

# Central Butte Neighborhood Planning Area

## Initial Goals and Objectives

September 10, 2010

### OVERVIEW

This is an initial draft of goals and objectives for the Central Butte Planning Area. This draft is intended for discussion purposes and subject to change. Goals and objectives are the heart of the plan, which generally has a 10-20 year life-span.

**Goals:** Short, broadly stated targets for the future

**Objectives:** More specific description of how to attain the goals

This initial draft does not include specific implementation methods. Those will be developed once the goals and objectives have been reviewed and discussed by the steering committee. Implementation measures address what resources are needed to accomplish objectives. Because of the long-term timeframe for plans (10-20 years) and changing nature of funding sources, detailed implementation will be focused on those projects prioritized for the first 1-3 years of the plan.

#### Implementation:

- Funding sources
- Human resources (who will keep the effort moving forward)
- Timeline

Implementation of goals and objectives is predicated on the following guiding policies:

#### Guiding Policies:

**Policy #1:** Identify all grant and existing funding sources possible and use these first.

**Policy #2:** Consider new or additional taxing only as needed, and tied to specific objectives and outcomes.

**Policy #3:** Projects will be managed openly, with information available to the public and public involvement encouraged.

**Policy #4:** Encourage a can-do and positive attitude about the community.

**Policy #5:** Efforts that focus on a specific area, such as a block or group of blocks, will be the priority rather than addressing single efforts scattered across the Planning Area.

## BACKGROUND STATEMENT

The Central Butte Planning Area is a large diverse area with approximately 3500 residents on the slopes of the Butte Hill south of the Uptown Park Street corridor. It includes major gateways to Uptown, the single public high school in Butte, the regional hospital and medical facilities, a broad cross section of residents of varying incomes and interests. It is also part of a Superfund site for clean-up associated with decades of mining. The area experienced years of down-turn, when businesses and residents left, and many buildings were vacated or torn down. The area currently has dilapidated buildings and large open gaps between existing uses. Efforts have been made in the past few years and also currently underway to address these issues, including a number of upgrades by private individuals on residences and on larger structures (such as the hospital and high school). The Central Butte Planning Area has many opportunities and an excellent location between the Interstate and Uptown Butte. Central Butte is in the unique position of being part of the largest National Historic Landmark District in the nation, a reflection of its unique and diverse historical character dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and roots in ore mining. It has resulted in a character that elevates it among other towns in the Rocky Mountain West, and a national reputation that Butte is using to rebuild itself.

## INITIAL DRAFT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

*Note: Numbering of goals and objectives is for purposes of identification and does NOT reflect any particular priority.*

### HOUSING

***Topic statement: The housing stock is mostly pre-1940s and many homes are in various states of disrepair and decay. The national historic landmark district designation was achieved in part because of the large numbers of historic houses, the variety of styles and sizes, which cumulatively created much of the distinctive character of the Plan Area. Housing stock issues include all facets from subsurface, structural, interior and exterior conditions. The influence of substantial numbers of low quality rental units contributes to further decay. There are actual or perceived disincentives for many homeowners to improve their properties including poor quality of adjoining properties, lack of funding, costs of upgrades needed to conform to historic preservation guidelines (compared to costs of tear-down and building new).***

**Goal 1: Improve quality of rental units.**

Objective 1: Enact a task force whose purpose is to inform renters and landlords on renter's rights and landlord responsibilities under Montana law and to spearhead specific incentives for landlords to improve rental quality.

Objective 2: Identify a local process to report substandard rentals.

Objective 3: Develop an occupancy permit process for rental units to verify the rental unit has functioning water, sewer, electrical, and heating units.

**Goal 2: Improve overall housing condition.**

Objective 1: Develop a program to provide information and assistance for rehabilitating and updating existing housing stock. (examples: info on funding programs, education/skill building for repair and construction, professional technical contacts)

Objective 2: Initiate a local funding source (such as a revolving loan fund) for low-income individuals to repair and upgrade their homes.

Objective 3: Develop guidelines for addressing properties where fix-up costs and/or regulatory compliance (e.g., community decay and historic preservation ordinances) exceed value of home.

Objective 4: Review Community Decay Ordinance and recommend changes as needed to have an ordinance that will both meet its intended purpose and be enforced.

## **LAND USE**

***Topic statement: Land use patterns were basically established in a 1900s mining community pattern, where uses were placed near mine entrances and reflected the needs of workers who lived there, other professional and commercial enterprises, and warehousing and industrial that sprang up near the railroad line. Over time, land uses have changed somewhat, more vacant lots have appeared, and there are fewer homes and businesses in the Planning Area than there were in its heyday. Weeds and junk are problems on some lots. The challenge is to embrace the earlier footprint of diverse uses with the needs of modern society.***

**Goal 1: Promote safe infill development on existing vacant lots.**

Objective 1: Encourage commercial development by inventorying available suitable properties and providing incentives for development.

Objective 2: Develop incentives for residential infill.

Objective 3: Provide information on need for professional hazard assessments prior to construction.

