



# Envision ENNIS

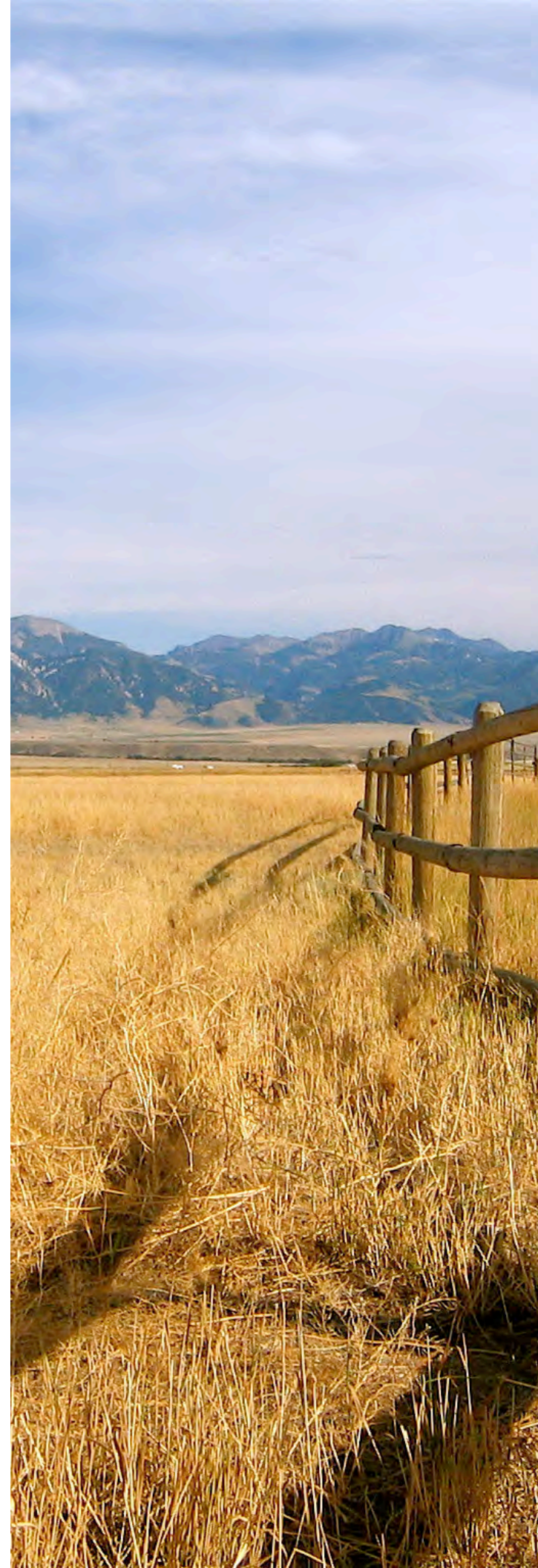
— 2021 MASTER PLAN —

DRAFT FOR REVIEW NOVEMBER 10, 2021



## ADOPTION LETTER

DRAFT



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2021 Envision Ennis Master Plan was not possible without the support, input, guidance and consideration from the Town Commissioners and Project Steering Committee.

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The Master Plan was primarily driven by the voices of participants representing the people of Ennis and its surrounding areas. Special thanks goes to those who participated in the process by contributing thoughts and ideas online or in-person at any or all of the community meetings or other events.

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# 1. Executive Summary

The Envision Ennis Master Plan is an updated approach to Ennis' long range planning framework. The last long-range, comprehensive plan for the Town of Ennis was adopted in 1996. At that time, Ennis was not experiencing the extreme growth pressures and tourism boom that it is today. The 1996 Comprehensive Plan could not have addressed 2021's challenges which include a wave of incoming residents, rapid increases in the cost of living, and differing community priorities. The primary goal of this master plan is to create a healthier, more connected and economically successful town that sustains the lifestyles and landscapes that attract so many people to Ennis.

## A NEW VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Much of the community and stakeholder input gathered in this master planning process was formed into the plan's Vision, Goals and Objectives - aspirational statements that emphasize how the Town will achieve desired outcomes. They are organized around seven planning themes: 1) *Town Character* which addresses protecting the Town's heritage, lifestyle and feel; 2) *Community Services + Infrastructure* to ensure sustainable infrastructure and equal access to services; 3) *Town Governance*

+ *Fiscal Sustainability* to ensure responsible financial decisions and good governance; 4) *Land Use + Growth* to focus directly on changing land use patterns; 5) *Economics, Recreation + Tourism* that focuses on building up the Town's unique qualities to foster economic resiliency and a diverse workforce; 6) *Housing* to help supply a mix of housing types and affordability; and 7) *Transportation + Mobility* which seeks to make all modes of transport easier and safer throughout Town.

## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan provides a vision for growth in Ennis and within the Ennis Planning Area by illustrating the character of land uses and activities that occur in town. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) offers guidance for decisions on land use applications and is derived from input from the Steering Committee, stakeholders, Town staff and the general public. Future Land Use planning has not been a significant tool for leaders and decision makers in the past and is intended to be adapted and amended to ensure flexibility and compatibility with future conditions and form a basis for revisions to the Town's Land Use Code.

## MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations were developed to address issues that were identified through public input and technical analysis and were vetted with the Steering Committee, greater community and Town staff. They represent both short-term and long-term projects, policies and actions that will help implement the Goals and Objectives in this plan. Recommendations range from smaller efforts like "Issue a Request for Proposals for an update to the Town's Land Use Code," to larger capital investments like "Partner with Madison County on the construction of a regionally-serving recreation center with aquatic facilities".

## PHASING + FUNDING PLAN

To ensure that this plan is actionable, it concludes with an ambitious Implementation Plan of actions and steps required to achieve the Vision and Goals defined by the Ennis community. The master plan cannot be implemented by one jurisdiction, agency or group, therefore the implementation actions are intended to be fostered by all pertinent groups, and not solely by the Town itself. The Implementation Table identifies responsible agencies that should help implement the plan, potential funding strategies (when applicable), and assigns each action a priority level to serve as a roadmap for the Town to follow.



# 2. Introduction

## 2.1 | PREFACE

The last long-range, comprehensive plan for the Town of Ennis was adopted in 1996. At that time, Ennis was not experiencing the extreme growth pressures and tourism boom that it is today. While the Town adopted a Growth Policy in 2014, it serves as a long-range plan for growth, and lacks actionable strategies to address the Town's capital improvement needs and the threat of changing character.

Nestled in the beautiful Madison Valley on the Madison River, Ennis is one of the most famous fishing destinations in the state. Highway 287, one of the main routes to Yellowstone National Park, is the Town's Main Street. Rugged peaks offer a backdrop to the valley floor's open ranchlands, providing stunning views and a rural, small-town feel.

Anyone who lives in or visits Ennis recognizes the area's exceptional beauty, strong western heritage, quality recreation and friendly people. But Ennis is at an important crossroads where the decisions it makes today will have long lasting implications. Tourism has become the Town's largest industry, bringing an influx of people to visit and to live.

However, increases in both tourism and population have created both opportunities and challenges. The influx of people has put significant strain on the Town's infrastructure, housing affordability and social fabric, as long-standing and newer value systems come into conflict.

### WHY DOES ENNIS NEED A MASTER PLAN?

With limited resources and no planning staff, the Town has fallen into a pattern of reactivity, fixing problems as they come up. With the current increasing growth pressures, this is no longer an option. The need for a community vision for the future of Ennis and a plan for how to achieve that vision is critical. For Ennis to grow intentionally and maintain its character, proactive planning for the next 10-15 years is paramount. Conditions and community priorities have changed since the 1996 Plan, and a robust community engagement effort is needed to understand the current needs and hopes of Ennis residents.

A community is like an ecosystem; to thrive, all of the parts must work together in order to sustain the Town's future. This master plan is meant to guide policy makers and implement programs to protect the health, safety and welfare of Ennis' community character for future generations.



### WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

The Envision Ennis Master Plan is a guiding document for decision-makers that defines an aspirational vision for how the Town grows and evolves. Under Montana law, the master plan is an advisory document and is not regulatory in nature. It provides direction for Town staff, elected officials and developers on the community's priorities for the future use of land, housing, transportation, infrastructure, local economy, growth, and Town character.

### HOW TO USE THIS MASTER PLAN

For local government, this plan reflects community desires for resource investments and should inform decision making for consistency with the Plan's Vision and Goals. The Town should actively pursue the recommendations in this master plan in a strategic manner as funding is available. For the development community and property owners, this plan provides greater clarity about the desired Town character and type of future development.



## 2.2 | MASTER PLAN MOTIVATORS

Most issues faced by Ennis are connected to growth, and the Town's capacity to continue to provide safe and reliable public services, housing and economic opportunities for all citizens. But on a deeper level, the fundamental issue is change, and where people have resistance to change usually ties back to changes to quality of life. The following issues of concern are based on the pressing challenges that Ennis is dealing with in 2021 and how they provide motivation for the master planning elements and land use actions put forth in this plan.

### 1. There is more development pressure in Ennis than has existed in the last 10 years due to several key factors.

- **People are moving to Montana.** The state's population has increased by 10% since 2010, and recent natural disasters in places like California have caused migration surges of people coming to Montana to escape wildfires and live the Montana lifestyle.
- **The Covid-19 pandemic has caused an exodus from cities.** Nation-wide, people are leaving cities for wide-open spaces, many of whom have the resources to pay a higher price. Many of those who have owned second homes in Ennis chose to live there permanently during the pandemic, and have stuck around. The increase in location-neutral workers has made living in Ennis more attainable for those with the ability to work from home.
- **The cost of living in Bozeman is rapidly increasing.** The median sales price has increased by 45% for single family homes and by 41% for condo/townhomes from

March 2020 to April 2021. While Bozeman is the hub for jobs in the region, people are getting priced out and are forced to relocate to neighboring communities like Ennis and commute for work.

- **Big Sky Resort is growing.** The Resort is expanding its terrain and building more lodging and condos. Employees of the Resort and new businesses are looking for seasonal housing and Ennis is one of the closest communities on their radar.
- ### 2. The cost of living is increasing, threatening to displace community members and change the Town's character.
- **Land, housing and building costs are increasing rapidly.** The median sale price of homes in Ennis increased from \$266,000 in 2015 to \$450,000 in 2020 - a 69% increase in 5 years. There is currently a 2-year waitlist for contractors in the Valley for any new construction project.
  - **The long-term rental stock has significantly decreased due to short-term rentals.** Ever since the advent of companies like AirBnB and VRBO, property owners have been converting income properties from long-term rental units into short-term rentals because they can be more lucrative. Most of the Town's workforce relies on stable rental housing which is now extremely hard to find. "Help Wanted" signs are hung in most businesses in Ennis, and business owners cite the lack of affordable rental housing as the reason they are unable to recruit and retain employees.
  - **Second homeownership is increasing.** Madison Valley's population increases by an estimated 3,000 people in the summer when seasonal residents occupy their



properties. Second homes take properties off the market for full-time residents and further increase the cost of housing.

### 3. The Town lacks a sufficient tax base and funding for public improvements.

- **Property taxes do not generate enough funds for needed public improvements.** The Town is less than a mile square, which means its tax base is only about 850 properties. With no sales tax, the Town is solely reliant on property taxes for funding, which are insufficient. There is no funding available for needed public improvement projects, and increased tourism and population is putting strain on the Town's infrastructure.

### 4. The community lacks a unified vision for the future of Ennis.

- **Fear of growth has caused unrest in the community.** Because the rate of growth has been rapid in the last five years, this change has caused some community members to take on a "no growth" mentality. Other community members understand that growth is inevitable but desire that it be smart and intentional.

### 5. The Town's Land Use Code is outdated.

- The Land Use Code was written at a time when Ennis was not experiencing the growth that it is today. Recent development applications have caused unrest in the community because certain elements within the Code lack proper criteria from which staff and elected officials can use to make decisions on development applications. They pose a liability to the Town and do not serve the intended purpose of retaining the Town's western character.
- There is question over the legality of the zoning that extends out one mile from the Town's boundaries. It is not administered by the Town and is not recognized by Madison County. It is unclear if this zoning was ever legally adopted by the Town and County.
- There are no design guidelines for Downtown Ennis, which poses a potential threat to the western character as developers have no aesthetic guidance or understanding of what the community wants to see in new development.



## 2.3 | PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee was formed to offer guidance throughout the planning process and act as a sounding board for the project. Community members were chosen by the Town to sit on the Committee who represented the following diverse organizations and sectors of the Town's economy:

- Ennis Chamber of Commerce
- River guides/outfitters
- Madison Valley Medical Center
- Property management
- Downtown business owners
- Construction/building
- Lodging

The Steering Committee met four times over the plan's 9-month planning process at different project milestones:

- Meeting #1, April 27, 2021: Develop over-arching goals for the Master Plan, discuss the Community Engagement Plan
- Meeting #2, May 27th, 2021: Discuss findings from initial engagement and survey, identify issues and opportunities
- Meeting #3, July 20th, 2021: Workshop initial Master Plan recommendations and project ideas
- Meeting #4, October 13: Discuss the draft plan, refine Master Plan recommendations, finalize goals/objectives/implementation actions



## 2.4 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the plan's development, public involvement was critical to understand current community issues and opportunities. The process engaged a wide spectrum of community members including full-time residents, retirees, elected officials, business owners, local developers, community organizations, non-profits and new residents. Outreach was conducted through community meetings, group stakeholder interviews, workshops, one-on-one interviews with business owners, a town tour and an online and mailed survey.

The Community Engagement Plan (see Figure 1) was developed in collaboration with Town staff and the project Steering Committee to ensure that the process was inclusive and outreach was effective at reaching Ennis residents. Information about the project and ways to engage were available on the project website from its launch in April 2021 through the Plan's final adoption at: [www.cushingterrell.com/envisionennis](http://www.cushingterrell.com/envisionennis).

Each touchpoint with the community informed the plan's vision, goals, objectives and recommendations to outline priorities for future policy and the implementation plan. The Community Engagement Plan and results of the outreach done are described on the following pages.





Figure 1: Community Engagement Plan

Date(s)	Task	Purpose	Outreach
<b>PHASE 1: PROJECT AND ENGAGEMENT KICK-OFF</b>			
April 27	Steering Committee Meeting #1	Develop over-arching goals for the Master Plan, discuss Community Engagement Plan	N/A
April 28 - May 24	Online + mailed survey	Ask general questions about public concerns, recent successes and vision for the future	Flyers, social media ads, newspaper ads, press release, email blasts. Over 700 surveys were mailed to area residents.
May 27 + 28	Library Listening Sessions	Hold in-person input sessions to hear the community's ideas for future opportunities	Flyers, social media ads, newspaper ads, email blasts
<b>PHASE 2: ANALYSIS + FINDINGS</b>			
May-June	Group Stakeholder Interviews	Group interviews on topics like housing, economy, sustainability with stakeholders from organizations identified by the Town	N/A
May 27	Steering Committee Meeting #2	Discuss initial findings from initial engagement and survey, identify key issues and opportunities	N/A
July 14	Virtual Public Meeting (streamed at the Library and Senior Center)	Present research + findings from Phase 1, discuss survey results, Q+A/feedback session	Flyers, social media ads, newspaper ads, press release, email blasts
<b>PHASE 3: GOALS AND DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES</b>			
July 20	Steering Committee Meeting #3	Workshop initial Master Plan recommendations and project ideas	N/A
July 21	Downtown Design Workshop	Workshop design solutions for Main Street, discuss project opportunities	Project website, email blasts
<b>PHASE 4: DRAFT MASTER PLAN</b>			
Oct 13	Steering Committee Meeting #4	Get feedback on the draft plan, refine Master Plan recommendations, finalize goals/objectives/implementation actions	N/A
Oct 13	Public Meeting #2	Present draft Master Plan, design options + trade-offs, Q+A/feedback session	Flyers, social media ads, newspaper ads, press release, email blasts
<b>PHASE 5: FINAL PLAN REVISION + ADOPTION</b>			
Nov XX	Public Adoption Hearing	Master Plan is presented to Town Council for Adoption	TBD



The Town of Ennis, Montana is developing a Master Plan to ensure a high quality of life, character, and economic vitality for years to come. You'll find information about the project and ways to get involved on this page.



