

August 9, 2018

To: Neighboring Residents of the Snow Lot
Re: Snow Lot Update



Dear Neighboring Residents of the Snow Lot,

On behalf of the City of Whitefish, I would like to invite neighbors of the Snow Lot and the community at large to a series of upcoming meetings to help us identify ideas, work through concerns, and create a design that works for our community. All these meetings will be in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. Homeword Inc., has been selected as the consultant to handle neighborhood and community design meetings for the Snow Lot. Homeword is a nonprofit community housing development organization out of Missoula that has been providing affordable housing across Montana since 1994.

This process will start off with a Neighborhood and Community Kickoff Meeting **Thursday, September 6th at 6:00pm**. At this meeting, you will be introduced to the process team, learn about the process, and how to participate. The Kickoff Meeting will be followed by two Design Charrette Meetings where your input will help shape the outcome of the Snow Lot. These meetings will be held on **Wednesday and Thursday evenings on September 19th and 20th at 5:30pm**. Finally, on **Wednesday, October 17th at 6:00pm**, Homeword will present three design concepts created from your input for consideration by the Whitefish Strategic Housing Plan Steering Committee and the Whitefish City Council.

Recent Activities

- BNSF has taken down some trees in preparation for a storage building they are intending to build. This was NOT the City beginning work on any project. I know the trees were loved by some but BNSF property is in the County and we have no control over these matters.
- The City has had some environmental testing done on the site where soil borings were taken to determine if there are any concerns. There will also be further soil borings once the Montana Department of Environmental Quality determines the best place for them to be taken. We anticipate results from these tests in early November but do not anticipate any problems. This is a necessary part of the process to ensure the health and safety of any future use of the Snow Lot.

Next Steps

- Go through the Design Charrette process with Homeword and gather input from the neighborhood and the community culminating in three design options for consideration by the Whitefish Strategic Housing Plan Steering Committee and the City Council. The conceptual designs are options to consider and may not be the final project design.
- Finish environmental testing.
- The Whitefish Housing Authority will be coordinating the development portion of the project.

As a reminder, the goal of this effort is to create homes residents of Whitefish can afford with area median incomes averaging \$40,000 to \$53,400 per year. This project is part of the City's mission to provide homes that are affordable to a wide range of income levels. It is important for people of all demographics to feel they can live in the community in which they work. Affordable housing is not cheap or poor-quality tenements, giant blocks of apartments with no character, or units intended for high frequency turnover of residents with low-incomes. Affordable homes are homes for which a family spends no more than 30% of their income on monthly housing costs. The term "workforce housing" means housing for people who are working in Whitefish: business owners, teachers, police officers, firefighters, waitstaff, retail sales force, etc. The workforce housing described in the Whitefish Strategic Housing Plan is meant to encompass all people looking to work and/or live in Whitefish regardless of income level but who are instead living in Columbia Falls, Kalispell, or the County where housing is more affordable. It's important for the health of our community that people that work in Whitefish, can live in Whitefish. It opens opportunities for volunteerism, civic engagement, and helps our economy thrive.

If you are interested in receiving agendas for upcoming Whitefish Strategic Housing Plan Steering Committee meetings or City Council meetings, please visit the City's website homepage, click on [Email Notifications](#) in the lower right side of the homepage, and then fill out your information. I typically send out agenda emails on Fridays if there are meetings the following week. I notice upcoming meetings in this email and some may include items of importance to the Snow Lot.

Thank you for your patience as we work through this process. We hope you will take part in the public dialogue to find solutions for our fellow community members. If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call or send me an email.

Sincerely,

Adam M. Hammatt
City Manager – Whitefish, MT

cc: Whitefish City Council
Whitefish Strategic Housing Plan Steering Committee
Homeword Inc.