

Central Butte Area Plan

PREPARED FOR AMENDMENT INTO THE BUTTE-SILVER
BOW GROWTH POLICY AS A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



December 2010

Prepared by: Central Butte Planning Area
Steering Committee

With Technical Assistance From:

Cossitt Consulting Planning Team

Cossitt Consulting - 503 Fifth Avenue NW - Park City, MT 59063 –
cossitt@usadig.com

COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 11-17

A RESOLUTION APPROVING GROWTH POLICY AMENDMENT NO. 28 TO THE 1987 BUTTE-SILVER BOW MASTER PLAN, INCORPORATING, BY REFERENCE, THE TEXT OF THE AMENDMENTS AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE HEREIN.

WHEREAS, this amendment is intended to incorporate the Central Butte Planning Area Neighborhood Plan and the Greeley-Racetrack Neighborhood Plan in to the Growth Policy to reflect basic objectives and policies for generalized patterns of future land uses within the two neighborhood planning areas; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board did, on January 27, 2011, hold a meeting to consider Growth Policy Amendment No. 28 to amend the text of the 1987 Butte-Silver Bow Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board, after reviewing said application and all written and oral testimony both for and against said amendment to amend the text of the 1987 Butte-Silver Bow Master Plan recommended that Growth Policy Amendment No. 28 be approved; and

WHEREAS, the Council of Commissioners did, on April 13, 2011, hold a public hearing, after due notice, to consider Growth Policy Amendment No. 28 at which all interested persons were given an opportunity to be heard; and

WHEREAS, the Council of Commissioners did consider all written and oral testimony, both for and against Growth Policy Amendment changes, and deems it to be in the interest of the public health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Butte-Silver Bow that Growth Policy Amendment No. 28 be approved.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CONSOLIDATED CITY AND COUNTY OF BUTTE-SILVER BOW, STATE OF MONTANA:

SECTION 1: That the 1987 Butte-Silver Bow Master Plan be amended to reflect text amendment changes as contained in Growth Policy Amendment No. 28

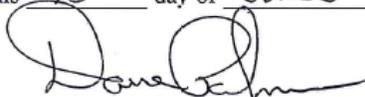
SECTION 2: "Growth Policy Amendment No. 27 Adopted by Reference". That the 1987 Butte-Silver Bow Master Plan of the City and County of Butte-Silver Bow, State of Montana, heretofore

adopted by the Butte-Silver Bow Planning Board (Planning Resolution No. 4) on the 31st day of July, 1986, and the Butte-Silver Bow Council of Commissioners (Council Resolution No. 914) on the 3rd day of December, 1986, is hereby amended to incorporate the changes as contained in Growth Policy Amendment No. 28 is approved and adopted and incorporated herein by this reference as if the same were set forth herein word-for-word and figure-for-figure; that a true copy of the 1987 Butte-Silver Bow Master Plan, as amended, is annexed hereto and thereby made a part hereof and is identified as Exhibit "A".

SECTION 3: REPEALER: That all resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

SECTION 4: EFFECTIVE DATE: This Resolution shall be in full force and effect immediately from and after its passage and approval.

PASSED this 15th day of June, 2011.



DAVE PALMER
CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS

APPROVED this 15 day of June, 2011.



PAUL D. BABB
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

WITNESSETH:

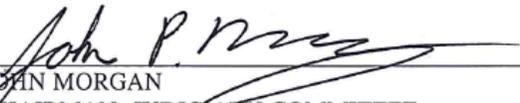
Ally Hollis
ALLY HOLLIS
CLERK & RECORDER



APPROVED AS TO FORM:



EILEEN JOYCE
COUNTY ATTORNEY



JOHN MORGAN
CHAIRMAN, JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

February 11, 2010

Chief Executive and Council of Commissioners

Butte-Silver Bow Government

Courthouse Building

Butte, MT 59701

RE: Council Concurrence to authorize Butte-Silver Bow to enter into a joint contract with
Cossitt Consulting to Develop Neighborhood Plans for Central Butte and Greeley
Neighborhoods - Mining City Neighborhood Planning

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Planning Department is requesting the authorization of a contract with Cossitt Consulting to complete two neighborhood plans. The neighborhood plans would be developed for the Central Butte and Greeley neighborhoods and are being funded by a Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) Reclamation and Development Grants Program grant. The awarded grant is in the amount of \$47,400.00

The Planning Department sent out a Request for Proposals (RFP) in November of 2009 and five firms responded to the RFP. A review committee comprised of Butte-Silver Bow employees and representatives of local nonprofit agencies reviewed the RFP's and selected three firms to be interviewed. The review committee interviewed representatives of the three firms and voted to retain the services of Cossitt Consulting. The Cossitt Consulting team also includes Kim Olsen of O2 Architects, Jolene Rieck of Peaks to Plains Design, PC, and Kenneth Markers of MMI Planning. The contract would be in the amount of \$46,100.00

At your February 17, 2010, meeting the Planning Department requests that the Council authorize Butte-Silver Bow to enter into a contract with Cossitt Consulting for Mining City Neighborhood Planning.

Sincerely,

Stephen D. Hess

Assistant Planning Director

PLAN PARTICIPANTS

Butte-Silver Bow Council of Commissioners

Glen Granger

David Walker

Sheryl Ralph

Ristene Hall

John Morgan

Dan Foley

Terry Schultz

William Andersen

Dennis Henderson

Cindi Shaw

Wally Frasz

Dave Palmer

Butte-Silver Bow Planning Board

Jeanne Caddy

John McDermott

Dan Foley

Mark Shutey

Gary Jones

Andrea Stierle

Nick Kujawa

Josh Vincent

Janet Lindh

Central Butte Planning Area Steering Committee

This plan would have not been possible without the dedicated participation of volunteer steering committee members who attended monthly meetings for six months between June and December of 2010, and who also attended and facilitated small group discussion at the town hall meetings.

Doug Conway

Jim Shive

Jim Hope

Dan Steele

Sandra Johnson

Revonda Stordahl

Ed Kilgore

Julie Tranmer

Barbara Miller

Jim Fay (ad hoc member)

Town Hall Participants

Thanks to all of those persons who attended town hall meetings in August and October and shared their thoughts and ideas with others.

Butte-Silver Bow Planning Department

Jon Sesso

Steve Hess

Jim Jarvis

Planning Consultants

Cossitt Consulting Planning Team:

Anne Cossitt, Cossitt Consulting

Ken Market, MMI Planning

Kim Olsen, O2 Architects

Jolene Rieck, Peaks to Plains
Design

VISION

A vision statement is a concise description of what a community desires for its future. It is the long-term foundation for actions to be taken as part of the 20-year plan.

The Central Butte planning area consists of six historic neighborhoods that are functioning well in the 21st century. Demographically diverse, the neighborhoods have a sustainable mix of residential, business, educational and medical care uses. The area is the cornerstone of the National Historic Landmark District and gateway to Uptown Butte. Residential properties are safe and affordable; commercial properties are rehabilitated and occupied; and new residential and commercial construction is compatible with historic design. The planning area's neighborhoods have complete infrastructure including sidewalks, streets and quality outdoor spaces that contribute to a desirable quality of life for all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- A D A** – Americans with Disabilities Act
- C D B G** – Community Development Block Grant (see potential funding sources in Appendix A)
- C T E C** - Citizens Technical Environmental Committee, a local committee in Butte
- C T E P** – Community Transportation Enhancement Program (see potential funding sources in Appendix A)
- E P A** - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- H P C** - Historic Preservation Commission, the local commission in Butte as authorized in municipal code
- H R C** - Human Resources Council, agency that serves a multi-county area including Silver Bow County
- N H L D** - National Historic Landmark District
- N R D** - Natural Resource Damages Program
- O U s**-Operating Units of the Superfund Site
- P R P s**- Potentially Responsible Parties, used in the context of environmental damages and the Superfund Site
- R R A** - Renovation and Rehabilitation Agency, a TIFD in Butte
- T I F D** - Tax-Increment Finance District (refer to discussion in “Potential Funding Sources”)
- U R A** – Urban Revitalization Agency, a TIFD in Butte

PART ONE:

PLAN BACKGROUND

This part describes the overall purpose of the plan. It also describes the process by which the plan was created and how it is intended to be amended into the Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy.

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

This is a plan for the Central Butte Area, intended to be adopted by the Butte-Silver Bow Council of Commissioners as a “Neighborhood Plan” amendment to the Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy, updated in 2008. The Growth Policy specifically calls out the need for neighborhood planning in Central Butte. This plan sets out the vision and goals for Central Butte. It also addresses desired future land use, intended to be a guide to future zoning changes.

