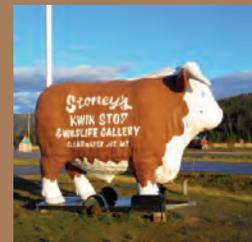


Missoula County Growth Policy

Landscapes • Livelihoods • Communities



May 2016
Amended 2019





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County Commission

Resolution Number

Date

Growth Policy 2016 Resolutions

Resolution 2016-84 of Intent to Adopt

June 1, 2016

Resolution 2016-98 to Adopt

July 13, 2016

Land Use Element 2019 Resolutions

Resolution 2019-70 of Intent to Adopt

May 23, 2019

Resolution 2019-90 to Adopt

June 6, 2019



Acknowledgments

Board of County Commissioners

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Thank You Residents of Missoula County

A special thanks to all of the dedicated residents of Missoula County who contributed to this plan on their free time by participating in public meetings, submitting comments and filling out survey forms. Your time, efforts and ideas are very much appreciated and reflected in this plan.



RESOLUTION NUMBER 2016-084

A RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO ADOPT THE MISSOULA COUNTY GROWTH POLICY

WHEREAS, 76-1-604 M.C.A. authorizes the Board of County Commissioners to adopt and revise a growth policy; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the 2005 Missoula County Growth Policy for Missoula County through the passage of County Resolution 2006-079 that was most recently updated to include a new County profile in 2014 (County Resolution 2014-010); and,

WHEREAS, the 2005 Missoula County Growth Policy requires a review at least once every five years to determine whether revisions to the Growth Policy are necessary; and,

WHEREAS, an analysis of the review criteria determined revisions were warranted based on changes in the circumstances, changes in community goals, degree to which goals and objectives had been met, and knowledge of specific, and identifiable amendments that would improve the growth policy's usefulness, so that it better serves the public; and,

WHEREAS, a process to update the growth policy was initiated in October 2014 that continued through May 2016 that included three full rounds of public outreach and engagement and review of draft goals, objectives, actions and other elements of the growth policy; and,

WHEREAS, based on public and agency input a new draft Missoula County Growth Policy was issued on November 13, 2015, and subsequently amended on February 12, 2016 and May 2016, based on comment received; and

WHEREAS, a notice of public hearing was advertised in the *Missoulian* on November 15 & 22, 2015; February 14 & 21, 2016, and,

WHEREAS, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board held a public hearing December 1, 2015 and continued it to March 1, 2016; and,

WHEREAS, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board recommended by a 9-0 vote that the Missoula Board of County Commissioners approve and adopt the February 2016 draft Missoula County Growth Policy, as amended; and,

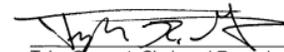
WHEREAS, a notice of public hearing was advertised in the *Missoulian* on March 27 & April 3, 2016; May 22 & 29 and,

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held by the County Commissioners of Missoula County on April 13, 2016 that was continued on June 1, 2016, to consider the proposed update to the Missoula County Growth Policy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County hereby adopts this Resolution of Intent to repeal the existing Missoula County Growth Policy and adopt the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy, as amended by the Planning Board and the Board of County Commissioners, and with any necessary editorial and formatting corrections.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 1st DAY OF JUNE, 2016

ATTEST:

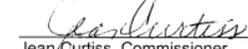

Tyler Gemant, Clerk and Recorder

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MISSOULA COUNTY


Nicola Rowley, Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


John Hart, Deputy County Attorney


Jean Curtiss, Commissioner


Stacy Rye, Commissioner





RESOLUTION NUMBER 2016-~~148~~149

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE MISSOULA COUNTY GROWTH POLICY

WHEREAS, 76-1-604 M.C.A. authorizes the Board of County Commissioners to adopt and revise a growth policy; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the 2005 Missoula County Growth Policy for Missoula County through the passage of County Resolution 2006-079 that was most recently updated to include a new County profile in 2014 (County Resolution 2014-010); and,

WHEREAS, the 2005 Missoula County Growth Policy requires a review at least once every five years to determine whether revisions to the Growth Policy are necessary; and,

WHEREAS, an analysis of the review criteria determined revisions were warranted based on changes in the circumstances, changes in community goals, degree to which goals and objectives had been met, and knowledge of specific, and identifiable amendments that would improve the growth policy's usefulness, so that it better serves the public; and,

WHEREAS, a process to update the growth policy was initiated in October 2014 and continued through May 2016 that included three full rounds of public outreach and engagement and review of draft goals, objectives, actions and other elements of the growth policy; and,

WHEREAS, based on public and agency input a new draft Missoula County Growth Policy was issued on November 13, 2015, and subsequently amended on February 12, 2016 and May 23, 2016, based on comment received; and

WHEREAS, a notice of public hearing was advertised in the *Missoulian* on November 15 & 22, 2015; February 14 & 21, 2016, and,

WHEREAS, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board held a public hearing December 1, 2015 and continued it to March 1, 2016; and,

WHEREAS, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board recommended by a 9-0 vote that the Missoula Board of County Commissioners approve and adopt the February 2016 draft Missoula County Growth Policy, as amended; and,

WHEREAS, a notice of public hearing was advertised in the *Missoulian* on March 27 & April 3, 2016; May 22 & 29 and,

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held by the County Commissioners of Missoula County on April 13, 2016 that was continued on June 1, 2016, to consider the proposed 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners held final deliberations on the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy at the public hearing on June 1, 2016; and,

WHEREAS, on June 1, 2016, the Board of County Commissioners adopted Resolution 2016-84, a Resolution of Intent to repeal the existing Missoula County Growth Policy and adopt the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy, as amended by the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board and the Board of County Commissioners, with any necessary editorial and formatting corrections;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County hereby adopts this Resolution to Adopt the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy, as amended by the Planning Board and the Board of County Commissioners, with any necessary editorial and formatting corrections. Further, the current growth policy is repealed and replaced by the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy, as shown in Exhibit A.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 13th DAY OF JULY, 2016

ATTEST:


Tyler Gernant, Clerk and Recorder

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MISSOULA COUNTY


Nicola Rowley, Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


John Hart, Deputy County Attorney


Jean Curtiss, Commissioner

NOT AVAILABLE FOR SIGNATURE
Stacy Rye, Commissioner





POB020190B

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-070

A RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO ADOPT THE MISSOULA AREA LAND USE ELEMENT AS AN AMENDMENT TO THE MISSOULA COUNTY GROWTH POLICY.

WHEREAS, 76-1-604 M.C.A. authorizes the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County to adopt and revise a growth policy; and,
WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County adopted the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy through the passage of County Resolution 2016-084; and,
WHEREAS, the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy identified updating Map 18 of the Missoula County Growth Policy through the land use strategy as a high priority; and,
WHEREAS, an analysis of the criteria for prioritizing the area to be updated resulted in a planning area boundary focused on the urban area outside the city limits due to the area experiencing the most growth pressure in Missoula County, the complex land use patterns, the history of and interest in land use planning; and the region's impact on the housing market; and,
WHEREAS, a process to update the land use map and policy for this area was initiated in June 2017 and continued through October 2018, including three rounds of public outreach and engagement to review draft maps, population projections, community values, realities, implementation strategies; and,
WHEREAS, based on public and agency input, a preliminary draft of the Missoula Area Land Use Element was issued on October 9, 2018, and subsequently amended based on comments received; and,
WHEREAS, a planning board draft of the Missoula Area Land Use Element was issued on December 30, 2018 and a notice of public hearing was advertised in the Missoulian on December 30, 2018, January 6, February 3, and February 10, 2019; and,
WHEREAS, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board held a public hearing January 15, 2019 and continued it twice to February 19, 2019 and March 5, 2019; and,
WHEREAS, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board resolved by a 7-0 vote to recommend the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County approve and adopt the January 2019 draft Missoula Area Land Use Element as an amendment to the Missoula County Growth Policy, as amended; and,
WHEREAS, a notice of public hearing was advertised in the Missoulian on April 7 and April 14, 2019; and,
WHEREAS, a public hearing was held by the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County on April 18, 2019 and continued twice to April 25, 2019 and May 2, 2019, to consider the proposed Missoula Area Land Use Element as an amendment to the Missoula County Growth Policy; and,
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County hereby adopts this Resolution of Intent to adopt the 2019 Missoula Area Land Use Element as an amendment to the Missoula County Growth Policy and Map 18 of the Growth Policy, as amended by the Planning Board and the Board of County Commissioners, and with any necessary editorial and formatting corrections.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 2ND DAY OF MAY 2019

ATTEST: Tyler Germant, Clerk and Recorder
Nicole Rowley, Chair
Josh Blotnick, Commissioner
David Strohmaier, Commissioner
John Hart, Deputy County Attorney



RESOLUTION NUMBER 2019-090

POB020190B

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE MISSOULA AREA LAND USE ELEMENT AS AN AMENDMENT TO THE MISSOULA COUNTY GROWTH POLICY

WHEREAS, 76-1-604 M.C.A. authorizes the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County to adopt and revise a growth policy; and,
WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County adopted the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy through the passage of County Resolution 2016-084; and,
WHEREAS, the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy identified updating Map 18 of the Missoula County Growth Policy through the land use strategy as a high priority; and,
WHEREAS, an analysis of the criteria for prioritizing the area to be updated resulted in a planning area boundary focused on the urban area outside the city limits due to the area experiencing the most growth pressure in Missoula County, the complex land use patterns, the history of and interest in land use planning; and the region's impact on the housing market; and,
WHEREAS, a process to update the land use map and policy for this area was initiated in June 2017, and continued through October 2018, including three rounds of public outreach and engagement to review draft maps, population projections, community values, realities, implementation strategies; and,
WHEREAS, based on public and agency input, a preliminary draft of the Missoula Area Land Use Element was issued on October 9, 2018, and subsequently amended, based on comments received; and,
WHEREAS, a planning board draft of the Missoula Area Land Use Element was issued on December 30, 2018, and a notice of public hearing was advertised in the Missoulian on December 30, 2018, January 6, February 3 and February 10, 2019; and,
WHEREAS, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board held a public hearing January 15, 2019 and continued it twice to February 19, 2019, and March 5, 2019; and,
WHEREAS, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board resolved by a 7-0 vote to recommend the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County approve and adopt the January 2019 draft Missoula Area Land Use Element and revised Map 16 of the Missoula County Growth Policy as an amendment to the Missoula County Growth Policy, as amended; and,
WHEREAS, a notice of public hearing was advertised in the Missoulian on April 7, and April 14, 2019; and,
WHEREAS, a public hearing was held by the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County on April 18, 2019, and continued twice to April 25, 2019, and May 2, 2019, to consider the proposed Missoula Area Land Use Element as an amendment to the Missoula County Growth Policy; and,
WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County held final deliberations on the 2019 Missoula Area Land Use Element at the public hearing on May 2, 2019; and,
WHEREAS, on May 2, 2019, the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County adopted the Resolution 2019-070, a Resolution of Intent to adopt the Missoula Area Land Use Element as an amendment to the Missoula County Growth Policy, as amended by the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board and the Board of County Commissioners, with any necessary editorial and formatting corrections.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County hereby adopts this Resolution to adopt the 2019 Missoula Area Land Use Element as an amendment to the Missoula County Growth Policy and Map 18 of the Growth Policy, as amended by the Planning Board and the Board of County Commissioners, and with any necessary editorial and formatting corrections.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 6TH DAY OF JUNE 2019

ATTEST: Tyler Germant, Clerk and Recorder
Nicole Rowley, Chair
Josh Blotnick, Commissioner
David Strohmaier, Commissioner
John Hart, Deputy County Attorney



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06/13/2019 04:07:55 PM Resolution
Tyler R. Germant, Missoula County Clerk & Recorder
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Acronym List:

- **BCC – Board of County Commissioners**
- **BREDD – Bitter Root Economic Development District**
- **CAPS – Community and Planning Services**
- **CFAC – Community Food and Agriculture Coalition**
- **CSKT – Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes**
- **Montana DNRC –Department of Natural Resources and Conservation**
- **FVLT – Five Valleys Land Trust**
- **GCP – Grants and Community Programs**
- **MDT – Montana Department of Transportation**
- **MEP – Missoula Economic Partnership**
- **MHA – Missoula Housing Authority**
- **MOR – Missoula Organization of Realtors**
- **MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization**
- **MRTMA – Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association**
- **MT FWP – Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**
- **OEM – Office of Emergency Management**
- **OLC – Open Lands Committee**
- **PB – Missoula Consolidated Planning Board**
- **PHC – Partnership Health Center**
- **PTOL – Parks, Trails, and Open Lands**
- **PW – County Public Works**
- **UM – University of Montana**
- **USFS – United States Forest Service**



Missoula County Growth Policy

*Shaping Our Place,
Charting Our Future*

Welcome to the Missoula County Growth Policy
Listening Session – Evaro School House

Tuesday, October 14, 2014 ~ 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.



Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

The Setting

Missoula County is largely characterized by its remarkable landscapes that have had a pronounced influence on the area's development and life style. The mountains, valleys and river corridors that make up the striking scenery have shaped the physical development of the county by creating several distinct places, and each of these places has its own identity and sense of community. While this landscape creates separate physical places, it also provides a strong connection among residents. The natural landscape creates open spaces with tremendous recreational opportunities that provide many of the reasons the residents live here and enjoy a high quality of life. It also draws more people to live and visit here.



Missoula County contains many special places that have provided for fish, wildlife, and people from time immemorial until today. The oldest

Indian artifacts found in Missoula County date from 12,000 years ago and the first known semi-permanent sites were developed 5,500 years ago. During the following centuries, Missoula County was occupied by a succession of Native American tribes. For centuries the Missoula Valley also offered natural passageways between the mountain ranges, where Native Americans, such as the Salish, Kootenai, Pend d'Oreille, and Nez Perce, traveled to and from buffalo hunting grounds on the plains east of the Continental Divide.

The physical landscape has played a major role in the economic development of Missoula County. Rich soils with nearby sources of water supported agriculture as an early form of economic development after European settlement. Construction of the railroad through Missoula Valley and timber resources brought prosperity to the area in the late 19th century. The natural resources supported the agricultural and timber industries as the mainstays of Missoula County's economy for over a century.

The physical landscape and the discrete places created by it also contribute to a sense of self-reliance that is shared among residents of the rural parts of the county. Rural residents feel a strong sense of protection for the character of their communities that is matched by their independence and desire



for limited governmental regulation. However, a growing population creates challenges for preserving the very attributes that residents value.

While many residents in rural communities highly value their decision to live, work and raise their families in a rural environment, they also enjoy and rely upon their proximity to the City of Missoula. The city provides additional employment opportunities, health care services and facilities, grocery stores, cultural and entertainment activities and an energy generated around the University of Montana. Missoula County provides its residents the opportunity to enjoy a rural lifestyle with urban services, economic opportunities and amenities nearby.

This growth policy seeks to protect the natural landscape and open spaces that are so important to Missoula County, while preparing for growth and promoting the economic wellbeing of its residents.

What is a Growth Policy?

In Montana, a growth policy is a plan for the future of a city or county. It is a vision for how to provide vibrant places for people to live, work and play while protecting the assets that residents

value most. 'Growth Policy' is the term used in Montana state law [Montana Code Annotated 76-1-601] for a comprehensive plan or master plan.

A growth policy takes stock of what a community was yesterday, is today, and provides a vision for what a community would like to become tomorrow. It includes goals based on community priorities and an action plan to help achieve those goals.

Fundamentally a growth policy is a guidance document, not a regulatory document, and it does not necessarily require regulations to be adopted. However, growth policies provide the legal framework and philosophical foundation upon which future plans and regulations are based. In summary, a growth policy is a guide for decision-making as well as a road map that articulates what a community would like to become and how it intends to get there.

How are Growth Policies Used?

Growth policies can be used to identify community priorities. With limited staff and budget, Missoula County must decide what projects and initiatives are most important and budget accordingly; growth policies can help to guide those

decisions. Growth policies are also used to guide infrastructure investments like public roads, water, sewer, parks and trails. In addition, growth policies are used as the basis for updating or adopting land use regulations and are used as a resource when evaluating development applications. Chapter 7 provides more detail on how this growth policy will be used.

How was this Growth Policy Developed?

This growth policy is a comprehensive update to the 2005 Missoula County Growth Policy. Since 2005, much has changed in the county including an end to the land and housing boom, a major economic recession, closure of two major employers and the emergence of new industries. In addition, the land use planning functions of the City of Missoula and Missoula County are now separately housed in city and county agencies.

The Missoula County Growth Policy covers all of Missoula County outside of the city limits of Missoula (Map 1).

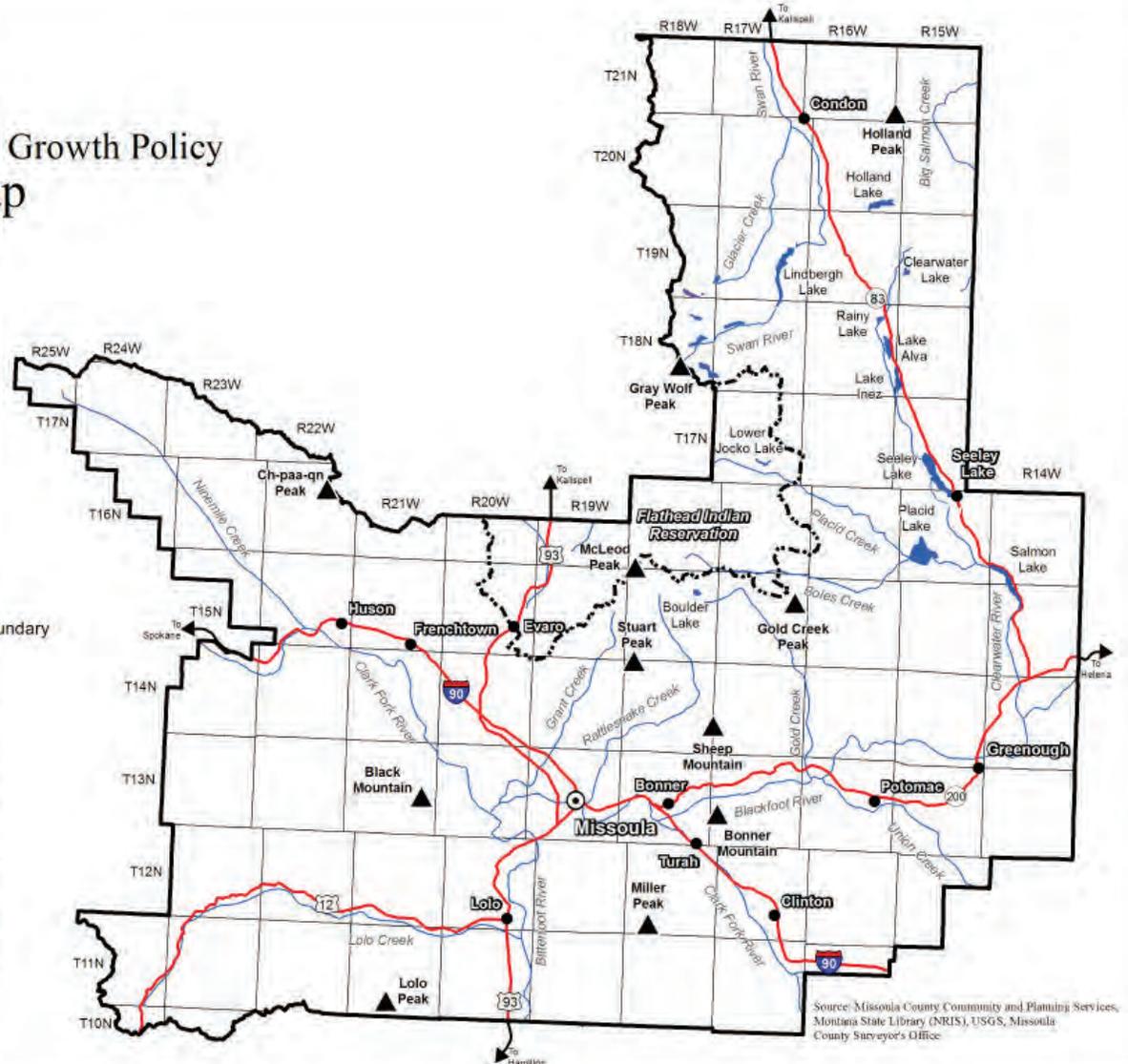
In order to understand how the community challenges and priorities have changed since 2005, under the guidance of the Missoula Board of County Commissioners and Missoula

Map 1

Missoula County Growth Policy Location Map

Legend

- Cities and Towns
- ▲ Summits
- Highways
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Townships
- Missoula City Limits
- ⋯ Flathead Reservation Boundary
- County Boundary



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services, Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula County Surveyor's Office



Consolidated Planning Board, a team of county planners and planning consultants interviewed County Commissioners, department heads and stakeholder organizations and held three rounds of listening sessions in communities across the county. Round 1 was designed to introduce the public to the Growth Policy update and for the planning team to gain an understanding of the key issues that are important to Missoula County residents. Round 2 evaluated initial goals and objectives in order to gauge the public's level of acceptance of the draft approaches to address the key issues. Round 3 was designed to assess more specific policy recommendations and develop a plan of action. (See Appendix B)

The county also created a website dedicated to the project that has provided background information, updates and allowed participants to submit comments throughout the process. All told, this effort has engaged hundreds of individuals whose comments and suggestions have been used to create this plan.

In addition to these efforts, the adoption process included public hearings before the Planning Board and final adoption by the Missoula County Board of Commissioners through a public hearing process.

Main Themes

This growth policy is organized under the main themes of landscapes, livelihoods and communities. Primary issues and concerns related to these themes are described below.

Landscapes

The valleys, mountains and open spaces that make up Missoula County's landscape provide a geographic framework for the growth policy. The valleys are formed by large drainages with natural water features throughout the county. Over 1,975 miles of



rivers, streams and named tributaries crisscross the valleys of Missoula County. The quality of life here and the livelihoods of many residents depend on protecting watersheds in general, and water quality and quantity in particular, as new development occurs and the volume of storm water runoff and the number of septic systems increases.

The valleys can be subject to inversions that trap particulates in the air that can cause health problems for residents. Maintaining clean healthy air is another essential component of a high quality of life that is important to local residents, and it also is essential for attracting new economic development.

The forested mountains that frame the valleys brought early prosperity to Missoula County through the wood products industries. The open spaces that blanket the valley floors are iconic of Missoula County, but they also provide agricultural lands in close proximity to water. Agriculture was an early economic activity in the Missoula area and it continues today. Growth of the county during the recent decades has extended subdivisions and development into the forest and also onto much of the agricultural land base, resulting in challenges related to public safety, cost of providing services, and long term agricultural production.

In listening sessions throughout



the county, open spaces and the natural environment were frequently discussed. The county's natural features were regularly listed among the values and assets for the people of Missoula County. Residents also included protection of and access to natural resources as important for the county's future.



These natural resources transcend all facets of life in Missoula County. They contribute to quality of life by providing recreational opportunities and scenic amenities. They also provided for early agricultural and timber industries, imprinting the culture and heritage of the current day Missoula County. The natural environment continues to be a significant asset that helps recruit and maintain economic development.

How the natural environment and natural systems may shift with the effects of climate change, and how we should plan and develop our communities in preparation for and in response to changing circumstances, are important considerations as we seek to accommodate population growth.

Livelihoods

The people of Missoula County are key to vibrant and successful communities. When residents enjoy productive livelihoods they are committed to their communities and have a stronger stake in the overall success of the area.

Missoula County's physical landscape supported the livelihoods of its residents for many decades, and continues today providing agricultural timber, and recreational resources. The economy in Missoula County is changing; however, many jobs in timber-related industries are being replaced with jobs in newly emerging industries such as biotechnology, data management, and research. Agriculture provides a smaller share of the area's economic activity than in the past.



Missoula County has always been fortunate to enjoy access to the larger region that ushered in new waves of

economic development. First the railroad was constructed through the area in mid to late 19 century, followed later by Interstate 90. Now the very same alignment that accommodated these two transportation facilities provides the route for a major backbone of the digital highway between the Midwest and the West Coast.

In the transitioning economy, the manufacturing sector continues to be strong while the University provides new opportunities with a steady stream of graduates. Opportunities in restoration, renewable energy, re-development and re-use of older commercial sites, and positioning the county to capitalize on recreational opportunities and a high quality of life have great promise. Overall, there are good reasons to be optimistic about Missoula County's economic future, although this optimism is not shared uniformly across the county.

Parts of the county that have relied on the timber or other resource-based industries have been hit hard by recent economic changes, and remote communities in the county seek greater economic stability. Promoting the economic development of Missoula County may be challenging, but the hardest part may be ensuring that rural communities and low income residents also benefit from the economic growth of the county.



Communities

The valleys that make up the natural landscape of Missoula County are home to several distinctive, unincorporated communities that have evolved over time. Residents in each of these places share a strong sense of community. The remoteness of some communities from the City of Missoula, coupled with their distinctive character, causes many residents to perceive decisions of the county government as failing to meet their needs. The unincorporated area adjacent to the city adds diversity to Missoula County by functioning as an extension of the city with little visible distinction between the two jurisdictions, while also maintaining a level of rural character close to the city limits that residents value.



Establishing policies and decisions that apply to dispersed and diverse communities is challenging. An effective system for consistent outreach and communication is essential to fostering

a countywide sense of community that will be necessary to implement this Growth Policy.

Another challenge Missoula County residents face is high housing prices. Compared with typical wages, the cost of housing in Missoula County is disproportionately high, necessitating additional efforts from the public, private and non-profit sectors to provide the housing stock necessary to accommodate growth.

Missoula County is home to numerous agencies and organizations that are pursuing individual missions and goals. Two economic development agencies, several non-profit organizations, Tribal government, city government, several governmental commissions and boards, multiple county departments, numerous homeowner associations, the University of Montana and Missoula College create a rich mixture of organizations and agencies operating in Missoula County. This diversity creates tremendous opportunities to accomplish great things but also creates a challenge to coordinate actions.

The influence of federal agencies is a major part of each community. The federal government manages about half of the land in Missoula County. The Flathead Indian Reservation, home to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, also covers about 6% of Missoula

County. This pattern of land ownership requires cooperation among all levels of government to create a compatible system of land management that protects the natural resources and supports the residents' lifestyles.

Montana, in general, and much of Missoula County experience limited regulations on the decisions and actions of private individuals. However, strong population growth brings challenges in protecting the wonderful characteristics that make Missoula County an attractive place. According to Regional Economic Models, Inc., the county's population grew by 30,363 people between 1990 and 2010 and is projected to grow by more than 27,612 between 2010 and 2035. This growth creates a challenge of balancing the protection of beloved assets in the county with the strong desire for limited governmental regulation.



Document Organization

The document is structured to outline how the vision might be achieved; to provide a framework for continued community development, resource conservation, and planning efforts; and to meet state legal requirements.

Chapter 1 includes an introduction and vision statement that describes what the growth policy is intended to help achieve.

Chapter 2 contains the main policy portion of this document, containing guiding principles, goals and objectives for how the county plans to address community challenges in the coming years. It also includes the implementation plan which describes what actions are planned to achieve the goals and objectives, a timeframe, and identifies entities that are expected to take the lead in carrying out the actions. The end of the chapter includes a discussion on the county's land use mapping strategy, which is a key implementation measure.

Chapter 3 describes how Missoula County will coordinate efforts with other jurisdictions.

Chapter 4 provides a description of two types of locally driven planning efforts

Missoula County intends to support in coming years, area and issue plans, as well as how the review, amendment, and retirement of current plans would occur.

Chapter 5 defines the criteria used for subdivision review, describes how the criteria will be used, and also how public hearings on subdivisions will be conducted.

Chapter 6 includes a strategy for the development, replacement, and maintenance of public infrastructure.

Chapter 7 provides guidance on how to use this growth policy, including how to assess consistency of local area and issue plans with the goals and objectives and how to assess compliance of development applications with the growth policy.

Chapter 8 describes how, when, and under what conditions the growth policy may be amended and revised.

Chapter 9 provides the background information on which the growth policy is based including conditions, trends and projections regarding land use, population, housing needs, economic conditions, local services, public facilities, and natural resources.



Chapter 2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

INTRODUCTION

This growth policy is intended to provide the direction necessary to conserve the natural landscapes and open spaces that are so important to Missoula County, while accommodating growth and promoting the economic wellbeing of its residents. Toward this ideal, the growth policy establishes guiding principles, goals, objectives, and an action plan.

Guiding principles are broad assumptions that establish the overall planning framework. They provide a compass to be used in deliberation and decision-making.

Goals are general statements of values that articulate a vision and set priorities for how Missoula County should grow and develop.

Objectives, which are more specific and measurable statements of desired results, further define and elaborate upon the goals.

Actions are specific steps that the county can take to help achieve the objectives.



The Growth Policy is guided by these **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- **Sustainability:** Local government should strive to make decisions that are environmentally sound, fiscally responsible, and supportive of healthy communities over the long term.
- **Clean and healthful environment:** The right to a clean and healthful environment is fundamentally important. Missoula County's natural and cultural resources make this place unique; they should be conserved, enhanced and enjoyed.
- **Climate change:** Local government decision-making should consider the impacts of and adaptation to climate change in policy and regulatory decisions.
- **Agriculture:** A healthy agriculture sector is essential to the well-being of our community due to benefits such as food security, open space, wildlife habitat, economic activity, health promotion, and quality of life.
- **Economic development:** Economic measures should focus on long term economic development that is fiscally-responsible and does not unduly compromise quality of life or the natural environment.
- **Public health and safety:** Missoula County will strive to protect public health, safety, and welfare in a fiscally-responsible manner.
- **Private property rights:** Respect for private property rights should be supported in policy.
- **Balancing interests and minimizing regulation:** The public interests of promoting economic development, conserving natural resources, maintaining community character, protecting public health and safety, and supporting private property rights should be weighed and balanced in decision-making. The use of regulatory and voluntary measures will be evaluated with an effort to employ the minimum amount of regulation necessary to protect public interests.
- **Partnerships:** Efforts by non- governmental groups, private individuals, tribal government, and state and federal agencies to achieve community goals are as vital to community development as local governmental actions. Partnerships among these groups, individuals and local government are essential.
- **Public involvement:** Communities and individuals should continue to be involved in the planning and decision-making processes that affect them.
- **Diversity of communities and citizenry:** The diversity, integrity and unique values of neighborhoods, communities and rural areas are important and should be protected. Diversity among the county's population is also valued. A wide variety of housing and transportation choices is necessary to serve all communities and all of the population.
- **Infrastructure:** Investing in infrastructure, as part of implementing planning, is one of the most effective ways to build enduring communities.
- **Recreation:** Missoula County residents enjoy recreating in the area's natural landscape. It is important to promote access to land and waters, and to provide facilities that contribute to active and healthy lifestyles, while concurrently protecting natural resources.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

The goals, objectives, and actions provided herein are divided into three categories: **Landscapes, Livelihoods and Communities**. The growth policy is organized around these categories as a reminder of the core focus of this plan. When reading the goals and objectives it is important to keep in mind that some of the objectives can be used to help achieve more than one goal, as illustrated in Figure 2.

The goals and objectives are intended to create a basis for future actions by Missoula County. While there are numerous topics and issues that are important in Missoula County, this growth policy does not attempt to inventory and address them all. Instead, **the growth policy focuses on those goals and objectives that can lead to an action plan for Missoula County and its partners to address key land use, natural resource, and community development issues.**

A plan is only as good as its implementation. With that in mind, this chapter describes how to help achieve the goals and objectives. Community and Planning Services (CAPS) or other agencies may already be addressing some goals and objectives that are established here, but because these goals and objectives continue to be a part of a future action plan they are retained in this growth policy.

The tables below list each goal and

objective, anticipated actions, a timeframe, and the anticipated lead partners. As projects are implemented, the county will develop indicators of success to help measure performance.

- **Timeframe:** This indicates when the action is expected to be taken.
- **Immediate:** These actions are to be initiated or completed within 1 to 2 years from the adoption of the plan and generally reflect high priorities
- **Mid-Term:** These actions are to be initiated or completed within 2 to 5 years from the adoption of the plan
- **Long-Term:** These actions are to be

initiated or completed 5 to 10 years or longer after adoption of the plan

- **Ongoing:** These tasks occur continually

Lead Partners: This column lists who is planned to take a leadership role on each action. It does not cite all partners or participants who will be involved with each objective. Depending on the action, the county’s role will vary from leading to facilitating to supporting.

Land Use Strategy: Following the action plan is a land use strategy that describes how the county intends to address a variety of land use-related issues through updated land use designation maps.

Figure 2 - Goals and Objectives Framework

This image illustrates the relationship between the goals and objectives in the growth policy and shows that objectives can help achieve multiple goals.





Landscapes

Goal #1 - Conserve vital natural resources including surface and ground water, air quality, agricultural resources, iconic landscapes, fish and wildlife species and their habitats, and native plant communities

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
1.1 Develop and implement regulatory and non-regulatory strategies to conserve vital natural resources and environmental functions.	1.1.1 Identify priority resource areas based on agricultural soils, wildlife habitat, water, scenic viewsheds, and the functions of the natural environment.	Mid-term	CAPS
	1.1.2 Update or develop land use designation maps, area and issue plans, zoning and other projects using priority resource areas. This could include the use of overlays.	Ongoing	CAPS
	1.1.3 Conserve the highest priority lands and waters while allowing other public benefits such as public access utilizing open space bond funding and other public funding sources.	Ongoing	OLC, CAPS, PTOL
	1.1.4 Cooperate with private land trusts and landowners to facilitate voluntary conservation projects with private funding.	Ongoing	OLC, CAPS, PTOL, land trusts
	1.1.5 Update subdivision regulations to provide standards that minimize and mitigate impacts to natural resources.	Immediate	CAPS
	1.1.6 Improve air quality through road dust abatement, wood stove change outs, energy efficiency, etc.	Ongoing	Health dept, PW, CAPS
	1.1.7 Increase the percentage of the population that is served by public or community water and wastewater systems.	Ongoing	Health dept, PW, Seeley Lake Sewer Board, Seeley Lake Water District

* See acronym list on page V of the Table of Contents



Goal #2 - Promote the responsible use and enjoyment of publicly-owned lands and waters

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
2.1 Maximize opportunities for access to publicly-owned lands and waters when consistent with resource management objectives.	2.1.1 Plan for and develop accesses to rivers, lakes and public lands where needed and appropriate, while concurrently protecting resources for future generations.	Ongoing	PTOL, PW, MT FWP
	2.1.2 Build trails to connect communities with public lands and to create linkages between public lands and waters, while concurrently protecting resources for future generations.	Ongoing	PTOL, PW, MT FWP, other agencies and land trusts

Goal #3 - Protect and enhance the historic and cultural structures and sites that are part of Missoula County's history and heritage

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
3.1 Protect and, where appropriate, restore and make use of key historic and cultural resources and sites.	3.1.1 Work with partners to protect, restore, and re-use historic resources, sites, and structures, where appropriate.	Ongoing	CAPS, PTOL, community councils, community groups, MT Historic Preservation Office
3.2 Respect cultural resources identified by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and other tribal entities.	3.2.1 Support tribal efforts to protect and conserve cultural resources, when invited.	Ongoing	CAPS, PTOL, CSKT
	3.2.2 Include the Tribes on agency review lists for development, conservation, and parks and trails projects.	Ongoing	CAPS, PTOL
	3.2.3 Notify contractors that should native remains or artifacts be uncovered during land development, work would need to cease and tribal cultural resource experts need to be contacted immediately.	Immediate/ Ongoing	CAPS, PW, EHD, other development review agencies

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Goal #4 - Reduce Missoula County’s contribution to climate change while promoting resiliency and adapting to its impact on the natural environment and communities

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
4.1 Reduce Missoula County’s contribution to climate change.	4.1.1 Use green building principles and consider energy efficiency and waste reduction when siting, upgrading, and constructing public facilities.	Ongoing	BCC, Facilities Management, PW
	4.1.2 Adopt a green-building incentive program for qualifying private sector development projects focusing on siting, energy efficiency, waste reduction and other measures.	Mid-term	CAPS, PW
	4.1.3 Encourage alternative energy development and use in county facilities and land use plans and policies.	Ongoing	CAPS
	4.1.4 Work with Mountain Line, MRTMA and/or other transportation providers to expand service to rural areas and/or promote ridesharing.	Long-term	CAPS, Mountain Line, MRTMA
	4.1.5 Ensure land use plans and regulations accommodate home-based businesses where appropriate to reduce vehicle miles traveled	Ongoing	CAPS
	4.1.6 Develop county policy to reduce energy use and waste generation at the county level and encourage recycling efforts. Find and use renewable energy sources where possible.	Mid-term	BCC, Facilities Management
4.2 Develop and implement strategies to adapt to climate change.	4.2.1 Convene a working group to investigate the current level of greenhouse gas emissions generated from county facilities and develop a climate change monitoring, mitigation and adaptation plan for Missoula County or participate in other local working groups.	Immediate	BCC, CAPS
4.3 Encourage legislative action on alternative energy.	4.3.1 Support the continuation of tax breaks for alternative energy.	Immediate	BCC
	4.3.2 Lobby for tax breaks for community solar.	Immediate	BCC

Note: Objectives and actions related to climate change prevention and adaptation located elsewhere in this chapter include: providing efficient and functional communities that encourage compact development patterns; encouraging multi-modal transportation, supporting local agricultural markets and local businesses to minimize vehicle miles traveled; protecting life and property from floods and wildfires, and water quality protection measures.

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Livelihoods

Goal #5 - Promote economic development that creates opportunities throughout Missoula County including people living and working in rural communities and across wage levels

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
5.1 Support local businesses.	5.1.1 Develop a buy-local program for county government and invite other governments, non-profits and businesses to participate.	Mid-term	BCC
	5.1.2 Provide grant writing and other technical support to qualifying companies seeking to add value to local products and create jobs in rural areas.	Ongoing	BREDD, MEP, GCP
	5.1.3 Support business location, retention and expansion efforts as opportunities arise.	Ongoing	BREDD, BCC, MEP
	5.1.4 Work with business community to improve permitting systems and streamline development review.	Ongoing	
5.2 Expand economic opportunities in rural areas of the county.	5.2.1 Work with local economic development agencies to create a targeted plan(s) for rural communities.	Mid-term	MEP, BREDD, BCC, and private partners

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Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
5.3 Facilitate well-designed commercial and industrial development that is located appropriately, served by necessary infrastructure, conducive to public health and the environment, and reduces buyer and developer financial and legal risks.	5.3.1 Create an industrial site readiness and certification program based on the results of the Industrial Lands Study.	Mid-term	BCC, MDA
	5.3.2 Modernize the county zoning resolution to reflect current and anticipated industries and businesses and to encourage clean technology firms.	Mid-term	CAPS
	5.3.3 Support efforts of business groups in Missoula County communities to improve the appearance and function of the business districts.	Ongoing	CAPS, BCC, MDT, PW, GCP
5.4 Facilitate the re-use of former industrial sites and previously developed, under-utilized parcels of land to revitalize blighted and infrastructure deficient areas and spur private investment.	5.4.1 Use brownfield programs, tax increment finance, targeted economic development districts and other tools to assist with redevelopment efforts.	Ongoing	GCP, MDA, BCC
5.5 Support workforce training.	5.5.1 Develop a county internship program to provide training to local students.	Immediate	BCC, county depts, UM, Missoula College
	5.5.2 Partner with educational institutions and economic development agencies to create opportunities to retain college and university graduates by matching skills with local industries, especially emerging industries.	Ongoing	UM, Missoula College, BREDD, MEP

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Goal #6 - Embrace emerging economic trends and new technologies that will prepare Missoula County for the economy that will exist in 20 years

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
6.1 Support initiatives to expand digital communications and develop clean technologies throughout the county.	6.1.1 Research, assess, and enhance broadband availability and affordability throughout Missoula County.	Ongoing	BCC, BREDD, MEP,
	6.1.2 Support legislation to expand digital communications in rural areas.	Ongoing	BCC, BREDD, MC Operations, MEP
	6.1.3 Adopt a county policy to require broadband conduit be included in projects in county right-of-way and private road easements in subdivisions for future expansion where appropriate.	Immediate	BCC, CAPS

Goal #7 - Sustain and promote the land- and resource-based industries of agriculture, timber, restoration, and recreation that are part of the local economy and heritage

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
7.1 Conserve agricultural lands and timberlands. (See also Landscapes.)	7.1.1 Identify actual amount of remaining agricultural land and evaluate its value/ usability for agriculture using parcel size and other factors.	Midterm	CAPS, Extension Office
	7.1.2 Support projects using public and private funding sources to conserve agricultural lands.	Ongoing	CAPS, OLC
	7.1.3 Revise subdivision regulations to address impacts to agriculture and to conserve important agricultural soils.	Immediate	CAPS

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Goal #7 (Continued)

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
7.2 Support local agriculture and businesses involved with wood products and encourage value-added operations.	7.2.1 Create land use designation mapping and zoning that include opportunities for growing and processing of natural resource products in appropriate locations, as well as the flexibility for affiliated businesses.	Mid-term	CAPS
	7.2.2 Assist with efforts to create and expand markets for locally grown and made products.	Ongoing	BREDD, MEP
	7.2.3 Research and develop policies, legal tools and funding sources for new farm start-ups and farmland conservation.	Immediate	CAPS, FVLT, Extension Office, CFAC, MOR, PTOL, City of Missoula, and other partners
7.3 Support efforts of public and private sectors to restore and maintain healthy forests, including harvesting timber, while meeting other resource management goals.	7.3.1 Engage in the Southwest Crown of the Continent Collaborative and other initiatives as opportunities arise.	Ongoing	BCC, CAPS, USFS
	7.3.2 Encourage forest restoration projects that result in economic activity, fuels reduction and improvements to wildlife habitat.	Immediate	OEM, USFS, PTOL
	7.3.3 Support legislation that enables collaborative efforts to restore and maintain healthy forests and reduce wildfire risks.	Ongoing	BCC
7.4 Help to develop the recreation and tourist economies.	7.4.1 Complete recreation mapping efforts and support marketing and educational opportunities.	Mid-term	PTOL, other partners
	7.4.2 Work with partners to develop and market a regional parks and trail system.	Ongoing	PTOL, City Parks and Recreation, BREDD, MEP, CAPS, local communities

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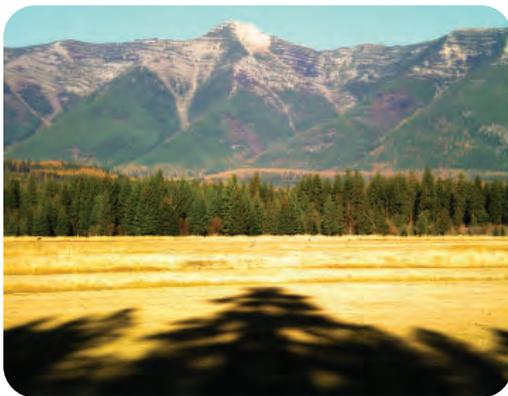


Communities

Goal #8 - Proactively plan and provide for the logical growth of communities while protecting rural character and sustaining county resources by guiding development to areas most suited for it

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
8.1 Protect and enhance the rural character that exists in much of the County, maintaining a clear distinction between urban and rural areas.	8.1.1 Review and update land use designation maps where there is community interest to accommodate growth, while protecting vital natural resources.	Immediate, Mid-term	CAPS
	8.1.2 Review and update or retire area and issue plans.	Immediate, Mid-term	CAPS
8.2 Provide opportunities for varied land uses in and around existing communities.	8.2.1 Update area plans and zoning regulations to accommodate modern development types for urban and rural areas.	Mid-term, Ongoing	CAPS
	8.2.2 Work with land owners and residents to develop area plans and apply zoning standards to guide community growth.	Mid-term	CAPS
8.3 Guide new subdivisions and development to areas that have the least impact on natural resources and are most suited for development.	8.3.1 As part of land use and other plans, identify and communicate where development is encouraged and discouraged.	Ongoing, mid-term	CAPS
	8.3.2 Explore opportunities for zoning with density standards.	Mid-term	CAPS

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Goal #9 - As part of planning, support the provision of infrastructure and services to and within rural communities

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
9.1 Support increased infrastructure capacity, services and amenities in and around existing communities where appropriate.	9.1.1 Continue to identify and set priorities for community development projects, while minimizing impacts to service providers.	Ongoing	PW, MDT
	9.1.2 Provide grant writing, administration, and technical support for projects.	Ongoing	PW, GCP
	9.1.3 Support legislative efforts to provide infrastructure funding for community development.	Ongoing	BCC
	9.1.4 Create and support policies that require developers and new users to pay their proportional share of the costs necessary to serve new development.	Mid-term	CAPS, PW

Goal #10 - Provide opportunities for a wide range of housing choices, especially for those who are homeless or experiencing high costs for housing relative to income

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
10.1 Facilitate the development of a variety of housing types including housing that is affordable to all segments of the population.	10.1.1 Project the amount of housing that will be needed of all types and price levels to accommodate the projected population growth.	Mid-term	GCP, CAPS, PW Building Division, MOR, other partners
	10.1.2 Identify areas for housing development through land use designation mapping and area planning to accommodate the projected housing needs.	Mid-term	GCP, CAPS, PW Building Division, MOR
	10.1.3 Work with local communities to revise or initiate new zoning to accommodate the projected housing needs.	Mid-term	MHA, GCP, CAPS
	10.1.4 Research and create an incentive program for private development of housing for underserved groups.	Mid-term	MHA, GCP, CAPS, BCC, private developers
	10.1.5 Seek and utilize creative financing tools and public funding to provide housing for underserved groups.	Ongoing	MHA, GCP, CAPS, other housing developers

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Goal #11 - Reduce the safety risks and costs associated with wildland fire, flooding, and other hazards

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
11.1 Discourage development in hazardous areas and areas where public and emergency responder safety is compromised.	11.1.1 Identify hazardous areas, including mapping of wildfire and floodplain risks.	Immediate, Ongoing	OEM, CAPS, DNRC, USFS, fire districts, fire service fee areas
	11.1.2 Provide mapping and other information to the public about local hazards in an easily accessible format.	Immediate	CAPS, OEM, other partners
	11.1.3 Explore zoning regulations to guide growth to appropriate locations (outside of hazard areas).	Mid-term	CAPS, OEM
	11.1.4 Complete channel migration zone mapping to identify historical river and stream movement and model future movement.	Mid-term	OEM, Health dept, CAPS
11.2 When development in hazardous areas does occur, take appropriate measures to limit safety risks and ensure emergency personnel have sufficient resources to respond safely and effectively.	11.2.1 Work with public safety and resource agencies to identify and mitigate risks and provide appropriate resources for public and responder safety.	Ongoing	OEM, CAPS, GCP, fire districts, fire service areas
	11.2.2 Adopt development regulations that require the best possible hazardous mitigation techniques, including Firewise construction, multiple accesses, etc.	Ongoing	OEM, CAPS, PW, DNRC, fire districts, fire service areas
	11.2.3 Provide information to landowners regarding development in hazardous areas (evacuation plans, Firewise development practices, etc.). Explore the possibility of providing risk disclosure statements.	Ongoing	OEM, CAPS, fire districts
	11.2.4 Support efforts such as cost sharing to help landowners reduce fuels and take measures to make their properties more resilient to hazards.	Ongoing	OEM, GCP

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Goal #12 - Promote healthy active communities

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
12.1 Expand and maintain the network of trails, pathways and sidewalks.	12.1.1 Support development, maintenance, and expansion of trails, including those in the County Parks and Trails Master Plan and the Active Transportation Plan.	Ongoing	PTOL, City, MPO
	12.1.2 Pursue funding for trail development and maintenance, including legislation.	Ongoing	PTOL, City, MPO, MDT, private organizations
12.2 Enhance parks and recreational opportunities throughout Missoula County.	12.2.1 Implement the Parks and Trails Master Plan	Ongoing	PTOL, City Parks and Recreation
12.3 Encourage development of community facilities that promote health and wellness for all age groups.	12.3.1 Coordinate with the health community to provide and enhance community facilities for health and wellness.	Ongoing	Health dept, PTOL

Goal #13 - Promote equal access to employment, safe housing, transportation, community services and amenities for all segments of the population

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
13.1 Maximize access for all segments of the population to economic opportunities, social services, health care and other services.	13.1.1 Assess where services are not reaching those in need or are not effective and identify needed actions to ensure access.	Ongoing	GCP, PHC, federal, state and tribal agencies, non-profit organizations

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Goal #14 - Improve communication between Missoula County officials and residents and enhance opportunities for public engagement in local government

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
14.1 Increase contact and communication between Missoula County government and residents.	14.1.1 Ensure staff or county officials attend community meetings when appropriate.	Ongoing	BCC, Communications dept, county depts
	14.1.2 Implement other communication mechanisms to maximize public outreach and transparency.	Ongoing	BCC, Communications dept, county depts
	14.1.3 Use community councils and other advisory boards to help improve communication in both directions and provide opportunities for public engagement.	Ongoing	BCC, county depts
	14.1.4 Provide staff support to community efforts when fiscally possible.	Ongoing	BCC, CAPS, PW, Health dept, Weed District
	14.1.5 Implement policies regarding public meeting notice and update as needed.	Ongoing	BCC, Communications dept
	14.1.6 Prepare and disseminate information on the relationship between taxes paid and cost of providing services.	Ongoing	Finance and Communications depts
14.2 Enhance opportunities for public engagement.	14.2.1 Support and encourage opportunities for rural representation on County boards.	Ongoing	BCC
	14.2.2 Evaluate whether the joint City-County Planning Board provides sufficient representation to rural areas.	Immediate	BCC, CAPS
	14.2.3 Structure community development projects to incorporate a variety of opportunities for public involvement.	Ongoing	CAPS, Communications dept, county depts, BCC
	14.2.4 Increase Planning Board members involvement in rural projects and provide opportunities for Planning Board to learn about rural planning and community issues.	Immediate	BCC, CAPS, county depts., PB

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Goal #15 - Provide effective customer service and flexible, predictable and timely development review processes

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners *
15.1 Provide simple, clear and flexible land use and development regulations, procedures and forms.	15.1.1 Use plain language, graphics and build in flexibility as regulations are revised.	Ongoing	CAPS, PW, Health dept., county depts
	15.1.2 Provide resourceful and responsive assistance in a fair and objective manner to Missoula County residents, businesses, property owners, and visitors.	Ongoing	CAPS, PW, Health dept., county depts
	15.1.3 Set up a regular meeting of agency personnel to review development applications. Explore options to incentivize early comment from agencies and resolution of conflicting comments.	Immediate	CAPS, PW, EHD, other development review agencies
	15.1.4 Establish targets to process development applications more quickly than required under state law.	Immediate	CAPS, PW, EHD, other development review agencies
15.2 Provide enforcement of development regulations that is reasonable and adequate.	15.2.1 Enforce development rules using common sense.	Ongoing	CAPS, Health dept, PW, County Attorney

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Goal #16 - Promote cooperation between Missoula County and the city, state, federal and tribal governments

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Partners*
16.1 Maintain compatible policies, coordinated services and regular communication with the City of Missoula.	16.1.1 Maintain and update as needed the city-county inter-local agreement that guides coordinated planning efforts.	Ongoing	BCC, CAPS, Development Services, Mayor
	16.1.2 Maintain an agreement for review of plans and projects in the Missoula urban fringe.	Ongoing	CAPS, Development Services, Mayor
16.2 Maintain open, regular communication and coordinated efforts for better service delivery to the public.	16.2.1 Continue to conduct regular meetings with agencies and organizations to exchange information and address common issues.	Ongoing	BCC, CAPS, other governments, private sector organizations
16.3 Maintain the Memorandum of Understanding with land management agencies in Missoula County.	16.3.1 Continue biannual meetings with land management agencies, and interagency review of development projects.	Ongoing	BCC, CAPS, DNRC, USFS, BLM, MDT, FWP
16.4 Maintain the land use Memorandum of Agreement with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.	16.4.1 Follow the provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement with Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes regarding review of development projects.	Ongoing	BCC, CAPS, CSKT
	16.4.2 Continue annual or as needed meetings between the Board of County Commissioners and the Tribal Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.	Ongoing	BCC, CAPS, CSKT

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Land Use Strategy

A land use designation map is used to help achieve Goals 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, as described herein. This growth policy includes the existing Missoula County Land Use Designation Map (Map #18 is located in the back cover of printed copies of the plan), which notes land use designations from comprehensive planning and local area plans adopted by the county. Map #6 in Chapter 4 shows the boundaries of the plans that serve as the source of the land use designations.

Missoula County has used land use designation mapping since 1975. Land use designations and mapping are intended to reflect the desired future land use and development pattern for local communities and the county as a whole. This information can be used to help guide development of public infrastructure, plan for delivery of local services, and signal to the private sector where certain kinds of development are preferred. The Land

Use Designation Map provides an overarching guide for any regulations that address land use and/or development patterns such as zoning and subdivision regulations.

Zoning is highlighted in the implementation plan as a possible tool to direct growth, protect key resources, and address other community design issues. Zoning must be adopted in accordance with the growth policy. When zoning is proposed to address density and land use in particular, the Land Use Designation Map is the primary, though not the only, guide from the growth policy.

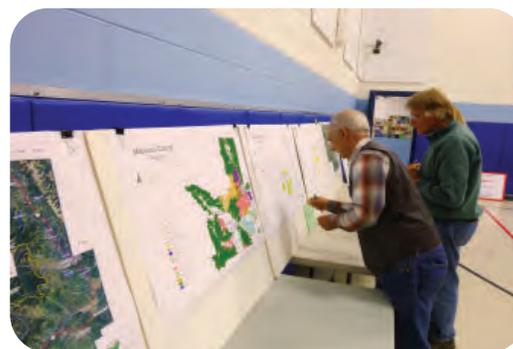
Land use designations on the current map date from 1975 through the most recently adopted changes in 2011. Due to the number of goals that can be addressed through land use designation mapping, the county has identified mapping updates as a high priority for growth policy implementation. It is considered an especially high priority for those areas

experiencing growth and development pressures, where the existing designations are outdated, and/or where there is significant community interest.

Comments received throughout the growth policy update process indicate there is interest in some areas in reviewing and updating existing land use designation maps. In addition, the stated preference is for considerable public involvement at the local level in updates to the Land Use Designation Map. Consequently, the county has focused long range planning resources on local community-based efforts.

The steps outlined below are planned for updating the map as part of the growth policy implementation process. They include the time frame indicators of immediate (1 to 2 years), mid-term (2 to 5 years), and long-term (5 to 10 years) that are used in the Action Plan.

1. Establish a land use designation framework for the county that reduces the overall number of land use designations.
(Immediate)
2. Establish guidelines for community-based land use mapping, such as data sets to be used, community involvement expectations, time line, roles/responsibilities





for participating communities and Community and Planning Services, etc. **(Immediate)**

3. Establish criteria to evaluate the priority of areas to be updated. Criteria should address, at a minimum: time since the last update of land use designations in the area; type and urgency of growth pressures; and community interest and readiness. **(Immediate)**
4. Identify order of priority for updating land use designations in specific communities and areas of Missoula County. **(immediate, to be revisited as needed)**
5. Update land use designations at the community level, using community involvement, based on order of priority, and report progress annually to the Board of County Commissioners and Planning Board. **(immediate for first community or area, mid-term and long-term for future areas or communities)**





Chapter 3

COOPERATION

AND

COORDINATION

This chapter describes the cooperative planning efforts between Missoula County and the City of Missoula, as well as how the county coordinates planning with other governments and agencies on matters related to the growth policy. Compatible policies, coordinated services and regular communication between the county and other governments are necessary for effective governance to address issues of mutual interest and to provide efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

Coordination with the City of Missoula

For over 50 years the city and county have coordinated planning efforts, particularly within the Missoula urban area. In 1961, the Missoula City-County Planning Board completed a master plan for the urban area. In 1975 the city and county created the Missoula County Comprehensive Plan and Missoula: A Policy Guide for Urban Growth. Several other plans adopted by both the city and the county address the Missoula urban area including:

- Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan (2006)
- Missoula Active Transportation Plan (2011)
- Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan (2012)

Policy Guidance:

- **Objective 13.1.** Maximize access for all segments of the population to economic opportunities, social services, health care and other services.
- **Goal 16.** Promote cooperation between Missoula County and the city, state, federal and tribal governments.
- **Objective 16.1.** Maintain compatible policies, coordinated services and regular communication with the City of Missoula.

