



# Meeting Summary Notes

## SUCSESSES Study Group Meeting\*

April 1, 2024 12:00pm - 2:00pm

\*The Zoom meeting and associated documents are posted on the Housing Task Force website:

<https://deq.mt.gov/about/Housing-Task-Force>

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### Welcome and Co-Chair Introductions

The Zoom meeting had 39 total participants: 23 public guests, 10 Housing Task Force (HTF) members, six invited presenters, and two DEQ administrative support. Public comments were solicited and addressed during the meeting and encouraged to be submitted through the HTF website. The meeting lasted approximately 125 minutes.

### Guest Presentations on Housing Topics

#### Panel Discussion I: "Building Code Enforcement Jurisdictions: State and Local Fire Marshals"

Kendall Cotton moderated a panel discussion on the topic of building codes, specifically those enforced by state and local fire marshals. Panelist included Ron Martin, Deputy State Fire Marshall, DOJ, Area 2; Brandon Yung, Acting Fire Marshall, Central Valley Fire Dist., City of Belgrade and greater Gallatin Valley; and Eric Copeland, Bureau Chief Commercial Weights and Measurements Bureau, DLI.

Some panelists expressed frustration with the time required to assist customers with "who to call for assistance" and "who does what when" regarding the code enforcement process. A potential solution was presented that, in part, creates a universal database showing approved building permits subject to code inspection and outlines agency roles and responsibilities. Fostering positive work relationships was agreed to be the best method of code compliance.

Panelists mentioned successes in code enforcement approach such as local jurisdictions having simultaneous code review, thus being mindful of construction timelines. There are also select construction projects exempt from (some) code review such as fourplex housing (and others) because they are not considered commercial buildings.

The state building codes program (certified local programs) is required to allow builders to use modern technical methods, devices, and improvements that tend to reduce the cost of construction. These methods must have reasonable requirements to provide for the health and safety of building users and occupants, be consistent with the conservation of energy, and by design criteria result in the efficient use of energy. This approach supports regulatory flexibility while meeting the intent of the law for public health and safety.

## **Panel Discussion II: “CTE and Construction Education Training Programs in Montana”**

Sarah Swanson moderated a panel discussion on the topic of construction trades education and training in Montana. Panelist included Mike Parcell, Engagement Specialist, DLI; Bill Ryan, Director of Education & Apprenticeship, Dick Anderson Construction; and Jason Small, Executive Director, Montana AFL-CIO.

Successes in trades education and awareness are many. Panelists discussed how they work to identify and close potential disconnects between what is taught in school and what is needed on the job site. Creating public-private partnerships is necessary to maintain a qualified pool of trades workers.

The Dick Andersen Construction Apprenticeship program with support from the Great Falls College is an example of a customized training program that became a state recognized apprenticeship program. Another example included a pre-apprenticeship program that provides incentives to keep students in school to complete their high school diploma that will benefit them in the future.

The Future Build Great Falls construction training program is an example of a success that focuses on five core components weaved throughout the curriculum and hands-on training: education, construction training, work ethic and job training, leadership and community service, and career development. Professional certifications and college credits are also offered.

Potential solutions include providing additional public funding to support student engagement activities that promote the trades career pathway. Another potential solution is to provide grant funding to qualified students for monetary support while receiving training, i.e. transportation costs, per diem, etc.

## **Kelly Lynch, MT League of Cities and Towns. “SB 382 – Montana Land Use and Planning Act”**

Kelly presented a slide show with information on SB 382 that passed in the 2023 legislature. The statute revisions were codified in Title 76 - Land Resources and Use, Chapter 25 - Montana Land Use Planning Act. She stated the need for the bill was due to the existing status of outdated and inconsistent land use and planning statutes and the increased frustration with the slow, expensive, and risky process.

SB 382 created new statutes for land use planning and mapping, zoning regulations and mapping, and subdivision regulations and mapping. Specifically, it requires local planning commissions, public participation plans, land use plans, future land use maps, implementation plans, updated reviews, zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, and other miscellaneous provisions. Kelly also provided an update on the Montanans Against Irresponsible Densification (MAID) lawsuit challenging, in part, SB 382.

## **Member Discussion**

Following the presentations, members and the public shared thoughts and ideas with panelists and the invited speaker. Notes from the meeting will be used to identify potential root causes, and potential solutions for the worksheet. Assignment #4 will use, in part, the worksheet information to draft recommendations.