



Missoula Neighborhoods

Engage • Educate • Empower



# NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN GUIDE

A Strategic Planning Toolkit for  
Neighborhood Leadership Teams

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# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide should be utilized by neighborhood and community leaders interested in developing or updating a neighborhood action plan. This guide describes a neighborhood action plan, how and why to create a plan, and how to get a plan officially recognized by the City. It also includes templates and forms to help you through the process. Make sure you have clear, accurate information on each page.

## WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN?

A neighborhood action plan is a document that outlines a two-year workplan for the Neighborhood Leadership Team to enact the community's vision, values, and priorities within an area of the City. It represents all the groups that contribute to the neighborhood. A neighborhood action plan must be consistent with the City of Missoula Strategic Plan and Neighborhood Engagement Responses and provide clear priorities and actions to guide growth, investment, and development specific to your neighborhood.



# HOW IS A NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN DIFFERENT THAN A CITY OF MISSOULA NEIGHBORHOOD AREA PLAN?

Neighborhood Plans are an opportunity to plan for ways to address neighborhood needs and priorities and help to inform other City processes. They are meaningful expressions of specific neighborhood ideas and provide specific suggested solutions to specific issues in a given time frame. As such these plans help to strategically shape and improve the city's neighborhoods, infrastructure and community systems.

Neighborhood Plans provide neighborhood residents with an organized, focused way to plan for their future and contribute to the larger community in a way that helps to guide change within the area. A neighborhood planning process generally includes developing a foundation of information about the area, establishing a vision, identifying assets, issues, and opportunities and then developing recommendations to implement. The time frame for a neighborhood plan is generally in line with the growth policy which is a 10 or 20 year horizon with the need to check in on it about every five years.

Adoption of a Neighborhood Plan does not necessarily commit the City to immediately carry out each recommendation to the letter, but it does put the City on record as recognizing the desirability of the neighborhood goals and the decisions or actions they imply. Agencies responsible for many of these actions must also take into consideration safety and budget constraints and other community-wide needs. Actions from a Neighborhood Plan must also follow established city processes for implementation which means, for example, being considered in Transportation Improvement Plans and Capital Improvement Plans.

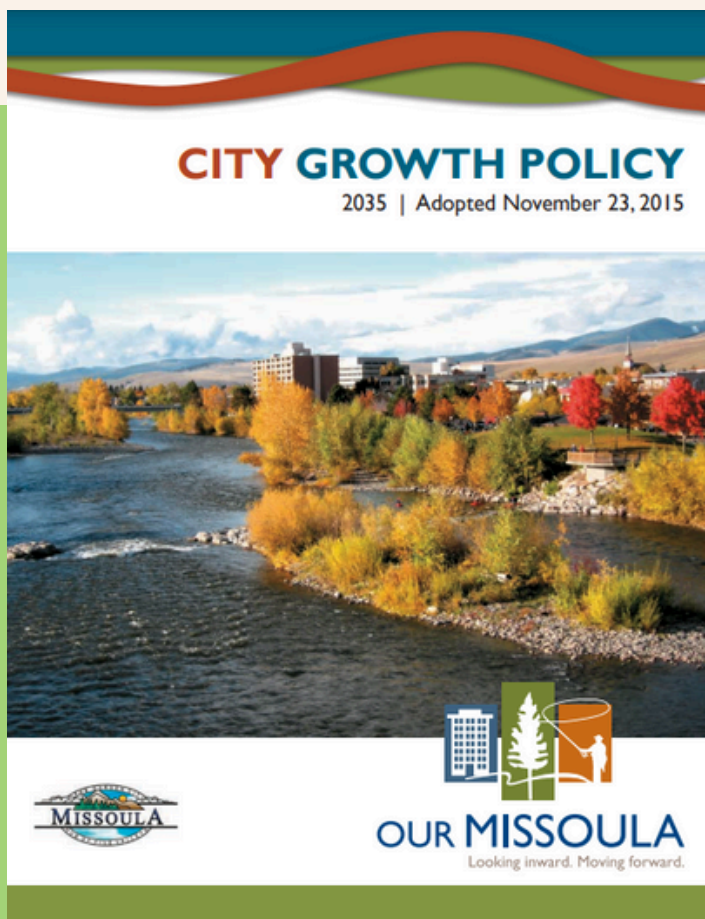




According to state law, a Growth Policy may include one or more neighborhood plans. A neighborhood plan must be consistent with the Growth Policy (MCA 76-1-601 (4)(a)). Neighborhood plans are adopted as attachments (amendments) to the Growth Policy and must be consistent with the City Growth Policy, but address matters at a much finer geographic scale.

