Chapter 3
COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

This chapter describes the cooperative planning efforts between Missoula County and the City of Missoula, as well as how the county coordinates planning with other governments and agencies on matters related to the growth policy. Compatible policies, coordinated services and regular communication between the county and other governments are necessary for effective governance to address issues of mutual interest and to provide efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

Coordination with the City of Missoula

For over 50 years the city and county have coordinated planning efforts, particularly within the Missoula urban area. In 1961, the Missoula City-County Planning Board completed a master plan for the urban area. In 1975 the city and county created the Missoula County Comprehensive Plan and Missoula: A Policy Guide for Urban Growth. Several other plans adopted by both the city and the county address the Missoula urban area including:

- Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan (2006)
- Missoula Active Transportation Plan (2011)
- Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan (2012)
- Numerous neighborhood plans

Policy Guidance:

- **Objective 13.1.** Maximize access for all segments of the population to economic opportunities, social services, health care and other services.
- **Goal 16.** Promote cooperation between Missoula County and the city, state, federal and tribal governments.
- **Objective 16.1.** Maintain compatible policies, coordinated services and regular communication with the City of Missoula.

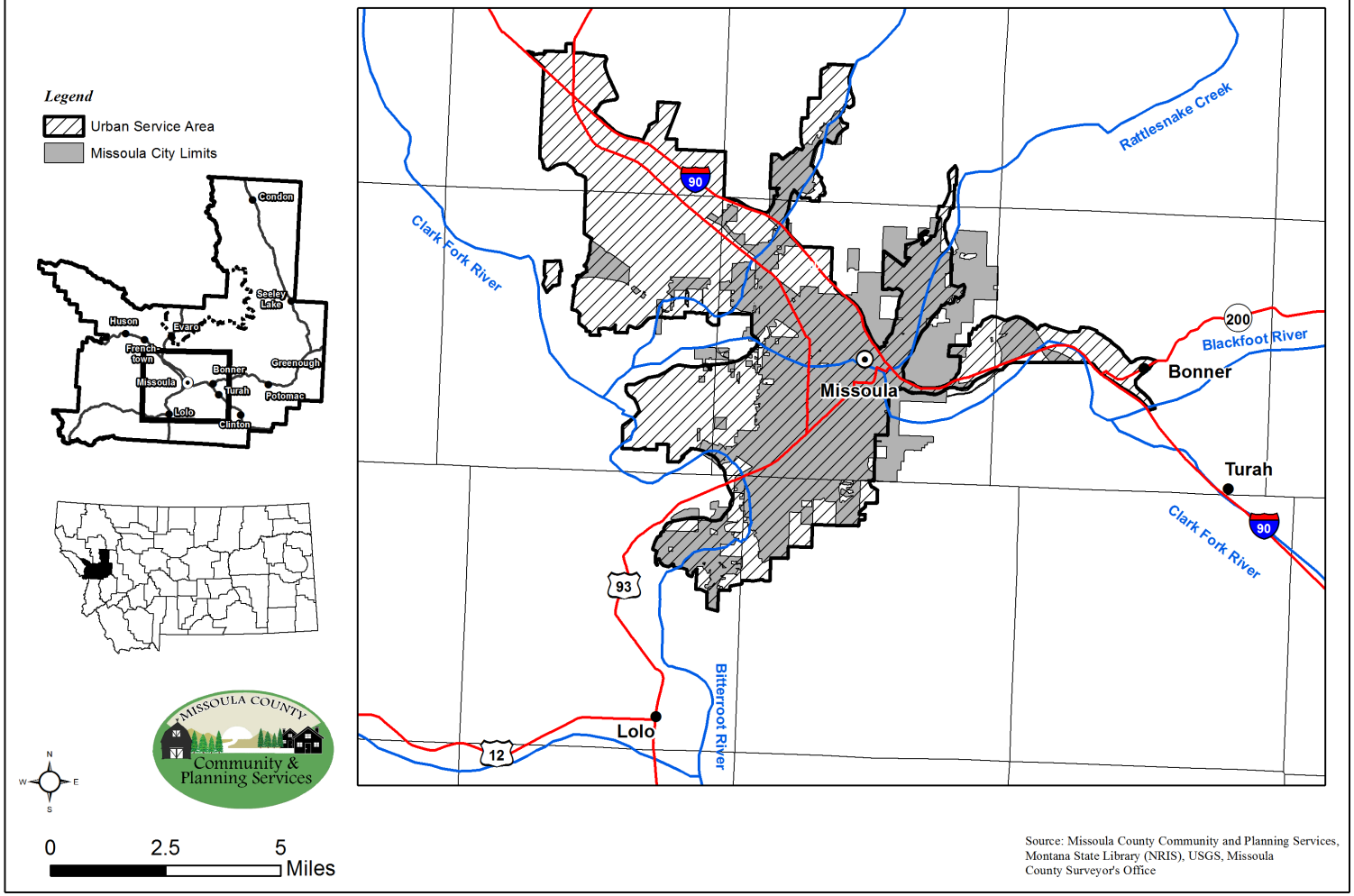
Interlocal Agreements

Since 1987, interlocal agreements have guided city and county regulatory and planning functions such as permitting, subdivision review, zoning and transportation. The interlocal agreement was revised in 1996 to provide for grants administration and other functions.

In 2013, under County Resolution No. 2013-111, the interlocal agreement was revised to create separate city and county planning departments, but also stipulated

Map 2

Missoula County Growth Policy
Missoula Urban Service Area



several methods for cooperative planning including:

