

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## *2025 Amendments to the Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan, Staff Report and Referral*

**Report to:** Missoula City Planning Commission

**From:** Madson Matthias, Senior Planner; Marc Hendrickson, Associate Planner; Emily Gluckin, Senior Planner; Ben Brewer, Community Planning Supervisor; Laval Means, Community Planning Manager; Eran Pehan, Director of Community Planning, Development, and Innovation; Ben Weiss, Bike/Ped Program Manager

**Report date:** November 13, 2025

**Agenda Item:** Adoption of amendments to the *Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan* and Place Types Map (Attachment 1).

### **SECTION A. Meeting Dates, Requirements, and Recommendations**

1. **November 18, 2025.** Planning Commission, Public Hearing.
2. **November 20, 2025.** Planning Commission Meeting (tentative).
3. **December 2, 2025.** Planning Commission Meeting (tentative).  
**Action Required:** After review of the draft amendments to the Land Use Plan and Place Types Map (Attachment 1), consideration of the executive summary/staff report and consideration and response to public comment on the proposed Land Use Plan and Place Types map, the Planning Board will make a final recommendation to the City Council regarding adoption, modification, or rejection of the proposed plan and map, and associated repeal actions.  
**Recommendation:** That the Planning Commission resolves to recommend that the City Council **adopt** amendments to the *Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan* and Place Types Map (Attachment 1), based on the information and considerations in the staff report.
4. **December 3, 2025.** Land Use and Planning Committee. Presentation #1 (tentative)
5. **December 8, 2025.** City Council. Consent Agenda  
**Action:** Set a public hearing on resolution to amend the Land Use Plan
6. **December 10, 2025.** Land Use and Planning Committee. Presentation #2
7. **December 15, 2025.** City Council. Public Hearing.
8. **December 17, 2025.** Land Use and Planning Committee. Presentation #3  
**Action:** Work Session for further discussion, and amendments as needed  
**Recommendation:** Advance to Final Consideration

9. **December 22, 2025.** City Council. Public Hearing #3, Final Consideration.

**Action Required:** Consider Planning Board recommendations when determining whether to adopt a Resolution to adopt, modify, or reject amendments to the *Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan* and Place Types Map (Attachment 1).

**Recommendation:**

That the City Council adopt a Resolution to Adopt amendments to the *Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan* and Place Types Map (Attachment 1), based on the information and considerations in the staff report.

## **SECTION B. Notification of Public Hearing**

- Email:
  - Newsletters were sent on October 30, 2025, that announced the draft amendments to the Land Use Plan and Place Types Map were available online for public review.
  - A memo (Attachment 3) was sent to Agency and Community Groups on October 30, 2025, requesting comment on the public draft of the amended Land Use Plan by November 7, 2025. This also announced the Planning Board public hearing date.
  - Newsletters were sent on November 11, 2025, to announce the public hearing dates to adopt amendments to the Land Use Plan and Place Types Map.
- Online Engagement:
  - The public review and adoption drafts of the amended Land Use Plan and Place Types Map were posted on the Engage Missoula website for review and comment.
  - The Planning Board and City Council public hearing dates were listed on the Engage Missoula website.

## **SECTION C. Project and Proposal Introduction**

### *Proposal Summary: Amending the Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan*

The City of Missoula requests that the Planning Board recommend City Council adopt amendments to the *Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan* and Place Types Map (Attachment 1). These updates will replace outdated content and strengthen the Plan's policy framework. Developed with ongoing community input, the Plan presents a clear vision that promotes sustainable growth and public well-being.

The Land Use Plan serves as the foundation for the City's development regulations. State law requires that development regulations align with the local plan. This requirement has guided the City's approach to updating the Unified Development Code (UDC). To ensure all regulations are consistent with the Land Use Plan, minor updates will be incorporated into the Plan and adopted concurrently with the UDC. This approach maintains clarity and legal compliance across the Code and the Plan.

## SECTION D. Summary of Updates

The following is a summary of the amendments to the Land Use Plan and Place Types Map:

Several updates improve clarity and consistency in the Plan wording:

1. Comparable zoning districts are updated to align with the new UDC (Title 22). This includes the renaming of Title 22's Industrial Mixed Use (I-MU) zoning district to Transitional Mixed Use (T-MU) in order to clearly show its purpose in guiding industrial areas toward urban mixed-use development.
2. Childcare centers are now allowed in Industrial and Employment Center Place Types, supporting care closer to workplaces.
3. The Airport Hazard Area is now included as a development constraint for the Urban Residential High, Urban Mixed-Use Low, and Civic place types.
4. The Street Types Map description now clarifies that it is approximate and for illustrative purposes, with the official version available on the City's website.

