

Helena Downtown Urban Renewal Plan

Adopted by
Helena City Commission
on Oct. 29, 2018,
per Ordinance No. 3242,
Amended Nov. 18, 2019,
per Ordinance No. 3275



Prepared By:



WGMGROUP

Prepared For:



City of Helena

NOTE:

The 2018 Downtown URD Plan and Boundary were amended in 2019 to include the Rodney Street Area. The 2018 Downtown URD Plan has been modified accordingly in the following manner:

1. A new chapter, Chapter 6, has been added to include the document that analyzed the Rodney Street Area according to provisions of URD statute, and includes the vision and goals for the Rodney Street amendment area.
2. The boundary and legal description of the Downtown URD have been updated in Appendix A to include the Rodney Street Area.
3. A note has been added at the beginning of each chapter to clarify that each chapter has a corresponding section in Chapter 6 for the Rodney Street Amendment.
4. Chapter 4 was modified to reflect specific changes for implementation that resulted from the Ordinance adopting the Rodney Street Area Amendment.

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CITY OF HELENA

City Commission

Wilmot Collins, Mayor
Robert Farris-Olsen
Heather O’Loughlin
Andres Haladay
Ed Noonan

City Staff

Sharon Haugen, Community Development Director
Eric Spangenberg, GIS Coordinator
Glen Jorgenson, Administrative Services Director
Amy Teegarden, Parks and Recreation Director
Ryan Leland, City Engineer
Lou Antonik, Fire Marshall
Jon Pallister, Chief Building Official

HELENA BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Micky Zurcher, Executive Director

MONTANA BUSINESS ASSISTANCE CONNECTION

Brian Obert, Executive Director
Eric Seidensticker, Program Manager

CONSULTANT TEAM

Jeremy Keene, WGM Group, Inc.
Anne Cossitt, WGM Group, Inc.
Anna Vickers, WGM Group, Inc.
Kate Dinsmore, WGM Group, Inc.
Shelly Michalski, WGM Group, Inc.
Kirk Adkins, WGM Group, Inc.
Ashley Scully, WGM Group, Inc.



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Executive Summary

NOTE: The 2018 Downtown URD was amended to include the Rodney Street Area; see Chapter 6, which includes an Executive Summary of the report for the Rodney Street Amendment Area.

The Helena Downtown Urban Renewal District (URD) area is in transition. Some areas have stagnated, and others have been vacant for much or all of the past few years. Other locations in downtown have made significant positive changes over the past five years. These include the major renovation of the YMCA, the New York block with the Hawthorne wine bar and Ten Mile Brewery, and new office buildings on North Last Chance by Lyndale Avenue. Helena's Downtown Master Plan sets a broad vision for transitioning downtown to a stronger, vibrant place that reflects its unique history and outdoor connections. This URD Plan is a critical component in assuring Downtown Helena moves forward as envisioned by the Master Plan.

This plan provides a vision, goals, and objectives to improve Downtown in the URD area. Downtown issues are described in detail in the Helena Downtown Master Plan and in the Statement of Blight report that was prepared prior to this URD Plan. The issues summarized in this plan include, among others, a need to update infrastructure and buildings to meet 21st century demand and safety, a need for better pedestrian and bicycle continuity and connectivity, better wayfinding and gateways to downtown, more housing for a variety of income levels, and a need to retain and create business opportunities. The URD vision is:

“To advance Downtown revitalization and the Downtown Helena Master Plan vision by incentivizing private investment and funding public infrastructure that improves the quality and value of downtown properties.”

One of the primary tools to accomplish the URD vision is the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). TIF is not an additional or new tax; it is a way to direct tax revenues to make improvements in the District. TIF revenues will be dedicated to projects within the URD that meet provisions of this plan and comply with state statute regarding use of TIF. TIF is a proven mechanism to incentivize private investment and to provide matching funds for grants.

The URD area includes 267 acres extending north from around Park and Cruse Avenues to Centennial Park north of Lyndale Avenue. The area includes nearly all the area covered by the 2016 Downtown Master Plan. It adds some areas along the fringe of the Downtown Master Plan. The largest additional area is comprised of several parcels in Centennial Park, including the YMCA and Armory buildings.

This is the fourth URD created by the City of Helena. The first two were in downtown and around the Great Northern area and were eventually combined into a single District. That District sunsetted in 2006 with more than 80 projects completed. The City Commission adopted the third URD, the Railroad District, in 2016. It was established to revitalize an area radiating from the old Depot at the end of Helena Avenue.

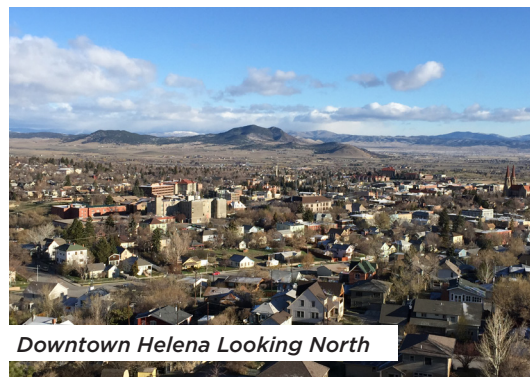
The City Commission looks forward to reinvigorating the URD area, building on actions that are already taking place to implement the Downtown Master Plan, including the update of Downtown Zoning. This URD Plan conforms to the City's 2011 Growth Policy as amended by the 2016 Downtown Master Plan. Creating the URD is another step in fulfilling an objective of the Downtown Master Plan - the objective to initiate TIF to revitalize downtown. This URD plan meets statutory provisions for approval by the Helena City Commission.

Background and Statement of Purpose

NOTE: The 2018 Downtown URD was amended to include the Rodney Street Area; see Chapter 6, which includes Background and Statement of Purpose for the Rodney Street Amendment Area.

Overview

This chapter introduces basic parameters of the Helena Downtown Urban Renewal District (URD). It includes a general description of geographic setting, a statement of purpose and a discussion of how the plan was developed.



Downtown Helena Looking North

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish a plan for the Helena Downtown Urban Renewal District. The City of Helena intends to use this plan to address conditions identified in the Statement of Blight and create goals for addressing these concerns. As part of that effort, it is the City's intention to utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a provision of the District's plan. This URD Plan completes an objective of the Helena Downtown Master Plan to establish TIF.

Location and Setting

The Helena Downtown URD extends north for more than a mile from the Reeder's Village Drive-Park Avenue intersection to Centennial Park. The entire area encompasses 267 acres and roughly 40 city blocks. It generally follows the original creek bed of Last Chance Gulch, although the water now flows almost exclusively in underground pipes in the District. At its southern end, the URD lies within a narrow gap with the steep hillsides that flank Mount Helena and Mount Ascension. The study area widens to a valley floor that is approximately two to three blocks in width, gradually becoming wider toward the north. At the very north end, the study area widens to the flat expanse of Centennial Park.

The URD includes distinct areas. The Fire Tower area includes the downtown historic core that was developed soon after the discovery of gold in 1864. This area includes the walking mall, Reeder's Alley and southern portions of Park Avenue. It includes the library, retail and commercial along Benton Avenue. It also includes residential development, most of which consists of multi-family units south of Cruse Avenue and on the eastern and western edges of this the Fire Tower area. The Last Chance Retail section stretches from 6th Avenue to Neill Avenue, north of the walking mall. Along North Last Chance and Fuller Avenue, ground floor use includes commercial-retail, services and offices. Upper floors contain offices and some residential. The far western and eastern areas include single and multi-family residential. The Great Northern area is south of Lyndale and north of Neill Avenue. It includes commercial, retail, and office space mostly developed within the last couple of decades, although laid out in a pattern and density comparable to traditional downtowns. Last Chance Gulch south of Lyndale is also primarily commercial retail, services, and office

space, with some new buildings interspersed with older structures. Single and multi-family housing exist east and west of the Great Northern and Last Chance Gulch commercial areas. North of Lyndale, the URD includes portions of Centennial Park. It also includes the commercial and public use development of the Armory Building and YMCA near the intersection of Lyndale and North Last Chance Gulch.



Helena's Fire Tower

There is a distinctly downtown feel to the area that distinguishes it from any other area in the City. The URD contains a mix of office, retail, entertainment, and to a lesser extent residential uses. It is the most pedestrian-friendly commercial-retail district in the City and includes several parks, used for a variety of events, most notably “Alive-at-Five” concerts in the summer. The downtown is situated between two historic traditional tree-lined neighborhoods, “West Side” and “South-Central.” It is also located close to other important community centers and destinations, including the Capital, Carroll College, and the Railroad/6th Ward neighborhood, which also has a URD. The downtown is a destination for hikers and mountain-bikers for access to approximately 70 miles of trails that take off on both sides of Last Chance Gulch.

How the Plan was Developed

The Downtown Master Plan laid the groundwork for the creation of the District. The City of Helena initiated the Urban Renewal District in late 2017. WGM Group, Inc. was contracted to provide technical support to prepare the URD Plan and the Statement of Blight that is a prerequisite for establishing a URD. The Statement of Blight report was drafted in early 2018 and a public meeting held at the Civic Center on March 27 to discuss the findings. Notices were sent in advance of the meeting to property owners to over 300 property owners and to Lewis and Clark County and Helena School District. A notice of the meeting was also placed on the City’s website, along with information on how to submit comments. Notice was also made on local television news channels. Approximately 26 persons attended the meeting. Several people commented on the boundary, asking questions and making suggestions for changes. Several additional comments were received in writing after the meeting was held. A summary of public comments on the Statement of Blight is included in Appendix C.

On May 21, 2018, after reviewing comments from the public and information from the Community Development Department staff, the City Commission voted to accept the Statement of Blight, and adopt a “Resolution of Necessity.” The Commission made no changes to the URD boundary as presented in the Statement of Blight.

A draft of the URD Plan was released on July 18, 2018. A public meeting was held on July 24, 2018. A Summary of the comments received during the comment period are included in Appendix C.

On August 21, 2018, the Planning Board reviewed the URD Plan and proposed changes to respond to comments. The Board found the URD Plan was in conformance with the City of Helena’s 2011 Growth Policy, as amended with the 2016 Helena Downtown Master Plan.

The Helena City Commission held a public hearing on September 24, 2018 and the final adoption was October 29, 2018.



Figure 1.2. Downtown URD Boundary as approved in 2018. Refer to Chapter 6 and Appendix A for the updated URD boundary that includes the 2018 Rodney Street Area Amendment.

Description of the Downtown URD

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NOTE: The 2018 Downtown URD was amended to include the Rodney Street Area; see Chapter 6, which includes a separate description of the Rodney Street Amendment Area.

Overview

This chapter provides more information on the Downtown URD, including downtown history, previous Helena URDs, and details on how the Downtown URD boundary was developed. It describes current land uses, zoning, issues, and opportunities for this area.

Brief History

The City of Helena began with the 1864 discovery of gold in Last Chance Gulch near the south end of the current downtown. More miners arrived and within months there were approximately 200 cabins. Within a year, 3,000 residents were living in the start-up community. As placer mining became less effective in the 1860s, mining moved to hydraulic extraction on nearby hills and the old placer claims downtown were developed as businesses. In 1875, Helena became the capital of Montana Territory. The Federal Assay Office (located west of the old court house on Broadway) was built in 1876. By the time gold mining operations ceased near downtown in the 1940s, the assay office had produced gold bars worth \$833 million (adjusted for inflation to current dollars). The wealth of the City and its residents resulted in buildings and attractions that rivalled, on a smaller scale, the cutting-edge development in San Francisco and Chicago. Two railroad depots were built in the 1870s, and by 1890 the population was 13,000. The last decade of the century marked the selection of Helena as Montana's state capital. Some major landmark structures were built at this time, including many still in place, the City County building, the Montana Club, the Fire Tower (now reconstructed), and Reeder's Alley.

By the end of the 19th century development began to slow. In 1928, a major fire destroyed nearly a complete block downtown. In 1935, two earthquakes over a 2-week period caused major damage on the south end of downtown. By the mid-20th century, downtown had, like many areas throughout the nation, begun to decline. By the 1950s, growth across America was moving to city fringes and suburbs. Increased car ownership resulted in development further from city centers. The decline of passenger rail took the public life from two previously bustling depots. The Great Northern depot was eventually demolished and the entire area became an eye-sore and less-than-inviting entry into downtown from the highway. Despite intentions to attract visitors, renaming Main Street to Last Chance Gulch in the 1950s did little to attract tourists. South Main had become a run-down area, known for seedy hotels and prostitutes, and crumbling empty buildings. Reeder's Alley was home to pensioners in tiny unheated apartments with no plumbing. The newest type of retail development were strip malls. Like the rest of the nation, Helena developed its



malls, all outside of the downtown area, including Capital Hill Mall, Hustad Center, and Lundy Center.

20th Century style “urban renewal” began in 1968 with Helena’s participation in the national Model Cities Program along with its federal funding. The City Commission created an urban renewal plan for the south part of downtown, followed by a tax increment provision in 1978. This “renewal” effort was, and remains highly controversial. As Ellen Baumler, noted Montana historian, writes in Helena, the “Town that Gold Built”:

“Local opinions are still vehemently divided on the architectural merits of this program, but it did transform Helena’s downtown from a crowded, depressing, abandoned, and run-down area to the present walking mall that so many enjoy today. The loss of more than 230 historic buildings was a tall price to pay, yet many historic landmarks like the First National Bank, the Atlas Block, the Masonic Temple, and the Diamond and Power blocks escaped the wrecking ball and eventually received much needed rehabilitation.”

There have been benefits from the Urban Renewal that took place in downtown. More than 80 projects were completed from 1970 through 2006. In the central and southern areas of downtown, those projects included the walking mall, library, improvements to the Civic Center and Grandstreet Theater, women’s mural repair, three façade improvement programs, the creation of Constitution Park, and assistance with fire and building code compliance.

The northern area of downtown, including the abandoned and blighted Great Northern Railroad depot area, was included in an urban renewal plan with tax increment provision in 1981. As a direct result of urban renewal designation, the site now includes a hand-built carousel, Exploration Works Museum, bank, movie theatre, conference hotel, offices, retail stores, condominiums, and a connecting tunnel to Centennial Park. The “Lewis and Clark Montana Experience” story is displayed in the sidewalks, building art, and sculptures, providing an interpretive pathway of the Lewis and Clark trek across Montana.



1935 Earthquake Damage
(Source: helenahistory.org)

The north and south urban renewal areas were consolidated into a single URD in 1990. The consolidated URD sunsetted in 2006.

This plan for a new downtown URD will constitute one of two current URDs in Helena. In January 2016, the City Commission adopted a URD for the Railroad District, an area centered around the old depot at the end of Helena Avenue, north and east of downtown.

Helena’s downtown has made a resurgence in the areas addressed by the two previous downtown URDs, but it is far from complete. Downtown cores, just like any property, need continuous attention to retain them in good condition. It has been nearly 50 years since the last round of urban renewal projects was initiated in downtown and 15-20 years since most of the projects were completed. In a survey conducted in 2015-16 for the Downtown Master Plan, less than half of respondents found downtown to be a

vibrant place. The creation of the current Helena Downtown URD will address factors that continue to limit downtown's growth and liveliness.

Downtown Urban Renewal District Boundaries

The Downtown URD boundary was initially developed by reviewing other boundaries of downtown Helena. The starting point was the 2016 Downtown Master Plan area and the proposed downtown zoning district. Discussions were held among the consultant, City staff, and representatives of the Helena Business Improvement District and the Montana Business Assistance Connection, which were partners in the creation of the Downtown Master Plan.

The following criteria guided the development of the URD boundaries:

- Importance of Gateways and Connections
- Topography
- Sense of "Downtown"
- Sized Right to Avoid Stretching Resources
- Advances Downtown Master Plan Objectives
- Potential for New Investment
- No Overlap with the Railroad URD District
- Include Complete Parcels - Boundary should not "split" parcels
- Avoid Using Alleys as Boundary
- Straight Regular Boundary Lines - when doing so does not negate the factors listed above

Differences between the URD boundary and the Downtown Master Plan Area include the following. Refer also to Figure 2.1.

- **Highway 12 from Benton to Getchell**
Added land south of Highway 12/Lyndale and west of the Great Northern and included land on both sides of Benton. Doing so responded to the criteria for the importance of gateways into downtown.
- **Centennial Park Area**
Added much of Centennial Park area from Carroll College to North Last Chance. This served several purposes. Doing so provides a gateway along North Last Chance from I-15 to downtown and better connection to the adjacent Railroad District that falls on the east side of North Last Chance at this location. It also responds to the Downtown Master Plan objective of creating better connections to Carroll College, which lacks direct access to the trail system and Lyndale pedestrian tunnel. Including connections in Centennial Park required including large areas to avoid splitting parcels. In addition, the 2011 Growth Policy identified the future land use of the southeast corner of the Centennial Park area as "multi-use." Including those areas in this URD can rectify the potential for the multi-use properties north of Lyndale from becoming an isolated land use "island."
- **Helena Avenue to Logan**
This addition of a couple blocks was made because of topography and because the commercial uses along this area are related to the service industry along North Last Chance, north of the five-point intersection.
- **East Side**
The east side boundary was extended to avoid a boundary along an alley, to include the commercial uses along Helena Avenue, multi-family housing with potential for

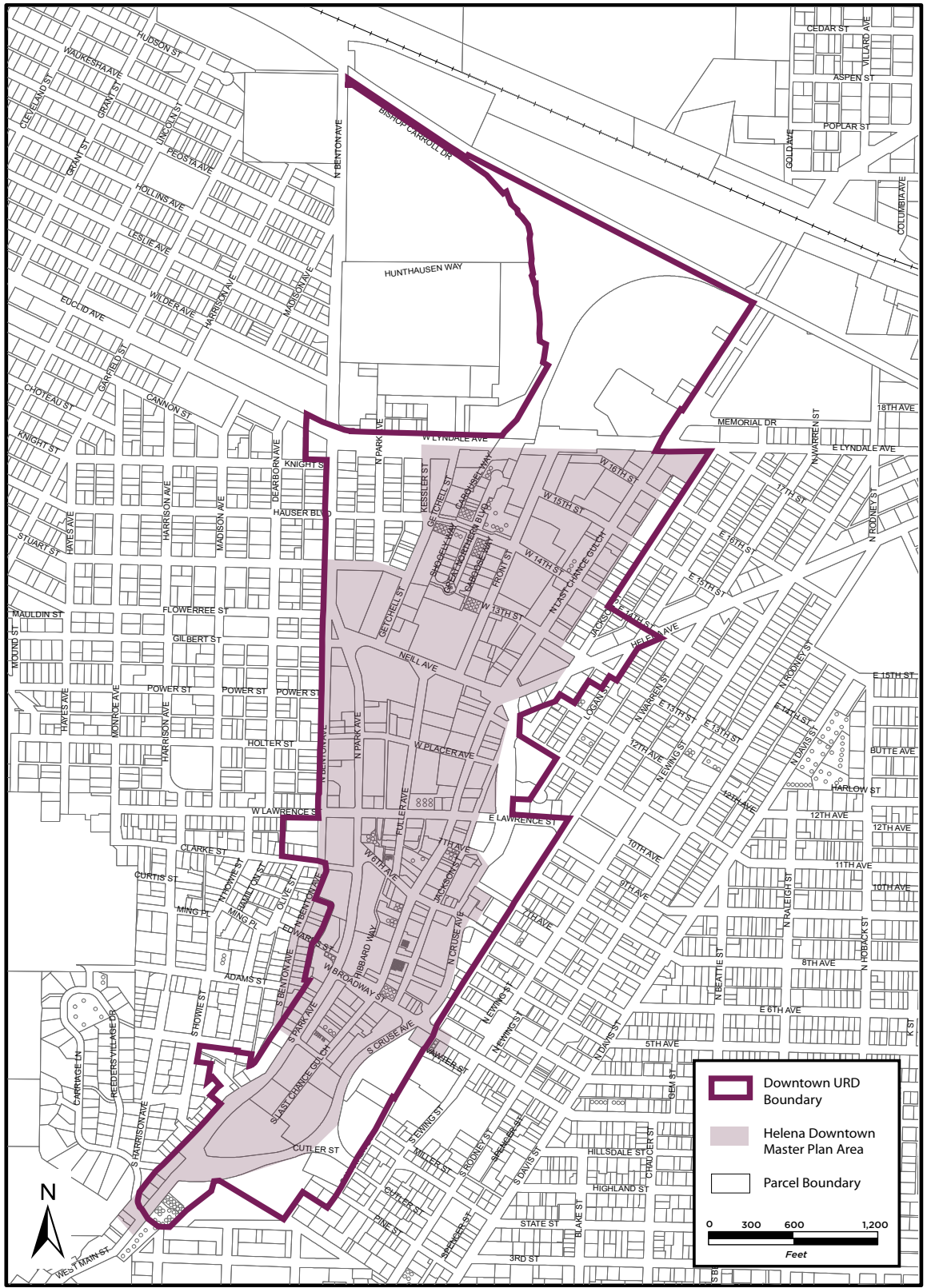


Figure 2.1. Comparison of Downtown Master Plan and Downtown URD Boundaries

improvement, Central School property to include 7th Street Gym potential, and lands west of Warren Street to include lands with potential and to provide a several block-long straight boundary.

