

Moscow Comprehensive Plan Update 2007-2008



Facilitator Discussion & Information Guide

City of Moscow
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Moscow YOUR VISION, OUR
www.visionmoscow.org

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Introduction

The City of Moscow is beginning an 18 month process to rewrite its Comprehensive Plan. The Plan is the growth and development guide for the future of the City. The key to a successful Comprehensive Plan and the basis for this project is community input and citizen participation. This project will be based upon the premise that the community members are empowered to create the environment they desire, and that the citizens of Moscow play a critical role in increasing the quality of life in our city.

On behalf of the Mayor and City Council,, the Community Development Department invites each and every community member (this includes people who live outside of Moscow, but share an interest in the City and its well-being) to actively participate in this dynamic planning process to help develop The Plan. There will be many different kinds of opportunities to participate in The Process. One of the cornerstones of the public input gathering for this project will be participatory democracy in a free, open environment.

Because community development issues tend to be controversial and because Moscow community members are so impassioned about their community, a concerted effort will be made to create and maintain uninhibited, free-flowing ideas and input from community members from beginning to end of the process. We will be using study circles, which have been employed in hundreds of communities throughout the United States and Canada, to create and sustain public dialogue and problem solving. Trained, volunteer facilitators are critical to the success of these discussions.

Within this guide you will find information about The Plan and The Process. You will also find important information about study circles, facilitation and Building Strong Neighborhoods, as adapted from guides created by Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC). These guides and further details and information about the SCRC may be found at www.studycircles.org. The City of Moscow is thankful to SCRC for its valuable efforts to improve communities everywhere and, especially for their willingness to come to Moscow, ID.

The Comprehensive Plan

AUTHORITY, ROLE AND USE: The Preface

State statute requires that all cities adopt a Comprehensive Plan (The Plan). The Plan is the guiding document for development of the City. It is a general plan that establishes goals, objectives and policies about different aspects of community development (housing, transportation, economic development, etc.), but not actual development layouts or proposals. It is used as a reference guide by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Mayor and City Council in their decision making about applications filed by property owners for subdivision and rezoning of land. It should have some degree of flexibility, while representing a certain vision for future development and redevelopment.

This is why we must have a Comprehensive Plan and how it is used.

VISION: The Perfect Place to Live and Work or The Premise

What do we want our community to be and look like in 25 years? The Plan should represent a clear vision of what the community believes is most desirable for maintaining, improving and/or creating quality of life. What kind of community do we want?

This is our big picture, long range desire. This is our dream.

VALUES & PRIORITIES: The Needs and Wants

What do we value most about our lives and community that we want to preserve, create and/or enhance? What housing, economic, neighborhood, transportation and neighborhood conditions and opportunities should be available to us in our daily lives?

These are our guiding principles to get to our Vision.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES: The Comprehensive Plan Components

What are specific things we want to accomplish in each of the aspects of community development and in The Plan and what do we need to do to accomplish them?

The Plan is required by state statute to be based on the following components, and we may choose to have additional components: Property Rights, Population, Economic Development, Land Use, Natural Resources, Hazardous Areas, Public Services, Facilities & Utilities, Transportation, Recreation, Housing, Community Design, and Implementation.

These are our tools to implement our Values to achieve our Vision.

The Process

ADVERTISEMENT AND OUTREACH

In order to assemble a diverse, critical mass of Moscow residents, an intensive outreach and recruitment process is underway. We are using multiple media and methods, including newsletter mailings, newspaper ads, survey mailing, stakeholder group notifications and solicitations, Moscow Dialogues meetings and design charrettes (to be held in 7 or more different locations throughout the City), interactive webpage, and info briefs on public access television channel (Time Warner Cable, Channel 13).

GETTING READY

In the first stages of this project, Community Development staff gathered and prepared information and data, identified stakeholder groups, hired a planning consultant, trained facilitators, established a project management team, steering committee and action plan, and prepared a community profile and assessment.

