

# 7.0 Action Plan

This section of the master plan expands upon recommendations included in previous chapters and describes specific short-term actions to stimulate reinvestment and regeneration. The actions are organized around three defined types of actions: policies, programs, and projects. The included recommendations should guide activities over the next 3 to 5 years. The matrix included at the end of this chapter includes a suggested schedule and timeframe. This is included as a useful tool to guide preparation of annual work plans of various entities responsible for implementations. As with any strategic plan, new ideas and opportunities, will emerge. This action plan in combination with the overall vision and guiding principles should be considered guidance for investment decision-making and work plan priorities. Although a lead organization is shown, it is assumed the consortium will support all efforts.

## 7.1 RECOMMENDED POLICY ACTIONS

### Billings City Council and Yellowstone County Commission Adoption of EBURD Master Plan

#### Discussion

Adoption of this plan by elected leaders is essential. Formal acceptance for the EBURD Master Plan demonstrates the elected leaders' commitment, provides direction to City staff, informs annual work programs, and makes recommended projects eligible for capital funds. Furthermore, adoption by government increases the eligibility for grants and loans.



Table 7.1-1 Recommend Policy Actions

| 7.1 POLICIES |  | Priority* | Lead Organization |
|--------------|--|-----------|-------------------|
| 1.1          | City Council & Co. Commission Adoption of EBURD Master Plan  | 1.0       | City              |
| 1.2          | Green Strategies Workshop                                    | 1.5       | BSEDA             |
| 1.3          | Revise Parking Code  | 1.0       | City              |
| 1.4          | Revise Zoning & Development Code (form based)                | 1.0       | City              |
| 1.5          | TIF District Expansion and Annexation Program - County Lands | 1.0       | City              |
| 1.6          | Integrate EBURD Master Plan w/ Adopted Plans & Policies      | 1.5       | City              |
| 1.7          | Confirm Compliance w/ Engineering & Site development Stds    | 1.0       | City              |
| 1.8          | Coordination with MET Transit                                | 3.0       | City              |

\* 1.0 = highest priority

## Actions

- Stakeholders should collectively shepherd the EBURD Master Plan through the review and approval process to have it formally adopted by the City Council and County Commissioners.
- Seek support and recommendations (and perhaps citizen positions) from all relevant boards, commissions, and committees including the planning commission, zoning commission, parking advisory board, park board, transportation advisory committee, public utilities board, energy and conservation commission, development process advisory review board, and policy coordinating commission.
- Engage the property and business owners, BIRD, BSEDA, the Steering Committee, and the Downtown Billings Association in the approval process.
- Actively participate in the annual budgeting process to ensure that EBURD projects are included in the annual work plans and 5-year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP).

## Sustainability and Green Strategies

### Community Workshop

#### Discussion

Throughout the planning process, stakeholders have expressed interest in a “green” mixed-use neighborhood that would retain industrial and manufacturing uses, attract re-investment, create jobs, and provide mixed-income and affordable housing. Initial discussions for the industrial portion of the plan focused on recycling land uses and attracting businesses that manufacture or distribute green products to locate in the district.

Affordable housing, transportation choices, and bicycle connections to the river, Rims, CBD, and MetraPark were stated as priorities. During the design charrette in February 2009, these ideas were expanded to include preliminary discussions of water-sensitive urban design, solid waste recycling, alternative energy, and district heating concepts, including combined heat and power distribution, and “green-collar” job creation. A review of emerging trends and existing and planned eco-industrial parks revealed that a broader palette of sustainable planning strategies and policies should be evaluated. Principles of industrial ecology may allow the area to capitalize on the synergy of the existing and proposed land uses and resources. Because this more expansive concept of sustainable and green strategies emerged late in the process, a workshop focused specifically on these opportunities, strategies, and policies is recommended. It is also recommended that an educational work session occur prior to finalizing regulatory changes, as the outcomes may affect policy and development regulations. A more detailed description of Sustainable Strategies, Opportunities, and Policy Options is presented in Chapter 8.

#### Actions

- Conduct stakeholder outreach and education to further explore opportunities and determine interest in the sustainable strategies described throughout this master plan (and in greater detail in Chapter 8).
- Identify public and private partners and resources and conduct a workshop.
- Conduct further research and analysis to assess the financial feasibility of a range of identified options.

## Revise Parking Codes

#### Discussion

The current parking code is a disincentive to reinvestment in the district. Recommended revisions to parking codes are described in detail in Section 6.2 of this report.

#### Actions

- Revise the parking code. BIRD, BSEDA, and the Downtown Billings Association should request that City County Planning revise the parking code and participate in this effort by reviewing proposals and supporting the required public outreach and education process.
- Conduct a parking study that includes an analysis of future parking pricing, development of a park-once district, parking requirements for development, and the development of a Parking Benefit District (PBD). This would provide a forum to begin a conversation with business leaders about the tradeoffs of parking pricing and the benefits of a PBD, which could provide a mechanism to fund enhancements to the public realm. The study could also help to refine a number of the other proposed programs listed below.
- Establish in-lieu fees program: Establishing an in-lieu program would promote flexibility in coordinating and timing improvements. It could provide an alternative to developers or land owners who must provide required parking and allow them to contribute to public parking facilities. Under such a program, developers and employers would be given the opportunity to reduce parking demand rather than increase

the parking supply. Credit could also be given to those that develop bicycle, pedestrian, or transit facilities. Acquiring land or entering into an agreement with the private land owner is required.

