



City of Missoula, Montana
Item to be Referred to City Council Committee

Committee: Land Use and Planning

Item: Growth Policy 5-Year Review

Date: October 21, 2021

Sponsor(s): Benjamin Brewer

Prepared by: Ben Brewer

Ward(s) Affected:

- Ward 1
- Ward 2
- Ward 3
- All Wards
- Ward 4
- Ward 5
- Ward 6
- N/A

Action Required:

No action is required.

Timeline and Recommended Motions:

Referral to committee: October 25, 2021
 Committee discussion: October 27, 2021
 Council sets public hearing: N/A
 Recommended motion: NA
 Public Hearing: N/A
 Recommended motion: NA
 Deadline: N/A

Background and Alternatives Explored:

The primary goal of the Growth Policy 5-year Review Project is to comply with a commitment for review, consistent with State Law and expectations laid out in the current growth policy.

The Growth Policy has been in place for 6+ years, and Missoula has experienced significant challenges within that amount of time. The city has seen a steady and continued rise in development that has been accompanied by a related trend of housing affordability issues. Development in the city has become increasingly contentious, exacerbated by the steep increases in housing costs. Climate change continues to drive extreme weather and fire events in the region, posing serious implications for community health and safety. Several new important city policies have since been adopted, including those for housing, climate resiliency, and an update to the Long Range Transportation Plan. Since ownership of the city water utility was transferred back to the public, the City has also been proceeding with long-range utility planning. Additionally, and significantly, a once-in-a-century pandemic has exposed various community vulnerabilities.

The Growth Policy is the foundational policy that cities use in Montana to implement land use strategies and regulations, and is generally responsible for guiding planning for future urban growth over the next 20 years. This review ensures compliance with State Law requirements, while also evaluating which aspects of the Growth Policy are working well for the City and are consistent with other City policies; and will determine which aspects of the Growth Policy may

warrant additional work in a future growth policy updating process, especially in light of the more pressing challenges listed above.

Primary tasks for this project include:

- Conducting the review, based on review criteria contained in the Growth Policy
- Based on the review, determine whether growth policy amendments are warranted

Materials generated for this project include:

- Review Report, structured around Review Criteria
- Supplemental Materials (Report Appendices), including:
 - General Recommendations for amendments to the Growth Policy
 - List of adopted policy documents since 2015
 - Implementation Actions Update
 - Public Comment and Input Summary

Financial Implications:

NA

Links to external websites:

<https://www.engagemissoula.com/growth-policy-5-year-review>