

2021

RESERVE ST.

COMMUNITY INPUT PROJECT

RESERVE STREET

COMMUNITY INPUT PROJECT

prepared for

City of Missoula Infrastructure and Mobility Planning Division
for the
Missoula Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process
in cooperation with the
Montana Department of Transportation
and the
U. S. Department of Transportation
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prepared by

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Missoula County ~ City of Missoula

MPO

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reserve Street is both a federal highway and a core route in Missoula's transportation network, and it has been receiving more focus in recent years. New development pressures, continued congestion at peak travel hours, and master planning for surrounding areas have brought more attention to the Reserve Corridor; elected officials and transportation staff are increasingly hearing input from members of the community about the good, the bad and the ugly parts of Reserve Street.

Reserve Street is also a critical corridor in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), a multi-modal transportation plan, updated every four years, that considers the growth and development of a regional transportation system. The LRTP is currently being updated and improvements to Reserve Street are being actively discussed.

The Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), a regional transportation planning body that works to plan a safe transportation network that is comprehensive, cooperative, and connected for our metropolitan planning area, recognized the need to systematically collect the growing public input about this road at a critical time when planning processes were in very initial stages. It was also clear that community members were hungry for more information about what considerations for the road were being discussed. The MPO partnered with 5th House Consulting, and thus the "Reserve Street Community Input Project" was born.

The purpose of this project was to understand Missoulians' lived experience of Reserve Street and what they believe would improve their experience. The project also intended to create a process for dialogue between members of the community and transportation staff to facilitate increased awareness of ongoing efforts, responsibility, and planning. The information gathered during this project can be used as a reference for transportation planners as they undertake future projects that include Reserve Street, particularly as the LRTP is being updated.

Methodology

In order to get a sense of what will improve Missoulians' experience with Reserve Street as well as provide pertinent education related to community members' questions, the project used the following methods to gather diverse perspectives:

- Surveys were used to gather quantitative information about Missoulians' experiences and concerns with Reserve Street.
- A Community Forum was held to gather qualitative information from participants about their experiences and wishes for Reserve Street. The Forum also provided education opportunities based on community member concerns conveyed through the surveys.
- Key Informant Interviews of community experts and city, county and state staff were conducted to gather direct information and expertise to answer community forum attendees' questions about the history of Reserve Street, what plans were being developed, and what improvements might be feasible.
- Case Studies of five Reserve Street stakeholders were developed to gain a deeper understanding of their individual user experience with the Corridor and to provide better context of issues raised by community members in the surveys and at the community forum.

This mixed methods approach created a unique process that encouraged greater public dialogue between the public, elected officials, and agency staff. The results of this process are discussed in the report in the following sections:

- Community Perceptions
- Community Concerns
- Case Studies titled Missoulians of Reserve Street

Results

The project team learned a lot about Reserve Street from the eyes of Missoulians – the good, the bad, and the ugly. Community concerns regarding Reserve Street are generalized into four main categories, discussed in this report: Safety and Maintenance, Traffic Congestion, Plans for Reserve Street, and Community. These sections include information provided from key informant interviews that address these concerns and questions from community members. Based on findings from the community input processes and key informant interviews, it appears the planning community is moving in a direction that is very much in line with what the project team learned from community members during this input process, which includes focusing on multi-modal transportation, accessibility, and beautification. An important finding of this project was discovering the community's desire to learn what is going on in regards to planning on Reserve Street. Both community members and City staff want to hear from each other, but with so many communication channels and bustling schedules, these opportunities to share information can easily get lost.

Recommendations

The vision of this community input project, and the Forum in particular, was to facilitate a deeper dialogue and understanding of the many perspectives, and nuances, of Reserve Street according to community members and agency staff. It's important to always continue this dialogue. To mirror this dynamic, recommendations are broken out into three areas: 1. Engagement Recommendations for the Missoula Community; 2. Planning Recommendations for the MPO; 3. Long-term Recommendations for the MPO.

Engagement Recommendations for the Missoula Community

- Keep informed on what is going on and learn about opportunities to provide effective community input.

Planning Recommendations for the MPO

It's important to note that this report is atypical of most planning reports which often are created to lay out a future plan or serve as an assessment with recommendations to be acted upon. Rather, the recommendations below for the MPO are intended to be used as a reference for planners and board members when they undertake future projects.

- Signal Technology to Optimize the Flow of Traffic
- Working to Facilitate Transit Service
- Create Safe Pedestrian Road Crossings
- Design Pedestrian Friendly Sidewalks
- Create Protected Bicycle Facilities
- Provide Incentives For Efficient Transportation Modes
- Build a Grid System
- Beautification of Reserve Street
- Continue to Keep Community Members Involved

Long-term Recommendations for the MPO

- Stay Tenacious to Create Density with Design
- Institute a Positive Culture Framework
- Distracted Driver Campaign
- Implementing a Proactive Safety Campaign

Conclusion

The mission of the Missoula MPO is about creating an environment that's livable and sustainable for all, and to accomplish this via coordination and collaboration between the state, the county and the city. To meet this pledge, planners are working to design places for people. They talk about density, but they talk about density with design. They talk about streets not only being safe and accommodating for people using all modes of transportation and movement, but also about how to make our community interesting for people to see. They strive to create a quality of life where it feels easy to get around and people feel connected to our beautiful valley and each other.

This is not something that will happen overnight, but over many years. It is also something that does not just involve design, building and infrastructure alone, but personal responsibility of individual community members to understand the role they play in creating a less stressful, safe and healthy atmosphere along the Reserve Street Corridor.

INTRODUCTION

When people think of Missoula, Montana, they think of a city surrounded by open lands with great access to recreation, the wildflowers of the North Hills, hiking to the 'M' on Mount Sentinel or the 'L' on Mount Jumbo. Often you hear about the Clark Fork River that runs through the center of town, overlooked by the historic Wilma Theatre on one side and the old Milwaukee Depot that now houses the Boone and Crocket Club on the other. Hellgate Canyon welcomes people with its windy gusts opening into the University of Montana and Rattlesnake neighborhoods. Lolo Peak and the Snowbowl ski resort can be seen from the Missoula Courthouse lawn right downtown. These elements are a result of Glacial Lake Missoula, which also provided numerous terrace benches, alluvial deposits and a valley geography that limits development. These picturesque scenes allude to beauty, relaxation, exercise and a high quality of life – many of the reasons Missoula has seen rapid growth. Missoula is also a regional economic hub for Western Montana, that offers services and commodities for surrounding counties, many of which reside along the Reserve Street Corridor (US Highway 93).

Reserve Street started out as a dirt road on the edge of town but was later determined to be a viable bypass route for Orange Street – the original Highway 93. Subsequently, it has grown into a regional arterial connecting Interstate 90 down to Ravalli County and ultimately routes into Idaho giving it a dual role. It's a federal highway (US-93) and it is also part of a city network that's tied into the city grid. Considering the regional draw to interior and exterior destinations, the vehicle counts on Reserve Street can vary from 38,000 to 43,000 cars a day; average annual daily traffic can climb all the way up to 48,000 cars a day at the intersection of Mullan and Reserve, which at one time was the highest count in the entire state.



Over recent years, elected officials and transportation staff increasingly heard input from members of the community about the good, the bad and the ugly parts of Reserve Street. The focus on this particular corridor stems from a number of issues, such as new development pressures, continued congestion at peak travel hours, and master planning for areas such as the Sxwtpqyen (S-wh-tip-KAYN) Area Master Plan west of Reserve. These land use and transportation projects have served to focus additional attention on Reserve Street as a core route in Missoula's transportation network. It also serves as an economic hub, providing access to one of the region's main commercial centers on North Reserve. Groups such as Let's Improve Missoula's Reserve Street are asking that attention be paid to Reserve, however there is also lack of clarity in the public's eye about who is ultimately responsible for initiating or completing any future changes.

Recognizing the need to understand more about people's lived experiences with Reserve Street and to clarify roles and responsibilities between the City of Missoula, Missoula County, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), staff presented this unique project to the Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee (TPCC). The TPCC develops and keeps current transportation planning as an integral part of the comprehensive regional planning for the Missoula urban area. This committee works closely with the City, County, Missoula Consolidated Planning Board and the State and is responsible for ensuring the coordination between jurisdictions that is at the heart of managing Reserve Street.

The MPO is a federally required organization for communities with urbanized areas that have a population of 50,000 or more people. The Missoula MPO, established in 1982, is a regional transportation planning body that works to plan a safe transportation network that is comprehensive, cooperative, and connected for our metropolitan

planning area (MPA), which includes the City of Missoula and adjacent urban areas of Missoula County.

The MPO facilitates collaboration between federal, state, and local government agencies, including Missoula City and County governments, Montana Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, local interested parties, and community members. The primary responsibility of the MPO is to create a Long-Range Transportation Plan that prioritizes funding and improvements throughout the Missoula urban area.

With the TPCC's approval, the MPO partnered with 5th House Consulting to begin the "Reserve Street Community Input Project". The goal of this project was to explore the question, "What will improve people's experience with Reserve Street?" as well as create a process for dialogue between members of the community and transportation staff that helps increase awareness of ongoing efforts, responsibility, and planning. This process was initiated with a Community Forum in January of 2020 where community members had the opportunity to share their experience and vision for the Reserve Street corridor while learning about how Missoula is approaching safety, plans for the corridor, and land use from MPO and County staff.

OWNERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

The ownership of Reserve Street plays an important role in its maintenance and development and therefore has an impact on people's experience with the Corridor. Many people who came to the forum learned that Reserve Street is a federal highway (US Highway 93) owned and maintained by the Montana Department of Transportation and part of the National Highway System. The State maintains the road and features within the right-of-way. Widening the sidewalk or installing a transit shelter would require coordination with MDT and/or the adjacent property owner. Current right-of-way width along the Reserve Street corridor varies, creating challenges to improving or expanding transportation facilities.

Often people reference the large sums of state and federal funds available for transportation improvements. What is important to note is that within the state, those funds are split between five districts and each district includes a number of counties. Missoula's district goes as far north as Whitefish, west to Idaho, and south through Ravalli County. Federal funds dedicated to managing our highway system, therefore, are spread thin for all of those counties. Demands and need for federal funds are growing at a much faster rate than increases in funding received by the state. This means responsibility to fund transportation improvements on state and local streets falls increasingly onto local jurisdictions like the City and County. Reserve Street also happens to be within the MPO boundary, so any federal funding projects need to be coordinated through the TPCC. This ensures that all local and state jurisdictions are collaborating on improvements to Missoula's transportation system.

So decision-making for Reserve Street is not simply left to MDT, or the City, or County. It is a complex relationship between all of those jurisdictions, which is where the MPO is involved in ensuring that planning for improvements is coordinated, bringing the various interests together for a collaborative process.



LIFE AROUND RESERVE STREET



To put a tangible expression of what it is like to live around and utilize Reserve Street for local travel, 5 individuals were interviewed in depth. Their stories are interspersed throughout the report to demonstrate real examples of navigating the corridor.

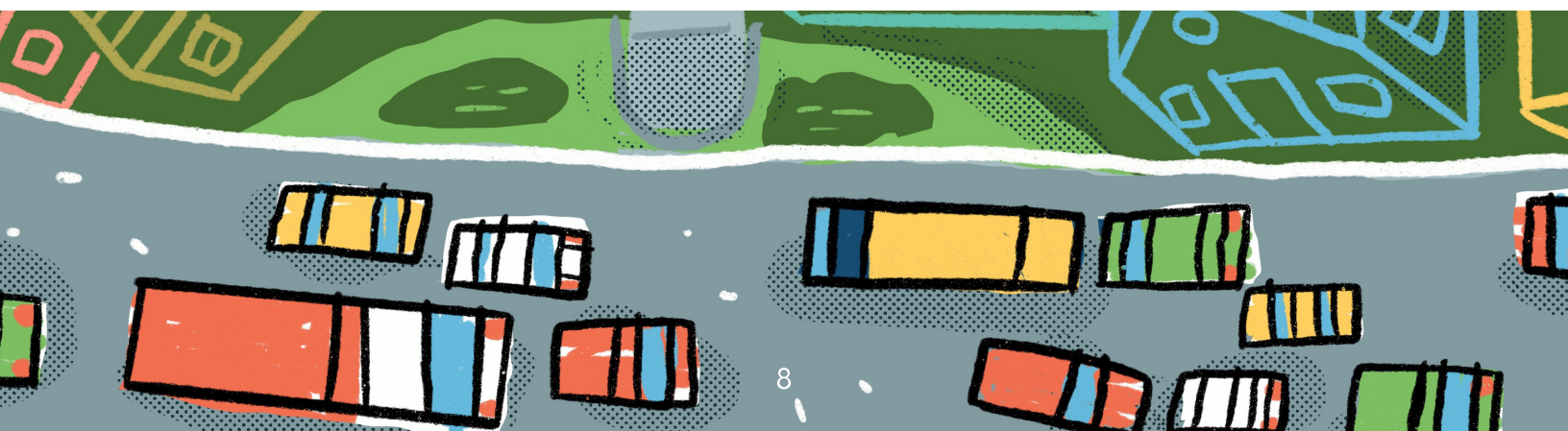
- Bruce Benson's family has lived and farmed on the Reserve Street Corridor for generations. He describes the Orchard Homes neighborhood area historically with pride. "It was a vibrant hard-working, viable community." While he has pride in the history of the people of Missoula and a deep sense of place, his recent experience is one of frustration and disappointment with the Reserve Street corridor. He has found only limited opportunities for communication to and from the city or county about the vision for the corridor. Although he is trying hard to be involved, it isn't working.
- Ada is a newer resident of Missoula that also lives in the Orchard Homes neighborhood. Ada has the perspective of people coming here for the first time. She enjoys living in the Reserve Street corridor for its convenient access to services, and she is willing to make concessions for safety, such as avoiding bicycling along Reserve Street. Ada is also someone who works in natural resource planning, and therefore has a realistic grasp of the possibilities for improving the corridor in order to transform into a part of Missoula that we can be proud of.
- Rusty enjoys biking as a main mode of transportation. He chooses to live off of the Reserve Street corridor, but avoids Reserve Street while biking for many reasons such as safety while in traffic and the odor from the waste treatment plant. Beyond his personal value on biking, Rusty sees bikes as an economical means of transportation that is affordable for area residents of lower socioeconomic status; looking at the common good, he wants the Reserve corridor to be more bicycle friendly. As someone involved in city planning, he has a sense of what may be possible and therefore feels hopeful that there are many ways to improve public life along the corridor.



