AGENDA
MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2018
COUNCIL CHAMBERS CITY HALL

FINANCE COMMITTEE – 6:30 P.M.
(Barnhart, Fisher, Karper)

1. Claims Review

REGULAR MEETING – 7:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER
   A. Roll Call
   B. Pledge of Allegiance

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3. CONSENT AGENDA:
   *A. Approval of Claims - $261,621.57 – June 4, 2018
   *B. Approval of Payroll Claims - $94,174.90 - June 1, 2018
   *C. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes – May 21, 2018
   *D. Approval of Plant Investment Fee Agreement, Michael K. Blend, Inc. and authorize City Manager to sign.

4. VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT (Items not on agenda)

5. NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS/PUBLIC HEARINGS:
   *A. PUBLIC HEARING – TIF Appropriations June 4th:
   Notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, will hold a public hearing on June 4, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Columbia Falls City Hall, 130-6th Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana, to appropriate funds within the Tax Increment District Fund.

   The City will receive current year tax funding estimated to be $221,000. The City Council will appropriate funds to be spent as provided for in the Tax Increment
District Statement of Need in addition to the current $94,363 appropriation. All approved appropriations will carry over to the 2019 FY budget.

Current and proposed projects comply with the Urban Renewal District Plan adopted in September 2015 and include, but are not limited to wayfinding signage, downtown alley improvements, sidewalk improvements and public safety enhancement and façade lighting.

*B. NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING – Water & Sewer Rate Changes – July 2nd:
Notice is hereby given that the City of Columbia Falls is proposing an increase to the water and sewer base rates. The City Council approved the following water and sewer base rates for the purpose of conducting the public hearing.

Water
The rate structure for water contains a fee for volume and a fee for base service charge. The City Council is proposing raising only the base fee by $2/month for a ¾’ meter. An Equivalent Connection Factor ratio is applied according to Meter Size:

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Sewer
The rate structure for sewer also contains a fee for volume and a fee for base service charge. The City council is proposing raising only the base fee by $1.50/month for a residential equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) from $7.35 to $8.85. Residential single family customers are billed at the rate of 1 EDU. All other customers, commercial, industrial, government, multi-family, are billed 1 EDU for every 50,000 gallons of metered water usage calculated annually. For example, a business with annual metered usage of 2 million gallons is equal to 40 EDUs.

The public hearing will be held on July 2, 2018 at the City Council Chambers at City Hall at 130, 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, MT. Interested persons may attend the hearing or submit written testimony mailed or delivered to City of Columbia Falls, City Clerk, 130 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, MT 59912 or by email: staalandb@cityofcolumbiafalls.com. For questions or further information regarding the hearing, contact City Manager Susan Nicosia at City Hall, (406) 892-4391 or email: nicosias@cityofcolumbiafalls.com.
6. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

7. **NEW BUSINESS:**
   *A. Proposed text amendments from Public Works Committee
   B. Council Support – Gateway to Glacier Trail Group Request to Flathead County to assume Glencore Trail License

8. **ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:**

9. **REPORTS/BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL**

10. **CITY MANAGER REPORT**
    A. Manager’s Update

11. **CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

12. **MISCELLANEOUS:**
    *A. INFORMATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE - List available for Review

13. **ADJOURN**

Next Scheduled Meetings:
Council Regular Meeting – June 21st
Planning Board – July 12th

*Attached
For the Accounting Period: 5/18

"... Over spent expenditure"

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For the Accounting Period: 5/18

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| 37708        | 1216 FIRST BANKCARD | 05/02/18 MT COFFEE TRDRS-TEDD MTG | 14.10 | 1000 | 410400 | 380 | 101000 |
|              |                   | 05/08/18 SWINGSETMALL-PRKS,SWING HNGRS | 123.00 | 1000 | 460400 | 240 | 101000 |
|              |                   | 05/08/18 ARROWHEAD-FD,EVDNC LBL,STRG | 184.00 | 1000 | 420100 | 220 | 101000 |
|              |                   | 05/08/18 SWINGSETMALL-PRKS,HEX TOOL | 5.00 | 1000 | 460400 | 240 | 101000 |
|              |                   | 05/09/18 INTERNATION-ADMIN,ROTRN-DOM VIO | 149.00 | 1000 | 410400 | 380 | 101000 |
|              |                   | 05/10/18 LA QUINTA-FD,S.CARLSON | 81.95 | 1000 | 410500 | 380 | 101000 |
|              |                   | 05/18/18 KAL ARMY/NAVY-FD,SHOE ACCS | 44.96 | 1000 | 420400 | 220 | 101000 |

| Total for Vendor: |            |                              |                  |       |       |                |             | 789.44 |

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For the Accounting Period: 5/18

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37670 2849 J2 BUSINESS PRODUCTS

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| 052118       | 05/17/18 WTR/SWR REFUND       | 221.81      |        | 5210 | 214010        |             | 101000  |
| **Total for Vendor:** |              | **221.81**  |        |      |               |             |         |

| **37692**    | 63 PETTY CASH                | 70.22       |        | 1000 | 510620        | 170         | 101000  |
| B1J4-27      | 05/04/18 BACKSLOPE BWRY-GIFT CARD | 25.00     | 1000   | 510620 | 170           | 101000     |
| 74806        | 03/07/18 VERIZON-CABLE ADAPTER| 10.00       | 1000   | 410580 | 212           | 101000     |
| 052418       | 04/10/18 CHAMBER LUNCH-GLACIER TOURISM | 12.00 | 1000 | 410400 | 380           | 101000     |
| 506977       | 05/02/18 MT COFFEE TRDRS-TEDD MEETING | 9.25     | 1000   | 410400 | 380           | 101000     |
| 052418       | 05/24/18 TENNIS BALLS-PARKS   | 13.97       | 1000   | 460400 | 220           | 101000     |
| **Total for Vendor:** |              | **70.22**   |        |      |               |             |         |

| **37687**    | 2932 PIONEER CHEMICAL SUPPLY LLC | 6,808.55 |      | 1000 | 460445        | 221         | 101000  |
| 6820        | 05/10/18 POOL-ACCU TABS,ACID MAGIC | 6,808.55 | 1000 | 460445 | 221           | 101000     |
| **Total for Vendor:** |              | **6,808.55** |        |      |               |             |         |

| **37675**    | 2846 RDO EQUIPMENT CO         | 70.86       |        | 1000 | 460400        | 240         | 101000  |
| P41557      | 05/16/18 PRKS-WHEEL KIT       | 70.86       |        | 1000 | 460400        | 240         | 101000  |
| **Total for Vendor:** |              | **70.86**   |        |      |               |             |         |

| **37706**    | 2769 RESPONSE EQUIPMENT SPECIALISTS, | 1,811.44 |      | 1000 | 420400        | 212         | 101000  |
| 498         | 05/18/18 FD-INTAKE/SUCTION VALVE | 1,811.44   | 1000   | 420400 | 212           | 101000     |
| **Total for Vendor:** |              | **1,811.44** |        |      |               |             |         |

| **37684**    | 2620 ROBERT PECCIA AND ASSOCIATES | 307.19    |        | 5210 | 430500        | 354         | 101000  |
| 9(FINAL)    | 05/17/18 WTR-WATER PER          | 307.19*    |        | 5210 | 430500        | 354         | 101000  |
| **Total for Vendor:** |              | **307.19**  |        |      |               |             |         |

* ... Over spent expenditure
For the Accounting Period: 5/18

* ... Over spent expenditure

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06/04/18

The following claims are significant:
- Big Time Painting (painting of pool surface) $5,800.00 (Fund 1000)
- Community Development Services (TEDD services) $5,267.85 (Fund 1000)
- HDR Engineering (WWTP PER) $17,318.56 (Fund 5310)
- Russell Industries Inc (Grit Pumps) $14,697.71 (Fund 5310)
- US Bank (Debt Payments) $187,772.50
  Sewer payments $109,240 (Fund 5310)
  Water payments $15,407.50 (Fund 5210)
  Pool payments $63,125 (Fund 3010)

The remaining items are routine.

If you have questions, please let me know.

Sandy
## Total for Payroll Checks

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GROSS PAY: 57,188.11
NET PAY: 39,499.77

**Notes:**
- Payroll: $94,174.90
- Allegiance: 3,762.76
- Flex: 745.27
- Healthins/Pre: 2,098.11
- Medicare: 786.06
- Medcare: 24.89
- National/Ord: 0.00
- Nationwide: 0.00
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- Pers/Fers: 0.00
- Pers/Polic: 1,319.75
- Sit: 2,285.00
- Social Security: 2,144.27
- Teamsters: 208.50
- Unemployment Insur.: 0.00
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- Workers' Comp: 0.00
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Total Payroll Expense (Gross Pay + Employer Contributions): 81,324.38

Check Summary
-------------
Payroll Checks Prev. Out. $423.00
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Payroll Checks Redeemed $0.00
Payroll Checks Outstanding $35,631.45
Electronic Checks $58,966.53
Total Ded.  42834.61  29966.79  55685.13  17116.27

*** Carried Forward column only correct if report run for current period.
CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
HELD MAY 21, 2018

Regular Meeting - Transact Routine Business

Mayor Barnhart called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with roll call as follows:

PRESENT: Mayor Barnhart
COUNCIL: Karper, Shepard, Fisher, Lovering, Piper and Robinson
ABSENT: None.

ROLL CALL

Also present were City Manager Nicosia, City Clerk Staaland, City Attorney Breck and Police Chief Peters.

PLEDGE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:
Mayor Barnhart requested a motion to approve the agenda. Councilman Shepard moved to approve the agenda, second by Councilman Lovering, and the motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA
APPROVAL

CONSENT AGENDA:
Councilman Shepard moved to approve the consent agenda noting that all claims appeared to be in order, second by Councilman Robinson. Motion carried with Council voting as follows: YES: Robinson, Karper, Shepard, Fisher, Lovering, Piper, Robinson and Barnhart NOES: None. ABSENT: None.

CONSENT
AGENDA
APPROVAL

A. Approval of Claims - $ 99,593.52 - May 21, 2018
B. Approval of Payroll Claims - $ 62,751.14 - May 18, 2018
C. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes - May 7, 2018
D. Approval of Amended Agreement between Morrison-Maierle, Inc and City of Columbia Falls for Nucleus Ave Pedestrian Safety Improvement Project (adding north side of 7th St West) and authorize City Manager to sign.
E. Approval of Standard Agreement between Morrison-Maierle, Inc and City of Columbia Falls for Transportation Alternates Grant Application and authorize City Manager to sign.
F. Approval of Employee Assistance Program Service Agreement Modification #1, extending the program for 2 years, July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2020 and authorize City Manager to sign.
G. Authorize Agency Service Agreement with PayGov.US, LLC and authorize City Manager to sign.
CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
HELD MAY 21, 2018

VISITOR/PUBLIC COMMENT: (Items not on agenda)
None.

A. NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING:
Mayor Barnhart read the Hearing Notice for June 4th: Notice Is Hereby
Given, that the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, will
hold a public hearing on June 4, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Columbia Falls
City Hall, 130-6th Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana, to appropriate
funds within the Tax Increment District Fund.

The City will receive current year tax funding estimated to be $221,000.
The City Council will appropriate funds to be spent as provided for in the
Tax Increment District Statement of Need in addition to the current
$94,363 appropriation. All approved appropriations will carry over to the
2019 FY budget.

Current and proposed projects comply with the Urban Renewal District
Plan adopted in September 2015 and include, but are not limited to
wayfinding signage, downtown alley improvements, sidewalk
improvements and public safety enhancement and façade lighting.

Taxpayers are encouraged to attend the hearing and give written or oral
comments on the proposed appropriations. Written comments may be
mailed to the City Clerk, 130 6th Street West, Room A, Columbia Falls,
Montana, 59912. Questions regarding the proposed items can be made by
contacting City Manager Susan Nicosia at 892-4391.

Mayor Barnhart asked City Manager Nicosia if she had anything to add at
this time. Nicosia reminded Council that the hearing and subsequent
appropriations are all based on the Urban Renewal District Plan adopted
in 2015. Mayor Barnhart recommended handouts over a PowerPoint
presentation. Nicosia will send Urban Renewal District Plan to council
members.

REPORTS/BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL:
Mayor Barnhart said the road construction traffic is atrocious and he
expressed concern for emergency services.
CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
HELD MAY 21, 2018

CITY MANAGER:
Public Safety Committee met on May 14th to review Fire and Police capital, staffing levels and operations for the 2019 FY. Columbia Falls is one of the fastest growing communities in MT based on the census statistics from 2000-2016. The City has maintained 8 full-time police officers since 2001 despite an additional 1,323 citizens. The committee concurred with the recommendation to add an officer to the 2019 FY preliminary budget. As the City approaches 2nd class city status, the City must move toward a paid Fire Department. Nicosia and Hagen applied for a SAFER Grant to provide funding for a Fire Marshall position. The City Council and staff will begin a long-term evaluation of providing the appropriate level of police and fire service. Mayor Barnhart added that the Committee discussed the need for a voted public safety levy in the near future.

The City is upgrading from the original copper centrex system with Centurylink to their fiber service. The monthly fee for service will be less than it is now with better and easier options. Our City Hall mail phone line will still be answered by a person, not just a phone tree. The system is scheduled to be installed in July and is to be relatively seamless.

Nicosia said she discussed the littering condition on the truck route within one week of the Clean the Falls day at the Solid Waste Board meeting. There is a littering ordinance in Flathead County but it is hard to enforce. Nicosia reported that Commissioner Krueger suggested that the City require garbage pick-up in the City. The other flathead cities have their own garbage collection enterprise operations in place, but it is not inexpensive. Councilman Shepard said we have discussed this in the past and it never passed.

Nicosia reported that we will hold public hearings in mid-June to complete the Municipal Code clean up that we started in 2012. As soon as all of the Ordinances are adopted, the municipal code will be codified.

