



Lewis and Clark County
Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan
Phase 2- Master Plan
May 2019

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Lewis and Clark County would like to acknowledge the contributions of all residents, along with civic and citizen groups that participated in the process of creating this plan.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. PURPOSE OF THIS MASTER PLAN

In a parallel planning effort, Lewis and Clark County (County) and the City of Helena (City) are updating their individual jurisdictional plans. The primary purpose of updating each plan is to create a clear set of goals and objectives that will provide direction to the City-County Parks Board, County and City staff, and commissions for the ongoing management/maintenance, re-development, growth, and enhancement of existing parks and the future acquisition and development of new parkland in both the County and City.

B. BACKGROUND AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Under the direction and partnership of a joint City-County Parks Board, this process updates the individual jurisdictional plans simultaneously by combining planning processes and services. This effort resulted in two separate updated parks plans; however, the plans identify shared issues, needs, and opportunities for future collaboration between the two jurisdictions.

C. METHODOLOGY OF MASTER PLAN

The process for completing this Master Plan happened in two phases. Phase 1 began in March of 2018 and concluded the following September. The development process included an integrated project team consisting of staff representing various areas. The planning process allowed for a collaborative approach incorporating consultant expertise, as well as local knowledge and institutional history that only staff and community

engagement can provide. The development of this report included the following tasks:

Phase 1

Information Gathering

Relevant information from previous planning documents and from budgets, work plans, and funding plans was reviewed in order to facilitate the direction and recommendations.

Community Workshops and Outreach

Multiple outreach methods were employed to engage Stakeholders from throughout the area. Participants included individual users and non-users, user groups, special interest organizations, associations, and other stakeholders.

Demographics Analysis

Demographics analysis and market profile defined the community character of the County, the City, and part of north Jefferson County, utilizing information available from previous planning efforts.

Trends Analysis

To help form short-term recommendations and set the stage for long-term goals, the project team researched and identified potential trends that may influence the use of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and programs.

Phase 1 and 2

Inventory and Analysis of the System

Inventory of Assets and Opportunities

The project team compiled available GIS/CAD materials to develop a comprehensive assessment of the area's recreation facilities and programs.

Facility and Asset Gaps and Level of Service

In combination with the findings from the focus groups, stakeholder meetings, demographics and trends, and current level of service and standards, the project team identified and prioritized the

unmet needs and potential opportunities in the community.

Other Analysis

Using the results of the focus groups, stakeholder meetings, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, demographics, and trends, and the current level of service and standards, the project team identified the unmet needs and potential opportunities in both the County and the City.

Partners and Alternative Providers

Throughout the process, the project team engaged several potential partners and collaborators within the service area. Through collaboration, a satisfying level of service can be delivered to both County and City residents without needing to provide for every unmet need.

Operational Analysis

An overview analysis of existing funding was conducted to ensure that existing needs and projected funding meet future needs. Other sources of funding were also analyzed and identified.

Marketing Analysis

The project team conducted a market analysis to identify the appropriate mix of communications tools to promote agency programs, facilities, events and services and to provide accurate, timely and useful information to the various segments of the target audience.

Phase 2

Visioning Strategies and Recommendations

There was a Visioning Strategies Workshop conducted with both County and City constituents, which included a discussion of all findings, and any other potential challenges. The workshop identified opportunities for implementation steps, work plans, and funding implications.

Project Schedule & Timeline

The following 2018-2019 timeline of tasks was determined following a Strategic Kick-off (SKO) meeting:

Project Coordination, SKO and CSF/Vision	March – August
Project Coordination	
Community and Stakeholder Input, Information Gathering	April – June
Review Existing Plans and Conditions	April
Staff and Stakeholder Engagement	April – May
Statistically Valid Survey	April – June
Inventory and Level of Service Analysis	April – October
Inventory of Assets and Opportunities	April – October
Facility, Service, and Asset Gaps	April – October
SWOT Analysis	April – May
Demographics and Trends Analysis	April – May
Operational Analysis	April – October
Market Analysis – Gaps, Collaborations, and Saturations	May – October
Partners and Alternative Providers	May – October
Findings, Visioning, and Recommendations	July – September
Finding Compilation and Validation	July – September
Visioning Workshop	October
Final Recommendations and Action Plan	November – May
Final Draft Plan and Recommendations	April
Plan Approval	May

I. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. PURPOSE OF THIS MASTER PLAN

In a parallel planning effort, Lewis and Clark County (County) and the City of Helena (City) are updating their respective plans. The primary purpose of updating each plan is to create a clear set of goals and objectives that will provide direction to the City-County Parks Board, County and City staff, and commissions for the ongoing management/maintenance, re-development, growth, and enhancement of existing parks and the future acquisition and development of new parkland in both the County and City.

B. BACKGROUND AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Under the direction and partnership of a joint City-County Parks Board, the County, and the City, this process updates the individual jurisdictional comprehensive parks plans simultaneously by combining planning processes and services. This effort resulted in two separate updated parks plans; however, the plans identify shared issues, needs, and opportunities for future collaboration between the two jurisdictions.

C. METHODOLOGY OF MASTER PLAN

The process for completing this Master Plan happened in two phases. Phase 1 began in March of 2018 and concluded the following September. The development process included an integrated project team consisting of staff representing various areas. The planning process allowed for a

collaborative approach incorporating consultant expertise, as well as local knowledge and institutional history that only staff and community engagement can provide. The development of this report included the following tasks.

Phase 1 – Information Gathering

Multiple outreach methods were employed to engage stakeholders from throughout the area. Participants included individual users and non-users, user groups, special interest organizations, associations, and other stakeholders. Information collected and reviewed included:

- 2004 Lewis and Clark County Growth Policy
- 2015 Lewis and Clark County Growth Policy Update - Helena Valley Area Plan
- Lewis and Clark County Parks and Recreation Plan
- Greater Helena Area Transportation Plan
- Lewis and Clark County Open Lands Program
- Lewis and Clark County Subdivision Regulations
- City of Helena Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan
- City Growth Policy
- Existing inventory
- Budgets, work plans, and funding plans utilized by the Departments to facilitate the comprehensive coordination of direction and recommendations

Phase 1 – Workshops and Outreach

Stakeholders from throughout the area were engaged through multiple outreach methods. Participants included individual users and non-users, user groups, special interest organizations, associations, and other stakeholders. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the project team engaged participants through:

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Focus Group Meetings
- Public Meetings
- Statistically-Valid Survey
- Findings Presentation

These meetings were held in a modified SWOT analysis format. Initial community outreach results were used to guide discussions regarding short and long-term goals for the future planning of facilities and the provision of programs and services.

Phase 1 – Demographics Analysis

Demographics analysis and market profile defined the character of the County, the City, and part of north Jefferson County, and utilized information available from previous planning efforts. The demographics analysis based on service areas was used to outline trends and information that could affect the need for facilities and programming.

Factors that were analyzed included:

- Population density
- Age Distribution
- Households
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Household Income

Phase 1 – Trends Analysis

Potential trends that may influence the usage of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and programs were researched and identified to help form short-term recommendations and set the stage for long-term goals. The trends analysis includes an evaluation of demographic shifts and their impact on what needs to be provided for the future, interest and participation levels for a variety of activities, and new developments in the field.

Phase 1 and 2 – Inventory and Analysis of Parks, Facilities, and Programs

Inventory of Assets and Opportunities

The project team compiled available GIS/CAD materials to develop a comprehensive assessment of the area’s recreation facilities and programs. Additionally, relevant park and recreation assets owned and managed by other entities were identified with the goal of informing a tailored level of service standard for the recreational services in the area.

Facility and Asset Gaps and Level of Service Analysis

In combination with the findings from the focus groups, stakeholder meetings, demographics, trends, and current level of service and standards, the project team identified and prioritized the unmet needs and potential opportunities in the County and the City.

Other Analysis – Market/ Service – Gaps, Collaborations, and Saturations

Using the results of the focus groups, stakeholder meetings, SWOT Analysis, demographics, and trends, and the current level of service and standards, the project team identified the unmet needs and potential opportunities in the County and the City. These gaps in service can further be identified and later substantiated using the nexus of unmet need and high importance, determined through previous surveys and the citizen engagement process.

Partners and Alternative Providers – A Collaborative Approach

Throughout the process, the project team engaged several potential partners and collaborators within the service area. Through collaboration, the individual jurisdictions can deliver a satisfying level of service without needing to provide for every unmet need. This service strategy leverages partnerships with other providers to extend service opportunities for jurisdictions.

Operational Analysis – Projecting Fiscal Resources, Cost Recovery and Allocation

An overview analysis of existing funding was conducted to ensure that existing needs and projected funding meet future needs. Other sources of funding were also analyzed and identified.

The overall philosophy and approach for resource allocation, program pricing, and cost recovery evaluation was evaluated; including a review of any existing policies for identification of gaps.

Marketing Analysis

The project team conducted a marketing analysis to identify the appropriate mix of communications tools to promote agency programs, facilities, events and services and to provide accurate, timely and useful information to the various segments of the target audience.

Phase 2 – Visioning Strategies and Recommendations

A Visioning Strategies Workshop was conducted with County and City constituents, which included a discussion of all findings, and any other potential challenges. The workshop identified opportunities for implementation steps, work plans, and funding implications.

Project Schedule and Timeline

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II. COMMUNITY PROFILE AND IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

A. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

By analyzing population data, trends emerge that can inform decision making and resource allocation strategies for the provision of parks, recreation, and open space management. Key characteristics were analyzed to identify current demographic statistics and trends that can impact the planning and provision of services.