- **West Side**

Changes on the west side were made primarily to include commercial retail and lands with potential, including Reeder’s Alley. Some residential areas were eliminated from the URD boundary because they are well established and not likely to meet blight criteria or produce significant new investment.

Other areas considered for inclusion in the Downtown URD:

- **Rodney Street Commercial and Old Hospital/Historic “Catholic Hill” Areas**

Early discussions considered adding these areas due to their proximity to downtown and for their potential for development. They were ultimately not included for a variety of reasons. Rodney Street is up a few blocks and at the crest of the hill to the east of downtown and doesn’t fit the topography of the “gulch.” These areas are distinct neighborhoods, separate from downtown, and do not have quite the same downtown appearance and feel as downtown along Last Chance Gulch. They were not included in the Downtown Master Plan nor in the previous downtown urban renewal districts. In addition, the Rodney and Old Hospitals areas are large and could constitute their own URD. Adding them to the Downtown URD could stress the resources of the Downtown District.

Existing Land Use and Zoning

Existing land use generally follows existing zoning, which generally focuses on bulk and dimensional requirements and the separation of uses. There are four primary zoning districts in Downtown:

- Public Lands and Institutions (PLI)
- Residential-Office (R-4/R-O)
- General Commercial (B-2)
- Central Business (B-3)

Buildings typically consist of two, three, and four stories, with a few older historic structures that go as high as six or seven stories. Recent construction has primarily focused on land around the Great Northern Town Center, but also includes renovation projects like the historic Placer Hotel, which was remodeled as residential condominiums. Other major recent upgrades and remodels include the Old Liquor Warehouse where SoFi is located, the local brewery and wine tasting room remodels in the New York Building on the walking mall, a major renovation for a downtown hotel, two remodels to accommodate two new private schools, purchase and remodel of the Old Armory, and the recent purchase and subsequent remodel of the old Blue Cross-Blue Shield office building.

The City is currently updating zoning in downtown in accordance to the guidance in the Downtown Master Plan. The Downtown Master Plan recommended a single zoning district with standards for building form and scale, setbacks, and relationship to the street. The proposed zoning, with an anticipated completion in the Fall of 2018, calls for more active uses of the main floor of the buildings and encourages housing and offices in the upper floors.

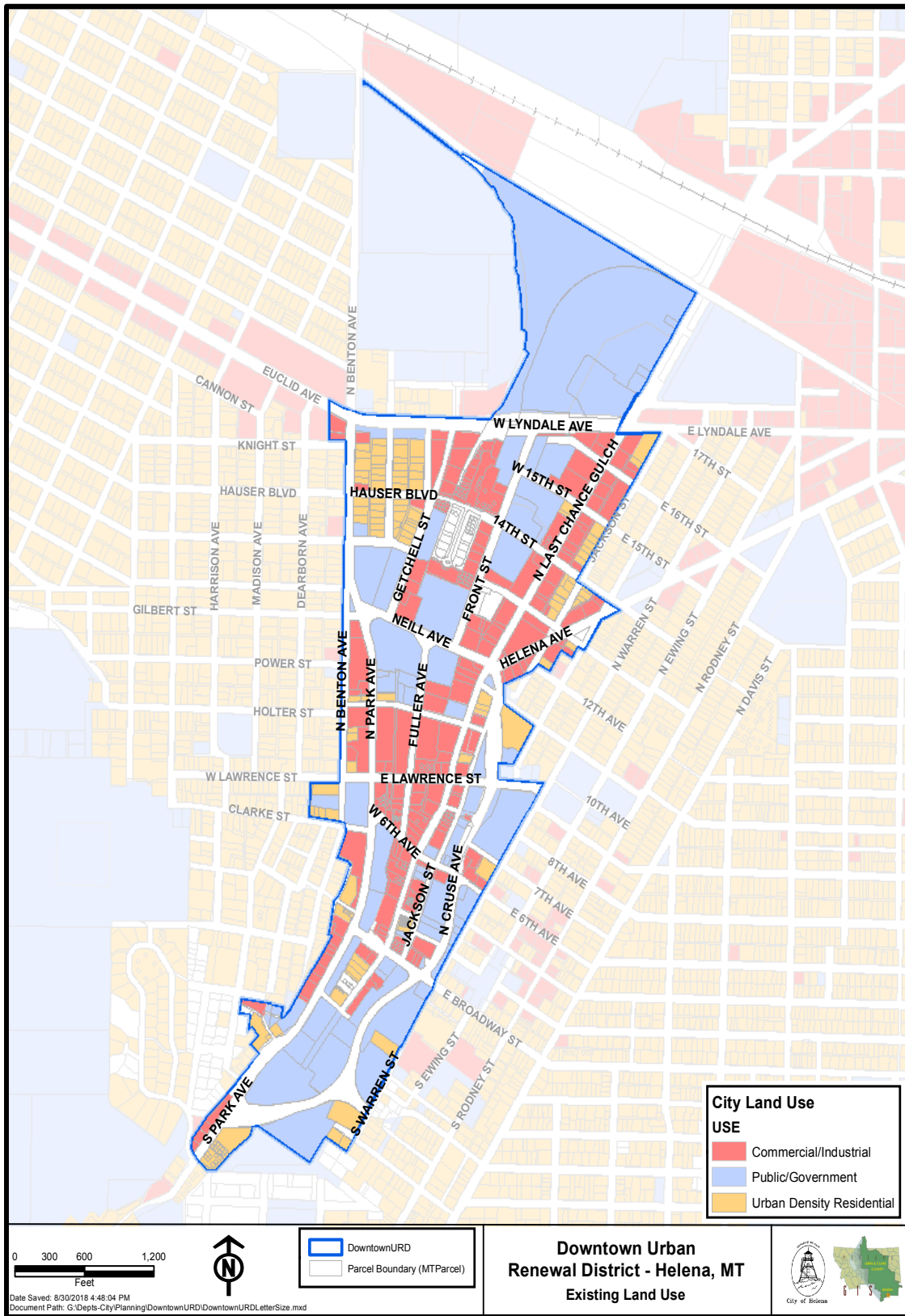


Figure 2.2. Existing Land Use

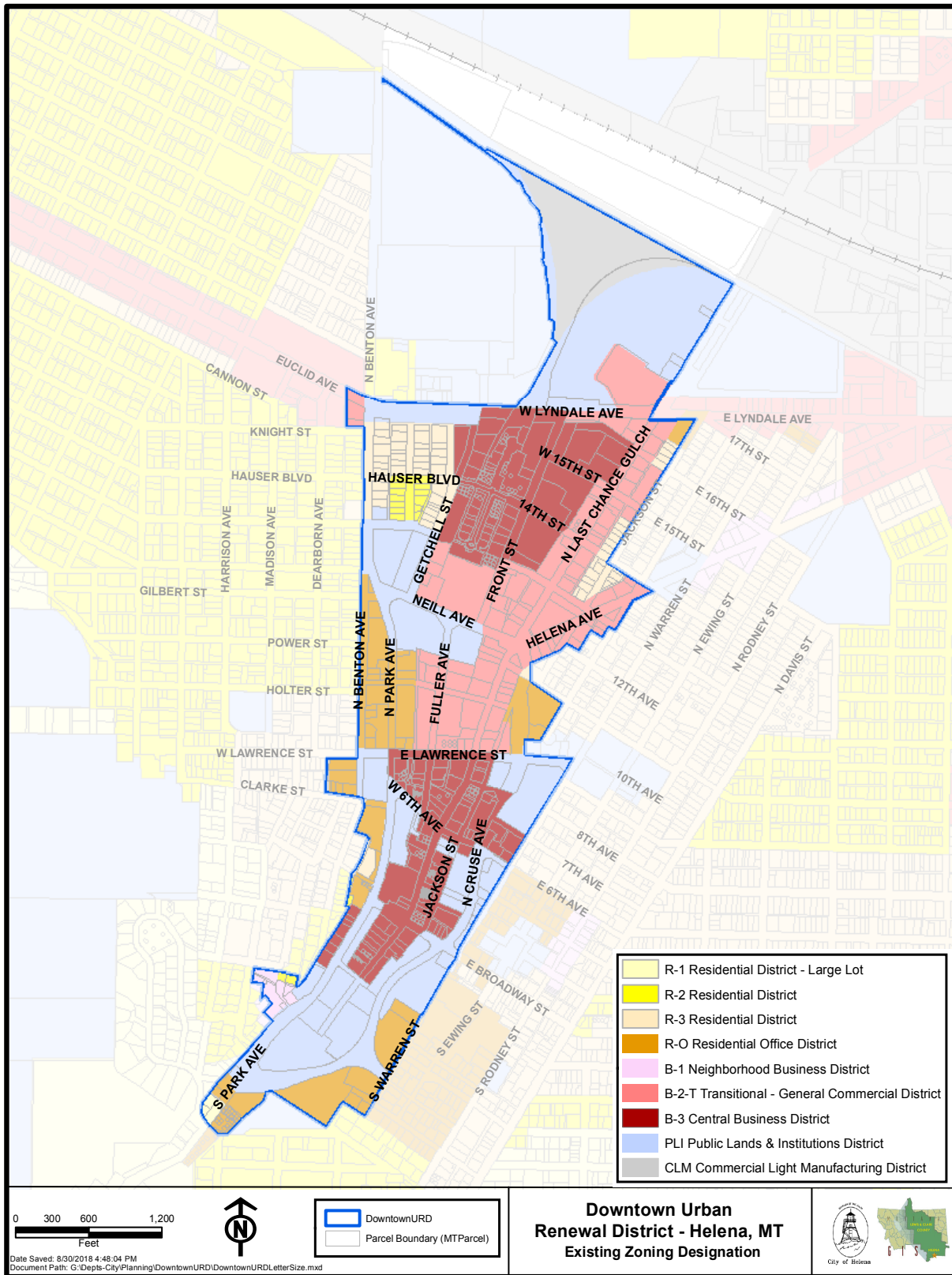


Figure 2.3. Existing Zoning

Issues in the Urban Renewal District

Issues facing downtown are stimulating the need for a URD and have been documented in both the Downtown Master Plan and the URD Statement of Blight report.

The Downtown Helena Master Plan identifies seven key issues for the area:

1. Connections to the greater community need to be strengthened.
2. Business access and visibility is limited by a lack of wayfinding and through traffic.
3. Pedestrian and bicycle routes lack continuity and connectivity.
4. Parking is inconvenient and confusing.
5. Current aesthetic and maintenance levels don't reflect the desired quality of Downtown.
6. Marketing and branding for Downtown lacks a consistent voice and identity.
7. Existing land uses don't support a desirable, walkable Downtown with neighborhood services and amenities.

The Statement of Blight, adopted in May 2018 as part of the process for establishing a Downtown URD, identifies very specific issues of blight, including nine of the 15 blight factors in state statute. The terminology below is the exact language of the statute for blight criteria found in the Downtown URD area. (For more detail, refer to the Statement of Blight in Appendix B.)

1. The substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential
2. Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, proper sanitary facilities, or open spaces as determined by competent appraisers on the base of an examination of the building standards of the municipality
3. Defective or inadequate street layout
4. Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness
5. Unsanitary or unsafe conditions
6. Deterioration of site
7. Diversity of ownership
8. Improper subdivision or obsolete platting
9. Existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes

Examples of blight identified in the report include the following:

- **Property Tax Valuations**

Property values are not increasing as rapidly as the city overall – total taxable valuations increased by 27% city-wide over the past 10 years, compared to 16% increase for downtown

- **Older Buildings Need Expensive Upgrades**

A total of 178 buildings are more than 50 years old, and 50 buildings are in less than average condition. Many properties have insufficient ADA facilities, lack modern infrastructure from electrical to high speed internet, and do not meet fire safety and building code requirements. Costs to upgrade can run into the millions of dollars. Costs of upgrading the YMCA, for example, are estimated at \$3 million.

- **Defective Street Layout**

The winding streets in the historic downtown core are part of its charm. Other street configurations are more troublesome and far less charming, including the five-point intersection where Neill, Helena, North Last Chance and Cruse converge. Neill Avenue is wide, inefficient and has been recommended for changes in two separate studies. Gateways from Lyndale into downtown are less than inviting and lack adequate signage to the Great Northern and historic downtown areas. Cruse Avenue right-of-way is excessively sized for its level of service; reconfiguration could produce developable lots for housing or other uses.



Gateway Intersection to Downtown from Hwy 12 intersection with N. Last Chance Gulch

- **Pedestrian and Bike Connections**

Street configurations create barriers to non-motorized connections from one part of downtown to another. For example, there is no clear pedestrian/bike route from the historic south end of downtown to the Great Northern area. Sidewalks and bike routes are lacking in various locations. The edges of Great Northern development do not include facilities on Getchell that would link downtown with Carroll College. Although the tunnel under Lyndale connects to Centennial Park trails, there is no connection from those trails to the college. Wide crossing distances on Lyndale, Neill, and the 5-point intersection are problematic for pedestrians. Sidewalks in many places are too narrow to accommodate two people side-by-side. Many are interrupted by sloped surfaces, such as driveways, or other blockages. ADA accessibility is an issue in many places.



Pedestrian and Vehicular Challenges of the Five-Point Intersection of Last Chance Gulch and Neill, Cruse, and Helena Avenues

- **Safety Considerations**

The most potentially damaging conditions in downtown are the potential for fire, flood, and earthquake. Fault lines run through downtown and a devastating earthquake occurred in 1935.

In a broader context than “blight,” the URD has key issues that affect its ability to generate property taxes that pay for downtown’s share of city services including streets, water, sewer, police, fire suppression, and schools. The issues that impede downtown development include all of those listed above from the Downtown Master Plan and Statement of Blight. The following includes more description of some other key factors that contribute to Downtown issues.

- **Downturn in Downtown Employment**

Major employers like Blue Cross/Blue Shield and the Helena Independent Record have moved their offices and hundreds of employees to locations outside of downtown. The loss results in building vacancies and affects other downtown businesses, including restaurants and services that were frequented by employees. The number and square footage of vacant commercial space is not tracked by a standardized method in Helena, making it difficult to assess baseline and change over time. Some new businesses have located recently in Helena, including SoFi in the former State Liquor Warehouse building in the Great Northern area. The City and County will be occupying the Blue Cross-Blue Shield building on Fuller Avenue. Even with these changes, large business gaps remain in downtown.

- **Housing**

Downtowns are more active socially and economically when there are people living in and using downtown. Although flanked by single and multi-family residential neighborhoods to the east and west, downtown has far less housing than it did a century ago, when many buildings had commercial on the ground floor and residential above. Like commercial properties, it is impossible to identify the total number of residential properties by type (e.g., condo, single family), ownership or rental, or current vacancies using easily retrievable public information sources. The largest multi-unit rentals in the URD area are the Guardian Apartments (118 units) on 11th Avenue and M.E. Anderson Apartments (76 units) at the base of the Fire Tower. There are also apartment and condo units scattered through downtown, including the Placer Hotel, and units along Park and Benton. In a March 2018 media release, the Tri-County Housing Task Force reported,

“Our area is struggling with many housing issues. New housing construction in the Helena area is not keeping up with projected population growth. Vacancy rates are at record lows, resulting in rent increase. As a result, many renters cannot find an affordable place to live.”

Downtown housing options for homeless, transitional needs, elderly/disabled, and low-income include God’s Love Shelter, YWCA, Iron Front Hotel, Guardian Apartments, and M.E. Anderson Apartments. Without an accurate inventory, it is difficult to assess total numbers of housing units in downtown. More housing is needed for a variety of income ranges, as identified in the Downtown Master Plan.

- **Infrastructure**

Downtown infrastructure includes streets, water, sewer, storm drainage, public spaces, and facilities (including city parks and properties/buildings), and telecommunications. As identified in the Statement of Blight report and Downtown Master Plan, improvements are needed for downtown infrastructure. Examples of street traffic issues include the five-point intersection at Neill and Last Chance, and

need for a traffic light at 14th and Last Chance Gulch. Pedestrian and bicycle needs include a connected system of bike paths and pedestrian facilities throughout downtown, and streetscapes for a safer and more aesthetic pedestrian experience. Communication issues include lack of consistent high-speed internet throughout downtown. Public spaces are deteriorating and in need of repair, such as the walking surface of the pedestrian mall. Despite recent upgrades at various locations in downtown, storm-water drainage capacity results in flooding, particularly on the north end of the URD. Accessing existing utilities that cross under existing developments can be difficult and expensive.



Building gaps located at North Last Chance Gulch

- **Under-utilized Properties**

Under-utilized properties are defined as properties where the value of improvements is less than the value of the land. As identified in the Statement of Blight, downtown includes 100 acres of such properties, which include vacant lots, city parks, and parking areas. Some of the properties that meet the definition of “under-utilized” include major parks in downtown (e.g., Women’s, Hill, Pioneer, and Anchor Parks). These parks have intrinsic value as downtown public spaces and green space, and are much utilized for a variety of events and daily use. Other under-utilized properties have the potential to be redeveloped for new purposes. Examples include excess land in the Cruse Avenue right-of-way along the southern edge of downtown, the City’s old bus depot on North Last Chance Gulch, and the ground floor parking facility on Last Chance Gulch in the block north of 6th Avenue.