The City is contracting with Morrison and Maierle to complete the Transportation Alternative (TA) Grant application for the Railroad Street sidewalk/path project. M & M proposed a cost-share with the City paying 1/2, or $6,000 to complete the proposed engineering. This is the first TA grant that the City has applied for and they are highly competitive, with requests significantly exceeding available resources. With the $135,000 reserved by the City Council for the project, the application should be competitive. We will have to gather community support and traffic/pedestrian counts for that neighborhood.

Nicosia reported that building activity has increased within in the City as
CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
HELD MAY 21, 2018

well as an increase in building projects commencing without proper building permits. Nicosia also reported that proper building permits are required for accessory apartments and it is not a simple project to convert a garage into living quarters. Nicosia is working on a fact sheet to add to the website.

Chief Peters reported that the City has hired two probationary Patrolman and are excited to have an increase in staff.

INFORMATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE - List available for Review

A. REPORTS:
   a. Finance - April

ADJOURN: Upon motion duly made by Councilman Lovering and seconded by Councilman Shepard and the meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

______________________________
Mayor

ATTEST:

______________________________
City Clerk

APPROVED BY COUNCIL ACTION: June 4, 2018
AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into this day of May 30th, 2018, by and between Michael K. Blend, Inc., a Montana Corporation, of 1553 14th Street East North, Columbia Falls, MT 59912, hereinafter OWNER and CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS, a municipal corporation of 130 Sixth Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana 59912, hereinafter "City",

WHEREAS, by Municipal Code Sec. 13.04.175 (Water) and Chapter 13.12 (Sewer), the City has adopted Plant Investment Fees;

WHEREAS, the City and OWNER have entered into an agreement whereby OWNER is required to pay said Plant Investment Fee; and

WHEREAS, the parties desire a written agreement setting forth the payment plan of said Plant Investment Fee by OWNER to the City.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

1. OWNER shall pay to City its Plant Investment Fee according to the terms and conditions set forth on Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein.

2. The first payment by OWNER has been with OWNER's Connection Application, which includes an administrative fee.

3. Interest shall be paid by OWNER pursuant to the formula set forth on Exhibit "A".

4. If OWNER fails to make payment, the service to the property shall be terminated ten (10) days after written notice, and the full amount of the outstanding principal and interest shall be paid in full prior to reestablishment of the service.

5. The parties agree that should any action be commenced to enforce, modify, or interpret any provision contained herein, the Court as a cost of suit shall award reasonable attorney's fees to the successful party.

6. The rights and responsibilities described in this instrument shall run with the land and shall be binding and inure to the benefit of the parties to this agreement, their respective heirs, successors, or assigns.
7. This agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and any prior understanding or representation of any kind preceding the date of this agreement shall not be binding on either party except to the extent incorporated in this agreement.

8. Any modifications of this agreement or additional obligation assumed by either party in connection with Plant Investment Fees shall be binding only if evidenced in writing signed by each party or an authorized representative of each party.

9. The failure of either party to this agreement to insist on the performance of any of the terms and conditions of this agreement, or the waiver of any breach of any of the terms and conditions of this agreement, shall not be construed as thereafter waiving any such terms and conditions, but the same shall continue and remain in full force and effect as if no such forbearance or waiver had occurred.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, said parties have hereunto set their hands and seal the day and year here in above written.

Legal description of property: Lots 7 and 8 of Block of Tracey's Aluminum City, according to the map or plat thereof on file and record in the office of the Clerk and Recorder of Flathead County, Montana.

CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS

By: ____________________
   Susan M. Nicosia
   Its: City Manager

OWNER/Title
By: ____________________
   Michael K. Blend Inc.

Notary Public's Signature

Printed Name: VICKIE R. OTT
Notary Public for the State of MT
County: Flathead
Residing in: Columbia Falls
My Commission Expires: 10-14-2019
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, will hold a public hearing on June 4, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Columbia Falls City Hall, 130-6th Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana, to appropriate funds within the Tax Increment District Fund.

The City will receive current year tax funding estimated to be $221,000. The City Council will appropriate funds to be spent as provided for in the Tax Increment District Statement of Need in addition to the current $94,363 appropriation. All approved appropriations will carry over to the 2019 FY budget.

Current and proposed projects comply with the Urban Renewal District Plan adopted in September 2015 and include, but are not limited to wayfinding signage, downtown alley improvements, sidewalk improvements and public safety enhancement and façade lighting.

Taxpayers are encouraged to attend the hearing and give written or oral comments on the proposed appropriations. Written comments may be mailed to the City Clerk, 130 6th Street West, Room A, Columbia Falls, Montana, 59912. Questions regarding the proposed items can be made by contacting City Manager Susan Nicosia at 892-4391.

DATED THIS 21st DAY OF MAY, 2018

s/Barb Staaland, City Clerk

Publish: Wednesday May 23rd and Wednesday May 30th
May 31, 2018

To: Mayor & Council

From: Susan M Nicosia, City Manager

Re: Public Hearing – Tax Increment District Fund Budget

This is the City’s second budget hearing for the Tax Increment District Fund, #2310. The District was officially recognized and established as of January 1, 2016. The first year’s valuation, August 2016 reflected an incremental value of $123,219, which was reported to generate $96,956.52 in tax dollars. The City received approximately $94,000. The August 2017 certified valuations reflected an incremental value of $284,888 with an expected tax generation of approximately $220,000. The current cash balance of Fund 2310 is $219,171, before May and June tax collections.

Based on the statutory requirements to have available resources (cash and taxes receivable) and established budgetary appropriations, I am recommending the adoption of a budget in the amount of $315,000. The 2018 FY budget included appropriations in the amount of $94,363. To date, no expenditures have been made and the projects will be carried over to the 2019 FY budget.

In the Urban Renewal District Plan, the City adopted the following guiding principles:

**Guiding Principles of the Urban Renewal Plan**
The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Plan reflects sound public policy and thoughtful planning. To this end the following principles will guide revitalization and redevelopment efforts in the urban renewal district.

Readiness – The revitalization of the Urban Renewal District will occur in stages, as resources and opportunities become available. In some cases, specific projects will occur in support of private investment that would otherwise not occur without a corresponding investment in public infrastructures. Also, new program initiatives or funding opportunities may present themselves from time to time, which can help bring certain urban renewal projects forward.

Leveraging – Projects that make use of a variety of public and private resources including state and federal grants, loans and specialized tax credits, as well as tax increment funds are encouraged.

Public Investment – As noted above, the City of Columbia Falls may invest in public infrastructure improvements in order to foster private investment. Funding for public infrastructure improvements will come from a number of sources including, but not limited to Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Specific projects will be undertaken in accordance with the Montana Urban Renewal Law, 7-15-42 and 7-15-43, MCA.
Partnership - The revitalization of the Urban Renewal District will require cooperation between the public and private sectors. Property and business owners should acknowledge the benefit they will derive from the reinvestment of their property taxes that are generated within the District and make corresponding private investments to further rehabilitation and redevelopment goals and objectives.

Although the Montana Urban Renewal Law recognizes that eliminating urban blight is a matter of public interest, this Plan has been developed, based on the underlying principle that it is the citizens who work, reside and own property in the area who will be engaged directly in the revitalization effort. (Emphasis added) Further, the Plan has been prepared with respect to the following overarching community goals:

❖ To foster economic vitality in Columbia Falls through the redevelopment and revitalization of downtown and the US Highway 2 corridor. (emphasis added)
❖ To enhance opportunities for private investment in order to generate jobs and new taxable value for the City of Columbia Falls.
❖ To address blight through investment in public infrastructure and programs that enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Columbia Falls. (emphasis added).

Principles, Goals and Objectives in the Columbia Falls Growth Policy furthering urban renewal and economic stability for the prevention and the elimination of urban blight.
❖ The vision of Columbia Falls is as a community maintaining quality embracing change.
❖ Weaknesses Columbia Falls has identified and would like to overcome include:
✓ a limited tax base,
✓ the decline of old downtown (Nucleus), and
✓ unmet infrastructure needs.
❖ A Commercial Land Use goal is for a revitalized Nucleus Avenue providing a downtown focus for the community of Columbia Falls.
❖ A Commercial Land Use goal is for focused commercial development along US Highway 2 that embraces good signage, access and landscaping serving as an entrance corridor to Columbia Falls. (Emphasis added)

Evaluation of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan for conformance with Overall Principles and Goals of the Growth Policy.
❖ In conformance with the Growth Policy, the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan seeks to provide long term economic stability and to use planning and the development of public infrastructure as tools for well managed growth.
❖ The goals of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District as stated in the Urban Renewal District Plan are:
✓ Promote Renovation, Revitalization, Rehabilitation and Historic Preservation within the Urban Renewal Area
✓ Improve Public Infrastructure in Support of Urban Renewal
✓ Improve Multi-modal Transportation in Support of Urban Renewal
✓ Foster Land Uses within the Urban Renewal Area that Facilitate Sustainable Economic Development
✓ Foster Reinvestment and Economic Development within the Urban Renewal Area
✓ Strengthen Opportunities Associated with Tourism and Recreation within the Urban Renewal Area
✓ Market and Promote the Urban Renewal Area

Recommended Budgetary Appropriations: $50,000 – wayfinding signs

As indicated above within the stated goals of the Urban Renewal Plan, foster economic renewal and vitality with engagement from the citizens. The wayfinding sign project with the Graduation Matters Leadership students is a stated goal within the Urban Renewal Plan. Page 26: A Commercial Land Use goal is for focused commercial development along US Highway 2 that embraces good signage, access and landscaping serving as an entrance corridor to Columbia Falls.

Recommended Budgetary Appropriations: $7,400 – portion of alley Block 28 (north portion)

As indicated above within the stated goals of the Urban Renewal Plan, foster economic vitality in Columbia Falls through the redevelopment and revitalization of downtown and the US Highway 2 corridor and to address blight through investment in public infrastructure and programs that enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Columbia Falls. Specifically, weaknesses that were identified to be overcome included the decline of old downtown (Nucleus) and unmet infrastructure needs. Alleys were a noted blight condition.

Recommended Budgetary Appropriations: $170,000 – Nucleus Ave. Intersection Safety Improvements and sidewalk additions

As indicated above within the stated goals and weaknesses, overcoming unmet infrastructure needs, improve public infrastructure in support of Urban Renewal. Specifically identified were the defective street layouts resulting in unsafe conditions,
missing sidewalks and curbs and the disintegrated existing sidewalks and curbs along Nucleus Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods.

Remaining funds for appropriation – $87,600 – alley and sidewalk improvements up to the available funding.

Total Fund Appropriations - $315,000

Also for consideration is the request from Dave Peterson to consider Nucleus Ave uniform lighting within the downtown core (Estherville, IA). Additionally, I received this emailed comment from Jill Lambs:

I read in the paper that Columbia Falls has TIF funds available. I would like to see some of those funds "beautify" Columbia Falls.
Some of the areas I see as needing improvements are the Chamber of Commerce building, the Columbia "Falls" on Nucleus, and Hwy 2. The Chamber office could have more signage, improved landscaping and more visibility. The "Falls" could be more visible and maybe consider this a "rest area" with picnic tables. An inviting place to sit and relax and listen to the falls. Improve upon an idea that came about years ago. There are beautiful trees along the street and it seems it could be a downtown draw for visitors.
I also would love to see more trees and greenery as one drives on Hwy 2 entering into Columbia Falls. There are many businesses that have cement and pavement and it would be nice to see less of that. I think this community has come along so nicely over the years, but as the Gateway to Glacier National Park we could enhance and beautify and welcome visitors to stop on their way through to the park.
The city parks here are well maintained and lovely and I hope that continues to be the case.
I probably have more thoughts but I think this sums up some of what I feel is important. I did read that the city has some plans with signage, which I think is so important and pedestrian walkways:
Thank you.
Columbia Falls
Urban Renewal District
Plan

2015
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Chapter 1. Introduction and Overview

Authorization to Undertake an Urban Renewal Program
In September of 2014, the City of Columbia Falls initiated a study of blight in the area that includes downtown Columbia Falls and the US Highway 2 corridor, which connects the downtown to the City's primary entryways. The study was undertaken in accordance with 7-15-4201 and 4301 et Seq. Montana Codes Annotated (MCA), as a first step in establishing an urban renewal program.

General Study Area Description
The study of blight was conducted in an area that includes downtown Columbia Falls generally north / south along Nucleus Avenue from Railroad Avenue (MT 486) on the north end to the city limits on the south side of US Highway 2; and US Highway 2 - from Meadow Lake Boulevard on the west end to the city limits on the east end which provides entry into the community from both the east and west.

Study Area Map
The following map illustrates the Columbia Falls urban renewal study area.
The study found that, pursuant to the Montana Urban Renewal Law in 7-15 4206 MCA, at least three conditions of blight were evident in the study area. On December 15th, 2014, the Columbia Falls City Council adopted Resolution No. 1690, per 7-15-4210 MCA, finding that "that rehabilitation and redevelopment of [the study] area (pursuant to the Montana Urban Renewal Law in 7-15-4202 and 4203 et Seq. MCA) is necessary and desirable in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the City of Columbia Falls and that this rehabilitation and redevelopment be made with a commitment to quality improvement and a commitment to property owner and community involvement in decision making."

In particular, the Resolution identified the following four conditions of blight, which applied to the area:

1. Physical deterioration of buildings and properties
   - Physically, downtown Columbia Falls is suffering from deferred maintenance and deterioration of both buildings and empty spaces. The area includes a number of properties that are vacant and deteriorating.
   - The designs of parking lots, alleyways, driveways create blighted conditions that diminish the value of property in the area and present hazards for pedestrians. There are also a number of vacant lots at locations where buildings were lost over time.

2. Defective street layout
   - The study area includes a variety of land uses including commercial, residential, public and industrial. While these uses all contribute to the area's economy, the various uses are not always clearly separated, creating unsightly and unsafe conditions. For example, the intersection of the railroad corridor with Highway 2 has no provision for pedestrians or other non-motorized uses.

3. Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings
   - Throughout the urban renewal study area, sidewalks and curbs are missing, making it difficult for pedestrians to access residences and businesses. Along Nucleus Avenue and in surrounding neighborhoods, existing curbs and sidewalks have disintegrated.
   - Commercial establishments along Highway 2 are generally designed to serve customers arriving by automobiles, so large parking lots and driveways make the area difficult to navigate and potentially unsafe for pedestrians.
• Alleys are of particular concern, especially in cases where alleys provide primary access to parking facilities in the downtown. The majority of alleys are unpaved, and ungraded.
• In many areas there are encroachments on the alley rights-of-way that create physical hazards.

4. Unsanitary and unsafe conditions and the existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes
• Many of the blighted conditions noted above can be characterized as unsafe. Vacant buildings and the general deterioration of the overall infrastructure increase the risk of system failures and structure fires.
• Occupied buildings adjacent to vacant properties are in jeopardy and overall investment the commercial areas of Columbia Falls will continue to be stymied in the absence of a renewed revitalization effort.

The passage of this Resolution enables the City to embark on an urban renewal program to address blighted conditions within the study area. According to 7-15-4209 MCA, a local government “may formulate a workable program for utilizing appropriate private and public resources:
(a) to eliminate and prevent the development or spread of blighted areas;
(b) to encourage needed urban rehabilitation;
(c) to provide for the redevelopment of such areas; or
(d) to undertake such of the aforesaid activities or other feasible municipal activities as may be suitably employed to achieve the objectives of such workable program”

Therefore, the City is undertaking an effort to revitalize downtown Columbia Falls and the US Highway 2 corridor through the adoption, by ordinance, of this Urban Renewal Plan. The Plan identifies a specific Urban Renewal District, located within the study area; a workable program defined in a series of goals, objectives and strategies; and a provision to use tax increment financing, as such funds become available, in addition to other resources in implementing its goals and strategies.
Guiding Principles of the Urban Renewal Plan
The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Plan reflects sound public policy and thoughtful planning. To this end the following principles will guide revitalization and redevelopment efforts in the urban renewal district.

Readiness – The revitalization of the Urban Renewal District will occur in stages, as resources and opportunities become available. In some cases, specific projects will occur in support of private investment that would otherwise not occur without a corresponding investment in public infrastructures. Also, new program initiatives or funding opportunities may present themselves from time to time, which can help bring certain urban renewal projects forward.

Leveraging – Projects that make use of a variety of public and private resources including state and federal grants, loans and specialized tax credits, as well as tax increment funds are encouraged.

Public Investment – As noted above, the City of Columbia Falls may invest in public infrastructure improvements in order to foster private investment. Funding for public infrastructure improvements will come from a number of sources including, but not limited to Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Specific projects will be undertaken in accordance with the Montana Urban Renewal Law, 7-15-42 and 7-15-43, MCA.

Partnership - The revitalization of the Urban Renewal District will require cooperation between the public and private sectors. Property and business owners should acknowledge the benefit they will derive from the reinvestment of their property taxes that are generated within the District and make corresponding private investments to further rehabilitation and redevelopment goals and objectives.

Statement of Purpose – Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Plan
In response to conditions of blight as noted in Chapter 3 of this plan, the City of Columbia Falls has chosen to create an urban renewal district in order to engage in a comprehensive renewal program in downtown Columbia Falls and the US Highway 2 corridor, which connects the downtown to the east and west entryways into the City. This Urban Renewal Plan provides direction to the local government in its efforts to foster the revitalization and economic development in the district. The Plan, including a provision to use tax increment financing, provides a context for activities that will be undertaken by a variety of public and private entities over the next several decades. More particularly, this Plan recommends a series of programs and projects that will be
undertaken by the local government to encourage reinvestment in the district, which will in turn address blighted conditions that have diminished the environmental, economic and cultural well being of the area over time.

Although the Montana Urban Renewal Law recognizes that eliminating urban blight is a matter of public interest, this Plan has been developed, based on the underlying principle that it is the citizens who work, reside and own property in the area who will be engaged directly in the revitalization effort. Further, the Plan has been prepared with respect to the following overarching community goals:

- To foster economic vitality in Columbia Falls through the redevelopment and revitalization of downtown and the US Highway 2 corridor.
- To enhance opportunities for private investment in order to generate jobs and new taxable value for the City of Columbia Falls.
- To address blight through investment in public infrastructure and programs that enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Columbia Falls.

Tax Increment Financing Provision

The City of Columbia Falls intends to utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in conjunction with other funding sources to help foster revitalization within the Urban Renewal District. The base year for the purposes of measuring any incremental value in the District will be 2015 and the base value will be calculated as of January 1, 2015.

Tax Increment Financing is a state authorized, locally driven funding mechanism that allows cities and counties to direct property tax dollars that accrue from new development, within a specifically designated district, to community and economic development activities. In Montana, TIF districts are authorized in parts 7-15-4201 and 4301, et Seq. Montana Code Annotated (MCA), the State’s Urban Renewal Law.

TIF districts are typically characterized by blight and/or infrastructure deficiencies that have limited or prohibited new investment. A base year is established from which "incremental" increases in property values are measured. Virtually all of the resulting new property tax dollars (with the exception of the six mill state-wide university levy) can be directed to redevelopment and economic revitalization activities within the area in which they are generated (as shown in the following figure).
Taxpayers located within a TIF district pay the same amount as they would if the property were located outside the district. TIF only affects the way that taxes, once collected, are distributed. Taxes that are derived from base year taxable values continue to be distributed to the various taxing jurisdictions – local and state government entities and school districts. Taxes derived from the incremental increase in taxable value are placed in a special fund for purposes set forth an Urban Renewal Plan.
Chapter 2. Description of the Urban Renewal District

An Overview of Columbia Falls

Setting
The City of Columbia Falls, Montana is located in Flathead County, in the northwest corner of the state. It is surrounded by the Flathead National Forest and is approximately 17 miles southwest of Glacier National Park. The City also offers access to scenic and recreational resources associated with the Flathead River, which runs through the community. US Highway 2 connects Columbia Falls with Highway 93 to Whitefish and Kalispell on the west, and to the West Glacier Entrance to the Park to the northeast. Nucleus Avenue, which is the main street running north/south through the downtown, provides direct access to the North Fork (of the Flathead River) and subsequently to the Camas Creek entrance to Glacier.

History
The earliest inhabitants of northwestern Montana were primarily the Kootenai people, who, prior to 1850, hunted seasonally at Flathead Lake, competing with indigenous bands of the Pend d’Oreille or Kalispel tribe. After 1850, the Kootenai moved to the area permanently, replacing or intermixing with the original population. A few years later, the various bands began moving to the Flathead Indian Reservation, which was established in the lower Flathead Valley under the Hellgate Treaty of 1855. The creation
of the Reservation opened the door to settlement of the valleys of western Montana and by 1858, the resident non-Native American population of Missoula County (all of northwestern Montana at that time) was approximately 200 people (http://www.foresthistory.org).

"By 1883, settlers were moving into the Flathead Valley in larger numbers, squatting in the wilderness, staking out homesteads and carving farms out of the timber lands. That year, the Missoula Gazette promoted [the development of] the Half Moon Prairie area, five miles west of Bad Rock Canyon. By then, travel through the Western Montana wilderness was much easier, with settlers arriving in Missoula by Northern Pacific train and then traveling by coach and steamboat to the head of Flathead Lake." (Richard Hanners, Editor, Hungry Horse News)

In 1887 seven men located coal claims on the “Coal Banks”, in the North Fork, at the urging of Marcus Daly of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company of Butte. Their holdings were sold three years later to a Columbia Falls promoter, James Talbott and others of the Northern International Improvement Company for $50,000. Talbott had a steamboat built to bring out the coal via the North Fork of the Flathead (foresthistory.org).

On November 8, 1889, when Montana became the 41st state, a group of pioneers established a village on the banks of the Flathead River called Columbia, at the foot of today’s Nucleus Avenue. A post office was established at what was now referred to as Columbia Falls in 1891.

“The first newspaper, The Columbian, was started in 1891 by J.W. Pace. In 1946, Mel Ruder began publishing the Hungry Horse News, which became known nationally for its coverage of Columbia Falls and Glacier National Park. Ruder went on to win a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the 1964 flood [of the Flathead and other area rivers]” (flatheadwatershed.org).

The arrival of the Great Northern Railway in the Flathead Valley in 1891 led to increased interest in the natural resources, particularly minerals, “up the North Fork” of the Flathead (www.foresthistory.org). “The new Great Northern line turned Columbia Falls into a boom town. In 1889, James Hill of the Great Northern [had] sent John F. Stevens to explore the terrain around Marias Pass and find a route for his transcontinental railroad over the Rocky Mountains.” Rumors spread and soon a group of investors formed a company to establish a town where the railroad emerged from the mountains. Seeking to tie up land before the railway reached the Columbia Falls area,
the Northern International Improvement Co., including Talbott and Frank Langford, purchased land for $5,000 from Mrs. La Frambois and filed a plat for a city on March 5th, 1891 (Richard Hanners, Editor, Hungry Horse News).

According to popular legend, postmaster Jim Kennedy had named the new town Columbia Falls after learning there was already a town in Montana named Columbus and his wife suggested tacking on the suffix "Falls". Columbus, Montana, however, the Stillwater County seat, was not named until several years later (Richard Hanners, Editor, Hungry Horse News). *Names on the Face of Montana* (1983) provides a different explanation. "...the townsite was originally planned for a place near a falls on the Flathead River...hence, the name, Columbia Falls."

The village grew quickly, with a general merchandise store, barber shop, flour mill and 18 saloons. High water each spring drove residents from the original village of Columbia to the newly platted town. The *Missoula Gazette* said the city was 'laid out on a high, level tract of bench land, with a growth of heavy pine timber surrounding it on all sides, giving the whole a park like appearance.' The city of Columbia Falls, however, was not officially incorporated until April 26, 1909 (cfallsheritage.org and Richard Hanners, Editor, Hungry Horse News).

In 1892, Talbott built the first bank building, located on the southeast corner of Nucleus and 7th. Around the corner on 7th, west of the bank, was Garrette Grocery, later to become Smalls Grocery and after that, the Farmers Exchange Telephone Service. Fifield's Baker was located across 7th to the south and the Schanders Hotel was located to the east, on 7th and across Nucleus Avenue. Next to the Schanders was a livery stable. Down under the hill was the red light district, known as "The Brick." (cfallsheritage.org)

The selection of neighboring Kalispell, MT as the county seat of Flathead County in 1894 and the decision to put the major division point for the railroad there in 1892, slowed the town's early growth. (The division point was moved to Whitefish in 1904.) However, in August of 1895 the state legislature learning the town had the "healthiest air" in the state, approved construction of a Soldier's Home in Columbia Falls (Richard Hanners, Editor, Hungry Horse News).
History of the Local Economy
Logging developed early in the areas around Columbia Falls. One of the early logging sales took place in the winter of 1890-91 on land that later was included in the Flathead Forest Reserve. As many as 30 men were paid $50 a month to work on the sale. Under contract with the Columbia Falls Mill Company, they cut several hundred thousand board feet of ponderosa pine.

In the late nineteenth century, the ACM had permits to cut free timber for its mines in Butte; however, the company also used these permits to cut timber for retail sale of lumber throughout the state. The ACM was operating in Columbia Falls under the name of Daly & Co. by 1897. In 1898 it was the ACM, Lumber Dept., of Columbia Falls, and soon the business went under the name of the Big Blackfoot Milling Company, the timber subsidiary of the ACM.

By 1907, there were at least five lumber companies operating in Columbia Falls including State, Hunt Tripet, John Olson, Parker Zorzie and A. O. Westberg. Increasingly, the lumber companies were using railroads to log area trees. As of 1910, Stoltze Land and Lumber Company, State and the A.O. Westberg and Columbia lumber mills were logging with rail. Over time, four large lumber mills established themselves in Columbia Falls including Plum Creek, Stoltze Land and Lumber, Superior Building Company, and Rocky Mountain Lumber Company.

Tourism has played a significant role in the region beginning in the early years of the 20th Century, particularly with the establishment of Glacier National Park in 1910. However, in 1910, the closest road to the Park from the Flathead Valley ended in Coram, nine miles northwest of Columbia Falls. While efforts were being made to construct roads within the Park, private citizens took the initiative to create better access for travelers visiting the Park via Kalispell and Columbia Falls. The Flathead County Commissioners and the Flathead County Auto Club worked together to build a road from Columbia Falls to Belton, just outside the Park, and the first visitors arrived at Belton in the spring of 1911. (Going to the Sun Road Cultural Landscape Report, 2002).

Columbia Falls' population continued to grow into the 1950s, in part due to the construction and opening of the Anaconda Aluminum Company plant. The Harvey Machine Company first acquired options for an aluminum plant in the Flathead Valley.
in 1949, and shortly after purchased 1000 acres six miles north of Kalispell at Rose Crossing. Although Harvey was unable to obtain financing to build the plant, on November 6, 1951, Anaconda Copper Mining Company acquired 95 percent of Harvey's interests, and on August 30, 1952, Anaconda announced that it would build its $45,000,000 aluminum reduction plant two miles northeast of Columbia Falls near Teakettle Mountain. The completion, in 1952, of the Hungry Horse Dam and its supply of lower cost electricity, nine miles southeast of Columbia Falls, was a key factor in the ACM decision to build the aluminum plant in Columbia Falls. (foresthistory.org).

The first aluminum was produced on August 12, 1955. Initially, the plant had a capacity of 67,500 tons, increasing to 180,000 by 1968. The Anaconda Company was purchased by Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) in 1977 and in December of 1983, ARCO announced intentions to divest its Metals Division (brass and aluminum operations) including the Columbia Falls plant. In September of 1985 the plant was sold to the Montana Aluminum Investors Corporation, which changed the name to the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company. On May 28, 1999, CFAC was purchased by Glencore AG, which operated the plant until 2009 (cfaluminum.com). Despite efforts to re-open the plant, including adapting it for a new industrial use, it has remained closed.