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY
2018 DATA

POPULATION: 68,910

ANNUAL GROWTH RATE: 1.04%

HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY: 11.28%

MED. HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$58,898

MEDIAN AGE: 42.5

CITY OF HELENA
2018 DATA

POPULATION: 30,147

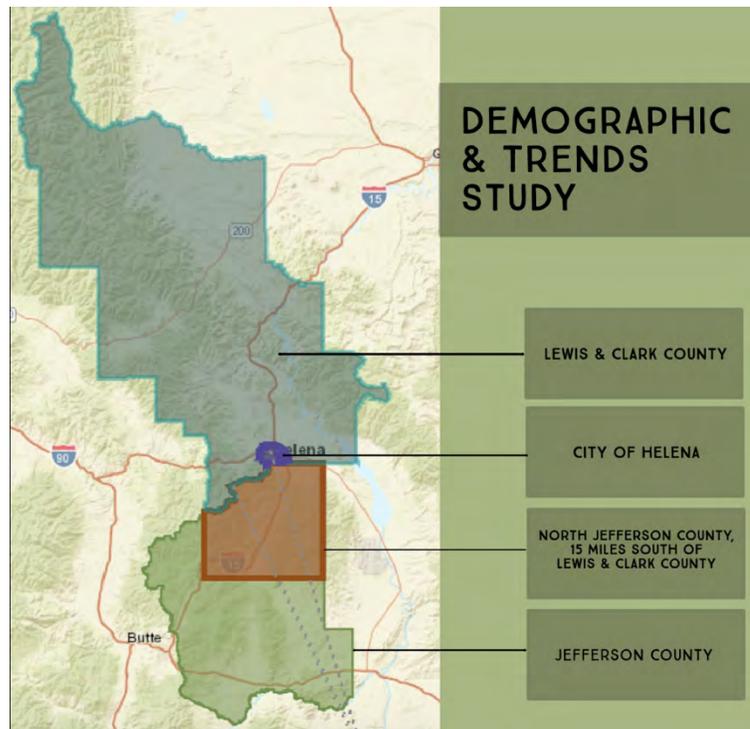
ANNUAL GROWTH RATE: 0.8%

HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY: 14.1%

MED. HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$54,611

MEDIAN AGE: 42

Figure 1: Demographic Map and Overview of Study Areas



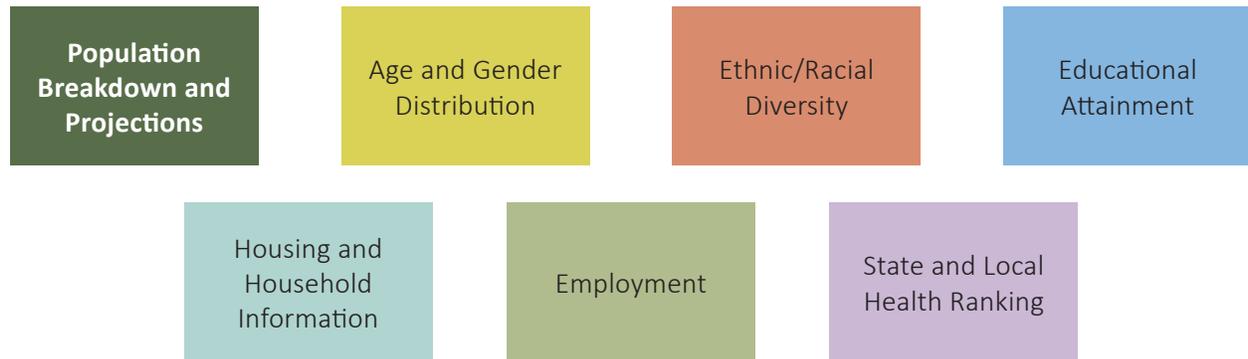
Lewis and Clark County
Area: 3,498 mi²



City of Helena
Area: 16.39 mi²

Source: Esri Business Analyst; Image: Google Maps, June 2018

This demographic profile was compiled in June 2018 from a combination of sources including the ESRI Business Analyst and 2010 U.S. Census. The following topics will be covered in detail in this report:



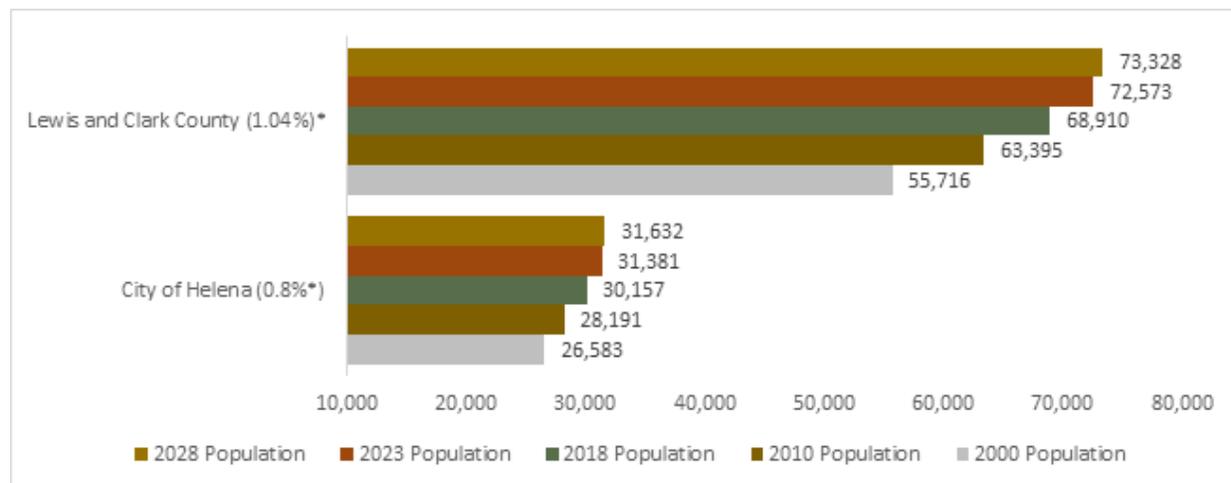
Lewis and Clark County is expected to experience over one percent average annual growth from 2018 to 2023; projections estimate that the population will reach over 70,000 in the next five years. The City of Helena will also grow, slightly more slowly, to just over 31,000 in 2023.



Population Projections

Figure 2 contains actual population figures based on the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census, in addition to estimates of 2018 and 2023 population by ESRI Business Analyst. Using the average annual growth rates between 2018 and 2023, projections were calculated for 5 and 10 year increments until 2028.

Figure 2: County and City Population Growth Trend



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Esri Business Analyst Population Projections *2018 – 2028 growth rate

Population Age & Gender Distribution

The County is nearly balanced between males and females at 49.3% and 50.6%, while the City has roughly 1,000 more females (51.8%) than males (48.1%). The existing and projected population of different age groups, or cohorts, is illustrated in the following series of figures. As demonstrated in **Figure 3**, the County and the City have very different age distributions. Knowing this can help plan recreational activities for specific age groups.

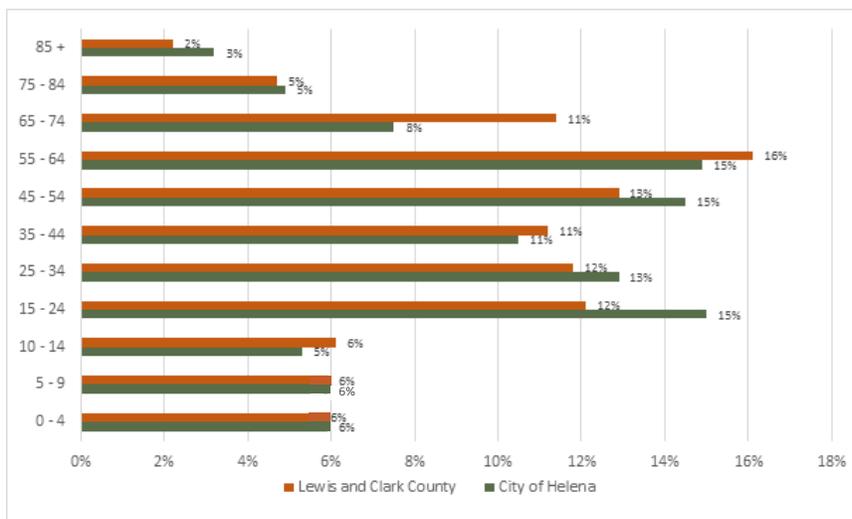


The median age between the two areas is very similar; 42.5 years is the median age in the County and 42 years in the City. The County has a population of persons under 18 years old at 21.5 percent, while the City's is 17.9 percent. In the County, over 16 percent of the population falls into the 55 to 64 age cohort. The major differences between the County and the City is the distribution between ages 15 and 54. The majority of the City's residents fall into this category (69%).

Lewis and Clark County
21.5%

City of Helena
17.9%

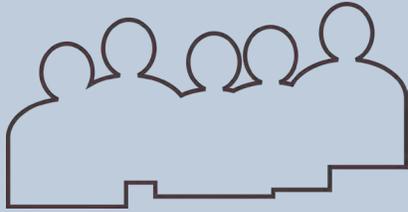
Figure 3: 2018 Estimated Population by Age Cohort



Source: Esri Business Analyst

Race/Ethnicity

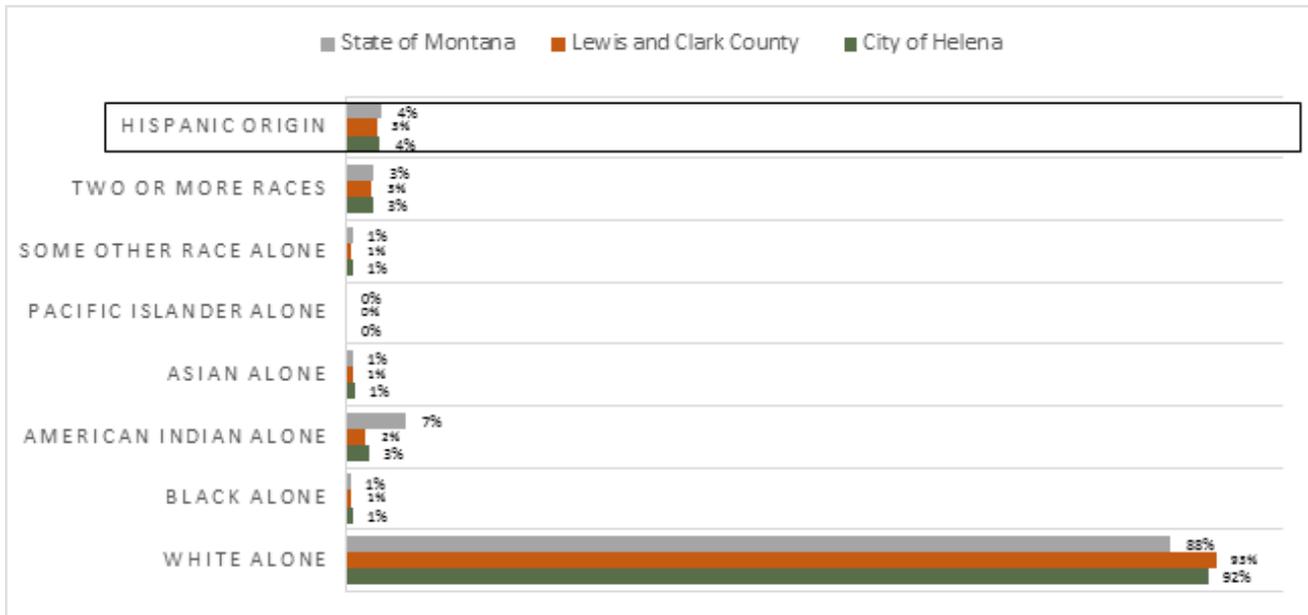
Prior to reviewing demographic data pertaining to a population's racial and ethnic character, it is important to note how the U.S. Census classifies and counts individuals who identify as Hispanic. The Census notes that Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before arrival in the United States. In the U.S. Census, people who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race and are included in all of the race categories. All race categories add up to 100 percent of the population, the indication of Hispanic origin is a different view of the population and is not considered a race. **Figure 4** reflects the approximate racial/ethnic population distribution for the County and the City based on the 2018 estimates from the U.S. Census. **Figure 5** shows the projected changes expected in the next five years.



