



CITY OF POST FALLS
2021 MASTER PLAN ADDENDUM

POST FALLS

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PROJECT NO. 41354

SUBMITTED TO:

THE CITY OF POST FALLS



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PREPARED BY:



330 E. Lakeside Avenue, Suite 101
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
208-664-9382 ♦ 208-664-5946 Fax
E-Mail: wc@welchcomer.com

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Summary of Original 2005 City Center Plan

In 2004, the City of Post Falls embarked on a comprehensive revitalization strategy for the historic center of the city. The City Center Plan (Plan), published in 2005, considered a “full range of community development issues such as transportation, character and identity, economic reinvestment, business vitality, and other topics.” As with most thoughtful planning efforts, the specific process followed determines the plan’s effectiveness and success. The original Plan followed a process that started broad and narrowed in focus over time (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 - General Planning Process

For the City Center Plan to be inclusive and effective, input from a variety of people with diverse backgrounds, expertise, and history with the city was sought. Among those who contributed were planning consultants, city staff and leadership, key stakeholders, and many members of the general public.

Original Vision Statement

To provide continued inspiration, direction, and grounding on what City Center is and can be, a Vision Statement was carefully developed. That Vision Statement clearly defines what makes the City Center attractive and what is necessary to improve it for the citizens of Post Falls and its visitors.

Original Plan Goals

Consistent with the spirit and inspiration of the Vision Statement, the Plan listed overarching goals for the city to strive for within the City Center. These seven (7) goals further serve as a “roadmap” to assist in decision making and what to strive for in the future.

The city center district is the city’s heritage center, the focus of Post Falls identity, and is distinctive in character, look and feel. The district celebrates and reconnects with Post Falls’ heritage as a historic mill and railroad town. The City Center fully capitalizes on wonderful natural resources in close proximity to downtown including the Spokane River, Post falls, and Q’emiln Park. A network of safe, pleasant pedestrian connections are in place, linking key landmarks and attractions, and these connections are clearly marked and understood. Civic, cultural, and business attractions draw both I-90 travelers and Post Falls residents into the area. A safe, livable residential core is in place especially in the southern part of the district. The residential core provides basic support for a mix of retail shops, small offices and services nearby, that are also available to regional patrons as well. Because of the falls, natural character and parks, the Post Falls city center is a great place to live, work, recreate, do business and visit.

Figure 2 - Original Vision Statement

Goal 1: Promote a Distinct Post Falls Identity

Goal 2: Reconnect with Post Falls History and Heritage

Goal 3: Capitalize on Natural Character – The River, The Falls, and the Landscape

Goal 4: Make Pedestrian Friendly Connections

Goal 5: Create and Strengthen City Center Attractions

Goal 6: Promote a Vibrant Mix of Infill Developments and Uses

Goal 7: Improve Transportation Choices

Original Plan Actions

Utilizing the City Center Vision Statement, goals, and input received from stakeholders and the general public, the original planning team developed a list of Action Items. The Action Items, shown in Table 1 below, is a list of 25 specific projects or actions that were prioritized and estimated for cost. Many of these projects were completed successfully. However, others remain only partially completed or not yet completed.

Table 1 - Original Plan Action Item List

Action	Project	Priority
1	4th Ave, Spokane St to Idaho St - Streetscape Improvements	High
2	Infill & Shared Parking	High
3	Implement City Hall Project	High
4	Utility Improvements (varied locations throughout CC)	High
5	Acquire Property for Parking Lots and Green Space	High
6	Development Incentive & Regulatory Actions: Overlay Zones	High
7	Streetscape Improvement Spokane St - 1st Ave. to 5th Ave.	High
8	Split Diamond Interchange	High
9	Unique City Center Street Signage & Fixtures	High
10	Commercial Development Demonstration Project	High
11	Centennial Trail Parking Lot Upgrades	High
12	Rename Spokane St., and 4th Ave.	High
13	Create Joint Visitors Center / Historic Museum	High
14	Falls & Dam Accent Lighting	Medium
15	Streetscape Improvement Henry St. and Lincoln St.	Medium
16	Streetscape Improvement 3rd Ave.	Medium
17	Improve Centennial Trail Crossing	Medium
18	Mullan Ave. / Spokane Street Improvement	Medium
19	Create a Historic/Interpretive Walking Tour	Medium
20	Streetscape Improvement 1st Ave.	Low
21	Improve 3rd. Ave. Crossing	Low
22	Centennial Trail Spurs	Low
23	Residential Development Demonstration Project	Low
24	Plan For Future Events / Gathering Center	Low
25	Plan for Future Multi-Modal Transit Center	Low

2021 Master Plan Addendum

Purpose

This City Center Master Plan Addendum is not intended to *replace* the original plan. Much of the hard work, progress, and information produced through that planning process still applies today. The primary purpose of this Addendum is to capture and understand what has changed over the last 16 years, since the original plan was published. The Addendum is also intended to evaluate any existing Action Items that were not completed and any new items that should be added to the current list.

At the surface, much has changed in the City of Post Falls and the City Center since 2005.

- The population increased from around 23,000 in 2005 to just over 38,000 in 2020 (increase of 65%).
- Citizen demographics have changed.
- The average age of citizens has changed.
- The leadership has changed.
- The economy has changed.
- The nature of commerce has changed.

It stands to reason that some elements of the original Plan need to be revisited and revised to be consistent with the current political, economic, and cultural landscape.

