



City of Helena

CITY OF HELENA
City Commission Meeting
March 24, 2025 - 6:00 PM

City - County Building Room 330 / Zoom Online Meeting; <https://zoom.helenamt.gov/j/36053471/publicmeetings>

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Minutes**
 - A. 3-5-25 Admin Meeting
4. **Presentations**
 - A. Confirmation of Officers Toby Erickson and Brendan Colburn
 - B. Confirmation of Fire Dept. Assistant Chief Jason Wendzel
5. **Board & Committee Update**
 - A. Board Appointments
6. **Bid Award**
 - A. Bid Award for Centennial Drive Water Main Replacement Project #24-19
7. **Communication/Proposals from Commissioners**
8. **Report of the City Attorney**
9. **Report of the City Manager**
10. **Communications from the Helena Citizens Council**
11. **Regular Items**
 - A. Consider Acceptance of the FY2024 Financial and Federal Single Audits
 - B. Consider a Resolution of Intention to Establish New Fees Charged for the Use of the Helena Civic Center and Repeal Resolution No. 20819.
 - C. Consider Open Lands Proposed Major Projects
 - D. Consider final passage of an ordinance that changes the zoning in The Peaks Phase 1, MVM from R-U to R-4 [War Eagle St]
12. **Public Hearings**
 - A. Consider a Resolution to Adopt the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan by Amending the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy for its Inclusion
13. **Public Communications**
14. **Adjournment**

It is the policy of the City Commission to take public comment on any action item. For further information on any of the items mentioned above, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 447-8410 or dmclayborn@helenamt.gov.

To read packet information while attending a City Commission Meeting please use the City/County wireless network COMM_MEET during the meeting.

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, Ellie Ray, 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 Commission Administrative Meeting
March 5, 2025 – 4:00 PM**

**Zoom Link: [https://zoom.helenamt.gov/c/36053471/publicmeetings](https://zoom.helenamt.gov/j/36053471/publicmeetings)
City County Building, 316 N. Park Ave., Room 326**

Time & Place

A City Commission Administrative meeting was held Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. physically in the City County Building, Room 326, and via Zoom Hub Link: <https://zoom.helenamt.gov/c/36053471/publicmeetings>

Call to Work Session, Introductions

(00:04:20) The following responded present:

In Person

Deputy City Attorney Petesch
City Manager Burton
Commissioner Dean
Commissioner Shirtliff
Commissioner Logan
Mayor Collins

Via Zoom

none

The following were absent:

Commissioner Reed

Commission Comments, Questions

(00:04:56) There were no comments or questions from Commissioners.

Board & Committee Update

A. Board Appointment Review

(00:05:06) Mayor Collins presented Item A.

Recommendations from the Helena Citizens Council

(00:05:44) HCC Chairperson Ben Kuiper discussed recent and upcoming meeting agenda items.

(00:06:16) Commissioner Dean asked Manager Burton about staff coordination.

Report of the City Manager

(00:06:40) City Manager Burton had nothing to report.

Department Reports

A. Allocation of funds from the former Consolidated Central Helena Urban Renewal Area to a new project located within the boundaries of the former URA

- (00:07:13) Community Development Director Brink presented Item A.
- (00:15:30) Finance Director Danielson discussed context for accumulated funds and repayments.
- (00:17:29) Commissioner Shirliff asked Director Brink and Helena Symphony Board Chair Baldwin about the timeline for the feasibility plan.
- (00:20:17) Commissioner Dean asked Director Brink about fund match requirements for a sunset URA district.
- (00:21:28) Commissioner Logan asked Chairperson Baldwin about the current property ownership and the application process.
- (00:22:45) Commissioner Logan asked Director Danielson about the amount of usable funds.
- (00:23:50) Commissioner Logan asked Director Brink and Manager Burton about the process for spending money based on the existing agreement.
- (00:24:36) Commissioner Shirliff asked Director Brink and Manager Burton about a TIF Board or similar mechanism for review.
- (00:27:27) Helena Symphony Music Director Allan R Scott provided public comment, discussing additional context.

B. Transportation Systems - Municipal Infractions Discussion

- (00:29:54) Transportation Systems Director Knoepke and Deputy City Attorney Petesch presented Item B.
- (00:36:52) Mayor Collins, Director Knoepke, and Commissioner Dean discussed combining the courtesy notice and first written notice.
- (00:39:33) Commissioner Logan asked Director Knoepke about additional examples of code that apply to the process.

- (00:41:11) Manager Burton asked Director Knoepke about the ADA transition plan.
- (00:41:46) Commissioner Logan requested that railroad crossings be included in further discussions.
- (00:42:15) George McCauley provided public comment, advocating for ADA compliance.
- (00:45:19) Mark Juedeman provided public comment via Zoom, advocating for ADA compliance.

C. Presentation of 2025 Engineering Department Capital Projects Update

- (00:46:45) Public Works Director Leland and City Engineer Clark presented Item C.
- (00:52:03) Commissioner Dean asked Engineer Clark about recent impacts on Forest Service contacts.
- (00:53:00) Commissioner Logan asked about property ownership of the Flume.
- (00:59:44) Manager Burton about the total value of projects.
- (01:00:00) Commissioner Logan asked Director Leland about information available for the public on the City of Helena website.
- (01:01:00) Commissioner Dean asked Engineer Clark and Director Leland about under-bid funding placement and about the name of Senate Bill 357.

Public Comment

- (01:02:39) There were no further comments or questions from the Commission and/or public.

Commission Discussion and Direction to the City Manager

Adjournment

- (01:03:00) There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:03pm.

City of Helena, Montana

February 27, 2025

To:

Mayor Collins and Helena City Commission

From:

Chief Brett Petty

Subject:

Confirmation of Officers Toby Erickson and Brendan Colburn

Present Situation:

The Helena Police Department has two officers who have successfully completed their one-year probationary period.

Background Information:

Under Montana law after the end of the probationary period the appointment of the officer must be submitted to the City Commission for vote of confirmation.

Proposal/Objective:

Approve the confirmation of Officers Toby Erickson and Brendan Colburn.

Advantage:

N/A

Notable Energy Impact:

N/A

Disadvantage:

N/A

Quasi-Judicial Item:

False

Notice of Public Hearing:

False

**Staff Recommendation/
Recommended Motion:**

Approve the confirmation of Officer Toby Erickson and Officer Brendan Colburn.

Montana Code Annotated 2019

TITLE 7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER 32. LAW ENFORCEMENT

Part 41. Municipal Police Force

Probationary Period And Confirmation Of Appointment

7-32-4113. Probationary period and confirmation of appointment. (1) Every applicant who has passed the examination and received the certificate referred to in **7-32-4108** must first serve for a probationary term of not more than 1 year. At any time before the end of such probationary term, the mayor, or the manager in those cities operating under the commission-manager plan, may revoke such appointment.

(2) After the end of such probationary period and within 30 days thereafter, the appointment of such applicant must be submitted to the city council or commission, and if such appointment is confirmed by the city council or commission, such applicant becomes a member of the police force and shall hold such position during good behavior unless suspended or discharged as provided by law.

History: En. Sec. 3, Ch. 136, L. 1907; Sec. 3306, Rev. C. 1907; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 198, L. 1921; re-en. Sec. 5097, R.C.M. 1921; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 119, L. 1923; re-en. Sec. 5097, R.C.M. 1935; amd. Sec. 3, Ch. 152, L. 1947; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 160, L. 1973; R.C.M. 1947, 11-1803(part).

City of Helena, Montana

3/24/2025

To: Mayor Collins and the Helena City Commission
From: City Manager Tim Burton, Fire Chief Jon Campbell
Subject: Confirmation of Fire Department Assistant Chief Jason Wendzel

Present Situation: Assistant Chief Wendzel has completed the requirements of his probation period.

Background Information: Assistant Chief Wendzel has completed his probationary period in good standing.

Proposal/Objective: Fire Department staff recommend the confirmation of Assistant Chief Jason Wendzel in alignment with MCA 7-33-4106. (see attachment)

Advantage: Completion of probationary process.

Notable Energy Impact: n/a

Disadvantage: n/a

Notice of Public Hearing: n/a

**Staff Recommendation/
Recommended Motion:** Fire Department staff recommend the confirmation of Assistant Fire Chief Jason Wendzel

Oath of Office

I, Jason Wendzel, recognize my obligation as a member of the Fire Department for the City of Helena to protect and preserve life and property of the public I serve, and I do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Montana, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of the office of

Assistant Fire Chief

for the City of Helena Fire Department according to the best of my ability and understanding.

Sworn Date: 3/24/2025

Wilmot J. Collins, Mayor



Jon Campbell, Fire Chief

Montana Code Annotated 2021

TITLE 7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CHAPTER 33. FIRE PROTECTION

Part 41. Municipal Fire Departments

Appointment Of Firefighters

7-33-4106. Appointment of firefighters. The mayor or manager shall nominate and, with the consent of the council or commission, appoint the chief of the fire department, the assistant chief or chiefs of the fire department, and all firefighters.

History: En. Sec. 2, p. 73, L. 1899; re-en. Sec. 3327, Rev. C. 1907; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 46, L. 1911; re-en. Sec. 5110, R.C.M. 1921; re-en. Sec. 5110, R.C.M. 1935; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 151, L. 1947; amd. Sec. 3, Ch. 489, L. 1977; R.C.M. 1947, 11-1902(part).

March 19, 2025

TO: City Commissioners
FROM: Mayor Wilmot Collins
SUBJECT: Board Appointments

I am recommending the following board appointments:

Citizen Conservation Board

Appointment of David Saba to an interim term on the Citizen Conservation Board. Interim term expires February 28, 2026.

*Appointees can reapply for full terms following the completion of the Interim Appointment.

City of Helena, Montana

03/10/2025

To:

Mayor Collins and the Helena City Commission

From:

Tim Burton, City Manager
Ryan Leland, Public Works Director
Jamie Clark, City Engineer

Subject:

Bid Award for Centennial Drive Water Main Replacement Project #24-19

Present Situation:

Presently there is an 8-inch ductile iron water main located in the 3400 block of Centennial Drive. The water main provides service to five (5) industrial users and was built in 1980. Over the past three (3) years there have been nine (9) water main breaks in this area, making it one of the more problematic mains within the City's water system. Through discussions with the Utility Maintenance Division, it was determined that the water main was installed in a substandard manner not using proper pipe bedding and instead bedded with native corrosive soils, significantly increasing the deterioration rate of the existing main. This is likely to lead to more break and leak issues in the future. The project will replace the entire 8-inch main on Centennial Drive from 3400 Centennial located just east of Irene Street east to Janet Street. This project will also replace the associated hydrants, valves, and fittings.

Bids were opened for the Centennial Drive Water Main Project on February 25, 2025. The city received 2 responsive bids for the Centennial Drive Water Main Replacement Project. Bids were received from 4050 Development LLC of Ennis, MT and Helena Sand and Gravel of Helena, MT. 4050 Development delivered a bid of \$469,247.00 and Helena Sand and Gravel delivered a bid of \$312,00.00. The apparent low bidder for the project was Helena Sand and Gravel of Helena MT with a quote of \$312,000.00.

Background Information:

Presently there is an 8-inch ductile iron water main located in the 3400 block of Centennial Drive. The water main provides service to five (5) industrial users and was built in 1980. Over the past three (3) years there have been nine (9) water main breaks in this area, making it one of the more problematic mains within the City's water system. Through discussions with the Utility Maintenance Division, it was determined that the water main was installed in a substandard manner not using proper pipe bedding and instead bedded with native corrosive soils, significantly increasing the deterioration rate of the existing main. This is likely to lead to more break and leak issues in the future. The project will replace the entire 8-inch main on Centennial Drive from 3400 Centennial located just east of Irene Street east to Janet Street. This project will also replace the associated hydrants, valves, and fittings.

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Proposal/Objective:

Consider awarding the contract to Helena Sand and Gravel, Incorporated. which submitted the lowest responsive bid in the amount of \$312,000.00.

Advantage:

Replacement of the aging water distribution infrastructure with new PVC water main will allow for the elimination of existing corrosion issues, reduced maintenance, and overall improved water service for the affected residents. Reduced repair frequency will eliminate significant additional maintenance costs that are incurred when the main breaks or leaks with freezing and thawing.

Notable Energy Impact:

Construction of this project will increase reliability and will decrease the need to allocate Utility Maintenance resources to this aging main to keep it functional.

Disadvantage:

None expected.

Quasi-Judicial Item:

False

Notice of Public Hearing:

False

**Staff Recommendation/
Recommended Motion:**

Move to award the Centennial Drive Main Replacement Project #24-19 to the lowest responsible bidder Helena Sand and Gravel Incorporated in the amount of \$312,000.00.

PROJECT: Cenennial Drive Water Main Replacement
 Bid Opening Date: 2/25/2025
 SUBJECT: PROJECT BID TABULATIONS



CITY OF HELENA PROJECT #24-19 - WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT			CENTENNIAL DRIVE	ENGINEER'S ESTIMATE	4050 DEVELOPMENT LLC ENNIS, MONTANA	HELENA SAND & GRAVEL INC. HELENA, MONTANA			
BID ITEM NO.	ESTIMATED QUANTITY	UNIT	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE
1	1	LS	MOBILIZATION	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$36,000.00	\$36,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
2	45	LF	INSTALL 8 INCH CLASS 200 C900, DR-14 PVC WATER MAIN, REMOVE AND REPLACE	\$110.00	\$4,950.00	\$145.00	\$6,525.00	\$83.00	\$3,735.00
3	960	LF	INSTALL 8 INCH CLASS 200, C900, DR-14 PVC WATER MAIN	\$100.00	\$96,000.00	\$155.00	\$148,800.00	\$83.00	\$79,680.00
4	1	LS	ABANDON EXISTING 8-INCH DI WATER MAIN IN PLACE, COMPLETE	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$40,900.00	\$40,900.00	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
5	2	EA	INSTALL NEW 6 INCH FIRE HYDRANT SERVICE, 8 X 6 TEE, AUXILLIARY VALVE & RISER BOX, COMPLETE HYDRANT ASSEMBLY	\$11,500.00	\$23,000.00	\$12,500.00	\$25,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$24,000.00
6	2	EA	REMOVE EXISTING 6 INCH FIRE HYDRANT SERVICE, 8 X 6 TEE, AUXILLIARY VALVE & RISER BOX	\$3,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$2,150.00	\$4,300.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
7	2	EA	INSTALL 8 INCH MJ X MJ GATE VALVE & RISER BOX	\$2,250.00	\$4,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$8,000.00
8	1	EA	INSTALL 6 INCH MJ X MJ GATE VALVE & RISER BOX	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
9	1	EA	INSTALL 8 INCH X 8 INCH X 8 INCH CLASS 52 MJ X MJ DUCTILE IRON TEE	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,125.00	\$2,125.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
10	2	EA	WATER MAIN/SEWER MAIN CROSSING, INCLUDING PIPE, FITTINGS, COUPLERS, AND HARDWARE	\$2,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$7,925.00	\$15,850.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
11	1	EA	SEWER CROSSING WITH WATER MAIN VERTICAL ADJUSTMENT	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$7,925.00	\$7,925.00	\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00
12	2	EA	CONNECT NEW WATER MAIN TO EXISTING WATER MAIN	\$6,500.00	\$13,000.00	\$3,200.00	\$6,400.00	\$3,000.00	\$6,000.00
13	1	EA	CONNECT EXISTING 6 INCH WATER FIRE SERVICE TO NEW MAIN, INCLUDING 8 X 8 X 6 CLASS 52 MJ X MJ DUCTILE IRON TEE	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
14	5	EA	NEW 1 INCH WATER SERVICE TO NEW WATER MAIN AND INSTALL CURB STOP VALVE AND RECONNECT	\$3,200.00	\$16,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$3,500.00	\$17,500.00
15	1	LS	INSTALL CATHODIC PROTECTION SYSTEM, COMPLETE	\$9,500.00	\$9,500.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,870.00	\$4,870.00
16	1,100	SY	ASPHALT PAVEMENT RESTORATION, 4 INCH THICKNESS OF HOT PLANT MIX ASPHALT SURFACE COURSE & TACK COAT - PG 58-28	\$47.00	\$51,700.00	\$50.50	\$55,550.00	\$45.00	\$49,500.00
17	45	LF	STANDARD CURB AND GUTTER REPLACEMENT (INCLUDING LAYDOWN CURB)	\$97.00	\$4,365.00	\$37.50	\$1,687.50	\$100.00	\$4,500.00
18	75	SF	STANDARD 6 INCH THICK CONCRETE DRIVE APPROACH REPLACEMENT	\$65.00	\$4,875.00	\$14.50	\$1,087.50	\$34.00	\$2,550.00
19	175	SF	STANDARD 4 INCH THICK CONCRETE SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT	\$46.00	\$8,050.00	\$11.00	\$1,925.00	\$23.00	\$4,025.00
20	184	CY	ASPHALT PAVEMENT RESTORATION, 6 INCH THICKNESS OF 1-1/2 INCH MINUS CRUSHED BASE COURSE	\$77.00	\$14,168.00	\$58.00	\$10,672.00	\$110.00	\$20,240.00
21	1	LS	CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC CONTROL	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$8,500.00	\$8,500.00	\$7,800.00	\$7,800.00
22	12	HR	EXPLORATORY EXCAVATION	\$300.00	\$3,600.00	\$625.00	\$7,500.00	\$300.00	\$3,600.00
23	1	LS	TEMPORARY WATER. ALL INCLUSIVE	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
24	20	CY	ROCK EXCAVATION AND REMOVAL	\$300.00	\$6,000.00	\$1400.00	\$28,000.00	\$300.00	\$6,000.00
			SUBTOTAL =		\$355,708.00				
			10% CONTINGENCY		\$35,570.80				
TOTAL PROJECT ESTIMATED COST =					\$391,278.80		\$469,247.00		\$312,000.00

BUDGET WORKSHEET

PROJECT #24-19 CENTENNIAL DRIVE WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT

Description	Estimate or Cost
ENGINEERING	
Engineering Design -In House	\$ -
Construction Management -PW Facilities in House	\$ -
Total Engineering Cost	\$ -
CONSTRUCTION COSTS	
Bid Price - Helena Sand & Gravel Inc.	\$ 312,000.00
15% Install Contingency	\$ 46,800.00
Total Construction Cost	\$ 358,800.00
Misc. Cost (MT DEQ Review & Advertising Fees)	\$ 875.00
Total Project Estimate	\$359,675.00

Description	Costs
Budget	
Water Budgeted Capital FY 25 Main Replacements - WU 25005 (#52430550-493110)	\$ 500,000.00
Totals	\$ 500,000.00

City of Helena, Montana

03/14/2025

To: Mayor Collins and the Helena City Commission

From: Tim Burton, City Manager
Sheila Danielson, Finance Director

Subject: Consider Acceptance of the FY2024 Financial and Federal Single Audits

Present Situation:

The City of Helena engaged Maher Duessel, CPAs to audit the financials, internal controls and federal awards for the Fiscal Year 2024. A an unmodified "clean" opinion was given in regard to the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and the Schedule of Federal Expenditures and Awards (SEFA).

Audit representatives Jennifer Croft and Natalie Caponi from Maher Duessel, CPAs presented highlights of the audit, financials and management letter.

The Commission appointed Audit Committee met on March 14, 2025. Commissioner Shirliff and Commissioner Logan were present and recommended accepting the Financial and Federal Single Audits to come before the full City Commission for acceptance.

Aside from the Finance Director, others in attendance at the Audit Committee Meeting were City Manager Tim Burton, City Controller Eliza Salonga, and City Accountant Kammi McClain.

Finance Director, Sheila Danielson discussed issues noted in the management letter and strategies to strengthen internal controls. No issues in the management letter were deemed material as to negatively impact the financial statements.

Background Information:

Due to a major software conversion project, the audit and preparation of the annual financial reports were delayed.

All required submissions to the State of Montana, Federal Audit Clearing House, Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board have been completed, and the audited reports will be filed on the city's website.

Proposal/Objective:

Consider acceptance of the Fiscal Year 2024 Financial and Federal Single audits.

Advantage:

Acceptance of the annual audit of the Financial Statements and Federal Single Audit by the City Commission is a required procedure in the State of Montana.

Notable Energy Impact:

N/A

Disadvantage:

N/A

Quasi-Judicial Item:

False

Notice of Public Hearing:

False

**Staff Recommendation/
Recommended Motion:**

Move to accept the Fiscal Year 2024 Audit of the City of Helena's Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports and Federal Single Audit.

**To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana**

We have audited the financial statements of the City of Helena, Montana (City) as of and for the year ended June 30, 2024. We reported on the City's internal control over financial reporting and on compliance and other matters based on an audit of financial statements performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in our report dated February 21, 2025. We also reported on the City's compliance for each major program and on internal control over compliance required by the Uniform Guidance in our report dated February 21, 2025. However, during our audit, we noted certain matters involving internal control and operational matters that are presented for your consideration. This letter does not affect our report dated February 21, 2025 on the City's financial statements.

Our comments and recommendations, all of which have been discussed with the appropriate members of management, are intended to improve internal control, or result in other operating efficiencies. Items noted with an asterisk "*" were included in the June 30, 2023 management letter and continue for this fiscal year.

Financial Reporting

During the audit, adjustments were identified that were necessary to properly record revenue and receivables relating to grants (including federal grant programs), record revenue and receivables for the Tourism Business Improvement District and Business Improvement District, roll fund balance, and adjust SBITAs. All entries were made with assistance and supporting details from the City. We recommend that management of the City ensure all entries are timely reflected in the general ledger and ensure grant revenues are being properly tracked as state or federal as the total amount of federal dollars could have an impact on the financial audit and reporting.

Bank Reconciliations

Due to the system conversion, bank reconciliations were not performed for April and May 2024. Through discussion with management, we noted all receivables for the fourth quarter of the fiscal year were posted to June 2024 in the new accounting system. As such, the City was unable to perform bank reconciliations for the months noted. However, we noted a year-end bank reconciliation was accurately prepared as of June 30, 2024, and was reviewed in accordance with City policies and procedures. An integral part of the effective operation of a system of internal control includes the timely monitoring of accounting processes. We recommend that the City reconcile bank statements on a monthly basis.

Segregation of Duties – Golf Course

Strong internal controls require that the responsibilities for the custody, accounting, and control of assets be segregated. In regard to controls over the cash receipt process, the same individual receives cash, maintains the documentation to support receipts, prepares the deposits, and takes deposits to the bank. Certain mitigating controls exist, including that monthly bank reconciliations and general ledger entries are prepared by someone independent of the cash receipts process.

The small staff size at the Golf Course makes it impractical to fully segregate duties related to certain cash receipt activities. Nonetheless, management needs to appreciate that an absence of segregation can allow errors or fraud to occur and not be detected. In order to reduce the risk associated with this situation, the responsibility for making bank deposits, recording of cash receipts, and performing bank reconciliations should be segregated as much as possible.

Cybersecurity Training (Tourism Business Improvement District and Business Improvement District)

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of social engineering attacks across many industries, including governments. The attacks range from email phishing to ransomware attacks and can cost organizations significant resources. We recommend that vulnerabilities to social engineering schemes and other cybersecurity threats be assessed. Additionally, training should be provided to all personnel regarding the identification of the various types of social engineering attacks and how to avoid the attacks.

Segregation of Duties – Civic Center *

Strong internal controls require that the responsibilities for the custody, accounting, and control of assets be segregated. In regard to controls over the cash receipt process, the same individual has the ability to receive cash, maintains the documentation to support receipts, prepares the deposits, and records transactions to the general ledger system. Some mitigating controls exist, including that monthly bank reconciliations are prepared by someone independent of the cash receipts process.

The small staff size at the Civic Center makes it impractical to fully segregate duties related to certain cash receipt activities. Nonetheless, management needs to appreciate that an absence of segregation can allow errors or fraud to occur and not be detected. In order to reduce the risk associated with this situation, the responsibility for making bank deposits, recording of cash receipts, and performing bank reconciliations should be segregated as much as possible.

Parking Pass Sales *

During review of parking pass sales, we noted the City does not have a process in place to reconcile physical passes available to passes available per the system. We recommend the City create and implement procedures to reconcile parking passes sold per the system to physical passes available and cash received.

Transportation Office *

During review of bus pass sales, we noted the City does not have a process in place to reconcile physical passes sold to cash received. Additionally, we noted only one individual is responsible for handling cash received at the office and farebox receipts. We recommend the City create and implement procedures to reconcile passes sold to cash received and more than one individual be involved in processes surrounding cash.

Journal Entry Review *

During review of the journal entry process, we noted that although journal entries are reviewed and authorized prior to posting, there is no proof of review once posted. We recommend the City ensure that an independent review of posted journal entries is performed monthly to ensure accuracy and reasonableness of the entries being posted and this review be formally documented.

Petty Cash Reconciliation *

During review of the petty cash process, we noted that although petty cash is being reconciled on a monthly basis, it is being reconciled by an individual with access to the cash. We recommend petty cash be reconciled by someone independent of the petty cash process.

Information Technology (includes Tourism Business Improvement District and Business Improvement District) *

Data Retention

We noted that although the City has a data retention policy, it is not followed. We recommend the City review and follow their data retention policy and ensure this policy includes items such as electronic files and voicemail, back-up procedures, archiving documents, and regular check-ups of the reliability of the system.

Disaster Recovery

We noted that although an informal disaster recovery plan does exist, there are no formally documented policy and procedures. Additionally, there is no testing of the plan. An information technology disaster recovery plan describes the procedures necessary to recover from an abnormal disruption in computerized operations such as an equipment failure, or effects of hacking attempts. The objectives of disaster recovery are to:

- Ensure that the City personnel are sufficiently prepared and trained in the event of a disaster;
- Minimize the effects upon the City's other operations; and,
- Establish an alternative means of restoring normal information technology operations within a short period of time.

The scope of the plan should cover the following issues:

- Identification of critical information technology systems relevant to the daily operations of the City.
- An assessment of the vulnerability and security of each critical information technology system.
- Declaration and notification procedures and assignment of responsibilities to personnel.
- Procedures for restoration of critical information technology systems.
- Any required testing of the plan's disaster recovery procedures to ensure that the plan will function as intended.
- An inventory of all critical information technology assets.
- A list of employee and vendor contracts.

We recommend the City develop a written disaster recovery plan that covers all information systems under the City's control and that this plan be tested annually.

User Access Levels

During review of user access levels, we noted the user access levels to network folders was set up by the Information Technology Department, and although it was reviewed during the current fiscal year, is not reviewed annually. We recommend user access levels be reviewed annually by each department head and the Information Technology Department to ensure that only those individuals requiring access to City information are permitted access.

Tourism Business Improvement District – Bank Reconciliations *

During review of the cash disbursement process, we noted that although bank statements and reconciliations are reviewed by someone independent of the cash disbursements process, the original bank statement is not reviewed. We recommend the individual reviewing bank statements and reconciliations review the original statement, including a review of cancelled check images and transfers, and that this review be documented.

Business Improvement District (BID)

Bank Reconciliations

It is BID's policy that all bank reconciliations be independently reviewed by the Executive Director. During our review of bank reconciliations, we noted the May 2024 reconciliation was not signed off as reviewed by the Executive Director as per internal policy. Lack of bank reconciliation review increases the risk that material errors, irregularities, or fraud could go undetected. We recommend that BID follow their internal policy for bank reconciliations throughout the year, including performing bank reconciliations timely and obtaining the required independent review and approval.

Cancelled Checks

During review of cancelled check images, we noted one check for a sponsorship payment cleared the bank that did not contain a signature. Through discussion with management, we noted that the Board reviews financial statements and budget to actual statements at monthly meetings which would identify any large fluctuations of unapproved expenses. Additionally, all sponsorship payments are approved by the Board prior to payment. We viewed the April 2024 Board minutes noting this payment was approved by the Board. BID should ensure that all checks have the required signatures.

Segregation of Duties *

Strong internal controls require that the responsibilities for the custody, accounting, and control of assets be segregated. In regard to controls over the cash receipt process, the same individual receives cash, maintains the documentation to support receipts, prepares the deposits, and takes the deposit to the bank. Some mitigating controls exist, including that someone independent of the cash receipts process prepares the monthly bank reconciliations and posts to the general ledger.

To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana
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The small staff size at the BID makes it impractical to fully segregate duties related to certain cash receipt activities. Nonetheless, management needs to appreciate that an absence of segregation can allow errors or fraud to occur and not be detected. In order to reduce the risk associated with this situation, the responsibility for making bank deposits, recording of cash receipts, and performing bank reconciliations should be segregated as much as possible.

*Journal Entries **

During review of the journal entry process, we noted that although journal entries are reviewed and authorized prior to posting, they are not being reviewed once posted. We recommend the BID ensure that an independent review of posted journal entries is performed monthly to ensure accuracy and reasonableness of the entries being posted and this review be formally documented.

This communication is intended solely for the information and use of the Mayor, Members of the City Commission and City Manager, and others within the City, and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Mahe Duessel

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
February 21, 2025

**To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana**

We have audited the financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the City of Helena (City) for the year ended June 30, 2024. Professional standards require that we provide you with information about our responsibilities under auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, *Government Auditing Standards*, and Title 2 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance), as well as certain information related to the planned scope and timing of our audit. We have communicated such information in our conversation with a member of the Audit Committee about planning matters on February 3, 2025. Professional standards also require that we communicate to you the following information related to our audit.

Our Responsibilities under Auditing Standards Generally Accepted in the United States of America, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance

As stated in our engagement letter dated June 9, 2023, our responsibility, as described by professional standards, is to express opinions about whether the financial statements prepared by management with your oversight are fairly presented, in all material respects, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Our audit of the financial statements does not relieve you or management of your responsibilities.

In planning and performing our audit, we considered the City's system of internal control over financial reporting in order to determine our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing opinions on the financial statements and not to provide assurance on the internal control over financial reporting. We also considered internal control over compliance with requirements that could have a direct and material effect on a major federal program in order to determine our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on compliance and to test and report on internal control over compliance in accordance with the Uniform Guidance.

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the City's financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grants. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit. Also, in accordance with the Uniform Guidance, we examined, on a test basis, evidence about the City's compliance with the types of compliance requirements described in the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) *Compliance Supplement* applicable to each of its major federal programs for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the City's compliance with those requirements. While our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion, it does not provide a legal determination on the City's compliance with those requirements.

Significant Accounting Policies

Management is responsible for the selection and use of appropriate accounting policies. The significant accounting policies used by the City are described in Note 1 to the financial statements. No new accounting policies were adopted, and the application of existing policies was not changed during 2024. We noted no transactions entered into by the City during the year for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. All significant transactions have been recognized in the financial statements in the proper period.

Accounting Estimates

Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's knowledge and experience about past and current events and assumptions about future events. Certain accounting estimates are particularly sensitive because of their significance to the financial statements and because of the possibility that future events affecting them may differ significantly from those expected.

We noted no sensitive estimates affecting the financial statements.

Disclosures

Certain financial statement disclosures are particularly sensitive because of their significance to financial statement users. We noted no sensitive disclosures affecting the financial statements.

The financial statement disclosures are neutral, consistent, and clear.

Difficulties Encountered in Performing the Audit

We encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing our audit.

Corrected and Uncorrected Misstatements

Professional standards require us to accumulate all known and likely misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are clearly trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. Management has corrected all such misstatements, except as noted below. In addition, none of the misstatements detected as a result of audit procedures and corrected by management were material, either individually or in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole. There was one uncorrected misstatement related to the basis on which budgeted revenues and expenditures are recorded. Management has determined that its effect is immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Disagreements with Management

For purposes of this letter, a disagreement with management is a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction that could be significant to the financial statements or the auditor's report. We are pleased to report that no such disagreements arose during the course of our audit.

Management Representations

We have requested certain representations from management that are included in the management representation letter dated February 21, 2025.

Management Consultations with Other Independent Accountants

In some cases, management may decide to consult with other accountants about auditing and accounting matters, similar to obtaining a "second opinion" on certain situations. If a consultation involves application of an accounting principle to the City's financial statements or a determination of the type of auditor's opinion that may be expressed on those financial statements, our professional standards require the consulting accountant to check with us to determine that the consultant has all the relevant facts. To our knowledge, there were no such consultations with other accountants.

Issues Discussed Prior to Retention of Independent Auditors

We generally discuss a variety of matters, including the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, with management each year prior to retention as the City's auditors. However, these discussions occurred in the normal course of our professional relationship and our responses were not a condition to our retention.

Other Matters

Matters involving internal controls and the City's operations are detailed in a separately issued management letter.

Required Supplementary Information

We applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information (RSI) that supplements the basic financial statements. Our procedures consisted of inquiries of management regarding the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge

Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana
Page 4

we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We did not audit the RSI and do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the RSI.

Supplementary Information

We were engaged to report on the supplementary information, which accompany the financial statements but is not RSI. With respect to this supplementary information, we made certain inquiries of management and evaluated the form, content, and methods of preparing the information to determine that the information complies with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the method of preparing it has not changed from the prior period, and the information is appropriate and complete in relation to our audit of the financial statements. We compared and reconciled the supplementary information to the underlying accounting records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves.

Other Information

We were not engaged to report on the other information, which accompanies the financial statements but is not supplementary information. Such information has not been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, accordingly, we do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on it.

This information is intended solely for the information and use of the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commissioners and City Manager, and management of the City, and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Very truly yours,

Maher Duessel

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
February 21, 2025



2024

ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT

HELENA, MONTANA

JULY 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2024



CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT

FINANCE DEPARTMENT
Sheila Danielson, Finance Director

FISCAL YEAR 2024
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

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ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTORY SECTION

**City of Helena, Montana
List of Principal Officials
As of June 30, 2024**

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Wilmot J. Collins	Mayor
Andrew Shirtliff	Commissioner
Melinda Reed	Commissioner
Emily Dean	Commissioner
Sean Logan	Commissioner

CITY OFFICIALS

Tim Burton	Interim City Manager
Dannai Clayborn	Clerk
Anne Peterson	Municipal Judge
Ryan Leland	Public Works Director
David Knoepke	Transportation Systems Director
Rebeca Dockter	City Attorney
Sheila Danielson	Finance Director
Brett Petty	Police Chief
Jon Campbell	Fire Chief
Christopher Brink	Community Development Director
Douglas Smith	Parks and Recreation Director
Renee McMahon	Human Resources Director



February 21, 2025

City Manager Tim Burton,
Mayor Collins, City of Helena Commission and
Residents of Helena, Montana:

ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT TRANSMITTAL

The Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the City of Helena, Montana for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2024, is hereby submitted. This report is published annually as the official annual financial report and complies with Montana State law (2-7-503 MCA) requiring annual reports for general purpose local governments to be filed in a timely manner.

Responsibility for both the accuracy of the data, and the completeness and fairness of the presentation, including all disclosures, rests with city management. To the best of our knowledge and belief, the enclosed data are accurate in all material respects and are reported in a manner designed to present fairly the financial position and results of operations of the various funds of the City. To provide a reasonable basis for making these representations, management of the City has established and maintained an internal control system designed to ensure that the assets of the City are protected from loss, theft, or abuse, and to ensure that adequate accounting data are compiled to allow for the preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States (US GAAP) and to comply with applicable laws and regulations. The system of internal control is designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that these objectives are met. The concept of reasonable assurance recognizes that: (1) the cost of a control should not exceed the benefits likely to be derived; and (2) the valuation of costs and benefits requires estimates and judgments by management. All disclosures necessary to enable the reader to gain an understanding of the City's financial activities have been included.

Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) require management to provide a narrative introduction, overview, and analysis to accompany the basic financial statements in the form of Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A). This letter of transmittal is designed to complement the MD&A and should be read in conjunction with it. The City of Helena's MD&A can be found immediately following the independent auditor's report.

As a recipient of federal financial assistance in excess of \$750,000 the City is required to undergo a Single Audit designed to meet the special needs of federal grantor agencies, in conformity with the provisions of the Single Audit Act of 1984, as amended in 1996, and Title 2 U.S. Code of

Federal Regulations Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance). Information related to the Single Audit, including the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards and the auditor's reports on internal controls and compliance is included in the Single Audit Section of this report.

PROFILE OF THE CITY OF HELENA

Self-Government Chartered City

The City of Helena was incorporated March 7, 1881. On March 2, 1953, by lawful authority, the City established a commission/manager form of government. The voters adopted a self-government charter, which allows the City to exercise powers not specifically prohibited by state law in 1976.

City Commission

The City Commission is composed of a mayor and four commissioners, elected at large by the voters of the City. The City charter outlines the roles and responsibilities of the mayor and commissioners. The Helena City Commission is the legislative and policy-making body of the City and is responsible for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed upon the City by the City charter and State law.

City Manager

The City Manager is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the City Commission. The City Manager's primary duty is to ensure that policies and guidelines adopted by the City Commission are executed as efficiently, fairly, and effectively as possible.

City Demographics

Known as the "Queen City of the Rockies," Helena is the state capital of Montana and the county seat of Lewis and Clark County. Helena was established in 1864 as a gold camp during the Montana gold rush. Due to the gold rush Helena became a wealthy city with approximately 50 millionaires inhabiting the area by 1888. This contributed to the City's elaborate Victorian grand architecture that is seen throughout the city.

Located in southern Lewis and Clark County (west-central Montana), and surrounded by Helena National Forest, Helena boasts attractions for any lifestyle. With its numerous museums, historic sites, trails, parks, commerce, and other indoor and outdoor recreation areas, it serves as a premier destination to work, live and play.

Helena is sustained by a stable base of government employment (30%) as it serves as a major governmental center for federal, state and county activities. It is also a trading and transportation center for nearby livestock, mining, and farming enterprises. Helena maintains an interest in mineral production and processing and remains a major telecommunications center. Although Helena's population is about 34,464 it serves a much larger trade area. This area, defined as a "35-mile radius" in and around the City of Helena, encompasses a population of almost 75,000. This area relies on Helena for employment, professional services, retail goods, and entertainment.

City Services

The City provides a full range of services divided into service areas, financial management and control systems. Services provided include: Public safety functions including police and fire protection and prevention, municipal court services, and animal control; Public works, one of the

largest city departments, operates engineering services, water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities, solid waste disposal, and recycling services; Community development including planning, zoning, permitting and building inspection activities; Transportation systems including parking, traffic signal, street, roadway and sidewalk construction and maintenance, and operating a vast public transit system. In addition, the City operates and maintains growing open land, parks and recreation programs including a city-owned golf course, public swimming pool, civic center, tennis and pickleball courts, skateboard park, bike park, and an outdoor skating rink, plus sponsors numerous cultural events throughout the year.

Financial Entity

The financial reporting entity includes all the funds of the primary government (i.e., the City of Helena, Montana as legally defined), as well as all its component units. Component units are legally separate entities for which the primary government is financially accountable. Discretely presented component units are reported in separate columns in the government-wide financial statements to emphasize that they are legally separate from the primary government and to differentiate their financial position and results of operations from those of the primary government. The Business Improvement District and Tourism Business Improvement District are reported as discretely presented component units.

Annual Budget

The annual budget serves as the foundation for the City's financial planning and control. All departments of the City submit budget proposals to the City Finance Department in the spring of each year. During this same time period, the City Manager's office solicits public feedback through various engagement tools. The Finance Department uses these department requests and public feedback as the starting point for the development of the next fiscal year's budget. The City Commissioners are required to hold public hearings on the preliminary budget which is adopted by resolution with an effective date of July 1 and contains the estimated amount to be raised by an ad valorem property tax. The Commission holds a separate public hearing to adopt the final budget no later than the first Thursday after the first Tuesday in September or within 30 calendar days of receiving certified taxable values from the Montana State Department of Revenue. The legal level of budget appropriations is at the fund level. Management cannot overspend the budget at the fund level without the approval of the governing body. A budgetary management plan is prepared by fund, department, division, and line item. The City maintains budgetary controls whose objectives are to ensure compliance with legal provisions embodied in the annual appropriations budget approved by the City Commission.

The State municipal budget law stipulates that money, other than payments from custodial funds, may not be drawn from the treasury of a municipality except pursuant to an appropriation. Therefore, a legally adopted annual budget is required for all funds, except for custodial funds. The City legally adopts a budget for the required funds. Consistent with past years, the City established the legal spending level at the fund level for the fiscal year 2024 budget. The City Manager may make transfers of appropriations within a fund. Transfers between funds, however, require approval of the City Commission. Budget-to-actual comparisons are provided in this report for each individual governmental fund. For the general and streets funds, comparisons are presented beginning on III - 7 as part of the basic financial statements for the governmental funds. For other governmental funds, this comparison is presented in the governmental fund subsection of this report, starting on V - 1. All appropriations lapse at year-end; however, they can be re-appropriated by the City Manager as part of the following year's budget in accordance with state law and the adopting budget resolution.

LONG RANGE FINANCIAL PLANNING

Comprehensive Capital Improvement Programs (CCIP)

The City updates an annual CCIP. The CCIP encompasses all City operations and is the major long-range financial planning tool of the City which spans out to a 5-year outlook. It addresses capital projects, major maintenance, facility, and equipment revolving schedules which are tied back to financing projections.

The CCIP emphasizes:

- complete inventories of all infrastructure, facilities, and equipment,
- assessments of condition,
- prioritization of projects and needs; and,
- long-term analysis of funding feasibility and options.

CCIPs are updated annually and the first year in the CCIP becomes the proposed annual budget. In their public forum, the City Commission reviews the capital plan in order to set priorities and policies for the implementation of current and long-term capital projects. The City Commission is constantly monitoring capital and maintenance needs while attempting to strike a proper balance between raising fees to better fund those needs and considering the cost to the consumer.

ECONOMIC CONDITION AND OUTLOOK

Local Economy

Montana's economic output (GDP) grew by 2.2 percent in 2023, consistent with long-term historic growth. Nearly 2,000 new professional service businesses were started in Montana during 2023. With the professional services industry expansion of high-tech jobs, Montana ranks 1st in the country for GDP growth in 2024. Secretary of State, Christi Jacobsen, announced in early 2024 that 59,420 new businesses registered in 2023, surpassing the old record set in 2022 with roughly 54,000. Those new businesses include industries such as construction, farming and ranching, retail, insurance, and others.¹

Montana also ranks 3rd in the nation for self-employment with 30% running their own businesses. Since 2020, personal income has grown 7.5%, from 4.7% annually prior 2020, ranking Montana as the 4th fastest in the nation during that period.²

The metro area of Helena boasts over 2,500 businesses and over 41,000 employees. Tourism, hospitality, and recreation industries have exceeded pre-pandemic levels, and it is expected to continue in that fashion in the foreseeable future.

As with other cities in Montana, Helena continues to experience population growth as more people are inspired to move from large metropolitan areas and relocate to Montana. The acceleration in growth began in 2020. The inventory of homes has not kept up with demand. Helena has roughly

¹ Montana Secretary of State – Media Center, January 10, 2024 – Official Secretary of State Website (sosmt.gov)

² Montana Department of Labor and Industries, Workforce Services Division: “Montana Labor Day Report 2024”; Primary Author: Amy Watson, State Economist. (lmi.mt.gov)

16,574 housing units with a median cost of approximately \$355,100. 54% are listed as owner-occupied. The average cost of a home is \$470,000, a rise of 4.7% from 2023, compared to a 5% nationwide average. Housing prices are a main component of inflation, but the pace of housing prices is showing some signs of slowing. The housing units in Helena are categorized into single-family units (58%), multi-family units (38%) and mobile homes (3%).³ Some Montanans benefit from the increased home values, but the rising costs pose a threat to first time homebuyers trying to acquire homes.

New luxury apartments boasting 133 units, with four floors, “Summerville Flats”, with studio apartments starting at \$1,365, and 3-bedroom 2-bath units starting at \$2,750 is slated to begin occupancy in early 2025. This complex enjoys a fitness center, sports court, rooftop patio, community room and a pet program. A second complex, next door, is planned to begin construction in 2025.

In 2024, the City annexed two parcels of the amended plat of Craftsman Village Phase 6, Phase 8 of Craftsman Village, and Portions of the Peaks Phase I as extensions of the Mountain View Meadows subdivision phased development for single and multi-family structures creating several new living units to the housing inventory for Helena.

Governor Gianforte reformed the state’s tax code to promote business and job creation in tandem with Secretary Jacobsen cutting registration fees in half for new Montana businesses. Her office also eliminated several other fees and waived the filing fee for 2024 Annual Reports if filed by April 15th deadline. These tactics have been successful in bringing new businesses to the state.⁴

New commercial construction is also doing well in the Helena area. In 2024, construction started on several businesses such as Sierra Trading Post, Chipotle, Panera Bread, Town Pump in East Helena, Maverick Gas Station in the Helena South Hills area, and several new bank buildings including new branches for Opportunity Bank and Stockman bank.⁵

In December 2020, the Capital Hill Mall Urban Renewal District Plan was approved for urban renewal and redevelopment. This area is considered a gateway into Helena defined by the two one-way couplets of Prospect Avenue and 11th Street that provide access to Interstate 15. The area is close in proximity to the State Capital and includes the old Capitol Hill Mall site (built in 1965 and demolished in 2019), a number of hotel parcels, retail establishments, office buildings, financial institutions, and the Samuel V. Stewart Homes development managed by the Helena Housing Authority. In 2023/2024, four businesses opened in this area including Benefis Health Systems, a freestanding clinic that offers primary and specialty care services, Opportunity Bank conference and administrative center, Panera Bread, and Starbucks. Stockman bank is under construction and slated to open in 2025.

The Downtown Urban Renewal district (approved in October 2018 and amended in 2019 to include the Rodney Street area) continues to experience large commercial and infrastructure development according to the URD plan. The urban renewal board recommended, and the City Commission approved several distributions in 2023/2024 to businesses and property owners located in the Downtown Urban Renewal area for improvements. Those projects included sidewalk repairs for Atlas Rentals, LLC and the Myrna Loy and YWCA Façade Improvements on their aging building.

³ Census Reporter, (data.census.gov); Helena, MT – Profile data

⁴ Montana Secretary of State – Media Center, January 10, 2024 – Official Secretary of State Website (sosmt.gov)

⁵ Census Reporter, (data.census.gov); Helena, MT – Profile data

The Railroad Urban renewal district was established in 2016 and encompasses the Sixth Ward (the area just east of Montana Avenue and south of the railroad tracks or “historic Railroad District”). In 2024 distributions were approved by the City Commission for ADA ramps and landscaping at the Hustad Center, accessible parking, and ingress improvements at the Larson Building, and for exterior accessibility and façade improvements to Patter Housing Holdings, LLC.

Population

From 2010 to 2020, Montana’s population grew by 96,481, a 9.74% increase, and during that same period the rate of growth was around 7.18% in the United States. After the COVID19 pandemic and between years 2020 and 2023, Montana’s population increased by 45,601, a 4.19% rise in population giving Montana an overall population of 1,132,812 in 2023.⁶ Meanwhile, the United States rate of growth during that same period was 1.02%. Most of the population growth occurred in the western portion of the state since the pandemic. Over the past year, Gallatin County has had the largest migration with 4,161 while Lewis and Clark County came in second with 829, and Flathead County with an increase of 652 over that time.⁷

From 2013 to 2023, the Helena area grew in population by 4,393 with the population being the highest during 2023 with 34,464, and lowest during 2014 with the population count of 30,422. Over the last decade, the population has had an average growth rate of 1.38%. Between 2000 and 2023, the overall population grew by 31.37% in Helena. During that same time period, the population of Helena grew year by year for 21 years and declined for only 2 years. These numbers suggest that the Helena continues to show a trend of growth and has not reached its peak yet.⁸

Unemployment

In June of 2024, the Montana unemployment rate was 3.1%, as compared to the United States unemployment rate of 3.9%. Rapid economic growth has led to an increase in demand for workers among Montana businesses. The Montana labor force reached a record high of 580,000 people with about 560,000 employed midway through 2024. Job demand averaged 33,000 monthly openings in April 2024, which has moderated a bit in relation to 2022, when there were over 40,000 job openings. Even with the unemployment rate at 3.1%, there are still nearly two job openings for every one unemployed person in Montana. Increased retirements have driven declines in labor force participation. Of the 900,000+ Montanans that are old enough to participate in the workforce, only about 63% do. A total of 330,000 Montanans are currently not employed or actively seeking work and 61% of these individuals are retired. Average retirements in 2023 were 200,000 people. Labor force participation usually starts to decline when a person is between 55 and 64 years old.

Healthcare added the largest number of jobs in 2023. In-migration coupled with an aging population increased the demand for these services. Healthcare is projected to add the most jobs over the next ten years, or 1,310 jobs per year. Leisure jobs came in at adding over 2,000 jobs in 2023, a 3.1% growth, and professional services grew by 4.1%, adding 1,120 jobs. Employment losses were centered around banking and real estate and financial activities, manufacturing and transportation jobs were experienced slower growth compared to historical averages.⁹

⁶ Quick Facts, Montana – US Census Bureau (www.census.gov)

⁷ Montana Department of Labor and Industries: Data dashboards/Labor Force Participation (dli.mt.gov)

⁸ Helena Population update: www.neilsburg.com

⁹ Montana Department of Labor and Industries, Workforce Services Division: “Montana Labor Day Report 2024”; Primary Author: Amy Watson, State Economist. (lmi.mt.gov)

With these labor shortages, both governmental and private businesses are not able to meet demand in an efficient manner. The City is not immune to the workforce shortage experiencing high vacancy rates in almost every department.

A significant impact to labor participation is the lack of available and affordable daycare. Helena is self-declared as a “daycare desert.” In Lewis and Clark County, childcare capacity as a percent of demand is about 64 percent. This prevents some parents from fully participating in the workforce.

Per Capita Income

Although Montana ranks 30th in the nation, the per capita personal income rose to \$64,989 in 2023 and has been steadily growing over recent years. It is still lower than the national average but since 2020, per capita income has grown by 6.7% per year from 4% a decade prior. Montanans earn income from sources including wages, business income, capital gains and government payments with the large portion of income coming from wages at 39%. Investment income was 24%, transfers at 18%, and business income at 10%. Between income from business activity and self-employment, Montanans received slightly more of their income from these two sources relative to the national average. Overall, Montana ranks 6th in the nation for fastest personal income growth in 2023.¹⁰

The US Census Bureau market data as of 2023 states that per capita income for Lewis and Clark County is \$43,263 with a median household income of \$74,543. Montana’s median household income is \$69,922. People living in poverty is 9.1% for Lewis & Clark County, as compared to 11.7% for the state of Montana. Overall, Helena is doing quite well in comparison to how the rest of the state is doing according to the statistics displayed.

Revenue Growth and Reform

City revenues can be considered statutorily limited, circumstantial, or discretionary. The City has very little control over the growth of these revenues. Although the City ‘controls’ the growth of discretionary revenue, it is still subject to typical community pressures for conservative growth.

Revenues such as property taxes and State entitlements are subject to statutory or other limitations. Property taxes make up approximately 15.6% of total City budgeted revenues and 54.3% of General Fund budgeted revenues (excluding interfund transfers). The City is only allowed to increase property taxes on existing property at one-half the CPI-U average rate of inflation for the past three years. The Montana Constitution and state law require periodic reappraisal of property in the interest of equal taxation (15-7-111, MCA). The State of Montana, through the Department of Revenue (DOR), is responsible for valuing all taxable real and personal property. The 2015 legislature changed the reappraisal period from once every six years to once every two years. The DOR is required by state law to conduct a reappraisal of all residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and forestland property in the state. The most recent reappraisal cycle was completed on January 1, 2023, for legislative review during the 2023 legislative session. New reappraisal values were used for property tax purposes in tax year 2023 (fiscal year 2024). Within the City limits of Helena, appraised values went up over 30%.

State shared entitlement revenues make up approximately 4.3% of total City budgeted revenues and 18.4% of the General Fund budgeted revenues. This revenue is set by statutory formula and has grown by population and inflation in recent years. State shared entitlement revenue (born

¹⁰ Montana Department of Labor and Industries, Workforce Services Division: “Montana Labor Day Report 2024”; Primary Author: Amy Watson, State Economist. (lmi.mt.gov)

from House Bill 124 passed in 2001 by the Montana State Legislature) consists of motor vehicle taxes, gaming revenues, and alcohol and income taxes intended to provide local governments with a stable source of funding.

Discretionary revenues such as special assessments, licenses, permits, fines, utility, and other charges for services make up about 39.1% of budgeted City revenues and allow the City to set rates to cover costs. Such revenue is secured by the ability to attach property liens and/or do utility shut offs in case of non-payment. Special assessments make up approximately 10.8% of total City budgeted revenues. Service charges make up approximately 25.9% of total City budgeted revenues.

Circumstantial revenues such as newly taxable property and building permit fees are primarily driven by the economy or other variables beyond City control. The Montana State Legislature also allows local governments to raise mills to cover the cost of increases in health insurance premiums.

Major Initiatives

In 2024, the City Commission adopted a new strategic plan. In December 2023, they held a retreat led by the Local Government Center at Montana State University. The framework for the strategic plan established core values, goals, strategies, and action plans. Core values were identified as Accessibility, Sustainability, Community Engagement and Service. Strategic goals were identified to Maintain and Improve City Services to residents, Support Holistic Commercial and Residential Development, Maintain and Improve City Infrastructure and to be the Employer of Choice. Strategies were outlined to achieve the above goals and action plans were adopted by the Commission in late 2024.

The City was accepted into the National League of Cities Racial Equity and Leadership Institute. The Mayor, City Attorney and Human Resources Director represented Helena as one of ten cohort teams to participate in the inaugural REAL institute. Participants learned how to focus on leading for racial equity, communicate effectively about race, visualize a racially equitable future, and bring systems change by building racial equity infrastructure for organizational change. The team is working on action plans for the City departments to implement.

Highlights of Department accomplishments are as follows:

- The City Manager's office led a transition for the city to move to a new hosted website, which improved the community's ability to access information and engage with the City.
- Along with the City Attorney's office, the City Clerk's office implemented electronic workflows for contracts and resolutions. This replaced our "paper" based documents with electronic documents which are stored in an accessible media platform for public transparency.
- The Clerk's office successfully completed an Administrative and Governance Policy Boards project, which redefines how the City and City Commission interact with citizen advisory bodies. The project created consistency in administrative processes and standardization of governance practices, allowing for more fair and open citizen engagement.
- The Community Development Department sponsored the City's first Affordable Housing Trust Fund Project providing \$1 million out of the Housing Trust Fund to support 70 affordable housing units. In addition, this department supported \$750,000 in CDBG grants

to assist in funding the Helena Foodshare's new food resource center. Finally, they are leading a new Land Use Plan in conjunction with implementing the Montana Land Use Planning Act and went live with a new online permitting software in June.

- The Community Facilities Department continued with upgrading facilities with LED lighting and upgraded our public conference and meeting areas with new audio/visual technology to allow for better hybrid public meetings. They are also working on upgrading several boilers at the Law & Justice Center, City maintenance shop and the main Fire station to more energy efficient models.
- The Finance department led a city-wide effort to upgrade our enterprise resource planning system. The City went live with our core finance, budget and accounting platform in April of 2024 and went live with payroll and a new time and attendance software in September. The final phase of implementing a new utility software started and is slated to go-live in August 2025.
- The Fire Department completed its master plan and successfully led a ballot initiative to build a third fire station to support the growing community in Helena. Plans for building the new station are slated in 2025. The Fire Department also launched a new records management system which handles scheduling, fire inspections, incident pre-planning and dispatch integration. They are continuing their efforts to promote the initiatives outlined in their master plan.
- The Municipal Court completed implementation and training of a new court software system and with implementation of status hearings as a mechanism for checking in with defendants to follow up with compliance.
- The Human Resources Department led a market analysis wage study in efforts to improve employee recruitment and retention. They are continuing this effort to reconfigure our wage matrix and a market-based pay plan policy to bring to the Commission for approval. In addition, the Department is working on implementing the Human Capital Management modules of the ERP system and recently launched the recruitment module.
- Parks, Recreation and Open Lands accomplished many projects that enhance the lives of the community. Their focus has been on improving facilities and parks, providing affordable recreation activities for families, maintaining our vast open lands, trails, and urban forestry, and providing positive experiences to our community. This is evident in resulting statistics of over 200 booked events in our Civic Center, hosting over 20,000 visitors at the Last Chance Splash & Pool and over 5,000 people at the Memorial Park Ice Rink in addition to providing summer programming for over 80 kids. The Bill Roberts Golf Course had over 70 participants in the Junior program and supported events such as Special Olympics, the Disabled American Veterans Golf Tournament and partnered with the Last Chance Nordic Ski Club to provide cross-country skiing for the public.
- The Helena Police Department is committed to increasing its public information sharing and community outreach. They launched a software implementation to completely overhaul their CAD/Record Management System with tentative go live date in early 2025. They partnered with the Helena School District to donate 18 AED machines and to implement the Handle with Care Program, which has been overwhelmingly successful. In addition, they implemented the Leave Behind Program for Narcan allowing officers to leave doses of Narcan at locations where opioid use is suspected. Animal Control launched a successful Trap, Neuter, Return Program for feral cats. Finally, the Helena Police Department carried on the tradition of their annual Curt Stinson Memorial Blood Drive which had its highest number of attendees so far.
- Public works made substantial progress on facility improvements that impact all aspects of water, wastewater, and solid waste services. The water treatment division made improvements to the Ten Mile Treatment facility that resulted in more efficiency and less

chemical usage. They received a \$147,000 grant to install a new piece of equipment at the Wastewater Treatment plant that will save approximately \$38,000 of energy costs per year. New automated entrance gates were installed at the Transfer Station that promote safety. Finally, they installed 2 electric vehicle charging stations, completed an in-depth analysis of water use in the City, and started a monthly sustainability newsletter.

- The Transportation Systems Department led the transition of Helena, Lewis & Clark County, and the City of East Helena to a Metropolitan Planning Organization. They are working with partner agencies to successfully implement this transition. They coordinated 15 households in bringing their sidewalks up to ADA/PROWAG standards through the sidewalk loan program. The department contracted with a company to complete a LIDAR scan of all City Streets' assets, which provides the City with an interactive system to better manage transportation assets. Finally, this department put into service the City's first 100% electric sweeper with the assistance of a grant from Montana Department of Transportation.

The City is committed to continuing our collaboration with Lewis and Clark County, the State of Montana, City of East Helena, Helena Regional Airport, and local non-profits to meet the demands of the growing community. The adopted strategic plan will be the guiding document to focus City resources to ensure Helena remains a vibrant place to live, play and work.

As the proud seat of the State of Montana, Helena remains strong and continues to model for the future of the state.

INDEPENDENT AUDIT

The State of Montana requires a biennial audit of the basic financial statements of the City by independent certified public accountants selected by the Commission. The City of Helena has elected to have an annual audit performed. An annual audit provides a higher level of financial management and fiscal responsibility. Maher Duessel, Certified Public Accountants, have issued an unmodified ("clean") opinion on the City of Helena, Montana's financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024. The independent auditor's report is located at the front of the financial section of this report.

AWARDS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the City of Helena for its annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023. This was the thirty-sixth consecutive year that the City has achieved this prestigious award. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive, and timely annual financial report. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements. A Certificate of Achievement is valid for a period of one year only.

Staff anticipate that the current annual comprehensive financial report will continue to meet the requirements that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure to be understandable,

reliable, relevant, consistent, timely, and comparable. We will submit our fiscal year 2024 report to the GFOA to determine its eligibility for another certificate.

The preparation of the annual comprehensive financial report represents the culmination of months of collaborative teamwork of the entire staff in the Finance Department. Each member of the Finance Department has our sincere appreciation for the contributions made in the preparation of this report. A special thank you is extended to Kammi McClain, Accountant, for her contributions to the preparation of this report. We also wish to thank all City departments for their assistance in providing the data necessary to complete this report.

Further appreciation is offered to the City's leadership team, City Manager, the Mayor, and the City Commission for their encouragement, interest, and support in conducting the financial operations of the City in a sound and progressive manner.

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sheila Danielson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sheila Danielson
Finance Director



Government Finance Officers Association

Certificate of
Achievement
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in Financial
Reporting

Presented to

**City of Helena
Montana**

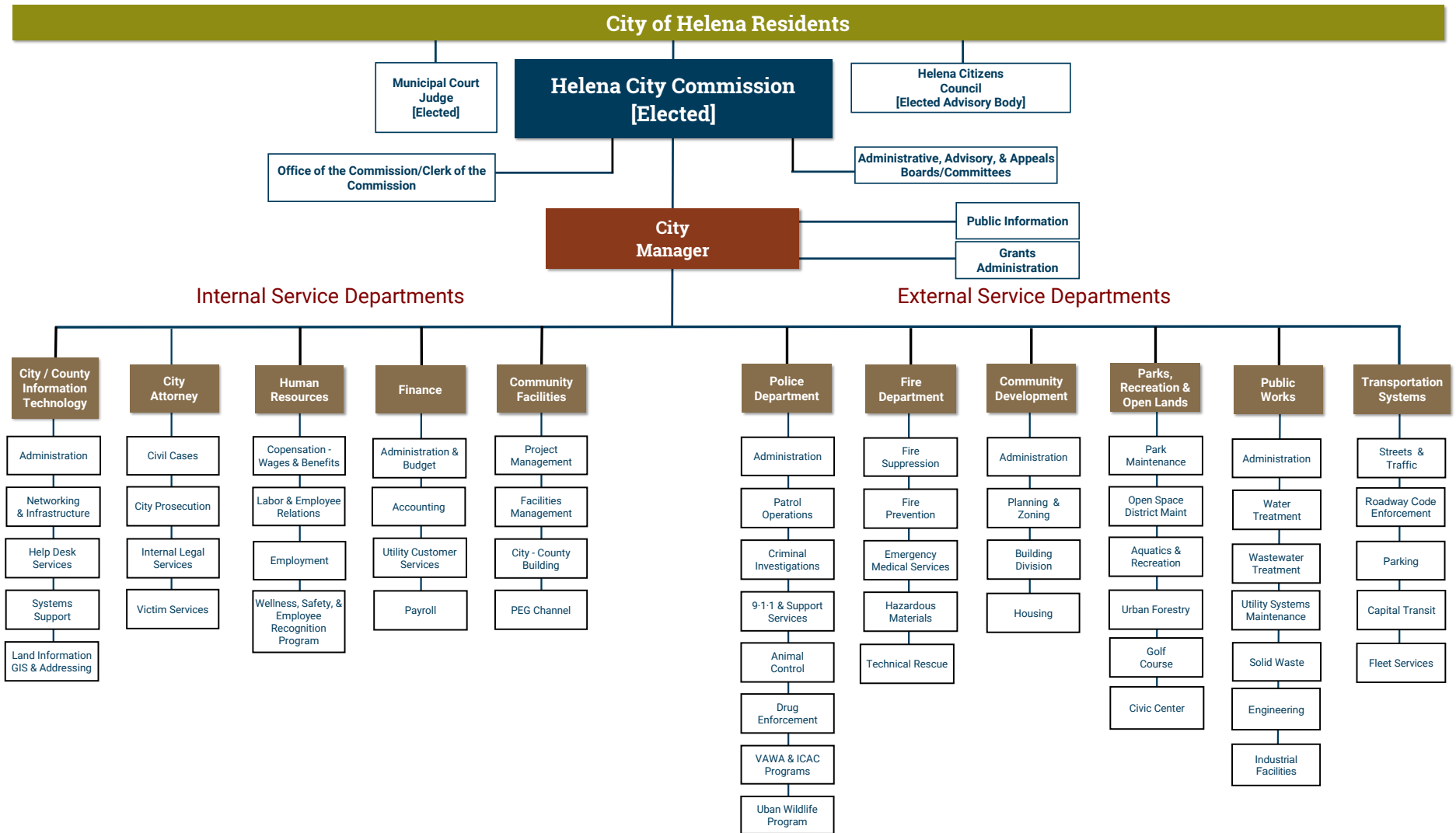
For its Annual Comprehensive
Financial Report
For the Fiscal Year Ended

June 30, 2023

Christopher P. Morill

Executive Director/CEO

CITY OF HELENA - ORGANIZATION CHART



FINANCIAL SECTION

Independent Auditor's Report

**To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana**

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the City of Helena, Montana (City), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2024, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the City's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the City, as of June 30, 2024, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof, and the respective budgetary comparison for the General Fund and Streets Fund for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the City and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana
Independent Auditor's Report

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the City's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the City's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the City's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control related matters that we identified during the audit.

To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana
Independent Auditor's Report

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the required supplementary information listed in the table of contents be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Supplementary Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise the City's basic financial statements. The supplementary information listed in the table of contents and the schedule of expenditures of federal awards, as required by Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the supplementary information is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

Other Information

Management is responsible for the other information listed in the table of contents. The other information listed in the table of contents does not include the basic financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinions on the basic financial statements do not cover the other information, and we do not express an opinion or any form of assurance thereon.

To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana
Independent Auditor's Report

In connection with our audit of the basic financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and consider whether a material inconsistency exists between the other information and the basic financial statements, or the other information otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work performed, we conclude that an uncorrected material misstatement of the other information exists, we are required to describe it in our report.

Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards*

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated February 21, 2025 on our consideration of the City's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the City's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the City's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Mahe Duessel

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
February 21, 2025

MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Management's Discussion and Analysis

June 30, 2024

As management of the City of Helena, Montana (City), we offer the readers of the City's financial statements this narrative overview and analysis of the financial activities for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. We encourage readers to consider the information presented here in conjunction with additional information furnished in our letter of transmittal, which can be found on pages I-2 through I-12 of this report.

Financial Highlights

- The assets and deferred outflows of the City exceeded its liabilities and deferred inflows at fiscal year end June 30, 2024, by \$370,653,668 (*net position*). Of this amount, \$59,144,190 (*unrestricted net position*) may be used to meet the City's ongoing obligations to citizens and creditors.
- Total net position increased by \$15,523,117 over the prior fiscal year primarily due to capital asset acquisitions of \$7,196,493 and an increase of \$10,095,439 in cash and cash equivalents, offset by increased pension liability of \$1,817,031 and other liabilities and deferred outflows.
- As of June 30, 2024, the City's governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of \$56,109,398, an increase of \$6,744,247 from the prior year. Approximately, 11.93 percent of this amount, \$6,694,981 is available for spending at the government's discretion (*unassigned fund balance*).
- At the end of the current fiscal year, the total of the *committed*, *assigned*, and *unassigned* components of *fund balance* for the General Fund was \$11,215,127, or 50.67 percent of total General Fund expenditures.
- The City's total debt decreased by \$96,265 (0.43 percent) during the current fiscal year. Key factors in the change include:
 1. Golf INTERCAP Loan in the amount of \$184,195.
 2. Water Revenue Loan principal payments of \$748,000 decreased the total water revenue bond debt service outstanding. No new water revenue bonds issues were taken out in fiscal year 2024.
 3. Wastewater Revenue Loan principal payments of \$116,000 decreased the total wastewater revenue bond debt services outstanding. Wastewater revenue bonds in the amount of \$848,581 were issued in fiscal year 2024.
 3. General obligation bond principal payments of \$670,000, other loan principal payments, offset by SBITAs issued in the amount of \$1,017,199 for cloud-based enterprise resource planning software represent the balance and additional loans issued totaling \$1,374,233.

OVERVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

This Management's Discussion and Analysis is intended to serve as an introduction to the City's basic financial statements. The basic financial statements comprise three components:

- 1) government-wide financial statements
- 2) fund financial statements
- 3) notes to the financial statements

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Management's Discussion and Analysis

June 30, 2024

This report also contains required supplementary information and supplementary information intended to furnish additional detail to support the basic financial statements themselves.

Government-Wide Financial Statements. The *government-wide financial statements* are designed to provide readers with a broad overview of the City's finances using the accrual basis of accounting, in a manner similar to a private-sector business.

The *Statement of Net Position* presents information on all of the City's assets, deferred outflows, liabilities, and deferred inflows. The difference between total assets and deferred outflows minus liabilities and deferred inflows is reported as net position. Over time, increases and decreases in net position may provide an indication of whether the City's financial position is improving or deteriorating.

The *Statement of Activities* presents information reflecting how the City's net position has changed during the fiscal year just ended. All changes in net position are reported as soon as the underlying event giving rise to the change occurs, regardless of the timing of the related cash flows.

Thus, the revenues and expenses are reported in this statement for some items that will only result in cash flows in future periods (e.g., uncollected taxes and earned but not unused vacation leave).

The government-wide financial statements distinguish functions of the City that are principally supported by taxes and intergovernmental revenues (governmental activities) from other functions that are intended to recover all, or a significant portion of their costs through user fees and charges (business-type activities).

The *Statement of Net Position* and the *Statement of Activities* distinguishes between the following activities:

- **Governmental Activities** - much of the City's basic services are reported here, including general administration, public safety, public works, public health, culture and recreation and community development. Property taxes, state entitlement distributions, property assessments, and state and federal grants finance most of the costs of these activities.
- **Business-type Activities** - the City charges a fee to customers to recover the cost of certain services provided. The City's water, wastewater, solid waste, transfer station, parking, transit (bus), golf course, building, and City-County administration building (CCAB) activities are reported here.
- **Component Units** - the City includes two separate legal entities in its report, the Business Improvement District, and Tourism Business Improvement District. Although legally separate, these component units are presented because the City is financially accountable for them, and the boards of these entities are appointed by the City Mayor subject to approval by the City Commission. The City Commission also approves the annual budget and assessments charged by each component unit. Further information about the City's component units are presented in the notes to the financial statements.

The government-wide financial statements can be found beginning on page III-1 of this report.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Management's Discussion and Analysis

June 30, 2024

Fund Financial Statements. Traditional users of the City's financial statements will find the fund financial statement presentation more familiar. With the implementation of Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 34, the focus is on major funds rather than fund types. A *fund* is a grouping of related accounts that are used to maintain control over resources that have been segregated for specific activities or objectives. A major fund should generally meet both of the following criteria: 1) total assets, liabilities, revenues, or expenditures/expenses are at least 10 percent of the corresponding total (assets, liabilities, etc.) for that fund type (i.e. *governmental* or *enterprise* funds) and 2) total assets, liabilities, revenues, or expenditures/expenses of the individual governmental or enterprise funds are at least five percent of the corresponding total for all governmental and enterprise funds combined.

The City, like other state and local governments, uses fund accounting to ensure and demonstrate compliance with finance-related legal requirements. All the funds of the City can be divided into three categories: governmental funds, proprietary funds, and fiduciary funds.

Governmental Funds. *Governmental funds* are used to report those same functions reported as governmental activities in the government-wide financial statements. However, unlike the government-wide statements, the fund financial statements are prepared on the modified accrual basis. Under the modified accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when they become measurable and available, and expenditures are recognized when the related fund liability is incurred, with the exception of long-term debt and similar long-term items which are recorded when due. Therefore, the focus of the governmental fund financial statements is on near-term inflows and outflows of spendable resources, as well as on the balance of spendable resources available at the end of the fiscal year.

Because the focus of governmental funds is narrower than that of the government-wide financial statements, it is useful to compare the information presented for *governmental funds* with similar information presented for *governmental activities* in the government-wide financial statements. By doing so, readers may better understand the long-term impact of the government's near-term financing decisions. Both the governmental funds *Balance Sheet* and the governmental funds *Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances* provide a reconciliation to facilitate this comparison between *governmental funds* and *governmental activities*.

Information is presented separately in the governmental fund Balance Sheet and in the governmental fund *Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances* for the General and Streets special revenue funds that are major funds. Data from the other governmental funds is combined into a single, aggregated presentation. Individual fund data for each of these non-major governmental funds is provided in the form of combining statements located within the supplementary information following the notes to the financial statements and the required supplementary information.

The City adopts an annual appropriations budget for all funds. GASB Statement No. 34, requires budgetary information be shown for the General Fund and each major special revenue fund. A budgetary comparison statement has been provided for the General and Streets funds to demonstrate compliance with their budgets.

The basic governmental fund financial statements can be found beginning on page III-3 of this report.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Management's Discussion and Analysis

June 30, 2024

Proprietary Funds. The City maintains two different types of *proprietary* funds: Enterprise and Internal Service funds. The proprietary fund financial statements are prepared on the accrual basis of accounting. *Enterprise funds* are used to report the same functions presented as *business-type activities* in the government-wide financial statements. The City uses enterprise funds to account for its water, wastewater, solid waste, transfer station, parking, golf course, transit (bus), building, and City-County Building operations. *Internal service funds* are used to account for activities performed for other organizational units within the City. The City uses internal service funds to account for its fleet services, copier revolving, property and liability insurance, and health insurance services.

Proprietary funds are reported in the same way that all activities are reported in the *Statement of Net Position* and the *Statement of Activities*, but provide more detail and additional information, such as cash flows. Internal service funds are reflected in either the governmental or the business-type activities depending on which funds benefit primarily from its services. The fleet services fund's assets are consolidated in the government-wide financial statements with the business-type activities. Similarly, the copier revolving, property and liability insurance, and health insurance funds are consolidated with the governmental activities.

The basic proprietary fund financial statements can be found beginning on page III-9 of this report.

Fiduciary Funds. Fiduciary funds are used to account for assets that are not for the benefit of the government or its component units. For fiscal year 2024, the City has one Fiduciary Fund categorized as "Other Fiduciary Activities" or Custodial Fund.

The activities in the Custodial Fund meet the following criteria to be reported as Other Fiduciary Activities:

1. The assets are controlled by the government.
2. The assets are not derived from the government's own-source revenue or government mandated nonexchange or voluntary nonexchange transactions, and
3. The assets are for the benefit of individuals, and the government does not have administrative or direct financial involvement with the assets, and the assets are not derived from the government providing goods or services to those individuals.

Fiduciary funds are not reflected in the government-wide financial statements because the assets of those funds are not available to support the City's own programs. The accounting used for fiduciary funds is much like that used for proprietary funds. Fiduciary Funds present two basic financial statements 1) A statement of fiduciary net position, and 2) A statement of changes in fiduciary net position. Fiduciary funds are not required to report a Statement of Cash Flows.

The Custodial Fund is used to account for and report Municipal Court Bond and Restitution assets. The basic fiduciary fund financial statements can be found beginning on page III-12.

Notes to the Financial Statements. The notes provide additional information that is essential to a full understanding of the data provided in the government-wide and fund financial statements. The notes to the financial statements can be found beginning on page III-14 of this report.

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Other Information. All required supplementary information other than GASB Statement Nos. 68 and 75, Pensions and Other Postemployment Benefits other than Pensions (OPEB) schedules precedes the basic financial statements or is included in the basic financial statements and accompanying notes. Therefore, the only information presented in the section for required supplementary information is information demonstrating funding of our OPEB implied rate subsidy and Pension's liabilities beginning on page IV-1.

The Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) consists of two governmental funds. The TBID does not prepare separate financial statements. Therefore, combining statements are included beginning on page V-23.

GOVERNMENT-WIDE FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Net position over time may serve as a useful indicator of a government's financial position. The net position for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024 was \$370,653,668 (assets and deferred outflows exceeded liabilities and deferred inflows), which was an increase of \$15,523,117.

The largest portion of the City's net position, \$299,612,374 or 80.83 percent, reflects its investment in capital assets (e.g., land, building, machinery and equipment, right-of-use lease equipment, and infrastructure); less any related debt used to acquire those assets that is still outstanding. The City uses these capital assets to provide services to citizens; accordingly, these assets are not available for future spending. Although the City's investment in capital assets is reported net of related debt, it should be noted that the resources used to repay this debt must be provided from other sources, since the capital assets themselves cannot be used to liquidate these liabilities. A summary of net position is shown in the following table:

	Governmental Activities		Business-Type Activities		Total	
	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
Current and other assets	\$ 58,522,275	\$ 51,709,578	\$ 56,662,272	\$ 53,449,234	\$115,184,547	\$105,158,812
Capital assets	150,423,797	147,571,240	169,990,623	165,646,687	320,414,420	313,217,927
Total assets	208,946,072	199,280,818	226,652,895	219,095,921	435,598,967	418,376,739
Deferred outflows of resources	5,030,144	5,616,059	1,999,823	1,955,912	7,029,967	7,571,971
Long-term liabilities	28,108,097	26,590,321	29,398,918	28,600,207	57,507,015	55,190,528
Other liabilities	1,316,017	1,686,230	2,581,294	1,940,358	3,897,311	3,626,588
Total liabilities	29,424,114	28,276,551	31,980,212	30,540,565	61,404,326	58,817,116
Deferred inflows of resources	4,804,927	5,554,365	5,766,013	6,446,678	10,570,940	12,001,043
Net investment in capital assets	145,991,970	143,238,126	153,620,404	149,351,583	299,612,374	292,589,709
Restricted	9,541,915	8,234,765	2,355,189	1,266,489	11,897,104	9,501,254
Unrestricted	24,213,290	19,593,070	34,930,900	33,446,518	59,144,190	53,039,588
Total net position	\$179,747,175	\$171,065,961	\$190,906,493	\$184,064,590	\$370,653,668	\$355,130,551

As of June 30, 2024 the City can report positive balances in all three categories of net position. The Parking, Golf Course and Transit (Bus) proprietary funds' negative unrestricted net position is because GASB 68 and 75 require the City's estimated portion of the State's pension liability and other postemployment

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benefits (OPEB) to be reported. The City has paid all required amounts to the pension administrators as required by State law. In addition, the City has paid all insurance premiums.

The City's increase in net position by \$15,523,117 is attributed to several factors that are discussed on the following pages.

	Governmental Activities		Business-Type Activities		Total	
	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
Revenues:						
Program revenues:						
Charges for services	\$ 14,244,300	\$ 15,790,408	\$ 30,764,362	\$ 31,152,445	\$ 45,008,662	\$ 46,942,853
Operating grants and contributions	15,268,036	12,802,601	2,026,894	1,872,365	17,294,930	14,674,966
Capital grants and contributions	168,229	633,196	351,964	-	520,193	633,196
General revenues:						
Property taxes	17,325,226	13,884,885	-	-	17,325,226	13,884,885
Motor vehicle taxes	1,735,424	965,755	-	-	1,735,424	965,755
Other	3,116,611	1,821,152	2,523,870	1,601,971	5,640,481	3,423,123
Total revenues	51,857,826	45,897,997	35,667,090	34,626,781	87,524,916	80,524,778
Expenses:						
General government	3,706,174	2,328,408	-	-	3,706,174	2,328,408
Public safety	22,357,259	20,342,894	-	-	22,357,259	20,342,894
Public works	8,784,647	8,583,419	-	-	8,784,647	8,583,419
Public health	176,771	144,666	-	-	176,771	144,666
Culture and recreation	5,888,861	6,705,086	-	-	5,888,861	6,705,086
Community development	1,349,909	827,314	-	-	1,349,909	827,314
Interest on long-term debt	180,689	156,112	-	-	180,689	156,112
Water	-	-	7,761,776	7,209,705	7,761,776	7,209,705
Wastewater	-	-	4,878,776	4,653,288	4,878,776	4,653,288
Solid Waste	-	-	3,806,991	3,709,506	3,806,991	3,709,506
Transfer Station	-	-	3,309,925	3,385,950	3,309,925	3,385,950
Parking	-	-	1,971,092	1,758,174	1,971,092	1,758,174
Golf Course	-	-	2,681,967	2,094,635	2,681,967	2,094,635
Building	-	-	1,530,055	1,405,102	1,530,055	1,405,102
Transit (Bus)	-	-	1,961,267	1,858,205	1,961,267	1,858,205
City-County Administration Building	-	-	1,655,640	1,412,374	1,655,640	1,412,374
Total expenses	42,444,310	39,087,899	29,557,489	27,486,939	72,001,799	66,574,838
Changes in Net Position before transfers	9,413,516	6,810,098	6,109,601	7,139,842	15,523,117	13,949,940
Transfers	(732,302)	(2,825,848)	732,302	2,825,848	-	-
Change in net position	8,681,214	3,984,250	6,841,903	9,965,690	15,523,117	13,949,940
Net Position - beginning of year	171,065,961	167,081,711	184,064,590	174,098,900	355,130,551	341,180,611
Net position - end of year	\$179,747,175	\$171,065,961	\$190,906,493	\$184,064,590	\$370,653,668	\$355,130,551

Governmental Activities. Governmental activities in fiscal year 2024 increased the City's net position by \$8,681,214, or 5.07 percent. The key elements of the increase and variances between years are:

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Governmental Revenues:

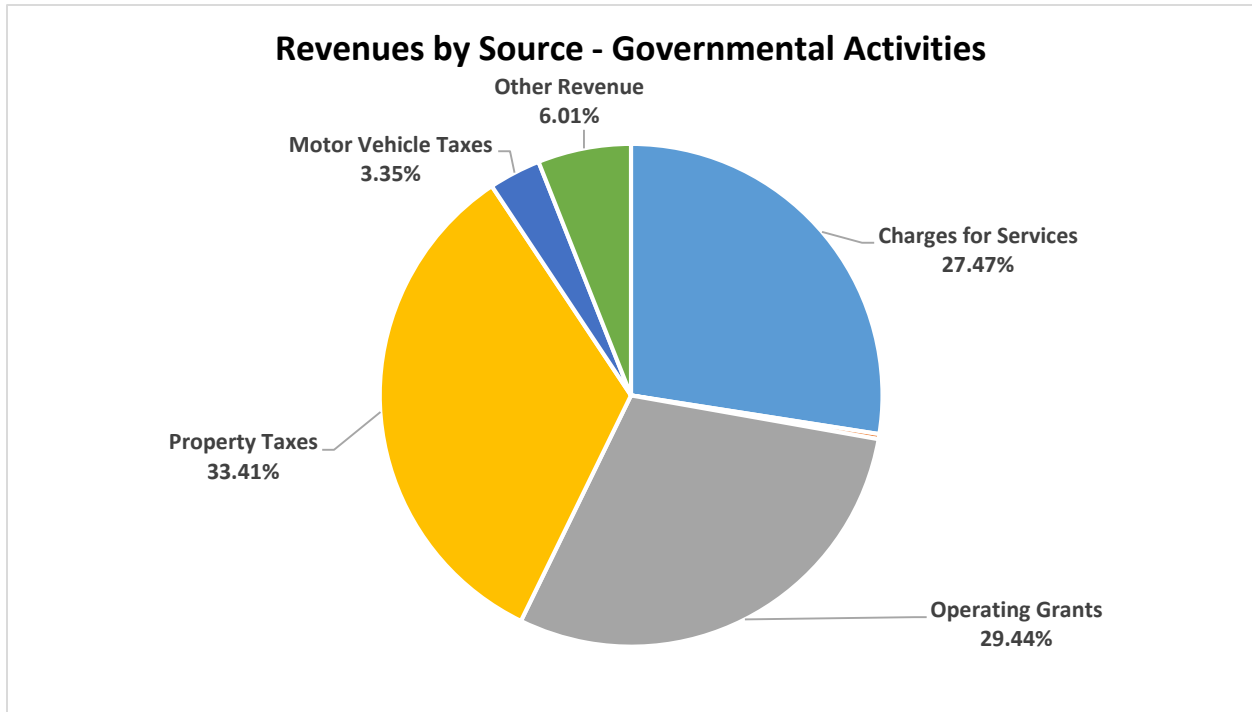
- Charges for services decreased by \$1,546,108 or 9.80 percent. The City lost the service contract with Fort Harrison to provide Fire and Emergency response to that area. This was a loss of about \$200,000 to the General Fund for that service. Streets Maintenance assessments were more than \$500,000 less than the prior year due to protested street maintenance assessments; the protests were based on the methodology the City uses to calculate the charges. These protests were settled in Fiscal Year 2025 which will carry over to lost revenue in the new fiscal year. The Transportation Systems Department is reviewing the rate structure methodology for potential changes in Fiscal Year 2026.
- Total Operating Grants and Contributions of \$15,268,036 increased by \$2,465,435, or 19.26 percent from the prior year. Lewis and Clark County contributed \$750,000 to the 9-1-1 Center for its proportionate share of the new Records Management/CAD computer software system. East Helena also contributed \$50,000 to this project. In Fiscal Year 2024, the City received over \$50,000 in opioid abatement funds that have not been disbursed according to the restriction on the purpose of the funds. The City received a \$50,000 contribution for renewable energy projects and an \$80,113 private donation for historic preservation projects. The balance of the change in grants and contributions from the prior year is largely due to health insurance contributions. Fiscal Year 2024 was the first full impact year of our change in health care premiums where the City picked up more of the proportionate share in premiums for families. These amounts paid by both the city and the employees are included in the contribution revenue.
- Property tax revenue increased \$3,440,341 or 24.78 percent from the prior year. General property tax levy revenue grows by 1/2 of the average rate of inflation for the prior three years in addition to new construction. Fiscal Year 2024 represented an appraisal year which raised the value of properties. The appraisals are performed by the Montana Department of Revenue every other year. In addition, the City's growth of new construction continues to be unprecedented as compared to the previous decade.
- Motor vehicle tax state shared revenue increased \$769,669 or 79.70 percent. This tax is collected by the Montana Department of Justice, Motor Vehicle Division. Because Montana does not have a sales tax on vehicle sales, this tax helps pay for transportation infrastructure. The method of collecting this tax is based on vehicle age, MRSP and vehicle type. Lewis and Clark County continues to experience higher than usual vehicle registrations which is the primary reason for the increase.

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The chart below shows the distribution of General Government Revenues by source for fiscal year 2024:



Governmental Expenses:

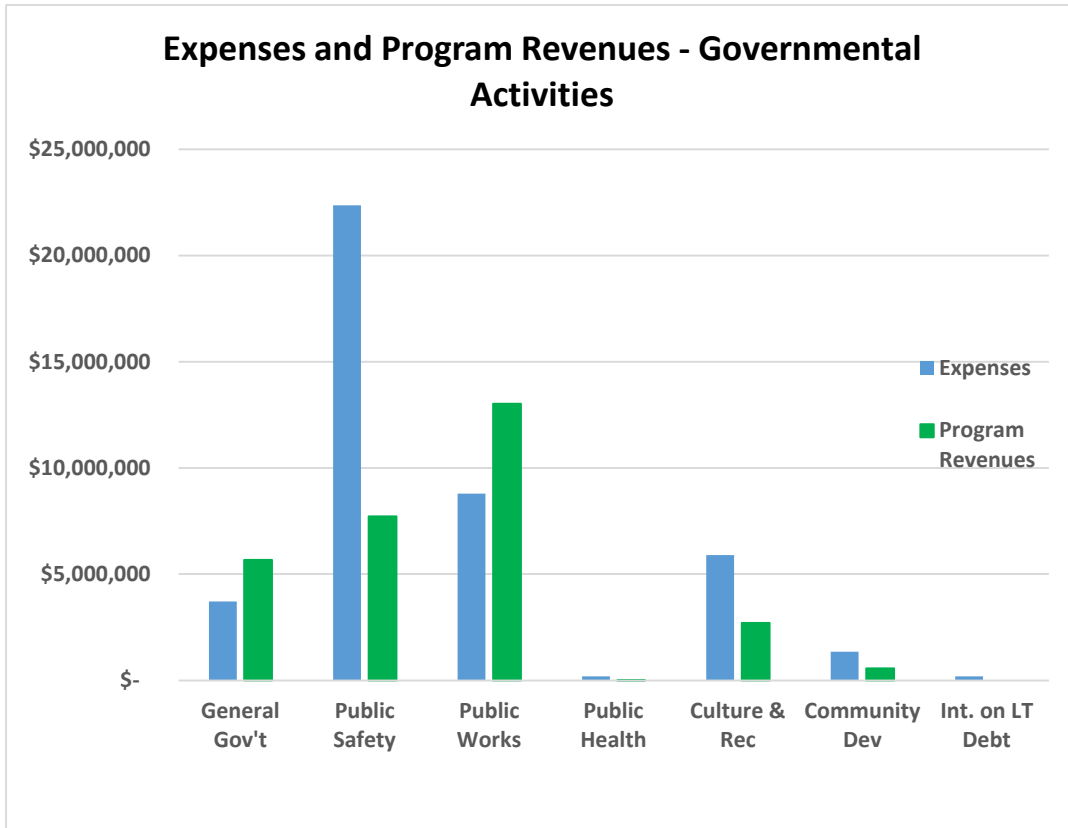
- General Government Expenses increased \$3,356,411 from the prior year or (8.59 percent). This is primarily related to the following:
 - Staff received a cost-of-living adjustment (cola) of 4.0 percent in Fiscal Year 2024. This cola, along with scheduled step increase had an impact of \$2,200,000 to general government salaries and wages.
 - A new subscription-based technology arrangement was entered into in Fiscal Year 2024, adding \$168,901 in lease amortization expense and \$420,552 in Lease Principal and Interest Expense.
 - The City spent \$590,110 in donations to local non-profit organizations. Receiving American Rescue Plan Act funds in Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 resulted in an increase in cash reserves in the General Fund. The City Commission approved appropriations from the reserves to fund several projects from non-profits that went through an application process. The Commission held several public meetings to deliberate and approve the funding. Some appropriations were approved in fiscal year 2024 but were carried forward in Fiscal Year 2025.
 - The increase in general government expenses was offset by a decrease in pension expense by \$943,172 from Fiscal Year 2023. OPEB Expense stayed relatively the same.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

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General Government activities revenue and expense by program is displayed in the chart below:



Business-Type Activities. Business-type activities increased the City's net position by \$6,841,903 or 3.72 percent. Key elements of the increase are:

- The total change in net position of \$6,841,903 was primarily impacted by water and wastewater operating revenues over expenses by \$3,767,265 as the result of capital asset acquisitions increasing by \$4,343,936 or 2.62 percent.
- The Golf Fund had a successful year with total operating revenues increasing of approximately \$446,000 from the prior year. This was not enough to keep pace with expenditures to run the course. The clubhouse or MUNIS Restaurant had operating expenses exceed operating revenue by \$221,138. Offering the services the clubhouse is popular to the golfers and the general public but running a restaurant is difficult to break even. Finding and paying service personnel is challenging. Prices set for golf course use were increased by over 2 percent, however, not enough to offset the losses from the clubhouse. As a public golf course, the City desires to keep rates at a level where if someone wants to play golf, they can play. This strikes a delicate balance of breaking even in the entire fund, while not outpricing the course use for general public use.
- The residential solid waste assessments were increased by 10.20 percent to afford new debt service for solid waste trucks and equipment. The loan was not secured until Fiscal Year 2025 due to supply chain delays in delivering the equipment and vehicles to the city, thus resulting in more

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revenue than anticipated expense. Operating revenues exceeded operating expenses by more than \$232,000.

- The Transit system is also difficult to break even. The system is funded primarily by Federal and State Grants with a match coming from the General Fund. The General Fund increased its match to up to \$447,000 in Fiscal Year 2024, up \$35,000 from the prior year or 8.5 percent. Ridership fares make up only 6.3 percent of operating revenue. The costs of operating the system continue to outpace revenue, especially with hiring drivers. To be competitive and fill vacancies, the City needs to compete with other agencies, resulting in increasing wages. The shortfall lands with the General Fund to increase its match funding to maintain sustainability of the services.

Business-Type Revenues:

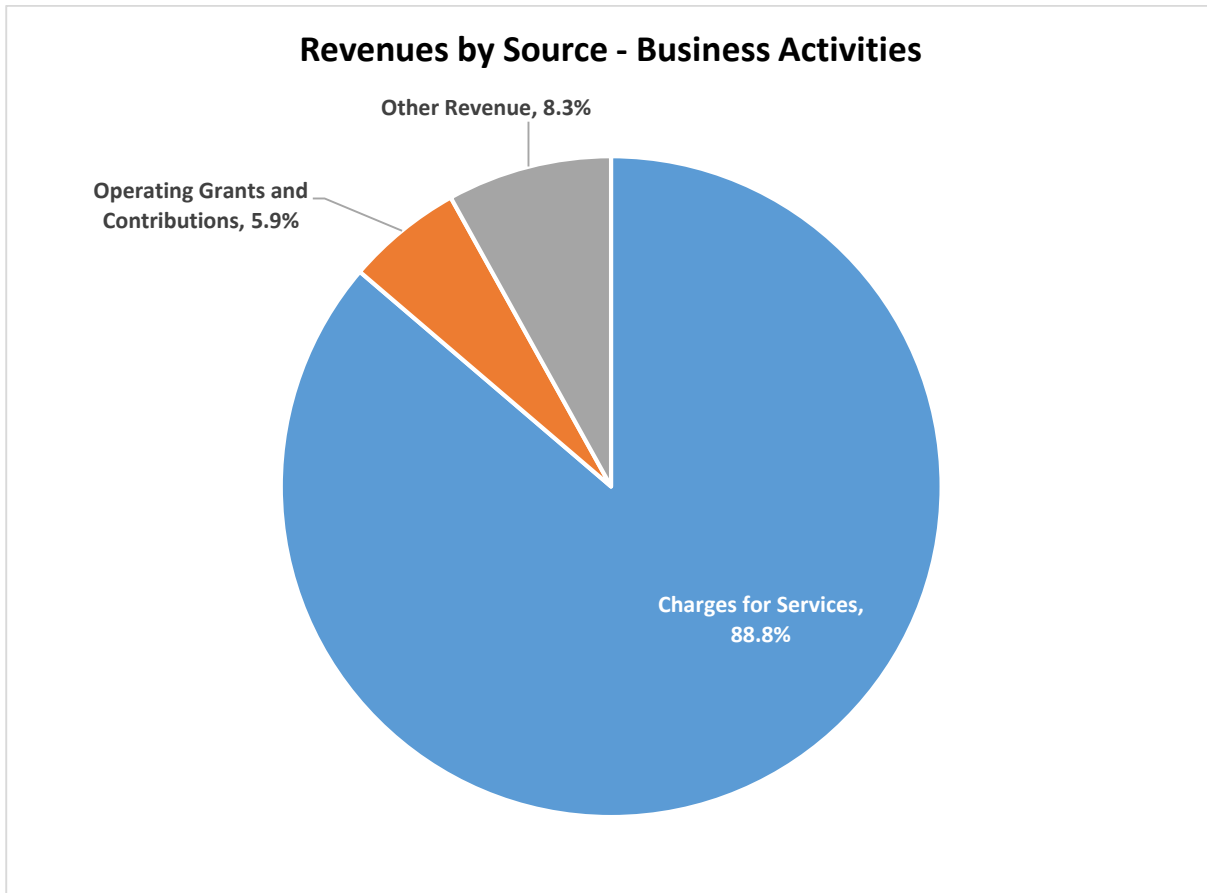
- Water and wastewater charges for services decreased by \$4,822 (0.05 percent) and \$32,402 (0.50 percent), respectively.
- Transfer station charges for services decreased by \$146,620 or 5.48 percent. Recent years saw higher usage at the transfer station during the pandemic. The utilization has tapered off to averages consistent with pre-pandemic services. The County contributed \$100,000 more than Fiscal Year 2023 for tipping services, and commercial tipping usage increase by \$193,500; however, these were offset by a decrease in residential tipping revenue of \$301,800.
- Golf Course charges for services increased from the prior year by \$446,277 or 22.83 percent from the prior year. Broken down, golf passes and lessons increased over \$308,000, and the club house (MUNI'S Restaurant) brought in an increase of \$129,000 or 28.7% more revenue than the prior year. The course is enjoyed all year round with golf players and in the winter, cross country skiing. Achieving consistent hours at the restaurant has helped with garnering more interest in eating, drinking craft beer and wine, playing the simulator, and booking small parties.
- Parking revenues increased 2.79 percent from the prior year. No increase in the fee structure was passed. On street (kiosk) parking revenue decreased by \$138,500 as a result of initiative 1st hour free parking in the downtown area; off-street parking revenues increased by \$210,800. Off-street parking is utilized primarily by businesses in parking garages and lots.
- Building permit fees decreased from the prior year by \$256,203, or 14.77 percent. The building department continued to be busy, however high dollar commercial permits in Fiscal Year 2024 declined as compared to the prior year.

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Revenues by sources and a comparison of expenses to program revenues are displayed in the charts below:



Business-Type Expenses:

- Total business-type activity program expenses increased by \$2,070,550 or 7.53 percent, which represents inflationary costs for supplies and materials, and a 4.0 percent cost of living adjustment for personnel. In Fiscal Year 2023, the Commission approved an enhanced employee package for health insurance benefits, where the employer is picking up a larger proportional share of the premiums. The average decrease for an employee on the family plan went from paying an out-of-pocket cost of \$750 per month to \$350 per month. Fiscal Year 2024 saw more employees choosing family plans than in the prior year, likely due to spouse's coverages on other plans drop to come onto the city's plan. Comparative analysis reveals that the city's package is very competitive to the State of Montana and Lewis and Clark County. This was an intentional decision by the Commission to continue its efforts to promote the City as an employer of choice.
- For most of the business-type funds, program revenues exceed program expenses with the exception of the Golf Course, Building fund, and combined Solid Waste funds. The Commission made a deliberate decision to promote sustainability to continue subsidizing the rising costs of curb-side recycling. This contracted service picks up recycling materials at the curbside for city

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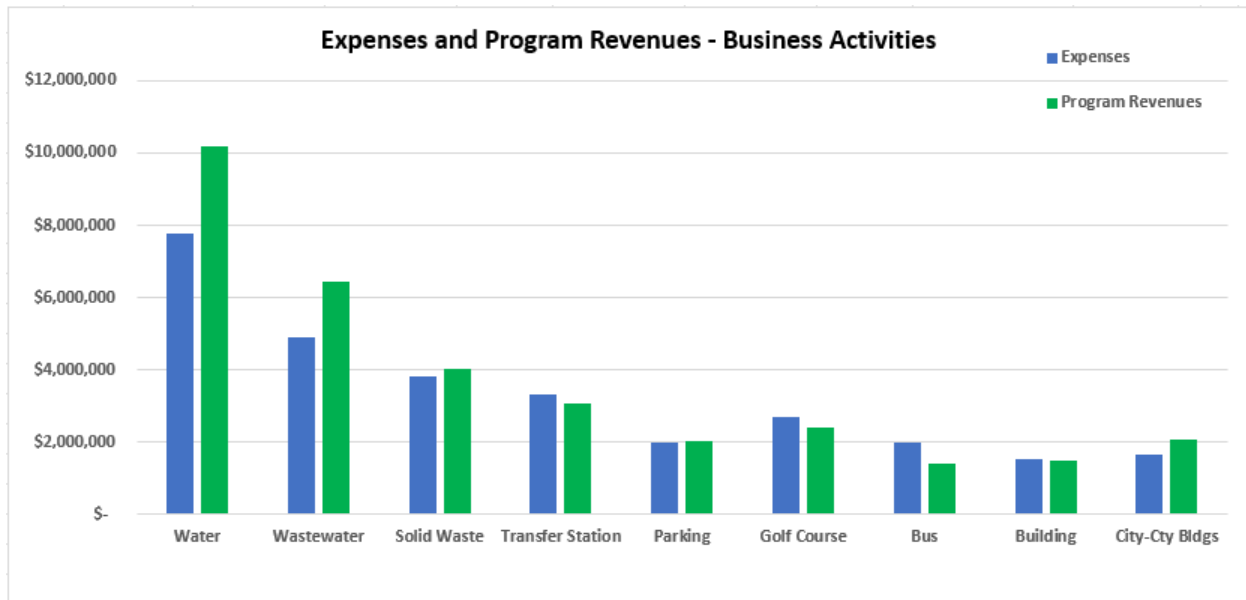
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residents. Customers pay \$8.00 per month and the city pays \$7.00 per month taken from the residential solid-waste assessments. As the service expands, the impact to the residential solid waste fund increases. To date, the subsidy is nearing \$1,000,000 over the course of five years.

- The Golf Course fund took on new debt to replace their golf cart fleet, adding \$11,448 to their annual debt service payments. Cart rental rates were increased to help cover the cost of the new debt service. Muni's Restaurant struggles to break even with high staffing costs.
- Depreciation expense in the business-type funds increased \$396,600, or over 8.7 percent, primarily in the water and wastewater funds as result of moving construction in progress into service.
- Building Fund salaries and wages increased over \$100,000 due to receiving a cost-of-Living increase of 4 percent. No new staff were added to this division. Maintenance and operating costs remained relatively unchanged from the prior year. Additionally, permit revenue decreased by \$358,000.

A chart representing both business type revenues as compared to expenses for fiscal year 2024 is shown below:



Financial Analysis of the City's Funds

Governmental Funds. The focus of the City's *governmental funds* is to provide information on near-term inflows, outflows, and balances of spendable resources. Such information is useful in assessing the City's financing requirements. In particular, unassigned fund balances may serve as a useful measure of a government's net resources available for discretionary use as they represent the portion of fund balance which has not yet been limited to use for a particular purpose by either an external party, the City itself, or a group or individual that has been delegated authority to assign resources for use of particular purposes by the City Commission.

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As of June 30, 2024, the City's governmental funds reported combined fund balances of \$56,109,398, an increase of \$6,744,247 in comparison with the prior year. Approximately 11.93 percent of this amount, \$6,694,981, constitutes *unassigned fund balance*, which is available for spending at the City's discretion. The remainder of the fund balance is either *non-spendable, restricted, committed, or assigned* to indicate that it is 1) not in spendable form, \$1,384,235, 2) restricted for particular purposes, \$9,541,915, 3) committed for a particular purpose, \$8,440,968, or 4) assigned for a particular purpose, \$30,047,299.

The General Fund is the chief operating fund of the City. At June 30, 2024, unassigned fund balance was \$6,694,981 while total fund balance was \$11,938,038. As a measure of the General Fund's liquidity, it may be useful to compare both unassigned fund balance and total fund balance to total General Fund expenditures. Unassigned fund balance represents approximately 30.25 percent of total General Fund expenditures, while total fund balance represents approximately 53.93 percent of that same amount. The General Fund balance decreased \$1,263,410 during the current fiscal year, primarily due to spending down cash reserves on capital and community aide.

The Streets Fund had an ending fund balance of \$15,320,185, an increase of \$3,033,320 primarily due to capital outlay spending of over \$2,000,000 less than the prior year. In Fiscal Year 2024, the Streets Fund focused their capital outlay on mill and overlay and ADA compliance projects rather than total reconstruction costs in the prior year on Rodney Street. In addition, in Fiscal Year 2023, the Streets Fund received a \$500,000 grant that was not realized in the current year.

Proprietary Funds. The City's proprietary funds provide the same type of information found in the government-wide financial statements, but in more detail. Unrestricted net position and the total growth in net position of proprietary funds is outlined by fund below:

City's Proprietary Fund Net Position				
	Unrestricted Net Position	Percent of Unrestricted Net Position	Change in Net Position	Percent Change in Net Position
Water	\$ 18,064,284	51.60%	\$ 3,511,281	51.94%
Wastewater	10,721,188	30.63%	2,196,971	32.50%
Solid Waste	1,583,636	4.52%	198,860	2.94%
Transfer Station	1,135,462	3.24%	131,483	1.94%
Parking	(106,445)	-0.31%	177,043	2.63%
Golf Course	(723,662)	-2.07%	(159,636)	-2.36%
Building	1,425,172	4.07%	88,642	1.31%
Transit (Bus)	(40,258)	-0.11%	(27,822)	-0.41%
City-County				
Administration Building	1,946,514	5.56%	758,540	11.22%
Internal service	1,001,952	2.86%	(115,261)	-1.71%
Total	\$ 35,007,843	100.00%	\$ 6,760,101	100.00%

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Major changes in net position of the proprietary funds are attributable to:

- The Water and Wastewater funds increased Total Net Position for Proprietary funds by 51.94 and 32.50 percent, respectively, during fiscal year 2024 primarily due to infrastructure improvements and construction in progress increasing Capital Assets.
- Total proprietary operating income added \$1,773,978 (not including internal service activities) to net position of proprietary funds, of which \$2,156,154 and \$1,611,111 was for Water and Wastewater services, respectively.
- The Solid Waste, Parking, and City-County Buildings had operating gains of \$220,417, \$269,765, and \$438,435, respectively. Parking revenue increases were recognized primarily in off-street and lot sales. The Transfer Station experienced more activity in commercial tipping and less in residential tipping services, which is generally more expensive to the consumer, and the City-County Buildings generated an increase income by more than \$80,000 rental rate increases. Several budgeted capital projects were also delayed to Fiscal Year 2025. Both the City and County made contributions in the amount of \$403,000 Fiscal Year 2024 to cover these projects.
- These operating gains were offset by operating losses in the Transfer station of \$(770,309), Golf Course of \$(221,138), Building \$(51,386), and the Transit (Bus) fund by \$(1,879,071). As noted earlier in this analysis, the Transfer station has seen a significant increase in subsidizing curbside recycling per the Commission's direction. Both the Golf Course Fund and Transit Fund continue to maintain a balance in raising rates and keeping services affordable. As a result, the General Fund is relied on to subsidize these funds.

General Fund Budgetary Highlights

Revenue budgets were adjusted by \$6,760 for a contribution to the Police Department. No other changes were made to General Fund revenue budgets.

General Fund budgeted expenditures were increased in total by \$2,200,403. This was comprised primarily of fiscal year 2023 budget carryovers and other adjustments as follows:

- Non-Departmental:
 - \$2,120,500 – Carryover appropriations for unexpended community aid contributions
- Legislative:
 - \$7,000 – Increase for joint records management study with Lewis and Clark County
 - \$89,000 – Carryover for sidewalk and parks capital programs
- Accounting Services:
 - \$10,800 – Carryover for Accounting Audit Contract
- Public Safety - Law Enforcement:
 - \$6,740 – Training Supplies increase with contribution received
- Public Safety - Fire:
 - \$36,343 - HAZMAT Grant Balance

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- Community Development:
 - \$2,461 – Housing Trust Fund Procedure Development Contract

Total actual General Fund expenditures were \$7,334,636 less than the final budget. Almost \$4 million of the comparison is due to internal allocations. The budget is prepared on a modified-accrual basis. In modified accrual, the general expenses are reduced (along with the revenue) by internal services allocated to/from other funds.

The balance of the variance can be attributed to the following:

- \$2,268,000 in Community Aide grants were appropriated but not distributed.
- \$562,600 savings resulting from staffing vacancies; primarily in the police, finance and engineering departments. The Parks Recreation and Swimming Pool also did not utilize the full estimate for their seasonal staff.
- \$74,000 savings resulted in unspent appropriated contracted services, of which most will be carried over to the new fiscal year.
- Various miscellaneous unspent appropriations throughout the general fund accounted for the remainder of the variance.

Capital Asset and Debt Administration

Capital Assets. The City's net investment in capital assets (net of related debt) for its governmental and business-type activities as of June 30, 2024 was \$299,612,374. Capital assets include land, buildings, improvements other than buildings, machinery and equipment, construction in progress, right-of-use lease equipment, and infrastructure.

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City's Capital Assets
(Net of Accumulated Depreciation)

	Governmental Activities	Business-Type Activities	Total
Non-depreciable assets:			
Land	\$ 84,844,395	\$ 48,571,704	\$ 133,416,099
Construction in Progress	2,613,439	13,906,058	16,519,497
	<u>87,457,834</u>	<u>62,477,762</u>	<u>149,935,596</u>
Depreciable assets:			
Buildings	3,559,886	24,185,011	27,744,897
Improvements other than buildings	7,809,292	2,043,060	9,852,352
Machinery and equipment	9,431,620	6,293,627	15,725,247
Right-of-use lease equipment	-	21,334	21,334
Subscription-based information technology arrangement	2,385,677	-	2,385,677
Infrastructure	39,779,488	74,969,829	114,749,317
	<u>62,965,963</u>	<u>107,512,861</u>	<u>170,478,824</u>
Net Capital Assets	<u><u>\$ 150,423,797</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 169,990,623</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 320,414,420</u></u>

Total acquisitions amounted to \$16,420,449. Major capital asset events during the current fiscal year include the following:

Streets/Stormwater:

- \$ 878,168– Pavement preservation and mill and overlay projects
- \$ 636,270 – Rodney Street reconstruction – Phase II
- \$ 416,714 – Vehicle and equipment replacements
- \$ 183,870 – 11th Street Improvements
- \$ 164,590– Multi Modal projects
- \$ 32,748 – GPS Building Remodel

General Administration:

- \$ 569,106 - New ERP Financial Software implementation costs
- \$ 235,195 – Vehicle / equipment purchases
- \$ 219,698 – ERP Subscription-based Information Technology Arrangement
- \$ 142,911 – City Parks Renovations

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA
Management's Discussion and Analysis
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- \$ 100,490 – Sustainability Audit Study
- \$ 86,536 - Human Resources office remodel
- \$ 82,887 – Solar Energy Project
- \$ 30,623 – Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Facilities:

- \$ 696,770 – Law and Justice Center Renovations
- \$ 344, 495 – City-County Building remodels and LED lighting upgrades
- \$ 64,302 – City-County Building audio/visual conference room upgrades
- \$ 41,600 – Grandstreet Theatre Roof Replacement
- \$12,000 – Equipment replacements

Water / Wastewater:

- \$ 1,448,836– Eureka/Ground Water Wells Rehabilitation
- \$ 1,067,528 – Water/Sewer Main replacements
- \$ 811,562 – Sewer CIPP project
- \$ 751,791 – Ten Mile Treatment plant improvements
- \$ 536,180 – Crosstown Connector replacements
- \$ 393,257 – Hydrant replacements
- \$ 307,054 – Land purchase for well project
- \$ 178,773 – Generator Project
- \$ 173,343 – Wastewater master plan
- \$ 160,158 – Vehicle/Equipment replacements
- \$ 139,580 – Bio-reactor basin blowers
- \$ 89,201 - Gas line replacement with Northwestern Energy
- \$ 48,794 - Ten Mile Diversion project
- \$ 83,054 – Digester Ring Blower upgrades
- \$ 58,500 – Chessman Dam improvements
- \$ 58,097 – Hale/Halben main connection project
- \$ 52,304 – Red Mountain Flume rehabilitation project
- \$ 52,157 – SCADA Systems upgrades for water treatment facilities
- \$ 49,900 - Cold storage Building
- \$ 43,664 - GPS Building Remodel
- \$ 42,095 – water Station Pumps
- \$ 37,581 – Water Treatment master plan
- \$ 21,762 – MRTP Heater BFP/Chemical Feed

Solid Waste:

- \$ 766,093 – Vehicle/Equipment purchases
- \$ 189 275 – Solid Waste Master Plan
- \$ 201,281 – Transfer Station Building/Gate Improvements
- \$ 41,056 – Landfill monitoring gas extraction blower
- \$ 25,015 – Solid Waste shop remodel

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA
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- \$ 21,120 – Recycling Entry Terminal improvements

Public Safety Services:

- \$ 653,006 – 9-1-1 Center CAD/RMS Subscription-based Information Technology Arrangement
- \$ 577,230 Police vehicle/equipment purchases
- \$ 520,104 – Wildland Firefighting vehicle & radios
- \$ 219,893 – Police radios
- \$ 161,983 – 9-1-1 Center CAD/Records Management implementation costs
- \$ 57,330 - Fire station #1 – New air compressor
- \$ 49,861 – Police taser replacements
- \$ 27,875 – Fire Station #1 and #2 improvements
- \$ 27,262 – 9-1-1 Center Desk Console replacements
- \$ 26,276 – 9-1-1 Center Security upgrades
- \$11,666 – Fire radios for new apparatus

Parking:

- \$ 59,636 – Surface Lot repairs

Golf:

- \$ 184,195 – Golf cart fleet replacement
- \$ 6,892 – Equipment replacement

Parks/Open Space/Trails:

- \$ 151,442 – Vehicle/Equipment purchases

Fleet Services (Internal Services):

- \$ 32,601 – Vehicle/Equipment purchases
- \$11,800 – Building improvements

Additional information on capital assets including commitments for significant capital projects can be found in the notes to the basic financial statements (Notes 6 and 11).

Long-Term Debt

As of June 30, 2024, the City had total debt outstanding of \$22,309,122. Of this amount, \$3,870,000 comprises debt backed by the full faith and credit of the government; \$618,914 for an INTERCAP Loan secured by the General Fund; \$1,808,960 is loans payable; \$5,905,000 is certificates of participation secured solely by the 15th Street Parking Garage; and \$8,417,581 is bonds secured solely by specified revenue sources of the water and wastewater funds.

The City's total debt decreased by \$96,265 (0.43 percent) during the current fiscal year. Additional debt was issued for loans in the amount of \$1,374,233. The City also recognized a new Subscription-Based Technology Arrangement liability in the amount of \$1,017,199.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA
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The City maintains an "AA" rating from Standard & Poor's on its general obligation bonds and on its certificates of participation.

State statutes limit the amount of general obligation debt a governmental entity may issue to 2.50 percent of the total assessed value of taxable property. The current debt limitation for the City is \$152,450,835, which is significantly in excess of the City's outstanding general obligation debt.

City's Outstanding Debt

	Governmental Activities	Business-Type Activities	Total
General obligations Bonds	\$ 2,145,000	\$ 1,725,000	\$ 3,870,000
Loans Payable	618,914	10,226,541	10,845,455
Certificates of Participation	-	5,905,000	5,905,000
Lease obligations	-	20,754	20,754
SBITAs	1,667,913	-	1,667,913
	<u>\$ 4,431,827</u>	<u>\$ 17,877,295</u>	<u>\$ 22,309,122</u>

Additional information long-term debt can be found in the notes to the basic financial statements (Note 7).

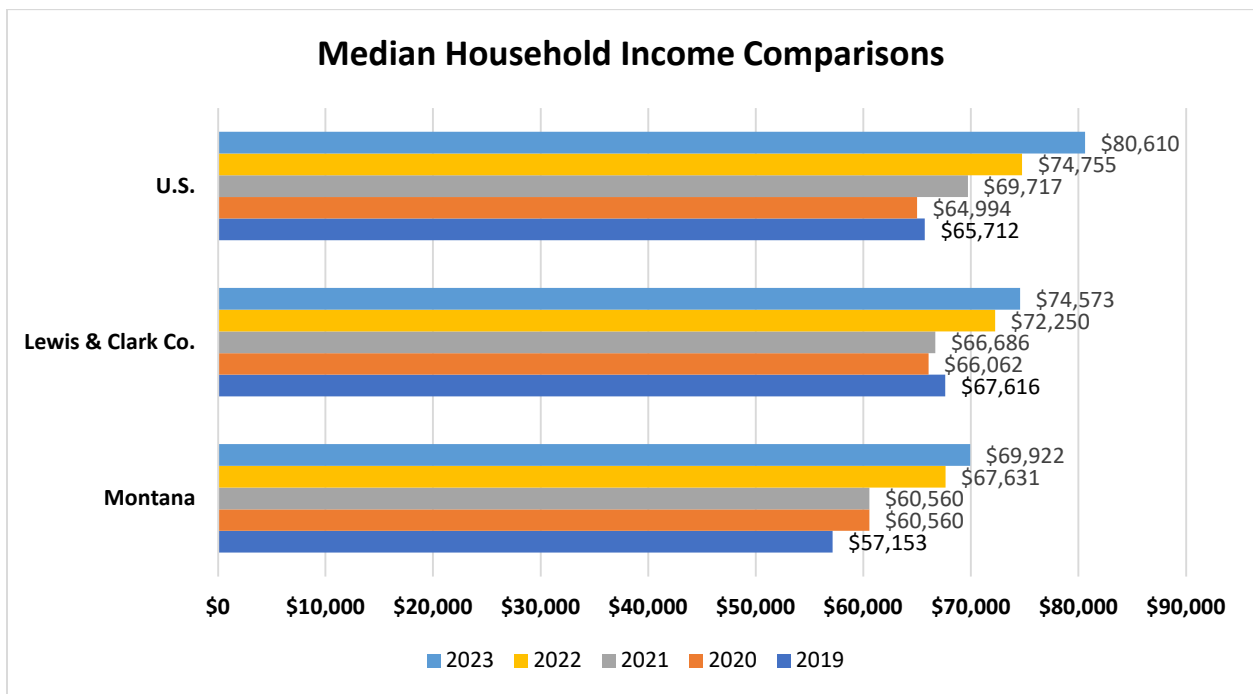
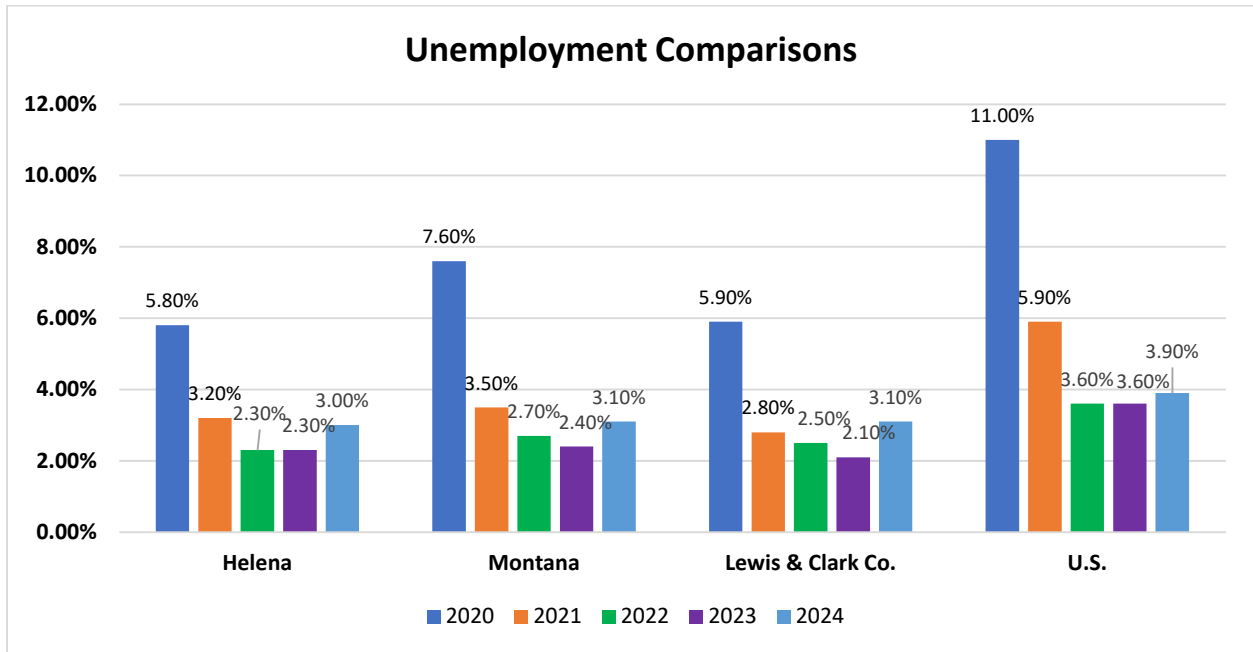
CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Management's Discussion and Analysis

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Economic Factors and Next Year's Budget Rates

(Some factors for the City are unavailable. In these instances, factors for Lewis & Clark County have been used. Source: MT Dept of Labor and Industries and "DATA USA" and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.)



CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA
Management's Discussion and Analysis
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Requests for Information

The City's financial statements are designed to provide users (citizens, taxpayers, customers, investors, and creditors) with a general overview of the City's finances and to demonstrate the City's accountability. Questions concerning any of the information provided in this report or requests for additional financial information should be addressed to the attention of the Finance Director at the following address: City of Helena, 316 North Park Avenue, Room 320, Helena, MT 59623.