AUTHORITY FOR THE PLAN

State laws (76-1-601 through 76-1-606, MCA) specify what should be included in a growth policy and the process for adopting and revising growth policies. State laws indicate neighborhood plans are an optional element of a growth policy, provided the plan is consistent with the growth policy. Specific requirements for what must be included in a neighborhood plan are not discussed in state law.

The Central Butte Area Plan conforms to state law. It is intended as a policy guide to the future. The plan is not regulatory and does not have the force and effect of law. However, zoning in Central Butte must be consistent with the plan as required by the Montana Planning and Zoning Act (76-2-304, MCA)

Steering Committee members felt that Central Butte was too large to be referred to as a single neighborhood. They pointed out that areas within Central Butte are quite different from each other today and historically it was as well. The Central Butte planning area is comprised of portions of six different historic neighborhoods. For this reason, this plan is referred to as the Central Butte Area Plan, but it has been designed to meet the requirements for a neighborhood plan as specified in state law.

TIMELINE FOR THE PLAN

The Central Butte Area Plan is intended as framework for growth and infill development over the next 20 years, through 2030. While it is expected that the plan will remain valid for the next 20 years, as conditions change periodic review of the plan will be necessary. Reviewing the growth policy every five years, as required by state law, should also trigger a review of the Central Butte Area Plan as well.

PLANNING PROCESS

The process for the Central Butte Area Plan was started in part by the Human Resources Council (HRC) when they began working with Butte-Silver Box Community Development to develop a neighborhood plan for the area around Emma Park. It should be noted that historically, no neighborhood in Central Butte was identified as Emma Park. Instead, HRC proposed its own boundaries of such an area. The area is bounded by Mercury, Main, Platinum and Montana. In late 2009, the Butte-Silver Bow Planning Department determined that a larger planning area was needed for purposes of a neighborhood amendment to the Growth Policy Update – 2008. The Central Butte planning area included the HRC-proposed, 12-block Emma Park area and a much larger area as well.

Efforts to revitalize Central Butte have in fact been ongoing for decades. In the past 15 years, actions have included new construction, new lighting, sidewalks, improvements to the high school properties, and improvements to the entry streets to Uptown Butte –Main, Montana, and Arizona-Utah. More than 30 new homes and more than 45 rehabilitations to homes occurred in the past 10 years. The new paving, lighting, and other improvements to Main Street that were completed in 2010, was a keystone of the “High Schools Neighborhood Project.” Imagine Butte, Butte Affordable Housing, Habitat for Humanity, National Affordable Housing Network, and other groups have been involved in these efforts to redevelop Central Butte. (Refer to Appendix A for information on Imagine Butte Collaborative effort.)

Despite these efforts, there is still considerable blight and poverty in the Central Butte area. In 2010 Butte-Silver Bow determined the area needed to develop a neighborhood plan and contracted with Cossitt Consulting to provide technical support for the planning process. Butte-Silver Bow specified that the plan was to be completed within six months (June to December 2010).

The Butte-Silver Bow Council of Commissioners appointed members to a steering committee to guide plan development. The steering committee met once a month with the Cossitt Consulting team and Planning Department staff from June 2010 through November 2010. The steering committee’s recommended plan was submitted to the Butte-Silver Bow Planning Board in December 2010.

The steering committee hosted two public town hall meetings to gather public comments and ideas. The first town hall was held in August and the second was held in October.

The steering committee developed a public opinion survey with guidance from Ken Markert of the consulting team. The survey was distributed to a random sample of 620 Central Butte residents in August 2010. A total of 183 surveys were completed and returned. The survey results are referred to often in this plan.

The Butte-Silver Bow Planning Board reviewed the Central Butte Area Plan submitted to them by the Central Butte Plan Area steering committee. The Planning Board held a public hearing before forwarding their recommendation to the Council of Commissioners. Also, in accordance with the Butte-Silver Bow Municipal Code Title 2, Chapter 2.64.070 (H), the draft planning document was reviewed by the Butte-Silver Bow Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and comments from that commission were submitted to the Council of Commissioners.

The Butte-Silver Bow Council of Commissioners considered the recommendations from the steering committee, the planning board, HPC, as well as comments from the public, and adopted the Central Butte Area Plan into the Growth Policy, following procedures outlined in state law.

PART TWO: CENTRAL BUTTE PROFILE

This section provides a summary of the existing characteristics and projected future trends of Central Butte.

OVERVIEW

The Central Butte Planning Area is a large diverse area with approximately 3500 residents on the slopes of the Butte Hill south of the Uptown Park Street corridor. It includes major gateways to Uptown, the single public high school in Butte, the regional hospital and medical facilities, a broad cross section of residents of varying incomes and interests. It is also part of a Superfund site for clean-up associated with decades of mining. The area experienced years of down-turn, when businesses and residents left, and many buildings were vacated or torn down. Low income and poverty is a major issue for the area, linked to other issues such as blight and decay. The area currently has some dilapidated buildings and areas of vacant lots between existing uses. Efforts have been made in the past few years and also currently underway to address these issues, including a number of upgrades by private individuals on residences and on larger structures (such as the hospital and high school). The Central Butte Planning Area has many opportunities and an excellent location between the Interstate and Uptown Butte. Central Butte is in the unique position of being part of the largest National Historic Landmark District in the nation, a reflection of its unique and diverse historical character dating back to the 19th Century and roots in ore mining. It has resulted in a character that elevates it among other towns in the Rocky Mountain West, and a national reputation that Butte is using to rebuild itself.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Central Butte was at the center of much Butte's development from the time gold was discovered along Silver Bow Creek in 1864. As gold placer mining played out, miners staked claims on Butte Hill. By the 1870s, silver was the main objective and three major silver mines – the Emma, Travona, and Ophir – all operated in the Central Butte Planning Area. By the 1880s copper mining was on the rise, and by 1917, approximately 150 mines were located in and near Butte.

Central Butte is part of six different historic neighborhoods identified in the National Historic Landmark District (NHLD) nomination. In 1966, the National Park Service designated areas of Butte as a National Historic Landmark District. Each of the six historic neighborhoods—Central Business District, South Central, East Side, West side, Southwest, and South Butte—has unique characteristics which is what supported original designation in 1962. In 2006, the District was expanded to include Anaconda, the Butt-Anaconda and Pacific Railroad corridor linking Butte and Anaconda, thus making it the largest historic landmark district in the United States. Management of Historic Landmarks in the United States is in part prescribed by the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, in relationship to federally licensed, permitted or funded actions or undertakings (and applicable federal regulations as well) that could affect such areas and for other purposes. Additional management prescriptions for the Butte portion of the NHLD are set out in the Butte-Silver Bow Municipal Code Title 2, Chapter 2.64. The Central Butte planning area is a core element of that portion of the NHLD located in Butte.

Central Butte includes a portion of the original townsite of Butte, which was platted in 1876 and included the area between Copper, Washington, Gold, and Arizona Streets. Central Butte included at one time or another in its history the following features -- the Red Light District, Chinatown, mine shafts, mine workings, and mine tailings, railyards and associated industrial operations and warehouse district, commercial and retail businesses, and a variety of housing styles and sizes for workers, professionals, including the one of the nation's first public housing complexes. Many buildings and physical remnants of these features remain and many are still in use. The population of the various neighborhoods was one that included a variety of ethnicities and financial status.

PHYSICAL SETTING

The existing topography of the Central Butte Planning Area includes relatively flat areas and steep slopes with an overall rise of several hundred feet from its lowest point on the southern end to the highest elevation in the north. Historically, the natural terrain was altered by mining operations that produced tremendous quantities of mining-related waste.



LAND USE

The existing land uses in the Central Butte Planning Area are inextricably linked to how the land was used for mining and the housing for miners and others who came to live in Butte, as well as the commercial and industrial operations that grew with the city. The area includes approximately 320 acres (excluding streets and public right of ways).

Land uses in the Central Butte Planning Area are diverse and also mixed; you can find industrial next to residential, commercial with residential and single family homes intermixed with multi-family and apartments in a single block. As noted above, the Planning Area includes portions of several neighborhoods and not surprisingly, the Central Butte Planning Area has some areas with very distinct land uses and issues that are quite different from other places in the Planning Area. These include:

- Hospital/Medical Corridor that extends from Excelsior to Montana Street. It includes St. James Health Care and a number of clinics and medical offices.
- Porphyry from Montana Street to the Butte High School and the blocks north and south are noticeably comprised of vacant lots and deterioration, identified as a problem priority area in the Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy. This area has seen improvements related to the high school, new home construction with assistance from National Affordable Housing Network, and is also the site for a new facility to be constructed by the Human Resources Council (HRC) as a Community Center and for their offices. HRC is currently engaging residents within a 12-block area around Emma Park in planning for area renewal.
- South of Butte High School to Front Street between Montana and Utah is a mix of industrial, commercial and residential. In some ways the mix is the same as its roots in the old "South Butte" neighborhood described above. There is a band of commercial and retail mixed with residences along Front Street, on Main and Utah. Land developed for industrial uses along the rail-lines that cut across the center of this area is still in use as industrial (e.g., the concrete plant and warehouses) with mixed uses including residential to the north and south. This area also has significant areas of vacant land, particularly south of the High School.

