

**ORDINANCE NO. 559**

**AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE AN URBAN RENEWAL PLANNING COMMISSION.**

WHEREAS, The City of Polson passed Resolution No. 739 on November 3, 1997, complying with the mandates of Section 7-15-4210, Montana Code Annotated, finding that one or more blighted areas existed in the municipality and that the rehabilitation, redevelopment, or combination thereof is necessary in the interest of public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the residents of the City of Polson.

Pursuant to Resolution 739, the Polson Economic Development Corporation was authorized to prepare an Urban Renewal Plan, hereinafter referred to as "draft Plan."

That the Polson Economic Development Corporation did conduct factual surveys and otherwise compiled and organized data, and developed the draft Plan attached hereto as Exhibit A.

That the draft Plan was subsequently reviewed by the City-County Planning Board pursuant to Section 7-15-4213, Montana Code Annotated, at their meeting of August 11, 1998, during which time the same was open to public comment upon lawful notice.

That the City-County Planning Board determined that the draft Plan conforms with the Polson Master Plan and Development Code or parts thereof for the municipality as a whole as reflected on the minutes and staff analysis attached hereto as Exhibit B.

That the City of Polson submitted the draft Plan to a Council committee for further consideration, which has reported its deliberations to the full Council.

That prior to adoption of the draft Plan the City of Polson is required to find pursuant to Section 7-15-4217, Montana Code Annotated, that:

- 1) a workable and feasible plan exists for making available adequate housing for the persons who may be displaced by the implementation of the Plan;
- 2) the Plan conforms with the Polson Master Plan and Development Code or parts thereof for the municipality as a whole;
- 3) the Plan will afford maximum opportunity, consistent with the sound needs of the City of Polson as a whole, for the rehabilitation or redevelopment of the urban renewal area by private enterprise; and,
- 4) a sound and adequate financial program exists for the financing of the Plan.

That the City of Polson recognizes that any plan for urban renewal will be a complex and sensitive undertaking and therefore desires to create a Commission to examine the draft plan comprehensively and recommend any changes that should be considered by the Council.

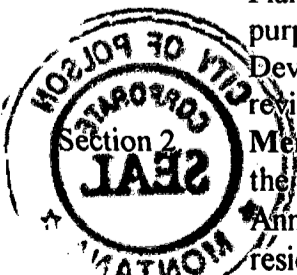
That this Ordinance is intended to provide for appointment of an Urban Renewal Planning Commission to undertake refinement of the proposed Plan prior to adoption of the Plan by the City of Polson and creation of an Urban Renewal Agency.

**THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF POLSON**

Section 1. **Creation of Urban Renewal Planning Commission.** An Urban Renewal Planning Commission, hereinafter Planning Commission, is hereby created for the purpose of reviewing the draft Plan submitted by the Polson Economic Development Corporation and preparing a final draft to be presented for public review and comment and Council consideration.

Section 2. **Membership.** The members of the Planning Commission are to be appointed in the same manner as set forth in Sections 7-15-4234 and 7-15-4235, Montana Code Annotated. In addition, the members of the Planning Commission shall each be residents of the City of Polson.

Section 3. **Initial Implementation.** The Mayor, with the advice and consent of the Council,



shall appoint the several Commissioners pursuant to Section 2 within 30 days of the effective date hereof. The Mayor shall further set the date and place of the first meeting of the Planning Commission within 30 days of the appointment of all Commissioners thereto. At that initial meeting the Commissioners shall among themselves elect a Chairperson.

Section 4. **Conduct of the Commission's Business.** The Chairperson shall determine a regular meeting schedule, propose for discussion and adoption by vote of the Commission a system of rules by which issues before the Commission are addressed and resolved, and develop a plan of action to review the draft Plan and determine a deadline in which to provide any and all recommendations for changes to the draft Plan to the City Council. Each Commissioner shall exercise one vote as to any matters requiring vote. The Chairperson shall vote on any matter requiring vote, and all votes shall carry by simple majority. The Chairperson may elect to resolve issues by discussion and consensus, but in any case the rules adopted must provide that any member of the Commission may demand a vote to resolve any issue before the Commission.

Section 5. **Scope of Authority.** The Planning Commission is empowered to meet, discuss, and decide any issues pertinent to its purpose as set forth in Section 1 hereof. To the extent any facts need be investigated or explored it may charge members thereof to conduct the same, and may hold, pursuant to the regular procedures attendant upon notice of public hearings, any public hearings as it may find necessary or expedient. It may further employ legal or other counsel and secretarial assistance upon prior approval of the City Council, the same to be paid out of the General Fund if the City is unable to provide facilities or services as needed by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission has no other powers or duties than those stated herein.

Section 6. **Timeline.** The Commissioners shall gather any facts, opinions, or conclusions necessary to recommend any changes to the draft Plan and submit those recommendations, in final draft form, to the full City Council on or before the first Monday in August, 1999.

Section 7. **Amendment.** As to any features of the final draft of the Plan proposed by the Planning Commission upon which the City Council directs further findings, study, or recommendation, the Planning Commission shall undertake to execute the desires of the Council in those regards and present for approval by the Council any necessary amendments within 60 days of being so directed.

Section 8. **Dissolution.** The Planning Commission shall be dissolved upon resolution of the Council to that effect following completion of the purpose outlined herein and any amendment required or requested by the Council.

Section 9. **Encourage Private Enterprise.** That the City of Polson specifically acknowledges and directs that any review or recommendation for changes to be made by the Planning Commission shall afford maximum opportunity, consistent with the sound needs of the municipality as a whole, to the rehabilitation or redevelopment of the urban renewal area by private enterprise.

Section 10. **Modification.** That the City of Polson may modify the purpose, composition, or authority of the Planning Commission as the City may, from time to time, deem necessary. Any modification hereof shall be by ordinance.

FIRST READING: January 4, 1999

SECOND READING: January 19, 1999

NOW THEREFORE, it is resolved that the subject Ordinance shall become effective on February 19, 1999.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 19<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1999

CITY OF POLSON

*Michael Lies*  
Mike Lies, Mayor



ATTEST:

*Aggi G. Loeser*  
Aggi Loeser, City Clerk

State of Montana ss I, Aggi G. Loeser, City Clerk hereby certify that the above is a full, true and correct copy of the original as the same appears on the files and records at the office of the City Clerk of the City of Polson, Lake County, MT.