- Numerous neighborhood plans

Interlocal Agreements

Since 1987, interlocal agreements have guided city and county regulatory and planning functions such as permitting, subdivision review, zoning and transportation. The interlocal agreement was revised in 1996 to provide for grants administration and other functions.

In 2013, under County Resolution No. 2013-111, the interlocal agreement was revised to create separate city and county planning departments, but also stipulated



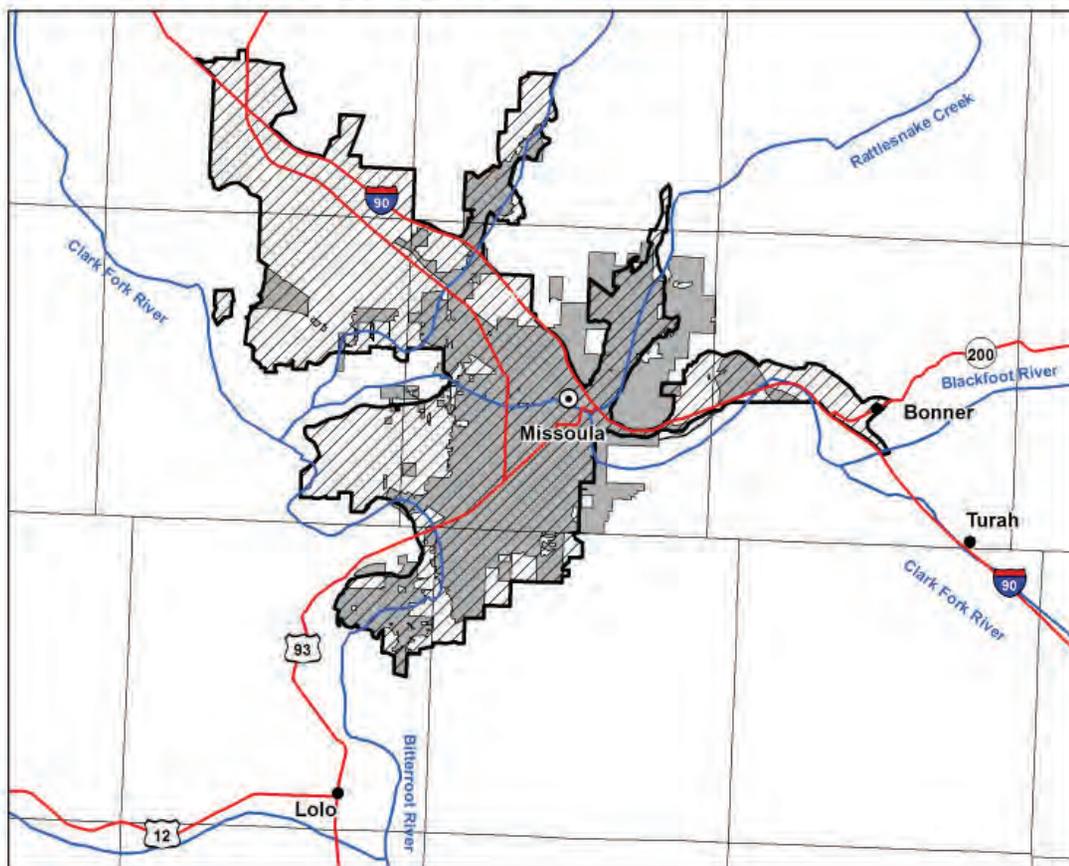
Map 2 Missoula County Growth Policy Missoula Urban Service Area

Legend

- Urban Service Area
- Missoula City Limits



0 2.5 5 Miles



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services, Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula County Surveyor's Office



several methods for cooperative planning including:

- Retaining the Consolidated City-County Planning Board and a Metropolitan Planning Organization to make recommendations on land use and transportation issues to both the city council and county commissioners
- Creating the Urban Growth Commission, consisting of city and county officials and a planning board member with the purpose of addressing urban area development issues
- Coordinating on infrastructure and planning issues through regular meetings and a commitment to develop consistent development standards in the urban area

The 2013 interlocal agreement also explicitly provides for retained jurisdictional authority by both governments. The City Council makes final decisions on land use issues within the city and the County Commissioners make final decisions on land use issues in the county outside the city limits. The interlocal agreement does not have a sunset date but is expected to be updated as necessary over time. Other types of city and county coordination in planning, development review, and provision of services are described below.

General Staff Level Coordination

City and county planning staff have a standing monthly meeting where they discuss development projects, growth policy updates, annexation proposals, and other issues within the Missoula urban area.

Subdivision and Zoning Application Review

The city and county conduct separate subdivision review processes. The county seeks comments on subdivision applications from city agencies and officials when a subdivision proposal is located within three miles of the city limits as per 76-3-601(2)(b), MCA and when a delayed annexation agreement is a component of the subdivision. The Consolidated Planning Board makes recommendations to the governing bodies on all major subdivisions (Figure 3). City and county staff also coordinate on zoning proposals in close proximity to the City limits.

Subdivision and Zoning Regulations

The county coordinates with the city on updates to the County Subdivision Regulations, particularly with regard to infrastructure standards (e.g., water,

sewer, streets, sidewalks) in the urban area. The county also coordinates with the city on updates to the Missoula County Zoning Resolution, which primarily has been applied to properties within the urban area.

Land Use Maps

The city and county maintain land use designation maps in their respective growth policies and neighborhood plans. Neighborhood plans and other officially adopted land use designation maps are advisory, meaning they are to be considered and generally followed when making land use decisions. In some instances city and county maps may differ with regard to the types and densities of development in areas outside of the city limits. When development is proposed to remain within the county, the county maps apply. When development is proposed to be annexed into the city, the city maps apply.

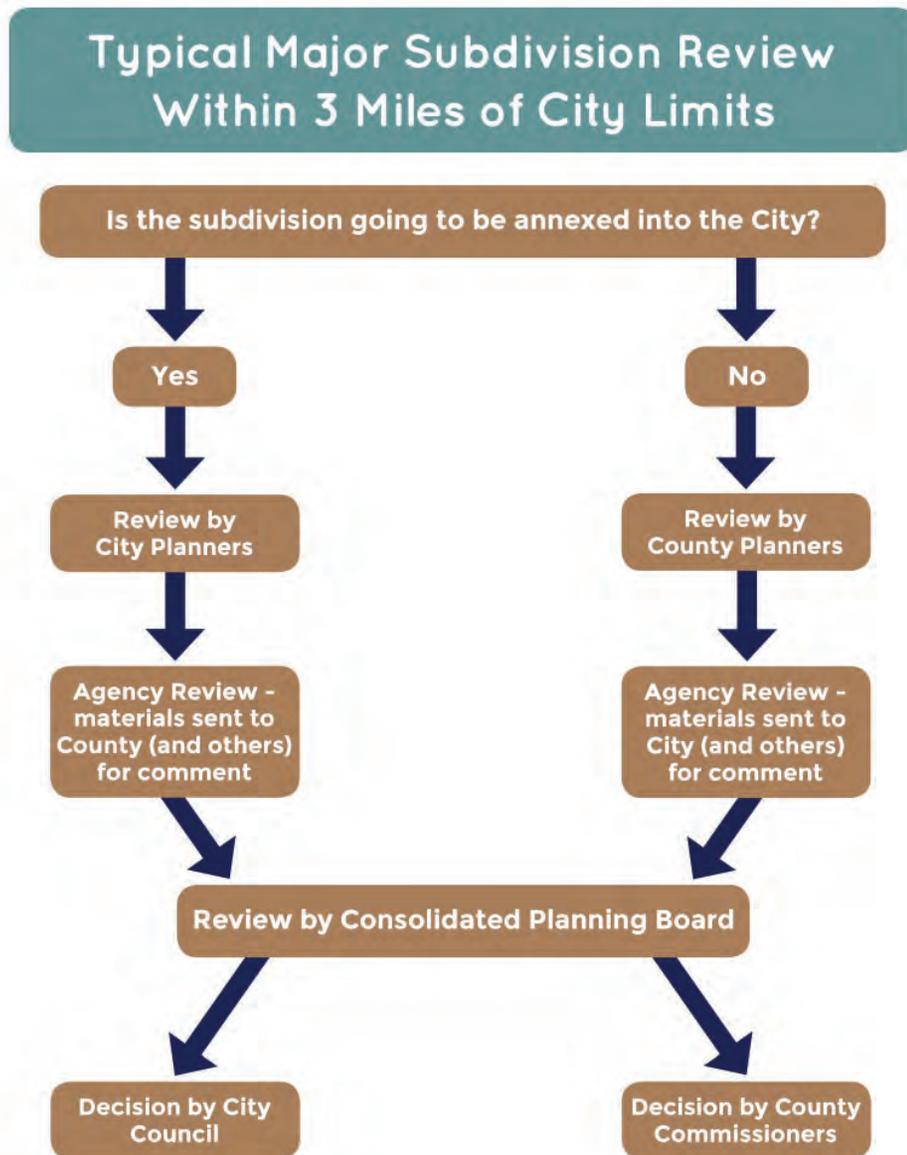
Urban Fringe Development Area Project and Other Plans in the Urban Service Area

In 2007 a city and county residential development project called the Urban Fringe Development Area (UFDA) project was undertaken to determine where an anticipated 15,000 new homes could be built in the urban service area (Map 3) over



Figure 3 - Typical Major Subdivision Reivew Within 3 Miles of City Limits

The typical major subdivision review process is dependent on proximity to the city and whether it is going to be annexed. If the subdivision will not be annexed, it is reviewed by the county.



the next 20 to 30 years. The UFDA growth policy amendment accommodates varying levels of residential development in different geographic locations based on existing land use designations in the growth policy. From 2008 to 2014, more than 2,700 housing units were constructed in the urban service area, an average of 390 per year. Both the city and county adopted this project. It will be necessary to update it in the coming years.

Several other plans adopted by both the city and the county address the Missoula urban area, such as the Wye-Mullan Comprehensive Plan and the Miller Creek Comprehensive Plan.

These documents provide county and city officials and the public recommendations to guide land use, transportation, utility, and recreational facility development within these planning areas. These plans are considered in subdivision, zoning, and other development decisions made by the Board of County Commissioners.

County neighborhood or area plans may be updated or new neighborhood planning efforts in the county portion of the urban service area may be initiated. Missoula County will continue to offer city representatives an opportunity to participate in developing or updating these plans.



Map 3 Missoula County Growth Policy UFDA 2014 Update: Residential Development Allocation Within Urban Service Area

Legend

Areas in the Missoula Urban Services Area

Area Name
#A / #B
(#C)

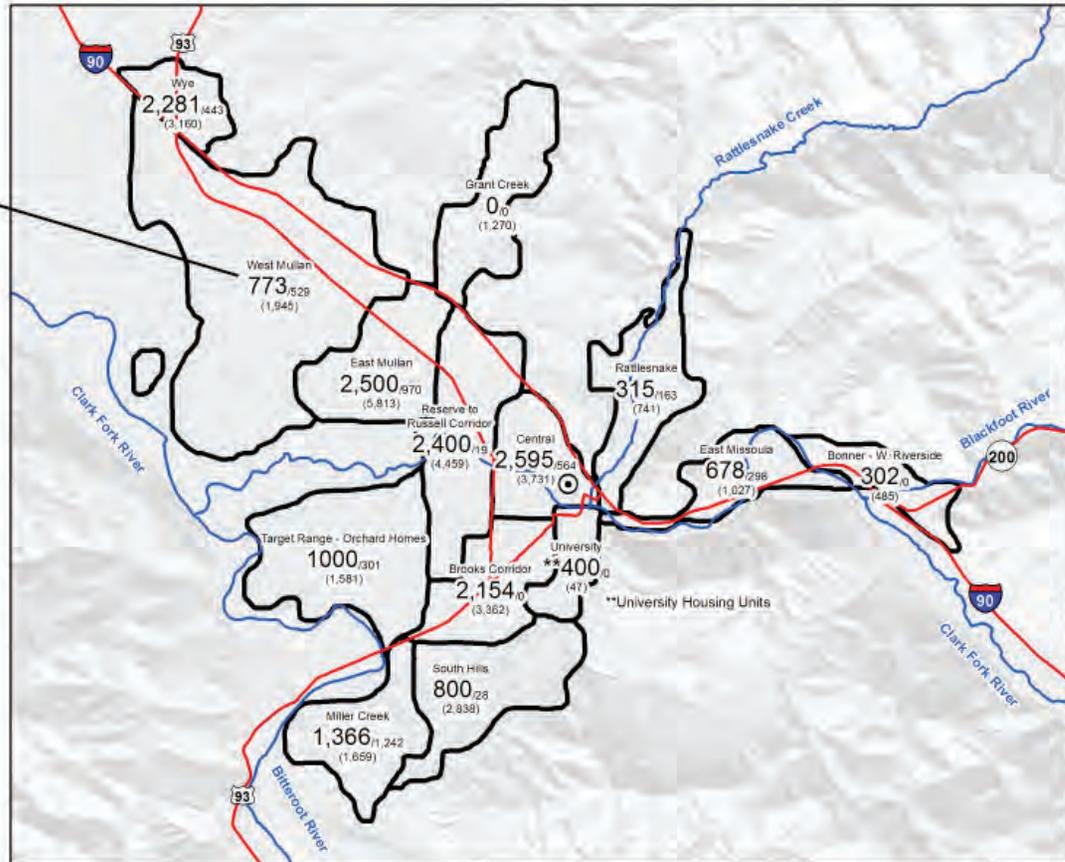
#A Residential growth allocation - UFDA 2008 Growth Policy Amendment

#B Entitled lots - UFDA 2008 PLUS new entitled lots (08-14)

#C Units permitted by zoning UFDA 2008 MINUS number of new dwelling units permitted (08-14)



0 2.5 5 Miles



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services, City of Missoula - Development Services, Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula County Surveyor's Office



Annexation

Recently the city has taken the approach of primarily trying to focus inward – making use of existing municipal and community infrastructure to concentrate new development in underdeveloped areas. State law (MCA 7-2-43 to 48) provides guidance regarding the conditions upon which annexation may occur. Annexation into the city typically occurs when landowners voluntarily petition for annexation in order to make use of the municipal water and sewer systems. The annexation committee includes representatives from the County Public Works and Community and Planning Services Departments.

Transportation Planning

The Metropolitan Planning Organization provides coordinated city- county transportation planning and improvements within the urbanized Missoula area (Map 4). The Metropolitan Planning Organization is a federally-mandated and federally-funded transportation policy-making organization that consists of government officials from the county, city, Federal Highway Administration, the Montana Department of Transportation, and various city, county, and state organizations.

The Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee is the primary decision-making

body for the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee is supported by the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and Metropolitan Planning Organization staff. The Metropolitan Planning Organization guides and makes decisions on federally funded transportation projects within the Missoula urban area. County projects outside the city limits include efforts such as the Missoula to Lolo Trail, Highway 200 transportation and land use planning in East Missoula, and the South Avenue Bridge planning and design project.

Other Areas of Coordination

The city and county maintain joint departments of Health and also Grants and Community Programs. The city and county have separate parks and trails departments, but closely collaborate on planning and improvements in the urban area. This will continue under the 2014 Parks and Trails bond, which will be used for the development of Fort Missoula Regional Park. The city and county have also coordinated for the past several years on the Open Space Bond, which the county administers under a separate interlocal agreement. The city and county (as well as state and federal agencies) also share information about floodplain permitting, administration and enforcement. All of these efforts are expected to continue.

Coordination with Other Governments and Agencies

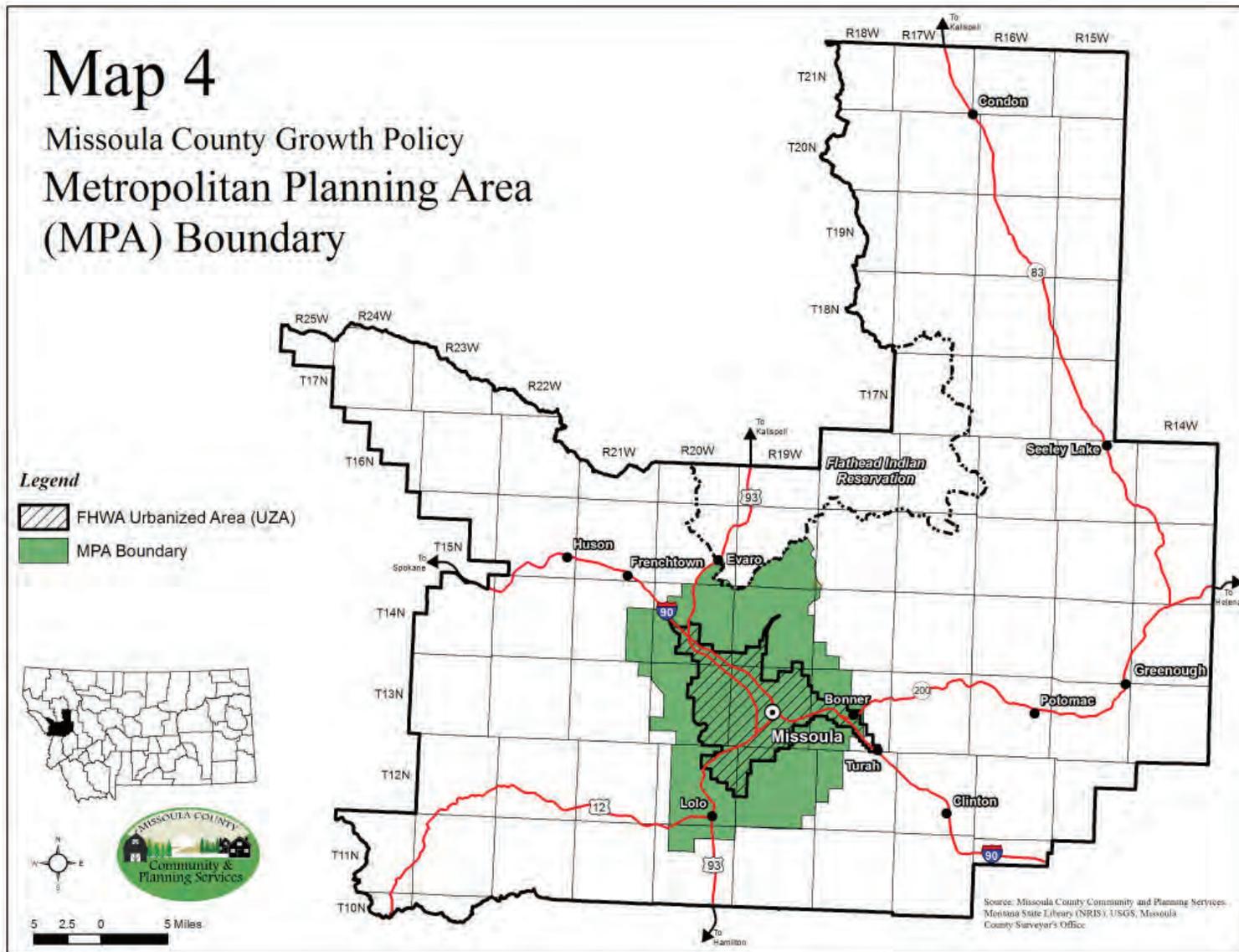
Other collaborative endeavors with tribal, federal and state governments contribute to natural resource, transportation, emergency response planning and general community development in Missoula County.

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

A memorandum of agreement coordinates land use planning activities in the portion of the Flathead Reservation within Missoula County. In this five-year agreement, the county administers land use planning such as zoning and subdivision proposals, family transfers and other certificate of survey requests for non-Indian lands, with the Tribes acting as an agency providing comments, until such time as the Tribes can undertake such projects internally. Missoula County intends to renew this agreement prior to expiration. Missoula County and the Tribes also meet annually to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Map 4

Missoula County Growth Policy Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) Boundary





Land and Resource Management Agencies

A memorandum of understanding exists between Missoula County, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Department, the Bureau of Land Management, surrounding national forests and others. The parties jointly share knowledge of conditions and issues to enhance the economic, social, cultural, and natural resource conditions of area lands. Agency representatives through an interagency coordinating committee meet biannually to discuss issues of mutual concern.

Southwest Crown of the Continent

In 2009, Congress established the Collaborative Forest and Landscape Restoration Program to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. The Collaborative Forest and Landscape Restoration Program leverages federal resources with local and private resources; encourages utilization of forest restoration by-products to benefit local rural economies and improve forest health; and facilitates the reduction of wildfire management costs through fuels reduction projects. Missoula County participates as a voting member in the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative, which is taking advantage

of the Collaborative Forest and Landscape Restoration Program funding. Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative projects provide timber for local mills, improve water quality, create and sustain local jobs, improve forest health, and provide habitat for species of special concern.

Community Councils

Seven community councils provide advice to the Board of County Commissioners on matters of community interest (Map 5). The councils are intended to facilitate two-way communication between communities and local government. The councils have weighed in on issues such as the Milltown State Park development, East Missoula Highway 200 development, Highway 83 improvements, and the former Smurfit-Stone site redevelopment. The councils are notified about subdivision and zoning projects and can participate in long range planning for their regions. They also can initiate and participate in a variety of community projects.

Law Enforcement and Emergency Services

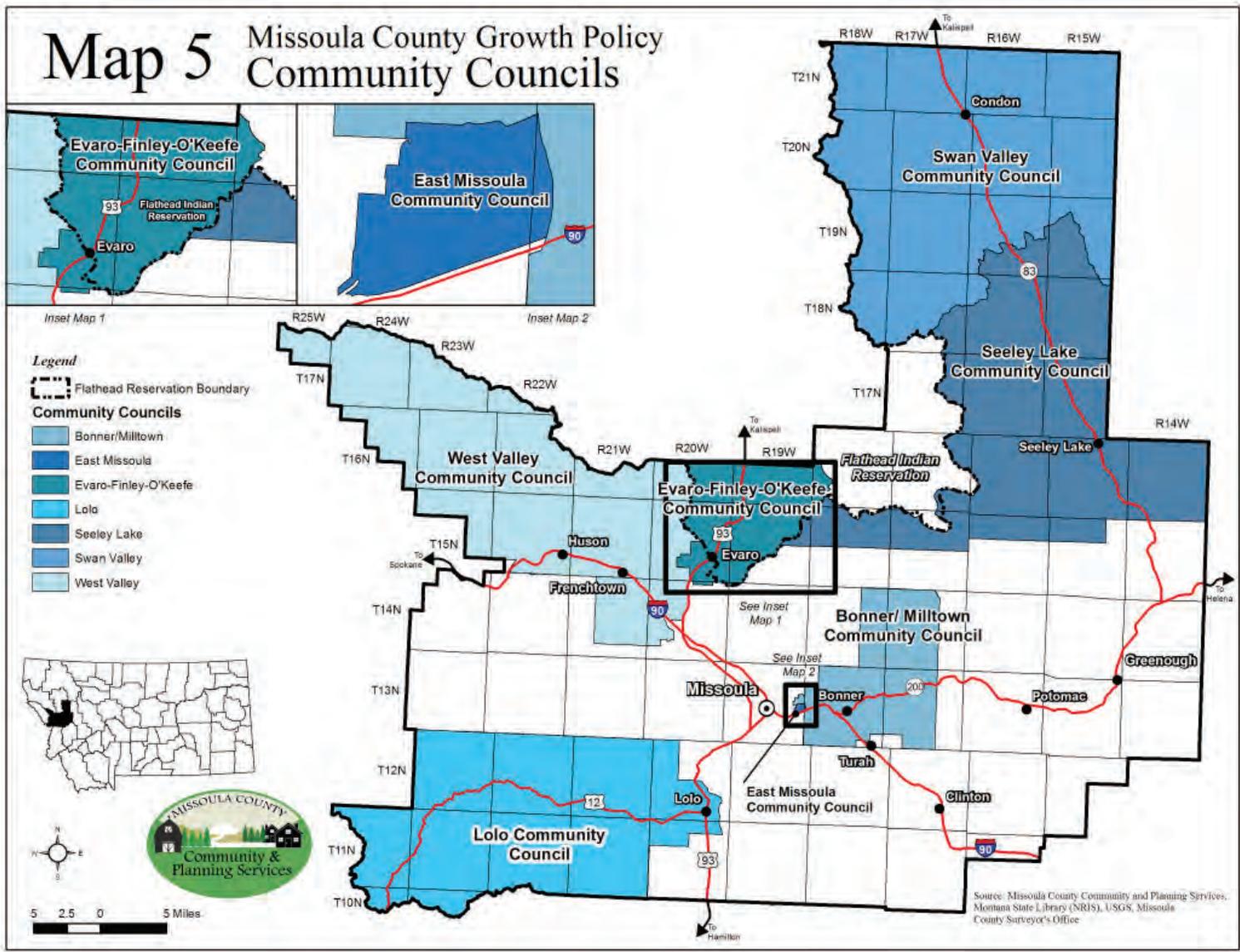
The Sheriff's Department has agreements with tribal, federal, state, and city law enforcement agencies to assist in any law enforcement effort in the county.

Missoula County Office of Emergency Management has agreements with the rural fire districts, Missoula City Fire, Missoula City Police, and Missoula County Sheriff's Office. These agreements assist with 911 calls to respond to medical, fire, and other emergency services.

Economic Development Agencies

Missoula County is a member of the Bitter Root Economic Development District, Inc. (BREDD), the federally-designated economic development district for the Western Montana Region. The District developed and maintains the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Missoula County and Mineral County. Missoula County contracts with the District to administer Big Sky Trust Fund Category I Job Creation Grants from the Montana Department of Commerce for eligible businesses in Missoula County. Missoula County also contracted with BREDD to do the Broadband Master Plan and Industrial Lands Assessment.

The County is also an investor and an active participant in Missoula Economic Partnership, a public-private partnership created to connect businesses with the programs, resources and workforce to enhance their success.







Chapter 4 AREA AND ISSUE BASED PLANNING

Missoula County is made up of unique neighborhoods, communities, and rural areas. Because this growth policy is countywide in scale, it cannot adequately address every important land use and community issue in detail. Also, because residents of one area of the county may have different land use, conservation and development priorities from residents in another part of the county, different approaches to planning are warranted. During the development of this growth policy citizens made it clear they prefer “locally driven” planning efforts instead of “top down” ones.

There are several ways local communities and citizens can address local planning issues. This chapter provides guidance on two different types of plans that Missoula County will employ to address land use and development issues in the coming years - area plans and issue plans. In either case, more specific planning efforts must be consistent with the Missoula County Growth Policy.

Traditionally, Missoula County has worked with community groups to develop comprehensive area plans, such as the Lolo and Seeley Lake plans. Such plans have typically contained considerable detail and provided strong guidance on approaches to local challenges. However, some of these plans have taken years to produce and contain overwhelming detail. While comprehensive area plans are appropriate in some cases, at other

Policy Guidance:

- **Guiding Principle. Partnerships** - Efforts by non-governmental groups, private individuals, tribal government, and state and federal agencies to achieve community goals are as vital to community development as local government actions. Partnerships among these groups, individuals, and local government are essential.
- **Guiding Principle. Public involvement** - Communities and individuals should continue to be involved in the planning and decision-making processes that affect them.
- **Guiding Principle. Diversity of communities and citizenry** - The diversity, integrity and unique values of neighborhoods, communities and rural areas are important and should be protected. Diversity among the county’s population is also valued. A wide variety of housing and transportation choices is necessary to serve all communities and all of the population.

times such an effort is neither practical nor necessary. A more streamlined area plan or an issue specific plan or strategy may better suit the needs of a community.



Area Plans

An area plan is a land use plan for a geographic region within the county that covers one or more of the elements of the growth policy in more detail. These plans are sometimes called neighborhood plans, but the term “area plan” is used in this growth policy to indicate a geographic area larger than a traditional neighborhood. An area plan is more specific than the countywide growth policy because it focuses on a smaller and less diverse area than the entire county. An area plan may also focus on fewer subject areas than the growth policy. While the growth policy provides a general view of the entire county, an area plan can look at a smaller geographic region and its land use and other community issues from a closer vantage and with a sharper focus.

Area plans are adopted under the statutory authority for growth policies. As such, the plan must be consistent with the growth policy. (See Chapter 7.)

Area Plan Content

The content and detail in an area plan may vary depending on the issues the community seeks to address. Missoula County is moving toward plans that are much more targeted or discrete than in the past.

A streamlined 10 to 20 page plan including text and maps might be sufficient to address a community’s land use and development goals, depending on the circumstances.

All area plans should be implementable, with a focus on specific actions that community partners, including Missoula County, can take to help achieve the goals of the plan. All plans should be focused enough to be developed in a reasonable timeframe. If an area plan is to contain elements addressing the subjects in the table below, it should

meet the corresponding requirements.

Area Plan Public Involvement

Planning is successful when it involves members of the public and stakeholders. Opportunities for public involvement should be provided throughout the planning process through means appropriate to the community, to issues at hand, and to the scale of the plan. Advertised open houses, design workshops, presentations to civic

Table 1 - Elements and Requirements for Area Plans

Subject	Requirement
Future Land Use and Development	Include general designations on future land use maps – not fine grained, parcel by parcel detail and not to the level of detail of a zoning map
Housing	Provide for an adequate supply and variety of housing types
Commercial and/or industrial development	Provide opportunities for commercial and/or industrial development designed to serve the local community and result in additional employment and a reliable tax base
Public services and infrastructure	Address how appropriate types of public services, infrastructure and transportation options will be provided, and set out goals and actions to achieve an appropriate level of service delivery
Natural resources	Prioritize and provide protection strategies for key resources and resource rich areas and/or demonstrate the plan does not unduly compromise critical natural resources or natural functions
Community character	Include measures to maintain or enhance the character of the area



groups, neighborhood and landowner association meetings, surveys, and solicitation of public comment are among the tools that are typically utilized. All area plan meetings must be open to the public. Ultimately, public review and a recommendation from a community council (if applicable) and the Planning Board are necessary, followed by possible adoption by the county commissioners. During the review and adoption process amendments are to be expected.

Support from CAPS Staff

When directed by the county commissioners, CAPS staff will facilitate development of an area plan in cooperation with local volunteers and consultants. The determination of which area planning efforts are undertaken will be determined by the county commissioners, based on staff's assessment of growth and development pressure, urgency of need, state or federal requirements, and community interest and readiness. Planning priorities for area plans will be evaluated during CAPS' annual work plan and budget development.

Existing Area Plans

The area plans included in this growth policy are listed in Appendix A and shown on Map 6. Some of these are

relatively recent and some have been in effect for decades. Several area plans cover areas both inside and outside the city limits and have been adopted by both the City of Missoula and Missoula County. These plans remain as adopted policy.

Area plans should be reviewed periodically to assess their relevancy to current conditions, projected needs and modern planning practice. When a plan is no longer relevant or able to be used effectively to accomplish its goals, it should be either updated or retired.

During review for update or retirement of a plan, CAPS staff will assess an area plan using the following considerations:

- The area plan does/does not substantially comply with the goals, objectives and land use designations of the growth policy or other applicable policies and state law
- The issues the plan was developed to address are no longer significant and/or relevant
- The jurisdictional boundaries have substantially changed (i.e. an area that was predominantly in the county when the plan was adopted is now predominantly in the city)
- The plan lacks sufficient guidance or

relevant policy statements to meet emerging needs

- The plan includes inaccurate or outdated information
- The goals and objectives or land use recommendations do not support today's desired development
- There have been substantial changes in land ownership or land use since plan adoption.

If retirement is proposed for a plan, public outreach will be conducted prior to a final decision by the county commissioners. The county commissioners will determine whether it is in the public interest to pursue a plan update and how and when it fits into the annual work plan.

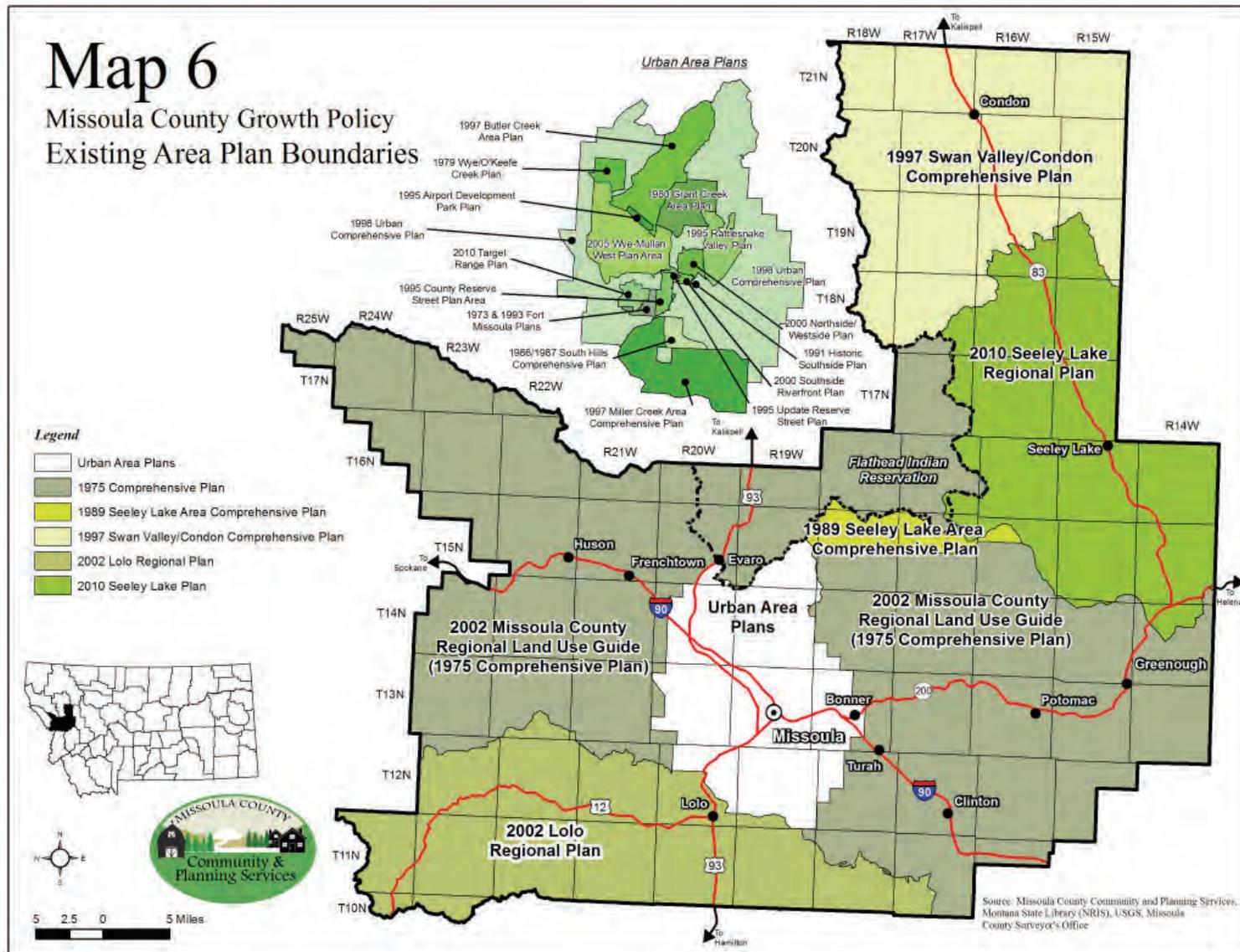
When a joint city-county plan is reviewed, county planners will work with city staff to develop a common assessment of the plan and its relevancy using the above considerations as well as those that are applicable to the review and amendment or retirement of city plans, which is called "sunsetting" in the city growth policy.

Area plan amendments may be made at the direction of the county commissioners or as a joint effort of the city and county. Plan amendments, such as to area plans or regional plans,



Map 6

Missoula County Growth Policy Existing Area Plan Boundaries





may also be proposed by private parties to support development proposals or for other purposes. In such cases, an application and public review is required following the growth policy adoption procedure in MCA 76-1-602 through 76-1-604. Private party amendments require an application fee and will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- The amendment substantially complies with the applicable guiding principles, goals, and objectives of the overall growth policy and accompanying future land use maps. (If the amendment does not meet this criterion, an amendment to the growth policy could also be proposed.)
- The amendment substantially complies with the applicable goals, objectives and future land use designations of the area plan, except as specifically addressed in the amendment request.
- The amendment is designed to meet a need that is otherwise not being met in the plan area.
- The amendment will provide substantial public benefit to the surrounding community.
- The change proposed is the best means of providing the public benefit.

Issue Plans

Unlike area plans, issue plans are focused on specific subjects or issues rather than land use planning across a larger region. Examples include the Flathead Reservation Comprehensive Resources Plan (CSKT – 1996), the airport master plan, the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Industrial Lands Study, trails plans, plans for redevelopment of a former industrial site, a targeted economic development strategy for a community, and design guidelines for a commercial corridor. These plans are not necessarily adopted under the authority of the growth policy, but are stand-alone plans that can be implemented, updated, and retired as necessary. Like area plans, issue plans are advisory documents that should be considered during development review.

Issue plans should provide specific direction and a level of detail appropriate for users to understand how the issue is to be addressed. As with area plans, the focus should be on implementation and brevity, with actions that are intended to be carried out in order to achieve the plan's goals.

Like the process to develop area plans, issue plans should be developed using an open public process appropriate to the community, the issues being addressed, and the scale of the plan.

Conclusion

Multiple approaches to community planning are warranted in Missoula County. This is due to the diversity of geography, natural features, and economic circumstances throughout Missoula County and its discrete local communities. It is also supported by the public's preference that issues be addressed in the context of local communities. This chapter offers two ways to address locally driven land use planning and community development: area plans that focus on a geographic area and issue plans that focus on a particular topic. These two approaches are not the only ways Missoula County might help facilitate locally driven planning, as other approaches may be needed for unique circumstances in the future. However, they offer clear paths for community leaders to pursue conservation and development efforts.





Chapter 5 SUBDIVISION REVIEW

This growth policy provides the conceptual platform and policy guidance to address many of Missoula County's land use, conservation and development opportunities and challenges. One of the ways to address these challenges is to craft and implement subdivision regulations that follow the policy guidance of this document, with the understanding that subdivision regulations are limited in nature and are only one tool in the growth management toolbox.

In accordance with MCA 76-1-601(3) (h-i), this chapter is intended to address state legal requirements that require an explanation of how the Board of Missoula County Commissioners will define the primary subdivision review criteria in MCA 76- 3-608(3)(a) and evaluate and make decisions on proposed subdivisions with respect to the primary review criteria. This chapter is also intended to provide guidance to subdividers and their agents, community members, reviewers and decision makers regarding:

- What might constitute an impact under the primary review criteria
- What appropriate mitigation might be when an impact from a proposed subdivision is anticipated
- When the impacts of a proposed subdivision are too great for the

Policy Guidance:

Note: While each of the following objectives can be achieved in part through updating Missoula County's subdivision regulations and through the review of subdivision applications, they are intended to also be achieved through other means.

- **Objective 1.1:** Develop and implement regulatory and non-regulatory strategies to conserve vital natural resources and environmental functions.
- **Objective 8.2:** Provide opportunities for varied land uses in and around existing communities.
- **Objective 9.1:** Support increased infrastructure capacity, services and amenities in and around existing communities, where appropriate.

preliminary plat application to be approved.

This chapter also addresses how public hearings on proposed subdivisions are conducted.



Policy Guidance:

- **Objective 10.1:** Facilitate the development of a variety of housing types including housing that is affordable to all segments of the population.
- **Objective 11.1:** Discourage development in hazardous areas and areas where public and emergency responder safety is compromised.
- **Objective 12.3:** Encourage development of community facilities that promote health and wellness for all age groups.
- **Objective 15.1:** Provide simple, clear and flexible land use and development regulations, procedures and forms.
- **Objective 16.1:** Maintain compatible policies, coordinated services and regular communication with the City of Missoula.

Primary Review Criteria for Subdivisions

Under the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act, preliminary subdivision applications are evaluated for several criteria including compliance with state subdivision law, local subdivision regulations, the growth policy, area and issue plans, and local zoning. All subdivisions must comply with state and local law (including zoning), and should substantially comply with the growth policy and any area and issue plans adopted as amendments.

The main focus of this chapter is the primary criteria for subdivisions that are provided in state law. The primary criteria are:

- Agriculture
- Agricultural water user facilities
- Local services
- Natural environment
- Wildlife
- Wildlife habitat
- Public health and safety

Each local government in Montana is given the responsibility to define these criteria and examine subdivisions for their impact on the criteria. Local governments may also require mitigation measures to alleviate or lessen the subdivision's expected impacts.



As a way to reduce the need for mitigation and in order to provide clear and consistent expectations to subdividers, the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations include design standards that address items such as roads, parks, utilities, building on steep slopes, fire protection requirements, easements, etc. These design standards are intended to address many of the primary criteria in the sense that when a subdivision complies with the design standards (as well as applicable provisions of state and local law and adopted plans and policies), the subdivision should effectively avoid or mitigate most of the potentially significant adverse impacts.



However, the design standards in the subdivision regulations do not address all of the primary criteria in detail. For example, they do not include design standards for areas of important wildlife habitat such as elk winter range. This is why subdivision proposals must also be reviewed based on their unique site characteristics, setting, design, and proposed land uses according to the criteria.

Evaluating a Subdivision for Potentially Significant Adverse Impacts, Appropriate Mitigation

When preparing a subdivision application, and unless exempted under the law, the subdivider must identify the anticipated likely impacts under the primary criteria. When significant adverse impacts can be expected, the subdivider must propose realistic ways



to mitigate the impacts. Significant adverse impacts are ones that could damage human health, safety or welfare, the natural environment, or the effectiveness of community functions or resources. Impacts may be on- or off-site, be long-term, or likely to generate additional demands that the community or service providers are not currently prepared to meet.

Missoula County reviews the subdivider's application and proposed mitigation to determine if mitigation is warranted and whether proposed mitigation sufficiently eliminates or reduces the impacts. The commissioners may require the subdivider to design the proposed subdivision to reasonably minimize potentially significant adverse impacts.

There is not a set formula to determine a significant adverse impact and sufficient mitigation for a given project because each subdivision proposal, its site and surroundings contain unique characteristics. However, in determining



whether a proposed subdivision creates a significant adverse impact, and if mitigation is appropriate, Missoula County will:

- Consider the significance of the adverse impacts
- Consult with a subdivider about his/her perspectives and preferences for mitigation
- Consult with public agencies, service providers and other experts to determine whether mitigation should be required and what types of mitigation would be effective at reducing or eliminating the impacts
- Review previous projects for mitigation requirements and their effectiveness

Whether proposed by a subdivider or required by Missoula County, mitigation measures should always be:

- Related to the expected impacts (i.e., directly address the unique circumstances)





- Roughly proportional in extent to the expected impacts
- Timely (i.e., instituted prior to or concurrent with the expected impacts in order to prevent or lessen the detrimental effects)
- Effective

Under Montana law, when requiring mitigation, a governing body must consult with the subdivider and give due weight and consideration to the subdivider's preference for mitigation, but it is recognized that in some instances the unmitigated impacts of a subdivision may be unacceptable and will preclude approval of the subdivision. This happens when the Board of County Commissioners determines that mitigation measures cannot adequately reduce or eliminate the likely significant adverse impacts.

Definitions and Potential Mitigation Measures

Below is a definition for each of the primary criteria, items that may be considered during evaluation, and potential mitigation measures.

Agriculture

Definition

The use of land for growing, raising, or marketing of plants or animals to produce food, feed, and fiber commodities. Examples of agricultural activities include, but are not limited to, cultivation and tillage of the soil; dairying; growing and harvesting of agricultural and horticultural commodities; and the raising of livestock, bees, fur-bearing animals, or poultry. Agriculture does not include gardening for personal use, keeping of house pets, kenneling, or landscaping for aesthetic purposes.

Note: Integral to the term agriculture is agricultural land, which means: land having soils of agricultural importance, including prime farmland, prime farmland if irrigated, and farmland of statewide and local importance, as defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Evaluating a subdivision's impact on agriculture

Missoula County seeks to conserve agricultural lands, preserve options for local agriculture, accommodate a growing population, provide for the co-existence of agriculture and development, and preserve agricultural infrastructure. The items below may be considered when evaluating a proposed subdivision's potentially significant adverse impacts on agricultural activities and resources. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

- Soils of prime, prime if irrigated, statewide, and local importance
- Historic and current agricultural use, productivity and profitability
- Impact on productivity and operations of adjacent farm and ranch operations due to increased population, traffic, domestic pets, noxious weeds and other factors





- Impact on community-wide agricultural operations and markets

When significant adverse impacts are likely, appropriate mitigation measures may include:

- Treating noxious weeds on the property and developing a long-term weed management plan
- Clustering homes and development on lesser quality soils or restricting future development on on-site or off-site agricultural land
- Contributing to an established and effective agricultural land conservation program
- Adopting covenants that notify lot buyers of the potential implications of living adjacent to agricultural operations such as odors, noise, chemical use, etc.
- Requiring building setbacks between residential structures and agricultural operations
- Adequately fencing the perimeter boundaries of subdivisions in livestock areas to prevent conflicts in an open range state
- Adopting covenants that require pets to be restrained
- Other mitigation measures

proposed by the subdivider, the county or other interested parties

Agricultural Water User Facilities

Definition

Those facilities which provide water for irrigation or stock watering to agricultural lands for the production of agricultural products. These facilities include, but are not limited to, water supply and drainage ditches, canals, pipes, sprinkler systems, and head gates.

Evaluating a subdivision's impact on agricultural water user facilities

The items below may be considered when evaluating a proposed subdivision's potential impact on agricultural water user facilities. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

- Access for maintenance, including



appropriate easements as well as unimpeded physical access

- Changes to the water supply or drainage system
- Changes to water quality or quantity
- Runoff into irrigation ditches
- Availability of irrigation water
- Transfer or removal of water rights
- Whether precautions are necessary to prevent injury to children who may be attracted to play in the water
- Liability resulting from proximity of development to agricultural water user facilities (e.g., blowouts, flooding, artificially high groundwater)

When significant adverse impacts are likely, appropriate mitigation measures may include:

- Providing easements of appropriate width in appropriate locations for ongoing access
- Taking steps to ensure downstream water users are not impacted by the subdivision
- Providing protective safety measures
- Setting up a functional mechanism for delivery of water to the lots in



the subdivision and management of irrigation water or transferring or removing water rights

- Requiring sufficient setbacks from ditches
- Meeting the requirements of the irrigation district for installation and maintenance of facilities
- Other mitigation measures proposed by the subdivider, the county or other interested parties

Local Services

Definition

Any and all services and related facilities that local government entities or public utilities may provide, both currently and in the future, such as motorized and non-motorized transportation facilities and systems, parking, law enforcement, fire protection, drainage structures, water supply, sanitary sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, electrical, internet,



telephone and natural gas facilities, recreation, parks, libraries, or schools.

Evaluating a subdivision's impact on local services

Developers and new users should pay a proportional share of the costs necessary to serve new development. The items below may be considered when evaluating a proposed subdivision's potential impact on local services. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

- Whether the existing quality or level of services available in the community will be positively or detrimentally impacted by the subdivision
- Whether local services of sufficient quality are or will be available in reasonable proximity to the subdivision
- Whether the cost of providing services to the subdivision will be borne primarily by the subdivider and future owners or the community as a whole
- Whether local services will be provided either prior to or concurrent with development of the subdivision (i.e., when demand occurs)

When significant adverse impacts are likely, appropriate mitigation measures

may include:

- Requiring a subdivider to extend (or pay a proportional share for extending) local services of sufficient quality or level to the subdivision prior to or concurrent with demand, so that the existing level of service provided to the community will not be negatively impacted
- Requiring future lot purchasers to waive the right to protest the formation of improvement districts related to specific improvements made necessary by the subdivision
- Other mitigation measures proposed by the subdivider, the county or other interested parties

Natural Environment

Definition

The system of physical, chemical, and biotic factors that exist within or influence a geographic area or community. These factors include, but are not limited to, geology, soils, topography, climate, surface water, groundwater, floodplain, wildlife habitat, flora and fauna, and objects or places of cultural, historic, or aesthetic significance. Natural environment also includes aesthetic, cultural, and historical resources that relate to the landscape and history of an area.



Evaluating a subdivision's impact on the natural environment

Missoula County's natural landscape has played a key role in its history, culture and economy. It is important to protect these features, landscapes and resources, while accommodating population growth and change. The items below may be considered when evaluating a proposed subdivision's potential impact on the natural environment. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

- Riparian or wetland areas
- Vegetation cover and type
- Infestation of noxious weeds
- Unique or important wildlife habitats
- Surface and ground water quality and quantity
- Natural landforms
- Air quality
- Stream bank stability and erosion potential
- Open spaces/scenic resources
- Objects or places of historic or cultural significance

When significant adverse impacts are

likely, appropriate mitigation measures may include:

- Conserving riparian and wetland areas and other important vegetation and habitat types
- Managing noxious weeds
- Incorporating design features such as building setbacks, vegetative buffers and storm water facilities to protect water quality and limit soil erosion
- Designing developments to fit into the natural landscape, including clustering development
- Conserving iconic scenic resources
- Conserving objects and places of historic or cultural significance
- Other mitigation measures proposed by the subdivider, the county or other interested parties



Wildlife

Definition

A mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish, mollusk, crustacean, or other animal that is native to the area and is not domesticated or tamed. The definition does not include feral animals, which are animals that have escaped captivity and become wild (including dogs, cats, and Eurasian ferrets).

Evaluating a subdivision's impact on wildlife

Missoula County wildlife has intrinsic value and is also important to our culture, quality of life and economy. Missoula County intends to conserve important wildlife habitat through non-regulatory and regulatory means. Wildlife and wildlife habitat are closely related; a loss of habitat may result in the loss of wildlife. Therefore, while these two criteria are listed separately, they may be evaluated as one during the review of subdivision proposals. The items below may be considered when evaluating a proposed subdivision's potential impact on wildlife. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

- Potential for human/wildlife conflict including pets, fencing, and wildlife attractants such as gardens, apiaries, chickens, garbage and barbecue grills



- Water quantity or quality for aquatic species

When significant adverse impacts are likely, appropriate mitigation measures may include:

- Requiring covenants to make lot purchasers aware of the presence of wildlife and include measures to reduce the likelihood of conflict
- Designing the subdivision to reduce the likelihood of conflict by clustering building lots in non-vital areas, including building setbacks and vegetative buffers along water bodies or at nesting sites and maintaining travel corridors
- Lessening the density of development in important wildlife areas
- Requiring setbacks and other measures to maintain water quality for aquatic species
- Other mitigation measures proposed by the subdivider, the county or other interested parties

Wildlife Habitat

Definition

Geographic areas that contain physical or biological features essential to

wildlife for feeding and foraging, cover, migration, breeding, rearing, nesting, or buffers from those areas. It also includes areas essential to the conservation of species protected by the Endangered Species Act or those of concern to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes or the State of Montana. Some of the most important types of wildlife habitat in Missoula County include, but are not limited to, big game winter range, grizzly bear habitat, travel corridors, bald eagle nesting sites, and riparian and wetland areas.

Evaluating a subdivision's impact on wildlife habitat

Important wildlife habitat is a critical resource to the culture, history and well-being of Missoula County residents and is necessary for the survival of wildlife. Missoula County intends to conserve important wildlife habitat through regulatory and non-regulatory means. The following items may be considered when evaluating a proposed subdivision's potential impact



on wildlife habitat. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

- Loss of habitat or winter range
- Encroachment into migration routes
- Active and inactive nesting or denning sites
- Water quantity or quality for aquatic species
- Spawning areas

When significant adverse impacts are likely, appropriate mitigation measures may include:

- Designing the subdivision to maintain the quality and function of important winter range, habitat and migration routes, which may include measures like clustering building lots in non-vital areas, no-build areas, building setbacks and vegetative buffers along water bodies and nesting sites, and maintaining travel corridors
- Covenants to make lot purchasers aware of the presence of important wildlife habitat and that include appropriate measures to reduce the likelihood of compromised quality or habitat loss
- Lessening the density of development in important wildlife areas



- Enhancement of habitat areas to offset impacts
- Limiting outdoor construction to certain times of year to avoid creating disturbances during critical nesting times
- Other mitigation measures proposed by the subdivider, the county or other interested parties

Public Health and Safety

Definition

A condition of well-being, reasonably free from danger, risk or injury. Assessment of public health and safety should consider the community at large, not merely for the welfare of a specific individual or a small class of persons. Conditions that relate to public health and safety include, but are not limited to, flood hazards, geologic hazards, dam failures, avalanches, air quality, water



quality, toxic or hazardous substance exposure, fire or wildfire hazards, proximity to high voltage power lines or high pressure gas lines, noise, air or vehicular traffic hazards, and threats to life, health, safety, and wellness.

Evaluating a subdivision's impact on public health and safety

Missoula County will strive to protect public health, safety and welfare as our communities grow and change. The items below may be considered when evaluating a proposed subdivision's potential impact on public health and safety. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

- Potential to increase effects of natural or man-made hazards
- Flooding
- High ground water
- Geologic hazards such as seismic activity, swelling soils, subsidence, improper drainage, adverse geological formations or topography, potential for avalanches, rock falls or land slides
- Air quality
- Drinking water quality and quantity
- Toxic or hazardous substances
- High voltage power lines

- High pressure gas lines
- Air or vehicular traffic hazards or congestion
- Provision of emergency services, including access and response time
- Wildland fire potential
- Compatibility of development with the built and natural environment

When significant adverse impacts are likely, appropriate mitigation measures may include:

- Building outside areas prone to natural or manmade hazards
- Using construction techniques that mitigate or eliminate the threat of hazards
- Building where adequate water supplies are available, including water sources sufficient for fire fighting
- Providing emergency services with water supply, storage and related facilities
- Building roads to and within the subdivision to appropriate standards and ensuring multiple accesses for safe ingress and egress in the event of an emergency



- Providing areas for outdoor exercise, including open space, parkland and trails
- Reducing vegetative fuels, providing fire breaks, and otherwise designing the subdivision to withstand wildfire, including maintenance agreements among future lot owners
- Requiring covenants, plat notations and other documents that inform lot purchasers of the risks of wildfire and other hazards and measures they can take to protect their lives and property
- Ensuring the design of subdivision provides for the safety of first responders
- Lessening the density of development in areas prone to natural or manmade hazards
- Providing non-motorized transportation systems to serve the subdivision
- Other mitigation measures proposed by the subdivider, the county or other interested parties

Public Hearings on Preliminary Plat Applications

Public hearings are required for major subdivisions (six or more lots or units). Public hearings provide the opportunity for people who have an interest in or may be impacted by a subdivision to voice their interests and concerns.

Both the Planning Board and Board of County Commissioners will follow the procedures below when holding a public hearing. More specific information regarding board member conflict of interest, voting and other matters can be found in the planning board's bylaws. More specific information regarding what happens when new information is submitted at a public hearing, the county commissioners' decision-making process, and other matters can be found in the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations.

Public hearings will be conducted as follows:

1. Notice of the public hearing will be published in a newspaper and sent by certified mail at least 15 days prior to a public hearing as described in the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations and 76-3-605, MCA.

2. A quorum, consisting of five or more Planning Board members or two or more County Commissioners, is required for official action. When a quorum is not present, no action on the item will be taken and the hearing will be rescheduled to the next available meeting date for which public notice requirements can be met.
3. At the hearing a staff member will give a summary of the staff report pointing out key issues, findings and recommendations, followed by board members being given the opportunity to ask questions of staff.
4. The subdivider and her/his representative will be given the opportunity to provide a summary of the subdivision proposal and address the key issues, findings, and recommendations. In the case of a hearing before the Board of County Commissioners, the subdivider may also discuss her/his preference for mitigation. Board members will then be given the opportunity to ask questions of the subdivider.
5. The presiding officer will ask for public comments from proponents, opponents and others, followed by the subdivider being given the opportunity for rebuttal. In the interest of time, the presiding



officer may limit the amount of time members of the public are given to speak so long as everyone desiring to speak has a reasonable opportunity.

6. The presiding officer will close the public hearing for board deliberation. During this time board members may ask questions of the subdivider, staff and any members of the public. Due to late hour or other extraordinary circumstances, a public hearing may be closed and continued to a later date.
7. The board will deliberate and make a recommendation (Planning Board) or decision (Board of County Commissioners) on the application.
8. Prior to voting on the subdivision application, board members will review the subject matter contained in the public comments and discuss whether and how the comments impacted their decisions.
9. Planning board recommendations and commissioner decisions will be supported by written findings of fact and conclusions of law.





