

FOCUS 2020

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The FOCUS 2020 Land Use Committee and Development (LUD) Committee submits this report to provide a vision, goals and suggestions to provide guidance to the development community and policy makers. The committee identified areas for potential development and the importance of maintaining the integrity and value of existing property of the Mitchell community. The committee examined physical limitations due to availability of infrastructure, environmental considerations, geography, feasibility constraints, state and federal restrictions and potential land use conflicts. The LUD committee spent considerable time reviewing Mitchell's development history and the effects on today's development decisions and patterns. The historic perspective and review of past decisions along with contemporary trends, design techniques, and current regulations are necessary to provide informed recommendations. Our ultimate goal to provide a vision for a visually attractive and functionally efficient physical landscape for those choosing to live, work and visit our community today and tomorrow.

The LUD committee wants to acknowledge those whom served on the committee and provided input and supporting information. The committee is grateful to those that provided background information for the committee's edification. The committee is grateful to Mayor Sebert for permitting the public works staff to assist the committee. The committee had exceptional leadership from its chairmen Larry Thompson, Don Meyers, and Harlan Quenzer.

The LUD Committee focused on three aspects of land use and development; Zoning, Community Improvement/Image, and Transportation. The committee feels there are other aspects of land use policy that require attention; however due to time constraints the committee felt these three areas require immediate examination. The LUD committee strongly encourages policy makers and staff continues to monitor development patterns, the regulatory environment, and public feedback in formulating policy in regards to development activities. This report is to examine each of these aspects in depth and provide recommendations.

Mitchell has a history of long range planning with community engagement which is beneficial in developing a strategic and goal oriented vision for the community's destiny. A decade ago a community project known as VISION 2000, identified a number of ideas which were desirable to promote development and investment. Many of the suggestions have come to fruition, such as; Missouri River Water, North-South By-pass, Senior citizen facilities, New elementary schools, and an Affordable Housing Project. However, some proposals remain as suggestions and some have to be abandoned to economic conditions, political decisions or citizen desires. Today, FOCUS 2020 is continuing the tradition of a futuristic, yet realistic plan for a better Mitchell.

LAND USE REGULATION (ZONING)

Local governments that desire effective land use regulation and policies need the tools to implement plans, goals and objectives. Simply, the tools put the plan to work. The tools include zoning, subdivision regulations, building and life safety codes and other applicable local ordinances. Additionally, local governments have the responsibility to incorporate state and federal regulations and policies in considering development projects. The committee recommends the city leadership to examine new technology that may affect land use regulations such as telecommunications advances and alternative energy infrastructure.

The purpose of land use regulations is to insure real property's value and comfort is preserved by preventing conflicts that may affect the integrity of the property and its value. Land Use regulations provide standards for new construction, rehabilitation, renovation, or redevelopment. The result of effective regulations should be safe, attractive, efficient, and valuable real property that meets the expectations of the occupants and owners.

Before regulations are to be enacted a comprehensive or master plan should be developed and adopted. Municipalities and counties are required by state law to have a plan adopted prior to ordination of land use regulations. The statute is consistent with the historic trend of local governments nationwide desiring over time to ensure its citizens have clean and safe homes, employment opportunities, sufficient amenities, and public facilities. The comprehensive plan is working document that provides vision, goals, and actions a community and should be updated periodically.

The LUD Committee reviewed current uses of properties in and adjacent to the City of Mitchell. The committee feels for the most part current uses are reasonably consistent and general conformance with the planned uses. However, it is becoming evident that there is an increasing usage and development of properties that appear to be in conflict with current and desired usage of neighboring properties. As development of outlying areas adjacent to the City of Mitchell occurs, there is an appearance that this issue is occurring in a manner that does or will lead to haphazard growth along with accompanying problems. Planned and orderly land use and development can, do and will continue to reduce the investments needed by the community for utilities and infrastructure to develop various properties. Communities need thorough and careful planning and orderly land use and development thus eliminating the potential problems that are experienced with haphazard growth and land use. The LUD committee feels the policy makers should review the current comprehensive plan and municipal land use ordinances (zoning, subdivision, and building code) and address plans and trends in all areas in the Mitchell area. Again the committee is focusing on critical areas in need of immediate attention which are; Downtown, Highway 37 By-Pass, and I-90.

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Downtown Business District is unique when compared to other commercial areas in the community. Most of the properties have common walls, front door access, limited landscaping, parking challenges, historic requirements, and require high visibility. It is also the largest concentration of employees.

