

Railroad Urban Renewal District Plan

City of Helena



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PREPARED FOR:



City of Helena

PREPARED BY:



COSSITT CONSULTING

City of Helena

Mayor

James E. Smith

City Commission

Dan Ellison

Matt Elsaesser

Katherine Hague-Hausrath

Andres Haladay

City Manager

Ron Alles

Community Development Director

Sharon Haugen

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Chapter I – Background and Statement of Purpose

Introduction

Property owners, residents, and other local parties have long been interested in revitalizing Helena's historic Railroad District and the surrounding 6th Ward neighborhood. As early as 2001, the City of Helena Community Development Department commissioned a *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study* in pursuit of this goal.¹ Two years later, Helena's Planning Department "contracted with the Community Design Center from Montana State University Architecture Department to work with the residents of the 6th Ward to produce design concepts that might be used to revitalize the Railroad District."² That project resulted in the publication of a book of design guidelines titled, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization*.

Recently, the Railroad Advocacy Team (RAT), a volunteer group of property owners, residents, and local planning professionals, has led efforts to revitalize the neighborhood. RAT's mission is "to enhance and promote the vitality, growth, historic significance and walkability of Helena's Railroad District."³ An analysis completed in early 2015 concluded that there was ample evidence to "support the proposition that the area is qualified for designation as an Urban Renewal district" and that such designation "would benefit from public-private coordination efforts, and would benefit the greater governmental area."⁴ Shortly thereafter, the City of Helena asked WGM Group to document blight in the area, prepare an Urban Renewal Plan and facilitate the creation of the Railroad Urban Renewal District (URD). The first step in this process was documenting blight in the district to demonstrate the area's suitability as an Urban Renewal District (see Chapter II). This enabled the City of Helena to adopt, in September 2015, a Resolution of Necessity in order to facilitate area revitalization.

Executive Summary

The Railroad URD Plan provides an overview of the proposed response to the conditions of blight found in the district as well as to other district revitalization priorities identified by stakeholders. The Plan suggests potential means of addressing the issues facing the district, and does so in the explicit context of existing plans for the City of Helena. These existing plans, in conjunction with Montana laws, shape the proposed implementation of the Railroad URD Plan (See Chapter IV – Railroad District Plan: Implementation).

The Railroad URD Plan is intended to revitalize the existing Railroad District with upgraded infrastructure, business expansion, improved transportation functionality and connections within and outside the district, while maintaining a commitment to preserving the area's historic integrity. The Railroad URD details four overarching goals (See Chapter III – Railroad District Plan: Vision and Goals) which guide planning and implementation.

Goal #1: Emphasize the District's Historic Importance

The historic character of the neighborhood and its built environment is critically important to area stakeholders, and has been called the "area's most valuable asset." Yet, deferred maintenance on many of these properties and associated streetscapes has resulted in blight and deterioration. The Railroad

URD Plan highlights revitalization through historic preservation and heritage interpretation, as well as the development of public amenities.

Goal #2: Increase Property Utilization and Function

The Railroad URD plan highlights sustainable and equitable residential development, while addressing demographic decline. It does this through rehabilitation/adaptive re-use of housing, commercial and public buildings, and beautifying streetscapes.

Goal #3: Expand and Diversify the District's Economy

Develop the District's historic and proposed mix of residential, commercial and light industrial uses as a unique, identifying feature for businesses. Promote this uniqueness and market the District as an exceptional place to do business due to its historic and cultural sense of place.

Goal #4: Create an Inviting Venue

Develop planning tools to address eight key urban design elements identified by the Urban Land Institute: Imageability, Enclosure, Human Scale, Transparency, Complexity, Coherence, Legibility, and Linkage.

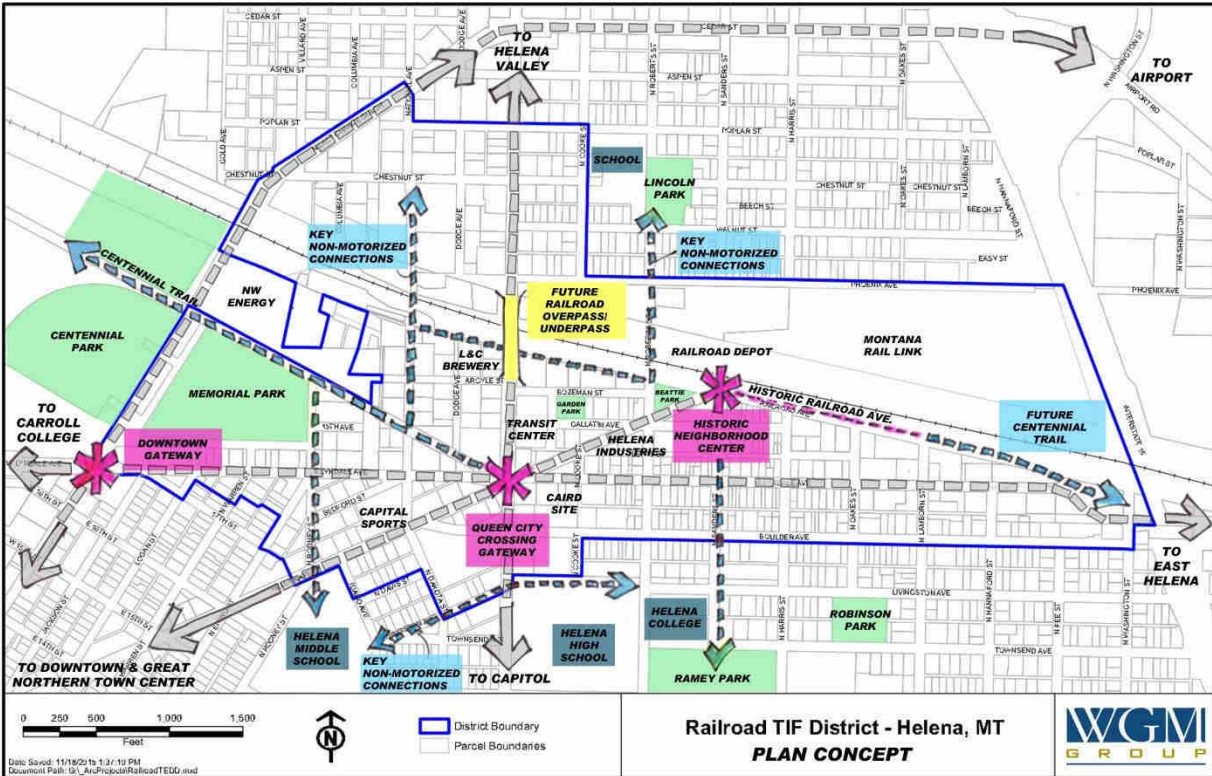
Goal #5: Address Public Infrastructure Needs

Plan and prioritize public infrastructure in coordination with the city's transportation planning system and capital improvements planning process. Plan for primary motorized access/to from the District, motorized access within the district, and address non-motorized transportation needs.

Goal #6: Provide for Public and Environmental Health.

The Railroad URD Plan highlights the reduction in crime and environmental pollution problems, the development of green infrastructure and building, providing recreational opportunities, and providing complete street access for those with disabilities.

All goals within the Railroad URD Plan correspond to the Montana Urban Renewal Statute which requires that the URD plan indicate, "any land acquisition, demolition, and removal of structures; redevelopment; improvements; and rehabilitation that is proposed to be carried out in the urban renewal area per MCA 7-15-4206 (19)(b)(i).



Railroad TIF District, Plan Concept Map

Statement of Purpose:

To address the range of blighted conditions that exist in the Railroad District, the City of Helena intends to create the Railroad Urban Renewal District and establish a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program to help fund its efforts. In Montana Code Annotated, Title 7, Chapter 15, Parts 42 and 43, Montana law provides for the creation of urban renewal districts in municipal areas deemed “blighted.” According to MCA 7-15-4209, municipalities may create an Urban Renewal Plan for such “blighted” areas, i.e. “may formulate a workable program for utilizing appropriate private and public resources:

- (a) to eliminate and prevent the development or spread of blighted areas;
- (b) to encourage needed urban rehabilitation;
- (c) to provide for the redevelopment of such areas; or
- (d) to undertake such of the aforesaid activities or other feasible municipal activities as may be suitably employed to achieve the objectives of such workable program.

Chapter II – Description of Railroad Urban Renewal District

Brief History of the Area

Helena's Railroad District was borne of the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883. At the time, Helena—capital of Montana Territory and regional commercial hub—centered on the downtown area flanking Last Chance Gulch, with residential areas ringing the city center. The site the Northern Pacific chose for its Helena depot lay about a mile and a half east of downtown, in a largely undeveloped area on the fringes of the city. The railroad's arrival sparked a boom in the city generally, and transformed the fields on its eastern edges into a semi-autonomous commercial hub and vibrant residential

neighborhood. By virtue of its location at the base of the mountains cresting at the continental divide, Helena occupied a strategic location on the Northern Pacific's line—to get over the divide, trains needed to be broken into smaller units and assisted by additional locomotives: this fact promised a busy future for Helena's railyard. The railroad soon established extensive operations in Helena

and became a major employer. It also connected Helena to goods and markets in population centers to the east and west, stimulating almost every aspect of the young city's economy.⁵



Helena's railroad district in the 1890s.

In the Railroad District itself, the arrival of the Northern Pacific spawned immediate real estate speculation and development. Surveyors staked out Helena Avenue to link the new depot with the established downtown business district, and several hotels soon lined Railroad Avenue. Rental homes and rooming houses sprang up on newly-platted lots, and saloons, stores and butcher shops appeared alongside. A school and a church soon followed. Growth in the district reflected both the railroad's influence and historic development patterns in the era before the spread of automobiles: residents mostly worked for the railroad or kept the shops along the tracks, and businesses

catered to neighborhood residents and to travelers arriving on or boarding passenger trains. Facilities that required railroad access—like grain elevators, warehouses and factories—also built near the tracks, which quickly constituted “Helena's primary industrial zone.” Like the railroad itself, these businesses were staffed mainly by area residents, and “the area developed its own distinct identity as a working class neighborhood.”⁶



St. Mary's Church.

At the time, Helena was divided into seven municipal wards and the railroad additions composed the city's 6th Ward. The neighborhood has been known by that name ever since, and it has retained its distinctive working class feel and strong railroad-neighborhood identity. Historically, this solidarity was reinforced by the predominance of Catholicism among neighborhood residents, and in 1910 the Catholic Church built the Colonial Revival-style St. Mary's Church and School to serve the more than 500 parishioners in the area. The facility beckoned the 6th Ward faithful for over 50 years, and its history brackets the heyday and demise of the district it served.⁷



Union Depot, Helena, Montana.

Optimism characterized the first fifteen years of the twentieth century in Montana, and Helena enjoyed stability and steady growth. By 1911, according to some sources, Helena was the richest city per capita in United States.⁸ While such wealth didn't trickle down to the 6th Ward, it, too, prospered. The Northern Pacific added new passenger trains to its daily service and, in 1903, replaced the original wood-frame depot with a handsome brick edifice designed by architect Charles Reed.

Other substantial improvements in the neighborhood appeared during these thriving years. After builders completed the Catholic church and school, bricklayers paved several blocks of Railroad Avenue with bricks to enhance the appeal and prestige of the depot area, and multiple masonry buildings appeared on the commercial side of the street, furthering "the impression of stability and permanence." In 1911, much of the Grand Pacific Hotel was razed, and in its place rose the three-story Hotel Drake. In this period, the population of the district also changed noticeably, as "the railroad imported some 40 male workers of Japanese descent who were housed in railroad 'warehouses' . . . along the NP tracks."⁹



Helena's railroad district, 1937.

As they did across Montana, the boom years of the early 20th century proved fleeting in the Railroad District. Drought descended on Montana in the late 'teens, and the state became the only one in the nation to lose population in the 1920s.¹⁰ The national Great Depression followed, and the local effects of all of these developments were compounded by devastating damage from a series of earthquakes that hit Helena in October 1935. Despite "being one of the hardest-hit sections of the city," life in the 6th Ward went on much as it had before. Growth in the district stagnated in these decades, and little

expansion or development occurred, but neighborhood residents continued to work for the railroad or associated industries and shop in the commercial district that remained clustered along near the tracks. Businesses and shops, many run by the original owners or their children, still catered to train travelers, railroad workers, and the working-class residents of the 6th Ward. Beginning in 1930, these same groups could also enjoy a bit of greenery and open space—the city called it a “beauty spot”— while they took a break from traveling, working or shopping. That year, after reports that “Helena had the worst looking depot area on the entire NP line,” the crowded and run-down commercial block immediately west of the depot was razed, and Beattie Park was created.¹¹

The railroad-centered way of life that defined and sustained the 6th Ward into the mid-20th century would not last. Although the neighborhood enjoyed a brief boom period during World War II—readily apparent in the many remodeled facades of businesses in the depot commercial district—the era ushered in a long period of decline that corresponded to the diminishing national importance of railroads. Improvements in roads and vehicles, and a fervor for all things automotive, drove the increasing importance of cars and trucks for transporting goods and people, and airplane travel expanded. All of these reduced railroad-related employment and travel, both of which hurt the 6th Ward. At the same time, industries mechanized and modernized, reducing their workforces and relocating farther from city centers. People, too, began to sprawl into suburbs, no longer relying on their legs to get to work, school, and stores. The Railroad District lost jobs, businesses, and residents, and began a steady decline that would endure for 50 years. That decline would be punctuated, and symbolized, in 1971, when the Northern Pacific discontinued passenger service. Paradoxically, that decline in many ways preserved the neighborhood, protecting it from the kind of redevelopment that so often destroys historic districts. Today the 6th Ward is an unusually intact historic district with a strong neighborhood identity. As such, it is ripe for the type of investment that will improve and revitalize the area and enhance its existing assets.¹²

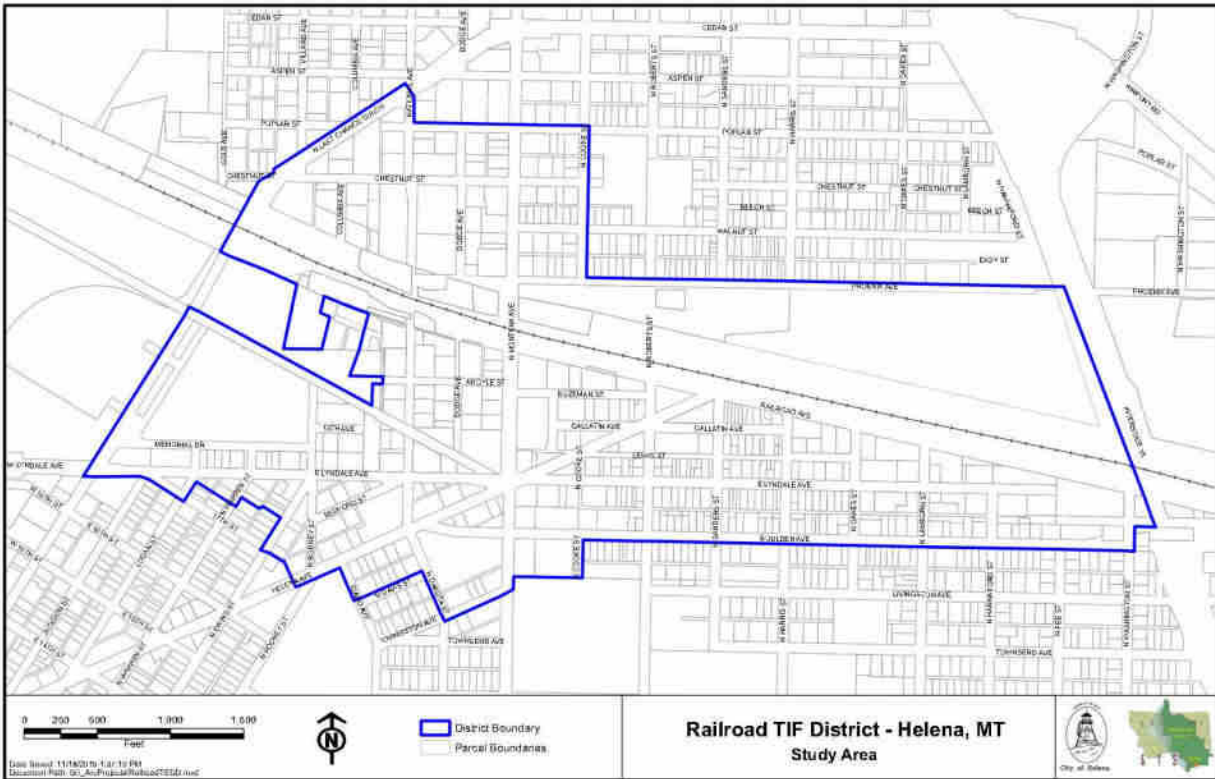
Railroad Urban Renewal District Boundaries

The Railroad Urban Renewal District boundary is defined as an area generally straddling the Montana Rail Link mainline, bounded by North Last Chance Gulch to the west and Interstate 15 to the east. The boundaries of the District are based on key transportation corridors, existing land use patterns, and existing conditions of blight that can be addressed with Tax Increment Financing (TIF). In general, District boundaries take into consideration the ability to generate revenue (tax increment), feasibility of improving infrastructure, proximity to services, reasonable benefit, effects on taxing jurisdictions, and opportunities for success.

Consideration was given to underutilized properties, where land value exceeds the value of improvements, and to properties that allow a higher intensity of use under current zoning. Stable residential neighborhoods, where redevelopment is less likely to occur, were generally excluded from the district. However, several residential areas were included where infrastructure such as sidewalks or traffic calming is needed.

Based on public input and legal counsel, the preliminary boundaries presented in the *Statement of Blight* were modified to include entire blocks and areas, such as Boulder Avenue, which have a history of traffic issues that could be addressed with TIF funding. Helena High School, Helena College, and the Helena Housing Authority (Stuart Homes) were not included in the District because these properties are not consistent with the historic railroad district character and associated commercial/industrial uses; do

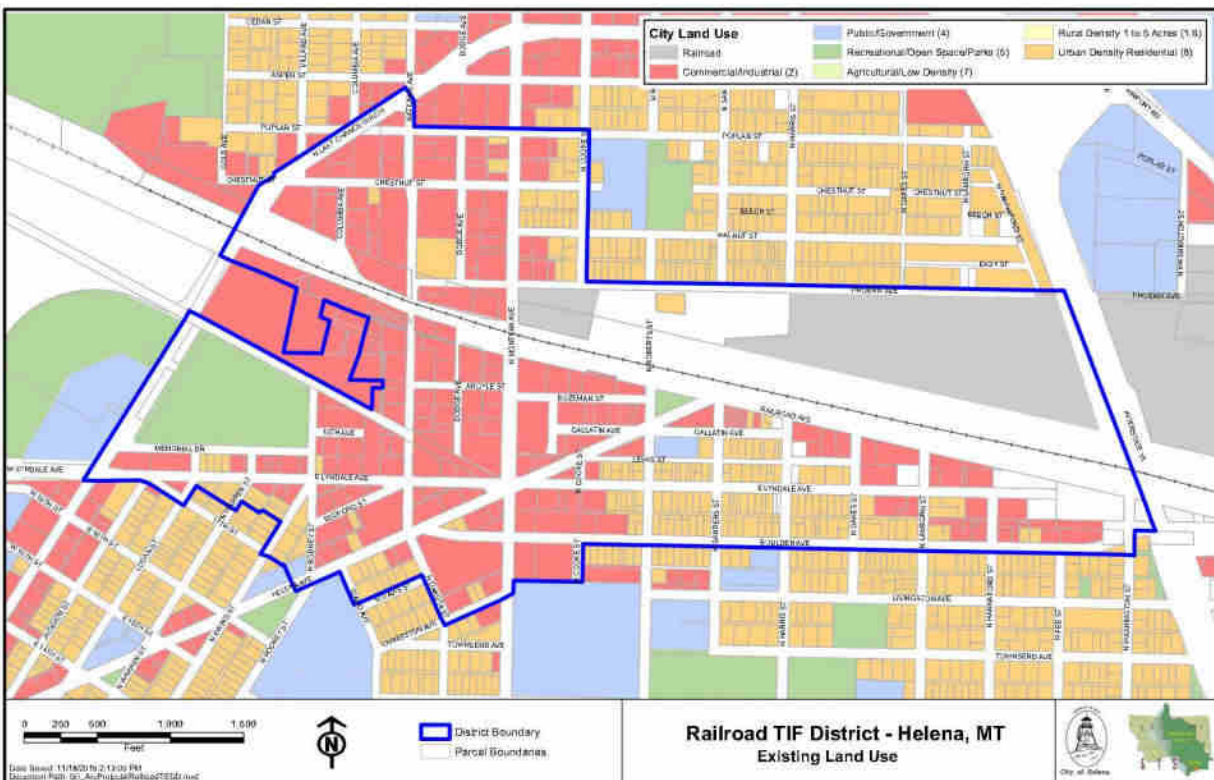
not exhibit the same level of physical deterioration or lack street/sidewalk infrastructure that were found in other parts of the District; and do not present opportunities to create tax increment. Several parcels owned or leased by Northwestern Energy were also excluded from the District due to high taxable values caused by equipment and materials stored on site. This could cause volatility in the tax revenues for the District if this equipment and materials were removed from the site in subsequent appraisals. The Montana Rail Link property was included in the District because it includes significant land that could be sold or leased for development in the future.



Railroad TIF District, Study Area Boundaries Map

Current Conditions

Helena's Railroad District is characterized by a mix of historical residential, commercial and industrial development, with some modern development—primarily light industrial and commercial—located along arterials and in the northwest portion of the district (See Existing Land Use Map below). The district is bi-sected by Montana Avenue, which runs north-south through the district's center, and by Montana Rail Link's main line, which runs east-west through the district. Historic development in the area is associated with the presence of the railroad, as is some of the more recent development. Different land uses predominate in the east and west portions of the district, creating two distinct sections.



Railroad TIF District, Existing Land Use

The eastern portion of the Railroad District centers on the historic Northern Pacific Railroad depot. The depot stands along the south side of the tracks (which are themselves included in the district boundaries) on Railroad Avenue. Helena's oldest extant mixed-use commercial district lines the opposite side of Railroad Avenue, facing the depot and the tracks. Light industrial businesses currently operate around the east end of Railroad Avenue, while more recent commercial development leads up to Montana Avenue and the new Helena Area Transit Service building, to the west. Historic residential blocks radiate north and south across the tracks from the commercial core, the immediate southern blocks are located within the proposed south district boundary. The southwest corner of this east section of the district contains what is known as the Caird property, a large vacant lot that for decades held the historic industrial buildings, recently demolished, of Caird Engineering Works.

The west section of the Railroad District correlates to the roughly triangular area marked by Montana Avenue, Lyndale Avenue, and N. Last Chance Gulch. In contrast to the east section, the west section of the district contains little residential development, with only two residential sites (a trailer park and an apartment complex that may have started as a motel) located north of Lyndale, and a few residential sites located along the district's southern boundary. A variety of commercial development defines the west section. Historically industrial, the area now houses industrial, retail, service, and office spaces as well as Memorial Field and Memorial Park. Memorial Field and Memorial Park are located just south of the tracks and east of N. Last Chance Gulch.

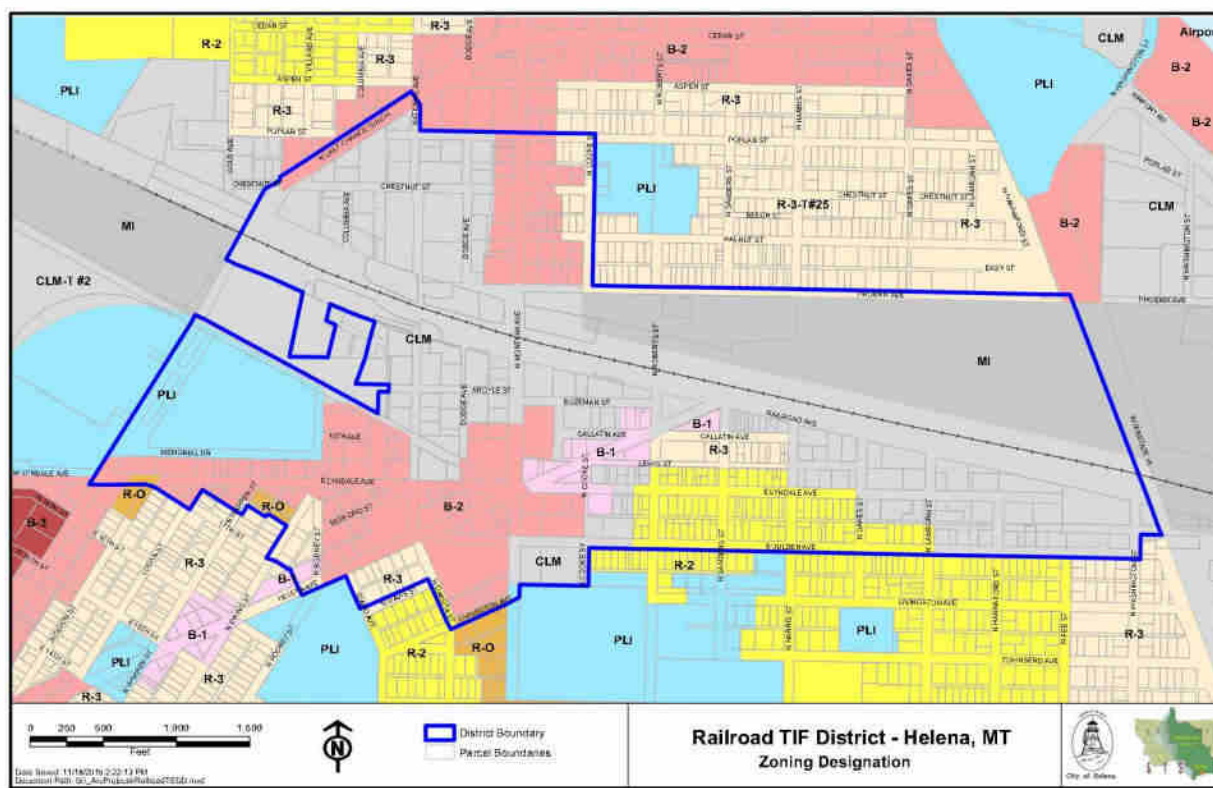


Businesses in this section include a variety of warehouses, Pacific Hide and Steel, utilities such as Century Link and Northwest Energy, the Lewis and Clark Brewing

Caird property, 2014.

Company, building-supply businesses such as Habitat for Humanity's Re-Store, auto sales and servicing, and Disability Rights Montana. Retail and office spaces are concentrated along the section's arterials, primarily Lyndale Avenue

Current Zoning



Railroad TIF District, Zoning Designation Map

Compliance with Zoning

The City of Helena has typically used Euclidian zoning which focuses on land uses and their separation or compatibility with surrounding land uses. The property contained within the boundaries of the Railroad URD is zoned Commercial Light Manufacturing (CLM) and Manufacturing /Industrial (M/I)-- (primarily along the railroad tracks); and also includes residential and commercial uses, and city-owned public land. All of the current zoning of the property within this boundary is consistent with the Future Land Use designations in the 2011 Growth Policy.

CLM District - The CLM district provides for the community's commercial and light manufacturing needs. These uses generally need access to the city's transportation amenities and should be located to reduce adverse impacts upon residential neighborhoods in the city.

MI District - The MI district provides for manufacturing and other industrial uses.

B District - The B provides for compatible residential uses and a broad range of commercial and service uses that serve large areas of the city and that are normally required to sustain a community. B-1 district provides for a compatible mixture of residential, public, and small scale commercial uses that serve as transitions between zoning districts.

RO District - The RO district provides for a compatible mix of higher density residential development with professional and business offices and associated service uses.

PLI - The Memorial Park area owned by the City is zoned PLI (Public Lands and Institutions).

Documentation of Blight

As noted above, Montana Code Annotated 7-15-42 requires that, in order to form an Urban Renewal District, a municipality must first document that the district is blighted, i.e. that at least three causes of blight (as listed in MCA 7-15-4206(2)) "apply to the area or part of the area." According the statute, causes of blight can include:

- a) **The substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential;**
- b) Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, proper sanitary facilities, or open spaces as determined by competent appraisers on the base of an examination of the building standards of the municipality;
- c) **Inappropriate of mixed uses of land or buildings;**
- d) High density of population and overcrowding;
- e) **Defective or inadequate street layout;**
- f) **Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;**
- g) Excessive land coverage;
- h) **Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;**
- i) Deterioration of site;
- j) Diversity of ownership;
- k) Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;

- l) Defective or unusual conditions of title;
- m) Improper subdivision or obsolete platting;
- n) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes;**
- o) Any combination of the above factors.

WGM Group documented the existence of blight factors **a, c, e, f, h,** and **n** in the proposed district. Many of these same factors have long been extant in the area, and were previously documented in James Boyer's *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study* (2001) and the *Helena Railroad District Conditions and Criteria Analysis* completed in January 2015. For a detailed discussion of blight factors in the Railroad District, see the appended *Railroad Urban Renewal District Statement of Blight* (August 2015; (See **Appendix C**).

District Issues and Opportunities

This section describes issues and opportunities in Helena's Railroad District. It includes public comment collected over the past 15 years as well as more recent observations.

Historic Significance

The Railroad District includes many historic sites and the district core is an Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, called the Railroad Depot Historic District.¹³ The historic character of the neighborhood and its built environment is critically important to area stakeholders—it has been called the area's "most valuable asset," but deferred maintenance on many of these properties and associated streetscapes has resulted in blight, i.e. "the substantial physical dilapidation [and/or] deterioration . . . of buildings or improvements." Problematic in its own right, this blight threatens the nature and distinctiveness of the district: "the loss of key historic structures due to continued deterioration of displacement would permanently change the character of the area."¹⁴ As noted in the *Statement of Blight*, examples of dilapidated and/or deteriorated sites can be found throughout the district, and include residential, commercial, and industrial properties.

Moreover, infrastructure in the area is noticeably deteriorated, including many sections of sidewalks and portions of some streets. Notable among them is the historic brick street fronting the railroad depot, maintenance on which, by all appearances, has long been neglected. Residents have long discussed the need to "get that brick street repaired and preserved."¹⁵ The Railroad District exemplifies the notion that neighborhoods thrive or decay with their building stock.

Stakeholders have consistently expressed the desire for public interpretation of the district's railroad heritage, a desire which reflects as well the value placed on the neighborhood's historic quality. Montana Rail Link currently uses only the bottom floor of the historic depot, which is the community's favored site for heritage interpretation, ideally in the form of a museum.

Deterioration and Under-Utilization of Properties

Tax valuation trends indicate that deterioration in the district is even more widespread than visual assessment suggests. Although taxable values on previously-taxable properties across Helena have risen almost 50 percent in the last ten years, over one-third of the properties within the Railroad District have actually lost taxable value in that same time period. Many more have gained value at a much slower rate than properties in the city as a whole.¹⁶ The "lack of maintenance and reinvestment in housing and business buildings," that is reflected in recent tax valuation trends, "threatens the character of

structures” which contribute to the district’s historic value.¹⁷ Such structures compose a large majority of the district building stock.

Area residents and business owners have long identified property deterioration as a major concern. In 2001, both residents and business operators were surveyed and ranked “deterioration of homes/property maintenance” and “decay of some business sites” as two of the top five “major concerns about the district.” A district analysis completed earlier this year noted that “aging of buildings, underutilization, transitioning uses, and historic qualities . . . suggest complex problems that may require coordinated response in terms of transportation, other infrastructure, zoning, platting, and historic preservation.”¹⁸

Residential Development and Affordable Housing

Urban renewal efforts across the nation have sometimes been linked to gentrification. Railroad District stakeholders have been consistently clear about the need to avoid this type of development and to preserve housing affordability in the area. Preserving housing affordability is critical both in order to prevent overall demographic decline in the district and to accommodate the specific needs of core neighborhood demographic groups. As noted in previous reports, “the population of the Railroad District is aging, with many residents at or near retirement age. Households are smaller than is typical overall in Helena. School enrollments are noticeably declining. . . Helena’s Railroad District is an area inside the city with potential to serve the housing needs of young families whose presence is important to the overall vitality of Helena. Population growth within Railroad District neighborhoods would benefit schools, businesses, and social activities throughout the city. District development should try to avoid displacing neighborhood residents, ie. avoid what has happened in the Hustad Center area, where “in recent decades . . . new and expanded business development has displaced most of the area’s housing.”¹⁹

In light of these considerations, it bears mentioning that it is not only possible, but more efficient and effective to achieve multiple Railroad District development priorities simultaneously, ie. to pursue historic preservation, affordable housing and green building techniques. Historic preservation has been shown to provide a host of economic benefits, and prominent among them is affordability. Preservation supports the success of small businesses by providing more affordable space, and historic buildings provide affordable housing, which is not only a Railroad URD Plan goal but the number one issue identified in Helena’s *2010 Housing Needs Study*. The Railroad District contains not only historic residences but also depot-area buildings which offer potential adaptive re-use opportunities for addressing some of Helena’s additional housing needs, like affordable rentals and special needs residences.