Parking lot structure on Last Chance Gulch with the potential for ground-floor retail

- **Transit**

The Downtown Master Plan identified several needs for transit, including a study of a downtown circulatory trolley, an employee bus pass program, regular service to the capitol, a downtown transfer center. Since the adoption of the Master Plan in 2016, the transit department completed a multi-year planning process, changed its name from HATS to Capital Transit, added another fixed route, regular service to the capitol, established new stops, and a covered transfer shelter downtown. Not all bus stops are covered or have seating.

- **Lack of Baseline Data**

There is no standardized information on many of the topics of concern in downtown. This includes information on parking utilization and demand, residential and commercial inventories, vacancy rates, broadband capabilities, etc. Until such information is collected and analyzed for future demand, capacity, options and alternatives, it will be difficult to assess what is needed or will have the greatest likelihood of success.

- **Streetscapes and Urban Landscaping**

The walking mall is showing the wear and tear of its pedestrian surface and needs upgrading. Many of the buildings in the mall lack windows and interest on the ground level, creating voids in the pedestrian experience. The length of North Last Chance, from Lyndale to the five-point intersection with Helena Avenue, Neill Avenue, and Cruse Avenue, lacks a continuous inviting streetscape, urban landscaping with shade and greenery, adequate pedestrian separation from traffic, and public art. More installations of public art and landscaping can make pedestrian pathways to/from parking areas and to/from the Great Northern to the walking mall more defined and interesting.

- **Downtown Vibrancy**

A city core with a strong economy, sense of place, and vibrancy requires a mix of business and residents. In a survey conducted for the Downtown Master Plan in 2016, only 41% of respondents agreed that Downtown is vibrant, with many people and activities. This is an issue, however 95% of survey respondents said Downtown has potential to be more than it currently is. Although downtown is more vibrant during working hours because of the many governmental offices and private businesses, it is far less so after 5:30 or 6:00 pm. Some areas are more active after work hours, such as the pedestrian mall by the brewery and wine bar. The Downtown Master Plan identified the need for more downtown housing and more downtown services to serve residents (including a grocery/food market) as a way to improve vibrancy.

“As many communities seek new approaches to economic development, Helena is well-positioned to offer what people are looking for.”

- Downtown Master Plan, Oct. 2016

Opportunities

Downtown Helena is indeed well-positioned to revitalize. The city overall has a relatively strong and stable economy and has not seen the rapid pace of housing costs experienced in the last few years in Bozeman, Missoula, and Kalispell.

Helena’s downtown is unique and attractive. Unlike many historic downtowns in Montana, it is not located on a major highway. Last Chance Gulch, the downtown’s main street, curves along the former creek bed. Framed by steep hillsides and mountain views, the street’s curvilinear form and aesthetics are noticeably different from other Montana cities. Downtown includes a greater proportion of state and federal office buildings compared to other downtowns its size, including

“Increasingly, people are choosing quality of life over other factors, including higher salaries. . At the same time, technology and growth of “creative-class” industries allow people and businesses to locate anywhere. Building a strong and resilient economy starts with creating a great community where people want to live and work.”

- Downtown Master Plan, Oct. 2016

the only branch bank of the Federal Reserve’s multi-state 9th District. Its history of gold mining and related wealth are evidenced in outstanding architecture from the 19th and early 20th centuries. The pedestrian mall, one of hundreds built across the nation in the 1960s and 70s, is now historic at more than 50 years old. Use and activity on the mall is increasing, putting Helena in a special class (along with places like Pearl Street Mall in Boulder, Colorado), with only 15% of the original malls remaining intact today nationwide. The Helena Downtown walking mall has potential for better use of much of its ground-floor space. Many of the historic buildings throughout downtown have potential for adaptive re-use as commercial space and housing. The opportunity is to retain the historic integrity and adapt to modern needs.

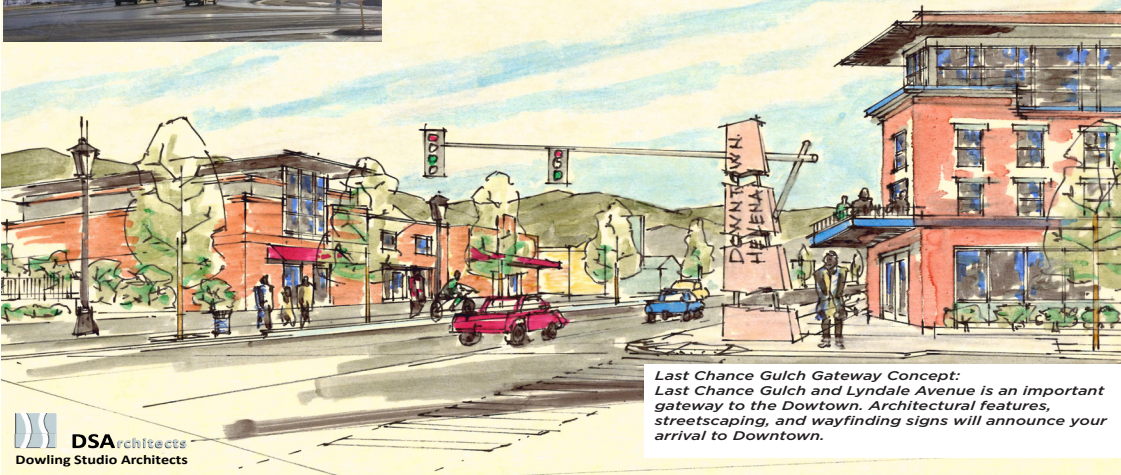
Helena is already a leader in active lifestyles and the amenities that support those activities, such as hiking and biking trails accessed directly from downtown. Downtown inherently offers the built-in efficiency of urban systems, connectivity, and walkability that is desirable for creative class jobs, residents seeking an active urban lifestyle, and sustainable growth and development. In fact, the City of Helena ranks second in the state for walking to work, and third for bicycling to work (7.5% and 3.3%, respectively). Helena also has the lowest share of working age commuters using an automobile to commute to work (83 percent). Helena residents, on average, have shorter travel times (13.5 minutes), with nearly 70 percent spending less than 15 minutes commuting to work. Helena is working to create connected trails throughout the City and surrounding area. Downtown has potential for better connections to the recreational trail systems and for expanding its unique biking-hiking reputation.



Helena's connection to the outdoors is a defining characteristic of the community

Nationally, downtowns are attracting more residents. Young professionals and retirees are moving to downtowns to be closer to work, restaurants, and activities. Helena has a growing base of retired state and federal workers who are interested in living downtown. Providing for a variety of housing types for a range of needs and incomes will promote other downtown businesses and services to serve an increasing downtown population.

Downtown is uniquely positioned to attract top retailers, restaurants, employers, and residents. Helena has an extensive trade area with a large high-income, well-educated population. The retail market analysis conducted for the Downtown Master Plan found that Helena has existing demand for up to 142,900 square feet of retail development space. Downtown has potential to capitalize on this demand by upgrading buildings to meet 21st century needs and by transforming “under-utilized” properties, such as ground floor parking on North Last Chance, to retail space or other uses. Improving gateways to downtown will make attractive entrances to downtown venues.



Last Chance Gulch Gateway Concept: Last Chance Gulch and Lyndale Avenue is an important gateway to the Downtown. Architectural features, streetscaping, and wayfinding signs will announce your arrival to Downtown.

DSArchitects
Dowling Studio Architects

Redevelopment opportunities abound in Downtown. These include underutilized properties, such as Cruse Avenue, which has been identified with potential to be redesigned to accommodate land for residential purposes on the south end of downtown. Surface parking areas and covered lots on retail streets have potential for conversion to retail on the ground floor and other uses above.



Cruse Avenue Concept: De-emphasizing traffic on Cruse Avenue will create new opportunities for redevelopment

Google earth

Critically, the City is making great progress with planning and implementing change in Downtown. Two of the fundamental objectives of the Downtown Master Plan are being completed – the revision of downtown zoning and the creation of this URD and use of the TIF financing tool. In addition, City staff and the Helena Business Improvement District are working on other projects, including a revision of downtown parking policies and a feasibility study for the Marlow Market, a potential food market for downtown.

Downtown URD Plan: Vision and Goals

3

NOTE: The 2018 Downtown URD was amended to include the Rodney Street Area; see Chapter 6, which includes Vision and Goals for the Rodney Street Amendment Area.

Overview

This chapter identifies the vision, goals, and objectives of the plan for the Urban Renewal District. Chapter 4 identifies how the Plan will be implemented.

Helena's Planning Framework for Downtown

This plan is guided by the Helena Growth Policy and the Downtown Helena Master Plan. The Helena Growth Policy is the City's long-range comprehensive planning document, adopted by the City Commission in 2011. The Downtown Master Plan was adopted by the City Commission as an amendment to the Growth Policy in 2016. The creation of the Urban Renewal District was one of the implementation strategies of the Downtown Master Plan.

Downtown Master Plan Vision Statement:

“With a rich history and spectacular 19th century architecture, Downtown Helena is the economic, cultural, and social center of Montana’s capital city. A stable economy, active lifestyles, independent retail, and a strong connection to trails, parks, and outdoor activities make Downtown Helena a year-round destination for businesses, residents, and tourists.”

Future Land Use Framework for the Downtown URD

The plan for the Downtown URD is based on a vision and conceptual land use framework.

Downtown Urban Renewal District Vision Statement:

“To advance Downtown revitalization and the Downtown Helena Master Plan vision by incentivizing private investment and funding public infrastructure that improves the quality and value of downtown properties.”

Figure 3.1 shows the future land use framework identified in the Master Plan. It uses categories for all areas that were in the Downtown Master Plan schematic (p.43 of the Master Plan). Centennial Park was not included in that Downtown Master Plan; however, it is part of the Urban Renewal District. Centennial Park is shown with the future land use designations of the 2011 Growth Policy.

URD Future Land Use Framework



Figure 3.1 URD Future Land Use Framework

Downtown Urban Renewal District Goals and Objectives

The following goals were developed by considering the goals and implementation measures of the Downtown Master Plan, issues raised in the Statement of Blight, and the intent of urban renewal statute to provide maximum opportunity for private enterprise to improve the district.

Goal #1: Build a Cohesive Downtown Identity

1. Brand and market downtown to stimulate investment
2. Assemble baseline information and update to monitor change and make available to public and prospective investors. Information would include commercial and residential real estate data, occupancy rates, broadband availability, historic building inventory, building condition, resident population numbers, etc.

Goal #2: Add to Downtown Vibrancy with a Mix of Uses

1. Provide a range of housing types for a range of incomes, with an emphasis on a core of quality affordable housing for young professionals, workers, and older generations that is currently lacking in downtown
2. Attract new business types to downtown, such as specialty food markets, etc., that support residential uses.
3. Encourage business start-ups and incubators
4. Complete process of rezoning Downtown area to encourage more mixed use and ground floor active use
5. Conduct feasibility, market, and other studies as needed prior to projects
6. Encourage ground-floor use with transparency - Street-level storefront windows, doors and entryways, courtyards, etc. that invite passersby.
7. Add to and improve urban landscaping with public art, trees, and plantings for visual interest and shaded areas.

Goal #3: Upgrade Underperforming Properties

1. Develop vacant lots and encourage upgrades to under-performing property gaps
2. Encourage the update and adaptive re-use of buildings for 21st century needs, such as open interiors, improvements to broadband, and for safety and market competitiveness
3. Encourage redevelopment of parking facilities that create gaps in downtown ground-floor retail by allowing for non-parking uses on floor level and parking on other stories
4. Facilitate façade improvements
5. Inventory city properties with potential for higher use and develop criteria for disposition
6. Provide for demolition and site preparation as needed to upgrade properties

Goal #4: Invest in the Public Infrastructure Needed to Attract Development

1. Improve transportation infrastructure for better function and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles and include streetscape features to improve aesthetics, safety and quality of use by non-motorists
2. Rectify issues of parcels along and within streets that were not properly surveyed during 1970s urban renewal, starting with Cruse Avenue
3. Address improvements needed for fire suppression water flow requirements for higher densities; improve fire engine access; and prioritize replacement of older segments of concrete and vitrified clay pipe for water and sewer

4. Facilitate storm drainage, access to pipes under buildings, and continue work to address pipe capacity and alternative detention features
5. Accommodate private underground utilities within public rights-of-way
6. Expand fiber capability
7. Document existing parking capacity and use; and analyze projected demand and parking alternatives including park-and-ride, mobile applications, and other approaches to parking in similar-sized communities in the nation. Manage parking for optimal efficiency and utilization, and locate parking facilities to support a mix of downtown uses without creating “gaps” in downtown, and make better use of existing parking facilities
8. Invest in capital improvements needed to improve parks, green space, and recreational facilities in URD, and continue to use parks for attractions such as, “Alive at Five” and other functions
9. Retain and address needs of existing city-owned cultural and historic facilities to improve use and function

Goal #5: Connections

1. Improve bike and pedestrian connections within the District and linkages to recreational trail systems and surrounding neighborhoods, including Carroll College
2. Develop a comprehensive bike network
3. Improve vehicle circulation and access to increase retail viability
4. Improve gateways, wayfinding, and signage systems for downtown
5. Increase transit options in downtown, including easily-identified bus stops with posted schedules
6. Improve pedestrian connections from parking facilities to destinations by making them more easily identified, more attractive and inviting (with trees, greenscape, viewpoints, etc. so that walking to/from parking becomes a pleasurable experience in itself

Goal #6: Promote Historic Preservation to Create a Quality and Unique Experience

1. Promote historic preservation and context-sensitive design, and avoid demolition of historic building where feasible
2. Capitalize on downtown’s historic assets and unique history (Distinguish Helena downtown from other places in Helena and from other cities)
3. Emphasize the unique and historic walking mall and make improvements to attract more businesses and activities

Figure 3.2, from the Downtown Master Plan, presents some specific projects that also meet the goals of this URD plan. Examples of potential projects in the Centennial Park area, not included in the Downtown Master Plan, include those addressing URD Plan objectives for improving gateways, pedestrian connections, infrastructure improvements, business development, and recreational facilities.

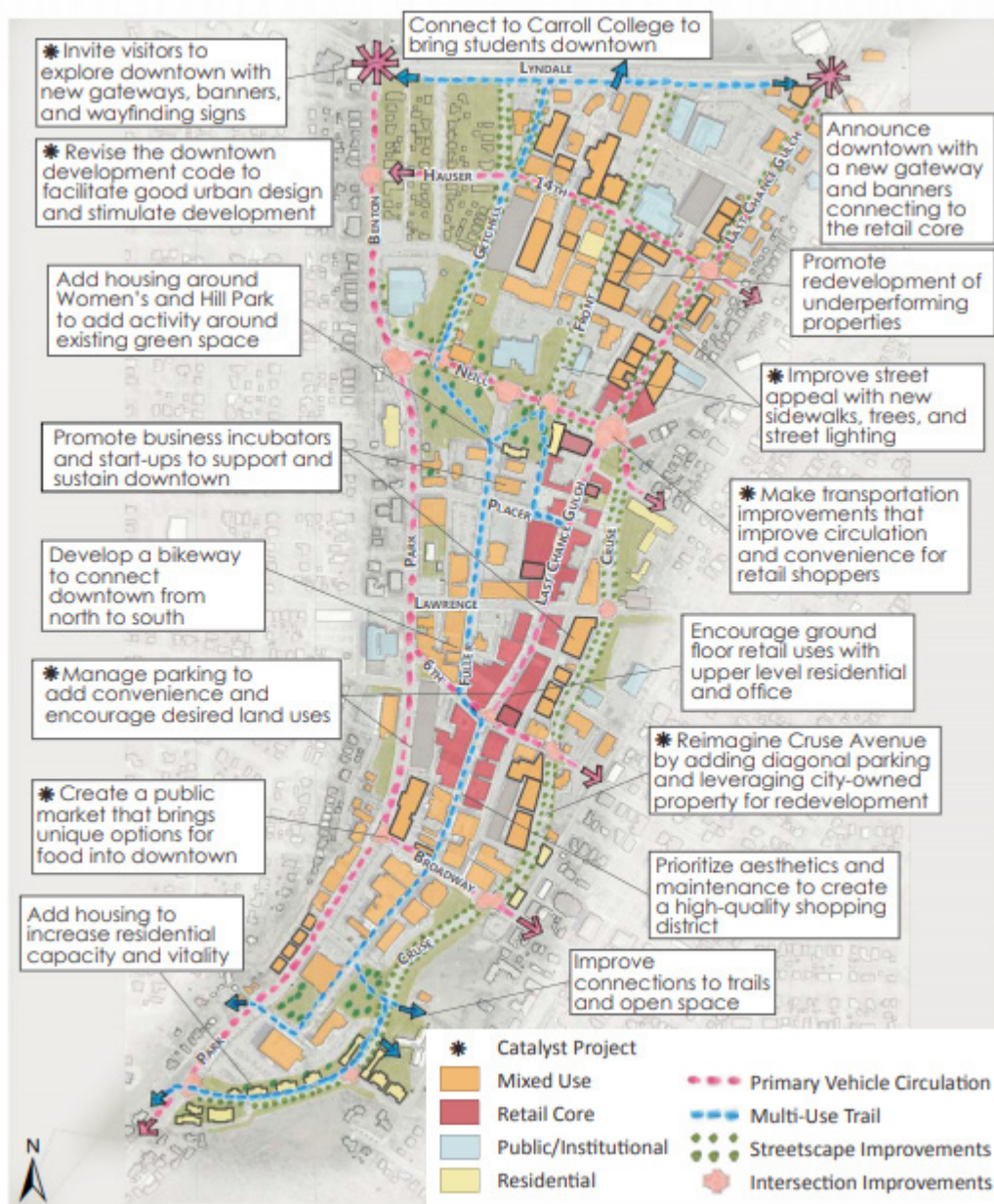


Figure 3.2 Downtown Master Plan - Overall Vision

Downtown URD Plan: Implementation

4

The following implementation section of the Downtown URD is amended to include the Rodney Street Area; as specified in Chapter 6.

Overview

This chapter identifies how the URD Plan will be implemented. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is the most important implementation tool for urban renewal districts. This chapter discusses TIF, how it works, and what it can fund, along with other funding sources. It also describes considerations for initial implementation and how projects will be vetted and chosen for funding. The proposed administration and responsibilities for managing the TIF program are discussed in the last section.

Funding Sources

Tax Increment Financing

The Helena Downtown URD Plan incorporates the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF), the primary funding tool for Urban Renewal Districts. TIF is widely-used across Montana as an economic tool to finance public infrastructure and stimulate private investment in areas designated as blighted or needing targeted economic development.

TIF is intended to support capital projects with public benefit. It can be used to incentivize private development, but it cannot be used for operations and maintenance, even by public entities. It is often used to develop or improve the infrastructure needed to support development, such as streets, water, sewer, pedestrian and bike facilities, stormwater systems, and utilities. It can also assist with development activities, site preparation and demolition that are approved in an Urban Renewal Plan, such as feasibility studies for potential development. Some communities in Montana have used TIF for affordable housing projects.

“TIF isn’t enough to fund all the projects needed to reinvigorate the District. It’s important to build partnerships to identify the best projects and leverage TIF with other funding.”