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

STATEMENT OF NET POSITION

JUNE 30, 2024

	Primary Government			Component Units	
	Governmental Activities	Business-Type Activities	Total	Business Improvement District	Tourism Business Improvement District
Assets					
Current assets:					
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 55,898,524	\$ 44,770,847	\$ 100,669,371	\$ 328,294	\$ 387,384
Cash and cash equivalents - unspent debt proceeds	-	1,088,700	1,088,700	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents - cash with fiscal agent	-	120	120	-	-
Investments - restricted	-	1,266,489	1,266,489	-	-
Receivables, net of allowance for uncollectibles	2,092,810	2,401,684	4,494,494	125,668	103,688
Intergovernmental receivable	12,812	288,228	301,040	-	-
Loans receivable	177,456	53,399	230,855	-	-
Internal balances	(1,043,562)	1,043,562	-	-	-
Inventories	370,725	1,217,393	1,588,118	-	-
Lease receivable	-	228,014	228,014	-	-
Total current assets	57,508,765	52,358,436	109,867,201	453,962	491,072
Noncurrent assets:					
Loans receivable, net of current portion	1,013,510	543,802	1,557,312	-	-
Lease receivable, net of current portion	-	3,760,034	3,760,034	-	-
Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation:					
Capital assets not being depreciated	87,457,834	62,477,762	149,935,596	-	-
Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation	62,965,963	107,512,861	170,478,824	54,451	5,240
Total noncurrent assets	151,437,307	174,294,459	325,731,766	54,451	5,240
Total Assets	208,946,072	226,652,895	435,598,967	508,413	496,312
Deferred Outflows of Resources					
Deferred outflows of resources for pension	4,538,034	1,581,447	6,119,481	-	-
Deferred charge on debt refunding	-	418,376	418,376	-	-
Deferred outflows of resources for OPEB	492,110	-	492,110	-	-
Total Deferred Outflows of Resources	5,030,144	1,999,823	7,029,967	-	-
Liabilities					
Current liabilities:					
Accounts payable and other current liabilities	1,270,547	2,071,787	3,342,334	50	26,346
Customer deposits	-	195,229	195,229	-	-
Accrued interest	45,470	187,463	232,933	-	-
Unearned revenue	-	-	-	10,619	103,688
Compensated absences	1,612,704	478,684	2,091,388	-	-
Loans payable	78,332	934,336	1,012,668	-	-
General obligation bonds	500,000	190,000	690,000	-	-
Certificates of participation	-	330,000	330,000	-	-
SBITA liability	382,688	-	382,688	-	-
Lease payable	-	7,445	7,445	20,800	-
Landfill post-closure costs	-	126,815	126,815	-	-
Total current liabilities	3,889,741	4,521,759	8,411,500	31,469	130,034
Long-term liabilities:					
Compensated absences, net of current portion	1,232,712	381,310	1,614,022	1,610	9,882
Loans payable, net of current portion	540,582	9,292,205	9,832,787	-	-
General obligation bonds, net of current portion	1,645,000	1,535,000	3,180,000	-	-
Certificates of participation, net of current portion	-	5,575,000	5,575,000	-	-
SBITA liability, net of current portion	1,285,225	-	1,285,225	-	-
Lease payable, net of current portion	-	13,309	13,309	29,192	-
Landfill post-closure costs, net of current portion	-	1,775,410	1,775,410	-	-
Net pension liability	18,494,098	8,006,404	26,500,502	-	-
Other postemployment benefits	2,336,756	879,815	3,216,571	-	-
Total noncurrent liabilities	25,534,373	27,458,453	52,992,826	30,802	9,882
Total Liabilities	29,424,114	31,980,212	61,404,326	62,271	139,916
Deferred Inflows of Resources					
Deferred inflows of resources for pension	589,771	285,570	875,341	-	-
Deferred inflows of resources for leases	-	3,897,604	3,897,604	-	-
Deferred inflows of resources for OPEB	4,215,156	1,582,839	5,797,995	-	-
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	4,804,927	5,766,013	10,570,940	-	-
Net Position					
Net investment in capital assets	145,991,970	153,620,404	299,612,374	54,451	5,240
Restricted for:					
General government	764,848	-	764,848	-	-
Public safety	1,163,479	-	1,163,479	-	-
911 dispatch center	-	-	-	-	-
Public health	76,948	-	76,948	-	-
Public works	699,639	-	699,639	-	-
Culture and recreation	1,243,749	-	1,243,749	-	-
Community development	302,935	-	302,935	-	-
Debt service	630,011	2,355,189	2,985,200	-	-
Capital projects	4,660,306	-	4,660,306	-	-
Unrestricted	24,213,290	34,930,900	59,144,190	391,691	351,156
Total Net Position	\$ 179,747,175	\$ 190,906,493	\$ 370,653,668	\$ 446,142	\$ 356,396

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Functions/Programs	Program Revenues				Net (Expense) Revenue and Changes in Net Position				
	Expenses	Charges for Services	Operating Grants and Contributions	Capital Grants and Contributions	Primary Government			Component Units	
					Total Governmental Activities	Total Business-Type Activities	Total	Business Improvement District	Tourism Business Improvement District
Primary government:									
Governmental activities:									
General government	\$ 3,706,174	\$ 306,353	\$ 5,368,167	\$ -	\$ 1,968,346	\$ -	\$ 1,968,346	\$ -	\$ -
Public safety	22,357,259	883,801	6,835,476	-	(14,637,982)	-	(14,637,982)	-	-
Public works	8,784,647	10,379,035	2,645,962	-	4,240,350	-	4,240,350	-	-
Public health	176,771	-	1,951	-	(174,820)	-	(174,820)	-	-
Culture and recreation	5,888,861	2,312,704	291,948	93,130	(3,191,079)	-	(3,191,079)	-	-
Community development	1,349,909	362,407	124,532	75,099	(787,871)	-	(787,871)	-	-
Debt service - interest expense	180,689	-	-	-	(180,689)	-	(180,689)	-	-
Total governmental activities	<u>42,444,310</u>	<u>14,244,300</u>	<u>15,268,036</u>	<u>168,229</u>	<u>(12,763,745)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(12,763,745)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Business-type activities:									
Water	\$ 7,761,776	\$ 9,773,016	\$ 43,109	\$ 351,964	\$ -	\$ 2,406,313	\$ 2,406,313		
Waste water	4,878,776	6,430,337	27,157	-	-	1,578,718	1,578,718		
Solid waste	3,806,991	4,017,675	21,444	-	-	232,128	232,128		
Transfer station	3,309,925	2,531,293	545,853	-	-	(232,779)	(232,779)		
Parking	1,971,092	2,018,391	14,265	-	-	61,564	61,564		
Golf course	2,681,967	2,401,398	14,076	-	-	(266,493)	(266,493)		
Building	1,530,055	1,478,227	21,874	-	-	(29,954)	(29,954)		
Transit (Bus)	1,961,267	70,827	1,328,936	-	-	(561,504)	(561,504)		
City-County administration building	1,655,640	2,043,198	10,180	-	-	397,738	397,738		
Total business-type activities	<u>29,557,489</u>	<u>30,764,362</u>	<u>2,026,894</u>	<u>351,964</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,585,731</u>	<u>3,585,731</u>		
Total Primary Government	<u>\$ 72,001,799</u>	<u>\$ 45,008,662</u>	<u>\$ 17,294,930</u>	<u>\$ 520,193</u>	<u>(12,763,745)</u>	<u>3,585,731</u>	<u>(9,178,014)</u>		
Component units:									
Business Improvement District	\$ 281,440	\$ 351,294	\$ -	\$ -				\$ 69,854	
Tourism Business Improvement District	\$ 578,182	\$ 635,275	\$ -	\$ -					\$ 57,093
General revenues:									
Taxes:									
Property taxes					17,325,226	-	17,325,226	-	-
Motor vehicle taxes					1,735,424	-	1,735,424	-	-
Total taxes					19,060,650	-	19,060,650	-	-
Interest and investment income/(loss)					2,524,169	2,481,160	5,005,329	14,029	601
Gain on sale of capital assets					31,476	42,710	74,186	-	-
Other income					560,966	-	560,966	5,530	11,571
Transfers					(732,302)	732,302	-	-	-
Total general revenues and transfers					<u>21,444,959</u>	<u>3,256,172</u>	<u>24,701,131</u>	<u>19,559</u>	<u>12,172</u>
Change in Net Position					<u>8,681,214</u>	<u>6,841,903</u>	<u>15,523,117</u>	<u>89,413</u>	<u>69,265</u>
Net Position - beginning of year					<u>171,065,961</u>	<u>184,064,590</u>	<u>355,130,551</u>	<u>356,729</u>	<u>287,131</u>
Net position - ending					<u>\$ 179,747,175</u>	<u>\$ 190,906,493</u>	<u>\$ 370,653,668</u>	<u>\$ 446,142</u>	<u>\$ 356,396</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

BALANCE SHEET

GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS

JUNE 30, 2024

	General Fund	Streets Fund	Other Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 12,170,127	\$ 14,912,622	\$ 27,639,199	\$ 54,721,948
Taxes and special assessments receivable, net of allowance	830,287	655,634	377,324	1,863,245
Accounts receivable, net of allowance	170,374	14,239	10,579	195,192
Loans receivable	-	-	1,190,966	1,190,966
Intergovernmental receivable	-	-	12,812	12,812
Inventories	56,753	313,972	-	370,725
Total Assets	\$ 13,227,541	\$ 15,896,467	\$ 29,230,880	\$ 58,354,888
Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources, and Fund Balance				
Liabilities:				
Accounts payable and other current liabilities	\$ 973,195	\$ 71,217	\$ 221,739	\$ 1,266,151
Total Liabilities	973,195	71,217	221,739	1,266,151
Deferred Inflows of Resources:				
Unavailable revenue - taxes	316,308	-	50,958	367,266
Unavailable revenue - special assessments	-	505,065	107,008	612,073
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	316,308	505,065	157,966	979,339
Fund Balance:				
Nonspendable	56,753	313,972	1,013,510	1,384,235
Restricted:				
General government	-	-	764,848	764,848
Public safety	269,858	-	893,621	1,163,479
911 dispatch center	-	-	-	-
Public health	76,948	-	-	76,948
Public works	-	-	699,639	699,639
Culture and recreation	24,167	-	1,219,582	1,243,749
Community development	295,185	-	7,750	302,935
Debt service	-	-	630,011	630,011
Capital projects	-	-	4,660,306	4,660,306
Committed:				
General government	2,576,938	-	-	2,576,938
Public works	-	3,406,362	-	3,406,362
Community Development	1,930,000	-	477,668	2,407,668
Capital purchases	-	-	50,000	50,000
Assigned:				
Public safety	13,208	-	2,830,531	2,843,739
Public works	-	11,599,851	7,518,513	19,118,364
Culture and recreation	-	-	961,892	961,892
Community development	-	-	4,023,752	4,023,752
Capital purchases	-	-	3,099,552	3,099,552
Unassigned	6,694,981	-	-	6,694,981
Total Fund Balance	11,938,038	15,320,185	28,851,175	56,109,398
Total Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources, and Fund Balances	\$ 13,227,541	\$ 15,896,467	\$ 29,230,880	\$ 58,354,888

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

RECONCILIATION OF THE BALANCE SHEET OF GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS TO THE STATEMENT OF NET POSITION

JUNE 30, 2024

Total Fund Balance - Governmental Funds	\$ 56,109,398
<p>Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of net position are different because:</p>	
<p>Capital assets including construction in progress used in governmental activities are not current financial resources and are not reported as assets in governmental funds.</p>	150,423,797
<p>Other long-term assets are not available to pay for current period expenditures and, therefore, are reported as deferred inflow of resources in the governmental funds.</p>	979,339
<p>Internal Service Funds are used by management to charge the costs of the copier revolving and insurance to individual funds. The assets and liabilities of these Internal Service Funds are included in the governmental activities in the statement of net position.</p>	162,991
<p>Deferred outflows and inflows of resources for pension and OPEB are recorded and amortized in the statement of net position. However, these items are not recorded on the fund financial statements.</p>	225,217
<p>Long-term liabilities, including notes and bonds payable, are not due and payable in the current period and, therefore, are not reported as liabilities in the funds. Long-term liabilities at year-end consist of:</p>	
Bonds and loan payable	\$ (2,763,914)
SBITA liability	(1,667,913)
Accrued interest on debt	(45,470)
Compensated absences	(2,845,416)
Net pension liability	(18,494,098)
Other postemployment benefits	(2,336,756)
	(28,153,567)
Total Net Position - Governmental Activities	\$ 179,747,175

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES

GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	General	Streets	Other Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
Revenues:				
Taxes	\$ 14,706,333	\$ -	\$ 4,000,245	\$ 18,706,578
Special assessments	-	6,773,943	4,506,453	11,280,396
Licenses and permits	544,194	61,411	16,453	622,058
Intergovernmental	5,943,961	2,485,535	3,391,655	11,821,151
Charges for services	633,852	-	1,073,534	1,707,386
Fines and forfeitures	457,182	2,736	-	459,918
Investment earnings	579,180	689,075	1,255,913	2,524,168
Contributions and donations	73,667	40,985	175,084	289,736
Miscellaneous	99,519	22,290	109,702	231,511
Total revenues	<u>23,037,888</u>	<u>10,075,975</u>	<u>14,529,039</u>	<u>47,642,902</u>
Expenditures:				
General government	2,844,273	-	-	2,844,273
Public safety	15,313,139	-	2,254,771	17,567,910
Public works	374,728	4,662,509	1,676,092	6,713,329
Public health	171,793	-	-	171,793
Culture and recreation	2,438,039	-	2,425,705	4,863,744
Community development	801,118	-	463,958	1,265,076
Debt service	-	-	623,402	623,402
Capital outlay	191,527	2,637,229	4,712,877	7,541,633
Total expenditures	<u>22,134,617</u>	<u>7,299,738</u>	<u>12,156,805</u>	<u>41,591,160</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenditures	<u>903,271</u>	<u>2,776,237</u>	<u>2,372,234</u>	<u>6,051,742</u>
Other Financing Sources (Uses):				
Sale of capital assets	-	31,476	-	31,476
Proceeds from insurance settlements	6,645	241,659	81,151	329,455
Subscription-based information technology arrangement	-	-	1,017,199	1,017,199
Transfers in	740,682	122,948	2,649,622	3,513,252
Transfers out	(2,914,008)	(139,000)	(1,145,869)	(4,198,877)
Total other financing sources (uses)	<u>(2,166,681)</u>	<u>257,083</u>	<u>2,602,103</u>	<u>692,505</u>
Net Change in Fund Balance	<u>(1,263,410)</u>	<u>3,033,320</u>	<u>4,974,337</u>	<u>6,744,247</u>
Fund Balance:				
Beginning of year	<u>13,201,448</u>	<u>12,286,865</u>	<u>23,876,838</u>	<u>49,365,151</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 11,938,038</u>	<u>\$ 15,320,185</u>	<u>\$ 28,851,175</u>	<u>\$ 56,109,398</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

RECONCILIATION OF THE STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES OF GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS TO THE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Net Change in Fund Balance - Governmental Funds

\$ 6,744,247

Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of activities are different because:

Governmental funds report capital outlays as expenditures. However, in the statement of activities, the cost of those assets is allocated over their estimated useful lives as depreciation expense. This is the amount of change between capital outlays and depreciation expense in the current year:

	Capital outlays	\$ 7,088,807	
	Depreciation expense	<u>(4,249,886)</u>	2,838,921

Revenues in the statement of activities that do not provide current financial resources and are not reported as revenues in the funds.

3,853,993

The issuance of long-term obligations (e.g., notes, bonds, leases, and SBITAs) provides current financial resources to governmental funds, while the repayment of the principal of long-term obligations consumes the current financial resources of governmental funds. Neither transaction has any effect on net position. This amount is the net effect of these differences in the treatment of long-term obligations and related items.

(98,713)

Some expenses reported in the statement of activities do not require the use of current financial resources and, therefore, are not reported as expenditures in governmental funds.

	Compensated absences	(400,707)	
	Other postemployment benefits	21,733	
	Pension accruals	(4,201,945)	
	Prepaid interest/interest accruals	<u>2,820</u>	(4,578,099)

Internal Service Funds are used by management to charge the costs of copier revolving and insurance activities to individual funds.

(79,135)

Change in Net Position of Governmental Activities

\$ 8,681,214

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

GENERAL FUND

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final		
Revenues:				
Taxes and special assessments	\$ 14,618,429	\$ 14,618,429	\$ 14,706,333	\$ 87,904
Licenses and permits	575,000	575,000	544,194	(30,806)
Intergovernmental	5,791,370	5,791,370	5,943,961	152,591
Charges for services	666,386	666,386	633,852	(32,534)
Fines and forfeitures	438,500	438,500	457,182	18,682
Investment earnings	425,000	425,000	579,180	154,180
Contributions and donations	154,000	160,760	73,667	(87,093)
Miscellaneous	90,200	90,200	99,519	9,319
Total revenues	<u>22,758,885</u>	<u>22,765,645</u>	<u>23,037,888</u>	<u>272,243</u>
Expenditures:				
Current:				
General government	5,873,049	8,011,349	2,844,273	(5,167,076)
Public safety	15,204,084	15,247,187	15,313,139	65,952
Public works	2,138,940	2,138,940	374,728	(1,764,212)
Public health	191,422	191,422	171,793	(19,629)
Culture and recreation	2,920,312	2,939,312	2,438,039	(501,273)
Community development	941,043	941,043	801,118	(139,925)
Debt service	-	-	-	-
Capital outlay	-	-	191,527	191,527
Total expenditures	<u>27,268,850</u>	<u>29,469,253</u>	<u>22,134,617</u>	<u>(7,334,636)</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	<u>(4,509,965)</u>	<u>(6,703,608)</u>	<u>903,271</u>	<u>7,606,879</u>
Other Financing Sources (Uses):				
Sale of capital assets	10,000	10,000	-	(10,000)
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	6,645	6,645
Transfers in	703,585	722,585	740,682	18,097
Transfers out	<u>(2,705,008)</u>	<u>(2,794,008)</u>	<u>(2,914,008)</u>	<u>(120,000)</u>
Total other financing sources (uses)	<u>(1,991,423)</u>	<u>(2,061,423)</u>	<u>(2,166,681)</u>	<u>(105,258)</u>
Net Change in Fund Balance	<u>\$ (6,501,388)</u>	<u>\$ (8,765,031)</u>	<u>\$ (1,263,410)</u>	<u>\$ 7,501,621</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

STREETS FUND

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final		
Revenues:				
Taxes and special assessments	\$ 7,310,000	\$ 7,310,000	\$ 6,773,943	\$ (536,057)
Licenses and permits	60,000	60,000	61,411	1,411
Intergovernmental	1,367,573	2,167,573	2,485,535	317,962
Charges for services	-	-	-	-
Fines and forfeitures	1,500	1,500	2,736	1,236
Investment earnings	120,000	120,000	689,075	569,075
Contributions and donations	(31,000)	31,000	40,985	9,985
Miscellaneous	4,500	4,500	22,290	17,790
Total revenues	<u>8,832,573</u>	<u>9,694,573</u>	<u>10,075,975</u>	<u>381,402</u>
Expenditures:				
Current:				
General government	-	-	-	-
Public safety	-	-	-	-
Public works	5,698,582	6,422,804	4,662,509	(1,760,295)
Public health	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-
Community development	-	-	-	-
Debt service	-	-	-	-
Capital outlay	2,923,273	9,057,254	2,637,229	(6,420,025)
Total expenditures	<u>8,621,855</u>	<u>15,480,058</u>	<u>7,299,738</u>	<u>(8,180,320)</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	<u>210,718</u>	<u>(5,785,485)</u>	<u>2,776,237</u>	<u>8,561,722</u>
Other Financing Sources (Uses):				
Sale of capital assets	-	-	31,476	31,476
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	236,206	241,659	5,453
Transfers in	2,948	2,948	122,948	120,000
Transfers out	19,000	(19,000)	(139,000)	(120,000)
Total other financing sources (uses)	<u>21,948</u>	<u>220,154</u>	<u>257,083</u>	<u>36,929</u>
Net Change in Fund Balance	<u>\$ 232,666</u>	<u>\$ (5,565,331)</u>	<u>\$ 3,033,320</u>	<u>\$ 8,598,651</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

STATEMENT OF NET POSITION
PROPRIETARY FUNDS

JUNE 30, 2024

	Business-type Activities							City-County Administration Building	Total Enterprise Funds	Internal Service	
	Water	Wastewater	Solid Waste	Transfer Station	Parking	Golf Course	Building				Transit (Bus)
Assets											
Current assets:											
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 19,879,111	\$ 11,544,417	\$ 4,211,462	\$ 2,163,088	\$ 650,522	\$ 91,039	\$ 2,422,496	\$ 745,103	\$ 2,528,150	\$ 44,235,388	\$ 1,712,035
Cash and cash equivalents - unspent debt proceeds	811,355	277,345	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,088,700	-
Cash and cash equivalent - cash with fiscal agent	-	-	-	-	120	-	-	-	-	120	-
Investments - restricted	-	1,266,489	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,266,489	-
Receivables, net of allowance for uncollectibles	1,473,602	547,205	197,452	118,408	-	198	63,915	-	657	2,401,437	34,620
Intergovernmental receivable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	288,228	-	288,228	-
Loans receivable	12,111	41,288	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53,399	-
Inventories	717,805	132,133	133,032	-	31,068	182,355	-	-	-	1,196,393	21,000
Lease receivable	-	-	-	-	228,014	-	-	-	-	228,014	-
Total current assets	22,893,984	13,808,877	4,541,946	2,281,496	909,724	273,592	2,486,411	1,033,331	2,528,807	50,758,168	1,767,655
Noncurrent assets:											
Loans receivable, net of current portion	158,147	385,655	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	543,802	-
Lease receivable, net of current portion	-	-	-	-	3,760,034	-	-	-	-	3,760,034	-
Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation:											
Capital assets not being depreciated	34,453,454	22,281,870	205,873	512,028	2,705,717	83,000	-	446,988	1,701,832	62,390,762	87,000
Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation	51,910,664	30,245,577	1,526,806	2,471,155	12,416,494	2,788,926	39,272	1,916,141	3,973,725	107,288,760	237,737
Total noncurrent assets	86,522,265	52,913,102	1,732,679	2,983,183	18,882,245	2,871,926	39,272	2,363,129	5,675,557	173,983,358	324,737
Total Assets	109,416,249	66,721,979	6,274,625	5,264,679	19,791,969	3,145,518	2,525,683	3,396,460	8,204,364	224,741,526	2,092,392
Deferred Outflows of Resources											
Deferred outflows of resources for pension	328,593	207,005	163,457	155,108	108,734	107,295	166,730	174,358	77,600	1,488,880	92,567
Deferred outflows of resources for debt refunding	-	-	-	-	418,376	-	-	-	-	418,376	-
Deferred outflows of resources for OPEB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Deferred Outflows of Resources	328,593	207,005	163,457	155,108	527,110	107,295	166,730	174,358	77,600	1,907,256	92,567
Liabilities											
Current liabilities:											
Accounts payable and other current liabilities	1,125,237	287,419	84,874	142,380	87,192	76,448	29,712	33,861	61,732	1,928,855	142,932
Customer deposits	-	416	6,172	-	-	188,641	-	-	-	195,229	-
Accrued interest	54,499	37,044	-	-	48,679	23,865	-	-	23,376	187,463	-
Compensated absences	142,801	50,845	53,592	64,846	7,487	29,104	55,418	29,910	19,457	453,460	25,224
Loans payable	543,000	152,581	-	-	54,847	43,613	-	-	140,295	934,336	-
General obligation bonds	-	-	-	-	90,000	100,000	-	-	-	190,000	-
Certificates of participation	-	-	-	-	330,000	-	-	-	-	330,000	-
Lease payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,445	7,445	-
Landfill post-closure costs	-	-	126,815	-	-	-	-	-	-	126,815	-
Total current liabilities	1,865,537	528,305	271,453	207,226	618,205	461,671	85,130	63,771	252,305	4,353,603	168,156
Long-term liabilities:											
Compensated absences	126,948	38,865	36,976	49,567	5,723	22,247	42,360	24,471	14,873	362,030	19,280
Loans payable	4,719,000	3,003,000	-	-	303,449	322,234	-	-	944,522	9,292,205	-
General obligation bonds	-	-	-	-	90,000	1,445,000	-	-	-	1,535,000	-
Certificates of participation	-	-	-	-	5,575,000	-	-	-	-	5,575,000	-
Lease payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,309	-
Landfill post-closure costs	-	-	1,775,410	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,775,410	-
Net pension liability	1,663,573	1,048,008	827,538	785,270	550,482	543,202	844,106	882,722	392,866	7,537,767	468,637
Other postemployment benefits	188,415	168,720	34,042	109,052	65,681	64,604	79,922	73,016	33,040	816,492	63,323
Total long-term liabilities	6,697,936	4,258,593	2,673,966	943,889	6,590,335	2,397,287	966,388	980,209	1,398,610	26,907,213	551,240
Total Liabilities	8,563,473	4,786,898	2,945,419	1,151,115	7,208,540	2,858,958	1,051,518	1,043,980	1,650,915	31,260,816	719,396
Deferred Inflows of Resources											
Deferred inflows of resources for pension	59,336	37,380	29,516	28,009	19,634	19,375	30,107	31,485	14,013	268,855	16,715
Deferred inflows of resources for leases	-	-	-	-	3,897,604	-	-	-	-	3,897,604	-
Deferred inflows of resources for OPEB	332,921	190,473	146,832	122,018	112,011	1,367,063	146,344	172,482	100,536	1,460,680	122,159
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	392,257	227,853	176,348	150,027	4,029,249	156,438	176,451	203,967	114,549	5,627,139	138,874
Net Position											
Net investment in capital assets	81,913,473	49,649,211	1,732,679	2,983,183	9,187,735	961,079	39,272	2,363,129	4,569,986	153,399,747	324,737
Restricted for debt service	811,355	1,543,834	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,355,189	-
Unrestricted	18,064,284	10,721,188	1,583,636	1,135,462	(106,445)	(723,662)	1,425,172	(40,258)	1,946,514	34,005,891	1,001,952
Total Net Position	\$ 100,789,112	\$ 61,914,233	\$ 3,316,315	\$ 4,118,645	\$ 9,081,290	\$ 237,417	\$ 1,464,444	\$ 2,322,871	\$ 6,516,500	\$ 189,760,827	\$ 1,326,689
										Adjustment to reflect the consolidation of fleet service internal service fund activities related to enterprise funds	1,145,666
										Net position of business-type activities	\$ 190,906,493

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND CHANGES IN NET POSITION

PROPRIETARY FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Business-type Activities									Total Enterprise Funds	Internal Service
	Water	Wastewater	Solid Waste	Transfer Station	Parking	Golf Course	Building	Transit (Bus)	City-County Administration Building		
Operating Revenues:											
Charges for services	\$ 9,747,495	\$ 6,428,434	\$ 3,919,268	\$ 2,523,568	\$ 1,892,229	\$ 2,393,570	\$ 1,478,227	\$ 70,699	\$ 1,816,865	\$ 30,270,355	\$ 10,135,656
Contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	201,500	201,500	-
Other	25,521	1,903	98,407	7,725	126,162	7,828	-	128	24,833	292,507	135,967
Total operating revenues	9,773,016	6,430,337	4,017,675	2,531,293	2,018,391	2,401,398	1,478,227	70,827	2,043,198	30,764,362	10,271,623
Operating Expenses:											
Personnel services	2,234,465	1,358,009	1,119,698	995,159	747,786	1,179,093	1,161,718	1,118,313	463,388	10,377,629	742,067
Maintenance and operations	3,189,764	2,119,425	2,490,940	2,039,923	714,159	1,268,493	357,569	587,282	910,847	13,678,402	9,647,737
Depreciation and amortization	2,192,633	1,341,792	186,620	266,520	286,681	174,950	10,326	244,303	230,528	4,934,353	37,095
Total operating expenses	7,616,862	4,819,226	3,797,258	3,301,602	1,748,626	2,622,536	1,529,613	1,949,898	1,604,763	28,990,384	10,426,899
Operating Income (Loss)	2,156,154	1,611,111	220,417	(770,309)	269,765	(221,138)	(51,386)	(1,879,071)	438,435	1,773,978	(155,276)
Nonoperating Revenues (Expenses):											
Intergovernmental	395,073	27,157	21,444	545,853	14,265	14,076	21,874	1,328,936	10,180	2,378,858	38,993
Investment earnings	1,142,094	631,795	209,377	110,091	114,687	(1,293)	116,838	31,227	126,344	2,481,160	42,155
Interest expense	(143,150)	(55,950)	-	-	(222,545)	(59,765)	-	-	(51,519)	(532,929)	-
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42,710	-	42,710	4,827
Total nonoperating revenues (expenses)	1,394,017	603,002	230,821	655,944	(93,593)	(46,982)	138,712	1,402,873	85,005	4,369,799	85,975
Settlements - insurance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers in	2,601	1,663	27,189	276,289	871	108,484	1,316	448,376	235,100	1,101,889	717
Transfers out	(41,491)	(18,805)	(279,567)	(30,441)	-	-	-	-	-	(370,304)	(46,677)
Change in Net Position	3,511,281	2,196,971	198,860	131,483	177,043	(159,636)	88,642	(27,822)	758,540	6,875,362	(115,261)
Net Position:											
Beginning of year	97,277,831	59,717,262	3,117,455	3,987,162	8,904,247	397,053	1,375,802	2,350,693	5,757,960	182,885,465	1,441,950
End of year	\$ 100,789,112	\$ 61,914,233	\$ 3,316,315	\$ 4,118,645	\$ 9,081,290	\$ 237,417	\$ 1,464,444	\$ 2,322,871	\$ 6,516,500	\$ 189,760,827	\$ 1,326,689

Amounts reported for business-type activities in the statement of activities are different because:

Change in net position - total enterprise funds	6,875,362
Adjustment to reflect the consolidation of fleet services internal service funds activities related to enterprise funds	(33,459)
Change in net position of business-type activities	\$ 6,841,903

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
PROPRIETARY FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Business-type Activities										
	Water	Wastewater	Solid Waste	Transfer Station	Parking	Golf Course	Building	Transit (Bus)	City-County Administration Building	Total Enterprise Funds	Internal Service
Cash Flows From Operating Activities:											
Receipts from customers and users	\$ 9,615,120	\$ 6,372,983	\$ 3,993,375	\$ 2,541,539	\$ 1,793,033	\$ 2,501,341	\$ 1,785,307	\$ 71,064	\$ 2,043,198	\$ 30,716,960	\$ 135,967
Receipts from interfund services provided	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,127,023
Payments to suppliers	(1,487,175)	(984,778)	(1,702,963)	(1,393,581)	(491,488)	(953,608)	(222,408)	(218,957)	(644,365)	(8,099,323)	(1,648,281)
Payments to employees	(2,128,298)	(1,347,805)	(1,037,031)	(1,029,209)	(701,710)	(1,115,888)	(1,101,804)	(1,064,962)	(443,943)	(9,970,650)	(666,024)
Payment for interfund services used	(1,233,053)	(1,056,471)	(736,239)	(657,306)	(164,076)	(305,263)	(129,430)	(357,298)	(237,277)	(4,876,413)	(8,052,430)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	4,766,594	2,983,929	517,142	(538,557)	435,759	126,582	331,665	(1,570,153)	717,613	7,770,574	(103,745)
Cash Flows From Non-Capital Financing Activities:											
Transfers from other funds	2,601	1,663	27,189	276,289	871	108,484	1,316	448,376	235,100	1,101,889	717
Transfers to other funds	(41,491)	(18,805)	(279,567)	(30,441)	-	-	-	-	-	(370,304)	(46,677)
Operating grants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,291,029	-	1,291,029	-
Contributions from other governments	395,073	27,157	21,444	545,853	14,265	14,076	21,874	-	42,681	1,082,423	38,993
Net cash provided by (used in) non-capital financing activities	356,183	10,015	(230,934)	791,701	15,136	122,560	23,190	1,739,405	277,781	3,105,037	(6,967)
Cash Flows From Capital and Related Financing Activities:											
Proceeds from capital debt/insurance settlements	-	848,581	-	-	-	184,195	-	-	341,457	1,374,233	-
Principal payments - bonds	(748,000)	(116,000)	-	-	(438,161)	-	-	-	-	(1,302,161)	-
Principal payments - loans	-	-	-	-	-	(129,233)	-	-	(100,604)	(229,837)	-
Principal payments - leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(7,329)	(7,329)	-
Interest payments	(162,101)	(40,016)	-	-	(227,157)	(57,413)	-	-	(46,275)	(532,962)	-
Acquisition and construction of capital assets	(4,922,168)	(1,769,312)	(778,321)	(652,558)	(120,141)	(191,090)	-	-	(830,225)	(9,263,815)	(58,142)
Lease receivable	-	-	-	-	183,854	-	-	-	-	183,854	-
Proceeds from sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42,710	-	42,710	4,827
Net cash provided by (used in) capital and related financing activities	(5,832,269)	(1,076,747)	(778,321)	(652,558)	(601,605)	(193,541)	-	42,710	(642,976)	(9,735,307)	(53,315)
Cash Flows From Investing Activities:											
Interest received	1,142,094	631,795	209,377	110,091	114,687	(1,293)	116,838	31,227	126,344	2,481,160	42,155
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	1,142,094	631,795	209,377	110,091	114,687	(1,293)	116,838	31,227	126,344	2,481,160	42,155
Net increase/(decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	432,602	2,548,992	(282,736)	(289,323)	(36,023)	54,308	471,693	243,189	478,762	3,621,464	(121,872)
Cash and Cash Equivalents:											
Beginning of year	20,257,864	10,539,259	4,494,198	2,452,411	686,665	36,731	1,950,803	501,914	2,049,388	42,969,233	1,833,907
End of year	\$ 20,690,466	\$ 13,088,251	\$ 4,211,462	\$ 2,163,088	\$ 650,642	\$ 91,039	\$ 2,422,496	\$ 745,103	\$ 2,528,150	\$ 46,590,697	\$ 1,712,035
Consists of:											
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 19,879,111	\$ 11,544,417	\$ 4,211,462	\$ 2,163,088	\$ 650,522	\$ 91,039	\$ 2,422,496	\$ 745,103	\$ 2,528,150	\$ 44,235,388	\$ 1,712,035
Cash and cash equivalents - unspent debt proceeds	811,355	277,345	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,088,700	-
Cash and cash equivalent - cash with fiscal agent	-	-	-	-	120	-	-	-	-	120	-
Investments - restricted	-	1,266,489	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,266,489	-
	\$ 20,690,466	\$ 13,088,251	\$ 4,211,462	\$ 2,163,088	\$ 650,642	\$ 91,039	\$ 2,422,496	\$ 745,103	\$ 2,528,150	\$ 46,590,697	\$ 1,712,035
Reconciliation of Operating Income (Loss) to Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Operating Activities:											
Operating income (loss)	\$ 2,156,154	\$ 1,611,111	\$ 220,417	\$ (770,309)	\$ 269,765	\$ (221,138)	\$ (51,386)	\$ (1,879,071)	\$ 438,435	\$ 1,773,978	\$ (155,276)
Adjustments to reconciled operating income to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities:											
Depreciation and amortization	2,192,633	1,341,792	186,620	266,520	286,681	174,950	10,326	244,303	230,528	4,934,353	37,095
Change in:											
Receivables	(338,856)	(46,513)	6,192	10,246	41,893	-	307,080	237	-	(19,721)	(8,633)
Inventories	180,960	(10,841)	(30,492)	-	(15,793)	99,943	-	-	-	223,777	5,454
Lease receivable	-	-	-	-	(251,458)	-	-	-	-	(251,458)	-
Pension and OPEB related deferred outflows of resources	(15,760)	2,326	(16,673)	3,300	(12,205)	(4,360)	(2,528)	(18,189)	(4,705)	(68,794)	(5,001)
Accounts payable and other current liabilities	710,830	78,176	40,265	(10,964)	58,595	15,996	5,731	11,027	29,205	938,861	(58,428)
Customer deposits	(241,294)	-	(5,158)	-	-	(6,374)	-	-	-	(252,826)	-
Compensated absences	-	12,774	(7,572)	1,347	(8,570)	10,710	21,510	1	(227)	29,973	8,285
Landfill post-closure costs payable	-	-	16,631	-	-	-	-	-	-	16,631	-
Net pension liability	190,035	61,993	136,143	39,113	95,795	58,340	70,655	147,115	49,504	848,693	56,175
Other postemployment benefits	9,037	5,058	4,031	3,192	3,828	3,978	4,627	2,753	4,627	39,531	3,367
Pension and OPEB related deferred inflows of resources	(77,145)	(71,947)	(33,262)	(81,002)	(31,971)	(5,313)	(33,701)	(80,203)	(27,880)	(442,424)	13,217
Total adjustments	2,610,440	1,372,818	296,725	231,752	165,994	347,720	383,051	308,918	279,178	5,996,596	51,531
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	\$ 4,766,594	\$ 2,983,929	\$ 517,142	\$ (538,557)	\$ 435,759	\$ 126,582	\$ 331,665	\$ (1,570,153)	\$ 717,613	\$ 7,770,574	\$ (103,745)

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

STATEMENT OF FIDUCIARY NET POSITION

CUSTODIAL FUND

JUNE 30, 2024

	<u>Custodial Funds</u>
Assets	
<hr/>	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 15,985
Total Assets	<u>15,985</u>
Liabilities	
<hr/>	
Accounts payable	<u>750</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>750</u>
Net Position	
<hr/>	
Net Position Restricted for individuals, organizations, and other governments	<u><u>\$ 15,235</u></u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FIDUCIARY NET POSITION

CUSTODIAL FUND

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Custodial Funds
Additions:	
<hr/>	
Contributions:	
Bail funds	\$ 50,081
Restitution	73,746
	<hr/>
Total contributions	123,827
	<hr/>
Deductions:	
<hr/>	
Distributions of funds to other governments:	
Bail funds	45,334
Restitution	63,258
	<hr/>
Total deductions	108,592
	<hr/>
Increase (Decrease) in Fiduciary Net Position	15,235
Net Position:	
<hr/>	
Beginning of year	-
End of year	\$ 15,235

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial statements of the City of Helena, Montana (City) have been prepared in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States (U.S. GAAP) as applied to governmental units. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is the accepted standard-setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principles. The more significant of the City's accounting policies are described below.

Reporting Entity

The City was incorporated March 7, 1881. On March 2, 1953, by lawful authority, the City established a Commission/Manager form of government. The voters approved a self-government charter in 1976. This charter allows the City to exercise powers not specifically prohibited by state law. The City is governed by a city commission, composed of four commissioners and a mayor, elected at large by the voters of the City.

Component Units

In evaluating how to define the City for financial reporting purposes, management has considered all potential component units. The decision to include a potential component unit in the reporting entity was made by applying the criteria set forth by GASB. These financials present the City and its component units, entities for which the government are financially accountable, or which accumulate resources for the primary government and the government have access to them. The discretely presented component units are reported in separate columns in the basic financial statements to emphasize they are legally separate from the City. Each discretely presented component unit has a June 30 year-end.

The following separately administered organizations meet the criteria for inclusion in the City's reporting entity as discretely presented component units:

The Business Improvement District (BID) and Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) were created under State Law. The BID's purpose is promoting private investment and business expansion within its district boundaries, and the TBID's purpose is promoting tourism within its district's boundaries. The Boards of Trustees of the BID and TBID are appointed by the Mayor and subject to the approval of the Commission. The City is able to impose its will on the BID and TBID as it is authorized to levy assessments to support their activities and approve their annual budgets. Neither the BID nor TBID separately present financial information for their entity. The entire financial reporting structure of the BID

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

consists of one individual governmental fund. The TBID consists of two governmental type funds. In accordance with U.S. GAAP, the City presents combining statements for the TBID with the non-major funds since separate financial statements are not prepared.

Related Organizations

The following are organizations that have the majority of their governing Board appointed by the City Commission, without the City being financially accountable for the organization:

- Helena Housing Authority – The City Commission appoints 100% of the Board.
- Helena Regional Airport Authority – The City and County Commissions each appoint three members. One is appointed jointly.

Government-Wide and Fund Financial Statements

The government-wide financial statements (i.e., the statement of net position and the statement of activities) report information on all the nonfiduciary activities of the primary government and its component units. *Governmental activities*, which normally are supported by taxes and intergovernmental revenues, are reported separately from *business-type activities*, which rely to a significant extent on fees and charges for support. Likewise, the *primary government* is reported separately from certain legally separate *component units* for which the primary government is financially accountable.

The statement of activities demonstrates the degree to which the direct expenses of a government function or segment are offset by program revenues. Direct expenses are those that are clearly identifiable with a specific function or segment. The City's policy is to allocate indirect costs to a specific function or segment. Program revenues include (a) charges to customers or applicants who purchase, use, or directly benefit from goods, services, or privileges provided by a given function or segment and (b) grants and contributions that are restricted to meeting the operational or capital requirements of a particular function or segment. Internally dedicated resources are reported as general revenues rather than program revenues. Taxes and other items not properly included among program revenues are reported instead as general revenues.

As a general rule, the effect of the interfund activity has been eliminated for the government-wide financial statements.

While separate government-wide and fund financial statements are presented, they are interrelated. The governmental activities column incorporates data from governmental

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

funds and internal service funds, while the business-type activities incorporate data from the City's enterprise funds. Separate fund financial statements are provided for governmental funds, proprietary funds, and fiduciary funds, even though the latter are excluded from the government-wide financial statements. Major individual governmental funds and major individual enterprise funds are reported as separate columns in the fund financial statements. The City has elected to report all enterprise funds as major.

The City reports the following major governmental funds:

General. This is the City's primary operating fund. It accounts for all financial resources of the general government, except those required to be accounted for in another fund.

Streets. This special revenue fund is used to account for the receipt of street maintenance assessments, state gas tax distributions and the corresponding expenditures for striping, signing, and other traffic safety functions, as well as street surface repair and replacement, sealing and cleaning, snow and ice control, and other street maintenance functions.

The City reports the following major enterprise funds:

Water. This fund accounts for the receipt of revenue and related expenses to provide water service to City residents.

Wastewater. This fund accounts for the receipt of revenue and related expenses to provide wastewater service to City residents.

Solid Waste. This fund is used to account for the activities of the City's residential and commercial solid waste collection system and the post-closure expenses of the City's landfill.

Transfer Station. This fund is used to account for the activities of the City's transfer station operation and recycling programs. All residential and commercial solid waste is taken to the transfer station, loaded onto semi-trucks, and hauled to a Lewis and Clark County landfill.

Parking. This fund is used to account for the activities of the City's five parking garages, ten lots, meters, and permit parking areas, including administration, enforcement, and maintenance.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Golf Course. This fund is used to account for the revenues and expenditures related to the operation and maintenance of the City's 18-hole golf course, pro shop, and clubhouse. The fund is also used to account for course-related construction projects and the corresponding debt.

Building. This fund is used to account for funds received and expended attributable to the City's building code enforcement program.

Transit (Bus). This fund is used to account for the activities of the City's transit system, which provides transportation to the citizens of Helena and East Helena in two ways: 1) a fixed route system and 2) an ADA paratransit origin to destination demand system for qualified disabled citizens. Qualified ADA riders may call the Helena Transit office and arrange for pickup and delivery within the transit service area.

City-County Administration Building. This fund is used to account for the rental income and expenses of the City-County Building and Law and Justice Center that are jointly owned by the City and Lewis and Clark County (County). The building holds the main administrative offices of the City and County governments, Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's office, Helena Police Department, City's Municipal Court, and various City and County administrative offices for law and justice services. The City-County Buildings are jointly administered by City and County officials. The City acts as the fiscal agent.

Additionally, the City reports the following fund types:

Internal Service. These funds account for the financing of goods and services provided by one department or agency to other departments or agencies on a cost reimbursement basis. These funds account for the City's fleet services, copier revolving, property and liability insurance, and health insurance.

The City's policy for internal service elimination is to eliminate amounts related to overhead and indirect expenditures and not services provided. Assets of the internal service funds are allocated to the governmental-type activities and the business-type activities based on which activities benefits the most from its services.

Accordingly, the Copier Revolving, Property and Liability Insurance, and Health Insurance funds' assets are included with the governmental activities, and the Fleet Services fund's assets are included in the business-type activities in the government-wide statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Fiduciary. These funds are used to account for assets held in trust for others. The City has one fiduciary fund to account for Municipal Court bonds and restitution held in trust pending a court decision of individual cases.

Measurement Focus, Basis of Accounting, and Financial Statement Presentation

Government-Wide and Governmental Funds

The government-wide financial statements are reported using the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting, similar to the proprietary funds, fiduciary funds, and the component unit financial statements. Revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when a liability is incurred, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Property taxes are recognized as revenue in the year in which they are levied. Grants and similar items are recognized as revenue as soon as eligibility requirements imposed by the provider have been met.

Governmental fund financial statements are reported using the current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recognized as soon as they are both measurable and available. Revenues are considered to be available when they are collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to pay liabilities of the current period. For this purpose, the City considers revenues to be available if they are collected within 60 days of the end of the current fiscal period. Expenditures generally are recorded when a liability is incurred, as under accrual accounting. However, debt service expenditures, including lease and subscription liabilities, as well as expenditures related to pensions, OPEBs, compensated absences, claims and judgments, and postemployment benefits, are recorded only when payment is due. General capital asset acquisitions, including entering into contracts giving the City the right-of-use lease assets, are reported as expenditures in governmental funds. Issuance of long-term debt and financing through leases and subscription-based information technology arrangements are reported as other financing sources.

Property taxes, licenses, and interest associated within the current period are all considered to be susceptible to accrual and so have been recognized as revenues of the current fiscal period. Only the portion of special assessment receivable due within the current fiscal period is considered to be susceptible to accrual as revenue of the current period. Expenditure-driven grants are recognized as revenue when the qualifying expenditures have been incurred and all other eligibility requirements have been met, and the amount is received during the period or within the availability period for this revenue source. All other

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

revenue items are considered to be measurable and available only when cash is received by the City.

Under the terms of grant agreements and State law, the City funds certain programs by a combination of specific cost-reimbursement grants, categorical block grants, and general revenues. Thus, when program expenses are incurred, there are both restricted and unrestricted net positions available to finance the program. It is the City's policy to first apply cost-reimbursement grant resources to such programs, followed by categorical block grants, and then general revenues. In accordance with provisions of Montana statutes, the City finances both capital improvements and certain services deemed to benefit specific properties by levying special assessments against the benefited properties. Special assessments are levied against property in a manner similar to ad valorem property taxes.

Unearned revenues arise when resources are received by the City before it has legal claim to them, such as when intergovernmental funds are received prior to the occurrence of qualifying expenditures. During subsequent periods, when the City has a legal claim to the resources, the unearned revenue is removed as a liability and the revenue is recognized.

Proprietary Funds

The proprietary fund statements are reported using the economic resources measurement focus and full-accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when liability is incurred regardless of the timing of the cash flows.

Proprietary funds distinguish operating revenues and expenses from non-operating items. Operating revenues and expenses generally result from providing services and producing and delivering goods in connection with a proprietary fund's principal ongoing operations. The principal operating revenues of the City are charges for goods and services, fees, and assessments. Operating expenses for the City include cost of sales and services, administrative expenses, depreciation on capital assets, and capital outlays. All revenues and expenses not meeting this definition are reported as nonoperating revenues and expenses.

Cash

The City's cash and cash equivalents are considered to be cash on hand, demand deposits, and short-term investments with original maturities of three months or less from the date of acquisition.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Generally, cash resources of the individual funds are combined to form a pool of cash and investments that is managed by the City Controller and Finance Director. Investments of the pooled cash consist primarily of certificates of deposit and investments with the State of Montana short-term investment pool (STIP). Interest income earned as a result of pooling is distributed monthly to the appropriate funds based on the average daily balance of cash in each fund. Bank overdrafts are reported as a liability.

State law requires bank balances to be secured at 50 percent if the banking institution has a net worth to total assets ratio of 6 percent or more; secured at 100 percent if less than 6 percent.

The City's current banking contract requires deposits and overnight repurchase agreements to be 103 percent secured by collateral. Overnight repurchase agreement collateral cannot have a maturity date greater than five years. Collateral for overnight repurchase agreements must be U.S. government and U.S. agency obligations.

There were no deposit transactions during the year that were in violation of either the statutes or the policy of the City.

Investments

Investments for the government are stated at fair value based on current market prices.

The City categorizes its fair value measurements within the fair value hierarchy established by generally accepted accounting principles. The hierarchy is based on the valuation inputs used to measure the fair value of the asset. Level 1 inputs are quoted prices in active markets for identical assets; Level 2 inputs are significant other observable inputs; Level 3 inputs are significant unobservable inputs.

Under the City's investment policy and as authorized by Montana law, the City is restricted to investing funds in specific types of investment instruments listed below:

- U.S. government and U.S. agency obligations,
- interest-bearing savings accounts, certificates of deposits and time deposits insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or which are fully collateralized,
- short-term discount obligations of the Federal National Mortgage Association or in shares of savings and loan associations insured by the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation and its successor,

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

- State of Montana Short-term Investment Pool and repurchase agreements where there is a master repurchase agreement.

The City's investment policy limits investment maturities to no greater than one year from the date of purchase unless tied to a specific cash flow. Investments are made on a competitive basis after receiving three bids from qualified investment companies.

There were no investment transactions during the year that were in violation of either the statutes or the policy of the City.

Receivables and Payables

During the course of operations, numerous transactions occur between individual funds for goods provided or services rendered. Outstanding receivables and payables are classified as "due to\from other funds" or "advances to\from other funds" on the fund statements. All amounts are eliminated in the government-wide statement of net position other than any outstanding balances between governmental-type and business-type activities that are classified as "internal balances."

All trade, taxes, and assessment receivables are shown net of an allowance for uncollectible amounts. Receivables are reviewed prior to year-end and written off if older than 360 days and not secured by real property. Water and wastewater receivables constitute a lien on the property per City ordinance and are passed to the new property owner if necessary. The only uncollectible amounts incurred in these funds are immaterial and relate to bankruptcy proceedings that are written off immediately after court proceedings are finalized. As such, there is no allowance for uncollectible accounts as of June 30, 2024.

Property taxes are levied and collected by the County and are payable in two installments due November 30 and May 31. The County assesses penalties and interest after these dates and writes off receivables when uncollectible. Uncollectible taxes result from protested taxes. As of June 30, 2024, there were no taxes receivable considered uncollectible.

Decisions by the tax appeal board on protested taxes are generally made prior to fiscal year-end for that year's taxes. Protesters may appeal to the State courts if they do not agree with the tax appeal board. All remaining receivables constitute a lien on the property and are eventually collected.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Inventories

Inventories consist of expendable supplies held for consumption. The cost is recorded as an expenditure at the time individual inventory items are consumed. The reserve for inventory is equal to the ending amount of inventory to indicate that a portion of the fund balance is not available for future expenditures. A comparison to market value is not considered necessary. Inventories in proprietary funds are valued by using the first-in/first-out (FIFO) method.

Restricted Assets

Certain proceeds of bonds and loans, as well as certain resources set aside for their repayment, are classified as restricted assets because their use is limited by applicable bond covenants. The cash equivalents, unspent debt proceeds, and cash with fiscal agent on the statement of net position, are used to segregate resources set aside to make the next principal and interest payments or make up potential future deficiencies in debt service accounts. The restricted intergovernmental receivable is restricted to grantor specified uses.

The City's policy for using restricted or unrestricted cash reflects the bond covenant restrictions or grant requirements. Amounts set aside for the payment of principal and interest is used when payments are made on the related bonds. Other long-term reserves are invested as allowed and are not used for any type of expenditure except as allowed by the covenants.

Capital Assets

The accounting and reporting treatment applied to the capital assets associated with a fund is determined by its measurement focus. Capital assets used in governmental fund types are recorded as expenditures in the governmental funds and capitalized in the statement of net position. Capital assets of the proprietary funds are capitalized in the fund in which they are used.

All purchased capital assets are valued at historical cost or estimated historical cost if actual historical cost is not available (except for the intangible right-of-use lease and subscription assets, the measurement of which is discussed under Leases and SBITA below). Donated capital assets are valued at acquisition value on the date donated. The City considers capital assets and infrastructure to be assets with an initial cost greater than or equal to \$5,000 and an estimated life of more than one year.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

The costs of normal maintenance and repairs that do not add to the value of the asset, or materially extend asset lives, are not capitalized. Improvements are capitalized and depreciated over the remaining useful lives of the related capital assets, as applicable.

Depreciation of all governmental fund capital assets, except land, easements, and construction in progress, is charged as an expense to the proper function in the government-wide statement of activities, but not in the governmental fund statements in accordance with U.S. GAAP. Depreciation of all capital assets, except land, easements, and construction in progress, used by proprietary funds is charged as an expense against their operations.

Depreciation has been provided over the estimated useful lives using the straight-line method. The estimated useful lives are as follows:

	<u>Years</u>
Buildings	20-75
Improvements other than buildings	20-50
Equipment and vehicles	3-15
Right-of-use lease and subscription equipment	3-20
Infrastructure	50-100

Unavailable Revenue

Unavailable revenue results when asset recognition criteria have been met and when revenue recognition criteria have not been met. Revenue recognition criteria are met when the receivable is collected within 60 days after the end of the fiscal year. These pertain to the net uncollected property tax and special assessment receivables and are classified as unavailable revenue on the balance sheet of the governmental funds.

Compensated Absences

It is the City's policy to permit employees to accumulate a limited amount of earned but unused leave benefits, which will be paid to employees upon separation from City service or when used. Employees earn vacation leave at the rate of 120 hours per year for the first 10 years. During years 11-21, employees earn leave at an increasing rate, reaching 192 hours in year 21. Employees are allowed to accumulate and carry over a maximum of two times their annual accumulation of vacation. Any excess over the maximum must be used by 90 days

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

into the new calendar year. State law and City policy allows excess vacation hours to be carried until the end of the calendar year under certain circumstances.

There is no restriction on the amount of sick leave that may be accumulated. Full-time employees earn 96 hours per year. Upon separation, employees are paid 100 percent of accumulated vacation and 25 percent of accumulated sick leave.

Compensated absences liability and expense are reported in the governmental funds only if they have matured. This would occur if an employee had terminated their employment with the City and there was unused reimbursable leave unpaid at June 30, 2024.

Long-Term Obligations

In the government-wide financial statements and in the proprietary fund financial statements, long-term debt, and other long-term obligations, such as notes payable, are reported as liabilities in the applicable government activities, business-type activities, or proprietary fund type statement of net position. Bond premiums and discounts are deferred and amortized over the life of the bonds, on a straight-line basis. Bonds payable are reported net of the applicable bond premium or discount.

In the fund financial statements, governmental fund types recognize bond premiums and discounts, as well as bond issuance costs, during the current period. The face amount of debt issued is reported as other financing sources. Discounts on debt issuances are reported as other financing uses, while bond premiums are reported as other financing sources. Issuance costs, whether or not withheld from the actual debt proceeds, are reported as debt service expenditures.

Pensions

The City participates in three cost-sharing defined benefit pension plans administered by the Public Employees Retirement Board (PERB). For purposes of measuring the net pension liability, deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions, and pension expense, information about the fiduciary net position of the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), Municipal Police Officers Retirement System (MPORS), Firefighters Unified Retirement System (FURS), and additions to/deductions from PERB's fiduciary net position have been determined on the same basis as they are reported by PERB. For this purpose, benefit payments (including refunds of employee contributions) are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. Investments are reported at fair value.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

The City also participates in a defined contribution plan offered by PERB. There is no liability associated with this type of pension plan unless the City fails to pay the required contributions. The City has paid all required contributions.

Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions (OPEB)

The City accounts for postemployment benefit obligations in accordance with GASB Statement No. 75, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions*. The City allows retirees, their dependents, and spouses to retain health insurance coverage under its plans. As of June 30, 2024, the City provides no explicit OPEB benefits.

Deferred Outflows/Inflows of Resources

In addition to assets, the statement of net position and/or the balance sheet will sometimes report a separate section for deferred outflows of resources. This separate financial statement element, deferred outflows of resources, represents a consumption of net assets and/or fund balance that applies to future periods and so will not be recognized as an outflow of resources (expense/expenditure) until that time.

In addition to liabilities, the statement of net position and/or the balance sheet will sometimes report a separate section for deferred inflows of resources. This separate financial statement element, deferred inflows of resources, represents an acquisition of net assets and/or fund balance that applies to future periods and so will not be recognized as an inflow of resources (revenue) until that time.

Leases

Lessor

The City is a lessor for one noncancellable lease for parking areas. The City recognizes a lease receivable and a deferred inflow of resources in the government-wide and proprietary fund financial statements.

At the commencement of a lease, the City initially measures the lease receivable at the present value of payments expected to be received during the lease term. Subsequently, the lease receivable is reduced by the principal portion of lease payments received. The deferred inflow of resources is initially measured as the initial amount of the lease

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

receivable, adjusted for lease payments received at or before the lease commencement date.

Subsequently, the deferred inflow of resources is recognized as revenue over the life of the lease term.

Key estimates and judgments include how the City determines (1) the discount rate it uses to discount the expected lease receipts to present value, (2) lease term, and (3) lease receipts.

- The City uses its estimated incremental borrowing rate as the discount rate for leases.
- The lease term includes the noncancellable period of the lease and any extensions that are deemed reasonably certain to be exercised. Lease receipts included in the measurement of the lease receivable is composed of fixed payments from the lessee.

The City monitors changes in circumstances that would require a remeasurement of its lease and will remeasure the lease receivable and deferred inflows of resources if certain changes occur that are expected to significantly affect the amount of the lease receivable.

Lessee

The City is a lessee for various noncancellable leases. The City recognizes a lease liability and an intangible right-of-use lease asset (lease asset) in the government-wide and proprietary statements of net position. The City recognizes lease liabilities with an initial, individual value of \$5,000 or more.

At the commencement of a lease, the City initially measures the lease liability at the present value of payments expected to be made during the lease term. Subsequently, the lease liability is reduced by the principal portion of lease payments made. The lease asset is initially measured as the initial amount of the lease liability, adjusted for lease payments made at or before the lease commencement date, plus certain initial direct costs. Subsequently, the lease asset is amortized on a straight-line basis over its useful life.

Key estimates and judgments related to leases include how the City determines (1) the discount rate it uses to discount the expected lease payments to present value, (2) lease term, and (3) lease payments.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

- The City uses the interest rate charged by the lessor as the discount rate. When the interest rate charged by the lessor is not provided, the City generally uses its estimated incremental borrowing rate as the discount rate for leases.
- The lease term includes the noncancellable period of the lease. Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability are composed of fixed payments and purchase option price that the City is reasonably certain to exercise.

The City monitors changes in circumstances that would require a remeasurement of its leases and will remeasure the lease asset and liability if certain changes occur that are expected to significantly affect the amount of the lease liability.

Lease assets are reported with capital assets, and lease liabilities as a lease payable on the statement of net position.

Short-term leases, or leases that, at the commencement of the lease term, have a maximum possible term under the lease contract of 12 months or less, including any options to extend, regardless of their probability of being exercised, are not recognized as a lease liability and lease asset on the statement of net position. Short-term lease payments are recognized as expenditures based on the payment provisions of the lease contract. An asset is recognized if payments are made in advance or a liability for rent due if payments are to be made subsequent to the reporting period.

Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITA)

The City is a lessee for a noncancellable software subscriptions. The City recognizes a liability and an intangible right-to use subscription asset (subscription asset) as part of capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation on the statement of net position. At the commencement of a subscription, the City initially measures the SBITA liability at the present value of payments expected to be made during the subscription term. Subsequently, the SBITA liability is reduced by the principal portion of payments made. The subscription asset is initially measured as the initial amount of the SBITA liability, adjusted for payments made at or before the commencement date, plus certain initial direct costs. Subsequently, the subscription asset is amortized on the straight-line basis over its useful life.

Key estimates and judgements related to SBITA liabilities include how the City determines (1) the discount rate it uses to discount the expected contract payments to present value, (2) subscription term, and (3) subscription payments.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

- The City uses the interest rate charged by the lessor as the discount rate. When the interest rate charged by the lessor is not provided, the City generally uses its estimated incremental borrowing rate as the discount rate for subscription contracts.
- The subscription term includes the noncancellable period of the subscription. If a subscription automatically renews after the initial term, the City uses a period of 3 years to record the SBITA liability for automatic renewals. Subscription payments included in the measurement of the SBITA liability are composed of fixed payments and purchase option price that the City is reasonably certain to exercise.

The City monitors changes in circumstances that would require remeasurement of its SBITA liability and will remeasure the asset and liability if certain changes occur that are expected to significantly affect the amount of the SBITA liability. Subscription assets are reported with capital assets and SBITA liabilities are reported as a current and non-current liability on the statement of net position.

Refunding Transactions

A deferred charge on funding reported in the government-wide and proprietary statements of net position results from the difference in the carrying value of refunded debt and its reacquisition price. This amount is deferred and recognized over the shorter of the life of the refunded or refunding debt.

Fund Balance

In the fund financial statements, governmental funds report fund balance in categories based on the level of restriction placed upon the funds. These levels are as follows:

- Nonspendable – This category represents funds that are not in spendable form and includes inventories and the non-current portion of loans receivable.
- Restricted – This category represents funds that are limited in use due to constraints on purpose and circumstances of spending that are legally enforceable by outside parties.
- Committed – This category represents funds that are limited in use due to constraints on purpose and circumstances of spending imposed by the City's highest level of decision-making authority. Since the City Commission is the highest level of decision-making authority for the City, they can make such a commitment through a resolution prior to the end of the fiscal year. A commitment can only be modified or removed by an equal action of the City Commission.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

- Assigned – This category represents intentions of the City to use the funds for specific purposes but do not meet the criteria to be classified as committed. The City Commission has, by resolution, authorized the City Manager to assign fund balance.
- Unassigned – This category includes balances that have not been assigned to other funds and have not been restricted, committed, or assigned to specific purposes within the General Fund. In governmental funds other than the General Fund, if expenditures incurred for specific purposes exceed restricted, committed, or assigned balances in other funds, a negative unassigned fund balance is reported.

The City's policy is to use funds in the order of the most restrictive to the least restrictive. When the components of unassigned fund balance can be used for the same purpose, committed fund balance is used first, followed by assigned fund balance. Unassigned fund balance is applied last.

Net Position

Accounting standards require the classification of net position into these components – net investment in capital assets; restricted; and unrestricted. These classifications are defined below:

- Net investment in capital assets – The net investment in capital assets component of net position consists of capital assets net of accumulated depreciation, reduced by the outstanding balances of any bonds, notes, or other borrowings that are attributable to the acquisition, construction, or improvement of those assets. Deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources that are attributable to the acquisition, construction, or improvement of those assets or related debt are also included in this component of net position. If there are significant unspent related debt proceeds at the end of the reporting period, the portion of the debt attributable to the unspent amount is not included in the calculation of net investment in capital assets. Instead, that portion of the debt is included in the same net position component (restricted or unrestricted) as the unspent amount.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Net investment in capital assets is calculated as follows:

	Governmental Activities	Business-Type Activities
Capital assets:	\$ 209,058,161	\$ 338,576,436
Less: accumulated depreciation/amortization	(58,634,364)	(168,585,813)
Less: outstanding principal of capital-related borrowings	(4,431,827)	(17,877,295)
Plus: capital-related deferred outflows	-	418,376
Plus: unspent proceeds on capital-related borrowings	-	1,088,700
	<u>\$ 145,991,970</u>	<u>\$ 153,620,404</u>

- Restricted – the restricted component of net position consists of restricted assets reduced by liabilities and deferred inflows of resources related to those assets. Generally, a liability relates to restricted assets if the asset results from a resource flow that also results in the recognition of a liability or if the liability will be liquidated with the restricted assets reported. Two categories are used to further describe restricted net position:
 - Expendable – can be expended in compliance with the external restriction
 - Nonexpendable – net position that is required to be retained in perpetuity
- Unrestricted – The unrestricted component of net position is the net amount of the assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities, and deferred inflows of resources that are not included in the determination of net investment in capital assets or the restricted components of net position.

When both restricted and unrestricted resources are available for use, it is the City's policy to use restricted resources first, then unrestricted resources as they are needed.

Grant Revenue

The City recognizes grant income on government-mandated and voluntary non-exchange transactions when all eligibility requirements have been met. Cash or other assets provided in advance are reported as unearned grant revenue until all eligibility requirements have been met.

Interfund Transactions

Interfund services provided and used are accounted for as revenues, expenditures or expenses. Transactions that constitute reimbursements to a fund for expenditures/expenses

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

initially made from it that are properly applicable to another fund, are recorded as expenditures/expenses in the reimbursing fund, and as reductions of expenditures/expenses in the fund that is reimbursed. All other interfund transactions, except interfund services provided and used are reported as transfers.

Transactions occurring between the City (primary government) and its discretely presented component units are recorded as revenues and expenses.

Budgets and Budgetary Accounting

The State of Montana's budget law stipulates that money, other than payments from Custodial funds, may not be drawn from the treasury of a municipality except pursuant to an appropriation. Therefore, a legally adopted budget is required for all funds, with the exception of Custodial funds. The City legally adopts a budget for the required funds.

The City follows these procedures in establishing the budgetary data reflected in the financial statements:

The City Manager is responsible for preparation of the preliminary annual budget. The City Commission modifies and/or approves the budget. The City Commission must meet prior to the budget adoption for the purpose of holding a public hearing and answer questions on the proposed budget. This hearing can be continued until the preliminary budget is adopted by the end of June. The final budget and tax levies are set by the later of the first Thursday after the first Tuesday in September or within 30 calendar days of receiving certified taxable values from the Montana State Department of Revenue. The effective date of the final budget resolution is July 1 of the fiscal year. A local government may receive and expend money between July 1 of the fiscal year and the date the final budget resolution is adopted per state law. Taxable values are determined by the Department of Revenue and the County Assessor assesses property tax based on these values.

For fiscal year 2024, the City levied 148.77 mills including a 105.70 all-purpose mill levy, a 27.51 group health insurance mill levy, a 9.98 voter approved fire safety mill levy, and a 5.58 debt service mill levy for the Open Space/Fire Truck and Park and Recreation debt service funds.

The City forwards a copy of the final budget to the State Department of Administration no later than October 1st of each year. A copy of the final budget is available for review in the City Clerk's office located at 316 North Park Avenue, Helena, Montana and at the City's

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

website at www.helenamt.gov. The tax levies and special assessments are forwarded to the County Treasurer for collection.

The appropriated budget is prepared by fund, department, and division. City departments may spend up to the appropriation limit within each division. Although the legal level of budget appropriation is the fund level, a management plan is prepared by fund, department, division, and line item. The City maintains budgetary controls whose objective is to ensure compliance with legal provisions embodied in the annual appropriated budget approved by the City Commission.

State law permits the City Commission to transfer authority to the City Manager any part of an unencumbered balance of an appropriation to a purpose or object for which the appropriation for the current year is insufficient within the same fund. The City Manager may also appropriate any accruing revenue of the municipality not appropriated, and any balance at any time remaining after the purpose of the appropriation has been satisfied or abandoned to other uses that do not conflict with any uses for which specifically the revenue was accrued. A public hearing is required for an overall increase in appropriation within a fund. Transfers of assets of discontinued funds do not require an appropriation.

State law also allows for emergency expenditures to be charged to an emergency budget appropriation adopted by a three-fourths majority of the Commission members present.

All appropriations lapse at the end of the year but can be re-appropriated in the subsequent fiscal year if approved by the City Manager and presented to the City Commission in a public meeting.

Annual appropriated budgets are legally adopted for all City funds, except Custodial funds. U.S. GAAP require that budget to actual comparisons be presented for all governmental fund types for which annual budgets have been adopted. The General Fund and major special revenue funds are presented as part of the basic financial statements while all other governmental funds are shown in the combining statements in the Supplementary Information.

The City had no violations of budget law for fiscal year 2024. During fiscal year 2024, the City experienced a budget deficit in the CARES/ARPA, Light Maintenance Districts, Special Improvement Districts Revolving, and Sidewalk Loans funds. The deficits arose primarily due to transfers between funds, or a decrease in special assessments charged in the Light Maintenance Districts fund. The budget deficits are offset by the City's General Fund unassigned fund balance.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Estimates

The preparation of the financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statements and accompanying notes. Actual results may differ from those estimates.

Adopted Pronouncements

The following GASB Statement was adopted for the year ended June 30, 2024: Statement No. 100 (Accounting Changes and Error Corrections). This statement had no significant impact on the City's financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2024.

Pending Pronouncements

GASB has issued statements that will become effective in future years including Statement Nos. 101 (Compensated Absences), 102 (Certain Risk Disclosures), 103 (Financial Reporting Model Improvements), and 104 (Disclosure of Certain Capital Assets). Management has not yet determined the impact of these statements on the financial statements.

2. Deposits and Investments

As of June 30, 2024, the deposits and investments of the City had the following bank balances:

Primary government	\$ 105,698,199
Component units:	
BID	330,609
TBID	418,588
	<hr/>
	\$ 106,447,396

As of June 30, 2024, the entire cash balance was covered by an irrevocable, unconditional, and nontransferable Letter of Credit from Federal Home Loan Bank.

Custodial Credit Risk – Custodial credit risk is the risk that in the event of a bank failure, the City's deposits may not be returned to it. Along with limitations placed on investments by

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

state law, the City minimizes custodial credit risk by restrictions set forth in City policy. The City's administrative services department maintains a listing of financial institutions and securities dealers, not affiliated with a bank, which are approved for investment purposes. City policy requires that specific safeguards against risk of loss be evidenced when the City does not physically hold securities.

Interest Rate Risk – Interest rate risk exists when there is a possibility that changes in interest rates could adversely affect an investment's fair value.

Credit Risk – The risk that an issuer or other counterparty to an investment will not fulfill its obligations is called credit risk. The City's investment policies do not specifically address credit risk. However, they do address it indirectly by limiting investments to those described in Note 1.

The City invests in the Short-Term Investment Pool (STIP) managed by the State of Montana, Board of Investments. The pool invests in short-term, highly liquid investments and, as such, the City has reported these investments as cash equivalents. Amounts invested by the City in STIP may be redeemed at any date at the carrying value on that date. Audited financial statements for the State of Montana's Board of Investments are available at 2401 Colonial Drive, 3rd Floor, Helena, Montana 59620.

Investments in the pool are reported at a Net Asset Value (NAV). The fair value of pooled investments is determined annually and is based on year-end market prices. The unit value of the pool is fixed at \$1 for both participant redemptions and purchases. Investments in STIP are carried and reported at cost. STIP income is automatically reinvested in additional units. The STIP is not rated by a national rating agency.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

3. Accounts/Other Receivables

Receivables represent services provided and billed as of June 30, 2024. The following represents a breakdown by fund type of outstanding balances as of June 30, 2024.

Funds	Accounts Receivable				Total
	Taxes	Accounts	Special Assessments	Intergovernmental	
Governmental funds:					
General	\$ 830,287	\$ 170,374	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000,661
Streets	-	14,239	655,634	-	669,873
Nonmajor governmental	234,989	10,579	142,335	12,812	400,715
Proprietary funds:					
Water	-	1,472,290	1,312	-	1,473,602
Wastewater	-	543,795	3,410	-	547,205
Solid waste	-	148,657	48,795	-	197,452
Transfer Station	-	118,408	-	-	118,408
Golf Course	-	198	-	-	198
Building	-	63,915	-	-	63,915
Transit (Bus)	-	-	-	288,228	288,228
City-County Administration	-	-	-	-	-
Building	-	657	-	-	657
Internal service	-	34,620	-	-	34,620
	<u>\$ 1,065,276</u>	<u>\$ 2,577,732</u>	<u>\$ 851,486</u>	<u>\$ 301,040</u>	<u>\$ 4,795,534</u>

Discretely presented component unit receivables of \$125,668 and \$103,688 for the BID and TBID, respectively, include special assessments and miscellaneous receivables. Governmental funds report unavailable revenue in connection with receivables for revenues that are not considered to be available to liquidate liabilities of the current period. Governmental funds also defer revenue recognition in connection with resources that have been received, but not yet earned.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

4. Interfund Receivables, Payables, and Transfers

The composition of internal balances on the statements of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balances/net position is as follows:

<u>Funds</u>	<u>Transfers In</u>	<u>Transfers Out</u>
Governmental Funds:		
General	\$ 740,682	\$ 2,914,008
Streets	122,948	139,000
Nonmajor governmental	<u>2,649,622</u>	<u>1,145,869</u>
Total governmental funds	<u>3,513,252</u>	<u>4,198,877</u>
Proprietary Funds:		
Water	2,601	41,491
Wastewater	1,663	18,805
Solid Waste	27,189	279,567
Transfer Station	276,289	30,441
Parking	871	-
Golf Course	108,484	-
Building	1,316	-
Transit (Bus)	448,376	-
City-County Administration Building	235,100	-
Internal Service	<u>717</u>	<u>46,677</u>
Total proprietary funds	<u>1,102,606</u>	<u>416,981</u>
	<u>\$ 4,615,858</u>	<u>\$ 4,615,858</u>

The General Fund transferred a total of \$2,914,008 to other funds as of June 30, 2024. Of this, \$827,098 was transferred to the General Capital Fund for annual capital items for facilities, parks and police; \$218,000 was transferred to the Parks Capital Fund to support a public restroom project in the downtown area and a long-term recreation plan study; \$240,000 was transferred to General Capital Fund to support renewable energy projects; \$150,000 was transferred to support the sidewalk loan program; \$360,900 was transferred to the City/County Buildings and Facilities Fund for building improvement projects; \$447,000 was transferred to the Transit (Bus) Fund for matching operating dollars; \$360,000 transferred to the Civic Center to support maintenance of the building; \$100,000 was transferred to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (annual transfer); \$80,000 was transferred for the renewable energy loan program; \$13,000 was transferred for public arts projects;

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

\$10,910 was transferred for Public Education capital and operations; and \$107,100 was transferred to the Golf Course Fund to support debt service.

Each year, the General Liability Fund transfers a discount from the insurer back to the funds that participate in the program. In Fiscal Year 2024, the total amount transferred to other funds was \$46,677.

In addition, the Solid Waste fund transfers tipping fees to the Transfer Station, which totaled \$276,289.

Internal service fund receivable/(payable) balances as of June 30, 2024 are as follows:

	<u>Governmental Activities</u>	<u>Business-Type Activities</u>
Internal service funds - governmental activities funds	\$ (1,151,818)	\$ 1,151,818
Internal services funds - business-type funds	<u>108,256</u>	<u>(108,256)</u>
	<u>\$ (1,043,562)</u>	<u>\$ 1,043,562</u>

The City uses internal service type funds to account for functions that serve other City departments. Any balances of net position in these funds indicate that the user funds were either over or under-charged for the services provided. The City's charges to each fund and function using the services are reduced according to their usage and are offset by an internal balance in the statement of net position.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

5. Loans Receivable

Loans receivable as of June 30, 2024 include the following:

Governmental activities:

3% Loan receivable from Artisan LLP; due in monthly payments beginning August 1, 2001 through April 2034; secured by real property (a)	\$ 369,302
0% Alternative Energy Loan Program; secured by tax lien on property (b)	337,313
0% Sidewalk Replacement Loan Program; secured by tax lien on property (c)	484,351

Business-Type activities:

0% Water Infrastructure Rebate Program; secured by lien on property (d)	7,666
0% Service Line Infrastructure Rebate Program; secured by lien on property (d)	162,592
0% Wastewater Infrastructure Rebate Program; secured by lien on property (d)	102,583
0% Service Line Infrastructure Rebate Program; secured by lien on property (d)	<u>324,360</u>
	<u>\$ 1,788,167</u>

- (a) The City originally loaned \$880,000 of tax increment financing funds to a local developer to help construct major improvements in the downtown Great Northern area. The City Commission agreed to lower the loan amount by \$254,730 for increases in taxable value to the property through fiscal year 2005. The developer made payments through July 2002 when the City Commission approved deferring payments on the loan until April 2020. The City discounted the note to its present value in fiscal year 2008 as interest on the loan was deferred from June 30, 2007 until April 2020. This loan is partially secured with real property currently valued at approximately \$670,000 and is currently being repaid by the borrower in monthly installments.
- (b) The City created an alternative energy loan program to encourage homeowners to invest in this type of upgrades to residences. The property owner hires the work and pays the contractor. The City reimburses them construction costs, which are then repaid over 10

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

years on their tax bill with zero percent interest. The tax assessments constitute a first lien on the property under State law.

- (c) The City created a sidewalk replacement program to encourage construction of new sidewalks and the replacement of aging, unsafe sidewalks. The City bids the work and pays the contractor to perform the work. The property owner contracts to pay the cost back over 10 years on their tax bill with zero percent interest. The tax assessments constitute a first lien on the property under State law.
- (d) The City created a loan program to assist newly annexed property owners on the west side who are on wells and/or septic systems to connect to the City's water and wastewater systems. The City hires and pays the contractor. The property owner contracts to pay the cost back over 20 years through a monthly charge on their utility or property tax bill. The loans are secured by a lien on the property.

The schedule of future payments to be received for the loans is as follows:

Year Ending June 30,	Governmental Funds		Business-Type Activities	
	Principal	Interest	Principal	Interest
2025	\$ 177,456	\$ 10,629	\$ 53,399	\$ -
2026	160,132	9,627	53,399	-
2027	134,189	8,594	53,399	-
2028	127,447	7,531	53,399	-
2029	81,097	6,435	53,399	-
2030-2034	508,924	14,543	174,076	-
2035-2039	1,721	-	6,434	-
Deferred *	-	-	149,696	-
	<u>\$ 1,190,966</u>	<u>\$ 57,359</u>	<u>\$ 597,201</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

* Deferred loans include loans that are expected to be repaid in full upon the sale of the property.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

6. Capital Assets

Capital asset activity for the year ended June 30, 2024 for the primary government was as follows:

	Beginning Balance at July 1, 2023	Additions	Deletions	Ending Balance at June 30, 2024
Governmental Activities:				
Capital assets, not being depreciated/amortized:				
Land	\$ 84,844,395	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 84,844,395
Construction in progress	8,726,702	2,693,816	(8,807,079)	2,613,439
Total capital assets, not being depreciated/amortized	93,571,097	2,693,816	(8,807,079)	87,457,834
Capital assets, being depreciated/amortized:				
Buildings	11,294,217	178,832	-	11,473,049
Improvements other than buildings	18,279,349	386,889	-	18,666,238
Machinery and equipment	24,186,600	2,717,122	(979,241)	25,924,481
Right-of-use lease equipment	13,671	-	(13,671)	-
Subscription-based information technology arrangement	-	2,982,097	-	2,982,097
Infrastructure	55,603,569	6,950,893	-	62,554,462
Total capital assets, being depreciated/amortized	109,377,406	13,215,833	(992,912)	121,600,327
Less accumulated depreciation/amortization:				
Buildings	(7,695,314)	(217,849)	-	(7,913,163)
Improvements other than buildings	(10,341,798)	(515,148)	-	(10,856,946)
Machinery and equipment	(15,582,715)	(1,889,260)	979,114	(16,492,861)
Right-of-use lease equipment	(11,020)	(2,651)	13,671	-
Subscription-based information technology arrangement	-	(596,420)	-	(596,420)
Infrastructure	(21,746,416)	(1,028,558)	-	(22,774,974)
Total accumulated depreciation/ amortization	(55,377,263)	(4,249,886)	992,785	(58,634,364)
Total capital assets, being depreciated/ amortized, net	54,000,143	8,965,947	(127)	62,965,963
Governmental activities capital assets, net	\$ 147,571,240	\$ 11,659,763	\$ (8,807,206)	\$ 150,423,797

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Beginning Balance at July 1, 2023	Additions	Deletions	Ending Balance at June 30, 2024
Business-Type Activities:				
Capital assets, not being depreciated/amortized:				
Land	\$ 48,264,650	\$ 307,054	\$ -	\$ 48,571,704
Construction in progress	13,667,558	6,696,331	(6,457,831)	13,906,058
Total capital assets, not being depreciated/amortized	61,932,208	7,003,385	(6,457,831)	62,477,762
Capital assets, being depreciated/amortized:				
Building	49,069,940	112,378	-	49,182,318
Improvements other than buildings	5,879,834	306,077	-	6,185,911
Machinery and equipment	19,158,467	1,911,952	(241,560)	20,828,859
Right-of-use lease equipment	37,183	-	-	37,183
Infrastructure	193,422,485	6,441,918	-	199,864,403
Total capital assets, being depreciated/amortized	267,567,909	8,772,325	(241,560)	276,098,674
Less accumulated depreciation/amortization				
Building	(23,969,084)	(1,028,223)	-	(24,997,307)
Improvements other than buildings	(3,842,588)	(300,263)	-	(4,142,851)
Machinery and equipment	(13,519,924)	(1,254,373)	239,065	(14,535,232)
Right-of-use lease equipment	(8,534)	(7,315)	-	(15,849)
Infrastructure	(122,513,300)	(2,381,274)	-	(124,894,574)
Total accumulated depreciation/amortization	(163,853,430)	(4,971,448)	239,065	(168,585,813)
Total capital assets, being depreciated/ amortized, net	103,714,479	3,800,877	(2,495)	107,512,861
Business-type activities capital assets, net	\$165,646,687	\$ 10,804,262	\$ (6,460,326)	\$169,990,623

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Depreciation/amortization expense was charged to functions/programs of the primary government as follows:

Governmental activities:

General government	\$	548,144
Public safety		1,176,674
Public works		1,710,174
Public health		748
Culture and recreation		806,978
Internal service funds *		<u>7,168</u>
Total depreciation and amortization expense - governmental activities	\$	<u><u>4,249,886</u></u>

*Depreciation and amortization of capital assets held by the City's internal service funds are charged to the various functions based on their usage of the assets.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

7. Long-Term Liabilities

General Obligation Bonds

As of June 30, 2024, the outstanding general obligation indebtedness of the City was as follows:

Governmental:

2017 General Obligation Refunding Bonds, 3.0% interest payable in annual installments of \$400,000 to \$565,000, final scheduled payment January 1, 2028. \$ 2,145,000

Business-Type:

2015 Limited General Obligation Bonds, 2.4% interest payable in annual installments of \$10,000 to \$90,000, final scheduled payment August 15, 2025. 180,000

2017 Limited General Obligation Bonds, 2.75% interest payable in annual installments of \$85,000 to \$140,000, final scheduled payment February 15, 2037. 1,545,000

Total general obligation bonds outstanding 3,870,000

Less: current portion (690,000)

\$ 3,180,000

In November 2007, the electors of the City authorized the Commission to issue \$7,850,000 of general obligation bonds to finance major improvements at Centennial Park, Memorial Park pool, and Kindrick-Legion baseball field. The bonds were issued in April 2008. The 2008 General Obligation Parks bonds were general obligations of the City and the City's general credit and taxing powers were pledged for the payment of principal and interest thereon. These bonds were refunded on February 28, 2017, when the City issued \$5,180,000 of General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2017, with an interest rate of 3.0 percent to advance refund \$5,525,000 of outstanding 2008 Series bonds with a true interest rate of 3.77 percent. Principal and interest paid for the current year on the refunding bonds was \$558,780.

In June 2015, the City issued \$845,000 of General Refunding Bonds, Series 2015 with an interest rate of 2.4 percent to refund the General Fund Bonds, Series 2005. The original Series 2005 bonds were issued to finance improvements in the downtown area, including construction of the Jackson Street parking garage. The City has pledged the revenues of the General Fund to repay these refunding bonds. However, the bonds are not subject to the City's debt limit, as the City is not obligated to levy taxes for repayment. These bonds are

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

expected to be paid solely from parking net revenues and are payable through 2025. Principal and interest paid for the current year on the refunding bonds was \$91,071.

In November 2017, the City issued \$2,100,000 of General Bonds, Series 2017 with an interest rate of 2.75 percent for a major expansion to the City's golf course pro shop and restaurant. The City has pledged the revenues of the General Fund to repay these bonds. However, these bonds are expected to be paid solely from golf course net revenues and are payable through 2037. These bonds were bank qualified, and all were purchased by a local bank. Principal and interest paid for the current year on the refunding bonds was \$145,238.

Year Ending June 30,	Governmental		Business-Type	
	Principal	Interest	Principal	Interest
2025	\$ 500,000	\$ 64,350	\$ 190,000	\$ 45,731
2026	530,000	49,350	195,000	40,810
2027	550,000	33,450	105,000	36,850
2028	565,000	16,950	110,000	33,963
2029	-	-	110,000	30,938
2030-2034	-	-	610,000	106,976
2035-2037	-	-	405,000	22,551
	<u>\$ 2,145,000</u>	<u>\$ 164,100</u>	<u>\$ 1,725,000</u>	<u>\$ 317,819</u>

Certificates of Participation

In 2008, the City entered into a partnership with the State of Montana, Board of Investments (BOI), the Montana State Fund (worker's compensation), and the Helena Parking Commission to build a new 350-space parking garage in the downtown Great Northern Area. In February 2009, the City entered into a Lease Purchase Agreement with US Bank NA, and the City issued 2009 Certificates of Participation (COPs) totaling \$8,900,000 to finance construction. The BOI has guaranteed the purchase of 350 parking permits, per year, for the life of the lease purchase agreement. This garage will help provide necessary parking capacity throughout the entire downtown parking system.

On July 26, 2016, the City issued COPs totaling \$8,200,000 with a true interest rate of 2.64 percent to advance refund the 2009 COPs.

Payments are made using the garage lease receipts and other downtown parking revenues. The City has pledged the revenues of the General Fund to repay the COPs principal and

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

interest, but they are not a general obligation of the City or secured by the full faith and credit or the taxing power of the City. However, the City expects the bonds to be paid solely from parking net revenues and are payable through June 2039. Annual principal and interest payments on the bonds are expected to require approximately 2.0 percent of General Fund net revenues if the Parking Fund cannot make the payments.

Annual debt service requirements to maturity for COPs are as follows:

<u>Year Ending June 30,</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Interest</u>
2025	\$ 330,000	\$ 158,250
2026	335,000	151,650
2027	345,000	144,113
2028	350,000	136,350
2029	355,000	129,350
2030-2034	1,950,000	498,000
2035-2039	2,240,000	191,200
	<u>\$ 5,905,000</u>	<u>\$ 1,408,913</u>

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Revenue Indebtedness (Loans):

As of June 30, 2024, the outstanding business-type activities revenue indebtedness of the City is as follows:

The City participates in the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) and has obtained loans from the state through that program as noted below. Loans are collateralized by business-type activity revenues.

Series 2012 Refunding, in the amount of \$2,072,000, due July 1, 2025; 2.25% interest, payable from the Water Fund in semi-annual installments of \$69,000 to \$92,000 beginning January 1, 2013, redeemable on any date with the permission of the State.	\$ 271,000
Series 2012 Refunding, in the amount of \$1,325,000, due January 1, 2027; 2.25% interest, payable from the Water Fund in semi-annual installments of \$42,000 to \$57,000 beginning January 1, 2013, redeemable on any date with the permission of the State.	330,000
Series 2016, in the amount of \$660,666 due July 1, 2036; 2.50% interest, payable from the Water Fund in semi-annual installments of \$12,666 to \$21,000 beginning January 1, 2017, redeemable on any date with the permission of the State.	451,000
Series 2019, in the amount of \$5,211,112, due July 1, 2036; 2.50% interest, payable from the Water Fund in semi-annual installments of \$111,000 to \$163,000 beginning January 1, 2020, redeemable on any date with the permission of the State.	4,210,000
Series 2019 Refunding, in the amount of \$2,754,000, due July 1, 2040; 2.00% interest, payable from the Wastewater Fund in semi-annual installments of \$53,000 to \$84,000 beginning January 1, 2020, redeemable on any date with the permission of the State.	2,307,000
Series 2023 Refunding, in the amount of \$848,841, due July 1, 2044; 2.50% interest, payable from the Wastewater Fund in remaining semi-annual installments of \$17,000 to \$26,000 beginning July 1, 2024, redeemable on any date with permission of the State.	<u>848,581</u>
Total outstanding	\$ 8,417,581
Less: current portion	<u>(695,581)</u>
	<u><u>\$ 7,722,000</u></u>

Revenue bond resolutions include various restrictive covenants. The most significant covenants 1) require that cash be restricted and reserved for operations, construction, debt service, and replacement and depreciation of facilities; 2) specify minimum required

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

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operating income over debt service requirements of 110 percent for water and 125 percent for wastewater; and 3) require specific and timely reporting of financial information to bond holders and the registrar. The City complied with these provisions during the current fiscal year.

Annual debt service requirements to maturity for revenue bonds are as follows:

<u>Year Ending June 30,</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Interest</u>
2025	\$ 695,581	\$ 205,427
2026	621,000	188,596
2027	542,000	155,215
2028	440,000	143,343
2029	450,000	133,145
2030-2034	2,433,000	478,551
2035-2039	2,652,000	208,986
2040-2044	584,000	16,798
	<u>\$ 8,417,581</u>	<u>\$ 1,530,061</u>

Loans

The City borrows money from the State of Montana, Board of Investments INTERCAP loan program. The loans bear interest at a variable rate based on the State's annual cost of borrowing. Loans payable and the current rate as of June 30, 2024 are as follows:

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Governmental:

Fire - New Fire Ladder Truck Loan, Series 2021: annual adjustable interest rate INTERCAP Revolving Loan to the City from the Montana Board of Investments; agreement date June 22, 2021, with a loan amount of \$810,000, semi-annual payments of varying amounts with a maturity date of February 15, 2031; secured by real property. Current rate - 5.75%

\$ 618,914
Less: current portion (78,332)
\$ 540,582

Business-Type:

Golf INTERCAP Loan, Series 2014 (Irrigation Improvements): annual adjustable interest rate INTERCAP Revolving Loan from the Montana Board of Investments; agreement dated December 5, 2014 with a loan amount of \$600,000, semi-annual payments of varying amounts with a maturity date of February 15, 2030; Current rate - 5.75%

\$ 181,652

CCAB Cooling System INTERCAP Loan, Series 2020: annual adjustable rate INTERCAP Revolving Loan to the City from the Montana Board of Investments; agreement date June 29, 2020 with a loan amount of \$750,000, semi-annual payments of varying amounts with a maturity date of August 15, 2030; Current rate - 5.75%

508,044

Parking Meter Project INTERCAP Loan Series 2020: annual adjustable rate INTERCAP Revolving Loan to the City from the Montana Board of Investments; agreement dated November 1, 2019 with a loan amount of \$560,242, semi-annual payments of varying amounts with a maturity date of February 15, 2030; Current rate - 5.75%

358,296

City-County Law & Justice Building Loan, Series 2021: annual adjustable interest rate INTERCAP Revolving Loan to the City from the Montana Board of Investments; agreement date June 24, 2021, with a loan amount of \$650,000, semi-annual payments of varying amounts with a maturity date of August 15, 2032; secured by real property. Current rate - 5.75%

576,773

Golf INTERCAP Loan, Series 2024 (Golf Carts): annual adjustable interest rate INTERCAP Revolving Loan to the City from the Montana Board of Investments; agreement dated November 3, 2023, with a loan amount of \$184,195, semi-annual payments of varying amounts with a maturity date of February 15, 2034; Current rate - 5.75%

184,195

Total outstanding 1,808,960
Less: current portion (238,755)

\$ 1,570,205

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Annual debt service requirements to maturity for loans are as follows:

Year Ending June 30,	Governmental		Business-Type	
	Principal	Interest	Principal	Interest
2025	\$ 78,332	\$ 29,234	\$ 238,755	\$ 92,712
2026	79,631	20,780	246,338	62,907
2027	80,950	17,582	254,134	52,741
2028	82,291	14,330	262,239	42,245
2029	83,654	11,025	270,613	31,410
2030-2034	214,056	12,742	536,881	37,275
	<u>\$ 618,914</u>	<u>\$ 105,693</u>	<u>\$ 1,808,960</u>	<u>\$ 319,290</u>

Subscription Based Information Technology Agreement (SBITA)

During the year ended June 30, 2023, the City entered into an agreement with a vendor to allow the City to use their cloud based enterprise resource planning software system. This agreement qualifies as a SBITA under GASB Statement No. 96. The agreement is for a term of five years beginning January 2023, with payments made on a quarterly basis through December 2023 and a yearly basis beginning January 2024. The agreement has an assumed interest rate of 5.75%. As of June 30, 2024, the value of the subscription asset was \$2,137,440 and had accumulated amortization of \$427,519.

During the year ended June 30, 2024, the City entered into an agreement with a vendor to allow the City to use their cloud based records management software system. This agreement qualifies as a SBITA under GASB Statement No. 96. The agreement is for a term of five years beginning September 2023, with payments made on an annual basis through September 2028. The agreement has an assumed interest rate of 5.75%. As of June 30, 2024, the value of the subscription asset was \$844,657 and had accumulated amortization of \$168,901.

The future principal and interest payments required under the SBITA are as follows:

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Year Ending June 30,	Governmental	
	Principal	Interest
2025	\$ 382,688	\$ 95,905
2026	404,693	73,900
2027	427,962	50,631
2028	452,570	26,022
	\$ 1,667,913	\$ 246,458

Changes in Long-Term Liabilities

The following is a summary of the changes in long-term liabilities for the year ended June 30, 2024:

	Balance at July 1, 2023	Additions	Reductions	Balance at June 30, 2024	Due Within One Year
<u>Governmental Activities</u>					
General obligation bonds	\$ 2,625,000	\$ -	\$ (480,000)	\$ 2,145,000	\$ 500,000
Loans	694,714	-	(75,800)	618,914	78,332
Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Compensated absences *	2,444,709	1,603,143	(1,202,436)	2,845,416	1,612,704
Other postemployment benefits *	2,230,563	106,193	-	2,336,756	-
Pension *	17,581,935	912,163	-	18,494,098	-
Lease obligations	806	-	(806)	-	-
SBITAs	1,012,594	1,017,199	(361,880)	1,667,913	382,688
Long-term liabilities	\$ 26,590,321	\$ 3,638,698	\$ (2,120,922)	\$ 28,108,097	\$ 2,573,724
<u>Business-Type Activities</u>					
General obligation bonds	\$ 1,915,000	\$ -	\$ (190,000)	\$ 1,725,000	\$ 190,000
Loans	1,466,190	525,652	(182,882)	1,808,960	238,755
Certificates of participation	6,230,000	-	(325,000)	5,905,000	330,000
Revenue indebtedness	8,433,000	848,581	(864,000)	8,417,581	695,581
Compensated absences *	821,736	446,850	(408,592)	859,994	478,684
Other postemployment benefits *	836,917	42,898	-	879,815	-
Pension *	7,164,190	842,214	-	8,006,404	-
Landfill post-closure	1,885,594	134,480	(117,849)	1,902,225	126,815
Lease obligations	28,083	-	(7,329)	20,754	7,445
	\$ 28,780,710	\$ 2,840,675	\$ (2,095,652)	\$ 29,525,733	\$ 2,067,280

*The liability for compensated absences, other postemployment benefits, and pension is liquidated from the governmental and business-type funds where the corresponding payroll costs for the respective employees are allocated. This includes the General, Streets, Storm Water, Community Facilities, Police Programs, Open Space Maintenance District, and Urban

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

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Forestry Maintenance District funds. The liability for landfill post-closure costs is liquidated from the Solid Waste Fund.

Legal Debt Margin

The City is subject to a debt limit that is 250 percent of the three-year average of the full valuation of taxable real property. At June 30, 2024, the general obligation debt issued by the City did not exceed its legal debt margin as demonstrated by the following computation:

Total assessed value of taxable property (market value)	\$ 6,098,033,385
General limitation percentage	<u>2.50%</u>
General limit of indebtedness	<u>\$ 152,450,835</u>
Outstanding General Obligation bonds as of June 30:	
Outstanding loans subject to limitation *	<u>3,870,000</u>
Excess limit over outstanding margin	<u><u>\$ 148,580,835</u></u>

(*) A State of Montana Board of Investment's attorney gave an opinion that loans issued under 7-7-4101, MCA are subject to the limit of indebtedness.

8. Employee Benefit Plans

Pension Plans

Substantially all City full-time employees participate in one of four statewide, cost-sharing multiple-employer retirement benefit plans. All plans are administered by the Public Employees' Retirement Board (PERB). The authority to establish or amend contribution requirements for all plans and provide cost of living adjustments for defined benefits plans is assigned to the State legislature. PERB issues a publicly available annual comprehensive financial report that includes financial statements and required supplementary information for these plans. It is available from the Montana Public Employees' Retirement Administration (MPERA) at 100 North Park Avenue, Suite 200, P.O. Box 200131, Helena, Montana, 59620-0131 or at their website, <http://mpera.mt.gov>.

The Montana Public Employees Retirement Administration (MPERA) prepares its financial statements using the accrual basis of accounting. For the purposes of measuring the net pension liability, deferred inflows of resources and deferred outflows of resources related to

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

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YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

pensions, pension expense, information about the fiduciary net position and additions to, and deductions from, fiduciary net position have been determined on the same accrual basis as they are reported by MPERA. For this purpose, member contributions are recognized in the period in which contributions are due. Employer contributions are recognized when due and the employer has made a formal commitment to provide the contributions. Revenues are recognized in the accounting period they are earned and become measurable. Benefit payments and refunds are recognized in the accounting period when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. Expenses are recognized in the period incurred. Investments are reported at fair value. MPERA adheres to all applicable GASB statements.

Contributions to pension plans are as required by state statute. Information about each plan is as follows:

Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) - All eligible new hires are initially members of the PERS-DBRP (Defined Benefit Retirement Plan). New hires have a 12-month window during which they may choose to remain in the PERS-DBRP or join the PERS-DCRP (Defined Contribution Retirement Plan) by filing an irrevocable election. Both plans are governed by Title 19, Chapters 2 and 3, Montana Code Annotated (MCA). PERS plans cover eligible state, local government, school district, and university system employees.

PERS-DBRP is a multiple-employer, cost-sharing plan established July 1, 1945. PERS-DBRP provides retirement, disability benefits, annual cost-of-living adjustments, and death benefits to plan members and their beneficiaries.

Employees with at least five years of service are eligible to retire at ages shown below. Vested (five years of service) employees are eligible for disability benefits. Disability benefits are determined in the same manner as retirement benefits but are payable immediately without an actuarial reduction. Death benefits generally equal the balance in the member's vested account or continuing payments under an annuity contract.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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Benefit Calculation

To be eligible for service retirement, a member must meet one of the following requirements:

- If hired prior to July 1, 2011:
 - Age 60, 5 years of membership service,
 - Age 65, regardless of membership service, or
 - Any age, 30 years of membership service,
- Or if hired on or after July 1, 2011:
 - Age 65, with at least 5 years of membership service, or
 - Age 70 and in active service.

A member's monthly retirement benefit is equal to the membership service factor times the member's highest average compensation times the member's service credit. After completing 12 full months of retirement, the member will receive a guaranteed annual benefit adjustment (GABA) of 0% to 3% depending on their hire date and the amortization period of the plan.

Membership Service

Members earn a full month of membership service for any month in which he/she is reported to PERB by the City. Membership service is used to determine the membership service factor and vesting. One hour reported in a month will result in one month of membership service.

The Membership Service Factor is:

Members hired prior to July 1, 2011:

- 1.7857% for members with less than 25 years of membership service
- 2.0% for members with 25 or more years of membership service, or

Members hired on or after July 1, 2011:

- 1.5% for members with less than 10 years of membership service
- 1.7857% for members with 10 or more but less than 30 years of membership service
- 2.0% for members with 30 or more years of membership service.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Highest Average Compensation (HAC)

HAC is a member's highest average monthly compensation:

- during any consecutive 36 months if hired prior to July 1, 2011
- during any consecutive 60 months of membership service if hired on or after July 1, 2011
- If hired on or after July 1, 2013, a 110% annual cap on compensation earned during each year of the HAC period.

Service Credit

A full month of service credit is earned when 160 hours or more is reported to PERB by the city during any given month. Proportional service credit is awarded unless at least 2080 hours is worked in a year.

Guaranteed Annual Benefit Adjustment (GABA)

- 3% for members hired prior to July 1, 2007
- 1.5% for members hired on or after July 1, 2007 and before July 1, 2013
- Members hired on or after July 1, 2013
 - 1.5% each year PERS is funded at or above 90%
 - 1.5% is reduced by 0.1% for each 2% PERS is funded below 90%; and
 - 0% whenever the amortization period for PERS is 40 years or more. After the member has completed 12 full months of retirement, the member's benefit increases by the applicable percentage each January, inclusive of other adjustments to the member's benefit.

PERS-DCRP is a multiple-employer plan established July 1, 2002. A percentage of employer contributions are used to fund various PERS member education programs and a long-term disability plan fund. PERS-DCRP provides for retirement, disability, and death benefits to plan members and their beneficiaries based on the balance in the member's account.

Municipal Police Officers' Retirement System (MPORS) - MPORS, established in 1974 and governed by Title 19, chapters 2 and 9, MCA, covers all municipal police officers of cities covered by the plan. MPORS is a mandatory multiple-employer, cost-sharing defined benefit plan. It offers retirement, disability, and death benefits to plan members and their beneficiaries.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Members are eligible to retire and receive pension benefits when he/she has completed 20 years of membership service, or at age 50 with at least five years of membership service. Disability benefits are determined in the same manner as retirement benefits for members having 20 or more years of service. If less than 20 years of membership service, the disability benefit is equal to one-half of the member's final average compensation. Death benefits are paid to beneficiaries as follows:

- Active Member and less than 20 years of membership service - one-half of final average compensation.
- Active member and 20 years or more of membership service - 2.5% of final average compensation for each year of service credit.
- Inactive member - refund of accumulated contributions.
- Retired member - benefit is paid to surviving spouse or dependent children. If no survivors as previously mentioned, the designated beneficiary or estate will receive the remaining amount of accumulated contributions.

Benefit Calculation

To be eligible for service retirement, a member must meet one of the following requirements:

- 20 years of membership service at any age, or
- 5 years of membership service and 50 years of age.

A member's monthly retirement benefit is equal to the service credit times 2.5% times final average compensation (FAC).

Service Credit

A full month of service credit is earned when at least 160 hours is worked. Proportional service credit is awarded for less than 160 hours.

Final Average Compensation (FAC)

- Hired prior to July 1, 1977 - average monthly compensation of final year of service.
- Hired on or after July 1, 1977 - average monthly compensation for last consecutive 36 months of service.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

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YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

- This is capped at 110% of compensation in the previous year for members hired after July 1, 2013. Also, bonuses paid on or after July 1, 2013, are not considered when calculating FAC.

Guaranteed Annual Benefit Adjustment (GABA)

Police officers who were active members before July 1, 1997, could choose to be covered under GABA. Officers hired on or after July 1, 1997, all receive GABA retirement benefit increases. GABA insures an increase of 3% over the previous year's benefit. Members not covered under GABA must receive a minimum benefit adjustment that may not be less than one-half of the base salary paid in the current fiscal year to a newly confirmed police officer in the city that last employed the retired member.

Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP)

DROP provides members who have at least 20 years of membership service with an additional retirement option. Once participation is elected, it is irrevocable. DROP allows a member to begin accumulating their retirement benefit without terminating employment for one to 60 months. While participating in DROP, monthly benefit payments accumulate in the MPORS trust fund in a separate DROP account. DROP participants and their employers continue to pay regular contributions. When employment is terminated, the DROP benefit is paid to the participant in addition to retirement benefits.

Firefighters' Unified Retirement System (FURS) - FURS, established in 1981 and governed by Title 19, Chapters 2 and 13, MCA, is a mandatory multiple-employer, cost-sharing defined benefit plan offering retirement, disability, and death benefits to plan members and their beneficiaries.

Members are eligible to retire and receive pension benefits when he/she has completed 20 years of membership service, or at age 50 with at least five years of membership service. Disability benefits are determined in the same manner as retirement benefits for members having 20 or more years of service.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

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YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Benefit Calculation

A member's basic monthly retirement benefit is equal to 2.5% times years of service credit times highest average compensation (HAC). If a member was hired before July 1, 1981 and did not elect to be covered under GABA, their monthly benefit will be the greater of the benefit calculated using the basic formula above; or

- For members with less than 20 years of membership service: 2% of highest monthly compensation (HMC) for each year of service credit
- For members with 20 or more years of membership service: 50% of HMC plus 2% of HMC for each year of service credit over 20 years.

Service Credit

A full month of service credit is earned when at least 160 hours is worked. Proportional service credit is awarded for less than 160 hours.

Highest Average Compensation (HAC)

HAC is the average of the member's highest consecutive 36 months of compensation. For members hired on or after July 1, 2013, HAC is capped at 110% of compensation earned during the highest average compensation period.

Guaranteed Annual Benefit Adjustment (GABA)

Firefighters who were active members before July 1, 1997, could choose to be covered under GABA. All members hired on or after that date are automatically eligible for GABA. GABA increases the monthly retirement benefit 3% each year. Non-GABA members with at least ten years of service will receive a minimum retirement not less than one-half of the current base salary paid to a newly confirmed active firefighter in the city where last employed as a firefighter.

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Contribution Rates and Amounts

	Employee	Employer	State
PERS	7.90%	9.07%	0.10%
MPORS	5.80-9.00%	14.41%	29.37%
FURS - GABA	10.70%	14.36%	32.61%
FURS - NON-GABA	9.50%	14.36%	32.61%

	City					State
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2024
PERS	\$ 2,755,391	\$ 1,443,683	\$ 1,257,895	\$ 1,149,783	\$ 1,084,186	\$ 503,323
MPORS	645,544	563,758	514,746	512,610	536,769	1,564,304
FURS	655,030	529,104	484,499	464,377	417,245	1,465,224

The State also contributes from the Coal Tax Severance Fund.

One hundred percent of required contributions were paid.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

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YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions

At June 30, 2024, the City reported a liability for its proportionate share of the net pension liability that reflected a reduction for State pension support provided to the City. The amount recognized by the City as its proportionate share of the net pension liability, the related State support, and the total portion of the net pension liability that was associated with the City were as follows:

	PERS	MPORS	FURS	Total
City's proportionate share of the net pension liability	\$19,419,439	\$ 4,495,707	\$ 2,585,356	\$26,500,502
State's proportionate share of the net pension liability associated with the City	5,365,071	9,073,305	5,867,829	20,306,205
Total	\$24,784,510	\$13,569,012	\$ 8,453,185	\$46,806,707

The net pension liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of June 30, 2023, with update procedures to roll forward to the measurement date of June 30, 2024. The City's proportion of the net pension liability was based on a projection of the City's long-term share of contributions to the pension plan relative to the projected contributions of all participating governments, including the State, actuarially determined.

	PERS	MPORS	FURS
Proportionate share of plan's net pension liability	0.7958%	1.9391%	1.7124%

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

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YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

For the year ended June 30, 2024, the City recognized pension expenses of \$7,588,816 and revenue of \$3,532,851 for support provided by the State. At June 30, 2024, the City reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions from the following sources:

Deferred Outflows of Resources				
	PERS	MPORS	FURS	Total
Differences between expected and actual experience	\$ 773,443	\$ 58,787	\$ 239,215	\$ 1,071,445
Net difference between projected and actual investment earnings	49,271	63,111	67,937	180,319
Changes in assumptions	-	134,940	552,874	687,814
Changes in proportion and difference between City contributions and proportionate share of contributions	1,447,262	-	35,376	1,482,638
City contributions subsequent to the measurement date	1,565,807	598,095	533,363	2,697,265
Total	\$ 3,835,783	\$ 854,933	\$ 1,428,765	\$ 6,119,481

Deferred Inflows of Resources				
	PERS	MPORS	FURS	Total
Differences between expected and actual experience	\$ -	\$ 9,504	\$ 2,658	\$ 12,162
Net difference between projected and actual investment earnings	-	-	-	-
Changes in assumptions	692,645	58,613	-	751,258
Changes in proportion and difference between City contributions and proportionate share of contributions	-	111,921	-	111,921
City contributions subsequent to the measurement date	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 692,645	\$ 180,038	\$ 2,658	\$ 875,341

\$2,697,265 reported as deferred outflows of resources related to pensions from City contributions subsequent to the measurement date will be recognized as a reduction of the net pension liability in the year ending June 30, 2025. Other amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions will be recognized in pension expense as follows:

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

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YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Year Ending June 30,	PERS	MPORS	FURS	Total
2025	\$ 409,034	\$ (24,919)	\$ 197,646	\$ 581,761
2026	137,864	(134,963)	116,242	119,143
2027	1,148,301	256,243	439,612	1,844,156
2028	(117,868)	(19,561)	127,416	(10,013)
2029	-	-	11,828	11,828
	\$ 1,577,331	\$ 76,800	\$ 892,744	\$ 2,546,875

Actuarial Assumptions

The total pension liabilities (TPL) used to calculate the net pension liabilities was determined by actuarial valuation date of June 30, 2023, using the following actuarial assumptions, applied to all periods included in the measurement. Among those assumptions were the following:

Actuarial assumptions:

Investment rate of return	7.30%
Projected salary increases	3.50%
Underlying inflation rate	2.75%
Administrative expense average percentage of payroll	29.00%
Merit increases	0.00%-6.40%
Guaranteed annual benefit adjustment (GABA)	0.00%-3.00%

Long-Term Expected Rate of Return – The long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was determined by considering information from various sources, including historical rates of return, rate of return assumptions adopted by similar public sector systems, and by using a building-block method in which best-estimate ranges of expected future real rates of return (expected returns, net of pension plan investment expense and inflation) are developed for each major asset class. These ranges are combined to produce the long-term expected rate of return by weighting the expected future real rates of return for each major asset class included in the target asset allocation as of June 30, 2024 and are summarized in the following table:

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Target Allocation</u>	<u>Long-Term Expected Real Rate of Return</u>
Cash	3.00%	-0.33%
Domestic equity	30.00%	5.90%
International equity	17.00%	7.14%
Private investments	15.00%	9.13%
Real assets	5.00%	4.03%
Real estate	9.00%	5.41%
Core fixed income	15.00%	1.14%
Non-core fixed income	6.00%	3.02%
	<u>100%</u>	

Discount Rate – The discount rate used to measure the total pension liabilities remained at 7.30 percent. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate assumed that employee and employer contributions will be made at the current statutorily required rates. Based on those assumptions, the pension plans' fiduciary net positions were projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments of current active and inactive employees. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was applied to all periods of projected benefit payments to determine the total pension liabilities. A municipal bond rate was not incorporated in the discount rate.

Target Allocations – The long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments is reviewed as part of regular experience studies prepared for the plan about every five years. The long-term rate of return as of June 30, 2023, is based on analysis in the experience study report dated May 2, 2022 without consideration for the administrative expense analysis shown. Several factors are considered in evaluating the long-term rate of return assumption including long-term historical data, estimates inherent in current market data, and an analysis in which best-estimate ranges of expected future real rates of return (expected returns, net of investment expense and inflation), along with estimates of variability and correlations for each asset class. These ranges were combined to develop the long-term expected rate of return by weighting the expected future real rates of return by the target asset allocation percentage and then adding expected inflation. The assumption is intended to be a long-term assumption (30 to 50 years) and is not expected to change absent a significant change in the asset allocation, a change in the underlying inflation assumption, or a fundamental change in the market that alters expected returns in future years.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Sensitivity of the Net Pension Liability (Asset) to Changes in the Discount Rate – The following presents the City’s sensitivity of the net pension liability to the discount rate in the table below. A small change in the discount rate can create a significant change in the liability. The net pension liability was calculated using the discount rate of 7.30 percent, as well as what the NPL would be if it were calculated using a discount rate 1.00 percent lower or 1.00 percent higher than the current rate.

	1% Decrease (6.30%)	Current Discount Rate	1% Increase (8.30%)
PERS	\$ 28,051,308	\$ 19,419,439	\$ 12,178,072
MPORS	6,937,751	4,495,707	2,556,744
FURS	4,715,103	2,585,356	885,537
Total	<u>\$ 39,704,162</u>	<u>\$ 26,500,502</u>	<u>\$ 15,620,353</u>

Pension Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Detailed information about the pension plans’ fiduciary net positions is available in the separately issued PERB financial report.

9. Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions (OPEB)

Plan Description. In 2024, the City provided employee medical insurance through a single-employer plan run by the Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority (MMIA). The City also provided dental and vision through single-employer defined benefit plans. As required by state law (2-18-704, MCA), the City provides employees who retire and their spouses and dependents (retirees) the option to continue to participate in the City’s group health insurance plans. To continue coverage, retirees are required to pay the full cost of the benefits. Rates are adjusted annually, and benefits altered to ensure the plans remain properly funded. The plan is not administered through a trust and assets are not accumulated in a trust to pay related benefits.

Benefits Provided. The City's plans provide healthcare, dental, and vision benefits for retirees and their dependents. Retirees pay the full cost of coverages selected.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Employees covered by benefit terms. At June 30, 2024, the following employees were covered by the benefit terms:

	<u>Health</u>	<u>Dental</u>	<u>Vision</u>
Inactive plan members or beneficiaries			
currently receiving benefits	16	83	96
Active plan members	<u>333</u>	<u>334</u>	<u>333</u>
Total plan members	<u><u>349</u></u>	<u><u>417</u></u>	<u><u>429</u></u>

Contributions. MMIA health insurance rates are actuarially set annually, and benefits altered to ensure the plans remain properly funded. The City receives a monthly bill that it can allocate to participants as it wishes. The City pays MMIA the monthly premiums and has no further liability for health claims. The City plans to continue funding the employee health insurance plan on a "pay as you go" basis and does not plan to fund this liability since it has paid the full amount due each month.

OPEB Liabilities, OPEB Expense, Deferred Outflows of Resources, and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to OPEB

The City's total OPEB liability of \$3,216,571 was measured as of June 30, 2024.

Actuarial assumptions and other inputs. The total OPEB liability in the July 1, 2024 actuarial valuation was determined using the following actuarial assumptions and other inputs, applied to all periods included in the measurement, unless otherwise specified:

Discount rate	4.34%
Projected salary increases	3.50%
Medical healthcare trend rates	9.80% for 2023, decreasing 4.60% in 2026, then decreasing 0.40 to 4.80% in 2040, then decreasing to an ultimate rate of 3.90% for 2074 and later years
Vision healthcare cost trend rate	2.00%
Dental healthcare cost trend rate	3.50%
Retiree's share of benefit-related costs	100% of projected premiums for retirees

The discount rate was based on the current 20-year municipal bond index.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Mortality rates were based on the RP-2000 Healthy Combined Mortality Table, as appropriate, with adjustments for mortality improvements based on Scale AA.

The actuarial assumptions used in the July 1, 2022 valuation were based on the results of an actuarial experience study for the period January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2020. The City will be required to have another full valuation with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025.

Changes in the OPEB Liability

The changes in the net OPEB liability of the City for the year ended June 30, 2024 were as follows:

Balances at June 30, 2023	\$	3,067,480
Changes for the year:		
Service cost		258,405
Interest		133,570
Changes in assumption		(89,310)
Benefit payments, including refunds		<u>(153,574)</u>
Net changes		<u>149,091</u>
Balances at June 30, 2024	\$	<u><u>3,216,571</u></u>

Changes in Actuarial Assumptions. The interest rate for the measurement period ending June 30, 2024 was increased from 4.11% to 4.34%.

Sensitivity of the total OPEB liability to changes in the discount rate. The following presents the total OPEB liability of the City, as well as what the City's total OPEB liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1 percentage point lower (3.34%) or 1 percentage point higher (5.34%) than the current discount rate:

	<u>1% Decrease</u> <u>(3.34%)</u>	<u>Current</u> <u>Discount Rate</u>	<u>1% Increase</u> <u>(5.34%)</u>
Total OPEB Liability	<u>\$ 3,562,156</u>	<u>\$ 3,216,571</u>	<u>\$ 2,913,243</u>

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Sensitivity of the total OPEB liability to changes in the healthcare cost trend rates. The following presents the total OPEB liability of the City, as well as what the City's total OPEB liability would be if it were calculated using healthcare cost trend rates that are 1 percentage point lower or 1 percentage point higher than the current healthcare cost trend rates:

	1% Decrease	Healthcare Cost Trend Rates	1% Increase
Total OPEB Liability	\$ 2,805,999	\$ 3,216,571	\$ 3,706,632

At June 30, 2024, the City reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB from the following sources:

	Deferred Outflows of Resources	Deferred Inflows of Resources
Differences between expected and actual experience	\$ -	\$ 5,354,926
Changes in assumptions	492,110	443,069
Total	\$ 492,110	\$ 5,797,995

Amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB will be recognized in OPEB expense as follows:

Year Ending June 30,	
2025	\$ (412,115)
2026	(412,115)
2027	(412,115)
2028	(412,115)
2029	(412,115)
Thereafter	(3,245,310)
	\$ (5,305,885)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

10. Joint Ventures

Lewis and Clark Library

In 1974, the City entered into an interlocal library contract with the County to create the Lewis and Clark Library (Library) located within the City of Helena. The five-member Board of Trustees consists of two members appointed by each government and one member appointed jointly. Upon dissolution, the City has a 50% share in the net position of the Library. The most current summary financial information presented on the cash basis of accounting as allowed by the State of Montana, as of, and for, the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024 is:

Cash and investments	<u>\$ 5,037,595</u>
Total assets	5,037,595
Liabilities	<u>1,955,548</u>
Net position	<u>\$ 3,082,047</u>
Revenues	\$ 5,804,233
Expenses	<u>(4,219,595)</u>
Change in net position	<u>\$ 1,584,638</u>

Financial information is available at the Lewis and Clark Library at 120 S. Last Chance Gulch, Helena, Montana, 59601.

11. Commitments and Contingencies

Revenues provided to the City by the state and federal governments are subject to audit by respective grantor agencies. Potential reimbursements may be required as a result of such audits. No provision has been made for potential reimbursements in the financial statements, as material amounts are considered to be unlikely.

The City is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts, theft of, damage to, and destruction of assets; errors and omissions; injuries to employees; and natural disasters. These risks are covered by commercial insurance purchased from independent third parties.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Settled claims from these risks have not exceeded commercial insurance coverage for the past three years; and there have been no significant reductions in insurance coverage.

The City is also involved in contracts related to various construction projects. Contract commitments outstanding related to projects as of June 30, 2024 totaled approximately \$41.6 million.

There are also various other matters of pending litigation in which the City is involved; however, City Commission believes that it is unlikely such matters would significantly affect the financial position of the City.

12. Risk Management

The City faces a considerable number of risks of loss, including damage to and loss of property and contents, employee torts, professional liability (i.e., errors and omission), environmental damage, workers' compensation, and medical insurance costs of employees. A variety of methods are used to provide insurance for these risks. Commercial policies, transferring all risk of loss except for relatively small deductible amounts, are purchased for commercial property and boiler insurance. The City participates in a statewide public risk pool operated by the Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority (MMIA) for property and contents, business auto, contractors' equipment, bonding of public officials, workers' compensation, and tort liability coverage. MMIA provides environmental damages coverage for all participants on a first-come, first-served basis of \$10 million each year, with maximum coverage of \$2 million per incident. The City has no coverage for potential losses from environmental damages once the ten million is expended. The City also contracts with the MMIA to provide health insurance.

Coverage limits and the deductibles in the commercial policies have stayed relatively constant for the last several years. The premiums for the policies are allocated between the City's property and liability Insurance fund (internal service) and other funds based upon the insurance needs of the funds. Settled claims resulting from these risks did not exceed commercial insurance coverage for each of the past three years.

In 1986, the City joined together with other Montana cities to form the Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority, which established a workers' compensation plan and a tort liability plan. Both public entity risk pools currently operate as common risk management and insurance programs for the member governments. The liability limits for damages in tort action are \$750,000 per individual and \$1.5 million per occurrence with an \$11,250

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

deductible per incident. The City pays an annual premium for its employee injury insurance coverage, which is allocated to the employer funds based on total salaries and wages. The agreements for formation of the pools provide that they will be self-sustaining through member premiums.

The City offers employees health benefits for medical, vision, dental, and life. The City was self-insured for the dental and vision plans during fiscal year 2024 that are administered by third-party administrators (TPAs), Allegiance, Inc. of Missoula, Montana and Vision Service Plan. The City is a member of MMIA's health insurance plan. All three plans are included in the Health Insurance funds in the internal service funds combining financial statements elsewhere in this report. The City accrues as liabilities those claims that have been reported within ninety days of the date of the financial statements but were identified by the TPAs as being incurred prior to the date of the financial statements. A brief description of each plan is as follows.

Vision Plan - Effective July 1, 1997, the City established a self-insured vision plan. The purpose of the plan is to pay vision care claims of City employees and other enrolled family members and minimize the total cost of annual vision insurance to the municipality. Rates are determined in consultation with the administrator for the coming year.

Dental Plan - Effective August 1, 1989, the City implemented a self-insured dental benefits plan for all employees. The City is the named fiduciary and plan administrator. The supervisor of the plan is Allegiance, Inc. Life insurance of \$25,000 is attached to the dental plan for employees only. A reconciliation of dental claims payable for the year ended June 30, 2024:

Claims payable, July 1	\$	92,566
Claims incurred/claim adjustments		370,493
Claims paid/claim adjustments		<u>(370,817)</u>
Claims payable, June 30	\$	<u>92,242</u>

Medical Plan - Effective July 1, 2009, the City joined MMIA's health insurance plan. MMIA provides four plans with varying rates, benefits, and deductibles participants can select from. The purpose of these plans is to pay medical claims of the City employees, retirees, and other enrolled family members. Rates are actuarially determined and approved by MMIA's board each spring for the next fiscal year. The City pays a monthly premium in advance.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

13. Landfill Post-closure Care Costs

In November of 1993, the City discontinued using their landfill operation. Final closure status was granted to this facility in January 2000. State and Federal laws require the City to monitor the site for thirty subsequent years or longer when the state determines it is necessary to ensure protection of human health and the environment. The accounting treatment for these projected costs is to recognize a portion of the post-closure care costs in each operating period even though actual payouts will occur in the future. The amount recognized each year is based on the landfill capacity used as of the statement of net position date. Since the landfill closed in a prior fiscal year, all expenses associated with closure and post-closure care costs were reflected in the prior years as cost of operations based on information present at that time. During fiscal year 2024, estimated closure and post-closure costs have been recalculated to include a net decrease of \$16,631. This decrease represents a change in accounting estimate and is therefore accounted for as part of the cost of operations. The City anticipates meeting the closure and post-closure care requirements for the next twenty years with special assessments charged to all property owners within the City limits.

The City continues to demonstrate financial viability as required under RCRA Subtitle D and is, therefore, not required to create a trust fund or secure third-party provider instruments such as letters of credit or surety bonds. The \$1,902,225 presented on the statement of net position at June 30, 2024 is an estimate of the post-closure care costs liability and is subject to changes such as the effect of inflation, revision of laws, and other variables.

14. Lease Receivable

In August 2008, the City entered into a thirty-year lease for 350 parking spaces in the 15th Street parking garage with the Montana Board of Investments (MBOI). Payments are due annually from MBOI on December 31st for the next calendar year through 2029. The City receives a fixed annual payment of \$307,710 with variable adjustments with changes in the fees set by the City Commission. These minimum lease payments are offset by permits sold to other parties at that garage. The City recognized \$251,458 in lease revenue and \$81,963 in interest revenue during 2024 related to this lease. As of June 30, 2024, the City's receivable for lease payments was \$3,988,048. The City also has a deferred inflow of resources associated with this lease that will be recognized over the lease term. As of June 30, 2024, the balance of the deferred inflow of resources was \$3,897,604.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Future minimum lease payments on the leases are as follows:

Year Ending June 30,	Principal	Interest	Total
2025	\$ 228,014	\$ 77,406	\$ 305,420
2026	232,616	72,758	305,374
2027	237,312	68,015	305,327
2028	242,102	63,177	305,279
2029	246,988	58,242	305,230
2030-2034	1,311,764	213,613	1,525,377
2035-2039	1,489,252	74,391	1,563,643
	\$ 3,988,048	\$ 627,602	\$ 4,615,650

15. Tax Abatements

The City enters into property tax abatement agreements with local businesses as allowed by state laws. Under 15-24-1402, MCA, localities may grant property tax abatements to new or expanding industries. In the first five years, qualifying expansions must be taxed at 50 percent of their taxable value. Each year thereafter, the percentage must be increased by equal percentages until the full taxable value is attained in the 10th year. In subsequent years, the property must be taxed at 100 percent of its taxable value. Property taxes abated by this section are subject to recapture if the ownership does not add at least \$50,000 worth of qualifying improvements or modernized processes within the first two years in which these benefits are provided. For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, the City abated the following property taxes:

Abatements	Tax Dollars
Pioneer Structures	\$ 2,383

In November of 2022, the City Commission granted Prickly Pear Development, LLC a 50-percent tax abatement for a new building valued at \$4,046,836, and Five Star Leasing Company a 50-percent tax abatement for equipment valued at \$2,736,149. These abatements will not be realized until Tax Year 2024.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

16. Tax Increment Financing

On September 14, 2015, with Resolution No. 20215, the City Commission declared the existence of blight in the Railroad Urban Renewal Area. The City created a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF Railroad District) in 2016 to revitalize this historic area bordering both sides of the railroad as it runs through Helena. The base taxable value was established as of January 1, 2017. The Railroad Urban Renewal Area Tax Increment Advisory Board was created with Resolution No. 20374 and makes recommendations to the City Commission for potential projects to be funded. The most recent work plan recommended by the committee was adopted by the City Commission on August 22, 2022.

In fiscal year 2024, Tax Increment generated \$711,995 in Real and Personal Property taxes. No expenditures were approved for this district by the City Commission in fiscal year 2024. TIF Railroad District valuation information as of June 30, 2024 is as follows:

<u>Tax Year</u>	<u>Base</u>	<u>Taxable Value</u>	<u>Increment</u>	<u>Mill Levy</u>	<u>Actual Revenue</u>
2023	<u>\$ 2,334,837</u>	<u>\$ 3,363,065</u>	<u>\$ 1,028,228</u>	753.99	<u>\$ 711,995</u>

The City Commission adopted Ordinance 3242 creating the Downtown Urban Renewal District and the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (TIF Downtown District), including a tax increment provision on September 10, 2018. The base taxable value was established as of January 1, 2019. With Ordinance 3275, this district was amended to include the portion of Rodney Street that borders downtown on November 18, 2019. In November 2019, the amended base taxable value was established as of January 1, 2020. The Downtown Urban Renewal District Tax Increment Financing Advisory Board was created with Resolution No. 20580 and makes recommendations to the City Commission for potential projects to be funded.

In fiscal year 2024, Tax Increment generated \$1,234,914 in Real and Personal Property taxes and expended \$133,378 for board recommended projects within the district. TIF Downtown District valuation information as of June 30, 2024 is as follows:

<u>Tax Year</u>	<u>Base</u>	<u>Taxable Value</u>	<u>Increment</u>	<u>Mill Levy</u>	<u>Actual Revenue</u>
2023	<u>\$ 6,100,262</u>	<u>\$ 7,720,793</u>	<u>\$ 1,620,531</u>	753.99	<u>\$ 1,234,914</u>

On August 24, 2020, with Resolution No. 20618, the City of Helena Commission declared the existence of blight in the Capital Hill Mall Area. On December 7, 2020, the Helena City Commission adopted Ordinance 3285 that created the Capital Hill Urban Renewal District

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

and the Capital Hill Urban Renewal District Plan (TIF Capital Mall District), including the tax increment provision to revitalize this area generally described as one block north of Prospect Avenue, extending one block south of 11th Street, bounded to the west by North Dakota Street and to the east by I-15, including a number of hotel parcels around the highway interchange and a housing development managed by the Helena Housing Authority. The base taxable value was established as of January 1, 2020. Currently, there is no advisory board established for this urban renewal area.

In fiscal year 2024, Tax Increment generated \$588,889 in Real and Personal Property taxes. No expenditures were approved for this district by the City Commission in fiscal year 2024. TIF Capital Mall District valuation information as of June 30, 2024 is as follows:

<u>Tax Year</u>	<u>Base</u>	<u>Taxable Value</u>	<u>Increment</u>	<u>Mill Levy</u>	<u>Actual Revenue</u>
2023	<u>\$ 1,988,913</u>	<u>\$ 2,899,282</u>	<u>\$ 910,369</u>	753.99	<u>\$ 588,889</u>

17. Subsequent Events

In August 2024, the City issued Limited Tax General Obligation Bond, Series 2024A (Bond), in the amount of \$1,033,000 to fund capital improvements. The Bond is set to mature in fiscal year 2040 and has an interest rate of 3.75% with semi-annual payments of approximately \$50,000 beginning August 2025.

In December 2024, the City entered into a settlement agreement for payback of excess assessment fees collected by the Street Maintenance District in the amount of \$193,126 dating back to 2021. The amount of this settlement has been reflected in these financial statements.

In February 2025, the City issued a Solid Waste System Revenue Bond, Series 2025 (Bond), in the amount of \$1,350,530, from the State INTERCAP program. As of February 2025, \$479,385 of this loan has been drawn. This is a ten-year loan with a variable interest rate. Semi-annual payments are to begin in August 2025.

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN TOTAL OPEB LIABILITY AND RELATED RATIOS

LAST TEN YEARS*

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Total OPEB Liability:								
Service cost	\$ 258,405	\$ 477,718	\$ 664,278	\$ 621,017	\$ 494,525	\$ 305,180	\$ 323,195	\$ 349,927
Interest	133,570	298,043	202,315	279,163	280,803	205,052	213,451	212,050
Differences between expected and actual experience	-	(4,224,391)	-	(1,766,524)	-	15,687	-	(390,128)
Changes of assumptions	(89,310)	(296,778)	(1,946,975)	(1,108,664)	2,076,199	1,828,444	(45,567)	(23,468)
Benefit payments	(153,574)	(244,367)	(220,065)	(159,803)	(136,828)	(129,987)	(129,987)	(157,165)
Net Changes in Total OPEB Liability	149,091	(3,989,775)	(1,300,447)	(2,134,811)	2,714,699	2,224,376	361,092	(8,784)
Total OPEB Liability - Beginning	3,067,480	7,057,255	8,357,702	10,492,513	7,777,814	5,553,438	5,192,346	5,201,130
Total OPEB Liability - Ending	\$ 3,216,571	\$ 3,067,480	\$ 7,057,255	\$ 8,357,702	\$ 10,492,513	\$ 7,777,814	\$ 5,553,438	\$ 5,192,346

* Until a full 10-year trend is compiled, the required information for the plan is presented for as many years as are available.

Notes to the Schedule:

Changes of assumptions and other inputs reflect the effects of changes in the discount rate each period.
The following are the discount rates used in each period:

2016	4.25%
2017	3.82%
2018	3.87%
2019	3.50%
2020	3.50%
2021	2.53%
2022	2.27%
2023	4.11%
2024	4.34%

There are no assets accumulated in a trust that meet the criteria of GASB codification P22.101 or P52.101 to pay related benefits for the OPEB plan.

See accompanying notes to required supplementary information.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

SCHEDULE OF OPEB CONTRIBUTIONS

LAST TEN YEARS*

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Contractually required contribution	\$ 5,305,010	\$ 4,481,811	\$ 4,191,917	\$ 3,937,108	\$ 3,574,506	\$ 3,259,869	\$ 3,095,913	\$ 2,967,400
Contributions in relation to the contractually required contribution	<u>5,305,010</u>	<u>4,481,811</u>	<u>4,191,917</u>	<u>3,937,108</u>	<u>3,574,506</u>	<u>3,259,869</u>	<u>3,095,913</u>	<u>2,967,400</u>
Contribution deficiency (excess)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

* Until a full 10-year trend is compiled, the required information for the plan is presented for as many years as are available.