- Retaining the Consolidated City-County Planning Board and a Metropolitan Planning Organization to make recommendations on land use and transportation issues to both the city council and county commissioners
- Creating the Urban Growth Commission, consisting of city and county officials and a planning board member with the purpose of addressing urban area development issues
- Coordinating on infrastructure and planning issues through regular meetings and a commitment to develop consistent development standards in the urban area

The 2013 interlocal agreement also explicitly provides for retained jurisdictional authority by both governments. The City Council makes final decisions on land use issues within the city and the County Commissioners make final decisions on land use issues in the county outside the city limits. The interlocal agreement does not have a sunset date but is expected to be updated as necessary over time. Other types of city and county coordination in planning, development review, and provision of services are described below.

General Staff Level Coordination

City and county planning staff have a standing monthly meeting where they discuss development projects, growth policy updates, annexation proposals, and other issues within the Missoula urban area.

Subdivision and Zoning Application Review

The city and county conduct separate subdivision review processes. The county seeks comments on subdivision applications from city agencies and officials when a subdivision proposal is located within three miles of the city limits as per 76-3-601(2)(b), MCA and when a delayed annexation agreement is a component of the subdivision. The Consolidated Planning Board makes recommendations to the governing bodies on all major subdivisions (Figure 3). City and county staff also coordinate on zoning proposals in close proximity to the City limits.

Subdivision and Zoning Regulations

The county coordinates with the city on updates to the County Subdivision Regulations, particularly with regard to infrastructure standards (e.g., water, sewer, streets, sidewalks) in the urban area. The county also coordinates with the city on updates to the Missoula County Zoning Resolution, which primarily has been applied to properties within the urban area.

