

# **CORE AREA PLAN**

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

**March 2011 – December 2012**

## Public Outreach



Kalispell Picnic in the park



## Flathead County Fair



Kalispell Chamber of Commerce luncheon

# Public Involvement

## **Stakeholder Interviews**

In March of 2011 city staff began conducting interviews with stakeholders which included property owners, business owners, residents and community organizations with property, business or an interest within the boundaries of the Core Area plan. City staff met with over 80 stakeholders initially who provided staff with their thoughts on the issues that should be addressed and their perspective on future redevelopment of the Core Area. This insight has been invaluable in helping to guide staff in the planning efforts for the area. The stakeholder interviews continue to date with a total of approximately 140 stakeholder interviews. Note this represents about 60% of the land area in the Core Area plan.

## **Steering Committee**

The planning board appointed a nine member steering committee in March of 2012 to help staff develop the vision, goals and policies for the Core Area plan. The steering committee has met monthly since April of 2012 providing city staff and CTA perspective on the concept plans and street profiles developed for the plan. The steering committee has committed to remain together after the plan is adopted to aid staff in the implementation of the plan.

## **Open Houses**

Public open houses were held in December of 2011 to solicit input from citizens on the issues they felt needed to be addressed in the plan. The public was invited back to a series of open house meetings in August of 2012 once a draft vision statement, goals and concept plans were developed for comment and suggested changes. The comments focused on the need to remove the railroad tracks from the Core Area, a focus on better street connectivity, increased sidewalks connections and increased parks and green space in the area.

## **Chamber of Commerce**

The August 2012 Kalispell Chamber of Commerce luncheon featured CTA's presentation of their work on the Core Area plan. City staff provided a brief overview of the planning process to date with CTA giving an in depth look at the concept plans that will be included in the draft plan. The luncheon was well attended with over 210 in attendance. The city recorded the presentation and subsequently aired it on the city's public access channel during the month of September.

## **Planning Board Work Sessions**

The planning board was provided an update on the planning efforts on the Core Area plan at their regular meeting in June 2012. At the planning board's

regular meeting in September of 2012, city staff and CTA provided the same presentation that was presented at the August chamber luncheon. The planning board held a public hearing on the draft plan at their October 2012 planning board meeting and forwarded a unanimous positive recommendation to the city council.

### **Website and Communications**

Six newsletters were mailed directly to property owners in the Core Area plan boundaries. The newsletters informed the property owners of the following:

- The overall plan process
- How they could become involved in the planning process
- City staff contact information
- Provided updates on progress of the plan
- Identified major issues under consideration for the plan
- Invitations to the public open houses and chamber luncheon
- Notification of planning board and city council hearings on the draft plan

An email list of other interested individuals was also compiled to provide them with an electronic version of the newsletter and inform them of upcoming hearings. The Community Development Department also maintained up-to-date information on the plan on its website. A copy of the draft plan was made available on the Community Development Department's

website and the Planning Department's website.

### **Public Involvement Summary**

Stakeholder Interviews – 3/2011 to 9/2012

City staff conducted 80 one on one interviews with property and businesses owners in the Core Area

Open House – 12/1/2011, 12/5/2011 and 12/6/2011

Over 40 property owners attended the series of open houses. Property owners were introduced to the plan and asked about issues or concerns the plan should address.

Steering Committee appointment – 3/13/2012

The planning board appointed a nine member steering committee based on a list of interested individuals in the community.

Steering Committee meeting – 4/10/2012

Initial meeting to set up committee and begin discussion on plan.

Steering Committee meeting – 4/25/2012

Discussion of vision statement and goals to be included in the plan.

Steering Committee meeting – 5/23/2012

Confirmed vision statement and draft goals

Planning board work session –  
6/12/2012

City staff provided an overview of the plan to date. Specific topics discussed were the vision statement for the plan and major issues brought up by the public.

Planning board work session –  
6/21/2012

Joint work session with the planning board and Flathead County Fair Board at the fairgrounds. The work session focused on the fairgrounds long range plan and discussion of the Core Area plan.

Steering Committee meeting –  
6/26/2012

Overview of CTA's concept plans with input from the committee

Montana West Economic Development Board meeting – 6/27/2012

City staff gave a presentation on the planning process for the Core Area plan including the draft vision statement, goals and upcoming concept plans from CTA.