Overall, the State mirrored the County and City populations in racial and ethnic character. However, the American Indian population was the largest minority group in the State at 7 percent. Residents identifying as two or more races made up about 3 percent in the State, the County, and the City.

The demographic composition of all three locations is becoming more diverse over time. It is predicted that in 2023, those identifying as “White Alone” will decrease about one percent in both the County and the City. Those identifying as having Hispanic Origin is expected to increase by about one percent in the next five years in both areas.

Figure 4: County, City, and State Comparison of Racial and Ethnic Character



Source: Esri Business Analyst

Figure 5: Projected Demographic Changes from 2018 to 2023



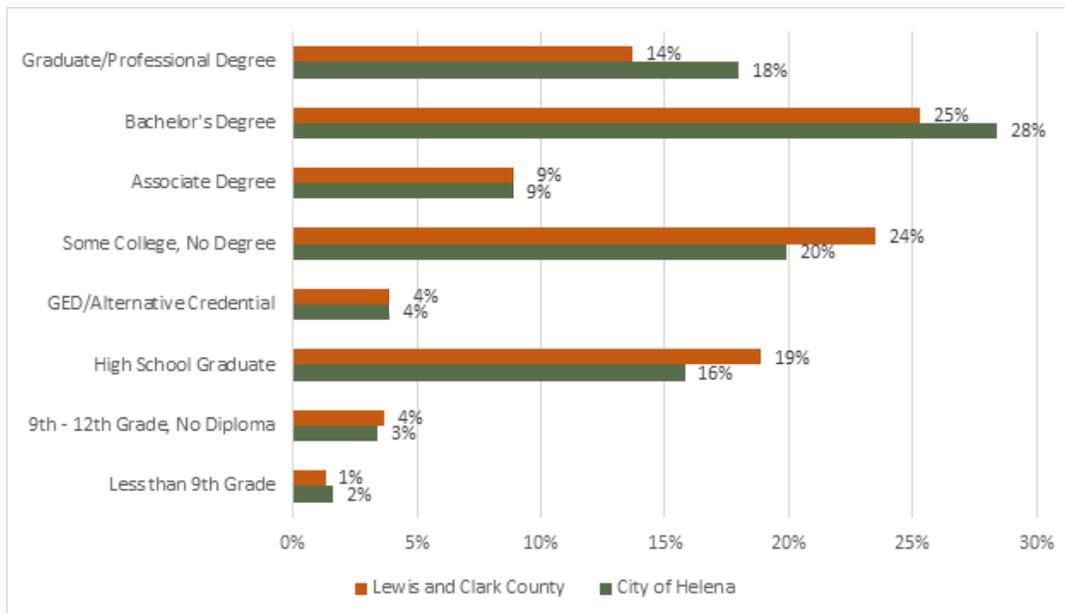
Educational Attainment

According to a Census study, education levels had more effect on earnings over a 40-year span in the workforce than any other demographic factor, such as gender, race, and ethnic origin.¹ The educational attainment for County and City residents over the age of 25 was measured, as illustrated in **Figure 6**.



The most common educational attainment level for both locations was a Bachelor’s degree. Nearly a quarter of the County’s residents had attended some college, but not received a degree. In both the County and the City, 95 percent of residents have obtained at least a high school degree.

Figure 6: 2018 Educational Attainment of County and City Adults (ages 25+)



Source: Esri Business Analyst

Household Information

Data regarding the households, housing value, and median income was measured using Esri Business Analyst and American Community Survey. **Table 1** breaks down the data by occupied housing units, the number of housing units, and the number of households.

¹Tiffany Julian and Robert Kominski, “Education and Synthetic Work-Life Earnings Estimates” American Community Survey Reports, US Census Bureau, <http://www.Census.gov/prosd/2011pubs/acs-14.pdf>, September 2011.



The County has about twice as many housing units and households as the City, and a slightly higher average household size. The owner-occupied rate is much higher in the County (57.3%) than the City (48.0%). The home value in the County is slightly higher than the City.

Median Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units (2012-2016)

Lewis and Clark County
\$212,600

City of Helena
\$209,500

Table 1: 2018 County and City Housing Profile

	Lewis and Clark County	City of Helena
Total Housing Units	32,925	14,423
Number of Households	28,990	13,655
Average Household Size	2.31	2.09
Owner Occupied Housing Units	57.3%	48.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	30.8%	46.7%
Vacant Housing Units	12.0%	5.3%

The most current data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community Survey, illustrated in **Figure 7**, indicates that the median household income in the County and in the City was higher than that of the State of Montana, and about average with the median household income of the United States.

Figure 7: Median Household Income



Source: Esri Business Analyst

Employment

The majority of working residents (age 16+) in the County were employed in jobs in the service industry (48.0%) as illustrated in **Figure 8**. It is estimated that public administration employed nearly a fifth of the residents in both locations, while retail trade also employed a significant portion of the population.



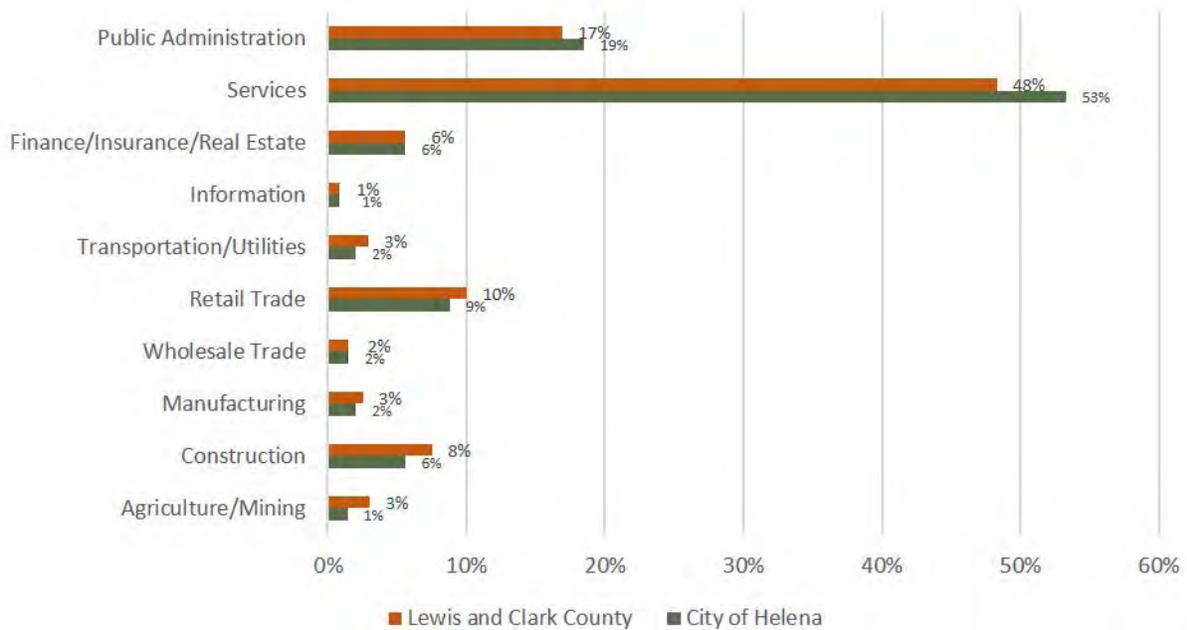
Both the County and the City had between 63 and 66 percent of their population in the labor force, and both had similar workforce trends. The County has a lower percentage of residents in poverty than the City.

Residents in poverty (2012 to 2016)

Lewis and Clark County
10.4%

City of Helena
16.5%

Figure 8: 2018 Employment by Industry in the County and the City



Source: Esri Business Analyst

Health Ranking

Understanding the status of the community’s health can help inform policies related to recreation and fitness. For instance, learning that 10.2 percent of the County lives with a disability may help justify the need for adaptive programming in recreation, or additional accessibility in facilities and playgrounds. The American Community Survey attempts to capture six elements of a disability: hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living.

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

10.2% with a Disability*
7.6% without health insurance*
*Under 65 Years Old

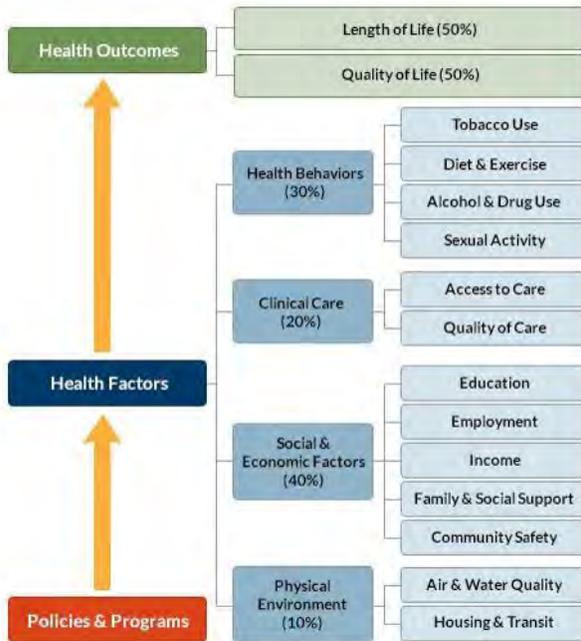
CITY OF HELENA

11% with a Disability*
9.4% without health insurance*
*Under 65 Years Old

County Health Ranking

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings and Roadmaps provide annual insight on the general health of national, state, and county populations. The 2018 Rankings model, shown in **Figure 9**, highlights the topic areas reviewed by the Foundation.

Figure 9: County Health Ranking



The health ranking for the County gauged the public health of the population based on “how long people live and how healthy people feel while alive,” coupled with ranking factors including healthy behaviors, clinical care, social, economic, and physical environment factors.