One of the first changes is a slight modification to the original boundary. To include critical commercial businesses and contributors to the success in City Center, the boundary has been expanded to the north to include the Seltice Way and Mullan Avenue corridors. The boundary has also been expanded to the east as far as Bay Street to include the entire former Idaho Veneer site.

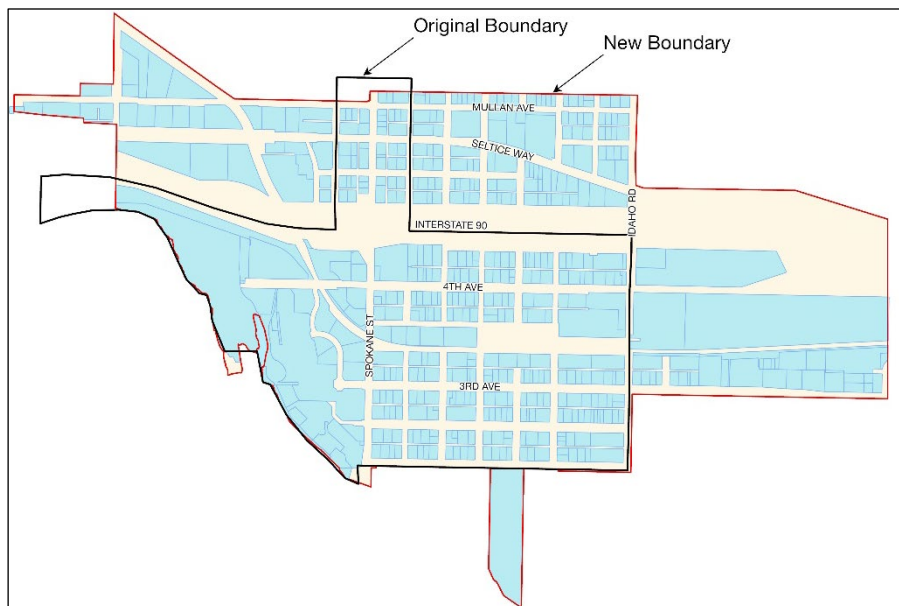


Figure 3 – Original and New City Center Boundary

Nodes

With the slight expansion of the City Center boundary, the overall area has increased enough to have independent subareas which this document refers to as Nodes. The Nodes help isolate attention and conversations to specific areas. Nodes are not prioritized for importance. They are simply unique subareas within the overall City Center Boundary.

Spokane Street/Seltice Way: As a gateway into the City Center area, this node is likely the busiest in the City, at least from a traffic standpoint. Much of Post Falls traffic uses it daily to access I-90, City Center, and residential and commercial uses south of the Spokane River. This area also has successful and diverse business activity.

The Landings/Spokane Street: The Landings development is thought to be one of the “linchpins” that will accelerate growth along the Spokane Street corridor. The mixture of commercial and residential along with proximity to the Spokane River and the Centennial Trail are key ingredients to a vibrant downtown.

Idaho Veneer Site: As this long-time and historic fixture in Post Falls changes use, development activity is expected to occur quickly in this node. This area is expected to be a dense pocket in the City Center area.

