

R4 - Incorporate Landmark Pro-Housing Reforms into the Montana Land Use and Planning Act

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Common Theme: Regulations

Recommendation:

Incorporate the “Montana Miracle” pro-housing reforms (and applicable reforms being proposed in this current report) into section 20 of the Montana Land Use and Planning Act (MLUPA).

Rationale:

In 2021 and 2023, Governor Gianforte signed multiple legislative reforms designed to expand housing options for Montanans and cut unnecessary red tape out of the homebuilding process. While some reforms were incorporated into the 2023 Montana Land Use and Planning Act, the rapid pace of that legislative session meant that others were not able to be included. The end result is a patchwork of inconsistent rules, making it difficult for private property owners to determine what they can and cannot do with their property. By incorporating all of the "Montana Miracle" reforms of 2023 (and 2025) into MLUPA, property owners across the state can benefit from faster permitting and expanded freedom to build.

Barriers Addressed:

Updating the MLUPA will help tackle the long-term challenge of boosting inventory in larger cities.

Key Strategies:

- Incorporate the “Montana Miracle” pro-housing reforms legalizing duplexes, Accessory Dwelling Units, mixed-use development, and streamlined design review into Section 20 of the MLUPA. Also incorporate relevant reforms to municipal zoning being recommended in this current report (e.g. manufactured home community zoning, minimum lot sizes, and parking mandates.)
- Update Section 19 of MLUPA to ensure consistency between its “menu of options” and the reforms incorporated into Section 20.

Dissenting Opinions:

None identified.

Supporting Graphic:

None identified.