Out of the 47 Montana counties reviewed, Lewis and Clark County was ranked as 7th for overall health outcomes, and 3rd for health factors.

State Health Ranking

In 2018, the United Health Foundation’s America’s Health Rankings Annual Report, ranked Montana as the 22nd healthiest state nationally. The health

rankings consider and weigh social and environmental factors that tend to directly impact the overall health of state populations, as illustrated in **Figure 10**.

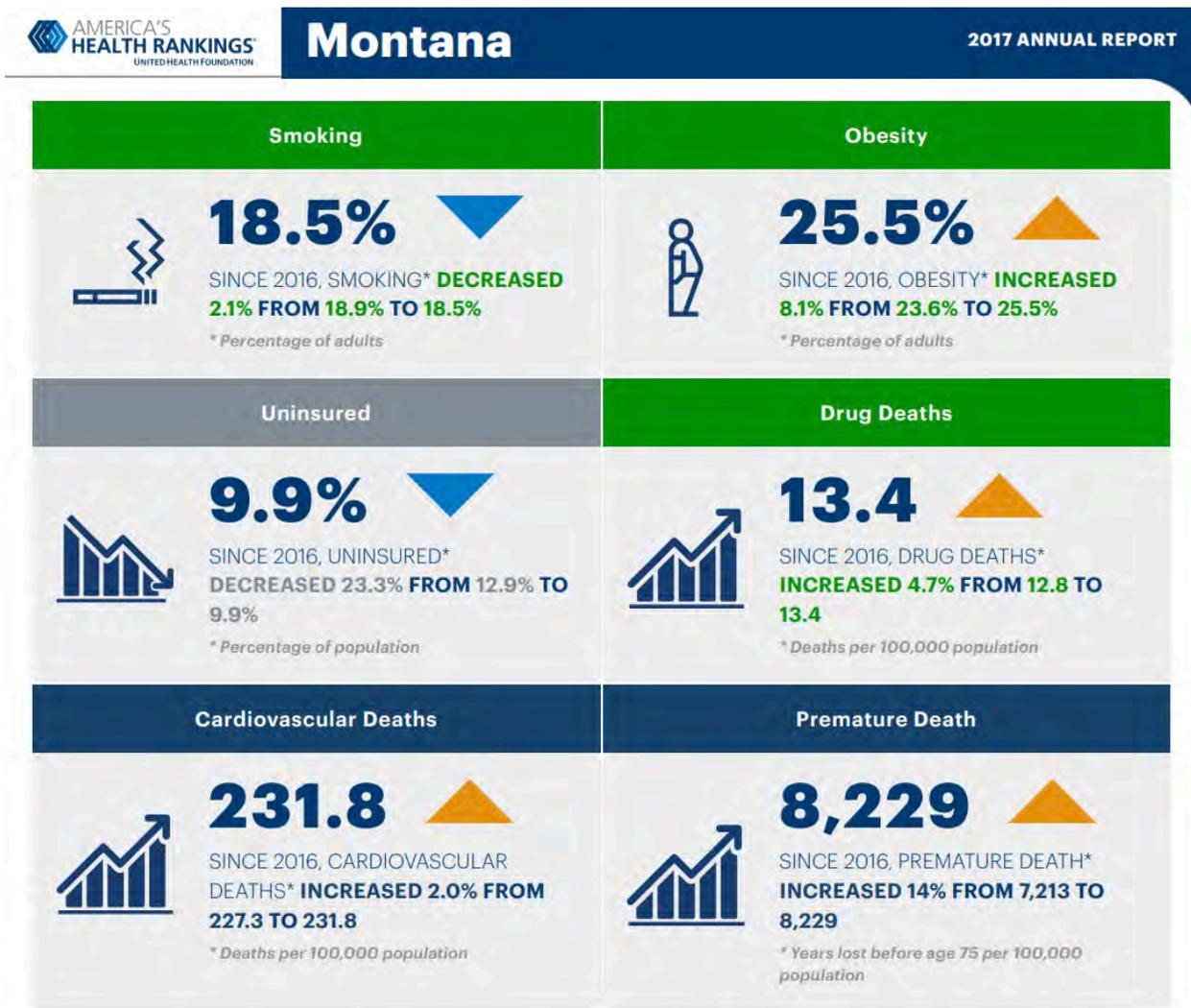
Montana’s public health ranking strengths include:

- Low levels of air pollution
- Low prevalence of obesity
- Low prevalence of diabetes

Challenges to Montana’s health include:

- Low immunization coverage among children
- Lower number of primary care physicians
- High prevalence of excessive drinking

Figure 10: 2018 Montana Health Ranking Overview



Source: United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings Annual Report 2018

A Look at North Jefferson County

A final comparison report was requested for north Jefferson County. **Table 2** is basic demographic information. Using the boundary of Lewis and Clark County, and measuring 15 miles south, this portion of Jefferson County is a total of 545.41 square miles.

Table 2: Demographic Comparison

Variable	Lewis and Clark County	Northern Jefferson County	City of Helena
2018 Total Population	68,910	7,942	30,157
2018-2023 Population: Annual Growth Rate	1.04%	0.70%	0.80%
2018 Median Household Income	\$58,898	\$83,085	\$54,611
2018 Median Home Value	\$227,852	\$292,241	\$222,563
2018 Total Housing Units	32,925	3,283	14,423
2018 Owner Occupied Housing Units	18,854	2,585	6,917
2018 Renter Occupied Housing Units	10,136	440	6,738
2018 Vacant Housing Units	3,935	257	768
2018 Median Age	42.5	47.5	42.0

B. NATIONAL TRENDS IN PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

The pace of change today requires analysis of recreation trends from both a local and national level. Understanding the participation levels of County and City residents using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, combined with research of relevant national recreation trends, provides critical insights that help to plan for the future.

An essential component of understanding and serving the community is learning from these shifts, particularly in regard to participation in outdoor recreation, sports, and cultural programs.

Local and State-wide Recreational Expenditures

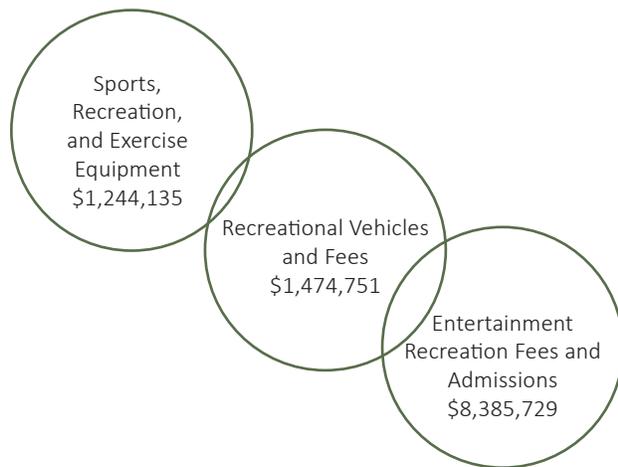
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, County residents spent an average of \$896.99 a year, while City residents spent \$867.95 a year on recreational expenditures. This included membership fees for social, recreation, and community clubs, fees for recreation lessons, camping fees, and recreation equipment purchases, and other related recreation expenses. Total expenditures for the County and City are shown in **Figures 11 and 12**.

Figure 11: 2018 County Recreational Expenditures



Lewis and Clark County:
\$26,003,818

Figure 12: 2018 City Recreational Expenditures



City of Helena:
\$11,104,515

Source: Esri Business Analyst

According to the Outdoor Industry Economy Report (**Figure 13**), in Montana alone, annual consumer spending in outdoor recreation is \$7.1 billion, supporting 71,000 direct jobs. This has led to \$286 million in State and local tax revenue.

Generational Changes

Activity Participation varies based on age, but it also varies based on generational preferences. (Age ranges for each generation are found in **Table 3**.) According to the 2018 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities (SFLA) Topline Participation Report (**Figure 14**), Millennials had the highest percentage of those who were “active to a healthy level,” but a quarter also remained sedentary. Nearly 28 percent of Generation X were inactive, with Baby Boomers at 33 percent inactive. Baby Boomers prefer low impact fitness activities such as swimming, cycling, aquatic exercise, and walking for fitness.

Table 3: Generational Age Categories

Generational Group	Age Category
Generation Alpha	~ Born 2010- ?
Generation Z	~ Born 1997- 2010
Millennials	Born 1981- 1996
Generation X	Born 1965- 1980
Baby Boomers	Born 1946- 1964
Silent Generation	Born 1928- 1945
Greatest Generation	Born 1910- 1924

Figure 13: State of Montana Outdoor Recreation Economy



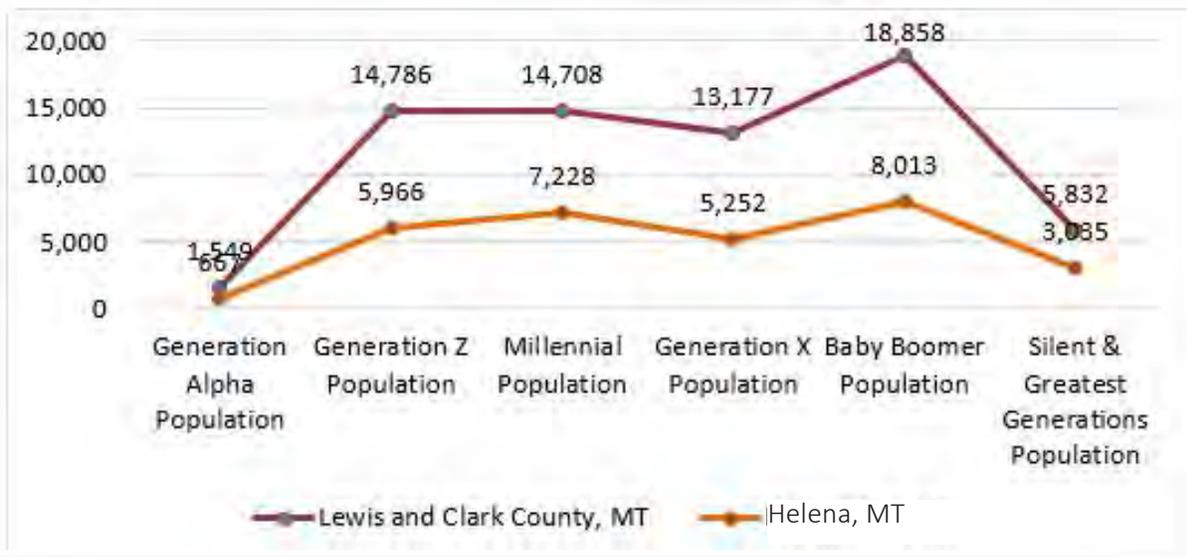
Source: Outdoor Industry, 2016 Outdoor Recreation Economy Report

Figure 14: Generational Characteristics



Figure 15 below demonstrates the breakdown of generations in the County and the City. Both locations had similar generational makeup. Baby Boomers make up the largest generational group, followed by Generation Z and Millennials.

