

## Our Missoula Listening Session

### September 24, 2014



This document contains the combined notes from the discussion with Older Adults held in partnership with Missoula Aging Services. Approximately 40 older community members participated in a workshop that fostered small group discussions along with large group sharing of ideas. The notes from the six small groups have been combined in this summary document. The purpose of the listening session is to encourage open discussion with participants specifically interested in the given listening session topic. The comments recorded are the opinions, ideas, and impressions of the individuals present and does not reflect consensus positions. The session focused on three main components:

1. **ASSETS:** What do participants value about Missoula, and then what do they value specifically in regard to their expertise and session topic.
2. **CHALLENGES:** What are the challenges facing Missoula.
3. **DISCUSSION:** Broaden the conversation to openly discuss ideas, recommendations, programs, policies or actions.

## Older Adults

### What do you value?

- Bus service
- Good and accessible senior transit bus system (Mountain Line)
- International airport
- Excellent access to healthcare for everyone
- Sophistication of healthcare services
- Regional medical centers
- Library
- Theater
- Symphony
- Museums
- Strong theater and literary tradition
- Music and arts including art shows
- Cultural offerings of community and University
- Historical architecture
- Cultural and activity diversity
- Artistic beauty
- Sense of community; pride in area
- Caring community
- Diversity; age, color, ability, philosophy, spirituality, ethnicity
- Community itself; Welcoming and accepting
- Treated with respect regardless of income, education, intellectual ability
- Tolerance for others
- Engaged community
- Missoula community and support of group homes, long term care
- Giving nature of people
- Warm and friendly

- Easy access to city government; government transparency
- Community and government attitude
- Responsive public
- Police/City/Fire/Ambulance responsiveness to community
- Activities for all ages
- Abundant variety of youth events and activities
- Public markets
- Lively downtown
- Opportunity to see your neighbors
- Events
- Restaurants
- Local food/markets
- Lots of festivals
- Missoula Marathon
- Food excellence
- Active downtown association
- Vital and vibrant downtown
- Services/local businesses spread out in neighborhoods
- Good health clubs
- Great service opportunities: e.g. Clark Fork river cleanup
- Churches, ministries
- Environmental activism
- Feels like a small town, but has amenities of big city
- Size of the town; just the right size; manageable
- Big city advantages without big city problems
- Kids water features
- Parks
- Outdoor recreation
- Access to recreation
- Walking community
- Green spaces
- Trail network
- Clark Fork River
- Western Montana Region; access to the wilderness
- Caras Park
- Mountain views
- Urban to nature interface
- Open Space
- Natural Beauty; landscape
- Beauty of area; scenery
- Sporting activities for all ages
- Recreation options
- Climate
- Poverello Center
- Multiple levels of access to education - Lifelong Learning Center, University, Rocky Mountain School of Photography

- Learning environment; Educational opportunities for all ages
- University: connection to - and support of - the community; relationship with community has improved over time; MOLL classes
- Schools
- Senior center
- Missoula Aging Services
- Excellent senior services

### **What are the challenges?**

- Visitability of homes: Issues with yard work, downsizing, stairs, one-level buildings, and inadequate doorway clearance
- Staying in place which gets difficult if you have a large yard, etc.
- Housing for aging populations; Limited number of one-level homes
- Accessible housing; Need more street level houses; Elevators
- Aging at home: concern over expenses, sidewalks, property maintenance, large yards, utilities, taxes, lack of choice in service providers (phone, internet, charter, etc.), high food costs, and infrastructure/improvement costs
- Promotion of self sufficiency
- Taxes keep going up
- No housing community for seniors
- Adequate Housing Authority assistance
- Cost of housing
- Lack of low income housing for all
- Safe housing
- Economic livability
- Too much bureaucracy for construction permitting
- Restrictive zoning for aging population
- Mismatch of architectural appeal; construction types of housing in neighborhoods
- Growth problems
- Too much multi-dwelling development
- Lack of affordable housing (that is not subsidized)
- Affordable housing
- Challenge to maintain quality neighborhoods
- No outside activity areas for senior dwellings
- Impediments to live-in help; i.e. ADU policy limits availability
- Increasing crime; Enforce current laws
- Poor access to mental health facilities and services
- Family, friends, and aging populations needs more information about transitional services
- Prioritize information for the aging community
- Access to bus service; not running in all neighborhoods
- Few bus routes and few bus stops; frequency for bus system
- Traffic on Reserve; prohibits busses, etc.
- Bus service not adequate; doesn't cover enough area; routes too limited
- Access to medical facilities if busses don't go
- Alternatives to bus service is limited
- Senior van is very limited - appointments only; Para-transit