- Eliminate minimum parking requirements and implement parking maximums: Less restrictive parking policies can help to create financial incentives for developers to introduce denser, mixed-use building types. This would require creating an exception to City code (Article 6-1200 Site Developments) for the neighborhood.
- Identify location and plan for future structured parking facilities that will form a Park-Once program for the neighborhood: Locations need to be identified for structured parking facilities in the study area. Developing structured parking will free up parking lots for development and allow visitors to park during their visit. This program should be closely coordinated with the Downtown Billings Association and the City-managed Parking District.
- Encourage shared parking: Provide incentives and support for shared parking programs. Possibilities include using a Transportation Management Association or local planning agency to provide shared parking matching and rewrite City code. Anticipate potential spillover problems, and respond with appropriate regulations and enforcement programs. Rewrite City code or structure developer agreements to provide incentives for developers to build or participate in shared parking. The parking agreement with First Interstate Bank (FIB) wherein a partial rebate

of TIF district funds is provided in exchange for public use of parking built by FIB.

- Require builders to unbundle the cost of parking: The cost of parking should be unbundled from residential units so that people have a choice to not purchase parking when buying a condominium or renting an apartment. This strategy can improve housing affordability and improve financial pro forma for developers.
- Promote multi-modal transportation options: Encouraging a full range of transportation options within the study area—such as bicycling, walking, and transit use—will reduce parking demand.

### Revise Zoning and Development Codes

#### Discussion

Recommended changes to the zoning and development code are discussed in Sections 6.1 through 6.5. BSEDA, BIRD, property owners, and DBA should actively participate in this process and assist with education and outreach activities to garner support for zoning and regulatory changes. The intent is to create new districts that complement versus compete with the CBD.

#### Actions

- Develop Form-Based Code per guidance in Section 6.3 and Appendix B.
- Revise the regulatory plan and zoning map to create Mixed-Use Livability (MUL) and Industrial Sanctuary (IS) zones, per guidance in Section 6.4.

- Revise standards for Mixed-Use Livability (MUL) and Industrial Sanctuary (IS) zones, per guidance in Section 6.5.

### EBURD TIF District Expansion and Annexation Program

#### Discussion

Several parcels of County-owned land are adjacent to the rail line and east edges of the EBURD District. All landowners should be approached and encouraged to be annexed into the City and become part of the EBURD TIF district.

An Exposition Gateway Zoning District (EG) is proposed for lands west of MetraPark. These lands are highly visible with great access from Billings Heights via Main Street and 305, Lockwood via Interstate 90, and Highway 87. Traveling from the west end of Billings, the CBD, or South Billings, these lands are conveniently accessed from Montana Avenue / State Highway 87 and 4th and 1st Avenues N, both major arterials. Much of the land in this proposed district is still located in the County and, as a result, is not serviced by City utilities included in the TIF district.

#### Actions

- Form a committee to annex County lands. Establish clear roles, responsibility, and schedule.
- Conduct outreach, education, and information meetings with land owners individually and as a group. Assure land owners that the City, BESEDA, and BIRD are not proposing to assemble lands through condemnation. Clearly communicate that the purpose of the site master planning study is to add value, provide services, and achieve coordinated development and an attractive gateway.

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- Coordinate with the City and County to define the annexation process considering efficiency, cost, and incentives.
- Conduct a planning workshop to develop an Exposition Gateway District site master plan with the participation of property owners, BIRD, BSEDA, MetraPark, County and City elected officials, and public works and planning staff. See the expanded discussion below under Exposition Gateway Site Master Plan and Redevelopment Strategy.
- Ensure consistency with all elements of the Comprehensive Plan and associated plans, including the Heritage Trail Plan, Transportation Plan, STIP, TIP, Utility Plans, and Capital Facility and Improvement Plans.
- Engage and seek positions on City/County boards and commissions. These positions are advisory to the City Council, who ultimately determine City funding priorities and approve how all TIF district funds are spent.

### **Integrate EBURD Master Plan with Adopted Plans**

#### Discussion

The Comprehensive Plan and adopted plans serve as the basis for planning, capital expenditures, and annual work plans in the City and Yellowstone County. The Comprehensive Plan is continually updated to incorporate policy changes and findings of new studies. It is not unusual to see discrepancies between documents; however, it is in the community's best interest for these to be minimal and for plans to be aligned.

#### Actions

- EBURD stakeholders would be wise to push for stronger language in the Comprehensive Plan supporting infill and redevelopment of already developed lands.
- Similarly, infrastructure financing and maintenance policies should be reviewed and amended to provide incentives for reinvestment versus green field development.

### **Confirm Compliance with Public Works, Engineering, and Site Development Standards or Seek Approval as Demonstration Project**

#### Discussion

Coordinated Infrastructure Planning, Policy, and Investment

A number of standard and non-conventional parking, street, transit, landscape, and utility improvements are proposed in this master plan. Coordinate the capital planning of public utilities, streets, sidewalks, and drainage improvements closely with the Public Works Director. It will be most cost effective to implement improvements as cohesive projects. Much of the streetscape, roadway, and underground utility improvement work in the CBD has been accomplished with property owners contributing a percentage of the overall costs, with remaining funding coming from Community Transportation Enhancement and Air Quality Mitigation grants, tax increment funds, utility maintenance funds, and Community Development Block Grants.