Dated this 16th day of August 2001 *Aggi G. Loeser*  
City Clerk

**DRAFT**

**POLSON REDEVELOPMENT**

**PLAN**

**MARCH 1998**

**URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT**

**AS AUTHORIZED UNDER  
RESOLUTION #739 ON 11/3/1997**

**PREPARED AND SUBMITTED BY:**

**POLSON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

- Jerry Kurzenbaum, President
- Jake Block
- Bob Bowers
- Ken Donovan
- John Glueckert
- Greg Hertz
- Tim Hinderman
- Mike Hutchin
- Jerry Kurzenbaum
- Jamey Layman
- Mike Lies
- Howard Pickerill
- Doug Stam
- Gary Wicks

**URBAN RENEWAL PLAN FOR  
POLSON URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT UNDER RESOLUTION #739**

## SUMMARY

The City of Polson, in the four brief years since its Master Plan was adopted, has grown at a rate that has exceeded even the most optimistic projections of the Master Plan. Interim census data provided by the Montana Department of Commerce states Polson's population at the end of 1996 at 4,316 – already exceeding the Master Plan's projection for the year 2005! This 31.5% growth rate since 1990, although seeming to level off at the present time, demands that the City actively engage in the implementation of its Master Plan. This Urban Renewal Plan creates a Redevelopment Agency to work under the jurisdiction of the City Council to implement the Master Plan's recommendations for the following districts and their adjacent transitional area:

1. Salish Point
2. Central Business District
3. Railyard District
4. Commercial/Light Industrial District

The mission of the Redevelopment Agency is to work with the City Council and the public at-large to create a vision for the Urban Renewal District; to develop a comprehensive set of development plans through which the vision may be made manifest; then to create financial alternatives by which the plans may be implemented.

What follows is the beginning of the public input process. It sets forth some visionary statements and creates guidelines by which such visions may be accomplished. It begins where the Master Plan leaves off, further defining the goals implicated within the Master Plan for these four areas designated for "urban renewal" activities. Its ultimate goal is to create a vibrant and healthy community which will result in the creation of quality jobs with livable wages and an enhanced quality of life for all who live here.

Enhancing the City's attractive location adjacent to Flathead Lake will create the means by which Polson may become a "destination" to be enjoyed by visitors and residents alike. Emphasis will be placed on marketing to the RV industry, as the image of Polson as an "RV friendly" community is developed. This will be accomplished by creating an urban design and landscaping plan which incorporates the waterfront from Riverside Park, around the City Docks and KwaTaqNuk Resort to Lakeview Village; the Salish Point area and central business district and establishes an easily accessible core area for recreation, shopping, enjoyment of the arts and access to services. The areas will be linked by attractive pedestrian and bicycle pathways and supported by access to parking for cars, bicycles and recreational vehicles.

A plan for the Railyard and light commercial areas will be created which will focus on cleaning up and developing those areas to be made suitable for various light industries which can provide good paying jobs for our citizens and an enhanced tax base for our City. By carefully planning traffic routes, building codes and prime locations for such commercial activity, greater care may be taken to protect and enhance our residential neighborhoods, creating buffer zones and greenways to help separate them from excessive noise and traffic.

Each step in the planning process is open to public review and comment. The proposed Redevelopment Agency is simply the tool by which the plan is implemented.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

**1.1 History**

Located at the southern tip of Flathead Lake in Lake County and centrally placed within the Flathead Indian Reservation, the City of Polson, established in 1910, was formally named the County Seat of Lake County in 1923 when the County was formed. Until the mid 1930's when the first highways around Flathead Lake were completed, Polson was a port city and the end of the road -- and railroad -- from the south. Before the highway, paddle wheel and steamboats frequented the Lake ferrying commerce and people north and towing logs to the mills at Lakeside and Sommers.

Once dependent upon agriculture and wood products manufacturing, these staples are now less than 40% of local economic activity, with primary income having shifted to jobs in retail and service industries; government employment (especially Tribal), "light" industry/electronics manufacturing; health care/social services; and retirement/government transfer payments.

As a population boom became evident by 1991, the City Council could see the potential for conflict over land use escalating right along with the growing population and the increasing demand for municipal utilities and services. As the demand for housing grew, property values escalated, as has Polson's landscape. As the value of lake shore property - and taxes - escalated, the more affluent newcomers gravitated first to the lake, forcing the less affluent residents into the older town site, where, although much of the housing had deteriorated into substandard condition, it was at least affordable. As lake shore property became more unavailable, the upper slopes became attractive for their "vistas". The demand for scarce community resources increased, along with the arguments as to "where" they should be directed. New roads in new subdivisions -- or pave roads in the older parts of town which were still gravel? Sidewalks to create access to schools and shopping from the neighborhoods or equipment to maintain the growing network of roads? Expansion of the sewer and water systems -- which direction first? Should any attempt be made to preserve the traditional downtown business area -- or should Polson's commercial growth be encouraged along Highway 93 which transits the city? If city crews are building new infrastructure, how can they also give attention to blight removal and beautification efforts in the older part of town?

The demands of growth and an evolving area economy have presented a major challenge to the citizens and local government of the Polson area. Their quality of life could not be sustained by standing by and simply reacting to the trends. The necessity for proactive planning - the anticipation and management of community change - became apparent and the City Council set aside funds to develop the City's master planning document in 1992, which was finally adopted late in 1993. The only previous plan for the Polson area was the 1986 *Development Policy and Plan* which was actually adopted in 1969 and only renamed in 1986 under the intention to revise it. The Lake County 1988 *General Plan* did not apply within the Polson Planning Area.