See accompanying notes to required supplementary information.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

SCHEDULE OF THE CITY'S AND STATE'S PROPORTIONATE SHARE OF THE NET PENSION LIABILITY
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

Last 10 Fiscal Years

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
City's proportion of net pension liability/(asset)	0.80%	0.73%	0.67%	0.68%	0.67%	0.68%	0.86%	0.90%	0.92%	0.92%
City's proportionate share of net pension liability/(asset)	\$ 19,419,439	\$ 17,383,754	\$ 12,232,594	\$ 17,811,746	\$ 13,966,667	\$ 14,143,693	\$ 16,776,937	\$ 15,264,917	\$ 12,895,525	\$ 11,467,968
State's proportionate share of the net pension liability/(asset) associated with the City	<u>5,365,071</u>	<u>5,192,198</u>	<u>3,603,510</u>	<u>5,607,543</u>	<u>4,543,235</u>	<u>4,729,895</u>	<u>216,680</u>	<u>186,520</u>	<u>158,400</u>	<u>140,041</u>
Total	<u>\$ 24,784,510</u>	<u>\$ 22,575,952</u>	<u>\$ 15,836,104</u>	<u>\$ 23,419,289</u>	<u>\$ 18,509,902</u>	<u>\$ 18,873,588</u>	<u>\$ 16,993,617</u>	<u>\$ 15,451,437</u>	<u>\$ 13,053,925</u>	<u>\$ 11,608,009</u>
City's covered payroll	\$ 14,629,295	\$ 12,678,213	\$ 11,770,756	\$ 11,327,809	\$ 11,024,574	\$ 11,148,092	\$ 10,684,955	\$ 10,734,576	\$ 10,765,891	\$ 10,457,868
City's proportionate share of net pension liability/(asset) as a percentage of its covered payroll	132.74%	137.12%	103.92%	157.24%	126.69%	126.87%	157.01%	142.20%	119.78%	109.66%
Plan fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability	73.93%	73.66%	79.91%	68.90%	73.85%	73.47%	73.75%	74.71%	78.40%	79.87%

CITY'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PENSION PLAN

Last 10 Fiscal Years

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Contractually required contribution	\$ 1,555,721	\$ 1,338,139	\$ 1,142,612	\$ 1,056,038	\$ 992,467	\$ 948,189	\$ 943,936	\$ 894,415	\$ 912,348	\$ 906,902
Contributions in relation to the contractually required contribution	<u>1,555,721</u>	<u>1,338,139</u>	<u>1,142,612</u>	<u>1,056,038</u>	<u>992,467</u>	<u>948,189</u>	<u>943,936</u>	<u>894,415</u>	<u>912,348</u>	<u>906,902</u>
Contribution deficiency (excess)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
City's covered payroll	\$ 17,149,846	\$ 14,629,295	\$ 12,678,213	\$ 11,770,756	\$ 11,327,809	\$ 11,024,574	\$ 11,148,092	\$ 10,684,955	\$ 10,734,576	\$ 10,765,891
Contributions as a percentage of covered payroll	9.07%	9.15%	9.01%	8.97%	8.76%	8.60%	8.47%	8.37%	8.50%	8.42%

See accompanying notes to required supplementary information.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

SCHEDULE OF THE CITY'S AND STATE'S PROPORTIONATE SHARE OF THE NET PENSION LIABILITY
MONTANA POLICE OFFICERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

Last 10 Fiscal Years

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
City's proportion of net pension liability/(asset)	1.94%	1.91%	1.97%	2.17%	2.21%	2.22%	2.16%	2.35%	2.34%	2.28%
City's proportionate share of net pension liability/(asset)	\$ 4,495,707	\$ 4,523,209	\$ 3,573,155	\$ 5,319,390	\$ 4,405,672	\$ 3,804,931	\$ 3,835,219	\$ 4,229,192	\$ 3,878,937	\$ 3,589,338
State's proportionate share of the net pension liability/(asset) associated with the City	<u>9,073,305</u>	<u>9,193,255</u>	<u>7,262,640</u>	<u>10,728,671</u>	<u>8,971,489</u>	<u>7,775,004</u>	<u>7,816,822</u>	<u>8,395,130</u>	<u>7,859,095</u>	<u>7,250,892</u>
Total	<u>\$ 13,569,012</u>	<u>\$ 13,716,464</u>	<u>\$ 10,835,795</u>	<u>\$ 16,048,061</u>	<u>\$ 13,377,161</u>	<u>\$ 11,579,935</u>	<u>\$ 11,652,041</u>	<u>\$ 12,624,322</u>	<u>\$ 11,738,032</u>	<u>\$ 10,840,230</u>
City's covered payroll	\$ 3,910,006	\$ 3,572,144	\$ 3,557,324	\$ 3,725,564	\$ 3,647,960	\$ 3,506,897	\$ 3,233,935	\$ 3,316,542	\$ 3,245,374	\$ 3,064,830
City's proportionate share of net pension liability/(asset) as a percentage of its covered payroll	114.98%	126.62%	100.45%	142.78%	120.77%	108.50%	118.59%	127.52%	119.52%	117.11%
Plan fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability	71.65%	69.67%	75.76%	68.84%	68.84%	70.95%	68.34%	65.62%	66.90%	67.01%

CITY'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PENSION PLAN

Last 10 Fiscal Years

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Contractually required contribution	\$ 596,642	\$ 569,111	\$ 518,533	\$ 511,925	\$ 542,795	\$ 527,763	\$ 524,517	\$ 464,527	\$ 485,830	\$ 470,450
Contributions in relation to the contractually required contribution	<u>596,642</u>	<u>569,111</u>	<u>518,533</u>	<u>511,925</u>	<u>542,795</u>	<u>527,763</u>	<u>524,517</u>	<u>464,527</u>	<u>485,830</u>	<u>470,450</u>
Contribution deficiency (excess)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
City's covered payroll	\$ 4,143,452	\$ 3,910,006	\$ 3,572,144	\$ 3,557,324	\$ 3,725,564	\$ 3,647,960	\$ 3,506,897	\$ 3,223,935	\$ 3,316,542	\$ 3,245,374
Contributions as a percentage of covered payroll	14.40%	14.56%	14.52%	14.39%	14.57%	14.47%	14.96%	14.41%	14.65%	14.50%

See accompanying notes to required supplementary information.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

SCHEDULE OF THE CITY'S AND STATE'S PROPORTIONATE SHARE OF THE NET PENSION LIABILITY
FIREFIGHTERS' UNIFIED RETIREMENT SYSTEM

Last 10 Fiscal Years

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
City's proportion of net pension liability/(asset)	1.71%	1.75%	1.76%	1.66%	1.64%	1.61%	1.64%	1.74%	1.80%	1.77%
City's proportionate share of net pension liability/(asset)	\$ 2,585,356	\$ 2,776,508	\$ 1,503,813	\$ 2,604,437	\$ 1,881,303	\$ 1,854,894	\$ 1,854,259	\$ 1,988,576	\$ 1,843,275	\$ 1,725,991
State's proportionate share of the net pension liability/(asset) associated with the City	<u>5,867,829</u>	<u>6,281,722</u>	<u>3,413,176</u>	<u>5,871,283</u>	<u>4,549,940</u>	<u>4,241,313</u>	<u>4,210,822</u>	<u>4,505,486</u>	<u>4,105,464</u>	<u>3,893,752</u>
Total	<u>\$ 8,453,185</u>	<u>\$ 9,058,230</u>	<u>\$ 4,916,989</u>	<u>\$ 8,475,720</u>	<u>\$ 6,431,243</u>	<u>\$ 6,096,207</u>	<u>\$ 6,065,081</u>	<u>\$ 6,494,062</u>	<u>\$ 5,948,739</u>	<u>\$ 5,619,743</u>
City's covered payroll	\$ 3,688,621	\$ 3,386,852	\$ 3,233,824	\$ 2,905,533	\$ 2,843,908	\$ 2,536,513	\$ 2,449,938	\$ 2,451,788	\$ 2,421,941	\$ 2,296,751
City's proportionate share of net pension liability/(asset) as a percentage of its covered payroll	70.09%	81.98%	46.50%	89.64%	66.15%	73.13%	75.69%	81.11%	76.11%	75.15%
Plan fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability	81.00%	78.76%	87.72%	75.34%	80.08%	79.03%	77.77%	75.48%	76.90%	76.71%

CITY'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PENSION PLAN

Last 10 Fiscal Years

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Contractually required contribution	\$ 519,721	\$ 530,535	\$ 489,873	\$ 462,627	\$ 427,669	\$ 391,924	\$ 373,335	\$ 352,156	\$ 350,540	\$ 354,559
Contributions in relation to the contractually required contribution	<u>519,721</u>	<u>530,535</u>	<u>489,873</u>	<u>462,627</u>	<u>427,669</u>	<u>391,924</u>	<u>373,335</u>	<u>352,156</u>	<u>350,540</u>	<u>354,559</u>
Contribution deficiency (excess)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
City's covered payroll	\$ 3,619,223	\$ 3,688,621	\$ 3,386,852	\$ 3,233,824	\$ 2,905,533	\$ 2,843,908	\$ 2,536,513	\$ 2,449,938	\$ 2,451,788	\$ 2,421,941
Contributions as a percentage of covered payroll	14.36%	14.38%	14.46%	14.31%	14.72%	13.78%	14.72%	14.37%	14.30%	14.64%

See accompanying notes to required supplementary information.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Changes of Benefit Terms

Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). The following changes to the plan provisions were made as identified:

2017 Legislative Changes:

General Revisions - House Bill 101, effective July 1, 2017 Working Retiree Limitations

If a PERS retiree returns as an independent contractor to what would otherwise be PERS-covered employment, general contractor overhead costs are excluded from PERS working retiree limitations.

Terminating Employers - Recovery of actuary costs

Employers who terminate participation in PERS must pay the actuarial liability associated with that termination. Starting July 1, 2017, the terminating employers must also pay for the cost of the actuarial study used to determine that liability.

Refunds

- 1) Terminating members eligible to retire may be, in lieu of receiving a monthly retirement benefit, refunded their accumulated contributions in a lump sum.
- 2) Terminating members with accumulated contributions between \$200 and \$1,000 who wish to rollover their refund must do so within 90 days of termination of service.
- 3) Trusts, estates, and charitable organizations listed as beneficiaries are entitled to receive only a lump-sum payment.

Family Law Orders

If a Family Law Order (FLO) is silent regarding the apportionment of post-retirement benefit adjustments such as the Guaranteed Annual Benefit Adjustment (GABA), the FLO is presumed to require apportionment of the post-retirement benefit adjustment in the same percentage as the monthly retirement benefit is apportioned.

Lump Sum Payouts

Effective July 1, 2017, lump-sum payouts in all systems are limited to the member's accumulated contributions rate than the present value of member's benefit.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Disabled PERS Defined Contribution (DC) Members

PERS members hired after July 1, 2011 have a normal retirement age of 65. PERS DC members hired after July 1, 2011 who become disabled were previously only eligible for a disability benefit until age 65. Effective July 1, 2017, these individuals will be eligible for a disability benefit until they reach 70, thus ensuring the same five-year time period available to PERS DC disabled members hired prior to July 1, 2011 who have a normal retirement age of 60 and are eligible for a disability benefit until age 65.

PERS - Changes in Actuarial Assumptions and Methods

Method and assumptions used in calculations of actuarially determined contributions

The following Actuarial Assumptions were adopted from the June 30, 2023 actuarial valuation:

General Wage Growth*	3.50%
Investment Rate of Return *	7.30%
*includes inflation at	2.75%
Merit salary increase	0% to 4.80%
Asset valuation method	Four-year smoothed market
Actuarial; cost method	Entry Age Normal
Amortization	Level percentage of payroll; open
Remaining amortization period	30 years

Mortality (Active Members)	PUB-2010 General Amount Weighted Employee Mortality projected to 2021 for males and females. Projected generally using MP-2021.
Mortality (Disabled Members)	PUB-2010 General Amount Weighted Disabled Retiree Mortality table, projected to 2021, set forward one year for both males and females.
Mortality (Conteigent Survivors)	PUB-2010 General Amount Weighted Contingent Survivor Mortality projected to 2021 with ages set forward one year for males and females. Projected generationally using MP-2021.
Mortality (Healthy Members)	PUB-2010 Safety Amount Weighted Healthy Retiree Mortality Table projected to 2021, with ages set forward one year and adjsuted 104% for males and 103% for females. Projected generationally using MP-2021.
Admin expense as a % of payroll	0.29%

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Administrative expenses are recognized by an additional amount added to the normal cost contribution rate for the system. This amount varies from year to year based on prior year's actual administrative expenses. The actuarial assumptions and methods utilized in the June 30, 2021 valuation were developed in the six-year experience study for the period ending June 30, 2016.

Montana Police Officers Retirement (MPORS)

The following changes to the plan provision were made as identified:

2015 Legislative Changes:

General Revisions - House Bill 101, effective January 1, 2016

MPORS DROP Survivor Benefits - Allow statutory beneficiary (spouse or dependent child) of a deceased DROP participant to receive a DROP benefit and a survivorship benefit rather than accumulated contributions or a lump sum payment. 19-9-1206(1), MCA.

Montana Police Officers Retirement (MPORS)

2017 Legislative Changes:

General Revisions - House Bill 101, effective July 1, 2017 Working Retiree Limitations

- 1) Applies to retirement system members who return on or after July 1, 2017 to covered employment in the system from which they retired.
- 2) Members who return for less than 480 hours in a calendar year:
 - a. May not become an active member in the system; and
 - b. Are subject to a \$1 reduction in their retirement benefit for each \$3 earned in excess of \$5,000 in the calendar year.
- 3) Members who return for 480 or more hours in a calendar year:
 - a. Must become an active member of the system;
 - b. Will stop receiving a retirement benefit from the system; and
 - c. Will be eligible for a second retirement benefit if they earn 5 or more years of service credit through their second employment.
- 4) Employee, employer and state contributions, if any, apply as follows:
 - a. Employer contributions and state contributions (if any) must be paid on all working retirees; and
 - b. Employee contributions must be paid on working retirees who return to covered employment for 480 or more hours in a calendar year.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Second Retirement Benefit

- 1) Applies to retirement system members who return on or after July 1, 2017 to active service covered by the system from which they retired.
- 2) If the member works more than 480 hours in a calendar year and accumulates less than 5 years of service credit before terminating again, the member:
 - a. Is not awarded service credit for the period of reemployment;
 - b. Is refunded the accumulated contributions associated with the period of reemployment;
 - c. Starting the first month following termination of service, receives the same retirement benefit previously paid to the member; and
 - d. Does not accrue post-retirement benefit adjustments during the term of reemployment but receives a GABA in January immediately following the second retirement.
- 3) If the member works more than 480 hours in a calendar year and accumulates at least 5 years of service credit before terminating again, the member:
 - a. Is awarded service credit for the period of reemployment;
 - b. Starting the first month following termination of service, receives:
 - i. The same retirement benefits previously paid to the member, and
 - ii. A second retirement benefit for the period of reemployment calculated based on the laws in effect as of the member's rehire date; and
 - c. Does not accrue post-retirement benefit adjustments during the term of reemployment but receives a GABA:
 - i. On the initial retirement benefit in January immediately following second retirement, and
 - ii. On the second retirement benefit starting in January after receiving that benefit for at least 12 months.
- 4) A member who returns to covered service is not eligible for a disability benefit.

Terminating Employers - Recovery of actuary costs

Employers who terminate participation in MPORS or FURS must pay the actuarial liability associated with that termination. Starting July 1, 2017, the terminating employers must also pay for the cost of the actuarial study used to determine that liability.

Refunds

- 1) Terminating members eligible to retire may be, in lieu of receiving a monthly retirement benefit, refunded their accumulated contributions in a lump sum.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

- 2) Terminating members with accumulated contributions between \$200 and \$1,000 who wish to rollover their refund must do so within 90 days of termination of service.
- 3) Trusts, estates, and charitable organizations listed as beneficiaries are entitled to receive only a lump-sum payment.

Interest credited to member accounts

- 1) Effective July 1, 2017, the interest rate credited to member accounts increased from 0.25% to 0.77%.

Lump-sum payouts

- 1) Effective July 1, 2017, lump-sum payouts in all systems are limited to the member's accumulated contributions rate than the present value of member's benefit.

Family Law Orders

- 1) If a Family Law Order (FLO) is silent regarding the apportionment of post-retirement benefit adjustments such as the Guaranteed Annual Benefit Adjustment (GABA), the FLO is presumed to require apportionment of the post-retirement benefit adjustment in the same percentage as the monthly retirement benefit is apportioned.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

MPORS - Changes in Actuarial Assumptions and Methods

Method and assumptions used in calculations of actuarially determined contributions

The following Actuarial Assumptions were adopted from the June 30, 2023 actuarial valuation:

General Wage Growth*	3.50%
Investment Rate of Return*	7.30%
*Includes inflation at	2.75%
Merit salary increase	1.00% to 6.40%
Asset valuation method	Four-year smoothed market
Actuarial; cost method	Entry Age Normal
Amortization	Level percentage of payroll, open
Remaining amortization period	30 years
Mortality (Health Members)	PUB-2010 Safety Amount Weighted Healthy Retiree Mortality projected to 2021 for males and females. Projected generationally using MP-2021.
Mortality (Health Members)	PUB-2010 Safety Amount Weighted Employee Mortality Table projected to 2021, set forward one year for males and adjusted 105% for males and 100% for females. Projected generationally using MP-2021.
Mortality (Disabled Members)	PUB-2010 Safety Amount Weighted Disabled Retiree Mortality Projected to 2021, set forward one year for males.
Mortality (Contingent Survivor)	PUB-2010 Safety Amount Weighted Contingent Survivor Mortality Projected to 2021, set forward one year for males. Projected generationally using MP-2021.
Admin expense as a % of payroll	0.17%

Administrative expenses are recognized by an additional amount added to the normal cost contribution rate for the system. This amount varies from year to year based on prior year's actual administrative expenses.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Firefighters Unified Retirement (FURS)

The following changes to the plan provision were made as identified:

2017 Legislative Changes:

General Revisions - House Bill 101, effective July 1, 2017 Working Retiree Limitations

- 1) Applies to retirement system members who return on or after July 1, 2017 to covered employment in the system from which they retired.
- 2) Members who return for less than 480 hours in a calendar year:
 - a. May not become an active member in the system; and
 - b. Are subject to a \$1 reduction in their retirement benefit for each \$3 earned in excess of \$5,000 in the calendar year.
- 3) Members who return for 480 or more hours in a calendar year:
 - a. Must become an active member of the system;
 - b. Will stop receiving a retirement benefit from the system; and
 - c. Will be eligible for a second retirement benefit if they earn 5 or more years of service credit through their second employment.
- 4) Employee, employer and state contributions, if any, apply as follows:
 - a. Employer contributions and state contributions (if any) must be paid on all working retirees; and
 - b. Employee contributions must be paid on working retirees who return to covered employment for 480 or more hours in a calendar year.

Second Retirement Benefit

- 1) Applies to retirement system members who return on or after July 1, 2017 to active service covered by the system from which they retired.
- 2) If the member works more than 480 hours in a calendar year and accumulates less than 5 years of service credit before terminating again, the member:
 - a. Is not awarded service credit for the period of reemployment;
 - b. Is refunded the accumulated contributions associated with the period of reemployment;
 - c. Starting the first month following termination of service, receives the same retirement benefit previously paid to the member; and
 - d. Does not accrue post-retirement benefit adjustments during the term of reemployment but receives a GABA in January immediately following the second retirement.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

- 3) If the member works more than 480 hours in a calendar year and accumulates at least 5 years of service credit before terminating again, the member:
 - a. Is awarded service credit for the period of reemployment;
 - b. Starting the first month following termination of service, receives:
 - i. The same retirement benefits previously paid to the member, and
 - ii. A second retirement benefit for the period of reemployment calculated based on the laws in effect as of the member's rehire date; and
 - c. Does not accrue post-retirement benefit adjustments during the term of reemployment but receives a GABA:
 - i. On the initial retirement benefit in January immediately following second retirement, and
 - ii. On the second retirement benefit starting in January after receiving that benefit for at least 12 months.
- 4) A member who returns to covered service is not eligible for a disability benefit.

Refunds

- 1) Terminating members eligible to retire may, in lieu of receiving a monthly retirement benefit, refund their accumulated contributions in a lump sum
- 2) Terminating members with accumulated contributions between \$200 and \$1,000 who wish to rollover their refund must do so within 90 days of termination of service
- 3) Trusts, estates, and charitable organizations listed as beneficiaries are entitled to receive only a lump-sum payment.

Interest credited to member accounts

- 1) Effective July 1, 2017, the interest rate credited to member accounts increased from 0.25% to 0.77%.

Lump-sum payouts

- 2) Effective July 1, 2017, lump-sum payouts in all systems are limited to the member's accumulated contributions rate than the present value of member's benefit.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

FURS - Changes in Actuarial Assumptions and Methods

Method and assumptions used in calculations of actuarially determined contributions

The following Actuarial Assumptions were adopted from the June 30, 2023 actuarial valuation:

General Wage Growth*	3.50%
Investment Rate of Return*	7.30%, net of pension plan investments and administrative expenses
*Includes inflation at	2.75%
Merit salary increase	1.00% to 6.40%
Asset valuation method	Four-year smoothed market
Actuarial; cost method	Entry Age Normal
Amortization	Level percentage of payroll; open
Remaining amortization period	30 years
Mortality (Active Members)	PUB-2010 Safety Amount Weighted Employee Mortality projected to 2021 for males and females. Projected generationally using MP-2021.
Mortality (Health Members)	PUB-2010 Safety Amount Weighted Employee Mortality Table projected to 2021, set forward one year for males and adjusted 105% for males and 100% for females. Projected generationally using MP-2021.
Mortality (Disabled Members)	PUB-2010 Safety Amount Weighted Disabled Retiree Mortality Projected to 2021, set forward one year for males.
Mortality (Contingent Survivor)	PUB-2010 Safety Amount Weighted Contingent Survivor Mortality Projected to 2021, set forward one year for males. Projected generationally using MP-2021.
Admin expense as a % of payroll	0.13%

Administrative expenses are recognized by an additional amount added to the normal cost contribution rate for the system. This amount varies from year to year based on prior year's actual administrative expenses.

There are no assets accumulated in a trust that meet the criteria of GASB codification P22.101 or P52.101 to pay related benefits for the pension plans.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

NON-MAJOR GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS

Special Revenue Funds

Special Revenue Funds are used to account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources (other than major capital projects) that are restricted, committed, or assigned to expenditures for specified purposes.

Storm Water - Used to account for the receipt of assessments from each property owner within the City of Helena (City) limits. These assessments help finance the storm water drainage operation, maintenance, and capital improvements.

Community Development - Used to account for the receipt and expenditure of funds related to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investments Partnerships (HOME), Affordable Housing, Public Art, as well as other community development grants and planning activities.

Community Facilities - Used to account for the receipts and expenditures related to maintenance and other activities in buildings owned by the City.

Police Programs - Used to account for the receipt and expenditure of funds related to various police department related programs. Programs include officer overtime that is fully reimbursed by businesses, schools, etc., requiring police security; the operation of 9-1-1 and emergency and communication system; the joint City/County operation of the dispatch and record-keeping functions; and miscellaneous grant funding.

Fire Programs - Used to account for the receipt and transfer of funds related to the voter-approved fire safety levy and federal grants for firefighter wages and capital needs.

Open Space District Maintenance - Used to account for the receipt and expenditure of assessments from each property owner within the City limits and grant funds received to be used to maintain open space land owned by the City.

Urban Forestry Maintenance District - Used to account for the receipt of assessments from each property owner within the City limits. The assessments are used to plant, protect, maintain, preserve, and care for trees in public parks, City right-of-way and on open space land.

CARES / ARPA - Used to account for the receipt of Federal CARES Act and ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act - State and Local Government Fiscal Recovery Funds) Grants and eligible expenditures to address the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impacts.

Light Maintenance Districts - Used to account for the receipt of assessments from property owners in 53 street lighting districts who are assessed for electricity for the lights in their district and for administrative charges.

Debt Service Funds

Debt Service Funds account for the accumulation of property taxes and other revenue for the periodic payment of interest and principal on general obligation and special improvement district bonds and related authorized costs.

Special Improvement Districts - Used to account for the receipt and expenditure of assessments from property owners covering such improvements as sidewalk and street construction or reconstruction. These funds are used to pay the interest and principal on bonds or warrants issued to pay for construction costs.

Special Improvement Districts Revolving - This fund is required to maintain a balance no less than five percent of outstanding special improvement district (SID) bonds. This fund secures prompt payment of any SID bonds issued in payment of improvements and the interest thereon as it becomes due. These funds were received over a period of years from developers that are required to deposit five percent of the amount of the bonds issued for the development of new districts.

Park and Recreation General Obligation Refunding - Used to account for funds to pay the periodic payment of interest and principal on the bonds issued to refund the 2008 general obligation bonds that were used to finance improvements to Centennial Park, Memorial Park pool, and Kindrick Legion field approved by the citizens.

Sidewalk Loans - Used to account for funds to pay the periodic payment of interest and principal on debt issued to finance sidewalk repairs for citizens.

Capital Projects Funds

Capital Projects Funds are used to account for financial resources to be used for the acquisition or construction of equipment or major capital facilities other than those financed in the proprietary fund types.

Capital Improvements - Used to account for capital projects for General Fund departments as well as funds specifically earmarked for the development of parks.

Special Improvement Districts Constructions - Used to account for the expenditure of special warrant or loan proceeds intended to construct (or reconstruct) sidewalks for property owners and the receipt and expenditure of SID bond proceeds intended to pave streets and finance other similar improvements for property owners.

TIF Railroad District - Used to account for revenues from property tax levies on increased taxable values in the district. Amounts collected are available to revitalize an historic area of Helena bordering both sides of the railroad that runs through the center of town. The district was created with Ordinance 3214 in December 2015.

TIF Downtown District - Used to account for revenues from property tax levies on increased taxable values in the district. Amounts collected are available for rehabilitation and redevelopment in a blighted historic area of downtown Helena. The district was created with Ordinance 3242 in October 2018.

TIF Capital Mall District – Used to account for revenues from property tax levies on increased taxable values in the district. Amounts collected are available for rehabilitation and redevelopment in a blighted area known as the Capital Hill Urban Renewal District in Helena. The district was created with Ordinance 3285 in November 2020.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING BALANCE SHEET

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS

JUNE 30, 2024

	Special Revenue Funds									
	Storm Water	Community Development	Community Facilities	Police Programs	Fire Programs	Open Space District Maintenance	Urban Forestry Maintenance District	CARES/ARPA	Light Maintenance Districts	Total Special Revenue
Assets										
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 7,608,271	\$ 2,701,458	\$ 1,760,737	\$ 3,367,210	\$ 333,151	\$ 839,588	\$ 523,625	\$ -	\$ 666,625	\$ 17,800,665
Taxes and special assessments receivable, net of allowance	89,900	-	-	-	60,654	22,303	14,639	-	15,493	202,989
Accounts receivable	-	1,731	469	8,204	-	175	-	-	-	10,579
Loans receivable	-	706,615	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	706,615
Intergovernmental receivable	-	-	-	12,812	-	-	-	-	-	12,812
Inventories	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	\$ 7,698,171	\$ 3,409,804	\$ 1,761,206	\$ 3,388,226	\$ 393,805	\$ 862,066	\$ 538,264	\$ -	\$ 682,118	\$ 18,733,660
Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources, and Fund Balance										
Liabilities:										
Accounts payable and other liabilities	\$ 8,915	\$ 110	\$ 39,831	\$ 48,502	\$ -	\$ 9,725	\$ 8,174	\$ -	\$ 106,482	\$ 221,739
Total Liabilities	8,915	110	39,831	48,502	-	9,725	8,174	-	106,482	\$221,739
Deferred Inflows of Resources:										
Unavailable revenue - taxes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unavailable revenue - special assessments	41,614	-	-	-	22,502	14,830	7,989	-	5,126	92,061
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	41,614	-	-	-	22,502	14,830	7,989	-	5,126	92,061
Fund Balance:										
Nonspendable	-	621,899	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	621,899
Restricted:										
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public safety	-	-	-	763,723	116,773	13,125	-	-	-	893,621
911 dispatch center	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public works	129,134	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	570,505	699,639
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	-	817,253	402,329	-	-	1,219,582
Community development	-	7,750	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,750
Debt service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital projects	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Committed:										
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public works	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community development	-	-	477,668	-	-	-	-	-	-	477,668
Capital purchases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assigned:										
Public safety	-	-	-	2,576,001	254,530	-	-	-	-	2,830,531
Public works	7,518,508	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	7,518,513
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	-	7,133	119,772	-	-	126,905
Community development	-	2,780,045	1,243,707	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,023,752
Capital purchases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unassigned	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Fund Balance	7,647,642	3,409,694	1,721,375	3,339,724	371,303	837,511	522,101	-	570,510	18,419,860
Total Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources, and Fund Balance	\$ 7,698,171	\$ 3,409,804	\$ 1,761,206	\$ 3,388,226	\$ 393,805	\$ 862,066	\$ 538,264	\$ -	\$ 682,118	\$ 18,733,660

(Continued)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING BALANCE SHEET

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS

JUNE 30, 2024

(Continued)

	Debt Service Funds					Capital Project Funds					Total Other Governmental Funds	
	Special Improvements Districts	Special Improvements Districts Revolving	Park and Recreation General Obligation Refunding	Sidewalk Loans	Total Debt Service	Capital Improvements	Special Improvements Districts Constructions	TIF Railroad District	TIF Downtown District	TIF Capital Mall District		Total Capital Project Funds
Assets												
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 9	\$ -	\$ 608,667	\$ -	\$ 608,676	\$ 5,145,358	\$ 73,822	\$ 1,414,238	\$ 1,619,476	\$ 976,964	\$ 9,229,858	\$ 27,639,199
Taxes and special assessments receivable, net of allowance	-	-	36,282	-	36,282	-	-	32,549	46,804	58,700	138,053	377,324
Accounts receivable, net of allowance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,579
Loans receivable	-	-	-	-	-	393,317	91,034	-	-	-	484,351	1,190,966
Intergovernmental receivable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12,812
Inventories	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	<u>\$ 9</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 644,949</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 644,958</u>	<u>\$ 5,538,675</u>	<u>\$ 164,856</u>	<u>\$ 1,446,787</u>	<u>\$ 1,666,280</u>	<u>\$ 1,035,664</u>	<u>\$ 9,852,262</u>	<u>\$ 29,230,880</u>
Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources, and Fund Balance												
Liabilities:												
Accounts payable and other liabilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 221,739
Total Liabilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	221,739
Deferred Inflows of Resources:												
Unavailable revenue - taxes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,683	16,317	20,958	50,958	50,958
Unavailable revenue - special assessments	-	-	14,947	-	14,947	-	-	-	-	-	-	107,008
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	-	-	14,947	-	14,947	-	-	13,683	16,317	20,958	50,958	157,966
Fund Balance:												
Nonspendable	-	-	-	-	-	309,680	81,931	-	-	-	391,611	1,013,510
Restricted:												
General government	-	-	-	-	-	764,848	-	-	-	-	764,848	764,848
Public safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	893,621
911 dispatch center	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public works	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	699,639
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,219,582
Community development	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,750
Debt service	9	-	630,002	-	630,011	-	-	-	-	-	-	630,011
Capital projects	-	-	-	-	-	479,608	82,925	1,433,104	1,649,963	1,014,706	4,660,306	4,660,306
Committed:												
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public works	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community development	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	477,668
Capital purchases	-	-	-	-	-	50,000	-	-	-	-	50,000	50,000
Assigned:												
Public safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,830,531
Public works	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,518,513
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	-	834,987	-	-	-	-	834,987	961,892
Community development	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,023,752
Capital purchases	-	-	-	-	-	3,099,552	-	-	-	-	3,099,552	3,099,552
Unassigned	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Fund Balance	<u>9</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>630,002</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>630,011</u>	<u>5,538,675</u>	<u>164,856</u>	<u>1,433,104</u>	<u>1,649,963</u>	<u>1,014,706</u>	<u>9,801,304</u>	<u>28,851,175</u>
Total Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources, and Fund Balance	<u>\$ 9</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 644,949</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 644,958</u>	<u>\$ 5,538,675</u>	<u>\$ 164,856</u>	<u>\$ 1,446,787</u>	<u>\$ 1,666,280</u>	<u>\$ 1,035,664</u>	<u>\$ 9,852,262</u>	<u>\$ 29,230,880</u>

(Concluded)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Special Revenue Funds									
	Storm Water	Community Development	Community Facilities	Police Programs	Fire Programs	Open Space District Maintenance	Urban Forestry Maintenance District	CARES/ARPA	Light Maintenance Districts	Total Special Revenue
Revenues:										
Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 972,067	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 972,067
Special assessments	2,409,360	-	-	-	-	642,362	508,348	-	946,177	4,506,247
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	9,510	-	-	-	-	-	9,510
Intergovernmental	-	75,099	-	3,082,335	-	104,223	10,000	-	-	3,271,657
Charges for services	-	-	948,899	74,816	5	3,338	-	-	-	1,027,058
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	335,725	146,257	94,046	157,537	27,338	34,627	21,475	-	-	817,005
Contributions and donations	24,554	7,750	-	-	-	4,942	1,547	-	-	38,793
Miscellaneous	-	-	152	2,897	-	247	11,446	-	-	14,742
Total revenues	2,769,639	229,106	1,043,097	3,327,095	999,410	789,739	552,816	-	946,177	10,657,079
Expenditures:										
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public safety	-	-	-	2,250,961	3,810	-	-	-	-	2,254,771
Public works	583,322	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,015,054	1,598,376
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	1,285,373	-	-	637,490	433,505	-	-	2,356,368
Community development	-	161,812	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	161,812
Debt service	-	-	-	808	102,820	-	-	-	-	103,628
Capital outlay	22,818	-	116,715	1,203,060	632,002	152,443	-	-	-	2,127,038
Total expenditures	606,140	161,812	1,402,088	3,454,829	738,632	789,933	433,505	-	1,015,054	8,601,993
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	2,163,499	67,294	(358,991)	(127,734)	260,778	(194)	119,311	-	(68,877)	2,055,086
Other Financing Sources (Uses):										
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	81,151	-	-	-	-	81,151
Subscription-based information technology arrangement	-	-	-	797,501	-	-	-	-	-	797,501
Transfers in	353	193,000	540,836	2,135	-	20,451	461	-	-	757,236
Transfers out	(4,298)	-	(402,385)	-	(665,358)	-	-	(30,191)	-	(1,102,232)
Total other financing sources (uses)	(3,945)	193,000	138,451	799,636	(584,207)	20,451	461	(30,191)	-	533,656
Net Change in Fund Balance	2,159,554	260,294	(220,540)	671,902	(323,429)	20,257	119,772	(30,191)	(68,877)	2,588,742
Fund Balance:										
Beginning of year	5,488,088	3,149,400	1,941,915	2,667,822	694,732	817,254	402,329	30,191	639,387	15,831,118
End of year	\$ 7,647,642	\$ 3,409,694	\$ 1,721,375	\$ 3,339,724	\$ 371,303	\$ 837,511	\$ 522,101	\$ -	\$ 570,510	\$ 18,419,860

(Continued)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

(Continued)

	Debt Service Funds					Capital Project Funds					Total Other Governmental Funds	
	Special Improvements Districts	Special Improvements Districts Revolving	Park and Recreation General Obligation Refunding	Sidewalk Loans	Total Debt Service	Capital Improvements	Special Improvements Districts Constructions	TIF Railroad District	TIF Downtown District	TIF Capital Mall District		Total Capital Projects
Revenues:												
Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 543,578	\$ 120	\$ 543,698	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 697,862	\$ 1,178,282	\$ 608,336	\$ 2,484,480	\$ 4,000,245
Special assessments	-	-	-	-	-	206	-	-	-	-	206	4,506,453
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	-	-	6,943	-	-	-	-	6,943	16,453
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	17,000	-	20,593	64,109	18,296	119,998	3,391,655
Charges for services	-	-	-	-	-	46,476	-	-	-	-	46,476	1,073,534
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	-	-	29,314	-	29,314	271,724	-	55,229	50,290	32,351	409,594	1,255,913
Contributions and donations	-	-	-	-	-	136,291	-	-	-	-	136,291	175,084
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	94,960	-	-	-	94,960	109,702
Total revenues	-	-	572,892	120	573,012	478,640	94,960	773,684	1,292,681	658,983	3,298,948	14,529,039
Expenditures:												
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,254,771
Public works	-	-	-	-	-	-	77,716	-	-	-	77,716	1,676,092
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	-	69,337	-	-	-	-	69,337	2,425,705
Community development	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	115,603	186,543	-	302,146	463,958
Debt service	-	-	519,774	-	519,774	-	-	-	-	-	-	623,402
Capital outlay	-	-	-	-	-	2,585,839	-	-	-	-	2,585,839	4,712,877
Total expenditures	-	-	519,774	-	519,774	2,655,176	77,716	115,603	186,543	-	3,035,038	12,156,805
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	-	-	53,118	120	53,238	(2,176,536)	17,244	658,081	1,106,138	658,983	263,910	2,372,234
Other Financing Sources (Uses):												
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	81,151
Subscription-based information technology arrangement	-	-	-	-	-	219,698	-	-	-	-	219,698	1,017,199
Transfers in	-	-	-	-	-	1,698,827	193,559	-	-	-	1,892,386	2,649,622
Transfers out	-	(40,898)	-	(2,739)	(43,637)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,145,869)
Total other financing sources (uses)	-	(40,898)	-	(2,739)	(43,637)	1,918,525	193,559	-	-	-	2,112,084	2,602,103
Net Change in Fund Balance	-	(40,898)	53,118	(2,619)	9,601	(258,011)	210,803	658,081	1,106,138	658,983	2,375,994	4,974,337
Fund Balance:												
Beginning of year	9	40,898	576,884	2,619	620,410	5,796,686	(45,947)	775,023	543,825	355,723	7,425,310	23,876,838
End of year	\$ 9	\$ -	\$ 630,002	\$ -	\$ 630,011	\$ 5,538,675	\$ 164,856	\$ 1,433,104	\$ 1,649,963	\$ 1,014,706	\$ 9,801,304	\$ 28,851,175

(Concluded)

INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS

Internal Service Funds are used to account for the financing of goods and services provided by one department or agency to other departments or agencies on a cost reimbursement basis.

Fleet Services - Used to account for the expenses incurred for the maintenance of all City vehicles and the charges to each department for its respective share.

Copier Revolving - Used to account for the purchase, maintenance and supplies for copiers for several City departments. Each department is charged for its respective use to recover operating costs.

Property and Liability Insurance - Used to account for the receipt of funds from all applicable departments and expenditure of insurance premium charges and deductibles attributed to the City's general insurance coverage.

Health Insurance - Used to account for the receipt of funds from other departments and entities, on a per employee basis, for medical, dental, and vision insurance coverage and the related claims and administrative fees.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA
COMBINING STATEMENT OF NET POSITION
INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS
JUNE 30, 2024

<u>Assets</u>	<u>Fleet Services</u>	<u>Copier Revolving</u>	<u>Property and Liability Insurance</u>	<u>Health Insurance</u>	<u>Total</u>
Current assets:					
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 535,459	\$ 86,861	\$ 645,703	\$ 444,012	\$ 1,712,035
Cash and cash equivalents - unspent debt proceeds	-	-	-	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents - cash with fiscal agent	-	-	-	-	-
Investments - restricted	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables, net of allowance for uncollectibles	247	-	-	34,373	34,620
Intergovernmental receivable	-	-	-	-	-
Loans receivable	-	-	-	-	-
Inventories	21,000	-	-	-	21,000
Lease receivable	-	-	-	-	-
Total current assets	<u>556,706</u>	<u>86,861</u>	<u>645,703</u>	<u>478,385</u>	<u>1,767,655</u>
Noncurrent assets:					
Loans receivable, net of current portion	-	-	-	-	-
Lease receivable, net of current portion	-	-	-	-	-
Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation:					
Capital assets not being depreciated	87,000	-	-	-	87,000
Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation	<u>224,101</u>	<u>13,636</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>237,737</u>
Total noncurrent assets	<u>311,101</u>	<u>13,636</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>324,737</u>
Total Assets	<u>867,807</u>	<u>100,497</u>	<u>645,703</u>	<u>478,385</u>	<u>2,092,392</u>
Deferred Outflows of Resources					
Deferred outflows of resources for debt refunding	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred outflows of resources for pension	92,567	-	-	-	92,567
Deferred outflows of resources for OPEB	-	-	-	-	-
Total Deferred Outflows of Resources	<u>92,567</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>92,567</u>
Liabilities					
Current liabilities:					
Accounts payable and other current liabilities	142,932	-	-	-	142,932
Customer deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Accrued interest	-	-	-	-	-
Compensated absences	25,224	-	-	-	25,224
Loans payable	-	-	-	-	-
General obligation bonds	-	-	-	-	-
Certificates of obligation	-	-	-	-	-
Lease payable	-	-	-	-	-
Landfill post-closure costs	-	-	-	-	-
Total current liabilities	<u>168,156</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>168,156</u>
Long-term liabilities:					
Compensated absences	19,280	-	-	-	19,280
Loans payable	-	-	-	-	-
General obligation bonds	-	-	-	-	-
Certificates of obligation	-	-	-	-	-
Lease payable	-	-	-	-	-
Landfill post-closure costs	-	-	-	-	-
Net pension liability	468,637	-	-	-	468,637
Other postemployment benefits	63,323	-	-	-	63,323
Total long-term liabilities	<u>551,240</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>551,240</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>719,396</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>719,396</u>
Deferred Inflows of Resources					
Deferred inflows of resources for pension	16,715	-	-	-	16,715
Deferred inflows of resources for leases	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred inflows of resources for OPEB	<u>122,159</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>122,159</u>
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	<u>138,874</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>138,874</u>
Net Position					
Net investment in capital assets	311,101	13,636	-	-	324,737
Restricted for debt service	-	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted	<u>(208,997)</u>	<u>86,861</u>	<u>645,703</u>	<u>478,385</u>	<u>1,001,952</u>
Total Net Position	<u>\$ 102,104</u>	<u>\$ 100,497</u>	<u>\$ 645,703</u>	<u>\$ 478,385</u>	<u>\$ 1,326,689</u>

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND CHANGES IN NET POSITION

INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Fleet Services	Copier Revolving	Property and Liability Insurance	Health Insurance	Total
Operating Revenues:					
Charges for services	\$ 2,021,649	\$ 22,197	\$ 1,183,248	\$ 6,908,562	\$ 10,135,656
Contributions	-	-	-	-	-
Other	1,845	-	-	134,122	135,967
Total operating revenues	<u>2,023,494</u>	<u>22,197</u>	<u>1,183,248</u>	<u>7,042,684</u>	<u>10,271,623</u>
Operating Expenses:					
Personnel services	742,067	-	-	-	742,067
Maintenance and operations:					
Supplies/purchase services	1,199,356	1,537	-	-	1,200,893
Purchased services	146,806	10,820	-	177,358	334,984
Other maintenance and operations	63,337	-	-	-	63,337
Fixed charges	-	-	1,162,675	6,885,848	8,048,523
Depreciation	29,927	7,168	-	-	37,095
Total operating expenses	<u>2,181,493</u>	<u>19,525</u>	<u>1,162,675</u>	<u>7,063,206</u>	<u>10,426,899</u>
Operating Income (Loss)	<u>(157,999)</u>	<u>2,672</u>	<u>20,573</u>	<u>(20,522)</u>	<u>(155,276)</u>
Nonoperating Revenues (Expenses):					
Intergovernmental	38,993	-	-	-	38,993
Investment earnings	21,826	4,523	10,362	5,444	42,155
Interest expense	-	-	-	-	-
Sale of capital assets	4,827	-	-	-	4,827
Total nonoperating revenues (expenses)	<u>65,646</u>	<u>4,523</u>	<u>10,362</u>	<u>5,444</u>	<u>85,975</u>
Settlements - insurance	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers in	717	-	-	-	717
Transfers out	-	-	(46,677)	-	(46,677)
Change in Net Position	<u>(91,636)</u>	<u>7,195</u>	<u>(15,742)</u>	<u>(15,078)</u>	<u>(115,261)</u>
Net Position:					
Beginning of year	<u>193,740</u>	<u>93,302</u>	<u>661,445</u>	<u>493,463</u>	<u>1,441,950</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 102,104</u>	<u>\$ 100,497</u>	<u>\$ 645,703</u>	<u>\$ 478,385</u>	<u>\$ 1,326,689</u>

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA
COMBINING STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Fleet Services	Copier Revolving	Property and Liability Insurance	Health Insurance	Total
Cash Flows From Operating Activities:					
Receipts from customers and users	\$ 1,845	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 134,122	\$ 135,967
Receipts from interfund services provided	2,021,649	22,197	1,183,248	6,899,929	10,127,023
Payments to suppliers	(1,458,077)	(12,846)	-	(177,358)	(1,648,281)
Payments to employees	(666,024)	-	-	-	(666,024)
Payments for interfund services used	-	-	(1,166,582)	(6,885,848)	(8,052,430)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	<u>(100,607)</u>	<u>9,351</u>	<u>16,666</u>	<u>(29,155)</u>	<u>(103,745)</u>
Cash Flows From Non-Capital Financing Activities:					
Transfers from other funds	717	-	-	-	717
Transfers to other funds	-	-	(46,677)	-	(46,677)
Operating grants	-	-	-	-	-
Contributions from other governments	38,993	-	-	-	38,993
Net cash provided by (used in) non-capital financing activities	<u>39,710</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(46,677)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(6,967)</u>
Cash Flows From Capital and Related Financing Activities:					
Proceeds from capital debt/insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	-
Principal payments - bonds	-	-	-	-	-
Principal payments - loans	-	-	-	-	-
Principal payments - leases	-	-	-	-	-
Interest payments	-	-	-	-	-
Debt issuance costs	-	-	-	-	-
Acquisition and construction of capital assets	(44,401)	(13,741)	-	-	(58,142)
Proceeds from leases receivable	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from sale of capital assets	4,827	-	-	-	4,827
Net cash provided by (used in) capital and related financing activities	<u>(39,574)</u>	<u>(13,741)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(53,315)</u>
Cash Flows From Investing Activities:					
Interest received	21,826	4,523	10,362	5,444	42,155
Net increase/(decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	<u>21,826</u>	<u>4,523</u>	<u>10,362</u>	<u>5,444</u>	<u>42,155</u>
Net Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents	(78,645)	133	(19,649)	(23,711)	(121,872)
Cash and Cash Equivalents:					
Beginning of year	614,104	86,728	665,352	467,723	1,833,907
End of year	<u>\$ 535,459</u>	<u>\$ 86,861</u>	<u>\$ 645,703</u>	<u>\$ 444,012</u>	<u>\$ 1,712,035</u>
Reconciliation of Operating Income (Loss) to Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Operating Activities:					
Operating income (loss)	\$ (157,999)	\$ 2,672	\$ 20,573	\$ (20,522)	\$ (155,276)
Adjustments to reconciled operating income to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities:					
Depreciation expense	29,927	7,168	-	-	37,095
Change in:					
Receivables	-	-	-	(8,633)	(8,633)
Inventories	5,454	-	-	-	5,454
Deferred outflows of resources	(5,001)	-	-	-	(5,001)
Accounts payable and other current liabilities	(54,032)	(489)	(3,907)	-	(58,428)
Customer deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Compensated absences	8,285	-	-	-	8,285
Long-term debt	-	-	-	-	-
Landfill post-closure costs payable	-	-	-	-	-
Net pension liability	56,175	-	-	-	56,175
Other postemployment benefits	3,367	-	-	-	3,367
Deferred inflows of resources	13,217	-	-	-	13,217
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	<u>\$ (100,607)</u>	<u>\$ 9,351</u>	<u>\$ 16,666</u>	<u>\$ (29,155)</u>	<u>\$ (103,745)</u>

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN
FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

NON-MAJOR SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Storm Water				Community Development			
	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final			Original	Final		
Revenues:								
Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Special assessments	2,358,365	2,358,365	2,409,360	50,995	-	-	-	-
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	1,407,437	1,407,437	75,099	(1,332,338)
Charges for services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	30,000	30,000	335,725	305,725	35,021	35,021	146,257	111,236
Contributions and donations	18,572	18,572	24,554	5,982	7,500	7,500	7,750	250
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total revenues	2,406,937	2,406,937	2,769,639	362,702	1,449,958	1,449,958	229,106	(1,220,852)
Expenditures:								
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public works	1,329,172	1,329,172	583,322	(745,850)	-	-	-	-
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community development	-	-	-	-	2,907,593	2,935,605	161,812	(2,773,793)
Debt service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital outlay	54,500	70,850	22,818	(48,032)	-	-	-	-
Total expenditures	1,383,672	1,400,022	606,140	(793,882)	2,907,593	2,935,605	161,812	(2,773,793)
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	1,023,265	1,006,915	2,163,499	1,156,584	(1,457,635)	(1,485,647)	67,294	1,552,941
Other Financing Sources (Uses):								
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subscription-based information technology agreements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers in	353	353	353	-	113,000	193,000	193,000	-
Transfers out	(886,617)	(2,715,460)	(4,298)	2,711,162	-	-	-	-
Total other financing sources (uses)	(886,264)	(2,715,107)	(3,945)	2,711,162	113,000	193,000	193,000	-
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ 137,001	\$ (1,708,192)	\$ 2,159,554	\$ 3,867,746	\$ (1,344,635)	\$ (1,292,647)	\$ 260,294	\$ 1,552,941

(Continued)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN
FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

NON-MAJOR SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024
(Continued)

	Community Facilities				Police Programs			
	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final			Original	Final		
Revenues:								
Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Special assessments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	-	7,000	7,000	9,510	2,510
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	1,835,383	1,875,383	3,082,335	1,206,952
Charges for services	1,052,641	1,052,641	948,899	(103,742)	23,000	23,000	74,816	51,816
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	30,900	30,900	94,046	63,146	27,000	27,000	157,537	130,537
Contributions and donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	5,000	5,000	152	(4,848)	59,547	59,547	2,897	(56,650)
Total revenues	1,088,541	1,088,541	1,043,097	(45,444)	1,951,930	1,991,930	3,327,095	1,335,165
Expenditures:								
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public safety	-	-	-	-	2,320,946	2,320,946	2,250,961	(69,985)
Public works	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	2,036,980	2,660,775	1,285,373	(1,375,402)	-	-	-	-
Community development	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt service	-	-	-	-	-	-	808	808
Capital outlay	-	-	116,715	116,715	98,495	919,158	1,203,060	283,902
Total expenditures	2,036,980	2,660,775	1,402,088	(1,258,687)	2,419,441	3,240,104	3,454,829	214,725
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(948,439)	(1,572,234)	(358,991)	1,213,243	(467,511)	(1,248,174)	(127,734)	1,120,440
Other Financing Sources (Uses):								
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subscription-based information technology agreements	-	-	-	-	-	-	797,501	797,501
Transfers in	540,833	540,833	540,836	3	2,048	2,048	2,135	87
Transfers out	-	-	(402,385)	(402,385)	(31,818)	(31,818)	-	31,818
Total other financing sources (uses)	540,833	540,833	138,451	(402,382)	(29,770)	(29,770)	799,636	829,406
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ (407,606)	\$ (1,031,401)	\$ (220,540)	\$ 810,861	\$ (497,281)	\$ (1,277,944)	\$ 671,902	\$ 1,949,846

(Continued)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN
FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

NON-MAJOR SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024
(Continued)

	Fire Programs				Open Space Maintenance District			
	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final			Original	Final		
Revenues:								
Taxes	\$ 1,031,000	\$ 1,031,000	\$ 972,067	\$ (58,933)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Special assessments	-	-	-	-	646,750	646,750	642,362	(4,388)
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	82,278	104,223	21,945
Charges for services	45,000	45,000	5	(44,995)	4,000	4,000	3,338	(662)
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	10,500	10,500	27,338	16,838	8,250	8,250	34,627	26,377
Contributions and donations	-	-	-	-	38,738	38,738	4,942	(33,796)
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	247	247
Total revenues	1,086,500	1,086,500	999,410	(87,090)	697,738	780,016	789,739	9,723
Expenditures:								
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public safety	58,391	58,391	3,810	(54,581)	-	-	-	-
Public works	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	730,396	812,674	637,490	(175,184)
Community development	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt service	98,261	98,261	102,820	4,559	-	-	-	-
Capital outlay	538,000	713,053	632,002	(81,051)	160,000	160,000	152,443	(7,557)
Total expenditures	694,652	869,705	738,632	(131,073)	890,396	972,674	789,933	(182,741)
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	391,848	216,795	260,778	43,983	(192,658)	(192,658)	(194)	192,464
Other Financing Sources (Uses):								
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	81,151	81,151	-	-	-	-
Subscription-based information technology agreements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers in	87	87	-	(87)	20,375	20,375	20,451	76
Transfers out	(665,358)	(665,358)	(665,358)	-	-	-	-	-
Total other financing sources (uses)	(665,271)	(665,271)	(584,207)	81,064	20,375	20,375	20,451	76
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ (273,423)	\$ (448,476)	\$ (323,429)	\$ 125,047	\$ (172,283)	\$ (172,283)	\$ 20,257	\$ 192,540

(Continued)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN
FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

NON-MAJOR SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024
(Continued)

	Urban Forestry Maintenance District				CARES/ARPA			
	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final			Original	Final		
Revenues:								
Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Special assessments	480,750	480,750	508,348	27,598	-	-	-	-
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental	-	-	10,000	10,000	-	-	-	-
Charges for services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	4,500	4,500	21,475	16,975	-	-	-	-
Contributions and donations	1,170	1,170	1,547	377	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	11,446	11,446	-	-	-	-
Total revenues	486,420	486,420	552,816	66,396	-	-	-	-
Expenditures:								
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public works	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	556,815	556,815	433,505	(123,310)	-	-	-	-
Community development	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital outlay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total expenditures	556,815	556,815	433,505	(123,310)	-	-	-	-
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(70,395)	(70,395)	119,311	189,706	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Sources (Uses):								
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subscription-based information technology agreements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers in	461	461	461	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers out	-	-	-	-	-	-	(30,191)	(30,191)
Total other financing sources (uses)	461	461	461	-	-	-	(30,191)	(30,191)
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ (69,934)	\$ (69,934)	\$ 119,772	\$ 189,706	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (30,191)	\$ (30,191)

(Continued)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN
FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

NON-MAJOR SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024
(Continued)

	Light Maintenance Districts				Total			
	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final			Original	Final		
Revenues:								
Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,031,000	\$ 1,031,000	\$ 972,067	\$ (58,933)
Special assessments	1,061,285	1,061,285	946,177	(115,108)	4,547,150	4,547,150	4,506,247	(40,903)
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	-	7,000	7,000	9,510	2,510
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	3,242,820	3,365,098	3,271,657	(93,441)
Charges for services	-	-	-	-	1,124,641	1,124,641	1,027,058	(97,583)
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	-	-	-	-	146,171	146,171	817,005	670,834
Contributions and donations	-	-	-	-	65,980	65,980	38,793	(27,187)
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	64,547	64,547	14,742	(49,805)
Total revenues	1,061,285	1,061,285	946,177	(115,108)	10,229,309	10,351,587	10,657,079	305,492
Expenditures:								
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public safety	-	-	-	-	2,379,337	2,379,337	2,254,771	(124,566)
Public works	1,114,985	1,114,985	1,015,054	(99,931)	2,444,157	2,444,157	1,598,376	(845,781)
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	3,324,191	4,030,264	2,356,368	(1,673,896)
Community development	-	-	-	-	2,907,593	2,935,605	161,812	(2,773,793)
Debt service	-	-	-	-	98,261	98,261	103,628	5,367
Capital outlay	-	-	-	-	850,995	1,863,061	2,127,038	263,977
Total expenditures	1,114,985	1,114,985	1,015,054	(99,931)	12,004,534	13,750,685	8,601,993	(5,148,692)
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(53,700)	(53,700)	(68,877)	(15,177)	(1,775,225)	(3,399,098)	2,055,086	5,454,184
Other Financing Sources (Uses):								
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	-	-	81,151	81,151
Subscription-based information technology agreements	-	-	-	-	-	-	797,501	797,501
Transfers in	-	-	-	-	677,157	757,157	757,236	79
Transfers out	-	-	-	-	(1,583,793)	(3,412,636)	(1,102,232)	2,310,404
Total other financing sources (uses)	-	-	-	-	(906,636)	(2,655,479)	533,656	3,189,135
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ (53,700)	\$ (53,700)	\$ (68,877)	\$ (15,177)	\$ (2,681,861)	\$ (6,054,577)	\$ 2,588,742	\$ 8,643,319

(Concluded)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN
FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

NON-MAJOR DEBT SERVICE FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Special Improvement Districts				Special Improvement Districts Revolving			
	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final			Original	Final		
Revenues:								
Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Special assessments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charges for services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contributions and donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total revenues	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Expenditures:								
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public works	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community development	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital outlay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total expenditures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Sources (Uses):								
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subscription-based information technology agreements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers in	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers out	-	-	-	-	-	-	(40,898)	(40,898)
Total other financing sources (uses)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(40,898)	(40,898)
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (40,898)	\$ (40,898)

(Continued)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN
FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

NON-MAJOR DEBT SERVICE FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

(Continued)

	Park and Recreation General Obligation Refunding				Sidewalk Loans			
	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final			Original	Final		
Revenues:								
Taxes	\$ 551,750	\$ 551,750	\$ 543,578	\$ (8,172)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 120	\$ 120
Special assessments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charges for services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	8,000	8,000	29,314	21,314	-	-	-	-
Contributions and donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total revenues	559,750	559,750	572,892	13,142	-	-	120	120
Expenditures:								
General government	-	-	-	-	56	56	-	(56)
Public safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public works	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community development	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt service	560,250	560,250	519,774	(40,476)	-	-	-	-
Capital outlay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total expenditures	560,250	560,250	519,774	(40,476)	56	56	-	(56)
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(500)	(500)	53,118	53,618	(56)	(56)	120	176
Other Financing Sources (Uses):								
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subscription-based information technology agreements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers in	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers out	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2,739)	(2,739)
Total other financing sources (uses)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2,739)	(2,739)
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ (500)	\$ (500)	\$ 53,118	\$ 53,618	\$ (56)	\$ (56)	\$ (2,619)	\$ (2,563)

(Continued)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

NON-MAJOR DEBT SERVICE FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

(Continued)

	Total			
	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final		
Revenues:				
Taxes	\$ 551,750	\$ 551,750	\$ 543,698	\$ (8,052)
Special assessments	-	-	-	-
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-
Charges for services	-	-	-	-
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	8,000	8,000	29,314	21,314
Contributions and donations	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-
Total revenues	<u>559,750</u>	<u>559,750</u>	<u>573,012</u>	<u>13,262</u>
Expenditures:				
General government	56	56	-	(56)
Public safety	-	-	-	-
Public works	-	-	-	-
Public health	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-
Community development	-	-	-	-
Debt service	560,250	560,250	519,774	(40,476)
Capital outlay	-	-	-	-
Total expenditures	<u>560,306</u>	<u>560,306</u>	<u>519,774</u>	<u>(40,532)</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	<u>(556)</u>	<u>(556)</u>	<u>53,238</u>	<u>53,794</u>
Other Financing Sources (Uses):				
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-
Subscription-based information technology agreements	-	-	-	-
Transfers in	-	-	-	-
Transfers out	-	-	(43,637)	(43,637)
Total other financing sources (uses)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(43,637)</u>	<u>(43,637)</u>
Net Change in Fund Balance	<u>\$ (556)</u>	<u>\$ (556)</u>	<u>\$ 9,601</u>	<u>\$ 10,157</u>

(Concluded)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN
FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

NON-MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	Capital Improvements				Special Improvements Districts Construction			
	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final			Original	Final		
Revenues:								
Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Special assessments	-	-	206	206	-	-	-	-
Licenses and permits	8,000	8,000	6,943	(1,057)	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental	-	-	17,000	17,000	-	-	-	-
Charges for services	80,000	80,000	46,476	(33,524)	-	-	-	-
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	77,500	77,500	271,724	194,224	-	-	-	-
Contributions and donations	700	700	136,291	135,591	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	74,650	74,650	-	(74,650)	-	-	94,960	94,960
Total revenues	240,850	240,850	478,640	237,790	-	-	94,960	94,960
Expenditures:								
General government	53,990	11,000	-	(11,000)	-	-	-	-
Public safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public works	-	-	-	-	150,000	150,000	77,716	(72,284)
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	2,500	78,380	69,337	(9,043)	-	-	-	-
Community development	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital outlay	1,635,150	5,549,974	2,585,839	(2,964,135)	-	-	-	-
Total expenditures	1,691,640	5,639,354	2,655,176	(2,984,178)	150,000	150,000	77,716	(72,284)
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(1,450,790)	(5,398,504)	(2,176,536)	3,221,968	(150,000)	(150,000)	17,244	167,244
Other Financing Sources (Uses):								
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subscription-based information technology agreements	-	-	219,698	219,698	-	-	-	-
Transfers in	1,550,490	1,559,490	1,698,827	139,337	150,000	150,000	193,559	43,559
Transfers out	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total other financing sources (uses)	1,550,490	1,559,490	1,918,525	359,035	150,000	150,000	193,559	43,559
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ 99,700	\$ (3,839,014)	\$ (258,011)	\$ 3,581,003	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 210,803	\$ 210,803

(Continued)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN
FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

NON-MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024
(Continued)

	TIF Railroad Districts				TIF Downtown District			
	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final			Original	Final		
Revenues:								
Taxes	\$ 327,258	\$ 327,258	\$ 697,862	\$ 370,604	\$ 318,500	\$ 318,500	\$ 1,178,282	\$ 859,782
Special assessments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental	8,500	8,500	20,593	12,093	16,000	16,000	64,109	48,109
Charges for services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	8,500	8,500	55,229	46,729	4,000	4,000	50,290	46,290
Contributions and donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total revenues	344,258	344,258	773,684	429,426	338,500	338,500	1,292,681	954,181
Expenditures:								
General government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public works	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community development	350,000	350,000	115,603	(234,397)	350,000	350,000	186,543	(163,457)
Debt service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital outlay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total expenditures	350,000	350,000	115,603	(234,397)	350,000	350,000	186,543	(163,457)
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(5,742)	(5,742)	658,081	663,823	(11,500)	(11,500)	1,106,138	1,117,638
Other Financing Sources (Uses):								
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subscription-based information technology agreements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers in	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers out	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total other financing sources (uses)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ (5,742)	\$ (5,742)	\$ 658,081	\$ 663,823	\$ (11,500)	\$ (11,500)	\$ 1,106,138	\$ 1,117,638

(Continued)

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN
FUND BALANCES - BUDGET AND ACTUAL

NON-MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS FUNDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024
(Continued)

	TIF Capital Mall District				Total			
	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance with Final Budget
	Original	Final			Original	Final		
Revenues:								
Taxes	\$ 209,700	\$ 209,700	\$ 608,336	\$ 398,636	\$ 855,458	\$ 855,458	\$ 2,484,480	\$ 1,629,022
Special assessments	-	-	-	-	-	-	206	206
Licenses and permits	-	-	-	-	8,000	8,000	6,943	(1,057)
Intergovernmental	5,100	5,100	18,296	13,196	29,600	29,600	119,998	90,398
Charges for services	-	-	-	-	80,000	80,000	46,476	(33,524)
Fines and forfeitures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment earnings	2,750	2,750	32,351	29,601	92,750	92,750	409,594	316,844
Contributions and donations	-	-	-	-	700	700	136,291	135,591
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	74,650	74,650	94,960	20,310
Total revenues	217,550	217,550	658,983	441,433	1,141,158	1,141,158	3,298,948	2,157,790
Expenditures:								
General government	-	-	-	-	53,990	11,000	-	(11,000)
Public safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public works	-	-	-	-	150,000	150,000	77,716	(72,284)
Public health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and recreation	-	-	-	-	2,500	78,380	69,337	(9,043)
Community development	200,000	200,000	-	(200,000)	900,000	900,000	302,146	(597,854)
Debt service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital outlay	-	-	-	-	1,635,150	5,549,974	2,585,839	(2,964,135)
Total expenditures	200,000	200,000	-	(200,000)	2,741,640	6,689,354	3,035,038	(3,654,316)
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	17,550	17,550	658,983	641,433	(1,600,482)	(5,548,196)	263,910	5,812,106
Other Financing Sources (Uses):								
Sale of capital assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from insurance settlements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subscription-based information technology agreements	-	-	-	-	-	-	219,698	219,698
Transfers in	-	-	-	-	1,700,490	1,709,490	1,892,386	182,896
Transfers out	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total other financing sources (uses)	-	-	-	-	1,700,490	1,709,490	2,112,084	402,594
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ 17,550	\$ 17,550	\$ 658,983	\$ 641,433	\$ 100,008	\$ (3,838,706)	\$ 2,375,994	\$ 6,214,700

(Concluded)

COMPONENT UNITS

The Helena Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) is a component unit of the City. The TBID does not issue a separate financial report. Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States (U.S. GAAP) require the City to present combining fund statements if the component units do not present separate financial statements. The TBID is made up of two governmental funds. Combining statements are reported here as required by U.S. GAAP.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING BALANCE SHEET GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS

HELENA TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

JUNE 30, 2024

	General	Special Revenue Tourism Alliance	Total
Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 374,543	\$ 12,841	\$ 387,384
Taxes receivable, net of allowance for uncollectibles	103,688	-	103,688
Prepaid expenses	-	-	-
Internal balances	16,165	(16,165)	-
Total Assets	494,396	(3,324)	491,072
Liabilities			
Accounts payable	20,250	-	20,250
Payroll liabilities	-	2,368	2,368
Unearned revenue	103,688	-	103,688
Other liabilities	3,728	-	3,728
Total Liabilities	127,666	2,368	130,034
Fund Balances			
Unassigned	366,730	(5,692)	361,038
Total Fund Balances	366,730	(5,692)	361,038
Total Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources, and Fund Balances	\$ 494,396	\$ (3,324)	\$ 491,072

Reconciliation to the balance sheet of governmental funds to the statement of net position

Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of net position are different because:

Ending fund balance	\$	361,038
Capital assets used in governmental activities are not financial resources and, therefore, are not reported in the funds.		5,240
Long-term liabilities, including bonds payable, are not due and payable in the current period and, therefore, are not reported in the funds.		
Compensated absences		(9,882)
Net position of governmental activities	\$	356,396

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

COMBINING STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES

HELENA TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

	General	Special Revenue Tourism Alliance	Total
Revenues:			
Special assessments	\$ 635,275	\$ -	\$ 635,275
Contributions	-	-	-
Charges for services	-	-	-
Investment earnings	601	-	601
Other income	11,214	357	11,571
Total revenues	647,090	357	647,447
Expenditures:			
Community development	406,980	179,526	586,506
Total expenditures	406,980	179,526	586,506
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	240,110	(179,169)	60,941
Other Financing Sources (Uses):			
Transfers in	-	180,000	180,000
Transfers out	(180,000)	-	(180,000)
Total other financing sources (uses)	(180,000)	180,000	-
Net Change in Fund Balance	60,110	831	60,941
Fund Balance:			
Beginning of year	306,620	(6,523)	300,097
End of year	\$ 366,730	\$ (5,692)	\$ 361,038

Reconciliation of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance
of Governmental Funds to the Statement of Activities

Net change in fund balance - total governmental funds \$ 60,941

Governmental funds report capital outlays as expenditures. However, in the statement of activities the cost of those assets is allocated over their estimated useful lives reported as depreciation expense. This is the amount by which capital outlays exceeded depreciation in the current period.

Capital assets purchased	6,171
Depreciation expense	(931)

Some expenses reported in the statement of activities do not require the use of current financial resources and, therefore, are not reported as expenditures in the government funds.

Compensated absences	3,084
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Change in net position of governmental activities \$ 69,265

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURES OF FEDERAL AWARDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

<u>Federal Grantor / Pass-Through Grantor / Project Title</u>	<u>Federal ALN</u>	<u>Pass-Through Grantor's Number</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Passed Through to Subrecipients</u>
<u>U.S. Department of Agriculture</u>				
Passed Through the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation:				
Cooperative Forestry Assistance	10.664	20-DG-11010000-024	\$ 20,070	\$ -
State & Private Forestry Hazardous Fuel Reduction Program	10.697	20-DG-11010000-014	<u>16,018</u>	<u>-</u>
Total U.S. Department of Agriculture			<u>36,088</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>U.S. Department of the Interior</u>				
Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination	15.234	22-CS-11011500-030	<u>39,250</u>	<u>-</u>
Total U.S. Department of the Interior			<u>39,250</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development:</u>				
Passed Through the Montana Department of Commerce:				
Community Development Block Grants/State's Program and Non-Entitlement Grants in Hawaii	14.228	MT-CDBG-19HSP-02	88,771	88,771
COVID-19 - Community Development Block Grants/State's Program and Non-Entitlement Grants in Hawaii	14.228	MT-CDBG-CV-22-06	<u>11,097</u>	<u>11,097</u>
Total U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development			<u>99,868</u>	<u>99,868</u>
<u>U.S. Department of Justice:</u>				
Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program	16.607	FY23 BVP Funds	3,086	-
Passed Through the Montana Board of Crime Control:				
Crime Victim Assistance (VOCA)	16.575	23-V01-1375	95,424	-
Violence Against Women Formula Grants (VAWA)	16.588	23-W02-1485	2,695	-
Violence Against Women Formula Grants (VAWA)	16.588	23-W02-1799	<u>55,205</u>	<u>-</u>
Subtotal 16.588			<u>57,900</u>	<u>-</u>
Passed Through Lewis & Clark County:				
Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program	16.738	15PBJA-22-GG-02631-JAGX	49,990	19,724
Passed Through Gallatin County:				
Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program	16.738	24-G01-1663	<u>38,452</u>	<u>-</u>
Subtotal 16.738			<u>88,442</u>	<u>19,724</u>
Total U.S. Department of Justice			<u>244,852</u>	<u>19,724</u>
<u>U.S. Department of Transportation:</u>				
Passed Through Montana Department of Fish and Wildlife and Parks:				
Recreational Trails Program	20.219	RTP2312	<u>38,885</u>	<u>-</u>
Passed Through Montana Department of Transportation:				
Formula Grants for Rural Areas and Tribal Transit Program	20.509	5311-111297	<u>1,059,479</u>	<u>-</u>
Highway Safety Cluster:				
National Priority Safety Programs	20.616	112343	5,653	-
National Priority Safety Programs	20.616	112833	<u>38,858</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Highway Safety Cluster			<u>44,511</u>	<u>-</u>
Total U.S. Department of Transportation			<u>1,142,875</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>U.S. Executive Office of the President:</u>				
Passed Through Lewis & Clark County:				
High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program	95.001	G20RM0036A	<u>3,054</u>	<u>-</u>
Total U.S. Executive Office of the President			<u>3,054</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>U.S. Department of Homeland Security:</u>				
Passed Through Montana Department of Military Affairs, Disaster and Emergency Services:				
Homeland Security Grant Program	97.067	EMW-2022-SS-00078	18,273	-
Homeland Security Grant Program	97.067	EMW-2023-SS-00059	147,349	-
Homeland Security Grant Program	97.067	EMW-2019-SS-00010	2,687	-
Homeland Security Grant Program	97.067	EMW-2021-SS-00042	<u>18,144</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Department of Homeland Security			<u>186,453</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>U.S. Department of Treasury:</u>				
Passed Through the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation:				
COVID-19 - Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds	21.027	AC-22-0026	67,049	-
COVID-19 - Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds	21.027	AM-22-0030	<u>284,916</u>	<u>-</u>
Total U.S. Department of Treasury			<u>351,965</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Expenditures of Federal Awards			<u>\$ 2,104,405</u>	<u>\$ 119,592</u>

See accompanying notes to schedule of expenditures of federal awards.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NOTES TO SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURES OF FEDERAL AWARDS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

1. Basis of Presentation

The accompanying schedule of expenditures of federal awards (Schedule) includes the federal award activity of the City of Helena (City) under programs of the federal government for the year ended June 30, 2024. The information in this Schedule is presented in accordance with the requirements of Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance). Because the Schedule presents only a selected portion of the operations of the City, it is not intended to and does not present the financial position, changes in net position, or cash flows of the City.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Expenditures reported on the Schedule are reported on the accrual basis of accounting. Such expenditures are recognized following the cost principles contained in the Uniform Guidance, wherein certain types of expenditures are not allowable or are limited as to reimbursement. The City has elected to not use the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate as allowed under the Uniform Guidance.

STATISTICAL SECTION

STATISTICAL SECTION

This part of the City of Helena’s (City) annual comprehensive financial report presents detailed information as a context for understanding what the information in the financial statements, note disclosures, and required supplementary information says about the government’s overall financial health.

Contents	Page
<u>Financial Trends</u>	
These schedules contain trend information to improve the reader’s understanding of how the City’s financial performance and well-being have changed over time.	VI – 3
<u>Revenue Capacity</u>	
These schedules contain information to help the reader assess the City’s most significant local revenue source: property taxes.	VI – 7
<u>Debt Capacity</u>	
These schedules present information to help the reader assess the affordability of the City’s current levels of outstanding debt and the City’s ability to issue additional debt in the future.	VI – 11
<u>Demographic and Economic Information</u>	
These schedules offer demographic and economic indicators to improve the reader’s understanding of the environment in which the City’s financial activities take place.	VI – 16
<u>Operating Information</u>	
These schedules contain service and infrastructure data to improve the reader’s understanding of how the information in the City’s financial report relates to the services the government provides and the activities it performs.	VI – 18
<u>Miscellaneous Statistics</u>	
These schedules are intended to present other information the City feels is necessary for its users.	VI – 21

The Water System - presents information about the City’s water system as required in bond covenants.

The Wastewater System - presents information about the City's wastewater system as required in bond covenants.

Special Improvement Districts (SID) Revolving Fund/Statement of Changes in Fund Balance -presents information about the City's SID Revolving Fund as is required in bond covenants.

Special Improvement Districts Revolving Fund/Cash Balance and Outstanding Bonds Secured Thereby - presents information about bonds secured by the City's SID Revolving Fund and the amount of cash securing them.

Railroad Tax Increment Financing District/Property Tax Levies and Collections - presents information regarding the amount of property taxes levied and collected to support the district.

Downtown Tax Increment Financing District/Property Tax Levies and Collections - presents information regarding the amount of property taxes levied and collected to support the district.

Capital Hill Tax Increment Financing District/Property Tax Levies and Collections - presents information regarding the amount of property taxes levied and collected to support the district.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

NET POSITION BY COMPONENT - LAST TEN YEARS

(Accrual basis of accounting)

(Unaudited)

	Fiscal Year									
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Governmental activities:										
Net investment in capital assets	\$ 145,991,970	\$ 143,238,126	\$ 138,334,845	\$ 137,041,118	\$ 139,254,305	\$ 130,768,106	\$ 129,370,594	\$ 127,387,996	\$ 126,448,587	\$ 112,997,297
Restricted	9,541,915	8,234,765	38,392,080	25,625,200	17,323,027	11,140,729	10,179,868	11,521,903	12,000,238	9,969,118
Unrestricted	<u>24,213,290</u>	<u>19,593,070</u>	<u>(9,645,214)</u>	<u>(4,235,354)</u>	<u>(11,977,161)</u>	<u>(4,849,462)</u>	<u>(4,888,987)</u>	<u>(5,071,175)</u>	<u>(5,301,510)</u>	<u>(3,648,813)</u>
Total governmental activities net position	<u>\$ 179,747,175</u>	<u>\$ 171,065,961</u>	<u>\$ 167,081,711</u>	<u>\$ 158,430,964</u>	<u>\$ 144,600,171</u>	<u>\$ 137,059,373</u>	<u>\$ 134,661,475</u>	<u>\$ 133,838,724</u>	<u>\$ 133,147,315</u>	<u>\$ 119,317,602</u>
Business-type activities:										
Net investment in capital assets	\$ 153,620,404	\$ 149,351,583	\$ 141,526,645	\$ 143,177,781	\$ 137,151,058	\$ 138,938,912	\$ 129,901,321	\$ 125,406,279	\$ 125,294,720	\$ 117,255,708
Restricted	2,355,189	1,266,489	28,792,457	13,280,856	3,274,243	1,719,012	1,718,447	1,828,652	2,773,367	2,782,860
Unrestricted	<u>34,930,900</u>	<u>33,446,518</u>	<u>3,779,798</u>	<u>9,206,061</u>	<u>19,544,795</u>	<u>14,951,125</u>	<u>17,933,829</u>	<u>19,577,629</u>	<u>15,392,015</u>	<u>13,978,228</u>
Total business-type activities net position	<u>\$ 190,906,493</u>	<u>\$ 184,064,590</u>	<u>\$ 174,098,900</u>	<u>\$ 165,664,698</u>	<u>\$ 159,970,096</u>	<u>\$ 155,609,049</u>	<u>\$ 149,553,597</u>	<u>\$ 146,812,560</u>	<u>\$ 143,460,102</u>	<u>\$ 134,016,796</u>
Primary government:										
Net investment in capital assets	\$ 299,612,374	\$ 292,589,709	\$ 279,861,490	\$ 280,218,899	\$ 276,405,363	\$ 269,707,018	\$ 259,271,915	\$ 252,794,275	\$ 251,743,307	\$ 230,253,005
Restricted	11,897,104	9,501,254	67,184,537	38,906,055	20,597,270	12,859,741	11,898,315	13,350,555	14,773,605	12,751,978
Unrestricted	<u>59,144,190</u>	<u>53,039,588</u>	<u>(5,865,416)</u>	<u>4,970,707</u>	<u>7,567,634</u>	<u>10,101,663</u>	<u>13,044,842</u>	<u>14,506,454</u>	<u>10,090,505</u>	<u>10,329,415</u>
Total primary government net position	<u>\$ 370,653,668</u>	<u>\$ 355,130,551</u>	<u>\$ 341,180,611</u>	<u>\$ 324,095,661</u>	<u>\$ 304,570,267</u>	<u>\$ 292,668,422</u>	<u>\$ 284,215,072</u>	<u>\$ 280,651,284</u>	<u>\$ 276,607,417</u>	<u>\$ 253,334,398</u>

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

CHANGES IN NET POSITION - LAST TEN YEARS

(Accrual Basis of Accounting)

(Unaudited)

	Fiscal Year									
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Expenses:										
Governmental activities:										
General government	\$ 3,706,174	\$ 2,328,408	\$ 5,283,196	\$ 2,079,433	\$ 3,151,905	\$ 2,473,932	\$ 3,036,845	\$ 2,784,547	\$ 2,312,861	\$ 2,462,445
Public safety	22,357,259	20,071,239	17,953,590	19,442,038	16,980,222	15,625,931	14,930,310	13,858,480	13,509,042	13,080,712
Public works	8,784,647	8,855,074	9,300,006	7,791,635	7,822,691	7,466,323	6,517,871	6,227,931	5,589,151	6,128,853
Public health	176,771	144,666	126,375	100,425	91,084	108,097	188,800	230,818	235,321	229,590
Culture and recreation	5,888,861	6,705,086	5,868,110	5,614,783	4,659,172	4,978,638	4,641,148	4,760,319	4,360,431	4,370,730
Community development	1,349,909	827,314	1,201,983	1,239,898	994,638	1,653,385	799,505	560,099	927,252	896,997
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	13,919	-	11,849	-	-
Interest on long-term debt	180,689	156,112	121,253	172,394	131,100	138,732	162,792	187,449	261,594	71,187
Total governmental activities expenses	42,444,310	39,087,899	39,854,513	36,440,606	33,830,812	32,458,957	30,277,271	28,621,492	27,195,652	27,240,514
Business-type activities:										
Water	7,761,776	7,209,705	6,670,785	7,237,377	6,948,747	6,262,263	6,353,763	6,527,186	5,948,722	5,682,401
Waste water	4,878,776	4,653,288	4,238,054	4,491,872	4,216,097	4,281,630	3,905,694	3,832,496	3,840,425	3,763,125
Solid waste	3,806,991	3,709,506	3,471,806	3,848,570	3,363,018	3,217,794	3,914,718	2,527,796	2,804,327	2,774,054
Transfer station	3,309,925	3,385,950	3,071,589	3,155,076	3,086,794	2,911,765	2,898,935	2,999,596	2,804,491	2,884,298
Parking	1,971,092	1,758,174	1,731,661	1,839,104	1,967,777	1,787,009	1,854,018	1,615,543	1,616,030	1,774,216
Golf course	2,681,967	2,094,635	2,125,520	2,123,950	1,677,501	2,170,807	1,437,446	1,378,934	1,346,433	1,302,066
Bus	1,961,267	1,858,205	1,730,348	1,698,131	1,586,514	1,733,548	1,742,719	1,707,372	1,340,154	1,340,586
Other activities	3,185,695	2,817,476	2,585,248	2,675,069	2,458,884	2,294,153	2,082,131	1,974,257	1,943,910	1,946,026
Total business-type activities expenses	29,557,489	27,486,939	25,625,011	27,069,149	25,305,332	24,658,969	24,189,424	22,563,180	21,644,492	21,466,772
Total primary government expenses	\$ 72,001,799	\$ 66,574,838	\$ 65,479,524	\$ 63,509,755	\$ 59,136,144	\$ 57,117,926	\$ 54,466,695	\$ 51,184,672	\$ 48,840,144	\$ 48,707,286
Program Revenues:										
Governmental activities:										
Charges for services:										
General government	\$ 306,353	\$ 232,796	\$ 182,246	\$ 569,782	\$ 653,762	\$ 850,363	\$ 776,923	\$ 930,972	\$ 933,136	\$ 1,011,040
Public safety	883,801	1,132,991	642,810	5,830,676	4,135,574	2,995,632	2,827,107	2,519,299	2,438,728	2,424,719
Public works	10,379,035	10,895,229	11,071,671	11,009,061	10,511,471	7,819,308	6,488,305	5,820,802	5,374,585	5,147,857
Public health	-	53,573	27,827	29,497	34,805	34,038	38,685	37,906	42,505	38,805
Culture and recreation	2,312,704	3,109,200	2,478,951	1,878,259	3,066,355	2,672,516	2,042,207	2,058,972	2,544,201	2,414,957
Community development	362,407	366,619	393,137	130,478	582,748	1,078,322	255,309	33,589	414,227	448,664
Operating grants and contributions	15,268,036	12,802,601	14,417,774	12,828,359	6,951,335	3,344,495	2,636,652	2,938,264	2,600,111	3,593,753
Capital grants and contributions	168,229	633,196	49,069	32,000	-	342,062	146,862	1,194,086	11,960,203	9,033,942
Total governmental activities program revenues	29,680,565	29,226,205	29,263,485	32,308,112	25,936,050	19,136,736	15,212,050	15,533,890	26,307,696	24,113,737
Business-type activities:										
Water	9,773,016	9,777,838	9,928,870	9,937,707	8,452,071	8,329,202	8,001,154	6,869,273	6,857,902	6,848,752
Waste water	6,430,337	6,462,739	6,579,051	6,819,087	6,147,366	5,643,905	4,684,320	4,422,625	4,231,987	4,231,987
Solid waste	4,017,675	3,719,428	3,786,056	3,526,899	3,432,181	3,428,248	3,296,827	3,296,934	3,471,427	3,407,846
Transfer station	2,531,293	2,677,913	2,824,940	2,807,142	2,676,681	2,428,905	2,480,033	2,568,365	2,636,743	2,999,698
Parking	2,018,391	1,963,515	1,922,175	1,858,461	1,793,831	1,764,326	1,615,268	1,738,246	1,763,047	1,794,908
Golf course	2,401,398	1,955,121	1,753,055	1,879,666	1,530,191	1,746,898	1,318,807	1,308,364	1,379,110	1,400,988
Bus	70,827	32,385	21,528	20,461	65,017	142,751	181,262	224,606	146,952	196,189
Other activities	3,521,425	4,563,506	3,264,769	3,133,969	2,520,874	2,243,111	2,340,183	2,251,768	2,149,382	1,995,117
Operating grants and contributions	2,026,894	1,872,365	1,903,796	1,947,065	1,739,535	1,702,931	1,081,538	1,311,418	1,267,118	974,042
Capital grants and contributions	351,964	-	735,000	-	10,376	726,328	1,074,948	1,677,932	6,519,156	4,341,452
Total business-type activities revenues	33,143,220	33,024,810	32,719,240	31,930,457	28,368,123	28,156,605	26,074,340	25,893,576	30,613,462	28,190,979
Total primary government revenues	\$ 62,823,785	\$ 62,251,015	\$ 61,982,725	\$ 64,238,569	\$ 54,304,173	\$ 47,293,341	\$ 41,286,390	\$ 41,427,466	\$ 56,921,158	\$ 52,304,716
Net (Expenses)/Revenues:										
Governmental activities	\$ (12,763,745)	\$ (9,861,694)	\$ (10,591,028)	\$ (4,132,494)	\$ (7,894,762)	\$ (13,322,221)	\$ (15,065,221)	\$ (13,087,602)	\$ (887,956)	\$ (3,126,777)
Business-type activities	3,585,731	5,537,871	7,094,229	4,861,308	3,062,791	3,497,636	1,884,916	3,330,396	8,968,970	6,724,207
Total primary government net (expenses) revenues	\$ (9,178,014)	\$ (4,323,823)	\$ (3,496,799)	\$ 728,814	\$ (4,831,971)	\$ (9,824,585)	\$ (13,180,305)	\$ (9,757,206)	\$ 8,081,014	\$ 3,597,430
General Revenues and other Changes in Net Position:										
Governmental activities:										
Property taxes	\$ 17,325,226	\$ 13,884,885	\$ 13,651,843	\$ 13,115,613	\$ 10,514,624	\$ 11,620,191	\$ 10,797,141	\$ 10,329,375	\$ 9,939,895	\$ 9,627,235
Motor vehicle taxes	1,735,424	965,755	1,210,782	1,153,193	1,054,649	1,028,710	891,652	853,548	826,785	774,849
Unrestricted grants and contributions	-	-	4,819,847	4,617,261	4,525,417	4,409,295	4,334,645	4,310,367	4,259,548	4,132,618
Investment earnings	2,524,169	1,600,932	114,415	40,479	314,922	463,553	291,269	157,354	91,441	31,507
Gain on the sale of capital assets	31,476	27,465	80,441	42,562	132,464	2,850	20,157	58,539	-	28,257
Miscellaneous	231,511	134,267	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	(732,302)	(2,825,848)	(787,505)	(737,845)	(848,659)	(1,804,481)	(446,892)	(407,904)	(375,000)	(1,775,194)
Insurance settlements	329,455	58,488	151,952	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Special item	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(25,000)	-
Total governmental activities	21,444,959	13,845,944	19,241,775	18,231,263	15,693,417	15,720,118	15,887,972	15,301,279	14,717,669	12,819,272
Business-type activities:										
Investment earnings	2,481,160	1,542,746	94,801	56,084	449,598	617,860	396,725	188,875	81,993	18,808
Gain on sale of capital assets	42,710	19,455	72,028	34,983	-	135,475	12,504	5,925	17,343	30,695
Miscellaneous	-	39,770	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	732,302	2,825,848	787,505	737,845	848,659	1,804,481	446,892	407,904	375,000	1,775,194
Special item	-	-	385,639	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,391,153
Total business-type activities	3,256,172	4,427,819	1,339,973	828,912	1,298,257	2,557,816	856,121	602,704	474,336	9,215,850
Total primary government	\$ 24,701,131	\$ 18,273,763	\$ 20,581,748	\$ 19,060,175	\$ 16,991,674	\$ 18,277,934	\$ 16,744,093	\$ 15,903,983	\$ 15,192,005	\$ 22,035,122
Change in Net Position:										
Governmental activities	\$ 8,681,214	\$ 3,984,250	\$ 8,650,747	\$ 14,098,769	\$ 7,798,655	\$ 2,397,897	\$ 822,751	\$ 2,213,677	\$ 13,829,713	\$ 9,692,495
Business-type activities	6,841,903	9,965,690	8,434,202	5,690,220	4,361,048	6,055,452	2,741,037	3,933,100	9,443,306	15,940,057
Total primary government change in net position	\$ 15,523,117	\$ 13,949,940	\$ 17,084,949	\$ 19,788,989	\$ 12,159,703	\$ 8,453,349	\$ 3,563,788	\$ 6,146,777	\$ 23,273,019	\$ 25,632,552

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

FUND BALANCES, GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS - LAST TEN YEARS

(Modified Accrual Basis of Accounting)

(Unaudited)

	Fiscal Year									
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
General Fund:										
Nonspendable	\$ 56,753	\$ 29,143	\$ 1,317,033	\$ 124,494	\$ 6,287	\$ 9,780	\$ 7,697	\$ 16,902	\$ 13,663	\$ 14,774
Restricted	666,158	246,648	92,447	86,789	132,814	144,235	67,937	73,800	62,473	113,730
Committed	4,506,938	2,939,597	1,426,620	17,000	-	-	-	-	42,273	117,273
Assigned	13,208	36,343	378,850	444,000	47,934	163,852	824,027	32,596	5,000	6,000
Unassigned	6,694,981	9,949,717	13,058,159	11,778,130	10,300,640	6,426,782	4,609,737	5,376,401	5,436,164	6,770,453
Total General Fund	<u>\$ 11,938,038</u>	<u>\$ 13,201,448</u>	<u>\$ 16,273,109</u>	<u>\$ 12,450,413</u>	<u>\$ 10,487,675</u>	<u>\$ 6,744,649</u>	<u>\$ 5,509,398</u>	<u>\$ 5,499,699</u>	<u>\$ 5,559,573</u>	<u>\$ 7,022,230</u>
All Other Governmental Funds:										
Nonspendable	\$ 1,327,482	\$ 306,593	\$ 360,393	\$ 5,585,036	\$ 965,972	\$ 286,611	\$ 280,299	\$ 387,233	\$ 394,047	\$ 248,965
Restricted	8,875,757	7,988,117	4,640,241	10,800,937	7,661,558	12,487,883	11,142,220	12,711,213	11,937,765	9,855,388
Committed	3,934,030	2,841,966	6,732,761	4,215,205	2,931,907	1,807,477	1,781,734	1,488,727	1,553,024	1,576,584
Assigned	30,034,091	25,027,027	20,068,474	4,796,737	5,598,507	2,420,721	4,138,428	3,119,020	2,544,285	2,791,027
Unassigned	-	-	-	(528,674)	(44,075)	(68,957)	(50,485)	(51,433)	(281,618)	(150,931)
Total all Other Governmental Funds	<u>\$ 44,171,360</u>	<u>\$ 36,163,703</u>	<u>\$ 31,801,869</u>	<u>\$ 24,869,241</u>	<u>\$ 17,113,869</u>	<u>\$ 16,933,735</u>	<u>\$ 17,292,196</u>	<u>\$ 17,654,760</u>	<u>\$ 16,147,503</u>	<u>\$ 14,321,033</u>

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES, GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS - LAST TEN YEARS

(Modified Accrual Basis of Accounting)

(Unaudited)

	Fiscal Year									
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Revenues:										
Property taxes	\$ 16,971,154	\$ 14,639,284	\$ 13,651,063	\$ 13,091,139	\$ 12,608,166	\$ 11,518,252	\$ 10,799,382	\$ 10,386,161	\$ 9,940,730	\$ 10,138,026
Motor vehicle taxes	1,735,424	965,755	1,210,782	1,153,193	1,054,649	1,028,710	891,652	853,548	826,785	774,849
Special assessments	11,280,396	11,599,155	11,476,251	11,211,778	11,141,122	8,345,193	7,021,904	6,409,137	5,911,386	5,718,233
Licenses and permits	622,058	629,452	643,584	681,073	665,401	688,404	545,630	633,332	638,250	638,327
Intergovernmental	11,821,151	9,649,990	16,961,632	13,972,271	11,550,618	9,147,355	7,357,020	7,658,087	7,961,957	8,533,328
Charges for services	1,707,386	2,674,961	2,164,828	2,474,136	1,952,050	2,091,774	1,779,690	1,632,309	2,063,152	1,922,226
Fines	459,918	449,309	398,979	444,690	571,191	540,899	523,678	535,033	585,401	650,074
Investment earnings	2,524,168	1,600,932	128,401	60,546	314,922	479,082	291,269	157,354	91,441	31,507
Miscellaneous	521,247	729,386	133,118	516,602	353,426	305,423	372,789	415,052	727,425	551,325
Total revenues	47,642,902	42,938,224	46,768,638	43,605,428	40,211,545	34,145,092	29,583,014	28,680,013	28,746,527	28,957,895
Expenditures:										
General government	2,844,273	1,988,429	4,457,975	2,270,942	2,880,223	2,324,298	2,785,665	2,467,576	2,150,391	2,343,318
Public safety	17,567,910	15,987,611	15,450,138	14,738,531	14,108,886	13,381,503	12,631,086	11,786,301	11,722,710	11,487,514
Public works	6,713,329	6,308,231	7,240,016	6,349,554	5,979,935	5,551,877	5,307,073	5,192,118	4,583,452	5,185,550
Public health	171,793	152,937	70,566	83,318	83,813	146,113	173,517	232,168	236,745	227,565
Culture and recreation	4,863,744	5,757,850	5,528,873	4,030,122	3,954,455	4,158,847	3,691,666	3,800,002	3,655,584	3,788,237
Community development	1,265,076	772,491	1,179,802	1,202,462	973,675	1,653,251	773,214	556,388	934,609	875,627
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	13,919	-	11,849	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt service:										
Principal	442,713	493,967	490,894	425,000	415,000	699,107	832,892	771,583	735,321	719,102
Interest	180,689	156,112	121,227	172,394	131,100	149,273	151,233	248,064	274,926	301,260
Debt issuance costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	96,440	-	-
Capital outlay	7,541,633	8,583,067	3,700,212	5,187,380	7,256,776	3,805,289	3,545,993	2,072,624	3,678,117	2,132,609
Total expenditures	41,591,160	40,200,695	38,239,703	34,459,703	35,783,863	31,883,477	29,892,339	27,235,113	27,971,855	27,060,782
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	6,051,742	2,737,529	8,528,935	9,145,725	4,427,682	2,261,615	(309,325)	1,444,900	774,672	1,897,113
Other Financing Sources (Uses):										
Debt issued	-	-	1,614,950	810,000	-	-	-	5,180,000	-	-
Debt issuance premium	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	308,748	-	-
Contributions	-	-	-	-	11,674	-	-	-	-	-
Payments to bond escrow agency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(5,390,156)	-	-
Sale of capital assets	31,476	27,465	97,403	42,562	132,464	2,850	20,157	58,539	(11,859)	112,230
Insurance settlements	329,455	58,488	137,002	6,032	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subscription-based information technology arrangement	1,017,199	1,012,594	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers in	3,513,252	4,413,424	5,430,539	5,102,238	1,498,242	1,574,633	1,868,584	2,473,448	3,889,055	1,558,900
Transfers out	(4,198,877)	(6,959,327)	(5,053,507)	(5,388,445)	(2,146,903)	(2,962,308)	(1,932,281)	(2,627,096)	(4,264,055)	(3,062,058)
Total other financing sources (uses)	692,505	(1,447,356)	2,226,387	572,387	(504,523)	(1,384,825)	(43,540)	3,483	(386,859)	(1,390,928)
Special Item	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(25,000)	-
Net change in fund balance	\$ 6,744,247	\$ 1,290,173	\$ 10,755,322	\$ 9,718,112	\$ 3,923,159	\$ 876,790	\$ (352,865)	\$ 1,448,383	\$ 362,813	\$ 506,185
Debt service as a percentage of noncapital expenditures	1.81%	1.98%	1.77%	2.04%	1.91%	3.02%	3.74%	4.05%	4.16%	4.09%

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

MARKET VALUE OF TAXABLE PROPERTY

LAST TEN YEARS 2015-2024
(Unaudited)

Fiscal Year	Real Taxable Value (1)	Personal Taxable Value (1)	Less Tax Increment	Net Taxable Valuation	Total Direct Tax Rate	Estimated Market Value	Taxable Value as a Percentage of Market Value
2015	\$ 57,074	\$ 2,035	\$ -	\$ 59,109	168.17	\$ 2,384,469	2.48%
2016	58,044	2,320	-	60,364	164.76	3,623,976	1.67%
2017	59,539	2,578	-	62,117	167.32	3,710,432	1.67%
2018	63,280	2,547	160	65,667	163.86	4,167,551	1.58%
2019	64,975	3,061	-	68,036	169.73	4,362,418	1.56%
2020	63,785	3,390	-	67,175	169.08	4,389,878	1.53%
2021	70,135	3,335	-	73,470	174.80	4,771,310	1.54%
2022	74,799	2,820	-	77,619	168.87	5,112,116	1.52%
2023	76,733	3,809	-	80,542	173.87	5,223,980	1.61%
2024	97,962	3,629	-	101,591	148.77	6,912,901	1.47%

Sources: Lewis & Clark County

NOTES: The State of Montana reappraises the Estimated Market Value each year with the exception of property tax classes 3, 4, and 10 which are reappraised on a cyclical basis. There are currently eleven classes of property assigned by the Montana Department of Revenue.

The Estimated Market Value of residential and commercial property is "partially exempted" from taxation by the percentages shown in the table below. This "partially exempted" market value is referred to as the Taxable Market Value. The Taxable Market Value is multiplied by the Taxable Valuation Rate to arrive at the Taxable Value. The Taxable Valuation Rate is set for each class of property assigned by the Montana Department of Revenue. The Taxable Valuation Rates for residential and commercial property is shown in the table below. Centrally assessed property percentages vary from 3 to 12% depending on the type of utility.

Tax Year	Class 3 and 4 Taxable Valuation Rate	Class 4 Exemption Percentages	
		Residential	Commerical
2008 and after	3.01%	34.00%	15.00%

(1) Real property taxable valuations include personal property that is "attached" to the property. Personal property valuations includes only "non-attached" personal property such as movable equipment. It is not possible to separate the market value of attached personal property from the real property using any information available to the city. These amounts reflect taxable value of properties billed, and include adjustments not reflected in the certified taxable value.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

DIRECT AND OVERLAPPING PROPERTY TAX RATES - LAST TEN YEARS

(Per \$1,000 of Taxable Value)

2015-2024

(Unaudited)

	City of Helena						Overlapping Rates (1)				
	General Purpose	Medical Insurance	Fire Safety (2)	GO Bonds Debt Service	Tax Increment Financing	Other Levies (4)	Total Direct	Helena Elementary	East Helena K-12 (3)	Helena High	Lewis and Clark County
2015	100.06	25.16	-	17.79	-	25.16	168.17	166.31	157.69	87.06	226.20
2016	99.13	25.84	-	14.35	-	25.44	164.76	155.76	158.59	85.71	218.04
2017	102.52	27.16	-	13.15	-	24.49	167.32	159.96	166.56	80.22	225.30
2018	99.47	27.75	-	11.75	0.30	24.59	163.86	201.19	195.45	82.95	218.22
2019	101.75	28.08	7.25	7.94	0.07	24.64	169.73	221.34	232.45	91.99	235.94
2020	121.60	30.17	9.26	7.14	0.91	-	169.08	215.75	375.60	88.75	243.49
2021	123.73	30.89	12.56	7.07	0.55	-	174.80	218.96	242.83	85.92	236.25
2022	119.84	28.66	11.98	7.10	1.29	-	168.87	206.13	226.45	81.04	232.40
2023	125.21	27.35	12.59	7.00	1.72	-	173.87	205.45	228.42	80.48	241.84
2024	101.88	27.51	9.98	5.58	3.82	-	148.77	184.54	185.57	68.26	202.42

Source: City of Helena and Lewis & Clark County

Note: The City of Helena is allowed to increase property tax revenue each year on existing property at one-half the CPI-U average rate of inflation for the past three years, plus new growth.

1. Overlapping rates are those of local and county governments that apply to property owners within the City of Helena. Not all overlapping rates apply to all Helena property owners. Although the county and high school property tax rates apply to all city property owners, elementary do not. East Helena Elementary School District rates apply to approximately 2% of city property owners whose property is located within that district's geographic boundaries. All other city property is located within the Helena Elementary school district boundaries and those rates apply.

2. The voters approved a fire safety levy in June 2018 for six additional firefighters and capital equipment needs.

3. The voters of East Helena approved becoming a K-12 district and began transitioning their high school students from the Helena High School District in fiscal year 2020.

4. In fiscal year 2020, the Other Levies, which included Comprehensive Insurance, PERS, Police and Firefighter retirement, were rolled up to the General Purpose Mill Levy total.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

PRINCIPAL PROPERTY TAXPAYERS

CURRENT YEAR AND NINE YEARS AGO

(Unaudited)

Taxpayer	June 30, 2024			June 30, 2015		
	Taxable Assessed Valuation	Rank	Percentage of Total Assessed Valuation	Taxable Assessed Valuation (1)	Rank	Percentage of Total Assessed Valuation
Northwestern Corporation	\$ 8,090,022	1	7.91%	\$ 5,449,974	1	8.86%
The Boeing Company	2,389,314	2	2.34%	1,757,014	3	2.86%
Verizon Wireless	1,729,876	3	1.69%	3,933,335	2	6.39%
Charter Communications, Inc.	621,674	4	0.61%	-	-	-
Lumen Technologies, LLC (formerly Centurylink)	614,106	5	0.60%	-	-	-
Health Care Service Corporation	561,604	6	0.55%	-	-	-
TRC Remington, LLC	508,573	7	0.50%	-	-	-
Pioneer Aerostructures LLC	428,812	8	0.42%	-	-	-
Skyway Regional Shopping Center, LLC	428,077	9	0.42%	-	-	-
Touchmark Living Centers, LLC (formerly Waterford)	406,607	10	0.40%	364,162	8	0.59%
Helena Federal Office Complex LLC	-	-	-	479,912	5	0.78%
Qwest Corporation	-	-	-	1,522,585	4	2.47%
Walmart Stores, Inc.	-	-	-	401,390	6	0.65%
Bresnan Communications	-	-	-	476,325	6	0.77%
Costco	-	-	-	298,407	9	0.48%
Lowe's HIW Inc	-	-	-	226,442	10	0.37%
	<u>\$ 15,778,665</u>		<u>15.44%</u>	<u>\$ 14,909,546</u>		<u>24.22%</u>
Year-End Total Taxable Assessed Valuation (1)	<u>\$ 102,223,173</u>			<u>\$ 61,531,129</u>		

SOURCE:

Lewis & Clark County

(1) Certified taxable value per Montana Department of Revenue.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

PROPERTY TAX LEVIES AND COLLECTIONS

LAST TEN YEARS 2015-2024
(Unaudited)

Fiscal Year	Taxes Levied for the Fiscal Year	Collected Within the Fiscal Year of the Levy		Collections in Subsequent Years	Total Collections to Date	
		Amount	Percentage of Original Levy		Amount	Percentage of Adjusted Levy
2015	\$ 9,968,710	\$ 9,400,597	94.30%	\$ 568,113	\$ 9,968,710	100.00%
2016	9,944,618	9,658,179	97.12%	285,967	9,944,146	100.00%
2017	10,356,135	9,853,992	95.15%	502,070	10,356,062	100.00%
2018	10,882,574	10,282,203	94.48%	600,240	10,882,443	100.00%
2019	9,378,242	8,685,574	92.61%	692,330	9,377,904	100.00%
2020	11,326,037	10,723,897	94.68%	601,708	11,325,605	100.00%
2021	12,791,198	11,794,044	92.20%	996,174	12,790,218	99.99%
2022	12,988,465	12,303,363	94.73%	683,746	12,987,109	99.99%
2023	13,829,575	13,412,748	96.99%	402,639	13,815,387	99.90%
2024	14,654,852	14,390,985	98.20%	-	14,390,985	98.20%

NOTES:

This schedule does not include the Railroad, Downtown, or Capital Hill Tax Increment Districts.

SOURCES:

Lewis & Clark County

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

RATIO OF OUTSTANDING DEBT BY TYPE - LAST TEN YEARS

2015-2024

(Unaudited)

Fiscal Year	Governmental Activities				Business-Type Activities						Total Primary Government	(1)	(1)
	General Obligation Bonds	Loans	Special Assessment Bonds	Lease / SBITA Liabilities	General Obligation Bonds	Certificates of Participation	Revenue Bonds	Loans	Lease / SBITA Liabilities	Percentage of Personal Income		Debt Per Capita	
2015	\$ 7,085,000	\$ 148,903	\$ 160,000	\$ -	\$ 1,695,000	(2) \$ 8,170,000	\$ 9,387,000	\$ 1,139,560	\$ -	\$ 27,785,463	2.10%	928	
2016	6,435,000	113,582	110,000	-	835,000	7,975,000	8,290,000	965,257	-	24,723,839	1.81%	808	
2017	5,765,000	76,999	60,000	-	760,000	8,045,000	7,817,000	744,307	-	23,268,306	1.63%	747	
2018	5,010,000	39,107	20,000	-	2,780,000	(3) 7,760,000	6,648,000	521,171	-	22,778,278	1.53%	725	
2019	4,370,000	-	-	-	2,615,000	7,465,000	5,455,000	416,442	-	20,321,442	1.31%	629	
2020	3,955,000	-	-	-	2,445,000	7,165,000	8,769,919	1,633,082	-	23,968,001	1.44%	724	
2021	3,530,000	810,000	(4) -	-	2,275,000	6,860,000	7,191,919	1,806,075	-	22,472,994	1.19%	679	
2022	3,085,000	770,514	-	7,263	2,095,000	6,550,000	8,372,343	1,644,755	35,300	22,560,175	1.20%	681	
2023	2,625,000	694,714	-	1,013,400	(5) 1,915,000	6,230,000	8,433,000	1,466,190	28,083	22,405,387	1.06%	631	
2024	2,145,000	618,914	-	1,667,913	1,725,000	5,905,000	8,417,581	1,808,960	20,754	22,309,122	0.99%	641	

Note: Details regarding the City's outstanding debt can be found in the notes to the financial statements.

(1) See page VI-16 for personal income and population data. These ratios are calculated using personal income and population for the prior calendar year.

(2) General obligation debt that financed parking activities was transferred to the parking proprietary fund July 1, 2014 as a result of merging the Parking component unit into the City.

(3) \$2.1 million in bonds were issued to finance a significant expansion to the pro shop and clubhouse at the municipal golf course.

(4) Intercap Loan to acquire a new fire truck.

(5) Recognition of two SBITA Agreements

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

RATIOS OF GENERAL BONDED DEBT OUTSTANDING - LAST TEN YEARS

2015-2024
(Unaudited)

Fiscal Year	General Obligation Bonds	General Fund Bonds 2015 (1)	Limited General Fund Refunding Bonds 2015 (1)	Limited General Fund Refunding Bonds 2017	Less Amounts Restricted to Repaying Principal	Total	Percentage of Estimated Actual Taxable Value (2)	Per Capita (3)
2015	\$ 7,085,000	\$ 850,000	\$ 845,000	\$ -	\$ (1,510,000)	\$ 7,270,000	12.04%	242.79
2016	6,435,000	-	835,000	-	(743,507)	6,526,493	10.51%	213.42
2017	5,765,000	-	760,000	-	(1,081,954)	5,443,046	8.29%	174.63
2018	5,010,000	-	680,000	2,100,000	(870,177)	6,919,823	10.54%	220.17
2019	4,370,000	-	600,000	2,015,000	(585,000)	6,400,000	9.41%	198.05
2020	3,955,000	-	520,000	1,925,000	(595,000)	5,805,000	8.64%	175.25
2021	3,530,000	-	440,000	1,835,000	(595,000)	5,210,000	7.09%	162.35
2022	3,085,000	-	355,000	1,740,000	(625,000)	4,555,000	5.87%	137.53
2023	2,625,000	-	270,000	1,645,000	(640,000)	3,900,000	4.62%	115.10
2024	2,145,000	-	180,000	1,545,000	(670,000)	3,200,000	3.15%	92.85

Source: Details regarding the City's outstanding debt can be found in the notes to the financial statements.

(1) The General Fund Bonds, Series 2005, and General Fund Refunding Bonds, Series 2015, are a general obligation of the City. However, they are not taken into account when calculating the City's debt limit and the City is not obligated to levy taxes for the payment of principal or interest. Effective July 1, 2014, the City acquired the Parking Component Unit, which is now maintained as an enterprise fund, and these bonds are being paid for and accounted for in that proprietary fund.

(2) See page VI-7 for property value data.

(3) See page VI-16 for population data.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

DIRECT AND OVERLAPPING GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES DEBT

AS OF JUNE 30, 2024
(Unaudited)

Governmental Unit	Debt Outstanding	(1) Estimated Percentage Applicable	Estimated Share of Direct and Overlapping Debt
Debt repaid with property taxes			
Helena School District No. 1 Elementary	\$ 50,165,000	70.87%	\$ 35,551,936
East Helena School District No. 9 K-12	32,070,000	13.06%	4,188,342
Lewis & Clark County Bonds	9,835,000	77.01%	7,573,934
Subtotal, Overlapping Debt			47,314,212
City direct debt	\$ 4,333,114	100.00%	4,333,114
Total direct and overlapping debt			\$ 51,647,326

Source: Assessed value data used to estimate applicable percentages was provided by the State of Montana, Department of Revenue. Debt outstanding data was provided by each governmental unit.

Note: Overlapping governments are those that coincide, at least in part, with the geographic boundaries of the City. This schedule estimates the portion of the outstanding debt of those overlapping governments that is borne by the residents and businesses of Helena. This process recognizes that, when considering the City's ability to issue and repay long-term debt, the entire debt burden borne by the residents and businesses should be taken into account. However, this does not imply that every taxpayer is a resident, and therefore responsible for repaying the debt, of each overlapping government.

(1) For debt repaid with property taxes, the percentage of overlapping debt applicable is estimated using taxable assessed property values. Applicable percentages were estimated by determining the portion of another governmental unit's taxable assessed value that is within the City's boundaries and dividing it by each unit's total taxable assessed value.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

LEGAL DEBT MARGIN INFORMATION - LAST TEN YEARS (1)

2015-2024
(Unaudited)

Fiscal Year	2024	2023 (4)	2022 (4)	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Debt limit	\$ 152,451	\$ 112,829	\$ 111,380	\$ 103,196	\$ 103,196	\$ 94,136	\$ 91,884	\$ 85,464	\$ 84,952	\$ 60,015
Total net debt applicable to limit	<u>3,870</u>	<u>3,870</u>	<u>5,180</u>	<u>5,805</u>	<u>5,880</u>	<u>6,396</u>	<u>7,184</u>	<u>5,899</u>	<u>6,513</u>	<u>6,969</u>
Legal debt margin	<u>\$ 148,581</u>	<u>\$ 108,959</u>	<u>\$ 106,200</u>	<u>\$ 97,391</u>	<u>\$ 97,316</u>	<u>\$ 87,740</u>	<u>\$ 84,700</u>	<u>\$ 79,565</u>	<u>\$ 78,439</u>	<u>\$ 53,046</u>
Total Net Debt Applicable to the Limit as a Percentage of Debt Limit	2.54%	3.43%	4.65%	5.63%	5.70%	6.79%	7.82%	6.90%	7.67%	11.61%
Assessed value (2)	<u>\$ 6,098,033</u>									
Debt limit (2.5% of assessed value) (3)	\$ 152,451									
Debt applicable to limit:										
General obligation bonds	<u>3,870</u>									
Legal debt margin	<u>\$ 148,581</u>									

Source: Assessed value provided by the State of Montana Department of Revenue, other information from City records.

(1) Details regarding the City's outstanding debt can be found in Note 7 to the financial statements.

(2) The City uses the "certified" Estimated Market Value provided by the State of Montana, Department of Revenue to calculate the legal debt margin in accordance with State law. This represents the 2023 Market Value used for assessing properties in 2024.

(3) Under State finance law, the City's outstanding general obligation debt should not exceed 2.5% of the total assessed value of taxable property (market value).

(4) Calculations updated using revised assessed values. Assessed values in Fiscal Year 2023 and Fiscal Year 2022 updated to use tax year 2022 and 2021, respectively, for the assessed values.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

PLEGGED-REVENUE COVERAGE LAST TEN YEARS

2015-2024
(Unaudited)

Water Revenues Bonds

Fiscal Year	Utility Service Charges	Less: Operating Expenses	Net Available Revenue	Maximum Debt Service in Any Fiscal Year		Coverage
				Principal	Interest	
2015	\$ 6,951	\$ 3,821	\$ 3,130	\$ 468	\$ 54	599.60%
2016	6,974	4,026	2,948	468	54	564.80%
2017	7,047	4,481	2,566	496	132	408.60%
2018	8,151	4,058	4,093	507	57	725.80%
2019	7,915	4,267	3,648	485	79	646.80%
2020	8,143	4,780	3,363	825	71	375.30%
2021	8,652	4,723	3,929	693	140	471.60%
2022	10,738	5,113	5,625	758	140	626.30%
2023	9,667	5,014	4,653	855	132	471.30%
2024	9,746	5,219	4,527	748	143	507.90%

Wastewater Revenue Bonds

Fiscal Year	Utility Service Charges	Less: Operating Expenses	Net Available Revenue	Maximum Debt Service in Any Fiscal Year		Coverage
				Principal	Interest	
2015	\$ 4,404	\$ 2,719	\$ 1,685	\$ 736	\$ 34	218.80%
2016	4,567	2,759	1,808	736	34	234.80%
2017	4,831	2,719	2,112	736	34	274.30%
2018	4,781	2,703	2,078	736	34	269.90%
2019	5,311	3,093	2,218	736	34	288.20%
2020	5,489	3,164	2,325	877	62	247.60%
2021	5,799	3,254	2,545	750	24	328.90%
2022	6,327	3,232	3,095	496	32	586.30%
2023	6,353	3,441	2,912	170	31	1451.90%
2024	6,428	3,497	2,931	218	79	988.60%

Parking Certificate of Participation

Fiscal Year	Utility Service Charges	Less: Operating Expenses	Net Available Revenue	Maximum Debt Service in Any Fiscal Year		Coverage
				Principal	Interest	
2015	\$ 1,795	\$ 745	\$ 1,050	\$ 290	\$ 401	152.00%
2016	1,763	928	835	370	410	107.10%
2017	1,744	960	784	470	147	127.10%
2018	1,538	1,297	241	470	201	36.00%
2019	1,683	1,110	573	470	195	86.10%
2020	1,754	1,224	530	470	189	80.30%
2021	1,797	1,181	616	470	183	94.30%
2022	1,811	1,103	708	470	177	109.30%
2023	1,934	1,245	689	470	171	107.60%
2024	1,641	1,500	141	470	165	22.10%

Source: City financial statements.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC STATISTICS - LAST TEN YEARS

2015-2024
(Unaudited)

Year	Population	Total Personal Income (thousands of dollars)	Per Capita Income (\$)	Median Age	School Enrollment	Unemployment Rate
2015	29,943	\$ 1,323,481	\$ 44,200	41.0	8,290	3.9%
2016	30,581	1,368,561	44,752	41.0	8,294	3.1%
2017	31,169	1,423,488	45,670	42.0	8,332	3.0%
2018	31,429	1,489,169	47,382	40.0	9,512	3.3%
2019	32,315	1,551,896 (1)	48,024	40.0	9,601 (1)	3.1%
2020	33,124	1,660,605 (1)	50,133	40.0	9,738 (1)	3.0%
2021	32,091 (2)	1,744,595 (3)	54,364	41.0 (1)	10,649 (1)	3.2%
2022	33,120	1,880,918	56,791	41.0 (1)	10,659 (1)	2.3%
2023	33,885	2,023,341	59,712	40.0 (1)	10,009 (1)	2.4%
2024	34,464	2,239,781	64,989	39.9 (1)	9,886 (1)	2.6%

SOURCES:

U.S. Census Bureau and Montana Census and Economic Information Center: Population
 State of Montana, Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis:
 Unemployment Rate, Personal Income, Per Capita Personal Income
 Lewis and Clark Superintendent of Schools: School Enrollment

- (1) Lewis and Clark County information is reported as City of Helena information is not available.
- (2) Updated Decennial census information - population decline from prior year.
- (3) State of Montana, Department of Labor & Industry

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

TOP TWENTY EMPLOYERS IN LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

AS OF JUNE 30, 2024

(Unaudited)

Employer (1):	Product or Service
Albertsons	Retail
American Chemet	Metal-based Chemical Manufacturer
Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Montana	Health Services
Boeing	Manufacturer
Carroll College	Higher Education
Costco	Wholesale
Home Depot	Retail
Intermountain Children's Home	Health Services
Lowes Home Center	Retail
Montana Independence Living Project	Health Services
Shodair Hospital	Health Services
SoFi	Financial Services
Spring Meadow Resources	Assisted Living
St. Peter's Hospital	Health Services
Touchmark	Assisted Living
Town Pump, Inc.	Auto Services
UPS	Delivery Services
Valley Bank	Financial Services
Wal-Mart	Retail
West Mont	Health Services

Sources:

Montana Department of Labor and Industries - Labor Market Information; Data USA
Most Recent Data is 2021

(1) Governmental Accounting Standards Board, Statement 44 requires this statistic include the top ten employers in the current year and nine years ago for comparison. The State of Montana, Department of Labor only reports the top 20 private employers in each county and does not rank them or provide the number of employees as they consider it confidential information.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT CITY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES BY FUNCTION/PROGRAM

LAST TEN YEARS
(Unaudited)

	Fiscal Year									
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
General Government:										
Legislative	8.50	8.50	7.50	7.38	7.38	7.38	7.38	7.38	7.38	7.38
Executive	4.00	4.00	5.50	4.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Judicial	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Administrative	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Financial	9.00	12.00	9.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	7.00	7.00	8.00
Human Resources	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Legal	9.00	9.00	9.00	8.00	8.00	7.00	7.16	6.00	5.00	4.75
Facilities Administration	4.17	4.17	3.16	2.24	2.24	2.08	2.17	2.17	2.17	2.17
General Government Sub-total	48.67	50.67	47.16	42.62	41.62	39.46	39.71	37.55	36.55	37.30
Public Safety:										
Law enforcement	83.65	80.65	80.65	79.05	78.55	76.00	75.00	71.50	73.50	72.50
Fire protection	43.00	43.00	43.00	42.00	41.00	42.00	37.00	37.00	37.00	36.46
Public Safety Sub-total	126.65	123.65	123.65	121.05	119.55	118.00	112.00	108.50	110.50	108.96
Public Works:										
Public Works administration	3.50	3.50	3.00	5.00	5.00	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
Engineering	9.50	13.00	12.00	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.90	8.65
Industrial facilities	4.00	3.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Road and street	27.91	25.05	24.09	23.31	23.31	15.12	15.13	15.01	15.01	15.01
Storm water	3.33	3.33	3.33	3.81	3.81	3.81	2.56	2.56	2.33	2.27
Public Works Sub-total	48.24	47.88	42.42	40.62	40.62	29.93	28.69	28.57	28.74	28.43
Public Health:										
Animal control	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Public Health Sub-total	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Culture and Recreation:										
Park and recreation	28.00	28.00	26.25	27.75	27.75	25.67	23.75	22.50	21.60	21.60
Civic center	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.93	5.93	5.98	5.94	5.44	5.44	5.44
Culture and Recreation Sub-total	34.00	34.00	32.25	33.68	33.68	31.65	29.69	27.94	27.04	27.04
Community Development:										
Community development and planning	7.00	6.50	6.00	5.63	5.38	5.13	5.13	5.13	5.13	5.13
Building	10.50	10.50	10.00	10.00	9.75	9.50	9.75	9.50	9.50	9.50
Conservation and Development Sub-total	17.50	17.00	16.00	15.63	15.13	14.63	14.88	14.63	14.63	14.63
Water	24.76	24.76	25.71	25.73	25.73	24.45	21.45	21.95	22.26	21.28
Wastewater	15.41	15.41	16.36	16.84	16.84	16.74	15.49	15.99	15.91	15.23
Solid waste	11.00	11.00	13.20	10.40	10.40	8.40	8.40	8.30	8.30	8.30
Transfer station	12.00	12.00	9.80	11.60	11.60	11.60	11.60	11.70	10.70	10.70
Bus	15.40	15.35	14.88	13.10	13.10	12.98	13.25	13.37	11.27	10.95
Parking	9.27	9.09	9.14	8.80	8.80	8.65	7.65	7.65	7.65	9.80
City-County building administration	8.31	8.31	9.31	9.30	9.30	8.41	6.37	6.37	6.37	6.37
Fleet services	6.53	6.48	6.75	6.80	6.80	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50	5.50
TOTAL	378.74	377.10	368.13	357.17	354.17	332.40	317.68	311.02	308.42	306.49

Source: City of Helena, Finance Budget Department

NOTE: This schedule only includes permanent full and part-time employees and does not include seasonal or temporary employees.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

OPERATING INDICATORS BY FUNCTION/PROGRAM - LAST TEN YEARS

(Unaudited)

Function	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
General Government - Administration:										
Judicial:										
Trials by judge	5,198	4,285	3,741	3,987	3,534	3,147	3,005	2,832	4,525	5,685
Trials by jury	6	4	7	3	8	8	7	8	11	7
Citations filed	3,985	3,663	3,242	4,225	5,206	5,094	5,691	5,067	5,921	7,068
Public Safety Activities:										
Police:										
Total calls	29,809	29,832	25,494	28,309	30,806	31,368	29,432	27,871	29,205	30,583
Arrests	2,797	1,623	1,381	1,581	1,897	2,168	2,050	1,780	1,976	2,128
Warrants served	1,611	1,591	899	1,312	1,376	1,034	1,351	1,276	1,726	1,192
Traffic citations	2,964	2,029	1,745	1,939	2,417	2,366	2,686	2,244	2,205	4,620
Fire:										
Alarms	4,887	4,851	4,268	3,993	4,210	3,743	4,014	4,385	4,120	3,807
Inspections	1,230	897	296	636	556	375	476	812	1,048	617
Medical calls	3,515	3,550	3,076	2,806	2,933	2,608	2,820	3,208	3,044	2,748
Public Works:										
Streets:										
Chip seals (miles)	11.00	23.70	19.70	30.90	19.30	19.00	13.40	9.20	8.70	8.90
Fog Seal (miles)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Crack seal (miles)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	19.30	19.00	13.40	9.20	8.70	8.90
Re-surface	8.00	2.80	4.20	0.00	1.40	1.50	2.40	1.20	N/A	N/A
Water:										
Average daily consumption (millions of gallons)	5.50	4.40	5.90	5.50	5.10	5.30	5.90	5.20	5.60	5.60
Peak demand (millions of gallons)	12.60	12.60	13.60	14.80	12.00	15.20	15.10	13.10	13.20	15.00
Number of customers	11,678	11,600	12,801	12,719	12,079	11,569	11,569	11,526	11,441	11,159
Wastewater:										
Average daily wastewater treated (millions of gallons)	3.10	3.00	3.00	3.30	3.20	3.20	2.70	2.50	2.80	2.80
Solid waste:										
Refuse collected (tons per day)	106	117	117	116	112	101	100	104	104	101
Recyclables collected (tons per day)	25	11	24	19	20	21	18	18	17	18
Bus:										
Total passengers (1)	55,305	47,806	32,712	30,657	97,589	82,488	95,789	81,787	97,189	79,252
Parking:										
Number of spaces in garages	1,389	1,389	1,389	1,389	1,389	1,383	1,383	1,383	1,383	1,383
Monthly rates	75	75	75	\$65-\$75	\$65-\$75	\$63-\$73	\$63-\$73	\$63-\$73	\$59-\$69	\$57-\$67
Hourly rates	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.75	\$ 0.75	\$ 0.75	\$ 0.75	\$ 0.75	\$ 0.75	\$ 0.75
Garage revenues	\$ 1,285,846	\$ 758,899	\$ 981,998	\$ 714,199	\$ 1,429,321	\$ 1,093,614	\$ 1,045,100	\$ 1,053,540	\$ 1,125,661	\$ 1,127,000
Number of spaces in paid lots	656	656	656	656	656	656	656	656	656	656
Number of spaces in paid lots - monthly rate	\$60	\$55-\$60	\$55-\$60	\$55-\$60	\$55-\$60	\$53-\$80	\$53-\$80	\$53-\$80	\$49-\$74	\$47-\$72
Number of spaces in paid lots - hourly rate	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50
Number of spaces in paid lots - lot revenues	\$ 424,524	\$ 336,181	\$ 267,521	\$ 307,679	\$ 312,310	\$ 350,107	\$ 349,079	\$ 329,890	\$ 328,388	\$ 319,163
On-street monthly permit rate:										
Commercial areas	\$51	\$51	\$51	\$21-\$43	\$21-\$43	\$21-\$43	\$21-\$43	\$21-\$43	\$21-\$43	\$21-\$43
Residential areas	\$20	\$5-\$20	\$5-\$20	\$5-\$20	\$5-\$20	\$5-\$20	\$5-\$20	\$5-\$20	\$5-\$20	\$5-\$10
Permit revenues	\$ 209,332	\$ 154,923	\$ 148,324	\$ 185,567	\$ 208,013	\$ 201,218	\$ 185,768	\$ 211,731	\$ 217,650	\$ 212,520
Parking meter rate	\$1.00	\$ 0.50-\$1.00	\$ 0.50-\$1.00	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50
Parking meter rate - meter revenues	\$ 579,042	\$ 189,978	\$ 278,463	\$ 211,483	\$ 189,037	\$ 38,444	\$ 17,327	\$ 22,042	\$ 18,931	\$ 12,549
Public Health Activities:										
Animal control:										
Total incidents	3,304	3,377	1,757	1,688	1,639	1,730	2,115	2,541	2,453	2,521
Citations	31	24	71	109	100	141	254	332	288	347
Culture and Recreation:										
Swimming pool attendance (1)	32,002	32,252	24,010	6,001	21,579	24,090	24,739	19,950	24,001	24,386
Civic center:										
Events (1)	107	99	91	58	140	80	68	79	73	71
Number of days used	130	172	143	87	218	150	131	170	N/A	N/A
Tickets sold	10,530	13,265	10,500	19,010	85,703	58,603	48,379	55,055	53,784	48,586
Community Development:										
Building:										
Residential permits, new construction	115	76	101	106	94	90	142	80	118	80
Residential permits, new construction - number of units	103	88	223	244	204	188	258	175	386	339
Residential permits, new construction - value of permits (in thousands)	\$ 58,305	\$ 25,959	\$ 44,367	\$ 44,082	\$ 34,387	\$ 32,922	\$ 21,724	\$ 46,820	\$ 48,294	\$ 37,670
Residential permits, addition/remodel	595	459	124	107	99	119	126	184	169	122
Residential permits, addition/remodel - value of permits (in thousands)	\$ 15,027	\$ 11,006	\$ 5,518	\$ 2,922	\$ 2,831	\$ 3,804	\$ 2,982	\$ 3,820	\$ 3,386	\$ 4,180
Commercial permits, new construction	15	17	14	22	14	18	15	19	39	13
Commercial permits, new construction - value of permits (in thousands)	\$ 34,480	\$ 64,531	\$ 57,742	\$ 2,054	\$ 10,968	\$ 45,014	\$ 15,206	\$ 26,565	\$ 54,372	\$ 14,623
Commercial permits, addition/remodel	134	155	117	120	118	145	127	177	211	169
Commercial permits, addition/remodel - value of permits (in thousands)	\$ 58,006	\$ 36,629	\$ 55,829	\$ 31,482	\$ 31,716	\$ 32,324	\$ 21,950	\$ 32,444	\$ 17,930	\$ 18,675
Planning:										
Annexations	2	2	4	1	3	2	5	7	1	4
Annexed properties	3	3	5	2	2	2	145	31	10	4
Major subdivisions	-	2	3	1	2	2	2	-	2	-
Major subdivisions - lots created	-	45	75	-	-	26	50	-	32	-
Minor subdivisions	2	3	-	-	1	-	2	1	1	1
Minor subdivisions - lots created	5	8	-	-	-	-	5	3	4	3

Source: City of Helena
 (1) Bus, Civic Center and pool attendance affected by COVID

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

CAPITAL ASSET STATISTICS BY FUNCTION/PROGRAM - LAST TEN YEARS

(Unaudited)

Function/Program	Fiscal Year									
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Public Safety Activities:										
Police:										
Number of stations	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Patrol units	32	32	32	32	31	31	30	28	35	37
Fire stations:										
Number of stations	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Fire response trucks	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	16	16
Public Works:										
Streets (miles)	266	263	261	261	268	268	272	272	271	271
Street lights (1)	3,486	3,489	3,483	3,458	3,406	3,408	3,697	3,689	3,689	3,691
Stormwater mains (miles)	55	73	72	72	71	72	71	71	71	68
Water:										
Water mains (miles)	259	248	252	252	248	248	247	244	244	236
Fire hydrants	1,996	1,817	1,812	1,812	1,787	1,763	1,733	1,704	1,785	1,678
Storage capacity (in millions of gallons)	23	23	23	23	22	23	23	23	23	23
Wastewater mains (miles)	192	158	185	185	183	192	190	188	188	188
Solid waste - collection trucks	10	10	16	18	18	19	19	18	17	18
Buses	13	14	14	14	12	13	15	19	18	19
Parking:										
Garages	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Parking lots	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	10	10
Curbside meters	196	196	196	196	196	264	264	264	280	280
On-street rental spaces (2)	739	739	739	739	320	-	-	-	-	-
Culture and Recreation:										
Number of city parks	44	44	44	46	47	47	47	47	47	47
City park acreage	236	236	236	263	263	263	263	263	258	258
Open space acreage	2,300	2,300	2,134	1,999	1,999	1,999	1,999	1,999	1,999	1,999

Source: City of Helena

(1) Street lights are not the property of the City. All lights within the City are owned by NorthWestern Energy. Each light district is charged the full cost of electricity plus an annual maintenance charge to cover the cost and replacement of the lights.