#### Actions

- Explore with property owners their willingness to participate in Special Improvement Districts, whereby property owners contribute to projects through volunteer tax assessments.
- Work with City Engineer and Public Works Director on possible matches from City funds and grants as well as other creative funding approaches and utility policies.
- Include infrastructure improvements in City capital and planning budgets and annual work plans.

### **Coordination with MET Transit**

#### Discussion

2nd and possibly 3rd Avenue N are discussed in this plan as desirable transit routes. The plan also recommends a future circulator. Although this is long term, be certain MET Transit is aware of this recommendation and that street design standards and turning radii will accommodate these desired connections in the future

#### Actions

- Coordinate long-term transit plans and connections through the district with MET Transit.
- Coordinate final street design standards with MET Transit to ensure that safe, functional, and attractive bus stops are developed in the district.

## 7.2 RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS

### Business Retention - Retaining Existing Businesses and Encouraging Expansion

#### Discussion

The study area is home to a number of successful and unique businesses. Collectively, they reflect the agrarian heritage as well as the more cosmopolitan character of the community. As examples, there are boot and hat makers, luggage manufacturers who distribute globally, as well as long-term suppliers of ranch and farm supplies, equipment, and clothing.

Pay attention to the needs of these businesses and business owners for basic infrastructure improvements, and remember that they have been paying utility fees for years. Access to information is critical to the success and support of the master plan. Employ alternative outreach methods to engage the hard-to-reach and those who are unable or unwilling to attend meetings. The Linen District in Boise, ID, is a good example of an eclectic mix of uses that have created a distinct identity, and is now a destination.

#### Actions

- Create a brand and identity for the study area/ neighborhood.
- Create a neighborhood directory, map, and coordinated marketing programs to promote, grow, and retain existing businesses.
- Develop infrastructure replacement programs for existing businesses and provide incentives to invest, such as low interest loans, matching funds provided through grants, and utility maintenance funds and programs.

Table 7.2-1 Recommend Programs

| 7.2 PROGRAMS |   | Priority* | Lead Organization   |
|--------------|---|-----------|---------------------|
| 2.1          | Business Retention                                | 1.0       | BESDA               |
|              | Infrastructure Upgrades                           | 1.0       | BIRD / BSEDA / City |
|              | Promotion & Outreach                              | 1.5       | BIRD / DBP          |
|              | Assistance Programs                               | 1.0       | BSEDA               |
| 2.2          | Business and Developer Recruitment                | 1.0       | BIRD / DBP          |
|              | Federal Building                                  | 1.0       |                     |
|              | Colleges-MSU and Technology                       | 2.0       |                     |
|              | Medical Expansion-Billings Clinic                 | 1.0       |                     |
|              | Green Industries                                  | 2.0       |                     |
|              | Workforce and Student Housing                     | 2.0       |                     |
|              | Expansion of DT businesses and industries         | 1.0       |                     |
| 2.3          | Pursue Planning and Capital Grants                | 1.0       | BSEDA / City        |
|              | Economic Development & Job Creation               | 1.0       |                     |
|              | Housing   | 2.0       |                     |
|              | Energy, Air Quality                               | 2.0       |                     |
|              | Flood Management / Storm Drainage                 | 1.0       |                     |
|              | Transportation & Transportaion Enhancement        | 1.0       |                     |
| 2.4          | Branding and Promotion of District                | 2.0       | BIRD / DBP          |
|              | Simple Business Directory & Map                   | 2.0       |                     |
|              | Hone the Message & Vision                         | 2.0       |                     |
|              | Visibility on Websites-DBA, Chamber, Others       | 1.5       |                     |
|              | Outreach Tool Kit(s)- PPT and handouts            | 1.0       |                     |
|              | Green Strategies                                  | 1.5       |                     |
| 2.5          | Phase 1 Assessments of Priority Acquisition Sites |           | BSEDA               |
|              | Design Incentive and Assistance Programs          | 1.0       |                     |
|              | Communications and Outreach Program               | 1.5       |                     |

\* 1.0 = highest priority

- Improve communications, perhaps through distribution of a newsletter, by providing an interactive website, conducting an on-line survey, or hosting an interactive website with discussion features.
- Create supportive programs with organizational support to retain, expand, and enhance both businesses and facilities.

### **Business and Developer Recruitment – Attracting New Businesses**

#### **Discussion**

Potential businesses and institutions who are looking for space downtown have been identified, including a new Federal Office Building and expansion of Billings Clinic maintenance operations. As Billings grows, a number of businesses and institutions will need to or plan to expand. These opportunities and others that can be identified or emerge should be actively recruited. Concurrently, out-of-town recruitment should continue.

#### **Actions**

- Aggressively pursue existing opportunities. A new Federal Office building is a prime candidate. Billings Clinic has expressed interest as well. Make someone responsible for pursuing these leads in a timely manner.
- Proactively recruit in-town expansions of business, industry, institutions, and government. A number of businesses and institutions within the greater downtown may be short on space, and could possibly locate some of their administrative, maintenance, or office functions into the district. Identify potential businesses and approach them. Be prepared to speak about the vision, costs, and

benefits. Possible candidates include hospital and medical facilities, MSU-B programs or student housing, City offices and maintenance operations, federal and state offices, the larger industries, non-profits, and business incubators. As parts of the CBD, medical corridor, or N 27th Street districts redevelop, pay attention to what businesses may be displaced and recruit them into the district. Approach successful west end businesses who could benefit from a downtown presence.