- South Montana Street is the gateway to Uptown Butte from the Interstate and other areas to the south. It is the widest street in the Planning Area and has a mix of residential, commercial, and public buildings. Vacant lots and run-down older buildings are interspersed with newer buildings (some of which are also in poor condition) and renovated structures.
- Excelsior to South Washington north of the medical complex area is a distinctly residential neighborhood of older single family and multi-family residences with little or no setbacks, and generally fewer vacant lots than in other areas of the Central Butte Planning Area.
- East Galena from S. Washington to Arizona. This block wide band is almost entirely large commercial or warehouse structures, interspersed with vacant lots.
- Excelsior to Montana south of the medical complex area is noticeably comprised of the open space of the Travona Mineyard in the west. East of the Travona, residences (primarily single family) of various ages and construction types are located along the hillsides and smaller housing units along West Iron. Vacant lots are noticeable in this area as well.
- Silver Bow Homes, east of the Butte High School, has been public housing since the 1940s. At the time this plan was prepared, Butte Affordable Housing was completing several new housing units just to the north of Silver Bow Homes.

The existing zoning in Central Butte is quite complex. The Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy – 2008 Update recommended simplifying the many layers and also suggested form-based and design codes for Central Butte.

The Central Butte Planning Area for decades experienced deterioration, with the most significant land use change being the increasing quantities of vacant buildings and vacant land. During the development of this Central Butte Area Plan, there were three different instances of building fires which destroyed or seriously damaged buildings. The cause of the fires was being investigated at the time this report was written, but arson and neglect have been the cause of most vacant lots and buildings in Central Butte. The trend of more and more vacant lots and buildings could be reversed if action is taken. Initiating this Central Butte Area Plan is a start, as are efforts by individual owners and businesses to keep up their buildings, and by organizations to build quality low income housing and stimulate neighborhood efforts, such as the Emma Park neighborhood plan.

POPULATION

Total population in the Central Butte Neighborhood was 3,598 persons in the year 2000. Population had been declining in Butte and throughout the county since 1920, when county population peaked at 60,313. By 2000, total county population had declined by more than one-third. Although population in the county began to rise slightly in 1990, most of the growth has been outside of the Butte urban area.

The people who live in Central Butte include a variety of income levels, but overall the area is poorer than residents county-wide, in the state, and in the nation. The poverty rate for individuals is approximately double that of the nation. The concentration of poor households has contributed to a cycle of poverty that has persisted for some time in much of Central Butte.

The area includes diverse demographics and significantly fewer family households compared to the state and the nation. Central Butte includes a number of group facilities, including a pre-release center. The senior

population is also on the rise – projections indicate persons ages 65+ will comprise a quarter of total population in the county by 2030.

Looking toward the future, Central Butte faces challenges for attracting new residents and serving the existing population. Building on positive changes will be important to make Central Butte more desirable and more competitive with other residential locations on the urban fringe.

HOUSING TRENDS

This area is one of the most diverse in Butte and contains the greatest mix of use and construction types, building scales and lot sizes in a very concentrated area. It is one of the oldest areas and contains a significant number of historic structures.

While the predominant housing type in Butte-Silver Bow is single family housing, the Central Butte Area contains 74% of all duplexes and four-plexes and contains the largest number of multi-family and public housing units. It has the widest variety of housing types and styles and the oldest housing stock. Forty-one percent of the Butte-Silver Bow housing was constructed prior to 1939 and over half of these units are concentrated in the Central Butte Area. The majority of units in this area are 70 years old with many that are over 100 years old. These units and others do not meet current building codes for wiring, plumbing, energy consumption and structural systems. Very little new housing development occurred in this area since the 1950's, but within the past 10 years, there have been more than 30 new homes built and 45 homes rehabilitated.

Vacant properties in housing blocks create holes in the social fabric and erode social interaction, isolate neighbors and affect livability.

Central Butte will need to expand housing upgrades to reverse the decades-long trends of neglect and will need to rebuild the area as an interesting, dynamic and desired place to live.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Central Butte includes the region's medical care hub, with several clinics and physicians' offices, chiropractic and dental offices, many of which are clustered within a few blocks of St. James Health Care. Central Butte businesses also include retail (furniture, shoes, a warehouse food supply), industrial (cement plant), public service organizations (pre-release center, group home), a number of gas stations and automotive repair shops, cafes and fast food (Subway, Annie's café, North Star Ice Cream), and other commercial retail including a bakery, beauty salons, etc. The major public sector employer is Butte High School. Each day hundreds of people travel to work in Central Butte. Saint James Health Care alone employs approximately 600 persons. Many more travel through Central Butte to jobs in Uptown Butte. These commuters provide some potential for economic opportunities in the service sector.

Future challenges facing the economic sector are similar to those facing housing – the overall blight, vacant lots and vacant buildings, structures in various states of decay, and competition from areas south and east --- make it difficult to attract and retain businesses. Working to address the overall blight and create a more lively business atmosphere will help improve the economics of Central Butte.

LOCAL SERVICES

Local public services include law enforcement, fire and emergency services, medical, education-schools, transportation services, library, solid waste collection, and senior and other services. Generally, residents in the Central Butte Planning Area are close to nearly all of these services and for those without cars, there are bus routes that stop at many locations in the Planning Area. Most of the public services in the Central Butte Planning Area have adequate capacity for increased population. Butte and the surrounding region have current needs related to medical and mental health care, which will grow with the aging population. Law enforcement has been seeking additional officers for many years in order to provide adequate services for the existing population. This area has the highest crime rate in Silver Bow County.

Public services are generally more than adequate for future needs in Central Butte, with the notable exception of law enforcement patrols. Central Butte is centrally located to access most public services in Silver Bow County and will continue to be so in the future. Public service access is definitely one of the area's strong points.

PUBLIC FACILITIES (PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE)

Public facilities include water, sewer, storm sewer, streets, sidewalks, and street lighting. Many infrastructure improvements have been occurring in the area – a new water supply system is almost complete, sewer collection lines are being updated, and storm water is being addressed. These activities are occurring as part of the overall plan to address environmental issues and priority soils identified in Superfund clean-up of past mining-related impacts. Other improvements include new paving and new street lighting on major streets leading to Uptown Butte. Other areas are in serious need of street and sidewalk improvements. The steep hillside topography diminishes opportunities for all ages to circulate via non-motorized transportation. Sidewalks are generally in poor condition or non-existent. Although improvements are in progress, storm water collection and treatment could use improvements.

Looking to the future, the gains made toward water, sewer, and storm sewer are excellent foundations for rebuilding the neighborhood with basic municipal services. Streets, sidewalks, and public lighting, however, are far behind the curve and will continue to add to the general blight of the neighborhood unless addressed.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Central Butte is urbanized. Natural resources typically addressed in a plan include topics such as wildlife, wildlife habitat, streams and lakes, etc. that are not applicable here. Sand and gravel is another topic required by state law to be addressed in a growth policy (an addition to state law since the Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy – 2008 Update). Sand and gravel operations would typically be excluded under the zoning code, so even if such deposits exist in Central Butte, they would not likely be excavated. Of course, the natural resources overshadowing all of Butte are the silver, gold, copper, molybdenum and other metals that have been at the heart of Butte's title as "the richest hill on earth."

Mining and ore processing (including mills, concentrators, and smelters) produced tremendous volumes of mining-related waste, including waste rock, mill tailings, slag, and aerial smelter emissions. Mining wastes impacted water quality on the entire length of Silver Bow Creek. The Silver Bow Creek/Butte Area Superfund Site, established in 1987 includes the Butte Hill, underground mines beneath Butte Hill, Berkeley Pit, Berkeley Pit mining area, active Continental Pit operation, entire reach of Silver Bow Creek between Butte and Warm Springs and the Warm Springs treatment ponds. Within this large area of 85 square miles, the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified 13 Operating Units (OUs) or focus areas for remediation. Of these the following overlap or include the Central Butte Planning Area: Butte Mine Flooding OU and the Butte Priority Soils OU. (CDM)

The Butte Mine Flooding OU consists of waters within the Berkeley Pit, the underground mine workings hydraulically connected to the Pit, the associated alluvial and bedrock aquifers, and other contributing sources of inflow to the Berkeley Pit. The Berkeley Pit covers approximately 675 acres, with a volume of 35 billion gallons of contaminated water. The U.S. EPA, Montana DEQ, and Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) agreed to a critical water level of 5,420 feet above sea level in the Berkeley Pit (water not to exceed that level). The current water surface is 5,291 feet above sea level. When the critical level of 5,420 feet is reached, pumping and treating must commence.

