CITY OF HELENA
Helena Citizens' Council Regular Meeting
October 22, 2026 from 5:30-7:30 pm
Zoom Online Meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89275551103?pwd=xqeShf4jlHu6g0bZ1Cb2vfJFso3T4j.1
Room 326, 316 N. Park Avenue, Helena, MT, 59623

Call to Order and Roll Call

Public Comment

Minutes for review and approval

June 2026, August 2026

HCC Member Appointments

New Business

Vice Chair Elections

Recommendation re: Draft Long Range Transportation Plan

Officer Reports

A. Chair, Anne Hausrath - District 2

B. Vice Chair, Vacant –

C. Treasurer, Lori FitzGerald – District 1

D. Secretary, Diana Hammer – District 1

Staff Liaison Report

Outreach Committee Report

1. HCC Community Discussion re: the Long Range Transportation Plan
2. November Art Walk

Commission/Board Meeting Attendee Reports

A. September 28, 2026 - Regular Commission Meeting
B. October 5th, 2026 - Regular Commission Meeting
C. October 19, 2026 – Regular Commission Meeting

Unfinished Business –

City of Helena
Helena Citizens' Council

City Board Meeting Attendees' Reports

1. Metropolitan Planning Organization
2. City-County Planning Board
3. Helena Public Arts Committee
4. Citizen Conservation Board
5. City-County Library Board
6. Golf Advisory Board
7. City-County Parks Board
8. Affordable Housing Trust Fund
9. Water Quality Protection District

District Reports

Member Communications

Topics for Next Meeting?

Public Comment

Next meeting: November 19, 2026 – 5:30pm

Adjournment

The City of Helena is committed to providing access to persons with disabilities for its meetings, in compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Montana Human Rights Act. The City will not exclude persons with disabilities from participation at its meetings or otherwise deny them the City's services, programs, or activities.

Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the City's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Anne Pichette, as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the requested accommodation, at any of the following:

Phone: (406) 447- 8490

TTY Relay Service 1-800-253-4091 or 711 Email: citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov

Mailing Address & Physical Location: 316 North Park Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623.

City of Helena

Helena Citizens' Council

HELENA CITIZENS' COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
EXPANDED PACKET MINUTES
June 25, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Video Timestamp: 00:01:44
Chair Ben Kuiper called the regular meeting of the Helena Citizens' Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Secretary Diana Hammer conducted roll call. Members present established a quorum and the Chair proceeded through the published agenda.

ROLL CALL

Video Timestamp: 00:02:03
Members present included Lori Fitzgerald, Diana Hammer, Joe Lehman, Nancy Perry, Anne Hausrath, Jakob Miles, Ben Kuiper, Ryan Schwochert (online), Dylan Klutmeyer and additional members identified during the meeting. The record reflected that a quorum was present.

MINUTES / MEMBER APPOINTMENTS

Video Timestamp: 00:03:00
The Council had no minutes for approval and no member appointments requiring action. The agenda then advanced to guest speakers.

MAYOR EMILY DEAN REPORT

Video Timestamp: 00:03:27
Mayor Dean provided an extensive briefing regarding implementation of Helena's recently adopted land use plan, upcoming zoning reform efforts, the city budget environment, public safety staffing, transportation planning, transit funding reductions, and major capital projects. The Mayor reported Helena was among a limited number of Montana communities

aligned with current state land-use requirements. Discussion emphasized growth management, future zoning updates, and the need to create policies that support continued development while preserving community character. Additional discussion addressed public safety levy planning, MPO transportation work, transit funding losses, infrastructure projects, and budget limitations.

CITY MANAGER ALANA LAKE REPORT

Video Timestamp: 00:12:33
City Manager Lake thanked members for their volunteer service and described HCC as an important component of Helena's civic structure. Discussion focused on community engagement, Be Heard Helena, listening sessions, recruitment efforts, leadership vacancies, downtown planning, and streamlining development processes. The City Manager highlighted collaboration with community organizations and emphasized the strength and dedication of City staff.

HCC QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Video Timestamp: 00:20:59
Culture of Yes: Mayor Dean and City Manager Lake discussed creating a solutions-oriented culture within City government, emphasizing collaboration, strategic planning, realistic expectations, and constructive engagement.

Community Engagement: Members discussed listening sessions, surveys, public meetings, budget outreach, and methods for ensuring residents feel informed and heard. Both officials expressed support for earlier HCC involvement in future budget cycles.

Advisory Boards: Members discussed advisory-board membership, five-year reviews, vacancies, quorum requirements, and whether HCC representatives should again serve on advisory bodies.

Additional questions addressed transportation planning, transit funding, board administration, budget transparency, and strengthening communication between HCC, City staff, and the City Commission.

PUBLIC SAFETY LEVY DISCUSSION

Video Timestamp: 00:41:11
Members engaged in extensive discussion regarding police and fire staffing levels, projected response demands, levy timing, state revenue limitations, overtime concerns, and public education needs. Discussion included tiered levy proposals, the possibility of moving the election from November to March, impacts of Montana tax law on municipal staffing, and debate over whether HCC should issue a recommendation. Members discussed whether

police and fire funding should remain combined and requested additional legal clarification regarding advocacy and recommendations.

ACTION ITEM A – BLOCK PARTY COSTS

Video Timestamp: 01:21:29
Motion: Authorize reimbursement support for eligible unfunded block-party applicants up to $50 per applicant, not to exceed $300 total.
Made By: Anne Hausrath
Seconded By: Joe Lehman
Discussion: Members discussed use of remaining fiscal-year funds and support for neighborhood-building activities.
Result: Passed by unanimous voice vote.

ACTION ITEM B – OUTREACH EXPENSES

Video Timestamp: 01:28:22
Motion: Authorize expenditure of up to $1,150 for outreach materials including reusable name badges, signs, and banners.
Made By: Diana Hammer
Seconded By: Council Member
Discussion: Members reviewed proposed outreach materials, future public events, visibility efforts, and reuse of purchased items.
Result: Passed by voice vote.

ACTION ITEM C – WATER BILL INSERT

Video Timestamp: 01:37:54
Motion: Allocate $560 for a future water-bill insert supporting public budget education and outreach.
Made By: Lori Fitzgerald
Seconded By: Anne Hausrath
Discussion: Members discussed improving public understanding of municipal budgeting and encouraging participation before future budget cycles.
Result: Passed by voice vote.

ACTION ITEM D – PUBLIC SAFETY LEVY RECOMMENDATION

Video Timestamp: 01:42:52
Motion to Table
Made By: Lori Fitzgerald
Seconded By: Dick Sloan
Motion: Table consideration of the recommendation until the July meeting pending additional information and legal clarification.

ROLL CALL VOTE – MOTION TO TABLE

Video Timestamp: 01:56:04

Member	Vote
Lori Fitzgerald	Yes
Diana Hammer	Yes
Joe Lehman	No
Nancy Perry	Yes
Anne Hausrath	Yes
Jakob Miles	Yes
Ben Kuiper	No
Katie Ryan	Yes
Dylan Klutmeyer	No
Kent Stevenson	Yes
Dick Sloan	Yes
Ryan Schwochert	Yes

Result: Motion passed 9–4.

CHAIR REPORT

Video Timestamp: 01:58:58

Chair Kuiper provided an update regarding communication procedures between HCC, the Commission Office, and City staff. Members were advised to route questions through established channels to improve coordination and accountability. The Chair emphasized building processes that would remain effective despite future turnover in officers or staff and encouraged continued collaboration with City leadership.

VICE CHAIR REPORT

Video Timestamp: 01:59:37

Vice Chair Hausrath reported on neighborhood outreach efforts and an upcoming block party. She encouraged members to participate in neighborhood-based activities and highlighted the value of community-building events in increasing civic engagement and strengthening relationships among residents.

TREASURER REPORT

Video Timestamp: 02:00:08

Treasurer Fitzgerald reviewed the Council budget and remaining FY26 funds. She discussed recent presentation of HCC budget recommendations to the City Commission and noted positive commissioner feedback regarding earlier participation by HCC in future budget discussions. Members also requested follow-up concerning previous recommendations related to water and sanitation fee structures.

SECRETARY REPORT

Video Timestamp: 02:02:19

Secretary Hammer coordinated assignments for upcoming City Commission and Administrative meetings through August. Members volunteered for attendance responsibilities and reporting duties. Hammer thanked members for prior participation and reviewed expectations for future reports.

COORDINATOR REPORT

Video Timestamp: 02:04:19

Members acknowledged the appointment of Alexander Kosiewicz as coordinator and liaison. Discussion focused on communication procedures, administrative support, agenda coordination, and use of shared email accounts to ensure continuity and responsiveness.

OUTREACH REPORT

Video Timestamp: 02:04:57

The Outreach Committee reviewed ongoing outreach efforts and confirmed a July 6 committee meeting. Members discussed public education, visibility of HCC activities, and strategies to increase resident participation in local government.

COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS

Video Timestamp: 02:05:20

Due to time constraints following extensive guest-speaker and action-item discussions, members agreed that Commission and Board reports would be distributed electronically. This approach ensured members would still receive updates while allowing the meeting to conclude on schedule.

MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Video Timestamp: 02:05:55

Members discussed neighborhood concerns including a feral-cat issue in District 1. The reporting member described meetings with residents, City staff, and law-enforcement

representatives and expressed appreciation for the responsiveness shown by City officials in addressing constituent concerns.

TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

Video Timestamp: 02:07:24
Members discussed inviting representatives from the League of Women Voters and possibly AARP for future meetings. Continued discussion of public-safety funding, outreach initiatives, and budget engagement was also anticipated.

ADJOURNMENT

Video Timestamp: 02:08:09
With no further business before the Council and no additional public comment, Chair Kuiper adjourned the meeting. Informal conversation continued among attendees following adjournment.

HELENA CITIZENS' COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

EXPANDED PACKET MINUTES

August 27, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Video Timestamp: 00:00:12

Chair Ben Kuiper called the regular meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Secretary Diana Hammer conducted roll call and a quorum was established.

ROLL CALL

Video Timestamp: 00:01:00

Members present included Diana Hammer, Lori Fitzgerald, Joe Lehman, Nancy Perry, Ann Hausrath, Jakob Miles, Janet Zimmerman, Ben Kuiper, Katie Ryan, Bob Haybeck, Kent Stevenson and others. John Walden joined later during the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT / MINUTES

Video Timestamp: 00:02:04

No public comment was offered. No minutes were available in the packet for approval.

LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN PRESENTATION

Video Timestamp: 00:03:08

Director David Knoepke provided a presentation regarding the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The presentation reviewed the purpose of the LRTP as Helena's long-term transportation planning document and

outlined current planning priorities, committed transportation projects, projected funding limitations, and opportunities for public engagement.

Director Knoepke discussed the transportation planning process used to identify priority projects and explained how public outreach, stakeholder feedback, transportation data, and projected growth patterns are incorporated into the plan. Discussion included roadway maintenance needs, multimodal transportation improvements, pedestrian infrastructure, transit service, bicycle connectivity, and coordination with Montana Department of Transportation projects.

Council members engaged in extensive discussion regarding sidewalk accessibility, pedestrian connectivity, bicycle infrastructure gaps, school access routes, downtown transportation needs, and future transit opportunities. Members raised questions concerning the relationship between local transportation planning and state transportation projects, as well as methods used to prioritize projects within constrained funding environments.

Additional discussion focused on future population growth, transportation system resiliency, multimodal accessibility, and opportunities to better integrate transportation planning with community development goals. Council members expressed interest in ensuring that future transportation investments promote connectivity between neighborhoods, schools, parks, employment centers, and future transportation facilities.

Director Knoepke emphasized the importance of public participation in transportation planning and outlined opportunities for residents to review and comment on the draft LRTP before final adoption.

MEMBER APPOINTMENTS

Video Timestamp: 00:28:38

Rob Freistadt was presented for appointment to District 1. John Walden was presented for appointment to District 6 and provided remarks concerning transparency, representation, and civic engagement.

ACTION ITEM A - DISTRICT 1 APPOINTMENT

Video Timestamp: 00:31:34

District representatives introduced Rob Freistadt as the recommended appointee to fill the vacant District 1 seat. Members reviewed the recommendation process previously conducted within the district. Discussion focused on maintaining district representation and ensuring continued participation in Council activities.

Vote - District 1 Appointment

Member, Vote

Diana Hammer, Yes

Lori Fitzgerald, Yes

Result: Motion approved unanimously. Rob Freistadt was appointed as the District 1 representative.

ACTION ITEM B - DISTRICT 6 APPOINTMENT

Video Timestamp: 00:33:20

ohn Walden was introduced as the recommended candidate for the vacant District 6 position. Mr. Walden provided introductory remarks and discussed his interest in civic engagement, transparency, public participation, and representing District 6 residents.

Council members welcomed Mr. Walden and discussed the importance of maintaining active district participation. Following discussion, a motion was made to appoint John Walden to the vacant position.

Roll Call Vote - District 6 Appointment

Member, Vote

Diana Hammer, Aye

Lori Fitzgerald, Aye

Joseph Lehman, Aye

Nancy Perry, Aye

Ann Hausrath, Aye

Jakob Miles, Aye

Janet Zimmerman, Aye

Ben Kuiper, Aye

Katie Ryan, Aye

Bob Haybeck, Aye

Kent Stevenson, Aye

Richard Sloan, Aye

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

OFFICER REPORTS

Video Timestamp: 00:37:51

Officer reports addressed ongoing Council administrative matters, budget activities, committee coordination, outreach planning, communication processes, and future meeting logistics.

Discussion included recent engagement activities, coordination with City staff, website management, records management procedures, community outreach planning, and budget considerations. Members reviewed ongoing efforts to improve public awareness of Council activities and examined opportunities to expand participation in future community engagement initiatives.

The Treasurer provided updates regarding Council allocations and expenditures. The Secretary discussed communication activities and administrative coordination. The Vice Chair and Chair each reviewed ongoing organizational matters and pending work items scheduled for future meetings.

The Staff Liaison provided updates regarding interactions with City departments, administrative support, website publication, and coordination between Helena Citizens' Council and City staff.

OUTREACH REPORT

Video Timestamp: 01:01:17

The Outreach Committee reported on recent public engagement activities conducted during the Art Walk event. Members reviewed community feedback received from residents and discussed trends observed during outreach conversations.

Discussion focused on methods for improving attendance at community meetings, expanding awareness of Council functions, strengthening partnerships with neighborhood organizations, and enhancing communication through social media and online resources.

Members also discussed publication of outreach findings, future engagement opportunities, and methods for ensuring public input continues to inform Council recommendations.

COMMISSION REPORTS

Video Timestamp: 01:09:00

Representatives provided updates regarding recent City Commission meetings and related community issues. Topics discussed included utility infrastructure projects, annexation

matters, assessments, transportation improvements, board appointments, and other municipal issues under consideration by the Commission.

Particular attention was given to major infrastructure projects, including transportation and stormwater improvements. Members discussed public feedback received regarding current projects and reviewed issues likely to have continuing impacts on Helena residents.

ACTION ITEM C - LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN RECOMMENDATION

Video Timestamp: 01:18:23

The Council entered into detailed consideration of its proposed recommendation regarding the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Discussion centered on ensuring that the Council's recommendations accurately reflected transportation needs identified by residents. Members considered pedestrian infrastructure, connectivity between neighborhoods, school access, bicycle transportation, passenger rail opportunities, transit integration, and intersection improvements.

Several amendments were offered and considered individually.

AMENDMENT 1

Video Timestamp: 01:22:29

Motion

Add the following priorities:

Prioritize safe and accessible routes to schools and parks, including identification of sidewalk gaps and installation or repair of sidewalks to improve accessibility and connectivity.

Ensure motorized, non-motorized, and transit connections to support future passenger rail service.

Roll Call Vote

Member, Vote

Rob Brightstad, Aye

Diana Hammer, Aye

Lori Fitzgerald, Aye

Joseph Lehman, Aye

Nancy Perry, Aye

Janet Zimmerman, Aye

Ben Kuiper, Aye

Katie Ryan, Aye

John Walden, Aye

Kent Stevenson, Aye

Richard Sloan, Nay

Result: Amendment adopted.

AMENDMENT 2

Video Timestamp: 01:35:57

AMENDMENT 2

Final Amendment Language

Prioritize improving north-south bicycle connectivity along key commuter routes and around schools.

Vote on Amendment to Amendment

Member, Vote

Diana Hammer, Aye

Lori Fitzgerald, Aye

Joseph Lehman, Aye

Nancy Perry, Aye

Ann Hausrath, Aye

Janet Zimmerman, Abstain

Ben Kuiper, Aye

John Walden, Aye

Bob Haybeck, Aye

Kent Stevenson, Aye

Richard Sloan, Aye

Result: Amendment to amendment passed.

Vote on Amendment 2 as Amended

Member, Vote

Diana Hammer, Aye

Lori Fitzgerald, Aye

Joseph Lehman, Aye

Nancy Perry, Aye

Ann Hausrath, Aye

Janet Zimmerman, Abstain

Ben Kuiper, Aye

Katie Ryan, Aye

John Walden, Aye

Jakob Miles, Aye

Bob Haybeck, Aye

Kent Stevenson, Aye

Richard Sloan, Aye

Result: Amendment adopted with one abstention.

AMENDMENT 3

Video Timestamp: 01:43:29

Motion

Remove language referencing whether a roundabout would or would not be constructed at Malfunction Junction.