Land Use Maps

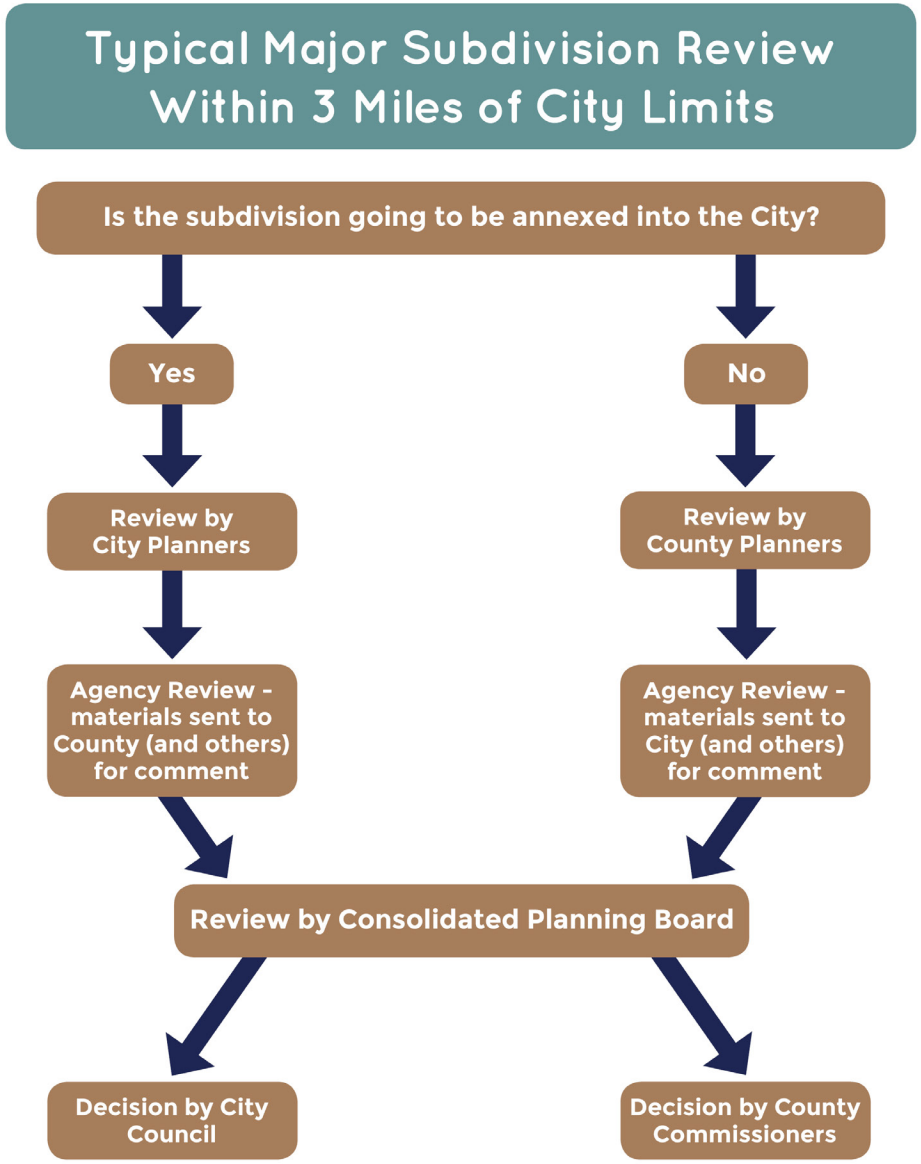
The city and county maintain land use designation maps in their respective growth policies and neighborhood plans. Neighborhood plans and other officially adopted land use designation maps are advisory, meaning they are to be considered and generally followed when making land use decisions. In some instances city and county maps may differ with regard to the types and densities of development in areas outside of the city limits. When development is proposed to remain within the county, the county maps apply. When development is proposed to be annexed into the city, the city maps apply.

Urban Fringe Development Area Project and Other Plans in the Urban Service Area

In 2007 a city and county residential development project called the Urban Fringe Development Area (UFDA) project was undertaken to determine where an anticipated 15,000 new homes could be built in the urban service area (Map 3) over

Figure 3 - Typical Major Subdivision Reivew Within 3 Miles of City Limits

The typical major subdivision review process is dependent on proximity to the city and whether it is going to be annexed. If the subdivision will not be annexed, it is reviewed by the county.



the next 20 to 30 years. The UFDA growth policy amendment accommodates varying levels of residential development in different geographic locations based on existing land use designations in the growth policy. From 2008 to 2014, more than 2,700 housing units were constructed in the urban service area, an average of 390 per year. Both the city and county adopted this project. It will be necessary to update it in the coming years.