Economic Investment in the District

As has long been the case, in general “the district is not attracting investment needed to maintain and improve the condition of lands and buildings.” As a result, “declining sections of the Railroad District area are having difficulty improving on their own.”²⁰ The inability to invest in the maintenance and development of district properties is reflected in the physical condition of buildings and sites.

A 2001 report suggested that, “in the absence of special inducements to encourage new investment in the area, sections of the Railroad District will continue to decline.” The trajectory over the last 15 years indicates that this does indeed seem to be the case: low income residents often lack the financial means to maintain or develop properties, while population decline (and aging) means that local businesses face

a contracting neighborhood market. The spread of big box stores outside of the Railroad District further exacerbates the problems faced by neighborhood businesses. The lack of investment in the neighborhood poses problems for the district in particular and for Helena as a whole, for “the lack of investment in the Railroad District properties is inhibiting growth in the community’s overall tax base.” While the district itself lacks some needed resources for development, it also contains resources that offer development opportunities. Chief among these is available land. In addition to the undeveloped railroad property that covers a significant portion of the district, there are also numerous underutilized properties within district boundaries.

Public and Environmental Health

With its history of industrial use, the district has had to contend with contamination concerns in the past and continues to do so today. In 2001, the district contained two super fund sites (ie. Burlington Northern’s fueling stations and Montana Power’s former natural gas production plant) on which cleanup was being implemented. Studies from that period noted as well “active and inactive petroleum and other chemical storage areas” in the district.²¹ More recent investigations document the existence of currently contaminated sites, including several related to the railyard itself (eg. elevated lead and arsenic levels in nearby residential yards).²² Current Montana DEQ spatial data indicates at least six hazardous waste handling facilities within district boundaries.²³ More generally, stakeholders have repeatedly raised concerns about other pollution, including noise and fumes from rail operations.

The Railroad District has the potential to continue environmental clean-up, as well as become a model for energy-efficient rehabilitation and repurposing historic buildings in Helena. In contrast to frequent perceptions, historic preservation simultaneously fosters environmentally friendly neighborhoods and is key to “greening” Helena’s Railroad District development. New buildings require enormous amounts of materials and energy, and even the most energy efficient take decades to recover the carbon expended in construction. A study by Booz Allen Hamilton concluded that, in every case examined, preservation and rehabilitation was more energy efficient than demolition and rebuilding.

The individual health of people who live and work in the Railroad District is also critically important. Health factors across the nation indicate increasing problems associated with sedentary life-styles and weight gain. Promoting a more active life style and better food choices is key to addressing many health issues and improving quality of life. In most parts of the Railroad District now, it is difficult to navigate the area on foot or on a bicycle. Safety is an issue at several major street crossings, and most of the area has no continuous sidewalks or pathways. Play areas are very limited. The edible forest garden, being developed on city park land near the Transit Center, will offer a location to grow fresh produce, and provide a park-like atmosphere and small playground. The Railroad District includes a super-market (Real Food Store) but has only a few restaurants for the many who work and/or live in the area.

Transportation and Infrastructure

As noted in the *Statement of Blight*, defective and inadequate street layout plagues various parts of the district, and creates circulation problems, access limitations, and critically unsafe conditions which threaten motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians alike.

In the course of this and previous studies, residents repeatedly expressed concerns over what one consultant has called “the two biggest flaws in Helena’s road system,” i.e. the five-legged intersection of Lyndale, Helena and Montana avenues (a.k.a. Malfunction Junction) and the Montana Avenue railroad crossing located immediately north of the intersection. A report earlier this year called congestion at Malfunction Junction “the most consistently-noted problem in surveys and public comments.” Previous

studies identified the Montana Avenue railroad crossing as “the most commonly held complaint among persons living in the Railroad District” and “the number one complaint of the area’s business operators.” The traffic problems within these two related sites are compounded by nearby Boulder Avenue, which has its own issues where it intersects Montana Avenue. Together, these three linked sites pose delay dangers for emergency vehicles, and “delays of emergency vehicles is a particular problem for persons and businesses located in the Railroad District.” Moreover, as problematic as these locations are for cars, the issues they raise are even more acute for bicyclists and pedestrians, whose very lives are endangered by the absence of any provision for their use.²⁴

Although the Lyndale-Helena-Montana intersection is a central concern of district residents, and construction of a complex roundabout at the intersection was listed as a Major Street Network (MSN) project in Helena’s 2004 Transportation Plan but never completed, Helena’s recently-adopted 5 year Transportation Plan contains no provisions for its immediate improvement. In that plan, other projects were deemed higher priority and TA funding was allocated accordingly: the Malfunction Junction roundabout is recommended MSN project #15 in the current Transportation Plan, which calls for “closing both Helena Avenue approaches to create a traditional ‘four-legged’ intersection.”²⁵ The city has, however, recently allocated \$350,000 to prepare the engineering and application necessary for a TIGER grant, which funds projects that are “shovel-ready.”²⁶

Immediately to the north on Montana Avenue, the mainline of “a national rail corridor makes a surface crossing of [one of] Helena’s busiest road corridor[s].” At this crossing, as at two other at-grade crossings in the district (ie. Roberts Street and National Avenue), trains frequently impede the flow of traffic. On average, some 35 through trains a day travel the tracks (18 of them between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.), and other railyard operations also require street crossings: crossing-related congestion is a significant concern. As with Malfunction Junction, the Montana Avenue and other crossings are especially perilous for cyclists and pedestrians, who have neither sidewalks nor bike paths on which to travel. According to Helena’s 2011 Growth Policy, “installing a railroad underpass or overpass on Montana Avenue has been discussed for many years and has been included as a non-prioritized major network improvement in the Transportation Plan.” Although a grade-separated railroad crossing of Montana Avenue was included in the 2004 plan, it has not been completed and was incorporated into the 2014 Transportation Plan as recommended MSN project #2.²⁷

The Montana Department of Transportation is also looking into options for addressing problems with Boulder Avenue just south of Malfunction Junction. Problems there are linked to the southbound left turn onto Boulder. The MDT considered closing the left turn, but owners of the adjacent CAIRD property have suggested that doing so would jeopardize the property’s redevelopment potential by further limiting access to the site. MDT is currently looking at short-term improvements such as signal timing and a southbound left-turn lane in an attempt to balance access and operations concerns.

Additional problems with street layout or adequacy have been repeatedly noted in several other district locations. Some areas in the district suffer from access issues related to street layout. Problem areas oft-noted by residents include the I-15 underpass (located on Boulder Ave. instead of Lyndale, the main arterial) and, nearby, the eastern sections of the district (where access from arterials is difficult). Access inadequacies hamper business development, and, like congestion, also inhibit the provision of emergency services. Issues of inadequate transportation facilities have also been raised with regard to the Memorial Park area, where access is limited by road and parking problems.

Moreover, street layouts throughout the district are inadequate in terms of provision for bicycles and pedestrians. This study and others have established that the need for bicycle and pedestrian facilities is

particularly acute in the district. Malfunction Junction and other Montana Avenue crossings are especially deficient in functional pedestrian facilities, a fact made more problematic by their frequent use by youth and disabled people. Connections to through city-wide paths and planned through trails, like the Centennial Trail, are also wanting. The district is in need of a comprehensive sidewalk system that connects retail, commercial, and recreational facilities with residential areas as well as with hotels and motels.

The absence of sidewalks and bicycle facilities endangers pedestrians and cyclists, and more generally undermines the sustainability and quality of life in the district. Walkability ranks high on the list of priorities for neighborhood residents. The City of Helena has committed to constructing sidewalks in a small portion of the district—along Lyndale from Benton to Montana—in the coming years. Additional transportation issues of concern in the district center around public transportation. A re-route of the city bus system is currently in progress, as are an ADA assessment and an engineering study (focused especially on places on state highways where buses stop in lane). The city recently completed a new building for the Helena Area Transit Service in the district. All of these developments promise to impact public transportation in the district and should be considered as redevelopment progresses.



Substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction within District.

Infrastructure issues in the district extend beyond the transportation realm. As Boyer's 2001 report noted, "noteworthy deficiencies . . . exist in the area's . . . water, sewer, and storm sewer systems" with "water delivery and sewage collection systems" in particular undersized. The district is bisected by a flood plain, fed by mountain drainages to the south, that has resulted in serious flood incidents in the past (eg. a spring flood in the 1980s that "caused considerable damage" in this district. At the time of Boyer's report flood prevention measures had not been implemented, and the district remained vulnerable. Moreover, these "limitations in the area's water distribution and sewage systems also affect homes and businesses in other areas of the city and flood management problems extend to areas upstream and downstream of the Railroad District."²⁸ Many projects associated with water, sewer and storm water systems within the Railroad Urban Renewal District are currently in the planning stages and slotted for improvement (See **Appendix H**).

Summary of Issues and Opportunities

In many respects, the issues of the Railroad District are also its opportunities. The current under-utilization of property and vacant areas is an opportune environment to attract new businesses to an area that is already served with basic city infrastructure. Expanding business and residential areas within existing city boundaries is more cost-effective than extensions of roads, sewer, and water to outlying areas.

The Railroad District also has unique character and history that can be promoted as the District's "brand" or "image." It is different from other areas in Helena, and the railroad operations are a known attraction to railroad enthusiasts across the nation. The District has the potential to become a vibrant mix of businesses, restaurants, housing, and public spaces and amenities connected by a distinctive identity.

The Railroad District is well-situated for the creation of a Tax Increment Finance District, which will reinvest back into the District a portion of the property taxes. The tax increment can be used to address the deteriorated condition of the area's streets, water, sewer, sidewalks, pathways, buildings, and vacant areas. Utilizing tax increment revenue to improve infrastructure and stimulate private investment is the basic premise of Tax Increment Financing.

Chapter III – Railroad URD Plan: Vision and Goals

Introduction to the Plan

The URD plan for the Helena Railroad District has been prepared to meet the requirements for an Urban Renewal and Tax Increment Finance District under Montana Urban Renewal Law in Title 7, Chapter 15, parts 42 and 43, of Montana Code Annotated. The plan is intended to be responsive and adaptable, recognizing that conditions may change and unanticipated development opportunities may arise over the anticipated 15-year period of the plan. It is anticipated that further planning and public involvement will be needed to identify priorities for projects and fund expenditures based on current information, conditions and opportunities.

This chapter identifies a broad vision, primary goals, and key objectives for the Railroad District. Chapter IV provides more information on how the plan will be implemented.

Vision for the Railroad District

The Railroad District will be a destination district in the City of Helena, with a strong neighborhood identity based on the district's historic core, unique mix of uses, including workforce housing, manufacturing, and the railroad after which the district is named. The Railroad District will be a vibrant place to work, live, and visit with shops, restaurants, and diverse commercial businesses. It will be uniquely different from the city's other main nearby destinations – downtown, Great Northern Town Center, and the Capitol area. People will easily access the Railroad District by vehicle, and pedestrian and bike-friendly connections.

Goals and Objectives

The purpose of the goals and objectives is to establish an overall framework and direction for the future of the Railroad District. They are intended to provide a rational and more specific basis for how the vision will be achieved.

The following goals and objectives are drawn from previous studies and public outreach efforts, dating back nearly 15 years. Most recently, this plan draws on individual interviews with landowners, businesses, and residents of the area; a public meeting held in October; meetings held by the U.S. EPA over the spring, summer and fall of 2015 to address a variety of issues for an area that includes the Helena Railroad District, and meetings with city officials and the city-county planning board (See **Appendix D**).

For purposes of land use planning, a goal is a general statement; a target for a future condition and for which actions are aimed. Goals are intended to be broad, long-range and all-encompassing, and should experience little change through the years. Objectives are actions or policies to realize the goal. Objectives refer to specifics that are reasonably attainable.

In the following lists, goals and objectives are numbered so that they can be more easily referenced, not to suggest any particular priority order. In fact many of the goals and objectives overlap. The determination of priorities will be made through additional planning and annual work plans for the District. More information on this topic can be found in Chapter IV.

Goal #1: Emphasize the District's Historic Importance

1. Promote the railroad depot area as a defining feature of the District.
2. Review and update as needed the 2003 Architectural Guidelines and formally adopt as guidelines.
3. Work with the BNSF and others to pursue how best to highlight the railroad's historic importance and unique potential for observing railcar operations from the depot area.
4. Develop interpretive signage with a consistent appearance.
5. Retain and restore/rehabilitate historic buildings and other historic features such as brick paving, fencing, and lighting.
6. Develop and market programs and activities that incorporate education on the area's historic importance.
7. Develop an image "brand" for the District, based on its distinctive character and history.

Goal #2: Increase Property Utilization and Function

1. Provide technical assistance and planning to identify vacant and underutilized properties for redevelopment.
2. Provide for a mix of uses within the District.
3. Strive for neighborhood commercial options—places to shop and eat within walking distance of work, schools, and homes.
4. Provide for a variety of residential housing, including affordable workforce housing and special needs housing.
5. Prepare properties for redevelopment by facilitating land assemblage and property transfer.
6. Work with city planning and zoning and private interests to identify regulatory roadblocks to improving property and identify solutions.
7. Consider the unique differences in various parts of the District and identify planning and project approaches as necessary for those areas.

Goal #3: Expand and Diversify the District's Economy

1. Promote and market the District as a place to do business – highlight what makes the District uniquely qualified for various businesses.
2. Upgrade and expand on existing broad-band capabilities to attract high tech businesses.
3. Develop the District's historic and proposed mix of residential, commercial and light industrial uses as a unique, identifying feature for businesses.
4. Work with business leaders and individual businesses to provide maximum opportunity, consistent with the sound needs of the municipality as a whole, for the rehabilitation or redevelopment of the Helena Railroad District by private enterprise.
5. Develop partnerships among existing property owners, new/expanding businesses and the local government to increase economic activity
6. Work with Helena College to identify training opportunities to expand and diversify District businesses.

7. Encourage projects that provide opportunities for college students to live and/or work near the campus.
8. Encourage businesses that can benefit from proximity to the college.
9. Potential for live-work building concepts, e.g., artist studios with retail and living space.

Goal #4: Create an Inviting Venue

1. Develop planning tools to address eight key urban design elements identified by the Urban Land Institute: imageability, enclosure, human scale, transparency, complexity, coherence, legibility and linkage.
 - Imageability - Features or landmarks that make the area distinct, recognizable and memorable.
 - Enclosure - Streets and public spaces that are visually defined with trees, buildings, and other vertical elements to create outdoor spaces.
 - Human Scale - Building dimensions, architectural details, signage, public lighting, sidewalks, and street widths which are more intimate landscapes for pedestrians
 - Transparency - Street-level storefront windows, doors and entryways, courtyards, etc. that invite passersby to look in.
 - Complexity - An area with a visual richness from architectural diversity, landscape elements, street furniture, signage, and human activity.
 - Coherence - A sense of visual order, influenced by consistency and complementarity of scale, character, and arrangement of buildings, landscaping, and other physical elements.
 - Legibility - Ease with which people can navigate the area, including layout of streets
 - Linkage - The physical and visual connections that unify various elements – e.g., from building to street, one side of street to the other.
2. Develop “Entryways” and wayfinding signage– for example, entryway arches or other features at key intersections into the District, and distinctive signage for locating specific sites.
3. Promote street art that reflects the District’s historic foundations.

Goal #5: Address Public Infrastructure Needs

1. Plan and prioritize public infrastructure in coordination with the city’s transportation planning system and capital improvements planning process.
2. Consider and plan for primary motorized access to/from the District, including:
 - a. Montana Avenue Railroad Crossing - and possible potential under-over-pass;
 - b. Other Railroad Crossings;
 - c. Malfunction Junction; and
 - d. Other major connections into/within District: Lyndale, Helena, Boulder Avenue.
3. Plan for motorized access within the district, including:
 - e. Memorial Park transportation improvements; and
 - f. Establishing criteria for prioritizing other street improvements in the district.

4. Address non-motorized transportation needs, including:
 - g. Trail Systems and Non-Motorized Crossings of Montana Avenue;
 - h. Safe routes to School;
 - i. Sidewalks, Complete Streets;
 - j. Railroad crossings, and
 - k. Connections to the region-wide trail systems.
5. Identify and prioritize upgrades to water, sewer and stormwater drainage infrastructure.
6. Plan for specific parking needs of various businesses. Develop guidelines that reflect urban design elements identified in Goal #4 “Create an Inviting Venue.”

Goal #6: Provide for Public and Environmental Health

1. Promote compatible adjoining land uses and avoid adjacent uses with potential for public health or safety issues.
2. Reduce air, noise and other environmental pollution problems.
3. Support green infrastructure/green development.
4. Provide recreational opportunities including trails, and “active” parks with playgrounds.
5. Provide complete streets with access for those with disabilities.

Chapter IV – Railroad District Plan: Implementation

Administration

Organizational Management and Authority

The Helena City Commission has ultimate responsibility for the Railroad District and Tax Increment Finance District management. State law 7-15-4232 and 7-15-4233, MCA (see box inset), authorizes the City Commission to assign certain project powers to a city department or officers of the municipality.

The Helena Railroad District shall be administered by the Helena City Commission, with staffing provided by the Community Development Department, and with assistance from an Advisory Committee.

The Community Development Department shall have the following powers:

- 1) To formulate recommendations for annual work-plans and budgets,
- 2) To coordinate the Railroad District programs as established by annual work-plans and budgets approved by the City Commission;
- 3) To undertake and carry out urban renewal projects as required by the local governing body;
- 4) To disseminate blight clearance and urban renewal information;
- 5) To study the closing, vacating, planning, or re-planning of streets, roads, sidewalks, ways, or other places and to make recommendations with respect thereto;
- 6) To perform such duties as the local governing body may direct so as to make the necessary arrangements for the exercise of the powers and performance of the duties and responsibilities entrusted to the local governing body.

The Advisory Committee shall report directly to the City Commission. The Advisory Committee has no assigned powers (as limited by provisions of 7-15-4232, MCA) other than to consider and make recommendations on matters related to the Railroad District. The Advisory Committee will advise on the following:

- 1) Annual work-plans, reports, evaluations, and budgets;
- 2) Allocation of TIFD funds;
- 3) Amendments to the Railroad District Plan;
- 4) Other matters as assigned by the City Commission.

The Advisory Committee shall be appointed by the City Commission and consist of not more than nine individuals representing the following sectors:

- Businesses
- Landowners
- Residents
- MidTowne 6th Ward Neighborhood Association
- Montana Business Assistance Connection
- Low-Income Non-Profit Sector (e.g., Food Bank or Helena Industries)
- School District
- Helena Community College
- City of Helena Chief Financial Officer

7-15-4233. Powers which may be exercised by urban renewal agency or authorized

department. (1) In the event the local governing body makes such determination, such body may authorize the urban renewal agency or department or other officers of the municipality to exercise any of the following urban renewal project powers:

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

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

Annual Work Program Budget

The Administrative and Financial Services Department will prepare an Annual Work Program as part of the fiscal year budget that lists the activities and costs of activities for the coming fiscal year, as well as the method of financing those activities. This program and budget may be amended during the course of the fiscal year, in light of funding and program changes. All budgets and revised budgets shall be reviewed and approved by the City, and administered in accordance with City policies.

The annual work plan shall address:

- (i) any land acquisition, demolition, and removal of structures; redevelopment; improvements; and rehabilitation that is proposed to be carried out in the urban renewal area;
- (ii) zoning and planning changes, if any, including changes to the growth policy if one has been adopted pursuant to Title 76, chapter 1;
- (iii) changes to land uses, maximum densities, building requirements; and
- (iv) the plan's relationship to definite local objectives respecting appropriate land uses, improved traffic, public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities, and other public improvements.

Annual Independent Audit

The Administrative and Financial Services Department shall cause to be performed an annual independent audit covering the operations of the Department in carrying out this Plan. The first such audit shall be completed within ninety (90) days of the close of the first fiscal year following the adoption of this Plan by City Commission.

Evaluation

The Administrative and Financial Services Department shall provide to the City Commission and the public an annual program evaluation as part of the Annual Report. Such evaluation shall review the Railroad District Plan and the past annual work program. The City Commission shall evaluate, every five years during implementation of the plan, the goals and objectives and the fulfillment thereof and the necessity for the continuation of the district.

Measures that may be used in evaluating program success include:

- Increases in the property tax base
- Creation of jobs within the Urban Renewal District
- Elimination of blighted conditions

Amendment

The Railroad URD Plan may be amended in accordance with Montana statute. In addition, any changes to the land use element shall be made consistent with Helena zoning regulations. The City Commission may modify and amend the Plan, including modifications and amendments to designate and approve urban renewal projects to be undertaken pursuant thereto, by enacting an ordinance

providing for and setting forth the modification and amendment. No such ordinance shall be adopted until after a public hearing has been conducted thereon and notice of said hearing has been given in accordance with State Law.

If the modification or amendment involves the addition or deletion of land from the District, mailed notice shall be given to all persons owning property to be added or deleted at the time and the manner provided by Section 7-15-4215 (1), MCA. All notices shall provide the information regarding the modification required by Section 7015-4215 (1), MCA.

Projects and Programs

The City Commission will implement programs and evaluate projects based on the goals of this urban renewal plan. Measureable objectives, such as the following, shall be established to evaluate potential programs and projects:

- Job Creation
- Increased Taxable Valuation
- Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Investment/Expenditure
- Leverage-Ratios of tax increment funds to other sources
- Health and Safety Concerns
- Historic Preservation
- Density and Infill
- Adaptive Re-Use
- Cost of Public Services
- Conformance with the goals and objectives of the Railroad URD Plan
- Conformance with the Helena Growth Policy and other Relevant Adopted Plans
- Conformance with Requirements for TIF fund expenditures per 7-15-4288, MCA

Costs that may be paid using TIF dollars are specified in state law (see box inset).

7-15-4288. Costs that may be paid by tax increment financing.

The tax increments may be used by the local government to pay the following costs of or incurred in connection with an urban renewal area or targeted economic development district as identified in the urban renewal plan or targeted economic development district comprehensive development plan:

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

Provisions for Displaced Residents

One of the three criteria for approving Urban Renewal Plans is a plan for making available adequate housing for persons who may be displaced by the project. The Railroad District does not propose nor anticipate any measures that would result in displacement of current residents. In fact, the Railroad District is designed to encourage more residential development and a range of affordable housing options. In the event that actions directly related to projects of Railroad District, as administered by the City Commission, result in displacement, the City of Helena shall work with those individuals to find comparable housing within the Railroad District or otherwise within city limits if no comparable housing is available.

Partnership Development

Private development is essential for the success of a Tax Increment Finance District. As such the Railroad District must work hand in hand with other community-based revitalization efforts. The Railroad District is already experiencing planning and development from a variety of organizations and individuals. Management of the Railroad District will necessarily involve participation with and outreach to these various entities, in addition to the involvement of the Advisory Committee. The many persons and interests represented at the “Queen City Crossing” meetings, held in the summer and fall of 2015, are the very same interests related to the proposed efforts of the Railroad District. (See **Appendix D** for a complete list of attendees to the EPA meetings.)

Program Funding

The Railroad District proposes to utilize a variety of funding mechanisms to support the revitalization efforts. These include the following:

Public Infrastructure Investments

- Annual Tax Increment Appropriations – The City Commission may finance public infrastructure improvements and renewal programs for the Railroad District from its annual tax increment receipts by appropriation. Funds available each year would be determined by the size of the annual increment and any prior commitments (such as bond debt service requirements and administrative costs).
- Tax Revenue Increment Bonds – The City Commission may issue tax increment revenue bonds in order to finance major capital projects in the Railroad District. TIF bonds would enable projects to be financed up-front. The debt would be retired through annual tax increment receipts.
- Conventional Financing – The City may borrow funds from commercial lending institutions in order to finance public infrastructure improvements. Annual tax increment revenues could be used to pay principal and interest on the loan.
- Local, State and Federal Funding Mechanisms – There are a number of funding resources available to communities to undertake planning and capital improvement projects. These include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Federal Surface Transportation Program - Rail/Highway Crossing Protective Devices Program
 - Federal Surface Transportation Program - Rail/Highway Crossing Elimination of Hazard Program
 - Treasure State Endowment Program - Montana Department of Commerce

- The Montana Intercap Program - Montana Board of Investments
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
Public Works Program - Economic Development Administration

Private Sector Development

In addition to public sector investments, the MRA can assist property and business owners in specific renewal activities including the following:

- Assistance to Value-Adding Industries – One of the uses authorized in state law (7-15-4288, MCA) is for the provision of direct assistance to secondary value-adding industries to assist in meeting their infrastructure and land needs within the District.
- Other Assistance – The urban renewal program can assist private sector projects in a variety of ways, by providing technical assistance and helping property.

Chapter V – Conformance with Growth Policy and Consistency with Other Plans

This Chapter provides a summary of the analysis of the Railroad URD Plan in relation to the Growth Policy and to other relevant plans.

Growth Policy

The proposed Railroad District URD Plan was reviewed for conformance with the 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, as required by 7-15-4213, MCA.

Growth Policy Review:

The Growth Policy includes descriptions of existing conditions and projected trends, goals and objectives, and a future land use map. Chapter III (Railroad URD Plan: Vision and Goals) identifies relevant portions of the Growth Policy's goals, objectives, conditions and trends as they relate to the Railroad URD.

This section of the Railroad URD Plan provides a summary analysis of the proposed Railroad District in relation to the following components of the Growth Policy:

- 1) **Goals and Objectives** The goals and objectives are the city's written plan for the future. Goals and objectives shape policy and regulations.
- 2) **Future Land Use Map** The city's future land use map is the guide for managing land use. It forms the basis of city zoning.

Conformity with Growth Policy Goals and Objectives:

The Railroad District Plan is intended to revitalize the area with upgraded infrastructure, business expansion, improved transportation functionality and connections within and outside the district, and a commitment to preserving the area's historic integrity. As such, it contains flexibility for mixing land uses, while at the same time envisioning that some areas will emphasize a particular use, such as commercial/retail, or technology-related businesses, or mixed residential. A Tax Increment Finance District is a key component of the Railroad District's implementation, as it will provide a portion of the funding needed for some of the public improvements.

The Growth Policy goals and objectives were reviewed in detail. No conflict was identified between the growth policy and the proposed Railroad District. In fact, many of the Growth Policy goals and objectives correlate with the kinds of efforts proposed for the Railroad District.

Key Growth Policy Goals and Objectives:

- **Tax Increment Finance Districts**
Support the economic and social vitality of historic districts by measures such as business improvement districts, tax increment financing districts, zoning, and neighborhood planning.
(Goal: Culture, Objective 8)

- **Economic Vitality**

Promote and sustain economic vitality while maintaining and enhancing the quality of human and natural environments. (Goal: Economic Conditions)

- **Objective 1**
Foster diversification of the economic base.
- **Objective 3**
Promote development of resources, educational programs, and infrastructure that facilitate sound business development.
- **Objective 7**
Direct community incentive programs and other financial resources to job development, both to retain and expand existing industries and attract new ones.
- **Objective 11**
Promote the concentration of specialized industries within the city where specialized infrastructure, information, and labor advantages of greater concentration could promote economic development and desirable growth.
- **Objective 13**
Encourage green building and renewable energy investments to provide jobs that will increase property values, reduce energy costs, and strengthen the community's sustainability.

- **Housing**

Housing that is safe, available, accessible, and affordable for all sectors of the population. (Goal: Housing)

- **Objective 5**
Support infill development of additional housing that harmonizes with the character of existing neighborhoods.
- **Objective 7**
Conserve and enhance the character, quality, and livability of the community by preserving and improving distinctive neighborhoods that offer diverse housing opportunities.
- **Objective 8**
Encourage the development of housing located in proximity to physical, technological, social, and economic infrastructure.

- **Public Facilities**

Protect and enhance the natural environment; promote efficient use of community infrastructure, services, and transportation networks; and conserve resources.

(Goal B)

- **Objective 2**

Encourage infill development on vacant and underutilized land and full utilization of properties currently served by, or in close proximity to, infrastructure with a scale and quality that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

- **Transportation**

A multimodal transportation system that:

Meets the current and future transportation needs of the greater Helena area including, but not limited to, travel by automobile; Minimizes demand for petroleum products and emissions of green-house gases by promoting transportation choices and efficient land use patterns; Promotes public health by facilitating non-motorized transportation; Meets the unique transportation needs of the area's elderly, disabled, and disadvantaged populations; Respects the area's natural and historic context and minimizes adverse impacts to the environment and existing neighborhoods; Provides for transportation choices in the community to allow safe and efficient travel; Minimizes vehicle miles traveled; Promotes a development pattern that is more compact and less dispersed; and connects to regional transit.

(Goal: Transportation)

- **Local Culture**

Strengthen the relationship between Helena's cultural assets and overall economic vitality, social welfare, and quality of life of the community. Helena's diverse cultural life is broadly defined as including the visual and performing arts, history, library, education, recreation, and its people.

(Goal: Culture)

- **Objective 3**

Continue to explore and increase options to support cultural tourism, enhance economic development, address social and cultural issues in the community, and encourage community pride and aesthetics.

- **Objective 6**

Continue to promote the preservation of historic and prehistoric sites, structures, objects, buildings and historic districts.

- **Land Use**

Protect and enhance the natural environment; protect cultural and historical assets; preserve and enhance community aesthetics; protect established neighborhoods and address compatibility of uses; and promote efficient use of community infrastructure, services, transportation networks, energy and resources. (Goal: Land Use)

- **Objective 2B**

Provide cohesive neighborhoods and pedestrian-friendly environments

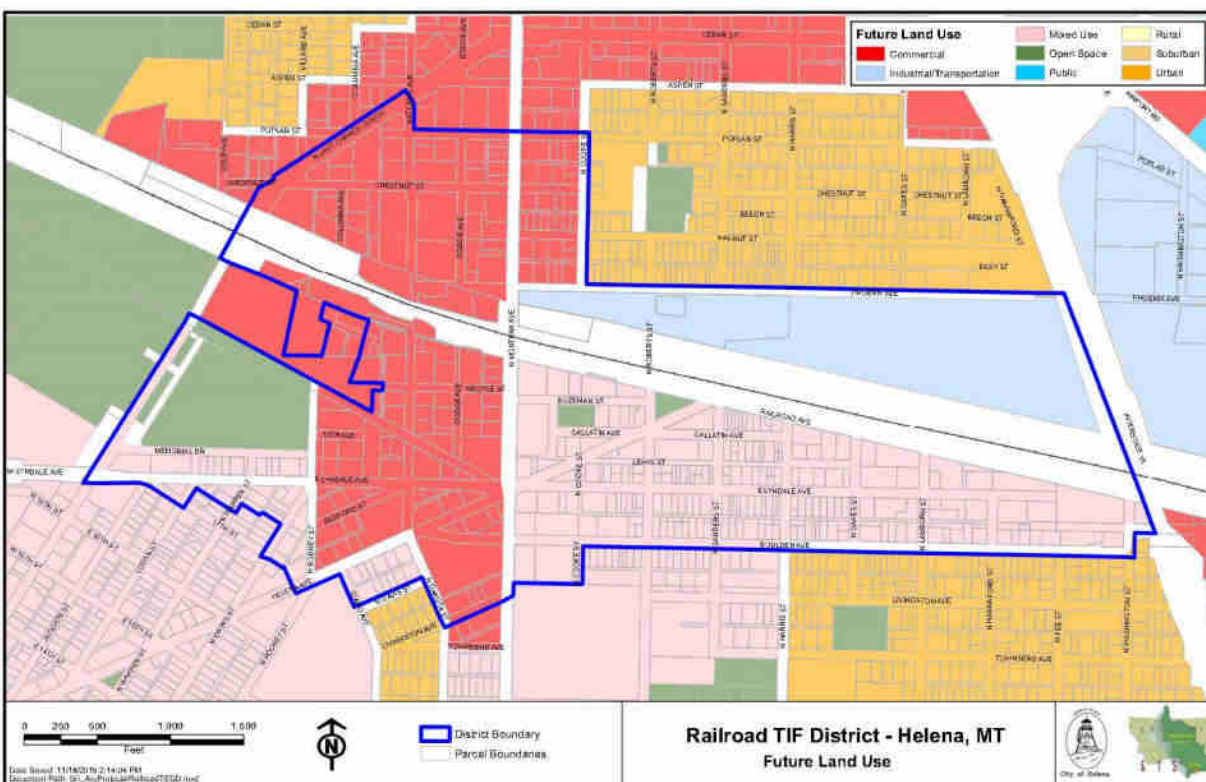
with connected transportation linkages with walkable block lengths for pedestrian corridors for physical connectivity, and a sense of community.

