
*“ I see Great Falls as a model healthy community,
where citizens value living active lifestyles.”*

Working Group Participant

*“ We should have balanced housing through-out
the City with a mix of multi-family, single family,
rentals and ownership and housing within
reasonable walking distance to public schools and
grocery stores.”*

Working Group Participant

SOCIAL

1.0 Social Fabric 2025 Vision and Goals

Communication and Collaboration

Great Falls has a dynamic non-profit sector. This sector has benefitted from enhanced communication, collaboration and capacity building.

Diversity of Choice

Great Falls has grown at a steady pace. The City is now a destination location. Residents have an array of choices for employment, shopping and other activities. Both newcomers and young people are attracted to the City of Great Falls.

Health and Wellness

Great Falls offers multiple opportunities for recreation and an active lifestyle, improving its overall level of health as a community. Regional healthcare and supporting medical uses and infrastructure abound, making Great Falls a medical leader for the region.

Sense of Community

Great Falls continues to offer great schools, parks and trails. These features help the City maintain and enhance its sense of identity, health and social connectedness.

Safe and Affordable Housing Supply

Diverse housing types can be found throughout the City, offering residents a range of housing choices at different rental and purchase points.

Public Safety

Fire, Police and Public Health services are equal to or above expectations and applicable standards. The City has adapted to changing demographics, finding new and creative responses to its public safety needs.

Strong City Park and Recreation System

Great Falls has maintained the vision of Paris Gibson. Neighborhood and community parks are accessible to pedestrians in all parts of the City. Neighborhood residents feel a strong sense of pride in their parks, and can walk, bike and follow trails to many of these locations.

Public Safety

SOC1.1 Maintain the City's high public safety and health standards.

Policies

- Soc1.1.1 Maintain mutual aide agreements with surrounding jurisdictions for law enforcement, fire and emergency response purposes.
- Soc1.1.2 Respond to public safety and emergency medical needs in a timely and safe manner.
- Soc1.1.3 Support the Police Department's community-wide efforts to expand Neighborhood Watch and other neighborhood and City crime prevention and safety efforts.
- Soc1.1.4 Strategically improve public safety in the Downtown, as well as other city-wide "hotspots" throughout the City.
- Soc1.1.5 Support coordination and communication efforts amongst our public safety and social providers to most effectively address the emergency response and care of special needs populations.
- Soc1.1.6 Coordinate with Cascade County on issues related to the interface of urban and rural uses and the accompanying threat or potential threat for wildfire.
- Soc1.1.7 Support the Fire department's ability to maintain and improve the City's Insurance Service Organization (ISO) rating.
- Soc1.1.8 Continue to educate the public on fire safety prevention and safety practices.
- Soc1.1.9 Support the implementation of the *Downtown Great Falls Safety Plan*.
- Soc1.1.10 Support Cascade City-County Health Department's role in protecting and promoting the health and safety of the public including but not limited to:
- 1) Promoting conditions in which people can be healthy,
 - 2) Monitoring health status to identify and recommend solutions to community health problems,
 - 3) Informing and educating individuals about health issues.
- Soc1.1.11 Support the Health Department's role in investigating and diagnosing health problems and health hazards in the community.
- Soc1.1.12 Support the Health Department's role in implementing and enforcing laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety, including but not limited to ensuring that restaurants serve safe food.



Parks

SOC1.2 Employ innovative strategies to promote, enhance and utilize the City's parks.

Policies

- Soc1.2.1 Continue to provide quality recreational programs and facilities to meet the current and future needs of area residents.
- Soc1.2.2 Update the City's *Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan* to include innovative solutions to the City's park management needs, including such issues as:
- a. Accessibility
 - b. Connectedness with neighborhoods, community facilities, trails and open space
 - c. Youth activities
 - d. Strategies to reduce maintenance costs
 - e. Creative adjunct uses such as community gardens, outdoor education centers, and joint neighborhood park partnerships
- Soc1.2.3 Pilot the use of native or low maintenance, xeric, or native vegetation to manage and reduce the maintenance needs for parks.
- Soc1.2.4 Promote the integration of historical, geological, cultural, archeological, and other informational exhibits or displays in City parks and other community facilities.
- Soc1.2.5 Ensure a neighborhood role in the creation and disposition of park land.
- Soc1.2.6 Strive to achieve park equity, level-of-service and access throughout the City.
- Soc1.2.7 Make West Bank Park a "Destination Park" by fulfilling the vision as described in the *West Bank Park Master Plan*.
- Soc1.2.8 Evaluate and pursue, as appropriate, key intersection improvements to improve pedestrian access to Gibson Park.



Community Facilities

SOC1.3 Develop and maintain the City's community facilities and cultural resources.

Policies

- Soc1.3.1 Support the Library's mission, role and services, as well as its expansion in the realm of digital and electronic access and communication.
- Soc1.3.2 Utilize the following criteria as the basis for reviewing the location of new or expanded facilities:
- Proximity to major transportation routes, essential infrastructure and transit
 - Land use compatibility and consistency with the Growth Policy
 - Potential impacts on environmental, historical, and cultural resources
 - Public costs and benefits of the project, including operation and maintenance
 - Current capacity and location of equivalent facilities
 - The existence of reasonable alternatives to the proposed facility within the community
 - Other public interest criteria as determined to be relevant to the specific proposed facility
- Soc1.3.3 Partner with other governmental and non-governmental entities to coordinate improvement projects, promote joint uses, avoid duplication, and maximize the public benefit of facilities and services.
- Soc1.3.4 Ensure that affected citizens, agencies, and other interested parties are given adequate notice and opportunity for meaningful participation in decisions on locating or expanding community facilities and services.
- Soc1.3.5 Expand opportunities for public art in buildings, on the streetscape, and in settings suitable for urban placemaking, urban parks and community space.