One of the primary actions for implementing the goals and objectives of the Growth Policy is through development of neighborhood plans. Neighborhood plans should, first and foremost, further the goals of the Growth Policy but focus on specific issues and ideas to preserve and improve neighborhoods. Neighborhood plans allow for refinement of the goals, objectives and actions in the Growth Policy.

The Neighborhood Action Plan, although similar to the goal of a Neighborhood Area Plan, is different in a few particular ways. The Neighborhood Action Plan is focused specifically on helping the City of Missoula Neighborhood Leadership Teams plan their workplan. The Action Plan will be a two-year look at what the current priorities are for the neighborhood and evolve neighborhood priorities into tangible and effective action steps for the representatives on the Neighborhood Leadership Teams.



This document will be a more inward facing plan to guide the projects and actions of the Neighborhood Leadership Teams to take the initiative in the opportunities that are available to them. This Action Plan can be an early step towards beginning the Neighborhood Area Planning process but does not accomplish the same outcome.

The Neighborhood Action Plan will not be adopted as an attachment to the Growth Policy. This will be a working document Leadership Teams will use to empower their actions through grant projects, developments happening in your neighborhood, and building other opportunities for community connection.

# WHY CREATE A NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN?

A neighborhood action plan is a tool for your community to make your neighborhood the best place. An action plan will help City officials, private property owners, and investors understand neighborhood values and priorities. It can help maintain things you treasure and direct changes you would like to see in your area.

When you create an action plan, you are bringing together your neighbor's desires and the City's current priorities to develop localized priorities and actions. The priorities and actions you create align neighbors, foster transparency, and provide a roadmap to success.

## THE BENEFITS OF A NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Build partnerships for planning and implementing – people will support what they help create
- Empower you and your neighborhood to proactively and creatively take responsibility for improving your neighborhood
- Help the City understand your priorities to determine future resources and policies better
- Identify and prioritize projects that would enhance the community and understand how those projects can be implemented
- Request that appropriate projects be considered for funding in City budgets
- Propose changes to City policies affecting your neighborhood

# HOW TO CREATE A NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN



## 01. REVIEW THE CITY OF MISSOULA'S STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic goals of the City's plan are organized into four pillars encompassing all aspects of City operations. The strategic goals included in the plan help maintain the City's core services or are new initiatives that enhance City services without compromising the core levels of service. They also help to prioritize budgeting and cross-departmental work planning.

## 02. CONDUCT NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT

Neighborhood Councils are required to engage residents at the beginning of the process. Refer to the Neighborhood Engagement Toolkit for an outline of the process. This is where you can begin to see the neighborhood's vision, values and priorities.



## 03. PREPARE THE PLAN

Your Neighborhood Council should develop a draft action plan incorporating the background information, research, and community input. This will be added to the plan as additional information. The topics covered in the plan will vary depending on your neighborhood needs.

Drafts of the neighborhood action plan should be provided to the Missoula Neighborhoods Office for review and comment. Staff will review the draft plan to ensure that your plan meets all requirements for approval. The action plan must be consistent with the City's Strategic Plan, other relevant City Plans, and Neighborhood Engagement responses.

### Plan requirements:

- **Introduction:** Include the purpose for developing or updating the plan, a description of the process, who was involved, and what you learned.
- **Priorities:** Themes that the plan addresses, which organize specific actions and how they align with the City's Strategic Plan, other relevant City Plans, and Neighborhood Engagement responses.
- **Action Plan:** Recommendations in the form of actions.
- **Implementation Plan:** Description of the key parties responsible for implementation and outline potential funding sources or other sources.



## DEVELOPING PRIORITIES & ACTIONS

Priorities and actions are essential for effective neighborhood action planning. Without them, it is easy to get stuck or sidetracked.

Often, priorities and actions are used interchangeably, as if they are the same but not. The following chart illustrates the differences between priorities and actions.

PRIORITIES	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are broad</li> <li>• Are general intentions</li> <li>• Are tangible</li> <li>• Are abstract</li> <li>• Are not tied to a timeframe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are narrow</li> <li>• Are precise</li> <li>• Are tangible</li> <li>• Are concrete</li> <li>• Are always tied to a timeframe</li> </ul>

Priorities and actions are different, but they always come as a pair. Priorities are a general expression of what you want to accomplish; actions are precise statements of the actions you will take to address the priority.

For example:

The *priority* is to "Improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility."

The *actions* are to:

- Install a bike rack at Currents, Silver Park, and McCormick Park with support by Parks & Recreation.
- Create a sidewalk repair matching grant program for residents.
- Advocate to repair sidewalks on streets A and B.