Changes in Montana’s timber industry during the last 40 years have also affected the economy of Columbia Falls. The production of lumber across the state “has dropped from a record high of 1.6 billion board feet annually in 1986 to nearly 600 million in 2013. The number of sawmills across the state, from small operations to large facilities, has shrunk from 150 facilities to barely 30. Timber related employment dropped from 10,695 workers in 1994 to barely 7,000 twenty years later. The amount of timber harvested dropped from 1 billion board feet 30 years ago to less than 365 in 2013. There are various reasons for this decline, including economic recessions and volatile housing markets.” While the last two years have seen improvement, F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co. in Columbia Falls, the oldest family owned sawmill in Montana, announced cutbacks in production and layoffs in August of 2014, despite a rebounding economy and favorable market for logs (The Flathead Beacon, September, 2014).
Once known as the "Industrial Hub of Flathead Valley", the economy of Columbia Falls is now largely service based, as noted above. The loss of jobs in manufacturing and timber related activities has taken its toll on downtown Columbia Falls. Many of the retail spaces are vacant and buildings are deteriorating. In addition, while the 1985 reconstruction of Highway 2 between Glacier Park and Highway 93 to the west of the City has made it easier for travelers to access the City of Columbia Falls, it also made it easier to bypass the downtown businesses along Nucleus Avenue. While there has been commercial development along Highway 2, it is not well-linked to other parts of the community. If not for a lower speed limit within the city limits, visitors to the region could easily travel along Highway 2 without discovering downtown and the rest of Columbia Falls.

**Community Demographic and Economic Information**
According to 2013 Census estimates, there are 4,796 people living in the City, up slightly from the 2010 number of 4,688. The county’s population is projected to experience continued growth through 2060, from 95,188 in 2014 to 127,403 in 2060, an increase of 33% (Montana Economic and Information Center). Census information, recorded over a one hundred year period, beginning in 1910, indicates that Columbia Falls’ population has continued to grow, even in light of the overall decline in natural resource and industry-based employment over the past several decades. The following figure presents population data for the City from 1910 to 2010, based on the decennial census.
Based on county population projections, as well as historic data for the City, it is likely that the number of people living in Columbia Falls will continue to grow. However, while the population is increasing, the poverty rate, at 17.3% is higher than for Montana and the nation, which are both just under 15% (American Community Survey –ACS, 2008-2012).

Median Income for residents living in Columbia Falls is $38,456, significantly lower than the state, at $45,456 and the nation, at $53,046 (ACS, 2008-2012). The closure of the Columbia Falls Aluminum Plant in 2009, after more than 50 years of operation has had a significant impact on area income. Ninety people lost their jobs at the time of the closure, but at its height, in the 1960s, the plant employed 1,500 and was “central to the area’s economy” (The Missoulian). Today, as noted in the table on the following page, the “educational services, health care and social assistance” sector employs the most people, followed by “arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services” and “retail trade”.

| Civilian employed population 16 years and over | 2,226 | 2,226 |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining | 181 | 8.1% |
| Construction | 240 | 10.8% |
| Manufacturing | 167 | 7.5% |
| Wholesale trade | 12 | 0.5% |
| Retail trade | 264 | 11.9% |
| Transportation and warehousing, and utilities | 68 | 3.1% |
| Information | 70 | 3.1% |
| Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing | 78 | 3.5% |
| Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services | 66 | 3.0% |
| Educational services, and health care and social assistance | 430 | 19.3% |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services | 408 | 18.3% |
| Other services, except public administration | 121 | 5.4% |
| Public administration | 121 | 5.4% |
Description of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District

Boundary Legal of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Description

Beginning at the intersection of 1st Avenue East North and MT 486 (Railroad Street),
then thence southwesterly to 1st Avenue West North,
then thence southerly to 5th Street West,
then thence westerly to 2nd Avenue West,
then thence southerly to 7th Street West,
then thence westerly to 9th Avenue West,
then thence northerly to 5th Street West, adjacent to the abandoned roadway,
then thence westerly to 12th Avenue West along Truck Route,
then thence southwesterly to Tract 8AA (ASSR#0005784) in the SE1/4 of Section 7, T30 N, R20 W, COS 7482,
then thence southwesterly along the boundary of Tract 8A to the city limits line at 9th ST West / U. S. Highway 2,
then thence westerly along the city limits line to the southeast corner of Tract 5BAF (ASSR#0000570),
then thence northerly 287.44' to Tract 5BAE (ASSR#0000520), COS 13264,
then thence northwesterly 142.57' to Tract 5BAD SW Corner (ASSR#0001459), continuing northerly 50' then westerly to the northwest corner of Tract 5BF (ASSR#0820302) COS 13716,
then thence southerly 437.35' to US HWY 2,
then thence westerly along US HWY 2 to the southeast corner of Sunshine Lot 18, Parcel A of COS 2256 (ASSR#0562160),
then thence northwesterly to the southeast corner of Tract 5EA (ASSR#0014158),
then thence westerly to the southeast corner of Tract 5EB, Parcel 3 of COS 18616 (ASSR#0013619),
then thence northerly along Tract 5EB to the northeast corner then westerly approximately 567.86' to the northwest corner of Tract 5EB, COS 18616,
then thence southerly to the intersection of Meadow Lake Blvd (north) and 9th ST W/US HWY 2,
then thence westerly along 9th ST W/US Hwy 2 to the northeast corner of Lot 4, O'Neil Subdivision (ASSR#E001317),
then thence southerly along the city limits, approximately 1,253.07', COS 13446, to 13th Street West,
then thence easterly to the southwest corner of Lot 1 Glenn's Addition Phase 3, (ASSR#0420451)
then thence northerly to the northwest corner of Lot 8 Glenn's Addition Phase 3, (ASSR#0501979)
thence northeasterly to northwest corner of Lot 9 Glenn's Addition Phase 3, (ASSR#0501980)
thence easterly to the northeast corner of Lot 22B Glenn's Addition Phase 1 (ASSR#0009434) at intersection of 12th Avenue West and 11th Street West,
thence easterly along 11th Street West to Nucleus Avenue,
thence southerly to 13th Street East, thence easterly to 2nd Avenue East,
thence southerly to the city limits line at the southwest corner of Tract 4E (ASSR#0250325),
thence easterly 214.17' to the southeast corner, COS 3040,
thence northerly to the southeast corner of Lot 2, Blk 1, Lou-Ellen subd (ASSR#0314250), COS 13774,
thence easterly 138.09' to the southeast corner of Lot 1 Blk 1, Lou-Ellen subd (ASSR#0314250), COS 13774,
thence northerly 81.15' to US Highway 2,
thence northerly to the intersection of 3rd Avenue East and U. S. Highway 2,
thence northerly on 3rd Avenue East to 9th Street East,
thence westerly to 1st Avenue East,
thence northerly to the point of beginning.

Map of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Area
Parcels Included in the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District
The list of parcels within the district (attached as Appendix B) includes the identifying geocodes and the following information.

- Property owners' names, property address and mailing addresses of all properties with geocodes for every property in the district.
- All centrally assessed properties and their geocodes within the district. An estimate of the number of miles of railroad tracks.
- Personal property within the district and the corresponding assessor codes
- Mobile homes/manufactured homes not attached to real property within the district and their assessor codes
Chapter 3. Documentation of Blight

Introduction
As noted in Chapter 1, in September of 2014, the City Council of Columbia Falls, Montana voted to undertake a study of blighted areas, as a first step in establishing an urban renewal program for the community. The documentation of blight, within a municipality (defined as a city or town or consolidated city-county government), in accordance with state law, provides the necessary foundation upon which a local government may exercise its urban renewal powers. As noted below, conditions of blight may apply in all or parts of a study area in order to qualify a local government to undertake an urban renewal program. The importance of addressing these conditions is set forth in the Montana Urban Renewal Law, which states that is a matter of public policy to eliminate and prevent blight. Particularly, in 7-15- 4202 Montana Codes Annotated (MCA), states, “It is hereby found and declared:

(1) that blighted areas which constitute a serious and growing menace, injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the residents of the state, exist in municipalities of the state;
(2) that the existence of such areas:
   (a) contributes substantially and increasingly to the spread of disease and crime and depreciation of property values;
   (b) constitutes an economic and social liability;
   (c) substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of municipalities;
   (d) retards the provision of housing accommodations;
   (e) aggravates traffic problems; and
   (f) substantially impairs or arrests the elimination of traffic hazards and the improvement of traffic facilities; and
(3) that the prevention and elimination of such areas is a matter of state policy and state concern in order that the state and its municipalities shall not continue to be endangered by areas which are focal centers of disease, promote juvenile delinquency, are conducive to fires, are difficult to police and to provide police protection for, and, while contributing little to the tax income of the state and its municipalities, consume an excessive proportion of its revenues because of the extra services required for police, fire, accident, hospitalization, and other forms of public protection, services, and facilities.”
Defining Blight
Montana law sets forth the specific conditions that constitute blight. In particular, state statute defines a blighted area as one that substantially impairs or arrests the sound development of communities, constitutes an economic or social liability, and/or constitutes a menace to the public health and safety in its present condition.

Per 7-15-4206, MCA, a “blighted area” may be identified as such by reason of:
(a) the substantial physical dilapidation; deterioration; defective construction, material, and arrangement; or age obsolescence of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential;
(b) inadequate provision for ventilation, light, proper sanitary facilities, or open spaces as determined by competent appraisers on the basis of an examination of the building standards of the municipality;
(c) inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings;
(d) high density of population and overcrowding;
(e) defective or inadequate street layout;
(f) faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
(g) excessive land coverage;
(h) unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
(i) deterioration of site;
(j) diversity of ownership;
(k) tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
(l) defective or unusual conditions of title;
(m) improper subdivision or obsolete platting;
(n) the existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes; or
(o) any combination of the factors listed in this subsection (2).” (Montana Laws)

Blighted Conditions in the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Study Area
The area exhibits a number of these blighted conditions including:
1. Physical deterioration of buildings and properties
2. Defective street layout
3. Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings
4. Unsanitary and unsafe conditions and the existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.

The following provides information is support of these conditions.
Physical Deterioration of Buildings and Properties

Physically, downtown Columbia Falls is suffering from deferred maintenance and deterioration of both buildings and empty spaces. The area includes a number of properties that are vacant and deteriorating. For example, a bank building and associated “drive through” located at Nucleus and 6th Street West has remained vacant in spite of efforts to find a re-use for the space.

The designs of parking lots, alleyways, driveways create blighted conditions that diminish the value of property in the area and present hazards for pedestrians. There are also a number of vacant lots at locations where buildings were lost over time.

Inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings

The study area includes a variety of land uses including commercial, residential, public and industrial. While these uses all contribute to the area’s economy, the various uses are not always clearly separated, creating unsightly and unsafe conditions. For example, the intersection of the railroad corridor with Highway 2 has no provision for pedestrians or other non-motorized uses.
Defective Street Layout
Throughout the urban renewal study area, sidewalks and curbs are missing, making it difficult for pedestrians to access residences and businesses. Along Nucleus Avenue and in surrounding neighborhoods, existing curbs and sidewalks have disintegrated, as these two photographs indicate.

Commercial establishments along Highway 2 are generally designed to serve customers arriving by automobiles, so large parking lots and driveways make the area difficult to navigate and potentially unsafe for pedestrians.

Alleys are of particular concern, especially in cases where alleys provide primary access to parking facilities in the downtown. The majority of alleys are unpaved, and ungraded.

And in many areas there are encroachments on the alley rights-of-way that create physical hazards.
Unsanitary and unsafe conditions and the existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes

Many of the blighted conditions noted above can be characterized as unsafe. Vacant buildings and the general deterioration of the overall infrastructure increase the risk of system failures and structure fires. Occupied buildings adjacent to vacant properties are in jeopardy and overall investment the commercial areas of Columbia Falls will continue to be stymied in the absence of a renewed revitalization effort.

Conclusion

Based on these findings, the Columbia Falls urban renewal study area can be described as blighted per Montana Statute, with respect to the deteriorating condition of property in the area, inappropriate or mixed uses of land or buildings, defective street layout, and unsafe conditions associated both public and privately held property.
Chapter 4. Planning Consistency

This Urban Renewal Plan must conform to the 2013 *City of Columbia Falls Growth Policy* per 7-15-4213 MCA. On March 19th, 2015 the Columbia Falls Planning Board and Zoning Commission reviewed the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Plan and found it to be in conformance with the Growth Policy, per statutory requirements. The 2013 *Columbia Falls Growth Policy* was officially adopted by the City Council on January 22nd, 2013, and supersedes the Growth Policies dated 2005 and 2008.

Growth Policy Review

The following selections from the Growth Policy demonstrate conformance of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Plan to the principals, goals and objectives of the Growth Policy.

VISION STATEMENT (page 1)

A community maintaining quality embracing change.

WEAKNESSES (page 5)

Weaknesses are traits, conditions or shortcomings in a community. They hinder progress, detract from the quality of the community or restrict opportunity in some form or fashion. Weaknesses reflect an existing situation. It is important for a community to identify and acknowledge weaknesses. Once identified, weaknesses can be improved upon or overcome, however this requires effort in terms of resources, time and commitment.

