

**From:** [Emily Gluckin \(she/her\)](#)  
**To:** [Emily Gluckin \(she/her\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: City of Missoula Standards and Specifications Manual Update  
**Date:** Monday, January 19, 2026 10:18:21 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image.png](#)  
[image.png](#)  
[image.png](#)

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**From:** David Gray <[david@dvgarchitects.com](mailto:david@dvgarchitects.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, January 16, 2026 12:26:42 PM

**To:** Bob Campbell <[CampbellB@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:CampbellB@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Mike Nugent <[NugentM@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:NugentM@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Gwen Jones <[JonesG@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:JonesG@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Jennifer Savage (she/her) <[SavageJ@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:SavageJ@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Kristen Jordan <[JordanK@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:JordanK@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Sean McCoy <[McCoyS@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:McCoyS@ci.missoula.mt.us)>

**Subject:** Fwd: City of Missoula Standards and Specifications Manual Update

Hello Council Members,

I am forwarding this correspondence to you so you understand some of the intricacies of development, City mandated Costs and ongoing issues making housing / business less affordable in Missoula.

The cliffnotes are:

1. City Boulevard tree rules are still very costly, out of line with financial affordability of most small to medium sized developments, cause damage to buildings, and are going to increase the cost of city tree maintenance in Mixed-use zoning areas. ("Build to zone" areas)
2. If the City uses all of the ROW for bike lanes, parking and driving lanes which then does not leave room for boulevard trees along the street, private property owners should not be harmed because of that. The city manual states the private property owner's should be required to find an easement or redesign their property to make room for boulevard trees the city decided were less important than what they designed to be in the ROW. ( Page 7-28 2) Acceptable Design Exception Conditions, vi.)
3. City Boulevards should not be required to have automatic irrigation systems for low density housing (1-4 dwelling units) The cost is very high and only raises the cost of rent inappropriately compared to a much higher density residential development. (\$8-\$10k at 1 D.U., \$4-\$5 at 2 D.U.s, \$2k-\$2.5K a 4 D.U.s)
4. Fire access travel distances should be made more flexible for small buildings that are Fire Sprinklered. (Fire sprinkler systems in buildings usually put out the fire before the Fire Department arrives so having more travel distance doesn't really negatively affect life safety.)
5. Alley ROWs that are 20 feet wide and 13'-6" high should be mandatorily designated as Fire Access roads by the City. This is the definition of a Fire Access Road in the Fire Code but the Missoula Fire Marshall or plan checkers do not accept these alley's meeting this definition as Fire Access Roads. This stops development in the City Core when it shouldn't. This is going to take some political and administrative pressure to make happen. As an Example my home was reported to be on fire Christmas morning several years ago. As the fire was supposedly on

the back of my home the Fire Truck arrived in the alley and I watched firemen enter my backyard from the alley about the same time as they knocked on my front door. It wasn't a fire, just my clothes dryer was running on a cold morning but the point is the Fire department chose the alley as the best Fire Access Road to attack the reported fire, on the alley side of my home. The issue is if a building permit was applied for to install a new dwelling unit in my backyard and the distance from the street to the furthest corner of the new home was greater than 150 feet and the home was along the alley the Fire Department **will not allow the home to be built** because they do not consider the alley as a "Fire Access Road."

I appreciate your time,

David V. Gray LEED Green Associate  
Principal Architect and President  
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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **David Gray** <[david@dvgarchitects.com](mailto:david@dvgarchitects.com)>

Date: Fri, Jan 16, 2026 at 11:48 AM

Subject: Re: City of Missoula Standards and Specifications Manual Update

To: Ross Mollenhauer <[MollenhauerR@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:MollenhauerR@ci.missoula.mt.us)>

Cc: Ida Sajor <[SajorI@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:SajorI@ci.missoula.mt.us)>

Ross and Ida,

On Details STD 901 and 903 it shows deer fencing. I would hope that is not required everywhere but only where there are deer problems. Some flexibility on that requirement would be appreciated.

On Detail STD-904 the two notes shown below should have inch or feet markings on them for clarity. I am glad Root barriers are allowed.

## KEYED NOTES:

- ① DEEP ROOT 12-2 OR APPROVED EQUAL
  - ② DEEP ROOT 12-18 OR APPROVED EQUAL
- 

On STD 503.1.1(3) I recommend extending the access length if the building is fire sprinklered by State Adopted Code.

Alley's that are 20 feet wide in ROW width and have 13 feet of headroom should also be mandatorily listed as Fire Access Roads as that complies with the Fire Code. This will become more important as infill occurs in the city core to meet the city's housing goals.