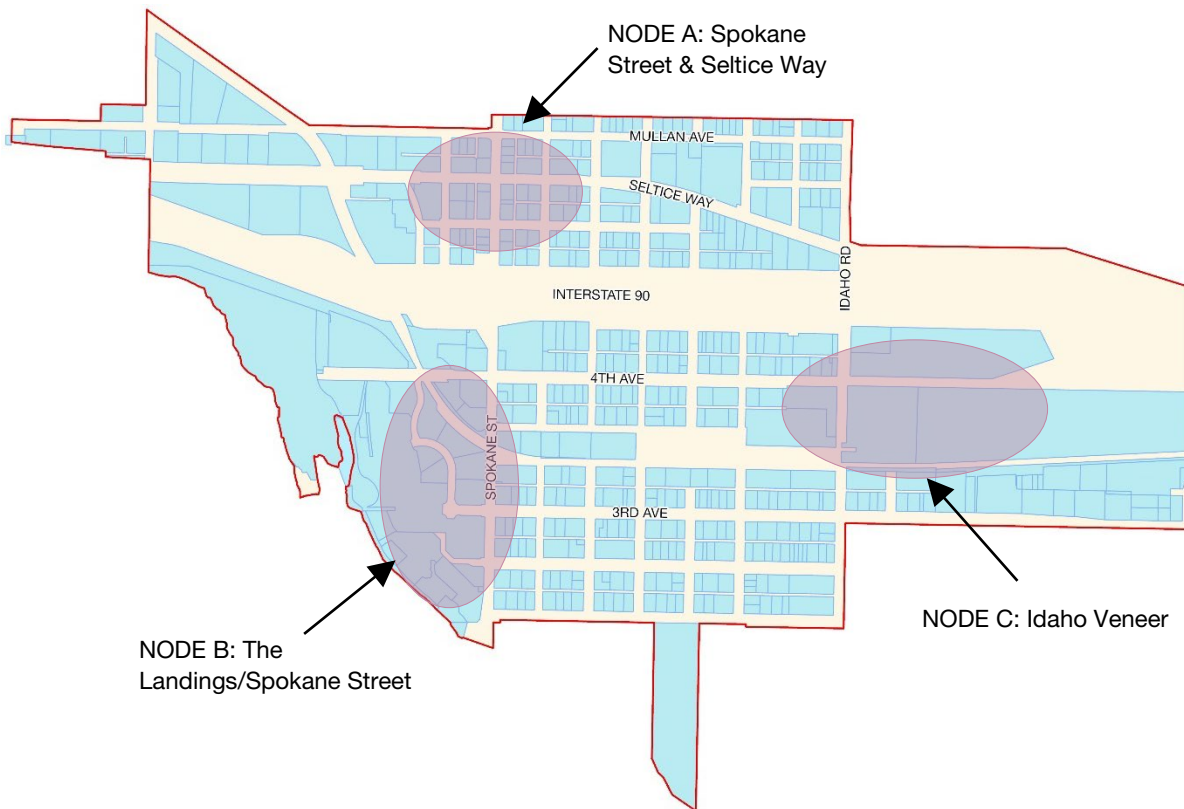


Figure 3 - City Center Nodes

Public Outreach and Updated Opinion

Consistent with the process followed during the original master planning process, it was critical to reach out to the public to understand their opinions of the City Center area, how well things are working, and what needs to change.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic experienced during the amendment process, a typical public outreach strategy was not possible. Although desirable and effective, there could not be large open-house meetings to exchange ideas and gather information. Instead, city staff and the planning team utilized electronic platforms and social media to reach people. Specifically, an eight (8)-minute presentation was developed for public viewing and interaction via social media. The purpose of the presentation was to:

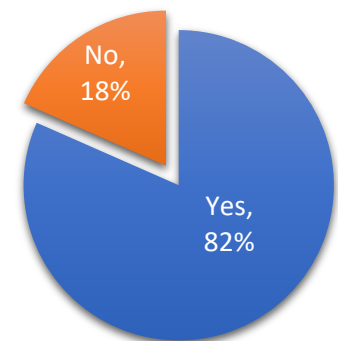
- Provide a history of the original plan.
- Review the original Vision Statement, Goals and Action Items.
- List what Action Items have been completed.
- List what Action Items were yet to be completed.
- Describe the revised City Center Boundary.
- Solicit input on 10 specific questions.

The public responded very well to the outreach strategy. By the end of the public comment period, the city received 164 individual comments. Within each of those comments were answers and commentary to several demographic and specific city center-related questions provided during the online presentation. In terms of master planning efforts, public participation was very successful.

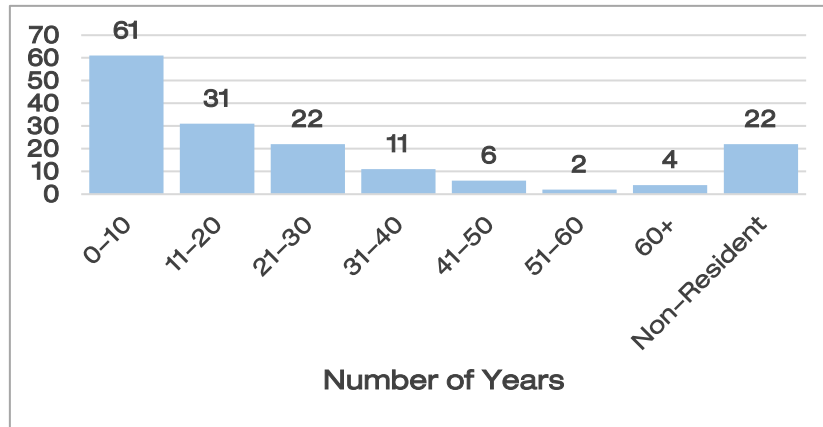
Summary of Public Feedback

The data below provides a summary in graphical form of the public input received.

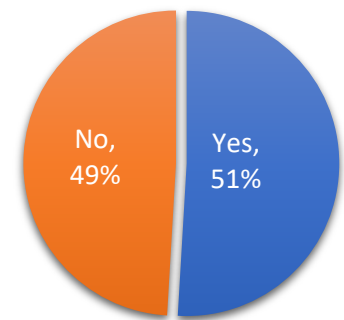
Demographic Question 1: Do you live in Post Falls?



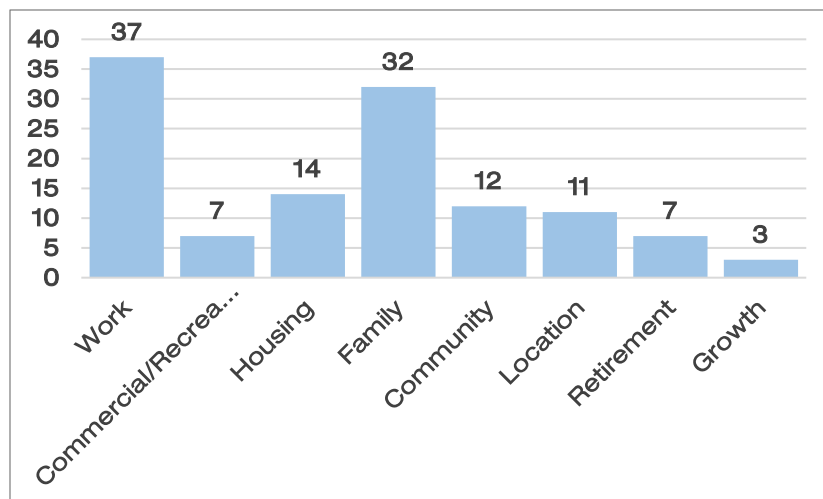
Demographic Question 2: If yes, how many years have you lived in Post Falls?