It should be noted in the 1960's the City of Mitchell developed a plan for downtown enhancement. The recommendations of the plan were not completely implemented. Subsequent, downtown business owners and elected leaders continue to debate parking dilemmas. The LUD Committee recommends as property becomes available in the downtown it should be acquired and developed into off street parking. Perhaps, the council or other entities may develop a 'land bank' to establish funding for parking and other related improvements that will enhance the downtown area. Another recommendation to compliment parking is additional signage to lots for patrons.

Downtown revitalization and enhancement has been a goal for decades and rightfully so. We are encouraging downtown businesses, citizens and city government to make this a development priority. The newly formed Main Street and Beyond organization is poised to jumpstart the economic vitality, visual appearance, and redevelopment of downtown. For many their observation of our community is based on their impression of Main Street.

The LUD committee offers some recommendation s for consideration by Main Street and Beyond and the city leadership. The committee recommends a study of the traffic patterns in downtown, including consideration of one way traffic. Another recommendation of the LUD committee is to examine the feasibility of a Business Improvement District (BID) as a means of financing various enhancements or projects. Additionally, an inventory of the other options of financing should be available, such as historic preservation programs, tax incremental financing, urban renewal programs, and targeted economic development initiatives. The committee also recommends that a consistent downtown theme be development and design standards that are consistent with the theme and décor.

Summary

- Acquire property in downtown when becomes available for parking or development
- Install additional signage to parking lots
- Consider implementation of Business Improvement District (BID)
- Historic preservation programs and other programs available for downtown revitalization
- Downtown theme
- Strategy for upper floor development
- Downtown streetscape
- Make 7th Avenue to 1st Avenue pedestrian friendly

The World's Only Corn Palace

Mitchell is fortunate to have an anchor that attracts thousands of visitors, *The World's Only Corn Palace*. Therefore, it is critically important that our city capitalize on the potential economic activity and public activities it generates as well as its symbolic representation of our history, perseverance and pride. The committee recommends a priority is protection of this icon and its environs. This may be accomplished by adequate parking, historic preservation, and insuring compatibility in adjacent land uses. Simply, projects in the Corn Palace vicinity must compliment the facility. The committee submits for improvement of the Corn Palace experience should be pedestrian and family friendly. Properties within the line of sight of the Corn Palace should be acquired and possibly removed which may improve the visual appearance of the 'Corn Palace Campus'. The committee also recommends the Corn Palace management consider activities that welcome small children and will provide interaction opportunities to 'run off' energy.

Summary

- Acquire property in the sight line of the Corn Palace
- Develop a Corn Palace campus setting with resting area and family friendly features
- See exhibits which are target areas for redevelopment or revitalization

HIGHWAY 37-BY PASS

A north-south bypass was referenced in the 1990 City of Mitchell Comprehensive Plan. Since the bypass' installation some structures have been built. However, most of the property remains unimproved. The LUD committee feels this area demands immediate attention because of its significant economic potential. The committee recommends an examination of this area's zoning designation. The description of the uses may be too broad. Environmental considerations (drainage) and limited access from the Highway 37 must also be considered. Mitchell Christian School and Cadwell Park compliment the area and should be compatible with future projects.

Summary

- Consider rezoning or update use definitions
- Account for limited highway access
- Account for potential drainage to Lake Mitchell and wetlands

INTERSTATE 90

Since the opening of Cabela's the I-90 corridors and the area between the two exits has witnessed phenomenal growth. The new investments and new infrastructure has resulted in significant economic development and increased revenue. Additionally, it provides an image of progressive and managed growth to those passing through and potential investors. Despite the success of the area, the city challenge is to appropriately manage undeveloped land. The LUD committee recommends a review of the zoning designation of this area and infrastructure capacity limits must be considered. The potential for land use conflicts exists under the present zoning scheme but they may be prevented with prudent planning and appropriate and palpable regulations. The community must be sensitive to the fact that for travelers this is the first, and maybe the only image of our community they will experience.