Figure 15: County and City Generational Comparisons



Racial and Ethnic Trends

The United States is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. People who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race and are included in all of the race categories. The U.S. Census Bureau notes that Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person, or the person’s parents or ancestors before arrival in the United States. In 2010, just over 16 percent of adults identified as being of Hispanic origin; this number is expected to reach almost 20 percent in 2023. **Table 4** shows a comparison between County, City, and National percentages.

Table 4: Hispanic Population Change Over Time

Variable	Lewis and Clark County	City of Helena	Montana	USA
2010 Hispanic Population (%)	2.50%	2.76%	2.89%	16.35%
2018 Hispanic Population (%)	3.42%	3.71%	3.93%	18.32%
2023 Hispanic Population (%)	4.20%	4.54%	4.65%	19.82%

Source: Pew Research Center 2018

Recreational Preferences

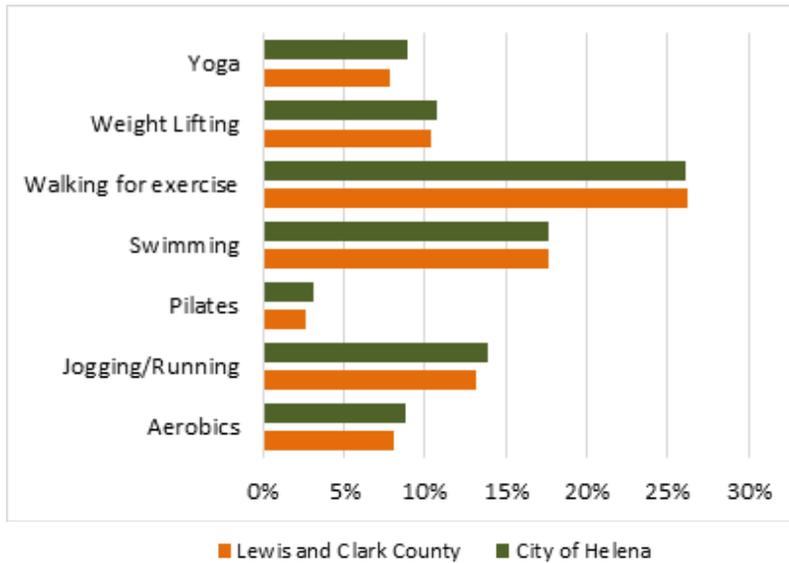
According to the 2018 SFLA “Topline Participation Report,” outdoor recreation is an activity group that is continuing to capture the interest and attention of new audiences. With the exception of those older than 55, all other age groups listed camping as the number one activity.

Nationally, overnight backpacking has seen an average annual growth of seven percent over the last five years. RV Camping is also growing in popularity, with an average annual growth of nine percent in the last three years. Stand up paddle boarding has seen, on average, a 20 percent annual growth in the last five years.



According to the 2018 SFLA, Millennials are more likely than other generations to engage in water sports. In 2018, the most popular fitness activity in both the County and the City was walking for exercise, followed by swimming, jogging/running, and weight lifting. Yoga is also a popular activity in the area, with almost nine percent participation (**Figure 16**).

Figure 16: Fitness and Health Participation in the County and the City



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

With regard to participation in sports (**Figure 17**), golf and basketball were two of the most popular sports in both locations, with almost 10 percent of household participation in the sports. Baseball and football were also popular sports.

Figure 17: Team Sport Participation in the County and the City



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census



C. CITIZEN AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Public input was gathered during April of 2018. Methods used to engage with citizens included – focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and public meetings. These sessions were held at the County and City offices. Additional information was collected via phone interviews and emails sent by citizens wanting to participate. The goal of these sessions was to gather information for recommendations and to inform development of the survey tools. Focus group attendees included County and City elected officials, the joint City-County Parks Board, partners, alternate providers, and members of the public.

A summary of responses follows. Responses are not prioritized, but recurring responses are denoted with asterisks () . It should be noted that some participants chose not to respond during the sessions.***

Strengths

- ***Trail system
 - ***Paved bike trails/Centennial Trail
 - *Outdoor amenities
 - *Mountain biking
 - *Accessibility to trails from houses
 - *Diversity of trails
- *Diversity of parks and users
 - *Playground equipment
 - *Centennial Park – diversity of amenities
 - Attraction to outside visitors
 - Great open land and large parks
 - Activities/events in City parks
 - Pickleball courts
 - Clean parks
- *Partnerships with user groups
 - Volunteers

Opportunities for Improvement

- ***Lack of funding
 - City Parks and Recreation Department scope very broad and beyond parks and recreation
 - Undeveloped park land
 - Add public art in parks and on trails
 - Improve ADA accessibility and ADA accessibility playgrounds
 - Lack of Indoor Pool
- *Dangerous air quality for months due to wildfire smoke affects outdoor recreation activities
 - Not enough shade in parks
- Operations/Regulations in park spaces
 - Off-leash regulations and enforcement in mountain parks
 - Concerns regarding safety in parks (loitering, vandalism, etc.)
- Parks should connect via trails and walkways
 - Open space could be overused if parks used only for recreation and not as an ecosystem
- Missing marketing opportunities
 - Unclear communication process or partnership process
 - Users unaware of opportunities

Activities/Programs That Should be Enhanced

- *Equity between City residents and nonresidents
- Reserve pavilions and pay user fees
- Cultural Arts programs
- Sports Tournaments – not enough playing fields or gymnasiums for weekend tournaments
- Walking clubs and tours, guided tours (could use art in the park)
- Interpretive signage and programs
- Special events (movie nights, racing series)
- Additional winter activities (grooming City trails for X-country skiing)

- Skill-building opportunities (woodworking, furniture refining, art classes, interior design, cooking, sewing, photography, pottery, etc.)
- Dance classes
- Health and wellness programming

Improvements Needed at Existing Facilities

- *Complete Centennial Park Trail
- *Connector trails from park to park and neighborhoods in both the County and the City
- *Restrooms in highly used parks
- New and improved signage at Mount Helena Park
- Disperse access to trails at Mount Helena Park
- Batch Park ballfields need to be upgraded – trees, shelters, restrooms, etc.
- Upgrade outdoor ice skating rink
- Tennis courts need to be redone
- Upgrade County Fairgrounds – trail around property
- Create a safe Centennial Trail crossing at Henderson
- Trail Lighting
- Additional support services

Additional Amenities or Facilities

- ***Create a Parks and Recreation District with dedicated funding
- ***New indoor facility with ***indoor pool (8 lane, 25 meter competition pool, leisure pool, zero depth, slides, climbing wall, lazy river, therapeutic pool), **gymnasiums, *indoor turf, **indoor walking track, indoor playground / playspace
- *Multipurpose rectangle ballfields
 - Tournament Sports Complex
 - Dedicated pickleball courts
- Dog agility obstacle course
- Public Art should be utilized to beautify and inform parks

- Interactive amenities in parks
- Motorized recreational vehicle (ATV, ORV) area at North Park
- Playground in downtown area

Underserved Portions of the Area

- Rural County residents for trails
- Urban natural parks
- Pedestrians/walkability around the City
- Cultural and Arts
- Motorized recreational vehicles (ATV, ORV)
- Winter park users
- Low income families

Funding Opportunities/ Partners

- Realtors, Developers, Home Builders, HOAs (Northstar Homeowners Association)
- Alternate providers and programmers – US Forest Service, Bike Walk Helena, Friends of Centennial Trail, State of Montana, Bike Walk Montana, Prickly Pear Land Trust
- School District
- Waukesha Community Gardens
- Hotels – encourage guests to ride bikes to trailheads versus driving
- Private entities
- Montana Independent Living
- Public Health agencies
- Helena Softball Association – and other associations
- YMCA – predominately older demographics, youth sports programs
- HRSA – Helena Regional Sports Association
- User Groups – hikers, bikers, ATV riders, runners, sports organizations, snow mobile groups, Helena Lions Swim Team
- Hospital
- Medical Health Insurance Companies

Top Parks and Recreation Priorities

- **Create a Parks and Recreation District, find dedicated funding sources
- County and City cooperative effort
- Connectivity/Walkability
- Rectangle Sports Fields
- Sustainability – Infrastructure, maintenance, water, etc.
- Accessibility to All (ADA)
- More staffing/resources
- Reassessment of general fund allocations
- Create a Parks and Recreation 501(c)(3) Foundation
- Communication with the public
- Support partnerships
- Elevate the Level of Service in existing parks to an acceptable level for the community
- Indoor Pool

D. CITIZEN SURVEY SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to gather public feedback on County and City parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs. This survey research effort and subsequent analysis were designed to assist the County in planning for future improvements, developments, and services.



The survey was conducted using three primary methods:

Mailed Invitation Survey
Sent to randomly selected County and City residents

Online Invitation Survey
Accessed through a password-protected website for residents who received the mailed survey

Open link Online Survey
Open to members of the public who were not part of the invitation survey

In total, 445 County-wide invitation surveys were completed through a variety of survey approaches. In addition, 407 open-link surveys were received (completed and partially completed). The invitation sample includes responses gathered from the mailed survey and online invitation sample. The margin of error for the invitation sample is +/- 4.6%.

The analysis herein primarily focuses on responses from the invitation survey of all County residents. However, invitation sample results are compared to the open-link results throughout the report.

