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August 8, 2017

Board President Chad Graham and Members of the Kalispell Planning Board  
City of Kalispell Planning Board  
201 First Avenue East  
Kalispell, MT 59901

RE: Comments on The Downtown Plan

Dear Board President Graham and Members of the Planning Board:

We at Citizens for a Better Flathead supports The Downtown Plan (The Plan) and the revitalization of Kalispell's historic downtown core. We believe it will create the quality of life and the "sense of place" we all desire.

At Citizens, we support human-scale streetscapes for the safe and convenient use and enjoyment of residents, businesses, and visitors.

We support the success and prosperity of local businesses.

We support the increased demand on urban cores thereby decreasing pressure on outer sprawl. By doing so, we preserve and protect our valley's historic and cultural heritage, our natural heritage, and our agricultural heritage.

We support more choices for transportation, to see walkability and bicycle-use further encouraged and supported.

As we see these goals achievable through The Plan, the successful restoration of "Main Street, Kalispell" hinges on the ability to effectively and successfully redirect the anticipated increase in highway traffic volume away from the downtown core and reengineer the corridor. We at Citizens support that effort.

Citizens believes The Plan will also reinvigorate neighborhoods surrounding the downtown planning zone. But we are concerned that increased property taxes and rents may displace local business owners, home owners and renters, seniors and young alike. We don't want to see a climate of added pressures of affordability pricing out those who live, work, and play downtown.

We are concerned by the possible increase in liquor/gaming licenses in the corridor, which may conflict with the “sense of place” the downtown redevelopment looks to achieve. As this board and the council has addressed the proliferation of gaming activity, we agree with The Plan (on page 28) and encourage the city to look closely at new state laws that would allow an increase in restaurant-directed liquor licenses to help foster an entertainment culture within the planning zone.

Public art shouldn't be public art for its own sake – “Let's put a piece of public art there.” Public art works when it's reflective of the natural creativity and vibrancy of an area. And it works better when policy is in place to design, implement, and maintain such a program – perhaps through an arts or culture commission inclusive of community members.

Thank you...

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Richard Turbiak". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the top of the "T".

A. Richard Turbiak  
Executive Director  
Citizens for a Better Flathead