Public Facilities & Services

5

Introduction

Public facilities and services are important to Helena's quality of life and this growth policy provides a guide to their ongoing management, ensuring coordination with larger community objectives. Helena maintains facility and strategic plans for all of its public services, evaluating demand, needs, best management practices, and required investments. The Helena Public Facilities map (Figure 5.06) shows the location of key public facilities and services.

This chapter provides background information, identifies issues and presents goals and objectives for a wide range of services, including Helena's:

- Wastewater collection and treatment;
- Water treatment and distribution;
- Storm drainage;
- Solid waste disposal and recycling;
- Fire and police protection,
- Parks and recreational services.

These services and facilities are important components of the City's ability to ensure the health, safety, and general welfare of its residents as they live, work, recreate and travel.

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As the City's population and geographic area continue to grow, Helena must maintain or upgrade existing facilities and services, while also investing in new ones. This growth policy will help the City manage changes in demand and equitably distribute costs to fund system expansion and modification.

The City's general policy is that costs of development should be shared where feasible – assigning appropriate levels of cost between developers and the public, considering respective costs and benefits (long- and short-term). The City also employs development standards to implement community goals, fostering cost-efficient infrastructure constructed to urban standards and utilizing an array of financing mechanisms. Options to finance improvements include, but may not be limited to, property taxes, special fees and assessments, tax increment financing (TIF) districts, special improvement districts (SIDs), and grants.

Publicly-funded improvements may be targeted for certain areas, with efforts considering public and private partnerships considered. Such examples include the Nob Hill water tank and the Custer/I-15 interchange. All funding options from public and private sources should be considered and pursued if warranted – and may ideally be used as incentives to direct growth and to achieve specific objectives of this Growth Policy.

Public Works

The Public Works Department is responsible for the overall supervision, control, budgeting, and coordination of an integrated system that includes the following divisions:

- Engineering;
- Solid waste;
- Fleet Services;
- Water/Wastewater Treatment;
- Utility Maintenance.

The Public Works Department and Transportation Systems also develop and implement water, wastewater, stormwater, and transportation facilities master plans to ensure that short- and long-term public infrastructure needs are being addressed as the community expands and grows, establishing standards for the construction and maintenance of the City's infrastructure.

The Public Works department operates the wastewater/stormwater collection system, water distribution system and solid waste collection system through "Enterprise Funds." Such funds extend the cost (expenses, including depreciation) of providing services to the general public on a continuing basis, financed or recovered primarily through user charges.

As of August 2019, Helena's Transportation Systems division became its own department, leading streets, shop and fleet services, transit, parking and ROW code enforcement activities.

Water System

Helena's municipal water system is managed by the Water Treatment Division and the Utility Maintenance Division. The Water Treatment Division is responsible for acquiring and treating water provided for domestic use, fire suppression, and irrigation uses. The Utility Maintenance Division maintains and upgrades the water distribution system to meet the demands for City water customers. The Utility Maintenance Division locates and turns water on and off at property owners' curb boxes and makes taps for new and replacement services. In addition, the Utility Maintenance Division oversees the City leak detection; main flushing, repair and replacement programs; fire hydrant flow testing and repairs; installation of water meters for new construction, and repairs of existing water meters. The Utility Maintenance Division conducts all water sampling and submission for testing to be sure that water meets all Environmental Protection Agency and Montana Department of Environmental Quality standards for health and safety. The Water Treatment Division also encourages water conservation through educational pamphlets mailed with the water bills.

Draw & Capacity

Helena's municipal water system draws from Canyon Ferry Reservoir (on the Missouri River), Ten Mile Creek, Chessman Reservoir, and Scott Reservoir. The City has a 40-year contract with the Bureau of Reclamation for 11,300 acre-feet of water per year from the Canyon Ferry Reservoir for the City's use. Currently, Helena uses approximately 3,000 acre-feet of water per year from this source. Water from the Canyon Ferry Reservoir is fed into the Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir, then through an underground pipe to the Missouri River Treatment Plant located northeast of Helena. This water is fed into the system, and the excess is stored in Malben and Woolston reservoirs.

Helena owns the first and second water rights on Ten Mile Creek, west of town. The first water right is for 325 miners' inches of water per day, and the second is for 225 miners' inches, or approximately 8.9 million gallons of water per day. Ten Mile Creek, with headwaters located west of town above Rimini, is joined by several feeder creeks below Rimini. The City of Helena has head-gates on these creeks to divert the water into a concrete pipeline that connects directly to the Ten Mile Water Plant. If the creek does not supply enough, water can be added from Chessman or Scott reservoirs located southwest of town. The water supplied from these reservoirs is not counted against the City's water rights.

When the Missouri River plant is operating, the Missouri water serves the east side of town, and the Ten Mile water serves the west side of town.

During the winter, the Missouri plant is shut down, and all of the water is provided from the Ten Mile water system.

According to the 2019 Consumer Confidence Report, the current maximum demand is approximately 15.2 million gallons per day (mgd). Based upon the report, the projected average demand for water will be approximately 15 mgd in 2025. The City currently treats enough water to meet present demand and has reserved enough capacity to meet the demand of future growth.

As Helena develops, the municipal water system must continue to provide adequate water capacity through reservoirs and water storage tanks and pipelines to satisfy the City's demand for water and meet fire protection standards. The Water Distribution & Facility Plan identifies a variety of improvements for treatment, distribution and transmission, and includes a map showing the location and sizing of future major distribution system components.

The City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County are developing an Urban Standards Boundary (USB) to guide the extension of services as the City of Helena annexes property. The establishment of the USB will enable the Public Works Department to anticipate and design new facilities and pipeline extensions for the newly annexed lands in response to requests by developers for service.

Storage

The City utilizes nine water storage reservoirs within the water distribution system: Nob Hill, two Woolston Reservoirs, Malben Reservoir, two Winne Reservoirs, Hale Reservoir, Upper Hale Reservoir, and West Side Reservoir. These reservoirs provide operational storage to meet peak-hour water demands; emergency storage to satisfy short-term, emergency supply; and storage for fire protection as required by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) and the City of Helena.

Reservoir and storage tank improvements are paid for through the City of Helena CCIP and grants, with enterprise funds providing the major source of funding for system improvements. Water main extensions are initially financed and constructed by developers, based on the overall requirements of the water utility, and are then turned over to the City.

Wastewater System

The Wastewater Treatment Facility consists of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Industrial Pretreatment Program. The facility's main objective is to protect the health of the Helena community by providing primary and secondary wastewater treatment.

The Wastewater Treatment Facility serves customers primarily within the City of Helena, with those seeking service but living outside City limits required to seek annexation or waive the right to protest future annexation. Despite this, many wastewater customers are located outside

Figure 5.01 – *Helena's Wastewater Treatment Facility. (Image: SCJ Alliance, Inc.)*

the City, especially in areas west of Helena. Many of these were connected to services during the 1970s and 1980s without formal annexation-related agreements. In 2018, much of this area was annexed into the City, providing all landowners the option of service connections.

Treatment Plant

The Wastewater Treatment Facility, which became operational in 2001, was constructed to increase the size and efficiency of the secondary treatment process. The facility's average daily flow is about 3.2 million gallons per day, in which solids and other pollutants are removed in accordance with regulations and the City's permit. The facility emphasizes ongoing preventative maintenance to achieve minimum operation and maintenance costs. The facility also utilizes by-product methane gas to meet some of its heating needs.

Effluent water is disinfected with ultra-violet (UV) light and reused in the treatment plant for all irrigation and process water. Remaining effluent discharges into Prickly Pear Creek, which flows into Lake Helena and then to the Missouri River.

The utility's conveyance system consists of a series of gravity sewer mains, sewer access structures, lift stations, and force mains. Annual repairs and maintenance keep the facilities in proper working order. Major expansions and capital improvements are guided by the 2008 Wastewater Collection System Plan. Typically, City rate-payers cover costs of routine maintenance and larger projects.

The Wastewater Treatment Plant also accepts hauled waste, including waste from maintenance of septic systems located outside Helena. Based on plant utilization between 2004 and 2009, this program treats approximately 1.5 million septic gallons a year which is more concentrated than city wastewater. These septic gallons are much more concentrated than city wastewater flows; thus, the impact on plant operation is a

magnitude greater than the same volume of city wastewater. This City facility not only reduces the environmental impact of city waste but also reduces the impact from County residents who use this treatment option for their septic systems.

Industrial Pretreatment

The Industrial Pretreatment Program was developed in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements and protects the environment and the community from adverse effects of industrial waste discharges; reduces heavy metal loading in effluent discharge and bio-solids; and protects the biological process at the Wastewater Treatment Facility and the collection system. The Industrial Pretreatment Program also guides the Wastewater Treatment Facility's acceptance of hauled waste.

