park Improvements - FY 2027 Project



Prepared for:
City of Whitefish
Whitefish, Montana



Prepared by:
Robert Peccia & Associates
Kalispell, MT
www.rpa-eng.com

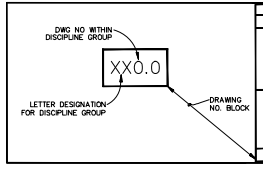
SHEET	SHEET TITLE
CG0.1	DRAWING FORMAT AND ABBREVIATIONS
CG0.2	LEGEND AND NOTES
CV1.1	EXISTING CONDITIONS
CW1.1	SWPP PLAN
CW5.1	SWPP NOTES AND DETAIL
CD1.1	DEMOLITION PLAN
CH1.1	IMPROVEMENTS OVERVIEW
CH1.2	HAUL ROUTE AND TRAFFIC CONTROL PLAN
CS1.1	PARKING LOT GRADING AND SURFACING PLAN
CS1.2	OPEN SPACE GRADING AND SURFACING PLAN
CS5.1	SURFACING DETAILS
CU1.1	STORM DRAINAGE PLAN
CU1.2	STORM DRAINAGE PLAN
CU5.1	STORM DRAINAGE NOTES AND DETAIL
CU5.2	STORM DRAINAGE DETAILS
CT1.1	PARKING LOT STRIPING AND SIGNAGE PLAN

Ryan E. Mitchell, PE, PLS

Designed by: Austin Pauly, E.I.
Drawn by: Mark Rogers
Checked by: Ryan Mitchell, P.E., P.L.S.
QA/QC Approved by: Craig Jenneskens, P.E.
Date: January 2026
RPA Project No.: 20108.100

NOTES:

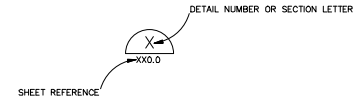
1. CONTACT THE ENGINEER FOR ABBREVIATIONS NOT LISTED.
2. THIS IS A STANDARD SHEET. THEREFORE, SOME ABBREVIATIONS MAY APPEAR ON THIS SHEET AND MAY NOT BE UTILIZED ON THIS PROJECT.



STANDARD RPA FORMAT

LETTER	DISCIPLINE
CG	CIVIL GENERAL
CV	CIVIL EXISTING CONDITIONS
CW	CIVIL SWPP
CD	CIVIL DEMOLITION
CI	CIVIL IMPROVEMENTS
CS	CIVIL GRADING AND SURFACING
CJ	CIVIL UTILITIES
CT	CIVIL TRAFFIC MARKINGS AND SIGNAGE

DRAWING IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM



DETAIL AND SECTION CALLOUT

ABBREVIATIONS

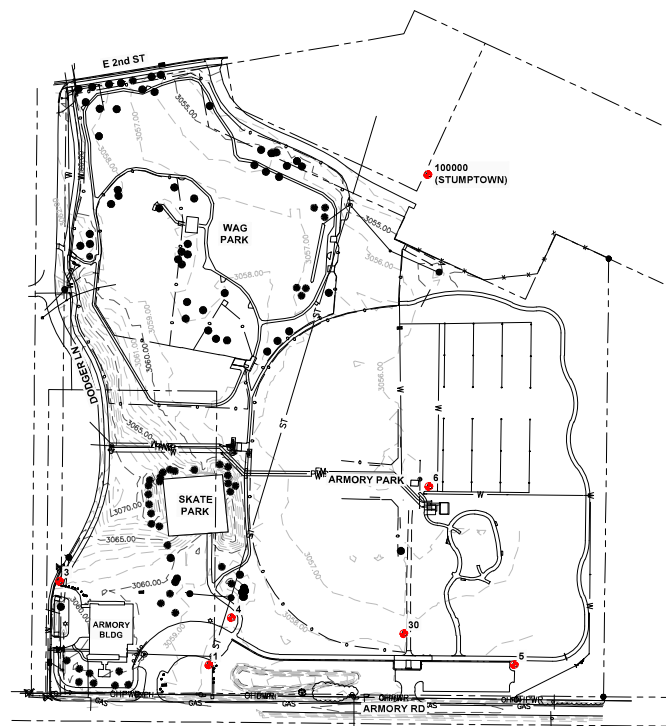
A	DIAMETER	DEM	DEMOLITION	HD	HEAVY DUTY OR HOT-DIPPED	OAL	OVERALL LENGTH	SSM	SANITARY SEWER MANHOLE
AB	AT	DEPT	DEPARTMENT	HDD	HORIZONTAL DIRECTIONAL DRILLING	OC	ON CENTER	SSP	SPIRAL STEEL PIPE
AC	ANCHOR BOLT, AGGREGATE BASE	DH	DRILL HOLE (SOIL BORING)	HOPE	HIGH DENSITY POLYETHYLENE PIPE	OD	OUTSIDE DIAMETER	ST	STREET
AFF	ASBESTOS CEMENT OR ACRE	D1	DUCTILE IRON OR DRAIN INLET	HOT	HEIGHT	OF	OUTSIDE FACE, OVERFLOW	STA	STATION
ADA	ABOVE FINISHED FLOOR	DIA	DIAMETER	HP	HIGH POINT OR HORSEPOWER	OH	OVERHEAD POWER	STD	STANDARD
AHA	AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT	DIAJ	DUCTILE IRON MECHANICAL JOINT	HT	HEIGHT	OPC	ORANGE PLASTIC CAP	STL	STEEL OR STEEL PIPE
AL	AUTHORITY HAVING JURISDICTION	DIP	DUCTILE IRON PIPE	HWY	HIGHWAY	OSA	OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION	SV	SQUARE YARDS
ALU	ALUMINUM	DR	DRAIN OR DIMENSION RATIO						
ANC	ANCHOR	DWG	DRAWING	IBC	INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE	PC	POINT OF CURVATURE	T	TELEPHONE
ANSI	AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARDS INSTITUTE			ID	INSIDE DIAMETER	PE	PLAIN END	TBC	TOP OF BACK CURB
APPROX	APPROXIMATELY	EA	EACH	IN	INCH	PH	PHONE	TBLAY	TOP BACK OF LAYDOWN CURB
ARY	AIR RELEASE VALVE	EQ	EXISTING GRADE	INFO	INFORMATION	PL	PROPERTY LINE OR PLATE	TBM	TEMPORARY BENCH MARK
AVE	AVENUE	ELEV	ELEVATION	INT	INTERIOR, INTERSECTION	PLCS	PLACES	TDH	TOTAL DYNAMIC HEAD
AWWA	AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION	EOC	EDGE OF CONCRETE	INV	INVERT	PI	PROPERTY OR PROPOSED	TEMP	TEMPERATURE OR TEMPORARY
		EOP	EDGE OF PAVEMENT	JT	JOINT	PROP	POINT OF INTERSECTION	THD	THREAD
BC	BUILDING CORNER	EOS	EDGE OF SIDEWALK	K	KILOMETER	PSI	POUNDS PER SQUARE INCH	TOA	TOP OF ASPHALT
BF	BLIND FLANGE	EVC	END VERTICAL CURVE	KW	KILOWATT	PSG	POUNDS PER SQUARE INCH GAUGE	TOC	TOP OF CONCRETE
BFT	BELOW FINISH FLOOR	EW	EACH WAY	LB(S)	POUND(S)	PT	POINT OF TANGENCY	TOG	TOP OF GRATE
BFP	BACK FLOW PREVENTER	EXT	EXTERIOR	LF	LINEAL FOOT OR LINEAR FEET	PV	POLYVINYL CHLORIDE	TOS	TOP OF SIDEWALK
BFV	BUTTERFLY VALVE	EXIST	EXISTING	LP	LOW POINT OR LUMINAIRE POLE	PVC	POLYVINYL CHLORIDE	TOW	TOP OF WALL
BGS	BELOW GROUND SURFACE			LT	LEFT	PVI	POINT OF VERTICAL INTERSECTION	TP	TEST PIT
BLDG	BUILDING	FC	FLEXIBLE COUPLING	MAX	MAXIMUM	R	RADIUS	TS	TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS
BLVD	BOULEVARD	FCA	FLANGED COUPLING ADAPTER	MC	MECHANICAL COUPLING	RCB	REINFORCED CONCRETE BOX	TV	CABLE TELEVISION
BM	BENCH MARK	FDN	FOUNDATION	MDT	MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	RCP	REINFORCED CONCRETE PIPE	TYP	TYPICAL
BOC	BACK OF CURB	FEC	FLATHEAD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE	MCH	MECHANICAL	RCPA	REINFORCED CONCRETE PIPE ARCH	UBC	UNIFORM BUILDING CODE
BV	BALL VALVE	FETS	FLARED END TERMINAL SECTION	MFR	MANUFACTURER	RDCR	REDUCER	UG	UNDERGROUND
BVC	BEGIN VERTICAL CURVE	FF	FINISHED FLOOR	MJ	MECHANICAL JOINT	RFC	ROTATED FOR CLARITY	UP	UNDERGROUND POWER
		FHVD	FIRE HYDRANT	MPT	MALE PIPE THREAD	ROW	RIGHT-OF-WAY	UPC	UNIFORM PLUMBING CODE
C	CHANNEL OR CENTER	FL	FLOOR, FLANGE OR FLOW LINE	MPWS	MONTANA PUBLIC WORKS STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS	RPA	ROBERT PECCIA & ASSOCIATES		
CARV	COMBINATION AIR RELEASE VALVE	FMV	FORCE MAIN VALVE	MTL	MATERIAL	RPC	RED PLASTIC CAP	V	VENT OR VOLT
CATV	CABLE TELEVISION	FOT	FOOT OR FEET	MUTCD	MANUAL ON UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES	RR	REINFORCED POLYPROPYLENE	VERT	VERTICAL
CF	CUBIC FEET	G	GAUGE			RT	RAILROAD	VLV	VALVE
CFS	CUBIC FEET PER SECOND	GAL	GALLON OR GALLONS			RW	RACEWAY	VPC	VERTICAL POINT OF CURVATURE
CI	CAST IRON OR CURB INLET	GD	GALLONS PER DAY			RWL	RAIN WATER LEADER OR ROOF WATER LEADER	VPT	VERTICAL POINT OF TANGENCY
CIP	CAST IRON PIPE OR CAST-IN-PLACE	GPM	GALLONS PER MINUTE			S	SLOPE	W	WATER OR WEST
CIPP	CURED-IN-PLACE PIPE	GPS	GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM			SCH	SCHEDULE	W/O	WITHOUT
CL	CENTERLINE	GRD	GRADE TO DRAIN			SDI	STORM DRAIN INLET	WS	WATER SURFACE OR WATER STOP
CLR	CLEAR	GV	GATE VALVE			SDM	STORM DRAIN MANHOLE	WSP	WELDED STEEL PIPE
CMP	CORRUGATED METAL PIPE					SDR	STANDARD DIMENSION RATIO	WV	WATER VALVE
CMU	CONCRETE MASONRY UNIT					SECT	SECTION	WWF	WELDED WIRE FABRIC
CO	CONCRETE					SF	SQUARE FOOT OR FEET	X	USED AS A VARIABLE
COS	CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY					SM	SIMILAR	XING	CROSSING
CP	CONTROL POINT					SPEC	SPECIFICATION(S)	YD	YARD
CPE	CORRUGATED POLYETHYLENE PIPE					SQFT	SQUARE FOOT OR FEET	YHYD	YARD HYDRANT
CPLG	COUPLING					SS	STORMWATER POLLUTION PREVENTION	YPC	YELLOW PLASTIC CAP
CPVC	CHLORINATED POLYVINYL CHLORIDE								
CSP	CORRUGATED STEEL PIPE								
CV	CHECK VALVE								
CY	CUBIC YARDS								

DESCRIPTION	EXISTING SYMBOL	PROPOSED SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	EXISTING SYMBOL	PROPOSED SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	EXISTING SYMBOL	PROPOSED SYMBOL
ASPHALT PAVEMENT			FENCE			SANITARY SEWER FORCE MAIN		
SIDEWALK			SIGN			SANITARY SEWER MANHOLE		
GRAVEL			GAS			WATER LINE AND APPURTENANCES		
BUILDING			OVERHEAD POWER			VALVE		
RIGHT-OF-WAY PROPERTY LINE			OVERHEAD PHONE			CURB STOP		
EASEMENT			UNDERGROUND POWER			METER		
SURVEY CONTROL POINT			ELECTRICAL MANHOLE			WELL		
MONUMENT			ELECTRICAL VAULT			FIRE HYDRANT		
QUARTER CORNER			ELECTRICAL SERVICE METER			IRRIGATION BOX		
CONTOURS			TRANSFORMER			STORM DRAIN MANHOLE		
CONSTRUCTION LIMITS			LUMINAIRE			DRAINAGE		
TREES & SHRUBS			UNDERGROUND TELEPHONE PEDESTAL			STORM DRAIN MANHOLE		
ROCK			PHONE PEDESTAL			CULVERT		