- Limited tax base (significant industrial, commercial and residential tax base lies just outside the immediate boundaries of the city)
- Limited retail shopping
- Limited in-town lodging accommodations
- Commercial development continues to shift to 9th (US 2) while old downtown (Nucleus) declines
- Sprawl on the outskirts of the community
- Infrastructure needs
  - Curbs and sidewalks/bikepaths
  - Pedestrian bridge over river
  - Sewer and water extensions to growth areas
  - Railroad crossings (13th)
- Lack of a dedicated community building or civic center
- Lack of activities for young adults
• Brain drain (young people leave after high school or college for job opportunities elsewhere)

OPPORTUNITIES (page 5 and 6)
Opportunities are actions or circumstances which if capitalized upon can be used to overcome weaknesses or build on strengths. Opportunities may be available for only a short time and are thus time sensitive. Therefore, it is important to constantly monitor opportunities in a community. Opportunities rarely happen on their own and require energy and direction to accomplish them. Once lost, they are very difficult to retrieve or revive.
• Flathead River access
• Development and expansion of the existing trail system in the community
• Vacant lands on the east and west sides of the community that could accommodate future growth
• Paving of the North Fork Road to Camas Creek Road providing a direct access through Columbia Falls to Glacier National Park.
• Tourist development due to location
• Good market for retail expansion
• Existing industrial base already here
• Access to Flathead Valley Community College for training and education
• Retirement housing – opportunities to expand here
• Good pool of quality youth and volunteers.
• The extension of Homestead Drive at North Hilltop and the extension of 13th across the railroad tracks.
• Tax incentive programs to revitalize Nucleus and blighted areas.
• Grant programs/funding opportunities
• Quality of non-college educated workforce

2. GROWTH MANAGEMENT (page 13)
Growth in the Columbia Falls area has fluctuated with modest declines inside the city in the 1980's counter balanced by significant growth throughout the 1990's with peaks in 1996 and 2004. In 2008 through 2012, the mortgage crisis and resulting recession reduced demand and the resulting over supply of housing and lots resulted in a significant price reduction. Over the last ten years, the city has added a number of multi-family housing units, including a 16 town home project for Habitat for Humanity. More recently, developers have constructed over sixty assisted care units. Diverse housing opportunities, delivery of services, location of new development, redevelopment of the existing downtown core and quality of life are all issues that the City will continue to address.

Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Plan – September 8, 2015
4. LAND USE – COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (pages 23-26)

Commercial activity and a commercial center are vital for a community as they provide employment, tax base and community identity. Columbia Falls serves as a commercial service center for northeast Flathead County including the Canyon and the North Fork. The commercial core of Columbia Falls has shifted from a traditional downtown center along Nucleus Avenue to a more linear development along US Highway 2 within the community. At the same time, the community has felt significant pressure from Kalispell, 15 miles to the south, which serves as a secondary trade center for Northwest Montana and from generally unregulated linear strip development along US Highway 2 between Kalispell and Columbia Falls.

Issues:
1. Land devoted to commercial development has more than doubled between 1982 and 2002 from 4% of developed land in the community to 9.6%. This has primarily been due to new commercial development along US Highway 2 (9th Street).
2. Downtown Columbia Falls (Nucleus Avenue) continues to evolve with new development and interest in rehabilitation of old structures.
3. Significant new commercial development and re-development has occurred along US Highway 2 (9th Street) however, this development is typically one lot deep, linear in design and auto oriented characterized by individual accesses, limited landscaping and expansive parking lots.
4. Columbia Falls lacks a broad base of retail services such as department stores and community based retail services.
5. Columbia Falls serves as a gateway city to Glacier National Park situated on the Flathead River yet it is just beginning to capitalize on its location in terms of traveler services, accommodations and amenities.
6. Commercial strips have developed on the east side of the planning jurisdiction (Columbia Heights) and the west side of the planning jurisdiction (Blue Moon/Highway 2 Corridor area).

Goals:
1. Balanced commercial development providing convenient access to a broad selection of goods and services.
2. Columbia falls as a gateway community to Glacier National Park and the surrounding recreational assets which provide the traveler and residents with a broad array of retail businesses, services and accommodations.
3. A revitalized Nucleus Avenue providing a downtown focus for the community of Columbia Falls.

4. Focused commercial development along US Highway 2 that embraces good signage, access and landscaping serving as an entrance corridor to Columbia Falls.

Policies:

1. General
   a. Design and locate development to protect public health and safety; insure adequate provision of services; fit the character of its surroundings; and encourage the most appropriate use of land. Community character shall represent the following values identified by the community in the public input process: scenic, small town ambience, outdoor lifestyle, western town, historic/cultural assets, national park gateway, wildlife, walkable community, winter sports.
   b. Utilize Planned Unit Developments as a tool to ensure that commercial areas provide appropriate buffers to adjacent residential areas, and that all planned uses are compatible.

2. Central Business District:
   a. Recognize Nucleus Avenue as the historical downtown community center of Columbia Falls.
   b. Work to promote redevelopment/revitalization of commercial buildings in the downtown core.
   c. Establish a Tax Increment District within the downtown area to aid in reinvestment in the downtown.
   d. Reinforce and take advantage of downtown’s strengths, including its higher concentration of people, investment in buildings and infrastructure, intricate mix of land uses, historic and architectural character, pedestrian orientation, and visitor attraction.
   e. Recognize that there are special parking considerations downtown which differ from other areas, encourage innovative parking management, effective regulation of on-street parking, shared parking provisions, parking standards that encourage reuse of upper floors, and provision of public parking lots and structures.
   f. New development should give adequate consideration to downtown’s historic character and use.
   g. Support mixed-use projects in this area which blend traditional commercial with office and residential housing opportunities.
h. Support the concentration of community events, civic functions, and activities in the downtown.

Recommendations:
1. Review the Columbia Falls sign code to determine if it is meeting the goals of the Growth Policy by encouraging quality design for the city’s commercial areas.
2. Review the landscape design standards within the Columbia Falls zoning ordinance to ensure that undesirable aspects of commercial development such as storage areas and parking lots are being adequately shielded and that the commercial entrance ways to the community are appealing.
3. Develop lighting standards for commercial areas that ensure the lighting is directed down and shielded to inhibit light trespassing or impacting neighboring properties, reducing unwanted glare and protecting the night skies.
4. Identify under used commercial buildings and develop a program to either encourage activities to improve/upgrade/revitalize these buildings.
5. Create an Urban Renewal District or Tax Increment Finance District for the commercial and industrial areas.
6. Support the paving of the North Fork Road north to Camas Creek to serve as an eastern entrance to Glacier National Park thus encouraging Glacier National Park traffic down Nucleus and supporting Columbia Falls as a Gateway City to Glacier National Park.
7. Support zoning Nucleus and a Historic District to promote mix use, multifamily, and commercial uses in same structure.

Principles, Goals and Objectives in the Columbia Falls Growth Policy furthering urban renewal and economic stability for the prevention and the elimination of urban blight.

- The vision of Columbia Falls is as a community maintaining quality embracing change.
- Weaknesses Columbia Falls has identified and would like to overcome include:
  - a limited tax base,
  - the decline of old downtown (Nucleus), and
  - unmet infrastructure needs.
- A Commercial Land Use goal is for a revitalized Nucleus Avenue providing a downtown focus for the community of Columbia Falls.
- A Commercial Land Use goal is for focused commercial development along US Highway 2 that embraces good signage, access and landscaping serving as an entrance corridor to Columbia Falls.
Evaluation of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan for conformance with Overall Principles and Goals of the Growth Policy.

- In conformance with the Growth Policy, the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan seeks to provide long term economic stability and to use planning and the development of public infrastructure as tools for well managed growth.
- The goals of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District as stated in the Urban Renewal District Plan are:
  ✓ Promote Renovation, Revitalization, Rehabilitation and Historic Preservation within the Urban Renewal Area
  ✓ Improve Public Infrastructure in Support of Urban Renewal
  ✓ Improve Multi-modal Transportation in Support of Urban Renewal
  ✓ Foster Land Uses within the Urban Renewal Area that Facilitate Sustainable Economic Development
  ✓ Foster Reinvestment and Economic Development within the Urban Renewal Area
  ✓ Strengthen Opportunities Associated with Tourism and Recreation within the Urban Renewal Area
  ✓ Market and Promote the Urban Renewal Area

Growth Policy Implementation
The following selections from the Columbia Falls Growth Policy demonstrate conformance of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Plan to the implementation strategies and tools of the Growth Policy.

12. GROWTH POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
A. UPDATING AND AMENDING THE GROWTH POLICY (page 49)
RECOMMENDATIONS
1. The City needs to establish an ongoing program of review and analysis of the Growth Policy at least on a five year basis and revising the policy if necessary.
2. As needed, the city should prepare special elements to the Growth Policy to address specific needs of the Planning Jurisdiction where more direct or special guidance is needed or to further refine and develop existing goals and policies. Examples include Neighborhood Plans, a Downtown Redevelopment Plan, a Community Drainage Plan, etc.
12. GROWTH POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

I. URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (page 56)
Urban Development Programs address a broad array of economic development needs typically in cities, such as downtown redevelopment, economic development, job training, etc. Communities typically develop an urban renewal plan which outlines development issues and develops strategies to overcome these issues. Tools available include state and federal grants and the creation of tax increment districts.

RECOMMENDATION
The city should continue to pursue the creation of an urban development plan for the downtown Nucleus core area and other business/industrial areas.

Implementation tools and strategies, including Tax Increment Financing, to help achieve the Columbia Falls Growth Policy’s goals and objectives.
- Using tax incentive programs to revitalize Nucleus and blighted areas.
- Redevelopment of the existing downtown core.
- Insuring adequate provision of services.
- Redevelopment/revitalization of commercial buildings in the downtown core.
- Establishment of a Tax Increment District within the downtown area to aid in re-investment in the downtown.
- Investment in buildings and infrastructure.
- Revitalization of under-utilized commercial buildings.
- Creation of an Urban Renewal District for the commercial areas.
- Development of a downtown redevelopment plan.
- Creation of tax increment districts.

Evaluation of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan for conformance with implementation tools and strategies in the Columbia Falls Growth Policy.
- The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan takes advantage of the urban renewal law offered by the State of Montana Code.
- The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan provides for the opportunity to use tax increment financing to assist with redevelopment and revitalization activities, and encourage the retention and growth of economic development.
- The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan supports the development of infrastructure that encourages urban renewal and economic development in the community.
Growth Policy Land Use
The Growth Policy provides a visual policy statement with identification of future land use through maps and/or text of lands to help achieve the goals and objectives of the Columbia Falls Growth Policy. Columbia Falls Growth Policy Future Land Use Map and Legend (as follows) is found on pages 59 and 60 of the 2013 Growth Policy.
Future Land Use Designations to help achieve the Columbia Falls Growth Policy’s goals and objectives.

- The majority of the area included in the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District has a land use designation of “Commercial”. Commercial is described as “General highway and neighborhood retail sales, services and mixed office use”.
- The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District includes a minor amount of “Public Facilities”, “Park and Open Space”, “Light Industrial”, “Urban Residential” and “Multi-Family Residential” land use designations.

Evaluation of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan for conformance with land use description.

- The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan provides a plan for redevelopment of an existing “Commercial” designated area to retain existing and attract new economic development.
- The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan does not suggest any revision to the existing land use designations.

Zoning Review

The following selections from the Columbia Falls Area Zoning Ordinance have been provided to demonstrate accordance of zoning within the area of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District to the Growth Policy.

Chapter 18.101.010 Short title.

This title and the maps adopted pursuant hereto shall be known as, and shall be cited and referred to as, the “Columbia Falls Area Zoning Ordinance” in accordance with and exercising the authority of the laws of the State of Montana, Title 11, Chapter 27, R.C.M., 1947, as amended, and Section 76-2-301, M.C.A.

Chapter 18.103.010 Purpose and interpretation.

The purpose of this title is to:
A. implement and promote the Growth Policy;
B. securing safety from fire, panic, and other dangers;
C. promote public health, safety, and general welfare;
D. provide adequate light and air;
E. promote compatible urban growth;
F. facilitate the adequate provision of motorized and nonmotorized transportation systems, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public requirements;

G. give reasonable consideration to the character of the districts;

H. give consideration to peculiar suitability of the property for particular uses;

I. conserve the value of buildings; and encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the jurisdictional area.

Chapter 18.314 USE DISTRICTS

18.314.010 Intent.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish districts wherein compatible uses of land may be grouped to create, protect, and maintain a livable environment; to stabilize and protect the uses contained within the districts; to allow a maximum degree of latitude within the districts, conduct profitable business, or contribute to the economy of the Columbia Falls area. It is also the purpose of this chapter to make it possible to more efficiently and economically design and install all physical public service facilities in terms of size and capacity to adequately and permanently meet needs resulting from a defined intensity of land use, providing for the health, safety, prosperity, and well-being of the total area.

18.314.020 Establishment of use districts.

For the purpose of applying these regulations to the zoning jurisdictional area of the city of Columbia Falls, said area is divided into the following use districts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Minimum Lot Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSAG-20</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>20 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSAG-10</td>
<td>Suburban Agriculture</td>
<td>10 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSAG-5</td>
<td>Suburban Agriculture</td>
<td>5 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR-1</td>
<td>Suburban Residential</td>
<td>1 acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR-2</td>
<td>One-Family Limited Residential</td>
<td>20,000 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR-3</td>
<td>One-Family Residential</td>
<td>9,600 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR-4</td>
<td>Urban Residential</td>
<td>7,200 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR-5</td>
<td>Two-Family Residential</td>
<td>5,400 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRA-1</td>
<td>Residential Apartment</td>
<td>7,500 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB-1</td>
<td>Neighborhood Business</td>
<td>5 acres, maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB-2</td>
<td>General Business</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB-4</td>
<td>Central Business</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB-5</td>
<td>Resort Business</td>
<td>15,000 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI-1</td>
<td>Light Industrial</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI-2</td>
<td>Heavy Industrial</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP-1</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPUD</td>
<td>Planned Unit Development</td>
<td>see Chapter 18.346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH</td>
<td>Manufactured Home Overlay District</td>
<td>see Chapter 18.350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBR-4</td>
<td>Resort Business</td>
<td>see Chapter 18.352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 18.315 LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES OF DISTRICTS; 18.315.010 Establishment of locations and boundaries.

The location and boundaries of the use districts are established as they are shown on the map entitled “The Columbia Falls Jurisdictional Area Official Zoning Map,” which shall become effective with and as an inseparable part of this title as of the date of adoption by the city council of the city. This title is invalid without said map and, conversely, the map is deemed to be invalid without this title.