Figure 2: Screenshot of project website

Follow us on [Facebook!](#)

**KEY DATES**

7-21-21: Pop-up Workshop

Stop by the Library from 10am to 6pm to participate in a workshop where we will be doing real-time sketching of some project ideas!

**TIMELINE**

Phase 1: Project and Engagement Kick-off  
Introduce the community to the engagement process, hold stakeholder

**WHAT WE HEARD**

The outreach for this plan was conducted in multiple phases beginning in April of 2021 and completed in December 2021.

- Phase 1, held in April and May, was designed to get the word out about the project and identify community values, issues and opportunities.
- Phase 2 involved updating the Town's vision based on community input.
- In Phase 3, opportunities were identified that meet the Town's vision and goals and objectives were formed to help achieve that vision.
- In Phase 4, the draft plan was presented to the community and Steering Committee for feedback, and final revisions were made in Phase 5 before Plan adoption.

Outreach for community meetings and events was conducted through many outlets including advertisements and press releases in the

Madisonian, posters in businesses and community gathering spaces, the project website, email blasts and general word of mouth.

**ONLINE + MAILED SURVEY**

The survey was available online and was mailed to over 700 area residents using voter registration addresses. It received 152 responses, representing about 15% of the Town's population. Nearly 50% of respondents lived within the Town of Ennis, and 15% worked in Ennis.

"Small Town Character" was the top reason why respondents chose to live in Town, followed by the beauty of the natural environment and the people/sense of community (see Figure 4). When asked to describe the identity of Ennis, common answers included small town, western, friendly people, rural, great sense of community, fishing and classic Montana, among others (see Figure 3).



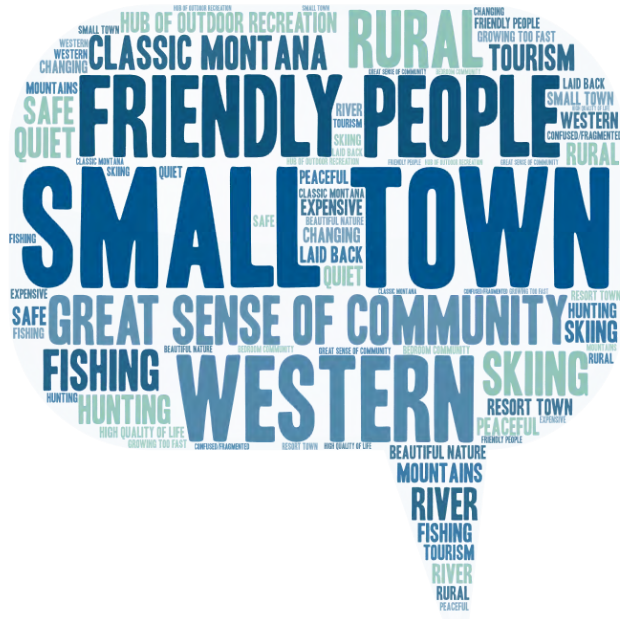


Figure 3: Word cloud from public survey on the identity of Ennis

When asked what businesses/services they would like to see in Ennis that aren't currently available, the most common responses were a grocery store with lower prices, more restaurants and nothing else is needed. Most respondents travel outside of Ennis for specialty healthcare (dentists, eye doctor, etc), groceries and household purchases.

Survey respondents were split on their feelings about growth - just over half felt that there as been too much residential growth while 40% felt that residential growth has been adequate and 9% felt that there hasn't been enough growth. However, when responding to commercial growth, 54% believed that growth has been adequate, 33% said there has not been enough commercial growth and 13% think there has been too much.

Respondents to the survey were relatively tax-adverse. When asked if they would support a property tax increase to help fund a list of choices, the top choices were none of the above (39%), affordable housing (17%), a community/aquatic center (15%), parks and trails (13%) and all of the above (13%). However, 52% of survey respondents said they would support a resort tax for infrastructure improvements, 28% supported a Business Improvement District and 20% supported a property tax increase.

Survey respondents indicated that infrastructure improvements were prioritized in the following order: road paving (29%), other - variety of answers (24%), water system upgrades (22%), sidewalks (13%) and stormwater infrastructure (12%). When asked what their biggest concerns were about the future of Ennis, respondents cited growth management (22%), loss of identity/character (17%), housing affordability (16%), infrastructure capacity (13%), water quality (10%), water supply (10%), and other - variety of answers (8%).

**Why do you choose to live in ennis?**



Figure 4: Top reasons why survey respondents live in Ennis

**LIBRARY LISTENING SESSIONS**

The purpose of the listening sessions was to have in-person conversations with community members to better understand concerns and potential opportunities for the Master Plan. An estimated 15 people came to each meeting, and attendees had the opportunity to place pins on a map to show where they thought future projects could happen and discuss their ideas with fellow community members and the planning team.



Library Listening Session

**BUSINESS OWNER INTERVIEWS**

The planning team went door to door to businesses on Main Street to interview them on what's working and what's not working in Downtown Ennis. All business owners cited affordable housing for employees and recruiting/retaining employees as their number one concern. Other concerns included parking, needed infrastructure improvements on Main Street (like stormwater drainage), and having to limit business hours due to staffing issues.

When asked what they would like to see out of this Master Plan, common answers were affordable employee housing, a public parking lot on Main Street, public restrooms, garbage cans on Main Street, street trees and planters in Downtown Ennis, enhanced lighting, and a sustainable funding source for Main Street improvements.

**GROUP STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

Interviews with subject-matter experts (identified by the Town) were conducted in group settings to better understand the issues and opportunities around the following key topics:

- Community Services
- Infrastructure
- Arts + Culture
- Parks, Recreation, Trails + Open Space
- Land Use + Development
- Tourism



## VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

The Virtual Public Meeting had a great turnout of about 30 people on Zoom, 15 at the Library and 5 at the Senior Center. After a brief presentation on the current issues identified and public survey results, the meeting was opened up for a Q+A and input session. The discussion included water and wastewater infrastructure and the capacity for growth, the character of new growth, how to slow or better manage growth, annexation, and a sustainable funding source for infrastructure improvements.

## PUBLIC MEETING ON DRAFT MASTER PLAN

A public meeting on the Draft Master Plan was held at the Library on October 13, 2021 where community members had the opportunity to give feedback on project recommendations, a proposed site plan for Main Street improvements, and the draft Future Land Use Map. About 15 people attended the meeting and feedback was split on a few key items:

- The transition from angled to parallel parking on Main Street - some meeting attendees loved the concept and others disliked the idea.
- The roundabout at the “Y” intersection - most attendees understood the benefits of increased traffic flow but some were against roundabouts in general.

Generally, meeting attendees had positive feedback about the draft Future Land Use Map and the project recommendations presented at the meeting.



October in-person Public Meeting



October in-person Public Meeting

## 2.4 | PLAN FRAMEWORK

As the Master Plan was developed and through community engagement, key themes emerged as elements that the community stated were highly valued. These seven Planning Themes provide a way to organize the Master Plan’s Goals and Objectives and a discussion on how Ennis’ existing community characteristics will guide long-term change.

### SEVEN PLANNING THEMES:

TOWN CHARACTER

COMMUNITY SERVICES +  
INFRASTRUCTURE

TOWN GOVERNANCE +  
FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

LAND USE + GROWTH

ECONOMICS, RECREATION +  
TOURISM

HOUSING

TRANSPORTATION + MOBILITY



# 3. Background + Existing Conditions

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Town of Ennis is part of Madison County, located in southwestern Montana. Ennis is set in the beautiful Madison Valley between the Madison Range to the east, and the Tobacco Root Mountains and Gravelly Range to the west (see Figure 5). Dan Mountain and an alluvial fan provide a dramatic backdrop looking east from Main Street. Along the eastern boundary of Ennis is the Madison River, one of the most famous trout fishing rivers in Montana. The Town provides easy access to Yellowstone National Park, located 70 miles, or just over an hour, to the southwest. Many trails and campgrounds offer recreational opportunities within the surrounding national forests. Ennis Lake is a popular place to recreate for tourists and locals alike, located five miles north of the Town.



Figure 5: Regional Context Map



Figure 6: The Rodeo is an important part of Ennis' history and culture

## 3.1 | TOWN BACKGROUND

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the Madison Valley was long prized by the Shoshone, Flathead and Bannock tribes for the abundance of hunting in the area. Due to harsh winters, they were unable to make permanent homes in the area but came back each spring to enjoy all the Madison Valley had to offer.

Lewis and Clark crossed the Madison Valley in 1805, but it would be several more years before settlers discovered the area. In May of 1863, gold was discovered in nearby Alder Gulch and soon after Madison County was created and Virginia City was made the capital of the Montana Territory. The fertile Madison Valley provided agricultural products for the gold

campers. William Ennis, a freighter born in Ireland, homesteaded the land along the Madison River that is now the Town of Ennis. In 1863, he and his family started a general store, post office, hotel, boarding house, blacksmith shop, and saloon. Three major stage lines freighted through Ennis by the late 1880s. The Town was incorporated in 1956.

Throughout the years, Ennis has continued to provide services to ranching families in the Madison Valley. The Town has been putting on a 4th of July Parade and Rodeo since 1935, bringing thousands of people to town for a true western experience.



## 3.2 | EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

This section of the Master Plan includes a comprehensive overview of existing conditions used to provide context for current conditions and to lay the groundwork for future opportunities. The topics covered in this assessment are aligned with the issues and priorities identified in conversations at town meetings and public events with residents, business owners and elected officials.

### TOWN CHARACTER

Throughout the planning process, the public's number one concern was "preserving small town character". To understand this deeper, we began to ask what "small town character" means to community members. Many cite the friendliness of the community or neighbors helping neighbors, others point out that there are no big box stores in Town, or that buildings are a maximum of two stories tall. Perhaps it's the fact that the Town is surrounded by active agricultural and ranching uses. These qualities that contribute to the character of Ennis have been identified as important to preserve.

Architecturally, the Town has a distinct western character. Main Street is lined with one to two story commercial buildings of similar scale that incorporate natural materials like wood and stone that emphasize a strong connection to the natural environment. Second story apartments and overhanging structures over the sidewalks on Main Street contribute to the western feel. There are a variety of housing styles throughout Town ranging from rustic log cabins to



*Willie's Distillery contributes to the Town's western character*



*Log cabin-style architecture is common in Ennis*

Victorian-style homes. Most new development has tried to reflect the Town's western character, however there are no regulations in place that require it. As Ennis grows, it may consider design standards to ensure new development is compatible with existing buildings.

The Town has three main gateways: from the north on U.S. Highway 287, from the east on U.S. Highway 287, and from the south on State Route 287. From the north and south, industrial land uses line the highway and there is no true arrival experience. Similarly, if entering town from the east, drivers abruptly enter Main Street after driving past agricultural lands for miles.



*Ennis Fourth of July Parade*

### MAIN STREET

Main Street in Ennis is not only where the largest concentration of businesses and services exist in Ennis, it is also a U.S. Highway and the primary thoroughfare in Town. This means that it gets a lot of vehicular and truck traffic on a daily basis. While it wants to be a highly walkable street that caters to a "Main Street" shopping experience, this is difficult to achieve with so much vehicular movement on a daily basis. The community has expressed a desire for beautification and improvements on Main Street like street trees, benches, lighting and trash cans that can contribute to Downtown Ennis' sense of place.

### YEAR-ROUND VITALITY

Ennis' busiest season is summer when it sees thousands of seasonal residents and visitors come to and through town for fishing and other recreational opportunities. The Ennis Chamber puts on numerous events in summer months, including the famed Fourth of July Parade, that have gained increased attention in recent years. Fall is also busy during hunting season, but in winter, the Town sees little activity. This seasonality in economic activity can be challenging for small businesses to survive winter months. The Chamber of Commerce should continue its efforts to promote Ennis in the winter and offer events and activities year-round.



## COMMUNITY SERVICES + INFRASTRUCTURE

Ennis has facilities and services for both residents and visitors. It was identified early on in the planning process that with rapid growth and increasing tourism, the Town's infrastructure is being stressed and the current funds from property taxes alone are insufficient for major infrastructure improvements.



### COMMUNITY SERVICES

#### Law Enforcement

The Town employs one full-time law enforcement officer, and a second part-time officer position was filled for a few months but was not replaced once that individual left the position. A grant from the State of Montana has funded the staffing of a second position, but it is only funded for one year. When the Town's police chief is off duty, the Madison County Sheriff's Department handles law enforcement in Ennis.

#### Fire and Emergency Services

The Madison Valley Rural Fire District serves the Town of Ennis and surrounding Madison Valley with 35 volunteer firefighters and three part-time administrative staff. Recent development proposals have brought to light that the fire station in Ennis is not equipped with a fire truck that can reach the third floor of a building.

#### Medical Services

The Madison Valley Medical Center built its campus on Highway 287 in 2009 and due to its regional service, it has already outgrown the facility. The hospital is looking to relocate just north of town where a larger campus will be constructed with units for employee housing.

#### Senior Services

The Ennis Senior Center opened in 2015 and provides Meals on Wheels and dine-in service for senior citizens. Funding for the Senior Center comes from the Madison County Senior Services mill levy, Southwest Montana Aging and Disability Services, and donations. The center is run on volunteer labor and provides activities and aid service for community members over 50.

Other services for seniors include Madison Valley Manor, a nursing home that provides long-term care, and Generations Assisted Living.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

The Town of Ennis owns and operates two wells that provide potable water to residents and businesses within Ennis via two wells in town. A third well is currently being considered to provide additional capacity and redundancy as the community grows. Waste water treatment is provided through a lagoon system and treated water is discharged into the Madison River.

As a part of this planning process, existing reporting documentation was reviewed, provided by Great West Engineering who has served as the Town's consulting engineers for several years. A site visit was also conducted and study of the operation of both water wells and the waste water treatment facility.

#### Water System

Water in Ennis is pumped and metered by both existing wells. The total metered water delivery was nearly 45 million gallons in 2019 and nearly 56 million gallons in 2020. Well number 2 was constructed in 1979 and has 350 GPM capacity as well as the water right. Well number 3 was constructed to replace Well number 1 in 2014. It is capable of delivering 350 GPM but the Town only has a water right of 200 GPM.

The Town is currently delivering water at a combined rate of 550 GPM or 792,000 GPD which is above current demand. However, if Well number 2 were to be out of service, capacity could not meet demand hence the



desire by the Town to provide an additional well to cover this redundant need as well as accommodate future growth demand. The Town is delivering flow capacity throughout the community above minimum recommended fire flow capacity. Currently there is capacity to handle approximately 372 additional residential service connections.

#### Wastewater System

The existing 3-cell lagoon system was designed for 2,300 people and 0.24 million gallons/day (MGD). Currently, the Town is discharging a daily average of 0.11 MGD of treated effluent into the Madison River. This leaves reserve capacity of 0.13 MGD. MDEQ standards estimates the production of roughly 100 Gallons per day (GPD) for a 2.5 person-household. According to Great West Engineering, there is a waste water capacity reserve of 520 homes in the treatment facility.





Stormwater pools on both sides of Main Street and freezes in winter months

## Roads

The road system in Ennis is centered on U.S. Highway 287 (Main Street) and Montana Highway 287, which function as regional arterial routes through town. Both highways are owned and maintained by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). The remainder of town is connected by both paved and unpaved (gravel) roads that are maintained by the Town. In 2007, Great West Engineering completed an Ennis street improvement plan that has been partially implemented. In 2007, the Town had 5.25 miles of asphalt roads and 3.5 miles of gravel roads. Many of the gravel roads have upgraded to asphalt but the exact amount is unknown.

Of particular concern is the lack of a formal storm water collection system on Main Street. Water ponding in low areas affects road conditions and ultimately leads to deterioration of subbase. In winter months when water pools at the curbs where there is angled parking, it then freezes, posing a safety hazard for people getting out of vehicles that step directly on ice. Installing a proper drainage system for stormwater will be costly but could be an opportunity to rethink what parking looks like on Main Street.

Biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), is a measure of the amount of oxygen required to remove waste organic matter from water. Currently, MDEQ requires that the Town meet secondary standard for BOD. The Town has been able to meet these standards but may not be able to continue to do so as growth continues.

MDEQ also requires Ennis to meet secondary standards for suspended solid (TSS) discharge. There have been 13 violations of TSS concentrations (algae) since 2018. During the summer months, algae is produced in the lagoons because the water is sitting in the lagoons longer due to the fact that the lagoon treatment is oversized for the current amount of effluent entering the lagoon. Added water input from community growth may help this condition with the TSS violations.

## TOWN GOVERNANCE + FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

In recent years, the Town of Ennis has struggled to find staff and individuals willing to serve as elected officials. Ennis relies on Madison County for help with planning services and other resources. Noticeable gaps in staff/boards include a Town Manager/Administrator to implement a master plan, a planning director/staff planner to review development applications, and a town planning board to advise Town Council on development applications within town.

Ennis is solely reliant on property taxes for its funding, which are insufficient. The Town is less than a mile square, which means its tax base is only about 850 properties. There is no funding available for needed public infrastructure improvements, and increasing population and tourism are putting additional strain on the Town's aging infrastructure. An additional funding source will be needed for capital improvements to ensure Ennis remains a great place to live and visit.

The Town also lacks a strategic plan or policy for annexation. Annexations have traditionally taken place in a piecemeal manner, when property owners approach the Town, rather than based on a plan that looks out 5-10 years in the future and considers where growth is desired and the capacity of infrastructure.

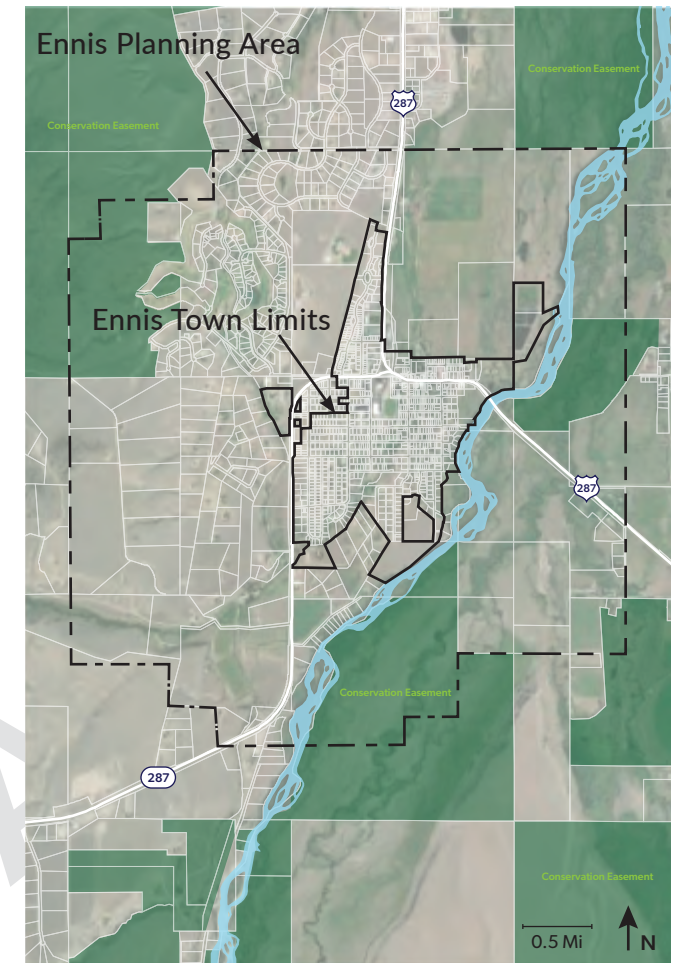


Figure 6: Ennis Planning Area

## LAND USE, GROWTH TRENDS + PROJECTIONS

Ennis has a designated Planning Area which encompasses the land within a one-mile radius of the Town limits (see Figure 6).



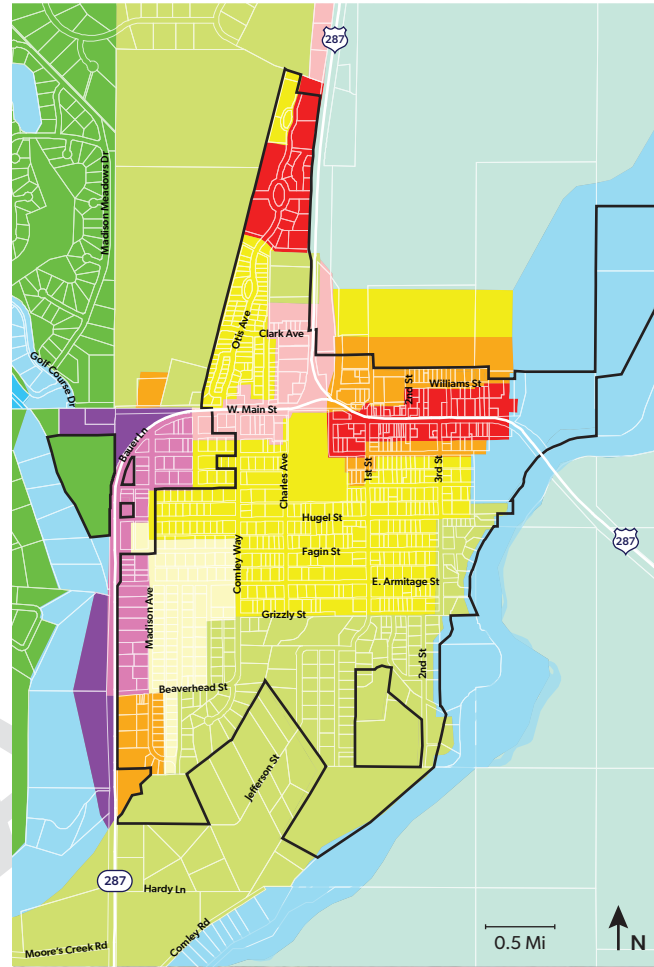
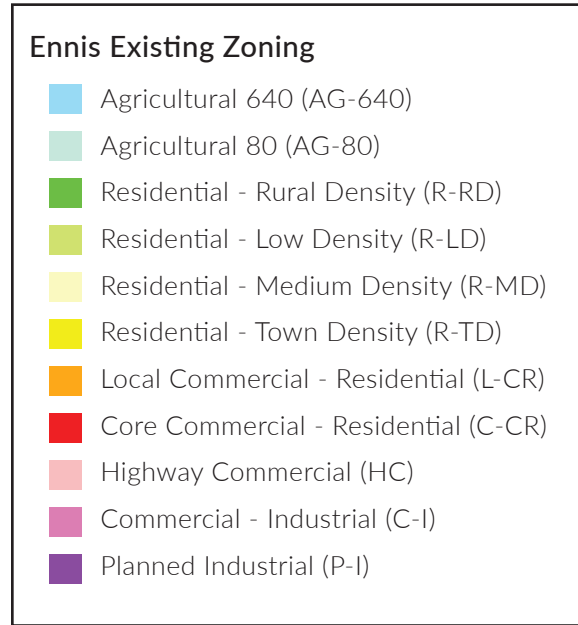


Figure 7: Existing Zoning

**EXISTING ZONING**

Zoning is a tool used by local governments to encourage orderly development and aid in the creation of livable, vibrant communities. In the Town of Ennis, the intent of the current zoning regulation is:

1. Stop Suburban Sprawl
2. Protect the Natural Environment
3. Retail Small Town Character
4. Protect Agricultural Lands
5. Promote Basic Sector Jobs

Without an adopted building code, the zoning regulation also becomes the only way in which the Town can protect public health & safety when new development is proposed.

The current code considers four types of districts, Agricultural, Residential and Mixed Commercial/Residential, and Nonresidential. The Main Street area is found within the Mixed Commercial/Residential area and is zoned Core Commercial - Residential. Updated in 2002, this district was created with the intent to “maintain and strengthen the downtown core area and facilitate the continuance of its western, small town character.”

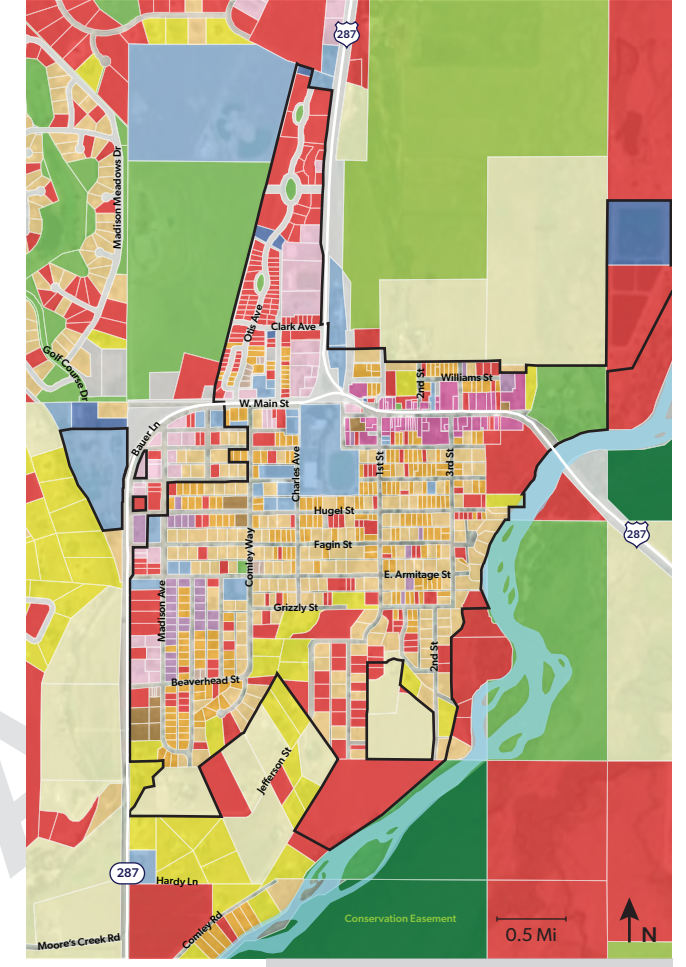
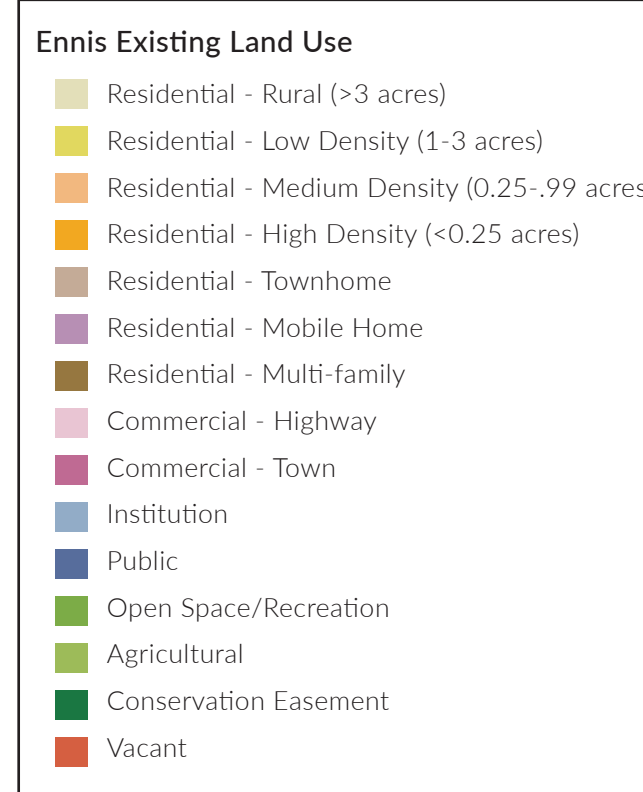


Figure 8: Existing Land Use

Since the 2002 update, the Town of Ennis has gone through many changes but continues to value the Main Street core. As the needs of the town change, so too should the zoning regulation.

**EXISTING LAND USE**

The Town and its Planning Area are relatively constrained from expanding further due to floodplain to the east around the Madison River and large conservation easements to the north and south. Figure 8 shows existing land use. Entering Town from the north, land uses are mostly agricultural with ranches and associated commercial/industrial uses. The “North 40”, the Town’s most recently platted subdivision, has a mix of uses, with mostly vacant parcels in the northern portion and highway commercial and

residential uses in the southern portion. U.S. Highway 287 meets State Route 287 at the “Y” intersection, and east of the “Y” intersection turns into Main Street and Downtown Ennis. The Town’s core commercial district is located along Main Street and stretches into the blocks north and south of Main Street. West of the “Y” intersection there are continued highway commercial uses.



South of Main Street is the traditional town development of Ennis, almost exclusively residential uses ranging from high to medium densities, with a typical parcel size of less than a quarter acre. West of Town are mostly low density residential subdivisions, including the Valley Garden Golf Village, Pintail Ridge, Sky View, Antelope Meadows, Glenview Heights, Elkhorn, West Terrace, and Echols subdivisions.

Other important land uses include Lions Club Park, the Town's largest park, which sits at the edge of Main Street and features ball fields, river access and trails. Across the River is the Ennis Fishing Access which provides camping areas and recreational river access.

The Rodeo Grounds are just west of the North 40 outside the Town's limits, where rodeos and community events are held. The Ennis School District has plans to move their track and field facilities to the bus barn parcel just northwest of Town.

There are many properties within the Old Town's grid that have never annexed into Town. The largest concentration is just west of Town between Bauer Lane and Comley Way. These properties have individual well and septic systems that do not meet MDEQ standards, and pose a health risk to both users and adjacent neighbors in Town.

Figure 9: Ennis Planning Area Existing Land Use

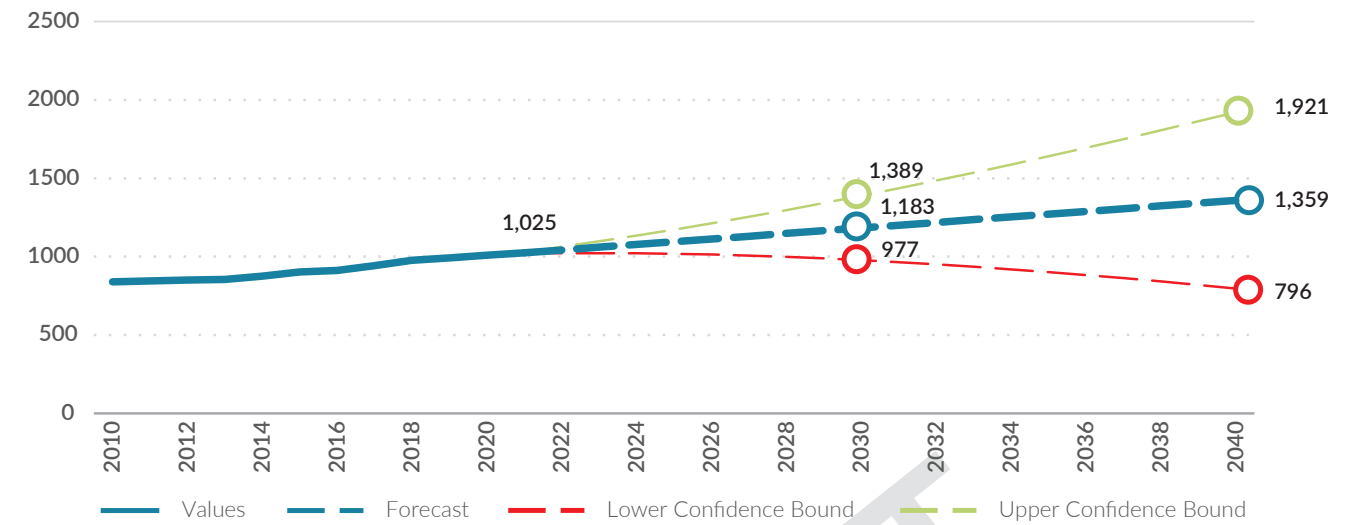
	Acres	% of Total
Agricultural/Conserved Lands	1,211	31%
Residential	1,154	29%
Vacant	922	23%
Open Space/Recreational	292	7%
Public/Institution	126	3%
Commercial	76	2%

**GROWTH TRENDS + PROJECTIONS**

**Population (Ennis Town Limits)**

U.S. Census data for towns the size of Ennis generally has a large margin of error due to a small sample size, and data is only available for the area within the Town's boundaries. This exercise has used both Census population data for the Town of Ennis and an a land use/housing growth analysis for the Ennis Planning Area to paint a picture of potential growth in and around Ennis. Since the 2010 U.S. Census, Ennis has experienced an estimated annual growth rate of just over 2%, adding an estimated 186 new residents to the community, which is slower than Madison County's growth rate of 12% between 2010 and 2019.