The focus of the Butte Priority Soils OU is contamination from mining and ore-processing wastes in the form of mill tailings, waste rock, slag, and smelter fallout. Considerable progress has been made toward clean-up. Within the entire OU, response efforts have removed, capped, or reclaimed over 8 million cubic yards of waste; over 400 acres of mine-impacted land has been reclaimed, and approximately 1.2 million cubic yards of tailings previous in contact with ground and surface water have been removed from Silver Bow Creek floodplain. Reclaimed and/or capped lands in Central Butte include Emma Park and Travona mine area. Funding from the Natural Resources Damages (NRD) fund established to address the Priority Soils OU, has also helped fund the water, sewer, and storm water system upgrades in Central Butte.

Contaminated soils on properties with large quantities of exposed contaminants have for the most part been addressed. Now, a major focus is to identify properties where contaminants may be recently exposed (such as excavations, or renovation of buildings), where individuals may particularly at risk, and to begin the work of sampling all residential properties for contaminants, per the Residential Metals Abatement Program.

The “Final Multi-Pathway Residential Metals Abatement Program Plan” was released in April 2010 with the purpose of ensuring “public and environmental health of the residents of the Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit and the adjacent areas by effectively identifying and mitigating potentially harmful exposures to sources of lead, arsenic, and mercury. To that end, the program requires sampling residential yard soil, interior living space dust, attic dust, and lead-based paint and remediating those that exceed action levels. The program will utilize a prioritized approach for affected and sensitive populations and also requires that every property with the Priority Soils Operating Unit and Adjacent Area be systematically sampled within 10 years following the effective date of the Consent Decree.

Mine-related surface subsidence is another issue that for years created a hostile lending environment for construction, renovation, or property purchase throughout much of Butte, including the Central Butte Planning Area. Although the lending dilemma made it appear that all properties in the Priority Soils OU were at risk for subsidence, subsidence issues are localized and specific to mine openings.

Although mine related impacts and Superfund Status are a challenge, they are not insurmountable in the context of future growth. New developments in Uptown Butte (e.g., Sears building upgrade) and in Central Butte (medical area activity) indicate businesses and residents are moving into the area.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The Butte Silver Bow Comprehensive Park, Trails and Open Space Plan was adopted in 2009 and outlines the existing conditions, community needs and recommendations for the development of park lands, natural areas,

heritage sites, recreation facilities and operations and management. Park land in the Plan Area is higher than average, however amenities are outdated and non-existent. Much of the residential development in the Plan Area is high density with little or no individual yard space for children to play, consequently public play space is very important.

SUMMARY

Central Butte faces challenging prospects for the future, resulting from decades of population loss, decaying infrastructure and increasing blight. There is now energy to get past the problems and to recreate Central Butte in a new way that reflects historical character and promotes strong community. This plan is an attempt to solidify a strategic approach to positive change.

PART THREE: PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

This part introduces the vision statement and planning goals, which describe what Central Butte should strive to be in the future. Supplementing these goals are detailed “planning strategies” that outline specific policies to adopt and actions to undertake to accomplish the goals. In addition, a future land use plan provides a geographic perspective of the desired future of Central Butte. This part concludes with a priority action plan that lists specific actions to begin in the first year of the plan.

VISION AND PRIMARY GOALS

Vision for Central Butte’s Future

A vision statement is a concise description of what a community desires for its future. It is the long-term foundation for actions to be taken as part of the 20-year plan.

The Central Butte vision statement is the result of discussions at steering committee meetings and town hall meetings regarding what people value most about Central Butte, what they would most like to retain for the future, and what most needs to be changed.

C e n t r a l B u t t e V i s i o n S t a t e m e n t :

The Central Butte neighborhood planning area consists of six historic neighborhoods that are functioning well in the 21st century. Demographically diverse, the neighborhoods have a sustainable mix of residential, business, educational and medical care uses. The area is the cornerstone of the National Historic Landmark District and gateway to Uptown Butte. Residential properties are safe and affordable; commercial properties are rehabilitated and occupied; and new construction is compatible with historic design. The planning area’s neighborhoods have complete infrastructure including sidewalks, streets and quality outdoor spaces that contribute to a desirable quality of life for all.

Primary Goals

The primary goals are short statements clarifying direction and addressing key issues needed to achieve the vision. The overarching theme of the goals is to revitalize Central Butte in a way that does not compromise quality of life for residents and that retains the integrity of the national historic district. The goals and overarching themes are consistent with the Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy – 2008 Update.

The Central Butte Plan is based on the following primary goals, Goals A through K. The goals interrelate and overlap with each other. It is important to consider each goal within the overall context of the Vision Statement and the other goals. Because the goals are so connected, they have not been assigned any priority order in the following list.

GOAL A: PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Repair and upgrade streets, sidewalks, alleys, public lighting, and any remaining needed improvements to the water and sewer systems.

GOAL B: HOUSING

Encourage a range of quality housing types with a range of affordability, from low-income to high income.

GOAL C: ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Reduce the barriers to infill development and revitalization created by actual or perceived environmental hazards.

GOAL D: HISTORIC DISTRICT

Retain and protect the National Historic Landmark District.

GOAL E: DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Expand a mix of residential and commercial uses with form and design that retains the Central Butte historic character.

GOAL F: ECONOMY

Revitalize the Central Butte economy with more commercial retail activity compatible with residential uses.

GOAL G: PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

Promote public safety and reduce crime and nuisances.

GOAL H: TRANSPORTATION

Encourage pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, with good access to public transportation.

GOAL I: NEIGHBORHOOD APPEARANCE

Reduce blight and decay of buildings and properties.

GOAL J: NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS AND OPEN SPACE

Encourage open space and street landscaping as key elements in community design and retain and develop neighborhood centers consistent with need and demand.

GOAL K: CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT AND ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT

Encourage citizen involvement in the implementation of the Central Butte Area Plan and access to information and assistance from Butte-Silver Bow government.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

The Central Butte Area Plan is a comprehensive, long-range plan intended to guide growth and development in Central Butte. The Vision Statement is a short declaration of what Central Butte will strive to be. The Primary Goals further define how to achieve the vision, but are still fairly general. More detail is needed to explain how to achieve the goals and vision. The Planning Strategies of this section provide that detail.

The Planning Strategies and the Future Land Use Plan (in the next section) are the main action steps and policies for the Central Butte Area Plan. The Future Land Use Plan provides specific guidance for future zoning and incorporates elements of the goals and planning strategies.

This section on Planning Strategies provides a re-statement of each goal. Following each goal, a context is provided in the form of a brief discussion of the rationale or background for the goal and identification of issues leading to the specific planning strategies. The context reflects comments from the Central Butte Steering Committee and from town hall participants, resident opinion survey results, and the inventory analysis conducted by the Cossitt Consulting team. Following the discussion of context, are the objectives (desired results for each goal), and the specific Planning Strategies.

Implementation of goals and objectives is predicated on the following guiding policies:

Guiding Policies:

- Policy #1: Identify all grant and existing funding sources possible and use these first.**
- Policy #2: Consider new or additional taxing only as needed, and tied to specific objectives and outcomes.**
- Policy #3: Projects will be managed openly, with information available to the public and public involvement encouraged.**
- Policy #4: Encourage a can-do and positive attitude about the community.**
- Policy #5: Efforts that focus on a specific area, such as a block or group of blocks, will be the priority rather than addressing single efforts scattered across the Planning Area.**
- Policy #6: Neighborhood and housing redevelopment efforts should encourage economically diverse neighborhoods.**

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL A: Repair and upgrade streets, sidewalks, alleys, public lighting, and any remaining needed improvements to the water and sewer systems.

CONTEXT

Central Butte's streets, alleys, and sidewalks are in serious need of repair and upgrade. Major improvements have been made recently along Main Street, but generally throughout Central Butte sidewalks are rough, broken, pitted or missing and street condition is just as bad. Survey respondents ranked sidewalks #2 on the high priority list for improvements (49% of all respondents), street improvements #3 (48%), alleys #5 (31%), street lighting #6 (25%), and stormwater drainage #10 (20%). The waiting list for city sidewalk improvements is backed up nearly seven years. Pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods are important part of creating a sustainable and high quality of life in an urban setting.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Sidewalks and streets that are in good repair and well-maintained
- ✓ Pedestrian-friendly environment
- ✓ Central Butte infrastructure is attractive for infill development
- ✓ Residents and lot owners maintain sidewalks with snow removal and cleaning

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy A-1: Initiate a capital improvements program that inventories condition of streets, sidewalks, alleys, street lighting, curb, and gutter, stormwater facilities, and prioritizes projects in a five year implementation plan with annual budget review and status report.

