



City of Montrose Department Head Interviews Summary

October 2019

The City of Montrose Planning Staff conducted personal interviews with City of Montrose Department Head Staff from August through September 2019. Ten individuals participated in the interviews. The feedback received will help guide development of the Comprehensive Plan and future vision, goals, and recommendations for the *Envision 2040 Montrose Comprehensive Plan*.

1. What are some of our greatest strengths or assets? What's working best?

Community Character

- Quality of life
- More inclusion lately
- Our surroundings
- Livability of our community
- Proximity to outdoors, remoteness, surrounding environment, locality

Services & Amenities

- Whitewater park
- Things for young people to do is encouraging people to live and work here
- Outdoor opportunities
- Access to water sports park, bike paths, recreation amenities

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure that's attractive, useful, meaningful to a wide variety of residents

Economic Development

- Pro-business
- Welcome growth and change
- Diversify economy

Government

- Best team and group of individuals, experience, knowledge, ability to solve problems (coupled with challenge of getting ideas into the same room)
- Interns are great, encouraging people to come back to Montrose
- Very competent, focused team
- Good job balancing interests; very solutions focused

- Get things done
- Skill level and talent
- Leveraging grant money for projects (Connect Trail)
- Collaboration and assistance with local non-profits and stakeholders
- Leader in the community (monetary and in-kind assistance)
- Service agreements between agencies, governments, etc.

2. What are some of the biggest issues facing the City over the next 10 years?

Community Character

- Tendency to overlook certain parts of town and citizens
- Engage all demographics to gain a better understanding of the whole population

Land Use

- Growth - Is there a point where we stop incentives, or should we continue and be ready for explosive growth?
- Staying ahead of growth (traffic, roads)

Housing

- Cost of living & lack of rentals

Community Services & Amenities

- Public safety & drug issues
- Increasing issues of drug and mental health
- State laws that hinder us
- Need to take a hard look at the core issues (mental health, social services)
- Law enforcements will become harder and will be harder to assign resources to meet these challenges (policy, amenities, infrastructure, etc.)
- Employment for the next generation; lack of opportunities

Infrastructure

- Streets and drainage maintenance needs and costs
- Keeping up with core maintenance
- Infrastructure needs – fund better
- We're a regional trade hub - need to take care of our infrastructure

Transportation

- Street infrastructure is deteriorating faster than we're repairing due to costs
- Some of the newer developments don't have a lot of inner lot access – need for frontage roads to help with traffic flow; lots of turning movements
- How to deal with past decisions and development practices that may impede process (i.e. traffic lights not warranted but public is accustomed to it)

Economic Development

- A place for the city to attract big crowds (like the Pavilion & Event Center)
- Lots of people on fixed incomes – elderly population; need larger economic base

- Maintaining a level of customer service with a looming recession
- Growing the middle class, economics, providing light manufacturing jobs, lots of government/hospital/utilities jobs
- Employee wages

Government

- Increased demands from government – asking more and paying less

3. What is your vision for Montrose in 20 years? What do we need to do to achieve it?

Community Character

- Be a place where the outdoors is accessible, people feel safe, quality of life is #1 reason people move here; understand who we are (Montrose), what we're founded on and what's important to our community members
- Having people of all ages – not just a retirement community
- Diversify our population, economy & amenities
- Retain historical past while embracing growth and growing smartly
- Small town feel/community

Land Use

- Manage growth
- Need to control growth it so we don't grow irresponsibly

Housing

- Affordable housing

Community Services & Amenities

- College education and jobs
- Jobs for kids who don't want to go to college

Infrastructure

- Safe community with the right infrastructure to get people around

Transportation

- Address traffic concerns, invest capital funds to find alternative routes/bypass, better mobility and alternative forms of transportation (bicycle/pedestrian)
- Build infrastructure for alternative forms of transportation
- Anticipate where we may have traffic issues and come up with ways to improve traffic flow
- Access for businesses
- A walkable community where you can catch transit for free in various places

Economic Development

- Trajectory we are on is good, make right decisions & invest in the right things
- Provide environment where young professionals can return or come to Montrose and make a living

- Better economic development – creating a community that kids want to return to and raise a family
- Provide jobs and telecommuting opportunities

Government

- Continue to remain flexible and not get tunnel vision
- Be a leader on the western slope for civic government and for how successful partnerships are built within communities and getting things done
- Be the right size city, react to issues, established partnership, respond to issues and show other communities what can be done

4. **We will provide a summary of results from the Workshops and request your feedback from what we learned.** *Each category represents the summer workshops.