Steering Committee meeting –  
8/1/2012

Review of CTA's concept plans and further discussion of the draft plan goal statements.

Flathead County Fair – 8/15 to  
8/19/2012

City staff set up a booth at the fair informing citizens of the Core Area plan, the vision and list of issues brought to the city's attention to date. The booth was staffed for three days, 8/15 to 8/17 during which over 75 people talked with staff about the plan and provided comments.

Kalispell Chamber of Commerce luncheon – 8/28/2012

City staff and CTA presented an overview of the plan to date with CTA providing a presentation of their concept plans. The luncheon had in excess of 210 attendees and was one of the largest luncheons attended in the last few years.

Open House – 8/28 and 8/29/2012

Over 15 people attending this second round of open house meetings to inform the public on the vision and goal statements in the plan and review CTA's concept plans.

Planning Board work session –  
9/11/2012

CTA presented the planning board with its concept plan presentation given at the chamber luncheon on August 28<sup>th</sup>.

Steering Committee meeting –  
9/12/2012

A review of CTA's presentation at the August chamber luncheon and staff provided a synopsis of the comments received at the luncheon. The committee discussed the next steps in the project.

Steering Committee meeting –  
10/24/2012

The committee reviewed the draft plan and recommended the plan be forwarded to the planning board to hold the public hearing

Planning Board public hearing –  
11/13/2012

A public hearing was held and the planning board recommended the city council approve the Core Area Plan as an amendment to the Kalispell Growth Policy

City council work session –  
12/10/12

City council public hearing  
12/17/12

**Kalispell Core Area  
Chamber Presentation August 28, 2012  
Questionnaire Results**

**COMMENTS**

**General Support comments:**

- Loved the plans for the future. Having lived in the Calgary, Boston and New York have seen what vision can do!
- Good info and great thoughtful vision to future of our community.
- I've been hoping, dreaming and planning for this for 32 years. The sooner we start the better. If we don't plan and move forward....then in 30-50 years, we'll still be in the same place we are today. GO FOR IT!
- Like seeing some "vision" for growth – let's be sure to apply that to City Airport as well, especially since the majority of funding is already available.
- Excellent presentation – very exciting!!
- It only takes people, money and time. Good start.
- Love it, Kalispell really needs this. What about a fountain in the end? In Seattle at their Seattle Center they have a great fountain where families go and kids play in the water as its interactive and fun.
- Yes!!
- Good Luck.....
- I love the idea of a more urban feel in downtown Kalispell.
- CTA is the perfect partner for the city.

- Some great ideas to bring life to our city. Enjoyed the vision. Thanks.
- Great!
- I think that you are on the right track - Thank you for your interest, involvement and vision!

**Recommendations:**

- Library/Fine Arts/Theater/Community Center can move here. We need to be careful about using public funds to develop and/or pay to move businesses. Gov't agencies should not develop with public funds. They can become money pits of the taxpayer dollars.
- Build new main library in downtown – EN-Cenex area would be good – sooner rather than later!
- Build new library in the core area. Include railway X on west end including area out to Hwy 2/Appleyway Drive.
- An art center and a library at the end of the east corridor is a great idea for a mixed use area. The trails and green areas are absolutely necessary to its success.
- Please DON'T remove the tracks! They are the reason Kalispell is here. Convert them to a electric trolley track that can service the new businesses that are proposed for that area – think Seattle waterfront trolley. Mark that a vehicle free area (except the trolley) make parking garages that are not visible – try to develop buildings that keep the historic feel of the downtown. Don't turn the Town of Kalispell into a City! Make it look like “Old” Kalispell.
- More attention should be given to retaining the historical railway presence of the railroad in Kalispell. The revitalization plan should give this historical aspect more attention. How about a trolley system to move people east-to-west? Perhaps extend all the way to GPIA (Glacier Park International Airport).

