



City of Kalispell, Montana
Core Area Plan: December 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The plan could not be realized without the support and commitment of the following individuals:

The Owners

The 450 property and business owners who live and/or work within the Core Area.

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*“Determine that the thing can and shall be done
and then we shall find a way.”*

- Abraham Lincoln

Executive Summary

The City of Kalispell has long recognized that the heart of our community must remain strong for Kalispell to grow and prosper. The heart of Kalispell includes the historic downtown and those areas north of the downtown which constitute the Core Area. These areas of the Kalispell community provide a unique setting unlike the large scale commercial development on the north side of the city which is primarily comprised of box stores and national commercial chains. The downtown and Core Area are the original commercial districts of the city. Through the years these areas have undergone changes but it is these areas that provide Kalispell with its identity. Losing this identity, whether through neglect or haphazard development patterns, will be a detriment to the entire city.

Once the vibrant industrial center of Kalispell, there is a sense that the Core Area has since lost its way. Through this plan, Kalispell is setting a course to introduce sustainable redevelopment in the Core Area. In this context, sustainable redevelopment means creating an economy based on using local assets creating measurable local benefits depending primarily on the private sector, particularly small businesses. This development will incorporate the neighborhood quality of life as a major component of economic competitiveness with long term strategies recognizing that success in the Core Area should not come at the expense of downtown; conversely success in one will benefit the other. Finally, sustainable redevelopment will include Brownfield remediation where needed to move Core Area infill properties to higher and better uses, increasing both the property values and benefitting public health and the tax base of the area, and allowing for the most cost effective and efficient use of city services

“Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how.”

*Edward T. McMahon,
ULI Senior Resident Fellow*

from public safety to infrastructure.

The purpose of the plan is to develop a vision, integrate community ideas and priorities, identify infrastructure needs and development limitations due in part to the properties classified as Brownfields, and then create specific strategies to make revitalization in the area a reality.

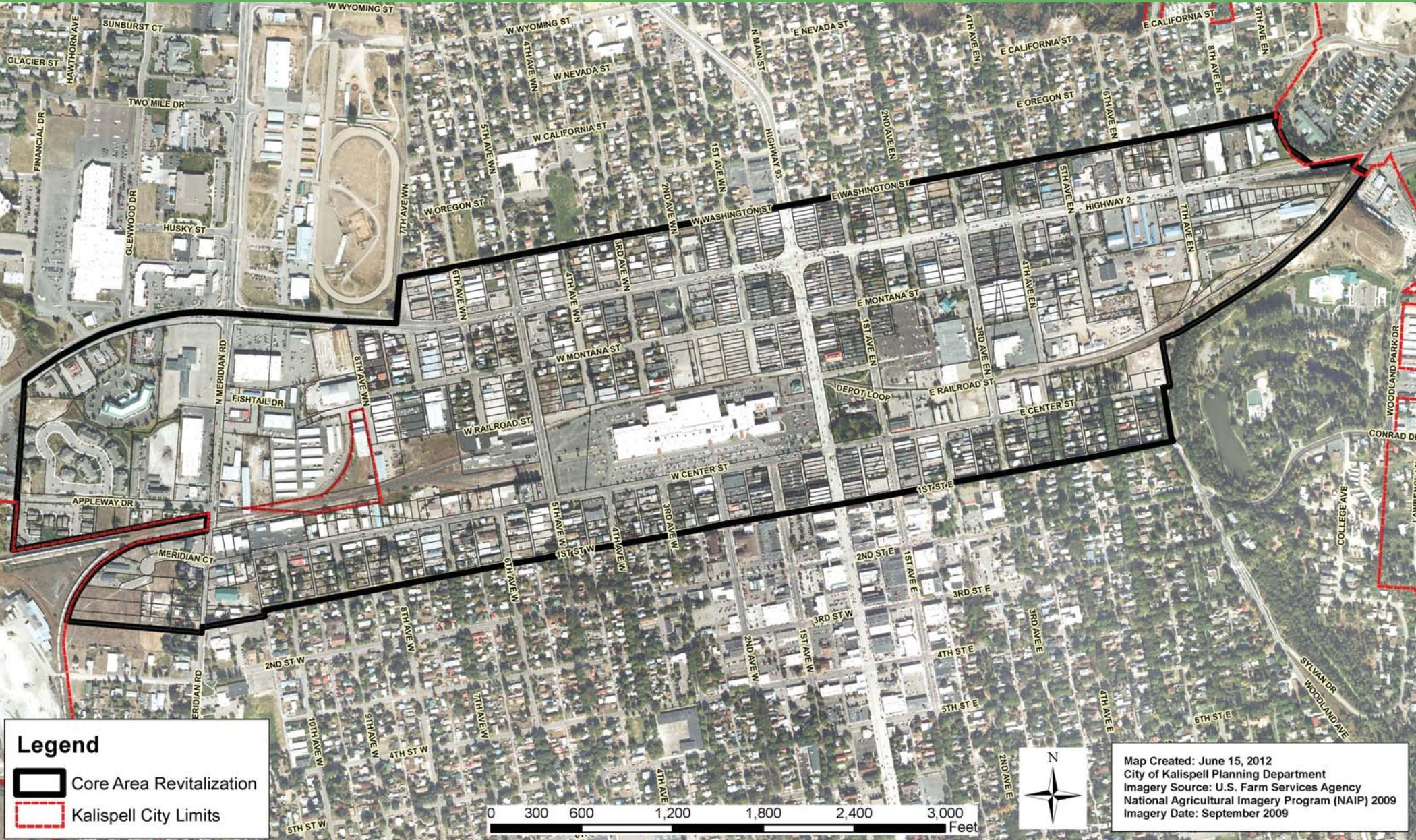
The city focused its efforts on the heart of our community, the traditional industrial hub we refer to as the “Core Area”. The Core Area is located along the rail corridor within the city limits bounded on the east and west by the current city limits, on the north by Washington Street and on the south by First Street. This 364-acre neighborhood, perched at the north end of our traditional downtown, has shown significant signs of blight and neglect.

Based on a significant public outreach program conducted by city staff, the focus of this plan includes a number of issues the public felt were important for the future revitalization of this area. The major issues of concern include:

- Remove the railroad track
- Linear park development and green space replacing and or in addition to the railroad track
- Infusion of higher density housing
- Compatible mix of commercial and residential uses
- Pedestrian/bicycle trail development
- Sidewalk development and improvements
- Street improvements and increased north/south street connections

This plan sets out a series of goal and policy statements to address the above issues and other concerns voiced by the public. With the

Core Area Plan



Kalispell Core Area Revitalization study boundary.

Core Area Plan



Kalispell July 1, 1961

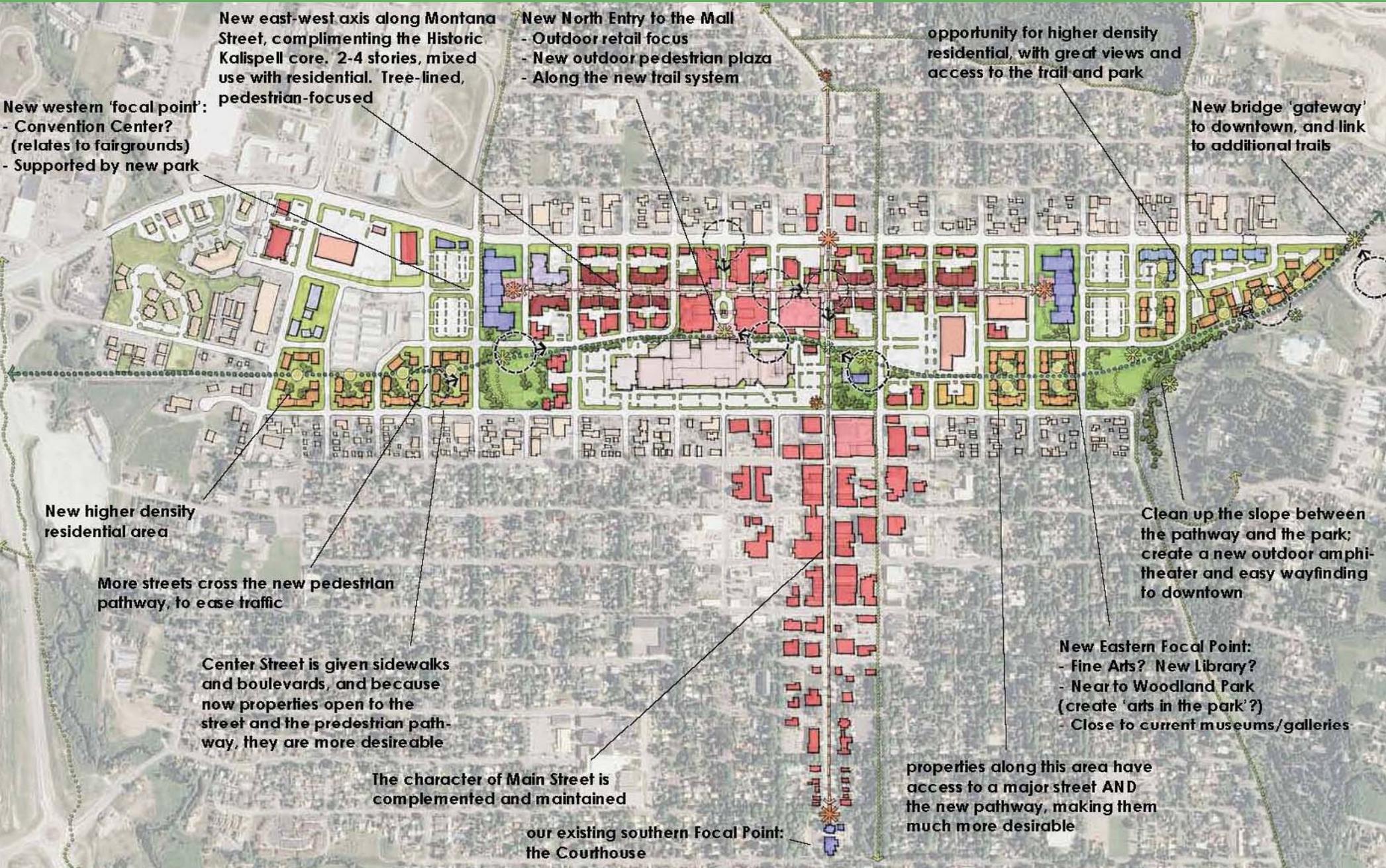
Vision Statement

The vision of Kalispell's revitalized Core Area is to transform from an industrially-oriented center into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhood, focusing upon retail, residential, entertainment, and cultural amenities designed to proudly and consistently complement the existing historic Kalispell downtown area.

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act but also dream. Not only plan but also believe."

Anatole France
French critic, writer

Core Area Plan



Conceptual site plan of the Core Area

CHAPTER 1 - THE VISION

The existing rail bridge that spans Highway 2 to the east would no longer be needed if the railway system is removed from downtown. But rather than demolition, it would exist as an opportunity to allow the new pedestrian trail system to safely cross Highway 2 and head north toward Lawrence Park and other trails. And because the existing bridge would need new guardrails and other details, the intent is to design the bridge as an attractive 'gateway' into downtown Kalispell from the east, welcoming travelers as they pass beneath it and into the revitalized downtown area.