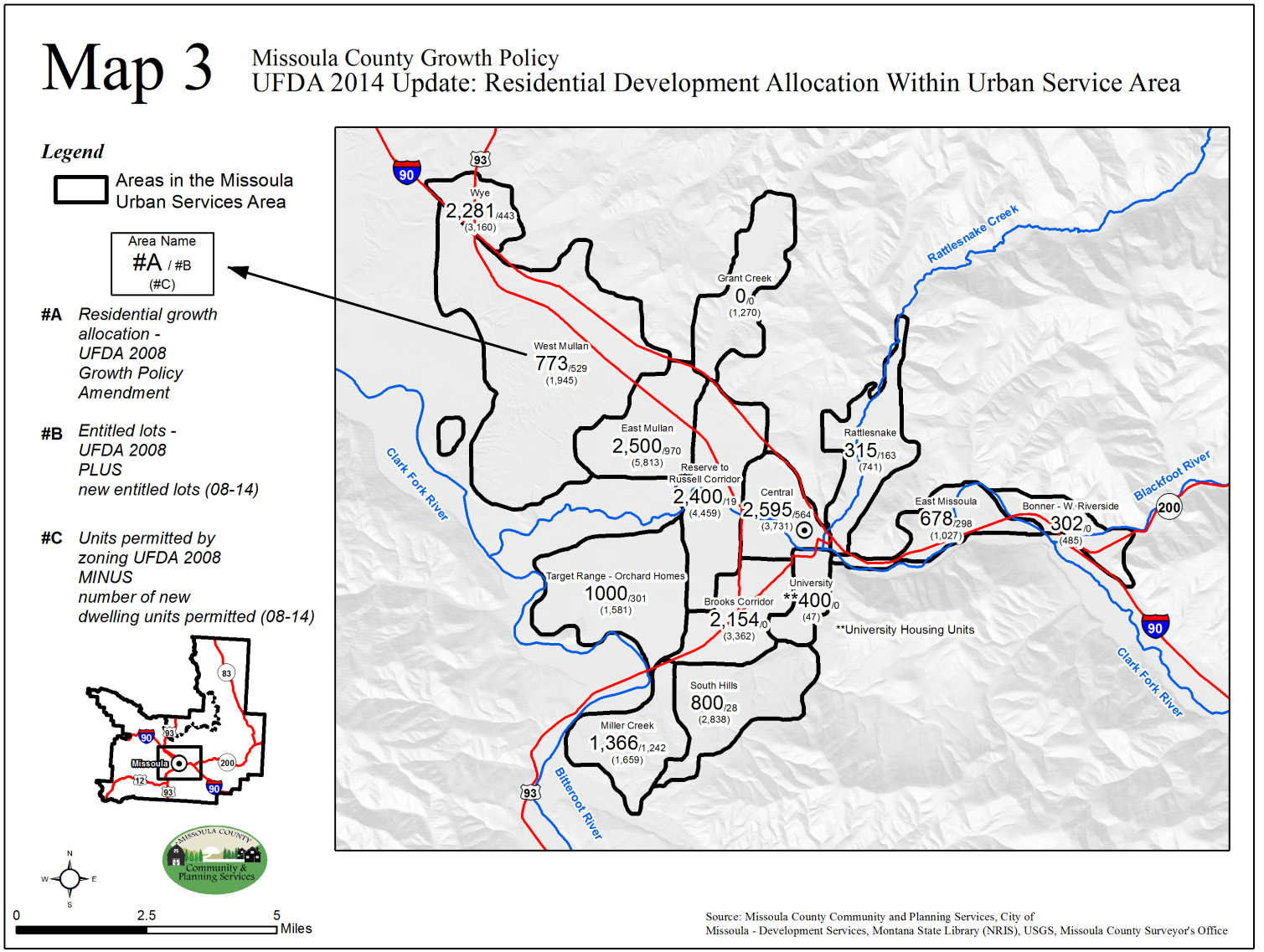
Several other plans adopted by both the city and the county address the Missoula urban area, such as the Wye-Mullan Comprehensive Plan and the Miller Creek Comprehensive Plan.