- **Objective 7**
Implement the mixed-use areas and urban standards boundary identified on the Future Land Use Map, update the Growth Policy as new issues arise and make the mixed use areas a priority when developing neighborhood plans.
- **Objective 10**
Promote development of dense and intense land uses both in the city and in close proximity to existing city services to better utilize city infrastructure and encourage the shared use of facilities such as lift stations and stormwater ponds to ensure efficient expenditure of public funds.
- **Water and Sewer Systems**
Provide an adequate and stable supply of safe and economical water to the Helena community. (Goal A: Water)
 - **Objective 3**
Encourage land-use change and development proposals that promote efficient use of city water infrastructure and resources.
 - **Objective 5**
Continue to invest in system upgrades and maintenance of the city's municipal water and wastewater network.
 - **Objective 9:**
Encourage in-fill and full utilization of properties currently served by, or in close proximity to, city water and wastewater infrastructure.

Conformity with the Growth Policy Future Land Use Map:

The proposed use concepts for the Railroad District are aligned with the future uses identified in the city's growth policy. The Railroad District includes the following proposed land uses:

- Commercial
- Industrial/Transportation
- Mixed Use
- Open Space
- Urban



Railroad TIF District, Future Land Use Map

The growth policy states that the land use classification boundaries should be interpreted in a broad, flexible manner. They are not intended to be absolute and may vary slightly according to the situation.

Each of the land use categories applicable to the Railroad District are defined in the city's growth policy as follows:

Commercial:

Lands where the predominant use is the transaction of goods or services such as retail, office, restaurants, entertainment, etc.; areas are usually near arterials or have good access to major streets; these properties would have limited single-unit residential uses but may include high density residential uses and residences associated with a commercial use.

Industrial:

Generally, land in the industrial category has access to utilities and major transportation networks such as highways, railroad, and the airport; could have heavy-truck traffic; and may be less desirable for other uses. Heavy industrial areas include uses that may emit fumes or constant and loud noise; may include businesses that involve hazardous conditions; typically these areas would not be compatible with residential uses. Light industrial/manufacturing includes manufacturing products from previously prepared materials such as assembly of computers and electronics; storage, sales, and distribution of such products; packaging of premade goods, etc., but excludes basic industrial processing; and could be compatible with residential, commercial, and other land uses.

Mixed Use:

Places where people can work, live, and play. These areas include a variety of complementary and integrated uses, such as, but not limited to, all forms of residential, office, light industrial/manufacturing, retail, public, or entertainment. Development is usually in a denser comprehensive pattern to achieve a unified, functional, efficient, and aesthetically appealing physical setting; provides opportunities for connectivity, public transportation, and walkability; these areas do not use the traditional segregation of uses.

Mixed Use Area H:

Montana Avenue/ Harris Street/ Railroad Tracks. This area contains a mixture of residential, educational, commercial, and industrial uses. Revitalization of the area that preserves the historic character of the district and appropriate redevelopment and infill that continues the mix of a higher concentration of uses, particularly along Montana Avenue, should be promoted.

Mixed Use Area I:

Downtown/Carroll College. This area is the cultural center of the City, which includes a mixture of the historic downtown with more recent development and redevelopment. Uses are predominantly commercial/office and educational (Carroll College) with some residential uses. It is desirable to encourage continuation of mixed use of this area; promote more residential uses particularly in and adjacent to the Great Northern Town Center; and promote more intense and higher density uses closer to Last Chance Gulch and Lyndale Avenue. Mixed use of services and low intensity commercial could be expanded into adjacent areas, including areas between Benton and Davis Street, while preserving the historic character of the district. Better connectivity with all areas should be encouraged.

Open Space:

Lands that are parks; recreational areas such as golf courses and ball fields; large undeveloped areas maintained in natural vegetation; stream corridors and significant wetland areas (may include regional storm-water detention ponds); and cemeteries. Some open-space areas may be incorporated into other land use categories

Urban:

Within the City this category includes predominantly moderate to high density residential uses; may include public uses such as schools, churches, and open lands such as parks; and occasional commercial uses that serve the immediate area or are relatively small and low intensity. Within the County, it includes areas closer to the City; areas with few development constraints; areas that may be currently developed or could be redeveloped at higher densities; and may include a variety of uses including commercial and light industrial.

Conformance with Growth Policy and Consistency with Other Plans

This section provides more detail regarding specific sections of the growth policy and other plans related to the Railroad URD Plan. Other plans include the *2010 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan*, *2013 Lewis and Clark County Health Improvement Plan*, and *2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan*.

Culture: History, Heritage, Quality of Life

Existing plans for the City of Helena (incl. *the 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy* and the *2010 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan*) have identified a series of priorities, policies and goals that pertain to the community vitality issues in the Railroad District and should be used as tools to guide urban renewal efforts. Relevant specific sections of these documents include:

1. **Historic Preservation** - Chapter 9 of the City of Helena's 2011 Growth Policy, titled "Culture," treats historic preservation and recreation, noting that they "contribute to the attractiveness of the City and its economic vitality, community pride, and identity." The Policy goes on to elaborate that, "historic areas are important cultural assets, resulting in economic benefits to the community through tourism, community reinvestment, and recognized workmanship in wood, brick, and stone. Preserving historic areas also represents a wise utilization of resources (i.e., materials used for building construction), which provides a sense of place for residents and results in economic benefits from cultural tourism." "The Travel Industry Association of America states that cultural tourists spend 45% more than other tourists."¹¹⁰
2. **Local Historical Museum** - "Communities often showcase their cultural heritage with a local historical society or museum. Although the Montana Historical Society Museum is located in Helena, there is a fledgling local historical society, but no local historical museum. There are local historical programs conducted by the state at their buildings and collections of local history there, but only occasional local history displays. Without these basic institutions, prospects for a complete cultural heritage program continue to be limited."¹¹¹
3. **Parks and Recreation** - "Parks and recreation facilities are among the most important contributing factors for local quality of life," and "the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Update identifies some of the gaps and potential services and opportunities in providing a variety of recreational opportunities for all ages, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds."¹¹²
4. **Tax Abatement Program for Historic Structure Rehabilitation** - The City of Helena encourages historic preservation through "a tax abatement program for the rehabilitation of historic structures. To qualify for abatement, properties must either be individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places or be located within a declared historic district and contribute to the character of the district. Design review of the proposed rehabilitation, restoration, expansion, or (even) new construction is required, either from a state or locally appointed board. The construction must be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. After abatement, alterations that detract from historic elements of the design can trigger repayment and penalties. With this tax abatement the owner is allowed a tax abatement for up to six years on property taxes on qualifying improvements (including one year of construction). The tax abatement is limited to 100% of the increase in taxable value caused by the rehabilitation, restoration, expansion, or new construction. Current City requirements for tax abatements for historic properties are set forth in Resolution 10256 (11/5/90)."¹¹³
5. **Design Guidelines and Demolition Review** - "Recognizing the importance of maintaining the historic districts, the City has adopted a demolition review process for historic buildings and districts," and has developed and published *Design Guidelines for Helena's Historic Neighborhoods*.¹¹⁴

6. **Recreational Partnerships** - "The City partners with community organizations to help provide a variety of recreational opportunities, through facilities and programs for all ages, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds."¹¹⁵
7. **Opportunities for Protected Historic Areas** - "Protection of historic and prehistoric resources should be encouraged . . . Motorized and non-motorized transportation improvements can be compatible with cultural resources. Existing housing stock can be preserved, rehabilitated, and redeveloped with special attention to historic structures and historic areas. Protected historic areas can present an economic opportunity through heritage or cultural tourism and can aid economic development."¹¹⁶
8. **Maintain Integrity of City's Cultural Resources** - "While the existing historic preservation programs are important as initial actions, more could be done to include considerations on the part of citizens and local government to maintain the integrity of the City's cultural resources. Demolition has taken its toll on historic places outside of recognized historic districts; alterations and new construction have also affected the appearance of historic areas."¹¹⁷
9. **Demolition** - "If Helena is to retain its considerable historic reserves, they must be protected and maintained. Demolition, sometimes with new development, has taken its toll on hundreds of historic Helena buildings."¹¹⁸
10. **Consider Historic Features in Planning** - "It continues to be beneficial to the community to promote the preservation of historic and prehistoric sites, structures, objects, buildings, and historic districts by addressing historic preservation issues at the local level and integrating them into local, state, and federal planning and decision-making processes."¹¹⁹
11. **Guidance for Property Owners** - "Options to address some of these issues include: continuing public outreach by providing information, advice, and guidance to property owners for restoration, rehabilitation, landscaping, or maintenance of historic and potentially historic buildings or structures; providing design criteria for historic properties, historic districts, and potentially eligible historic districts prior to strengthening and implementing the existing voluntary design guidelines; developing additional incentives to support the use and reuse of existing historic structures through maintenance, conservation, and rehabilitation which may include measures such as business improvement districts, tax increment financing districts, zoning, and neighborhood planning; preserving, rehabilitating, and developing the existing housing stock with special attention to historic structures and historic areas; continuing to maintain City-owned historic public buildings as part of an overall maintenance program in a manner consistent with retaining the buildings' historic integrity; and, adopting a more effective demolition review ordinance."¹²⁰
12. **Cultural and Social Diversity** - "Discussions with the 2008 Cultural focus group identified some groups who are not currently served in the community, including those on a low income; fixed-income retirees; minority cultural and ethnic groups; and children. This focus group noted the current offerings should be reviewed for ways to improve the availability and opportunities for participation. Cultural and social diversity is an essential element of a healthy, pluralistic community, can strengthen the City's cultural life, and can provide new opportunities for multi-generational interaction. This infusion of the richness of diversity into the City's cultural work could be a means for strengthening Helena's cultural life. A strong cultural and artistic community is a magnet for economic growth and stability. The economic benefits derived from Helena's many cultural activities are acknowledged, but have not been fully evaluated. Conducting an impact study of the community's widely-defined culture could provide a benefit for future funding opportunities and could assist the City in the area of economic development."

13. **Recreation for All Abilities and Age Groups** - "Provide and maintain quality park facilities, open spaces, and recreational opportunities for citizens of all abilities and age groups."¹²¹
14. **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan** - "Implement the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan."¹²² (Please refer to the 2010 Parks, `Recreation and Open Space Plan, available here: http://www.helenamt.gov/fileadmin/user_upload/City_Parks/Documents/Helena_Comprehensive_Park_Plan_10_2010.pdf)

Demographics, Housing, Physical and Economic Development

Development considerations factor into many sections of the 2011 Helena Growth Policy, which contains a series of priorities, policies and goals that pertain to development issues in the Railroad District and should be used as tools to guide urban renewal efforts. Among them are:

1. **Aging Population** - "The aging of the Helena area population warrants particular attention when addressing future needs. An aging population presents challenges for health care, transportation, and social interaction. Some older employees, who may have been working with the same business for many years, will be retiring, taking with them extensive institutional history and experience. Others will want or need to remain in the workforce. Many live alone. It will be important to help these new senior citizens maintain important societal bonds and to discourage discriminatory activities in housing and employment."¹²³
2. **Housing Patterns and Affordability** - "The location, design, and affordability of housing affect many aspects of the community, including its transportation system, public safety, efficiency, cultural diversity, and schools. Housing development patterns affect energy consumption and environmental quality for the future. Lower density housing patterns increase transportation costs for the homeowner and consume farm and ranch land. Higher density housing in cities and towns has been perceived as affecting the quality of life in neighborhoods. Housing shortages hamper economic development, community safety and cohesion. The shortage of housing affordable to prospective employees may affect local employers and area businesses. Housing development patterns affect the use of public resources now and for the future."¹²⁴
3. **Housing for those in Poverty** - "Average wages have not kept pace with the local cost of living. As transportation costs increase, wells and septic systems fail, and traffic impacts intensify, more and more people may choose to live within the city. It is the responsibility of local government, financial institutions, private and public organizations, and the general public to work together to understand the housing needs of all residents and to ensure that everyone in the community has the opportunity to live in safe, affordable housing."¹²⁵ This issue promises to persist, for "the portion of the population living in poverty is increasing. Poverty rates in Lewis and Clark County have increased by an estimated 10.9% of county residents living in poverty in 2000 compared to 11.9% of its residents in 2009."¹²⁶
4. **Affordable Housing and Transportation Costs** - "According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), housing is affordable if it costs the occupant no more than 30% of their income for gross housing costs, including utilities."¹²⁷ "In 2006 in Lewis and Clark County, average wage earners who were renting paid 24.2% of their income in rent, while senior citizens on Social Security Income (SSI) who were renting paid 62.7% of their income in rent. By 2020, it is projected that average wage earners will pay about 40.7% of their income in rent, while senior citizens on SSI will pay 69.7%. The recent increase in oil prices has focused more attention to the crucial role the location of housing plays in transportation costs for individuals and communities. Distance from employment centers and lower density housing patterns (such as one acre or more per dwelling unit) lead to

- higher transportation costs for the homeowner. On the other hand, some believe that higher density housing will affect the quality of life in neighborhoods. Factors that can help people control transportation costs include walkable neighborhood streets, access to public transit, and nearby employment and retail.”¹²⁸
5. **Protect and Improve Existing Neighborhoods** - “There is strong public support for the preservation of existing neighborhoods, including the strengthening and support of existing neighborhoods through adequate infrastructure, maintenance, and consideration of design standards to preserve the unique qualities of the neighborhood. Efforts should continue to be made to protect and improve existing neighborhoods, which by their history and unique character offer unique, socially interactive settings for all residents. Increased pedestrian access and walkability in existing neighborhoods has been cited as a way to increase the desirability of the older parts of the community and to offset some of the costs associated with living in older neighborhoods.”¹²⁹
 6. **Locate Housing in Existing Neighborhoods** - “Much discussion has occurred concerning the effect of development patterns and practices on the quantity and quality of housing in the community, particularly on lower income households. The connection between housing affordability and transportation costs is cited as one of the more measurable factors. Housing that is located near sensitive wildlife areas or wetlands may have negative impacts if not properly mitigated. Locating housing near existing employment centers, schools, and other services lessens the cost burden on the homeowner and promotes infill development and redevelopment of underutilized properties. Encouraging mixed use areas will also provide flexibility to a community. If designed properly, it may allow existing neighborhoods to adapt to changes in housing needs or demographics, while still keeping neighborhood character.”¹³⁰
 7. **Green Building** - “Development within the city allows more efficient expansion that can be an asset to both the city and the business community.”¹³¹ “The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines green building as ‘the practice of maximizing the efficiency with which buildings and their sites use resources—energy, water, and materials—while minimizing building impacts on human health and the environment, throughout the complete building life cycle—from siting, design, and construction to operation, renovation, and reuse.’”¹³² “Green building and renewable energy investments could provide jobs, reduce energy costs, and strengthen the community’s sustainability. Communities benefit when business locations provide for efficient use of infrastructure and resources.”¹³³ “Options could include commercial nodes or centers that can serve neighborhoods more effectively; mixed-use developments that can reduce travel distances.”¹³⁴ “Supporting efforts to encourage the creation and expansion of small business could help reduce the rate of business failure.”¹³⁵
 8. **Balance High Density with Neighborhood** - “As the city expands and development occurs, a balance between high density and efficient development and the impacts on the environment and the neighborhood should be considered. The City should work with all interested parties to develop regulations and permitting that accommodate new development while mitigating environmental impacts, protecting established areas, and maintaining the interest of the greater community.”¹³⁶
 9. **Mix of Housing and Environment** - “A primary objective of managing growth is to achieve the overall mix and placement of housing needed to support a community that is rich in social, cultural, historic, and economic diversity, and an environment rich in natural resources.”¹³⁷
 10. **Housing Goal** - “Housing that is safe, available, accessible, and affordable for all sectors of the population.”¹³⁸

11. **Housing Objectives** – “1. Support and expand the supply of housing for all residents, especially lower income, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, homeless, and others with special needs. 2. Encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock. 3. Work with nonprofit agencies to maximize housing resources for low- and moderate income residents. 4. Promote energy efficiency in new and existing housing. 5. Support infill development of additional housing that harmonizes with the character of existing neighborhoods. 6. Maintain a regulatory environment that protects the health, safety, and welfare of citizens while minimizing barriers for new or existing housing. 7. Conserve and enhance the character, quality, and livability of the community by preserving and improving distinctive neighborhoods that offer diverse housing opportunities. 8. Encourage the development of housing located in proximity to physical, technological, social, and economic infrastructure. 9. Develop and preserve housing to minimize impacts on natural resources and the physical environment and to maximize social resources while meeting emerging needs. 10. Maximize constructive neighborhood involvement in housing development and design.”¹³⁹
12. **Economic Vitality and Environment Goal** - “Goal: Promote and sustain economic vitality while maintaining and enhancing the quality of human and natural environments.”¹⁴⁰
13. **Economic Vitality and Environment Objectives** - “1. Foster diversification of the economic base. 2. Promote the maintenance and expansion of existing Helena area businesses. 3. Promote development of resources, educational programs, and infrastructure that facilitate sound business development. 4. Promote positive partnerships between public and private sectors within the Helena area to encourage a healthy business community. 6. Maintain and protect cultural resources recognizing that they are an important and irreplaceable asset for the community and tourism. 7. Direct community incentive programs and other financial resources to job development, both to retain and expand existing industries and attract new ones. 8. Support efforts to encourage the creation and expansion of small business and help reduce the rate of failure. 9. Facilitate the permitting process while maintaining the public interest. 10. Review City zoning requirements to identify and remove unnecessary impediments to commercial and industrial development, while protecting established areas with the appropriate standards and promoting the interests of the greater community. 11. Promote the concentration of specialized industries within the city where specialized infrastructure, information, and labor advantages of greater concentration could promote economic development and desirable growth. 12. Encourage development of jobs that pay salaries and benefits sufficient to support families and contribute to the economy of the community, including providing active assistance to businesses and individuals, where appropriate. 13. Encourage green building and renewable energy investments to provide jobs that will increase property values, reduce energy costs, and strengthen the community’s sustainability. 15. Continue to support the Montana Business Assistance Connection’s efforts to attract new businesses, and support growth in existing businesses within the greater Helena metropolitan area.”¹⁴¹
14. **Green Building, Development and Environment Goals and Objectives** - “Promote conservation, workplace safety and other community values by investing in buildings, vehicles and programs encompassed in facilities and services that support green building design, workplace ergonomics and energy efficiency. 2. Encourage infill development on vacant and underutilized land and full utilization of properties currently served by, or in close proximity to, infrastructure with a scale and quality that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. 3. Apply development requirements equally to public agencies and private entities. 4. Create a public-works funding system that will divide the cost of

providing infrastructure and protecting the environment between the public and those developing land.”¹⁴²

Public and Environmental Health

The *2013 Lewis and Clark County Health Improvement Plan* discusses some general public health issues that are priorities for the community, many of which are linked to poverty and therefore particularly relevant to the Railroad District. The *2011 City of Helena Growth Policy* also touches on priorities, policies and goals that pertain to public and environmental health in the Railroad District and should be used as tools to guide urban renewal efforts. Sections that pertain to these issues include:

1. **Public Health and Safety Goals** - “A. Protect public health and ensure public safety. B. Protect and enhance the natural environment; promote efficient use of community infrastructure, services, and transportation networks; and conserve resources. C. Educate citizens for emergency preparedness and the protection of life, property, and environment.”¹⁴³
2. **Public Health and Safety Objectives** - “1. Make public health and public safety high priorities, and address potential hazards for areas located adjacent to and within the City. 6. Continue to provide a safe community for citizens and visitors through education and mitigation for adequate response to, and recovery from, disasters and emergencies. 7. Maintain safety as people travel in the community. 8. Continue training programs for public safety personnel to minimize emergency response times. 9. Develop and maintain disaster, mitigation, emergency, and recovery plans.”¹⁴⁴

Transportation and Infrastructure:

Existing plans for the City of Helena (incl. the *2011 City of Helena Growth Policy* and the *2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan*) have identified a series of priorities, policies and goals that pertain to the transportation and infrastructure issues in the Railroad District and should be used as tools to guide urban renewal efforts. Relevant sections include the following:

- **Congestion and Connectivity** - “Encourage traveling at off peak hours, expanding some major roadways to alleviate congestion and add connectivity, and the use and expansion of public transit”¹⁴⁵
- **Non-Motorized Connections** - “Bicycling, walking routes, and paths . . . connecting destinations and neighborhoods with: schools, stores, places of employment, places to live, and places to recreate.”¹⁴⁶
- **Pedestrian Facilities** - There is “a strong need for better pedestrian connectivity throughout the city, ‘complete streets,’ and elimination of pedestrian barriers. The need to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment (with amenities, traffic calming, and safer intersections) also has been extensively noted by the public.” Specifically, public “input indicated the need to install more sidewalks, incorporating ‘accessible design,’ maintenance of existing infrastructure and seasonal maintenance to ensure that all facilities are useable throughout the year.”¹⁴⁷
- **Public Transit and Non-Motorized** - “The use and expansion of public transit and pedestrian/bicyclist access to those [public transit] services.”¹⁴⁸
- **Smarter Transportation System** - “A connected, smarter transportation system through land use and transportation planning. This type of system allows citizens to choose what more of travel they desire, and makes travel more convenient while promoting and active lifestyle by choice for its citizens.”¹⁴⁹

- **Transportation and Environment** - “A transportation system that is compatible with the environment in the context of the Greater Helena area, with special consideration given to sustainability and conserving natural and cultural resources.”¹⁵⁰
- **Multi-Modal Planning** - “Transportation improvements should be integrated with local land use planning to ensure the proper mix of roads, trails, transit, paths and other bicycle and pedestrian features co-exist.”¹⁵¹
- **Holistic Approach** - “A more holistic approach to transportation. The preservation of natural, historic, and cultural resources, as well as promoting a healthy, active lifestyle, are priorities.”¹⁵²
- **Water and Sewer** - “Public facilities and services are important to the quality of life enjoyed by residents of the City of Helena. Facilities and services, such as the provision of municipal water and sewer services, encourage development within the City. . . .The City of Helena must look at ways to maintain or upgrade existing facilities and services so current users do not suffer a reduction in service while providing services to new development.”¹⁵³
- **Complete Streets** - “The City of Helena now has an adopted Complete Streets policy. The concept of ‘complete streets’ includes a transportation network that accommodates non-motorized and motorized facilities.”¹⁵⁴
- **Transportation Goal** - “A multimodal transportation system that:¹⁵⁵
 - A. Meets the current and future transportation needs of the greater Helena area including, but not limited to, travel by automobile;
 - B. Minimizes demand for petroleum products and emissions of green-house gases by promoting transportation choices and efficient land use patterns;
 - C. Promotes public health by facilitating non-motorized transportation
 - D. Meets the unique transportation needs of the area’s elderly, disabled, and disadvantaged populations;
 - E. Respects the area’s natural and historic context and minimizes adverse impacts to the environment and existing neighborhoods;
 - F. Provides transportation choices in the community to allow safe and efficient travel;
 - G. Minimizes vehicle miles traveled;
 - H. Promotes a development pattern that is more compact and less dispersed;
 - I. Connects to regional transit.”
- **Transportation Objectives** - “1. Plan a logical, long-range arterial system, including interstate access, that promotes a compact, highly interconnected urban land use pattern and can be systematically implemented by right-of-way reservations and advance acquisition procedures. 2. Implement policies and decisions to ensure that bicyclists and pedestrians can use and cross major roadways and highways leading to the surrounding areas. 3. Include appropriate facilities that are safe, comfortable, integrated and convenient for travel by persons of all ages and abilities, automobile, foot, bicycle, and public transit in major street improvement projects and developing areas. 4. Prefer transportation improvements that preserve the natural panorama of skylines and sightlines and that are compatible with historic resources.”¹⁵⁶
- **Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Goal** - “Improve the efficiency, performance, and connectivity of a balanced transportation system.” Objectives: “2.2 Promote the development of an effective roadway network through improvements in intersection and roadway capacity. 2.3 Improve opportunities for active transportation (non-motorized) as part of daily travel mode choice within the community by increasing pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections. 2.4 Ensure that mobility-challenged populations, such as low income, persons with disabilities, or senior citizens, have travel options in the Greater Helena area. 2.5 Identify and reduce (or

eliminate) freight movement impacts on area roadways and identify improvements to eliminate deficiencies with the objective of improving freight movement.”¹⁵⁷

- **L RTP Goal** - “Provide a safe and secure transportation system.”¹⁵⁸ “Identify barriers to effective and prompt emergency response.”¹⁵⁹
- **L RTP Goal:** Maintain the Existing Transportation System. Objective: “1.4 Relieve pressures on the existing transportation system through minor infrastructure improvements, maintenance and system preservation activities rather than expanding the current system.”¹⁶⁰
- **L RTP Goal** - “Protect and enhance environmental sustainability, provide opportunities for active lifestyles, and conserve natural and cultural resources.” Objectives: “7.1 Promote transportation projects, plans and/or programs that encourage reducing fuel consumption, reducing vehicle miles of travel, and thereby minimizing air pollution. 7.4 Coordinate transportation planning activities with appropriate federal, state, and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation.”¹⁶¹

Appendices

Appendix A

Legal Description of Boundaries & Map

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF BOUNDARIES

ALL THOSE TRACTS OF LAND AND STREET RIGHTS-OF-WAYS LOCATED IN SECTIONS 19, 20, 29, AND 30, ALL IN TOWNSHIP 10 NORTH, RANGE 3 WEST, PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA, LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY, MONTANA, WITHIN THE CURRENT CITY LIMITS, AND BEING WITHIN THE BOUNDS DESCRIBED BELOW:

BEGINNING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF BLOCK 7 OF FLOWER GARDEN ADDITION;

THENCE EASTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF PHOENIX AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF INTERSTATE 15;

THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID INTERSTATE 15 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF BOULDER AVENUE;

THENCE WESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID BOULDER AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF WASHINGTON STREET;

THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID WASHINGTON STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE EASTERLY PROLONGATION OF THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID BOULDER AVENUE;

THENCE WESTERLY ALONG THE LAST SAID EASTERLY PROLONGATION OF THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE AND THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID BOULDER AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH COOKE STREET;

THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID NORTH COOKE STREET TO THE NORTHERLY LINE OF HIGH SCHOOL BLOCK 3 PER CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3128576;

THENCE WESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY LINE OF HIGH SCHOOL BLOCK 3 PER SAID CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3128576 TO THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH MONTANA AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID NORTH MONTANA AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHEASTERLY PROLONGATION OF THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF LIVINGSTON AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE LAST SAID NORTHEASTERLY PROLONGATION OF THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE AND THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF LIVINGSTON AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION OF THE SOUTHERLY PROLONGATION OF THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH DAKOTA STREET;

THENCE NORTHERLY ALONG THE LAST SAID SOUTHERLY PROLONGATION OF THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE AND THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH DAKOTA STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH DAVIS STREET;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE LAST SAID SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE AND ITS SOUTHWESTERLY PROLONGATION TO THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF IDAHO AVENUE;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID IDAHO AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF HELENA AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF HELENA AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY PROLONGATION OF THE EASTERLY LINE OF LOT 12, BLOCK 38 OF CENTRAL ADDITION NO. 2;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE LAST SAID SOUTHEASTERLY PROLONGATION OF THE EASTERLY LINE AND THE EASTERLY LINE OF SAID LOT 12 TO THE NORTHERLY MOST CORNER OF SAID LOT 12;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY LINE OF SAID LOT 12 TO SOUTHEASTERLY MOST CORNER OF LOT 41 OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 422892;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHEASTERLY LINE OF SAID LOT 41 TO THE NORTHERLY MOST CORNER OF SAID LOT 41;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY TO THE NORTHEASTERLY CORNER OF BLOCK 34 OF CENTRAL ADDITION NO. 2;

THENCE NORTHEASTERLY ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH EWING STREET TO THE EASTERLY MOST CORNER COMMON TO LOTS 8 AND 9 OF BLOCK 39 OF CENTRAL ADDITION NO. 2;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE LINE COMMON TO SAID LOTS 8 AND 9 TO THE WESTERLY MOST CORNER COMMON TO SAID LOTS 8 AND 9;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY TO THE EASTERLY MOST CORNER COMMON TO LOTS 27 AND 28 BLOCK 39 OF SAID CENTRAL ADDITION NO. 2;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE LINE COMMON TO SAID LOTS 27 AND 28 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH WARREN STREET;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH WARREN STREET TO THE WESTERLY MOST CORNER COMMON TO LOTS 30 AND 31 BLOCK 39 OF SAID CENTRAL ADDITION NO. 2;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY TO THE EASTERLY MOST CORNER OF LOT 4, BLOCK 40 OF SAID CENTRAL ADDITION NO. 2;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY LINE OF SAID LOT 4 TO THE NORTHERLY MOST CORNER OF SAID LOT 4;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY TO THE EASTERLY MOST CORNER OF LOT 14, BLOCK 40 OF SAID CENTRAL ADDITION NO. 2;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY LINE OF SAID LOT 14 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF LOGAN STREET;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF LOGAN STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SEVENTEENTH STREET;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SEVENTEENTH STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EAST ELYNDALE AVENUE;

THENCE WESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID EAST ELYNDALE AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH LAST CHANCE GULCH;

THENCE NORTHEASTERLY ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH LAST CHANCE GULCH TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHEASTERLY LINE OF TRACT R-1 OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3179876;

THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG THE NORTHEASTERLY LINE OF TRACT R-1 OF SAID CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3179876 TO THE SOUTHEASTERLY CORNER OF TRACT B OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 451496;

THENCE NORTHERLY, EASTERLY, NORTHERLY AND WESTERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY AND NORTHERLY LINES OF SAID TRACT B TO THE NORTHWESTERLY CORNER OF SAID TRACT B, SAID CORNER BEING A POINT ON THE EASTERLY LINE OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 366314;

THENCE NORTHERLY, NORTHWESTERLY, SOUTHERLY, SOUTHEASTERLY, SOUTHERLY, WESTERLY AND NORTHERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY AND NORTHERLY LINES OF SAID CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 366314 AND ITS NORTHWESTERLY PROLONGATION TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH LAST CHANCE GULCH;

THENCE NORTHEASTERLY ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID NORTH LAST CHANCE GULCH TO THE SOUTHEASTERLY MOST CORNER OF LOT 6A OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3173845;

THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY TO THE NORTHWESTERLY MOST CORNER OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 591772;

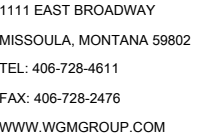
THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NATIONAL AVENUE TO THE SOUTHWESTERLY CORNER OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3032900;

THENCE EASTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF POPLAR STREET TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF BLOCK 19 OF FLOWER GARDEN ADDITION;

THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH COOKE STREET TO SOUTHWEST CORNER OF BLOCK 7 OF SAID FLOWER GARDEN ADDITION, SAID CORNER ALSO BEING THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

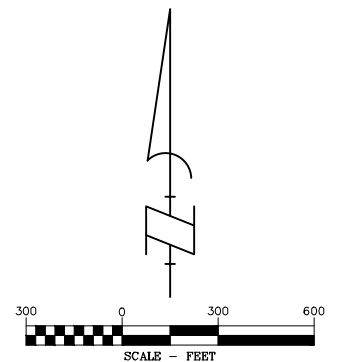
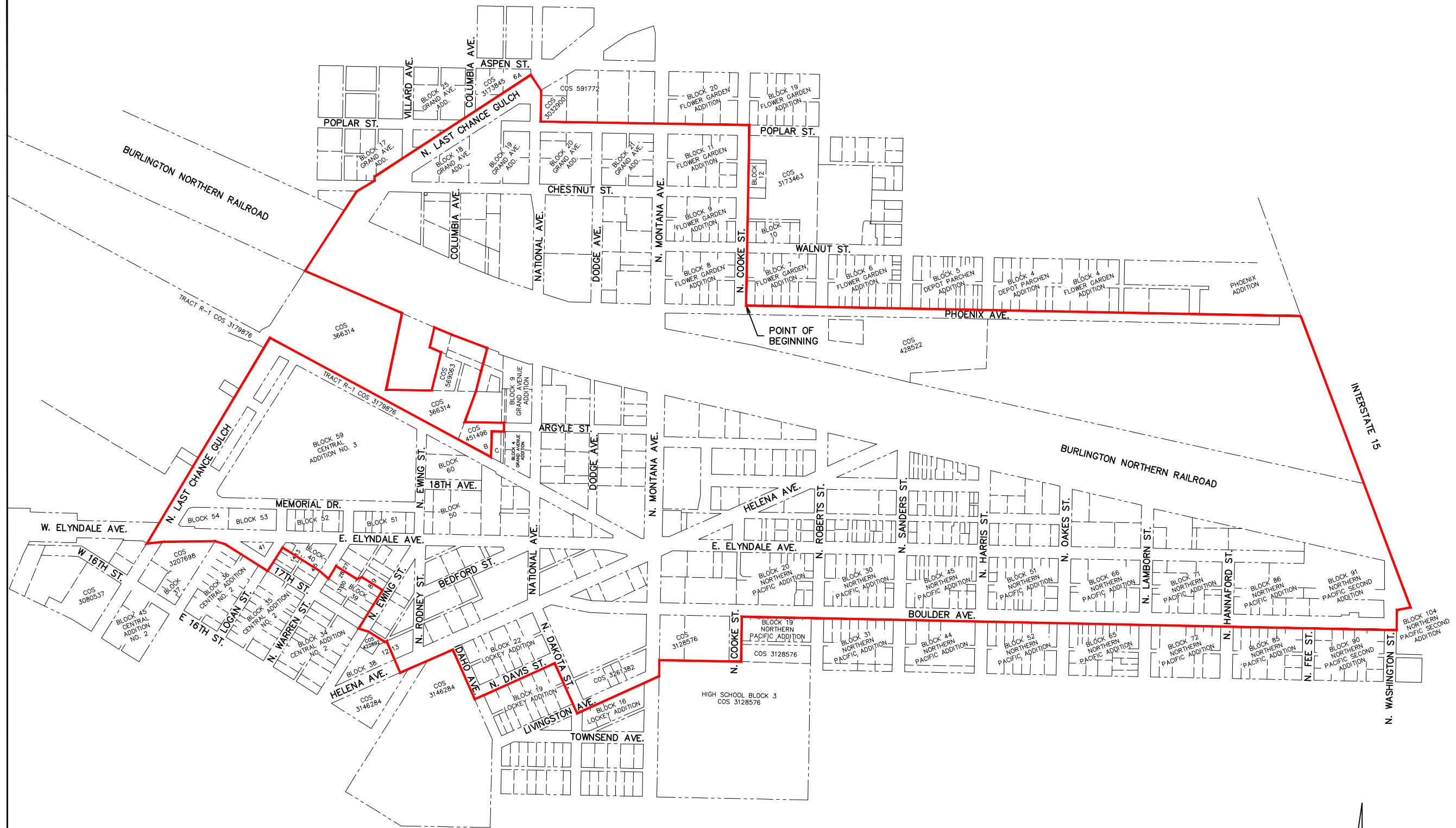
CONTAINING 324 ACRES, MORE OR LESS.