Chapter 6 INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Introduction

Outside the City of Missoula, most of the infrastructure that serves the public is decentralized, with a number of different federal, tribal, state, county and municipal agencies, local taxing districts, and private entities responsible for their own equipment, infrastructure and upkeep. For example, in the Rattlesnake Valley, roads are maintained by the U.S. Forest Service, the City of Missoula, Missoula County, and private landowner associations. In Seeley Lake and Lolo there are individual water and sewer districts.

Missoula County's strategy for development, maintenance, and replacement of public infrastructure is to support increased and efficient infrastructure capacities, services, and amenities in and around existing communities, where appropriate (Objective 9.1). This emphasizes investing in existing communities instead of supporting widespread infrastructure expansion into agricultural and resource lands. Due to the decentralized nature and high costs of infrastructure development and maintenance, it is also important to emphasize developing public/private partnerships to provide adequate infrastructure for local residents, visitors and businesses in the future.

Policy Guidance:

- **Guiding Principle. Infrastructure** - Investing in infrastructure as part of implementing planning is one of the most effective ways to build enduring communities.
- **Goal 9.** As part of planning, support the provision of infrastructure and services to and within rural communities.

Long Term Capital Improvements Planning and Budgeting

County government's limited powers and the numerous taxing entities that develop infrastructure for their own purposes (fire districts, school districts, sewer and water districts) can lead to decentralized infrastructure planning in the county. Furthermore, the scarcity and uncertainty in funding streams causes the county to develop projects around available funding sources targeted to specific types of improvements. The county plans for infrastructure needs and improvements in a manner that allows it to take advantage of funding opportunities as they arise.



The county is responsible primarily for public projects such as bridges, roads, and sewer and water facilities through its Public Works Department. It is also responsible for certain parks and recreation facilities, and public buildings and facilities. The county has a capital improvements plan for administrative facilities such as buildings; however, it does not include public works projects at this time. Currently, the County Public Works Director and Board of County Commissioners evaluate and prioritize capital improvement projects.

Drinking Water Systems

Most residences in unincorporated Missoula County have individual wells. The few exceptions include the El Mar, Lolo and Sunset West water systems, which are managed by the Missoula County Public Works Department. Also, the Seeley Lake Water District serves a portion of the Seeley Lake community and a few private parties maintain several multi-user water systems throughout the county. Mountain Water serves the urban area.

Missoula County supports the creation and expansion of public water supply systems to address public health concerns, support the goals of existing communities, and ensure effective

mechanisms for system operation, maintenance and financing. One way the county supports public systems is to provide grant writing and administration services to water and sewer districts and in some instances to provide matching funds for preliminary engineering reports when there is a documented public health and safety threat. The county also looks for legislative options to help fund investment in public infrastructure.

Wastewater Treatment Systems

The individual wastewater treatment system (septic system) is the most common method of wastewater disposal outside of the Missoula urban area. The Missoula County Public Works Department operates the Lolo and Lewis and Clark sewer systems. The Seeley Lake Sewer District is planning a centralized wastewater project that will provide wastewater treatment in the Seeley Lake area. The City of Missoula municipal wastewater treatment system operates in the urban area with planned expansions in the Rattlesnake Valley, the Wye, McCauley Butte, west of Reserve Street, and south of the Clark Fork River. The City-County Health Department has been successful in working with landowners to decommission septic systems and

connect properties to urban services, thereby protecting public health and the quality of groundwater.



Missoula County encourages the formation and expansion of public wastewater treatment systems when health, safety and water quality threats are apparent and to accommodate growth and development of existing communities. Missoula County plans to help to provide wastewater treatment by:

- Maintaining and updating (as needed) the City-County Interlocal Agreement that guides coordinated planning and infrastructure development in the urban service area
- Updating the county subdivision regulations to ensure that infrastructure requirements in the urban area are compatible with the city's



- Seeking opportunities for private, federal and state support of infrastructure investment including legislation
- Providing grant writing and administration assistance to water and sewer districts for system development and expansion
- Providing matching funds for preliminary engineering reports in some cases when there is a documented water quality or public health and safety threat

Storm Water Drainage

Storm water drainage is most often addressed by landowners (including Missoula County) attempting to keep runoff on their properties and in drainage swales along public and private roads. Missoula County does not operate a storm sewer system, but manages roadway storm water runoff through roadside ditches, culverts and retention systems. As part of this, the county maintains approximately 528 sumps and more than 100 culverts. Improvements to storm water drainage facilities are planned to be addressed through annual budgeting and operation and maintenance by the Public Works Department, with special projects addressed through a capital improvement plan.

Solid Waste Facilities

Republic Waste Services, a private company, operates and maintains the solid waste landfill that serves the city and county. Missoula County encourages Republic Waste Services to provide effective, environmentally sound solid waste disposal and recycling services. Missoula County also intends to develop internal policies and guidelines for waste reduction and recycling as an implementation measure of this growth policy.

Fire Protection Facilities

Rural fire districts as well as county, city, state, federal, and tribal agencies provide fire protection services in Missoula County. These agencies plan and provide for their own infrastructure needs and generate funds necessary



to develop facilities and obtain new equipment. The Missoula County Fire Protection Association is a voluntary non-profit association of city, rural, state and federal fire professionals, emergency responders, and others who work together to address issues in common. The Missoula County Wildfire Protection Plan covers two-thirds of the County and the Seeley Swan Fire Plan covers the remaining area.

Because these entities have their own funding sources, Missoula County plays a minimal role in the provision of fire protection infrastructure. Missoula County plans to assist with fire protection infrastructure by:

- Working with nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to facilitate acquisition of the best available information regarding wildfire risk and likelihood of growth in risk areas
- Providing grant writing and administration assistance to local districts if requested
- Supporting the development and expansion of public water supplies through local water districts
- Requiring new subdivisions to provide sufficient water supplies for firefighting purposes



- Supporting legislation to assist fire protection agencies with acquiring capital improvements

Roads and Bridges

County, city, state, federal, and tribal agencies develop and maintain roads and bridges through limited dedicated road and bridge funds. Missoula County has approximately 1,500 miles of public roadway. The County Road Department is responsible for maintenance activities on approximately 474 miles of roadway. Of these 474 miles, approximately 232 miles are paved and 242 miles are gravel. Road maintenance activities can include road repair, snow removal, right-of-way maintenance, paving, graveling, grading, and dust abatement. The county is also responsible for all bridges in the county that are not part of the state highway system.

The County Public Works Department



funds maintenance through annual budgeting with a 10-year capital improvements plan for larger projects like bridge and culvert replacement. Missoula County will continue requiring private developers to build subdivision roads and landowner associations to maintain them in most cases.

Parks and Trails

The Missoula County Parks, Trails, and Open Lands Program works with the Parks and Trails Advisory Board to plan, develop, and manage 90 parks on over 645 acres. The program collaborates with the County Public Works Department to plan, develop, and manage a system of shared-use paved trails and recreational trails. In November 2014, voters passed a \$42 million parks and trails bond. The bond funds enable the expansion and improvement of Fort Missoula Regional Park (\$38 million), 10 new or enhanced city playgrounds (\$1 million),



and a county trails funding program (\$3 million).

Partnerships with local communities, neighborhood groups, and non-profit organizations are instrumental in developing and maintaining parks and trails. The County Parks and Trails Advisory Board assists these groups with funding for qualifying projects through a matching grants program.

The Missoula Active Transportation Plan and the County Parks and Trails Master Plan guide various projects. The Parks and Trails Plan includes a capital improvements plan that establishes 10-year priorities.

Open Space

As noted in the guiding principles, Missoula County considers infrastructure to be more than water, sewer, transportation and communications systems. It includes libraries, museums, historical landmarks, government buildings, parks, trails, open spaces and schools, as well as health, safety, educational and social services.

The 2006 \$10 million open space bond in Missoula County provides funding for the protection of open space, water quality, wildlife habitat, working farms and ranches, river access, and other



public resources. Half of the bond is allocated to the county and half is allocated to the city for use in the urban area. The county portion has been used on 23 projects to conserve over 29,000 acres in conjunction with public, private and non-profit landowners and partners. Parks, Trails and Open Lands staff and an Open Lands Advisory Committee, consisting of 13 citizen volunteers from rural areas of the county, advises the county commissioners on the allocation of these funds.

Digital Communications

Affordable, accessible and reliable broadband is a critical piece of community infrastructure for Missoula County communities to adapt to periods of rapid economic and technological change. Broadband service is provided by several private companies. The city and the county have begun investigating the feasibility of partnerships with the private sector to expand broadband capacity with the goal of making it affordable and accessible. Missoula County will consider the recommendations of feasibility studies and work with the city and the private sector to provide broadband to Missoula County communities. The county will also consider adopting a policy to encourage and facilitate the

expansion of broadband infrastructure when projects are being developed.

Other County Facilities and Community Infrastructure

Missoula County owns and maintains the county fairgrounds, public works facilities, the county courthouse, the detention center, and several other public buildings.

Libraries, museums, community centers, historical sites, educational and social services, and even public art are also types of community infrastructure. These are assets that reflect the county's heritage, build community, and make Missoula County special.





Chapter 7

USE OF THE GROWTH POLICY

The growth policy is a guidance document that asserts Missoula County's policies and approaches for addressing land use, conservation and community development issues in the coming years.

Growth policies are foundational community planning documents in the sense that both regulatory documents (subdivision and zoning) and advisory documents (area and issue plans) must be adopted in accordance with the growth policy. This chapter provides guidance to Missoula County planners, planning board members, county commissioners, the public and developers with regard to how these specific regulatory and planning documents, as well as proposals for subdivisions, zoning and plan amendments, will be evaluated for compliance with this growth policy.

How to Assess Consistency of an Area Plan or Issue Plan with this Growth Policy

Area and issue plans provide locally-driven guidance for land use planning (area plans) and for specific subjects (issue plans). Both types of plans should be developed to help implement this growth policy by providing more focused

Policy Guidance:

- MCA 76-1-605, Use of Adopted Growth Policy. A governing body must be guided by and give consideration to the general pattern of development set out in the growth policy in the:
 - Authorization, construction, alteration, or abandonment of public places, public structures and public utilities;
 - Authorization, acceptance, or construction of water mains, sewers, connections, facilities, or utilities; and
 - Adoption of zoning ordinance or resolutions.
- MCA 76-1-606, Effect of Growth Policy on Subdivision Regulations. When a growth policy has been approved, the subdivision regulations must be made in accordance with the growth policy.

guidance on community conservation and development in specific locations. Land use designation maps developed with an area plan are incorporated into the overall land use designation map for the county. (Map 18)



Policy Guidance:

- MCA 76-1-601(4)(a), Growth Policy – Contents. A growth policy may include one or more neighborhood plans. A neighborhood plan must be consistent with the growth policy.
- MCA 76-2-203(1)(a), Criteria and Guidelines for Zoning Regulations. Zoning regulations must be made in accordance with a growth policy.

Area and issue plans should follow the guidance provided in Chapter 4 and will be assessed for consistency with this growth policy using the goals and objectives provided in Chapter 2. Plans are not required to address all of the goals and objectives, but they must not contradict those that apply. Existing area plans will be reviewed periodically as provided in Chapter 4, when consistency with this growth policy will be evaluated.

How to Assess Accordance of the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations with this Growth Policy

The implementation plan in Chapter 2 recommends changes to the subdivision regulations to address specific issues. As these changes are completed, the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations will be evaluated to confirm that they are in accordance with the growth policy.

This growth policy includes definitions for the seven primary review criteria that are used to evaluate proposed subdivisions under state law. The criteria are: agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, local services, natural environment, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and public health and safety. The definitions of these criteria in the subdivision regulations must be consistent with the definitions in the growth policy.

How to Assess Compliance of Development Applications with the Growth Policy

Development applications, including subdivisions, are to be reviewed for compliance with this growth policy. Under current state law, a subdivision proposal cannot be denied and conditions cannot be imposed based solely on whether it complies with a growth policy. However, developers are strongly encouraged to adhere to the development pattern and policies stated in this document and the land use designation map (Map 18), or otherwise seek an amendment to this document.

Goals

A development application should generally comply with the growth policy goals that apply to it. A development proposal does not have to comply with all of the applicable goals, but on balance it should comply with most of them. When a proposal is found to contradict any of the goals, mitigation measures may be requested or required, depending on the legal authority, to limit or eliminate the



impacts the development creates. In development applications, developers must include a section detailing how a proposal either complies or does not comply with applicable goals. When a development does not comply, the developer is advised to propose mitigation measures.

Land Use Designation Maps

The Land Use Designation Map is an integral part of this growth policy and is intended to help achieve several goals, such as providing for the logical growth of communities, while protecting rural character (Goal 8) and reducing safety risks and costs associated with wildland fire and other hazards (Goal 11). The current County Land Use Designation Map incorporates designations from adopted area plans, as well as designations for portions of the county without area plans that were originally adopted in 1975 and re-adopted in 2002. (See Map 18)

Due to the number of goals that can be addressed through land use designation mapping, the County has identified updated mapping through the land use strategy as a high priority for growth policy implementation, particularly for those areas experiencing growth and development pressures, where the existing designations are outdated, and/or where there is significant community

interest. Until revision occurs, the current map remains in effect. A detailed discussion of the county's approach to land use mapping is located at the end of Chapter 2.

The Land Use Designation Map is to be used to evaluate development proposals, which should substantially comply with the map. Developers whose proposals do not substantially comply with the map may seek to modify their proposal or amend the map through an application and the public review process.

In addition to assessment for compliance with the growth policy, development proposals are also assessed for compliance with area and issue plans using the same approach described above.

How to Assess Zoning Resolution Accordance with the Growth Policy and/or Area Plan

Zoning is used to help implement a growth policy or area plan. Zoning regulations include descriptions of zoning districts and the standards that apply within them. A zoning map that shows where these districts have been applied accompanies the regulations.

Locations of the zoning districts and the standards that apply within them should reflect the pattern of development set forth on the Land Use Designation Map. (Maps 6 & 18) The map should include similar general land use designations such as residential or commercial, but it is not necessary for a zoning map to be a perfect replica of the Land Use Designation Map or have identical districts, densities or other designations. The zoning text should be designed to help carry out the applicable goals and policies of the plan, but zoning is not required to address all of the goals and policies.

When assessing accordance with the growth policy, reviewers should list the applicable goals and policies and evaluate whether and how the zoning regulations and map either comply with the plan or do not. In some instances, revisions to the zoning regulations and map may be necessary to help implement the growth policy.





Chapter 8 GROWTH POLICY AMENDMENT AND REVISION

Regular evaluation of the growth policy will help the community, planning board and the county commissioners maintain the relevance of its guidance, given the ever changing conditions throughout the county. Regular updates also help the county to shift strategies and take new approaches as circumstances change and goals are met.

Timetable and Review Process

Annual Progress Review

County staff will evaluate progress on the Action Plan described in Chapter 2. On an annual basis, results of this evaluation will be described in a status report to the planning board and commissioners. This is not intended to be a full-scale review of the growth policy; rather the evaluation is a mid-stream assessment of the progress in implementing the goals and objectives to determine whether adjustments are needed in the county's work plan.

Five-Year Review

County staff, in consultation with the planning board and county commissioners, will evaluate the growth policy to determine whether revisions are necessary. At least once

every five years, county staff will conduct an assessment of the factors listed herein. Based on the review, the county may conclude that revisions are needed. If so, staff will produce a report to the county commissioners and the planning board that includes a description of the issues and needs to be addressed, proposed changes, anticipated impacts of the changes, and whether additional or modified implementation actions are appropriate. When actions are proposed, associated timelines, and lead partners will be included.

Growth policy revisions will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of state law, including a public hearing before the planning board and adoption by the county commissioners, following a public process, which will be determined by Community and Planning Services staff depending on the scope of the proposed revisions.

Review Factors

Factors to be considered in the five-year review include:

- Changes in the legal framework regarding growth policies or implementation measures
- Significant changes to existing conditions and projected trends



that might warrant different or additional goals and objectives

- Degree to which the goals and objectives have been met
- Completion of implementation actions or identification of actions that are no longer appropriate
- Deviation from the implementation timetable
- Public and stakeholder input suggesting the need to make changes
- Knowledge of specific amendments that would improve the growth policy's usefulness so that it better serves the public.

retirement of existing area plans (Map 6, page 4-4)

- New issue plans or the revision or retirement of existing issue plans that fall under the legal authority of this growth policy.

Growth policy amendments by private parties would typically be proposed to support development proposals. Public review of amendments made after growth policy adoption is required by state law. Private party amendments require an application fee and will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- The amendment substantially complies with the applicable guiding principles, goals, and objectives of the growth policy and accompanying Land Use Designation Map, except as specifically addressed in the amendment request
- The amendment is consistent with the applicable goals, objectives and land use designations of the applicable area plan (if any), except as specifically addressed in the amendment request. (Note: Growth policy and area plan amendment requests may be reviewed concurrently.)
- The amendment is designed to meet a need that is otherwise not being met

- The amendment will provide substantial public benefit to the surrounding community
- The change proposed is the best means of providing the public benefit

Other Amendments

In addition to amendments proposed as part of a regularly scheduled review, growth policy amendments may be proposed by Community and Planning Services staff, the planning board, and private parties at any time. At the time of this writing, anticipated amendments are:

- Updates to the Land Use Designation Map (Map 18)
- New area plans or the revision or



Chapter 9

CONDITIONS, TRENDS, & PROJECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a profile of Missoula County’s human and natural resources. The information provides an overall picture of existing conditions and projected trends for the life of the growth policy, or 20 years. More detailed information and analyses are available from other sources including regional area plans and issue-specific plans. This chapter begins with an overview of the county followed by three main sections: landscapes, livelihoods and communities. Throughout this chapter the key trends are linked to action plan elements found in Chapter 2.

Missoula County Overview

Missoula County encompasses 1,675,584 acres or approximately 2,600 square miles, which is roughly equivalent to the size of Delaware. Missoula County ranks 25th for land area among Montana counties. Approximately 104,691 acres in the county are located within the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes’ Flathead Reservation. (See Map 1 in Chapter 1.)

The 2015 population of Missoula County is estimated to be 116,076 people, which ranks second in Montana for population behind Yellowstone County. Missoula County has an overall population density of approximately

43 persons per square mile, which is significantly denser than the state’s population density of 6.8 persons per square mile. The City of Missoula is the only incorporated community in the county with an estimated 2015 population of 71,967 residents and an approximate population density of 2,428 persons per square mile. Outside of the city, Missoula County has an approximate population density of 17 persons per square mile.

Missoula County is governed by the Board of County Commissioners, which has three elected members who serve staggered six year terms. Seven areas of the county have community councils, established by the county commissioners to act as liaisons between residents and the commissioners and to advance and promote the interests of local residents. The community councils include:

- Bonner – Milltown
- East Missoula
- Evaro – Finley – O’Keefe
- Lolo
- West Valley
- Seeley Lake
- Swan Valley

Map 5 in Chapter 3 shows the community council areas.



LANDSCAPES

Missoula County is rich in natural resources that have influenced the character and economy of the region. This section provides an overview of the county’s climate, soils and geology, water, biological, and air resources. In addition to the maps provided here, please refer to the PLACE Project Atlas of Conservation and Community Resources for more information: <http://gis.missoulacounty.us/caps/place/>.

Climate

Missoula County’s climate is semiarid, with 12 to 15 inches of annual precipitation spread fairly evenly throughout the year. Winters are moderately cold with occasional arctic air masses creating short periods of subzero temperatures. Summers tend to be hot and dry, with cool evenings.

Increasing evidence indicates that the earth’s atmosphere is warming and that climate change is projected to accelerate. Missoula’s annual mean air temperature increased about 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit over the 60 years prior to 2014. The number of frost free days also increased over this same period.

According to a Geos Institute report for the Missoula area,¹ climate-related changes with a high degree of probability in Missoula County include:

- Two to five degrees F warmer by 2035-2045
- Lower stream flow for an extended period in late summer with warmer overall stream temperatures
- Earlier and greater spring runoff
- Shifts in species ranges for wildlife and plants
- Greater likelihood of severe wildfire
- Increased spread of invasive plants and animals

Potential implications of climate-related changes are described in a background document provided to participants in a ClimateWise workshop held in 2011.² The report from the workshop concludes that Missoula County may also be impacted by changes occurring in other parts of the country. Among the concerns identified at the workshop were:³

- More people moving to the area due to sea level rise and climate change impacts in other parts of the country

- Increased demand for domestically-produced energy, leading to increased area of land used for local production and new transmission corridors
- Increased demand for water for a growing population
- Higher land prices making it more expensive to produce local food
- Disproportionate effect of climate change on low-income populations
- Increased demand on food production capacity

Missoula County intends to take several steps to address climate change. Such steps include adopting a green building program; supporting alternative energy sources, encouraging multi-modal transportation, supporting local agriculture and businesses; encouraging more compact development; and minimizing development in the wildland urban interface. See Chapter 2, Goal 4.

Adapting to climate change poses challenges and opportunities for managing resources, infrastructure, and the economy. Missoula County will work with partners who are monitoring climate change and potential impacts to local communities. Preparation for and adaptation to potential impacts will be considered in resiliency planning.



Map 7

Missoula County Growth Policy Elevation

Legend

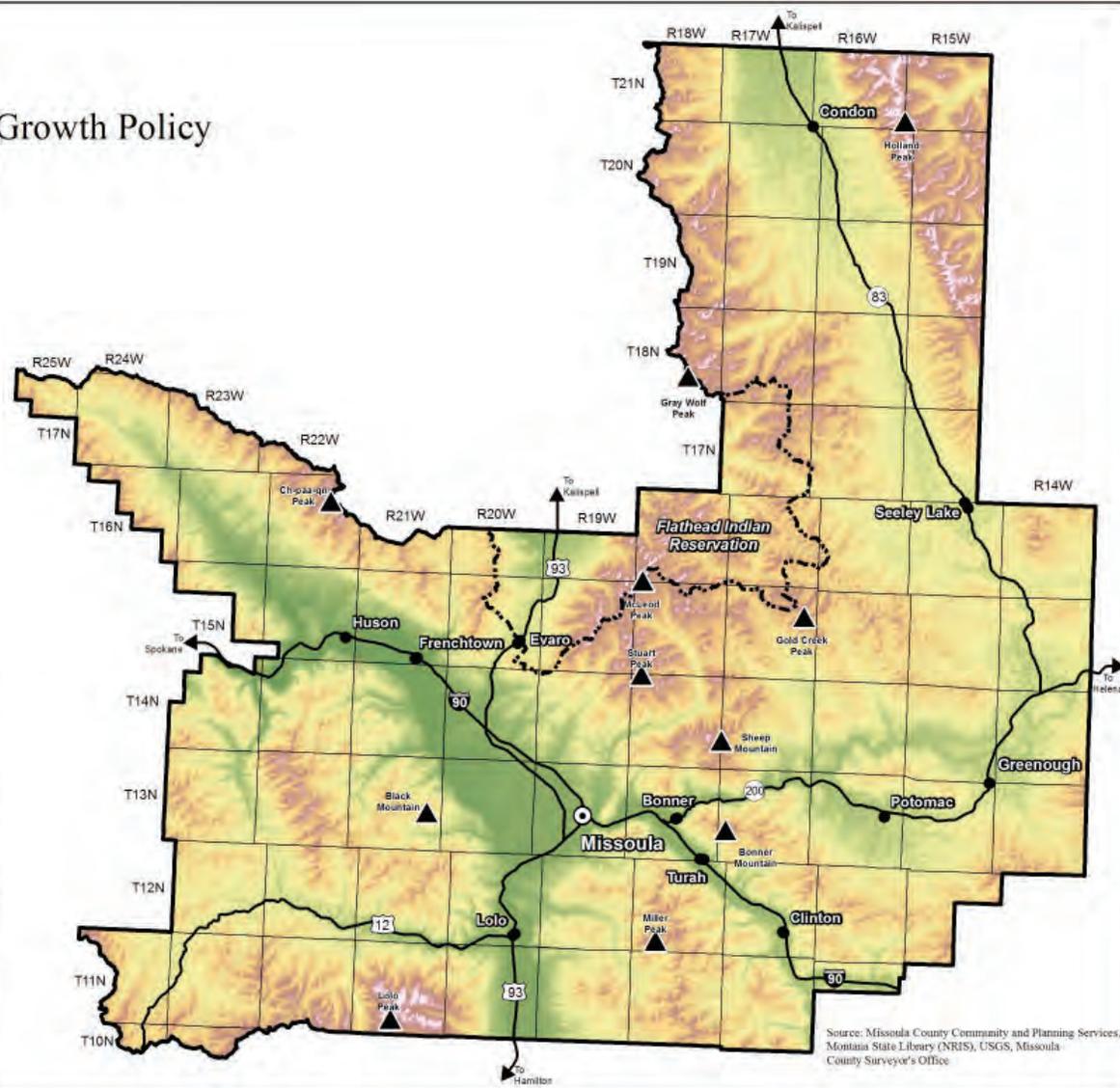
▲ Summits

Elevation

Feet
High : 9,364
Low : 2,922



5 2.5 0 5 Miles



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services, Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula County Surveyor's Office

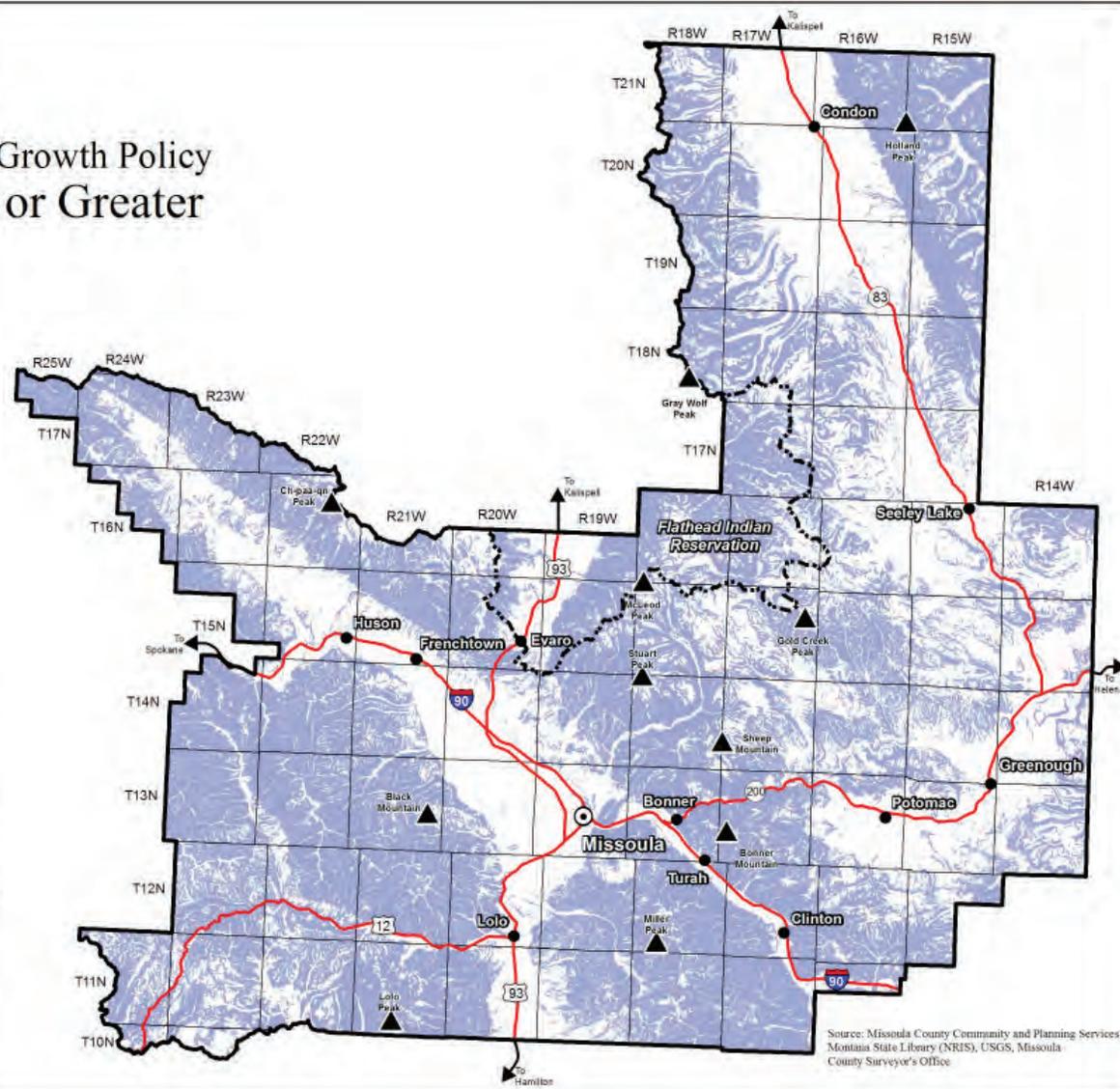


Map 8

Missoula County Growth Policy Slope of 25% or Greater

Legend

- ▲ Summits
- Slope 25%+



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services, Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula County Surveyor's Office.



Soils and Geology

Missoula County topography is mountainous and is divided by several intermountain valleys. Elevations range from approximately 9,140 feet on Lolo Peak to just under 3,000 feet where the Clark Fork River leaves the northwest end of the county. (See Map 7 for elevation information) Much of the land above the valleys in the county is characterized by steep hillsides and alpine terrain. Slopes greater than 25% are generally considered too steep for building purposes and special requirements apply for the siting of septic systems on slopes greater than 15%. Map 8 shows slopes of 25% or greater.

Agricultural Soils

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, in collaboration with the Missoula County Conservation District, evaluates soils based on their capability to support agricultural production and classifies soils into four different categories:

- Prime Farmland has the properties needed to produce sustained high-yield crops when managed with modern farming techniques
- Prime Farmland (if irrigated) soil

has the same characteristics and prime farmland, but requires a dependable water supply

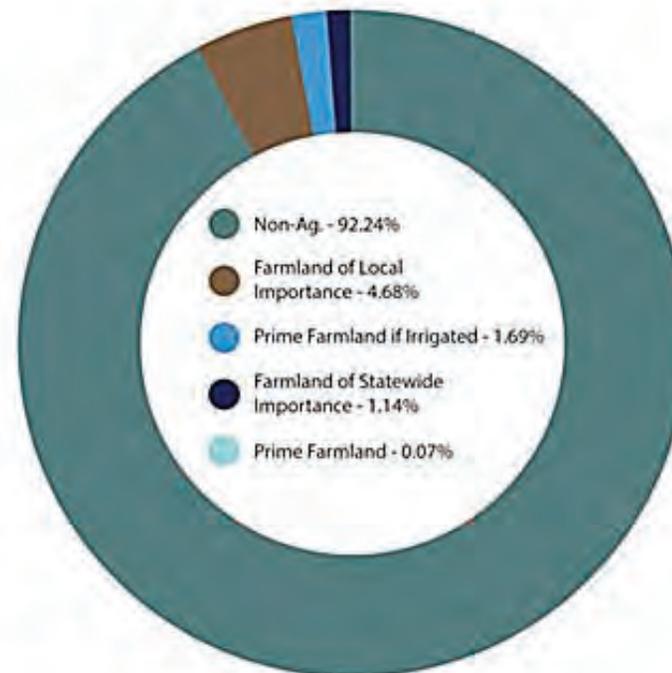
- Farmland of Statewide Importance, which is not quite as good as prime farmland, but still produces high crop yields
- Farmland of Local Importance does not quite meet the guidelines for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, but is considered locally important. Soils

of Local Importance are designated by the Conservation District

Figure 4 shows the percentages (in acres) of each of these categories in Missoula County, and Map 9 shows the distribution of these soils across the county.

A total of 28,869 acres of farm and ranch land shifted from agricultural to non-agricultural tax classifications from 1986 to 2008, bringing the total number of acres taxed for agriculture

Figure 4 - Missoula County Soils of Agricultural Importance.
A small area of Missoula County has soils identified as agricultural.
Source: National Resource Conservation Service





to 112,227 in 2008. It is unclear exactly how this shift occurred. It is likely due to a variety of factors including, but not limited to, divisions of land through exemption, subdivision, construction on existing parcels, change in reporting of agricultural production to Department of Revenue, etc.⁴

According to Missoula County records, from 2007 to 2014, more than 1,000 acres of land with agricultural soils underwent subdivision review. Some of these subdivisions have not yet been filed. However, during the same time period, more than 4,000 acres of land with agricultural soils were protected through conservation easements.

Projected Trend

Depending on the prices of farm and ranch products, as well as the supply and demand for housing, farm and ranch lands may become more profitable when sold for development. Pressures to convert land from agricultural use are likely to continue as the economy rebounds, which may result in declining acres of land used for agriculture. Agriculture is important to Missoula County residents for many reasons and the county intends to support the conservation of agricultural resources and expansion of markets. See Goals 1, 5 and 7 and the Land Use Strategy in Chapter 2 for examples.

Sand and Gravel

Gravel resources are generally, but not always, located along streams, rivers, or areas where certain kinds of geologic activities have occurred. Map 10 shows potential gravel resources and currently permitted gravel pits throughout the county. This may help to identify where additional gravel resources have a greater potential of being found and developed.

State law allows the prohibition of sand and gravel mining in areas zoned residential. In areas zoned other than residential, sand and gravel mining may be conditioned to address the impacts to surrounding landowners and the environment, but may not be prohibited. Missoula County desires to provide for the extraction of sand and gravel in a manner that meets the needs of the growing population while concurrently protecting natural resources and public health and safety. Issues to be considered include air and water quality, impacts to agriculture and agricultural land, impacts to existing residential development, and public health and safety concerns.

Projected Trend

Sand and gravel are important materials for road and building construction. Therefore, as the population in

Missoula County grows and the need for construction materials increases, the demand for sand and gravel will likely increase as well.

Water Resources

Missoula County surface resources include six major rivers with numerous tributaries and many lakes (Map 11). These watercourses provide groundwater recharge, water for drinking and irrigation, habitat for fish and wildlife, and recreational opportunities. An important groundwater resource in Missoula County is the Missoula Aquifer, which is the primary source of water for Missoula Valley residents. Related water resources such as wetland and riparian areas sustain important habitats and ecosystems throughout the county.

Water Quality

Although water quality in Missoula County is generally good, accidental releases of hazardous materials, runoff from urban and agricultural areas, and degradation from septic systems threaten water quality. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) develops "total maximum daily loads" (TMDL) for streams and lakes that do not meet Montana's water quality standards (both for drinking water and

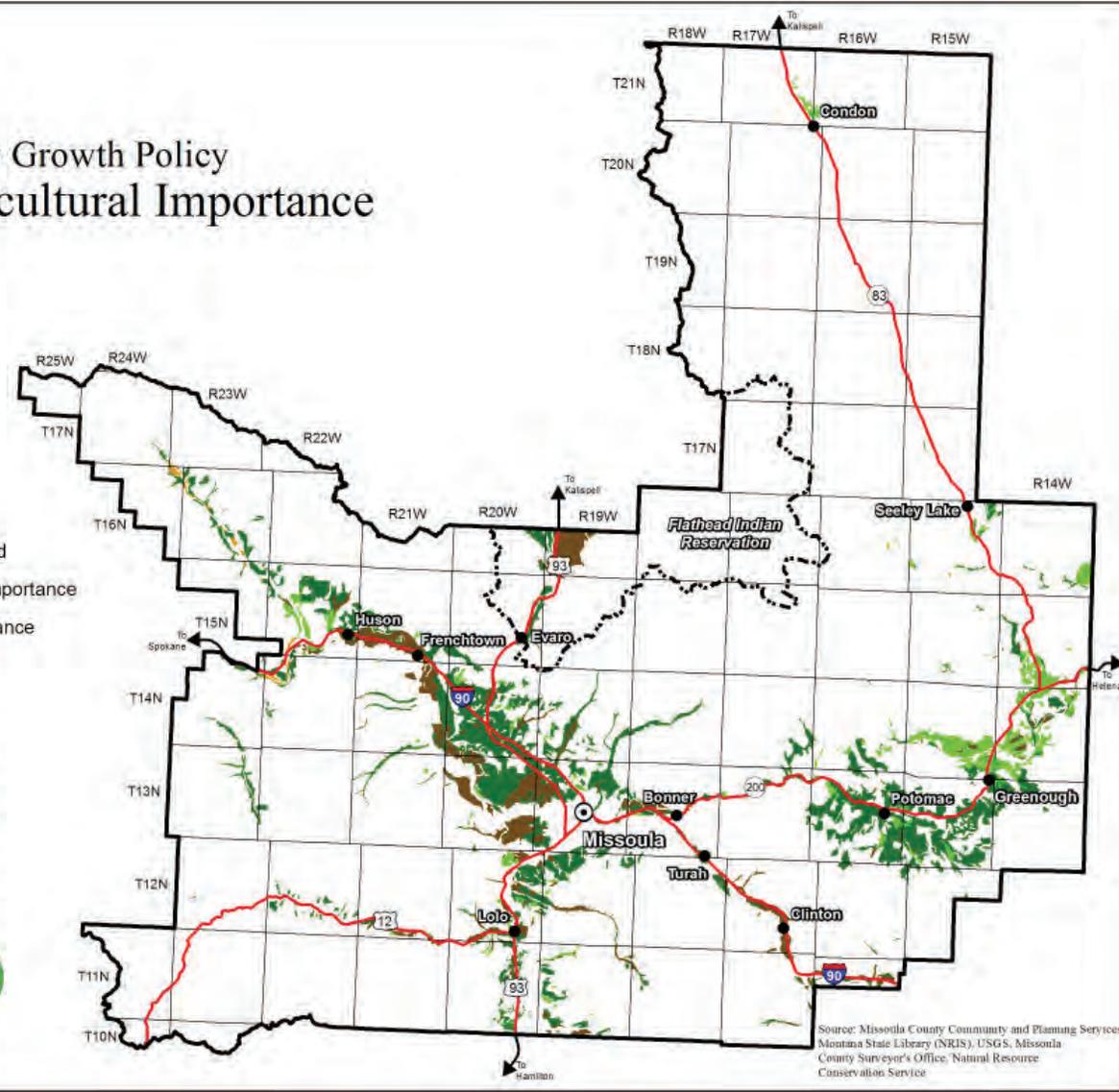


Map 9

Missoula County Growth Policy Soils of Agricultural Importance

Legend

- Prime Farmland
- Prime farmland if irrigated
- Farmland of statewide importance
- Farmland of local importance



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services, Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula County Surveyor's Office, Natural Resource Conservation Service



Map 10

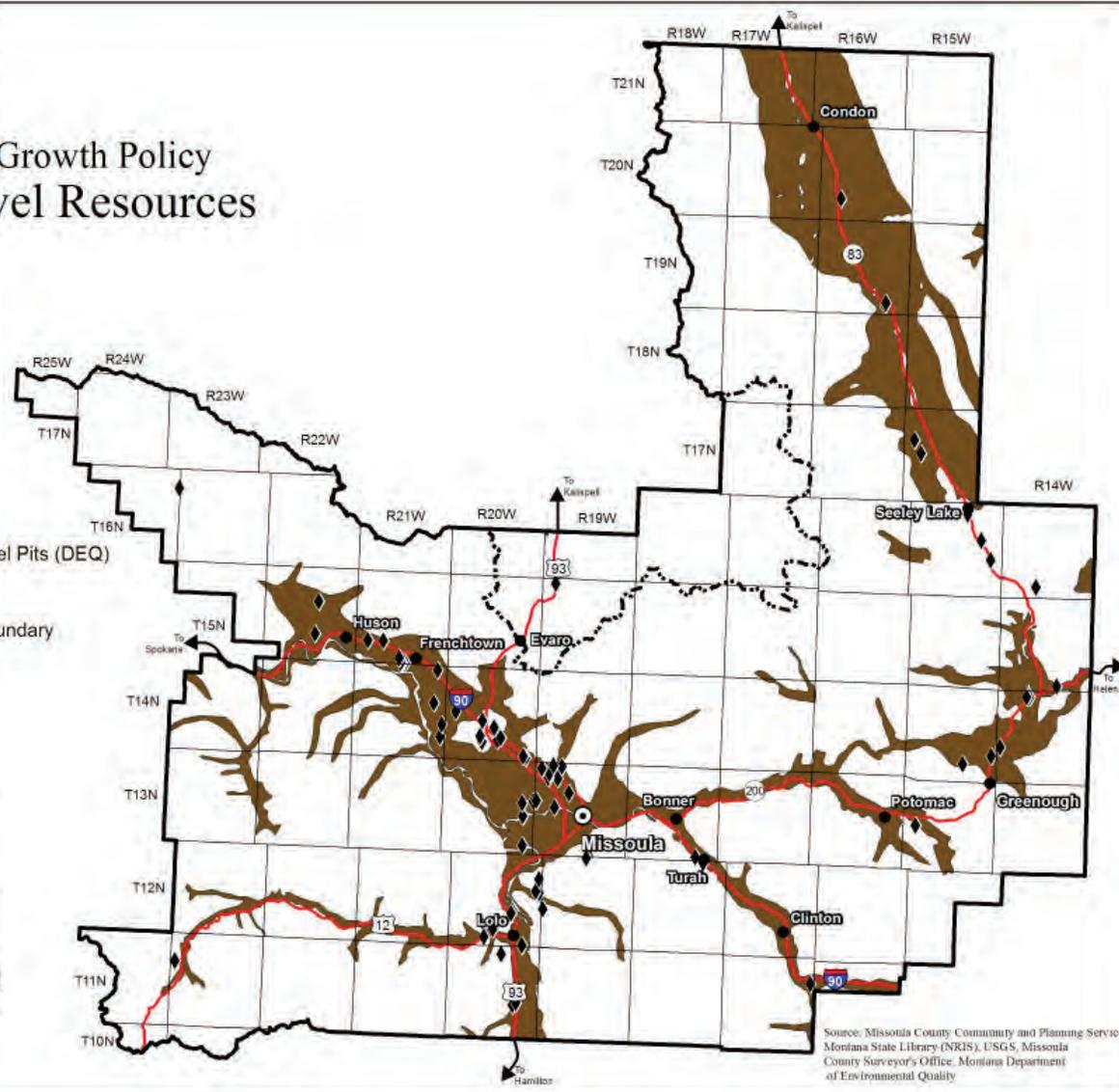
Missoula County Growth Policy Potential Gravel Resources

Legend

- ◆ Currently Permitted Gravel Pits (DEQ)
- Quaternary Alluvium
- ⋯ Flathead Reservation Boundary



5 2.5 0 5 Miles



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services; Montana State Library (NRIS); USGS; Missoula County Surveyor's Office; Montana Department of Environmental Quality

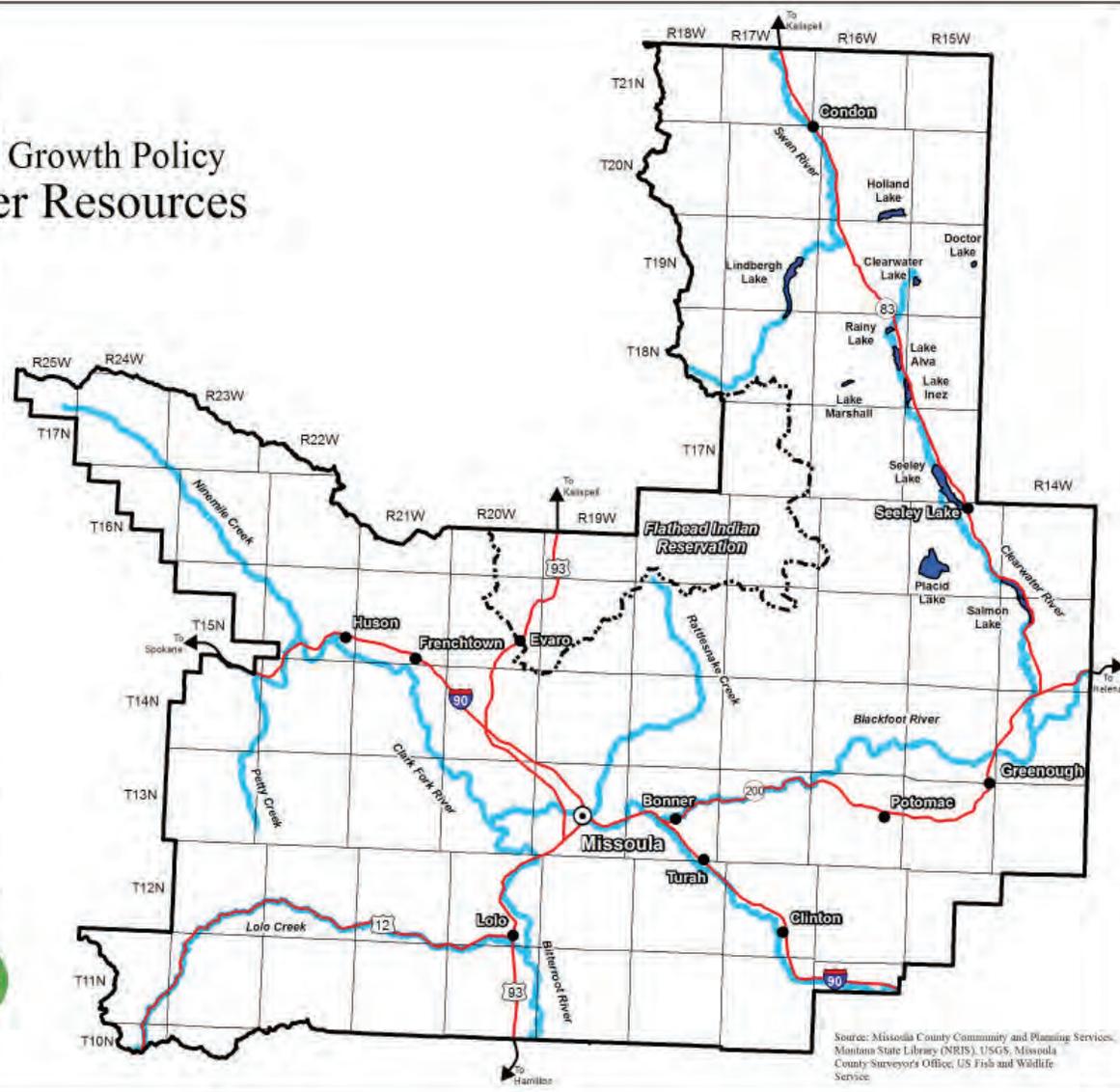
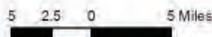


Map 11

Missoula County Growth Policy Surface Water Resources

Legend

-  Rivers and Creeks
-  Lakes





aquatic health). This process also defines solutions to the identified water quality issues through a Voluntary Nutrient Reduction Program. Local watershed groups and other stakeholders can then use this program to prioritize and carry out improvement activities.

A 2014 Department of Environmental Quality report documented water quality trends from 1998 to 2012 in the Clark Fork River. Since 1998, the levels of total nitrogen and phosphorous have decreased on the Clark Fork River below Missoula. In addition, total phosphorous has decreased on the whole section of the Middle Clark Fork, which extends from above Missoula to the confluence of the Flathead River.⁵

The Missoula Water Quality District samples a network of 40 wells twice per year to monitor groundwater quality. Groundwater quality is generally good in the Missoula Valley. However, several sites around Missoula have groundwater that has been contaminated by historic mining, industrial wastes, improper chemical disposal, or petroleum product spills and leaks.

Elevated nitrate levels have been found to occur in isolated areas, due primarily to improperly treated septic system discharges. Septic system discharge can also elevate the level of nutrients in lakes, which can lead to increased

growth in aquatic plants, leading to decreased quality of cold water fish habitat.

There have been concerns regarding the water quality of Salmon and Seeley Lakes. A 2012 study examined water quality and potential contamination sources of these lakes. The study found that while there were no prominent trends since the 1970s, better information is needed through consistent monitoring. The report recommended that areas of dense housing near the lakes should be sewered to prevent decreases in water quality.

Projected Trend

Local efforts have been effective at improving stream conditions through stream restoration projects and changes in management practices. For example, water quality in the Clark Fork River has improved through the Voluntary Nutrient Reduction Program. In addition, Missoula County has partnered with Trout Unlimited and the US Forest Service to reclaim mining wastes in the Nine Mile Valley, resulting in improved water quality and fish passage with continued efforts. If this continues, levels of nutrients in rivers and lakes should continue to decrease. As sewer connections are added to areas within the county these trends are likely to continue.

Clean water is essential and maintaining high water quality is a fundamental value to Missoula County residents. Actions intended to address water quality are listed under Goals 1, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 11 in Chapter 2.

Water Quantity

Water quantity is an important aspect of overall watershed health as it affects the quality and abundance of riparian vegetation, fisheries, and the neighboring ecosystems sustained by surface and groundwater. Water quantity also has a strong effect on agricultural industries and the potential for future growth of these industries. Water quantity is affected by a wide variety of factors including climate, land use, and water consumption.

Stream flows in the Clark Fork Basin are largely driven by the frequency, magnitude, and distribution of rainfall and snowmelt, with annual stream flows peaking in the spring. Figure 5 shows the variability in average annual streamflow for the three major rivers in the county. The Clark Fork Basin is essentially closed to new surface and ground water rights appropriations. However, groundwater wells on existing parcels of land that pump less than 35 gallons per minute and produce less than 10 acre feet of water a year are exempt.



Projected Trend

The Montana State Water Plan for the Clark Fork and Kootenai River Basins gives a detailed description of water quantity conditions in the Clark Fork Basin and potential future water supply and demand given the potential effects of climate change. The plan projects that temperatures in the Upper Clark Fork Basin will continue to warm, variability in precipitation patterns will increase, and increases in evapotranspiration are possible. These changes could result in alterations in the timing of streamflow, with increased runoff earlier in the year and decreased runoff in the late summer. Overall, modeling shows runoff volumes either staying the same or increasing as compared to past conditions.⁶

Wetland and Riparian Resources

Wetlands can be located along rivers, streams, lakes, and irrigation ditches and within low spots along the landscape. Wetlands store surface water during floods, serve as ground water recharge areas, filter surface runoff, and provide wildlife habitat to maintain overall ecological health.

Wetlands include springs, seeps, marshes, wet meadows, and riparian areas (along creek or river margins). Healthy riparian areas are vital to the

natural function of streams and provide bank stability. Riparian areas along creeks and rivers link wildlife habitats and are important hiding and feeding areas for migrating and nesting birds, big game species and smaller mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Table 1 shows the different types and acreages of wetlands and riparian areas throughout the county.

At this time there is no information on the condition of these areas, nor are there quantitative data on wetland or riparian area loss in Missoula County. National estimates of wetland loss are

over 50%, with estimates in Montana at 33% wetland loss since settlement.⁷

Table 2 - Wetland and Riparian Area Acreage in Missoula County

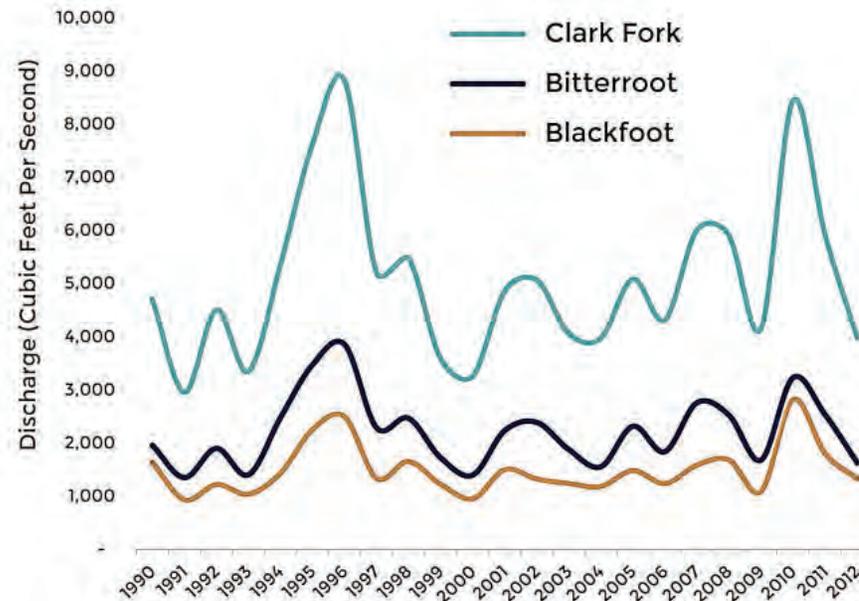
A very small portion of the county's lands are classified as wetland or riparian.

Source: Montana Natural Heritage Program.

Wetland Type	Acres	Percent of Total County Area
Wetland	25,972	1.55%
Riparian	16,814	1%
Freshwater Pond	3,597	0.2%
All Types	46,383	2.75%

Figure 5 - Average Annual Streamflow of Three Rivers in Missoula County
Of the county's three primary rivers, the Clark Fork experiences the greatest flow. There is considerable variability in flow between the three major rivers in Missoula County.

Source: U.S. Geological Survey





Some estimates place riparian habitat loss at greater than 95% in most western states.⁸

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, riparian and in-stream fish habitat represent the most degraded habitats in Montana. An estimated 70% of privately owned riparian habitats grazed by livestock could benefit from better grazing management.⁹

Streams and wetlands are protected under various state, federal and tribal laws. Road construction, vegetation clearing, dredging, filling and water diversion may require a permit. Programs available to assist landowners with wetlands protection include conservation easements, leases to conservation organizations, restoration, management agreements, limited development strategies, and sale or donation of land. Various non-governmental organizations and government agencies educate the public on the importance of riparian areas and wetlands and their impact on water resources and wildlife. Missoula County Floodplain Regulation amendments, adopted in 2015, prevent the removal of native vegetation within 50 feet of a designated stream.

Projected Trend

While existing protections and voluntary programs are likely to help maintain or improve the conditions of riparian areas and recover lost riparian and wetland areas, some are likely to be lost over time due to development and changing land management practices. Efforts Missoula County and its partners will initiate to conserve riparian and wetland areas are included in Chapter 2 under Goals 1, 4 and 7.

Flood Hazards

Flooding can occur due to overland flow, when excessive ground water fills an aquifer and surfaces, when stream channels erode their banks, and when ice jams break, releasing a surge of water that causes flooding downstream. Missoula County uses the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan to help assess and identify areas subject to frequent flooding in order to set priorities for mitigating damage and preventing casualties.

The Missoula County Floodplain Regulations provide requirements for residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational development built within designated floodplains. In Missoula County, Federal Emergency Management Agency 100-year floodplain maps identify areas

associated with a risk of being impacted by a flood with a one percent chance of occurring in any year, also known as a "100-year flood." Loss of property on mapped rivers and streams in the event of a 100-year flood in Missoula County is estimated at 472 structures built prior to floodplain mapping, with an estimated value of over \$16 million dollars. Missoula County coordinates with Federal Emergency Management Agency and Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to identify and address properties that repeatedly flood.

Missoula County has completed channel migration zone mapping for a limited stretch of the Clark Fork River, which can help the public and policy makers better understand river movement and predict where the river may move in the future. Missoula County and landowners can use this information to help prevent costly and potentially catastrophic damage to private property and public infrastructure.

Projected Trends

The number of structures in Missoula County impacted by a 100-year flood should not substantially increase, although the estimated value of loss from a 100-year flood will likely increase due to inflation. Amendments to floodplain and subdivision



regulations will reduce the potential for additional structures in flood hazard areas. The county is also working on identifying floodplains on unmapped streams, conducting additional channel migration mapping, and ensuring that reconstruction of existing buildings meets floodplain regulations. Specific efforts the county plans to undertake in order to reduce the risk of loss to life and property from flooding are located in Chapter 2 under Goal 11 as well as the Land Use Strategy.

Vegetation

The vegetation zones in Missoula County range from the uppermost alpine zone, characterized by alpine meadows, scree, and the absence of trees, to the lower foothill zone, characterized by dry areas dominated by shrubs and grasses, with areas of open ponderosa pine parklands and pockets of Douglas-fir/ ponderosa pine forests.

Approximately 70% of the county is forested¹⁰, including much of the land above the valley floors. Almost 70% of the county is owned and managed by the United States Forest Service, Weyerhaeuser, or The Nature Conservancy for timber and other uses. Quantitative measures of changes in vegetation type are not available. Some estimates indicate that western

Montana has lost 80 to 90% of its low elevation, high productivity, old-growth forests and 80 to 90% of its low elevation grasslands.¹¹

Overall, forest health is influenced by a variety of factors, including climate, occurrence of fire, and presence of insects and disease. Recently, forests have been less resistant to insects and disease due to drought and overstocking. Mountain pine beetles have had tremendous effects on forests across the state, causing tree mortality on more than six million acres. The beetle outbreaks are declining, but there is a small area in the southwestern part of Missoula County with a mountain pine beetle infestation.¹²

Plant Species of Concern

The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists species of concern designated by organizations or land management agencies in Montana. There are 47 vascular and non-vascular plant species of concern with recorded occurrences in Missoula County, including the federally threatened water howellia. An additional nine plant species are designated as potential species of concern.