Figure 10: Population Projections



According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Ennis has an estimated population of 917 residents. Utilizing U.S. Census data from 2010 through today, an exponential smoothing forecast estimates that Ennis' population will increase by 25% by 2030, reaching 1,183 residents based on historic trends (see Figure 10).

**Seasonal Residents**

It is important to note that the Census defines a resident as someone who spends most of the year in Ennis, which excludes seasonal residents that primarily spend summers in town. We can estimate the number of seasonal residents a few ways. The first is taking the total estimated number of housing units in the Planning Area (788), and with an estimated vacancy rate of 6.6% and an average household size of 2 persons, we can estimate a total population of 1,472 residents (seasonal and year-round) within the Planning Area. Another source for

Figure 11: Planning Area Population Projections

	2010	2020	2030
Town of Ennis	838	917	1,193
Ennis Planning Area	1,361	1,472	1,647

determining seasonal residents is property records. According to County Assessor's data, there are 317 parcels in the Planning Area that have listed property owners with a permanent mailing address outside of Madison County, meaning they are likely seasonal residents. Using the average household size of 2 persons, this calculates to about 634 seasonal residents. This means that an estimated 43% of the residents within Ennis' Planning Area are seasonal residents.



**Demographic Trends**

Ennis is home to an aging population (see Figure 12), with a median age of 48.4, which is much older than the state’s median age of 39.9, but comparable to Madison County’s median age of 53. The Town is 52% female and 42% male, and the population is predominantly (95%) white.

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

The 2014 Ennis Growth Policy covers natural resources, and should be referenced for further detail on this topic.

**Agricultural Lands**

Ranching and farming are an important part of Ennis’ history and culture. Agricultural lands contribute to the area’s rural character and also play a role in its economy. A high proportion of the land in Madison Valley is permanently protected in conservation easements, and 31% of the land in the Ennis Planning Area is agricultural and/or conserved. The Madison Valley is primarily cattle country, producing prize Herefords and Black Angus cows along with rotating crops of hay and grain.

**Gravel Resources**

There are no gravel pits located within the Ennis Planning Area.

Figure 12: Median Age

	Median Age	% of Population 65 years and older
Ennis	48.4	28%
Madison County	53	29%
Montana	39.9	18%



**Water Resources**

Surface water resources in the Ennis Planning Area include the Madison River, Moores Creek, O’Dell Creek and Bear Creek. The water source for domestic use in Ennis is groundwater pumped from two wells. There are irrigation ditches that traverse the Ennis Planning Area that supply water for agricultural operations.

Moores Creek, which runs through Downtown Ennis, is listed as a water quality-impaired stream by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Impairments include E coli, nutrients, sediment, temperature and alterations to streamside vegetation. The main causes of the creek’s degradation are urban encroachment (reduced riparian buffer widths), riparian grazing, irrigation diversions, loss of riparian habitat from irrigated cropland, and residential development.

The Madison Valley Conservation District is working with property owners to do continued stream restoration to improve the health of Moores Creek. O’Dell Creek is also listed as a water quality-impaired stream. Impairments include alterations to streamside vegetation and physical substrate habitat alterations due to riparian grazing and stream over-widening.

While development within the Town of Ennis and contiguous parcels utilize the Town’s water and wastewater systems, development outside Town relies on individual well and septic systems. There is statewide concern over the impacts of an increasing number of individual well and septic systems on area water quality and supply. Groundwater quality in the Planning Area has been a concern due to elevated temperatures and naturally occurring minerals such as Arsenic.





Ice gorging on the Madison River

### Wildlife

The same land that provides space for outdoor recreation and drives the tourism industry is also crucial habitat for fish and wildlife. Portions of the Ennis Planning Area provide winter range for moose, elk, pronghorn antelope, mule deer and white-tail deer. Other wildlife seen around town are black bears, foxes, skunks and a variety of bird species. The Madison River is a blue ribbon trout stream that attracts thousands of visitors each year for a premier fishing experience. In any land use and development decisions, wildlife habitat and corridors should be considered and protected.

### Hazards

According to the Madison County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), The Town of Ennis and Ennis Planning Area are low to moderate priority based on the current or potential wildfire risk. This means that significant negative effects from wildfire are less likely because the area is within five miles of a fire station. Other factors that decrease significant wildfire risk are the fact that the lands surrounding the Town area irrigated and the Town's setting is relatively urban.

Flood is another potential hazard risk in Ennis. Most winters, gorging occurs in the Madison River which is when ice forms on the river, builds up, then creates icy dams that divert the normal flow of water into either new channels or a pond, flooding low-lying areas. Another potential source of flood is in the northeast portion of the Ennis Planning Area where soils are poorly drained and the water table is high.

## ECONOMICS, RECREATION + TOURISM

### ECONOMICS

Ennis has a tourist-based economy that relies on its natural beauty and recreational assets that bring visitors to town. The predominant occupation category in Ennis is “service occupations” that represents 35% of residents’ employment (see Figure 13). Of those service occupations, the most prevalent industry is “arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services” at 28%. Anecdotally, the Chamber of Commerce estimates that the largest employers in Town are the School District, the Madison Valley Medical Center and Willie’s Distillery.

According to U.S. Census estimates, there were 760 people over the age of 16 in Ennis in 2019, only 478 of which were part of the labor force, meaning over a third of the Town’s working-age population was not employed. It is safe to assume a large portion of those not employed are retired based on the Town’s median age.

### INCOME

The median income for residents in the Town of Ennis in 2019 was \$46,280, which is lower than Madison County and the State of Montana (see Figure 14). However, the percentage of individuals below the poverty line in Ennis has decreased from 14.8% in 2010 to 5.2% in 2019, which is lower than Madison County (8.4%) and

Figure 13: Employment by Occupation

Estimated 2019 Civilian Employed Population (16+)	478	
Service occupations	168	35%
Production, transportation and material moving occupations	89	19%
Sales and office occupations	89	19%
Management, business, science and arts occupations	82	17%
Natural resources, construction + maintenance occupations	50	11%

Figure 14: Median Income

	Median Income 2010	Median Income 2019
Ennis	\$38,558	\$46,280
Madison County	\$42,998	\$54,107
Montana	\$43,872	\$54,970

the State of Montana (13.1%). This confirms that Ennis is home to working-class individuals and families, the majority of whose employment caters to the tourism industry.

### TOURISM

While world-class fly fishing and stunning mountain views attract visitors specifically to Ennis, the Town is also situated on the way (for many) to Yellowstone National Park, and thousands of travelers stop in Town on their journey to shop, eat, or take in the views. The Chamber of Commerce promotes tourism by



organizing events and running a website and social media page. Tourism, overall, is growing significantly in Ennis, and each year (not including 2020) the Town sees record numbers of visitors. Yellowstone National Park’s visitation increased 14% between 2019 and 2021, and an estimated 30% of Yellowstone visitors come through Ennis. The most recent Fourth of July Parade brought an estimated 10,000 people to Town. Anecdotally, the Chamber has been told by business owners that they pay for January and February (the slowest months) with the revenues from the Fourth of July.

Winter months are significantly slower than late spring, summer and fall in Ennis. The Chamber is working to establish a healthy tourism market in winter by organizing more events year-round and promoting the town through advertising campaigns. Main Street is almost exclusively small businesses that sometimes struggle without visitors to support them during the winter.



Fourth of July Parade

Main Street business owners have raised concerns over the availability of parking for their customers in recent years, as there are no formal public parking lots for Main Street businesses. Main Street currently has angled parking with no time limitations, and there are several small parking lots owned by business owners that are open to the public but there is no signage directing visitors to them. Whether or not the parking problem is perceived, this Master Plan intends to address parking Downtown as part of its economic development strategy.

Also lacking in Downtown Ennis are public restrooms for visitors and those passing through town. Identified in the 2014 Growth Policy was a need for better signage and wayfinding. Several problems have resulted from increased tourism in Ennis, such as excess strain on infrastructure, traffic, and the ability for businesses to staff their operations properly.

Figure 15: Housing Units in Town and Occupancy

	2010		2020	
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	527		540	
<b>Occupied</b>	416	79%	460	85%
<b>Vacant</b>	111	21%	80	15%
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	250	60%	378	70%
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	166	40%	162	30%

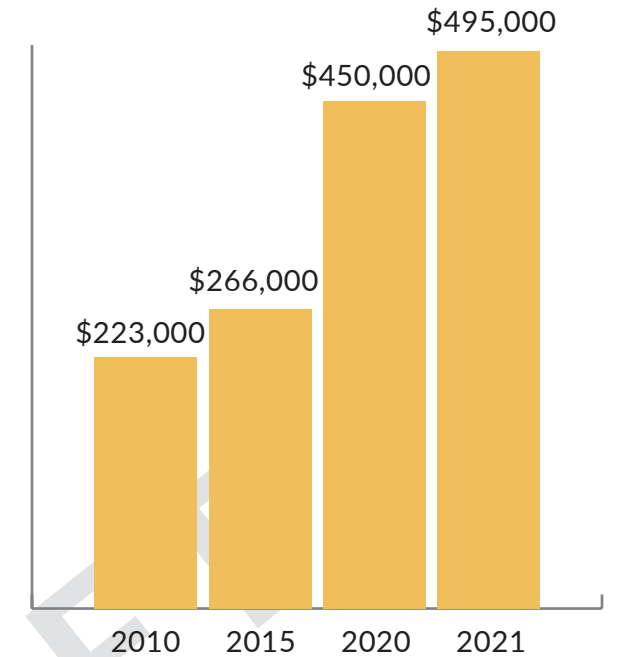
## HOUSING

### HOUSING STOCK + OCCUPANCY

According to the U.S. Census, the total number of housing units in the Town of Ennis is estimated at 540 units. Approximately 85% of those units were occupied (rather than vacant), up 6% from 2010 (see Figure 15). It can be assumed that many of the 80 vacant properties in Ennis are seasonal rentals that accommodate summer tourists. Since 2010, 10% more units are owner-occupied (now at 70%) than renter-occupied (30%). This confirms anecdotal information from town staff and the community that the stock of long-term rental properties in Ennis has decreased.

The majority of Ennis’ housing stock is single family homes (61%) and mobile homes (19%), with 14% multi-family, 4% duplex and 3% townhomes. Real estate market analyses show

Figure 16: Median Home Sales Price



the price of housing has increased significantly since 2015, when the median home sales price in Ennis was \$266,000. In 2020, the median home sales price was \$450,000, and preliminary reports (January through July) for 2021 show it at \$495,000. That’s an 86% increase from 2015 to 2021 (see Figure 16). The cost of land and construction costs are also increasing rapidly. There is currently a 2-year waitlist for contractors in the Madison Valley, which slows the pace at which new housing can be built.



## SHORT TERM RENTALS

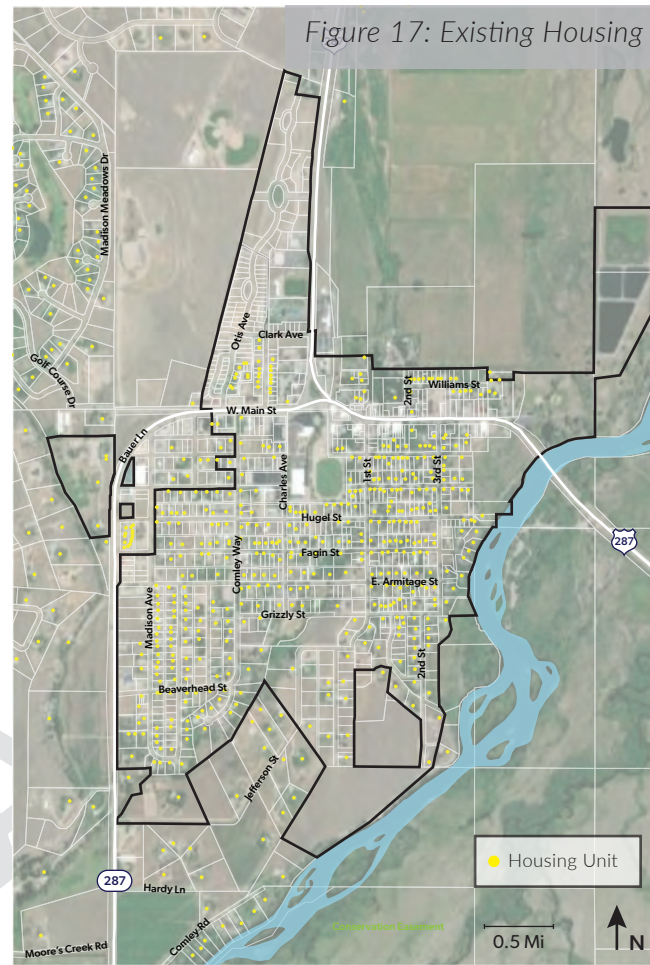
The Town does not currently have a permitting system for short term rental properties, so there is not any hard data available on how many rentals there are in Ennis. A scan of several sites that host short term rentals found that there were an estimated 45 properties in the Ennis Planning Area that are rented for vacationing visitors.

## HOUSING NEED

In 2019, the Madison County Housing Board did a survey to understand housing needs in the County, with the following results:

- 88% of respondents said finding housing in Madison County is difficult or impossible
- Respondents indicated their average rent plus utilities is \$1,132
- Approximately 61% of respondents pay 30% or more of their income on housing

When Downtown business owners were interviewed, every one of them expressed that their biggest challenge was employee recruitment and retention due to lack of affordable housing options. As Big Sky Resort grows, the Resort, Yellowstone Club, Moonlight Basin and One and Only will be looking to Ennis as a potential location for housing for their seasonal workforce, putting further pressure on the housing market. Since Ennis is home to an older demographic, housing and services for seniors will need to be provided, as well as measures for community members to age in place.



Utilizing property records that list vacant parcels and an analysis of aerial imagery, it was determined that there are an estimated 788 housing units in the Town's Planning Area. There are currently an estimated 373 vacant parcels within the Town's Planning Area (922 acres total), and by referencing the existing zoning on these parcels and applying growth trends, a low estimate of 452 new housing units could be added on those vacant parcels. If the zoning changes to encourage density within the Town's boundaries, a high estimate of 672 units could be added within the Planning Area.



## TRANSPORTATION + MOBILITY

### TRAFFIC

In summer months when tourist season is in full swing, U.S. Highway 287 becomes highly congested with local and regional traffic. Of particular concern is the "Y" intersection, where U.S. Highway 287 meets Montana State Highway 287, which experiences lengthy traffic back-ups in all directions. The people of Ennis are proud that their town does not have a stoplight, and desires that it stay that way to preserve its small town charm. That said, some intersection improvements will be required as tourism and growth continue to increase and more vehicle trips move through the intersection.

U.S. Highway 287, which is also Main Street and the main commercial corridor in town, is a primary truck route for freight traffic, which has created safety issues over the years. The biggest concern is that motorists and trucks entering

Ennis from both the north and the east do not notice or abide by the transition from a highway to a main street, which requires a slower speed (25 mph speed limit) and yielding to pedestrians in Downtown Ennis. From the east, there is no indication that one is entering a town, and the speed limit drops from 55 to 35 and then 35 to 25 relatively quickly. On multiple occasions, motorists have crashed into buildings at the end of Main Street where the road curves because they were driving too fast.