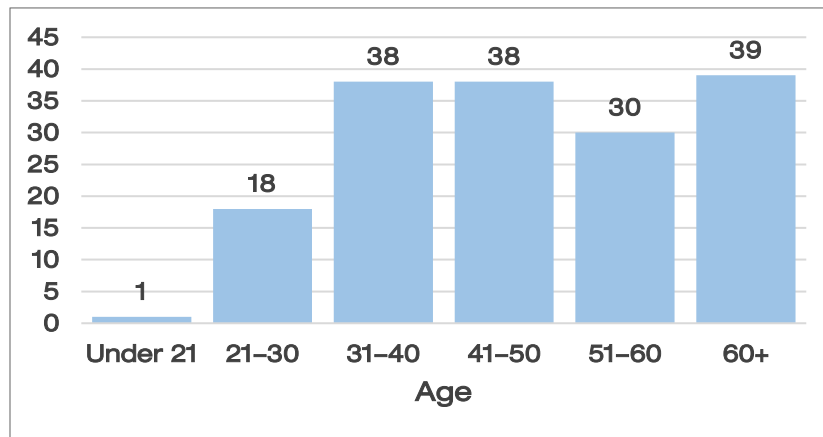
Demographic Question 3: Do you work in Post Falls?



Demographic Question 4: What brings you to Post Falls?

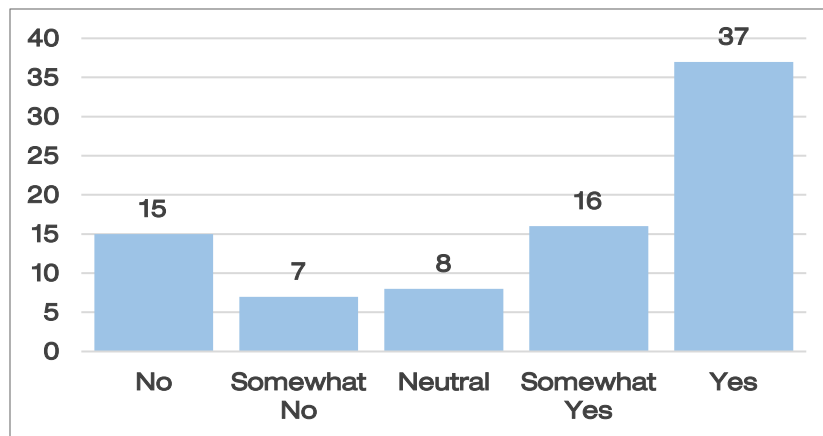


Demographic Question 5: What is your age?



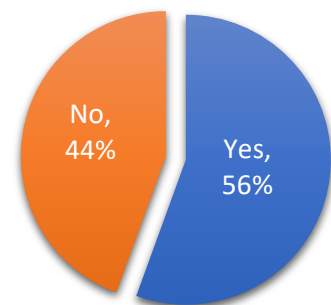
Question 1: How do you feel about the 2005 Plan? Is the vision still the same?

General Opinion: People like the vision and plan established in 2005 but want to see more activity. They want more attractions that really create the downtown feel.



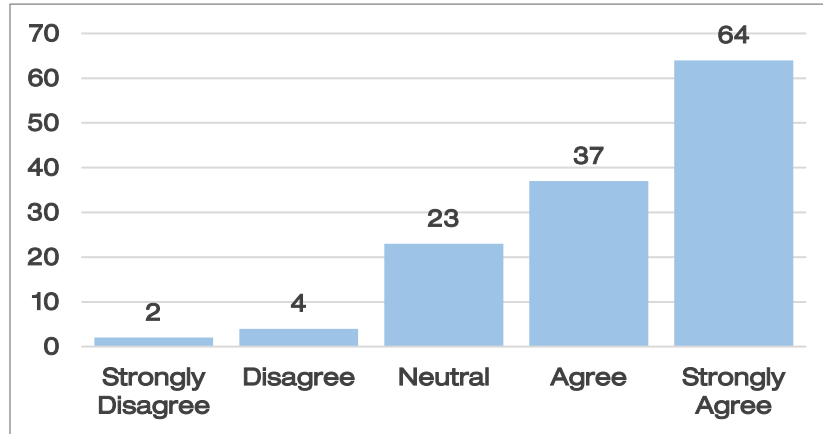
Question 2: Should the vision change?

General Opinion: Same as previous.



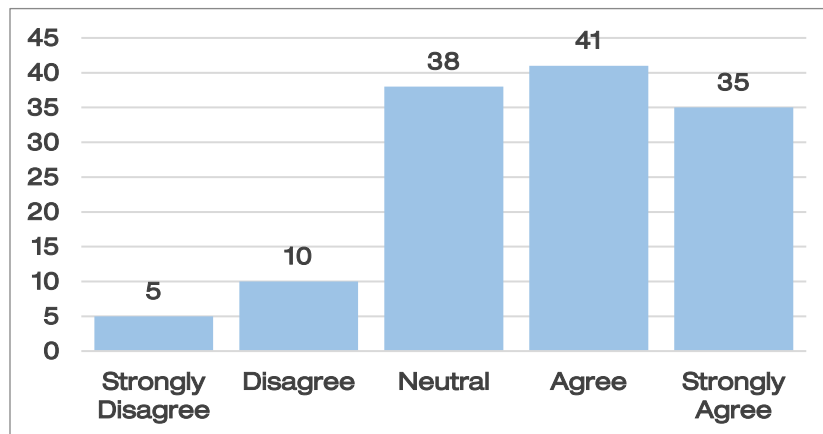
Question 3: Do you identify wide sidewalks being important to a City Center?

