

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
October 17, 2023

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Kelly presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kelly, Susan Wolff, Eric Hinebauch, and Rick Tryon. Commissioner Joe McKenney arrived at 5:36 p.m.

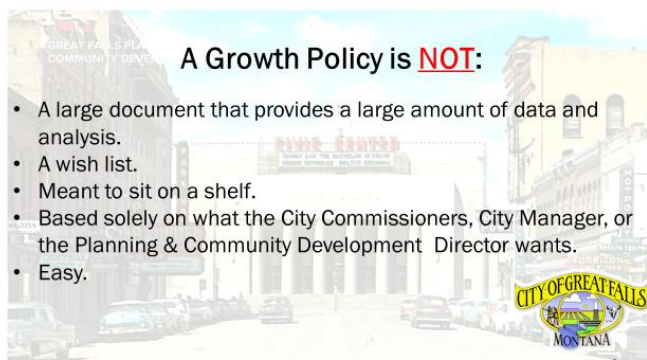
STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; City Attorney David Dennis; Finance Director Melissa Kinzler and Grant Administrator Tom Hazen; Public Works Director Chris Gaub; Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry, Deputy Director Tom Micuda and Associate Planner Sarah Doermann; Municipal Court Judge Steve Bolstad and Court Supervisor Morgan Medvec; Fire Chief Jeremy Jones; Police Chief Jeff Newton; and, City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

1. GROWTH POLICY UPDATE.

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint:



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So what about our Growth Policy?

- The City's most recent Growth Policy, "2025 Imagine Great Falls" was initiated on December 20th, 2011, and adopted on August 6th, 2013.
- The effort took approximately 19 ½ months.
- The update was also undertaken using an internal staffing model, meaning no third-party consultant was utilized.
- For the 24-25 Growth Policy Update, a consultant model will be utilized, consisting of direct coordination with Staff, but the Consultant performing most of the labor.



What does SB 382 mean for the Growth Policy update?

- SB 382: The Montana Land Use Planning Act, requires that the City provide:
 - Public Participation Plan
 - A Future Land Use Map
 - A review of the Growth Policy every five years to determine any updates need to be performed.
- Both the Growth Policy and related ordinance updates be completed by mid-2026.



Some of our Growth Policy Update Partners!

The People



So what is the Commission's role?

- Approve the Resolution to begin the Growth Policy Update
- Approve the Request for Proposals (RFP) – **Dec 2023**
 - Staff aims to have the RFP presented for Commission approval before the end of the year – **It is then expected that the RFP will be published from January – March 2024.**
- Award the RFP contract – **April 2024**



So what are the next steps?



Commissioner Tryon inquired what the citizens could expect with the updated Growth Policy.

Planning and Community Development Director Cherry responded that land use and local government are inherently tied together because the City operates from property taxes. Certain land uses have a different formula of how each of those uses are taxed, and there are certain figures - infrastructure, roads, sewer, water, and the cost of employees - which are always the same. If there is a disproportionate land use that is not supported by a healthy mix of other land uses, then things could be developed that will not ultimately be able to pay for themselves. The way the community was built using property tax alone is not able to pay for itself. In 20 years, we want to be able to say, not only did we grow the way we want,

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but also we were able to pay for it without being detrimental to the taxpayer, while still being in a place that is attractive for new business and new investment.

Great Falls Public Schools Superintendent Tom Moore introduced Business Operations Director Brian Patrick and School Board Trustee Bill Bronson.

Mr. Moore explained that in 2017, the School District hired Cropper GIS to do some work on redistricting and rebounding individual neighborhood schools. Over a year of bringing stakeholder groups together, their recommendations were considered and an attempt was made to implement them. This was done in isolation and not from a community perspective. There has been recession in some parts of the community and in the local schools; however, there has been growth in other areas. In order to predict what the school's needs are going to be in the future, the Growth Policy update needs to be done strategically and in conjunction with the City. The School District is ready to work with the City through the Growth Policy update process and would step up with resources when needed.

City Manager Greg Doyon explained that the delay in updating the Growth Policy was due to hiring a new Planning and Community Development Director. Although there would be outside partners, there are elements to the Growth Policy that need to be addressed by statute. Housing challenges, traffic congestion and the development of Malmstrom's Sentinel missile project affect the community.

Mayor Kelly requested that Director Cherry provide the Commission with feedback on the previous Growth Policy over the next couple of months.

Commissioner McKenney inquired about addressing housing needs now since the Growth Policy and related ordinances would not be updated until mid-2026. He further inquired if waiting might inadvertently put a stall on housing with developers.

Director Cherry responded that Planning and Community Development staff are currently working on ordinances, and could have those ready to go by the beginning of this upcoming year.