East Side - Rail Bridge

Core Area Plan

The area above Woodland Park along the existing railroad tracks is among the best-kept secrets in the downtown area; a short walk up along the railroad embankment rewards a person with panoramic views in all directions spanning from Lone Pine Park, Woodland Park, the Swan Range to the east and a peek into Glacier National Park through the gap in the northeastern range. Turning the tracks into a trail would create a marvelous opportunity to convert the surrounding steeply-graded areas into higher density residential apartments and condominiums, built gracefully into the hillside, allowing immediate walk-out access to the trail system linking them to the retail and entertainment amenities offered downtown while turning Woodland Park into the occupant's immediate "front lawn".

The sloped and treed area along the western and northern border of Woodland Park as it rises to meet the railroad is currently overgrown with dense, scrubby vegetation. It is an unsafe environment for pedestrians and more conducive for transients. The plan speaks to cleaning up and thinning out the vegetation on this slope allowing it to be a new, safe and inviting gateway from downtown to the Woodland area, via the new trail system. It is envisioned that a new outdoor amphitheater could be built within the existing slope in the northwest corner of the park providing a new venue for outdoor music, plays, and other attractions, with Woodland Park and the dis-

*East Side - Railroad
Tracks Above
Woodland Park*



tant Swan Range as a backdrop to the stage. The current underutilized Flathead Electric Cooperative (FEC) substation at the corner of Woodland Avenue and Center Street could be converted into a temporary or permanent trailhead, parking facility for the amphitheater and new gateway into Woodland Park.

CHAPTER 1 - THE VISION

The existing view southward on Main Street is that of a busy 7-lane highway, with narrow sidewalks, industrial light fixtures, and nary a tree in sight. The current environment is not inviting for pedestrians and not conducive for outdoor seating associated with restaurants and cafes.

The long-range vision for this area is to make it an attractive destination for pedestrians by widening sidewalks, planting trees, adding benches and lower-scaled light fixtures, reducing the number of drive lanes and adding convenient angular parking stalls.

All of these measures serve to slow vehicular traffic and enhance the role and experience of the pedestrian, thereby attracting businesses to invest in the downtown core. These same design principles are also envisioned in the existing downtown area, to again enhance the vital role and experience of the pedestrian. Additionally, as architecture is encouraged northward into this area surrounding the new trail system, the intent is to influence the designs to be complimentary and respectful of the existing historic architecture of downtown Kalispell through the use of appropriate materials, scale, and character.

*Main Street
and Montana
Street (looking
South)*



Core Area Plan

With the railroad tracks removed and a linear trail in their place, the trail will need to cross Main Street. The likely crossing would be the current location of the railroad tracks at the intersection of Main Street and Market Street.

This intersection is situated between Center Street to the south and Montana Street to the north making the crossing at this location a convenient walking distance between the two streets.

This crossing would be at the nexus of north – south sidewalks leading downtown and the new east – west trail system, increasing its importance in terms of the overall trail system and requiring that the method of crossing Main Street is comfortable, interesting, and above all safe. The new design concept seeks to narrow Main Street to a more comfortable walking distance, add trees, and very likely include both crosswalk-marked pavement and a new stoplight or pedestrian light. In this manner, the new flow of bikes and people along the new east – west trail system

*Main Street and
Pedestrian Trail
(looking West)*



can integrate with Main Street and downtown Kalispell in a dynamic and safe way.

CHAPTER 1 - THE VISION

The area north of the Kalispell Center Mall is an example of the unfortunate blight that is created when an otherwise centrally-located and theoretically valuable portion of land is cut off from everyday pedestrian and vehicular circulation (due to the existence of the railroad tracks), thereby rendering it undesirable for development due to inaccessibility and non-visibility. Of course, this all changes dramatically when the tracks, once a barrier, are removed and a popular new, well-traveled trail system is introduced directly through this area. The result is literally a night-and-day comparison: what was a barrier is now an attraction; what was blight is now in high demand. In this case, the opportunity for the mall to expand northward is entirely possible. However, the expansion needn't be a physical connection to the mall's current indoor-oriented architecture; rather, expansion could take place in the form of what is often referred to as a 'lifestyle center', a method of essentially turning the interior mall inside out, allowing people to walk along outdoor streetscapes from shop to shop. This concept of street front shop design is identical to the intent of the architecture envisioned in the new Core Area (as described in the site plan narrative), and would create a new and lively pedestrian-focused shopping area to the north of the mall. It is envisioned that a new main entry to the existing mall would be located on this new north façade, visually attracting visi-

*Mall Plaza and
the Pedestrian Trail*



tors from the busy Highway 2 to the north. Even more exciting is the potential to create a large new outdoor plaza/gathering space at this new north entry to the mall, which would serve as a new venue in the downtown area for farmers markets, attractions, and festivities of all kinds while linking directly to the new east-west trail system.

Core Area Plan

This street is envisioned to be a new 'front door' view corridor to the Kalispell Center Mall and its front pedestrian plaza. Retail, office, and residential spaces would grow along this street, and the mall has the opportunity to celebrate this new entry area with an iconic clock tower or some other such attraction, drawing attention directly to its front door.

This view also encourages roof top access for living and dining to expand use and to create a more human scale. It also encourages wider sidewalks and abundant landscaping combined with reductions in street width at key pedestrian crossings.



2nd Avenue West North and Idaho Street (looking South)

CHAPTER 1 - THE VISION

Center Street is an area that, because of its industrial rail history, over time, has developed in a series of Quonsets, similar warehouses, gravel parking and single-story service buildings. In addition there is a confusing network of unlinked roads just north of the tracks, and a surprising amount of hidden open space along the current railroad right-of-way. Center Street is also a well-used travel route as traffic is funneled to Meridian Road to head north on one of the few streets that currently allows passage over the tracks.

The removal of the tracks once again breathes life into an area that was once choked-off from vehicular and pedestrian travel, allowing the new trail system to cleverly weave through areas that are envisioned to be townhouse-style walk-up homes, light retail areas along Center Street, and a large new city park for west-side residents. Additionally, throughout this area streets would be reconnected across what was previously the railroad track, thereby freeing up traffic along Center Street and

*Center Street and
7th Avenue West
(looking East)*



giving this part of Kalispell some much-needed traffic flow permeability from north to south.

Core Area Plan

The area west of the mall is another “no man’s land” that’s been created as a result of the existence of the railway throughout its long history. Roads don’t connect, and a significant amount of unused open space exists around the tracks in this location.

The opportunity that arises with the transformation of the rails-to-trail system is one of newly-organized and aligned streets, and a walking trail that leads people between the retail opportunities and pedestrian plaza areas surrounding the mall, and the new parks, townhouse residences, and existing trail system to the west.

Along the way, it is envisioned that quaint and interesting retail opportunities will arise directly along the pathway, where folks can stop off of the trail and have a snack, buy a book, meet an old friend, or find other interesting diversions. These are the random encounters and experiences that make life interesting in a properly designed cityscape.

*West Side Railroad at
5th Avenue West North
(looking East)*



CHAPTER 1 - THE VISION

The design intent of this area is to be a vibrant and lively continuation of the historic downtown of Kalispell, extending east-to-west along the entirety of Montana Street.

As an organizational principle and to provide architectural 'end-points' or 'focal points' to this east-west axis, attractive, civic-oriented (library, arts center, convention center, etc) buildings are intended in the center of these street views, paying homage to the "centralized" location exhibited by the existing historic courthouse at the southern end of Main Street. The idea is to build upon this very unique aspect of Kalispell's historic urban design history, carrying it forward into the new vision for Kalispell's future development.

Note the building shown at the end of the street in this sketch, which is intended to represent a new arts center, library, or some other major civic function.

All along this new east-west corridor, there would be mixed-use buildings consisting of retail and office uses on the first floor; office, residential, or hotel uses on the second floor; and generally residential

Montana Street (looking East toward Main Street)



on the upper floors.

The character and scale would be influenced by the existing downtown of Kalispell, using a similar palette of materials and creating a very strong pedestrian-scaled atmosphere with shops and markets, lower-scale lighting, ample trees and landscape, and other various downtown attractions.

Core Area Plan

The elevated aerial view to the right further describe the potential character and density that would be encouraged along Montana Street over many years of development.

Note the design intent of once again focusing upon the pedestrian experience by providing widened sidewalks, trees, plants and benches, attractive light fixtures, shops with awnings, and the like. Vehicles would be well accommodated with angular parking and well-designed parking structures in strategic locations. Pedestrian crossing areas would be well-marked with accent paving. Art and sculpture could be introduced in key locations to add additional interest and beauty. The intent of this new neighborhood would be to encourage a higher density of full-time residents who live, work, and shop in this area; people who will happily call this neighborhood their home, and will come to care for it, keep it safe, clean, and vibrant in a manner that becomes self-perpetuating.

Architecture would be encouraged to be thoughtful and consistent with that of the historic downtown, but certainly appropriate to the technology of the age of its construction, with em-

Montana Street at the intersection of Montana Street and Main Street (aerial view looking East)



phasis placed upon smart design that takes advantage of natural light, the region's dramatic views, and ample access to the outdoors.

CHAPTER 2 - GOALS FOR OUR FUTURE

These nine goals are intended to provide the overarching direction for the future of the Core Area. Chapters 3 & 4 will then continue to refine these fundamental yet visionary statements.

1. Relocation of the railroad tracks from the Core Area.
2. A green belt extending from Woodland Park to Meridian Road providing pedestrian and bike access and greenery through the Core Area.
3. A circulation system that encourages increased north-south connections.
4. Neighborhoods connected and well-served by sidewalks and trails for use by people of all ages and mobility levels.
5. A functional, physical and architectural connection between the traditional downtown and other surrounding neighborhoods and the Core Area as appropriate.
6. The focal point along with the traditional downtown for public venues such as city hall, county fairgrounds, chamber of commerce, library, performing arts center, exhibit halls and event centers.
7. A mix of commercial retail, neighborhood services, residential, public and open space uses within the Core Area that drive local

development by meeting the daily needs of residents, attracts the traveling public, inspires the greater community and encourages non-vehicular transportation.