- Handicap access for transportation inadequate
- Limited public transportation in many areas
- Accessibility: Parking is lacking, need more accessible spots in general
- Limited routes out of Airport
- Cost of airline tickets
- Cost of long distance transportation
- No train service; get rail access to passenger trains; better train connections to other cities
- Taxi service is costly and limited
- Traffic congestion; Increased street traffic
- Improve transportation connectivity
- Road/street condition
- Conflict between encouraging bike riding and providing for bike space
- Poor cross town traffic flow
- Lack of river crossing/bridges
- City annexation of County
- Infill; crowding people
- Concern of city paying for non-city residential services
- High cost of hooking up to sewer
- Bikes on sidewalks
- Winter; parking and sidewalk snow and ice maintenance; plowing of streets; safety issue
- Communication, media challenges
- Local news sources
- Negligence of rental property owners and property managers
- Landlords/Rental issues; regulations affect all property owners, including “good and bad”; City management of property can be lacking/absent (i.e. boulevards)
- Obnoxious pet owners/pets
- Isolation of Missoulians
- Smoke/forest fires
- Wildlife
- Accessibility for all including low income people
- Adequate accessible infrastructure
- Issues with finding adequate funding to address accessibility
- Winter time accessibility and mobility issues, especially along sidewalks
- Jobs
- Living wage; low wages
- Job opportunities for grown children; employment for young men
- Diversified economy
- Lack of industry, how to attract manufacturing?
- Breaking into the Missoula community
- Good paying jobs
- High taxes/increasing taxes
- No jobs; No full time jobs or careers; U of M students leave Missoula after graduation
- High cost of living
- High poverty
- Air and water quality
- Water ownership

- Crime perception (downtown/transients)
- Panhandling
- Homeless issues
- Concerns about attracting transient populations
- Lack of home care services
- Effective senior services
- Lack of University programs aimed at senior issues (gerontology programs)
- End of life conversations/issues
- Homecare availability; medical visits
- Medical services available?
- Interface between University and community needs
- Poor city government budgeting
- Cost-effective use of public money
- Limited funding for City services; parks, maintenance, sewer, sidewalks, etc.
- Limited parks in some areas: Mullan for example
- Access to neighborhood services- groceries, shopping
- Good map of the city showing shopping, University, Post Office, etc.
- Lack of world class telecommunications
- Addressing hunger
- No real public community center

#### **Ideas, Policies, Programs, Actions, Recommendations**

- Service “bank” for seniors
- Create a Central clearinghouse for senior services/ one-stop shop
- Services: Establish “Ombudsman” to help advocate, renter’s rights, etc.; Health services and Medicare revising; Re-focus from “end of life” care to “continuous wellness care”; Medicaid is too politicized
- Create a program/organization to help with home safety assessment so homeowners know what is possible strategies and/or physical changes
- Create a system to help people on constrained incomes to meet their needs or if resources already exist then get the word out
- Fix taxes at some point for seniors
- Provide a specific program that will get people into houses
- Require more bike trails and shoulders on roads
- Enforce bike laws
- License bikes/enforce existing laws
- Separate wheeled and pedestrian trails
- Encourage sharing of trails, bike lanes; maybe switch from one to another mode on a trail.
- Educate citizens on bike laws, trail laws, etc. Provide a class.
- Airport needs to fly to more places
- Provide opportunities for better senior education, i.e. computer use, technical education
- Provide more senior education classes that are affordable
- University provides older students to educate community
- Encourage the creation of a performance center
- Need space for UM art- art museum and city art museum
- Support Missoula Aging Services expansion, more funds are needed
- Assess healthcare to see if it will meet the needs of the aging

- Provide more Montana Healthcare Centers for everybody because it's easy, affordable, and can be centralized
- Encourage more gerontologists to come to Missoula
- Explore more options for in-home medical services
- Maintain a low building profile; maybe cottage living with green space
- Make construction permitting consider visitability, but be reasonable
- Seek Landlord/Tenant compliance and enforcements of zoning for housing
- Support housing for all economic groups; may require zoning amendments
- Improve zoning classifications (residential, not commercial) for more efficient locating of housing
- Parking should be improved and nearby for multi-dwelling housing
- Place more emphasis on senior housing
- Support graduated senior housing communities/development that is affordable
- Plan and provide for affordable travel options (frequency, more options); Inter city transportation; Planned transportation near housing; Planned for aging populations/general public
- Increase van services; busses need to follow through on previous promises
- Increase bus service to family locations- i.e. YMCA
- Follow through with enforcement for snow removal on roads and sidewalks
- Support locally owned media with local news; information consolidation for easy access; call center, local media station, online services; website maintained by an organization
- Increase accessibility (ADA) requirements; update accessibility regulations
- Aging in Place: Make it easier to have live-in care (i.e. ADU); consider cost of improvements; establish an Advisory council
- Support expanding services (providers and funds) for in-home care; need respite care (only 100 hours available for entire community)
- Address cost of living by establishing sliding scales for taxes and services like transportation and medical
- Create a more progressive tax system
- Create community action groups
- Focus education on job sector needs
- Reassess the town/gown (community/University) relationship
- Foster open communication between different groups
- Understand the generations, seniors are changing
- Provide a different approach to aging- Re: input on services offered
- Improve permit process for business start-ups
- Encourage people to engage in the community more
- Encourage more industry through tax breaks; consider short term incentives; select industries that fit with Missoula; retrofit existing structures; create an environment business is interested in; promote Internet, good tax base, good education, etc.
- More manufacturing is needed
- Improve business environment, lower taxes for businesses
- Do more to market for better jobs
- Advertise jobs better
- Support training for jobs that are available
- Develop more parks
- Increase safe recreation for seniors
- Establish specific times for only citizens- i.e. Currents and City owned businesses
- Connect the youth to help with seniors- deliver groceries, shovel sidewalks, clean homes, etc.