NOTE: ALL SUBDIVISION PLATS, CERTIFICATE OF SURVEYS, AND RIGHTS-OF-WAYS REFERENCES ARE FILED IN THE LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY CLERK AND RECORDER'S OFFICE, HELENA, MONTANA.



REVISIONS:		
NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE

NOVEMBER 2015



Appendix B

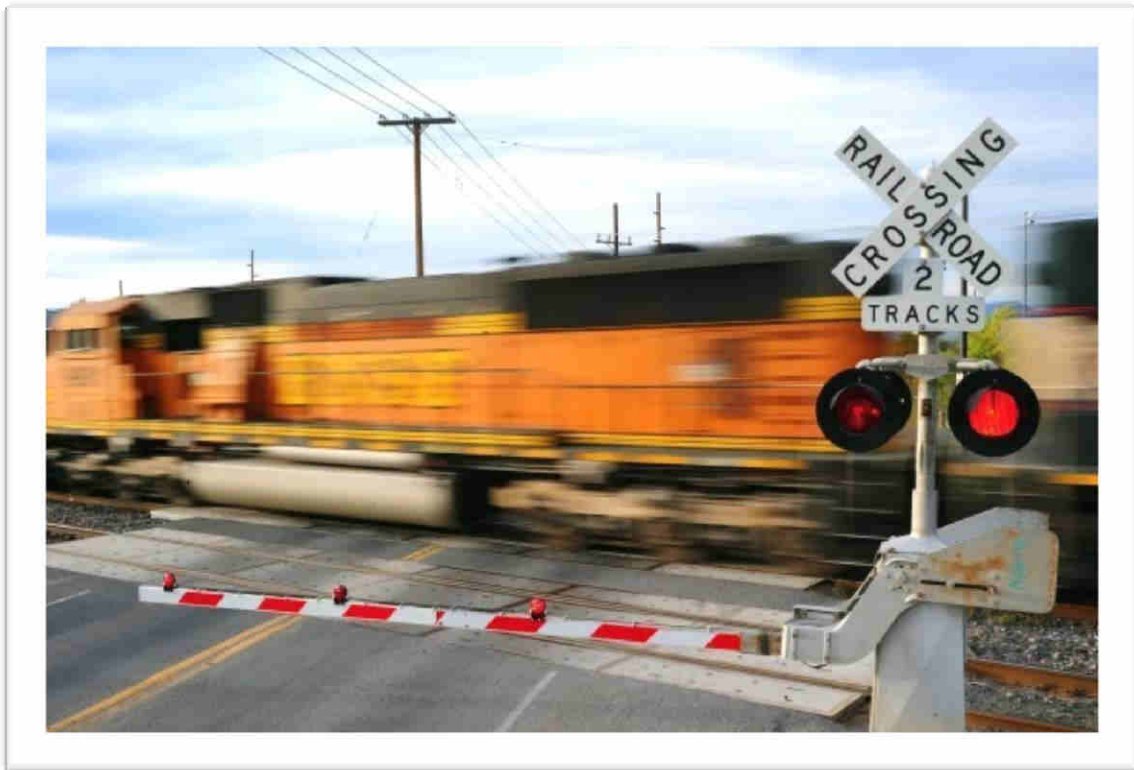
Aerial Map of Railroad TIF District, Helena, MT

Appendix C

Railroad Urban Renewal District Statement of Blight (August 2015)

RAILROAD URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT STATEMENT OF BLIGHT

CITY OF HELENA



AUGUST 2015

PREPARED BY:



Introduction

Property owners, residents, and other local parties have long been interested in revitalizing Helena's historic Railroad District and the surrounding 6th Ward neighborhood. As early as 2001, the City of Helena Community Development Department commissioned a *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study* in pursuit of this goal.¹ Two years later, Helena's Planning Department "contracted with the Community Design Center from Montana State University Architecture Department to work with the residents of the 6th Ward to produce design concepts that might be used to revitalize the Railroad District."² That project resulted in the publication of a book of design guidelines titled *Helena Railroad District Revitalization*.

Recently, the Railroad Advocacy Team (RAT), a volunteer group of property owners, residents, and local planning professionals, has led efforts to revitalize the neighborhood. RAT's mission is "to enhance and promote the vitality, growth, historic significance and walkability of Helena's Railroad District."³ An analysis completed in early 2015 concluded that there was ample evidence to "support the proposition that the area is qualified for designation as an Urban Renewal district" and that such designation "would benefit from public-private coordination efforts, and would benefit the greater governmental area."⁴ Shortly thereafter, the City of Helena asked WGM Group to document blight in the area, prepare an Urban Renewal Plan and facilitate the creation of the Railroad Urban Renewal District. The first step in this process is documenting blight in the district to demonstrate the area's suitability as an Urban Renewal District. This would then enable the City of Helena to adopt a Resolution of Necessity and facilitate area revitalization. As required by Montana Urban Renewal law, this "Statement of Blight" documents blighted conditions that exist in the district.

Blight and Urban Renewal

To address the range of blighted conditions that are discussed in this report, the City of Helena may create a Railroad Urban Renewal District and establish a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program to help fund its efforts. In Montana Code Annotated, Title 7, Chapter 15, Parts 42 and 43, Montana law provides for the creation of urban renewal districts in municipal areas deemed "blighted." According to MCA 7-15-4209, municipalities may create an Urban Renewal Plan for such "blighted" areas, i.e. "may formulate a workable program for utilizing appropriate private and public resources:

- (a) to eliminate and prevent the development or spread of blighted areas;
- (b) to encourage needed urban rehabilitation;
- (c) to provide for the redevelopment of such areas; or
- (d) to undertake such of the aforesaid activities or other feasible municipal activities as may be

¹ James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*, completed for the City of Helena Community Development Department, April 28, 2001.

² http://www.mbac.biz/index.php?pr=Railroad_District_Plan

³ Fossum Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Conditions and Criteria Analysis*, January 16, 2015, 1, 1n3. In December 2014, Max Pigman, head of RAT and owner of Lewis and Clark Brewery, noted that RAT hoped that improving the district by promoting its historic functions and character would attract more businesses. "There's people that actually come from out of town just to watch the trains hook up and unhook," Pigman said, "if we can actually take advantage of some of the great history we have and create some new information that those people can be attracted to then businesses will follow." Matt Witkos, KTVH.com, "Businesses Start a Team to Improve Railroad District." December 12, 2014. <http://www.ktvh.com/home/headlines/Businesses-Start-a-Team-to-Improve-Railroad-District-285689481.html>.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

suitably employed to achieve the objectives of such workable program.”

Montana law further stipulates that, before a municipality creates an Urban Renewal District and develops a plan for its revitalization, its local governing body must adopt a Resolution of Necessity (MCA 7-15-4210) finding that:

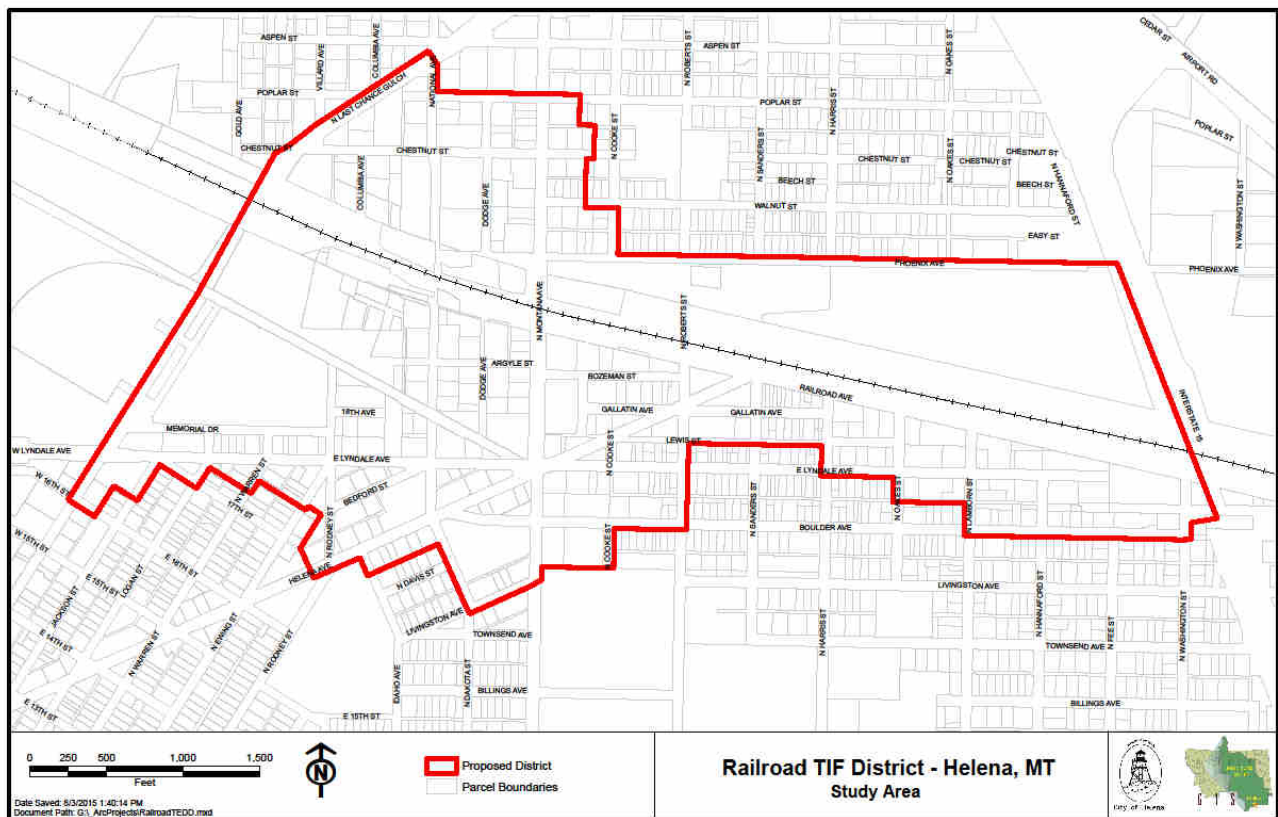
(1) within the municipality a blighted area exists in which at least three blight factors apply to the area or a part of the area; and

(2) the rehabilitation, redevelopment, or both of the area is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of the municipality.

This “Statement of Blight” details the blight factors that exist in Helena’s Railroad District, and demonstrates that the area is “blighted” as defined by Montana law, and is therefore eligible for designation as an Urban Renewal District.

Railroad URD Study Area Boundaries

For the purposes of this study, Helena’s Railroad District has been defined as generally encompassing an area straddling the Montana Rail Link mainline and bounded by Interstate 15 on the east and North Last Chance Gulch on the west. See the following map for a preliminary delineation of district boundaries.



Railroad URD Study Area Description

Helena’s Railroad District is characterized by a mix of historical residential, commercial and industrial development, with some modern development—primarily light industrial and commercial—located along arterials and in the northwest portion of the district. The URD study area is bi-sected by Montana

Avenue, which runs north-south through the district's center, and by Montana Rail Link's main line, which runs east-west through the district. Historic development in the area is associated with the presence of the railroad, as is some of the more recent development. Different land uses predominate in the east and west portions of the district as it has been defined in this study, creating two distinct sections.

The eastern portion of the proposed Railroad URD centers on the historic Northern Pacific Railroad depot. The depot stands along the south side of the tracks (which are themselves included in the draft district boundaries) on Railroad Avenue. Helena's oldest extant commercial district lines the opposite side of Railroad Avenue, facing the depot and the tracks. Light industrial businesses currently operate around the east end of Railroad Avenue, while off its west end more recent commercial development leads up to Montana Avenue and the new Helena Area Transit Service building. Historic residential blocks radiate south (and north, across the tracks) from this commercial core, and the first few of these blocks to the south lie within the proposed south district boundary. The southwest corner of this east section of the district contains what is known as the Caird property, a large vacant lot that for decades held the historic industrial buildings, recently demolished, of Caird Engineering Works.



The west section of the Railroad URD study area correlates to the roughly triangular area marked by Montana Avenue, Lyndale Avenue, and N. Last Chance Gulch. In contrast to the east section, the west section of the proposed Railroad URD contains little residential development, with only two residential sites (a trailer park and an apartment complex that may have started as a motel) located north of Lyndale, and a few residential buildings located along the district's southern boundary. A variety of commercial development defines the west section. Historically industrial, the area now houses industrial, retail, service, and office spaces as well as Memorial Field and Memorial Park. Businesses in this section include a variety of warehouses, Pacific Hide and Steel, utilities like Century Link and Northwest Energy, the Lewis and Clark Brewing Company, building supply businesses like Habitat for Humanity's Re-Store, auto sales and servicing, and Disability Rights Montana. Retail and office spaces are concentrated along the section's arterials, especially Lyndale Avenue. Memorial Field and Memorial Park are located just south of the tracks and east of N. Last Chance Gulch.

History of the Railroad District

Helena's Railroad District was borne of the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883. At the time, Helena—capital of Montana Territory and regional commercial hub—centered on the downtown area flanking Last Chance Gulch, with residential areas ringing the city center. The site the Northern Pacific chose for its Helena depot lay about a mile and a half east of downtown, in a largely undeveloped area on the fringes of the city. The railroad's arrival sparked a boom in the city generally, and transformed the fields on its eastern edges into a semi-autonomous commercial hub and vibrant residential neighborhood. By virtue of its location at the base of the mountains cresting at the continental divide, Helena occupied a strategic location on the Northern Pacific's line—to get over the divide, trains needed

to be broken into smaller units and assisted by additional locomotives: this fact promised a busy future for Helena's railyard. The railroad soon established extensive operations in Helena and became a major employer. It also connected Helena to goods and markets in population centers to the east and west, stimulating almost every aspect of the young city's economy.⁵

In the railroad district itself, the arrival of the Northern Pacific spawned immediate real estate speculation and development. Surveyors staked out Helena Avenue to link the new depot with the established downtown business district, and several hotels soon lined Railroad Avenue. Rental homes and rooming houses



sprang up on newly platted lots, and saloons, stores and butcher shops appeared alongside. A school and a church soon followed. Growth in the district reflected both the railroad's influence and historic development patterns in the era before the spread of automobiles: residents mostly worked for the railroad or kept the shops along the tracks, and businesses catered to neighborhood residents and to travelers arriving on or boarding passenger trains. Facilities that required railroad access—like grain elevators, warehouses and factories—also built near the tracks, which quickly constituted “Helena's primary industrial zone.” Like the railroad itself, these businesses were staffed mainly by area residents, and “the area developed its own distinct identity as a working class neighborhood.”⁶

At the time, Helena was divided into seven municipal wards and the railroad additions composed the city's 6th Ward. The neighborhood has been known by that name ever since, and it has retained its distinctive working class feel and strong railroad-neighborhood identity. Historically, this solidarity was reinforced by the predominance of Catholicism among neighborhood residents, and in 1910 the Catholic Church built the Colonial Revival-style St. Mary's Church and School to serve the more than 500 parishioners in the area. The facility beckoned the 6th Ward faithful for over



⁵ Kate Hampton, “More than a Mile from City Center: Helena's Northern Pacific Railroad District and Sixth Ward,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 57, no. 1 (2007): 56–60; Jon Axline and Ellen Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, 2004; Jon Axline, *Cultural Resource Survey and Assessment: Caird Engineering Works (24LC2205)*, 2014; James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*.

⁶ James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*, 1; Axline, *Caird Engineering Works*, 8; *Ibid.*; Axline and Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District*.

50 years, and its history brackets the heyday and demise of the district it served.⁷

Optimism characterized the first fifteen years of the twentieth century in Montana, and Helena enjoyed stability and steady growth. By 1911, according to some sources, Helena was the richest city per capita in United States.⁸ While such wealth didn't trickle down to the 6th Ward, it, too, prospered. The Northern Pacific added new passenger trains to its daily service and, in 1903, replaced the original wood-frame depot with a handsome brick edifice designed by architect Charles Reed.



Other substantial improvements in the neighborhood appeared during these thriving years. After builders completed the Catholic church and school, bricklayers paved several blocks of Railroad Avenue with bricks to enhance the appeal and prestige of the depot area, and multiple masonry buildings appeared on the commercial side of the street, furthering “the impression of stability and permanence.” In 1911, much of the Grand Pacific Hotel was razed, and in its place rose the three-story Hotel Drake. In this period, the population of the district also changed noticeably, as “the railroad imported some 40 male workers of Japanese descent who were housed in railroad ‘warehouses’ . . . along the NP tracks.”⁹ As they did across Montana, the boom years of the early 20th century proved fleeting in the railroad district. Drought descended on Montana in the late ‘teens, and the state became the only one in the nation to lose population in the 1920s.¹⁰ The national Great Depression followed, and the local effects of all of these developments were compounded by devastating damage from a series of earthquakes that hit Helena in October 1935. Despite “being one of the hardest-hit sections of the city,” life in the 6th Ward went on much as it had before. Growth in the district stagnated in these decades, and little expansion or development occurred, but neighborhood



residents continued to work for the railroad or

⁷ Ibid.; James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*; Axline, Caird Engineering Works; Axline and Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District*.

⁸ William L Lang, “The Nearly Forgotten Blacks on Last Chance Gulch, 1900-1912,” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (1979): 50.

⁹ Hampton, “More than a Mile from City Center,” 59; Axline and Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District*, Section 8, p. 6.

¹⁰ Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, Revised (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 283.

associated industries and shop in the commercial district that remained clustered along near the tracks. Businesses and shops, many run by the original owners or their children, still catered to train travelers, railroad workers, and the working-class residents of the 6th Ward. Beginning in 1930, these same groups could also enjoy a bit of greenery and open space—the city called it a “beauty spot”— while they took a break from traveling, working or shopping. That year, after reports that “Helena had the worst looking depot area on the entire NP line,” the crowded and run-down commercial block immediately west of the depot was razed, and Beattie Park was created.¹¹

The railroad-centered way of life that defined and sustained the 6th Ward into the mid-20th century would not last. Although the neighborhood enjoyed a brief boom period during World War II—readily apparent in the many remodeled facades of businesses in the depot commercial district—the era ushered in a long period of decline that corresponded to the diminishing national importance of railroads. Improvements in roads and vehicles, and a fervor for all things automotive, drove the increasing importance of cars and trucks for transporting goods and people, and airplane travel expanded. All of these reduced railroad-related employment and travel, both of which hurt the 6th Ward. At the same time, industries mechanized and modernized, reducing their workforces and relocating farther from city centers. People, too, began to sprawl into suburbs, no longer relying on their legs to get to work, school, and stores. The railroad district lost jobs, businesses, and residents, and began a steady decline that would endure for 50 years. That decline would be punctuated, and symbolized, in 1971, when the Northern Pacific discontinued passenger service. Paradoxically, that decline in many ways preserved the neighborhood, protecting it from the kind of redevelopment that so often destroys historic districts. Today the 6th Ward is an unusually intact historic district with a strong neighborhood identity. As such, it is ripe for the type of investment that will improve and revitalize the area and enhance its existing assets.¹²

Blighted Conditions in the Railroad URD Study Area

As noted above, Montana Code Annotated 7-15-42 requires that, in order to form an Urban Renewal District, a municipality must first document that the district is blighted, ie. that at least three causes of blight (as listed in MCA 7-15-4206(2)) “apply to the area or part of the area.” According the statute, causes of blight can include:

- a) The substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential;
- b) Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, proper sanitary facilities, or open spaces as determined by competent appraisers on the base of an examination of the building standards of the municipality;
- c) Inappropriate of mixed uses of land or buildings;
- d) High density of population and overcrowding;
- e) Defective or inadequate street layout;
- f) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- g) Excessive land coverage;
- h) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- i) Deterioration of site;
- j) Diversity of ownership;
- k) Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;

¹¹ Axline and Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District*; Hampton, “More than a Mile from City Center.”

¹² Ibid.; James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*; Axline and Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District*.

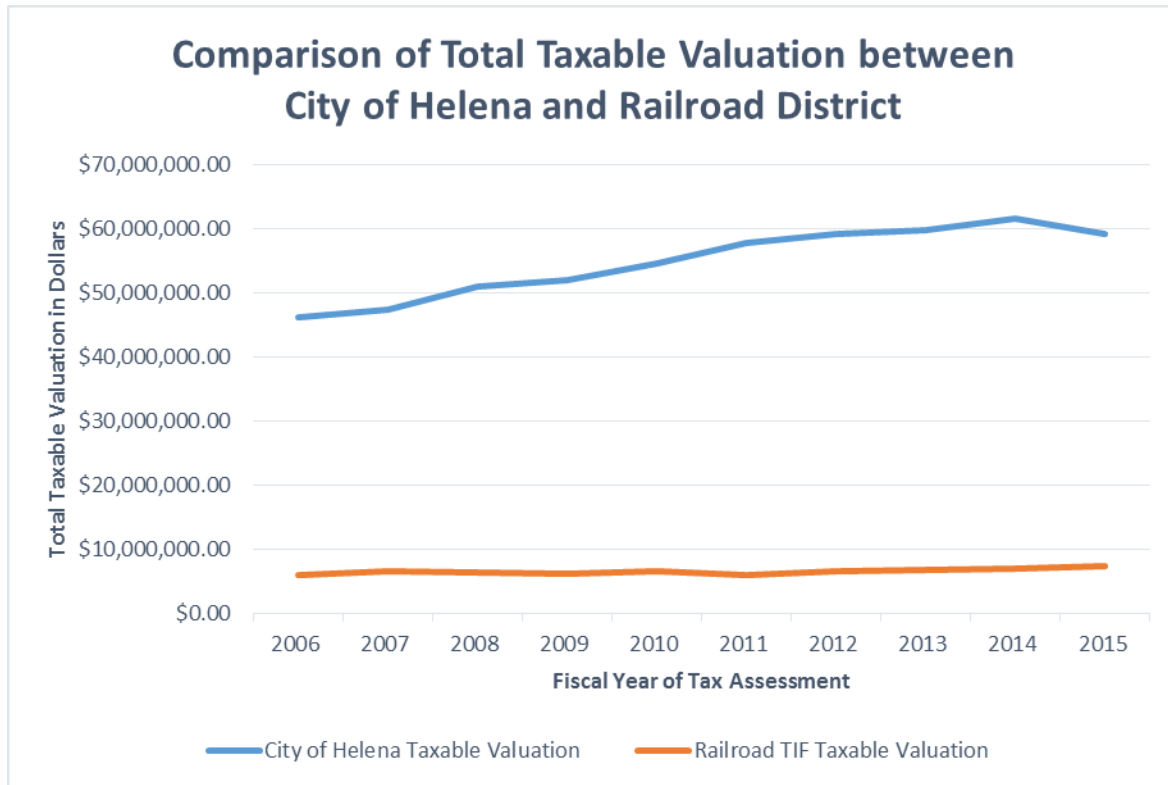
- l) Defective or unusual conditions of title;
- m) Improper subdivision or obsolete platting;
- n) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes;
- o) Any combination of the above factors.

WGM Group documented the existence of blight factors a, c, e, f, h, and n in the proposed district. Many of these same factors have long been extant in the area, and were previously documented in James Boyer's *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study* (2001) and the *Helena Railroad District Conditions and Criteria Analysis* completed in January 2015. Specifically, the following blight conditions are present:

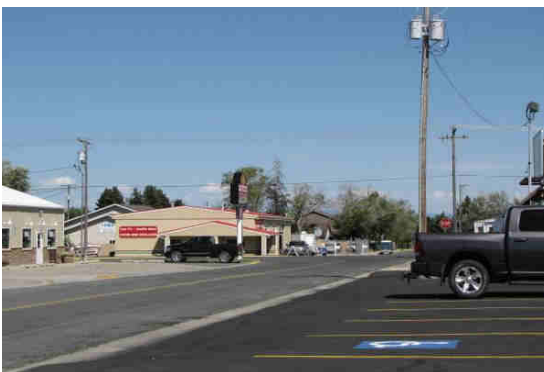
- a) **Substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential.** Numerous buildings in the area are deteriorated and dilapidated. Examples can be found throughout the district, and include both residential and commercial/industrial properties. Moreover, other improvements in the area are noticeably deteriorated, including many sections of sidewalks and portions of some streets. Foremost among them is the historic brick street fronting the railroad depot.

Tax valuation trends indicate that deterioration in the district is even more widespread than visual assessment suggests. Although taxable values on previously taxable properties across Helena have risen almost 50% in the last ten years, over one-third of properties (110/325) within the Railroad District have actually lost taxable value in that same time period. Many more have gained value at a much slower rate than properties in the city as a whole.





- c) **Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings.** The core of the Railroad URD study area is commercial and light industrial, with residential uses found mainly at the southern fringes. The primary exception to this pattern is a trailer court, Van's Mobile Home Park, located just north of the railroad tracks between Dodge and National avenues (at 804 Phoenix). The trailer court forms a residential island that suggests an incompatible mix of land uses. It contains about 17 trailers, a modular, and 3 historic frame houses, and the residents of these are cut off from schools, parks and other services and amenities by the railroad and a pair of major arterials, which form a triangle around the area. A lack of sidewalks exacerbates the safety and access issues posed by the trailer court's location, as do the nature of nearby businesses and the character of their sites, as well as the proximity of the actively-used train tracks themselves.



Two other sites in the district also constitute noticeable examples of incompatible mixes of land or building uses. The first is a day care and small attached graveled playground located in a commercial block at the 6-legged intersection of Gallatin, Helena, and Roberts. The second is the Memorial Park Apartment complex, sandwiched between Lyndale Avenue and Memorial Drive just east of the busy intersection of Lyndale and North Last Chance Gulch.



- e) **Defective or inadequate street layout.** Multiple instances of defective or inadequate street layout are apparent in the district, creating problems with circulation and connectivity. The most obvious of these is the five-legged intersection of Lyndale, Helena, and Montana Avenues, which elicits frequent complaints of congestion and has earned the local nickname “Malfunction Junction.” The problems at Malfunction Junction are compounded by a second major problem area immediately to the north, the Montana Avenue crossing of the railroad mainline (where congestion is consistently noted).



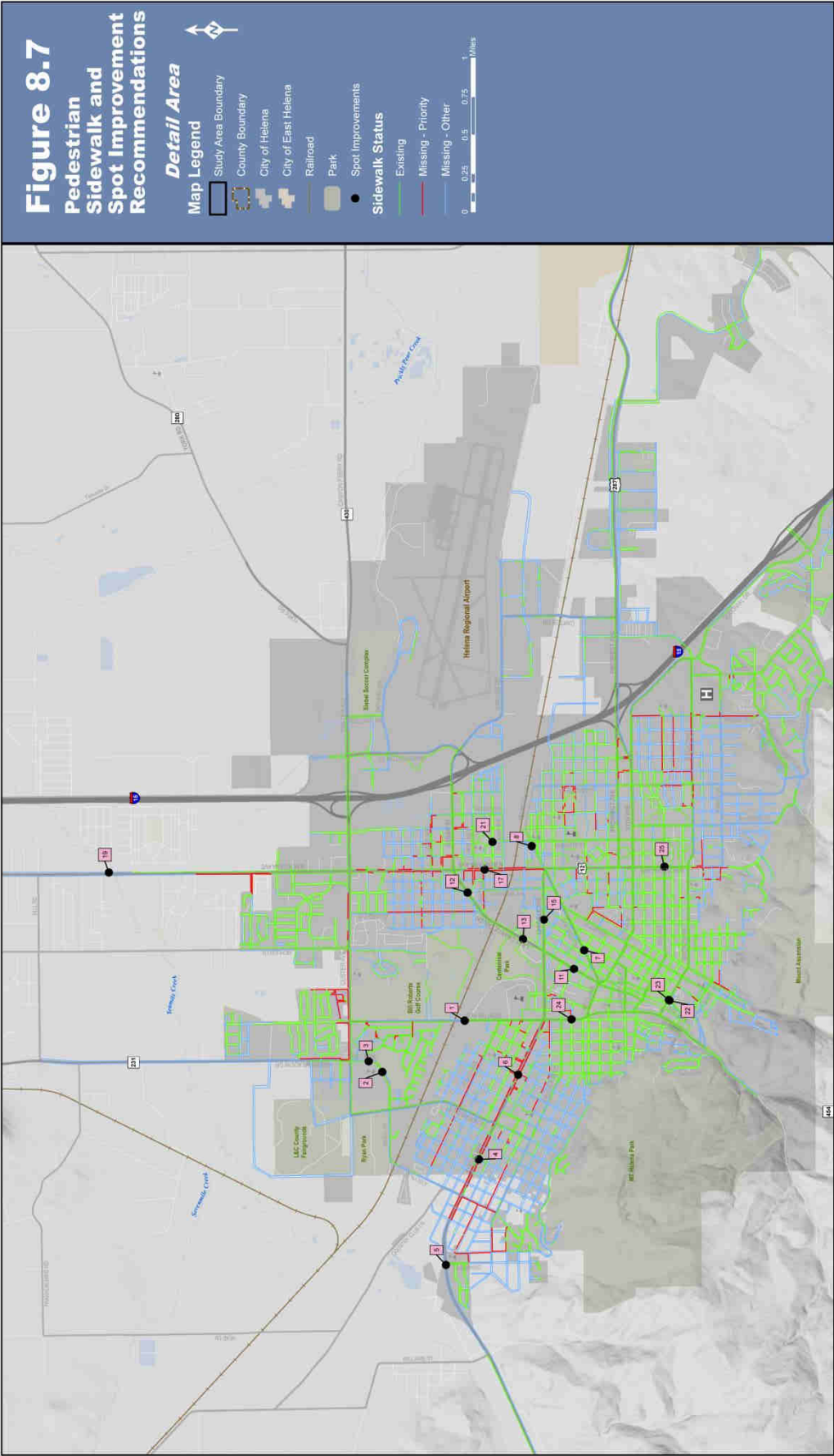


Additional problems with street layout or adequacy include the six-legged intersection of Gallatin, Helena, and Roberts.¹³ Moreover, street layouts throughout the district are grossly inadequate in terms of provision for bicycles and pedestrians. Most streets in the area lack sidewalks, and many of the extant sidewalks are in disrepair.

