



Commission Memorandum

REPORT TO: Mayor and City Commission

FROM: Chris Saunders, Policy and Planning Manager
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SUBJECT: Review and discussion of the content and interrelationship between the Bozeman Community Plan [BCP] (growth policy) and the Downtown Bozeman Improvement Plan [DBIP] (neighborhood plan)

MEETING DATE: November 28, 2016

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Action

BACKGROUND: Communities are dynamic and ever changing. Healthy communities change quickly in ways both small and large. The City of Bozeman adopted its first formal city-wide long-range land use and development plan in 1958. Since then, the City adopted five subsequent versions as the community needs have changed. This type of planning document is generically referred to as a growth policy. A growth policy injects consideration of long-term issues and consequences into day to day decision making.

A growth policy applies to the entire city and covers many topics. By necessity a growth policy addresses issues and land development at a high level and establishes general policies, and describes trends and analysis. The minimum content of a growth policy is established in state law, [Section 76-1-601, MCA](#). The law provides for compulsory elements but also allows a local community to add to the document.

One discretionary element of a growth policy is a neighborhood plan. See 76-1-601(4)(a). This is a more detailed analysis of a subsection of the community. As it is more focused it can analyze issues and recommended implementation actions at a finer degree of detail. A neighborhood plan must be consistent with the overall growth policy goals, standards, and policies.

The City has adopted five neighborhood plans. One of those neighborhood plans is the Downtown Bozeman Improvement Plan. Section C.6 of the growth policy describes the interplay between the growth policy and a neighborhood plan. Links to all of the documents referenced above are provided below.

[Bozeman Community Plan](#)

[Downtown Bozeman Improvement Plan](#)

City [web page](#) with links to all adopted plans presently in force.

The City must review, and if needed, update its growth policy every five years. The Commission conducted a review on January 12, 2015. The [packet materials](#) and [minutes](#) are available on-line

for agenda item J.2. The Commission found the growth policy adequate but that due to high rates of growth an update will be needed. The Commission provided funding for an update to the growth policy in Fiscal Year 2017. Staff is working to complete a request for proposals (RFP) for some specialized data services in support of the growth policy update. It is planned to issue the RFP by the end of the year.

The Commission also asked for a subsequent check-in on growth policy status. This action item partially meets that request. The City is revising its land development regulations in support of the growth policy. Several work sessions and public hearings on those amendments have been held. The next scheduled discussion with the City Commission is on December 5, 2016. That discussion will address infill related issues.

Bozeman Community Plan: This document was adopted by Commission Resolution 4163 in June 2009. A summary of the public engagement effort for the BCP is in Appendix L. The BCP has 17 chapters and 13 appendices addressing many different topics. Substantial effort went into harmonizing the many different issues and priorities addressed. Due to the diverse combinations of issues and how they interact with individual locations and diverse opinions of the relative importance of different matters different people may see the plan as applying in different ways. The plan gives guidance but does not attempt to resolve the details of all issues nor does it set specific development standards.

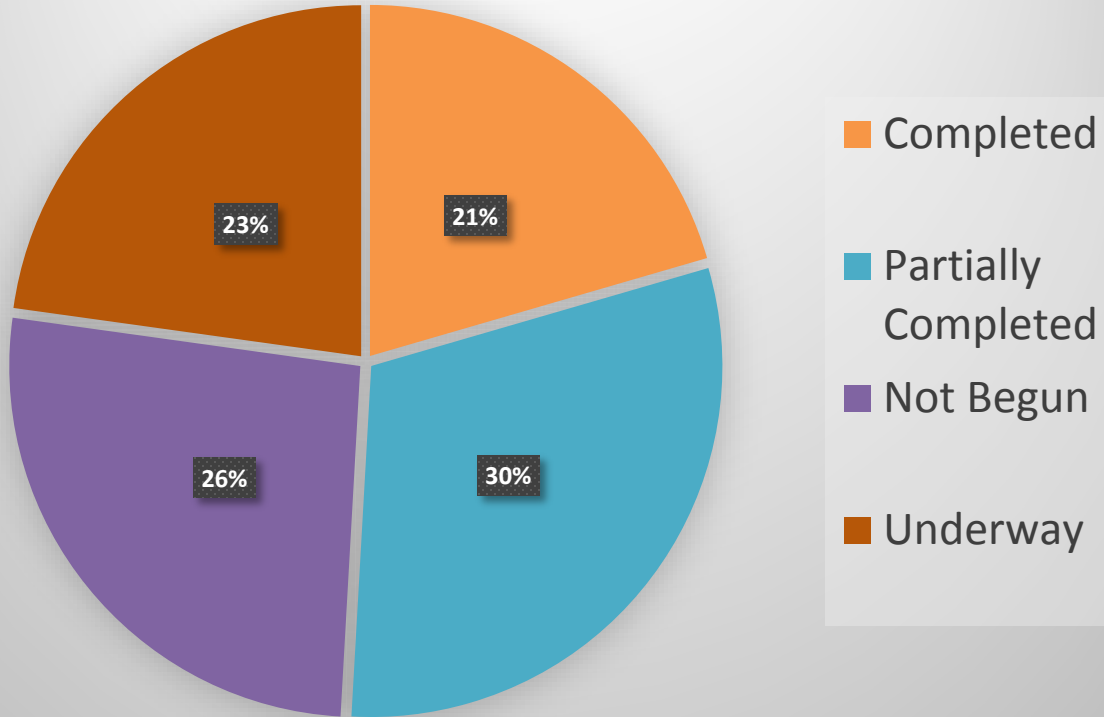
There are seven major themes relating to land development. They are explained in detail in Chapter 3.