Roll Call Vote

Member, Vote

Diana Hammer, Aye

Lori Fitzgerald, Aye

Joseph Lehman, Aye

Nancy Perry, Aye

Janet Zimmerman, Aye

Ben Kuiper, Aye

Katie Ryan, Aye

John Walden, Aye

Kent Stevenson, Aye

Richard Sloan, Aye

Result: Amendment adopted unanimously.

FINAL VOTE

Video Timestamp: 01:47:43

Roll Call Vote

Member, Vote

Rob Brightstad, Aye

Diana Hammer, Aye

Lori Fitzgerald, Aye

Joseph Lehman, Aye

Nancy Perry, Aye

Ann Hausrath, Aye

Janet Zimmerman, Aye

Ben Kuiper, Aye

Katie Ryan, Aye

John Walden, Aye

Bob Haybeck, Aye

Kent Stevenson, Aye

Richard Sloan, Aye

Result: The Helena Citizens' Council approved the Long Range Transportation Plan recommendation as amended and directed that the recommendation be forwarded to the Helena City Commission.

BOARD REPORTS, MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS, ADJOURNMENT

Video Timestamp: 01:48:55

Members reported on MPO and Water Quality Protection District activities, discussed future attendance and communications, and addressed potential officer succession issues. With no further business and no public comment, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:28 p.m.

Helena Citizens' Council
316 N. Park Avenue, Room 324
Helena, MT 59623
Phone: (406) 447-8410
hcc@helenamt.gov
www.helenacitizenscouncil.com

Date: October 22, 2026

To: Helena Mayor and City Commissioners

cc: The Greater Helena Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Members
The MPO Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) Members
Mr. Ty Weingartner, MPO Manager
Mr. Scott Randall, Project Manager, Robert Peccia & Associates

From: Anne Hausrath, Chair, Helena Citizens' Council

Greetings Mayor Dean and Helena City Commissioners Gustafson, Logan, Reed, and Rigby:

During the spring and summer Art Walks, the Helena Citizens' Council collected public comments re: what our community loves about Helena as well areas where we could do better. The topic receiving the greatest number of comments in both categories was transportation. Not surprisingly, the HCC, representing seven neighborhood districts also has listed transportation as one of its top priorities. (Both the verbatim comments from the Art Walks and the HCC priorities have been previously shared with the Commission and are attached again here for your convenience.)

In September (9/25/26) HCC submitted a Recommendation to the Commission re: the priorities to be included in the upcoming Draft Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The HCC held a community meeting on October 14, 2026 and presented an overview of the Draft LRTP, followed by an open discussion about the Plan and how to comment.

At its October 22, 2026 meeting, the HCC reviewed and discussed the Draft Plan and comments and concerns raised by the community.

Let it be known that the Helena Citizens' Council, at its regular full board meeting on Thursday, October 22, 2026, voted and passed the following recommendation re: the Draft Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for your consideration:

RECOMMENDATION

The Helena Citizens' Council submits the following comments on the draft Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) as a recommendation for the Helena City Commission:

HCC considers the Greater Helena Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP or Plan) as an essential guide to how the Greater Helena Transportation network is designed and developed over the next 20 years.

General LRTP comments:

1. The draft LRTP is heavily focused on motorized transportation with million-dollar costs while the majority of public comments and community discussions show high interest and focus on improving the non-motorized transportation network, also referred to as 'active transportation' and includes walking, biking, and rolling modes of travel.

2. HCC recognizes that prioritizing investments to create a more walkable, bikeable, and accessible community cost far less and would improve the safety and mobility of Helena residents and recommends the non-motorized network receive greater consideration as the City prioritizes projects and seeks funding. For instance, if fully considered, the Helena area could have safer routes to all schools for a fraction of what a road widening project would cost while addressing consistently expressed community interests and concerns.

3. HCC requests that active transportation infrastructure should be an integral part of the LRTP.

4. Helena has adopted a 'Complete Streets' policy and LRTP projects (including maintenance projects) must conform with this policy and with the adopted 2025 Land Use Plan.

5. Prioritize projects that benefit City residents (not those which primarily address needs of non-city residents and commuters who do not pay City taxes).

6. Consider the valuable insights contained in the County Public Health Department's 2016 Active Living Wayfinding Report (attached) to inform transportation and connectivity decisions for the greater Helena area.

7. Develop and implement a robust community engagement process for transportation infrastructure projects.

Project-specific comments:

- Construct a pedestrian crossing of Lyndale at Rodney
- Construct a pedestrian bridge over Henderson for the Centennial Trail
- Create safer pedestrian crossings of Cruse at Broadway, 6th, and Lawrence Avenues
- Complete sidewalks on Broadway between Montana and California
- Construct pedestrian crossing on Henderson at Ryan Park
- Install pedestrian crossings on Montana from 11th to Broadway
- Install pedestrian safety and street-scape infrastructure at “mini malfunction junction” to create inviting entry corridors and proper urban street design
- Keep 11th Avenue two lanes east of Montana. Do not increase to three lanes

Thank you for consideration of these comments on the Draft Long Range Transportation Plan and to working with the City, the MPO, and other interested parties to create a more walkable, bike-friendly, accessible, and safely mobile community.

Helena Citizens Council Members

_____

Signed by the HCC Chair, Anne Hausrath

Survey Results: Priorities

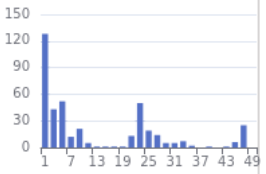
Survey Info - This survey was sent on behalf of the City of Helena to the FlashVote community for Helena, MT.

These FlashVote results are shared with local officials

415
Total Participants
377 of 597 initially invited (63%)
38 others
Margin of error: ± 5%

Applied Filter:
All Responses

Response Time (hours)



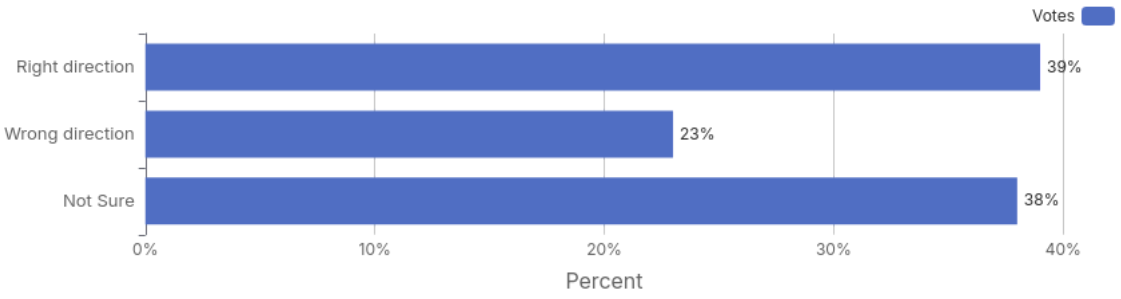
Started:
Oct 14, 2026 11:06am MDT
Ended:
Oct 16, 2026 11:04am MDT
Target Participants:
All Helena

Q1 Overall, do you feel like Helena is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?

(413 responses)

Survey response data for survey question 1

Options	**Votes** (413)
Right direction	39% (162)
Wrong direction	23% (96)
Not Sure	38% (155)

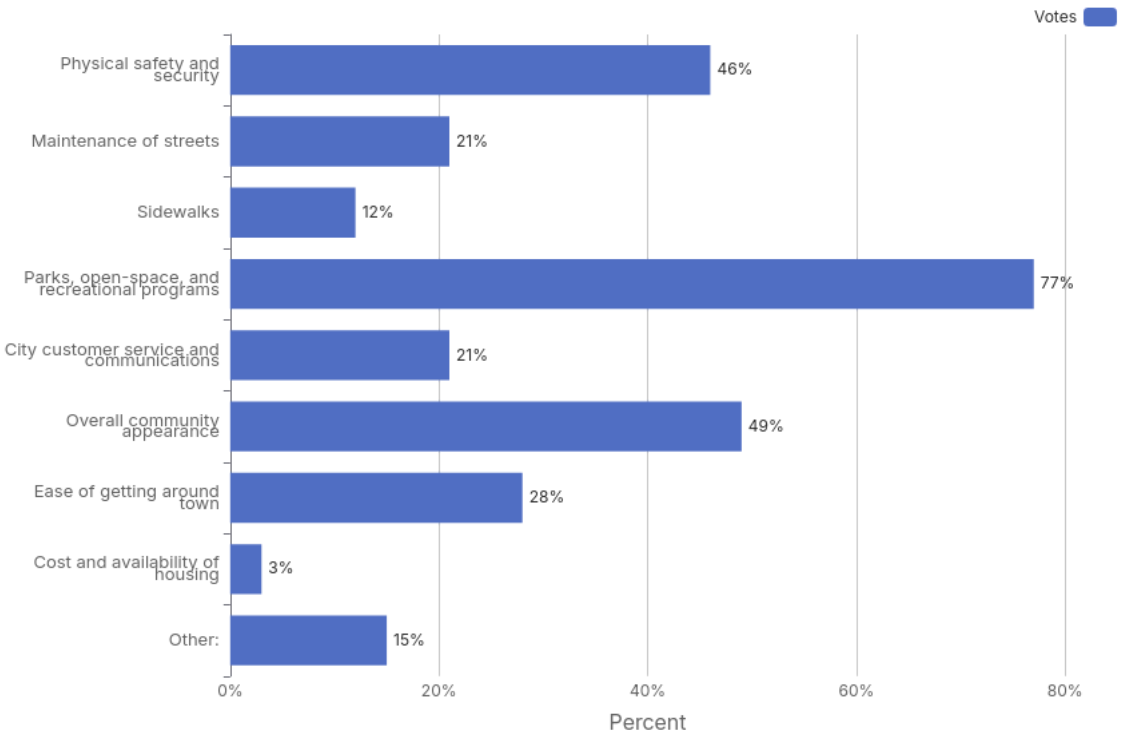


Q2 Which of the following do you think are a STRENGTH of Helena, if any? (Choose all that apply)