- What about converting the railroad tracks to a trolley system with parking (lots or garages) at the east and west ends of the line? Example – Downtown Denver.
- The use of the Trolleys that would travel up and down through the shopping district (similar to the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall in downtown Denver) would enable the train tracks to be used in a positive way keeping the charm of Kalispell – old and new – alive! The trolleys would also be an attraction to tourist – they would know they can walk possibly out of the hotel room and get on the trolley and ride to the various shopping destinations, restaurants, and points of interest without having to worry about parking. The downtown Denver trolley has brought more businesses, tourists to the city then predicted. There is more business now then with vehicle traffic!
- Development should attract locals and tourists to area (restaurants, bars, shopping); Pie in the sky but what about a trolley along track corridor? Parking will be very important.
- Kudos on McElroy site, nice job! Use tracks for public transportation “Kalispell Trolley”. Change Main Street to allow trolley too for North/South to hospital in middle of 93. Kalispell Airport to Hutton? Or sell the whole lot – 340 acres to mall developer to have inside shopping year-round with parking on top still using your entrance ideas.
- Would like to see a walking Main Street.
- We certainly need to allow Kalispell to be more vibrant with pedestrian traffic – much like Whitefish. It will immensely benefit all business in Kalispell. Like the idea of a pedestrian bridge on Hwy 93 – like the ones on the strip of Las Vegas.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Ave EN needs to come south along the RR Tracks and connect to Woodland Ave.
- Development did not consider weather in our area; should consider removing gauntlet at courthouse.

- Traffic on Hwy 93 is already slow and congested (a traffic study could do wonders). Do not narrow the street, but consider a pedestrian bridge over the road. There should still be adequate parking if you put in those garages you spoke of.
- Be aware of detailed plans and remember we have more winter than summer! 8. Do we want them connected or each a complimentary but unique personality? 4. “in” – not necessarily – to those areas – Yes. 3. Would look prettier – but many a man with a trophy wife learned the hard way – pretty to look at and pretty to live with aren’t necessarily the same thing. We need revenue. Narrowing 93, step backwards. The busiest I ever saw Kalispell sidewalks was the line up for Jurassic Park – narrow sidewalks were not a problem. The wide sidewalks we now have not invited pedestrians and the reduced parking and more difficult driving has reduced pedestrian. Do not make the same mistake! Would more pedestrian bridges be possible? Especially if businesses can be encouraged to help build them like the downtown bank did? Home businesses could have green back yards that would face into small city parks – then most of the green would be paid for with private money.
- Cross (East/West) over 93 with a sky bridge. Once the rail is gone it will proceed with lots of enthusiasm. Residential density is needed for low to moderate income. The trail will be a great thread and great vision from CTA. Grain silos can be a “spot” for historical site and figure out a high rise bird’s eye view of the downtown.
- Need: 1. Better road/access connectivity; 2. Need “re-think” of current zoning standards; 3. Need job growth; 4. Need “open space” as we are Montana and this is why people come. Ideas for recreational development? 5. I believe the train history of Kalispell should be maintained throughout this process.
- Traffic down Main Street is horrible so not too sure that making the street narrow again would help but make it worse. Right now we have to sit through about 2 or 3 lights in the summertime just at the main intersection light alone. Snow removal and weather should be considered when talking about medians and outdoor spaces.

- Consider crossing North Main Street with a sky bridge. That goes with a reduced size North annex of KCM (Kalispell Center Mall) of 2 stories, wherein you go into shopping in the 2 story “North Main” then down a flight of stairs into current KC Mall.
- What about public transportation?
- In the short term it would be more valuable and feasible to focus on connecting the existing rails to trails along the existing trails ROW to Evergreen. This would safely draw foot/bike traffic into and through town. Existing businesses would benefit. Over time begin to add commercial and residential “properties.” (illegible)
- Keep the downtown vital so it’s not lost to box area on 93 N.
- Connect present downtown to the new area by over walks (sky walks) – over Center Street.
- How much money to get rid of the RR tracks and where would it come from?
- What about small lots for single family homes like those older homes on the east side?
- How much population growth would be needed to build out? 100,000; 50,000; 25,000?
- Are there any businesses currently served by the railroad & how will it impact them?
- Well done! Do not make the train track an auto street – keep separation between bike path and automobile street – bike/pedestrian overpass on Main Street.
- I think the planning looks great, but we could make Main Street look like these new pictures. I feel we need to start in downtown existing areas where the old buildings are instead of leaving them behind and move forward to building a new core.