PUBLIC INPUT AND PARTICIPATION

The input-gathering process is designed to be a multi-faceted, flexible, convenient system that reaches all interest groups, makes it easy for them to participate, makes the best use of tapping their knowledge, empowers them to create the environment they want and includes them from start to finish. This will include Moscow Dialogues meetings and design charrettes (to be held in 7 or more different locations throughout the City), interactive webpage, newsletter mailings, stakeholder group meetings, focus group meetings and public hearings.

SCENARIO PLANNING

As input comes in from these various sources, we will be using computer software and visual aids to play out, predict and depict different growth and development patterns and rates based on data, trends, public input and planning theory. This will help the community make adjustments and re-evaluate, as necessary.

PLAN DRAFTING

Over the summer, the City will establish focus groups, a drafting team and a steering committee to create, review, and refer draft sections of The Plan, based on all the input gathered from the community in the methods described above. In the fall, drafts of The Plan will be presented to the community at large-group sessions and small-group Moscow Dialogues. People will have a chance to assess and modify The Plan before it is approved.

PLAN ADOPTION

Finally, public hearings at Planning & Zoning and City Council will provide a last chance for community input and final revisions before the Plan is approved.

The Moscow Dialogues: An Opportunity for Neighborhood-level Planning and Action

Each of the Moscow Dialogues will consist of a series of four small-group sessions. They will be conducted in various sectors of the City, and are meant to foster neighborhood level discussion about community development and planning issues.

The Dialogue sessions held this spring are designed to help residents articulate the values and priorities that should underlie the new Comprehensive Plan. The final two sessions, held in the fall, will give participants a chance to assess the draft Plan, and to decide what the Plan means for their neighborhood. Community members will be encouraged to work together on objectives that will improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

Although Moscow has many neighborhoods, they are not all formally recognized or represented as individual neighborhoods with identified geographic boundaries or land use plans. More neighborhoods exist in Moscow than can readily be identified and managed individually for purposes of rewriting the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, the Moscow Dialogues and related neighborhood discussions will be conducted based on geographic sectors of the City that have been identified and used as part of the Moscow Citizen Surveys that were conducted in 2001 and 2004. Dialogue meetings to discuss neighborhood issues will be conducted in each of these sectors, as shown on the map below.

About the Moscow Dialogues and the Role of Facilitators

The Moscow Dialogues will be small-group discussions about various community planning and development issues where every voice can be heard, equally and respectfully. They are based a proven set of organizing and small-group techniques that many communities refer to as 'study circles.' In other places, these strategies have helped communities develop their own ability to solve problems by bringing all kinds of people together to think, talk, and work to create change. The Study Circles Resource Center provided free technical assistance to this project.

The facilitator is key to making the dialogue work, by helping the members talk and work together productively.

There are five principles that distinguish this kind of approach:

- Involve everyone. Demonstrate that the whole community is welcome and needed.
- Embrace diversity. Reach out to all kinds of people.
- Share knowledge, resources, power, and decision making.
- Combine dialogue and deliberation. Create public talk that builds understanding and explores a range of solutions.
- Connect deliberative dialogue to social, political, and policy change

In this approach to community problem solving, it is the facilitators who have the ultimate responsibility for the quality of the democratic discussion. They are usually volunteers who reflect the diversity of the community—people who are willing to give their time to engage their peers in productive, small-group, public discussions. Special training and support is provided to build their skills and experience.

The *facilitators* are responsible for what happens “inside” a dialogue:

- the quality and productiveness of the conversation
- helping people explore a range of viewpoints
- making space for all voices
- building trust across differences
- helping participants make progress on the issue by connecting their dialogue to action.

