

Land Use Public Participation Plan

City of Missoula
Community Planning, Development, & Innovation
2024

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Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Public Participation Plan is to provide a framework for continuous and extensive public engagement - including public notice, review, comment, and participation - in the adoption, amendment, or update of the City of Missoula's land use plan or land use regulations. This plan aims to satisfy both the statutory requirements of the [2023 Montana Land Use Planning Act](#) (MLUPA) (Montana Code Annotated, Title 76, Chapter 25) and reflect the City of Missoula's commitment to community engagement. This document demonstrates the minimum public participation opportunities that the City must provide. It is intended to be used by city staff to ensure that requirements for public participation are met and serve as a reference for the public to understand what to expect during a land use planning process.

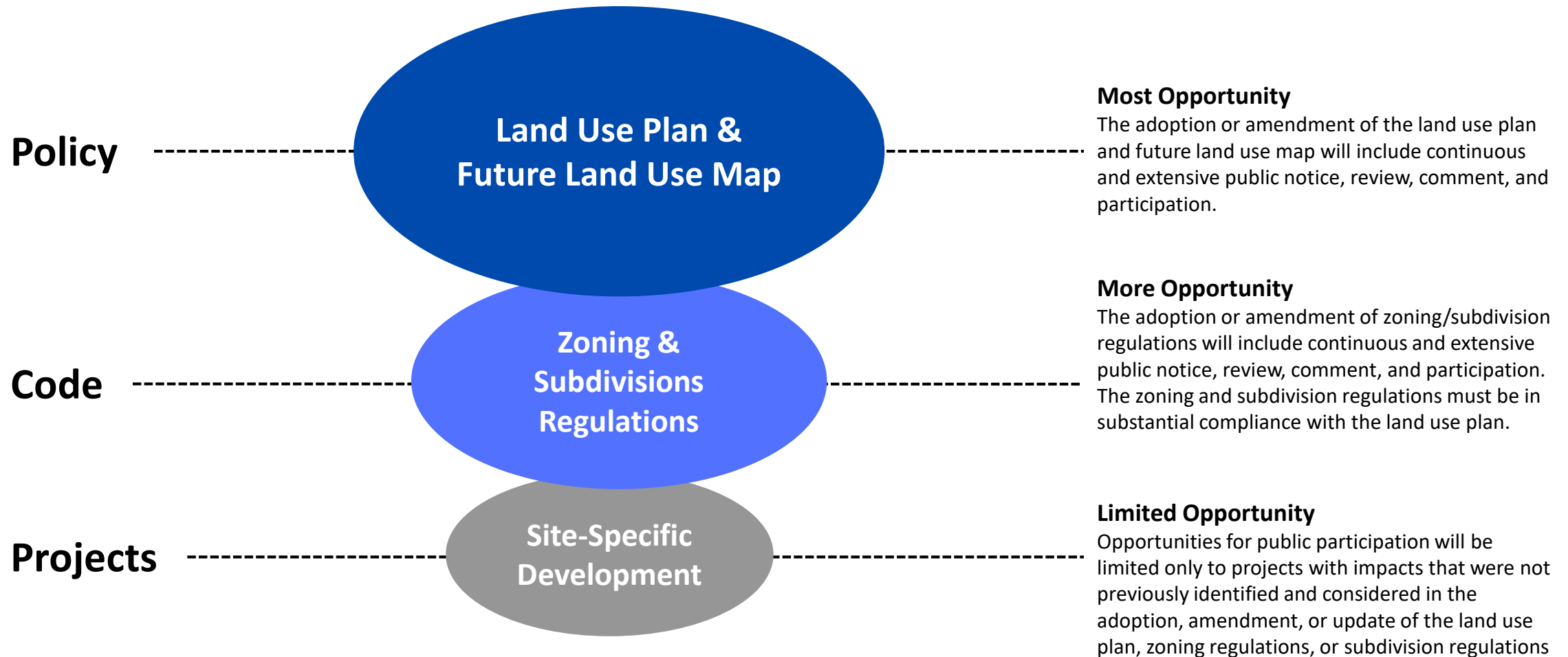
The Public Participation Plan will guide the public engagement process during the initial effort to update Missoula's land use plan and land use regulations in compliance with the MLUPA, as well as future updates or amendments to the land use plan or the city's land use

regulations. This plan will be updated as needed to reflect changes to Montana state law requirements and City of Missoula policies.

