THE POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR WALKABLE COMMUNITIES

Community Technical Assistance Program
Building Active Communities Institute
March 2016
ACTIVE COMMUNITIES ‘BACK THEN’

Lifestyle
Economic conditions
Lack of infrastructure
Necessity
Smaller footprint
ACTIVE COMMUNITIES NOW
ACTIVE COMMUNITIES NOW

Expanded geography
Individual choice
Cost/O & M
Development patterns
Policy & regulation
POLICY FRAMEWORK

Growth Policy
Community Planning & Policy Foundation

Subdivision Regulations
New Development and Community Expansion

Design Standards
Infrastructure, layout & connectivity

Other Long Range Plans
(Downtown Master Plan, CEDS, Housing Plan, Transportation Plan)

Zoning Regulations
New Construction and Community Redevelopment

Design Standards
Structure, dimensions and site design
OPPORTUNITIES IN GROWTH POLICIES

- Prioritize walkability, active environments within broad vision/goals – infill, connectivity
- Support design decisions in the update or development of regulations
- Engage community stakeholders in policy development
- Incorporate goals & objectives from other long range plans
OTHER LONG-RANGE PLANS

- May include Active Transportation/LRT Plans, Housing Plans, Downtown Master Plans, Urban Renewal Plans, CEDS, Bike/Ped, Capital Improvements, etc.
- Targeted documents developed to address a specific area or specific set(s) of issues.
- Should inform and/or implement the Growth Policy
- Guide regulatory framework
Implement

Implement

IMPLEMENT!

But how.....?
608 impact criteria – local services, the natural environment, public health & safety

Subdivision regulations provide the first opportunity for communities to shape the form and design of new development.

Subdivision regulations are only effective in promoting walkability and other design components before the subdivision process is complete (unless zoning in place)
How wide does the street network need to be?
Is street grid connected and at a walkable scale?
Does parkland dedication provide opportunities for recreational activities? – e.g. a neighborhood trail system.
Are sidewalks required?
Are sidewalks accessible, well-lit, and functional?
ZONING REGULATIONS

- Provides the greatest opportunity to promote walkability in all areas, including those previously developed.
- Zoning can and should foster sound design that defines the character of a community.
- Must be consistent with goals & objectives within your growth policy, future land use map, other long range plans adopted under GP umbrella.
“For the purpose of promoting health, safety, morals, or the general welfare of the community, the city or town council or other legislative body of cities and incorporated towns is hereby empowered to regulate and restrict the height, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures; the percentage of lot that may be occupied; the size of yards, courts, and other open spaces; the density of population; and the location and use of buildings, structures, and land for trade, industry, residence, or other purposes.”

Criteria and guidelines for zoning regulations. Zoning regulations must be: (a) made in accordance with a growth policy;
DESIGN STANDARDS

- Can be incorporated within or supplemental to zoning regulations
- Can be encouraged through development incentives
- Consistency between regulations
- Standards vs. guidelines
DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

- Waive standards requirements when other, highly prioritized design considerations are met.
  - Ex) allow height requirements to be relaxed if developer also creates a public park on a lot.
- Can be useful to promote cluster development and encourage density.
- Offer expedited site plan review and approval.
BUT.....

Grants, loans, private leverage

Impact Fees

Capital Improvements Plan

Tax Increment Financing
EBURD RSV: Rail Spur Village District. The Rail Spur Village District is intended to create a walkable neighborhood focused on residential uses with associated green spaces and commercial businesses with the appropriate form.
GETTING TO EBURD

- East Billings Urban Renewal Master Plan (2009)
- EBURD Hybrid Zoning Code
- Complete Streets Policy (2011)
- Subdivision Regulations (2013)
- Long Range Transportation Plan (2014)
- EBURD TIFD (underway)
Transportation alternatives, public health, urban infill highlighted

ISSUE IV: Urban sprawl threatens the rural character of land surrounding Billings, increases the cost of providing public services, and threatens the vitality of the city core and downtown.

POLICY IV: Coordinate efforts to concentrate development in and adjacent to existing City limits.

3. Encourage the development of neighborhoods, not just housing developments.
4. Provide incentives for urban redevelopment. Strategies may include:
   a. Fee waivers
   b. Tax Increment Finance Districts (TIFD)
   c. Tiered cost of service districts
5. Provide fee and development standard incentives for urban infill development and low to moderate income housing.
ISSUE VI: There is a desire for more mixed-use neighborhoods.

POLICY VI: Create diverse and vibrant neighborhoods that offer convenient places to work, learn, and shop within walking distance of residences.

1. Consider modifying zoning regulations to include:
   a. Mixed-use development zones
   b. “Urban village overlay zones”
   c. Performance-based zoning codes1 for major corridors throughout the city to create quality mixed use developments
**ISSUE:** Billings and surrounding County townsites need more multiple use trails.

**GOAL:** A multi-purpose trail network integrated into the community infrastructure that emphasizes safety, environmental preservation, resource conservation and cost effectiveness.

**OBJECTIVES:**
- Develop non-motorized connections between residential neighborhoods and work places.
- Provide convenient access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Improve quality of life for residents.

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**4. ISSUE:** The design of roads, streets, and pedestrian facilities can be more attractive and functional.

**GOAL:** Visually appealing rights-of-way that serve the needs of all modes of travel.

**OBJECTIVES:**
- Employ smart, cost effective designs.
- Use designs that recognize the needs of all users.
- Incorporate attractive visual elements into rights-of-way design.

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**4. ISSUE:** There are safety and functionality issues with City streets.