- Ali has lived in several Missoula neighborhoods. She appreciates the higher speed limit on Reserve Street because it allows her to get where she is going fast; she also appreciates the convenience of being able to do all of her shopping in the N. Reserve Street area. Despite these conveniences, however, traffic congestion can slow the speed of travel in the Reserve Street corridor, and so she has learned to choose earlier morning or later evening times to use Reserve Street. She has also witnessed traffic-safety issues, such as a bicycle/semi-truck near-accident in which she feared for the bicyclist's life.
- Mark lives in the Reserve corridor, and is a person with an acquired disability who uses a power wheelchair. He is a highly engaged community member who serves on the board of the local Independent Living organization for people with disabilities and is a member of his homeowners' association. His experience of getting around Missoula is largely positive -- he uses the bike paths to get around, as well as the bus system and his personal van. He views Reserve Street as well maintained. Marc has had a couple of negative experiences when wheeling in the corridor, related to inadequate curb cuts and unreachable crosswalk push buttons -- in one instance, his only option to reach his destination was to wheel in the Reserve Street bike lane, which was unpleasant and somewhat scary due to the proximity to traffic. Although Marc has encountered barriers to using the corridor, he has a positive view on the accessibility of the community, especially given the recent infrastructure improvements such as curb cuts and accessible-height crosswalk pushbuttons. He also finds the community to be kind and considerate when he is out and about in his powerchair.

The five different users all living along the Reserve Street Corridor provide five different experiences and perspectives of local users on this section of the National Highway 93/Reserve Street corridor. Their input presented themes of community pride, interest, and hope for a livable corridor that can serve many purposes in a growing population.

Five is a relevant number to Missoula since it's the coming together of five valleys that make Missoula the beautiful scenic place we all love. And at the same time, the convergence of the five valleys with a river that runs through it confines and defines growth. Missoula County hosts natural landscapes with recreational opportunities, rich soils and ample water that promotes agriculture, a rich history that blends a succession of Native American tribes with European settlements that culturally form a community composed of individuals with a deep sense of connection to the landscape and to each other. Missoula, Montana is a community with an active citizenry that desires a voice in how the community grows and develops. Thus, a Community Input Process was started with a community meeting on January 29th, 2020 to answer the question, "What will improve people's experience with the Reserve Street area?"



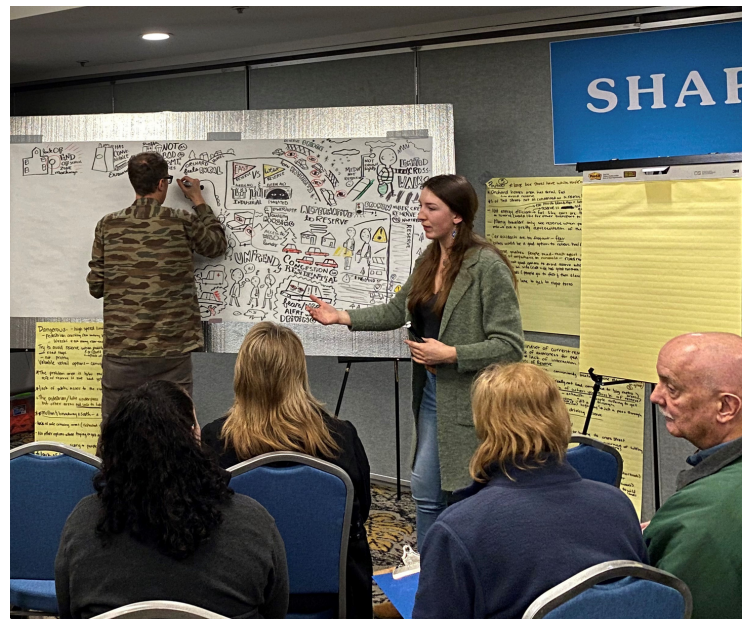
OVERVIEW & METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this project was to understand what Missoulians' lived experience of Reserve Street looks like as well as what they believe would improve their experience. This project was intended to gather information that could be used as a reference for planners and board members when they undertake future projects. This report is atypical of most planning reports which often are created to lay out a future plan or serve as an assessment with recommendations to be acted upon. The methodology chosen for this study was one of educating Missoulians about current plans while also creating a space for dialogue where they could share their perspective and concerns.

In order to get a sense of what will improve Missoulian's experience with Reserve Street, the project used a variety of methods to gather diverse perspectives and insights from Missoulians, elected officials, and agency staff. The gathering of this information was kicked off with the hosting of a Community Forum held on January 29th, 2020. The forum was followed by a series of key informant interviews and in depth interviews we refer to as "case studies." Community Forum attendees and Case Study participants offered perspectives and experiences from the community; they were the voices of public engagement. Elected officials, experts and agency staff provided expert knowledge as well as background for the technical aspects of Reserve Street management and development. The methods used for this project are listed here and then described in further detail below:

- surveys
- community forum
- key informant interviews of community members, elected officials, experts and agency staff
- case studies



Surveys

Two surveys were available for Missoulians to complete. The goal of the first survey was to gather Missoulians' experiences and concerns with Reserve Street. This survey was included as part of the community forum registration process so those concerns could be addressed at the event. It was also available following the forum so feedback could continue to be gathered from those who were unable to attend. A total of 88 people responded to the survey.

The second survey was provided at the forum and was intended to understand users' experience on Reserve Street. This survey asked about personal experiences and beliefs, what's been witnessed on Reserve Street, and the perception of what others experience and believe. 20 forum attendees responded to this survey.

Community Forum

The MPO staff and 5th House Consulting held a community forum on behalf of the TPCC. This Community Input Forum was held on January 29th, 2020 at the Best Western Plus Grant Creek Inn, which was selected particularly for its proximity to Reserve Street; approximately 70 people attended the event.

The goal of the forum was to provide opportunities to attendees to both learn about and share thoughts and experiences about Reserve Street. The event was structured so that all attendees heard about the history of Reserve Street, and then broke into small groups which moved among five stations with a facilitator assigned to each small group.

To facilitate the learning portion of the event, there were three learning stations whose topics were determined by the most frequent concerns and questions in the survey responses. These stations were: Approaches to Safety, Land Use and Traffic, and Plans for Reserve Street. Each station was staffed with a content expert. The role of the expert

was to provide high-level information and relevant data to small groups of members of the public as well as to answer any questions or address any concerns brought up by the attendees. See the Community Forum Program in the Appendix for summaries of the learning stations.

To facilitate the sharing portion of the event, attendees rotated through two sharing stations, which were staffed by local artists Josh Quick and Lauren Norby, who served as graphic recorders. The two artists drew in real time the responses they heard to produce a visual representation of how people perceive their current experiences on Reserve Street and what they think Reserve Street could be.

At Mr. Quick's station, attendees shared their answers to the question, "What is happening on Reserve Street today?" Attendees shared their thoughts for what Reserve Street looks like today - the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Mr. Norby's station focused on the question, "What would you like to see Reserve Street look like?" Attendees shared what they envision Reserve Street could be given the parameters of what cannot be changed.

Throughout the event, attendees had the opportunity to write down questions on note cards. These question cards were collected at the end of the night and used to develop the questions asked during key informant interviews. Staff also posted responses to many of these questions in an FAQ document, available on the project website.

Key informant interviews

Community forum attendees had a variety of questions about the history of Reserve Street, what plans were being developed, and what improvements might be feasible. To gain expert

insight to these questions, the project team interviewed key community experts, city, county and state staff with direct information and expertise. Interview questions were derived from community member questions and tailored to each key informant according to their expertise and role in the community. Information from these interviews are discussed along with community member questions and suggestions in the Discussion section of this report. A list of the key informants who were interviewed is included in the Appendix.

Case studies

Due to COVID-19 restrictions this project was unable to lead focus groups and instead interviewed individuals. These key informants represented multiple transportation mode choices as local users of the Reserve Street Corridor. The information gathered in these interviews provides insights to the desires of the directly surrounding communities but is not representative of the entire user base of the Reserve Street section of National Highway 93. It is important to note that Reserve Street is a small part of National Highway 93, which provides essential connections between inter-regional, state and country travel, passing through the Missoula region from Idaho to Canada.

The project team conducted in-depth interviews with the five Reserve Street stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of their individual experience with the Corridor. To find the five individuals we reached out to people who fit the following user groups -- commuters, shoppers, cyclists, pedestrians, residents that lived along the Reserve street corridor, retirees, and pre-release residents. Some of the people attended the forum, other people were contacted by referrals from community advocates. We were unable to attain an interview with retirees at The Springs or an individual at Pre-Release, but the highlighted individuals at the introduction to this report covered our other desired attributes.

Case Studies were approached with a classic unstructured qualitative approach in which the interviewer follows where the interviewee takes the conversation. The high-level question for each individual was, "Tell me what your experience is of Reserve Street?" This question was the starting point. The following theme areas were touched on throughout the conversation: safety, enjoyment, navigation, person to person interaction, barriers. The goal was to understand what Reserve Street was like from their personal experience. Stories from the interviews with Bruce, Ada, Ali, Rusty, and Mark are included throughout the report to provide more context and nuance about the lived experience using the Reserve Street Corridor.

The rest of this report discusses what was learned about people's experience with Reserve Street and its parameters through the four strategies of surveys, a community forum, key informant interviews, and case studies. Learnings from this project will inform future projects.





Conclusion

The project team used a mixed methods approach to gather information from the community in the form of public engagement at the community forum, case studies, and surveys. The information gathered from these methods then informed the key informant interviews, the results of which are intended to provide education and context tailored to what community members wanted to learn about. The result is a unique process that encouraged greater public dialogue between the public, elected officials, and agency staff. The results of these efforts are discussed in the section below, starting with general community perspectives of Reserve Street, then moving into community concerns related to general themes, or categories, that community members' questions and suggestions fell into. Information provided from the key informant interviews are included in these themed discussions, which include:

- Safety and Maintenance
- Traffic Congestion
- Plans for Reserve Street
- Community

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

The question, “What is happening on Reserve Street today?” and “What would you like to see Reserve Street look like?” were posed to attendees of the community input forum. Throughout this process, the project team learned a lot about Reserve Street from the eyes of Missoulians – the good, the bad, and the ugly. Here’s some of what they had to say.

The Good

Reserve Street was recognized as an important through corridor. Some community members liked that the whole of Reserve Street was not particularly dense and that parts still maintained a rural feel. In fact, attendees talked of Reserve Street in three distinct sections – from Highway 93 to the Mount Avenue intersection; Mount to Mullan Road intersection; and Mullan Road to I-90. While concerns existed in all three sections, the majority of concerns were concentrated in the Mullan to I-90 section.

Most groups of attendees at the forum discussed stores being conveniently located off Reserve Street, which helped make shopping and running errands more efficient.

Responses to the personal experiences survey also demonstrated that, indeed, positive experiences on Reserve Street were possible. On average, respondents rated overall quality of life in Missoula as good or very good. Respondents were asked about their actual experiences along the Reserve Street corridor. Positive experiences were reported at high levels, even though there were low levels of hearing about these positive experiences from others. Most people reported having experienced positive activities, such as kindness and good driving, neither of which were experiences most respondents had heard about.

Average frequency of use of Reserve Street, among respondents, was between daily and a few times per week. Respondents were asked to consider their previous five trips to Reserve Street and then to consider how often those were positive experiences. Responses were not absolute – no one said “never” nor did they say “everytime”. In fact, most of the number of respondents said they were “occasionally/sometimes” positive.



"Reinstate buses on Mullan Rd corridor"

"More artwork – sculptures, murals!"

"People are rushing to get through"

"Unsafe drivers do not understand the laws"

"Lack of clarity in turning lanes & outdated lights"

"Lack of awareness for pedestrians & bicycle"

"Not safe when walking or biking to cross street"

"Congestion at England Blvd. & Reserve, improve pedestrian safety"

The Bad

Many comments from forum attendees about current experiences on Reserve could be summed up by the sentiment, "try to avoid Reserve when possible."

