

# Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC)

June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
4:00pm – 6:00 pm  
Headwaters at Currents  
600 Cregg Lane  
Missoula, MT 59801

## Agenda

### Action Items:

- Approve minutes from May 9<sup>th</sup> and May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 meetings
- Review public comments on open space plan and vote on motion to recommend Missoula City Council and Planning Board adopt final open space plan draft.
- Nominate and vote on Vice Chair position

### Public/Guest comments on items not on the Agenda:

### Discussion Items:

- Open Space Program Manager hiring process and timeline
- Conservation Lands Program Update – Morgan Valliant, Conservation Lands Manager

### Future items

- City Open Space Ordinance amendments
- 2018 Open Space bond interlocal agreement

### Adjournment

---

The City makes reasonable accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's ability to participate in this meeting. Persons needing assistance should provide advanced notice to allow adequate time to make needed arrangements. Please call **Corena Maurer** or write to Missoula Parks & Recreation Operations Division, 100 Hickory St., Missoula, MT 59801, to make your request known. (552-6253)

**Review of Public Comments Received for 2019 Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan/Open Space Plan Chapter of Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (PROST) Plan**

The following document provides a synopsis of the review of public comments received for the draft Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan, a chapter of the PROST Plan. The public comment period was open for 21 days and was advertised via emails from City and County, social media from City and County, a news release, and a newspaper article. Eleven public comments were received through the online form and 5 more comments were emailed. Below, is a summary and response addressing the detailed comments that were submitted.

Comments to be reviewed at the City Open Space Advisory Committee on June 13th, 2019 and the County Open Lands Citizen Advisory Committee on June 20, 2019.

**Summary of comment:** Acquisition of trails and trail easements are important, trails should be connected across jurisdictional ownership, and acquisition of lands with public access should be prioritized over those that do not offer public access.

*Response:* Corridors and trails are an open space type that is a priority in the draft plan. Also, as the remaining chapters of the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (PROST) plan are developed, the Trails chapter will address in greater detail the priorities for trails.

**Summary of comment:** It is essential to provide green spaces that can be accessed within the urban area and close to home. These are more accessible for families, people of all ages and abilities, etc.

*Response:* The plan prioritizes Urban Green Spaces as a type of area in need of further protection. Also, as the remaining chapters of the PROST plan are developed, the Parks chapter will address in greater detail the priorities for parks and urban green spaces.

**Summary of comment:** This plan over-emphasizes agricultural land protection.

*Response:* Agricultural land is one of several open space types that are priorities in the draft plan.

**Summary of comment:** The plan does not adequately factor in maintenance for trails and parks.

*Response:* As the remaining chapters of the PROST plan are developed, the Parks and Trails chapters will address in greater detail the priorities for parks, urban green spaces, and trails.

**Summary of comment:** Cost of open space conservation creates a hardship for rural residents and affordable housing.

*Response:* The City and County are committed to protecting the lands that make Missoula unique, while also working to address the host of challenges that arise regarding land use and public needs.

**Summary of comment:** We don't need more open space.

*Response:* With the open space funds voted for by County residents in 2018, it is important to have an updated plan that helps inform and guide the direction of open space in the future. Of note,

the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails survey Results regarding continued strong support for Open Space protection. (See Appendices, particularly G, of the Draft Plan.)

Summary of comment: Land near the old pulp mill should be restored. Riverfront parks are important, especially along the north shore of the Clark Fork River.

*Response:* Riparian corridors, including the Clark Fork River, are prioritized for protection in the open space plan. The City also maintains a long-term goal to connect the river front trail along the north and south shores of the Clark Fork River through downtown Missoula.

Summary of comment: Lands with public access for recreation are important, especially west of Reserve Street, north of Clark Fork River.

*Response:* Open space acquisition is opportunistic and occurs voluntarily. Lands in this area are important for conservation, as depicted in the open space cornerstone map.

Summary of comment: Various comments pointed out grammatical errors or inaccuracies. FWP requested addition of certain FWP parcels to the appropriate maps.

*Resulting edits to plan:* Edits were, and will continue to be, addressed in the document text.

Additional content-related considerations for Edits:

Page 1, add “human” to paragraph 2 “...from ecological and human health to economic vitality.”

Page 11, #2 Urban Green Spaces. Add to last sentence “...health and recreation, ‘and often best provide for social justice, health equity, and inclusion opportunities’.”