Housing & Neighborhoods

- Need affordable housing (2)
- Housing is going to be a primary limiting factor for Montrose due to supply & demand. If we can get more housing here, it will open up housing opportunities.
- Don't put a lot of restrictions on housing
- Think carefully about what we want to become as a city – should we regulate housing or promote it more (i.e. incentives)

Transportation & Mobility

- Diagonal parking downtown is difficult but may be the best option
- Roundabouts are a great option
- The public saw many of the same strengths & issues that we think are important
- Hillcrest is a great bypass opportunity when fully completed
- West side arterial needs to be rebuilt to an acceptable standard from north Townsend to Target
- East bypass – the cost will be too much and probably not warranted for many years due to traffic numbers and volume, also many topography challenges
- Hillcrest a better bypass option
- Address traffic volume in the core first before moving out
- Map of downtown & overlay with Walmart parking – our parking areas are actually closer to businesses than what people walk when parking at Walmart
- Parking lots downtown are underused and need better signage
- Bypass would be great

Land Use & Growth

- Property by wastewater treatment plant: trade with railroad for ROW south of there; make N. Townsend look a lot nicer
- Need a good contact with the railroad to discuss ideas
- Agreement between city & railroad to beautify North Townsend
- Repurpose railroad from Main Street south and possibly more to the north where railroad isn't needed

Parks, Trails, Open Space, Recreation & Tourism

- Keep the golf course to provide a variety of opportunities (2)
- River corridor is great
- In-town camping needs to be addressed appropriately
- We've come a long way by adding the rec center and new Riverbottom trails
- Need separation of bike paths (Connect Trail) from the road. Off-street bike paths are a better and safer option than bike lanes.

Health & Environment

- Keep improving the health of the community

Economy & Opportunity

- Need a quality workforce
- Downtown is the heart of our community – should be a destination
- The city is doing a great job with REDO and accessory dwelling units – advantage for planning growth in a positive way
- Broadband is great
- Our K-12 education is lacking (core curriculum)
- Important to expand CMU and opportunities for youth to stay and come back
- More opportunities for jobs
- Proximity space idea is a great asset
- Need good education systems
- Need opportunities for entry level work right out of college
- Opportunities for young kids – children's museum

Spanish Workshop

- Immigrant community is very in tune with issues – priorities are different
- Need more funding to address mental health issues

5. **Do you have any other comments or suggestions? Any questions? Any concerns?**

Community Character

- Take care of what we have
- River is huge asset
- Seniors play a big role and should be integrated more with the young folks
- Keep open space and agricultural areas within town

Land Use

- Can't just do infill but can't just let growth go wherever it wants due to costs of infrastructure development
- Control development

Housing

- Affordable housing

Community Services and Amenities

- Expand higher education
- Parks – getting results of MRC/City needs analysis wrapped into Comp Plan
- ADA playgrounds
- Need a Parks Plan
- Need to have opportunities for young people to be able to stay (education, jobs) and get involved

Transportation

- Roundabout at Main & Townsend or alternative traffic pattern that makes it easier for pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Identify traffic bottlenecks, discuss opportunities to change
- Ideas to improve traffic flow on Townsend
- Reduce number of access points to help with traffic flow

Economic Development

- Continue developing river corridor, downtown, more retail, more walkable downtown
- More commercial/retail development north of town

Government

- We should have problem-solving committees within the City
- The way we recruit Council – meet people where they are to get people on Council that represent the whole community.
- Reach out to younger people in the process (not just high school but young adults)