

What is a Growth Policy?

Section 76-1-601 of Montana Code Annotated (M.C.A.) establishes a requirement for all county and municipal jurisdictions in the state of Montana to prepare a growth policy. A growth policy is not regulatory, but forms the conceptual foundation for future land use decisions and is a basis for future regulations. The Flathead County Growth Policy was adopted on March 19, 2007, and is intended to provide guidance for growth in Flathead County.

Why is an amendment necessary?

Amendments to the Growth Policy may be warranted in order to adequately protect public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, or general welfare in the process of community development. Amendments may be proposed by citizens or governing bodies, and may involve changes to text.

EASY ACCESS

Pre-application meeting request forms AND Growth Policy Amendment applications can be found in our office as well as on our website:

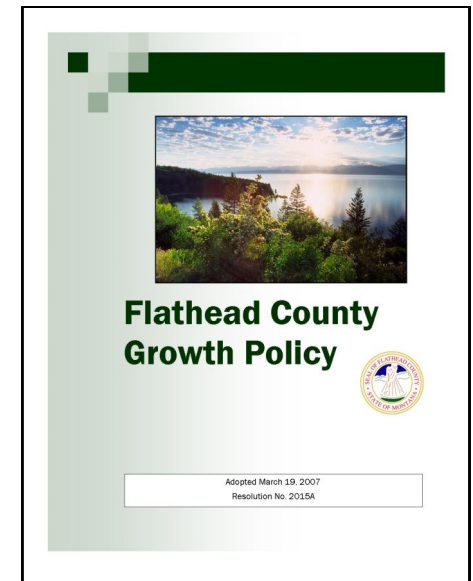
http://flathead.mt.gov/planning_zoning

Mission Statement:

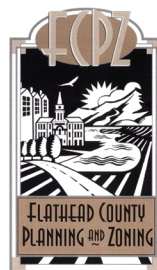
"The Flathead County Planning & Zoning Office is committed to providing the highest level of planning services. We will accomplish this through employees who anticipate public needs, and promote a work environment that encourages creativity, communication and cooperation. The Office will also encourage professional development and training for all staff members."

Flathead County
Planning & Zoning

Growth Policy Amendment



For more information, contact:



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Information Regarding
Growth Policy Amendments

Why Amend a Growth

Policy?

Goals and policies of growth policies are generally implemented through zoning and subdivision regulations. Certain zoning related processes require compliance with the effective growth policy. Although growth policies are required to be updated regularly, **Amendments** typically address current conditions and provide more detail to a specific geographic area or neighborhood.

The following are examples where a growth policy amendment may be warranted:

- Creation of new zoning districts
- Expansion of an existing zoning district
- Zone change requests
- When significant changes to infrastructure have occurred (i.e. roads, public water and sewer facilities, etc.)

Review Procedure

There are several steps involved in pursuing a growth policy text amendment:

- Pre-application meeting;
- Public workshops;
- Application submittal;
- Staff review of the proposal;
- Before the application is heard by the Planning Board written notice of the hearing is mailed to adjacent property

owners within 150 feet of the property being reviewed.

- Notice of the public hearing is also published in the Daily Interlake at least 15 days prior to the scheduled hearing date
- Public hearing before a local land use advisory council (as applicable);
- Public hearing before the Planning Board, who make a recommendation by resolution to the Board of Commissioners; and
- Meeting before the Board of Commissioners.



Review Criteria

The review process is completed by Planning and Zoning Office staff prior to the public hearing, and a staff report is prepared addressing the following criteria:

- Does the amendment affect overall compliance of the Growth Policy with 76-1-201, M.C.A.?
- Is the amendment based on existing characteristics and/or projected trends that are substantially different from those presented in the most recent update?
- Does the amendment create inconsistencies within the document?
- Does the amendment further protect and comply with the seven elements of the public's vision for the future of Flathead County?
- Has the proposed amendment undergone a sufficient process of county-wide public participation and review?

Timeline

Growth policy amendments are adopted through 'Resolution' in compliance with standards established in MCA 76-1-604. Due to requirements associated with public workshops and the review procedure, growth policy amendments typically require 4-12 months to accomplish, depending upon the complexities involved with the proposal.

Additional Consideration

- Because land use designations, goals, and policies of growth policies form the comprehensive foundation for future land use decisions and regulations, public participation is necessary. Plan ahead for legally noticed public workshops to involve all stakeholders and property owners within the proposed amendment area before submitting an application.
- If a growth policy map or text amendment is approved, there is no guarantee that a related subsequent request (i.e. zone change request) will be approved.

Just a reminder...

- Schedule a pre-application meeting to get the facts before submitting an application!
- Pay attention to application due dates and corresponding public meeting dates and timelines
- The more complete the application, the easier it is for the Planning Office to review. Answer **ALL** questions and submit **ALL** documents required to expedite the process!
- Once submitted, the application fee is **NON-REFUNDABLE!**
- There are **NO** guarantees of approval.