The Wastewater Treatment Facility discharges treated water into Prickly Pear Creek. The facility is regulated and must meet current water quality standards. This facility, as well as other sources, has been identified as increasing total nitrogen and phosphorus loading in the Lake Helena sub-watershed. Reducing the output of phosphates would improve water quality in this watershed. One mechanism would be to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering the facility by reducing the use of phosphorus–containing household cleaning products. State regulations, authorize banning the sale of these products in counties where one or more surface water bodies exceed the numerical algal biomass or total phosphorus standards.[1] If phosphorus content or algal biomass in surface waters exceeds the standards, the County may be subject to this ban, which could significantly reduce the amount of phosphorus discharge from the treatment plant.

The City of Helena Public Works Department regularly reviews the 2008 Wastewater Collection System Plan and the 1998 Helena Area Wastewater Treatment Facility Plan (HAWT) to develop a Capital Improvement Program that meets the area's needs. Except for 12 gravity sewer main sections, the plan indicates the system is adequate to convey average- and maximum-day flow conditions. The plan also identifies no capacity issues for present and near-term flows, but projects flows to be at or above 75% capacity by 2025.

The wastewater treatment system may be extended by the City as it grows and develops along its boundaries. The system may also be extended to provide service to individual properties with failing septic systems on a case-by-case basis, including consideration for out-of-city subdivisions with failing septic or community treatment systems. One option to aid expansion of DEQ-compliant infrastructure would be to cooperatively plan for a regional wastewater treatment system, designed to City standards. Consideration of such long-term approaches to wastewater treatment is reviewed on a regular basis in departmental planning and is supported in this plan's objectives and actions framework.

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1 *Phosphorus Ban Act, MCA 75-7-4*

Community Wastewater Treatment

Some developments outside the City use community wastewater treatment facilities that serve an entire subdivision. These treatment facilities often use lagoons in the process of treating their waste. Over time, these lagoons can break down and leak contaminants into ground and surface waters.

Such failures result in contaminants being leaked into the ground, resulting in both ground and surface water degradation. They must be upgraded or replaced, or another system must be incorporated – such as connection to the City's treatment facility. The construction of regional lift stations could expand municipal wastewater treatment to areas where lagoons are failing or in danger of failing. One option, described in this plan's actions framework, encourages the provision of infrastructure planned for and developed cooperatively, creating a regional wastewater treatment system to serve a greater geographical area.

The City must be vigilant in guarding against all threats to the City's water system. Invasive aquatic species such as some varieties of mussels have invaded other municipal systems in the United States. Once established, invasive mussels can clog water intake and delivery pipes, restricting flows and requiring costly maintenance. Supporting guidelines to stem the spread of these species into Montana waterways could help protect the City's system from these invasive species.

Stormwater System

Development creates impervious surfaces, may change natural drainage patterns, and tends to affect existing vegetation. These factors can affect where precipitation drains, how fast it flows, and its contamination content when it enters local waterways. Helena's municipal stormwater system is overseen by the Utility Maintenance and Engineering Divisions. The stormwater system collects, transports, and discharges water and sediments generated by rain, snowmelt, or similar situations in certain portions of the City.

Stormwater management facilities are essential to protect people and property from the harmful effects of sediments, as well as floods that can erode land, damage buildings, and wash out streets and utilities. Stormwater drainage facilities include natural or man-made structures to collect, convey, hold, divert, and discharge water, including storm sewers and detention/retention basins. These facilities convey excess runoff from individual properties, buildings, and streets to an acceptable point of discharge. In some cases, runoff is routed through a detention basin to slow the rate at which it is released downstream, or runoff may be retained in a pond or basin.

Helena's stormwater conveyance system consists of streets, inlets, pipes, open-channel drainage ways, and intermediate storage and treatment basins. The City is divided into six drainage basins:

- West Side;
- Last Chance;
- Davis;
- Bull Run;
- Far East DB;
- Airport.

A City crew cleans all of the stormwater inlets yearly and performs hydraulic cleaning (jetting) of the pipes. In addition, approximately 25,000 feet (4.7 miles) is inspected annually with a television camera to inventory and determine pipe condition. In June 2006, Helena was granted authorization to discharge storm water from its municipal storm water system into the Ten Mile and Prickly Pear Creek watersheds.

As the City expands and develops, recommendations from the (2018) Stormwater Master Plan will be implemented, primarily through the City's Comprehensive Capital Improvements Program (CCIP). The Stormwater Master Plan also:

- Provides for mitigation from development impacts, which may include a variety of open spaces that provide for community character;
- Supports preservation of wetlands, associated habitat and wildlife species by reducing water pollution;
- May be used to support Helena's urban forest and other landscaping that facilitate stormwater management.

Projects for the CCIP receive supplemental funds from a Storm Drain Utility established to raise revenue through property assessments. In addition, the City's 2010 Stormwater Ordinance provides guidance and outlines restrictions for managing runoff quantity and quality of existing systems and from new development. The ordinance regulates land-disturbing activities that create soil erosion, sediment, and runoff during construction activities, and is designed to comply with requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) permit process.

Solid Waste Management

The Solid Waste Division manages the collection of household refuse for the City of Helena, and maintains and operates a transfer station for residents to dispose of bulk waste, recyclable commodities and yard waste. The Solid Waste Division is also responsible for management of the Lewis and Clark County Landfill, the Marysville Container Site, the closed Scratch Gravel Landfill, and represents the Department of Health on the Lincoln and Augusta Solid Waste Boards. The division's goal is to maintain efficient, convenient, and cost-effective solid waste service.

The Solid Waste Division provides curbside collection of trash for residential users and commercial businesses. The division's management techniques include landfilling, recycling, and composting of waste materials. The Solid Waste Transfer Station takes in an average of 45,000 tons of refuse per year, with users charged a fee based on the amount and type of material being disposed. City residents receive a transfer station permit that allows each residential property owner to drop off a maximum of 1.5 tons of trash per year.

The division's "Tramp Truck" service collects typical household rubbish that does not fit into a household dumpster, such as bagged grass, leaves, branches, furniture, etc. Other materials such as tires, batteries, oil, paint, large appliances, hazardous waste, and construction debris from home renovations cannot be picked up by the Tramp Truck. The service is provided to residential customers only and is funded by Solid Waste property tax assessments.

In addition to the services listed above, the City also cooperates with volunteer recycling programs, including the annual "Pines for Perch" program, and other events.

It is important for the City to continue to provide efficient and effective solid waste collection and disposal services, along with opportunities for recycling and composting, which will minimize the amount of waste being landfilled.

Public Works Issues

The following listing of public works issues was developed as a result of input by City staff and from comments received at public outreach events during the Growth Policy update process. Future actions as may be required are reflected and supported in the objectives framework:

- Plan input indicated a need to explore options that support infill development on vacant and under-utilized land served by, or in close proximity to City infrastructure and compatible with surrounding neighborhoods;
- Input indicated the need to explore ways to apply public-works development requirements equally to public agencies and private entities.

Fire & Emergency Services

The City of Helena Fire Department is responsible for services primarily within the City, but also works with several other local fire districts to respond to emergencies outside Helena.

Thirty-six firefighters, a Fire Chief and two Assistant Chiefs along with one administrative staff member provide fire protection and emergency

medical services, supported by two stations and special equipment and apparatus. All firefighting personnel are trained at the Emergency Medical Technician Basic (EMT-B) level.

The City of Helena Fire Department provides trained and equipped personnel to prevent and respond to fires, accidents, chemical releases, natural disasters, medical emergencies, etc. The Department's activities are divided among five functions, with the focus on preventing fires through educational and code enforcement programs as well as responding to fires and emergencies when necessary. The five functions are:

- Emergency Medical Services (EMS);
- Fire Prevention;
- Fire Suppression;
- Training and Safety;
- Hazardous Materials.

Emergency Medical Services

The Helena Fire Department provides emergency medical care to the citizens of Helena. Consistent with trends throughout the United States, medically related emergencies are approximately 70% of the annual responses. The City of Helena Fire Department is licensed by the State of Montana at the Advanced Life Support "Non-transporting Paramedic" level.

The Helena Fire Department operates in a tiered response system with St. Peter's Hospital Paramedic Ambulance service. When an individual has a medical emergency, both agencies are dispatched through the 911 system at the same time.

Fire Prevention

The Fire Prevention Bureau is currently staffed by two members that perform a wide variety of duties, focused on fire safety as implemented through education application of fire codes.

