

Missoula City Council Land Use and Planning Committee Minutes - DRAFT

January 7, 2026

10:25 am

Council Chambers (in person) or TEAMS (virtually)

Attend in person: City Council Chambers, 140 W Pine, Missoula MT

Members present: Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Betsy Craske, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Sean McCoy, Eric Melson, Mike Nugent, Justin Ponton, Jennifer Savage, Amber Sherrill

Members absent: Bob Campbell

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

The meeting was called to order at 10:25 a.m.

1.1 Roll Call

Amanda Vermace called the roll.

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

1.2.1 Minutes from December 17, 2025

The minutes were approved as submitted.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on items not listed on the agenda.

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Annexation of 3300 Raser Drive

Dave DeGrandpre, Planning Supervisor with the Community Planning, Development and Innovation department, presented on the subject item. He provided details on the background and history of the subject property and refreshed the committee on why the proposed annexation has been brought back to the Land Use and Planning committee. Michael Hick, Project Manager with the Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA), provided additional details specific to the North Reserve/Scott Street Master Plan since the proposed annexation would place the parcel within the master plan area. The annexation is subject to five conditions of approval

The applicant team was also present and provided additional details around the history of the property and advocated why the annexation was being requested. They agreed with the conditions of approval.

Committee members sought more details on the Yellowstone Pipeline easement that runs through the property and the potential impact it would have on infrastructure. They also Inquired about the difference between the Master Plan and the Urban Renewal District as

it relates to the subject property. Members also asked about the undevelopable land on the property. There were questions raised about the deconstruction of structures on the property and the status of what's been demolished. The committee expressed excitement and support for the proposed annexation.

Moved by: Amber Sherrill

Adopt a resolution to annex and incorporate within the boundaries of the City of Missoula, Montana land described as Tracts 1 and 13 of Certificate of Survey No. 6982, Tract 8A of Certificate of Survey No. 6995, Tracts 2B and 4B of Certificate of Survey No. 7035, and adjacent right-of-way, all located in Section 8, Township 13 North, Range 19 West, Missoula County, Montana, P.M.M., containing approximately 93 acres plus right-of-way, as shown on Exhibit A, being subject to all easements or rights-of-way existing or of record, and zone the property M1-2 Limited Industrial, based on the findings of fact in the staff report and Memo No. 2, subject to the recommended conditions of annexation approval.

AYES: (11): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Betsy Craske, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Sean McCoy, Eric Melson, Mike Nugent, Justin Ponton, Jennifer Savage, and Amber Sherrill

ABSENT: (1): Bob Campbell

Vote results: Approved (11 to 0)

3.2 Our Missoula Project – Unified Development Code

Context -Setting Topics: Transitional Mixed Use (TMU), Residential FAR, and Neighborhood Commercial.

Staff from the Community Planning, Development and Innovation department (CPDI) presented information on the subject item. Emily Gluckin, Senior Planner with CPDI, began by giving a reminder of the materials that are available as part of the project record, highlighting the recent staff memorandums. A summary of each topic followed.

- Transitional Mixed-Use (TMU)
 - The TMU district, formerly called Industrial Mixed-Use, is designed to allow a mix of residential, commercial, and low-intensity industrial uses in areas with large, irregular lots and poor street connectivity. It is applied where redevelopment toward an urban pattern is possible but not yet feasible due to infrastructure limitations. The River Road area was highlighted as an example, where TMU zoning replaces a previous residential designation to reflect existing industrial uses and future growth potential. While the Planning Commission suggested reevaluating TMU to preserve residential character, staff recommends keeping TMU with density caps to balance compatibility and flexibility.
- Neighborhood Commercial
 - Neighborhood commercial zoning aims to integrate small-scale businesses like coffee shops and corner stores into residential areas to support walkable

amenities, a top priority identified in public feedback. Original standards limited new commercial buildings to corner lots, capped size at 2,000–3,500 sq. ft., and exempted parking in urban districts. The Planning Commission proposed allowing mid-block new builds, increasing size limits to 5,000 sq. ft., and scaling size by lot area using Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Staff expressed support for larger size limits and FAR (.5) for compatibility but opposes mid-block new construction, favoring adaptive reuse to maintain neighborhood character.

- Residential Floor Area Ratio (FAR)
 - FAR is introduced as a form-based tool to regulate building size relative to lot area, replacing rigid density caps and encouraging smaller, more affordable units. It acts as a “budget” for total floor space, allowing flexibility in design while maintaining neighborhood scale. Proposed FARs increase with unit count, but staff recommended lowering maximum FAR for higher-density zones (UR4 and UR1) to align with land use plan goals and prevent oversized structures. Planning Commission suggested adding density caps, but staff shared opposition on this, emphasizing FAR’s flexibility and its role in promoting compatibility and affordability.

Public comments reflected a mix of concerns and priorities. Many speakers expressed worry about the proposed density increases, citing impacts on neighborhood character, parking congestion, and inadequate infrastructure such as sidewalks and connectivity. Several residents requested visual examples of how FAR changes would affect building size and streetscapes, as well as clearer maps showing amenity proximity, which drives zoning decisions. Some commenters urged slowing down the process and “dialing back” density to avoid unintended consequences, while others emphasized the need for more housing and supported innovative tools like FAR to promote affordability. There were calls to adopt Planning Board recommendations for density caps, reconsider alley-based zoning splits, and ensure setbacks to preserve compatibility. Developers and architects raised concerns that FAR limits could reduce housing supply and make projects financially unfeasible, particularly for affordable housing. Others advocated for flexibility in neighborhood commercial standards, including allowing mid-block new builds and mixed-use opportunities to support walkable amenities. Overall, comments highlighted tension between increasing housing capacity and maintaining neighborhood livability.

Council members asked for visual examples comparing current zoning to proposed FAR buildouts, including maximum scenarios and setbacks, to better understand scale impacts. They requested detailed maps showing amenity proximity that influence zoning designations and clarification on how those amenities are defined. Several members questioned the methodology for zoning boundaries, suggesting alley-based splits instead of street centerlines to maintain neighborhood compatibility. Legal clarification was sought on whether HOAs can impose stricter covenants than city zoning (confirmed by the city attorney), and whether future state legislation could affect HOA authority. Council also raised concerns about parking mandates, infrastructure requirements, and potential congestion, asking how these changes align with simplification goals. Additionally, they requested cost analysis or data on how infrastructure trade-offs affect housing affordability and why certain standards are being relaxed. Questions were posed about the impact of FAR on permitting complexity, the rationale for civic district designations

(CD1 vs. CD2), and whether private landowners should be treated differently from public properties. Overall, Council emphasized the need for visuals, data transparency, and clarity on implementation impacts before final decisions.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 p.m.