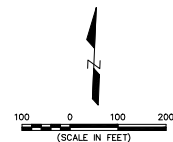
1. GENERAL NOTES FOR SHEETS INVOLVING SITE CIVIL WORK ARE SHOWN ON THIS SHEET.
2. THE CONTRACTOR IS ENCOURAGED TO INVESTIGATE THE SITE PRIOR TO SUBMITTING A BID. INVESTIGATIONS THAT INCLUDE EXCAVATION ACTIVITIES MUST BE COORDINATED WITH THE ENGINEER AND APPROVED BY THE CITY OF WHITEFISH. ALL THE INVESTIGATIONS MUST BE PERFORMED WITHIN THE TWO-WEEK PERIOD PRIOR TO THE BID OPENING. TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN CONTROL ASSOCIATED WITH THESE INVESTIGATIONS SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CONTRACTOR AND MUST BE APPROVED BY THE CITY OF WHITEFISH.
3. UNLESS SPECIFICALLY SHOWN OR SPECIFIED, ALL WORK WILL CONFORM TO THE CONTRACT DOCUMENTS, CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS, MPWSS AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CITY OF WHITEFISH.
4. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL PERMITS REQUIRED FOR THEIR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES, EXCEPT THOSE SPECIFICALLY LISTED AS SECURED BY THE OWNER.
5. FIRE DEPARTMENT, RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES MUST BE PROVIDED ACCESS TO ALL BUILDINGS DURING CONSTRUCTION.
6. A DETAILED SCHEDULE OF CONSTRUCTION OPERATIONS FOR THE WORK SHALL BE PREPARED AND SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW BY THE CONTRACTOR.
7. WITH 48 HOURS NOTICE, POINTS OR OTHER CRITICAL HORIZONTAL CONTROL MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ENGINEER IN A NORTHING AND EASTING FORMAT. AN AUTOCAD BASE MAP WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE CONTRACTOR TO ASSIST IN LOCATING PERTINENT POINTS.

1. THE CITY OF WHITEHISH'S PERMISSION WILL BE REQUIRED FOR PARKING EQUIPMENT WITHIN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY, EITHER OVERNIGHT OR ON WEEKENDS.
2. NO MATERIAL SHALL BE STORED IN THE OPEN TRAVELED WAY OF THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY.
3. CLEANUP AND RESTORATION OF AREAS WITHIN THE CITY OF WHITEHISH'S RIGHT-OF-WAY, DISTURBED BY CONSTRUCTION, SHALL TAKE PLACE WITHIN 72 HOURS FOLLOWING THE COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION.
4. POSITIVE DRAINAGE, I.E. NO PONDING OR POOLING WATER, SHALL BE MAINTAINED BY THE CONTRACTOR AT ALL TIMES DURING CONSTRUCTION.
5. ALL PAVEMENT MARKINGS, GUARDRAIL, CURBING, STORM DRAINAGE PIPES AND APPURTENANCES, SIGNS, FENCES, AND OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROPERTY WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO THE PROJECT AREA, THAT ARE DAMAGED BY THE CONTRACTOR, SHALL BE REPLACED IN KIND TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE AT NO ADDITIONAL COST TO THE OWNER. PAVEMENT REPLACEMENT SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS.
6. ALL FENCE CROSSINGS, CONCRETE, ASPHALT, GRAVEL AREAS AND YARDS SHALL BE REPAIRED AND LEFT IN THE SAME OR BETTER CONDITION AS THEY WERE PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION.

1. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL CALL 811 OR THE LOCAL "ONE-CALL" SYSTEM TO HAVE EXISTING UTILITIES LOCATED PRIOR TO ANY EXCAVATION.
2. EXISTING UTILITY LOCATES, BOTH HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL LOCATIONS, SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CONTRACTOR.
3. EXISTING UTILITIES ARE SHOWN SCHEMATICALLY ON THE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS, UTILIZING THE BEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF SURVEY. ACCURACY OF SUCH INFORMATION IS NOT GUARANTEED AND SHALL BE VERIFIED BY THE CONTRACTOR. SIZE, LINE VOLTAGES, HEIGHTS OF UTILITY LINES AND DEPTH OF BURY OF UTILITY LINES ARE NOT SHOWN.
4. EXISTING UTILITIES MAY NOT BE BURIED AT EVEN DEPTHS OR AS INDICATED ON THE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS.
5. EXISTING UTILITIES SHOWN ON THE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS AS "ELECTRIC" OR "TELEPHONE" MAY INCLUDE ALARM SIGNALS, DATA LINES, TELEMETRY, INSTRUMENTATION, COMPUTER LINES, COMMUNICATION, OR SIMILAR FUNCTION. ALL LINES SHALL BE ASSUMED TO BE "LIVE" UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED. ANY DAMAGE TO EXISTING UTILITIES OR LINES DAMAGED BY THE CONTRACTOR'S OPERATION SHALL BE REPAIRED BY THE UTILITY OWNER AT THE CONTRACTOR'S EXPENSE.
6. AT LOCATIONS WHERE A UTILITY TRENCH IS NEAR UTILITY POLES OR GUY WIRES, THE CONTRACTOR SHALL NOTIFY THE UTILITY POLE OWNER AND BEAR THE COST FOR TEMPORARY BRACING OR SUPPORT. IT IS THE CONTRACTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DETERMINE WHETHER CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES WARRANT POLE OR GUY WIRE SUPPORT.
7. ALL DAMAGES TO EXISTING UTILITIES OR INTERRUPTION TO UTILITY SERVICES AS A RESULT OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CONTRACTOR. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL CONTACT AND COOPERATE WITH THE UTILITY OWNER TO REPAIR OR REPLACE DAMAGED UTILITIES AND RESTORE UTILITY SERVICE AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE. THE CONTRACTOR MAY BE REQUIRED TO ASSIST IN THE REPAIR OF DAMAGED UTILITIES AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE.
8. ALL EXISTING UTILITIES WHICH INTERFERE WITH THE CONSTRUCTION SHALL BE REMOVED OR RELOCATED BY THE UTILITY COMPANY AT THE CONTRACTOR'S EXPENSE. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL COORDINATE WITH THE UTILITY COMPANY ALL NECESSARY UTILITY RELOCATION WORK WITH THE APPROPRIATE UTILITY COMPANY AT NO ADDITIONAL COST TO THE OWNER.



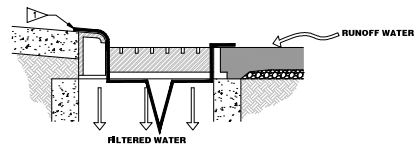
CONTROL POINT COORDINATE TABLE					
POINT	NORTHING	EASTING	ELEVATION	DESCRIPTION	
1	51506.04	11179.50	3057.61	SET 5" REBAR WITH RPC "RPA CONTROL"	
3	51666.51	10878.29	3061.55	SET MAG NAIL IN PAVEMENT	
4	51601.44	11231.84	3058.46	SET 5" REBAR WITH RPC "RPA CONTROL"	
5	51473.11	11815.17	3057.42	SET 5" REBAR WITH RPC "RPA CONTROL"	
6	51653.37	11056.77	3057.14	SET 5" REBAR WITH RPC "RPA CONTROL"	
7	51544.31	11590.93	3057.78	SET 5" REBAR WITH RPC "RPA CONTROL"	
10000	52502.24	11668.90	3059.26	91/8" STAINLESS STEEL ROD DRIVEN TO REFUSAL (SEE N.G.S. DATA SHEET)	



SHEET TITLE		SHEET	
PROJECT TITLE		A PARTY'S OWNERS BY	
ARMORY PARK IMPROVEMENTS FY 2027 PROJECTS Whiterfish, Montana		DATE	
		JANUARY 2026	
		BY	
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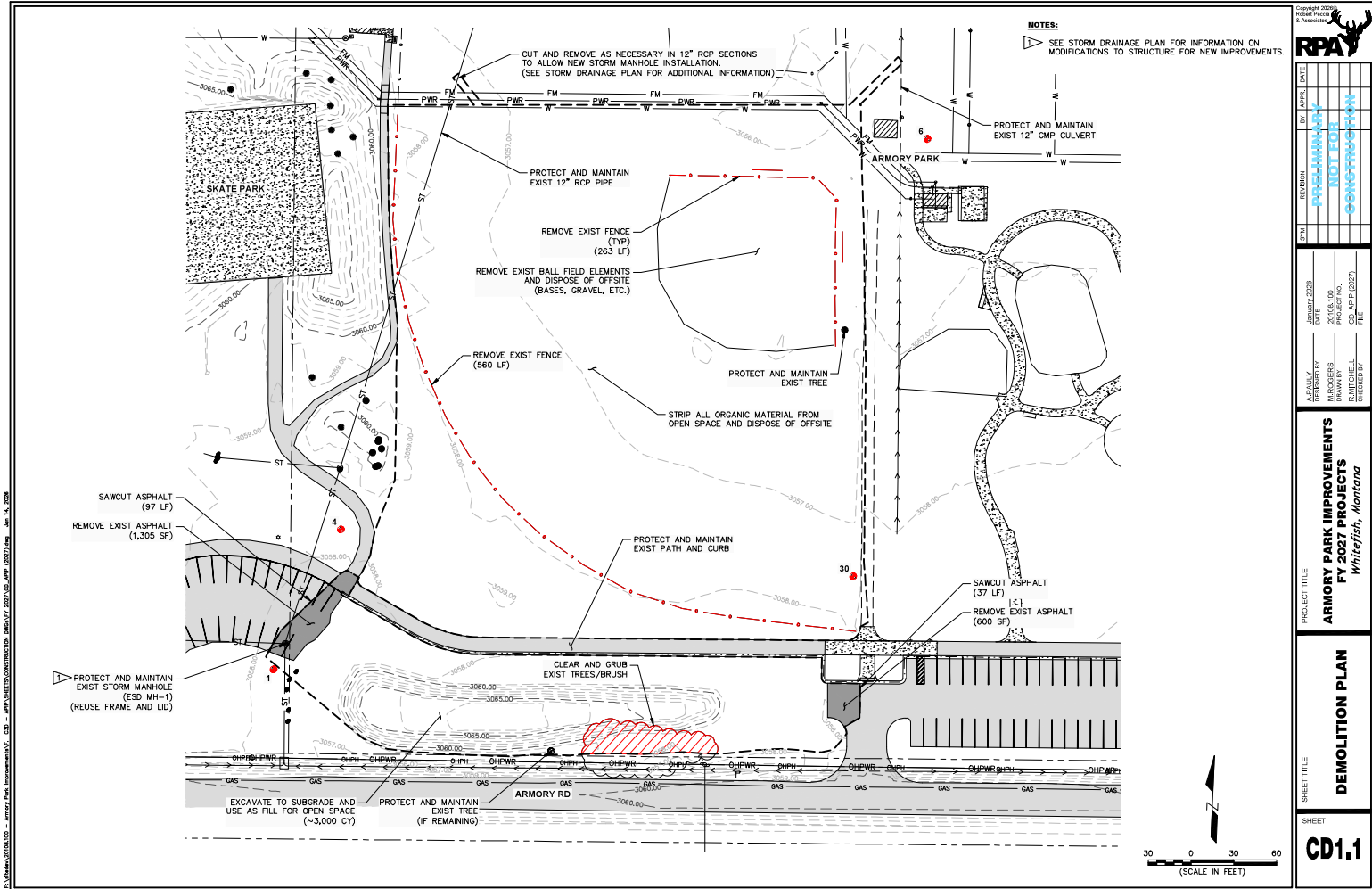
1. PRIOR TO COMMENCING ANY LAND DISTURBING ACTIVITIES, THE CONTRACTOR SHALL PREPARE AND SUBMIT ALL CONSTRUCTION STORM WATER RELATED PERMITS. A SWPPP TO THE CITY OF WHITEFISH FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL. FOR SITES WITH GREATER THAN 1-ACRE OF DISTURBANCE, IN ADDITION TO THE CITY OF WHITEFISH PERMIT, AN APPROVED SWPPP PERMIT WILL BE REQUIRED FROM MDEQ. COPIES OF ALL PERMITS SHALL BE PROVIDED TO THE ENGINEER.
2. AS A MINIMUM, ALL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL PRACTICES SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED AND MAINTAINED BY THE CONTRACTOR ACCORDING TO THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT) EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES MANUAL, DECEMBER 2016. THE CONTRACTOR IS RESPONSIBLE TO MAINTAIN OR CHANGE THE EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL MEASURES AS THE PROJECT PROGRESSES TO ENSURE PERMIT COMPLIANCE.
3. A COPY OF THE APPROVED SWPPP, AS PREPARED BY THE CONTRACTOR, SHALL BE MAINTAINED AT THE PROJECT SITE AT ALL TIMES. THIS COPY SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CITY OF WHITEFISH AND MDEQ UPON REQUEST.
4. ALL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL MEASURES, INCLUDING INLET PROTECTION, MUST BE INSTALLED PRIOR TO ANY CLEARING, GRADING, OR EXCAVATION. THE CONTRACTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ADDITIONAL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL MEASURES NECESSARY TO PREVENT EROSION AND SEDIMENT TRANSFER, AS DETERMINED BY THE CITY OF WHITEFISH AND/OR ENGINEER.
5. PRIOR TO ANY DEWATERING OPERATIONS, THE CITY OF WHITEFISH MUST BE NOTIFIED. WATER MUST BE PUMPED THROUGH AN APPROVED FILTERING DEVICE. THE CITY OF WHITEFISH MAY SUSPEND DEWATERING OPERATIONS IF POLLUTION IS OBSERVED.
6. ALL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL DEVICES SHALL BE INSPECTED BY THE CONTRACTOR AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK DURING DRY WEATHER AND AT LEAST ONCE A DAY DURING RAINFALL EVENTS. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL PERFORM ANY REPAIRS OR MAINTENANCE IMMEDIATELY TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL.
7. A WRITTEN RECORD OF ALL INSPECTIONS AND MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES AT THE PROJECT SITE SHALL BE COMPLETED BY THE CONTRACTOR. THIS WRITTEN RECORD SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CITY OF WHITEFISH AND MDEQ UPON REQUEST.
8. UNLESS CONFINED IN A PREDEFINED 'BERMED' CONTAINMENT AREA, THE CLEANING OF CEMENT TRUCK DELIVERY CHUTES IS PROHIBITED AT THE JOB SITE. THE DISCHARGE OF WATER CONTAINING WASTE CEMENT TO THE STORM DRAINAGE SYSTEM IS PROHIBITED.
9. EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL MEASURES SHALL BE LEFT IN PLACE AND MAINTAINED BY THE CONTRACTOR UNTIL PAVING IS COMPLETE AND VEGETATION IS ESTABLISHED.
10. ALL SEDIMENT, MUD, AND CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS THAT MAY ACCUMULATE IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY AS A RESULT OF THIS PROJECT SHALL BE REMOVED DAILY, OR MORE FREQUENTLY PER THE CITY OF WHITEFISH'S REQUEST, BY THE CONTRACTOR.
11. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL ENSURE ALL MATERIAL IMPORTED TO OR EXPORTED FROM THE SITE IS PROPERLY COVERED TO PREVENT LOSS OF THE MATERIAL DURING TRANSPORT ON PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY.
12. ALL STOCKPILED MATERIAL SHALL BE DESIGNATED ON THE SWPPP.

