

Staff Recommended Changes Memo

Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan

To	City Council
From	Madson Matthias, Associate Planner; Ben Brewer, Community Planning Supervisor.
Report Date	December 5, 2024
Agenda Item	Staff Recommended Changes to the November Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan Adoption Draft

This memo lists a set of staff recommended amendments to the Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan. These would be amendments to the draft of the Plan that was reviewed and approved by the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board on November 19th, 2024. Provided these amendments are approved, they will be added to the final draft of the Plan.

Proposed changes to the Plan document are shown in **red**. Deleted language from the Plan document are shown in **red-strikethrough**. Rationales for proposed changes are provided under each proposed amendment.

Staff proposes the following changes:

1. Page 20: Clarify language in the second column

~~Within the Utility Service Area boundary, identifying key areas for infrastructure upgrades, such as water, transportation, and utilities, is essential for supporting Missoula's growth. Certain sewer improvements, including upsizing pumps and gravity mains, will be necessary to accommodate new development, and similar adjustments will be needed for water infrastructure. By 2027, it is projected that 94% of infrastructure and effectively accommodate projected population growth. Missoula's wastewater collection system will be adequately sized, while 4% will need upsizing and 2% will require complete replacement.~~

Identifying key areas for infrastructure upgrades—such as water, transportation, and other utilities—is essential to supporting Missoula's growth within the Utility Service Area boundary. According to the Wastewater Facility Master Plan, by 2027, 4% of the system's mains are projected to need upsizing, and 2% will require complete replacement. Specific site improvements like these are identified for the wastewater collection system and include the upsizing of pumps and gravity mains. Similar upgrades will also be necessary for the water infrastructure.

Rationale

Planning Board members commented that this passage required more clear and concise language to understand the policy intention.

2. Pages 69, 71, 73, 77, 79, & 81 (Residential and Mixed Use Place Types, Generally): Add "Residential Mobile Home (RMH)" Title 20 Zoning District to list of Comparable Zoning Districts in Place Type Descriptions

In Land Use section of related Place Type descriptions:

Add **RMH** in lists of Comparable Zoning Districts for the following Place Types: Urban Residential Low; Limited Urban Residential; Rural Residential; Urban Mixed-Use High; Urban Mixed-Use Low; and Limited Urban Mixed-Use. (It is already listed for Urban Residential High.)

Rationale

The Land Use Plan supports missing middle housing, which is generally more affordable, and includes an action to recognize manufactured housing as a viable option. However, establishing a manufactured housing park, even with as few as two units, currently requires going through the subdivision process and rezoning to the RMH district. This type of development often doesn't fit well with the standards of other zoning districts. Upon review and with guidance from project consultants, staff has identified the need to update the Land Use Plan. Specifically, the plan should align its place types with the policy direction for manufactured housing by revising all residential and mixed-use place types to clearly include the RMH zoning district.

3. Page 101: Neighborhood Greenways

Under 'NG streets':

'Are typically calm enough for bicycles and vehicles to share space, although they may have dedicated, separate facilities ~~when passing particularly busy destinations, such as regional parks or shopping centers.~~'

Rationale

Staff recommends this change, based on public comments received from members of Common Good Missoula, to reflect that dedicated and separate facilities, including the Neighborways concept, may be appropriate at locations that are not limited to busy destinations. Staff concurs with this and was not intending to preclude additional treatments or dedicated space outside of such busy locations. This amendment will help ensure that dedicated/protected facilities along Neighborhood Greenway street types are not unnecessarily limited.

4. Page 106: Regional Mixed Use Street Type

Under 'Target Metrics':

Vehicle volumes: ~~>16,000 per day = 15,000 - 25,000 per day.~~

Rationale

During the public review and planning board hearing, staff received comments raising concerns that a target of over 16,000 ADT might imply this street type is designed to handle ever-increasing traffic volumes. However, that is not the intent. RMU streets are crucial for regional vehicle traffic traveling to or through Missoula, but they are also meant to fit within a dense urban environment. Their design prioritizes pedestrian crossings, multi-modal transportation, and slower speeds. While staff classify RMU streets as high-volume, they do not intend for vehicle traffic to always take priority, which helps limit potential future traffic growth. The range of 15,000 to 25,000 ADT reflects current volumes on similar RMU streets like Orange, Russell, and Brooks.