Summary

- Rezone or redefine the allowable uses in North One half Section 34 to limit uses to commercial business activities such as those currently being developed in the area;
- Rezone or redefine the allowable uses in the area bounded by Rowley on the west, Spruce Street on the south, Highway 37 on the east and Interstate 90 on the north to limit to commercial business activities such as those currently being developed in the area;
- Rezone or redefine the allowable uses in the area bounded by Rowley Street on the east, Spruce Street on the south, Ohlman on the west and interstate 90 on the north to limit uses to commercial business activities such as those currently being development in the area;
- Rezone or redefine the allowable uses in the North One Half of Section 33 to limit uses to industrial business activities such as those currently being developed.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Mitchell 1990 Comprehensive Plan is functional and continues to have goals and objectives applicable for today. However, the salient information and statistical analyses does not account for current circumstances and relevant forecasts. Economic conditions, demographic changes, contemporary design and standards, traffic patterns, consumer demands and technology have significantly impacted the community and these must also be considered in charting the future. Therefore, we recommend once FOCUS 2020 is complete city leadership use the recommendations as the framework to update the current plan.

Effective and relevant comprehensive plans need functional policies and ordinances to put the plan into action. As previously mention, the committee recommends attention to key areas of the community in regards to their respective zoning designations. The committee also recommends the zoning code also be updated. The current code needs definitions and descriptions that reflect contemporary trends and identify which uses should be permitted, reviewable and prohibited within particular districts due to

current situations. The code must be compatible with the other municipal ordinances. The updated zoning code must also recognize in Mitchell's periphery the potential for conflicts between urban and rural may arise. That is why it is vital a cooperative agreement between the counties, townships, and rural landowners be formed. The city needs to have an annexation policy that provides orderly growth with sufficient resources. The committee also recommends development of an Agricultural District in the zoning code.

The LUD committee recommends elimination of the Urban Development (UD) District as it is vague. The committee recommends rural-residential, rural-commercial, and agricultural districts. The committee recommends a review of the current Industrial district the nature of manufacturing has changed over the years and a more contemporary description may be warranted.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation Planning is a catch phrase that is becoming more popular in planning. This aspect of land use planning attempts to seek a balance between the need to move vehicles and pedestrians in an efficient and safe manner. The goal of "traffic calming" or "pedestrianization" in any long range plan is to make urban life pleasant. Another goal is a transportation system that alleviates congestion and supports future development.

Davison County and the City of Mitchell transportation systems are interconnected to serve its constituents. However, as the city expands the county's current issues in regards to road service will be assumed by the City of Mitchell, thus a need for continue coordination and communication.

Davison County and the City of Mitchell are products of railroad development and associated issues continue today. Communities were settled as result of railroad development and destinations. Trucks, automobiles, and airplanes have replaced trains as modes of transportation for passengers and goods. Despite many means of travel, railroad continues to be a key component to Mitchell's economy and land use policies.

Transportation planning also includes air travel, bicycling, sidewalks, in addition to roads and streets. The Land Use and Development Committee attempted to address these areas. We have since isolated our observations and goals to the present situations and how we can make the transition to the future. The committee suggestions may be applicable to both the city and county.

Air Transportation

The City of Mitchell is fortunate to have a quality airport and has been well maintained. It is unlikely the city will see commercial service due to a number of factors such as; few passengers, costs for security, luggage handling facilities, fire service and other services the public expect from a 'commercial' airport. Additionally, our proximity to the Sioux Falls airport also contributes to the lack of resources for our airport. The Mitchell airport will be remain a viable regional general aviation airport because of instrument landing, lighting and maintained runways. The Mitchell airport services the corporate sector in our community and visitors during hunting season and special events.

The LUD committee recommends the following for consideration by the city's leadership; 1) maintain a Runway Protection Zone through land use policies 2) Enhance the promotion of our airport to the general public 3) Improve signage and road improvements, specifically the turning of trucks turning to the airport.

RAILROAD

The city's founders early on recognized the potential of Mitchell as a railroad hub and as result the city and county experience significant growth that has sustained. This recognition is evident by naming the city Mitchell after Alexander Mitchell a prominent railroad industry leader at the time. The railroad industry has seen some revitalization since the 1970's due to the need to move particularly agricultural products by this method of transportation. The coal industry that is likely to expand in other states thus it is possible increased rail activity in the Dakotas. The railroad companies are preparing for expansion of new lines and updating their existing ones.

Land use policies in Mitchell must take into consideration the impact trains have on development and the environs around tracks. The issues include noise, traffic congestion, warning devices, track maintenance, access to industry and most importantly safety. The committee has identified some areas of the city that need immediate examination regarding railroad activities and the traveling public and residents, specifically 23rd Avenue, 8th Avenue, 3rd Avenue and Minnesota Street. Another recent area that needs to be examined is Spruce Street near the new Mitchell Technical Institute (Tech Center) campus.