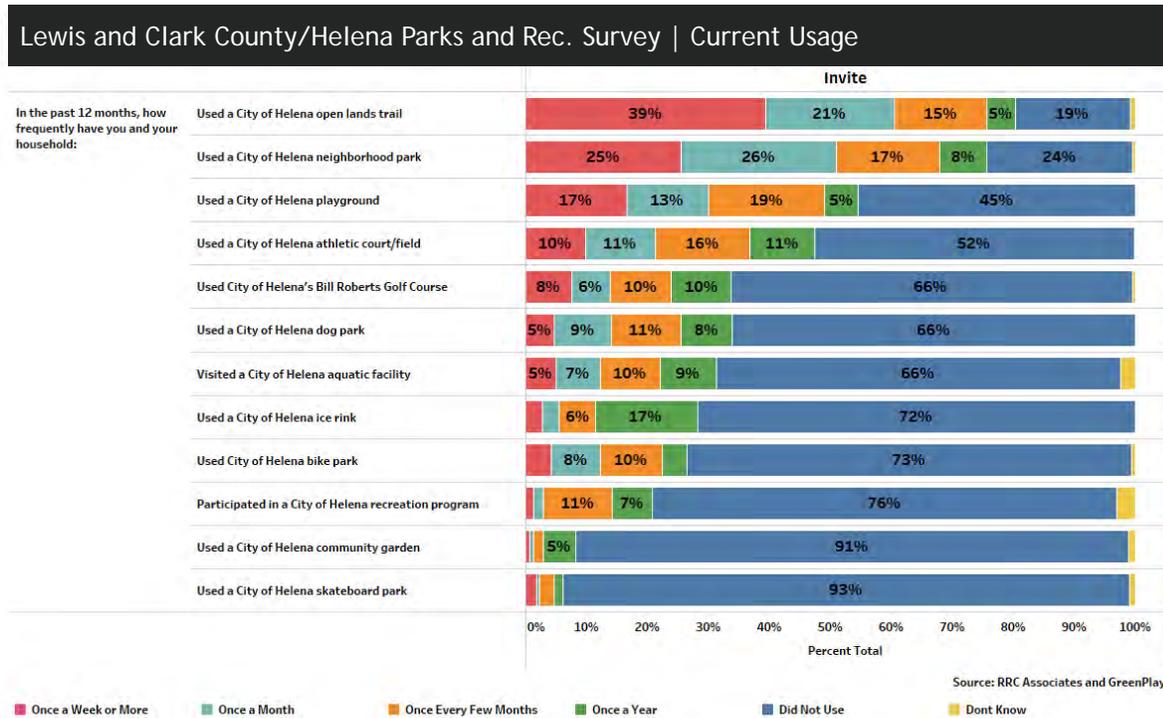
Summary of Survey Findings

The following is a summary of selected questions asked via the survey tool. More information can be found in the survey report and open comment report submitted to the County as staff resource documents.

Usage of Park and Recreation Facilities

Among invitation respondents (**Figure 18**), using a City open lands trail (76% used in past year), a City neighborhood park (69% used), and City playground (55% used) were most common. Followed by a City athletic court/field (47% used) and a City aquatic facility (33% used).

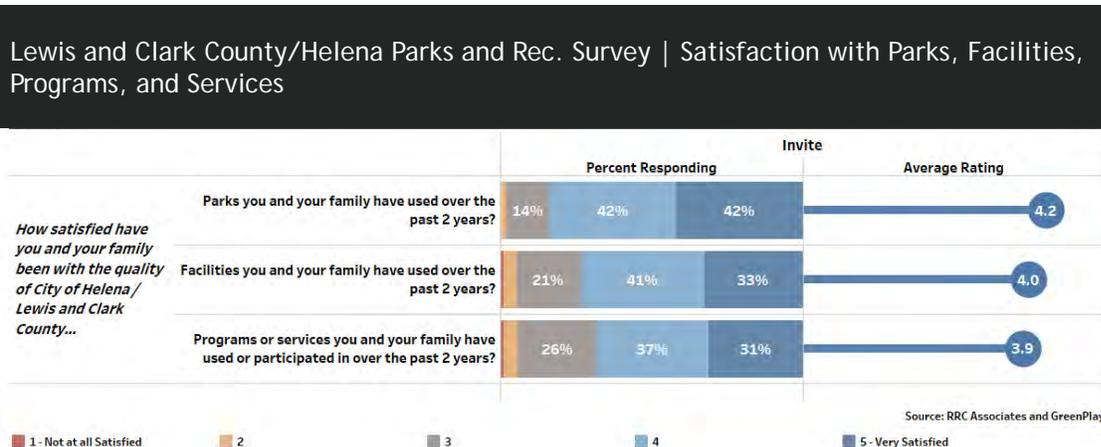
Figure 18: Usage of Park and Recreation Facilities



Satisfaction with Park/Facilities/Programs/Services

Among invitation respondents (**Figure 19**), satisfaction with parks was rated an average of 4.1 out of 5.0, followed by 3.9 for facilities, and 3.8 for programs/services. Overall, residents have a positive satisfaction rating with most aspects of parks and recreation offerings, but there are still areas for improvement for a smaller segment of users.

Figure 19: Satisfaction with Park/Facilities/Programs/Services



Satisfaction with Park/Facilities/Programs/Services

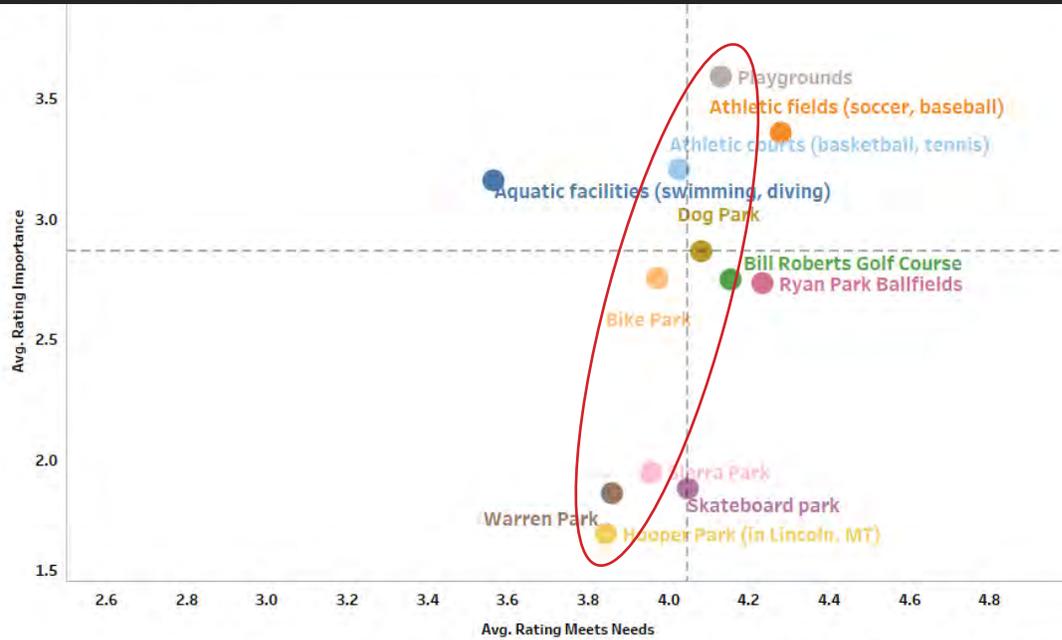
An Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix compares the relative importance and degree to which needs are met for each amenity. Scores from invitation respondents are again displayed in the matrix using the mid-points for both questions to divide into four quadrants. **Figure 20** describes each of the quadrants within the matrix. **Figure 21** is a facility and amenity matrix, and **Figure 22** is a programs matrix. A red oval has been input on the matrix for added clarity. Amenities that exist within this oval are considered areas where the County should continue operations as is for the time being. Amenities that lie outside of the circle should be considered as opportunities or areas for improvement.

Figure 20: Importance vs. Needs-Met Matrix Description



Figure 21: The Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix – Facilities/Amenities

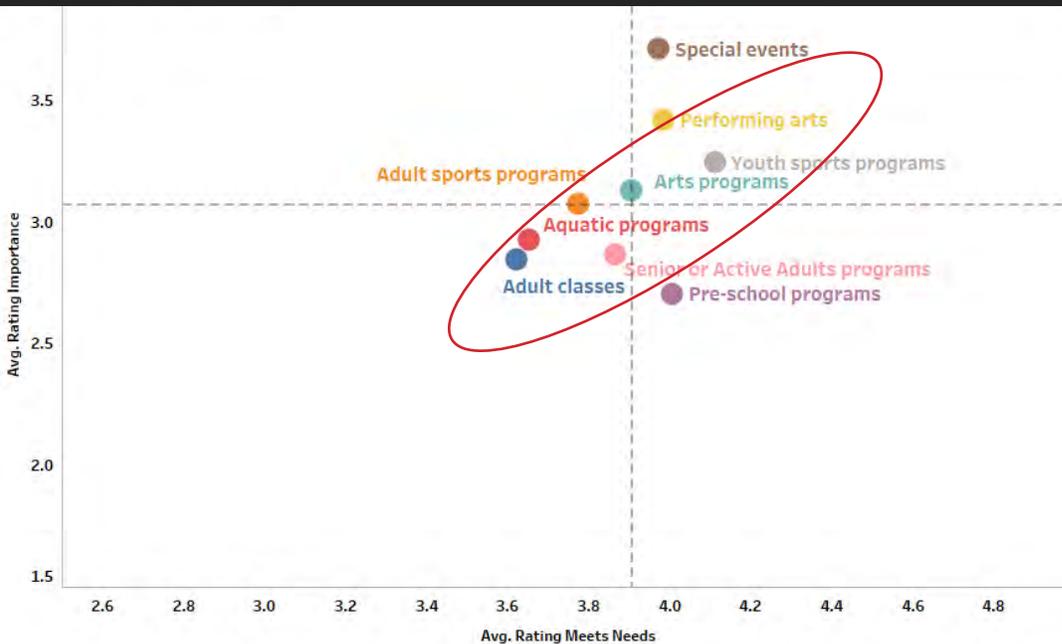
Lewis and Clark County/Helena Parks and Rec. Survey | Level of Importance vs. Needs Met for Current Programs



Source: RRC Associates and GreenPlay

Figure 22: The Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix – Programs

Lewis and Clark County/Helena Parks and Rec. Survey | Level of Importance vs. Needs Met for Current Programs



