

**From:** [Emily Gluckin \(she/her\)](#)  
**To:** [Emily Gluckin \(she/her\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Public Comment: Zoning - Missoula County Public Schools  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 14, 2026 11:45:55 AM

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**From:** Micah Hill <[mhill@mcpsmt.org](mailto:mhill@mcpsmt.org)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 13, 2026 10:50 AM

**To:** Amber Sherrill <[SherrillA@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:SherrillA@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Mirtha Becerra <[BecerraM@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:BecerraM@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Eric Melson <[MelsonE@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:MelsonE@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Mike Nugent <[NugentM@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:NugentM@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Justin Ponton <[PontonJ@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:PontonJ@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)>; Bob Campbell <[CampbellB@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:CampbellB@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Gwen Jones <[JonesG@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:JonesG@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Betsy Craske <[CraskeB@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:CraskeB@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Stacie Anderson <[andersons@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:andersons@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Sean McCoy <[McCoyS@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:McCoyS@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Eran Pehan <[PehanE@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:PehanE@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Andrea Davis <[DavisA@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:DavisA@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Cassie Tripard <[TripardC@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:TripardC@ci.missoula.mt.us)>; Benjamin Brewer <[BrewerB@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:BrewerB@ci.missoula.mt.us)>

**Subject:** Public Comment: Zoning - Missoula County Public Schools

Dear Mayor Davis, Members of the Missoula City Council, and Planning Staff:

I want to thank the Mayor, Council and Staff for their work on developing a new zoning plan for Missoulians. I know this has been an arduous process and have appreciated the opportunity to offer comments. I especially want to thank the City's staff who have worked hard to develop a plan that is likely to meet opposition from someone, somewhere. I too work in the public sector and can appreciate the difficult decisions, and rationale that goes into an endeavor such as this. You have my full respect for the decisions you make and the reasons for doing so.

Today, I am writing on behalf of Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) to formally express our opposition to any proposed amendments that would change the zoning designation of any MCPS district property from what was specified in the original rezoning proposals now and into the future. Specifically, I would like to call out the PEAS Farm Property that is owned by MCPS. In addition, I would also like to advocate that our property on Rimel Road be changed from OP-2 to LU-R1.

As you may or may not be aware, MCPS has been engaged in a facility and property study during the same time as the City's growth policy updates, code reform and zoning changes. A committee made up of school board trustees, administrators and community members have been meeting for three years. We have had publicly held meetings, listening sessions, property tours, community engagement surveys and other notable opportunities for public engagement such as inviting the City and County to discuss potential symbiotic and mutually beneficial opportunities. The MCPS Board of Trustees is charged with contemplating a path forward that recognizes the value of our properties and its future uses, demonstrating good stewardship of

our taxpayer dollars and resources, and being good community partners with the public who benefit from our holdings.

It is my understanding that a council member is planning to bring an amendment to Wednesday's committee meetings to rezone the Duncan Drive property (PEAS Farm) from R-R1 to OP-1 which would effectively be “downzoning” our property. While we recognize the community value of the PEAS Farm and appreciate the partnership created through the long-term lease agreement, we have significant concerns about this proposed change.

First, and most troublingly, MCPS was not contacted or consulted regarding this proposed amendment to our property's zoning designation. As the property owner, MCPS should have been notified and included in discussions about potential changes that would directly affect our land, its future use and future value to the District. This lack of communication raises serious concerns about the transparency of this process and how a City councilor’s lack of engagement with property owners when seemingly trying to impose a zoning change of this magnitude would look to the broader community.

Second, I would like to note that during the rezoning process, MCPS requested that our Rimel Road property which is slated to be zoned OP-2 be zoned LU-R1. All the land surrounding our property on Rimel Road was zoned LU-R1 but our request was denied citing lack of infrastructure. I’m not sure the infrastructure exists on the adjacent properties, but I don’t think the private property owners would just sit back and say that it is okay to zone their property as open space. It would be inconsistent at best to deny our request for zoning alignment while approving the change to the zoning of another MCPS property without our input or consent. If consistency in zoning methodology is a stated objective, it should apply equitably across all properties, including in favor of the property owner's stated preferences and regardless of whether that property is currently under a lease agreement or not.

While the PEAS Farm and the park space operates under a 40-year lease with the City of Missoula, for \$1 a year, we don’t see that as a reason to “downzone” our properties to increase the value of neighboring properties and decrease the value of our property and limit future use. It is no secret that properties zoned “open land” or “agricultural,” when appraised, have a significantly lower value than property appraised as residential or commercial. Zoning decisions have long-term implications that extend beyond current use agreements. Any zoning changes should be made with the property owner's knowledge, input, and I would argue, consent, particularly when it may affect the district's ability to utilize the property in the future. Rhetorically, I'm curious why it's assumed that because MCPS is a government entity under Montana Law, that our properties should suddenly be zoned or zoning changed to open space? Are there similar amendments or proposals to do this with County owned land, City

owned land? Why are our properties the one's being singled out?

On behalf of MCPS I respectfully request that the City Council decline to adopt *any* amendment changing the zoning designation of the PEAS Farm; maintain the Rural Residential zoning as proposed in the original staff recommendations; commit to consulting with MCPS as the property owner before considering any future zoning changes affecting school district property; apply zoning methodology consistently across all properties, including MCPS properties; and reconsider our request to zone our Rimel Road property LU-R1 to be commensurate with surrounding properties.

We appreciate the City Council's consideration of our concerns and remain committed to working collaboratively with the City of Missoula on matters of mutual interest.

Sincerely,

Micah Hill  
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