- The idea and concept would make the area more functional for the community. However, to promote wellness to the community should only have pedestrian use in the center/core of Kalispell so all can take in the beauty of the area.
- This is exciting! Our existing gateway entering Kalispell from the east on Hwy 2 is tired and unappealing. Wider sidewalks and trees on Main Street would be wonderful! We visited Grand Junction, CO last year and their downtown is so vital and popular. They have 2 narrow lanes on their Main Street and wide sidewalks. I support this effort wholeheartedly.
- Pedestrian Overpass; one way streets – 1<sup>st</sup> Ave east and west to alternate Main Street; Keep some of old buildings to keep historic look; and recycle and reuse existing buildings.
- Good start – nice vision. Hwy 93 overpass for pedestrian and bikes vs. another stop light.
- Woo hoo! ☺ 6. Depends on what they are – we need businesses that attract foot traffic; 8. Concerned about if opening roads/access would bring with is more traffic (auto) vs foot traffic. \*We need to get the bypass opened and utilized before growth can reasonable happen downtown.
- Share this with Leadership Flathead this year!
- Overpass on 93 downtown good idea.
- I like Woodland Park because of the dense trees. I like the idea of adding life, trees and filling in the ugly, empty spaces. I do think it's important to embrace the rustic, small town, railroad roots when it comes to overall style to avoid a typical lifestyle center, Anytown USA look. Keep the Main Street look; brick buildings with old painted ads, etc.
- Bikes can only get to this path if they can get to it from the North – down Buffalo Hill, etc. Downtown needs a facility for concerts, plays, etc. to host events and bring tourists here. Think ING Center in Spokane. Touring Broadway, Glacier Symphony, etc. Kalispell schools and FVCC

could use it too. The core area is perfect place for it. What about BN and are businesses wanting to move?

- Need bike/ped connections from Kidsport down to Kalispell city core.
- Agree to need for pedestrian path, and encourage foot traffic, but our climate and longer colder months need to be considered. Lighting for short days – warning areas or opportunities for winter pedestrians – winter maintenance services. Would love to see cycling from outlying areas encouraged with more safe cycle paths.
- Like the density concepts but want to make sure current owners are not displaced and fully compensated. In this economy, even loans put the burden on the property owner – what about grants or outright purchase? My husband and I own property along the tracks in the core area. It is an old shipping warehouse, which could suit some other purpose but we do not have the funds or the ability to borrow more to improve it. We need assistance, and not more regulation that increases our costs or causes us to lose our business.
- The north/south traffic congestion is, in my opinion, the largest problem w/ downtown Kalispell. There are a number of people, including myself, that avoid downtown at all costs because the traffic is horrible. If the congestion was not so bad, it may even be an enjoyable place to go.
- Consider an art park as a draw for both residents and tourists. Attractions for tourists to stop vs driving through. Library and community center.

**RESPONSES TO THE 10 QUESTIONS PROVIDED TO ATTENDEES AT  
THE CHAMBER LUNCHEON:**

**(Score of 1 is best - 10 is least desirable)**

**111 responses**

- #1 There is a need to address underutilized and deteriorating properties in the Core Area.**  
Ave. Score – 1.9  
1. 62 2. 23 3. 13 4. 5 5. 3 6. 2 7. 0 8. 1 9. 0 10. 1 N/R-1
- #2 If the railroad tracks were removed from the Core Area, could this area in-fill and grow.**  
Ave. Score – 2.3  
1. 51 2. 20 3. 17 4. 10 5. 6 6. 1 7. 1 8. 2 9. 0 10. 1 N/R- 2
- #3 If the RR track is removed, a linear park/trail, where feasible, extending from Woodland Park to South Meridian would be a valuable community asset.**  
Ave. Score – 2.2  
1. 64 2. 16 3. 13 4. 5 5. 3 6. 3 7. 0 8. 2 9. 2 10. 2 N/R- 1
- #4 There is a need for improved sidewalks and pedestrian/bike trails in the Kalispell Core Area.**  
Ave. Score – 2.2  
1. 61 2. 10 3. 14 4. 9 5. 5 6. 3 7. 0 8. 3 9. 0 10. 2 N/R- 4
- #5 There is a need for additional north/south street connections through the Kalispell Core Area.**  
Ave. Score – 2.4  
1. 55 2. 16 3. 13 4. 10 5. 7 6. 5 7. 1 8. 2 9. 0 10. 1 N/ R- 1
- #6 A mix of retail, service, residential and public uses in the Core Area would bring vitality to Kalispell.**  
Ave. Score – 2.3  
1. 58 2. 11 3. 19 4. 12 5. 3 6. 1 7. 2 8. 2 9. 1 10. 1 N/R – 1
- #7 Multi-story development and increased density would promote additional growth.**  
Ave. Score – 2.8  
1. 45 2. 16 3. 17 4. 9 5. 9 6. 6 7. 2 8. 2 9. 2 10.2 N/R – 1