1. CONTRACTOR SHALL USE INLET FILTER AS APPROVED BY THE CITY OF WHITEFISH.



INLET FILTER BMP
SCALE: NONE ~

[illegible]



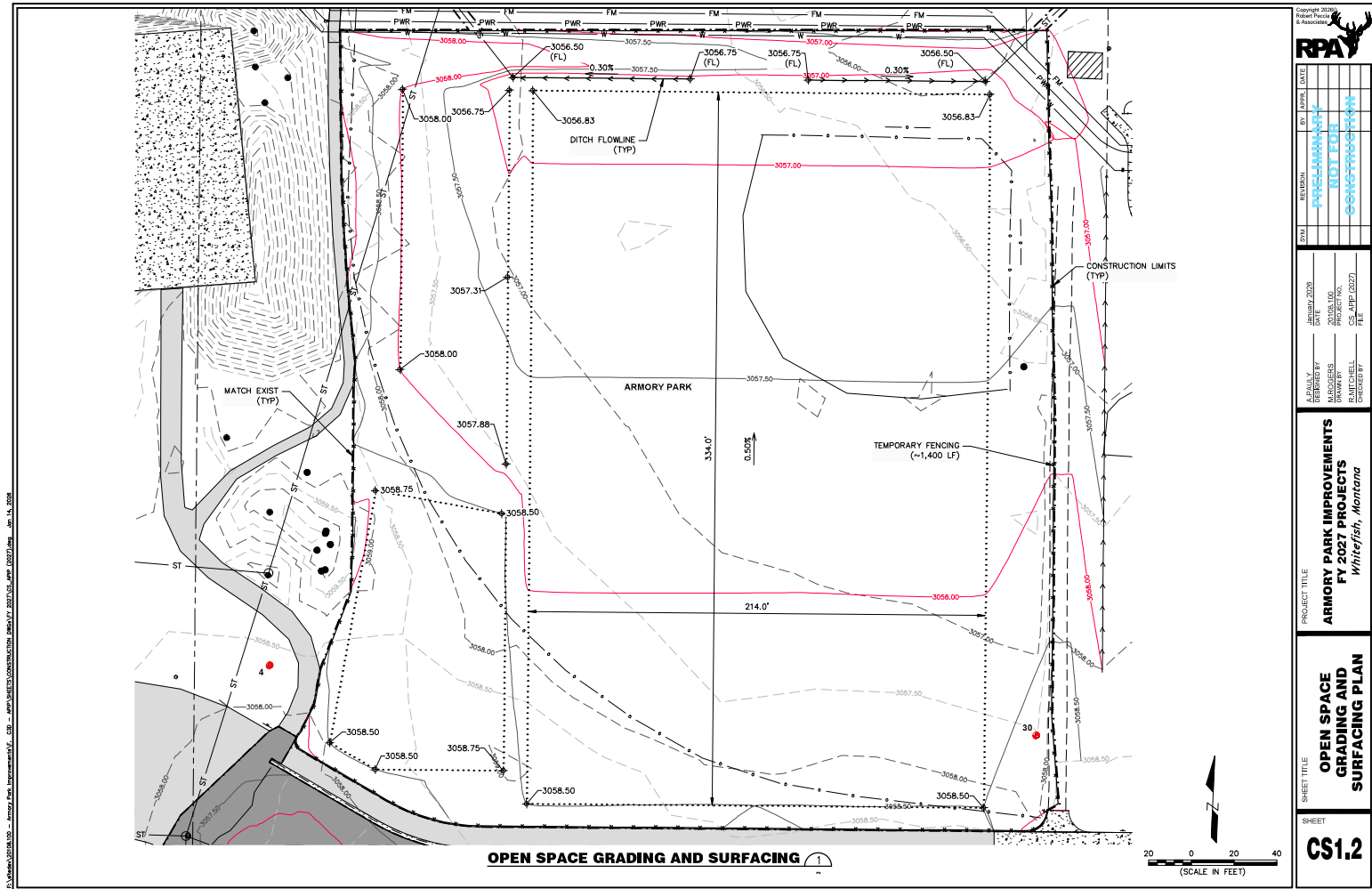
PRELIMINARY
NOT FOR
CONSTRUCTION

REVISION	BY	DATE
1	ALP	1/10/2020
2	ALP	1/10/2020
3	ALP	1/10/2020
4	ALP	1/10/2020
5	ALP	1/10/2020
6	ALP	1/10/2020
7	ALP	1/10/2020
8	ALP	1/10/2020
9	ALP	1/10/2020
10	ALP	1/10/2020

PROJECT TITLE
**ARMORY PARK IMPROVEMENTS
 FY 2027 PROJECTS**
 Whitefish, Montana

SHEET TITLE
DEMOLITION PLAN

SHEET
CD1.1

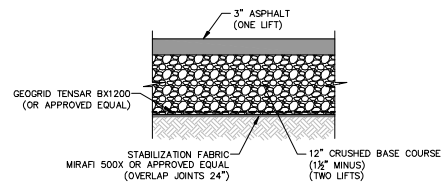


1. THE ASPHALT TO BE REMOVED SHALL BE CUT ALONG A NEAT STRAIGHT LINE. IT SHALL BE THE CONTRACTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT THE CUT EDGE DURING CONSTRUCTION.
2. SUBGRADE COMPACTION AND PROOF ROLLING SHALL BE INCIDENTAL TO OTHER ITEMS.
3. THICKNESS OF ASPHALT, CONCRETE AND CRUSHED BASE COURSE SHALL BE AS SHOWN IN THE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS, UNLESS AN ALTERNATE DESIGN IS APPROVED.
4. ALL CONCRETE FORMS SHALL BE INSPECTED BY THE ENGINEER FOR ALIGNMENT, THICKNESS AND SLOPES PRIOR TO POURING CONCRETE.
5. A CONCRETE JOINTING PLAN SHALL BE SUBMITTED BY THE CONTRACTOR PRIOR TO CONCRETE PLACEMENT.
6. ALL CONCRETE VALLEY GUTTER COLD JOINTS SHALL RECEIVE EITHER 12" LONG SMOOTH DOWELS (1/2" DIAMETER) PLACED AT 2'-0" ON CENTER OR KEYWAYS TO PREVENT HEAVING.
7. CONCRETE SHALL BE BROOM FINISHED, UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
8. EMULSIFIED ASPHALT, TACK COAT (SS-1) SHALL BE APPLIED TO ALL CUT EDGES AND VERTICAL SURFACES BY THE CONTRACTOR PRIOR TO PLACEMENT OF NEW ASPHALT. IF THE CUT EDGE IS IN ANY WAY DAMAGED PRIOR TO PLACING NEW ASPHALT, THE CONTRACTOR SHALL RE-CUT THE EDGE, IN A MANNER SATISFACTORY TO THE ENGINEER, AND SHALL PLACE ADDITIONAL ASPHALT AT CONTRACTOR'S EXPENSE.

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1. CONTRACTOR SHALL TACK ALL VERTICAL SURFACES (MATCH LINES) PRIOR TO PAVING.

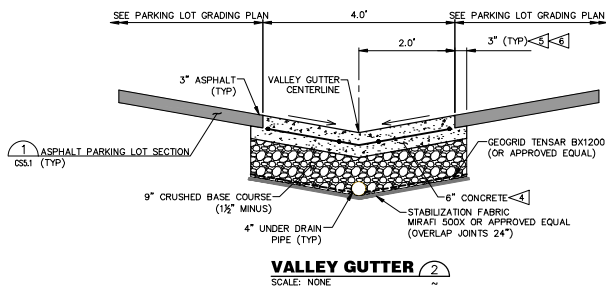
1. CONTRACTOR SHALL TACK ALL VERTICAL SURFACES (MATCH LINES) PRIOR TO PAVING.



ASPHALT PARKING LOT SECTION 1
SCALE: NONE

1. $\frac{3}{8}$ " EXPANSION JOINT MATERIAL SHALL BE PLACED AT THE PC, PT AND AT 300' MAXIMUM SPACING.
2. CONCRETE SHALL INCLUDE THE USE OF FIBER MESH (0.75 POUNDS PER CUBIC YARD OF CONCRETE).
3. CONTRACTOR TO APPLY Sika CEM-102 FIRST SEAL, OR APPROVED EQUAL, TO FINISHED CONCRETE SURFACE.
4. #4 REBAR @ 18" OC (BOTHWAYS), SUPPORTED BY 3" TALL CHAIRS IN ALL 6" CONCRETE.
5. TACK COAT TO BE PLACED AT KEYWAYS.
6. CONCRETE SHALL BE "KEYED" UNDER ASPHALT TO PREVENT HEAVING.
7. TOP 1" OF EXPANSION MATERIAL SHALL BE CUT OUT AND FILLED WITH POLYURETHANE SEALANT.