Housing

SOC1.4 Encourage a diverse, safe and affordable supply of housing in Great Falls.

Policies

- Soc1.4.1 Work with the private sector and non-profits to increase housing opportunities in the City.
- Soc1.4.2 Expand the supply of residential opportunities including single family homes, apartments, manufactured homes, and assisted living facilities.
- Soc1.4.3 Encourage, promote and support adequate and affordable home ownership in the City.
- Soc1.4.4 Promote a range of housing options and supportive networks to help the elderly remain independent and “age in place.”
- Soc1.4.5 Continue to support the development of accessible housing units for those with physical and mental challenges and special needs, including members of the community with disabilities, etc.
- Soc1.4.6 Encourage a variety of housing types and densities so that residents can choose by price or rent, location and place of work.
- Soc1.4.7 Encourage workforce housing in locations that meet the needs of the City’s major employers, downtown and the City’s activity centers.
- Soc1.4.8 Ensure that the area’s existing housing stock is maintained in safe and sanitary condition through zoning review, inspection and building code enforcement activities.
- Soc1.4.9 Continue to ensure that the City promotes equal opportunity housing and access to housing for all residents and is in compliance with Federal and State requirements aimed at preventing housing discrimination.
- Soc1.4.10 Be open to creative housing solutions such as co-ops, land trusts, easements, co-housing, accessory dwelling units, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), granny flats etc. exchange, and the identification and resolution of housing issues in the City.

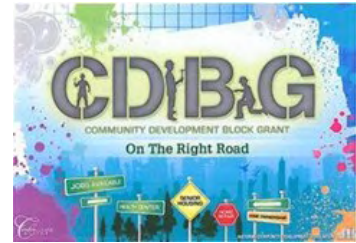
Housing

SOC1.4 Encourage a diverse, safe and affordable supply of housing in Great Falls.

Policies

(cont.)

- Soc1.4.11 Promote the character, quality, and livability of neighborhoods by maintaining the quality of our existing housing stock.
- Soc1.4.12 When annexing land for residential development, consider the timing, phasing and connectivity of housing and infrastructure development.
- Soc1.4.13 Protect the character, livability and affordability of existing neighborhoods by ensuring that infill development is compatible with existing neighborhoods.
- Soc1.4.14 Support the priorities established by the City's *Consolidated Plan*.
- Soc1.4.15 Expand transitional housing with supportive services benefitting the homeless and special needs populations in the City.
- Soc1.4.16 Continue the work of the Housing Task Force as a resource for information exchange, issue identification and problem-solving.
- Soc1.4.17 Educate the public, and other stakeholders, as to the legalities of housing requirements, preferred housing strategies and approaches.



Housing Diversity



Neighborhoods

SOC1.6 Work cooperatively with the community at-large and the City's neighborhoods.

Policies

- Soc1.6.1 Ensure that community facilities are designed, constructed, and maintained as attractive social and environmental assets in the neighborhoods where they are located.
- Soc1.6.2 Identify neighborhood needs and benchmarks in coordination with the Neighborhood Councils, residents, property owners and business owners.
- Soc1.6.3 Work with the Neighborhood Councils, residents, property owners and businesses to create individual neighborhood plans as way of addressing needs, and preserving and improving neighborhoods.
- Soc1.6.4 Pursue grants to conduct a Healthy by Design audit. Based on the assessment and interest, incorporate Healthy by Design Neighborhood standards and practices to foster safety, wellness and activity at the local neighborhood level.
- Soc1.6.5 Support initiatives resulting in the promotion of locally produced fresh foods such as farmer's markets, community gardens and other associated retail efforts.
- Soc1.6.6 Encourage creative community service options in the City.
- Soc1.6.7 Continue to partner, with neighborhoods and the Neighborhood Councils to promote and enhance the utilization and maintenance of neighborhood parks.



Non-Profits

Soc 1.7 Bolster the capacity of non-profits in the City.

Policies

- Soc1.7.1 Work with non-profits to monitor and coordinate information, impacts and responses related to the exploration and development of oil in the Bakken fault.
- Soc1.7.2 Call upon the Montana Association of Non-Profits for assistance, guidance and instruction.
- Soc1.7.3 Develop new partnerships for problem solving, including the creation of a non-profit community network model to improve communication, coordination, collaboration and innovation in the City.
- Soc1.7.4 Facilitate and promote volunteerism in all non-profit and City endeavors.
- Soc1.7.5 Asset map and model all of the City's social and medical infrastructure, including private sector, regional and State stakeholders.
- Soc1.7.6 Support capacity building, grant collaboration and fundraising efforts by the City's non-profits, including the development of a robust Community Foundation in the City.
- Soc1.7.7 Employ volunteers, students, GIS tools and other related technologies to expand data and mapping capabilities in the City.



*“ Provide strategic connections from neighborhoods
to the River’s Edge Trail.”*

Survey Participant

*“ Allow balanced sustainable growth according to a
plan that has been presented to and vetted by the
public.”*

Working Group Participant

ENVIRONMENTAL

2.0 Natural Environment 2025 Vision and Goals

Air

Great Falls is known for having the best air of quality any major City in Montana due to its abundance of clear, crisp, sunny days. The freshness of the air helps the City maintain its reputation for having the best weather in Montana.

Brownfields

The City of Great Falls, in cooperation with other stakeholders, has remediated key brownfield sites downtown and in its older areas. This work has enabled small businesses to develop, connected key tracts, and created a resurgence of interest in redevelopment opportunities city-wide.