The first scoping meeting for the master planning process took place in January 1992 with about 85 people attending. By September, the City had retained a consulting planner, set up a planning board and board of adjustments to review the plan of work. In October, the first of several "Polson Planning Focus" events was held. This was an all day meeting designed to get interested citizens involved in the planning process and developing policies. Forty people attended that meeting. A citizen's task force was authorized by the planning board to hold the various public meetings and focus group activities scheduled for the next several months. Public meetings were well advertised in advance with plenty of notices placed in very public places. The December meeting regarding expansion of the central business district toward the north and Flathead Lake drew approximately 40 people, as did the January meeting who met to concentrate on the central business area, defining its character and determining how best to ensure its future vitality.

The February meeting, discussing the issues surrounding development around Highway 93 between the central business district and the southeast corner of the planning area drew 80 people to join the discussion. After several more focus meetings, usually attended by 30-40 people, the city-county planning board received the first draft of the master plan in May 1993 and the draft development code in June. After making their revisions, the planning board and city council held hearings between August and November before finally adopting the document.

The jurisdiction of the master plan applies within the Polson City/County Planning Area, established by the City and Lake County in 1963, and included all land within the City plus roughly three miles outside the City in areas that could be considered areas of natural future expansion. The policies adopted to guide the implementation of the master plan included two types:

- \* **community wide policies** which apply to the entire Polson Planning Area; and
- \* **neighborhood policies** which apply within a stated "policy area".

There were also two types of strategies:

- \* **investment strategies** which require expenditures by the City or other service providers; and
- \* **regulatory strategies** which define the Polson Development Code as the administrative tool.

Community infrastructure planning, including roads, sewer, water and parks were defined as "community wide policies" and a capital investment plan became the investment strategy.

A brief outline of the community-wide policy statements and their related investment strategies are as follows:

1. **Maintain a Proactive Planning Board**  
\*Support the Planning Board and Boards of Adjustment... \*Appoint an Administrator...  
\*Conduct an Annual Plan Review... \*Continue to Encourage Public Participation in Planning  
\*Charge Adequate Administrative Fees
2. **Reemphasize the Community's Connection with Flathead Lake**  
\*Institute a Runoff Management Program... \*Be Prepared to Respond to Hazardous  
Materials Spills... \*Develop a Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail Linking Points of Public Access  
to Flathead Lake... \*Develop More of the Salish Point Lake shore for Public Enjoyment...  
\*Require Site-Specific Runoff Management Plans... \*Require Commercial and Industrial  
Developments to Safely Contain Hazardous Materials... \*Protect Visual Access to Lake
3. **Provide for Polson's Anticipated Expansion**  
\*Establish an Urban Service Area... \*Inside the Urban Service Area: Require Sequential  
Development with City Services... \*Outside the Urban Service Area Permit Only Low  
Density Development... \*Provide a Uniform Planning System Throughout the Planning Area
4. **Provide Adequate Infrastructure**  
\*Develop a Capital Improvements Program... \*Utilize All Available Funding Techniques...  
\*Address Traffic Issues... \*On-site Infrastructure and Utility and Street Extensions Installed  
to City Specifications at Developer's Expense... \*Developers may also be Responsible for  
Off-site Facilities... \*Do Not Accept Subdivision Park Sites that Serve no Useful  
Recreational Purpose
5. **Protect the Municipal Water Supply**  
\*Conduct a Wellhead Protection Study... \*Establish Wellhead Protection Zones, with  
Performance Standards to Protect Groundwater Quality

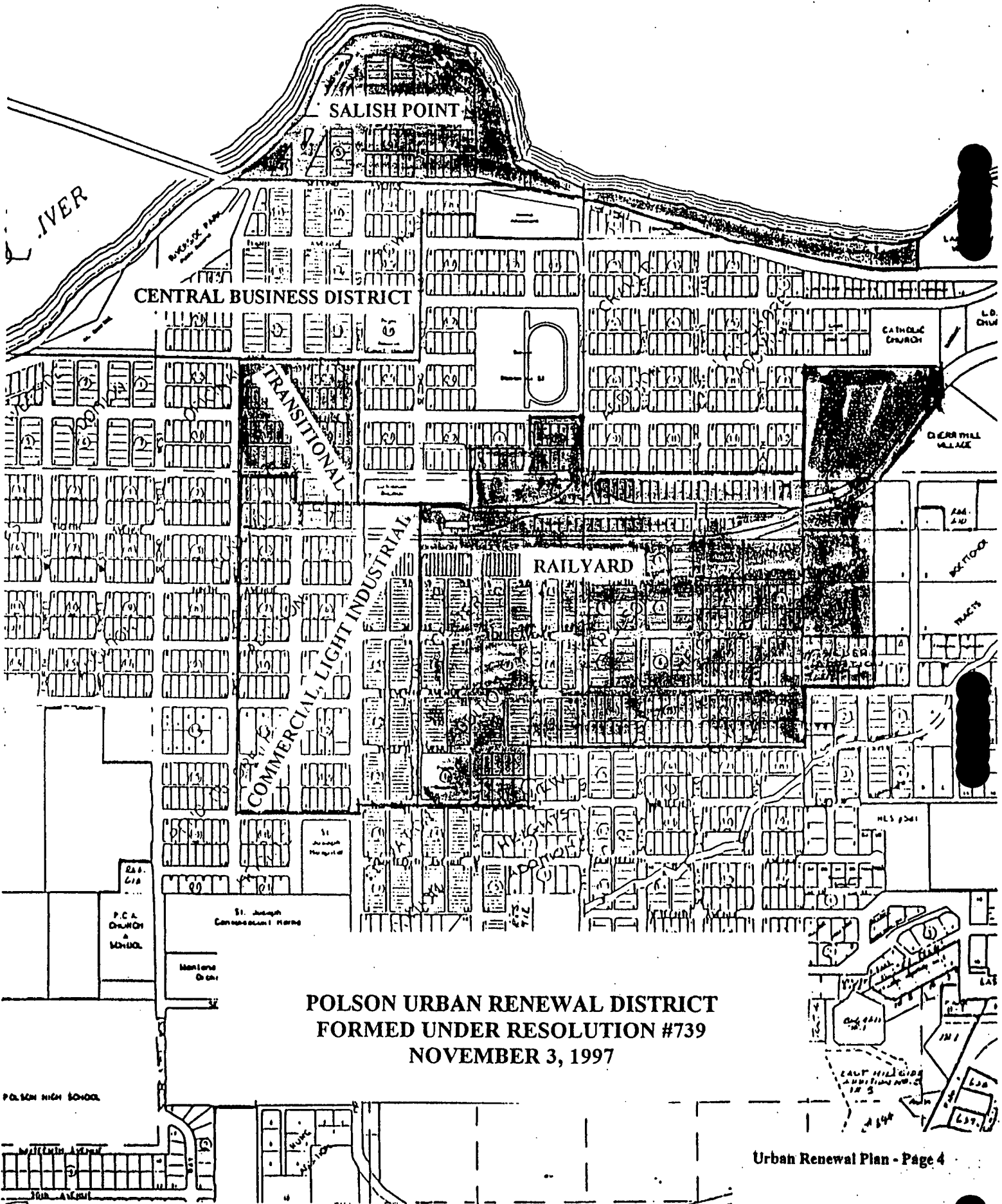
- 6. **Require Land Use Compatibility, Except in Planned Transition Areas**  
\*Protect Public Facilities from Land Use Conflicts... \*Prevent Incompatible Land Use Changes... \*Require Development to be Compatible with Landscape Setting
- 7. **Make Salish Point the Fiscal Point of Polson's Reorientation to Flathead Lake**  
\*Adopt an Urban Renewal Plan for Salish Point... \*Provide for the Salish Point Transition in the Polson Development Code
- 8. **Nurture the Central Business District**  
\*Link the CBD to Flathead Lake... \*Keep Public Facilities in the CBD... \*Secure Adequate Parking... \*Repair the Sidewalks... \*Consider a CBD Revitalization Program... \*Avoid Excessive Commercial Zoning Outside the CBD
- 9. **Exploit the Potential of the Railyard**  
\*Adopt an Urban Renewal Plan for the Railyard... \*Provide for Development of the Railyard in the Polson Development Code
- 10. **Make Highway-Oriented Development Safe and Attractive**  
\*Provide for Safe Pedestrian Movement... \*Minimize Traffic Congestion... \*Highway Oriented Development Should Make a Positive Contribution to the Community's Image
- 11. **Establish a Compatible Development Pattern**  
\*Extend Water Service to the West Shore... \*Protect the Public Investment in the Airport... \*Develop the Fairgrounds' Recreational Potential... \*Implement the Future Land Use Map... \*Maintain an Attractive West Entrance
- 12. **Maintain an Attractive East Entrance to Polson**  
\*Acquire an East Side Park Site... \*Protect the Municipal Water Supply... \*Implement the Future Land Use Map
- 13. **Protect the Integrity of Residential Neighborhoods**  
\*Encourage Affordable Housing... \*Eliminate Existing Nuisances in Residential Neighborhoods... \*Buffer the Edges of Residential Neighborhoods... \*Provide a Single-Family Zoning District
- 14. **Protect Productive Rural Activities from Conflict with Development**  
\*Phase the Extension of Municipal Services... \*Limit Land Use Conflicts with Agriculture and Gravel Mining