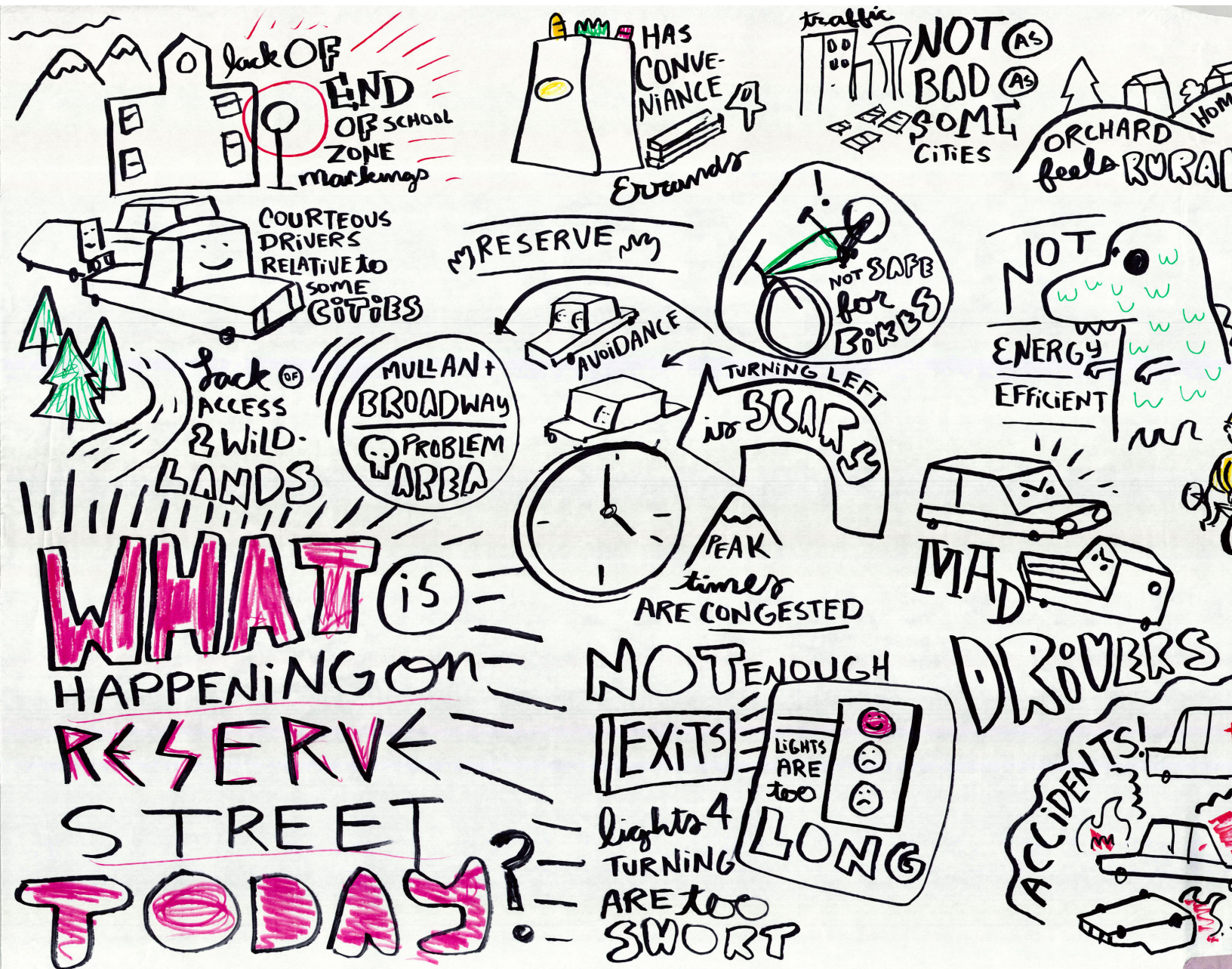
Attendees spoke of Reserve Street as being most heavily trafficked by car, which leads to congestion. The perception of ill-timed traffic lights and turn lanes and a lack of alternative routes were mentioned as adding to that congestion. Generally, Reserve was spoken about as a road that fostered road rage, as drivers were just focused on getting to where they wanted to go.

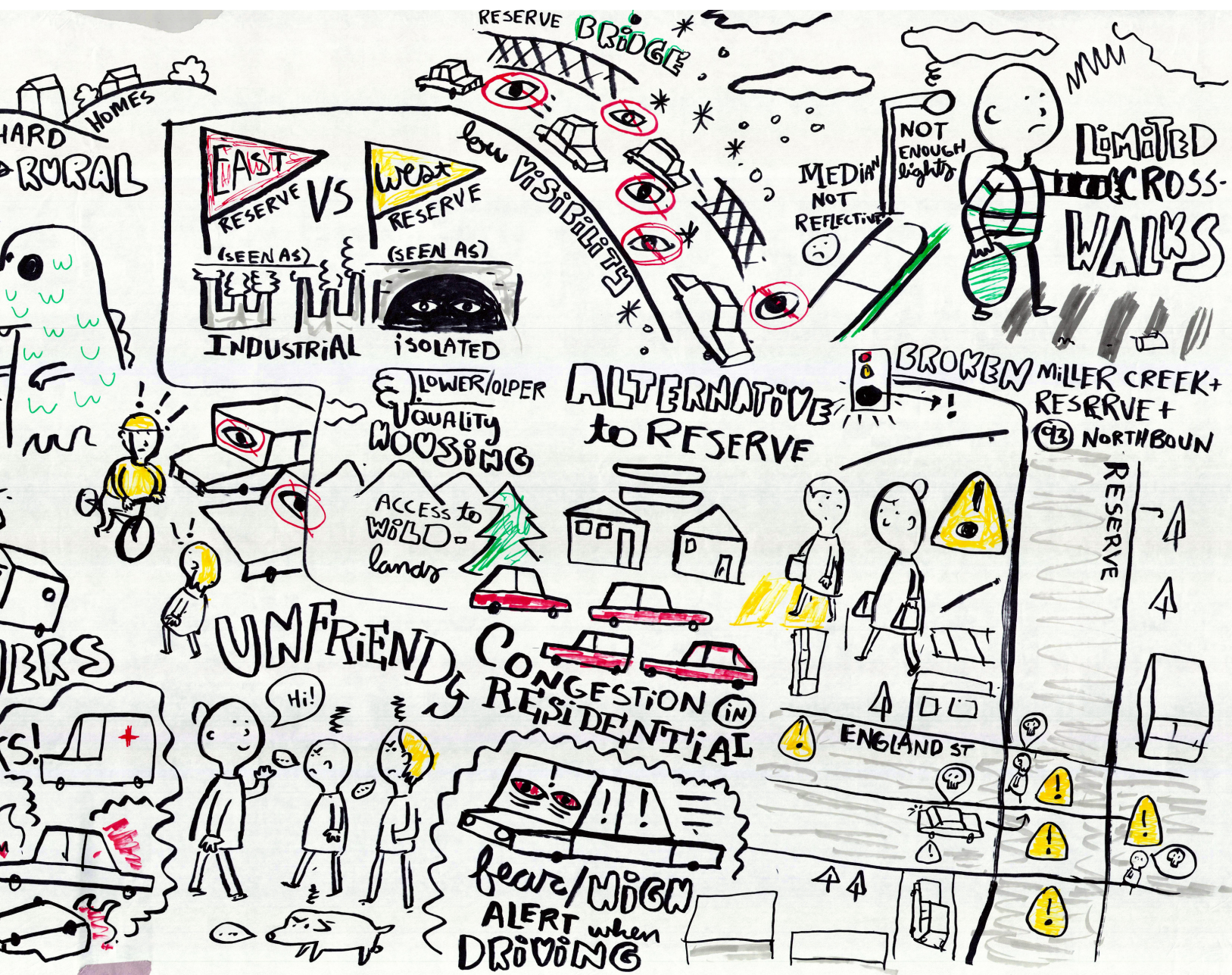
Some community members described driving on Reserve as feeling unsafe due to aggressive drivers, design layout of intersections and turn lanes, and a lack of lighting and reflective strips (particularly in winter when strips get covered by snow and dirt). Many also noted walking or biking down Reserve felt less safe than driving.

The Ugly

Many people just feel Reserve Street is ugly. Forum attendees described the road as industrial and not the best face to put forward for tourists coming into town. Others feel it doesn't portray the values and community that they love about Missoula; the development on the road mars the otherwise scenic view of the river and surrounding mountains.

GRAPHIC RECORDER 1: WHAT IS HAPPENING ON RESERVE STREET TODAY?





COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Concerns regarding Reserve Street can be generalized into four main categories, discussed below: Traffic Congestion, Safety and Maintenance, Plans for Reserve Street, and Community. Highlights from Reserve Street stakeholder case study interviews are included in the following 'Missoulians of Reserve Street'.

Traffic Congestion

Traffic congestion in some form or other, was a top concern of community members. According to Ed Toaves, a former Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) official who was interviewed for the historic background he possesses while working for MDT, Reserve Street competes with Billings' East Main Street and King Avenue for the busiest routes in all of Montana. The road, since it's also a state route and major commuter route, can see an average daily traffic rate of over 40,000 cars a day. This amount of traffic flow can at times lead to congestion. Ada, a Missoulian that lives adjacent to Reserve Street, avoids both driving and biking on Reserve Street due to its congestion. Not only is that an inconvenience, but she worries about air quality problems from all the traffic, particularly during inversions.

- Ada -

New resident of Reserve Street

Ada is a newer resident to the city and so has in mind the perspective of people coming here for the first time. She enjoys living in the Reserve Street corridor for its convenient access to services, and she believes it functions best as a corridor for connecting the Bitterroot Valley and points south to the I-90. Ada is comfortable biking off of spurs of Reserve Street, but tends to avoid bicycling along Reserve Street. She says it's practical to bike along Reserve Street, but not pleasant. Ada is also someone who works in natural resource planning, and with that perspective she has a realistic grasp of the possibilities for improving the corridor and for it to transform into a part of Missoula that we can be proud of.

Ada has lived in Montana for seven years, and Missoula for four of those years. She moved back to Missoula from Helena a year ago. She chose to live in the Orchard Homes neighborhood because she could bike to work on Spurgin Road from there, and because home prices were affordable in that area of town. She primarily drives on Reserve Street to go grocery shopping or to go to parks with her son. Although she and her son enjoy biking, they stick to the Milwaukee Trail when riding together and avoid Reserve Street all together. She wishes that it connected to Orchard Homes.



Ada likes how direct a corridor Reserve can be to services, such as I-90, Snowbowl, and Hamilton. She also likes the cost-savings that the box stores on North Reserve Street can provide. Traffic often disrupts that direct route, though. She will sometimes take a different route to bypass Reserve Street traffic.

Ada has concerns with the traffic on Reserve Street aside from the inconvenience. She's concerned about the air quality from vehicle exhaust, particularly on days with inversions, as well as the noise. She describes being near Reserve as a "'Let's get through this and get to where we're going' kind of thing", as opposed to being enjoyable. She thinks the corridor is a missed opportunity to showcase the character of Missoula and feels like we have an over-engineered landscape and that there's not enough design. She would like to see developers held accountable and make sure that the built landscape has a modicum of beauty to it.

Ada has hope for the future of Reserve Street. She is "super impressed" with the community-involvement aspect of the city and county in terms of their willingness to obtain and consider public comment on the Reserve St. corridor. As for herself, she has a background in land use planning and has a lot of input for what she would like to see in the corridor. This includes more bicycle and pedestrian routes parallel to Reserve so the area can still be accessible through different modes of transportation. She could see keeping Reserve Street corridor focused on being a highway or through-way if local traffic could be redirected to other routes that would provide access to existing commercial developments on North Reserve Street separately.

She would also like to see Reserve Street be a part of the Missoula that she loves. This would involve improving the visual appeal of Reserve Street, and encouraging developers to really incorporate visual appeal and the special things about Montana into their projects. Ultimately, she'd like Reserve Street to reflect the pride that Missoulians have in calling this area home. But she reflects that all of this shouldn't come at the expense of other important issues, like affordable housing. She'd like to see a balance of the two.

Community members framed their traffic concerns around solutions for how congestion could be improved, how growth will affect future traffic patterns, and how the city is thinking about ways to improve Reserve Street for pedestrians, bicyclists and mass transit.

City and county planners admit that any attempt to solve congestion requires a long-term perspective. Studies have shown that typical solutions meant to relieve congestion, such as adding or widening traffic lanes or increasing speed limits, often end up leading to more congestion. Research supporting the concept of "induced demand" reveals that as you increase road capacity, congestion decreases, and people then choose to use that road more than they would otherwise. With this in mind, the high cost of adding roadway capacity must be considered against the likelihood of benefit in the long run.

Bob Giordano, a long-time multimodal transportation advocate supported this concept, stating, "There's German studies on how cars act like molecules of gas and the faster they're moving around, the more space they take and you lose efficiency and there are crashes and noise, and dust and on and on."

However, demand can also increase due to growth in surrounding neighborhoods. For example, the Sx^wtpqyen Area Master Plan calls for as many as 6,000 to 8,000 new residential units and mixed-use growth in the area west of Reserve Street between Broadway and Mullan Road. This new development will create trips for commutes, goods, services, and recreation. This can lead to additional congestion.

Congestion opportunities and constraints

Building or improving alternate routes – otherwise known as increasing the grid system – can improve congestion on Reserve Street. Ongoing Russell Street improvements are an example of this strategy – a project under construction and set for completion sometime in 2024 or 2025 – will add additional capacity to Russell Street between Mount Avenue and Broadway, creating a parallel route to Reserve St. The Russell Street project includes full multi-modal options including raised bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and improved transit access.

Projects that build new roadways or expand existing ones to create alternate routes take a long time to study and usually require a significant amount of funds. Community members at the forum suggested a bypass for Reserve Street as a solution to congestion. In the 2000s, MDT conducted a study to look at a western bypass option, similar to the new Kalispell bypass. That study came up with two significant issues that blocked it from moving any further: first, it was an extremely expensive undertaking, and second, it did not have much community support on the western edge of Missoula.