Environmental Ethics and Education

Expanding environmental education, outreach, and learning opportunities in and near the City have strengthened the City's commitment to being good stewards of the environment.

Missouri River

The City of Great Falls has successfully partnered, with the County and the State, in implementing a Total Management Demand Load (TMDL) plan for the Missouri River, becoming a model urban watershed for habitat and restoration. Bank stabilization efforts have worked hand-in-hand with this effort preventing erosion and loss of key areas.

Trees

Thanks to the foresight of citizens, the City of Great Falls has a robust urban forest with a diverse mix of trees, by type and age. The City has kept pace with new approaches for the care and maintenance of trees both by staff and the citizenry.

Trails and Open Space

Key open space assets in Great Falls are now connected, encouraging citizens of every age to walk, bike and use the transit system more than ever before.



Sustainability

Citizens, in partnership with the City and Cascade County, have implemented a range of sustainable and environmental friendly initiatives, including recycling and reuse, renewable energy, mixed-use and connected neighborhoods, trail systems, rain gardens, local food production and composting.

Brownfields

ENV 2.1 Expand efforts to identify and remediate brownfields in the City. Policies

- Env2.1.1 Pursue a city-wide brownfield assessment grant aimed toward the clean-up and adaptive reuse of properties impacted by hazardous waste contamination.
- Env2.1.2 Promote the Revolving Loan Fund for the redevelopment and reuse of brownfields, especially in areas with existing infrastructure, such as our downtown and Missouri River Corridor.
- Env2.1.3 Incentivize and expedite brownfield redevelopment in the permit process. Highlight successful projects where possible.
- Env2.1.4 Ensure that information relative to brownfield location and reuse opportunities is available to the public and prospective developers and users.
- Env2.1.5 Coordinate the City's brownfield remediation efforts with the residents in the City, County, and State and Federal agencies.



Missouri River

ENV 2.2 Continue to maintain, protect and enhance the environmental values and the natural attributes of the Missouri River system.

Policies

- Env2.2.1 Identify, stabilize and manage the Missouri’s floodplain and river bank so as to protect the river, its riparian assets and adjoining lands.
- Env2.2.2 Partner with the State and Cascade County to establish an equitable Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the long-term health and maintenance of the Missouri River. Implement Phase II Storm water regulations in the City, including Best Management Practices (BMPS).
- Env2.2.3 Continue to identify and remediate groundwater, point and non-point impacts to the River’s water quality.
- Env2.2.4 Develop, maintain and enhance the River’s value as a public amenity and resource, including resource management determined to be consistent with these values, such as:
- Public access, connectivity and viewing
 - Recreational values
 - Urban habitat
 - Leisure, dining and mixed-use development
 - Education
 - Designation as a National Heritage area
- Env2.2.5 Continue to implement the *Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan* as the long-term vision for the river system.
- Env2.2.6 Support mixed-use and commercial development that will enhance the Missouri River consistent with the vision identified in the *Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan*.
- Env2.2.7 Expand access to and use of the River’s Edge Trail.
- Env2.2.8 Explore the use of digital wayfinding along the trail and at other key junctures in the City.



Urban Form

ENV 2.3 Enhance the urban built environment by promoting infill and redevelopment in the City.

Policies

- Env2.3.1 In order to maximize existing infrastructure, identify underutilized parcels and areas with infill potential as candidates for redevelopment in the City.
- Env2.3.2 Identify and remediate brownfields in the City.
- Env2.3.3 Identify and develop standards for mixed-use commercial buildings and neighborhood commercial nodes in the City.
- Env2.3.4 Expand efforts to encourage outdoor eating and seating in the City oriented toward the river, the River's Edge Trail and downtown, utilizing proximity to water, views, and public open space.
- Env2.3.5 Prioritize and implement sidewalk installation and repair in the City based on safety concerns, safe routes to school, and the needs of special populations in the community.
- Env2.3.6 Conduct an updated tree inventory in the City. Based on the results, develop strategies to augment and diversify the City's urban tree canopy.
- Env2.3.7 Develop a rain garden as a demonstration project for managing stormwater in an environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing way.
- Env2.3.8 Support and expand the use of environmental expertise in the City.
- Env2.3.9 Encourage and promote Crime Prevention Through Design (CPTED) strategies in the City.
- Env2.3.10 Develop strategies to identify and reduce the number of automobile, bicycle and pedestrian accidents in the City.



Environmental-friendly

ENV 2.4 Maintain a clean, healthy, vibrant, connected and safe City now and into the future.

Policies

- Env2.4.1 Maintain the City’s 2012 air quality standards, and exceed these standards when technology and cost improvements makes more stringent standards achievable.
- Env2.4.2 Create a multi-modal transportation, open space and infrastructure system that promotes increased opportunities for walking, biking, and public transit.
- Env2.4.3 Continue to expand the City’s access to a locally produced fresh food supply through its local agricultural suppliers, farmer’s markets, community gardens and innovative educational and marketing strategies.
- Env2.4.4 Develop and implement a strategy for affordable, financially feasible, single stream recycling in the City.
- Env2.4.5 Educate the public on Best Management Practices referred to as BMPs or non-structural solutions to improve water quality.
- Env2.4.6 Fully evaluate the development and implementation of a “dark sky” ordinance in the City.
- Env2.4.7 Explore the use of hybrids in the City’s fleet and other “green” purchasing that may result in long-term cost savings to the City and its residents.
- Env2.4.8 Promote environmental educational opportunities and values in the City.
- Env2.4.9 Allow for environmental assessments, soil studies and geotechnical surveys for development in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of environmental concerns, consistent with State law.
- Env2.4.10 Continue to test, monitor and address groundwater issues in the Upper and Lower River Road vicinity, as well as other areas of concern.
- Env2.4.11 Incentivize and promote renewable, clean energy and energy efficiency standards as viable options in the City.