Chapter 18.334 CB-1 NEIGHBORHOOD/PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS; 18.334.010 Definition.

A business district to provide certain commercial and professional office uses where such uses are compatible with the adjacent residential areas. This district should serve as a buffer between residential areas and other commercial districts and primarily serve the daily needs of the surrounding population. The district is not intended for those businesses that require the outdoor display, sale, and/or storage of merchandise, outdoor services or operations, or outdoor consumption of food and beverages. It is also not intended for buildings larger than 3,000 square feet.

Chapter 18.336 CB-2 GENERAL BUSINESS; 18.336.010 Definition.

A business district to provide for a wide range of commercial activities including offices, retail sales and services, shopping malls, and businesses that serve the needs of the traveling public and tourists.

Chapter 18.338 CB-4 CENTRAL BUSINESS; 18.338.010 Definition.

A business district to set apart that portion of the city which forms the center for financial, commercial, governmental, professional, and cultural activities. Suitability of this district for the performance of these functions should be maintained and uses likely to create friction should be discouraged. This district is not intended for general application throughout the planning area.
Zoning to help achieve the Columbia Falls Growth Policy.

- A purpose of the Columbia Falls Area Zoning Ordinance is to implement and promote the Growth Policy.
- The majority of the property included within the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District is zoned for business or commercial uses.
- Section 18.606.120 of the Columbia Falls Area Zoning Ordinance includes the following definition for “Business or commercial use”. “Business or commercial use” means the purchase, sale, offering for sale, or other transaction involving the handling or disposition of any article, service, substance, or commodity for livelihood or profit; or the management or occupancy of office buildings, offices, recreation or amusement enterprises; or the maintenance and use of buildings, offices, structures, or premises by professions and trades or persons rendering services.
- The majority of the property included within the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District is zoned B-1 Central Business District, B-2 General Business, or B-1 Neighborhood Business.
- The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District includes a minor amount of “Public Facilities”, “Park and Open Space”, “Light Industrial”, “Urban Residential” and “Multi-Family Residential” land use designations.


- The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan supports the purposes of the Columbia Falls Area Zoning Ordinance.
- The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan supports “business or commercial use” as defined by the Columbia Falls Area Zoning Ordinance.
- The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan provides a plan for redevelopment of an existing “Commercial” designated area to eliminate blight, and retain existing and attract new economic development.
- The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan does not suggest any revision to the existing zoning classifications.
Conclusions:

1. The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan has been evaluated against the relevant goals, policies and objectives of the Columbia Falls Growth Policy (2013 Edition), and the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District Plan is in conformance with the Growth Policy.

2. The zoning in the area of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District has been evaluated against the Growth Policy, and the zoning in the area of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District is in accordance with the Growth Policy.
Chapter 5. Goals and Strategies of the Urban Renewal Plan

Introduction
This chapter presents the goals and strategies for addressing blight within the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal District, based on comments received at a series of public meetings held in October of 2014. The meetings provided the opportunity for elected officials, representatives from various taxing jurisdictions, planning board members, as well as members of the public to identify issues of concern and suggested strategies for addressing and preventing blight. Meeting summaries can be found in Appendix A.
Goals and Strategies

**Promote Renovation, Revitalization, Rehabilitation and Historic Preservation within the Urban Renewal Area**

**Planning Initiatives**
- Inventory properties with respect to:
  - Building condition
  - Ownership status and tax delinquency
  - Infrastructure needs
  - Uses and potential re-uses
  - Prioritize properties based on potential for re-use with urban renewal intervention
- Complete re-utilization studies of vacant and neglected properties
  - Explore applicability of both for-profit and non-profit uses
  - Compete adaptive reuse study of “Town Square” site
  - Study priority properties in need of urban renewal intervention
- Study absentee ownership and develop strategies to address associated issues
- Study public open space needs
- Complete an urban design plan that addresses:
  - Street Lighting
  - Landscaping/Planters
  - Streetscape and Street Furniture
  - Pedestrian access
  - Way finding
  - Signage
  - Façade restoration
  - Entrance Features
    - Emphasize the entryway to downtown at the intersection of US Highway 2 and Nucleus Avenue

**Program Initiatives**
- Facilitate public-private partnerships for urban renewal
- Develop a façade restoration program
- Facilitate the preparation of developer packets for priority properties in order to seek proposals for adaptive re-use
- Establish an entrepreneurial ownership program to foster the revitalization of vacant and neglected properties
• Develop a short-term art display program for empty storefronts and visitor kiosks
• List properties on the National Register of Historic Places (as warranted)
• Highlight historic properties to better connect the community's history to the built environment

**Capital Projects**
• Implement the urban design plan
• Prepare sites, as appropriate, for adaptive re-use, possibly including the "Town Square" site

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**Improve Public Infrastructure in Support of Urban Renewal**

**Planning Initiatives**
• Address area infrastructure needs in the community’s capital improvement plans
• Complete a parking needs study and plan
• Complete a cost-benefit analysis of locating utilities underground
• Evaluate high-speed communication connectivity needs
  • Consider alternative infrastructure ownership models
    • Government
    • Non-profit
    • Private for-profit
    • Public-private partnerships

**Program Initiatives**
• Establish a grant/loan program to enable businesses to connect to high speed internet service
• Support code enforcement including issues related alley encroachments

**Capital Projects**
• Promote installation of primary cable and conduit infrastructure for high-speed connectivity
• Infill gaps in sewer and water service
• Implement parking recommendations
• Improve alleys

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• Promote paving of roadways, alleys, driveways and parking lots
• Install utilities underground as feasible and appropriate
• Improve or construct public open spaces
• Support implementation of capital improvement plans

Improve Multi-modal Transportation in Support of Urban Renewal

Planning Initiatives
• Conduct a non-motorized use study which addresses:
  o Walkability
  o Intersection safety
  o Railroad crossing safety
  o Accessibility
  o Multi-modal interaction
• Develop a design plan to improve traffic patterns at the intersection of Nucleus Avenue and US Highway 2
  o Change highway emphasis to local/small town intersection design
  o Incorporate additional directional signing
• Study traffic flow
  o Consider the use of a "business loop" in the downtown
• Consider the inclusion of boulevards in street design

Program Initiatives
• Establish a loan/grant program to enable businesses to advance a walkable community

Capital Projects
• Improve pedestrian safety at intersections and railroad crossings.
• Work with MDT to improve traffic patterns at the intersection of Nucleus Avenue and Highway 2
• Improve or construct non-motorized transportation infrastructure

Foster Land Uses within the Urban Renewal Area that Facilitate Sustainable Economic Development

Planning Initiatives
• Complete a plan for sustainable mixed-use development
Residential uses that incorporate the following principles
- Income diversity
- Second or upper story housing
- Live–work opportunities
- Diversity of ownership
- Supportive services
- Extended family opportunities

Commercial and Service uses that
- Enhance the physical tie between downtown and US Highway 2
- Enhance the symbiotic relationship within the urban renewal area
- Foster appropriate business development
- Promote the efficiencies and cost saving associated with density
  including
  - Land
  - Utilities and public infrastructure
  - Use of tax dollars
  - Energy
  - Other resources
- Balance the needs of residents with those of visitors

Industrial uses that include
- Secondary value-adding manufacturing and technological businesses including
  - Artisan manufacturing
  - Research and Development
- Businesses that produce or process products or commodities that
  are capable of being sold or traded in interstate commerce

Program Initiatives
- Update codes as required to foster sustainable economic development, including:
  o Zoning
  o Subdivision
  o Building

Foster Reinvestment and Economic Development within the Urban Renewal Area

Planning Initiatives
- Complete a market study that considers:
• customized retail shops that feature local artisans
• sustainable businesses that serve local residents
• retail businesses that target specific age groups
• businesses that are focused outdoor and recreational opportunities
• local/regional and chain restaurants

• Prepare a business recruitment plan that considers
  • technology and other “soft” industries
  • medical and professional services
  • small scale metal fabrication and other manufacturing opportunities
  • living wage needs

Program Initiatives
  • Develop public-private partnerships for urban renewal
  • Encourage local investment

Capital Projects
  • Promote reinvestment in vacant and underutilized properties identified in the re-utilization study

Strengthen Opportunities Associated with Tourism and Recreation within the Urban Renewal Area

Planning Initiatives
  • Complete a marketing study to address tourism and recreation that considers
    • Proximity to Glacier National Park
    • The Flathead River
    • Camas Creek Entrance to Glacier National Park
    • Year round area-wide recreation opportunities
  • Conduct an accommodation needs study to include:
    • a variety of accommodation types
      ▪ Hotel chains
      ▪ Glacier Park concessionaires
      ▪ Boutique and independent hotels
      ▪ Campground services
    • on-site amenity needs
    • a diverse visitor base
      ▪ Area visitors (including visitors to Glacier National Park)
• Visiting sports teams
• Work-related travelers
• Corporate executives
  o a convention/conference facility
• Explore ways to provide public swimming facilities through:
  o Public investment
  o Public – private partnership
  o Corporate largess

Program Initiatives
• Foster a recruitment program to improve visitor accommodations
• Create a Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) to help market the community
• Support ground transportation services from arrival locations to hotels

Market and Promote the Urban Renewal Area

Planning Initiatives
• Study ways to encourage visitors to stop in the urban renewal area
• Develop a “brand”/community image for Columbia Falls
  o Capitalize on the community’s family orientation, quality of life and “laid back atmosphere”
  o Reflects the area’s geography, particularly the river, access to recreation and outdoor activities
  o Consider:
    ▪ The “moniker”, Gateway to Glacier
    ▪ “Bring the Park (Glacier) to Columbia Falls” using lodge design (aka Great Northern Architecture)

Program Initiatives
• Support events that to attract area residents and visitors, such as
  o Farmers’ Markets
  o Art Shows
  o Music Festivals
  o Athletic Events
• Promote Columbia Falls to students at Flathead Valley Community College, emphasizing the availability of
  o Housing
  o Concerts/Live Music
  o Outdoor Amenities
• Foster Partnerships
  o With the Chamber of Commerce for business development
  o With the Glacier Conservancy to promote Columbia Falls
Chapter 6. Implementation

The Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Plan provides a framework for the rehabilitation and redevelopment of the Urban Renewal District. Upon its adoption, this Plan will serve as the official policy guide for public action. However, these policies can only be transformed to action through an effective implementation program. Key to implementation will be sound processes of administration, financing and program evaluation.

Administration
Under 7-15-4231 MCA, the exercise of powers related to urban renewal, a municipality may itself exercise its urban renewal project powers, or may, "if the local governing body by resolution determines such action to be in the public interest, elect to have such powers exercised by the urban renewal agency created under 7-15-4232 MCA, or a department or other officers of the municipality as they are authorized to exercise under this part and part 43."

The City of Columbia Falls may establish an urban renewal agency under this provision to direct the projects and programs outlined in the Urban Renewal Plan. As provided in the statute, the City Council would appoint five members to the agency’s board, who would be responsible for developing and implementing programs. Initially, the City of Columbia Falls has chosen to exercise its urban renewal project powers. The Council may make use of advisory committees or boards at its discretion to help guide the activities undertaken.

The annual work program and budget; listing the activities and costs of the activities for the coming fiscal year, as well as the method of financing those activities, will be reviewed and approved by the City Council. This program and budget can be amended during the course of the fiscal year in light of funding and program opportunities and changes. Urban renewal activities undertaken will be in accordance with Montana State statute. (The specific provisions of 7-15-4233 MCA are below.)

7-15-4233. Powers which may be exercised by urban renewal agency or authorized department. (1) In the event the local governing body makes such determination, such body may authorize the urban renewal agency or department or other officers of the municipality to exercise any of the following urban renewal project powers:

(a) to formulate and coordinate a workable program as specified in 7-15-4209;
(b) to prepare Urban Renewal Plans;
(c) to prepare recommended modifications to an urban renewal project plan;
(d) to undertake and carry out urban renewal projects as required by the local
governing body;
(e) to make and execute contracts as specified in 7-15-4251, 7-15-4254, 7-15-4255, and
7-15-4281, with the exception of contracts for the purchase or sale of real or personal
property;
(f) to disseminate blight clearance and urban renewal information;
(g) to exercise the powers prescribed by 7-15-4255, except the power to agree to
conditions for federal financial assistance and imposed pursuant to federal law relating
to salaries and wages shall be reserved to the local governing body;
(h) to enter any building or property in any urban renewal area in order to make
surveys and appraisals in the manner specified in 7-15-4257;
(i) to improve, clear, or prepare for redevelopment any real or personal property in
an urban renewal area;
(j) to insure real or personal property as provided in 7-15-4258;
(k) to effectuate the plans provided for in 7-15-4254;
(l) to prepare plans for the relocation of families displaced from an urban renewal
area and to coordinate public and private agencies in such relocation;
(m) to prepare plans for carrying out a program of voluntary or compulsory repair
and rehabilitation of buildings and improvements;
(n) to conduct appraisals, title searches, surveys, studies, and other preliminary plans
and work necessary to prepare for the undertaking of urban renewal projects;
(o) to negotiate for the acquisition of land;
(p) to study the closing, vacating, planning, or replanning of streets, roads,
sidewalks, ways, or other places and to make recommendations with respect thereto;
(q) to organize, coordinate, and direct the administration of the provisions of this
part and part 43;
(r) to perform such duties as the local governing body may direct so as to make the
necessary arrangements for the exercise of the powers and performance of the duties
and responsibilities entrusted to the local governing body.

(2) Any powers granted in this part or part 43 that are not included in subsection (1)
as powers of the urban renewal agency or a department or other officers of a
municipality in lieu thereof may only be exercised by the local governing body or other
officers, boards, and commissions as provided under existing law.
Projects and Programs

The URA will implement programs and evaluate projects based on the goals of this Urban Renewal Plan. Measureable objectives should be established with respect to the following to evaluate potential programs and projects:

- Job Creation
- Increased Taxable Valuation
- Leverage-Ratios of tax increment funds to other sources
- Health and Safety Concerns
- Historic Preservation
- Density and Infill
- Adaptive Re-Use
- Cost of Public Services

Given that private development will be necessary to generate tax increment funds, business development must occur hand in hand with other community based revitalization activities. The Columbia Falls urban renewal program will make use of a variety of financing in achieving the goals of this plan, including:

Public Investments

- Annual Tax Increment Appropriations – The City of Columbia Falls may finance smaller public infrastructure improvements and renewal programs from its annual tax increment receipts by appropriation. Funds available each year would be determined by the size of the annual increment and any prior commitments (such as bond debt service requirements and administrative costs).