(2) The Parking Program began a kiosk program in fiscal year 2020.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

THE WATER SYSTEM (1)

JUNE 30, 2024
(unaudited)

Historical Water System Connections Last Five Fiscal Years

Fiscal Year	Residential Customers	Commercial Customers	Total Customers
2020	8,728	3,991	12,719
2021	8,784	4,017	12,801
2022	8,853	3,994	12,847
2023	10,246	1,432	11,678
2024	10,394	1,870	12,264

Water System Rate Structure

	Residential (Single Family Residence)	Commercial and Multi-Family
Base rate (based on meter size)	\$9.26-\$49.20	\$9.26-\$694.20
Per 100 Cubic Feet Water	\$3.39-\$3.86	\$3.39-\$4.09

Major Water System Users

User	Water Charges	Percent of Total Water Revenues (2)
State of Montana	\$ 308,239	3.16%
City of Helena	228,444	2.34%
St. Peter's Hospital	155,214	1.59%
Military Affairs	116,085	1.19%
Helena School District #1	159,913	1.64%
Helena Housing Authority	142,019	1.46%
Fort Harrison VA Medical Center	58,572	0.60%
Carroll College	54,842	0.56%
Guardian Apartments	38,610	0.40%
Helena Colonial, LLC	38,018	0.39%
	\$ 1,299,956	13.33%

Source: The City of Helena

(1) This schedule is included to comply with requirements of our water bonds.
 (2) Water revenue equals total operating revenue of the Water fund.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

THE WASTEWATER SYSTEM (1)

JUNE 30, 2024
(unaudited)

Historical Water System Connections Last Five Fiscal Years

Fiscal Year	Residential Customers	Commercial Customers	Total Customers
2020	8,511	2,784	11,295
2021	8,642	2,827	11,469
2022	8,677	2,876	11,553
2023	10,101	1,389	11,490
2024	8,767	2,817	11,584

Water System Rate Structure

	Base Monthly Rates
Base rate	\$ 10.12
Per 100 Cubic Feet Water:	
Residential	\$ 3.47
Commercial	\$ 4.67

Major Water System Users

User	Wastewater Charges	Percent of Total Water Revenues (2)
St. Peter's Hospital	\$ 122,990	1.91%
State of Montana	98,394	1.53%
McHugh Mobile Home Park	105,819	1.65%
Helena School District #1	85,809	1.33%
Helena Housing Authority	61,889	0.96%
Mobile City Home Park	48,999	0.76%
Carroll College	34,560	0.54%
Fort Harrison VA Medical Center	39,365	0.61%
Guardian Apartments	7,920	0.12%
Helena Colonial, LLC.	87,552	1.36%
	\$ 693,297	10.77%

Source: The City of Helena

(1) This schedule is included to comply with requirements of our wastewater bonds.

(2) Water revenue equals total operating revenue of the Wastewater fund.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS REVOLVING FUND STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE (1)

LAST FIVE FISCAL YEARS
(unaudited)

	Fiscal Year				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Beginning balance - July 1	\$ 51,605	\$ 47,437	\$ 41,237	\$ 40,998	\$ 40,940
Receipts over disbursements (2)	<u>(4,168)</u>	<u>(6,200)</u>	<u>(239)</u>	<u>(58)</u>	<u>(40,940)</u>
Ending balance - June 30	<u>\$ 47,437</u>	<u>\$ 41,237</u>	<u>\$ 40,998</u>	<u>\$ 40,940</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Assets:					
Cash	\$ 33,393	\$ 35,776	\$ 40,993	\$ 40,940	\$ -
Assessments receivable	189	52	50	50	-
Warrants	14,044	5,459	5	-	-
Total Assets	<u>\$ 47,626</u>	<u>\$ 41,287</u>	<u>\$ 41,048</u>	<u>\$ 40,990</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Deferred Inflows of Resources:					
Unavailable revenue	\$ 189	\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ -
Total deferred inflows of resources	<u>189</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>-</u>
Fund Balances:					
Restricted	47,437	41,187	40,998	40,940	-
Unassigned	<u>-</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total fund balances	<u>47,437</u>	<u>41,237</u>	<u>40,998</u>	<u>40,940</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources and Fund Balances	<u>\$ 47,626</u>	<u>\$ 41,287</u>	<u>\$ 41,048</u>	<u>\$ 40,990</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

Source: The City of Helena

(1) This information is provided to satisfy reporting requirements for our special improvement district bonds.

(2) The negative change in fund balance is due to the City using cash reserves in excess of bond requirements to provide capital replacement funds for governmental functions.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS REVOLVING FUND (1) CASH BALANCE AND OUTSTANDING BONDS SECURED THEREBY

LAST TEN FISCAL YEARS
(unaudited)

Fiscal Year	Revolving Fund Ending Cash and Investment Balances	Principal Amount of Bonds and Warrants	Percentage
2015	\$ 102,655	\$ 160,000	64.16%
2016	59,877	110,000	54.43%
2017	56,501	60,000	94.17%
2018	52,337	20,000	261.69%
2019	28,962	-	n/a
2020	33,393	-	n/a
2021	35,776	-	n/a
2022	40,993	-	n/a
2023	40,948	-	n/a
2024	-	-	n/a

Source: City of Helena

(1) This schedule is included to comply with requirements of our special improvement district bonds. There are currently none outstanding.
n/a - not applicable

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

RAILROAD TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT PROPERTY TAX LEVIES AND COLLECTIONS

LAST TEN YEARS*
(Unaudited)

Fiscal Year	Taxes Levied for the Fiscal Year	Collected Within the Fiscal Year of the Levy		Collections in Subsequent Years	Total Collections to Date	
		Amount	Percentage of Levy		Amount	Percentage of Adjusted Levy
2017	\$ 9,054	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 9,054	\$ 9,054	100.00%
2018	42,998	10,229	23.79%	31,770	41,999	97.68%
2019	73,924	23,910	32.34%	50,010	73,920	99.99%
2020	174,819	164,429	94.06%	10,320	174,749	99.96%
2021	187,512	169,887	90.60%	17,554	187,441	99.96%
2022	312,728	293,770	93.94%	18,986	312,756	100.01%
2023	296,489	283,495	95.62%	12,730	296,225	99.91%
2024	706,756	704,775	99.72%	-	704,775	99.72%

* This schedule is intended to show the last ten fiscal years. Because this is a new district, only eight years are available.

SOURCES:

Lewis & Clark County

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

DOWNTOWN TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT PROPERTY TAX LEVIES AND COLLECTIONS

LAST TEN YEARS*
(Unaudited)

Fiscal Year	Taxes Levied for the Fiscal Year	Collected Within the Fiscal Year of the Levy		Collections in Subsequent Years	Total Collections to Date	
		Amount	Percentage of Levy		Amount	Percentage of Adjusted Levy
2021	\$ 63,857	\$ 59,954	93.89%	\$ 3,900	\$ 63,854	100.00%
2022	34,167	30,095	88.08%	154,060	184,155	100.00%
2023	316,778	303,091	95.68%	13,372	316,463	99.90%
2024	1,195,412	1,193,100	99.81%	-	1,193,100	99.81%

* This schedule is intended to show the last ten fiscal years. Because this is a new district, only four years are available.

SOURCES:
Lewis & Clark County

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

CAPITAL HILL TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT PROPERTY TAX LEVIES AND COLLECTIONS

LAST TEN YEARS*
(Unaudited)

Fiscal Year	Taxes Levied for the Fiscal Year	Collected Within the Fiscal Year of the Levy		Collections in Subsequent Years	Total Collections to Date	
		Amount	Percentage of Levy		Amount	Percentage of Adjusted Levy
2022	\$ 144,628	\$ 30,095	20.81%	\$ 114,533	\$ 144,628	100.00%
2023	183,297	159,224	86.87%	23,936	183,160	99.93%
2024	622,287	603,777	97.03%	-	603,777	97.03%

* This schedule is intended to show the last ten fiscal years. Because this is a new district, only three years are available.

SOURCES:

Lewis & Clark County

City of Helena, Montana

Independent Auditor's Reports
Required by the Uniform Guidance

Year Ended June 30, 2024

**Independent Auditor’s Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance
and Other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with
Government Auditing Standards**

**To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana**

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the City of Helena, Montana (City), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2024, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the City’s basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated February 21, 2025.

Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the City’s internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the City’s internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the City’s internal control.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. *A material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity’s financial statements will not be prevented or detected and corrected on a timely basis. *A significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana
Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control over
Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters

Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the City's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the City's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Mahe Duessel

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
February 21, 2025

Independent Auditor's Report on Compliance for Each Major Program and on Internal Control over Compliance Required by the Uniform Guidance

To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana

Report on Compliance for Each Major Federal Program

Opinion on Each Major Federal Program

We have audited the City of Helena, Montana's (City) compliance with the types of compliance requirements identified as subject to audit in the OMB Compliance Supplement that could have a direct and material effect on each of the City's major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2024. The City's major federal programs are identified in the summary of auditor's results section of the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs.

In our opinion, the City complied, in all material respects, with the types of compliance requirements referred to above that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2024.

Basis for Opinion on Each Major Federal Program

We conducted our audit of compliance in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and the audit requirements of Title 2 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance). Our responsibilities under those standards and the Uniform Guidance are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance section of our report.

We are required to be independent of the City and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion on compliance for each major federal program. Our audit does not provide a legal determination of the City's compliance with the compliance requirements referred to above.

To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana
Independent Auditor's Report on Compliance for Each Major
Program and on Internal Control over Compliance

Responsibilities of Management for Compliance

Management is responsible for compliance with the requirements referred to above and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of effective internal control over compliance with the requirements of laws, statutes, regulations, rules, and provisions of contracts or grant agreements applicable to the City's federal programs.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether material noncompliance with the compliance requirements referred to above occurred, whether due to fraud or error, and express an opinion on the City's compliance based on our audit. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance will always detect material noncompliance when it exists. The risk of not detecting material noncompliance resulting from fraud is higher than for that resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Noncompliance with the compliance requirements referred to above is considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, it would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user of the report on compliance about the City's compliance with the requirements of each major federal program as a whole.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material noncompliance, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the City's compliance with the compliance requirements referred to above and performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.
- Obtain an understanding of the City's internal control over compliance relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances and to test and report on internal control over compliance in accordance with the Uniform Guidance, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the City's internal control over compliance. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and any significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in internal control over compliance that we identified during the audit.

To the Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Commission, and
The City Manager
City of Helena, Montana
Independent Auditor's Report on Compliance for Each Major
Program and on Internal Control over Compliance

Report on Internal Control over Compliance

A deficiency in internal control over compliance exists when the design or operation of a control over compliance does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program on a timely basis. A *material weakness in internal control over compliance* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance, such that there is a reasonable possibility that material noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A significant deficiency in internal control over compliance is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program that is less severe than a material weakness in internal control over compliance, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control over compliance was for the limited purpose described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance section above and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control over compliance that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control over compliance. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over compliance that we consider to be material weaknesses, as defined above. However, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control over compliance may exist that were not identified.

Our audit was not designed for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over compliance. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

The purpose of this report on internal control over compliance is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over compliance and the results of that testing based on the requirements of the Uniform Guidance. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose.

Maher Duessel

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
February 21, 2025

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND QUESTIONED COSTS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

I. Summary of Audit Results

1. Type of auditor's report issued: Unmodified, prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

2. Internal control over financial reporting:

Material weakness(es) identified? yes no

Significant deficiencies identified that are not considered to be material weakness(es)? yes none reported

3. Noncompliance material to financial statements noted? yes no

4. Internal control over major programs:

Material weakness(es) identified? yes no

Significant deficiencies identified that are not considered to be material weakness(es)? yes none reported

5. Type of auditor's report issued on compliance for major programs: Unmodified

6. Any audit findings disclosed that are required to be reported in accordance with 2 CFR Section 200.516(a)? yes no

7. Major Programs:

Federal ALN(s)

20.509

Name of Federal Program or Cluster

Formula Grants for Rural Areas and Tribal Transit Programs

8. Dollar threshold used to distinguish between type A and type B programs: \$750,000

9. Auditee qualified as low-risk auditee? yes no

II. Findings related to the financial statements which are required to be reported in accordance with GAGAS.

No matters were reported.

III. Findings and questioned costs for federal awards.

No matters were reported.

CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

SUMMARY SCHEDULE OF PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

NONE

City of Helena, Montana

March 12, 2025

To:

Mayor Collins and the Helena City Commission

From:

Tim Burton, City Manager
Doug Smith, Parks, Recreation and Open Lands Director

Subject:

Consider a Resolution of Intention to Establish New Fees Charged for the Use of the Helena Civic Center and Repeal Resolution No. 20819

Present Situation:

The Helena Civic Center charges fees for the use of the facility that help support the cost of its operations. The general fund helps to fund the Civic Center and in order to offset some of the impact to the general fund, City Staff recommends increasing the fees charged to the Civic Center.

Background Information:

Resolution 20819, passed May 8, 2023, previously set fees charged for the use of the Helena Civic Center.

Proposal/Objective:

It appears to be in the best interests of the City to slightly increase fees charged for use of the Civic Center.

Advantage:

N/A

Notable Energy Impact:

N/A

Disadvantage:

N/A

Quasi-Judicial Item:

False

Notice of Public Hearing:

Yes, Helena IR Legal Ad Publication Dates: 3/27/25 & 4/3/25, Public Hearing scheduled for Monday, April 7, 2025.

**Staff Recommendation/
Recommended Motion:**

Move to Approve Resolution of Intention to Establish New Fees Charged for the Use of the Helena Civic Center and Repeal Resolution No. 20819 and set a Public Hearing date of April 7, 2025.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF INTENTION TO SET FEES CHARGED FOR USE OF THE HELENA CIVIC CENTER AND REPEAL RESOLUTION NO. 20819

WHEREAS, the City of Helena owns and operates a facility known as the Civic Center;

WHEREAS, the City of Helena, in the prudent management of its financial affairs, must charge fees for the use of the Civic Center that support the cost of operations;

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20819, passed May 8, 2023, previously set fees charged for the use of the Helena Civic Center;

WHEREAS, the general fund helps to fund the Civic Center where fees do not cover the cost of the operation, and in order to offset some of the impact to the general fund, City staff recommend increasing the fees charged to support continued cost recovery; and

WHEREAS, it appears to be in the best interests of the City of Helena, Montana, and the inhabitants thereof, that the Helena City Commission hold a public hearing on the implementation of the fees.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

OF HELENA, MONTANA:

//

Section 1. That it is the intention of the Helena City Commission to set the fees charged for use of the Civic Center as shown on the attached Exhibit "A."

Section 2. That it is the intention of the Helena City Commission to repeal Resolution No. 20819.

Section 3. A public hearing on this Resolution of Intention will be held on the 24th day of March, 2025, in the Commission Chambers at 316 North Park Avenue, Helena, Montana, at 6:00 P.M. and via an online meeting utilizing the Zoom meeting platform. The online meeting information is located on the City of Helena Public Meeting Access Hub:

<https://zoom.helenamt.gov/c/36053471/publicmeetings> at which time all interested parties may appear and express their views of approval or disapproval on the proposed fees.

Section 4. Notice of the above-referenced public hearing and passage of this resolution of intention shall be given by publication as required by § 7-1-4127, MCA.

PASSED AND EFFECTIVE BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HELENA,

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

MONTANA, THIS 24th DAY OF March, 2025.

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CLERK OF THE COMMISSION

DRAFT

Exhibit A: Civic Center Proposed Fees for FY 2026

CIVIC CENTER Room Rentals	2017-2021	2021-2023	FY23 Revenue	FY24 Fee	FY26 Proposed	FY24 #s Sold	FY24 Revenue	2026 Proposal Fee Increase	2026 Revenue Proposed	Increase in \$'s
	Auditorium 7% Gross Box Office Revenues Min \$1250 Max \$4500	\$850.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 34,200.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,250.00	29	\$ 29,000.00	\$250.00	\$36,250.00
NPO Series Rate - No %, Minimum 5 Performances	\$850.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,250.00	6	\$ 6,000.00	\$250.00	\$7,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
Auditorium Rental No Performance (Graduations, Private Parties)	NA	\$ 675.00	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 1,000.00	2	\$ 1,500.00	\$250.00	\$2,000.00	\$ 500.00
Auditorium Set-up/Rehearsal No Public Friday-Sunday	\$400.00	\$ 550.00	\$ 4,950.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 850.00	8	\$ 6,000.00	\$100.00	\$6,800.00	\$ 800.00
Auditorium Set-up/Rehearsal No Public Monday-Thursday	\$400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 8,400.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 750.00	11	\$ 5,500.00	\$250.00	\$8,250.00	\$ 2,750.00
Ballroom Mezzanine/Bathrooms	\$500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	2	\$ 500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$ -
Ballroom Rental	\$1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 29,000.00	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,300.00	34	\$ 42,500.00	\$50.00	\$44,200.00	\$ 1,700.00
Ballroom Sunday-Thursday	\$750.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 850.00	\$ 1,000.00	24	\$ 20,400.00	\$150.00	\$24,000.00	\$ 3,600.00
Ballroom Set-up/Load-out Friday-Sunday	\$450.00	\$ 650.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 850.00	8	\$ 6,000.00	\$100.00	\$6,800.00	\$ 800.00
Ballroom Set-up/Load-out Monday-Thursday	\$450.00	\$ 450.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 750.00	5	\$ 3,000.00	\$150.00	\$3,750.00	\$ 750.00
Hourly Over 15 Hours (2 hour min)	\$100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ -	\$ 100.00	\$ 200.00	6	\$ 600.00	\$100.00	\$1,200.00	\$ 600.00
Auditorium Stage/Arena/Backstage with Ballroom Rental	\$350.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 600.00	1	\$ 500.00	\$100.00	\$600.00	\$ 100.00
Full Facility Rental Friday-Sunday No Aud Perf	\$1,600.00	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 8,750.00	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 1,800.00	6	\$ 10,500.00	\$50.00	\$10,800.00	\$ 300.00
Full Facility Rental Monday-Thursday No Aud Perf	\$1,600.00	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,350.00	5	\$ 6,250.00	\$100.00	\$6,750.00	\$ 500.00
Full Facility Set-up/Load-out Friday-Sunday No Aud Perf	\$1,600.00	\$ 950.00	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,250.00	3	\$ 3,000.00	\$250.00	\$3,750.00	\$ 750.00
Full Facility Set-up/Load-out Monday-Thursday No Aud Perf	\$1,600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,000.00	1	\$ 800.00	\$200.00	\$1,000.00	\$ 200.00
			\$ 125,600.00				\$ 142,050.00		\$164,150.00	\$22,100.00
Equipment Rentals										
Tables Per Day	\$5.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 13,765.00	\$ 7.50	\$ 7.50	2825	\$ 21,187.50	\$0.00	\$21,187.50	\$ -
Tables Weekly	\$15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 1,140.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00	229	\$ 3,435.00	\$0.00	\$3,435.00	\$ -
Chairs Per Day	\$0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 6,273.50	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.00	14273	\$ 14,273.00	\$0.00	\$14,273.00	\$ -
Chairs Weekly	\$1.50	\$ 1.50	\$ 253.50	\$ 2.00	\$ 2.00	420	\$ 840.00	\$0.00	\$840.00	\$ -
Risers Per Day	\$15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 3,180.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 40.00	143	\$ 4,290.00	\$10.00	\$5,720.00	\$ 1,430.00
Risers Weekly	\$45.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 5,310.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 55.00	215	\$ 10,750.00	\$5.00	\$11,825.00	\$ 1,075.00
Pipe & Drape per linear foot	\$1.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 944.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 2.50	1015	\$ 2,030.00	\$0.50	\$2,537.50	\$ 507.50
Pipe & Drape Weekly	\$3.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 756.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	226	\$ 1,130.00	\$1.00	\$1,356.00	\$ 226.00
			\$ 31,622.00				\$ 57,935.50		\$ 61,174.00	\$ 3,238.50
Auditorium Sound/Light/Other										
Light Fee	\$400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 500.00	19	\$ 7,600.00	\$100.00	\$9,500.00	\$ 1,900.00
Light Fee 2nd & Subsequent Perfs	\$200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	17	\$ 3,400.00	\$0.00	\$3,400.00	\$ -
Sound Fee	\$200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 5,200.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	24	\$ 7,200.00	\$0.00	\$7,200.00	\$ -
Sound Fee 2nd & Subsequent Perfs	\$100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00	7	\$ 700.00	\$50.00	\$1,050.00	\$ 350.00
Spotlights Per Day (operators billed separate)	\$50.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00	4	\$ 400.00	\$50.00	\$600.00	\$ 200.00
Merchandise Fee - Goods Sold at Auditorium Event 20% of Gross			\$ -				\$ -	\$0.00	\$0.00	
			\$ 18,000.00				\$ 19,300.00		\$ 21,750.00	\$ 2,450.00
Labor Rates per Hour										
Tech Director	\$30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 17,555.10	\$ 30.00	\$ 40.00	347.75	\$ 10,432.50	\$10.00	\$13,910.00	\$ 3,477.50
Technician	\$20.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 9,530.20	\$ 20.00	\$ 25.00	621	\$ 12,420.00	\$5.00	\$15,525.00	\$ 3,105.00
Stagehand	\$15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 1,908.75	\$ 15.00	\$ 20.00	430.26	\$ 6,453.90	\$5.00	\$8,605.20	\$ 2,151.30
Police	\$50.00	\$ 60.00	\$ -	\$ 60.00	\$ 60.00	0	\$ -	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$ -
			\$ 28,994.05				\$ 29,306.40		\$38,040.20	\$ 8,733.80
Other Fees										
Serving of Alcohol in Ballroom	\$300.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 250.00	29	\$ 5,800.00	\$50.00	\$7,250.00	\$ 1,450.00
Ballroom Audio Package					\$ 600.00				\$9,600.00	\$ 7,200.00
Ballroom Audio Package Additional Day					\$ 400.00				\$2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Ballroom Lighting Package					\$ 400.00				\$4,800.00	\$ 4,800.00
Ballroom Lighting Package Additional Day					\$ 300.00				\$1,800.00	\$ 1,800.00
Screen/Projector Package		\$ 200.00	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 600.00	14	\$ 5,600.00	\$200.00	\$8,400.00	\$ 2,800.00
Screen/Projector Package Additional Day		\$ 100.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 300.00	3	\$ 300.00	\$200.00	\$900.00	\$ 600.00
			\$ 4,800.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 2,850.00		\$ 11,700.00		\$ 34,750.00	\$ 20,650.00
			\$ 209,016.05				\$ 260,291.90	\$ -	\$ 319,864.20	\$ 57,172.30

INTERIM AD DRAFT

This is the proof of your ad scheduled to run in **Helena Independent Record** on the dates indicated below. If changes are needed, please contact us prior to deadline at **(123) 456-7890**.

Notice ID: lz6ZKXzhDWRgQI9kPUKd | **Proof Updated: Feb. 27, 2025 at 01:51pm MST**
 Notice Name: Copy Copy Civic Center Fees_4.7.25

See Proof on Next Page

This is not an invoice. Below is an estimated price, and it is subject to change. You will receive an invoice with the final price upon invoice creation by the publisher.

FILER	FILING FOR
Heather Kahler hkahler@helenamt.gov (406) 447-8463	Helena Independent Record

Columns Wide: 2 **Ad Class:** Legals
Total Column Inches: 7.18
Number of Lines: 31

03/27/2025: General Legal	36.00
04/03/2025: General Legal	30.00

Subtotal	\$66.00
Tax	\$0.00
Processing Fee	\$0.00
Total	\$66.00

Public Hearing Notice

The Helena City Commission will hold a public hearing at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, April 7, 2025 in the City of Helena Commission Chambers, Room 330 at 316 N. Park Avenue, Helena, MT 59623, and via the City of Helena's Zoom Events Hub: <https://zoom.helenamt.gov/j/36053471> to consider the following:

A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH FEES TO BE CHARGED FOR THE HELENA CIVIC CENTER REPEALING RESOLUTION NO. 20819.

For further information, please contact the Parks, Recreation, and Open Lands Department located in the City County Building at 316 North Park Avenue, Room 405 Helena, MT 59623 or call the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, Doug Smith at (406) 447-8462.

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, as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the requested accommodation, at any of the following:

(406) 447- 8490 TTY Relay Service 1-800-253-4091 or 711 or email: citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov, in person at 316 North Park, Avenue, Room 440, Helena, MT 59623

March 27, April 3, 2025 ##### MNAXLP

City of Helena, Montana

March 12, 2025

To:

Mayor Collins and the Helena City Commission

From:

Tim Burton, City Manager
Doug Smith, Parks, Recreation and Open Lands Director

Subject:

Consider Open Lands Proposed Major Projects

Present Situation:

The Open Lands Division within the Parks, Recreation and Open Lands Department is proposing ten projects that the trail using community would benefit from if approved to be completed. The projects proposed are implementing trailhead parking use area hours, construction of a new parking area, several trail connector creations and a few trail re-routes. Total estimated budget of \$101,000. Open Lands staff plans on utilizing their own staff, local contractors, grant funds and community partners to assist in the construction and investment sources to complete the projects.

Background Information:

Two open houses were recently hosted by the Open Lands team with ample positive feedback from the public and community partners on the benefit of completing these projects.

Proposal/Objective:

Staff proposes to approve these ten Open Lands Major Projects to be completed.

Advantage:

These projects represent fulfillment of goals and objectives outlined in the Helena Open Lands Management Plan. The projects also improve/maintain community access and use, promote sustainable use and stewardship.

Notable Energy Impact:

N/A

Disadvantage:

N/A

Quasi-Judicial Item:

False

Notice of Public Hearing:

False

**Staff Recommendation/
Recommended Motion:**

Staff recommends moving to approve the Open Lands Major Projects.

**City of Helena
Open Lands
Division
Proposed Major
Projects**

City Recommendations
Calendar Year 2025



Major Projects Definitions

- New trail, or trailhead construction (includes extension of existing trails)
- New or changed trail usage rules (i.e., limiting or changing use on an existing trail, allowing new uses on a trail)
- Trail removal and/or reroute
- Potential for significant public interest
- Substantial project cost (i.e., in excess of \$25,000)

Trailhead Parking Area Use Hours – Brad Langsather, Presenter

- **Current Situation**

- In the past five years, Helena’s open lands trailhead parking areas have seen an increase in late-night public usage that is unrelated to traditional recreational pursuits. In some instances, these after-hours events have resulted in requests for police investigation. Others have been highlighted by instances of vandal induced physical damage to trailhead amenities, including irreparable damage to restrooms, pet stations, signs and/or the painting of profane graffiti on signs, fences, kiosks, historic sites, restrooms and natural features (rocks, trees).

- **Recommendation**

- The city recommends establishing a nighttime closure period of 11:00 P.M. to 5:00 A.M. for five open land trailhead parking areas (Beattie, Dump Gulch, Old Shooting Range, Reeder’s Village, South Hills Disc Golf Course).

- **Estimated Budget**

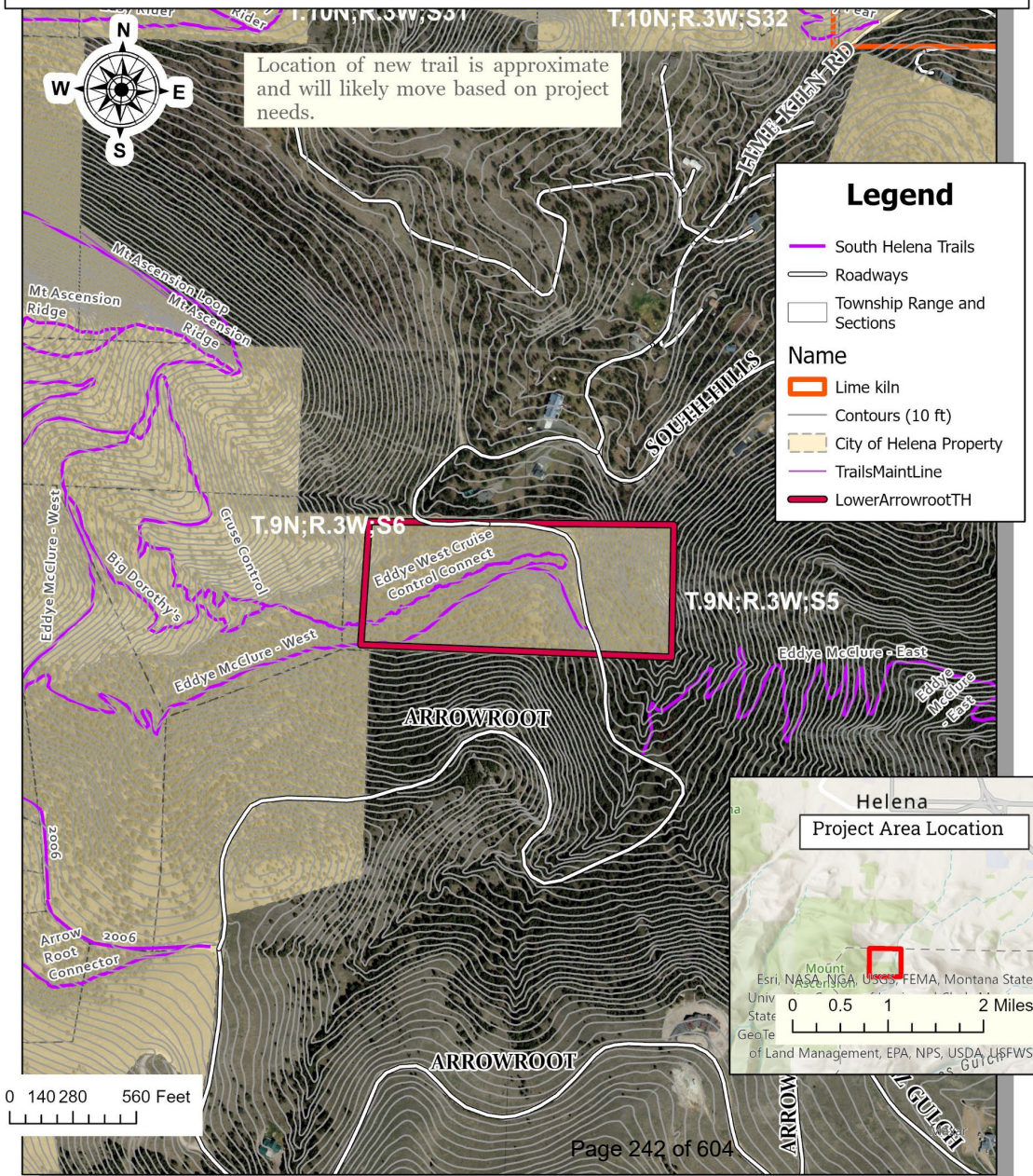
- \$2000 (Signage)

Lower Arrowroot Trailhead Parking Area – Brad Langsather, Presenter

- **Current Situation**
- Recent developments associated with parking availability for those recreationalists using the Eddy McClure East Trail have resulted in an increase of trail user vehicles parking on Arrowroot Drive and Limekiln Road. This results in safety issues for trail users and motorists traveling on either roadway.
- **Recommendation**
- To address the situation, the city would like to propose the construction of a 6-8 vehicle, gravel surfaced parking area to be constructed on City of Helena property located adjacent to Arrowroot Drive in Sections 5 & 6, Township 9 North, Range 3 West, Certificate of Survey 154368 Folio 367B, Jefferson County, MT
- **Estimated Budget**
- \$35,000 (Equipment, Materials, Wages)
- **SEE EXHIBIT “A”**

Lower Arrowroot TH and Parking Area

EXHIBIT A



Prickly Pear Reroute (From Beattie TH) – Brad Langasther, Presenter

- **Current Situation**

- Following the construction of the Beattie Street Trailhead parking area in 2020, the Prickly Pear Trail was rerouted to address slope/drainage issues. Unfortunately, the trail has deteriorated significantly in the past four years. Currently, the trail is becoming excessively wide, overly out sloped, and marred by straight-line paths braiding across switchbacks. Multiple public comments have highlighted these issues.

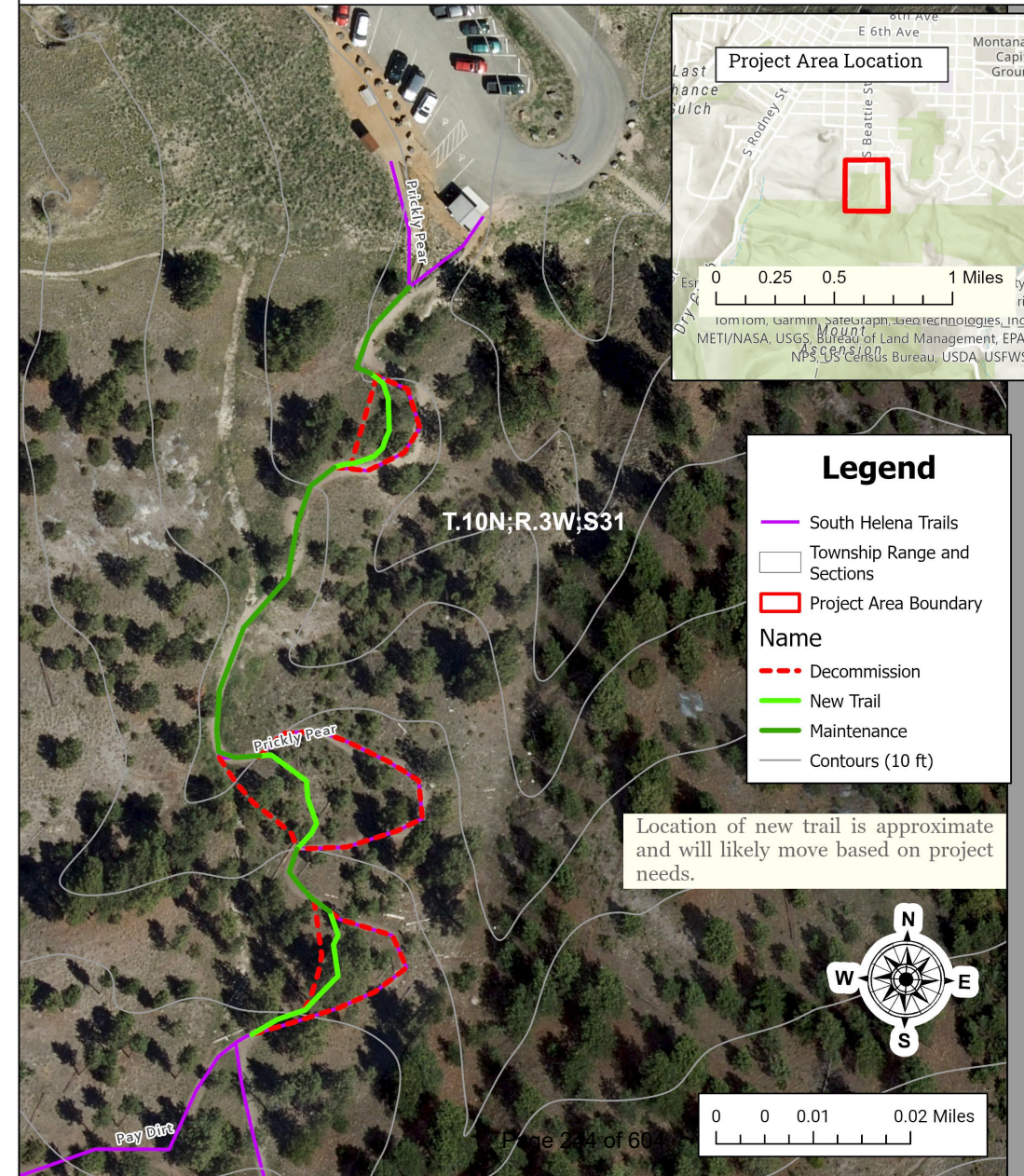
- **Recommendation**

- The city recommends a reroute of Prickly Pear Trail to create a more direct and sustainable path combined with implementation of rehabilitation work on the old trail bed (where it has been rerouted as well as the switch-back braids).

- **Estimated Budget**

- \$3000(Existing trail maintenance, new trail construction and old trail decommission)
- SEE EXHIBIT “B”

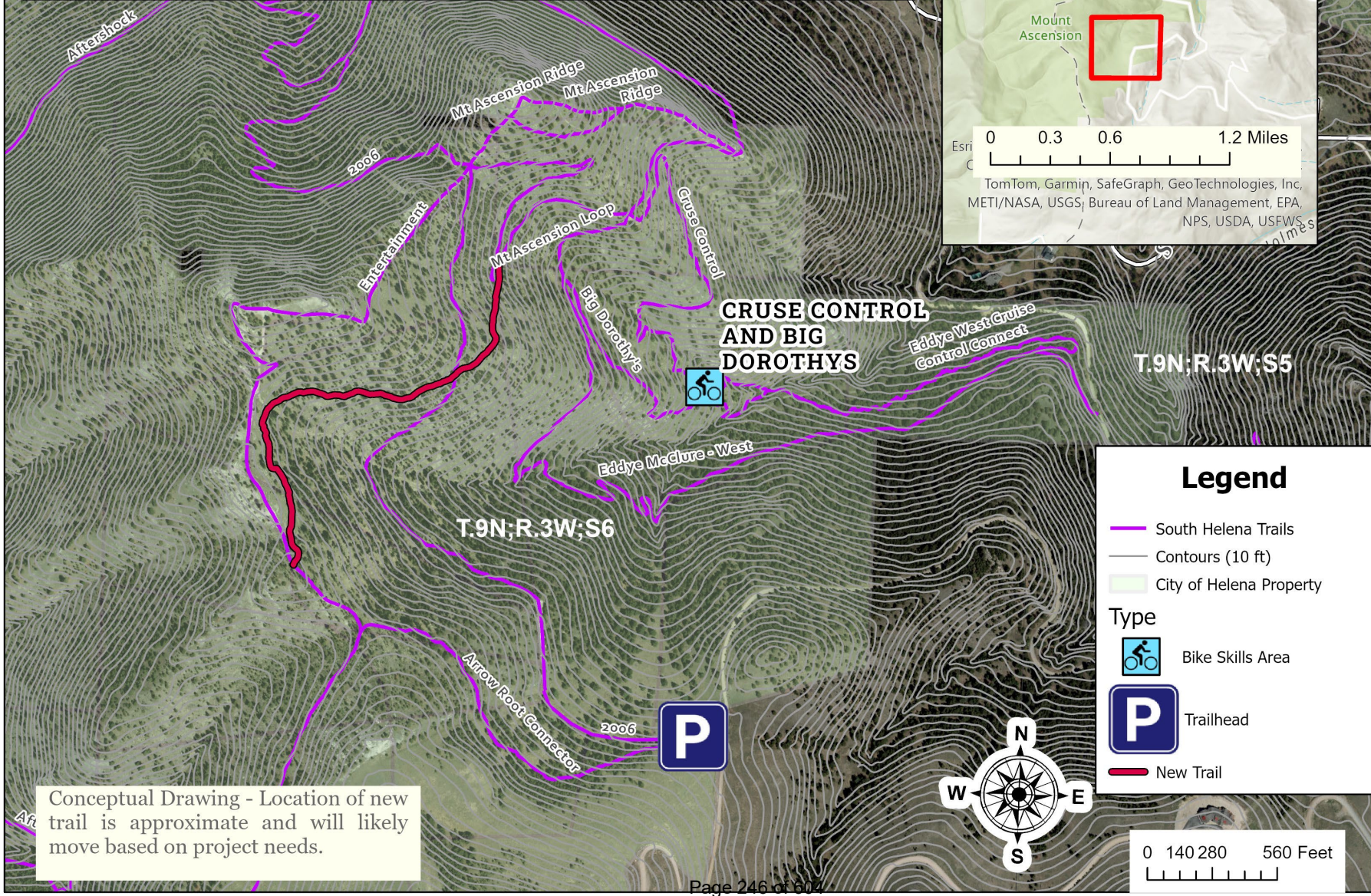
Prickly Pear Trail Proposed Reroute - EXHIBIT B



Entertainment and Ascension Loop Connector Trail– Brad Langsather, Presenter

- **Current Situation**
- To access the Directional Trails on the backside of Mt Ascension from the Arrowroot Drive Trailhead, a user must follow the 2006 Trail to the Ascension Loop Trail. This results in increased downhill bicycle use on the ascension Loop and Eddy McClure West Trails. As the use of Mt Ascension increases, there is increased opportunities for user conflict on these trails.
- **Recommendation**
- The Montana Bicycle Guild proposes creating a trail from the southern ridge of the Entertainment Trail to the Ascension Loop. This trail would be very welcomed by the mountain bike community as a preferred route to access the Directional Trails on Mt Ascension. This trail would also provide a new loop opportunity on the east side of the park, particularly in combination with the proposed low-angle connector (Goin EZ Trail). The new Entertainment to Ascension Loop Connector Trail would likely have the effect of reducing mountain bike use descending Eddy West. Although city staff anticipate frequent mountain bike use of the proposed connector trail, no use restrictions are recommended at this time. Should the proposed trail be recommended for construction, it is imperative that when crossing the 2006 Trail, and when merging into the Ascension Loop Trail, that the new connector trail have good sightlines/terrain conducive to safe crossing/merger.
- **Estimated Budget**
- \$12,000 (New trail construction, Materials)
- SEE EXHIBIT "C"

Entertainment & Ascension Loop Connector - Exhibit "C"



Conceptual Drawing - Location of new trail is approximate and will likely move based on project needs.

Lime Kiln Connector Trails– Brad Langsather, Presenter

- **Current Situation**

- Lime Kiln Drive from Virginia Dale Dr can be a dangerous road heading south. It is narrow, windy, varied in width, and characterized by poorly sloped surfaces. This road provides recreation opportunities and is frequently used by runners, bikers, and walkers.

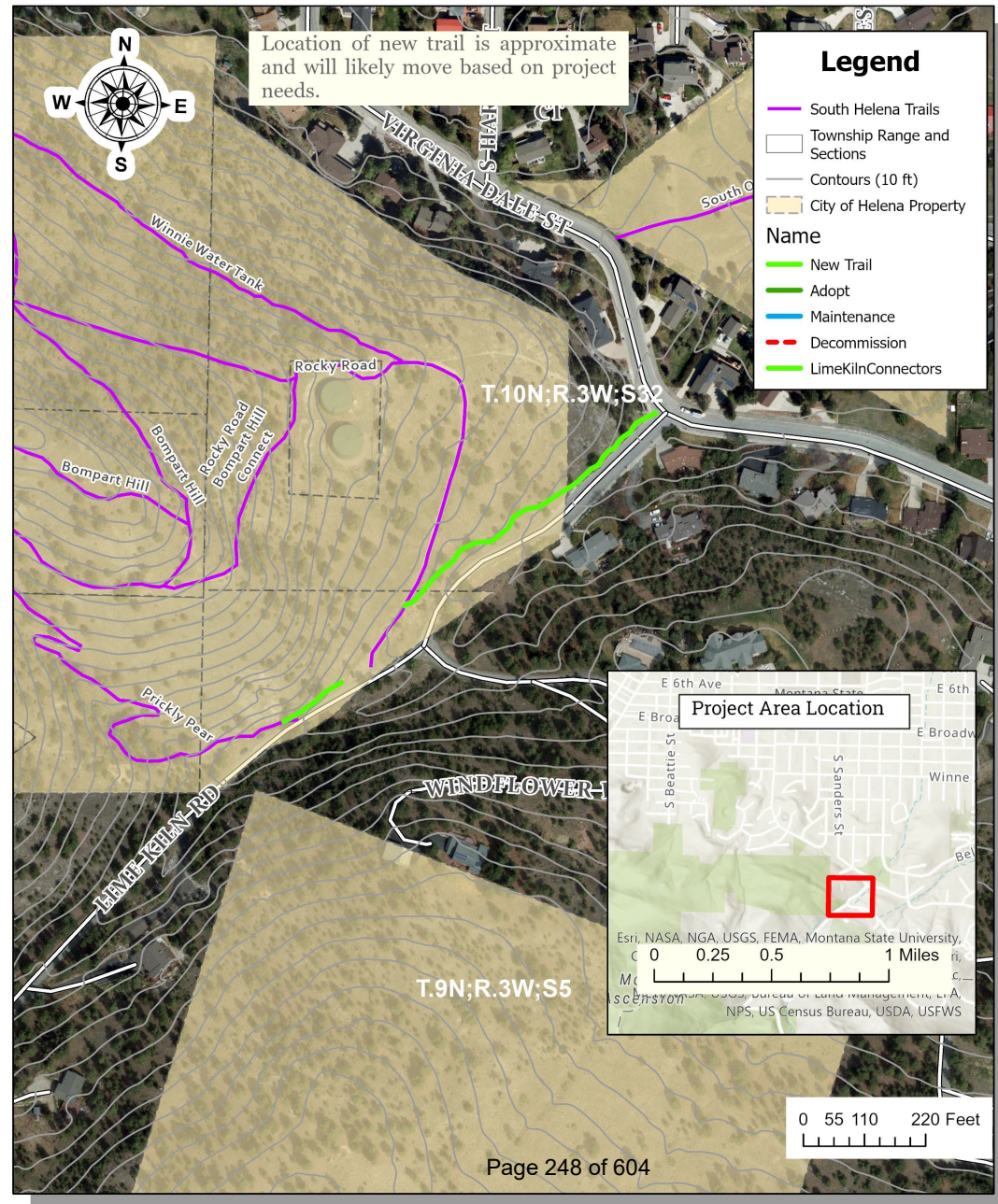
- **Recommendation**

- City staff proposes creating two trails that parallel Lime Kiln Road as it goes south. The first trail will be positioned from near the Virginia Dale Street sidewalk/Limekiln Road junction and travel in a generally southerly direction to the recently upgraded Lime Kiln Trailhead parking area. The second will connect the Lime Kiln Trailhead parking area to the point where Prickly Pear Trail intersects the Limekiln Road borrow pit.

- **Estimated Budget**

- \$4000 (New trail construction)
- SEE EXHIBIT “D”

Lime Kiln - EXHIBIT D



Mount Helena Restroom Trail – Brad Langsather, Presenter

- **Current Situation**

- The Mount Helena (Reeders Village) Trailhead parking area has two distinct tiers, that are separated by a steep, grassy bank. There are multiple social trails that connect the upper tier and lower parking lot tiers. They are difficult to use, have erosion issues, and get icy in the winter. The upper parking lot tier drains water down to a point immediately adjacent to the vaulted restroom located in the lower parking lot tier. This has created issues with water seeping through the restroom wall during stormwater run-off events.

- **Recommendation**

- City staff proposes placement of several large rocks with flat faces positioned on their sides, into holes excavated in a straight line on the bank slope that is situated between the upper and lower tiers of the Mount Helena Trailhead Parking Area. The rocks will be placed in a manner that will create stepping stairs for individuals wishing to travel from the upper parking lot tier down to the restroom located in the lower parking lot tier. One set of steps will be located just north of the restroom where a social trail marks the path that people are currently using, and a second set of steps will be constructed further to the northwest where a second social trail provides evidence of an additional route that is currently being used to travel between the parking lot tiers.

- **Estimated Budget**

- \$ 1000 (New trail construction, Obliteration, Drainage, Materials)
- SEE EXHIBIT "E"

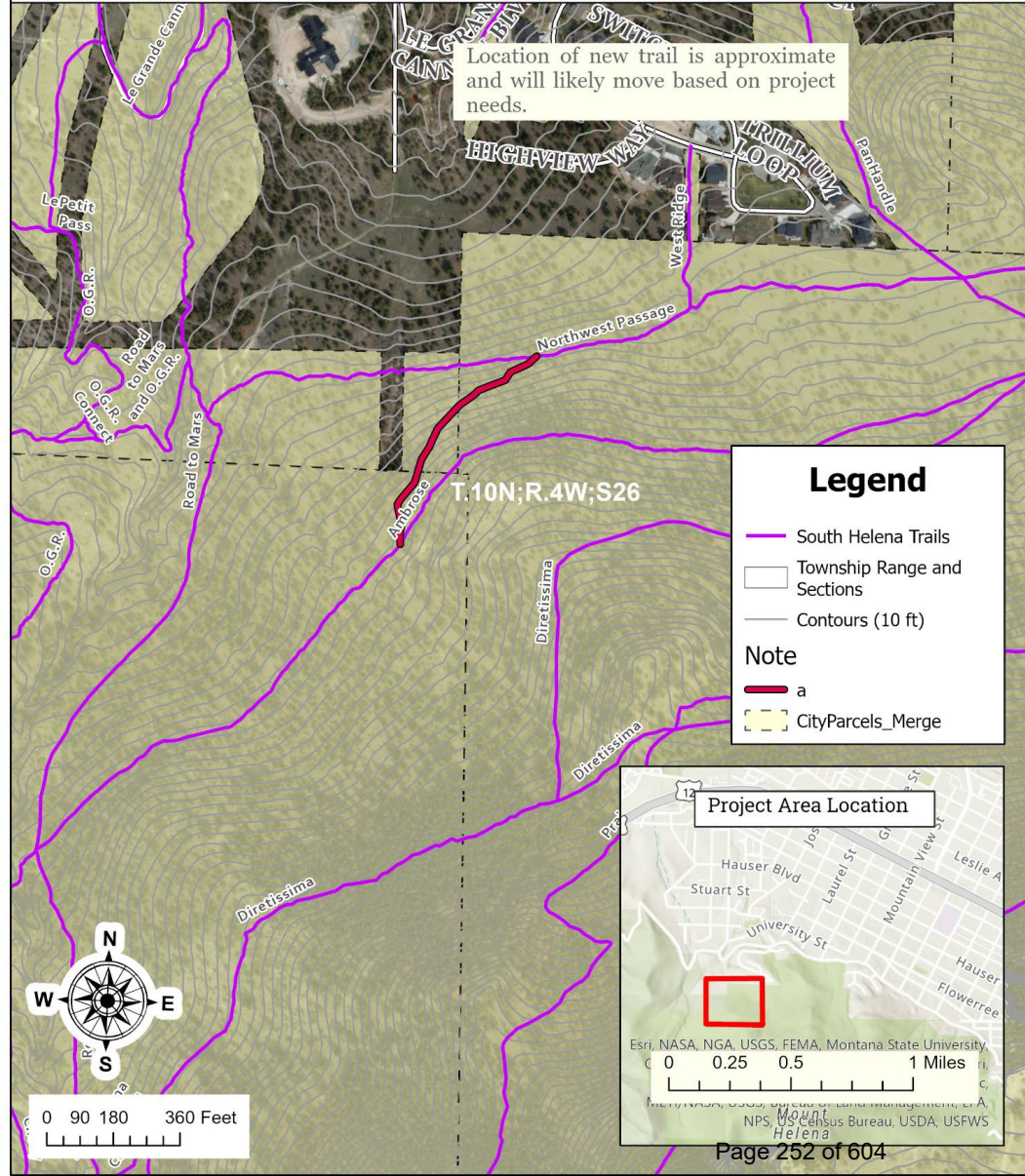
Mount Helena Restroom Trail - EXHIBIT E



Northwest Passage & Ambrose Connector– Brad Langsather, Presenter

- Northwest Passage & Ambrose Connector– Tyler Wock, Presenter
- **Current Situation**
- To get from the West Ridge/Pan Handle area to the western edge of MT Helena City Park, you must follow Northwest Passage to Road to Mars. Half of this section of Northwest Passage is downhill and following this route to Road to Mars is over a quarter mile. A connector from Northwest Passage to Ambrose Trail would increase connectivity and be convenient for those desiring an upslope route to their eventual destination point or loop trail route.
- **Recommendation**
- Create a connector trail from the Northwest Passage trail near the Westridge trail to the Ambrose Trail.
- **Estimated Budget**
- \$3500 (New trail construction)
- **SEE EXHIBIT “F”**

Northwest Passage & Ambrose Connector - EXHIBIT F



Meatloaf Area Trail Redesign– Brad Langsather, Presenter

- **Current Situation**

- The Meatloaf Hill area serves as a neighborhood open space park and contains an extensive network of non-motorized trails that are used daily by numerous hikers, bikers, and dog walkers. It has many trail routes that are simply old roads that have been adopted as trails, as well as a number of social trails that see heavy use. Some of the social trails see enough use that they should be brought up to an acceptable level of sustainability and incorporated into city's system of designated trails.

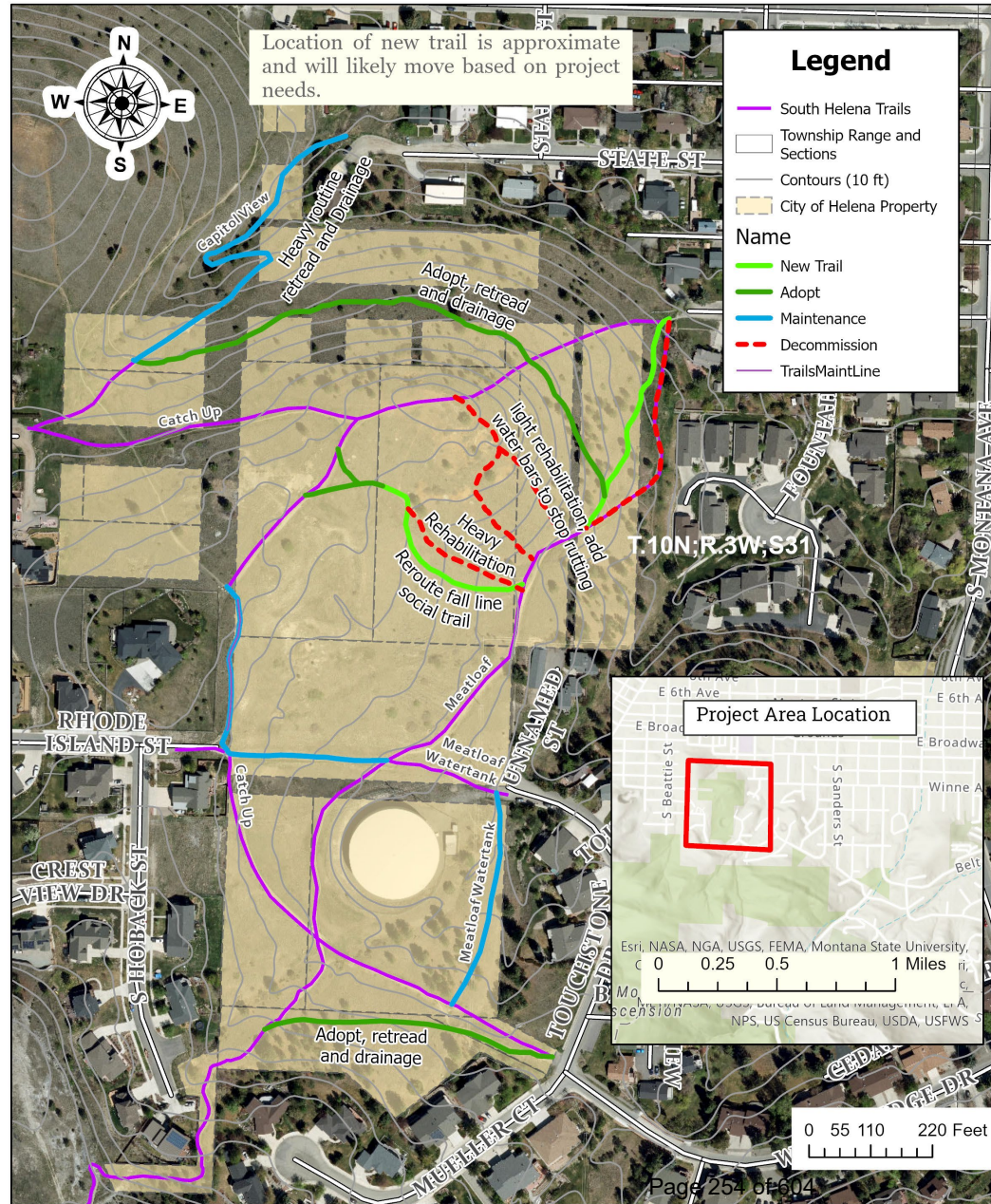
- **Recommendation**

- Reroute a portion of Meatloaf Trail nearest 3rd Street and redesign the entrance. Adopt and reroute the heavily used social trail located between Catchup and Meatloaf trails as well as rehabilitate the heavily rutted old alignment. Adopt the heavily used trail that wraps around Meatloaf Hill from the Meatloaf Trail to the Capitol View Trail.

- **Estimated Budget**

- \$8500 (New trail construction, Trail Maintenance, Adoption, and Rehabilitation)
- SEE EXHIBIT "G"

Meatloaf Hill Redesign - EXHIBIT G



2006 Trail Redesign and Switchback

Construction– Brad Langsather, Presenter

- **Current Situation**

- The Switchback Portion of the 2006 Trail, located on the north face of Mt Ascension, is a preferred route to the Entertainment Trail junction. When the trail was created, the parcel managed by the city had a smaller footprint that limited the ability of trail designers to reduce trail grades and switchback numbers. Due to the presence of a steep sidehill, and the frequency of use, the occurrence of trail user conflict is inevitable. These usage patterns have resulted in the development of a trail prism that is widened and eroded in some spots and narrowed in others.

- **Recommendation**

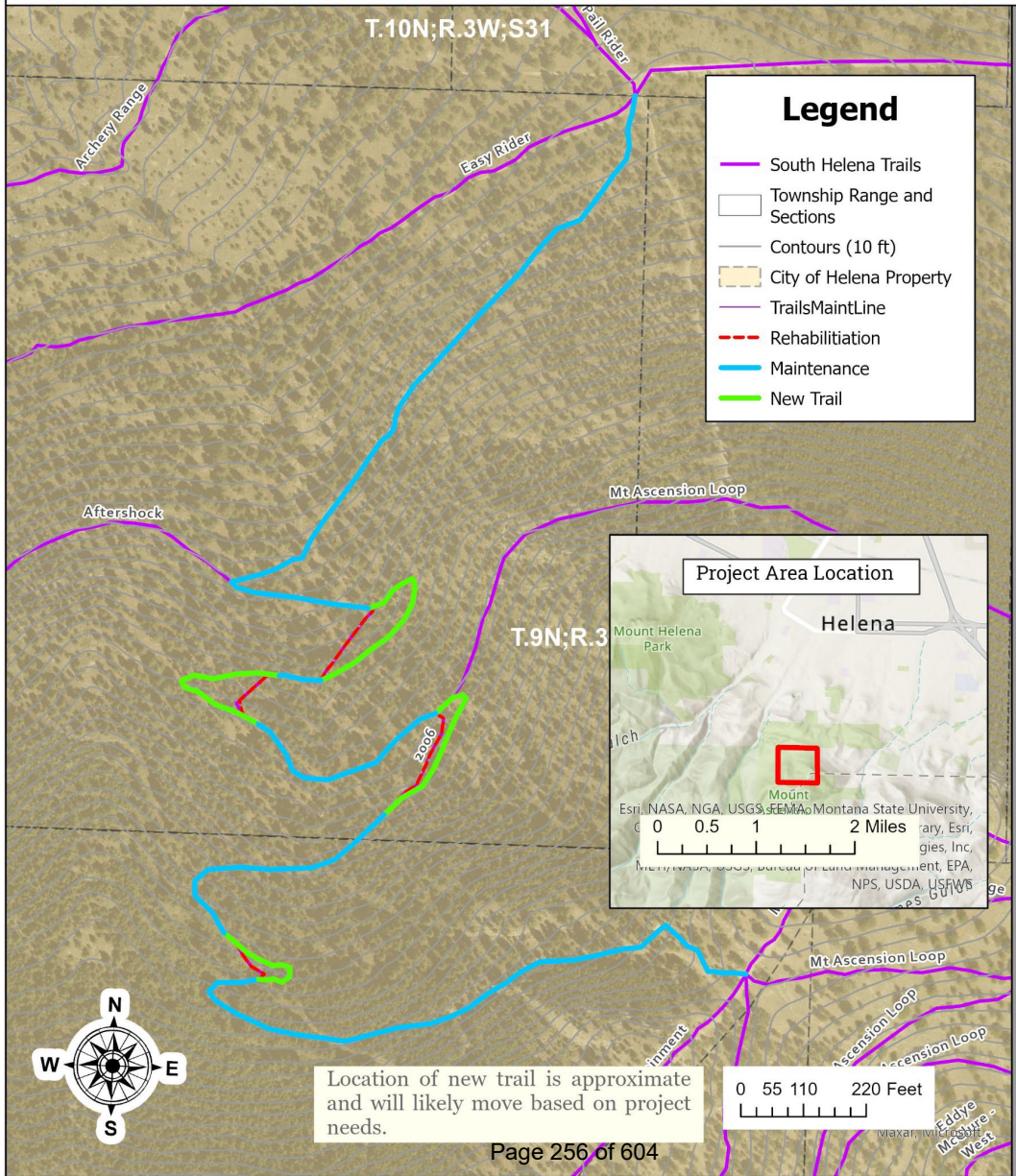
- City Staff recommends a series of short reroutes and heavy retread for that portion of 2006 Trail located between the junction of 2006/Easy Rider junction and the Entertainment Trail junction located near on the Mt Ascension ridge.

- **Estimated Budget**

- \$ 16000 (New trail construction, Existing maintenance, and Rehabilitation)
- SEE EXHIBIT “H”

2006 Switchback Reconstruction

EXHIBIT H



Eddye West and Arrowroot Trailhead Connector– Brad Langsather, Presenter

- **Current Situation**

- There currently is no designated trail route from the east end of Eddye McClure West trail to the Upper Arrowroot Trailhead parking area and/or the Entertainment Trail connector route. Therefore, at present, Eddye McClure West is essentially a dead-end trail for those users that do not want to use the Arrowroot Road to loop or continue to Eddye McClure East. A new trail here would provide users with numerous loop options that access the upper reaches of Mt Ascension.

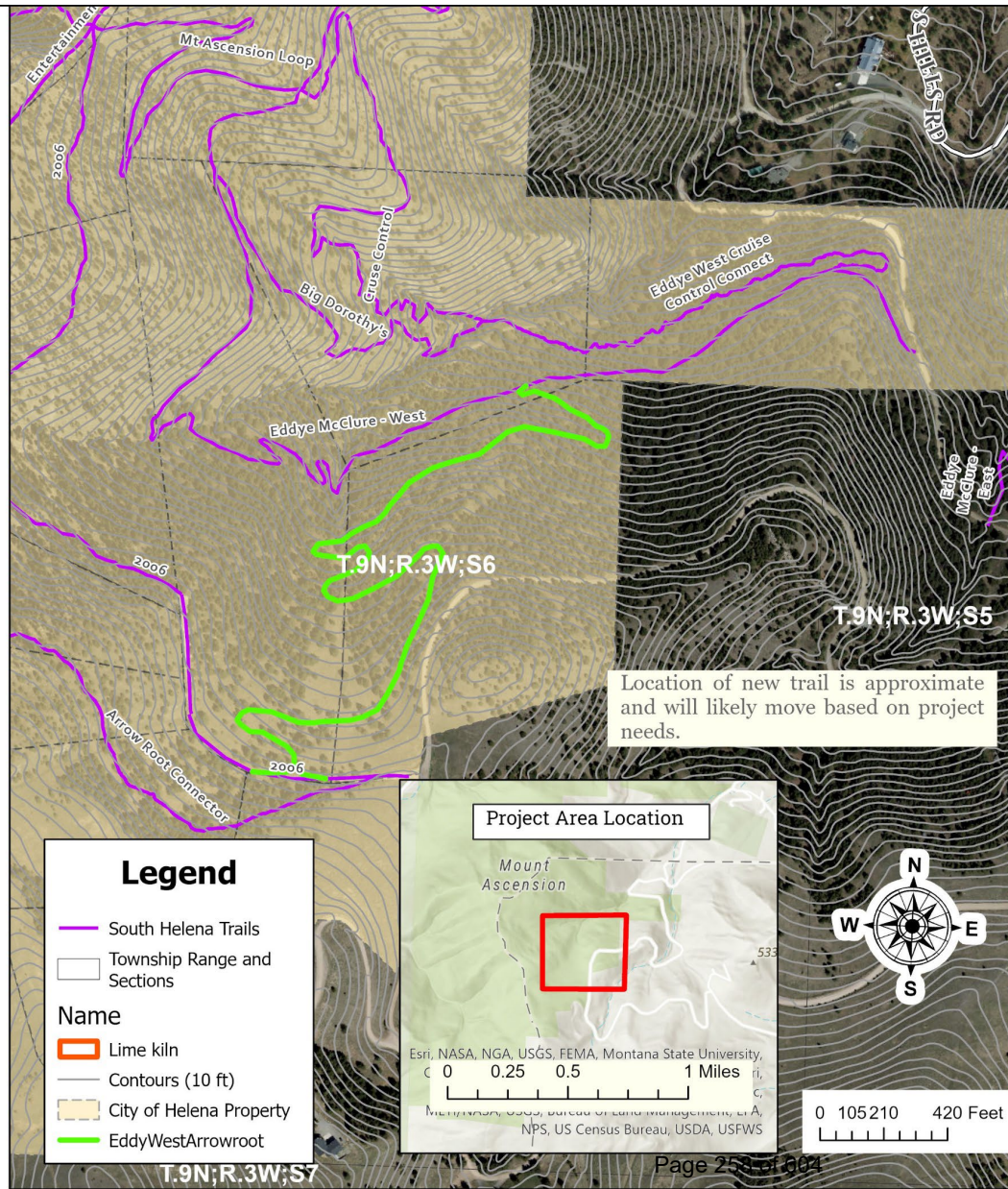
- **Recommendation**

- City Staff recommends a mellow grade trail from the eastern end of Eddye McClure West to the Arrowroot Trailhead.

- **Estimated Budget**

- \$ 16000(New trail construction)
- SEE EXHIBIT “I”

Eddy McClure West & Arrowroot Connector - EXHIBIT I



PUBLIC COMMENT SUBMITTED TO BE HEARD HELENA

Responded at	Signup Form Q1 (Username (what you put here will show up publicly in any comments you make))	Signup Form Q2 (Email)	Q1 (Please submit your comment(s) for the recommended Open Lands projects here:)
2024-12-11 10:35: s		dillonkey92@gmail.com	<p>1. Trailhead Parking Area Use Hours - Fine by me, but no gates. 2. Lower Arrowroot Trailhead Parking Area - Great idea to provide a safer road 3. Prickly Pear Reroute (From Beattie TH) - Build trails correctly the first time and we don't have to waste money on rebuilds 4. Diehl Dr Redesign - Rocks are OK. Quit turning trails into sidewalks. Waste of money. 5. Lime Kiln Connector Trails - Great for road safety, but really worth \$4000? Maybe not. 6. Mount Helena Restroom Trail - It's a restroom. People will straight line to it and ignore new trail. Waste of money. 7. Northwest Passage & Ambrose Connector - Sure, why not 8. Meatloaf Area Trail Redesign - These are neighborhood trails and heavily frequented by game. Game trails will always exist. Waste of money. 9. 2006 Trail Redesign and Switchback Construction - Bikers want singletrack single. Hikers like to walk side by side and not get their feet dirty. Lets be clear who causes this widening. 10. Eddy West and Arrowroot Trailhead Connector - Great idea, just be sure to build a TRAIL, not another sidewalk.</p>
2024-12-11 18:40: Christine W		christineweaver@bresnan.net	<p>Nature Park is a valuable outdoor resource for me, is this area eligible? I notice a fair amount of dog poop and wondered if poop bag dispensers could be erected on the three ends of the pavement, as well as garbage on the Montana Ave side (there is garbage on the other two ends).</p> <p>The proposed projects will continue to improve our public lands. The continued investment in our open lands is extremely important and appreciated. Being an avid trail user, the biggest challenge in the proposed projects is the Beattie St Trail. I believe that by making it more direct, as proposed, will hopefully encourage users to stay on the trail. I would propose educational signage about staying on the trail, protecting our wild flowers in that area etc. Thank you for all your hard work.</p>
2024-12-12 08:03: LaNette		lanettediaz@gmail.com	<p>Please include the Deford TH for night closure. There are constant late night drug and alcohol abuse and vandalism of city property.</p> <p>I do not see the need to make changes to the 2006 trail. Longer switchbacks could encourage more shortcutting. I have seen that in many areas where the switchbacks are long and tight.</p> <p>The new trail connecting eddy east with the upper lime kiln parking area is a good idea.</p> <p>General comment: switch back designs have been too tight and excessive in flat terrain. Please consider fewer switchbacks and when needed use a wider radius.</p>
2024-12-30 20:57: mculpo		mattculpo@msn.com	<p>General Comment: social trails should be considered for incorporation into the system rather than removal. A social trail is telling us that people like to go a certain way and it should be incorporated into the system. Public outreach should occur before any social trail closure.</p> <p>I support the projects proposed in the Open Lands Major Projects.</p> <p>Our trail users do a great job of sharing our trails with a variety of user groups. These proposed projects will allow us to continue the positive trail culture, despite trail use increasing.</p>
2025-01-26 10:58: Erin Madison		madison.erin@gmail.com	<p>I'm so happy to see proposals that include new trails and trail reroutes, rather than limiting trails to certain user groups.</p> <p>Do not close our trailheads and parks by criminalizing using them from 11 pm to 5 am, wasting \$2,000 of city taxpayer dollars in the process. Isolated incidents should not be an excuse to criminalize park use. Many users go to trailheads and parks to view the night sky past the arbitrary 11 pm deadline suggested and others are early risers hitting parks and trailheads before 5 am.</p> <p>If anything, post signs noting that vandalism is a crime and the accompanying criminal penalties and fines associated with the damage. The city police do not have the staff nor financial resources to patrol trailheads and parks between 11 pm and 5 am either.</p>
2025-01-30 15:20: Jayson O'Neill		jaysononeill@gmail.com	<p>Keep our trailheads and parks open, and don't criminalize their use.</p> <p>Dear Helena Parks & Recreation and Open Lands staff,</p> <p>I am writing in support of the proposed improvements for the Helena Open Lands major projects in 2025. Specifically the Eddy McClure West-Arrowroot connector trail, Going EZ trail, and Meatloaf Hill trails redesign. The proposed improvements will make it easier to access the trails, improve parking, and make it easier to complete hikes in a loop. Upgrading the trails will also cut down on pirate trails, decrease erosion, and allow the forest to be restored where it has been tore up by social trails. Thank you for your time and consideration of public comment. I enjoy all of the trails around Helena and am looking forward to seeing these improvements.</p>
2025-02-10 14:00: Abby		abigailhunthausen@gmail.com	<p>Happy trails, Abby</p>

From: [Kevin League](#)
To: [ParksAndRec](#); [Cedar League](#)
Subject: Comment on Major Projects
Date: Wednesday, December 11, 2024 7:29:08 PM

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Hi Heather,

Is it too soon to submit comments on the upcoming major projects? If not, Cedar League and I of 650 S. Davis St. Would like to encourage adding the Deford Trailhead on South Davis, to the late night closure list? Police records will back our observations of late night parking, littering and drug and alcohol abuse.

Thank you,
Kevin



Outlook

RE: Helena Open Lands Major Projects 2025 - Public Comment

From Bill H Shropshire <whshropshire@chemet.com>**Date** Fri 12/20/2024 5:59 PM**To** ParksAndRec <parksandrec@helenamt.gov>

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Good work, Parks and Rec. Thank you for what you do.

Bill H. Shropshire
American Chemet Corp.

From: ParksAndRec <parksandrec@helenamt.gov>**Sent:** Friday, December 20, 2024 9:36 AM**Subject:** Helena Open Lands Major Projects 2025 - Public Comment

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The City of Helena is gathering public comment on a proposal for Open Lands Major Projects for 2025. Comments will be accepted through January 2, 2025 and can be submitted by mail to the address below, or electronically to parksandrec@helenamt.gov or at this link: <https://beheardhelena.com/helena-open-lands-major-projects-2025>

Regards,

**City of Helena Parks, Recreation and Open Lands**

316 N Park Ave Room 405

Helena MT 59623

parksandrec@helenamt.gov



Parking closures

From Dal Smilie <dalsmilie@aol.com>

Date Fri 12/20/2024 4:54 PM

To ParksAndRec <parksandrec@helenamt.gov>

[You don't often get email from dalsmilie@aol.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

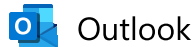
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We live right next to the park, it borders two sides of our property. I see headlights of hikers/bikers on the trails at all hours. Winter or summer. And certainly before 5:00am. I suppose they can park in the neighborhoods.

We and many others have hiked after midnight on New Years, northern lights viewing times, meteor showers, full moons and more. I'll bet there were over 75 folks on top at New Years/2000.

We do understand the problems though. I've toted hundreds of pounds of broken bottles and cans off the mountain from the last 100 years of parties.

Sent from my iPad



Outlook

Open lands major projects comment

From David Holien <daveholien1@gmail.com>

Date Fri 12/20/2024 4:49 PM

To ParksAndRec <parksandrec@helenamt.gov>

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I'm a big proponent of the Arrowroot to Eddy McClure West trail. This will be a great addition to the system and will allow people to walk/hike/ride on a trail rather than on Arrowroot Drive. However, I think the trail should be lengthened to tie in further down actually on Arrowroot drive. (Not in the middle of Eddy West trail) There is some public land there that could be utilized to make this new connector trail even longer. I feel like most people, especially mountain bikers, will want to pick up this new trail near the intersection of Eddy and Arrowroot, and it should then go all the way up to 2006 (as proposed.) also it looks like at the connector at 2006, the trail actually splits into two. In my opinion, this is not needed. Just have one trail (don't split it) to connect with 2006.

Thanks!

Dave Holien

Helena, Montana

406-465-6206

Sent from my iPhone

From: afiaschetti77@gmail.com
To: [ParksAndRec](#)
Subject: 2025 Major Projects
Date: Monday, December 23, 2024 10:25:11 AM

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Hello Helena Open Land Staff,

I would like to voice my support for the proposed major projects for 2025. They detail some much needed projects and improvements for the Mt Ascension and Meatloaf hills areas. Several of the projects are much needed to improve resource protection , user experience and correct past poor trail designs by the land trust. In particular the Eddy McClure West/Arrowroot connector represents some forward thinking by the city to improve access and the experience by trial users.

Happy Holidays,
Aaron Fiaschetti

From: [Robert Jeffrey](#)
To: [ParksAndRec](#); [Brad Langsather](#); [Jacob Garcin](#)
Subject: Helena Open Lands Trail Closure Proposal
Date: Monday, December 23, 2024 1:25:56 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from robertkjeffrey@msn.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To: City of Helena Parks & Recreation Staff
Re: Proposal to Close Helena Area Trailheads at Night

I am opposed to your proposal to close local Helena trailhead parking areas from 11PM to 5AM. There are legit users that park at these trailheads to enjoy moonlight hikes, especially in the summer months. IMO, this proposal is a classic example of adding new regulations instead of just dealing with the root problem. As far as I know, vandalism of city property is already a crime. A closure won't accomplish your goals because the looters that are vandalizing public property don't follow the rules and regulations to begin with.

How about installing one or two digital cellular trail cameras to monitor and record the culprits? The cameras could be rotated around from trailhead to trailhead. Their images (still or video) can be transmitted via a cellular signal in real-time directly to the Helena City Police dispatch office. Post signs at the trailheads that inform the users that video recording is in progress. Use some of our taxpayer dollars that are currently appropriated for the obnoxious street lighting districts in Helena that don't seem to be effective in stopping the vandalism of private property around town.

Submitted by a Helena homeowner and taxpayer,
Robert Jeffrey

From: [Jake Gunther](#)
To: [ParksAndRec](#)
Subject: 2025 Helena Open Lands Major Projects
Date: Thursday, January 2, 2025 10:09:22 AM

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Hello,

I am writing in support of the proposed 2025 HOL major projects. Specific comments on each project below.

- Trailhead Parking Area Use Hours - I agree this is appropriate and support adding the signs.
- Lower Arrowroot Trailhead Parking Area - this is a great idea and something that is needed in this area.
- Prickly Pear Reroute - I support a reroute that is based on a realistic expectation of where people will walk - i.e. don't include excessive switchbacks/etc that will inevitably be cut across.
- Diehl Dr Redesign - good idea
- Lime Kiln Connector Trails - good idea
- Mount Helena Restroom Trail - good idea and a much needed improvement
- NW Passage & Ambrose Connector - good idea
- Meatloaf Area Trail Redesign - good idea
- 2006 Trail Redesign and Switchback Construction - I am fine with maintaining the trail but am opposed to introducing excessive new switchbacks. Any trail reroutes should be completed with both uphill and downhill bike traffic in mind.
- Eddy McClure West & Arrowroot Connector - This is a good idea but the project should include a connection to this new junction from the bottom of Big Dorothy and Cruse Control for bikers heading back uphill.

Thanks,
Jake Gunther
1221 Chestnut St
Helena, MT 59601



Major trail projects

From byron deford <bdef123@yahoo.com>

Date Thu 12/19/2024 10:43 PM

To ParksAndRec <parksandrec@helenamt.gov>

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I want to go on record as supporting all the major trail projects proposed. I am especially fond of the proposed hours for vehicles at the trail heads.

Thank you

Byron DeFord 406-431-6295

From: [Chris Deveny](#)
To: [ParksAndRec](#)
Subject: Comments Re: 2025 Major Trail Projects
Date: Friday, December 27, 2024 2:27:36 PM

You don't often get email from cmdeveny7@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please consider my comments below regarding your recommendations for the 2025 Major Trail Projects on our open space lands. I was unable to attend your open house.

1. I strongly support the recommendation for fixing the mess on the Prickly Pear trail starting at the Beattie Street Trailhead and feel this should be the priority project. The resource damage here from users widening and cutting switchbacks is unacceptable. However, please extend this rehabilitation work another 100 yards further up the Pay Dirt trail where additional switchback cutting and user created trails have occurred. I also suggest placing large educational signs at the trailhead warning users to not cut corners and switchbacks and why.

2. I am concerned that the trail density on Mount Ascension is already too high and, therefore, do not support the addition of a new trail connecting Eddy McClure West to Upper Arrowroot and or the Entertainment Trail Connector. Riders already have the option to go to Eddy McClure East or loop back on the road. This was what was ultimately agreed to when the "Bike Skills" Directional Trail was punched in without public input several years ago.

Thank you for your work with Helena's trail system.

Ms. Chris Deveny
2nd Street, Helena

From: eric@montanabicycleguild.org
To: [ParksAndRec](#)
Subject: Comments on Helena Open Lands Major Projects 2025
Date: Thursday, January 2, 2025 1:57:56 PM

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Dear Parks & Recreation staff-

The Montana Bicycle Guild (MBG) has reviewed the projects proposed by Helena Open Lands for 2025.

General comments:

- The projects are well-presented and cover a broad spectrum of issues that present opportunities for improvement.
- We applaud the city's efforts to develop a more robust open lands program with internal capacity for trail construction and maintenance.
- We appreciate the city's ongoing efforts to improve the HOL estate and the experiences it offers.
- Reduction of social trail braids is welcomed, both to reduce resource impacts and potential for confusion in navigation.
- Improvement and addition of parking areas is needed. In addition to helping meet current needs more safely, additional parking may help disperse use across the South Hills.
- MBG would not support nighttime closures of the open lands as many of our members enjoy recreating after dark. However, the proposed evening closures of the identified parking areas seems to be a good compromise that should help address the concerns presented to the city.
- The MBG supports all the projects as presented.

We wish to express particular support for the 2006 trail redesign and the Eddy West – Arrowroot connection. We have voiced support for these concepts in the past and are pleased to see them incorporated into the 2025 plan. MBG volunteers may be available to help with these (and other) projects.

Finally, we would like to suggest an additional project for consideration. We propose a trail running from the ridgeline south of Mount Ascension (where the 2006 trail follows old doubletrack) down the east side of Mount Ascension to the junction with Eddy McClure West and Big Dorothy (or thereabouts). This trail would provide a new loop opportunity on the east side of the park, particularly in combination with the proposed low-angle connector. This trail would be very welcomed by the mountain bike community as a superior route to access the directional trails on Mount Ascension. It would likely have the effect of reducing mountain bike use descending Eddy West. Although we anticipate frequent mountain bike use of such a trail, we make no management recommendation. The landscape is open enough that sightlines would be good, and multiple use would likely be appropriate. Regardless of use designation, we propose that such a trail incorporate landscape

features into optional trail features as appropriate.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Eric Sivers, President

eric@montanabicycleguild.org | 406.202.0879



P.O. Box 1259, Helena, MT 59624

montanabicycleguild.org

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Doug Habermann
1016 11th Avenue
Helena, MT 59601

January 2, 2024,

To the City of Helena Parks and Recreation Department and Open Lands Division,

I would like to express my support for and to make comments on the City of Helena Open Lands Proposed Major Projects 2025. I thank Brad Langsather, Tyler Wock and Heather Kahler for the public open house on December 18, 2024 regarding these projects and the opportunity to have further comment. Their presentations clearly outlined the reasoning behind and the need for the proposed projects. Our trail system and open lands management is professional and effective as shown by the high quality resource in our extended back yard. Since the meeting, I have had a chance to look at nearly all the projects on the ground and have these additional comments to add.

The mix of proposals reflects a maturing system with one management action, five realignment and maintenance actions, one new trailhead, one creating a trail parallel to a roadway, and two new trails. With approval of these projects, staff will be able to move forward in applying for grants such as the Montana State Trails Program. The amount of funding coming from successful grant applications is another positive aspect of our Open Lands Division and Parks Department. Grants are a significant part of their budget and many of these projects will be funded by grants and not by taxes.

These are my comments for specific projects.

Trailhead use hours. A good approach to reduce vandalism. Will need the support of the police department to be successful.

Lower Arrowroot Trailhead parking area. This is a really good idea from a safety standpoint with additional benefit in management and spreading use. It will require some serious design and engineering work. There appears to be a feasible route to relocate the McClure-road intersection uphill resulting in a straight-forward crossing and probably the best location for parking/trailhead. This would eliminate the on road segment between the two trail sections which would reduce vehicle/recreationist interactions. I hope this project will include wayfaring, trail crossing and trailhead signage. Establishing parking areas where vehicle limits can be defined will give us another tool in the future.

This project is connected literally to the Eddy West/Arrowroot connector and, in concert, will bring positive improvement to this part of the trail system. It may attract more mountain bike use by allowing direct access to the downhill tracts of Big Dorothy and Cruse Control from Arrowroot trailhead. MTB use on the section of Arrowroot Drive between the trailhead and the McClure/Road intersection may increase as riders use it to make a loop. Arrowroot Drive here is a relatively lightly used piece of gravel road with no residences on it and access by Martinez Gulch Road to residences to the east. I would suggest that the trail leave the 2006 trail where the old road turns into single trail and connect to the west end of Eddy McClure West near the big gully. I have attached a map with a suggested route. This would allow more direct connection to Big Dorothy and Cruse Control and create a great walking loop route with 2006 and the Mt Ascension Loop.

The Diehl Drive Trail Redesign will be an improvement to this old trail by reducing grade and improving drainage. It will move the trail away from a close neighbor and users may have less sight contacts with each other, improving the trail visual experience. Eliminating the steep pioneered trails and the trail location makes sense, particularly the uppermost connector.

Likewise, with the Prickly Pear reroute, Meatloaf Hill redesign, and the 2006 Switchback reconstruction – good improvements and needed maintenance for a maturing trail system. I observed a lot of the trails slated for reconstruction have plenty of room to be moved uphill onto the cut as they have migrated downhill over time. Care should be taken to retain the diversity and character of each trail and to not have a one width fits all approach. That is a far better way to encourage self-selection for different types of users – a trail might be very rocky and not as good for MTB’s and remain primarily a walking trail. Wide, open trails cater more to MTB’s and they are expected and seeable there. Providing a spectrum of trail experiences supports future use restrictions, if and when they are needed.

The Northwest Passage & Ambrose connector, as stated in the project description, will increase connectivity and provide for a good spectrum of grade challenge opportunities – slow or fast climbs. This connector would also allow for quicker firefighter access above Helena. Luckily, good fuels reduction actions in this area have and will reduce fire danger.

The Mount Helena Restroom Trail is a relatively easy and small solution to heavy use at this site. I would repeat my suggestion to create a walkway along the parking area above the outhouse, move the boulders further out onto the asphalt, or build up and gravel, something to allow folks to move horizontally to where ever the trail is. There were some other ideas offered at the meeting, consider them as well, this is a good proposal.

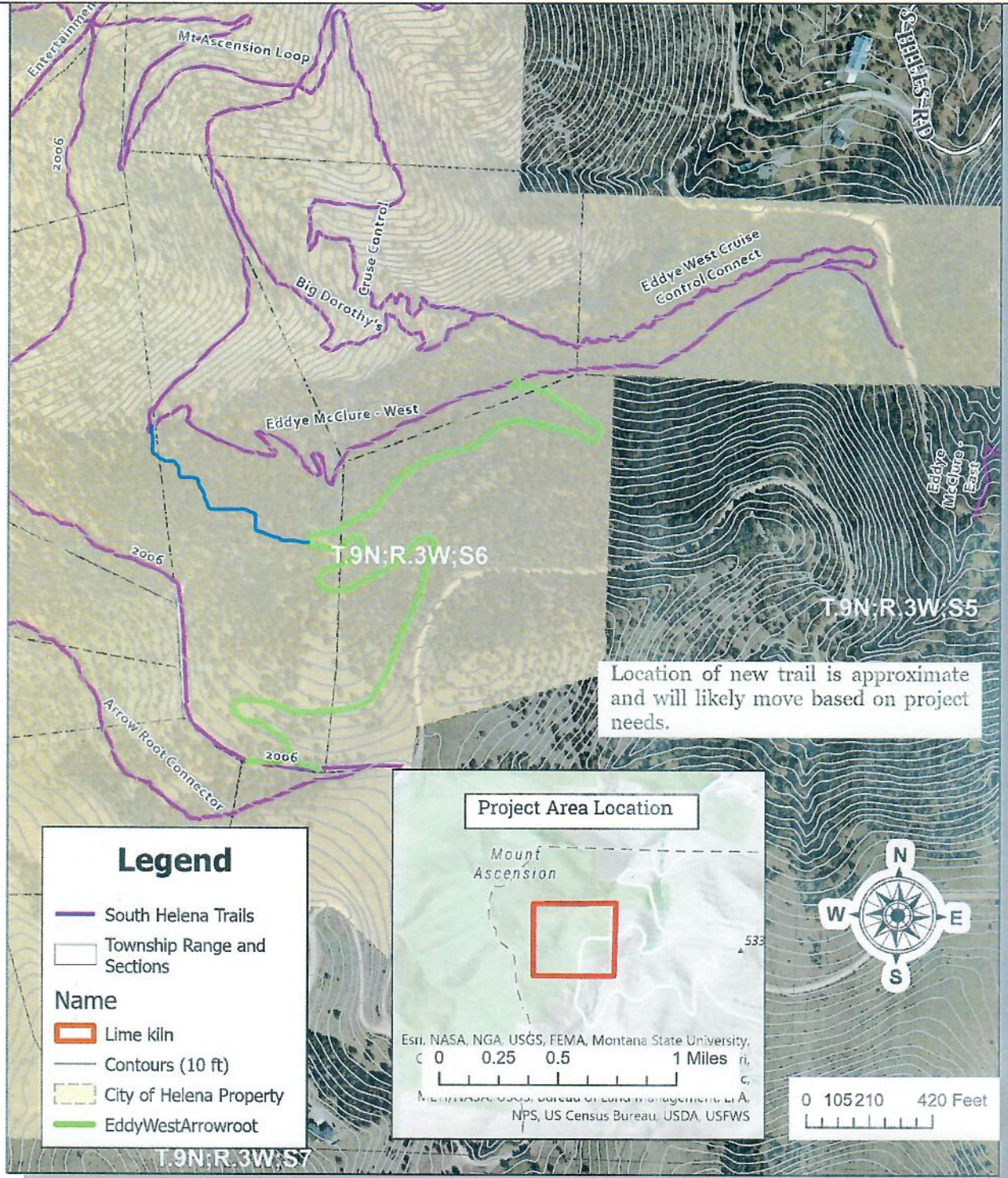
The Lime Kiln connector trails will improve trail experience and increase safety for trail users and vehicles alike. It appears some folks have already pioneered a route here. It would be good to include trail crossing signage and even a painted crosswalk to provide a seamless link between our trails and sidewalk system.

I very much as in support of these projects. At the meeting, there were several questions about public input opportunity and how would that be gathered now with the dissolution of the HOLMAC. These are valid concerns and trail users and citizens are rightfully interested in what is happening on their trails and open lands. It sounded like there will further opportunity for citizen involvement as projects move forward with funding for design and construction. This is a good thing as it builds community ownership, support for and trust in the sound management that we benefit from. It underscores the advantage of the Park Board having a public interest role in Open Land and Trails. It would be good to revisit the “Helena Open Lands Public Involvement Process for Recreation” document now that HOLMAC has been dissolved.

I will also be proposing that the Park Board be briefed on what input has been received, how the projects may have been modified and schedule for Commission approval at our next Park Board meeting on February 5. Depending on the desires of the board, we may provide support or comments in our capacity as advisors to the Department and Commission. I look forward to supporting these projects through their commission approval, design and construction phases, and, most of all, to use and enjoy them!

Doug Habermann

Eddy McClure West & Arrowroot Connector - EXHIBIT I



From: [Elisa](#)
To: [ParksAndRec](#)
Subject: Helena parks and rec trail plan
Date: Friday, January 3, 2025 8:48:05 AM

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Hello-

I want to express my support for the Helena parks and recreation trail plan and proposed maintenance of the trails, particularly on meatloaf hill and mount ascension.

I appreciate the city's commitment to the trail system in Helena. The continued maintenance and growth of the trails is beneficial for all.

Sincerely,
Elisa Fiaschetti

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Brad Langsather](#)
To: [Heather Kahler](#)
Subject: FW: Open Lands projects for 2025
Date: Thursday, January 30, 2025 10:41:22 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)



Brad Langsather
Open Lands Manager
(406) 447-8454 | blangsather@helenamt.gov



From: Tom Kilmer <tom.montana.2011@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 5:12 PM
To: Brad Langsather <blangsather@helenamt.gov>
Subject: Open Lands projects for 2025

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Hello:

Here are a few comments regarding Open Lands projects and management for 2025.

1. No new parking lots please. Why? Global Warming and traffic congestion in Helena.

No parking lot "Improvements" ie : paving, signage, enlargements..

Please encourage people to walk or bike to the trailheads or to just take a walk or bike ride in their neighborhood.

2. No additional trails on Mount Ascension or Mount Helena. Why? Trail density is excessive already.

3. Nighttime closure at Trailheads. I understand a proposed time for closure at the Dry Gulch trailhead is 11pm.

That is a good idea. But make it better. Close that trailhead and all trailheads with parking lots at 10pm.

4. Please consider a user fee for out of county and out of state Open Lands users. A recreation permit similar to what the State of Montana requires now is an excellent idea. Helena and Lewis and Clark County taxpayers are subsidizing all other users. Open Lands are not free.

That is all.

Thanks.

Thomas R. Kilmer
621 2nd Street

To: City of Helena Parks, Recreation and Open Lands Departments
Re: Draft Proposed Major Projects – City Recommendations
Date: January 2, 2025
Tony Jewett – 500 Diehl Dr., Helena

I submit these comments in response to the recent draft open lands, major projects work plan released by the Helena Parks, Recreation and Open Lands Department.

I would like to thank the Department for launching the public engagement process that many of us worked on diligently several years ago in a citizen led effort to bring a greater level of transparency to the city's open lands management and planning process. The crafting of the public engagement rules that emerged through the effort was a long and highly engaged process that in the end provided a structured, tiered outlet for interested Helena citizens to participate and comment on proposed projects, offer thoughts, ideas and alternatives and be a part of the planning and operational future affecting our open lands. As a participant in that process, it has been a disappointment that the public process has been largely neglected and closed in the recent intervening years – to my knowledge.

I recently attended the city's public hearing on the current draft plan. I was surprised to hear that the Helena Open Lands Advisory Committee (HOLMAC) has been disbanded and that it's functions are apparently now under the umbrella of the City-County Consolidated Parks Board (a separate board). In that meeting the city Open Lands Manager, when questioned about the status of HOLMAC, characterized this city board, and I paraphrase here, as not an 'official entity', duplicative and one whose functions could be folded into another citizen board. To make sure the record and the history is not arbitrarily rewritten, HOLMAC was formally institutionalized by virtue of its inclusion in the Helena Open Lands Management Plan, Final, adopted by the city commission on February 23rd, 2004. HOLMAC. Its duties, make-up and purpose can be found in Section 1.3.2. HOLMAC also has a set of adopted by-laws that govern its work and formalize its presence as a city approved and adopted citizen body providing important feedback and guidance on Open Lands to the Department and the city as a whole. I would ask that there be explanation of the decision to disband HOLMAC, accompanied by a justification for folding its duties within the City-County Consolidated Parks Board – an entity with a wide umbrella of functions and without the singular attention or expertise to address the vastly important open lands of our city.

Please accept the following comments on the current draft Open Lands Major Projects plan:

1. Focus on Trail Rehabilitation: it is encouraging to see the amount of time and resources the city is putting into rehabbing Helena’s badly deteriorating trails. That acknowledged, it is doubtful that the city will be able to keep up with the pace of this expanding deterioration, which is largely a function of overuse and misuse in recent years. With Helena’s current growth and expansion, which will not stop in the years ahead, these lands and trails are under increasing use and decay. Their functional integrity is becoming imperiled in many areas across the system. As such I would recommend that the city shift funds away from trail building projects for the time being and refocus those resources to further and expand trail repair

2. Trail Etiquette/Trail User Behavior: Several years ago, as a result of a vocal and highly engaged public asking for it, the city – in partnership with Prickly Pear Land Trust – launched a multi-layered Trail Etiquette program. This program was designed to more broadly inform and educate trail users of the rules and etiquette that govern use of our open space and pathway system. The program was designed to ‘spread the word’, stimulate a greater awareness of and support for proper trail usage, and replace the increase of user conflict that was mushrooming with a more congenial culture among trail users. This effort seems to have largely gone by the wayside, despite the fact that it was a consensus priority of all represented trail users who spent months engaged in the planning discussions. Many of the issues we currently are having with our open lands – social trails, users not yielding to other users on the trails, people not picking up after their pets, open conflict between users, etc . are a function – at least in part - of an unaware and uninformed public. I would request that the city reallocate resources away from more construction on our open space and place those resources into an enhanced trail etiquette/behavior program that reaches out consistently and deeply to the trail public. A more robust effort would undoubtedly pay major dividends on all aspects of trail management and usage, as well as likely forestall and blunt the deteriorating trail conditions.

3. Bompart/Diehl Drive Redesign: I am pleased to see that the city is planning to do major rehabilitation to this area. I have hiked Bompart Hill for well over 20 years, and in that space of time have witnessed the excessive establishment of ‘social trails’ on all sides of the hill. I would suggest that the city begin its rehab work by erasing the social trails that have been established directly from the houses on the north side up onto the existing and approved trails (and talking to the residents who are part and parcel of the illegal constructing of those trails) as it tackles the ones listed in the plan.

In regards to this draft city recommendation for Bompart, I would further request that the city not go through with its intended plan of obliterating the

existing switchbacks off of Diehl. The justification for the proposed re-route is, frankly, not accurate. Those switchbacks have remained largely stable in terms of erosion, high banking, etc. in the 20+ years that I have walked them. Today they look virtually the same as they did 20 years ago, while the rest of Bompart is a maze of unauthorized, illegal trails. The hillside on which the switchbacks climb annually has one of the finest wildflower blooms on Helena’s open space lands. To blade a new trail in that area is not only not needed, but it would lead to the ability of bike users to gain greater speed on that section as it is being proposed, posing a potential danger to other users and resulting in probable high banking and further erosion.

4. North Side of Mt Helena: Anyone using the trails on the north side of Mt Helena (Tubbs trailhead) is aware of the increasing and rapid deterioration of major sections of the trail system there – led by a mish mash of unauthorized trails, many of which head straight downhill, cut switchbacks, and create high banks on turns. Whereas a number of the plan’s recommendations justifiably seek to address some of these problems, the extent of the city’s proposed investment on this area fails to match the extent of the damage. My suggestion is to refocus some of the dollars currently allocated for trail expansion on this north side and put it into trail rehab – with a focus on emerging ‘social trails’ that are good candidates for successful rehabilitation because progress can be made before those social trails reach a ‘tipping’ point.
5. Trail Tours – a Suggestion: In looking through the draft plan I was struck by how valuable it would be for the Department to sponsor a series of public field tours as it goes through the development of that plan and composes its recommendations. It is inherently difficult for members of the general public to fully grasp the details and thoughts of the Department and their project recommendations without having an opportunity to be ‘on the ground’, and especially when the draft is released to the public in the winter months when trail conditions are not conducive normally to outdoor analysis and site visits. Tours of the interested public stakeholders along with staff would afford valuable interchanges and discussions. As a recommendation, those tours could be conducted during the summer/early fall when city staff are beginning the process of compiling their proposed work plan.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed plan. I hope my comments are useful and taken seriously in moving forward on the plans next draft and eventual adoption.

Sincerely,

Tony Jewett
500 Diehl Drive
Helena 59601
Tonyjewett1@gmail.com
(406) 431-8408

From: [Brad Langsather](#)
To: [Douglas Smith](#)
Cc: [Heather Kahler](#)
Subject: FW: Davis Gulch improvements
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 2:08:50 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)



Brad Langsather
Open Lands Manager
(406) 447-8454 | blangsather@helenamt.gov



From: Rob Freistadt <rfreistadt@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 1:35 PM
To: Brad Langsather <blangsather@helenamt.gov>; citycommission@helenamt.gov
Subject: Davis Gulch improvements

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Brad and commissioners, having read the open space improvement plan for the upcoming year, I'm wondering where the improvements to Davis Gulch trails are.

Several years ago, you had talked of improving the surface of the DeFord Trail, but other than creating an expanded bicycle skills course, nothing has actually changed on the trail itself. Getting some of the bicycles off the actual trail and onto the bicycle trail has been a great improvement.

Also, there was considerable effort made in improving the upper DeFord Trail and building rest facilities at the Old Shooting Range. However, with the increasing traffic on Davis, dust in this area makes the DeFord Trail undesirable to use especially in the evening hours. This trail would be a likely spot for family picnics if tables were provided in the area, but not at all enticing when there's so much dust in the area created by the dirt road. Is there any way of working with the Transportation Department to use recycled asphalt from other road projects in the area to more permanently solve the dust problems that have plagued Davis Gulch for many years and have increased each year as this area receives more traffic?

Thank you for looking into this.

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Rob Freistadt

507 First Street
Helena, Montana 59601
(406)443-1054

From: [Brad Robinson](#)
To: [ParksAndRec](#)
Subject: Open Lands Major Project comment
Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2025 3:40:34 PM

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I have a couple of points that I would like to make regarding the Open Lands Major Projects plan as presented.

First, I am supportive of any and all 'social trail' removal and remediation. But I would like to be assured that the old trails would be properly obliterated the way many of the trails in the Le Petit Pass, OGR, Seven Sisters, and Northwest Passage area were managed in the late fall of last year. I would not like to see the trails in the plan simply widened to absorb social trails. I enjoyed seeing and thanking your staff when I saw them working to obliterate and reclaim the social trails.

As an aside to the proposed plan, but germane in my mind, I want to share this observation. During 2024 I walked every named trail in the system, minus the smaller neighborhood feeder trails. I logged over 1,000 miles in the south hills. The corner cutting, which often leads to social re-routing happens system-wide, is worse closer to any given trailhead, but the very worst that I saw this year was above the Tubb's trailhead following the use of motorized weed mitigation crews.

Once the crews blazed the trails straight uphill, hundreds of walkers and bikers simply followed suit and, with every passing person or bike, the new trail became more obvious and more attractive to certain users.

I am strenuously opposed to any continued use of motorized resource management on Mount Helena, Mount Ascension, Wakina Sky, or Rodney Ridge. I found and recorded many instances of four-wheeler damage to the trails, grasses, forbs, shrubs, and even small trees during my trail walking. I tagged the Mayor's office and Parks and Rec is several images posted to social media asking for feedback, but heard nothing. Parks and Rec should return to walk-in management of the resource.

It seems to me to be a bad choice to use motorized crews to mitigate weeds, then follow up with spending taxpayers dollars to fix the damage caused by people following what look like established trails.

Second, I am in support of adding new trails to the system that work provide better access and improved user experiences, but obviously existing easements, the patchwork of land ownership that exists around Helena, and user density issues should be worked out before committing to a plan and setting a budget. I would want to be assured that all of these foundational issues have been addressed properly in each new trail plan.

Third, I oppose closing trailheads overnight for several reasons. As has been stated in other public comment, there are people who use the trails early and late for legitimate purposes. One park in the system already suffers from a daily closure, Northwest Park during school hours. This closure causes people to simply park on the side of the road if they want to use the park.

The signs in the parking lot at NorthWest say that vehicles not belonging to park patrons will be ticketed, etc., but they are not. Instead, those of us who like to use that park between 5 and 6am, are simply unable to do so without parking illegally along the main road or using the High School parking lot.

I believe the same thing will happen at each of the closure-proposed trailheads. A mishmash of parked cars at a locked gate is going to cause no end of trouble in the event an emergency or Parks and Rec vehicle needs to get through. Closing the trailheads will make emergency access much more problematic.

The budget for this aspect of the plan only lists signage, but I have to believe that staff-time will also be an expense. At the very least, I would like to see an estimate of monthly hours that would be dedicated to the daily task of opening and closing the gates.

Lastly, I doubt that the Parks and Rec personnel are going to quickly and successfully confront inappropriate users and get them to move along so the gates can be locked. I suspect a police presence will often be required.

Which leads me to what I feel is the proper solution; increased evening and overnight patrolling by our law enforcement officers, whose stated mission indicates they are "...dedicated to providing our community with professional law enforcement services through equitable enforcement of the law, continued professional development, and respect for the needs of our citizens."

Helena Parks and Rec does not post a mission statement on their webpage, but I doubt that it would include 'confronting ne'er do wells, vandals, and unhoused people sleeping in cars.' A well trained, compassionate police force such as we have in Helena, increasing their presence in known hotspots, is likely to serve the greater

good in a greater capacity.

Thank you for allowing me to comment, and keep up the good work- Helena is Montana's last best place to live, work, and play in no small part because of our proximity to Montanas best urban trail system and the long-term dedication that Parks and Rec and the US Forest Service, working with local conservation groups, have done to create, maintain, and improve our access to the open lands that surround us.

Brad Robinson
HelenaOutdoors.com
Helena, Montana



Friday, February 14, 2025

To City of Helena re Open Land and Trails,

Thank you for providing a second opportunity to attend an open house and make comments on these major projects. We were unable to attend the first open house due to a conflicting board meeting.

Congratulations on an ambitious slate of major projects. It is encouraging to see the City's trail building and maintenance program maturing. Given the land trust's role since 1996 in donating land to expand, and staff time to maintaining lands and trails over the years, we will continue to offer our expertise and labor to help Helena's Open Lands trail system be the best it can be.

Prickly Pear Land Trust, now in its 30th year, directly participated in the protection and donation to the City and USFS of over 1,300 acres of land in Helena's South Hills, This includes the majority of Mount Ascension, a significant portion of Mount Helena as well as Forest Service lands further south. For most of those 30 years PPLT was the primary trails maintenance and implementation partner of the city of Helena and the Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest. Since 2023 the city has been responsible for the entirety of the trail management on city lands. In that time PPLT has expanded its partnership with other public land managers and taken on a robust, regional parks program. PPLT now stewards over 500 acres of parkland between Helena and East Helena. We have grown and staffed ourselves to address the increased recreational responsibilities in addition to being prepared to assist communities we serve. As such, we remain committed to supporting this trail system in service to the Helena community. PPLT is open to explore a private-public partnership where PPLT can provide on the ground assistance as well as community goodwill for the South Hills trails system. We recognize that the needs and organizational structure of 2025 are different than they were 20, 10, or even 5 years ago. We see the challenges ahead and we are committed to adapting our partnership to meet the needs of this community.

PPLT strives to participate, as able, in regional recreational planning opportunities. We believe that land managers are better served through the thoughtful participation of its constituents and partners. As such, PPLT submits the following comments which are intended to be constructive and informative to city staff:

1. Regarding the public process. The public process remains somewhat confusing and we encourage the City to continue to improve and be transparent on the existing process.
 - a. The public process that was approved in 2020 was an annual one that would begin in September each year. It appears that that has been modified. What will



- the public process look like going forward? Annual or bi-annual? Will it remain a December/January process?
- b. In the future we encourage the city to schedule open houses and comment periods at an earlier time than directly before Christmas break. PPLT, like many others, was unable to participate in the open house or put together comments due to the timing of that process. It surely contributed to the fact that only 18 comments were submitted during the initial comment period. The second open house and comment period is welcome. We hope it comes with increased participation.
 - c. There are some inconsistencies in the updated documentation that was shared in advance of the second open house.
 - i. The Environmental Analysis (EA) forms reference the completion of a 30-day public comment period but, as far as we can tell, it appears the initial comment period was 15 days (December 18 - January 2). Is it correct that the 30-day period referenced is actually two 15-day periods that together total 30 days? If so, then it is confusing that the EAs reference the completed comment period rather than acknowledging it as an ongoing process.
 - ii. The EAs also reference that the “vast majority of the comments were positive” and, while this appears to be true, with only 18 comments received at the close of the initial deadline, we hope that the city factors in any additional comments received for a more representative sampling. How will the EAs and project specifics be updated following the 2nd comment period?
 - iii. Separately, we encourage the city to set robust goals in terms of the feedback they would like to see during comment periods such as these. Please lean on PPLT and other local recreational groups to spread the word in the future. We could have helped spread the word to drive up participation and, hopefully, reduce the number of people who feel that they were not involved in the process, as we have seen in past projects. For example, PPLT recently put together a trail survey and garnered over 850 participants. If we work together we can magnify the city’s reach.
 - d. We are glad to hear that there is still an avenue for the public to engage on open lands issues. Brad Langsather mentioned quarterly report outs at the consolidated parks board meetings. Can the City provide clarity as to what months those Open Lands sessions will be? While comment periods like this one are great for trail feedback, there are a number of other open lands issues (weeds, fuels and timber work, signage, etc.) that are deserving of public input. We encourage the city to restart the HOLMAC committee and bring back a more direct line of communication between the open lands program and the public.
 - e. It appears that between the first and second open house a couple projects were removed and a few others added. Brad indicated the reasons for that at the open



house but we think it would be a best practice to articulate those changes in any communications that go out. If one had not attended the open house there would be no way to know the difference without comparing the two open house project packets. Additionally, we think it would be good to see city staff logic behind the adoption of the projects that came from the public. It would be good to know who in the community is proposing these projects - neighborhoods, individuals, groups, etc. Will these new projects that were not a part of the original proposals have an extended comment period as they are only subject to the 15 days of his second period and the requirement is 30?

- f. The timeline of construction of these projects is unclear. Are these just for 2025 or is the time horizon multiple years?

2. Regarding general trail priorities and maintenance.

- a. The South Hills present unique challenges to land managers from a trails perspective that are important to consider when making trail construction and maintenance decisions. The main footprint of the South Hills system was created as primarily an adoption of game trails and old motorized routes from when motorcycles were allowed to ride on Helena's open lands. This means that many of the trails (including many of the most popular trails!) are not built to modern trail design standards. If one were to erase the existing system from the map and start from scratch, the new system would look wholly different. This means that many existing trails require a level of maintenance above what a modern, intentionally designed system would require. Balancing the upkeep of these trails in conjunction with a growing public's use and expectation of the system is a challenge that PPLT understands entirely.

- i. Any significant trail maintenance and construction or closure projects should involve an abundance of public notice prior to work being initiated. We have seen time and time again projects that should not be controversial become so because the public felt uninformed.
- ii. Additionally, we believe that there should be an increased emphasis and commitment to trail etiquette and education in the Helena area in order to be proactive in reducing user conflict (be it, hikers, bikers, dog-walkers, etc.). We encourage the open lands program to set aside an appropriate portion of its annual budget towards trail etiquette and education.
- iii. Generally speaking, it appears that the city is utilizing mechanized construction and maintenance techniques at a far greater rate than had been typical in the past. The benefits are obvious; more dirt can be moved by less people, more efficiently than hand crews. While this is true, PPLT encourages the city to be thoughtful in the application of mechanized techniques. Beyond the higher impact and visibility of the construction, some of the risks include a changing of the South Hills trail culture and character. This system was built by locals for locals and



we believe there could be an unintentional consequence of losing some of the special connection this community has to its trail system. We encourage the city to utilize local volunteers, whether through PPLT or another local group or through city programs, to maintain trails where

possible. Additionally, mechanized use typically creates trails that are wider (30"-48") vs. hand built single track (18"-30"). This is not inherently a bad thing and, frankly, Helena's trails will naturally widen over time with increased use but, wider trails means more challenging maintenance in the future. Simply put, the wider a trail is, the harder it is to maintain. PPLT fears that, while mechanized construction is often more efficient in the short-term, we may see an increase in future maintenance costs in order to maintain these wider trails. PPLT encourages the city to be strategic and intentional when utilizing higher impact mechanized Techniques.

3. Specific Projects:

- a. Trailhead Parking Area Use Hours: PPLT recognizes the need for enforcement and understands the challenges and impacts of bad actors using trailheads inappropriately. We also know that there are small, but passionate groups of recreationists that utilize trailheads for full moon hikes or bike rides and we hope that enforcement will be limited to those creating a nuisance and not the general public.
- b. Lower Arrowroot TH and Parking Area: Before pursuing the construction of a new parking lot PPLT encourages the city to sit down with stakeholders in the Martinez Gulch/Arrowroot area to try to come up with a solution for the lost parking on the east side of Eddy McClure East. If that parking situation can be resolved there may not be a need for the city to pursue an expensive parking solution in an area where road maintenance and access is already difficult. While not a landowner in this area, PPLT holds multiple trail easements on the Eddy McClure East trail and, as a stakeholder, would like to be a part of a solution. Please include us in any meetings relating to Arrowroot parking going forward.
- c. Prickly Pear Trail Proposed Reroute: This is a great idea. PPLT and the City originally worked together to establish this trail and it is apparent that trail users of all kinds are wanting a different line on this trail. Note, that one reason contributing to the failure of these trails was the lack of vegetation or materials necessary to close down the old trail and sightlines. When the trail was originally built there was ample materials but subsequent fuels reduction projects eliminated those materials and as such, without the practical or visual barriers, the public was able to cut the switchbacks with ease. Fire protection projects in the wildland urban interface should take precedence over trails but the trail would likely have been designed differently if the limitations in materials and creation of



visual barriers were known from the start. We encourage the city to collaborate between departments on the front end to, hopefully, avoid having to redo projects like this.

- d. Diehl Dr Redesign - Smart to remove this project from the current slate. Very challenging social trail issues here.
- e. Entertainment/Ascension Loop Connector trail - This seems like a trail that will be popular with users of all types. The explanation given is a bit confusing in regards to reducing bike use on certain trails. It seems like it could displace some use but, if anything, with the increased loop opportunities in the area it would not be surprising to see an increase in use from all user groups. This is particularly true when considering the addition of the newly proposed Goin' EZ trail. Paired together, along with 2006 improvements there could be a dramatic increase in use and, therefore, maintenance and potential user conflict. Regardless, this trail will no doubt be popular, PPLT encourages the city to be intentional about how it is constructed and the impact it will have.
- f. Lime Kiln - Smart project.
- g. Mount Helena Restroom Trail - Good change to build stairs.
- h. Northwest Passage and Ambrose Connector - Great idea. Should create some additional loop potential for users.
- i. Meatloaf Hill redesign - These are great ideas. An ambitious project, as the closing down of the old trails with such a long history of public use in this area will prove a challenge and will require signage and diligent followup and maintenance once completed. The social trail adoptions are straightforward. PPLT's concern is if the public will utilize the rerouted trails or go back to their old social trails.
- j. 2006 Switchback Reconstruction - This is a great project to improve sustainability and user experience on a very popular trail. PPLT's concern is the public respecting these extended switchbacks. We would hate to see these trails get redone again in the future like the above-listed Prickly Pear trails. We encourage the city to close the old routes in a significant way and supplement with signage on the old routes in the hopes of encouraging people to utilize the new trails. Be diligent about maintaining the closures so that they don't get reopened.
- k. Goin' EZ trail - Another new project that could use a bit more explanation. The EA references a completed 30-day comment period with positive comments received but, as far as PPLT can tell, it is a new project that has not yet received public input. Similar to the above connector trail comments this trail will surely be popular and create numerous new loop opportunities for users. We believe that, coupled with the Entertainment/Loop connector trail, there may be an unintended consequence of driving up use in this area and want to encourage the city to consider the potential impacts here before initiating construction. Additionally, the proposed corridor is on fairly steep terrain and may require significant dirt moving to achieve the 40" trail width as proposed. Due to the elevation changes and wider nature of this trail it may require more than average maintenance in the



future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and good luck to city staff on implementing this ambitious slate of projects. As ever, PPLT remains committed to supporting successful trail projects in the South Hills and is happy to sit down with the city to discuss strengthening our public-private partnership.

Sincerely,

Nate Kopp

Program and Trails Director
Prickly Pear Land Trust



City of Helena, Montana

01/27/2025

To:

Honorable Mayor Collins and City Commissioners

From:

Tim Burton, City Manager
Chris Brink, Community Development Director
Michael Alvarez, Planner II

Subject:

Consider an ordinance that changes the zoning in The Peaks Phase 1, MVM from R-U to R-4 [War Eagle St]

Present Situation:

The properties at the Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows are currently vacant and are zoned R-U (residential-urban), B-2 (commercial) and R-2 (residential). The applicant/ property owner is requesting a zone change to the R-4 (residential-office) zone type.

Background Information:

The area was originally pre-zoned and platted in 2012. In early 2024 the plat was altered to better meet current market demands. The current areas zoned no longer match the plat with two of the properties having more than one zone type cutting across them. The southern of those two properties currently has a portion that is zoned R-2 (residential) and the northern of those two properties currently has a portion that is zoned B-2 (commercial). These remnants from the previous plat should be cleaned up with this application for zone change.

This area was originally envisioned as having more lots with R-2 (residential) zoning. The area's change to R-U (residential-urban) zoning was driven by the envisioned unit type (duplexes), and density. R-U (residential-urban) zoning lends itself to duplex and town-home style development. However, the change in the plat in the area from many individual lots to fewer lots with condominiums meant R-U (residential-urban) zoning was no longer appropriate. Residence, multiple dwelling-units (3 or more) is not a permitted use in the R-U (residential-urban) zone type. A change to R-4 (residential-office) would allow the envisioned residential development.

Proposal/Objective:

The applicant, Mountain View Meadows, LLC, is requesting the following Zone Change, from R-U (residential-urban) to R-4 (residential) for the properties legally described as Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14; of The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

Advantage:

R-U is not appropriate for the size and shape of the 3 tracts. The R-U zoning district would limit the maximum number of units that could be built on these tracts to 6. R-3 and R-4 zoning districts permit the multiple-dwelling unit (for instance multiple duplex condos) that better could better fill the tracts with housing.

Notable Energy Impact:

The efficiency of dwelling units and their energy impact is dictated by building code.

Disadvantage:

There is no disadvantage to removing R-U from these tracts. The city has a preference for R-3 to limit the impacts of traffic concerns in the

area. The requested zone change should be amended to capture the R-2 and B-2 zoning designations on portions of the property.

Quasi-Judicial Item:

True

Notice of Public Hearing:

True

**Staff Recommendation/
Recommended Motion:**

Staff recommends **Approval** of an ordinance amending City of Helena ordinance no. 3097 and the official zoning map for the City of Helena that:

Changes the zoning district from R-U (residential-urban) to **R-3 (residential)** for the property legally described as Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14;

changes the zoning district from B-2 (commercial) to R-3 (residential) for that portion of Lot 1 Block 21;

and changes the zoning district from R-2 (residential) to R-3 (residential) for that portion of Lot 5 of Block 26;

of The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

STAFF REPORT

Mountain View Meadows The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows – War Eagle St

Zone Change from R-U to R-4

Case# ZONC2411-0003

Michael Alvarez
Planner II

Community Development Department
316 North Park Avenue, Room 402
Helena, Montana 59623





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Section 1 - Project Overview

The applicant, Mountain View Meadows, LLC, is requesting the following Zone Change, from R-U (residential-urban) to R-4 (residential) for the properties legally described as Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14; of The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

The applicant's preference is for R-4 (residential-office) in order to best match the surrounding zoning and uses in the immediate vicinity. However, after conversations with city staff, the applicant has stated in writing that they would be comfortable moving forward with a zone change to R-3 (residential). City staff has concerns about the potential traffic implication of R-4 (residential-office) zoning that would be lessened with R-3 (residential) zoning (outlined in more detail in the transportation section of this report). The current development plans for the three parcels would not be impacted by either zone type.

There is a portion of Lot 1 of Block 21 of unknown specific size (<.5ac) that is zoned B-2 (commercial) and a portion of Lot 5 of Block 26 of unknown specific size (<.75ac) that is zoned R-2 (residential). Community Development Department staff recommends a change of those portions of the lots to the R-3 (residential) zoning district as well though the specific asks for changes from B-2 (commercial) or R-2 (residential) to R-3 (residential) is not made in the application. This was an unintentional omission.

These properties are in the Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows and are generally located along War Eagle St between Eloise Cobell St and Peaks Ave.

The subject properties currently have predominantly R-U (residential-urban) zoning. The subject properties have B-2 (commercial) zoning to the north (adjacent), R-U zoning to the west (adjacent), R-4 (residential-office) zoning to the east (adjacent), and R-2 (residential) zoning to the south that has a pending zone change to R-U (residential-urban) that has received a recommendation of approval from the Zoning Commission as of the writing of this staff report.

Section 2 - Staff Recommendation

Move to recommend **Approval** of an ordinance amending City of Helena ordinance no. 3097 and the official zoning map for the City of Helena that:

Changes the zoning district from R-U (residential-urban) to **R-3 (residential)** for the property legally described as Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14;

changes the zoning district from B-2 (commercial) to R-3 (residential) for that portion of Lot 1 Block 21;

and changes the zoning district from R-2 (residential) to R-3 (residential) for that portion of Lot 5 of Block 26;

of The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

Section 3 - General Information

Application Date: November 01, 2024

Public Hearing Dates: Zoning Commission – January 14, 2025
City Commission – March 10, 2025 – Final Passage / Public Hearing

Public Meeting Date: City Commission – February 10, 2025 – First Passage

Applicant: Mountain View Meadows, LLC
ATTN: Mark Runkle
431 South Alice St
Helena, MT 59601

Authorized Representative: Stahly Engineering & Associates
ATTN: Nicholas Heard
3530 Centennial Dr
Helena, MT 59601

Property Owner: Same as applicant

Legal Description: Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14; of The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

General location: These properties are generally located along War Eagle St between Eloise Cobell St and Peaks Ave

Present Land Use: Vacant

Adjacent Land Uses: North: B-2 (commercial)
South: R-2 (residential) pending zone change to R-U.
East: R-4 (residential-office)
West: R-U (residential urban) & R-U (County, urban-residential mix)

Tract/Property Size: Approximately 8 acres

2019 Growth Policy

Land Use Designation(s): Urban– This category includes predominantly moderate- to high-density residential uses, and may include public uses such as schools, churches, and open lands such as parks and occasional commercial

uses that serve the immediate area or are relatively small and low-intensity. Within the County, this category includes areas closer to the City; areas with few development constraints; areas that may be currently developed or could be redeveloped at higher densities; and may include a variety of uses including commercial and light industrial.

Mixed Use– Places where people can work, live, and play and learn. These areas include a variety of complementary and integrated uses such as, but not limited to, all forms of residential; office; light industrial/manufacturing; retail, entertainment or public uses. Development is usually in a denser comprehensive pattern to achieve a unified, functional, efficient, and aesthetically appealing physical setting, and provides opportunities for connectivity, public transportation, and walkability. Mixed-use areas do not use the traditional segregation of uses.

Section 4 - Public Process

- A. Zone Change applications are filed with the Community Development Department, and any required fees must be paid upon submission of an application. The application will then be reviewed by City staff, per City Code Section 11-1-10.
- B. The Zoning Commission shall hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the City Commission, per City Code Section 11-1-10.
- C. The City Commission shall pass an ordinance approving the zoning change, which is effective thirty (30) days after the passage of the ordinance. (Ord. 3097, 4-7-2008)

This review process as defined by Helena City Code allows for public comment, staff review, and vetting through city departments and appointed and elected boards or committees prior to approval. As part of this process, the Community Development Department sends the application materials to applicable departments for their review and comment. This leads to a full evaluation of potential impacts and helps determine how the proposed conditional use relates to the review criteria.