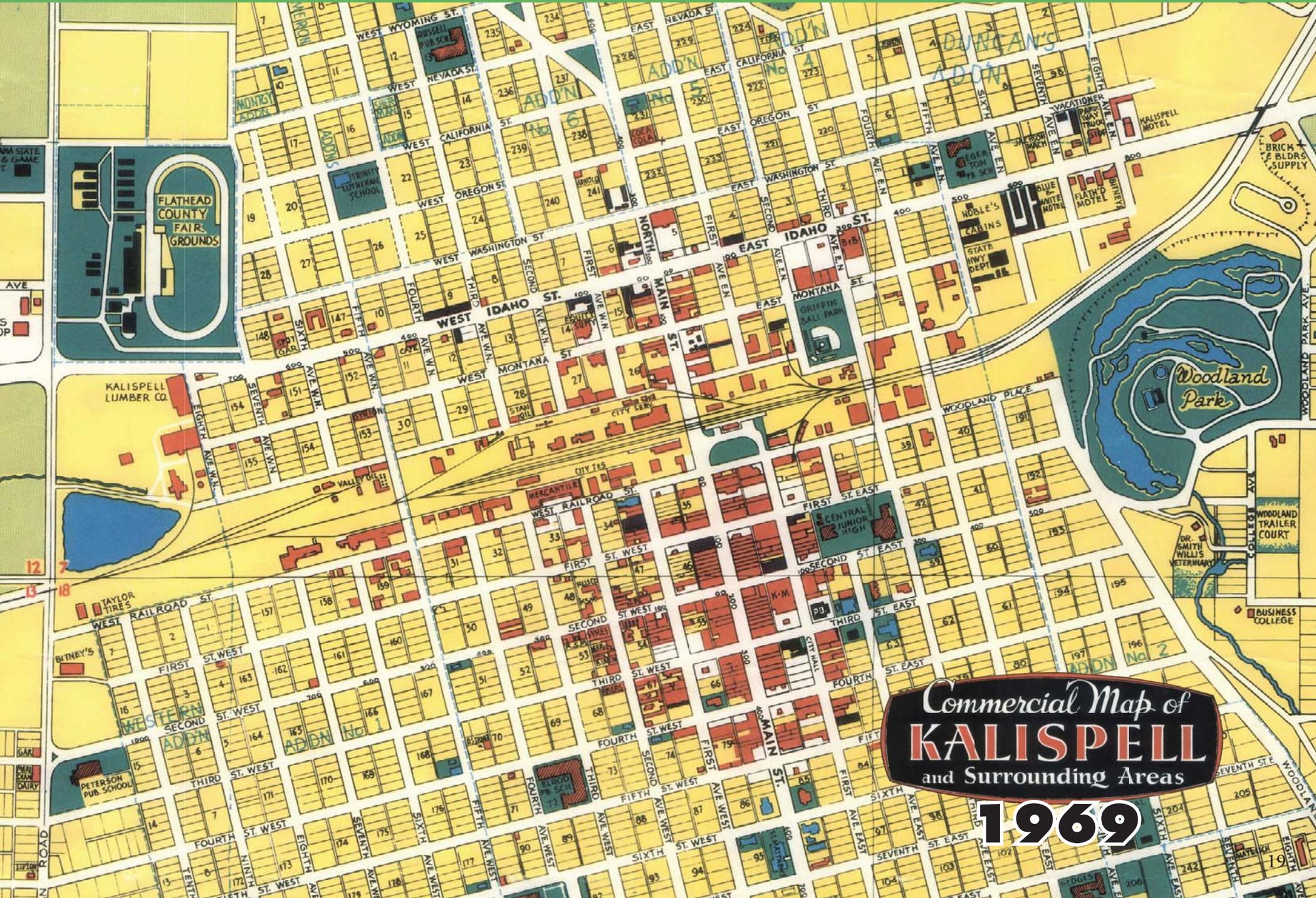
8. New development and redevelopment that incorporates parks, landscaped boulevards, open spaces for casual public interaction and landscaping that compliments architecture and the neighborhood to encourage active use of the built environment.
9. Entrance features including signs and visual cues such as building location, complimentary building design and streetscape features along Main Street and Highway 2 to define the boundaries of the Core Area and downtown.

“Planning is a process of choosing among those many options. If we do not choose to plan, then we choose to have others plan for us.”

Richard I. Winwood

NOTES:

Core Area Plan

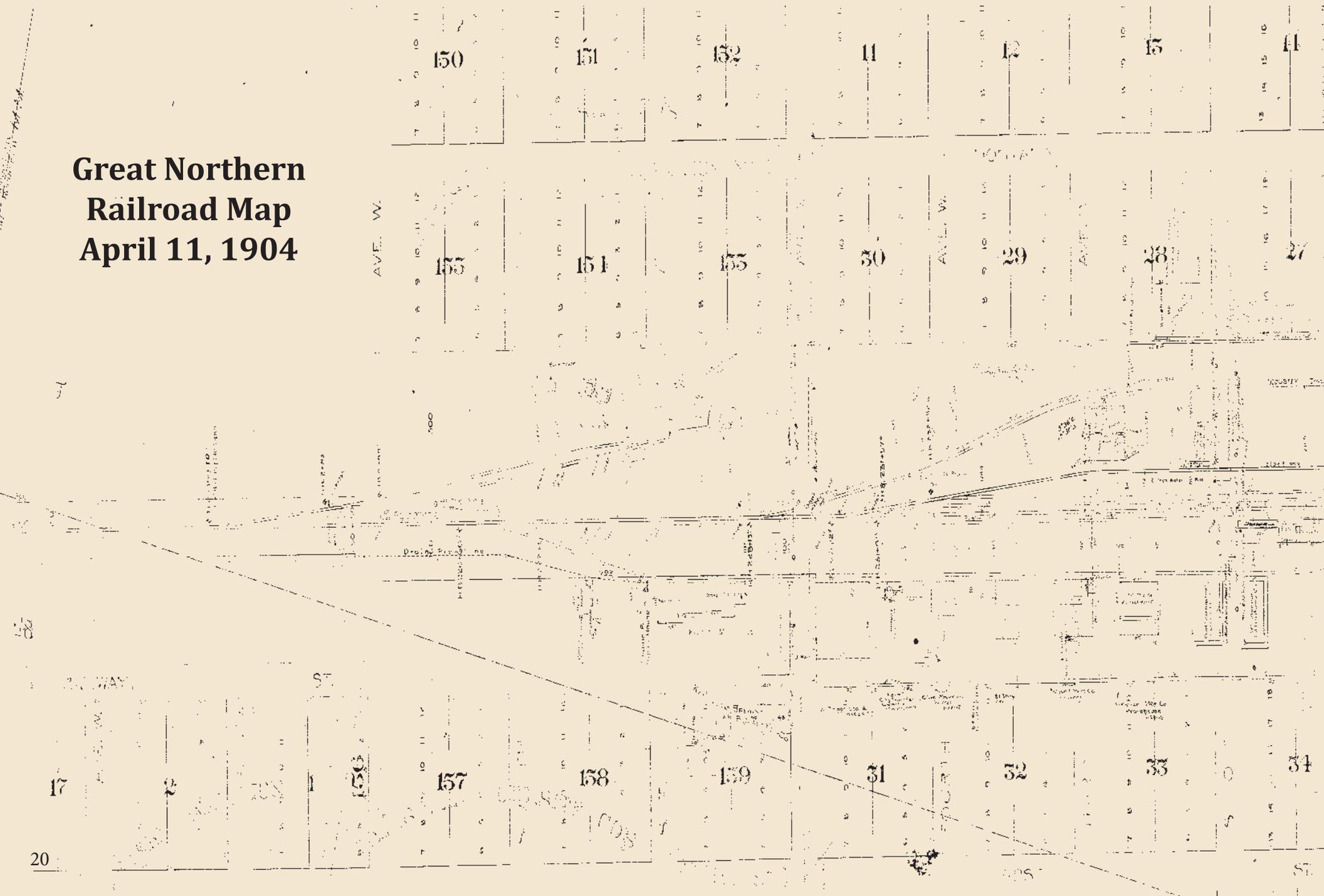


Commercial Map of
KALISPELL
and Surrounding Areas

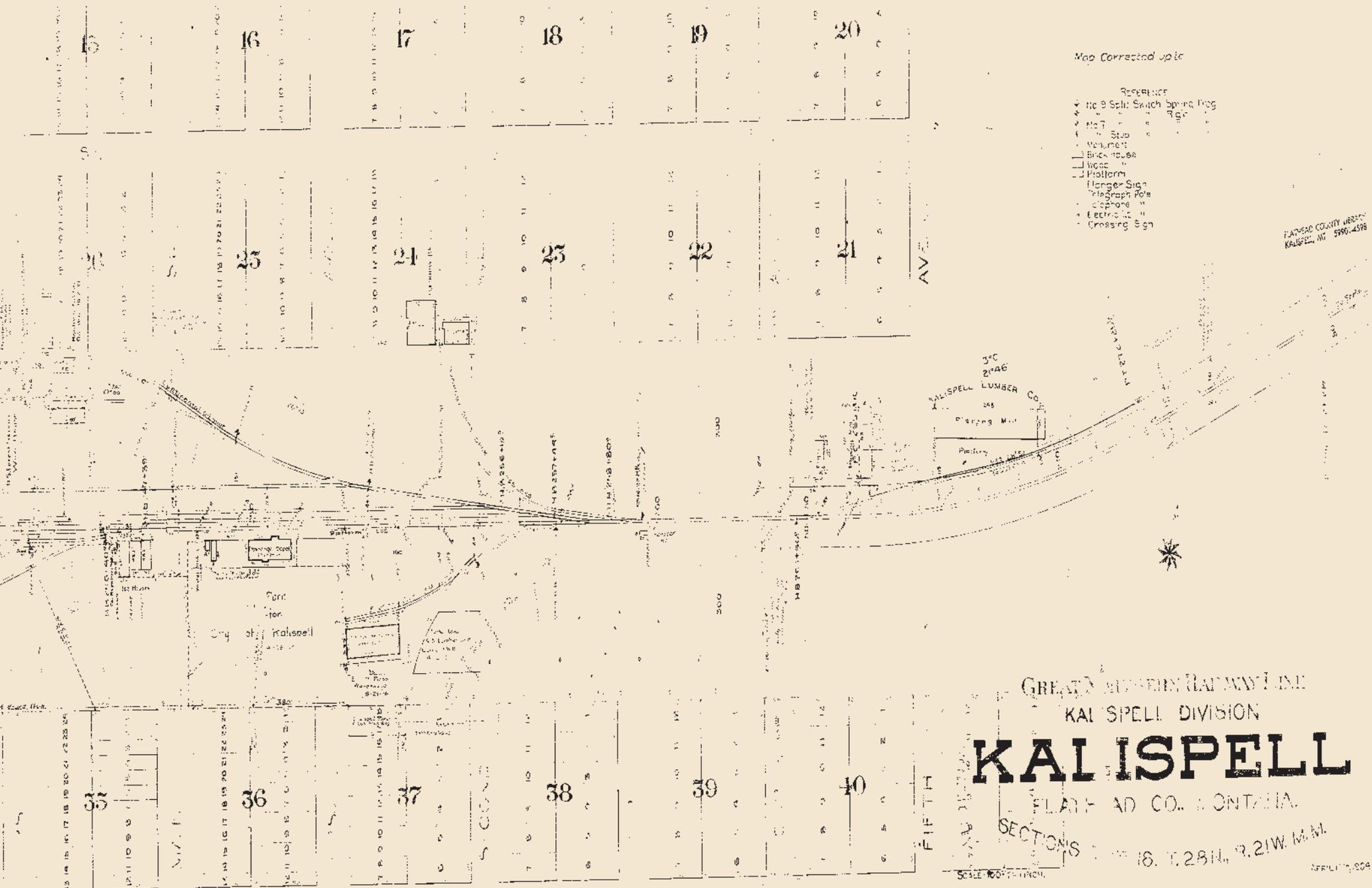
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CHAPTER 2 - GOALS FOR OUR FUTURE

Great Northern Railroad Map April 11, 1904



Core Area Plan



CHAPTER 3 - VISION AND GOALS IN ACTION

Goal 1: Relocation of the railroad tracks from the Core Area.

The railroad tracks run east to west through the center of Kalispell. While serving other businesses between Columbia Falls and Kalispell, within the city the railroad only serves two businesses, each on the west side of town.

Land north and south of the tracks was once the industrial center of the community. Lumber mills, a cherry warehouse and numerous gas and oil wholesalers were located adjacent to or within a block of the tracks. These businesses, which numbered well above 50 in the past, all needed the railroad to operate.

However, since the 1970's the land along the tracks has been slowly changing from industrial to commercial and residential uses. Expectedly train traffic has

“Good plans shape good decisions. That’s why good planning helps to make elusive dreams come true.”