Helena has experience with URDs and using TIF revenues. Downtown Helena had two previous URDs, eventually merged into one. Those Districts helped build the walking mall and library, and transformed an abandoned railyard into the Great Northern Town Center. More than 80 projects were completed from the 1970s until 2006, when the last downtown URD expired. Since the beginning of the creation of TIF in downtown in 1978 until its sunset in 2006, an investment of \$17m in TIF allocation resulted in improvements estimated at \$100-\$200 million. In 2016, the City approved the creation of the Railroad District, centered around the historic railroad depot at the far end of Helena Avenue. The Railroad District is now accumulating TIF revenue and beginning the process of identifying first projects.

Tax increments are not new or additional taxes. At the creation of an Urban Renewal District, the tax base is frozen. This “base year” tax value continues to fund local government services, but taxes from new development or appreciation (the “tax increment”) get reinvested in the District. (See Figure 4.1) The property taxes collected to reinvest in the Urban Renewal District are known as TIF revenues. The City of Helena can spend the TIF revenues directly or they can leverage anticipated TIF revenues to secure bonds for identified improvements.

All taxing jurisdictions that include areas within the Urban Renewal District, including the county and school districts, will see the tax revenues “frozen” on properties within the District. The incremental TIF revenues will be used to reinvest in Downtown to attract private-sector investment that generates economic growth. In Montana, property taxes pay a large share of City services – things like schools, parks, police, fire, road maintenance, and utilities. In the Downtown Urban Renewal District, property values are overall flat and not increasing at the same rate as elsewhere in the City. Using TIF revenues is intended to reverse that trend by investing in projects that create jobs, improve quality of life, increase property values, and expand the tax base. Although city, county and school districts will see their tax revenues “frozen” for a period, they benefit from increased tax revenues when the URD sunsets. Without the use of TIF, flat or declining tax revenues may continue into the foreseeable future, limiting Downtown’s ability to carry its fair share of the load.

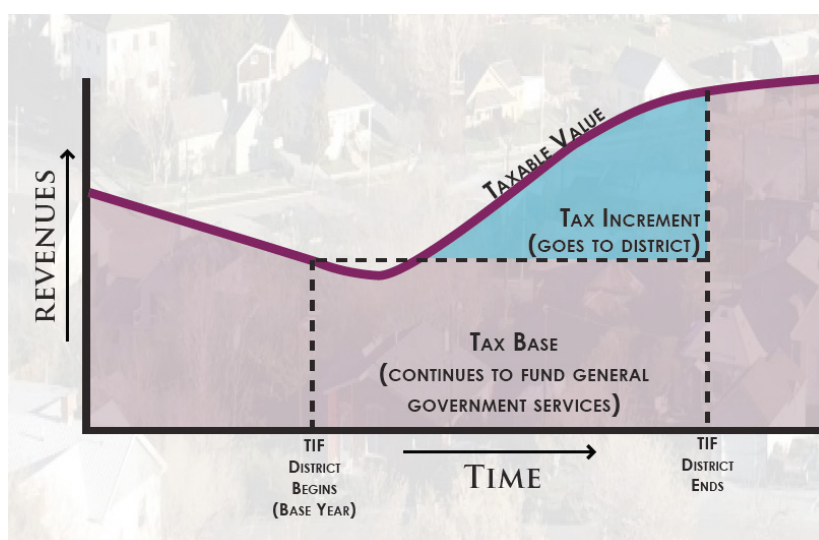


Figure 4.1: How Tax Increment Financing Works

Other Funding Sources

The types, sources and amounts of funding sources are not static. Governmental programs are subject to legislative and administrative changes. For example, the following is a general list of potential funding sources as of June 2018.

- Opportunity Zones are a new federal program to stimulate development in low-income communities. The census tract that includes portions of the Urban Renewal District was approved by the US Treasury Department as one of 25 Opportunity Zones in Montana in May 2018. Opportunity Zones were established in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage long-term investments in low-income urban and rural communities nationwide. The Opportunity Zones program provides a tax incentive for investors to re-invest their unrealized capital gains into Opportunity Funds dedicated to investing into Opportunity Zones. The Treasury Department had not completed rulemaking as of June 2018.

- New Markets Tax Credit, established to attract capital to low income communities by providing private investors with a federal tax credit, is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2019, but may be extended with new legislation. This source of funding has been used in the Downtown already.
- Big Sky Trust Fund (State of Montana)
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), with grants and loans for housing and economic development including Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME funds, administered by Montana Department of Commerce
- Montana Main Street Program
- State of Montana INTERCAP Loan Program
- US Department of Transportation programs (e.g., BUILD grants, formerly TIGER grants; Urban Highway System Funds; and Surface Transportation Block Grant for Transportation Alternatives)
- US Small Business Administration, with grants and loans for qualifying businesses
- Local Taxing Districts, such as Helena Business Improvement District, Special Improvement Districts, Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID)
- Traditional Municipal Government Funding (general fund, gas tax funds)
- Conventional Loans and Municipal Bonds
- Private Donations/Foundations
- Historic Tax Credit Program, administered by the National Park Service, provides tax credits equal to 20% of qualified investments to rehabilitate and re-use historic buildings
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program provides tax credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing targeted to lower-income households

Timeline, Initial Implementation and Next Steps

Timeline

The timeline for TIF can last up to 40 years. The TIF provision terminates on the 15th year after its adoption, or until any bonds issued on the TIF have been paid in full, whichever comes later. Bonds cannot be issued for longer than 25 years, so the longest any TIF provision could be in effect is 40 years.

Initial Implementation

Implementation of the URD Plan depends in large part on building successful projects in the District. Adhering to the “Guiding Principles” shown in Figure 4.2 more fully described below will facilitate successful implementation.

Guiding Principles for Initial Implementation:

1. *Focus on projects that generate TIF sooner, directly or indirectly*
Consider what is more likely to attract new investment to the URD. Projects such as infrastructure improvements have indirect benefits. The improved infrastructure does not directly increase property values and TIF revenues, but can be an important incentive for private sector investments that will result in TIF revenues.
2. *Look to new resources to catalyze public/private development*
TIF revenues are most effective when they are used to leverage funds from other sources. They are often used as match for grants. They can also leverage private investment in a very direct way, such as when TIF funds for façade improvements require matching improvements to upgrade building interiors to meet objectives of this URD plan.

3. *Strategic investments and partnerships*

It takes relationships with partners to discover projects with the best potential. Partners also are often aware of additional funding sources and innovative ways to leverage investments. The following section “Next Steps” provides more information on building connections with partners.

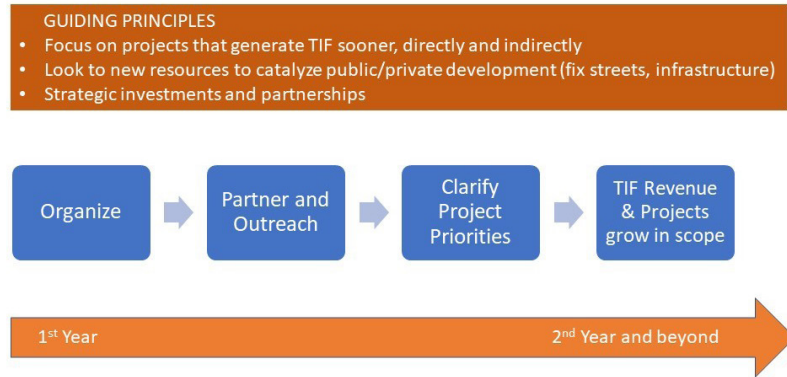


Figure 4.2: Initial Phases of TIF Program

Next Steps

- **Organize**

Once the URD has been approved by the City Commission, the first steps will be to organize the management of the District. Refer to the following section on Administration.

- **Partner and Outreach**

The next step will be to begin outreach to identify projects that can generate meaningful TIF revenue quickly. This means not only identifying projects, but also locating and leveraging funding to start the first projects, as TIF revenues may come in slowly at first. Talking with potential partners is important at this point, particularly at the initial stages of the URD.

Talk with commercial brokerage firms, downtown businesses, and developers about what infrastructure improvements in the URD will be most effective in attracting private investments. The local economic development agencies, such as the Helena Downtown Business Improvement District (Helena BID) and Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC), as well as nonprofit foundations, housing authorities and others, may know about potential projects and funding sources.

Potential Partners include the following categories:

- Economic Development agencies
- Local Lenders
- Private Developers
- Local nonprofits and foundations
- Public housing authority and nonprofit housing providers
- Education Resources, e.g. Carroll College and Helena College for training program partnerships
- Businesses

- **Initial Potential Project Priorities**

The Downtown Master Plan identifies many action items that would benefit from TIF funding. A major catalyst project can jump start the URD. Something may be in the conceptual stages now and just needs the outreach and partnering to bring

it to light for potential TIF funding. Although TIF can start slowly, it can also get a huge boost from a major project early on. That happened in Missoula where a major project was funded in part with revenues from bonding on the TIF. Bonding requires analysis to ensure the project succeeds in raising TIF revenues to cover the bond and to add new revenues to the district. Bonding has been successful in various locations across Montana.

Some initial project ideas that have already surfaced from the Downtown Master Plan and the public comment on the URD plan include the following. Additional public comments are found in Appendix C.

- Add streetscape improvements to Front Street
- Begin addressing under-utilized city properties with a new use for the old bus depot site on North Last Chance or by moving forward with plans to re-align Cruse Avenue and make land available for residential uses
- Improve the Hauser/14th corridor, adding signal at 14th and Last Chance Gulch
- Completion of a feasibility study for the “Marlow Market,” a potential market for food and other goods
- Evaluate the need to develop a more robust and detailed plan for the Rodney neighborhood as part of the City’s Growth Policy to ensure the Rodney Street Area vision can be realized with clear linkage to the growth policy and with zoning that enables the vision and goals in Chapter 6



Streetscape improvements are key to creating a high-quality, desirable Downtown that promotes pedestrian activity.

Less capital-intensive projects that could see success in the District’s initial start-up include:

- Develop streetscape design guidelines
- Build a baseline inventory of annual indicators to evaluate URD program success and be of use to potential developers. These indicators might include the following within the URD boundaries:
 - Commercial and residential vacancy rates/square footage
 - Median cost of rent/home ownership in URD
 - Number of employees
 - Map of Broadband capabilities
 - Vacant lots/Under-utilized properties
 - Number and type of business establishments

Provisions for Displaced Residents

One of the four criteria for approving Urban Renewal Plans is a plan for making available adequate housing for persons who may be displaced by the project. This URD Plan does not propose nor anticipate any measures that would result in displacement of current residents. In fact, the District is designed to encourage more residential development and a range of affordable housing options. If actions directly related to projects of the Downtown District, as administered by the City Commission, result in displacement, the City of Helena shall work with those individuals to find comparable housing within the District or elsewhere within city limits if no comparable housing is available.

Administration

The Helena Downtown Urban Renewal District shall be administered by the Helena City Commission, with staffing provided by the Community Development Department and the Administrative and Financial Services Department, and with assistance from an Advisory Committee. The Helena City Commission is the legal entity responsible for ongoing management, budgeting, financial reporting and other requirements and authorities provided for an urban renewal district.

The Community Development Department shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Formulate recommendations for annual work-plans and budgets,
2. Coordinate the Downtown Urban Renewal District programs as established by annual work-plans and budgets approved by the City Commission;
3. Undertake and carry out urban renewal projects as required by the City Commission;
4. Disseminate urban renewal district information;
5. Study the closing, vacating, planning, or re-planning of streets, roads, sidewalks, ways, or other places and to make recommendations with respect thereto;
6. Provide staff support to the Advisory Committee; and
7. Perform such duties as the local governing body may direct to make the necessary arrangements for the exercise of the powers and performance of the duties and responsibilities entrusted to the local governing body.

The City Commission may appoint an advisory committee to assist in the administration of the District. If the City Commission elects to appoint such a committee, the City Commission shall determine the exact composition of the advisory committee by resolution.

The Advisory Committee shall report directly to the City Commission. The Advisory Committee has no assigned powers other than to consider and make recommendations on matters related to the Downtown Urban Renewal District. The Advisory Committee will advise on the following:

1. Annual work-plans, reports, and budgets;
2. Allocation of TIF funds for individual projects;
3. Amendments to the Urban Renewal District Plan; and,
4. Other matters as assigned by the City Commission.

Project Selection Process and Criteria

The process for reviewing projects is shown in Figure 4.3. Project applications will be submitted to the Community Development Department where staff will prepare written evaluations of project compliance with the URD Plan, Downtown Master Plan, and project criteria. Community Development Department staff may circulate the projects to other departments for comment. The URD Advisory Committee will review the applications and staff evaluations. The Advisory Committee may require study or analysis of a proposed project by technical experts as needed to determine compliance with project criteria. The Advisory Committee submits its recommendations on projects to the City Commission, which is responsible for the final decision on all applications.

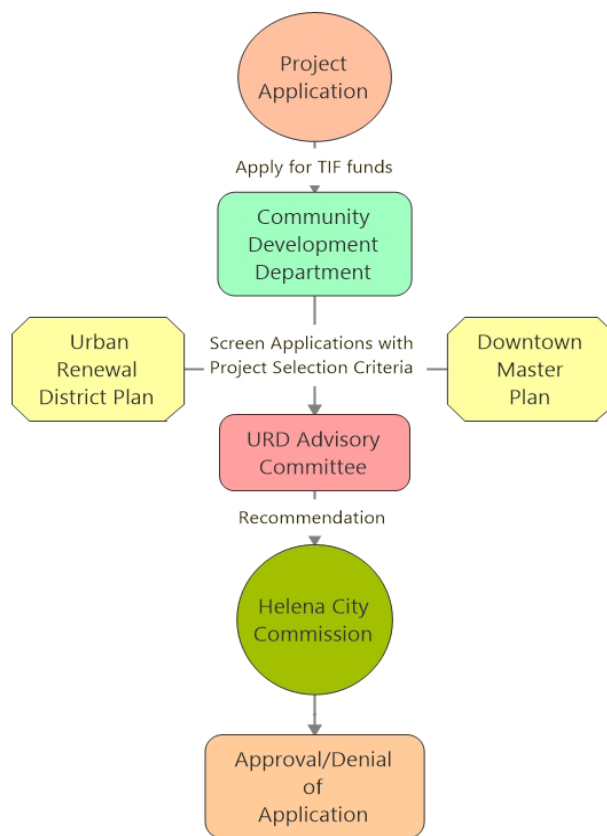


Figure 4.3. TIF Project Selection Flow Chart

Initial Project Criteria:

The following are initial criteria to be used in selecting projects. The City of Helena may adopt additional criteria in the future, as needed. Projects to be selected for TIF funding will be evaluated on how the project achieves the following criteria:

1. Achieves the vision, goals, and objectives of the URD Plan as revised by the Rodney Street Area Amendment in Chapter 6
2. Meets the statutory criteria for use of TIF funds
3. Conforms to the Downtown Master Plan and current Growth Policy
4. Incentivizes private investment
5. Provides a good return on investment

Annual Reports

The Administrative and Financial Services Department will prepare an Annual Work Plan and Report with four components:

1. Budget. The annual budget lists the activities and costs of activities for the coming fiscal year, as well as the method of financing those activities. This program and budget may be amended during the course of the fiscal year, in light of funding and program changes. All budgets and revised budgets shall be reviewed and approved by the City, and administered in accordance with City policies.
2. Work Plan. This shall describe ongoing and projected projects and activities during the upcoming year. It shall address:¹
 - a. any land acquisition, demolition, and removal of structures; redevelopment; improvements; and rehabilitation that is proposed to be carried out in the urban renewal area;
 - b. zoning and planning changes, if any, including changes to the growth policy;
 - c. changes to land uses, maximum densities, building requirements; and
 - d. the plan's relationship to definite local objectives respecting appropriate land uses, improved traffic, public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities, and other public improvements.
3. Financial Report. A report of the financial activities related to the tax increment financing provision of this URD shall be included in the annual financial report submitted to the Montana Department of Administration.²
4. Evaluation of Progress. The Administrative and Financial Services Department shall provide to the City Commission an annual program evaluation of progress on achieving intended goals.

Amendment

The Downtown Urban Renewal District may be amended or modified by the City Commission in accordance with Montana statute. The applicable provision is Montana Code Annotated 7-15-4221 (at the time this plan was developed) which sets forth the process and minimum requirements.

¹ The list includes items identified in 7-15-4206(19)(b), MCA

² Financial reporting for the previous year as required by 2-7-503(1)(b), MCA

Conclusions

NOTE: The 2018 Downtown URD was amended to include the Rodney Street Area; see Chapter 6, which includes Conclusions for the Rodney Street Amendment Area.

Overview

This chapter reiterates the purpose of the plan and discusses how this document meets that purpose. It also reviews how the plan meets the statutory criteria for approving the URD plan.

Accomplishing a Plan for the URD

The Helena City Commission wishes to establish a URD for Downtown. A plan for the URD is a prerequisite for URD establishment. This document is the long-range plan for the URD. It identifies issues, including conditions of blight identified in the “Statement of Blight.” It also includes information on how the plan was developed, including public outreach and public comment. This plan identifies a vision, goals and objectives to address those blight conditions and to revitalize and invigorate downtown. This plan also establishes a provision for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to finance and stimulate private investment in projects that meet the goals of this URD Plan.

Conformance with Approval Criteria

This Helena Downtown URD Plan meets statutory requirements for approval by the City Commission as follows:

1. Housing for Displaced Persons

Chapter 4 of this URD includes provisions for making available adequate housing for persons who may be displaced by URD projects as follows:

“This URD Plan does not propose nor anticipate any measures that would result in displacement of current residents. In fact, the District is designed to encourage more residential development and a range of affordable housing options. If actions directly related to projects of the Downtown District, as administered by the City Commission, result in displacement, the City of Helena shall work with those individuals to find comparable housing within the District or elsewhere within city limits if no comparable housing is available.”

2. Conformance with the City’s Growth Policy

The future land use framework of this URD, as depicted in Figure 3.1 in Chapter 3, follows the exact configuration of future land use in the City’s 2011 Growth Policy as amended by the 2016 Helena Downtown Master Plan. The Downtown URD also builds on the goals and objectives of the Downtown Master Plan. The Downtown URD conforms to the Growth Policy as amended.

3. Maximum Opportunity for Redevelopment by Private Enterprise

This Downtown URD Plan's vision statement is:

“To advance Downtown revitalization and the Downtown Helena Master Plan vision *by incentivizing private investment* and funding public infrastructure that improves the quality and value of downtown properties (bold italics emphasis added).”

Chapter 3 of this plan identifies goals and objectives intended to stimulate private investment in downtown. Chapter 4 identifies a TIF program as one of the primary tools for private sector investment. TIF is widely-used across Montana as a successful economic tool to finance public infrastructure and stimulate private investment in urban renewal districts. One of the most advantageous uses of TIF revenues is as leverage for additional private sector (and grant) funding.

4. Sound Financial Program

Chapter 4 of this URD plan lists potential funding sources to fund projects. TIF revenues are anticipated to be the foundation for diversified funding by using TIF as match for private and public funding and investment. Chapter 4 also discusses responsibilities of managing the URD and TIF-funded project.

Conclusions

The URD area is in transition. This URD Plan, along with the 2016 Downtown Master Plan can make the difference in assuring the transition is to a more vibrant and economically strong Downtown.

