

**Missoula City/County Elected Officials Policy Meeting
Planning and Grants Services Interlocal Agreement
April 28, 2010
10:05 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Council Chambers, 140 W Pine**

Present: Ed Childers, Renee Mitchell, Dick Haines, Marilyn Marler, Bill Carey, Michele Landquist, Bob Jaffe, Pam Walzer, Jon Wilkins, Lyn Hellegaard, Roy Houseman, Mike Barton, Roger Millar, Casey Wilson, Tom Zavitz, Jen Gress, Laval Means, Ginny Merriam, Dale Bickell, Denise Alexander, Mary McCrea, Lewis YellowRobe, Gary Bakke, Andy Short, Jason Rice, Paul Hubbard, Ann Cundy, Karen Hughes, Patrick O’Herren, Ruth Link, Dr. Neva Hassanien, Dr. Elon Gilbert, Jackie Corday, and Bobbi Day

1. **Introductions and Public Comments** – None
2. **Approval of [January 27, 2010](#)** – Approved as presented
3. **[2009 Urban Fringe Development Area \(UFDA\) Yearbook \(Presentation\)](#)**

Roger Millar provided an overview of changes in 2009 in the UFDA:

- 198 new dwelling units were permitted; 75% of those were located in an area between the east end of the airport runway and Russell Street.
- There were 490 entitled lots approved per the subdivision process. Major subdivisions were located in Miller Creek, the Wye and East Missoula.
- The Entitled Lots and Potential Units by Zoning map (Map 18 of the 2009 UFDA Plan) was updated to show the current growth allocations.
- There were six new annexations with the largest parcels in Linda Vista Estates, Chickasaw Place and Clark Fork Terrace #1.
- The Projected Road Congestion 2035 map came out of the Envision Missoula process and shows that growth will have to be accommodated by expansion of several roads.
- New roads have been paved and those roads will be the responsibility of the City and County to maintain.
- There were 7,764 feet of new and repaired water mains completed primarily in the areas of greatest building permit activity.
- 2.3 miles of bike lanes were added and 1.1 miles of new bike trail added.
- Parks added 63 acres to the inventory; 59 of those acres were open space acquisition on the back side of Mount Jumbo.
- There were 41.4 acres of sensitive lands and resources approved for residential development. Most of the impact was in the Miller Creek area.
- There were 49 acres approved for residential development in the prime agricultural soils area (primarily Chickasaw and Linda Vista Estates). There are 3600 acres of prime soils left in parcels of two acres or greater in size.
- Critical wildlife habitat approved for residential development equaled 212 acres. The habitat may not be adversely affected by the development because of conditions imposed on the development.

Observations from this information include:

- Since 2004 there have been over 5,000 lots entitled providing a 10 to 30 year supply of residential and a zoned capacity for 27,000 homes. This provides a 50 to 150 year supply added to the URSA.
- Entitlement and infrastructure does not track home building activity.
- Sensitive agriculture land impacts are occurring outside the building permit activity area.

Mr. Millar asked members if there was any other information they wanted to see graphically and presented the Food Desert map. It showed grocery stores and other food sources (co-ops, food bank, etc.) and indicated areas that were not within walking distance to these outlets. Other items for consideration included:

- Plat filing deadlines – should these be allowed to expire?
- Annexation policy – where homes were being built versus where they were in the city. Does Missoula need additional entitled density in the city?
- Infrastructure investment.
- Open space acquisition – should the money be used to preserve land or not?
- Agriculture and open space policy.

Mr. Millar pointed out that only two years of data did not necessarily point the direction to take it did raise some questions. The floor was opened up for questions.

1. Building permits were not being issued where the new sewer lines were installed. Were these sewer lines running to large developments? One line was installed in the Miller Creek area where several lots were already entitled. Another was at the Wye where both commercial and residential uses pushed to get the sewer. Because of the economy there has not been much building activity at the Wye.
2. Is there a map that shows the Urban Transportation system and where it runs presently with bus stops? There was a map but it was not included in the update because there have not been any changes to the routes in 2009.
3. What might the implications be on vacating preliminary plats and how did infrastructure and vacating plats mesh? An approved preliminary plat has a deadline for final approval or it goes away; it was a risk the developer took. The developer could extend the deadline through phasing plans, but if a deadline was missed that entitlement went away. OPG saw more phasing plans extending the deadline into the future. The suggestion was to think about being smart on extending plats; not to stop approving the extensions.
4. Developers put quite a bit of money into the preliminary approval process so it would be wrong to deny future extensions. The County looks at the land management when the land lays dormant (weed control, fire hazards, agriculture use) when considering extensions. Is there a way to keep costs down without giving away staff hours when developers want to change a subdivision? That was up to BCC and City Council to decide. Changing lines was not the difficulty, but the impacts on the surrounding land by changing lines were difficult.
5. Looking at two years of data was significant since the results of prior years development were being seen. There would be some disconnect since building permits followed years later.