Invasive Species

Western Montana's native landscape

is threatened by noxious weeds, which limit agricultural productivity, reduce wildlife habitat and threaten native grasslands. Road building, off-road vehicles, logging and construction can damage native vegetation and increase noxious weed invasions.

Aquatic invasive species are a recent concern for the county's waterways. Aquatic invasive species are non-native species that can have devastating effects on native species – sometimes out-competing them for food and habitat. For example, Eurasian watermilfoil is a weed-like plant that grows so thick on shallow lake bottoms that it can make swimming nearly impossible.

The Missoula County Noxious Weed Management Plan, developed by the Missoula County Weed District as required by state law, provides a framework and rationale for effective noxious weed management. The plan divides the State Noxious Weed List into three categories:

- Priority 1 weeds: those not currently found in Missoula County
- Priority 2 weeds: new invaders that cover less than 100 acres
- Priority 3 weeds: species that are widespread and infest more than 100 acres in Missoula County.



Priority 3 weeds cover over 650,000 acres. Priority 2 weeds are the highest priority in Missoula County for control efforts in order to prevent their spread. There are currently 13 Priority 2 weed species in Missoula County, which cover a total of 399 acres.¹³

Public and private landowners are responsible for noxious weed management in Missoula County. Infestation rates are influenced through understanding control methods, working in partnership, and managing vegetation to be competitive with noxious weeds.

Projected Trend

Weed control efforts will continue to address and reduce weed infestation for certain species, but new infestations of other species are likely to continue. The Missoula County Weed District has instituted the following programs as part of the Noxious Weed Management Plan to help address noxious weeds in the future:

- Focus on Priority 1 and 2 noxious weeds and control these noxious weeds through expending resources and organizing cooperative landowner projects
- Seek control of Priority 3 weeds through assisting in developing and funding cooperative vegetation

management projects

- Conduct educational programs to improve land managers' knowledge of vegetation management and noxious weed control
- Work with the research community to develop more environmentally sensitive, cost-effective means of control
- Pursue the legal process of compliance as a last resort, with a focus on Priority 1 and 2 noxious weeds

Wildland Urban Interface

Wildland Urban Interface is the area where homes are built near or among lands prone to wildland fire. All of the Missoula County communities are located in or near the interface consequently fire hazards pose a significant threat to life and property. Map 12 shows the Wildland Urban Interface in Missoula County.

The Missoula County Community Wildfire Protection Plan seeks to reduce hazardous fuels and structure ignitability to protect communities from wildfire. The Missoula County Community Wildfire Protection Plan and the Seeley Swan Fire Plan contain more detailed maps identifying areas of greater fire

risk and where fire hazard reduction treatments should be prioritized. A new wildfire hazard risk mapping project is underway to help provide landowners, the public, and decision makers with additional information about wildfire hazards in Missoula County. The project will result in recommendations for possible firewise treatments and other land management options to reduce risks associated with wildfire.

The Missoula County Subdivision Regulations contain requirements for subdivisions in the Wildland Urban Interface that address defensible space for critical infrastructure, ingress and egress for lot owners and emergency responders, and water supply for fire suppression. The Missoula County Zoning Resolution and building code may be updated or other measures developed to further protect life and property.

Missoula County supports responsible forest restoration programs, including fuel mitigation intended in part to reduce risk of wildfire in the Wildland Urban Interface and also aids private landowners to create defensible space by supporting cost sharing and other programs.

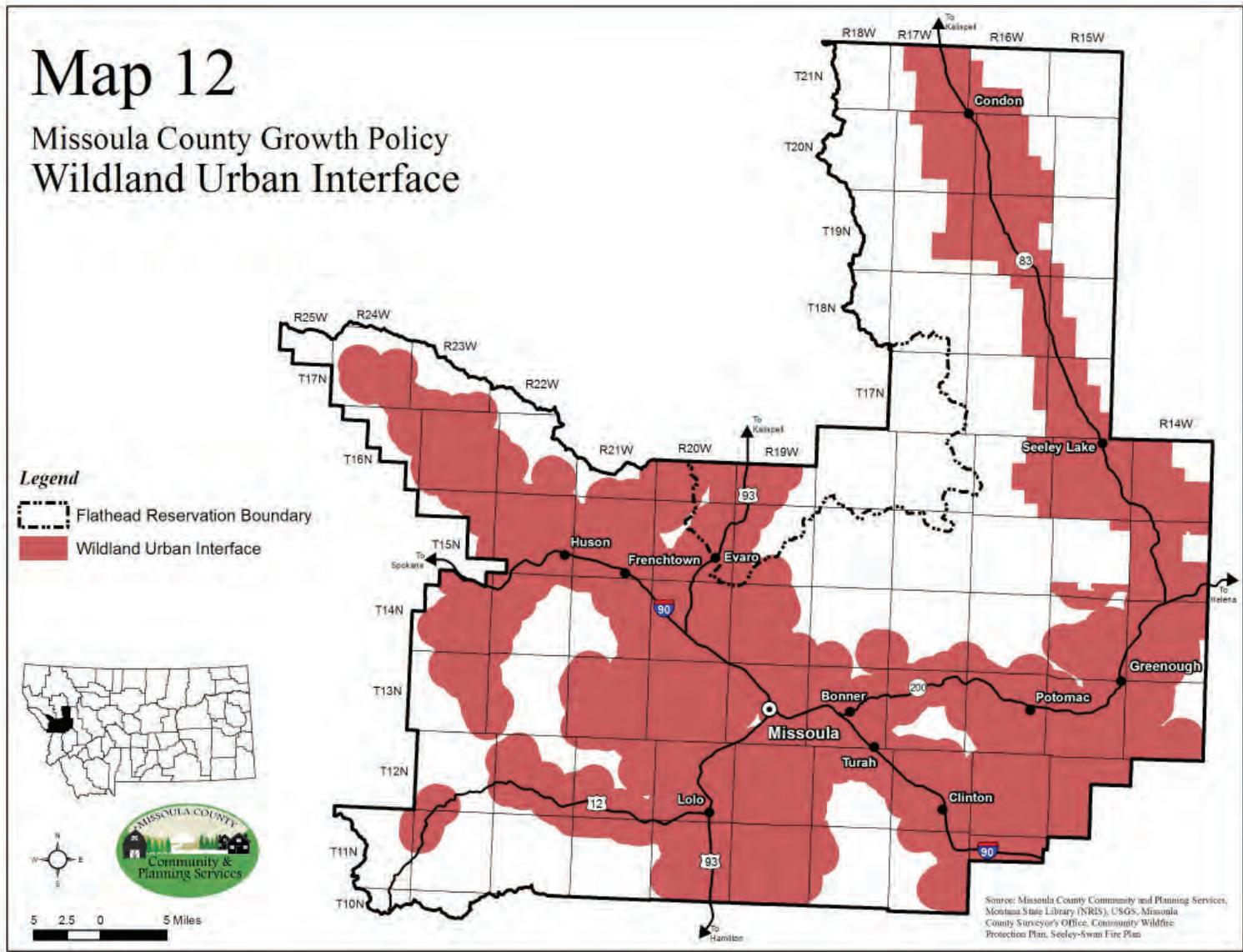
Projected Trends

Trends over the last 20 years show



Map 12

Missoula County Growth Policy Wildland Urban Interface





increased frequency and intensity of wildfires and increased costs to control wildfires and protect structures. This trend is likely to continue. It is estimated that wildfire activity will double in the Rocky Mountains by 2050 due to the effects of climate change including altered vegetation and less precipitation.¹⁴ There is also increased development pressure in fire hazard areas. These trends indicate that additional money, equipment, water supplies and personnel are likely to be needed for the protection of lives and property are likely to be needed. Missoula County, in conjunction with its partners, intends to take several actions to address healthy forest management and public health and safety issues related to Wildland Urban Interface development These are listed in Chapter 2 under Goals 5, 7, 8, 9, 11 and the Land Use Strategy.

Wildlife

Missoula County possesses diverse and high quality wildlife habitats. For a number of species, conservation of seasonal habitats and other populations are important for long-term survival. Wildlife corridors enable species to disperse, migrate, and maintain linkages with other populations that provide population support and genetic exchange. In recent years, major

highway reconstructions have improved habitat connectivity by including wildlife crossing structures. Highway projects between Evaro and Polson and between Lolo and Hamilton added more than 50 fish and wildlife crossing structures between 2005 and 2012. Connectivity and habitat conservation will become even more important as species ranges shift due to climate change.¹⁵

Mammals

The variety of large and small mammals in Missoula County includes grizzly bears, bobcats, lynx, otters, and weasels. Quantity and quality of winter range are the most limiting factors in the lifecycle of most big game.¹⁶ Map 13 shows areas of big game winter range. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have also mapped big game winter and summer range on the Flathead Reservation. (Big game hunting on the Reservation is restricted to tribal members only, as guaranteed by the 1855 Treaty of the Hellgate.)

Table 2 summarizes the winter range of several species within the county. Over 70% of winter range is located on private land.¹⁷

Table 3 - Big Game Winter Range
Most of the county's land serves as winter range for a variety of big game, primarily white-tailed deer, mule deer and elk.
 Source: Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

Winter Range	Acres	Percent of Total County Area
White-tailed Deer	543,097	32%
Mule Deer	458,438	27%
Elk	698,580	42%
Moose	125,231	7%
Big Horn Sheep	45,473	2%
Mountain Goat	21,366	1%

Big game hunting is an important part of Missoula County's heritage, culture and economy. Based on its 2014 hunter/angler expenditure survey report, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks estimates that deer and elk hunters log over 100,000 'hunter days' in Missoula County and spend over \$10 million annually.

Projected Trend

Population levels vary among species. Bighorn sheep populations fluctuate in the county and disease has caused recent large die-offs.¹⁸ Black bears are abundant and numbers are expected to remain stable in the county. While white-tailed deer are abundant, mule deer populations have been declining.

Map 13

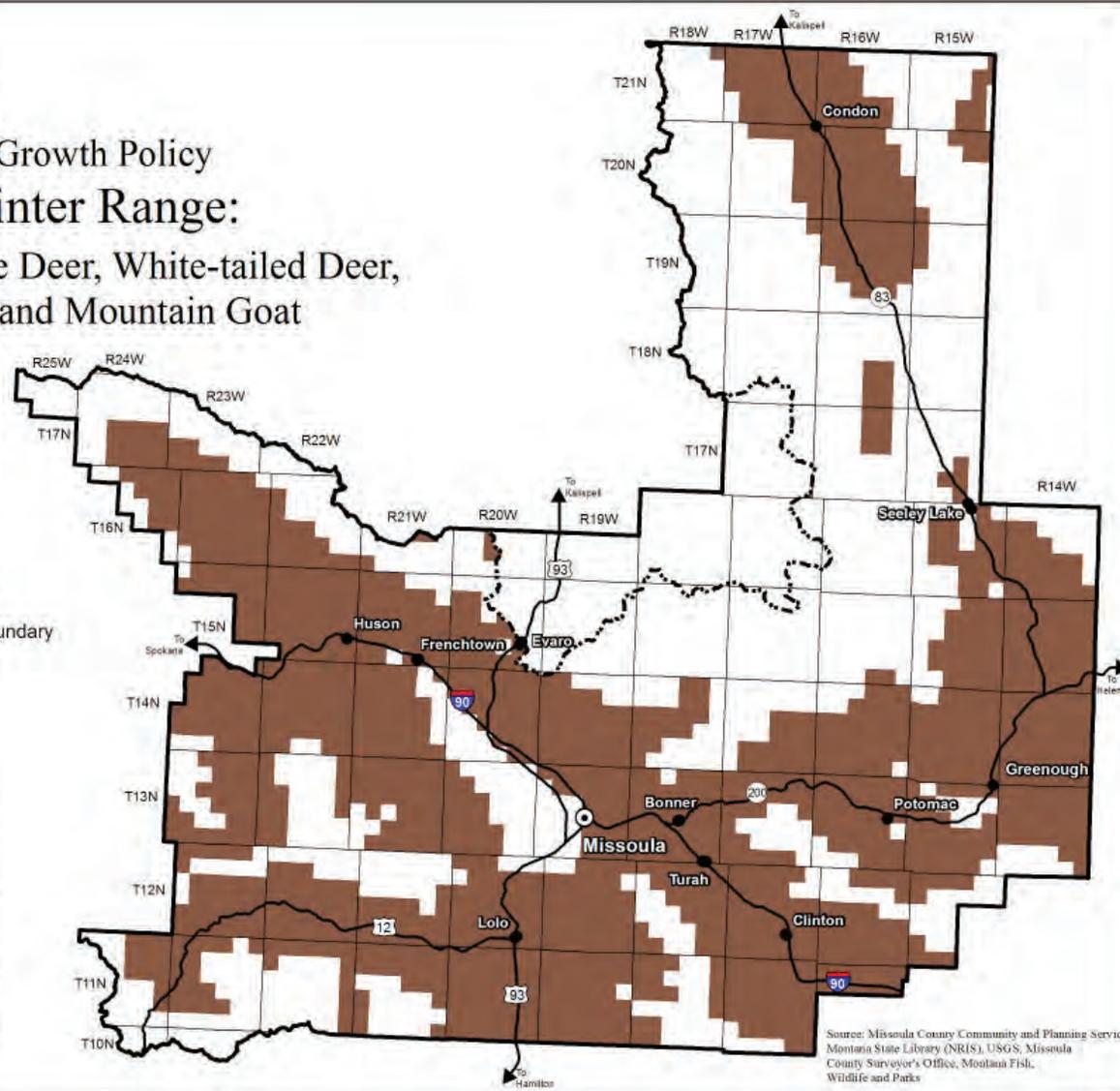
Missoula County Growth Policy
Big Game Winter Range:
 Elk, Moose, Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer,
 Big Horn Sheep, and Mountain Goat

Legend

-  Big Game Winter Range
-  Flathead Reservation Boundary



5 2.5 0 5 Miles



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services
 Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula
 County Surveyor's Office, Montana Fish,
 Wildlife and Parks



Although regional elk populations have remained relatively stable, some local populations have decreased in recent years, likely due to wolves and hunter harvests.¹⁹ Carnivore populations, including wolves and grizzly bears, have increased in recent decades. Wolf populations are expected to decrease in number with active management and hunting. A map of grizzly bear habitat and linkages on Map 14 shows the occupied habitat, recovery areas and linkage zones, which are described as follows:

- Occupied habitat – Areas where grizzly bears are likely to reside on a regular basis. While grizzlies are most likely to be found in this area, bear managers in Missoula County caution that it is possible to encounter a grizzly bear in any but the most urban areas as bears continue to expand their range.
- Recovery areas – Portions of two United States Fish and Wildlife Service designated Recovery Areas occur in Missoula County: the North Continental Divide Ecosystem and the Bitterroot Recovery Area. Grizzly bears currently occupy much of the North Continental Divide Ecosystem, but are not thought to be established in the Bitterroot Recovery Area at this time.

- Linkage Zones – Linkage zones in general are broad areas of seasonal habitat where animals can find the quantity and quality of food shelter and security to meet their needs. Linkage zones for grizzly bears were identified in the Swan Valley, representing areas that provide habitat with low levels of disturbance. These linkage zones support grizzly movement between the Swan and Mission Mountain ranges.

Wildlife populations are threatened by direct habitat loss, habitat fragmentation and increased conflicts with humans that can result from development in or near wildlife habitat and corridors. Conflicts are on the rise, with significant increases occurring since 1999, and this trend is expected to continue as the county's population continues to grow. Continued public and private efforts to conserve wildlife habitat and maintain habitat connectivity will help protect these wildlife populations. Goal 1 and the Land Use Strategy of Chapter 2 outlines actions Missoula County will take to conserve wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Birds

Missoula County bird species habitats include cottonwood gallery forests, conifer forests, riparian willows, various wetland types and grasslands.

Grasslands provide habitat for a small population of Swainson's Hawks (6 to 8 breeding pairs) and wintering raptor species.

The National Audubon Society has identified several important bird areas in Missoula County including the Kelly Island Fishing Access, Maclay Flat, the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area, Mount Jumbo and Pattee Canyon, which provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds. Throughout the county, more than 265 species may be found as year-round residents, winter or summer migrants, or as transient migrants.²⁰

Projected Trend

Bird habitats in the county that are most under threat are wetland and riparian areas and the native grasslands.²¹ The status of these habitat types will be a large factor in the population trends of many bird species in Missoula County.

Fish

Thirty fish species are found in the county, including rainbow trout, brown trout, westslope cutthroat trout (a statewide species of concern), bull trout (a federally-listed threatened species), perch, whitefish, sculpins, and suckers. Nationally significant fisheries in the county include the Blackfoot River,



Map 14

Missoula County Growth Policy Grizzly Bear Habitat and Linkages

Description:
This map depicts areas within Missoula County that have been identified as grizzly bear habitat and critical habitat linkages by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

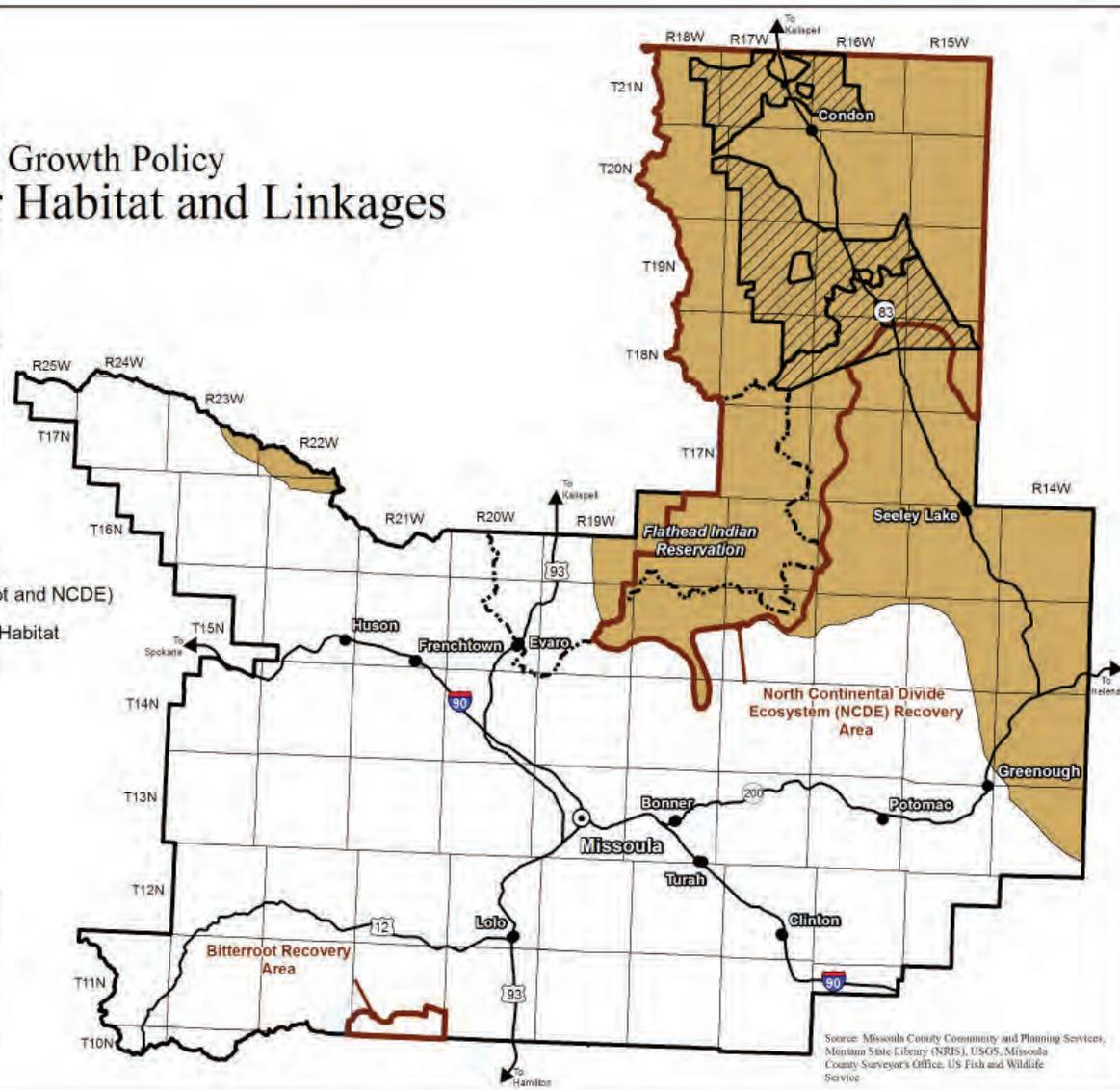
This map is intended as an illustration of areas within the county that may provide grizzly bear habitat or habitat linkages. This general overview is not intended for property specific range identification.

Legend

-  Grizzly Linkage Zones
-  Recovery Areas (Bitterroot and NCDE)
-  Non-Recovery Occupied Habitat



5 2.5 0 5 Miles



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services, Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula County Surveyors Office, US Fish and Wildlife Service



Bitterroot River, middle Clark Fork River, and Rock Creek.

Fishing is a significant part of Missoula County's heritage, culture, and economy. Based on its 2014 hunter/angler expenditure survey report, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks estimates anglers spend more than 250,000 days on the water and more than \$60 million annually in Missoula County.

The spread of non-native fish species has profoundly impacted native fish populations. Since the introduction of northern pike into the Clearwater River watershed within Missoula County, many native fish populations have shown dramatic local declines.

Indirect but significant impacts to streams and fisheries typically accompany development. These include riparian degradation, livestock overgrazing and channel modification. Other activities such as construction of artificial ponds, excessive stream channel crossings, road construction in floodplains, and gravel mining degrade aquatic systems. It is rare for stream habitats and fisheries to remain intact when people inhabit areas that are near or directly adjacent to streams and other surface waters.

Projected Trends

Fish passage barriers on mainstem rivers and tributaries are often identified as limiting factors for fish populations. Over the past decade, many of these obstructions have been removed and fish passage work will continue to be a priority for fisheries enhancement within the county. In spite of these potential improvements, conditions for cold-water fisheries and native fish may face challenges due to climate change and human population growth. Efforts to protect habitat, preserve water quality and quantity, and to recreate are included under Goals 1, 2 and 9 and the Land Use Strategy in Chapter 2.

Air

Over the last few decades, air quality has dramatically improved in Missoula County. Factors responsible for this improvement include the Missoula City-County Air Pollution Control Program (which includes rules that limit residential wood smoke, regulate debris burning, and require paving), changes in industry, and motor vehicle fleet turnover.

As of 2016, Missoula monitors $PM_{2.5}$ (particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 microns or less), PM_{10} (particulate matter with

an aerodynamic diameter of 10 microns or less), and ozone. Missoula ceased monitoring carbon monoxide in 2011 due to extremely low ambient carbon monoxide concentrations.

$PM_{2.5}$

Like many mountain valley communities, Missoula's primary pollutant of concern is $PM_{2.5}$. $PM_{2.5}$ forms as a result of incomplete combustion, and in Missoula County, the primary sources of $PM_{2.5}$ are residential wood smoke in the winter and wildfires in the summer. Figure 6 shows characteristic $PM_{2.5}$ peaks in the winter and summer months.

$PM_{2.5}$ is composed of tiny particulates that can penetrate deep into a person's lung and even pass into the bloodstream. These particulates aggravate asthma and lead to decreased lung function, increased respiratory symptoms, and have been linked to premature death in people with heart or lung disease.

Missoula monitors $PM_{2.5}$ in the City of Missoula (at Boyd Park), Frenchtown, and Seeley Lake. Frenchtown $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations are typically on par with Missoula's.

Residential Wood Smoke

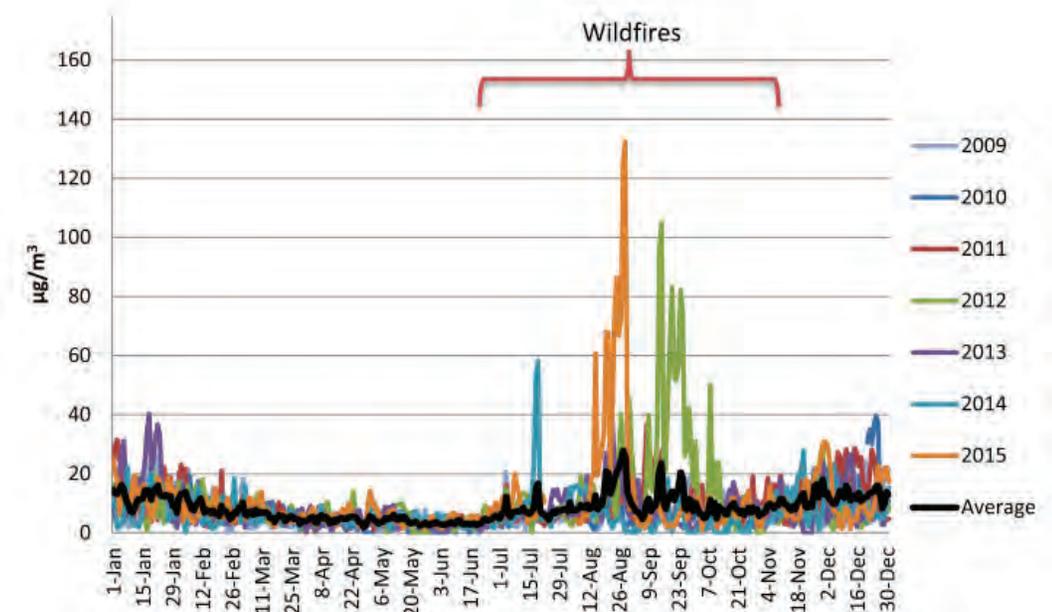
In the winter months, residential wood smoke builds up in mountain valleys



due to inversions that trap cold air and pollutants near the valley floor. Regulations that require the removal of woodstoves in the Missoula Air Stagnation Zone - which includes the City of Missoula and much of the surrounding area - and prohibit the installation of wood stoves or fireplaces in the air stagnation zone has led to steady improvements in winter air quality. Figure 7 shows the Missoula trend of decreasing $PM_{2.5}$ in the winter months, as well as wildfire spikes in the summer months.

Outside the air stagnation zone, many Missoula County residents continue to rely on wood heat. In Seeley Lake, smoke from wood stoves has led to a large number of poor air quality days. In 2010, the Missoula City-County Health Department, with the help of several community members, began raising funds to start replacing inefficient woodstoves with low-emission EPA-certified stoves. By the winter of 2014/2015, more than 160 stoves were exchanged and significant progress was made in improving air quality in the Seeley Lake Valley (Figure 8). Missoula County now has an electronic sign at the Seeley Lake Elementary School to display air quality data and messages encouraging proper wood stove use. The City-County Health Department continues to work with the community to lower wood smoke pollution.

Figure 6 - 24-Hour $PM_{2.5}$ Averages at Boyd Park in Missoula 2009-2015
Missoula Valley's $PM_{2.5}$ levels characteristically peak in the winter and summer months, primarily due to wood burning stoves and wildfires.
Source: Missoula City-County Health Department



Wildfires

Due to the changing climate, wildfire season has become longer and more severe in the western United States. Wildfires are burning more acreage and causing more severe damage than they were in the 1980s and early 1990s. During a bad wildfire year, smoke from these fires is the source of Missoula County's most significant $PM_{2.5}$ pollution.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a product of

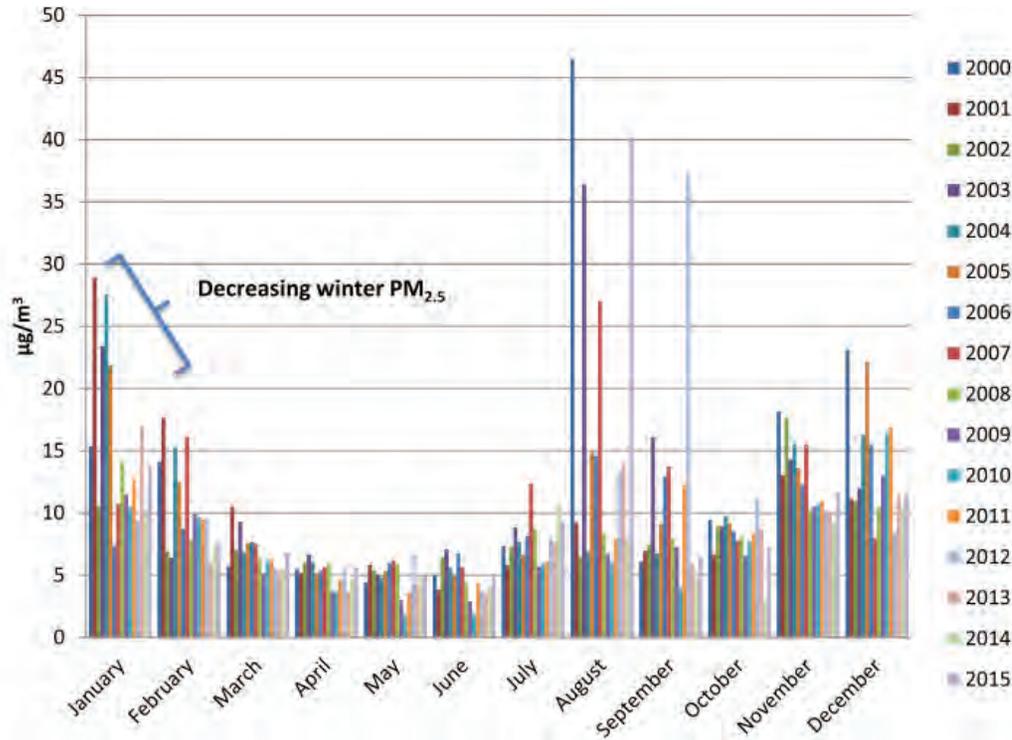
incomplete combustions and the primary source in Missoula County is vehicle traffic. In the 1990s, Missoula initiated an oxygenated fuels program and reconfigured a busy intersection to reduce carbon monoxide pollution. These efforts, in addition to fleet turnover, led to dramatic reductions in carbon monoxide. Missoula is making a maintenance area. Missoula County last violated the federal carbon monoxide standard in 1991.

PM_{10}

PM_{10} includes all particulates that are



Figure 7 - Missoula Monthly Average PM_{2.5} 24-Hour Concentrations 200-2015
Over time, the urban area has decreased winter PM_{2.5} levels through a wood burning stove exchange program. Wildfires, however, continue to contribute heavily in summer.
 Source: Missoula City-County Health Department



10 microns in diameter or smaller. The primary sources of PM₁₀ in Missoula County are road dust, residential wood smoke, and wildfires. Thanks to paving and woodstove regulations in the air stagnation zone, Missoula last violated the PM₁₀ federal standard in 1989. PM₁₀ concentrations have been relatively stable (and well below the federal standard) for the past several years. Missoula is currently seeking redesignation from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from

non-attainment to attainment. The request is scheduled to be considered in 2017. If Missoula is redesignated, the area will enter a 20-year maintenance period for PM₁₀.

Missoula monitors PM₁₀ in the City of Missoula (at Boyd Park).

Ozone

Ground level ozone is created by chemical reaction between oxides

of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds in the presence of sunlight. Emissions from industrial facilities and electric utilities, motor vehicle exhaust, gasoline vapors, and chemical solvents are some of the major sources of oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality has been monitoring ozone at Boyd Park in Missoula since 2010. While concentrations increase in the late spring and summer months, ozone levels in Missoula are well below the federal standard.

Projected Trends

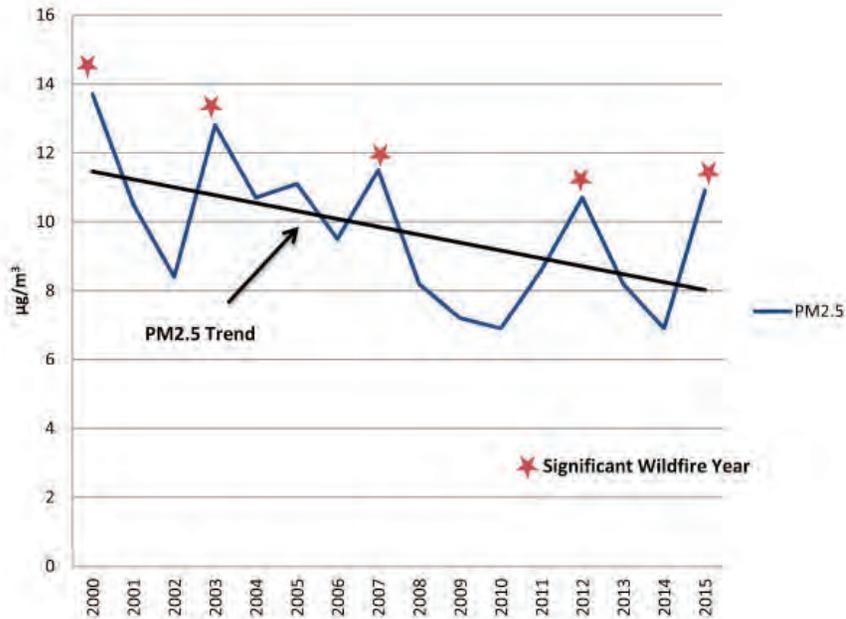
Overall, PM_{2.5} pollution in the Missoula urban area and Seeley Lake is on a downward trend (See Figures 8 and 9). This is due to the reduction of residential wood smoke and corresponding improved winter air quality. However, wildfire smoke is a continual summer threat and the general improvement may be overshadowed by these high pollution spikes. PM₁₀ concentrations are expected to remain relatively stable. However, PM₁₀ concentrations will spike in the summer months due to wildfire smoke intrusions. Ozone pollution is not expected to increase significantly in the near future. As the vehicle fleet continues to turn over and



Figure 8 - Number of Winter Days that Exceeded the Federal PM_{2.5} Standard in Seeley Lake 2010-2015
Overall, air pollution in the Seeley Lake area is decreasing.
Source: Missoula City-County Health Department



Figure 9 - Missoula Annual Average PM_{2.5} Concentration 200-2015
While air pollution in general is decreasing in the Missoula urban area, particularly significant wildfire years continue to impact reduction goals.
Source: Missoula City-County Health Department



more efficient vehicles take the roads, carbon monoxide levels in Missoula are expected to continue to decline.

Air quality in Missoula County is expected to continue improving. A robust air quality control program and the availability of cleaner motor vehicles and more efficient wood stoves are providing cleaner air for a growing population. In addition, local projects (such as free mass transit in the Missoula urban area) are helping clean up Missoula’s skies.

Actions to be taken by Missoula County and its partners to address air quality can be found in Chapter 2 under Goals 1, 4, 7 and 12.

Land Conservation

Protection of ecological, agricultural, scenic, and cultural resources can be achieved through land conservation measures on both public and private land. As summarized below, conservation easements are one tool for land protection. Other conservation tools, such as land donation and land purchases are used throughout the county. These include public/private partnerships such as the Montana Legacy Project, which transferred 230,000 acres of land from Plum Creek Timber Company to The Nature



Conservancy, most of which was eventually transferred into public ownership. Missoula County voters approved a \$10 million Open Space Bond in 2006 in Missoula County, with half allocated to the county and half allocated to the City of Missoula for use in the urban area.

The amount of land in Missoula County in conservation easements has been growing steadily. As of December 2015, there were 205 filed conservation easements on more than 55,444 acres.²² The results of private/public land acquisition projects have more frequently resulted in thousands of acres of land in Missoula County shifting out of Plum Creek (now Weyerhaeuser) ownership in the last 10 years. The Montana Legacy Project involved conserving more than 223,000 acres and the Clearwater-Blackfoot Project involved 117,000 acres, the outcome of which has not been finalized. Private land conservation efforts are affected by the economy and the availability of private and public funding.

As of December 2015, 23 county open space bond projects had been completed (including two jointly funded with the city) comprising 20 conservation easements and three acquisitions. When completed, these projects will directly protect 11,564

acres, and with the additional leverage provided as match for other projects, nearly 29,621 acres will be protected.

Projected Trends

The amount of land in conservation easements has been increasing in the county. With less than approximately \$2.8 million of the \$10 million 2006 Open Space Bond remaining, more land is expected to be conserved using this tool. Efforts to continue conservation of vital natural resources and working

lands are listed in Chapter 2, Goal 1.

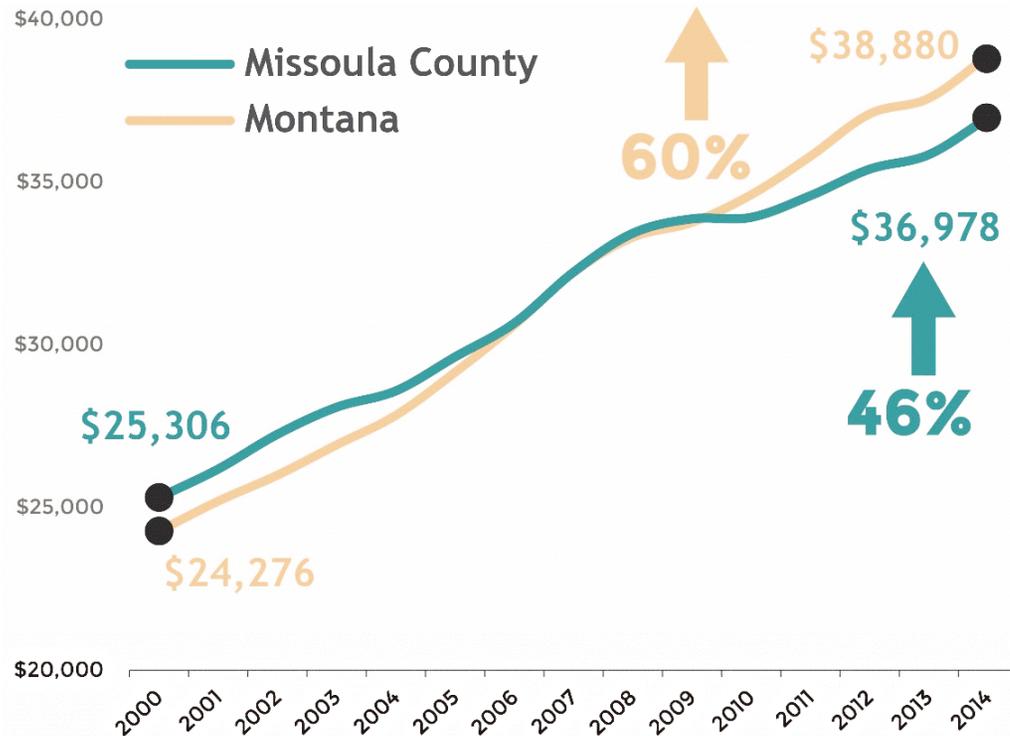
LIVELIHOODS

Outside the City of Missoula the local economy was historically fueled by timber production and agriculture. While these industries are still important, the economy is changing rapidly. Today, jobs in health care, education, retail and wholesale trade, tourism, government, professional, technical and

Figure 10 - Average Annual Wage 200-2014

Before 2008, the county exceeded the average state wage; however, since then, wages in Missoula County have not kept up with average statewide increases.

Source: Montana Department of Labor and Industry





business services, and construction are the largest income generators. Many of these jobs require education and specialized training beyond high school level. Fortunately, Missoula County has

a strong educational culture (94.5% of residents hold a high school diploma or higher) and a strong education system to help prepare the workforce to serve the growing demand for goods and services.

Wages and Industry

Wages in Missoula County have increased by 46% since 2000, but they have not matched the rate of increase across the State of Montana which is 60% (Figure 10). Wages in Missoula County vary by industry and job type. Wages are higher than average in the non-service and government sectors, but below average in categories such as the leisure and hospitality industries (Table 3). The Missoula County economy added almost 8,500 jobs from 2001 to 2013.

The types of jobs in Missoula County have also changed. The greatest numbers of jobs created between 2001 and 2013 were in health care and social assistance; administrative and waste services; government; accommodation and food services; real estate, rental and leasing; and professional and technical services. The biggest job losses occurred in manufacturing, construction, transportation and warehousing, information, wholesale trade, and farm (Figure 11).

By 2013 Missoula County was starting to recover from the Great Recession. Consequently, some of the job gains since that time are not accounted for in the data. From 2001 – 2013 total job earnings increased by approximately

Table 4 - Average Annual Wages By Industry in Missoula County - 2014
Wages in the county vary by industry and job type, but are generally higher than average in non-service and government sectors.
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Industry	Avg. Annual Wages	Percent Above/ Below Avg.
Total	\$36,978	
Private	\$35,244	-5%
Non-Services Related	\$43,563	18%
Natural Resources and Mining	\$52,952	43%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting	\$52,583	42%
Mining	\$57,554	56%
Construction	\$44,590	21%
Manufacturing	\$40,002	8%
Services Related	\$34,267	-7%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	\$32,668	-12%
Financial Activities	\$50,927	38%
Professional and Business Services	\$41,942	13%
Education and Health Services	\$41,949	13%
Leisure and Hospitality	\$15,912	-57%
Other Services	\$25,157	-32%
Government	\$45,815	24%
Federal Government	\$69,194	87%
State Government	\$41,775	13%
Local Government	\$42,185	14%



12%, with the largest increases in mining and service related industries (Figure 12).

Business Activity in Missoula County Communities

The City of Missoula is the economic center for not only the county, but also the region. There were more than 76,000 jobs in Missoula County in 2013, but less than 6,000 jobs were located outside of the city. In addition, almost 3,000 people work out of their homes running trucking, construction, and professional services firms, etc. These businesses supplement the traditional “brick-and-mortar” establishments such as restaurants, gas stations and stores, providing communities with vital and diverse economic activity.

Accommodating low-impact, home-based businesses in area plans and zoning will help to keep the county’s unincorporated communities strong.

Agricultural Economic Activity

Agriculture contributes to the more than \$38 million in wages paid by the agriculture and related services, forestry, fishing, and hunting industries in the county. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s 2012 Census of Agriculture reports that the number

of farms in Missoula County increased between 1974 and 2012 from 310 to 637 (Table 4). Although the total number of farms has increased, the size of the average farm has decreased by almost 50%.

Table 5 - Farming in Missoula County 1974-2012
While Missoula County’s number of farms has increased over time, the average farm size has decreased.

Source: USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture.

	Number of Farms	Total Acres in Farms	Avg. Farm Acreage
1974	310	262,024	845
1997	608	269,657	443
2002	641	258,315	403
2007	699	281,893	403
2012	637	247,141	388

Almost 38% of farms in the county now sell less than \$1,000 worth of agricultural products in a year, and most proprietors do not make their primary living from farming or even produce the majority of their own food. Many of the county’s farms may primarily be rural residences with agriculture playing a secondary role on the property.²³

Direct markets in Missoula such as the Missoula Farmer’s Market, Clark Fork Market, sales to grocery stores, and food being sold through the Western Montana Growers cooperative, contribute to the

agricultural economic activity within Missoula County. The largest agricultural sales within Missoula County are cattle and calves (\$8,148,000); nursery and greenhouse sales (\$1,945,000); and crops and hay (\$1,593,000).

Residents of Missoula County have consistently noted that local agriculture is important for maintaining a resilient local economy and conserving the history and culture of the region. The county will support conservation of agricultural resources and expansion of markets as outlined in Goals 1, 5 and 7 and the Land Use Strategy in Chapter 2.

Timber and Wood Products Economic Activity

The timber and wood products industry drove the Missoula County economy throughout the 20th century. Although the industry is now far less dominant, it still plays an important role and Missoula County has timber resources that can provide an economic base. Timber is harvested on private, state, and federal lands and processed at the Pyramid Mill in Seeley Lake and Roseburg Mill in Missoula. In 2013, the industry paid more than \$34 million in wages and employed almost 700 workers in forestry, logging, support activities, and wood products manufacturing.



Economic Development

Missoula County is a member of the Bitter Root Economic Development District, Inc., the federally-designated economic development district for the Western Montana Region. The district developed and maintains the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Missoula County and Mineral County. Missoula County contracts with the district to administer Big Sky Trust Fund

Category I Job Creation Grants from the Montana Department of Commerce for eligible businesses in Missoula County. Missoula County also contracted with BREDD to do the Broadband Master Plan and Industrial Lands Assessment.

The County is also an investor and an active participant in Missoula Economic Partnership, is a public-private partnership created to connect businesses with the programs,

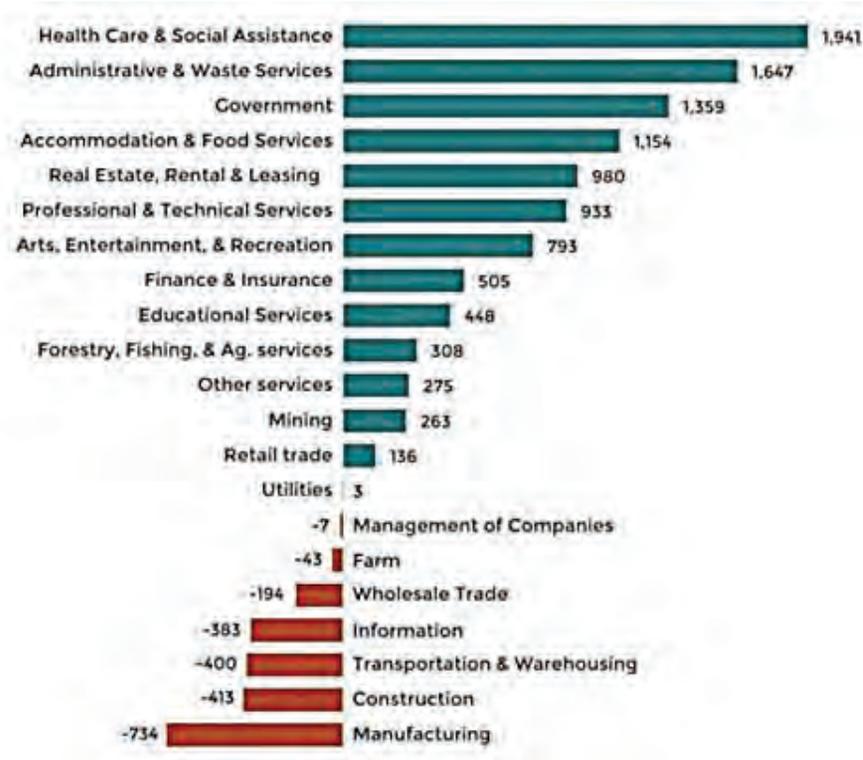
resources and workforce to enhance their success.

Industrial Lands

Missoula County commissioned an Industrial Lands Study to identify and analyze currently or formerly used industrial properties that could be re-developed into industrial and commercial sites. The survey evaluated 38 locations outside of the city limits. The Industrial Lands Study included factors such as demographic, economic and labor force trends, transportation accessibility, utility infrastructure, and regulatory, and environmental opportunities and constraints. These factors were applied to each property to characterize the sites' current status as ranging from 'decision ready' (presently suited for re-development) to 'industrial reserve' (impediments need to be overcome prior to re-development).

The Industrial Lands Study indicates that the Missoula Development Park, Bonner Mill Site, Frenchtown Mill Site and the Wye are ready for re-development because they have sufficient supply or access to transportation and utilities and/or have limited environmental constraints. The Missoula and Bonner sites have additional capacity for further industrial business. The Frenchtown site is awaiting environmental and projected land use studies to be completed before re-development can take place.

Figure 11 - Change in Number of Jobs By Industry in Missoula County 2001-2013
Missoula County's job market has changed over time, shifting from production to service, which reflects a nation trend.
 Source US Bureau of Economic Analysis



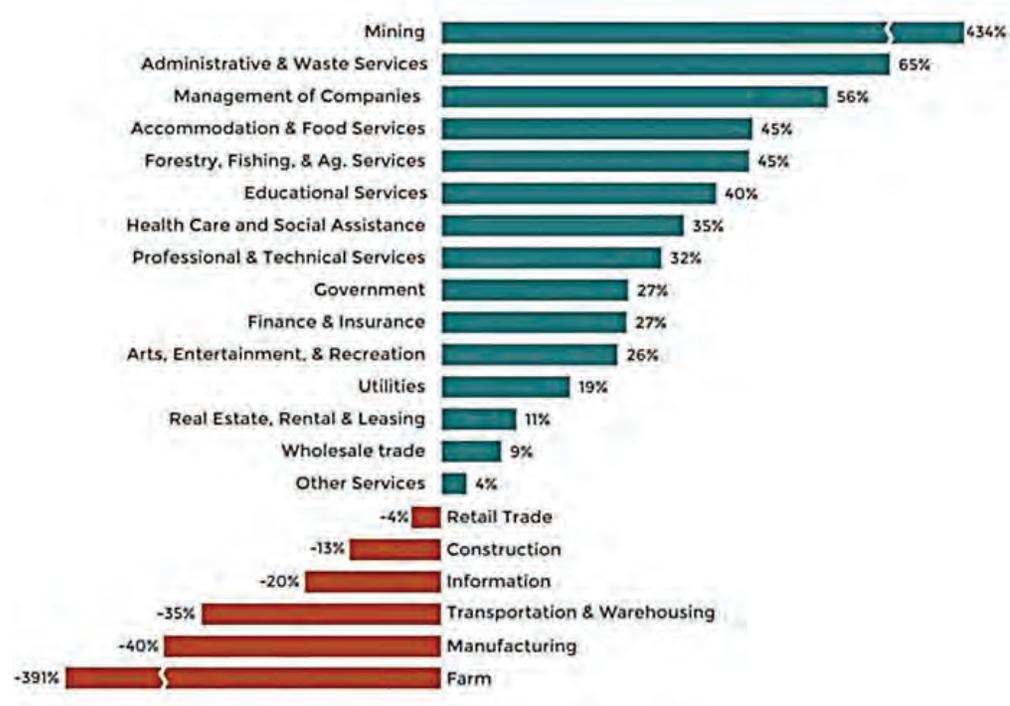


The study states that Missoula County has an excess supply of industrially-zoned lands given current market absorption rates. All of the potential sites could be redeveloped to accommodate non-industrial/non-manufacturing uses that are current growth sectors such as health care services, accommodations and food services, retail trade, and professional scientific and technical services. Current county zoning regulations may hinder some conversion to non-industrial business activity and the study recommended updating the zoning to allow land uses that reflect current and future demands. Actions the county plans to take to address these issues are located primarily under Goal 5 in Chapter 2.

Targeted Economic Development Districts and Tax Increment Financing

The State of Montana’s Urban Renewal Law (Montana Code Annotated 7-15-4279) provides opportunities for cities and counties to create targeted economic development districts with the purpose of developing infrastructure to encourage the location and retention of value-adding industries or projects. Targeted economic development districts must have a comprehensive development plan, be located in an area that is deficient in infrastructure improvements, and must be zoned appropriately for the intended uses.

Figure 12 - Percent Change in Total Earnings By Industry in Missoula County 2001-2013
Since 2001, the county has experienced the greatest increase in earnings in mining and service-related industries.
 Source US Bureau of Economic Analysis



Local governments may use tax increment financing to finance the development of infrastructure needed by industry within the districts. Tax increment financing allows cities and counties to direct new tax dollars that accrue from development within the district and reinvest those funds in infrastructure for that district for a limited period of time. Tax increment financing does not increase property taxes, but it affects the way new tax revenues, once collected, are distributed. Tax payers within the district pay the same amount as they would pay if the property were located outside of the district, but virtually all of the resulting new property tax dollars can be directed to redevelopment and economic revitalization activities within the area in which they are generated. Funds generated from tax increment financing districts can be used directly for projects and also to leverage state and federal grants.



Tax increment financing is an important fiscal tool that allows local governments to finance certain kinds of development costs. Bonds may be sold to finance re-development efforts based on anticipated increases in property taxes collected in that locale. The actual increment of increased tax revenue from the area is used to pay off the bonds. Opportunities exist for the establishment of districts for the use of tax increment financing, particularly in conjunction with superfund and brownfield sites. There is an industrial tax increment financing at the Bonner Mill Site and a targeted economic development districts across the river from the Bonner Mill Site on industrial lands.

Counties have the ability to establish three types of TIF districts – industrial, technology, and aerospace transportation and technology. Industrial districts must be zoned for light or heavy industrial use in accordance with the growth policy, and have as their purpose the development of infrastructure to encourage the growth and retention of secondary, value-added industries.

Technology districts must, through the employment of knowledge or labor, add value to a product, process, or export service that results in the creation of

new wealth of which at least 50% of the sales of the business or organization occur outside of Montana.

Aerospace transportation and technology districts must be designed to develop infrastructure intended to encourage the location and retention of aerospace transportation and technology development projects in the state. Missoula County intends to apply these re-development tools as opportunities arise to spur economic development.

Projected trends

Due to the baby boom generation exiting the workforce over the next 20 years, Missoula County, like the state as a whole, will have to attract a qualified workforce to meet the needs of a growing population. According to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry’s Labor Day Report, unemployment rates are projected to drop to 1 to 2% over the next 10 to 20 years. This is likely to put upward pressure on wages as workers will be relatively scarce.

Areas of growth appear to be health care services, accommodations and food services, retail trade, and professional scientific and technical services. Additionally, efforts to support local agriculture and other value-adding

industries, education and job training programs are expected to increase.

One of the implementation actions of this growth policy is to work closely with economic development agencies to develop a targeted economic development plan focusing on the rural communities of Missoula County (See Goal 5 in Chapter 2). Please see Goals 5, 6 and 7 in Chapter 2 for Missoula County’s approach to address economic development challenges and opportunities.

COMMUNITIES

The distinct communities of Missoula County extend along highway corridors and river valleys. Each community has a unique history and identity. This section focuses on the portions of Missoula County outside of the City of Missoula. In some cases information about the city is included to provide context. This section presents population growth, housing needs, land ownership and land use patterns, local services, public facilities, and cultural resources.

Missoula County’s population is expected to grow significantly over the next 20 years. In order to meet the challenge of accommodating growth while conserving vital natural resources,



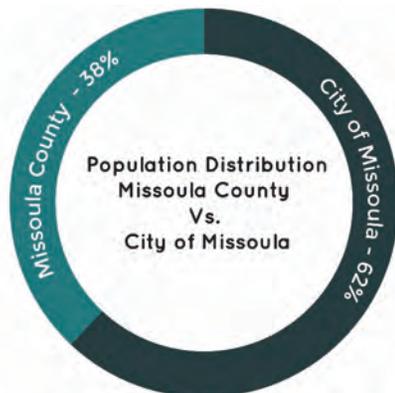
providing amenities, and maintaining the high quality of life that makes our communities special, Missoula County and its partners must provide attractive and functional places for people to live, work and recreate.

Population

The 2015 population of Missoula County is estimated to be 116,076 people, an increase of 6,847 people since the 2010 Census.²⁴

Map 15 provides a snapshot of the overall population distribution based on 2010 Census figures. The map shows the vast majority of Missoula County residents live within or in close proximity to the City of Missoula.

Figure 13 - Population Distribution Missoula County Vs. City of Missoula
Continuing the current trend, the population is split with about two-thirds in the city and one-third in the county.
 Source: American Community Survey



Population Projections

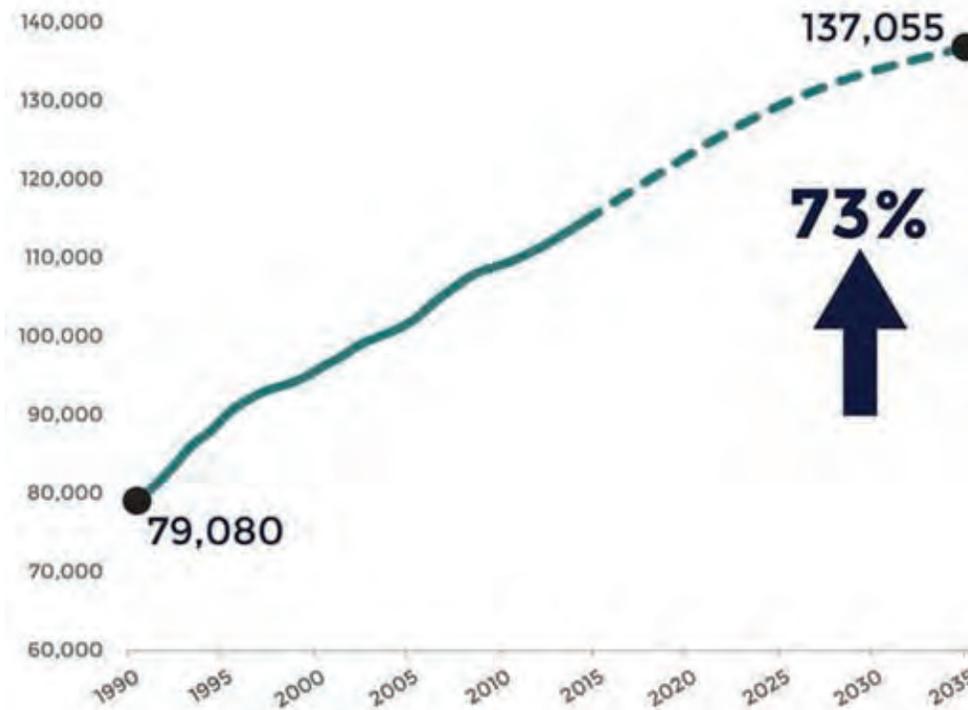
The Missoula County population is projected to be 137,055 in 2035, an increase of 20,979 persons in both the city and unincorporated areas over a 20-year period.²⁵ Figure 13 shows past and projected population growth.