- Neighborhoods – Small town within a city.
- Sense of Place – We know where we are and why.
- Natural Amenities – Beautiful streams, blue skies, trails, open spaces, and wildlife
- Centers – Focal points for the community.
- Integration of Action – Keeping both hands working to the same purpose.
- Urban Density – Good things can come in compact packages.
- Sustainability – Thinking of the future in today's actions.

Application of these themes interacts with other chapters on housing, transportation, economic development, historic preservation, and environmental quality among others. Some of the terms used in the growth policy are given specific meanings which are contained in Appendix K, Glossary.

Specific implementation actions are called for in Chapter 16. The January 12, 2015 review included a specific accounting of progress made to date on completing implementation steps. The following graphic summarizes the findings at that time. Additional progress has been made. The substantial update to the Unified Development Ordinance now underway will advance the implementation of the growth policy upon its adoption next spring.

Bozeman Community Plan Implementation Task Status (2015)



Downtown Bozeman Improvement Plan: This was adopted as a neighborhood plan by Commission Resolution 4230 in January 2010. This document builds upon the general policies and principles established in the BCP (growth policy). This neighborhood plan was a cooperative effort between the Downtown Bozeman Partnership and the City of Bozeman. It is more detailed in its role as an examination of a small subsection of the community. It is in support of and subordinate to the overall growth policy.

The DBIP contains nine strategies to accomplish its 12 guiding principles. These strategies are:

- Create Distinct Districts
- Build Housing
- Create A Network of Open Spaces
- Tame The Traffic
- Create A Unique Place
- Strengthen Downtown Businesses
- Adopt A Code Unique to Downtown
- Effective Leadership and Partnering
- Move Towards a Sustainable City Center

After completion of the DBIP, several implementation actions were undertaken. These include, but are not limited to, rezoning property to B-3 on the eastern end of downtown, several parking utilization and policy studies, targeted revisions to development standards, and establishing technical assistance programs to help owners evaluate options for rehabilitation and redevelopment. Not all called for implementation actions have been completed.

Implementation and Regulations:

By state law, a growth policy, and by extension a neighborhood plan, is not itself a regulatory document. However, when creating zoning standards those regulations must be in accordance with the adopted growth policy. The zoning standards contain a much higher level of detail and are directly regulatory. Therefore, although the City's planning documents are considered during review of development applications, compliance with the specific standards contained in the zoning regulations is often sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the growth policy.

An example of how this occurs is the issue of parking. The Bozeman Community Plan has several elements addressing parking. It discusses under chapter 3 the effect of shared parking on consumption of land with development and parking as part of the circulation system of mixed use areas. Chapter 4 has objectives to explore innovative parking solutions and to minimize the visual impacts of off-street parking. Chapter 8, Economic Development, has a short discussion on shared parking supporting increased business density and reducing costs. Implementation actions are called for to review and evaluate parking with changes to be made as determined to be necessary. No specific outcome is identified other than balancing any changes with the other goals and policies of the document. Since the growth policy is a high level policy document this is an appropriate approach that supports a detailed evaluation and decisions based on those details.

The Downtown Bozeman Improvement Plan also considers parking. As a neighborhood plan, the DBIP looks in greater detail at a smaller geographical area. Downtown has unique features with the only publicly accessible shared parking lots and parking garage in Bozeman. The development pattern along Main Street predated the automobile. The City's transit hub is located at the Bridger Park garage. Beginning on page 34 of the DBIP some specific actions are recommended. Many of these are unique to Downtown but fit into the larger BCP direction to evaluate parking.

Even though both documents called for evaluation and potential changes to parking standards neither document changed a standard. Following the preparation of the BCP and DBIP, the City initiated an amendment to the text of the municipal code. Through that public process, specific potential changes to parking standards were identified, noticed to the public, and discussed before the Zoning Commission and City Commission. Multiple opportunities for public input were offered. Ultimately, Ordinance 1769 was adopted and took effect in January 2010. It contained several revisions to parking requirements for the B-3 zoning district that is applied downtown. Only after the effective date of Ordinance 1769 had the regulations changed for new projects.

Upcoming Presentation: The Mayor has requested the staff provide a review of the growth policy and the Downtown plan and how they interact. Staff will present this material on November 28th. The City Manager, Director of Community Development, Policy and Planning Manager, and Chris Naumann from the Downtown Bozeman Partnership will participate in the presentation. The purpose of the presentation is a refresher for the staff, Commission, and public on the content of the plans and how these plans interact with other City documents.

FISCAL EFFECTS: This is a discussion only.

Report compiled on: November 18, 2016