Lester Robert Bittel, writer

correspondingly declined. In spite of this, however, railroad policy has closed four existing railroad crossings in Kalispell in past years citing safety issues.

Furthermore, the railroad will not allow new crossings in the city unless an existing crossing is closed. This has left Kalispell with only six level railroad crossings within city limits. With the transition in land use and railroad policy concerning access, the tracks are becoming a growing hindrance for further development of the area.

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks are operated by a short branch line railroad, WATCO, which serves two businesses in the Core Area.

The two businesses are Cenex Harvest States and Northwest Drywall. In the coming years Cenex Harvest States may be increasing its services to farmers outside of the valley, increasing the need for additional rail cars to and from their grain elevator site.

Both businesses are in the city limits and the city recognizes that the companies add to the economic vitality of the city and the valley. It is the intent of the plan to encourage the desired redevelopment of this area, not to close down businesses. For this to occur, the city should work with rail served businesses in the Core Area to relocate outside of the Core Area thereby allowing the tracks to be relocated east of the Core Area.

With or without rail-served businesses in Kalispell, any train that travels south of Columbia Falls must utilize the turnaround area on the west end of Kalispell. The railroad tracks will continue to hinder redevelopment in the Core Area unless an alternate turnaround is created.



View of the existing railroad tracks west of Kalispell Center Mall

Core Area Plan

Strategies:

1. Implement a program to relocate the Burlington Northern Railroad tracks from within the Core Area.
 - a. Utilization of railroad right-of-way for a multi-functional linear public feature (i.e. pedestrian /bike trail and parks) providing for non-motorized transportation, urban recreation, increased vehicular traffic flow and accessibility, aesthetic function, utility corridor, all acting as both functional improvement to the Core Area and beyond, and as a catalyst for economic development and increased utilization of the area as a whole.

Policies:

1. Work with the railroad to develop a seamless program to remove the tracks from the Core Area and provide a new rail terminus at the Flathead County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA) rail- served industrial site.
2. The city should take the lead in coordinating with the current track users and the railroad for relocation of the businesses out of the Core Area and for track removal.
3. A program should be developed for the relocation of existing rail dependent business out of the Core Area into the Flathead Economic Development Authority (FCEDA) rail-served industrial site as a preferred location.

Goal 2: A green belt extending from Woodland Park to Meridian Road providing pedestrian and bike access and greenery through the Core Area.

During the city's public outreach over 90% of citizens commented that if the railroad tracks are removed the land formerly used for



View of the existing Cenex Harvest States grain elevators

the railroad should be developed into a linear park. This linear park would span the entire east/west boundaries of the Core Area and connect Woodland Park (east boundary of the Core Area) to existing trails on the west side of the Core Area. There is existing support for such a proposal in the Kalispell Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Kalispell Area Transportation Plan. Both plans have been adopted by the city council and encourage a trail system through the plan area.

Policies:

1. Work with Burlington Northern to transfer the railroad right-of-way and surface easements to the city.
2. Work with Burlington Northern on funding sources to remove the railroad tracks within the plan area.
3. Work with other landowners, where the railroad easement exists, to transfer the easement or property to the city.

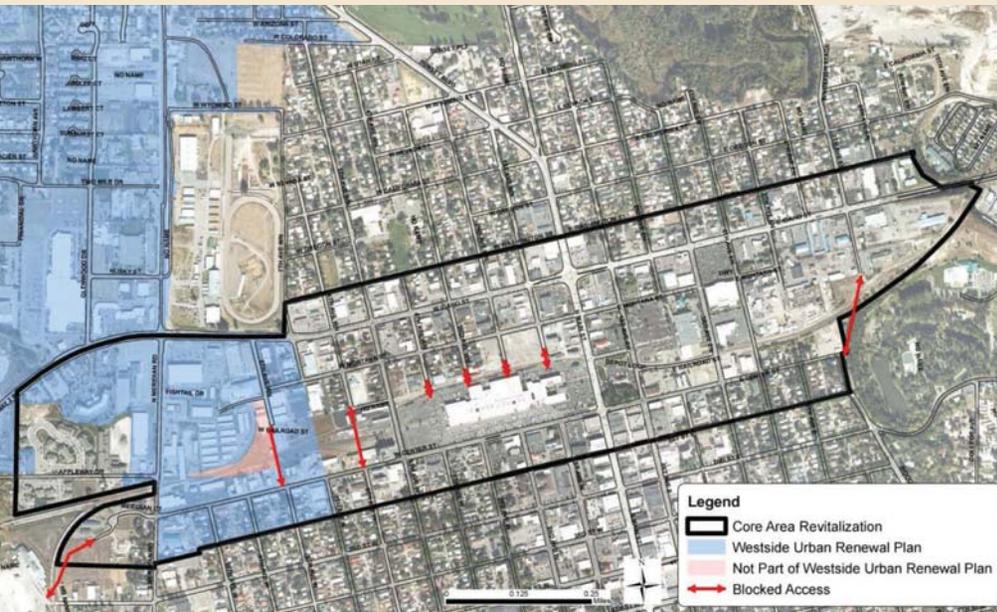
CHAPTER 3 - VISION AND GOALS IN ACTION

4. Provide a linear park/trail connection from Woodland Park to the bike trails to the west along Alternate Route 93.
5. Plan and develop connecting pedestrian/bike facilities to Lawrence Park.
6. Improve pedestrian and bike access throughout the plan area to improve safety and mobility.
7. Work with adjacent landowners and Burlington Northern to establish a trailhead to serve the linear park and other trails in the area.

and were installed to serve the industrial uses at the time. Over the last century the uses in the Core Area have changed from an industrial base to a mix of retail commercial, industrial and residential. Currently the railroad serves a few businesses and compared to its past use in this area, the frequency of train traffic has been reduced dramatically. Even with this reduced amount of rail traffic, the railroad will not permit additional vehicle or pedestrian crossings.

There are only six level crossings in the Core Area. By contrast the typical lot and block configuration developed north and south of the Core Area boundary has between 16 and 18 north/south connections. The lack of north/south street connections in this area funnels traffic into six streets unduly burdening these particular streets. In addition, the Kalispell Area Transportation Plan (2006 Update), under the Executive Summary, states that several major travel corridors will be pushed to their limits in the coming years. Three out of the four major travel corridors that are expected to exceed capacity are within the plan area (Highway 2, Highway 93 and Meridian Road).

Creating additional north/south street connections will continue the existing street pattern providing multiple options to travel in and out of this area and alleviate the congestion on the existing six streets. Additional north/south streets in the Core Area will provide greater access to lots in the area, some of which are currently land-locked or have severe access limitations, allowing more redevelopment opportunities.



Potential street and trail connections

Goal 3: A circulation system that encourages increased north-south connections for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycle transportation

The railroad tracks span the length of the Core Area from east to west

Policies:

1. Prior to the rail being relocated out of Kalispell, work with BN to open closed crossings north of the center Mall.
2. When the rail is removed, open up the crossing north of the mall if they are still closed.

3. Work to re-open existing closed crossings across the railroad right-of-way.
4. Plan for additional north/south street extensions to serve properties which have limited or no other access.

Goal 4: Neighborhoods connected and well-served by sidewalks and trails for use by people of all ages and mobility levels.

Shortly after receiving the Area Wide Planning Pilot Program grant, the city began the public outreach and planning for the Core Area. The planning department conducted a sidewalk inventory of the Core Area and the inventory demonstrated a neighborhood which lacked sidewalks along a majority of the streets. During the public outreach portion of the plan one of the primary concerns from citizens was the lack of sidewalks in the Core Area.

The Core Area is located centrally within the City of Kalispell with high density residential housing north and south of the Core Area. A significant number of the higher density housing includes low-income apartments and elderly housing. Low-income and elderly housing are more likely to have only one car, or sometimes no car. Some residents have fewer options and in these cases residents tend to walk more frequently than drive especially during good weather to recreate at local parks, shop, go to work and attend school.

Inconsistent sidewalks and sidewalks in poor condition also make pedestrian travel difficult through the Core Area. In some instances the lack of a sidewalk forces the pedestrians out in the street to compete with parked cars and moving traffic when walking from one place to another.

This lack of sidewalks in an area that has a variety of business, some of which serve the local residents in the area, makes it difficult

for pedestrians, especially the elderly and young, to navigate the streets in this neighborhood. The lack of sidewalks generally discourages walking in an area of the city where walking should be encouraged.

Policies:

1. Promote the city's 50-50 sidewalk replacement program for existing deteriorated sidewalks.
2. Create a sidewalk replacement program to specifically assist low-income qualifying homeowners.
3. Create an incentive program to develop sidewalks where none now exist.
4. Prioritize pedestrian routes that connect schools, parks, the downtown and higher density residential areas and insure that sidewalks or trails along these routes are installed and/or replaced where deteriorated.
5. Prioritize the major street corridors for sidewalk installation.
6. Identify major gathering or destination points (public buildings, parks, commercial areas, schools) that are in need of pedestrian access and connection.
7. Begin a capital improvements program for sidewalk/trail installation and/or replacement throughout the core area.
8. Provide interconnecting sidewalk and trail access with the proposed linear parkway/trail along the proposed trail planned when the tracks are removed.
9. Work with the Flathead County Fairgrounds Manager to incorporate sidewalks on the property's north and east sides connecting to the Core Area.
10. Construct a pedestrian/bicycle path connection from 7th Avenue EN to Woodland Drive.

CHAPTER 3 - VISION AND GOALS IN ACTION

Goal 5: A functional, physical and architectural connection between the traditional downtown and other surrounding neighborhoods and the Core Area as appropriate.

A. Building and lot design

The Core Area is intended to be a vibrant and lively continuation of historic downtown Kalispell. To achieve this continuation of the downtown built environment the plan encourages buildings to house a mix of uses consisting of retail and office uses on the first floor; office, residential, or hotel uses on the second floor; and generally residential on the upper floors. The character and scale of buildings would be influenced by the existing downtown of Kalispell, using a similar palette of materials and creating a very strong pedestrian-scaled atmosphere with shops and markets, lower-scale lighting, ample trees and landscape, and other various downtown attractions.

The overall design intent for the Core Area neighborhood is focused upon the pedestrian experience by providing widened sidewalks, trees, plants and benches, attractive light fixtures and shops with awnings. Vehicle parking should not be the prominent feature from the street or the linear trail and is intended to be provided within well-designed vertical parking structures that mimic the downtown character, or underground structures as much as possible.

New development or redevelopment is encouraged to provide art and sculptures in key locations around the building or lot to add interest and beauty to the building. The intent of this new neighborhood would be to encourage a higher density of full-time residents who live, work, and shop in this area; people who will happily call this neighborhood their home, and will come to care for it, keep it safe, clean, and vibrant in a manner that becomes self-perpetuating.

Strategies:

1. A mix of commercial retail, neighborhood services, residential, public and open space uses within the Core Area that drive local development by meeting the daily needs of residents, attracts the traveling public, inspires the greater community and encourages non-vehicular transportation.
2. New development or redevelopment that strives to provide a better built environment that includes parks, landscaping to compliment the building and surrounding neighborhood, open spaces for casual public interaction and landscape boulevards to break the edge of urban streets.
3. Amend the existing Architectural Design Standards to develop an architectural theme for the Core Area using the railroad and industrial past as a guide and encouraging preservation of buildings which contain exceptional architecture from the present and past.