- Tax Increment Bonds – The City of Columbia Falls will issue tax increment financing (TIF) revenue bonds if necessary, as revenues allow, to finance major capital projects. TIF bonds will enable the local government to finance projects up-front and then retire the debt through annual tax increment receipts.

- Other Debt Financing – The City of Columbia Falls may borrow funds through local, state and federal loan programs in order to finance public improvements. Annual tax increment revenues may be used to make principal and interest payments.

- Local, State and Federal Funding Mechanisms – There are a number of funding resources available to communities to undertake planning and capital improvement projects. These are listed in the funding section below.
Private Sector Development
In addition to public sector investments, the urban renewal program can assist property and business owners in specific renewal activities including the following:

- Tax Increment Financing Revolving Loans – In 7-15-4292, MCA, the Montana TIF statute provides for the establishment of loan programs, whereby TIF funds may be used to support public and private urban renewal projects in support of the goals of the Urban Renewal District. As principal and interest payments are made, the funds may be loaned again, even after the TIF District sunsets.

- Tax Increment Grants – In some cases urban renewal agencies can make grants to private entities to support projects that are in the community’s best interest, and are in keeping with the purposes of the Montana Urban Renewal Law, such as historic preservation, public safety and the removal of blight. Examples include:
  - Restoration of historic building facades
  - Stabilization of structures that have been neglected or abandoned
  - Installation of life safety equipment such as sprinkler systems

- Other Assistance – The urban renewal program can assist private sector projects in a variety of ways, by providing technical assistance and helping property owners access federal, state and local resources and incentives for development.

Partnership Development
The urban renewal program will rely on cooperative efforts among the local government and the URA, district property owners, and economic development organizations to achieve its goal of fostering revitalization. In many cases, these cooperative partners will work jointly on market analyses, business recruitment and capital improvements planning. Also, as noted above, it will be necessary to work with other local, state and federal entities in providing additional financing and matching funds to undertake projects and programs in the Urban Renewal District. Potential partnerships can be forged using a variety of programs and funding mechanisms. A sampling of these is provided in the following section.

Program Funding

Tax Increment Financing
As noted in Chapter 1 of this plan, the implementation of the Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Plan will include the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). More particularly, costs that may be paid using TIF dollars are included in 7-15-4288, MCA as follows:

**7-15-4288. Costs that may be paid by tax increment financing.** The tax increments may be used by the municipality to pay the following costs of or incurred in connection with an urban renewal project, industrial infrastructure development project, technology infrastructure development project, or aerospace transportation and technology infrastructure development project:

1. land acquisition;
2. demolition and removal of structures;
3. relocation of occupants;
4. the acquisition, construction, and improvement of infrastructure, industrial infrastructure, technology infrastructure, or aerospace transportation and technology infrastructure that includes streets, roads, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, pedestrian malls, alleys, parking lots and off-street parking facilities, sewers, sewer lines, sewage treatment facilities, storm sewers, waterlines, waterways, water treatment facilities, natural gas lines, electrical lines, telecommunications lines, rail lines, rail spurs, bridges, spaceports for reusable launch vehicles with associated runways and launch, recovery, fuel manufacturing, and cargo holding facilities, publicly owned buildings, and any public improvements authorized by Title 7, chapter 12, parts 41 through 45; Title 7, chapter 13, parts 42 and 43; and Title 7, chapter 14, part 47, and items of personal property to be used in connection with improvements for which the foregoing costs may be incurred;
5. costs incurred in connection with the redevelopment activities allowed under 7-15-4233;
6. acquisition of infrastructure-deficient areas or portions of areas;
7. administrative costs associated with the management of the urban renewal area, industrial district, technology district, or aerospace transportation and technology district;
8. assemblage of land for development or redevelopment by private enterprise or public agencies, including sale, initial leasing, or retention by the municipality itself at its fair value;
9. the compilation and analysis of pertinent information required to adequately determine the needs of an urban renewal project in an urban renewal area, the infrastructure needs of secondary, value-adding industries in the industrial district, the needs of a technology infrastructure development project in the technology district, or the needs of an aerospace transportation and technology infrastructure development.
project in the aerospace transportation and technology district;

(10) the connection of the urban renewal area, industrial district, technology district, or aerospace transportation and technology district to existing infrastructure outside the district;

(11) the provision of direct assistance, through industrial infrastructure development projects, technology infrastructure development projects, or aerospace transportation and technology infrastructure development projects, to secondary, value-adding industries to assist in meeting their infrastructure and land needs within the district; and

(12) the acquisition, construction, or improvement of facilities or equipment for reducing, preventing, abating, or eliminating pollution.

A tax increment program is authorized for 15 years or longer if the tax increment revenue is pledged to the payment of tax increment bonds. 7-15-4289, MCA provides for the use of tax increments for bond payments. The tax increment may be pledged to the payment of the principal of premiums, if any, and interest on bonds, which the municipality may issue for the purpose of providing funds to pay such costs.

The City of Columbia Falls will establish a Tax Increment Financing program for the Urban Renewal District, as defined in this Urban Renewal Plan. The base year for the purposes of measuring any incremental value will be January 1, 2015.

Per 7-15-4291, MCA, the City of Columbia Falls may enter into agreements with the other affected taxing bodies to remit to such taxing bodies any portion of the annual tax increment not currently required for the payment of the costs listed in 7-15-4288, MCA or pledged to the payment of the principal of premiums, if any, and interest on bonds.

Other Financing Mechanisms
There are a number of financial assistance programs that can be used in the revitalization of the Urban Renewal District in addition to Tax Increment Financing. Financing strategies for addressing urban renewal needs identified in this Plan will likely include combining various funding sources. For example, a local special improvement district might be used in combination with a Montana Board of Investment Intercap loan to match federal or state dollars. The following is a summary of programs available to fund urban renewal projects
Transportation Infrastructure
This section describes funds and funding sources that are available to finance urban renewal transportation related projects. These funding methods, such as local option taxes, improvement districts and other types of bonds, enable local citizens to participate in funding projects. In general, however, the ability to use additional property tax levies to fund urban renewal is governed by Montana Statute under 15-10-402 MCA that limits taxes to 1996 levels.

A. Bridge and Road Mills (Property Taxes)
Montana law provides for cities (7-14-4101, MCA) to manage transportation infrastructure. Counties are specifically responsible for all the bridges in a county, including those within cities and towns, except those managed by the Montana Department of Transportation. Municipalities may establish a road fund under 7-14-4113 MCA.

B. Transportation Improvement Authority
Established under 7-14-1001, MCA, the purpose of a transportation improvement authority is to blend the interests of local, state, and federal governments with the interests of the general public and the business community to build, modify, or improve transportation facilities and systems within its jurisdiction. A county and a municipality within a county may, by joint resolution, create a transportation improvement authority. The Authority may enter into contracts and accept local, state, federal and private funds to undertake transportation projects.

C. Transportation Alternatives Program (TA Program), Montana Department of Transportation
The Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program authorized under Section 1122 of the Federal Highway Administration's Moving Ahead for Progress program -MAP-21 (23 U.S.C. 213(b), 101(a)(29)), replaces the former Community Transportation Enhancement Program. It provides approximately $4 million annually to eligible entities including local governments, for activities defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for the planning, design or construction of boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.
D. State Fuel Tax
Under 15-70-101, MCA, Montana assesses a tax on gasoline and diesel fuel used for transportation purposes. Each municipality receives a portion of the total tax funds allocated to cities and Towns based on:

1) The ratio of the population within each municipality to the total population in all cities and Towns in the State;
2) The ratio of the street mileage within each municipality to the total street mileage in all incorporated cities and towns in the State. The street mileage is exclusive of the Interstate, National Highway, and Primary Systems.

All fuel tax funds allocated to local governments must be used for the construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and repair of rural roads or city streets and alleys. Priorities for the use of these funds are established by the cities receiving them.

Debt Financing – All Types of Projects
Local governments can make use of various kinds of debt financing to fund urban renewal projects. These include general obligation bonds, special improvement district bonds and revenue bonds as well as Tax Increment Financing Bonds. Debt financing enables local governments to finance major infrastructure projects using future revenue from special assessments, user fees, and other forms of revenue. Under 7-7-4101, MCA, a local government has power to incur indebtedness by borrowing money, issuing bonds, issuing notes, entering into leases, entering into lease-purchase agreements, or entering into installment purchase contracts for the following purposes:

1) acquiring land for and designing and erecting public buildings;
2) acquiring land for and designing and constructing sewers, sewage treatment and disposal plants, waterworks, reservoirs, reservoir sites, and lighting plants;
3) supplying the municipality with water by contract and the construction or purchase of canals or ditches and water rights for supplying municipality with water;
4) designing and constructing bridges, docks, wharves, breakwaters, piers, jetties, and moles;
5) acquiring, opening, or widening any street and improving the street by constructing, reconstructing, and repairing pavement, gutters, curbs, and vehicle parking strips and to pay all or any portion of the cost relating to the project;
6) purchasing or leasing fire apparatus, street and other equipment, and personal property, including without limitation, vehicles, telephone systems, and photocopy and office equipment, including computer hardware and software;
7) building, purchasing, designing, constructing, and maintaining devices intended to protect the safety of the public from open ditches carrying irrigation or other water;
8) funding outstanding warrants and maturing bonds; and
9) repaying tax protests lost by the local government or other municipal corporation.

The local government incurs various administrative costs in conjunction with issuing bonds. These costs include the retention of legal counsel and financial consultants, the establishment of reserve funds and the preparation of the prospectus and various required documents. These bonds provide tax-free interest earnings to purchasers and are therefore subject to detailed scrutiny under both state and federal law. The citations in the Montana Code are listed below, for each type of bond described.
A. Special Improvement Districts
Under 7-12-4101, and 7-12-4102 MCA, cities and towns can create special improvement districts for a number of activities including:

- The acquisition, construction or reconstruction of public streets and roads
- The acquisition, construction or reconstruction of sidewalks, culverts, bridges, gutters, curbs, steps and parks including the planting of trees
- The construction or reconstruction of sewers, ditches, drains, conduits, and channels for sanitary or drainage purposes, with outlets, cesspools, manholes, catch basins, flush tanks, septic tanks, connecting sewers, ditches, drains, conduits, channels, and other appurtenances
- The construction of sewer and water systems including fire hydrants
- The acquisition and improvement of land to be designated as public park or open-space land
- The conversion of overhead utilities to underground locations in accordance with 69-4-311 through 69-4-314, MCA
- The purchase, installation, maintenance, and management of alternative energy production facilities

B. Business Improvement District
Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are authorized under 7-12-1101 et Seq. MCA. This provision of the law allows the local governing body to assess properties, upon the request of property owners within a district to fund the following activities:

- provide special police, maintenance, or cleaning personnel for the protection and enjoyment of the general public using the business district
- landscape and beautify public areas and to maintain those areas
- contract with the governing body to maintain, operate, or repair public parking facilities
- contract with the governing body to maintain streets, alleys, malls, bridges, ramps, tunnels, landscaping, and other public facilities as mutually agreed upon
- promote private investment and business expansion in the district
- provide for the management and administration of the affairs of the district
- promote business activity by advertising, decorating, marketing, and promoting and managing events and other actions designed for the general promotion of business activities in the district
- perform such other functions as are necessary to carry out the purposes of this part and to further the objectives of the district.
C. General Obligation Bonds
General obligation bonds are backed by the full faith and credit of the local government and must be approved by the voters in an election. General obligation bonds are generally payable from ad valorem taxes (based on the value of property) and expressed in mills. General obligation bonds are attractive to bond buyers because they have voter approval and are not as vulnerable to fluctuations in revenue. Municipalities are assigned a bond debt limit based on a percentage of taxable valuation. General obligation bonds must fall within this limit.

D. Revenue Bonds
Under 7-7-4401, MCA, a municipality may issue revenue bonds to finance any project or activity authorized. Tax Increment Financing bonds are considered revenue bonds but other types of revenue may be directed to debt service as well.

Railroad Crossing Related Programs
A. Federal Surface Transportation Program - Rail/Highway Crossing Protective Devices Program
The purpose of the Federal Rail/Highway Crossing - Protective Devices Program is to identify high hazard rail crossing sites and install new rail crossing signals. MDT's Rail-Highway Safety manager is responsible for surveying, identifying and prioritizing those railroad crossings that require new protective devices or upgrading of existing devices. The funds are distributed on a statewide basis determined by a priority list ranked by a hazard index. The Federal/State ratio is 90% Federal and 10% State.

B. Federal Surface Transportation Program - Rail/Highway Crossing Elimination of Hazard Program
The purpose of the Federal Rail/Highway Crossing - Elimination of Hazard Program is to identify high hazard rail crossing sites and construct new rail/highway grade crossings. The program also uses funds to rehabilitate existing grade separations. Grade separation projects are funded with 90% Federal funds and 10% State funds. Since funding for this program is limited, funds are often used in combination with other Federal funding sources to fund costly grade separation projects. Eligible expenditures include the separation or protection at grade crossings, reconstruction of existing crossings and relocation of highways to eliminate crossings. Projects for this program are selected by identifying those sites where only a grade separation will eliminate an identified hazard or where an existing grade separation exists but needs rehabilitation or replacement.
Funding for Public Improvements (Sewer, Water, Roads, Community Facilities, Parks)

A. Treasure State Endowment Program ~ Montana Department of Commerce

The Montana Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) is a state-funded program, authorized under 90-6-701 through 710, MCA, and is administered by the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC). It is designed to assist local governments in financing capital improvements to sewer and water facilities. Funds are derived from the Montana coal severance tax and made available to local governments as matching grants, loans and grant/loan combinations. TSEP also provides matching grants of up to $15,000 to local governments for preliminary engineering study costs.