A few changes are being made to the Place Types Map:

1. In the Riverfront neighborhood, a block is changing to mixed-use to match the existing mix of uses, nearby amenities, and multi-modal access.
2. In Sx<sup>w</sup>tpqyen (S-wh-tip-KAYN), the Grant Creek "horseshoe bend" will be straightened and realigned, allowing for the conversion of what was only potential Industrial area to Urban Mixed-Use Low.
3. In the Westside, the area between the railroad and West Broadway will change to Industrial and Employment.
4. Parcels at the intersection of Miller Creek Road and Linda Vista are changing to mixed-use to reflect its approved development rights and status as a neighborhood mixed-use node. There are currently a restaurant and market on the site.
5. In the Upper Rattlesnake, an existing winery and vineyard will have an expanded place type to allow additional agricultural and related uses, supporting "working lands" in a rural context.
6. Parcels near campus and owned by the University of Montana are being changed to Civic to align with the current public use of the land.
7. Updates also align the Land Use Plan with the 2025 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Plan, re-designating select parcels to Parks and Conservation across the city.

## SECTION E. Public, Stakeholder, and Agency Participation

### Overview

All engagement activities adhered to the adopted Public Participation Plan. The engagement strategy utilized by the Our Missoula team was continuous and relationship-based, emphasizing collaborative education, shared experiences, and increased awareness of key issues while focusing on building meaningful relationships based on trust and transparency.

The public review draft of the Land Use Plan and Place Types Map was made available for comment on the website for three weeks, leading up to consideration of comments that could inform this adoption draft of the amended Land Use Plan and Place Types Map. Agency and community groups were notified of the comment period and encouraged to submit comments. This included contact to a wide range of groups with interest in special resources like housing, economics, development, construction, real estate, transportation, government agencies, climate, the natural environment, utilities, infrastructure, community services, community organizing, neighborhood councils and

overlapping county community councils. Comments are continued to be encouraged up to the point of adoption. This phase concludes with the adoption of the amended *Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan and Place Types Map*.

### **Public Review Draft: Summary & Analysis of Comments**

The public draft of the proposed amendments was released on October 30, and all comments received through November 7 are summarized below:

Most comments (around 70%–75%) express opposition or concern about the proposed amendments, emphasizing that the original language better reflects community values and that zoning updates should not drive changes to the Land Use Plan. Many feel the amendments are being guided by zoning intent under the new UDC rather than by the Plan itself. Roughly 40% of comments specifically argue that the Land Use Plan should remain the primary policy document guiding zoning, not the reverse. Several highlight issues with the Airport Hazard Area language, saying it places too much emphasis on noise and safety concerns at the expense of housing flexibility and long-term planning priorities. Generally, comments urge the City to maintain equitable housing opportunities and avoid overly restrictive policies; over 40% of the feedback conflicts with adopted policy or project goals, reflecting tension between maintaining community-driven intent and ensuring technical consistency with the new zoning framework.

Only one agency comment was received during public review, from Brian Ellestad, Airport Director of the Missoula Montana Airport. In a letter dated December 2024, the Missoula County Airport Authority (MCAA) expressed concern that land east of the airport (in the “Urban Residential High” and “Urban Mixed-Use Low” Place Types) falls within the airport’s flight path and noise zone. The Airport stated these areas aren’t suitable for housing, schools, or other dense uses due to noise, safety, and navigation risks. MCAA repeated the ask of the City to update the Land Use Plan to avoid incompatible uses near the runway and to add policies like noise and height limits or aviation easements. The letter was cooperative in tone and reiterated the Airport’s interest in working with the City to ensure safety and smart growth.

## **SECTION F. Land Use Plan and Place Types Map Adoption Criteria and Considerations**

Staff has reviewed the *Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan* and bases the recommendation of adoption of the Land Use Plan amendments on the following information:

### **Overview of The Montana Land Use Planning Act (The Planning Act), 76-25, MCA**

The City of Missoula is subject to the *Montana Land Use Planning Act*. The Planning Act contains five parts. Part 1 (General Provisions) and Part 2 (Land Use Plan) apply to this land use plan adoption process and staff report. Parts 3, 4, and 5 do not apply to this process and staff report as they cover development regulations and regulatory procedures. While the amendments in this report have resulted from the process of creating and adopting development regulations, this staff report is limited to the Land Use Plan and related amendments. Requirements for development regulations and regulatory procedures are not addressed further in this report.