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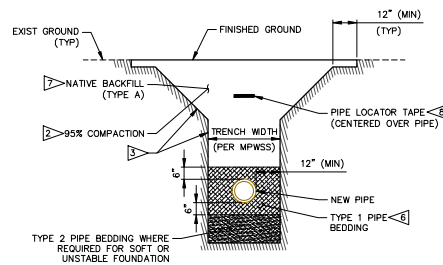


VALLEY GUTTER $\frac{2}{\sim}$
SCALE: NONE

SHEET		CS5.1
SHEET TITLE		SURFACING DETAILS
PROJECT TITLE		ARMY PARK IMPROVEMENTS FY 2027 PROJECTS <i>Whitefish, Montana</i>
DRAWN BY	DESIGNED BY	DATE
RJMT/CHELL	JANUARY 2026	
CHECKED BY	MODIFIED BY	PROJECT NO.
		2026.100
BY	REVISION	DATE
		PRELIMINARY
		HOLD FOR
		CONSTRUCTION

1. THE CITY OF WHITEFISH SHALL BE NOTIFIED BY THE CONTRACTOR A MINIMUM 24 HOURS PRIOR TO BEGINNING ANY STORM DRAINAGE RELATED WORK.
2. LINE AND GRADE OF EXISTING STORM DRAINAGE CONNECTIONS SHALL BE FIELD VERIFIED BY THE CONTRACTOR WELL IN ADVANCE OF MAKING THE CONNECTION.
3. ALL NECESSARY FITTINGS, COUPLINGS, AND PIPING FOR CONNECTING NEW STORM DRAINAGE LINES TO EXISTING STORM DRAINAGE LINES SHALL BE PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTOR. THESE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS MAY NOT SHOW ALL REQUIRED COMPONENTS FOR MAKING THE CONNECTIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS TO AVOID OTHER UTILITIES.
4. GRAVITY STORM DRAINAGE MAINS SHALL BE INSTALLED PER THE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS AND AT A CONSTANT GRADE AND ALIGNMENT BETWEEN MANHOLES. PIPES SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED MEETING THE MINIMUM PIPE SLOPE REQUIREMENTS OF MONTANA DEQ CIRCULAR 8.
5. GRAVITY STORM DRAINAGE MAINS SHALL BE LAID UPSTREAM WITH THE SPIGOT ENDS POINTING DOWNSTREAM.
6. GRAVITY STORM DRAINAGE MAINS SHALL BE INSTALLED WITH DETECTABLE WARNING TAPE. WARNING TAPE SHALL AS SPECIFIED AND CONFORM TO APWA COLORS.
7. GRAVITY AND STORM DRAINAGE MAINS SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED SUCH THAT A MINIMUM OF 10'-0" (OUTSIDE WALL TO OUTSIDE WALL) OF CLEARANCE IS MAINTAINED HORIZONTALLY BETWEEN ALL WATER MAINS, UNLESS OTHERWISE SHOWN ON THE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS.
8. ALL EXCESS TRENCH MATERIAL EXCAVATED DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE STORM DRAINAGE SYSTEM SHALL BE DISPOSED OF BY CONTRACTOR.
9. ALL NEW GRAVITY STORM DRAINAGE MAINS SHALL BE CLEANED AND VISUALLY INSPECTED UPON COMPLETION OF BACKFILL OPERATIONS. ALL TESTING SHALL BE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE ENGINEER.
10. A GRAVITY STORM DRAINAGE MAIN IS DEFECTIVE AND UNACCEPTABLE IF:
 - a. THE ALIGNMENT IS OUTSIDE THE SPECIFIED LIMITS;
 - b. GRAVEL, SEDIMENT, OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS IS VISIBLE IN THE PIPE;
 - c. WATER PONDING IN ANY SECTION IS EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN TWO TIMES THE GRADE TOLERANCE SPECIFIED; OR
 - d. THE PIPE HAS VISIBLE DEFECTS SUCH AS OPEN JOINTS, PINCHED GASKETS, CRACKED BARRELS OR BELLS OR SIMILAR DEFECTS
11. STORM DRAINAGE MANHOLES AND INLETS SHALL BE CLEANED UPON COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT.

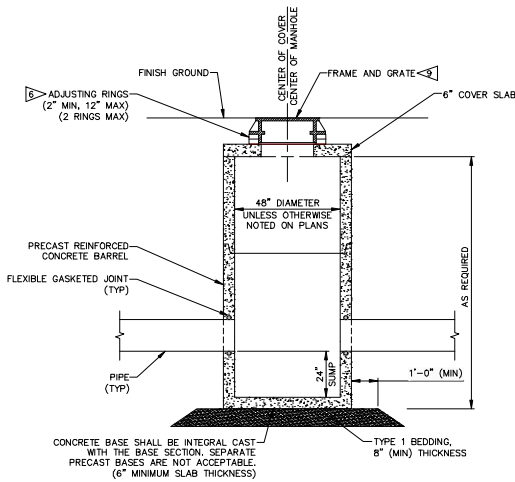
1. VERIFY THAT COMPACTION METHODS ARE COMPATIBLE WITH PIPE MANUFACTURER'S RECOMMENDATIONS. ANY DAMAGE TO THE PIPE WILL BE THE CONTRACTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REPLACE TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE ENGINEER.
2. COMPACTION REFERS TO PERCENT OF MAXIMUM DRY DENSITY DETERMINED BY A STANDARD PROCTOR, (ASTM D 698-91, AASHTO T-99)
3. TRENCH SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED TO OSHA SPECIFICATIONS FOR EXCAVATION, DRAWINGS DO NOT SHOW TRENCH DIMENSIONS OR BACKFILLS THAT MAY REQUIRE CONTRACTOR IS REQUIRED TO DETERMINE WHICH OSHA SPECIFICATIONS ARE APPLICABLE. CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR TRENCH EXCAVATION AND SAFETY PER OSHA SPECIFICATIONS.
4. ALL SPOILS SHALL BE REMOVED AND DISPOSED OF AT APPROVED LOCATIONS.
5. ALL ROCKS GREATER THAN 12" IN ANY DIMENSION SHALL BE HAULED TO AN APPROVED LOCATION ONSITE OR HAULED OFFSITE AND DISPOSED OF PROPERLY.
6. NO ROCKS OR LUMPS LARGER THAN 2" IN ANY DIMENSION SHALL BE ALLOWED WITHIN 6" OF THE PIPE.
7. USE SUITABLE NATIVE MATERIAL FOR BACKFILL. SEE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR CONDITIONS REQUIRING IMPORTED TRENCH BACKFILL.
8. USE LABELED AND DETECTABLE BURIED WARNING TAPE PER APWA/ULCC COLORS FOR THE APPROPRIATE UTILITY PIPE. INSTALLED A MINIMUM OF 12" AND A MAXIMUM OF 18" BELOW FINISHED GROUND.



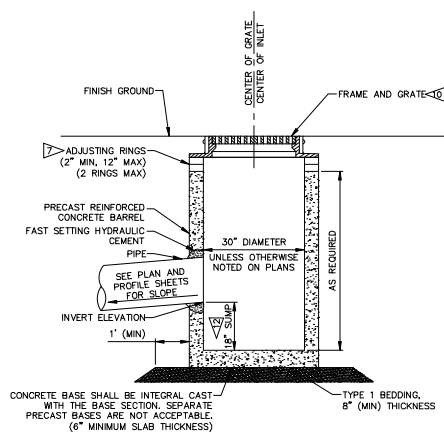
SCALE: NONE (GRAVITY LINES)

NOTES:

1. FRAME AND GRATE ARE TO BE PLACED AS SHOWN ON PLANS.
2. ALL JOINTS BETWEEN MANHOLES SECTIONS, MANHOLE FRAME AND TOP SECTION, AND AROUND STORM PIPE INTO MANHOLE SHALL BE WATERTIGHT. JOINTING MATERIAL BETWEEN BARREL SECTIONS SHALL BE "RAMNEK", OR APPROVED EQUAL.
3. ALL JOINTS BETWEEN INLET SECTIONS, INLET FRAME & ADJUSTING RINGS AND AROUND STORM PIPE INTO MANHOLE SHALL BE WATERTIGHT. JOINTING MATERIAL BETWEEN SECTIONS SHALL BE "RAMNEK", OR APPROVED EQUAL.
4. PRECAST REINFORCED CONCRETE MANHOLES AND INLETS SHALL CONFORM TO ASTM C-478.
5. ALL MANHOLES AND INLETS SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED TO HANDLE HS-20 LOADING.
6. SET MANHOLE FRAME AND COVER TO FINISHED GRADE USING CONCRETE RISER RINGS.
7. SET INLET FRAME AND GRATE TO FINISHED GRADE USING LADTECH POLYETHYLENE MANHOLE ADJUSTING RINGS (WEDGE DESIGN) OR APPROVED EQUAL.
8. ALL HOLES IN NEW MANHOLES AND INLETS SHALL BE CAST OR CORED.
9. FRAME SHALL BE EAST JORDAN IRON WORKS 3772, D&L A1172 OR APPROVED EQUAL. GRATE SHALL BE EAST JORDAN IRON WORKS 1205-2 "BEEHIVE" GRATE OR APPROVED EQUAL.
10. FRAME SHALL BE EAST JORDAN IRON WORKS 3772, D&L A1172 OR APPROVED EQUAL. GRATE SHALL BE EAST JORDAN IRON WORKS EJIW TYPE M FLAT GRATE OR APPROVED EQUAL.



STORM MANHOLE 1
SCALE: NONE



STORM INLET 2
SCALE: NONE

Copyright 2005
Robert F. Fitch
& Associates, Inc.

RPA

REVISION

DATE

BY

APP'D

DATE

FILE

PROJECT TITLE

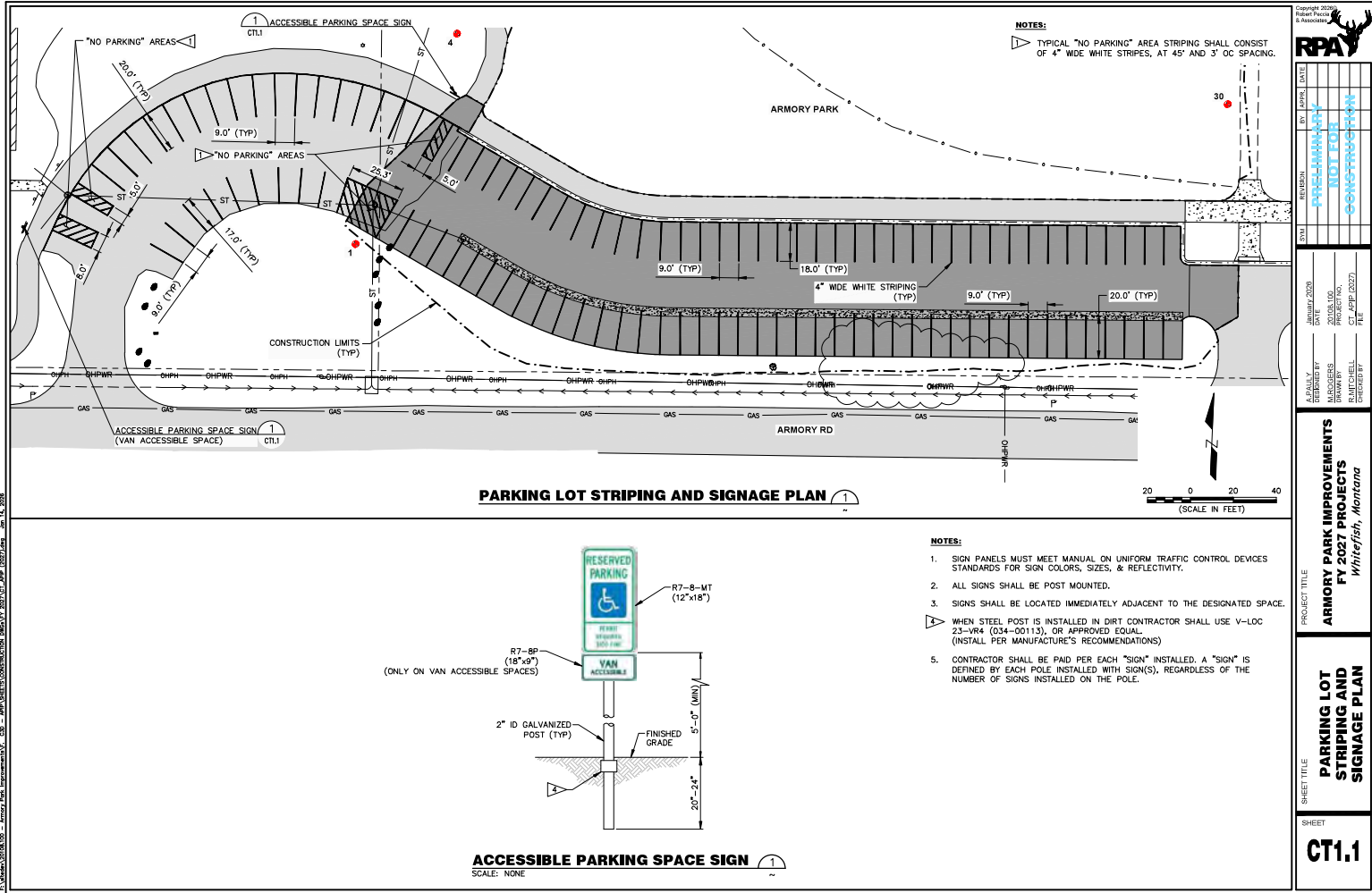
**ARMORY PARK IMPROVEMENTS
FY 2027 PROJECTS**
Whitefish, Montana

SHEET TITLE

**STORM DRAINAGE
DETAILS**

SHEET

CU5.2



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City of Whitefish

Department of Public Works

418 E. 2nd Street | PO Box 158

Whitefish, MT 59937

(406) 863-2460 | Fax (406) 863-2419

February 10, 2026

Mayor Muhlfeld and City Councilors
City of Whitefish
Whitefish, Montana

Armory Road Reconstruction Project - Resort Tax Approval of Final Design & Authorization to Bid

Introduction/History

Armory Road has been selected as the next project on the Resort Tax priority list. The road has surface concerns, lacks bicycle and pedestrian amenities, and has significant influences from school traffic. Council directed staff to proceed with consultant selection on April 15, 2024 with the intention of proceeding with preliminary engineering and public outreach on the project.