Regarding education, key activities include:

- *Fire Prevention Week – featuring presentations, follow-up visits, open house events and newsletters to elementary schools;*
- *Hotel/Motel Safety Classes – Instructing employees and management fire prevention and necessary actions, safety inspections and practices, and evacuation planning;*
- *Food Service Safety Classes – Providing instruction to food-service workers, typically those employed by large kitchens or caterers;*

- *Fire Extinguisher Classes – Instruction regarding fire type identification, combatting techniques, fire and life-safety techniques and practices.*

Regarding code enforcement, the Fire Department currently enforces the 2012 Edition of the International Fire Code, with fire-related ordinances in Title 3, Chapter 9, of the Helena City Code. Codes are applied during construction plan reviews and inspections of existing buildings.

The bureau also investigates the origin, cause, and circumstances of many fires. Working with the Police Department, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), the County Attorney's Office, the State Fire Marshal and other criminal justice agencies in case of arson.

As the City of Helena continues to expand its boundaries, additional staffing, stations, and services will be necessary to serve new neighborhoods.

Figure 5.02 – *In addition to covering all of Helena, the City's Fire Department coordinates to aid emergency services in adjacent areas. (Image: SCJ Alliance, Inc.)*

Fire Suppression

The primary role of Helena's fire department is to respond to 911 calls for service, including fire, EMS, HAZMAT[2] and many other various types of emergencies. This is carried out by the members of the Fire Suppression Division, which uses three pumpers, one aerial vehicle, two EMS rescue vehicles, one technical rescue, two wildland Type-6 engines and five "Command Administrative" vehicles. Equipment and two stations are strategically located within the City. The main station is on the east side of the Civic Center; the second station is located on the east side of Helena.

Not all fires occur in structures within the City. The vast Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) has great potential to be threatened by wildfire. The

2 *Hazmat is an abbreviation for "hazardous materials" — substances in quantities or forms that may pose a reasonable risk to health, property, or the environment. HAZMATs include such substances as toxic chemicals, fuels, nuclear waste products, and biological, chemical, and radiological agents.*

City of Helena Fire Department is equipped with specialized personal protective equipment, wildland fire-fighting vehicles, and tools that are appropriate for fighting wildland fires.

One way of evaluating fire protection services is a "Fire Suppression Rating" assigned by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), a national organization formed by insurance companies that provides independent evaluations of cities across the nation. ISO ratings range from a high of 1 to a low of 10. Property owners in cities with high ratings benefit from lower fire insurance costs. One department goal is to achieve the highest possible rating for the citizens of Helena. In 2008, the Fire Department initiated an ISO rating re-evaluation process, resulting in a City ISO rating of 4. This rating remained unchanged following a 2010 review, but a 2017 process saw the City's ISO rating improve to 3.

Training & Safety

Helena's Fire Department includes a Training Division, charged with providing, preparing, and furnishing all members with adequate equipment, knowledge, and individual proficiency, enabling members to function safely and skillfully at every incident encountered.

Hazardous Materials

Many facilities in Helena use and produce hazardous materials. In addition, airplanes, interstate traffic, and the railroad transport hazardous materials through the Helena area.

The Helena Fire Department has the primary responsibility to respond to hazardous materials incidents in the City and the greater Helena area. The Fire Department established a Hazardous Materials Response Team with all members trained to the "Technician" level to respond to hazardous materials incidents and participate as an integral part of the State of Montana's hazardous materials response efforts.[3] Through agreements, the City of Helena Hazardous Materials Response Team became one of six state-funded "regional" teams that provide hazardous materials emergency response to all counties in Montana. The six regional teams have identical Hazardous Materials Response Trailers, equipment, and similar training. The regional teams hold regular meetings and conduct joint exercises.

Fire & Emergency Services Issues

The following topical issues were identified in the 2006 Lewis and Clark County and City of Helena Fire Protection Service Review Study, and reflect subsequent review by City staff and comments received at public outreach events during the Growth Policy update process. Future actions as may be required are reflected and supported in the objectives framework:

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3 "Technician" level meets or exceeds training requirements prescribed by US Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

- Because the Helena Fire Department is a general fund entity, the 2006 study recommended alternate funding sources be explored, such as developing a fire service area. A levy increase of $900,000 was approved by public vote in June of 2018, providing funds for six new firefighters and to help fund capital equipment needs.
- The 2006 study also identified the need for a third fire station and development of a new training site for fire and emergency response personnel. To date, these needs still exist and would greatly improve response times and training opportunities.
- Since Helena is also Montana's state capitol, there is a larger-than-normal percentage of value and workload associated with publicly-owned buildings such as the capitol complex, federal buildings and City and County-owned structures. Though none of these entities pay into Helena's general fund, the Fire Department works cooperatively with other departments located in Lewis and Clark County, maintaining excellent working relationships through mutual aid agreements.

To meet ongoing fire and emergency needs, the Helena Fire Department will continue to review and improve facility and staffing levels, updating disaster, mitigation, emergency, and recovery plans as needed.

Law Enforcement

The Helena Police Department provides timely, efficient crime prevention and maintenance of peace and order. The Helena Police Department's main station is located at the Law and Justice Center, in the downtown central business district. The Department also has a sub-station located in the Helena Regional Airport Terminal. As the City grows in population, geographical area, and in housing and businesses, a proportionate increase in crime, accidents, and calls for service can be expected to increase the demands on the Helena Police Department.

The Police Department provides 24-hour law enforcement to protect lives and property for a diverse population of residents, visitors, and businesses. It also promotes community-oriented prevention/education programs that stress interaction between the Department and the community for preventing and solving crimes and works closely with the Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Office. The Police Department's activities are divided among four functions, with the focus on upholding the laws and ordinances that keep citizens safe and preventing crime through education and law enforcement programs, as well as responding to emergencies when necessary. The four functions are: Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Support Services, and Animal Control.

Patrol

The Patrol Division is staffed with 27 patrol officers. Patrol officers work a nine-hour shift with the first hour consisting of a briefing and in-house training. There are also 11 officers assigned to special projects including, Traffic Enforcement, School Resource Officers, Bike officers, and Focused Enforcement. The Helena Police Department provides patrol officers with all the required equipment for duty including firearm, taser, OC canister, expandable baton, duty belt, uniforms, and footwear.

The Patrol Division is organized as the primary-call response unit of the department. The patrol officers are the most visible and recognized employees of the Department and are largely responsible for cultivating the positive image of the Department. Patrol officers are expected to respond in a timely manner to dispatched calls for service and to be aware of and aggressively pursue traffic and criminal offenses as they are discovered during the course of normal patrol. Patrol officers complete the initial investigations of most criminal and traffic cases and solve policing problems within the community.

Criminal Investigations

The Criminal Investigations Division is composed of nine Detectives, an Evidence Technician and a part-time evidence clerk. The Criminal Investigations Division's responsibilities include the in-depth investigation of financial, property, person crimes, domestic violence, vice narcotics, and special investigations.

The division has a representative who is the police department's coordinator to the Helena Area Crime Stoppers Board and Helena's Most Wanted program. The division also monitors pawnshops and property being pawned.

The Criminal Investigations Division serves as liaison with the County Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Montana Department of Justice, and other outside agencies. It also provides specialized training to the department and training and education programs to the general public, the private sector, and especially children, about safety and crime prevention, Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC), Drug Task Force, and other special projects.

Support Services

The Support Services Division includes the 911 dispatchers and the law enforcement records section. The Support Services Division is a joint operation between the City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County. The Helena Police Department is contracted to provide this service.

911 Dispatch – An up-to-date communications system is vital to public safety and welfare. The City of Helena/Lewis and Clark County Consolidated 911 Center answers all calls for emergency assistance. The call center is located in the Rocky Mountain Emergency Services Training

Center at the Helena Regional Airport and is managed by the Helena Police Department. Also vital to public safety is the Detention Center that is located in the Law Enforcement Center and managed by the Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Office. The City uses the detention facility for adults.

Dispatchers for the Helena Police Department receive basic communications training, Power Phone, Emergency Medical Dispatch, Law Enforcement techniques, and Fire Dispatch training from the Montana Law Enforcement Academy.

Dispatchers monitor all law enforcement, fire department, and emergency services radio traffic. They are responsible for routing and dispatching all incident and emergency calls that are received by the 911 dispatch center.

Records – The Records Division is the central repository for all law enforcement reports and records generated by the Helena Police Department and Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Department. This division provides alarm permits, disseminates reports and local arrest record checks, registers sex and violent offenders, and collects fees for services and copies.

The Records Division also maintains the arrest records for the Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Department. These records are considered confidential. Individuals can get their personal record for arrests in Helena and Lewis and Clark County for a fee after providing a signed authorization.

Animal Control

Helena's animal control officer is an employee of the Helena Police Department. The animal control officer handles animal calls within the City limits and promotes community-oriented education programs that stress responsible pet ownership.