Projects from the previous urban renewal efforts, starting in the 1970s and ending in the first decade of the 21st century, however controversial, did revitalize business/commercial development in the historic downtown core and Great Northern area. Downtown cores, just like any properties, need continuous attention to retain them in good condition. It has been nearly 50 years since the last round of urban renewal projects was initiated and 15-20 years since most of the projects were completed. The Statement of Blight report, prepared as part of developing the URD, identified 9 of 15 statutory conditions of blight in downtown. That report and the Downtown Master Plan identify issues related to streets, connectivity, housing, safety, storm sewer, internet, pedestrian and bicycle movement, streetscapes, under-utilized property, and others.

This URD Plan provides a vision, goals and objectives to improve Downtown. One of the primary tools to accomplish that vision is the use of TIF. TIF revenues will be dedicated to projects within the URD that meet provisions of this plan and comply with state statute on use of TIF. TIF is a proven mechanism to incentivize private investment and to use a match for public sector grants.

This URD plan meets statutory provisions for approval by the Helena City Commission.

Rodney Street Area

6

RODNEY STREET AREA AMENDMENT *TO THE*

HELENA DOWNTOWN URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT



October 28, 2019

Prepared For:



City of Helena

Prepared By:



WGMGROUP™

Acknowledgments

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CITY OF HELENA

CITY COMMISSION

Wilmot Collins, Mayor
Andrews Haladay
Ed Noonan
Heather O’Loughlin
Kali Wicks

CITY STAFF

Sharon Haugen, City Community Development Director
Ellie Ray, Planner II
Michael McConnell, Planner II
Eric Spangenberg, GIS Coordinator
Stefani Reinhardt, Administrative Assistant III

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WGM GROUP, INC.

Anne Cossitt, Senior Planner
Brent Campbell, President
Anna Vickers, Planning Technician
Ashley Scully, Project Assistant
Daniel Lunde, Landscape Intern

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Executive Summary

The Rodney Street Area is slowly transitioning from an area perceived to be one of the most run-down and rowdy in Helena. Positive change in the Rodney Street Area has come slowly and almost imperceptibly over the past three decades. In the 1970s and '80s, area residents were adamant their neighborhood would not be subject to the tear-down mentality of the federal urban renewal programs that changed downtown Helena. As a result, transition from rough to revitalized in the Rodney neighborhood has not been swift nor entirely successful, but the area has retained a neighborhood integrity. Without a boost to stimulate major improvements, the area will continue to lag behind other areas in Helena.

The purpose of the proposed amendment into the Downtown Urban Renewal District (URD) is to provide the boost the neighborhood needs to rehabilitate and redevelop blighted areas and become more vital and sustainable. Becoming part of the Downtown URD will provide the Rodney Street Area with resources for implementing the neighborhood's plan for the future. As part of the Downtown URD, funding from the District's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can be used for projects that provide public benefit.

As a result of being considered for amendment, the Rodney Street neighborhood now has its first-ever plan for the future. The plan for the future (Chapter 3 of this report) initially was developed from insights gained at a focus group of approximately a dozen local residents and business owners and refined with comments received at open houses held on August 8, and September 12, 2019. Residents are passionate about this neighborhood and now is the chance to ensure it grows in way that retains the neighborhood's unique character. Amendment into the URD is an opportunity to accelerate the reinvigoration of the neighborhood.

This report provides the information required by statute for amending the Downtown URD. The proposed addition of the Rodney Street Area meets all amendment criteria.

Background and Statement of Purpose

1

Overview

This chapter introduces basic information about the Rodney Street Area proposed to be amended into the Helena Downtown Urban Renewal District (URD). This chapter describes the purpose of the amendment, geographic setting, and background on why the amendment is proposed and how it will be realized.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this report is to include the Rodney Street Area in the Helena Downtown URD with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) provisions. This amendment document will serve as the plan for addressing conditions identified in the Statement of Blight.

This amendment is intended as a separate document to the Downtown URD Plan. Changes that need to be made to the existing text and maps in the Downtown URD Plan are identified in Chapter 4 of this report.



Photo 1.1. Residential buildings on Rodney Street.

SOURCE: WGM PHOTO

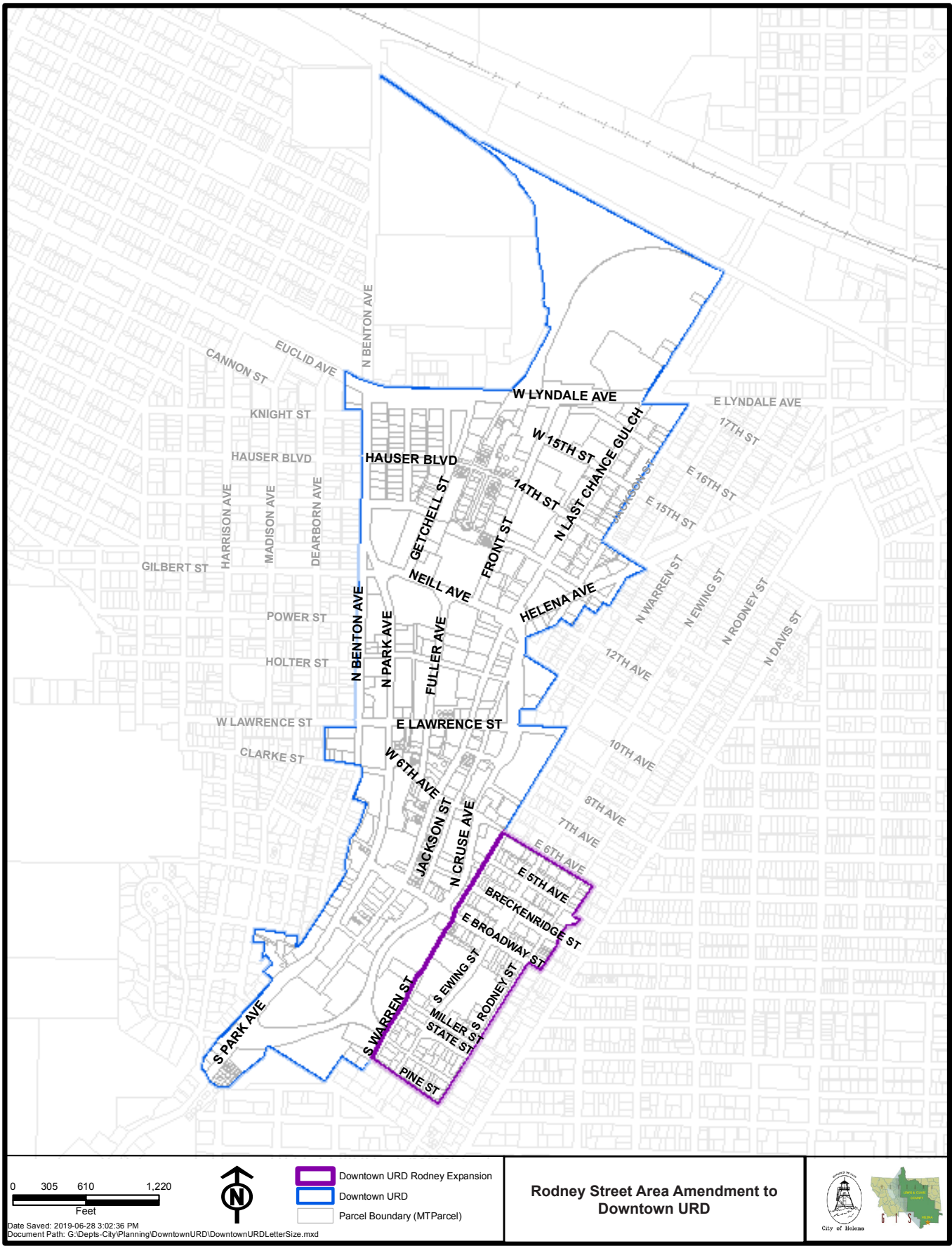


Figure 1.2. Downtown URD Area and Rodney Street Area Amendment.

Location

The Rodney Street Area lies immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the existing Downtown URD's south end along Warren Street. The Amendment Area runs east on 6th Street from Warren Street to Spencer Street alignment (now an alley), south on Spencer to Broadway, then west to Rodney Street, south on Rodney Street to Pine Street, then west to Warren Street and north back to the point of beginning. The boundaries extend to the edges of the street right-of-ways.

Project Background

Just prior to adopting the Helena Downtown URD at the end of 2018, the Helena City Commission raised the question of including an area surrounding Rodney Street. Doing so would result in several steps backward in the adoption process. The Helena City Commission agreed to adopt the Downtown URD as presented and to reconsider in 2019 the addition of Rodney Street as an amendment to the URD.

The Downtown URD is intended to improve economic vitality, create jobs, encourage investment, and generally improve infrastructure. The proposed Rodney Street Area is too small to do well as its own separate URD, so the City is considering adding it to the Downtown URD.

At the end of March 2019, the City of Helena contracted with WGM Group, Inc. to assist with amending the Rodney Street Area into the Downtown URD. The first step in that process was to assess if and how to move forward with including the Rodney Street Area.

Because the Rodney Street Area does not have a separate planning organization or neighborhood interest group, a list of approximately 18 key stakeholders were identified by the Helena Citizens Council, City Staff, and WGM Group, Inc. Stakeholders included local landowners, Montessori School, Myrna Loy Center, business owners, apartment owners, and residents. Most residents had lived there for a long-time; one person had been born at St. John's hospital; another grew up in the neighborhood. Eleven of the stakeholders were able to participate in a focus group on May 14, 2019, to explore local perceptions and desired future for the Rodney Street Area. The information from the focus group and subsequent public meetings on August 8, and September 12, 2019, form the basis for the vision and goals presented in Chapter 3 of this report.

Amendment Process

The process for including the Rodney Street Area follows the process identified in the Downtown URD Plan and applicable provisions of Montana statute as follows.

1. Documentation of Blight (Statement of Blight report)
2. City determination that the Amendment Area is blighted (formalized as a "Resolution of Necessity")
3. Consideration by the Helena URD Advisory Committee
4. Notice to Lewis and Clark County and Helena School District and opportunity to comment at a public meeting regarding the effect of Tax Increment Financing
5. Check for conformance with the Growth Policy — Planning Board review and recommendations
6. Public Hearing by the Helena City Commission
7. Adoption by City Ordinance

Although not required by the URD Plan or Montana statute, the amendment process for the Rodney Street Area includes two separate public meetings. The first meeting was held on August 8, 2019, to introduce the project and present the statement of blight and initial vision concepts. The second meeting was held on September 12, 2019, to present and obtain comments on the draft plan for the Rodney Street Area.

The Helena City Commission desires to complete the amendment process by the end of 2019.

Description of the Rodney Street Area

Overview

This chapter provides more information on the Rodney Street Area, including its history, current land uses, zoning, growth policy direction, issues, and opportunities.

Rodney Street Area — How the Boundary was Determined

Figure 2.1 provides a more detailed look at the Rodney Street Area. The boundaries were established by considering the following criteria, which are the same as those in Blight Statement for the Downtown Helena URD inclusion criteria.

Boundary Criteria:

- Must be within city limits
- Likelihood to contain areas of blight, including under-utilized property and high vacancy rates
- Boundary does not cut across existing lots
- Avoids using alleys as boundary line
- Good potential for new investment
- Advances the objectives of the Downtown Master Plan
- Area is not so big that TIF funding for projects is diffused or spread too thin to be effective

Overall Description of the Rodney Street Area

The Rodney Street Area comprises 39.53 acres, primarily on a gentle spur ridge between Davis Gulch and Last Chance Gulch. The spur ridge rises in elevation from the north to the south, becoming progressively steeper south of State Street. The Rodney Street Area's lowest points are in the vicinity of State and Miller Streets between Rodney and Warren.

Situated within walking distance of downtown Helena and the capital, the area is an eclectic mix of housing, retail, and offices. Rodney Street between 6th and Broadway Streets is a distinctive neighborhood commercial/retail area with a bank, small grocery store, laundry, hair salon, bakery, bar, and a mix of private and state government offices. Just to the west, the Myna Loy Center is a performing arts center and theater with events every day of the week. Across Ewing Street is the Justice Center, with courthouse and detention facility. Between Broadway and Miller Streets the area is dominated by the Old St. John's hospital. This facility now houses a variety of businesses and private offices, and Rocky Mountain Senior Care Center. Much of the area housing is multi-family. With the exception of the south facing block of Pine between Ewing and Rodney Streets, there is not a single block comprised solely of single family housing. Single family and multi-family types are interspersed with commercial or public uses from 6th Avenue to Miller Street. Pocha Park between Miller and State Streets is the only park in the area.

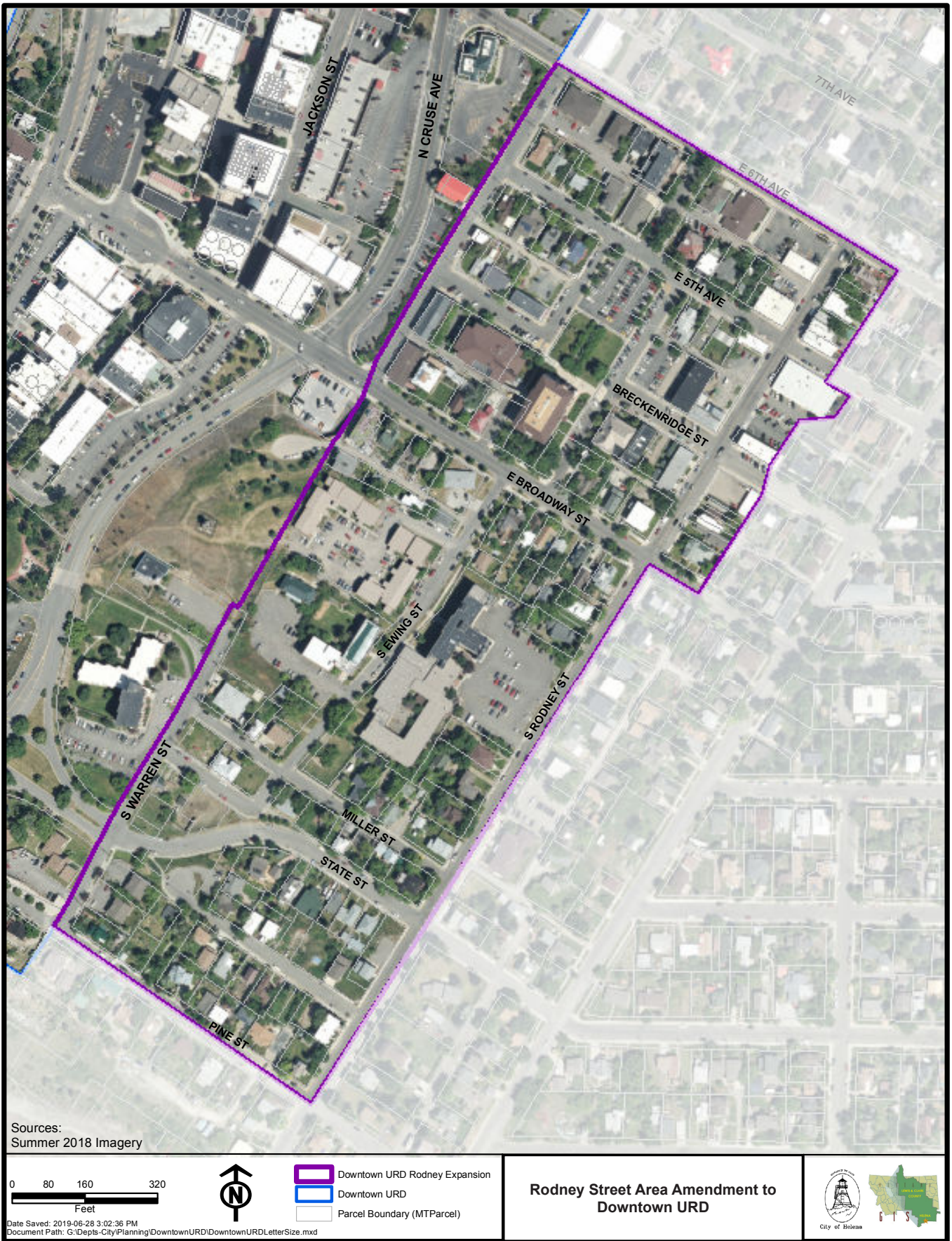


Figure 2.1. Detail of Rodney Street Area Amendment.

Rodney Street Area Quick Statistics	
Rodney Street Area Total	39.53 acres
Home-owner Residential	7.25 acres
Commercial, including residential rentals	14.91 acres
Vacant	1.81 acres
Exempt from Taxation	3.87 acres
Total number of buildings	118
Buildings built prior to 1900	67

The area is slowly transitioning from an area perceived to be one of the most rundown in Helena. The Rodney Street Area has always had a strong neighborhood feel with many lifelong residents, but it has also had a history of short-term residents, a transient component and a reputation as rough. Rowdiness has dissipated over past decades with a decrease in the number of bars from several to one, the Jester. New families are moving in and making improvements to properties, along with other improvements made by commercial building owners. The neighborhood is frequented by residents and others from throughout the City and out-of-town visitors for attractions like the Myrna Loy and retail and events on Rodney Street. Close to the south hills and recreational trails, many bicyclists also frequent the area. Locals would like to see continued improvements, but want to keep the same sort of eclectic vibe and distinct neighborhood characteristic.

Change in the Rodney Street Area has come slowly and almost imperceptibly over the past three decades. In the 1970s and '80s, area residents were adamant their neighborhood would not be subject to the tear-down mentality of the federal urban renewal programs that changed downtown Helena. As a result, transition from rough to revitalized has not been swift nor entirely successful, but the area has retained a neighborhood integrity and more of Helena's oldest historic structures than anywhere else. Without a boost to stimulate major improvements, the area will continue to lag behind other areas in Helena.



Photo 2.2. Continental Divide Trail Riders at the B&B for groceries.

SOURCE: WGM PHOTO

Rodney Street Area History

The Rodney Street neighborhood began developing soon after the 1864 discovery of gold in Helena. It was the town's first permanent residential neighborhood and commercial district, built above the heavily mined and muddy gulch bottom. State Street developed as a commercial area on the slopes of the gulch and the Rodney Street commercial area developed only slightly later. The first permanent house on Rodney Hill was built in 1867.

By the late 1870s and early 1880s, the Rodney area had achieved the status of the preferred place to live, home of the town's most prominent citizens. The Catholic Diocese established an extensive complex of schools, dormitories, cathedral, and hospital by the 1880s on

Photo 2.3.
Livery
Building on
Breckenridge
Street in July
2019.
SOURCE: WGM PHOTO



what became known as “Catholic Hill.” This area was located in the area that now includes the Old St. John’s hospital building. Just down the hill, Helena’s red light district emerged on Miller and State streets in the 1880s. The Mollie Byrnes House at 212 E. State Street is still standing, one of the few remaining structures of the red light districts in Helena.

By the early 1890s, the new and exclusive residential district on Helena’s west side attracted some of the more financially successful Rodney area residents to relocate. Owner occupancy declined and rental lodging increased. The Rodney area continued rampant growth with new multi-family housing and major public facilities including the Territorial Capitol (now the county courthouse) and new jail (now the Myrna Loy Center) until the mid-1890s. The Panic of 1893, a serious national economic depression triggered by a collapse of the silver markets, curbed the meteoric rise of Helena and other mining towns across the West. The Rodney neighborhood character changed during this time. Owner occupancy continued to decline. By 1900, construction of new buildings in the neighborhood had come to a standstill and remained in a period of stasis until 1935.