(358 responses)

Survey response data for survey question 2

Options	**Votes** (358)
Physical safety and security	46% (166)
Maintenance of streets	21% (74)
Sidewalks	12% (43)
Parks, open-space, and recreational programs	77% (277)
City customer service and communications	21% (75)
Overall community appearance	49% (175)
Ease of getting around town	28% (99)
Cost and availability of housing	3% (11)
Other:	15% (55)



Responses for "Other":"

I feel like Helena is slowly improving, but I would not rank any of the above as strengths.
None of these
A vibrant arts community
Roads and buildings are not planned for beauty; except for a few areas, Helena is not a town people
Small town feeling. But beginning to get too big.
Its citizens who care about this wonderful place.
Water and Waste Handling
Like the change in leadership, better communication with citizens, common sense decisions.
Location
Friendly people. Engaged city commission
Availability of local healthy food. 33% by 2033
None
Arts and cultural venues. Location in the state.
Opportunity for business growth
None
The people
Generous and caring citizens
Downtown charm and historic buildings
I was super impressed with the fire mitigation of Mount Ascension
I LOVE Helena!
History, museum, capitol building

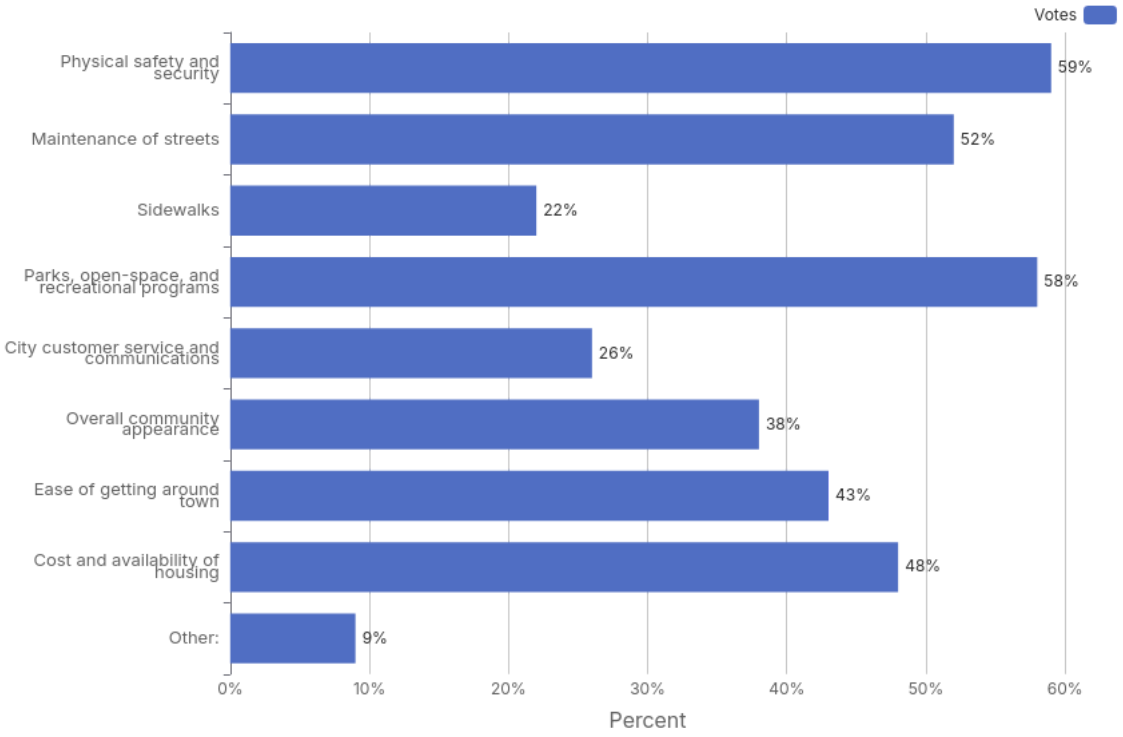
For is size, Helena has a lot of culture and events.
artistic and musical community, residents want to make Helena better
Downtown and the walking mall
Government focus on local issues, not virtue signaling
That you are using this so to collect a broader base of community opinions
All of the things listed in this category need HUGE help!
Sanitation services
Garbage disposal
Overall community cooperation and compassion exhibited by Helena residents
Historic downtown and related tourism. Centrally located within MT. Stable economy.
The management of your Parks department is horrid. There’s little public accountability, lead staff
Keeping homeless in control
good pubic officials, the mayor, the city manager and their staffs.
A great place to live! Don't pass it on.
Arts and public art
none
The beaitful color of the RED lights that burns gallons of gas.
Friendly residents, nice churches, clubs.
General friendliness of residents
Vapiyal
Being the seat of Montana's government allows Helena to shine!
the way the bureaucracy is being run with the new city manager
Flashvote
City staff and commission being proactive in addressing needs of infrastructure, eg water sources
Size and approchability
Character of the downtown district
The city over funds trails and does extremely poor in the other areas.
The City and County are well behind all other major cities in Montana as far as planning and mainte
Why did yall make a list of all the things Helena is failing at.
The City Manager.
Very friendly people.
Sidewalks, physical safety, and maintenance are all adversely affected by vagrants.

Q3 Which of the following aspects of Helena are most IMPORTANT to you, if any? (You can choose up to FOUR)

(355 responses)

Survey response data for survey question 3

Options	**Votes** (355)
Physical safety and security	59% (208)
Maintenance of streets	52% (186)
Sidewalks	22% (79)
Parks, open-space, and recreational programs	58% (206)
City customer service and communications	26% (94)
Overall community appearance	38% (135)
Ease of getting around town	43% (153)
Cost and availability of housing	48% (172)
Other:	9% (32)



Responses for "Other":"

Free parking
Passenger rail
Recruiting of varied businesses that are desired rather than banks, early 2000s big stores, casinos
Maintain county roads
Affordable housing. Affordable housing. Affordable housing.
Good leadership and Common sense decision-making. If the feds want to give us money, take it.
Helena public Schools
Wellbeing of future generations
Listening better to citizens
Just as a note, this question didn't make sense - most important to work on? or existing condition?
Amenities like restaurants, coffee shops, etc. and/or a thriving downtown
Water and utilities
The Arts. Grandstreet. The Myrna Loy. The Holter. The Walking Mall. Etc.
safe walking and bicycling
Variety of shopping and restaurants
Custer ave needs better traffic flow
Transportation for non drivers
Get rid of the weeds and five people for leaving their garage save signs up. It’s littering
Govt structures and actions that support arts, culture & other positive residents’ initiatives
WATER/SEWER- Hard to believe that wasn’t listed.
funding for maintenance of public buildings