The animal control officer enforces all City ordinances and laws for all animals located in Helena and handles all animal related complaints such as dogs-at-large, barking dogs, vicious animals, animal bites, and missing animals. All animals impounded by the animal control officer are transported to the Lewis and Clark Humane Society.

Law Enforcement Issues

The following listing of law enforcement issues were developed as a result of input by City staff and from comments received at public outreach events during the Growth Policy update process. Future actions as may be required are reflected and supported in the objectives framework:

- Public input identified a desire for improved enforcement of speed limits and other traffic laws, especially in neighborhoods near schools. In addition, safety of walking routes and street crossings were mentioned as well as the need to have street design standards that facilitate traffic safety and accessibility;

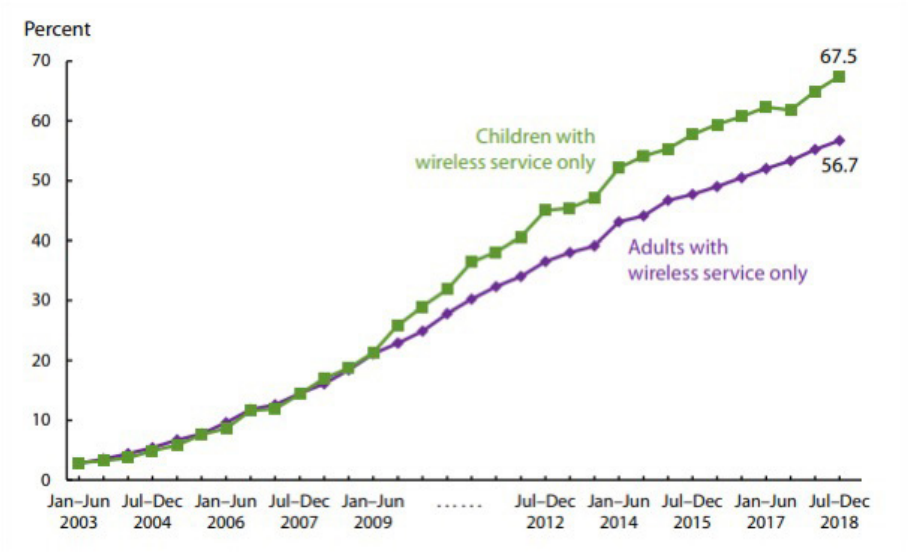

Figure 5.03 – *Percentage of Adults & Children with Wireless Only or No Telephone Service; US, 2003-2018. (NOTE: Adults are aged 18 and over; children are under age 18. Source: NCHS, National Health Interview Survey)*

- Public input suggested that landscape standards be reviewed to create more "defensible space" and accommodate crime prevention measures;
- Concerns regarding drug-related crimes were voiced, with perceptions that these are on the rise in Helena;
- Input identified the need to maintain law enforcement levels of service on-pace with future growth and coverage area.

Helena's police department is the first agency to be contacted in the City to handle complaints ranging from wildlife encounters to transient issues. As with the fire department, these issues are linked to the need to maintain adequate staffing and equipment to meet the current and future workloads, driven by new residential and commercial development, annexations and general population growth.

Other Facilities & Services

Anticipating and preparing for the needs and safety of Helena's citizens is essential to maintaining a high quality of life within the community. However, non-City community facilities are important to as well. The following section describes facilities and services that provide residents and businesses with power, heat, schools, health care, library and aviation services.

Private Utility Providers

Many services within the City are supplied by private utilities, including electric power, natural gas, cable television, phone services, and wireless communications. The City works closely with all providers to ensure that citizens' needs are adequately addressed. Areas requiring close coordination include easement acquisition and placement, converting overhead utilities to below ground, installation and maintenance of utilities within City rights-of-way, and siting of new facilities (such as cellular towers).

Electrical Power

Electrical power is supplied in the Helena area by Northwestern Energy. Although there are hydroelectric dams in the Helena area, power comes from a portfolio of resources across Montana and the Pacific Northwest. Because NorthWestern purchases a significant portion of its resources at market prices, the utility is interested in stabilizing and lowering future costs by acquiring its own generating resources and by encouraging demand reduction through energy efficiency.

Telephone Service

Telephone services in the area are provided by a number of entities. Century Link (Formerly Qwest) has historically been the principal provider and maintains a network of lines (principally underground). The system has accommodated population growth in the late 1990s and early 2000s. However, since deregulation of the industry and advancements in fiber optic and cellular communications technology, other communications providers are also servicing the area.

No information is currently available for the percentage of households in the Helena area that are cell-phone only households. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducts surveys to track the number of American homes with only wireless telephones (also known as cellular telephones, cell phones, or mobile phones). The CDC surveys indicate approximately 67.5% of American homes have wireless-only telephone service as of December 2018, a percentage that has been increasing steadily since 2003. In addition, the CDC surveys indicate the percentage of children living in wireless-only households is also growing, see Figure 5.03.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is distributed in the Helena area by Northwestern Energy, derived primarily from Canada in a pipeline along the Rocky Mountain Front. The pipeline splits northwest of Helena, with one branch heading towards Missoula and other to Helena and eastward. The Yellowstone Pipeline has one main pipeline in the Helena area which flows east to west carrying finished petroleum products. It has a branch line that flows north to Great Falls from the Helena terminal.

For reasons both economic and strategic, the City should continue to devise ways to conserve energy resources and explore alternative resources and/or relationships to help residents and businesses deal with energy costs. In 2008, the City established a climate change task force, which among other actions, recommended policies and strategies to conserve energy. This task force is now known as the Helena Conservation Board.

Education

Educational facilities in Helena include the public school system; a private four-year liberal arts college; a two-year college of technology that is part of the University of Montana system, plus several private schools. The City continues to work in a cooperative partnership with all educational providers to address issues related to economic vitality, City financial resources and shared recreational resources. Cooperative efforts presently include Safe Routes to School, the Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP), recreational facilities, and subdivision review. Quality schools are very important indicators of good places to live and work, and are often cited as a reason people choose to live in Helena.

Future school enrollment will affect the City of Helena, especially in regard to land use and transportation. Similarly, decisions the City makes will have impacts on the school district. This Growth Policy, including specific goals and objectives, recognize the importance of the City and School District to work closely together and keep each other informed of future plans.

Primary & Secondary Education

Helena School District is a significant property owner in the City and adjacent areas, and serves the majority of the City of Helena and the Helena Valley. Currently, the District operates:

- *11 elementary schools, each providing kindergarten through fifth grade, serving 3,610 students. The District manages a Montessori program as an option for students, serving up to 192 students in three classrooms;*
- *Two middle schools (grades six through eight) serving 1,790 students;*
- *Two high schools with a combined student population of 2,770 students.*

A 2013 demographic study commissioned by the District[4] projects that:

- *Elementary enrollment will begin a slow decline. Through 2022-23, elementary enrollment is expected to drop by 87 students to 3,477, representing a 2.4% decrease from 2017-18 figures. Despite overall city growth, this trend relates to 1) A "bubble" of population in the*

4 *Helena Public Schools MT Demographic Study, McKibben Demographics, April 2013*

Figure 5.04 – *Carroll College consistently ranks as one of the best colleges in the West. (Image: Carroll College)*

pre-school ages, 2) The reversal of cohort sizes in the elementary grades, and 3) The continued number of in migrating households;

- *Total district enrollment is forecast to increase by 162 students, or 0.9%, from 2017-18 to 2022-23;*
- *Through 2022-23, middle school enrollment is forecast to rise to 1,840, an increase of 157 students or 9.3% from 2013. The difference in the size of the individual grade cohorts and the aging of students through the school system are the primary reasons why middle school enrollment trends deviate from those of the elementary grades. A secondary but important factor is the large number of "move up" homes being built in the district. These homes, selling in excess of $417,000, tend to have children in the late elementary and middle school ages;*
- *Enrollment at the high school level is forecast to grow through 2022-23 at approximately 3.7%, or an increase of 110 students to 3,108. The report notes that the vast majority of this future high school growth will be a result of students aging into those grades. Specifically, students who already live in the district (and not in-migration of students ages 14 to 18) will be the primary cause of the forecasted increase in high school enrollment.*

The projected student population for the year 2025 is estimated at 3,984 students at the 11 elementary schools; 1,963 students at the two middle schools and 3,363 students at the two high schools. The study projects a combined total enrollment for all schools in 2025 of 9,310 students.

As indicated above, the School District operates two high schools in Helena – Helena High School and Capital High School. Helena High currently enrolls around 1,500 students, with 400-500 of them from East Helena. In 2018, voters approved funding to construct a new high school in East Helena. As a result, East Helena Public Schools became a high school

district, and formed an agreement to gradually transition students into the new high school to help the Helena district prepare for reductions while it adjusts to lower enrollment and a smaller tax base. The new East Helena high school is built to accommodate 600 students.