General Opinion: Responders prefer wide sidewalk, especially in the commercial areas.



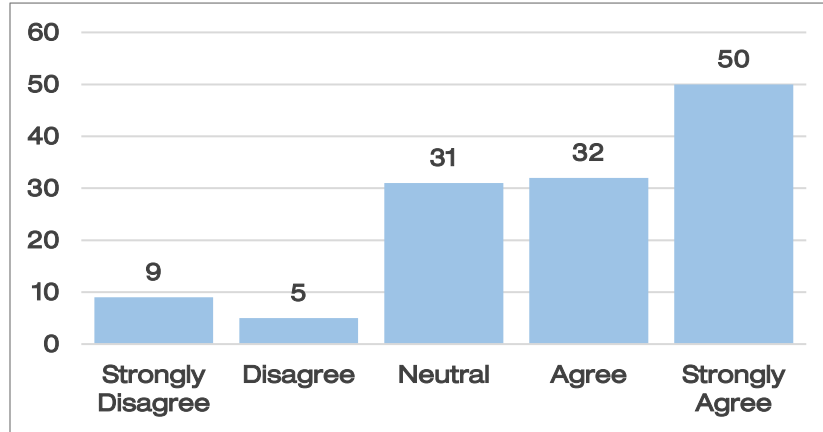
Question 4: Are carefully placed seating areas and street furniture important?

General Opinion: They are important but can get in the way and are often underutilized.



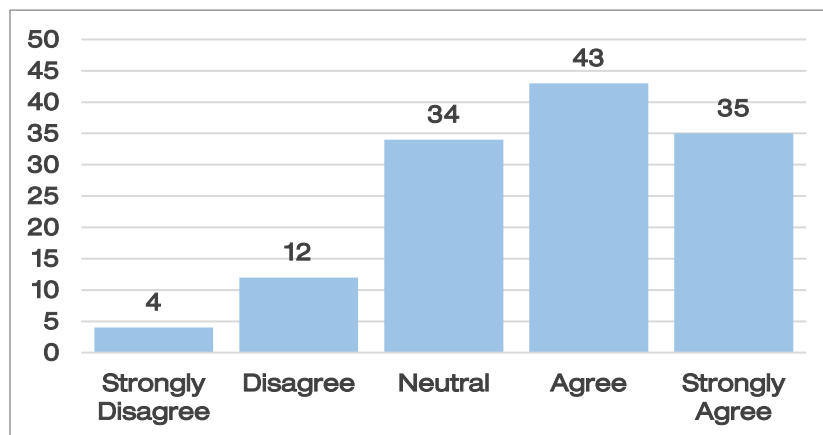
Question 5: How important is “mixed use” in our City Center?

General Opinion: Seen as essential in City Center but must be planned and priced appropriately.



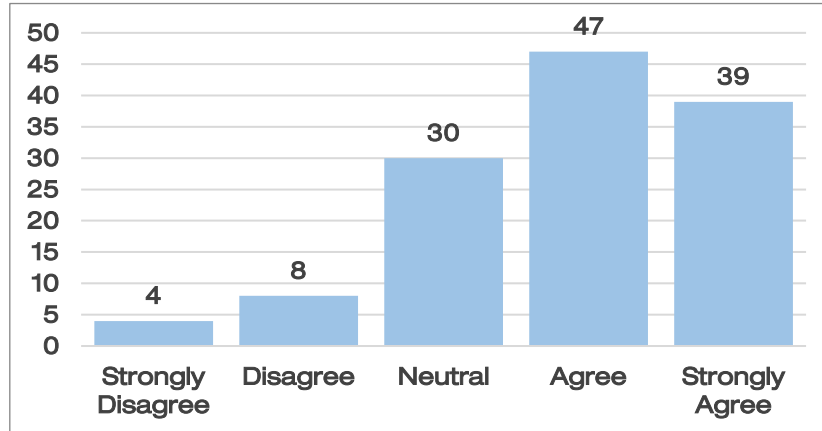
Question 6: Is wayfinding an important element for a City Center?

General Opinion: Become increasingly important when more attractions are present in the area.



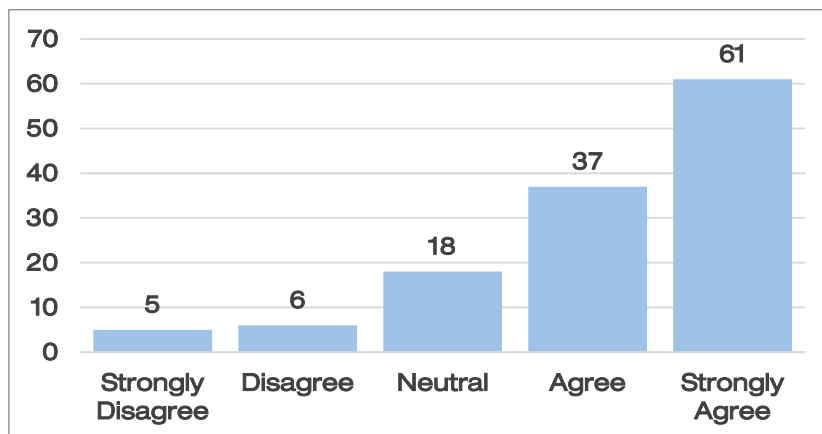
Question 7: Is a common theme for downtown décor important?

