



MISSOULA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
MISSOULA DOWNTOWN FOUNDATION

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DOWNTOWN MISSOULA HERITAGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED; HERITAGE MISSOULA PROGRAM LAUNCHES WITH IMPLEMENTATION

Following a year of public outreach, research, writing and analysis, Missoula's first-ever Heritage Interpretive Plan was unanimously approved last week by the Missoula City Council and the Missoula County Commissioners, completing the multi-agency adoption process. The [Downtown Missoula Heritage Interpretive Plan](#) was developed in collaboration with the Downtown Master Plan to preserve the spirit of place, promote community identity, and foster civic pride through meaningful story-telling and interpretation.

With the understanding that Missoula has long been a gathering place, the Downtown Missoula Heritage Interpretive Plan is focused on four different themes related to gathering:

- Landscape and Homelands
- Create & Exchange
- Community Life
- Memory & Experience

With financial support from the Montana Department of Commerce and the Missoula Downtown Foundation, the Downtown Heritage Plan was written by Missoula-based Historical Research Associates in collaboration with the Downtown Missoula Partnership and the City of Missoula Historic Preservation Commission.

"This was an incredibly rewarding project for our company to work on," said Jimmy Grant, lead author and historian with Historical Research Associates (HRA), an historical consulting firm headquartered in Downtown Missoula since 1974. "It's not often consultants have the opportunity to work in their own community, and working with our local leaders and community members really gave us good insight on what makes Missoula so special."

The plan will guide downtown heritage interpretation by encouraging audiences to make meaningful connections to the shared human experience. It identifies interpretive goals and programs, examines existing conditions, and provides recommendations to implement over a period of time, as well as planning and interpretive resources for educators and others.

With adoption complete, the Downtown Missoula Partnership (DMP) recently created a new program - Heritage Missoula - to help shape the downtown experience and celebrate the distinct character of the community by tying together key natural and cultural resources into a cohesive network. One of the first projects of Heritage Missoula will be the Downtown Heritage Trail, a self-guided walkable immersion experience that connects four destination anchors with wayfinding and story-telling. Just last month the Missoula Downtown Foundation approved funding for the first four anchor medallions to identify the Heritage Trail.

“Much like the Freedom Trail in Boston, the Missoula Heritage Trail will help tell the story of who we are as a community in a way that speaks to both historical and modern-day happenings in our city,” said Alan Newell, member of the Heritage Missoula Committee and the MDF Board of Directors. “The Heritage Missoula Committee will help ensure the plan is implemented over time, and there is a lot of work to be done to help ensure the history of this place is valued and appreciated over time.”

The Downtown Missoula Heritage Interpretive Plan can be viewed online at www.missouladowntown.com/heritage-missoula. For more information or to connect about Heritage Missoula ideas, contact DMP Program Director Kalina Wickham via email (kalina@missouladowntown.com) or phone (406-543-4238).

Downtown Missoula: Connecting Our Community!