5. Page 112: Adoption, Amendment and Update Process (3rd column on page)

Under 'Targeted Amendments to the Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Map':

...Any amendment must comply substantially with the existing Land Use Plan. **An amendment will be considered to substantially comply with the land use plan when on balance, the proposed amendment would help to implement the applicable goals and policies without materially undermining one or more**

goals or policies of the plan.

Rationale

Montana Code Annotated Section 76-25-201(8)(a) states the governing body may not amend the land use plan or future land use map unless the amendment is found in substantial compliance with the land use plan. Staff find it is necessary to provide additional guidance for determining what ‘substantial compliance’ means when considering an amendment. The land use plan’s goals and policies provide guidance on what the City is trying to achieve through adoption and implementation of the plan. Many goals and policies will not be applicable to every proposed amendment, but some will, and the applicable ones will allow staff, stakeholders, the Planning Commission, and City Council to evaluate and weigh how the proposed amendment stacks up against the guidance provided in the plan.

6. Page 118: Implementation Actions, add a new action between Code Actions #13 and #14

Revise and restructure the Parks and Recreation Design Manual to better align with other city manuals and the new UDC.

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Rationale

The list of Implementation Actions already includes Code Action Item #13, “to consolidate manuals into one unified development manual, as a near term task that will follow the creation of the new UDC.’ However, staff intends to make updates to the existing Parks and Recreation design manual to support and align with the new UDC, and want to indicate that intent by adding a clear action statement to the implementation schedule. The purpose of updating Missoula Parks and Recreation’s standards and specifications is to make design and construction requirements for public parks, trails, and trees easier to find and easier to understand. To make information easier to find, relevant standards currently located in several different City documents will be consolidated, and outdated or extraneous information will be removed. Additionally, the updated MPR standards and specifications will be incorporated into the Missoula City Public Works and Mobility Standards and Specifications (MCPWSS) Manual so that all public facilities and infrastructure design standards are in one location. To make requirements easier to understand, content will be re-written from a narrative format to a technical specifications format with improved clarity and conciseness.

7. Page 118: Implementation Actions, add language to the existing Code Action #30

Integrate principles and develop incentives for Universal Design and visitability principles.

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Rationale

Staff recommends updating this action to reflect the priorities identified by members of Common Good Missoula through their extensive community engagement and input. Public comments emphasized the importance of equity, affordability, visitability, climate, growing inward, mixed-use development, and incentives. Key points included the need for accessible, inclusive design and aging-in-place infrastructure to ensure homes and communities are adaptable for people of all ages and abilities. Staff supports further developing incentives for universal design and visitability to address these priorities, fostering inclusive, sustainable development that aligns with the community’s shared values and goals.

8. Page 121: Implementation Actions, add a new action between Infrastructure Actions #19 and #20

Whenever possible, acquire and protect important parkland, trail corridors and open space properties based on the most currently adopted Open Space Plan.

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Rationale:

Staff recommends this new action in recognition that open space defines Missoula and frames our views and daily life. Residents and visitors alike use trails to commute and recreate, enjoy the views of natural areas, play in parks and conservation areas, and appreciate wildlife and agricultural abundance fortunately still common in our area. The city's conserved lands exist because of the foresight of those who came before us. For nearly half a century, Missoulians have reaffirmed their support for open space by engaging in the planning process, by connecting with land, water and wildlife, and by voting in support of open space bond funding. Additionally, State law authorizes the City to preserve significant open space lands for recreational purposes, conservation, scenic purposes, or assisting in the shaping of the character direction and timing of community development. Staff finds it necessary to add this action statement to state and indicate a commitment and intent towards pursuing the acquisition and protection of areas recognized as having such importance to the community through the city's open space planning processes.