

# CITY OF MISSOULA

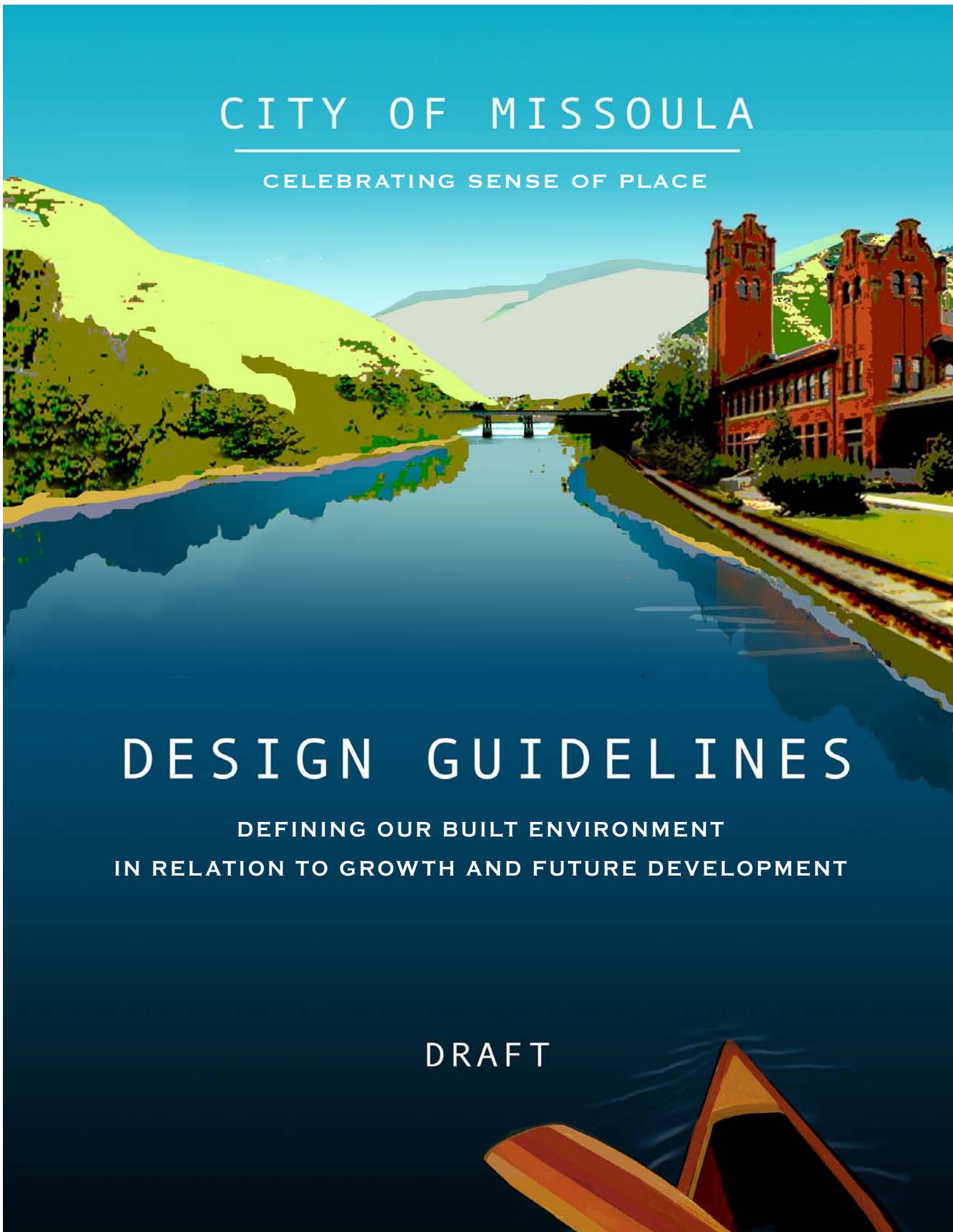
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CELEBRATING SENSE OF PLACE

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

DEFINING OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
IN RELATION TO GROWTH AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