Fresh Food Access

Fresh food and local food access have repeatedly come up throughout the planning process as a valued and sought after commodity. Inroads have been achieved through the widespread success of the City's summer farmers market and the piloting of several community garden projects. These efforts have increasingly received public attention and support. The Imagine Great Falls planning process reflected support for the expansion of these efforts into the mainstream of day to day life.

Fresh food access helps the City and its residents in a number of ways. It creates new markets for goods, and expands current markets. Community gardens can be used as teaching opportunities for youth and groups in the area. Surplus garden harvests have been shared with non profits such as the Food Bank and the Salvation Army. Gardens can also act to "clean up" vacant areas, bringing new life and care to a location.

Gardens are good for the environment, allowing the filtration of water, and the cleansing of air. By encouraging a greater and more expansive supply of fresh food, residents will have opportunities to incorporate healthier and better food choices into their diet.

The Department of Planning and Community Development responded to this need by creating an easier process for garden location.



“ I see industry. Jobs that allow a good lifestyle with vibrant neighborhoods and areas of mixed commercial and residential use. A business area by the east side of town.”

Working Group Participant

“ I see a diversified economy with high paying jobs and good benefits. Diversification in agriculture (value-added), manufacturing, tourism, medical, educational, military, technology and energy.”

Working Group Participant

ECONOMIC

3.0 2025 Economic Vision and Goals

Diversification

The City's efforts toward economic diversification are succeeding. The City has a balanced mix of manufacturing, medical and agri-businesses. These industries have built on the community's industrial foundation, access to Canada and location in the renowned Golden Triangle of agriculture. The City's "business friendly" welcoming and "can do" attitude is here to stay.

Good Paying Jobs

Workers living in Great Falls have distinct strengths and are envied for their competitive advantages. A committed, well trained labor pool and citizenry have enjoyed the fruits of their economy. Residents have a choice of well-paying jobs, and young people are choosing to stay in the City.

The creation of primary sector jobs have increased the City's tax base. As a result, there is more investment in neighborhoods and city-wide amenities. In fact, the residents of the City have the highest percentage of home ownership in the State.

Workforce Development

The once small colleges in the City have transformed into major pillars of education locally, regionally and nationally via distinct programs and new modes of training, such as remote learning and simulation. Colleges have joined forces with the private sector and high schools to create many employment paths and options. Graduation rates at the City's high schools and colleges have increased to the highest in the State because students recognize and realize the strengths and value of these programs.

Small businesses

The City's small businesses are included in the success and development of the City's economic mix. Residents enjoy choice in their shopping, dining and entertainment venues. Out-of-state residents are attracted to the distinctiveness and many consider and choose to relocate to Great Falls. These businesses act on new ideas as well as carry forward many traditions and home-town favorites. Residents are happy the City maintains a small town character.

Downtown

The *Downtown Master Plan*, adopted in 2011, has been implemented. It is so successful that locating in downtown has become competitive and highly prized. The City's downtown is vibrant and safe, and residents enjoy many late night eating and entertainment venues.

Fiscally Sound

The City's economic successes have not changed its core values. Wise investments and prudent decisions have forged great partnerships between the City, its residents and other stakeholders.

3.0 2025 Economic Vision and Goals

Energy

The energy sector has greatly expanded. It is an economic engine, along with the military presence, healthcare industry, education and business sector. The energy sector is balanced between the clean conversion of conventional and traditional sources of fuels with a complimenting mix of alternative sources such as of solar, wind, hydropower, bio-fuels etc. As a result of growth, the City's airport has truly become a regional hub, and is relied on by residents, tourists and business investors alike. Gone are the days when travel out of Great Falls meant limited choices.



“I want Great Falls to be attractive to those who are able to choose Great Falls...Great Falls needs to be a bigger player in tourism as a destination.”

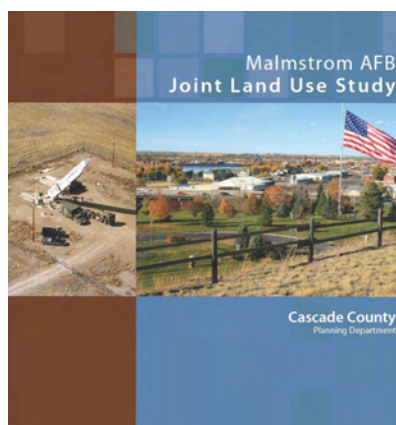
Working Group Participant

Support the Military Mission in Great Falls

ECO 3.1 Support, cooperate, expand and adjust accordingly the current and future mission and role of the military of Great Falls.

Policies

- Eco3.1.1 Support, cooperate and coordinate with Malmstrom Air Force Base and the Montana National Guard (MANG).
- Eco3.1.2 Support the Malmstrom Air Force Base *Joint Land Use Study* (2012), also referred to as the JLUS study, and participate in the joint coordinating committee so as to implement its recommendations.
- Eco3.1.3 Should there be a change in the mission and role of the military at Great Falls, follow the recommendations of the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) in responding to this condition so that the City is well positioned and prepared to respond to any change of status, be it new missions, adjustments, downsizing or closure.
- Eco3.1.4 Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with key stakeholders impacted by the military.
- Eco3.1.5 Educate the public regarding issues related to the military, and their contribution to the local economy, needs, and current status.
- Eco3.1.6 Evaluate taking action to annex Malmstrom Air Force Base.
- Eco3.1.7 Increase the attractiveness of Great Falls as a destination location for retirees, including military veterans.