Public Comment

An integral part of the review process is the conducting of public hearings and the solicitation of public comment. Comments are welcome throughout the entire process including during the public hearings. As of January 03, 2025, there have been no comments received regarding the proposed rezoning. Any comments received during and after the hearing conducted by the Zoning Commission will be attached to this report and presented to the City Commission for their review and final decision.

Section 5 –Evaluation

The properties at the Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows are currently vacant and are primarily zoned R-U (residential). The applicant/ property owner is requesting a zone change to the R-4 (residential-office) zone type.

The area was originally pre-zoned and platted in 2012. Earlier this year (2024), the plat was altered to better meet current market demands. The current areas zoned no longer match the plat with two of the properties having more than one zone type cutting across them. The southern of those two properties currently has a portion that is zoned R-2 (residential) and the northern of those two properties currently has a portion that is zoned B-2 (commercial). These remnants from the previous plat should be cleaned up with this application for zone change.

This area was originally envisioned as having more lots with R-2 (residential) zoning. The area's change to R-U (residential-urban) zoning was driven by the envisioned unit type (duplexes), and density. R-U (residential-urban) zoning lends itself to duplex and town-home style development. However, the change in the plat in the area from many individual lots to fewer lots with condominiums meant R-U (residential-urban) zoning was no longer appropriate. Residence, multiple dwelling-units (3 or more) is not a permitted use in the R-U (residential-urban) zone type. A change to R-4 (residential-office) would allow the envisioned residential development.

R-4 (residential-office) allows for very a very similar set of uses to R-U (residential-urban). Both R-U (residential-urban) and R-4 (residential-office) have the possibility of allowing more intense, traffic-generating uses along the street by right (such as a sit-down restaurant). The largest difference between the zone types is the lack of setbacks in R-U (residential-urban) zoning and allowing for the residence, multiple dwelling-units (3 or more) use in the R-4 (residential-office) zoning district.

The Future land use map designates this area as both “urban,” and “mixed-use.” a higher density residential area, with some flexibility to add low-intensity and complimentary additional uses. These zone types better reflect that intent statement than the overly limited R-2 (residential) and the overly permissive B-2 (commercial) zone types. R-4 (residential-office) zoning for the area is generally considered to be a better fit for the “mixed-use” future land use designation, and R-3 (residential) for the “urban” designation, but future land use map types are not zoning districts and there is sound reasoning for either zoning district to be used to promote those types of development.

76-2-304. Criteria and guidelines for zoning regulations.

1. Zoning regulations must be:
 - a. made in accordance with a growth policy; and
 - b. designed to:
 - i. secure safety from fire and other dangers;
 - ii. promote public health, public safety, and the general welfare; and

- iii. facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public requirements.
2. In the adoption of zoning regulations, the municipal governing body shall consider:
 - a. reasonable provision of adequate light and air;
 - b. the effect on motorized and nonmotorized transportation systems;
 - c. promotion of compatible urban growth;
 - d. the character of the district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses; and
 - e. conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout the jurisdictional area.

EVALUATION

1. **Zoning regulations must be:**

a. **Made in accordance with a growth policy;**

The 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy designates this area as “urban” along the straight section of War Eagle. Urban is defined in part as predominantly “moderate- to high-density residential uses, and may include public uses such as schools, churches, and open lands, such as parks and occasional commercial uses that serve the immediate area or are relatively small and low-intensity.” The curved section of War Eagle St is designated as “mixed use.” Mixed use areas are generally considered to be places where people can live, work, and play all in the same area.

Future land use designations are not zone types, and a future land use designation should not necessarily exclude a zone type from an area without considering the merits of the specific project. In this case, there are positives and negatives to choosing either R-4 (residential-office) or R-3 (residential). R-4 (residential-office) would logically match the surrounding zoning for future development. Someone looking to modify a home into an office could do so along War Eagle to the south of the subject area (pending its zone change to R-U) and could also do so along the south side of Jeannette Ranking (the north side is zoned commercial). R-3 (residential) would better lock-in the residential nature of the area.

R-U (residential-urban) zoning doesn’t fit the size of the subject properties and it would be impossible to meet the intended densities envisioned by the G2019 Growth Policy for the area if the zoning remains R-U (residential-urban).

The proposed zone change aligns with the following goals and objectives:

- [G.02] Support provision of housing that is safe, available, accessible, and affordable for all Helena residents.

- [G.10] Plan for and establish types and quantities of land uses in Helena supporting community needs, neighborhood centers, aesthetics and the City’s long-term sustainability.
- [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.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.

b. Designed to:

i. Secure safety from fire and other dangers;

The subject property is within the City of Helena Urban Standards Boundary and is currently served by all City of Helena emergency services. The proposed zone change will not impact the levels of emergency services available in the surrounding area.

ii. Promote public health, public safety, and the general welfare;

Both R-4 (residential-office) and R-3 (residential) zoning would bring a setback for buildings that R-U (residential-urban) zoning doesn’t currently have. This may improve sight lines for cars or pedestrians looking to cross the street.

iii. Facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public requirements.

The properties are served by City of Helena streets, utilities, and public services. The proposed zone changes and any future uses’ impacts on services were calculated at the time of annexation and/or final plat. There is no expectation that this re-zone would have significant impacts beyond what was anticipated at that time.

2. In the adoption of zoning regulations, the municipal governing body shall consider:

a. Reasonable provision of adequate light and air;

The property is currently vacant. The reasonable provision of light and air will be maintained through the district dimensional standards of the R-U and R-4 zoning districts. A comparison table of the applicable districts is below:

	R-U (Residential- Urban)	R-1/R-2 (Residential)	R-3 (Residential)	R-4/R-O (Residential- Office)
Lot area	No minimum	No minimum	No minimum	No minimum
Lot coverage	60% maximum Additional 5% for porch attached to front or side	40% maximum	40% maximum	60% maximum
Front lot line setback	No minimum	10' minimum	10' minimum	10' minimum
Rear lot line setback	No minimum	10' minimum	10' minimum	10' minimum
Side lot line setback	No minimum	8' minimum	6' minimum for each side yard	6' minimum
Height	42' maximum	30' maximum	36' maximum	42' maximum

b. The effect on motorized and nonmotorized transportation systems;

The Community Development Department uses a theoretical mix of potential uses and the ITE Trip Generation manual to calculate an estimate of the number of trips each zoning district will produce by size or number of parcels. The subject area contains 3 parcels covering approximately 8 acres in total. The current zoning of the area includes portions that are zoned B-2 (commercial) and R-2 (residential) that were ignored because of their small size and partial coverage of each property.

~~The 3 parcels evaluated with the current R-U (residential-urban) zoning are estimated to have a mix of 30% “Residence, Single Dwelling-Unit,” and 60% “Residence, Two Dwelling-Units,” and 10% restaurant. The total number of expected trips generated per day from those uses is 644.7.~~

~~A zone change to R-4 (residential-office) is estimated to have a mix of 40% “Residence, Single Dwelling-Unit,” and 50% “Residence, multiple dwelling-units,” and 10% restaurant. The total number of expected trips generated per day from those uses is 1,578.8.~~

~~A zone change to R-3 (residential) zoning is estimated to have a mix of 30% “Residence, Single Dwelling-Unit,” and 40% “Residence, Two Dwelling-Units,” and 30% “Residence, multiple dwelling-units.” The total number of expected trips generated per day from those uses is 644.7.~~

~~A zone change to R-4 (residential-office) is estimated to have a mix of 40% “Residence, Single Dwelling-Unit,” and 50% “Residence, multiple dwelling-units,” and 10% restaurant. The total number of expected trips generated per day from those uses is 379.~~

~~War Eagle St was developed to the minimum standard of a collector street. A minor collector is designed with the intent of carrying 1,500-3,500 vehicles per day. After a zone change to R-U (residential-urban) and R-4 (residential-office) for the neighborhood to the south, that area is estimated to generate 3,685.1 trips per day. Note that War Eagle would not be expected to be travelled for all of those trips since Peaks Ave also empties out to Runkle Pkwy.~~

The 3 parcels evaluated with the current R-U (residential-urban) zoning are estimated to have a mix of 30% “Residence, Single Dwelling-Unit,” and 60% “Residence, Two Dwelling-Units,” and 10% restaurant. The total number of expected trips generated per day from those uses is 644.7.

A zone change to R-4 (residential-office) is estimated to have a mix of 40% “Residence, Single Dwelling-Unit,” and 50% “Residence, multiple dwelling-units,” and 10% restaurant. The total number of expected trips generated per day from those uses is 1,578.8.

A zone change to R-3 (residential) zoning is estimated to have a mix of 40% “Residence, Single Dwelling-Unit,” and 50% “Residence, multiple dwelling-units,” and 10% restaurant. The total number of expected trips generated per day from those uses is 379.

War Eagle St was developed to the minimum standard of a collector street. A minor collector is designed with the intent of carrying 1,500-3,500 vehicles per day. After a zone change to R-U (residential-urban) and R-4 (residential-office) for the neighborhood to the south, that area is estimated to generate 3,685.1 trips per day. Note that War Eagle would not be expected to be travelled for all of those trips since Peaks Ave also empties out to Runkle Pkwy.

In the case of either R-3 (residential) or R-4 (residential-office) zoning, the intended development will include 20+ new driveways along War Eagle St.

The project will be required to install sidewalks throughout the area, per city standards, in any zoning configuration.

c. Promotion of compatible urban growth;

The 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy designates this area as urban and mixed-use, and the area would predominantly be bordered by R-U (residential-urban) and R-4 (residential-office) zone types. These zone types offer a significant overlap in allowable uses.

The R-U (residential-urban) zoning district, however, restricts the total amount of units that a parcel may have and doesn't provide remedy through the Conditional Use Permitting process. The subject properties would need to be subdivided to match the density of the surrounding neighborhood.

The proposed R-4 (residential-office) zoning district allows for multiple dwelling-unit residences and would therefore allow the larger properties to match the densities of the surrounding smaller lot neighborhood. R-3 (residential) zoning would have the same effect on the parcels, however, would eliminate or only allow through the conditional use process, many of the potential uses available to properties in the surrounding neighborhood.

The trade-off between R-3 (residential) and R-4 (residential-office) in this portion of the neighborhood is that R-3 (residential) does a better job of capping the high-end estimates of trip-generation. This would potentially keep War Eagle St more free-flowing.

d. The character of the district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses; and

The zoning change R-4 (residential-office) is in alignment with the other zoning in the area. This area has large areas of R-U and R-4 immediately adjacent.

R-3 (residential) zoning would be novel for the area, but is unlikely to create a notably different feel in character.

e. Conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout the jurisdictional area.

The proposed zone change to R-4 is a more appropriate use of land than R-U (residential-urban) because it will allow the subject properties to match the density of the surrounding neighborhood. R-3 (residential) would similarly accomplish this objective.

Section 6 - Staff Recommendation

The approval of this zone change is consistent with the goals and objectives of the 2019 Growth Policy and is consistent with all the Montana zoning criteria.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to recommend **Approval** of an ordinance amending City of Helena ordinance no. 3097 and the official zoning map for the City of Helena that:

Changes the zoning district from R-U (residential-urban) to R-3 (residential) for the property legally described as Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14;

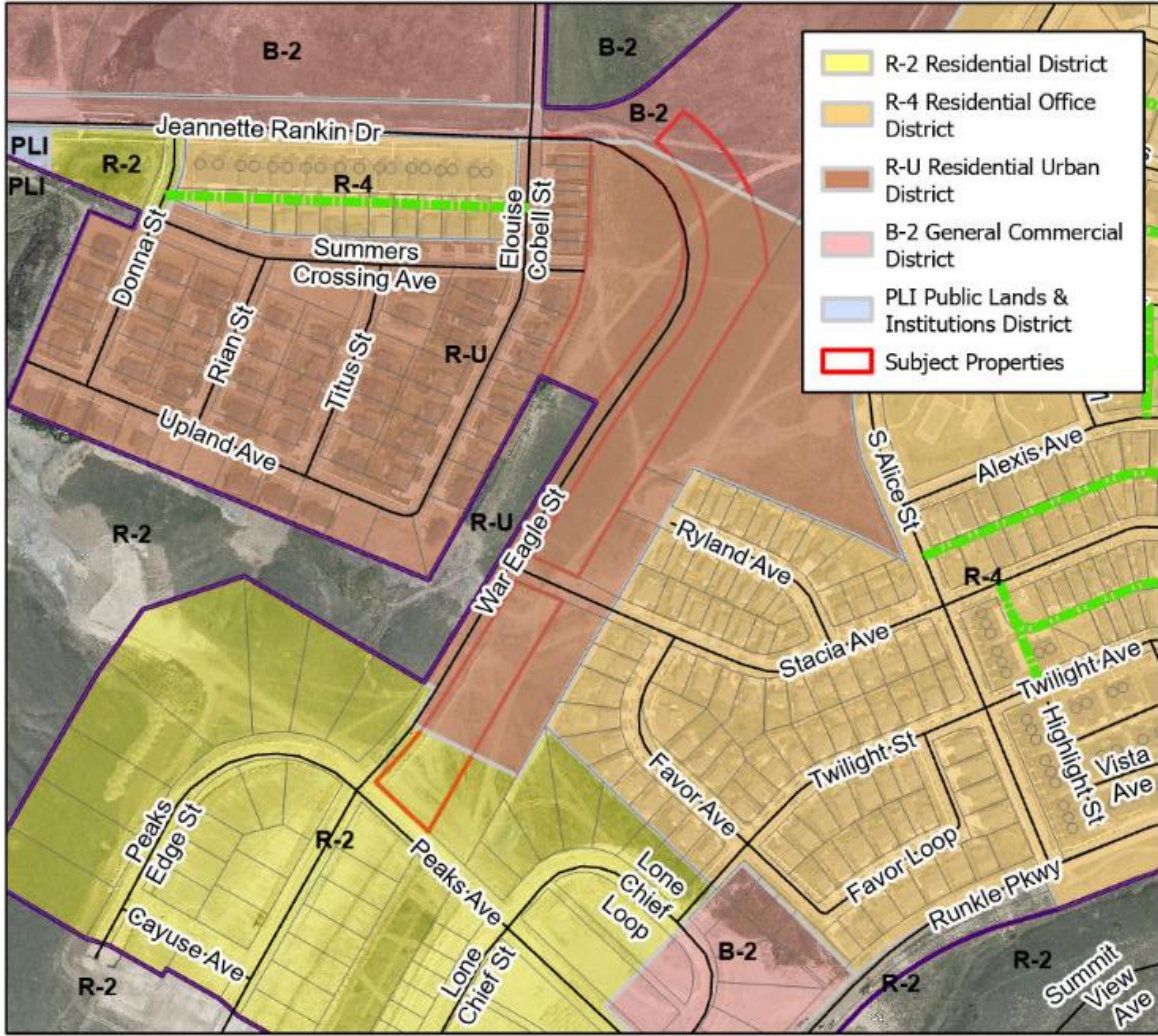
changes the zoning district from B-2 (commercial) to R-3 (residential) for that portion of Lot 1 Block 21;

and changes the zoning district from R-2 (residential) to R-3 (residential) for that portion of Lot 5 of Block 26;


of The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

Appendix A – Maps

War Eagle St Properties Zoning Map



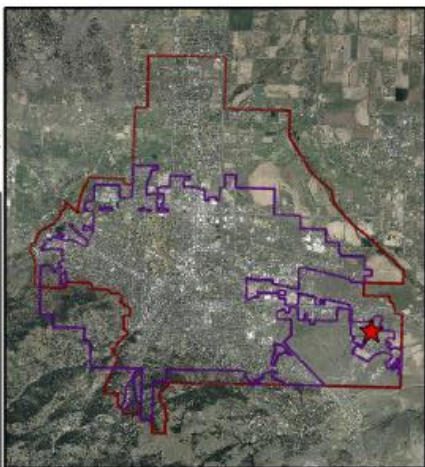
— Paved
 — Alley
 □ MT Parcels w Condos
 □ Subject Properties



Community Development
 City/County Building
 316 North Park Avenue, Rm. 445
 Helena, MT 59623

N
 0 125 250 500 750 Feet

Legal Description: Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14; of The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana



Appendix B – Comments

ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CITY OF HELENA ORDINANCE NO. 3097 AND THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP FOR THE CITY OF HELENA THAT: CHANGES THE ZONING DISTRICT FROM R-U (RESIDENTIAL-URBAN) TO R-4 (RESIDENTIAL-OFFICE) FOR THE PROPERTY LEGALLY DESCRIBED AS LOT 5 OF BLOCK 26, LOT 1 OF BLOCK 21, AND LOTS 5 OF BLOCK 14, OF THE PEAKS PHASE 1 OF THE CROSSROADS AT MOUNTAIN VIEW MEADOWS SUBDIVISION, IN THE CITY OF HELENA, LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY, MONTANA.

WHEREAS, Mountain View Meadows, LLC (ATTN: Mark Runkle), as owner of the following properties, has requested that the City of Helena pass an ordinance, pursuant to section 11-1-10 of the Helena City Code, to amend the following zoning designation:

From R-U (residential-urban) to R-4 (residential-office) for the property legally described as Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14, of the Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana;

WHEREAS, the heretofore listed properties are generally located along War Eagle St between Eloise Cobell St and Peaks Ave, are shown on Exhibit 1, which is hereby incorporated into this ordinance and made part thereof by this reference, as the outlined properties, and having R-U, B-2, and R-2 zoning districts;

WHEREAS, this zone change is in substantial compliance with

ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Ord. _____

the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy and Future Land Use map;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 11-1-3 of the Helena City Code the official zoning map of the City of Helena must be amended to change the zoning designation for said property;

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on January 14, 2025, before the Helena Zoning Commission concerning this zone change and amendment to the official zoning map;

WHEREAS, the Zoning Commission recommended an amendment and zone change that changes the zoning designation from R-U (residential-urban) to R-4 (residential-office) for the property legally described as Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14;

Changes the zoning district from B-2 (commercial) to R-4 (residential-office) for that portion of Lot 1 Block 21;

Changes the zoning district from R-2 (residential) to R-4 (residential-office) for that portion of Lot 5 of Block 26, of the Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana;

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on March 10, 2025, before

ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Ord. _____

the Helena City Commission concerning this zone change and amendment to the official zoning map;

WHEREAS, this amendment and zone change appear to be in the best interests of the City of Helena, Montana, and inhabitants thereof; and

WHEREAS, in considering this amendment and zone change, the City of Helena has given due consideration to the matters set forth in § 76-2-304, MCA.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA:

Section 1. City of Helena Ordinance No. 3097 is amended and the zoning designation for property legally described as Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14; of The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana, generally located along War Eagle St between Eloise Cobell St and Peaks Ave, are shown on Exhibit 1, which is hereby incorporated into this ordinance and made part thereof by this reference, as the outlined properties, and having R-U, B-2, and R-2 zoning districts, is changed as follows:

ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Ord. _____

From R-U (residential-urban) to R-4 (residential-office) for the property legally described as Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14, of The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

FIRST PASSED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA,
THIS 10TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2025

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CLERK OF THE COMMISSION

FINALLY PASSED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HELENA,
MONTANA, 10TH DAY OF MARCH, 2025.

MAYOR

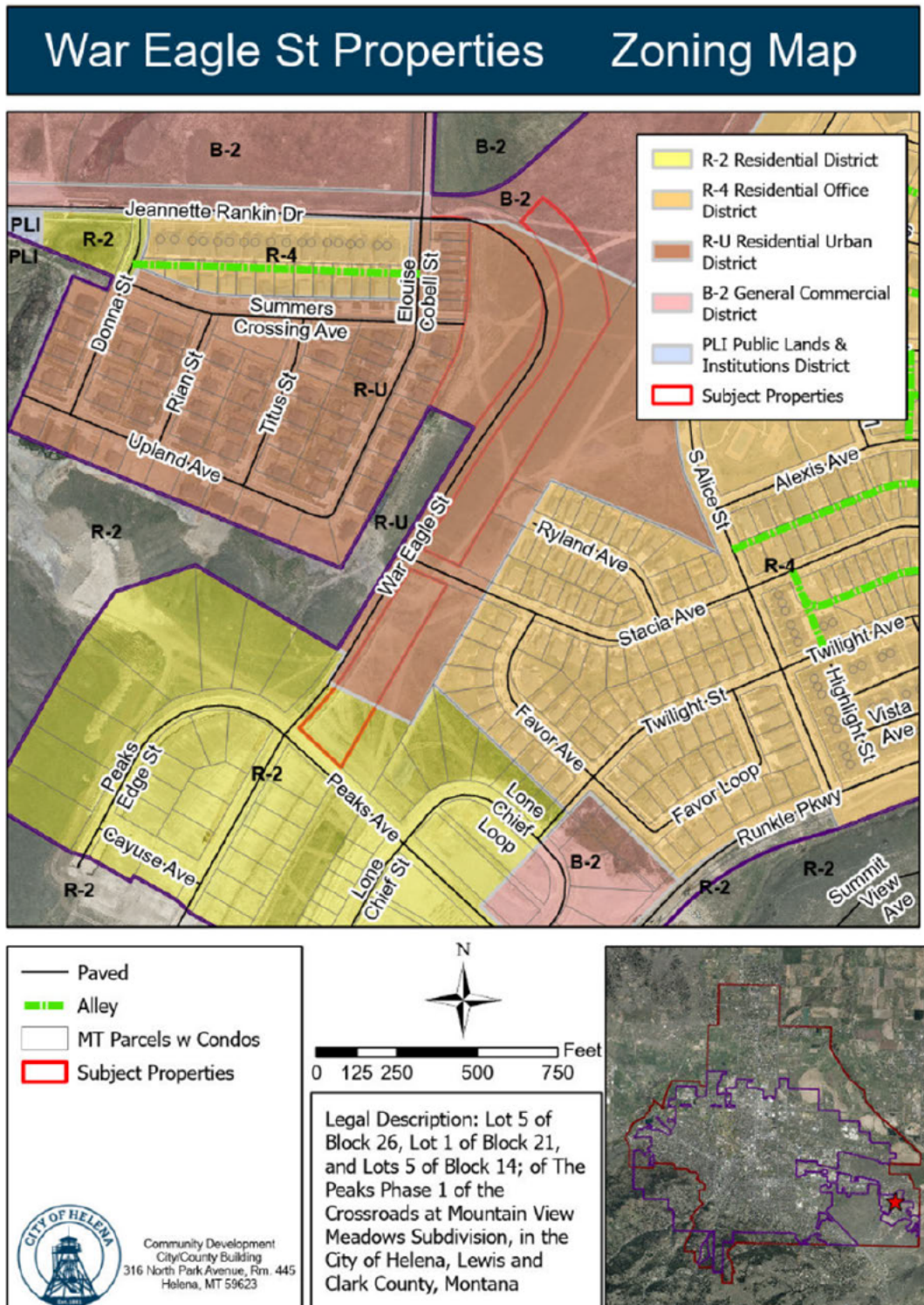
ATTEST:

CLERK OF THE COMMISSION

ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Ord. _____

Exhibit 1:





ZONE CHANGE APPLICATION

Community Development Department, Planning Division
316 North Park Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623
406-447-8490; citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov

Date received:

APPLICATION FEE: \$410.00
(PAYABLE TO THE CITY OF HELENA)
ALL FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE

Application to the Helena Zoning Commission and City Commission for an amendment to the official Zoning Map. Such amendments re-classify property from one zoning district to another.

PROPERTY OWNER: Primary Contact? No

Name: **Mountain View Meadows, LLC** Primary Number: **406-431-7305**
ATTN: Mark Runkle
Address: **431 South Alice Street** Other Phone: **None**
Helena, MT 59601
Email: **markrunkle@hotmail.com**

APPLICANT (If different from property owner): Primary Contact? No

Name: **Same as owner** Primary Number: **Same as owner**
Address: **Same as owner** Other Phone: **Same as owner**
Email: **Same as owner** Company: **Same as owner**

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Primary Contact? Yes

Name: **Stahly Engineering & Associates** Primary Number: **406-442-8594**
ATTN: Greg Wirth, PE
Address: **3530 Centennial Drive** Other Phone: **None**
Helena, MT 59601
Email: **gwirth@seaeng.com**

X Address of the Property: **Varies – Applies To Several Addresses**
Address City State Zip Code

X Legal Description (Lots, Block, & Subdivision, COS #, deed reference)

Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, Lot 5 of Block 14 (COS 3424364) of The Peaks Phase 1

X Provide a current deed and plat/COS with the metes and bounds of the subject property

Included in Application

- X Geocode **05-1888-35-3-13-01-0000**
- X Current City Zoning District **R-U (Residential Urban District)**
- X Proposed Zoning District **R-3 (Residential District)**
- X Adjacent Zoning Districts **North – B-2**
South – R-2 (Residential)
East - R-4 (Residential Urban District)
West – Urban Residential Mixed Use (Lewis and Clark County) and R-4 (Residential Urban District)
- X Are there other related Land Use Applications being submitted: Yes No **X**
- X Submit proof of current paid taxes **Included in Application**
- X Existing use on the property **Vacant**

I HEREBY CERTIFY AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE STATEMENTS IN THIS APPLICATION AND ANY ATTACHED INFORMATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

Signed: 
Property Owner

Date: 12/12/2024

Applicant: _____
(If different from Owner)

Date:

Review Criteria

(A different zoning district may be recommended if it appropriately fits the review criteria)

Your application will be reviewed using Montana MCA Section 76-2-304, "Criteria and Guidelines for Zoning Regulations" stated below.

- (1) Zoning regulations must be:
 - (a) made in accordance with a growth policy; and
 - (b) designed to secure safety from fire and other dangers;
 - (ii) promote public health, public safety, and the general welfare; and
 - (iii) facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public requirements.
- (2) In the adoption of zoning regulations, the municipal governing body shall consider:
 - (a) reasonable provision of adequate light and air;
 - (b) the effect on motorized and nonmotorized transportation systems;
 - (c) promotion of compatible urban growth;

- (d) the character of the district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses; and*
- (e) conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout the jurisdictional area.*

Per Section 11-1-10 of the Helena City Code, the Zoning Commission and the City Commission will hold public hearings, to give the public an opportunity to be heard upon the matter. The Zoning Commission will make a recommendation to the City Commission who will approve or deny the requested zoning. If approved, the zone change becomes effective 30 days after final pass of the zone change Ordinance.

To evaluate the requested zone change with the above criteria the following must be submitted with this application. Please provide all the information requested on additional sheets as an incomplete application may delay the review of your request.

Please Note: N/A is not an acceptable answer alone and requires an explanation if used.

- X** 1. Apply to the City on the appropriate forms and pay any required fees. The application must include the property owner's signature;

Signed application and fee provided

- X** 2. Describe how your proposal relates to the above zoning review criteria (attach additional sheets if necessary);

Zoning Review Criteria Narrative Provided in Application

- X** 3. Provide a statement why the proposed zone change should be approved;

Based on city interpretation the zone change to R-3 is proposed to permit two dwelling units since not allowed in R-U zoning.

- X** 4. Submit a traffic impact study for a proposed zoning district that is anticipated to generate more than two hundred (200) additional vehicle trips a day;

The zone change will not increase the planned density on the platted lots, thus the zoning district will not generate more than 200 vehicle trips per day.

Traffic studies were conducted and provided to the City during the infrastructure review for the Peaks in 2023 that found all intersections are functioning far under capacity and will continue to function under capacity with the full development of the Peaks. The traffic studies found the local intersections within Mountain View Meadows may see 1,000 to 2,000 vehicles per day with the intersection capacity of 5,000 to 8,000 vehicles per day.

Further, traffic counts were conducted in September 2024 and found the weekday traffic on Crossroads Parkway at 2,300 vehicles per day. As noted in the traffic study, the capacity of Crossroad Parkway is 18,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day.

- X 5. Provide a vicinity map of the area showing the location of the property in relation to surrounding land and zoning in the immediate area, water and wastewater mains, other utilities, and city streets and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, trails);

Mapping provided in Application

- X 6. Submit a statement on how the proposed zoning conforms to the Helena Growth Policy and Land Use Map; include how the proposed zoning conforms with the area neighborhood plan if one has been adopted;

See attached Zoning Review Criteria Narrative

- X 7. Statement indicating if the existing structures meets the proposed zoning dimensional standards requirements without the need for a variance;

There are no existing structures on the property

- X 8. Statement indicating if the existing use on the subject property meets the proposed zoning permitted uses;

There is no existing use on the property

- X 9. Historical uses, established use patterns, and recent changes and trends in the neighborhood.

The historical uses include residential use to the east and west. The development of the east and west has occurred within the last two decades. The land use on properties to the south are just starting to be developed.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE APPLICANT CONTACT NEIGHBORS TO INFORM THEM OF THIS PROPOSED ZONE CHANGE AND IDENTIFY ANY CONCERNS THAT THE APPLICANT MAY BE ABLE TO ADDRESS.

It is the policy of the City Commission not to act on a proposal if the applicant/ applicant's representative is not present at the commission meeting. City Planning Staff represents the City; staff cannot answer questions for the applicant.

Per 1-4-12 City Code, the taxes and assessments on the applicant's property, which is the subject of the proposed action, must be paid or payment of said taxes and assessments must be made a condition of final approval of said action by the City Commission, with the taxes and assessments to be paid within fourteen (14) days after final passage.



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316 North Park Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623
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- X Are there other related Land Use Applications being submitted: Yes No **X**
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- X Existing use on the property **Vacant**

I HEREBY CERTIFY AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE STATEMENTS IN THIS APPLICATION AND ANY ATTACHED INFORMATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

Signed: 
Property Owner

Date: 10/30/2024

Applicant: _____
(If different from Owner)

Date:

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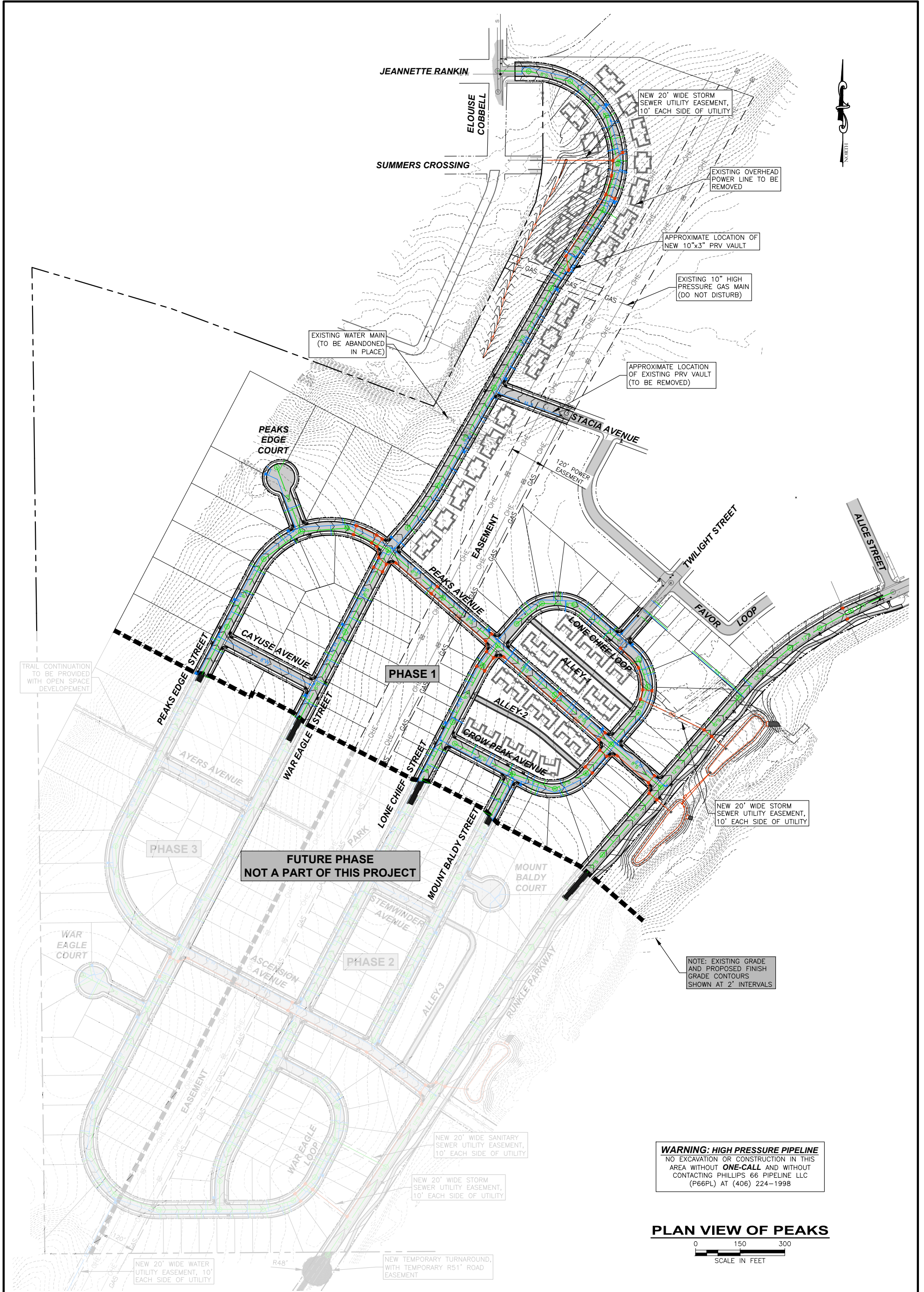
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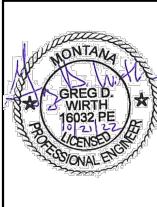
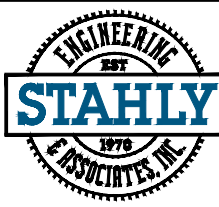
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4
OF 125
SHEET NO.

THE PEAKS - PHASE 1
MOUNTAIN VIEW MEADOWS
HELENA, MT

OVERALL SITE PLAN



PROJECT:	NO.	REVISION DESCRIPTION	BY	DATE
2116-PKS1	1	PHASE 1	GDW	01.23.2023
DESIGNED: JDM	2	RESPONSE TO CITY COMMENTS	GDW	03.17.2023
DRAWN: JDM				
CHECKED: CDP				
APPROVED: GDW				
DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2022				



**CITY OF HELENA
Zoning Commission
January 14, 2025 – 6:00 PM
Meeting Minutes**

[Recording Available Here](#)

Members Present:

Rebecca Harbage (Chair), Alyssa Sorenson, Mark Roylance, Mark Runde (Alternate)

Members Absent:

Nicole Anderson, Betsy Story

Staff Present:

Michael Alvarez, April Sparks

Call to Order and Roll Call

(0:00:45) Chair Harbage called the meeting to order, roll was taken, and a quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes

(0:01:37) Minutes from the December 10, 2024 meeting were approved unanimously.

Election of Officers

(0:01:41) The need for electing officers was announced. Chair Harbage nominated herself in the absence of any interest from other members. Ms. Sorenson seconded the nomination. The nomination was approved unanimously. Ms. Story was nominated for Vice-Chair. In her absence, and with no other nominations, the vote was tabled for that nomination.

Regular Items

Item 1

Staff Presentation and Questions for Staff

(0:05:28) Mr. Alvarez gave a presentation on the application for a proposed zone change from RU to R4 for the Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View

Meadows. No public comment had been received, although adjacent property owners called Mr. Alvarez with questions.

- (0:20:23)** Commission was given the opportunity to ask questions of staff. Mr. Alvarez was asked about the discrepancy in the request from the applicant and the staff recommended motion. Mr. Alvarez confirmed that the applicant's desire is for R4 zoning, but the staff recommendation is for R3. Mr. Alvarez was asked a question related to car trips and the B2 zoning district included in the recommendation. Mr. Alvarez clarified that there was only a small portion (less than half an acre) of the proposed area that is currently zoned B2 and the bulk of the area is zoned RU, and that the area is proposed for complete residential development. Mr. Alvarez was asked if other areas in this subdivision also zoned R4 had been built out to the extent that one would expect with the calculation of traffic at this level. Mr. Alvarez stated that the subdivision has been tracking under the city's estimates.

Applicant Presentation and Questions for Applicant

- (0:28:21)** Greg Wirth spoke on behalf of the applicant and requested the recommendation for a zone change to R4 as they had previously requested. Mr. Wirth noted that while the proposed development would fit within an R3 district, there is a building permit provision which would limit driveway width to 30 feet which would then necessitate a variance in the future, which becomes a hardship, which brought them back to the R4 request which provides for the driveway width needed for the proposed condos to be developed. Mr. Wirth also noted that the hearing was noticed as an R4 zone change, R4 provides the upzoning that has been a preference of the Zoning Commission and the growth policy, R4 is in direct alignment with the adjacent zoning, and that R4 is appropriate outside of the concerns from Transportation Systems. Mr. Wirth then noted the adjacent R4 zones, and the meetings when that zoning has gone before both the Zoning and City Commissions. Mr. Wirth also gave information on the most recent traffic counts from their own traffic studies, before repeating the applicant's request for R4 zoning.
- (0:36:04)** There were no questions for the applicant. Mr. Alvarez offered to create recommended language for a motion for R4 zoning.

Public Comment

- (0:36:54)** Public Comment was opened. There was no public comment.

Commission Discussion

(0:37:17) Commission discussion was opened. Ms. Sorenson stated that she has concerns about zone changes opening the door for development by right other than what is proposed, but did not want to see extra bureaucratic loopholes for an extra ten feet of driveway. Mr. Roylance stated that he felt R4 is consistent with the growth policy and what already exists.

Motion

(0:39:43) Ms. Sorenson moved to recommend approval of an ordinance amending the City of Helena Ordinance number 3097 and the official zoning map for the City of Helena that changes the zoning district from RU to R4 residential for the property legally described as Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14; Changes the zoning district from B2 commercial to R4 residential for that portion of Lot 1 Block 21; And changes the zoning district from R2 to R4 residential for that portion of Lot 5 Block 36 of the Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana. Mr. Roylance seconded the motion.

(0:40:43) Chair Harbage made some comments, echoing some of Ms. Sorenson's, but stating she would be in support of the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously (4:0).

General Public Comment

(0:42:27) There was no public comment.

Member Communications / Proposals for next Agenda

(0:42:46) It was noted the next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, February 11, 2025, but that it would not be held. Staff noted no applications were received before the deadline for the March meeting, other than a Pre-Zone application attached to a Subdivision, which has yet to be scheduled for a meeting date. Commissioners asked about getting an update on the Land Use Plan process, and zoning code updates. Staff noted that the Director would be the person to give an update, and that any major updates to the zoning code would be completed after the Land Use Plan process was completed and this Commission would likely be dissolved at that point. Commissioners proposed holding a work session and proposed topics.

Adjournment

(0:59:08) The meeting was adjourned.

Michael Alvarez

From: Greg Wirth <gwirth@seaeng.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2024 10:57 AM
To: Michael Alvarez
Cc: Nick Heard; Mark Runkle; Rebecca Ryland
Subject: MVM - Peaks War Eagle Zone Change
Attachments: 2216-PKS1-12.12.24_ZONE MAP WAR EAGLE.pdf; 1.1_MVM_Zone_Change_App_R3.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Michael,

Thanks again for the presentation at the Zoning Commission this week.

Following our phone conversation this morning, attached is a revised application and map to request the zoning to be changed to R-3. We have reviewed the dimensional standards and the proposed condo development will conform with the R-3 requirements.

Please let us know if you need anything else for presentation to the Zoning Commission in January.

Thanks, appreciate your assistance.



Greg Wirth, P.E.
Senior Engineer

Stahly Engineering & Associates, Inc
3530 Centennial Drive | Helena, MT 59601
Office: (406) 442-8594 | **Direct:** (406) 495-2298
Email: gwirth@seaeng.com
www.seaeng.com

Michael Alvarez

From: Greg Wirth <gwirth@seaeng.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2025 10:48 AM
To: Michael Alvarez
Cc: Mark Runkle
Subject: War Eagle Plan Sheet
Attachments: 2216-PKS1-COH_DEQ Approved Plan Set_6-3-23_Overall_Site_Plan.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Michael,

For use in sharing with the Zoning Commission this evening, attached is the Overall Site Plan from the construction plans showing the proposed condos adjacent to War Eagle Street. This illustrates the driveway widths and need for R-4 zoning as R-3 limits a driveway width to 30 feet. To avoid a variance request, MVM will be requesting the Zoning Commission to recommend a zone change to R-4.

Thanks and let us know if you have any questions.



Greg Wirth, P.E.
Senior Engineer
Stahly Engineering & Associates, Inc
3530 Centennial Drive | Helena, MT 59601
Office: (406) 442-8594 | **Direct:** (406) 495-2298
Email: gwirth@seaeng.com
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Independent Record

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

See Proof on Next Page

Helena Independent Record
2222 N. Washington St
Helena, Montana 59602
(123) 456-7890

State of Florida, County of Broward, ss:

Tatiana Dorval, being first duly sworn, deposes and says: That (s)he is a duly authorized signatory of Column Software, PBC, duly authorized agent of Helena Independent Record, a newspaper of general circulation published that is a "legal newspaper" as that is published daily in the City of Helena, in the County of Lewis and Clark, State of Montana, and has charge of the Advertisements thereof.

If this certification is for the State of Montana, I hereby certify that I have read sec. 18-7-204 and 18-7-205 , MCA, and subsequent revisions, and declare that the price or rate charged the State of Montana for the publication for which claim is made in printed copy in the amount of \$36.00 , is not in excess of the minimum rate charged any other advertiser for publication of advertisement, set in the same size type and published for the same number of insertions, further certify that this claim is correct and just in all respects, and that payment or credit has not been received.

PUBLICATION DATES: March. 8 2025

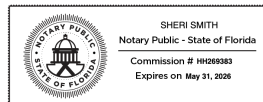
NOTICE ID: npscubSliWTDDrNaGoHg

PUBLISHER ID: COL-MT-201000

NOTICE NAME: ZONE2411-0003 War Eagles zone change

Publication Fee: \$36.00

(Signed) Tatiana Dorval



VERIFICATION

State of Florida
County of Broward

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me on this: 03/11/2025

S. Smith

Notary Public

Notarized remotely online using communication technology via Proof.

Notice of Public Hearing

The Helena City Commission will hold a public hearing on Monday, March 24, 2025, at 6pm in person in the Commission Chambers, Rm. 330, 316 N Park Ave, and via the ZOOM platform. The meeting will serve to consider the following proposal:

To consider an ordinance amending City of Helena ordinance no. 3097 and the official zoning map for the City of Helena that:

Changes the zoning district from R-U (residential-urban) to R-4 (residential-office) for the property legally described as Lot 5 of Block 26, Lot 1 of Block 21, and Lots 5 of Block 14; of The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

ADDRESS:

These properties are located in the Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows and is generally located along War Eagle St between Eloise Cobell St and Peaks Ave.

This meeting can be accessed via the online meeting platform Zoom at: This meeting can be accessed via the online meeting platform Zoom at:

[https://zoom.helenamt.gov/c/36053471/publicmeetings](https://zoom.helenamt.gov/j/36053471/publicmeetings)

For further information on this proposal, please contact the Community Development Department located in the City-County Building, 316 N Park Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623 or by calling (406) 447-8490

Dannai Clayborn

City Clerk

Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the City's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Ellie Ray, 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.

March 8, 2025 COL-MT-201000 MNAXLP

City of Helena, Montana

02/03/2025

To: Mayor Collins and the Helena City Commission

From: City Manager, Tim Burton,
Director, Christopher Brink, AICP
Michael Alvarez, Planner II

Subject: Consider a Resolution to Adopt the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan by Amending the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy for its Inclusion

Present Situation: The Railroad District Neighborhood Plan has been completed with extensive public input through stakeholder interviews, storefront studio sessions, and discussions with members of the public and boards. The Planning Board voted on January 18, 2025, to recommend including the Plan as an amendment to the Growth Policy. Per MCA §76-1-601(4), the plan defines its jurisdictional area and is consistent with the municipal growth policy.

Background Information: This plan is an implementation step of the 2019 Growth Policy; wherein the Goals and Objectives of that plan asks that vibrant neighborhood centers be created that support strong residential neighborhoods. The plan also suggested specific areas where some of the city's neighborhood centers could be developed through neighborhood plans. The Railroad District was selected as the first planning area. The original RFP was sent out in July of 2022, and a contract was entered into with SCJ Alliance in October of 2022.

Proposal/Objective: Consider a Resolution revising the 2019 Growth Policy by including the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan.

Advantage: The plan provides clear implementation framework for district improvements, reflects community priorities, and fulfills Growth Policy goals and objectives. If adopted, the plan will guide development of the Railroad District through its vision of six distinct neighborhoods. The plan provides specific implementation actions to enhance the district's economic vitality while preserving its historic character.

Notable Energy Impact: N/A

Disadvantage: Implementation will require further work with public outreach, especially in regard to the specific nature of the recommended new zoning districts.

Quasi-Judicial Item: False

Notice of Public Hearing: True

Staff Recommendation/Recommended Motion: Staff recommends that the City Commission move to approve the Resolution of Intention to Adopt the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan

by Amending the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy for its Inclusion and to set a public hearing for March 24, 2025.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION TO REVISE THE 2019 CITY OF HELENA GROWTH POLICY BY INCLUDING THE RAILROAD DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN.

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, the Helena City Commission adopted a Growth Policy by Resolution No. 20593, referred to as the "2019 Growth Policy";

WHEREAS, Chapter 3 of the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy encourages that neighborhood centers be located, and promoted through the creation of neighborhood plans;

WHEREAS, §76-1-601(4) (a) and (b), MCA, contains the provisions and criteria to allow neighborhood plans as part of a Growth Policy and §76-1-603, MCA, outlines the procedures for adopting or amending a Growth Policy;

WHEREAS, a public hearing on this proposed amendment was held in the Commission Chambers in the City-County Building at 316 N Park Ave, in Helena, MT, by the City of Helena-Lewis and Clark County Consolidated Planning Board on December 17, 2024, and said hearing was continued on January 18, 2025;

WHEREAS, said Planning Board voted to recommend the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan, attached hereto and by this reference made a part hereof, be included as part of the 2019 City of Helena Growth on January 18, 2025;

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on this matter on the 24th day of February, 2025, in the Commission Chambers in the City-County Building at 316 North Park Ave in Helena, Montana.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA:

Section 1. The Helena City Commission, pursuant to §76-1-601(4) (a) and (b) §76-1-603, MCA, hereby revises the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy to include the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan for the area indicated in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and by this reference made a part hereof.

PASSED AND EFFECTIVE BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA, THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 20__.

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CLERK OF THE COMMISSION

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

Exhibit 'A'



The 6th Ward boundaries are Last Chance Gulch to the West, Cedar to the North, Highway 287, Butte Avenue to the South, and 13th Street to the Southwest corner.

City of Helena

RAILROAD DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

November 2024



City of
Helena



SCJ ALLIANCE
CONSULTING SERVICES

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Special Thanks to:

Helena Citizens Council

Helena College

National Alliance on Mental Illness Montana

Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Council

The Railroad Urban Renewal Area Tax Increment Financing Advisory Board

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0. Executive Summary

Helena’s Railroad District (also known as the 6th Ward or Midtowne) is as old as the city, forming around the railroad depot as people and goods came to settle the town. The transportation system – formed by the railroad, the local town streets, and the streetcar running along Helena Avenue – brought life and activity to the district in its early years. As the town grew, the transportation system which energized the district evolved. US Highway 12, North Montana Ave, and the freight-only rail service changed the ways in which people access Helena, creating a web of high-capacity corridors which essentially divide the heart of the Railroad District from the rest of town.

While these transportation corridors still provide access to the Railroad District, they also can make it difficult. High automotive

and freight volumes can make it difficult to access the district on foot or by bike, and the transportation management techniques necessary to smooth traffic flows can even make accessing the district by car difficult.

Still, the district has retained much of its historic character and has nurtured a mix of businesses, institutions, and housing which make the Railroad District unique – both a reminder of Helena’s path and a contributor to Helena’s future.

This subarea plan is rooted in Helena’s Growth Policy, capturing the vision of a neighborhood center and applying it to the Sixth Ward. The Growth Policy prioritizes planning for several neighborhood centers, and Helena chose to plan first for the Railroad District.

Figure 1: The Railroad District Today



The neighborhood centers are intended to stimulate new types of activities in Helena's neighborhoods, introducing small-scale storefront retail, new housing options, and community spaces to emphasize local identity and redirect public and private investment into the community's more historic neighborhoods.

Helena values community engagement, and the public voice underpins this plan. The plan's vision is consistent with Growth Policy direction and is shaped by the community's priorities and aspirations. Further, the subarea plan's goals and objectives dovetail with those of the Growth Policy, adding detail and direction for the Railroad District as suggested by the community conversation running throughout this process.

The plan (based on community engagement described in Chapter 3) guides growth and revitalization through its policy direction and its implementation strategies. It focuses on the district's vibrant neighborhood center to retain its unique identity and eliminate barriers to investment. The plan's land use and transportation initiatives are designed with a relatively soft touch, suggesting notable revisions to zoning to encourage a new mixing of uses, new twists on using the historic landscape, and tailoring the local streets and trails to truly welcome autos, trucks, cyclists, and pedestrians into and through the district. The plan identifies distinct neighborhoods within the district and suggests specific actions for each, all of which work in concert to guide reinvestment, honor historic uses, preserve and expand housing options, and create a safe, attractive, and accessible transportation network.

Chapter 4 presents the plan's vision. In this vision, the Depot District will be the vibrant commercial core, with the historic train depot as its focus. The Trades District will mix small-scale manufacturing, arts, and warehousing uses with housing. The residential areas of 6th Ward North and South will retain their neighborhood scale

and character, mixing in parks and, in the south, the school facilities which provide the entire district a space for multi-generational connection. The Corridor District along Montana Ave will gradually transform into a mixed-use gateway. And the Recreation District will enhance recreational amenities and access, anchored by the Centennial Trail and the existing context of warehousing and light manufacturing uses.

Several goals and objectives (detailed in Chapter 5) underpin this plan and respond to the 12 major issues challenging this subarea. The goals include:

1. Keeping and **enhancing the neighborhood's identity and history**
2. **Improving safety**
3. **Improving access** and connections
4. **Bolstering housing opportunities**
5. **Supporting the business community**

The scale and focus of a subarea plan allow a closer examination of the opportunities and implications the plan promises. Chapter 6 lists a series of land use, transportation, utilities and infrastructure, and economic development implications of the plan's goals and objectives. Chapter 7 then zooms in to the subarea plan's neighborhoods, referencing the various plan implications and exploring how the plan may guide new investment.

Key implementation priorities (listed in Chapter 8) include constructing the roundabout at Montana Ave and Lyndale, extending the Centennial Trail into and through the district, establishing a business improvement district, updating zoning, and initiating targeted infrastructure and streetscape improvements.

This plan links the 12 issues revealed in this process to the plan's goals and implementation actions, as illustrated in the table on the following page.



Table 1: Railroad Neighborhood District Plan - Goals and Implementation Actions

#	Issue	#	Goal	#	Implementation Action
1	Montana Ave/Lyndale Ave Intersection	2	Improving Safety	3	Montana Ave Improvements
		3	Improving Access		
		5	Supporting the Business Community		
2	Access to Boulder Ave	2	Improving Safety	3	Montana Ave Improvements
		3	Improving Access		
3	Commercial District Vitality	1	Neighborhood Identity	2	Streetscape Plan
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity	4	Centennial Trail Extension
		5	Supporting the Business Community	5	Zoning Updates
4	TIF Investment Strategy	5	Supporting the Business Community	1	BID Formation
				2	Streetscape Plan
				4	Centennial Trail Extension
5	Vehicle / Outdoor Storage	1	Neighborhood Identity	1	BID Formation
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity		
		5	Supporting the Business Community		
6	Housing Attainability	4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity	5	Zoning Updates
7	Neighborhood Character Preservation	1	Neighborhood Identity	2	Streetscape Plan
		5	Supporting the Business Community	5	Zoning Updates
8	Rail Crossings	2	Improving Safety	2	Streetscape Plan
		3	Improving Access		
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity	3	Montana Ave Improvements
		5	Supporting the Business Community		
9	Stormwater Management	2	Improving Safety	2	Streetscape Plan
10	Zoning and Intensity	1	Neighborhood Identity	5	Zoning Updates
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity		
		5	Supporting the Business Community		
11	Zoning and Built Character	1	Neighborhood Identity	5	Zoning Updates
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity		
12	Placemaking	1	Neighborhood Identity	1	BID Formation
		3	Improving Access	2	Streetscape Plan
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity	4	Centennial Trail Extension
		5	Supporting the Business Community	5	Zoning Updates



With collaboration between the City, businesses, residents, and partners, the plan provides a roadmap to fulfill the Growth Policy’s objective to create vibrant neighborhood centers in Helena. The Railroad District Neighborhood Plan will guide investment and action to revitalize this historic area as a unique destination and integral part of the city.

Figure 2: The Railroad District 2045



1.0 Introduction

This project’s aim is to create a vibrant, dynamic neighborhood center within the context of a larger residential neighborhood and to eliminate impediments to investment while still ensuring quality developments.

The 2019 Growth Policy’s principal growth strategy is to focus the city’s development into “neighborhood centers,” forming and promoting these dense, multi-use areas to create unique urban spaces supported by one or more of Helena’s residential neighborhoods. In the Railroad District, this strategy is also supported by the plan underpinning the 6th Ward Urban Renewal District (URD). The URD’s plan contains goals to revitalize the area by improving economic vitality, creating jobs, and encouraging investment in targeted neighborhoods.

Residents, stakeholders, business owners, and the City of Helena are seeking to spur economic activity in Helena’s historic Railroad District and create the type of interconnected, dynamic, unique, and identity-rich neighborhood center the Growth Policy envisions. This is consistent with the results of the engagement activities incorporated into this subarea planning process, integrating the voice of the neighborhood’s residents and businesses into the larger policy context and shaping a plan tailored to the 6th Ward’s needs and aspirations.

1.1 Neighborhood Planning and Policy

1.1.1 Importance of Neighborhood Planning

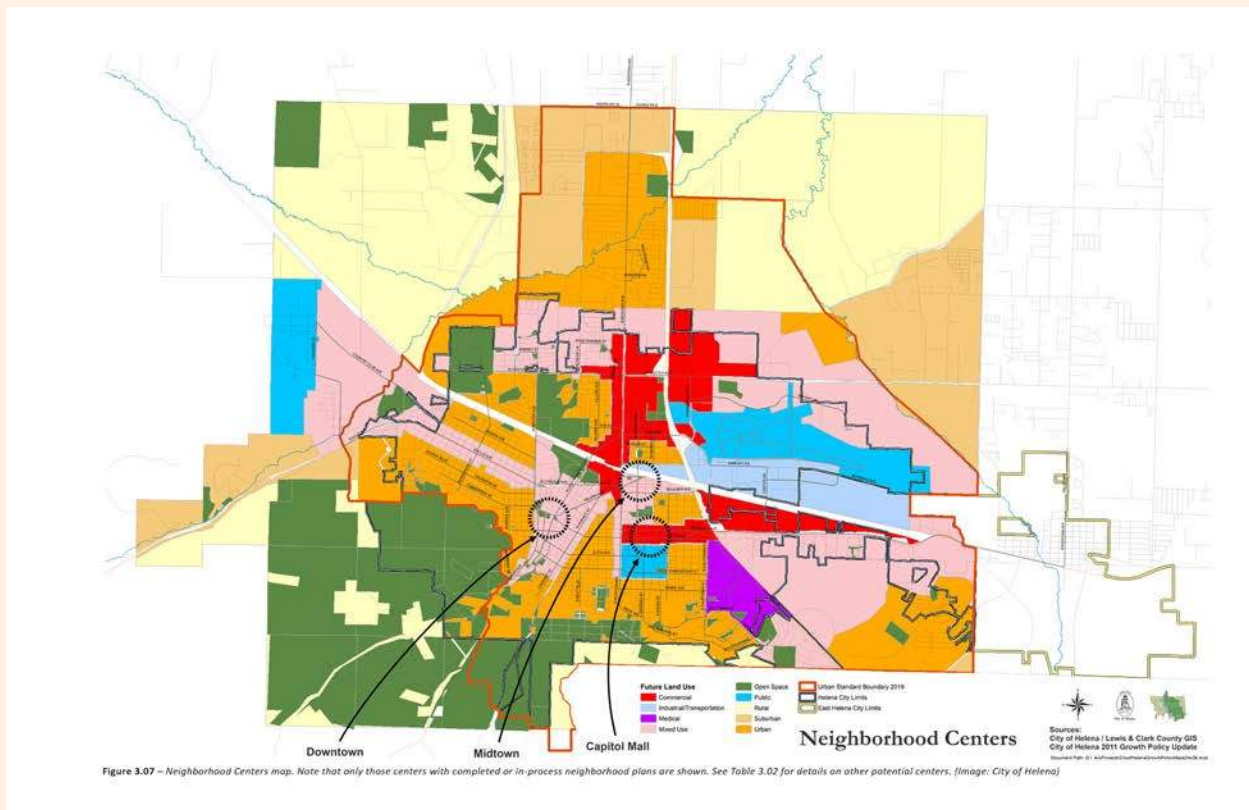
Helena’s Growth Policy underscores the importance of neighborhood planning, particularly as a key to determining the location, scale and type of change anticipated or hoped to occur in the community’s neighborhoods. As noted in the Growth Policy:

“The concept of mixed-use development is an important growth management strategy for Helena. If properly planned and developed, Neighborhood Centers will enjoy higher densities, a mix of activities, more transportation options, and convenient shopping and services. When combined with improved multi-modal transportation opportunities, Neighborhood Centers can reduce reliance on automobile travel and the need for costly street improvements while benefiting air quality, slowing sprawl, and providing a greater variety of housing types. Neighborhood Centers located at the west, north and east areas of town may also enhance the experience of entering the city.”



The Growth Policy identifies three areas where mixed-use neighborhood centers can develop, assuring the neighborhoods are involved in determining their character and appropriateness. The Growth Policy’s storefront studio focused community conversation about these mixed-use neighborhood centers. And the community responded, understanding what a compact, mixed-use center can bring to a neighborhood and suggesting those places in town where this type of transformation would be welcomed.

Figure 3: 2019 Growth Policy Neighborhood Centers



The Railroad District emerged as the highest priority candidate for a neighborhood plan. There is already an urban renewal district formed in the area, a tax-increment financing district exists, and the district’s small business district, street grid, and mix of uses already establish a pattern suited for a mixed-use neighborhood center. This type of project can align the City’s zoning ordinance and development regulations to meet the district’s unique circumstances and suggest strategic action to stimulate appropriate and effective change- all consistent with the neighborhood’s specific needs and aspirations.





Photo #1: The Storefront Studio captured the community's desires for neighborhood centers as ways to encourage infill development and enhance neighborhood quality of life.

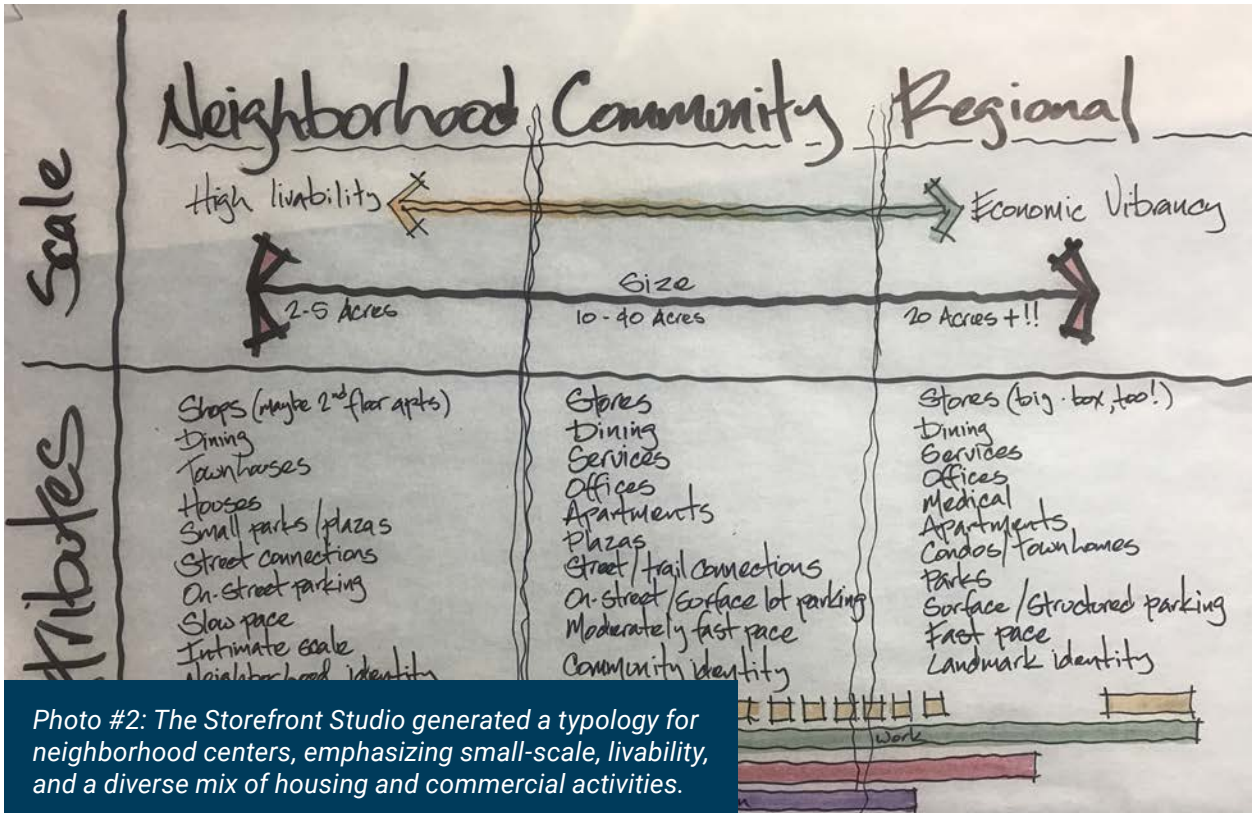


Photo #2: The Storefront Studio generated a typology for neighborhood centers, emphasizing small-scale, livability, and a diverse mix of housing and commercial activities.

1.1.2 Direction from the Growth Policy

The 2018 Growth Policy establishes the foundation for this subarea plan, acknowledging the importance of Helena’s neighborhoods and seeking reinvestment in time and energy to guide their development. Goal 10 and Objective 45 of the Growth Policy calls for this effort, as follows:

- [Goal 10] Plan for and establish types and quantities of land uses in Helena supporting community needs, Neighborhood Centers, aesthetics, and the City’s long-term sustainability.*
- [Objective 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.*

This subarea plan implements several action items included in the Growth Policy:

- (Action 34) Develop and adopt Neighborhood Plans that address appropriate economic and implementation strategies for Neighborhood Centers.*
- (Action 35) Create a Neighborhood Center process to:*
 - ♦ *Identify Neighborhood Center locations;*
 - ♦ *Develop strategy for development of center;*
 - ♦ *Develop implementation methods to achieve those goals;*
 - ♦ *Amend map reflecting Neighborhood Center locations.*
- (Action 38) Develop design standards for:*
 - ♦ *Neighborhoods, as appropriate; Historic property and historic districts;*
 - ♦ *Transportation Corridors;*
 - ♦ *Strip development;*
 - ♦ *Neighborhood Center development.*
- (Action 39) Monitor existing Urban Renewal Plans in Helena to optimize chances for implementation and overall community benefit.*

The Growth Policy’s relevant objectives are included in Appendix B, illustrating how they align with and support this subarea plan.

1.2 Relationship to the Urban Renewal District

The Urban Renewal District (URD) receives revenue from within the TIF district boundary. According to MCA 7.15.42, the URD is entitled to receive a percentage of property tax revenues based on the difference between the tax collected when the district was formed and the tax collected as property values increase. This “increment” flows to the URD, who is then obligated to reinvest these funds to improve conditions in the district. A URD exists for no more than 20 years, expected to act

relatively quickly to encourage reinvestment and improve conditions within the district.

Forming a URD requires several actions, two of which include a finding of “blight” within a defined geographic area and then the preparation of a plan to improve blighted conditions. The URD is then bound to act within the plan’s framework, investing its funds consistent with the plan’s policies and in line with identified implementation strategies. The area incorporated within the TIF district, however, is slightly smaller than the area addressed in this subarea plan, only because the area within the TIF district boundaries had to meet criteria for blight. There are properties within the subarea plan which are not blighted but still contribute to the identity, character, and function of the 6th Ward.

Figure 4: Railroad District Urban Renewal District Boundaries





The Railroad District Urban Renewal Plan contains several policies relevant to this subarea plan, generally consistent with the City’s Growth Policy and with the direction this subarea plan takes. Specifically, the Urban Renewal Plan promotes a vision for the district where:

“The Railroad District will be a destination district in the City of Helena, with a strong neighborhood identity based on the district’s historic core, unique mix of uses, including workforce housing, manufacturing, and the railroad after which the district is named. The Railroad District will be a vibrant place to work, live, and visit with shops, restaurants, and diverse commercial businesses. It will be uniquely different from the city’s other main nearby destinations – downtown, Great Northern Town Center, and the Capitol area. People will easily access the Railroad District by vehicle, and pedestrian and bike-friendly connections.”

This vision easily extends beyond just the TIF district boundary, capturing the essence of the larger planning area, too.

As with the objectives from the Growth Policy, those Urban Renewal Plan policies aligning with and supporting this subarea plan are included in Appendix B. The plan includes six goals, all of which align with and support this subarea plan’s preparation, as follows:

1. **Emphasize** the District’s Historic Importance,
2. **Increase** Property Utilization and Function,
3. **Expand** and Diversify the District’s Economy,
4. **Create** an Inviting Venue,
5. **Address** Public Infrastructure Needs, and
6. **Provide** for Public and Environmental Health.

1.3 Planning Area

The 6th Ward boundaries are Last Chance Gulch to the West, Cedar to the North, Highway 287, Butte Avenue to the South, and 13th Street to the Southwest corner. The 6th Ward can be broken down into seven smaller neighborhoods (Corridor District, 6th Ward North, Railyard, Recreation District, Depot District, Trades District, and 6th Ward South), each section has its own character, interconnected through history, community, and a shared interest in Helena’s prosperity.



Figure 5: Railroad District Planning Area



1.3.1 Why It Was Chosen

The Railroad District is the City of Helena’s first subarea planning effort since the 2018 Growth Policy’s adoption. The Growth Policy identifies the 6th Ward as a district where a neighborhood center is to be located, and the City chose this neighborhood for this effort as its first for multiple reasons.

- ◆ **Accessibility** – Neighborhood Centers should have the capacity to be accessed by a variety and volume of transportation.
- ◆ **Institutions & Mix of Uses** – Neighborhood Centers should be placed at those intersections unique to cities where a mix of uses can be found.
- ◆ **Placemaking Opportunity** – Neighborhood Centers should be encouraged in places benefiting from an enhancement of their urban form.
- ◆ **Development and Redevelopment Opportunity** - Neighborhood Centers should be encouraged in places benefiting from city attention.
- ◆ **Planned Infrastructure Expansion** – Neighborhood Centers should be encouraged in places which already have or are planned to soon have the infrastructure capacity to handle an intensification of use in the area.

The RR District was of interest because of its accessibility possibilities, its diverse institutions and mix of uses, the obvious placemaking opportunities provided by its historic character, and its redevelopment opportunity. Infrastructure is already mostly in place, and the City is already conducting studies to enhance its water and storm drain systems.



The neighborhood also already has an established commercial center, the heart of the district’s identity and scaled consistently with the district’s historic character and role. It is central to the entire district, seen by those who live there as an anchoring civic, social, and cultural place and easily accessible by foot, bike, or car from surrounding residential neighborhoods.

1.4 Planning Process and Engagement

The process to develop the plan centered on meaningful community conversation and adherence to the Growth Policy’s overarching guidance on neighborhood center character and function. This translated to a public engagement program eliciting community expression of hopes, concerns, and aspirations anchored in a solid technical understanding of the community’s context, constraints, and opportunities.

The public conversation drew from the community’s imagination to consider alternatives for the Railroad District, and then collaborated on identifying recommendations for action. This approach is also consistent with the City of Helena’s public participation policy, underpinning the critical role a meaningful public dialogue plays in policy development.

1.4.1 Interviews

A set of November 2022 orientation interviews set the stage. These interviews invited individual community members to speak with the consultants one-on-one, introducing the consultant team to the neighborhood in an intimate, open, and easy way. The interviews set out to identify the topics and issues on the community’s mind via two and a half days of one-on-one conversations with community members and agency staff. The interviews covered a range of topics and revealed issues this planning process must address. Appendix D provides a complete summary of the interviews, including a list of those interviewed.



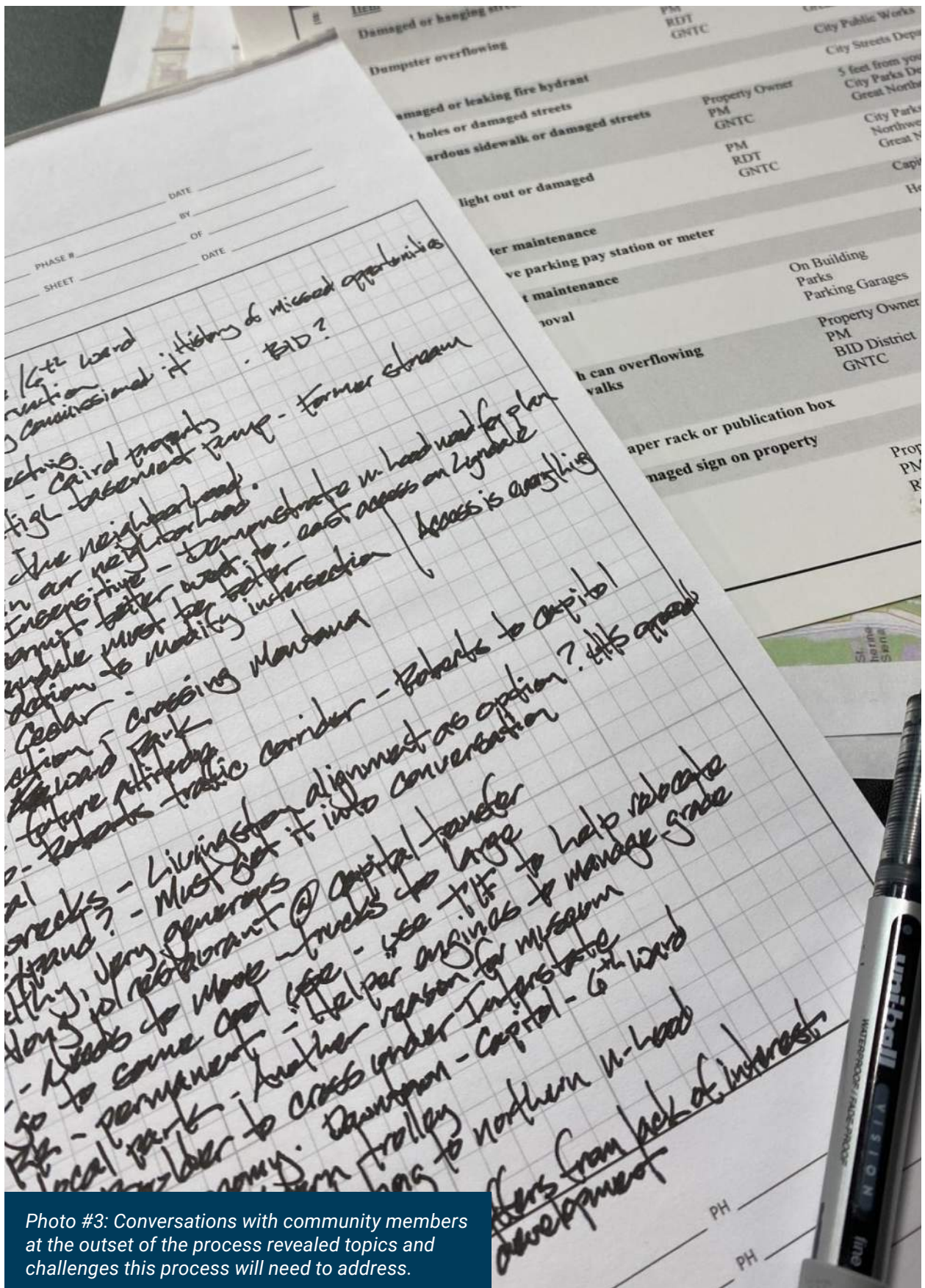


Photo #3: Conversations with community members at the outset of the process revealed topics and challenges this process will need to address.



1.4.2 Studio

The interviews set the stage for the “storefront studio” conducted in March. During the studio, those interested in the 6th Ward – many of whom were business owners or residents – considered the subarea’s long-term vision and three different scenarios to help attain it. Each scenario explored different sets of priorities, emphasizing tradeoffs and providing examples of how each may favor certain actions or investments.

- Scenario 1 focused on recreation, emphasizing investment and action to enhance the district’s family friendliness.*
- Scenario 2 focused on revitalizing the commercial core, emphasizing new housing construction near the retail center and welcoming local and regional patrons to the district’s shops, restaurants, and offices.*
- Scenario 3 focused on implementing the transportation improvements identified in the City’s 2020 “Five Points” study, accommodating – among other things – a railway underpass at North Montana Ave and a roundabout at the intersection of Lyndale, Montana, and Helena.*

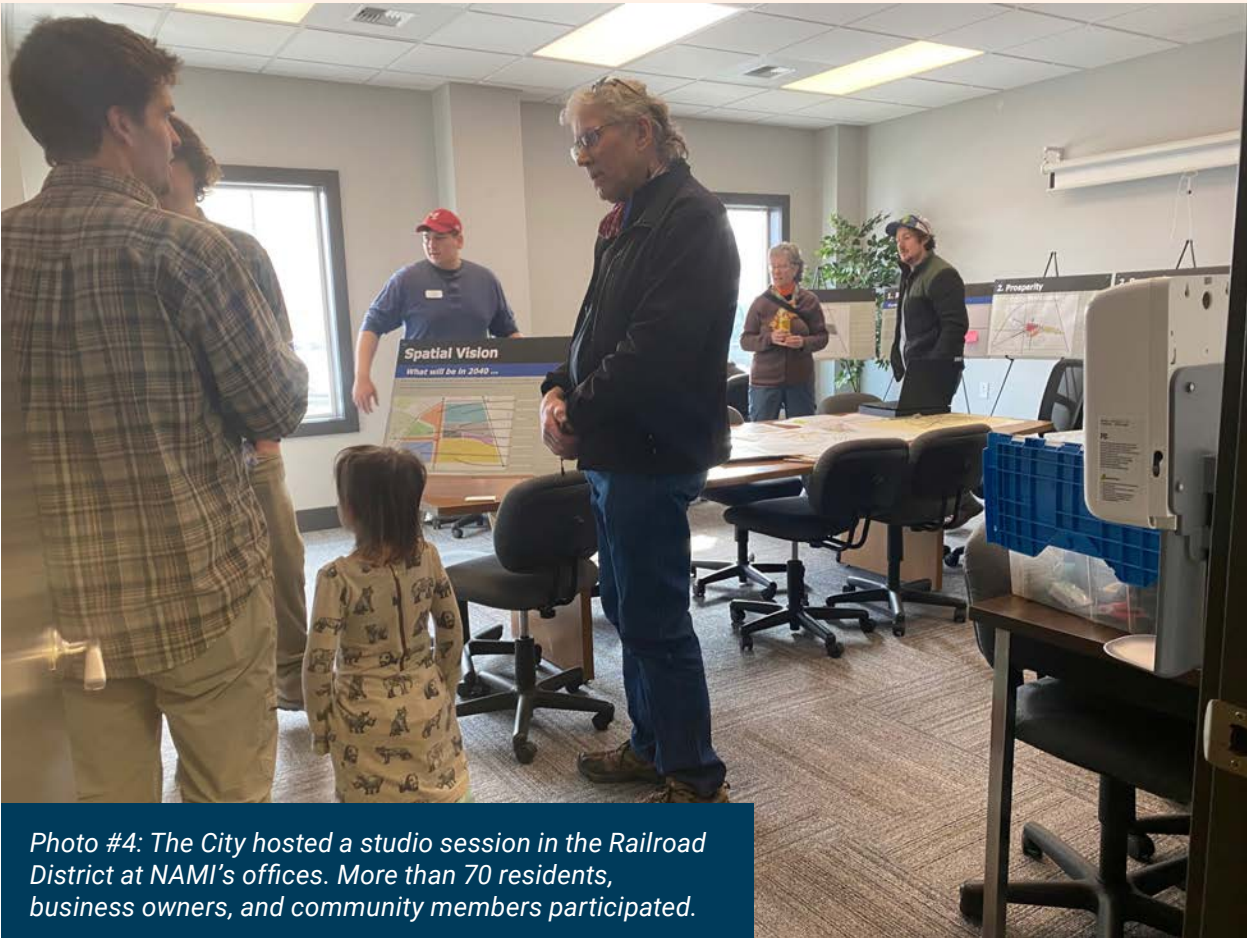


Photo #4: The City hosted a studio session in the Railroad District at NAMI’s offices. More than 70 residents, business owners, and community members participated.

Studio participants also took time to comment on the “6th Ward Jam Board” to identify specific concerns, make suggestions, and offer solutions. Notes on the “Jam Board” and on the scenarios influenced the plan’s final recommendations, balancing the priorities of the three scenarios and clarifying what the plan’s policy options should be.

1.4.3 Rollout

The subarea plan’s rollout allowed the community to review the draft plan’s recommendations and, importantly, verify the plan accurately captures the community’s identity and honestly reflects the suggestions participants offered during the planning process.

1.4.4 Plan Adoption

The Railroad District Subarea Plan is adopted as part of the City’s Growth Policy, offering policy direction and implementation actions specific to this part of town. The plan augments policy the City has adopted in the Growth Policy and Urban Renewal Plan, offering new policy to add detail and specific implementation actions to guide investment and assist decision making. The subarea plan will become an appendix to the Growth Policy, one of several subarea plans the City anticipates incorporating into the Growth Policy in similar fashion.

The City’s adoption process will include review and recommendation by the joint Helena/Lewis and Clark County Planning Commission and then adoption by the Helena City Commission following a series of public hearings, consistent with the requirements of 76-1 Part 6 of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA).

1.5 Policy

The Growth Policy and Urban Renewal Plan establishes a policy framework within which this subarea plan operates. Appendix

B lists the relevant policies from each of those two documents, presenting the policy “sideboards” shaping this process and the plan’s recommendations. This plan does, however, offer new policy to augment what the City has already adopted, suggesting new initiatives reflecting this process and the more specific look into the dynamics of the Railroad District and a deliberate incorporation of the community’s ideas. Section 5 details this plan’s new objectives, formatted to be consistent with and adopted as part of the overarching Growth Policy.

1.6 Actions

Because Helena’s recent Growth Policy and the Railroad District’s Urban Renewal Plan provide such clear and appropriate policy guidance, this planning process was able to target specific policy adjustments and focus on implementation. Priority initiatives are:

1. Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and **form a business improvement district (BID)**.
2. Create **streetscape plan** and design to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor.
3. Implement **Montana Ave traffic calming** between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and install the RRFB for the Centennial Trail crossing of Montana Ave.
4. Confirm **Centennial Trail alignment** through the district, design it, and improve it.
5. **Update zoning throughout the subarea**, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, and Corridor District to encourage and facilitate mixed-use development.



2. Context

The 6th Ward neighborhood is rich in history, much of which dates back to Helena's founding. The small commercial district near the historic train depot played an important part in Helena's development, and the industrial and residential areas surrounding it – on both sides of the tracks – share in the district's legacy of rail, commerce, working-class family living, and connection to community. Appendix A presents a comprehensive statement of community condition, describing demographic, economic, transportation, land use contexts.

2.1 What Makes the Railroad District Special

The Railroad District is a historic neighborhood, important in the eyes of residents and those who appreciate Helena's establishment and evolution. The community members who participated in this process indicate they wish to see the district's historic charm return. Participants appreciate the specific elements which

speak to the district's past, and they have expressed desire to build on them to create a contemporary version of the 6th Ward which is every bit as vital and compelling as the place of the early 1900s. The historic elements establish a visual and cultural context, reminders of how long the district has been part of Helena.

Also generally known as the 6th Ward or Midtowne – the Railroad District remains a window into the community's railroad-based history. It includes a small commercial district at its core, an intimate relationship with the rail yard, an inventory of small workshops and warehouses, and a turn-of-the-century neighborhood plat pattern. The small clapboard and brick houses near the rail yard were built to serve those working the trains or the businesses supporting them. Though the past 100 years have brought US Highway 12 through the district, added schools, created the Montana Avenue commercial corridor, and seen road-based transportation supplant rail, much of the neighborhood's historic character remains.

There are several specific attributes which set this area of Helena apart from others.



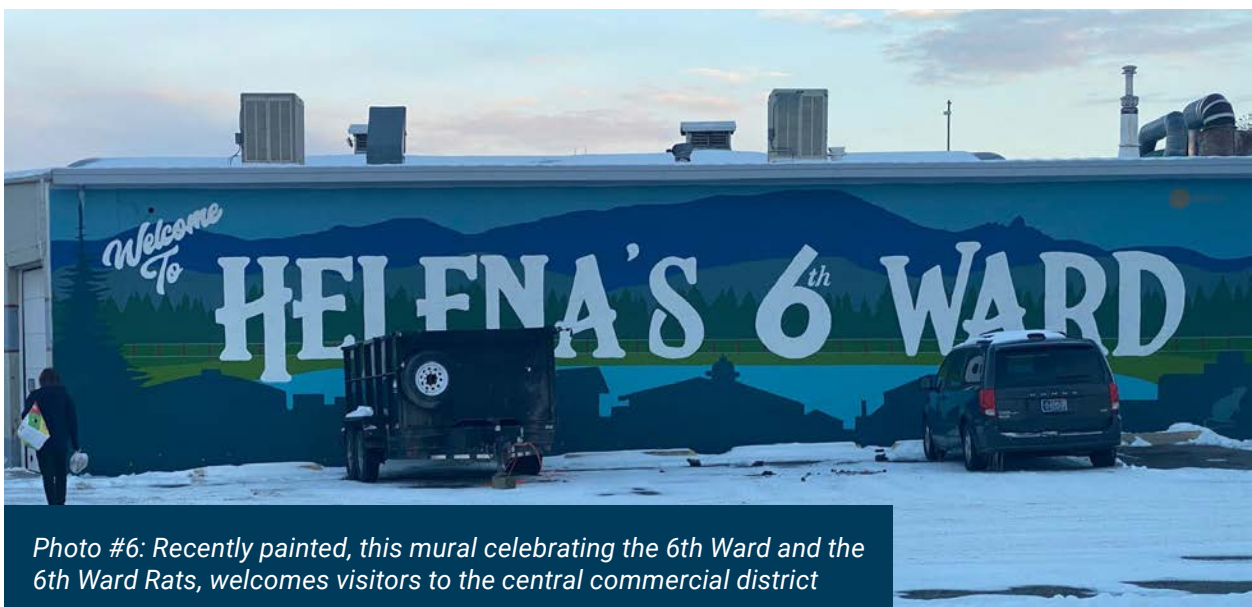
2.1.1 The Railyard

Covering more than 170 acres, the railyard is a large, busy, noisy presence in the neighborhood. It serves an important rail transportation function, splitting and moving freight trains over the grades to the east and west of town. The yard employs more than 100 workers and – according to participants in this plan – processes up to 18 trains per day.



2.1.2 The Business Core

The 6th Ward’s business district is more than 120 years old, initially developed to serve the railroad, its commerce, and its passengers. While the buildings and businesses have changed over the years, its historic scale and general character remain.



2.1.3 The Warehouses

The landscape south of the tracks and east of the commercial core is a mix of workshops, warehouses, storage, studios, and housing, reflecting a long history of adaptive use of the land near the district’s major transportation infrastructure.



Photo #7: Trades offices and small warehouses are popular in the eastern reach of the district, south of the tracks.

2.1.4 Helena Avenue

Once a trolley connection between the depot and downtown, the Helena Ave corridor now is an arterial street cutting at an angle through the city’s plats. Mt Helena is its “terminal view” to the west, and the historic depot sits at its eastern terminus, creating a unique urban design opportunity with opportunities for historic reference.



Photo #8: The historic rail depot lies at the eastern end of Helena Ave.



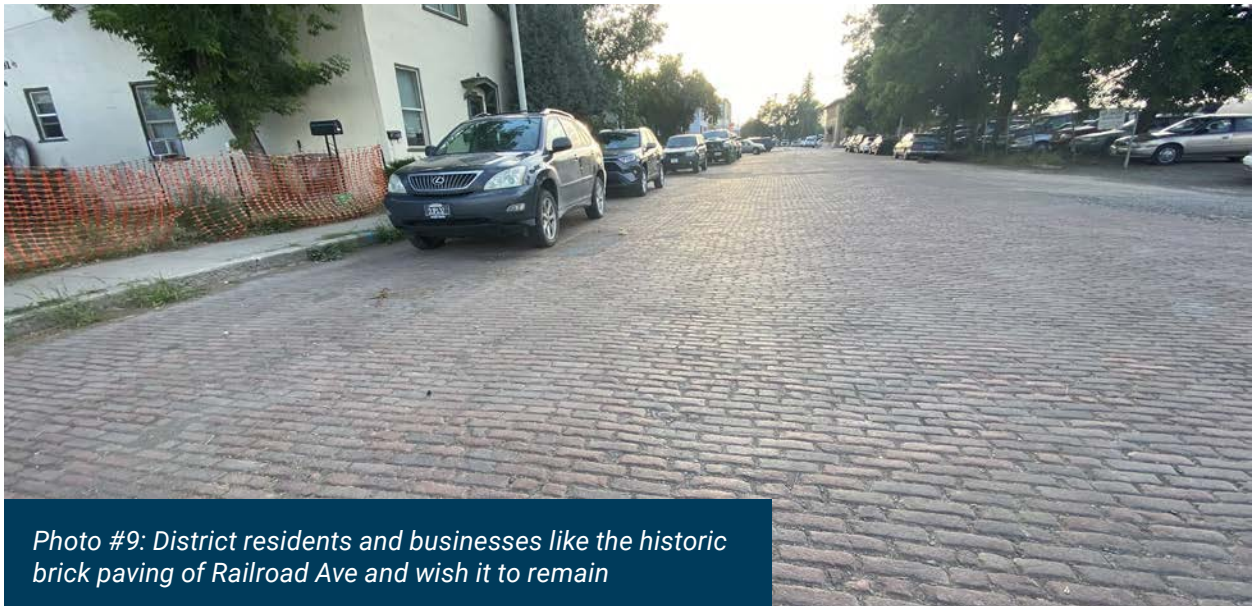


Photo #9: District residents and businesses like the historic brick paving of Railroad Ave and wish it to remain

2.1.5 Railroad Avenue

Railroad Avenue, owned by the railroad, is a brick-paved street, cited by participants in this process as key to the district’s identity. Portions of it have been paved in asphalt, but much of the brick remains, particularly in front of the depot and some of the commercial core’s oldest storefronts.

2.1.6 The Residents

6th Ward residents report they like living in the neighborhoods. They appreciate its historic legacy, its modest housing on small lots, the family atmosphere, and the proximity to services, shopping, and work. Residents are a mix of Helena’s demographic, with people whose families have lived in the district for generations neighbors to newcomers, attracted to the district for a variety of reasons. While the population is mostly white at 84%, information from the American Community Survey indicates this is one of Helena’s most economically and socially diverse places. Residents say they feel part of this community, valuing the district’s local

businesses, churches, events, and schools.

2.1.7 The Businesspeople

Like the district’s residents, the local businesspeople indicate appreciation for the district’s uniqueness, historic character, and scale. The local businesses are drawn together as a community, embracing their image as an “underdog” district, where the railroad legacy creates an attitude blending individuality and community.

2.1.8 The Schools

Residents indicate a deep connection to the district’s schools and are engaged in student activities from elementary grades through high school. Bryant Elementary, Helena Middle School, and Helena High School are all within walking distance of the district’s neighborhoods, and, according to participant comments, the proximity enhances parental involvement in the schools’ educational, athletic, and social programs. Helena College also plays an important role, making advanced academic and vocational education accessible to neighborhood residents and employees.





Photo #10: Houses north of Lyndale Ave are generally older than those developed to the south, reflecting development for railroad and commercial district employees.



Photo #11: Newer homes, built to more of a suburban style, are more popular south of Lyndale.





Photo #12: Bryant Elementary School serves the entire Railroad District area, with students from both the north and south side of the tracks.





Photo #13: The Helena Middle School is located in the southwest portion of the planning area, near the alignment of the historic Helena Ave trolley line.





Photo #14: Helena College, affiliated with the University of Montana, is located adjacent to Helena High School and offers a range of college level and vocational courses of study

2.2 District History

The historic train depot was constructed in 1904, replacing the smaller original and creating a visual centerpiece for the commercial district surrounding it. By that time, the rail yard and the nearby residential areas had already been established to support Helena’s growing economy. Gold mined nearby and then exported via rail fueled the community’s growth, and the station at the center of the Railroad District was the focus of the movement of ore out, and the movement of goods – and people – in.

The rail station was linked to the city center by Helena Avenue and its trolley line, allowing people to travel easily between the commercial and industrial bustle near the train station and the community’s civic and cultural center to the west. The Railroad District evolved to serve the needs of freight

movement, with housing nearby to house rail workers of all levels and a commercial district responding to the needs of those workers and others with business near the depot. It was a contrast to the more wealthy, Victorian character of the development nearer the city’s center, but it was busy and a critical part of early Helena’s prosperity.

As the region’s resource-based economy changed, freight movement shifted to favor truck over rail, and passenger rail service ended, the district’s core economic activity declined. US Highway 12 worked east-west through the district, accommodating vehicle travel, and commercial development moved to line the highway corridor in response. The district gradually transformed, retaining its historic neighborhood subdivision pattern and commercial building stock but adapting to the new economic, functional, and social context emerging around it. In some cases, this led to disinvestment, vacancy, and poverty.





Photo #15: The original train depot was replaced in 1907 to serve growing rail demand.

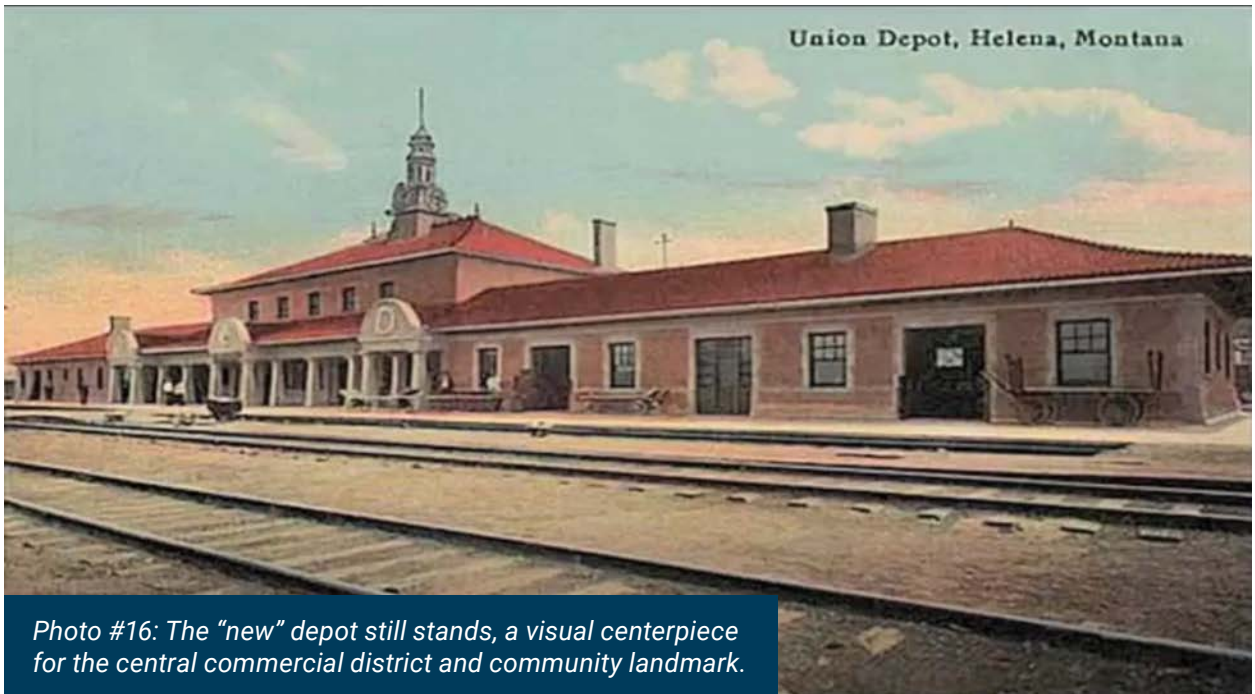


Photo #16: The "new" depot still stands, a visual centerpiece for the central commercial district and community landmark.

The district’s working-class roots, however, remain. Many of those who participated in this process reflected warmly on the identity of the “6th Ward Rats,” an affectionate term applied to those who live in the district by those who live in the district, incorporated into a recently painted mural on a downtown building. The neighborhoods in the district are still some of Helena’s most affordable, with modest and aging houses on small lots. Most residents appreciate the sounds of the working rail yard, the sense of community the district engenders, and convenient access to schools, parks, jobs, and the small commercial center.

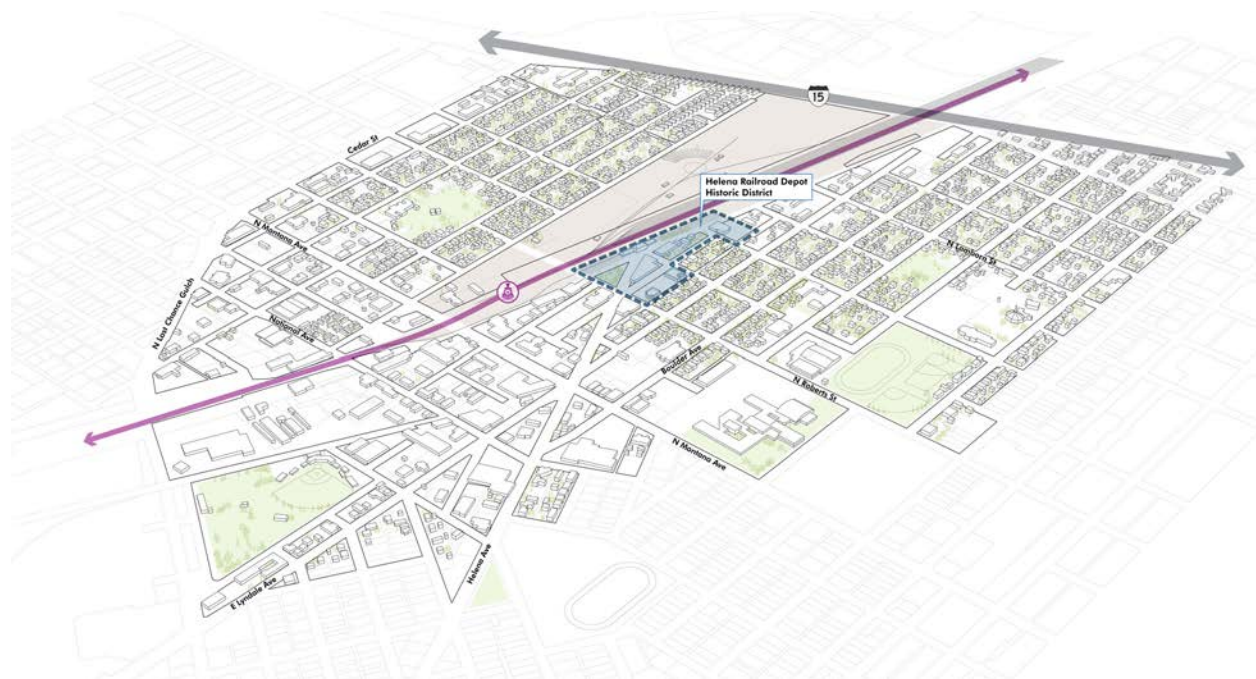
While the subject of an urban renewal plan, the district is enjoying a bit of resurgence. The commercial district is attracting new businesses looking to build on the district’s identity or explore entrepreneurship. The school district rebuilt Roberts Elementary School, and Helena College is expanding. Local businesses and the City of Helena are also investing in the commercial district’s streetscape, enhancing the district’s identity and implementing new storm

water management techniques. These investments speak to renewed interest in the neighborhood, rooted in the community’s enduring sense of identity and commitment to those unique characteristics and stories which define the 6th Ward.

2.3 Railroad District Business Outlook

The Railroad District has three distinct commercial spaces, each with different attributes defining their scale, business types, customer bases, and operational characteristics. While the district is relatively compact, it possesses a diversity of business activity. Local businesspeople see the district’s potential and are investing in it, establishing and expanding new retail and dining options and working collectively to advance district objectives. They see a niche for this type of commercial district, true to its railroad heritage and dynamic enough to attract visitors from elsewhere in Helena.

Figure 6: Railroad Depot Historic District and Community Facilities



Local non-profits, professional offices, and tradespeople are also in the district, comprising a mix of businesses representing the mix in the larger metro area and underscoring the economic diversity embedded in this relatively small space.

2.3.1 Montana Ave Corridor

The North Montana Ave corridor runs north-south, with the segment between 11th Ave and Lyndale Ave serving as a portion of US Highway 12. Businesses along the corridor generally orient to the corridor, serving customers who travel by auto. Restaurants, auto repair, warehousing, transportation, and light manufacturing businesses proliferate here, where convenient access to a busy arterial provide specific advantages.

2.3.2 Central Businesses

The cluster of activities in the district near the depot do not rely on direct highway access and include dining, professional office, service commercial, entertainment, and institutional operations. These tenants generally occupy traditional storefronts

or small-scale stand-alone structures, relying on on-street parking and sometimes benefiting from the proximity of other businesses or services nearby.

2.3.3 Warehousing & Rail

Located to the east of the central business district and south of the rail line, the warehousing district features light manufacturing, warehousing, trades offices, and artist studios intermixed with residential uses. These operations often rely on access to storage for vehicles or goods and the ability for those around them to tolerate noise, early morning operations, or outdoor equipment storage.

In general, the vacancy rates and trends by sector in the Railroad District appear to reflect what the rest of Helena is experiencing, with fluctuations in retail occupancy, warehousing, and light manufacturing on par with the rest of the City's business environment. Participants in this process, however, indicate increasing demand for storefront space in the central business area as the district's image as an inviting place for small-business startups is growing.

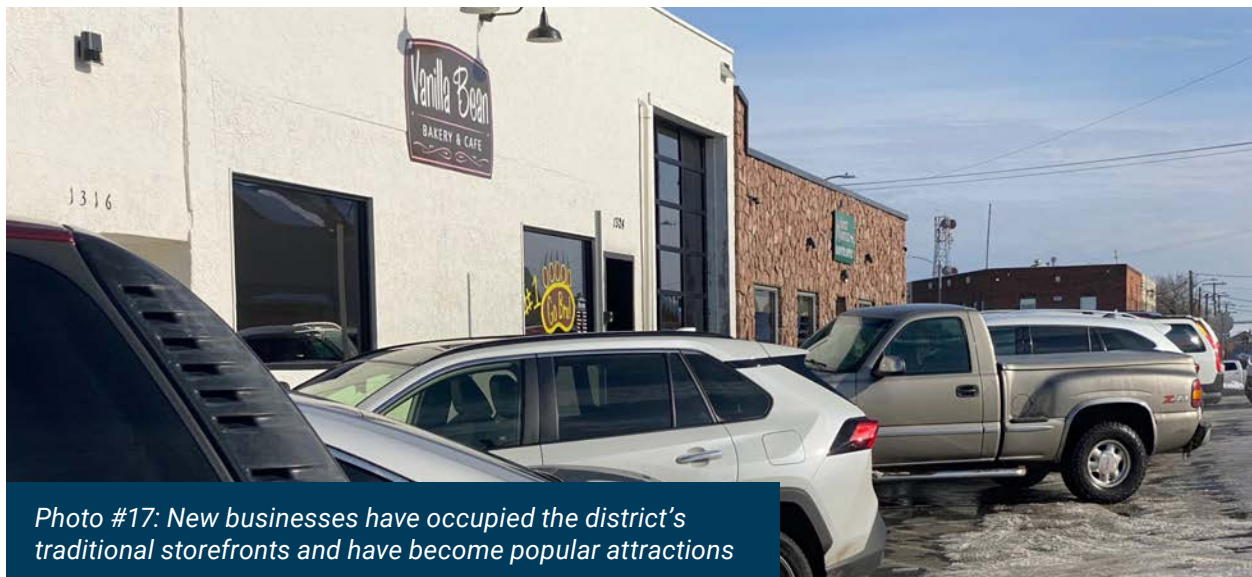


Photo #17: New businesses have occupied the district's traditional storefronts and have become popular attractions





Photo #18: Historic uses also remain in the central commercial district, enjoying a type of cult status and appreciation.





Photo #19: New uses are also adapting to disused warehouse space, bringing new activities to old places.

From 2010 to 2017, Helena’s retail trade industry declined by more than 20%. These declining trends in the retail industry appear to be reflected in the saturation of available office and retail spaces for lease (Appendix A). This is a relatively high inventory for Helena, possibly due in part to trends of allowing work-from-home and the rise of e-commerce in response to the Covid pandemic. This may mean retail and office spaces are less in demand, but it also may indicate increased availability of cheaper office or storefront space for business startups. In the Railroad District, this dynamic appears to be playing out.

Helena’s warehousing sector is changing, too. Recent trends indicate both a rise in Helena’s “wholesale trade” employment and a balancing decrease in “transportation, warehousing, and utilities” employment. This suggests existing warehousing space is being repurposed to serve the growing “wholesale trade” sector. It may be a source for new opportunities in the 6th Ward’s own warehousing district, repurposing or intensifying the use of warehouse space near the rail line.

The diversity of business types in the district presents opportunities and challenges. Increased diversity may make the business environment more resilient to changes in any one sector, with some businesses possibly prospering while others struggle. It can present challenges, though, in requiring a more adaptive and generalized policy approach, with investment or business development strategies capable of reflecting the diversity and distributing benefits equitably.

2.4 Housing

The Railroad District has a mix of residential housing types, with single-family units predominating. Many of the single-family units, particularly in the northern neighborhood, are modest and sited on relatively small parcels, consistent with the railroad worker housing style of the early 1900s. Based on a 2022 housing inventory, approximately 4% of the residential land in the Railroad District was developed with units determined to be in poor or worse condition.



2.4.1 Population and Growth in Helena

The City of Helena relies on population data provided by the U. S. Bureau of the Census and Montana State’s Department of Commerce. The Department of Commerce prepares the population forecasts for cities and counties to use in Comprehensive Planning. Lewis and Clark County's population reached 70,973 full-time residents in 2020, reflecting an increase of more than 7,578 since 2010. About 3,900 people or 10.6 percent of this growth, occurred in the City of Helena.

From 2010 to 2024, Helena grew at an average annual growth rate of approximately 1.9 percent. Lewis and Clark County grew at a rate of approximately 1.5 percent, and the state of Montana grew at a rate of approximately 1.1 percent. The Montana

Department of Commerce forecasts Helena to grow to 58,214 by the year 2045. If the Railroad District continues to house approximately 10 percent of Helena’s residents, then the district will grow to a population of approximately 5,821.

2.4.2 Railroad District Demographics

The railroad district constitutes a portion of the City of Helena, with 3,495 residents in 2022. There are approximately 1,735 households in the district, with a median annual household income of \$46,232. Of those residents, the median age is 37.7 years old, with 16.2% holding a bachelor’s degree or higher. The number of housing units is almost equally split between the neighborhoods on either side of the tracks.

Table 2: Lewis and Clark County and Helena Population Projections (2024-2045)

	2010	2024	Population Increase	Percent Increase (2010-2024)	2045 Projection
State of Montana	989,415	1,142,746	153,331	15.5%	1,373,587
Lewis and Clark County	63,395	76,490	13,095	20.6%	123,056
City of Helena	28,190	35,540	7,350	26.1%	58,214

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Montana Department of Commerce



2.4.3 Housing Type

City of Helena had 15,032 housing units in 2022 according to the American Community Survey, Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units. About 8,413 of these homes or about 56 percent of all housing units in the city of Helena are owner-occupied. In the Railroad District, approximately 34% of the units are owner occupied, with renters occupying 61% of the district's housing units, and approximately 5% are vacant

Table 3 and Figure 7 on the following page summarize the types of housing in the city of Helena in 2022. Table 3 also identifies owner-occupied and rental housing for the occupied units in the city of Helena.

Structure Type	Occupied Housing		Owner-Occupied Housing		Renter- Occupied Housing	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Total Occupied Housing Units	15,032	100%	8,413	100%	6,619	100%
1-detached	8,276	55%	7,090	84%	1,186	18%
1-attached	1,033	7%	529	6%	504	8%
2 apartments	976	6%	77	1%	899	14%
3-4 apartment	1,864	12%	244	3%	1,620	24%
5-9 apartments	743	5%	76	1%	667	10%
10+ apartments	1,689	11%	60	1%	1,629	25%
Mobile Home/Other	451	3%	337	4%	114	2%

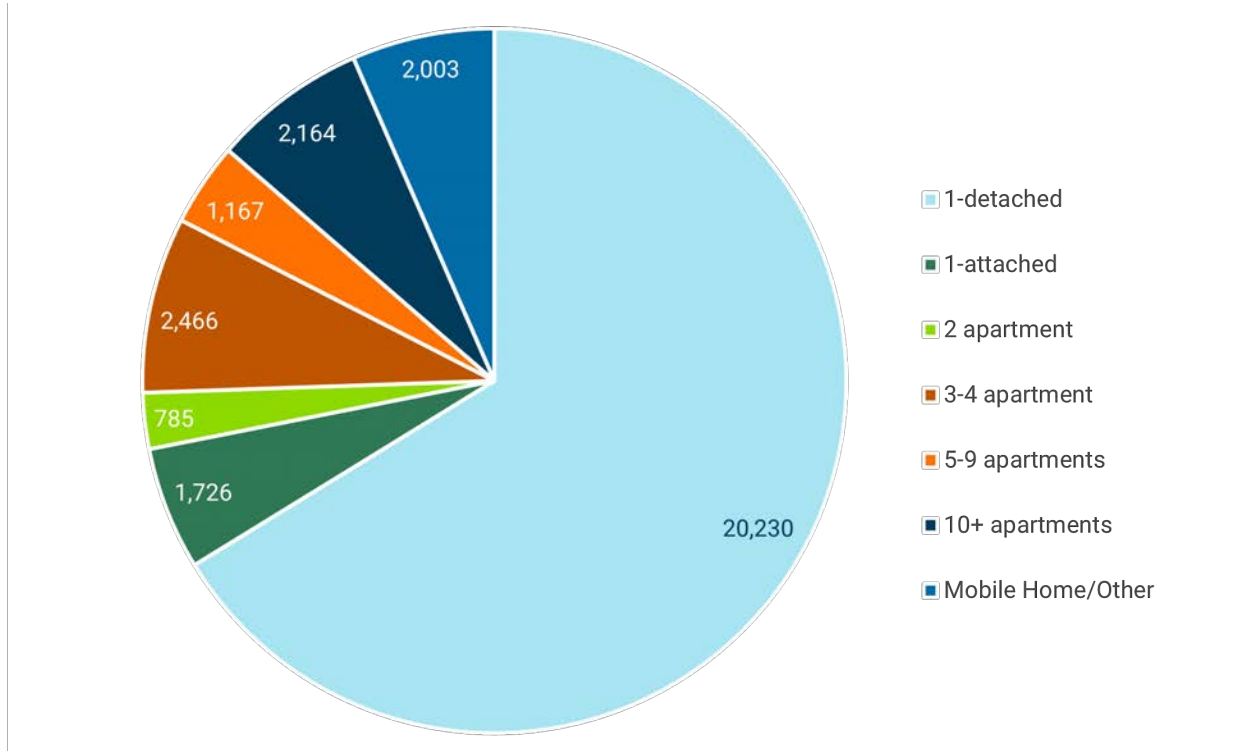
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Montana Department of Commerce

2.4.4 Housing Age and Condition

Most of the houses in the heart of the Railroad District were constructed before or shortly after 1900, with homes in the southern portion of the district generally newer, larger, and in better condition. The condition of most of the older houses is considered average with just a few being considered poor or very poor. The houses in the northern portion of the 6th Ward were also mainly constructed near the turn-of-the-century. The condition of most of these houses is also considered average with some homes considered poor or very poor. The maps here illustrate those properties with poor or very poor housing condition, scattered across the entirety of the planning area but concentrated near the center and in the north.

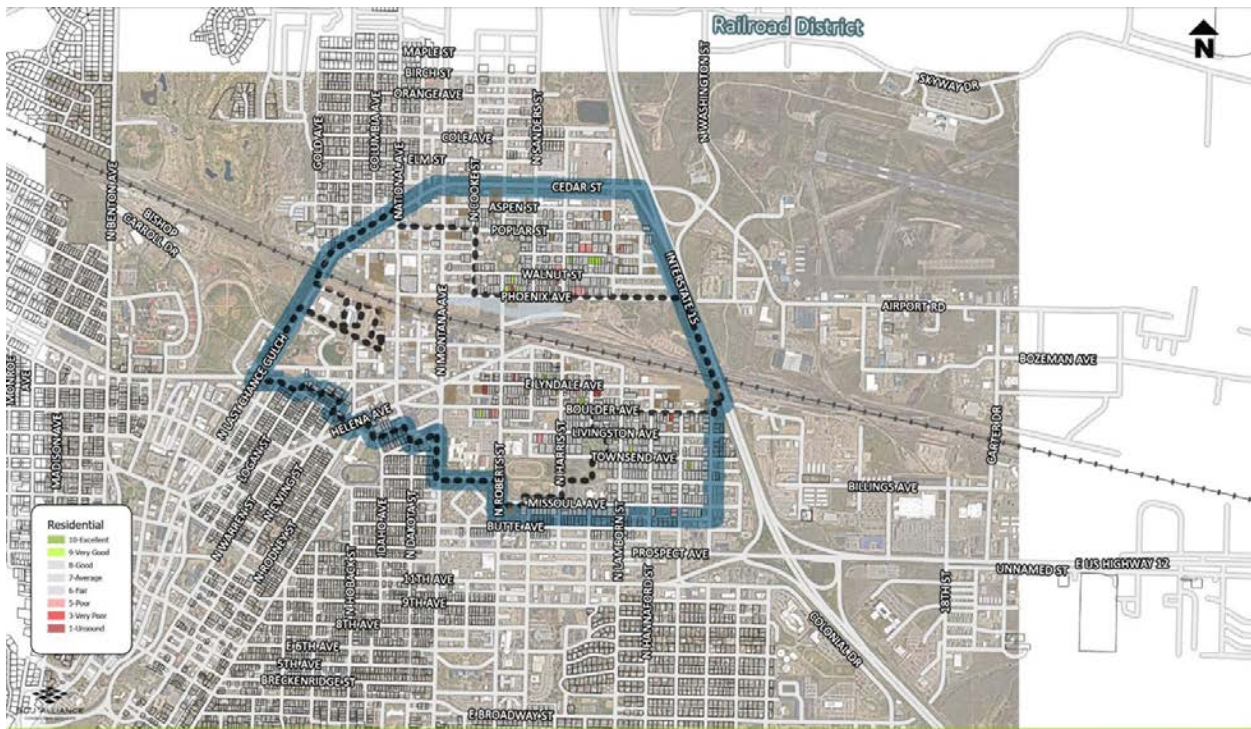


Figure 7: 2022 City of Helena Housing Types



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022: ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables

Figure 8: Map of Housing Condition



2.4.5 Affordability in the Railroad District

A median-income earning household (\$46,232 in 2022) in the Railroad District could afford to purchase a \$175,000 home, based on dedicating no more than 30% of gross income to cover a mortgage and related expenses. Even though the district's housing stock is generally older, the \$270,690 median home value exceeds a household's ability to afford it by almost 55 percent.

Households renting their housing pay a median rent of \$810. This is closer to the affordability limit, but the relatively high rent makes it a challenge for those householders to enter the homeownership market.

Attempts to increase housing affordability here will likely need to concentrate on producing units below median value and with rents below the current median rent. This may be difficult to do under market conditions given current construction costs and existing zoning density limitations.

2.5 Access, Circulation, & Parking

The railroad spawned the 6th Ward's development, bringing economic vitality to the district and transforming this part of Helena to serve the railroad's needs. As transportation technology evolved and the railroad's importance diminished, the community had to adapt to new transportation investments and the social, economic, and development changes which came with them. While the railroad remains a significant physical and operational element in the district, US Highway 12, and Helena's arterial streets influence the district's function and character, as well.

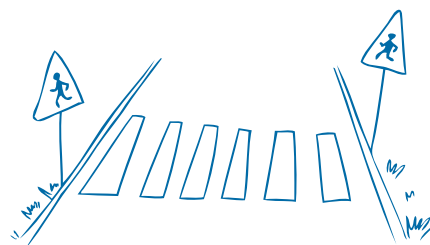
The Railroad District is located at a regional mobility hub. East-west vehicular traffic on US 12 works its way through the district along North Montana Avenue and Lyndale Avenue, making a right-angle turn at the intersection with Helena Avenue. North Montana Avenue continues north from intersection with Lyndale and Helena to access the growing Helena Valley, interrupted by its at-grade crossing of the BNSF railroad tracks. This context of a busy US highway, regional arterials, and a railroad creates a set of constraints and considerations to which transportation and land use planning in the district must adapt.

2.5.1 Roadways

Helena's roadways are governed by city, county, and state entities. Helena's Transportation Systems department works in close conjunction with the county and state. Currently, two plans are acting as guiding documents:

- ◆ *Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan – 2014 Update*
- ◆ *City of Helena Multimodal Traffic Study Five-Point Intersection & Corridor Connection*

Traffic volumes, speeds, and roadway geometries inhibit pedestrian and cyclist use of the arterial corridors. The priority is to accommodate regional traffic flow, consistent with the highway and arterial designations these roadways possess. The result, however, is a disconnection between the Railroad District and the rest of Helena, where US 12 and North Montana Ave effectively separate the district from the residential neighborhoods to the west.



The design of the five-point intersection at North Montana, Lyndale, and Helena further restricts access to the district from the west, requiring those wishing to enter the district to do so via Helena Ave and not from Lyndale Ave. The City commissioned a detailed study of its five-point intersections, one of which is this intersection. The study also examined non-motorized transportation within the same area, making recommendations for the Centennial Trail and its approach to an intersection with North Montana Ave. The study examines roadway and trail geometry, crash histories, physical constraints, and multimodal needs, making recommendations to satisfy regional mobility needs and increase pedestrian and cyclist safety.

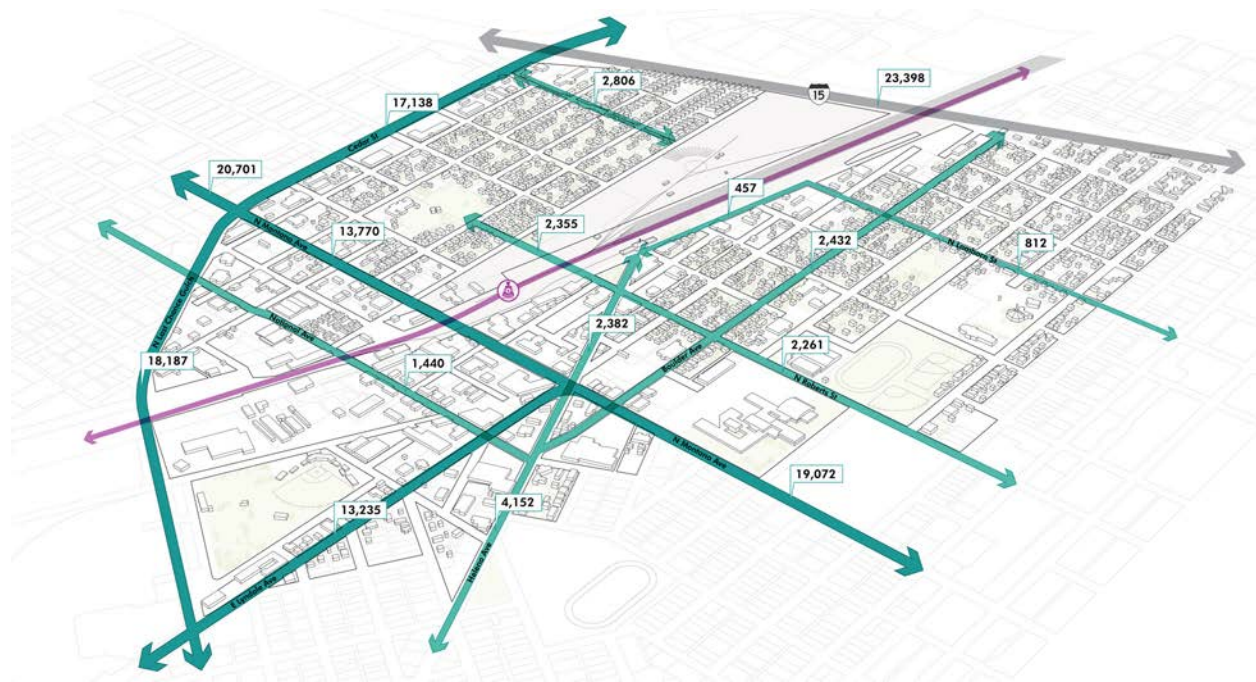
The recommendations include a new roundabout at the North Montana, Lyndale, and Helena intersection, a grade-separated railroad crossing with North Montana going below the rail lines, and an at-grade Centennial Trail crossing at North Montana, controlled by a pedestrian-activated beacon

or crossing signal. The study makes several other recommendations to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety at crossings along Helena Ave. A full summary of the study's recommendations is provided in Appendix C.

While the study offers a detailed examination of the various proposed improvements, the combination of a roundabout at Montana/Lyndale/Helena, a Centennial Trail crossing, and a grade-separated railroad crossing create conflicts not easily reconciled. There is too little horizontal distance to accommodate all three improvements with the grading the railroad crossing requires. And a grade-separated rail crossing would eliminate access to North Montana from Bozeman St, Argyle St, and Phoenix Ave, implications the Five Points study did not fully explore.

There are other roadway-related transportation issues influencing this area, too, not mentioned in the Five Points Study. They are noted below and expanded upon in the following section on "issues."

Figure 9: Railroad District Transportation Corridors and Traffic Volumes



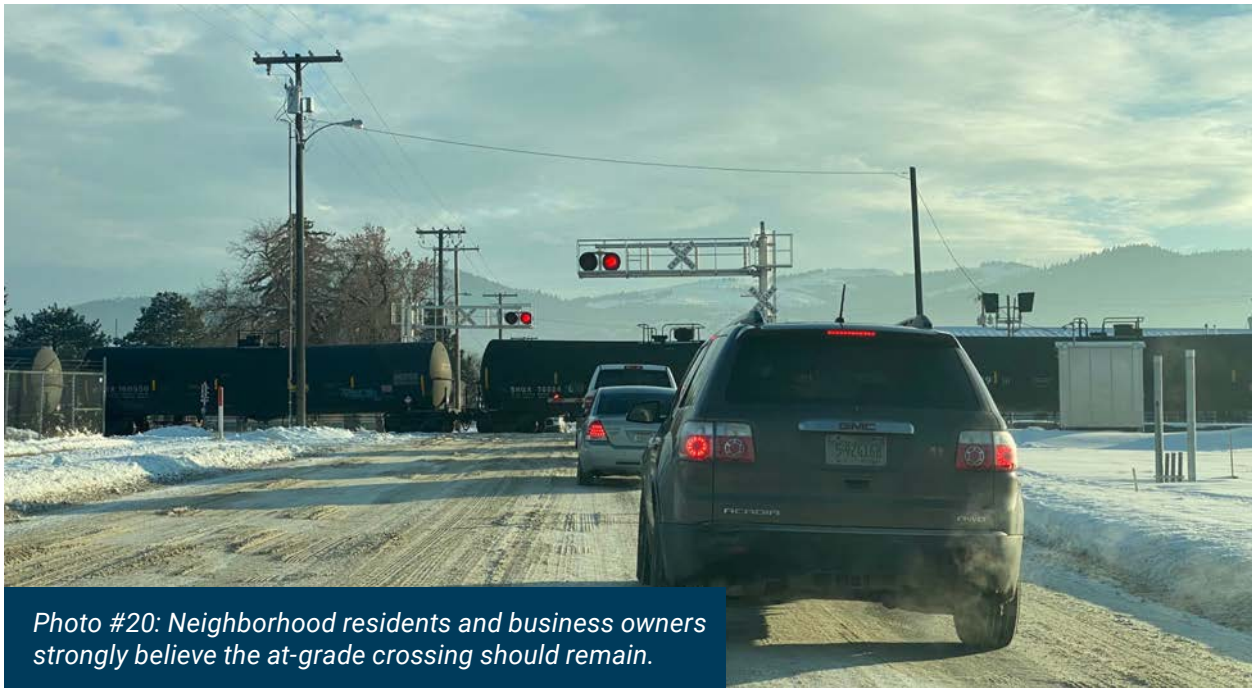


Photo #20: Neighborhood residents and business owners strongly believe the at-grade crossing should remain.

Roberts Street Crossing

This at-grade railroad crossing is critical to district residents, connecting northern neighborhoods to the commercial core and the schools and parks south of the tracks. Retaining the crossing – while not necessarily the railroad’s preference – allows district residents to access local businesses and services without relying on North Montana Ave, an important element to reinforce the local lifestyle residents cherish and to alleviate traffic congestion on North Montana Ave.

Boulder Avenue Access

The left turning movement from southbound North Montana Ave to eastbound Boulder Ave is used by school buses and others wishing to access the district from the north. Because of this intersection’s proximity to North Montana Avenue’s intersection with Lyndale Ave, the dedicated left turn lane can accommodate only three vehicles.

This causes congestion on southbound North Montana Ave as the left turn queue fills up and waiting vehicles spill into the southbound travel lane.

Railroad Avenue Ownership

One of the district’s more defining elements is the brick paving on Railroad Ave. This street also provides access to several local businesses with storefronts and on-street parking on Railroad Ave. The street, however, is not a public right of way. The railroad owns Railroad Ave and has control over its maintenance and its continued use as a street.

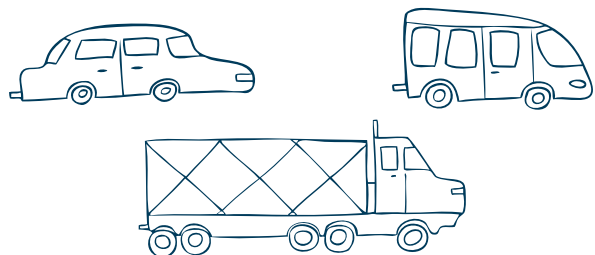




Photo #21: The Centennial Trail now terminates near Kendrick Field in the district's northwest. It begins again near I-15, running toward East Helena.



2.5.2 Rail

Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway has acquired Montana Rail Link Trainmaster and owns the railyard and operating rail line rights as a result. The rail now serves only freight traffic traveling through the region. Helena’s rail yard is considered a “helper” station, where longer freight trains are separated into smaller sections for easier movement over mountain passes both east and west of Helena. The yard – once a critical component of the local economy – now facilitates regional freight movement, and much of the space within it has fallen into disuse.

Passenger rail service to Montana ended in 1979, though there has been recent activity to consider reviving passenger service linking Billings, Bozeman, Helena, and Missoula.

2.5.3 Trails

The City of Helena’s Centennial Trail enters the Railroad District from the west and terminates before reaching North Montana Ave. It then reappears on the east end of the district along Boulder Ave to continue under the I-15 underpass and continue to East Helena. The Centennial Trail Master Plan calls for the trail to be continuous, but this will depend on reaching and then crossing North Montana Ave and then determining an alignment through the rest of the Railroad

District. The trail is limited to non-motorized use and follows a former rail right of way to the point where the right of way was deeded to adjoining property owners at National Ave.

2.6 Zoning Assessment

Helena’s zoning ordinance and zoning map apply land use and dimensional standards by zoning district throughout the city. The designations applied in the Railroad District are much like those found elsewhere in the city, with a variety of residential, commercial, and institutional district designations. This means land use development here is regulated much the same way as it is in other neighborhoods, even though the district’s history and existing development condition are different than what is found elsewhere in Helena.

This results in a sense of misalignment between what zoning permits, what now exists, and what subarea residents, institutions, and businesses appear to want. Each zoning district in the subarea now misses the mark to some degree when compared to the Growth Policy’s objectives (to both retain the district’s character and to facilitate new investment in a compact, neighborhood center type) or the Urban Renewal Plan’s objectives (to mix a wider variety of uses in the district’s commercial core).