Alternate routes are one long-term tool that can help with congestion, but other tools may be more effective in the short-term. Traffic mitigation approaches look at how to generally reduce traffic on Reserve Street. Much of the focus is how to improve the road for multiple types of users—including pedestrians, bicyclists, and bus users. Things that can improve pedestrian friendliness include better sidewalk infrastructure and reducing road-crossing distances with features such as curb bulb-outs, median refuge locations, and signalized midblock crosswalk locations. Adding buffer zones would help both bicyclists and pedestrians feel better about using non-motorized transportation modes on Reserve Street.

When discussing hopes for Reserve Street, bike and pedestrian friendliness was an important aspect that community members wanted to see. Rusty, another Missoulian that lives along Reserve Street, also supports finding ways to make biking on or near Reserve safer and more accessible. Although he is an experienced bicycle rider, he avoids biking on Reserve Street – too many cars and motorists honking at him make him feel uncomfortable.

- Rusty - Bicyclist

Rusty is a committed bicyclist who enjoys biking as a main mode of transportation. He has incorporated biking into his life to help save money, live a healthier lifestyle, and do his part to reduce carbon emissions. Rusty used to be a bicycle courier and would bike 40-50 miles a day for work, so he is an experienced and knowledgeable rider. Although Rusty is confident bicycling, he avoids the Reserve corridor if he can help it. The primary reason is due to being concerned about his safety while in traffic, but there are other factors that make the Corridor unpleasant, such as odor from the waste treatment plant.

Rusty recently moved to the “Franklin to the Fort” neighborhood near South Reserve Street and so must use the road often to go to and from his home. Besides that, he also uses Reserve for shopping and sometimes to go to the movies. In using Reserve Street, Rusty primarily bikes or drives in his truck. Rusty doesn’t just avoid Reserve Street when biking – his driving experience along the corridor is also unpleasant and he avoids travel on the road, particularly North Reserve, because of how busy that section is.

Although his commuting experience on Reserve is unpleasant, Rusty really enjoys his neighborhood, which he describes as a pretty quiet little section of Reserve Street. He especially likes his proximity to the park, the Bitterroot Trail, and Blue Mountain recreation area.

Rusty's main concern about Reserve Street is the congestion and how that affects the bikeability of the road. He's experienced motorists honking at him and feels there are just too many vehicles on the road to feel safe. He acknowledges that he bikes out of choice, but others bike because they don't have a vehicle due to economic constraints. The automobile-centric nature of Reserve not only prevents him from biking in the area, but also makes the Reserve Street corridor less accessible for many Missoulians.

Rusty supports improving Reserve Street so it accommodates multiple modes of transportation. He provides the following examples of potential solutions: more bus routes on Reserve Street so cyclists could load their bikes onto busses to skip the sections with more traffic, defined places for people to walk, buffered bicycle lanes protected from motor vehicles, and more alternative bicycle routes. He believes such improvements would benefit the common good – not only would he be able to get around the area easier, but so would other people in the community, particularly ones who need to bike because it's more affordable than owning or using a car. Ultimately, Rusty would like to see the Reserve Street corridor become a poster child for retrofitting urban sprawl, meaning it could be a case study of how a road was redeveloped to allow for more walkability, bikeability, greenery and something that community members have more pride in.

Activate Missoula, the MPO's 2045 long range transportation plan has adopted mode share goals that aim to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips. If a small percentage of drivers feel more comfortable walking or biking on Reserve Street and decide to use a non SOV mode of transportation, it can help relieve the number of car trips on the road and ease congestion. This goal requires creative solutions that yield safer and therefore more widely used walking and bicycling infrastructure networks. The result of this effort is thought of as a permanent reduction of automobile congestion on Reserve Street and the wider transportation network.

Increasing public transit on Reserve Street also was discussed at the forum as a desire for the road and a solution to congestion.

Currently, Mountain Line serves the businesses on East Reserve Street on Route Two through the stop right behind Target. This is one of their busiest stops. However, Mountain Line staff explain that the bus doesn't go on Reserve Street for the same reasons that people avoid driving there. The congestion that's experienced throughout the day creates variability in bus headways, so the route becomes harder to operate. There also aren't many places for buses to stop on Reserve Street that are also near signalized intersections, which are necessary for bus riders to access both directions of a route (to and from a destination). Many of the potential improvements to Reserve discussed in this report would also make it easier for Mountain Line to service more of Reserve Street. For now, Mountain Line is investigating how it can serve the businesses on the west side of the street in the near future, and plans to continue to reevaluate its routes so when opportunities on Reserve arise they can incorporate those improvements into their decision-making.

Safety and Maintenance

Community members wanted to know what police and traffic planners have learned from Reserve Street's crash history, what has contributed to the road's lack of safety and speed controls, and how the road is maintained. Reserve Street is by far the busiest roadway in Missoula and, unsurprisingly, is the location of many crashes, particularly at intersections. When thinking about driving there can be a shared responsibility. One of personal responsibility to drive safely, and one of transportation planners and safety officers to design safe roads and monitor driver behavior. This is a community shared responsibility.

The good news: these crashes are typically rear-end crashes and rarely is there an accident that results in a fatality. In fact, Reserve Street crash data from 2014–2018 indicate that 64% of all accidents were rear-end. Of the 636 accidents that occurred over that time frame, less than 40% resulted in injuries and there was one fatality.

And while crash trend analysis is not currently available for Reserve Street, the number of severe and fatal crashes is decreasing city-wide despite growth in traffic and population.

The bad news: although Reserve Street may qualify for federal and state highway safety funds, the reality is that the street is often a lower priority than other highways that see either higher crash rates, more severe crashes, or would have a better cost to benefit ratio (how the cost of a project compares to the benefit of reduced crashes). More importantly, these facts don't negate the fact that many community members feel stressed and generally unsafe on Reserve Street, particularly in Ali's case. She has witnessed a couple near crashes on Reserve Street, one involving a bicyclist and a semi-truck where she feared for the cyclist's life. There are also still 40% of crashes resulting in a documented injury.

- Ali - Commuter

Ali has lived in Missoula for 21 years, living in several Missoula neighborhoods during that time, including on the south side of town, off Expressway, and off River Road. She primarily commutes on the Reserve Street Corridor- in the past to work but mostly for shopping now.

Ali appreciates the higher speed limit on Reserve Street because it allows her to get where she is going fast; she also appreciates the convenience of being able to do all of her shopping and errands in the N. Reserve Street area. Despite these conveniences, however, traffic congestion can slow the speed of travel in the Reserve Street corridor, and so she has learned to choose earlier morning or later evening times to use Reserve Street. For example, she avoids shopping on Reserve Street on certain days and at certain times when it's busiest.

Ali's concerns about Reserve Street include long traffic wait times and general safety. She has witnessed a near-accident between a cyclist and a semi-truck on Reserve in which she feared for the bicyclist's life. She also feels the Clark Fork bridge's safety could be improved. For example, a taller median would block headlights of oncoming traffic, and clean reflectors would work better. Ali is also concerned about the rising cost of living in Missoula, such as affordable housing, which indirectly affects the Reserve Street corridor.

Ali hopes for improvements to expedite the flow of traffic on Reserve Street. She jokes, “The bypass needs a bypass.” She wonders if roundabouts or accessing N. Reserve stores from the back side could help with traffic flow. She’d like to see the speed limit at 45 mph to enable drivers to get where they are going faster, and acknowledges that more clear signage could help improve safety, for example, when you have exited the school zone for Porter Middle School.



The fact that 64% of crashes on Reserve are rear-end crashes suggests that distracted driving may be an additional culprit. Interestingly, responses in the personal experiences survey indicate that Reserve Street drivers may have misperceptions about their own driving and that of others. When asked about their own driving behaviors and their perceptions of the driving behaviors of others along Reserve Street, respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they, themselves, engaged in safer, more considerate driving practices than they have witnessed in others. These behaviors ranged from driving with extra care around pedestrians and bicyclists, to obeying traffic signals and yielding right of way when appropriate, to maintaining a safe distance from other vehicles, to paying “complete” attention while driving.

Respondents also took credit for more responsible driving practices, in terms of traveling with another person when shopping on Reserve Street than they credited to others. The single question to which respondents did not indicate more responsible behavior than other drivers they observed was “commuting with a passenger who was also going to work.”

This perception in favor of themselves extended to how knowledgeable they were, compared to others (i.e., awareness that there are neighborhoods around Reserve Street and that Reserve Street is a federal highway). Such perceptions in favor of ourselves is human nature; whether it's true that forum attendees are actually safer drivers than their observed counterparts cannot be accurately evaluated. But it is clear that many have observed distracted driving in others. Reducing crashes that occur as a result of careless or inattentive driving can hopefully contribute to a greater sense of safety on Reserve Street.

Jay Otto, Principal Scientist with the Center for Health & Safety at Montana State University, offers that improving distracted driving mainly requires behavioral change and can then be supported by infrastructure change. Shifting the conversation about distracted driving from what not to do, to what to do, has been suggested as a behavioral campaign that could help relieve safety concerns on Reserve Street. This involves understanding traffic and crashes in the context of the broader picture of road safety- overwhelmingly, people go to work, go shopping, and everything turns out fine. This also involves promoting engaged driving, which would include messaging around setting family rules and workplace policies around cell phone usage while driving and increasing awareness of what’s happening

outside the vehicle, such as noticing pedestrians and cyclists. In essence, proactive traffic safety would be about bringing the community on board to collectively engage in shared norms around safe driving practices, much like we already have regarding drunk driving. It's also recognizing that the transportation system is a shared system. I don't own it, you don't own it, we own it.

Traffic enforcement is also noted as an aspect of safety on Reserve Street. Since Reserve Street serves multiple purposes, as a federal highway and as a community thoroughfare, it is also in the jurisdiction of multiple agencies. This dynamic increases complexity around enforcing speed limits.

Another complicating factor is the volume of traffic on Reserve Street. When traffic is dense, it causes safety issues for law enforcement to get around traffic fast enough to pull over drivers who break the laws.

Understanding Plans for Reserve Street

So far, discussions around law enforcement have focused on identifying obstacles and solutions have not been fully addressed. Community members were very interested in knowing historical, current, and upcoming plans related to Reserve Street.

- How did the street become what it is?
- What plans are being considered and why?
- What improvements are being considered?

Reserve Street started out as a dirt road on the edge of town. People referred to it as Reserve Street because it went past the Army Reserve, or Fort Missoula. Over time, with the creation of a bridge over the Clark Fork River, it became a regional artery connecting the interstate down to Ravalli County and ultimately to two routes into

Idaho. Originally, the road was located on the edge of Missoula, but as the City boundaries have grown and neighborhoods in the county have filled in, it now appears to be a road that runs through the middle of Missoula. As North Reserve developed, it was the perfect place for large box stores to bring shopping and economic opportunities for not just Missoula, but the surrounding counties (Ravalli, Lake, Sanders, Mineral, Granite, Flathead and Powell). Today, it is an economic regional center, a neighborhood thoroughfare, a major commuter route as well as a route for visitors during our tourist season.

Many people feel that there has been a general lack of planning around Reserve Street, and that lack of planning has ultimately led to many of the community's current concerns. Current city and county planners were not around when Reserve Street was going through its great development stage and could not speak to the planning efforts, or lack thereof, at the time.

One contributing factor to this feeling is the fact that Reserve Street falls into multiple jurisdictions. It's a Federal Highway, so MDT has responsibility for maintaining it. The road also runs through city and county lines, so both Missoula City and County have some responsibility for it as well. Essentially, the City and County are responsible for what happens up to and along Reserve Street and MDT is responsible for the corridor right of way itself. State and local agencies then share responsibility for its maintenance.

That is where the MPO comes in. The MPO is a partnership that includes all of these entities so they can plan and make decisions together. It is the MPO's responsibility to both develop the vision for Reserve Street projects and develop a region-wide plan. Although the actual road falls under MDT's responsibility, the MDT has a commitment to collaborate in developing the local vision for how our community is growing while also balancing the

needs of the national highway route, and they are part of that process.

Planning is a complex process that involves multiple stakeholders and lots of coordination and navigation of competing priorities. Adding to that complexity is the amount of resources available to make any vision, or plan, happen. The majority of funding for any kind of improvements to Reserve Street come from state and federal sources. A very large project with high costs is more difficult to fund because of limited federal funding availability coupled with competing needs throughout the Missoula District. For example the needs on the national highway system in the Missoula District far exceed the funding available to meet those needs. As a result, improvements to Reserve must first be visioned to get a clear purpose and clear set of needs to identify a preliminary schedule and cost that can be prioritized according to others in Missoula's transportation district; then those needs will be assessed to see if improvements can be made in small chunks at a time or all at once. Due to all of these factors, planning tends to take more time than anyone wishes it would (community members and planners alike!).

Creativity is welcome when considering improvements. Collaboration with federal, state, and local partners will be paramount to balance diverse needs with the requirements on a federal-aid route.

The Reserve Street corridor is in very early stages of study, meaning any improvement projects are yet to be defined. Project definition is critical to developing a plan and subsequently acquiring funding. Generally, planners and elected officials alike are hearing common concerns from the community about Reserve Street- in terms of making it safer, reducing congestion, and making it more livable- the themes represented throughout this report. This means being creative about how to make the road more bikeable, walkable and transit-friendly, as well as considering new development

uses, such as mixing residential, business, and green space. Such improvements are all being considered as part of the planning process for Reserve Street.

