

CHAPTER 13: FUTURE GROWTH POLICY REVIEW, EVALUATION, AND UPDATES

INTRODUCTION

Growth Policies identify a community’s long-range vision through goals, objectives, and policies along with options for short-range and long-range implementation. Montana law (MCA 76-1-601) outlines the requirements for Growth Policies, requiring. *(f) an implementation strategy that includes:*

- (i) a timetable for implementing the growth policy;*
- (ii) a list of conditions that will lead to a revision of the growth policy; and*
- (iii) a timetable for reviewing the growth policy at least once every 5 years and revising the policy if necessary;...*

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

This chapter is provides information for an implementation strategy that contains a timetable for implementing the growth policy; a list of conditions that will lead to a revision of the growth policy; and a timetable for reviewing the growth policy at least once every five years and revising the policy if necessary.

The Growth Policy should be a living document that is revised as issues, challenges, and resources change. Implementing a Growth Policy allows the community to shape its future and proactively work to achieve its goals and objectives instead of just responding and moving from one short-range, quick-fix solution to another as events occur. Implementing the Growth Policy should be a constant process of exploring alternatives to attain goals and objectives as simply, efficiently and economically as possible.

EXISTING PLANS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REGULATIONS

Existing plans and studies addressing a wide range of infrastructure and services were reviewed for the development of this Growth Policy. New information will become available as these plans and studies are updated in the future and can then be included in future amendments.

The City of Helena Subdivision Regulations were most recently revised in 2006. The City's Zoning Ordinance was most recently updated in 2010. The Growth Policy is implemented through a number of mechanisms. Within the next five years the City will review and amend as necessary the subdivision regulations and zoning ordinance to incorporate applicable goals and objectives identified in the Growth Policy. The Growth Policy will be implemented continually as the guiding document when approving ordinances, regulations, public improvements, plans, standards, and budgets; and when participating in and collaborating with other jurisdictions, boards, organizations, or citizens groups.

The City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County are currently analyzing a variety of impact fees that may be appropriate to implement in the future.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR UPDATING THE GROWTH POLICY

This Growth Policy utilized 2000 census data and will be revisited after the 2010 census when newer data become available. Neighborhood plans that incorporate this additional information and encourage public participation should be developed in order to further identify community needs and priorities. Montana law requires growth policies to be reviewed, at a minimum, every five years to determine if changes that warrant attention have occurred in the community. Implementing the Growth Policy is an ongoing process that will continue to evaluate the City's various regulatory and budgetary tools.

Although the Growth Policy is intended to be flexible to allow response to changing conditions, other factors might lead to revising the Growth Policy:

1. Changes in state or federal law, or legal decisions;
2. New technologies that allow improved evaluation of impacts to Helena and/or the surrounding area which may require different infrastructure improvements;
3. Significant changes in demographics, the economy, land use or environment that may affect the climate and energy supplies in the City or in adjacent jurisdictions.
4. Adoption of a neighborhood plan.

All amendments to the Helena Growth Policy will be consistent with applicable Montana statutes. Amendments to the Growth Policy should include the following elements:

1. A statement of any proposed changes and rationale for the changes;
2. Any necessary implementation mechanisms and alternatives; and
3. A public participation process.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal:

Review and update the Growth Policy in a timely manner and as needed.

Objectives:

1. Amendments to the City of Helena Growth Policy will be considered as needed and, at a minimum, will be considered once every five years. These amendments will also consider their relationship to the long-term plan for the community. Therefore, the frequency of amendments will not be subject to a specific timeframe.
2. Any necessary changes to development regulations, modifications to capital improvements programs, and proposed neighborhood plans required for implementation should accompany the proposed amendments to the Growth Policy so that regulations will be consistent with the Policy.
3. As neighborhood plans are proposed for inclusion in the Growth Policy, give priority to the mixed use areas displayed on the Future Land Use map.