Policies:

1. Incorporate amenities into new or redevelopment projects such as pocket parks, activity nodes and gathering places.
2. Require urban scale design standards along the street.
 - Zero lot line setbacks.
 - Encourage two, three or more story buildings to help frame the street (similar to Main Street in downtown Kalispell).
 - Eliminate parking lots separating the street and the business.
3. Increase landscaping to soften the area and create a more appealing location
4. De-emphasize the car (eliminate or significantly reduce off-street parking requirements) and rebuild streets to accommodate pedestrians.

B. Tourism and Entertainment

Every year hundreds of thousands of people travel through Kalispell on their way to visit Glacier National Park, Flathead Lake or one of the many other scenic treasures we have to offer. With the sheer amount of people traveling through the Core Area, the city needs to partner with the business community and focus on targeting amenities and tourism. The Core Area presently has few restaurants, entertainment businesses and third places (places for people to formally or informally meet that is not at work or at their home) to attract people into the area during both the day and the evening hours. A result of the lack of restaurants, entertainment and cultural amenities is a built environment throughout much of the Core Area which discourages pedestrian activity and fails to be inviting to the traveling public.

Focusing on tourism can take many approaches. Particularly in the Core Area heritage tourism programs create a sense of place rooted in the local landscape, architecture, people, artifacts, traditions and stories that make a particular place unique. Cultural tourism programs celebrate the same kind of experiences, though with less emphasis on place. Given that both elements are present in Kalispell it may be useful to use the term “cultural heritage tourism”. Cultural heritage tourism means traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes irreplaceable historic, cultural and natural resources. Kalispell is well positioned to capture tourism with its genuine historic places, districts, cultural opportunities and natural surroundings.

Strategy:

1. An environment where residents and the traveling public will stay to shop, eat and frequent local hotels and cultural events

Policies:

1. Promote development of the Core Area as an ancillary or adjunct to the historic downtown as a tourism destination, with emphasis on a cultural corridor.
2. Support programs that develop tourism in the Core Area and Downtown.
3. Sidewalks should be installed and sized to accommodate a mix of activity out in the public way such as merchandise display and sidewalk café activity.
4. Zoning within the Core Area should accommodate a mix of residential and commercial uses.
5. New commercial development in the Core Area including expansion of the Kalispell Center Mall should be encouraged to provide a more attractive and diverse shopping experience.

Goal 6: The focal point along with the traditional downtown for public venues such as city hall, county fairgrounds, chamber of commerce, library, performing arts center, exhibit halls and event centers.

A. Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation

The functions of arts and culture serve to feed a financial engine bringing together tourism and the hospitality industry. The arts help to define who we are, and they make Kalispell an exciting place to work and live while attracting business and tourism. This may take the form of public art, design features in the built environment, community events, the perseveration of historic buildings and an emphasis on private sector investments.

Downtown Kalispell has long been recognized as a key destination for growing tourism and taken with the Core Area, presents new

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opportunities for growth in arts and culture. Two museums, the Hockaday and the Museum at Central School currently exist within the downtown area, with a third; the Conrad Mansion Museum that lies just a few blocks to the east. Building on this successful community asset base and complimenting the Main Street Historic District, creating a Cultural Corridor in the Core Area offers a new future for this area. This could be accomplished by:

- Telling the story of the corridor through signage, online/printed materials such as guidebooks/brochures, special programs or events;
- Preserving and protecting irreplaceable resources along the cultural corridor in order to ensure that the corridor is sustainable;
- Identifying and addressing any potential threats to important historic buildings;

- Building partnerships with other organizations and individuals that can contribute to the cultural corridor; and
- Continuing to reach out to the public along the corridor for their input and keep them informed on progress, addressing concerns.

Kalispell, with a focus on the Core Area, would be well served to leverage the arts and engage design to create a distinct sense of place, and a vibrant local economy that, taken together, capitalizes on our existing asset.

The city should work with partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors to animate public and private spaces, rejuvenate structures and streetscapes, improve local business viability and public safety, and bring diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.



Aerial view of the fairgrounds property

Strategies:

1. Promote public art and cultural activities.
2. Promote conservation/adaptable reuse of irreplaceable historic resources.

Policies:

1. Work with the Montana Historical Society for the purpose of supporting historic preservation in the Core Area.
2. Promote design standards in keeping with the styles and materials of historic buildings in the neighborhood.
3. Support current cultural activities such as Art in the Park and Picnic in the Park.
4. Expand the location and frequency of cultural events in the Core Area.
5. Encourage public/private partnerships to fund the creation and display of art.
6. Support preservation, conservation and adaptable reuse of historic buildings.

B. Flathead County Fairgrounds

The Flathead County Fairgrounds is a 63 acre site located north of and immediately adjacent to the Core Area. Although the county fairgrounds are outside of the Core Area, the fairgrounds is the largest single land use on the west side of Kalispell and it exists as an aged, under-utilized facility. What happens at the fairgrounds will have significant impacts to the Core Area.

In tandem with the Core Area plan, the Flathead County Fair Manager has begun a long range planning process. When completed the plan would help to determine the appropriate improvements, immediate and long range, the fairgrounds should begin investing in

to address the aged buildings and improve the overall site.

The fairgrounds is a significant land use in the area and its presence dictates to a great degree the character and future viability of the portion of the Core Area immediately south of the fairgrounds. The city recognizes that to achieve the desired built environment in the Core Area described in the vision statement the city and the county needs to work together in achieving the long range plans and improvements for the fairgrounds provided for in the adopted plan. Therefore, the following goals, policies and recommendations are meant to aid the fairgrounds to achieve the desired results in the Core Area.

Strategy:

1. A year-round events center that respects the residential neighborhood to the east and serves as an entryway facility on the west side of Kalispell.

Policies:

1. Work with the county to encourage the redevelopment of the fairgrounds property prioritizing the integration of the property with the residential neighborhoods to the north and east.
2. Work with the county to assist in and encourage promotion and expansion of use and activity so as to serve as a significant economic enhancement to the west end of the Core Area and Kalispell as a whole.
3. Work with the county to incorporate sidewalks or trail systems on the fairground property's north and east sides.
4. Encourage beautification and greenery of the exterior boundaries of the fairgrounds to make it a more desirable public facility.

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Goal 7: A mix of commercial retail, neighborhood services, residential, public and open space uses within the Core Area that drive local development by meeting the daily needs of residents, attracts the traveling public, inspires the greater community and encourages non-vehicular transportation.

A. Business

The Core Area has few restaurants, entertainment businesses and third places (places for people to formally or informally meet that is not at work or at their home) to attract people into the area during the evening hours. This creates an urban environment devoid of pedestrians and, in turn, the activity associated with a population of people who frequent a neighborhood during all hours of the day and evening. A result of the lack of restaurants and entertainment businesses is a built environment throughout much of the Core Area which discourages pedestrian activity due to the lack of sidewalks, inadequate street lighting, large parking lots along the street and buildings set too far back from the street. The few restaurants that are within the Core Area are spread too far apart. This large distance separation diffuses any strong nightlife activities that closer restaurants, bars and entertainment businesses typically create with each other.

Strategy:

1. Create an environment which encourages more people to live, work and visit.

Policies:

1. Encourage more restaurants into the Core Area.
2. Sidewalks should be installed and sized to accommodate seating

and eating within the right-of-way thereby encouraging a sidewalk cafe or restaurant.

3. Zoning within the Core Area should accommodate a mix of residential and commercial uses.
4. Work to accommodate an expansion of the Kalispell Center Mall.

B. Housing

Several of the existing businesses in the Core Area expressed the need for more housing to support businesses in the area. Specifically, higher density housing targeted in areas with an easy walking distance to retail shops, grocery stores, restaurants, etc. Higher density housing, whether stand alone apartment buildings or above commercial businesses, provides two immediate benefits to the Core Area:

- The housing enables a larger population to live in the Core Area and provides those businesses in the area an instant increase in potential customers; and
- Higher density housing in the Core Area would help to alleviate traffic congestion into and through the plan area.

Several of the existing zoning districts in the area already accommodate second floor apartments and larger apartment buildings.

Increasing the number of residents who live full time in the Core Area is one of the key foundations to changing the area in accordance with the vision statement.

Strategy:

1. An array of housing options in the Core Area (multi-family apartment buildings, townhouse and row housing, loft and studio apartments, senior housing, second floor residential,

smaller scale multi-family apartments, etc.) to provide housing for a variety of age and income levels.

Policies:

1. Increase the presence of higher density housing in the plan area.
2. Upgrade/replace aged and/or inadequate infrastructure (water, sewer, fire flows, sidewalks, streets and street connections) to accommodate higher density housing.
3. Work to improve constraints to housing by removing blighted buildings, improve lighting and pedestrian access.

C. Housing Reinvestment

The Core Area has a significant number of residential structures which appear to have moderate to severe deterioration. Moderate or severe structure deterioration brings down property values and can lead to a disincentive for property owners to rehabilitate or redevelop their property; this disincentive can spread to neighboring properties or blocks.

A cursory review of the Core Area shows approximately 57% of the detached single-family homes and duplexes in the Core Area are rentals. This rental percentage is relatively high for the limited amount of single-family houses and duplexes that are currently within the Core Area boundaries. As redevelopment in the area occurs, the city should be encouraging structural upgrades to rental units to insure the resident population has access to safe housing.



*Kalispell, Montana 1940
5th & Main - North*

Strategy:

1. A housing stock that is safe, affordable and an asset to the neighborhood.

Policies:

1. Work with local and state agencies to develop programs for the rehabilitation of rental units to bring them into code compliance.
2. Promote outreach efforts to low and moderate income residents on loan and grant programs for home ownership and home rehabilitation.
3. Develop programs to assist in the removal of residential structures identified as having severe deterioration thus allowing affordable opportunities for redevelopment.

D. Vehicle Parking

There is a perception of inadequate parking in the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, including portions of the Core Area. There are a number of surface parking lots and on-street parking spaces within the area to accommodate employee and visitor parking. The down side for the surface parking lots is that they take up valuable space that could be built upon, decreasing the business and housing opportunities in the area and thereby decreasing the likelihood for people to patronize the businesses in the area. They also create voids or empty spaces in the retail framework, discouraging pedestrian traffic, increasing stormwater runoff issues and increasing the amount of bare hard surface.

On the parking issue public comments both favored building parking garages to address the need for off-street parking and a reduction in

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off-street parking so this aspect does not negatively affect the design and layout of new buildings. Underground parking and second and third floor parking should be encouraged with the street level serving as a retail space. A parking garage is very expensive and should only be considered when on and off-street parking is at such a demand that customers avoid the area due to a true lack of parking. Reducing or eliminating off-street parking requirements could enable more buildings to be built thus creating a parking issue in the area and expediting the construction of one or more parking garages.

Strategy:

1. Adequate parking options to serve existing and future uses.

Policies:

1. Establish on-street parking designed for diagonal parking spaces and minimizing the use of parallel parking spaces.
2. Parking standards should be addressed to accommodate mixed-use development.
3. Encourage designs that provide for street level retail and place parking in a parking garage or beneath homes or apartment buildings.