DRAFT



# CITY OF MISSOULA DESIGN GUIDELINES DRAFT

## Introduction

*“The Missoula Valley, a crossroads for historic cultures, continues to attract people for its wild and scenic qualities. Appropriate development strikes a balance that respects the natural mountain valley setting, the surrounding neighborhoods, and historically significant sites and structures with the needs of future generations. Missoula's Focus Inward strategy provides sustainable, long-term solutions by carefully guiding development and redevelopment, while preserving open space, neighborhoods, stream corridors, and the unique outdoor flavor of the community, assuring economic vitality.*

## Preserving and enhancing the distinct neighborhoods of Missoula

*New development should make a positive contribution to the community. Good design can create a pleasant, functional, and organized environment that helps residents, workers, and visitors have a sense of well-being. As the community experiences new development, Missoula should imagine design parameters to serve as a guide for creating attractive and functional new development that reflects Missoula's unique character. Good urban design also attracts high quality development by giving developers and business owners the confidence their investment in the community will be protected.”--*

*— Our Missoula Growth Polic*

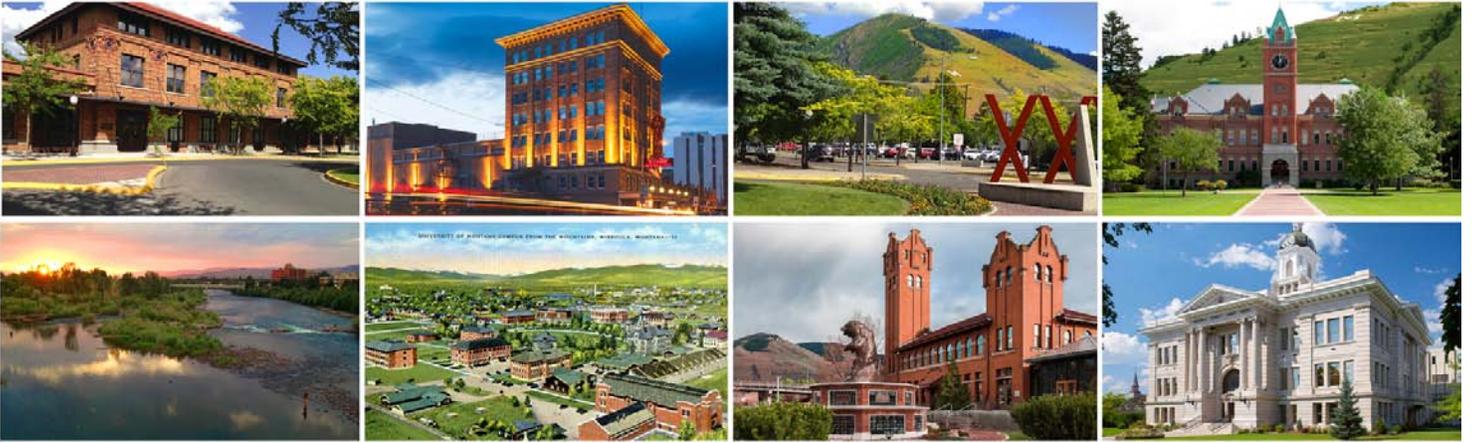
## Purpose

To advise developers in the early phases of a project, in order to provide design direction and expedite the development review process. Projects subject to these guidelines include all new construction projects, exterior renovations, and remodeling of existing buildings and storefronts, and additions to existing buildings.

## Public Process

The Guidelines are the result of the cooperative planning efforts by city departments and Missoula community through Our Missoula — Asset Mapping Project, The Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan, and Our Missoula —City Growth Policy.





**Iconic Missoula Landmarks**

### **A SENSE OF PLACE — MISSOULA STYLE**

Missoula's distinct architecture and landscape plays a key part in defining a sense of place and fostering our strong community identity. Natural amenities such as our scenic vistas, rivers, and wilderness, combined with a vibrant downtown, the University, and traditional neighborhoods all contribute to this sense of place. The unique features that make Missoula special are treasured by residents. In the marketing world, these same features are the cornerstone of city branding — encouraging business growth and tourism.

By assembling a photo collection of locations and buildings that Missoulians hold dear, patterns become visible: we find lots of brick, local timber, iconic turn-of-the-century civic buildings, mountain views, eight historic neighborhoods, canopies of tree-lined streets, and our celebrated rivers at the heart of five valleys. A color palette of brickwork reds, and greens from the gardens, trees and hills emerges. Architectural styles of Historic Downtown and the University of Montana feature early twentieth-century Renaissance Revival, Neo Classical details. Queen Anne, cottage and bungalow-style houses — in brick and wood slat siding — are scattered throughout Missoula's residential neighborhoods. There are inventive modern buildings — with materials and vernacular borrowed from regional architectural influences, such as log structures, barns and prairie-houses.