- Proactively recruit out-of-town candidates. To recruit new businesses from out of town, the BIRD should work with the Chamber, BSEDA, and the Downtown Billings Association on a promotional strategy and materials. Be prepared to address basic incentives before they ask and have a quick response team in place to support them through the process.
- Identify and target appropriate business sectors and recruit. Define what is distinctive. For instance, the district could decide to extend the rail line, develop a shared rail loading platform, facilitate local or regional waste exchange, pursue LEED-ND certifications, or commit to renewable energy. Each of these provides a distinct market advantage. Promote to the segments that will respond to these differentiators.
- Inventory available property and businesses; focus on current ownership, improvements, conditions, and use. Many development agencies use students or interns to complete the GIS-based inventory after data fields are defined by professionals. It is important to understand and easily access the relative stability and value of properties and be able

to connect property and business owners with those seeking opportunities in the district.

### **Pursue Planning and Capital Grants**

#### **Discussion**

The appendices include information on potential funding sources. BSEDA has been very successful in obtaining planning grants for this project and infrastructure grants for other projects. Build on the momentum to date and seek additional federal and state loans and grants. There are a number of new and emerging programs.

#### **Actions**

- BIRD, perhaps through BID or allocation of TID funds, should fund research of all potential sources and retain BSEDA to apply for and secure funding.
- Property owner approved SIDs can serve as matches for these grants.

### **Branding and Promotion of the District**

#### **Discussion**

EBURD is a large district with the capacity and desire to support an eclectic mix of new and existing land uses. The EBURD Master Plan accommodates the mix of uses and suggests which uses are most appropriate in each district. Much can be learned by reviewing the planning, marketing, and build-out of the Homestead Business Park in the West End, as well as the evolution of the Linen District in Boise. Identifying distinctions and putting in place enough (but not too many) regulations to provide a desired element of certainty and identity are important elements. Branding and promoting this evolving district as a diverse, affordable, forward looking, and distinct place should be pursued, and a marketing and information campaign developed.

## Actions

- Coordinate closely with the Chamber of Commerce on branding and promotion.
- Prepare a simple map and directory of the existing businesses and properties. The community, BIRD, BSEDA, and other stakeholders will have a better understanding of who is located here. Businesses may benefit from increased visibility and a more organized approach to promotion to residents and visitors.
- Hone the message & vision and the supporting guidance and regulations. Do not try to be all things to all people in all locations. People locating and located here desire an element of certainty. Other sectors will be attracted by elements of distinction.
- Increase district visibility on maps, websites, and publications. Partner with BSEDA, Downtown Billings Association, chamber and visitors bureau, and others to be identified.
- Develop an outreach tool kit, a speakers bureau, and materials to support grant and funding applications. Begin promoting the district and educating the community about the existing district and what is planned. Local service and business clubs are good initial local targets. The materials should also be suitable to support grant applications and communicate with legislators and prospective new businesses and developers.
- Commit to green strategies. Explore and decide on the level of green strategies to be pursued and decide if LEED-ND certification is desired. Located near the existing

downtown, EBURD is well positioned to obtain certification. The recommendations on land use regulation, drainage, streets, and transportation will support this, as will the brownfields assessment initiative currently underway.

## Phase 1 Assessments of Priority Land Acquisition Sites

### Discussion

BSEDA, supported by a grant from EPA, is sponsoring a program to conduct brownfield assessments. The EBURD Master Plan identifies several projects that will require land acquisitions for parks, parking, infrastructure, or redevelopment.

### Actions

- Target outreach and communications to owners of properties that may eventually be sold for redevelopment, public parking, or a downtown green space.

## 7.3 RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

Table 7.3-1 Recommend Projects

### Develop Sustainability Strategies for the District

#### Discussion

Enduring and vibrant cities emerge where the citizens are guided by well-informed spatial plans, innovative programs and creative, sustainable urban renewal and environmental protection and restoration policies. Throughout the world, comprehensive, integrated, and sustainable approach to urban and environmental planning is guiding growth and transforming existing and shaping new communities. The importance of more closely integrating urban and natural resource planning has emerged as an important strategy to address complex challenges of rapid global urbanization, climate change, and increasing infrastructure demands in an era of declining natural and human capital.

#### Action

- Review the opportunities outlined in Chapter 8.
- Conduct a community workshop facilitated by sustainability experts. The workshop should be designed to inform and explore a full range of options.
- Develop a strategy and incorporate it into marketing and branding strategies.
- Determine if and what level of certification of the Neighborhoods and Buildings by USGBC is desired.
- Reward green investment through programs, development policy, awards, and recognition.