#### **→ Part 1 of the Planning Act**

Part 1 of the Planning Act covers administrative rules, definitions, applicability, and requirements to establish a Planning Commission (76-25-104, MCA) and to adopt a Public Participation Plan (76-25-106, MCA).

### **Section 104: Planning Commission**

The Planning Act requires a Planning Commission to review and provide recommendations to the City Council on establishing a compliant land use plan, maps, and zoning and subdivision regulations.

1. A Public Hearing is scheduled on November 18, 2025, for the Planning Board to review and provide recommendations on the amended Land Use Plan and Place Types Map to the City Council.
2. A Public Hearing is scheduled on November 20, 2025, for the Planning Board to review and provide recommendations on the amended Land Use Plan and Place Types Map to the City Council.
3. A Public Hearing is scheduled on December 2, 2025, for the Planning Board to review and provide recommendations on the amended Land Use Plan and Place Types Map to the City Council.
4. **A Planning Commission has been established to review and provide recommendations to the City Council on establishing a compliant land use plan, maps, and zoning and subdivision regulations.**
5. **This process is not related to the planning and adoption of land use regulations.**
6. **The Planning Commission is scheduled to review and provide recommendations on the adoption draft of the amended Plan and map.**

### Section 106: Public Participation

The Planning Act requires continuous public involvement, guided by creation and adoption of a Public Participation Plan, in the planning and adoption of land use policy objectives and regulations.

7. Throughout the *Our Missoula* project, city staff have maintained consistent, relationship-based engagement with the community, focusing on collaborative education, experience-sharing, and raising awareness of key issues.
8. The *Our Missoula* public engagement structure for the Land Use Plan and map is comprised of four Phases: Phase 1 included a community kick-off event that introduced the project and engaged residents in storytelling to shape its foundation. Phase 2 focused on defining the problems. Public feedback was gathered to define community concerns around equity in land use, culminating in workshops where residents shared what they value in their neighborhoods. Phase 3 introduced Scenarios for the Future, using workshops and open houses to explore housing diversity and growth preferences, informing a preferred scenario to address housing and equity needs. Phase 4 involved community presentations, stakeholder input, and final adjustments before public hearings and the adoption of the Land Use Plan. Phase 5 follows the adoption of the Unified Development Code, which has included several community Open Houses and presentations; individual mailers were sent to every address in the Land Use Plan Area and there has been consistent opportunity for online engagement.
9. The amendments proposed at this time have benefitted and resulted from the above engagement. The amendments were not explicitly mentioned in Phases 1-4 and have been introduced at the final stages of Phase 5.
10. **The public has been involved throughout the creation and adoption of the Land Use Plan, Land Use Regulations, and resulting amendments. The process provided continuous and extensive public notice, review, comment, and participation in the development of the land use plan, regulations, and resulting amendments.**

### → Part 2 of the Planning Act

Part 2 of the Planning Act covers the adoption and amendment of the Plan and Future Land Use Map in *Section 201*. *Section 202* relates to cyclical future updates of the Land Use Plan and is not further addressed in this report but is referred to in the Land Use Plan Adoption and Amendment chapter of the Land Use Plan. *Section 203* covers

requirements for providing population projections. *Sections 204 and 205* are reserved. *Sections 206 through 209* detail requirements to inventory, describe, and analyze needs and constraints related to: housing; local services and facilities; economic development; and natural resources, environment, and hazards. *Sections 210 through 212* are reserved. *Section 213* covers the Future Land Use Map while *Sections 214 and 215* address Area and Issue Plans. Finally, *Section 216* outlines provisions related to Implementation.

### **Section 203: Population Projection**

The Planning Act requires the Land Use Plan to include a projection of Missoula's population for 2045.

11. The population projection in the Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan remains unchanged.
- 12. The Land Use Plan contains a projection of Missoula's population for 2045.**

### **Section 206: Housing**

The Planning Act requires the Land Use Plan to address Housing in Missoula. This includes a required inventory of existing conditions, an analysis of community housing impacts and needs from now through 2045, and a description of how the City of Missoula will address these needs.

13. No substantive changes are being made to the existing inventories, analyses, and descriptions of Housing in the Land Use Plan.
14. Several map changes shifted low-capacity areas toward more versatile, mixed-use development.
- 15. The Land Use Plan addresses housing in Missoula and provides the required inventories, analyses, and descriptions.**

### **Section 207: Local Services and Facilities**

The Planning Act requires the Land Use Plan to address Local Services and Facilities in Missoula. This includes a required inventory of existing conditions, an analysis of community services and facilities' impacts and needs from now through 2045, and a description of how the City of Missoula will address these needs.