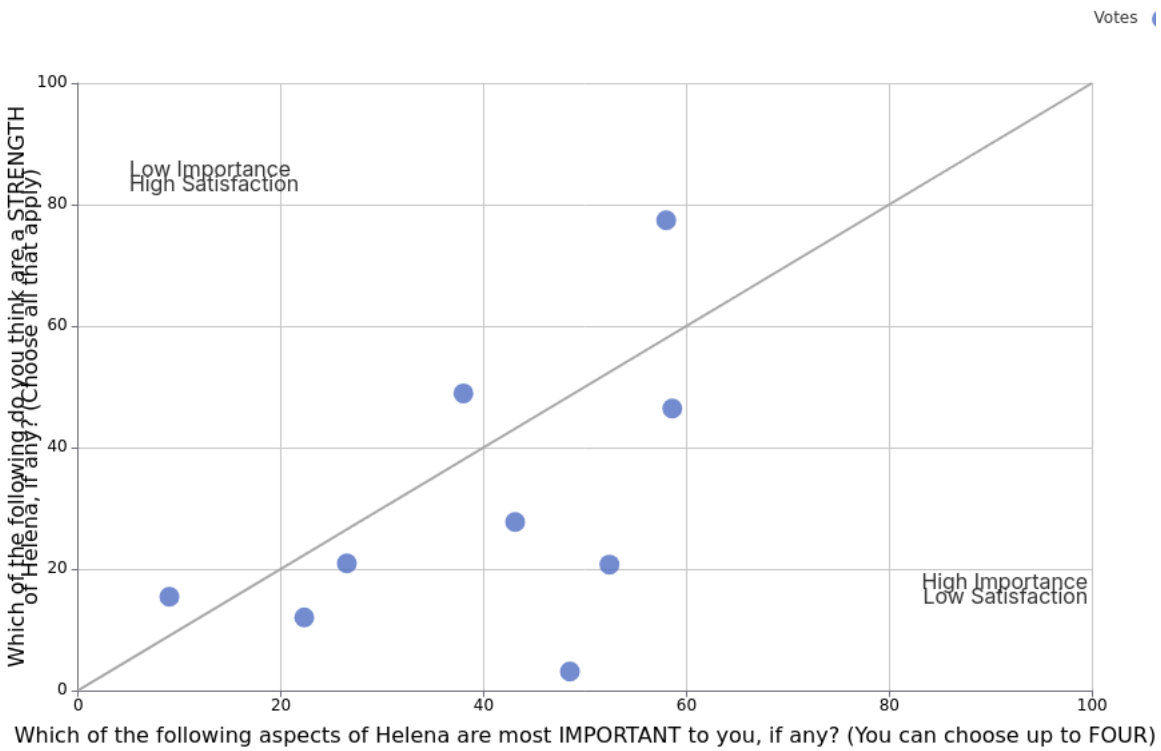
Jobs
High speeds and excessive traffic on Rodney St near 2 schools
stop interring with business growth and development
State worker employment, physical location, and size
walkability and bike ability.
Too many homeless in walking tunnels near downtown
Cost and availability of childcare
Community programs for the arts
Parking downtown is till an issue. You are hurting downtown business
Quality leaders on staff.

Importance vs. Satisfaction Comparison

(358 responses)

Survey response analysis data

Options	Votes (355)	
	Importance	**Satisfaction**
Physical safety and security	59% (208)	46% (166)
Maintenance of streets	52% (186)	21% (74)
Sidewalks	22% (79)	12% (43)
Parks, open-space, and recreational programs	58% (206)	77% (277)
City customer service and communications	26% (94)	21% (75)
Overall community appearance	38% (135)	49% (175)
Ease of getting around town	43% (153)	28% (99)
Cost and availability of housing	48% (172)	3% (11)
Other:	9% (32)	15% (55)

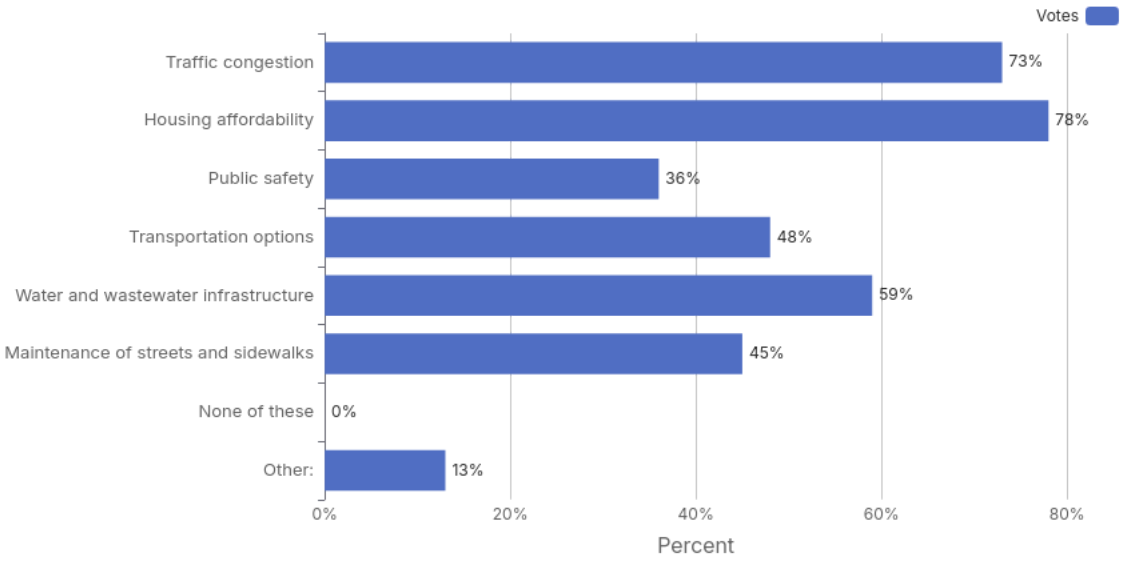


Q4 Think about the future of Helena 10 years from now.

Which of the following do you see as being a challenge then, if any? (Choose all that apply)
(359 responses)

Survey response data for survey question 4

Options	**Votes** (359)
Traffic congestion	73% (263)
Housing affordability	78% (279)
Public safety	36% (130)
Transportation options	48% (174)
Water and wastewater infrastructure	59% (213)
Maintenance of streets and sidewalks	45% (160)
None of these	0% (1)
Other:	13% (46)



Responses for "Other":"

pedestrian and cycling safety
Lack of quality of life amenities for a City with an economic community this size; lack of events.
Affordable housing infill
Waste management
Lack of bike lanes
Housing affordability. Housing affordability. Housing affordability.
Redevelopment of Downtown
Leadership, Being good stewards of our tax dollars, Traditional common sense values
Jobs
Food security
Cost of utilities
mental health services
business incubator, larger shopping districts, incentives to use empty buildings, protect rural are
Homelessness is increasing in Helena, the city needs to set aside an emergency space for camping.
Streamlined, business-friendly and pro-growth city leadership and economic development staff.
Custer Avenue
Reducing sprawl! Already a problem
parking
population vs infrastructure, increase in trains
Leadership that didn't plan for such large growth
city government that is responsive to residents

Urban Deer
Street lights timed correctly and Custer. When bldg new streets leave room for expanding the roads
Conserving Helena neighborhoods, including yards & gardens (since our parks utterly fail in design)
lightening up the city's "carbon footprint"
We are behind the 8 ball, fiscally & physically on all things infrastructure wise
Green space in new development areas that maintains Montana large open spaces
Please do something with Custer Ave. west of Montana Ave!
Overbuilding and, drawing in undesirables
City council doesn't take feedback from citizens
Lack of city tree maintenance in older Helena areas with electrical wiring running trough them
Noise from increasingly loud vehicles
The City fathers focusing on keeping Montana values and way of lifein forefront.
The city government's willingness to listen and respond to resident concerns and wishes.
business friendly climate
sidewalks, safe bike paths that allow for commute biking
Maintenance of parks.
Then and Now - empty retail locations, too many Stockman Bank buildings, loss of small businesses
access to quality healthcare options
Childcare affordability
Culture and Activities - engagement and entertainment
All of the above
Continued growth of transient community
Meeting needs of housed to ensure safety of all
The water tastes and smells terrible

Q5 Any other comments or suggestions about community priorities or needs in Helena, including anything specific you would change?

(179 responses)

Individual Responses | AI-Generated Comment Summary

Walkable cities
Improve pedestrianxajd cycling safety. Congestion - particularly around railroad crossing options.
We need to fully support the passenger rail plan underway. That would bring such long term economic benefits to the town, connecting us to that line will be a boon to the entire community and region
need less roundabouts and more stop lights and stop signs. Do not put a roundabout down town. The stop signs are working just great!! Listen to the citizens rather than some consultant you hired that does not live here.
PLEASE, no more banks, early 2000s box stores, casinos! It's a joke and ruins our community. Recruit valuable businesses and smart developers to help shape the city.
Need arrows at Rodney & 11th Ave intersection- morning / school traffic is awful & congested. Need School zone on Broadway & Warren for Central Elementary kids walking- crazy speeders!!
Cut the red tape! On site stormwater controls is a huge blockade to getting any type of development in this clown town. Get rid of the on site stormwater controls blockade!
Helena is not a town people visit for its beauty. Builders are building ugly houses. Let's do better Helena!
Better notification to residents of council votes related to ICE in Helena, better preparedness of city attorney and council members before voting.
Housing affordability is my greatest fear. It may drive me out of Helena. I know it's a hard issue with no easy solution but there needs to be a better mix of options including regulated manufactured homes, "tiny" homes and small lots - not just ADUs. Programs to help seniors maintain homes would help too. Perhaps less pressing but still vital is more support for pet spay/neuters and vaccination.
Staff must do a better job respecting citizen input. Get to YES when possible. Exercise good judgment not blind adherence to an interpretation of a rule. Find appropriate applications and/or responses to an every changing

environment for most issues; housing, small business, investment, fees and services, sidewalks, etc.

Make parking free.

Support for Helena's immigrant and refugee communities should be enhanced, and the needs of Helena's unhoused population addressed more effectively so that public spaces are not encampments of last resort.