Tips for Participants

- ***Listen carefully to others.*** Make sure you are giving everyone a chance to speak. Don't interrupt people. When you show respect for other people, it helps them show respect for you.
- ***Keep an open mind.*** This is a chance for you to explore ideas that you have rejected or didn't consider in the past.
- ***Do your best to understand other points of view.*** It is important to understand what other people think and why they feel the way they do. This will help you find solutions that work for everyone.
- ***Help keep the discussion on track.*** Make sure your remarks relate to the discussion.
- ***Speak your mind freely, but don't take over the discussion.*** If you tend to talk a lot in groups, leave room for quieter people. Being a good listener shows respect for others. This makes it easier for quiet people to speak up.
- ***Talk to the group rather than the leader.*** Try to look around the group when you talk. That will help others to know that they are part of the conversation.
- ***Talk to individuals in the group.*** A study circle should feel like a conversation. Try to involve everyone. If you feel someone has something to say, draw them out. Ask them questions about their ideas.
- ***Tell the facilitator what you need.*** The facilitator guides the discussion, sums up key ideas, and helps to make things clear. If something is not clear, ask the leader about this. Others might have the same concern.
- ***Value your life stories and opinions.*** Everyone in the group, including you, is special. No one is the same. All our lives have been different. This is what makes the study circle interesting. Make sure your voice is heard. Your wisdom and ideas are important.
- ***It's OK to disagree.*** Even when we all come from the same group or culture, we are still different. These differences keep the group lively. If you do not agree with an idea, ask questions. But don't get carried away. Be respectful.
- ***Remember that humor and a pleasant manner will help.*** When you keep your sense of humor, people will like listening to you. You can disagree with someone without making a personal attack. When you talk, your body "talks," too. Pay attention to your "body language."

Session 1: About Our Neighborhood

Though we share a connection to the neighborhood, we rarely have the chance to express our hopes and concerns for the neighborhood.

This session provides an opportunity to share personal experiences, stories, and opinions. It lays the foundation for the rest of the sessions, and sets the tone for open, thoughtful discussion.

Tips for facilitators

1. Welcome everyone, tell them about the program, and explain your role.
2. Help the group set ground rules, and post them so everyone can see them. See the sample ground rules in the box.
3. Introduce the recorder (or ask for a volunteer to record).
4. Don't feel like you have to cover every question – or that you have to ask them in order.

Some Sample Ground Rules

- Everyone gets a fair hearing.
- Give everyone a chance to talk.
- One person speaks at a time. Don't interrupt.
- Speak for yourself, only. Do not presume to speak for others.

- If you are offended, say so.
- You can disagree, but don't personalize it. Keep it about the issue, not the personality.
- Everyone helps the facilitator keep the discussion moving and on track.

Introductions

1. Introduce and describe yourself to the group. Tell the group a little about the neighborhood where you grew up.
2. How long have you lived in this neighborhood, and how did you come to live here? Was it by choice or by chance?
3. What skills and strengths do you bring to neighborhood issues?

Our Connections to the Neighborhood

1. How would you describe the neighborhood? What kinds of people live here?
2. How long has this neighborhood existed? What stands out about the history of the neighborhood?
3. What are the distinguishing characteristics of the neighborhood?

4. In what ways do you feel connected to the neighborhood?
 - A. What neighborhood groups do you belong to? (For example: religious, volunteer, or youth group.)
 - B. Why are these connections important to you?
 - C. Describe an experience that made you feel connected to the neighborhood.
 - D. Describe an experience that made you feel like you didn't belong in the neighborhood.

5. What kinds of things would make you feel more connected to the neighborhood?

6. How has the neighborhood changed since you've lived here?
 - A. How has the mix of people changed?
 - B. How do people in your neighborhood get along? Is that changing?
 - C. What other kinds of changes do you see?
 - D. How do these changes affect your life on a daily basis?

7. Is there a mix of different kinds of housing, and types of land use (houses, businesses, etc.), in your neighborhood?

8. Do you feel that your neighborhood is well-connected with other neighborhoods and to the community as a whole?

9. What do you like best about this neighborhood? Why? Tell a story or anecdote that illustrates what you like best.

10. If you could change one thing about our neighborhood, what would it be? Why?

11. Do you have children or relatives living in the neighborhood? How do their views of the neighborhood differ from your own?

12. What do people living outside the neighborhood think about it? What would you want them to know?

Session 2: Charting a Course for the Future of Moscow: Talking about key priorities, issues, and values

In this session, we'll continue talking about your neighborhood within the context of the topics that are included within The Plan. You will be presented with a draft summary of the input that was received during the first dialogue session as well as during the community wide Moscow Congress meeting. This is an opportunity to discuss these topics in the broad context of the community as a whole, and to communicate issues or concerns that your neighborhood has about items such as pedestrian walkability, park facilities, traffic and housing. The following is a list of priorities that may be important to your neighborhood, and are also important to the city. You are certainly not required to discuss all of the priorities listed below, so please feel free to discuss those that are most important to you and your neighborhood.