Manager Doyon added that the City does not want to get ahead of itself nor does it want to slow development. A brief prior revision of the Growth Policy and a Great Falls Development Authority Housing Study both indicated a need for housing in the community and housing should not be stalled. Even though the Growth Policy has not been updated, it does not remove the discretion of the Planning Board and the Commission to make appropriate decisions for the community based on the document's understanding that there probably have been some changes. There will be sufficient opportunity for the Commission to provide input on the next Growth Policy.

Commissioner Tryon inquired about the cost, where the money is being budgeted from and if the new Growth Policy will be a complete update.

Director Cherry responded that given the condition of the City's current plan, the Growth Policy merits an entire overhaul. The updated Growth Policy is a living document that must reflect today's needs and the voices of today's residents. The amount of \$300,000 has already been allocated for the Growth Policy

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update and it will be the future of the community and represent the will of the public.

Manager Doyon added that the legislature will be in session again next year. As the City embarks on an updated Growth Management Plan, staff will closely monitor any substantial changes after that session.


2. GREAT FALLS DOWNTOWN TIF ACTIVITY REPORT.

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry expressed appreciation to Planning and Community Development Deputy Director Tom Micuda and Associate Planner Sarah Doermann for their efforts with regard to preparing the Great Falls Downtown TIF Activity Report.

Director Cherry reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint:

Great Falls Downtown TIF Activity Report


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Projects using Downtown TIF funds

- ❖ Completed Projects
- ❖ Projects in Progress

Completed Projects




The Wild Hare
518 Central Avenue
Building Program

Façade: \$35,675
Env. Safety: \$2,500
Total: \$38,157

Completion Date:
February 2023

Completed Projects



The Sip 'n Dip
17 7th Street South
Building Program

Façade: \$50,000
Total: \$50,000

Completion Date:
February 2023

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Completed Projects



Roe River Realty
618 Central Avenue
Building Program

Façade: \$16,999
Env. Safety: \$2,371.50
Total: \$19,370.50

Completion Date: June 2023

Completed Projects



City Bar
705 Central Avenue
Building Program

Façade: \$22,879.19
Life Safety: \$25,541.50
Env. Safety: \$2,503.75
Total: \$50,924.44

Completion Date: July 2023

Completed Projects



Columbia Grain
120 1st Avenue North
Building Program

Façade: \$25,000
Life Safety: \$24,999
Total: \$49,999

Completion Date:
February 2023

Projects in Progress



Arvon Block
Alley Storm Drain

Approved Funds: \$90,000

Work completed in
September, pending final
payout to contractor

Projects in Progress



7th St. Streetscape
Between Central Avenue and
1st Avenue South

Approved Funds:
\$243,000

Project in design

Goal: Construction 2024
Partnership with Sip N
Dip

Projects in Progress



ADA Ramps on
Central
Between Park Drive and
6th Street

Approved Funds: \$31,052

Project in design

Goal: Construction in 2024-2025
Financial partnership with MDT
(required 13% match)

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Projects in Progress



BID Alley Mural Lighting

Approved Funds: \$150,000

Lighting design in progress



Projects in Progress



**Public Works
Downtown Storm Drain**

Approved Funds: \$2.5 million
over 5 years

Phase I - on going

Projects in Progress



**Kellergeist
Pub Theater
111 Central Avenue**

Approved Funds:
\$263,500

Permit submitted and
under review

Projects in Progress



**Mountain Wave
Distillery
313-315 Central
Avenue**

Approved Funds:
\$68,650

Construction in
Progress

Projects in Progress



**400 Block Storm
Drain – Alley
between Central
and 1st Ave N**

Approved Funds:
\$18,000

Work completed,
pending final payout
to contractor

Projects in Progress



**Economic Vitality
Transformation
Strategy**

Approved Funds: \$10,000

Consultant selection in
process

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Projects in Progress



Boulevard Tree Work in the Business Improvement District

Approved Funds: \$125,000 over 5 years

Year 3 of tree work - completed

Projects in Progress



Civic Center 2 Park Drive South

Approved Funds:
\$5,900,551.75

Project nearing completion



Projects in Progress



Baatz Building 400 2nd Avenue South Building Program

Facade: \$50,000
Life Safety: \$75,000
Env. Safety: \$5,000

Building permit approved
Interior demolition in progress

Downtown TIF Program Investment 2021 - 2023

- Façade Program:
 - \$150,603
- Life Safety:
 - \$125,540.50
- Environmental Safety:
 - \$12,374.75
- General TIF Investment:
 - \$3,346,202
- Bond Investment:
 - \$5,900,551.75

Downtown TIF Program Investment Continued

- Funds obligated to debt service and projects:
 - \$5,131,586
- Funds Available:
 - \$4,482,000, pending December increment
- Future Funds:
 - \$1.6 million est. for 2024

Questions and Discussion

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Mayor Kelly expressed appreciation to urban renewal agencies for their efforts with regard to making great use of TIF funds.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that a development review update will be a topic for November 7, 2023. An EMS transportation contract will be a topic for the November 21, 2023 work session.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal work session of October 17, 2023 at 6:26 p.m.