### PEDESTRIAN MOBILITY + INFRASTRUCTURE

Although the Town has installed stretches of sidewalks in recent years, Ennis lacks a network of sidewalks and trails that connect neighborhoods to Downtown and other destinations. Sidewalks are important to provide universal access for older adults, persons with disabilities, families pushing strollers and young children on bicycles. A critical gap in the network is the bridge over the Madison River at the east end of Downtown Ennis, as there is currently no path for pedestrians or bicyclists, who are forced to walk on the shoulder of the Highway to cross the river. The 2011 Ennis Safe Routes to Schools Travel Plan identifies other gaps and needed connections in the pedestrian infrastructure network, which are highlighted in the Implementation Plan.





Angled parking on Main Street

## MAIN STREET

Like many main streets in the west, Ennis is lined with angled parking, which poses a safety hazard for motorists, pedestrians and bicycles. While angled parking allows for easy entry into parking spaces, drivers have almost no visibility of oncoming traffic when backing out. Vehicles turning onto Main Street from the north-south side streets (like First, Second or Third Streets), there is also extremely poor visibility, requiring drivers to blindly make turns hoping that oncoming traffic is moving slowly enough to stop quickly if need be. Angled parking also blocks visibility for drivers to see pedestrians attempting to cross Main Street, who are forced to stand in the road to see past the parked vehicles.

Main Street, as it is currently designed, gives priority to vehicles over pedestrians. Crossing Main Street can be dangerous and difficult during peak traffic volumes. Proper crosswalks and signage alerting drivers of pedestrian crossings are lacking, as well as any traffic-calming measures like bulb-outs or landscaping.

# 4. Vision, Goals + Objectives

## DEFINITIONS

### VISION

The Vision represents an overarching, aspirational statement describing the ideal future Town of Ennis. The Vision was created through an understanding of community values and defining qualities as agreed upon by community members.

### GOALS

Goals, while still broad in nature, provide more detail in each Planning Element for how to achieve the Vision.

### OBJECTIVES

Objectives provide more detailed action steps to achieve each goal.

## 4.1 | TOWN VISION

*“Ennis celebrates its authentic western heritage, outstanding recreational opportunities and natural resources while continuing to be a safe, inclusive and sustainable place to live, work and play.”*



## 4.2 | GOALS + OBJECTIVES



## TOWN CHARACTER

**GOAL 1:** Celebrate and preserve the historic, western character of Main Street and downtown Ennis.

### OBJECTIVES:

- A. Develop and adopt Design Guidelines for Main Street and downtown.
- B. Form a design review board to review development applications.

**GOAL 2:** Improve the appearance and vitality of Main Street and downtown.

### OBJECTIVES:

- C. Work with business owners to create year-round vitality on Main Street through beautification efforts.
- D. Pursue grant funding for aesthetic improvements on Main Street such as tree planting, benches, litter receptacles, and pedestrian-scale lighting
- E. Develop adequate stormwater infrastructure on Main Street and work with Main Street businesses on phasing of construction.

**GOAL 3:** Ensure park and recreational services are improved and expanded in relation to population growth, types of users and user demand.

### OBJECTIVES:

- F. Require that annexed lands ensure appropriate parks, recreation and open space remain undeveloped.
- G. Develop multi-use trails along the Madison River and on public lands.
- H. Acquire lands in planned growth areas for the future development of parks and trails.

**GOAL 4:** Continue to build on community events year-round.

### OBJECTIVES:

- I. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to plan events that bring community members together in winter months as well as summer.



## COMMUNITY SERVICES + INFRASTRUCTURE

**GOAL 1: Promote and support physical and mental health for all residents.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- A. Invest in facilities and infrastructure that aid in physical activity and promote wellness.
- B. Promote businesses that provide local food production.

**GOAL 2: Develop an aging-friendly community**

### OBJECTIVES:

- C. Provide a wide range of housing types accessible to people at all stages of life
- D. Ensure ADA accessibility in the Town's commercial core.
- E. Ensure adequate access to health care for later stages of life.

**GOAL 3: Provide adequate infrastructure for current and future residents that is fiscally sustainable**

### OBJECTIVES:

- F. Annually update the Town budget and Capital Improvement Plan
- G. Plan for the expansion of water and wastewater infrastructure systems

- H. When reviewing development applications, ensure that the Town understands the cost/benefit of providing infrastructure.

**GOAL 4: Ensure emergency and law enforcement services are adequately funded and staffed to maintain high quality service as the population increases.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- I. Consider initiating impact fees for new development to fund capital needs for emergency services.
- J. Support efforts by Madison Valley Medical Center to expand its operations

## TOWN GOVERNANCE + FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

**GOAL 1: Maintain a fiscally stable and effective Town government.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- A. Recruit and hire a Town Manager to run Town operations and manage the Town's budget.
- B. Ensure growth does not adversely affect fiscal health,
- C. Monitor, with the assistance of Montana Community Technical Assistance Program, any additional revenue generating possibilities.
- D. Communicate with officials from similar Montana communities to understand what makes them successful.

**GOAL 2: Improve communications between the Town Council and the Ennis community**

### OBJECTIVES:

- E. Provide office hours for residents to stop in and ask Town Council members questions and give input.
- F. Create a database of citizens' contact information to send out regular announcements and communications with a focus on facts (rather than opinions).

**GOAL 3: Investigate property and sales tax rate increases that are commensurate with similar communities.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- G. Initiate a resort tax to provide a sustainable funding source for the ongoing maintenance of roads, road pavement, water/sewer system upgrades and expansion, and other needed infrastructure improvements.
- H. Implement impact fees for new development to help offset the cost of infrastructure improvements and providing fire and emergency services.



## LAND USE + GROWTH

**GOAL 1: Promote a land use fabric that retains small town character while allowing incremental growth and remaining an inclusive community.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- A. Update the Town's Land Use Code to ensure that future development does not negatively impact the qualities of Ennis that residents cherish, and that includes incentives for affordable housing.
- B. Hire a full-time staff planner to review development applications.
- C. Develop an annexation plan for the strategic growth of the Town's boundaries that considers infrastructure capacity.
- D. Encourage development along Highway 287 that is appropriately scaled and aligns with the highway commercial uses outlined in the Future Land Use Table.
- E. Require annexations to provide water rights or impose impact fees associated with annexation.
- F. Encourage mixed-use development in commercial districts.

**GOAL 2: Protect the environmental quality of the Town and surrounding Planning Area.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- G. Continue to ensure the water quality of Moore Creek and the Madison River are monitored by appropriate agencies and take any corrective actions as necessary.
- H. Manage water resources to ensure a resilient and sustainable water supply that can support current and future residents.
- I. Continue to encourage the permanent conservation of open space and wildlife corridors.

**GOAL 3: Identify and implement hazard mitigation strategies.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- J. Pursue funding for the development of a hazard mitigation plan.

**GOAL 4: Collaborate with Madison County Planning to ensure the areas surrounding Ennis are strategically planned for.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- K. Develop a Town-County Planning Board to approve/deny development applications and initiate zoning on parcels within the Planning Area outside of the Town's boundaries.
- L. Designate a staff member to work with the County as it discusses the potential for zoning in the unincorporated County.

## ECONOMICS, RECREATION + TOURISM

**GOAL 1: Promote a strong and diverse economy with opportunity for all income levels.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- A. Attract new businesses into the community that align with community values and provide long-term employment for a diverse workforce.
- B. Continue to support existing businesses through the Chamber of Commerce and increase education programs for business owners and entrepreneurs.

**GOAL 2: Provide adequate facilities and services for visitors that boost the local economy.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- C. Provide adequate parking for downtown businesses by acquiring property for the development of public parking lots. Consider a parking study if desired by the community.
- D. Provide public restrooms in close proximity to Main Street.
- E. Develop a wayfinding plan to enhance signage that directs visitors to parking, facilities and destinations.

**GOAL 3: Manage the tourism sector to ensure that the values and resources that make Ennis a desirable destination are protected and economic benefits are year-round.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- F. Work closely with land management agencies, Madison Valley Conservation District, the Chamber of Commerce, and others to develop strategies for year-round economic resiliency.
- G. Adopt a philosophy of managing tourism rather than promoting tourism.



## HOUSING

**GOAL 1: Ensure that diverse housing types are available to meet changing community needs.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- A. Work with business owners to understand their needs for employee housing and pursue funding partnership opportunities.
- B. Work with private development interests to acquire Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding for affordable housing.
- C. Revise the Town's Land Use Code to provide incentives for affordable housing
- D. Encourage the development of Accessory Dwelling Units to provide additional long-term rental properties for the Town's workforce.
- E. Develop and adopt legislation that limits short-term rentals to preserve long-term rental housing stock.
- F. Implement a tax on short-term rentals similar to the bed tax on lodging and contribute funds to affordable housing.
- G. Investigate and implement strategies for the preservation of existing quality housing.
- H. Form public-private partnership(s) for the development of housing for workforce, seniors and persons with disabilities.

## TRANSPORTATION + MOBILITY

**GOAL 1: Improve safety and efficiency on Highway 287 and provide a road network for vehicles that connects neighborhoods to destinations.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- A. Enhance safety on Highway 287 coming into Town from the south and from the north.
- B. Construct rumble strips to slow traffic entering Town from the east on Highway 287.
- C. Develop a gateway feature on Highway 287 north of town and on the east side of Main Street to indicate the entrances into Ennis.
- D. Complete a traffic study on the "Y" intersection.
- E. Continue to pave roads in town and stripe for parallel parking.

**GOAL 2: Provide a network of sidewalks and trails for pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- F. Coordinate road paving with construction of sidewalks on streets in-town identified in the Future Land Use Map.

G. Work with Madison County and landowners to develop pedestrian and bicycle trails that connect residences to schools, jobs, services, and parks.

H. Construct a bike/pedestrian path that crosses the Madison River

**GOAL 3: Enhance pedestrian safety and comfort in Ennis by reducing conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and slowing vehicular speeds on Main Street.**

### OBJECTIVES:

- I. Widen sidewalks by eventually re-striping parking on Main Street to be parallel, only after providing adequate parking to replace the current angled parking.
- J. Provide crosswalks and bulb-outs on Main Street that increase safety and contribute to the downtown's sense of place.



# 5. Implementation Plan



## 5.1 | FUTURE LAND USE

How and where the community grows has a major influence on how community members get around, the character of the Town, natural resources, and the sense of community. The Future Land Use Plan responds to the need to accommodate a growing population and the subsequent demand for additional housing, services, and employment in a manner consistent with the Master Plan Vision.

The purpose of the Future Land Use Plan is to establish a framework that illustrates the desired locations and patterns for this growth. While development potential is constrained by the fact that large portions of land surrounding the Town are permanently protected in conservation easements, analysis indicates that there is approximately 922 acres of physically developable land which is currently vacant.

While only advisory, the Future Land Use Plan is intended to be a roadmap to guide updates to the land use code and nudge new development in a direction consistent with the community's vision for orderly, efficient, and sustainable growth in appropriate locations both in town and in the Planning Area.

### CHANGES FROM THE 2014 GROWTH POLICY'S FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The 2014 Growth Policy is the Town's most current adopted long-range plan. The Growth Policy's Future Land Use Map (FLUM) was reviewed when creating this Plan's FLUM to understand if growth had occurred where it was envisioned in 2014. Although similar in intent, this plan's FLUM is different from the 2014 FLUM in the following ways:

- While the Growth Policy's FLUM covered the Ennis Planning Area, this FLUM focuses on the area within the Town's boundaries and areas where change is likely or desired.
- The 2014 FLUM included more designations, while this FLUM has consolidated designations and focuses more on mixed use districts to provide more flexibility.
- This FLUM moves away from the Planned Industrial designation in the 2014 FLUM.



# Suburban Residential

## FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER

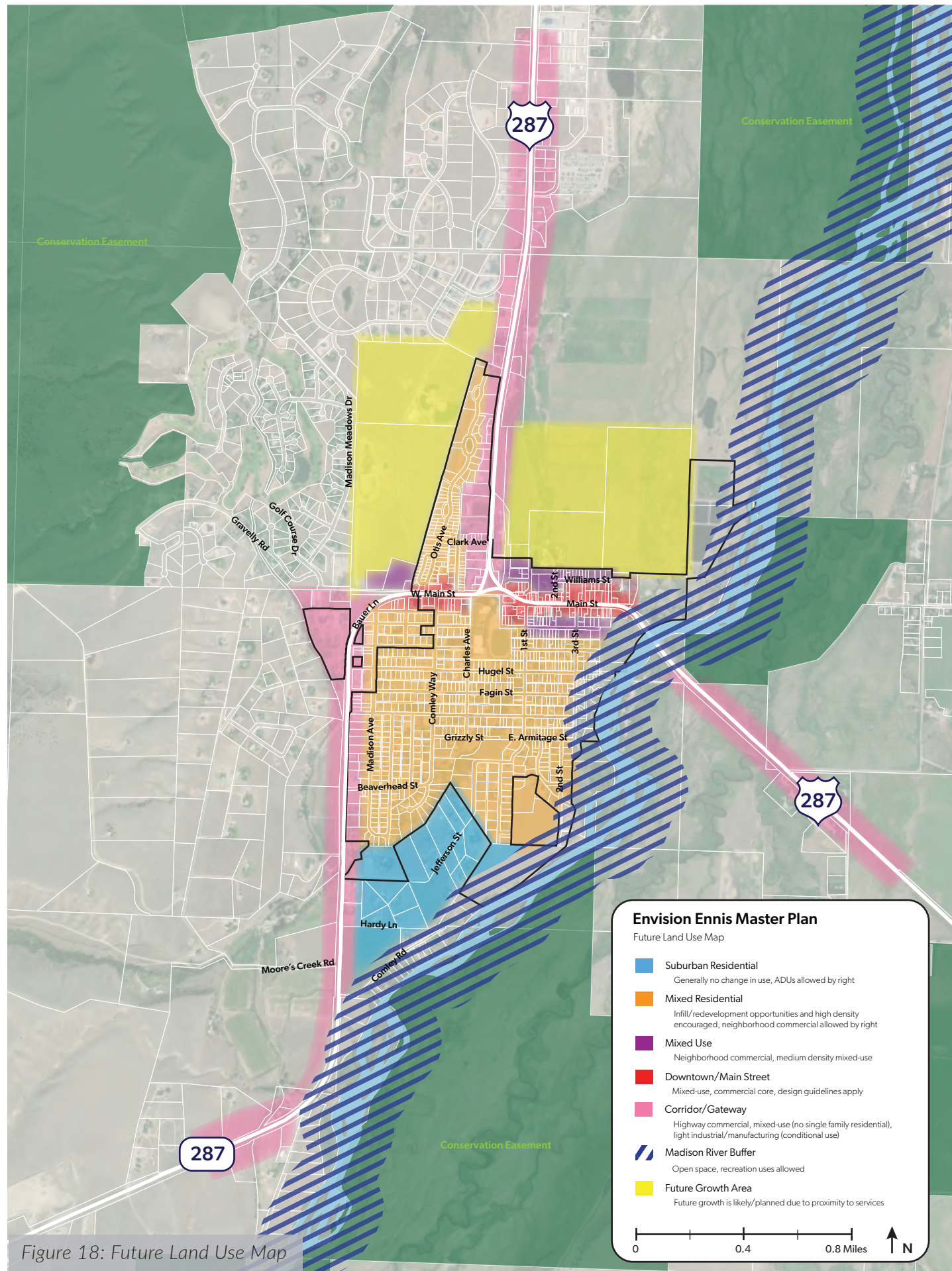


Figure 18: Future Land Use Map

### Objectives:

- Promote residential uses that provide more open space
- Preserve rural character

### Character:

- Low density residential uses: single family homes on large lots (between 1.5 and 10 acres).
- Infill development can be accommodated in the form of Accessory Dwelling Units to provide a mix of housing types and to serve a range of income levels.
- Agricultural uses also allowed by right.
- Conditional uses could include small-scale retail so long as it does not generate intense levels of traffic or impact the suburban residential character.