**1.2 The Urban Renewal District**

The Urban Renewal District in Polson (See Map on Page 4 following) responds directly to strategies 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13 (as listed above) and is composed of five areas clustered in and around the central business district, defined within the Master Plan as follows:

- 1. **Salish Point:** a combined commercial and residential area bounded on the north and west by Flathead Lake and on the south by Highway 93 (2nd Avenue); extending along the lake shore north of the highway only, east to the Lake View Village property line.
- 2. **Central Business District:** the heart of downtown, positioned north of Highway 93 (2nd Avenue) adjacent to the Salish Point area, bounded by the Flathead River on the west; 5th Avenue on the south; to 2nd Street on the east; then, in stair step fashion to exclude an unblighted residential area, north to 3rd Avenue, then east again to 5th Street east and north again to the Highway.
- 3. **Transitional Area:** a small area immediately south of the downtown area currently a mix of older homes, light commercial and retail which is anticipated to lose any residential identity, bounded by 5 Avenue on the north; 1st Street West on the west; 1st Street East on the east; and in stair step fashion, 7th Avenue on the south between 1st Street West and Main Street, and 8th Avenue on the south between Main Street and 1st Street East.

FIG 1 MAP OF URBAN RENEWAL AREA



4. **Commercial/ Light Industrial:** a larger area south of the Transitional area, bounded on the north by 7th Avenue between 1st Street West and Main Street and 8th Avenue between Main Street and 2nd Street East; 13th Avenue on the north; 1st Street West on the west and 2nd Street East on the east.
5. **Railyard:** an area with a mix of old residential, substantially abandoned Railyard, and largely undeveloped land bordering the east edge of the Commercial/Light Industrial area. The area proceeds easterly in a somewhat irregular pattern bounded on its northern edge from the corner of 2nd Street East and 8th Avenue easterly to 3rd Avenue East then north to 6th Street East, east to 5th Street East, south to 7th Avenue, then east again to 9th Street East, north to 5th Avenue and east again to the junction of 5th and 7th Avenues; then south along the 7th Avenue curve to 11th Street East, continuing south to 11th Avenue; then west to 9th Street East, south to 12th Avenue, west again to 4th Street East, south to 13th Avenue and west again to the border of the Commercial/Light Industrial area at 2nd Street East.

### 1.3 Blight

During the summer months of 1997, the Polson Economic Development Corporation's ("PDC") Board of Directors assisted the City in evaluating the social and physical aspects of the central business district and adjoining areas and determined that several indicators of deteriorated conditions were found that directly relate to the definition of a "blighted area" as contained in the State Urban Renewal Law (subsection 7-15-4206 MCA).

The study included a windshield survey of the residential and commercial structures in the area conducted by the Lake County Community Housing Organization in order to develop background for a Community Development Block Grant application for housing rehabilitation in the area. The study resulted in the finding of several blighted conditions, as follows:

- 1) present urbanized land use patterns incorporate a haphazard and incompatible mix of uses;
- 2) Many of the existing commercial structures appear to be structurally substandard, and several appear to be severely substandard when viewed from the outside;
- 3) interaction of pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles can create dangerous situations; and
- 4) growth within the areas are resulting in increased strains on infrastructure, parking, streets, sidewalks and other city services.
- 5) Dilapidated buildings, refuse, overgrown weeds - all create an unappealing area, which restricts both residential and economic development.