City Council awarded the engineering contract to Morrison-Maierle in August of 2024 and public outreach began with a project website shortly thereafter. Since then, we have sent four project newsletters, held four public meetings, and had numerous individual conversations and meetings with residents and property owners.

Current Report

Attached to this report are several figures which provide an overview of the design for Armory Road along with the current estimated construction cost. The following sections describe the highlights of this information.

Roadway Profile & Active Transportation

The City's approved Transportation Plan designates Armory Road as a "Collector Roadway". Our city engineering standard for a collector roadway is 28 feet wide and includes curb and gutter, and sidewalk/boulevards on each side (SD-8, attached). Given the many design constraints along the corridor, the design team determined a standard collector roadway profile would not be appropriate. The proposed design calls for two 11' lanes with an 8' shared use path on one side. The design will also include a raised median on the curve to help calm traffic.

Schedule

Assuming staff is authorized to bid the project, the following schedule is proposed:

- 3/1/2026: 1st Advertisement
- 3/8/2026: 2nd Advertisement
- 3/15/2026: 3rd Advertisement
- 3/19/2026: Bid Opening
- 4/6/2026: Bid Award

Lighting

As with past road reconstruction projects, staff is recommending this corridor be upgraded to include the City standard, 14-foot tall, dark sky compliant decorative LED street lighting. These lights are compliant with the City's Outdoor Lighting Standards which were adopted to protect and promote the public health, safety and welfare, the quality of life, and the ability to view the night sky. Amongst other things, the code establishes standards for exterior lighting to provide safe roadways for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians while protecting and reclaiming the ability to view the night sky. The proposed lights will match those recently installed on E. 6th Street, Karrow, Texas, Edgewood Place, State Park Road, and Somers Avenue.

Landscaping

The Public Works Department will work with Parks and Recreation and the Tree Committee to determine a tree planting plan in the boulevard as construction nears completion. The schedule of this project has been developed to ensure adequate time to restore disturbed areas.

Traffic Control & Construction Routes

The City has experienced some issues with construction traffic patterns and traffic related control issues on past projects. Armory Road will be bid with specific traffic control plans which must be adhered to. The roadway will be CLOSED TO THRU TRAFFIC during construction. This will allow residents that live along the roadway to access their properties, while preventing other vehicles from simply driving through the construction.

Financial Requirement

This project is slated to be paid by the Resort Tax Fund. Estimated construction costs are \$6.4M, which includes a 20% contingency.

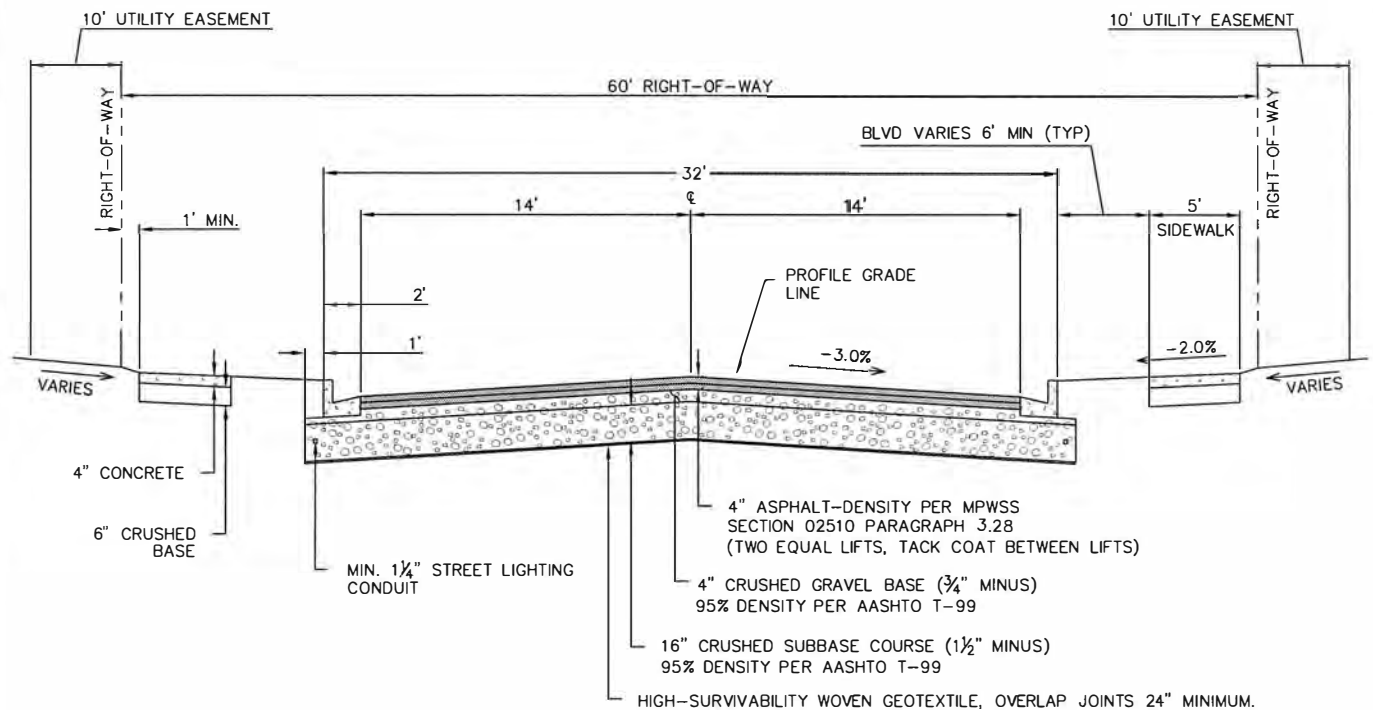
Recommendation

Based on the guidance and direction received to date from Council and the Resort Tax Committee, along with the public outreach that has been conducted, I respectfully request Council approve the design for Armory Road and authorize staff to proceed with bidding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Craig Workman", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig Workman, P.E.
Public Works Director

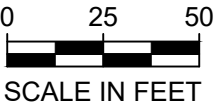
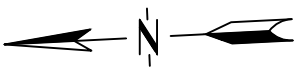
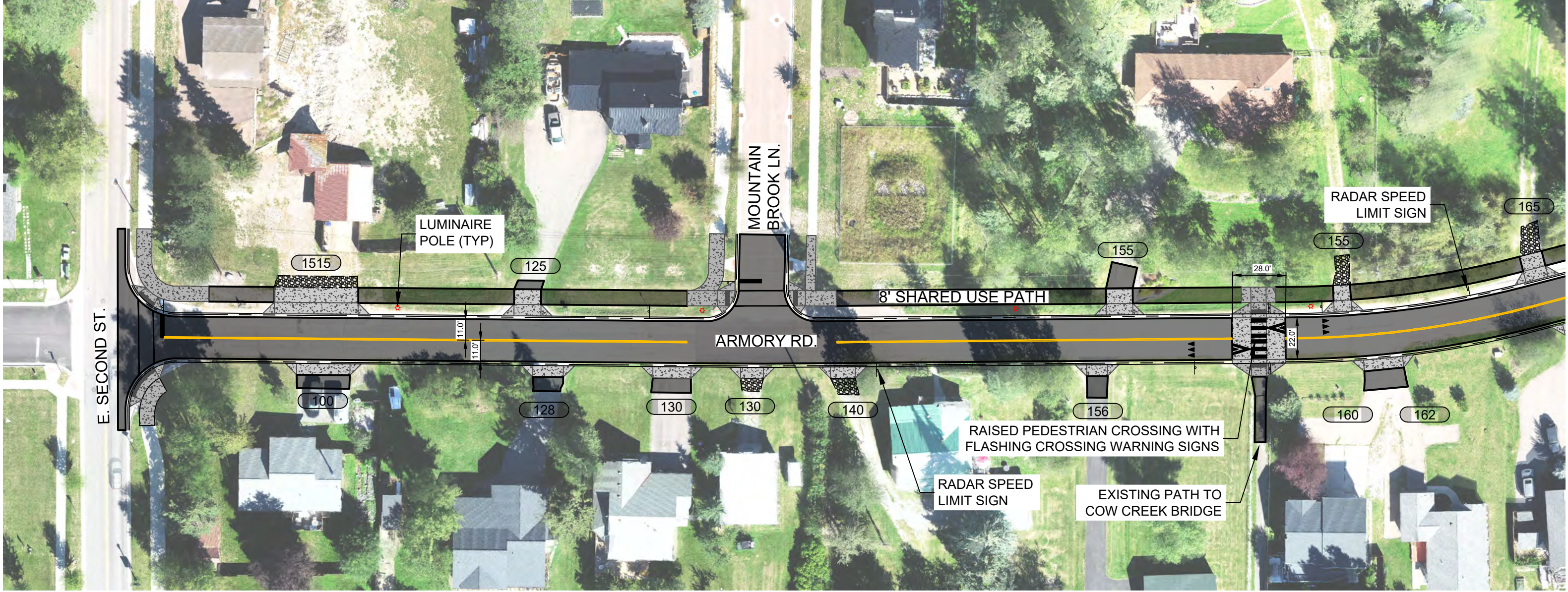


32 FT. TYPICAL ROADWAY SECTION

SCALE: NONE

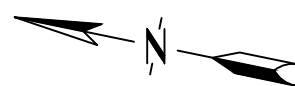
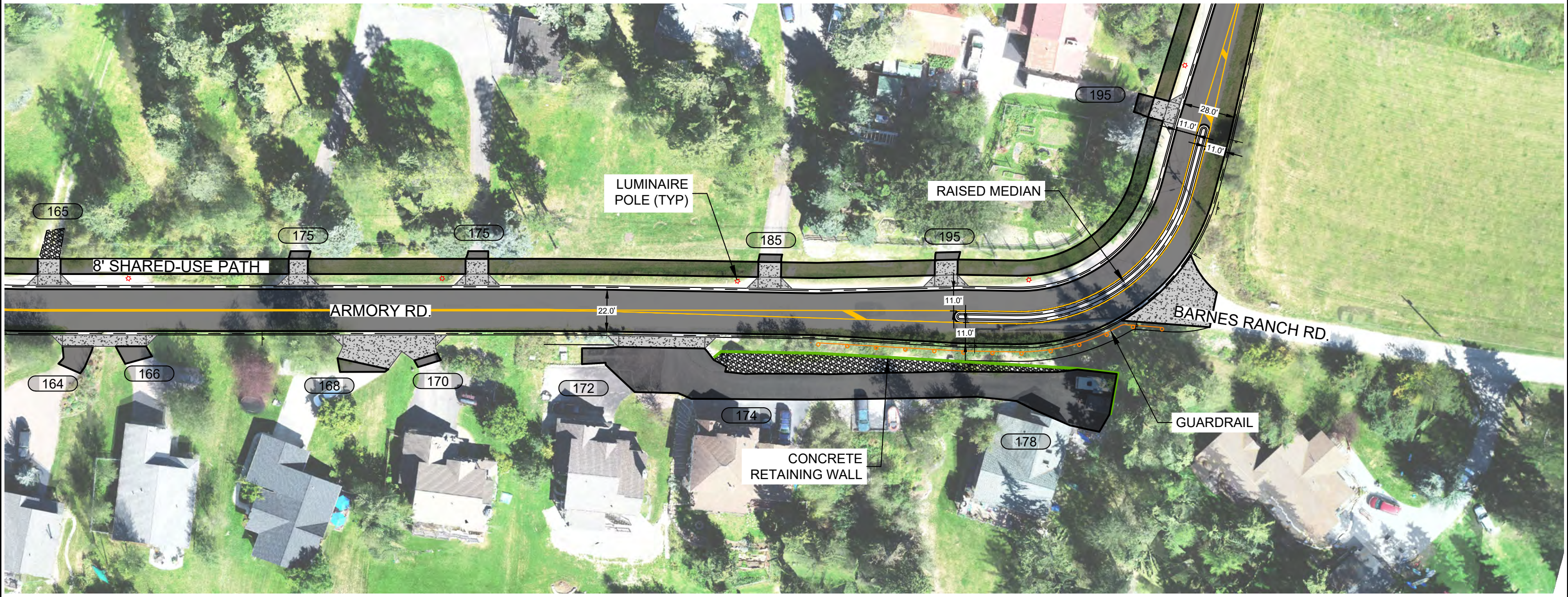
NOTES:

1. THE WIDTH OF THE RIGHT OF WAY MAY HAVE TO BE INCREASED DUE TO ROAD SLOPES, UTILITIES, TRAFFIC VOLUME OR OTHER REQUIREMENTS.
2. ALL TOPSOILED AREAS TO BE SEEDED OR SODDED.
3. THE MAXIMUM GRADE SHALL BE 8%.
4. GEOTEXTILE SHALL BE MIRAFI 500x OR APPROVED EQUAL.
 GEOTEXTILE INSTALLATION:
 A. COMPACT SUBGRADE TO 95% PROCTOR.
 B. REMOVE ALL WRINKLES.
 C. DO NOT DRIVE OR OPERATE EQUIPMENT ON FABRIC.
5. UTILITY NOTE: NO UNDERGROUND UTILITIES SHALL BE PLACED IN THE BOULEVARD BETWEEN THE BACK OF CURB AND SIDEWALK, UNDERGROUND UTILITIES (OTHER THAN SEWER, WATER, STORM SEWER, AND STREET LIGHTING) SHALL BE LOCATED BETWEEN BACK OF SIDEWALK AND THE EASEMENT LINE.