Strategy A-2: Upgrade and repair sidewalks to ADA standards and prioritize based on poor condition and potential for high use.

Strategy A-3: Identify regular maintenance needs, such as sweeping and removing snow on streets, and identify a priority system (e.g., snow routes) and clarify lot owner responsibilities for sidewalk maintenance.

Strategy A-4: Focus on pedestrian-friendly public infrastructure, with street intersections that are safe to cross, pedestrian-level lighting, and sidewalks buffered from busy streets with trees and other vegetation.

Strategy A-5: Encourage Butte-Silver Bow to develop an infrastructure policy that promotes historically compatible infill in Central Butte before extending city water, sewer, and city-maintained streets to currently un-served areas, such as new subdivisions on the urban fringe.

Strategy A-6: Encourage residents to provide information and priorities for the Butte-Silver Bow Transportation Plan Updates and presentations to the Butte Transportation Coordinating Committee that oversees transportation projects in Butte-Silver Bow.

HOUSING

GOAL B: Encourage a range of quality housing types with a range of affordability, from low-income to high income.

CONTEXT

The housing stock is mostly pre-1940s and many homes are in various states of disrepair and decay. Historically, Central Butte's neighborhoods were a mix of low-income and higher end housing stock, and a range of household incomes remains a desired characteristic. Housing stock issues include all facets from subsurface, structural, interior and exterior conditions. There are actual or perceived disincentives for many homeowners to improve their properties including poor quality of adjoining properties, lack of funding, costs of upgrades. Some fear that improving their residences will increase property taxes. Half of all survey respondents ranked improving older housing as a high priority, putting it at the top of the list.

The substantial numbers of low quality rental units is a debilitating component of the overall housing picture in Central Butte. Participants in the planning process repeatedly discussed rentals that were substandard and unhealthy, including leaking roofs or inadequate water or sewer. Currently there is no rental inspection program in Butte, but there are prototypes in other communities.

A variety of organizations are involved in efforts to upgrade homes include National Affordable Housing Network, Butte Affordable Housing, Habitat for Humanity and others. Considerable results have been made in the past ten years. These groups have worked on affordable housing that meets safety standards and is energy efficient. Self-help programs, like those funded by USDA Rural Development, help groups of six to ten low income families build their own homes by providing materials and the skilled labor they cannot furnish themselves. The families must agree to work together until all homes are finished.

National Affordable Housing Network reported that for decades, it was nearly impossible to obtain traditional mortgages for much of the housing in Central Butte, a status referred to as "Red-lining" or exclusion of the area for financing. That appears to have eased off some, but was cited as a continuing problem by National Affordable Housing Network in regard to substandard housing. Others on the Steering Committee and parties involved in the real estate market in Butte did not report this as an issue. A list of FHA low interest loan requirements for housing is attached as an appendix to this document.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Overall condition of residential properties is improved
- ✓ All rental units meet basic minimum standards for habitation
- ✓ Residences are safe and affordable to purchase or rent
- ✓ More residences are energy efficient

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy B-1: Develop a city code to establish minimum health and habitability standards for residential rental properties and to license and inspect properties to protect the health, safety, and well being of the occupants.

Strategy B-2: Maintain a list of rental properties that meet minimum standards and those that do not.

Strategy B-3: Create a voluntary landlord-tenant association who work to inform renters and landlords of their rights and responsibilities and creates incentives for landlords to improve rentals.

Strategy B-4: Identify existing programs or develop new programs to provide information and assistance for rehabilitating and updating existing housing stock. (examples: information on funding programs, education/skill building for repair and construction, professional technical contacts)

Strategy B-5: Initiate a local funding source (such as a revolving loan fund) for low-income individuals to repair and upgrade their homes.

Strategy B-6: Develop guidelines and programs for assisting owners in making improvements to properties where rehabilitation and/or regulatory compliance (e.g., community decay and historic preservation ordinances) exceed value of home.

Strategy B-7: Encourage building techniques and residential heating and cooling systems that promote energy affordability.

Strategy B-8: Provide specific information about the effects of improvements on property taxes and consider feasibility of tax abatement programs for improvements.

Strategy B-9: Develop support services in combination with affordable housing that ensure long-term maintenance and sustainability of homes and ownership.

Strategy B-10: Encourage affordable home purchase for low income and workforce with programs such as self-help ("sweat-equity" efforts like Habitat for Humanity), and affordable financing.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

GOAL C: Reduce the barriers to infill development and revitalization created by actual or perceived environmental hazards.

CONTEXT

Environmental hazards include smelter dust and contaminated soils, and there are programs in place to address both issues. The programs, however, can only handle a limited number of clean up activity per year. Subsidence is another issue that causes concern but a study completed in 2002 indicates that the problem is isolated to a few specific locations. Survey respondents ranked “lead dust, mine waste, and other environmental conditions” as one of the top three obstacles to home improvement. Some sinkholes and settling identified by participants may not be caused by “subsidence” but possibly poor installation of utilities.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Residents, businesses, and property owners understand environmental hazards, know how to identify if such exist on their properties, and how to remediate the hazards
- ✓ More historically compatible infill development in Central Butte resulting from accurate information on hazards and remediation in new construction and re-use of existing buildings and structures

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy C-1: Provide information to the public about the potential hazards and the programs in place to assist residents and property owners, and provide more resources for these programs to address more properties per year.

Strategy C-2: Develop and distribute a short brochure that summarizes the 2002 subsidence study for the Central Butte area.

Strategy C-3: Initiate a pilot program, coordinating with Montana Tech, the Citizens Technical Environmental Committee (CTEC) and others to identify any further specific research needed related to smelter dust and other environmental issues, to complete studies as needed, and disseminate study results to residents of Central Butte.

Strategy C-4: Clarify subsidence in Central Butte by identifying areas with no potential for subsidence, and those with low, medium, and high potential for subsidence and identify measures to address subsidence.

Strategy C-5: Butte-Silver Bow to provide annual progress reports on clean-up efforts under the Residential Metals Abatement Program, including how many addressed soils (e.g., residential yards and other sites), and how many addressed buildings (attics, basements), etc.

HISTORIC DISTRICT

GOAL D: Retain and protect the National Historic Landmark District.

CONTEXT

Central Butte comprises a significant portion of the National Historic Landmark District in the Butte urban area. The Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy – 2008 Update identifies the need to preserve the historic buildings of the National Historic Landmark District. Participants in the Central Butte planning process identified perceived conflicts between the desire to preserve buildings and economic costs of doing so. Economic conditions have caused property owners to allow buildings to deteriorate to the point where buildings are in significant need of rehabilitation or may not be useable at all. Some buildings in Central Butte are in their current condition simply because of owner neglect. Some rental properties are in poor condition as a result of the unwillingness of owners to improve them. The end result can become vacant lots where buildings once stood, potentially replaced with in-fill development which is not historically compatible with the surrounding buildings and structures. At some point in the future this could lead to delisting that portion of the National Historic Landmark District within the Central Butte or specific neighborhoods of that area. This issue includes residential and commercial properties alike. If public funds are used for improvements to historic structures, and those properties are listed on the local register of historic places, the improvements must meet Butte-Silver Bow's local historic preservation guidelines. Similar requirements are in place where federal funds are used for in-fill development, such as additional public housing.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ More historic buildings are rehabilitated for use while retaining their historic designation
- ✓ More upgrades and renovations utilize the public funding available for that purpose (such as Urban Renewal Agency (URA) funds)

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy D-1: Develop and implement local historic preservation guidelines that provide economic options for restoration (highest level of preservation), and rehabilitation- adaptive reuse that are specific, clear, and easy to understand and follow. Develop pattern book to be used for existing buildings and infill construction that reflect the specific design features of the various historic neighborhoods of Central Butte.

Strategy D-2: Encourage the HPC to be more active in Central Butte, providing education and information, such as workshops, education events, and demonstrations projects.

Strategy D-3: Continue to consult with National Park Service and other resources and identify a variety and range of methods for preserving historic buildings that fit with the economic and cultural realities of Central Butte.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

GOAL E: Expand a mix of residential and commercial uses with form and design that retains the Central Butte historic character.