Page 12 Implementation Strategies for Corridors. Add “Support efforts to enhance the benefits of a healthy Urban Forest”/

Page 16 Decision Making Structure. Add to title “‘Current’ Decision Making...” and consider moving to appendix.



Region 2 Office  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804-3101  
406-542-5500  
May 31, 2019

Donna Gaukler, Director  
Missoula Parks & Recreation  
[dgaukler@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:dgaukler@ci.missoula.mt.us)

Juniper Davis, Program Manager  
Missoula County Parks, Trails and Open Lands  
[jdavis@missoulacounty.us](mailto:jdavis@missoulacounty.us)  
Missoula, MT

Reference: Draft 2019 Open Space Plan Chapter of the PROST Plan

Dear Ms. Gaukler and Ms. Davis:

Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has reviewed draft 2019 Open space Plan Chapter (hereafter, First Chapter) of the new Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Plan. We offer the following input, which might also apply to later chapters in the PROST.

### **SCORP**

FWP encourages planners to consult Montana's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP<sup>1</sup>). SCORP is the state's guide for outdoor recreation and conservation management. It creates a recreation roadmap for improving the quality of life for residents with consideration of sustained economic benefits and opportunities to communities, balanced with ensuring that there are functioning fish and wildlife habitats, now and into the future. (The 2019-2024 SCORP report is currently in the process of being drafted; it is expected to be published for public review by December 2019.)

### **Health Impacts**

FWP agrees with and support planning efforts that include consideration for the human health benefits of exposure to natural public landscapes. The benefits of being in nature have been clinically proven to apply to people of all ages, income levels, backgrounds, health, and abilities. Access to natural landscapes, outdoor recreation, and time spent in open space have all been documented to provide numerous health benefits, including:

- Improved physical and mental health;
- Greater awareness of environmental concerns and stewardship principles; and,
- Improved community interactions between residents, neighbors, and visitors.

---

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://stateparks.mt.gov/about-us/scorp.html> Accessed 30 May 2019.

## Tracking and monitoring

FWP recommends comprehensive planning efforts that closely track and monitor open space and recreational demands to enable making informed adjustments. With tourism in the area growing and the Missoula population increasing, more and more visitors will be traveling to the surrounding areas in search of both open spaces and recreation areas. We also encourage planners to develop open space plans with strong consideration for potential impacts to fish and wildlife habitats, public lands, parks and recreational areas in mind.

## Connectivity

FWP supports connectivity through expansion of existing commuter networks. We encourage planning and projects that connect all public lands within the plan area, regardless of administrative oversight (National Forest, BLM, City, County, State). We also encourage planning that considers connectivity to public lands outside the planning area, such as the communities of Lolo, Frenchtown, Clinton and Seeley Lake.

## FWP Lands

State Parks. FWP's Montana State Parks manages five state parks (SPs, listed below) within short driving distance of Missoula. Two SPs, Council Grove and Milltown, are within the Plan's area (and are shown as Public Recreation Lands on Figure 1 of the First Chapter). The other three SPs, respectively, are approximately 1, 6, and 16 miles beyond. Increasingly, these SPs provide significant recreational access and educational programming for the Missoula and western Montana communities. Proximity to a major urban area can place strain on nearby existing park resources and infrastructure, including critical natural and cultural resources. Having additional local urban and suburban options for both open space and recreational access to complement these SPs can help alleviate the impacts to these often irreplaceable--and sometimes nationally significant--resources.

- State Parks in the Plan area: Council Grove, Milltown State Park
- State Parks near the Plan area: Travelers' Rest, Frenchtown Pond, Beavertail Hill

Other FWP Lands. In addition to State Parks, FWP also has other recreation lands in the Plan's area that are not shown on Figure 1 (First Chapter).

- We have at least three Fishing Access Sites (FASs) in the Plan's area: Harpers Bridge, Kelly Island, and our Bitterroot River parcels.
- We have a 120-acre Mount Jumbo Wildlife Management Area (WMA).
- We recommend adding these FWP lands to the Figure depicting current public lands in the Plan area. (For more information, please contact Sharon Rose at our office, 542-5540 or [shrose@mt.gov](mailto:shrose@mt.gov)).

Thank you for this opportunity for FWP to review and comment on this proposal.

Sincerely,



Randy Arnold  
Regional Supervisor

RA/sr