Land use policies must also recognize some industries require railroad access. The policies should have standards that minimize land use conflicts and perhaps buffers may be required.

BICYCLE PATHS AND SIDEWALKS

Wellness and walkability have become important elements in transportation planning the past few years. The new focus is intended to decrease automobile dependency, reduce traffic congestion, increase sidewalk installation, and encourage recreational trails. The committee commends the city's leadership in development of a progressive sidewalk installation plan. The plan addresses federal regulations and potential liability issues. The committee also applauds park and recreation officials in promoting trails in the city's vicinity.

STREETS AND ROADS

The natural boundaries of the James River and railroads have created natural barriers thus limited some expansion of the city. The City of Mitchell like many western communities were platted a traditional grid system with streets running at right angles to each other that run north-south and east-west forming a grid from the city's hub. In the 1950's and 1960's the grid system for residential developments was replaced with asymmetrical streets and cul-de-sacs. The challenge for the development and policy makers is to balance the desire of property owners and developers with creative street layouts with those in engineering, planning and maintenance. The committee suggest

using *transit oriented concepts* which attempts to place higher densities of employment, residents, public, and commercial activities link to higher volume 'collector' streets, sidewalks and bike paths. The City of Mitchell adopted a master street plan in 2000 and it has served as the framework for development. The plans should be periodically reviewed.

Summary of Recommendations

- Maintain integrity of addressing system in place
- Invest in Airport improvements
- Maintain Runway Protection Zone
- Enhance awareness within the community of our airport
- Improve signage to the airport and consider road modifications
- Ease the flow to collector streets by connecting to Highway 37 By Pass, Sanborn overpass and Burr Steet Underpass
- Coordinate with the SDDOT when I-90 Bridge Interchange on Exit 332 is replaced to improve Foster street and design additional access to MTI's south campus and other properties in the area
- Maintain the current city sidewalk/bike path plan
- Endorse the City of Mitchell's 2002 Master Street Plan... it returns to Grid concept and need for collector roads that control traffic and speeds.
- Eliminate gravel roads in city limits
- Primary collector roads intersect every one-half mile intersections for approximately 300 feet
- East & West connections need to be investigated
- Improve the intersection of 7th Avenue and Burr Street
- Improve the intersection of South Rowley and Havens Avenue
- Pull Hitchcock Park's Main Entrance to First Avenue by purchasing the block and ½ block of First Avenue and west Foster Street for future expansion of parking and park improvements
- 3rd Avenue should be a two-way street for the East City limit, extending to the ByPass if not viable then extend 1st Avenue from Minnesota Street west following the railroad tracks and ending at Edgerton, so that West 1st Avenue could feed into Edgerton and proceed to 8th avenue which would allow access in the event of trains on 3rd Avenue
- Link west 8th Avenue to West 7th Avenue somewhere east of Minnesota Street to ease traffic congestion and ease the flow of east/west traffic through the city linking the east city limit at Foster to the west city limit on 8th Avenue
- Provide yield lanes off of 7th Avenue at Sanborn. To allow larger RV traffic northbound on Sanborn to make easier turns to the Corn Palace. The yield turning lane off 7th Avenue turning onto Sanborn would provide access to a collector to divert traffic after larger functions in Corn Palace Area.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AND IMAGE

The first and last impression visitors and citizens have our community must be a priority for both future projects and maintenance of our existing developments. The LUD committee feels particular attention should be toward our corridors and high travel areas because these areas are a reflection of our community's intention to welcome economic activity, new residents and hospitality of visitors. The committee feels strongly the city along with a cooperative effort of the citizens needs to continue their aggressive code enforcement programs which are essential for public health and sustainable property values.

IMAGE

The appearance of our community is essential for the above stated reasons; however city leaders cannot assume sole responsibility. Property owners and service organizations have been engaged and in most instances are willing to 'clean up'. The city's role in prevention or encouragement of attractive properties may be accomplished during project planning with staff and developer collaboration. Encouragement of green space allocations and attractive landscaping contributes to appearance and the environment.