We know growth is coming, but where will it occur? The city is a focal point of employment and education and has stated its intent to accept several thousand new residents. Based on

current population distribution and assuming 65 to 70% of new residents locate within the city and 30 to 35% locate within the unincorporated areas, Missoula County can plan for an additional 6,300 to 7,400 new residents over the next 20 years. (See Figure 14)

Missoula County intends to guide the majority of new growth within and adjacent to existing communities through efforts to help develop communities as attractive and functional

Figure 14 - Missoula County Population Growth and Projections
The county's population has grown consistently over time and is expected to continue to grow, adding nearly 21,000 people in 20 years. Source: Montana Department of Commerce with permission from Regional Economic Models, Inc.





Map 15

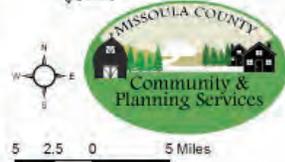
Missoula County Growth Policy 2010 Population Distribution in Planning Regions

Population Distribution

● 1 Dot = 1 Person

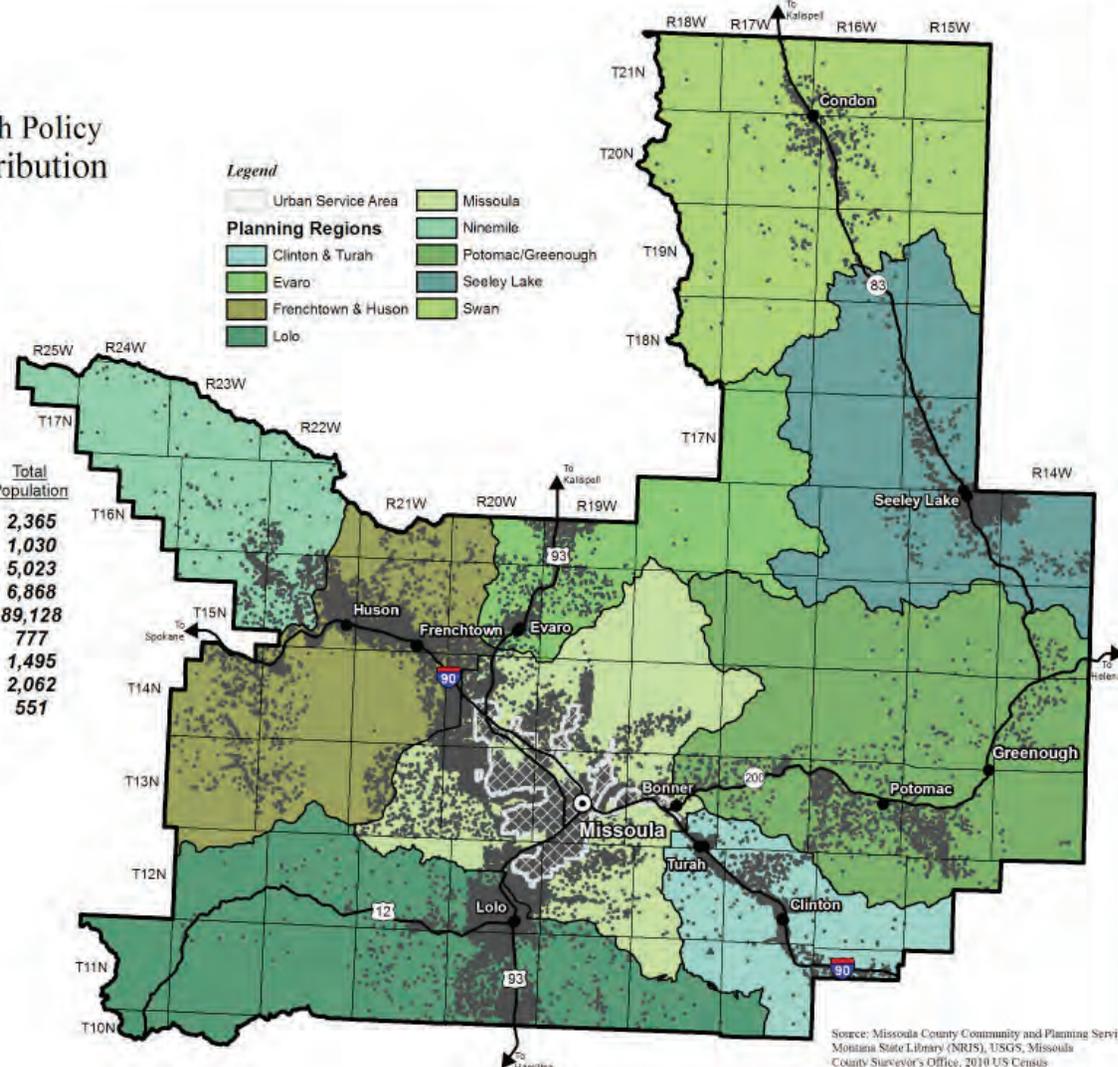
Dots are placed based on density of Census Blocks, not an indicator of exact locations of population within the Blocks.

Planning Region	Population Density (sq. mi)	Total Population
Clinton & Turah	16.1	2,365
Evaro	6.1	1,030
Frenchtown & Huson	17.4	5,023
Lolo	18.6	6,868
Missoula	263.0	89,128
Ninemile	4.2	777
Potomac/Greenough	3.4	1,495
Seeley Lake	6.8	2,062
Swan	1.5	551



Legend

- Urban Service Area
- Planning Regions:
 - Clinton & Turah
 - Evaro
 - Frenchtown & Huson
 - Lolo
 - Missoula
 - Ninemile
 - Potomac/Greenough
 - Seeley Lake
 - Swan



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services, Montana State Library (NRS), USGS, Missoula County Surveyor's Office, 2010 US Census



places with necessary infrastructure, housing and services.

Aging Population

In Missoula County, even more so than the rest of the United States, the population is aging. Families across the county are having fewer children and now living longer lives. Figure 15 shows the portion of the population under 18 years of age has decreased while the population over 65 continues to increase, both in total numbers and as a percentage of the overall population.

Figure 16 shows that while all age groups are projected to increase numerically, the largest percentage gains are likely to occur in the 65+ age group. More senior-friendly housing and functional communities with grocery stores, pedestrian facilities, medical care and transportation, and other services will be necessary in the coming years to accommodate the aging population. A combination of efforts with partners from the public, private and non-profit sectors will be necessary to provide for our aging population.

Housing

In 2014, there were an estimated 51,411 housing units in Missoula County, including 30,682 located within

Figure 15 - Population Age Group Changes 1990-2014

Over time, the population younger than 18 has decreased while the population older than 65 has increased.

Source: Decennial Census and American Community Survey

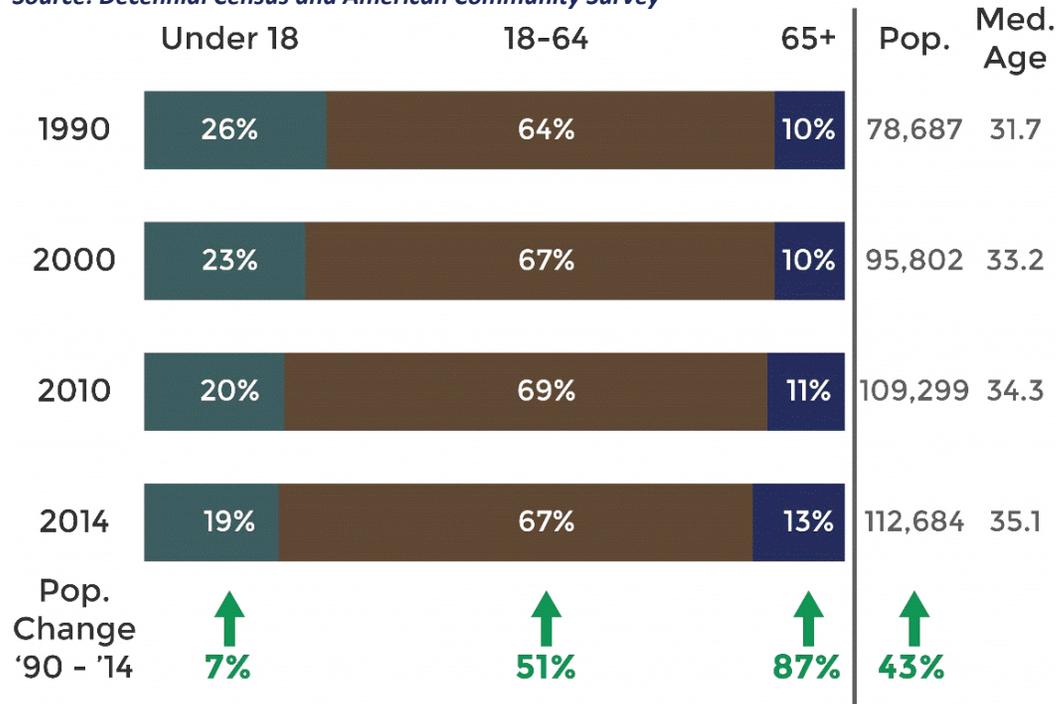


Figure 16 - Projected Population By Age Group 2035

Over the next 20 years, most population growth will occur in the older than 65 age group.

Source: Decennial Census and American Community Survey





the City of Missoula. Housing within the County consists of single-family units (62%), multi-family units (28%), and mobile homes (10%). Missoula County's housing occupancy rate is 56% owner-occupied units, 35% renter-occupied units, and approximately 9% vacant (including seasonal and temporarily vacant homes).²⁶ Of the total vacancies, the rental market typically averages less than a 5% vacancy rate at a given time, which puts upward pressure on rent and sale prices.

Housing Costs

In Missoula County, the median housing value (cost) is far higher than the State of Montana. From 2009 to 2013, the median housing cost for owner-occupied units (typically single-family detached structures) was estimated at approximately \$237,500, while the median cost across the state was \$184,200.²⁷ For about 28% of the homeowners and 54% of renters, the cost of housing exceeds 30% of their gross monthly incomes, which is considered a cost-burden by

the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Figure 17). These figures point to a significant need for new housing that accommodates a range of incomes in both the Missoula urban area and in and around the unincorporated communities. Goals 8, 9 and 10 and the Land Use Strategy in Chapter 2 focus on actions Missoula County will take with its partners to provide opportunity for a wide range of housing choices.

Household Composition

Between 2000 and 2014, the average household size in Missoula County decreased from 2.4 to 2.35 persons.²⁸ During that same time, the percent of single person households increased by 5%, while the percent of 3 and 4+ person households decreased (Figure 18).

Figure 17 - Homeowner Costs and Rent as a Percent of Income 2014
More than a quarter of Missoula County homeowners and half of renters pay more than 30% of their income for housing costs, making them cost-burdened.
 Source: American Community Survey

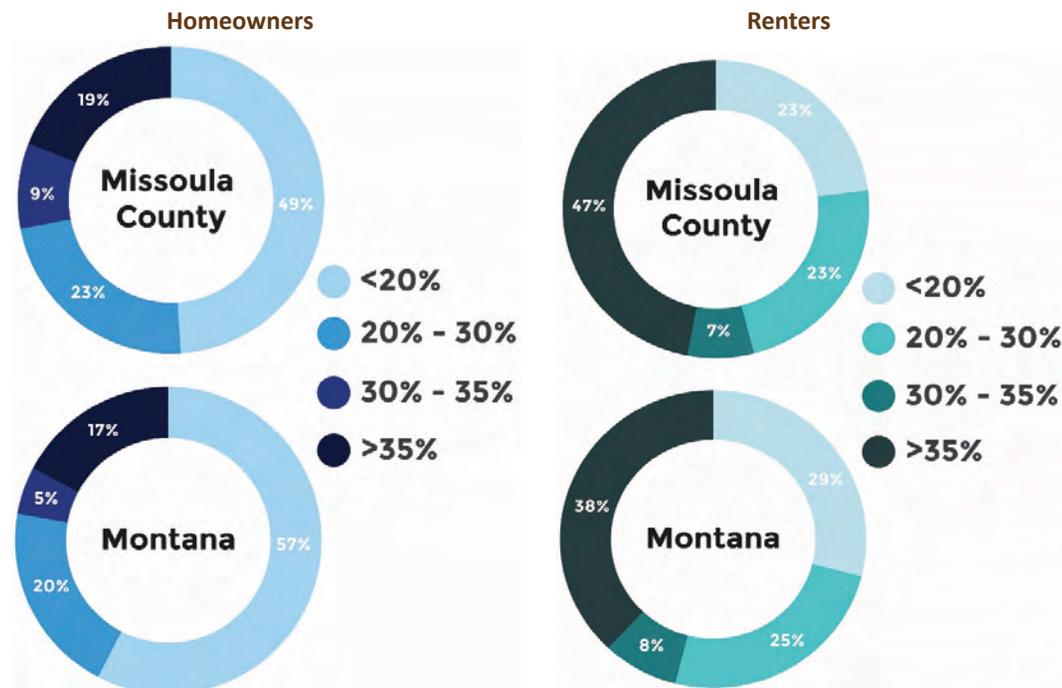


Table 6 - Changes in Household Composition
Slightly more than half of county households consist of two or more people, a small decrease since 2000. Family households with children has decreased, whereas households with one or more individuals 65+ has increased.
 Source: Decennial Census and American Community Survey

	2000	2014
Households (HH)	38,493	46,407
Family HH	60%	55%
Family HH w/ Children <18	49%	43%
HH w/ >1 Individual 65+	18%	24%



As shown in Table 5, as of 2014, 55% of all households in Missoula County were family households with two or more people related by birth, marriage or adoption, down from 60% in 2000. Of those family households, 43% had children under the age of 18, down from 49% in 2000.

At the same time, the percent of households with one or more person over the age of 65 increased from 18% in 2000 to 24% in 2014. All of these figures indicate that household size is decreasing in Missoula County, with an increasing share of households with individuals over the age of 65.

Projected Trends

Due in part to the aging population and family decisions to have fewer children, the average household size is expected to decrease to approximately 2.3 people per household. Based on household size and population estimates, Missoula County (outside of the city) will need between 2,740 and 3,220 new housing units by 2035. Efforts to provide smaller and senior friendly housing within and around our communities will be important to meet the expected demand.

Housing costs are high in Missoula County. With this range of new

Figure 18 - Change in Household Size 2000-2014

While household size has decreased slightly, the number of single person households in Missoula County has grown, following the national trend.

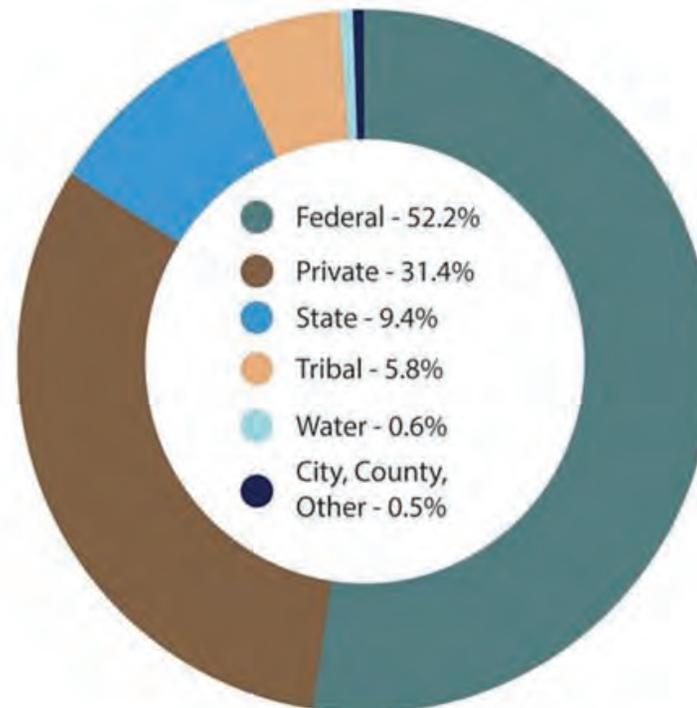
Source: American Community Survey



Figure 19 - Land Ownership in Missoula County

Most of the county's lands are managed by local, state and federal government, with half of the land in the county owned by the U.S. Forest Service.

Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services





households anticipated, housing costs as a percentage of income can only be expected to increase unless significant new supply across the spectrum of price ranges is developed.

Land Ownership

The total area of Missoula County is approximately 1,675,584 acres. Almost 62% of the land is managed by state, federal and local governments, with tribal lands accounting for an additional 5.8% (Figure 19). The U.S. Forest Service is the largest landowner, with 50.8% of the Missoula County land area, followed by the State of Montana at 9.4%.

Approximately 31.4% of the county is privately owned with the largest private landowner being The Nature Conservancy at 9.3%. Weyerhaeuser also has significant private land holdings. Approximately 19.5% of the county land area can be considered private and non-corporate.

Private land ownership in the county has decreased from 736,648 acres in 2005 to 526,635 acres in 2015. This is largely a result of a transfer of Plum Creek Timber Company (now Weyerhaeuser) land to the U.S. Forest Service, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, City of Missoula, the Nature Conservancy, and other private

owners via the Montana Legacy Project and the Clearwater-Blackfoot Project. The land transfer is intended to protect fish and wildlife habitat, maintain productive working forests, and provide public access for outdoor recreation activities. Map 16 depicts land ownership in Missoula County.

Projected Trend

The mix of land ownership is still in transition. The transfer of private land to public ownership is expected to slow with the completion of the Montana Legacy and the Clearwater-Blackfoot Projects. However, there will still be a transition of land from ownership by The Nature Conservancy to public, and to a lesser extent private, ownership as part of the Clearwater-Blackfoot Project

Development Patterns

Most of the subdivision and development activity in Missoula County has historically occurred in the valleys near existing communities, a pattern Missoula County seeks to continue in accommodating future growth. From 2000 to 2010, almost 80% of new housing units were built in the Missoula urban area (city and county) and, more recently, construction of multi-family units in this area has been on the rise.

Missoula County adopted a building

permit program in 2006 to provide for public safety and consumer protection. In conjunction with the efforts of the private development industry, subdivision, zoning and floodplain regulations ensure our communities are reasonably well planned. The Land Use Designation map (Map 18) and local area plans also guide development.

Subdivision Activity

Subdivision activity provides a snapshot of current and future development patterns. From 2005 through 2014, the county and the city preliminarily approved 3,559 lots on 4,510 acres

Table 7 - Subdivisions By Region
Regionally, most subdivision development has occurred in the Missoula Valley.
Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services

	Lots	Acres
Missoula Valley	3,041	1,986
Frenchtown & Huson	183	232
Lolo	163	1,040
Clinton & Turah	66	504
Swan Valley	44	481
Seeley Lake	44	194
Potomac/Greenough	16	63
Ninemile	2	10



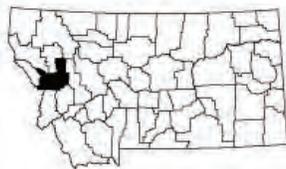
Map 16

Missoula County Growth Policy Land Ownership

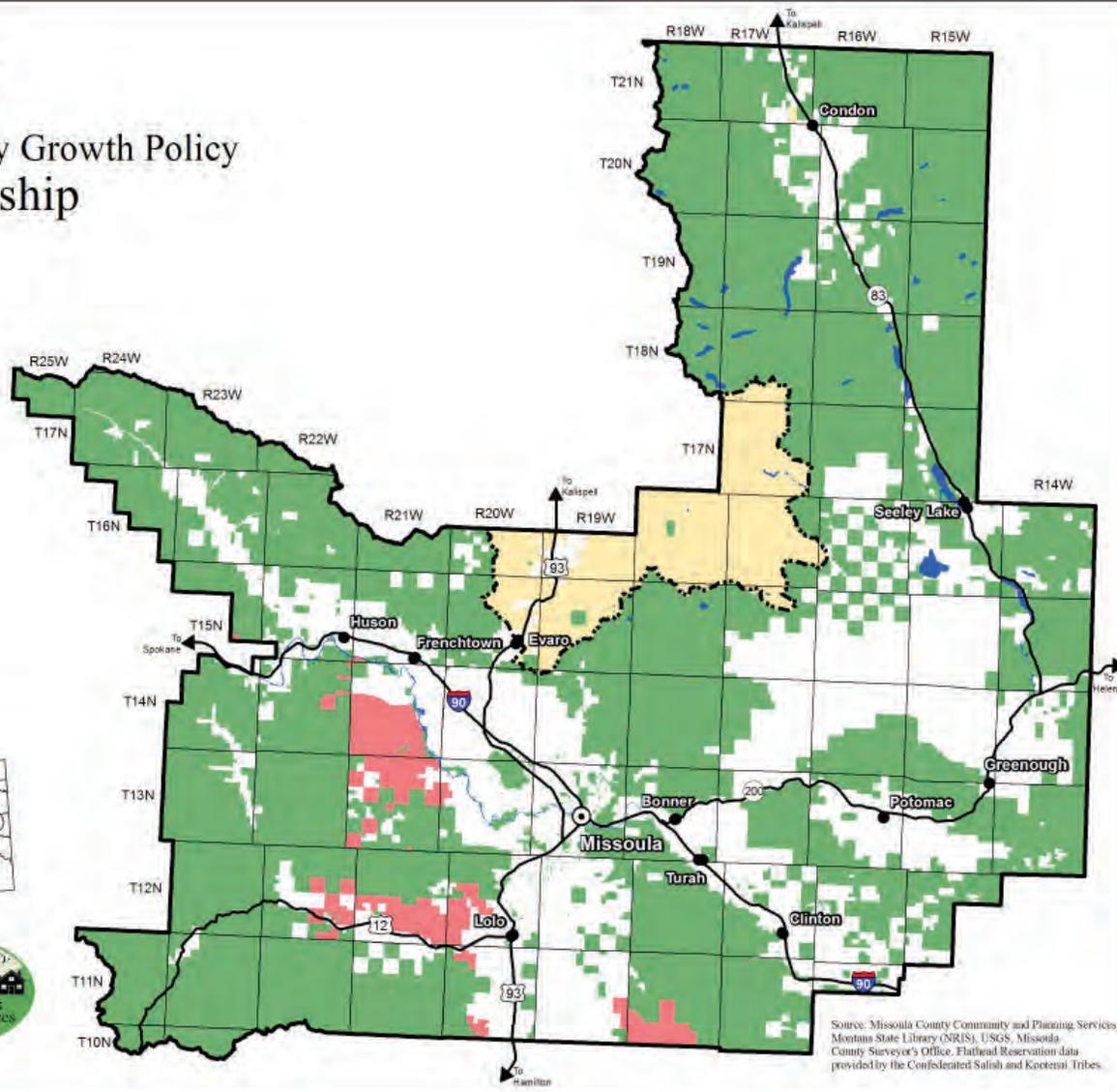
Legend

General Ownership (April 2016)

-  Private
-  Tribal
-  Public
-  Weyerhaeuser
-  Water



5 2.5 0 5 Miles



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services, Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula County Surveyor's Office, Flathead Reservation data provided by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.



(Table 6). Although precise figures are not available, many of these lots have yet to be developed and several of the subdivisions have not received final approval due to the recent economic recession and slow-down in construction. Since 2005, most development has been in the Missoula Valley.

Zoning

Zoning regulates the density and types of land uses that are permitted on a property. About 7% of land outside of the City of Missoula is currently zoned. Within the city, 96% of the land is zoned. Missoula County first adopted a zoning resolution in 1976. Missoula County planners intend to update the zoning resolution to address several of the goals and objectives in this growth policy, as well as to generally modernize the document.

Land Use Designation Maps

Land use designation maps are another indicator of a community's future development potential. The current Missoula County Land Use Designation Map (Map 18) incorporates designations from local area plans that have been adopted over the years, as well as designations for portions of the County without area plans that were originally adopted in 1975 and re-adopted in 2002. Please see the Land Use Strategy at the end of Chapter 2 for a discussion of how

the county's Land Use Designation Maps are planned to be updated.

Urban Fringe Development Area Project

The 2008 Urban Fringe Development Area Project analyzed where additional residential growth might occur within the Missoula urban services area with particular emphasis on potential growth on lands between the city limits and the Missoula Urban Service Area boundary.²⁹ The project provided city and county governments with recommendations to accommodate residential growth to 2028.³⁰

Based on building permit data and population trends, the Missoula urban area will grow at an average rate between 1% and 2% per year. As a result, the Missoula Urban Service Area will have to accommodate approximately 15,000 new dwelling units by 2028 in accordance with adopted policies applicable to the areas.³¹ A map in the fringe area document shows the preferred residential development allocation within the Missoula Urban Services Area. (See Map 3 in Chapter 3)

The 2012 Urban Fringe Developed Area Yearbook showed that housing growth slowed to 1.1% annually in the last five years, which is less than the projected 1.5% Census growth rate. During this

time period, 1,665 new units were built, which is an average of 383 new units annually.³² In 2012, out of 288 new units in the urban services area, 31 were outside the city limits. Over the last five years, one-quarter of the new 1,665 units within the urban services area were outside the city limits.

Projected Trends

As the economy improves new construction on approved lots is expected to increase throughout the county. The Miller Creek/Linda Vista area in particular is expected to grow within the next 10 to 20 years as more than 1,200 residential lots have been preliminarily approved for development in that area. Depending on the availability and costs of housing in the City of Missoula, increased residential development pressure can be expected in other areas within commuting distance to the city such as Frenchtown, Huson, Lolo, Clinton and Turah. The second home market is also likely to pick up again in the Swan Valley and other areas near lakes, rivers, and natural amenities.

Local Services

Law Enforcement and Crime

The Missoula County Sheriff's Office and the Missoula City Police Department are



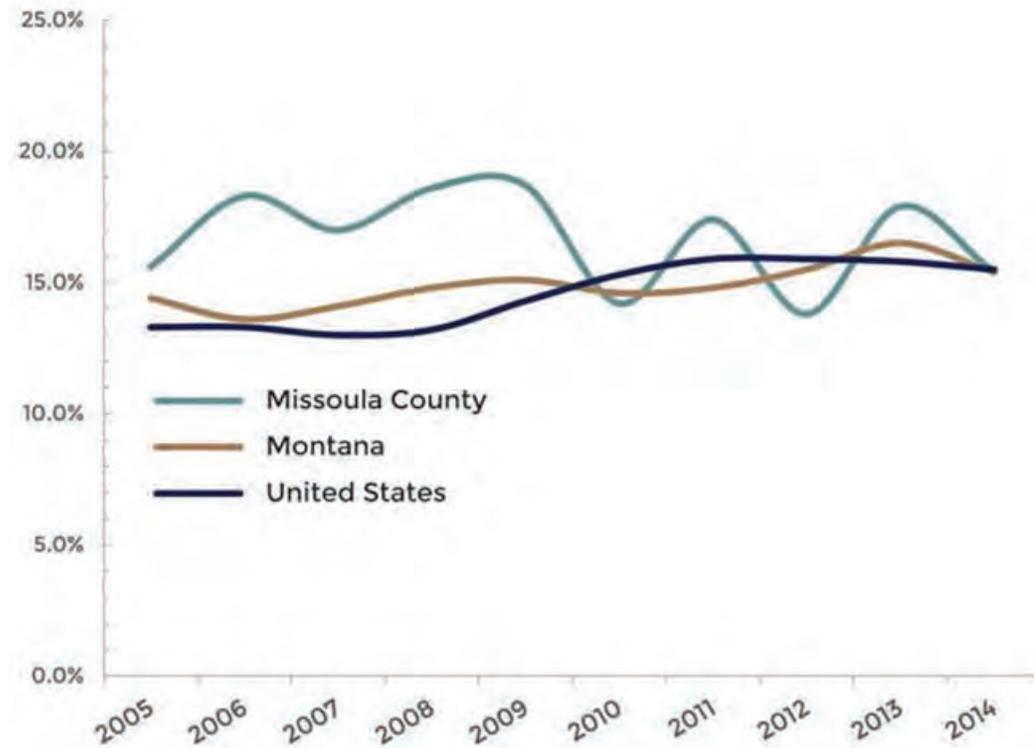
the primary law enforcement agencies within the county. The Montana Highway Patrol maintains traffic enforcement and crash investigation on State highways and areas outside the city limits. On the Flathead Reservation, Tribal Police have law enforcement authority. Other agencies with law enforcement roles in Missoula County are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Fire Protection

Several agencies respond to fire and medical emergencies throughout the county. Together, these agencies participate in the Missoula County Fire Protection Association, a private not-for-profit organization. The agency closest to the fire responds at the request of the sheriff. The City Fire Department and the Missoula Rural Fire District provide emergency medical services in most of the urban area. Other fire organizations in the county include:

- Clinton, East Missoula, Florence, Frenchtown, Arlee, and Seeley Lake Rural Fire Districts
- Greenough-Potomac and Swan Valley Fire Service Fee Areas
- Lolo, Flathead, and Bitterroot National Forests

Figure 20 - Percent of Population at or Below Poverty Line
Relatively speaking, Missoula County has a large population living in poverty.
 Source: American Community Survey



- Bureau of Land Management
- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

The fire districts and fire service fee areas are staffed by volunteers. There are areas without designated fire services. A discussion of wildland urban interface issues is located in the Landscapes section of this chapter.

Social Services

Various government and private social service agencies provide food, shelter, clothing, transportation, child care, and medical care for those living at or below the poverty level. Flathead Reservation human service programs provide similar services for eligible Indian and low-income applicants in Missoula County. The Missoula City-County Health Department tracks the



well-being of residents including the availability of social service needs and resources.

Missoula County has a large population living in poverty. Between 2005 and 2014, the percentage of the population in poverty decreased slightly from 15.6% to 15.4% (Figure 20). Regardless of this slight decrease, there remains a need for the county to continue its partnerships with the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors to address the needs of low-income populations.

Medical Services & Facilities

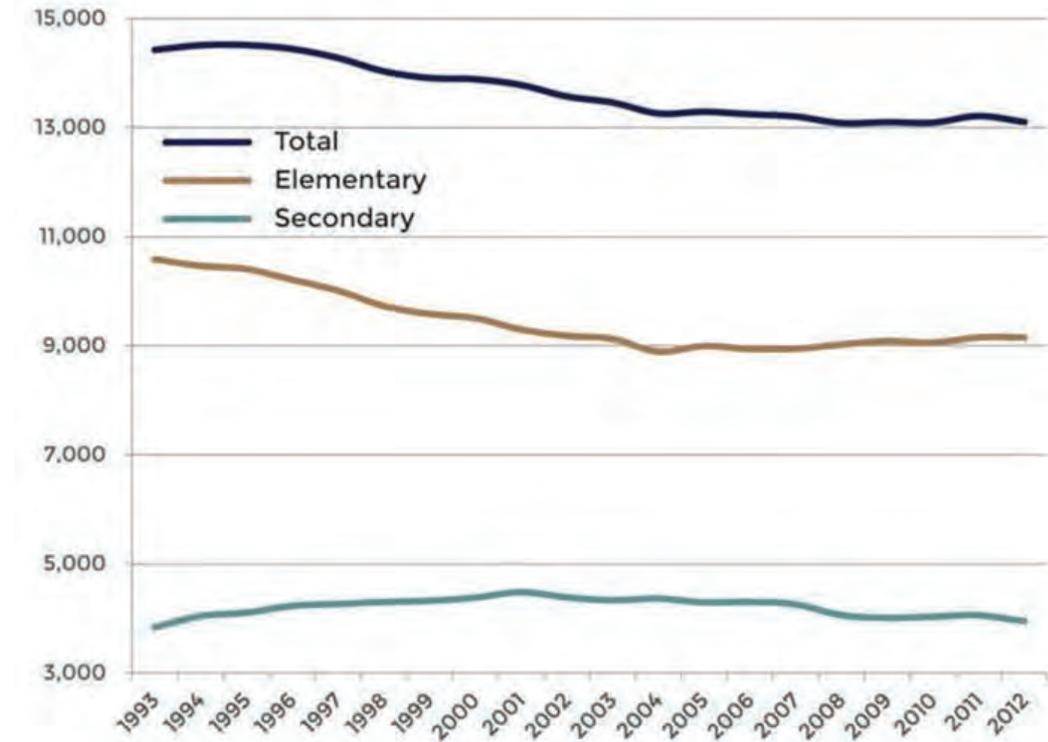
Missoula is a regional medical center with two hospitals. Community Medical Center serves almost 6,000 patients annually with 146 acute-care beds. St. Patrick Hospital served 8,144 patients in 2010 with 253 acute-care beds.³³

Partnership Health Center, a City-County program, provides medical, dental, and pharmacy services to over 7,000 patients annually based on ability to pay. Partnership has clinics in Missoula, Seeley Lake, and Superior. Partnership serves all sectors of the population, including low and moderate income populations, uninsured and underinsured, workers, and homeless individuals and families from Missoula and surrounding rural counties.

Figure 21- Missoula County Public School Enrollment 1990-2012

Overall, public school enrollment has declined over the past two decades, as can be expected when the share of population under 18 is shrinking.

Source: Missoula County Superintendent of Schools



Missoula Emergency Services, Inc. provides paramedic-level ambulances and responds to approximately 9,000 calls per month.³⁴ Northwest MedStar helicopter serves Community Medical Center and St. Patrick Hospital in areas up to 125 miles from Missoula.³⁵ The medical service transports approximately 800 patients each year.³⁶

Education

Public education is provided by thirteen school districts located throughout the city and county, each with its own governing board. In 2012, 13,255 Missoula County residents were enrolled in the public schools. An additional 421 residents attended joint districts (school districts which extend across county boundaries). Of these three joint districts, 67 students attended school



in Arlee (Lake County), 112 in Alberton (Mineral County), and 242 in Florence-Carlton (Ravalli County). Overall, public school enrollment has declined over the past two decades as shown in Figure 21.

The number of students who are home-schooled or enrolled in private schools is a relatively small percentage of the overall student-age population, with 189 students home-schooled and 1,023 students attending private schools in 2012.

Libraries

The Missoula Public Library has branches in Swan Valley, Seeley Lake, Potomac, Lolo, Frenchtown, and in Big Sky High School in Missoula. Web on Wheels, a mobile computer and library bus, serves areas outside the city limits and low-income apartment complexes and elder residential facilities. In 2010, the library provided services to more than 11,100 users in a typical week, an increase of over 3,700 per week since 2005. Efforts are underway to expand library facilities.

The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library at the University of Montana has the largest library collection of books and media in Montana. Combined collections within the Montana Public Access Catalog of the Affiliated Libraries of the University of Montana are in excess of 1.9 million volumes.

Museums

Missoula Art Museum and the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula reflect both current and historical aspects of the community. Missoula Art Museum includes six exhibition spaces, a library, and education center. The Historic Museum at Fort Missoula collects, preserves, and interprets the history of Missoula County and western Montana. Other communities have facilities or collections that honor local history and culture.

Solid Waste

Republic Services operates a regional landfill serving Missoula County. Additional landfill space was created for future use to the north of the current facility. According to Republic Services, the landfill has sufficient capacity until 2031. Missoula County supports efforts at waste reduction and recycling. Please see Chapter 2, Goal 4 for actions the county will take in this area.

Electricity and Natural Gas

Northwestern Energy and Missoula Electric Cooperative provide most of the electric service in the county. Mission Valley Power serves the area of the county within the Flathead Reservation. Northwestern Energy provides natural gas service and is generally less

available outside the city because extension of gas is costly to developers and the consumer. Bonneville Power Administration, Northwestern Energy, and Yellowstone Pipeline Company own transmission lines and gas pipelines that cross the county. Many rural residents also rely on propane.

Solar and Wind Energy

Some county homeowners and businesses are installing solar and wind energy systems to reduce utility costs and carbon emissions. Missoula County permits these systems in some zoning districts as special exceptions. One solar unit has been built within the county and another was recently approved. The City of Missoula permits wind and solar units in all zoning districts. Since 2010, 130 solar systems have been installed within city limits.

Missoula County recognizes the importance of developing alternative energy sources for several reasons, including to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and for increased energy independence. In Chapter 2, Goals 4 and 5 in particular address actions the county will take to support the development and use of alternative energy and the development of clean technology.



Telephone and Internet Services

Numerous local and national companies provide cellular, landline, and/or internet telecommunication services within the county. Broadband internet is generally available to residents throughout Missoula County. The main line from Seattle/ Chicago/ Denver/ Salt Lake City runs through Missoula and into the Swan Valley, Seeley Lake, Potomac, and Greenough. Due to terrain, there are areas that experience problems with these services. It is estimated that it would cost about \$225 million to connect all Blackfoot customers to the main line.

Current infrastructure provides high speed internet, but not the highest available speeds. As the economy and technology change in the coming years, the availability and speed of broadband is expected to be a major determinant of an area's economic development potential. Missoula County plans to support the expansion of broadband and digital technologies. Please see Chapter 2, Goal 6.

Projected Trends

With the projected population increase, it will be necessary to continue to increase law enforcement personnel in order to effectively serve the population. Similarly, fire protection resources and the need for volunteer and potentially paid personnel will

likely increase with the population, particularly to respond to an expected increase in wildland fires. The decline in total enrollment of students in public and private schools is likely to continue based on demographic changes in the population. Additionally, with increasing population in the county, the changing economy and demographics, there is likely to be an increased demand for all types of local and social services.

Public Facilities

Water Supply

Drinking water for 80% of Missoula County residents is supplied by the Missoula Valley aquifer. Mountain Water Company currently serves the majority of the urban area and East Missoula, although the city is in the process of taking over the system. The water system relies on 37 wells drawing from the aquifer. Rattlesnake Creek serves as an emergency backup supply and future resource if needed. The water receives no treatment except for chlorination before distribution.

Missoula County owns and operates the Lolo, El Mar/New Meadows, Sunset West, and Lewis and Clark water systems. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes maintain three community water systems in Missoula

County. The Seeley Lake Water District serves a portion of the Seeley Lake town and some areas on the eastside of Seeley Lake. The number of new private wells drilled within Missoula County over the past ten years is approximately 3,165.³⁷

Wastewater Treatment

Public wastewater treatment systems protect human health and preserve water quality. Areas without public systems are served by community or individual wastewater treatment systems. Plans have been developed to extend sewer collection systems in the urban area to several neighborhoods as well as the Miller Creek area. The Missoula City-County Board of Health has adopted a goal to ensure that connections to public sewer systems that do not discharge into the aquifer and are inside the Water Quality District occur at a rate such that the total number of septic systems in the District does not increase over time. A study is underway for the development of sewer service in the Bonner/ Milltown/ West Riverside areas.

Map 17 identifies where sewer service is anticipated by 2020. The City of Missoula is the primary provider of sewer service within the urban area (Map 2 in Chapter 3). A recent wastewater treatment facility upgrade increased capacity,

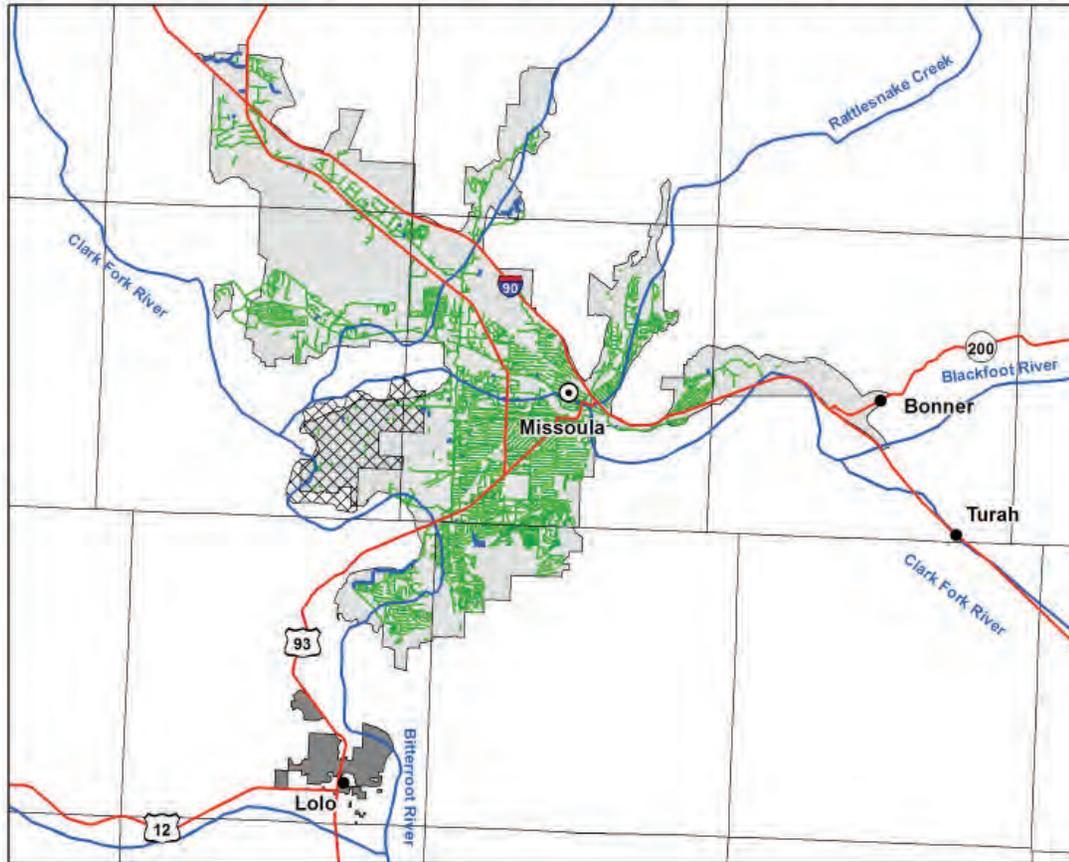
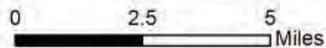


Map 17 Missoula County Growth Policy Missoula and Lolo Wastewater/Sewer Service Areas

Legend

Sanitary Sewer Lines

- Existing
- In Construction
- Target Range Sewer Water District
- Missoula Wastewater/Sewer Service Area
- Lolo Sewer Service Area



Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services,
Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula
County Surveyor's Office



improved treatment, and is expected to be sufficient through at least 2020.

Missoula County Public Works operates and maintains the sanitary sewer system and wastewater treatment plants in Lolo and at the Lewis and Clark District in Clinton. The Lolo facility has approximately 1,100 connections. The facility is planned to be upgraded to add nutrient removal capabilities to meet discharge limits. The Lewis & Clark District has 42 connections and will require an update sometime between 2015 and 2020.

The Seeley Lake Sewer District is planning a wastewater project that will provide sewer treatment to residential and commercial areas around Seeley Lake. The project is in the design and permit phase. In conjunction with planning, Missoula County supports the development and expansion of public water and wastewater systems to help provide for the growth of communities, to protect public health and safety, and to protect water quality. Measures to assist with the creation and expansion of such systems are included in Goal 9 of Chapter 2. Goals 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11 and the Land Use Strategy all complement this goal.

Transportation

Missoula County has approximately

1,500 miles of public roadway. The County Road Department is responsible for maintenance activities on approximately 474 miles of road, including approximately 232 miles of paved roads and 242 miles gravel roads.³⁸ New subdivision roads are generally maintained privately. The City of Missoula has approximately 338 total miles of local streets and highways.³⁹ Montana Department of Transportation roads include 191 miles of interstate, highway, and urban roads. About 10 miles of tribal residential and forest roads are within the Flathead Reservation in Missoula County as are over 2,400 miles of U.S. Forest Service roads.

Traffic Volumes

In 2010, estimated vehicle miles traveled in the urban area exceeded 1.59 million miles per day.⁴⁰ Projected vehicle miles traveled in 2040 will exceed 2.73 million miles per day.⁴¹ Roads previously congested can reasonably be expected to experience more congestion in 2040 unless significant improvements are made. Maintenance and construction costs associated with traffic growth are expected to increase faster than traditional sources of revenue.

Alternate Forms of Transportation

Busing, walking, cycling, carpooling, and vanpooling, reduce fuel consumption, pollution, traffic congestion, and construction and maintenance costs.

Figure 22 - Means of Transportation to Work
Since 2000, the share of people who drive to work has declined slightly with corresponding increases seen in the percentage of people who work from home and who commute by bus.
 Source: Decennial Census and American Community Survey

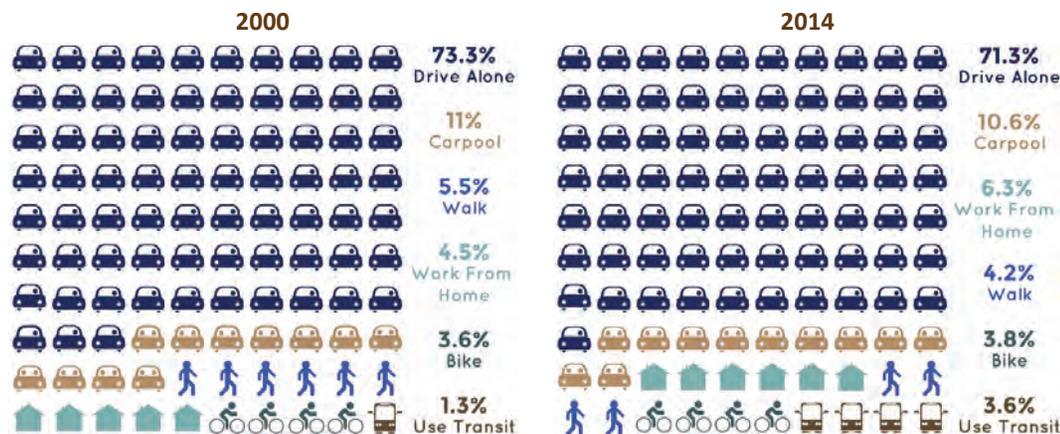




Figure 22 shows how people traveled to work within Missoula County in 2000 and 2014. The Missoula Active Transportation Plan encourages a transportation system that permits walking and biking.

Missoula County owns and maintains almost 45 miles of improved surface trails, including trails along the I-90 frontage road in Frenchtown, on Highway 210 in Milltown/Bonner, and along Highway 12 in Lolo. Many miles of recreational trails are located on federal and state lands. The Missoula to Lolo Trail is a 7-mile shared-use pathway that will complete the 50-mile trail connection between Missoula and Hamilton. The pathway will be completed in 2016.

Mountain Line provides public transportation in the city and surrounding area. Ridership has increased appreciably in recent years, with 933,694 rides in 2015, the first year of the three-year zero-fare demonstration project. In 2012, Mountain Line provided 19,340 door-to-door transportation rides to senior and disabled residents on six paratransit buses and in 2015 Mountain Line provided an increase in paratransit services. Mountain Line Senior Van service serves those not eligible for paratransit. Other transportation service providers include university and non-profit organizations. Providing

alternative forms of transportation, including public transportation, will help Missoula County to achieve several of its goals related to developing functional communities, serving an aging and low income population, and reducing our contribution to climate change.

Airports

The Missoula County Airport Authority operates the Missoula International Airport west of Missoula. The airport is a significant economic driver and averages 155 landings and takeoffs per day.⁴² Four air carrier and commuter airlines and several all-cargo airlines serve the airport.⁴³ The Aerial Fire Depot, Intermountain Fire Sciences Laboratory, and the Missoula Technology Development Center use the airport. Other airports in Missoula County include the Seeley Lake Airport, the Rock Creek Airport and U.S. Forest Service landing strips in Condon, Missoula (Johnson Bell Field), Ninemile, and Seeley Lake.⁴⁴

Railroads

Montana Rail Link and Burlington Northern-Santa Fe move freight through Missoula. According to Montana Rail Link, about 16 to 20 freight trains pass through Missoula daily. The Bitterroot Railroad Line operates on an infrequent basis. The rail lines in Missoula County

provide opportunity for goods to be transported to and from the area, particularly in relation to manufacturing operations. Passenger rail service is not available in Missoula.

Parks and Recreation

Parks, trails and recreation sites, and easy access to them, are key features of Missoula County that contribute to our high quality of life and are part of our overall economic development efforts.

County Parks

Missoula County manages 91 parks, greenways, open space sites, and special use facilities and nearly 45 miles of natural and improved trails. The Missoula County Parks & Trails Advisory Board and staff, local community groups, homeowners' associations, or individuals manage, maintain, and improve these sites. The Parks & Trails Advisory Board matching grant program assists these groups with funding for capital improvements and maintenance. The 2012 Missoula County Parks & Trails Plan provides guidance on improvements, maintenance, and management of the parks and trails systems in the county.

State Parks and Recreational Lands

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks



manage Salmon Lake, Placid Lake, Beavertail Hill, Frenchtown Pond, Council Grove, Travelers' Rest, and Milltown State Parks in the County. The agency manages 27 fishing access sites in the county that provide access to rivers and lakes for activities such as fishing, boating, swimming, and wildlife viewing. They also manage the Mount Jumbo, Marshall Creek, and Blackfoot-Clearwater Wildlife Management areas which comprise more than 35,000 acres.

Federal Recreational Lands

Federal public lands are important for tourism, recreation, wood-gathering, and other uses. The U.S. Forest Service manages most of the federal lands within Missoula County including Pattee Canyon, Blue Mountain, Rattlesnake, Maclay Flats, Lolo Pass, Seeley Lake, Lake Alva, Lake Inez, Lindbergh Lake, and Holland Lake.

Tribal Recreational Lands

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes maintain thousands of acres for recreation in the Missoula County portion of the Flathead Reservation. Whenever engaged in recreation activities on tribal lands, all non-tribal members must have a Flathead Reservation Use Permit.

Other tribal and/or state recreation

permits and appropriate bird hunting or fishing stamps are required for non-tribal members depending on the form of recreation.⁴⁵

Projected Trends

With increased population growth, the need for public water supplies and wastewater treatment systems will be necessary to protect public health and water quality and to encourage development in existing communities. Traffic congestion, maintenance, and construction costs are expected to increase faster than traditional revenue sources. Air travel is also expected to increase in the coming years, which will be important for economic growth.

The need for high speed data resources is expected to increase in the coming years. The Missoula County Parks & Trails Program is expected continue to foster partnerships with public and not-for-profit organizations to meet the increased demand for parks, trails and recreation services, linking communities to each other and to public land and recreation. There are also efforts underway to significantly improve parks and trails maintenance services. Please see Chapter 2 for approaches Missoula County plans to take to address these issues.

Cultural Resources

Diverse historic and archeological resources are found in Missoula County. These include paleo-Indian Native American artifacts, occupation sites and trails, sites of current cultural importance, and historic structures and land areas associated with white settlement. Seventy-five historic sites, districts, landmarks, and trails in Missoula County are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. More than 3,500 properties have been surveyed.

Native American Archaeological & Cultural Sites

Evidence of early inhabitation comes from a variety of sites and artifacts such as tools, pictographs, stone cairns, scarred trees, tipi rings, hearths, rock quarries, and chipping sites. Approximately 95% of archeological and cultural artifacts in Missoula County have been found along creeks, rivers, and lakes. Sites of current cultural importance to Native Americans also include undisturbed spiritual sites, prehistoric and historic campsites, and burial grounds.⁴⁶

Historic Places

Historic sites include Council Grove, Travelers' Rest, the Lolo Trail, Fort Fizzle, Camp Paxson in Seeley Lake,



and the Ninemile Ranger Station and numerous buildings and historic districts in the Missoula urban area. The Wallace, Coloma, and Potomac Mining Districts in eastern Missoula County and the Ninemile District in the western part of the County had brief but colorful histories in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Historic Buildings and Districts

A historic building or district displays architectural characteristics that reflect the history of the time in which it was built, is associated with significant people or events in the past, or may provide important historical information such as the County Courthouse and fairgrounds. Buildings and districts not on the Register may be considered historic or eligible to be listed.

Travelers' Rest

The Travelers' Rest Campsite was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960. Recent investigations indicated that the original landmark location east of Highway 93 was not the actual Lewis and Clark campsite. The National Park Service re-designated the official landmark location after an archeologist verified the historic campsite location west of Highway 93 along Lolo Creek. The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks has acquired portions of the Travelers' Rest site west of US Highway 93 for Travelers' Rest State

Park. The Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association, a non-profit organization, provides the interpretation and education programming.

Historic Trails

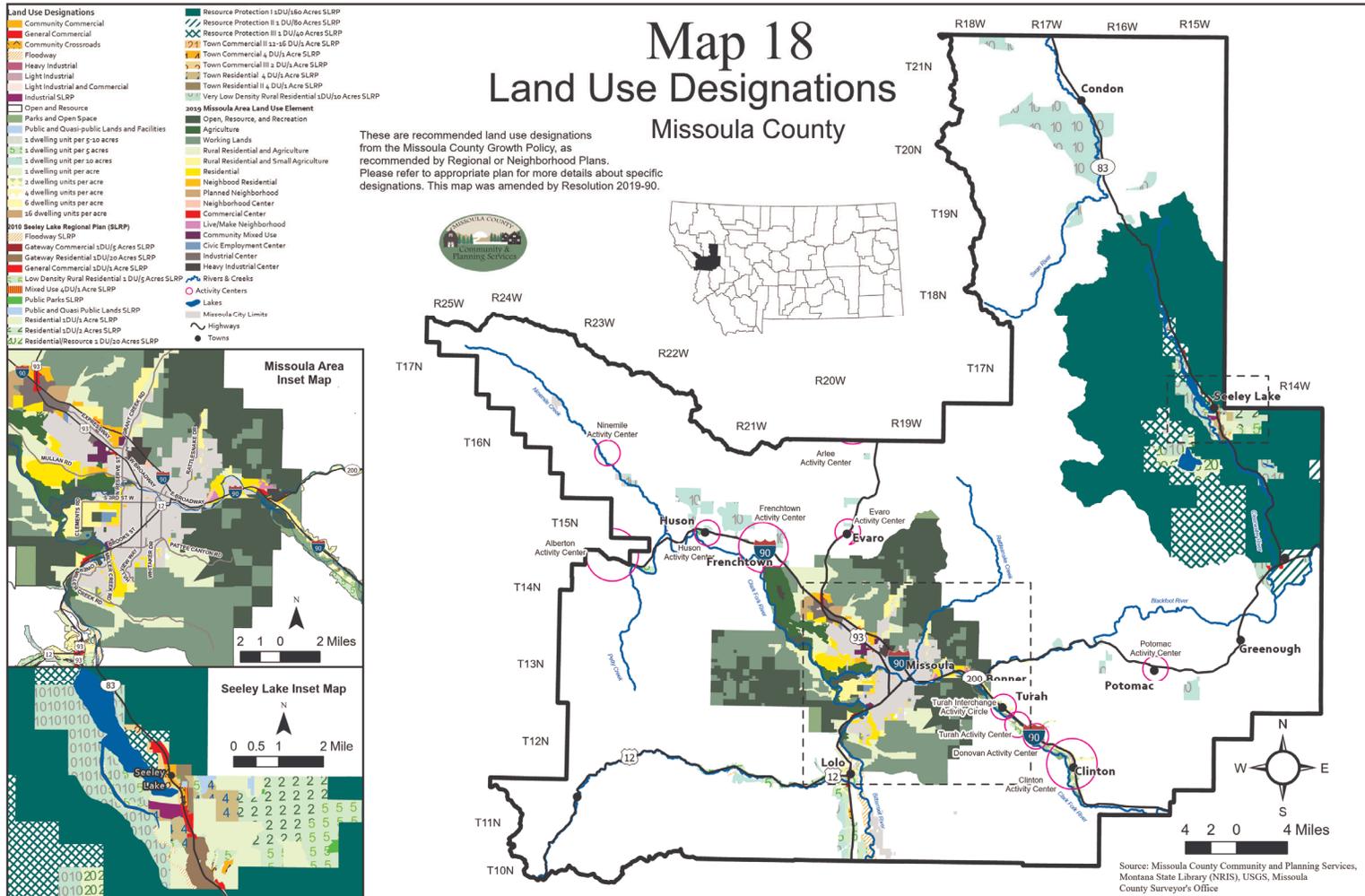
Historic trails in the County include the Lolo and Nez Perce Trails and the Lewis and Clark routes. The Lolo Trail was an Indian trade and hunting route across the Bitterroot Mountains to the Clearwater River. The Lolo Trail route is a designated National Historic Landmark. The Lewis and Clark route, a designated National Historic Trail, includes the trail south through the Bitterroot Valley and east through the City of Missoula and along the Blackfoot River.

