

Montana Main Street

District Boundary Guidance

Communities participating in the Montana Main Street Program must define their district areas and send them to Montana Department of Commerce staff for review. The boundaries or primary focus area of the local organization (i.e., coordinating program) must be that of a traditional downtown or neighborhood commercial district. A “traditional downtown” or “traditional neighborhood commercial district” typically refers to a large cluster of commercial parcels containing buildings of historical or architectural significance. The area must have been zoned, planned, built or used for commercial purposes for more than 50 years. This area must be:

- A traditional central business district and center for socioeconomic interaction
- Characterized by a cohesive core of historic or older commercial and mixed-use buildings that represent the community’s architectural heritage; may also include compatible in-fill development
- Have sufficient density of businesses and buildings to be effective
- Typically be arranged with most of the buildings side-by-side and fronting the sidewalk along a main street with intersecting side streets
- Compact, easily walkable and pedestrian-oriented

In general, districts containing newer commercial development that is low-density and automobile-oriented (i.e., sprawl), strip malls and enclosed shopping/entertainment centers will not qualify for designation unless they are fully integrated into the fabric of a traditional “Main Street District.”