## DEVELOPING PRIORITIES

Priorities are general enough to stimulate creativity and remain flexible when change arises. Priorities describe the desired result and unify efforts by pointing in a common direction. As you develop priorities, you should ensure they meet specific criteria:

- Address priorities and results of your neighborhood assessment, City priorities, and relevant City plans
- Address the gap between the current and desired state of the neighborhood
- Chart a clear direction for the neighborhood but does not set specific milestones or strategies

## MENU OF POSSIBLE PRIORITY TOPICS:



### BUILT ENVIRONMENT

(land use, community design, historic preservation, maintenance, beautification, redevelopment, infill)



### COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

(economic opportunity, health, social services)



### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

(open space protection, water quality and access, resiliency, and hazard mitigation)



### MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

(street design, traffic management, parking, pedestrian infrastructure, trails, transit)



### HOUSING

(upkeep and code, blight and revitalization, market needs and affordability)



### FACILITIES AND SERVICES

(schools, parks and recreation, utilities, city services, safety and crime prevention)



## DEVELOPING ACTIONS

Actions are the accomplishments necessary to achieve your priorities. As you develop actions, you should ensure they are **SMART**:

SMART	DEFINITION	QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
Specific	Specific actions have a desired outcome that is clearly understood	What will you achieve? What will you do?
Measurable	These are the numbers used with the action so you can track progress.	What data will you use to decide whether you've met the action?
Attainable	Actions must be realistic to maintain the enthusiasm to try to achieve them.	Are you sure you can do this? Do you have the right skills and resources?
Relevant	Actions should be aligned with the neighborhood.	Does the action align with those of your neighborhood assessment and city priorities?
Time-bound	Actions have a timeline.	What is the deadline for accomplishing the action?

## WRITING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

Once you have analyzed your neighborhood assessment, reviewed the city priorities, and agreed upon the priorities and actions, the next step is to put it together in one digestible document. One or multiple members of the Neighborhood Council will draft a neighborhood action plan and then submit it for review by the Neighborhood Council.

The neighborhood plan reviewers should ensure that the plan reflects neighbors' desires and aligns with city priorities. The result will be a concise description of where the neighborhood wants to go and how it will get there.

### Plan requirements:

1. Introduction. Include the purpose for updating the plan, a description of the process and who was involved, and a description of past plans and existing conditions that support the plan's recommendations.
2. Priorities. Themes that the plan addresses, which organize specific actions and how they align with the City's Strategic Plan, City Master Plans, and Neighborhood Engagement responses.
3. Action Plan. Recommendations in the form of actions.
4. Implementation Plan. Description of the key parties responsible for implementation and outline potential funding sources or other sources.

# 04. FORMALIZE YOUR PLAN

Once your action plan has been drafted and staff comments have been addressed, you may begin having your action plan formally approved by the Missoula Neighborhoods Office.

The approval process includes:

## **Community notification**

The City will host the draft plan document online and notify residents, property owners, and businesses in the area boundary that the draft action plan is seeking approval. The Neighborhood Council should promote the public review opportunity to other participants and stakeholders. One example avenue to accomplish this would be to hold a General Meeting. Within 30 days, the Neighborhood Council must collect written comments of support and concern. After reviewing the comments, you should assess whether any modifications to your action plan are necessary.

## **Staff review and approval**

The Neighborhood Council will submit a summary of the public comments and an updated action plan draft to Missoula Neighborhoods staff for final review. They will approve if the staff finds that the public comments have been addressed and the action plan is sufficiently supported.

# CONGRATULATIONS!



You have completed the required steps for creating a Neighborhood Action Plan. This can be used for the next few years and then it will be time to update the plan using these same steps. Now, onwards to supporting and improving your neighborhood!

# SMART Goal Worksheet

Goal	Write the goal you have in mind.
Specific	What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?
Measureable	How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal?
Achievable	Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? What is the motivation for this goal? Is the amount of effort required on par with what the goal will achieve?
Relevant	Why would you achieve this goal? What is the impact
Time-bound	What's the deadline and is it realistic?
S.M.A.R.T. Goal	Review what you have written, and craft a new goal statement based on what the answers to the questions above have revealed.



# Neighborhood Action Plan Template

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

The purpose for updating the plan

### Process

A description of the process, who was involved, and an outline of community meetings/surveys conducted – what we did, who we heard from, and what we learned.

## PRIORITIES

- Three to five priorities
- The themes that the plan addresses are neighborhood-specific actions.
- A description of how the plan supports City of Missoula Strategic Plan, relevant City Plans, and Neighborhood Engagement desires.