As a result of their findings, the PDC Board concluded that adequate information existed to qualify the area for designation as a blighted area and recommended to the City Council a declaration of blight be adopted. At its regular meeting on November 3, 1997, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 739 declaring the five areas described above as a blighted district. Upon adoption of the resolution, they instructed the PDC Board to prepare an Urban Revitalization Plan for the district.

### 1.4 Problems Facing the District

At this point in Polson's growth, it faces the same problems of nearly all small, high growth areas where downtown areas decline as business flees to the "highway". Polson's business district problems are several: deteriorating sidewalks, streets and downtown amenities; out-dated storefronts and residential areas in this older area of the City; lack of sufficient funds to keep up with infrastructure (especially streets) needs throughout the city; lack of funds and incentives which might draw more light industrial and commercial businesses into the Railyard and southern parts of the district designed to accommodate them; poor traffic patterns through the city that would provide easy access to businesses that may locate in these areas; lack of sidewalks and bicycle routes which enable people and children without cars safe access to either the lake or services; lack of parking in the downtown area; and, although the KwaTakNuk Resort created a lake front focus, there is no way to tie it to the City's commercial area and no detailed plan that develops the rest of the lake shore to take best advantage of Polson's greatest asset.

### **1.5 Why an Urban Revitalization District?**

Revitalization to the central business district and its adjoining areas is a core strategy of the Polson Development Corporation to encourage the creation of jobs throughout the community and is critical to the well-being of the entire community. It's vitality is a measurement of community health and demonstrates to the world what the community thinks of itself. It provides a diverse mix of services; can generate a considerable amount of tax dollars and revenues which are essential to the financial health of the City and is an area of substantial capital investment, both public and private. The issues facing the area are too great and too many to cure themselves. A Band-Aid cure in any one area of the district - one issue at a time - will result in a greater hodgepodge of growth without addressing any of the problems that are common to the entire district.

### **1.6 Goals for the District**

The goal of the Urban Renewal District is to encourage development and redevelopment within the district boundaries in a manner which enhances the entire community and provides for the long-term stability, health and well-being of the its businesses and residents. Through activation of the District's Redevelopment Agency, Polson will take advantage of its position as the only incorporated town on the lake with extensive shoreline frontage and its potential to become a thriving business center and major tourist destination. Such development provides the city with the opportunity to thoroughly evaluate the most appropriate "marketing niche" for itself and to focus on the visitor population that tends to have the greatest dollars to spend, including: seniors (reverse snowbirds desiring to "summer" in Montana); RV travelers desiring an "RV friendly" destination with amenities; and golfers and their families seeking a full service resort area to stay and play.

By creating an attractive business climate for light industry, the City assures its long term health by creating permanent well-paying jobs within stable businesses insulated from the seasonal swings of the tourist trade and which provide a growing tax base to support the increasing demand for city services.

This goal will be achieved under a long-term comprehensive plan that encompasses projected growth of the City; creates a focal point for the city through the creative development of Salish Point in such a way as to become a center of attraction for residents and visitors alike; focuses economic development efforts within the Central Business District and adjacent Railyard and Commercial/Light Industrial areas; encourages compatible use of land within the district; encourages compatible buffer zones between commercial and residential neighborhoods within the district; achieves reasonable movement of traffic (including necessary truck traffic) throughout the area and provides for public roads and infrastructure that accommodates such traffic; provides for improvements in parking and movement through the district by pedestrians and bicycles; and provides for reasonable development of the lake shore to further enhance the City as a place to live and do business.

**CHAPTER 2. POPULATION**

**Regional Statistics**

Lake County has been the target of one of the fastest growth rates in Montana over the past seven years... and Polson is the fastest growing City within Lake County, increasing by over 31% between 1990 and 1996 alone (versus the City of Ronan at 21.3% and St. Ignatius at 17.4%). The following chart demonstrates the City's growth versus the County, Region and State.

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Montana	694,409	786,690	13.3%	799,065	1.6%	879,372	10.1%
Region**	99,165	132,615	33.7%	139,270	5.0%	163,474	17.4%
Lake County	14,445	19,056	31.9%	21,041	10.4%	24,921	18.4%
Polson***	2,464	2,798	13.6%	3,283	17.3%	4,316	31.5%

\*\* Five Valley Region Including Missoula, Lake, Ravalli, Sanders, Mineral and Granite Counties  
 \*\*\* This shows Polson City statistics only and does not include the estimated 1,000 or more residents within the adjacent Polson Planning Area

Another factor affecting our future planning is the shifting age of our population just since 1990. While children under the ages of 16 have remained fairly constant, the population over 45 has shown a slow but steady trend upwards now making up over 38% of the population base. People between the ages of 24 and 45 tend to leave the area, at least for a time, with a decrease in that age group of 2.5%. This trend is further verified by a continuing increase in transfer payments (social security, retirement income, etc) and a decrease in farm income and most other sources of income remaining steady. Per Capita income from work throughout Lake County increased by 19.6%, while income from transfer payments increased by 31%! The County has been classified as a "destination retirement community" and certainly the Polson community is the most likely to be affected by this continuing migration. Such factors hugely affect the future face of our community and the services it provides.

**Population Projections - Polson**

The master plan projects population for Polson and Lake County in various phases from slow to high growth. Unfortunately, 1996 data shows that actual has already out paced even the most aggressive growth projections made in 1993 which projected Lake County to hit 23,915 by the year 2000 and Polson at 3,886 in the year 2000 and 4176 by the year 2005.

There is every indication that the rate of growth has leveled off through the end of 1996 and 1997; however, the University of Montana's Economic Policy Department projects that the area will continue to grow at a minimum of 2% per year. If the region continues to grow at the level, then the City of Polson can expect to grow by at least 3% per year, which would indicate growth through 2015 as follows:

**1996: 4316      2000: 4858      2005: 5631      2010: 6528      2015: 7568**

Once again, this does not include the three mile planning area adjacent to the City of Polson which would add an estimated one-third of the City's population to the projections.