The Lolo Trail, portions of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail generally follow Lolo Creek from Lolo Pass to Travelers' Rest. Other early trails noted on the first surveys include the Jocko Trail and the Trail to the Buffalo, east over the Mount Jumbo Saddle to the Blackfoot River Valley.

Projected Trend

Depending on the interest and commitment of volunteers and the availability of funding, cultural and historic resources in Missoula County are expected to be protected and

utilized in the coming years, where feasible and sustainable. Please see Goal 3 in Chapter to for Missoula County's planned approach to protecting and enhancing historic and cultural structures and sites.





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APPENDIX A: LIST OF AREA PLANS

Area Plans Adopted by Missoula County and Included in the Growth Policy

- Seeley Lake Regional Plan Update, adopted in 2010.
- Miller Creek Valley Plan, adopted in 1997.
- Section 18, T12N, R19W Comprehensive Plan Amendment, adopted in 1985.
- South Hills Comprehensive Plan Amendment, adopted in 1987.
- Lolo Regional Plan, adopted in 2002.
- Swan Valley-Condon Comprehensive Plan Update, adopted in 1996.
- Missoula County Regional Land Use Guide, adopted in 2002.
- Wye/O'Keefe Creek Area Plan, adopted 1979.
- Grant Creek Area Plan, adopted in 1980.
- Butler Creek Area Plan Amendment, adopted in 1996.
- Reserve Street Area Plan Update, adopted in 1995.
- Rattlesnake Valley Update, adopted in 1995.
- Wye/Mullan Road Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment, adopted in 2005.
- South Hills Comprehensive Plan Amendment adopted 1986.
- River Road/Emma Dickinson Infrastructure Plan, adopted in 2003.
- Fort Missoula Plan, adopted in 1994.
- Development Park Master Plan, adopted in 1995.

Urban Fringe:

- Missoula Urban Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1998.
- Target Range Neighborhood Plan, adopted 2009.





APPENDIX B: GROWTH POLICY PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARIES

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

REPORT #1 OF 3: Listening Sessions

**Prepared by Cossitt Consulting, Inc. for the Missoula County
Community and Planning Services Department**

The Missoula County Growth Policy, the county’s comprehensive long-range plan, is being updated. The current growth policy was adopted in 2005, and since that time there have been a number of changes in the county, including closure of Smurfit-Stone industry, restoration of the Milltown Dam area, and effects of the national 2007-2009 economic recession. In addition, the county planning jurisdiction and that of the City of Missoula were separated. The 2005 growth policy addresses both the city and the county. The county’s 2015 update will address only the area of the county outside the Missoula city limits.

In order to hear what was on the minds of community members, in October 2014 Missoula County held eight “listening sessions” throughout the county. The listening sessions provided an opportunity for residents to learn more about the growth policy update project and to express their views on the county’s assets, features or positive attributes, and also issues or concerns. The listening sessions were held in Evaro, Bonner, Target Range, Condon, Lubrecht, Seeley Lake, Lolo, and Frenchtown. A total of 79 people attended the sessions.

The same meeting format was used for each listening session. The evening began with a short slide show overview of the growth policy project, explaining why an update is needed, and describing the overall process and schedule. Participants were asked to identify important or special places on maps and to respond to the following questions:

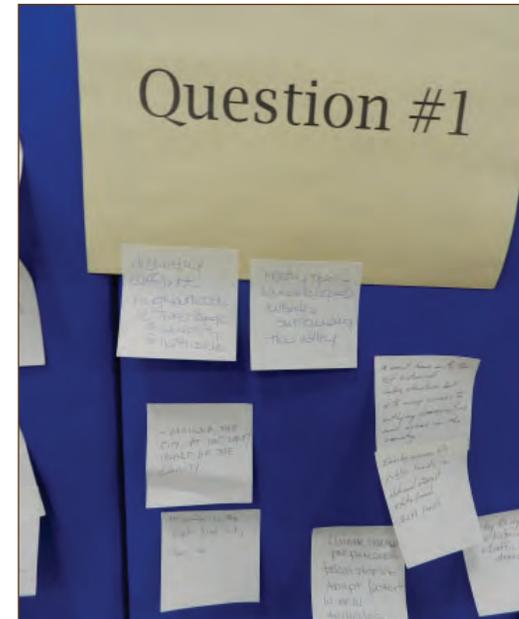


QUESTION #1: What are the special features or attributes of Missoula County that you value most and make it where you choose to live?

Example of How Listening Session Participants Grouped Comments

QUESTION #2: What are the issues or concerns that should be addressed in the Missoula County growth policy?

Participants placed their responses, written on “post-it” notes, next to what they considered to be similar concepts or ideas posted by other participants. Then they discussed as a group the ideas and issues and how they were organized. In the last part of the meeting, participants identified how they believed the growth policy should address the issues identified by the post-it notes and discussion.



Detailed notes from the listening sessions are included in two separate documents – one for the two exercises on assets and issues (Report #1a) and the other a record of flip-chart notes from group discussion at the sessions (Report #1b). Results of the mapping exercise are included in the “Final Map” document.

1. General Summary

Across the county people said they value their unique local areas, the county’s natural resources, outdoor recreation, scenic views and open spaces. They value the resource-based economy and the trend to diversify the economy. People very much value the rural lifestyle as well as services provided in the county.

County residents want the growth policy to address agriculture, open space, transportation, the economy, and other issues, but often the discussions revealed differences of opinion on what people want to see happen on these topics in 20 years. In some cases, there was agreement among those present at a particular meeting, and when that was the case it was noted and can be found in the last section (#4) of this summary.

2. Key Assets by Categories of “Landscapes, Livelihoods, and Communities”

This section summarizes comments made in response to Question #1: “What are the special features or attributes of Missoula County that you value most and make it where you choose to live?” The responses are organized by the three categories “Landscapes, Livelihoods, and Communities” which is the planned structure for much of the growth policy update. The number of comments after each topic is the number of written comments received at the listening sessions. This section also includes notes on discussion that took place during the listening session.



Landscapes (105 comments)

- **Natural Landscapes** The majority of comments in the “Landscapes” category addressed natural landscapes (mountains, rivers, etc.), scenic beauty, open space, outdoor recreation and public access.
- **Clean Water and Air** Comments on clean water addressed the purity of water from wells and other references to being on a well instead of a community system. Air quality was also identified, but with very few specifics.
- **Agriculture** The topic of agriculture was included in the “Landscapes” category because of the tie many people made to the rural nature of the county.

Note on Tie to Economy There is cross-over between the “landscapes” category and economics (“livelihoods” category). Agriculture, timber, and recreation also form a part of the county’s economy. These topics are, however, included under the landscapes category because the comments did not typically address related economic considerations.

Livelihoods (8 comments)

- **Natural-Resource Based Economy** People commented on the importance of timber and agriculture to the economy. Some comments indicated that these are less a part of the overall economy than previously. Some would like to see more timber-based jobs.
- **Diversified Economy** Some comments identified a diversified economy and existing technology as assets.

Communities (147 comments)

- **Community/People** Comments about people -- their friendliness, neighborliness, diversity, rural individualism, etc.—were the most frequently cited asset in the “Communities” category.
- **Services and Rural Lifestyle** Services were the next most frequently cited, such as health care, library, airport, shopping, and so was rural lifestyle – many people like the rural environment and may not want all these services in their locale but appreciate that they are available in the county.
- **Other Assets** Other assets cited were safety, no zoning, no box stores in the rural areas, Missoula as a “small” big city, local school systems, and the University of Montana.

3. Key Issues and Concerns by Categories of “Landscapes, Livelihoods, and Communities”

This section summarizes comments made in response to Question #2: “What are the issues, or concerns that should be addressed in the Missoula County growth policy?” It is organized by the three categories “Landscapes, Livelihoods, and Communities” which is the planned structure for much of the growth policy update. The number of comments after each topic is the number of written comments received at the listening sessions. This section also includes notes on discussion that took place during the listening session, including discussion of what people want to see in the county in 20 years.



Landscapes (57 comments)

- **Natural Resources** Comments addressed wildlife, wildlife habitat protection, wildfire, weeds, air quality and renewable energy. In discussion, clean water was often tied to groundwater pollution from septic tanks and drainfields. People generally want to keep existing public access or create more access to lands and waters. The need to remediate the Smurfitt Stone site was also mentioned. Open space was also frequently cited, sometimes in connection with agricultural lands, but open space is a broad term and could apply to many purposes, including wildlife habitat.
- **Agriculture** The importance of agriculture and need to preserve agricultural land was the most frequently cited concern. Discussion of the topic also made it clear that farmers and ranchers want flexibility to sell their land for other purposes.
- **Climate Change** The need to make provisions to adapt to climate change was discussed at length at the Target Range listening session.

Livelihoods (27 comments)

- **Strong Economy** Everyone wants a strong economy, but there were differences in opinion as to what constitutes a strong economy. Some would like to see resource extraction (timber harvest or a mine near Potomac) with few limits. Others emphasized a balance of economic growth, wages that support families, sustainability of long-term employment, compatibility with rural environment and balance with a healthy natural environment.
- **Better Internet and Technology** Discussion indicated that better internet and access to technology are important to support business growth.

Communities (166 comments)

- **County Government** This topic had the highest number of comments, including the following -- elected officials who do not listen, lack of respect for rural citizens, county commissioners who do not come to the rural areas, there should be less government, need input from the agricultural community, stop letting realtors and developers drive policy, and county policy not coordinated with the city.
- **Regulations and Land Use Controls** Generally, comments addressed a desire for no zoning and less government regulation, but in some locations there was specific discussion about need to identify where industrial activities should take place (Bonner), need for setbacks for construction near property lines (Evaro). Building permit requirements were identified as excessive for rural areas. Several comments indicated more needed to be done to reduce sprawl and increase open space. In discussion, some clearly voiced their opposition to “set-asides” for agricultural land.
- **Taxes** Several comments indicated that residents feel they pay too much in taxes and get too little in return. Some believe a disproportionate amount of county taxes goes to things within city limits.
- **Anticipating and Managing Growth** Some want to see more growth and development; others would like to keep their community the same as it is now (or perhaps even like it was 30 or 40 years ago.). Some identified the need to anticipate change and prepare for it – including climate change, increased potential for wildfire, etc. Some discussed changing demographics – moving to a larger proportion of older residents and how that affects services, economy, local schools, etc.



- **Unique Local Characteristics** Comments and discussion indicated the growth policy should take into account the unique nature of various areas of the county.
- **Housing** There were comments and discussion about issues of availability and cost of housing.
- **Built Environment** Some want to see concentrated development; others want to be able to do what they choose on their property. There were a few references to the cultural and historic aspects of the built environment.
- **Transportation and Infrastructure** Comments related to transportation and infrastructure included the following -- safety and maintenance of county roads is an issue as is pedestrian safety, need to focus on basic services first (especially roads), bus service (some want it and some don't), trails and pathways (many want more, but some want no more until there is a clear mechanism to make sure pathways are separated from the road, and are maintained year-round, including snow removal). Exception to this comment was from participants in Seeley, who said they don't want snow removal on pathways-- they want groomed snowmobile trails along highway and roads.
- **Quality of Life** Comments reflected a recognition of the importance of quality of life -- healthy lifestyles, good living conditions, etc.

4. Local Area Emphases and Concerns

The following summarizes topics on which participants generally agreed on a particular point. In some cases the topic is noted as one for which there were sharp differences of opinion.

Evato

- Consensus -- interested in some sort of zoning, particularly regarding boundary setbacks.
- Proximity to Flathead Indian Reservation – makes this part of the county very different from other areas and there was a question regarding issues with delineation of county/tribal lands.
- Divided as to need for increased telecommunication.

Bonner

- Area of major commercial development at site of former mill and industrial area.
- Interest in more say in how industries are sited, some interested in zoning, but others indicated there are too many regulations now and it makes operating a business very difficult.

Target Range

- Very concerned about annexation; want to retain low density and stay off city sewer and water.
- Upset over Maclay Bridge – decision to remove and replace with bridge on South Street - others present indicated that the bridge is not safe and needs to be replaced.
- Very proud of their local plan and upset that the county commissioners are not following the local plan.
- Discussed climate change in depth.
- Want streets safer, more sidewalks, Reserve Street is a major problem.



Condon

- Stretched out along highway for miles; have to get in the car to go places, no paths along road (or not enough); speeds on highway are not safe for this type of highway residential development pattern.
- Condon as a thriving community – some want to see it grow, others say it is fine as-is. Increased older population and reduced numbers of families threaten viability of historic community character and also schools.

Lubrecht

- Very strong local ties to the land, some go back generations.
- People like the individualism, like the natural environment and rural area, but want to be able to do what they like on their property.
- Doesn't want to be like Ravalli County, but most do not want any regulations or zoning.
- Differing views on benefit of the mine – some vocal supporters who want to see the proposed mine developed near Potomac.
- Some roads have serious maintenance issues.
- Fire Department has funding issues.

Seeley Lake

- Want clean water, but want to implement a sewer system incrementally, or deal with it on a case-by-case basis; others say sewer system is needed.
- Do not want zoning.
- Want to stay about the same size.

Lolo

Note: Only two persons attended; one arrived about halfway through. There was no discussion; only the presentation and review of maps.

Frenchtown

- Proximity to city of Missoula – more development on the way.
- Want agricultural land preserved and a strong real estate market.
- Smurfit-Stone Industries buildings – need for restoration and clean-up.



SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

REPORT #2 OF 3: Personal Interviews

Prepared by Cossitt Consulting, Inc. for the Missoula County Community and Planning Services Department

This is the second report prepared in the fall of 2014, summarizing comments received during initial outreach efforts conducted by Missoula County as part of updating the 2005 growth policy. The first report summarized results of eight listening sessions held throughout the county. This second report summarizes individual interviews conducted with each of the three county commissioners, individual interviews with 10 different county departments, and interviews with Missoula Economic Partnership, and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and Missoula Organization of Realtors. This report also includes notes from listening session exercises held with the City-County Planning Board and the Open Lands Committee that were conducted similarly to the eight listening sessions held across the county.

1. Summary Overview of Key Comments

Many comments made during the interviews and listening sessions with the City-County Planning Board and Open Lands Committee were similar to those received at the eight listening sessions.

There were, however, some significant, previously unmentioned concepts that came out of these discussions. These include the following, all of which fall under the growth policy category of “Communities.”

Communities

- **County Government** Some comments indicated the need to consider the public good, not just special interests or most vocal groups or individuals. County governments are perceived to have more power than they actually do.
- **Regulations and Land Use Controls** Some people indicated they’d like to see specific geographic areas designated for development and other areas designated for resource protection. Others indicated a preference for distinct communities instead of sprawl. A few suggested county-wide zoning. Others wanted to see some mechanisms to manage development in areas subject to hazards such as high groundwater or flooding.
- **Built Environment** One person commented that we should put people where we’ve planned and invested for them and don’t be swayed by special interests who block logical expansion
- **Transportation** One person raised the question of impacts of the megaloads headed to tar sands in Canada on smaller highways in the county.



2. Public Health and Safety Comments included need for a county-wide master plan for fire protection services, need for more deputies as there are too few deputies to cover such a large county, and need to address numerous health-safety issues such as drunk driving, domestic violence, etc. Detailed Comments

The following includes other points raised in the interviews and Missoula City-County Planning Board and Open Lands Committee “listening sessions” that expounded on or were different from those raised in the eight community listening sessions.

Landscapes

Natural Resources

- Protect important viewsheds – need for cell tower regulations.
- Water quality – concerns over degradation of water quality, particularly from septic systems.
- Need to develop a master plan for acquisition of open space that includes a map of key areas – the current process is too ad hoc and doesn’t set priorities.
- Trails are very important, enabling people to walk and exercise.
- Environmental health of the county is important.
- Need more open space close to city.
- Address Smurfit-Stone site.

Climate Change

- Need a climate change action plan.

Livelihoods

Economic Development

- Economic development is a top priority among residents.
- Perception that county is not doing enough, but county is a strong supporter of Missoula Economic Partnership, and has created three economic districts in the past few years.
- County should be more pro-active in economic development.
- There is a new economy that has emerged – it is not the same as the manufacturing-timber base of the 1960s and 70s and has three main components – new manufacturing, UM affiliated businesses, and foreign business --investment from and products being shipped to other countries.
- Need workforce development.
- One of few counties with net in migration of 20-somethings, a key point--they are coming here for lifestyle.
- The county faces issues of economic inequality – some people are quite wealthy and many quite poor.
- Issues of poverty also involve economic justice issues – such as distances that lower income persons have to travel to work, housing, etc.

Internet and Technology

- Need more broadband and internet, especially in rural areas.



- County has sufficient broadband in I-90 corridor, great access in industrial parks, but in other areas people are not willing to pay cost of extension.

Communities

County Government

- Working to get budget more “user-friendly” and understandable to public.
- Live within your means, fiscal responsibility in the long run (20-75 years).
- Difficult to balance the wide divides between conservative and liberal elements of the county.
- County has to serve the public interest, not just the most vocal or special interests.
- County needs to improve communication with the public.
- Citizens do not know where tax dollars go.
- Need better coordination among CAPS, Public Works, and Public Health departments.
- County Fire Chief role should be moved to DES and should be directly under Board of County Commissioners.

Services

- Medical transportation/transit from outlying areas to services needs to be improved
- Need a master plan for fire services in the county.

Public Health and Safety

- Provide opportunities for people to get moving for their health.
- Public buildings should be retrofitted for seismic events.
- Relationship violence.
- Rural urban interface and fire.
- Shuttle for medical care (e.g., Seeley to city of Missoula).
- Human trafficking along I-90, Msla a stop along route to Bakken oil fields.
- Persons with Disabilities -- “get by” without accessing services --people unaware of services.
- DUI - substance abuse.
- Homelessness and veterans issues.
- Law enforcement -- not enough sheriff deputies -- cannot cover entire county.

Regulations and Land Use Controls

- Need an ombudsman to guide people through regulatory processes and requirements.
- Need a simplified overview-guide to regulations.
- Issues with different development standards in city and county.
- Need context sensitive road building requirements for ingress-egress – the requirements for many lots on a steep hillside should be different from a few lots on flat landscape.
- Need ingress/egress standards for buildings for lease or rent regulations.
- Need building requirements for areas with high groundwater (e.g., no basements, etc.).
- Requirements for subdivision parks should be appropriate for different scales of development.



- Addressing should be required for all units – residential, rental, lodging, business, etc. to make sure emergency services can respond quickly.
- Bring about more zoning - pursue countywide zoning - zoning/standards for small community density.
- Annexation - Target Range thinks the county can prevent annexation, but that is not the case.
- Checkerboard annexations (where city leap-frogs over county parcels) creates issues for delivering services--city services may be farther away than county services (e.g., fire department), but limited in inter-locals because the city fire department is unionized and cannot enter into inter-local agreements with departments that are not unionized.

Anticipating and Managing Growth

- Need to plan for the special needs of the aging – the number of seniors will continue to grow – and needs include specialized housing, age-in-place, transit, medical, etc.

Housing

- Need affordable and workforce housing; land is expensive; no incentives now to build lower priced housing units.

Built Environment

- Bonner is a potential growth area for the county.
- More land available for industrial development than could be absorbed in two lifetimes.
- Build near existing services.
- There are serious issues with building in hazard areas – such as flood areas, high groundwater areas, wildland urban interface areas.
- Issues with fire suppression water supplies – volume and rates – in some new developments.
- Put people where we've planned and invested for them and don't be swayed by special interests who block logical expansion.
- Incorporation of Msla Co. communities - Lolo, Seeley.
- Downtown beautification.

Transportation/Infrastructure

- People appreciate recreation and trails.
- Infrastructure is the number one priority.
- Improve/extend public transit.
- If water quality issues arise outside of the sewer district, the sewer district boundary may be extended.
- Recognize the connections between increased transportation and poor air quality – work to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- Connect city parks and open space with non-motorized trails/paths and public transit.
- Road “diets” (where number or width of lanes is reduced) can be an issue for emergency service and evacuation routes.
- How to make sure that subdivision and private development water supplies for fire suppression are maintained and available over time?
- Need a way for private companies to submit info on location, etc. of critical infrastructure (such as cell towers) whereby the sensitive information is protected rather than released to public domain.
- Prevent a high/wide transport corridor from using our scenic byways (Rt 12, Hwy 200, etc.); “Keep ‘em on the interstate.”



SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

REPORT #3 OF 3: Written Comments

Prepared by Cossitt Consulting, Inc. for the Missoula County Community and Planning Services Department

This is the third report prepared in the fall of 2014 summarizing initial outreach efforts conducted by Missoula County as part of updating the 2005 Growth Policy. The first report summarizes results of eight listening sessions held throughout the county. The second report summarizes individual interviews conducted with each of the county commissioners, 10 different county departments, Missoula Economic Partnership, Chamber of Commerce and Missoula Organization of Realtors, and Missoula City-County Planning Board and Open Lands Committee.

This third report summarizes written comments received by November 6, 2014. A total of 10 individuals submitted comments.

Summary of Comments Received from 10 Individuals (as of November 6, 2014)

The following provides a listing of comments from the 10 individuals who submitted comments in response to standardized questions on the county growth policy website, or who submitted other written comments. The comments are organized by the three main growth policy categories of “Landscapes,” “Livelihoods,” and “Communities.”

Landscapes

Natural Resources

- Issues with land set asides for open space or agriculture in subdivisions -- people should do what they want – there are enough regulations.
- Designated floodplains should all be “Open and Resource.”
- Restore our forests.
- Many people choose to live in Missoula County because of our beautiful open spaces, clean water, recreational trails and our proximity to diverse wildlife habitat
- Maintain access to public lands.
- Voluntary private land conservation will remain our best tool for protecting agricultural land.
- Protect natural assets, wildlife habitat, scenic and recreational corridors.
- Protect natural land and develop new public trails.
- Public trail system in Missoula, which includes Mt. Jumbo, Mt. Sentinel, and the Kim Williams Trail, the Potomac Valley, and the Seeley Lake area.



Livelihoods

Economic Development

- Sustainable economic growth -- e.g. priorities for industries producing renewable energy products vs. those that relate to extracting fossil fuels.
- Identify tools to promote sustainable development -- e.g., zoning and tax incentives.
- County should identify means to actively pursue more sustainable development.

Communities

County Government

- Perceived as impeding economic development by making it impossible for small businesses to thrive and function.
- County gov't needs to facilitate citizen initiatives, not block them.
- Missoula isn't what it used to be -- no longer safe -- assaults, rapes, drug offenses.

Regulations and Land Use Controls

- Do not allow sprawl - subdividing goes against more rural character.
- Create incentives for land to remain agricultural, but do not limit people's ability to sell their land if they need the money.
- Regulations should be tied to reason -- regulations that don't make sense should be eliminated.
- Issue with regulations from county and Target Range Homeowners Association.
- Cannot issue a floodplain permit that doesn't comply with the growth policy - or with zoning - and sometimes those two conflict. Applicants then have to seek changes to those documents or obtain a variance from the floodplain regulations which requires compliance with either zoning and/or comp plan (growth policy).
- Over-regulated.
- Get a definition/designation regarding density in Open and Resource in the GP i.e., does "Open and Resource" really mean one single family dwelling per 40 acres.

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Maclay bridge needs to be replaced -- details and facts provided in the email.
- Increase bus service instead of widening roads and increasing speeds.
- County can't force a sewer system on Seeley -- that has to go to a vote.
- Keep existing Maclay bridge.
- The Seeley sewer system wouldn't serve the properties owned by the state of Montana on the lakefront so there would still be pollution effects.
- Missoula city should have its own water system.



OVERVIEW OF COMMENTS ON DRAFT GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STRATEGIES

From Comments Received During Round 2 Listening Sessions For the Missoula County Growth Policy Update

Prepared by **Cossitt Consulting, Inc. and Land Solutions, LLC**
For the **Missoula County Community and Planning Services Department**

1. BACKGROUND

The Missoula County Growth Policy, the county's comprehensive long-range land use plan, is being updated. The current growth policy was adopted in 2005 and since that time there have been a number of changes in the county, including closure of Smurfit-Stone, restoration of the Milltown Dam area, the 2007-2009 national recession and the current period of economic growth. In addition, the county planning jurisdiction and that of the City of Missoula were separated. The 2005 growth policy addresses both the city and county. The county's 2015 update will address only those areas of the county outside of the Missoula city limits.

During the fall of 2014 a consultant team and Missoula County Community and Planning Services (CAPS) staff began a process of collecting information on the priority issues and topics to be included in the growth policy update. The planners held eight public listening sessions at different locations around the county and also conducted individual interviews with county commissioners, county department heads and stakeholder organizations. The county also developed a website devoted to the growth policy project which includes opportunities for the public to submit comments. The first round of outreach efforts generated information on key issues with which the consulting and CAPS planners used to draft preliminary goals and objectives.

During two weeks in late February and early March of 2015, the planners held eight more listening sessions at locations throughout the county designed to vet the goals and objectives and provide for public guidance on how key issues might be addressed in the growth policy update. A total of 123 persons attended the eight sessions held in Condon (16), East Missoula (13), Evaro (6), Frenchtown (10), Lolo (4 local residents and 8 University students), Potomac (31), Seeley (14), and Target Range (21). At each location there was a short presentation on results of the first round of listening sessions and process for developing the draft goals and objectives. Participants were then asked to identify their most preferred objectives with green dots and their least preferred objectives with red dots. After a short break, facilitators led discussions on specific actions that the county could take for each of the three main topics – "Communities, Livelihoods, and Landscapes." For each topic, the facilitator asked one or more specific questions, and participants responded with their ideas. Action items were captured on flip-charts. The "dot exercise" on objectives and flip chart notes are included in attached documents for all eight locations.

Also attached are separately submitted public comments received through March 25, 2015 in the second round of listening sessions.



2. COMMON THEMES

Below is a brief summary of the common themes that emerged in the second round of listening sessions and from submitted public comments.

Missoula County is diverse and each community has unique needs. We heard many times that a one-size-fits-all approach to addressing community development challenges will not work well. Meeting attendees were generally supportive of local/regional planning efforts that include significant landowner and public participation with assistance from Missoula County. Where local plans are in effect, participants asked that they be observed in decision making and also implemented.

Work with the City of Missoula on annexation planning, but make sure Missoula County's distinct communities remain. In areas surrounding the city, meeting participants expressed a desire to retain the unique identities of their communities while acknowledging the city is growing and will probably continue to grow.

There is a need for concise, understandable goals and objectives. Some of the draft goals and objectives proved to be confusing. Meeting attendees voiced a desire for more direct, concise language as well as the need for a clear, logical flow from goals to objectives to actions. More than one citizen asked that a goal or statement addressing the importance of private property rights be included.

Locally driven zoning can be an acceptable tool to conserve resources and directing growth. Participants at every location, with the exception of Potomac, appeared to have interest in zoning as a means to conserve natural resources for the future and as a method for directing growth to acceptable locations. Participants' level of knowledge of different types of zoning (for example, issue-specific zoning to protect water quality vs. comprehensive small town zoning) seemed relatively high. The willingness to accept zoning seemed greater when it was discussed as a local cooperative effort, rather than a county-wide approach. Several locations have already developed regional plans that could form the basis of local zoning. Participants from East Missoula seemed interested in possible zoning, and some places, like Target Range, already have it, but want it updated to reflect their plan.

Planning for community development should include incentives. Participants stated it is important to identify areas for growth to occur and to invest in and facilitate development of those areas in order to provide incentive for targeted development. Investment might mean roads, trails, water and sewer, community centers, preserving historical sites, grant writing resources or other community endeavors. Simply having rules 'against' development in areas of important natural resources is not enough. In community growth areas, all types of housing, including affordable and workforce housing, should be encouraged.

The use of public funds to purchase conservation easements is generally supported. However, many participants stated the easements should include requirements for public access. Meeting attendees indicated the easements do not necessarily have to be perpetual –they could be for a defined time period and renewable. Provisions must be made to ensure the purpose of the easement is carried out over time.



The county should provide equitable distribution of tax revenue. This was an issue that seemed to rise in importance in direct proportion to the community’s distance from the county seat. The perspective is that the rural areas pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits. The recent bond for the sports fields in Missoula was identified by many as a particularly fresh example of this issue.

Conserving agricultural lands is complicated. Several participants stated that owners of agricultural land should not be ‘punished’ when they seek to subdivide or develop property by the county requiring land set-asides. They felt the producers should be encouraged or compensated in some way (possibly through purchase of conservation easements) by providing the ‘public good’ of open space, scenic views and rural character that others enjoy. Some suggested the county work with local agricultural preservation groups to develop a clearinghouse list of potential buyers of agricultural land.

Economic development efforts are valued, but resources should be spread around the county. Using county resources to help redevelop existing, underutilized industrial sites (Smurfit, Bonner Mill) was widely supported. So was using tax dollars to help support additional broadband and cellular communication in rural communities. The general use of tax incentives for business development received mixed reviews, and some meeting attendees felt the county should not be in the business of job creation at all; simply get out of the way of private enterprise. Others felt the county should help small business owners who create jobs and add value to local agricultural and forestry products. An often-voiced comment was economic development efforts and even basic service improvements (e.g., better road maintenance) should be focused on rural communities in addition to urban projects and services. Other areas of potential economic development include attracting retirees and tourism. Supporting job training and education was also mentioned frequently.

More and better community outreach is desired, and so is more rural representation on county boards. Several meeting participants stated the County Commissioners should visit communities more often, not only when problems arise. The county should also do whatever it can to notify people of meetings and events including postcards, newspaper, internet, radio, emails and sending announcements to senior centers. Several people indicated community councils are valuable. Some suggested there be more rural representation on the planning board and other boards in order to better represent the views of rural areas.

Regulations should be limited and customer service should be improved. Many comments focused on land development regulations being overly complex, requiring more than necessary to meet county goals and that more information is often requested on application forms than the laws require. Some people indicated permitting processes should be streamlined and county departments should do a better job of internal communication. Others suggested that providing a higher level of customer service is necessary, that staff seem to get in the way of development instead of facilitating it. A comment brought up more than once was a ‘citizen advocate’ or ombudsman would be useful to help citizens navigate county approval processes.

Access to public lands and natural resources is a high priority. Meeting attendees asked that Missoula County continue coordinating with federal and state land management agencies to ensure access to public lands. Specific projects include planning for recreational access points along the Clark Fork River and acquiring an access area in Bonner. Some meeting attendees stated Missoula County should not try to duplicate the roles of the state and federal governments.

OVERVIEW OF COMMENTS ON GROWTH POLICY ACTION PLAN



Received During Round Three Public Outreach For the Missoula County Growth Policy Update

Prepared by Missoula County Community and Planning Services Staff

Background

The Missoula County Growth Policy, the county's comprehensive land use plan, is being updated. During the fall of 2014 a consultant team and Missoula County Community and Planning Services staff began the first round of public process by collecting information on priority issues and topics to be addressed in the growth policy. This process included eight listening sessions, as well as interviews with county departments and stakeholder organizations. The public identified key values including economic development, open spaces, agricultural lands, natural resources, recreational opportunities, and rural character. The results were used to draft preliminary goals and objectives.

A second round of public outreach was held in late February and early March 2015. Eight listening sessions were held across the county. The public reviewed draft goals and objectives to address impacts of future growth on Communities, Landscapes, and Livelihoods. The results were used to revise goals and objectives and to draft action strategies.

Missoula County Community and Planning Services (CAPS) hosted a third and final round of public events in October 2015 to invite public comment on the draft Missoula County Growth Policy Action Plan. Outreach efforts included four open houses, presentations at four Community Council meetings, and an online questionnaire. One key purpose was to gather feedback on a set of draft action strategies, grouped in the general themes of Landscapes, Livelihoods, and Communities. Participants were invited to indicate for each action strategy whether to Go Ahead/Proceed with Caution/Stop. There was opportunity to provide this feedback via dot exercises at open houses, through hard copy questionnaires, or through an online questionnaire. Each of these tools followed the same basic format.

Overall Summary

Response from the open houses, Community Council presentations, and online questionnaires showed that residents supported the majority of the strategies in the action plan. They also commented that a few types of actions should be implemented cautiously. None of the actions had an overwhelming negative response.

Overall, participants expressed caution about actions related to development of regulations, bond funding, some economic development activities, and climate change. They were quite supportive of measures to improve relations and communications between the County and communities.



Open House Summary

Residents attended open houses in Orchard Homes, Frenchtown, East Missoula, and at the Lubrecht Forest conference center. Stations at each open house provided an introduction, described the Guiding Principles, and asked for feedback on action strategies. Residents were able to review the Communities, Landscapes, and Livelihood action strategies and indicate whether these strategies can achieve County development and conservation goals and objectives. County residents could indicate if the county should go ahead, proceed with caution, or stop for each action strategy. Lastly, residents were asked if there was interest in a review and update of future land use mapping and it how that might help the community.

- The open house participants were particularly favorable to the following strategies in the Action Plan:
- Regulatory and non-regulatory strategies to protect natural resources.
- Subdivision development with the least impact.
- Restore and use historic resources and sites.
- Re-use of former industrial sites.
- Expand digital communications.
- Support local agriculture.
- Contact and communication between Missoula County and residents.
- Public engagement.
- Better service delivery.

Some participants recommended the County proceed with caution when revising zoning and subdivision regulations to address a variety of issues.

The participants' oral and written comments focused upon agriculture, communication, and transportation. Several participants recommended the County stop revision of subdivision regulations to address agricultural impacts, which were likely a result of a simultaneous project to amend the agriculture provisions in the County subdivision regulations.

Some participants expressed a desire to have more County participation and attendance, particularly from the County Commissioners, at Community Council meetings and other local planning events. A few participants said County departments should continue and/or expand its efforts on weed management, transportation, and the collection of junk vehicles on private property.

Community Council Meeting Summary

After the open houses, county planning staff and consultants gave presentations at the Seeley Lake, Lolo, Swan Valley, and Evaro/Finley/O'Keefe Community Councils so County residents could learn about the draft Action Plan and provide comment directly or through an online survey. Council members and the public took copies of the questionnaire and online survey information to share with area residents and groups. The presentations and local distribution efforts may have helped generate responses to the questionnaire.

Some comment suggested how the County could do more to generate participation and input from residents outside of



the City of Missoula, particularly with this Growth Policy project. Some residents would like the County to investigate how subdivision and zoning regulations and planning efforts impact local residential and commercial development.

Online Questionnaire Summary

Residents favorably responded to the Landscape, Livelihoods, and Communities strategies in the Action Plan. The online questionnaire results showed that the residents indicated a clear “go ahead” for the majority of the strategies in the Action Plan. The participants indicated in the online questionnaire that a few actions should be implemented with caution when warranted. Overall, none of the actions had an overwhelming negative response.

The following strategy areas showed strong implementation interest.

1. Develop Natural Resource and Environmental Protection and Conservation Strategies.
2. Support Subdivision Development With The Least Impact.
3. Maximum Access Opportunities to Publicly Owned Lands.
4. Protect and Restore Historic Resources and Sites.
5. Support and Expand Local Businesses and Workforce Training.
6. Develop Recreation and Tourist Economies.
7. Protect and Enhance Rural Character.
8. Provide Varied Development Types and Densities In and Around Communities.
9. Support Increased Infrastructure In and Around Communities.
10. Discourage Development in Areas That Reduces Public and Responder Safety.
11. Expand and Enhance Parks, Trails, and Recreation To Promote Health and Wellness.
12. Increase Contact and Communication Between County and Residents.
13. Enhance Public Engagement Opportunities.
14. Provide Simple, Clear, and Flexible Land Use Regulations, Procedures, and Forms.
15. Maintain Coordination and Communication with the Tribes, City of Missoula, and Land Management Agencies

Landscapes, 136 responses (but not everyone answered every question): The lowest outright support was for actions related to climate change. Parks and trails projects and bond funding of projects received lukewarm responses, possibly due to recent bond for Fort Missoula Regional Park and (then) upcoming vote for school bonds. Several written comments expressed a lack of support for use of public bonds. The use of private funding for conservation efforts was better received.

Livelihoods, 77 responses (but not everyone answered every question): Less than one-half respondents selected ‘go ahead’ with “Work with economic development agencies to create a targeted economic development plan.” Over a third selected ‘proceed with caution’. Some comments indicated the need to carefully consider which economic development projects to support.

Several comments and the survey figures expressed caution with the county supporting economic development efforts. Support for broadband availability; brownfields, Targeted Economic Development Districts (TEDD) and tax increment financing



(TIF) districts for redevelopment; internship program; and assisting with efforts to create and expand markets for locally grown and made products was high.

Communities, 84 responses (but not everyone answered every question): “Develop Fort Missoula Regional Park” received less than one-third responses to ‘go ahead’ and over 40% selected ‘proceed with caution.’

Affordable housing actions were not strongly supported, with less than one-half selecting ‘go ahead’ to “Incorporate affordable housing goals and provisions in plans, policies and regulations” and almost one-third selected ‘proceed with caution.’ There were similar responses to “Explore incentives for development of affordable housing in regulations.”

More outreach from the county was strongly favored:

- Almost 90% selected ‘go ahead’ to “Prepare and disseminate information on revenues and expenditures in the County.”
- Almost 90% selected ‘go ahead’ to “Support and encourage opportunities for rural representation on County boards.”

General comments: ‘Proceed with caution’ figures were somewhat high (20-33% range) on actions that include zoning and subdivision regulations. ‘Stop’ figures were also higher for these actions where the wording seemed to support regulatory measures. The subdivision regulations agricultural standards, which were under review at the time of the survey, may account for this to some degree.

Written comments covered a very wide spectrum, ranging from unequivocal support for individual property rights to ‘zone us now.’ However, several comments opposed the proposed climate change actions and many also asked for the county to limit regulations. Limiting regulations was probably the most common written comment.





APPENDIX C: MISSOULA AREA LAND USE ELEMENT



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Missoula Area Land Use Element

An Amendment to the 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy
Missoula County Community and Planning Services



Adopted
June 6, 2019



Acknowledgements

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Resolution

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Introduction

Adopted in 2016, the Missoula County Growth Policy is an official public document guiding future social, physical, environmental, and economic growth and development of the county. The Land Use Designations Map is an important piece of the growth policy used as the policy foundation for making decisions on land use issues. Originally adopted in the 1970s, the land use map has been updated in portions of the county over time through the adoption of area plans, but there has never been a comprehensive update. The 2016 Missoula County Growth Policy identified updating the land use map as a high priority. This document and the corresponding land use map, land use designations, and implementation strategy are intended to be adopted as an element of the Growth Policy and update a portion of Land Use Designation Map.

This document, called the Missoula Area Land Use Element, is a long-range planning tool, guiding growth over a 20-year horizon. It is a visual and written description of the desired future character of land use in the community. While the land use element is a policy document, it contains a list of actions such as zoning amendments and infrastructure improvements as recommended implementation steps. The map and its associated text is not intended to be static; rather, it is meant to evolve over a 20-year horizon (roughly 2019 to 2040) and changes may be necessary.

The Missoula Area Land Use Element contains 15 land use designations which describe places with similar goals, characteristics, uses, and mobility considerations. The designations are meant to be general. As with the map, the land use designations do not describe the current conditions of the area; instead, they describe a desired future condition.

There are many considerations and factors that go into developing a plan for the future of a community, but the foundation of this plan is based on three pillars: our values, our ideas on growth and development, and the realities facing our community (page 12). The values and ideas on growth and development came from the community through a robust and thorough outreach process. The realities are facets of our community that affect land use that must be considered.

These three pillars support the “One Community” approach, which is a vision for how Missoula County should approach planning for the county’s jurisdiction in the Missoula area. This approach to planning is rooted in the idea that within this place we call Missoula, residents don’t see a “county” Missoula and a “city” Missoula, they see Missoula as one place. A core part of this planning approach identifies five roles for Missoula County in creating a community that has desirable places to live, work, and recreate (page 4).

Land use planning needs to be strategic. Our values and our ideas on growth need to be tied together through a set of strategic imperatives. The imperatives in this document describe strategies that integrate the values, ideas on growth and realities into the fabric of the land use designations and the land use map (page 19).

The Missoula Area Land Use Element is a forward thinking document. The map and text describe a vision, but this vision is only policy that helps guide the county’s decision making process. For the community to realize its vision, action must be taken. That is why the document contains an implementation strategy. These steps described in the implementation strategy will help this vision come to fruition.

Our Greatest Assets

Our People

People and their values shape the community

One of a community's greatest assets is its people. They are the leaders, the visionaries, the thinkers, and your neighbors. People have skills and abilities to empower, build, and act as agents of change. They provide the social capital, community organizations, and institutions that educate, offer a voice, and provide for community members in need. Each person has unique and dynamic ideas about our community and how it might change. Together these ideas make up the community's values, and these values help determine how the community takes shape.

Missoulians take pride in the unique character of their community. Many positive changes have come through the hard work and vision of our residents: the resurgence of downtown, Milltown State Park, and the acquisition of Mount Jumbo as public land. If the people of Missoula did not value investment in local merchants, the Clark Fork River, or seeing elk from their offices, these important places would not be what they are today.

Our values guide the choices we make as individuals and drive the missions of many organizations and businesses working within our community. Our values help make the places most important to us that much more special. Our values affect where and how the community grows, and those values play out on the land.



“I value quality, thoughtful growth that maintains the quality of life in the County, open space, great transportation facilities including integrated pedestrian, bicycling, etc.”

Workshop Participant

Our Land

Land in all its forms has value

Land is a community's second greatest asset. Our values set the foundation for how to use our land, such as for housing, employment, and transportation. Because land is limited, it has a monetary value. When land is improved, not only does the monetary value change, but community uses, benefits, and values are also affected. How communities use land evolves over time; those changes can be incremental or transformative. The future use of land influences the sustainability and prosperity of a community. Applying the land use map to the built environment is crucial in shaping whether a community functions effectively and how services can be delivered efficiently.

Bridging our Assets

The land use map is one tool to bring the community's greatest assets together. It serves as a visual representation of our values as well as a blueprint for our community as it grows and evolves. It is central to the strategic, continued development of our community by guiding land use regulations, development patterns, investment in public infrastructure, and connection to local services.



The Big Idea

“One Community”

Missoula transcends jurisdictional lines. It is a community composed of centers, corridors, neighborhoods, and natural spaces with unique characteristics and identities. These places enable our lifestyles, diversify our economy, and give the community its sense of place.

The community is connected through opportunities. Wherever a resident lives, there are opportunities to access jobs, transportation choices, services, education, housing and amenities; opportunities to experience urban spaces and open places; and opportunities to call a place home, to eat locally-grown food, and to access clean water.

To its residents, Missoula isn't “the county Missoula” and “the city Missoula.” It is one community.



The “One Community” Approach

The “One Community” planning approach recognizes that even though Missoula is divided by two jurisdictions, how we think about the future of our community shouldn’t be dictated by these divisions. We should think and plan for the future by always remembering that a community is like an ecosystem, where everything is connected. It is easy to base the foundation for planning upon jurisdictional lines, but that approach does not recognize the connectivity of the broader community.

The “One Community” approach provides the guide and vision for how Missoula County will address its role in planning for the future of the broader community within its jurisdiction. In terms of adopted policy and state law, this county document has no jurisdiction over lands within the city, just like the city’s planning documents have no jurisdiction within the county. But nonetheless, to the extent that these documents complement each other, the better the entire community is served.

The foundation and vision of the “One Community” approach, based upon five components, considers how the responsibility of planning for the community’s future is shared. These five components describe Missoula County’s role in planning for the future our community. Together with the city’s vision, they provide guidance and give direction for the future of the greater Missoula area.

Components of the “One Community” Approach

Coordinate on the Edges

Plan for the Physical Framework Needed to Facilitate Unique Neighborhoods

Provide for Rural Neighborhoods

Protect Public Health and Safety

Preserve Working Lands, Agricultural Areas, and Naturally-Functioning Systems

Coordinate on the Edges

Missoula County's role is to facilitate development patterns and efficient use of infrastructure in a consistent and congruent manner with the City of Missoula.

Most of the new growth within Missoula County occurs in the Missoula Valley, and most of that growth occurs within the City of Missoula or on its edges. A large portion of the growth on the city's edges will happen in areas that are now outside the city, but when developed they will likely be annexed into the city. As the city expands its footprint, there is a transition from county land use planning and regulations to city planning and zoning. Typically, in the edge areas, the city requires annexation in exchange for its services.

The county's role is to plan for development patterns harmonious with the city's growth policy to help facilitate congruent development and promote the efficient use of infrastructure. In these edge areas, aligning the "Our Missoula Land Use Map" (city growth policy) and county's land use map is an important consideration for coordinating growth. Examples of these edge areas include portions of Miller Creek and west of Reserve Street between South Avenue and 3rd Street (Figure 1).

One specific area where the community can benefit from additional coordinated planning is the area east of the airport between West Broadway and Mullan Road. This area has long been targeted by both the county and city as a location for future growth. Located on the edge of the city and directly adjacent to a range of infrastructure and transportation options, this large block of undeveloped property presents the opportunity to form unique public-private partnerships to plan, fund, and develop infrastructure necessary for development.

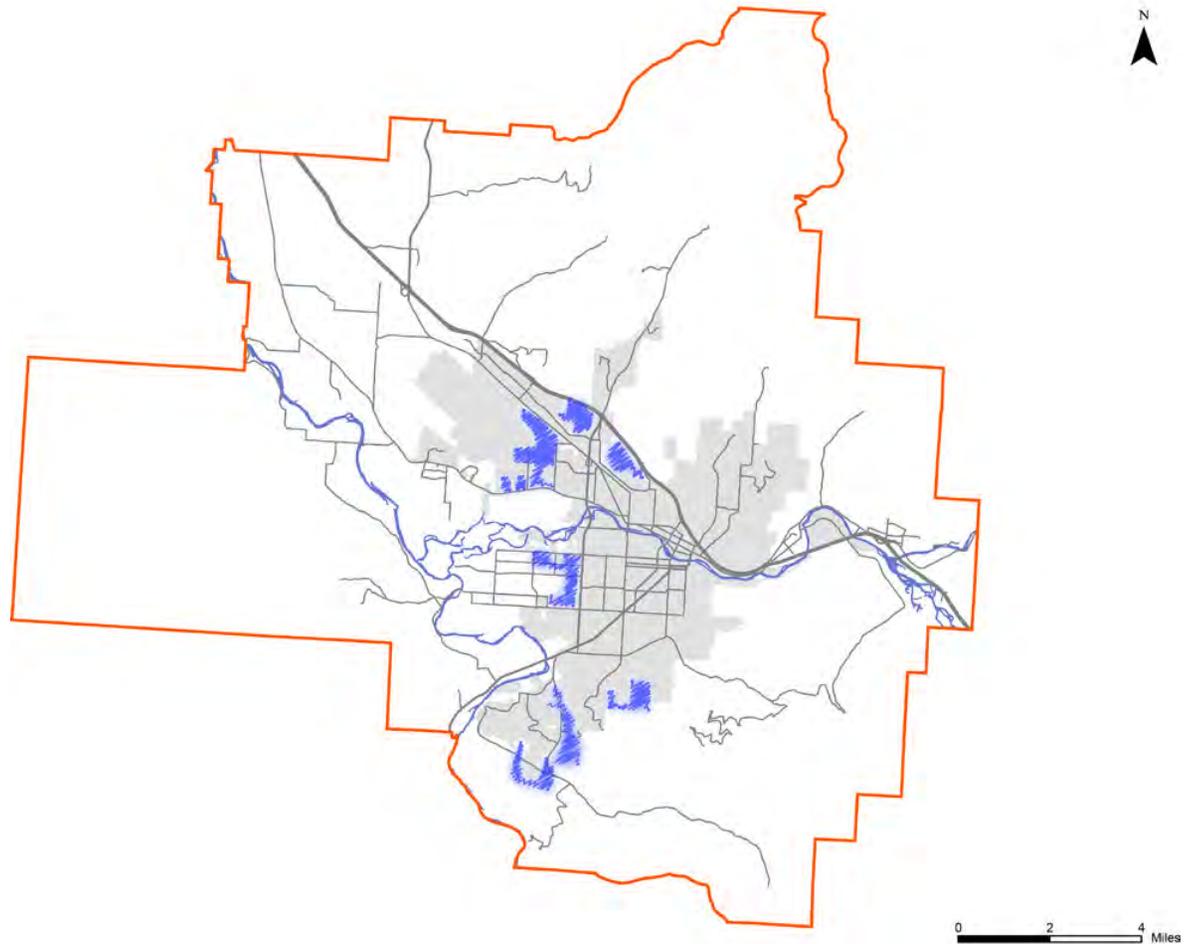


Figure 1: Conceptual representation of potential locations for coordination.

Plan for the Physical Framework Needed to Facilitate Unique Neighborhoods

Missoula County's role is to enable the evolution of existing and emerging neighborhoods to capture their distinct identity and sense of place.

Outside of the city, there are both existing and emerging neighborhoods, places like East Missoula, West Riverside, and the Wye (Figure 2). These neighborhoods have higher levels of infrastructure and services than other locations in the county, enabling more housing choices and a greater variety of services. Neighborhoods contain essential elements of a livable community, such as walkability, a mix of housing types, businesses, and opportunities for employment. They also have distinct identities.

Working with residents, the county's role is to enable the growth and development of neighborhoods through the implementation of the land use map. In some neighborhoods, like Bonner or East Missoula, change may occur incrementally; in others, like the Wye, it could be transformational. In all cases, investment in infrastructure through a variety of sources, including private-public partnerships, will be necessary. The county will need to ensure neighborhoods are well-connected with other parts of the community with roads, through non-motorized connections, and in some cases through transit.

Quality-of-life improvements will be of the utmost importance. It is the county's role to ensure these places are desirable and equitable places to live. This means ensuring neighborhoods are in locations with services like rural fire, schools, parks, trails, and access to open lands.

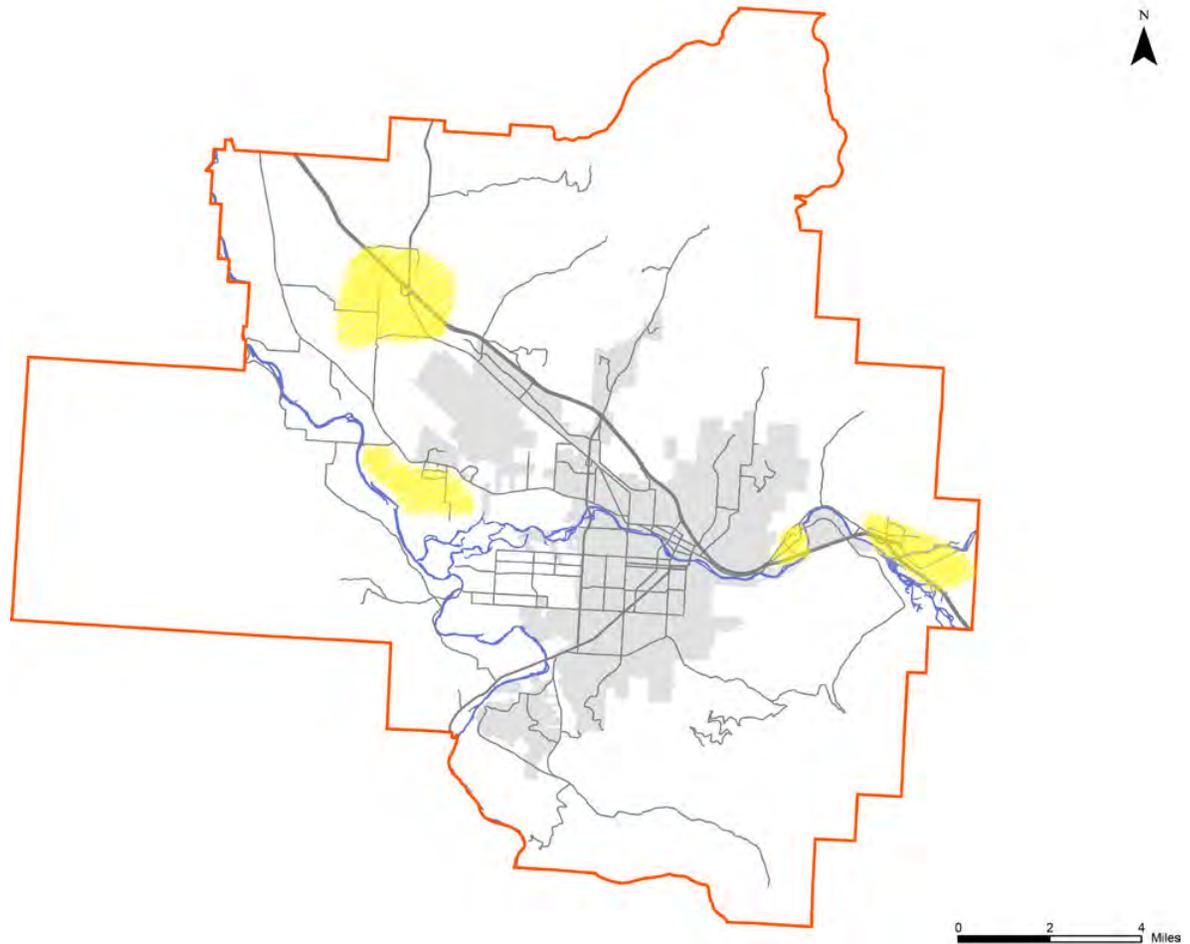


Figure 2: Conceptual representation of neighborhoods.

Provide Locations for Rural Neighborhoods

Missoula County's role is to provide places for rural lifestyles close to town.

Housing preferences differ; not everyone wants to live in town. Rural neighborhoods, with larger lots and fewer services, offer housing choices close to town, yet with a country feeling. Rural neighborhoods are places that mix housing, entrepreneurial activities, agriculture, ranching and timber lands. The role of rural neighborhoods is to provide a type of housing and lifestyle not found in the urban setting. Rural neighborhoods do not require the level of infrastructure and investment that more populated areas of the community do. Water and wastewater treatment are typically provided on-site. Locations of rural neighborhoods include Big Flat, north of the Wye, Target Range, and Miller Creek (Figure 3).