In the year-long *Our Missoula Public Process*, Missoulians mapped the the city's natural and built environment assets — creating a catalogue of our amenities and priorities for future growth. Missoulians treasure opportunities for outdoor sports adventures in the mountains and ski slopes, and views of elk and open space, farms and ranches, and sunsets reflected on the Clark Fork from the greenway trails along the shore. We love our vibrant community — historic downtown, cultural amenities, and river greenways. The Garden City name is reflected in the numerous community farms, home gardens and flower beds.

Iconic Missoula architecture includes the Wilma Theater, the Milwaukee Depot (AKA the Boone and Crockett Club), The Mercantile (Macy's building), University of Montana's colonnade and Oval (the lines of trees were planted even before neighborhoods and the University were built), surrounded by the ring of stately brick buildings and University Hall and Clock Tower, the Northern Pacific Railroad Depot, the deco-terra-cotta style of the Florence and Fine Arts buildings, Missoula County Courthouse, Fort Missoula and Fairgrounds, — all surrounded by a ring of mountains, the Clark Fork's shimmering waters, and Lolo Peak standing watch over the valley.

In the early part of the 1900s Missoula benefited from the planning and work of architects A. J. Gibson, H. E. Kirkemo, John G. Link and C. S. Haire who designed much of the original university and government buildings. Since the nineteen-eighties, Missoula has seen accelerated expansion, growing in population from 33,000 to 70,000 in less than forty years. Growth has brought new suburban neighborhoods, some new high quality building design, and much generic commercial development that has generally diminished the overall visual charm of the original town — particularly in the newer commercial zones. Areas of high development activity include the corridor streets (box stores, hotels and franchise services and eateries filling in Reserve), Thirty-ninth, Stephens, Brooks, and Broadway.

Notable new building design such as the Ryman building, Missoula Federal on Brooks, the Silver Park Structures, Burns Street Complex, the Salvation Army building, the Gold Dust and Orchard Gardens, the UM Native American Studies building, Rec Center addition, and Law School addition all expand on traditional Missoula vocabulary to great effect. The city has seen some inspired renovations to older structures like The Creamery, Good Food Store, 222 N. Higgins, the A&E Architecture building, the Northside Kettlehouse, CTA on Railroad St, and the MAM expansion.