CONTEXT

The current mix of existing land uses in Central Butte is a reflection of its creation and the historic neighborhoods that housed mine workers, professionals, business owners, many of whom were within walking distance to their place of work, to shopping, and to other services. Central Butte's historical land uses also included mining operations, rail yards, warehouses and industrial activity and there are still pockets of heavy industrial, including a cement plant. Participants in the planning process indicated that they were generally comfortable with a mix of residential and commercial uses, but would like to see the heavy industrial uses relocate outside of Central Butte. Steering Committee members and participants at the town hall meetings were interested in the concept of form-based code as an alternative to traditional zoning. Traditional zoning separates uses into different zoning districts while form-based codes allow a variety of residential and commercial uses in the same area as long as they meet requirements for building placement, height, setbacks, etc. Central Butte area is currently zoned in the traditional manner and there are many different types of residential districts, commercial districts, and industrial districts in the Plan Area. The Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy – 2008 Plan Update encouraged use of form and design guidelines in Central Butte as a way to encourage a lively mix of uses and retain historic character.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Historically compatible infill development occurs on vacant lots and vacant or under-used buildings are rehabilitated as needed for new uses.
- ✓ New development maintains historic character and adds to overall quality of life

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy E-1: Implement form-based zoning code as identified in the Future Land Use Plan.

Strategy E-2: Implement architectural design guidelines into zoning code as identified in the Future Land Use Plan.

Strategy E-3: Investigate feasibility of using the International Existing Building Code as a more reasonable and more economic alternative for existing commercial building upgrades than the International Building Code.

Strategy E-4: Develop incentives for residential and commercial infill and implement an infill policy for the Butte-Silver Bow that increases development of vacant lots and underused buildings in the urban area, including Central Butte.

Strategy E-5: Inventory vacant lots and vacant buildings and develop incentives for owners to use properties or to sell for development.

ECONOMY

GOAL F: Revitalize the Central Butte economy with more commercial retail activity compatible with residential uses.

CONTEXT

Central Butte has some bright economic features such as the medical area, but overall the economy is struggling. Commercial businesses are scattered among vacant lots and may be located within or adjacent to run-down buildings. Many of the existing businesses have been there for a long time, but with the exception of some new medical facilities, few new businesses are moving into the area. Many other businesses have closed shop over the decades and the building has remained vacant or has since been subject to arson or otherwise demolished.

Nearly one-quarter of the Central Butte Planning Area falls within the URA district, a Tax-Increment Finance District (TIFD) established to stimulate economic growth. The URA is near the end of its statutorily set lifespan of 30 years. Another TIFD, the Renovation and Rehabilitation Agency (RRA), was created in the last few years and includes one or two blocks of the Central Butte Planning Area (by Silver Bow Homes).

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Central Butte is economically sustainable with a variety of medical, retail and commercial businesses
- ✓ More commercial structures have been updated and rehabilitated to serve new and existing businesses
- ✓ Central Butte includes neighborhood restaurants and shops, and is seen as an up and coming place to live, work, and visit.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy F-1: Work with Butte Main Street organization, Butte-Silver Bow Community Development, HPC, business sector including banking and real estate, and others as well as the public to create and implement a strategic plan to attract new businesses and expand existing businesses. Consider market niche “clusters”, that could be uniquely tied to Central Butte, such as businesses that design and supply historic building renovation and repair.

Strategy F-2: Investigate the feasibility of a TIFD that would encompass Central Butte and possibly other areas as well.

Strategy F-3: Provide all sectors of the public with specific information about the effects of improvements on property taxes and implement tax abatement programs for improvements, including expansion of the Historic Preservation Tax Abatement program and the application of other tax incentive programs available to the state and federal levels.

Strategy F-4: Identify resources for commercial property to rehabilitate and upgrade existing buildings for new uses and distribute the information to existing and prospective businesses.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

GOAL G: Promote public safety and reduce crime and nuisances.

CONTEXT

Central Butte has the highest crime rates in Silver Bow County, with a theft or burglary occurring almost every day on average. In addition, residents complain of barking dogs and loose dogs and garbage. Butte-Silver Bow does not provide containers for solid waste pick up so residents are left to provide their own containers or none at all. Containers tip or are pushed over and garbage is strewn about. Planning participants have also cited junk and weeds as issues. Many residents may not have cars or trucks to haul large items to the land fill.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Central Butte is safer, with less crime
- ✓ The area is quieter and dogs are leashed or in fenced yards
- ✓ Central Butte is cleaner, with less trash on vacant lots and in alleys

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy G-1: Increase the number of law enforcement officers assigned to Central Butte and increase the number of patrols.

Strategy G-2: Work with law enforcement to identify pro-active steps that neighbors can take to reduce crime.

Strategy G-3: Review ordinances regarding barking and loose dogs for effectiveness, revise as needed and enforce..

Strategy G-4: Create a dog park in or near Central Butte and a maintenance program by dog-owners who use the park.

Strategy G-5: Provide solid waste containers for each residence.

Strategy G-6: Review ordinances regarding junk and weeds, revise as needed and enforce .

Strategy G-7: Provide for community clean-up days with large item pick-up and other activities to clean up the neighborhood.

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL H: Encourage pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, with good access to public transportation.

CONTEXT

Primary transportation focus in Central Butte is motorized traffic, as evidenced by the wide main streets (such as Montana), general lack of crosswalks, and write-in comments from survey respondents indicating that speed and traffic impact pedestrians and road conditions. Butte has an extensive public bus system for a community of its size, with busses generally running on the hour, but participants suggested more frequent service for Central Butte since many residents here may not have cars or cannot drive. A smaller bus that loops through Central Butte to Uptown on a more frequent basis was suggested for residents and also for visitors who come for Uptown special events. The public elementary school that serves most students in Central Butte is west of Excelsior, requiring students to cross busy streets, such as Montana. Federal programs, such as “Safe Routes to School” are available to improve access to elementary schools. Sidewalks are in horrible condition or non-existent. Nationwide, cities and towns are working to make urban areas more pedestrian friendly, with strong links to public transportation, and a street environment that is conducive to walking. As the senior population increases, fewer will be able to drive safely and will rely on public transportation.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Central Butte is safe for pedestrians and bicyclists
- ✓ Walking and biking are encouraged as alternative modes of transportation for individual health
- ✓ Those who must rely on public transportation are adequately served

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy H-1: Initiate a “Safe Routes to School” program with school travel plan for the elementary schools that serve Central Butte.

Strategy H-2: Conduct an analysis of existing use and a feasibility study for public bus transportation in Central Butte, focusing on whether service should be increased here (and perhaps reduced in other areas where use/need is less).

Strategy H-3: Conduct a feasibility study for a jitney or short-trip bus to/from Uptown and possibly Montana Tech.

Strategy H-4: Coordinate bus stops, main routes leading to/from bus stops, and Safe Routes to School, and needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, seniors and those with disabilities into the Public Infrastructure program (described above).

Strategy H-5: Public Works to coordinate with residents to identify and prioritize where traffic signage is needed to stop or slow traffic, and where traffic-calming measures such as narrower traffic lanes, curb extensions, etc. should be installed.

NEIGHBORHOOD APPEARANCE

GOAL I: Reduce blight and decay of buildings and properties.

CONTEXT

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed., defines blight as: "Something that impairs growth, withers hopes and ambitions, or impedes progress and prosperity." In Central Butte, blight is a sort of sum total of decaying buildings, vacant unkempt lots, junk, weeds, rough or non-existent sidewalks, and badly paved streets, etc. Most of those issues are addressed under other goal topics. This goal is intended to highlight the issue of both residential and commercial properties that fall into decay and disrepair. Unsightly properties and dilapidated buildings were two of the three most frequently cited negative features of Central Butte, according to survey respondents.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Pride of ownership is reflected in well-maintained properties
- ✓ Low income persons who need assistance to keep up their homes have access to help

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy I-1: Focus on collective projects that target a block or group of blocks to comprehensively address blight.

Strategy I-2: Look to other communities across the nation that have successfully addressed blight.

Strategy I-3: Review Community Decay Ordinance and recommend changes as needed to have an ordinance that will both meet its intended purpose and be enforced.

Strategy I-4: Develop a comprehensive list of agencies and services to assist with home maintenance and repair.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS, PARKS, AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

GOAL J: Encourage open space and street landscaping as key elements in community design and retain and develop neighborhood centers consistent with need and demand.

CONTEXT

Central Butte’s primary neighborhood center is Butte High School – it is the major center of events and activities in the area. The High School, however, is not easy for people to get to or around in unless they are familiar with the building layout. The Human Resources Council (HRC) has proposed a neighborhood center near Emma Park as a place where residents could access HRC services and also envisioned to include a shop where locals could work on carpentry and home repair projects and get technical assistance or training for the projects.

Park land in the Central Butte Planning Area is higher than average, however amenities are outdated or non-existent. Much of the residential development in the Plan Area is high density with little or no individual yard space for children to play, consequently public play space is very important. Butte Silver Bow’s park budget is very limited and has been cutting back the number of parks that are maintained by the city-county.