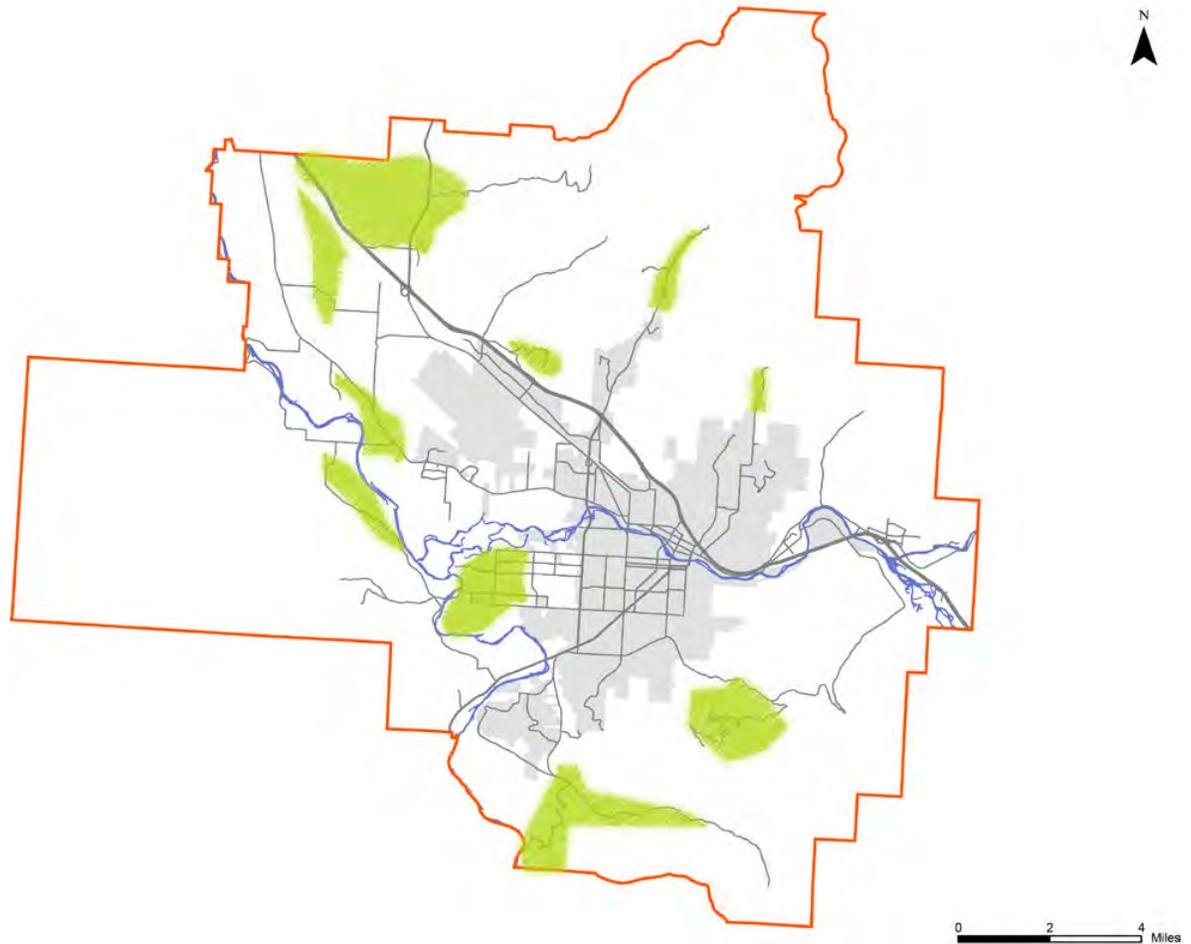


Figure 3: Conceptual representation of rural neighborhoods.

Protect Public Health and Safety

Missoula County's role is to steer future growth away from areas where hazards are likely to exist.

Development in the wrong places can lead to public health and safety issues, as well as significant expenditures of public funds to manage and mitigate disasters. Floodways, floodplains, and elevated wildfire risk are the main hazards in the planning area (Figures 4 and 5). In 2017, major fires directly affected large parts of the county. The following spring, the Clark Fork River reached the highest stage since 1908. The land use map is an opportunity to proactively mitigate risk to public health and safety by steering future growth and development away from hazardous areas.

Moreover, existing hazards will be exacerbated by climate change. Missoula County's summers are becoming hotter and drier, resulting in more frequent and severe wildfires and a longer wildfire season. At the same time, our winters and springs are projected to get warmer and wetter, leading to more frequent rain-on-snow events that cause the most destructive floods. Missoula County is currently engaged in a climate resiliency planning process with the city and Climate Smart Missoula, the outcome of which will include recommendations for how land use planning in the city and county can help make our community more resilient in the face of these changes.

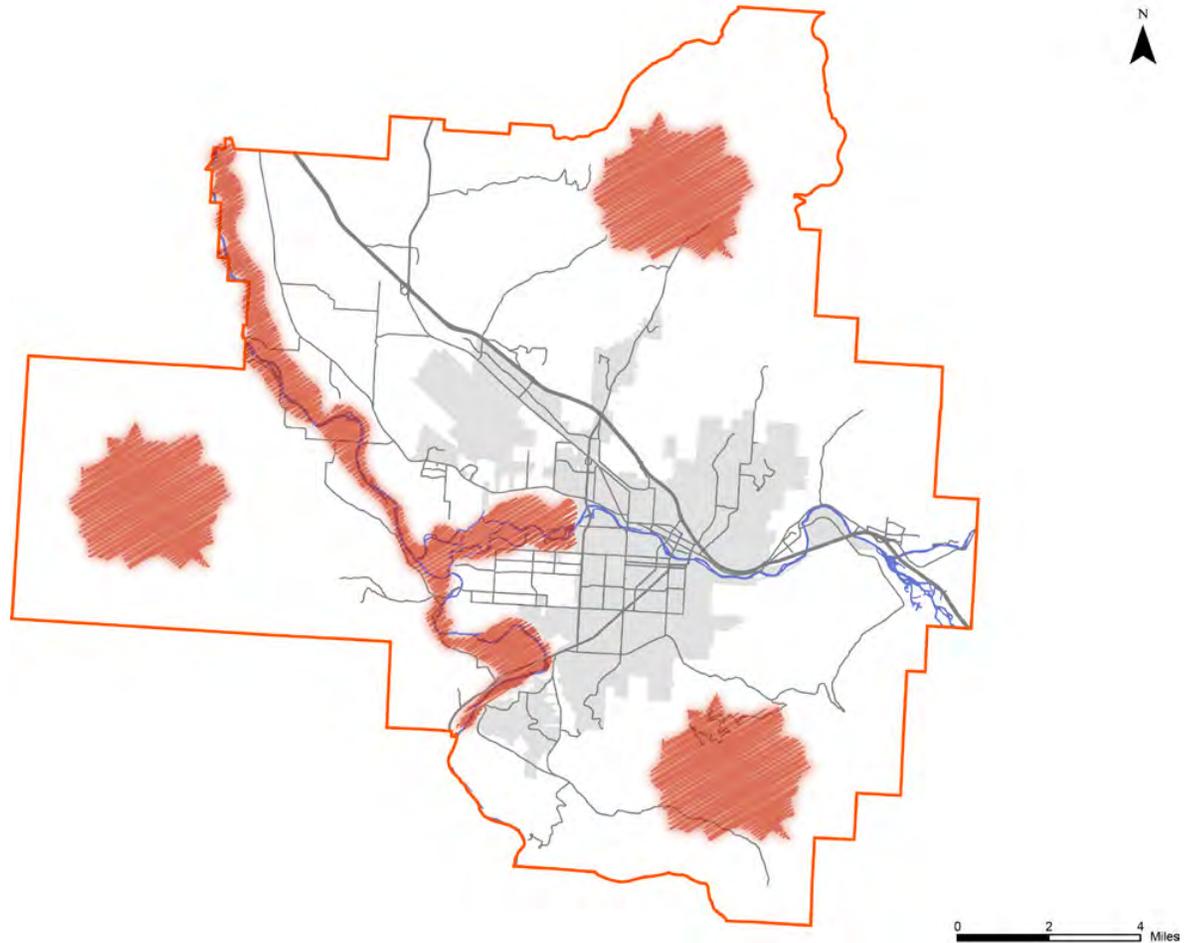


Figure 4: Conceptual representation of areas with hazards.

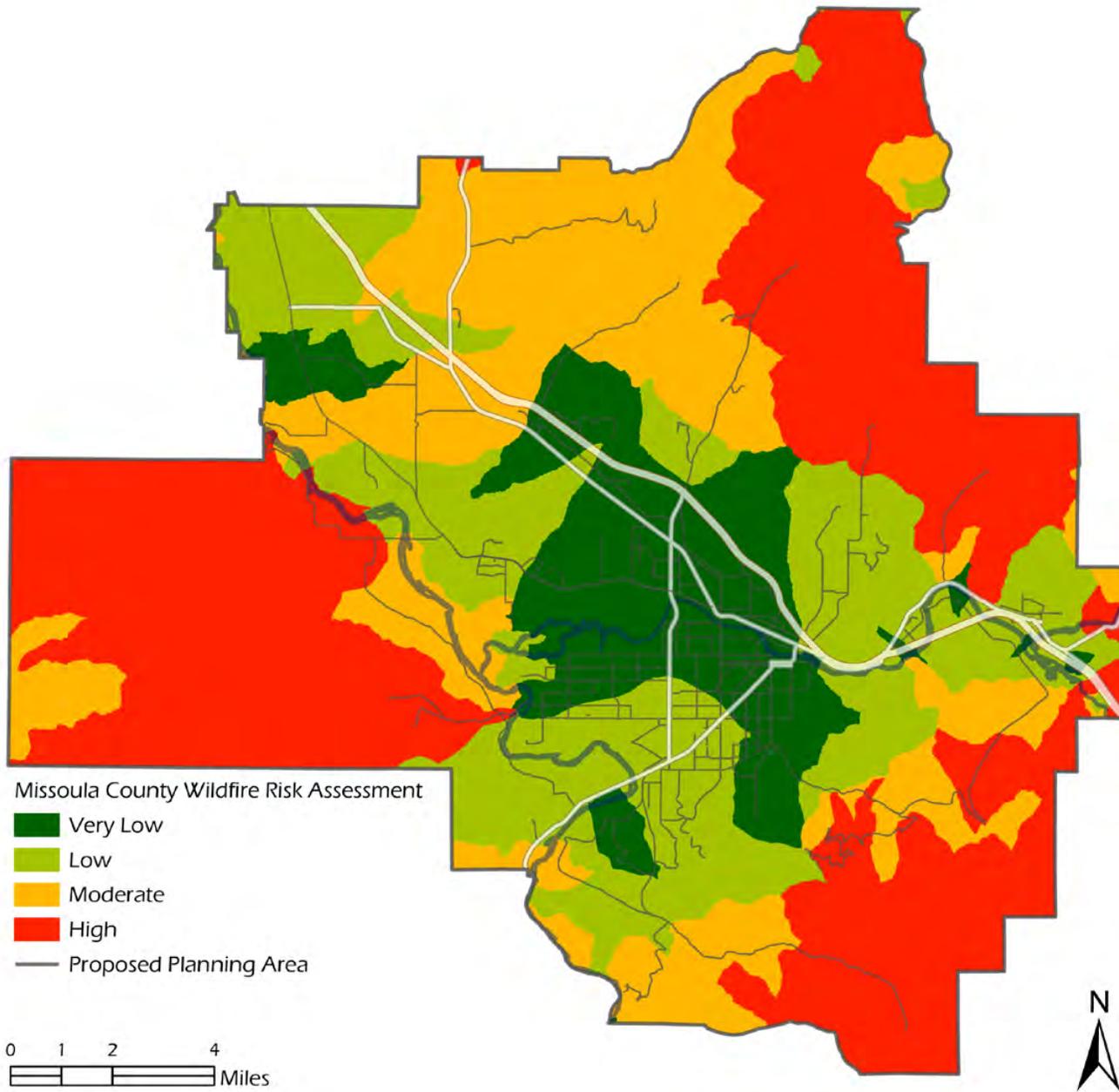


Figure 5: Wildfire risk in the planning area.

Preserve Working Lands, Agricultural Areas, and Naturally-Functioning Systems

Missoula County's role is to guide the development of working lands, agricultural areas, and natural areas to preserve their ability to function.

Missoula County recognizes the importance of quality of life, outdoor recreation, viewsheds, wildlife habitat, water quality, and local food production. Less developed areas, while not as critical for housing or providing significant employment opportunities, are critical to maintaining our values and quality of life (Figure 6). Managing the intensity of development in these areas and providing access to public lands are important roles for the county.

The role of the county must include the protection of three important habitats found in the Missoula area. First, stream corridors and associated riparian areas that are the most ecologically important and imperiled habitats for fish and wildlife species in western Montana should be protected. Second, important grassland habitats that are relatively rare in western Montana but provide critical resources for game and nongame wildlife communities, many of which are declining in North America, should be protected. Third, geographic funnels and terrain features (*e.g.*, riparian corridors, ridgelines, timbered draws, passes) that naturally guide wildlife to certain areas in harsh weather conditions and during seasonal movements and migrations should be accommodated.

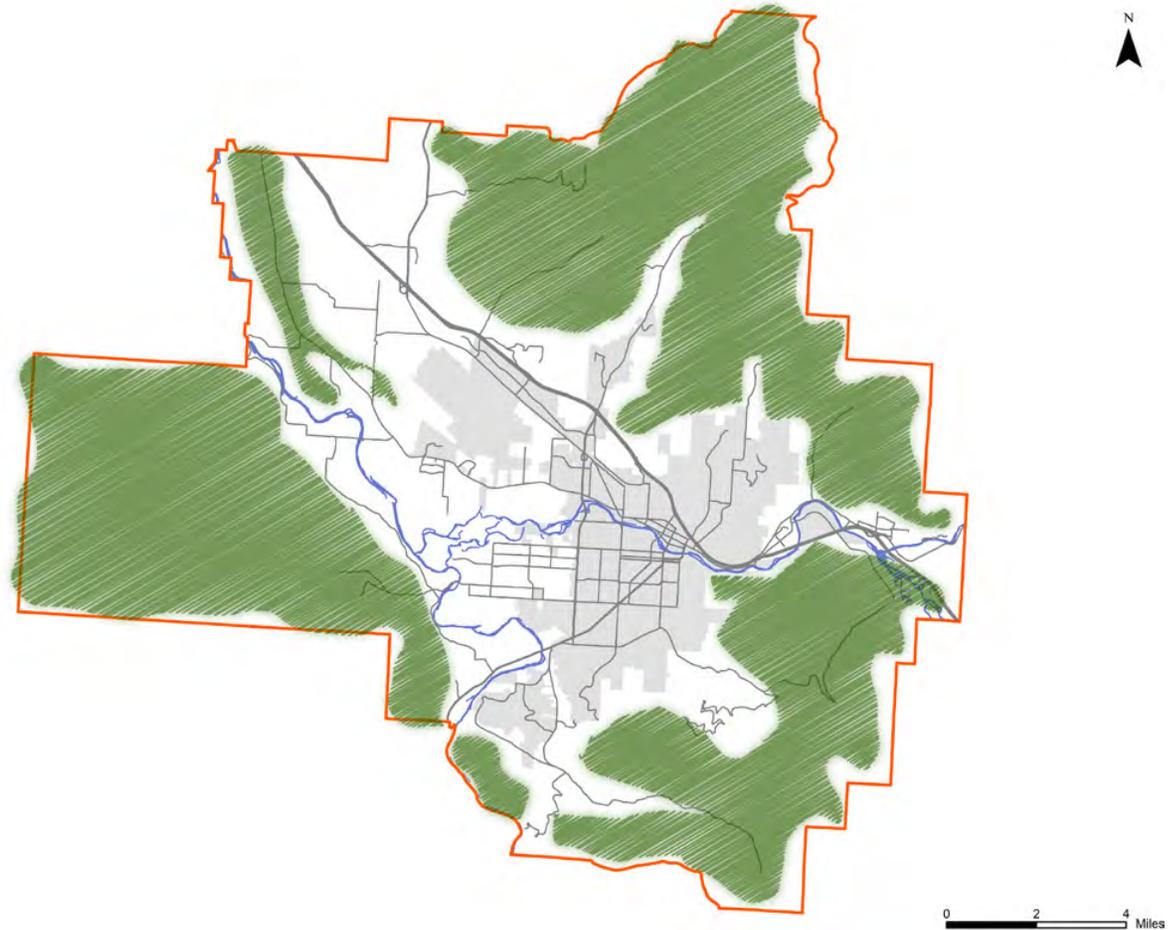


Figure 6: Conceptual representation of areas of working lands and natural landscapes.

The Foundation

The Missoula Area Land Use Element serves as a visual representation of the community's values, ideas on growth and development, and the realities facing our community as it grows and evolves. In developing the element, CAPS staff held 15 public workshops, open houses, and visioning sessions in neighborhoods from Bonner to Frenchtown. Planners spoke with community councils, homeowners' associations, and community organizations. Planners also interacted with dozens of stakeholders representing housing advocates, trail advocates, small farmers, conservationists, developers, and state and local agencies. This outreach effort engaged the community in a discussion about values and ideas on the growth in the planning area. Together with the realities our community faces, these three facets (values, ideas, and realities) form the foundation of the land use map.



“Every neighborhood has to have its own character. These should be identified by those who live there now, and enhanced and preserved through planning.”

Online Comment

Values

The land use map is a visual representation of the community's values, and it would therefore be impossible to develop a land use map without having a discussion about what those values are. Land use planning is often based in values. Valuing open space, farmland, wildlife, walkability, and affordability all translate into how you plan for the future of a community. This outreach process started by asking the community about values: What are they? What is the most important value? Can you identify where your values might be found on a map? Below are the predominate themes that emerged from that process.

Housing

Additional housing is needed throughout the planning area, specifically housing that is affordable for a range of income levels. In a land use map, this translates to providing for a range of housing types.

Existing Infrastructure

Focus development toward areas with existing infrastructure or toward those areas with the potential to expand or improve infrastructure to accommodate density and a mix of uses.

Agriculture

Establish an agricultural-specific land use designation and incorporate protection of small agricultural operations into planning tools.

Open Space

Protect open space for wildlife habitat, recreation, and agriculture. Cluster development to protect important resources, such as agriculture and habitat.

Multi-Modal Transportation

Integrate land use and multi-modal transportation options, including road enhancements, bus service, and pedestrian and bike facilities.

Water Quality

Protect surface water and groundwater.

Community Identity

Maintain unique neighborhood character.

Ideas

In addition to a discussion about values, the outreach process identified community members' ideas on planning for growth and development within the planning area. Along with the values and realities, these ideas help form the foundation of the land use map. Through the outreach process, the following themes were identified.

Cluster

Cluster housing and development to preserve open space, fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors, wetlands and riparian areas, public access, and agricultural lands.

Walkable Neighborhoods

Create neighborhood centers that include a mix of uses and walkable environments.

Infrastructure Planning

Identify areas where infrastructure is needed. Closely evaluate land uses in the immediate vicinity of the airport and consider some of the existing characteristics and infrastructure available in this area to serve future development.

Live-make Neighborhoods

Develop a "live-make" land use concept to allow small shops, artist studios, and manufacturing associated with a primary residence that are more intensive than the customary home occupation.

Connectivity

Increase motorized and non-motorized connectivity between neighborhoods, recreation areas, and to the city. Allow for the continued function of natural systems and fish and wildlife movement corridors.

Rural Character

Retain areas with rural residential character.

Avoid Hazards

Restrict development in areas prone to flooding and areas of elevated wildfire risk.

Realities

Realities are factors and trends we are experiencing that are unique to our community, and they must be considered in the development of a land use map. Recognizing these realities will help us develop a land use map that allows our community to respond to changing conditions.

Growing Population

When Missoula County first adopted a land use map in the 1970s, there were about 58,000 people living here. Since the adoption of the original map, Missoula County has continued to grow, doubling in population to over 117,000. In the next 20 years, Missoula County is expected to grow by another 30,000 people, and most of that growth, around 87%, will happen in the Missoula Valley. Some of this growth will happen within the City of Missoula; some will happen within the county planning area outside the city limits.

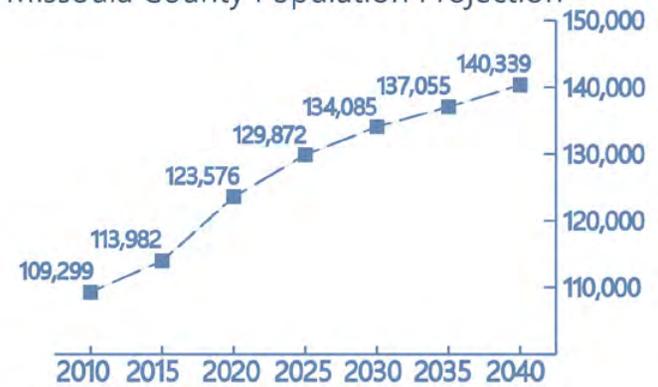
Based on population projections and recent growth patterns, the planning area could grow by more than 14,000 people by 2040. Furthermore, changes in the City of Missoula Growth Policy may affect growth patterns. The City of Missoula has adopted an "Inward Focus" policy, and, depending upon implementation, the ratio of development happening within city limits compared to the surrounding county may shift to a greater percentage of growth within the city. The upcoming 2020 census will likely have data to measure if the growth patterns are in fact shifting inwards.

The reality is Missoula and the surrounding areas will grow, somewhere in the neighborhood of 1,000 to 2,000 people per year. Missoula is a great community with a high quality of life, a major university, and a diversifying economy. With an increasingly footloose economy, Missoula and its surrounding neighborhoods will continue to attract new residents.

As the community grows there will be a need for additional housing, places to work, recreate, shop and other amenities typically found in a community of this size. As growth occurs, commercial, industrial and residential land use will be the primary drivers of change to our built environment. Trends affecting development patterns for these three land use types were key considerations in developing the land use map.

Growth in Missoula County

Missoula County Population Projection



1,000-2,000 ppl

Projected growth per year countywide

Population Distribution

8 out of 10 new Missoula County residents end up living in the Missoula area



Of the new growth in the Missoula area, 45% will be in the current boundaries of the Planning Area and 55% will be in the current boundaries of the city



Planning Area Population Projection

14,000 ppl through 2040

Based on the countywide projection and the distribution of growth

Land Use Trends

Commercial Trends

- Focus on availability of infrastructure as the key to locating office, retail, and commercial land uses
- Recognize that most new major commercial developments will likely be annexed into the city
- Acknowledge that future retail development will likely incorporate amenities, entertainment, and mixed-use
- Identify general locations for small-scale, mixed-use development to serve existing neighborhoods

Industrial Trends

- Utilize existing industrial areas more efficiently and effectively
- Locate new industrial areas near existing infrastructure, housing, and emergency services
- Understand that industrial uses increasingly need commercial components
- Encourage entrepreneurship through live-make environments

Residential Trends

- Within the planning area, anticipate a need for around 300 new housing units a year
- Accommodate an adequate supply of housing to avoid the map itself becoming a constraint
- Allow for a wide variety of housing types and densities
- Allow the market to react to changing housing needs
- Plan for the extension of public water and sewer to support development needs

Geography

Unlike communities in other parts of the country, the physical geography of Missoula plays a significant role in where and how we grow. The slopes of the mountains around the community define our edges to the east, north, and west. The rivers are another consideration. The floodplains and the associated waterways of the Clark Fork and Bitterroot rivers split the valley in half and limit the ability to develop north-south transportation corridors. These physical features direct where the community can expand, naturally limiting where future growth can and cannot occur.

The physical characteristics of the valley have the biggest influence on the directions the community can grow. Generally, the physical characteristics of the valley push options for future expansion of the developed area northwest along the Mullan Road and I-90 corridors. We must be judicious about where and how the community grows with respect to the constraints imposed by the landscape.

Infrastructure and Services

The intensity of development is predicated on the level of infrastructure, with the transportation network and water and wastewater treatment systems being key considerations. Generally, densities greater than two dwelling units per acre require connection to public water and public wastewater treatment.¹ Without public water and sewer treatment, density in residential areas and the scale of commercial development is restricted.

With few exceptions, Missoula County does not own and operate water and sewer infrastructure within the planning area; this has historically been driven by the City of Missoula. As a result, the potential for densities greater than one dwelling unit per acre within the planning area is restricted without expanding or developing water and sewer systems. Water rights are another factor affecting land use patterns. The availability of groundwater for future growth and development is limited by the legislative closure in the Bitterroot River basin and a lack of water availability in the lower Clark Fork River basin.

Transportation is another component of infrastructure related to where and how a community grows. Missoula's transportation network is multi-modal: a combination of roads, bus lines and non-motorized facilities, though travel by car is the predominate mode. The management of our transportation network is shared between the Montana Department of Transportation, Missoula County, and the City of Missoula. Today, key roads and intersections are at or near capacity, constraining opportunity for future development. Funding to address these concerns is in short supply, and money to build new roads is currently almost entirely reliant on federal grants through a competitive nationwide process.

¹ All references to public water or public sewer systems within this document refer to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality's definition of public systems, which is tied to the amount of use of the system, not the ownership.

Housing Prices

The cost of housing in the Missoula market has emerged as one of the most pressing community challenges. Increased housing costs are affecting both renters and homebuyers. One metric for determining if housing costs are too high is measuring how many households in the community are cost-burdened, meaning renters and homeowners pay more than 30% of their income on housing. Countywide, 37% of all households are considered cost-burdened. Within city limits, that percentage increases to 41% of households. Renters are more likely to be cost-burdened than homeowners. The percentage of cost-burdened households in Missoula County and the City of Missoula is higher than comparable communities, as well as state and national averages.

The median sale price of homes in the Missoula urban area has increased by nearly \$100,000 since 2010, from \$200,500 in 2010 to \$290,000 at the end of 2018. According to the 2018 *Making Missoula Home* report, nearly half of homes are out of reach for entry-level professionals and working-class residents. Rentals are also difficult to find. Due to vacancy rates of rentals hovering around 2%, the price for rentals has followed a similar upward trajectory.



37% of all households in Missoula County, including renters and homeowners, are cost-burdened.

Housing Needs and Supply

Housing Needs in the Planning Area

Based on population projections

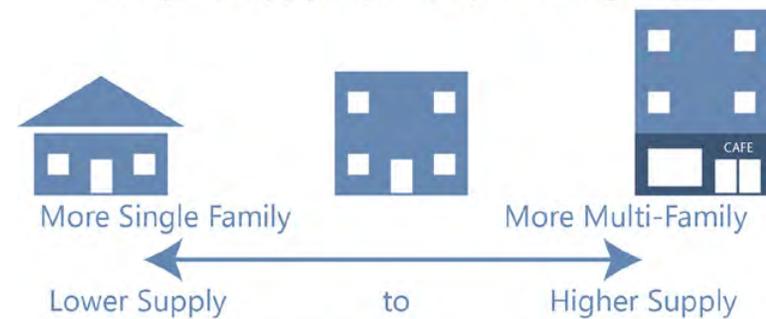
6,000 units over 20 Years

Housing Supply in the Planning Area

Housing supply is based on the land use designations, available infrastructure, what type of housing is built, and land potentially available for development.

Type of Housing Built

The range of supply depends upon what gets built



Our Environment

Our built environment is both affected by and affects our natural environment. Land use patterns need to include an over-arching approach to maintaining the ecological integrity of the area and consider the naturally functioning systems of the Missoula Valley. In addition, as our climate changes, our lifestyles and community will be affected in a number of ways. These realities need to be considered in how our community evolves over the course of the next 20 years.

Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

Home to elk, deer, moose, bighorn sheep, bears, mountain lions, and an array of bird life, as well as nongame wildlife species and world-class fisheries, the Missoula Valley has a diversity and abundance of fish and wildlife species. The opportunities for fishing, hunting, photography, bird-watching, and general wildlife viewing are some of the most powerful reasons people want to live in this area. Wildlife living on the valley floor and along the rivers and stream riparian areas, as well as wildlife trying to move through the valley, face obstacles as the community grows. Therefore, land considered important for wildlife as well as areas across the valley floor for recreation and wildlife passage must be considered in land use planning decisions and allow harmonious overlap with human development and recreational plans into the future.

Climate Change

We are already experiencing the impacts of climate change in Missoula County, and those impacts are projected to intensify over the coming decades and touch every sector in our county. Changes are likely to include reduced low elevation snowpack, earlier spring snowmelt, more frequent and intense droughts and wildfires, and impacts to agriculture, recreation, and human health. Many of the values and ideas that guide this land use plan, such as multi-modal transportation and walkable neighborhoods, will reduce our community's contribution to climate change by reducing fossil fuel use. Climate change will also exacerbate natural hazards such as wildfire and flooding, as described on page 9. Missoula County is currently partnering with the City of Missoula and Climate Smart Missoula to develop a Climate Resiliency Plan, which will identify and prioritize vulnerabilities and recommend strategies intended to address the vulnerabilities. These strategies may inform future planning efforts and future updates to the land use map.



Imperatives

Imperatives are essential strategies to address our realities and recognize our values.

Ensure the Community's Values are Represented in the Land Use Map

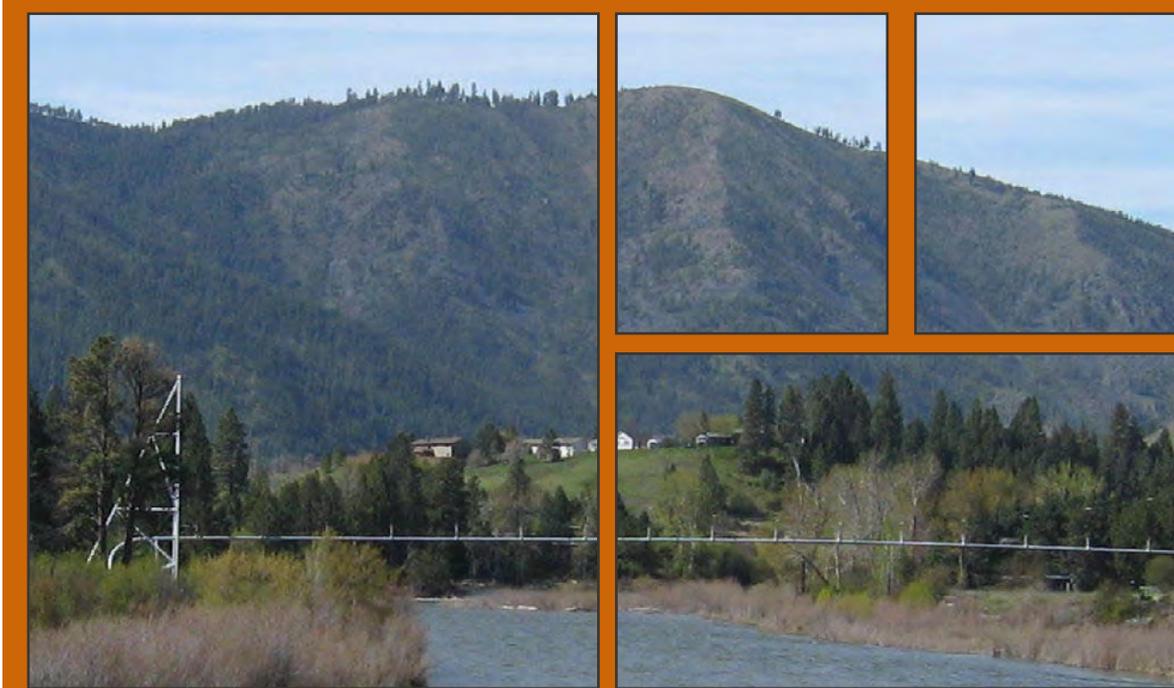
In Missoula, residents want the community to be affordable, they want trails and access to recreation areas, they want access to locally-grown food and quality health care, and they want areas for wildlife among a host of other values. These values will at times complement one or another, and at times they will conflict. The land use map is a puzzle that integrates these on the landscape. Compact development patterns and a logical expansion of urban services are the best strategies for balancing the community's values. Keeping these values at the forefront of the mapping process means we can provide room for housing and employment while ensuring that our working lands and natural systems remain a part of the community fabric.

Imperative: Incorporate Community Values

The values of the community, which are discussed on page 13, are incorporated into this plan in two ways: 1) into the descriptions of the land use designations and 2) within the map.

Imperative: Facilitate Compact Development Patterns

The key to balancing our community's values in the face of a changing built environment is for the land use map and designations to facilitate compact development patterns and a mix of uses supported by public water and sewer.



"I would like to see a 'recreation corridor' to Bonner and East Missoula that includes a trail and connections to recreation and open spaces."

Online Comment

Provide for a Variety of Housing Types

Missoula's housing prices have steadily increased over the past few years. A 2018 report focusing on housing affordability stated there is a lack of housing priced to meet the housing demand and few prospects necessary to increase the supply to meet future needs without interventions. The land use map is not by itself a solution to the housing issue, but it can affect potential housing supply and housing types.

Housing supply is reflected in the land use map as areas designated for residential use at various densities. Too little supply will constrain the market, and too much supply might conflict with other community values.

Housing type is reflected in the land use map through the descriptions of the land use designations. The idea is to provide for housing of all types and densities within the planning area, allowing the housing market to evolve and respond to economic changes. This means the land use map should have areas for every housing type, from single-family homes on large lots all the way to multi-unit dwellings.

The land use map can set the stage to increase the potential to meet housing needs. Neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, including "missing middle" units, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and multi-unit buildings meet different needs of the community. Under current conditions, new single-family home construction, even on smaller 5,000 square-foot lots, is not affordable for a Missoula family earning the median household income. In the urbanized area, single-family homes priced less than \$200,000 are almost non-existent, decreasing from 41% of home sales in 2012 down to 8% in 2017. Multi-unit buildings, including duplexes and townhomes, are part of the solution to meet the community's housing needs.

In the land use map, a broad approach to increased housing supply and types will allow the market to evolve with changing conditions and allow development of housing at price points where it can be economically produced. Even if new housing is moderately-priced, it can increase the overall affordability of a community through a concept called "filtering," where an increased supply of housing at a mid-ranged price point allows some people in lower-priced homes to then move to the higher-priced homes, thus increasing inventory of lower-priced homes.

Imperative: Provide Adequate Area for Housing Supply

The land use map must have enough land area designated for housing that can meet our future demands.

Imperative: Promote a Wide Range of Housing Types

A range of housing types and price points are needed to meet our future housing needs and to allow the market to respond to changing conditions.



Use, Plan, and Expand Infrastructure

Where appropriate, Missoula County must become proactive in planning for and developing infrastructure in order to successfully implement the land use map. Near the edge of the city, which is where growth is likely to happen in the near term, much of the required infrastructure is in place. But in areas targeted for higher residential, commercial and industrial growth over the long term (the 10 to 20-year horizon), not all the infrastructure is in place, and additional investments will be necessary.

Use the Infrastructure We Have in Place Today

In recent history, Missoula County has not taken a lead on using infrastructure to guide growth within the planning area. As a result, the area served by public water, public sewer, and our transportation network is limited. While not the only infrastructure necessary to serve the community, these three infrastructure types are the most critical. The areas that have these three pieces in place are key to accommodating near-term growth over the next 10 years or so.

The areas with these three key infrastructure types are primarily found adjacent to the city, in places like Miller Creek, Orchard Homes, Mullan Road, and east of the airport. Focusing the near-term growth toward our existing water and sewer infrastructure accomplishes two things: 1) it maximizes the infrastructure we already have in place, resulting in better economic use of the investments the community has already made, and 2) it accommodates the near-term population growth, allowing the county to plan for the next generation of infrastructure improvements necessary to accommodate long-term growth.

Plan for Areas to Expand Infrastructure to Accommodate the Growth of Tomorrow

Looking at our long-term population growth over the next 10 to 20 years and where we currently have the infrastructure necessary to accommodate new growth, it becomes clear that the infrastructure in place today will need to be expanded. There are many places within the planning area where we have two of the three key infrastructure pieces. With some additional investments, bringing in the third piece will greatly increase the area's development capacity.

Missoula County must work with public- and private-sector partners to identify strategies and develop the missing infrastructure pieces in underserved areas. Infrastructure improvements are large investments that require the county to carefully consider the fiscal impact and maintenance obligations over time. With sound planning and fiscal responsibility, infrastructure is a fundamental tool for implementing this plan.

Imperative: Use the Infrastructure We Already Have in Place

Focus near-term growth in areas where we already have water, sewer, and roads in place. This will capitalize on the investments we have already made while accommodating near-term housing and job growth.

Imperative: Plan for New Infrastructure

Proactively plan for extending infrastructure into underserved areas that can support additional growth. Develop strategies to build and manage this infrastructure in order to accommodate projected long-term growth.

Emphasize Community Character and Quality of Life

Community character and quality of life are important considerations when planning for the future of a community. The health and happiness of community members can be connected to a community that is unique, authentic, and has a sense of place. In today's footloose economy, building community character and quality of life is an essential economic development strategy.

Missoula no doubt has high standards for community character and quality of life. The different neighborhoods in the planning area also have a unique sense of place and would like to keep their distinct identities. The land use map emphasizes character and quality of life which can be accomplished through many avenues, such as building walkable places with a mix of uses, creating neighborhoods that are interconnected with the greater community, and developing housing types for people with different incomes, while protecting our natural environment, wildlife, and access to public lands.

Surrounded by rugged peaks from six mountain ranges and two wilderness areas, in a basin dissected by three rivers and multiple streams, Missoula is nestled in the area known as the Five Valleys. Our community is home to an abundance of vulnerable native fauna and fish. As Missoula has evolved into a hub for mountain and river recreation, tourism based on the surrounding natural amenities is a major economic driver and a reason why our community is known as a desirable place to live for outdoor enthusiasts. As the community grows, actions will be necessary to maintain local and large-scale wildlife movement corridors and protect areas for wildlife in an otherwise urbanizing landscape. This will certainly be a worthwhile investment in the future of the Missoula Valley.

Imperative: Emphasize Character and Quality of Life

Emphasize pedestrian friendly environments, mix of uses, interconnectedness, mix of housing types, our natural environment, wildlife, and access to public lands.



Implementation

The land use map and the corresponding land use designations describe desired future conditions. They are an aspiration we strive toward, and they won't happen without action.

Missoula County and its partners must work on implementation through a series of strategic steps over the next 20 years. This strategy focuses on three themes: Codes, Infrastructure, and Coordination. Within each theme individual steps are described, along with desired outcomes, the level of priority, and timing recommendations.

Codes

Update the Missoula County Zoning Regulations, Subdivision Regulations, and Zoning Map.

Infrastructure

Build and manage infrastructure to proactively guide where and how growth occurs.

Coordination

Work with the City of Missoula to plan for growth in areas adjacent to the city.



“If community water supply was extended west to the Wye area of Missoula, you could see greater commercial & industrial growth. This is a large limiting factor for growth in this area of the county.”

Online Comment

Codes

The land use element has two components: the text describing the land use designations and the map showing where on the landscape the designations are placed. The map and the land use designations are not regulatory tools. They provide a general policy foundation for regulatory tools, and those regulatory tools will be used to implement the text and the map. Tools like the Missoula County Zoning Regulations and Subdivision Regulations can implement the details from the text, and the zoning map can implement the land use map.

Update the Missoula County Zoning Regulations

This updated land use map and the corresponding land use designations provide the policy foundation for a comprehensive update to the zoning regulations. Updating the zoning regulations will align the zoning code with the community's vision and goals laid out in this document and the Missoula County Growth Policy. Updates will also address health and safety concerns, like development in areas at risk to wildfires or flooding. The county has already initiated this action.

Outcome – The zoning regulations are revised to be aligned with the community's vision and values described by the land use designations.

Priority – High

Timing – Immediate

Update the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations

As development occurs, the subdivision regulations are an important tool for implementing some of the character and transportation components of the land use designations. Urban places require different levels of infrastructure than rural areas. Therefore, the subdivision regulations should be updated to align tiered infrastructure standards to the land use designations. For example, Section 3.4 of the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations describes the different road standards needed in urban and rural settings. This section should be updated so the application of urban and rural road standards is determined by what land use designation the subdivision is within, aligning the intensity of land use with the appropriate type of transportation systems. Other potential updates include improving clustering provisions or improving wildland fire protections.

Outcome – The infrastructure and design standards in the subdivision regulations reflect the community's vision and values described in the land use designations.

Priority – Medium

Timing – Immediate

Update the Zoning Map

The land use map represents a desired future condition for the community, and the zoning map is the most effective tool to implement it. The land use map and the zoning map do not need to align all at once, but as the zoning map changes over time, it should move toward the land use map, not away from it. The changes to the zoning map can happen incrementally over time with the requests coming from private citizens, or comprehensive changes can be made by the county.

Missoula County should pursue proactively updating the zoning map where appropriate. There are certain locations where the existing level of infrastructure can support the proposed land use designations with limited or no additional investments. These areas should be proactively rezoned through a county-led effort, an important step to increase the opportunity for new housing units and business ventures. Other areas with potential for proactive efforts include unzoned areas, areas with public safety issues like flooding and wildland fire, and areas where the public has identified desired changes.

Outcome – The zoning map is in better alignment with the land use map, increasing housing supply, protections for agricultural areas and wildlife habitat, public health and safety, and providing increased predictability on where growth will occur which will allow the county to better align capital improvements.

Priority – High

Timing – Initiate after updating the zoning regulations

Infrastructure

Missoula County will need to become proactive in planning for and developing infrastructure in order to successfully implement the land use map. Near the edge of the city, which is where growth is likely to happen in the near term, much of the required infrastructure is in place. But in areas targeted for higher residential, commercial and industrial growth over the long term (the 10 to 20-year horizon), not all the infrastructure is in place, and additional investments will be necessary.

Guide Growth by Proactively Planning and Building Infrastructure

How the county develops the framework necessary to improve infrastructure could take on different forms in different locations. The tools to accomplish this task will need to be methodically explored and will require close collaboration with partners. Being proactive in planning, building, and managing infrastructure in the areas adjacent to the City of Missoula is a shift in planning strategy for the county, but necessary to manage future growth.

Outcome – Missoula County uses infrastructure to proactively guide where and how growth occurs.

Priority – High

Timing – Long-term

Increase Capacity for Funding Capital Projects and Ongoing Maintenance

The infrastructure projects necessary to implement the land use map will be expensive, likely to the tune of tens of millions of dollars. As the improvements are installed and development occurs, revenues will increase, but the improvements will also generate ongoing costs for maintenance and upkeep. The feasibility of each project will need to be determined, as well as how to pay for the capital costs and ongoing maintenance. Missoula County will need to augment the existing tools at their disposal to help facilitate the extension of infrastructure necessary to implement the land use map.

Outcome – Missoula County has increased capacity to build and maintain the infrastructure necessary to guide where and how growth occurs.

Priority – High

Timing – Long-term

Potential Infrastructure Outcomes

This list does not rank, prioritize, or evaluate the feasibility of projects. Their inclusion in this list does not mandate or guarantee commitments to their construction or exclude pursuing other projects.

Expand water service on Mullan Road

Upgrade and improve the existing county-owned and operated water district in the El Mar Estates area to expand service south of Mullan Road and west of Cote Lane.

Expand or develop water service to the Wye

The lack of public water at the Wye, both north and south of Interstate 90, is constraining the development potential of an area long planned for future growth. Extending existing water systems or developing new water systems is needed to address the constraints. Options for new or expanded water service exist and could be developed through a variety of alternatives that need greater analysis.

Complete a road grid east of the airport and west of Reserve Street between Mullan Road and Broadway

Adjacent to the City of Missoula and the city's water and sewer infrastructure, this area is constrained primarily by a lack of a road grid. A road grid in this area would help accommodate additional growth and provide new north-south alternatives to North Reserve Street.

Improve the existing road network south of the Wye

Roads such as Roller Coaster Road and Deschamps Lane need to be brought to a higher standard to accommodate future growth.

Develop a solution to wastewater treatment in the Bonner, Milltown and West Riverside neighborhoods

The Bonner, Milltown, and West Riverside neighborhoods primarily rely on individual septic systems to treat wastewater. Many of these systems are aging or were installed before permitting standards existed. This situation limits the options of property owners and constrains the development potential of the area. The community should continue to explore solutions to wastewater treatment in the area.

Expand access to public water systems in the Bonner, Milltown and West Riverside neighborhoods

The Bonner, Milltown, and West Riverside neighborhoods are mostly served by individual privately-owned wells, but there are a few privately-owned public water systems. These public systems could be expanded to accommodate future growth.

Complete infrastructure improvements in the North Reserve-Scott Street area

The North Reserve-Scott Street area is constrained by lack of infrastructure improvements despite its relatively close proximity to the urban core. The county could work with the city to complete improvements.

Improve Highway 200 in East Missoula

Highway 200 through East Missoula lacks access control, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and other non-motorized safety elements. The East Missoula community envisions a future where the highway is better defined and safe for pedestrian use.

Potential Infrastructure Funding Sources

This list does not rank, prioritize, or evaluate the feasibility of funding sources. Their inclusion in this list does not mandate or guarantee their use or exclude other funding opportunities.

Grant Funding - Grants are one method to fund infrastructure improvements, such as roads, water, and sewer. Grants come from a variety of sources, including federal or state programs and private foundations. They can be used for large projects, like building a connected street grid near the airport, or for smaller projects like assistance for residents with lower incomes.

Align County Expenditures with Planning for Future Growth: Capital Improvements Planning - Every year, Missoula County invests in the community through expenditures on roads, parks, trail development, open land preservation, and more. These expenditures are necessary for enabling growth and improving the quality of life for residents. In the future, this map should be used by decision-makers to help strategically prioritize these investments through capital improvements planning within the planning area.

Pursue Creation of Districts that Allow Use of Tax Increment Financing Tools to Maximize Industrial Areas - Many of the areas designated for industrial use lack "shovel-ready" sites due to infrastructure constraints. Tax increment financing (TIF) can fund the infrastructure necessary to get lands "shovel-ready." With the right infrastructure in place, the efficiency of the land use increases, bringing more industrial lands on line. For example, the efficiency of industrial lands by the Wye could be improved through the extension of infrastructure financed by TIF districts.

Public-Private Partnerships - Public-private partnerships can be used in situations where a private sector interest overlaps with the county's interest to finance, build, or operate infrastructure. These partnerships can increase the leverage a community has to complete expensive projects. Examples include the donation of right-of-way for transportation projects, or the expansion of privately-owned water systems. These partnerships can help meet community goals like increased housing supply or expanded employment centers.

Special Improvement Districts - County governments can create special improvement districts to build, repair, and maintain certain infrastructure improvements. These districts can pay for the construction of a specific improvement, like a sewer project, or ongoing maintenance of an improvement, such as roadway maintenance.

General Obligation Bonds - A general obligation bond is a mechanism to finance large projects that are paid back over time through taxation. These bonds can be used to finance a wide variety of projects including infrastructure like roads, sewer, or water systems. General obligation bonds need voter approval.

User Fees - User fees can be used for capital improvements of public facilities like water systems or wastewater treatment plants. The user of the facility is assessed a fee that is used to pay off the debt of the system and for ongoing maintenance and operation.

Impact Fees - Impact fees are assessed on new development for the purpose of financing public facilities attributed to new growth. The fees can be an effective tool for proactively addressing infrastructure necessary to accommodate new growth where that growth is anticipated. Missoula County has not adopted impact fees. To use this tool the fees would have to be studied and then enabled by the county.

Coordination

Much of the growth that occurs within Missoula County is at the fringe of the City of Missoula's city limits. As the city expands its footprint, there is a transition from county land use planning and regulations to city planning and zoning. In areas adjacent to the City of Missoula, coordination between the two jurisdictions will contribute to the implementation of the land use map.

Urban Growth Commission

The City of Missoula and Missoula County jointly participate in the Urban Growth Commission (UGC), an entity comprised of city and county elected officials and community development staff. The UGC provides an opportunity for the two jurisdictions to discuss land use planning issues of shared interest. The UGC is advisory and can forward issues and recommendations to their respective departments or jurisdictions. The UGC can play an enhanced role as a sounding board for ideas and issues related to cooperation to promote orderly urban development on the city's fringe.

Outcome – Planning issues and projects of value to the City of Missoula and Missoula County are discussed in an open public forum, increasing the public's awareness of cooperation between the two jurisdictions and improving coordination on planning and projects.

Priority – Low

Timing – Ongoing

Memorandum of Understanding

A non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the city and county that enumerates the shared interests and values of the two jurisdictions would document the expectations and roles each jurisdiction has in managing the growth of the community and articulating the "One Community" approach. The details of the MOU could guide a shared planning direction, while allowing the two jurisdictions to pursue their individual goals and objectives.

Outcome – Missoula County and the City of Missoula have a firm understanding of what issues or values are shared between the two jurisdictions in the Missoula area, improving land use planning projects and coordinating infrastructure improvements and standards.

Priority – Low

Timing – Near-term

Joint Master Planning

The Community Mixed-Use land use designation east of the airport represents an opportunity for the county to work with the city, landowners, and other stakeholders to plan the logical and productive transition of this area into a vibrant, livable, mixed-use neighborhood while addressing many of the community's most pressing needs, such as housing supply and locations for new employment centers. This planning process could identify critical infrastructure improvements, such as road grids, sewer, water, stormwater, non-motorized facilities, locations of urban agriculture, parks, and detailed land use typologies in advance of development. This effort would facilitate orderly development at higher densities with a broad mix of uses and develop a sense of place through public-private partnerships. It could make the community more competitive for federal grants that assist in financing infrastructure.

As development occurs, this area will most likely be annexed into the city. Agreements between the city and county may need to be formed if infrastructure is constructed prior to annexation to ensure that designs meet the appropriate city and county specifications.

Outcome – Missoula County and the City of Missoula have developed a shared vision for growth and investment in the area east of the airport for supporting housing, employment, transportation, environmental, and recreational goals.

Priority – High

Timing – Immediate

Relationship to Other Plans

Land uses, demographics, and the community's values and ideas about growth and development are always evolving. There are many plans that address these issues in Missoula County. Some are specific to a location, called an area plan; some are specific to an issue, called an issue plan. This Land Use Element primarily focuses on land use at a 40,000-foot level. It doesn't incorporate all of our transportation considerations or evaluate the detailed data on our changing environment; there are other plans that will. For example, the county is currently drafting its first Climate Resiliency Plan. This plan is collecting the best available data and public input, and developing actions to address climate change in Missoula County. The Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization, a joint city-county entity that plans for our transportation network, will update the transportation plan in the next few years. These plans that guide decision making in the county are intended to work together and inform one another. After the resiliency plan is adopted, it will have recommendations regarding adaptation strategies that may warrant amendments to the land use map. When the transportation plan is updated, it will use the land use designations in this plan for their modeling, to help identify future transportation improvements. This cyclical relationship will need to continue in order to capture the never ending changes in our community.

Outcome – Relevant planning documents interact and inform each other and provide a better picture of the community's values, ideas, realities and goals relating to a broad scope of work.

Priority – High

Timing – Ongoing

Monitoring and Amendments

No community is static—it is always evolving and changing. The land use map is designed for a 20-year horizon, but adjustments may be necessary from time to time.

Changing Conditions

Chapter 8 of the Missoula County Growth Policy details factors that would necessitate an update to the land use map. For example, the 2020 Decennial Census data will be released, providing insight to the accuracy of the population projections and the assumptions of where that growth is occurring on the landscape. If the projections and assumptions are too conservative, the land use map may need to be updated to reflect the higher than anticipated growth. Factors to be considered when determining whether amendments to the land use map are warranted include:

- Changes in the legal framework regarding growth policies or implementation measures
- Significant changes to existing conditions or projected trends
- Public and stakeholder input suggesting the need to make changes
- Knowledge of specific amendments that would improve the land use map's usefulness so that it may better serve the public
- New, or revisions to, area and issue plans that fall under the legal authority of a growth policy

Private Party Requests

Private parties may request to amend the Land Use Element. Typically, the requests are specific map amendments to support a proposed development. Amendments could also include text changes to the land use designations. Public review of amendments is required by state law. Any amendment would be evaluated for the entirety of the change. For example, a change to the text of the Residential land use designation would be evaluated for its impacts through the entire planning area. Proposed private party amendment requests include an application fee and are reviewed using the following criteria:

- The amendment substantially complies with the applicable guiding principles, goals, and objectives of the growth policy and accompanying Land Use Designation Map, except for what is addressed in the amendment request
- The amendment is consistent with the applicable goals, objectives, and land use designations of the applicable area plan (if any), except for what is addressed in the amendment request (Note: Growth policy and area plan amendment requests may be reviewed concurrently.)
- The amendment is designed to meet a need that is otherwise not being met
- The amendment will provide substantial public benefit to the surrounding community
- The change proposed is the best means of providing the public benefit

Land Use Designations

Land use designations are descriptions of desired future conditions. They, like the map, are an important piece of the policy direction guiding land use decision-making for Missoula County over the course of the next 20 years. Each designation possesses a unique combination of goals, land uses, characteristics, levels of intensity, and mobility considerations.

Elements of a Land Use Designation

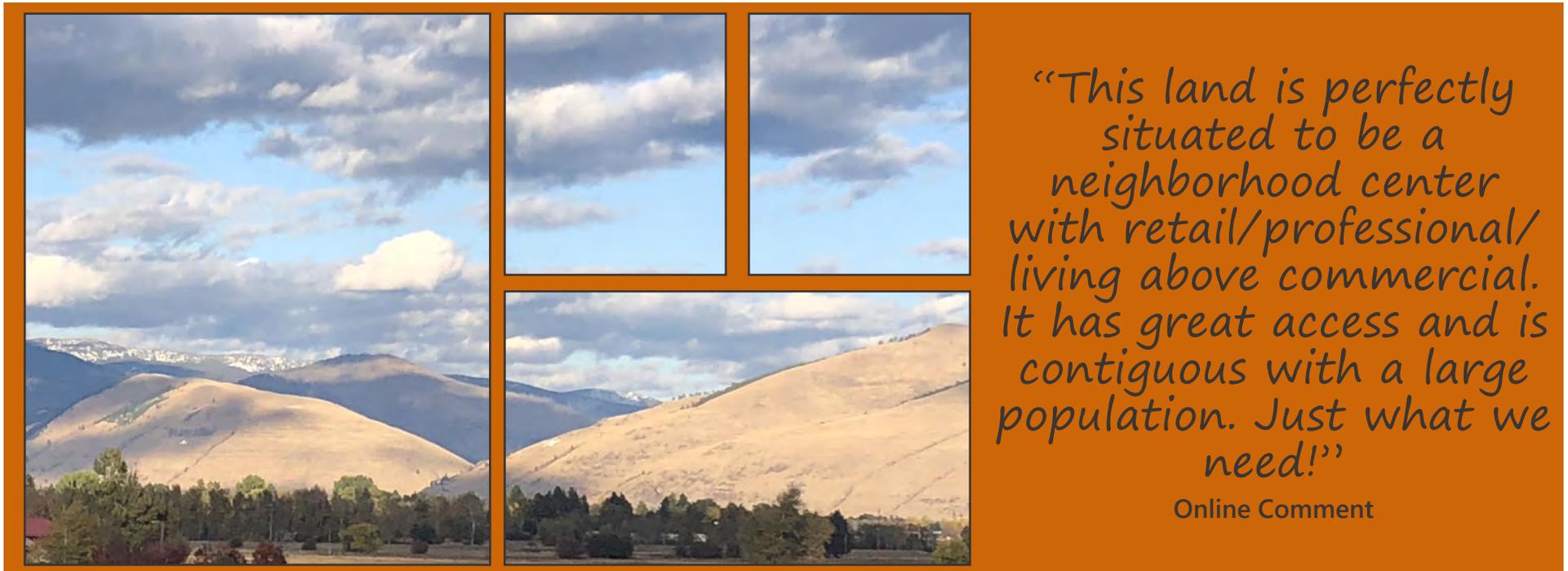
Goals describe the long-term purpose in relation to other places within the county.

Land Uses generally describe the type of land use that's most prevalent within a place.

Characteristics provide context on how the built environment appears.

Intensity describes the level of development, such as the gross units per acre or general descriptions of building scale.

Mobility and Access ties the land use to general descriptions of what type of transportation systems are desirable for the location.



Representing Our Vision for Growth

Altogether, the land use designations reflect and balance the community's values, ideas about land use, and the imperatives necessary to achieve the community's vision for the future. They provide a range of development types - from areas where development is restricted, to rural areas, to urban centers.

Promoting compact development patterns and a logical expansion of urban services are keys to balancing our growth and our values. Not all of our values are compatible with an expanding built environment. By encouraging compact development patterns, we encourage a mix of uses, different transit options, and greater housing choice. At the same time, we reduce the land area necessary to accommodate a growing population, thereby protecting fish and wildlife habitat, open lands, and agriculture.

In contrast to the areas identified for future growth, the land use designations are also designed to ensure our values of agriculture, wildlife habitat, clean water, and open spaces are represented. For the first time, the county has created a designation for Agriculture based on strong public support for protection of agricultural land with irrigation facilities. Clustering is a recommended tool that can be used in lower density designations, Agriculture through Residential, to financially incentivize landowners to preserve or provide a public amenity or benefit, such as agricultural soils, wetlands, trails, or access. Landowners may be eligible for additional housing units beyond the recommended density of the designation if such protections or provisions are provided.

Within these designations are some new ideas on land use that came from the outreach process. Along with Agriculture, the Live/Make designation is a new approach that allows light manufacturing, such as small-scale workshops, manufacturing, or artist studios in residential areas.

Land Use Designations Quick Guide

Land Use Designation	General Use Description (See full description for details)
Open, Resource, and Recreation	Open
Agriculture	Agriculture and low density residential
Working Lands	Agriculture, timber, and low density residential
Rural Residential and Agriculture	Low density residential, agriculture, and timber
Rural Residential and Small Agriculture	Low density residential, agriculture, and timber
Residential	Single-family residential
Neighborhood Residential	Single-family and multi-family residential
Planned Neighborhood	Single-family and multi-family residential
Neighborhood Center	Mixed-use, single-family, and multi-family residential
Commercial Center	Commercial and multi-family residential
Live/Make Neighborhood	Single-family residential and small manufacturing
Community Mixed-Use	Mixed-use, single-family, and multi-family residential
Civic Employment Center	Public purpose
Industrial Center	Industrial
Heavy Industrial Center	Industrial

Primary Considerations of the Land Use Designations and Land Use Map

The following is a list of the primary considerations used to develop the land use designations and the land use map.