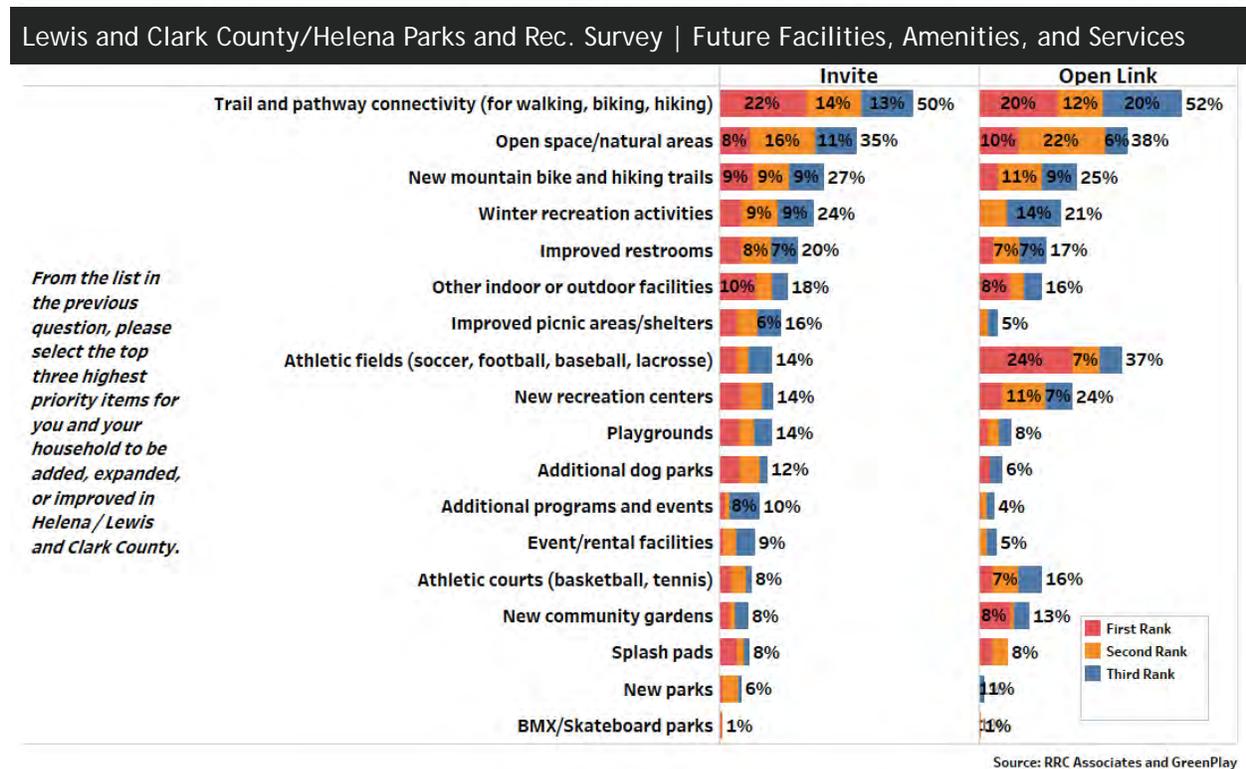
Source: RRC Associates and GreenPlay

When asked to select their top three priorities for the County and the City to add/expand/improve (**Figure 23**), invitation respondents were most likely to report the following priorities:

- Trail and pathway connectivity (18% first priority; 44% total)
- Open space/natural areas (33% total)
- New mountain bike and hiking trails (26%).

Open link respondents are similar in their priorities but had a much higher push for athletic fields (32% top priority, 50% total), athletic courts (27%), and new recreation centers (26%).

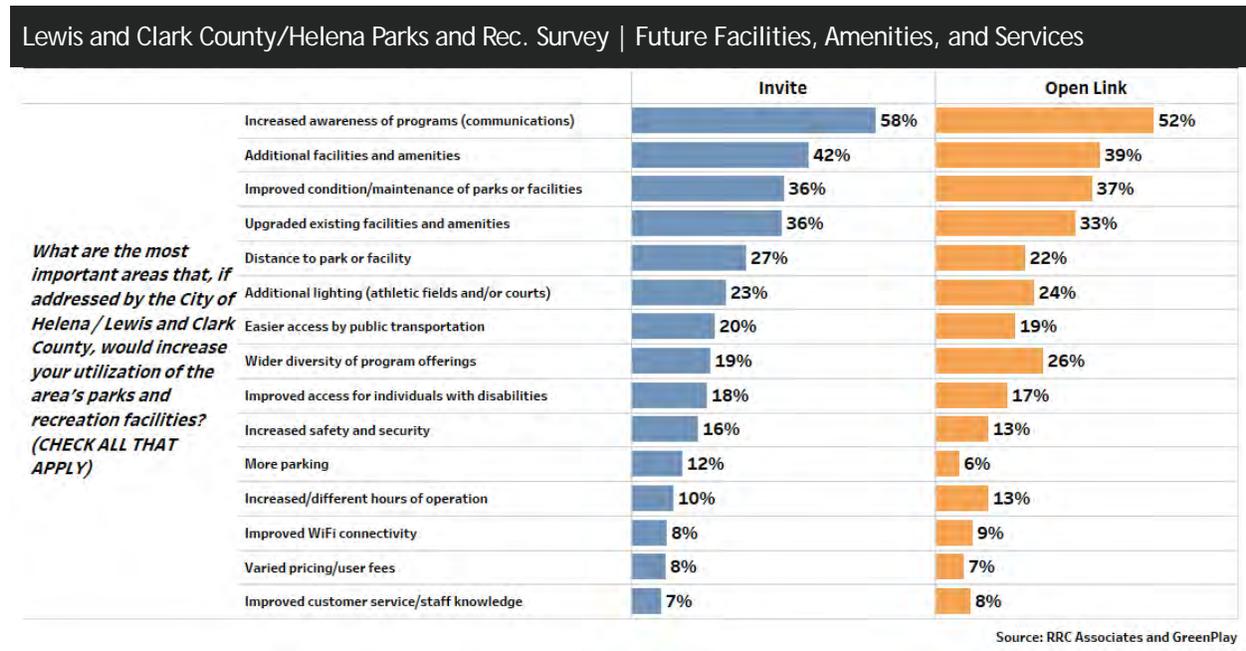
Figure 23: Priorities to Add, Expand, and Improve



Factors That Would Increase Usage

When asked what factors would increase their usage of County and City facilities (**Figure 24**), invitation respondents were most likely to highlight increased awareness of programs (59%), additional facilities and amenities (38%), upgraded facilities and amenities (37%), and improved condition/maintenance (36%). Following are the distance to park or facility (26%), additional lighting (21%) and wider diversity of program offerings (20%).

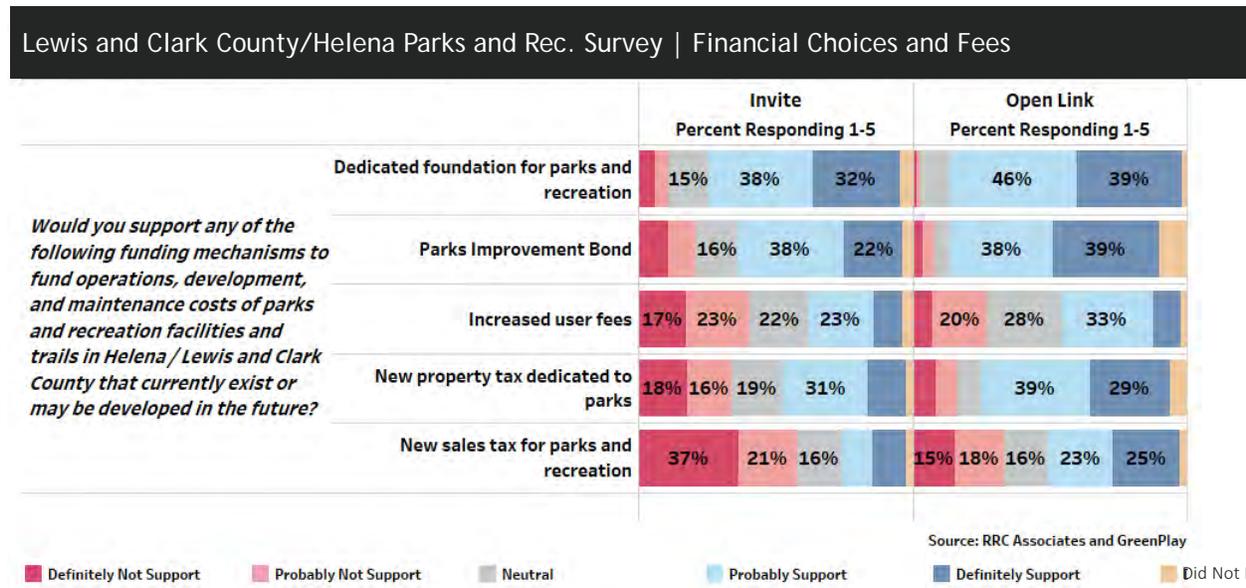
Figure 24: Factors that Would Increase Usage



Financial Choices/Fees

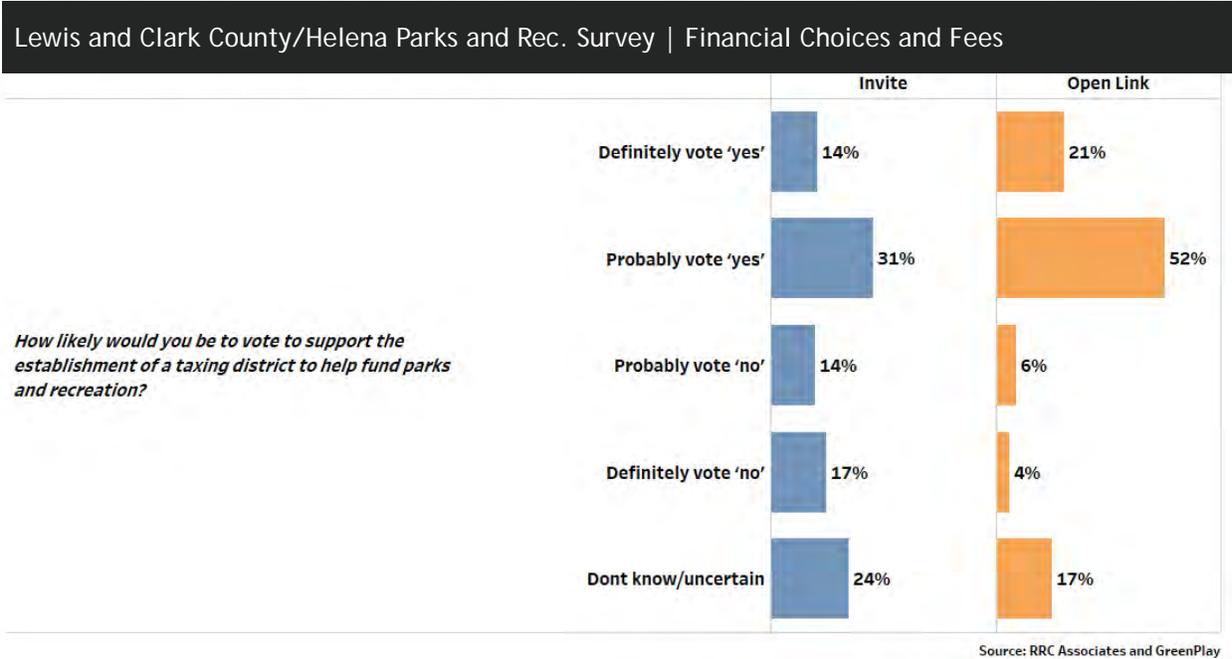
When asked about supporting funding mechanisms (**Figure 25**), invitation respondents were most supportive of a dedicated foundation for parks and recreation (63% would support), and a parks improvement bond (54% would support). New sales tax for parks and recreation (61% would not support), new property tax (39% would not support), and increased user fees (39% would not support) were less popular. Open link respondents were more supportive overall of most options.