| 7.3 PROJECTS & PLANNING |   | Priority* | Lead Organization   |
|-------------------------|---|-----------|---------------------|
| 3.1                     | Further Development of Sustainability Strategies              | 1.5       | BSEDA               |
|                         | Information Workshop, Research Grants and Partners            | 1.5       | BSEDA               |
|                         | Explore LEED ND Certification                                 | 1.5       | City                |
| 3.2                     | Stormwater Plan   | 1.5       | City                |
|                         | Plan and Funding  | 1.5       |                     |
|                         | Implementation  | 1.5       |                     |
| 3.3                     | Master Plan for Exposition Gateway District                   | 2.0       | BSEDA / City / BIRD |
| 3.4                     | Land Acquisition & Consolidation Strategies                   | 2.0       | BSEDA / City / BIRD |
|                         | Green Space   | 3.0       | BSEDA               |
|                         | Land for Shared Public Parking-Fee in Lieu Program            | 1.0       | BSEDA / City        |
|                         | Land to implement LID Strategies                              | 2.0       | City                |
| 3.5                     | Stormwater Improvements                                       | 2.0       | City                |
| 3.6                     | Green Space   | 3.0       | BSEDA / City        |
| 3.7                     | Freight Improvements / Rail Extension                         | 3.0       | BSEDA               |
| 3.8                     | 2nd Avenue Streetscape Improvements                           | 3.0       | DBP / BIRD          |
|                         | Design & Funding (Explore SID with match from City and Grant) | 2.0       |                     |
|                         | Phase 1 Construction (Broadway to West Edge of District)      | 3.0       |                     |
| 3.9                     | Street Improvement Projects                                   | 2.0       | City                |
| 3.10                    | Utility Improvement Projects                                  | 2.0       | City                |
| 3.11                    | Parking Plan and Implementations                              | 2.0       | City                |
| 3.12                    | Bike Path Extension   | 2.0       | City                |

\* 1.0 = highest priority

## Storm Drainage Master Plan and Improvements

### Discussion

A master stormwater management plan needs to be prepared/updated for the EBURD, with an emphasis on addressing existing issues and flooding. As further development of stormwater design concepts described in Chapter 3, stormwater planning could incorporate more water-sensitive urban design including offloading of water upstream and in appropriate locations to cisterns and reuse for irrigation or industrial processes. Through application of water-sensitive urban design strategies, much can be done within the study area to mitigate flooding caused by runoff and to reduce usage of potable water. Techniques include rain gardens, green roofs and rain water collection systems, cisterns, pervious surfacing techniques, and bio-filtration swales.

Although these would help to mitigate long-term runoff issues in the study area, the construction of the two main trunk projects identified in the City's Storm Water Master Plan should be pursued immediately by placing them on the City's Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan so that funding can be secured.

### Actions

- Develop a comprehensive stormwater master plan and work with City Public Works Director to gain approval of a broad range of water-sensitive urban design strategies. Prepare a water budget and cost-benefit analysis to illustrate the economic viability of green strategies. Seek grant and demonstration funds for their implementation.

- Explore the feasibility of land acquisition south of the railroad tracks to implement the drainage and trail project.
- Include priority projects in the near term CIP; improvements are anticipated to include upgrades on N 15th Street and N 9th Street and their associated railroad crossings. Include more reuse and harvesting of stormwater in the final project, perhaps including cisterns in rights-of-way.
- Integrate planning of utilities, street improvements, streetscape enhancements, and landscaping and bike paths.
- Revise City stormwater policies and regulations to support drainage concepts described in this plan or provide a mechanism for these strategies to be a demonstration pilot project.
- Work on the new stormwater detention basin and 2nd Avenue N can be done later in conjunction with broader project scopes, although land acquisition for the detention basin should be pursued now.

## Exposition Gateway Site Master Plan and Redevelopment Strategy

### Discussion

Land in the recommended Exposition Gateway District is well suited for hospitality and entertainment uses that complement MetraPark facilities, possibly including hotels, restaurant, and indoor recreation facilities. This district is proposed to be the terminus of 2nd Avenue N, a street proposed to be developed with the character and qualities of a traditional main street. Redevelopment may offer opportunities for an architectural, grade-separated overpass that improves pedestrian and

perhaps bicycle connections to MetraPark.

Without a site master plan, individual properties on the east side of Exposition Drive will redevelop in an uncoordinated manner as strip commercial with multiple access points and inefficient egress to properties. This will increase traffic congestion and result in an even-more unwelcoming pedestrian environment for visitors to the City and distracting from the unity of the streetscape. Alternatively, site master planning may allow the creation of an attractive gateway, coordinated and shared access, and a cohesive image created through street and landscape standards.

The illustration included in this master plan (Figure 3.3-3) is intended only to convey the recommendation that a site master plan be developed and to illustrate opportunities such as shared parking, attractive gateway, access consolidation, transit access, and connections to MetraPark.

**Actions (to be coordinated with annexation and servicing actions described above under the EBURD TIF District Expansion and Annexation Program subsection)**

- Property owners within the EG zone should be approached and encouraged to participate in a site master planning effort that looks at opportunities that might be realized through annexation, expansion of the EBURD tax increment district, and a comprehensive look at the properties.
- Explore with land owners how a site master plan could add to land value and create a more attractive entryway and possibly be realized through a series of minor land exchanges, easements, property owner initiated partnerships or land consolidations,

or participation in a more comprehensive redevelopment consortium.

- Work with land owners on a site master plan and assess the feasibility of land exchanges, shared accesses, and / or voluntary assemblage of land exchanges to achieve a vision.
- Work with local developers and realtors to attract anchor tenants. Provide incentive programs including financing of infrastructure improvements through the City SIDs. Benefits include lower interest rates than conventional financing.
- Improve the public realm, including streetscape, landscape, and non-motorized connections. This district would be an appropriate location for a bus/transit stop, oversized vehicle parking, or park development that includes stormwater management. The design details should be addressed in the site master plan process.

### Land Acquisition and Consolidation Strategies

#### Discussion

A number of land acquisition and consolidation strategies are discussed in the master plan, including acquisitions of land for additional rights-of-way, for public shared parking, for future institutional and civic sites, a major Downtown green space, to implement drainage strategies, and land to be consolidated for major redevelopment projects.