In October 1935, a series of major earthquakes struck Helena with especially severe impacts to the Rodney neighborhood. Catholic Hill was devastated with only two buildings remaining, the old hospital laundry and Immaculata Hall. Immaculata Hall is now an office building facing Ewing Street.

The inability of Helena to recover quickly from the earthquakes is a strong indicator of the shaky economy and national depression of the 1930s. The effects were magnified in the Rodney area. The area was already depressed and in decline prior to the earthquakes. Local owners, restricted by the depression’s shrinking effects on finances, were unable



Left, Photo 2.4. Housing on Ewing Street. Right, Photo 2.5. Transit stop with bench and lawn.
SOURCE: WGM PHOTOS



Photo 2.6.
Property near
Cutler and State
streets.
SOURCE: WGM PHOTO

to repair and rebuild to the same level of quality workmanship that existed prior to 1900. Of all the buildings razed on Catholic Hill after the 1935 earthquake, only the hospital and Emerson school (now school district administration offices) were eventually rebuilt on the hill. A large number of buildings remained vacant for years.

By the late 1970s and '80s, Rodney area residents were still strongly tied to the area, but the area had become a bit shabby. The Rodney Street neighborhood became known as a more sordid side of Helena, with multiple bars and prostitutes. The Rodney neighborhood was touched only slightly by the downtown urban renewal of the 1970s, most notably with the reconfiguration of Cutler Avenue and State Street.

By the 1980s and 1990s, the area began to renew on the strength of local owners and residents. The Helena South-Central Historic District was established in 1986 encompassing an area south of Broadway between Cruse Avenue and Davis Street. North of Broadway, local owners began renovating their buildings. The Weinstein building at 101 Rodney Street and the Myrna Loy Center are notable examples of the changes occurring during the 1980s and 1990s.

In the past decade, owners have built momentum, cleaning up properties and renovating buildings. Rodney Street continues as a neighborhood commercial area with a bakery, grocery, bar, bank, beauty shop, and offices.

Existing Conditions

Existence of Blight

The Statement of Blight report documented six of the 15 blight factors identified in Montana statute. This is important because an area proposed for amendment into an Urban Renewal District must first be determined to contain blight. The following provides key points about the six types of blight found in the Rodney Street Area.

- 1) The substantial physical dilapidation, deterioration, age obsolescence, or defective construction, material, and arrangement of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential

Almost 60 percent of all buildings in the Rodney Street Area were built prior to 1900. Many buildings do not have air conditioning, universal accessibility, high speed internet, open work space, updated bathrooms, and updated electrical and plumbing. A few buildings are vacant and boarded up, inviting vandalism.

Property values in the Rodney Street Area are not increasing as rapidly as the city overall.

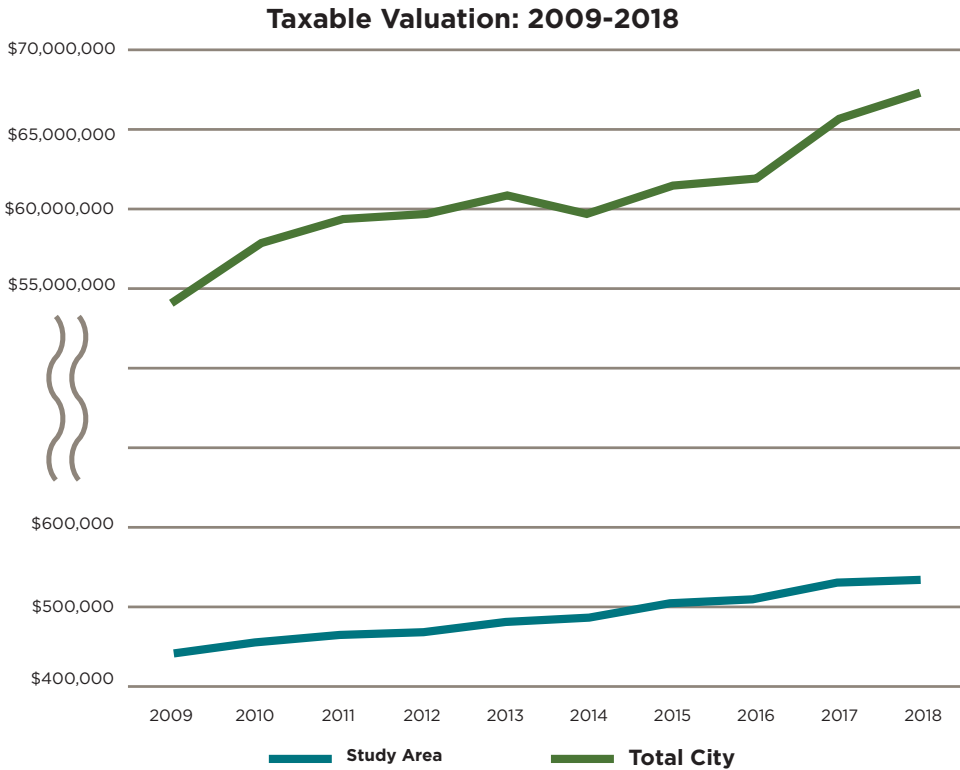


Figure 2.7. Taxable Valuation for Rodney Street Area and city-wide.
SOURCE: CITY OF HELENA FIGURES FROM THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

- 2) Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, proper sanitary facilities, or open spaces as determined by competent appraisers on the basis of an examination of the building standards of the municipality

Building codes are much more detailed now than when most buildings in the Rodney Street Area were constructed. When a building owner wishes to update or make changes to a building, building code requirements could require replacement of knob-and-tube electrical, installation of fire sprinklers, ADA access, asbestos remediation, and reconfiguration of interior space. Understandably, some owners may delay improvements that might trigger far more expensive building code requirements. This creates a cycle that also delays the kinds of improvements that make the building more competitive in the market. It can also result in serious deferred long-term maintenance that leads to building obsolescence.

- 3) Defective or inadequate street layout

Defective or inadequate street layout includes the following:

- The offset of Ewing Street – Ewing Street jogs to the east around the court house complex.
- Super-long blocks south of Broadway. These very long blocks make it more difficult to move around in the neighborhood and function as barriers to connections downtown.
- Alignment of Cutler, Ewing, and State streets – This is an odd street configuration

that can be confusing to navigate by car, bike or on foot. These streets were realigned as part of 1970s urban renewal to connect Cutler to S. Cruse with on/off ramp lanes separated by green space. The west portion of Cutler was curved to join with State Street. The final configuration resulted in the east portion of Cutler as a dead-end street, and an odd elbow where S. Ewing would have intersected with State Street.

- Half-Streets and Dead-Ends.



Figure 2.8. Street layout issues.

- 4) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness

The re-alignment of State Street and associated changes to Ewing, E. Cutler have resulted in loss of usefulness of lots, especially on both sides of Cutler just east of Warren Street. The right-of-way takes up only a portion of the lots and the remaining portions may have potential for development.

- 5) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions

Streets in the Rodney Street Area have heaves, potholes, crumbling curbs, and a patchwork of repairs that make it hazardous to drive, bike, or walk. Some of the repairs are linked to issues with underground utilities, including storm drainage. Poor street condition is especially noticeable on Rodney Street. The City of Helena is planning to start improvements to Rodney Street in Spring of 2020.

- 6) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes

The Rodney Street Area is in an area with earthquake potential. The Rodney Street Area includes conditions that can exacerbate fire spread and damage — not all buildings have fire sprinklers or fire alarms.

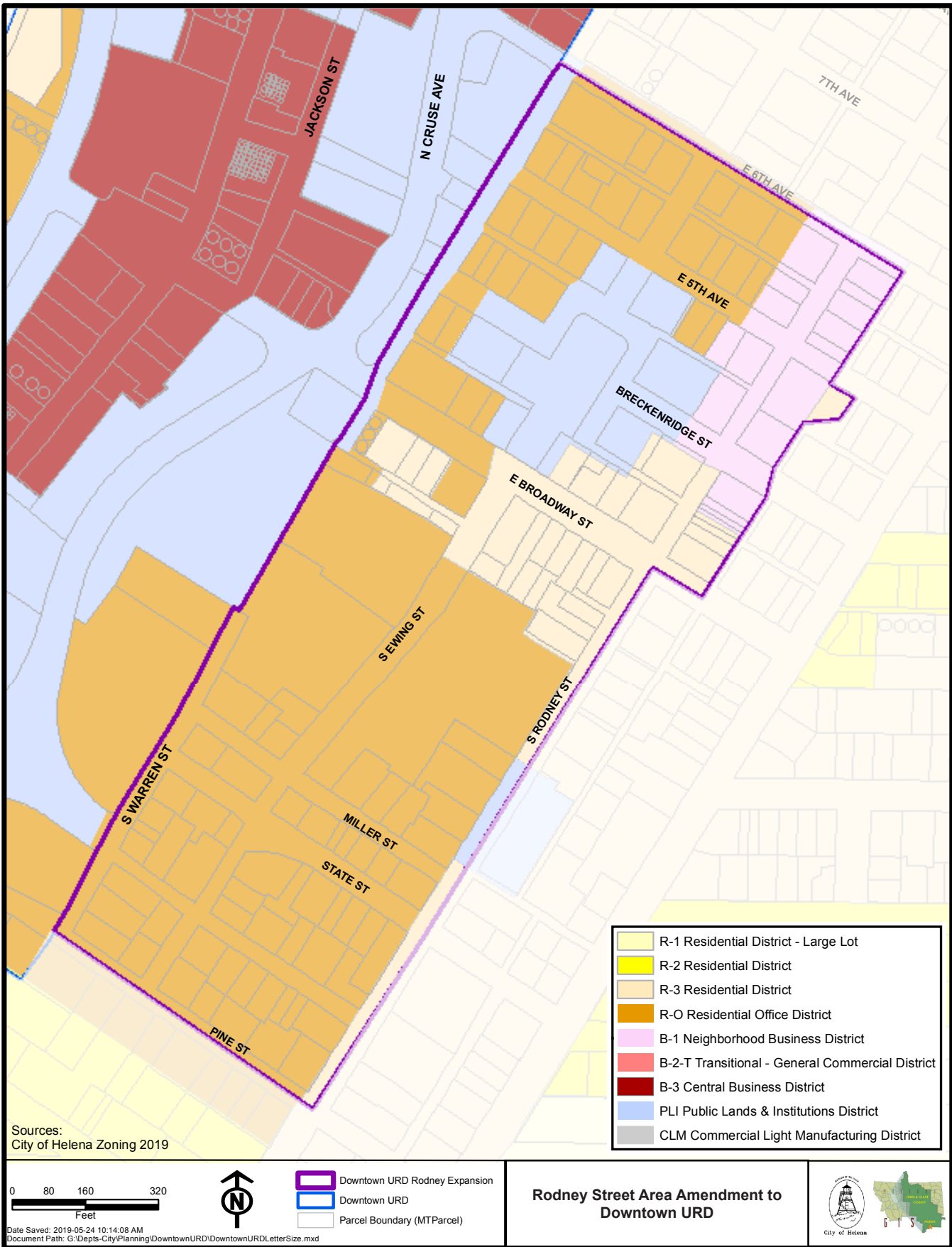


Figure 2.9. Existing zoning.

Zoning

Current zoning in the Rodney Street Area is shown on Figure 2.9.

Existing Zoning Districts in the Rodney Street Area

The following are general descriptions of the current zoning districts. The zoning code includes additional specific standard for lot sizes, maximum heights, and building setbacks.

- R-3** Residential — provides for a mixture of residential structures to serve varied housing needs and allows limited compatible nonresidential uses.

- R-O** Residential Office — provides for a compatible mix of higher density residential development with professional and business offices and associated service uses.

- B-1** Neighborhood Business — provides for a compatible mixture of residential, public, and small scale commercial uses that serve as transitions between zoning districts.

- PLI** Public Lands and Institutions

Future Land Use

The City's Growth Policy provides general direction for future land uses. The City is currently in the process of updating the 2011 Growth Policy. Until an update is adopted, the guiding document is the 2011 Growth Policy.

2011 Growth Policy Future Land Use Designations in the Rodney Street Area

The City's 2011 Growth Policy future land use designations for the Rodney Street Area are shown in Figure 10. The Rodney Street Area is comprised of Mixed Use and Urban designations. Growth Policy land use classifications are intended as a general guide and boundaries are not absolute.

The following descriptions are verbatim from the 2011 Growth Policy.

Mixed Use (Downtown-Carroll College Area): This area is the cultural center of the City, which includes a mixture of the historic downtown with more recent development and redevelopment. Uses are predominantly commercial/office and educational (Carroll College) with some residential uses. It is desirable to encourage continuation of mixed use of this area; promote more residential uses particularly in and adjacent to the Great Northern Town Center; and promote more intense and higher density uses closer to Last Chance Gulch and Lyndale Avenue. Mixed use of services and low intensity commercial could be expanded into adjacent areas, including areas between Benton and Davis Street, while preserving the historic character of the district. Better connectivity with all areas should be encouraged.

Urban: Within the City this category includes predominantly moderate to high density residential uses; may include public uses such as schools, churches, and open lands such as parks; and occasional commercial uses that serve the immediate area or are relatively small and low intensity. Within the County, it includes areas closer to the City; areas with few development constraints; areas that may be currently developed or could be redeveloped at higher densities; and may include a variety of uses including commercial and light industrial.

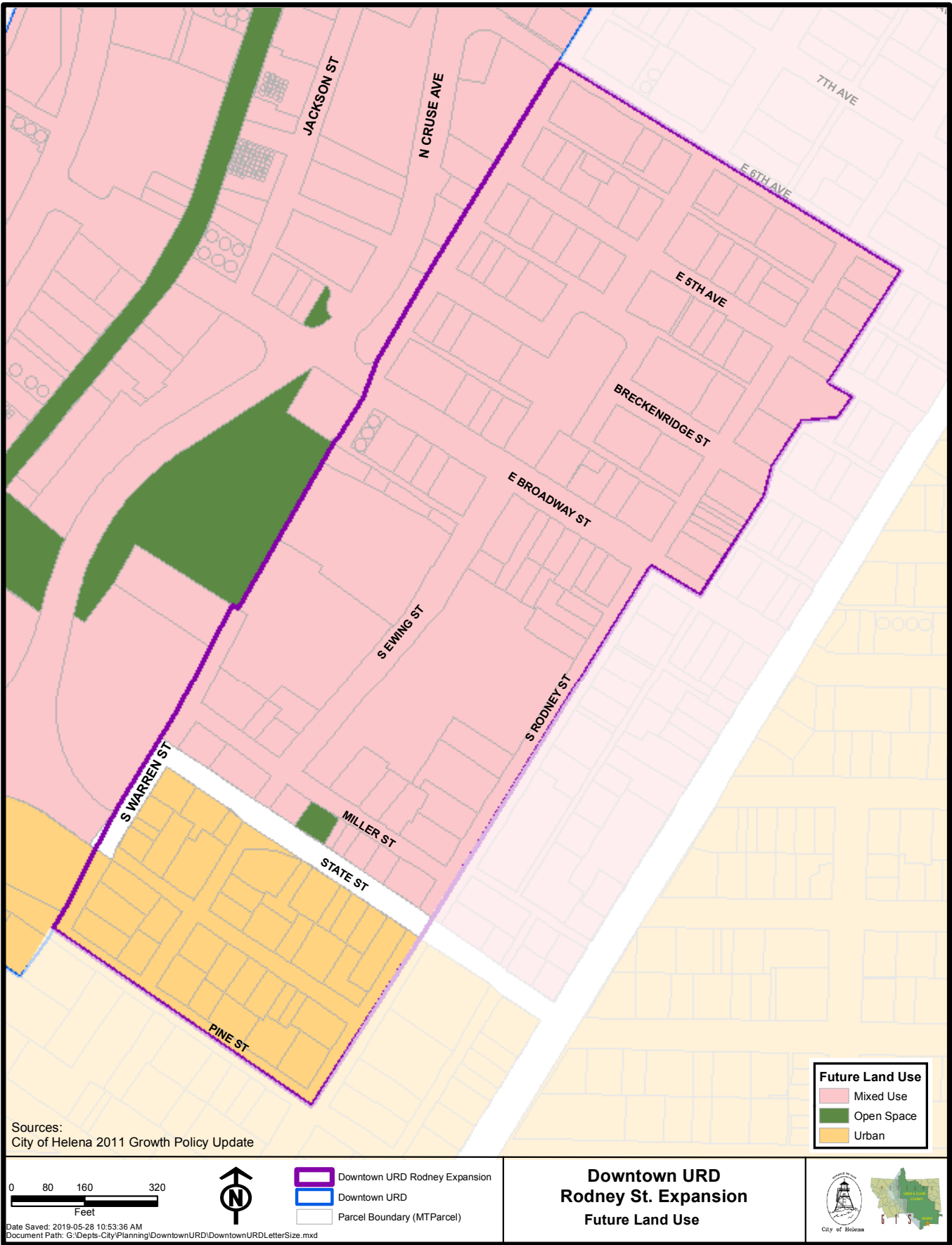
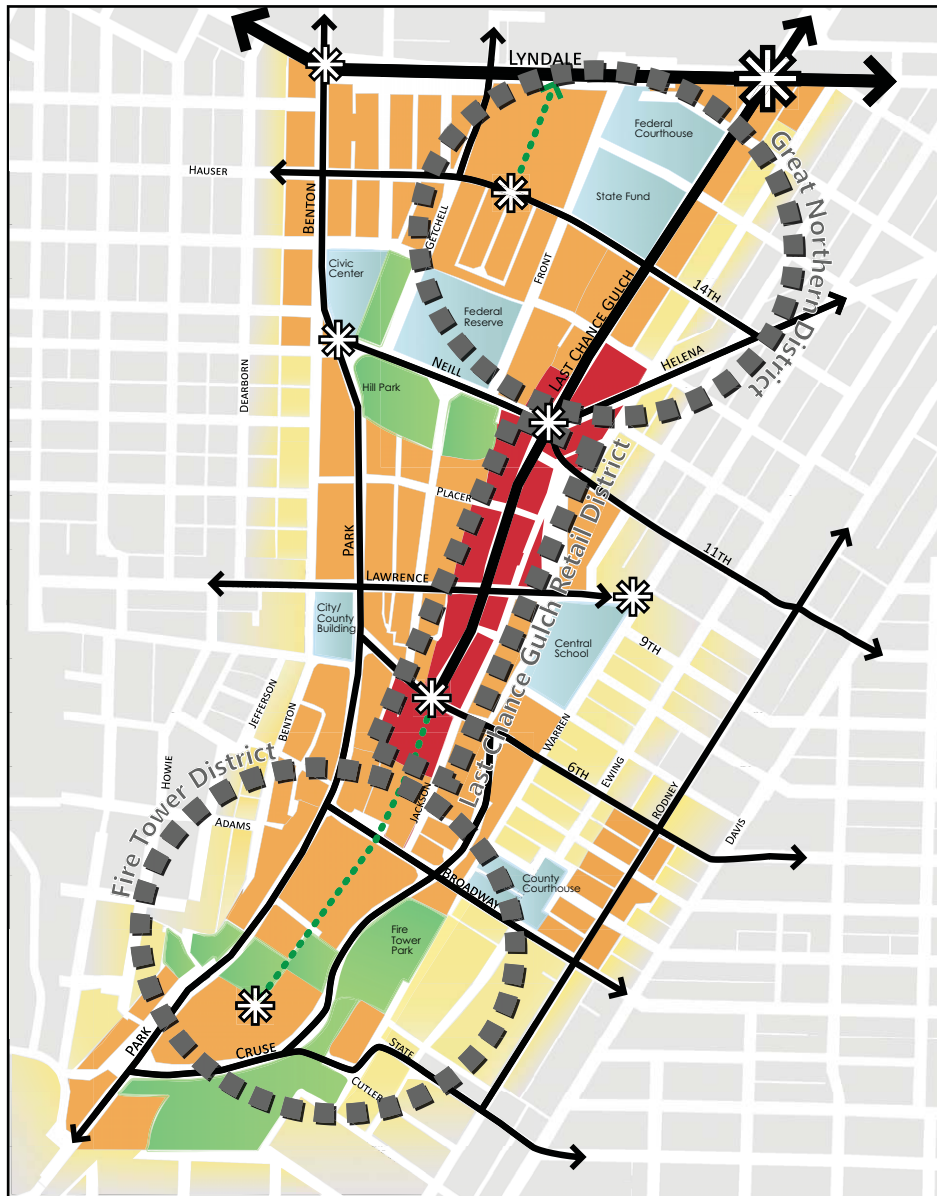


Figure 2.10. 2011 Growth Policy Future Land Use.