Reducing tax burden

I would like to see a requirement that new subdivisions must have a playground, sidewalks, and walking paths - similar to what Bozeman has been doing with their growth. I would also like bike lanes to be a priority. We also need a broader incentive program/requirement that homeowners in established neighborhoods install sidewalks, especially within a certain radius of public schools. I would also like to see us increase solar energy use.

The inferstructure in the county needs improved badly especialy the roads

There needs to be a stop light where cars come out of Costco. That street is very busy and it’s impossible to get out of that area. Also, with the new city brew opening there shortly and a new bank hat is only going to complicate traffic matters in that vicinity even worse than it is now. Also, on a different note. There needs to be something done on the traffic on Custer, from the traffic backup on the bridge over the interstate to the fairgrounds. That hole street needs to be widened since there are so many cars using that area. That road is a nightmare from the time school gets out until about 6p.

I’d like to see more protected bike lanes to encourage people to bike around town instead of drive everywhere

Need to control electric bikes and scooters in residential areas and roads. They and riders are not licensed and are in traffic not obeying laws. DAANGEROUS!

As a person using a walker and/or cane to get around I find that Helena is NOT friendly for disabled people. There are “lips” that must be maneuvered before getting on many places. A lot of broken up sidewalks. I realize many of them belong to businesses but is it the responsibility of the city to make sure it’s safe to get around everywhere.

The snow plows are inconsiderate about creation of berms. I know of elderly citizens who have been unable to get to chemo and other appointments during ordinary winter weather because they were unable to get onto the city or VA bus at their home, low income housing, or assisted living facility due to berms between sidewalk and street. I have finished shovelling and still standing at the end of my driveway only to have the snowplow come by and plow in a new berm where I had previously cleared. It is infuriating.

NA

We need to address traffic congestion on Custer Ave from Montana Ave to the County Fairgrounds.

Street maintenance dept not efficient during periods of winter and no snow

I would like to see us encourage more walking and electric vehicles and bikes. It would also be nice if we could invest in community solar power and share in the reduced electrical expenses. Establish a block wide solar investment shared by the participants of the neighborhood. If my hour wasn't a good choice for solar, perhaps I could invest in solar in another area of the neighborhood.

Would like to see incentives for ride sharing and continued street improvements.

We have been building a house here and all of the personal interactions I have had with the city personnel have been very good over the past 5 years. This is much improved from previous years when they were consistently poor.

I wish Helena prioritized sidewalks, walk ability, and safe streets more. I live close to downtown and the Capitol and the sidewalks are terrible and unsafe all around the older downtown core neighborhoods and people drive too fast down residential streets.

Make it easier for new businesses to open in Helena!

More facilities for kids to have fun. Less people Less traffic Noise restrictions on roads

Where is the City's action on clean energy goals and waste reduction goals? Are they being ignored? Why is the City not enforcing sidewalk snow removal requirements on Prospect, Montana, and 11th? I am also concerned about historic buildings which look like they are in the midst of demolition by neglect.(like the Cornelius Hedges house at Rodney and Broadway).

Housing affordability.

none

Community also depends on interaction. I wish there were city-sponsored things like neighborhood parties (currently way too expensive to close off a street) or meetings to discuss visions or ideas. But just encouraging social events would be helpful.

It has been a bit over 50 years since the destruction of downtown commenced with "urban renewal". Downtown could actually be a truly vibrant symbol of Helena again, 24/7, with smart ideas, best-in-class physical and economic planning and investment. The process begins with vision, political will and meaningful, well-crafted policies and incentives. The results can pay for themselves many times over. I wish this for Helena

Top priority: Montana Ave. underpass.

Prioritize essential services over niceties.

Less homeless, we need more people in jail. It's too dangerous at night.

Continue to stay out of national politics that you can't affect anyway. Concentrate on local issues.

Stricter enforcement of e-bikes and scooters Too much growth losing small town appeal Stricter laws on condition of owner properties.

thanks for this opportunity to comment. Helena has so much going for it, particularly in terms of walkability, open spaces and hiking opportunities, historic buildings and ease of travel. I don't want Helena to become another "Boz Angeles," with traffic problems, hectic pace of life, etc.

Just an observation from nearly 17 years residence in my neighborhood. It seems to me that streets like Gold Rush get faster and better maintenance (both plowing snow and actual filling of potholes and street repair) than streets like mine where the housing is mostly modest rentals.

Change (perception? reality?) of city staff being NO sayers and roadblocks to projects/progress to being problem solvers, listeners, action minded.

Make city property available for nutricious food production. Make all decisions by first considering the wellbeing of future generations.

More enforcement of noise laws

Please put a cross walk at Stuart and N Benton Sts

A noise ordinance on loud vehicles, and removing the blighted house on the NW corner of Broadway and Rodney

I appreciate The hard work of the Mayor and city commissioners For very little compensation. I am seeing a very vocal and sometimes large group of people who show up to the meetings with some ideas that I do not agree with. Please be assured that there are many people not as vocal, and not as present at the meetings that strongly disagree with their beliefs. many hard-working citizens have to prioritize and spend time in the evenings with their families. I like flash vote, which gives me the opportunity to express my feelings and also impressed with the new city listening sessions. it seems the city cares and wants to hear from its citizens. Let's stick to good old-fashioned values and common sense decision-making. Thank you.

Do away with the parking nazis. You're killing downtown with costly parking and inflexible employees

Bringing in more commerce, eg. restaurants and stores.

No

The city commission, mayor, and city manager have made huge progress over the last several months, but we need to keep going. We can't keep reverting back to the old way of doing things or be too scared to do things differently. Our community and our future generations are counting on us to make Helena a viable place to live and raise our families.

No need for a downtown roundabout. It works just great the way it is and we can really use the funds to fix all the streets that so desperately need repairs.

Change Hauser to a two-way street between Benton and Kessler.

Kind of a frustrating survey. If I left something unchecked, it doesn't mean you are doing badly or that I don't care about it. My responses are comparative selections of the choices offered.

Expanding city limits. Many people live outside city limits but use city amenities every day. They should be taxed.

bike trails... walkability....

The police need to care more about doing their jobs! People do what they want including driving rules being broken!

there is an apparent uptick in "bad behaviors" spilling out of local bars. Is it bartenders overserving? is it hard drugs being dealt? is it inadequate law enforcement? other?

Prioritizing and maintaining transportation and public works including streets, sidewalks, bike paths and projects that facilitate traffic flow and public transport.

Urban camping clean up. Better fiscal responsibility, such as dedicate effort and finances to get priority projects done, such as the railroad crossing. This has been on the table for entirely too long, while projects such as roundabouts or tennis courts get fast tracked, both of which seem very overpriced and not much value to Helena as a whole.

Be new business friendly to grow revenue. Improve upkeep of landscaping trees and roads.

I would like Helena to stop prioritizing feel good social things and start prioritizing its citizens health and safety. We don't need to be sister cities with Stepanavan, Armenia, and Isla Mujeres, Mexico, in addition to Montana's other global sister city relationships. This is the stupidest thing Helena could do! What about being sister cities with Montana City, Clancy, Townsend, Avon, Elliston, Wolf Creek, Augusta. What about helping those smaller communities thrive? What about helping our own citizens thrive? Spend your time and resources at home. You preach about shopping at home, yet you bring in out of the nation ideals. Help our own business thrive.

Review the busy roads and how to help with traffic flow. Phasing in sidewalks where neighborhoods do not have them.

Please focus on housing. We have been going the wrong direction on housing inventory for decades. Helena desperately needs more housing that is affordable for people at or below mean income. Too many people are living in RVs, cars, or on the street, or working multiple jobs to afford rent. The disconnect between housing costs and wages will continue to create problems in every area of Helena life if it's not addressed with more urgency. If I had to put forward an idea, I would suggest closing Bill Roberts Golf Course and using the land for affordable housing. It's a great location and the city already owns the land. The golf course seems to barely pay for itself, and we already have three other courses in the county. Housing is more important than frigging GOLF. Another thing that has been desperately needed since I moved here 23 years ago is widening Custer Avenue from North Montana to Henderson. I understand that it's a complex and expensive project, but man, it's so overdue.

State government will shrink if AI is applied every where possible. Start planning.

The population of individuals seeking cash or whatever on street corners, off-ramps seem to be increasing. My heart goes out to them

Housing affordability is top priority, both the rental market and for sale housing.

Not just sidewalk maintenance but specifically sidewalk connectivity and protected bike lanes. Broadway, winne, California could benefit from increased sidewalk connectivity

Improve railroad crossings to reduce traffic congestion and train noise

Just cause you have an empty lot does not mean you need to put something on it.

Sidewalk/road repairs (especially roads in the mansion district), paving dirt streets, adding sidewalks where there aren't any

Downtown parking is a serious problem- I would much prefer to pay an annual fee than to have to pay for street parking every time I want to go into town. I often don't bother to go just because of the parking issues.