4. Update on Agriculture Policy Development

Roger Millar explained that today's discussion was to present an agriculture policy process for consideration. He presented a [memo with attachments](#) that outlined the process for putting together an Agriculture Policy.

- There would be a community discussion about local food and agriculture policy that would be broader than how to fine-tune subdivision policy.
- Several groups needed to be included in that discussion so a steering committee would be put together including those groups.
- Staff have put together a list for the steering committee. From that list a planning committee would be put together.
- Staff will use the summer to gather information and sometime early fall have a community forum.
- Policy recommendations would then be brought back to the elected officials.
- Staff also looked at other communities to see what they have done.

Paul Hubbard, Land Use Coordinator for CFAC talked about their report “Losing Ground – The Future of Farms and Food in Missoula County”. In the report CFAC asked some guiding questions:

1. What is the state of agriculture here?
2. Where are the best soils and what has been lost?
3. What can we learn from development patterns and subdivision decisions?
4. How much agriculture land remained and how to conserve the necessary resource for food production?
5. How to support working farms and ranches and build a vibrant food system?

He focused on a couple of these questions because of the shortness of time:

- Since 1986 there has been a loss of 29,000 acres in productive uses. This was an average of 1400 acres per year. The loss did not mean that every acre was subdivided.
- In 1970 the average footprint size of a parcel was larger than it was today.
- Some of the best soils were located where the building patterns happened. Mr. Hubbard called it ‘sprawl gone wild’. Missoula County still has several hundred acres of productive land.
- The discussion today focused on the land use side although there were other sides (land plus farmers plus markets = local food and viable farms).
- Land use recommendations included:
 1. Identify agriculture cornerstone areas as a community – amend the Growth Policy.
 2. Enact agriculture resource standards – adopt in the County and City zoning codes and in the subdivision regulations to provide a clear regulatory tool.
 3. Evaluate and activate a broad suite of incentives – re-visit conservation tool box from the Open Lands Working Group.

Mr. Hubbard stated that Missoula could not continue the irresponsible development patterns of the previous decades. This was not just a city or rural issue.

Jason Rice, representing the Missoula Organization of Realtors (MOR) and MBIA, presented their ideas and noted that their Agriculture Reports were nearly complete.

- Their group wanted a nice community but did not want the cost put on the backs of those developing the community.
- MOR hired Dr. Elon Gilbert to complete the agriculture report. Dr. Gilbert has been talking to various groups about soils and water. He has also been looking at legal aspects of what can and cannot be done in restricting subdivisions.
- MOR wanted a comprehensive agriculture study.
- In this process it became clear that it was not MOR’s responsibility to come up with solutions but to provide data to help make decisions.
- The agriculture study will provide all the facts for food requirements.
- The agriculture policy should be done by looking at the bigger picture and not be created in pieces.
- MOR agreed with most of the points that CFAC brought up in its report.
- Look at zoning and bonds as some ways to help.

The floor was opened up for discussion and comments:

1. Did CFAC consult with Parks and Open Space so that work was not duplicated? Yes, they did. Agriculture lands were one of the five types of lands (including floodplain) that were identified in the cornerstones. The plan was not designed to protect the remaining 8% of agriculture soils.
2. The Open Space bond was one small tool that could be used but it was not the answer. The cornerstones were not identified as exact boundaries so there were no acres identified.
3. The Open Space Committee identified the values of parcels. The greater the value, the higher the rank. Rural Initiatives was in the process of completing the Place Project that would help identify agriculture resources.

4. The Hmong farms have the capacity to produce more but do not have markets. What was CFAC doing to match markets? One of the programs that helped was the Food Stamp Program at the Farmer's Market. CFAC also looked at including the Hmong community to get them connected with the Farm to School program but they do not know if that would be a viable market or not. Beyond that, this also needed to be worked out with the local stores, such as Food Farm. CFAC will continue to expand markets but without land, that will not be possible.
5. How much outreach was being done before land owner's contacted developers? When looking at land to purchase with bond money, Open Space can not compete with development. Staff can work with landowners if they want to stay on the land and work it. They have been pro-active in finding parcels that meet the bond criteria but landowners have not been interested. The Open Lands Committee does outreach and there has been a county outreach program to talk about conservation easements rather than developments.

Neva Hassanien: responded to the question about the Hmong and the community forum. She co-facilitated a lengthy study that resulted in a sound report. The wider dialogue has been going on since 2002. The Hmong do not participate in individual studies but did do a focus group. A major concern for the community was insecurity of land; they could lose their leases at any time.

Regarding the community event, they have already had extensive studies and meetings with the same groups. Nothing has been done and she feared they would lose ground and move backwards. Dr. Hassanien did not want to slow the momentum but wanted to move forward with specifics.

Councilman Wilkins stated that Chickasaw was a fiasco and he wanted some regulations once property was annexed into the city. However, he applauded the work on preserving land.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi Day

Administrative Secretary
Office of Planning and Grants

(To listen to this meeting, [click on this link](#). The half hour of this meeting was inadvertently not recorded.)