TSEP funds may not be used for annual operation and maintenance; the purchase of non-permanent furnishings; or for refinancing existing debt, except when required in conjunction with the financing of a new TSEP project. Grant requests cannot exceed $500,000 and the local government must typically provide a dollar for dollar match that can include other grant funds. Matching funds can be public or private funds provided by a TSEP applicant to directly support the cost of eligible project activities. There are a number of ways in which local governments can provide matching funds for bridge projects. Eligible types of matching funds include:

- local general funds or other cash;
- proceeds from the sale of general obligation, revenue, special assessment or other bonds;
- entitlement or formula-based federal or state funds such as federal highway funds or payments in lieu of taxes;
- loan or grant funds from a state or federal program (including TSEP loans);
- funds expended for engineering studies, reports, and plans, or other reasonable expenses expended for the preparation of the application, directly related to the project during the period 24 months prior to the TSEP application deadline;
- funds expended after the TSEP application deadline, but before being approved by the Legislature, for project management, final engineering design, and other reasonable expenses necessary to prepare the project as in the TSEP application for the construction phase;
- the value of land or materials provided by the applicant, if appraised within a two-year period preceding the application deadline. The appraisal must be:
  - an impartially written statement that adequately describes the land or materials, and states an opinion of defined value as of a specific date;
  - supported by an analysis of relevant market information; and
  - prepared by a qualified appraiser independent from the applicant.
• the value of labor performed by the applicant’s employees on the project, after the TSEP project has been approved for funding and a TSEP contract has been signed, as long as the employee is paid at his or her standard hourly rate of pay and the time worked is adequately documented; and

• the value of machinery used in the process of constructing the project that is owned (or leased) and operated by the applicant. The value of the use of the machinery will be determined using the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) equipment rate schedules.

B. The Montana Intercap Program - Montana Board of Investments

The INTERCAP Program is a low cost, variable-rate program that lends money to Montana local governments, state agencies and the university system for the purpose of financing or refinancing the acquisition and installation of equipment or personal and real property and infrastructure improvements. The Board of Investments issues tax-exempt bonds and loans the proceeds to eligible borrowers. In addition to long-term financing, INTERCAP is an excellent source for interim financing.

Funding is always available with no specific cycle. Allocations of $200,000 and under are considered and approved by the Board of Investments staff. Allocations in excess of $200,000 are considered and approved by the Board. Funds are released on an on-going basis as the project is completed. The program provides loans at a variable rate plus a one percent loan origination fee on loans over one year and for a term of 5 or 10 years depending on the borrower’s legal authority. Short-term loans of less than a year are also available. Interest and principal payments are due bi-annually (February 15 and August 15 of each year). Loans may be pre-paid without penalty with 30 days notice. Types of financing include installment purchase loans, general fund loans, general obligation bonds, revenue bonds and special improvement district and rural improvement district bonds. Gas tax revenues may not be used to service debt. Projects that will use rural improvement district payments to cover the annual debt are limited to a total loan of $300,000. Intercap funds may be used in association with other grant and loan programs as well as local sources.

C. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is a federally funded grant program that provides assistance to communities with community development needs such as housing, public facilities, economic development and planning grants. All projects must be designed to principally benefit low and moderate-income families. The program was established by the Federal Housing and Community Development Act of
1974 (42 USC 5301) and is administered nationally by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Legislature authorized the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) to administer the program beginning in 1982. Eligible activities include planning, public facilities construction, housing and neighborhood renewal and economic development.

D. Public Works Program ~ Economic Development Administration
The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce. The purpose of the Public Works Program is to assist communities with the funding of public works and development facilities that contribute to the creation or retention of private sector jobs and to the alleviation of unemployment and underemployment. Such assistance is designed to help communities achieve lasting improvement by stabilizing and diversifying local economies, and improving local living conditions and the economic environment of the area.

Grants are awarded up to a participation level of 80 percent but the average EDA grant covers approximately 50 percent of project costs. Acceptable sources of match include cash, local general obligation or revenue bonds; Community Development Block Grants, TSEP grants and loans, entitlement funds, Rural Development loans; and other public and private financing, including donations.

Projects must result in private sector job and business development in order to be considered for funding. Eligible applicants under this program include any state, or political subdivision thereof, Indian tribe (and other U.S. political entities), private or public nonprofit organization or association representing any redevelopment area if the project is within an EDA-designated redevelopment area. Redevelopment areas, other than those designated under the Public Works Impact Program must have a current EDA-approved Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP) in place.

E. Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team
In 1982, a group of professionals from state, federal, and non-profit organizations that finance, regulate, or provide technical assistance for community water and wastewater systems, decided to start meeting in order to coordinate and enhance their efforts. This group calls itself the "Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team" or W2ASACT for short. W2ASACT meets several times a year to find ways to improve our state's environmental infrastructure. All of the programs represented in W2ASACT have different missions and meet unique needs. However, it has been the common
elements shared by the funding programs that have been the driving force of W2ASACT. These programs provide money (grants or loans), take applications from communities to fund their projects, and administer those monies once the project is funded. While W2ASACT cannot change all of the state or federal requirements, it can identify unnecessary duplication of requirements that make compliance difficult for communities.

Voluntary Programs
In some cases, homeowner associations, business groups or other property owners may finance urban renewal projects voluntary basis.

Columbia Falls Urban Renewal Program Evaluation and Plan Amendments
The Urban Renewal Plan will be evaluated on a yearly basis in conjunction with the preparation of the annual report. Measures that may be used in evaluating program success include:

- Increases in the property tax base
- Creation of jobs within the Urban Renewal District
- Elimination of blighted conditions

The plan provides flexibility to accommodate a variety of approaches. However, changes over time may necessitate more formal amendments to the Urban Renewal Plan. The Urban Renewal Plan may be modified by ordinance under 7-15-4221 MCA.
City of Columbia Falls, Montana
Notice of Public Hearing
Water and Sewer Rate Changes

Notice is hereby given that the City of Columbia Falls is proposing an increase to the water and sewer base rates. The City Council approved the following water and sewer base rates for the purpose of conducting the public hearing.

**Water**
The rate structure for water contains a fee for volume and a fee for base service charge. The City Council is proposing raising only the base fee by $2/month for a ¾’ meter. An Equivalent Connection Factor ratio is applied according to Meter Size:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meter Size</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>Existing Fee</th>
<th>Proposed Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/4”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$8.50</td>
<td>$10.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1”</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>$15.30</td>
<td>$18.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 1/2”</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$34.00</td>
<td>$42.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2”</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$59.50</td>
<td>$73.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3”</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$136.00</td>
<td>$168.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4”</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>$238.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>6”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8”</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>$960.50</td>
<td>$1,186.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>10”</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>$1,513.00</td>
<td>$1,869.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12”</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>$2,176.00</td>
<td>$2,688.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sewer**
The rate structure for sewer also contains a fee for volume and a fee for base service charge. The City council is proposing raising only the base fee by $1.50/month for a residential equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) from $7.35 to $8.85. Residential single family customers are billed at the rate of 1 EDU. All other customers, commercial, industrial, government, multi-family, are billed 1 EDU for every 50,000 gallons of metered water usage calculated annually. For example, a business with annual metered usage of 2 million gallons is equal to 40 EDUs.

The public hearing will be held on July 2, 2018 at the City Council Chambers at City Hall at 130, 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, MT. Interested persons may attend the hearing or submit written testimony mailed or delivered to City of Columbia Falls, City Clerk, 130 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, MT 59912 or by email: staalandb@cityofcolumbiafalls.com. For questions or further information regarding the hearing, contact City Manager Susan Nicosia at City Hall, (406) 892-4391 or email: nicosias@cityofcolumbiafalls.com.

Dated this 4th day of June, 2018

s/Barb Staaland, City Clerk

Publish: Wednesday, June 13th, June 20th and June 27th
May 31, 2018

To: Mayor & Council

From: City Manager Nicosia

RE: Proposed Text Amendments from Public Works Committee

The Public Works Committee met and considered the following Municipal code items for review and amendment:

1. Attorney recommended adding a definition for “sharing of costs,” to include that the City determined that such sharing would mean that, unless the repair costs are due in part to damage resulting from impacts to adjoining private property, multiple adjoining private properties, damage to other utilities, or damage to public infrastructure, the City and the customer would share equally (50/50) in the costs to repair leaks in the service line between the main and the curb stop and share in such costs for repairs to the service between the curb stop and the customer’s structure with the customer paying 70% and the City paying 30%. The resulting change to the language of 13.04.020 would be an addition of a definition inserted at part L specifically defining “sharing of costs” to mean: “Subject to exceptions set forth in 13.04.600, for repairs to leaks in service lines between the main and the curb stop, the City and the customer will each pay 50% of the incurred cost. For repairs to leaks in service lines between the curb stop and the customer’s structure, the customer will pay 70% of the City will pay 30% of the incurred costs.” (Currently customer pays 100% from curb stop to house/bldg.).

As a change to Code Section 13.04.600, Attorney Breck suggested an amendment to Subsection A to read, “Except as otherwise provided in this Section, The water customer shall be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the service line located downstream from the city right-of-way, excepting normal wear of the meter. Any cost of repairs to the service line from the main to the city right-of-way, including the curb shutoff valve, shall be shared by the utility in those circumstances where it can be demonstrated that the necessary repairs are not the fault of the property owner. Such costs may include all materials and labor, whether the work is contracted or performed by city crews.” The City would then add a Subsection D, which would say, “If a portion of the repair costs are due in part to damage resulting from impacts of the water leaks to adjoining private property, multiple adjoining private properties, other utilities, or public infrastructure, the City will pay 100% of the costs to repair such additional portions of the repair costs.”
2. The above repair code would also be updated to reflect payment options available to the utility customer, such as placing on property taxes or allowing 12 months on the utility bill.

3. Section 13.04 would also be updated to include work to be completed by licensed contractors and 2 quotes. Currently, City provides an estimate based on costs if the city completed the work. The code language and repair forms will be updated to reflect uniform language.

4. Water Service Code – discussed requiring meter pits for all customers. Currently require meter pits on long service lines only.

5. Sewer Connections – add language to require connection and disbandment of septic upon change of ownership of property. Offer one last chance to connect to city sewer for reduced PIF?

6. Proposed updating Chapter 12.12 Street and sidewalk width and locations for clarity and uniformity for residential areas and commercial areas.

Council Action Requested: For review and discussion. Formal text amendments would go through hearing and Ordinance processes if Council concurs.
RESOLUTION NO. 1771


WHEREAS, the City has sold more building, mechanical, plumbing and electrical permits than originally anticipated during the preparation of the 2017-18 fiscal year budget;

WHEREAS, the City contracts with the City of Whitefish to provide building inspection services based on 65% of the permit fees collected;

WHEREAS, due to the increase in revenue from permits sold, there is a corresponding increase in expenditures for contracted services and operational costs;

WHEREAS, the City has collected more fees associated with the Crime Victims Assistance Fund than originally anticipated during the preparation of the 2017-18 fiscal year budget;

WHEREAS, the City is required to remit the funds to the Victim Witness Advocate Program thereby recording contracted service expenditure in an amount equal to the revenue collected;

WHEREAS, Section 7-6-4006, MCA provides for the adjustment of appropriations by the governing body for previously unbudgeted revenue that will fund the appropriations; and

WHEREAS, Fund 2394 would reflect an increase of permit revenue in the amount of $57,364 and contracted building inspection services in the amount of $30,928 and other operational line items in the amount of $825; thereby recognizing the budgeted surplus of $19,456; and

WHEREAS, Fund 2917 would reflect an increase of court fee revenue in the amount of $1,200 and contracted services also in the amount of $1,200.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS, MONTANA AS FOLLOWS:

Section One: Fund 2394 Building Code Enforcement and Fund 2917 Crime Victims Assistance Fund of the City of Columbia Falls are hereby amended as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Amended Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2394-323010 Building Permits</td>
<td>$34,070</td>
<td>$94,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2394-323012 Plumbing/Mech. Permits</td>
<td>$ 4,101</td>
<td>$19,101</td>
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<tr>
<td>2394-323014 Bldg Plan Review Fees</td>
<td>$15,885</td>
<td>$36,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2394-323020 Electrical Permits</td>
<td>$ 3,308</td>
<td>$12,908</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditures (Appropriations)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2394-420500-210 Office Supplies</td>
<td>$ 100</td>
<td>$ 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2394-420500-380 Training/cert.</td>
<td>$ 600</td>
<td>$ 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2394-420500-390 Other purch. Srvc.</td>
<td>$ 125</td>
<td>$ 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2394-420500-399 Other contracted srvc.</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>$105,928</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Amended Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2917-351034 Court Admin. Costs</td>
<td>$ 1,200</td>
<td>$ 5,700</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditures (Appropriations)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2917-410360-300 Purchased Services</td>
<td>$ 1,200</td>
<td>$ 5,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section Two: The City Council hereby authorizes the City Finance Director to make the itemized Fund 2394 Building Code Enforcement and Fund 2917 Crime Victim Assistance Fund appropriation and revenues amendments for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Section Three: This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and approval by the City Council.
PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF COLUMBIA FALLS, MONTANA THIS 4th DAY OF JUNE, 2018, THE COUNCIL VOTING AS FOLLOWS:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:

______________________________
City Clerk

APPROVED BY THE MAYOR OF COLUMBIA FALLS, MONTANA THIS ___ DAY OF JUNE, 2018.

______________________________
Mayor

ATTEST:

______________________________
City Clerk
CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CORRESPONDENCE LIST
COUNCIL MEETING
June 4, 2018

Regular Correspondence:
05/31/18 Letter from Department of Natural Resources and Conservation – Columbia Falls Water System Improvement Resource Grant and Loan Application