Bike paths are essentially nonexistent. Many streets in the district also dead end—at places other than those indicated on city maps—and aren't signed accordingly. Some lack paving, there are virtually no sidewalks, curbs, or gutters. It is difficult to determine where public streets end and private roads and driveways begin.



¹³ This intersection was a recommended Transportation System Management improvement project in the 2004 Transportation Plan, which called for modifying intersection geometry, but the project was not completed and the 2014 plan did not include it for further consideration. *2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan*, 116. Other reports have suggested problems in the eastern sections of the district (where access from arterials is difficult and inadequacy hampers business development) and at I-15 (where the underpass is located on Boulder Ave. instead of Lyndale, the main arterial). See Fossum Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Conditions and Criteria Analysis*, January 16, 2015, 4-5. The 2014 Transportation Plan lists improvements to a segment of Boulder Avenue (between North Hannaford Street and Blaine Street) as MSN project #14. The west end of the segment identified lies within the proposed Railroad URD. *2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan*, 109.



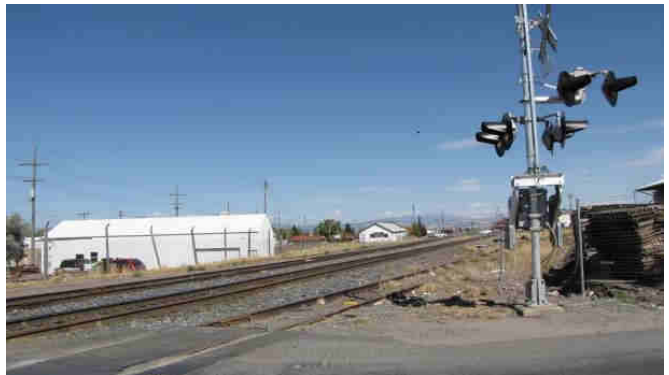
f) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness.

There are several sites throughout the district that suffer from access issues due to lot layout, most noticeably those near intersections. Examples of this can be found at the Malfunction Junction intersection and at the intersection of Chestnut Street and North Last Chance Gulch.

Other sites suffer from excessive, unbroken parking or paved areas that create an “asphalt sea” effect, among them the Century Link site on Chestnut Street between Dodge and National Avenues (where an enormous empty parking/storage area abuts the aforementioned trailer park). Additional lot layout problems are apparent in the Memorial Field vicinity, where provision for parking is inadequate.



- h) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions.** The most obvious unsafe conditions in the district relate to item e above. The absence of sidewalks and bicycle facilities seriously endangers pedestrians and cyclists, especially along arterials like Montana Avenue and at railroad crossings. Congestion and impediments to access inhibit provision of emergency services. Train crossings, both restricted and unrestricted, can do both of these (14-18 trains a day pass through the district). Unsafe conditions are also created by deteriorated sidewalks and streets, as well by the existence of contaminated sites, including several related to the railyard itself (eg. elevated lead and arsenic levels in nearby residential yards).¹⁴ A large open ditch runs along the west side of Montana Avenue and descends sharply into large culverts via deep, unfenced holes that pose a grave danger and immediate danger to cars, bikes, and pedestrians alike.



¹⁴ Tetra Tech, 6th Ward Area-Wide Assessment, prepared for Lewis and Clark County, May 30, 2008, 36-37. Other potentially unsafe contaminated sites include the Helena Solvent Site near 1427 Helena Ave., which is contaminated with the solvent PCE.



- n) **The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.** As noted in item h, numerous unsafe conditions exist in the district. Impediments to the provision of emergency services and the lack of adequate sidewalks endanger life, as does the presence of toxic substances in areas regularly used by residents, like residential yards.¹⁵



These six factors constitute the most pervasive and obvious blighted conditions in the Railroad District, with the related letter e, h, and n items most significant. Other examples of blight in the area are less substantial but nonetheless contribute to the district's overall blighted condition. They include:

- d) **High density or overcrowding.** Although the area encompassed by the proposed district boundaries itself includes no noticeable instances of overcrowding, an overcrowded section is located immediately adjacent to the east end of the north boundary. There, many trailers and modular homes have been squeezed into a small area, and there is a corresponding lack of

¹⁵ Tetra Tech, 6th Ward Area-Wide Assessment, prepared for Lewis and Clark County, May 30, 2008, 36-37.

outdoor space to accommodate the many young children living there. As a result, these young children play in the streets.

- i) **Deterioration of site.** As noted in item **a**, there are multiple instances of deteriorated buildings, both residential and commercial, throughout the district. Some of these examples can be characterized as deteriorated sites, on which not only a single building but the site as a whole has been allowed to deteriorate. This characterization, however, must be made with some caution, for the industrial nature of the district creates conditions that are inherently unsightly and may seem like deterioration when in fact they are just the byproducts of normal business operation.

Conclusion

Our study indicates that Helena's proposed Railroad URD meets Montana statutory criteria for a blighted area. It is also clear that the rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of the area is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the municipality. Indeed, without such rehabilitation, blighted conditions in the district are likely to worsen. Revitalizing this historic, intact and centrally-located neighborhood will benefit not only neighborhood residents, but the entire Helena community. This Statement of Blight establishes the need to undertake such revitalization. Once the city has adopted a Resolution of Necessity, the next step will be to prepare an Urban Renewal Plan to guide that revitalization effort.

Appendix D

Public Meeting Notes



1111 E. BROADWAY
MISSOULA, MT 59802
TEL: 406-728-4611
FAX: 406-728-2476
WWW.WGMGROUP.COM

PLANNING ■ SURVEYING ■ ENGINEERING ■ DESIGN

MEETING RECORD

MEETING DATE: October 21, 2015
PROJECT NAME: Helena Railroad Urban Renewal District Formation
PROJECT NO.: 15-01-11
SUBJECT: Railroad TIF District Neighborhood Meeting Summary
BY: Jeremy Keene, WGM Group
ATTENDEES: Anne Cossitt, Cossitt Consulting
Jeremy Keene, WGM Group
See sign in sheet for full list of attendees

☒ Meeting ☐ Telephone ☐ Conference Call

The following is a summary of the public meeting held in conjunction with the Mid-Town/6th Ward Neighborhood Association Meeting on Oct 21st at Helena College. There were 56 people in attendance at the meeting.

Jeremy Keene and Anne Cossitt provided a brief presentation on the Railroad TIF District. The following is a summary of questions, comments, and responses:

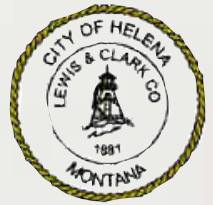
- There were many questions about how TIF works and how it affects taxes.
 - TIF takes property taxes from new development or redevelopment and invests them back into the District. TIF does not create new tax assessments (like a Special Improvement District). Property taxes do not go up, unless the value of the property changes. There were some concerns that if new development occurs, adjacent properties will also see their taxes go up. This would be true if those adjacent properties appreciate and are reappraised at a higher value.
- There were several questions about how the boundary was established and why the railroad was included. One person suggested that the Housing Authority property should be included to help with planned improvements.

- The proposed boundary was established based on conditions of blight and/or missing infrastructure, properties zoned for a higher intensity of use than the current use, “underutilized properties” where the land value exceeds the value of the improvements, and the ability to create a cohesive District with clear goals. The railroad property was included because it includes significant land that could be redeveloped.
- Some assumed that the TIF District was proposed to improve Malfunction Junction or create an underpass/overpass at the railroad, which is not the case, but TIF could play a role.
- There were several questions about rezoning and concerns for higher intensity of use.
 - Rezoning is not proposed with formation of the District, but it is something that could be considered in the future, which would require a separate public process.
- No one spoke out in opposition to the TIF District, but at least one or two people felt that it should go to a vote of “the people.”
 - The process for adopting a TIF District requires a public hearing and city ordinance, so the authority to create the District lies with the Helena City Commission. The public hearing for the Railroad District will likely happen in December.
- People seemed to be interested in improving the area, especially after seeing the revenue and results generated in other TIF Districts. Comments included:
 - Improving neighborhood connectivity, especially crossing Montana Ave and the railroad.
 - Improving sidewalk connections to schools
 - Improving Montana Avenue crossings, especially for school children
 - The importance of the railroad history in the neighborhood as something that defines the neighborhood and makes it different from other parts of Helena and also from other towns.
 - Opportunities to create a museums related to the railroad, model railroading, and/or the unique switching operations that happen in Helena to get rail cars over McDonald Pass.
 - Preserving and enhancing historic character
 - Addressing railroad noise (horns), which impact livability in the neighborhood
 - Improving Malfunction Junction
 - Creating a grade-separated railroad

END OF NOTES

RAILROAD TIF DISTRICT

Helena, Montana



TAX INCREMENT FINANCING FACT SHEET

WHAT IS TIF?

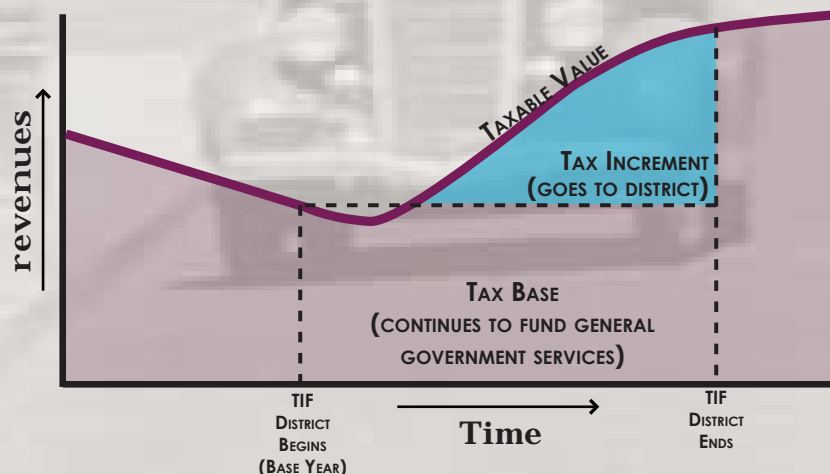
TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) IS A WAY OF DIRECTING PROPERTY TAX REVENUES FROM A GIVEN NEIGHBORHOOD, LIKE HELENA'S RAILROAD DISTRICT/6TH WARD, BACK INTO THAT NEIGHBORHOOD. NORMALLY, PROPERTY TAXES IN MONTANA GO INTO A GENERAL POOL TO HELP PAY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES SUCH AS SCHOOLS, ROADS AND BRIDGES, AS WELL AS FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION. WITH TIF, A PORTION OF THE PROPERTY TAXES IN A QUALIFYING NEIGHBORHOOD IS RESERVED FOR REVITALIZING THAT NEIGHBORHOOD. TIF AIMS TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC VITALITY, CREATE JOBS AND ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT IN TARGETED NEIGHBORHOODS, AND INVESTS IN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS LIKE STREETS, SIDEWALKS, TRAILS AND PARKS.

HOW DOES TIF WORK?

MONTANA'S URBAN RENEWAL LAW ALLOWS CITIES TO CREATE TIF DISTRICTS IN AREAS WHERE ECONOMIC GROWTH HAS BEEN IMPAIRED AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT IS LACKING—AREAS THAT ARE DEEMED "BLIGHTED." WHEN A TIF DISTRICT IS FORMED, A PORTION OF THE TAXES ON PROPERTIES WITHIN THE DISTRICT IS RESERVED FOR USE WITHIN THE DISTRICT FOR A SPECIFIED PERIOD (USUALLY 15 YEARS). THESE REVENUES GET REINVESTED IN THE DISTRICT TO PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES THAT WILL ENCOURAGE PRIVATE-SECTOR INVESTMENT AND REVITALIZE THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

THE PORTION OF PROPERTY TAXES THAT ARE DIRECTED TO THE DISTRICT IS KNOWN AS THE TAX INCREMENT. THE TAX INCREMENT IS CALCULATED ACCORDING TO PROVISIONS OF THE URBAN RENEWAL LAW: THE YEAR A TIF DISTRICT IS ESTABLISHED IS THE BASE YEAR, AND PROPERTY TAXES ASSESSED IN THAT YEAR ARE THE BASE TAX REVENUES. AS TIME GOES ON, AND THE DISTRICT IMPROVES, ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUES INCREASE, AND THE INCREASE IN PROPERTY TAX REVENUES IS THE TAX INCREMENT. THE BASE TAX REVENUES CONTINUE TO FUND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES, BUT THE ADDITIONAL REVENUES THAT ACCRUE WITH TIME AND INVESTMENT, IE. THE TAX INCREMENT, GET REINVESTED IN THE DISTRICT. ALTHOUGH TAX INCREMENTS FROM INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES MAY BE SLIGHT, THEY ARE AUGMENTED BY NEW DEVELOPMENT AND IT ADDS UP TO SUBSTANTIAL FUNDS FOR REVITALIZING A NEIGHBORHOOD.

EXAMPLE: A PROPERTY THAT GENERATED \$1,000 IN TAXES IN THE BASE YEAR APPRECIATES AND/OR IS IMPROVED SO THAT IT GENERATES \$1,500 IN PROPERTY TAXES IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS. THE \$500 INCREASE (THE TAX INCREMENT) GOES INTO A SPECIAL FUND TO BE USED FOR REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WITHIN THE DISTRICT.



Does TIF Raise Property Taxes?

No. TIF does not raise property taxes. Tax payers within a TIF district pay the same amount as they would if the property were located outside the district. The only difference is in the distribution of tax revenues—a portion of the property taxes TIF property owners pay gets redirected into improving their neighborhood.

How is TIF used?

Tax increment funds can be used to finance public and private redevelopment activities that benefit the public. These often include building rehabilitation and renovation; environmental cleanup; land acquisition; site preparation; demolition and removal of structures; utility upgrades and extensions; and construction of parking facilities, streets, alleys, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, parks, trails, and public buildings. The laws governing TIF can be found in Montana's Urban Renewal Law, 7-15-4201 of the Montana Code Annotated.

See http://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca_toc/7_15_42.htm

Does TIF Hurt Local Governments and Essential Services?

No. Each taxing jurisdiction (city, county, school district etc.) continues to receive its share of the base tax revenues throughout the duration of the TIF district, with only the tax increment being redirected to the district. When the district expires, the taxing jurisdictions benefit from increased property tax revenues (due to increased property values in the improved and redeveloped neighborhood) that would likely not exist if the district hadn't been formed.

How is a TIF District Created?

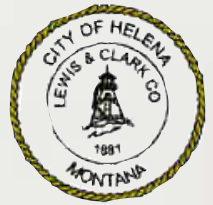
There is an established step by step process for creating a TIF district:

- A district's eligibility is established by identifying boundaries and documenting specific "blight" conditions
- The City Commission adopts a Resolution of Necessity that states that "blight" exists in the area, and that rehabilitation and/or redevelopment "are necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents."
- Public/neighborhood meetings are held to determine district priorities, desires, visions
- Urban Renewal Plan (URP) is prepared that reflects district priorities, desires, visions and outlines options for achieving them
- URP is reviewed by Planning Board to ensure it conforms with growth policy and zoning
- An ordinance is prepared for the City Commission to adopt the district URP
- All property owners in the district are notified of the draft ordinance and a public hearing is held
- The City Commission adopts the ordinance
- All affected taxing jurisdictions are notified and the relevant documents are sent to the Montana Department of Revenue
- The Montana Department of Revenue certifies the URP and the district is officially created



RAILROAD TIF DISTRICT

Helena, Montana



RAILROAD AREA REVITALIZATION

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT EFFORTS

FACT SHEET 2

OCTOBER 2015

CITY COMMISSION INITIATES PLANNING FOR THE RAILROAD AREA

ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2015, THE HELENA CITY COMMISSION VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT A "RESOLUTION OF NECESSITY" FOR THE RAILROAD AREA. THE RESOLUTION STATES BLIGHT EXISTS IN THE AREA, THAT REHABILITATION AND/OR REDEVELOPMENT ARE NECESSARY, AND THAT AN URBAN RENEWAL PLAN WILL BE DEVELOPED TO ADDRESS THE BLIGHT. THE TERMS "BLIGHT" AND "URBAN RENEWAL" ARE THOSE USED IN THE MONTANA LAWS THAT AUTHORIZE URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICTS AND TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF).

How TIF DISTRICTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) IS A WAY OF DIRECTING PROPERTY TAX REVENUES FROM A GIVEN NEIGHBORHOOD, LIKE HELENA'S RAILROAD DISTRICT, BACK INTO THAT NEIGHBORHOOD. WITH TIF, A PORTION OF THE PROPERTY TAXES ARE RESERVED FOR REVITALIZING THAT NEIGHBORHOOD. TIF AIMS TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC VITALITY, CREATE JOBS AND ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT IN TARGETED NEIGHBORHOODS, AND INVEST IN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS LIKE STREETS, SIDEWALKS, TRAILS, AND PARKS. TIFDs DO NOT RAISE PROPERTY TAXES, BUT REDIRECT SOME OF THE TAXES BACK INTO THE NEIGHBORHOOD. FOR MORE INFORMATION REFER TO THE SEPARATE "TAX INCREMENT FINANCING FACT SHEET."

SEE ATTACHED MAP OF TIF DISTRICT STUDY AREA.

HELENA CITY COMMISSION REQUESTS YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN DETERMINING PRIORITIES

ON OCTOBER 21, A PUBLIC MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THE RAILROAD TIF DISTRICT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER BUSINESS OF THE MID-TOWN/6TH WARD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION. THE MEETING WILL INCLUDE A PRESENTATION ON THE TIFD AND DISCUSSION OF PRIORITIES FOR THE AREA'S URBAN RENEWAL PLAN.

PUBLIC MEETING:
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21 ST
7:00 PM

HELENA COLLEGE, 1115 NORTH ROBERTS, ROOM 202

THE CITY COUNCIL PLANS TO TAKE ACTION TO CREATE THE TIF DISTRICT BY THE END OF 2015

BACKGROUND ON RENEWAL EFFORTS

HELENA'S RAILROAD DISTRICT IS CHARACTERIZED BY A MIX OF HISTORICAL RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, WITH SOME MODERN DEVELOPMENT—PRIMARILY LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL. THE CITY OF HELENA, PROPERTY OWNERS, RESIDENTS, AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES HAVE LONG BEEN INTERESTED IN REVITALIZING HELENA'S HISTORIC RAILROAD DISTRICT AND THE SURROUNDING 6TH WARD NEIGHBORHOOD. THERE IS RECENT RENEWED ACTIVITY AND INTEREST IN THE AREA BY A VARIETY OF ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS INCLUDING THE TIF DISTRICT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BROWNFIELDS, THE INTERSECTION OF LYNDALE, MONTANA, AND HELENA AVENUES," (AKA MALFUNCTION JUNCTION), RAILROAD CROSSINGS AND NOISE, BIKE/PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS, MID-TOWN/6TH WARD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, HOUSING, PARKS AND NEIGHBORHOOD GARDENS, AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION.

TIMELINE OF REVITALIZATION ACTIVITIES IN RAILROAD TIF DISTRICT AREA

2001	HELENA RAILROAD DISTRICT REVITALIZATION STUDY, COMPLETED BY JAMES BOYER FOR CITY OF HELENA
2003	CITY OF HELENA BRINGS IN THE COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTER OF MSU ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT WORKS WITH AREA RESIDENTS AND PRODUCES DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR RENOVATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION ENTITLED "HELENA RAILROAD DISTRICT REVITALIZATION."
2014	RAILROAD ADVOCACY TEAM (RAT) ORGANIZES AS VOLUNTEER GROUP OF PROPERTY OWNERS, RESIDENTS, AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES TO REVITALIZE THE NEIGHBORHOOD
JAN 2015	A STUDY OF THE AREA'S POTENTIAL AS A SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT IS COMPLETED BY FOSSUM CONSULTING (NOT A PROJECT OF THE CITY OF HELENA)
JUNE 2015	CITY OF HELENA CONTRACTS CONSULTING FIRMS WGM GROUP AND COSSITT CONSULTING TO ASSIST IN PREPARATION OF THE RAILROAD URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT
JUNE 2015	EPA CONVENES A MEETING ON ISSUES RELATED TO THE "QUEEN CITY CROSSING" (ALSO KNOWN MIDTOWN/RAILROAD DISTRICT AND TO DISCUSS HOW VARIOUS ACTIVITIES CAN BE COORDINATED – 32 STAKE HOLDERS ATTEND THE MEETING
SEPT 14, 2015	HELENA CITY COMMISSION REVIEWS THE WGM REPORT "STATEMENT OF BLIGHT" AND ADOPTS "RESOLUTION OF NECESSITY" TO BEGIN PLANNING FOR THE RAILROAD TIF DISTRICT
OCT 21, 2015	PUBLIC MEETING ON TIFD IN CONJUNCTION WITH MID-TOWN/6TH WARD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETING
OCT 22, 2015	EPA CONVENES 2ND MEETING ON "QUEEN CITY CROSSING" AREA

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR REVITALIZATION

THE "RAILROAD URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT STATEMENT OF BLIGHT" PREPARED BY WGM GROUP FOR THE CITY OF HELENA IN AUGUST, 2015 IDENTIFIED A NUMBER OF INSTANCES OF BLIGHT IN THE AREA INCLUDING SUBSTANTIAL PHYSICAL DILAPIDATION AND DETERIORATION OF BUILDINGS, DEFECTIVE OR INADEQUATE STREET LAYOUT, EXISTENCE OF CONDITIONS THAT ENDANGER LIFE OR PROPERTY, AND OTHERS. IN ADDITION, THE STUDY FOUND THAT OVER ONE-THIRD OF THE PROPERTIES WITHIN THE RAILROAD DISTRICT LOST TAXABLE VALUE IN THE LAST 10 YEARS, WHILE VALUES ACROSS HELENA ROSE ALMOST 50% IN THE SAME TIME PERIOD.

THE "STATEMENT OF BLIGHT" IDENTIFIES CONDITIONS THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED AND THE NEXT STEP WILL BE TO IDENTIFY A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE AREA. POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR REVITALIZATION, IDENTIFIED IN THE ORIGINAL 2001 STUDY BY JAMES BOYER, ARE LISTED BELOW AND CONTINUE TO BE VALID TODAY.

- REHABILITATION OF HOUSING, COMMERCIAL AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS
- IMPROVING TRAFFIC EFFICIENCY AND SAFETY
- CLEANING-UP AND BEAUTIFYING AREA STREETS, YARDS AND BUILDINGS
- REDUCING AIR, NOISE, AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION PROBLEMS
- ENCOURAGING IN-MIGRATION OF YOUNG FAMILIES INTO THE DISTRICT
- FOSTERING LOCAL BUSINESS AND JOB GROWTH
- MAKING NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE WATER, SEWER, AND STORM SEWER
- FOSTERING LONG-TERM GROWTH IN AREA TAX BASE
- PRESERVING AND ENHANCING HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT PROPERTIES
- SUSTAINING THE AREA'S VALUED SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS
- REDUCING CONFLICTS BETWEEN RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS LAND USE

RAILROAD TIF DISTRICT

Helena, Montana

Sign In – Please Print

NAME	E-MAIL/ADDRESS	PHONE NO.
Kermit Mueller	431 7534	442-3589
Bonnie Corang	594 9662 bonbraungnt@gmail.com	594-9662
Iryna O'Connor	irynakurbatava@gmail.com	406 465 8139
Quinlan O'Connor	q@quinlanoconnor.com	406 850 4512
John L. Horne	JHORNE6729@AOL.com	442-3970
Russ Cargo	rcargo@helenaindustries.org	442-8632
Glenn Jorgenson	gjorgenson@helena.mt.gov	447-8415
Raymond L. Clum	Clum@mt.net	457-0543
Ken Allis	✓	✓
Brian Obert	bobert@mbac.biz	465-0619
John Iverson	iversonmontana@gmail.com	459-3344
ED BEALL	ed@capitalportsmt.com	443 2878
Bruce Wood	bruce_wood@pacific-steel.com	438-3708
Dan Hill	Juedan.hill@msn.com	465-1486
Ria Steffins	runria@gmail.com	461-4523
Julie DalSoglio	dalsoglio.julie@epa.gov	457-5025
Judy Merickel	judy@gnrc.info	457-5541
Greg Pope	PopeKC@BRESNAN.net	996 1059
Wendy Sebastian	wendy@eaglefireonline.com	443-5910
Phil Sebastian	phil@eaglefireonline.com	443-5910

RAILROAD TIF DISTRICT

Helena, Montana

Sign In – Please Print

NAME	E-MAIL/ADDRESS	PHONE NO.
Terry Ray	raytst14@gmail.com	
BUTCH Huizinga	aaastorageMT@hotmail.com	406-442-1758
Ken + Beth Lamping	myyellow57@aol.com	406-442-4545
Don Lytle	DonLytle@msu.edu	431 7856
Steve Czar		443 1652
Dan Fiehrer	mafiehrer@yahoo.com	442 3720
Terry Atwood	terry@Atwoodarts.com	443-4907
Sharon Nougier	shaugen@helena.tnt.gov	447-8445
Rose Casey	watercarver@msn.com	410-0968
Ryan Stavnes	ryan.cecil@cityofhelena.com	465 3038
SCOTT McLean	AATRANS Hel-gmail	461-8493
Maggie Stockwell	magnolia9@hotmail.com	465-0707
Kurti McBride	KMcBride@hhamt.org	241-8655
Bruce Day	bruced@helenafoodshare.org	443-3663
Shawn White Wolf	sh.spwhitewolf@gmail.com	438 3228
Leslie Torgerson	ltorgerson@hhamt.org	442-7970x129
Carla Tevis	carlatevis@yahoo.com	449-2587
Rick Farrow	rick.farrow@pacific-northwest.com	442-7851
GREG GUSCH	HEL@HELENAINDUSTRIES.ORG	442-8637
Megan Moore	memoore@mt.gov	406-444-4464

Sign In – Please Print

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NAME

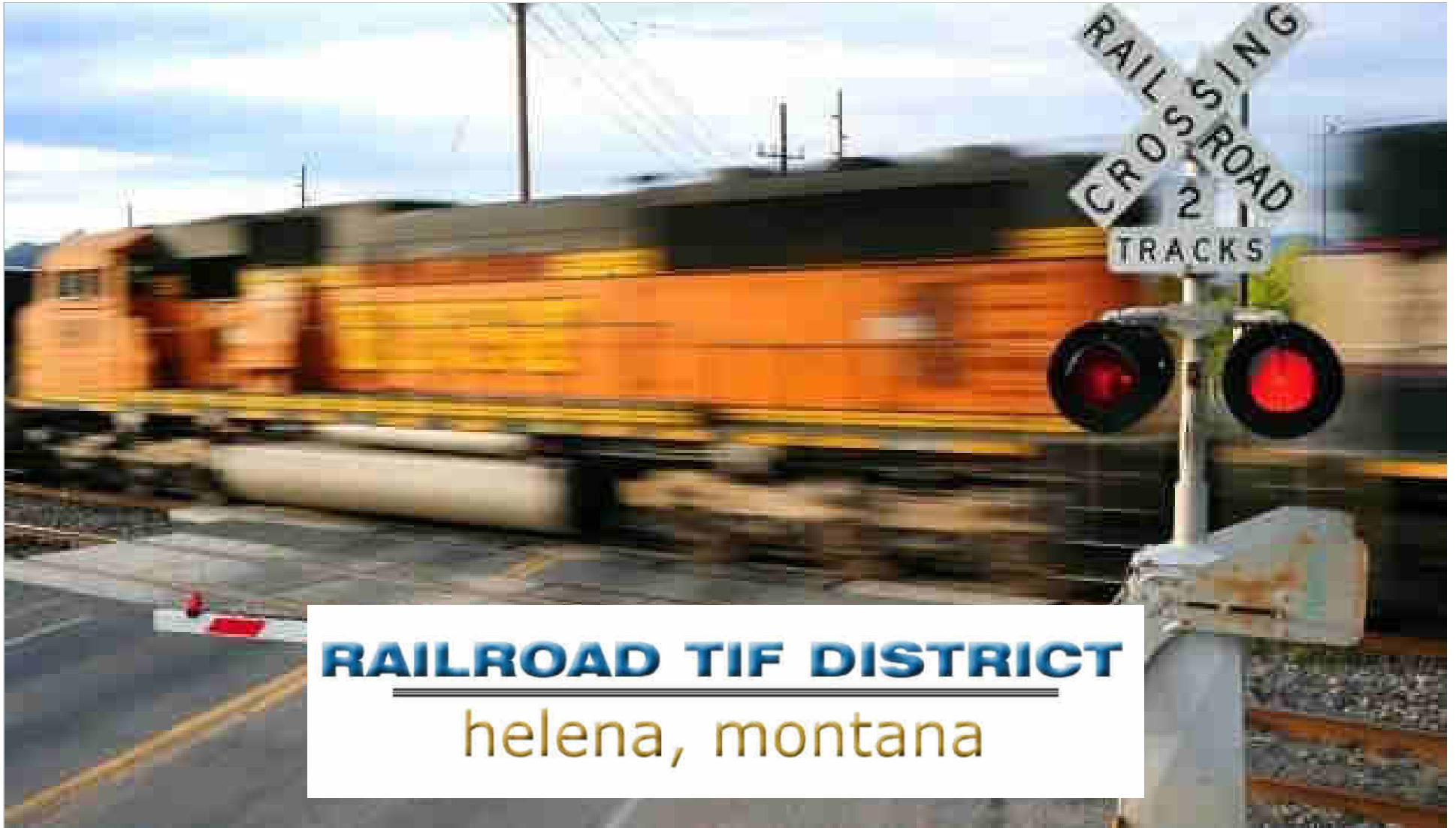
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Ph #

Geraldine Rhine
Kari Christensen

406-449-4881

449-8945



RAILROAD TIF DISTRICT
helena, montana

Neighborhood Meeting

October 21, 2015

City of Helena



Introductions

Sharon Haugen

City of Helena Community Development

Brian Obert

Montana Business Assistance Connection

Jeremy Keene

WGM Group, Inc.

Anne Cossitt

Cossitt Consulting



City of Helena



Agenda

What is TIF?

What are the benefits of a TIF District?

How is a TIF District created?

What is the Helena Railroad TIF?