**Successful New Development and Renovations**



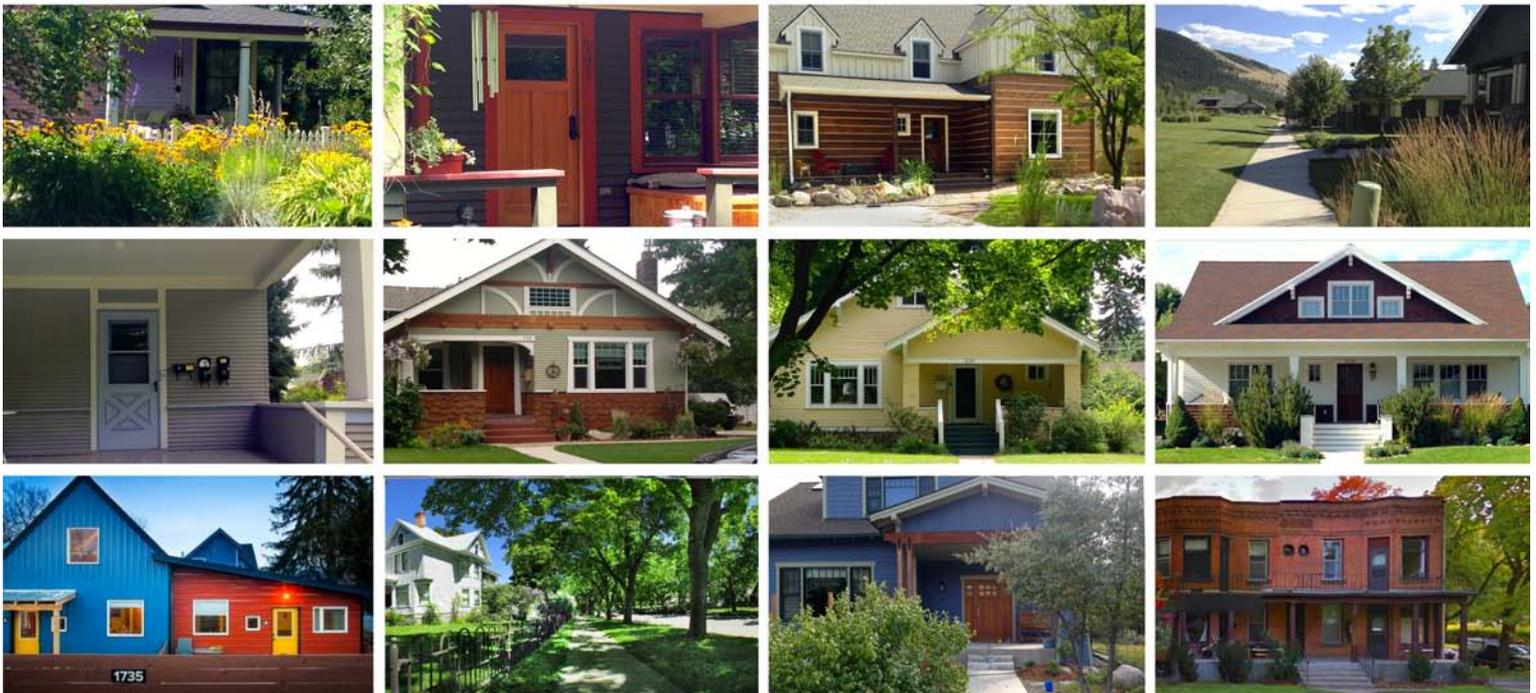
### Successful New Development and Renovation

Because Missoulians are witnessing accelerated growth and changes to the built environment, residents have expressed a desire for the city to articulate a well-thought-out vision to guide developers — so that new growth reflects the values and aesthetics of the community.

During the *Our Missoula City Growth Policy* charrettes and gatherings Missoulians stated these goals related to the built environment: Selected excerpts from the ***Missoula City Growth Policy 2015 - 2035*** — Guiding Principals & Actions