It would be very helpful if the city could empower Frontline workers with decision making authority. The city is known for its extensive red tape and that makes unnecessary hardships on citizens and business owners. Event planners try to make Helena a fun place to live and the fire marshal can be challenging to work with. Thank you.

Helena needs better traffic coordination with railroads

Sidewalks seem like a good start. Building ADA ramps to grass seems silly

The communities on the N end of Benton have no developed parks. It has been this way since 2009 when houses were first occupied. City has prioritized open lands and drilling wells? Over the well being of our residents.

Housing andrental costs are absolutely outrageos and unforgivable. Greedy bastsrds!!!

I continue to hear that building in Helena is far more difficult than in other places. I feel certain that we have hard working staff, so I assume we don't have enough staff. Given how costly it is to build anything today, we need to figure out how to work better with builders. I would do everything possible to protect our parks, trails, and open spaces. They make Helena the wonderful place it is.

As a citizen, I would appreciate it if commissioners focused on basic, boring needs in responsibilities within the city. Stop focusing on social agenda items that are outside of the purview of city leadership.

Do a better job at bike trasportation and bike safety

NO traffic roundabouts Fix mess on Custer Ave

Ni

Helena valley should incorporate into their own town

Helena needs an indoor public swimming pool. We need to support out fire and police services. Parks are also huge. Thanks to PPLT we have great open space. We must preserve that. I would like to see better sports facilities. More importantly would be for Helena to support housing for our unhoused citizens.

Support business development. Remove red tape. Our health system and existing businesses need qualified employees. Difficult to recruit talent with the "no one welcome" sign attitude and systems in place. Successful cities have water and utility solutions in place. Helena and area do not. No excuses.

Would appreciate being able to see a city map online that shows street resurfacing projects over a thee to five year schedule.

I love Helena, and one of the things that makes me saddest is that every route into town is pretty unwelcoming. I'd love it if there was a conscious effort to make Euclid/Lyndale, N Montana, and 11th/Prospect more welcoming, so I'd feel proud when I come into town instead of a little disappointed. I've had multiple visitors comment on how their intdroduction to Helena was very underwhelming

Alive @5: I'd make it a big priority. When it was in Women's Park and by the library it was very well attended. Great for downtown businesses. Great for the community. Great for the food truck community. Make it EASY to get permits for these events. It was a beautiful part of summer in Helena.

Our City Council should be more open in their decision making, especially regarding connections with ICE. When the three conservative Council members do not address the issue of accepting a $53,000 grant, and inside kick it down the road with a bogus excuse, it raises suspicion and mistrust. This may be the first time I have ever mistrusted this commission and it was very disappointing.

Coordination/timing of traffic lights, specifically East end of Prospect and 11th avenues

Helena is paying for the sins of terrible planning and zoning of decades past. Entire subdivisions without sidewalks, no boulevards to push snow, letting developers do whatever and then annexing them in, etc. These are being compounded by an enormous in growth in surrounding areas. I think current City staff is not serving the commission well, and I don't think the commission has the time to adequately plan for good community growth. Ideally I he Charter would be changed so that the Mayor is a paid full time manager and is involved in day to day operations because City staff get away with what is easy.

I would address the issue of the lobby at the library. It seems like it has become a homeless shelter -- and the numbers seem to be increasing as provisions are made for these people - food, water, etc. I formerly would use the lobby as a respite from work - and have a snack, read, do paper work, meet a friend. Now, will no longer sit in the lobby due to body odor smell. Will no longer bring my grandchild into the lobby - does not feel like a safe place.

invest in active transportation infrastructure

Stop spending time on non-local issues like immigration enforcement

Actual sidewalks for kids to walk to the middle school on. Better flashing signs for Jefferson elementary school on Broadway Street (like they have for the capital on Montana Ave)

I would like to see a growth plan that includes consideration of how big of a town the residents would like to acheive. Increased growth and density may be counter to what residents value in Helena

The city's obsession with process impedes progress in nearly every category.

I worry about how Helena would/could fund a public transportation system to reduce congestion on roads

Help the homeless.

Urban Deer are a huge safety concern and the culling has not kept up with the amount of deer being reproduced.

Work toward sidewalks and bike lanes on all major transportation corridors.

More focus on our community issues rather than political hot points

Streets, lights not times, Custer, interstate exchange at Sierra, weeds everywhere, garage sale signs left up forever

Helena is more than downtown. Helena city exists east of Montana ave and North of the RR tracks. Mayor nor city council seem to understand that businesses east of Montana deserve the same amount of time spent downtown

City government should strictly focus on city issues, not national issues. Too much money is being spent on an arbitrary resolution or other national hot topics. Stop virtue signaling and fix actual or tangible issues, like our ridiculous traffic congestion, or crime rate and lack of public safety.

We need to stop letting the small representation on controversial subjects like ICE sway decisions that have a greater impact for the good of the people like the Safety Grant that was tabled.

Creating a tax structure and budget which address the community priorities and needs. Assess the cause of homelessness and finding solutions to improving the lives of the disadvantaged.

Helena has way too much traffic congestion for a city of its size.

Unnecessary winter sidewalk requirement

Crumbling sidewalk rules should be enforced, and homeowners/developers should pay. City should not be paying for new sidewalks. Streets, water, and sewer should be the fiscal priority. So much of our critical infrastructure is VERY old and deteriorating rapidly. The city should not prioritize non-motorized improvements (that are not used!) when we have fallen so far behind with the basic infrastructure that we need to live.

Thank you

Bike paths

Just because we all want ‘affordable housing’ does NOT mean that every idea for government involvement makes sense or serves the public good. Many proposals are self-serving and/or ripoffs that threaten to degrade our communities for someone’s private profit.

There is a great deal of discouragement currently in the general public with the lack of accountability and transparency of city elected leadership. Significant segments of the public don’t feel listened to nor heard even when participating in public meetings and spending the time and effort to express their opinions. The CityCommission itself is divided internally and as such unproductive. Special interests, especially development interests, have an ear over common citizens.

Have sent two or three emails to public works office over the past 4 years requesting information on possible pedestrian safety or sidewalk issues, have never received a response. Also, would like to see city take some sort of action at sites where sidewalks are blocked or impeded, such as by unmanaged shrubbery or failure to clear snow/ice.

Other important issues: • Investment in downtown (walking mall) to keep and bring in new businesses • Making parking more affordable and accessible

Although there are many new apartment complexes being built, the average renter will have difficulty affording them. We already have too many homeless people on the streets and I fear housing prices will just create more.

Homelessness solution - especially downtown. Mental health facilities/solutions. More public art and murals downtown. Child focused indoor activity/community center. First class music venue attracting bigger artists. Keep ICE out of Helena. No FLOCK cameras. Free recycling.

West Custer Ave update and widening, this project has been hanging for too many years. Intersection at Custer and Sanders is so dangerous, new housing south of Winco is going to add to this. What can be changed there?

Stop the high rise construction

If we are putting up new housing, the parking spots/unit required needs to be increased. Parking on the street has become a nightmare.

Pedestrian and bike safety

we need to provide funds to repair and upgrade our public parking facilities, which are deteriorating for lack of maintenance and funding for maintenance. These facilties will eventually be unsafe due to lack of maintenance.

I have been to many city council meetings where they claim they want to hear public feedback and waste everyone's time listening to it and then do what they were going to do anyway

Increase financial support of emergency services!

I worry about the amount of growth in the Helena Valley and water availability in addition to strain on our local infrastructure. We need to be intentional about managing growth sustainably while also making sure housing development doesn't overwhelmingly favor higher income people.

Making downtown nice and walkable with community events and small businesses is important

I have appreciated that projects such as putting in the medians on Montana was completed quickly.

We had some good and needed upgrades to some main arterial streets in our section of town (capitol) this year but overall we are falling behind in our street repair and maintenance. This should be a priority.

invest in our downtown, make it easier to hold events. fix the malfunction junctions and railroad BS. Broadway is becoming a cluster too. INVEST IN SIGNS THAT BRING VISITOR INTO DOWNTOWN, stop relying on entities outside of city government to do the city's work. Make parks take responsibility for the walking mall. Get yes people into parks, transportation positions of power; people who want to see the town grown intentionally and with heart. annex parts of the valley to pay for public safety instead of asking people in the city to keep shelling out property taxes. be creative with TIF funds beyond sidewalks and that awful 1 way situation in the 6th ward. keep asking us questions and listening please.

Widening Custer Ave should be the top traffic priority. It’s by far the biggest bottleneck i Helena.

We need a low barrier shelter, including peer support services, for our unsheltered neighbors.

I worry about young children walking to Central School as they cross Rodney Street on 9th. Rodney has become a very busy thoroughfare since the Street was widened with high speeds and continuous traffic. Helena Middle School kids are also increasingly using electric scooters and bikes. There are already stop signs on 9th. I propose 2 more signs on Rodney to create a 4-way stop to slow people down.