The MLUPA shifts the opportunities for public engagement surrounding land use and development to be **during the planning and adoption of city land use plans and codes**, rather than during site-specific developments. After the City's land use plan and land use regulations are adopted in compliance with MLUPA, many site-specific development projects will be reviewed administratively by the City. The scope of and opportunity for public participation and comment on site-specific development that substantially complies with the City's land use plan "must be limited to those impacts or significantly increased impacts that were not previously identified and considered in the adoption, amendment, or update of the land use plan, zoning regulations, or subdivision regulations."

This shift means that opportunities for public participation during City planning processes are paramount to ensuring that community voices are represented in the City's land use policies, regulations, and the resulting built environment.

Opportunities for Public Participation



Opportunities for Public Participation

Public Hearings before MLUPA

Land Use Planning

- Land Use Plan adoption, update, or amendment
- Future Land Use Map amendment
- Issue and Area Plans

Zoning/Subdivision Regulations

- Zoning text amendments
- Zoning map amendments_(rezoning)
- Subdivision text amendments

Site-Specific Development

- Major subdivision
- Annexation
- Zoning variance
- Public forum
- Planned-Unit Development (PUD)
- Conditional use
- Historic preservation permit



Public Hearings after MLUPA

Land Use Planning

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Zoning/Subdivision Regulations

- Zoning text amendments
- Zoning map amendments_(rezoning)
- Subdivision text amendments

Site-Specific Development

- Only those impacts or significantly increased impacts that were not previously identified in the land use plan, zoning regulations, or subdivision regulations.

Engagement Philosophy

As allowed by the statutory requirements of the Montana Land Use and Planning Act, the City of Missoula strives to create continuous, relationship-based engagement opportunities that connect residents to the issues that matter to them.

The City believes that community engagement should be genuine, equitable, inclusive, innovative, intentional, informed, transparent, iterative/evolving, and user-friendly. The Community Planning, Development, and Innovation Department's community engagement approach is based around three key areas: collaborative education, sharing experiences, and building awareness of key issues.

During a land use planning process, CPDI staff work to build meaningful relationships with community members that are based on trust and transparency. Staff use existing structures for outreach – including Neighborhood Councils, boards, and commissions - as well as additional innovative strategies to ensure that we create opportunities for diverse participation across community groups.

Creating opportunities for the public to actively engage in the planning and adoption of land use plans and regulations is especially important as these decisions influence future development outcomes that will have limited opportunities for comment.

Montana Statutory Requirements

The [2023 Montana Land Use Planning Act \(MLUPA\)](#) requires the City of Missoula to update their land use plans and zoning and subdivision regulations within 3 years of the passage of the Act.

A land use plan is intended to identify the opportunities for development of land within the planning area for housing, businesses, agriculture, and the extraction of natural resources, while acknowledging and addressing the impacts of that development on adjacent properties, the community, the natural environment, public services and facilities, and natural hazards. Once updated, a land use plan must be reviewed every 5 years. The land use plan will need to be updated if the review shows new or increased impacts.

According to the MLUPA, a future land use map must be adopted in addition to a land use plan that reflects the preferred pattern of development within the City's jurisdiction over the next 20-years based on population and economic development projections, housing and local service needs, and public input received, while considering

the environment, natural resources, and natural hazards of the area.

The final adopted land use plan, including amendments or updates to the final adopted land use plan, comprises the basis for implementing land use regulations in substantial compliance with the land use plan. Per the MLUPA, the City must adopt a zoning map that aligns with the land use plan and future land use map. The City must also adopt zoning regulations that implement specific housing strategies that encourage the development of new housing.

The MLUPA requires that continuous public participation be provided when adopting, amending, or updating a land use plan or land use regulations. Adopting or updating a land use plan or regulations may be initiated by the local governing body. Amendments to the land use plan or zoning regulations may be initiated by either a majority vote of the local governing body, a petition of at least 15% of the electors of the jurisdiction of the plan, or by a property owner for a zoning, subdivision, or land use permit or application.

Montana Statutory Requirements

At a minimum, public participation must include:

- Public notice that specifies the nature of the land use plan or regulation under consideration, the type of comments the local government is seeking from the public, and how the public may participate.
- Electronic communication regarding the process including online access to documents, updates, and comments.
- The dissemination of draft documents.
- An opportunity for written and verbal comments.
- Public meetings after effective notice.
- Documentation and retention of all public outreach and participation performed as part of the administrative record in accordance with the retention schedule published by the secretary of state;
- Documentation of the methods used to provide continuous participation in the development, adoption, or update of a land use plan or regulation;
- The documentation, analysis of, and response to all public comments received.