These documents provide county and city officials and the public recommendations to guide land use, transportation, utility, and recreational facility development within these planning areas. These plans are considered in subdivision, zoning, and other development decisions made by the Board of County Commissioners.

County neighborhood or area plans may be updated or new neighborhood planning efforts in the county portion of the urban service area may be initiated. Missoula County will continue to offer city representatives an opportunity to participate in developing or updating these plans.

Map 3

Missoula County Growth Policy
UFDA 2014 Update: Residential Development Allocation Within Urban Service Area



Annexation

Recently the city has taken the approach of primarily trying to focus inward – making use of existing municipal and community infrastructure to concentrate new development in underdeveloped areas. State law (MCA 7-2-43 to 48) provides guidance regarding the conditions upon which annexation may occur. Annexation into the city typically occurs when landowners voluntarily petition for annexation in order to make use of the municipal water and sewer systems. The annexation committee includes representatives from the County Public Works and Community and Planning Services Departments.

Transportation Planning

The Metropolitan Planning Organization provides coordinated city- county transportation planning and improvements within the urbanized Missoula area (Map 4). The Metropolitan Planning Organization is a federally-mandated and federally-funded transportation policy-making organization that consists of government officials from the county, city, Federal Highway Administration, the Montana Department of Transportation, and various city, county, and state organizations.

The Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee is the primary decision-making body for the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee is supported by the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and Metropolitan Planning Organization staff. The Metropolitan Planning Organization guides and makes decisions on federally funded transportation projects within the Missoula urban area. County projects outside the city limits include efforts such as the Missoula to Lolo Trail, Highway 200 transportation and land use planning in East Missoula, and the South Avenue Bridge planning and design project.