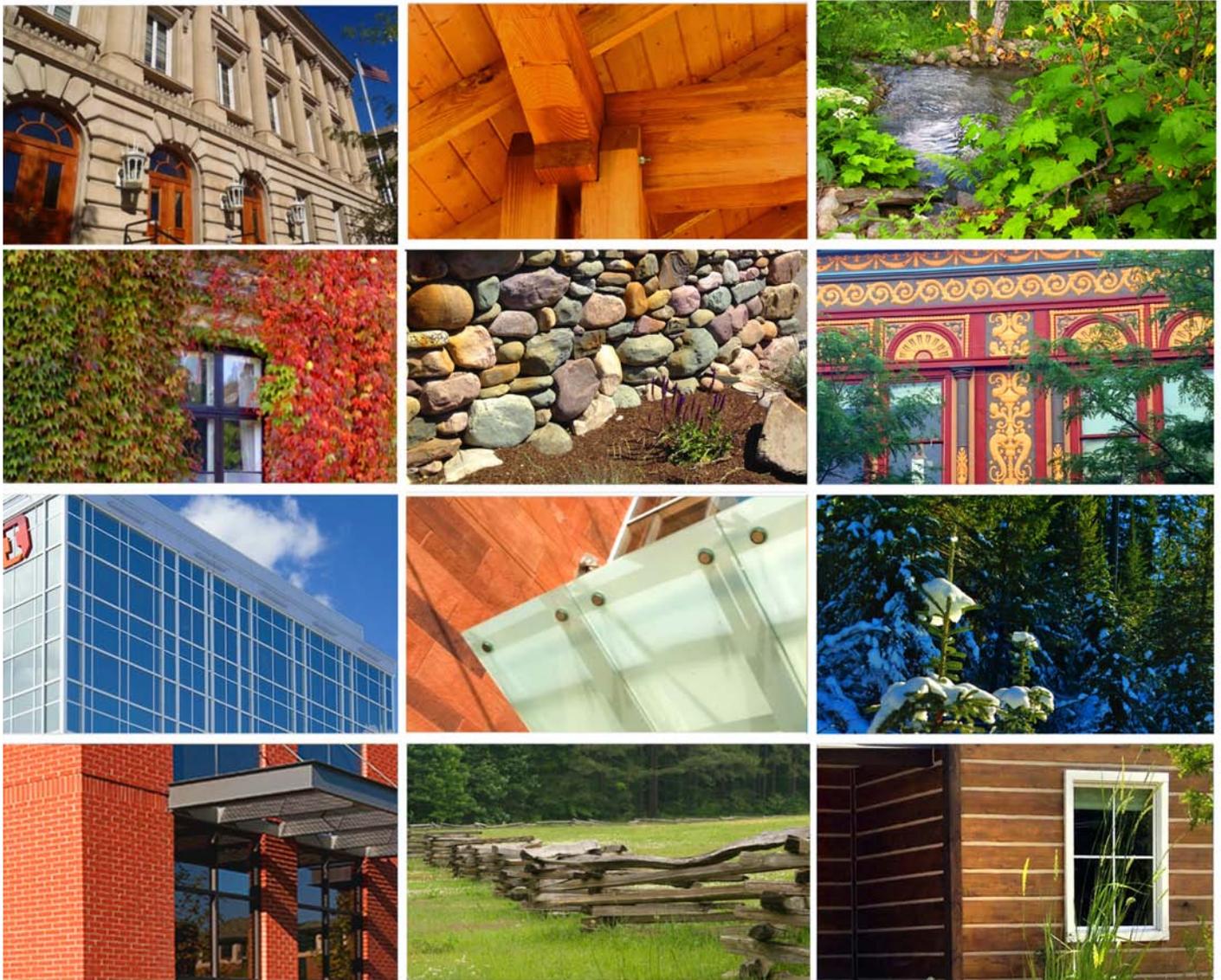
- Support future development that enhances the unique character of Missoula.
- Create policies or design standards that enhance unique characteristics and promote beautification of all aspects of our community.
- Support pedestrian-scale design that encourages non-motorized transportation and social interaction, especially in areas of the City that are now predominantly vehicular-oriented (e.g., Brooks Corridor).
- Incent mixed-use development so that residences are within walking distance to grocery stores and other basic necessities.
- Develop design standards for big box stores that add value and character to the community
- Develop neighborhood plans based on historic design patterns that unify neighborhoods and foster a sense of belonging.
- Support the design and maintenance of community gathering spaces that encourage public use and social interaction a — what hubs do people want?

- Consider ways to address how development looks and interacts with the street system, higher density housing on transit corridors, and urban design to de-emphasize parking and emphasize pedestrian scale development.
- Develop design standards for higher density in-fill projects — designed to be compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood; identify examples of exemplary projects to illustrate design concepts.
- Encourage redevelopment of downtown properties consistent with the downtown plan.
- Facilitate historic preservation, cultural programs, and heritage preservation.
- Promote green space and the urban forest areas, restoration of riparian areas, and development of community gardens.
- Encourage use of neighborhood plans to foster a sense of belonging and provide strategic direction.
- Preserve the unique character of Missoula’s setting by highlighting mountain views and river access.
- Support the development of venues for community events and link these to economic development efforts.
- Connectivity (physical form) among the built environment, natural environment, and human environment.
- Preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods and open space.
- Encourage integration of living and working spaces, and other flexible and sustainable development patterns.
- Align policies and develop strategies to encourage repurposing commercial or industrial buildings and land — with repurposed existing structures.
- Maintain and enhance sense of place — Community character is the distinctiveness of a place and it results from the interaction of a variety of factors such as the built form, transportation systems, landscape, history, people and their activities.



**Missoula’s Traditional Residential Neighborhoods. Missoula has seven historic neighborhoods.**

## Design guidelines — maintaining and enhancing Missoula's built environment



Colors and Materials

### Color

As the city has grown, Missoula has developed a color palette of reds, greens, whites, browns and grays through the use of local materials. The predominant use of warm red brick and the presence of evergreen trees and shrub plantings across the valley has served to add cheer and brightness to the winter months. Browns are found in the availability of timber, whites and grays are seen in historical use of masonry in civic buildings. Use of these materials, especially brick, will harmonize new projects with existing architecture.