2016 Downtown Master Plan

The Downtown Master Plan was adopted in 2016 as an amendment to the City Growth Policy. The Rodney Street Area was peripherally included the Downtown Master Plan's "Future Land Use Framework" map. The land uses for the Rodney Street Area in the Downtown Master Plan are different from those in the 2011 Growth Policy. The Rodney Street Area, was ultimately not part of the Master Plan's goals, vision, and actions. The Rodney Street Area was not included in the downtown zoning update that resulted from recommendations in the Downtown Master Plan.



LAND USE FRAMEWORK

- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Retail
- Civic/Institutional
- Parks/Open Space
- Key Focal Points
- Primary Vehicular Circulation
- Walking Mall

0 250 500 1,000 Feet



Figure 2.11. Land use framework

Future Needs and Considerations

1. **Desire for More Commerce and a Stronger Neighborhood.** The Rodney Street Area has seen improvements over the past few decades, but could use a boost to bring more commerce and people to the neighborhood to sustain and retain the neighborhood residential character.
2. **Strong Foundation.** The Rodney commercial area is one of the few historic neighborhood centers left in Montana. It once flourished with a variety of businesses serving nearby residents, and it still retains much of the foundation of what residents need — grocery (B&B), bank, laundromat, pre-school, entertainment (Myrna Loy), bar, and hair salon. Originally designed to serve the local neighborhood, it still does that and could do it even better, and at the same time serve as a destination for others in the city and visitors from out of town.
3. **Neighborhood Plan for the Future.** This area has no neighborhood plan to guide future growth at this level. The amendment of the Rodney Street Area to the Downtown URD provides an opportunity to establish the planning foundation for the Rodney Street Area.
4. **Neighborhood Character.** Rodney Street Area is funky in a spirited, positive way, with a very diverse set of residents, where many have strong roots, and it is uniquely different from any other place in Helena. Residents are passionate about this area and want to retain its character, connected to downtown and distinctly different from downtown.
5. **History.** The Rodney Street Area history is important to residents. The area south of Broadway is part of the South-Central Historic District. The area has incredible historic resources.
6. **Central Location.** The area is central to downtown, the capital, south hills trails, churches, schools — its “walkability” is evident by the numerous people who walk to and through the area.
7. **Rodney Street Infrastructure.** The street, and water, sewer, and storm drainage facilities are in serious need of upgrades. The City plans to begin improvements in the Spring of 2020. The planning process for this Rodney Street Amendment could help shape those improvements. Consider transit stops and school bus routes in the overall plan, as both currently run along Rodney Street. Consider how the neighborhood envisions street infrastructure this neighborhood commercial center.
8. **Transit.** The bus stops on Rodney Street are well-used. The adjacent landowner has provided benches and a small green area at these stops but there is no shelter from the weather.
9. **More Residents.** You need people to make a place vibrant. Neighborhood commercial centers thrive when local residents can walk to the coffee shop, gathering spot, entertainment, day care, etc. The Rodney Street Area has underdeveloped properties, including vacant lots and portions of city right-of-way, that could be used for more housing.
10. **Parking.** All off-street parking in the Rodney Street Area is either privately owned or part of the county’s court house complex. As the area grows, more parking will be needed.
11. **Appearance.** The Rodney Street Area looks a bit neglected overall, although there are clearly some properties that are well-tended. Improving aesthetics and usefulness of streets, public places, and buildings will help attract more people and businesses to the area.

Plan for the Future

Overview

This chapter provides the broad plan for the future of the Rodney Street Area. It identifies vision, goals and objectives of the area that will guide future growth and clarify the neighborhood's place within the Downtown Urban Renewal District.

Purpose of the Plan

The Rodney Street Area plan addresses two inter-related purposes:

- 1) Establish the sub-area plan necessary to integrate the Rodney Street Area into the Downtown URD. Being included in the Downtown URD District will provide access to Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and incentives for private sector investment to address blight and build the neighborhood's economic sustainability
- 2) Provide the initial planning framework for the Rodney neighborhood to envision what it wants to become and outline a broad strategic approach for achieving the vision

Vision

The Rodney Street Area is a unique neighborhood, connected to but distinctly different from Downtown. It is a quirky, fun, and spirited residential neighborhood that has remained un-gentrified, with a broad diversity of residents, housing options, and services. The neighborhood commercial area between 6th and Broadway is the "Heart of the Neighborhood" where locals can walk to attend to basic needs like groceries, dine out or take-in meals, haircuts, and where they can socialize and be entertained at pubs, coffee shops, ice cream shops, restaurants, special events and the Myrna Loy Center. The neighborhood's distinctive, richly historic, eclectic, and relaxed atmosphere attracts new residents and visitors who add to the area's vibrancy and economic stability.



Left, Photo 3.1. Example of wide sidewalks and street furniture.

Right, Photo 3.2. Example of a food cart venue in northwest Portland.

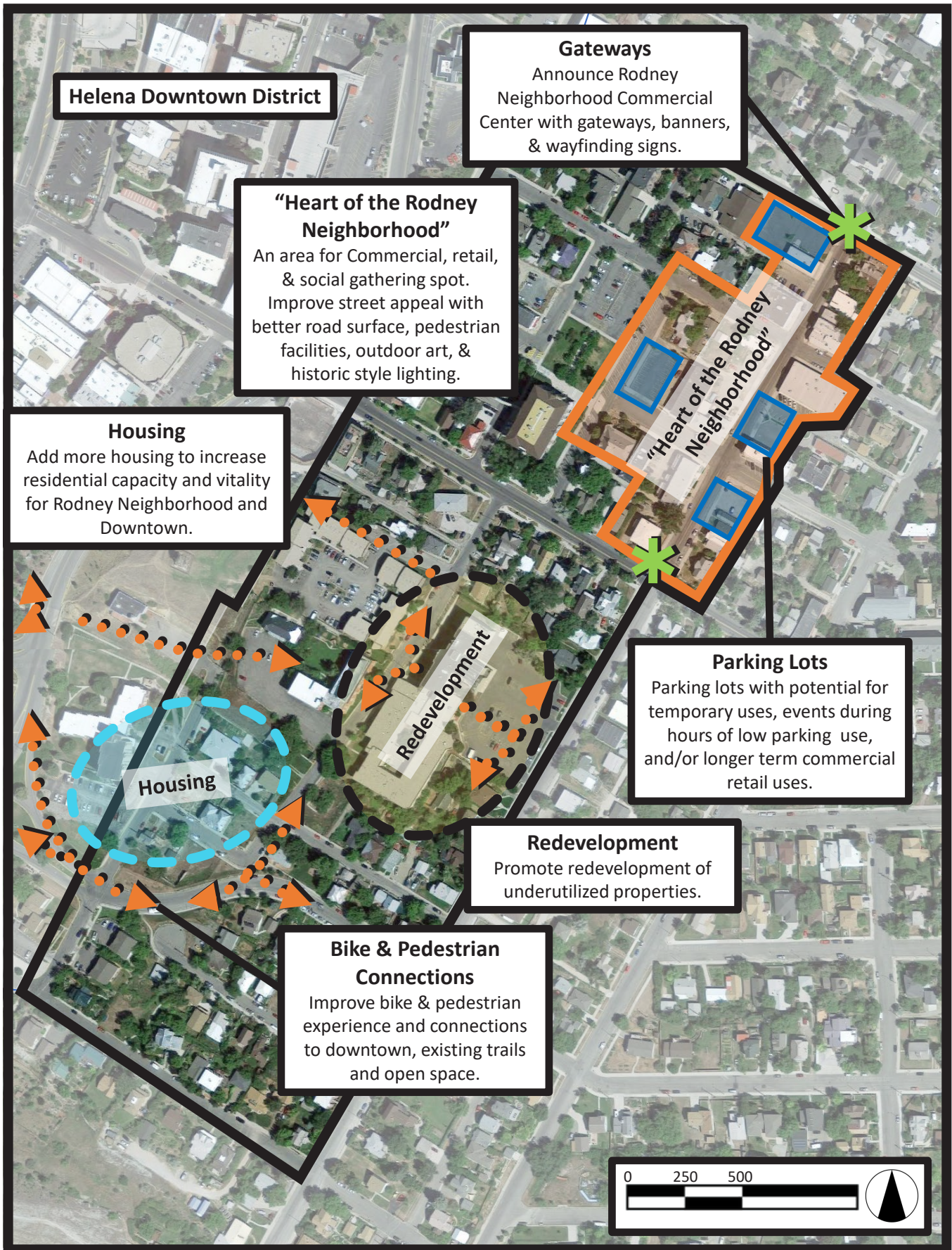


Figure 3.3. Rodney Street Area – Future Vision Concepts

Goal #1: Build Neighborhood Identity

1. Develop on the neighborhood’s foundation of an eclectic, bohemian, funky character with care to not become too sophisticated, urban, or gentrified.
2. Evaluate the need to develop a more robust plan for the neighborhood as part of the City’s Growth Policy.
3. As needed, provide guidance in the Growth Policy to ensure zoning enables this plan’s vision.¹
4. Develop design guidelines that incorporate historic neighborhood architecture and other elements of neighborhood character.
5. Include Rodney neighborhood-specific branding and marketing in the Downtown’s marketing and branding efforts.
6. Incorporate green space and trees into streetscapes, using drought tolerant species and design that can mitigate drainage impacts of storm events.

Goal #2: Stimulate Vibrancy with a Mix of Uses

1. Retain the neighborhood character, allowing for mixed uses, a variety of residential types, and a central commercial area. Buildings height should reflect what is already in the area, mostly limited to not more than three stories, with the possible exception of taller buildings in the commercial center.²
2. Keep the area primarily residential with a range of housing types intermixed with offices and local government uses.
3. Increase residential capacity with a focus on vacant or under-utilized lots, particularly in the area around Cutler, State and Warren, where city of right of way has more capacity than is used for existing streets.
4. Retain the Rodney Street Commercial Center as the primary area for retail, with potential for housing and offices on upper floors.

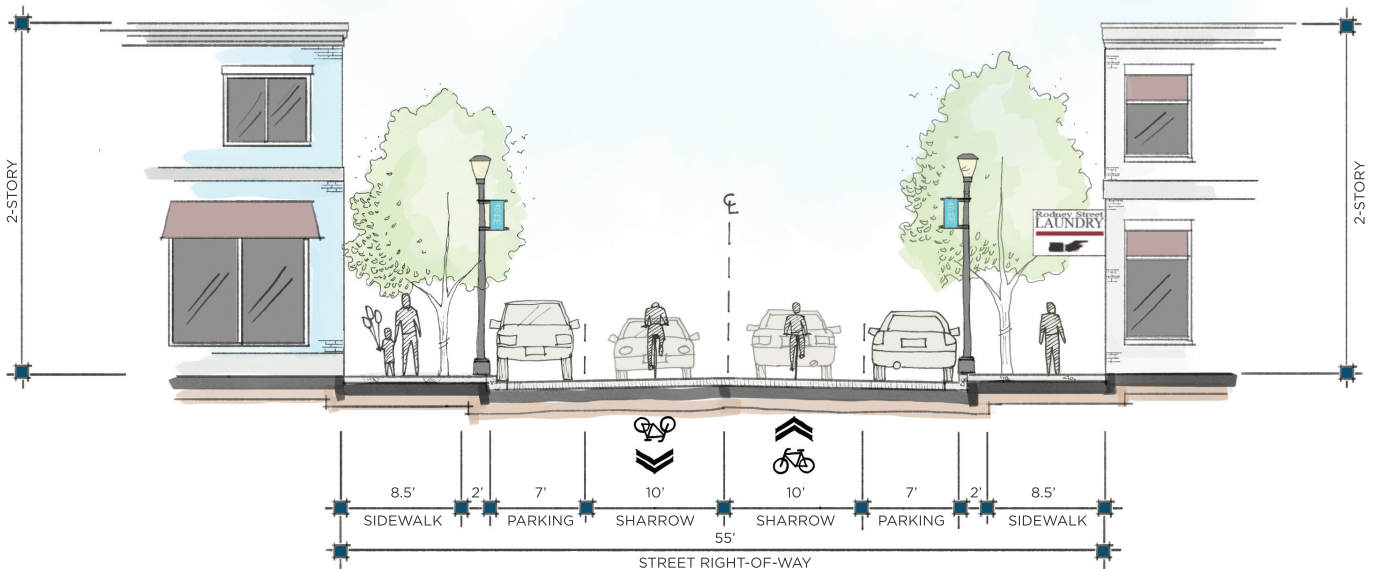


Figure 3.4. Example schematic of Rodney Street design (dimensions are illustrative, not final).
SOURCE: WGM ILLUSTRATION

¹ Growth policies are the basis for zoning. The 2011 Growth Policy provides considerable flexibility for zoning that achieves the Rodney Street Area vision with the land use categories of “Mixed Use” and “Urban.” A neighborhood plan adopted into the Growth Policy could provide more specificity if needed.

² The neighborhood building heights are recommended to create a distinctive break from the new downtown zoning that has no height maximums.

Goal #3: Reinitalize the Rodney Street Commercial Center

1. Retain and build the Neighborhood Commercial Center as the “Heart of the Neighborhood” — the center for retail, commercial, and social gathering.
2. Improve Rodney Street functionality, infrastructure, and aesthetics between 6th and Broadway.
 - a. Two-way traffic with on-street parking
 - b. Wide sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians, street furniture, traffic signage, lighting
 - c. Signage, hardscape and landscape design that improves aesthetics and visual interest and provides visual connection to businesses
 - d. Review proposed improvements to Rodney Street between 6th and Broadway Street for compliance with this plan
3. Create gateways with signage, banners, and wayfinding signage at both ends of the Commercial Center.
4. Create better linkages between the court house complex, Myrna Loy Center and Rodney Street.
5. Incorporate public art that differentiates the area from downtown in a fun and funky interactive way.
6. Monitor parking demand and identify potential for temporary uses, like a food truck venue, events during hours of low parking use and potential longer term transition to parking structures with ground floor retail uses and parking above or below.

Goal #4: Upgrade Underperforming Properties

1. Encourage development of vacant lots.
2. Encourage redevelopment and building upgrades to buildings that lack adequate safety, access, or other issues that prevent highest and best use of the property.

Goal #5: Improve Transit, Pedestrian, and Bike Connections

1. Improve pedestrian and bike connections in the southern portion of the neighborhood, where linkages to downtown are lacking and long blocks and irregular streets lack connectivity.
2. Improve pedestrian linkages between the Neighborhood, Fire Tower Park and the pedestrian walkway/underpass at Cruse Avenue.
3. Provide shelter that fits with neighborhood character at transit stops on Rodney Street.
4. Develop neighborhood streets as “complete” streets and review street traffic signage and intersection configurations for safety and efficiency for motorists and non-motorists.

How this Rodney Street Area Plan Integrates with the Downtown URD Plan

With few exceptions, the goals and objectives of the Downtown District Plan apply equally to the Rodney Street Area and should be considered incorporated by reference into the Rodney Street Area Plan.

The exceptions that do not apply to the Rodney Street Area are:

Goal #2: Objective #4.

Complete process of rezoning Downtown area to encourage more mixed use and ground floor active use

Rationale: The Rodney Street Area Plan should form the basis for any zone changes, consistent with the Growth Policy or a Rodney Street Neighborhood Plan that is amended into the Growth Policy.



Photo 3.5. “Trash to Treasure” transit stop reuses soft drink bottles in Lexington, Kentucky.
SOURCE: [HTTPS://NEXTCITY.ORG/DAILY/ENTRY/PUBLIC-ART-BUS-STOPS-PHOTOS](https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/public-art-bus-stops-photos)

Goal #6, Objective #3.

Emphasize the unique and historic walking mall and make improvements to attract more businesses and activities

Rationale: The walking mall is not in the Rodney Street Area District.

Rodney Street Area Plan Conformance with the Growth Policy

At their regularly scheduled meeting on October 15, 2019, the Lewis and Clark County/City of Helena Planning Board finalized a recommendation to the City Commission that the Rodney Street Area Amendment conforms to the 2011 Growth Policy and Downtown Neighborhood Plan.

The Rodney Street Area Amendment conforms to the 2011 Growth Policy goals and objectives on economic conditions, housing, transportation, and culture. It also conforms to the 2011 Growth Policy direction on land use because it promotes mixed uses; encourages infill development and using existing infrastructure to guide development projects; and it identifies the need for pedestrian facilities to encourage a more cohesive neighborhood. The “Mixed Use” and “Urban” land use types in the 2011 Growth Policy provide flexibility for zoning to achieve the Rodney Street Area vision as generally described here in this URD Amendment document. The Rodney Street Area vision and plan conform to the goals, objectives, and land use direction of the 2011 Growth Policy.

The Rodney Street Area Amendment to the Downtown Urban Renewal District complies with the Downtown Neighborhood Plan’s goals of creating a downtown brand, a dynamic environment, capitalizing on historic assets, updating and managing infrastructure, and connecting downtown with transit, non-motorized networks, and improved vehicle circulation.

Implementation

Overview

This chapter identifies how the Rodney Street Area Amendment will be integrated into the implementation section of the Downtown URD Plan. The following examines each section of the Downtown URD Plan Implementation Chapter and identifies where changes are needed.

Funding Sources

There are no changes needed to this section to incorporate the Rodney Street Area amendment. Tax Increment Funding (TIF) as a primary source of funding will apply to the entire District including the Rodney Street Area. The effects of TIF on the county and school district are described in the Downtown URD Plan. The effect of this amendment on the county and school district will be the addition of the Rodney Street Area to the total area that includes TIF provisions.

Other funding sources described in the Downtown URD plan apply to the Rodney Street Area, including the Opportunity Zone.