General Opinion: Creating an identity using downtown décor is important both culturally and economically. It's important to be unique but fit within a standard.



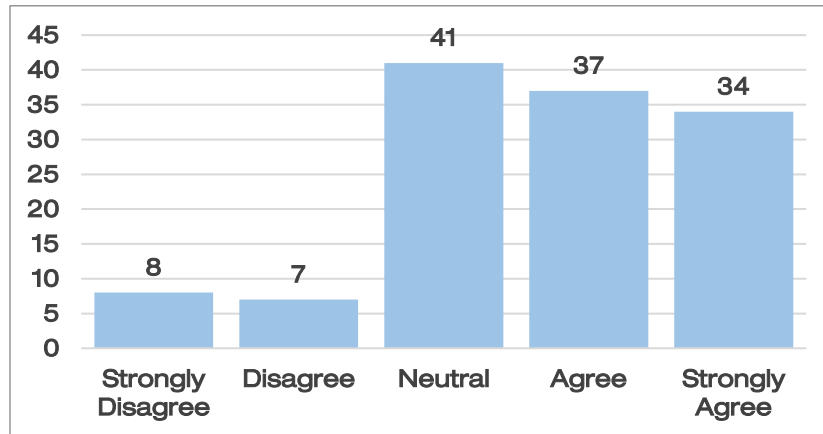
Question 8: Are central gathering places important within a City Center?

General Opinion: Important for a variety of events.



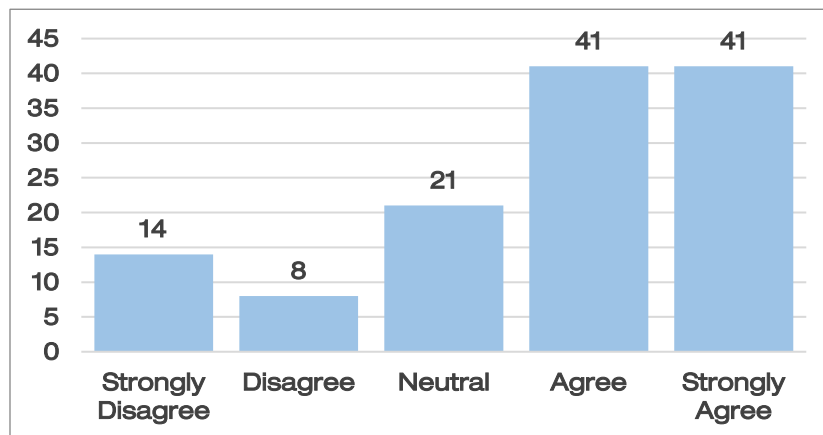
Question 9: Is public art important in a City Center?

General Opinion: Important but should have a controlled theme and come from local artists. Also consider art pieces that can be moved around.



Question 10: Do city centers and mixed-use development areas required diversified housing options at higher densities than other portions of a community to support commercial activity?

General Opinion: Diversity in housing is important with the intent of supporting the commercial zone.



Public Feedback Conclusion

From the input received, the general public believes in the spirit and vision of the original plan. They believe the City Center area should become an activity center for living, commerce, recreation and cultural events. It is evident they value the attributes typically essential for a vibrant and successful downtown area. Specifically, the public was most supportive of wide sidewalks and central gathering places.

While the public supports the Vision for what City Center could become, there is a general expectation that *more* development and additional *Action Items* would have been completed by now. The public wants to see progress.

Stakeholder Interviews

In addition to gathering input from members of the public, the City identified specific stakeholders that were interviewed and provided insightful input and information for this Addendum. The following community leaders served the planning process as stakeholders:

Table 2 - Stakeholder Interviewees

Stakeholder Member	Representing
Pepper Smock	CdA Realty
Ryan Ruffcorn	AA Construction
Hayden Anderl	The Landings
Mark Latham	ML Architects
Linda Wilhelm	City Councilmember
Ryan Davis	Planning & Zoning
Christi Fleischman	Post Falls Urban Renewal Agency

These stakeholders are diverse in experience, influential in the community, and/or know the city well. During their interviews, they provided excellent input to the following questions:

1. What are the strengths of our City Center/Downtown?
2. What are weaknesses of our City Center/Downtown?
3. How has our City changed since the City Center Master Plan in 2005?
4. Is the vision of the 2005 City Center Plan still the same?
5. Are we on the right track?
6. How do we encourage development in City Center?
7. What are the biggest initial needs in City Center? Residential? Commercial? Streetscape? Civic Space? Parking?
8. Would a new Urban Renewal District help City Center Growth?
9. Would a downtown business association help?

Stakeholder Feedback Conclusion

Below is a summary of the feedback gathered by the Stakeholders based on the specific question asked in the previous section.