The most relevant current plan that affects Reserve Street is the Sxwtpqyen Area Master Plan. So far, this Master Plan is also supporting mixed use transportation and development, with a focus on a "complete streets" design. Complete Streets is a transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation. Design and lessons learned from this planning process will inform Reserve Street planning.

Reserve Street is also a critical corridor in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that the MPO updates every 4 years. The LRTP is a multi-modal transportation plan that considers the growth and development of a regional transportation system. Due to Reserve Street's important connections to the region and status as a regional economic hub, the plan is looking at ways to improve not just traffic flow but the overall movement of people and goods. The MPO is currently in the process of updating the LRTP, and Reserve Street improvements are being actively discussed. The community concerns and hopes for Reserve Street shared as a result of this project are being considered in these discussions.

Mark, a Missoulain who travels through town on his powered wheelchair, appreciates the city's efforts to improve accessibility. He's had trouble using his wheelchair on the Reserve Street corridor, and looks forward to improvements that will make his travel on the road safer.

- Mark - Person with a disability

Mark is a highly engaged community member, serving as the President of Summit Independent Living, an organization for people with disabilities, and as a member of his homeowners' association. He was paralyzed 18 years ago and uses a power wheelchair to get around.

His experience of getting around Missoula is largely positive -- he finds the Missoula community to be kind and considerate when he is out and about in his powerchair. He is able to use the bike paths to get around, as well as the bus system and his personal van. Generally, Mark feels Missoula is highly accessible, especially given recent work to fix sidewalks lacking curb cuts and crosswalk buttons too high to reach from a wheelchair.



Mark lives in the Reserve corridor, on Eaton Street. Besides living in the area, he also uses Reserve Street for shopping; he feels that all the desirable stores are located there. He also feels that Reserve Street is well-maintained; that it is well marked and lacks potholes. However, Mark has had a couple of negative experiences when wheeling using the corridor, related to inadequate curb cuts and unreachable crosswalk pushbuttons. In one instance, his only option to reach his destination was to wheel in the Reserve St. bike lane, which was unpleasant and somewhat scary due to the proximity to traffic.

Mark's main concern with Reserve Street is its inaccessibility via wheelchair in many places. In addition to addressing accessibility of the area, he hopes the area can become a more enjoyable neighborhood with more parks.

Community

Community concerns included:

- How Reserve Street impacts the quality of life for people living near it,
- What environmental impacts does the road have,
- What the community needs to know regarding homelessness on Reserve Street

Bruce keenly feels the effects of population growth and road congestion on Reserve Street. As a long-time resident of the Orchard Homes neighborhood and a farmer, he's felt the community culture shift.

Long-time Resident of Reserve and farmer

Bruce is a long-time area resident with family history in the corridor. He has pride in the history of his neighborhood and neighbors, but his recent experience is one of frustration and disappointment with the corridor. He has found only limited opportunities for communication to and from the City and County regarding the vision for Reserve Street. Although he is trying hard to be involved, he doesn't feel like it is working.

Bruce uses Reserve Street for grocery shopping, shopping at hardware stores, and to satisfy those times he needs a quick meal. He is also unique in that he farms off of Reserve Street and must move farming equipment from field to field.

Bruce has generational ties to his Orchard Homes neighborhood- his connection to this specific neighborhood goes back to his parents and grandparents. He speaks with pride about his neighborhood, "It was a vibrant, hard-working, viable community." Orchard Homes is an agricultural community, something Bruce is proud of and believes in. He feels diversified agriculture and farming is the "highest and best use" of the land.

Over the years, Bruce has felt frustration with changes he sees happening in the neighborhood, related to Reserve Street. He remembers, as a child, riding his bike to school across Reserve Street without anyone worrying about it, and compares it to present day, where he feels it's way, way too hazardous to cross in any way. He has experienced being rear-ended on Reserve Street, as well as having two instances where vehicles drove off of Reserve Street and into his fields. This has led to feeling unsafe when working in his fields- knowing that a car could very well drive off the road at any moment.

His concerns for the area revolve around the heavy traffic and its impacts on his operation and the neighborhood. It's difficult to move farm machinery in the area with a slow-moving tractor when many drivers are going much faster and weed seeds from untended areas often get into his fields. Reserve Street also divides and isolates him from his neighbors and adds other disruptions to the neighborhoods, such as from truckers using jake brakes. He feels that the population growth, coupled with new zoning laws, results in a loss of sense of place and diminished quality of life.

Bruce's concerns are heightened because he perceives a lack of vision and forethought for the Reserve Street corridor. In cases where he's provided comment, such as in city council meetings, he feels like his comments fall on deaf ears. He's grown a mistrust for government officials over the years because of instances of broken promises and a lack of respect for property rights and lack of action to make accommodations for his hearing impairment.

Bruce would like to see a reduced speed limit on Reserve Street, as he feels that would make the road all-around safer. Ultimately, he'd like to see an alternate route for Reserve, one that would allow people passing through town to do so without having to go through Missoula neighborhoods. Bruce also hopes that the people making decisions on these issues will take the experience of local people into real consideration.

Quality of life is a subjective matter- what one community member likes, another may not. The process of finding common ground amongst a diversity of perspectives is one of the reasons planning projects are so complex and take a long time. Although there is much to Reserve Street that may negatively impact one's quality of life, as Bruce's situation demonstrates, there are also aspects to Reserve that improve the quality of life for some residents. According to the Pleasantville Home Owners Association President, a number of people actively choose to live off of Reserve Street for the many benefits it provides, such as a top-ranked school district, privacy, parks, affordable and well-cared for homes, and its proximity to stores, specifically Target, Albertsons, and Costco. While Reserve Street is a desirable place to live for many, the location does create heavier traffic than would be normal for a residential neighborhood because drivers take the back roads to avoid Reserve Street, and will often speed on those backroads. Panhandlers on the road can also make residents feel uncomfortable.

Overall, there are both benefits and drawbacks to living near the Reserve Street Corridor. Many people had the same concerns regarding air quality as expressed by Ada, the new resident on Reserve Street. They believe the traffic and development on Reserve Street create environmental and air quality concerns for Missoulians. To mitigate these impacts, MPO conducts air quality analysis in their long range plans, focused on ensuring that transportation investments keep our valley's emissions within established federal standards. However, these analyses do not necessarily consider the localized air quality impacts that come from proximity to high volumes of vehicle traffic. Any larger scale projects do trigger requirements to conduct a more in-depth environmental analysis which would also include impacts to the property owners and to the environment, and would assess environmental justice considerations.

Survey respondents brought up creative ways to further promote environmental sustainability, such as adding more solar panels or rooftop greenspace to businesses along Reserve Street. An important concern for Reserve Street, as well as the City of Missoula is the issue of homelessness. Reaching Home: Missoula's 10- Year Plan To End Homelessness was created by a broad group of community organizations and is being implemented by the Missoula City Housing and Community Development Program. Often people seek to make their home in places along the river corridor. For over a decade, people have lived underneath the Reserve Street bridge. In recent years, this encampment has become more apparent.

People expressed various reactions to homelessness; some feel the encampment is an eyesore and some find the encampments make them feel unsafe.

Rather than simply displacing the community members living in homeless encampments, the city supported initiatives to try to find safe housing for these residents and have regular contact with them through Homelessness Outreach Team (or HOT for short). HOT members check on the homeless population, building trust with those who are struggling and keep in touch with them to try and ensure that they are getting food and proper clothing for the weather. Through the HOT teams' efforts, the homeless encampment on Reserve lowered over the years. Once the COVID pandemic hit, this initiative became difficult to continue and more people experienced housing difficulties and resorted to the encampment. Homelessness on Reserve Street, and throughout Missoula, continues to be a matter of great importance and concern. You can read more about city initiatives to address homelessness on the City of Missoula website.



The planning community in Missoula has been responding to community input and is moving in a direction that is very much in line with what the project team learned from community members during this input process, which includes focusing on multi-modal transportation, accessibility, and beautification. These are all aspects that planners are taking into consideration, as Laval Means, Planning Services Manager for the City of Missoula, describes, "Planning has to have consideration of the character, the intangible feeling of a space somehow. And so we look at the quality of life and we talk about it, but it is one of those things that doesn't always relate to a physical thing. It might relate to the way we value our river corridor, and our green space, and our open space, but it still has a sense of how comfortable we feel—how healthy are we, do we feel in that environment too. And so it is important to think about those pieces."

Planners interviewed expressed appreciation of this community conversation and input. They believe it is good for elected officials and staff to be reminded of what is important to Missoulians and for everyone to be thinking about ways to be innovative.

An important finding of this project was discovering the community's desire to learn what is going on in regards to planning on Reserve Street. Both community members and City staff want to hear from each other, but with so many communication channels and bustling schedules, these opportunities to share information can easily get lost.

The graphic to the left can help people understand how and when they can participate in planning processes and how it fits into the grander planning process.

Below are some current ways the public can stay informed on what is going on and learn about opportunities to provide effective community input.

- Weekly neighborhood digest. The digest provides a quick snapshot of what's going on in each neighborhood. You can sign up for the digest on the City of Missoula website.
- City Council meetings. All meetings are also open to the public and present good opportunities to get informed on what discussions are happening around the city. Visit the city website to see the City Council's schedule. You can also sign up for email digests about City Council agendas and meetings.
- Commissioner Meetings. The Board of Missoula County Commissioners routinely meets on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week at 10 a.m. in Conference Room 206 of the Administration Building at 199 W. Pine Street in Missoula. During these administrative meetings, contracts are signed, topics are discussed and issues are voted upon.

- Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee (TPCC). TPCC develops and keeps current transportation planning as an integral part of the comprehensive regional planning for the Missoula urban area. This committee works closely with the City, County, Missoula Consolidated Planning Board and the State to develop and keep current urban transportation planning in the Missoula area.
- Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC). The TTAC provides technical advice to the TPCC and technical direction to the inter-agency staff of the Missoula Urban Transportation Planning Process.
- Transportation Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC). The TSAC is comprised of State, County, City and non-government representatives that coordinate efforts to accomplish the strategies set forth in the Community Transportation Safety Plan (CTSP).

All current plans are also publicly available. For anyone interested in learning more about planning efforts currently underway, reading the plans is a good place to start. Below is a list of plans and studies that could have an effect on Reserve Street development and improvements.

- Long Range Transportation Plan (2021)
- Our Missoula Growth Policy – City of Missoula (2015)
- Missoula County Growth Policy (2019)
- Sxwtpqyen Area Master Plan
- Missoula Urban Transportation District Long Range Strategic Plan
- Mullan BUILD Grant
- Missoula Community Transportation Safety Plan
- Bicycle Facilities Master Plan
- Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan (2018)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The vision of this community input project, and the Forum in particular, was to facilitate a deeper dialogue and understanding of the many perspectives, and nuances, of Reserve Street according to community members and agency staff. Such dialogue is important for planning a future Missoula that is inclusive and serves community members; it's a sign of a healthy democracy.

The poster on page 45 was created to illustrate how and when the public can participate in planning processes and how that participation fits into the grander planning process.

It's important to always continue this dialogue. To mirror this dynamic, the following recommendations are broken out into three areas: 1. Engagement Recommendations for the Missoula Community; 2. Planning Recommendations for the MPO; 3. Long-term Recommendations for the MPO

Signal Technology to Optimize the Flow of Traffic

One of the ways the MPO and MDT are looking at traffic and congestion is through signal optimization and new technology, often referred to as intelligent traffic signals (ITS). A recent study by MDT, funded through a federal Accelerating Innovation Deployment (AID) grant, examined the traffic operations of two corridors in Missoula: Reserve Street and Brooks. The results of that study indicated some potential for improved traffic flow through signal timing optimization and other new technologies designed to respond to changes in traffic patterns. However, the corridor also has issues and constraints including: queue lengths, cross-street signal needs for both traffic and longer pedestrian crossing times due to the width of Reserve Street, lane configuration imbalances, and left turn timings.

Despite limitations, there is evidence that improvements in signal timing between the south and north segments of Reserve could help, along with changes to how left turns are signalized. Regular performance monitoring of operations could lead to proactive timing updates to maintain the best possible flow of traffic.

Working to Facilitate Transit Service

Mountain Line's most recent update to their strategic plan includes service on Reserve Street from the Community Hospital to Downtown is included in the 2043 Long-Term Network Strategic Plan. This service would be contingent on changes to traffic engineering and pedestrian improvements on the corridor as this area is designated for mixed-use development and will likely generate a high transit demand.

The strategic plan also states, "While there are significant challenges to making major changes to the corridor at this time, it is conceivable that state, MPO and local priorities may align in the coming years such that Reserve Street may be re-imagined as less of a highway and more of a boulevard. If such a transformation is realized in the future, and if dense development along the corridor occurs, Reserve Street can become a part of the Primary Transit Network."

Create Safe Pedestrian Road Crossings

Work to create safe places for pedestrians to cross Reserve Street. Suggestions made by key informants include: lower speed limits, narrow lane widths, improved pedestrian signals, install a combination of curb extensions and a median refuge at road crossings. This combination narrows the roadway, which reduces the pedestrian crossing distance and the time that pedestrians are in the street. The overall goal is to improve the ability of pedestrians and motorists to see each other.

Design Pedestrian Friendly Sidewalks

The design of sidewalks makes a difference for increasing pedestrian traffic. Curbside sidewalks are closer to traffic, have fewer trees, and are noisier, all characteristics which make the sidewalk less comfortable to walk. Elements of sidewalks that are friendlier to pedestrians include: Proper sizing, Universal Accessibility, Safe Connections to other modes of transportation, Clear Signage, Attractive Spaces, Secure Spaces, and Quality Surfaces. Secure spaces are created with well-lit streets that include active storefronts. Quality Surfaces Include a combination of stable, slip- and flood-resistant materials, and efficient drainage.