# Mixed Residential

## FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



### Objectives:

- Promote residential uses that provide a mix of housing and affordability
- Promote infill development
- Preserve small-town character

### Character:

- Residential uses ranging from medium to high densities, including smaller single family homes on smaller lots, townhomes, mobile homes, duplexes and multi-family.
- Infill encouraged on vacant land and with Accessory Dwelling Units allowed by right.
- Neighborhood-scale retail/commercial uses also allowed by right.

# Mixed Use

## FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



### Objectives:

- Encourage a mix of uses, including neighborhood-scale commercial and medium- to high-density residential to provide affordability
- Provide transition between downtown commercial district and residential neighborhoods
- Preserve small-town character

### Character:

- Mixed use with commercial/retail uses and residential uses ranging from medium to high densities, including smaller single family homes on smaller lots, mobile homes, duplexes and multi-family.
- Infill encouraged on vacant land and with Accessory Dwelling Units allowed by right.
- Neighborhood-scale retail/commercial uses encouraged to serve residential areas.



## ■ Downtown/Main Street ■

### FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



#### Objectives:

- Provide a centralized commercial district that includes businesses and services that support the local community and tourism economy
- Acts as the hub for employment and promotes job growth
- Encourage the traditional “Main Street” mixed use urban form of first-floor retail/commercial uses with residential apartments on the second story
- Preserves Main Street’s western character through Design Guidelines

#### Character:

- A mix of uses is envisioned to include multi-family housing, public facilities, lodging, and retail and commercial uses that provide space for small/local businesses.
- New development should reflect the traditional “Main Street” urban form of first-floor retail/commercial uses with residential apartments on the second-floor.



- Residential uses are allowed in this district but should not be the predominant use.
- Design Guidelines should apply in this district to preserve Main Street’s western character.

## ■ Corridor/Gateway ■

### FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



#### Objectives:

- Preserve the scenic, rural, small-town character of gateways into Town
- Promote job growth and economic development by locating sites for transportation-dependent businesses, services and goods delivery near major highway corridors
- Promote a mix of uses best served by major transportation corridors and near existing higher intensity activities/uses
- Preserve open space and agricultural uses

#### Character:

- A mix of uses is envisioned to include multi-family housing and larger-scale retail and commercial uses such as personal services, offices, goods delivery, and uses that support agricultural operations.
- Residential uses are allowed but should not be the predominant use.



- Development should be designed to the Town’s standards to ensure compatibility of development for annexation.
- Light industrial uses are a conditional use and should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for compatibility with the Town’s vision for growth.



# Madison River Overlay

## FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



### Objectives:

- Protect ecologically sensitive lands from harmful development
- Provide public river access and recreational resources
- Protect water quality and riparian habitat

### Character:

- Taken from the Madison County Subdivision Regulations, this 500-foot buffer surrounding the Madison River is intended to protect the Town's prime natural resource.
- Trails and public river access sites should be developed but no other uses should be permitted.
- These areas promote both active and passive recreation and the preservation of open space and river views.

# Future Growth Area

## FUTURE LAND USE & CHARACTER



### Objectives:

- Focus growth near existing development to avoid sprawling development in unincorporated Madison County
- Locate new housing development near transportation corridors, activities and services such as the school, grocery store and employment center
- Anticipates municipal annexation and connection to Town infrastructure
- Provide affordable housing for the Town's workforce

### Character:

- These are areas where future growth is either planned or likely due to proximity to Town/services and development conditions.
- Identified in this master plan is the need for affordable housing for the Town's workforce. There are only a handful of parcels available for a larger development project that provides affordability in and

around Town, and these should be targeted for workforce housing development. Large portions of land surrounding Town are permanently protected in Conservation Easements, and most vacant parcels in Town are too small to accommodate a larger development project.

- Higher densities should be contingent on incentives for projects that incorporate affordable housing into the development.
- While the primary goal of Future Growth Areas is supplying housing, other associated uses such as parks, neighborhood retail/commercial, childcare or public facilities to provide goods, services and amenities to future residents should be accommodated.



**FUTURE LAND USE TABLE**

LAND USE DESIGNATION	INTENT	DESCRIPTION
Suburban Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote residential uses that provide more open space</li> <li>- Preserve rural character</li> </ul>	Generally low density residential uses, single family homes on large lots (between 1.5 and 10 acres). Infill development can be accommodated in the form of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to provide a mix of housing types and to serve a range of income levels. Agricultural uses allowed by right. Conditional uses could include small-scale retail, so long as it does not generate intense levels of traffic or impact the suburban residential character.
Mixed Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote residential uses that provide a mix of housing and affordability</li> <li>- Promote infill development</li> <li>- Preserve small-town character</li> </ul>	Residential uses ranging from medium to high densities, including smaller single family homes on smaller lots, townhomes, mobile homes, duplexes and multi-family housing. Infill is encouraged on vacant land and with ADUs allowed by right. Neighborhood-scale retail/commercial uses also allowed by right.
Mixed Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage a mix of uses</li> <li>- Provide transition between downtown commercial district and residential neighborhoods</li> <li>- Preserve small-town character</li> </ul>	Mixed use with commercial/retail uses and residential uses ranging from medium to high densities, including smaller single family homes on smaller lots, mobile homes, townhomes, duplexes and multi-family. Infill is encouraged on vacant land and with Accessory Dwelling Units allowed by right. Neighborhood-scale retail/commercial uses encouraged to serve residential areas.
Downtown/ Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide a centralized commercial district that includes businesses and services</li> <li>- Serve as an employment hub and promotes job growth</li> <li>- Preserves Main Street's western character</li> </ul>	A mix of uses including multi-family housing, public facilities, lodging and retail and commercial uses that provide space for small/local businesses. New development should reflect the traditional "Main Street" urban form of first-floor retail/commercial uses with residential apartments on the second story. Residential uses are allowed in this district but should not be the predominant use. Design Guidelines should apply in this district to preserve Main Street's western character.
Corridor/ Gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preserve the scenic, rural, small-town character of gateways into town</li> <li>- Promote job growth and economic development</li> <li>- Promote a mix of uses best served by major transportation corridors and near existing higher intensity activities/uses</li> <li>- Preserve open space and agricultural uses</li> </ul>	A mix of uses to include multi-family housing and larger-scale retail and commercial uses such as personal services, offices, goods delivery, and uses that support agricultural operations. Residential uses are allowed in this district but should not be the predominant use. Development should be designed to the Town's standards to ensure compatibility of development for annexation. Light industrial uses are a conditional use and should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for compatibility with the Town's vision for growth.

LAND USE DESIGNATION	INTENT	DESCRIPTION
Madison River Overlay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protect ecologically sensitive lands from harmful development</li> <li>- Provide public river access and recreational resources</li> <li>- Protect water quality and riparian habitat</li> </ul>	500-foot buffer surrounding the Madison River that is intended to protect the Town's prime natural resource. Recreational uses, trails, and public river access sites should be developed but no other uses are permitted. These areas promote both active and passive recreation and the preservation of open space and river views.
Future Growth Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus growth near existing development to avoid sprawling development in unincorporated Madison County</li> <li>- Locate new housing developments near transportation corridors, activities and services such as schools, grocery stores and employment centers</li> <li>- Anticipates municipal annexation and connection to Town infrastructure</li> <li>- Provide affordable housing for the Town's workforce</li> </ul>	Areas where future growth is either planned or likely due to proximity to Town/services and development conditions. Identified in this master plan is the need for affordable housing for the Town's workforce. There are only a handful of parcels available for a larger development project that provides affordability in and around Town, and these should be targeted for workforce housing development. Higher densities should be contingent on incentives for projects that incorporate affordable housing into the development. While the primary goal of Future Growth Areas is supplying housing, other associated uses such as parks, neighborhood retail/commercial, childcare or public facilities to provide goods, services and amenities to future residents should be accommodated.



## 5.2 | RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were developed to address issues that were identified through public input and were vetted with the Steering Committee, greater community and Town staff. They represent both short-term and long-term projects, policies and actions that will help implement the goals and objectives in this plan.

### TOWN CHARACTER

1. Form a Downtown Design Guidelines Committee tasked with drafting standards for Downtown Ennis. Design professionals should be represented on the committee as well as downtown business owners. Design Guidelines should include provisions addressing: streetscape, parking, signage, building height, building material and glazing, historic building preservation and limitations on ground floor residential uses.
2. Allocate funding for paving the right of way areas of side streets downtown (Chowning Street, 1st Street, 2nd Street and 3rd Street) and formulate a phasing plan for paving operations that considers needed infrastructure improvements and minimizes multiple street closures during peak season.
3. Work with the Montana Department of Transportation to finalize a streetscape plan for U.S. Highway 287 (Main Street) improvements and pursue funding sources. See Figure 19 for Proposed Main Street Site Plan.



Figure 19: Proposed Main Street Site Plan

4. Identify corridors along the Madison River that are ideal for trail development and pursue easements and grant funding for the development of trails.

Figure 19 depicts a possible scenario for how the downtown core can be more functional. This plan was presented to the public on October 13, 2021. The project team received comments that ranged from concern over parallel parking to being supportive of enhanced pedestrian experience.





Figure 20: Current Main St Streetscape

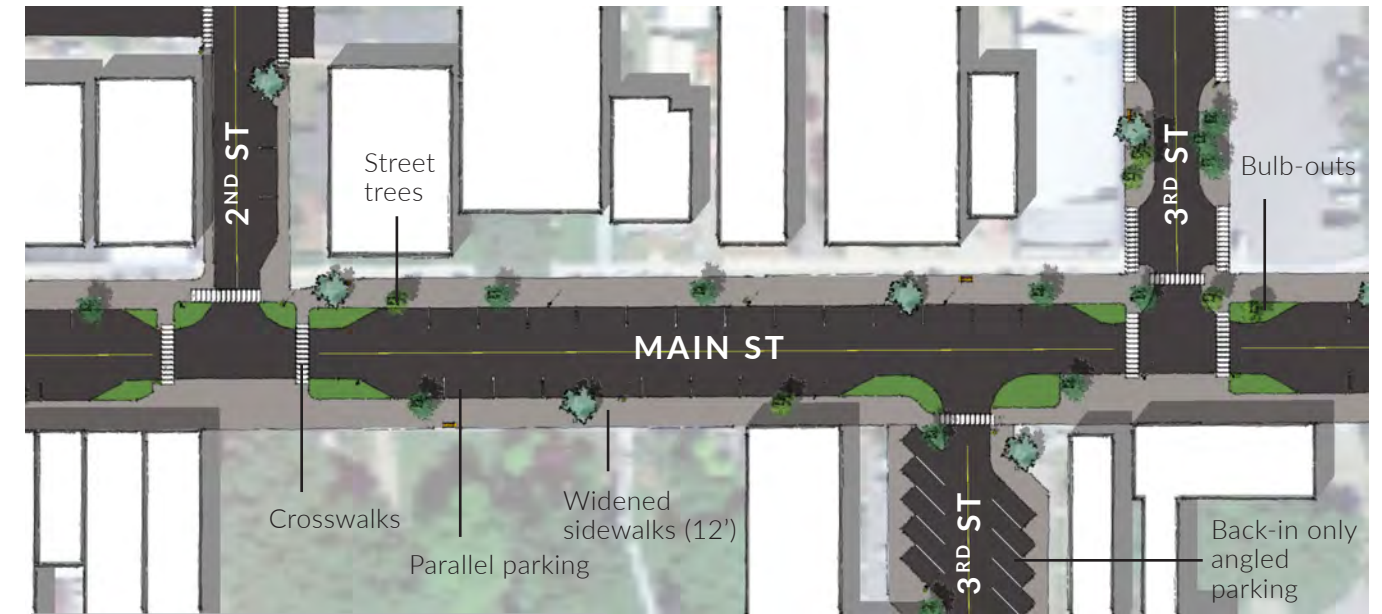


Figure 22: Proposed Main St Streetscape



Figure 21: Rendering of Proposed Main St Streetscape

### COMMUNITY SERVICES + INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Seek new funding sources for infrastructure upgrades which could include one or more of the following:
  - Implement a resort tax
  - Implement impact fees for future developments
  - Increase system fees for water and wastewater
  - Utilize state grant resources for future studies and projects recommended
2. Work with Madison County to annex properties in the Old Town's grid west of Town between Bauer Lane and Comley Way and provide water and wastewater services.
3. Partner with Madison County on the funding and construction of a regional-serving recreation center with indoor aquatic facilities (see Figure 24 for proposed location).

4. Form strategic partnerships to redevelop the current hospital building into senior housing/long-term care facility.
5. Seek funding for a new fire truck that can adequately serve buildings taller than two stories.

### WATER

6. Locate and construct a third well in Town to accommodate growth, improve redundancy and add capacity to the existing water supply.
7. Require that all annexations transfer water rights that are tied to property to the Town so that Ennis can build its water rights portfolio to accommodate growth and provide use insurance in the face of uncertainty with climate change.
8. Establish impact fees for water and sewer on all new annexations.



## WASTEWATER

9. Conduct a feasibility study on utilizing land near the lagoon for photovoltaic panels to power the operation of the lagoon and pumps.
10. Enact a pretreatment ordinance that defines the amount of waste that can be discharged into the Town's system. Effluent outside agreed upon residential standards should be pretreated by the developer prior to entering the Town's system.
11. Set requirements for influent BOD concentrations to ensure only residential grade wastewater is entering the lagoons.
12. Conduct a preliminary engineering study on the future need for expansion of the wastewater treatment facility as growth reduces capacity. Submit a funding request to the State of Montana for final engineering costs for wastewater treatment facility expansion.

## ROADS

13. Require new developments to utilize more urban streetscape standards including curb, gutter and underground storm sewer.
14. Implement a stormwater ordinance that requires on-site storage for new developments.

## TOWN GOVERNANCE + FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

15. Form a committee dedicated to educating the public on the benefits of a Resort Tax in Ennis and defining the proposed Resort Tax District.

Figure 23: Montana Resort Tax Communities

Town	Revenue/year	Seasonal?	Funded
Virginia City	~\$80,000	Summer/fall	Majority of the Town's budget, new fire hall
West Yellowstone	~\$150,000	Year-round	Water + wastewater system improvements, paving all roads
Gardiner	Unknown	Summer	Upgrading water and sewer systems, cultural grants, community services
Whitefish	Unknown	Year-round	Property tax reduction, street repair, sidewalk replacement, utility repairs

16. Conduct a study to determine appropriate impact fees for new development that is commensurate with similar communities to fund service costs for fire and emergency services.

## LAND USE + GROWTH

17. Issue a Request for Proposals for an update to the Town's Land Use Code. Utilize Montana Department of Commerce grants to provide partial funding.
18. Actively recruit a senior-level staff planner to implement this Master Plan and review development applications.
19. Work with Madison County to revisit the Ennis-Madison County Interlocal Agreement and make revisions to ensure it reflects current conditions and assigns jurisdictional review within the Ennis Planning Area to a Town-County Planning Board.