Timeline, Initial Implementation and Next Steps

The timeline for the District began with its approval a year ago. The initial implementation and Guiding Principles would apply to the Rodney Street Area once amended; no changes are needed.

The next steps for the Downtown URD already are underway. The organization and management of the URD has begun and the Rodney Street Area will need to be incorporated into that. The list of potential project priorities does not include Rodney Street improvements.

Revise the list of potential project priorities to include:

The exact change to the existing Downtown URD language is shown below with new text underlined.

- Evaluate the need to develop a more robust and detailed plan for the neighborhood as part of the City's Growth Policy to ensure the vision can be realized with clear linkage to the growth policy and with zoning that enables this plan's vision.
- Including the Rodney Street Area in any baseline inventories, branding, and marketing efforts of the Downtown
- Coordination of infrastructure improvements to Rodney Street proposed to begin in 2020 to align with the goals and objectives of the Rodney Street Area Amendment Plan

Provisions for Displaced Residents

This section will apply to the entire Downtown District, including the Rodney Street Area, once the amendment is completed.

Administration

This section needs to be revised to indicate that at least two of the 11-member Advisory Committee will be from the Rodney Street Area, one of whom will be a resident.

Revise the Advisory Committee membership as follows:

The exact change to the existing Downtown URD language is shown below with new text underlined.

The Advisory Committee shall be appointed by the City Commission and consist of not more than 11 individuals representing the following sectors. At least two of the committee members will be from the Rodney Street Area, one of whom must be a Rodney Street Area resident:

- Businesses
- Landowners
- Residents
- Low-Income Non-Profit Sector
- Realtor
- School District
- County Representative
- Helena Business Improvement District
- Two At-Large Representatives
- Board Member from the Heritage Preservation and Tourism Development Council

Project Selection Process and Criteria

No change is needed to this section.

Initial Project Criteria

Revise the project selection criteria as follows:

The exact change to the existing Downtown URD language is shown below with new text underlined.

1. Achieves the vision, goals, and objectives of the URD Plan as revised by the Rodney Street Area Amendment
2. Meets the statutory criteria for use of TIF funds
3. Conforms to the Downtown Master Plan and current Growth Policy
4. Incentivizes private investment
5. Provides a good return on investment

Annual Reports

No change to this section.

Amendment

No change to this section.

Other

The map and legal description of the entire Downtown District, including the Rodney Street Amendment Area will need to be updated. The map and legal description of the amended boundary are included in Appendix A.

Conclusions

Overview

This chapter reiterates the purpose of the amendment and discusses how this document meets that purpose. It also reviews how the plan meets the statutory criteria for approving the amendment.

Amending the Downtown URD Plan

The Helena City Commission wishes to amend the Downtown URD to include the Rodney Street Area. The purpose is to rehabilitate and redevelop blighted areas and accelerate revitalization by incentivizing private sector development with TIF funding for projects with public benefit.

The following identifies each of the required steps for approving the amendment and how each has been met:

1. Documentation of Blight. The Statement of Blight report was completed in July.
2. City determination that the Amendment Area is blighted. The City Commission adopted Resolution of Necessity No. 20554 on August 26, 2019.
3. Consideration by the Helena URD Advisory Committee. This is a requirement in the Downtown URD plan in Chapter 4, under the section on “Administration” which states the Advisory Committee will advise on amendments to the URD. The Downtown URD was created less than one year ago and the Advisory Committee has not yet been fully established. Therefore, this requirement is not applicable at the current time.
4. Notice to Lewis and Clark County and Helena School District and opportunity to comment at a public meeting regarding the effect of Tax Increment Financing. The County and School District were sent notices for the two open houses and the public hearing.
5. Check for conformance with the Growth Policy. The Planning Board determined conformance with the Growth Policy on October 15, 2019.
6. Public Hearing by the Helena City Commission. The City Commission held a public hearing on November 18.
7. Adoption by City Ordinance (Schedule for adoption is November 18).

Criteria for approval

The Rodney Street Amendment must also satisfy statutory criteria for approval of a URD by the City Commission.

1. *A workable and feasible plan exists for making available adequate housing for the persons who may be displaced by the project.*

This is addressed in Chapter 4 of this Amendment and Chapter 4 of the Downtown URD Plan.

2. *The urban renewal plan conforms to the comprehensive plan or parts thereof for the municipality as a whole.*

The Planning Board determined the Rodney Street Area Amendment conforms to the growth policy at their regular board meeting on Oct 15, 2019. Refer to Appendix C.

3. *The urban renewal plan will afford maximum opportunity, consistent with the sound needs of the municipality as a whole, for the rehabilitation or redevelopment of the urban renewal area by private enterprise.*

The purpose of this amendment is to accelerate revitalization of the area, and rehabilitation and redevelopment of blighted areas by incentivizing private sector development with TIF funding for projects with public benefit.

4. *A sound and adequate financial program exists for the financing of said project.*

Chapter 4 of this report addresses that topic and Chapter 4 of the URD plan lists potential funding sources to fund projects. TIF revenues are anticipated to be the foundation for diversified funding by using TIF as match for private and public funding and investment. Chapter 4 of the Downtown URD also discusses responsibilities of managing the URD and TIF-funded project.

Conclusions

The Rodney Street area contains blight and rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of those blighted areas is needed. The Rodney Street area is in transition and could use a boost to ensure the area becomes more vigorous economically and socially. Amending the Rodney Street Area into the Downtown URD can provide that extra incentive for private sector revitalization. In the process of developing this amendment, the Rodney Street Area has its first-ever vision to guide future actions in a way that will retain the area's unique character.

Amending the Rodney Street Area as described in this document meets statutory provisions for approval by the Helena City Commission.

Helena Downtown Urban Renewal Plan

Appendices



Prepared By:



WGMGROUP

Prepared For:



City of Helena

Contents

Appendix A: Legal Description of Boundaries and Map as updated in 2019 to include the Rodney Street Area Amendment

Appendix B: Downtown Urban Renewal District Statement of Blight

Appendix C: Public Participation and Comments

Public Meeting - March 27, 2018

Public Meeting - July 24, 2018

Planning Board Meeting - August 21, 2018

City Public Hearing - September 24, 2018

Written Comments Received

Appendix D: Urban Renewal Powers Under State Law

■ APPENDIX A

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF BOUNDARIES AND MAP AMENDED IN 2019 TO INCLUDE THE RODNEY STREET AREA



ALL THOSE TRACTS OF LAND AND STREET RIGHTS-OF-WAYS IN SECTIONS 19, 30 AND 31 IN TOWNSHIP 10 NORTH, RANGE 3 WEST AND SECTIONS 25 AND 36 IN TOWNSHIP 10 NORTH RANGE 4 WEST, PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA, LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY, MONTANA, WITHIN THE CURRENT CITY LIMITS, AND BEING WITHIN THE BOUNDS DESCRIBED BELOW:

BEGINNING AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF JACKSON STREET AND THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EAST ELYNDALE AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID JACKSON STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EAST 14TH STREET;

THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID EAST 14TH STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF HELENA AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID HELENA AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF LOGAN STREET;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID LOGAN STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EAST 13TH STREET;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID EAST 13TH STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF LOGAN STREET;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID LOGAN STREET TO THE SOUTHERLY MOST CORNER OF THAT CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND DESCRIBED IN BOOK M48, PAGE 4868;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY LINE OF SAID TRACT OF LAND DESCRIBED IN BOOK M48, PAGE 4868 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE ALLEY FOR BLOCK 12 OF CENTRAL ADDITION;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE ALLEY FOR SAID BLOCK 12 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF 12TH AVENUE;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID 12TH AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF JACKSON STREET;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID JACKSON STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF 12TH AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY TO THE INTERSECTION OF THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID JACKSON STREET AND THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE ALLEY FOR BLOCK 5 OF CENTRAL ADDITION;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE ALLEY FOR SAID BLOCK 5 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH CRUSE AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHERLY TO THE INTERSECTION OF EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID NORTH CRUSE AVENUE WITH THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF 11TH AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID 11TH AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF LOGAN STREET;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID LOGAN STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH NORTH LINE OF BLOCK 416 OF THE HELENA TOWNSITE;

THENCE WESTERLY ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID BLOCK 416 OF THE HELENA TOWNSITE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH CRUSE AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID NORTH CRUSE AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EAST LAWRENCE STREET;

THENCE EASTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID EAST LAWRENCE STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH WARREN STREET;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID NORTH WARREN STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EAST 6TH AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EAST 6TH AVENUE TO THE NORTHEASTERLY CORNER OF LOT 8 IN BLOCK 45 OF HELENA TOWNSITE 1869;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY LINES OF LOTS 1 THROUGH 8 IN LAST SAID BLOCK 45 AND IT'S SOUTHWESTERLY PROLONGATION TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EAST 5TH AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EAST 5TH AVENUE TO THE EASTERLY MOST CORNER OF LOT 6-A OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3109910;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY LINES OF LOTS 6-A AND LOT 2-A OF SAID CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3109910 TO THE SOUTHERLY MOST CORNER OF SAID LOT 2-A;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY TO THE NORTHEASTERLY CORNER OF LOT 12 IN BLOCK 36 OF HELENA TOWNSITE 1869;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY LINES OF LOTS 6 THROUGH 12 IN LAST SAID BLOCK 36 AND IT'S SOUTHWESTERLY PROLONGATION TO THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EAST BROADWAY STREET;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EAST BROADWAY STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SOUTH RODNEY STREET;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SOUTH RODNEY STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF PINE STREET;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF PINE STREET TO THE EASTERLY MOST CORNER OF LOT 33-34A OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 497812;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY LINE OF LOT 33-34A OF SAID CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 497812 TO THE SOUTHERLY MOST CORNER OF SAID CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 497812;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHWESTERLY LINES OF SAID CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 497812 AND LOT 32A1 OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 600657 TO THE SOUTHEASTERLY LINE OF PARCEL 4 OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 248946;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY AND NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY AND SOUTHWESTERLY LINES OF PARCEL 4 OF SAID CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 248946 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SOUTH CRUSE AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SOUTH CRUSE AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE EASTERLY LINE OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 252350;

THENCE SOUTHERLY, SOUTHWESTERLY, WESTERLY AND NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY, SOUTHEASTERLY, SOUTHERLY AND SOUTHWESTERLY LINES OF SAID CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 252350 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF WEST MAIN STREET;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF WEST MAIN STREET AND THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF REEDERS VILLAGE DRIVE;

THENCE NORTHERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID REEDERS VILLAGE DRIVE TO THE SOUTHWESTERLY MOST CORNER OF LOT 41A OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3013758;

THENCE NORTHEASTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY LINE OF LOT 41A OF SAID CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3013758 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF TAYLOR STREET;

THENCE NORTHEASTERLY TO THE INTERSECTION OF THE NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF TAYLOR STREET AND THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF PARK STREET;

THENCE NORTHEASTERLY ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF PARK STREET AND ALSO THE NORTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SOUTH PARK AVENUE TO THE SOUTHWESTERLY LINE OF PARCEL 1 OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3011503;

THENCE NORTHWESTERLY, NORTHEASTERLY, NORTHERLY, WESTERLY, EASTERLY AND SOUTHERLY ALONG THE WESTERLY, NORTHERLY AND EASTERLY LINES OF SAID

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 3011503 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE WESTERLY LINE OF THAT CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND DESCRIBED IN BOOK M22, PAGE 2144;

THENCE SOUTHERLY AND SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG THE WESTERLY AND SOUTHERLY LINES OF SAID CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND DESCRIBED IN BOOK M22, PAGE 2144 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE WESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE ALLEY IN BLOCK 61 OF HELENA TOWNSITE BLOCKS 12, 61 AND 187;

THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE WESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE ALLEY IN SAID BLOCK 61 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH COMMON LINE BETWEEN BLOCKS 12 AND 61 OF SAID HELENA TOWNSITE BLOCKS 12, 61 AND 187;

THENCE NORTHEASTERLY ALONG THE COMMON LINE BETWEEN SAID BLOCKS 12 AND 61 TO THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE ALLEY IN BLOCK 12 OF THE SECOND SUBDIVISION OF THE LAST CHANCE REVISION OF A PORTION OF THE ORIGINAL TOWNSITE OF HELENA;

THENCE WESTERLY AND NORTHERLY ALONG THE SOUTHERLY AND WESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINES OF THE ALLEY IN SAID BLOCK 12 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EDWARDS STREET;

THENCE NORTHEASTERLY TO THE INTERSECTION OF THE NORTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EDWARDS STREET AND THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE ALLEY IN BLOCK 12 OF SAID SECOND SUBDIVISION OF THE LAST CHANCE REVISION OF A PORTION OF THE ORIGINAL TOWNSITE OF HELENA;

THENCE NORTHEASTERLY, NORTHERLY AND NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY AND SOUTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINES OF THE ALLEY IN SAID BLOCK 12 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH BENTON AVENUE;

THENCE NORTHEASTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH BENTON AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF CLARKE STREET;

THENCE NORTHERLY TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF CLARKE STREET AND THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH BENTON AVENUE;

THENCE WESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF CLARK STREET TO THE SOUTHWESTERLY CORNER OF THAT CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND DESCRIBED IN BOOK M 46, PAGE 6252;

THENCE NORTHERLY ALONG THE WESTERLY LINE OF THAT CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND DESCRIBED IN SAID BOOK M 46, PAGE 6252 TO THE NORTHWESTERLY CORNER OF SAID CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND;

THENCE NORTHERLY TO THE SOUTHEASTERLY CORNER OF THAT CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND DESCRIBED IN BOOK M 29, PAGE 9009;

THENCE NORTHERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY LINE OF THAT CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND DESCRIBED IN SAID BOOK M 29, PAGE 9009 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF WEST LAWRENCE STREET;

THENCE EASTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID WEST LAWRENCE STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE WESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH BENTON AVENUE;

THENCE NORTHERLY ALONG THE WESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH BENTON AVNEUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF KNIGHT STREET;

THENCE WESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID KNIGHT STREET TO THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE ALLEY IN BLOCK 12 OF HAUSER ADDITION;

THENCE NORTHERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE ALLEY IN SAID BLOCK 12 AND IT'S NORTHERLY PROLONGATION TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF EUCLID AVENUE;

THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG THE NORTHEASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID EUCLID AVENUE AND THE NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF WEST ELYNDALE AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH WESTERLY LINE OF TRACT B-4A OF CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY NO. 619517;

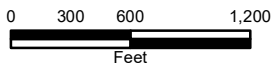
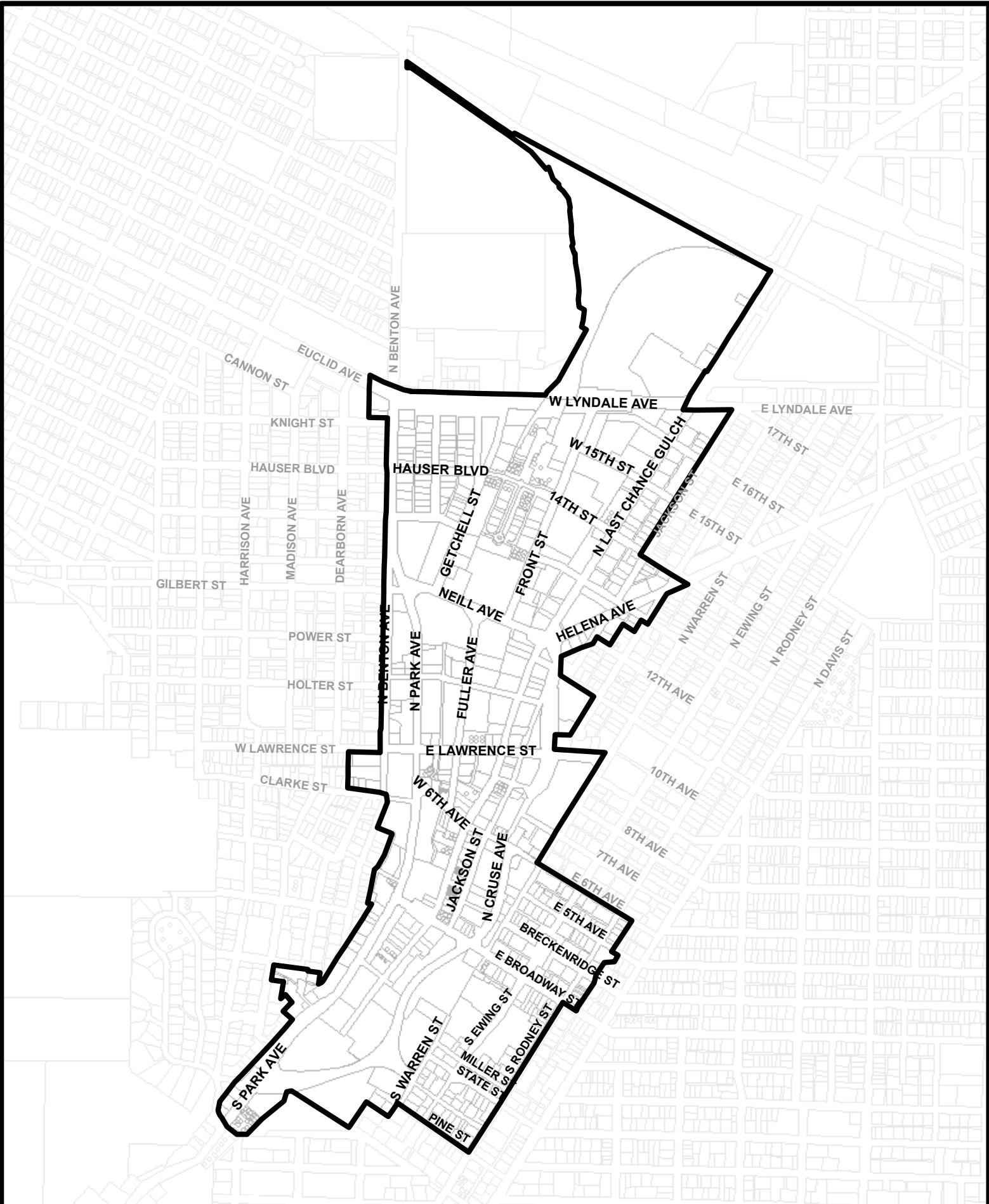
THENCE NORTHWESTERLY, WESTERLY, NORTHERLY AND SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG THE WESTERLY AND NORTHERLY LINES OF SAID TRACT B-4A TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NORTH LAST CHANCE GULCH;


THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID NORTH LAST CHANCE GULCH TO THE INTERSECTION WITH SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF WEST ELYNDALE AVENUE;

THENCE EASTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID EAST ELYNDALE AVENUE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTHWESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF JACKSON STREET, SAID INTERSECTION ALSO BEING THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

CONTAINING 310 ACRES, MORE OR LESS.

NOTE: ALL SUBDIVISION PLATS, CERTIFICATES OF SURVEY, AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY REFERENCES ARE FILED IN THE LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY CLERK AND RECORDER, HELENA, MONTANA.



 Updated DownTown URD

Downtown URD Boundary as Amended Nov 18, 2019 to include the Rodney Street Area