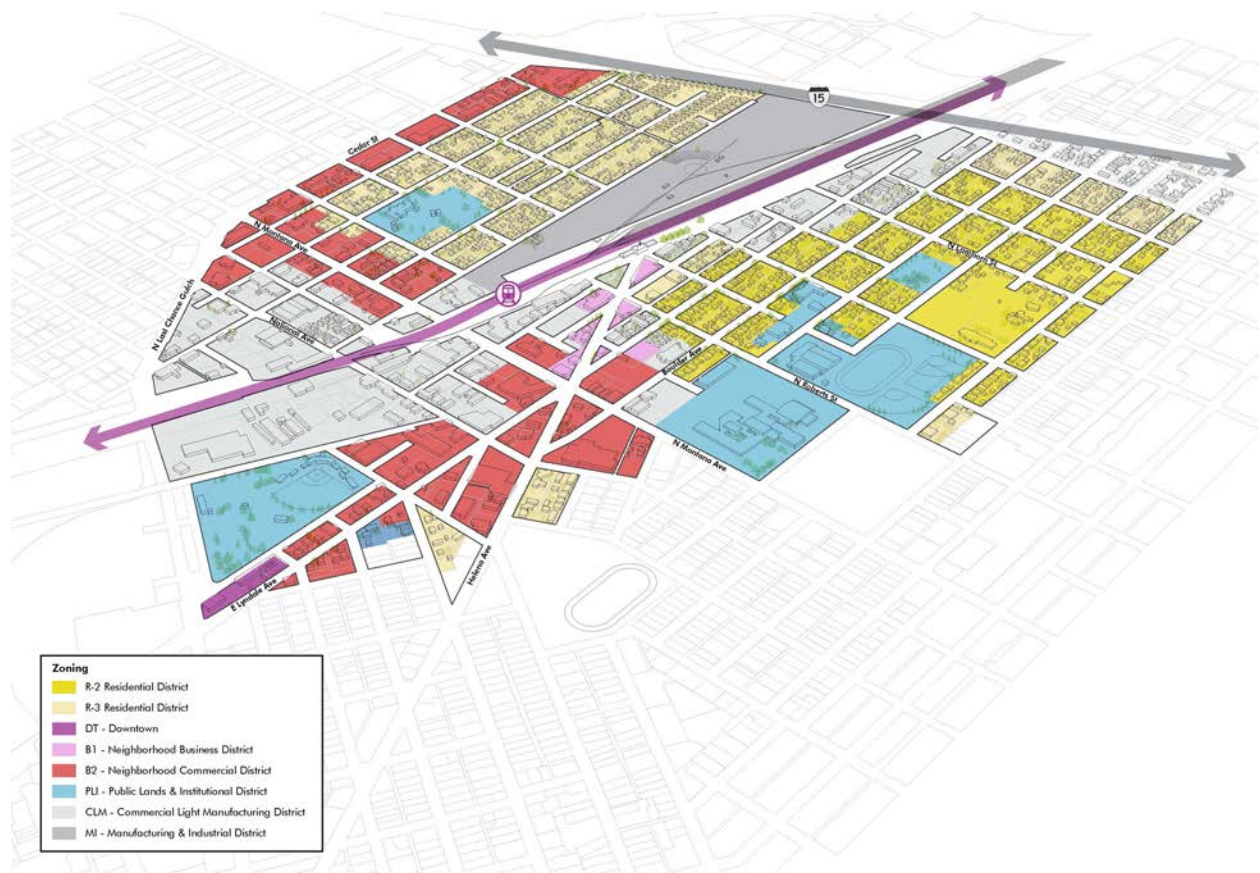


Existing zoning in the R-2 and R-3 districts require setbacks which are too large to permit construction on the area's narrow lots. The CLM district fails to permit residential uses near the small commercial core where the opportunity to do so would help implement City policy. The code also mandates off-street parking where it may not be warranted, particularly where on-street parking in the retail core may be abundant. Zoning also applies an overlay district (R-3/T-25) with standards difficult to decipher. Nonconforming structures proliferate in all zoning districts, limiting ability to reconstruct or reinvest. And existing standards limit the ability of new development to target residential or business needs City policy

calls for. Seeking remedies through variances or conditional use permits is not an effective solution, discouraging development at any scale.

The individual zoning districts and their potential disconnect from 6th Ward application are described in the plan's land use recommendations and in Appendix E as part of a more detailed zoning critique. Plan implementation focuses on the Depot District, the Trades District and the arterial corridors. It introduces new districts tailored to the Railroad District's unique needs, encouraging the type of compact, diverse, and identity-rich development 6th Ward residents and business owners desire.

Figure 10: Existing Zoning



3. Public Engagement

Inclusive, responsive, transparent, and meaningful public engagement is fundamental to any planning process, and it is essential when developing a plan for as distinct an area as the Railroad District. The district's residents, businesspeople, and service providers are eager to see their neighborhoods succeed, and they have insight into this area which shapes the plan and expectations which will determine this plan's success.

The engagement program sought to involve the community in a variety of ways and to work with community members to identify issues the plan must address, consider alternative courses of action, and determine specific priorities for action to set the plan in motion. It began with a set of orientation interviews and concluded with a celebratory roll-out meeting, with touchpoints in between.

3.1 Introductory Meetings

Individuals representing a variety of perspectives participated in the orientation interviews conducted at Helena College from November 14 through 16, 2022. The interviewees were subarea residents, business owners, employees at various local institutions, and agency partners. They joined the consultant to offer an introduction to this part of Helena, speaking

to their own relationships to the space, their understanding of the area's history, the dynamics influencing the neighborhoods, the folks the process must involve, and what might make this project most successful. These meetings allowed individuals to speak freely, absent the pressure of a public meeting or disagreement to openly discuss their hopes, concerns, and aspirations.

3.1.1 Topics

The interviews over the three days generated comprehensive conversations about the 6th Ward and the topics this plan may need to address. Participants raised at least 65 topics in these early conversations associated with neighborhood character, the economy, transportation, housing, or local institutions. Expectedly, many topics relate to more than one of these five overarching considerations. Appendix D provides a detailed summary of the topics raised and how each one relates to the plan's subject areas.

3.2 Storefront Studio

Conducted March 20 – 27, 2023 in the NAMI conference room, the storefront studio invited community members to drop in, speak with the consultant team, and consider three alternative visions for the district's future.



3.2.1 Scenarios

The studio presented three alternative visions for the 6th Ward, offering three different sets of priorities to guide the plan’s direction and implementation. They were intended to highlight community desires voiced in the orientation interviews and in preceding policy work, asking participants to wrestle with and reconcile the tradeoffs each scenario presented. Each of the three scenarios presented a vision for the district everyone could support, but the community’s resources to achieve all of what the three scenarios promise are limited.

Conversations with community members helped to tease out how one scenario differed from the others, illustrating how the set of priorities embedded in one might make satisfying the priorities embedded in the others more difficult. For instance, investing in making regional mobility faster and more efficient might make it more difficult to satisfy desires for pedestrian crossing of Montana Ave or encouraging the uniqueness and access to the district’s commercial core.

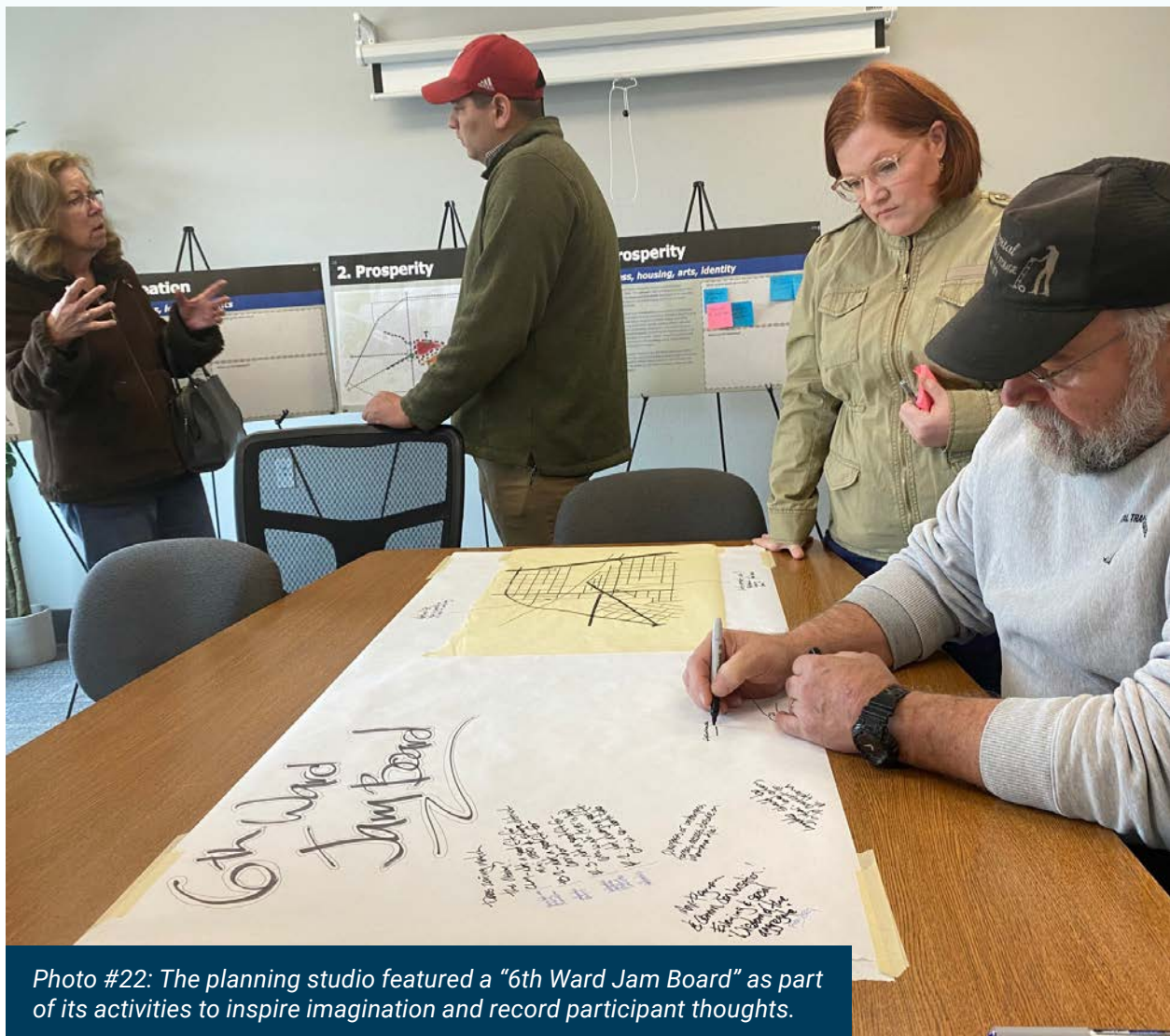


Photo #22: The planning studio featured a “6th Ward Jam Board” as part of its activities to inspire imagination and record participant thoughts.

Recreation Emphasis

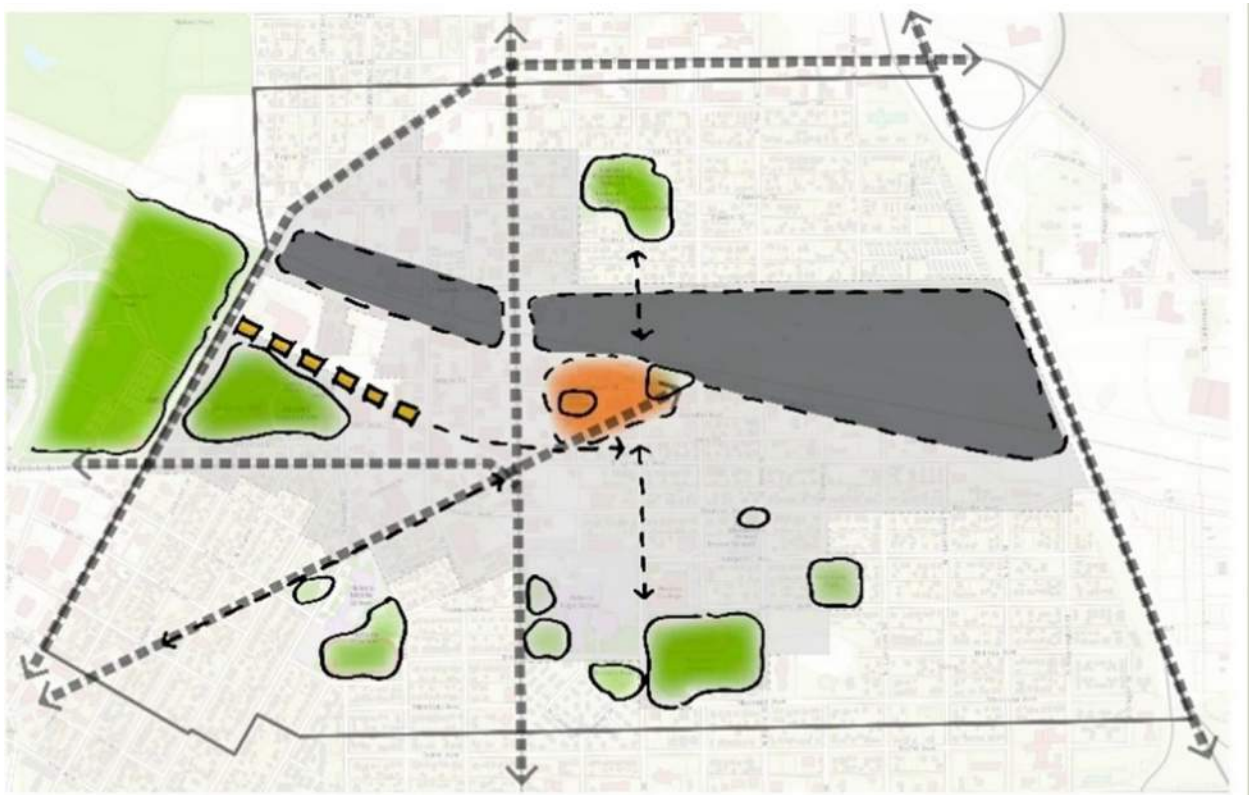
Helena's 6th Ward has 11 community parks, seven community churches, six recreational businesses, and four educational institutions. There are various local businesses located here, too.

This scenario emphasizes connections to parks and creates a family-friendly atmosphere with public events supporting local festivals, concerts, and other outdoor activities. Community-sponsored events encourage more connection to existing recreational activities. The

existing community institutions - such as churches, local businesses, and educational institutions - catalyze and sponsor neighborhood events, establishing and nurturing community pride.

Scenario 1 seeks collaborative neighborhood inclusion, possibly involving neighborhood art projects, public art, and increased community engagement in the district's schools. Community-sponsored events and entertainment may be key to bringing the community together, generating a shared sense of identity and commitment to all of the 6th Ward's neighborhoods.

Figure 11: Scenario #1 - Recreation Emphasis



Prosperity Emphasis

The railroad's 1880 arrival put Helena on the map, and the link between the depot and downtown developed as an essential corridor connecting the commercial and warehousing district to the town's commercial and institutional center.

This scenario supports the continued revitalization of the district's commercial core, emphasizing new housing adjacent to it and fueling interest in the emerging Trades District. 6th Ward businesses range from artisan shops, consulting services, food markets, financial institutions,

hotels, medical offices, personal services, restaurants, recreational activities, retail stores, and vehicle services. Strategies in this scenario will spur civic programming events, welcoming 6th Ward residents and outside visitors to support and grow economic vitality. Part of the commercial district's draw is its history, expressed in the buildings that remain and the railyard culture that defined the place's origins.

This scenario brings back economic vitality to the 6th Ward, but it is reshaped to reflect today's economy and to honor the scale, uniqueness, and flavor for which the 6th Ward is known.

Figure 12: Scenario #2 - Prosperity Emphasis

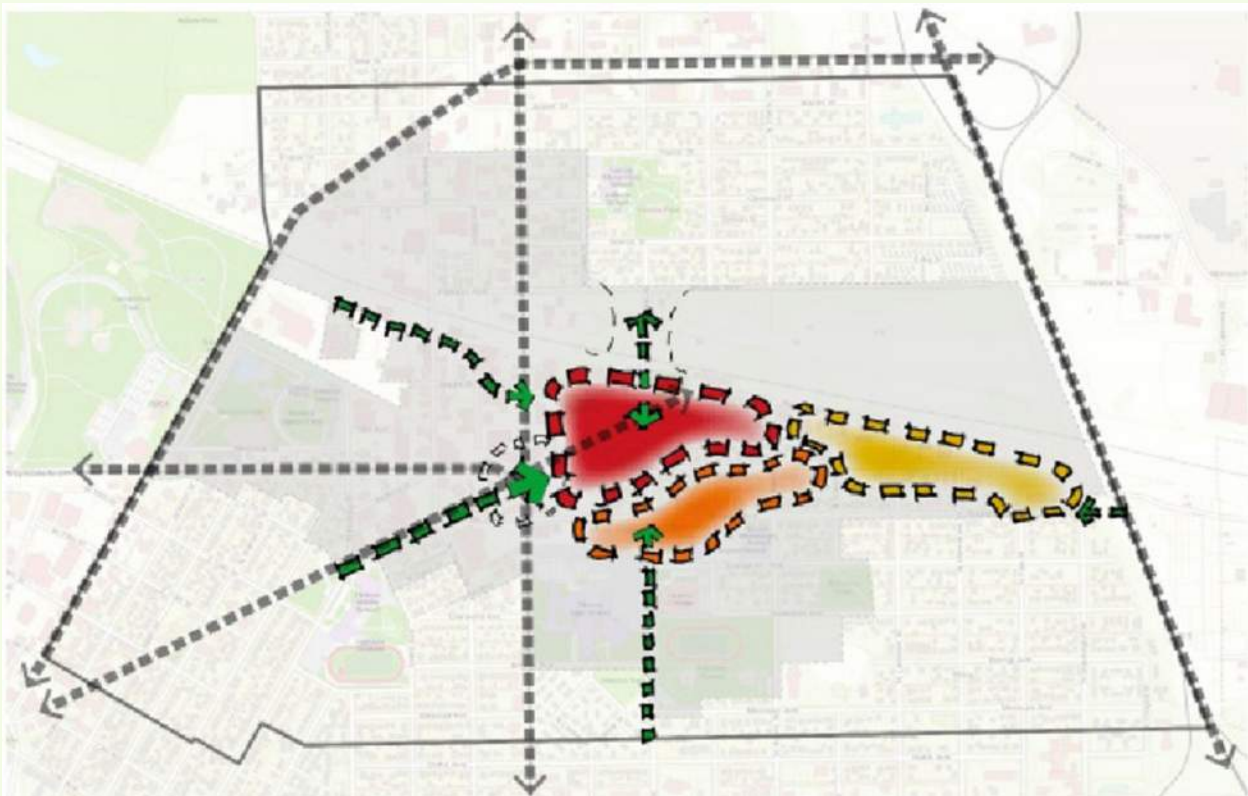
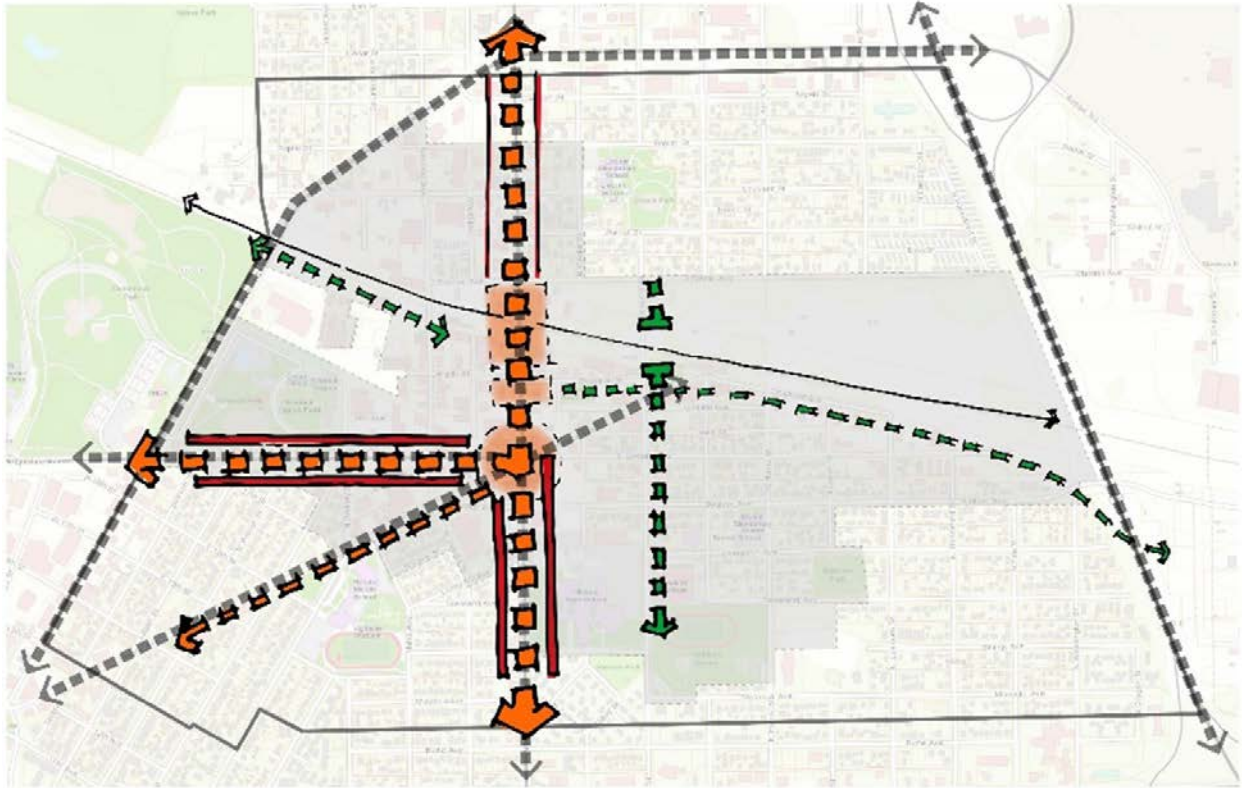


Figure 13: Scenario #3 - Mobility Emphasis



Mobility Emphasis

Navigating the 6th Ward on foot or by bike can be challenging. The transportation priority has been on moving freight and autos, with the railroad and US Highway 12 both transiting the district.

Helena commissioned a study on its five-point intersections a few years ago, with recommendations largely incorporated in this scenario. The big-ticket items of an underpass at the railroad and a roundabout at Malfunction Junction lead the list, with the emphasis continuing to be on efficiency, smoothness, and capacity for freight and autos. Some improvements address walking and biking, but they adapt to the roadway nature of the transportation network, with crossings at established intersections and non-motorized corridors generally following roads and tracks. The roadway underpass

would also require railroad participation, and that may cause the Roberts St. crossing to close.

An emphasis on mobility will also likely further limit access to properties adjoining US 12 and Montana Ave and may further reduce access to Boulder Ave. This will reshape the character of development along the roadways, pushing buildings further back and focusing access to a limited number of driveways or street intersections.

After reviewing the scenarios and discussing the premises and implications of each, participants noted what they liked and what might need to be improved upon for each one, resulting in a rich array of comments on the scenarios. Appendix D captures comments for each scenario and indicates where the comment may apply to more than just the scenario where it appeared.



Participants posted 72 comments across the three scenarios, emphasizing the importance of several broadly held priorities:

- ◆ **The trolley's history is important**, perhaps important enough for it to be reinstated in some way or honored in urban design treatments.
- ◆ There is a need for a **historic reference in the center of the district**, possibly a square or plaza, to celebrate the historic context.
- ◆ **Sidewalks** are a public good and should be installed in the district to facilitate safe pedestrian travel for all.
- ◆ The **brick surface of Railroad Avenue should be retained**, even if it means coordinating with the railroad to keep it that way.
- ◆ Increasing the number of available, **affordable housing units near the commercial center** is essential.
- ◆ **Malfunction Junction needs to be fixed**, either through a roundabout or other treatment to improve access to the district.
- ◆ Increasing the amount of **available parking on street** will help retail tenants

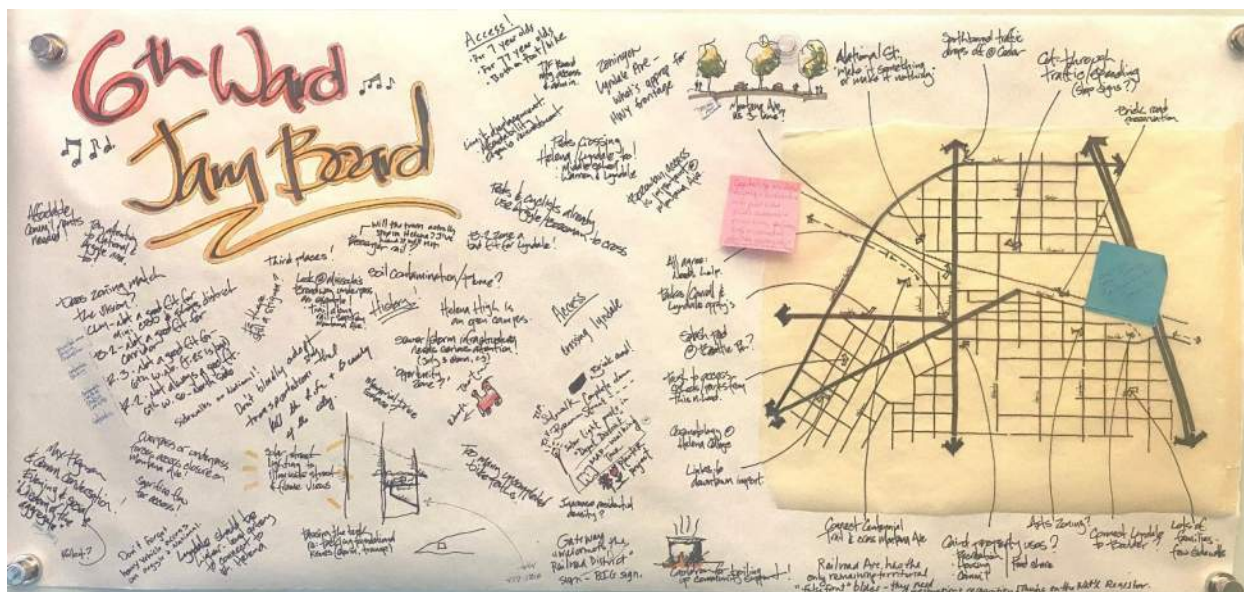
prosper – as will having storefront employees parking elsewhere.

- ◆ The **Roberts St rail crossing must remain open**, providing a convenient link for area residents and a necessary one for district school kids who live in the northern area of the district.
- ◆ It is essential to **connect the Centennial Trail through the district**.
- ◆ **Facilities for bikes and pedestrians need improvement**, particularly to cross North Montana Ave and to access the district's schools and parks.

3.2.2 Ward Jam Board

Studio visitors could also raise issues they believe important to the district, defining its identity, addressing persistent challenges, or taking advantage of opportunities just now beginning to materialize. The “Jam Board” tabletop worksheet invited a range of comments and suggestions, evolving during the studio’s course to reflect participant conversations and ideas. A detailed listing and analysis of public comments is provided in Appendix D.

Figure 14: 6th Ward Jam Board



The preferred scenario references these conversations and comments, resulting in a “mash-up” of the three scenarios and presenting a unified direction. The district’s spatial vision reflects this unified direction, as do the policy recommendations incorporated in the plan. The hybrid of the three scenarios also reconciles what might be conflicting priorities, reflecting on the studio’s discussions, existing City policy, and the urban renewal plan to produce clarity in the implementation strategy.

The plan’s direction emerges from responses to several key topics and issues. Several themes recurred in conversation, the Jam Board, and responses to the three scenarios, listed in Appendix D, and summarized here.

- ◆ **Safe pedestrian crossing Montana Ave and Lyndale Ave.**
- ◆ **Maintaining the Roberts St rail crossing**
- ◆ **Historic importance** of district
- ◆ **Rebuilding trust and connection with City**
- ◆ **Infrastructure investment** to stimulate development
- ◆ **Potential for passenger rail**
- ◆ **Need for additional public amenities** in the district

3.3 Rollout

To be completed after the community rollout meeting.

3.4 Ongoing Conversation - Commitment to Keep Listening

Helena intends to treat this plan as a living document, maintaining conversation with Railroad District residents, businesses, and institutions to ensure the plan’s objectives and initiatives are being implemented. While the plan-creation process ended at adoption, the plan implementation has just begun.



4. Vision

Existing Growth Policy objectives, policy direction incorporated in the Urban Renewal Plan, community engagement in this process, and analysis of the subarea's conditions revealed a general agreement for what the Railroad District's vision should be. The vision should:

- ◆ **Promote and honor the district's past**, using its history as a keystone in the district's identity and a unique advantage to help its businesses prosper.
- ◆ **Spur investment in the district's transportation network**, with strategic investments to smooth traffic flow where smoothness is sought, to enhance district access, and to increase safety and comfort for those walking or rolling.
- ◆ **Forecast new housing construction**, welcoming new residents of all income levels into the district, particularly near the commercial core.
- ◆ **Support local business efforts** to succeed, expand, hire, and thrive.
- ◆ **Recognize the critical role the district's schools, parks, and other public or institutional uses** play in sustaining the community's quality of life.
- ◆ **Promote public safety** throughout the district.
- ◆ **Honor the role each neighborhood** has in defining the district's character and contributing to its social and economic activity.

The vision forecasts a snapshot of the subarea in the year 2045, describing what the 6th Ward will look like, how it will function, who will live and operate businesses here, and what they will value. It is the future the community wishes to attain, and it is the basis for every goal, policy, and implementation recommendation this plan includes. It builds on the Growth Policy and Urban Renewal Plan. It also reflects on the community's suggestions, focusing on what makes the district livable and what attributes may change to suit those who live here, run a business, or manage a school.

Known affectionately as the 6th Ward "Rats," residents embrace this identity, seeing the district's rough edges as an honest expression of this part of Helena's roots. While there's a general call for new investment, there is also some hesitancy about going too far in transforming the 6th Ward and erasing what makes it a special, unique place.

This vision attempts to reconcile this tension, targeting improvement where necessary to support the district's business core and tempering recommendations elsewhere to retain the feel, function, and community connectedness the neighborhood's business owners and residents cherish. Its overall statement addresses persistent blight while still sensitive to the quirkiness making this neighborhood different from others in town. Set for the year 2045, This plan's vision also makes special note of the planning area's "sub-districts" or neighborhoods, places which have unique circumstances and specific functional expectations setting them up for different futures.



Figure 15 envisions what the build-out future may look like in the 6th Ward if the vision becomes reality, with reinvestment along the US 12 corridor and, importantly, in the Depot District and Trades District, providing additional housing opportunities and stimulating increased business activity.

Figure 15: Railroad District 2045



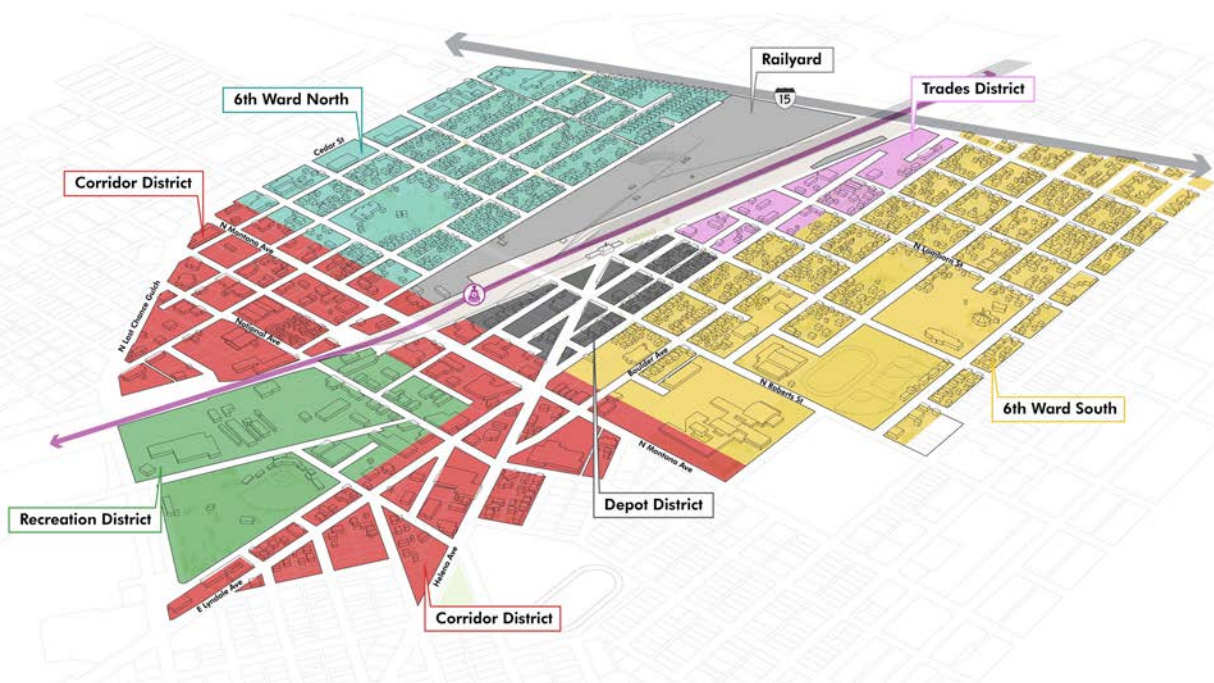
4.1 Vision for the Railroad District: The Year 2045

The Railroad District will grow as a neighborhood center, becoming a destination in the City of Helena, with a strong neighborhood identity based on the district's historic core and unique mix of uses. It includes workforce housing, manufacturing, and the railroad after which the district is named. The Railroad District will be a vibrant place to work, live, and visit, with shops, restaurants, and diverse commercial businesses. It will be uniquely different from the city's other main nearby destinations – downtown, Great Northern Town Center, and the Capitol area, mostly because of the contributions each neighborhood within the district make. People will easily access the Railroad District by vehicle, on foot and by bike, with safe, convenient, and effective access. Several unique neighborhoods contribute to the Railroad District's Vision:





Figure 16: Railroad District Neighborhoods



4.1.1 Depot District

The commercial district remains anchored by the historic train depot, with restaurants, bars, hotels, merchants, and warehouses radiating east, south, and west. More contemporary retail, dining, entertainment, and professional office uses fill in the historic storefronts, and new apartments occupy the upper floors. The district becomes vibrant with new morning, day, and evening activity, retaining its quirkiness and character. It remembers its railroad roots, while offering a mix of social, cultural, commercial, and artistic activities unique to this part of town. Improvement of the roundabout at Montana and Lyndale enhances visibility and access into the core, and the Centennial Trail connection welcomes visitors on foot and by bike. Higher-intensity residential areas along the district’s south edge bring customers close, within an easy walk of the core’s retail and civic spaces.



4.1.2 Trades District

South of the railyard and east of the Depot District lies the Trades District. This area mixes small-scale warehousing, trades workshops, artists' studios, and bungalows, with space available for live-work structures, small apartments, and cottages. This is a creative space, with a wide and surprising mix of activities, enjoying its proximity to all of what the Railroad District has to offer. It becomes a vibrant space for artists who wish to live and work where they exhibit, where the retail galleries smell of the furnaces, kilns, and paints used in the creative processes. While the Depot District emerges as the retail center, the Trades District is a working district, where trucks unload, things get made, and visitors to the place expect a degree of roughness and hardscrabble authenticity. The streets are improved to emphasize this industrial character, while still accommodating visitors with on-street parking. The Centennial Trail continues through this district, too, connecting it through Helena to Carroll College, the West End, and, ultimately, to the Archie Bray Institute – a companion artists community.

4.1.3 6th Ward North

The northern neighborhood retains its rail worker housing scale and character, with small bungalows and "shotgun" houses serving households of all sizes and economic conditions. Folks who live here appreciate the neighborhood's edgy vibe, compact form, walkable streets, and easy access to Cedar Street's commercial corridor to the north and the Depot District to the south. Not much changes here during the planning period, except new houses and apartments get built in forms, scales, and styles similar to those which exist today.

4.1.4 6th Ward South

The southern portion of the planning area is emerging as a center for education and recreation. There are houses here, too, enjoying proximity to the schools, parks, and college and to the commercial districts and Capitol complex further south. There is little to change here during the planning period. But enhancements to Lyndale Ave and Roberts St facilitate non-motorized access to the local schools and the bustling Depot District. The upgrading of Lyndale Ave east of the new roundabout relaxes traffic pressure on Boulder Ave, enhancing the pedestrian experience along this important east-west corridor and accommodating the Centennial Trail east of the Trades District.



4.1.5 Corridor District

Montana Avenue and Lyndale Street west of the new roundabout are the axes for the corridor district. Much of it also serves as US Highway 12, linking the Railroad District to the east-west highway route. This corridor's new roundabout and "gateway" character set the stage for new types of mixed office, retail, and residential development. The corridor is still predominantly auto and freight oriented, but it is becoming more welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists as improvements are made, new buildings are constructed closer to the sidewalk, and parking is located to the rear, away from the street edge.

4.1.6 Recreation District

Helena's Centennial Trail runs east-west, connecting Helena's western neighborhoods to East Helena. A key portion of the trail runs through the Railroad District, linking Memorial Park and Carroll College to Kindrick Field, the Depot District and Trades District. The Trail connects the Railroad District's business and civic heart to the rest of Helena. Still a warehousing district at its core, the Recreation District also includes evening-oriented activities which are compatible with the warehousing character and scale.

The new vision underpins the plan's goals and objectives, which, in turn, add detail to those which already exist in Helena's adopted Growth Policy.



5. Goals & Objectives

Helena’s Growth Policy establishes goals and objectives for the city, setting priorities and guiding local decision making of citywide consequence. The Growth Policy acknowledges the importance of the community’s smaller commercial districts and sees the potential for the evolution of “neighborhood centers” to enhance the identity of these places and build them up to support local businesses, create community cohesiveness, reduce reliance on the car, and enhance Helena’s local quality of life. One of these “neighborhood centers” is the 6th Ward.

The City also prepared an urban renewal plan for this area, establishing the tax increment

district and setting out goals and policies which apply to this area. Their focus is on the ways in which investment of tax increment funds can generate additional economic activity in the district and improve living conditions.

Appendix B summarizes the Growth Policy and urban renewal plan policy direction, comparing it to the subarea plan’s priorities and identifying how the subarea plan goals and policies relate to what Helena has already adopted. This plan essentially augments the Growth Policy, adding detail specific to this subarea and consistent with the citywide perspective the Growth Policy offers.



5.1 Issues

The following issues – as derived from the orientation interview conversations, review of previous studies and plans, and the studio workshops – give this planning effort a sense of direction, provide urgency for the community’s priorities, and serve as a touchstone for the rest of the process, ensuring it stays focused on what is most important. As with the topics, additional issues may surface as the conversations continue, and additional information will help refine these to facilitate resolution.

The implementation action items presented in Chapter 8 reference these issues, too, to ensure they are fully addressed in the plan’s priority recommendations.

Figure 17: Spatial Summary of Planning Issues



Issue #1: Montana/Helena/Lyndale Intersection

The issues at this intersection stem from the irregular roadway alignments, the state highway designation, and the relatively high traffic volumes on the regional arterials coming together here. According to the interviews:

- ◆ It is difficult to access areas east of Montana Ave when approaching the intersection from Lyndale Ave.
- ◆ It is difficult to cross Montana Ave on foot or by bike at this intersection, with irregularly configured crosswalks, confusion, long crossing distances, and no mid-crossing pedestrian refuge.
- ◆ The US Highway 12 designation limits local discretion in how to manage the intersection.
- ◆ Limited rights of way narrow design options for potential solutions.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
2	Improving Safety
3	Improving Access and Connections
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.



Photo #23: The intersection of Montana/Lyndale/Helena avenues can be difficult to navigate, and it impedes access into the Railroad District from the west.



Issue #2: Boulder Access

Boulder Ave is an important access corridor for the southern 6th Ward but getting to it from the north and west is difficult.

- ◆ The proximity of Boulder Ave to Lyndale Avenue limits the length of its protected left-turn lane, making it difficult for school buses, freight, and vehicular traffic to access the southern 6th, Ward.
- ◆ Traffic flows and the priority to maintain mobility on US Highway 12 restrict full access at Boulder Ave.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
2	Improving Safety
3	Improving Access and Connections

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.

Issue #3: Commerical District Identity/Vitality

The historic commercial center is more than a century old, and it appears to be enjoying new energy. The district’s enthusiasm seems to be generated by folks who’ve newly discovered the place, investing in buildings, properties, and businesses in pursuit of opportunity in a place where the history, character, and economics support their actions.

- ◆ The revitalization depends on a relatively small pool of local businesses, driven by the passion of local entrepreneurs but reliant in the longer term on early success and effective succession planning.
- ◆ New investment may influence the character and feel of the 6th Ward and threaten change that some may not accept.
- ◆ Incoming businesses and increased popularity may result in rising rents, potentially displacing businesses that have been in the district for generations.



Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
4	Making Housing Attainable
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor.
5	Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, and Corridor District.



Photo #24: The historic rail depot is a unique landmark contributing to the district's overall identity



Issue #4: TIF Board Investment Strategy

The TIF has been in place since 2016 and has begun making investments to elevate business activity in the district. The TIF district’s young age, however, means available revenues are still slim. Investments to date have been small and targeted to easy wins.

- ◆ The TIF Board’s investment has taken advantage of opportunities and now may be the time to coalesce TIF strategy around longer-term objectives and draw from broad community consensus on priorities, criteria, and tradeoffs.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
1	Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and form a business improvement district (BID).
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor

Issue #5: Vehicle Storage

The neighborhood has practiced a “live and let live” lifestyle, allowing households and businesses to operate as they please, as long as they don’t create a nuisance or safety hazard. With increasing attention – and increasing desires to promote an active and exciting commercial district – long-standing habits of storing commercial or abandoned vehicles on neighborhood streets or vacant lots are coming under increased scrutiny.

- ◆ Vehicle storage impacts the visual attractiveness of the 6th Ward, inconsistent with many residents and business owners’ hopes for an emerging neighborhood identity – at least in the core commercial area.



Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
4	Making Housing Attainable
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
1	Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and form a business improvement district (BID).



Issue #6: Housing Attainability

This has been one of Helena’s more affordable close-in neighborhoods. But property values are rising. With Helena College expanding to attract students from outside the region, demand for student housing nearby will increase.

- ♦ As local housing demand and property values continue to rise, households who may have been able to afford to purchase or rent in the neighborhood may need to find housing elsewhere.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
4	Making Housing Attainable

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
5	Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, and Corridor District.





Issue #7: Neighborhood Character Preservation

New investment in housing or the construction or remodeling of existing structures may influence the feel, scale, and experience of the 6th Ward. Existing zoning and design controls may not generate the types of results neighborhood residents or business owners want.

- ◆ The City’s development regulations are not consistent with neighborhood hopes or needs.
- ◆ The historic district is not effectively utilized or presented, receding in its prominence.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor
5	Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, and Corridor District.



Issue #8: At-Grade Rail Crossings

The two crossings at Montana Ave and Roberts Ave are important to the 6th Ward. Both are also important in the regional context, with Montana Ave providing access to Helena’s regional commercial districts and the valley and Roberts providing an alternate, parallel route for those who choose not to use Montana Ave. Train traffic blocks one or both crossings up to 20 times per day, sometimes for as long as 25 minutes. The city has grade-separated rail crossings at Last Chance Gulch and Interstate 15, both of which can provide alternative crossing opportunities within minutes of the crossings at Montana and Roberts. Still, traffic backs up at the at-grade crossings, complicating flows at nearby intersections.

- ♦ Creating a grade-separated crossing at Montana Ave is expensive, will impact multiple commercial properties, and is unfunded. The City has begun a feasibility study to investigate design options.
- ♦ The local and regional community relies on both crossings, even with their occasional interruptions, and will have difficulty adapting if either one is closed.
- ♦ There is now no definitive commitment to the future of the two crossings, leaving the neighborhood, the railroad, the larger community, and the state Department of Transportation without a resolution on what to do or how to adapt. The current feasibility study may provide some answers.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
2	Improving Safety
3	Improving Access and Connections
4	Making Housing Attainable
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.



Issue #9: Stormwater Management

There was a small stream that used to flow through this area, generally to the northeast through the core of the commercial center. A stormwater system now manages the flow, but it can be vulnerable to winter rain-on-snow events when the storm inlets are covered by ice and snow. Recent flooding has damaged ground floor spaces in businesses along Helena Ave and Gallatin Ave.

- ♦ The stormwater system periodically fails to convey surface water, resulting in flooding and damage in the commercial district.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
2	Improving Safety

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor



Issue #10: Zoning and Intensity

The area’s zoning may not reflect long-term objectives for land use and economic development in this part of town, making it difficult to permit the type of development the neighborhood hopes for and allowing what the neighborhood might not appreciate. Zoning may not contribute to housing attainability, business diversity, or employment objectives.

- ◆ Some of the current zoning is not consistent with neighborhood objectives, rendering much of what exists today as non-conforming because of land use, setback, or lot coverage requirements, particularly north of the railroad, and because of land use and off-street parking requirements in the proposed Depot District and Trades District neighborhoods.
- ◆ Development conforming to current standards in the R-2 and R-3 residential districts (like setbacks and coverage requirements) is different in character from historic structures surrounding it.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
4	Making Housing Attainable
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.



Issue #11: Zoning and Built Character Compatibility

Even though residents and business owners in the 6th Ward believe their neighborhood is unique, the zoning standards that apply here are the same as those applicable in other parts of town. The residential, commercial, and industrial zoning districts move toward a more homogenous Helena, something this neighborhood may not appreciate.

- ◆ Today’s zoning applies the same development and design standards to this neighborhood as to others in Helena under the same designations, ignoring in some cases those characteristics which make the 6th Ward unique.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
4	Making Housing Attainable

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
5	Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, Corridor District, and R-2 District.

Issue #12: Placemaking

Newer business and property owners in the district’s commercial core hope for street trees, lighting, wayfinding, and parking improvements, creating a “place” that attracts attention, facilitates pedestrian activity, and draws people from other parts of town for shopping, dining, recreation, and employment. The effort to make the commercial core a place argues for change, improving its looks, emphasizing its connection to the rest of Helena, and altering its functions to serve a larger audience.

- ◆ There is no guidance on what type of place the central commercial area should be, leading to individual initiatives that may act at cross-purposes.
- ◆ The transformation of the commercial district to become something different than what it has been is not accepted by all.



Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
3	Improving Access and Connections
4	Making Housing Attainable
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
1	Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and form a business improvement district (BID).
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor.
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.
4	Confirm Centennial Trail alignment through the district, design it, and improve it.
5	Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, Corridor District, and R-2 District.





5.2 Goals

This subarea plan proposes five goals, each with a series of objectives intended to complement those already found in the Growth Policy or Urban Renewal Plan. They consolidate a community response to the issues identified above and establish the foundation for the implementation priorities presented in Chapter 8.

Goal #1: The Railroad District optimizes its historic and contemporary ties to the rest of Helena.

Keeping the identity of the neighborhood in focus.

The historic train depot, the old retail storefronts, original warehouses, and Railroad Ave's brick surface remain a physical reminder of this district's past importance to Helena. They are assets in the district's reinvestment, contributing to the district's identity. They are also adaptable to the district's new role, offering opportunities for a renewed place in Helena's economy.

Objectives:

- ♦ **Objective 1:** Preserve and promote the Depot District's and Trades District's history and historic features through design guidelines, public art, and preservation-oriented programs.
- ♦ **Objective 2:** Enhance and promote existing historical artifacts and features – like the brick paving on Railroad Ave, the historic train depot, and the district's older buildings – through signs, partnership with property owners, and publicity.
- ♦ **Objective 3:** Collaborate with community representatives to establish the 6th Ward's brand identity consistent with the contemporary and historic character of the area (i.e. Flag, colors, logo).
- ♦ **Objective 4:** Support the creation of historic landmarks and online mapping.
- ♦ **Objective 5:** Promote publicly funded art pieces in the 6th Ward reflecting the present and historic neighborhood character.
- ♦ **Objective 6:** Facilitate to the extent within the City's control community events highlighting and incorporating past historical events, themes, and pastimes shaping Helena's character (idea: neighborhood block party in railroad district on June 13th, important anniversary remembrance of when passenger train service came into town).



Goal #2: The district is a safe place for all, whether they're running a business, living here, or visiting.

Improving safety.

Safety is a priority, ensuring the streets encourage safe movement and access for all modes, public spaces are designed, built, and maintained to be inviting and comfortable, and development applies best possible practices to ensure public safety for the long term.

Objectives:

- ♦ **Objective 1:** Connect the Centennial Trail through the district, incorporating a safe pedestrian crossing at North Montana Ave as determined by the Centennial Trail Master Plan and the feasibility and design process for the North Montana Ave/railroad crossing.
- ♦ **Objective 2:** Consider new approaches to Roberts Street as a multi-modal corridor connecting the district's neighborhoods to its schools and public spaces.
- ♦ **Objective 3:** Locate and design public spaces to ensure safety of their users, inviting frequent and popular activities.
- ♦ **Objective 4:** Pursue code enforcement and building rehabilitation programs, identifying and remediating structures posing hazardous conditions.
- ♦ **Objective 5:** Support neighborhood watch programs to build community and augment local policing.

Goal #3: The district's transportation system reconciles regional mobility with local access needs.

Improving access and connections

US Highway 12 runs through the district, and Montana Ave extends northward to serve some of Helena's high growth areas. These corridors are busy, accentuating the conflicts between regional mobility and access to local businesses and property. This goal calls for reconciliation, accommodating regional flows but in a manner compatible with the district's prosperity and livability.

Objectives:

- ♦ **Objective 1:** Support transportation programs oriented for vulnerable populations, coordinating with MDT and the MPO as appropriate.
- ♦ **Objective 2:** Establish multi-modal transportation network routes connecting 6th Ward neighborhoods to each other and greater Helena, coordinating with City accessibility and sidewalk improvement programs.
- ♦ **Objective 3:** Coordinate with local and regional partners in creating and implementing a region-wide transportation plan.
- ♦ **Objective 4:** Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety by adding bike-oriented navigation signs and improving bike lanes along popular corridors.
- ♦ **Objective 5:** Install missing sidewalk infrastructure in established multi-modal network routes.



Goal #4: The district's neighborhoods are liveable and affordable.

Making housing attainable.

These neighborhoods are some of the oldest in Helena, with a variety of housing types, sizes and conditions making it rich in character and diverse in population. It's an attribute the community cherishes, and this goal advances policy to keep it that way while enhancing its overall livability. Infrastructure investment, pedestrian and cyclist safety, and access to parks and schools are priorities.

Objectives:

- ◆ **Objective 1:** Promote higher density and variety of housing units in the Depot and Trades districts.
- ◆ **Objective 2:** Enhance walkable design infrastructure between centers of residential, commercial, and recreational activity.
- ◆ **Objective 3:** Mix residential uses with retail, office, and light industrial uses in the Depot District and Trades District.
- ◆ **Objective 4:** Promote infill development with new zoning districts allowing for additional housing types, higher density units, reduced setbacks, or reduced parking requirements.
- ◆ **Objective 5:** Promote neighborhood health and livability by investing in park amenities and park improvements.
- ◆ **Objective 6:** Collaborate with contractors and local developers to identify and reduce unnecessary regulatory roadblocks.
- ◆ **Objective 7:** Collaborate with Helena's Citizen Council (HCC) on community initiatives and neighborhood projects.
- ◆ **Objective 8:** Promote the connectivity between the residential neighborhoods, unique attractions, and historic assets.



Goal #5: The Railroad District has a prosperous, unique, and identity-rich core.

Supporting the business community.

This goal speaks to the ascending prominence and activity in the Railroad District's core, nurturing a stock of home-grown businesses and institutions with close ties to Helena and the district. The business district's prosperity also relies on increasing residential intensity within a five-minute walk of the core, a close relationship to the new Trades District to the east, and ease of access between this core commercial district and Helena's other neighborhoods.

Objectives:

- ◆ **Objective 1:** Encourage a mix of retail, professional office, maker spaces, small-scale shops, light industrial, and residential uses in the Depot District and Trades District through the creation of new zoning districts.
- ◆ **Objective 2:** Encourage live-work development in the Trades District by amending zoning and other

development regulations to permit it (as in Appendix F)

- ◆ **Objective 3:** Encourage higher development intensities within a quarter mile of the Depot District and Trades District by amending relevant zoning text and district boundaries to permit it (as in Appendix F and shown in the proposed zoning map)
- ◆ **Objective 4:** Coordinate closely with the TIF Board to develop and implement an investment strategy to leverage private development.
- ◆ **Objective 5:** Encourage formation of a business improvement district in the Depot District and Trades District to facilitate business coordination and target investment to enhance the district's identity.
- ◆ **Objective 6:** Enhance connections between the Depot District, Trades District, and nearby schools, parks, state Capitol, and other community institutions through the application of complete streets principles.
- ◆ **Objective 7:** Coordinate with Helena High School and Helena College to foster student employment opportunities and inform educational curricula.
- ◆ **Objective 8:** Preserve and promote the Depot District's and Trades District's historic features through design guidelines, public art, and preservation-oriented programs.



6. Implications

The subarea plan's goals and objectives establish a framework for how the concepts for the district can be achieved. They guide various land use and transportation initiatives within the context of the Growth Policy and Urban Renewal Plan, in response to the community's desires, and informed by the analysis performed as part of this work.

The sections below describe the plan's implications to the land use and housing, transportation, utilities, and economic development environments across the entire planning area, with a more detailed neighborhood-by-neighborhood examination following. The neighborhood examinations advance this plan's implementation, illustrating the specific zoning and public realm changes necessary to achieve the plan's objectives and providing a tangible set of recommendations at a discernable location in response to specific community need.

These changes may cause discomfort at first, including shifts in development expectations, additional City investment to modify zoning regulations and the Centennial Trail master plan, initiating and managing street construction projects, and supporting and nurturing a new business improvement district. Chapter 7 explores specific implications, challenges, and initiatives by neighborhood, identifying how each neighborhood can contribute to achieving the district's overall vision.

6.1 Land Use Implications

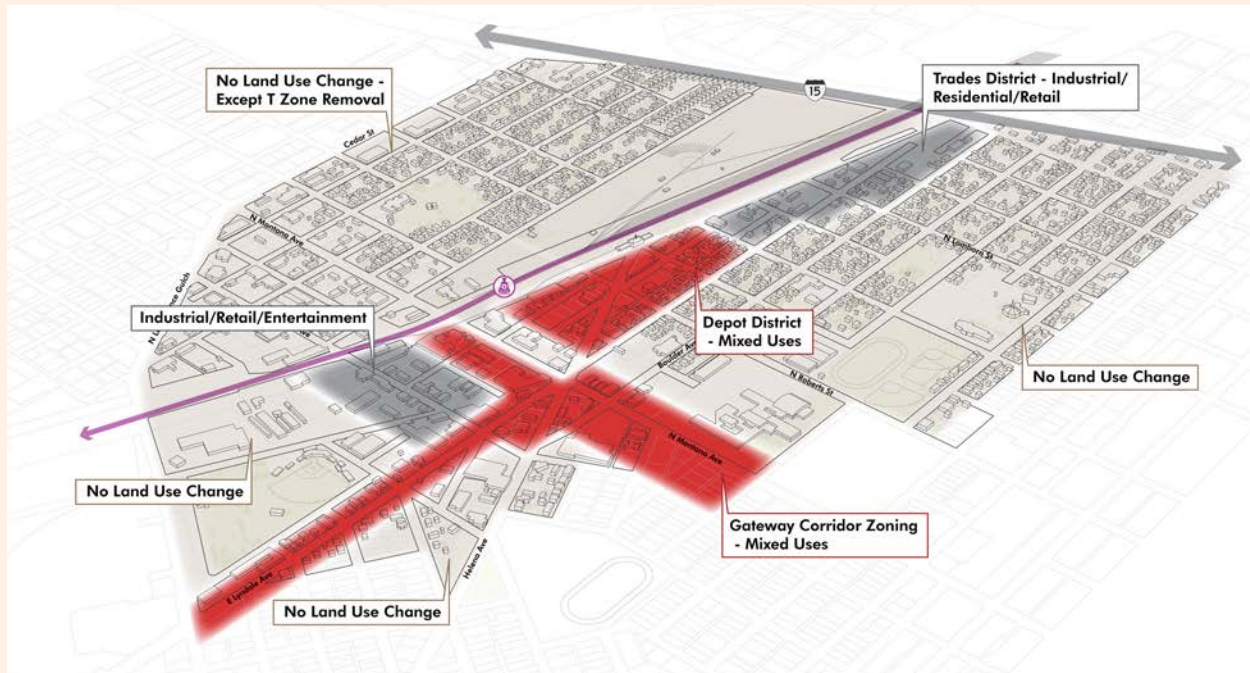
Subarea plan policies suggest land use transformation, concentrating intensity in and around the Depot District and facilitating redevelopment and mixing of uses along the US-12 and North Montana Ave corridors. Elsewhere, the district's land uses will remain largely the same, reinforcing the existing neighborhood character and accommodating incremental reinvestment as the housing stock improves.

Land use and development non-conformance underlines the immediate importance of acting on zoning amendments. The subarea plan's policy direction emphasizes it even more, calling for the reshaping of the 6th Ward's zoning environment to be more compatible with those neighborhoods which are intended for reinvestment and transformation and those which are intended to remain essentially as they are.

Plan implementation includes updates to the zoning ordinance to accomplish these changes, focusing on the Depot District, the Trades District and the arterial corridors. They introduce new districts tailored to the Railroad District's unique needs, encouraging the type of compact, diverse, and identity-rich development 6th Ward residents and business owners desire.



Figure 18: Land Use Changes



6.1.1 More Housing Near the Core

Constructing new housing in and near the existing commercial core will add to “built-in” demand for the blossoming retail district. The Land Use and Zoning Implications diagram illustrates where new residential intensity could be located, and the Zoning Updates section adds more detail on how development regulations can be amended to allow it.

6.1.2 New Development Standards for the Commercial Core and other Zoning Districts

A new look at the district’s zoning designations will encourage street-front retail, entertainment, and office development with the inclusion of residential uses wherever possible. Appendix E provides a comprehensive assessment of existing zoning and potential zoning alternatives to achieve plan objectives, identifying more specific changes to zoning district requirements and permitted land uses.

6.1.3 A New “Trades District”

Expanding the list of permitted uses from the existing CLM zoning district to permit residences and “maker” spaces, focusing on the new Trades District to encourage diversity, creativity, and a working, artistic experience.





This new district will facilitate a wide variety of uses to house artisans, small-scale manufacturing, galleries, live-work spaces, trades offices, and small warehouses, creating a space in the Railroad District which emerges as a unique destination and one accessible by the Centennial Trail extension.

6.1.4 Enhancing the US 12 and North Montana Ave Corridors

Creating a new zoning district to implement new development standards along the arterial corridors can facilitate mixed uses and acknowledge the changing character of the highway and Montana Ave as the district evolves. These new characteristics will seek to provide a complementary transitional flow from the heavy traffic of Highway 12 to the existing historic neighborhoods, something 6th Ward residents say they want.

6.1.5 Specific Zoning Changes

Figure 19 shows the Railroad District's current zoning pattern. Figure 20 shows how the zoning may change to implement this plan more fully. Along with the redesignation of some properties, particularly those surrounding the business core and along US Highway 12, the plan suggests modifications to some of the zoning district standards.

Appendix E provides a zoning analysis, describing how the existing districts may need to adjust to better achieve the plan's objectives. While some of the zoning districts may serve the planning area well, others may need a new look – or be applied to different areas – to create the type of mixed-use, identity-rich Railroad District residents and businesspeople seek. Some of the potential zoning changes are discussed below, with additional detail in the Appendix.



Figure 19: Existing Zoning

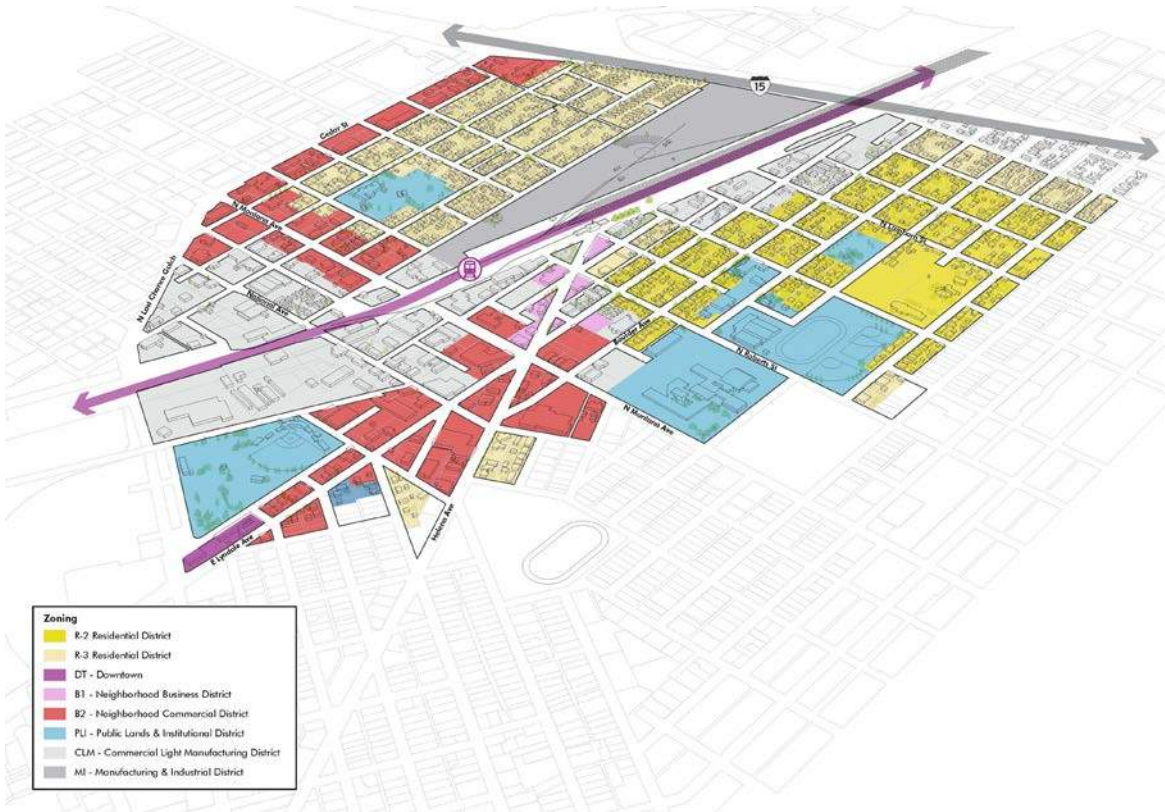


Figure 20: Proposed Zoning



R-2 Residential Zone

The R-2 zone is now limited to single-family and duplex housing types, limiting density which is unlikely to create enough nearby demand to support the 6th Ward's commercial core. Most of the R-2 area lies to the south of the proposed Depot District and Trades District in areas generally characterized by this type of lower-intensity residential development. The proposed zoning changes will reduce the land zoned R-2, replacing those parcels adjoining the Depot District with R-3.

R-3 Residential Zone

The R-3 zone allows for single family, duplex, multi-family housing types, permitting moderate density for more residential units needed to support the existing commercial core of the 6th Ward. The zoning district also permits some non-residential uses under certain circumstances. The higher residential intensity and opportunity for occasional ground-floor commercial uses make this district a good choice to surround the proposed Depot District, adding the potential for more residents within a convenient walk of the commercial core and providing for diversity in street-level land uses. Proposed changes to the development standards would reduce required setbacks and increase maximum permitted lot coverage, making it possible for single-family development in the R-3 district to resemble the historic structures already there and eliminating the need for the "Transition" overlay now in place.

The City may wish to customize these R-3 development regulations changes to the 6th Ward. They may not necessarily be appropriate for all other R-3 areas in the City.

B-1 Neighborhood Business Zone

The B-1 zone allows for a mix of housing types with a moderate density of residential units. Even so, it does not articulate aspirations or prescribe standards unique to the 6th Ward's commercial core. The proposed Depot District zoning designation is intended to apply to a larger area than what the B-1 district now encompasses, reducing minimum lot size and eliminating off-street parking requirements. Creating a new Depot District here will allow the existing B-1 zoning district to remain as-is in other areas of Helena, where its standards may be more appropriate.

The Depot District zone is fundamentally a mixed-use designation, with standards to encourage storefront retail or dining and the development of multi-family units – either as condominiums or apartments – above. Residential density in the proposed Depot District may exceed 25 units per acre, with actual development intensity limited by building height requirements and the market's demand for parking.



B-2 General Commercial Zone

The B-2 zone allows for a mix of housing types with a higher density of residential units, potentially adding support for the district’s commercial core businesses and those businesses located along the US-12 corridor.

The plan proposes the B-2 designation be replaced by the new Corridor Mixed-Use (CMX) zoning district along most of the US 12 corridor and North Montana Ave south of the railroad, closely aligning this corridor’s land use and development standards with the structure and theme of the City’s downtown zoning. The new CMX district would reduce setback requirements, reduce off-street parking requirements, and increase maximum permitted building height to encourage mixed use development consistent with the US 12 “gateway” theme. Residential density would likely not exceed 25 units per acre, with development intensity limited by building height, parking availability, and parcel depth and orientation. The B-2 district would remain in place unchanged along North Montana Ave north of the railroad.

CLM Commercial Light Manufacturing Zone

The CLM zone supports the community’s commercial and light manufacturing uses, with most 6th Ward CLM parcels now located south of the Railyard east of Harris Street and North of Boulder Avenue.

The subarea plan proposes the CLM district be almost completely eliminated in

the Railroad District south of the railroad, replaced mostly by the new Depot District and Trades District (TD) zoning district and, near Boulder and Cooke, by the amended R-3 district. CLM would remain in place and unchanged along the rail corridor and in the Recreation district, permitting continued rail and warehousing operations. This change welcomes new residential development in the 6th Ward and makes way for the inclusion of the new Trades District.

M-I Manufacturing and Industrial Zone

The MI zone supports heavy and intense manufacturing and industrial uses which are not conducive to retail businesses and residential activities. MI zoned parcels in the 6th Ward are in the Railyard, and the subarea plan proposes no changes to the zoning map or the land use and development standards in the district.

6.2 Transportation Implications

The transportation environment in the 6th Ward is similarly targeted for change, with improvements to the US-12 and Montana Ave corridors generally consistent with the Five-Points Intersection study, enhancements to the pedestrian experience, and an appreciation for the district’s connectivity within the 6th Ward and to nearby parts of town. Consultation with the Montana Department of Transportation is required for any transportation initiatives along or impacting US Highway 12.

Specifically, this plan recognizes and calls for:



6.2.1 Montana Ave Roundabout

The Five Points study recommends the roundabout at Lyndale/Helena/Montana. The community moderately supported it in the studio engagement, hoping it be sized appropriately to allow for pedestrians to cross safely. The roundabout appears in the Long-Range Transportation Plan, and MDT has committed to building the roundabout, encouraging access into the Depot District and reducing concerns of traffic backing up to the railroad crossing. This plan recommends the roundabout's design emphasizes the district's access from the west, both for vehicles and for those on foot, and that it accommodates additional turning movements onto Lyndale given the anticipated closure of Boulder Ave's left turn access.

In addition, the City is studying the feasibility of a grade-separated rail crossing at North Montana Ave. The study's outcomes may influence the roundabout's design, potentially shifting the Centennial Trail's Montana Ave

crossing to locate at the roundabout and increasing the need for the roundabout to provide access to the 6th Ward's commercial core along Helena Ave.

6.2.2 Centennial Trail Extension

The City is designing the extension of the Centennial Trail across Montana Ave and into the core of the 6th Ward at its intersection with Argyle St/Bozeman St. As of this plan's writing, the crossing is planned to be controlled by rectangular rapid-flashing beacon (RRFB) and include a median "refuge" to facilitate safe non-motorized transit across Montana Ave. This subarea plan anticipates a channelized trail alignment through the Depot District and then along Lyndale Ave in the Trades District. The trail would then extend along Lyndale and either curve along an easement on railroad property or follow existing City rights of way to join Boulder Ave near the highway underpass. Wayfinding signs – designed to promote district branding – can be located within the Depot District to help trail users navigate the three blocks of dispersed routing.

Figure 21: Transportation Initiatives

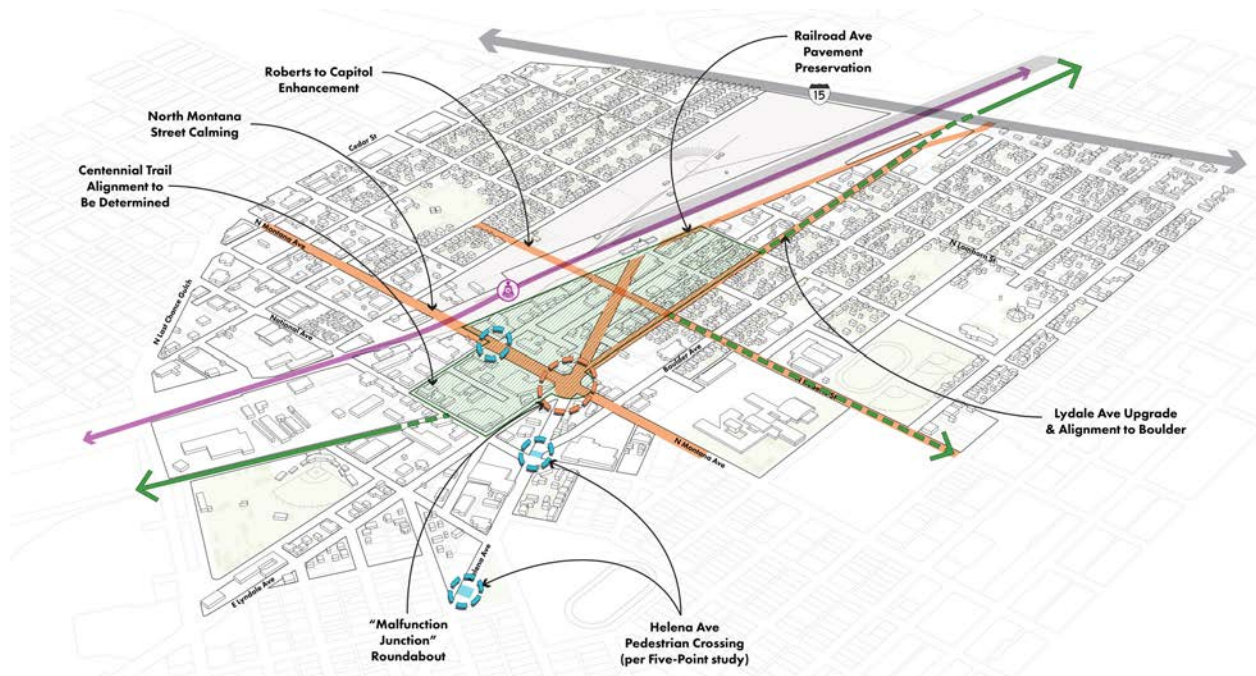
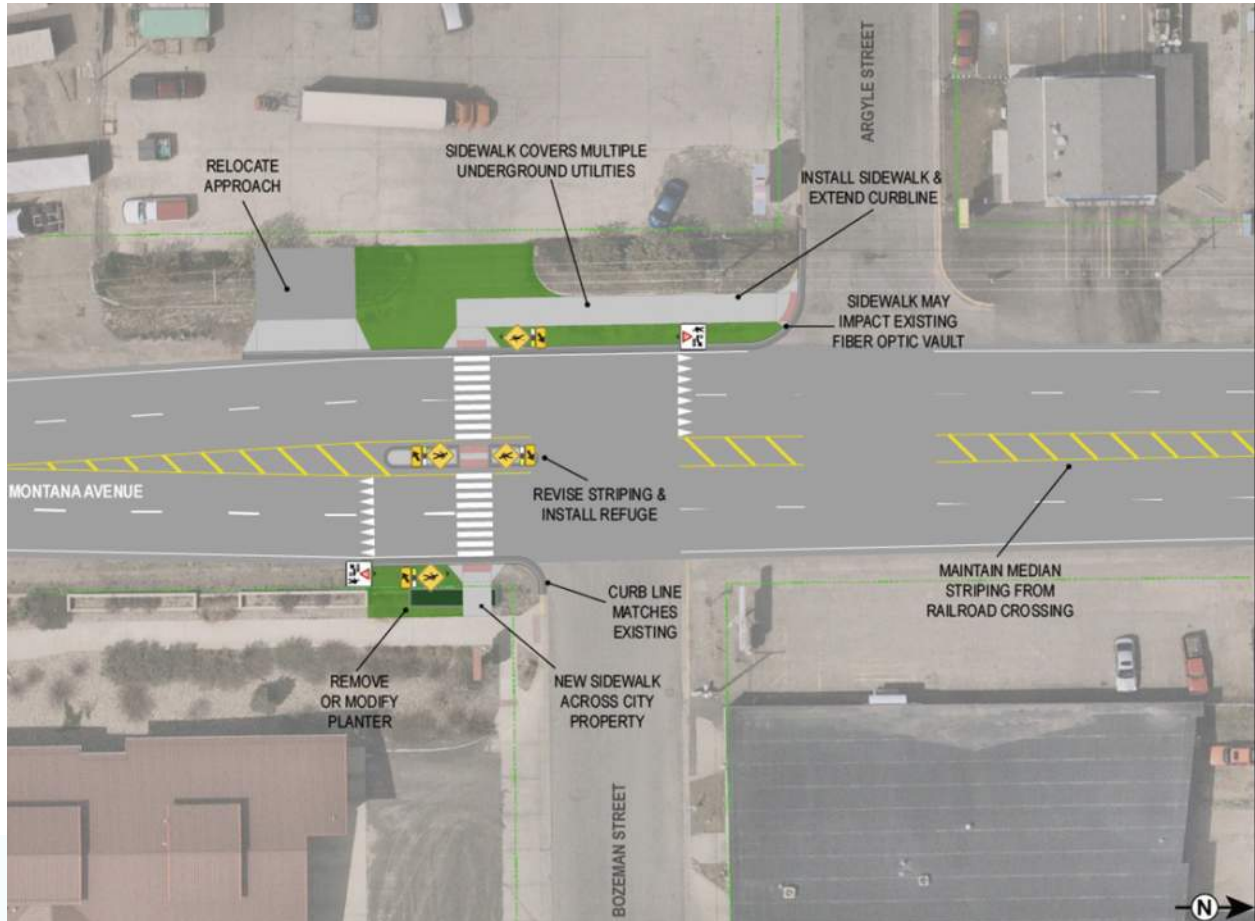


Figure 22: Montana Avenue Proposed Pedestrian Alignment



Depot District streets can be designed for shared use, accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, and autos, with reduced speeds and on-street parking to enliven retail storefronts, promote safety, and enhance the district's identity. Figure 22, above, shows the proposed trail crossing.

The City's current effort to study the feasibility of a grade-separated Montana Ave crossing of the railroad, however, may shift the trail crossing to coincide with the proposed roundabout at Lyndale and Helena or move north to coincide with the rail crossing. This will influence the way the trail enters the district from the west, shaping the trail's alignment and design approach.

Centennial Trail access to and through the Depot District will encourage trail users to meander through the commercial and creative districts, integrating the trail and Depot District experience at an intimate level. While the trail will be channelized through the district, its design and wayfinding can encourage access to the neighborhood's perpendicular streets to visit the Depot District and Trades District businesses, community spaces, and institutions. There are opportunities to manage the trail's alignment and design through the Railroad District to encourage trail users to linger, while still accommodating through-traffic for those whose primary interest is to get somewhere else.



Figure 24: Roberts St (North) Concept Cross Section

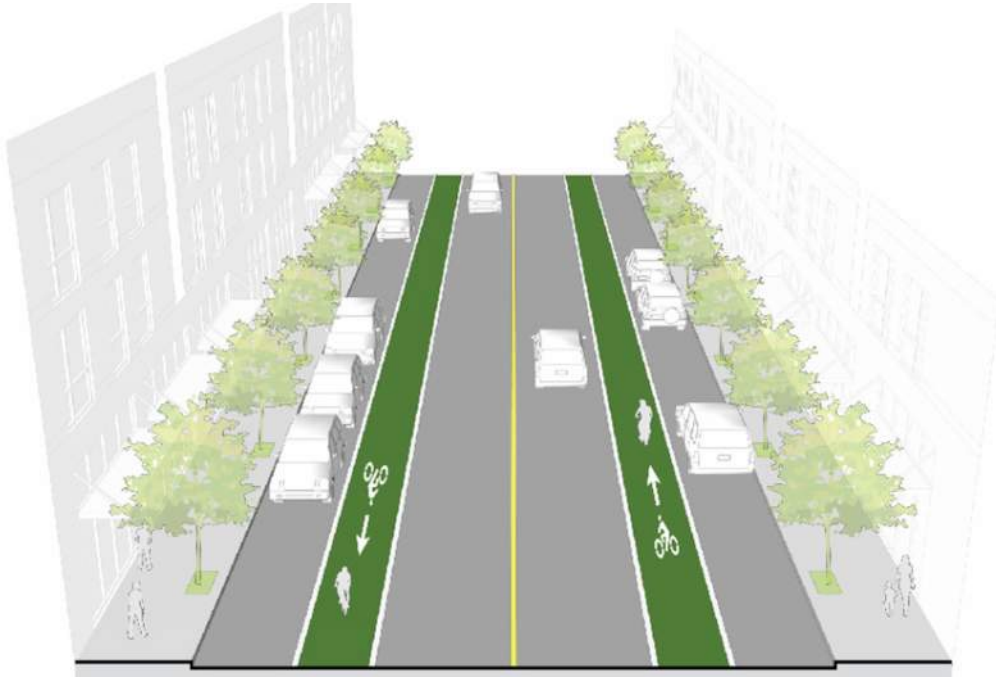


Figure 25: Roberts St (South) Concept Cross Section

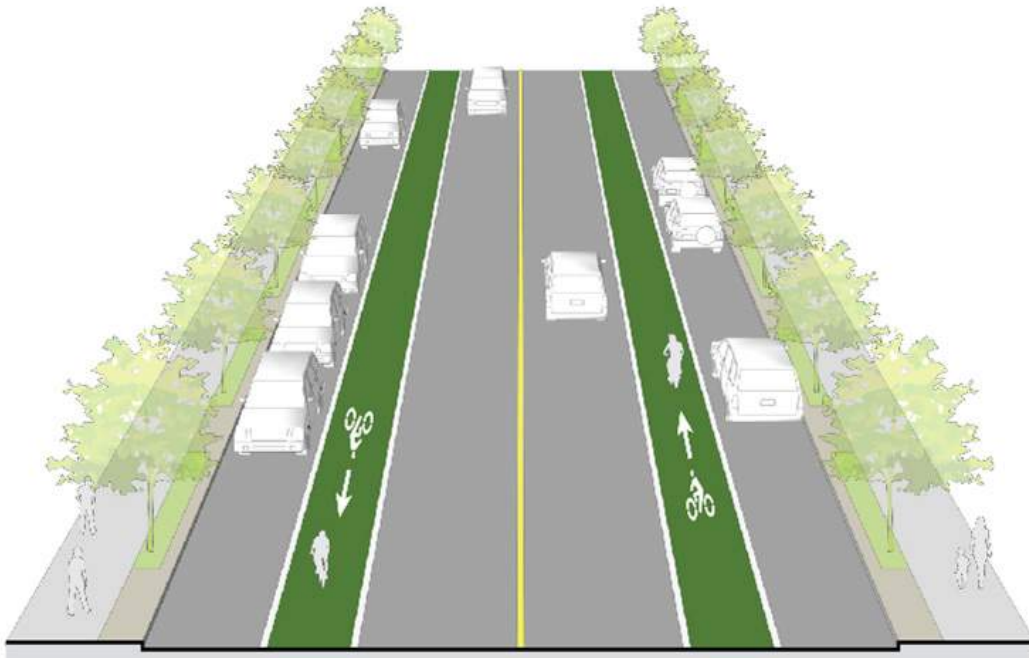
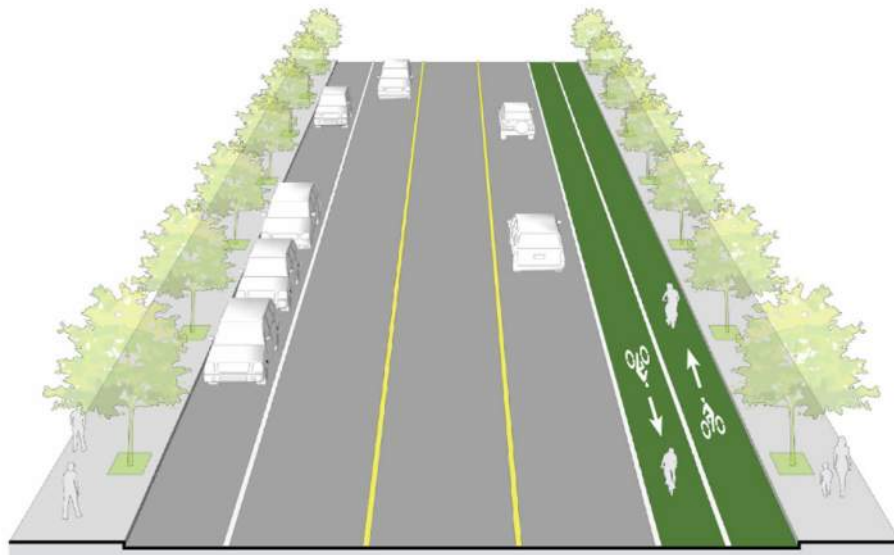




Figure 25: Lyndale Avenue Concept Cross Section



6.2.4 Lyndale Ave Enhancement

Lyndale Ave will emerge as the primary east-west corridor through the district, facilitating school bus movement from Montana Ave to Roberts St and improving overall access to the growing Depot District. These street enhancements will include sidewalks, crosswalks, a two-way bicycle track, pedestrian lighting, landscaping, and wayfinding signs. The street can have two travel lanes, one in each direction, a center turn lane, on-street parking on one side, and the two-way bicycle track to accommodate the Centennial Trail extension. If the

Centennial Trail is incorporated into the roundabout at North Montana Ave, the Lyndale street design will also need to include the trail alignment for its entire length from North Montana Ave east through the 6th Ward.

6.2.5 Brick Road

This plan calls for coordination with BNSF to retain and rehabilitate Railroad Ave’s brick surfacing. Community comment reinforced how important this feature is to the district, and this plan seeks to retain it as a crucial identity-defining element. This may be able to be partially funded through historic preservation grant opportunities.



6.2.6 Streetscape Enhancements

Upgrading the Depot District's streetscape along Lyndale Ave, Helena Ave, Roberts St, and Railroad Ave will enhance the area's beauty and historic prominence as a lively and livable district.

The City is already proceeding with a redesign of Helena and Gallatin to accommodate additional on-street parking. Further enhancements on Helena can accentuate the terminal view the historic depot offers upon entering the district and establish the corridor as the district's principal gateway from the west. The Five Points study identified Helena Ave as a primary entry into the 6th Ward's business district, and the creation of a grade-separated railroad crossing at North Montana will emphasize its importance. Grade separation would eliminate Depot District access from Bozeman St.

Figure 26: Proposed Angled Parking Exhibit

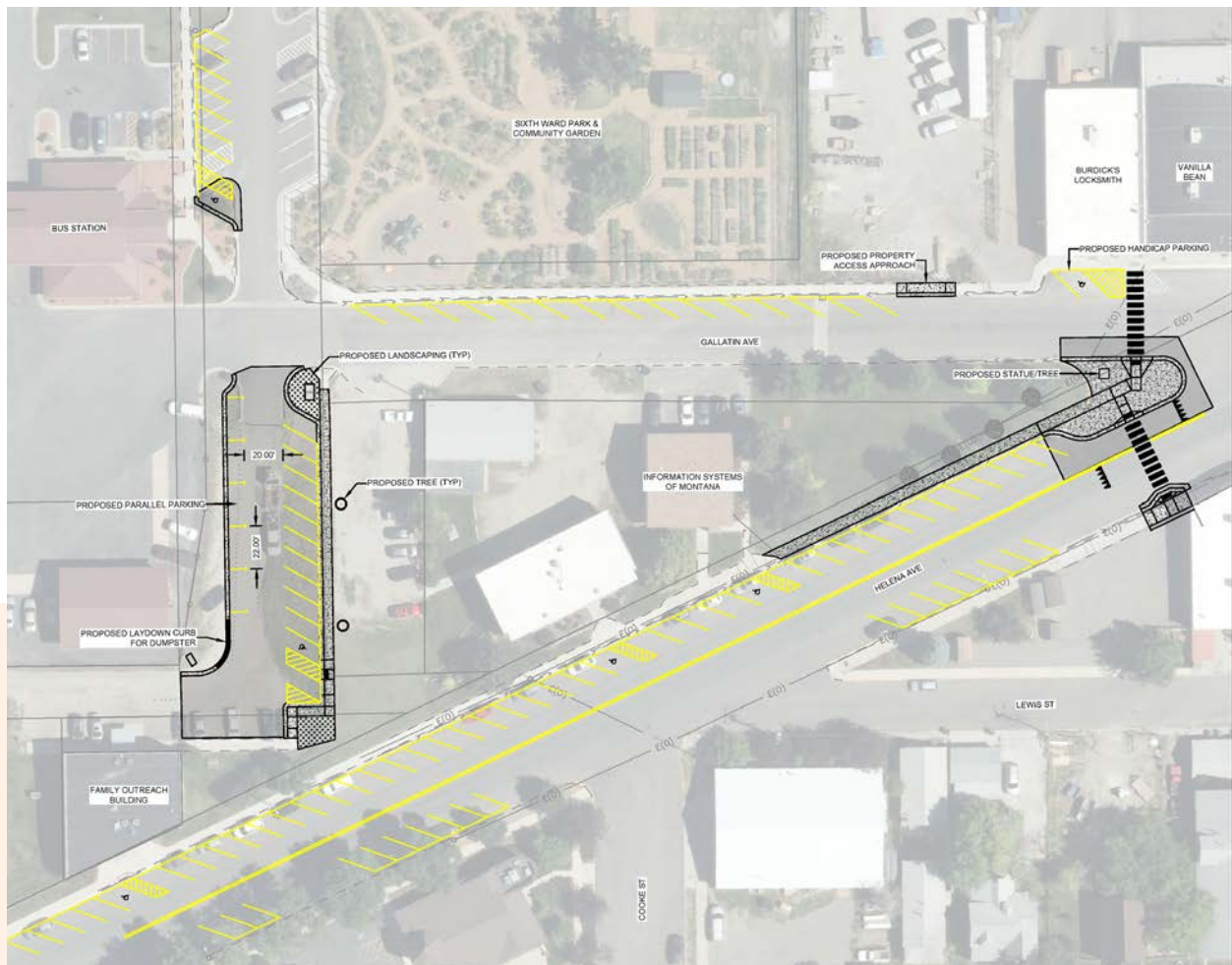


Figure 27: Helena Avenue Conceptual Corss Section

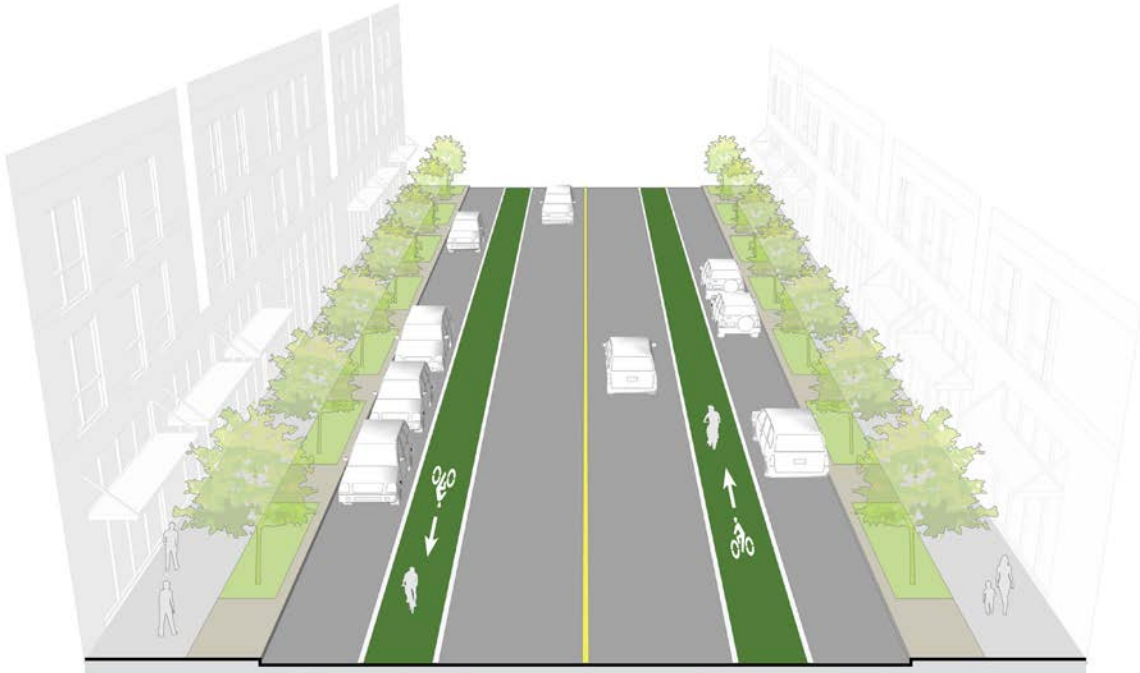
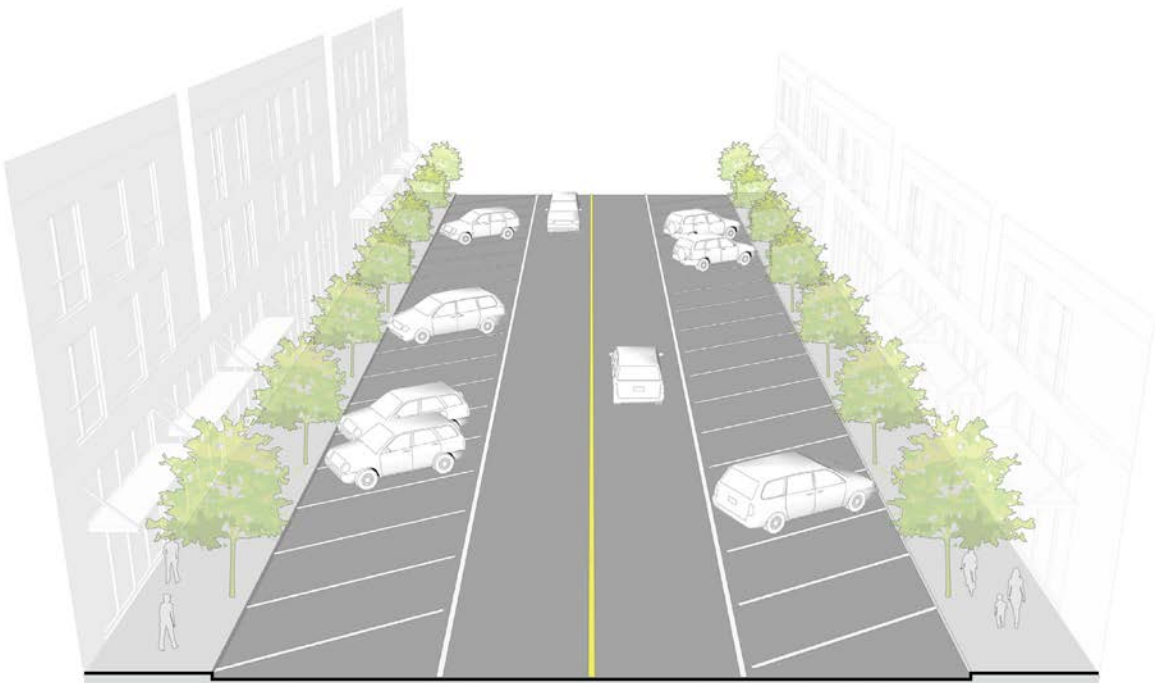


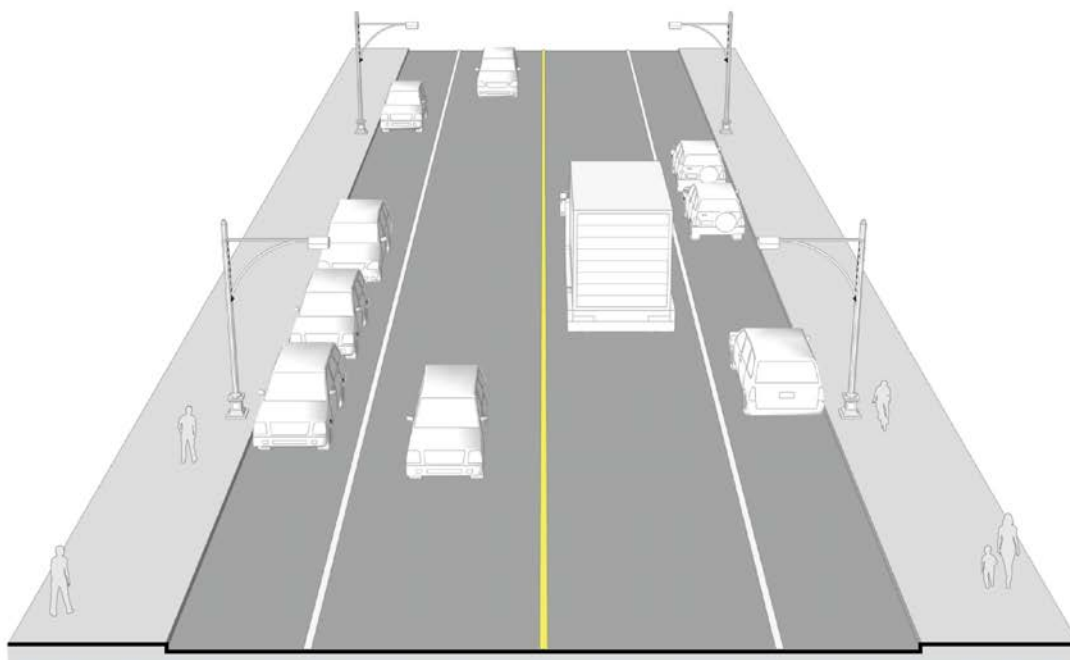
Figure 28: Helena Avenue Conceptual Cross Section (Parking Focused)



Future enhancements to streets in the Trades District can also help communicate the character and feel of the mixing of uses anticipated there. A relatively austere street design, consistent with the warehousing and trades offices uses can accommodate freight delivery and goods movement, while also being consistent with an emerging makers and artisan context. These streets will feel utilitarian, but the provision of on-street parking will also accommodate visitors and add to the feeling of safety for those who will be traveling through the Trades District on foot or by bike.

The design of these streets is intended to be industrial in nature, but the scale of the lane widths, the presence of on-street parking, and the character of street lighting softens the impact. This is consistent with the plan's recommendation for live-work spaces, artisan studios, galleries, and other, similar uses where projecting an image of rough creativity is important.

Figure 29: Trades District Cross Section



6.2.7 At-Grade Rail Crossings

Retaining the at-grade rail crossings at National Ave, Montana Ave, or Roberts St responds to the participants' collective preferences, maintaining a local access alternative for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. The neighborhood vocally opposes the closing of Roberts St, confirming its function as an essential local route for accessing the district's schools, parks, and services. The community similarly voiced support to retain the at-grade crossing at National Ave. There was not unanimous support to retain the at-grade crossing at North Montana Ave, however, with the community divided over the best option.

The City is studying the feasibility of a grade-separated crossing at North Montana and, in coordination with the MPO and MDT, may proceed with design.



6.2.8 Boulder Ave Turn Restrictions

Elimination of left-turn access to eastbound Boulder Ave from southbound Montana Ave will favor access from Lyndale Ave via the new roundabout and reduce traffic conflicts at the Boulder Ave/Montana Ave intersection. While the Five Points study analyzed and ultimately did not recommend restricting left turns at Boulder, subsequent decisions by MDT have concluded the restrictions should be implemented. The roundabout design at Lyndale/Helena may also confirm the need to close left-turn movements at Boulder.

6.2.9 Grid Pattern

Maintaining the district's overall grid connectivity, accommodating incremental change in and intensification of the district's commercial, residential, and educational uses is an important consideration. There are no recommendations to close streets, retaining optimal connectedness and diverse routing options as people move through and within the district. A grade-separated rail crossing at North Montana may impact this, however, eliminating local street access to North Montana along the segment where the grade separation prevents it.

6.2.10 Holistic Parking Strategy

This plan suggests a comprehensive parking strategy, relying on mixing uses to reduce overall parking demand, relaxing required off-street parking requirements to optimize available curb space for on-street parking throughout the Depot District, Trades District, and 6th Ward South, and studying the feasibility of a public parking lot on otherwise underutilized land near the railroad.

6.2.11 Transit Friendliness

Creating a built form compatible with transit services is a foundational principle for a compact business district and neighborhood, particularly here to complement more intense development in the Depot District and Gateway Corridor. This approach to transit-friendly design may encourage less reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and create benefits even before the transit system matures to serve it.

6.3 Utilities and Infrastructure Implications

This is a historic part of Helena, with older infrastructure to manage water, wastewater, and storm sewer needs. Increasing development intensity and a gradual shift to an increased mix of entertainment and professional office development may also cause increased demand for enhanced Internet access. Policies call for systematic assessment and upgrades, as appropriate, focusing on what is needed to address those areas where services may need improvement.

6.3.1 Stormwater

Snowmelt and rain-on-snow events can stress the 6th Ward's storm drain system. The City's efforts to incorporate boulevard streets where appropriate and enhance streetscape environments should help alleviate localized ponding and flooding events.



6.3.2 Broadband access

There are multiple Internet providers in the 6th Ward. Process participants routinely complained of poor Internet access speeds in the district, a problem largely beyond the City's control. It is an important element of educational and business success, so the City may play the role of convenor of a larger conversation to facilitate broadband access to those who need it.

6.4 Economic Development Implications

Plan policies – in the Growth Policy, Urban Renewal Plan, and this subarea plan – call for continued economic prosperity in the 6th Ward, identifying improvements to the district's historic elements, enhancements to its public realm, targeted investment to stimulate business development and retention, and enhancing the district's connection to the rest of Helena while maintaining its unique identity. This subarea plan augments the Growth Policy and Urban Renewal Plan by including specific strategies:

6.4.1 Business Improvement District

A business improvement district can advance the plan's policies to nurture the district's grass-roots commercial energy. A BID can organize and support local retail, entertainment, institutional, and office uses in the Depot District.

6.4.2 Centennial Trail

The community can leverage the Centennial Trail as a vehicle to stimulate a variety of reinvestment in the Recreation District, enlivening Kindrick Field and inviting new uses into the warehouse district there.

6.4.3 Historic Reference, Adaptation and Design

The historic trolley line link to downtown Helena, views of the historic depot and Mt. Helena, the unique street layout, and the scale of the 6th Ward's development offer important and defining design cues the district can incorporate into its branding and future economic identity. In addition, retaining the fine-grained street network and the local access it provides, particularly along Gallatin Ave, Argyle St, Roberts St, and National Ave facilitates commerce in the district. And adaptive reuse of older buildings can accommodate new investment within the context of the district's historic identity.

6.4.4 Incremental Change

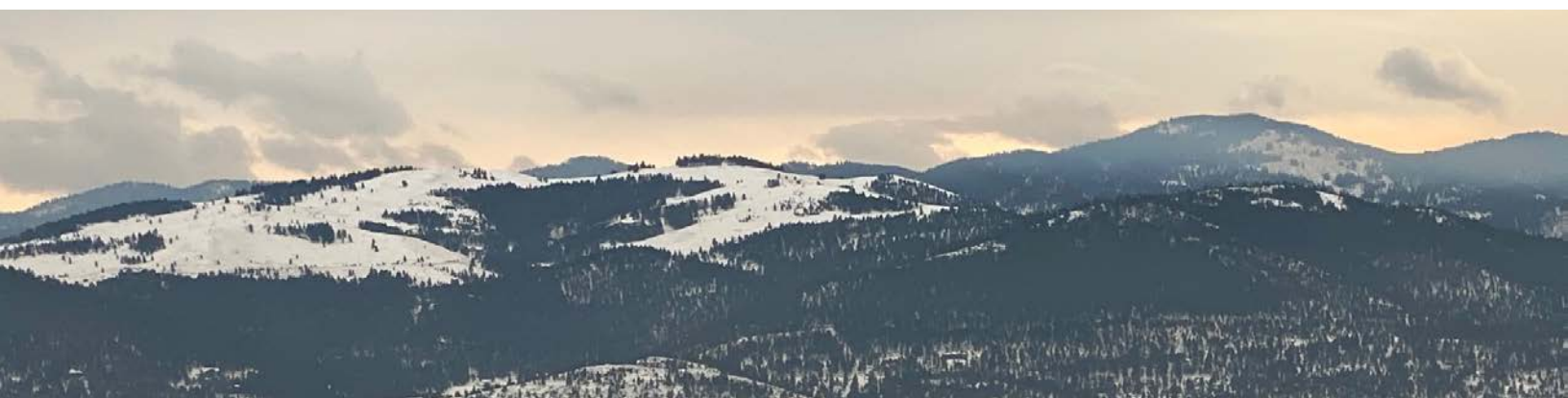
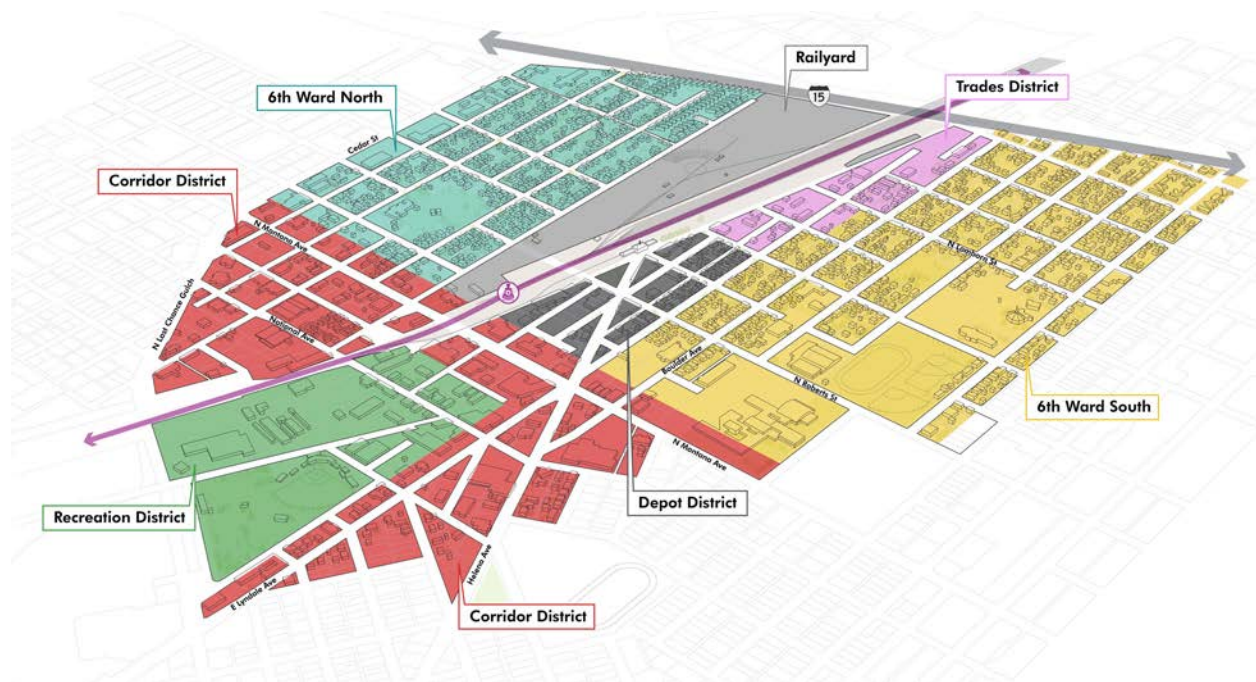
Change happens in small steps over time, and it can sometimes cause discomfort along the way. Parking availability, construction, land use shifts, and the needs of new residents will influence how the district behaves, possibly causing a need to either reexamine or reinforce this plan's recommendations.



7. Zooming In: Neighborhood Focus

The subarea plan’s vision, goals, objectives and implementation strategy knit together a series of actions, many of which rely on a detailed understanding of the 6th Ward’s neighborhoods and a detailed explanation of why they are necessary and how they can actually be accomplished. The following pages explore each of the district’s neighborhoods, confirming the overall vision for each one and how proposed changes may address challenges each neighborhood presents.

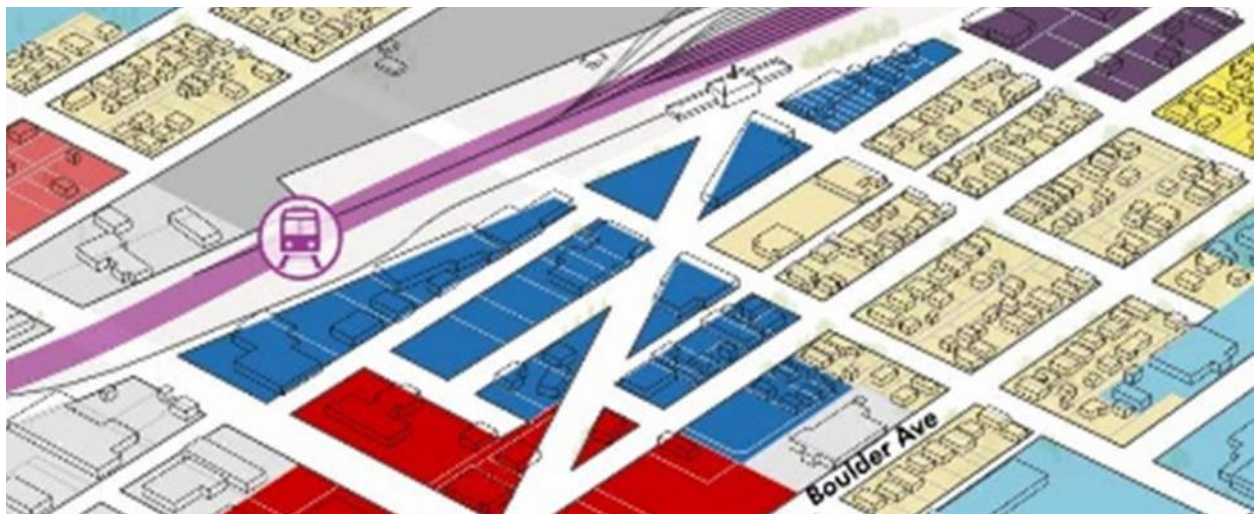
Figure 30: Railroad District Neighborhoods



7.1 Focus: Depot District

From the vision:

The commercial district remains anchored by the historic train depot, with restaurants, bars, hotels, merchants, and warehouses radiating east, south, and west. More contemporary retail, dining, entertainment, and professional office uses fill in the historic storefronts, and new apartments occupy the upper floors. The district becomes vibrant with new morning, day, and evening activity, retaining its quirkiness and character. It remembers its railroad roots, while offering a mix of social, cultural, commercial, and artistic activities unique to this part of town. Improvement of the roundabout at Montana and Lyndale enhances visibility and access into the core, and the Centennial Trail connection welcomes visitors on foot and by bike. Higher-intensity residential areas along the district's south edge bring customers close, within an easy walk of the core's retail and civic spaces.



7.1.2 The Concept

The Depot district builds on its current momentum, sustaining local businesses and providing a range of retail, services, dining, professional office, and entertainment uses. It is an active place, serving residents and visitors alike, referencing its historic identity and staying both hip and funky. It's a place locals cherish, uniquely Helena, with room for experimentation, fun, and a growing community connection.

7.1.3 The Challenges

The Depot District is challenged by its difficulty in access, and this may become even more critical if a grade-separated railroad crossing at North Montana Ave is constructed. The railroad and North Montana Ave present physical barriers to reach the district, making it difficult to navigate into the commercial core for those unfamiliar with it. The effective demand generated by nearby households causes the commercial uses here to rely on visitors, and making the district more accessible to them is key.





The district also has an indistinct presentation of its identity, with historic structures – such as the old train depot – not celebrated to the extent they can be. If the district is to use its historic identity as a foundation for its success, it must honor those historic resources, invest in them, and put them to effective use.

7.1.4 Recommended Changes

This plan’s proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the Depot District. They target:

Land Use and Zoning

New zoning will permit residential uses in those commercial districts where they may not now be allowed.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

Improvements to the Centennial Trail, Malfunction Junction, and Lyndale Ave will

improve roadway and non-motorized access to the district, more effectively connecting it to the west. Access via Bozeman Ave will be eliminated if a grade-separated railroad crossing is constructed, and the planned Centennial Trail crossing at Argyle will also need to be relocated. Retaining the Roberts St rail crossing will ensure residents to the north retain easy access to the district.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

Improvements to Helena Ave to emphasize the historic trolley connection to downtown, to Roberts St to accommodate vehicle and pedestrian flows between the district’s neighborhoods and schools and parks, and to Lyndale Ave to carry eastward traffic from Malfunction Junction into the district will enliven the district and provide opportunities to project its identity in the public realm. In addition, a grade-separated railroad crossing may cause Helena Ave to be incorporated into the Centennial Trail and increase Helena Ave’s importance as a primary district entry from the west.



7.2 Focus: Trades District

From the vision:

South of the railyard and east of the Depot District lies the Trades District. This area mixes small-scale warehousing, trades workshops, artists' studios, and bungalows, with space available for live-work structures, small apartments, and cottages. This is a creative space, with a wide and surprising mix of activities, enjoying its proximity to all of what the Railroad District has to offer. It becomes a vibrant space for artists who wish to live and work where they exhibit, where the retail galleries smell of the furnaces, kilns, and paints used in the creative processes. While the Depot District emerges as the retail center, the Trades District is a working district, where trucks unload, things get made, and visitors to the place expect a degree of roughness and hardscrabble authenticity.



7.2.1 The Concept

The Trades District can offer a range of business and residential opportunities, accommodating the small warehouse, “maker” space, live-work building, artist studio, gallery, or small housing units. It is a neighborhood which can be loud, active, busy, and a little rough around the edges, facilitating creativity and the act of making things. It is part of the district’s destination character, drawing people from around the region to work or cruise artists’ workshops.

7.2.2 The Challenges

To flourish, the Trades District must maintain its commercial access, with a system of streets designed to accommodate the small trucks which are crucial to the district’s success. It should also have direct access to the Centennial Trail, connecting this district across Helena to places such as Memorial Park, Carroll College, the Great Northern District, Helena’s West End, and the Bray Institute.



7.2.3 Recommended Changes

This plan’s proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the Trades District. They target:

Land Use and Zoning

The existing CLM and M-I zoning designations apply restrictions to housing development, impeding the development of smaller residential units and the creation of the type of artist studio, live-work, or “maker” spaces this plan envisions.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

Enhancing access to the Trades District will

involve improvements to the Centennial Trail and a new perspective on Lyndale Avenue and its segment between North Montana Avenue and a new connection to Boulder Avenue. The neighborhood’s interconnected grid is already compatible with the envisioned development types, but Railroad Ave would need an assured future – and a brick street surface – to help this district retain its charm.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

The Trades District streets should have a more industrial feel, accommodating small trucks and consistent with the grittiness associated with foundries, warehousing, working arts districts, and the like. While street trees are a priority in the Depot District, they are less important – though valued – here.



7.3 Focus: 6th Ward North

From the vision:

The northern neighborhood retains its rail worker housing scale and character, with small bungalows and “shotgun” houses serving households of all sizes and economic conditions. Folks who live here appreciate the neighborhood’s edgy vibe, compact form, walkable streets, and easy access to Cedar Street’s commercial corridor to the north and the Depot District to the south. Not much changes here during the planning period, except new houses and apartments get built in forms, scale, and styles similar to those which exist today.



7.3.1 The Concept

This is an eclectic neighborhood, with small lots, smaller housing units of a variety of types, and affordability. There are single-family homes, small apartments, manufactured homes, and townhouses, all mixed into a cohesive residential district tied together by a system of interconnected streets on a rectangular grid. Families walk and ride bikes, using the Roberts St crossing to access the district’s other neighborhoods.

7.3.2 The Challenges

The existing R-2 and “T” transition zoning is inconsistent with the neighborhood’s developed character, effectively making the entire neighborhood nonconforming. This limits reinvestment and directs any new projects to be inconsistent with the developed neighborhood surrounding them. The neighborhood is also reliant on the Roberts St rail crossing, and subject to “cut-through” traffic generated by non-residents looking for ways to bypass the rail crossing on North Montana Ave. Several process participants mentioned property maintenance as an issue here, though the focus seems to be more on ensuring adequate housing condition than on taking care of yards or abandoned vehicles.





7.3.3 Recommended Changes

This plan's proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the 6th Ward North. They target:

Land Use and Zoning

The R-2 and "T" zoning must change, either by creating a new zoning district specifically designed to guide development consistent with the subarea plan's vision or by amending the R-2 district and eliminating the "T" overlay. Standards related to minimum lot size, minimum side setbacks, and permitted land uses should do a better job corresponding to what already exists – a condition neighborhood residents generally appreciate.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

Retaining the Roberts St rail crossing is essential, maintaining a local connection to the commercial and public land uses south of the tracks. Instituting strategies to slow speeds on the neighborhood streets may also help to reduce the amount of "cut-through" traffic.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

There are no specific recommendations to alter the neighborhood's street design, except for finding opportunities to calm traffic in conformance to the City's complete streets principles. The Roberts St rail crossing can be made safer for pedestrians and cyclists, and extending the enhanced treatment of Roberts northward across the tracks and into the 6th Ward North neighborhood would tie this portion of the district more closely to the Depot District and 6th Ward South.



7.4 Focus: 6th Ward South

From the vision:

The southern portion of the planning area is emerging as a center for education and recreation. There are houses here, too, enjoying proximity to the schools, parks, and college and to the commercial districts and Capitol complex further south. There is little to change here during the planning period. But enhancements to the neighborhood's streets facilitate non-motorized access to the local schools and the bustling Depot District. And the upgrading of Lyndale Ave east of the new roundabout relaxes traffic pressure on Boulder Ave, enhancing the pedestrian experience along this important east-west corridor.



7.4.1 The Concept

This is the district's more contemporary residential neighborhood, mixing a variety of residential, public, and institutional land uses on lots and with development conforming to existing zoning standards. The plan concept proposes no changes to this land use pattern, focusing, instead, on enhancing connections between this neighborhood and the rest of the district. This includes ensuring Roberts St serves multi-modal demand and connecting the Centennial Trail and Lyndale Ave to Boulder Ave near I-15.

7.4.2 The Challenges

This district's land use mix puts potentially incompatible land uses next to each other. For example, Helena High School and Helena College's plans may involve development of property now vacant, placing higher-intensity educational activity next to existing single-family homes. Other examples may include the eventual redevelopment of the Corridor District, where land use intensification may create impacts for those uses adjoining it.



7.4.3 Recommended Changes

This plan’s proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the 6th Ward South. They target:

Land Use and Zoning

There are few proposed changes to zoning in this area, except for those portions where the Depot District and Trades District transition along Lyndale Ave and where the R-2 district may now permit a wider variety of attached single-family housing.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

Improvements to the transportation network include aligning Lyndale Ave and

the Centennial Trail to meet Boulder Ave near I-15, facilitating local travel through the Railroad District and enhancing this neighborhood’s connections to the Depot and Trades districts. Improvements to Roberts St may also be considered to ensure it adequately meets the multi-modal demand created by the neighborhood’s schools and encourages connection to the Depot District’s commercial core.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

The streetscape improvements include enhancements to Lyndale Ave to accommodate traffic and inclusion of the Centennial Trail extension which would otherwise rely on Boulder Ave. Lyndale has adequate right of way to carry this additional traffic, and the streetscape design and improvements can complement transitions to both the Depot District and Trades District.



7.5 Focus: The Corridor District

From the vision:

Montana Avenue and Lyndale Street west of the new roundabout are the axes for the corridor district. Much of it also serves as US Highway 12, linking the Railroad District to the east-west highway route. This corridor's new roundabout and "gateway" character set the stage for new types of mixed office, retail, and residential development. The corridor is still predominantly auto and freight oriented, but it is becoming more welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists as improvements are made, new buildings are constructed closer to the sidewalk, and parking is located to the rear, away from the street edge.



7.5.1 The Concept

This district is intended to gradually transform to accommodate mixed commercial, office, and multi-family residential uses on upper floors, lining the highway corridor with more development intensity and forming a "gateway" into Helena for those traveling on US 12. Its mixing of uses will add to the commercial vitality of the corridor and the Depot District, with residents within walking distance of a variety of retail, dining, services, and recreation opportunities. The streetscape is enhanced overall, with landscaping, sidewalks, and other treatments to make this corridor an attractive place for residents.



7.5.2 The Challenges

Today’s real estate development trends do not yet support the type of development envisioned here, but conditions change. The vision calls for the placement of storefront-style buildings along the arterial streets, and the current demand for abundant and visible parking for highway travelers make this difficult to achieve. The volume and speed of automotive and freight traffic – and the state Department of Transportation priorities – limit the degree to which non-motorized travel can be accommodated. Prioritizing traffic flow along the highway corridor creates an effective barrier isolating much of the Railroad District from the rest of Helena and discourages the type of mixed-use development envisioned along this segment of Montana Ave and Lyndale Ave.

The potential grade-separated rail crossing adds another dimension. While it may improve the efficiency of the proposed roundabout at Lyndale and Helena, it shifts the proposed alignment of the Centennial Trail crossing at North Montana Ave and places increased demand on Helena Ave to serve as the single point of entry to the Depot District. It also eliminates access to North Montana Ave near the railroad, necessitating new alternatives for those properties which now rely on North Montana Ave for access.

7.5.3 Recommended Changes

This plan’s proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the Corridor District. They target:

Land Use and Zoning

This plan recommends the creation of a new corridor-focused zoning district, requiring the ability to incorporate mixed uses, pushing development toward the street, increasing permitted development intensity, instituting architectural design guidance,

and encouraging interparcel connections to reduce reliance on North Montana Ave for all vehicular access. Specific zoning strategies – like establishing minimum building heights, establishing “build-to” lines, eliminating required off-street parking, or prohibiting the location of parking between a building front and the street edge – may help establish a built form more consistent with this pattern. Instituting these standards in a form-based or other zoning construct may also smooth administrative approval of new development if it conforms to adopted standards.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

The Montana State Department of Transportation manages those portions of US 12 along North Montana Ave and Lyndale Ave, so the City’s ability to influence design improvements there is limited. The portion of North Montana north of Lyndale warrants special attention as plans for the potential grade-separated rail crossing evolves. North-south auto and freight mobility is a priority on this corridor, and the non-motorized system paralleling it and crossing it will need to adapt – while still creating an environment more compatible with the Corridor District’s vision. This emerging approach may influence the way in which the rest of Montana Ave and Lyndale Ave are managed by MDOT, effectively integrating a non-motorized component and enhancing the street environment to complement envisioned land use transformations.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

The three-lane section of North Montana Ave can be designed to encourage new development to approach closer to the street, with pedestrian facilities compatible with mixed-use development. It can also more easily accommodate the proposed pedestrian Centennial Trail crossing near Argyle St and Bozeman St.



7.6 Focus: The Recreation District

From the vision:

Helena's Centennial Trail runs east-west, connecting Helena's western neighborhoods to East Helena. A key portion of the trail runs through the Railroad District, linking Memorial Park and Carroll College to Kindrick Field, the Depot District and Trades District. The Trail connects the Railroad District's business and civic heart to the rest of Helena.



7.6.1 The Concept

This district maintains and enhances its recreational spirit, with the Centennial Trail, Memorial Park, and Kindrick Field offering a rich and active spectrum of recreational opportunities accessible to residents of and visitors to the Railroad District.

7.6.2 The Challenges

The Centennial Trail now terminates in this neighborhood, limiting its potential to attract new users. The neighborhood is also difficult to access, with the Lyndale portion of US 12 and the streets north of it not easily navigable to access recreational opportunities.

7.6.3 Recommended Changes

This plan's proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the Recreation District. They target:



Access, Circulation, and Parking

Most of the plan’s recommendations here focus on providing access to the recreational assets and facilitating development of recreational-oriented activities while also accommodating the existing manufacturing, logistics, and warehousing land uses sharing this space. Maintaining the National Ave rail crossing is important, as is ensuring access to Memorial Drive is enhanced. The Centennial Trail is another critical component, aligning it within existing rights of way to reach North Montana Ave.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

This district’s street character is generally industrial, and the plan proposes no changes to street design. It does, however, propose extending the Centennial Trail along existing rights of way, resulting in targeted trail-related enhancement to portions of National Ave and Argyle St to accommodate the new, extended alignment and emphasize access to recreational or recreation-oriented uses along the way. In some cases, new sidewalks can close gaps where sidewalks do not now exist. In others – particularly where street speeds and vehicle volumes are low – the City may consider shared use arrangements where non-motorized traffic has priority.



8. Implementation

This chapter sets the plan into motion, articulating the neighborhood’s goals, the policies (or objectives) put in place to achieve them, and the specific actions necessary to implement this plan. These actions can be policy initiatives, investment into capital projects, or positioning for strategic partnerships where others may be better equipped to tackle plan priorities.

Implementation actions target infrastructure and institutional roles, reinforcing the physical, economic, social, and agency foundations for the district’s prosperity.

8.1 Roles & Responsibilities

Successful plan implementation requires collaboration and a shared commitment to the plan’s outcomes. While this may be the City of Helena’s plan, it requires action by many other agencies and individuals to become reality.

8.1.1 City of Helena

The City of Helena has land use and transportation jurisdiction throughout the subarea, partnering with the Montana State Department of Transportation on the improvement and maintenance of US Highway 12 along North Montana Ave and Lyndale Ave.

8.1.2 TIF Board

The Urban Revitalization District collects tax increment funds and applies them to support economic development efforts within the district boundaries.

8.1.3 RR District BID

Not yet created, a business improvement district in the 6th ward would collect revenue from businesses within the district – likely drawn closely around the Depot District and potentially including the Trades District – to invest in beautification, maintenance, and business development activities.



8.1.4 Montana Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation has jurisdiction over US Highway 12 and has influence over the alignment and design of streets, walkways, and other improvements providing access to the highway corridor.

8.1.5 Lewis and Clark County Metropolitan Planning Organization

This entity is being formed at the time of the plan's writing. The MPO will channel federal transportation funds to deserving transportation projects based on a more local understanding of Helena's needs.

8.1.6 Partner Organizations

Multiple governmental, non-profit, and private organizations may contribute to this plan's implementation, as appropriate, based on their relationship to implementation commitments and outcomes.

8.2 Implementation Strategy

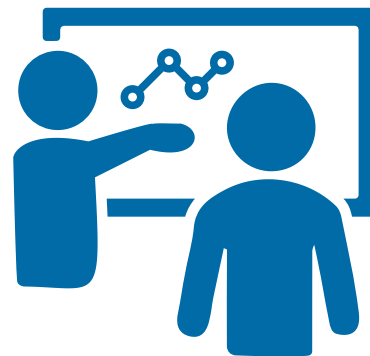
The paragraphs below identify the neighborhood's priority action items in response to the subarea plan's goals. Some of the actions are shorter term, focusing on issues which are more immediate.

Others cast a longer-term view, recognizing systemic or complex issues which may take more time and involve more partners to resolve. Where appropriate, this list also draws from the City's Growth Policy and the adopted Urban Renewal Plan, underscoring their continued relevance in planning for this neighborhood.

They revolve around policy changes, targeted investment, and the formation of partnerships, recognizing the City and community must work at different levels to achieve this plan's objectives.

Policy-related implementation actions include revisions to the Growth Policy and zoning ordinance, preparation of focused studies, and organizational clarity on transportation system priorities. Investment actions direct capital and operational expenditures, strategically leveraged to maximize impact on the district's physical landscape and demonstrate unified, coordinated commitment by the City, Tax Increment Financing District, and others, as appropriate. And the partnerships-related implementation actions recognize the need to act collaboratively on many issues, coordinating efforts and resources to address complex challenges and achieve mutually beneficial goals.

Policy references accompany each initiative, listed in the funding table provided at the end of this section. They anchor each recommendation to the subarea plan's policy direction.



Strategy #1: Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and form a business improvement district (BID).

The City can address nuisance vegetation, stockpiling of refuse, and abandoned vehicles through the adoption of a nuisance ordinance.

Many of the transformational initiatives will rely on TIF leadership and targeted investment, putting the TIF Board in a more publicly visible position. Creating and vetting an integrated investment strategy will help, allowing business owners and residents to participate in determining TIF investment priorities and, on occasion, understanding how private investment may also be leveraged.

Local business owners have initiated efforts to coordinate marketing, branding, and commercial district improvements. It is time to formalize this direction, creating an instrument like a BID to facilitate continued coordination and establish an entity whose purpose is to nurture district businesses, advise on TIF strategy, partner with the City on various initiatives, and invest in the district's prosperity.

Issues Addressed:

Number	Issue
4	TIF Investment Strategy
5	Vehicle Storage
12	Placemaking



Strategy #2: Create streetscape plan and design to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor.

Existing streetscape designs do not support the mix and intensity of uses this plan envisions. Nor do they emphasize the district's and the highway corridor's unique identities. New streetscape designs sensitive to multi-modal needs and gradual adaptive investment will support the new types of uses compatible with the district's historic character.

The City's current initiative to redesign the eastern portion of Helena Ave seeks to enhance the Depot District's look, advancing the plan's objectives to confirm how the district's commercial streets will function, and underscore and enhance the relationship between the Depot District, Railroad Ave, the Centennial Trail, and the Trades District.