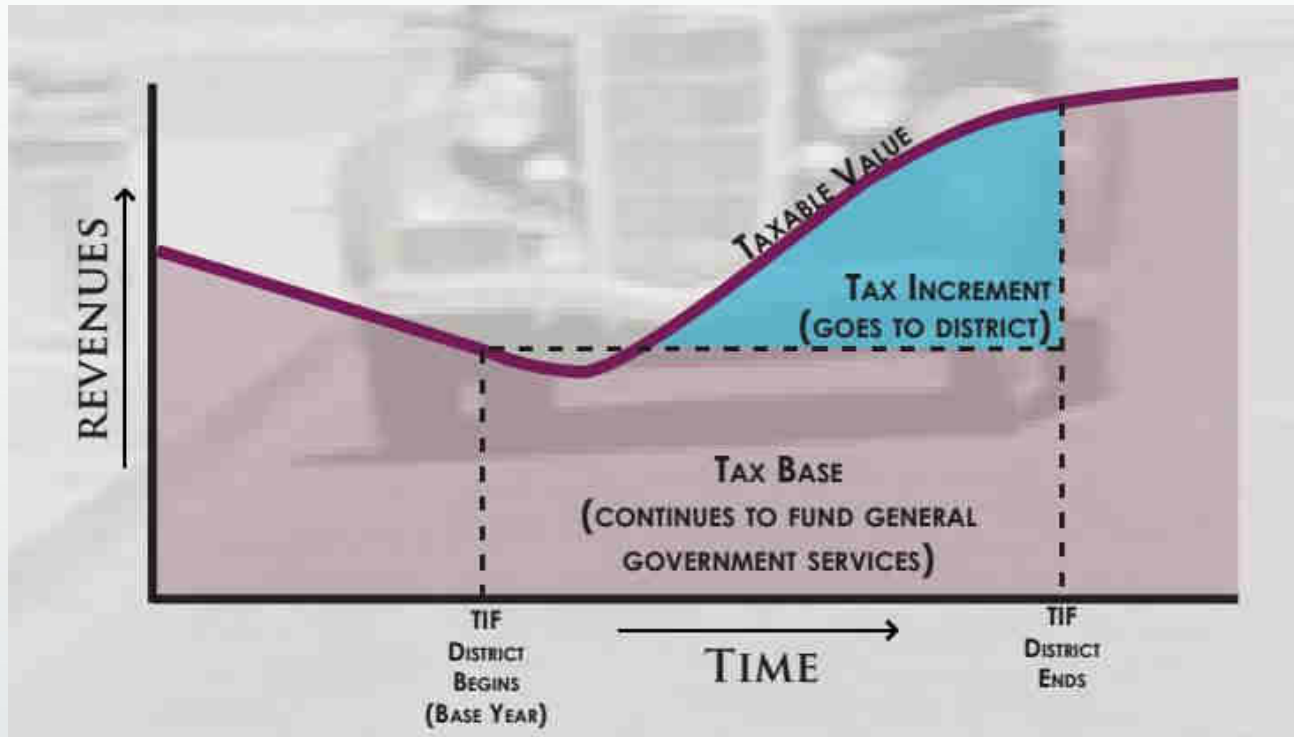
What do YOU want to see for the future of this area? (discussion)

Next Steps

What is TIF?

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a state authorized, locally driven funding mechanism that allows cities and counties to direct property tax dollars that accrue from new development, within a specifically designated district, to community and economic development activities.

How TIF Works



Example: A property that generates \$1,000 in taxes appreciates or is improved so that it generates \$1,500 in property taxes. The original \$1000 continues to go to the general fund, but the \$500 increase (the tax increment) goes to a special fund to be used for redevelopment projects in the District.

What are the Benefits of a TIF District?

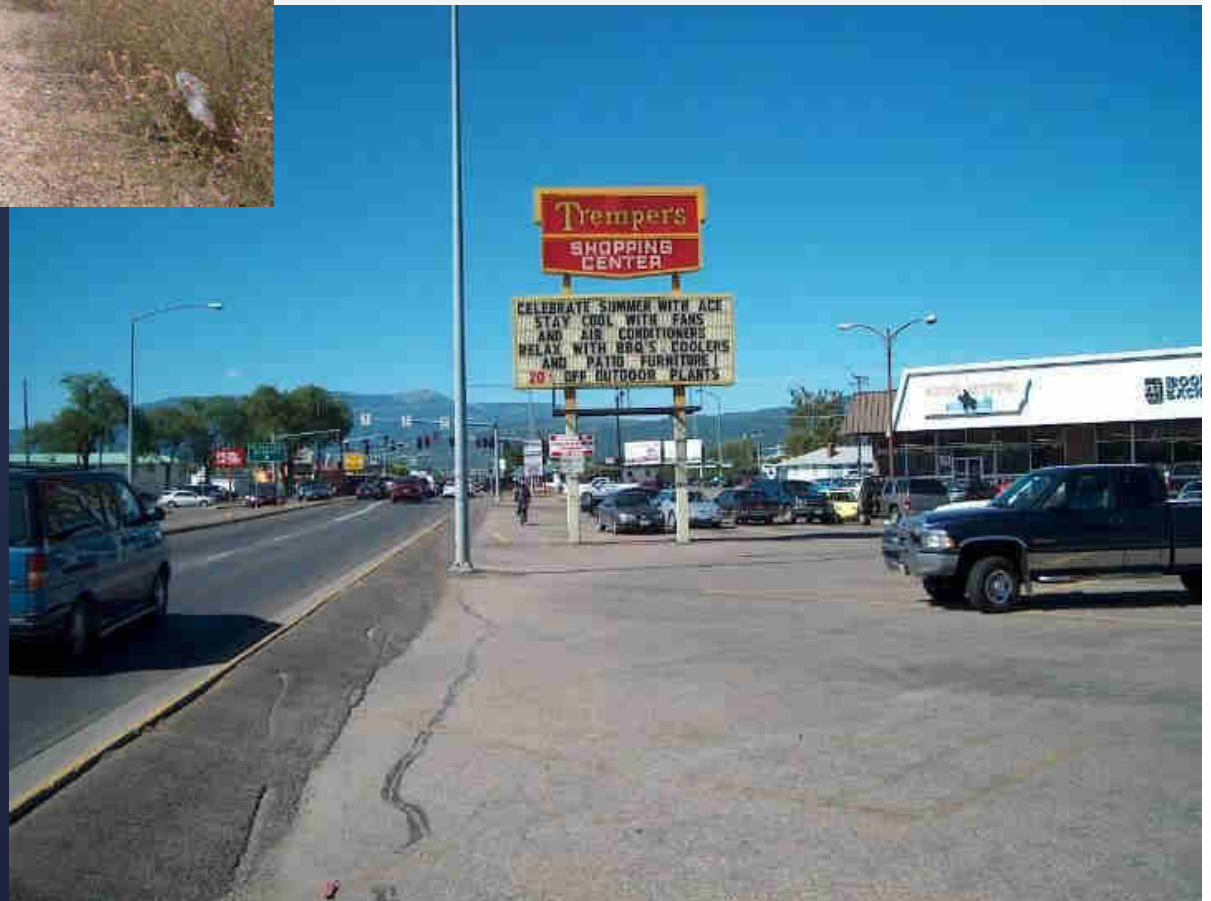
TIF aims to improve economic vitality, create jobs, and encourage investment in targeted neighborhoods by providing funds for private and public redevelopment activities.

- Building Rehabilitation and Renovation
- Environmental Cleanup
- Land Acquisition
- Demolition & Site Preparation
- Utility Upgrades
- Construction of Public Streets, Alleys, Sidewalks, Parks, Trails, Buildings and Parking Facilities



TIF District Benefits

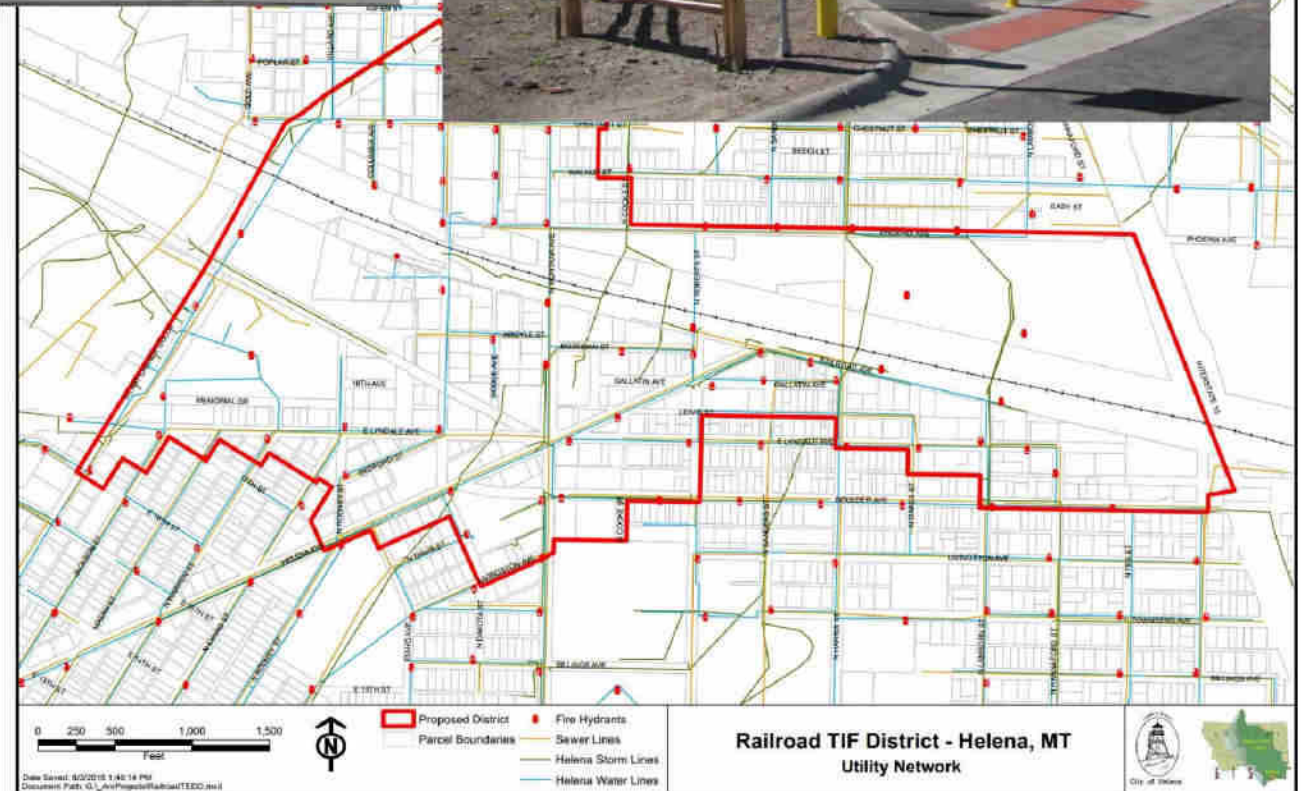
*Leveling the
Playing Field*





TIF District Benefits

*Utilizing Existing
Services &
Infrastructure*



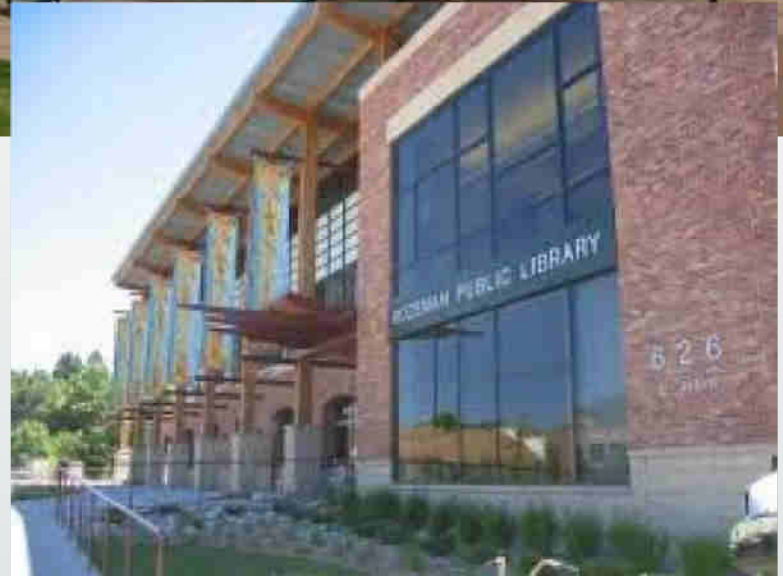


TIF funding typically provides 10-15% of the total development cost

TIF District Benefits

Leveraging Private Investment





TIF District Benefits

*Aligning
Development with
Community Goals*

"You can't have economic development until you have a place where people want to live."

—David Sims, Director of the Boundary Economic Development Council in Bonners Ferry, Idaho



TIF District Benefits

*Getting the best
results for the
community*





TIF District Benefits

*Catalyst for New
Development*





TIF District Benefits

*Catalyst for New
Development*



Disadvantages

Understanding TIF is difficult

Perceived effect on other taxing jurisdictions

Administration: cost, setup, management

Estimating revenue can be difficult

Long-term return on investment

- Tax base is deferred
- Would developments have happened anyway?

How is a TIF District Created?

Establish Boundaries and
“Blight” Conditions

Resolution of Necessity

Urban Renewal Plan Plan

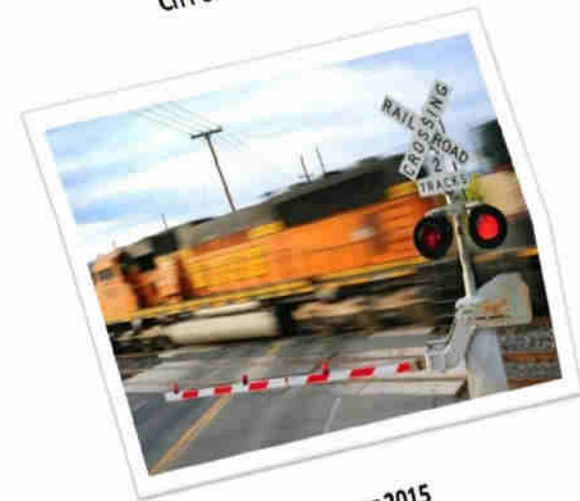
Planning Board Review

Public Hearing

Plan Adoption

Certification

RAILROAD URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT
STATEMENT OF BLIGHT
CITY OF HELENA



AUGUST 2015

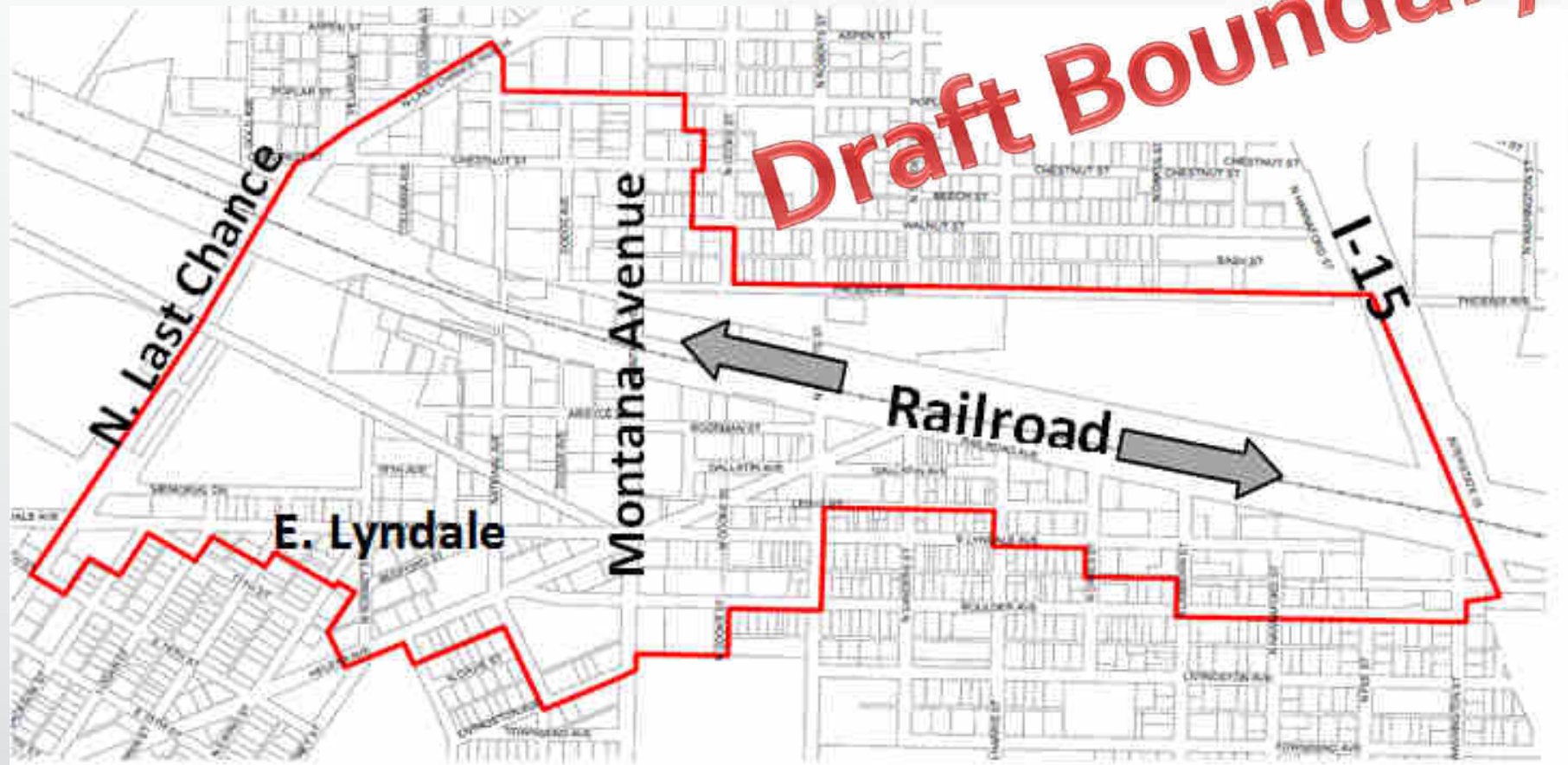
PREPARED BY:
WGM
GROUP



City of Helena



What is the Railroad TIF District?





From Past to Present

1883: Northern Pacific Railroad

- 1.5 mi from downtown
- Residential, commercial & industrial
- City's 6th ward of 7



1903: New depot

1911: Hotel Drake – 3 story bldg

1930: Beattie Park created

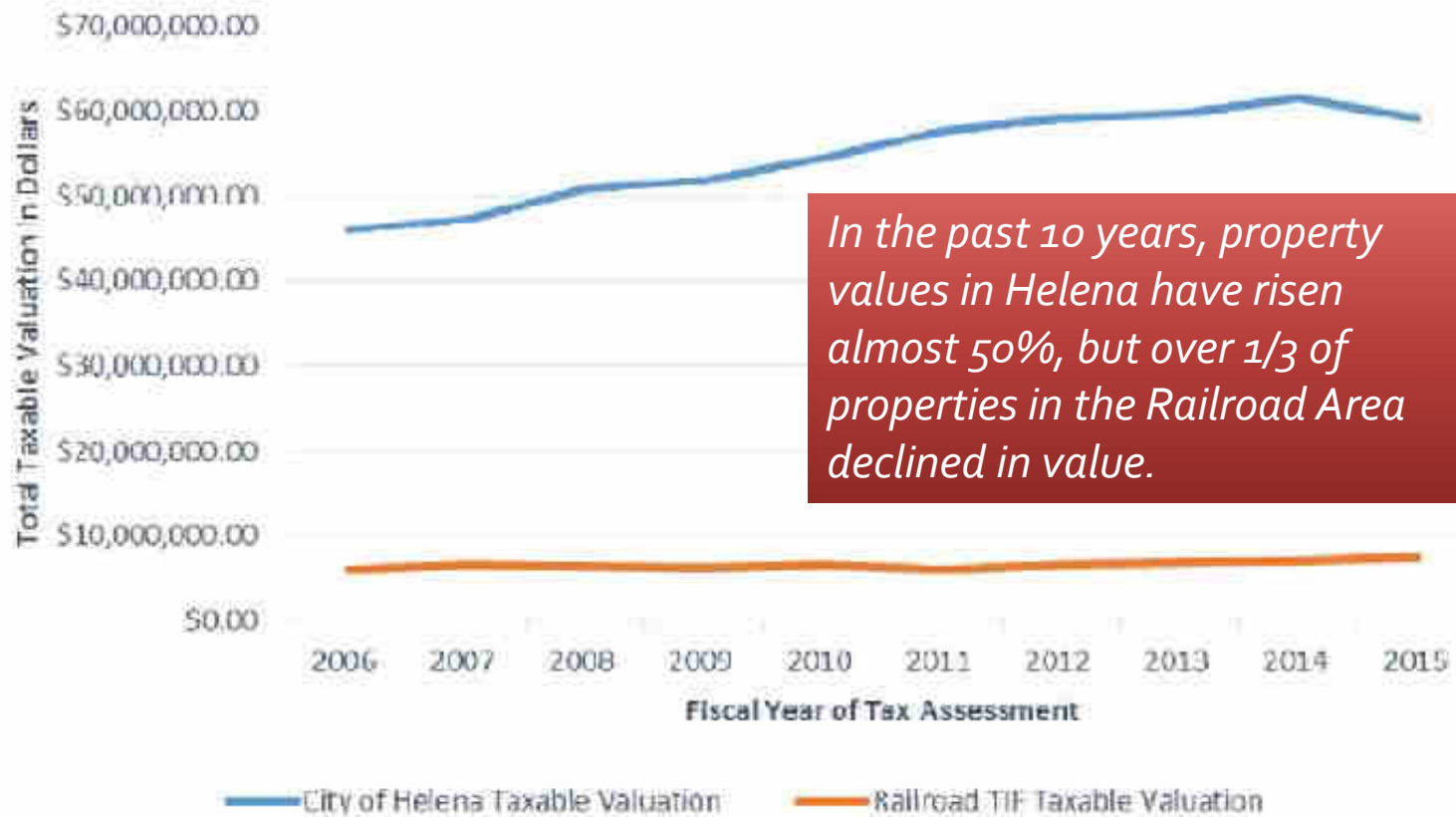
1950: Rise of the auto; decline of rail

1971: Railroad ends passenger service

TIMELINE OF RECENT REVITALIZATION ACTIVITIES

2001	<u>City of Helena</u> : Railroad District Revitalization Study
2003	<u>City of Helena</u> : MSU Architecture Department develops Design Guidelines
2014	Railroad Advocacy Team (RAT)
June 2015	<u>City of Helena</u> : Contracts with WGM/Cossitt for Railroad Urban Renewal District
June 2015	U.S. EPA: convenes meeting regarding various efforts in the area
Sep 14, 2015	<u>City of Helena</u> : Completes "Statement of Blight" City Commission adopts "Resolution of Necessity"
Oct 21, 2015	<u>City of Helena</u> : Public Meeting on Urban Renewal District

Comparison of Total Taxable Valuation between City of Helena and Railroad District



Documentation of Blight in Railroad Area

- Substantial physical dilapidation
- Inappropriate or mixed use of land or buildings
- Defective or inadequate street layout
- Faulty lot layout
- Unsanitary or unsafe conditions
- Conditions that endanger life or property

Where are we at in this process?

Establish Boundaries and
“Blight” Conditions

Resolution of Necessity

→ Urban Renewal Plan

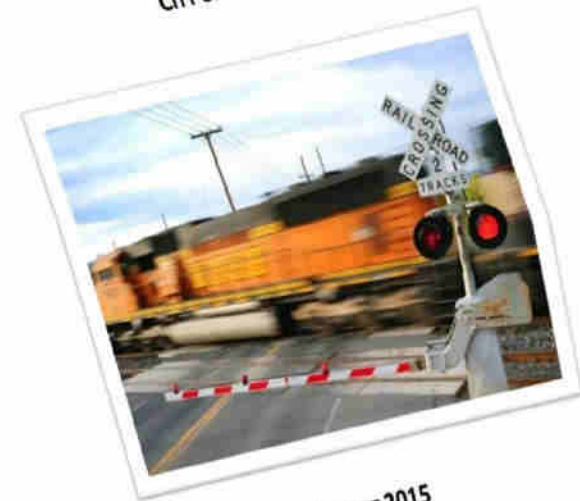
Planning Board Review

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RAILROAD URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT
STATEMENT OF BLIGHT
CITY OF HELENA



AUGUST 2015

PREPARED BY:
WGM
GROUP



City of Helena



TIF-Urban Renewal District Plan

Required Elements:

- Description of blighted and/or infrastructure deficient conditions
- A plan for addressing these conditions
- A map and legal description
- References/linkages to the jurisdiction's growth policy and zoning, and other related plans as appropriate (economic development, historic preservation, transportation, public health)
- A management strategy
- A statement of intent to use TIF and an associated base year

Initial Plan Concepts

- Infrastructure Improvements
- Improve and Foster Economic Growth
- Build on Valued Neighborhood Characteristics
- Improving Neighborhood Health

Initial Plan Concepts

Infrastructure Improvements

- Improving traffic efficiency and safety
- Improving “connections” within and outside District (connections to schools, downtown, Great Northern town center)
- Streets, sidewalks, sewer, water, storm sewer

Improve and Foster Economic Growth

- Foster local business and job growth
- Increase the diversity of businesses

Initial Plan Concepts

Build on Valued Neighborhood Characteristics

- Historically significant properties
- Mixed Use
- Pride in the Neighborhood – rehabilitating dilapidated structures, improved appearance
- Destination spot in town – to live, work, and enjoy

Improving Neighborhood Health

- Addressing pollution and other environmental issues
- Reducing conflicts among land uses

What do *YOU* want to see for the future of this area?



Jeremy Keene
WGM Group, Inc.
406.728.4611
jkeene@wgmgroup.com

Anne Cossitt
Cossitt Consulting
406.422.0633
atcositt@gmail.com

Thank You



City of Helena



Additional Information



City of Helena



Establishing Boundaries

TIF districts must:

- Be blighted and/or infrastructure deficient
- Be contiguous and not overlap another district
- Be correctly zoned in accordance with the Growth Policy
- Be located entirely within one jurisdiction
- Include entire parcels



Establishing Boundaries

Other Considerations:

Ability to generate revenue (increment) – Will enough development occur in the area to generate an adequate increment?

Feasibility of improving, installing or replacing infrastructure – can affordable infrastructure improvements be made within the boundary?

Proximity to services – Is the area close enough to emergency, utility and other services and/or is the area close enough to reasonably connect to existing infrastructure?

Fairness – Is the proposed district taking advantage of new investment that will not benefit from the TIF district?

Reasonable Benefit – Is the area large enough to accommodate more than one business enterprise/tenant/property owner?

Effects on Taxing Jurisdictions – Does the size of the district put a strain on the other taxing jurisdictions in providing services?

Opportunities for Success – Is the district sized so that the local government can meet its revitalization and/or development goals?



City of Helena



Resolution of Necessity

URDs – Determination of Blight (7-15-4210 MCA):

At least three of the “blight” factors listed in 7-15-4206(2) apply to the area or a part of the area; and

The rehabilitation, redevelopment, or both of an area or areas are necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of the municipality.

Definition of “Blight” (7-15-4206 (2) MCA):

- Substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential;
- Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, proper sanitary facilities, or open spaces as determined by competent appraisers on the basis of an examination of the building standards of the municipality;
- Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings;
- High density of population and overcrowding;
- Defective or inadequate street layout;
- Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- Excessive land coverage;
- Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- Deterioration of site;
- Diversity of ownership;
- Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
- Defective or unusual conditions of title;
- Improper subdivision or obsolete platting;
- The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes; or
- Any combination of the factors listed in this subsection.

TIF District Plan

Required Elements:

- Description of blighted and/or infrastructure deficient conditions
- A plan for addressing these conditions
- A map and legal description
- References/linkages to the jurisdiction's growth policy and zoning, and other related plans as appropriate (economic development, historic preservation, transportation, public health)
- A management strategy
- A statement of intent to use TIF and an associated base year

Plan Adoption

Local governing body may approve the TIF district, by ordinance, if it finds:

- A workable and feasible plan exists for making available adequate housing for the persons who may be displaced by the project;
- The urban renewal plan conforms to the comprehensive plan or parts thereof for the municipality as a whole;
- The urban renewal plan will afford maximum opportunity, consistent with the sound needs of the municipality as a whole, for the rehabilitation or redevelopment of the urban renewal area by private enterprise; and
- A sound and adequate financial program exists for the financing of said project.

Certification

Documents are mailed to Department of Revenue and all affected taxing jurisdictions

Department of Revenue establishes taxable value of the district in the base year

Queen City Crossing Area/ Sixth Ward Neighborhood Stakeholder Meeting
Thursday, October 22, 1-5 p.m.
Federal Reserve, 100 Neill Avenue, Helena, MT
Meeting Summary (As of 10/30/15)

Participants and other Interested Stakeholders

See separate document.

Agenda

Meeting Purpose:

- Provide updates since the July 16th Queen City Crossing Area/ Sixth Ward Neighborhood Stakeholder Meeting
- Provide refined input to project champions and/or identify specific next steps to further efforts
- Continue to build connections to coordinate efforts and leverage resources

Topics

- Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review
- Key Updates since the July 16th Meeting
- Small Group Discussion Topics – Railroad TIF District, transportation planning at Queen City Crossing intersection, nonmotorized transportation, affordable housing, and green infrastructure
- Full Group Report Out and Summary of Next Steps

Action Items

At the end of the meeting, each individual was asked to share one action item they will do in coordination with at least one person in the room to further revitalization efforts in the area. The following action items were identified. **Those that did not make a commitment -either because they had to leave early or we ran out of time- are strongly encouraged to contact Wendy Thomi (406-457-5037; thomi.wendy@epa.gov) with an action they will take in collaboration with another stakeholder. These additional action items will be added to the final meeting summary.**

- **Diana Holshue** will provide meeting space at the Federal Reserve, as requested, to support further coordination.
- **Laura Erikson** and **Brian Obert** will coordinate on applications for additional EPA Brownfields Assessments.
- **Laura Erikson, Ryan Kettel and Ryan Leland** will coordinate on re-opening the Centennial Trail Master Plan effort to reevaluate connection recommendations.
- **Rose Casey, Jeremy Keene, Pam Attardo and Max Pigman** will plan a discussion with Denny Washington about the Montana Rail Link property. The group suggested talking about the Railroad Depot and Centennial Trail connections separately. They will coordinate with City of Helena and BNSF staff.
- **Mike Schechtman and Julie Dalsoglio** will develop a survey of nonprofits to gain a better understanding of their interest in multi-party partnerships and how to address their needs.
- **Mike Schechtman** will provide Leslie Torgerson contact information for a new program being developed in Helena to help nonprofits utilize some of their assets for loans.

- **Wendy Thomi** will work with **Bonnie Lorang, Terry Ray**, the city, county and Stewart Homes to explore the EPA Equitable Development Workshop.
- **Wendy Thomi** will connect Leslie Torgerson and Alan Nicholson with contacts at the Denver Housing Authority so they can learn about the Sun Valley affordable housing model for whatever may be applicable to future changes to Stewart homes.
- **Terry Ray** will work the city to enforce its community decay ordinance. He will coordinate with the Mid-Towne & Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association.
- **Max Pigman** will work with **Matt Culpo** to discuss how to incorporate green infrastructure into the Lewis and Clark Brewery expansion. He will also work with David Lemieux and Brian Spangler at MDEQ to discuss solar and wind opportunities. **Brian Obert** will share relevant information on green infrastructure Revolving Loan Fund programs.
- **Jennifer Hill-Hart** will continue to work on local and healthy food access with the coalition of nonprofits that she has been working with. She will contact **Matt Culpo** to discuss how green infrastructure could be incorporated, and will reach out to Alan Nicholson about whether this could be incorporated into his plans. She may reach out to Laura Parr at the MT Wilderness Association to see if there is anything that can be done to utilize drainage from their property for food growth.
- **Matt Culpo** will coordinate with Stacey Eriksen at EPA Region 8 to determine any EPA green infrastructure technical assistance opportunities.
- **Jeff Kuhn and Sharon Haugen** will convene a group to discuss brownfields that could be assessed for key uses (e.g., technology corridor).
- **Jeff Kuhn, Wendy Thomi and Julie Dalsoglio** will map out a brownfields approach. A corridor assessment of petroleum properties and the solvent plume will be examined, and historic properties that may have environmental contamination will be identified (from 7/16 meeting).
- **Mike Schechtman** will identify resources that are not anchored here, but could be interested and begin to map potential funding resources (from 7/16 meeting).