Energy Development

ECO3.2 Develop a strategic response to the impacts of oil and gas development in the region.

Policies

- Eco3.2.1 Participate in grant applications and other efforts to assess the impacts of oil and gas development in the region.
- Eco3.2.2 Based on research and best planning practices, respond and create collaborative public-private and non-profit based solutions.
- Eco3.2.3 Develop energy support manufacturing clusters such as tool assembly and fabrication.
- Eco3.2.4 Develop a manufactured home construction industry.
- Eco3.2.5 Establish and promote regional cooperation and networking for this strategic areas of commerce.
- Eco3.2.6 Coordinate and expand existing workforce development efforts, such as Post-secondary training for energy development industry, that can help obtain and accommodate job growth in this industry.
- Eco3.2.7 Identify potential growth areas to accommodate the demands created by building industry and trade in the area.

Bill to fund infrastructure, other programs in oil-gas-impacted counties headed for approval

Steel fabrication company ADF coming to Great Falls

Workforce Development

ECO3.3 Continue efforts to support and develop the capacity of the future workforce in Great Falls and those in need of retooling.

Policies

- Eco3.3.1 Support the growth of the City's college community, including the University of Great Falls, Great Falls College at Montana State University, Park University and the Great Falls campus of Embry-Riddle Worldwide.
- Eco3.3.2 Support applied training, online learning, simulation and customized training opportunities.
- Eco3.3.3 Call upon SCORE, the Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Development Council (SBDC) to serve as mentors for business development in the City.
- Eco3.3.4 Have strong, innovative early educational and development programs in middle and high school programs to complement college workforce and trade development efforts.

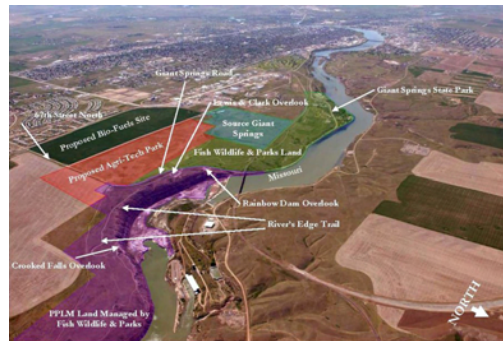


Attract and Retain New Businesses

ECO3.4 Continue efforts to expand, retain and attract new businesses to Great Falls.

Policies

- Eco3.4.1 Continue to implement the City's Downtown Revolving Loan Fund (RLF).
- Eco3.4.2 Promote a "business friendly" attitude and support the use of an ombudsman role in all facets of business development.
- Eco3.4.3 Ensure that the City's interests are represented in trade shows, site selector packaging activities and networking efforts.
- Eco3.4.4 Continue to offer incentives to responsible developers and employers.



Small Businesses

ECO3.5 Continue efforts to support and develop small businesses in Great Falls.

Policies

- Eco3.5.1 Continue to implement the City's Revolving Loan Funds (RLF).
- Eco3.5.2 Continue to encourage the provision and expansion of incubator space in the City.
- Eco3.5.3 To encourage new entrepreneurship in the City, hold a business plan competition for high school and college students in Great Falls. Grant the winner special recognition and assistance with plan implementation (such as cooperative advice, space and technical assistance).
- Eco3.5.4 Tout Spend Local and Buy Montana programs.



Amenities and Image

ECO3.6 Promote Great Falls as a destination and expand the City’s assets and amenities.

Policies

- Eco3.6.1 Support efforts to brand the City, such as the work of the Branding Alliance, or the creation of signature events and projects.
- Eco3.6.2 Encourage development that utilizes the Missouri riverfront for mixed-use residential, dining and recreational activities. Ensure the long-term access and value of this resource.
- Eco3.6.3 Encourage urban amenities such as art, outdoor eating, wayfinding, and streetscape as downtown enhancements.
- Eco3.6.4 Find creative opportunities for younger residents to innovate and participate in the City, such as the development of new events and festivals and opportunities for innovative competitions.
- Eco3.6.5 Explore the use of an ongoing “special events” committee. (Butte was cited as an example)
- Eco3.6.6 Support Expo Park aka “the fairgrounds” as an economic development tool, entertainment venue and cultural resource for the City.
- Eco3.6.7 Use social media to expand the City’s promotional efforts to share good reviews and results, highlight competitive advantages and our willingness to partner and collaborate with others.



Economic Assets and Opportunities



Balanced Economic Development Approach

ECO3.7 Support a balanced economic development approach to enhance and diversify the City's economic development capabilities.

Policies

- Eco3.7.1 Develop the City's capacity to conduct public-private partnerships and diversify economically. Specifically, evaluate establishing an economic development mill levy including:
- a. A planning time frame
 - b. An education and collaboration strategy
 - c. A process for the identification of outcomes and benefits
- Eco3.7.2 Improve the development process by creating an ombudsman role to foster a "business friendly" environment and to provide expertise on the City's Codes.
- Eco3.7.3 Manage the City's Tax Increment Finance Districts (TIFs) toward the creation of long-term improvements, with special emphasis on applying funds to capture, retain and reinvest dollars within the designated TIF boundaries.
- Eco3.7.4 Capitalize on the City's potential for outdoor, recreational and heritage tourism especially with regard to its location near to ecologically significant and vital public lands.
- Eco3.7.5 Pursue the City's competitive advantage, especially with regard to value-added agriculture of all types, including opportunities for organic foods and the introduction of new crops to the region.
- Eco3.7.6 In keeping with the City's industrial heritage, develop, maintain and utilize infrastructure that ensures "shovel ready" industrial sites.
- Eco3.7.7 Create a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) for infrastructure improvements by offering a 0% interest rate to provide gap infrastructure for new projects. Examples of suitable projects include sidewalks, sewer and water improvements and improvements needed to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
- Eco3.7.8 Encourage entrepreneurship and free market innovation.