Public outdoor space and landscaping is important to overall quality of life in urban settings. There aren’t many trees in Central Butte.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Butte High School is easily recognized and accessed as a center in Central Butte
- ✓ There are parks for outdoor recreation and events and places for children to play
- ✓ Community centers are well-used and serve a variety of residents
- ✓ Streets are visually softened with trees and plantings

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy J-1: Improve “gateways” to the school so that it can readily identified from the main connections – Utah/Arizona, Main, Platinum -- by out-of-towners coming for various school or other functions.

Strategy J-2: Develop and implement a plan to address student/visitor parking and access (e.g., safe pedestrian crossings) to Butte High School.

Strategy J-3: Retain existing park and playground areas in and near Central Butte.

Strategy J-4: Install new playground equipment as needed, starting first with Chester Steele Park, and involve adult and children residents in the selection process.

Strategy J-5: When improving streets, provide for street-side landscaping as a buffer between automobile traffic and pedestrians and provide human-scale lighting and signage.

Strategy J-6: Encourage private landowners to plant trees and maintain yards.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT AND ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT

GOAL K: Encourage citizen involvement in the implementation of the Central Butte Area Plan and access to information and assistance from Butte-Silver Bow government.

CONTEXT

Butte-Silver Bow does not have an active network of neighborhood organizations. Such groups can be an extremely effective tool in promoting positive change in the neighborhood. Without strong support and follow-up from local residents, it is more likely that the Central Butte Area Plan will sit on the shelf rather than be implemented. The processes and criteria for allocating public funds is not clear to local residents, thus making it more difficult for them to access resources needed to address the issues in this plan.

At the time this plan was prepared, there was an active neighborhood group for the area around Emma Park. It was anticipated that the Emma Park sub-area would develop a separate plan, which would be compatible with the overall Central Butte Area Plan. It was also anticipated that such a plan would ultimately also be incorporated as an addendum to the Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy. It is possible that if other neighborhood groups form, they might also propose more detailed plans for their sub-areas.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Central Butte has an active neighborhood group, formally recognized and supported by Butte-Silver Bow Government and consulted with on Central Butte issues
- ✓ Local government funding sources and criteria are understandable and accessible to qualifying entities

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy K-1: Develop one or more neighborhood task forces representing Central Butte, organized with bylaws, and officially recognized by Butte-Silver Bow government. Task Forces meet regularly to discuss issues affecting Central Butte, to coordinate ideas, and to monitor progress on the Central Butte Area Plan. Task Forces share meeting results with Council of Commissioners.

Strategy K-2: Regular collective meetings of Plan Area neighborhoods and with other entities planning change in the area such as St. James Health Care, Butte High School, etc. Purpose of meetings would be to share information, coordinate and share resources where possible.

Strategy K-3: Butte-Silver Bow supports Neighborhood Task Force(s) with a Community Organizer staff position.

Strategy K-4: Community Development Department develops and distributes information on the various funding sources available through the local government (e.g., URA, RRA, CTEP, CDBG, NRD, etc. – see list elsewhere in this plan), including information on application deadlines, criteria for selection, and accountability and performance standards for fund recipients.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan section is a visual guide and narrative of desired future land use consistent with the Central Butte Planning Area vision statement and goals. It indicates how the area should be redeveloped over the next 20 years by showing locations and characteristics of the preferred land forms and uses.

Fundamentally, the desired future condition is one where currently vacant buildings and vacant lots become utilized. Instead of conventional zoning, where different uses are typically separated, the desired future would include a variety of retail, commercial, and residential uses that are tied together by their form, rather than function. The form would be specified in terms of building placement on the lot (setbacks, side yards, etc.), building heights, setbacks, type of parking, public lighting types, and street and sidewalk design. As more communities turn to pedestrian-friendly communities, where people can walk to work, to the store, to school, they are also using form-based code to make it work. Central Butte historically was a lively mix of uses, and even today there is a variety from block-to-block and within blocks.

The Future Land Use Plan is intentionally fairly general. Boundaries are not meant to be distinct. It is a guide for future changes to zoning, but it is not as precise as a zoning ordinance. Details about the exact types and forms of uses, as well as the exact boundaries of areas will be worked out in the zoning revision process. At the core, however, the desired future would require a shift from traditional zoning that separates uses to a form-based code that integrates various uses.

It is also envisioned that the form would be further refined with design guidelines, which are discussed at the end of this section.

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

F o r m - B a s e d M i x e d U s e

The mixed use of Central Butte would include a wide range of building types – such as single family, row houses, multi-family (duplexes, triplexes, etc.) townhouses and small apartment buildings, with scattered commercial activity. Desirable non-residential uses would include parks, schools, playgrounds, religious buildings, offices, medical facilities, retail businesses, markets, restaurants, small inns (up to 12 units), and bed and breakfast facilities. Non-residential uses would be encouraged at corners.

New industrial uses would not be allowed. Existing industrial uses would be allowed, but because of the basic incompatibility of industrial uses with the predominately residential mix, the long-term intent is that industry, particularly heavy industry, would eventually relocate outside of Central Butte to more suitable locations, possibly with encouragement from local government in the form of incentives.

Uses: Mixed uses: Primarily residential with commercial, office, and public spaces such as parks, schools, etc.

Housing: A wide variety of housing types is appropriate from single family units to apartments.

Setbacks: Setbacks and landscaping would be variable, but generally shallow to medium front and side yard setbacks. For non-residential uses, setbacks should conform to those of residential buildings in the area.

Height: Up to two or three stories with a few taller mixed use buildings

Parking: Number of required parking spaces to be determined by function/use, and where off-street parking areas are necessary, parking areas to be at rear or side of buildings screened from neighboring properties.

Pedestrians: High level of pedestrian accommodation - sidewalks and curbs, pedestrian level lighting

Alleys: Alleys to provide the primary access to secondary buildings (such as garages) and in cases where that is not possible, secondary buildings should have a larger, deeper setback than the primary building

G a t e w a y s

The gateway areas are the major streets through Central Butte that lead to Uptown Butte: Montana Street, Arizona-Utah, and Main, listed in order of importance and use. The Future Land Use Map reflects the ranking by general width of gateway area, but in practical application, the width of each gateway would extend out to the half-block area. Montana Street is the primary gateway as it is directly linked via interchange to Interstate 90. The intent is that gateways will be inviting entry-ways to Uptown Butte as well as the primary commercial areas within Central Butte. Gateways also include residences, which are more common on the Main Street and Arizona-Utah gateways.

Uses: Mixed uses: Primarily commercial and office, with some residential

Housing: Higher density housing, such as row houses, town houses, apartments and single family on narrow lots

Setbacks: Buildings generally set close to sidewalks, shallow or no side yards.

Height: Generally two to three stories with a few taller mixed use buildings

Parking: Number of required parking spaces to be determined by function/use, and where off-street parking areas are necessary, parking lots to be at rear or side of buildings screened from neighboring properties.

Pedestrians: Highest level of pedestrian accommodation - sidewalks and curbs, curb extensions (bulb-outs) into intersections to shorten pedestrian travel distance and safety across the street, crosswalks, trees between street and sidewalk to buffer pedestrians from traffic.. Pedestrian level lighting

Alleys: Alleys to provide the primary access to secondary buildings (such as garages) and in cases where that is not possible, secondary buildings should have a larger, deeper setback than the primary building

O p e n S p a c e

Open spaces shown on the Future Land Use Map include Chester-Steele and Cinders Fields, the Travona mine area and currently vacant unzoned land north of the railroad between Main and Montana. The map does not show the other smaller parks (one block or less in size), such as Emma Park, Charley Judd, or the skating rink, which are considered automatic uses within the Mixed Use Designation. The purpose of the Open Space designation is to recognize the importance of larger open space settings and the recognition that former mined areas may be difficult to phase to other uses, but can be successfully converted to public open space (e.g., Emma Park).

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

Architectural design guidelines augment form-based design by addressing such things as construction material (e.g., brick, stucco, stone), roof forms, proportion and arrangement of window and door openings, colors, and decorative elements (e.g. cornices, trim work). Design guidelines would help ensure that new development complements Central Butte's existing historic buildings and retains the unique character of the various areas within Central Butte.

Survey respondents were about equally divided between those who wanted review to ensure that new construction is compatible with existing historic architecture and those who did not. Nearly one-quarter of the respondents had no opinion, which may indicate respondents do not have enough information to form an opinion.

Development of design guidelines should therefore involve the public and include education and information about the purpose of design guidelines. In addition, guidelines should have flexibility for a range of building costs and affordability.