Other Areas of Coordination

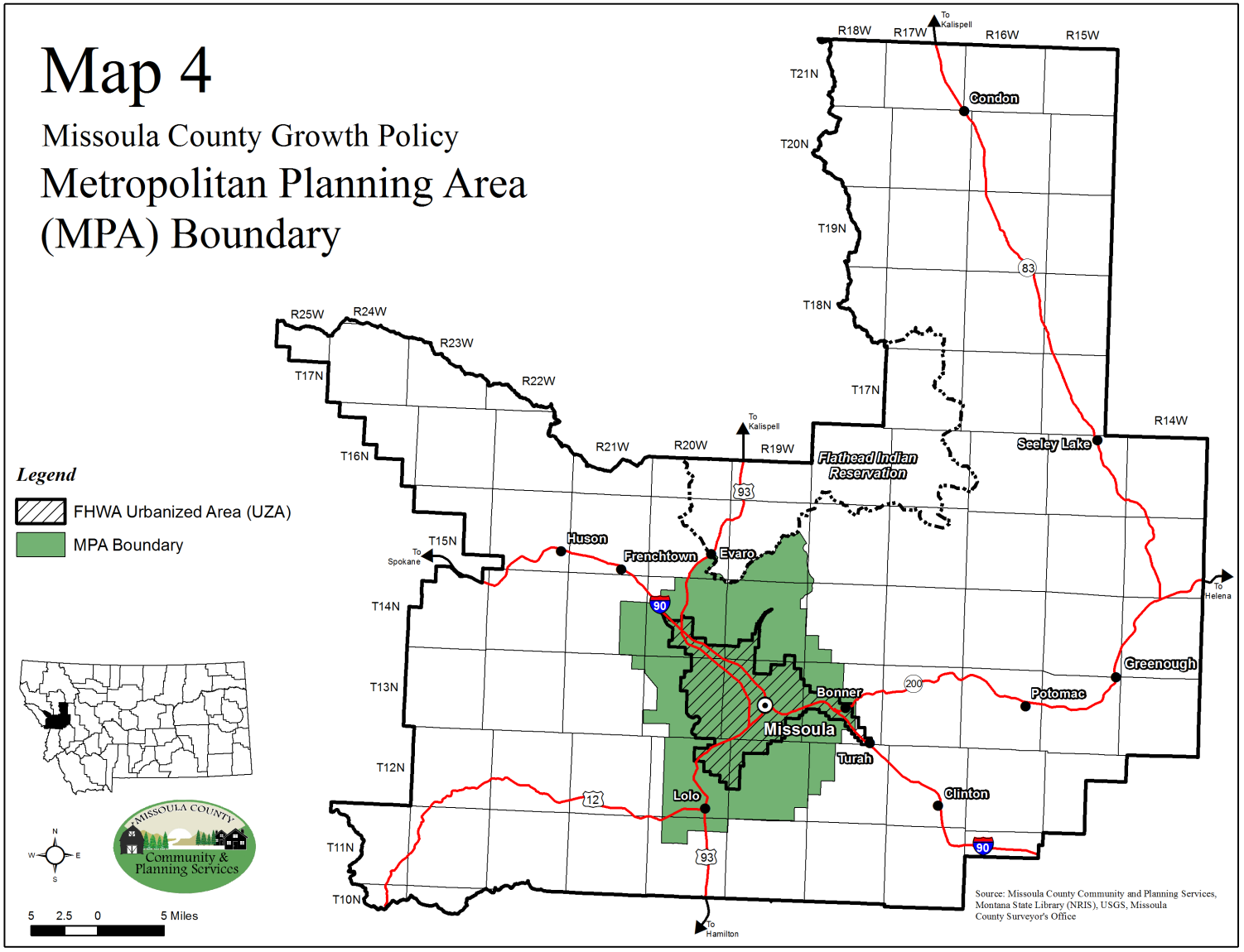
The city and county maintain joint departments of Health and also Grants and Community Programs. The city and county have separate parks and trails departments, but closely collaborate on planning and improvements in the urban area. This will continue under the 2014 Parks and Trails bond, which will be used for the development of Fort Missoula Regional Park. The city and county have also coordinated for the past several years on the Open Space Bond, which the county administers under a separate interlocal agreement. The city and county (as well as state and federal agencies) also share information about floodplain permitting, administration and enforcement. All of these efforts are expected to continue.

Coordination with Other Governments and Agencies

Other collaborative endeavors with tribal, federal and state governments contribute to natural resource, transportation, emergency response planning and general community development in Missoula County.

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

A memorandum of agreement coordinates land use planning activities in the portion of the Flathead Reservation within Missoula County. In this five-year agreement, the county administers land use planning such as zoning and subdivision proposals, family transfers and other certificate of survey requests for non-Indian lands, with the Tribes acting as an agency providing comments, until such time as the Tribes can undertake such projects internally. Missoula County intends to renew this agreement prior to expiration. Missoula County and the Tribes also meet annually to discuss issues of mutual interest.


Map 4
Missoula County Growth Policy
Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) Boundary
Legend
FHWA Urbanized Area (UZA)
MPA Boundary
R18W
R17W
R16W
R15W
R25W
R24W
R23W
R22W
R21W
R20W
R19W
R14W
T21N
T20N
T19N
T18N
T17N
T16N
T15N
T14N
T13N
T12N
T11N
T10N
To Kalispell
To Spokane
To Helena
To Hamilton
Condon
Seeley Lake
Flathead Indian Reservation
Huson
Frenchtown
Evaro
Greenough
Potomac
Bonner
Missoula
Turah
Lolo
Clinton
83
93
90
200
12
Missoula County
Community & Planning Services
5 2.5 0 5 Miles
Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services, Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula County Surveyor's Office

Land and Resource Management Agencies

A memorandum of understanding exists between Missoula County, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Department, the Bureau of Land Management, surrounding national forests and others. The parties jointly share knowledge of conditions and issues to enhance the economic, social, cultural, and natural resource conditions of area lands. Agency representatives through an interagency coordinating committee meet biannually to discuss issues of mutual concern.