 172 Timberwolf Parkway Kalispell, MT 59901 406.752.2216 www.m-m.net	DRAWN BY: DRS DSGN. BY: CRL APPR. BY: CRL DATE: FEB 2026	CITY OF WHITEFISH ARMORY ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT		PROJECT NO. 0719.039
		FINAL DESIGN LAYOUT		FIGURE NUMBER 1

U:\0719 Whitefish\039- Armory Road Reconstruction\ACAD\Exhibits\Council Packet Exhibit.dwg



 engineers • surveyors • planners • scientists 172 Timberwolf Parkway Kalispell, MT 59901 406.752.2216 www.m-m.net Plotted by don skramovsky on Feb/10/2026	DRAWN BY: DRS DSGN. BY: CRL APPR. BY: CRL DATE: FEB 2026	CITY OF WHITEFISH ARMORY ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT	PROJECT NO. 0719.039
		FINAL DESIGN LAYOUT	FIGURE NUMBER 2

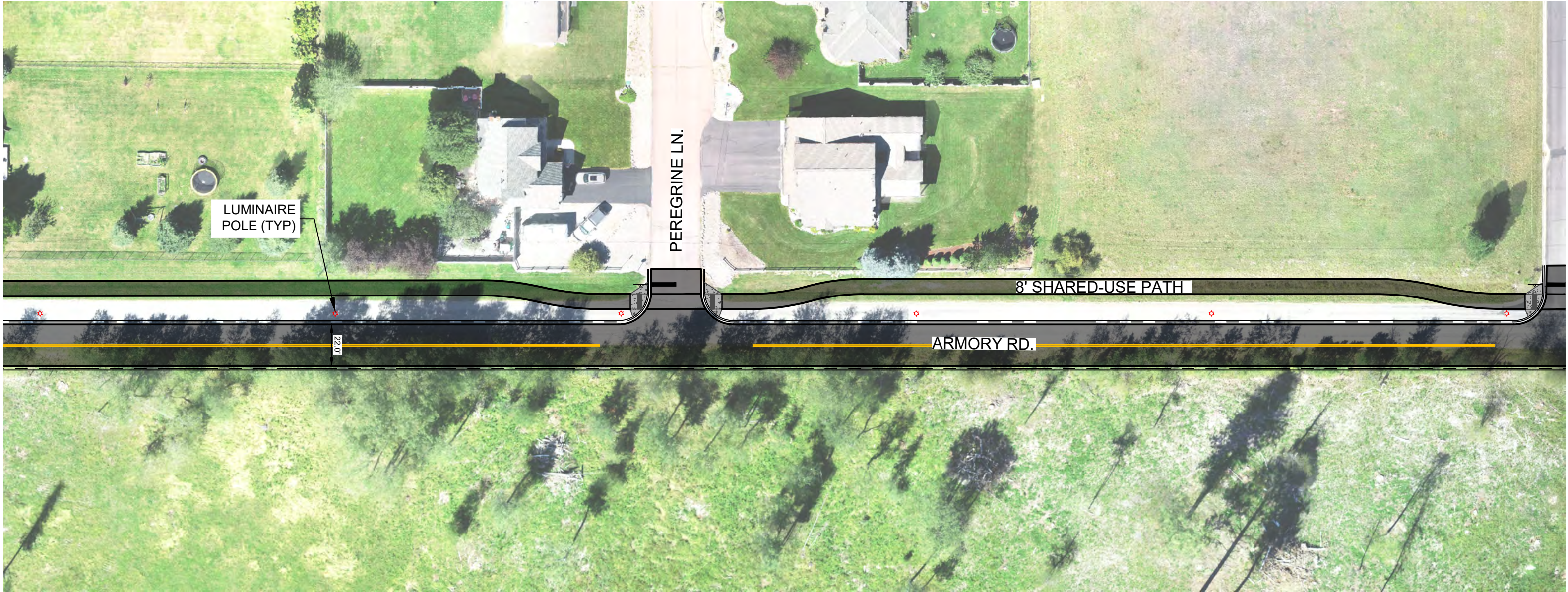
U:\0719 Whitefish\039- Armory Road Reconstruction\ACAD\Exhibits\Council Packet Exhibit.dwg



 engineers • surveyors • planners • scientists	172 Timberwolf Parkway Kalispell, MT 59901 406.752.2216 www.m-m.net	DRAWN BY: DRS DSGN. BY: CRL APPR. BY: CRL DATE: FEB 2026	CITY OF WHITEFISH ARMORY ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT	PROJECT NO. 0719.039
			FINAL DESIGN LAYOUT	FIGURE NUMBER 3

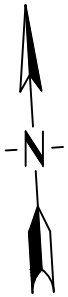
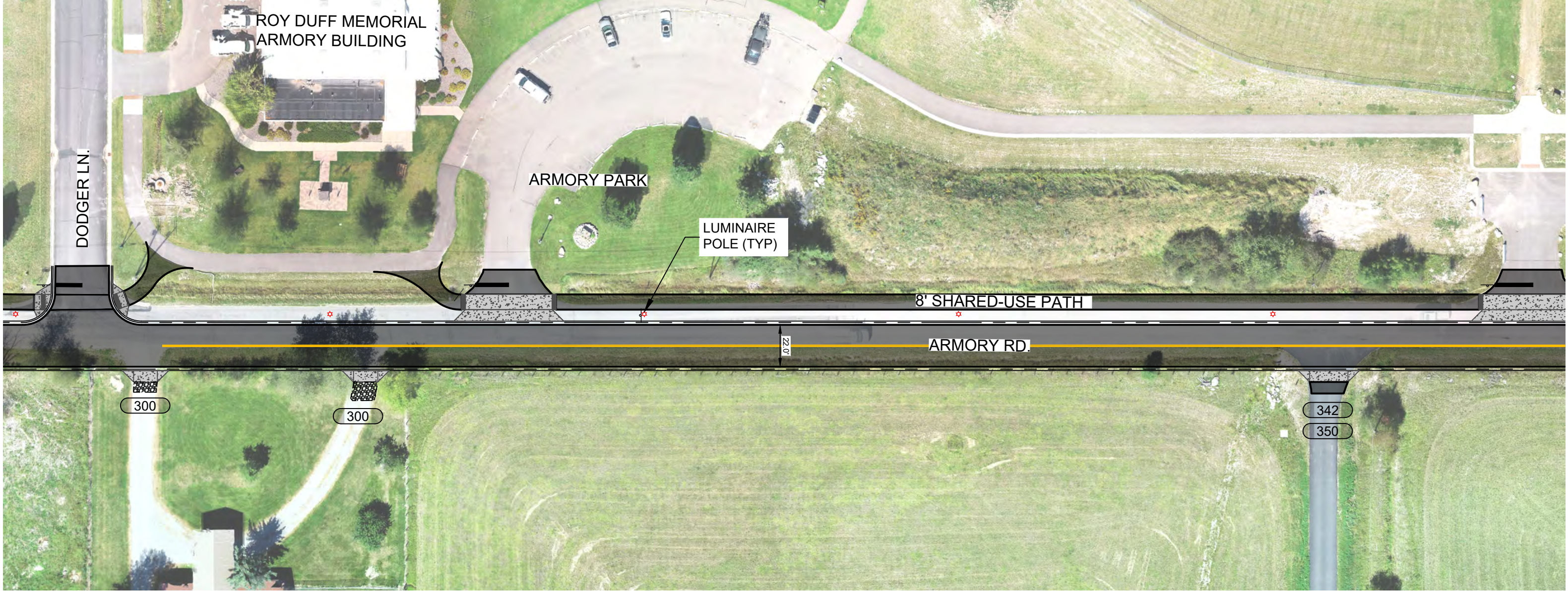
Plotted by don skramovsky on Feb/10/2026

U:\0719 Whitefish\039- Armory Road Reconstruct\ACAD\Exhibits\Council Packet Exhibit.dwg



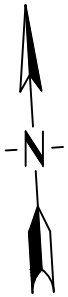
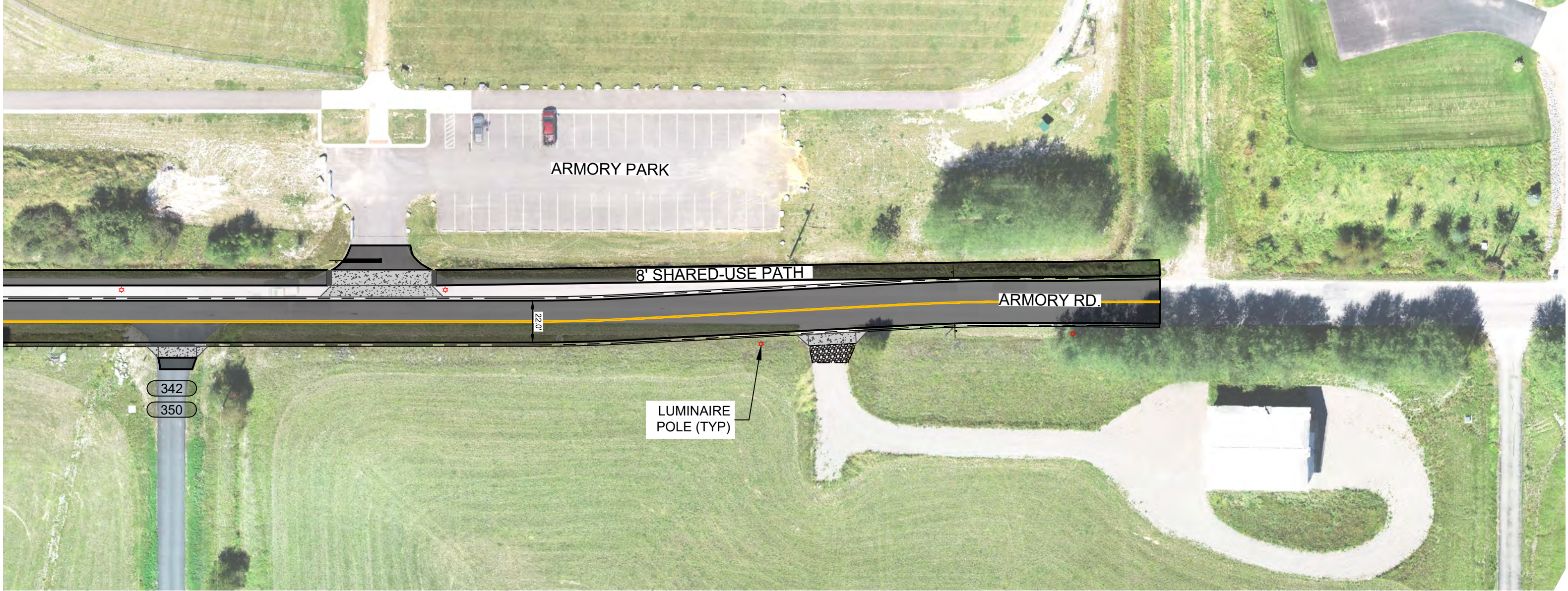
 engineers • surveyors • planners • scientists	172 Timberwolf Parkway Kalispell, MT 59901 406.752.2216 www.m-m.net	DRAWN BY: <u>DRS</u> DSGN. BY: <u>CRL</u> APPR. BY: <u>CRL</u> DATE: <u>FEB 2026</u>	CITY OF WHITEFISH ARMORY ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT	PROJECT NO. 0719.039
			FINAL DESIGN LAYOUT	FIGURE NUMBER 4