- The community's values and ideas about growth and development
- Planning documents like growth policies, neighborhood plans and transportation plans
- Trends in development and land use
- Population projections
- Existing and planned infrastructure
- Public services like emergency services and schools
- Physical characteristics of the landscape
- Natural features like floodplains and wildlife habitat
- Existing entitlements, such as zoning and individual property rights
- Existing development patterns

Agricultural Soils

10,000 Acres

Natural Resources Conservation Service soil classifications of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance where small scale or larger farming could occur.

Strategies to Address Soils

Protect: Protect agricultural uses with low densities, clustering, and incentives.

Mitigate: Mitigate impacts to small agriculture through clustering, incentives, and encouraging agricultural uses.

Incorporate: Use Master Planning to promote urban agriculture and support agricultural history.

95.5%

Percent of the two NRCS soil classifications where one of these three strategies is employed

4,750 Acres

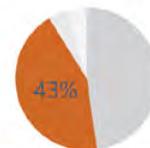
Protect



Land use designations that protect:
Open, Resource, and Recreation
Agriculture
Working Lands

4,304 Acres

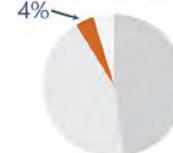
Mitigate



Land use designations that mitigate:
Rural Residential and Agriculture
Rural Residential and Small Ag.
Residential

432 Acres

Incorporate

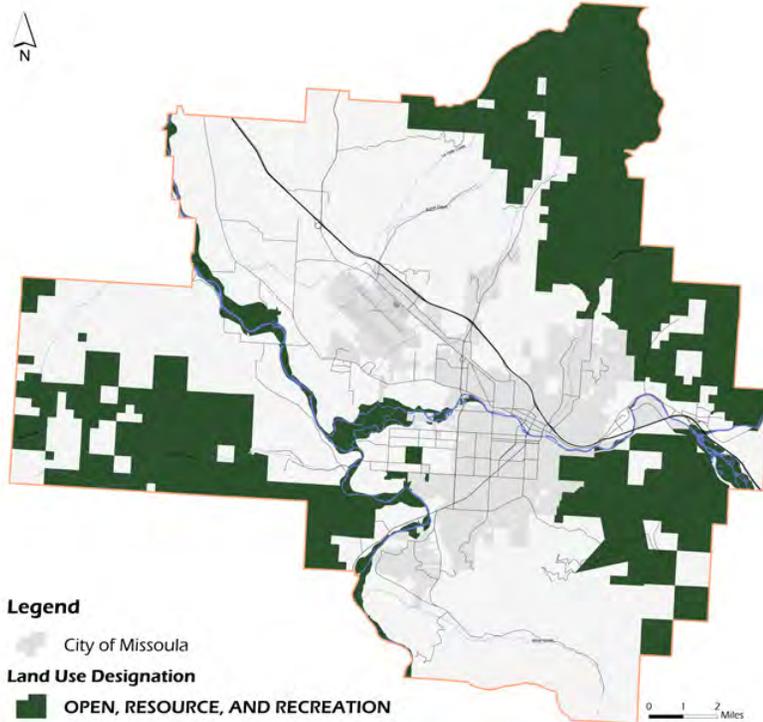


Land use designations that incorporate:
Community Mixed Use

OPEN, RESOURCE, AND RECREATION

GOALS

- Protect the continuing function of natural landscapes and waterways, fish and wildlife habitat and movements corridors, and water quality and quantity.
- Allow for agriculture, grazing, timber production, and recreation access.
- Protect public health and safety in areas with identified hazards that restrict development, such as floodways.



Open, Resource, and Recreation is 59,175 acres, 38.8% of the planning area.

LAND USES

Lands uses include open lands, wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, range lands, timber lands, and recreation areas.

Open, Resource, and Recreation is primarily intended for publicly-owned lands. It is also used for areas with identified hazards that restrict development, such as floodways.

CHARACTER

This area is mostly comprised of natural areas and undeveloped landscapes set aside for open space, wildlife habitat, agriculture and range, timber production, and recreation.

Buildings, utilities, and impervious surfaces are limited.

Where development is appropriate, improvements should be sited to avoid or accommodate sensitive areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, riparian areas, native grasslands, wildlife movement corridors, agriculture lands, soils, steep slopes, and natural landscapes and waterways.

INTENSITY

Development is limited, but structures for administrative purposes may be acceptable.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

Arterials, highways, and local roads may be present through this designation.

Local road and trail networks, when present, are typically managed by the agency managing the landscape.

If trail networks are present, they are typically managed by the agency managing the landscape.

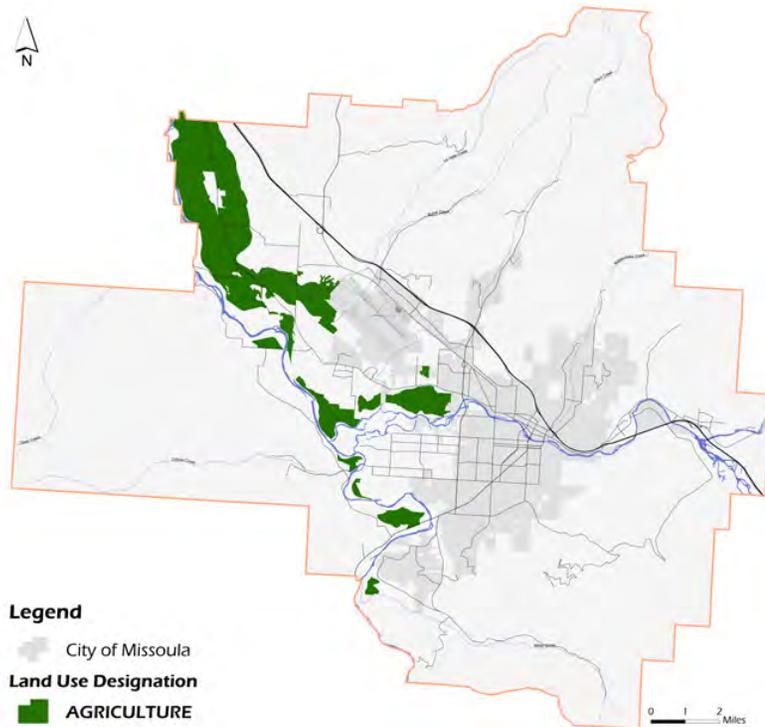


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AGRICULTURE

GOALS

- Support economic diversity and contribute to the health of the county by providing for the local and regional production of agricultural products.
- Allow for large-tract agricultural systems where agricultural soils and irrigation facilities are present.
- Protect the continuing function of natural landscapes and waterways, fish and wildlife habitat and movements corridors, and water quality and quantity.
- Protect public health and safety in areas with identified hazards, such as floodplains.



Agriculture is 8,661 acres, 5.7% of the planning area.



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By James Van Hemert
By Carolyn Torma
USDA-NRCS, Tim McCabe;

LAND USES

Land uses include agriculture, residential, and activities incidental to agriculture such as production, preparation or sale of products produced on the property, employee housing, and agritourism if the agricultural operator lives on site.

CHARACTER

Development is designed to protect important resources such as agricultural lands, sensitive natural landscapes and waterways, fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors, and avoid hazards such as floodplains and wildfire. Conservation design sets aside a major portion of a site for preservation, clustering development on the remaining portion.

Residential buildings are predominately single-family dwellings.

INTENSITY

Base residential density of one unit per 40 acres.

Density bonuses may be available if development is clustered to protect important resources such as natural landscapes and waterways, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, or if public facilities such as public access or trails are provided. When applied through conservation design, density bonuses increase according to the percentage of the area permanently protected.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

Lower densities are likely to produce auto-centric travel.

Arterials and highways may provide direct access to properties within this designation.

Local roads are in a grid pattern, usually following section lines or are irregular depending on topography.

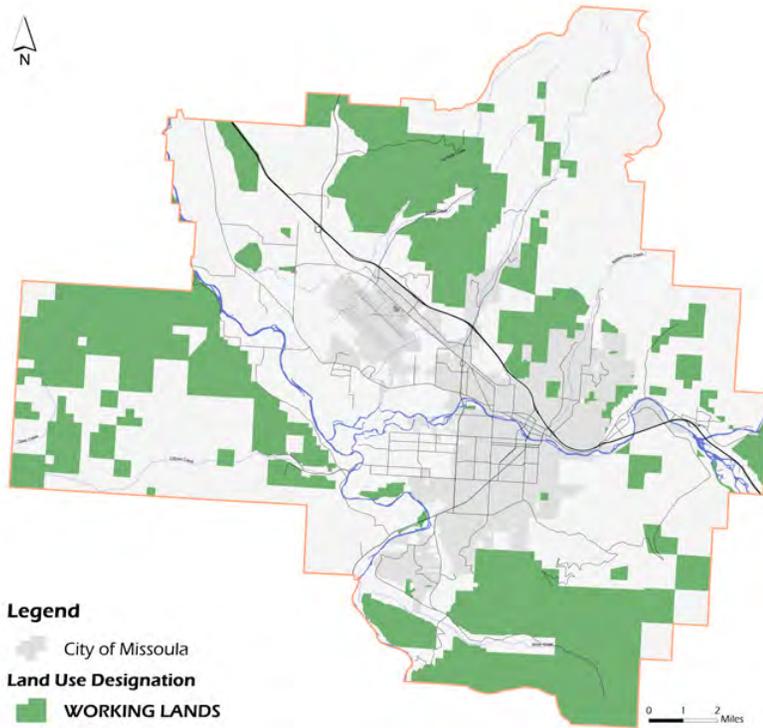
County and private roads may or may not be paved.

Non-motorized facilities, typically located along arterial and collector roads, provide connectivity to schools, parks, recreation facilities, and other communities.

WORKING LANDS

GOALS

- Provide opportunities for rural lifestyles and generating income from natural amenities.
- Protect the continuing function of natural landscapes and waterways, fish and wildlife habitat and movements corridors, and water quality and quantity.
- Protect public health and safety in areas with identified hazards, such as floodplains and areas with elevated wildfire risk.



Working Lands is 51,460 acres, 33.8% of the planning area.



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LAND USES

Land uses include residential, agricultural, activities incidental to agriculture, grazing, timber production, natural resource-based industries, and recreation.

Secondary uses may include home-based manufacturing, fabrication, commercial kitchens, and artist studios.

CHARACTER

Working lands are rural areas with limited infrastructure and few services. They include areas that contain both pristine natural landscapes and waterways and lands historically stewarded by people.

Residential development in this area is scattered low density or clustered into areas with fewer land use constraints. Most of the undeveloped area is in agricultural production, range land, timber land, or in a relatively natural state.

Development is designed to protect important resources such as agricultural lands, sensitive natural landscapes and waterways, fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors, and avoid hazards such as floodplains and wildfire. Conservation design sets aside a major portion of a site for preservation, clustering development on the remaining portion.

INTENSITY

Residential density ranges between one unit per 160 acres to one unit per 40 acres.

The appropriate density depends on site considerations, such as the transportation network, emergency services, presence of natural landscapes and waterways, fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors, hazards, and applicable area plans.

Density bonuses may be available if development is clustered to protect important resources such as natural landscapes and waterways, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, or if public facilities such as public access or trails are provided. When applied through conservation design, density bonuses increase according to the percentage of the area permanently protected.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

Lower densities are likely to produce auto-centric travel.

Arterials and highways may provide direct access to properties within this designation.

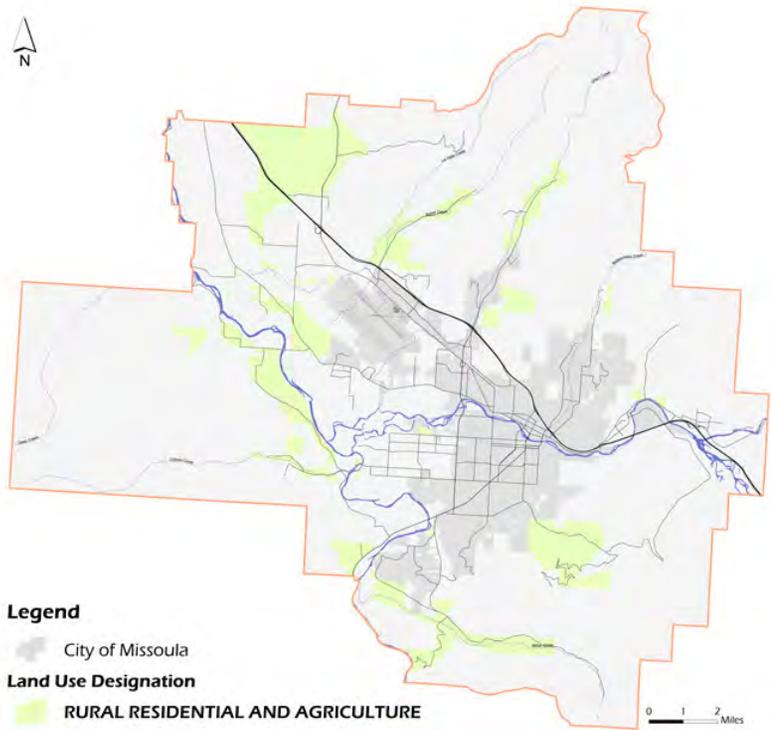
Local roads are few, unpaved, and may have limited maintenance, unless otherwise regulated.

Non-motorized facilities, typically located along arterial and collector roads, provide connectivity to schools, parks, recreation facilities, and other communities.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND AGRICULTURE

GOALS

- Preserve natural landscapes and waterways, while providing for rural residential uses in areas with proximity to higher levels of infrastructure and services than Working Lands or Agriculture land use designations.
- Support economic diversity and contribute to the health of the county by providing places to produce food on small farms.
- Protect public health and safety in areas with identified hazards, such as floodplains and areas with elevated potential for human-wildlife conflicts.



Rural Residential and Agriculture is 15,658 acres, 10.3% of the planning area.



LAND USES

Land uses include residential, natural areas, agriculture, grazing, and timber production.

Secondary uses may include activities incidental to agricultural activities occurring on site, such as small-scale production, preparation or sale of products produced on the property, and agritourism if the agricultural operator lives on site. Secondary uses may also include home-based manufacturing, fabrication, commercial kitchens, and artist studios.

CHARACTER

Residential development in this area is scattered low density or clustered into areas with fewer land use constraints. Most of the undeveloped area is in agricultural production, range land, timber lands, or in a relatively natural state.

Development is designed to protect important resources such as agricultural lands, sensitive natural landscapes and waterways, fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors, and avoid hazards such as floodplains and wildfire. Conservation design sets aside a major portion of a site for preservation, clustering development on the remaining portion.

Buildings are sited with a minimum distance from streets and lot lines.

INTENSITY

Residential density ranges between one unit per ten acres and one unit per two acres.

The appropriate density depends on site considerations, such as the transportation network, emergency services, presence of natural landscapes and waterways, fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors, hazards, and applicable area plans.

Density bonuses may be available if development is clustered to protect important resources such as natural landscapes and waterways, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, or if public facilities such as public access or trails are provided. When applied through conservation design, density bonuses increase according to the percentage of the area permanently protected.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

Lower densities are likely to produce auto-centric travel.

Arterial, collector, and local roads are present.

Local roads are in a grid following section lines or are irregular, depending on topography. County and private roads may or may not be paved.

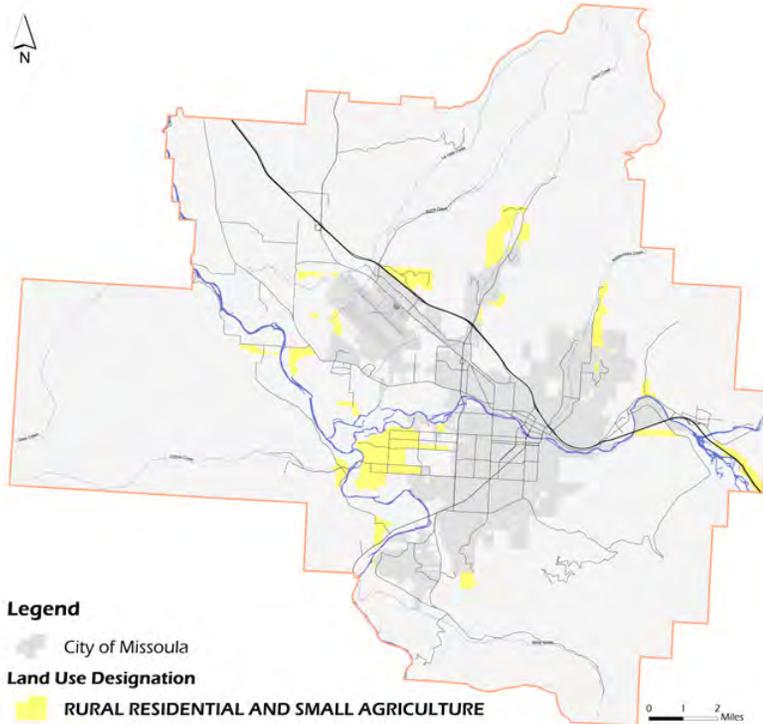
Non-motorized facilities, typically located along arterial and collector roads, provide connectivity to schools, parks, recreation facilities, and other parts of the community.

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RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND SMALL AGRICULTURE

GOALS

- Provide for low-density housing in areas without public water or sewer.
- Preserve rural and semi-rural characteristics, such as larger lots, small-scale agricultural uses, and natural landscapes and waterways.
- Accommodate fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors in areas with higher development density.



Legend

City of Missoula

Land Use Designation

RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND SMALL AGRICULTURE

Rural Residential and Small Agriculture is 4,808 acres, 3.2% of the planning area.



LAND USES

Land uses include residential, natural areas, agriculture, and grazing.

Secondary uses may include activities incidental to agricultural activities occurring on site such as small-scale production, preparation or sale of products produced on the property, and agritourism if the agricultural operator lives on site.

CHARACTER

This designation is characterized by a uniform pattern having one principal residential building per lot. Agricultural uses and buildings can be the primary use of the property, or secondary to a principal residential building.

Residential buildings are predominately single-family dwellings. Residential buildings are sited in relation to well isolation zones, septic systems, and drain fields.

Development is designed to protect important resources such as agricultural lands, sensitive natural landscapes and waterways, fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors, and avoid hazards such as floodplains and wildfire. Conservation design sets aside a major portion of a site for preservation, clustering development on the remaining portion.

Buildings are sited with a minimum distance from streets and lot lines.

INTENSITY

Residential density ranges between one unit per acre and two units per acre.

The appropriate density depends on access to public sewer or water, the transportation network, presence of natural landscapes and waterways, fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors, and applicable area plans.

Density bonuses may be available if development is clustered to protect important resources, such as natural landscapes and waterways, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, or if public facilities such as public access or trails are provided. When applied through conservation design, density bonuses increase according to the percentage of the area permanently protected.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

Lower densities are likely to produce auto-centric travel.

Arterial, collector, and local roads are in a traditional grid pattern or irregular pattern, depending on topography. Most local roads are paved.

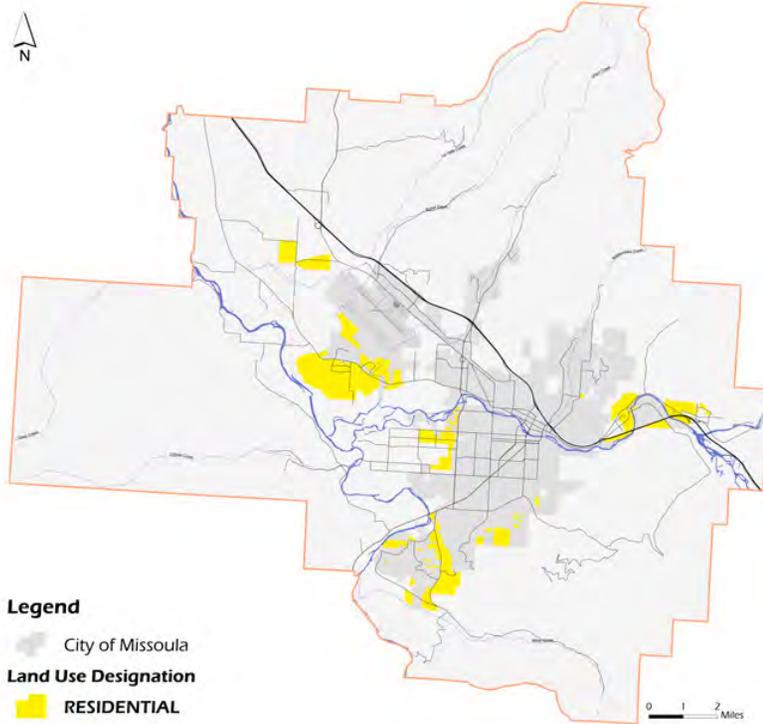
Non-motorized facilities, typically located along arterial and collector roads, provide connectivity to schools, parks, recreation facilities, and other parts of the community.

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RESIDENTIAL

GOALS

- Accommodate a range of housing options that contribute to countywide housing diversity.
- Preserve and enhance the residential character of existing neighborhoods.
- Provide for compatible in-fill housing where land uses are in transition.



Residential is 5,038 acres, 3.3% of the planning area.



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LAND USES

Land use is predominately residential. Secondary uses may include small-scale commercial in limited locations.

CHARACTER

This designation is characterized by a uniform pattern having one principal residential building per lot.

Buildings are predominately single-family dwellings with some two-family dwellings.

Multi-family dwellings may be appropriate when applied through clustering to protect a resource or provide a public benefit, or through density bonuses to create permanently affordable housing.

Commercial buildings should be sited along arterial or collector roads providing clusters of limited commercial activity with a compatible intensity level, scale, and form to the adjacent neighborhood.

Buildings are sited with a minimum distance from streets and lot lines.

INTENSITY

Residential density ranges between three units per acre and 11 units per acre requiring connections to public sewer and water.

Density bonuses may be available if development creates permanently affordable housing, or if development is clustered according to conservation design principals to protect important natural landscapes and waterways, agricultural lands, fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors, or if public facilities such as public access or trails are provided.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

A mix of land uses and access to nearby destinations and amenities encourages walking, biking, and transit use.

All roads should provide non-motorized facilities. Additional separation for non-motorized facilities, such as protected or buffered bike lanes, boulevard sidewalks, and enhanced crossings, are needed when vehicle speeds and traffic volume increase.

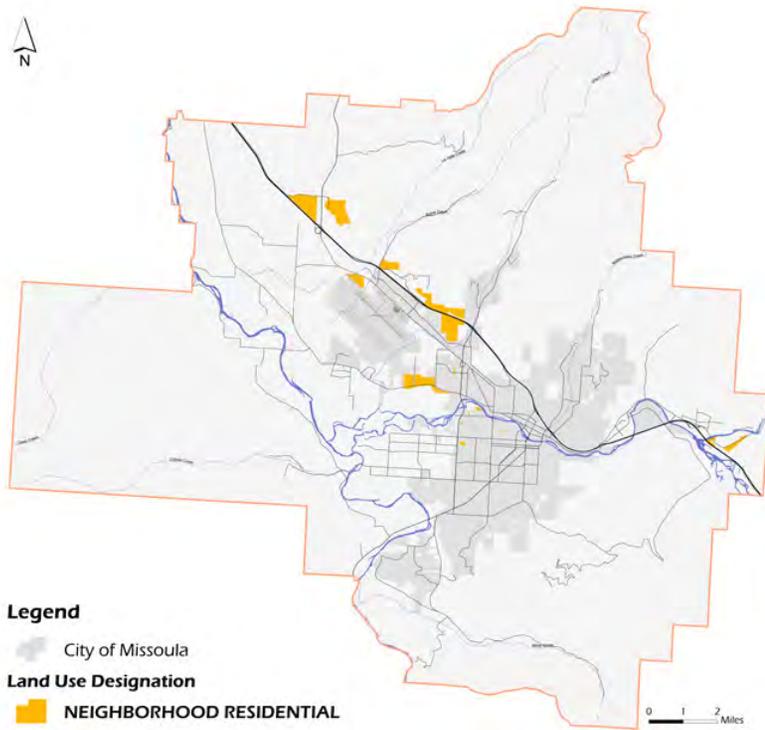
Arterial and collector roads are in a traditional grid pattern, or irregular pattern depending on topography.

The local street network disperses traffic through a well-connected grid system, or an irregular system depending on topography, with short block lengths.

NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL

GOALS

- Accommodate a range of residential options that contribute to countywide housing diversity.



Neighborhood Residential is 1,436 acres, 0.9% of the planning area.



LAND USES

Land use is predominately residential. Secondary uses may include small-scale commercial in limited locations.

CHARACTER

A mix of building types provides for a range of housing options accommodating housing preferences and household size.

Single-family, two-family, and multi-family dwellings are the primary building types.

Buildings are sited with a minimum distance from streets and lot lines.

Parking and utilities for multi-family and commercial buildings should be oriented toward the rear of buildings away from the street and front facade.

Commercial buildings should be sited along arterial or collector roads providing clusters of limited commercial activity with a compatible intensity level, scale, and form to the adjacent neighborhood.

INTENSITY

Residential density is eight units per acre or greater, requiring connections to public sewer and water.

The ability to achieve higher densities may be limited by site considerations, such as lot size, setbacks, floodplain, and slope.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

A mix of land uses and access to nearby destinations and amenities encourages walking, biking, and transit use.

All roads should provide non-motorized facilities. Additional separation for non-motorized facilities, such as protected or buffered bike lanes, boulevard sidewalks, and enhanced crossings, are needed when vehicle speeds and traffic volume increase.

Arterial and collector roads are in a traditional grid pattern or irregular pattern depending on topography.

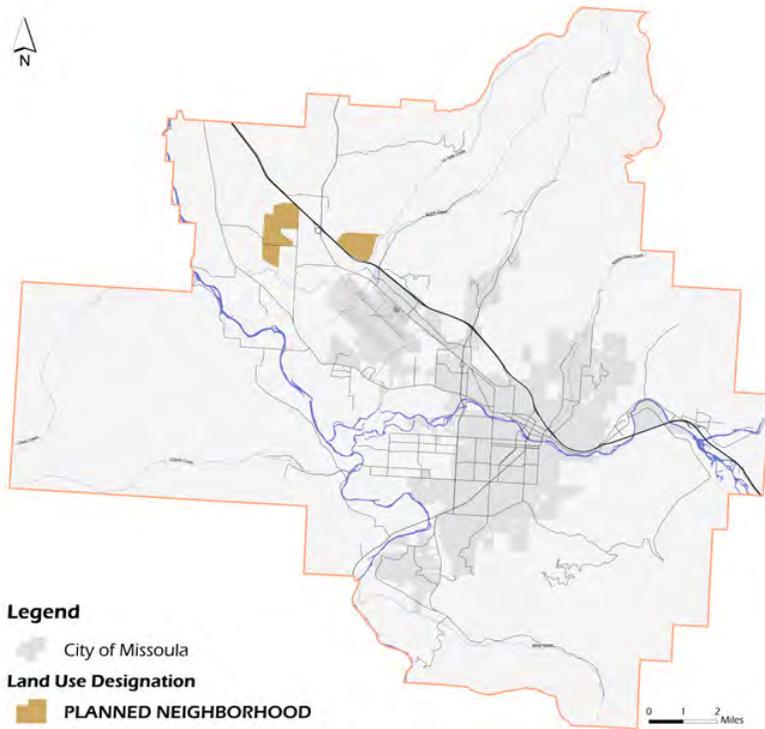
The local street network disperses traffic through a well-connected grid system, or an irregular system depending on topography, with short block lengths.

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PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD

GOALS

- Preserve development potential that accommodates a substantial portion of future growth until infrastructure is in place or planned.
- Accommodate a wide range of residential options that contribute to countywide housing diversity.



Legend

- City of Missoula
- Land Use Designation
- PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD**

Planned Neighborhood is 1,245 acres, 0.8% of the planning area.



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LAND USES

Land use is predominately residential. Secondary uses may include small-scale commercial in limited locations.

Master planning the area may be necessary to determine location of facilities, such as parks, open space, agriculture, roads, non-motorized facilities, storm water, water, and sewer.

CHARACTER

A mix of building types provides for a range of housing options accommodating housing preferences and household size.

Single-family, two-family, and multi-family dwellings are the primary building types.

Parking and utilities for multi-family and commercial buildings should be oriented toward the rear of buildings away from the street and front facade.

Commercial buildings should be sited along arterial or collector roads providing clusters of limited commercial activity with a compatible intensity level, scale, and form to the adjacent neighborhood.

Buildings are sited with a minimum distance from streets and lot lines.

INTENSITY

Residential density is eight units per acre or greater, requiring connections to public sewer and water.

The ability to achieve higher densities may be limited by site considerations, such as lot size, setbacks, floodplain, and slope.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

A mix of land uses and access to nearby destinations and amenities encourages walking, biking, and transit use.

All roads should provide non-motorized facilities. Additional separation for non-motorized facilities, such as protected or buffered bike lanes, boulevard sidewalks, and enhanced crossings, are needed when vehicle speeds and traffic volume increase.

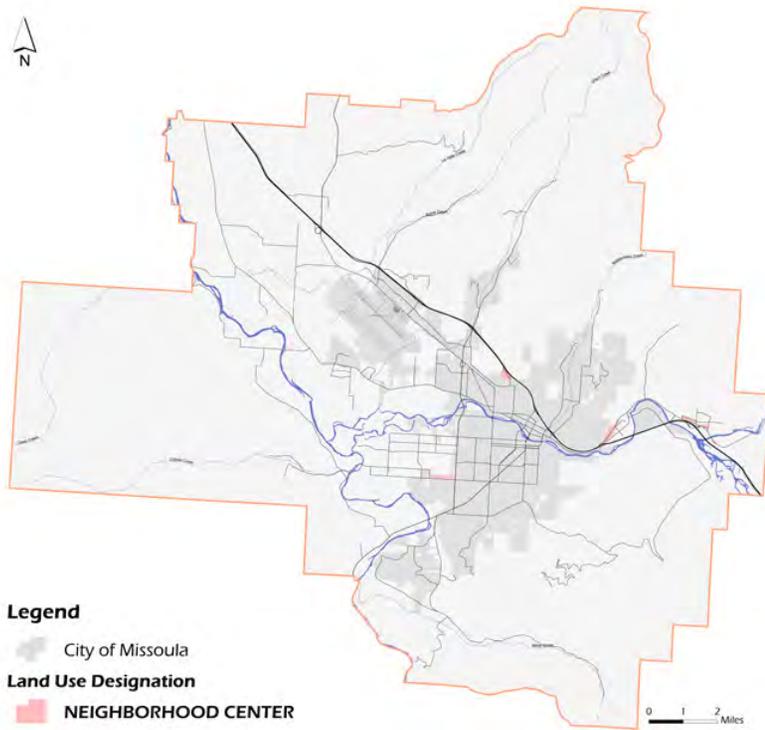
Arterial and collector roads are in a traditional grid pattern, or irregular pattern depending on topography.

The local street network disperses traffic through a well-connected grid system, or an irregular system depending on topography, with short block lengths.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

GOALS

- Designed to be a neighborhood focal point and center of activity, providing opportunities for retail, service, and employment.
- Provide services to residents within a five to ten-minute walk.
- Accommodate higher intensity residential choices that contribute to countywide housing diversity.



Neighborhood Center is 267 acres, 0.2% of the planning area.

LAND USES

Land use is a mix of residential, neighborhood services, offices, retail, and institutional uses.

CHARACTER

Mix of uses can be both horizontally and vertically integrated, having shared walls, ceilings, and floors.

Parking and utilities for multi-family and commercial buildings should be oriented toward the rear of buildings away from the street and front facade.

Building design is sensitive to its relationship to adjacent uses.

Neighborhood Centers are typically located on arterial or collector roads.

INTENSITY

Residential density is eight units per acre or greater, requiring connections to public sewer and water.

The ability to achieve higher densities may be limited by site considerations, like lot size, setbacks, floodplain, and slope.

Commercial and mixed-use buildings may range from small (1,000 square feet) to an anchor size (45,000 square feet). A grocery store is a typical anchor.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

A mix of land uses and access to nearby destinations and amenities encourages walking, biking, and transit use.

All roads should provide non-motorized facilities. Additional separation for non-motorized facilities, such as protected or buffered bike lanes, boulevard sidewalks, and enhanced crossings, are needed when vehicle speeds and traffic volume increase.

Arterial and collector roads are in a traditional grid pattern, or irregular pattern depending on topography.

The local street network disperses traffic through a well-connected grid system, or an irregular system depending on topography, with short block lengths.

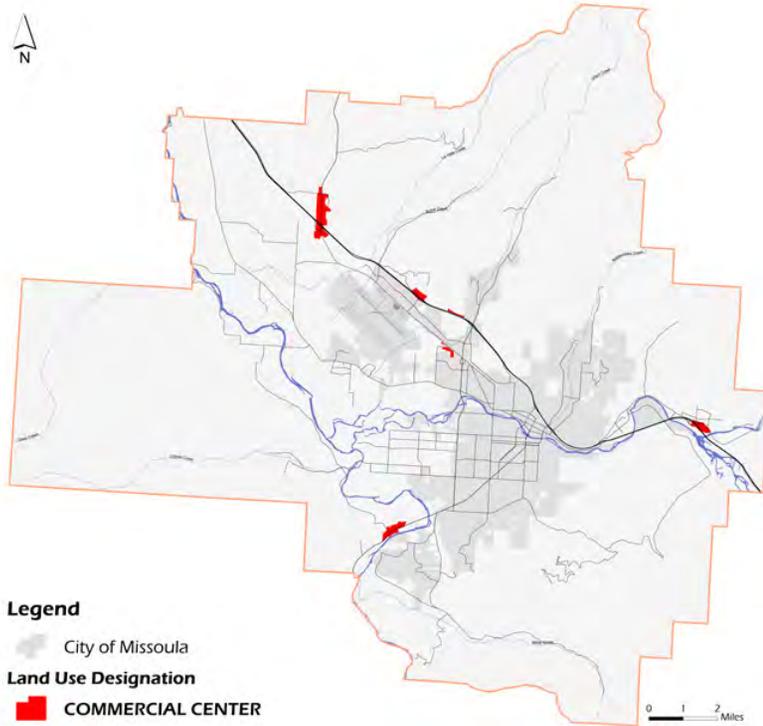


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COMMERCIAL CENTER

GOALS

- Provide opportunities for retail, service, and employment.
- Provide for a mix of primarily commercial and higher intensity residential choices in a well-connected, walkable pattern.



Commercial Center is 540 acres, 0.4% of the planning area.



LAND USES

Land uses primarily consist of auto-oriented retail, lodging, offices, food service, and automobile service.

Secondary uses may include residential.

CHARACTER

Buildings are typically single-use or small to large shopping centers.

Parking and utilities for multi-family and commercial buildings should be oriented toward the rear of buildings away from the street and front facade.

Overtime, these areas are expected to redevelop and experience infill, transitioning to a more vertically mixed-use place.

Buildings are sited with a minimum distance from streets and lot lines.

INTENSITY

Buildings generally range from small (1,000 square feet) to large (80,000 square feet or more).

Residential density is eight units per acre or greater, requiring connections to public sewer and water.

The ability to achieve higher densities may be limited by site considerations, such as lot size, setbacks, floodplain, and slope.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

Typically located along arterial roads and near interstate interchanges.

Although specific land uses on these roads may be auto-oriented, a variety of modes should be accommodated, including pedestrian, bike, and transit facilities. Additional separation for non-motorized facilities, such as protected or buffered bike lanes, boulevard sidewalks, and enhanced crossings, are needed when vehicle speeds and traffic volume increase.

Arterial and collector roads are in a traditional grid pattern, or irregular pattern depending on topography.

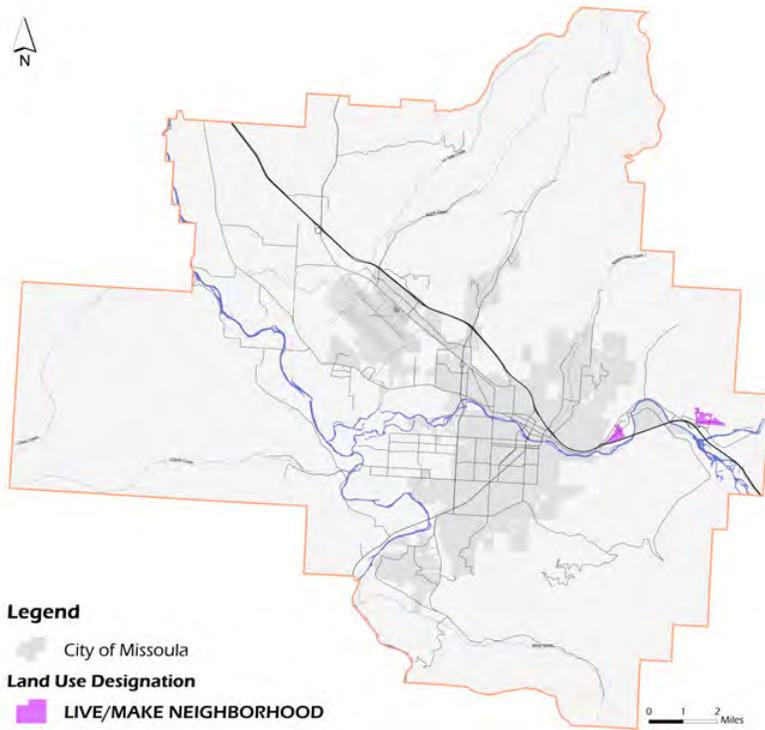
The local street network disperses traffic through a well connected-grid system, or an irregular system depending on topography, with short block lengths.

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LIVE/MAKE NEIGHBORHOOD

GOALS

- Contribute to economic diversity in the county by providing places for entrepreneurs and artisans to live and work, create, or make in a manner that respects the predominately residential character of the neighborhood.



Live/Make Neighborhood is 215 acres, 0.1% of the planning area.



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LAND USES

Land use is predominantly residential.

Secondary uses associated with residential use include small-scale manufacturing, fabrication, commercial kitchens, and artist studios.

On-site retail is not appropriate.

Outside of the resident(s), very few to no employees work on site.

CHARACTER

Residential buildings are predominately single-family dwellings with some two-family dwellings.

Multi-family dwellings may be appropriate when creating permanently affordable housing.

Buildings are sited with a minimum distance from streets and lot lines.

Business buildings must be associated with a primary residence, either on the property with the residence or adjacent to it under the same ownership.

Business buildings require additional buffering and design considerations to mitigate impacts.

INTENSITY

Residential densities range between three units per acre and 11 units per acre.

Business buildings are typically small in scale (1,000 square feet to 10,000 square feet).

Density bonuses may be available if development creates permanently affordable housing.

This level of density requires access to public sewer and water.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

A mix of land uses and access to nearby destinations and amenities encourages walking, biking, and transit use.

All roads should provide non-motorized facilities. Additional separation for non-motorized facilities, such as protected or buffered bike lanes, boulevard sidewalks, and enhanced crossings, are needed when vehicle speeds and traffic volume increase.

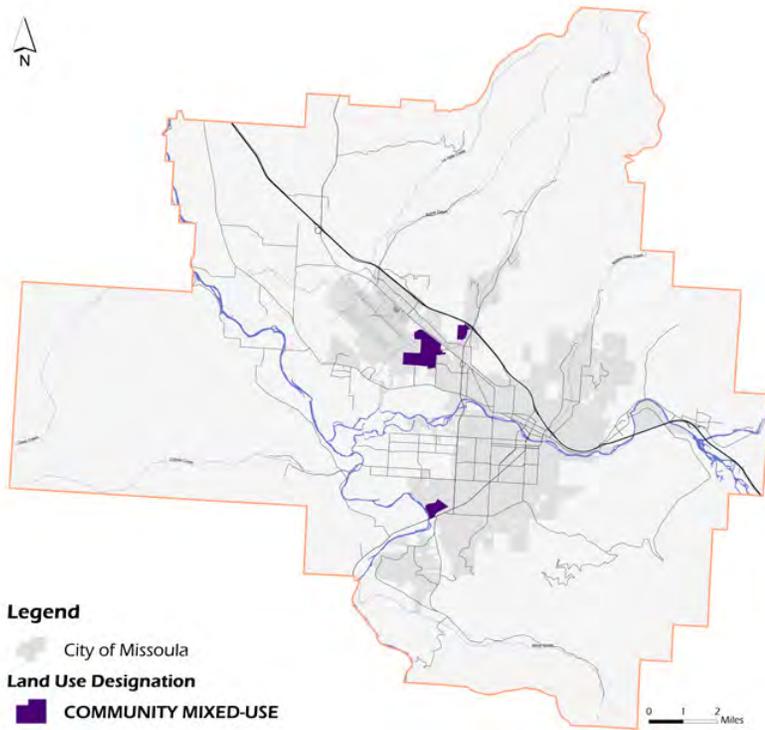
Arterial and collector roads are in a traditional grid pattern, or irregular pattern depending on topography.

The local street network disperses traffic through a well-connected grid system, or an irregular system depending on topography, with short block lengths.

COMMUNITY MIXED-USE

GOALS

- Accommodate a substantial portion of future growth.
- Provide for a mix of primarily residential, commercial, and civic activity in a well-connected, walkable pattern.
- Provide opportunities for retail, service, and employment.
- Accommodate higher intensity residential choices that contribute to countywide housing diversity.



Community Mixed-Use is 708 acres, 0.5% of the planning area.



LAND USES

Land use is a mix of residential, neighborhood services, offices, retail and institutional uses. Master planning may be necessary to determine location of facilities, like parks, open space, agriculture, roads, non-motorized facilities, storm water, water, and sewer.

CHARACTER

Currently, these areas are primarily undeveloped but adjacent to appropriate levels of infrastructure and services.

A mix of building types will provide for a range of housing options and mix of uses.

Single-family, two-family, and multi-family dwellings are the primary residential building types.

A mix of uses can be both horizontally and vertically integrated. Building design is sensitive to its relationship to adjacent uses.

Building fronts and entrances are oriented towards the street. Parking and utilities for multi-family and commercial buildings are oriented toward the rear of buildings away from the street and front facade.

Commercial uses are typically located on arterial or collector roads.

INTENSITY

Average residential density is 15 units per acre.

Commercial and mixed-use buildings may range from small (1,000 square feet) to an anchor size (45,000 square feet or greater if vertically integrated).

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

A mix of land uses and access to nearby destinations and amenities encourages walking, biking, and transit use.

All roads should provide non-motorized facilities. Additional separation for non-motorized facilities, such as protected or buffered bike lanes, boulevard sidewalks, and enhanced crossings, are needed when vehicle speed and traffic volume increase.

Arterial and collector roads are in a traditional grid pattern, or irregular pattern depending on topography.

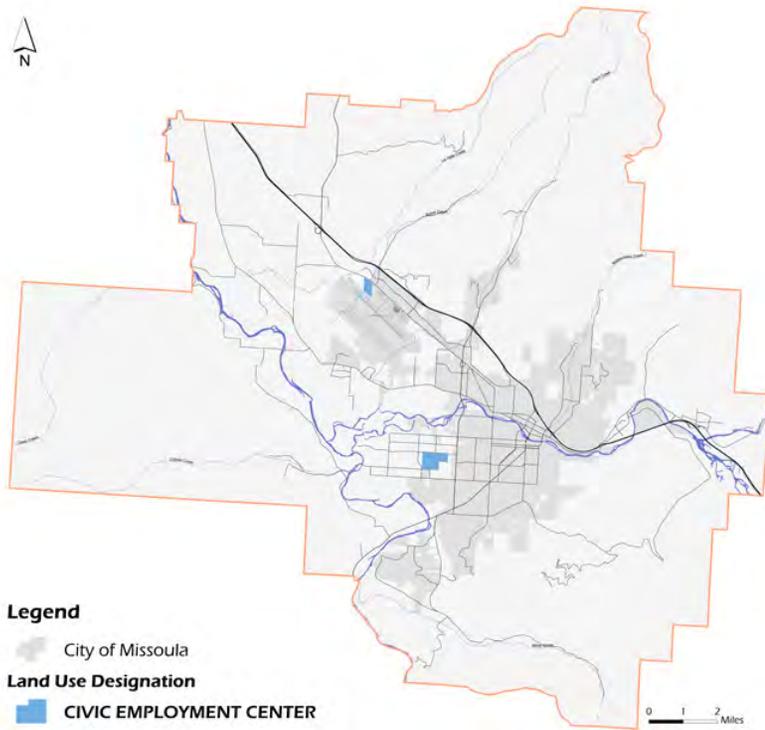
The local street network disperses traffic through a well-connected grid system, or an irregular system depending on topography, with short block lengths.

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CIVIC EMPLOYMENT CENTER

GOALS

- Provide for facilities that offer a public service or a variety of services stemming from a primary public need.
- Accommodates a concentration of jobs for a range of employment types.



LAND USES

Land use is primarily civic/institutional uses which may be comprised of offices, flex space, light manufacturing, or distribution. Examples include airports, educational institutions, or health care facilities that require a significant amount of space for various activities. Depending on the purpose, residential uses, such as assisted living facilities, may be appropriate.

CHARACTER

These areas are typically master planned with a clear design and purpose for the primary user. Depending on the purpose of the primary user, setbacks or buffers from adjacent land uses should be required.

INTENSITY

Buildings support the need for distinct types of activities dependent upon the purpose of the primary user.

Building types and sizes will vary depending on the purpose of the primary use.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

Civic Employment Centers are typically located along arterial roads with connectivity to other areas in the community by transit and non-motorized facilities.

Roads to and from this area should provide non-motorized facilities alongside or separated from the road. Additional separation for non-motorized facilities, such as protected or buffered bike lanes, boulevard sidewalks, and enhanced crossings, are needed when vehicle speeds and traffic volume increase.

Roads within this area may provide non-motorized facilities depending upon the purpose of the primary user and the land use being accessed.

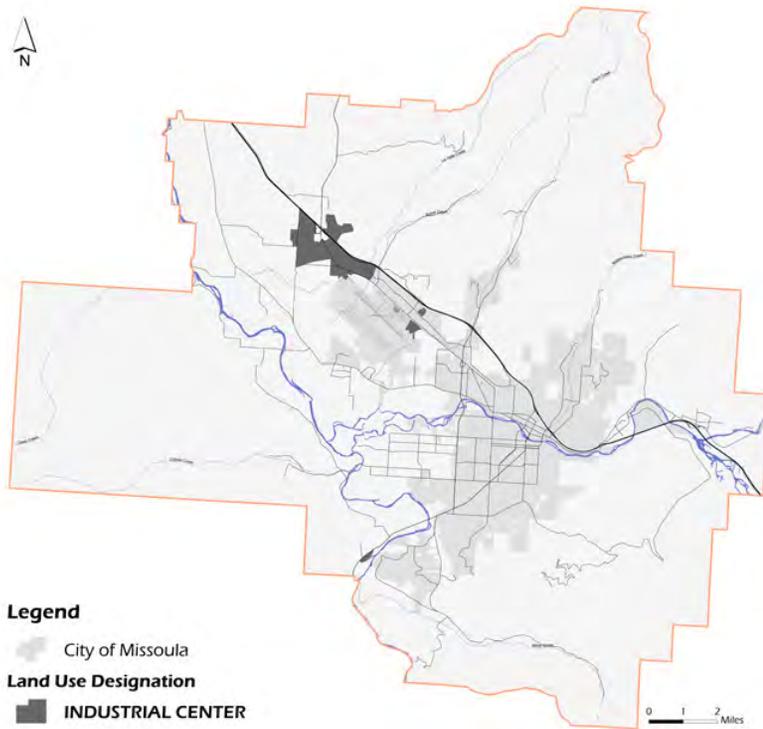


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INDUSTRIAL CENTER

GOALS

- Contributes to the county's economic base by providing places where people work, create, build, store, and distribute goods and services.



LAND USES

Land use is a mix of office, research, studios, manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution.

CHARACTER

Buildings are typically single use but may host a mix of uses that integrate horizontally rather than vertically, having shared walls rather than shared ceilings or floors.

Buildings are sited with a minimum distance from streets and lot lines.

Development is sited away from streams, riparian corridors, and wetlands to protect sensitive natural features and waterways and fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors.

INTENSITY

Building size varies depending on context and need and could range from small (1,000 square feet) to very large (over 150,000 square feet).

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

Industrial Centers are typically located along arterial roads, near or adjacent to rail, with connectivity to other areas in the community by transit and non-motorized facilities.

All roads should provide non-motorized facilities. Additional separation for non-motorized facilities, such as protected or buffered bike lanes, boulevard sidewalks, and enhanced crossings, are needed when vehicle speeds and traffic volume increase.

Industrial Center is 1,666 acres, 1.1% of the planning area.

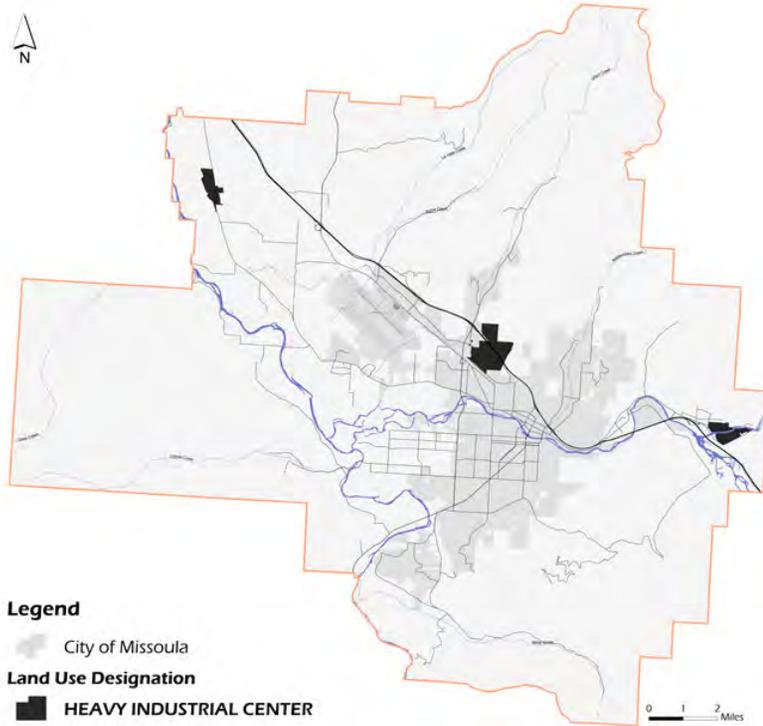


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HEAVY INDUSTRIAL CENTER

GOALS

- Contributes to the county's economic base by providing places where people manufacture, process, store, and distribute goods and services.
- Accommodates uses that may have impacts, such as noise, odors, clutter, or hazardous materials that require separation from other land uses.



LAND USES

In addition to Industrial Center uses, land uses include solid waste, power generation, processing, pipeline terminals, and similar uses.

CHARACTER

Heavy Industrial Centers may have uses that are incompatible with other land uses.

Buffers should separate this land use from less intense land uses.

Buildings are sited with a minimum distance from streets and lot lines.

Development is sited away from streams, riparian corridors, and wetlands to protect sensitive natural features and waterways and fish and wildlife habitat and movement corridors.

INTENSITY

Building size varies depending on context and need and could range from moderate (20,000 square feet) to very large (over 150,000 square feet).

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

Heavy Industrial Centers are typically located along arterial roads, near or adjacent to rail, with connectivity to other areas in the community by transit and non-motorized facilities.

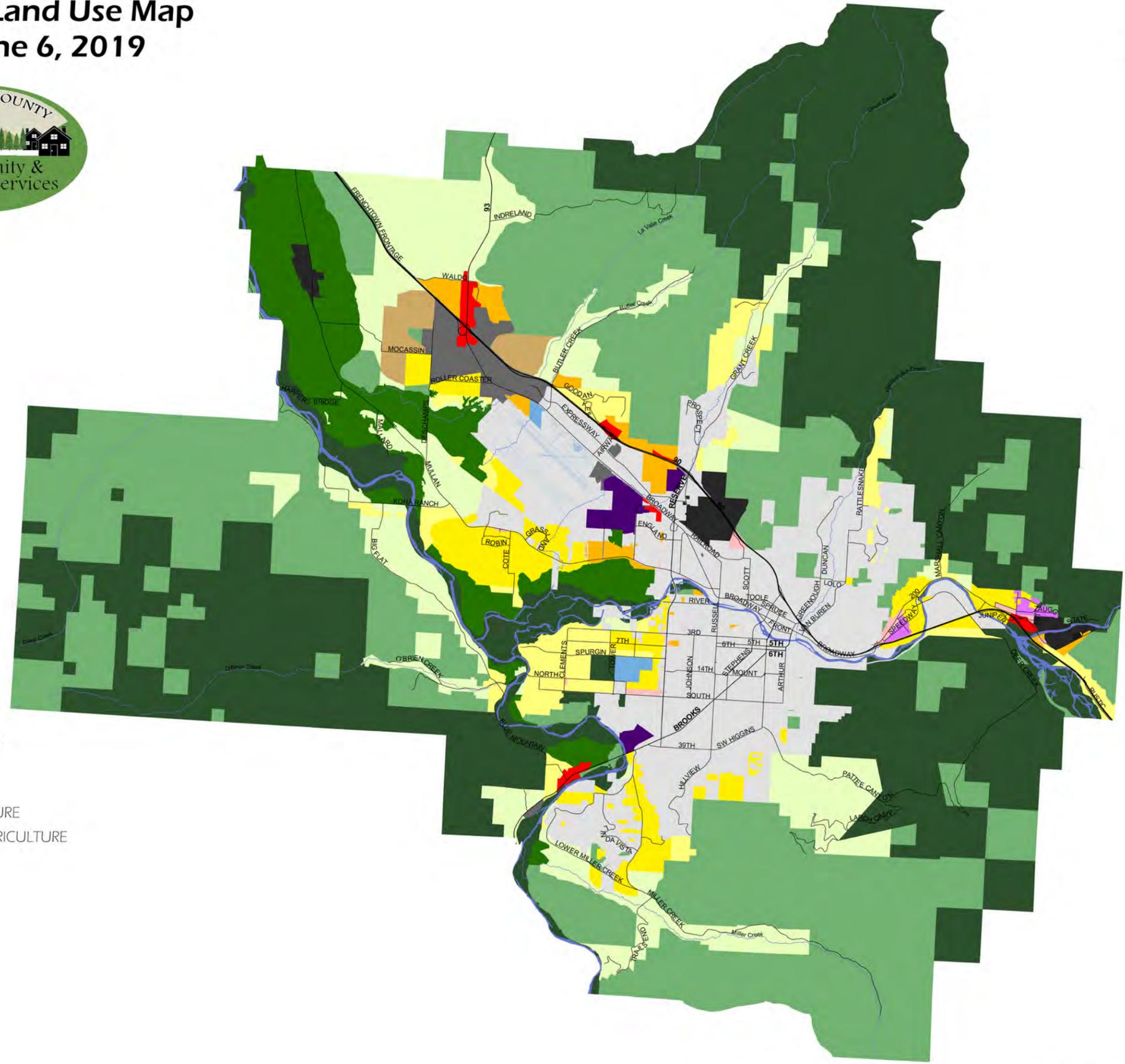
Heavy Industrial Center is 1,210 acres, 0.8% of the planning area.



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Missoula Area Land Use Map

Effective June 6, 2019



Legend

- City of Missoula
- Land Use Designation
 - OPEN, RESOURCE, AND RECREATION
 - AGRICULTURE
 - WORKING LANDS
 - RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND AGRICULTURE
 - RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND SMALL AGRICULTURE
 - RESIDENTIAL
 - NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL
 - PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD
 - NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
 - COMMERCIAL CENTER
 - LIVE/MAKE NEIGHBORHOOD
 - COMMUNITY MIXED-USE
 - CIVIC EMPLOYMENT CENTER
 - INDUSTRIAL CENTER
 - HEAVY INDUSTRIAL CENTER

This map was created by Missoula County Community and Planning Services staff. The information on this map is for reference only. No reliance should be placed on the completeness or accuracy of information without first consulting original records and personally verifying the accuracy of any and all information displayed on this map.