Southwest Crown of the Continent

In 2009, Congress established the Collaborative Forest and Landscape Restoration Program to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. The Collaborative Forest and Landscape Restoration Program leverages federal resources with local and private resources; encourages utilization of forest restoration by-products to benefit local rural economies and improve forest health; and facilitates the reduction of wildfire management costs through fuels reduction projects. Missoula County participates as a voting member in the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative, which is taking advantage of the Collaborative Forest and Landscape Restoration Program funding. Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative projects provide timber for local mills, improve water quality, create and sustain local jobs, improve forest health, and provide habitat for species of special concern.

Community Councils

Seven community councils provide advice to the Board of County Commissioners on matters of community interest (Map 5). The councils are intended to facilitate two-way communication between communities and local government. The councils have weighed in on issues such as the Milltown State Park development, East Missoula Highway 200 development, Highway 83 improvements, and the former Smurfit-Stone site redevelopment. The councils are notified about subdivision and zoning projects and can participate in long range planning for their regions. They also can initiate and participate in a variety of community projects.

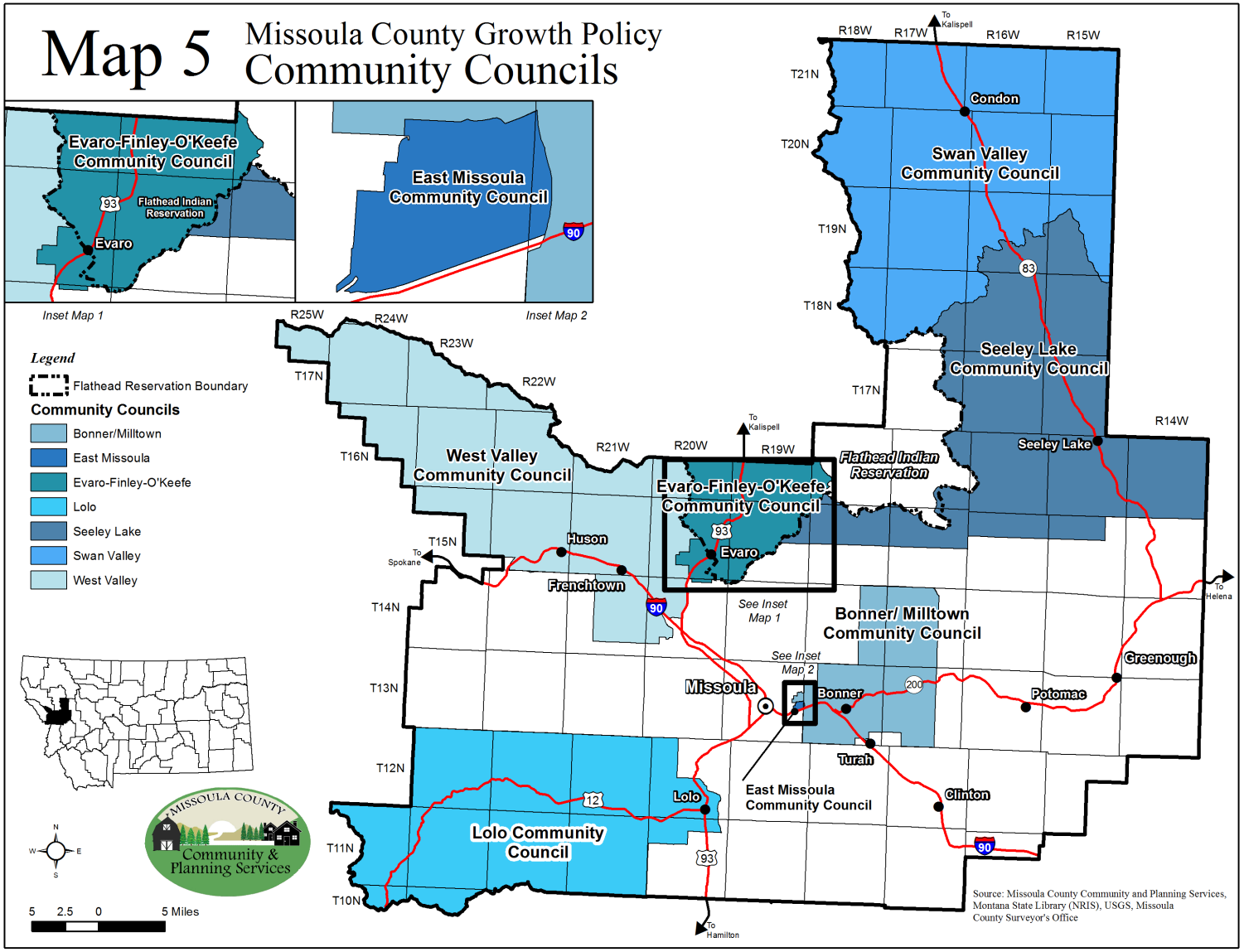
Law Enforcement and Emergency Services

The Sheriff's Department has agreements with tribal, federal, state, and city law enforcement agencies to assist in any law enforcement effort in the county. Missoula County Office of Emergency Management has agreements with the rural fire districts, Missoula City Fire, Missoula City Police, and Missoula County Sheriff's Office. These agreements assist with 911 calls to respond to medical, fire, and other emergency services.

