



Joint Media Release
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Local Agencies Seek Public Comment on Draft of Climate Ready Missoula Plan

Hotter, drier, smokier summers. Longer wildfire seasons. Warmer winters and more spring flooding. Less predictability from one year to the next. These are a few of the changes we can expect in Missoula County in the coming decades, according to locally specific climate projections.

The draft Climate Ready Missoula Plan, which Missoula County, Climate Smart Missoula and the City of Missoula released today, includes these climate projections, the risks they pose for the county and proposed strategies to address those risks. Strategies focus on eight areas of concern: wildfire smoke, heat and health; buildings and land use; water; ecosystems and wildlife; agriculture; emergency preparedness and response; business, tourism and recreation; and energy. Examples of the strategies in the plan include creating publicly accessible clean air spaces, shifting development away from areas deemed high-risk for wildfire and flood, and diversifying the region's tourism industry.

"There's no doubt our climate is changing, and this draft plan shows there's much we can and should be doing to prepare and adapt to the changes we face," said Dave Strohmaier, Missoula County commissioner and member of the Climate Ready Missoula Steering Committee.

The county, city and Climate Smart Missoula encourage the public to provide comment on the draft plan. The agencies will host three open houses to share information and gather feedback:

- 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 4-6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 22, Missoula County Courthouse Sophie Moiese Room, 200 W. Broadway St.
- 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 24, Missoula City Council Chambers, 140 W. Pine St.

People can also learn more and provide comments and suggestions online at www.climatereadymissoula.org. The public comment period closes Monday, Feb. 3.

"The goal of this plan is a resilient Missoula County," said Amy Cilimburg, executive director of Climate Smart Missoula. "Resiliency means not only that we're prepared for change and can bounce back from disruption, it also means building a more equitable place where no one is left behind."

The draft Climate Ready Missoula Plan is the result of an 18-month process that involved hundreds of stakeholders representing diverse sectors, including public health, emergency services, agriculture, forestry, recreation, business, underrepresented communities, and local water, energy and transportation systems. Last spring, the agencies also solicited public comment on the draft Vulnerability Assessment. That document initially identified Missoula County's climate change vulnerabilities that the strategies in the Climate Ready Missoula Plan address.

“Climate change will affect us all in different ways, and we all have a role to play in building climate resiliency,” said Heather Harp, Missoula City Council member who also serves on the Climate Ready Missoula Steering Committee. “We encourage folks to come to an open house, check out the website and share their thoughts.”

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