E. Undesirable Transient Influences

The railroad tracks are now infrequently used by the railroad as opposed to their original design serving as the main line to the Pacific. Due to this infrequent use, over the years graffiti has started to appear and transients have begun to use the tracks to access the community; trespassing on private property in areas largely unwatched by persons living and working in the area. Some people who live and/or work adjacent to the tracks have

expressed an unsafe feeling knowing that at times transients may be passing through or setting up temporary living on or near the tracks or on portions of their private property. Unfortunately, the increased presence of transients along the tracks gives the outward impression that this area is not safe and may be a disincentive for new businesses to locate along the tracks or for people to walk/bike in the areas closest to the tracks. According to residents these issues are spreading beyond the immediate railroad track and into adjoining neighborhoods.

The city's largest urban park, Woodland Park, is adjacent to the railroad tracks. Woodland Park provides numerous amenities including a public pool, hockey rink and ice skating park, skateboard park, public bathrooms, walking trails, picnic areas, and a wildlife pond. The north and west sides of the park are areas of thick undergrowth which provide cover and temporary shelter for transients.

With transients setting up camp in areas of the park their presence detracts from the aesthetic value of the park by way of increased trash, temporary living accommodations and potential conflicts between transients and residents. The transient's presence in the park can discourage residents, especially those who are alone or families with children, from visiting the park or allowing their children to play in the park. This, in-turn, can lead to a lack of use of the park and park facilities, contributing to the further decline of Woodland Park in general and invite more transients into the park area.

West of the park are residential homes which look out at the park across Woodland Drive. The presence of transients in evening hours and at night time walking in and about the neighborhood can have a chilling effect on resident night time outdoor activity.

Strategy:

1. Peaceful, quiet, safe vibrant neighborhoods free from the impacts of transient users.

Policies:

1. Create an environment that anticipates the tracks being removed and a future linear park/bike trail in place of the tracks.
2. Redevelopment should include a focus on incorporating the land currently occupied by the railroad tracks.
3. Increase security lighting along the railroad tracks.
4. Increased maintenance activities in Woodland Park specifically to include thinning and opening up of the vegetation along the north and west sides to provide open views through the park and to discourage overnight transient use.
5. Keep Woodland Park and particularly the edges of Woodland Park along the railroad right-of-way open, cleared and well maintained.
6. Improve lighting on the fringe areas of Woodland Park to inhibit use by transients and improve neighborhood safety.
7. Increased patrols of the fringe areas of Woodland Park to move along transient residences and to clean up or clear up transient use.

F. Residential Alley Appearance

Residents in the Core Area expressed concern about the presence and accumulation of garbage and junk/abandoned vehicles in the alleys. The presence of garbage and junk vehicles can lead to a decline in perceived property values by residents of the neighborhood and in some cases encourages more material to accumulate. The issue becomes more problematic where greater numbers of rental units

exist as absentee landlords may not maintain property as diligently as owner-occupied units.

The presence of such conditions in the alleys may discourage property owners from further investment in their property given the state of the neighborhood.

Strategy:

1. Neighborhood alleys free of the clutter of junk, debris and abandoned vehicles.

Policies:

1. Conduct a voluntary neighborhood alley clean up with the city.
2. Work with the Flathead County landfill to remove junk and abandoned vehicles from the residential neighborhoods.
3. Be pro-active in implementing the city junk vehicle ordinance and the community decay ordinance.

G. Appleway Drive Neighborhood

Appleway Drive is a quarter of a mile in length located on the west end of the Core Area plan boundary.

The land on the north and south sides of the street has developed as a significantly dense residential neighborhood in a relatively short period of time.

The apartment complexes along the street include a combination of market-rate apartments and apartments for low-income families. The higher density housing creates a larger population concentration on this particular street.

With the higher concentration of people, the likelihood of adults and children out walking and visiting with friends and neighbors during evening hours, walking to stores and to work is much higher here than

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in other residential neighborhoods in the city or Core Area. However, there is a lack of adequate park and open space in the immediate area and the sidewalk system is inconsistent.

Strategy:

1. Provide safe, pedestrian friendly environments in residential neighborhoods.

Policies:

1. Provide increased on-street lighting for higher density residential neighborhoods.
2. Encourage apartment buildings to increase security lighting inside their developments.
3. Provide additional public or private park space to serve the residents of Appleway Drive as well as the greater community.
4. Work to improve public access, including vehicle parking, to the Rails-to-Trails Meridian Trail along the south side of this neighborhood.
5. Provide pedestrian amenities (trails, sidewalks, benches, etc.) to assist and encourage pedestrian and bike traffic.

Goal 8: New development and redevelopment that incorporates parks, landscaped boulevards, open spaces for casual public interaction and landscaping that compliments architecture and the neighborhood to encourage active use of the built environment.

A. Parkland

Within the Core Area boundaries there is a severe lack of trees, green space and urban park settings to complement existing

commercial and retail uses and accommodate for the desired increase in residential dwellings in the area. The Core Area has only one city park, Depot Park, with Woodland Park on the plan's eastern border and Washington Park on the plan's northern boundary.

Discussion under goal 2 of this chapter includes goals, strategies and policies to establish a linear park in place of the railroad tracks. The linear park would span the entire east/west boundaries of the Core Area and connect Woodland Park (east boundary of the Core Area) to existing trails on the west side of the Core Area. Along with the linear trail new park spaces will need to be included in the redevelopment of the Core Area. These new park spaces should be designed to provide the public with an opportune place to gather, to easily sit, to talk, "people watch" and recreate.



View of West Center Street

The residential apartments developed along Appleway Drive represent a significantly dense residential neighborhood in the Core Area and has developed in a relatively short period of time. Included with the apartment housing along Appleway Drive are a significant number of subsidized housing units for low-income families. However, there is an overall lack of park space serving the families and residents in this area. One property owner along Appleway Drive has shown interest in creating a senior park adjacent to the Meridian bike trail. This park would contribute to much needed open space and a trail connection from the street. Whether the senior park is developed in this neighborhood or somewhere else, the lack of park space should not be replicated in future high-density residential development in the Core Area.

Strategies:

1. Provide sufficient parkland/open space to meet the needs of the surrounding neighborhood.
2. Develop new parks to accommodate people of all ages.
3. Park improvements should accommodate the use of the park throughout the day.

Policies:

1. Encourage the development or the redevelopment of park spaces to serve people's needs to gather, converse and enjoy the surroundings.
2. Prioritize the development of an open air amphitheater in Woodland Park.
3. Prioritize new parks in high density residential neighborhoods.
4. Incorporate park and open space development with the existing rail-trail path system.

5. Encourage events that bring people together in public spaces.
6. Support the neighborhood use of common and public facilities.
7. Promote development of intergenerational activities and programs.

B. Street Improvements

The streets within the Core Area vary greatly in both their built standards and functional vehicle carrying capacity. Portions of the two most heavily traveled highways in the county, Highway 93 (Main Street) and Highway 2 (Idaho Street) are both within the Core Area. Their intersection is in the approximate center of the boundaries of the Core Area Plan. Both Main Street and Idaho Street are maintained by the Montana Department of Transportation and include four travel lanes with sidewalks on both sides of the streets.

In addition to Main and Idaho, there are many other city streets in the Core Area where current vehicle carrying capacity varies greatly as does the current built design.

A large majority of the streets in the Core Area do not include curb, gutters and sidewalk. These improvements are standard now for all new streets within the city.

Those sections of the streets which lack the curb, gutters and sidewalks detract from the appearance of the neighborhood since the overall integrity and design of the street helps to define the quality and appearance in a particular neighborhood.

This could translate to perceived property value decline for surrounding commercial and residential properties. In addition, stormwater management is compromised where urban density streets lack curb and gutter and pedestrian safety is at issue where sidewalks are not provided adjacent to busy streets.

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Strategy:

1. Upgrade existing streets to meet or exceed city street standards.

Policies:

1. The city should take the lead in improving the existing streets in the Core Area.
2. The city should take the lead in establishing a priority list for the upgrade of existing streets based on community input.
3. The city should work with adjacent landowners to acquire additional right-of-way, if necessary, for street improvements to allow for the construction of complete streets.
4. Incorporate traffic calming techniques into design and improvements of the local street network to enhance pedestrian safety.

C. 3rd Avenue East and 4th Avenue East

On the east end of the Core Area plan boundary are portions of the historic east side residential neighborhood, with dozens of homes in the neighborhood listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

There are eight avenues running north to south through this neighborhood which generally only carry neighborhood traffic. However two of the avenues, 3rd Avenue East and 4th Avenue East, are one-way streets and function as a one-way couplet on the Montana Department of Transportation's (MDT) urban aid system.

These avenues provide vehicle traffic relief for Main Street allowing for vehicles to drive southbound on 3rd Avenue East and northbound on 4th Avenue East with limited stops through the east side neighborhood.

These avenues are used by local and non-local vehicle traffic generating three to four times the daily vehicle traffic experienced by

adjacent avenues which are not on the urban aid system. Furthermore, the limited number of stop signs and one-way traffic flow encourage higher traffic speeds.

The continued use of 3rd Avenue East and 4th Avenue East as one-way couplets increases non-neighborhood traffic and the associated traffic noise detracts from the residential feel on the streets.

The lack of stop signs and two-way traffic leads to increased vehicle speeds creating safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially children attending neighborhood schools and parks.

Furthermore, the increased non-neighborhood vehicle traffic on both avenues has begun to erode the residential character of the immediate area which can lead to increased deterioration to the homes because of the disincentive to invest and/or live along the avenues. This can lead to a greater proportion of the homes from owner-occupied housing to rental housing.

Strategy:

1. Discourage the introduction of outside vehicle traffic in residential neighborhoods.

Policy:

1. Work with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) to turn 3rd Avenue East and 4th Avenue East back into two-way streets and remove them from the urban aid system.

D. Brownfields

The term "brownfield site" means real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Contaminants can include oil or gas found in the

Core Area Plan

soil and placed there through a leaking underground storage tank or an historical use which dumped contaminant material on-site. The presence of hazardous materials can require additional costs to clean the site up prior to new development or redevelopment of the property and this serves as a detriment to redevelopment.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality has identified 50 sites within or immediately adjacent to the Core Area that may be potential brownfield sites. There may be more potential brownfield sites based on the presence of the railroad tracks and historical industrial uses such as oil and fuel storage. The known leaking storage tank sites and the history of industrial uses in this area have lead to perceptions in the community that many, if not all, properties within the Core Area are contaminated. This may or may not be the case however, this perception persists and may play a role in the reluctance of property owners or developers to invest in redevelopment or new development in this area. This can lead to further deterioration of buildings and property and reluctance to reinvest.

Strategy:

1. Maintain a viable Brownfield program at the city level and work with property owners to continue assessing and cleaning-up Brownfield sites.

Policies:

1. The city should continue applying for Brownfield grants to make property assessments and clean up loans available.
2. The city should continue an aggressive outreach program to inform property owners about Brownfields targeting the downtown and Core Area.



View of a fertilizer facility located on the east end of the Core Area

3. Priority for Brownfield assessments and clean up loans should be given to those properties in the downtown and Core Area.
4. Develop Brownfield focused property revitalization programs including property acquisition, demolition and clean up.