Strengths:

- Our City Center has so much potential and is starting to take shape, but slowly. Our proximity to our valued natural resources is something we should take advantage of.
- Restaurants in City Center are helping. Once those reach a “critical mass” it should accelerate development.
- Spokane Street, and other streetscape improvements, are also a great step in the right direction. These should continue.
- Public Art helps establish our culture and attracts visitors. Careful and strategic placement of more public art is essential.

Weaknesses:

- Cultural identity is considered one of the biggest weaknesses. There is not a strong sense of community in the area.
- Understanding that City Center *is* downtown is also weakness. Many people, even residents, cannot identify Post Falls’ downtown. We need to do better about advertising the location of our City Center.
- Pedestrian connectivity, primarily east of Spokane Street, is lacking. Focus on sidewalks and paths as streetscapes develop.
- Mixed use is critical, but it seems so much multifamily is being developed. The Landings is a good example. It is understood it will be mostly multifamily housing. The City should consider zoning changes and either change or removal of the Smart Code.
- Finally, significant empty land is present in City Center, which makes the area look blighted.

Changes since 2005:

- The primary change stakeholders see is the population.
- Secondly, there seems to be a reduction in good jobs. Housing is growing, but good-paying jobs are not.

Same Vision?

- We are on the right track, but development needs to happen quicker.
- We need to establish an *identity*.
- Housing in City Center needs to attract diverse people. Older and wealthier as well as younger urban types.
- Smart Code needs to be looked at closely and possibly revised completely. It has been confusing to the development community. We should consider a design review overlay district as well.

Biggest Initial Needs:

- Conflicting views on what is most needed in City Center: Residential or Commercial. Some think “rooftops” are the biggest need and will support commercial. Others believe we need to focus on commercial.
- Clarify or change Smart Code.
- Continue with street improvements east of Spokane Street consistent with City Center Parking Plan.
- Encourage mixed use development.
- Lack of parking is a challenge that needs to be addressed immediately.

A new Urban Renewal District:

- A new City Center Urban Renewal District would likely be helpful, especially if it extended to the north and east. It would also be helpful for the URA to aggressively target development.

Downtown Business Association:

- Ultimately, a Downtown Business Association will be a good thing, but it is probably premature.

Original Action Items

Of the 25 Action Items listed in the original Plan and shown in Table 1, many were completed, others were partially completed, and others were not completed. Also, of those original 25 projects, *additional* projects were added over time as things changed and opportunities presented themselves in City Center. So, projects completed from the original 25, and those added since 2005 are listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - City Center Projects Completed Since 2005

Completed Projects Since 2005
City Hall Campus
Chamber of Commerce Building
Spokane Street, 1st to 5th Avenue
4 th Avenue, Spokane Street to William
Frederick, 4 th to Railroad
William, 4 th to Railroad
Centennial Trail Parking Lot
Improve Centennial Trail Crossing
Mullan Ave & Spokane Street Intersection
Improve 3rd Avenue Crossing

Those projects left *partially* completed or *uncompleted* are listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4 - Original plan projects not completed

Project	Partially Complete	Uncomplete	Still a Priority?
4 th Ave, William to Idaho Street	X		Yes
Infill & Shared Parking	X		Yes
Utility Improvements		X	Yes
Acquire Property for Parking and Green Space	X		Yes
Development Overlay Zones		X	No
Split Diamond Interchange		X	Maybe
Unique City Center Signage and Fixtures	X		Yes
Commercial Development Demonstration Project		X	Maybe
Rename Spokane Street and 4 th Avenue		X	No
Create Joint Visitors Center/Museum		X	No
Falls Dam & Accent Lighting		X	Yes
Streetscape Improvements, Henry St. & Lincoln St.		X	Yes
Streetscape Improvements, 3 rd Ave		X	Yes
Historical/Interpretive Walking Tour		X	Yes
Streetscape Improvements, 1 st Ave		X	Yes
Centennial Trail Spurs		X	Yes
Residential Development Demonstration Project		X	No
Plan for Gathering Center		X	Yes
Multi-Modal Transit Center		X	Yes

Also, each of the projects listed above was carefully evaluated to determine whether it was still a priority for the City Center area. If determined to still be important to the success of City Center, they were “carried over” to the *Amended* Action Item list shown in Table 5 below. Names of project in the two lists may differ slightly, as multiple phases may be involved and/or the scope of work has changed.

Amended Action Item List

City staff developed an updated list of known infrastructure needs within the new City Center boundary. That list utilized the original Action Item List and was developed using predetermined criteria with input & debate amongst multiple staff members and departments. Once the overall list was populated, it was prioritized into a *tiered* system. Those tiers represented which project *groups* were most important. For example, the projects listed in Tier 1 were determined to be a higher priority than Tier 2 projects. However, if circumstances change, or if funding becomes available, projects in a lower tier can move up in priority.

This *Preliminary* Amended Action Item List was then compared to the input received through the public involvement and stakeholder interview process. Modifications to

the project lists and tiers were done accordingly based on the feedback. The *Final Amended Action Item List* with associated costs is listed in Table 5 below.

