

Planning Board Summary and Recommendations

Planning Board Recommendation:

At its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday June 4th, 2024, with 9 members present, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend that City Council approve the High Park Views preliminary plat application and the four variance requests to the City Subdivision Regulations.

Planning Board's Recommended Motions:

1. Recommend City Council **approve** the variance request from Article 3, Section 3-020.3.G, Section 3-020.5.A, and Sections 3-020.5.B(3) and B(4) of the City Subdivision Regulations to allow the extension of Landon's Way to be in the form of a cul-de-sac, providing only one access route to lots within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI).
2. Recommend City Council **approve** the variance request from Article 3, Section 3-020.4(D) requiring that a street connection must be provided to any existing or approved public street abutting the subdivision to allow for no new street connection to Simons Drive.
3. Recommend City Council **approve** the variance request from Article 3, Section 3-030.2.A(2) of the City Subdivision Regulations establishing a maximum block length of 480 feet in urban-suburban subdivisions to allow the block to include the entire extension of Landon's Way.
4. Recommend City Council **approve** the variance request from Article 3, Section 3-020 Table .2A, Section 3-020.15.D.1, and Section 3-020.15.D.2.a of the City Subdivision Regulations to allow Simons Drive to deviate from the design standards for a Low Density Urban Local Street, including the minimum right-of-way width, landscaped boulevard, and 7-foot sidewalk clear space.
5. Recommend City Council **approve** the High Park Views Subdivision preliminary plat application, subject to the recommended conditions of approval, based on the findings of fact and conclusions of law in this staff report.

Planning Board Discussion:

Planning Board unanimously supported staff recommendations for approval of the preliminary plat application and four variance requests. Planning Board's questions and comments centered around the following topics:

Road Connectivity & WUI

- Planning Board members had concerns regarding the variance request for a cul-de-sac road within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), which would not provide for a second ingress/egress route for residents. Discussion centered around the feasibility of building a road through the steeply sloped areas of the site, and that doing so may result in the loss of proposed Lot 13.
- IMEG representatives noted that building a road through this area to meet current regulations for maximum allowable grade would be impossible. Additionally, IMEG staff noted that the proposed street and cul-de-sac meets all the design standards for a Low Density Urban Local street type, and will have sufficient turning radii for emergency vehicles.
- Public Works and Mobility staff noted that the City supports the variance request in this instance, as the proposed number of units accessing off of the cul-de-sac does not hit the threshold for mandatory multiple routes per Fire Code.

Open Space/Parkland

- Members of the public discussed their current usage of the site as a de facto extension of High Park, and their enjoyment of the open space. Planning Board members asked for clarification on the proposed parkland, common area, and trail connection elements, and noted that the additional connections would be welcome. Staff noted that the proposed dedicated parkland would not typically be acceptable due to the slopes present, but the habitat value was seen to outweigh the topography as an important area to conserve.
- Staff clarified that there is proposed on-street parking along Simons Drive and along the extension of Landon's Way that could be utilized by visitors to the park or who wish to use the new trails.

Traffic & Safety

- Planning Board members addressed the concerns brought up in public comment around the existing traffic and safety issues in the area. The intersection of Hillview Way and Woodbine Place is much narrower than the intersection of Hillview and Black Pine Trail, and it also does not have a dedicated left turn lane like the Black Pine Trail intersection.
- The existing portion of Landon's Way does not meet the design standards for a Low Density Urban Local street type, and the road narrows down as it transitions to Woodbine Place closer to Hillview Drive. Residents noted issues in the winter months with snow further narrowing the street.
- IMEG staff discussed the included traffic memorandum and noted that the estimated 144 additional average daily trips would represent an additional vehicle passing neighboring houses about once every 3.5 minutes during the highest traffic periods of the day. City staff further noted that the number of additional average daily trips is below the threshold required for a formal traffic impact study (TIS), but a TIS is what would generally be used to substantiate any off-site infrastructure improvements required of a subdivider.

See the Planning Board Minutes and meeting recording for further Planning Board discussion.

Public Comment:

The public comment provided for the project expressed concerns similar to that of the Planning Board. The nearby residents were concerned with the addition of a cul-de-sac in the Wildland-Urban Interface area, providing only one means of ingress and egress for the new homes. They also felt that the additional traffic that would be generated by the project would be detrimental to their neighborhood, and mentioned the current issues they face with Woodbine Place and Hillview Way. Many comments expressed the desire for the proposed road to connect through from Landon's Way to Simons Drive, even though it would require disturbance of steep slopes. The other major concerns were for the development of an area they utilized to recreate in, and the potential impacts development could have on the wildlife present in the area.