- In general, select a color scheme that will visually link the building to Missoula's colorway as well as to the built environment near the project site.
- Softer muted colors, or shades of one color establish a uniform background.
- Masonry should be left in it's natural state — not painted. If the brick is already painted, paint removal is preferred.
- Rain gutters should be painted to blend in with surrounding materials.
- See *Remedies for Commercial Building Trends* below.



**Colors and Materials**

## **Materials**

The presence of timber mills and local brick foundries have shaped Missoula's architectural style. New architecture projects can nest harmoniously between older Missoula buildings when the materials, cladding and colorway relate to our historical roots.

- Materials and details should be consistent throughout.
- Ideally commercial buildings under 4,000 square feet (including Formula Retail — chain stores) should be clad in natural materials such as wood, stone or brick on at least 60% of frontage and street-view wall surfaces.
- The exterior use of brick, wood shingle, wooden slat siding, and stone is preferable to stucco.
- Use of the cladding materials, with glazing and the logical articulation of massing, can help to mitigate the monolithic effect of larger buildings like box stores, warehouses, and hotels.
- Whenever possible, retain and repair existing original materials or materials that contribute to the character of buildings built pre-1970.

## Corridor Areas: Commercial/Residential/Mixed-Use Subarea Design Guidelines



Artist rendering of Brooks Street Corridor before and after

The guidelines for this subarea are intended to ensure that new construction remedies several urban planning and neighborhood design issues: 1. correct building orientation and gaps on angled lots, 2. create a walkable and inviting built environment in harmony with the residential neighborhoods that flank the corridors, 3. generate economic opportunities in the area 4. provide more housing — particularly affordable housing.

### 1. Building Placement

- building orientation — align to the street — creating a cohesive built fabric
- parking — rear or side entrances, minimizing sightlines to parking areas
- no setbacks — site structures directly next to sidewalk, with entrance facing street/sidewalk

### 2. Complete Streets

Missoula has signed on to the healthy cities initiative Complete Streets — creating streets that accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, transit and autos. The strategy also includes narrower street widths, on-street parking, and street trees — to help reduce traffic speed and create a safer, attractive environment.

Adopting the Complete Streets strategy will help Missoula create a cohesive street layout throughout the city.

**On major commercial corridors:**

- a sidewalk width of 15' for walkability and expanded opportunities for cafes and cultural life.

### **3. Single Building Mixed-Use**

SBMU = shops, eateries and services on the ground floor, and housing or office space above. This powerful planning tool helps remedy multiple corridor issues because it transforms boulevard blight into mini-neighborhoods, making areas safer and helping cities realize greater tax revenues. SBMU development also calms traffic, beautifies and brings cultural amenities to the district.

- zone corridors with Single Building Mixed-Use Overlay District designation
- implement density bonuses, streamline the approval process, and reduce parking requirements
- incentive zoning may include infrastructure, TIF and BID financing.
- inclusion of affordable housing may be incentivised with reduced fees, increased density, a property tax exemption.

### **4. Architectural Standards**

- see *Remedies For Commercial Building Trends*
- on commercial corridors zoned for mixed-use housing, building height of up to four stories, setbacks encouraged above the first floor, (a design variation that creates opportunity for urban landscaping, and social public spaces that interface with the street.)
- liner buildings — (smaller buildings that sit next to the sidewalk) help block the unattractiveness and gaps created by large parking lots and big box stores.
- include smaller-sized commercial spaces within mixed-use buildings (small retail and office space options offer start-up businesses affordability.)
- cladding with natural materials such as brick, stone, and wood will create visual continuity throughout the city — enhancing sense of place and 'our brand'.
- city planners and developers can work together to add gathering place amenities: civic spaces like plazas, pocket parks, squares, greenways — to host daily interaction and public life.
- tree planting and landscaping make the public realm appealing and improve quality of life. permeable surface areas and swales reduce water runoff and hydrate the plantings.
- design review of building plans via a trained review board.

### **5. Revitalization — solving the puzzle of triangular lots**

Ordinances and policies that encourage owners and entrepreneurs to fill in the gaps will bring vitality and business opportunities to our corridor streets and correct the angled layout on Brooks' and Broadway's boulevards.