Most of all the design guidelines should be clear and understandable. Pattern books can show drawings or photos of acceptable forms of facades, roof types, first floor commercial, windows, entryways, porches, decorative elements, etc. Given the diversity of characteristics among the various historic neighborhoods that comprise Central Butte, it is possible that there could be more than one pattern book.

Many cities across the nation have developed design guidelines. Examples include Rockville, Maryland (<http://www.rockvillemd.gov/towncenter/design-guides.htm> - click on architectural vocabulary for example of patterns). Examples from other cities are included in the document "Design Guidelines and Pattern Books" (<http://www.historicalconcepts.com/DesignGuidelines-sml.pdf>). Note that some design guidelines include both form (lot layout) and architectural design. At this time this plan was prepared, the HPC was developing design standards for historic buildings and structures for in-fill development.

PRIORITY ACTION PLAN

The Priority Action Plan is the list of the highest priority action items to start working on in the first year after plan adoption. Some of the items on the list are simple tasks and can easily be completed in a year or less. Other action items are more complex and may take years to reach the intended objective. For those items, the Priority Action Plan identifies the first tasks to get the ball rolling in the first year.

Each action item lists what agency will take the lead and primary responsibility for action. Partner agencies or organizations are listed as well. It also includes an approximate time-table for completing the projects that will extend beyond a year, and identifies if an action requires ongoing activity.

The most important ongoing activity for any plan is monitoring progress. If no one is watching the pot, the stew will almost certainly fail. For this reason, Butte-Silver Bow government, neighborhood task force(s), and other participating partners should meet together to annually review accomplishments, celebrate successes, and set the work plan for the following year.

The first year includes work on ten action items:

- 1. Initiate and enable neighborhood task forces.**
- 2. Develop matrix of local funding sources.**
- 3. Begin work in target areas for multi-faceted approach to arresting blight.**
- 4. Develop a capital improvements program for public infrastructure.**
- 5. Revise zoning regulations to include form-based code for Central Butte.**
- 6. Improve rental housing conditions.**
- 7. Provide information on subsidence.**
- 8. Address community decay.**
- 9. Develop architectural design standards.**
- 10. Annually review the Central Butte Area Plan and update as needed.**

1. Initiate and enable neighborhood task forces.

This is a critical first step to ensuring that the plan is implemented as residents and local businesses are most likely to champion the efforts of this plan. The Emma Park Neighborhood group has already started. Other groups like it or a single group covering the entire Central Butte Plan Area need to get going. Butte-Silver Bow Community Development and Planning Department should work together to identify a staff person to work with the neighborhood groups, with the long-term goal of creating a part- or full-time position to provide assistance to neighborhood groups throughout all of Butte. Initial tasks will be to provide assistance with forming a task force to represent all of Central Butte, either as one neighborhood group or a council of groups representing various smaller neighborhoods, and developing structure and bylaws that will be formally recognized by Butte-Silver Bow Council of Commissioners. Within the first year, the goal would be to form the group(s), begin meetings, and

obtain written approval by the Council of Commissioners of how Butte-Silver Bow government and neighborhood groups will coordinate.

2. Develop matrix of local funding sources.

If projects are going to be initiated from the ground-up with involvement from residents and businesses within the area, people need to understand what funds are available through local government, such as TIFD funds (URA and RRA), CTEP, CDBG, and others. The Community Development Department will be the lead agency for developing and posting on the Butte-Silver website a matrix of funding sources, timelines for applications, criteria for selection, and performance standards that apply once funds are awarded. Getting information out on funding sources and criteria will facilitate action on a variety of other action steps in this plan that frankly need resources to move forward. Once developed, the matrix will need to be reviewed at least annually and updated accordingly to reflect changes.

Additional funding sources, such as a revolving loan fund for historic rehabilitation and reuse should be created. At the time this plan was prepared, the Historic Preservation was proposing to create such a fund from the ARCO/BSB Redevelopment Trust Fund. A similar fund would be created to assist property owners in mothballing buildings and structures while plans for rehabilitation and reuse are developed. In addition, the Historic Preservation Commission looks to promote increase use of the Historic Preservation Tax Abatement Program (abatement of increased property taxes associated with rehabilitation of historic properties or historically compatible infill development within the historic district) and to consider how to further enhance the applicability of that program. Once developed, the matrix will need to be reviewed at least annually and updated accordingly to reflect changes.

3. Begin work in target areas for multi-faceted approach to arresting blight.

One of the guiding policies of this plan is that efforts focused on a specific area, such as a group of blocks, will be the priority rather than addressing individual isolated problems scattered across the Central Butte Plan Area. The concept is that if neighbors can rally together to work on most or all of the issues facing their small area that results will be more visible and more areas will want to do the same. The Emma Park Neighborhood effort is already underway. The area south of the High School was identified as a priority area by participants at the October town hall meeting. Once a task force is established for the entire Central Butte area, it will be the lead agency for initiating a citizen involvement in an area south of the High School. Planning Department would provide support. The target area task will be to mobilize citizens, identify needed changes, and begin specific actions to improve the area. The Central Butte Citizen Task Force will also coordinate with ongoing efforts at Emma Park.

4. Develop a capital improvements program for public infrastructure.

Developing a systematic approach to public infrastructure improvements is fundamental. Until there is a clearly written document that identifies improvements needed, and prioritizes them in five year increments, with annual budgets and work plans readily available to the public, addressing overall blight will be hampered because it will be impossible to plan ahead for other changes. In the first year of this plan, the Public Works Department will be the lead agency for starting work on a capital improvements program, with a complete written program to be finalized within three years. Ongoing

work after that will include annual work plans, each of which extends out five years. In the first year of the Central Butte Area Plan, Council of Commissioners will be the lead agency for developing a policy that would emphasize new developments in areas already served by infrastructure (such as Central Butte) and establishing limits for extensions to currently un-served areas.

5. Revise zoning regulations to include form-based code for Central Butte.

This was a recommendation in the Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy – 2008 Update, and the Central Butte area is now ready to proceed. This action will allow for flexibility in locating residential and commercial uses within Central Butte and would begin a program that accommodates development consistent with the historic character of the area. It may take more than a year to adopt the changes, but using prototypes such as “Smartcode,” it would be possible to have an initial draft to share with neighborhood groups within a few months. Lead agency would be the Planning Department.

6. Improve rental housing conditions.

Although there are issues with decay and maintenance on owner-occupied housing, rental housing came up over and over again as a significant issue for low-income renters who may be subject to substandard living conditions without much potential for recourse. There are three different actions in this plan for improving rental conditions – one is regulatory and establishes minimum health and safety standards that would be enforced at the local level. The other two actions are voluntary. The Central Butte Citizen task force would be the lead agency on spearheading actions regarding rental housing condition. Within the first year of this plan, it would be possible to identify which actions to pursue, to set specific tasks and to begin work on those projects. This will be an ongoing priority and will likely take many years to accomplish the overall goal of safe and affordable rental housing.

7. Provide information on subsidence.

The detailed study on subsidence was completed several years ago, but many people seem to be unaware of the results, and generally there is still confusion about the extent and severity of subsidence. Addressing this with a simple one-page summary of subsidence locations and issues in Central Butte and a guide to addressing properties with subsidence or potential for subsidence would be a relatively small task. The information can be posted on the Butte-Silver Bow website. The Reclamation Division of the Planning Department would have lead responsibility. Other actions related to environmental hazards include similar information dissemination on the Residential Metals Abatement Program, which could also be led by the Reclamation Division.

8. Address community decay.

The first step in the first year should be the examination of the community decay ordinance. Council of Commissioners would be the lead agency.

Other actions that could be taken in the first year would be to create a matrix of existing programs to assist building owners (homeowners, business owners, etc.) in arresting building decay and begin improvements. Lead agency would be Community Development. An initial list generated from information from existing housing agencies and human service organizations could be accomplished within a year.

Overall, the issue of community decay will be ongoing and take many years to address thoroughly.

9. Develop architectural design standards.

The Butte-Silver Bow Growth Policy -2008 Update recommended design guidelines as a way to retain the historic character of Central Butte.

There are two actions in this plan related to architectural design standards. One action is to complete the Butte-Silver Bow Historic Preservation guidelines, and the guidelines apply to projects using public funds and for infill development within the historic landmark district. The Butte-Silver Bow HPC is currently developing the guidelines, which include design standards for historic buildings and structures for infill development.

In the first year, the HPC would be the lead agency to begin work with the residents of Central Butte neighborhoods to identify design elements for new construction. It could take two to three years to finalize.

10. Annually review the Central Butte Area Plan and update as needed.

The Planning Department would be the lead agency and work with the Central Butte Citizen Task Force to prepare a written annual report and work plan for the following year. The report and work plan would be submitted to the Council of Commissioners for their approval.