#### Actions

- Begin to explore ownership, feasibility, strategies, and partners. This effort will help to focus priorities and opportunities.
- The Parks 2020 Plan outlines several strategies. The Trust for Public Land should be sought as a partner.
- Seek to include potential land acquisitions in the current Brownfield Phase 1 Assessment program and engage BIRD members in promoting the program.

### Stormwater Plan & Improvements

#### Discussion

As pointed out in earlier sections of the plan, areas of the study area (particularly the west end) are deficient in stormwater improvements. To retain existing and recruit new businesses, these needs must be addressed. Ideally, the drainage improvements are planned and implemented in coordination with other infrastructure improvements including streets, other utilities, and landscape improvements. This plan describes both conventional drainage and alternative drainage strategies. An integrated and sustainable approach to stormwater management views stormwater as a resource that can be harvested for use as irrigation water, potentially reused in industrial processes, and managed in a manner that cleanses, recharges, and creates other beneficial landscape features. It is anticipated that there will be new infrastructure funding programs and grants to encourage low-impact approaches to stormwater management.

#### Actions

- Coordinate integrated sustainability strategies and stormwater master plan.

- Develop engineering plans and budgets for all required improvements.
- Include projects in the City's Capital Facilities Plan (CFP).
- Explore funding sources, including grants and SID.

### Rail Spur Village Site Master Plan and Redevelopment Strategy

#### Discussion

A review of properties in the study area revealed that the west end of the EBURD offers the greatest opportunity for redevelopment and creation of a distinct new downtown neighborhood. Many of the properties are underdeveloped, in poor condition, or poorly maintained; however, the utility infrastructure is in good condition. Creating a new mixed-use district that includes some neighborhood commercial and a mix of housing is proposed. The centerpiece of the new district is a new downtown green space, perhaps anchored by a site for a significant public or institutional building. Opportunities discussed during the planning process include exploring the feasibility of locating the City library and office to this new neighborhood, a satellite campus for the College of Technology or MSU-B, as well as recruitment of a business or technical school with an associated business incubator. Mixed-use buildings with ground-floor retail are envisioned along the perimeter of the new neighborhood along 4th Avenue N, 1st Avenue N, and the streets with highest traffic volume. 2nd Avenue N provides a logical extension of the main retail corridor. Retail in the Rail Spur Village District is envisioned as businesses that service the neighborhood. The upper floors would accommodate housing, offices, or perhaps classrooms.

The proposed village would be connected to the CBD, North Park, and the industrial sector by a grid of streets. Streetscapes along 2nd and 3rd Avenues N between the CBD and this proposed district would be developed with a main street character, similar to that of the CBD. The 2nd Avenue N main street character will eventually extend the length of the study area. The site master planning process should support outreach initiatives, including attracting a housing development partner as well as institutional or government anchor, as addressed in the actions listed in Section 7.2.

**Actions**

- Prior to further refinement of the site master plan, land owners within or nearby the proposed Rail Spur Village District should be identified and contacted to assess the feasibility and methods of assembling land for the proposed village. Coordinate with actions listed above for Business and Developer Recruitment.
- Conduct a detailed inventory of the uses, ownership, and stability and refinement of a site master plan that responds to the findings and development programs of potential tenants. This could be accomplished in coordination with the actions listed above for Business and Developer Recruitment.
- Explore the feasibility of a land acquisition that in the short term can be used for shared parking and in the long term serve as a development site for an anchor tenant and structured parking. Coordinate with the actions listed in Downtown Park Planning and Land Acquisitions.
- The site master plan should respond to and engage potential partners with educational

institutions and housing and economic development authorities. Student, workforce, and affordable housing are appropriate uses in this district. A green jobs incubator associated with university, trade, or technical colleges should be encouraged. Coordinate this action with recruitment efforts recommended in Section 7.2. Work with local developers and realtors to attract anchor tenants and use the site master planning process to assist in recruitment, as described in Section 7.2.

- Improve the public realm including streetscape, landscape, and non-motorized connections. This district would be an appropriate location for a bus/transit stop, oversized vehicle parking, or park development that includes stormwater management.

**Downtown Green Space Planning and Land Acquisition**

**Discussion**

Parks, open spaces, and public amenities are essential to urban vitality. They raise land values and stimulate reinvestment. A large downtown park in the CBD was a recommendation of the Billings Framework Plan that has not been realized because of limited land and high land costs. Investments in public amenities should not be set aside for later because money is needed for new utilities or buildings. Currently, land costs are low, and acquisition of land for a major downtown green space in the west end of the study area is highly recommended. A major, well-programmed downtown green space can serve as an economic engine. A great public park will draw people from throughout the community to downtown, provide a focus for development, provide amenities to residents and businesses, and stimulate reinvestment.

**Actions**

- Research and target parkland acquisition; in the short term, this land may be used for shared parking, thereby generating revenue.
- Develop a funding strategy whereby new development pays only a portion of the cost through park fee in-lieu contributions.
- Explore grant funding sources and partnerships with organizations such as the Trust for Public Lands.
- Coordinate transit planning and oversized vehicle parking. In the short term, parking of oversized vehicles may need to be accommodated near downtown until a bus connection between MetraPark and downtown is realized. In the long term, an agreement to park oversized vehicles with trailers should be reached with MetraPark or a property owner in the industrial zone near or at MetraPark, providing bus connections between the east and west ends of the study area.