The District also manages the Project for Alternative Learning (PAL) program, an alternative high school that focuses on dropout prevention for grades ten through 12. Students from the two Helena high schools may self-refer to PAL or be referred by parents, teachers, and/or a counselor. About one-third of the students participate in an on-site therapeutic day treatment program.

Carroll College

Carroll College, a private liberal arts college, was founded in 1909 by the Catholic Diocese of Helena as an independent, four-year, private, liberal arts college. The campus is located on 64 acres in town and has a current enrollment of 1,362 students (Fall 2017). Carroll offers 34 majors and numerous minors, and associate and special degree programs that position students for jobs and admission to graduate, law, and medical schools. Carroll College consistently ranks as one of the best colleges in the West.

The University of Montana - Helena College of Technology (UM-Helena)

The University of Montana - Helena College of Technology (UM-Helena) is a two-year institution for higher learning, offering 27 technical proficiency Certificates, Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Arts, and Associate of Science degrees, as well as study toward upper-level and graduate-level programs in cooperation with other Montana University System institutions to approximately 1,500 students per year (Fall 2018).

Formerly the Helena Vocational-Technical Center, UM-Helena was founded in 1939 when the Office of Public Instruction designated five training centers for Montana. This state designation was reaffirmed by the state legislature in 1969 when five vocational training centers were established by statutory law. The Montana Legislature in 1989 authorized the transfer of governance of the state's five Vocational-Technical Centers to the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education. This transfer ended joint governance by the local school districts and the state Office of Public Instruction. In 1994, the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education restructured the Montana University System, which resulted in the Helena Vocational-Technical Center becoming affiliated with the University of Montana. The institution was then renamed the Helena College of Technology of the University of Montana.

Adult Education

As part of the City's recreational programming or through other community organizations, Helena residents enjoy access to a wealth of classes regarding music, theater, dance, general technical education,

literature, martial arts, sports, arts and crafts, specialized business and industry training, professional and personal development, and many other subjects. The following introduces many of these opportunities; the City's Parks & Recreation Plan provides additional detail these and other City-led programs:

- *Visual Arts – Education opportunities for visual arts are available through the Helena School District's adult learning center, the Holter Museum of Art, the Archie Bray Foundation, the Clay Arts Guild, the Creation Arts Center, Exploration Works, and the Lewis and Clark County Library. Instruction for the performing arts is available through various dance companies, music organizations or individual instructors, and via the Grandstreet Theatre's summer program;*
- *History – Historical education is provided by the Montana Historical Society, the Helena/Lewis and Clark County Historic Preservation program, and the Lewis and Clark County Historical Society;*
- *Recreation – The City typically offers sports-specific programs supporting archery, baseball, golf, soccer, softball, swimming, and tennis;*
- *Cultural Education – Among other cultural activities and organizations, the Helena Indian Alliance offers Helena's Native American population services that support and serve the mental, physical, spiritual, and social welfare of that community. The Alliance also organizes an annual Pow Wow to celebrate tribal heritage.*

Helena Regional Airport

The first airport in Helena was located at what is now known as Bill Roberts Golf Course. Due to conflicting uses at that location, the airport was moved east of the City in July of 1928. During the late 1930s and early 1940s, the south terminal was constructed and remodeled several times, and a control tower was added to the structure with one of the early remodels. An outside baggage claim was constructed for the south terminal along with other new facilities during the 1960s and 1970s.

Construction on the present-day terminal was completed in 1978, including an expanded baggage handling area, updated roof system, a new jetway, office space, conference and meeting rooms. In 2006, upgrades were made to the security of the terminal to meet Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Regulations. The airport is currently completing a 20,000 square foot terminal expansion project, providing additional seating for up to 500 passengers along with the ability to serve six aircraft simultaneously through new jet bridges, an improved eating space and two new elevators. The airport served a total of 233,651 travelers in 2018, an increase of 11.5% over 2017 numbers.

The airport is owned and operated by the Helena Regional Airport Authority, established under title 67 of Montana Code to support self-sustaining operations. The Authority receives no local tax dollars, but receives federal (FAA) funds for capital improvement projects. Operational funding is generated through aeronautical and non-aeronautical means, including leasing of land on airport property.

Helena Regional Airport is situated on approximately 1,400 acres, most of which are within Helena city limits. A variety of locations on airport property offer lease potential for aeronautical and non-aeronautical uses, including the following:

- A National Guard Helicopter battalion;
- A Rocky Mountain Emergency Services Fire Training Facility;
- A fire dispatch facility;
- An aerial fire-retardant base;
- A number of federal offices;
- An aircraft component manufacturing operation (Boeing);
- A Costco warehouse retail store;
- Lee Enterprises (mass media);
- Aviation hangers;
- Various facilities supporting commercial and general aviation.

Current passenger service is provided to four major hubs (Seattle, Salt Lake City, Denver and Minneapolis) on Horizon/Alaska Airlines, Skywest/Delta and United Express.

Public Library

The Lewis and Clark County Public Library system consists of the Main Library on South Last Chance Gulch and three branch libraries (East Helena, Augusta, and Lincoln).

The Lewis and Clark County Library (Main Library) is the oldest library in Montana, first established in Helena in 1868. In 1974, voters approved a $1.8 million bond issue to construct a new building, which became a joint City/County library. Today, the Lewis and Clark Library has more than 115,000 volumes, including books, records, magazines, and video and audio materials. Nearly 50,000 people are served through the main library in Helena and the branches in East Helena, Augusta, and Lincoln.

Library use in Lewis and Clark County has steadily increased along with population. As with other services, this Growth Policy supports improvements maintaining current levels of service concurrent with expansion of City boundaries and population growth.

Public Health Department

The City of Helena/Lewis and Clark County Health Department provides many different services to the community. The Department offers health education, collects data and analyzes health issues, and offers services such as water testing and healthcare clinic services. Department staff promptly investigates and follows-up on environmental spills and citizen complaints affecting the environment, and may test drinking water for dangerous levels of contaminants. The Health Department provides information, education, and contacts regarding issues as Chronic Wasting Disease and the West Nile Virus. As with other services, City population growth will create new challenges for the Health Department in meeting critical objectives.

Neighborhood Center

Helena's Neighborhood Center is multi-functional facility serving a number of different populations. The Neighborhood Center is owned by the City, though activities carried out there are administered by the Rocky Mountain Development Council. There are also several community centers in Helena that serve specific populations, such as senior and youth centers that are run by private or nonprofit groups.

Health Care Facilities

Three hospitals serve the City of Helena:

- **St. Peter's Health** – Offering services including a 99-bed acute care hospital, physician clinics, cancer treatment center, a 24-bed behavioral health unit, urgent care clinics, home health and hospice care, dialysis center and ambulance services. St. Peter's provides services to an estimated 97,000 residents from a five-county area (Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, Powell, Meagher and Jefferson counties);
- **Fort Harrison Veterans Administration Hospital** – A 34-bed acute care, medical-surgical facility offering a broad range of acute, chronic, and specialized inpatient and outpatient services for veterans. Care includes internal medicine, gerontology, neurology, dermatology, cardiology, palliative care, pain management, medical oncology, surgery, urology, orthopedics, plastic, ophthalmology, ENT, podiatry, gynecology, chiropractic care, psychiatry and ambulatory care (primary care). Radiology and Pathology services are provided on a full-time basis, and Tele-medicine services are available for psychiatry, radiology, gynecology, primary care, ophthalmology and tele-home health needs;
- **Shodair Children's Hospital** – offering inpatient and residential psychiatric services to children and adolescents. Shodair's campus

has the ability to accommodate up to 20 acute patients and 64 residential patients from ages three to 18. In 2015 it provided services to over 900 Montana children, with nearly 70% coming from low-income families.

These hospitals have undergone significant expansions during recent years. In addition, the City of Helena provides education and health services through the PureView Health Center run by the City/County Health Department. There are also many clinics in Helena, ranging from health maintenance organizations to clinics that provide specialized care and treatments (e.g. dental clinics, eye care clinics, alternative medicine clinics and chiropractic clinics).

Parks & Recreation

The following section summarizes the City's parks and recreation system for Growth Policy development purposes. For additional detail on facilities and project-specific planning, see the 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The plan also guides development of new parks through the City's subdivision process and makes land acquisition recommendations.

The City of Helena Parks, Recreation & Open Lands Department oversees seven divisions including:

- Parks;
- Urban Forestry;
- Bill Roberts Municipal Golf Course;
- Open Lands;
- Recreation;
- Aquatics;
- Helena Civic Center.