Plotted by don skramovsky on Feb/10/2026



 172 Timberwolf Parkway Kalispell, MT 59901 406.752.2216 www.m-m.net	DRAWN BY: <u>DRS</u> DSGN. BY: <u>CRL</u> APPR. BY: <u>CRL</u> DATE: <u>FEB 2026</u>	CITY OF WHITEFISH ARMORY ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT		PROJECT NO. 0719.039
		FINAL DESIGN LAYOUT		FIGURE NUMBER 5

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 engineers • surveyors • planners • scientists 172 Timberwolf Parkway Kalispell, MT 59901 406.752.2216 www.m-m.net Drawn by: DRS Dsgn. by: CRL Appr. by: CRL Date: FEB 2026	CITY OF WHITEFISH ARMORY ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT		PROJECT NO. 0719.039
	FINAL DESIGN LAYOUT		FIGURE NUMBER 6

ARMORY ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

City of Whitefish

60% Design Construction Cost Estimate

9/26/2025



ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	EST. QTY.	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE
GENERAL					
100	Mobilization, Bonding, General Requirements (15% Maximum)	1	LS	\$ 694,598.67	\$ 694,598.67
101	Traffic Control	1	LS	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 300,000.00
102	Site Dust Control and Haul Road Cleaning	1	LS	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
103	Exploratory Excavation	40	HR	\$ 480.00	\$ 19,200.00
104	Clearing and Grubbing	1	LS	\$ 31,500.00	\$ 31,500.00
105	Remove Existing Tree	17	EA	\$ 600.00	\$ 10,200.00
106	New Tree	60	EA	\$ 500.00	\$ 30,000.00
107	Topsoil Removal	16,670	SY	\$ 3.60	\$ 60,012.00
108	Topsoil Placement (4" thick)	10,400	SY	\$ 11.00	\$ 114,400.00
109	Seeding	10,400	SY	\$ 3.00	\$ 31,200.00
110	Relocate Existing Telephone Utility Pedestal	12	EA	\$ 800.00	\$ 9,600.00
111	Relocate Existing Power Transformer	5	EA	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
112	Relocate Existing Dry Utility	500	LF	\$ 30.00	\$ 15,000.00
113	Reset Existing Mailbox	15	EA	\$ 570.00	\$ 8,550.00
114	Remove Existing Sign	22	EA	\$ 530.00	\$ 11,660.00
115	Dewatering Mob	3	EA	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
116	Dewatering	80	DAY	\$ 500.00	\$ 40,000.00
	Subtotal=	\$1,384,260.67			
Road Reconstruction					
117	Sawcut Asphalt Pavement	630	LF	\$ 3.85	\$ 2,425.50
118	Remove Existing Asphalt Pavement	12,000	SY	\$ 6.10	\$ 73,200.00
119	Remove Existing Curb and Gutter	245	LF	\$ 10.00	\$ 2,450.00
120	Street Excavation and Subgrade Preparation	6,000	CY	\$ 45.00	\$ 270,000.00
121	Ditch and Boulevard Grading	1	LS	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
122	Concrete Curb and Gutter	8,903	LF	\$ 27.50	\$ 244,832.50
123	Asphalt Pavement (4" thick)	12,000	SY	\$ 30.00	\$ 360,000.00
124	Asphalt Pavement (2.5" thick)	3,280	SY	\$ 18.75	\$ 61,500.00
125	Crushed Base Course (3/4" Minus)	2,141	CY	\$ 72.00	\$ 154,152.00
126	Crushed Subbase Course (1-1/2" Minus)	11,404	CY	\$ 60.00	\$ 684,240.00
127	Road Subexcavation	2,000	CY	\$ 90.00	\$ 180,000.00
128	Geotextile Separation Fabric	14,720	SY	\$ 2.00	\$ 29,440.72
129	Pavement Markings - 4" Double Yellow	4,200	LF	\$ 3.00	\$ 12,600.00
130	Pavement Markings - 4" Single White	1,000	LF	\$ 1.50	\$ 1,500.00
131	Pavement Markings - White	400	SF	\$ 5.00	\$ 2,000.00
132	New Sign - With Foundation and Post	27	EA	\$ 990.00	\$ 26,730.00
133	Sewer Manhole Rim Adjustment and Collar	12	EA	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 16,800.00
134	Water Valve Box Adjustment and Collar	11	EA	\$ 1,115.00	\$ 12,265.00
135	Adjust Existing Force Main	100	LF	\$ 55.00	\$ 5,500.00
136	Insulation Above Existing Force Main	480	LF	\$ 40.00	\$ 19,200.00
137	Concrete Sidewalk (4" thick)	3,900	SF	\$ 8.15	\$ 31,785.00
138	Concrete Sidewalk/Approach (6" thick)	9,063	SF	\$ 11.70	\$ 106,037.10
139	Raised Concrete Pedestrian Path (9" thick)	1,300	SF	\$ 30.00	\$ 39,000.00
140	Concrete Barrier Rail	16	EA	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 24,000.00
141	Concrete Retaining Wall	800	SF	\$ 235.00	\$ 188,000.00
142	ADA Truncated Domes	372	SF	\$ 60.00	\$ 22,320.00
143	Street Light	28	EA	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 56,000.00
144	Buried Power for Street Lighting	8,100	LF	\$ 12.50	\$ 101,250.00
145	Pull Box	30	EA	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 36,000.00
	Subtotal=	\$2,669,977.82			

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	EST. QTY.	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE
	Stormwater Main				
146	12" SDR 35 PVC Pipe	1,240	LF	\$ 75.00	\$ 93,000.00
147	18" SDR 35 PVC Pipe	3,064	LF	\$ 87.00	\$ 266,568.00
148	20" HDPE Directional Drill	160	LF	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 160,000.00
149	Trench Import Material	4,304	LF	\$ 30.00	\$ 129,120.00
150	4" Curb Underdrain	9,000	LF	\$ 5.00	\$ 45,000.00
151	48" Storm Drain Manhole	21	EA	\$ 6,520.00	\$ 136,920.00
152	30" Storm Drain Inlet	25	EA	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 112,500.00
153	30" Area Drain	6	EA	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 27,000.00
154	Concrete Splash Pad	1	EA	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
155	Stormwater Service	10	EA	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
	Subtotal=	\$830,608.00			
				CONSTRUCTION TOTAL	\$ 5,325,000.00
				CONTINGENCY	20%
				CONSTRUCTION TOTAL WITH CONTINGENCY	\$ 6,390,000.00

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CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

February 10, 2026



FISCAL YEAR 2026 CITY GOALS

Attached to this report is a progress report for the City Goals through the second quarter (October 1st – December 31st) of Fiscal Year 2026.

MEETINGS

On January 20th, Chief Hadley and I participated in a kick-off meeting with SWCA for the Community Wildfire Protection Plan project. We are identifying and inviting core team members for a team meeting in February. We anticipate this project will be completed in August 2026 with opportunities for public to participate through surveys and an open house in the coming months.

Chief Hadley and I met with the Board President of the Iron Horse HOA and the General Manager of the Iron Horse Golf Club to discuss the opportunity of the City locating a second fire station at the southwest corner of the golf course property. We also met with the property developer exploring a roundabout for Big Mountain Road and E. Lakeshore Drive to ensure access from the second fire station site is possible. This project is identified in the City's strategic and capital plans.

The Whitefish Community Housing Committee met on January 26th. The discussion was primarily about the Legacy Homes Program, including the need to amend the incentives and consider the cost-benefits of the cash in lieu option. A brief review of the action items in the Housing Roadmap was also completed. The next meeting is scheduled for February 23rd at 2:00 p.m.

City staff met with Republic Services' local leadership on Thursday, February 5th. The communication between the City and Republic Services is continuing in a positive direction.

Ryan Wilbur of Peoples & Carnivores, Justine Vallieres of MT FWP, and I met to discuss the City's efforts to address bears in our community. We have seen a significant reduction in bear reports to FWP. While animal resistant containers have helped reduce these numbers, other factors also play a role such as high availability of natural foods over the past few years and the black bear harvest by hunters being strong. To ensure we do not get complacent due to the lower number of reported sightings, we are developing a plan for quarterly messaging to continue to educate the public on topics including proper use of the animal resistant containers, managing other attractants like bird feeders, properly planning for recreation in bear country (including when in town along our river corridor), and more. Possible educational opportunities at community events are also being investigated.

I attended the 2026 Economic Outlook Seminar in Kalispell hosted by the University of Montana Bureau of Business & Economic Research. Overall, my takeaway from the seminar is that our population growth rate is declining (less people moving in), job growth has slowed, wages are increasing (finally at a rate higher than housing costs each year), and home prices and rents are

stabilizing and/or declining. The outlook for 2026 continues to be positive with areas of growth but at a much slower rate than post pandemic years.

OTHER

Shout out to employees in our Parks & Recreation Department! Maria Butts (Director), Jennie Bradford (operations Specialist), and Carla Belski (Community Services Coordinator) joined Mitch Lauenstein (Recreation Programmer) in becoming Certified Parks and Recreation Professionals! The certification requires passing a test demonstrating an in-depth knowledge of all things parks and recreation, including topics like budgeting and personnel management.

NEXT CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 2nd. A work session is tentatively scheduled to be held prior to the regular meeting to discuss the deer management plan.

Future Work Session Topics:

March 16th: Open

April 6th: Zoning and Subdivision Update to comply with MLUPA

April 20th: Board Interviews

May 4th: Board Interviews

Respectfully submitted,



Dana M. Meeker, CPA
City Manager

**FISCAL YEAR 2026 CITY GOALS
2ND QUARTER UPDATE**

Department/Goal	Update	Estimated Completion Date
Administration		
1. Finalize Social Media Policy	COMPELTED	October 2025
2. Resort Tax: Property Tax Relief for Residents vs. Property Taxpayers	In Progress: Staff are in the process of learning more about the State and County's processes for identifying properties as primary vs. secondary to further refine the options for distribution of property tax relief from resort tax.	June 2026
3. Garbage Service Analysis	In Progress: New rates established by the City Council in May 2025 have been implemented to include a breakout of administrative fees for ease in implementing future increases as required by the contract. Staff have been working regularly with Republic Services staff to audit all accounts for services being provided versus the rate charged. The first review by staff is complete and a meeting is scheduled early in the 3 rd quarter to discuss current findings.	June 2026
4. Big Mountain Annexation Analysis	In Progress: Staff continued to work on mapping and identification of properties subject to the annexation. GIS has completed the data inputs and is finalizing the features and look of the map for readability, which is expected to be completed in the 3 rd quarter.	January 2027
5. Technology Improvements in Public Meeting Spaces at City Hall	The conference room AV system upgrades are being phased over a three-year period (FY26-FY28). The City Council Conference Room upgrades are scheduled for FY26, which will include upgrading the television, extended mics, and computer system that interfaces with the screen. While Challenges in the Council Chambers have delayed the next phase, purchases for the Council Chambers Conference Room are scheduled to take place in the 3rd quarter of FY26.	June 2028
6. Cemetery Optimization Analysis	In Progress: Recent sales indicate there is likely the need for a third columbarium in the next year or so. Staff will begin the overall analysis in the coming months.	December 2026
Fire Department		

1. Develop a new Whitefish Community Wildfire Protection Plan	In Progress: The City Council awarded the contract SWCA. A kick-off meeting was held on January 20 th . Estimated completion based on the contract is now August 2026.	August 2026
2. Prepare for Voted Levy for Fire Capital Replacement in 2026	In Progress: Staff are considering the potential need to include operations (new firefighter positions) with the capital needs for this levy. More work on this project is anticipated during the third quarter.	November 2026
3. Implementation of the Whitefish Fire Department Strategic Plan	In Progress: SWCA was selected to complete the CWPP starting in January 2026. Data collection and tracking are being improved. The annual report for 2025 calendar year is being created and will be distributed to the City Council upon completion. Data shows the need for additional firefighter positions and reinforces the need for an assistant chief or community risk reduction. WFSA has been working well with the FD and are working towards improving their funding capabilities they are interested in finding a way to increase our total FTEs. New fire rescue fees and existing ambulance fees were proposed and approved by the City Council in the third quarter of FY26.	Ongoing
Parks & Recreation		
1. River Trail Improvement Project	COMPLETED	October 2025
2. Armory Park Redevelopment Project - Phase IV	In Progress: Contracts with Vada have been executed. Work will begin in the spring. 90% construction drawings have been completed for the parking lot and open space. This portion of the work will be bid in March with a construction date of September 2026.	June 2029* *Date extended to include all projects under Phase IV
3. Park Sign Plan Implementation	In Progress: Sign installation has slowed due to weather, but installation is anticipated to be completed by the summer.	October 2026
4. City Beach Boat Ramp Extension	COMPLETED	November 2025
Highway 93 Landscape Maintenance Evaluation and Review	COMPLETED: As of January 1, 2026, this project is complete. The Department will monitor impacts of this project throughout the spring and summer of 2026.	June 2026
6. Ice Den Roof Replacement Plan	In Progress: WSFF board was emailed to restart conversations regarding fundraising partnerships and an approved timeline for closure of the facility. Staff will be meeting with the Board Chair in early February.	June 2026