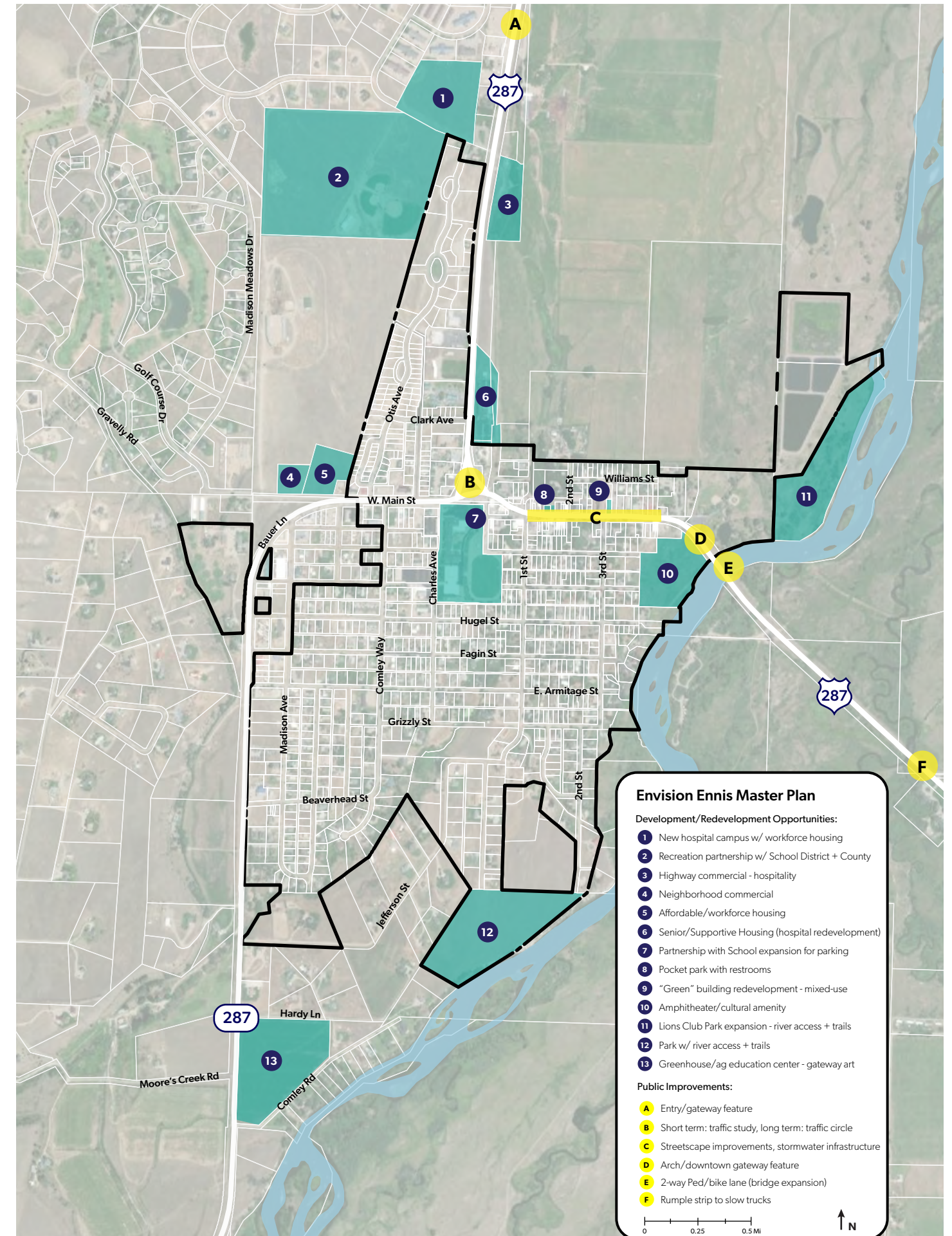


Figure 24: Potential Opportunities and Improvements



## ECONOMICS, RECREATION + TOURISM

20. Actively recruit businesses that will attract a younger demographic to locate in Ennis.
21. Purchase parcels for the development of public surface parking lots (see Figure 19).
22. Seek Department of Commerce funding for a wayfinding plan to enhance signage that directs visitors to parking, facilities and destinations.
23. Construct public restroom facilities in the pocket park owned by the Town on Main Street (see Figure 26).



Figure 27: Townhomes provide affordable ownership opportunity in Ennis

## HOUSING

24. Work with the Ennis Chamber of Commerce to survey business owners on their employee housing needs and initiate partnerships for the construction of workforce housing.
25. Research case studies of comparable towns with regulations on short-term rental properties and draft legislation that, at a minimum, requires permitting with fees but also consider capping the number of permits issued per year and assessing a tax commensurate with the State's lodging tax.
26. Pursue the Community Land Trust model and partner with nonprofit organizations to provide permanently affordable housing.
27. Form public-private partnerships with affordable housing developers to acquire Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding for the development of affordable rental housing in Ennis.



Figure 25: Proposed public parking lot north of the school campus redevelopment

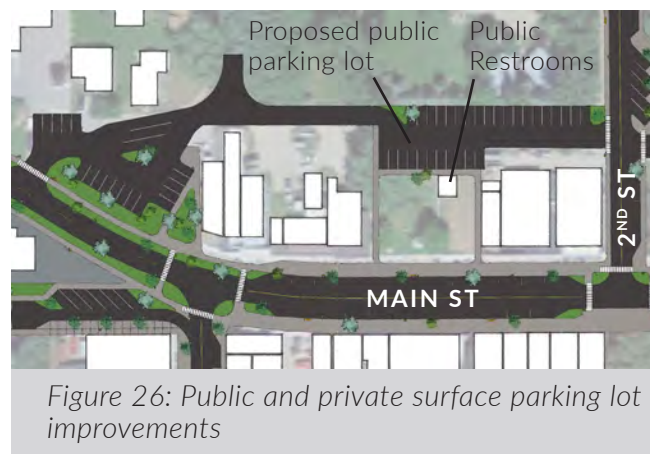


Figure 26: Public and private surface parking lot improvements

## TRANSPORTATION + MOBILITY

28. Work with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) to enhance the safety and visual appearance of the Town's gateway corridors to the north, east and south of town. Study the feasibility of gateway features including lighting, decorative arches and enhanced signage.
29. Following the upcoming July 2022 Highway 287 Corridor Study which will examine the "Y" intersection (where U.S. 287 and MT 287 converge), pursue the feasibility of a roundabout to enhance traffic flow and increase safety (see Figure 29).
30. Develop a phasing plan for road paving and parking striping based on the current road conditions and the need for road surface improvements and sidewalks that considers safe routes to school and the need for additional street parking for Main Street (see Figure 28 for proposed sidewalk improvements).
31. Pursue funding for the expansion of the bridge over the Madison River on U.S. Highway 287 to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
32. Widen sidewalks on Main Street from 5 feet to 12 feet wide by repaving and striping for parallel parking (and removing angled parking). See Figure 30 on the following page for existing and proposed parking estimates.
33. Construct crosswalks and bulb-outs on Main Street to increase pedestrian safety (see Figure 22).

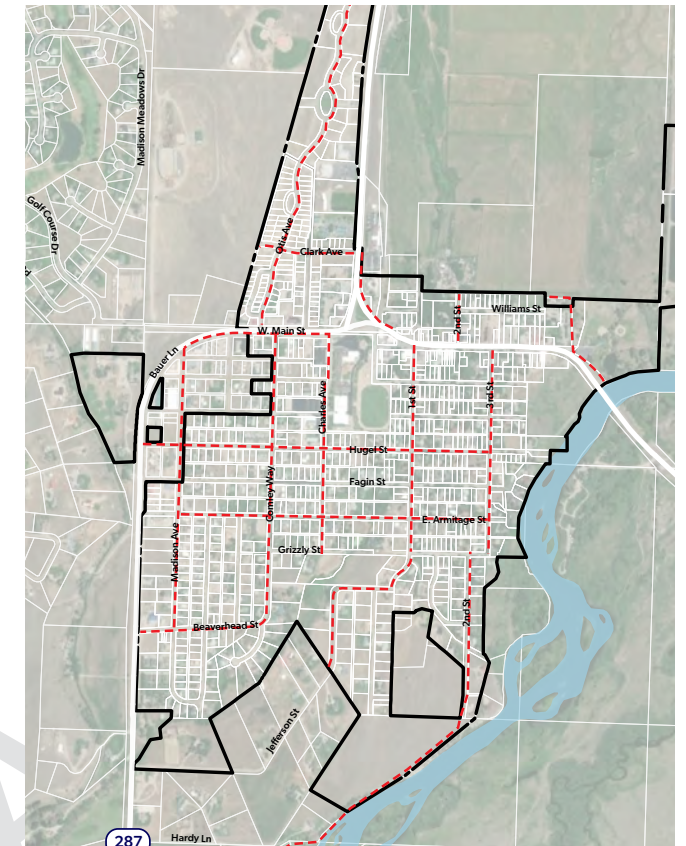


Figure 28: Proposed sidewalk connections

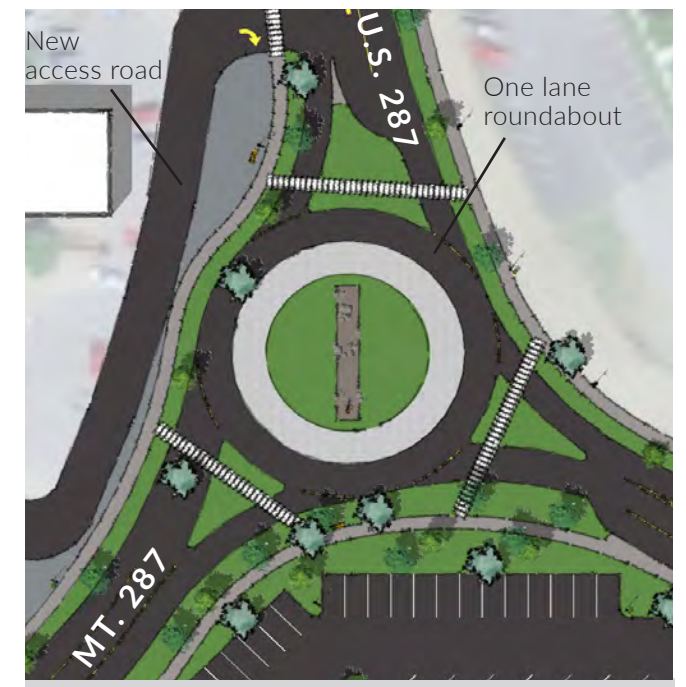


Figure 29: Proposed roundabout at "Y" intersection



Figure 30: Current and Proposed Parking Estimates

CURRENT parking estimates on Main Street:

On-street	Private Lots	Public Lots
179	54 - 70	35 - 40

Low Estimate: 262  
High Estimate: 289

PROPOSED parking estimates on Main Street:

On-street	Side Streets	Private Lots	Public Lots
100	92	108	121

Estimate including side streets: 421 (19 trailer)  
Estimate not including side streets: 329

421 - 289 =

+ 132  
PARKING  
SPACES

Figure 31: Proposed public and private parking lots



## 6.3 | PHASING + FUNDING PLAN

The following Implementation Table outlines the actions required to achieve the Goals and Vision defined by the Ennis community in this plan. It also identifies responsible agencies that should help implement the plan, potential funding strategies (when applicable), and assigns each action a priority level:

- High Priority: Actions that should be pursued within 1-2 years
- Medium Priority: Actions that should be pursued in 2-5 years
- Low Priority: Actions that should be pursued when resources become available

### IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

ACTION	PRIORITY LEVEL	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING STRATEGIES
<b>TOWN CHARACTER</b>			
Develop and adopt Design Guidelines for Main Street and downtown Ennis	Medium	Town to initiate formation of a Design Guidelines Committee	Montana Main Street, Montana Department of Commerce CTAP Program
Form a design review board to review development applications	Medium	Town-County Planning Board	Montana Department of Commerce CTAP Program
Invite business owners to form a Main Street Committee that focuses on Main Street beautification	Medium	Chamber of Commerce	
Pave side streets downtown (Chowning Street, 1st Street, 2nd Street and 3rd Street) and stripe for parallel parking	High	Public Works Director	Resort Tax Revenue
Work with MDT to finalize a streetscape plan for Main Street	High	Public Works Director	Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Main Street, MDT
Pursue grant funding for aesthetic improvements on Main Street	Medium	Town Council + staff	Montana Main Street
Install adequate stormwater infrastructure on Main Street	High	Public Works Director	MDT Transportation Alternatives grant, Resort Tax
Develop multi-use trails along the Madison River and on public lands	Low	Town Council + staff, MDT, Montana FWP	Montana State Parks' Recreation Trails Program Grant
Acquire land in planned growth areas for the future development of parks and trails	Medium	Town Council	Land + Water Conservation Fund recreation grants
Work with the Chamber of Commerce to plan events that bring community members together in winter months	Low	Chamber of Commerce	



ACTION	PRIORITY LEVEL	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING STRATEGIES
<b>COMMUNITY SERVICES + INFRASTRUCTURE</b>			
Seek new funding sources for infrastructure that could include a Resort Tax and impact fees for new development	High	Town Council	
Work with Madison County to annex properties in the Old Town's grid (west of town between Bauer Lane and Comley Way) and provide water and wastewater services	High	Public Works Director	Madison County tax revenue
Partner with Madison County and the School District on the funding and construction of a regionally-serving recreation center with indoor aquatic facilities	Medium	Town Council + staff	Public-private partnerships
Form a strategic partnership with an affordable housing developer (like Housing Solutions LLC) to redevelop the current hospital building into senior housing/ long-term care facility	Medium	Town staff, Senior Center	Montana Housing Trust Fund Program
Pursue grant funding to bring sidewalks on in downtown Ennis into ADA compliance	Medium	Town staff	MDT Transportation Alternatives grant
Seek funding for a new fire truck that can adequately service buildings taller than two stories	High	Madison Valley Rural Fire District	Resort tax revenue
Locate and construct a third well in town to accommodate growth, improve redundancy and add capacity to the existing water supply	High	Public Works Director	Resort tax revenue, Town water fee revenue
Conduct a feasibility study on utilizing land near the lagoon for photovoltaic panels to power the operation of the lagoon and pumps	Low	Public Works Director	Montana Renewable Energy Association loans and tax credits
Conduct a study on the future need for expansion of the wastewater treatment facility as growth reduces capacity	High	Public Works Director	Resort tax revenue
Implement a stormwater ordinance that requires on-site storage for new developments	Medium	Public Works Director	Montana Department of Commerce CTAP Program

ACTION	PRIORITY LEVEL	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING STRATEGIES
<b>TOWN GOVERNANCE + FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>			
Form a committee dedicated to educating the public on the benefits of a Resort Tax in Ennis and defining the proposed Resort Tax District	High	Town Council, Chamber of Commerce	Montana Department of Commerce CTAP Program
Conduct a study to determine appropriate impact fees for new development to fund service costs for fire and emergency services	High	Public Works Director	Montana Department of Commerce CTAP Program
Recruit and hire a Town Manager to run Town operations and manage the Town's budget.	High	Town Council	
Create a database of citizen's contact information to send out regular announcements and communications	Medium	Town staff	
<b>LAND USE + GROWTH</b>			
Issue a Request for Proposals for an update to the Town's Land Use Code	High	Town Council	Montana Department of Commerce CTAP Program
Actively recruit a senior-level staff planner to implement this Master Plan and review development applications	High	Town Council + staff	Resort tax revenue, impact fee revenue
Form a Town-County Planning Board to approve/deny development applications and initiate zoning on parcels within the Planning Area outside of the Town's boundaries	High	Town staff, Madison County	Town and Madison County general funds, Montana Department of Commerce CTAP Program
Work with Madison County to revisit the Ennis-Madison County Interlocal Agreement and make revisions to ensure it reflects current conditions and assigns jurisdictional review within the Ennis Planning Area to the Town-County Planning Board.	High	Town staff, Madison County	Montana Department of Commerce CTAP Program
Develop an annexation plan for the strategic growth of the Town's boundaries that considers infrastructure capacity	Medium	Town staff, Town-County Planning Board, Madison County staff	Montana Department of Commerce CTAP Program



ACTION	PRIORITY LEVEL	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING STRATEGIES
<b>ECONOMICS, RECREATION + TOURISM</b>			
Actively recruit businesses that will attract a younger demographic to locate in Ennis	Medium	Chamber of Commerce	Montana Department of Commerce
Purchase parcels in downtown for the development of public surface parking lots	High	Town Council	Resort tax revenue
Seek funding for a wayfinding plan to enhance signage that directs visitors to parking, facilities and destinations	Low	Town staff, Chamber of Commerce	Montana Main Street, Montana Department of Commerce CTAP Program
Construct public restroom facilities in the pocket park owned by the Town on Main Street	Medium	Public Works Director	Resort tax revenue
<b>HOUSING</b>			
Work with the Chamber to survey business owners on their employee housing needs and initiate partnerships for the construction of workforce housing	High	Town staff, Chamber of Commerce, Madison County Housing Board	
Research case studies of comparable towns with regulations on short-term rental properties and draft legislation that at a minimum requires permitting with fees but also consider capping permits issued per year and assessing a tax commensurate with the State's lodging tax	High	Town staff, Madison County Housing Board	Short-term rental tax revenue
Pursue the Community Land Trust model and partner with nonprofit organizations to provide permanently affordable housing	High	Town staff, Madison County Housing Board	CDBG Affordable Housing Development Grants, LIHTC, HOME Grants
Form public private partnerships with affordable housing developers to acquire Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding for the development of affordable rental housing in Ennis	High	Town staff, Madison County Housing Board, Montana Housing	LIHTC

ACTION	PRIORITY LEVEL	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING STRATEGIES
<b>TRANSPORTATION + MOBILITY</b>			
Work with MDT to enhance the safety and visual appearance of the Town's gateway corridors to the north, east and south of town. Study the feasibility of gateway features including lighting, decorative arches and enhanced signage	Medium	Town Council + staff, MDT	MDT, Montana Department of Commerce
Following the upcoming July 2022 Highway 287 Corridor Study which will examine the "Y" intersection, pursue the feasibility of a roundabout to enhance traffic flow and increase safety	Medium	Public Works Director, MDT	
Develop a phasing plan for road paving based on current road conditions and the need for road surface improvements and sidewalks that considers safe routes to schools	High	Public Works Director	MDT grants program
Pursue funding for the expansion of the bridge over the Madison River on U.S. Highway 287 to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure	Medium	Public Works Director, MDT	Montana Transportation Alternatives Grant
Widen sidewalks on Main Street from 5 feet to 12 feet wide by repaving and striping for parallel parking (and removing angled parking)	Medium	Public Works Director, MDT	Montana Transportation Alternatives Grant, Resort tax revenue
Construct crosswalks and bulb-outs on Main Street to increase pedestrian safety	Medium	Public Works Director, MDT	Montana Transportation Alternatives Grant, Resort tax revenue



## MAIN STREET PHASING PLAN

The following phasing plan was developed to ensure additional parking is provided before parking is lost when converting from angled to parallel parking on Main Street. This plan was designed to most efficiently and effectively use funding and to minimize street closures.