Roberts Street is an integral corridor for pedestrians and local traffic crossing the railroad tracks to access their homes, educational institutions, businesses, and public services. Improving the design and upgrading safety features on Roberts Street will allow for better access and provide pedestrians a sense of security.

Lyndale Avenue has two distinctly different personalities in the subarea. To the west of Montana Ave, it accommodates a steady flow of US 12 traffic on four lanes of roadway. To the east, it becomes a less-traveled street, still with abundant right of way but with fewer trips. The design challenge is to create a Lyndale compatible with highway operations for its western half and one better equipped to address the emerging needs of the Railroad District community on the east. In conjunction with the roundabout at Montana Ave, Lyndale will become a primary transportation corridor through the entirety of the Railroad District, accommodating highway traffic west of Montana and accommodating increased use – including school bus traffic – to the east.

A trolley once ran between the depot and downtown along Helena Avenue, transporting new arrivals and freight. This corridor can cement Helena's history through urban design and multimodal improvements, making pedestrian crossing easier and drawing design cues from Mt Helena to the west and the historic depot to the east (*designs to coordinate with City to ensure standards are met*).



Issues Addressed:

Number	Issue
3	Commercial District Identity/Vitality
4	TIF Investment Strategy
7	Neighborhood Character Preservation
8	At-Grade Rail Crossings
9	Stormwater Management
12	Placemaking

Strategy #3: Prepare a non-motorized strategy to complement proposed mobility improvements to North Montana Ave, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and install a Centennial Trail crossing of Montana Ave.

Helena's Five-Points multi-modal traffic study identified the roundabout as the best approach to solve multiple transportation objectives:

- ◆ Improving access to the 6th Ward neighborhoods from Lyndale and Montana Avenues,
- ◆ Maintaining Helena Avenue as a continuous route from the Railroad District to the downtown core through this intersection, and
- ◆ Maintaining acceptable operations for vehicles traveling on Highway 12, a need of the Montana Department of Transportation.

The Five-Points study also calls for a grade-separated railroad crossing at North Montana Ave and a signalized pedestrian crossing of Montana Ave between Lyndale Ave and the railroad. Participants in this process agree on the approach to the Centennial Trail crossing, recommending a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) for pedestrians and cyclists crossing Montana Avenue at the Argyle/Bozeman Street intersection. Many pedestrians and cyclists already use this path as an unofficial Centennial Trail extension. Participants are split on the grade-separated crossing, however, concerned by its access limitations and aware of its benefit to improve mobility. All actions related to this corridor must also be approached in coordination with MDT.



Issues Addressed:

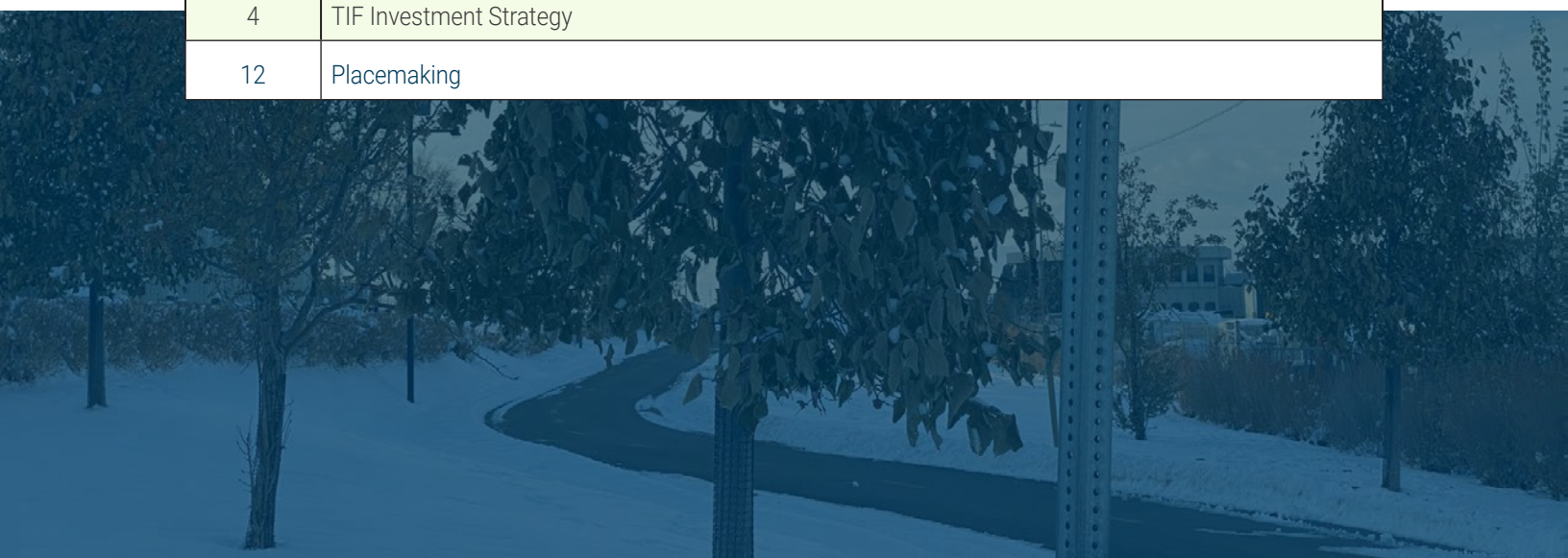
Number	Issue
1	Montana/Helena/Lyndale Intersection
2	Boulder Access
8	At-Grade Rail Crossings
12	Placemaking

Strategy #4: Confirm Centennial Trail alignment through the district, design it, and improve it.

The trail must continue from its existing terminus along public rights of way to reach Montana Ave and its proposed crossing at Argyle/Bozeman . There may also be influences on the final trail alignment based on the outcome of the current grade separation feasibility study, shifting the trail either north or south from its proposed Argyle/Bozeman crossing. This design effort will confirm the trail alignment through the entirety of the district, informing street design along the trail’s route and providing an opportunity to coordinate with adjoining property owners to maximize the trail’s positive impact.

Issues Addressed:

Number	Issue
3	Commercial District Identity/Vitality
4	TIF Investment Strategy
12	Placemaking



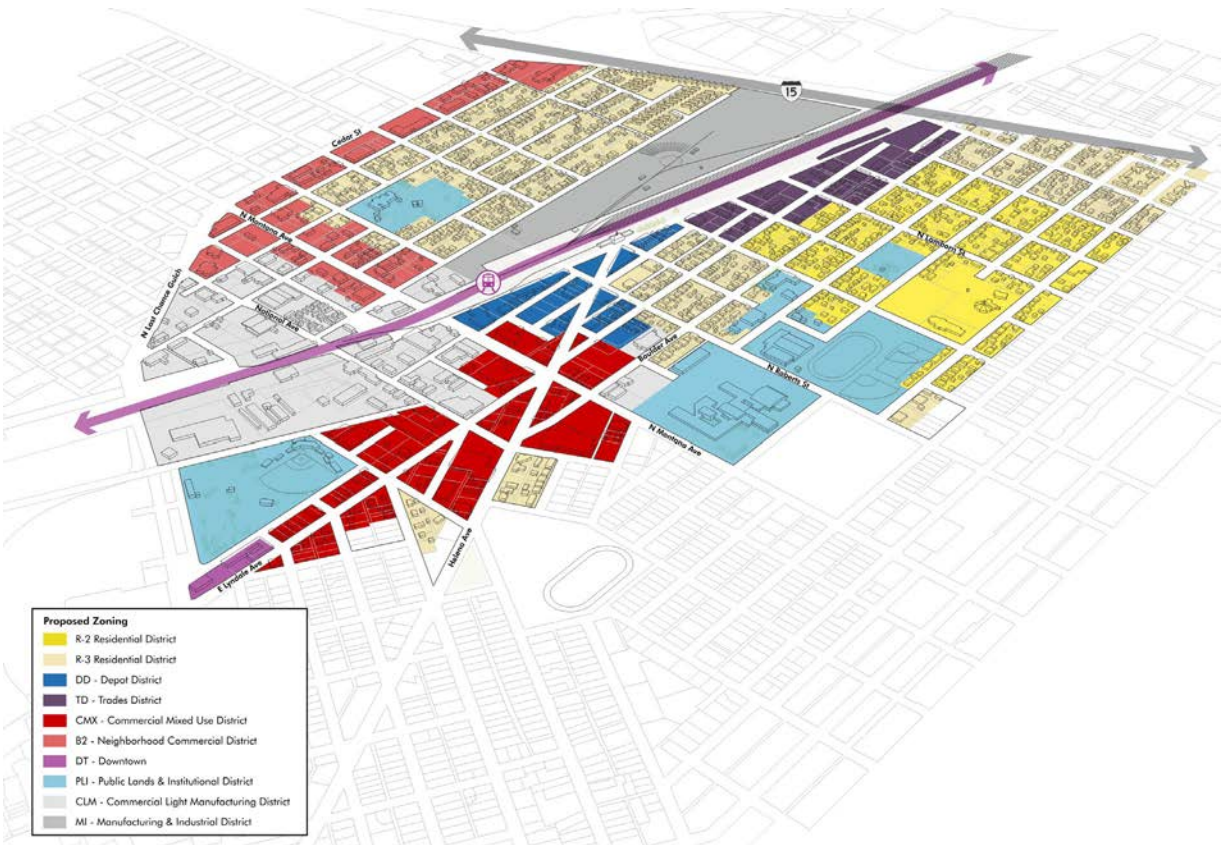
Strategy #5: Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot, Trades, and Corridor Districts.

The 6th Ward’s existing zoning renders much of the existing development patterns and types nonconforming and deters new revitalization opportunities. New development standards and land use permissions are necessary to achieve the potential this plan envisions.

Issues Addressed:

Number	Issue
3	Commercial district identity/vitality
6	Housing attainability
7	Neighborhood character preservation
10	Zoning and intensity
11	Zoning and built character compatibility
12	Placemaking

Figure 31: Proposed Zoning



8.3 Funding

The table below summarizes the various plan implementation actions, linking them to the subarea plan’s goals, indicating their relative timing, and identifying parties responsible for them. The City’s capital improvement program will take steps to implement recommendations, specifying timeline, investment, and responsibility.

The table here lists each of the proposed implementation actions, the goals and policies they implement, their anticipated timing in terms of short, medium, and long-range, those responsible for implementing them, and potential funding sources. The short, medium and long-range timing (abbreviated S, M, and L) correspond to 0 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years, and 11+ years from the date of this plan’s adoption.

Table 4: Implementation Matrix Abbreviations	
Abbreviation	Meaning
S	Short Range (0 – 5 years)
M	Medium Range (6 – 10 years)
L	Long range (11 + years)
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
HSIP	Highway Safety Improvement Program
MDT	Montana State Department of Transportation
NH	National Highway Performance Program
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
RURD/TIF	Railroad Urban Renewal District/Tax Increment Financing
SWBID	Sixth Ward Business Improvement District
TA	Transportation Alternatives Program



Table 5: Implementation Matrix

	Action	Issue(s)	Objective(s)	Timing (S, M, L)	Responsibility	Funding
1	Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and form a business improvement district (BID).					
	Adopt a robust community decay and vacant property ordinance	4, 5, 12	1.1, 2.4, 5.8			
	Produce and vet a TIF investment strategy	4, 5, 12	1.5, 3.5, 4.5, 4.8, 5.4, 5.8	S	City	City
	Form a business improvement district	4, 5, 12	5.5	S, M	City	City, SWBID
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor.					
	Prepare a streetscape plan for the Depot District and Shops District	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12	3.2, 3.4, 4.2, 4.8, 5.6	S	City, RURD, MDT	City, RURD/TIF
	Design the Roberts St corridor	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12	2.2, 4.2, 4.8, 5.6	S	City, RURD, MDT	City, RURD/TIF
	Design the Lyndale Ave corridor	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12	2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8, 5.1	S	City, RURD, MDT	City, RURD/TIF
	Design the Helena Ave corridor, with improvements per Five-Points study	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12	1.2, 1.3, 3.2, 4.2, 4.4, 4.8, 5.8	S, M	City, RURD, MDT	City, RURD/TIF
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.					
	Redesign Montana Ave consistent with complete streets policy	1, 2, 8, 12	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2, 5.6	M	MDT, MPO	MPT, Discretionary Grant Funding, CMAQ
	Design and construct the Montana Ave Roundabout	1, 2, 8, 12	3.2, 5.6	M, L	MDT, MPO	MPO, Discretionary Grant Funding, NH, CMAQ
	Verify and construct the Centennial Trail crossing at Montana Ave	1, 2, 8, 12	2.1, 3.1, 3.4, 4.2, 4.8	S	City, MDT	City, RURD/TIF, TA, NH, HSIP



Table 5: Implementation Matrix

	Action	Issue(s)	Objective(s)	Timing (S, M, L)	Responsibility	Funding
Confirm Centennial Trail alignment through the district, design it, and improve it.						
4	Study and confirm the Centennial Trail alignment through the district	3, 4, 12	1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6	S	City, MDT, MPO	City, RURD/ TIF, TA, NH, HSIP
	Improve the Centennial Trail through the district	3, 4, 12	1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6	M	City, MDT	City, RURD/ TIF, TA, NH, HSIP
Update zoning in the Depot District, Shops District, and Corridor District.						
5	Update zoning to match land use and development standards with proposed vision	3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12	4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.8	S	City, Property Owners	Discretionary Grant Funding, City, RURD/ TIF



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APPENDICES



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City of Helena

RAILROAD DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

November 2024



City of
Helena



SCJ ALLIANCE
CONSULTING SERVICES

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0. Executive Summary

Helena’s Railroad District (also known as the 6th Ward or Midtowne) is as old as the city, forming around the railroad depot as people and goods came to settle the town. The transportation system – formed by the railroad, the local town streets, and the streetcar running along Helena Avenue – brought life and activity to the district in its early years. As the town grew, the transportation system which energized the district evolved. US Highway 12, North Montana Ave, and the freight-only rail service changed the ways in which people access Helena, creating a web of high-capacity corridors which essentially divide the heart of the Railroad District from the rest of town.

While these transportation corridors still provide access to the Railroad District, they also can make it difficult. High automotive

and freight volumes can make it difficult to access the district on foot or by bike, and the transportation management techniques necessary to smooth traffic flows can even make accessing the district by car difficult.

Still, the district has retained much of its historic character and has nurtured a mix of businesses, institutions, and housing which make the Railroad District unique – both a reminder of Helena’s path and a contributor to Helena’s future.

This subarea plan is rooted in Helena’s Growth Policy, capturing the vision of a neighborhood center and applying it to the Sixth Ward. The Growth Policy prioritizes planning for several neighborhood centers, and Helena chose to plan first for the Railroad District.

Figure 1: The Railroad District Today



The neighborhood centers are intended to stimulate new types of activities in Helena's neighborhoods, introducing small-scale storefront retail, new housing options, and community spaces to emphasize local identity and redirect public and private investment into the community's more historic neighborhoods.

Helena values community engagement, and the public voice underpins this plan. The plan's vision is consistent with Growth Policy direction and is shaped by the community's priorities and aspirations. Further, the subarea plan's goals and objectives dovetail with those of the Growth Policy, adding detail and direction for the Railroad District as suggested by the community conversation running throughout this process.

The plan (based on community engagement described in Chapter 3) guides growth and revitalization through its policy direction and its implementation strategies. It focuses on the district's vibrant neighborhood center to retain its unique identity and eliminate barriers to investment. The plan's land use and transportation initiatives are designed with a relatively soft touch, suggesting notable revisions to zoning to encourage a new mixing of uses, new twists on using the historic landscape, and tailoring the local streets and trails to truly welcome autos, trucks, cyclists, and pedestrians into and through the district. The plan identifies distinct neighborhoods within the district and suggests specific actions for each, all of which work in concert to guide reinvestment, honor historic uses, preserve and expand housing options, and create a safe, attractive, and accessible transportation network.

Chapter 4 presents the plan's vision. In this vision, the Depot District will be the vibrant commercial core, with the historic train depot as its focus. The Trades District will mix small-scale manufacturing, arts, and warehousing uses with housing. The residential areas of 6th Ward North and South will retain their neighborhood scale

and character, mixing in parks and, in the south, the school facilities which provide the entire district a space for multi-generational connection. The Corridor District along Montana Ave will gradually transform into a mixed-use gateway. And the Recreation District will enhance recreational amenities and access, anchored by the Centennial Trail and the existing context of warehousing and light manufacturing uses.

Several goals and objectives (detailed in Chapter 5) underpin this plan and respond to the 12 major issues challenging this subarea. The goals include:

1. Keeping and **enhancing the neighborhood's identity and history**
2. **Improving safety**
3. **Improving access** and connections
4. **Bolstering housing opportunities**
5. **Supporting the business community**

The scale and focus of a subarea plan allow a closer examination of the opportunities and implications the plan promises. Chapter 6 lists a series of land use, transportation, utilities and infrastructure, and economic development implications of the plan's goals and objectives. Chapter 7 then zooms in to the subarea plan's neighborhoods, referencing the various plan implications and exploring how the plan may guide new investment.

Key implementation priorities (listed in Chapter 8) include constructing the roundabout at Montana Ave and Lyndale, extending the Centennial Trail into and through the district, establishing a business improvement district, updating zoning, and initiating targeted infrastructure and streetscape improvements.

This plan links the 12 issues revealed in this process to the plan's goals and implementation actions, as illustrated in the table on the following page.



Table 1: Railroad Neighborhood District Plan - Goals and Implementation Actions

#	Issue	#	Goal	#	Implementation Action
1	Montana Ave/Lyndale Ave Intersection	2	Improving Safety	3	Montana Ave Improvements
		3	Improving Access		
		5	Supporting the Business Community		
2	Access to Boulder Ave	2	Improving Safety	3	Montana Ave Improvements
		3	Improving Access		
3	Commercial District Vitality	1	Neighborhood Identity	2	Streetscape Plan
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity	4	Centennial Trail Extension
		5	Supporting the Business Community	5	Zoning Updates
4	TIF Investment Strategy	5	Supporting the Business Community	1	BID Formation
				2	Streetscape Plan
				4	Centennial Trail Extension
5	Vehicle / Outdoor Storage	1	Neighborhood Identity	1	BID Formation
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity		
		5	Supporting the Business Community		
6	Housing Attainability	4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity	5	Zoning Updates
7	Neighborhood Character Preservation	1	Neighborhood Identity	2	Streetscape Plan
		5	Supporting the Business Community	5	Zoning Updates
8	Rail Crossings	2	Improving Safety	2	Streetscape Plan
		3	Improving Access		
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity	3	Montana Ave Improvements
		5	Supporting the Business Community		
9	Stormwater Management	2	Improving Safety	2	Streetscape Plan
10	Zoning and Intensity	1	Neighborhood Identity	5	Zoning Updates
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity		
		5	Supporting the Business Community		
11	Zoning and Built Character	1	Neighborhood Identity	5	Zoning Updates
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity		
12	Placemaking	1	Neighborhood Identity	1	BID Formation
		3	Improving Access	2	Streetscape Plan
		4	Bolstering Housing Opportunity	4	Centennial Trail Extension
		5	Supporting the Business Community	5	Zoning Updates



With collaboration between the City, businesses, residents, and partners, the plan provides a roadmap to fulfill the Growth Policy's objective to create vibrant neighborhood centers in Helena. The Railroad District Neighborhood Plan will guide investment and action to revitalize this historic area as a unique destination and integral part of the city.

Figure 2: The Railroad District 2045



1.0 Introduction

This project’s aim is to create a vibrant, dynamic neighborhood center within the context of a larger residential neighborhood and to eliminate impediments to investment while still ensuring quality developments.

The 2019 Growth Policy’s principal growth strategy is to focus the city’s development into “neighborhood centers,” forming and promoting these dense, multi-use areas to create unique urban spaces supported by one or more of Helena’s residential neighborhoods. In the Railroad District, this strategy is also supported by the plan underpinning the 6th Ward Urban Renewal District (URD). The URD’s plan contains goals to revitalize the area by improving economic vitality, creating jobs, and encouraging investment in targeted neighborhoods.

Residents, stakeholders, business owners, and the City of Helena are seeking to spur economic activity in Helena’s historic Railroad District and create the type of interconnected, dynamic, unique, and identity-rich neighborhood center the Growth Policy envisions. This is consistent with the results of the engagement activities incorporated into this subarea planning process, integrating the voice of the neighborhood’s residents and businesses into the larger policy context and shaping a plan tailored to the 6th Ward’s needs and aspirations.

1.1 Neighborhood Planning and Policy

1.1.1 Importance of Neighborhood Planning

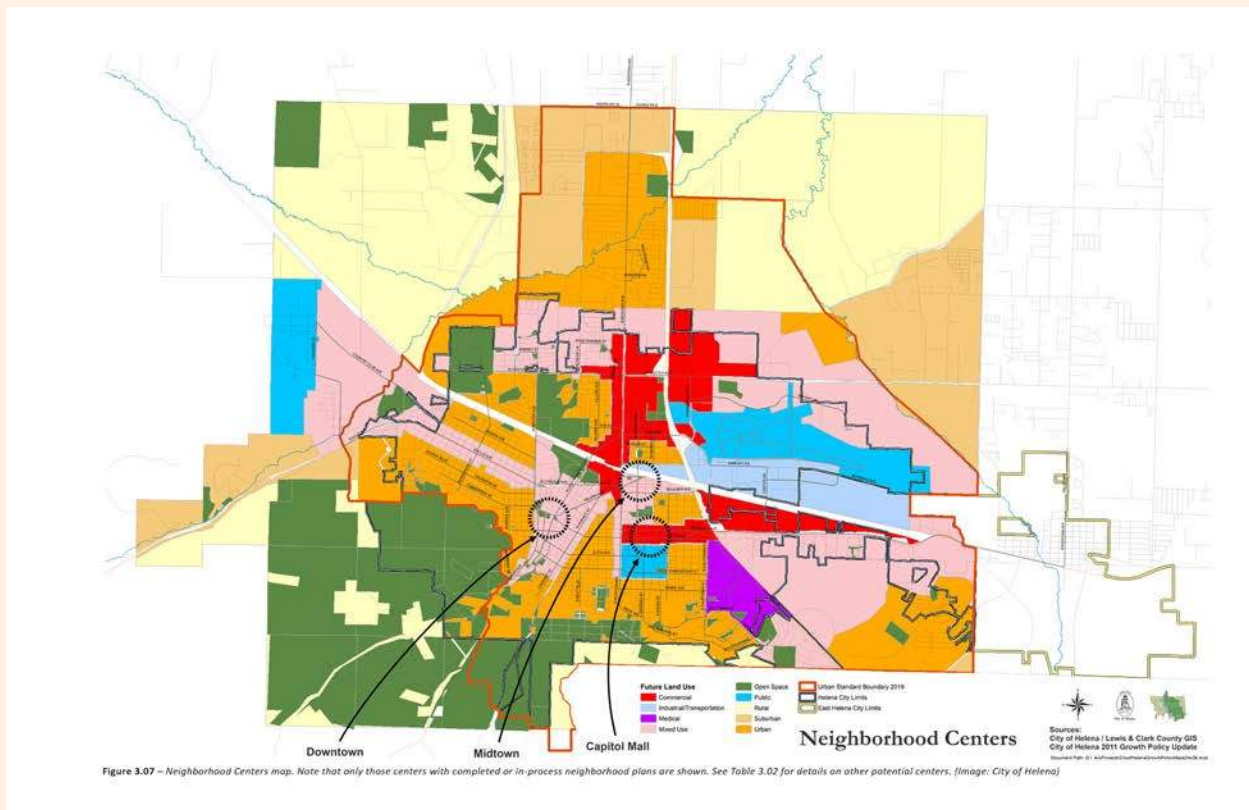
Helena’s Growth Policy underscores the importance of neighborhood planning, particularly as a key to determining the location, scale and type of change anticipated or hoped to occur in the community’s neighborhoods. As noted in the Growth Policy:

“The concept of mixed-use development is an important growth management strategy for Helena. If properly planned and developed, Neighborhood Centers will enjoy higher densities, a mix of activities, more transportation options, and convenient shopping and services. When combined with improved multi-modal transportation opportunities, Neighborhood Centers can reduce reliance on automobile travel and the need for costly street improvements while benefiting air quality, slowing sprawl, and providing a greater variety of housing types. Neighborhood Centers located at the west, north and east areas of town may also enhance the experience of entering the city.”



The Growth Policy identifies three areas where mixed-use neighborhood centers can develop, assuring the neighborhoods are involved in determining their character and appropriateness. The Growth Policy’s storefront studio focused community conversation about these mixed-use neighborhood centers. And the community responded, understanding what a compact, mixed-use center can bring to a neighborhood and suggesting those places in town where this type of transformation would be welcomed.

Figure 3: 2019 Growth Policy Neighborhood Centers



The Railroad District emerged as the highest priority candidate for a neighborhood plan. There is already an urban renewal district formed in the area, a tax-increment financing district exists, and the district’s small business district, street grid, and mix of uses already establish a pattern suited for a mixed-use neighborhood center. This type of project can align the City’s zoning ordinance and development regulations to meet the district’s unique circumstances and suggest strategic action to stimulate appropriate and effective change- all consistent with the neighborhood’s specific needs and aspirations.





Photo #1: The Storefront Studio captured the community's desires for neighborhood centers as ways to encourage infill development and enhance neighborhood quality of life.

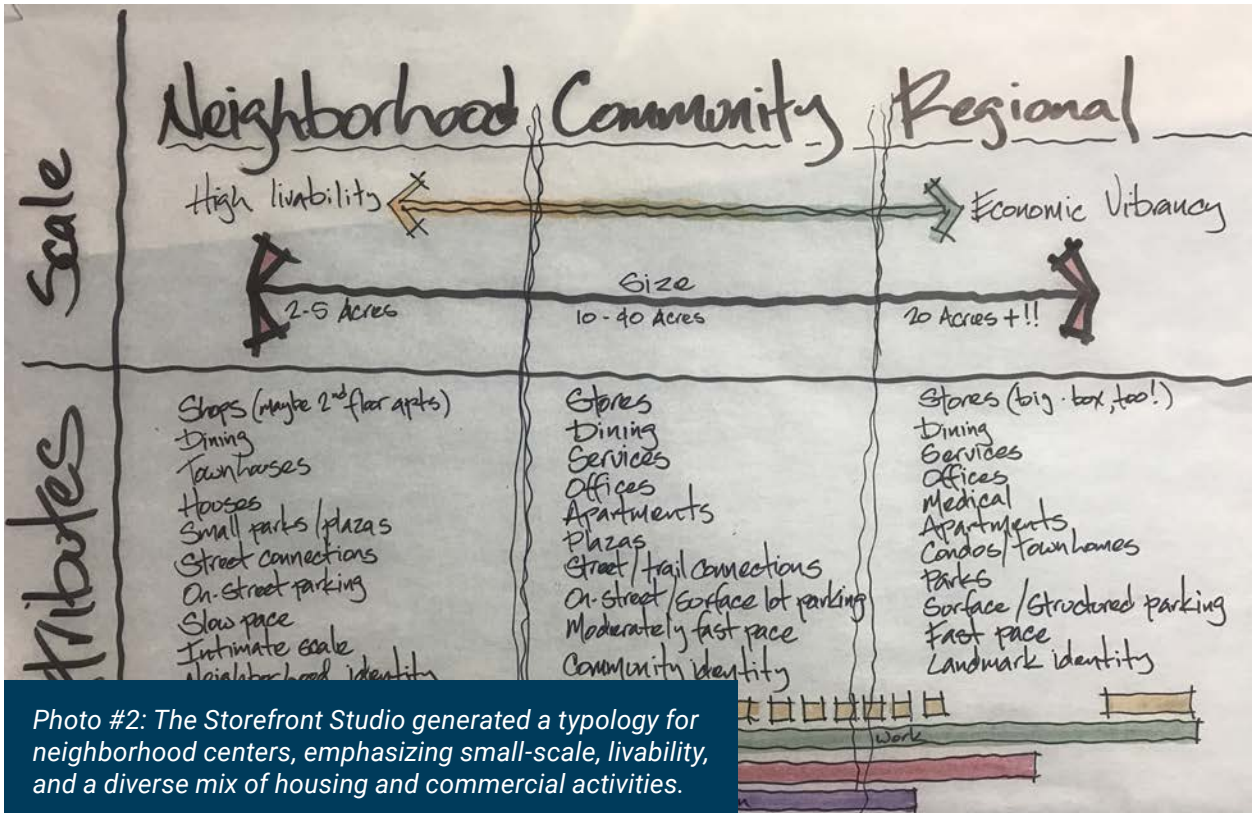


Photo #2: The Storefront Studio generated a typology for neighborhood centers, emphasizing small-scale, livability, and a diverse mix of housing and commercial activities.

1.1.2 Direction from the Growth Policy

The 2018 Growth Policy establishes the foundation for this subarea plan, acknowledging the importance of Helena’s neighborhoods and seeking reinvestment in time and energy to guide their development. Goal 10 and Objective 45 of the Growth Policy calls for this effort, as follows:

- [Goal 10] Plan for and establish types and quantities of land uses in Helena supporting community needs, Neighborhood Centers, aesthetics, and the City’s long-term sustainability.*
- [Objective 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.*

This subarea plan implements several action items included in the Growth Policy:

- (Action 34) Develop and adopt Neighborhood Plans that address appropriate economic and implementation strategies for Neighborhood Centers.*
- (Action 35) Create a Neighborhood Center process to:*
 - ♦ Identify Neighborhood Center locations;*
 - ♦ Develop strategy for development of center;*
 - ♦ Develop implementation methods to achieve those goals;*
 - ♦ Amend map reflecting Neighborhood Center locations.*
- (Action 38) Develop design standards for:*
 - ♦ Neighborhoods, as appropriate; Historic property and historic districts;*
 - ♦ Transportation Corridors;*
 - ♦ Strip development;*
 - ♦ Neighborhood Center development.*
- (Action 39) Monitor existing Urban Renewal Plans in Helena to optimize chances for implementation and overall community benefit.*

The Growth Policy’s relevant objectives are included in Appendix B, illustrating how they align with and support this subarea plan.

1.2 Relationship to the Urban Renewal District

The Urban Renewal District (URD) receives revenue from within the TIF district boundary. According to MCA 7.15.42, the URD is entitled to receive a percentage of property tax revenues based on the difference between the tax collected when the district was formed and the tax collected as property values increase. This “increment” flows to the URD, who is then obligated to reinvest these funds to improve conditions in the district. A URD exists for no more than 20 years, expected to act

relatively quickly to encourage reinvestment and improve conditions within the district.

Forming a URD requires several actions, two of which include a finding of “blight” within a defined geographic area and then the preparation of a plan to improve blighted conditions. The URD is then bound to act within the plan’s framework, investing its funds consistent with the plan’s policies and in line with identified implementation strategies. The area incorporated within the TIF district, however, is slightly smaller than the area addressed in this subarea plan, only because the area within the TIF district boundaries had to meet criteria for blight. There are properties within the subarea plan which are not blighted but still contribute to the identity, character, and function of the 6th Ward.

Figure 4: Railroad District Urban Renewal District Boundaries





The Railroad District Urban Renewal Plan contains several policies relevant to this subarea plan, generally consistent with the City’s Growth Policy and with the direction this subarea plan takes. Specifically, the Urban Renewal Plan promotes a vision for the district where:

“The Railroad District will be a destination district in the City of Helena, with a strong neighborhood identity based on the district’s historic core, unique mix of uses, including workforce housing, manufacturing, and the railroad after which the district is named. The Railroad District will be a vibrant place to work, live, and visit with shops, restaurants, and diverse commercial businesses. It will be uniquely different from the city’s other main nearby destinations – downtown, Great Northern Town Center, and the Capitol area. People will easily access the Railroad District by vehicle, and pedestrian and bike-friendly connections.”

This vision easily extends beyond just the TIF district boundary, capturing the essence of the larger planning area, too.

As with the objectives from the Growth Policy, those Urban Renewal Plan policies aligning with and supporting this subarea plan are included in Appendix B. The plan includes six goals, all of which align with and support this subarea plan’s preparation, as follows:

1. **Emphasize** the District’s Historic Importance,
2. **Increase** Property Utilization and Function,
3. **Expand** and Diversify the District’s Economy,
4. **Create** an Inviting Venue,
5. **Address** Public Infrastructure Needs, and
6. **Provide** for Public and Environmental Health.

1.3 Planning Area

The 6th Ward boundaries are Last Chance Gulch to the West, Cedar to the North, Highway 287, Butte Avenue to the South, and 13th Street to the Southwest corner. The 6th Ward can be broken down into seven smaller neighborhoods (Corridor District, 6th Ward North, Railyard, Recreation District, Depot District, Trades District, and 6th Ward South), each section has its own character, interconnected through history, community, and a shared interest in Helena’s prosperity.



Figure 5: Railroad District Planning Area



1.3.1 Why It Was Chosen

The Railroad District is the City of Helena’s first subarea planning effort since the 2018 Growth Policy’s adoption. The Growth Policy identifies the 6th Ward as a district where a neighborhood center is to be located, and the City chose this neighborhood for this effort as its first for multiple reasons.

- ◆ **Accessibility** – Neighborhood Centers should have the capacity to be accessed by a variety and volume of transportation.
- ◆ **Institutions & Mix of Uses** – Neighborhood Centers should be placed at those intersections unique to cities where a mix of uses can be found.
- ◆ **Placemaking Opportunity** – Neighborhood Centers should be encouraged in places benefiting from an enhancement of their urban form.
- ◆ **Development and Redevelopment Opportunity** - Neighborhood Centers should be encouraged in places benefiting from city attention.
- ◆ **Planned Infrastructure Expansion** – Neighborhood Centers should be encouraged in places which already have or are planned to soon have the infrastructure capacity to handle an intensification of use in the area.

The RR District was of interest because of its accessibility possibilities, its diverse institutions and mix of uses, the obvious placemaking opportunities provided by its historic character, and its redevelopment opportunity. Infrastructure is already mostly in place, and the City is already conducting studies to enhance its water and storm drain systems.



The neighborhood also already has an established commercial center, the heart of the district's identity and scaled consistently with the district's historic character and role. It is central to the entire district, seen by those who live there as an anchoring civic, social, and cultural place and easily accessible by foot, bike, or car from surrounding residential neighborhoods.

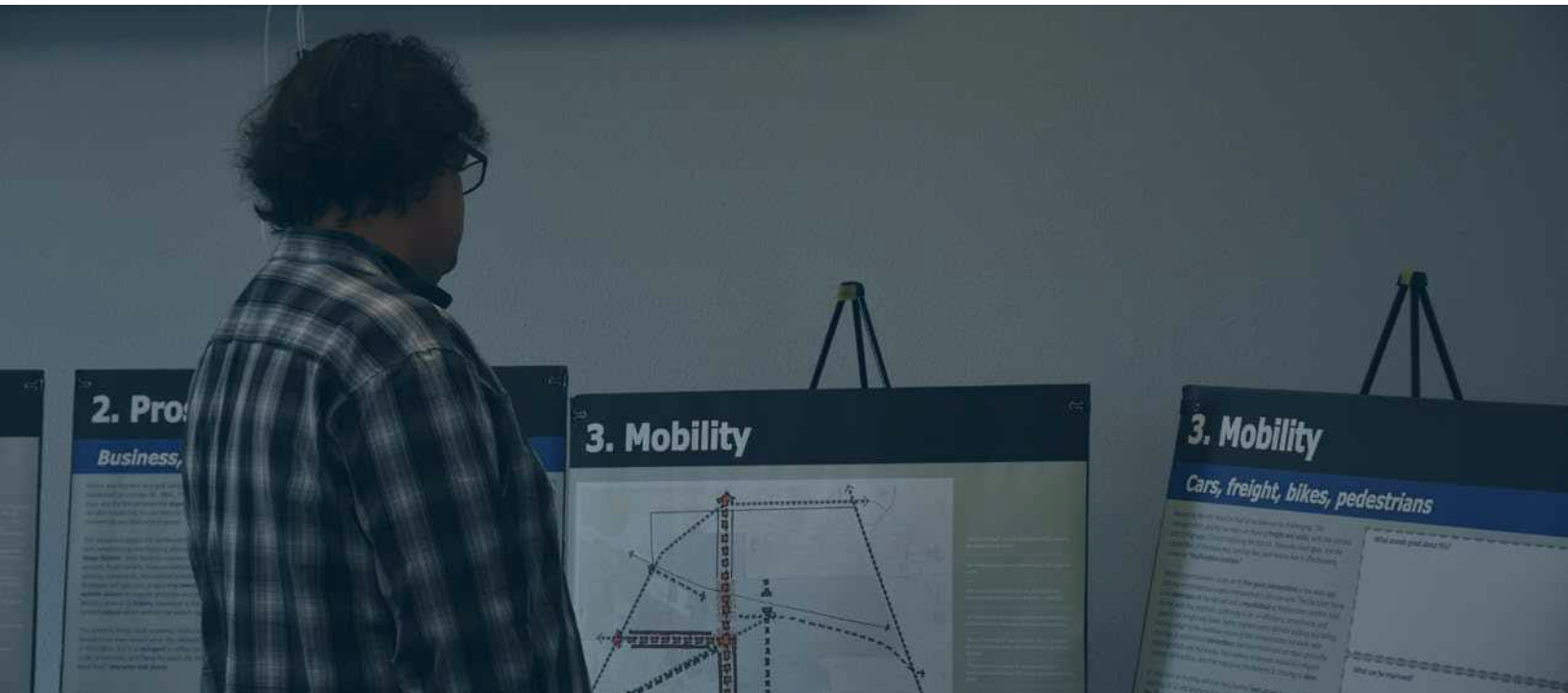
1.4 Planning Process and Engagement

The process to develop the plan centered on meaningful community conversation and adherence to the Growth Policy's overarching guidance on neighborhood center character and function. This translated to a public engagement program eliciting community expression of hopes, concerns, and aspirations anchored in a solid technical understanding of the community's context, constraints, and opportunities.

The public conversation drew from the community's imagination to consider alternatives for the Railroad District, and then collaborated on identifying recommendations for action. This approach is also consistent with the City of Helena's public participation policy, underpinning the critical role a meaningful public dialogue plays in policy development.

1.4.1 Interviews

A set of November 2022 orientation interviews set the stage. These interviews invited individual community members to speak with the consultants one-on-one, introducing the consultant team to the neighborhood in an intimate, open, and easy way. The interviews set out to identify the topics and issues on the community's mind via two and a half days of one-on-one conversations with community members and agency staff. The interviews covered a range of topics and revealed issues this planning process must address. Appendix D provides a complete summary of the interviews, including a list of those interviewed.



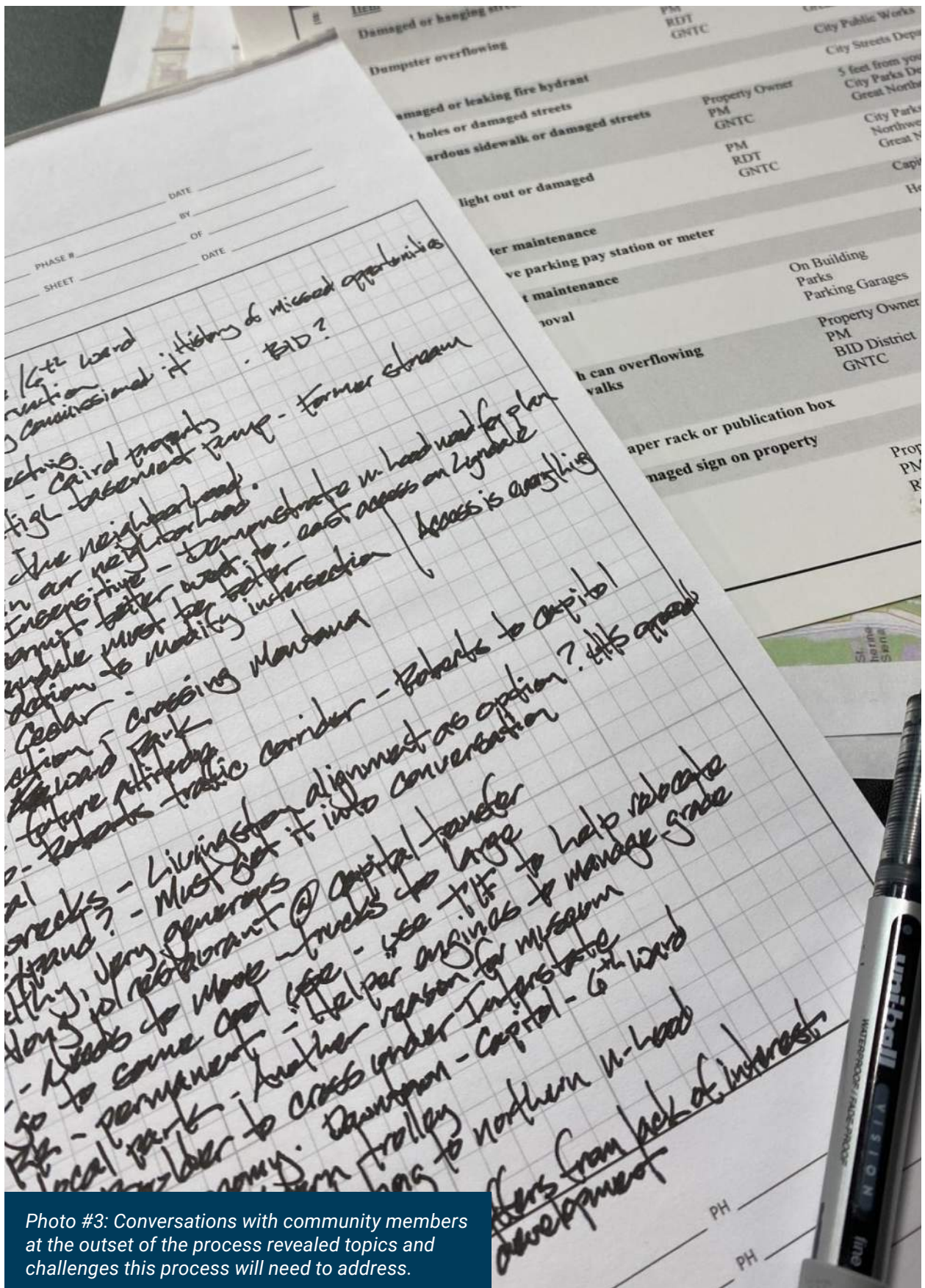


Photo #3: Conversations with community members at the outset of the process revealed topics and challenges this process will need to address.



1.4.2 Studio

The interviews set the stage for the “storefront studio” conducted in March. During the studio, those interested in the 6th Ward – many of whom were business owners or residents – considered the subarea’s long-term vision and three different scenarios to help attain it. Each scenario explored different sets of priorities, emphasizing tradeoffs and providing examples of how each may favor certain actions or investments.

- Scenario 1 focused on recreation, emphasizing investment and action to enhance the district’s family friendliness.*
- Scenario 2 focused on revitalizing the commercial core, emphasizing new housing construction near the retail center and welcoming local and regional patrons to the district’s shops, restaurants, and offices.*
- Scenario 3 focused on implementing the transportation improvements identified in the City’s 2020 “Five Points” study, accommodating – among other things – a railway underpass at North Montana Ave and a roundabout at the intersection of Lyndale, Montana, and Helena.*

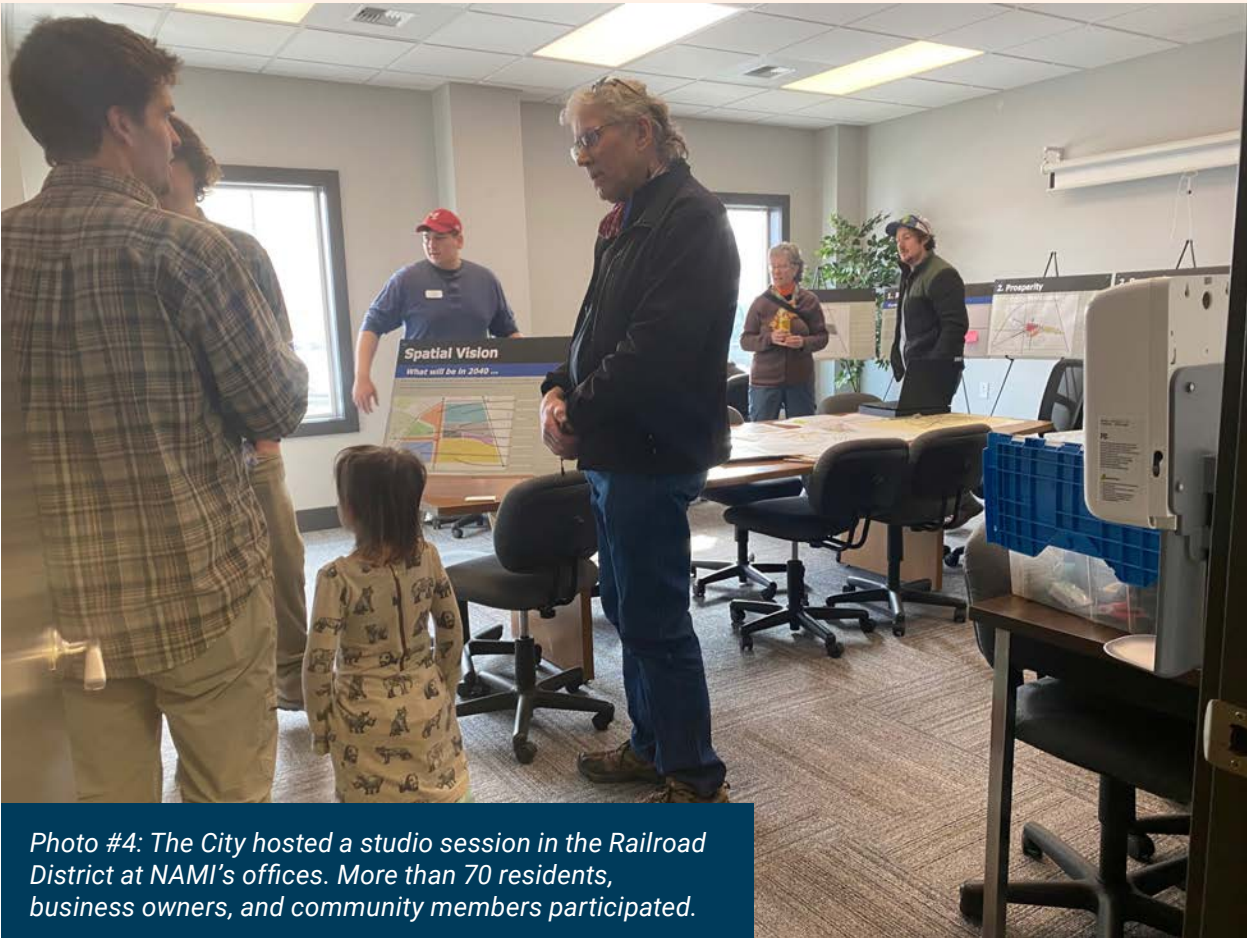


Photo #4: The City hosted a studio session in the Railroad District at NAMI’s offices. More than 70 residents, business owners, and community members participated.



Studio participants also took time to comment on the “6th Ward Jam Board” to identify specific concerns, make suggestions, and offer solutions. Notes on the “Jam Board” and on the scenarios influenced the plan’s final recommendations, balancing the priorities of the three scenarios and clarifying what the plan’s policy options should be.

1.4.3 Rollout

The subarea plan’s rollout allowed the community to review the draft plan’s recommendations and, importantly, verify the plan accurately captures the community’s identity and honestly reflects the suggestions participants offered during the planning process.

1.4.4 Plan Adoption

The Railroad District Subarea Plan is adopted as part of the City’s Growth Policy, offering policy direction and implementation actions specific to this part of town. The plan augments policy the City has adopted in the Growth Policy and Urban Renewal Plan, offering new policy to add detail and specific implementation actions to guide investment and assist decision making. The subarea plan will become an appendix to the Growth Policy, one of several subarea plans the City anticipates incorporating into the Growth Policy in similar fashion.

The City’s adoption process will include review and recommendation by the joint Helena/Lewis and Clark County Planning Commission and then adoption by the Helena City Commission following a series of public hearings, consistent with the requirements of 76-1 Part 6 of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA).

1.5 Policy

The Growth Policy and Urban Renewal Plan establishes a policy framework within which this subarea plan operates. Appendix

B lists the relevant policies from each of those two documents, presenting the policy “sideboards” shaping this process and the plan’s recommendations. This plan does, however, offer new policy to augment what the City has already adopted, suggesting new initiatives reflecting this process and the more specific look into the dynamics of the Railroad District and a deliberate incorporation of the community’s ideas. Section 5 details this plan’s new objectives, formatted to be consistent with and adopted as part of the overarching Growth Policy.

1.6 Actions

Because Helena’s recent Growth Policy and the Railroad District’s Urban Renewal Plan provide such clear and appropriate policy guidance, this planning process was able to target specific policy adjustments and focus on implementation. Priority initiatives are:

1. Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and **form a business improvement district (BID)**.
2. Create **streetscape plan** and design to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor.
3. Implement **Montana Ave traffic calming** between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and install the RRFB for the Centennial Trail crossing of Montana Ave.
4. Confirm **Centennial Trail alignment** through the district, design it, and improve it.
5. **Update zoning throughout the subarea**, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, and Corridor District to encourage and facilitate mixed-use development.



2. Context

The 6th Ward neighborhood is rich in history, much of which dates back to Helena's founding. The small commercial district near the historic train depot played an important part in Helena's development, and the industrial and residential areas surrounding it – on both sides of the tracks – share in the district's legacy of rail, commerce, working-class family living, and connection to community. Appendix A presents a comprehensive statement of community condition, describing demographic, economic, transportation, land use contexts.

2.1 What Makes the Railroad District Special

The Railroad District is a historic neighborhood, important in the eyes of residents and those who appreciate Helena's establishment and evolution. The community members who participated in this process indicate they wish to see the district's historic charm return. Participants appreciate the specific elements which

speak to the district's past, and they have expressed desire to build on them to create a contemporary version of the 6th Ward which is every bit as vital and compelling as the place of the early 1900s. The historic elements establish a visual and cultural context, reminders of how long the district has been part of Helena.

Also generally known as the 6th Ward or Midtowne – the Railroad District remains a window into the community's railroad-based history. It includes a small commercial district at its core, an intimate relationship with the rail yard, an inventory of small workshops and warehouses, and a turn-of-the-century neighborhood plat pattern. The small clapboard and brick houses near the rail yard were built to serve those working the trains or the businesses supporting them. Though the past 100 years have brought US Highway 12 through the district, added schools, created the Montana Avenue commercial corridor, and seen road-based transportation supplant rail, much of the neighborhood's historic character remains.

There are several specific attributes which set this area of Helena apart from others.



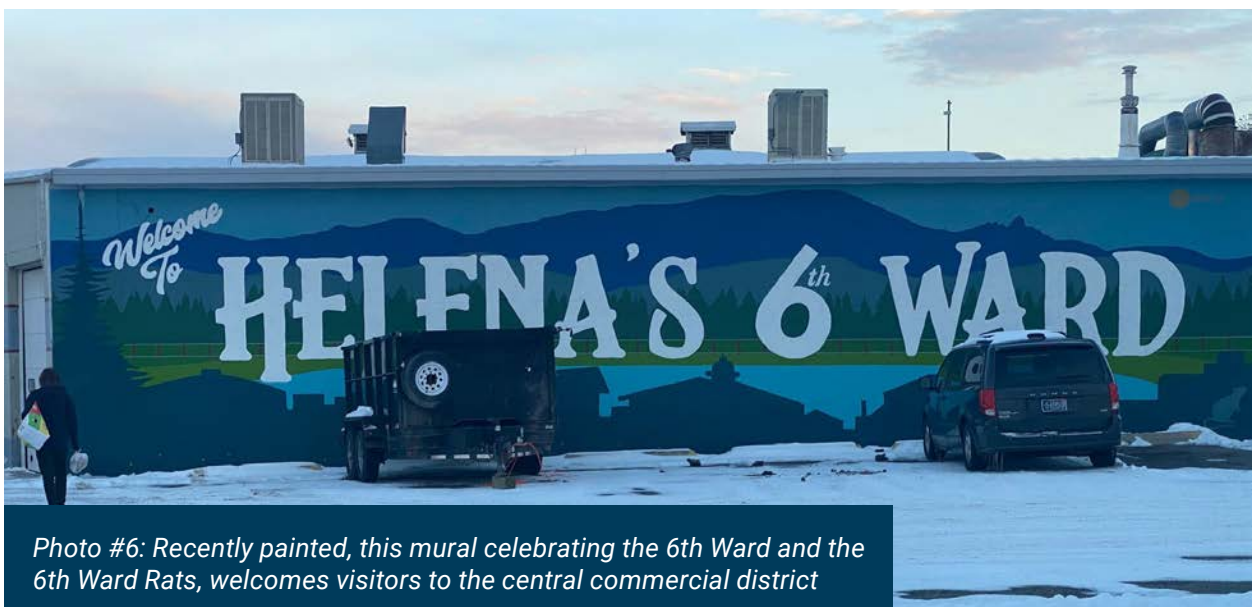
2.1.1 The Railyard

Covering more than 170 acres, the railyard is a large, busy, noisy presence in the neighborhood. It serves an important rail transportation function, splitting and moving freight trains over the grades to the east and west of town. The yard employs more than 100 workers and – according to participants in this plan – processes up to 18 trains per day.



2.1.2 The Business Core

The 6th Ward’s business district is more than 120 years old, initially developed to serve the railroad, its commerce, and its passengers. While the buildings and businesses have changed over the years, its historic scale and general character remain.



2.1.3 The Warehouses

The landscape south of the tracks and east of the commercial core is a mix of workshops, warehouses, storage, studios, and housing, reflecting a long history of adaptive use of the land near the district’s major transportation infrastructure.



Photo #7: Trades offices and small warehouses are popular in the eastern reach of the district, south of the tracks.

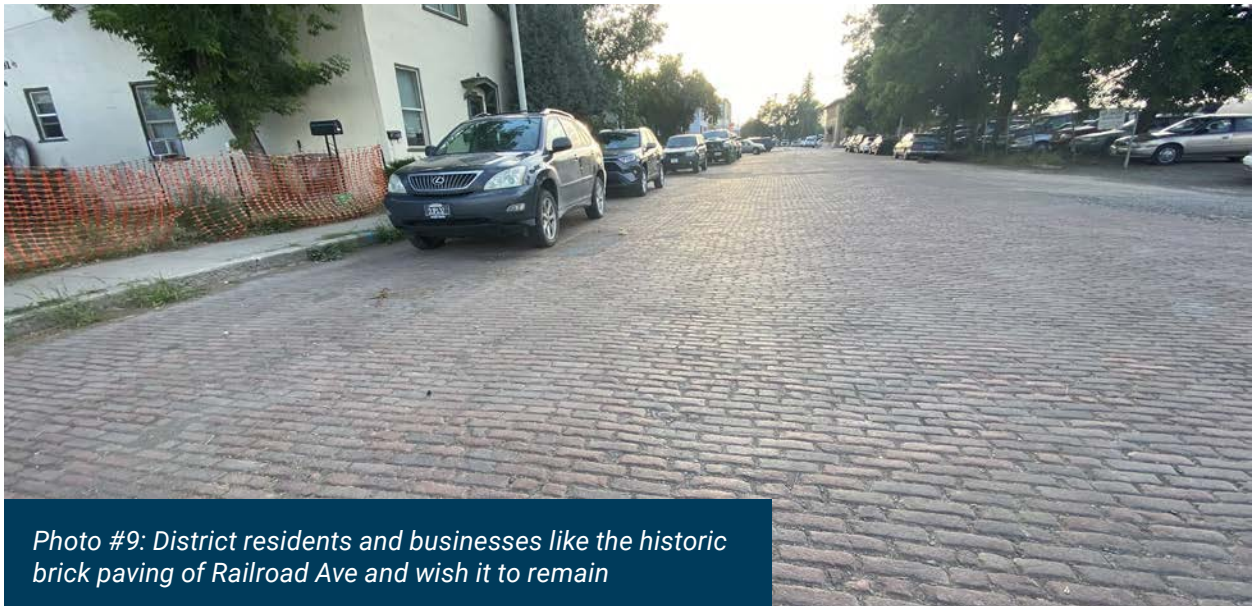
2.1.4 Helena Avenue

Once a trolley connection between the depot and downtown, the Helena Ave corridor now is an arterial street cutting at an angle through the city’s plats. Mt Helena is its “terminal view” to the west, and the historic depot sits at its eastern terminus, creating a unique urban design opportunity with opportunities for historic reference.



Photo #8: The historic rail depot lies at the eastern end of Helena Ave.





2.1.5 Railroad Avenue

Railroad Avenue, owned by the railroad, is a brick-paved street, cited by participants in this process as key to the district’s identity. Portions of it have been paved in asphalt, but much of the brick remains, particularly in front of the depot and some of the commercial core’s oldest storefronts.

2.1.6 The Residents

6th Ward residents report they like living in the neighborhoods. They appreciate its historic legacy, its modest housing on small lots, the family atmosphere, and the proximity to services, shopping, and work. Residents are a mix of Helena’s demographic, with people whose families have lived in the district for generations neighbors to newcomers, attracted to the district for a variety of reasons. While the population is mostly white at 84%, information from the American Community Survey indicates this is one of Helena’s most economically and socially diverse places. Residents say they feel part of this community, valuing the district’s local

businesses, churches, events, and schools.

2.1.7 The Businesspeople

Like the district’s residents, the local businesspeople indicate appreciation for the district’s uniqueness, historic character, and scale. The local businesses are drawn together as a community, embracing their image as an “underdog” district, where the railroad legacy creates an attitude blending individuality and community.

2.1.8 The Schools

Residents indicate a deep connection to the district’s schools and are engaged in student activities from elementary grades through high school. Bryant Elementary, Helena Middle School, and Helena High School are all within walking distance of the district’s neighborhoods, and, according to participant comments, the proximity enhances parental involvement in the schools’ educational, athletic, and social programs. Helena College also plays an important role, making advanced academic and vocational education accessible to neighborhood residents and employees.





Photo #10: Houses north of Lyndale Ave are generally older than those developed to the south, reflecting development for railroad and commercial district employees.

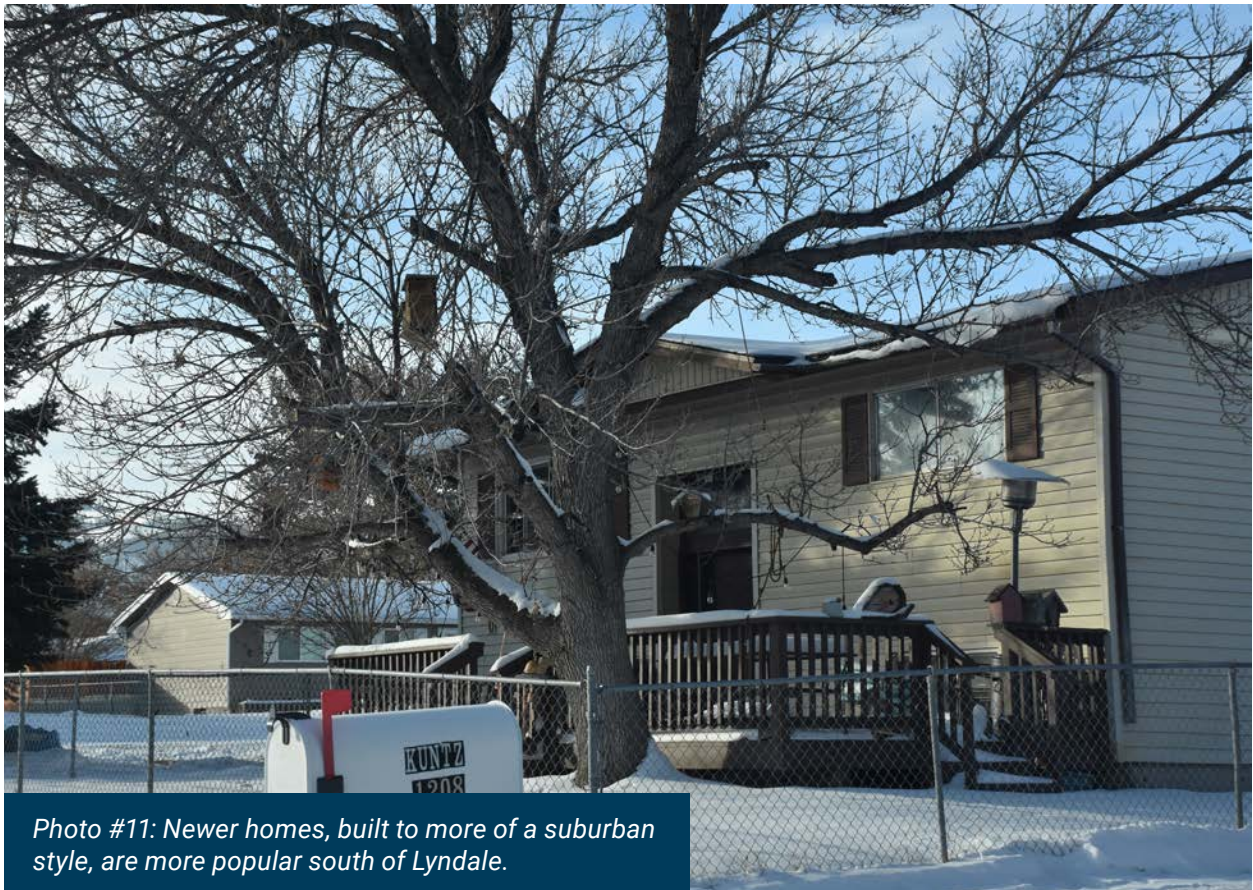


Photo #11: Newer homes, built to more of a suburban style, are more popular south of Lyndale.





Photo #12: Bryant Elementary School serves the entire Railroad District area, with students from both the north and south side of the tracks.





Photo #13: The Helena Middle School is located in the southwest portion of the planning area, near the alignment of the historic Helena Ave trolley line.





Photo #14: Helena College, affiliated with the University of Montana, is located adjacent to Helena High School and offers a range of college level and vocational courses of study

2.2 District History

The historic train depot was constructed in 1904, replacing the smaller original and creating a visual centerpiece for the commercial district surrounding it. By that time, the rail yard and the nearby residential areas had already been established to support Helena’s growing economy. Gold mined nearby and then exported via rail fueled the community’s growth, and the station at the center of the Railroad District was the focus of the movement of ore out, and the movement of goods – and people – in.

The rail station was linked to the city center by Helena Avenue and its trolley line, allowing people to travel easily between the commercial and industrial bustle near the train station and the community’s civic and cultural center to the west. The Railroad District evolved to serve the needs of freight

movement, with housing nearby to house rail workers of all levels and a commercial district responding to the needs of those workers and others with business near the depot. It was a contrast to the more wealthy, Victorian character of the development nearer the city’s center, but it was busy and a critical part of early Helena’s prosperity.

As the region’s resource-based economy changed, freight movement shifted to favor truck over rail, and passenger rail service ended, the district’s core economic activity declined. US Highway 12 worked east-west through the district, accommodating vehicle travel, and commercial development moved to line the highway corridor in response. The district gradually transformed, retaining its historic neighborhood subdivision pattern and commercial building stock but adapting to the new economic, functional, and social context emerging around it. In some cases, this led to disinvestment, vacancy, and poverty.





Photo #15: The original train depot was replaced in 1907 to serve growing rail demand.

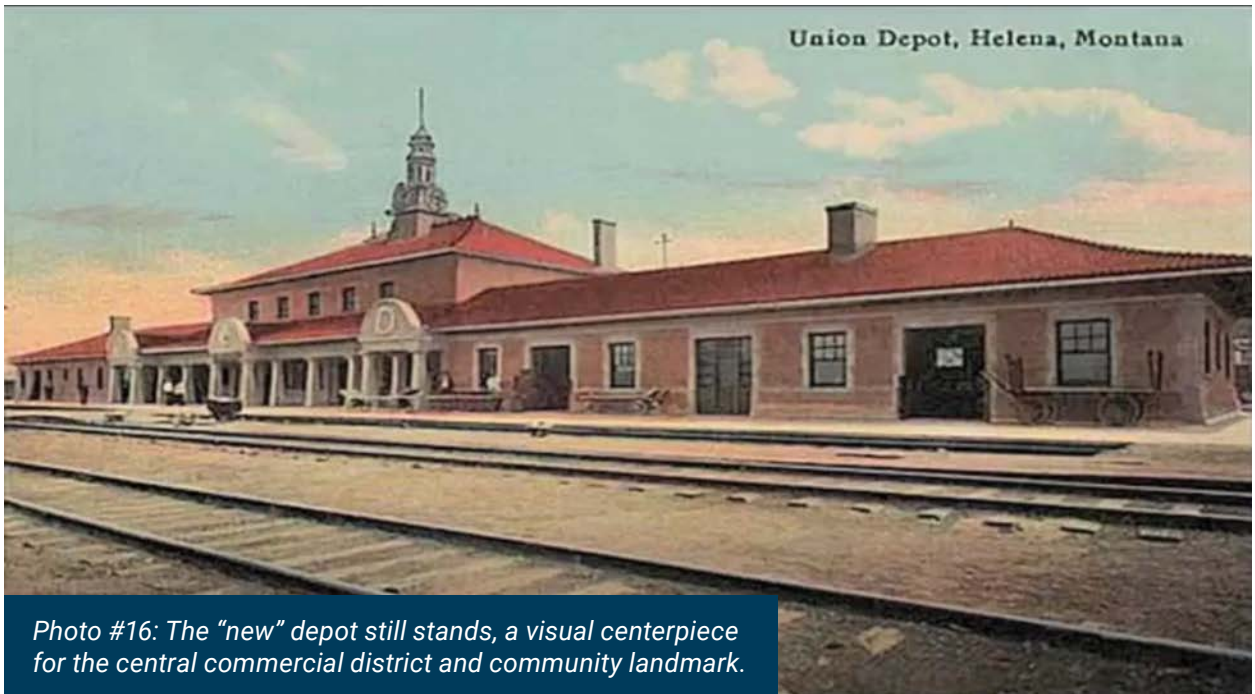


Photo #16: The "new" depot still stands, a visual centerpiece for the central commercial district and community landmark.

Local non-profits, professional offices, and tradespeople are also in the district, comprising a mix of businesses representing the mix in the larger metro area and underscoring the economic diversity embedded in this relatively small space.

2.3.1 Montana Ave Corridor

The North Montana Ave corridor runs north-south, with the segment between 11th Ave and Lyndale Ave serving as a portion of US Highway 12. Businesses along the corridor generally orient to the corridor, serving customers who travel by auto. Restaurants, auto repair, warehousing, transportation, and light manufacturing businesses proliferate here, where convenient access to a busy arterial provide specific advantages.

2.3.2 Central Businesses

The cluster of activities in the district near the depot do not rely on direct highway access and include dining, professional office, service commercial, entertainment, and institutional operations. These tenants generally occupy traditional storefronts

or small-scale stand-alone structures, relying on on-street parking and sometimes benefiting from the proximity of other businesses or services nearby.

2.3.3 Warehousing & Rail

Located to the east of the central business district and south of the rail line, the warehousing district features light manufacturing, warehousing, trades offices, and artist studios intermixed with residential uses. These operations often rely on access to storage for vehicles or goods and the ability for those around them to tolerate noise, early morning operations, or outdoor equipment storage.

In general, the vacancy rates and trends by sector in the Railroad District appear to reflect what the rest of Helena is experiencing, with fluctuations in retail occupancy, warehousing, and light manufacturing on par with the rest of the City's business environment. Participants in this process, however, indicate increasing demand for storefront space in the central business area as the district's image as an inviting place for small-business startups is growing.

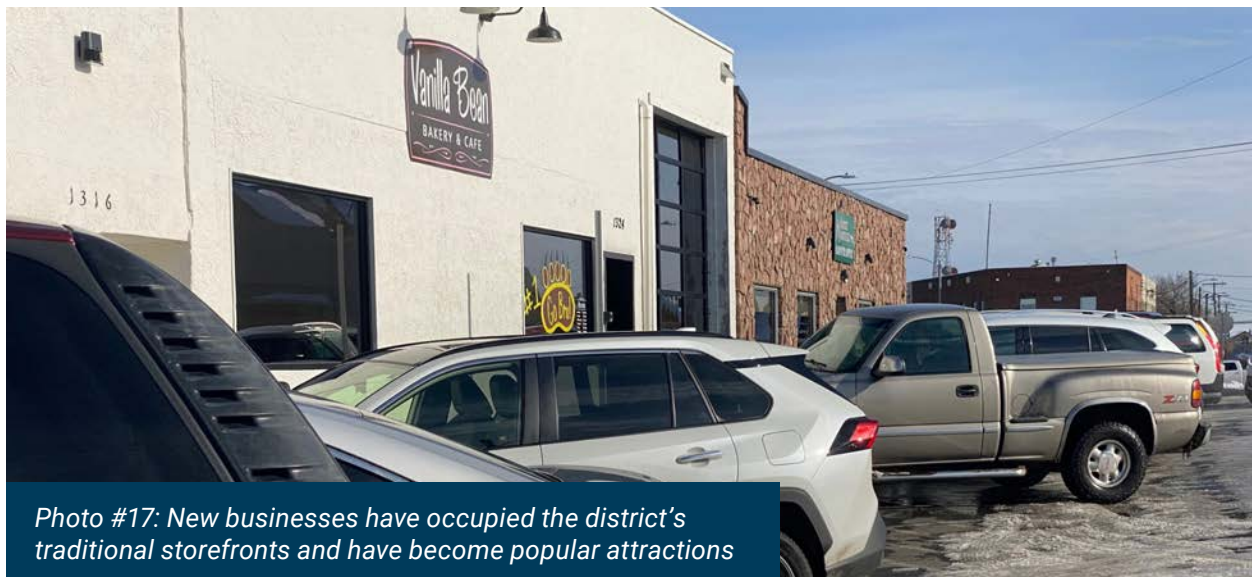


Photo #17: New businesses have occupied the district's traditional storefronts and have become popular attractions





Photo #18: Historic uses also remain in the central commercial district, enjoying a type of cult status and appreciation.





Photo #19: New uses are also adapting to disused warehouse space, bringing new activities to old places.

From 2010 to 2017, Helena’s retail trade industry declined by more than 20%. These declining trends in the retail industry appear to be reflected in the saturation of available office and retail spaces for lease (Appendix A). This is a relatively high inventory for Helena, possibly due in part to trends of allowing work-from-home and the rise of e-commerce in response to the Covid pandemic. This may mean retail and office spaces are less in demand, but it also may indicate increased availability of cheaper office or storefront space for business startups. In the Railroad District, this dynamic appears to be playing out.

Helena’s warehousing sector is changing, too. Recent trends indicate both a rise in Helena’s “wholesale trade” employment and a balancing decrease in “transportation, warehousing, and utilities” employment. This suggests existing warehousing space is being repurposed to serve the growing “wholesale trade” sector. It may be a source for new opportunities in the 6th Ward’s own warehousing district, repurposing or intensifying the use of warehouse space near the rail line.

The diversity of business types in the district presents opportunities and challenges. Increased diversity may make the business environment more resilient to changes in any one sector, with some businesses possibly prospering while others struggle. It can present challenges, though, in requiring a more adaptive and generalized policy approach, with investment or business development strategies capable of reflecting the diversity and distributing benefits equitably.

2.4 Housing

The Railroad District has a mix of residential housing types, with single-family units predominating. Many of the single-family units, particularly in the northern neighborhood, are modest and sited on relatively small parcels, consistent with the railroad worker housing style of the early 1900s. Based on a 2022 housing inventory, approximately 4% of the residential land in the Railroad District was developed with units determined to be in poor or worse condition.



2.4.1 Population and Growth in Helena

The City of Helena relies on population data provided by the U. S. Bureau of the Census and Montana State’s Department of Commerce. The Department of Commerce prepares the population forecasts for cities and counties to use in Comprehensive Planning. Lewis and Clark County's population reached 70,973 full-time residents in 2020, reflecting an increase of more than 7,578 since 2010. About 3,900 people or 10.6 percent of this growth, occurred in the City of Helena.

From 2010 to 2024, Helena grew at an average annual growth rate of approximately 1.9 percent. Lewis and Clark County grew at a rate of approximately 1.5 percent, and the state of Montana grew at a rate of approximately 1.1 percent. The Montana

Department of Commerce forecasts Helena to grow to 58,214 by the year 2045. If the Railroad District continues to house approximately 10 percent of Helena’s residents, then the district will grow to a population of approximately 5,821.

2.4.2 Railroad District Demographics

The railroad district constitutes a portion of the City of Helena, with 3,495 residents in 2022. There are approximately 1,735 households in the district, with a median annual household income of \$46,232. Of those residents, the median age is 37.7 years old, with 16.2% holding a bachelor’s degree or higher. The number of housing units is almost equally split between the neighborhoods on either side of the tracks.

Table 2: Lewis and Clark County and Helena Population Projections (2024-2045)

	2010	2024	Population Increase	Percent Increase (2010-2024)	2045 Projection
State of Montana	989,415	1,142,746	153,331	15.5%	1,373,587
Lewis and Clark County	63,395	76,490	13,095	20.6%	123,056
City of Helena	28,190	35,540	7,350	26.1%	58,214

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Montana Department of Commerce



2.4.3 Housing Type

City of Helena had 15,032 housing units in 2022 according to the American Community Survey, Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units. About 8,413 of these homes or about 56 percent of all housing units in the city of Helena are owner-occupied. In the Railroad District, approximately 34% of the units are owner occupied, with renters occupying 61% of the district's housing units, and approximately 5% are vacant

Table 3 and Figure 7 on the following page summarize the types of housing in the city of Helena in 2022. Table 3 also identifies owner-occupied and rental housing for the occupied units in the city of Helena.

Structure Type	Occupied Housing		Owner-Occupied Housing		Renter- Occupied Housing	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Total Occupied Housing Units	15,032	100%	8,413	100%	6,619	100%
1-detached	8,276	55%	7,090	84%	1,186	18%
1-attached	1,033	7%	529	6%	504	8%
2 apartments	976	6%	77	1%	899	14%
3-4 apartment	1,864	12%	244	3%	1,620	24%
5-9 apartments	743	5%	76	1%	667	10%
10+ apartments	1,689	11%	60	1%	1,629	25%
Mobile Home/Other	451	3%	337	4%	114	2%

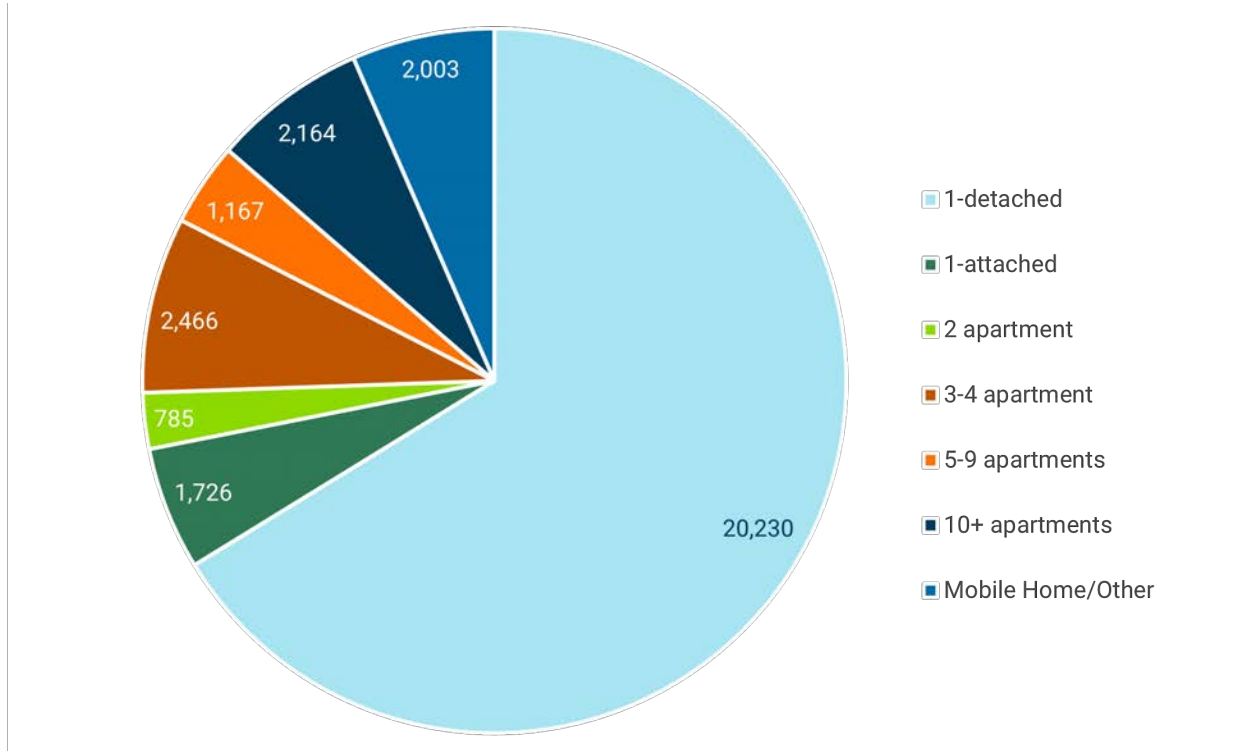
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Montana Department of Commerce

2.4.4 Housing Age and Condition

Most of the houses in the heart of the Railroad District were constructed before or shortly after 1900, with homes in the southern portion of the district generally newer, larger, and in better condition. The condition of most of the older houses is considered average with just a few being considered poor or very poor. The houses in the northern portion of the 6th Ward were also mainly constructed near the turn-of-the-century. The condition of most of these houses is also considered average with some homes considered poor or very poor. The maps here illustrate those properties with poor or very poor housing condition, scattered across the entirety of the planning area but concentrated near the center and in the north.

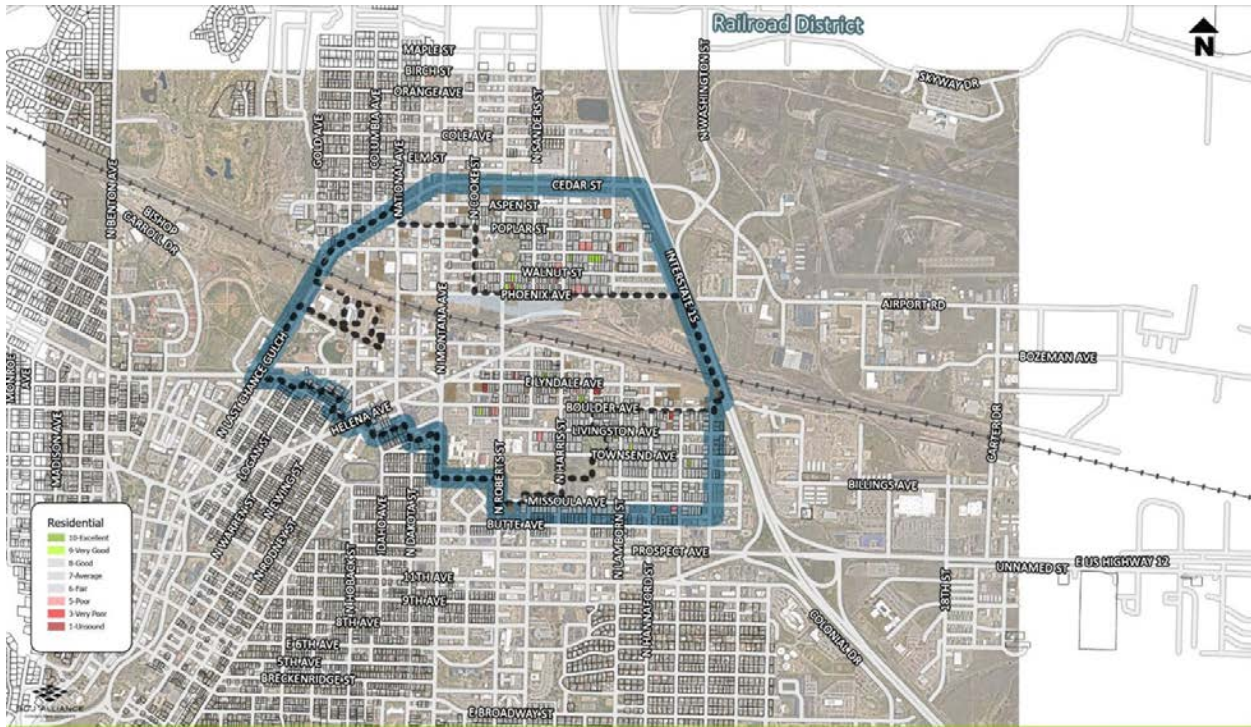


Figure 7: 2022 City of Helena Housing Types



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022: ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables

Figure 8: Map of Housing Condition



2.4.5 Affordability in the Railroad District

A median-income earning household (\$46,232 in 2022) in the Railroad District could afford to purchase a \$175,000 home, based on dedicating no more than 30% of gross income to cover a mortgage and related expenses. Even though the district's housing stock is generally older, the \$270,690 median home value exceeds a household's ability to afford it by almost 55 percent.

Households renting their housing pay a median rent of \$810. This is closer to the affordability limit, but the relatively high rent makes it a challenge for those householders to enter the homeownership market.

Attempts to increase housing affordability here will likely need to concentrate on producing units below median value and with rents below the current median rent. This may be difficult to do under market conditions given current construction costs and existing zoning density limitations.

2.5 Access, Circulation, & Parking

The railroad spawned the 6th Ward's development, bringing economic vitality to the district and transforming this part of Helena to serve the railroad's needs. As transportation technology evolved and the railroad's importance diminished, the community had to adapt to new transportation investments and the social, economic, and development changes which came with them. While the railroad remains a significant physical and operational element in the district, US Highway 12, and Helena's arterial streets influence the district's function and character, as well.

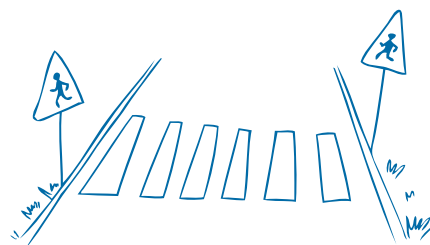
The Railroad District is located at a regional mobility hub. East-west vehicular traffic on US 12 works its way through the district along North Montana Avenue and Lyndale Avenue, making a right-angle turn at the intersection with Helena Avenue. North Montana Avenue continues north from intersection with Lyndale and Helena to access the growing Helena Valley, interrupted by its at-grade crossing of the BNR railroad tracks. This context of a busy US highway, regional arterials, and a railroad creates a set of constraints and considerations to which transportation and land use planning in the district must adapt.

2.5.1 Roadways

Helena's roadways are governed by city, county, and state entities. Helena's Transportation Systems department works in close conjunction with the county and state. Currently, two plans are acting as guiding documents:

- ◆ *Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan – 2014 Update*
- ◆ *City of Helena Multimodal Traffic Study Five-Point Intersection & Corridor Connection*

Traffic volumes, speeds, and roadway geometries inhibit pedestrian and cyclist use of the arterial corridors. The priority is to accommodate regional traffic flow, consistent with the highway and arterial designations these roadways possess. The result, however, is a disconnection between the Railroad District and the rest of Helena, where US 12 and North Montana Ave effectively separate the district from the residential neighborhoods to the west.



The design of the five-point intersection at North Montana, Lyndale, and Helena further restricts access to the district from the west, requiring those wishing to enter the district to do so via Helena Ave and not from Lyndale Ave. The City commissioned a detailed study of its five-point intersections, one of which is this intersection. The study also examined non-motorized transportation within the same area, making recommendations for the Centennial Trail and its approach to an intersection with North Montana Ave. The study examines roadway and trail geometry, crash histories, physical constraints, and multimodal needs, making recommendations to satisfy regional mobility needs and increase pedestrian and cyclist safety.

The recommendations include a new roundabout at the North Montana, Lyndale, and Helena intersection, a grade-separated railroad crossing with North Montana going below the rail lines, and an at-grade Centennial Trail crossing at North Montana, controlled by a pedestrian-activated beacon

or crossing signal. The study makes several other recommendations to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety at crossings along Helena Ave. A full summary of the study's recommendations is provided in Appendix C.

While the study offers a detailed examination of the various proposed improvements, the combination of a roundabout at Montana/Lyndale/Helena, a Centennial Trail crossing, and a grade-separated railroad crossing create conflicts not easily reconciled. There is too little horizontal distance to accommodate all three improvements with the grading the railroad crossing requires. And a grade-separated rail crossing would eliminate access to North Montana from Bozeman St, Argyle St, and Phoenix Ave, implications the Five Points study did not fully explore.

There are other roadway-related transportation issues influencing this area, too, not mentioned in the Five Points Study. They are noted below and expanded upon in the following section on "issues."

Figure 9: Railroad District Transportation Corridors and Traffic Volumes

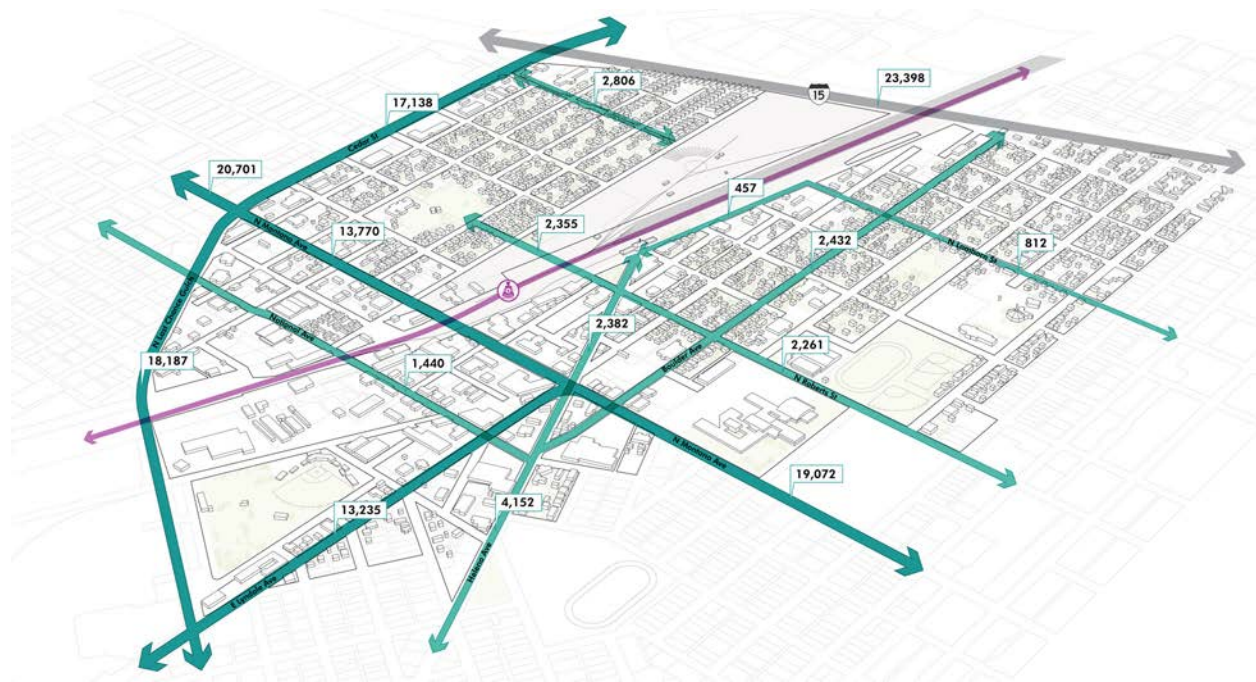




Photo #20: Neighborhood residents and business owners strongly believe the at-grade crossing should remain.

Roberts Street Crossing

This at-grade railroad crossing is critical to district residents, connecting northern neighborhoods to the commercial core and the schools and parks south of the tracks. Retaining the crossing – while not necessarily the railroad’s preference – allows district residents to access local businesses and services without relying on North Montana Ave, an important element to reinforce the local lifestyle residents cherish and to alleviate traffic congestion on North Montana Ave.

Boulder Avenue Access

The left turning movement from southbound North Montana Ave to eastbound Boulder Ave is used by school buses and others wishing to access the district from the north. Because of this intersection’s proximity to North Montana Avenue’s intersection with Lyndale Ave, the dedicated left turn lane can accommodate only three vehicles.

This causes congestion on southbound North Montana Ave as the left turn queue fills up and waiting vehicles spill into the southbound travel lane.

Railroad Avenue Ownership

One of the district’s more defining elements is the brick paving on Railroad Ave. This street also provides access to several local businesses with storefronts and on-street parking on Railroad Ave. The street, however, is not a public right of way. The railroad owns Railroad Ave and has control over its maintenance and its continued use as a street.

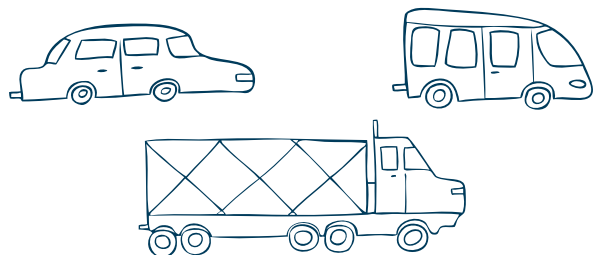




Photo #21: The Centennial Trail now terminates near Kendrick Field in the district's northwest. It begins again near I-15, running toward East Helena.



2.5.2 Rail

Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway has acquired Montana Rail Link Trainmaster and owns the railyard and operating rail line rights as a result. The rail now serves only freight traffic traveling through the region. Helena’s rail yard is considered a “helper” station, where longer freight trains are separated into smaller sections for easier movement over mountain passes both east and west of Helena. The yard – once a critical component of the local economy – now facilitates regional freight movement, and much of the space within it has fallen into disuse.

Passenger rail service to Montana ended in 1979, though there has been recent activity to consider reviving passenger service linking Billings, Bozeman, Helena, and Missoula.

2.5.3 Trails

The City of Helena’s Centennial Trail enters the Railroad District from the west and terminates before reaching North Montana Ave. It then reappears on the east end of the district along Boulder Ave to continue under the I-15 underpass and continue to East Helena. The Centennial Trail Master Plan calls for the trail to be continuous, but this will depend on reaching and then crossing North Montana Ave and then determining an alignment through the rest of the Railroad

District. The trail is limited to non-motorized use and follows a former rail right of way to the point where the right of way was deeded to adjoining property owners at National Ave.

2.6 Zoning Assessment

Helena’s zoning ordinance and zoning map apply land use and dimensional standards by zoning district throughout the city. The designations applied in the Railroad District are much like those found elsewhere in the city, with a variety of residential, commercial, and institutional district designations. This means land use development here is regulated much the same way as it is in other neighborhoods, even though the district’s history and existing development condition are different than what is found elsewhere in Helena.

This results in a sense of misalignment between what zoning permits, what now exists, and what subarea residents, institutions, and businesses appear to want. Each zoning district in the subarea now misses the mark to some degree when compared to the Growth Policy’s objectives (to both retain the district’s character and to facilitate new investment in a compact, neighborhood center type) or the Urban Renewal Plan’s objectives (to mix a wider variety of uses in the district’s commercial core).

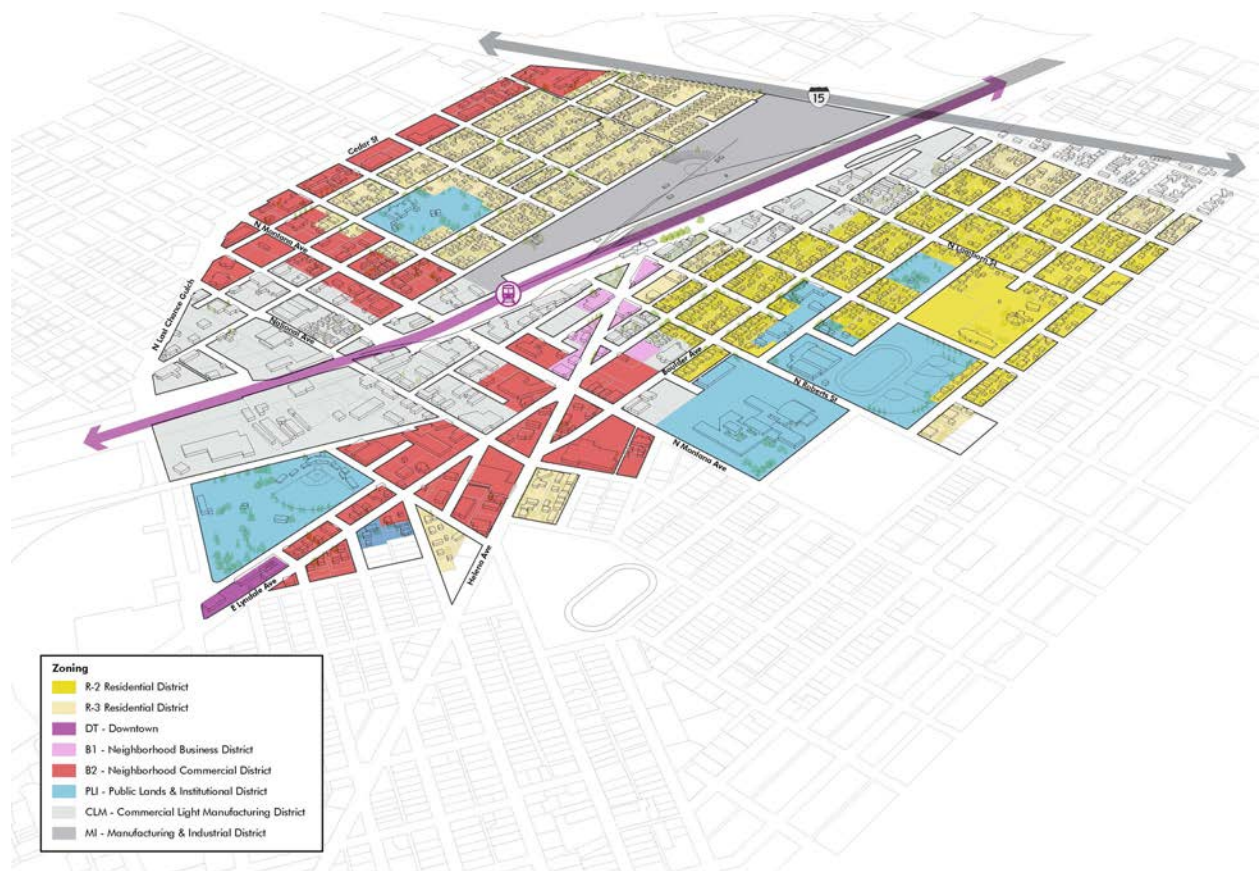


Existing zoning in the R-2 and R-3 districts require setbacks which are too large to permit construction on the area’s narrow lots. The CLM district fails to permit residential uses near the small commercial core where the opportunity to do so would help implement City policy. The code also mandates off-street parking where it may not be warranted, particularly where on-street parking in the retail core may be abundant. Zoning also applies an overlay district (R-3/T-25) with standards difficult to decipher. Nonconforming structures proliferate in all zoning districts, limiting ability to reconstruct or reinvest. And existing standards limit the ability of new development to target residential or business needs City policy

calls for. Seeking remedies through variances or conditional use permits is not an effective solution, discouraging development at any scale.

The individual zoning districts and their potential disconnect from 6th Ward application are described in the plan’s land use recommendations and in Appendix E as part of a more detailed zoning critique. Plan implementation focuses on the Depot District, the Trades District and the arterial corridors. It introduces new districts tailored to the Railroad District’s unique needs, encouraging the type of compact, diverse, and identity-rich development 6th Ward residents and business owners desire.

Figure 10: Existing Zoning



3. Public Engagement

Inclusive, responsive, transparent, and meaningful public engagement is fundamental to any planning process, and it is essential when developing a plan for as distinct an area as the Railroad District. The district's residents, businesspeople, and service providers are eager to see their neighborhoods succeed, and they have insight into this area which shapes the plan and expectations which will determine this plan's success.

The engagement program sought to involve the community in a variety of ways and to work with community members to identify issues the plan must address, consider alternative courses of action, and determine specific priorities for action to set the plan in motion. It began with a set of orientation interviews and concluded with a celebratory roll-out meeting, with touchpoints in between.

3.1 Introductory Meetings

Individuals representing a variety of perspectives participated in the orientation interviews conducted at Helena College from November 14 through 16, 2022. The interviewees were subarea residents, business owners, employees at various local institutions, and agency partners. They joined the consultant to offer an introduction to this part of Helena, speaking

to their own relationships to the space, their understanding of the area's history, the dynamics influencing the neighborhoods, the folks the process must involve, and what might make this project most successful. These meetings allowed individuals to speak freely, absent the pressure of a public meeting or disagreement to openly discuss their hopes, concerns, and aspirations.

3.1.1 Topics

The interviews over the three days generated comprehensive conversations about the 6th Ward and the topics this plan may need to address. Participants raised at least 65 topics in these early conversations associated with neighborhood character, the economy, transportation, housing, or local institutions. Expectedly, many topics relate to more than one of these five overarching considerations. Appendix D provides a detailed summary of the topics raised and how each one relates to the plan's subject areas.

3.2 Storefront Studio

Conducted March 20 – 27, 2023 in the NAMI conference room, the storefront studio invited community members to drop in, speak with the consultant team, and consider three alternative visions for the district's future.



3.2.1 Scenarios

The studio presented three alternative visions for the 6th Ward, offering three different sets of priorities to guide the plan’s direction and implementation. They were intended to highlight community desires voiced in the orientation interviews and in preceding policy work, asking participants to wrestle with and reconcile the tradeoffs each scenario presented. Each of the three scenarios presented a vision for the district everyone could support, but the community’s resources to achieve all of what the three scenarios promise are limited.

Conversations with community members helped to tease out how one scenario differed from the others, illustrating how the set of priorities embedded in one might make satisfying the priorities embedded in the others more difficult. For instance, investing in making regional mobility faster and more efficient might make it more difficult to satisfy desires for pedestrian crossing of Montana Ave or encouraging the uniqueness and access to the district’s commercial core.

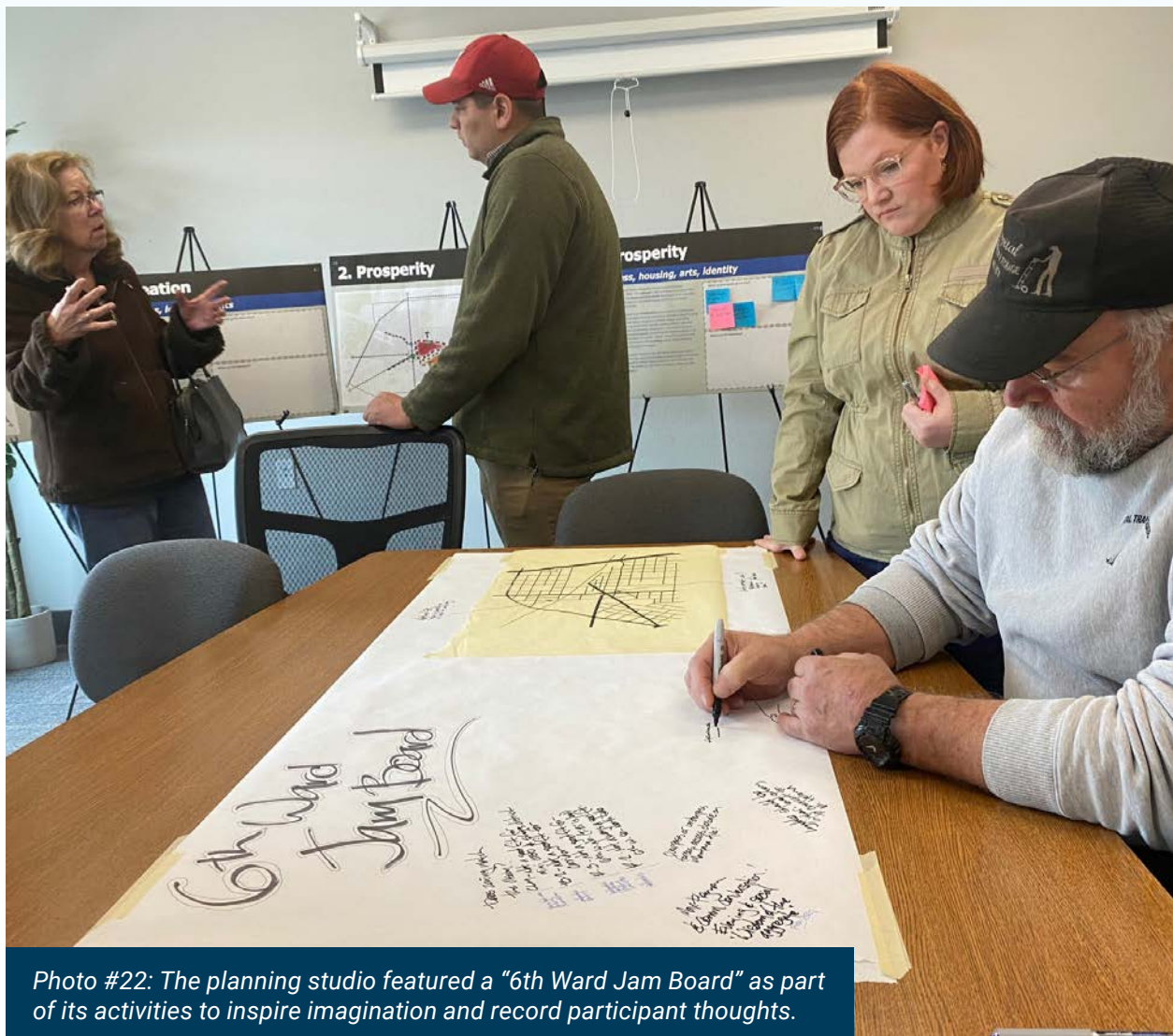


Photo #22: The planning studio featured a “6th Ward Jam Board” as part of its activities to inspire imagination and record participant thoughts.

Recreation Emphasis

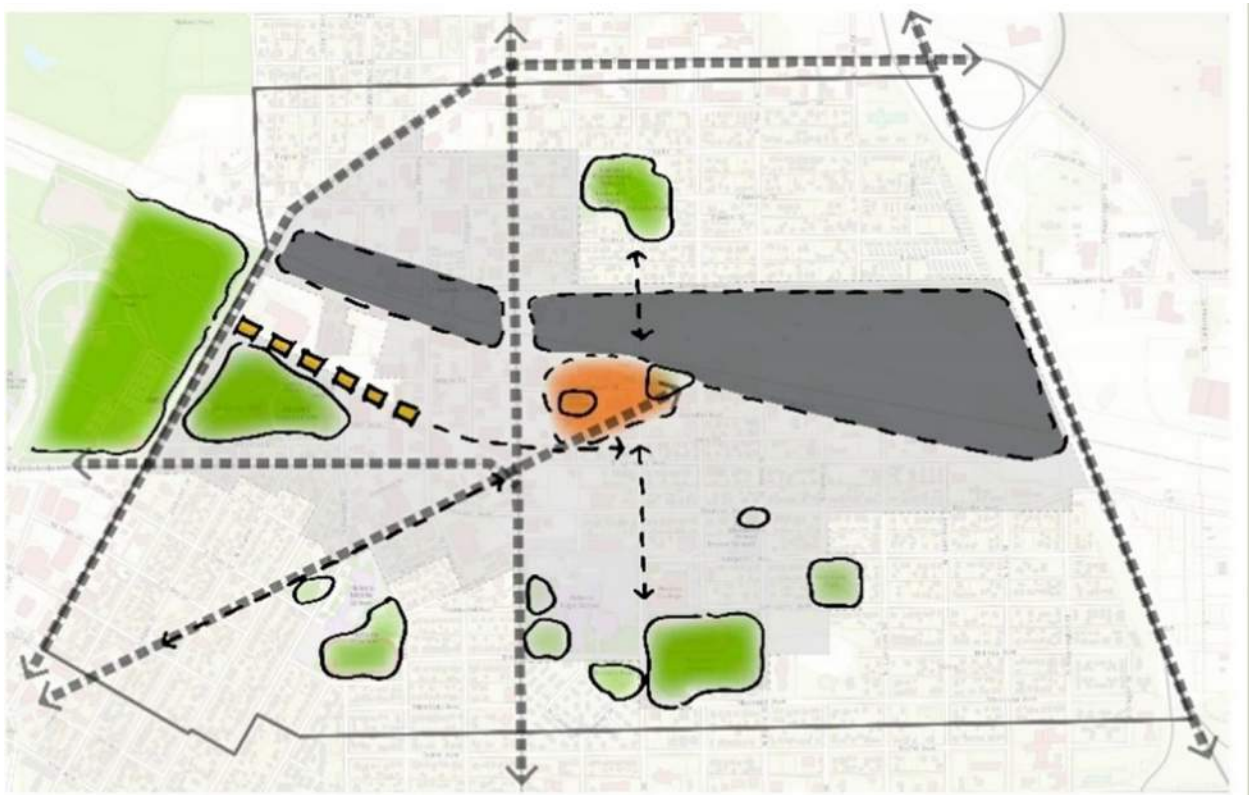
Helena's 6th Ward has 11 community parks, seven community churches, six recreational businesses, and four educational institutions. There are various local businesses located here, too.

This scenario emphasizes connections to parks and creates a family-friendly atmosphere with public events supporting local festivals, concerts, and other outdoor activities. Community-sponsored events encourage more connection to existing recreational activities. The

existing community institutions - such as churches, local businesses, and educational institutions - catalyze and sponsor neighborhood events, establishing and nurturing community pride.

Scenario 1 seeks collaborative neighborhood inclusion, possibly involving neighborhood art projects, public art, and increased community engagement in the district's schools. Community-sponsored events and entertainment may be key to bringing the community together, generating a shared sense of identity and commitment to all of the 6th Ward's neighborhoods.

Figure 11: Scenario #1 - Recreation Emphasis



Prosperity Emphasis

The railroad's 1880 arrival put Helena on the map, and the link between the depot and downtown developed as an essential corridor connecting the commercial and warehousing district to the town's commercial and institutional center.

This scenario supports the continued revitalization of the district's commercial core, emphasizing new housing adjacent to it and fueling interest in the emerging Trades District. 6th Ward businesses range from artisan shops, consulting services, food markets, financial institutions,

hotels, medical offices, personal services, restaurants, recreational activities, retail stores, and vehicle services. Strategies in this scenario will spur civic programming events, welcoming 6th Ward residents and outside visitors to support and grow economic vitality. Part of the commercial district's draw is its history, expressed in the buildings that remain and the railyard culture that defined the place's origins.

This scenario brings back economic vitality to the 6th Ward, but it is reshaped to reflect today's economy and to honor the scale, uniqueness, and flavor for which the 6th Ward is known.

Figure 12: Scenario #2 - Prosperity Emphasis

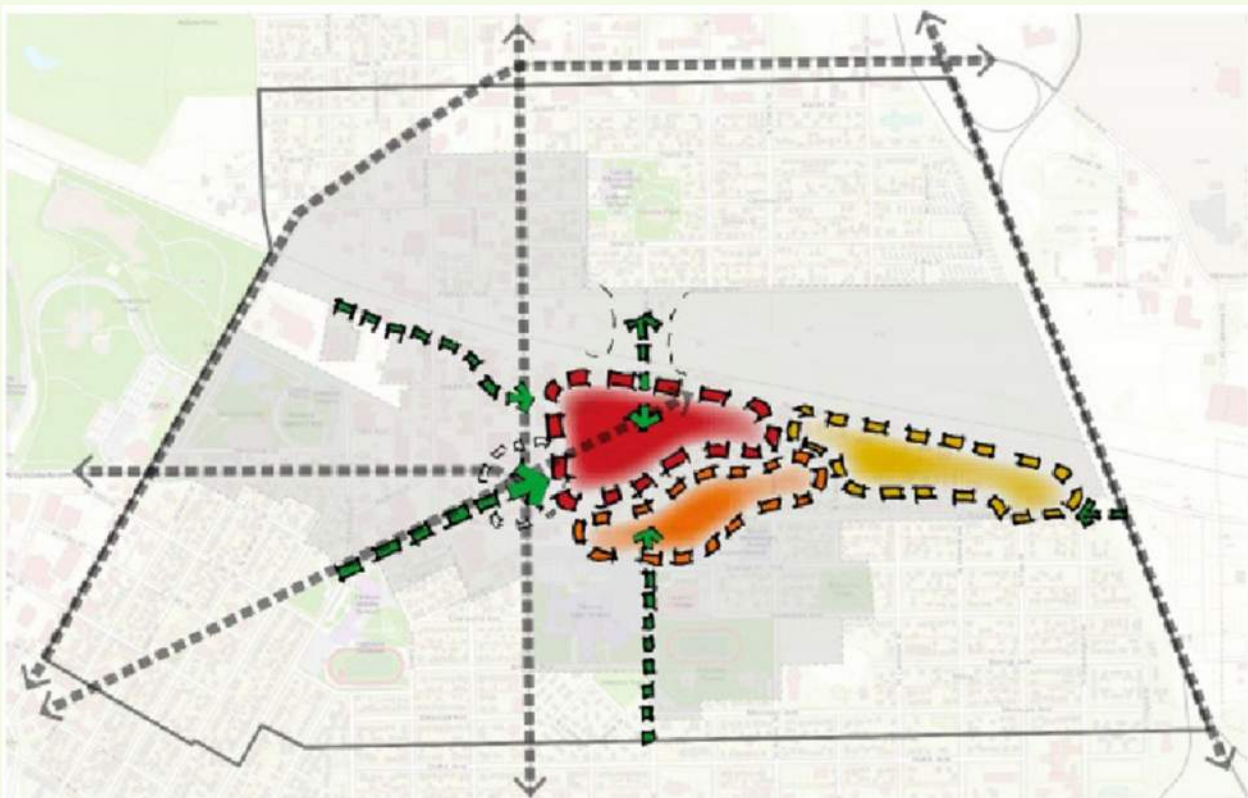
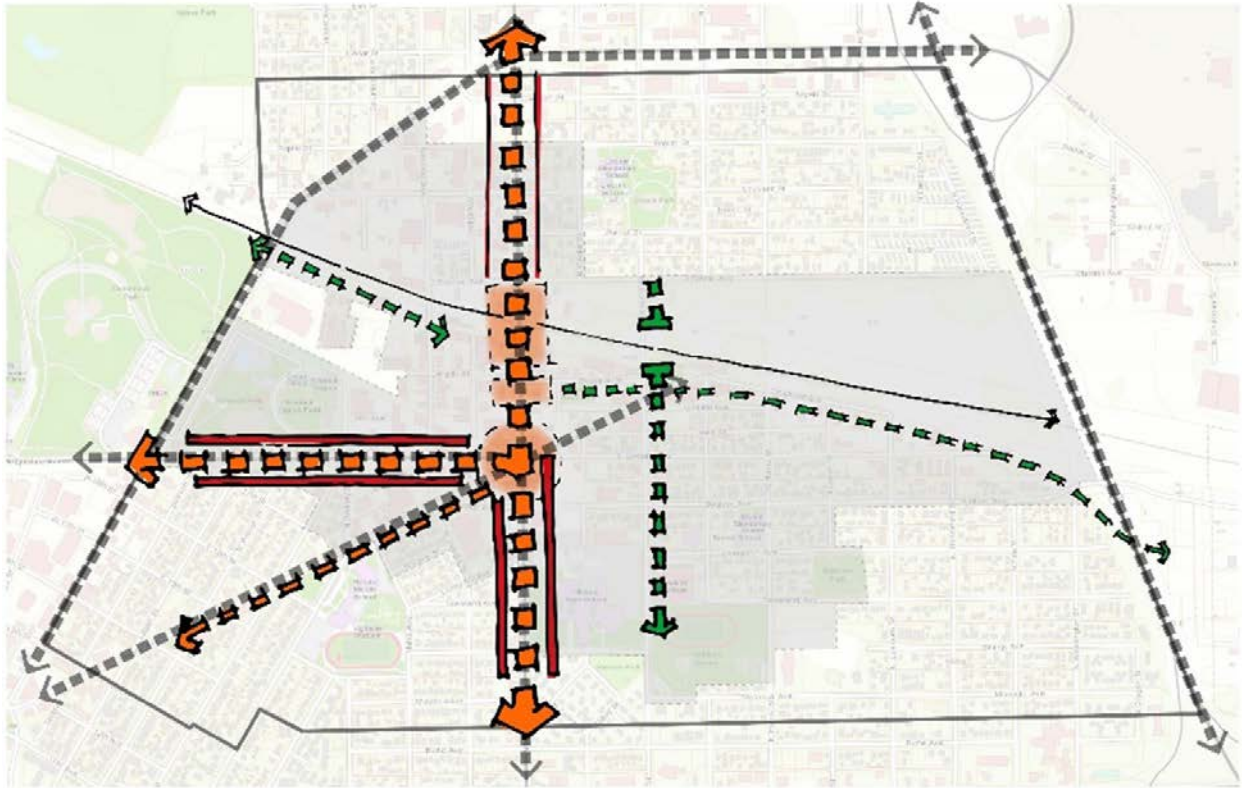


Figure 13: Scenario #3 - Mobility Emphasis



Mobility Emphasis

Navigating the 6th Ward on foot or by bike can be challenging. The transportation priority has been on moving freight and autos, with the railroad and US Highway 12 both transiting the district.

Helena commissioned a study on its five-point intersections a few years ago, with recommendations largely incorporated in this scenario. The big-ticket items of an underpass at the railroad and a roundabout at Malfunction Junction lead the list, with the emphasis continuing to be on efficiency, smoothness, and capacity for freight and autos. Some improvements address walking and biking, but they adapt to the roadway nature of the transportation network, with crossings at established intersections and non-motorized corridors generally following roads and tracks. The roadway underpass

would also require railroad participation, and that may cause the Roberts St. crossing to close.

An emphasis on mobility will also likely further limit access to properties adjoining US 12 and Montana Ave and may further reduce access to Boulder Ave. This will reshape the character of development along the roadways, pushing buildings further back and focusing access to a limited number of driveways or street intersections.

After reviewing the scenarios and discussing the premises and implications of each, participants noted what they liked and what might need to be improved upon for each one, resulting in a rich array of comments on the scenarios. Appendix D captures comments for each scenario and indicates where the comment may apply to more than just the scenario where it appeared.

Participants posted 72 comments across the three scenarios, emphasizing the importance of several broadly held priorities:

- ◆ **The trolley’s history is important**, perhaps important enough for it to be reinstated in some way or honored in urban design treatments.
- ◆ There is a need for a **historic reference in the center of the district**, possibly a square or plaza, to celebrate the historic context.
- ◆ **Sidewalks** are a public good and should be installed in the district to facilitate safe pedestrian travel for all.
- ◆ The **brick surface of Railroad Avenue should be retained**, even if it means coordinating with the railroad to keep it that way.
- ◆ Increasing the number of available, **affordable housing units near the commercial center** is essential.
- ◆ **Malfunction Junction needs to be fixed**, either through a roundabout or other treatment to improve access to the district.
- ◆ Increasing the amount of **available parking on street** will help retail tenants

prosper – as will having storefront employees parking elsewhere.

- ◆ The **Roberts St rail crossing must remain open**, providing a convenient link for area residents and a necessary one for district school kids who live in the northern area of the district.
- ◆ It is essential to **connect the Centennial Trail through the district**.
- ◆ **Facilities for bikes and pedestrians need improvement**, particularly to cross North Montana Ave and to access the district’s schools and parks.

3.2.2 Ward Jam Board

Studio visitors could also raise issues they believe important to the district, defining its identity, addressing persistent challenges, or taking advantage of opportunities just now beginning to materialize. The “Jam Board” tabletop worksheet invited a range of comments and suggestions, evolving during the studio’s course to reflect participant conversations and ideas. A detailed listing and analysis of public comments is provided in Appendix D.

Figure 14: 6th Ward Jam Board



The preferred scenario references these conversations and comments, resulting in a “mash-up” of the three scenarios and presenting a unified direction. The district’s spatial vision reflects this unified direction, as do the policy recommendations incorporated in the plan. The hybrid of the three scenarios also reconciles what might be conflicting priorities, reflecting on the studio’s discussions, existing City policy, and the urban renewal plan to produce clarity in the implementation strategy.

The plan’s direction emerges from responses to several key topics and issues. Several themes recurred in conversation, the Jam Board, and responses to the three scenarios, listed in Appendix D, and summarized here.

- ◆ **Safe pedestrian crossing Montana Ave and Lyndale Ave.**
- ◆ **Maintaining the Roberts St rail crossing**
- ◆ **Historic importance** of district
- ◆ **Rebuilding trust and connection with City**
- ◆ **Infrastructure investment** to stimulate development
- ◆ **Potential for passenger rail**
- ◆ **Need for additional public amenities** in the district

3.3 Rollout

To be completed after the community rollout meeting.

3.4 Ongoing Conversation - Commitment to Keep Listening

Helena intends to treat this plan as a living document, maintaining conversation with Railroad District residents, businesses, and institutions to ensure the plan’s objectives and initiatives are being implemented. While the plan-creation process ended at adoption, the plan implementation has just begun.



4. Vision

Existing Growth Policy objectives, policy direction incorporated in the Urban Renewal Plan, community engagement in this process, and analysis of the subarea's conditions revealed a general agreement for what the Railroad District's vision should be. The vision should:

- ◆ **Promote and honor the district's past**, using its history as a keystone in the district's identity and a unique advantage to help its businesses prosper.
- ◆ **Spur investment in the district's transportation network**, with strategic investments to smooth traffic flow where smoothness is sought, to enhance district access, and to increase safety and comfort for those walking or rolling.
- ◆ **Forecast new housing construction**, welcoming new residents of all income levels into the district, particularly near the commercial core.
- ◆ **Support local business efforts** to succeed, expand, hire, and thrive.
- ◆ **Recognize the critical role the district's schools, parks, and other public or institutional uses** play in sustaining the community's quality of life.
- ◆ **Promote public safety** throughout the district.
- ◆ **Honor the role each neighborhood** has in defining the district's character and contributing to its social and economic activity.

The vision forecasts a snapshot of the subarea in the year 2045, describing what the 6th Ward will look like, how it will function, who will live and operate businesses here, and what they will value. It is the future the community wishes to attain, and it is the basis for every goal, policy, and implementation recommendation this plan includes. It builds on the Growth Policy and Urban Renewal Plan. It also reflects on the community's suggestions, focusing on what makes the district livable and what attributes may change to suit those who live here, run a business, or manage a school.

Known affectionately as the 6th Ward "Rats," residents embrace this identity, seeing the district's rough edges as an honest expression of this part of Helena's roots. While there's a general call for new investment, there is also some hesitancy about going too far in transforming the 6th Ward and erasing what makes it a special, unique place.

This vision attempts to reconcile this tension, targeting improvement where necessary to support the district's business core and tempering recommendations elsewhere to retain the feel, function, and community connectedness the neighborhood's business owners and residents cherish. Its overall statement addresses persistent blight while still sensitive to the quirkiness making this neighborhood different from others in town. Set for the year 2045, This plan's vision also makes special note of the planning area's "sub-districts" or neighborhoods, places which have unique circumstances and specific functional expectations setting them up for different futures.



Figure 15 envisions what the build-out future may look like in the 6th Ward if the vision becomes reality, with reinvestment along the US 12 corridor and, importantly, in the Depot District and Trades District, providing additional housing opportunities and stimulating increased business activity.

Figure 15: Railroad District 2045

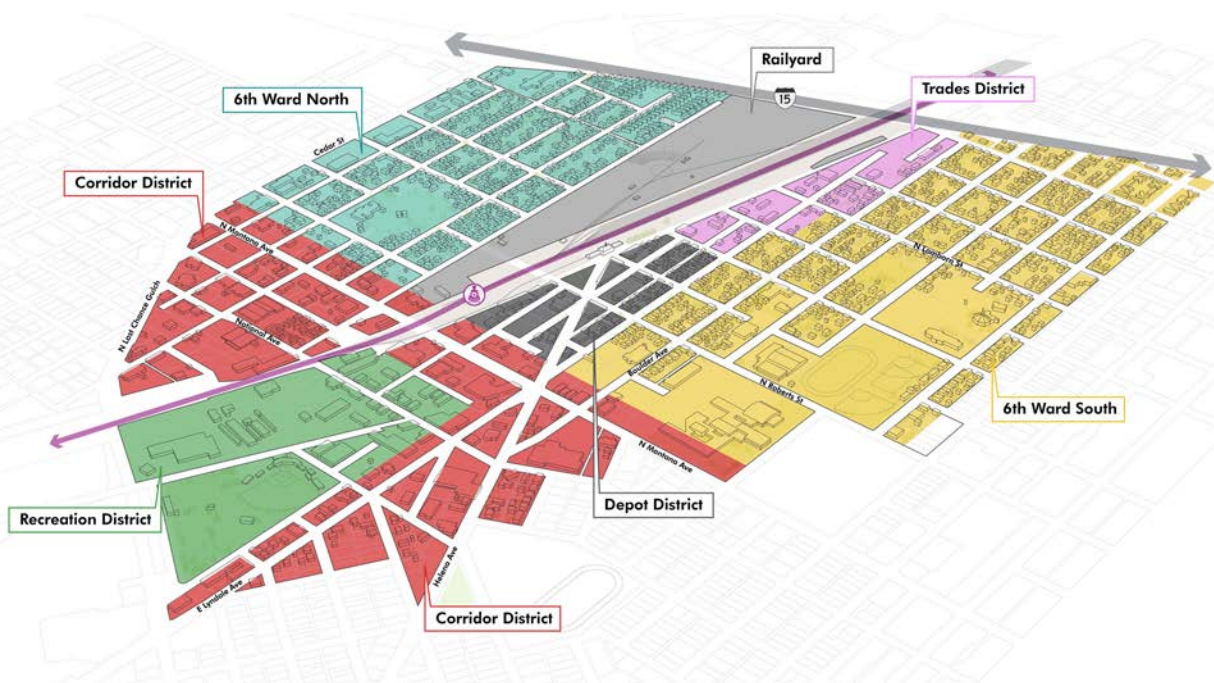


4.1 Vision for the Railroad District: The Year 2045

The Railroad District will grow as a neighborhood center, becoming a destination in the City of Helena, with a strong neighborhood identity based on the district's historic core and unique mix of uses. It includes workforce housing, manufacturing, and the railroad after which the district is named. The Railroad District will be a vibrant place to work, live, and visit, with shops, restaurants, and diverse commercial businesses. It will be uniquely different from the city's other main nearby destinations – downtown, Great Northern Town Center, and the Capitol area, mostly because of the contributions each neighborhood within the district make. People will easily access the Railroad District by vehicle, on foot and by bike, with safe, convenient, and effective access. Several unique neighborhoods contribute to the Railroad District's Vision:



Figure 16: Railroad District Neighborhoods



4.1.1 Depot District

The commercial district remains anchored by the historic train depot, with restaurants, bars, hotels, merchants, and warehouses radiating east, south, and west. More contemporary retail, dining, entertainment, and professional office uses fill in the historic storefronts, and new apartments occupy the upper floors. The district becomes vibrant with new morning, day, and evening activity, retaining its quirkiness and character. It remembers its railroad roots, while offering a mix of social, cultural, commercial, and artistic activities unique to this part of town. Improvement of the roundabout at Montana and Lyndale enhances visibility and access into the core, and the Centennial Trail connection welcomes visitors on foot and by bike. Higher-intensity residential areas along the district’s south edge bring customers close, within an easy walk of the core’s retail and civic spaces.



4.1.2 Trades District

South of the railyard and east of the Depot District lies the Trades District. This area mixes small-scale warehousing, trades workshops, artists' studios, and bungalows, with space available for live-work structures, small apartments, and cottages. This is a creative space, with a wide and surprising mix of activities, enjoying its proximity to all of what the Railroad District has to offer. It becomes a vibrant space for artists who wish to live and work where they exhibit, where the retail galleries smell of the furnaces, kilns, and paints used in the creative processes. While the Depot District emerges as the retail center, the Trades District is a working district, where trucks unload, things get made, and visitors to the place expect a degree of roughness and hardscrabble authenticity. The streets are improved to emphasize this industrial character, while still accommodating visitors with on-street parking. The Centennial Trail continues through this district, too, connecting it through Helena to Carroll College, the West End, and, ultimately, to the Archie Bray Institute – a companion artists community.

4.1.3 6th Ward North

The northern neighborhood retains its rail worker housing scale and character, with small bungalows and "shotgun" houses serving households of all sizes and economic conditions. Folks who live here appreciate the neighborhood's edgy vibe, compact form, walkable streets, and easy access to Cedar Street's commercial corridor to the north and the Depot District to the south. Not much changes here during the planning period, except new houses and apartments get built in forms, scales, and styles similar to those which exist today.

4.1.4 6th Ward South

The southern portion of the planning area is emerging as a center for education and recreation. There are houses here, too, enjoying proximity to the schools, parks, and college and to the commercial districts and Capitol complex further south. There is little to change here during the planning period. But enhancements to Lyndale Ave and Roberts St facilitate non-motorized access to the local schools and the bustling Depot District. The upgrading of Lyndale Ave east of the new roundabout relaxes traffic pressure on Boulder Ave, enhancing the pedestrian experience along this important east-west corridor and accommodating the Centennial Trail east of the Trades District.



4.1.5 Corridor District

Montana Avenue and Lyndale Street west of the new roundabout are the axes for the corridor district. Much of it also serves as US Highway 12, linking the Railroad District to the east-west highway route. This corridor's new roundabout and "gateway" character set the stage for new types of mixed office, retail, and residential development. The corridor is still predominantly auto and freight oriented, but it is becoming more welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists as improvements are made, new buildings are constructed closer to the sidewalk, and parking is located to the rear, away from the street edge.