Create Protected Bicycle Facilities

Reserve Street would benefit from protected bike facilities to improve the safety and comfort of bicyclists. When there is physical separation between vehicles and cyclists both feel more comfortable and secure. A benefit of bicycle infrastructure that is physically separated from vehicles is that it can help increase bicycle use, especially by less confident riders, and support safe travel in some applications (Pucher and Buehler, 2012; Lusk, 2011).

Key informants report that plans for a protected bike lane along the full length of Reserve Street are desired and they believe that would be the best facility for Reserve Street; however, funding is limited. Alternative options to investigate would be to add protected bike lanes on roads that parallel Reserve Street, such as Great Northern Ave.

The current update of the Long Range Transportation Plan includes a project to install protected bike lanes for the length of Reserve Street between Brooks and I-90, building off recommendations that were included in the 2016 Bicycle Facilities Master Plan. As the prioritization

and funding recommendations advance for that plan update, protected bike lanes rank highly and will continue to be an option for recommended funding.

Provide Incentives For Efficient Transportation Modes

Key informants suggest one solution is to look for ways to enhance or incentivize folks to take bike and pedestrian routes or public transit in order to help with congestion. Currently the Mountain Line bus is zero-fare and Missoula in Motion has commuter challenges in place to incentivize sustainable trips. Transportation Demand Management, which includes incentive programs, is a rapidly developing set of strategies, and Missoula transportation staff actively engage with industry best practices. As new strategies are studied, there may be opportunity to further incentivize Missoula's use of bike, walk and bus modes. For commuters coming to Missoula from surrounding communities, options include van pool, park and rides, and expanded telecommute policies.

Build a Grid System

Key informants suggest that congestion has to be solved within the current grid network. Creating alternative routes by connecting side streets to major arteries can help spread the congestion out, rather than having it focused on one road, such as Reserve Street. For instance, one of the primary benefits of the Russell Street project is to reduce pressure on Reserve Street through increased capacity on an alternate route. While the project is still new and not fully constructed, early evidence indicates that some traffic is choosing Russell over Reserve.

Other options to study include increasing the grid connectivity in the North Reserve area. Some existing streets provide this benefit today, such as Great Northern. The recently awarded BUILD grant to construction Mary Jane Boulevard and George

Elmer between Mullan and Broadway will further increase connectivity in the area, providing new routes to maximize use of our existing streets such as W Broadway, and relieving pressure on pinch-point intersections such as Mullan and Reserve.

Providing safe, accessible, and comfortable bicycle and pedestrian facilities on these expanded grid roads could also address community member suggestions of adding safe routes parallel to Reserve Street. In the same way a grid roadway system can provide alternative vehicle routes, a more complete grid will help people on bikes access services on adjacent street without having to ride directly on Reserve.

Beautification of Reserve Street

There are already areas on North Reserve Street that have center median islands which could be enhanced with visually pleasing plants. Currently, the State has an agreement that allows the City to maintain the medians and there is limited landscaping which is maintained by the Missoula Parks Department. This landscaping has been a challenge due to funding and safety. A recommendation is to invest in some more modern, water-wise, and low-maintenance type of landscaping that makes this area fit in with the feel of Missoula. Relatively low-cost improvements can significantly transform the way a street looks, which can then transform the way people feel. For example, trees and flowers along with attractive signage and flags help people feel proud, positive and calm.

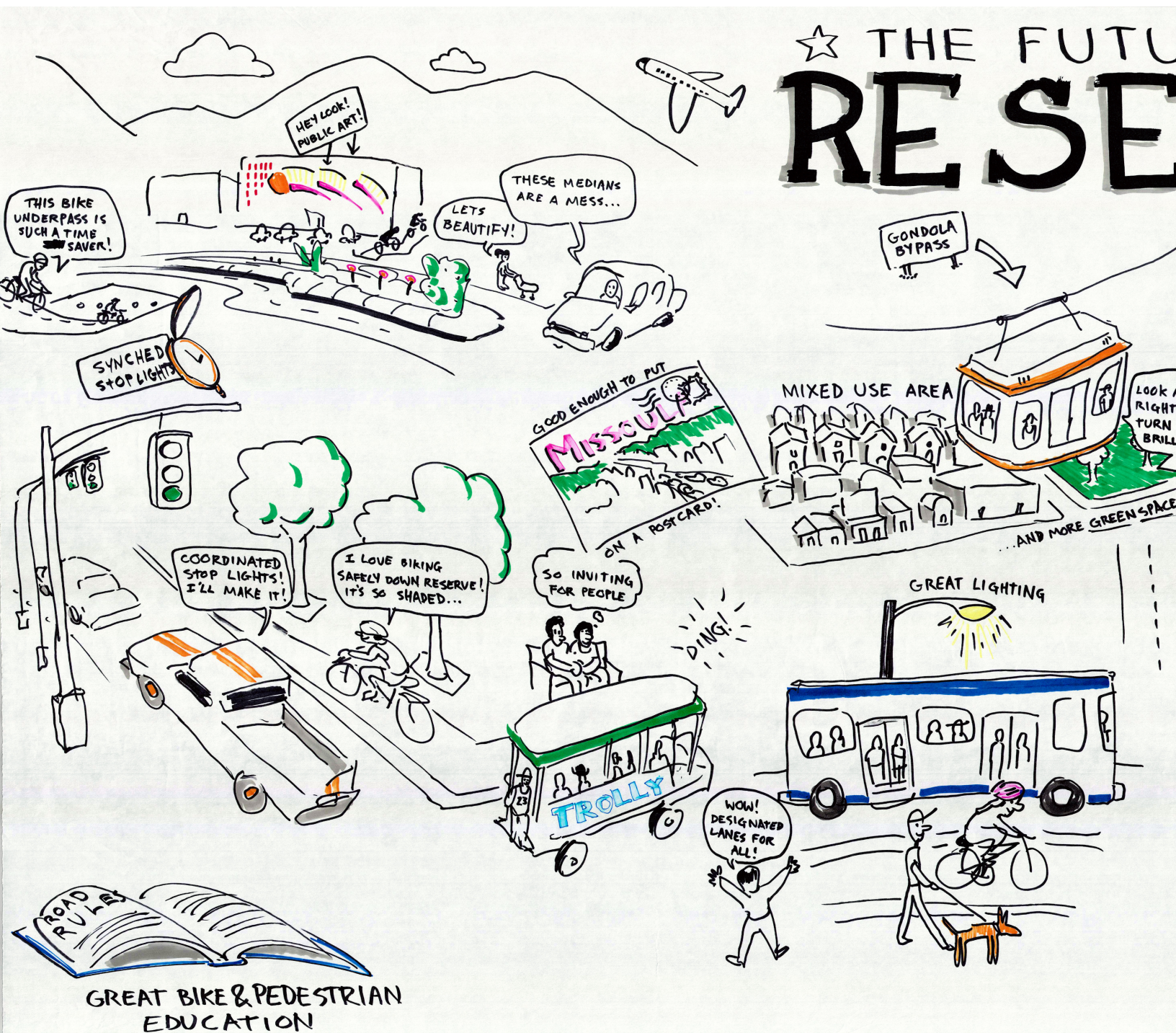
Continue to Keep Community Members Involved

Key informants recommended educating and communicating to citizens how, when and where they can lend their ideas to projects. Since the advent of the Internet, it has become harder due to a lack of a centralized information portal. Prior to the Internet most information was found in one of 3 places: the newspaper, the radio, or the television.

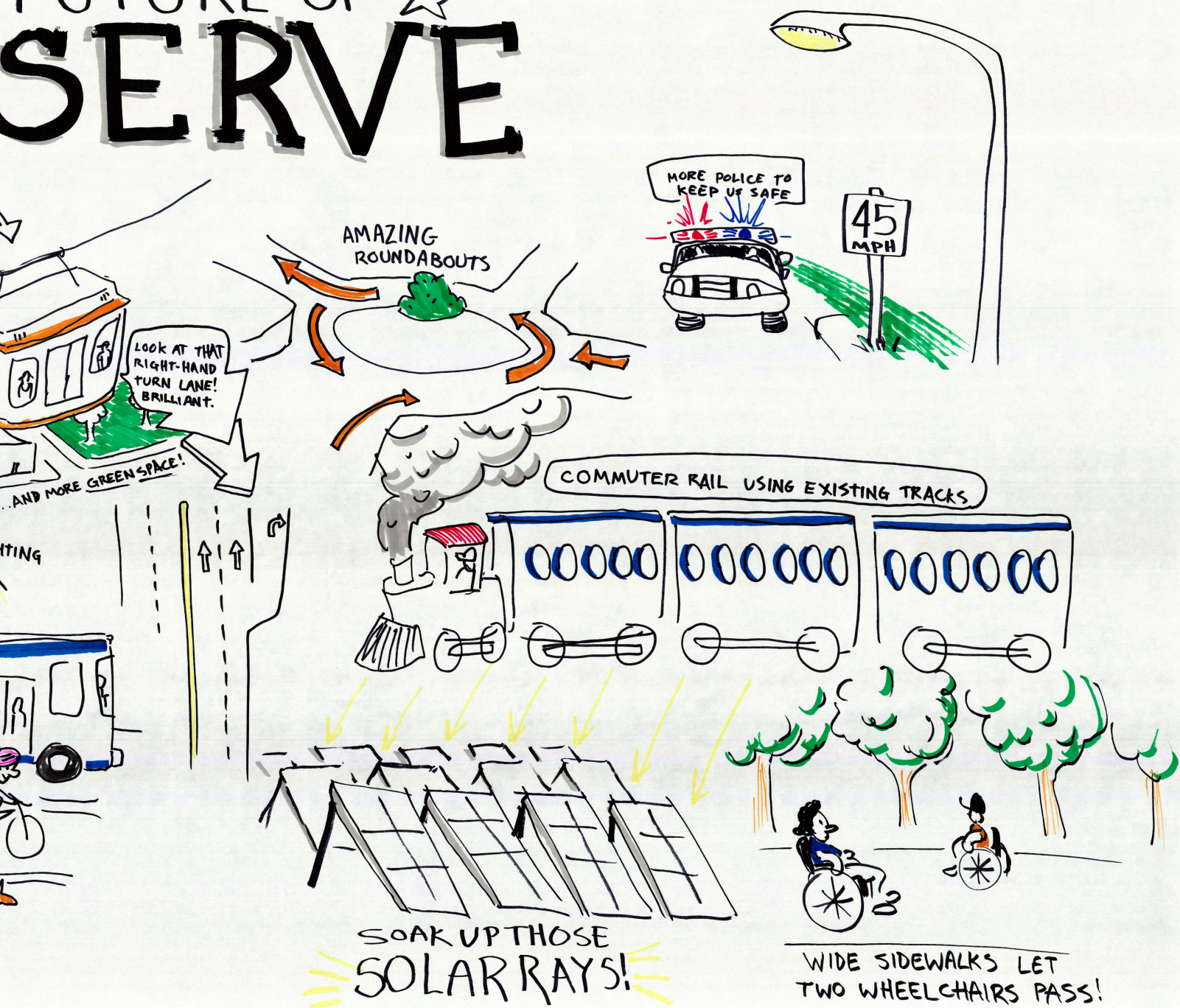
Key informants shared how in the past, some solutions would come from people that are part of the general public and not necessarily one of the district leads or one of the professionals on the team. Ed Toaves shared the value of community input in this quote, “You’ll get these comments and that will trigger a solution that people may have thought about or maybe didn’t think enough about, and I think that’s the advantage of having different perspectives from the public involved.”

The accessibility of opportunities for public input should be an important consideration, just as the planning community is focusing on improving accessibility of our roadways. Widely advertising input opportunities will also be important to keeping community members involved.

GRAPHIC RECORDER 2: WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE RESERVE STREET LOOK LIKE?



FUTURE OF SERVE



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MISSOULIANS TO IMPROVE RESERVE STREET

Stay Tenacious to Create Density with Design

Long term planning and projects take time. Missoula is an expanding community that is working to resolve road congestion and the need for more housing. Citizens feel the culture and quality of life being replaced. Community Planners understand this and seek to create multimodal improvements like the one we now have on Russell Street. Bringing community members along in the process and doing a marketing campaign to educate them on how long it takes to implement thoughtful design-oriented projects helps maintain community patience with the process. The Russell Street Improvements started with an EIS in 1999 and the first phase was completed in 2020. It's important to help people to understand the timelines for infrastructure projects so they remain patient.

Community planners and community members at the input process, also desire attention to design and the need to hold developers to a higher standard so new dense spaces are attractive, walkable and built for humans.

A majority of the Reserve Street Corridor is included in the City of Missoula's Design Excellence boundary. This development tool can help to address vehicular access, bicycle/ pedestrian amenities, parking location and design, lighting, as well as additional aesthetic components to the corridor. Although this manual was implemented in 2019 it provides great potential for changes to Reserve Street.

Institute a Positive Culture Framework

The Positive Culture Framework (PCF) is an approach based on the Montana State University's Center for Health and Safety's latest research about improving health and safety in our communities and

organizations. They intentionally use the word cultivate, as the PCF builds on shared values, beliefs, and attitudes that already exist in a culture to promote health and safety. Just as Missoula Planners stated in the key informant interviews, and we experienced at the January Community Input Forum, PCF builds on the recognition that the solutions are in the community.