E. Vacant Lots and Buildings

The Core Area includes 364 acres within which there are approximately 1,100 lots. Included in this make-up of the Core Area are approximately 19 acres of vacant land and approximately 19 lots with vacant buildings or otherwise underutilized buildings. The vacant lots and buildings represent underutilized properties in an area located centrally in the city. These underutilized lots result in depressed values for the lot itself and potentially surrounding lots. The vacant buildings are typically metal sided, older buildings in need of maintenance and repairs. These buildings, if not maintained, begin

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FEC's site along East Center Street

to detract from the neighborhood and give the impression that the area is run down or otherwise not to be invested in. The vacant lots also give an outward appearance of an abandoned area of the city. This may lead to further disincentive to invest in the immediate area and reduce the commercial viability of the neighborhood.

Strategies:

1. A neighborhood free of buildings and structures that are blighted, dilapidated, uninhabitable and/or a safety hazard.
2. Vacant properties free of trash, weeds and other debris in readiness for redevelopment.

Policies:

1. Develop funding mechanisms to incentivize the removal of dilapidated buildings to prepare the property for redevelopment.

2. Encourage property owners, citizen groups and neighborhood efforts to clean up and enhance vacant lots in the Core Area.

F. Incompatible land uses

The Core Area was once the center of industrial activity in the Kalispell community. Industrial uses included grain silos, bulk oil storage, a variety of warehouses and lumber mills. Over the last century many of the industrial uses have closed their doors, relocated or moved out of the city. In their place, retail commercial businesses have moved into the area including three grocery stores, a large indoor mall and high density housing. The Core Area is still the home to a grain elevator and bulk fertilizer plant as well as a wrecking yard, aged Quonset buildings, Flathead Electric Co-op substations, vacant warehouse buildings, etc.

The presence of these uses, while once the mainstay of industry, are now quickly becoming the exception as the Core Area evolves.

The owners of the grain elevator site are looking to expand its grain storage and transport capacity. This increased capacity means more train cars and more times for grain to be placed in those cars, causing increased air quality issues for neighboring businesses. Residents and business owners in the area of the grain elevators have reported that excess grain and small grain particles become airborne during the rail car loading process and spread over the neighborhood. The concern from some of the neighboring property and business owners is that the immediate air quality is compromised when the grain elevators are in use.

Strategy:

1. Work towards and assist in the relocation of incompatible businesses in the Core Area.

Policies:

1. Develop a program to assist businesses having existing rail service or an industrial type use to relocate to a more suitable location in the community.
2. Update existing zoning regulations to encourage the land uses set out in this plan.
3. Review existing zoning district patterns to ensure the zoning districts are consistent with this plan and rezone areas where there is a conflict.
4. When it advances the goals of this plan, land acquisition for revitalization should be based on a willing buyer to seller relationship.

G. Utility sites

Utility sites, whether they are well houses, lift stations, utility sites, pumping stations or cell towers are traditionally designed to meet a “utilitarian use” and often have to incorporate security measures as well. Design, neighborhood compatibility and neighborhood enhancement are often times not at the forefront.

The city operates one municipal site, a well house, in the Core Area. The site is located along 1st Avenue East immediately south of the railroad line. The building straddles the boulevard between the curb and sidewalk. It is a cinder block structure framed on two sides by historic buildings. To the west lies the historic train depot building housing the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce. To the east is “The Loading Dock” building, a historic brick building currently being renovated. The stark well house is out of character with the surrounding historic buildings. This structure and future municipal structures and facilities in the Core Area should give deference to the surrounding architecture of the neighborhood specifically in design, building materials, landscaping and colors.

Flathead Electric Cooperative (FEC) owns and operates two utility sites within the Core Area. The first site is approximately 1.7 acres at the intersection of East Center Street and Woodland Avenue. The site is currently used for storage of materials. The site’s outward appearance from the street is out of place with the surrounding residential character of the historic neighborhood. The site is a dead space, breaking up an otherwise significant residential housing pattern along East Center Street and Woodland Drive abutting one of the city’s premier parks.

The second site is located at the southeast corner of 7th Avenue West North and West Washington Street. The site is slightly under ½ acre and is an active electrical substation. Here again the outward appearance of the substation, with chain link fencing topped with barb wire is immediately south of a residential neighborhood and north of commercial businesses fronting Idaho Street.

The substation, a necessary utility site in the city, gives an outward appearance which is dramatically out of character with surrounding land uses.

Strategy:

1. Design utility sites such as well houses, lift stations, electrical substations, pumping stations or cell towers to blend into the fabric of the neighborhood.

Policies:

1. Work with FEC to beautify their sites to improve compatibility with the residential and commercial character of the neighborhood.
2. Encourage FEC to consider an alternative interim use of their

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East Center Street site that compliments both the neighborhood and Woodland Park. The site could serve as a trailhead for the new trail, extension of Woodland Park and a parking lot. If FEC declares this site surplus, work with them to find a compatible neighborhood use.

3. New municipal utility sites should reflect the character of buildings in the neighborhood.
4. Work to integrate existing public utility sites into the fabric of the adjacent neighborhood specifically through landscaping, painting or judicious use of compatible fencing and screening.

Goal 9: Entrance features including signs and visual cues such as building location, complimentary building design and streetscape features along Main Street and Highway 2 to define the boundaries of the Core Area and downtown.

The Core Area is bisected by two highways, Highway 93 (Main Street) running north to south and Highway 2 (Idaho Street) running east to west.

Comments received during the planning process included the need

to establish entrance features or appropriate signage to indicate that the traveling public is entering the City of Kalispell and/or the Core Area.

The purpose of the entrance features is to set this area of the city apart from the residential and commercial lands to the north and west of the Core Area.

On the Core Area's east boundary, an entrance feature such as a the rail road bridge would delineate both the entrance to the Core Area and the City of Kalispell's city limits as both boundary lines currently coincide.

Strategy:

1. Visually define the boundaries of the Core Area along Highway 93 and Highway 2 through the judicious use of way finding signage.

Policy:

1. Establish entrance features such as signs and visual cues such as building location, building design and streetscape features along Main Street and Idaho Street to define the boundaries of the revitalization area and downtown.

Core Area Plan



Brannigan's Pub on Center Street East, Spring 2013.

CHAPTER 4 - VISION & GOALS: FIRST STEPS

How do we as a community take the vision and goals that have been developed for the Core Area neighborhood and make them real, tangible and achievable?

The focus of this section is to create a road map offering “First Steps” that can be taken. On pages 44-47 is an outline fleshing out the “First Steps” needed to keep the vision alive. Some of the Steps

*“A hundred years after
we are gone and forgotten,
those who never heard of
us will be living with the
results of our actions.”*

*Oliver Wendell Holmes
U.S. Supreme Court Justice*

(particularly 1-5) are dependent on the railroad relocation. Other Steps (notably 6 – 14) can be done immediately and are not dependent on other actions. Many of these First Steps are public sector initiated. However, for the Core Area to truly undergo successful redevelopment the private sector must lead the way with investment using these First Steps as a spring board.



Depot Place on Center Street East, Spring 2013

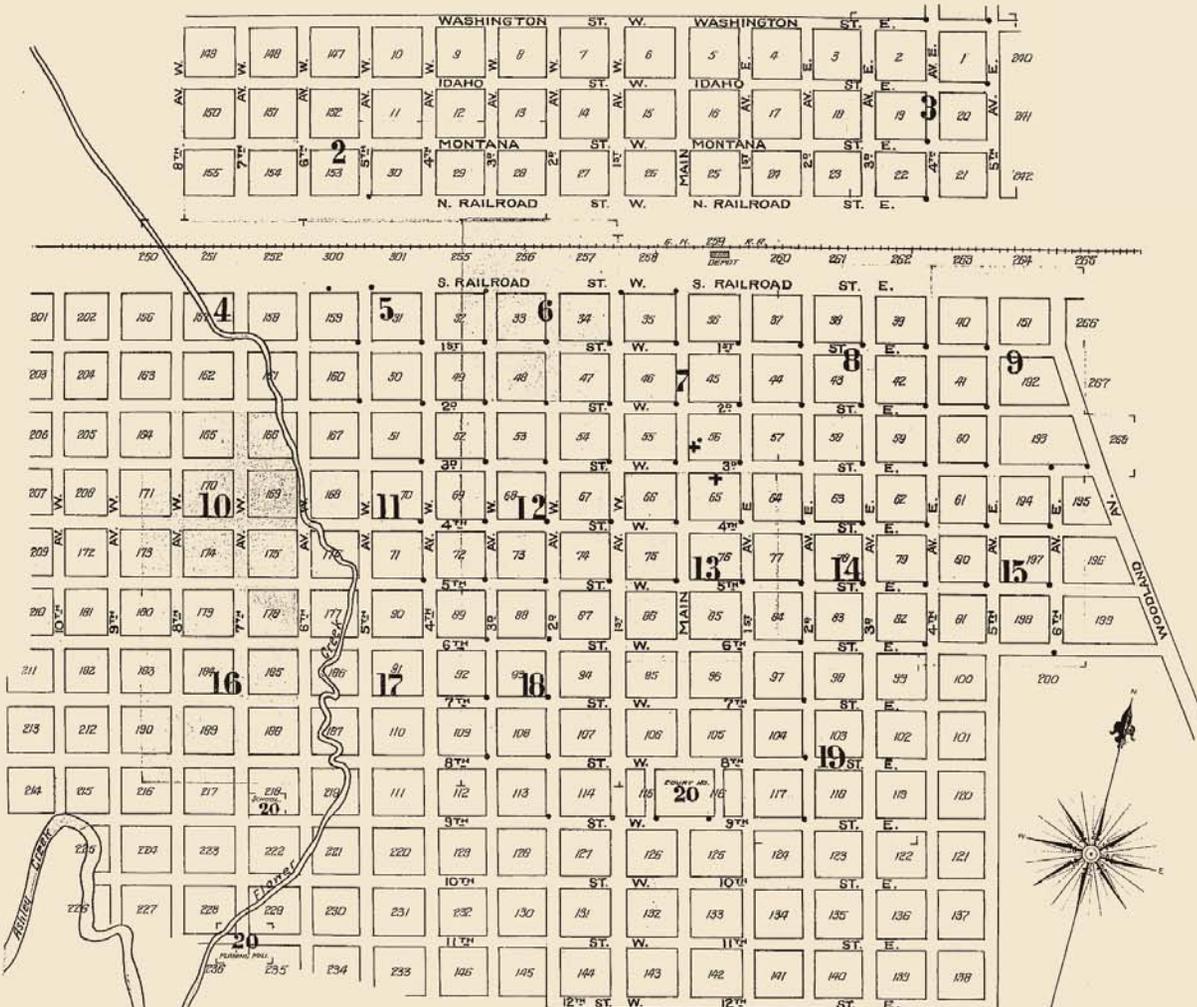
Core Area Plan

Population: 5,000.

Prev. Winds: N.W. & S.W.

Water Facilities: GRAVITY AND DIRECT PRESSURE. TWO NO. 3 "ROOT CO." ROTARY PUMPS RUN BY TWO ELECTRIC MOTORS 60 HP EACH, LOCATED IN POWER HOUSE 1/4 MILE N.E. OF POST OFFICE, PUMP FROM STILLWATER RIVER INTO A 26" X 80" STEEL STAND PIPE, CAP: 193,000 GALLONS ON HILL 3/4 MILE N.E. OF TOWN. TOP OF PIPE ELEV. 105 FT. ABOVE CITY. VALVE AT STAND PIPE CAN BE OPERATED ELECTRICALLY TO CONVERT SYSTEM INTO DIRECT PRESSURE. - CAP. OF PUMPS 1,000,000 GALLS EACH IN 24 HOURS. TWO DEAN COMPOUND DUPLEX STEAM PUMPS, CAP. 1,500,000 GALLS EACH IN 24 HOURS IN RESERVE. GRAVITY PRESSURE: 48 LBS. DIRECT PRESSURE: 120 LBS. - 8 MILES OF 12"-10"-6" X 4" MAINS. 79 DOUBLE HYDS (6 MORE TO BE PLACED, SEE SHEET A) AND 5 PRIVATE HYDS. - TELEPHONE CONNECTION BETWEEN STAND PIPE, OFFICE & POWER HOUSE AND FIRE STATION.