The following sections of the Public Participation Plan describe how the City of Missoula will address each of these requirements.

Public Participation Framework

The following outreach and public participation methods described in this plan may be used as a means of informing the public, soliciting feedback, and encouraging participation in the adoption, amendment, or update of a land use plan or implementing regulations, depending on the type and the scope of the project.

1. INFORMATIONAL TOOLS

Throughout a planning process, the City may use a variety of outreach methods to inform the public about the process, project updates, access to documents and information, and opportunities to provide feedback related to a land use planning effort or regulatory changes:

Electronic Communication

- Public notice of meetings on the City of Missoula agendas and calendar
- City of Missoula [Website](#)
- [Engage Missoula](#) Website
- City of Missoula and departmental social media accounts
- City of Missoula YouTube for recordings of presentations and informational videos
- E-newsletters

Local Media

- Legal advertisements of public hearings and opportunities to comment on documents under consideration
- Press releases to local media outlets
- Radio advertisements and public service announcements.
- Interviews with local media
- Missoula Community Access Television recordings of public meetings

Public Participation Framework

Printed Materials

- Project fact sheets and educational materials
- Mass mailings
- Event flyers and posters
- Announcements in utility bills

Office Hours/Tabling

City staff may table at existing events (such as farmer’s markets, events held by other City departments or organizations, etc.) or set up in-person “office hours” at businesses or community centers or offer virtual office hours to provide information in more informal settings.

2. ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Within the bounds of the MLUPA, a planning process may require varying levels of involvement and collaboration with the public depending on the type of project. Listed below are methods of engagement that the City may use to encourage participation and provide opportunities for written and verbal comment.

Online

Available for all members of the public:

- Opportunities to provide feedback on the [Engage Missoula](#) website
- Online surveys
- Draft documents will be available on the [Engage Missoula](#) website and part of the City’s administrative record for public review and comment

Public Participation Framework

In Person

Community-Wide Events

Available to all members of the public:

- Workshops
- Open houses
- Informational presentations

Targeted Outreach

Targeted outreach includes engagement with specific community representatives and organizations that are immediately affected by a land use planning project and that provide necessary expertise or perspectives. This type of engagement includes:

- Steering committees/technical advisory committees
- Presentations and discussions with targeted stakeholder groups and community partners
- Focus groups for specific topics

Public Meetings

Public meetings and public hearings are available for the public to attend and provide opportunities for verbal and written public comment on agenda and non-agenda items in a more structured setting.

- Neighborhood Council meetings
- Planning Board/Commission meetings
- City Council meetings
- Presentations to other relevant City boards and commissions

Documentation

The MLUPA requires that the City of Missoula document what methods it uses to provide continuous public participation in the development, adoption, or update of a land use plan or regulation and document all comments received. All public outreach, participation performed, and public comments received must be retained as part of the administrative record submitted to the governing body.

Methods

Detailed summaries of the engagement methods used throughout the development, adoption, or update of a land use plan or regulation will be documented and provided as part of the administrative record for the project and/or as a section of the final plan or document.

Additional details about the engagement methods could include the number and location of public participation opportunities, the types of activities used, the questions asked, and the number of attendees.

If the project has multiple phases, the City may prepare summaries for each phase.

Comments

The City will include all public comments received on draft documents in the administrative record for the project, as well as an analysis and response to comments received. Depending on the project, a summary and analysis of comments received will be included in the final plan or document. Some planning processes will be more in-depth and require multiple phases of public engagement prior to the creation of a draft plan or document. In these cases, the City will summarize the lessons learned in each cycle of engagement in a way that makes it clear how each phase informs the next leading up to the draft plan or regulation. The City shall set clear and transparent expectations with the public about what their feedback is informing and leading into.

Future Public Participation

Following initial compliance with the MLUPA,, the majority of site-specific projects will be reviewed for compliance with the land use plan and applicable regulations and approved or denied by City staff. Opportunities for public input during these projects will be limited unless the project differs substantially from the adopted land use plan, zoning, or subdivision regulations.

The Public Participation Plan shall be used as a framework for providing continuous and extensive engagement for any future adoption, amendment, or update of the City's land use plan or land use regulations. Individual land use planning efforts or regulatory updates or amendments may create individual engagement plans that describe the specific needs of that effort while meeting the requirements of this plan and the MLUPA.

The Public Participation Plan will be updated periodically and as needed depending on changes to State of Montana legislation and City of Missoula priorities.