Balanced Economic Development Approach

ECO3.7 Support a balanced economic development approach to enhance and diversify the City's economic development capabilities.

Policies (cont.)

- Eco3.7.8 Maintain a land use database and inventory, including infill and brownfield sites, to accommodate future development needs in the City.
- Eco3.7.9 Develop incentives, such as expedited permitting, for brownfield redevelopment, infill, and other highly desired but challenging projects.
- Eco3.7.10 Invest, spend and manage public dollars in a fiscally prudent manner.
- Eco3.7.11 Consider and pursue, where economically sound, catalyst projects and partnerships such as:
- a. Projects that support the implementation of the *Medical District* or the *Missouri River Urban Corridor Plans*
 - b. Projects that represent sound investment of Tax Increment Finance Districts
 - c. Projects that are consistent with the *Downtown Master Plan*, such as downtown feasibility studies for historic properties
 - d. Projects that support and expand opportunities for the performing arts, and participate in conventions, including the creation of a destination facility
 - e. Projects that support public-private development, mixed-use projects, or projects where naming rights can be granted
- Eco3.7.12 Exercise fiscal prudence and responsibility in the establishment of City commitments, use of resources, and expenditure of funds.



“We should have growth focusing more on income and job quality, diversity in terms of population and employment opportunity, City development that is attractive with well-developed infrastructure for transportation by foot, bike, bus and auto.”

Working Group Participant

PHYSICAL

4.0 2025 Vision and Goals for the Physical Realm

Mixed-use neighborhoods

Great Falls is known for its good jobs and a enjoyable lifestyle. There is a healthy and diverse supply of new homes as well as investments in older homes in the core and downtown residential areas. This mix of new and old investment in housing has created vibrant neighborhoods including areas with historic and mixed-use commercial. New business areas have flourished such as the one on the East end of town.

A thriving industrial sector

The development pattern in Great Falls is characterized by diverse land uses that are accessible by multiple means. Environmentally-friendly manufacturing and industry have revitalized aging industrial and brownfield areas. New industries have located in Great Falls based on the City's access to resources, quality labor market, and competitive advantages.

Missouri River Urban Corridor, Downtown Master and Medical District Master Plans

The Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan and the Downtown Master Plans have been implemented. As a result, the core of the City is connected and thriving. The City has a balanced transportation system with more bike lanes, two way streets, sidewalks, street beatification and trail extensions to neighborhoods and downtown. A regional medical district has blossomed, attracting more providers and offering needed care to residents of the City and the surrounding rural areas.

Varied housing, choice, accessibility and efficient services

New and old housing stock can be found through-out the City. The City's new housing stock is accessible, and much of the old housing stock has been retrofitted and is available to all special populations. More accessible walkways, paths and services are distributed through out the city to the extent that accessibility is common and complete now. A portion of the City's housing market has remained affordable, ensuring ownership to a cross section of the community.

Sustainability

Great Falls embodies balanced, compatible growth. Gradual consistent growth has occurred around the edges of the city, as well as within the City through infill development. Infill development includes both residential and commercial land uses. Service providers are available through-out the City.

As part of the City's build-out, a balanced transportation system is readily available in all major areas of the City. As a result of this transportation network, more bike lanes, two way streets, sidewalks, street enhancements and trail extensions can be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

City - County coordination

The 2025 vision is realized, in part because the City and the County have worked together to encourage growth. This was accomplished through a number of supported and shared relationships, networks and agreements.

Land Use

PHY4.1 Encourage a balanced mix of land uses through-out the City.

Policies

- Phy4.1.1 Promote and incentivize infill development that is compatible with the scale and character of established neighborhoods.
- Phy4.1.2 Expand neighborhood commercial uses, mixed-use development and local food choices where appropriate.
- Phy4.1.3 Create a balanced land use pattern that provides for a diversity of uses that will accommodate existing and future development in the City.
- Phy4.1.4 Foster the development of safe, walkable, neighborhoods with a mix of uses and diversity of housing types.
- Phy4.1.5 Encourage and incentivize the redevelopment or adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized properties so as to maximize the City's existing infrastructure.
- PHY4.1.6 Recognize, conserve, maintain and support the value and character of Traditional Neighborhood Development in the City.
- PHY4.1.7 Encourage vehicular access to lots from alleys so as so maintain the safety and design attributes of traditional streets in the City.
- Phy4.1.8 Support the implementation of the *Downtown Master Plan*, including but not limited to:
- a. The Downtown Tax Increment Finance District
 - b. The pursuit and monitoring of technical assistance projects for qualifying buildings downtown
 - c. Wayfinding and multimodal streetscape projects
 - d. Data research and analysis
 - e. The Downtown Development Partnership.

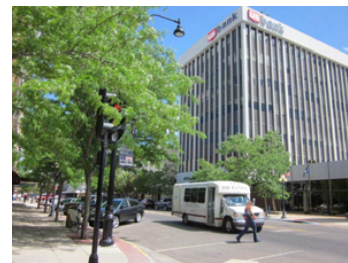
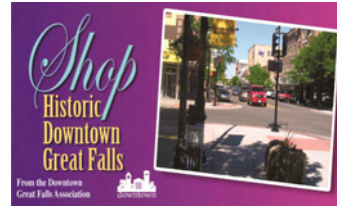
Community Wide Assets and Opportunities



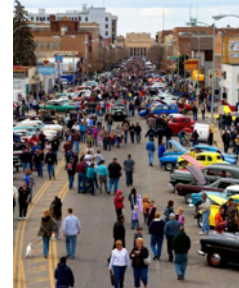
Awaiting Permission



Downtown Assets and Opportunities



An Energized Downtown



Zoning

PHY4.2 Implement the City's land use codes to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents.