STD 503.1(1) is not legible in the tables.

General Comment:

Ground cover mulch that is plant, bark, synthetic bark or mineral should be allowed in boulevards and that is not particularly clear.

Single family - 4-plex development should not be required to provide automatic irrigation systems in the boulevard. That is an addition of \$8000-\$10000 in irrigation system costs for those small developments which only makes housing less affordable and less attainable.

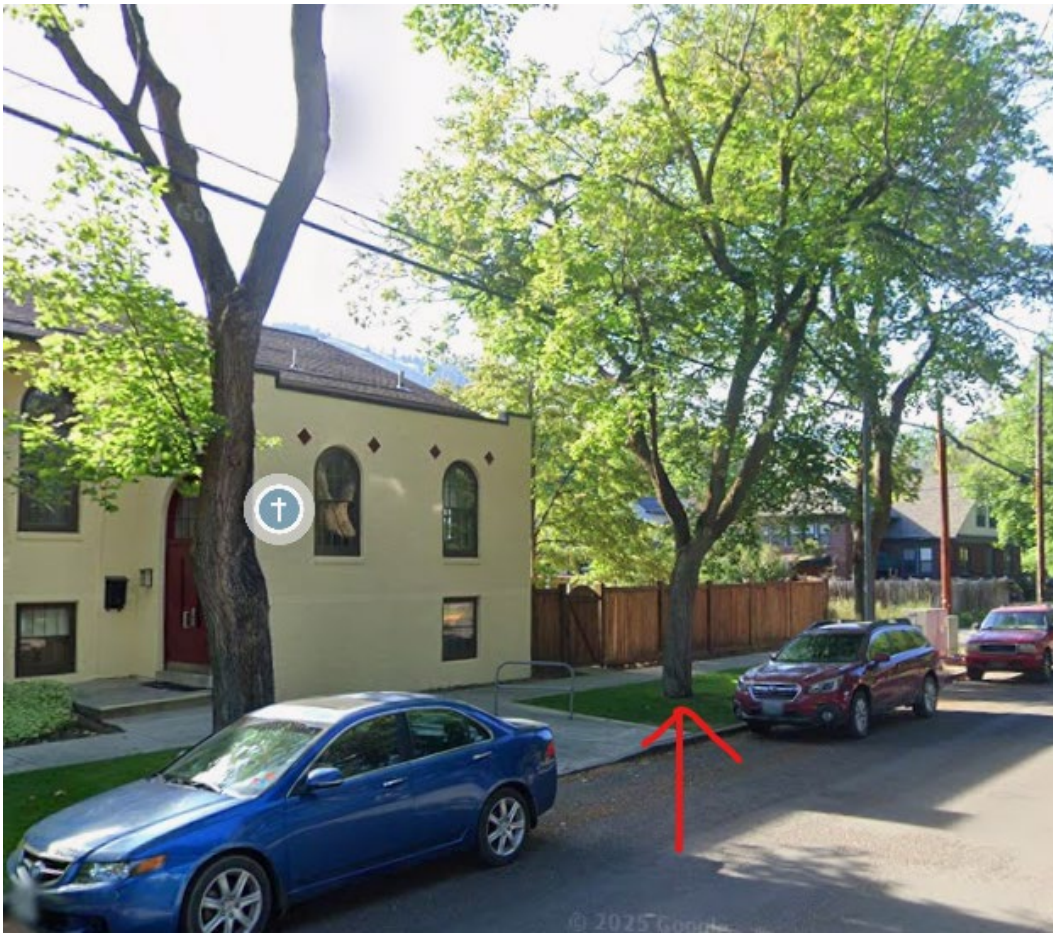
Page 7-28 2) Acceptable Design Exception Conditions, "vi. Limited Right-of-Way Width: Trees shall not be the first element eliminated from the right-of-way. Other options must be explored, including acquiring additional easement for sidewalk or for public trees on the property adjacent to the right-of-way, or redesigning/reducing other right-of-way elements. Prioritization of right-of-way elements shall follow guidelines found in the Street Typologies section of the Land Use Plan." Should be changed to say vi. if limited ROW does not allow for boulevard trees then they may be eliminated without prejudice

Page 7-29 has trees allowed to be planted in a visibility triangle at an intersection. I recommend that trees not be allowed in the visibility triangle because when they are younger they block oncoming traffic. I was in an accident on 11th due to this very case. See picture below. (Eye level) There is a stop sign on this intersection now but the tree (on the left) still blocks your view of oncoming traffic and is a hazard even if stopped on 11th. You should have clear visibility from 30" to 6' above grade for clear visibility to prevent accidents.