16. No substantive changes are being made to the existing inventories, analyses, and descriptions of Local Services and Facilities in the Land Use Plan.
- 17. The Land Use Plan addresses Missoula's local services and facilities by evaluating current conditions, analyzing projected needs, and outlining strategies to meet future demands through 2045. The plan emphasizes proactive infrastructure upgrades, improved service delivery, and better connectivity, including walkability, bike lanes, and public transportation, aligning with community priorities for sustainable growth.**

### **Section 208: Economic Development**

The Planning Act requires the Land Use Plan to address Economic Development in Missoula. This includes a required inventory of existing conditions, an analysis of community economic impacts and needs from now through 2045, and a description of how the City of Missoula will address these needs.

18. No substantive changes are being made to the existing inventories, analyses, and descriptions of Economic Development in the Land Use Plan.
- 19. Missoula has the economic capacity to support the projected population and workforce growth, with ample land for commercial development and a stable job market.**
- 20. The Land Use Plan addresses Economic Development in Missoula and provides the required inventories, analyses, and descriptions.**

## Section 209: Natural Resources, Environment, and Hazards

The Planning Act requires the Land Use Plan to address Natural Resources, Environment, and Hazards in Missoula. This includes a required inventory of existing conditions, an analysis of the impacts to and needs for natural resources, environment, and hazards from now through 2045, and a description of how the City of Missoula will address these needs.

21. No substantive changes are being made to the existing inventories, analyses, and descriptions of Natural Resources, Environment, and Hazards in the Land Use Plan.
22. **The Land Use Plan addresses Natural Resources in Missoula and provides the required inventories, analyses, and descriptions.**

## Part 2, Generally: Future Land Use Map

The Planning Act requires the Land Use Plan to include a Future Land Use Map that reflects the anticipated and preferred pattern and intensities of development for the jurisdiction over the next 20 years. This must be accompanied by a written description of the proposed general distribution, location, and extent of various land uses.

23. Changes are proposed to the specific, localized distribution, location, and extent of various land uses in the Land Use Plan. These changes are only parcel or block-wide and do not present a larger pattern in the original or resulting Place Type being amended.
24. The only significant changes proposed to the general, city-wide distribution, location, and extent of land uses are limited to the Parks and Conservation Place Type. Several select parcels' Place Types have been re-designated to reflect the updated inventories and policies for parkland as reflected in the 2025 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Plan. Staff are actively aligning the Unified Development Code and Land Use Plan with the PROST Plan.
25. These changes do not affect the definitions and descriptions of the Place Types.
26. **The Land Use Plan includes a Future Land Use Map that reflects the anticipated and preferred pattern and intensities of development for the jurisdiction over the next 20 years.**
27. **The Land Use Plan includes a written description of the proposed general distribution, location, and extent of various land uses.**

## Section 216: Implementation

The Planning Act requires the Land Use Plan to include an implementation section. This must include identification of actions, programs, regulations, or guidance for implementing the Land Use Plan. The Planning Act also requires an analysis of whether any inconsistencies exist between current zoning regulations and the land use plan and future land use map. If inconsistencies exist, then specific implementation actions are needed to amend the zoning regulations and zoning map to address the inconsistencies.

28. No substantive changes are being made to the Implementation Section in the Land Use Plan.
29. Staff are acting upon Implementation Action, Section CODE, Number 7 related to updating zoning districts to better match land use context and identified Place Types. Developing the zoning map revealed 32 targeted locations where staff identified land use needs and context that differs from the Land Use Plan's Place Types Map. To resolve these discrepancies, staff must adjust the recommended Place Types in these areas.
30. Several of these amendments are tied to Implementation Action, Section COORDINATION, Number 11 related to updating the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Plan (PROST).
31. **The Land Use Plan includes an implementation section.**
32. **The Land Use Plan's implementation section identifies actions, programs, regulations, or guidance for**

implementing the Land Use Plan.

33. **Actions have been identified and are being taken to amend the zoning regulations, zoning map, Land Use Plan, and Place Types map to address current inconsistencies between them.**

## **SECTION G. Attachments**

1. 2025 Land Use Plan Amendments
2. Resolution to Adopt
3. Agency Comment Request
4. List of Public Review Comments (Oct 29-Nov 12)
5. Links and Resources:
  - A. [Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan](#)
  - B. [Title 76, Chapter 25, MCA](#)  
*The Montana Land Use Planning Act*