Policies

- Phy4.2.1 Development density and intensity should be oriented toward areas of the City most capable of supporting it. General locations meeting this criteria include:
- Activity centers, as identified in the Transportation Plan
 - Major intersections and road corridors
 - Downtown
 - Tax Increment Finance Districts (TIFs)
 - Areas with adequate or excess infrastructure capacity
 - Locations with adequate community facilities
- Phy4.2.2 Inventory the City's historic commercial structures and develop a context sensitive strategy for ensuring their continued productive use.
- Phy4.2.3 Inventory the City's enclaves and develop a cost-effective approach for addressing their long-term status in the City.
- Phy4.2.3 Support actions that bring properties into conformance with the City's Land Development Code requirements over time.
- Phy4.2.4 Promote retail locations that are safe, attractive, and accessible and avoid those that are not.
- Phy4.2.5 Promote orderly development and the rational extension of infrastructure and City services.
- Phy4.2.6 The City may oppose zoning changes that will result in incompatible land uses and or result in adverse impacts to the residential character or use of adjoining properties.
- Phy4.2.7 The City may utilize provisions of the Land Development Code to ensure industrial uses avoid excessive noise, vibration, smell or sound impacts.
- Phy4.2.8 The City may recommend against spot zoning, zoning that creates incompatible land uses, or uses that are evaluated to be detrimental to the long term viability of adjacent properties.
- Phy4.2.9 The City may use its Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district to:
- a. Designate and encourage mixed-use projects
 - b. Foster creative and innovative land use planning strategies, including adaptive reuse, redevelopment, and cluster residential development to create open space
 - c. Designate special uses not defined in the zoning Ordinance
 - d. Mitigate the adverse impacts of a proposed development.

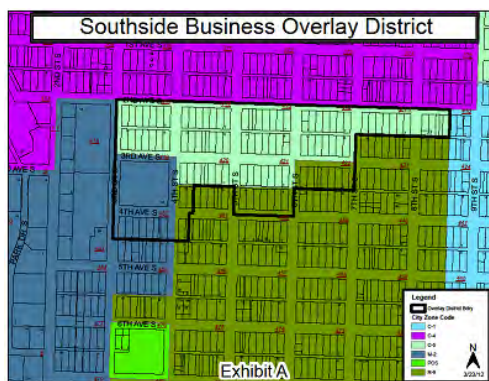
Zoning

PHY4.2 Implement the City's land use codes to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents.

Policies (cont.)

Phy4.2.7 Review the City's zoning code to evaluate the development standards for townhomes and the suitability of this use in other commensurate zoning districts.

Phy4.2.8 Evaluate whether there is sufficient Light Industrial (LI) zoning in the City to meet the needs of small businesses, contractors, mechanics and tradesman.



Efficient Infrastructure

PHY4.3 Optimize the efficiency and use of the City's public facilities and utilities.

Policies

- Phy4.3.1 Update the Facilities Plan portion of the City's 1998 *Wastewater Treatment and Collection System Plan*.
- Phy4.3.2 Plan for the provision of appropriate infrastructure improvements, where needed, to support development.
- Phy4.3.3 Do not subsidize the extension of improvements to areas where development is not encouraged.
- Phy4.3.4 Ensure that new development does not increase the cost or adversely impact existing service levels or service delivery.
- Phy4.3.5 Manage the City's water and wastewater facilities so as to maintain adequate long-term capacity for the City's residents, as well as commercial and industrial users.
- Phy4.3.6 Take all appropriate actions to maintain and defend the City's water rights.
- Phy4.3.7 Manage public facilities maintenance and improvements in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Phy4.3.8 Coordinate and prioritize capital improvement planning for all community interests.
- Phy4.3.9 Plan and budget for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) related to infrastructure, community facilities or services. This plan should be coordinated with the County, where possible.
- Phy4.3.10 Support stormwater conveyance that are acceptable to the Department of Public Works, methodically sound, avoids adverse impacts to affected property owners, and water quality.
- Phy4.3.11 Consider the following annexation incentives for water and sewer hook-ups so as to lessen the cost of improvements.
- Bonds
 - Impact fees
 - Streamlined or expedited processes
 - Assistance through grant monies
 - Special Improvement Districts (SIDs)



Transportation and Mobility

PHY4.4 Increase mobility and the access of citizens to transportation alternatives throughout the City.

Policies

- Phy4.4.1 Improve the ability of residents to travel from home to work, schools, shopping, employment centers and activity centers.
- Phy4.4.2 Support efforts and programs that seek to improve school crossings, pedestrian access and the safety of those enroute to and from schools.
- Phy4.4.3 Enhance public access to community services and programs such as the library, Centene Stadium, Mansfield Center and other civic facilities and events.
- Phy4.4.4 Create a built environment that promotes easy access to safe walking, biking and other opportunities for physical activity.
- Phy4.4.5 Encourage, promote and support transit options for the community of Great Falls, including those required for the elderly and the disabled.
- Phy4.4.6 Review, update and adopt new standards and regulations that encourage pedestrian and bicycle-friendly development.
- Phy4.4.7 Provide sufficient resources to construct and maintain the trails and related facilities recommended in the City's *Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan* and the *Bikeway Facilities Plan*.
- Phy4.4.8 Review and adopt formal design standards for all roadways.
- Phy4.4.9 Pursue grant funds to create a "Complete Streets" demonstration project or projects in the City.
- Phy4.4.10 Develop a formal ADA Transition Plan for public rights-of-way.
- Phy4.4.11 Implement elements of the *Downtown Access, Circulation and Streetscape Plan*, as opportunities arise.
- Phy4.4.12 Encourage development of network improvements that reduce emissions and idling times, reduce maintenance costs and increase efficiency of the road network. Examples include roundabouts, improved signal controls, construction of turn lanes and bike lanes, LED signal and street lighting, etc.