I think Class 1 trees should also be allowed when the building is adjacent to the Public sidewalk. The zoning code wants buildings next to the boulevard sidewalk and no trees should not rub against buildings especially boulevard trees as the building owner is not allowed to cut the branches off of them. If the front yard setback is less than 10 feet on the adjoining property then a Class 1 tree should be acceptable.

The tree below rubbed the membrane roof off of the Church shown in the photo in 5-8 years and the Urban forester refused to allow the branches to be cut back off the building. The church cut the branch off the roof after paying \$10,000 to replace that roof section in 1/3 the life expectancy of the roof they installed just a few years earlier. Then the city came and trimmed the tree as they should have years earlier. The boulevard trees around this church are also filled with dead branches on the private property side of the church, top of the tree and the parks department said they had no plans in the near future to maintain the trees and remove the dead branches. I assume this is due to budget limitations and the wind storm several years ago. That is a maintenance reality for the parks department, so city required boulevard trees should not add additional cost for boulevard tree maintenance as the city is also requiring buildings to be built next to the sidewalk just like this church is built. A 30'-60' diameter Class II tree is going to rub a building facade and roof far faster than a Class I tree.



I think the city still has a problem with the paved boulevard and boulevard tree requirements. Suspended pavements are extremely expensive (\$10,000 per tree) and the structure CU-Soil looks to be a patented soil which may mean it is not available in Missoula. If it is not readily available how can the city require it as one only of two allowed options for planting boulevard trees in an urban setting? Some reality needs to be brought into this issue with the most expensive solutions known to man being the only allowed solutions is just not good policy especially when the city is having an affordability crisis.

I appreciate you sharing the link with me. I am most concerned with issues that are stopping housing and business construction in Missoula so that is where my focus for comments are directed. Getting the Urban Forester and Fire Marshal to be more flexible and reasonable is really needed for our city to meet the needs of today and the future.

Respectfully,

David V. Gray LEED Green Associate  
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On Fri, Jan 16, 2026 at 9:58 AM Ross Mollenhauer <[MollenhauerR@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:MollenhauerR@ci.missoula.mt.us)> wrote:

Hi David, the version we sent out for public review is still here but be aware that some things have changed as a result of all of this discussion. We haven't put another version out yet.....

<https://www.engagemissoula.com/city-of-missoula-standards-and-specifications-manual-update>



**Ross Mollenhauer, PE** | Engineering Manager  
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*Promoting a safe, healthy Missoula through the development of transportation and mobility networks and the efficient delivery of high-quality public infrastructure, utilities, and services.*

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**From:** David Gray <[david@dvgarchitects.com](mailto:david@dvgarchitects.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, January 16, 2026 9:32 AM

**To:** Ross Mollenhauer <[MollenhauerR@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:MollenhauerR@ci.missoula.mt.us)>

**Cc:** Ida Sajor <[SajorI@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:SajorI@ci.missoula.mt.us)>

**Subject:** Re: City of Missoula Standards and Specifications Manual Update

It may have gone out to the Monthly CPDI & Dev. Community Meeting participants or other groups I am in.

I am now not able to find the proposed manual in the Our Missoula Site. Could you send me a link

to the proposed new manual so I can review parts of it please.

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On Wed, Jan 14, 2026 at 10:04 AM Ross Mollenhauer <[MollenhauerR@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:MollenhauerR@ci.missoula.mt.us)> wrote:

Hi David,

I'm not sure what memo you are referring to but yes the public comment period for the Manual is now closed. We are working on formatting and the final product now and need time for that given the size of this manual. If you have thoughts though, I'm always open to hearing them so feel free to send them my way though I can't promise anything at this point.

Thanks,



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***Promoting a safe, healthy Missoula through the development of transportation and mobility networks and the efficient delivery of high-quality public infrastructure, utilities, and services.***

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**From:** David Gray <[david@dvgaarchitects.com](mailto:david@dvgaarchitects.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 13, 2026 4:24 PM  
**To:** Ida Sajor <[SajorI@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:SajorI@ci.missoula.mt.us)>  
**Subject:** City of Missoula Standards and Specifications Manual Update

You don't often get email from [david@dvgaarchitects.com](mailto:david@dvgaarchitects.com). [Learn why this is important](#)  
Ida,

I thought a memo went out saying the public comment period for the manual was being pushed back to the end of January? Our Missoula has the comment period closed.

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