	WSFF provided a cost estimate of approximately \$900,000 that they received from an area roofing company. City staff have not been able to confirm if it exactly matches our preferred design from the consultants or not. Additionally, this quote was for last year, so it is anticipated that cost will increase due to time, but also the public bidding process, consultant fees for managing the public bidding process, and contingencies.	
Planning Department		
1. Implement 2025 Legislative Session Zoning Updates	COMPLETED: All standards updated except 60' building heights in heavy commercial, downtown commercial, and industrial zones, which will be rolled into zoning changes as part of the Growth Policy since it does not go into effect until November 2026.	December 2025
2. Landscape Code Updates	In Progress: Initial draft is still in progress as staff time was diverted to other priorities. Will likely be rolled into major zoning code update beginning this spring	June 2026*
3. Update City's Growth Policy	In Progress: Land Use is the only remaining section that has not been reviewed by the Planning Commission. The public hearing for the entire Growth Policy Plan will go before the Planning Commission on February 19 th .	May 2026
4. Downtown Character Overlay	In Progress: Consultants CZB, LLC will be completing the outline for this as part of their land use contract.	September 2026
5. Updated Floodplain Ordinance	No Started: Staff have not initiated this project due to workload.	June 2026*
6. Create a Best Practices Guide for Whitefish Lake	Not Started: Funding is required to complete this project, but no funds budgeted in FY26. Dr. Mark Lorang reached out to staff and is available to complete this project.	December 2026
7. Implement Community Housing Roadmap	In Progress: Zoning for affordability/ reduction of minimum lot sizes thoroughly researched and presented to Whitefish Community Housing Committee. Partnered with Homeward on CDBG grant application for Alpenglow repairs (not awarded funding). Housing element of Growth Policy development involved the WCHC.	Ongoing
8. Implement and Update Parking Plan for Downtown	In Progress: City Council directed staff to move forward, but funds were not budgeted for the consultant to update the plan.	Ongoing
Police Department		
1. Explore Creation of a Deer Management Plan	In Progress: Staff met with FWP Sgt Muhn and Warden Clark. Only two wardens for Flathead area. Discussed growing deer population in the	June 2026

	urban interface which has no active management efforts. There is still no positive CWD test within the city limits of Whitefish. Recent complaints about deer population are directly north of the viaduct and have been few in numbers.	
2. Plan for Proactive Policing and Adequate Staffing Levels	In Progress: WPD is fully staffed with 19 sworn full-time officers. One officer attending MLEA Basic Police Officer Training. Newest Officer in Field Training and scheduled to attend academy in September. Still in talks with State regarding a grant funded position for Selective Traffic Enforcement, primarily for DUI enforcement.	Ongoing
Public Works Department		
1. Birch Point Quiet Zone Project	In Progress: Continued work on Railroad Crossing Elimination Plan with FRA, BNSF, and HDR. Established task force and held first meeting.	July 2026
2. Armory and E. 6th Street Resort Tax Reconstruction Projects	In Progress: Final plan for Armory Road will be presented to Council next quarter. Working with Flathead County to make sure the right-of-way discrepancies are straightened out. Goal is still for construction of the entire project in 2026.	November 2026
3. Climate Action Initiatives	In Progress: The City is still recruiting for the position (Deputy Public Works Director) leading the City's sustainability goals. It has been a difficult position to fill. New job description includes management of water and wastewater treatment staff.	June 2025*
4. Increase Water Capacity through Production and Conservation Projects	In Progress: The first two phases of the South Whitefish Water Tank will be bid in early 2026. This will include the tank construction and the watermain improvements in W. 18th Street.	Ongoing
5. Implement Strategies of the 2022 Whitefish Transportation Plan	In Progress: Sent letter to Bob Vosen at MDT regarding intersection improvements on HWY 93 at W. 13th Street and Baker Avenue. Expecting Mayor Muhlfeld to meet with Amber Steed from FWP next quarter to help shape the next 124 permit application for Riverbend.	Ongoing

*Estimated completion date extended.

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City of Whitefish FY27 Budget Calendar

February 2	Finance Director begins updating budget spreadsheets and budgeting software, updating historical budget data, and estimating final year end revenues and expenditures for FY26 and forecasting revenues for FY27.
March 2	Finance Director submits budget and capital improvements plan preparation instructions and materials to all Department Heads.
March	City Manager meets with Mayor and Council members to get preliminary comments on budget.
April 1	Optional notice deadline for City Council or Municipal Judge to submit request for an adjustment in Municipal Judge's compensation other than automatic cost of living. (Ordinance)
April 3	All Department Directors submit individual updated 5-year capital improvements plan and estimates of expenditures and revenues to the Finance Director.
April	Throughout the month City Manager and Finance Director meet with Department Directors to review and refine proposed budget and capital improvements plan.
May 1	City Manager to provide Municipal Judge with proposed "status quo" Municipal Court Budget by no later than May 1 st .
May 4	Preliminary budget document and 5-year capital improvements plan is distributed to the Mayor and City Council.
May 15	Municipal Judge's deadline to submit the Municipal Court budget proposal. (Ord.)
May 26	Tentative Budget Work Session – City Manager presents proposed budget to Mayor and City Council. Department Directors present budgets and capital improvements plan updates.
June 8	Tentative Budget Work Session – City Manager provides any updates on proposed budget to Mayor and City Council. Department Directors present budgets and capital improvement plan updates.
June 15	Preliminary public hearing on Preliminary Budget.
July 1	City begins fiscal year using preliminary budget as approved by the City Council.
August 3	DOR to submit Certified Taxable Value to City and Finance Director to update Property Tax Budget.
August 5 & 12	Advertise notice of public hearing on final budget for August 17, 2026.
August 17	Public hearing on capital improvements plan and FY27 Budget. Final budget adopted by resolution.

Michelle Howke

From: Tara Zimmerman <tzimmerman2403@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2026 2:27 PM
To: Michelle Howke
Subject: Proposal for Wildlife Safety Signage, Wisconsin Avenue Corridor

ATTENTION: External Email - This email originated from outside the City of Whitefish. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the contents. Contact the IT Helpdesk<mailto:help@cityofwhitefish.gov> if in doubt.

Hi Michelle,

Would you mind passing this along to city council?

Dear Whitefish City Council Members,

My husband and I have lived in Whitefish for several years, and we are writing to you today out of a growing concern for the safety of our local wildlife and our drivers.

Specifically, we are deeply troubled by the high frequency of deer-vehicle collisions occurring in the corridor between the viaduct and Big Mountain Road. This past weekend alone, I witnessed three deer that had been hit and killed along this stretch.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated trend; it is a recurring issue we have observed throughout our time living here. As Whitefish continues to grow and attract more residents and tourists, the traffic volume on Wisconsin Avenue increases, often with drivers who may be unfamiliar with the high level of deer activity in this specific area.

To help mitigate this, I would like to propose the installation of additional high-visibility, reflective signage along this corridor to alert drivers of the active wildlife crossing. We believe that better "Deer Crossing" or "High Wildlife Activity" signs, especially those with enhanced reflectivity for night driving would significantly improve awareness for both locals and visitors.

In the interest of moving this forward quickly, my husband and I would be willing to personally cover the cost of the signage.

We love this community and want to do our part to protect the animals that make Whitefish special, while also ensuring the safety of everyone on our roads. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how we can coordinate with the city or the public works department to make this happen.

Thank you for your time and for all you do for our city.

Sincerely,
Tara Zimmerman

Michelle Howke

From: Toby Scott <tobyscott2@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 11:55 AM
To: Michelle Howke
Subject: For City Council 2/17/2026

ATTENTION: External Email - This email originated from outside the City of Whitefish. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the contents. Contact the [IT Helpdesk](#) if in doubt.

Michelle,

Please include these issues below that I will present during the Public Comment period during the meeting.

I will also present the status of the Lakeshore Protection Committee and dealings with the County during the agenda item #4 Communication from Volunteer Boards.

I send that outline in a separate email.

Mayor and Councilors

Please consider the following actions for the City to undertake.

- Stop light at 13th and Baker
- Painting the signal boxes - silver is not aesthetically pleasing, Kalispell and Bozeman have both painted theirs and they look very nice.
- Street side EV charging stations. I believe there is an amount for this in the budget and a proposed initial location.
- Remove the "Leased space" requirement for the 4 EV charge stations in the parking garage. Impose a 3 hour limit on them at most.
- Revised multi unit building requirements to include EV charger(s) for all new buildings of more than 8 units. More units, more charge stations, or at least wire for the installation of stations. We require bicycle racks - with the growing number of EV's we should accommodate them.

Thank you for your service to our community.

Toby Scott
Barkley Lane, Whitefish
+1 406-250-7004 text ok



Letter to the Mayor & City Council

People being rounded up due in part to the color of their skin or the language they speak. I don't have a choice but to speak out. Every one of us must feel a tug of resistance to this very unamerican activity.

My mother's family were German Jewish. My grandmother and her younger sister grew up in a big mansion in Berlin. It is now owned by a bank. They sometimes have outdoor concerts there. There are photos of my relatives having fancy parties in that house. One was a wedding engagement party in the 1920s. I can see my grandmother in the photo.

As a young man my grandfather, Ludwig, returned from Switzerland to Germany at the start of WWI. He felt an obligation to fight for Kaiser Wilhelm and his fatherland. Within two weeks he realized he had made a mistake. He was made an officer and was sent with his troops to the Russian front. He and his troops were saved by a Swedish nurse named Sonja. Later that is how my mom got her name, Sonja. As their train was leaving Russia heading back to Germany, my grandfather knew they would be stopped by the Russian troops. Sonja, the nurse, had the word Plague written on the outside of the train car. Their train car was not stopped.

As a young woman my grandmother met my German Jewish grandfather while skiing in Switzerland. He was 20 years older. They soon married and my mom was born in 1930. Ludwig Meyer moved the family inland in Switzerland before the war started. He had a "loud mouth" which got him into some trouble. Apparently German SS soldiers started to follow him on the train into Switzerland, and he started to carry a gun. His linen business was originally located right in a German/Swiss border city where my mom was born. He died in 1944. My mom was sad that he did not see the allies win the war.

We cannot sit by and watch fascists take over our country. This country was a land of hope and freedom for my mom. She moved here from Switzerland in 1952 at the age of 22. She became a stewardess, was laid off, and headed to Sun Valley to be a ski bum. She had great stories of being a ski bum when Sun Valley's visitors were Hollywood stars and other fancy people.

Most of my mom's relatives survived the war. My mom's family did not practice the Jewish religion similar to other Berlin Jews. She was so fortunate to spend the war skiing and hiking in the mountains. It reminds me of how we were able to ski and hike during some of the worst times of COVID. My mom knew little about Judaism. I didn't learn that I was half

Jewish until I was 17. I was singing Jesus Christ Superstar with my younger sister when she turned to me and said, “Did you know we are Jewish?”.

It wasn't until the last few years of my mom's life that she started to tell us more about her parents, other relatives and their friends. In doing the family tree we can see that all of my ancestors on that side were Jewish. Her Aunt Ruthie and her husband, Bert, had a difficult time being accepted into another country. They were eventually allowed into Britain. They then made their way to America. Uncle Bert worked for the World Bank and helped set up the new economic and currency system in Germany. It is crazy that Aunt Ruthie and Uncle Bert returned to Germany shortly after the war. He also testified at the Nuremberg trials. He was so familiar with the financial system that was taken over by the Nazis. Aunt Ruthie returned to the house in Berlin and knocked on the front door. Their former butler answered. He had remained there throughout the war. I asked Aunt Ruthie how could you go back after the war. She said, in her thick German accent, “oh that was easy, I explained that I was an American”. My mom's younger brother, Rene, joined the military soon after coming to America. Ruth and Bert's son, Roy, also joined the military. They were incredibly proud to serve their new country which had helped save Europe from fascism. Rene had been given a French name to get back at the German nazis. Rene was vice president at Sun Valley and eventually president of Snowbird ski resort. That side of the family can sure ski 😊.

Anything the council can do to support the vulnerable in our community is appreciated. Perhaps a resolution of solidarity with our Minnesota friends. On my Dad's Swedish Lutheran side, I have lots of relatives in Minneapolis. Some of them are freaked out and scared.

Thanks for serving on the city council.

Karin Hilding

Karinrob3@gmail.com