**Our strategy can include:**

- allowing creative uses: pocket parks and plazas, pop-up businesses and food truck courts on vacant areas. (municipalities may pair these remedies with a road diet.)
- suspending parking requirements
- redesigning block plans to reduce some of the unusable triangle lots — including closing some small streets to cars and adding pavers to create public space.
- changing building orientation and parking location to place structures flush with sidewalks.
- traffic circles at larger intersections to fill some of the gaps, and serve as part of our gateway design — creating a lovely, welcoming entrance to the city.

\* see examples next page

Examples of street revitalization tools in action are taken in Portland OR, Austin TX, Montreal QC, Playa Vista CA, Copenhagen DE, and Quebec QC.



pocket parks



pop up stores and food truck courts



gateway traffic circles

## Remedies for Commercial Building Trends



examples of franchise design conforming to city design standards around the country

In response to the Missoula community's request for protections regarding formula retail and local development that is visually unappealing and out of sync with the character of Missoula, the following protections are suggested as design standards, guidelines and code:

- **Visibility Requirements:** frontages with active uses must have visibility to allow pedestrians to see inside stores — with at least 75% open to perpendicular view with a 4-foot by 4-foot “visibility zone” at pedestrian eye level (the space between 4 feet and 8 feet in height above the sidewalk). 60% of all street frontages (including display windows) must be transparent windows.
- **Entrances:** recommend entrances recessed two to six feet from the sidewalk, allowing for protection from the weather, providing additional display frontage, and creating a rhythm of defined commercial spaces.
- **Building Placement:** aligned to the street, creating a cohesive built fabric. Parking in rear or with side entrance — minimizing sightlines to parking areas. No setbacks — structures sited directly next to sidewalk with entrance facing street/sidewalk.
- **Single-Building-Mixed-Use zoning** will offer franchises a location with potentially cheaper acquisition costs — where the aesthetic compatibility of the larger building can be ensured by design standards. Zoning to attract Formula Retail to use SBMU locations would include: SBMU at prime locations such as corners on main thoroughfares, frontage of 250 linear feet, 600 - 4000 sqft available space, and excellent visibility.
- **Design:** faux architectural features — tacked-on architectural features should be avoided. Articulation and details should spring from a rationale based on function.



examples of local and national commercial development

- **Facade Materials:** Cladding with natural materials — warm red brick, stone and wood shingle and slat can bring continuity with our local architectural style to new development. Using these materials will also protect the community from generic and unattractive color and design choices. Suggest a minimum 60% of wall surface areas.
- **Color:** Colorwashing a building facade in branded color serves as oversized signage and is not permitted. Large areas of color should be similar in profile to the surrounding buildings, and limited to different tones of one color. Suggest use of the Missoula colorway via natural materials: reds, greens, whites, browns & grays. Commercial buildings should avoid the use of large areas of high intensity colors and black in areas of over 200 sqft.
- **Commercial Signage:** Signage should be scaled and placed primarily for pedestrian legibility, and secondarily for vehicular visibility. Blade signs (perpendicular to building) boost foot traffic and beautify — so are standard for businesses that abut the street/sidewalk. Cabinet signs, dynamic display signs, and LED lights for contour outlines on buildings are not permitted. Internally illuminated signs are strongly discouraged. Freestanding signs should never be taller than the buildings to which they relate. Ground Sign area: 1 sqft. per linear foot of building street frontage, or 200 sq. ft., whichever is less. Projecting Sign area (blade signs): 10% of the building face or 150 sqft, whichever is less. Wall Sign area: 15% of building face, or 150 sqft, whichever is less. All exterior signs must have a sign permit or must be removed.

NOTE: An annual signage fee based on square footage is assessed by some communities — this fee generates income for the city that can be applied to improvement projects. Some municipalities like Jackson, Wyo., Stowe, Vt., and Hilton Head, S.C., prohibit plastic, internally lit signs. They require all businesses, whether locally, regionally, or nationally owned, to use hand-crafted signs constructed of wood, stone, or other natural materials.



examples of Missoula businesses that use signage and design programs in accord with the standards.

- **Existing buildings:** A designation of Buildings of Value, requires that such buildings and structures may be altered or demolished only in accordance with municipal preservation standards and protocols.
- **Lighting:** LED strips and other faux-neon is not be permitted, except with lumens of 344 or less, in white, for use illuminating walkways. All lighting brightness should be in accordance with our Dark Skies Ordinance.