Fire Dept. CHIEF AND 2 MEN FULLY PAID, 13 CALL MEN FOR CHEMICAL ENGINE, 18 FOR H.M.L. TRUCK AND 12-FUR HOSE CART PAID 50¢ AN HOUR AND 50¢ AN HOUR ADDITIONAL. - ONE DOUBLE 35 GALL. COMBINATION CHEMICAL AND HOSE WAGON WITH 1200 FT. HOSE, ONE VILLAGE H.M.L. TRUCK AND 3 HOSE CARTS, ONE OF WHICH HAS 500 FT. HOSE. 2 IN RESERVE. - ABOUT 1800 FT. HOSE IN GOOD CONDITION. - 2 HORSES FOR CHEMICAL. FIRE LIMITS INDICATED WITH HEAVY RED LINE ON INDEX. - GRADES LEVEL. - LIGHTS: ELECTRIC.



KEY	
NO OF STORIES 3	FIRE WALL 6 IN. AB. ROOF.
SHINGLE ROOF	" " 12 " "
COMPOSITION ROOF	" " 18 " "
SHADE ON TM ROOF	FRAME PARTITION
OPENING & IRON DOORS	WINDOWS " " SHUTTERS
STABLE	WINDOW IN 1ST STORY
1 1/2" x 3" "	" 2" x 4" "
2" x 4" "	" 1" x 3" "
B'LG'S COLORED YELLOW ARE FRAME	" " BRICK
" " " " " " "	" " BLUE " STONE
" " " " " " "	" " GREY " IRON
" " " " " " "	" " BROWN " FIRE PROOF
" " " " " " "	" " GREEN " OR AOOBE
" " " " " " "	" " " " SPECIALS
(5) MARKED (19) ARE CLOTH LINED	
(19) INDICATE RELATIVE HEIGHTS	
T.C. TERRA COTTA CHIMNEY	S.H.
S.P. STOVE PIPE	" " S.H.
PAT. C. PATENT	" " SINGLE FIRE HYDRANT
ALTERNATE STREET NOS ARE ACTUAL	" " " " ARBITRARY
CONSECUTIVE " " " "	" " " " " "
BROKEN LINE NEAR BLDG-WOOD CORNICE	" " " " " "
SOLID " " " "	" " " " METAL

CHAPTER 4 - VISION & GOALS: FIRST STEPS

1. Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad track relocation.

- a. Identify existing businesses using rail access in Kalispell.
 - i. Cenex/Equity/Harvest States
 - ii. Northwest Drywall
- b. Meet with each rail dependent business to determine needs and expectations should the rail line be removed in Kalispell.
- c. Develop a partnership and plan with each existing business having existing rail service to accommodate the loss of rail service in Kalispell.
- d. Work with both BNSF and WATCO to end rail service within the city.
- e. Work with both BNSF, WATCO and the Flathead Economic Development Authority to develop both a rail industrial park and a rail terminus point on the east side of Kalispell.
- f. Work with BNSF and WATCO to initiate a program to remove the existing rail infrastructure from the city including rail,

ties, switches, crossing features, etc.

- g. Preserve the existing rail bridge across East Idaho for future use as a trail and city entrance feature.
- h. Utilize the city's Brownfield program to conduct phase 1 and phase 2 assessments as the first stages of turning the rail corridor into other uses.

2. Conduct a market and feasibility study.

Hire a consulting firm to identify and provide direction on the following issues to assist in the redevelopment of the Core Area.

- a. Market and Feasibility Studies for Core Area
 - i. Real Estate Market Analysis
 - ii. Background Analysis
 - iii. Site Assessment
 - iv. Retail Development Opportunity Assessment – Supply & Demand Analysis

Ribbon marking the arrival of the Great Northern Railway in the new community of Kalispell, January 1, 1892. Speeches, the driving of a silver spike, a huge barbecue, and a public ball commemorated the event. According to Kalispell resident George Stannard, "Beer and whiskey were as free as the fresh air, and that



evening there were many men that were partly sober." The coming of the transcontinental line to the Flathead greatly expanded the valley's economy. (Photo courtesy of Alexandra Swaney; Caption and photo courtesy of 'Looking Back: A Pictorial History of the Flathead Valley, Montana' by Kathryn L. McKay.)

Core Area Plan

- v. Office Development Opportunity Assessment – Supply & Demand Analysis
- vi. Business Park/Flex Business Units Development Opportunity Assessment – Supply & Demand
- vii. Hotel/Accommodation Development Opportunity Assessment – Supply & Demand
- viii. Institutional Development Opportunity Assessment – Supply & Demand
- ix. Single and Multi-Family Residential Development Opportunity Assessment
- b. Conceptual Infrastructure (with cost estimate) and Site Plan for Core Area
 - i. Railroad track removal through Kalispell
- c. Identify land ownership/easement issues
- d. Identify sources and uses of funds
- e. Financial Feasibility Study
- f. Rail-served business relocation feasibility
 - i. Identify potential relocation options
 - ii. Identify relocation costs based on preferred option
 - iii. Identify sources and uses of funds
- g. Feasibility for Linear Park Development
 - i. Development options
 - ii. Identifying sources and uses of funds

3. A multi-use trail and linear park system using BNSF Railroad Right-of-Way.

- a. Develop an understanding of underlying ownerships of the land currently owned/leased by BNSF to operate their railroad.
- b. Determine the disposition of land (both owned and leased by BNSF) should the railroad abandon service through Kalispell.

- c. Develop a program or take necessary measures to get the underlying railroad lands into public use or easement.
- d. Work with the adjoining property owners as the community proceeds to develop a trail/linear park along the former railroad location.
- e. Contract with a professional design team to develop linear park/trail concepts.
- f. The trail/linear park should connect the Meridian Trail on the west side of the Core Area neighborhood with Woodland Park on the east.
- g. The railroad bridge over Idaho Street should be preserved and rehabilitated to accommodate pedestrian traffic linking with Evergreen and Lawrence Park.
- h. Prepare a financial plan to develop the trail and linear park including phasing and use of public/private partnerships.

4. Railroad Bridge over East Idaho Street.

- a. When the railroad is relocated the bridge should be brought into public ownership.
- b. The bridge should be rehabilitated into a pedestrian and bike bridge providing a safe crossing over East Idaho (US 2).
- c. The bridge should be used as a focal point and backdrop for a “Welcome to Kalispell” sign celebrating the entrance into the downtown/ Core Area of Kalispell.

5. Develop additional north south streets/pedestrian crossings.

- a. A pedestrian crossing from the corner of East Center and Woodland Avenue to 7th Street EN.
- b. Re-open street crossings at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Streets on the north side of the Kalispell Center Mall.

CHAPTER 4 - VISION & GOALS: FIRST STEPS

- c. Consider new alignments off of 8th Avenue WN and 6th Avenue WN between Idaho and Center.
- d. Develop a new street connection from the south end of Meridian Court westerly or southwesterly across the former railroad line to the former O'Neil Lumber Yard lands between the rail line and Alternate Highway 93.

6. Center Street.

- a. Initiate a street redevelopment program (increased right-of-way, sidewalks, boulevard with trees) for Center Street between 5th Avenue West and South Meridian.

7. Water-Sewer Main replacement program.

- a. Implement and fund a program to target the replacement of water and sewer lines in excess of 50 years of age so that as new development occurs, existing infrastructure is not an impediment.

8. A viable Brownfield program in the Core Area.

- a. Target the Core Area as a priority Brownfield area.
- b. Maintain a funding pool of grant and loan funds at the city level to address Brownfield issues.
- c. Advocate for the clearance of existing identified Brownfield sites including UST and LUST sites.
- d. Proactively contact those property owners on a regular basis offering available services to mitigate the issues.

9. Remove/clear all vacant or blighted properties in the Core Area for the key purpose of redevelopment.

- a. Maintain an updated database of all vacant and blighted

properties in the Core Area.

- b. Develop a financial assistance program to help property owners clear vacant and hazardous buildings and assist the property owner to prepare a site for redevelopment (scrape and bake program).
- c. The city should be prepared to acquire key properties for the purpose of clearing hazardous activities, site aggregation, and infrastructure upgrades to get back on the market for development/redevelopment.

10. Develop and fund a loan/grant program that offers incentives to commercial property owners to improve/upgrade their properties.

- a. Develop a revolving loan/grant program using Tax Increment Finance (TIF) or other funding sources.
 - i. Encourage façade and exterior amenities improvements.
 - ii. Offer incentives for expansion and mixed use opportunities.
 - iii. Actively advertise and promote this program.

11. Improve pedestrian and bike access throughout the Core Area.

- a. Target a program to replace existing walks in deteriorated condition.
 - i. Establish a dedicated funding source for sidewalk replacement.
 - ii. Share cost 50-50 between abutting property owner and city.
 - iii. Identify key routes where the public may need to

take a greater share to ensure complete routes are completed.

- b. Identify unserved routes that connect high-density residential areas with commercial areas, parks or schools. First priority routes include:
 - i. Woodland and Center north to 7th Avenue EN
 - ii. 7th Avenue WN along the fairgrounds.
 - iii. North Meridian (Idaho to Appleway)
 - iv. Center Street
 - v. 1st Street West (West of 5th Avenue)
 - vi. 4th Avenue EN (south of Montana Street)

12. Parklands and greening opportunities.

- a. Flathead Electric Cooperative (FEC) site at Center Street and Woodland Avenue.
 - i. Contact FEC and work with them to redevelop this site as a temporary (or permanent) neighborhood pocket park and trailhead site.
 - ii. Take down fence and jersey barriers.
 - iii. Create parking area, picnic tables or benches, etc.
- b. Woodland Park north and west boundaries
 - i. Thin, clear and open up entire north and west boundaries to eliminate transient resident activities and to invite the adjacent neighborhood in.

- ii. Improve lighting
- iii. Develop plans for an outdoor amphitheater in the northwest corner of Woodland Park below the FEC substation.

- c. Contact FEC and work on a plan to green/obscure the substation at Washington Street and 7th Avenue WN.

13. Develop zoning tools that will enable the Core Area to accommodate a mix of land uses and achieve the Core Area Vision.

- a. Develop new zoning tools and creative approaches to enable property owners to achieve the Core Area vision.
- b. Educate the public on the proposed tools for the area.
- c. Work to phase out the existing single purpose industrial zoning prevalent along the BNSF tracks.
- d. Identify those businesses which are not currently compatible with their adjoining neighbors and work with them to address concerns.

14. Amend the city's architectural design standards.

- a. Work with the public, business owners, property owners and the city's Architectural Review Committee to develop design guidelines tailored for the Core Area.
- b. Amend the existing Architectural Design Standards to promote the built environment.



Photo courtesy of Northwest Montana Historical Society, Museum at Central School, circa 1930's.

“The world of tomorrow belongs to the person who has the vision today.”

- Robert Schuller