## CHAPTER 3. ECONOMY

### **3.1 Polson and the Urban Renewal District**

As cited previously, the 1990's have brought a burst of building activity and population growth to Lake County, and Polson has been the target of most of that activity. This growth has begun to shift the demographics of the area, as more retirees move in and many younger families move elsewhere, at least for a time, to find more stable employment. Growth is expected to continue, although at a less frantic pace, as long as retirees -- including those who may have been raised here and left and return when they complete their careers elsewhere - and other in-migrants find Polson an attractive place to live. Local prosperity has become increasingly dependent upon the appeal of a small town atmosphere, the proximity of Flathead Lake, and the recreational opportunities and scenic vistas the lake and other natural attractions offer to both in-migrants and travelers.

While only limited income and employment data are available for small cities, the 1990 Census suggests that the Polson economy does differ somewhat from Lake County's. Twenty-two percent of the population living in Polson was over 65 but only 15.7% in Lake County. Polson's per capita income was 10% lower than the county's and fewer residents participated in the labor force. Residents of Polson are less likely to be employed in agriculture, services or government, but more likely to work in construction, retail trade, finance, insurance and real estate. A growing industry throughout the northwest is that of light industry/assembly -- and for Lake County, that means electronic assembly, primarily for the defense industry. The Montana Department of Commerce has invested time and money throughout the state to support industries that grow through government contracting, and this has excellent potential for Polson, especially in the Railyard area.

One of the fastest growing industries in the U.S., and an industry with excellent potential for the city of Polson, is the RV (recreational vehicle) industry, as more and more Americans take to the road to experience the Country first-hand. Over \$12 billion of new RV's were sold in 1997, far outstripping industry expectations, and 1998 is expected to attain even greater sales. These RV's buyers are led by the senior population which uses them as their summer homes and search for convenient "destination" areas where they tend to spend a month or more. Is this a growth area that Polson might be able to capitalize on by creating a shopping and recreational environment that such travelers will include on their list of destinations? The urban renewal plan seeks to identify all such possibilities as it tries to determine the highest and best use within each of its districts.

The Urban Renewal District is characterized by its three major transition areas:

- \* The Central Business District and Salish Point: which constitutes the major retail area of town, mixed with some service industry, government offices and residential;
- \* The Light Industrial/Commercial and Transitional Area immediately south of the Central Business District which is primarily light industrial and larger commercial such as lumber supply stores with a residential mix; and
- \* The Railyard which includes the end point of Montana Rail Links spur north into the Flathead Valley and is characterized by largely undeveloped parcels near the rails; older homes generally in fair to substandard condition; and some light industrial facilities.

### **3.2 General Goal**

To create jobs and enhance residential income; to preserve the public investment; and to encourage private investment within the Central Business District and its adjacent commercial areas by creating an environment wherein retail and commercial business will grow and flourish and that will attract an increased share of the visitor traffic which currently tends to flow through the community rather than to the community.

**3.3 Specific Goals**

The general goals, as described above, is further defined by the following specific goals for the district.

1. Create a development plan for Salish Point that creates a focal point of attractive recreational space combined with highly-attractive, low-impact commercial space which draws people – and revenues – into the downtown area.
2. Create safe and attractive links between the recreational and commercial areas on Salish Point and the Central Business district through walkways, bicycle paths, sidewalks and pedestrian crossings controlled by additional traffic lights.
4. Provide for public infrastructure which supports a thriving commercial and retail economy within the designated areas
5. Develop a marketing strategy for the Central Business District to (1) draw shoppers into the area and (2) strengthen its potential as a center for a variety of consumer and professional services
6. Develop a marketing strategy to strengthen movement to and expansion of the commercial and light industrial areas which border the Central Business District
7. Develop traffic and parking plans, and sidewalks, which better facilitate the flow of employees, shoppers and service vehicles throughout the District
8. Create incentives for businesses and homeowners which will encourage renovation of substandard retail, commercial and residential facilities.
9. Develop facilities and amenities which will establish Polson as an "RV friendly

## CHAPTER 4. COMMUNITY GOALS

The goals for redevelopment of the Urban Renewal District, originated within Master Plan, and have been more fully detailed in the development of this plan. These goals, as summarized below and provided in greater detail in later Chapters, will guide the efforts of the Urban Renewal Agency.

### 4.1 Traffic and Circulation

Circulation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic throughout the district will be enhanced under the following guidelines:

1. Adequate access to the downtown and railroad area should be provided.
2. Adequate circulation should be provided in the downtown area for thru-traffic and downtown business-oriented traffic.
3. Linkages between Highway 93 and the central business area, the Railyard and light commercial areas should be improved.
4. A circulation system must be developed which also provides for adequate parking and terminal facilities keyed to the development plans in each area.
5. Parking and traffic circulation must accommodate such things as recreational vehicles and vehicles with trailers.
6. Routing and parking of commercial vehicles, including trucks must be addressed in order to reduce the conflict with visitor/shopping traffic.
7. Impact on residential areas should be minimized.
8. Final planning and recommendations must be based on a detailed traffic analysis and evaluation of impacts by qualified professionals and contingent upon public review and comment.
9. A system of pathways for pedestrian and bicycle traffic must be developed to link the lake shore and Salish Point with the Central Business District.
10. A comprehensive system of pathways must also be developed to link community parks, schools and residential areas in order to provide for safe passage for the non-driving public.

### 4.2 Parking

Once people arrive in the downtown area adequate parking is necessary to get them to stay and patronize downtown establishments. Currently there is inadequate off-street parking, conflicts between employee and customer parking, poor linkage between parking and downtown, inadequate or non-existent parking for RV's and tourist vehicles.

#### Parking Improvements

Additional parking lots will probably be necessary to provide the quantity and kind of parking required by any renewal planned. An emphasis must be placed on publicly owned, free parking and parking that accommodates the type of users downtown wants to attract. For instance, if we want to attract RVs, parking lots will have to be located and designed to accommodate them. Public ownership of at least some parking lots will probably be necessary. Regulatory changes may also be needed. The City of Polson has set up a Parking Commission to develop and oversee a downtown parking plan.