Updates since the July 16, 2015 Meeting

Railroad Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District and Downtown Master Plan (Jeremy Keene): The presentation describes the benefits of a TIF District, how it works, input to date and next steps. Brief information was also provided on how the Downtown Master Plan is building off the city's historic downtown and employment centers and considering connections to other areas. For example, one asset is the view from downtown of the Railroad Depot at the end of Helena Avenue.

TIGER Grant (Ron Alles): The City Commission approved \$500,000 to develop an application, and the specific area has not yet been determined. The grant application will likely be for a \$15-20 million project that needs to be shovel ready. These are extremely competitive grants.

Zoning Commission (Sharon Haugen): The Zoning Commission will begin reviewing the zoning ordinance in early 2016. They will be reaching out to various stakeholders, and it is expected to take at least a year to finalize the ordinance. They will be considering issues such as single family homes and entry-way corridors.

Caird Property (Alan Nicholson): Alan expects to purchase the property by the end of 2015. Negotiations are still underway on access issues. The fact that the Montana Dept. of Transportation may not allow left turns on Boulder Ave. is particularly problematic for economic development. The site is 2.5 acres, will be zoned B2, and will likely include approximately 110,000 square feet of building space. Alan's vision is to make this an anchor/catalyst site, ideally building off the historic aspects of the Railroad District. No specific use is determined; it will likely be multi-use.

Affordable Housing (Mark Kaltenbach): Stewart Homes staff met with Rick Garcia from HUD, the Mayor and others. The primary message is that funding is not what it used to be and innovative approaches are needed and being explored. Ideas such as land swaps are being considered.

Centennial Trail (Ryan Kettel/ Laura Erikson): A ground-breaking was just celebrated to begin connections for the Centennial Trail outside of the Queen City Crossing/ Sixth Ward Neighborhood area, the county was awarded \$125,000 to develop a wayfinding signage system that can be used on all recreational sites. The idea for this came after realization that there are no sign standards for trails to use on the Centennial Trail. The city of Helena submitted a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) application for Centennial Trail connections in the Blayne Street to Highway 12 area. There is not currently a plan for how the trail should cross Montana. A TAP Grant is being used to improve ADA accessibility at 43 corners.

Green Infrastructure and its Benefits (Matt Culpo): The presentation is attached describes innovative drainage approaches to utilize water more effectively. Many of the ideas do not have to be expensive.

Potential EPA Technical Assistance Support (Wendy Thomi): If the community is interested, EPA can likely provide a free Equitable Development Workshop in Spring 2016. This workshop is designed to help the community better manage culture change in the neighborhood, by taking an active role in decision making around housing, economic development, transportation, and environment. There may also be resources to support green infrastructure efforts.

Small Group Discussions

Each participant had an opportunity to join three different small group conversations, based on questions framed on the agenda. A summary of the conversations is provided below.

Input for Urban Renewal Plan for Railroad Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District

Transportation

- Need improved flow for pedestrians. A key factor for this is ensuring there are consistent sidewalks as they are disjointed now. Lighting needs to be improved in some areas too.
- Need a visual barrier between the neighborhood and railroad.
- Connect the railroad depot and downtown along Helena to take advantage of view of the depot – perhaps with a trolley.
- Improve connection between the schools to make it easier for parents with kids in multiple schools.
- Need traffic calming at E. Lyndale and N. Roberts to make it easy for pedestrians to get to the stadium.
- Utilize Lyndale from N. Roberts St. to N. Harris St. as a minor arterial.

General Uses

- Use TIF funding as a match for TIGER Grant and/or to resolve any right-of-way issues by acquiring property before applying.
- Opportunity to utilize fiberoptics above the sports store at Helena Ave. and National Ave. as a technology hub area.
- Move heavy industry and rail users out of the district (including abandoning the spur line) to create redevelopment opportunities. Kalispell was highlighted as an example.
- Light industrial could be a good use.
- Need for more food options, especially for daytime employees.
- Create community spaces where there could be benches, food trucks, block parties, etc.
- Need a small hotel.
- Create a gateway to the area, likely at the Queen City Crossing intersection.

- Utilize funds to support green infrastructure needs.
- Note: The approximate historic district boundaries are North Roberts to railroad (North of Depot) to N. Harris St. to Lewis St.
- Need to find a way to mitigate train horn noise.

Ideas for Specific Uses

- Opportunity to utilize the railroad depot as a cultural/historical asset to highlight its architectural features. A 2003 MSU Architecture Study may be helpful for revitalization ideas. It could include a railroad museum where model trains could be displayed (a desire many collectors have expressed) and an observation tower. It could also be a community gathering place for education and entertainment opportunities, and redevelopment of historical Railroad Ave. The Railroad is currently only using the bottom floor of the depot.
- Helena Industries is interested in developing a veteran rehabilitation facility that recycles electronics.

Process

- Be transparent about how TIF decisions will be made via an Advisory Group, which will be created.

Transportation Planning at Queen City Crossing Intersection

General Input/ Ideas

- The intersection is functioning for traffic, but not access to neighborhoods. Improvements are needed in order to encourage economic development.
- A significant challenge is how to fund the transportation improvements. The intersection works from a motorized transportation perspective so it's not a priority for MDT. Partnerships are needed among the City and County to highlight this as an economic development priority. Community input is critical to demonstrate support for infrastructure changes.
- Boulder Avenue has competing interests. Many in the community would like to close it and others want it open for development access. It has become a major arterial though it wasn't designed that way.
- Some people think there should be a four-way intersection at Highway 12 and Montana Ave. by cutting off access to Helena Ave. at the intersection in order to be more pedestrian friendly, while others have concerns about closing it. They note that the current intersection slows down traffic, which make it safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Specific Ideas

- Liked Concept A (from previous visioning effort), though there are concerns about closing Helena Avenue.
- Add entrance/exit at high school with turn back to Boulder Avenue.
- Overpass for bikes and pedestrians at Boulder Avenue. It was noted that one overpass is not enough. People will not walk 1,000 ft. between Montana and Lyndale to utilize an overpass.

Process/ Next Steps

- More input is needed from the community on what to do at the intersection in order to make a decision. The question needs to be asked.
- Project recommendations for TIGER Grant include:
 - QCX improvements as it promotes economic development and revitalization;
 - Centennial Trail underpass under the interstate;
 - Railroad/ Montana Avenue under/over pass; and
 - Make Lyndale a major arterial. (east to west according to the community's Plan A vision?)
- Utilize community decay ordinance enforcement.
- Review zoning or custom zone to B2 Zone with green provisions.
- Adjust Centennial Trail past Lewis and Clarke Brewery.

- Utilize tax abatements.
- Track restrictions on specific streets (i.e., Boulder).

Nonmotorized Transportation

Centennial Trail

- Direct the Centennial Trail along Railroad Ave. past the depot.
- Complete Centennial Trail and then connect to other trails, but plan for the connection in advance.
- Front Street and Roberts St. are important N/S connections.
- Create an Adopt-a-Trail program for maintenance/ sponsor funding.

Crossing Needs

- N. Montana:
 - A grade separation at the railroad at Montana Avenue is critical, ideally with an under or overpass. Easements from BNSF will be challenging.
 - Have a separated crossing to HATS, in conjunction with brownfields work at Mergenthaler.
 - Need better crossings across Montana, possibly at Railroad or Argyle/Bozeman.
- Lyndale:
 - Billings Avenue has a traffic light and is less busy/ dangerous so it could be a better crossing across Lyndale than at Euclid.
 - Consider Ewing/Rodney as a way to get across Lyndale in the future.
 - Need better crossing across Lyndale, possibly at N. Rodney or Warren St.
- If Livingston is fixed, it could be an option for pedestrian crossing.
- Create a railroad overpass at Centennial Park to connect Front St., nature park and McHugh.
- Use Old Craig Bridge.

Sidewalks

- Increase pedestrian flow by increasing sidewalk connectivity.
- City should order property owners to fund sidewalks in conjunction with resurfacing and Centennial Trail projects.
- Plan ahead with property owners.

Bike Paths

- Add bike path along N. Warren St. from E. Lawrence to Helena Ave.
- Add bike path along E. 14th from W. Warren St. to past Kessler St. (edge of map). This will require a better crossing at N. Last Chance Gulch.
- On challenging streets, bike paths need to be grade separated because all cyclists are not comfortable riding in high traffic areas.

Misc. Notes

- More public input is needed.
- Need more education and outreach regarding the benefits of biking/walking.

Affordable Housing

Impediments

- Access to funding for needed housing stock improvements.
- Limited amount of vouchers – There are concerns that it is difficult to use vouchers in Helena because many landlords will not accept them. They expire if they are not used in a certain amount of time. There

are also concerns about using portable vouchers, which can be used anywhere in the US because it may reduce expected income in Helena.

- Difficult to integrate low-income people into middle class neighborhoods, partially due to social attitudes toward low-income people.
- Need to preserve existing housing stock.
- Need more education and outreach.
- Need to update Housing Needs Assessment.
- How to increase density while maintaining ADA accessibility (e.g., it's expensive to add elevators).
- Homes should not be next to major roads.
- MethLabs are becoming a bigger problem.

Opportunities

- Provide incentives for private developers.
- Consider joint ventures for private/public partnerships.
- Consider mixed income housing developments. These can be setup so that the affordable units change. Denver's Sun Valley Homes is a good example.
- Creating good relationships.
- EPA Equitable Development Workshop – free workshop likely in Spring 2016.
- A new program is being developed in Helena to help nonprofits utilize some of their assets for loans. Mike Schechtman will provide contact information.

Green Infrastructure

The groups decided to expand this discussion beyond green infrastructure and other stormwater controls.

Potential Demonstration Projects

- 6th Ward Garden Park (done) - includes bioswales, rain gardens, thoughtful plant selection, etc.
- Stewart Homes redevelopment – use City of Helena technical assistance.
- Support green efforts for nonprofits including materials, energy, waste management, green infrastructure and other etc. (e.g., Helena Industries, Food Share, Florence Crittenton Home, Friendship Center, etc.) – add link to Helena Area Habitat for Humanity and NeighborWorks, MT.
- HHS parking lot.
- Centennial Trail near Legion Field.
- Schools may be interested in partnering on a project.

Funding opportunities for broader greening efforts

- Incentives would be helpful because there is a perception that green infrastructure costs more, and in some cases it may.
- Consider foundation resources.
- Market incentives in high density urban areas.
- Consider restrictions on government direction.
- Utilize EPA technical assistance support.

Queen City Crossing Area/ Sixth Ward Neighborhood Stakeholders (As of 10/28/15)

First	Last	Organization	E-mail	Phone	Attended 7/16 mtg	Attended 10/22 mtg
Ron	Alles	City of Helena	ralles@helenamt.gov	447-8401		1
Erik	Amundson	US Housing and Urban Development	erik.amundson@hud.gov	447-1488		1
Pam	Attardo	Lewis and Clark County, Heritage Tourism Council	pattardo@lccountymt.gov	447-8357	1	1
Melinda	Barnes	BIKEWALK Helena/Non-Motorized Trav. Adv. Council	melinda@bikewalkmontana.org	449-2787	1	
M.C.	Beeby	MidTowne & Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association	mc@mcbeeby.com	431-3152	1	1
Daniel	Bingham	Helena College	Binghamd@umhelena.edu	443-5874		1
Danielle	Bolan	Montana Department of Transportation	dbolan@mt.gov	444-7295	1	
Pete	Brown	Montana State Historic Preservation Office	pebrown@mt.gov	444-7718		
Barbara	Burton	Florence Crittenton Home	barbb@florencecrittenton.org	442-6950x202	1	
Russ	Cargo	Helena Industries	rcargo@helenaindustries.org	461-1520		1
Rose	Casey	MidTowne & Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association	watercarver@msn.com	410-0968		1
Matt	Culpo	City of Helena	mculpo@helenamt.gov	447-8073		1
Julie	DalSoglio	Environmental Protection Agency	DalSoglio.Julie@epa.gov	457-5025	1	1
Bruce	Day	Helena Food Shares	BruceD@helenafoodshare.org	443-3663	1	1
Matthew	Elsaesser	Helena City Commission	MElsaesser@helenamt.gov	431-0815	1	1
Tyler	Emmert	Opportunity Bank	temmert@oppbank.com	438-1559	1	1
Laura	Erikson	Lewis and Clark County	lerikson@lccountymt.gov	447-8383	1	1
Sharon	Franjevik	Small Business Administration	Sharon.Franjevic@sba.gov	441-1088		1
Wayne	Gardella	Small Business Administration	Wayne.Gardella@sba.gov	441-1080		
Susan	Good-Geise	Lewis and Clark County Commission	sgeise@lccountymt.gov	447-8304		
Sharon	Haugen	City of Helena	shaugen@helenamt.gov	447-8445	1	1
Jennifer	Hill-Hart	Alternative Energy Resources Organization	jhill-hart@aeromt.org	443-7272		1
Bruce	Hodess	Helena Housing Authority	rico_ratso@yahoo.com	422-9151	1	
Diana	Holshue	Federal Reserve	diana.holshue@mpls.frb.org	447-3861	1	1
Andy	Hunthausen	Lewis and Clark County Commission	ahunthausen@lccountymt.gov	447-8304	1	1
Mark	Kaltenbach	Helena Housing Authority	mkaltenbach@hhamt.org	442-7970		1
Jeremy	Keene	WGM Group	jkeene@wgmgroup.com	728-4611	1	1
Ryan	Kettel	Non-motorized Travel Advisory Council	ryan.kettel@gmail.com	495-0151		1
Al	Knauber	Helena Independent Record	Al.Knauber@helenair.com	447-4097	1	1
Rhonda	Krieger	Federal Reserve	rhonda.krieger@mpls.frb.org	447-3864	1	
Jeff	Kuhn	Montana Department of Environmental Quality	jkuhn@mt.gov	431-3229	1	1
Karen	Lane	Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department	klane@lccountymt.gov	457-8960		
Ryan	Leland	City of Helena	RLeland@helenamt.gov	447-8433		1
Jim	Lewis	Montana Rail Link	jlewis@mtrail.com	523-1400	1	
Bonnie	Lorang	MidTowne & Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association	blorang@mitstel.com	594-9662	1	1
Sheila	Ludlow	Montana Department of Transportation	sludlow@mt.gov	444-9193		1
Jennifer	McCullough	Lewis and Clark County	jmcullough@lccountymt.gov	447-8028	1	
Judy	Merickel	GNTC/Alan Nicholson	judy@gntc.info	457-5541	1	1
Allison	Mouch	Montana Department of Commerce	amouch@mt.gov	841-2598	1	
Alan	Nicholson	Great Northern Town Center	alan@gntc.info	457-5542		1
Brian	Obert	Montana Business Assistance Connection	bobert@mbac.biz	465-0619	1	1
Greg	Olsen	Helena Industries	Greg@helenaindustries.org	442-8637	1	
Max	Pigman	Lewis and Clark Brewery	max@lcbeer.com	442-5960		1
Terry	Ray	Helena Citizens' Council	TerenceRay@mt.gov	850-3176	1	1
Tracy	Reich	Helena Business Improvement District	treich@helenabid.com	447-1535		
John	Rogers	Governor's Office of Economic Development	johnrogers@mt.gov	444-5470	1	
Mike	Schechtman	Big Sky Institute for the Advancement of Non-profits	mschecht@bigskyinstitute.org	443-5860	1	1
Laura	Sneeringer	CDR Associates	lsneeringer@mediate.org	720-251-9842	1	1
Alicia	Stickney	Montana Department of Natural Resources	astickney@mt.gov	444-6668		
Carol	Strizich	Montana Department of Transportation	cstrizich@mt.gov	444-9240	1	
Amy	Teegarden	City of Helena	ateegarden@helenamt.gov	447-8462	1	
Steve	Thennis	Helena High School	sthennis@helenaschools.org	459-9450		1
Wendy	Thomi	Environmental Protection Agency	Thomi.Wendy@epa.gov	457-5037	1	1
Leslie	Torgerson	Helena Housing Authority	LTorgerson@hhamt.org	442-7970 x124	1	

Queen City Crossing Area Stakeholder Meeting
Thursday, July 16, 1-5 p.m.
Federal Reserve, 100 Neill Avenue, Helena, MT
Meeting Summary

Participants and other Interested Stakeholders

To be sent in a separate document.

Agenda

Meeting Purpose:

- Educate each other on current and future activities in the Queen City Crossing Area
- Begin to identify cross-cutting needs/barriers and opportunities for coordination across activities

Topics:

- Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review
- Overview of the Queen City Crossing Area and the Making a Visible Difference Initiative
- Overview of Current Activities and Future Priorities for the Queen City Crossing Area
- Discussion on Cross-Cutting Needs/Barriers and Opportunities
- Discuss Next Steps – Individual Action Items and Purpose/Schedule for the Next Meeting

Action Items

- All participants are encouraged to send Wendy Thomi (406-457-5037; thomi.wendy@epa.gov): any additional feedback on the meeting, agenda and scheduling ideas for the next meeting, and any clarifications to the meeting summary.

Goals for the Area

During introductions, each participant was asked to identify one success in the Queen City Crossing Area that they'd like to be celebrating in five years. They were asked not to worry about funding or other constraints. The goals are not listed in any particular order except that goals that were mentioned several times, as indicated by the numbers in parenthesis, are listed first.

- Current plans implemented/ tangible results from redevelopment planning (7).
- Community friendly mixed use at the Caird property (4).
- Queen City Crossing intersection improved attractively (2).
- Centennial Trail connections completed through area and wayfinding added (2).
- Sufficient infrastructure to bike/walk/ safe crossings for pedestrians and cyclists (2).
- Improvements made around Memorial Park and connection to the Centennial Trail.
- Address sustainable housing and services.
- Stewart Homes' 2012 plan is a reality.
- Improved senior housing.
- Area is an enterprise investment zone.
- Economy rivals Bozeman.
- Rail depot area is utilized.
- Area is shining star of Helena.
- Sustainable collaborative partnerships developed among non-profits, private sector and government.
- Funding secured.
- Old Armory redeveloped.
- Increased understanding of the Montana Rail Link. (montanarail.com)
- Public transportation access is improved.
- Quiet zone.

Context Setting Background/ Updates on Specific Activities

Brief talking points were provided on current activities and future priorities for the Queen City Crossing Area. Presenters were asked to provide a brief overview of: 1) overall goals, 2) status update/ expected timeframe, and 3) opportunities to coordinate with others and/or challenges in which others may be able to provide support. The group added input on additional activities and asked questions.

Economic Redevelopment:

- There has been some recent interest in the area (e.g., climbing gym and Lewis and Clark Brewery).
- The City is focused on developing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District for the Railroad District. The purpose is to designate a special urban renewal area to address conditions of blight and/or underutilized properties. It does not add new taxes. Instead, a portion of the taxes received are used to support additional development in the area. The boundaries will be on both sides of the railroad tracks from North Last Chance Gulch to the interstate. The effort is focused on financing issues, though it will involve developing an Urban Renewal Plan. There will be a public process to obtain feedback, including a 60 day comment period.

Brownfields and Caird Property:

- A number of brownfields (properties with real or perceived contamination) have been assessed and cleaned up in the area. Much of this work has been done through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants to Lewis and Clark County. MT Dept. of Environmental Quality (MT DEQ) has also identified sites in the area with petroleum contamination, which continues to be a priority. There are also examples of private companies assessing and cleaning up brownfields. Lewis and Clark County recently received an EPA Workforce Development and Job Training Grant and will be starting the first program in October 2015. Participants are encouraged to help identify and engage potential trainees and can contact Laura Erikson for more information.
- Allan Nicholson has made a purchase offer for the Caird property. The MT Business Assistance Connection is working with him on sale contingencies, and they've resolved four out of five. The last contingency involves ensuring access to the site. There has been some discussion about not allowing a left turn onto Boulder as this can cause congestion to backup into the Queen City Crossing intersection. The question is how to ensure access to the Caird Property while preventing congestion into the Queen City Crossing intersection. The MT Dept. of Transportation (MDT) has been part of conversations to consider options.

Additional Environmental Considerations:

- There is a solvent plume under the Hustad Center.
- There are noise concerns from train horns.
- It was noted that air quality will be improved with transportation improvements and increased bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure options.

Queen City Crossing Intersection:

- Queen City Crossing modifications and the railroad grade separation on Montana Avenue are both listed as Major Street Network recommended projects in the recently adopted Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan - 2014 Update. These projects are not in MDT's 5-year plan for funding. MDT District 3 prioritizes improvements based on safety, function and infrastructure integrity. If key partners (including the City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County) initiate a coordinate approach to raise this intersection as a priority to the District and obtain some funding, opportunities may open up. The City of Helena is considering applying for a \$2.1 million TIGER grant, which requires the project to be shovel ready. The city has not yet decided if it will proceed, as it will be a costly and time intensive application process.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure:

- MDT has identified signal timing resources that could help make crosswalks safer and is implementing longer cross times in some locations.
- A significant portion of the Centennial Trail has been developed, though there are missing connections in the Sixth Ward Area. There is limited wayfinding signage so it's difficult to people to determine how to re-access the trail.
- Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funds are an effective resource for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Safe Routes to School now falls within TAP. Department of Commerce funding may also be a resource.

Transit:

- The City of Helena is in the midst of developing transit re-routes. This requires an assessment to determine if bus stops are ADA accessible; the City is currently identifying a consultant. Also, if a bus stop is proposed on a state highway a traffic study must be conducted to determine expected traffic impacts.

Railroad Crossings:

- Montana Rail Link averaged 17.8 trains through Helena per day in 2014 and 14.3 per day by the 2nd quarter of 2015. The trains fall into the following categories: 45% industrial, 30% coal, 13% grain, 11% intermodal, and 1% crude. MRL trained over 450 responders in 2014 and have trained an additional 150 to date in 2015. They work closely with first responders in Helena and the dispatch center is notified when crossings are blocked.

Vision for Mid-Town and Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association:

- As a central and integral part of the Helena Community, the Mid-Towne and Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association (MSWNA) will support measured, sustainable growth and programs for residential and commercial development while maintaining the existence and integrity of it mixed uses, built environment, historic resources and that of the community and its neighborhood. MSWNA is dedicated to maintaining a diverse, affordable, livable area in the traditional sense of a pedestrian friendly Helena neighborhood.

Housing:

- Helena Housing Authority is currently implementing its 2012 Master Plan for Stewart Homes. There has been a significant turnover rate, partially because residents feel isolated. Therefore, the plan focuses on integration with the community. This involves demolition in order to reconstruct building at different orientations and ensuring ADA accessibility. The plan also requires significant updates to underground infrastructure (e.g., water pipes). Stewart Homes also recently completed the Helena Learning Center. Many groups are utilizing it, including the Florence Crittenton Home.

Sixth Ward Park:

- Implementation of the 4-year plan began this year. Efforts to date have involved significant coordination among Helena City Parks and Recreation, Helena Community Gardens, Helena Food Share and the neighborhood. Partners purposely decided not to form a non-profit so the city serves as the fiscal agent. The project is being developed with significant support from volunteers – both for fundraising and construction.

Historical Preservation:

- A portion of the Sixth Ward is a historical district that currently is a draw for tourism and could become even more of a draw with additional preservation. Many buildings currently have siding that covers the historical facades. Artifacts from the Caird property and other historic properties have been preserved. A goal is to find a location to display them for the public.

Cross-Cutting Needs and Barriers

The following list summarizes challenges identified during the context setting talking points and follow-on small and full-group conversations.

- The future of Bryant Elementary School is unknown.
- Ensuring access to the Caird Property while preventing congestion into the Queen City Crossing intersection.
- Solvent plume under the Hustad Center.
- Noise from train horns.
- High cost for Queen City Crossing intersection improvements.
- Need to integrate Stewart Homes with the community, with ADA access.
- Funding for underground infrastructure at Stewart Homes (e.g., water pipes).
- Need a location to share historical elements from the Caird property and other community artifacts.
- Connections needed for the Centennial Trail within the Sixth Ward.
- The shopping mall is not an aesthetically pleasing gateway into town; it is a blighted area with many vacant properties.
- Need a sustainable plan to deal with ongoing, changing leadership.
- Need equitable redevelopment - concern that the area could become too expensive for current community members to live. Related, landlords for lower-income properties could sell properties, thereby pushing renters out.
- Need sustainable, long-term funding sources.
- Need to determine how to coordinate effectively and tap into everyone's energy without turning it into a time consuming "project".
- There are several intersections outside of the Queen City Crossing intersection that are unsafe for pedestrians.

Opportunities for Coordination

The following list summarizes opportunities identified during the context setting talking points and follow-on small and full-group conversations.

Economic Redevelopment Planning

- Participate in the Downtown Master Plan as development there impacts development in the Queen City Crossing Area.
- Get involved in the TIF District process and provide feedback.
- Consider land trades that better meet property owners' needs. For example, some of the schools are in transition and may require land in different areas. The Helena School District storage site is on valuable land that could be more effectively used for something else. Mergenthaler and Eagle Tire could be relocated to improve transportation. A current problem is that land owners are elevating the sale price too high to encourage interest. The TIF can help level the playing field. EPA funds can be used to assess and cleanup properties.
- Identify real estate land that could be combined magnets for investment.
- Rezone industrial area to office and residential.
- Conduct a corridor assessment for petroleum sites from the Armory site to the Caird property.

Funding and Technical Support

- Obtain funding from foundations, especially for environmental work.
- Encourage banks to coordinate on Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) activities.
- Seek blended funding such as social innovation funds that combine private sector and non-profit partners.
- Utilize urban renewal funding for historical preservation of private homes.
- Remind people that historic tax credits and city tax abatement is available for cleanup and remodeling buildings.
- Develop online repository of potential funding sources.

- Identify resources to help community groups effectively engage community members. Their feedback is critical. AmeriCorps VISTA have been used previously.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

- Identify/ advocate for funding sources for bicycle/pedestrian improvements (e.g., Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funds) and use the TIF as a match.
- Focus on walkability, as this will help spur residential and/or commercial development.
- Revisit Centennial Trail plan to reassess best connections in the Sixth Ward area.
- Use Helena St. as a bypass for non-motorized transportation and/or consider other transportation improvements at the Queen City Crossing area that do not cost a lot. Consider alternate routes – e.g., Livingston St.

Schools

- Utilize the TIF District to support schools in their potential transition.
- Utilize the EPA school siting tool.
- Develop a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) effort. There is high-fiber telecommunications infrastructure across from the Caird property that could support this. It may be possible to incorporate the railroad into some curriculum.
- Consider multiple purposes (e.g., public share schools recreation space).

Housing

- Update Housing Needs Assessment.
- Consider higher density for the Helena Housing Authority.

Individual Next Steps

The group was asked to share anything that they as an individual or their organization can do as a result of the meeting. Responses included:

- Walk around the area to get a better sense of pedestrian/bicycling infrastructure challenges and to focus on historic properties
- Determine who else needs to be engaged (Mike Schechtman)
- Identify resources that are not anchored here, but could be interested (Mike Schechtman)
- Begin to map potential funding resources (Mike Schechtman)
- Map out a brownfields approach that includes a corridor assessment of petroleum properties and the solvent plume, and identifying historic properties that may have environmental contamination (EPA and MT DEQ)
- Talk to the development community to better understand their interests – what do they need in order to invest in the area

Next Meeting

The group discussed the purpose of the next meeting to provide brief status updates on key activities and to have a more detailed discussion on potential opportunities for coordination, with the goal of identifying specific next steps. Ideas on appropriate timing for the next meeting varied, from a few months away in order to maintain energy to waiting until the TIF District is finalized. Participants were encouraged to give more thought to the next meeting and provide input, while it is fresh in their minds.

Feedback on the Meeting

Worked Well:

- Locations and refreshments
- Context setting talking points
- Good representation
- Having a representative from the Independent Record

Areas for Improvement:

- Need representation from schools (were planning to attend but something came up), developers and community property owners

Summary of the Queen City Crossing Area Stakeholder Meeting, July 16, 2015

The EPA Making a Visible Difference in Communities effort helped to convene and plan a meeting among key stakeholders in the Queen City Crossing Area of Helena, MT on July 16, 2015. There are a variety of efforts going on in the area to develop community amenities and spur economic development. This meeting was an opportunity to bring community champions together to share their individual pieces of the overall effort and spur some natural connections.

The primary purpose of the meeting was two-fold – to educate each other on current activities and future priorities for the area and to begin to identify cross-cutting needs/barriers and opportunities for coordination. The conversation covered a wide-range of topics from environmental cleanup and economic redevelopment, to roadway and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, to housing, parks and historical preservation. Thirty-two stakeholders shared their perspectives and ideas. The group included federal, state and local government representatives, social services, non-profits, funding organizations, the neighborhood association and a developer.

The group developed a long list of opportunities to coordinate, which they will refine at a future meeting. In the meantime, several participants shared their individual action items. Examples include: the City continuing to work on getting the area included in a Tax Increment Financing District; EPA and MT DEQ working together to map out how they can support future brownfields assessment and cleanup; the Big Sky Institute for the Advancement of Non-profits researching potential funding sources; and beginning to have conversations with developers to understand what they need in order to invest in the area. One participant encouraged everyone to spend time walking around the area in order to fully understand pedestrian/bicycling infrastructure challenges and to focus on historic properties. The group left energized and excited to find ways to work together, which will be refined at a follow-up meeting.

Queen City Crossing Area Stakeholders (As of 8/14/15)

First	Last	Organization and Position	E-mail	Phone	Attended 7/16 mtg
Mike	Schechtman	Big Sky Institute for the Advancement of Non-profits	mschecht@bigskyinstitute.org	443-5860	yes
Melinda	Barnes	Bike Walk Montana, Executive Director	melinda@bikewalkmontana.org	449-2787	yes
Laura	Sneeringer	CDR Associates, Facilitator	lsneeringer@mediate.org	720-407-4714	yes
Sharon	Haugen	City of Helena, Community Development Director	shaugen@helenamt.gov	447-8445	yes
Amy	Teegarden	City of Helena, Parks and Recreation Director	ateegarden@helenamt.gov	447-8462	yes
Tracy	Reich	Downtown Helena Business Improvement District Director	treich@helenabid.com	447-1535	no
Wendy	Thomi	Environmental Protection Agency, Brownfields Project Manager	Thomi.Wendy@epa.gov	457-5037	yes
Julie	DalSoglio	Environmental Protection Agency, MT Office Director	DalSoglio.Julie@epa.gov	457-5025	yes
Diana	Holshue	Federal Reserve	diana.holshue@mpls.frb.org	447-3861	yes
Rhonda	Krieger	Federal Reserve	rhonda.krieger@mpls.frb.org	447-3864	yes
Barbara	Burton	Florence Crittenton Home, Executive Director	barbb@florencecrittenton.org	442-6950 x202	yes
John	Rogers	Governor's Office of Economic Development	johnrogers@mt.gov	444-5470	yes
Terry	Ray	Helena Citizens' Council	TerenceRay@mt.gov	850-3176	yes
Matthew	Elsaesser	Helena City Commission	MElsaesser@helenamt.gov	431-0815	yes
Daniel	Bingham	Helena College, Dean	Binghamd@umhelena.edu	443-5874	no
Bruce	Day	Helena Food Shares, Executive Director	BruceD@helenafoodshare.org	443-3663	yes
Steve	Thennis	Helena High School, Principal	sthennis@helenaschools.org	459-9450	no
Bruce	Hodess	Helena Housing Authority, Board of Directors	rico_ratso@yahoo.com	422-9151	yes
Leslie	Torgerson	Helena Housing Authority, Executive Director	LTorgerson@hhamt.org	442-7970 x124	yes
Al	Knauber	Helena Independent Record	Al.Knauber@helenair.com	443-5879	yes
Russ	Cargo	Helena Industries, Executive Director	rcargo@helenaindustries.org	461-1520	no
Greg	Olsen	Helena Industries, Representative	Greg@helenaindustries.org	442-8637	yes
Erik	Amundsen	Housing and Urban Development, Field Office Director	erik.amundsen@hud.gov	447-1488	no
Susan	Good-Geise	Lewis and Clark County Commission	sgeise@lccountymt.gov	447-8304	no
Andy	Hunthausen	Lewis and Clark County Commission	ahunthausen@lccountymt.gov	447-8304	yes
Laura	Erikson	Lewis and Clark County, Community Development Coordinator	lerikson@lccountymt.gov	447-8383	yes
Pam	Attardo	Lewis and Clark County, Historic Preservation Officer	pattardo@lccountymt.gov	447-8357	yes
Jennifer	McCullough	Lewis and Clark County, Sustainability Coordinator	jmccullough@lccountymt.gov	447-8028	yes
M.C.	Beeby	MidTowne & Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association	mc@mcbeeby.com	431-3152	yes
Bonnie	Lorang	MidTowne & Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association	bonlorangmt@gmail.com	594-9662	yes
Brian	Obert	Montana Business Assistance Connection, Executive Director	bobert@mbac.biz	465-0619	yes
Allison	Mouch	Montana Department of Commerce, Planning Bureau Chief	amouch@mt.gov	841-2598	yes
Jeff	Kuhn	Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Brownfields Section Supervisor	jkuhn@mt.gov	431-3229	yes

Queen City Crossing Area Stakeholders (As of 8/14/15)

First	Last	Organization and Position	E-mail	Phone	Attended 7/16 mtg
Carol	Strizich	Montana Department of Transportation, Statewide and Urban Planning Supervisor	cstrizich@mt.gov	444-9240	yes
Danielle	Bolan	Montana Department of Transportation, Traffic Operations Engineer	dbolan@mt.gov	444-7295	yes
Jim	Lewis	Montana Rail Link, Sales, Marketing and Information Officer	jlewis@mtrail.com	523-1400	yes
Pete	Brown	MT State Historic preservation Office	pebrown@mt.gov	444-7718	no
Tyler	Emmert	Opportunity Bank, Commercial Lender	temmert@oppbank.com	438-1559	yes
Judy	Merickel	Representative for GNTC/Alan Nicholson	judy@gntc.info	457-5541	yes
Jeremy	Keene	WGM Group, Consultant	jkeene@wgmggroup.com	728-4611	yes

Appendix E

Urban Renewal Powers under State Law

7-15-4233. Powers which may be exercised by urban renewal agency or authorized department.