**Goal 2: Reduce number of vacant commercial buildings.**

Objective 1: Create a Central Butte Business District organization, whose mission is to attract businesses and assist in expanding existing businesses in the Plan Area.

Objective 2: Inventory and market available commercial size buildings for a variety of uses.

**Goal 3: Continue with character of diverse mixed uses in the Plan Area by developing form-based design standards for new development.**

Objectives: Specific objectives to be developed after steering committee review of suggested future land use map at September Steering Committee meeting. Some suggested topics:

- 1) Medical corridor overlay
- 2) Gateway overlays (main entryways to Uptown Butte)
- 3) Form-based design standards for compatibility with historic character
- 4) Areas suitable for industrial-type uses identified

*(Note: Based on the recent public survey, residents appear to be split evenly between those who want historic architecture compatibility review for new buildings and those who do not. In addition, there were a large proportion of respondents who had no opinion, indicating that they may not have enough information to form an opinion.)*

**Goal 4: Clean up weeds and junk, scattered debris, etc.**

Objective 1: Create incentives for neighborhood clean-up.

Objective 2: Enforce community decay ordinance.

**INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION (streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, storm sewer, lighting)**

***Topic statement: Many infrastructure improvements have been occurring in the area – a new water supply system is almost complete, sewer collection lines are being updated, and storm water is being addressed. These activities are occurring as part of the overall plan to address environmental issues and priority soils identified in Superfund clean-up of past mining-related impacts. Other improvements include new paving and new street lighting on major streets leading to Uptown Butte. Other areas are in serious need of street and sidewalk improvements. The steep hillside topography diminishes opportunities for all ages to circulate via non-motorized transportation. Sidewalks are generally in poor condition or non-existent. Storm water collection and treatment could use improvements.***

**Goal 1: Update and/or install sidewalks in residential and commercial areas to meet ADA standards.**

Objective 1: Prioritize sidewalks that generally run with the contours (with minimal elevation change) as they will likely be used the most.

Objective 2: Identify special use corridors that are topographically challenged, and include them in the prioritized list.

**Goal 2:** Apply for safe routes to school funding, through the Montana DOT to create a school travel plan for pedestrians and non-motorized transportation.

**Goal 3:** Develop a systematic plan for repairing and upgrading streets, storm sewer, lighting, and any remaining improvements to water and sewer systems.

Objective 1: Comprehensive single inventory existing condition of streets, lighting, sidewalks etc. and prioritize with input from neighborhood task force (see Services).

Objective 2: Identify areas that need lighting for safety purposes and address.

## **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

Topic statement: Park land in the Plan Area is higher than average, however amenities are outdated and non-existent. Much of the residential development in the Plan Area is high density with little or no individual yard space for children to play in, consequently public play space is very important.

**Goal 1:** Install new playground equipment in Chester Steele Park.

Objective 1: Work with neighbors to select the equipment. Include area children in the selection process.

**Goal 2:** Retain existing park and playground areas in and near the Plan Area.

## **SCHOOLS**

Topic Statement: Butte High School is the only public school in Butte and is located in the center of Plan Area. It has an impact on surrounding properties and surrounding properties have an effect on it. Recent changes on school properties have been praised and welcomed by citizens.

**Goal 1:** Continue work to make the Butte High School stand out as a central feature of the neighborhood.

Objective 1: Improve “gateways” to the school so that it can readily identified from the main connections – Utah/Arizona, Main, Platinum -- by out-of-towners coming for various school or other functions.

Objective 2: Develop a plan to address student parking and access (e.g., safe pedestrian crossings) to Butte High School.

## **SERVICES (police, emergency, fire, solid waste, medical, social)**

***Topic statement: The Central Butte Planning Area has the highest crime rates in Silver Bow County. St. James Healthcare, the regional hospital, is located in the Plan Area and many social service agencies are located in or near the Plan Area. BSB does not provide containers for solid waste so residents are left to provide their own containers or none at all. With the exception of the recently-formed Emma Park neighborhood group, there is no formal ongoing neighborhood organization to link residents' concerns with BSB government. The Emma Park neighborhood group includes 12-block area bordered by Platinum, Montana, Mercury, and Main.***

**Goal 1: Identify “sub-area” neighborhoods of the Plan Area and develop neighborhood task forces that are governed through by-laws approved by the BSB Community Development Office.**

Objective 1: Plan Area neighborhood task forces meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues affecting their neighborhood(s). Task forces meet also collectively on a regular basis to monitor progress on the Central Butte Plan Area adopted plan. Results from the meetings shared with Council of Commissioners.

Objective 2: Regular collective meetings of Plan Area neighborhoods and with other entities planning change in the area such as medical corridor-hospital, Butte High School, etc. Purpose of meetings would be to share information, coordinate and share resources where possible.

**Goal 2: Provide solid waste containers for each residence.**

**Goal 3: Reduce crime rate by increasing the number of law enforcement officers assigned to the neighborhood.**

Objective 1: Increase patrols of the Plan Area.

Objective 2: Work with law enforcement to identify pro-active steps that neighbors can take to reduce crime.