## ACTION PLAN

- Three to five actions for each priority
- Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- A description of the key parties responsible for implementation and an outline of potential funding sources or other resources
- A summary table of action items. Each action should note the responsible party, time frame, and applicable resources. Actions that request city funding or a change to city policy should be identified and prioritized.

### Example:

Action	Primary Responsibility	Time Frame	Funding Source	Anticipated City Involvement
Action number and Title	City	Q1 2024	Grant	Funder
Action number and Title	Neighborhood Leadership Team	Q2 2025	N/A	Policy Change

# Neighborhood Action Plan Example

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

With rapid growth and development in the Riverfront Neighborhood over the past ten years, the Neighborhood Council worked to develop a neighborhood action plan to help respond to new development pressures.

### Process

The Neighborhood Council held two neighborhood meetings and conducted an online survey to gather information from residents. A total of 50 neighbors guided the priorities and action items outlined in this plan.

Neighbors indicated that their most significant concern is that this growth negatively affects housing affordability and neighborhood safety. Therefore, the following plan addresses those concerns and prioritizes desired mobility and connectivity opportunities for residents.

## PRIORITIES & ACTION PLAN

- Provide quality, affordable housing
  - Recruit 25 residents to participate in the code reform process to incentivize affordable housing projects for developers.
  - Attend two Affordable Trust Fund meetings to learn about neighborhood housing affordability opportunities.
  - Develop a landlord-matching grant program for rental improvements.
- Improve the neighborhood gateway at the intersection of Cregg Lane and Orange Street.
  - Meet with Sawmill developers to learn about further development and traffic impacts on the neighborhood.
  - Advocate at City Council to add a traffic light and pedestrian crosswalk at Cregg Lane and Orange Street.
  - Create a Sawmill District gateway feature.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Action	Primary Responsibility	Time Frame	Funding Source	Anticipated City Involvement
Attend 2 City Council meetings to share stories about lack of lighting.	Neighborhood Leadership Team	Q1 2024	N/A	Budget change

# RESOURCES

- **Our Missoula Growth Policy:** [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3156/Our-Missoula-Growth-Policy](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3156/Our-Missoula-Growth-Policy)
- **Our Missoula Development Guide:** [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3128/Our-Missoula-Development-Guide](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3128/Our-Missoula-Development-Guide)
- **Missoula Connect 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan:** [www.missoulampo.com/\\_files/ugd/31250b\\_66ec0b40355843a4bdb608880f427245.pdf](http://www.missoulampo.com/_files/ugd/31250b_66ec0b40355843a4bdb608880f427245.pdf)
- **Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan:** [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/48031/Pedestrian-Facilities-Master-Plan-](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/48031/Pedestrian-Facilities-Master-Plan-)
- **Bicycle Facilities Master Plan:** [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/39172/2016-Bicycle-Facilities-Master-Plan?bidId=](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/39172/2016-Bicycle-Facilities-Master-Plan?bidId=)
- **Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (PROST) Planning Project:** [www.engagemissoula.com/prost](http://www.engagemissoula.com/prost)
- **Missoula Invest Health:** [www.investhealth.org/city-team/missoula-mt/](http://www.investhealth.org/city-team/missoula-mt/)
- **A Place to Call Home: Meeting Missoula's Housing Needs:** [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3050/Citywide-Housing-Policy](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3050/Citywide-Housing-Policy)
- **City of Missoula Strategic Plan:** [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2514/Strategic-Plan](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2514/Strategic-Plan)
- **Missoula Community Climate Smart Action Plan:** [www.missoulacclimate.org/uploads/4/3/2/6/43267085/missoulacommunity\\_climatesmartactionplan\\_v1.0.pdf](http://www.missoulacclimate.org/uploads/4/3/2/6/43267085/missoulacommunity_climatesmartactionplan_v1.0.pdf)
- **Downtown Master Plan:** [www.missouladowntown.com/downtown-master-plan/](http://www.missouladowntown.com/downtown-master-plan/)
- **Midtown Master Plan:** [www.midtownmasterplan.com/](http://www.midtownmasterplan.com/)
- **City of Missoula Neighborhood Profiles:** [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3197/Neighborhood-Profiles](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3197/Neighborhood-Profiles)
- **Missoula County Planning Department:** [www.missoulacounty.us/government/community-development/lands-communities](http://www.missoulacounty.us/government/community-development/lands-communities)
- **City of Missoula, What's My Zoning?:** [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3314/Whats-My-Zoning](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3314/Whats-My-Zoning)