(1) In the event the local governing body makes such determination, such body may authorize the urban renewal agency or department or other officers of the municipality to exercise any of the following urban renewal project powers:

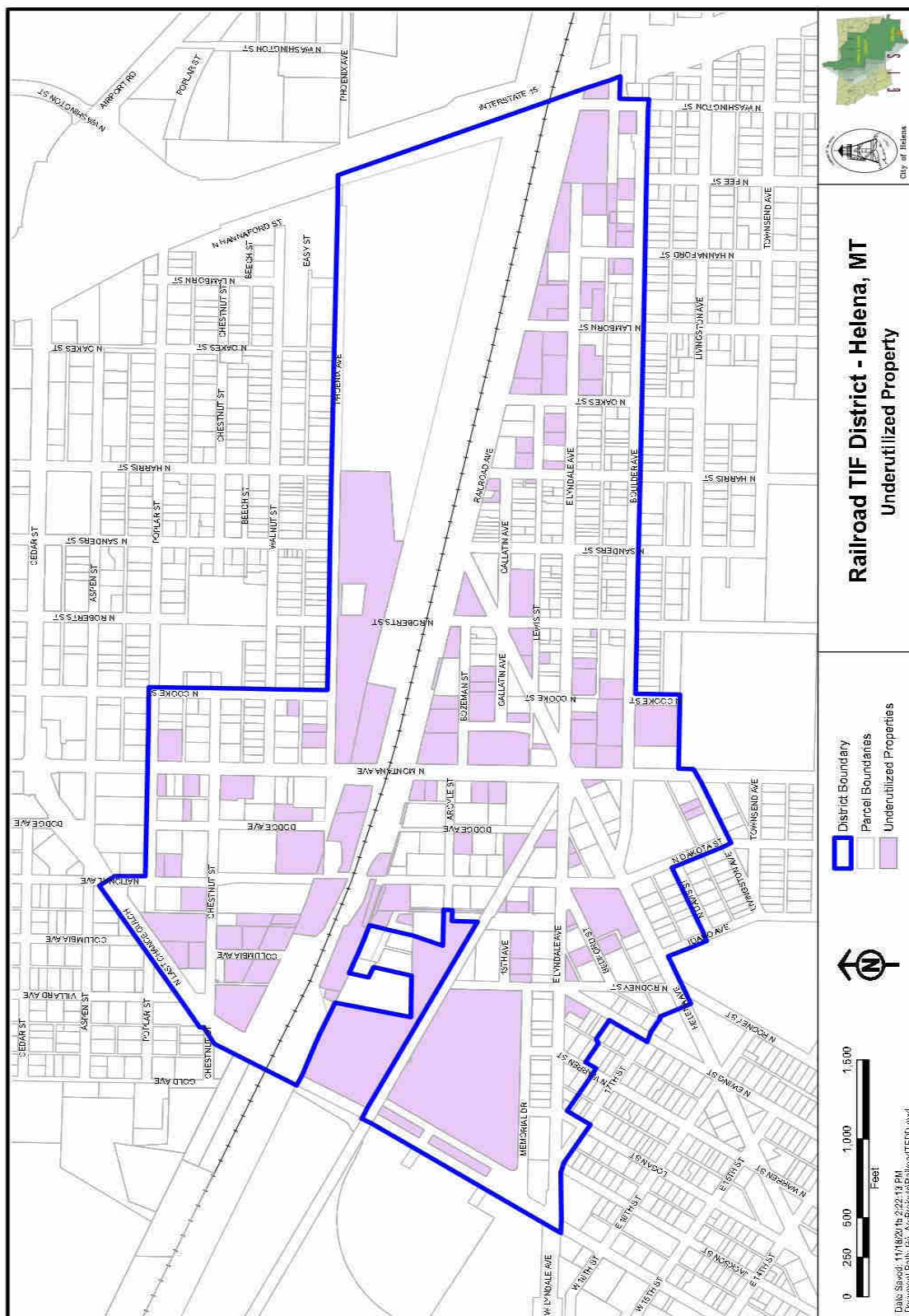
- (a) to formulate and coordinate a workable program as specified in [7-15-4209](#);
- (b) to prepare urban renewal plans;
- (c) to prepare recommended modifications to an urban renewal project plan;
- (d) to undertake and carry out urban renewal projects as required by the local governing body;
- (e)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

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

History: En. Sec. 15, Ch. 195, L. 1959; R.C.M. 1947, 11-3915(b).

Appendix F

Underutilized Property Map & List, Helena, MT



List of Underutilized Properties

PropAccess	LevyDistrict	PropType	TotalAcres	TotalBuildingValue	TotalLandValue	TotalValue	OwnerName	OwnerAddress1	OwnerAddress2	OwnerAddress3	OwnerCity	OwnerState	OwnerZipCode	CareOffTaxpayer
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	1.091	215840	44790	79990	JOHNER THOMAS H	240 WARREN SPRINGS CREEK RD				CLANCY	MT	59643-9525	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	1.439	224281	462539	686800	MIDDLESTAD ENTERPRISES LLC	915 MENLO PARK RD				HELENA	MT	59602-8300	
1-05-048702-0102	EP - Exempt Property	0.964	186380	197160	383540	HANNAFORD STREET BIBLE CHURCH	CALVARY CHAPEL OF HELENA INC	1421 N ROBERTS STREET			HELENA	MT	59601	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	1.379	139740	460521	600261	SCHMELTZER RENTALS LLC	1920 SIERRA RD E				HELENA	MT	59602-8834	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.786	137300	153100	290200	JOHNS MANAGEMENT LLC	PO BOX 17732				MISSOULA	MT	59806-7732	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.642	136720	137721	273900	STANHEIMER FAMILY LLC	1450 RAY RD E				HELENA	MT	59602-9480	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.643	123400	137940	261400	BAKER NIEL & FARRELL RAY	730 FLOWERREE ST				HELENA	MT	59601-2605	
1-05-048701-0101	MU - Mixed Use / Urban	1.162	118780	233006	352386	HILL DANIEL W & SUSAN E	505 S ROBERTS ST				HELENA	MT	59601-5485	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.628	115195	153505	259200	STONE TREE PROPERTIES LLC	633 TWIN PINES RD				HELENA	MT	59601-6814	
2-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.517	104525	114605	210200	ROSE ALBERT F	PO BOX 4135				HELENA	MT	59604-4135	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.47	103999	106101	210100	UN REAL ESTATE LLC	165 W 2ND ST				WINONA	MN	55987-3110	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.464	103419	105081	208500	SMITHAM DENNIS & GUY	1308 BOULDER AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-3569	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.626	101052	126648	227700	SMITH EUGENE E & MARY ELLEN	1721 E LYNDALE AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-3944	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.421	84830	92570	179000	SEELYE FAMILY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP	615 FAW RD				HELENA	MT	59602-7433	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.409	80706	94794	175500	HAMPTON GREG	2012 SWEETGRASS RD				HELENA	MT	59601-5881	
1-05-048701-0101	RU - Residential Urban	1.761	77670	82230	159900	BECKER JON	1317 N LAMBORN ST				HELENA	MT	59601-3129	
1-05-048701-0101	EP - Exempt Property	0.348	71200	472575	545855	CITY OF HELENA B	316 N PARK AVE				HELENA	MT	59603-0001	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.734	72446	77854	148800	HORNE MATTHEW A	1765 ROZEMAN AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-2941	
1-05-048701-0101	RU - Residential Urban	0.323	65560	76492	142052	TEST PETE B & LINDA E	1405 KNIGHT ST				HELENA	MT	59601-2351	
3-05-048702-0102	EP - Exempt Property	12.61	64490	834513	899003	CITY OF HELENA P	316 N PARK AVE				HELENA	MT	59603-0001	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.448	63780	102082	165862	MULLER KERAMT & BETTY J	15 MUELLER CT				HELENA	MT	59601-5446	
1-05-048701-0101	RU - Residential Urban	0.319	63286	78804	130200	MILLER DOUGLAS E & RUTH A	1920 N MONTANA AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-0887	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.31	57730	74250	131980	KOONITZ RONALD DALE	1918 BOULDER AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-3107	
1-05-048702-0102	EP - Exempt Property	1.495	54120	270414	324534	HELENA SCHOOL DIST NO 1	555 ROONEY ST				HELENA	MT	59601-5765	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.23	52613	61087	113700	ROWSEY RYAN	180 BOULDER AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-3103	
1-05-048701-0101	RU - Residential Urban	0.23	51880	60950	112800	NEWMAN W CRAIG	1633 LYNDALE AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-3941	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	1	51522	188478	240000	LYTLE DON	618 MADISON AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-2726	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.317	51000	77891	128891	HERSHEBERGER CURTIS	801 N BAIN ST				DENTON	MT	59430-9474	
1-05-048701-0101	NV - Non-Valued Property	2.88	50250	483804	534114	CONDO MASTER	GENERAL DELIVERY				HELENA	MT	59601-9999	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.215	46860	45610	84700	MARTO ROY & WOGAMON STACIA	1902 N MONTANA AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-9088	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.404	44480	164310	208800	BELL-MONT PROPERTIES INC	1301 11TH ST SW				SIDNEY	MT	59270-5225	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.44	44200	100623	144823	HAMPTON GREG	2012 SWEETGRASS RD				HELENA	MT	59601-5881	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.344	35820	79950	115770	CLAR JOHN B & HARRIET A	1608 BUTTE AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-3944	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.240	34520	36270	HEWITT JEFFREY & PATRICK	1912 BOULDER AVE					HELENA	MT	59601-3107	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.205	20200	77223	77503	PW PROPERTIES LLC	804 BIRCH ST				HELENA	MT	59601-0403	
1-05-048701-0101	RU - Residential Urban	0.321	11760	76150	87910	STONER GUY F & MARY JO	PO BOX 128				ELLUSTON	MT	59728-0128	
3-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.49	10480	109811	120301	MONTANA TAVERN ASSOCIATION	920 LYNDALE				HELENA	MT	59601-3941	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.151	10090	47850	53460	FEHMER PROPERTIES INC	PO BOX 811				HELENA	MT	59603-0811	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.472	10100	10100	10100	PATZER BRIAN & DEBRA	506 SLO DR				HELENA	MT	59602-8300	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.324	7860	76300	84190	ZIMMERMAN JOSEPH J	4280 GREEN MEADOW DR				HELENA	MT	59602-7415	
1-05-048701-0101	RU - Residential Urban	0.161	7180	49550	56730	COUTTS ALEX & JOAN	1924 N MONTANA AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-0807	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.089	4700	21900	36940	STAR PROPERTIES LLC	PO BOX 271				CLANCY	MT	59604-0271	
1-05-048701-0101	EP - Exempt Property	0.055	886	2010	886	LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY	316 N PARK AVE RM 113				HELENA	MT	59603-0001	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.106	1510	40488	42008	CATAN ENTERPRISES LLC	1950 ORIO FING GULCH				HELENA	MT	59601-6662	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.25	1260	65611	66871	PW PROPERTIES LLC	804 BIRCH ST				HELENA	MT	59601-0403	
1-05-048701-0101	RU - Residential Urban	0.115	730	41950	42080	PETER FRANK L	1912 BOULDER AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-3107	
1-05-048701-0101	VU - Vacant Land Urban	0.282	71452	640	71452	FEHMER PROPERTIES INC	PO BOX 811				HELENA	MT	59601-0403	
1-05-048702-0102	EP - Exempt Property	0.008	0	1523	1523	CITY OF HELENA - MONTANA - P	316 N PARK AVE				HELENA	MT	59603-0001	
3-05-048702-0102	CN - Centrally Assessed Non-Valued Property	0.005	0	6127	6127	NORTHWESTERN CORP	MAIL TO KARI RANDALL	3010 W 69TH ST			SIOUX FALLS	SD	57108-5613	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.064	0	9403	9403	MONTANA RAIL LINK INC	ATTN REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT	MONTANA RAIL LINK INC	P O BOX 16624		MISSOULA	MT	59808-6624	PROPERTY MANAGEMENT MRL
1-05-048701-0101	VU - Vacant Land Urban	0.968	9888	9888	9888	WENGER ENTERPRISES LLC	812 CHESTNUT ST				HELENA	MT	59601-0807	
3-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.076	0	13976	13976	PACIFIC HIDE & FUR DEPOT	PO BOX 1549		ACCOUNTANT 1611350		GREAT FALLS	MT	59403	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.108	0	17955	17955	HELENA APARTMENTS LLC	PO BOX 676				HELENA	MT	59604-0676	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.026	0	24352	24352	MONTANA RAIL LINK INC	ATTN REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT	MONTANA RAIL LINK INC	P O BOX 16624		MISSOULA	MT	59808-6624	PROPERTY MANAGEMENT MRL
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.072	0	26513	26513	STAR PROPERTIES LLC	C/O NAYDIA COATE	MONTANA RAIL LINK INC	P O BOX 16624		MISSOULA	MT	59808-6624	PROPERTY MANAGEMENT MRL
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.05	0	28679	28679	MONTANA RAIL LINK INC	ATTN REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT	MONTANA RAIL LINK INC	P O BOX 16624		MISSOULA	MT	59808-6624	PROPERTY MANAGEMENT MRL
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.051	0	28806	28806	RUCKER WYLIE A	2005 FLOWERREE ST				HELENA	MT	59601-5919	
1-05-048701-0101	RU - Residential Urban	0.046	0	30550	30550	BOLMA BERT H	1399 E LYNDALE AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-2961	
1-05-048701-0101	VU - Vacant Land Urban	0.192	0	31302	31302	WILLIAMS DOUGLAS E & MARY T	914 LINDSEY DR				CLANCY	MT	59604-0513	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.175	0	32296	32296	MONTANA RAIL LINK INC	ATTN REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT	MONTANA RAIL LINK INC	P O BOX 16624		MISSOULA	MT	59808-6624	PROPERTY MANAGEMENT MRL
1-05-048702-0102	EP - Exempt Property	0.072	0	32719	32719	CITY OF HELENA P	316 N PARK AVE				HELENA	MT	59603-0001	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.076	0	33577	33577	MONTANA RAIL LINK INC	ATTN REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT	MONTANA RAIL LINK INC	P O BOX 16624		MISSOULA	MT	59808-6624	PROPERTY MANAGEMENT MRL
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.369	0	34389	34389	BURLINGTON NORTHERN RR TAX DEPT 4TH FL	PO BOX 961089				FORT WORTH	TX	76161-0889	BNFS RAILROAD PROPERTY TAX DEPARTMENT
1-05-048702-0102	EP - Exempt Property	0.081	0	34491	34491	REGION IV FAMILY OUTREACH INC	1236 HELENA AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-2948	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.072	0	34825	34825	PREBL INVESTMENTS LLC	PO BOX 5076				HELENA	MT	59604-5076	
1-05-048702-0102	EP - Exempt Property	0.092	0	36330	36330	STATE OF MONTANA	DOT R/W BUREAU		PO BOX 201001		HELENA	MT	59601-0001	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.315	0	38150	38150	BURLINGTON NORTHERN RR TAX DEPT 4TH FL	PO BOX 961089				FORT WORTH	TX	76161-0889	BNFS RAILROAD PROPERTY TAX DEPARTMENT
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.1	0	39575	39575	BURLINGTON NORTHERN RR TAX DEPT 4TH FL	PO BOX 961089				FORT WORTH	TX	76161-0889	BNFS RAILROAD PROPERTY TAX DEPARTMENT
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.127	0	42968	42968	HUSTAD LLC	PO BOX 826				HELENA	MT	59604-0826	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.136	0	44537	44537	U HAUL REAL ESTATE CO	PO BOX 29046				PHOENIX	AZ	85038-9046	
1-05-048701-0101	VU - Vacant Land Urban	0.139	0	45189	45189	MIDWAY LLC	7 CLOVERVIEW DR				HELENA	MT	59601-0252	
1-05-048701-0101	VU - Vacant Land Urban	0.139	0	45189	45189	MIDWAY LLC	7 CLOVERVIEW DR				HELENA	MT	59601-0252	
1-05-048701-0101	VU - Vacant Land Urban	0.138	0	45849	45849	SEELYE FAMILY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP	563 DIEK DR				HELENA	MT	59601-5456	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.143	0	46700	46700	CLAR HARRIET A	1608 BUTTE AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-3944	
3-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.148	0	46784	46784	PACIFIC HIDE & FUR DEPOT	PO BOX 1549		ACCOUNTANT 1611350		GREAT FALLS	MT	59403	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.149	0	46981	46981	PHROG LLC	1745 N HOLUSE AVE				HELENA	MT	59712-2426	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.161	0	49110	49110	BIG SKY Z & J LLC	2810 COUNTRY CLUB AVE				HELENA	MT	59602-9239	
1-05-048701-0101	VU - Vacant Land Urban	0.161	0	49110	49110	REGION IV FAMILY OUTREACH INC	1236 HELENA AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-2948	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.161	0	49649	49649	ZIMMERMAN TERRY	357 MILL RD				HELENA	MT	59601-6935	
1-05-048701-0101	RU - Residential Urban	0.162	0	49710	49710	NAD INVESTMENTS LLC	1906 WINNIE AVE				HELENA	MT	59601-4107	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.17	0	50802	50802	U DAVIS PROPERTIES LLC	2015 N LAST CHANCE GULCH				HELENA	MT	59601-0744	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.18	0	52704	52704	PREBL INVESTMENTS LLC	PO BOX 5076				HELENA	MT	59604-5076	
1-05-048701-0101	CU - Commercial Urban	0.192	0	54821	54821	MONTANA BUSINESS ASSISTANCE CONNECTION	225 N CRUSE AVE STE P				HELENA	MT	59601-5087	
1-05-048702-0102	EP - Exempt Property	0.197	0	55827	55827	HELENA REHABILITATION INDUSTRY	1325 HELENA AVE				HELENA	MT		

Appendix G

Utility Network Map, Helena, MT



Appendix H

Proposed/Planned Projects within Railroad URD

SUBJECT: **Proposed/Planned Capital Water/Waste Water Projects Located Within
Proposed Railroad Targeted Economic Development District (TEDD)**

DATE: 1/28/15

AUTHOR: J. Clark

Water Projects Proposed as Per 2006 City of Helena Water Master Plan and 2011 Update:

Fire Flow Projects/Upsizing of Existing Mains:

1. Replace ex. 12" water main on Poplar St from Montana Avenue to Harris Street
2. New pressure reducing valve (PRV) and vault at corner of Chestnut and Villiard Ave.
3. Replace ex. 8" water main on Chestnut St from Last Chance Gulch to National Ave.
4. Replace ex. 6" water main on National Ave with 8" from Chestnut to Phoenix Ave.
5. Replace ex. 8" water main on Dodge Ave with 8" from Chestnut to Phoenix Ave.
6. Replace ex. 8" water main on Phoenix Ave with new 8" main from National to Montana Ave.
7. New PRV and vault at North Montana Ave and Railroad Tracks.
8. New PRV and vault at Roberts Street and Railroad Tracks.
9. Replace ex. 6" water main on East Lyndale with new 8" main from Last Chance Gulch east to Jackson Street.
10. Replace ex. 6" water main with new 8" main east from main on National Avenue at railroad tracks that heads west to serve Northwestern Energy.
11. Replace ex. 6" water main with new 8" main on Argyle St from National Ave to North Montana Ave., Connect and loop new upsized main.
12. Replace ex. 6" water main with new 8" main on Lyndale Ave from Warren St east to National Ave.
13. Replace ex. 6" water main with new 8" main on National Ave from Lyndale Ave north to its terminus at the railroad tracks.
14. Replace ex. 6" water main with new looped 8" main starting at corner of Lyndale Ave and Warren St northward serving Memorial Park.
15. Replace ex. 4" & 6" water mains with new 8" mains from corner of Lyndale Ave and Ewing St. north to dead end located just east of Legion Field.
16. Replace ex. 6" water main with new 8" main on Dodge Ave, south from Argyle St. to dead end.
17. Upsize and optimize ex. 8", 10" & 12" water mains at the intersection of Lyndale Ave and North Montana.
18. Replace ex. 8" water main with new 10" main on Poplar St. from Last Chance Gulch East to Harris Street.
19. Replace ex. 4" and 6" water mains looping northward from Lyndale Ave and through Memorial Park – northern loop with new 8" mains. Includes main in Lyndale at LC Gulch.
20. Replace ex. 8" C.I. water main with new 10" main on North Montana Ave from Lyndale Ave. north to the railroad tracks.

21. Replace ex. 8" water main with new 10" main on Bozeman Ave from North Montana Ave. east to Roberts Street.

Sanitary Sewer Projects Proposed as Per 2008 Waste Water System Master Plan:

Upsizing/Replacement/Reconfiguration Projects:

1. Replace ex. 18" sanitary sewer main on Harris Street with new 24" sanitary sewer main, from Phoenix Ave to Walnut St., and Harris St from Cedar to Cole St. (I & I area project).
2. Boulder Ave/E. Lyndale Ave/Lewis St. Replace ex. 8" and 10" sanitary sewer mains with new 12"/15"/18" sanitary sewer mains.

Pipe Relining/Replacement Projects – Failing Pipes That Do Not Need Upsizing:

1. Lewis St between Oakes St. and Harris St.
2. Roberts St from Boulder Ave south to alley.
3. Poplar St. between Roberts St. and Sanders St.
4. Walnut St. between N Montana Ave and Cooke St.
5. Livingston Ave between Idaho Ave and Montana Ave.
6. Bedford St. between Rodney St. 1E and Lyndale Ave.
7. Helena Avenue between Ewing St. and Rodney St.
8. Lyndale Avenue between Oakes 1W and Harris Street.

Stormwater Master Plan Recommendations in the TIFF/TEDD Area

1. Harris Street Project (RR-2)
2. Montana Avenue Railroad Underpass (RR-5)
3. Lamborn and Railroad Project (RR-21)

MAJOR STREET NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

Montana Avenue – Railroad Grade Separation

Boulder Avenue Connections – North Hannaford Street to Blaine Street

Montana Avenue / Lyndale Avenue / Helena Avenue Intersection Improvements

Vilard Ave & Last Chance Gulch - Proposed signal and striping improvements

PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

Helena Ave & Gallatin Avenue Bulbouts

Last Chance Gulch & Aspen Street - Crossing Improvement

Last Chance Gulch & Centennial Park (East Entrance) - Crossing Improvement

Lyndale Ave & Warren St. - Crossing Improvement

Montana Ave & Chesnut St - Crossing Improvement

Lyndale & Montana Avenue Sidewalks

BICYCLE NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

Proposed Bike Lanes

Last Chance Gulch - Lyndale Ave to Cedar Street

Montana Ave - Billings Ave to Cedar St

Helena Avenue - Last Chance Gulch to Roberts St

Proposed Shared-Use Path

Centennial Trail - National Ave to Interstate 15

Proposed Bike Boulevards

Chesnut St - Last Chance Gulch to Cooke St. -

Roberts St - Billings Ave to Phoenix Ave

TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS

Last Chance Gulch

Montana Ave

Lyndale Ave

Helena Ave

References

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- ¹ James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*, completed for the City of Helena Community Development Department, April 28, 2001.
- ² http://www.mbac.biz/index.php?pr=Railroad_District_Plan
- ³ Fossum Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Conditions and Criteria Analysis*, January 16, 2015, 1, 1n3. In December 2014, Max Pigman, head of RAT and owner of Lewis and Clark Brewery, noted that RAT hoped that improving the district by promoting its historic functions and character would attract more businesses. "There's people that actually come from out of town just to watch the trains hook up and unhook," Pigman said, "if we can actually take advantage of some of the great history we have and create some new information that those people can be attracted to then businesses will follow." Matt Witkos, KTVH.com, "Businesses Start a Team to Improve Railroad District." December 12, 2014. <http://www.ktvh.com/home/headlines/Businesses-Start-a-Team-to-Improve-Railroad-District-285689481.html>.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.
- ⁵ Kate Hampton, "More than a Mile from City Center: Helena's Northern Pacific Railroad District and Sixth Ward," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 57, no. 1 (2007): 56–60; Jon Axline and Ellen Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, 2004; Jon Axline, *Cultural Resource Survey and Assessment: Caird Engineering Works (24LC2205)*, 2014; James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*.
- ⁶ James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*, 1; Axline, *Caird Engineering Works*, 8; Axline and Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District*.
- ⁷ James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*; Axline, *Caird Engineering Works*; Axline and Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District*; Hampton, "More than a Mile from City Center," 58.
- ⁸ William L Lang, "The Nearly Forgotten Blacks on Last Chance Gulch, 1900-1912," *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (1979): 50.
- ⁹ Hampton, "More than a Mile from City Center," 59; Axline and Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District*, Section 8, p. 6.
- ¹⁰ Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, Revised (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 283.
- ¹¹ Axline and Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District*; Hampton, "More than a Mile from City Center."
- ¹² *Ibid.*; James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*; Axline and Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District*.
- ¹³ Axline and Baumler, *Helena Railroad Depot Historic District*.
- ¹⁴ James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*, completed for the City of Helena Community Development Department, April 28, 2001, 14.
- ¹⁵ "History in 6th Ward," *Helena Independent Record*, 3/19/2005. Neighborhood residents have consistently been adamant about the value they place on preserving the area's historic character, and "the Railroad District's historic resources also are of significance to the overall Helena Community." The City of Helena, too, "understands the importance of this area and want[s] to preserve its historic remnants." The depth of these commitments has been expressed in almost every discussion about the neighborhood's future in the last 15 years, and is further attested to by the fact that in 2003 the City hired the Montana the Community Design Center of the Montana State University Architecture Department to develop design guidelines for preserving the historic character of the neighborhood during, and as a means of, revitalization. James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*, completed for the City of Helena Community Development Department, April 28, 2001, 8; http://www.mbac.biz/index.php?pr=Railroad_District_Plan.
- ¹⁶ *City of Helena Assessor's Records*, 316 N Park Ave, Helena, Lewis & Clark Co, MT.
- ¹⁷ James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*, completed for the City of Helena Community Development Department, April 28, 2001, 7.
- ¹⁸ Fossum Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Conditions and Criteria Analysis*, January 16, 2015, 10.
- ¹⁹ James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*, completed for the City of Helena Community Development Department, April 28, 2001, 2.

²⁰ James Boyer Consulting Services, Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study, completed for the City of Helena Community Development Department, April 28, 2001, 2.

²¹ James Boyer Consulting Services, *Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study*, completed for the City of Helena Community Development Department, April 28, 2001, 15.

²² Tetra Tech, *6th Ward Area-Wide Assessment*, prepared for Lewis and Clark County, May 30, 2008, 36-37. Other potentially unsafe contaminated sites include the Helena Solvent Site near 1427 Helena Ave., which is contaminated with the solvent PCE.

²³ <http://svc.mt.gov/deq/wmadst>. Accessed 11/6/2015.

²⁴ James Boyer Consulting Services, Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study, completed for the City of Helena Community Development Department, April 28, 2001, 13; Fossum Consulting Services, Helena Railroad District Conditions and Criteria Analysis, January 16, 2015, 4; James Boyer Consulting Services, Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study, completed for the City of Helena Community Development Department, April 28, 2001, 13.

²⁵ Note that “the project numbering scheme . . . does not represent or imply priority with respect to individual projects.” 2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 106-107, 109.

²⁶ “Sixty Ward Area: Historic Neighborhood Becomes Focus for Future Planning,” *Helena Independent Record*, 7/26/2015.

²⁷ 2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 105, 107. In July 2002, a Grade Separation Feasibility Study examined four alternatives for this project, a identified a fully separated underpass crossing as the most feasible alternative. MRL preferred a fully separated overpass crossing. The following year, MDT completed a Statewide Rail/Highway Grade Separation Needs Study in which this crossing was identified as the #2 most feasible in the state for grade separation.

²⁸ James Boyer Consulting Services, Helena Railroad District Revitalization Study, completed for the City of Helena Community Development Department, April 28, 2001, 7-8, 15.

¹¹⁰ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 9-3.

¹¹¹ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 9-3.

¹¹² 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 9-14.

¹¹³ Additional financial incentives for preservation and restoration are offered by the Federal government.

¹¹⁴ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 9-6.

¹¹⁵ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 9-15.

¹¹⁶ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 9-9.

¹¹⁷ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 9-8.

¹¹⁸ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 9-9.

¹¹⁹ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 9-9.

¹²⁰ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 9-9.

¹²¹ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 5-26.

¹²² 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 5-26.

¹²³ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 2-10.

¹²⁴ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 4-1.

¹²⁵ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 4-2.

¹²⁶ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 4-9.

¹²⁷ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 4-1.

¹²⁸ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 4-8.

¹²⁹ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 4-9.

¹³⁰ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 4-11.

¹³¹ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 3-7.

¹³² 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 3-8.

¹³³ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 3-8.

¹³⁴ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 3-8, 9.

¹³⁵ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 3-10.

¹³⁶ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 3-8.

¹³⁷ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 4-2.

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- ¹³⁸ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 4-11.
- ¹³⁹ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 4-12.
- ¹⁴⁰ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 3-9.
- ¹⁴¹ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 3-10.
- ¹⁴² 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 5-26.
- ¹⁴³ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 5-26.
- ¹⁴⁴ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 5-26
- ¹⁴⁵ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 6-3
- ¹⁴⁶ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 6-4
- ¹⁴⁷ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 6-5. Specifically noted as a problem in this area is that “principal arterials and large intersections create barriers for pedestrians.”
- ¹⁴⁸ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 6-5
- ¹⁴⁹ 2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 3.
- ¹⁵⁰ 2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 3.
- ¹⁵¹ 2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 4.
- ¹⁵² 2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 5.
- ¹⁵³ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 5-1, 5-2.
- ¹⁵⁴ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 6-3
- ¹⁵⁵ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 6-10
- ¹⁵⁶ 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 6-11
- ¹⁵⁷ 2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 3.
- ¹⁵⁸ 2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 3.
- ¹⁵⁹ 2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 4.
- ¹⁶⁰ 2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 4.
- ¹⁶¹ 2014 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 3.