Priority – Housing

We should ensure that Moscow is a place where all kinds of people can live. We should strive toward a good array of housing choices in terms of type, cost, and location.

- What are the key issues about housing in your neighborhood?
- In the community?
- What values should we uphold as we work on issues of housing in Moscow?
- What are our greatest needs when it comes to housing?

Priority – Transportation

We should ensure that Moscow is a place where all kinds of transportation choices and opportunities exist. We should create a system that provides efficient, safe travel, and is sensitive to land use and neighborhood issues.

- What are the key issues about transportation in your neighborhood?

- In the community?
- What values should we uphold as we work on issues of transportation in Moscow?
- What are our greatest needs when it comes to transportation?

Priority – Economic Development

We should ensure that Moscow has a diverse, thriving economy that offers ample living wage job opportunities, as well as job opportunities for part-time workers/students – while also preserving our quality of life and small town character.

- What are the key issues about economic development from a neighborhood perspective? Have issues related to economic development impacted the social or physical make up of your neighborhood, and if so, how?
- From a community perspective?
- What values should we uphold as we work on issues of economic development in Moscow?
- What are our greatest needs when it comes to economic development?

Priority – Natural Resources

We should ensure that Moscow is a place where natural resources are identified and valued. We should use and/or preserve these resources in a manner consistent with sustainability practices, respect for future generations, and the natural environment.

- What are the key issues about natural resources in your neighborhood?
- In the community?
- What values should we uphold as we work on issues involving natural resources in Moscow?
- What are our greatest needs when it comes to natural resources?

Priority – Central Business District

We should ensure that Moscow has a vibrant downtown that is the heart of the City and is the hub for pedestrian shopping, community events, and governmental services.

- What are the key issues about the Central Business District from a neighborhood perspective? Are there issues about the Central Business District that effect the social or physical character of your neighborhood? If so what and how?
- From a community perspective?
- What values should we uphold as we work on downtown issues in Moscow?
- What are our greatest needs when it comes to the Central Business District?

Priority – Parks and Recreation

We should ensure that Moscow is a place where people with all kinds of recreational needs and desires can find opportunities for active and passive recreation.

- What are the key issues about parks and recreation in your neighborhood?
- In the community?
- What values should we uphold as we work on issues of parks and recreation in Moscow?
- What are our greatest needs when it comes to parks and recreation?

Priority – Neighborhood and Historic Districts

We should ensure that Moscow is a place where planning and development considers the needs and values of neighborhoods and historic districts, and promotes their identity, preservation, and enhancement.

- What are the key issues about neighborhood and historic preservation in your neighborhood?
- In the community?
- What values should we uphold as we work on issues of historic preservation in Moscow?
- What are our greatest needs when it comes to historic preservation?

Final questions

1. Are there other priorities, beyond the seven listed here, that Moscow should focus on as part of the Comprehensive Plan process?
2. What were the main themes in the discussion?
3. What are you most excited about working on in your neighborhood?
4. What are you most excited about working on in Moscow?

Tip for facilitators:

- Ask the recorder to give a summary of the discussion, and then ask the group if they want to change or add to the summary.

MOSCOW DIALOGUES

Recording form

Remember: Main themes and ideas only – don't try to capture every word.

Main areas of agreement:

Main areas of disagreement:

Action ideas:

Where Do We Go From Here?

After the first two sessions of the Moscow Dialogues have concluded this spring, people will have the chance to join working groups that focus on the priorities listed in Session 2. (There may also be groups forming on new priorities that emerge in the first two sessions)

The working groups will take the products of Moscow Dialogues Session 2 and begin formulating draft goals and objectives for each priority topic. These draft goals and objectives will be the bases for the creation of the new Comprehensive Plan and will be presented in draft form to the community for review and comment in future Moscow Dialogues sessions to be held in the fall of 2007.