### PHASE 1

The first step of Phase 1 is paving the side streets (Chowning St, 1st St, 2nd St and 3rd St - north and south of Main Street) and installing sidewalks, curb, gutter and striping for parallel parking. This alone will add an estimated 92 parking spaces downtown. Phase 1 also involves the Town purchasing the property north of the pocket park on Main Street and developing it into a surface parking lot, and paving the alley between this new lot and the lot to the west of Plain Jane's. Although privately-owned, the Plain Jane's lot should be striped to accommodate 21 parking spaces (3 of which are designated for trailers and larger vehicles). Finally, the Library currently has plans to develop a small parking lot on their current parcel which could serve as additional public parking.

### PHASE 2

Phase 2 would begin with the construction of the roundabout at the "Y" intersection, followed by the development of a large surface parking lot on the School District's property that would

provide 9 dedicated trailer spaces. This would require a partnership with the school district and should be timed to coincide with the school's expansion plans. Another lot to the east of the school campus would also be developed as a part of Phase 2. Streetscape improvements on Main Street between the roundabout and 1st Street would be next and include the installation of stormwater infrastructure and a landscaped buffer for snow storage. Finally, streetscape improvements on W. Main St between Chowning and 1st St would involve making W. Main St a one way street (eastbound) and only allowing right turns onto 1st St to improve the safety of the intersection of Main St and W. Main St. A few back-in only angled parking spaces will provide additional parking for businesses on W. Main St.

An additional opportunity for a surface parking lot is on the property at the very eastern end of Main St on the south side that is currently vacant. This parcel has significant floodplain issues that would not allow for traditional vertical development, but this opportunity would require that the property owner be interested in partnering with the Town and business owners on developing a parking lot.

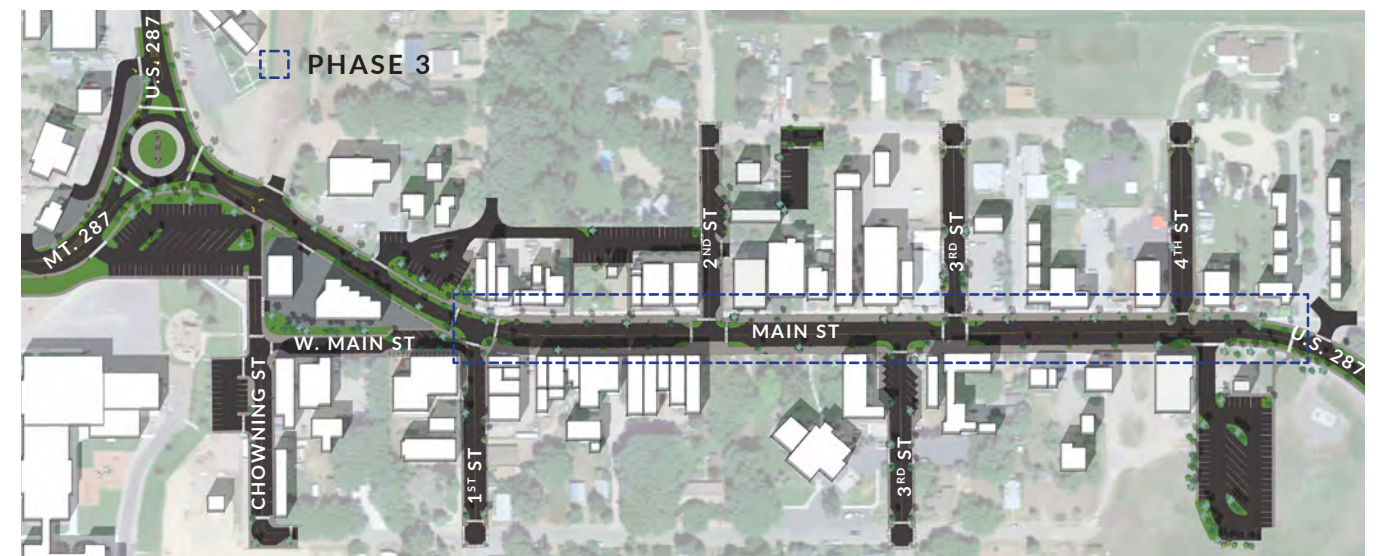
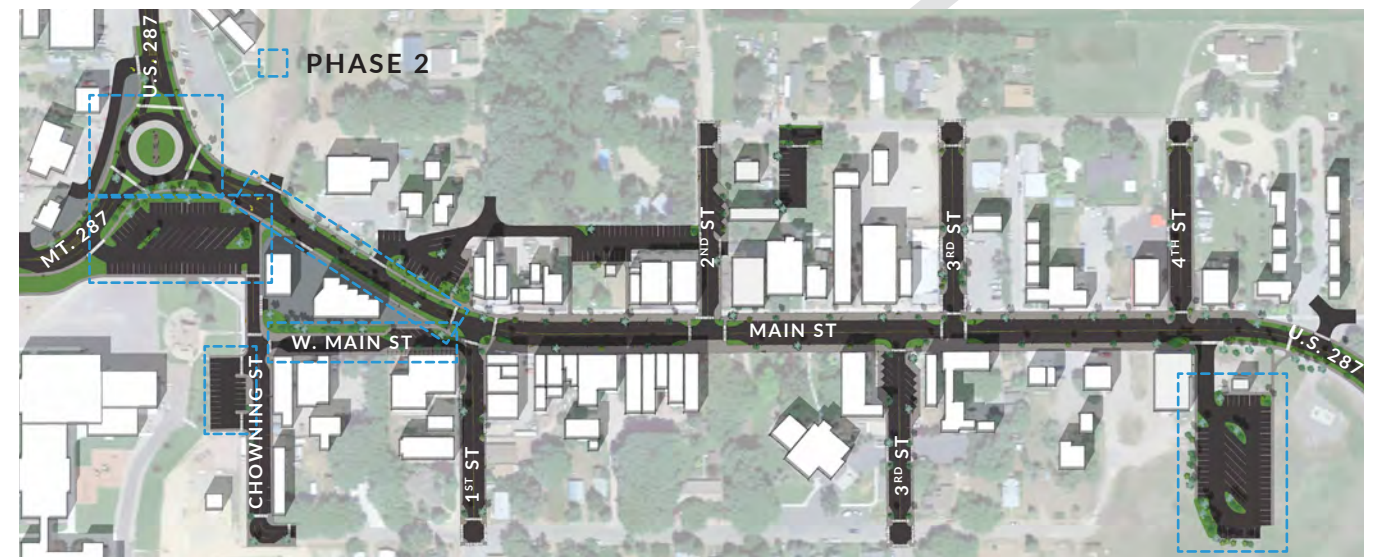
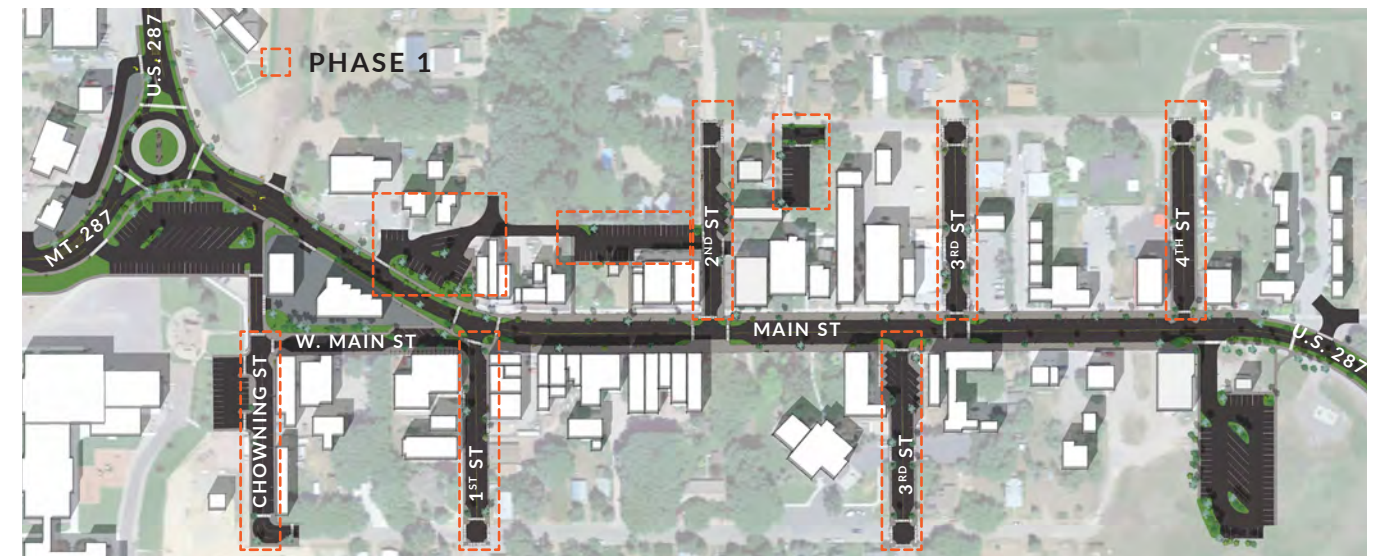


Figure 32: Proposed phasing plan for Main Street improvements



### PHASE 3

Phase 3 of the plan includes the infrastructure and streetscape improvements on Main St between Chowning St and Lions Club Park. While these infrastructure improvements will be a significant cost to finance, they are necessary for public safety and will result in an improved Main Street experience. The installation of stormwater infrastructure will require replacing the pavement on one side of the road (north or south) so that traffic can still get through during construction.

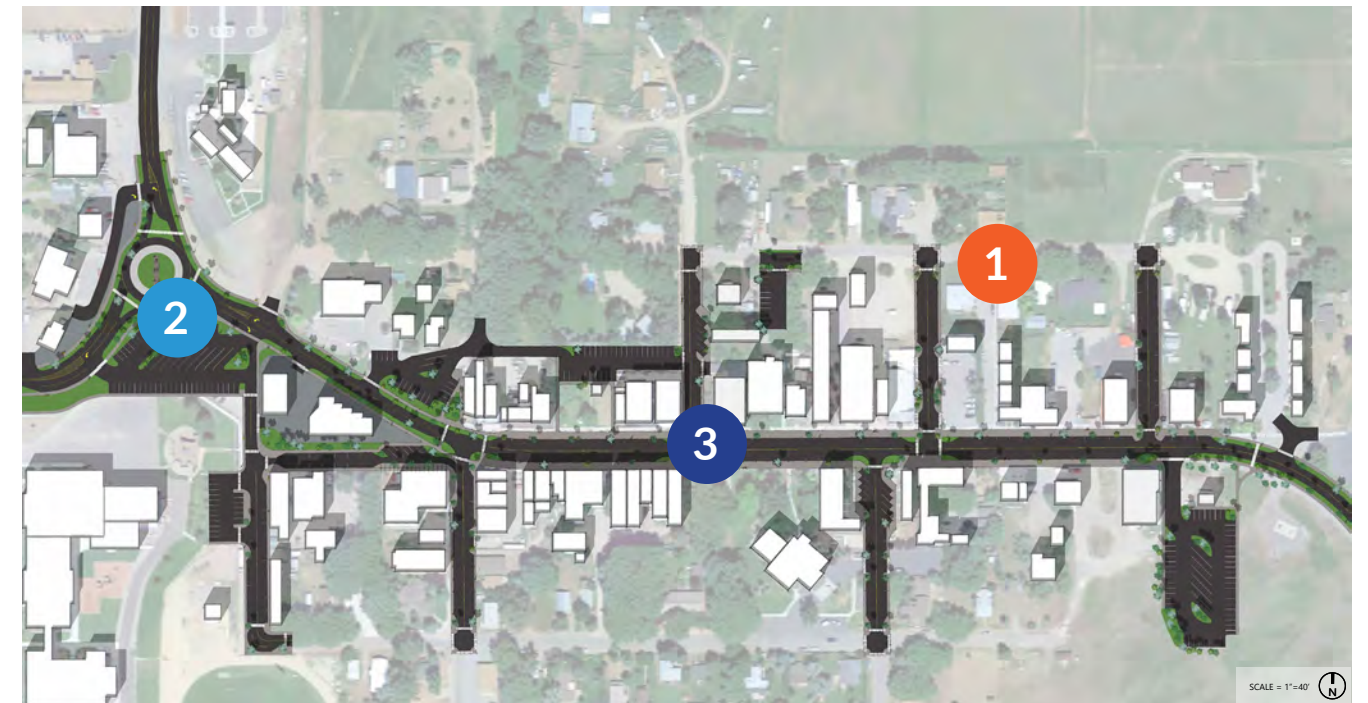
The new Main Street streetscape should include 12 foot wide sidewalks from the property line to the curb, 10 foot wide parking lanes, and 12.5 foot driving lanes (based on MDT road standards) in each direction. Wider sidewalks will allow for landscaping that will function as a snow storage area, potential patio seating for restaurants, and for children to safely ride their bikes from school to Lions Club Park without disrupting pedestrian circulation.

The purpose of these improvements and this phasing plan is to concentrate parking and implement a “park once” concept in downtown Ennis. This means that visitors are able to easily find public parking, park for the day and walk around downtown. By removing the angled parking that poses a safety hazard for drivers and pedestrians alike, that right of way space can be given back to people walking and shopping at businesses, it can enhance the town’s sense of place, and continue to support local businesses.

### TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

On October 26, 2021 the Town Council held a work session on the recommended modifications to the Main Street Corridor. Representatives of the public including downtown business owners were in attendance. Comments that the Town Council identified as key to explore, consider and to emphasize in the master plan and in future planning and design process included:

1. Emphasize that the recommendations are a long-term planning process and many more steps will be necessary before any work can be defined and completed.
2. Consider moving the location of the roundabout to the south that would allow some parking to occur on the northwest side of the roundabout.
3. Emphasize that a change from angled parking to parallel parking on Main Street would not occur (if ever) until additional parking is developed through acquisition of land for parking, creation of on-street parking on side streets and parking lot partnerships.





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