Helena has 2,297 acres of park and open space areas and a variety of recreational facilities, including approximately 30 parks; bike/pedestrian trails; public swimming and wading pools; an aquatics park; a public golf course; tennis court complexes; a skateboard park; outdoor skating rinks; community gardens; two natural parks and more. City parks are used for special events, fund-raising activities, community gardens, and races. A map showing the location of major parks and recreational facilities is included in this chapter as Figure 5.07.

Helena currently provides a number of public recreational programs for children and adults, including tennis, swimming, and golf lessons, and the Kay's Kids summer recreation program at some of the City parks. Department programs and facilities are designed so that people of all ages, abilities and income levels have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of quality recreational activities. Department staff work closely

with volunteers to provide quality facilities and programs throughout the year.

Major Facilities

The following lists Helena's main parks and recreational facilities:

Memorial Park	*Kendrick-Legion Field*
The 1,700-acre trail and open lands system	*Last Chance Gulch Walking Mall*
Batch Fields	*Siebel Fields*
Ryan Park	*Northwest Park*
Centennial Park	*Fire Tower Park*
Centennial Trail	*Bill Roberts Golf Course*

Partner Facilities & Programs

Helena partners with community organizations to help provide a variety of recreational opportunities and programs for all ages, abilities and socio-economic backgrounds. In addition to the City's programs, many private organizations also provide youth recreation programs.

The Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds is home to the Last Chance Stampede and Rodeo, featuring a variety of exhibits including animals raised by Helena area youth, art, photography, baking, flower arrangements, and locally grown vegetables. A 36,000 square-foot exhibit hall was constructed at the County Fairgrounds and is available for a variety of events.

In addition to the Bill Roberts golf course, two other golf courses are also located in the area. Statewide tournaments including baseball, basketball, golf, gymnastics, softball, soccer, swimming, and tennis are hosted in the area. The Helena Bighorns, a junior league North American 3 Hockey League team also call Helena home.

Notable Events

At more than 400 miles, the annual Race to the Sky sled-dog race is the longest in the lower 48 states and recognized as one of the most challenging and beautiful sled dog races in the world. Other annual events include the high schools' Vigilante Day parade and the Last Chance Stampede parade, among others. The yearly Governor's Cup 5K, 10K, Half Marathon, Marathon Relay and Marathon races have seen increasing numbers of participants each year, attracting runners from around the region and the world.

Figure 5.05 – *Helena's Parks & Recreation Department provides a wide range of organized team and sports activities for residents and visitors. (Image: SCJ Alliance)*

The Helena Farmers Market is located downtown, providing a venue for local farmers, gardeners, and crafts-persons to display and sell their wares. Some City recreational locations are also used for the performing arts, serving visitors and residents alike. The downtown walking mall is home to craft fairs and music festivals, including Alive at Five from May-September. The summer Trolley-to-Trails program provides transportation from downtown to various trailheads around town.

Parks & Recreation Issues

The following listing of parks-related issues were developed as a result of input and analysis by City staff, review of the 2010 plan, and from comments received at public outreach forums during the Growth Policy development process. Future actions as may be required are reflected and supported in the objectives framework:

- The City faces ongoing challenges in funding acquisition and maintenance of the community's ever-expanding desire for more open space, community parks, recreational services and facilities. Accordingly, consideration of funding mechanisms including a potential Parks and Recreation District is recommended;
- Protecting Helena's open spaces, surrounding mountains, waterways and wetlands is deemed important, not only for purposes of functional integrity, but also for their recreational value. This plan recommends coordination of land uses, systems management and other factors to sustain sensitive areas and optimize their overall benefit;
- The health of surrounding forests is an ongoing concern, in part related to fire danger and pine beetle-killed trees in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). As a result, managing the surrounding

forests has become a multi-jurisdictional issue affecting more than just recreational values.

Objectives Summary

The issues described in this chapter for each of the various public services and facilities guide the formulation of goals and objectives in this growth policy. In some cases, strategies to address the issues are already identified in system plans, as noted above. In other cases, this growth policy will either inform system plan updates or the ways in which the City manages its own provision of services. The growth policy will also inform the ways the City approaches its partnerships with other service providers, ensuring Helena's citizens and businesses receive the services they need.

As described in this chapter, Helena prioritizes public health, safety and general welfare in its array of public services. The City also seeks to make services available and accessible to all, cost effectively and at a pace and scale to meet community demand. Working with its services partners is essential, both as a natural course of managing the community's quality of life and to ensure adequate and appropriate response in times of emergency, disaster or other need that requires rapid, effective action.

Helena also values strategic investment of its resources, preferring to adequately maintain its systems rather than letting them fail. Incremental, targeted maintenance and system upgrades can help systems last longer, optimizing the investments the City makes in its infrastructure. And the City believes in system efficiency. Public facilities and services should "live within their means," getting the most value possible for every dollar, seeking energy efficiency, encouraging shared use of resources, and, importantly, making strategic decisions on extending services into annexing areas.

Helena's parks and open spaces play an important role in the community's identity and the level of satisfaction its residents feel by choosing Helena as home. Whether it's the proximity and condition of a city park, the mix of recreational programs on offer, or the accessibility and experience of a hillside trail, the community's parks and open spaces reinforce what is special about this town and encourage active, social lifestyles.

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Public Facilities Goals & Objectives

Goals

[G.03] Provide high-quality, affordable and efficient public facilities and services in Helena that also prioritize the protection of public health, including residents and visitors.

Discussion: Municipalities exist to provide infrastructure and services that would be impossible for individuals to provide. While pooled resources make services achievable, they also require strong levels of coordination and management to assure accountability and efficiency. This goal anchors the need for the City of Helena to consider the long-term cost implications and benefits of facility choices impacting land use, transportation investments, parks and recreational services, as well as other types of infrastructure – maintaining efficiency and the overall well-being of the community it serves.

[G.04] Provide and support Helena's parks and recreational opportunities on-pace with growth.

Discussion: Helena residents cherish current open space access, and parks and recreational services, and wish to retain the same or higher levels of service as the community grows. This goal directs the City to consider open space, parks and recreational needs in all related plans and actions, including land use decisions, regulatory requirements and budgeting.

[G.05] Establish and maintain a strong multi-modal transportation system for Helena, providing opportunity for all to travel safely and efficiently, on-pace and in concert with demand and overall Growth Policy objectives.

Discussion: All cities require functional, resilient transportation networks providing for the flow of people and materials. In assisting with this Growth Policy, residents urged improvements to the existing fabric and criteria that provide a full-featured street network for Helena, improving the efficiency, function and value of the City. Residents also recognize the importance of coordinating design of facilities with surrounding land uses, using transportation systems to complement existing patterns.

[G.07] Provide an adequate and stable supply of safe and economical water to all users in the Helena community, while protecting the quality of both ground- and surface-water in the Helena area watershed.

Discussion: City livability, health and value are fully dependent on clean, safe and sustainable water supplies. This goal underscores Helena's commitment to maintaining both supply and quality of ground and surface water, recognizing them as essential to the community's survival.

[G.08] Sustain and expand Helena's arts, cultural and civic environment, including visual and performing arts, historical assets, library and educational facilities, and recreational opportunities.

Discussion: Residents of Helena value and support the arts, cultural and social organizations, events and facilities. This goal and supporting objectives direct the City to encourage and expand community arts programming, historic and cultural resources – benefitting the civic health, quality of life, and economic vitality of Helena.

[G.11] Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions and agencies, including East Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Jefferson County, and Broadwater County on issues that have regional impacts.

Discussion: In the past, Helena was a more centralized, independent place. Today, the City's fortunes and that of its residents depends on a set of dynamic, inter-dependent relationships between East Helena, Lewis and Clark, Jefferson and Broadwater Counties, and other agencies and forces that shape the region. Over the course of this plan's life cycle, it is expected that inter-agency collaboration will become even more important. Accordingly, this plan's goal and objectives framework supports actions building the economic health and resilience of the region as a whole, especially as it relates strategically to the unique qualities Helena residents enjoy.

Objectives

[O.07] Work closely with the Helena Regional Airport Authority to facilitate growth in aviation, aeronautical and light manufacturing businesses related to aviation, in concert with the Airport Master Plan.

[O.12] Promote and maintain development of a diverse housing stock, helping to:
- Minimize depletion of natural resources;
- Reduce land consumption and demands on the physical environment;
- Provide housing options for all residents;
- Optimize infrastructure use;
- Prepare Helena to meet emerging needs.

[O.14] Support the development of housing located in proximity to necessary services and quality of life assets, including generalized physical, technological, social and economic infrastructure.

[O.19] Maintain standards for multi-family housing that encourage quality building design, landscaping and usable open space, supporting long-term family living.