Table 5 - Amended Action Item List

TIER 1 INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST, 2020 \$
City Center Parking Lots	\$1,600,000
City Center Parking Plan - Street Completion Plan	\$12,000,000
Roundabout at 4th & Seltice Way	\$700,000
Frontage Improvements Spokane Street West Side	\$250,000
4th Ave Frontage Improvements - Idaho Veneer	\$550,000
Idaho Street - 4th to 3rd	\$1,000,000
Idaho Veneer Site North	\$1,140,000
Idaho Veneer Site South	\$1,000,000
Esplanade Improvements	\$730,000
3rd Ave Extension, west of McReynolds	\$850,000
McReynolds Connection	\$400,000
TIER 2 INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST, 2020 \$
Signal at 3rd & Spokane	\$563,000
Railroad Property along RR and Switch Yard	\$1,185,000
Centennial Trail Spur - RR R/W Acquisition & Trail Const	\$2,752,000
Entry Monuments	\$300,000
Wayfinding Signage	\$100,000
Public Art	\$500,000
Water Tower Improvements/Highlights	\$180,000
Fire Station - Fence and Sewer Connection	\$25,000
4th Ave Frontage Improvements (excluding Idaho Veneer)	\$1,100,000
Waterline Extension, Marina Condos to Falls Park	\$200,000
TIER 3 INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST, 2020 \$
Seltice/Mullan Couplet Project - Street Completion Plan	\$10,000,000
Gathering Center	\$1,200,000
Railroad Avenue to Idaho Street	\$750,000
TIER 4 INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST, 2020 \$
Warren Park Improvements	\$412,000
Apply Improvements - Parking Plan North of Freeway	\$5,000,000
Ped & Bike Connections Across Freeway (Henry or Lincoln)	\$3,500,000
Site Remediation (General)	\$3,000,000
Land Acquisition General	\$15,000,000

Revisit Vision Statement and Goals

As mentioned previously, the general direction, vision, and spirit of the original City Center Plan remains the same. Therefore, there is no need to revise the official Vision Statement and associated goals developed in 2005. They apply today as strongly as they did 16 years ago.

Other Recent Studies in the City Center Area

Since 2005, other studies have been completed in the City Center area. It is the intent of this Addendum to be in general conformity and consistency with those plans.



Figure 4 - Post Falls recently completed their Comp Plan Update

Comprehensive Plan: In mid-2020, Post Falls completed its Comprehensive Plan update. That update covers the entire City, but its overall Vision is consistent with the City Center Vision. Specifically, both plans seek to preserve the community and culture, respect & utilize our natural resources, provide livable housing, and healthy opportunity for economic development.

City Center Parking Plan: In the Fall of 2018, the City completed a

comprehensive parking study of the City Center area. The goal of the plan is to provide future guidance on major on-street/off-street parking needs, street scape improvements, locations for potential city-owned parking lots, bicycle connections, and potential avenues for funding.

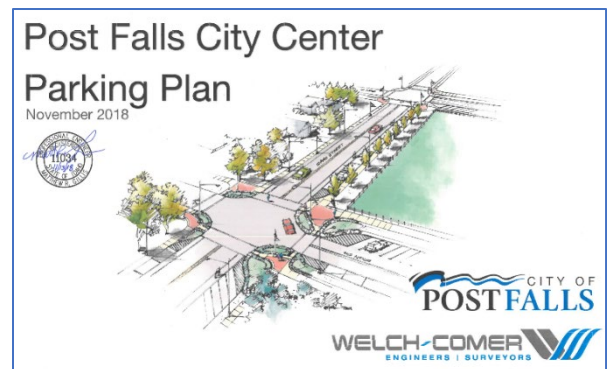


Figure 5 - The City Center Parking Plan is a guide for parking and infrastructure development in City Center.

The City Center Parking Plan is consistent with the Vision and goals of this Master Plan Addendum as it seeks to maximize the commercial, residential, and recreational uses of the City Center area.

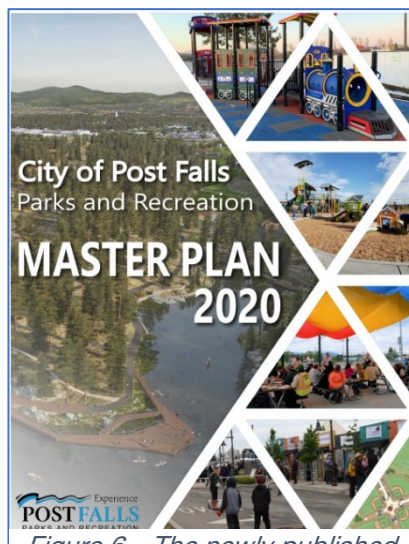


Figure 6 - The newly published Park & Rec Plan

Parks and Recreation Master Plan: This planning effort, completed in 2020 identifies Key Opportunities. One of those opportunities is “Creating a downtown, community gathering place” in the City Center area. The City Center is also identified as an alternative location for large community events and additional public open spaces.

Downtown Public Space Feasibility Study: Like other planning documents, the Public Space Plan is consistent with the original City Center Plan, and this Addendum document. One of the primary plan recommendations is to “Create a phases action plan that dove-tails, as much as possible, with the various other plans and strategic initiatives in place (ex. Streetscape and parking

improvements with Festival Street Improvements, etc.), in order to maximize the city project funds and new construction efforts.

Land Use and Zoning Changes:

The City of Post Falls currently utilizes SmartCode which is a form-based code to support this mixed use activity center for development. A link to the complete booklet for the SmartCode can be located with the following link:

<https://www.postfallsidaho.org/PZDept/SmartCode/SmartCode.pdf>. As the City Center area continues to develop, the City will continue to look in ways to improve the SmartCode regulation or seek other alternatives to assist creating a thriving City Center and facilitate the vision of this document.