Note: It is anticipated that this Objective will be reviewed as part of the Transportation Plan update that will occur in the Summer and Fall of 2013. Any revisions to this Objective would be required to go through a separate adoption process.

Historic Preservation

PHY4.5 Continue the work of the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission in the identification, evaluation and preservation of historic districts and individual properties in Great Falls and Cascade County.

Policies

- Phy4.5.1 Review for consistency with Federal and State laws regarding the designation of historic districts.
- Phy 4.5.2 Establish incentives for the preservation, rehabilitation, and maintenance of historically or architecturally significant properties in a manner closely related to the appearance of the district.
- Phy4.5.3 Develop regulations that require consistency and compatibility with the historic district's design criteria but also offer flexibility in meeting applicable development standards.
- Phy4.5.4 Educate the public at large, including owners, private sector and other interested stakeholders, about historic issues.
- Phy4.5.5 Work toward the local determination of historic districts, including methods for selecting properties and changing boundaries, if appropriate.
- Phy4.5.6 Support the implementation of the *Downtown Master Plan*, especially its preservation and housing goals.
- Phy4.5.7 Identify financial resources that may be used to assist in renovating or maintaining qualified properties, resource planning and tourism related to historic appreciation.
- Phy4.5.8 Maintain the City's standing as a Certified Local Government.

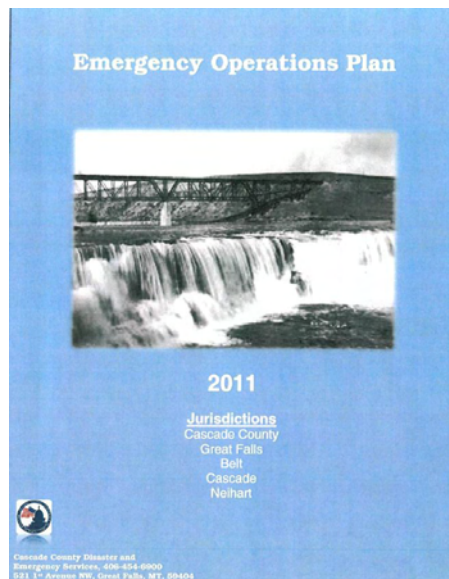


Emergency Management

PHY4.6 Plan, manage and coordinate the City's emergency response consistent with the state and local requirements.

Policies

- Phy4.6.1 Identify and review potential areas where there may be future conflicts between wild lands and urban areas.
- Phy4.6.2 Delineate interface areas and promote defensible space in and around structures.
- Phy4.6.3 Educate and encourage residents to prepare for disaster by maximizing personal preparedness kits, developing a family plan and staying informed.
- Phy4.6.4 Respond to emergencies by implementing the protocols in the *Cascade County Mitigation Plan*.
- Phy4.6.5 Mitigate other foreseeable hazards considered in the *Cascade County Mitigation Plan*.
- Phy4.6.6 Review the City's subdivision design standards with respect to emergency access and fire safety issues (see Chapter 5 of the International Building Code - Fire Service Features).
- Phy4.6.7 Coordinate emergency preparedness and response efforts with those specified in the Cascade City County Health Department's *Emergency Response Plan*.



Growth Policy

PHY4.7 Implement this Growth Policy update by balancing the strategies and policies contained herein.

Policies

- Phy4.7.1 Evaluate, review and permit development in a streamlined and timely manner.
- Phy4.7.2 Revise the Growth Policy every five years or amend, if:
- a. There are changing requirements in the applicable State law that must be addressed
 - a. There are changing priorities within the City
 - b. There is unanticipated growth beyond that projected in the Growth Policy
 - e. There are undue fiscal impacts from growth and services
- Phy4.7.3 Coordinate with Cascade County on issues of mutual concern and impact such as:
- a. Development review and impacts
 - b. Annexation issues, short and long-term
 - c. The reduction of enclaves
 - d. The urban rural interface and fire suppression threats or needs
 - e. Infrastructure planning and conflicts
 - f. Public safety and Health
 - g. Stormwater management and water quality issues
 - h. Joint planning initiatives and the need for a Joint Planning Area or Inter-local Agreement to address development standards within the City's Long Range Transportation Planning Area.
- Phy4.7.4 Do not permit the development of land unless all facilities are in place to serve new development, or a development agreement is in place to ensure that those facilities will be provided when needed.
- Phy4.7.5 Require all annexation to demonstrate a commitment to meet the City's development standards, including connecting to the City water and waste water service. This commitment may be demonstrated through the implementation of the conditions stated in the applicable annexation agreement and/or developer's agreement.
- Phy4.7.6 Encourage new development in areas contiguous to existing development in the City, where capacity exists or can be planned for. This type of growth is preferred in order to avoid the long-term cost to taxpayers of providing costly services in an inefficient way.
- Phy4.7.7 Consider undertaking an Impact Fee Study if the impacts of future development demonstrate a possible need to evaluate such fees.

Growth Policy

PHY4.7 **Implement this Growth Policy update by balancing the strategies and actions contained herein.**

Policies (cont.)

Phy4.7.8 Include a Growth Policy Implementation Section in the *Annual Report* for the Department of Planning and Community Development.