An important component of the PCF is to understand the concept of positive community norms and social norms marketing. Research shows that people's behavior is influenced by their perceptions of what is "normal" or "typical." It is normal for people to misperceive the typical behaviors or attitudes of their peers. For example, if people believe that the majority of their peers smoke, then they are more likely to smoke.

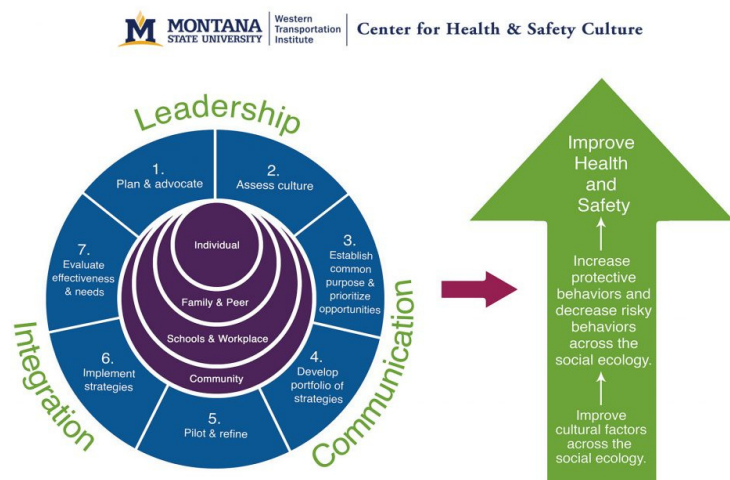
Jay Otto of the Center for Health and Safety at MSU shared that part of the effort can be simply to amplify stories of what is working and the safe behavior that does exist. Rarely do we see or notice all the times people do not get in an altercation or have a good experience on the Reserve Street corridor. These are not talked about. It is important to counter negative narratives actively with other information. Jay shared that people won't believe it at first. In fact, they'll absolutely, vehemently reject it. So it takes a long time to start to shift that.

Jay also recommends that positive reporting needs to happen at what is referred to as a "high dosage," meaning the message has to be consistent and shared regularly and often. He shared, "The results can take years. So it's a long

haul, like the first year, the first month or even year [you] can see a lot of pushback. ‘You guys don't know what you're talking about, you're using the wrong data.’ And then that tends to quiet down.” Jay Otto’s research shows that by year two and year three, people will actually start echoing back what you've been saying.

The goal is to remind people that the norm is “no accident or incident”. And so you have to be prepared to talk through that and lean into it and say, “Yes, there absolutely are incidents, which is maybe why we want to continue to explore making changes, both in physical structure and behavior.”

This graphic shows the process and community approach the PCF utilizes to move towards teaching community members to think about their personal responsibility to maintaining a safe environment.



Distracted Driver Campaign

Reserve Street crash data from 2014-2018 indicate that 64% of all accidents were rear-end collisions. Rear-end collisions can be the result of one of the drivers being distracted and not paying attention. Distracted drivers most often find themselves texting, talking on the phone, reaching for something in their car, looking away from the road or even petting their dog. We are so used to using our phones and technology, that it can be hard to believe that distracted driving is equivalent to driving while under the influence of a substance.

Currently in Missoula there is a fine for using your cell phone while driving. Jay Otto shared that it is important to have a campaign that talks about what to do to stop distracted driving, rather than approaching it from a negative stance.

He frames the conversation around wanting engaged drivers, promoting the question, “Can this wait?” Cell phone calls have high utility and we pride ourselves on multitasking in our busy world. Car time can feel like wasted time, so we use it to talk to people.” Using a Positive Culture Framework he promotes teaching people to ask themselves the question, “Is this really an emergency that you need to respond to?” and then helping them understand it absolutely increases the risk of a crash. Even a hands-free cell phone conversation increases the risk of a crash.

The Missoula County Health Department has an office that educates the community regarding distracted driving. It is a recommendation that this campaign be highlighted and become more active on the Reserve Street corridor. Other campaigns are coordinated at the state level through MDT’s Statewide Highway Safety Plan. Encouraging close coordination and focus on Reserve Street could be one strategy to help decrease the overall number of crashes along the corridor.

Implementing a Proactive Safety Campaign

A Proactive Safety Campaign makes the case that Reserve Street is a shared system and we all want it to be safe. Running a campaign that says, “I don't own it, you don't own it, we own it” puts responsibility on the driver, cyclist and pedestrian and not just on infrastructure and congestion. If we all own it, and we all take responsibility then that means we are safe, and we also look out for the safety of others. We can expand that conversation out to say, “What does it mean for me to be a safe driver? What does it mean to be looking out for not just my safety but your safety?”

A proactive traffic safety campaign works on growing behaviors in which people say, “I wear a seatbelt and I would ask you to wear a seatbelt. “I do not text and drive, so I would ask you not to text and drive.” It teaches people to be proactive with other people’s safety and not rely on the state or law enforcement to take care of monitoring people’s behavior.

Through implementation of Missoula’s Community Transportation Safety Plan (CTSP), which includes recommended safety strategies to address intersection crashes, non-motorized users, and high-risk behavior, progress has been made in addressing these concerns. The CTSP references actions and implementation partners to further the goals of the plan, many of which are specific to reducing risky behaviors such as inattentive driving.

CONCLUSION

The mission of the Missoula MPO is about creating an environment that’s livable and sustainable for all, and to accomplish this via coordination and collaboration between the state, the county and the city. To meet this pledge, planners are working to design places for people. They talk about density, but they talk about density with design. They talk about streets not only being safe and accommodating for people using all modes of transportation and movement, but also about how to make our community interesting for people to see. They strive to create a quality of life where it feels easy to get around and people feel connected to our beautiful valley and each other.

This is not something that will happen overnight, but over many years. It is also something that does not just involve design, building and infrastructure alone, but personal responsibility of individual community members to understand the role they play in creating a less stressful, safe and healthy atmosphere along the Reserve Street Corridor.

APPENDIX

- List of Key Informants
- Reserve Street Community Input Forum Sharing/ Learning Station Descriptions
- Reserve Street FAQ
- Planning Process Diagram
- Community Input Forum Program

Key Informant Interviews

Public Works

Understand how Reserve Street is maintained

People are concerned about the:

- cleanliness of Reserve Street
- appearance of Reserve Street (weeds)
- un-attractiveness of Reserve Street

Mountain Line

Understand transit plans for Reserve Street

People want to know:

- Will Mountain Line increase transit to Grant Creek areas?
- Will Mountain Line run up and down Reserve Street
- Have they ever done a study around transit and Reserve Street?
- Could they be involved in developing a trolley that runs the box stores?

Missoula Institute of Sustainable Transportation

Understand the bicycling perspective

- What could be improved?
- What are specific things that work well?

Former Missoula District Administrator of MDT

Understand the history of Reserve Street development

- How was Reserve Street developed as a by-pass that became a developed part of town

Missoula Crime Prevention Officer

Two areas of concern - homelessness and enforcement of traffic laws

Homelessness

- What is important for the public to know and understand

Traffic enforcement

- There is a perception that traffic laws are not enforced on Reserve Street

Stakeholder/Advocate/ Let's Improve Reserve Street

- What's the goal of LIRS?
- What should we know about Reserve Street from their perspective?

Missoula City Development

Development perspective of Reserve Street

- Issues of housing and business development in relation to Reserve Street

Transportation Planning Manager

Transportation planning perspective of Reserve Street

- History of road over time
 - By-pass history and development
- Insight into root of the problems with Reserve Street
 - Congestion
 - Traffic lights perceived to not be in synch
 - Road safety for vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians
 - Appearance
 - Developed as by-pass but business development impeded this use

Missoula City-County Health Department

- Air quality, emissions
- Environmental health aspects of Reserve Street

HOA

- Experiences of living on/near Reserve Street
- How does Reserve impact quality of life?

Neighborhood Council

- Experiences of living on/near Reserve Street
- How does Reserve impact quality of life?

City County Representative

- What are the concerns of Missoula residents?
- What can be done to make improvements?
- Are there plans for improvement?

Safety Behavior Specialists

- How people's perspective of safety affect their behavior on the roads?
- How to change traffic safety culture?
-

Questions asked at the Learning and Sharing Stations:

Graphic Recorder 1: What is happening on Reserve Street today?

At this station, attendees will share their thoughts for what Reserve Street looks like today – the good, the bad, and the ugly – and a Graphic Recorder will illustrate these thoughts for a visual representation of how people perceive their current experience with Reserve Street.

Graphic Recorder 2: What would you like to see Reserve Street look like?

At this station, attendees share their thoughts for what they envision Reserve Street could be given the parameters of what cannot be changed. The Graphic Recorder will illustrate these thoughts to provide a visual representation of what Reserve Street could be.

The following are the station topic descriptions and experts:

How is Missoula approaching safety on Reserve Street

Expert: David Gray

Description: Safety is one of the most important issues or needs that the City, County, State DOT, and Metropolitan Planning Organization are committed to addressing. Transportation safety can impact frequency as well as severity of crashes, for people of all ages, mobility, and economic status. Crashes can result in significant individual and community impacts on health, social and economic costs. In order to address this issue, the MPO has a community-wide Transportation Safety Plan that will lead us to effective, efficient solutions. Within that plan, there are three primary emphasis areas based on a comprehensive analysis of 10 years of crash data. Reserve Street is a state highway that accommodates a high level of pass-through and external to retail vehicle trips. The sheer volume of traffic on Reserve Street increases the probability of crashes occurring. However, there may be countermeasures that could be implemented to reduce crash severity. Based on the analysis in the safety plan, staff look for the most cost-effective solutions to known safety issues. The safety session will give an overview of how staff are looking to improve Reserve Street traffic safety through this strategic approach.

Plans for Reserve Street

Expert: Aaron Wilson

Description: Land use and transportation connections are essential ingredients for understanding and solving the problems related to future growth pressure. Planning for growth means identifying development locations and patterns that support a compact, walkable, and connected urban environment. Establishing the land use and transportation systems necessary for multi-modal travel will be vital for accommodating new residents and the trips they will need to take for

jobs, services and recreation. In Missoula, the foundation for both land use and transportation planning is underway, as detailed in the list of planning projects below. Reserve Street is a key component of many of these plans, and remains a central focus of all City, County and MPO planning processes.

In order to accomplish our ambitious goals, we must be strategic as a community in how we invest scarce transportation dollars. We must recognize that we cannot build our way out of congestion simply by widening streets and increasing speeds. There is a better, more efficient approach, as outlined in the LRTP and the City and County Growth Policies, that envisions compact, mixed-use development served by multi-modal transportation facilities that are accessible by all ages and all abilities. Reserve Street will be one of many key corridors to achieving that future.

Land Use and Traffic

Expert: Andrew Hagemaiier

Description: There is a lack of general understanding of the relationship between development patterns and congestion. Certain types of development patterns are much more likely to result in congestion than others. The development patterns along Reserve Street are among the most auto-centric development patterns in the city. As long as the development pattern along Reserve Street favors the automobile, congestion will be a problem. Small changes to infrastructure can help with safety, but any investment to the roadway to alleviate congestion will yield very little in return. But, changes throughout the city that favor walkability, biking and transit will help alleviate congestion community wide.

In addition to any relevant information identified by the experts, each educational station should be prepared to address the following questions:

- What is the issue?
- Why is this an issue?
- What has been done to address the issue?
- What can be done to address this issue?
- What does this mean for the future of Reserve Street?
- What should people know about this issue?
- Discussion: Knowing what they know now, what would participants do about this issue?

FAQ - Land Use and Traffic

Q: Will more traffic lights regulate flow of traffic more efficiently?

A: Timing is really the issue rather than the number of signals. Think of an EMS vehicle, ambulance/police car, with signal preemption. The more signals, the bigger disruption to the flow of traffic. Signal coordination, however, can help improve traffic flow under some conditions. Coordination means that signals throughout the network are working together to ensure blocks of vehicles travel efficiently through signals.

Q: Who is in charge of landscaping maintenance? – specifically dead trees along road over the Milwaukee Overpass.

A: Maintenance of landscaping along Reserve Street is a combination of City and Montana Department of Transportation, who work in partnership to ensure trees, shrubs and other landscaping remain in good condition.

Q: Is it a good policy to vacate easements to provide density?

A: Planning for growth means identifying development locations and patterns that support a compact, walkable, and connected urban environment. Greater development density is a key

component to supporting efficient multi-modal transportation systems. Establishing the land use and transportation systems necessary for multi-modal travel will be vital for accommodating new residents and the trips they will need to take for jobs, services and recreation. In Missoula, the foundation for both land use and transportation planning is underway.

Q: Is it feasible to require rooftop utilization such as solar panels or rooftop garden/ greenspace?

A: Although not in the scope of transportation planning, this is an innovative idea that could be incorporated into other community plans and regulations.

Q: Would there be an advantage to a “box store” shuttle/ trolley service to keep people from needing their cars to travel between stores?

A: The goal is to have a transportation system that fosters an environment where people can leave their cars at home, this idea could relieve congestion until our community reaches that goal.

Q: Where does funding come from for Reserve Street related projects?

A: While the Montana Department of Transportation maintains and has jurisdiction along the Reserve Street corridor, funding for future projects will come from various Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration sources. Other state and local funding sources could also be used to improve the corridor. Generally speaking, money for transportation projects comes from a combination of gas taxes, impact fees from new development, and local property taxes. More in-depth information on transportation revenue sources can be found in the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Q: Why is higher density housing approved without proper ingress and egress access?