Group Participant Description

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL (Existing Group)

The group of 7 elected officials of the City of Moscow

Charge: To perform the executive and legislative functions of the City, including passage of laws and policies

Planning and Zoning Commission (Existing Group)

The group of up to 9 citizens appointed by the Mayor and Council under the authority of Idaho Code 67-6504 and charged with making recommendations on all planning and zoning matters to the Mayor and City Council.

Charge: To conduct comprehensive planning processes and make recommendations to the Mayor and Council regarding the City Comprehensive Plan, as well as zoning and land use matters

Steering Committee (Newly Formed Specific to this Project)

- Mayor
- Council Member
- Council Member
- P&Z Chair
- Parks and Recreation Commission Chair
- Health and Environment Chair
- Historic Preservation Chair
- Fair and Affordable Housing Commission Chair
- Human Rights Commission Chair
- Transportation Commission Chair
- Tree Commission Chair
- Arts Commission Chair
- Moscow Civic Association President
- Greater Moscow Alliance President
- Moscow Urban Renewal Chair
- Moscow Chamber of Commerce President
- Two Citizen at Large Representatives
- Two Area of City Impact at Large Representatives
- Moscow School Board Chair
- County Commissioner Representative
- Gritman Medical Center Board Chair
- ASUI President
- University of Idaho Representative

25 member group representing elected and appointed officials, city commissions Latah County government and the general public

Charge = To oversee and guide process and make decisions about drafts and recommendations forwarded to them from the focus groups and staff team, prior to final recommendations are presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Mayor and City Council

Staff Team (Newly Formed Specific to this Project)

Community Development Director, Public Works Director, Parks Director, Assistant City Supervisor, Consultant

A 5 – 7 member group of staff most involved in project and having authority to delegate and commit resources

Charge = To facilitate the empowerment of the community to create the plan that they want for their own lives, families and future, to make arrangements for public participation, out reach and meetings, to receive and compile data and input, to coordinate project management, to provide professional feedback and input on products of focus groups and stakeholder groups, to make recommendations to Steering Committee and to draft plan text and maps

Working Groups (Newly Formed Specific to the Project)

Seven groups of 6-8 people made up of stakeholder group representatives, members of stakeholder groups, general public and a staff representative. All interested parties will be encouraged to attend the Working Group meetings to provide input. These groups will be created to work on the most fundamental and integral elements of community development, including the following:

- **Housing (7)** – (City Council Representative, Fair and Affordable Housing Commission Member, ASUI Representative, President Board of Realtors, Planning and Zoning Commission Member, and Two Citizens at Large)

- **Transportation (8)** – (City Council Representative, Transportation Commission Member, ASUI representative, Moscow Valley Transit Representative, Two Citizens at Large, and Two Area of City Impact at Large)
- **Economic Development (6)** – (City Council Representative, LEDC President, LEDC Executive Director, Moscow Chamber of Commerce Representative, and Two Citizens at Large)
- **Natural Resources (6)** – (City Council Representative, Two Health and Environment Commission Representatives, One Tree Commission Representative, and Two Citizens at Large)
- **Central Business District (8)** – (City Council Representative, Two Downtown Association Representatives, Chamber of Commerce Representative, Historic Preservation Commission Representative, Arts Commission Representative, Urban Renewal Agency Representative, and Two Citizens at Large)
- **Parks and Recreation and Culture (8)** – (City Council Representative, Two Parks and Recreation Commission Representatives, One Youth Taskforce Representative, Two Youth Activity Group Representatives, and Two Citizen at Large Representatives)
- **Neighborhoods and Historic Districts (7)** – (City Council Representative, Two Historic Preservation Commission Representatives, One Downtown Association Representative, One Fort Russell Representative, and Two Citizen at Large Representatives)

Umbrella themes for all of the above topics will be “Smart Growth”, “Sustainable Development” and “Sense of Place/Community Character.” Information about Smart and related community matters can be found at www.smartgrowth.org. The principles of Smart Growth Information about “Sustainability” can be found at www.sustainable.org.