COMMERCIAL

If the project is nonresidential the committee recommends advertising or signage regulations which encourage placement that is strategic, attractive and effective and prevents cluttering. Screening or sheltering should be required for uses that have outside material that should not be seen. Access management must also play a role in commercial development. If patrons have a bad experience in trying to get to property they may find the inconvenience displeasing. The city must be aware that policies and project approvals may need 'buffers for conflicting uses. The city needs regulations to insure construction complies with building, fire and zoning codes. The codes and policies are in place to insure the buildings are safe, functional and efficient. On the other hand, property owners should be encouraged to be creative in design and provide architectural features that simply 'wow' the public. The city must present the image that Mitchell is a great place to work, shop and receive services.

Mitchell is fortunate to have many businesses in town and our trade area is quite large. However, if the city doesn't maintain its relationship with the business community customers may flee to other commercial centers. Mitchell has a variety of commercial enterprises that offer many retail venues and many services consumers desire. Mitchell also hosts a number of franchises and big boxes. This is why it is vital strategies and partnerships are important to help existing businesses thrive as well future investments.

RESIDENTIAL

For most households their home is one of the most important investments they ever will make. Residents desire a place to live that is safe, clean and valuable. The committee recognized our resident desires a variety of housing choices. Some choose to own, some choose to lease. Some choose to live in higher densities than others. Some have substantial means to acquire or provide housing, others do not. Housing includes everyone from students to seniors. No matter what type of housing one chooses they require a 'home'. The community should insure housing developments meet the needs of the residents and neighborhood character and pride. Again, a strong enforcement policy is a must. Additionally, ample services and amenities are required. Housing standards need to provide privacy, consistency in placement, green space, easy access, and security. The LUD committee encourages policy makers to have policies taking into account the preceding, yet permit creative and functional design. Our neighborhoods are unique and have differing issues such as construction standards, historic character, or contemporary features. Therefore, the development community and city leadership need to address this diversity. The challenge is recognize the diverse neighborhoods, while at the same time trying to be consistent. Developers need some flexibility and the ability to control their projects. However, if the city could assist in encouragement of quality and affordable housing it should. The committee recommends city staff and developers to keep abreast of contemporary trends in the industry and the regulatory environment.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

The committee encourages our public and nonprofit facilities to emulate the appearance we desire from the public sector. Open spaces and public facilities must be cared for in a manner that provides safety, attractiveness, and cleanliness. Because, public facilities are typically funded by tax funds there is a tendency to construct only minimal requirements with few architectural flares. The committee feels the public may appreciate facilities that are functional, while still providing an attractive facility that reflects community pride, yet not extravagance. The committee understands the responsibility of elected officials to be prudent with public funds. There are many examples of public buildings that perhaps at the time of construction were perceived to be fiscally irresponsible by the public, but later became a symbol of the community desire to make a statement to the posterity. The citizens of community desire quality of life amenities and other public facilities such as parks, schools, hospitals, libraries, community facilities etc. The LUD committee reviewed the inventory of current facilities and pleased to report this community has many facilities and programs to enhance the recreational, educational, social and cultural experiences of our residents and visitors. The committee recommends the leadership continue to update, renovate and enhance the facilities as our citizens' desire change, or as population shifts. The city specifically encourages exploration of methods to improve water quality of Lake Mitchell.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The City of Mitchell has zoning jurisdiction within an area known as the area of Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The effect of this action by Davison County has been that the building permits issuance and zoning issues have been relinquished to the City of Mitchell. This action does not apply to road maintenance and other police powers under the county's control. Many citizens desire to live in a rural setting. City and county officials should continue a dialogue in implementation of policy and development review. Both entities need to develop procedures and strategies that mitigate issues as city limits expand and prevent rural and urban lifestyles colliding. This is particularly troublesome when agricultural interests and residential properties are not compatible.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

There are land uses that were constructed at the time when it was located outside the city limits. Today, as the city limits extends these uses maybe be incompatible with the new proposed uses that close the gap between the existing uses and new uses. The development community and approval agencies need to aware of the history involved in the placement of these uses and the potential issues that may result in incompatibility such as; traffic, odors, noise, and other disruptions. As previously stated an annexation policy should be developed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After months of meetings the LUD committee has some specific recommendations which are listed on the attachment. The committee encourages the city's leadership to commence the process of taking LUD committee's recommendations under advisement when developing and reviewing land use policies and development practices. Additionally, the committee recommends other applicable suggestions from the other FOCUS 2020 committees be interfaced with these recommendations. Mitchell has much to be proud of and the community is poised to continue to be a progressive city on the path for economic prosperity and an exceptional place to be.