**#8 Shared architectural standards patterned after the traditional Kalispell Main Street would complement and connect the two areas.**

Ave. Score – 2.5

1. 44 2. 21 3. 20 4. 11 5. 3 6. 5 7. 0 8. 1 9. 1 10. 2 N/R – 3

**#9 Public and neighborhood safety and access would be improved if the north and west portions of Woodland Park were thinned and cleared to provide more openness.**

Ave/ Score – 3.6

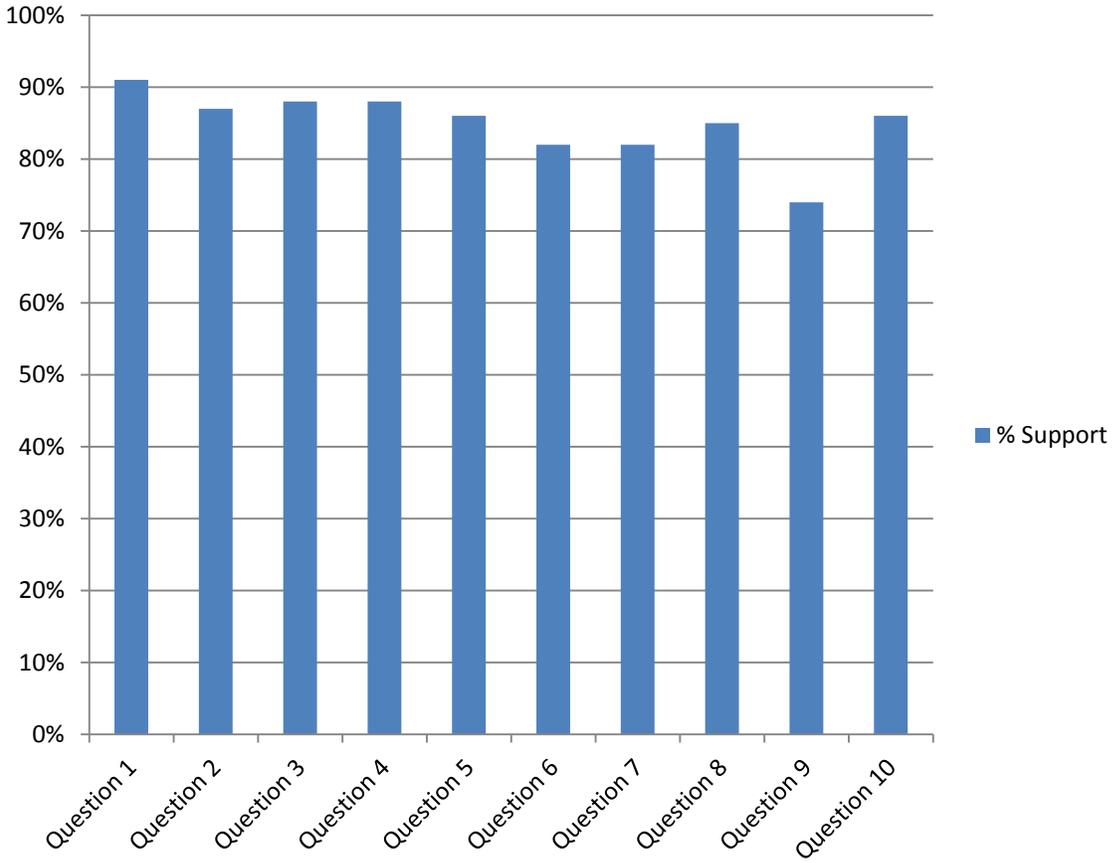
1. 32 2. 17 3. 13 4. 12 5. 5 6. 9 7. 7 8. 7 9. 3 10. 2 N/R – 4

**#10 The core area revitalization plan vision presented by CTA places Kalispell on the right path.**

Ave. Score – 2.4

1. 48 2. 18 3. 17 4. 8 5. 8 6. 2 7. 2 8. 3 9. 0 10.0 N/R – 5

# Kalispell Core Area Chamber meeting Survey Response - % Positive Response



## Newsletters

The planning department has mailed out six newsletters to date to property owners in the Core Area Plan boundary. These newsletters provide the owners with updates on the planning process, inform them of upcoming meetings and provide them contact information for city staff if they have comments or questions.