Charge = To receive input from stakeholder groups and general public and either represent community values and priorities in proposing goals, objectives and policies, based on the topic or topics they are assigned to work on

Stakeholder Groups (Existing Groups)

City appointed Boards and Commissions plus various interest groups having known or anticipated effect on and interest or involvement in Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives or policies. This would include groups such as the Planning and Zoning Commission, Transportation Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Fair and Affordable Housing Commission, Health and Environment Commission, Board of Adjustment, Human Rights Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Tree Commission, Paradise Path Task Force, Urban Renewal Agency, Latah Economic Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, University of Idaho, Moscow Civic Association, Greater Moscow Alliance, Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute, Palouse Land Trust, Gritman Medical Center and Latah County.

Charge = To receive products of Moscow Dialogues and survey and consider such in light of their groups interests and perspectives and to make recommendations and proposals on refinements of such to focus groups and to select and provide representatives to serve on focus groups

Facilitators (Newly Formed Specific to this Project)

A group of 10-30 volunteers trained specifically to encourage and manage verbal input in a group setting and an open, free, constructive environment.

Charge = To facilitate public input on community development issues at four (4) “Moscow Dialogues” meetings intended to be held in each of 7-10 different sectors of the City. Facilitators may also be asked to volunteer to facilitate the meetings of the Focus Groups described above.

Facilitators will be instrumental in the initial public input-gathering stage, which will include meetings held in different sectors of the City on four different occasions throughout the process.

Community (Existing Group)

1 group consisting of the community population minus elected and appointed officials and the project staff team

Charge = To actively participate and provide thoughts, experiences, information, observations and feedback from start to finish.

Comprehensive Plan Re-Write Process Organization Chart

Adoption Process

Public Hearings at
City Council

Public Meeting at
Council Committee

Public Hearings at
Planning & Zoning

DRAFT CP
DOCUMENT

Plan Preparation
Process



Public Input and
Information Gathering



More on Study Circles

Study circle programs embody an approach to community change that is centered on small-group, facilitated dialogue. The term “study circles” is shorthand for a three-phase process that is rooted in democratic principles. It begins with broad, inclusive community organizing to draw people from all parts of the community. In phase two, many small groups meet simultaneously across the community to discuss an issue of public concern. These facilitated dialogues lead to an action phase—outcomes ranging from changes in individuals’ attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs, to new projects and collaborations, and to institutional and policy change.

Study circles did not originate with the Study Circles Resource Center. The democratic concepts on which study circles are based have roots in ancient times. More recently, the Chautauqua Assembly, founded in New York in 1870, used study circles to promote adult learning and social change. These study circles provided higher education for people who didn’t have access to college. Instead of attending formal classes, people would send for lessons and reading materials, and get together in small groups to discuss them. This democratic process proved to be an effective way for people to study and learn together.

During the 20th century, study circles became a common form of adult education in countries all over the world, from Scandinavia to Asia. However, in the United States, study circles declined with the rise of colleges and universities.

American study circles have revived recently, but in a very different form. As public interest in small-group discussions and forums grew in the late 1980s, the Topsfield Foundation began to explore the role of citizen deliberation in public life and community problem solving. (The Topsfield Foundation was renamed The Paul J. Aicher Foundation in 2005 to honor its founder.)

With the creation of the Study Circles Resource Center in 1989, study circles began to play an increasing role in civic activities across the country. This early work yielded a top-down, bottom-up process that combines the concepts of broad-based organizing and inclusive grass-roots recruitment in community-wide initiatives.

During the past 17 years, hundreds of communities across the country have organized large-scale, public dialogue on a range of issues, including: racism and racial equity; education reform; youth issues; neighborhood development; local governance; poverty reduction; police-community relations; immigration; growth and development, and others.

Study circle programs take many forms. Some take place over several weeks or months, beginning and ending with large-group meetings, followed by strategic work on action ideas. Sometimes study circles are folded into a one-day forum or summit to address a community issue. Some communities sustain study circles on one topic over a number of years. In other places, a community organization serves as the institutional “home” for study circles and helps the community address a range of issues over time. This enables public officials to use study circle principles and practices to bring the public voice into ongoing public work.

THANK YOU!!

*For more information contact the Moscow Community Development Department,
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