**Freight Improvements / Rail Extension**

**Discussion**

The value of rail for freight and recycling shipping and deliveries is recognized in this plan. To maximize use, potentially the rail could be extended to service a few more properties to the west, or a shared loading facility could be developed. BIRD members have also discussed a larger container transfer hub south of downtown.

### Actions

- Planning for shared access, rail extension, and/or a container hub should be coordinated with BSEDA economic development efforts, and these activities should be coordinated.

## 2nd Avenue N Streetscape Improvements

### Discussion

2nd Avenue N has been identified as the primary pedestrian corridor to be developed as a main street typology, connecting the existing 2nd Avenue N CBD retail district to the proposed Rail Spur Village District; and continuing east with a connection to the proposed Exposition Gateway District.

### Actions

- Work with the Downtown Partnership to program the extension of the existing streetscape improvements from N 27th Street to the new district. These improvements will provide a signal to developers that 2nd Avenue N will be a future hub of neighborhood retail activity and provide connectivity with downtown.

## Circulation and Streetscape Improvements

### Discussion

The EBURD is linked by a traditional street grid network that provides good internal and external circulation opportunities. The street pattern ties directly to the downtown grid on the west edge of the neighborhood, providing an opportunity to tie the western area of the study area to downtown commercial and business activities and at the same time provide improved connections to MetraPark on the east end of the

neighborhood. This adjacency of the west edge to the CBD is a guiding element in priority phasing of street improvements. Within the study area, the street dimensions are generous, but the current facilities are in poor condition; many streets lack sidewalks, curbs and gutters, adequate drainage, or bicycle and pedestrian amenities. Public investment in fixing substandard streets and utilities will demonstrate to owners that the City is committed to sustaining and regenerating the study area. For years, property owners have contributed to utility enterprise funds.

### Actions

- Implementation of the circulation plan will be somewhat dependent on how the study area develops. Several small street and circulation improvement projects could be considered as catalysts to spur new development. In part, these projects would send the signal that the study area is poised to support new investment with high-quality street design, efficient circulation, excellent access, and a walkable neighborhood environment. Specific projects to be considered for near-term implementation are listed as follows:
- Design and build the first two or three blocks of 2nd Avenue N within the district. This will require working with City and property owners to convert 2nd and 3rd Avenues N to two-way streets within the district and extending to (and possibly beyond) N 27th Street.
- Implement bicycle connections through the neighborhood. Building on the recent successes of the City and Yellowstone County in creating an excellent bicycle system, proposed bicycle enhancements and connections to the Heritage Multi-Use

Trail system should be prioritized. Increasing activity in the study area will help to attract attention to the changes taking place.

- Restripe and construct pedestrian and transit improvements on 4th and 6th Avenues N. Currently, tens of thousands of vehicles speed past EBURD every day on this couplet. Restriping the street to calm traffic and accommodate bicycles and implementing pedestrian crossing improvements would help to signal that there is a place there! Furthermore, over time, these investments will encourage people to use transit, bike, or walk from adjacent neighborhoods to access the study area.

## Planning and Implementation for Utility Enhancements

### Discussion

Although water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, and private utilities exist throughout most of the study area, some significant upgrades will be required to achieve proper long-term servicing. Improvements can be made in conjunction with the City of Billings Site Development Ordinance or through broader area-wide improvement projects that are in harmony with the district character. Prompt attention to deficiencies in these primary infrastructure facilities must be addressed in the near term. Stormwater system improvements are addressed in the Storm Drainage Master Plan and Improvements section.

### Actions

- Immediately, facilitate discussion between the City and property owners and arrive at an achievable and comprehensive strategy and plan for improving the infrastructure in the

neighborhood. Failure to do this may result in loss of businesses to other areas of the City and a decreasing rather than increasing tax base. These discussions should address green and Complete Streets strategies (as outlined in Section 4.3) as well as water-sensitive urban design strategies and the full range of green strategies described in Chapter 8.

- Plan to address basic water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater management systems as well as energy, communications (e.g., fiber optics, WIFI, and state-of-the-art internet services), as well as renewable, clean, and sustainable energy district-wide systems.
- Explore financing alternatives with property owners, the BSEDA, City public works, and energy companies.
- Coordinate the planning of utility, street, streetscape, transit, and bicycle improvements to avoid several disruptions to the neighborhood. If all improvements cannot be installed at once, address logical phasing.
- Address severe undersizing of the main trunks in N 15th Street from 1st Avenue N to the south side of the railroad tracks and lack of sufficient service to the east end of the study area. Many of these blocks in the east end have no surface improvements, such as curb and gutter, little or no grade to promote channeling of runoff, and very limited collection systems.

### **Conduct a Parking Study, Implement Parking Strategies, and Invest in Public Shared Parking**

#### **Discussion**

Historically and in the CBD, the City parking district has led the effort to develop public parking structures. There are a few examples, such as Montana Avenue, where effective public/private partnerships were forged. In this instance, a private developer built, paid for, and operated parking lots on public land, agreeing to sell the improvements back to the City as the Depot site and historic district redeveloped. As the district became more vital, it also became more pedestrian friendly, requiring fewer parking spaces per square foot of development.

#### **Actions**

- Implement the parking strategies described in the Revise Parking Codes subsection.
- Purchase land for public parking.
- Eliminate the minimum parking requirements.
- Develop an in-lieu parking policy and fee.
- Purchase and bank land for public parking.
- Develop a shared parking strategy.
- Consider parking maximums.
- Evaluate future parking pricing.
- Consider residential parking unbundling.
- Maximize on-street parking on north-south streets.