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### 4.3 Marketing

**Central Business District (CBD):** This area, commonly referred to as "Downtown Polson", has a diverse make up of businesses and professional services. The public investment in the CBD should be focused to strengthen and preserve the CBD as a center for consumer services, finance, professional services, government, accommodations and in the future, possibly convention type services.

Specifically, the CBD businesses should expand their marketing strategy for the area to include targeting Missoula, Kalispell, other Montana communities and communities in the Idaho panhandle during appropriate seasons. Advertising and marketing to these cities should be consistent and promote Polson as a whole. CBD businesses should promote the central business district locally and regionally, through cooperative advertising campaigns utilizing existing organizations such as the *Polson Chamber of Commerce* and their active downtown committee, *The Polson Business Association*.

There should be a study made of the assets in the CBD with an eye toward attracting new and needed businesses into the CBD and expanding existing ones. This would include calculating available square footage within the area and monitoring of vacant retail spaces. In addition, the study should conduct a "landlord survey" to determine the long and short term goals of the property owners within the CBD.

The Central Business District should develop a variety of high quality uses such as restaurants, theaters and entertainment which will attract people into the CBD after working hours. Existing retail businesses within the CBD must enhance operating hours consistent with this strategy. Clusters or "niches", of specialty and general retail and professional services, should be developed within the CBD. This should be done in such a manner that the public is aware they should expect a certain kind of store would be located within a certain area. These clusters of retail and professional services should focus cooperatively on the advantage of shopping within the CBD. Products and services available within the CBD should be unique in nature or of higher quality, so should the level of product knowledge and service after the sale. It is essential to the future of the CBD that it retain a high-profile anchor, such as Safeway, in order to assure a continuing draw of people and traffic to the area.

Marketing and promotion should focus on the level of service, convenience and variety available to consumers downtown, all within walking distance. The CBD's core is approximately the same size as a regional mall.

Every effort should be made by the City of Polson and businesses to keep the CBD clean. This would include streets, storefronts, sidewalk repair, alleys and effective snow removal strategies.

Signage off of Highway 93 should be improved to enhance public awareness of the services provided within Polson's CBD. Signage at or near any intersection should indicate the "close" location of the city center and convenient parking.

Places and objects of historical, cultural or architectural significance in the CBD should be preserved and enhanced.

Development of the CBD should always take into consideration the future of the Salish Point area. The provision of attractive pedestrian links between the CBD and Salish Point is the ultimate goal of any development occurring in these two areas. Adequate parking in both areas allowing consumers to park and travel on foot, back and forth, should be encouraged.

All public parking structures should be designed and developed specifically to improve the retail climate within the CBD. Incentives for private development of parking areas should be made available.

**Rail Yard Area:** The Rail Yard area of Polson is addressed in the Master Plan because of its location, large size and because it has existing city services. This potential should be exploited by the City of Polson and redeveloped in a mixture of ways. There is sufficient size to consider light industrial/commercial use, parks and affordable housing.

Upon completion of an urban renewal plan for the Rail Yard area, to include an environmental audit and establishment of financing programs, this area should be promoted locally to existing businesses and residents currently located inappropriately. First choice should be to relocate these existing homes and businesses and develop replacements with newer more appropriate business and housing. With this in mind, carefully study of the developments on Salish Point in relation to the CBD must be maintained.

Both locally, regionally and nationwide, a search for private investment capital should be undertaken, specifically targeted for the Rail Yard Area.

All public investment in the Rail Yard Area should be done in such a way as to encourage future private investment. The success of the redevelopment probably lies in a public/private partnership. The attraction of private investment to this area will be more difficult than Salish Point and initial public investment will be crucial.

**Salish Point:** Salish Point offers tremendous potential to all of Polson. The successful development of this area will have many positive benefits, especially to the Central Business District.

In addition to enhancing and highlighting the recreational and cultural advantages of its location, new, higher density residential and lake oriented commercial uses compatible with public use of shoreline amenities should be promoted and encouraged in the Salish Point area.

Upon completion of a the urban renewal plan for the area, an architectural rendition and comprehensive land use plan (concept plan) should be developed immediately. The importance of a professionally created concept plan of the area cannot be over stated. Copies of this document will be a very valuable tool in securing both private and public investment and support.

Incentives should be developed to encourage relocation of existing inappropriate housing or businesses as soon as possible. The Rail Yard area, which is to be developed with a mix of light industrial and residential use, could be considered for affordable housing relocation and replacement. This should only be done if those relocated receive positive benefits and disruption is kept to a minimum. Marketing of this property must include and stress several key factors:

- 1) Proximity to the lake.
- 2) Proximity to the KwaTaqNuk Resort property.
- 3) Cultural sensitivity and inclusion of the Salish and Kootenai Tribes.
- 4) History of site.
- 5) Proximity to the CBD.

The successful development and marketing of this property will depend on a cooperative vision that is shared by the City of Polson and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe. This project should proceed, from the beginning, with the participation of tribal authorities. The marketing of Salish Point will only enhance the existing tribally owned KwaTaqNuk Resort.

#### **Commercial/Light Industrial District and Adjoining Transitional Area:**

The area described contains a mix of a variety of commercial enterprises and residential housing. In order to more fully develop the commercial potential of this area, the first goal must be to improve site access. Presently, the streets are typical city streets, but are limited for increased truck and other commercial use. Investment in streets and related infrastructure could bring immediate returns in attracting commercial business to the area. Such investment may include:

1. Creation of one-way traffic patterns to reduce congestion in the area.
2. Enforcement of city set-back requirements so that businesses have adequate off-street parking for customers and employee which will not further block the already congested streets.

- 3. Creation of incentives to move loading docks and create better access to them to prevent semi-trucks from blocking streets while unloading and loading.
- 4. Establishment of a truck route that has appropriate signage which directs truck traffic to the area in a manner which will least impact adjacent residential areas.
- 5. Consideration of traffic or caution lights in the area to assist trucks trying to make left hand turns onto particularly busy streets.

Future single family residential development in this area should be discouraged, although multi-family residential units could be encourage within the transitional area which may provide a labor base within walking distance of the district.