[O.20] Maintain public health and public safety as high priorities, providing necessary services and addressing potential hazards within and adjacent to City limits.

[O.21] Maintain infrastructure and personnel at levels that provide citizens with services that are high-quality, effective, and affordable.

[O.22] Maintain municipal water and wastewater system quality and levels of service through ongoing system upgrades and maintenance.

[O.23] Coordinate the development of new or expanded water and wastewater treatment capacity with Lewis and Clark County, complementary to and generally concurrent with growth.

[O.24] Give priority for future extension of services and annexations to property located within Helena's Urban Standards Boundary (USB) area.

[O.25] Avoid annexation of undeveloped land until all public facilities are adequate to serve the new development, or an infrastructure plan is in place to assure that such facilities will be provided when needed.

[O.26] Consider and implement ways to reduce nutrient discharges from Helena's wastewater treatment plant and its stormwater system to meet regulatory standards, including enforcement of the Stormwater Ordinance and erosion control requirements.

[O.27] Promote efficient use of community infrastructure, services and resources, including efforts to:
- Increase energy efficiency;
- Reduce vehicle trips;
- Maintain air quality;
- Minimize noise pollution.

[O.28] Continue to authorize connection of County residents with failing septic systems or lagoons to City treatment facilities, when compatible with Helena's Growth Policy and its discharge permit.

[O.29] Promote energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in new and existing development, minimizing impacts on natural resources and the environment through measures including, as appropriate:
- Development standards;
- Land use regulations;
- Public/private partnerships;
- Public education;
- Tax or other monetary incentives.

[O.30] Manage provision and use of recreational facilities to protect the integrity of environmentally-sensitive areas.

[O.31] Provide and maintain a full range of quality park facilities, open spaces and recreational opportunities for citizens of all abilities and age groups.

[O.32] Continue to fund and adequately maintain sports fields, trails, and other City recreational facilities on-pace and complementary with growth.

[O.33] Foster open-space connectivity in and around Helena, helping link parks, open spaces and water bodies, and providing opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle trails.

[O.34] Coordinate parks system planning with land use and transportation planning, recognizing the public health and recreational value of features that support walking and cycling.

[O.35] Work with Helena Public Schools to coordinate City parks, facilities and service planning with: • School facility plans; • School programs, recreational facilities and educational opportunities.

[O.36] Maintain city parks and open spaces taking full advantage of applicable and developing technologies.

[O.37] Work towards compliance with accessibility requirements in accordance with Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

[O.38] Encourage citizen involvement in crime prevention programs.

[O.39] Develop and enhance a transportation system in Helena that:
- Facilitates the safe, efficient movement of people, goods and services;
- Supports non-motorized and recreational needs;
- Promotes livable neighborhoods;
- Supports the needs of Helena's elderly, disabled and disadvantaged populations;
- Improves safe pedestrian and bike routes;
- Respects the area's natural and historic context;
- Improves and connects to regional transit systems.

[O.42] Promote transportation facilities and land use patterns that support resource efficiency and reduce the output of greenhouse gasses.

[O.43] Require street development or improvement projects to include facilities allowing persons of all ages and abilities to travel by automobile, foot, bicycle, and public transit.

[O.45] With local and regional jurisdictions, identify key transportation corridors and work to differentiate arterial roadway design, emphasizing neighborhood centers as points of community importance and focus.

[O.46] Require that subdivisions and other developments provide a transportation system that:
- Promotes connectivity where adjacent to developed areas;
- Provides for future connectivity with anticipated development;
- Incorporates 'traffic calming' measures where appropriate;
- Supports non-motorized transportation.

[O.47] Maintain and improve the continuity of sidewalks, trails, and bicycle paths in Helena, improving conditions for non-motorized transportation across the city and between future neighborhood centers.

[O.49] Encourage new development to provide multi-modal access to nearby parks, trails and green spaces.

[O.50] Support local and regional efforts to conserve energy, promote recycling and reduce solid waste.

[O.51] Protect and sustain irreplaceable natural features such as wetlands, stream corridors, and similar high-value areas that provide wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, improved water quality and safety values such as flood control.

[O.52] Encourage 'green' building and renewable energy investments, helping promote:
- Provision of local jobs;
- Increased property values;
- Reduced energy costs;
- Helena's long-term sustainability.

[O.56] Encourage use of technologies and techniques that direct light downwards, minimizing intrusive or excessive glare, reducing energy use and optimizing "dark sky" conditions in Helena.

[O.61] Promote landscaping guidelines that:
- Maintain or restore native trees and vegetative cover;
- Support locally-compatible species diversity;
- Re-vegetate disturbed areas;
- Beautify streets, entry corridors, roadways and parking lots;
- Help calm traffic;
- Help treat and address stormwater issues.

[O.62] Mitigate and adapt to climate change, supporting sustainable practices including:
• Development of programs and projects to address sustainability and climate change such as, in order of priority, source reduction, reuse, recycling of materials to achieve zero waste;
• Tracking of available indicators including temperature, precipitation, snowfall, days below freezing, and incorporation of photovoltaics into public and private infrastructure.
• Support for local food production, including community gardens, healthy food preparation and ecologically sound gardening practices that, composting, reduced water, synthetic fertilizer, and pesticide use;
• Educational efforts to increase awareness, explain benefits and promote voluntary efforts addressing climate change, carbon-neutral lifestyles, and related topics;
• Educational efforts regarding mitigation techniques for development in fire- and flood- prone areas.

[O.63] Promote water conservation efforts in Helena, reducing the need for infrastructure expansion.

[O.64] Evaluate subdivision impacts to ground and surface waters, drainages, floodplains, riparian areas and wetlands, incorporating adequate buffers or requiring appropriate mitigation, including, but not limited to, stormwater treatment and discharges to improve wetland viability.

[O.65] Protect the Ten Mile watershed as a key part of the municipal water supply, restoring those parts of the watershed that have been impaired by human activity.

[O.66] Promote sustainable practices for water resource preservation, supporting multiple uses of area waters, including:
• Recreational activities;
• Forest health;
• Wildlife preservation;
• Maintaining viable agricultural lands.

[O.68] Encourage the use of xeriscape landscaping, grey water, rain barrels, and other mechanisms to reduce demand on potable water and the amount of effluent.

[O.71] Work to maintain Helena's downtown as the city's 'heart' and key focal point, combining commercial, civic, cultural, residential, and recreational uses.

[O.74] Work to improve the awareness, availability and access of cultural programs and activities for all Helena residents, including coordination of such activities with other agencies and community organizations.

[O.75] Maintain support for the City of Helena's advisory committees.

[O.76] Support land use patterns that:
- Promote compatible, well-designed development;
- Foster the long-term fiscal health of the community;
- Maintain and enhance resident quality of life;
- Implement related master plans and/or facility plans.

[O.77] Apply or revise zoning designations with careful consideration of factors including:
- Future land use mapping;
- Compatibility with surrounding land uses;
- Infrastructure and service plans;
- Development of vacant and under-utilized buildings;
- Existing and future traffic patterns;
- Goals and objectives of the growth policy, related master plan and/or facility plans.

[O.78] Encourage infill development on vacant and under-utilized land within the city, directing growth to areas currently served by, or in close proximity to, existing infrastructure and that harmonizes with the character of existing neighborhoods.

[O.79] Encourage development within the Urban Standards Boundary (USB) to use City standards and guidelines to facilitate future annexation.

[O.81] Identify and encourage the growth of mixed-use neighborhood centers where appropriate and may be served by existing infrastructure.

[O.82] Encourage development patterns and proposals that promote efficient use of City infrastructure and resources.

[O.84] Promote small block development patterns, promoting connectivity and reduced multi-modal travel distances between residences and schools, parks, and services.

[O.87] With the school district, prioritize location of schools in areas with:
- Access to arterial and collector streets;
- Ample sidewalks and pedestrian access;
- Proximity to residential areas being served;
- Proximity to designated neighborhood centers;
- Cost-effective access to necessary utilities and services.

[O.88] In making annexation decisions consider the following factors:
• Master plans for water, sewer, transportation, parks, schools and emergency services;
• Provision of necessary rights-of-way and easements;
• Studies that evaluate environmental and public service factors;
• Timing that supports orderly development and/or coordinated extension of public services;
• Ability to leverage existing facilities, minimizing expansion or duplication of facilities;
• The Urban Standards Boundary (USB);
• Growth Policy goals and objectives.

[O.89] Develop and maintain disaster, mitigation, emergency, and recovery plans, working with and maintaining consistency, and integrity of such plans with adjacent jurisdictions.

[O.90] Maintain and implement wildfire prevention and evacuation plans, helping prevent or reduce loss of life, property damage and recovery costs in and around Helena.