**GOAL:** Safe, functional, and attractive streets for all users, including drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

**OBJECTIVES:**
- Enhance public safety on the street.
- Reduce traffic accidents and congestion.
3. Development Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone 1: Mixed-Use Livability</th>
<th>Zone 2: Industrial Sanctuary</th>
<th>Zone 3: Exposition Gateway</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common Features</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Allows land use flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Encourages density and district character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provides incentives for redevelopment and investment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Encourages green industries, buildings, and healthy environments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provides predictability in permitting, streamlines regulatory process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Variations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protects livability of residential areas while also allowing industry use (provides noise, air, and parking standards for new development)</td>
<td>Protects manufacturing uses (provides noise, air, and parking standards appropriate for industrial use)</td>
<td>Protects gateway image of the City of Billings (adapts process for Planned Unit Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides incentives for compact development and public amenities</td>
<td>Provides incentives for manufacturing and heavy industry associated with green industries (e.g., recycling hub)</td>
<td>Provides incentives and public amenities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4-1: Overview Features of Proposed Zones

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regulations. Non-professionals find FBCs easier to use than conventional zoning documents because they are much shorter, more concise, and organized for visual access and readability. This feature makes it easier for nonprofessionals to determine whether compliance has been achieved.

Depending upon the extent of direction provided by FBCs, the need for design guidelines is significantly reduced or potentially nullified. Design guidelines can be difficult to apply consistently, offer too much room for subjective interpretation, and can be difficult to enforce. They also require less oversight by discretionary review bodies, fostering a less politicized planning process that could deliver huge savings in time and money and reduce the risk of takings challenges.

3.5 INCREMENTAL DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME

The EBURD is a big district, there is significant competition for development from the west end of town and from the adjacent Central Business District, and Billings' overall growth rate is expected to remain at a modest 1% per year on average. Together, these factors mean that development in the EBURD will be incremental over a long time. The development concept illustrated in Figure 3.3-1 will take decades to realize.

Nevertheless, EBURD leadership needs to have a clear grasp of the development concept and its urban design, transportation, and infrastructure objectives to ensure that such opportunity or catalytic development project builds on the last, bringing the district over time toward the overall vision of an economically and culturally vibrant neighborhood, providing multi-faceted opportunities for residents and serving as a gateway to the community and the river.
ELEMENTS WITHIN PLAN

- Complete Streets
- Transportation facilities
- Infill standards
An alternative to traditional “Euclidean” zoning model.

Traditionally does not regulate use, though can still restrict some use.

Focuses on physical character of an area and neighborhood.
Can regulate lot size and building density, but also address issues such as:

- Setbacks
- Façade and sidewalk materials
- Streetlights
- Off-street parking requirements
- Can require or encourage the implementation of Complete Streets, CPTED and other environmental design principles
Front Buffer Section.

Figure 27-1815-1, Frontage Buffer Plan and Section.

Figure 27-1817(b)-1: Typical Right-of-Way Elements.

Figure 27-1817(b)-2: On-Street Bicycle Facilities.
13. **Sidewalks**: Boulevard style sidewalks shall be installed on both sides of all streets, except cul-de-sacs less than one hundred (100) feet in length. Arterial and Collector streets may have a multi-use trail on one side in lieu of one of the required boulevard sidewalks. The Planning Board may recommend to the City Council that it waive or modify the requirement for boulevard walks on both sides of a local residential street when the subdivision constructs an approved multi-use bicycle/pedestrian path connected and accessible to all lots in combination with or in lieu of sidewalks. Required sidewalk and boulevard widths shall follow those listed in Table 23.406.B.1, above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Type</th>
<th>Right-of-Way</th>
<th>B-B Curb Width</th>
<th>Lane Width</th>
<th>Parking Width</th>
<th>Turn lane width</th>
<th>Median Width</th>
<th>Boulevard Width</th>
<th>Sidewalk Width</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Arterial</td>
<td>130’</td>
<td>64′-86′**</td>
<td>11′-12′***</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>14′</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>10′</td>
<td>5′/10′***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
<td>100’</td>
<td>42′-66′*</td>
<td>12’</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>14′</td>
<td>10′</td>
<td>5′</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collector</td>
<td>74’</td>
<td>53′-39′</td>
<td>11’</td>
<td>8′</td>
<td>14′</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5′</td>
<td>5′</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Local Access</td>
<td>70’</td>
<td>44′-45′</td>
<td>13.5’</td>
<td>8′</td>
<td>14′</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5′</td>
<td>5′</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Local Access</td>
<td>56’</td>
<td>34′ min.</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5′</td>
<td>5′</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cul-de-Sac 100-600 feet</td>
<td>56’</td>
<td>34′ min.</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5′</td>
<td>5′</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cul-de-Sac &lt;100 feet</td>
<td>40’</td>
<td>29′ min.</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A traffic study is required to determine final width.
** Interior lane(s) is 11′ and the outside lane is 12′.
*** Sidewalk is 5′ on one side and 10′ on the other side.
n/s No specific width is specified.
EBURD TIFD

- Demolition and abatement of structures and removal of blight
- Relocation of businesses to EBURD
- Sidewalks, Curbs, Gutters
- Public Utilities – Water, Wastewater, Stormwater
- Private Utilities – Electrical, Natural Gas, Telecommunication Lines, Fiber Optic
- Intersection Signals & Hawk Crossings
- Crosswalks
- Landscaping & Green Space & Improvement of Pedestrian Areas
- Historical Restorations
- Off Street Parking (Must be a public benefit beyond simply increased parking for your business)
- Pollution Reduction
- Bridges
COMMUNITY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CTAP)
PLANNING BUREAU – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

DOCCTAP@MT.GOV
(406) 841-2770
http://comdev.mt.gov