Helena needs vastly improved walking, biking, and driving. The city should look into modern design resources available to look at planning and implementing driving corridors easy for cars and separate walking and biking corridors for the currently non-existent walking and biking access to: Downtown, Hospital district, Government hill, Southside park and trail systems, all linking in to the current Centennial trail system.

More transparency with city government, especially making sure agendas for city council meetings are available a day ahead of the meeting,

I know law enforcement is overstretched, but I wish there were more enforcement of traffic regulations. So many drivers exceed speed limits, drive right through traffic lights and stop signs, and deliberately make as much noise as possible. This is dangerous for everyone. I got hit by a speeding car while walking across 6th avenue downtown a few years ago. Many e-vehicles are using sidewalks at high speeds instead of streets. I worry about pedestrians of all ages, especially young children. Also, the deliberate racket made by souped-up, speeding vehicles disturbs the peace city-wide, 24/7. It seriously degrades Helena.

I would love to feel like the city fathers are interested in what the community wants. I would love for them to listen. We dont always want what works in other states. I am from here and I have lived up and down the west coast. I dont want Helena to be like other places

Pedestrian crosswalk lights at 11th and Hoback. Middle school kids crossing

Helena must work at being better at responding to resident concerns. Our area population continues to grow but we aren't addressing the needs that will grow in terms of transportation, water infrastructure, small (ma and pa establishments) business health, and general visual appeal of the City. Furthermore, the city limits must grow to include as many of the residents who utilize the city's services so that our revenue sources better represent those who are essentially a part of the city but not within city limits.

Homeless wander the streets, begging for handouts and the so-called Business Improvement District looks for ways to attract more homeless to the downtown. Tree limbs are broken but not yet fallen. A city that cared about public safety would cut them down and haul them away.

Indoor pool

I would like to see some of the potholes and general maintenance of the streets fixed. I do see projects happening around town, so maybe you're already addressing that. We have a lot of deer in our yard and neighborhood in general. My dog was charged by a buck recently which concerns me.

Thank you for this opportunity for community input!

Approx. 3-4 times per year the water tastes like the bottom of a swamp. Why not fix it?

city government is too bureaucratic, over regulatory, and interventionist. stick to basics: infrastructure and public safety. encourage private sector investment and growth.

I hope we can make public transportation more available and cheap to help people who do not or cannot drive.

The homeless are living in tunnels and parking garages!! Sick!! Parking should be free downtown like Bozeman!!

Old topic, close the outer lanes of intersection at Cruise and Cutler. All traffic through the two middle lanes until the big intersection change is addressed. People are driving faster, could we get 25 mph signs in neighborhood areas where drivers are transitioning from say 35 mph to neighborhood streets? The focus is to grab attention of the out of neighborhood folks using neighborhood streets on a regular basis to get to other parts of town, avoiding the established through streets to avoid traffic, etc. I think of this same area, Custer that becomes State Street to Rodney. Also the neighborhood streets that are used to avoid Custer and Montana Ave, running north-south. Changes in speed limits should be obvious in these areas. Thank you for asking and for your work.

Please don't put a roundabout at malfunction junction (Neill Ave., Helena Ave., Last Chance Gulch). It is working great and, as far as I know, nobody is in favor of changing it. It would be better to spend that money on the crime victims assistance program that the City of Helena has just started up, and similar programs.

I would love to see small businesses supported in the downtown area. And affordable housing. Help for the unhoused - a shelter with showers, sleeping rooms, bins to keep their stuff safe if/while they look for a job, food for them and for their animals

I spoke with Wilmot last year about the move of the mailboxs on Jade St. and there is no street light for residents to pickup their mail and it is very dangerous for kids and women in the fall,spring and winter as the daylight is reduced by a ton. I would like to see a street light installed for safety and ability to see your mailbox and pickup packages!

Traffic flow improvements on West Custer Ave need to be addressed ASAP!

The roundabouts are doing a great job where we've used them: Green Meadow/Lincoln Rd, Canyon Ferry and South Helena. Biggest challenge in our area now is congestion on Custer -- the entire length of Custer actually. Not sure how to encourage taking of other routes or if there are other realistic options. Getting to be a challenge to get out of our neighborhood, especially if you just want to take a walk.

make parking free and or provide decent accessible public transportation

I'd like to know where to find information about what needs are currently being addressed but need more volunteer help. Where are people experiencing problems that I may not otherwise know about. Are improvements actually helpful? ie, Lots of work was done to curb sidewalks this past summer, are they effective in use? Will snow block them this winter?

Rebuilding streets

The walking mall should be a priority. Visitors and vacationers will spend money, improves the feel of the city and is a main attraction.

Please get a community rec center with an indoor pool!

Sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, and non-motorized spaces are inconsistent across town: older properties are grandfathered in without sidewalks, and bike or pedestrian areas don't always link up with each other. Is there a possibility of long-range planning and funding to gradually increase Helena's walkability or bikeability? I would also dearly like to see modification to several traffic chokepoints: Custer Ave. between Henderson St. to Montana Ave., and N. Last Chance Gulch southbound at Lyndale Ave. (specifically the left-turn lane onto Lyndale east). Also (selfishly), the traffic light at N. Benton and Custer Ave. highly prioritizes east-west traffic, even late into the evening, and always

activates the crosswalk, even when no pedestrians are present. Could we re-program this and other outdated traffic signal algorithms?

Inner city parking is very congested, both around businesses and residential. Amd walking on sidewalks, most of which need fixing.. and not at the expense of the residents.

Stop building houses and apartments that have to filter on to already too busy of streets specifically Custer and Sanders. Nothing should be built north of Custer until Custer is fixed and can handle the traffic

There seems to be a lack of adherence to traffic rules which affects safety on the streets

Housing is a community health issue. The homeless need somewhere to go so they don't freeze to death. There are hundreds of Helenans who live in their vehicles at trailheads and the like. Most of these people also work. It's ridiculous that they can't find affordable housing anywhere around here, not even a safe place to park and spend the night. No public restrooms and the porta potties need more frequent cleanings.

Downtown safety

The city should encourage inclusive and diverse culture and entertainment opportunities for the community to be engaged and stay vibrant- currently the perspective that Helena is alive at five and asleep by eight is hard to counter- we need fun things for young adults and people in general to do besides drink or watch tv.

Everyone wants to stop living paycheck to paycheck, but nobody wants to pay a living wage. Get it together!

NA

Cost of living has risen so much that all most people do anymore is work, and then by the end of the pay period you spend your whole check on survival realizing you have to choose between basic needs. This city isn't walkable, if my car breaks down and I have one bad week I'll be homeless. Maybe prioritize working class people as human beings rather than commodities to be exploited. As a woman I cannot go to a gas station in Helena without being harassed by a male, I can't go to work without being harassed by males, I cannot drive without males in big trucks trying to bully me off the road, I can't really leave my house without my husband. Why am I'm being taxed into oblivion just for the right to live in a community I was born in and yall pretend like you care about what the community thinks, how about putting my taxes back in my pocket because corruption has made yall enough money.

Hire more police officers, develop a traffic unit to help control traffic, traffic congestion and speeding is a problem. I see this everyday and see the blatant and dangerous acts of failing to yield to pedestrians.

Not sure how you can have this survey without addressing the specific transient problem. It is a real problem that we have to navigate daily. My kinds can't walk to and from school safely and the city is not enforcing existing law

Traffic in and out of the valley and west side if Helena is very restricted causing extra congestion in traffic. Custer needs to be enlarged to handle the existing traffic of the residents and fairgrounds in addition to the soon upgraded Capital High School. It is embarrassing how many traffic jams we have in that area from the fair, concerts, sports games, and little league sports. This in turm causes extra congestion of Montana and Euclid. I am ashamed every time I have guests from out of town trying to come to Helena events and they witness that horrific scene. They have been "working" on it for over 6 years now and they have recently said it might be done in the next 8. This is ridiculous Helena! We do not need another "study". We need action.

It would be nice if the city commission listen to the public and didn't just do what they thought was right or wanted to do. It's been very discouraging being involved in city decisions.

Sidewalk maintenance would be better served by charging a fee like the one for street maintenance and then having city staff determine how best to use those funds to meet community needs rather than having anonymous complaints be the determining factor.

Support the city manager - she's moving it in the right direction.

Need to get streets fixed. Plants need to stop blocking, impeding sidewalks.

Move in the direction of clean energy, i.e. solar

Every year the vagrant encampment on Cruse is tolerated, the larger the encampment grows. Vagrants sleeping in downtown garages and doorways add to the perception that Downtown isn't safe. There needs to be a facility to get people off the streets and, if they are willing to participate, into a program that addresses their addictions or other problems. The city government seems to prioritize people choosing to sleep on our streets and sidewalks over the safety and general quality of life of taxpayers. This is NOT an affordable housing issue. It's a law and order versus vagrancy issue.

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