### **Bike Trail Extension**

#### **Discussion**

Community connections to the Yellowstone River are listed as priorities in several community plans included the Growth Plan and the Heritage Trail Plan. Extending the trail from the river to downtown is addressed in the Heritage Trail Non-motorized Transportation Plan. Implementing this extension would benefit the entire downtown. The proposed alignment is south of the rail line from the river to 13th Street, and paralleling the tracks along the north side into the CBD. The feasibility of following the active rail spur west into the CBD should be pursued

#### **Actions**

- Complete a trail alignment and feasibility study. Work with City, Chamber, and BikeNet Citizens group to determine right-of-way needs and costs and construction costs. Apply for CTEP and other grants to implement.
- Explore full range of land acquisition strategies. Consider including requirements or incentives to preserve a corridor adjacent to the rail lands through development agreements, purchase or negotiation of recreational use rights-of-way, and land owner donations.

EAST BILLINGS URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT WORK PLAN

Table 7.3-2 EBURD Work Plan

| 7.1 POLICIES |   | 2009 |  | 2010 |  |  |  | 2011 |  |  |  | 2012 |  |  |  |
|--------------|---|------|--|------|--|--|--|------|--|--|--|------|--|--|--|
| 1.1          | City Council & Co. Commission Adoption of EBURD Master Plan       |      |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |
| 1.2          | Green Strategies Workshop   |      |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |
| 1.3          | Revise Parking Code   |      |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |
| 1.4          | Revise Zoning & Development Code (form based)                     |      |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |
| 1.5          | TIF District Expansion and Annexation Program - County Lands      |      |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |
| 1.6          | Integrate EBURD Master Plan w/ Adopted Plans & Policies including |      |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |
| 1.7          | Confirm Compliance w/ Engineering & Site Development Stds         |      |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |
| 1.8          | Coordination with MET Transit                                     |      |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |
| 1.9          | Incorporate Priority Projects into City CFP and CIP               |      |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |      |  |  |  |

Table 7.3-2 EBURD Work Plan

| 7.2 PROGRAMS |   | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|--------------|---|------|------|------|------|
| 2.1          | Business Retention                                |      |      |      |      |
|              | Infrastructure Upgrades                           |      |      |      |      |
|              | Promotion & Outreach                              |      |      |      |      |
|              | Assistance Programs                               |      |      |      |      |
| 2.2          | Business and Developer Recruitment                |      |      |      |      |
|              | Federal Building                                  |      |      |      |      |
|              | Colleges-MSU and Technology                       |      |      |      |      |
|              | Medical Expansion-Billings Clinic                 |      |      |      |      |
|              | Green Industries                                  |      |      |      |      |
|              | Workforce and Student Housing                     |      |      |      |      |
|              | Expansion of DT businesses and industries         |      |      |      |      |
| 2.3          | Pursue Planning and Capital Grants                |      |      |      |      |
|              | Economic Development & Job Creation               |      |      |      |      |
|              | Housing   |      |      |      |      |
|              | Energy, Air Quality                               |      |      |      |      |
|              | Flood Management / Storm Drainage                 |      |      |      |      |
|              | Transportation & Transportaion Enhancement        |      |      |      |      |
| 2.4          | Branding and Promotion of District                |      |      |      |      |
|              | Simple Business Directory & Map                   |      |      |      |      |
|              | Hone the Message & Vision                         |      |      |      |      |
|              | Visibility on Websites-DBA, Chamber, Others       |      |      |      |      |
|              | Outreach Tool Kit(s)- PPT and handouts            |      |      |      |      |
|              | Green Strategies                                  |      |      |      |      |
| 2.5          | Phase 1 Assessments of Priority Acquisition Sites |      |      |      |      |
|              | Design Incentive and Assistance Programs          |      |      |      |      |
|              | Communications and Outreach Program               |      |      |      |      |

Table 7.3-2 EBURD Work Plan

| 7.3 PROJECTS & PLANNING |   | 2009 | 2010 |  |  | 2011 |  |  | 2012 |  |  |
|-------------------------|---|------|------|--|--|------|--|--|------|--|--|
| 3.1                     | Further Development of Sustainability Strategies              |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
|                         | Information Workshop, Research Grants and Partners            |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
|                         | Explore LEED ND Certification                                 |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
| 3.2                     | Stormwater Plan   |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
|                         | Plan and Funding  |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
|                         | Implementation  |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
| 3.3                     | Master Plan for Riverfront Gateway District                   |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
| 3.4                     | Land Acquisition & Consolidation Strategies                   |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
|                         | Green Space   |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
|                         | Land for Shared Public Parking-Fee in Lieu Program            |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
|                         | Land to implement LID Strategies                              |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
| 3.5                     | Stormwater Improvements                                       |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
| 3.6                     | Green Space   |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
| 3.7                     | Freight Improvements / Rail Extention                         |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
| 3.8                     | Second Avenue Streetscape Improvements                        |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
|                         | Design & Funding (Explore SID with match from City and Grant) |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
|                         | Phase 1 Construction (Broadway to West Edge of District)      |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
| 3.9                     | Street Improvement Projects                                   |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
| 3.10                    | Utility Improvement Projects                                  |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
| 3.11                    | Parking Plan and Implementations                              |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |
| 3.12                    | Bike Path Extension   |      |      |  |  |      |  |  |      |  |  |