A: All new development projects are reviewed for many factors, and appropriate transportation infrastructure is a key component of good development. Sometimes, development happens after infrastructure is in place. A good example is the Mullan area BUILD grant that will be constructing a road system in the area west of Reserve St between Mullan Rd and W Broadway. Other times, improvements to transportation systems need a certain level of development to cover the cost of necessary infrastructure. Intersection improvements like new traffic signals are one example.

Q: How many vehicles per day travel on Reserve Street?

A: Traffic counts vary on the Reserve Street corridor. Generally, the Annual Average Daily Traffic ranges between 30,000 – 40,000. View Montana Department of Transportation’s interactive traffic map: https://mdt.mt.gov/publications/datastats/traffic_maps.shtml

Q: How are automated electric vehicles being considered?

A: Autonomous vehicles (AV) are an exciting and evolving transportation opportunity. The MPO is actively looking at ways to incorporate emerging AV technology and infrastructure into the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Q: Is there collaboration with Bitterroot Valley to address Reserve Street?

A: Missoula and Ravalli Counties coordinate a carpool service. The Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association/ IRide Vanpool provides transportation options to minimize traffic, reduce parking congestion, protect our environment, and improve our quality of life. Learn more at mrtma.org.

Q: When was the last time a traffic light study was done on Reserve Street?

A: The last time signals were studied for coordination was about 8 or 9 years ago. This is longer than typically desired, however signals studies work best when they look at all signals in coordination across the City. One reason a new study is on hold is due to the Russell Street construction, which will likely impact traffic volumes on both Russell and Reserve St. Signal coordination will be an important tool in improving traffic flow on Reserve Street, as well as other streets in Missoula.

Q: Can more bus routes be created?

A: Mountain Line is actively seeking additional public and private funding opportunities to expand service into the evening and on Sundays and ultimately adjust and create new routes. Learn more about Mountain Line's future plans in the Missoula Urban Transportation District Strategic Plan. In addition, transit within the Reserve St/Mullan Road/Broadway area is being considered as part of the Mullan Area Master Plan. You can find information about that planning process here www.mullanareamasterplan.com

Q: What is being done to address the 25% of the Missoula workforce that commutes into town for work?

A: Missoula, Lake, and Ravalli Counties coordinate a carpool service through the Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association/ IRide Vanpool, which provides transportation options to minimize traffic, reduce parking congestion, protect our environment, and improve our quality of life. Learn more at mrtma.org. Missoula In Motion provides carpool resources and a map with Park and Ride locations throughout the Missoula area.

Missoula's efforts to create a complete multi-modal transportation system will ensure that

adequate capacity can be maintained to accommodate people commuting from outside of town. The more people that choose to bike, walk or take the bus within the City, the more room there is on our streets for people who have to drive without requiring costly roadway expansions.

Q: Why are federal dollars not being utilized for an outer belt, like Kalispell?

A: A bypass around Missoula would cost hundreds of millions of dollars and the river, flood plains, and private property cause additional cost burdens. This cost would consume nearly all of our region's transportation dollars for the next several decades, and studies from around the country indicate that creating bypasses or road widening projects do little over time to reduce congestion. More cost effective options to address congestion include providing quality transit service, safe and comfortable bicycle facilities, and to create a development pattern that allows people to choose different modes of transportation. The Montana Department of Transportation has no plans for a future bypass.

Q: Has mass transit, like in Europe, been considered?

A: Transportation options of all sorts are discussed, studied, and planned for, however funding constraints limit the implementation of infrastructure and programs. An example is the Missoula Urban Transportation District Urban Streetcar study, the document can be found here: https://www.mountainline.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Missoula-Streetcar-Final-Report_Dec-2012-2.pdf

Mass transit also requires much higher development densities than exist within most of Missoula. In order to support the cost and ridership needs, Missoula will need to provide more opportunities for infill and higher density development along with good mixes of uses to support walkability.

FAQ - Transportation Safety

Q: Is there enforcement for driving in bike lane, blocks before traffic lights?

A: Driving in the bike lane is not legal in Missoula. However, enforcement requires resources from our Police Department that may not be highest priority. As with all traffic violations, Police will enforce when noticed. Police will also respond to enforcement needs at specific known problem locations if resources allow.

Q:How many deaths have there been on Reserve Street since 1990?

A: Unfortunately, our crash records only go back to 2007, so we don't know the precise number. However, we do know that there continue to be safety challenges that can lead to fatalities, both for drivers and people walking or biking. Missoula has a strategy to address these issues, the Community Transportation Safety Plan. A good example of an improvement that came out of good planning is the center barrier installed between Mullan Rd and River Rd. We will continue to identify areas of increased risk and design solutions to address those needs.

Q: How can police and emergency vehicles get past congested traffic to come to aid of accidents, fire, or medical needs?

A: Road use education and technology both aid in assisting emergency vehicles navigating traffic and arriving at their destination as safely and quickly as possible. Individuals of all modes should be especially attentive when emergency vehicle lights can be seen or sirens can be heard. Traffic signals also allow pre-emption by emergency response vehicles.

Q: Do we have traffic cameras on traffic lights?

A: No, the State of Montana passed House Bill 531 in 2009 which prohibits the use of red light cameras. Devices attached to traffic signals are sensors to detect traffic.

Q: How can wide lanes, resulting in speeding traffic, be addressed?

A: Many streets in Missoula, including Reserve Street, are under the jurisdiction of the Montana Department of Transportation and must meet road width standards. The MPO is actively working with MDT to address these concerns from the community.

Q: Countdown signals result in drivers to speed up to beat the light, what is a positive reason for pedestrian countdown signals?

A: Although drivers speeding up to make it through a light is an unintended outcome of pedestrian countdown timers, they communicate to pedestrians how much time they have to safely cross the street.

Q: Why has it taken so long to address unsignalized intersections on Mullan Road?

A: The intersections along Mullan Road and West Broadway are being addressed in the Mullan Area Master Plan and the BUILD grant planning. Check out <https://www.mullanareamasterplan.com/> for opportunities to get involved with the Mullan Area Master plan and visit www.mullanbuild.com for more information on improvements that will be completed with the BUILD grant funding.

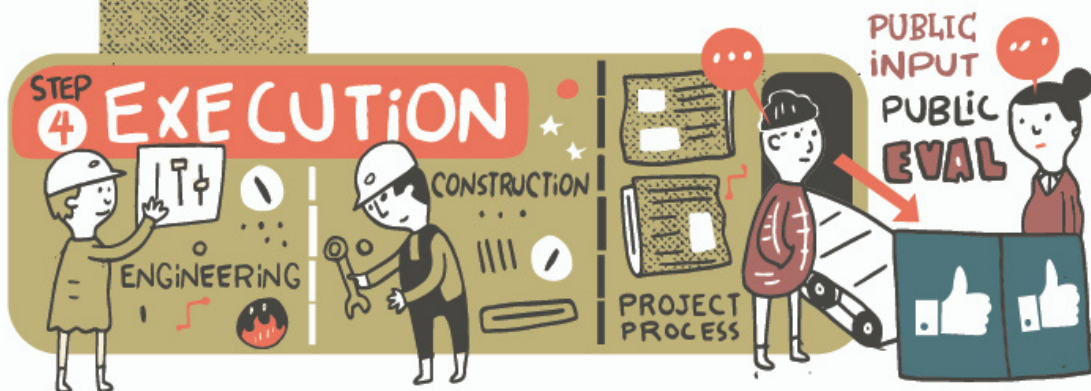
Q: Reserve has 3 possible agencies to enforce speed limits, is that one reason there is not sufficient enforcement?

A: Speed enforcement is done as resources and police priorities allow. There are many competing needs for our law enforcement, one of which is traffic safety.

Q: How can we make biking safer?

A: Safety is number one priority for the MPO, in addition to improving bicycle facilities throughout the community, education and outreach are key components of bicycle safety. The Missoula Community Transportation Safety Plan addresses changes in safety concerns, crash trends, and mitigation strategies.

DECISION POINTS OF A PUBLIC PROJECT



RESERVE Street Missoula Community Input Forum

January 29, 2020

Best Western Plus Grant Creek Inn

5280 Grant Creek Rd

WELCOME!!!

TONIGHT IS JUST THE BEGINNING!

The Reserve Street Community Input Project is a project of the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and 5th House Consulting. The Project is an opportunity to gather community input around the question, *“What will improve people’s experience with the Reserve Street area?”* The information gathered in this project will be used to inform future projects of the MPO.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EVENING:

1. Join your group

You will be assigned a group by color and will be escorted throughout the evening by a guide. Your guide has a color paddle so you know where your group is supposed to go.

2. Attend Stations – ROTATE WHEN YOU HEAR THE BELL

We have 5 stations you will be attending.

3 Learning Stations which have experts that give an overview of current plans.

2 Sharing stations in which you will give your input on your current experience around Reserve Street and then what you believe would help your experience to be more positive around Reserve Street.

3. Fill out question Cards

You have index cards called “question cards.”

Please write down your question regarding **the topic of the table** you are at.

We might not get to all of the questions so please give your questions cards to your group facilitator.

Your question may not be answered at the event, we will do our best to answer your question on the project website. Look for the Frequently Asked Question Link.

<https://www.missoulampo.com/reserve-street-community-input>

4. Fill out Survey

Fill out the survey enclosed in your packet and leave them at the bucket on the table at the registration table.

TIMETABLE FOR THE EVENING

5:45pm Registration

6:00 Introduction to Event

Rachel Gooen, Lead Facilitator and Aaron Wilson, Transportation Planning Manager

Rotation Timing

6:15 1st Station

6:35 2nd Station

6:55 3rd Station

7:15 4th Station

7:35 5th Station

7:55 Closure

Rachel Gooen, Aaron Wilson

DESCRIPTIONS OF LEARNING STATIONS AND SHARING STATIONS

LEARNING STATIONS:

How is Missoula approaching transportation safety on Reserve Street

Expert: David Gray

Description: Safety is one of the most important issues or needs that the City, County, State DOT, and Metropolitan Planning Organization are committed to addressing. Transportation safety can impact frequency as well as severity of crashes, for people of all ages, mobility, and economic status. Crashes can result in significant individual and community impacts on health, social and economic costs. In order to address this issue, the MPO has a community-wide Transportation Safety Plan that will lead us to effective, efficient solutions. Within that plan, there are three primary emphasis areas based on a comprehensive analysis of 10

years of crash data. Reserve Street is a state highway that accommodates a high level of pass-through and external to retail vehicle trips. The sheer volume of traffic on Reserve Street increases the probability of crashes occurring. However, there may be countermeasures that could be implemented to reduce crash severity. Based on the analysis in the safety plan, staff look for the most cost-effective solutions to known safety issues. The safety session will give an overview of how staff are looking to improve Reserve Street traffic safety through this strategic approach.

Plans for Reserve Street

Expert: Aaron Wilson

Description: Land use and transportation connections are essential ingredients for understanding and solving the problems related to future growth pressure. Planning for growth means identifying development locations and patterns that support a compact, walkable, and connected urban environment. Establishing the land use and transportation systems necessary for multi-modal travel will be vital for accommodating new residents and the trips they will need to take for jobs, services and recreation. In Missoula, the foundation for both land use and transportation planning is underway, as detailed in the list of planning projects below. Reserve Street is a key component of many of these plans, and remains a central focus of all City, County and MPO planning processes.

In order to accomplish our ambitious goals, we must be strategic as a community in how we invest scarce transportation dollars. We must recognize that we cannot build our way out of congestion simply by widening streets and increasing speeds. There is a better, more efficient approach, as outlined in the LRTP and the City and County Growth Policies, that envisions compact, mixed-use development served by multi-modal transportation facilities that are accessible by all ages and all abilities. Reserve Street will be one of many key corridors to achieving that future.

Land Use and Traffic

Expert: Andrew Hagemai

Description: There is a lack of general understanding of the relationship between development patterns and congestion. Certain types of development patterns are much more likely to result in congestion than others. The development patterns along Reserve Street are among the most auto-centric development patterns in the city. As long as the development pattern along Reserve Street favors the automobile, congestion will be a problem. Small changes to infrastructure can help with safety, but any investment to the roadway to alleviate congestion will yield very little in return. But, changes throughout the city that favor walkability, biking and transit will help alleviate congestion community wide.

SHARING Stations

Graphic Recorder 1: *What is happening on Reserve Street today?*

At this station, you will share YOUR current experience of the Reserve Street Area and a Graphic Recorder will illustrate these thoughts for a visual representation of how people perceive their current experience with Reserve Street.

What do you like? What have you seen? What have you experienced? How do you use this area? Do you live here? What's your neighborhood like? Do you shop here? Do you commute here? What is this area like for you currently?

Graphic Recorder 2: *What would you like to see Reserve Street look like?*

At this station, you will share your thoughts around what you envision Reserve Street could be given the parameters as described during the introduction. The Graphic Recorder will illustrate these thoughts to provide a visual representation of what Reserve Street could be.

What would make your experience better?

What would help you enjoy this part of town more?

NEXT STEPS in the Project.

Continuing for the next three months!

ADDITIONAL INPUT FROM YOU!

Tonight is just the beginning of this Community Input Project.

5th House Consulting will be hosting focus groups with stakeholder and user groups to continue the learning process. We will also be talking with identified key stakeholders over the next 3 months.

At the end of April, we will host another community education forum in which we report what we have learned from the community. We will be contacting you if you identified yourself as someone that is interested in being a part of a focus group and we will also be inviting you to the wrap up forum through the email that you registered with.

Thank you for participating tonight.