



CITY OF HELENA
City-County Consolidated Planning Board
January 21, 2025 – 6:00 PM
Commission Chambers, City-County Building Rm 330
[Recording Available Here](#)

Members Present: Quinlan O'Connor, Chair; Gene Walborn, City Representative; Austin Kidd-Anderson, City Representative; Lois Steinbeck, County Representative; Adrienne Cotton, County Representative; Sharlet Berensten, County Representative

Members Absent: Joseph Gilbert; Conservation District Representative; James Sonntag, County Representative

City Staff Present: Michael Alvarez, Planner II; April Sparks, Administrative Assistant III; Christopher Brink, Community Development Director

County Staff Present: Greg McNally, Community Development & Planning Director; Kathy Macefield, City-County Historic Preservation Office

Call to Order and Roll Call

(0:00:05) The meeting was called to order and roll was taken. A quorum was present, with only two members absent. There were some technical difficulties with audio from the Board members on Zoom and a pause was taken to fix those issues.

Regular Items

Election of Officers

(0:02:34) Chair O'Connor asked for nominations for Chair. Ms. Cotton nominated Chair O'Connor. Ms. Steinbeck seconded the nomination. Chair O'Connor accepted the nomination. The nomination was unanimously confirmed. Ms. Cotton nominated Ms. Steinbeck for Vice-Chair. Ms. Steinbeck declined the nomination. Mr. Walborn nominated Mr. Sonntag for Vice-Chair. Ms. Cotton seconded the nomination. The nomination was unanimously confirmed. [Mr. Sonntag accepted the nomination and confirmation via email with Ms. Sparks the following day.]

Attendance

(0:04:32) Chair O'Connor spoke briefly to the importance of regular attendance and asked that board members please remember to add the meetings to their calendars and communicate with staff when they were not going to be in attendance.

Public Hearings

- 1. Make a recommendation on a resolution recommending an amendment to the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy to include the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan.**



- (0:05:24) Chair O'Connor introduced the item, noting that this was first heard at the previous meeting, but action could not be taken due to a lack of quorum, that the recording of the meeting had been provided to all members of the Board, and asked for any public comment on the item.
- (0:06:20) Kathy Macefield, City-County Historic Preservation Office, gave comments related to historic preservation, and how that is reflected in the plan. There were no further public comments. Board discussion was opened at this time.
- (0:09:31) Ms. Steinbeck asked about the next steps after a recommendation was made at the meeting. Mr. Alvarez noted that it would be presented to City Commission for adoption, and would be appended to the 2019 Growth Policy, which would help inform the upcoming Land Use Plan. Ms. Steinbeck asked a follow-up question regarding how changes can be made after the adoption of the plan. Mr. Alvarez asked some clarifying questions, and ultimately answered that these planning documents are a guide for development in the area, and the plan could be amended through Commission action. Ms. Cotton asked about the absence of a solution for the two at-grade railroad crossings in the district. Mr. Alvarez noted the plan calls for keeping the at-grade crossing on Roberts, as it is seen as a vital link through the neighborhood. Further, regarding the crossing at North Montana, a roundabout has been recommended for the intersection of Lyndale, North Montana, and Helena Avenues, and that further study is necessary for the area north of that intersection, which Transportation Systems has lined up grants for those studies. Ms. Cotton noted her appreciation for the thorough answer, and for the proposed mixed-use zoning and additional housing. Ms. Steinbeck also voiced her appreciation for the plan. There was no further discussion.
- (0:20:22) Chair O'Connor called for a motion. Ms. Steinbeck made a motion to recommend to the City Commission to adopt the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan as part of the 2019 Growth Policy [corrected after second and vote from "city land use plan"]. Ms. Cotton seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

- (0:21:46) There was no other business. It was noted the next scheduled meeting is February 18, 2025 and that there would be at least one item, with the County bringing forward a conservation easement, and that the next meeting could be held entirely over Zoom if it is the Board's preference.

Public Comment

- (0:22:22) There was no public comment.

Adjournment

- (0:22:36) The meeting was adjourned.