[O.91] Work with Lewis and Clark County and East Helena to create joint development standards that:
• Provide a more consistent regulatory system for in-city and surrounding areas;
• Guide annexation decisions;
• Require new development connect to public services whenever practical or provide for future connections if not immediately practical.

[O.95] Encourage and support citizen involvement with City boards, commissions, and civic organizations.

[O.99] Promote the concentration of specialized industries within the city where specialized infrastructure, information, and labor advantages may promote economic development and desirable growth.

[O.101] Any necessary changes to development regulations, modifications to capital improvements programs, or proposed neighborhood plans required for implementation should accompany proposed amendments to the Growth Policy, so that regulations maintain consistency with the Growth Policy.

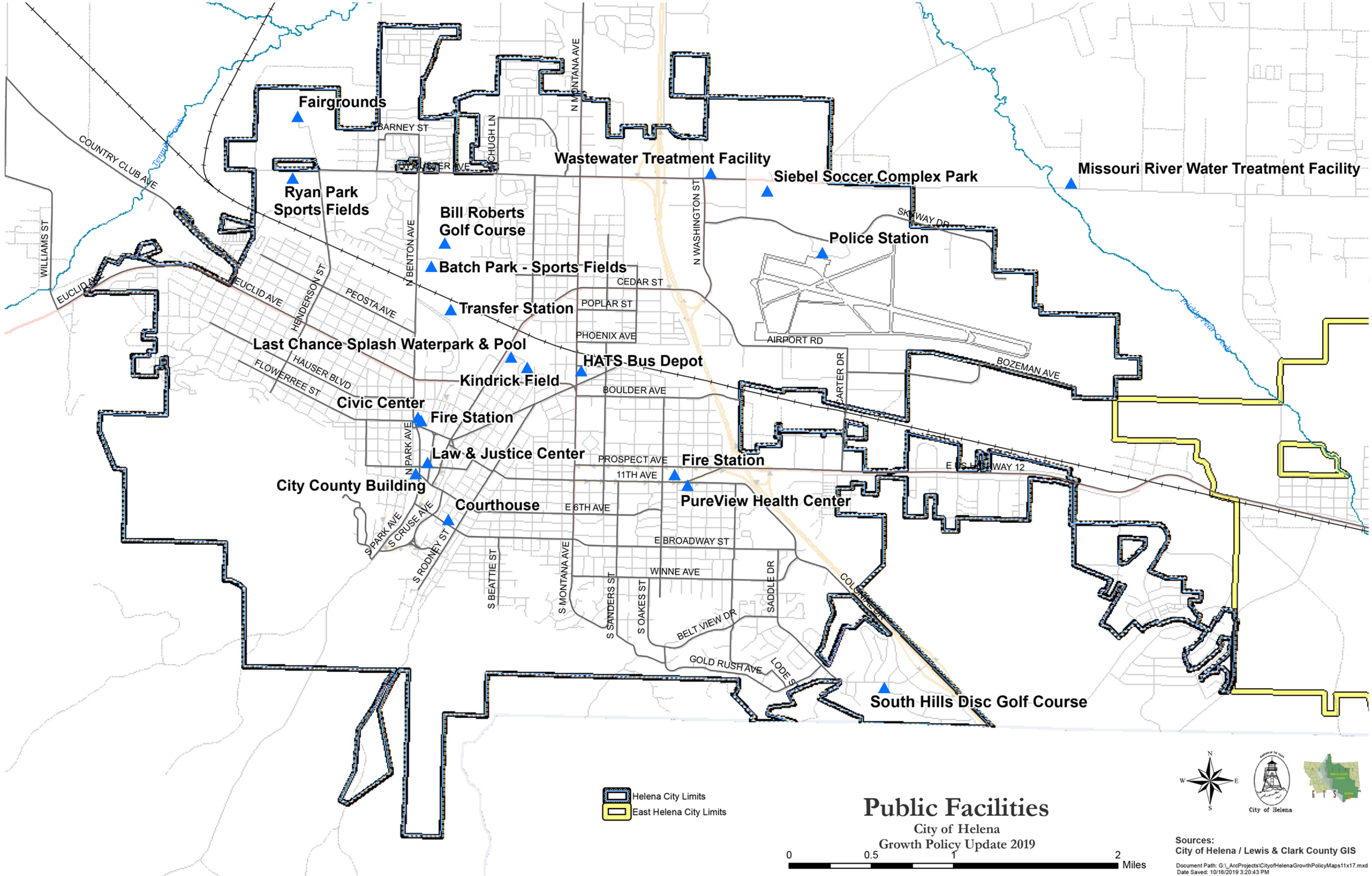

Figure 5.06 – *Public Facilities map (Image: City of Helena)*

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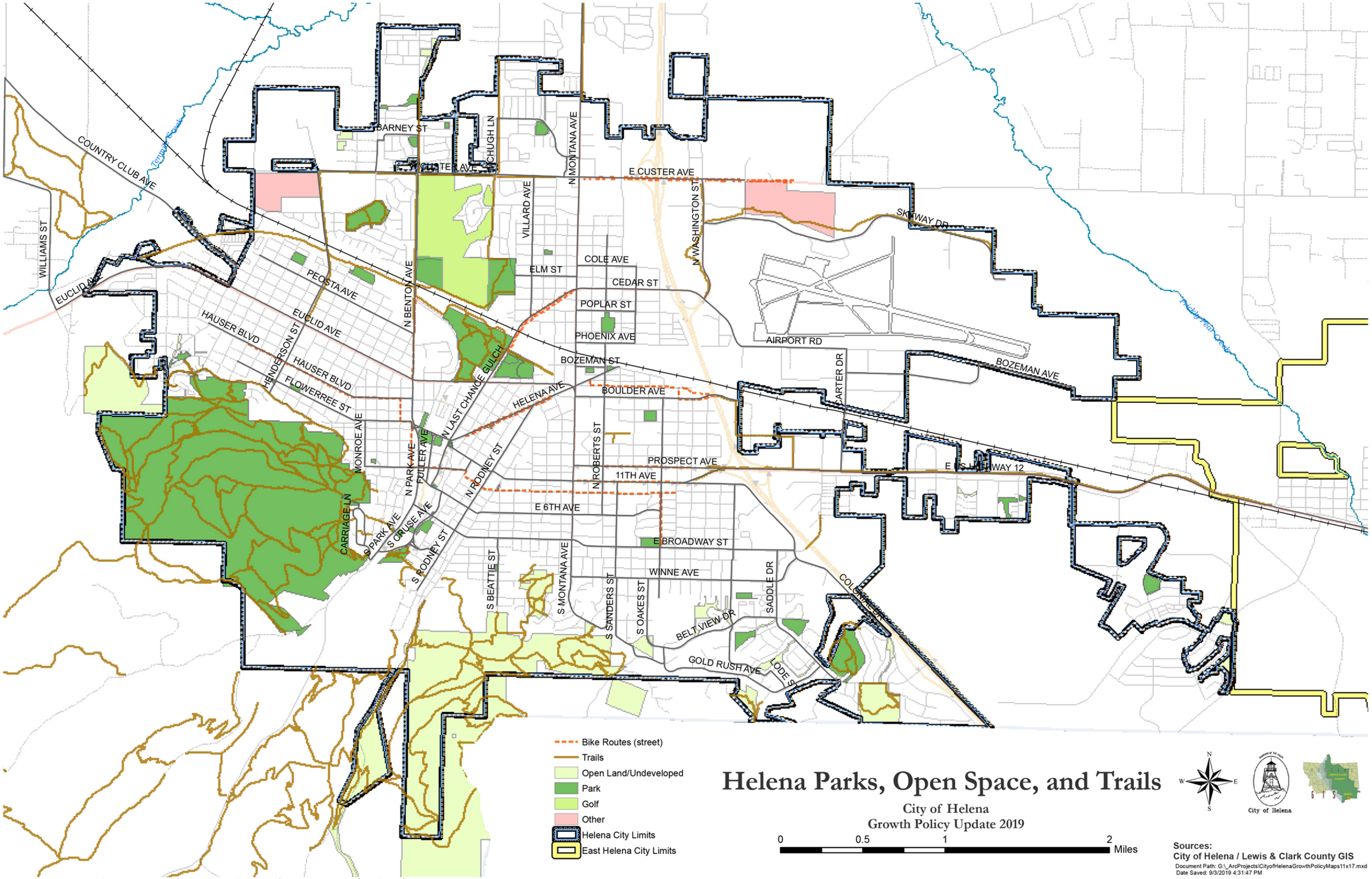

Figure 5.07 – *Parks, Open Space and Trails map (Image: City of Helena)*

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