4.1.6 Recreation District

Helena's Centennial Trail runs east-west, connecting Helena's western neighborhoods to East Helena. A key portion of the trail runs through the Railroad District, linking Memorial Park and Carroll College to Kindrick Field, the Depot District and Trades District. The Trail connects the Railroad District's business and civic heart to the rest of Helena. Still a warehousing district at its core, the Recreation District also includes evening-oriented activities which are compatible with the warehousing character and scale.

The new vision underpins the plan's goals and objectives, which, in turn, add detail to those which already exist in Helena's adopted Growth Policy.



5. Goals & Objectives

Helena’s Growth Policy establishes goals and objectives for the city, setting priorities and guiding local decision making of citywide consequence. The Growth Policy acknowledges the importance of the community’s smaller commercial districts and sees the potential for the evolution of “neighborhood centers” to enhance the identity of these places and build them up to support local businesses, create community cohesiveness, reduce reliance on the car, and enhance Helena’s local quality of life. One of these “neighborhood centers” is the 6th Ward.

The City also prepared an urban renewal plan for this area, establishing the tax increment

district and setting out goals and policies which apply to this area. Their focus is on the ways in which investment of tax increment funds can generate additional economic activity in the district and improve living conditions.

Appendix B summarizes the Growth Policy and urban renewal plan policy direction, comparing it to the subarea plan’s priorities and identifying how the subarea plan goals and policies relate to what Helena has already adopted. This plan essentially augments the Growth Policy, adding detail specific to this subarea and consistent with the citywide perspective the Growth Policy offers.



5.1 Issues

The following issues – as derived from the orientation interview conversations, review of previous studies and plans, and the studio workshops – give this planning effort a sense of direction, provide urgency for the community’s priorities, and serve as a touchstone for the rest of the process, ensuring it stays focused on what is most important. As with the topics, additional issues may surface as the conversations continue, and additional information will help refine these to facilitate resolution.

The implementation action items presented in Chapter 8 reference these issues, too, to ensure they are fully addressed in the plan’s priority recommendations.

Figure 17: Spatial Summary of Planning Issues



Issue #1: Montana/Helena/Lyndale Intersection

The issues at this intersection stem from the irregular roadway alignments, the state highway designation, and the relatively high traffic volumes on the regional arterials coming together here. According to the interviews:

- ◆ It is difficult to access areas east of Montana Ave when approaching the intersection from Lyndale Ave.
- ◆ It is difficult to cross Montana Ave on foot or by bike at this intersection, with irregularly configured crosswalks, confusion, long crossing distances, and no mid-crossing pedestrian refuge.
- ◆ The US Highway 12 designation limits local discretion in how to manage the intersection.
- ◆ Limited rights of way narrow design options for potential solutions.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
2	Improving Safety
3	Improving Access and Connections
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.



Photo #23: The intersection of Montana/Lyndale/Helena avenues can be difficult to navigate, and it impedes access into the Railroad District from the west.



Issue #2: Boulder Access

Boulder Ave is an important access corridor for the southern 6th Ward but getting to it from the north and west is difficult.

- ◆ The proximity of Boulder Ave to Lyndale Avenue limits the length of its protected left-turn lane, making it difficult for school buses, freight, and vehicular traffic to access the southern 6th, Ward.
- ◆ Traffic flows and the priority to maintain mobility on US Highway 12 restrict full access at Boulder Ave.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
2	Improving Safety
3	Improving Access and Connections

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.

Issue #3: Commerical District Identity/Vitality

The historic commercial center is more than a century old, and it appears to be enjoying new energy. The district's enthusiasm seems to be generated by folks who've newly discovered the place, investing in buildings, properties, and businesses in pursuit of opportunity in a place where the history, character, and economics support their actions.

- ◆ The revitalization depends on a relatively small pool of local businesses, driven by the passion of local entrepreneurs but reliant in the longer term on early success and effective succession planning.
- ◆ New investment may influence the character and feel of the 6th Ward and threaten change that some may not accept.
- ◆ Incoming businesses and increased popularity may result in rising rents, potentially displacing businesses that have been in the district for generations.



Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
4	Making Housing Attainable
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor.
5	Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, and Corridor District.



Photo #24: The historic rail depot is a unique landmark contributing to the district's overall identity

Issue #4: TIF Board Investment Strategy

The TIF has been in place since 2016 and has begun making investments to elevate business activity in the district. The TIF district’s young age, however, means available revenues are still slim. Investments to date have been small and targeted to easy wins.

- ◆ The TIF Board’s investment has taken advantage of opportunities and now may be the time to coalesce TIF strategy around longer-term objectives and draw from broad community consensus on priorities, criteria, and tradeoffs.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
1	Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and form a business improvement district (BID).
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor

Issue #5: Vehicle Storage

The neighborhood has practiced a “live and let live” lifestyle, allowing households and businesses to operate as they please, as long as they don’t create a nuisance or safety hazard. With increasing attention – and increasing desires to promote an active and exciting commercial district – long-standing habits of storing commercial or abandoned vehicles on neighborhood streets or vacant lots are coming under increased scrutiny.

- ◆ Vehicle storage impacts the visual attractiveness of the 6th Ward, inconsistent with many residents and business owners’ hopes for an emerging neighborhood identity – at least in the core commercial area.



Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
4	Making Housing Attainable
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
1	Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and form a business improvement district (BID).



Photo #25: Vehicle storage in the open might add to the district's charm, but residents believe too much can harm the district's image.



Issue #6: Housing Attainability

This has been one of Helena’s more affordable close-in neighborhoods. But property values are rising. With Helena College expanding to attract students from outside the region, demand for student housing nearby will increase.

- ◆ As local housing demand and property values continue to rise, households who may have been able to afford to purchase or rent in the neighborhood may need to find housing elsewhere.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
4	Making Housing Attainable

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
5	Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, and Corridor District.





Issue #7: Neighborhood Character Preservation

New investment in housing or the construction or remodeling of existing structures may influence the feel, scale, and experience of the 6th Ward. Existing zoning and design controls may not generate the types of results neighborhood residents or business owners want.

- ◆ The City’s development regulations are not consistent with neighborhood hopes or needs.
- ◆ The historic district is not effectively utilized or presented, receding in its prominence.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor
5	Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, and Corridor District.



Issue #8: At-Grade Rail Crossings

The two crossings at Montana Ave and Roberts Ave are important to the 6th Ward. Both are also important in the regional context, with Montana Ave providing access to Helena’s regional commercial districts and the valley and Roberts providing an alternate, parallel route for those who choose not to use Montana Ave. Train traffic blocks one or both crossings up to 20 times per day, sometimes for as long as 25 minutes. The city has grade-separated rail crossings at Last Chance Gulch and Interstate 15, both of which can provide alternative crossing opportunities within minutes of the crossings at Montana and Roberts. Still, traffic backs up at the at-grade crossings, complicating flows at nearby intersections.

- ♦ Creating a grade-separated crossing at Montana Ave is expensive, will impact multiple commercial properties, and is unfunded. The City has begun a feasibility study to investigate design options.
- ♦ The local and regional community relies on both crossings, even with their occasional interruptions, and will have difficulty adapting if either one is closed.
- ♦ There is now no definitive commitment to the future of the two crossings, leaving the neighborhood, the railroad, the larger community, and the state Department of Transportation without a resolution on what to do or how to adapt. The current feasibility study may provide some answers.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
2	Improving Safety
3	Improving Access and Connections
4	Making Housing Attainable
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.



Issue #9: Stormwater Management

There was a small stream that used to flow through this area, generally to the northeast through the core of the commercial center. A stormwater system now manages the flow, but it can be vulnerable to winter rain-on-snow events when the storm inlets are covered by ice and snow. Recent flooding has damaged ground floor spaces in businesses along Helena Ave and Gallatin Ave.

- ♦ The stormwater system periodically fails to convey surface water, resulting in flooding and damage in the commercial district.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
2	Improving Safety

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor



Issue #10: Zoning and Intensity

The area’s zoning may not reflect long-term objectives for land use and economic development in this part of town, making it difficult to permit the type of development the neighborhood hopes for and allowing what the neighborhood might not appreciate. Zoning may not contribute to housing attainability, business diversity, or employment objectives.

- ◆ Some of the current zoning is not consistent with neighborhood objectives, rendering much of what exists today as non-conforming because of land use, setback, or lot coverage requirements, particularly north of the railroad, and because of land use and off-street parking requirements in the proposed Depot District and Trades District neighborhoods.
- ◆ Development conforming to current standards in the R-2 and R-3 residential districts (like setbacks and coverage requirements) is different in character from historic structures surrounding it.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
4	Making Housing Attainable
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.



Issue #11: Zoning and Built Character Compatibility

Even though residents and business owners in the 6th Ward believe their neighborhood is unique, the zoning standards that apply here are the same as those applicable in other parts of town. The residential, commercial, and industrial zoning districts move toward a more homogenous Helena, something this neighborhood may not appreciate.

- ♦ Today’s zoning applies the same development and design standards to this neighborhood as to others in Helena under the same designations, ignoring in some cases those characteristics which make the 6th Ward unique.

Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
4	Making Housing Attainable

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
5	Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, Corridor District, and R-2 District.

Issue #12: Placemaking

Newer business and property owners in the district’s commercial core hope for street trees, lighting, wayfinding, and parking improvements, creating a “place” that attracts attention, facilitates pedestrian activity, and draws people from other parts of town for shopping, dining, recreation, and employment. The effort to make the commercial core a place argues for change, improving its looks, emphasizing its connection to the rest of Helena, and altering its functions to serve a larger audience.

- ♦ There is no guidance on what type of place the central commercial area should be, leading to individual initiatives that may act at cross-purposes.
- ♦ The transformation of the commercial district to become something different than what it has been is not accepted by all.



Related Goal(s):

Number	Goal
1	Keeping the Identity of the Neighborhood in Focus
3	Improving Access and Connections
4	Making Housing Attainable
5	Supporting the Business Community

Related Implementation Action(s):

Number	Action
1	Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and form a business improvement district (BID).
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor.
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.
4	Confirm Centennial Trail alignment through the district, design it, and improve it.
5	Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot District, Trades District, Corridor District, and R-2 District.





5.2 Goals

This subarea plan proposes five goals, each with a series of objectives intended to complement those already found in the Growth Policy or Urban Renewal Plan. They consolidate a community response to the issues identified above and establish the foundation for the implementation priorities presented in Chapter 8.

Goal #1: The Railroad District optimizes its historic and contemporary ties to the rest of Helena.

Keeping the identity of the neighborhood in focus.

The historic train depot, the old retail storefronts, original warehouses, and Railroad Ave's brick surface remain a physical reminder of this district's past importance to Helena. They are assets in the district's reinvestment, contributing to the district's identity. They are also adaptable to the district's new role, offering opportunities for a renewed place in Helena's economy.

Objectives:

- ♦ **Objective 1:** Preserve and promote the Depot District's and Trades District's history and historic features through design guidelines, public art, and preservation-oriented programs.
- ♦ **Objective 2:** Enhance and promote existing historical artifacts and features – like the brick paving on Railroad Ave, the historic train depot, and the district's older buildings – through signs, partnership with property owners, and publicity.
- ♦ **Objective 3:** Collaborate with community representatives to establish the 6th Ward's brand identity consistent with the contemporary and historic character of the area (i.e. Flag, colors, logo).
- ♦ **Objective 4:** Support the creation of historic landmarks and online mapping.
- ♦ **Objective 5:** Promote publicly funded art pieces in the 6th Ward reflecting the present and historic neighborhood character.
- ♦ **Objective 6:** Facilitate to the extent within the City's control community events highlighting and incorporating past historical events, themes, and pastimes shaping Helena's character (idea: neighborhood block party in railroad district on June 13th, important anniversary remembrance of when passenger train service came into town).



Goal #2: The district is a safe place for all, whether they're running a business, living here, or visiting.

Improving safety.

Safety is a priority, ensuring the streets encourage safe movement and access for all modes, public spaces are designed, built, and maintained to be inviting and comfortable, and development applies best possible practices to ensure public safety for the long term.

Objectives:

- ◆ **Objective 1:** Connect the Centennial Trail through the district, incorporating a safe pedestrian crossing at North Montana Ave as determined by the Centennial Trail Master Plan and the feasibility and design process for the North Montana Ave/railroad crossing.
- ◆ **Objective 2:** Consider new approaches to Roberts Street as a multi-modal corridor connecting the district's neighborhoods to its schools and public spaces.
- ◆ **Objective 3:** Locate and design public spaces to ensure safety of their users, inviting frequent and popular activities.
- ◆ **Objective 4:** Pursue code enforcement and building rehabilitation programs, identifying and remediating structures posing hazardous conditions.
- ◆ **Objective 5:** Support neighborhood watch programs to build community and augment local policing.

Goal #3: The district's transportation system reconciles regional mobility with local access needs.

Improving access and connections

US Highway 12 runs through the district, and Montana Ave extends northward to serve some of Helena's high growth areas. These corridors are busy, accentuating the conflicts between regional mobility and access to local businesses and property. This goal calls for reconciliation, accommodating regional flows but in a manner compatible with the district's prosperity and livability.

Objectives:

- ◆ **Objective 1:** Support transportation programs oriented for vulnerable populations, coordinating with MDT and the MPO as appropriate.
- ◆ **Objective 2:** Establish multi-modal transportation network routes connecting 6th Ward neighborhoods to each other and greater Helena, coordinating with City accessibility and sidewalk improvement programs.
- ◆ **Objective 3:** Coordinate with local and regional partners in creating and implementing a region-wide transportation plan.
- ◆ **Objective 4:** Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety by adding bike-oriented navigation signs and improving bike lanes along popular corridors.
- ◆ **Objective 5:** Install missing sidewalk infrastructure in established multi-modal network routes.



Goal #4: The district's neighborhoods are liveable and affordable.

Making housing attainable.

These neighborhoods are some of the oldest in Helena, with a variety of housing types, sizes and conditions making it rich in character and diverse in population. It's an attribute the community cherishes, and this goal advances policy to keep it that way while enhancing its overall livability. Infrastructure investment, pedestrian and cyclist safety, and access to parks and schools are priorities.

Objectives:

- ◆ **Objective 1:** Promote higher density and variety of housing units in the Depot and Trades districts.
- ◆ **Objective 2:** Enhance walkable design infrastructure between centers of residential, commercial, and recreational activity.
- ◆ **Objective 3:** Mix residential uses with retail, office, and light industrial uses in the Depot District and Trades District.
- ◆ **Objective 4:** Promote infill development with new zoning districts allowing for additional housing types, higher density units, reduced setbacks, or reduced parking requirements.
- ◆ **Objective 5:** Promote neighborhood health and livability by investing in park amenities and park improvements.
- ◆ **Objective 6:** Collaborate with contractors and local developers to identify and reduce unnecessary regulatory roadblocks.
- ◆ **Objective 7:** Collaborate with Helena's Citizen Council (HCC) on community initiatives and neighborhood projects.
- ◆ **Objective 8:** Promote the connectivity between the residential neighborhoods, unique attractions, and historic assets.



Goal #5: The Railroad District has a prosperous, unique, and identity-rich core.

Supporting the business community.

This goal speaks to the ascending prominence and activity in the Railroad District's core, nurturing a stock of home-grown businesses and institutions with close ties to Helena and the district. The business district's prosperity also relies on increasing residential intensity within a five-minute walk of the core, a close relationship to the new Trades District to the east, and ease of access between this core commercial district and Helena's other neighborhoods.

Objectives:

- ◆ **Objective 1:** Encourage a mix of retail, professional office, maker spaces, small-scale shops, light industrial, and residential uses in the Depot District and Trades District through the creation of new zoning districts.
- ◆ **Objective 2:** Encourage live-work development in the Trades District by amending zoning and other

development regulations to permit it (as in Appendix F)

- ◆ **Objective 3:** Encourage higher development intensities within a quarter mile of the Depot District and Trades District by amending relevant zoning text and district boundaries to permit it (as in Appendix F and shown in the proposed zoning map)
- ◆ **Objective 4:** Coordinate closely with the TIF Board to develop and implement an investment strategy to leverage private development.
- ◆ **Objective 5:** Encourage formation of a business improvement district in the Depot District and Trades District to facilitate business coordination and target investment to enhance the district's identity.
- ◆ **Objective 6:** Enhance connections between the Depot District, Trades District, and nearby schools, parks, state Capitol, and other community institutions through the application of complete streets principles.
- ◆ **Objective 7:** Coordinate with Helena High School and Helena College to foster student employment opportunities and inform educational curricula.
- ◆ **Objective 8:** Preserve and promote the Depot District's and Trades District's historic features through design guidelines, public art, and preservation-oriented programs.



6. Implications

The subarea plan's goals and objectives establish a framework for how the concepts for the district can be achieved. They guide various land use and transportation initiatives within the context of the Growth Policy and Urban Renewal Plan, in response to the community's desires, and informed by the analysis performed as part of this work.

The sections below describe the plan's implications to the land use and housing, transportation, utilities, and economic development environments across the entire planning area, with a more detailed neighborhood-by-neighborhood examination following. The neighborhood examinations advance this plan's implementation, illustrating the specific zoning and public realm changes necessary to achieve the plan's objectives and providing a tangible set of recommendations at a discernable location in response to specific community need.

These changes may cause discomfort at first, including shifts in development expectations, additional City investment to modify zoning regulations and the Centennial Trail master plan, initiating and managing street construction projects, and supporting and nurturing a new business improvement district. Chapter 7 explores specific implications, challenges, and initiatives by neighborhood, identifying how each neighborhood can contribute to achieving the district's overall vision.

6.1 Land Use Implications

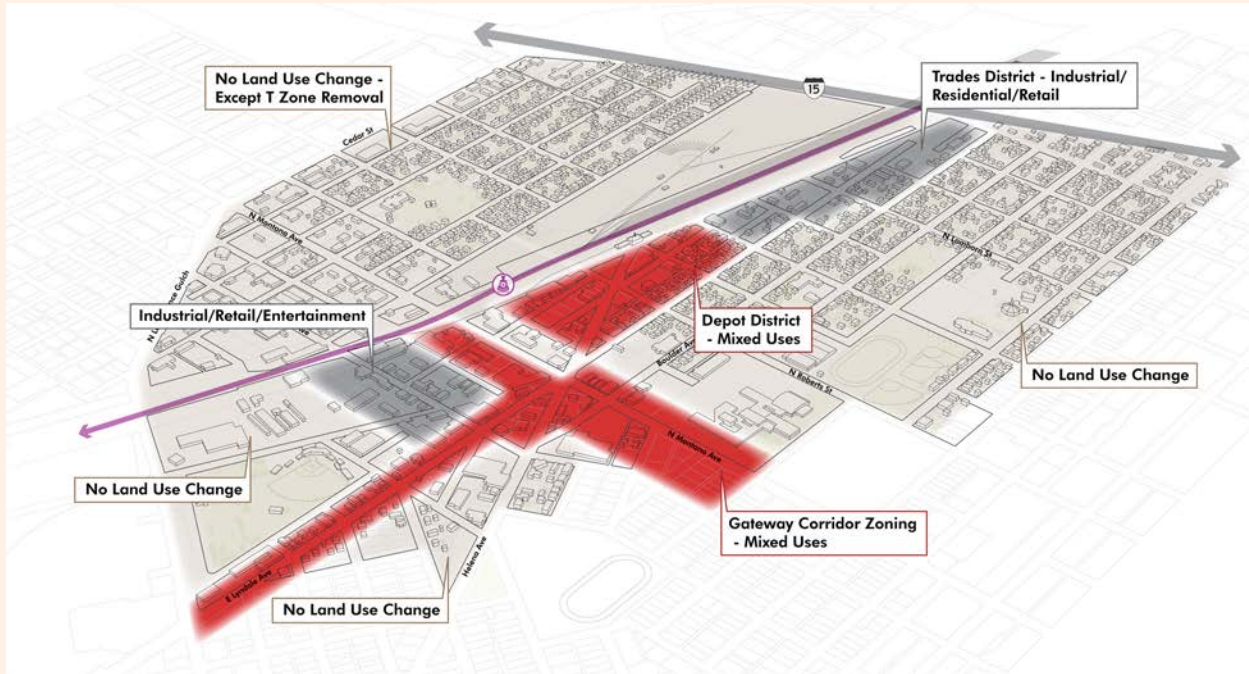
Subarea plan policies suggest land use transformation, concentrating intensity in and around the Depot District and facilitating redevelopment and mixing of uses along the US-12 and North Montana Ave corridors. Elsewhere, the district's land uses will remain largely the same, reinforcing the existing neighborhood character and accommodating incremental reinvestment as the housing stock improves.

Land use and development non-conformance underlines the immediate importance of acting on zoning amendments. The subarea plan's policy direction emphasizes it even more, calling for the reshaping of the 6th Ward's zoning environment to be more compatible with those neighborhoods which are intended for reinvestment and transformation and those which are intended to remain essentially as they are.

Plan implementation includes updates to the zoning ordinance to accomplish these changes, focusing on the Depot District, the Trades District and the arterial corridors. They introduce new districts tailored to the Railroad District's unique needs, encouraging the type of compact, diverse, and identity-rich development 6th Ward residents and business owners desire.



Figure 18: Land Use Changes



6.1.1 More Housing Near the Core

Constructing new housing in and near the existing commercial core will add to “built-in” demand for the blossoming retail district. The Land Use and Zoning Implications diagram illustrates where new residential intensity could be located, and the Zoning Updates section adds more detail on how development regulations can be amended to allow it.

6.1.2 New Development Standards for the Commercial Core and other Zoning Districts

A new look at the district’s zoning designations will encourage street-front retail, entertainment, and office development with the inclusion of residential uses wherever possible. Appendix E provides a comprehensive assessment of existing zoning and potential zoning alternatives to achieve plan objectives, identifying more specific changes to zoning district requirements and permitted land uses.

6.1.3 A New “Trades District”

Expanding the list of permitted uses from the existing CLM zoning district to permit residences and “maker” spaces, focusing on the new Trades District to encourage diversity, creativity, and a working, artistic experience.





This new district will facilitate a wide variety of uses to house artisans, small-scale manufacturing, galleries, live-work spaces, trades offices, and small warehouses, creating a space in the Railroad District which emerges as a unique destination and one accessible by the Centennial Trail extension.

6.1.4 Enhancing the US 12 and North Montana Ave Corridors

Creating a new zoning district to implement new development standards along the arterial corridors can facilitate mixed uses and acknowledge the changing character of the highway and Montana Ave as the district evolves. These new characteristics will seek to provide a complementary transitional flow from the heavy traffic of Highway 12 to the existing historic neighborhoods, something 6th Ward residents say they want.

6.1.5 Specific Zoning Changes

Figure 19 shows the Railroad District's current zoning pattern. Figure 20 shows how the zoning may change to implement this plan more fully. Along with the redesignation of some properties, particularly those surrounding the business core and along US Highway 12, the plan suggests modifications to some of the zoning district standards.

Appendix E provides a zoning analysis, describing how the existing districts may need to adjust to better achieve the plan's objectives. While some of the zoning districts may serve the planning area well, others may need a new look – or be applied to different areas – to create the type of mixed-use, identity-rich Railroad District residents and businesspeople seek. Some of the potential zoning changes are discussed below, with additional detail in the Appendix.



Figure 19: Existing Zoning

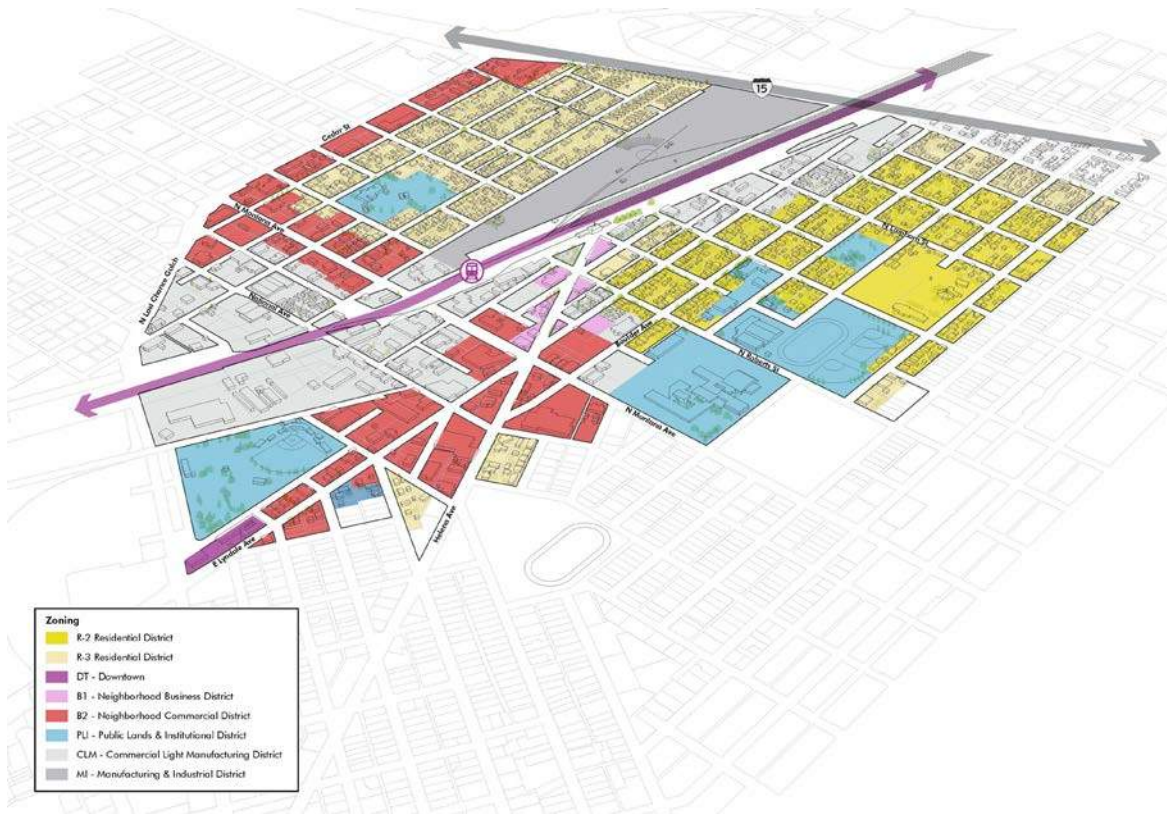


Figure 20: Proposed Zoning



R-2 Residential Zone

The R-2 zone is now limited to single-family and duplex housing types, limiting density which is unlikely to create enough nearby demand to support the 6th Ward's commercial core. Most of the R-2 area lies to the south of the proposed Depot District and Trades District in areas generally characterized by this type of lower-intensity residential development. The proposed zoning changes will reduce the land zoned R-2, replacing those parcels adjoining the Depot District with R-3.

R-3 Residential Zone

The R-3 zone allows for single family, duplex, multi-family housing types, permitting moderate density for more residential units needed to support the existing commercial core of the 6th Ward. The zoning district also permits some non-residential uses under certain circumstances. The higher residential intensity and opportunity for occasional ground-floor commercial uses make this district a good choice to surround the proposed Depot District, adding the potential for more residents within a convenient walk of the commercial core and providing for diversity in street-level land uses. Proposed changes to the development standards would reduce required setbacks and increase maximum permitted lot coverage, making it possible for single-family development in the R-3 district to resemble the historic structures already there and eliminating the need for the "Transition" overlay now in place.

The City may wish to customize these R-3 development regulations changes to the 6th Ward. They may not necessarily be appropriate for all other R-3 areas in the City.

B-1 Neighborhood Business Zone

The B-1 zone allows for a mix of housing types with a moderate density of residential units. Even so, it does not articulate aspirations or prescribe standards unique to the 6th Ward's commercial core. The proposed Depot District zoning designation is intended to apply to a larger area than what the B-1 district now encompasses, reducing minimum lot size and eliminating off-street parking requirements. Creating a new Depot District here will allow the existing B-1 zoning district to remain as-is in other areas of Helena, where its standards may be more appropriate.

The Depot District zone is fundamentally a mixed-use designation, with standards to encourage storefront retail or dining and the development of multi-family units – either as condominiums or apartments – above. Residential density in the proposed Depot District may exceed 25 units per acre, with actual development intensity limited by building height requirements and the market's demand for parking.



B-2 General Commercial Zone

The B-2 zone allows for a mix of housing types with a higher density of residential units, potentially adding support for the district’s commercial core businesses and those businesses located along the US-12 corridor.

The plan proposes the B-2 designation be replaced by the new Corridor Mixed-Use (CMX) zoning district along most of the US 12 corridor and North Montana Ave south of the railroad, closely aligning this corridor’s land use and development standards with the structure and theme of the City’s downtown zoning. The new CMX district would reduce setback requirements, reduce off-street parking requirements, and increase maximum permitted building height to encourage mixed use development consistent with the US 12 “gateway” theme. Residential density would likely not exceed 25 units per acre, with development intensity limited by building height, parking availability, and parcel depth and orientation. The B-2 district would remain in place unchanged along North Montana Ave north of the railroad.

CLM Commercial Light Manufacturing Zone

The CLM zone supports the community’s commercial and light manufacturing uses, with most 6th Ward CLM parcels now located south of the Railyard east of Harris Street and North of Boulder Avenue.

The subarea plan proposes the CLM district be almost completely eliminated in

the Railroad District south of the railroad, replaced mostly by the new Depot District and Trades District (TD) zoning district and, near Boulder and Cooke, by the amended R-3 district. CLM would remain in place and unchanged along the rail corridor and in the Recreation district, permitting continued rail and warehousing operations. This change welcomes new residential development in the 6th Ward and makes way for the inclusion of the new Trades District.

M-I Manufacturing and Industrial Zone

The MI zone supports heavy and intense manufacturing and industrial uses which are not conducive to retail businesses and residential activities. MI zoned parcels in the 6th Ward are in the Railyard, and the subarea plan proposes no changes to the zoning map or the land use and development standards in the district.

6.2 Transportation Implications

The transportation environment in the 6th Ward is similarly targeted for change, with improvements to the US-12 and Montana Ave corridors generally consistent with the Five-Points Intersection study, enhancements to the pedestrian experience, and an appreciation for the district’s connectivity within the 6th Ward and to nearby parts of town. Consultation with the Montana Department of Transportation is required for any transportation initiatives along or impacting US Highway 12.

Specifically, this plan recognizes and calls for:



6.2.1 Montana Ave Roundabout

The Five Points study recommends the roundabout at Lyndale/Helena/Montana. The community moderately supported it in the studio engagement, hoping it be sized appropriately to allow for pedestrians to cross safely. The roundabout appears in the Long-Range Transportation Plan, and MDT has committed to building the roundabout, encouraging access into the Depot District and reducing concerns of traffic backing up to the railroad crossing. This plan recommends the roundabout's design emphasizes the district's access from the west, both for vehicles and for those on foot, and that it accommodates additional turning movements onto Lyndale given the anticipated closure of Boulder Ave's left turn access.

In addition, the City is studying the feasibility of a grade-separated rail crossing at North Montana Ave. The study's outcomes may influence the roundabout's design, potentially shifting the Centennial Trail's Montana Ave

crossing to locate at the roundabout and increasing the need for the roundabout to provide access to the 6th Ward's commercial core along Helena Ave.

6.2.2 Centennial Trail Extension

The City is designing the extension of the Centennial Trail across Montana Ave and into the core of the 6th Ward at its intersection with Argyle St/Bozeman St. As of this plan's writing, the crossing is planned to be controlled by rectangular rapid-flashing beacon (RRFB) and include a median "refuge" to facilitate safe non-motorized transit across Montana Ave. This subarea plan anticipates a channelized trail alignment through the Depot District and then along Lyndale Ave in the Trades District. The trail would then extend along Lyndale and either curve along an easement on railroad property or follow existing City rights of way to join Boulder Ave near the highway underpass. Wayfinding signs – designed to promote district branding – can be located within the Depot District to help trail users navigate the three blocks of dispersed routing.

Figure 21: Transportation Initiatives

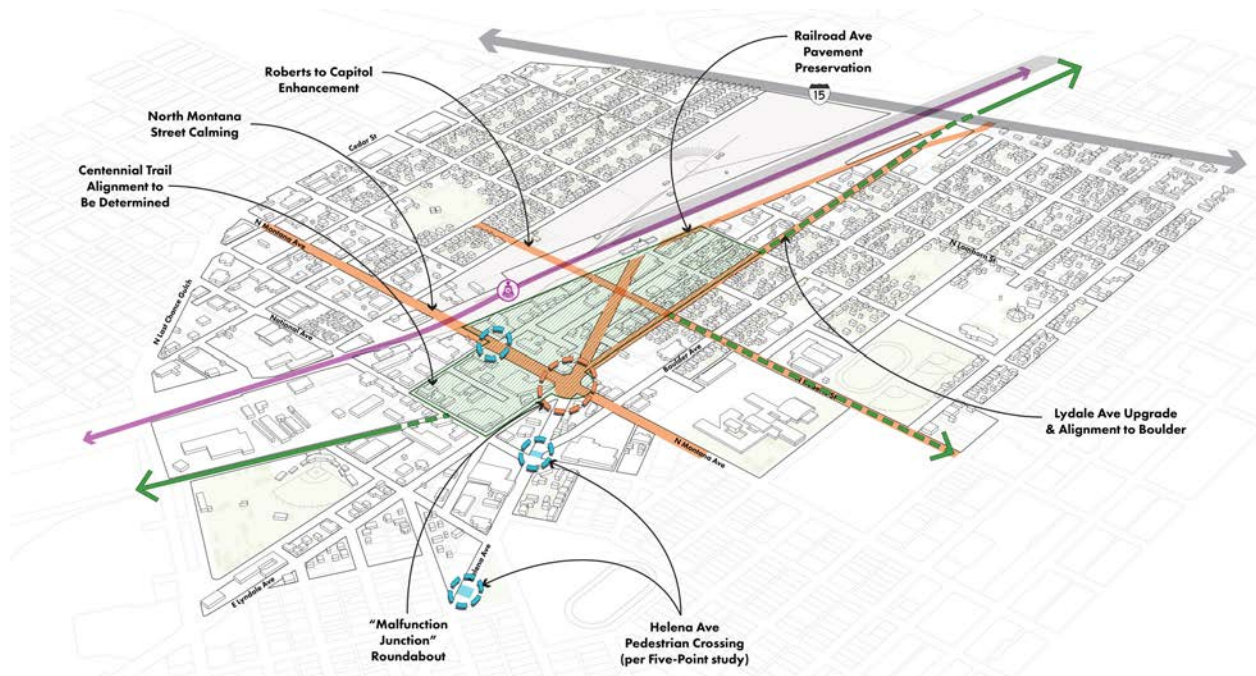


Figure 22: Montana Avenue Proposed Pedestrian Alignment



Depot District streets can be designed for shared use, accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, and autos, with reduced speeds and on-street parking to enliven retail storefronts, promote safety, and enhance the district’s identity. Figure 22, above, shows the proposed trail crossing.

The City’s current effort to study the feasibility of a grade-separated Montana Ave crossing of the railroad, however, may shift the trail crossing to coincide with the proposed roundabout at Lyndale and Helena or move north to coincide with the rail crossing. This will influence the way the trail enters the district from the west, shaping the trail’s alignment and design approach.

Centennial Trail access to and through the Depot District will encourage trail users to meander through the commercial and creative districts, integrating the trail and Depot District experience at an intimate level. While the trail will be channelized through the district, its design and wayfinding can encourage access to the neighborhood’s perpendicular streets to visit the Depot District and Trades District businesses, community spaces, and institutions. There are opportunities to manage the trail’s alignment and design through the Railroad District to encourage trail users to linger, while still accommodating through-traffic for those whose primary interest is to get somewhere else.



Figure 24: Roberts St (North) Concept Cross Section

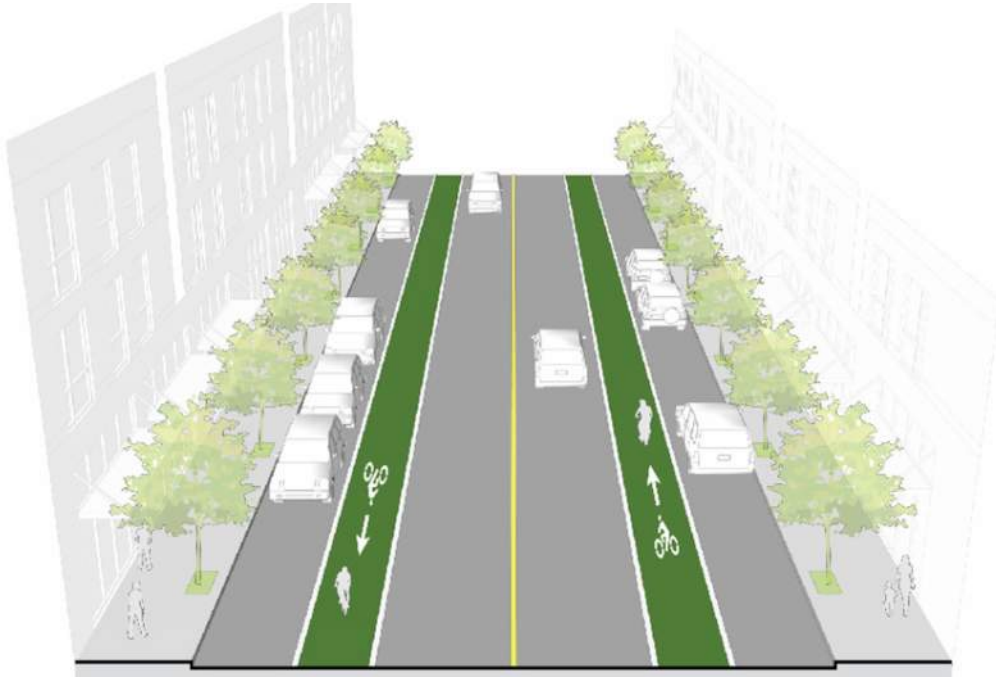


Figure 25: Roberts St (South) Concept Cross Section

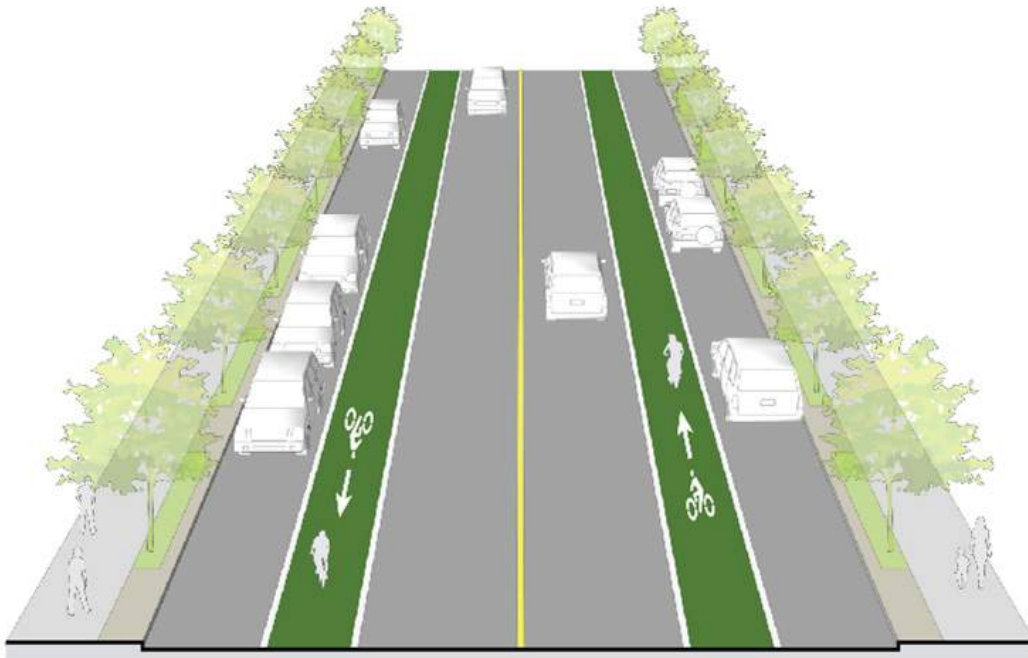
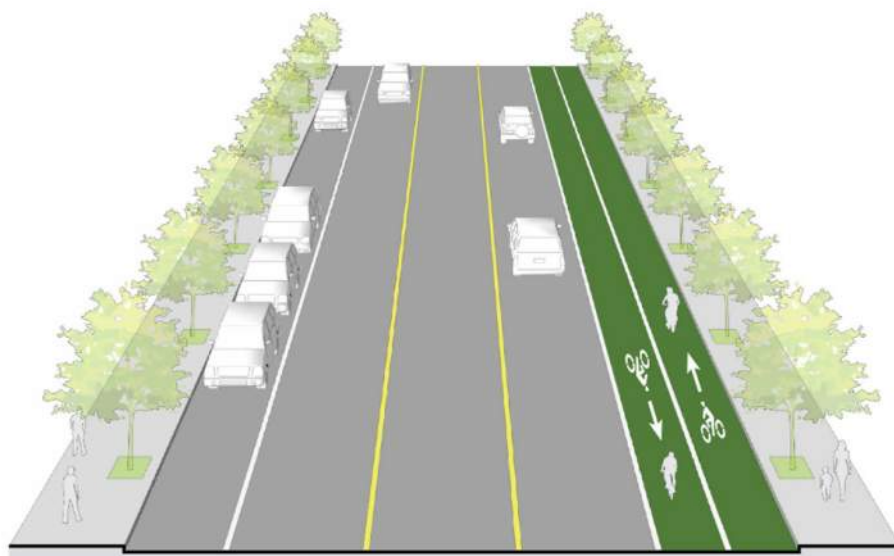




Figure 25: Lyndale Avenue Concept Cross Section



6.2.4 Lyndale Ave Enhancement

Lyndale Ave will emerge as the primary east-west corridor through the district, facilitating school bus movement from Montana Ave to Roberts St and improving overall access to the growing Depot District. These street enhancements will include sidewalks, crosswalks, a two-way bicycle track, pedestrian lighting, landscaping, and wayfinding signs. The street can have two travel lanes, one in each direction, a center turn lane, on-street parking on one side, and the two-way bicycle track to accommodate the Centennial Trail extension. If the

Centennial Trail is incorporated into the roundabout at North Montana Ave, the Lyndale street design will also need to include the trail alignment for its entire length from North Montana Ave east through the 6th Ward.

6.2.5 Brick Road

This plan calls for coordination with BNSF to retain and rehabilitate Railroad Ave’s brick surfacing. Community comment reinforced how important this feature is to the district, and this plan seeks to retain it as a crucial identity-defining element. This may be able to be partially funded through historic preservation grant opportunities.



6.2.6 Streetscape Enhancements

Upgrading the Depot District's streetscape along Lyndale Ave, Helena Ave, Roberts St, and Railroad Ave will enhance the area's beauty and historic prominence as a lively and livable district.

The City is already proceeding with a redesign of Helena and Gallatin to accommodate additional on-street parking. Further enhancements on Helena can accentuate the terminal view the historic depot offers upon entering the district and establish the corridor as the district's principal gateway from the west. The Five Points study identified Helena Ave as a primary entry into the 6th Ward's business district, and the creation of a grade-separated railroad crossing at North Montana will emphasize its importance. Grade separation would eliminate Depot District access from Bozeman St.

Figure 26: Proposed Angled Parking Exhibit

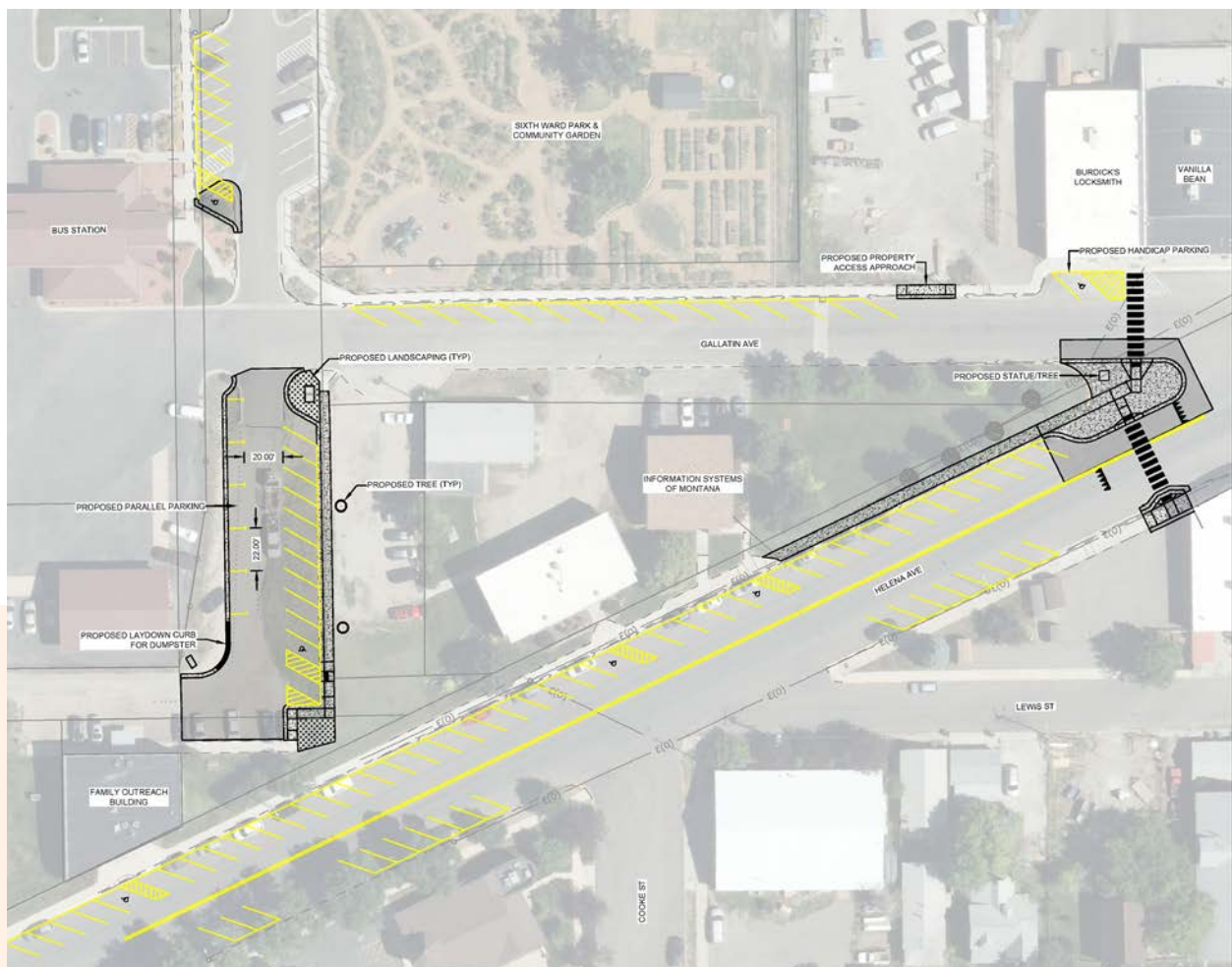


Figure 27: Helena Avenue Conceptual Corss Section

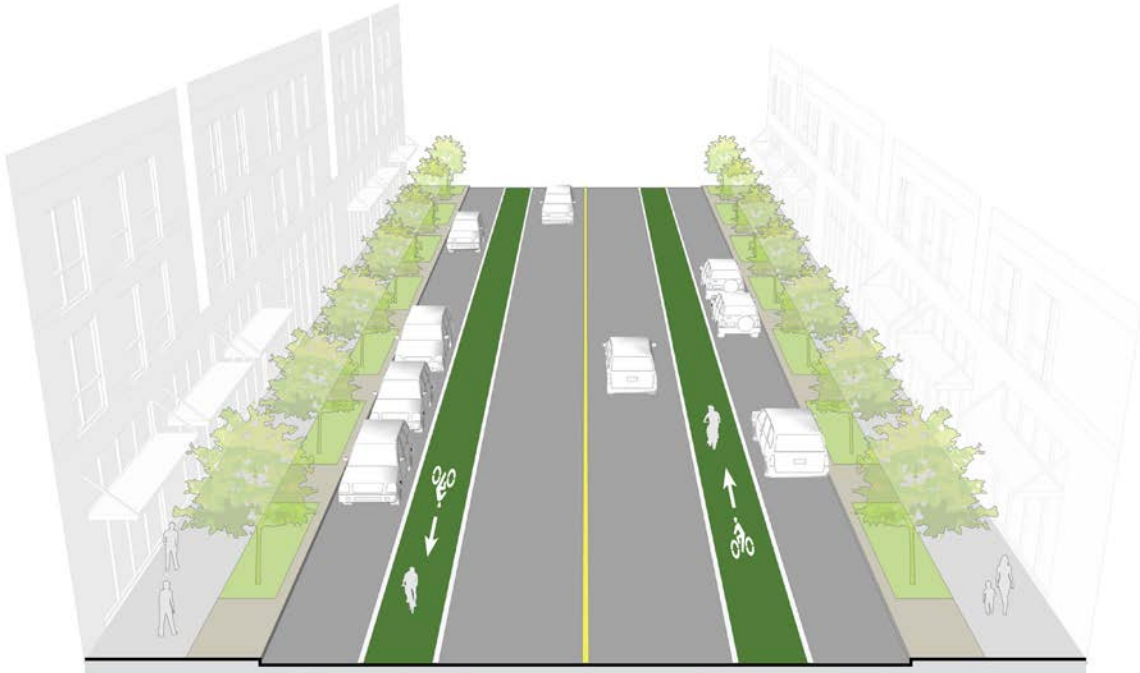
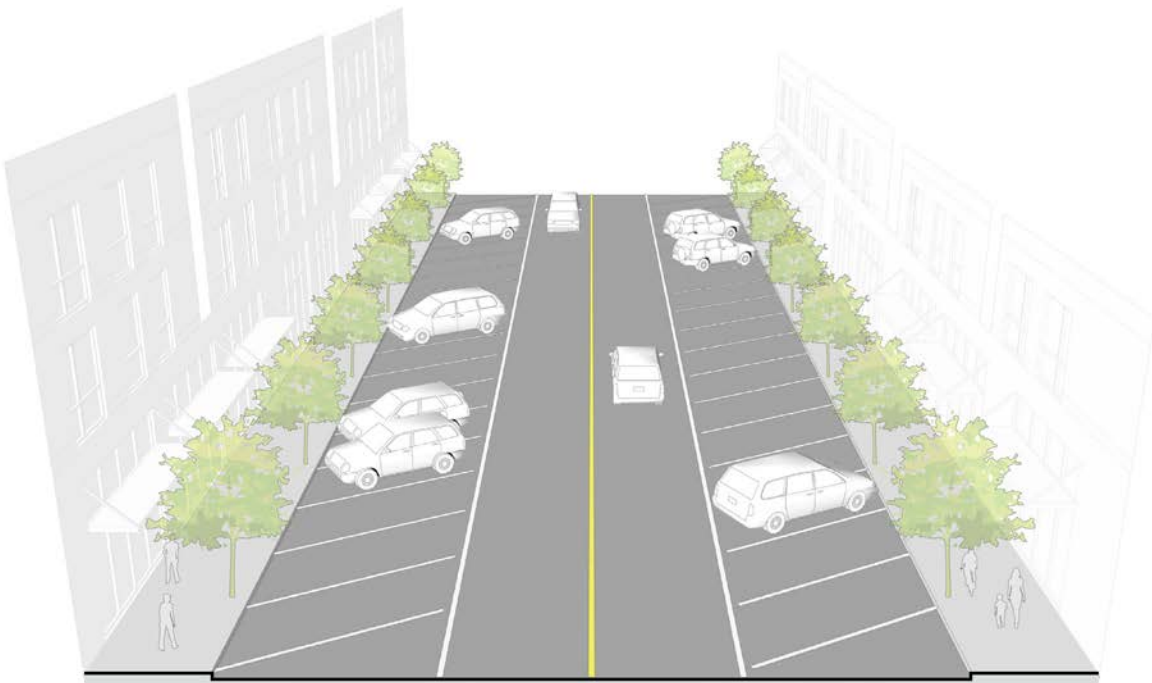


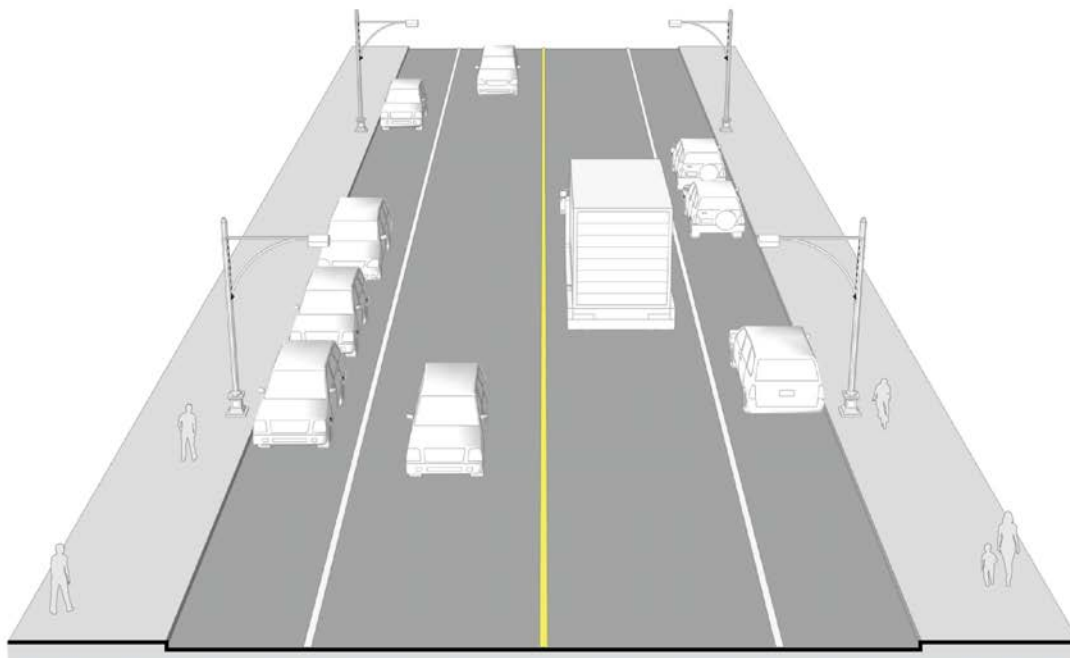
Figure 28: Helena Avenue Conceptual Cross Section (Parking Focused)



Future enhancements to streets in the Trades District can also help communicate the character and feel of the mixing of uses anticipated there. A relatively austere street design, consistent with the warehousing and trades offices uses can accommodate freight delivery and goods movement, while also being consistent with an emerging makers and artisan context. These streets will feel utilitarian, but the provision of on-street parking will also accommodate visitors and add to the feeling of safety for those who will be traveling through the Trades District on foot or by bike.

The design of these streets is intended to be industrial in nature, but the scale of the lane widths, the presence of on-street parking, and the character of street lighting softens the impact. This is consistent with the plan’s recommendation for live-work spaces, artisan studios, galleries, and other, similar uses where projecting an image of rough creativity is important.

Figure 29: Trades District Cross Section



6.2.7 At-Grade Rail Crossings

Retaining the at-grade rail crossings at National Ave, Montana Ave, or Roberts St responds to the participants’ collective preferences, maintaining a local access alternative for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. The neighborhood vocally opposes the closing of Roberts St, confirming its function as an essential local route for accessing the district’s schools, parks, and services. The community similarly voiced support to retain the at-grade crossing at National Ave. There was not unanimous support to retain the at-grade crossing at North Montana Ave, however, with the community divided over the best option.

The City is studying the feasibility of a grade-separated crossing at North Montana and, in coordination with the MPO and MDT, may proceed with design.



6.2.8 Boulder Ave Turn Restrictions

Elimination of left-turn access to eastbound Boulder Ave from southbound Montana Ave will favor access from Lyndale Ave via the new roundabout and reduce traffic conflicts at the Boulder Ave/Montana Ave intersection. While the Five Points study analyzed and ultimately did not recommend restricting left turns at Boulder, subsequent decisions by MDT have concluded the restrictions should be implemented. The roundabout design at Lyndale/Helena may also confirm the need to close left-turn movements at Boulder.

6.2.9 Grid Pattern

Maintaining the district's overall grid connectivity, accommodating incremental change in and intensification of the district's commercial, residential, and educational uses is an important consideration. There are no recommendations to close streets, retaining optimal connectedness and diverse routing options as people move through and within the district. A grade-separated rail crossing at North Montana may impact this, however, eliminating local street access to North Montana along the segment where the grade separation prevents it.

6.2.10 Holistic Parking Strategy

This plan suggests a comprehensive parking strategy, relying on mixing uses to reduce overall parking demand, relaxing required off-street parking requirements to optimize available curb space for on-street parking throughout the Depot District, Trades District, and 6th Ward South, and studying the feasibility of a public parking lot on otherwise underutilized land near the railroad.

6.2.11 Transit Friendliness

Creating a built form compatible with transit services is a foundational principle for a compact business district and neighborhood, particularly here to complement more intense development in the Depot District and Gateway Corridor. This approach to transit-friendly design may encourage less reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and create benefits even before the transit system matures to serve it.

6.3 Utilities and Infrastructure Implications

This is a historic part of Helena, with older infrastructure to manage water, wastewater, and storm sewer needs. Increasing development intensity and a gradual shift to an increased mix of entertainment and professional office development may also cause increased demand for enhanced Internet access. Policies call for systematic assessment and upgrades, as appropriate, focusing on what is needed to address those areas where services may need improvement.

6.3.1 Stormwater

Snowmelt and rain-on-snow events can stress the 6th Ward's storm drain system. The City's efforts to incorporate boulevard streets where appropriate and enhance streetscape environments should help alleviate localized ponding and flooding events.



6.3.2 Broadband access

There are multiple Internet providers in the 6th Ward. Process participants routinely complained of poor Internet access speeds in the district, a problem largely beyond the City's control. It is an important element of educational and business success, so the City may play the role of convenor of a larger conversation to facilitate broadband access to those who need it.

6.4 Economic Development Implications

Plan policies – in the Growth Policy, Urban Renewal Plan, and this subarea plan – call for continued economic prosperity in the 6th Ward, identifying improvements to the district's historic elements, enhancements to its public realm, targeted investment to stimulate business development and retention, and enhancing the district's connection to the rest of Helena while maintaining its unique identity. This subarea plan augments the Growth Policy and Urban Renewal Plan by including specific strategies:

6.4.1 Business Improvement District

A business improvement district can advance the plan's policies to nurture the district's grass-roots commercial energy. A BID can organize and support local retail, entertainment, institutional, and office uses in the Depot District.

6.4.2 Centennial Trail

The community can leverage the Centennial Trail as a vehicle to stimulate a variety of reinvestment in the Recreation District, enlivening Kindrick Field and inviting new uses into the warehouse district there.

6.4.3 Historic Reference, Adaptation and Design

The historic trolley line link to downtown Helena, views of the historic depot and Mt. Helena, the unique street layout, and the scale of the 6th Ward's development offer important and defining design cues the district can incorporate into its branding and future economic identity. In addition, retaining the fine-grained street network and the local access it provides, particularly along Gallatin Ave, Argyle St, Roberts St, and National Ave facilitates commerce in the district. And adaptive reuse of older buildings can accommodate new investment within the context of the district's historic identity.

6.4.4 Incremental Change

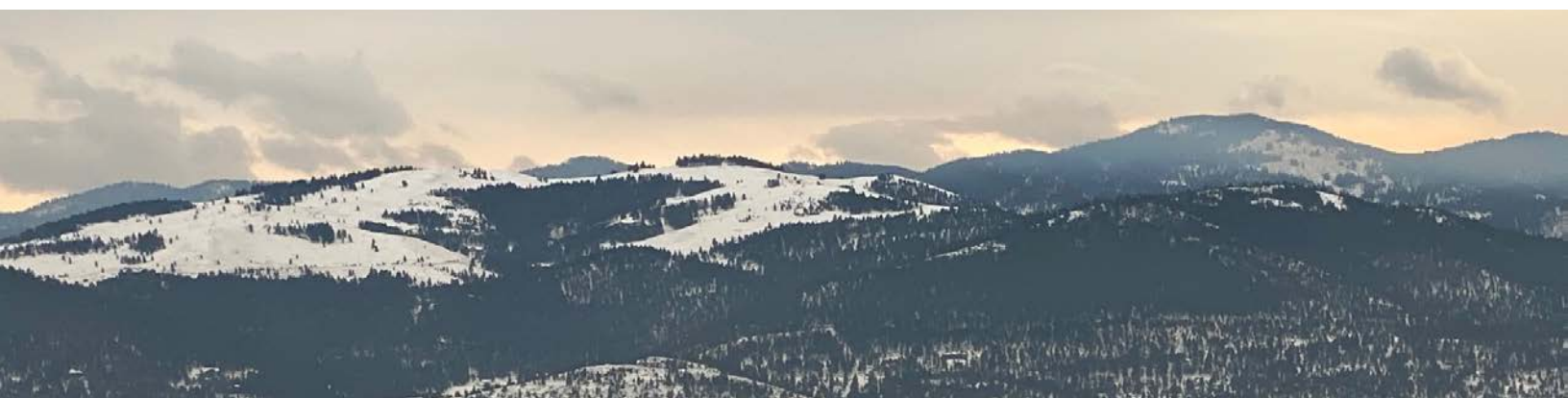
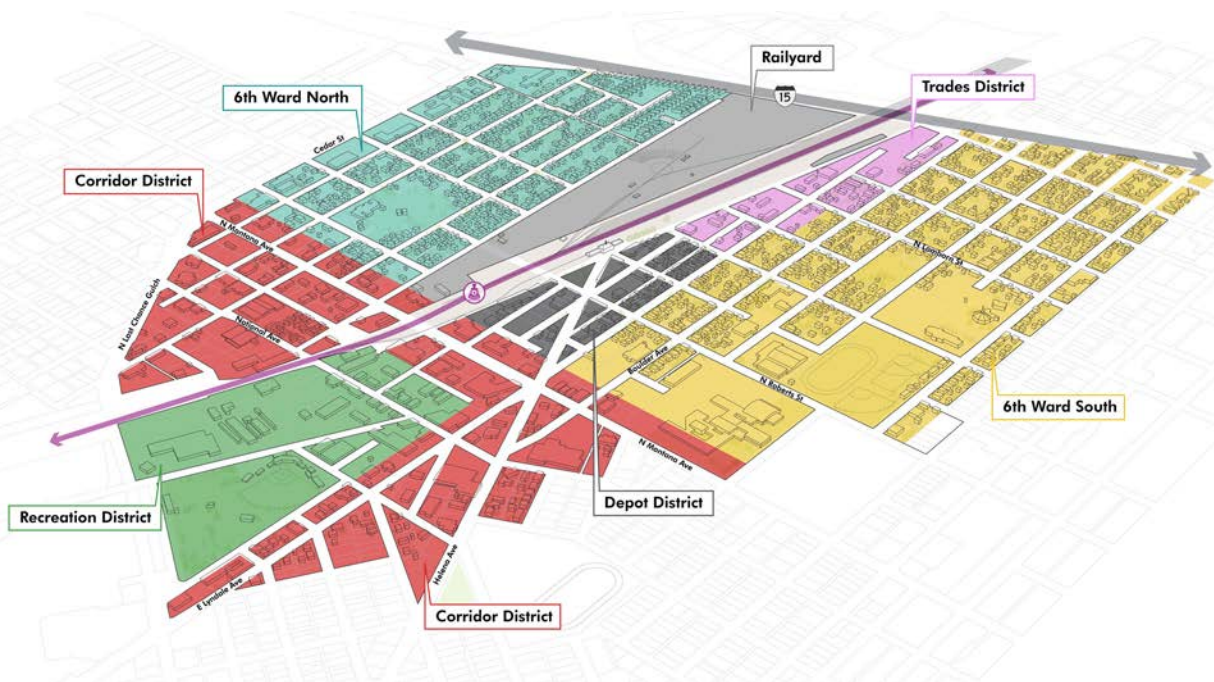
Change happens in small steps over time, and it can sometimes cause discomfort along the way. Parking availability, construction, land use shifts, and the needs of new residents will influence how the district behaves, possibly causing a need to either reexamine or reinforce this plan's recommendations.



7. Zooming In: Neighborhood Focus

The subarea plan’s vision, goals, objectives and implementation strategy knit together a series of actions, many of which rely on a detailed understanding of the 6th Ward’s neighborhoods and a detailed explanation of why they are necessary and how they can actually be accomplished. The following pages explore each of the district’s neighborhoods, confirming the overall vision for each one and how proposed changes may address challenges each neighborhood presents.

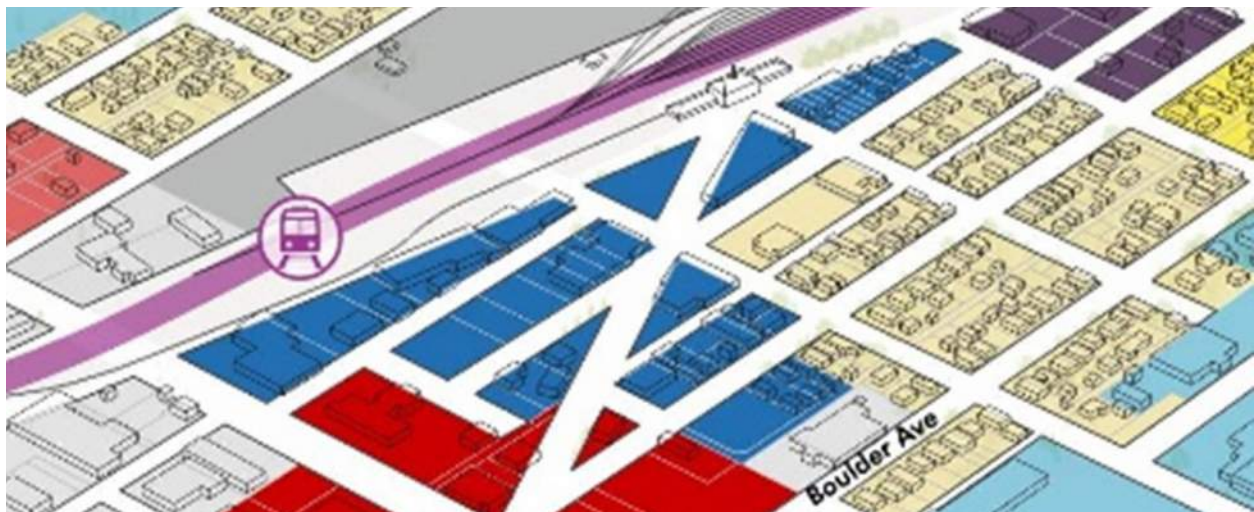
Figure 30: Railroad District Neighborhoods



7.1 Focus: Depot District

From the vision:

The commercial district remains anchored by the historic train depot, with restaurants, bars, hotels, merchants, and warehouses radiating east, south, and west. More contemporary retail, dining, entertainment, and professional office uses fill in the historic storefronts, and new apartments occupy the upper floors. The district becomes vibrant with new morning, day, and evening activity, retaining its quirkiness and character. It remembers its railroad roots, while offering a mix of social, cultural, commercial, and artistic activities unique to this part of town. Improvement of the roundabout at Montana and Lyndale enhances visibility and access into the core, and the Centennial Trail connection welcomes visitors on foot and by bike. Higher-intensity residential areas along the district's south edge bring customers close, within an easy walk of the core's retail and civic spaces.



7.1.2 The Concept

The Depot district builds on its current momentum, sustaining local businesses and providing a range of retail, services, dining, professional office, and entertainment uses. It is an active place, serving residents and visitors alike, referencing its historic identity and staying both hip and funky. It's a place locals cherish, uniquely Helena, with room for experimentation, fun, and a growing community connection.

7.1.3 The Challenges

The Depot District is challenged by its difficulty in access, and this may become even more critical if a grade-separated railroad crossing at North Montana Ave is constructed. The railroad and North Montana Ave present physical barriers to reach the district, making it difficult to navigate into the commercial core for those unfamiliar with it. The effective demand generated by nearby households causes the commercial uses here to rely on visitors, and making the district more accessible to them is key.





The district also has an indistinct presentation of its identity, with historic structures – such as the old train depot – not celebrated to the extent they can be. If the district is to use its historic identity as a foundation for its success, it must honor those historic resources, invest in them, and put them to effective use.

7.1.4 Recommended Changes

This plan’s proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the Depot District. They target:

Land Use and Zoning

New zoning will permit residential uses in those commercial districts where they may not now be allowed.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

Improvements to the Centennial Trail, Malfunction Junction, and Lyndale Ave will

improve roadway and non-motorized access to the district, more effectively connecting it to the west. Access via Bozeman Ave will be eliminated if a grade-separated railroad crossing is constructed, and the planned Centennial Trail crossing at Argyle will also need to be relocated. Retaining the Roberts St rail crossing will ensure residents to the north retain easy access to the district.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

Improvements to Helena Ave to emphasize the historic trolley connection to downtown, to Roberts St to accommodate vehicle and pedestrian flows between the district’s neighborhoods and schools and parks, and to Lyndale Ave to carry eastward traffic from Malfunction Junction into the district will enliven the district and provide opportunities to project its identity in the public realm. In addition, a grade-separated railroad crossing may cause Helena Ave to be incorporated into the Centennial Trail and increase Helena Ave’s importance as a primary district entry from the west.



7.2 Focus: Trades District

From the vision:

South of the railyard and east of the Depot District lies the Trades District. This area mixes small-scale warehousing, trades workshops, artists' studios, and bungalows, with space available for live-work structures, small apartments, and cottages. This is a creative space, with a wide and surprising mix of activities, enjoying its proximity to all of what the Railroad District has to offer. It becomes a vibrant space for artists who wish to live and work where they exhibit, where the retail galleries smell of the furnaces, kilns, and paints used in the creative processes. While the Depot District emerges as the retail center, the Trades District is a working district, where trucks unload, things get made, and visitors to the place expect a degree of roughness and hardscrabble authenticity.



7.2.1 The Concept

The Trades District can offer a range of business and residential opportunities, accommodating the small warehouse, “maker” space, live-work building, artist studio, gallery, or small housing units. It is a neighborhood which can be loud, active, busy, and a little rough around the edges, facilitating creativity and the act of making things. It is part of the district’s destination character, drawing people from around the region to work or cruise artists’ workshops.

7.2.2 The Challenges

To flourish, the Trades District must maintain its commercial access, with a system of streets designed to accommodate the small trucks which are crucial to the district’s success. It should also have direct access to the Centennial Trail, connecting this district across Helena to places such as Memorial Park, Carroll College, the Great Northern District, Helena’s West End, and the Bray Institute.



7.2.3 Recommended Changes

This plan’s proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the Trades District. They target:

Land Use and Zoning

The existing CLM and M-I zoning designations apply restrictions to housing development, impeding the development of smaller residential units and the creation of the type of artist studio, live-work, or “maker” spaces this plan envisions.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

Enhancing access to the Trades District will

involve improvements to the Centennial Trail and a new perspective on Lyndale Avenue and its segment between North Montana Avenue and a new connection to Boulder Avenue. The neighborhood’s interconnected grid is already compatible with the envisioned development types, but Railroad Ave would need an assured future – and a brick street surface – to help this district retain its charm.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

The Trades District streets should have a more industrial feel, accommodating small trucks and consistent with the grittiness associated with foundries, warehousing, working arts districts, and the like. While street trees are a priority in the Depot District, they are less important – though valued – here.



7.3 Focus: 6th Ward North

From the vision:

The northern neighborhood retains its rail worker housing scale and character, with small bungalows and “shotgun” houses serving households of all sizes and economic conditions. Folks who live here appreciate the neighborhood’s edgy vibe, compact form, walkable streets, and easy access to Cedar Street’s commercial corridor to the north and the Depot District to the south. Not much changes here during the planning period, except new houses and apartments get built in forms, scale, and styles similar to those which exist today.



7.3.1 The Concept

This is an eclectic neighborhood, with small lots, smaller housing units of a variety of types, and affordability. There are single-family homes, small apartments, manufactured homes, and townhouses, all mixed into a cohesive residential district tied together by a system of interconnected streets on a rectangular grid. Families walk and ride bikes, using the Roberts St crossing to access the district’s other neighborhoods.

7.3.2 The Challenges

The existing R-2 and “T” transition zoning is inconsistent with the neighborhood’s developed character, effectively making the entire neighborhood nonconforming. This limits reinvestment and directs any new projects to be inconsistent with the developed neighborhood surrounding them. The neighborhood is also reliant on the Roberts St rail crossing, and subject to “cut-through” traffic generated by non-residents looking for ways to bypass the rail crossing on North Montana Ave. Several process participants mentioned property maintenance as an issue here, though the focus seems to be more on ensuring adequate housing condition than on taking care of yards or abandoned vehicles.





7.3.3 Recommended Changes

This plan's proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the 6th Ward North. They target:

Land Use and Zoning

The R-2 and "T" zoning must change, either by creating a new zoning district specifically designed to guide development consistent with the subarea plan's vision or by amending the R-2 district and eliminating the "T" overlay. Standards related to minimum lot size, minimum side setbacks, and permitted land uses should do a better job corresponding to what already exists – a condition neighborhood residents generally appreciate.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

Retaining the Roberts St rail crossing is essential, maintaining a local connection to the commercial and public land uses south of the tracks. Instituting strategies to slow speeds on the neighborhood streets may also help to reduce the amount of "cut-through" traffic.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

There are no specific recommendations to alter the neighborhood's street design, except for finding opportunities to calm traffic in conformance to the City's complete streets principles. The Roberts St rail crossing can be made safer for pedestrians and cyclists, and extending the enhanced treatment of Roberts northward across the tracks and into the 6th Ward North neighborhood would tie this portion of the district more closely to the Depot District and 6th Ward South.



7.4 Focus: 6th Ward South

From the vision:

The southern portion of the planning area is emerging as a center for education and recreation. There are houses here, too, enjoying proximity to the schools, parks, and college and to the commercial districts and Capitol complex further south. There is little to change here during the planning period. But enhancements to the neighborhood's streets facilitate non-motorized access to the local schools and the bustling Depot District. And the upgrading of Lyndale Ave east of the new roundabout relaxes traffic pressure on Boulder Ave, enhancing the pedestrian experience along this important east-west corridor.



7.4.1 The Concept

This is the district's more contemporary residential neighborhood, mixing a variety of residential, public, and institutional land uses on lots and with development conforming to existing zoning standards. The plan concept proposes no changes to this land use pattern, focusing, instead, on enhancing connections between this neighborhood and the rest of the district. This includes ensuring Roberts St serves multi-modal demand and connecting the Centennial Trail and Lyndale Ave to Boulder Ave near I-15.

7.4.2 The Challenges

This district's land use mix puts potentially incompatible land uses next to each other. For example, Helena High School and Helena College's plans may involve development of property now vacant, placing higher-intensity educational activity next to existing single-family homes. Other examples may include the eventual redevelopment of the Corridor District, where land use intensification may create impacts for those uses adjoining it.



7.4.3 Recommended Changes

This plan’s proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the 6th Ward South. They target:

Land Use and Zoning

There are few proposed changes to zoning in this area, except for those portions where the Depot District and Trades District transition along Lyndale Ave and where the R-2 district may now permit a wider variety of attached single-family housing.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

Improvements to the transportation network include aligning Lyndale Ave and

the Centennial Trail to meet Boulder Ave near I-15, facilitating local travel through the Railroad District and enhancing this neighborhood’s connections to the Depot and Trades districts. Improvements to Roberts St may also be considered to ensure it adequately meets the multi-modal demand created by the neighborhood’s schools and encourages connection to the Depot District’s commercial core.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

The streetscape improvements include enhancements to Lyndale Ave to accommodate traffic and inclusion of the Centennial Trail extension which would otherwise rely on Boulder Ave. Lyndale has adequate right of way to carry this additional traffic, and the streetscape design and improvements can complement transitions to both the Depot District and Trades District.



7.5 Focus: The Corridor District

From the vision:

Montana Avenue and Lyndale Street west of the new roundabout are the axes for the corridor district. Much of it also serves as US Highway 12, linking the Railroad District to the east-west highway route. This corridor's new roundabout and "gateway" character set the stage for new types of mixed office, retail, and residential development. The corridor is still predominantly auto and freight oriented, but it is becoming more welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists as improvements are made, new buildings are constructed closer to the sidewalk, and parking is located to the rear, away from the street edge.



7.5.1 The Concept

This district is intended to gradually transform to accommodate mixed commercial, office, and multi-family residential uses on upper floors, lining the highway corridor with more development intensity and forming a "gateway" into Helena for those traveling on US 12. Its mixing of uses will add to the commercial vitality of the corridor and the Depot District, with residents within walking distance of a variety of retail, dining, services, and recreation opportunities. The streetscape is enhanced overall, with landscaping, sidewalks, and other treatments to make this corridor an attractive place for residents.



7.5.2 The Challenges

Today's real estate development trends do not yet support the type of development envisioned here, but conditions change. The vision calls for the placement of storefront-style buildings along the arterial streets, and the current demand for abundant and visible parking for highway travelers make this difficult to achieve. The volume and speed of automotive and freight traffic – and the state Department of Transportation priorities – limit the degree to which non-motorized travel can be accommodated. Prioritizing traffic flow along the highway corridor creates an effective barrier isolating much of the Railroad District from the rest of Helena and discourages the type of mixed-use development envisioned along this segment of Montana Ave and Lyndale Ave.

The potential grade-separated rail crossing adds another dimension. While it may improve the efficiency of the proposed roundabout at Lyndale and Helena, it shifts the proposed alignment of the Centennial Trail crossing at North Montana Ave and places increased demand on Helena Ave to serve as the single point of entry to the Depot District. It also eliminates access to North Montana Ave near the railroad, necessitating new alternatives for those properties which now rely on North Montana Ave for access.

7.5.3 Recommended Changes

This plan's proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the Corridor District. They target:

Land Use and Zoning

This plan recommends the creation of a new corridor-focused zoning district, requiring the ability to incorporate mixed uses, pushing development toward the street, increasing permitted development intensity, instituting architectural design guidance,

and encouraging interparcel connections to reduce reliance on North Montana Ave for all vehicular access. Specific zoning strategies – like establishing minimum building heights, establishing “build-to” lines, eliminating required off-street parking, or prohibiting the location of parking between a building front and the street edge – may help establish a built form more consistent with this pattern. Instituting these standards in a form-based or other zoning construct may also smooth administrative approval of new development if it conforms to adopted standards.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

The Montana State Department of Transportation manages those portions of US 12 along North Montana Ave and Lyndale Ave, so the City's ability to influence design improvements there is limited. The portion of North Montana north of Lyndale warrants special attention as plans for the potential grade-separated rail crossing evolves. North-south auto and freight mobility is a priority on this corridor, and the non-motorized system paralleling it and crossing it will need to adapt – while still creating an environment more compatible with the Corridor District's vision. This emerging approach may influence the way in which the rest of Montana Ave and Lyndale Ave are managed by MDOT, effectively integrating a non-motorized component and enhancing the street environment to complement envisioned land use transformations.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

The three-lane section of North Montana Ave can be designed to encourage new development to approach closer to the street, with pedestrian facilities compatible with mixed-use development. It can also more easily accommodate the proposed pedestrian Centennial Trail crossing near Argyle St and Bozeman St.



7.6 Focus: The Recreation District

From the vision:

Helena's Centennial Trail runs east-west, connecting Helena's western neighborhoods to East Helena. A key portion of the trail runs through the Railroad District, linking Memorial Park and Carroll College to Kindrick Field, the Depot District and Trades District. The Trail connects the Railroad District's business and civic heart to the rest of Helena.



7.6.1 The Concept

This district maintains and enhances its recreational spirit, with the Centennial Trail, Memorial Park, and Kindrick Field offering a rich and active spectrum of recreational opportunities accessible to residents of and visitors to the Railroad District.

7.6.2 The Challenges

The Centennial Trail now terminates in this neighborhood, limiting its potential to attract new users. The neighborhood is also difficult to access, with the Lyndale portion of US 12 and the streets north of it not easily navigable to access recreational opportunities.

7.6.3 Recommended Changes

This plan's proposed implementation actions advance strategic solutions for the Recreation District. They target:



Access, Circulation, and Parking

Most of the plan’s recommendations here focus on providing access to the recreational assets and facilitating development of recreational-oriented activities while also accommodating the existing manufacturing, logistics, and warehousing land uses sharing this space. Maintaining the National Ave rail crossing is important, as is ensuring access to Memorial Drive is enhanced. The Centennial Trail is another critical component, aligning it within existing rights of way to reach North Montana Ave.

Specific Streetscape Improvements

This district’s street character is generally industrial, and the plan proposes no changes to street design. It does, however, propose extending the Centennial Trail along existing rights of way, resulting in targeted trail-related enhancement to portions of National Ave and Argyle St to accommodate the new, extended alignment and emphasize access to recreational or recreation-oriented uses along the way. In some cases, new sidewalks can close gaps where sidewalks do not now exist. In others – particularly where street speeds and vehicle volumes are low – the City may consider shared use arrangements where non-motorized traffic has priority.



8. Implementation

This chapter sets the plan into motion, articulating the neighborhood’s goals, the policies (or objectives) put in place to achieve them, and the specific actions necessary to implement this plan. These actions can be policy initiatives, investment into capital projects, or positioning for strategic partnerships where others may be better equipped to tackle plan priorities.

Implementation actions target infrastructure and institutional roles, reinforcing the physical, economic, social, and agency foundations for the district’s prosperity.

8.1 Roles & Responsibilities

Successful plan implementation requires collaboration and a shared commitment to the plan’s outcomes. While this may be the City of Helena’s plan, it requires action by many other agencies and individuals to become reality.

8.1.1 City of Helena

The City of Helena has land use and transportation jurisdiction throughout the subarea, partnering with the Montana State Department of Transportation on the improvement and maintenance of US Highway 12 along North Montana Ave and Lyndale Ave.

8.1.2 TIF Board

The Urban Revitalization District collects tax increment funds and applies them to support economic development efforts within the district boundaries.

8.1.3 RR District BID

Not yet created, a business improvement district in the 6th ward would collect revenue from businesses within the district – likely drawn closely around the Depot District and potentially including the Trades District – to invest in beautification, maintenance, and business development activities.



8.1.4 Montana Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation has jurisdiction over US Highway 12 and has influence over the alignment and design of streets, walkways, and other improvements providing access to the highway corridor.

8.1.5 Lewis and Clark County Metropolitan Planning Organization

This entity is being formed at the time of the plan’s writing. The MPO will channel federal transportation funds to deserving transportation projects based on a more local understanding of Helena’s needs.

8.1.6 Partner Organizations

Multiple governmental, non-profit, and private organizations may contribute to this plan’s implementation, as appropriate, based on their relationship to implementation commitments and outcomes.

8.2 Implementation Strategy

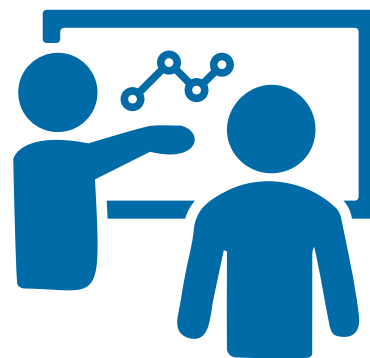
The paragraphs below identify the neighborhood’s priority action items in response to the subarea plan’s goals. Some of the actions are shorter term, focusing on issues which are more immediate.

Others cast a longer-term view, recognizing systemic or complex issues which may take more time and involve more partners to resolve. Where appropriate, this list also draws from the City’s Growth Policy and the adopted Urban Renewal Plan, underscoring their continued relevance in planning for this neighborhood.

They revolve around policy changes, targeted investment, and the formation of partnerships, recognizing the City and community must work at different levels to achieve this plan’s objectives.

Policy-related implementation actions include revisions to the Growth Policy and zoning ordinance, preparation of focused studies, and organizational clarity on transportation system priorities. Investment actions direct capital and operational expenditures, strategically leveraged to maximize impact on the district’s physical landscape and demonstrate unified, coordinated commitment by the City, Tax Increment Financing District, and others, as appropriate. And the partnerships-related implementation actions recognize the need to act collaboratively on many issues, coordinating efforts and resources to address complex challenges and achieve mutually beneficial goals.

Policy references accompany each initiative, listed in the funding table provided at the end of this section. They anchor each recommendation to the subarea plan’s policy direction.



Strategy #1: Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and form a business improvement district (BID).

The City can address nuisance vegetation, stockpiling of refuse, and abandoned vehicles through the adoption of a nuisance ordinance.

Many of the transformational initiatives will rely on TIF leadership and targeted investment, putting the TIF Board in a more publicly visible position. Creating and vetting an integrated investment strategy will help, allowing business owners and residents to participate in determining TIF investment priorities and, on occasion, understanding how private investment may also be leveraged.

Local business owners have initiated efforts to coordinate marketing, branding, and commercial district improvements. It is time to formalize this direction, creating an instrument like a BID to facilitate continued coordination and establish an entity whose purpose is to nurture district businesses, advise on TIF strategy, partner with the City on various initiatives, and invest in the district's prosperity.

Issues Addressed:

Number	Issue
4	TIF Investment Strategy
5	Vehicle Storage
12	Placemaking



Strategy #2: Create streetscape plan and design to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor.

Existing streetscape designs do not support the mix and intensity of uses this plan envisions. Nor do they emphasize the district's and the highway corridor's unique identities. New streetscape designs sensitive to multi-modal needs and gradual adaptive investment will support the new types of uses compatible with the district's historic character.

The City's current initiative to redesign the eastern portion of Helena Ave seeks to enhance the Depot District's look, advancing the plan's objectives to confirm how the district's commercial streets will function, and underscore and enhance the relationship between the Depot District, Railroad Ave, the Centennial Trail, and the Trades District.

Roberts Street is an integral corridor for pedestrians and local traffic crossing the railroad tracks to access their homes, educational institutions, businesses, and public services. Improving the design and upgrading safety features on Roberts Street will allow for better access and provide pedestrians a sense of security.

Lyndale Avenue has two distinctly different personalities in the subarea. To the west of Montana Ave, it accommodates a steady flow of US 12 traffic on four lanes of roadway. To the east, it becomes a less-traveled street, still with abundant right of way but with fewer trips. The design challenge is to create a Lyndale compatible with highway operations for its western half and one better equipped to address the emerging needs of the Railroad District community on the east. In conjunction with the roundabout at Montana Ave, Lyndale will become a primary transportation corridor through the entirety of the Railroad District, accommodating highway traffic west of Montana and accommodating increased use – including school bus traffic – to the east.

A trolley once ran between the depot and downtown along Helena Avenue, transporting new arrivals and freight. This corridor can cement Helena's history through urban design and multimodal improvements, making pedestrian crossing easier and drawing design cues from Mt Helena to the west and the historic depot to the east (*designs to coordinate with City to ensure standards are met*).



Issues Addressed:

Number	Issue
3	Commercial District Identity/Vitality
4	TIF Investment Strategy
7	Neighborhood Character Preservation
8	At-Grade Rail Crossings
9	Stormwater Management
12	Placemaking

Strategy #3: Prepare a non-motorized strategy to complement proposed mobility improvements to North Montana Ave, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and install a Centennial Trail crossing of Montana Ave.

Helena's Five-Points multi-modal traffic study identified the roundabout as the best approach to solve multiple transportation objectives:

- ◆ Improving access to the 6th Ward neighborhoods from Lyndale and Montana Avenues,
- ◆ Maintaining Helena Avenue as a continuous route from the Railroad District to the downtown core through this intersection, and
- ◆ Maintaining acceptable operations for vehicles traveling on Highway 12, a need of the Montana Department of Transportation.

The Five-Points study also calls for a grade-separated railroad crossing at North Montana Ave and a signalized pedestrian crossing of Montana Ave between Lyndale Ave and the railroad. Participants in this process agree on the approach to the Centennial Trail crossing, recommending a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) for pedestrians and cyclists crossing Montana Avenue at the Argyle/Bozeman Street intersection. Many pedestrians and cyclists already use this path as an unofficial Centennial Trail extension. Participants are split on the grade-separated crossing, however, concerned by its access limitations and aware of its benefit to improve mobility. All actions related to this corridor must also be approached in coordination with MDT.



Issues Addressed:

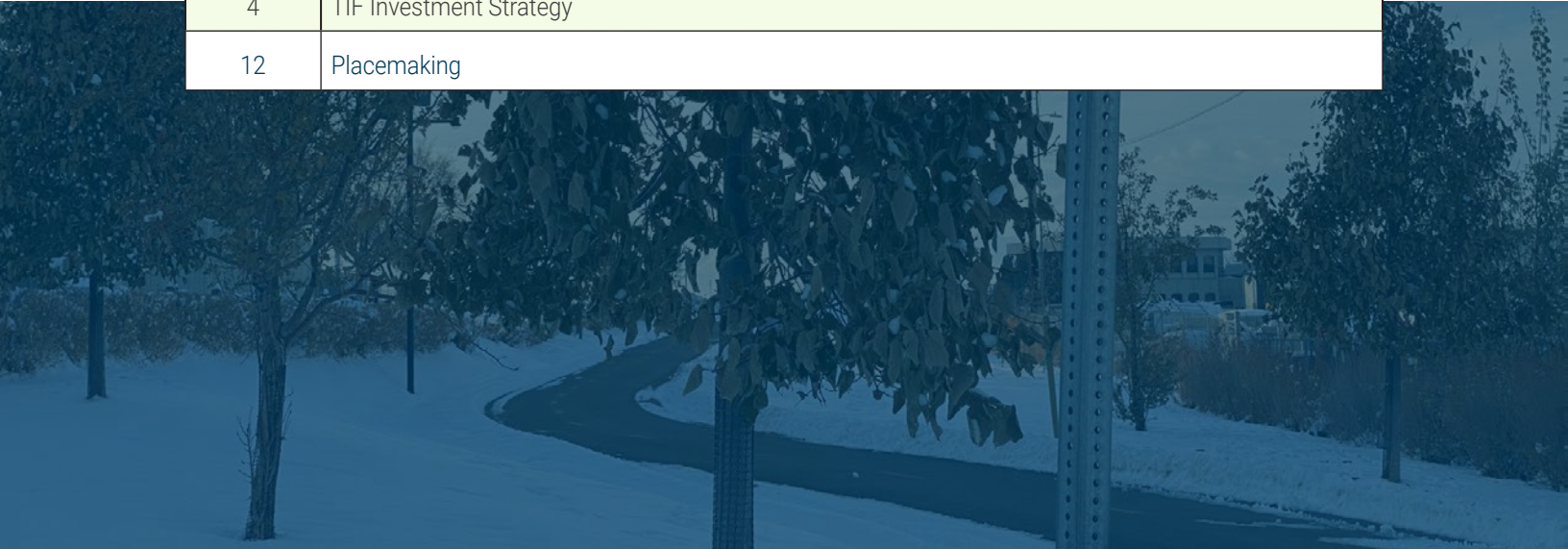
Number	Issue
1	Montana/Helena/Lyndale Intersection
2	Boulder Access
8	At-Grade Rail Crossings
12	Placemaking

Strategy #4: Confirm Centennial Trail alignment through the district, design it, and improve it.

The trail must continue from its existing terminus along public rights of way to reach Montana Ave and its proposed crossing at Argyle/Bozeman . There may also be influences on the final trail alignment based on the outcome of the current grade separation feasibility study, shifting the trail either north or south from its proposed Argyle/Bozeman crossing. This design effort will confirm the trail alignment through the entirety of the district, informing street design along the trail’s route and providing an opportunity to coordinate with adjoining property owners to maximize the trail’s positive impact.

Issues Addressed:

Number	Issue
3	Commercial District Identity/Vitality
4	TIF Investment Strategy
12	Placemaking



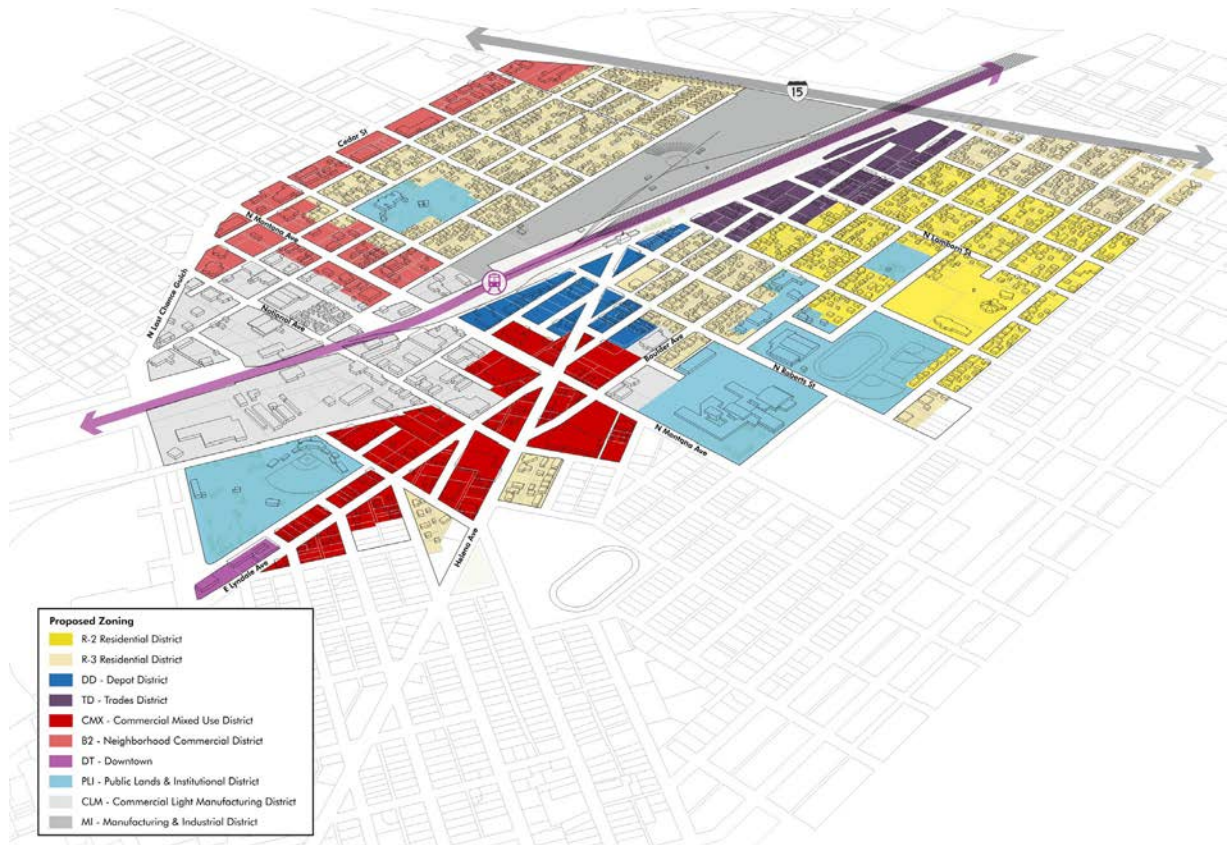
Strategy #5: Update zoning throughout the subarea, particularly in the Depot, Trades, and Corridor Districts.

The 6th Ward’s existing zoning renders much of the existing development patterns and types nonconforming and deters new revitalization opportunities. New development standards and land use permissions are necessary to achieve the potential this plan envisions.

Issues Addressed:

Number	Issue
3	Commercial district identity/vitality
6	Housing attainability
7	Neighborhood character preservation
10	Zoning and intensity
11	Zoning and built character compatibility
12	Placemaking

Figure 31: Proposed Zoning



8.3 Funding

The table below summarizes the various plan implementation actions, linking them to the subarea plan’s goals, indicating their relative timing, and identifying parties responsible for them. The City’s capital improvement program will take steps to implement recommendations, specifying timeline, investment, and responsibility.

The table here lists each of the proposed implementation actions, the goals and policies they implement, their anticipated timing in terms of short, medium, and long-range, those responsible for implementing them, and potential funding sources. The short, medium and long-range timing (abbreviated S, M, and L) correspond to 0 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years, and 11+ years from the date of this plan’s adoption.

Table 4: Implementation Matrix Abbreviations	
Abbreviation	Meaning
S	Short Range (0 – 5 years)
M	Medium Range (6 – 10 years)
L	Long range (11 + years)
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
HSIP	Highway Safety Improvement Program
MDT	Montana State Department of Transportation
NH	National Highway Performance Program
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
RURD/TIF	Railroad Urban Renewal District/Tax Increment Financing
SWBID	Sixth Ward Business Improvement District
TA	Transportation Alternatives Program



Table 5: Implementation Matrix

	Action	Issue(s)	Objective(s)	Timing (S, M, L)	Responsibility	Funding
1	Adopt specific strategies to address community decay and vacant properties, guide TIF investment, and form a business improvement district (BID).					
	Adopt a robust community decay and vacant property ordinance	4, 5, 12	1.1, 2.4, 5.8			
	Produce and vet a TIF investment strategy	4, 5, 12	1.5, 3.5, 4.5, 4.8, 5.4, 5.8	S	City	City
	Form a business improvement district	4, 5, 12	5.5	S, M	City	City, SWBID
2	Create streetscape plan and design consistent with complete streets policy to match vision in the Depot District and Trades District, Roberts St corridor, the Lyndale corridor, and the Helena Ave corridor.					
	Prepare a streetscape plan for the Depot District and Shops District	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12	3.2, 3.4, 4.2, 4.8, 5.6	S	City, RURD, MDT	City, RURD/TIF
	Design the Roberts St corridor	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12	2.2, 4.2, 4.8, 5.6	S	City, RURD, MDT	City, RURD/TIF
	Design the Lyndale Ave corridor	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12	2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8, 5.1	S	City, RURD, MDT	City, RURD/TIF
	Design the Helena Ave corridor, with improvements per Five-Points study	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12	1.2, 1.3, 3.2, 4.2, 4.4, 4.8, 5.8	S, M	City, RURD, MDT	City, RURD/TIF
3	Implement complete streets policy for Montana Ave between Lyndale and Cedar, design and construct the roundabout at Malfunction Junction, and verify alignment of and construct the Centennial Trail crossing of North Montana Ave.					
	Redesign Montana Ave consistent with complete streets policy	1, 2, 8, 12	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2, 5.6	M	MDT, MPO	MPT, Discretionary Grant Funding, CMAQ
	Design and construct the Montana Ave Roundabout	1, 2, 8, 12	3.2, 5.6	M, L	MDT, MPO	MPO, Discretionary Grant Funding, NH, CMAQ
	Verify and construct the Centennial Trail crossing at Montana Ave	1, 2, 8, 12	2.1, 3.1, 3.4, 4.2, 4.8	S	City, MDT	City, RURD/TIF, TA, NH, HSIP



Table 5: Implementation Matrix

	Action	Issue(s)	Objective(s)	Timing (S, M, L)	Responsibility	Funding
Confirm Centennial Trail alignment through the district, design it, and improve it.						
4	Study and confirm the Centennial Trail alignment through the district	3, 4, 12	1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6	S	City, MDT, MPO	City, RURD/ TIF, TA, NH, HSIP
	Improve the Centennial Trail through the district	3, 4, 12	1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6	M	City, MDT	City, RURD/ TIF, TA, NH, HSIP
Update zoning in the Depot District, Shops District, and Corridor District.						
5	Update zoning to match land use and development standards with proposed vision	3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12	4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.8	S	City, Property Owners	Discretionary Grant Funding, City, RURD/ TIF



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APPENDICES



SCJ ALLIANCE
CONSULTING SERVICES



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Michael Alvarez

From: Megan Malkin <malkinhouse@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2025 3:01 PM
To: Michael Alvarez
Subject: Railroad District/6th Ward Neighborhood Plan

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

As a business owner in the Railroad District, I am excited about the attention the neighborhood has been getting from the City of Helena through this planning process. I have worked for the last 6 1/2 years to not only grow my business in this neighborhood, but promote community events, beautification through completing two street art murals, initiating community garden planting projects, and organizing and paying for neighborhood summer night markets, a bicycle parade in 2020, giving campaigns for United Way, Food Share, and The Friendship Center plus annual neighborhood Christmas events! I actively pursue working relationships with other business owners, current residents, and property owners. My believe my little shop has become a destination in the district after a lot of time, service, marketing and perseverance. I have a nagging concern about continued business access to my shop's street with future plans of the large roundabout at Malfunction Junction as well as the proposed underpass on N. Montana simultaneously, as both would cause significant impact on traffic flow and could hinder my ability to continue growing my business and serving my neighbors here...which in turn would have a negative ripple effect on neighborhood events and beautification projects in the future.

There are many helpful ideas and recommendations in the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan, and I support the continued organic growth and changes that will come as is expected over time. I would urge a closer study on keeping access to Bozeman Street open if possible or provide alternate access. Additionally, mixing commercial/retail with residential in future developments seems to go against the grain of the neighborhood's historic layout, character and use. There is a distinct Business area covering 4 main streets, Helena Ave., Bozeman Street, Gallatin Ave. and Railroad Ave. The rest is residential and ought to remain as such. Infilling vacant lots with dwellings of similar size, height, and visual appeal to blend seamlessly would be the ideal. Distinct zoning recommendations are not mine to give, as there are others more versed in the nuances and expertise to create useful changes that still serve district business areas as well as the unique residential areas within the Railroad District. I am hopeful for the future of this special corner of Helena and excited to get to work on the collaboration and communication it will take to create a place that when it is spoken of, a smile will play at the corners of your mouth and you can't help but beam with pride for all the good that has been purposefully created here Through connection and thoughtful planning we build families, businesses, and neighborhoods that will thrive and bring joy for hopefully, many generations to come!

Michael Alvarez

From: Samuel Brown <deltadesignsmt@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 31, 2024 5:55 AM
To: Michael Alvarez
Cc: Wilmot Collins
Subject: Bravo! Railroad/Midtown Plans!

Some people who received this message don't often get email from deltadesignsmt@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Greetings,

It's time to unite and bridge this infrastructure gap.

Let me first say, I have not gone entirely over the plans in depth. However, I wanted to get a letter out while I had a window. I will go over the plans entirely when time willing.

My name is Samuel Albert Brown and I was born and raised in Helena. Some of my childhood was spent riding my bike through the abandoned rail yard which is now Great Northern town center. Imagine if it had never been done.

I have spent time working on several civil engineering projects in and around Helena for MDT as a Civil Engineering Tech, Bridge Design Intern, and a Design Engineering Intern. I have also served temporarily on the Helena Citizens Council as well as been an active member of the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority. Moreover, I currently live in the designated area of consideration. This project feels near and dear to me and has so for some time.

I have been an advocate for the reintroduction of passenger rail service through Helena for going on fifteen years. I have spent hours reading feasibility reports from Amtrak and MDT regarding potential benefits as well as concerns. In my search for greater understanding surrounding the debate, I have personally asked others in the local community how they feel about these potential changes and found everyone I spoke with liked the idea and that there was not one person that wouldn't want it completed.

I am very pleased with the Railroad/midtown plans. I am so grateful and excited to see action in motion. To be as brief as possible, I agree with a roundabout at Montana and Lyndale for several reasons. These traffic dampening devices have several proven benefits. A major benefit being traffic congestion reduction which is a no-brainer.

Respectfully, I see this as a multi-point plan that takes several issues into consideration as you're well aware. As I mentioned, I have spent a significant of time in the area and considered many things often walking the grounds considering my civil design experience.

I would like to offer some humble suggestions from what I see. The development of this area has been a personal vision of mine for many years. I can see a beautiful community center and transportation hub in my mind. That beings said, with all the considerations necessary I would like to hope we get it *all* right the first time.

I believe with the reintroduction of the North Cost Hiawatha Rail line several things will subsequently fall into place. From all my experience at transportation chasing my tail on getting projects approved and getting the gears turning it inevitably came back to the heart of infrastructure and that is rail. Getting Lewis and Clark Co. to approve this is a final piece in this puzzle will help free up so many other industries that may seem stagnant. All other counties on the route are in approval. I have witnessed firsthand the frustration of engineers hung up on projects because this is project is at the heart and not getting direction. I understand BNSF MRL like the idea because it would only improve their rial systems.

As a Helena, Montana, and US citizen I declare our community is entitled to significant grants available now for this project that I have seen listed for exactly these purposes and still are unutilized. As I see it, this is a win-win for our people and our local, state, and national economy, and possibly further. Furthermore, I feel this joint project is an inevitability for our city and we may be negligent not to approve it and move forward on it.

Given the scope of this project I feel that the Montana Ave. rail underpass needs to be done in succession. Here is one thought, on the SE corner of Montana and Phoenix is J&D Auto Sales. If there is any possible way that they would be willing to sell this location the property sitting just east of it is owned by BNSF and could be used as lease. This area could provide staging area for the underpass construction and later serve as a city park/walkway from the rial depot to the brewery as well as the Helena trail system. I am big time walker. I very much believe in the future of our health and trail systems. Let us set an example and provide people the clean and healthful environment our constitution grants us. We can do this through greater park and walkway provisions. Just think of all the cost savings for medical bills from all the happy healthy people.

I think a ped path over the MT underpass would be needed. Furthermore, I would consider a potential ped path over MT ave. south of the proposed roundabout. Walking is a big deal. People need pathways more than ever. I know people that simply do not walk because they do not want to cross MT ave.

Thank You!!!!!!

PS

I was a little disappointed that SJC Alliance got this work rather than local folks, but I get it.

Other thoughts**

(Underground) parking garage somewhere in the area.

Rebuild cobblestone road on railroad ave. to its original condition as best as possible with walks and recreational area.

I would like to see the streetlamps consistent with those on Rodney ave. in this project.

And maybe a statue or fountain representing unity in the center of the roundabout ..

something good. Water features need to be present as well as functioning water fountains.

More other thoughts.. getting into the weeds a bit here but anyway it crossed my mind.

((Retool Gods love into more of a hostel (respectfully) or possibly convert underutilized hotels into hostels.

Create public employe positions to address homelessness issues.))

Samuel A. Brown

Sbrown4@mtech.edu

4064222614



Samuel Albert Brown

DeltaDesignsMT@gmail.com

<https://www.deltadesignsmt.com>

Michael Alvarez

From: Lucas Wallace <lucasalanwallace@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 9, 2025 5:52 PM
To: Michael Alvarez
Subject: Comments on the Railroad Neighborhood Plan

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Michael,

More so than zoning I think what stifles commercial development in these historic neighborhoods is minimum parking requirements. Here is a 4000sq ft restaurant on a 7500 sq ft lot. But our minimum parking requirement for a restaurant is 14 spaces per 1000 sq ft, which can be reduced to 50% if all the conditions are met. This building would need at least 28 off street parking spaces - The parking lot alone would be over 8000 sq ft- you would need at least a 12,000 sq ft lot to build this building. None of the lots down here are that big, and a 1000 sq ft restaurant - which is all you could fit on this lot with our current parking minimums - is probably not viable.



Recommendations from Rose Casey. Resident of sixth ward for 45 years.

- There is already a traffic light at the intersection of MT Ave and Livingston. Reopen Livingston Avenue to allow traffic to flow through the parking lot of Helena High School so that traffic on Montana Avenue can easily access Helena College, Bryant School and Helena High School. This will relieve the congestion of cars trying to reach these destinations via Boulder Avenue from Montana Avenue. And it would be an excellent route for school buses going to Bryant. A few speed bumps in the current HS parking lot would keep traffic slowed. This would be an excellent additional way to access the sixth ward and its schools.
- Helena Avenue needs to remain open on both sides of Malfunction Junction! Helena Avenue is going to be the main corridor for tourists to access the city's new tourism attractions in the railroad district and will also be the main corridor for accessing the downtown from the depot area. Helena Avenue is one of Helena's oldest roadways and creates a strong historical, visual statement for people heading towards the depot on Helena Avenue. It is also part of a prominent tourism triangle that connects the downtown to the depot, then heads north up Roberts St. to the state capital and over again to the downtown. It's the perfect triangular route for a tour train or trolley.
- I know that you agree that there needs to be better access into the sixth ward and that you favor a roundabout at malfunction junction. And that you are about to approve yet ANOTHER study about this intersection. BUT it would likely be years until a roundabout could happen, I offer you an alternative solution until the results of your plan come in. Because as you know, malfunction junction actually works pretty well right now. With the addition of another cycle on the traffic light, cars could safely turn from Lyndale into the sixth ward and also turn left to head north onto MT Ave. Please have your engineers study this option:
- HELENA AVE from sixth ward: there are 2 lanes now, make the left lane a left turn only lane for traffic heading south on MT Ave. The right lane would go straight across Helena Ave or turn right onto Lyndale or MT Ave.
- LYNDAL E EAST BOUND: allow traffic in the left lane to move by itself and turn left into the sixth ward or left onto MT Ave. or go straight through heading south on MT Ave. (And Lyndale next to Caird property should be a one way street heading east for one block.)
- Then MT AVE north bound would move by itself and its left lane traffic would be allowed to turn left onto Helena Ave or keep going straight onto Lyndale.
- Then MT Ave South bound traffic would also move by itself and its left lane could turn into the sixth ward. Or traffic could go straight heading south on MT Ave.
- Livingston Ave would be reopened to allow left turn traffic to enter the sixth ward via the HS parking lot. Which would now be a street with traffic bumps.

Michael Alvarez

From: Bob Goodwyn <bob@stonetreeclimbing.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 11:01 AM
To: Michael Alvarez
Cc: Sean Logan
Subject: Public Comment - 6th Ward Transportation & CSPACE

You don't often get email from bob@stonetreeclimbing.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Subject: Public Comment for February 19 & 24 Meetings

Dear Mr. Alvarez,

My name is Bob Goodwyn, and I am a resident of Helena at 528 Highland Street, as well as the co-owner and manager of Stonetree Climbing Center, located at 1222 Bozeman Ave in Helena's 6th Ward. I would like to submit the following public comments ahead of the **February 19 Administrative Meeting** and the **February 24 Commissioner Meeting**.

1. Railroad Crossing Elimination Program Grant & Railroad District Neighborhood Plan

As a business located on Bozeman Avenue, perpendicular to Montana Avenue, our best public exposure and primary customer access comes from north-south traffic along Montana Avenue. I fully understand the safety concerns and long-term benefits of an improved railroad crossing on Montana Ave. However, I also recognize that changes to the road grade would likely eliminate vehicle access from Montana Avenue onto Bozeman Avenue, which would significantly impact all businesses on our block.

If this project moves forward, I respectfully ask that the city consider mitigating the impact on local businesses through thoughtful improvements to the 6th Ward. Two ideas have emerged in discussions with fellow residents, business operators, and commercial property owners:

- **Extend the Centennial Trail through the 6th Ward.** Connecting the Centennial Trail from its terminus on National Avenue would not only enhance connectivity but also provide safer, bike- and pedestrian-friendly access to our district. A well-integrated trail system is proven to boost foot traffic for local businesses, especially for recreation-based businesses like Stonetree, by making the area more accessible and attractive to families, visitors, and outdoor enthusiasts.
- **Redirect through-traffic from Boulder Avenue to Helena Avenue.** Boulder Avenue currently serves as a key access route for Bryant Elementary, Helena High School, and Carroll College, creating safety concerns due to high traffic volumes. Shifting through-traffic to Helena Avenue would not only improve safety for students and pedestrians but also restore Helena Avenue's role as a primary corridor, enhancing visibility and accessibility for businesses in our growing 6th Ward district.

2. Parking Design on Helena Avenue

As a separate but related concern, I want to highlight a safety issue with the recent redesign of parking along Helena Avenue between Montana Avenue and Roberts Street. The angled parking configuration does not account for the width of the street, making it unsafe.

Helena Avenue is frequently used by Montana-sized, larger than average vehicles, including four-door pickup trucks with extended beds, Capital Transfer's semi-trucks, and Montana Capitol maintenance vehicles. The current layout does not provide sufficient space for two parked vehicles on either side while still allowing two lanes of traffic to pass safely. This oversight creates a hazardous situation for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians alike.

I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with the **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Board** in our neighborhood about allocating funds to reassess and improve this parking design. To my knowledge, they have not met in a long time.

3. Support for CPACE Program in Helena

I recently attended a Helena Hometown meeting where Adam Gill spoke about **CSPACE** (Commercial Property Assessed Capital Enhancements), a Montana Facility Finance Authority program designed to provide financing for energy-efficient upgrades to commercial properties. I strongly support adopting CSPACE in **Helena and, ideally, across Lewis & Clark County**.

Adam noted that while some counties have opted out of CSPACE, individual cities—such as Whitefish and Kalispell in Flathead County—have successfully implemented the program. If county-wide adoption is not feasible at this time, I encourage the city to move forward independently. CSPACE would be an invaluable tool for business owners seeking to improve their properties while reducing long-term operating costs.

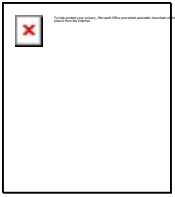
Acknowledgment & Appreciation

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to **Commissioner Sean Logan** for attending our **6th Ward Neighborhood Meeting** this past Monday evening. His willingness to engage with our community, listen to our ideas, and guide us through the process of working with the City Commission was greatly appreciated. His time and insights were invaluable, and I want to acknowledge his commitment to supporting local residents and businesses.

Thank you for your time and for ensuring these comments are shared with the appropriate individuals. I appreciate your consideration and your service to the Helena community.

Best regards,
Bob Goodwyn

Owner, Stonetree Climbing & Fitness
bob@stonetreeclimbing.com
Cell: [406-350-1833](tel:406-350-1833)



Michael Alvarez

From: Capital Transfer & Storage <jhorne6729@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 12:01 PM
To: Michael Alvarez
Cc: bob@stonetreeclimbing.com
Subject: Fw: Public Comment - 6th Ward Transportation & CPACE

You don't often get email from jhorne6729@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mr. Alvarez

I would like you to know that we are in full agreement with Mr. Goodwyn on his comments and concerns about the future use of the area. Although most of our business takes place through out the Helena area the loss of access from Montana Ave to our business property would have devastating effect on how we operate our business. It will become nearly impossible for us to remain in our current location .The only thing that would be worse is to lose the ability to use the Roberts Street crossing in conjunction with Montana Ave access.

Thank you for your time and service to look into this project.

John L. Horne (HORNE)
operations manager
Capital Transfer & Storage
1316 Bozeman Ave.
Helena, Montana
406-442-3970 office
406-459-5708 cell

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Bob Goodwyn <bob@stonetreeclimbing.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 11:07:02 AM MST
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment - 6th Ward Transportation & CPACE

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Bob Goodwyn <bob@stonetreeclimbing.com>
Date: Thu, Feb 6, 2025 at 11:00 AM
Subject: Public Comment - 6th Ward Transportation & CPACE
To: Michael Alvarez <MALVAREZ@helenamt.gov>
Cc: slogan@helenamt.gov <slogan@helenamt.gov>

Subject: Public Comment for February 19 & 24 Meetings

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Best regards,
Bob Goodwyn

Owner, Stonetree Climbing & Fitness

bob@stonetreeclimbing.com

Cell: 406-350-1833



Independent Record

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

See Proof on Next Page

Helena Independent Record
2222 N. Washington St
Helena, Montana 59602
(123) 456-7890

State of Florida, County of Broward, ss:

Megan Villanueva, being first duly sworn, deposes and says: That (s)he is a duly authorized signatory of Column Software, PBC, duly authorized agent of Helena Independent Record, a newspaper of general circulation published that is a "legal newspaper" as that is published daily in the City of Helena, in the County of Lewis and Clark, State of Montana, and has charge of the Advertisements thereof.

If this certification is for the State of Montana, I hereby certify that I have read sec. 18-7-204 and 18-7-205 , MCA, and subsequent revisions, and declare that the price or rate charged the State of Montana for the publication for which claim is made in printed copy in the amount of \$24.00 , is not in excess of the minimum rate charged any other advertiser for publication of advertisement, set in the same size type and published for the same number of insertions, further certify that this claim is correct and just in all respects, and that payment or credit has not been received.

PUBLICATION DATES: March. 8 2025

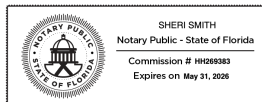
NOTICE ID: aqMzmfAYMiixZL58zv8z

PUBLISHER ID: COL-MT-200999

NOTICE NAME: Railroad District Neighborhood Plan Adoption

Publication Fee: \$24.00

(Signed) Megan Villanueva



VERIFICATION

State of Florida
County of Broward

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me on this: 03/11/2025

S. Smith

Notary Public
Notarized remotely online using communication technology via Proof.

Notice of Public Hearing

The Helena City Commission will hold a public hearing on Monday, March 24, 2025, at 6pm in person in the Commission Chambers, Rm. 330, 316 N Park Ave, and via the ZOOM platform. The meeting will serve to consider the following proposal:

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE RAILROAD DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN BY AMENDING THE 2019 CITY OF HELENA GROWTH POLICY FOR ITS INCLUSION

This meeting can be accessed via the online meeting platform Zoom at:

<https://zoom.helenamt.gov/c/36053471/publicmeetings>

For further information on this proposal, please contact the Community Development Department located in the City-County Building, 316 N Park Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623 or by calling (406) 447-8490

Dannai Clayborn
City Clerk

Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the City's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Ellie Ray, 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.

March 8, 2025 COL-MT-200999 MNAXLP

The Railroad District Neighborhood Plan is available!

Visit BeHeardHelena.com



**WE ARE SEEKING
YOUR FEEDBACK!**

City of Helena -- Community Development Dept

Plan Addresses:

- Housing
- Business
- Transportation
- And more!

Questions? Contact:
Michael Alvarez, Planner II

(406) 447-8459

malvarez@helenamt.gov



CITY OF HELENA
City-County Consolidated Planning Board
December 17, 2024 – 6:00 PM
Commission Chambers, City-County Building Rm 330
[Recording Available Here](#)

Members Present: Quinlan O'Connor, Chair; Gene Walborn, City Representative; Austin Kidd-Anderson, City Representative; James Sonntag, County Representative

Members Absent: Lois Steinbeck, Vice Chair; Adrienne Cotton, County Representative; Sharlet Berensten, County Representative; Joseph Gilbert; Conservation District Representative

City Staff Present: Michael Alvarez, Planner II; April Sparks, Administrative Assistant III; Christopher Brink, Community Development Director

County Staff Present: None

Call to Order and Roll Call

(0:00:06) The meeting was called to order and roll was taken. Only four members were present, and a quorum was not met.

Regular Items

Public Hearings

- 1. Make a recommendation on a resolution recommending an amendment to the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy to include the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan.**

(0:01:18) Michael Alvarez, Planner II, introduced the consultant, Bill Grimes of SCJ Alliance. Mr. Grimes gave a presentation outlining the process and resulting Railroad Neighborhood plan given to the Board for review prior to the meeting.

(0:35:23) The Board was invited to ask questions of Mr. Grimes. Mr. Sonntag asked about the public health component of the study. Mr. Grimes noted that this plan is augment policies that are already in the urban renewal plan, which speaks to storm water, utility provision, and traffic safety. Mr. Grimes continued that in terms of public health, finding ways to help create more active lifestyles by mixing uses, creating a transportation environment so children are safe is more the focus of the plan. Mr. Sonntag asked a follow-up question related to the proposed roundabout at malfunction junction. Mr. Alvarez stated that there is no current scheduling for a roundabout at that intersection, and that there is currently a planning grant for a North Montana underpass. He also noted a change from the original version of the plan distributed and why figure 21 on page 70 was replaced. There were no further questions.

- (0:39:23)** John Andrew of the HCC and Lucy Richards of the City Planning Commission both made public comments. There was no further comment, and it was noted that there would be additional time for public comment at the next hearing for this item, and that the presentation would be made available for the absent board members to review.

Other Business

- (0:42:23)** There was no other business. It was noted the next scheduled meeting is January 21, 2025 and that it is a mandatory meeting. Agenda items would be announced at a later date.

Public Comment

- (0:43:15)** There was no public comment.

Adjournment

- (0:43:28)** The meeting was adjourned.

DRAFT

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF INTENTION TO ADOPT THE RAILROAD DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN AND AMEND THE 2019 CITY OF HELENA GROWTH POLICY FOR ITS INCLUSION.

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, the Helena City Commission adopted a Growth Policy by Resolution No. 20593, referred to as the "2019 Growth Policy";

WHEREAS, Chapter 3 of the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy encourages that neighborhood centers be located, and promoted through the creation of neighborhood plans;

WHEREAS, §76-1-601(4) (a) and (b), MCA, contains the provisions and criteria to allow neighborhood plans as part of a Growth Policy and §76-1-603, MCA, outlines the procedures for adopting or amending a Growth Policy;

WHEREAS, the contracted consultant, SCJ Alliance, held a series of stakeholder meetings, a three-day public studio within the district, met with local advisory councils and boards, partner agencies, and the City of Helena-Lewis and Clark County Consolidated Planning Board; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing on this proposed amendment was held in the Commission Chambers in the City-County Building at 316 North Park Avenue, in Helena, Montana, by the City of Helena-Lewis and Clark County Consolidated Planning Board on December 17, 2024, and said hearing was continued on January

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

21, 2025;

WHEREAS, said Planning Board, voted to recommend the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan, attached hereto and by this reference made a part hereof, be included as part of the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy on January 21, 2025;

WHEREAS, said Planning Board approved a resolution on February 18, 2025, to recommend the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan be included as part of the 2019 City of Helena Growth; and

WHEREAS, it appears to be in the best interest of the citizens of the City of Helena that the 2019 Growth policy be amended in accordance with §§76-1-601(4)(a) and (b) and 76-1-603, MCA, to include the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan into the Growth Policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA:

Section 1. It is the intention of the Helena City Commission, pursuant to §§76-1-601(4)(a) and (b), MCA, to adopt the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan for the area indicated in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and by this reference made a part hereof.

Section 2. It is the intention of the Helena City Commission, pursuant to §76-1-604, MCA, to amend the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy to include the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan for the

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____
area indicated in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and by this reference
made a part hereof.

Section 3. A public hearing on this resolution shall be held before the Helena City Commission in its chambers at 316 North Park Avenue in Helena Montana on **March 24, 2025 at 6:00p.m.**

PASSED AND EFFECTIVE BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA, THIS 24th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2025.

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CLERK OF THE COMMISSION

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

Exhibit 'A'



The 6th Ward boundaries are Last Chance Gulch to the West, Cedar to the North, Highway 287, Butte Avenue to the South, and 13th Street to the Southwest corner.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2019 CITY OF HELENA GROWTH POLICY TO INCLUDE THE RAILROAD DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN.

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, the Helena City Commission adopted a Growth Policy by Resolution No. 20593, referred to as the "2019 Growth Policy"; **and**

WHEREAS, Chapter 3 of the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy encourages that neighborhood centers be located, and promoted through the creation of neighborhood plans; and

WHEREAS, §76-1-601(4) (a) and (b), MCA, contains the provisions and criteria to allow neighborhood plans as part of a Growth Policy and §76-1-603, MCA, outlines the procedures for adopting or amending a Growth Policy;

WHEREAS, the contracted consultant, SCJ Alliance, held a series of stakeholder meetings, a three-day public studio within the district, met with local advisory councils and boards, partner agencies, and the City of Helena-Lewis and Clark County Consolidated Planning Board; and

WHEREAS, on this proposed amendment was held in the Commission Chambers in the City-County Building at 316 N Park Ave, in Helena, MT, by the City of Helena-Lewis and Clark County Consolidated Planning Board on December 17, 2024, and said hearing was continued on January 18, 2025; and

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

WHEREAS, this matter was brought before the City of Helena-Lewis and Clark Consolidated Planning Board in a public hearing held in the Commission Chambers in the City-County Building at 316 N Park Ave, in Helena, MT, on December 17, 2024, and said hearing was continued on January 21, 2025; and

WHEREAS, said Planning Board voted to recommend the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan, attached hereto and by this reference made a part hereof, be included as part of the 2019 City of Helena Growth on January 18, 2025; and

WHEREAS, this proposed resolution was brought before the City of Helena-Lewis and Clark County Consolidated Planning Board in Commission Chambers in the City-County Building at 316 N Park Ave, in Helena, MT, on February 18, 2024; and

WHEREAS, said Planning Board voted by resolution to recommend the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan, be included as part of the 2019 City of Helena Growth on February 18, 2025; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF HELENA-LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY CONSOLIDATED PLANNING BOARD, MONTANA:

Section 1. The City of Helena-Lewis and Clark County Consolidated Planning Board, pursuant to §76-1-601(4) (a) and (b), MCA, hereby recommends the adoption of the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan for the area indicated in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and by this reference made a part hereof.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

Section 2. The City of Helena-Lewis and Clark County Consolidated Planning Board, pursuant to §76-1-603, MCA, hereby recommends amending the 2019 City of Helena Growth Policy to include the Railroad District Neighborhood Plan for the area indicated in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and by this reference made a part hereof.

PASSED AND EFFECTIVE BY THE CITY OF HELENA-LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY CONSOLIDATED PLANNING BOARD THIS 18th DAY OF February, 2025.

CHAIR

ATTEST:

**Director,
City Community Development**

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

Res. No. _____

Exhibit 'A'



The 6th Ward boundaries are Last Chance Gulch to the West, Cedar to the North, Highway 287, Butte Avenue to the South, and 13th Street to the Southwest corner.