Economic Development Agencies

Missoula County is a member of the Bitter Root Economic Development District, Inc. (BREDD), the federally-designated economic development district for the Western Montana Region. The District developed and maintains the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Missoula County and Mineral County. Missoula County contracts with the District to administrer Big Sky Trust Fund Category I Job Creation Grants from the Montana Department of Commerce for eligible businesses in Missoula County. Missoula County also contracted with BREDD to do the Broadband Master Plan and Industrial Lands Assessment.

The County is also an investor and an active participant in Missoula Economic Partnership, a public-private partnership created to connect businesses with the programs, resources and workforce to enhance their success.


Map 5
Missoula County Growth Policy
Community Councils
Evaro-Finley-O'Keefe Community Council
Flathead Indian Reservation
Evaro
East Missoula Community Council
Inset Map 1
Inset Map 2
Legend
Flathead Reservation Boundary
Community Councils
Bonner/Milltown
East Missoula
Evaro-Finley-O'Keefe
Lolo
Seeley Lake
Swan Valley
West Valley
R25W
R24W
R23W
R22W
R21W
R20W
R19W
R18W
R17W
R16W
R15W
R14W
T21N
T20N
T19N
T18N
T17N
T16N
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T11N
T10N
To Kalispell
To Spokane
To Helena
To Hamilton
Condon
Swan Valley Community Council
Seeley Lake Community Council
Seeley Lake
Flathead Indian Reservation
West Valley Community Council
Evaro-Finley-O'Keefe Community Council
Huson
Frenchtown
See Inset Map 1
See Inset Map 2
Bonner/ Milltown Community Council
Missoula
Bonner
Potomac
Greenough
Turah
Clinton
East Missoula Community Council
Lolo
Lolo Community Council
93
90
83
200
12
MISSOULA COUNTY
Community & Planning Services
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W
E
S
5 2.5 0 5 Miles
Source: Missoula County Community and Planning Services, Montana State Library (NRIS), USGS, Missoula County Surveyor's Office

EXIT