**4.4 Land Use**

Land use goals and policies must be kept consistent with the most recent versions of the Polson Master Plan , Development Code and Zoning Ordinances utilizing guidelines as follows:

- 1. Land use goals for each of the areas within the District must be integrated with the goals for both the District and the Community as a whole.
- 2. Retain and enhance the retail trade sector in the commercial business district and encourage commercial/light industrial business to locate in or relocate to the industrial/light commercial areas so designated.
- 3. Good housekeeping and maintenance of the areas should be encouraged
- 4. A landscape plan compatible to all areas should be developed
- 5. A sign control ordinance tailored to each of the areas within the district should be encouraged
- 6. New buildings should preserve existing vistas of the Lake and Mountains and integrate with the character of the area within which it is being built
- 7. Historic buildings should be preserved
- 8. An architectural theme should be developed to reflect the history and general flavor of the region.
- 9. A full spectrum of housing types and prices should be encouraged throughout the area.
- 10. The first effort of the district should be to authorize a detailed land use and renewal plan which, in addition to developing a waterfront, landscape design, fully integrates Salish Point and the lake shore with the Central Business District and creates an environment within Salish Point to attract businesses, primarily service and/or retail.

## CHAPTER 5. HOUSING

### 5.1 Results of Windshield Survey of Housing with District

A windshield survey of Polson took place in August 1997, surveying 910 buildings within the old city limits. The survey was conducted by the staff of the Lake County Community Housing Development Organization, with various staff and volunteers working under the direction of the Construction Supervisor. The standard "Survey Form for Structural Condition of Housing Units" as provided by the Department of Commerce was used for each building surveyed. Each survey form was identified by number and street address; the type of structure (i.e. mobile home, residential single family, commercial, etc.) and notations were made regarding any blighted conditions observed in addition to the scored items.

The surveys were collected every day, and tabulated using a point system that evaluated the building based on the condition (as viewed from the outside) of six major areas, including the foundation; walls, porches and/or stairs; windows and doors; roof; chimney and vents; and the condition of the electrical service to the building. The total points determined its rating of "standard", "moderately substandard", "substantially substandard" and "severely substandard". No judgement was made regarding appearance of signs, paint or other such "subjective" areas.

Of the 901 buildings surveyed, 848 were single-family residences. Five hundred and seven of them are within the urban renewal district. For comparative purposes, the results are as follows:

	<u>Polson</u>	<u>Target Area</u>
Households	848	507
Number Low/Moderate Income Households	458	274
Number Owner Occupied	448	268
Number of Standard Owner Occupied Units	266	146
Number of Substandard Owner Occupied Units	182	122
Number Renter Occupied	400	239
Number of Standard Owner Occupied Units	238	130
Number of Substandard Renter Occupied Units	162	110

In addition, there were 53 commercial buildings surveyed within the district, 24 of which are to some degree, apparently substandard; and approximately 47 acres of vacant land, most of which are included in the Railyard area. The District will address substandard homes by a plan to assist homeowners in repairing and upgrading current homes; removing area blight and assisting homeowners in transitioning to or from other areas.

As population statistics indicate, the population of Polson is aging, both due to natural aging of current residents and a significant in-migration to this picturesque retirement area. It is assumed that the average household size will shrink in this process and demand will be based on an average household size not greater than two. There were 1,565 housing units in Polson in 1990, 61.2% of which were conventional single family homes. This grew by over 100 units by 1996, 60 of which were single family homes. This indicates that the area within the District designated for new housing development will likely be targeted to smaller single family homes and multi-family residential with a large percentage geared toward the senior population.

### 5.2 Goals and Policy Alternatives for Residential Compatibility within District

The following general goals are viewed as guiding philosophy in the consideration of providing housing alternatives throughout the area.

1. Ensure access for all residents to affordable, decent and safe housing
2. Encourage a wide variety of choice in housing types and prices based on present and future needs.

3. Ensure that residential development is compatible with the natural environment and is situated in a sound social climate and neighborhood.
4. Preserve the integrity of the surrounding neighborhoods and encourage green ways and other buffer zones between commercial and residential areas.
5. Encourage the removal of blight in all neighborhoods and work to develop programs which enhance neighborhood beautification and revitalization.
6. Discourage development of new housing within established retail and commercial zones.
7. Develop a compatible land use plan specifically for Salish Point which provides incentives to encourage an appropriate mix of commercial development within the residential areas still existing within the Salish Point area.

In achieving these goals, several policy alternatives are available, including: 1) maintain the status quo with no particular emphasis on either upgrading the market or decreasing the housing stock; 2) maintain existing housing with policies directed toward rehabilitating dilapidated structures and stabilizing the current market; 3) develop adequate housing and incentives for new construction; and 4) adopt policies and actions which ultimately serve to diminish the vitality of housing within the district.

Obviously the first alternative avoids the need for a guiding policy, as the declining trend in certain older areas within the district would only continue.

The second and third alternatives work together to achieve a more satisfactory goal, and policies which support these alternatives include:

1. Coordinate Housing Efforts - wherein the efforts of all agencies involved in the provision of housing (both public and private) should be coordinated and better organized to the fullest extent possible.
2. Encourage Income Mix - Housing within the district should accommodate a mix of people, including low, moderate and high income people.
3. Provide "Human" Environment - Housing within the district will be enhanced with the provision of adequate police, fire, health protection, lighting, service centers, parks, pedestrian and bicycle systems and other public use facilities such as restaurants and recreational facilities.
4. Replace Housing Units - Low and moderate income housing units removed through federal, state, or local actions should be replaced on a one-to-one basis.
5. Eliminate Blight - Local government should pursue the elimination of blight and the prevention of neighborhood deterioration through rehabilitation and revitalization programs.

Growth of housing within the district should be encouraged through the following policies:

6. Establish Multi-use Overlay Zone - After an adequate feasibility study, the use of structures for both commercial and residential uses should be facilitated. This policy could potentially encourage new housing unit opportunities in buildings vacant above commercial uses.
7. Minimize Incompatible Uses - Encourage the concentration of housing in areas in which incompatible uses are minimized.
8. Low and Moderate Income Development Incentives - Help provide incentives to those housing developers willing to produce units which low and moderate income families can afford to purchase or rent. These might include density bonuses, financial backing or other innovations.