Figure 25: Level of Support for Funding



When asked about creation of a special taxing district dedicated to parks and recreation services (**Figure 26**), 41% would support one at this time and 36% would not support. Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) are uncertain or don't know if they would support one at this time.

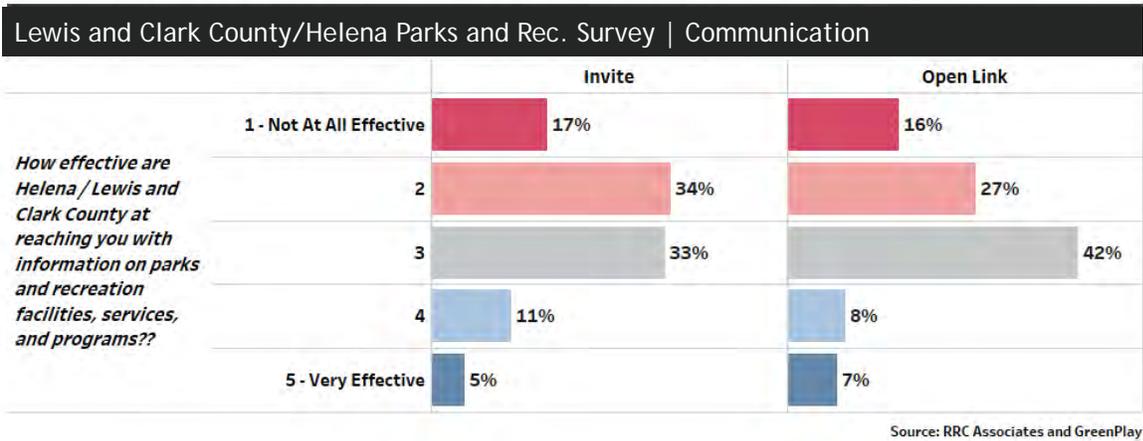
Figure 26: Support for a Special Tax District



Communication

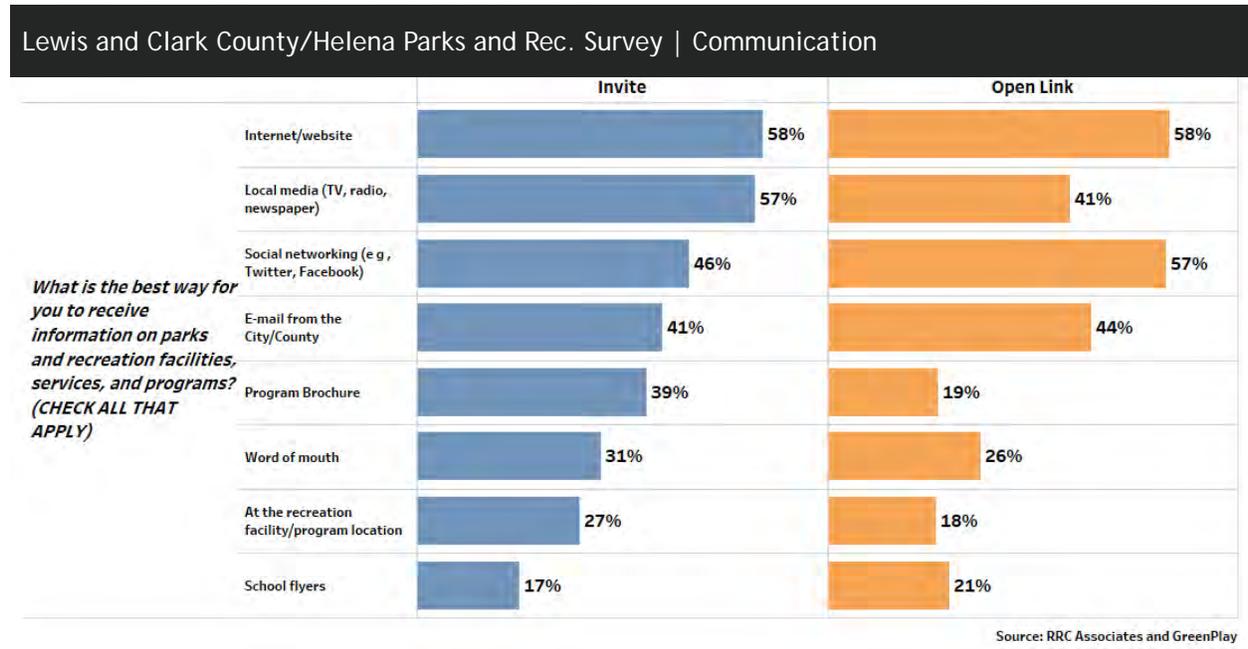
Communication effectiveness of the County and the City (**Figure 27**) was rated on a scale of 1 = “not at all effective” to 5 = “very effective.” In total, 15% of invitation respondents and 17% of open link respondents rated the County’s and City’s communications as effective (rated 4 or 5). In contrast, 53% of invitation respondents rated communication as not effective (rated 1 or 2) with 32% rating moderately effective (rated 3). Open link respondents were similar, with a slightly larger percentage rating moderately effective (37%).

Figure 27: Effectiveness of Communication Efforts



Respondents indicated local media (TV, radio, newspaper) (56%), internet/website (55%), and social networking (45%) as the best avenues to receive information (**Figure 28**). The following methods include e-mail from the County and/or the City (39%), program brochure (34%) and word of mouth (31%).

Figure 28: Best Way to Receive Information



III. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

The project team used public input from focus groups, public meetings and the statistically-valid citizen survey, staff experience, consultant team expertise, and the level of service analysis to identify and prioritize the key issues pertaining to this planning effort.

A key issues matrix was provided to staff as a digital file and can be found separate of this document. Further description of each issue follows in **Section IV**.

The key issues are not mutually exclusive, they were categorized in like areas. This allows the team to tell a more complete story of issues within the plan. These categories, along with a brief summary of issues, are:

- Inventory and Level of Service
 - No clear vision for park system development.
 - Trail system should connect park-to-park and/or focus on commuter connections.
 - Area residents are looking for additional regional trail amenities and other outdoor opportunities.
 - Citizens are looking for upgrades and maintenance to current infrastructure.
 - Parks are missing key features desired by residents.

- Indoor facilities are not provided by County/City.
- Area residents are looking for additional access to water.
- Operational/Financial
 - Demand on County resources is unsustainable.
 - Staff resources are limited.
 - Funding resources are limited.
- Programming
 - Citizens are looking for more programs.
- Marketing/Communication
 - Citizens are not fully aware of service profile.

Categorizing each issue and ranking them according to feedback, analysis, and professional experience, allows the project team to tell a more complete story of opportunities for the County. Further, it was used to develop recommendations based on the feasibility of the County’s ability to capitalize on the opportunity. The next sections further detail these issues and provide recommended goals and action steps.



Hooper Park

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IV. COMMUNITY NEEDS ANALYSIS

A. OPERATIONAL/ FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Current Circumstances

The County does not operate a Parks and Recreation Department, thus relying on partnerships to operate, program, and maintain the land in the County designated for park use. Parks are instead a responsibility of the County Community Development and Planning Department team, and lumped in with other development and land use operations. This system has benefits and challenges. Benefits include more staff resources dedicated to other County responsibilities, less expensive operations and deeper partnerships. Challenges include fewer resources dedicated to park-specific use and less ability to control the level of service at parks and recreation facilities.

Due to the scope of the County, minimal tax resources are dedicated toward the development and/or maintenance of parks facilities. The County collects fees-in-lieu of park land dedication from new developments, but currently, this money can only be spent within a 2.5 mile radius or a 15 minute bike ride of the area in which it was collected. These monies are allocated in multiple accounts, one for each area of the County, and currently total approximately \$150,000. The amount set for cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication is determined at the State-level and is not in the control of the County. Rural Improvement District (RID) money is also collected for specified parks and/or trails from residents located within the RID boundary; however, this money can only be used for improvements and/or maintenance of improvements as enumerated under the RID.

Lastly, the County is expected to see continued growth. Due to the geography and political boundaries, most of the developments happening

within the County are in close proximity to the City. While in is not in the County's purview to provide park and recreation resources, it will continue to face pressure by its residents to provide more services or by alternate providers to provide more support.

Operational/Financial Analysis

The biggest issues facing the County are financial. It does have dedicated funding sources through minimal taxes and assessments by way of cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication, but it is not amounting to enough money to develop park areas or recreational amenities. Since these are dedicated funds and not a substantial amount in terms of what is needed, the County is finding trouble using its resources in the most effective way; leaving many undeveloped park areas around the County. County residents, living in developed neighborhoods and in close proximity to City services, are looking for a higher level of service closer to home. The County does not have the resources to provide these desired services.

At the parks that do have services, partnership agreements are in place to operate, program, and maintain services. These are a long-term agreements that have worked very well in the past, with some agreements recently being renewed. Empowering partners can lead to an increased feeling of ownership on a property. However, the growth of the area has created a larger demand for services than in the past, and operators are having trouble keeping up with the demand and feel hindered in some ways by the agreements. While most partners seem happy with the agreements, some feel a need for more support, specifically with on-site development. These agreements should be evaluated on an annual basis.

Many long-term strategies have been researched and discussed in previous years. Most recently, a study determining the feasibility of creating a parks district that would be responsible for providing parks and recreation services in the area was conducted. This remains a strong option, as it would help mitigate the funding issue by drawing tax money from a more representative user group. However, there are many logistical issues and challenges in implementing a district. From the Regional Parks, Recreation, and Trails District Feasibility Study:

“Continuing current local government budget approaches will not be able to sustain existing parks and recreational programs over the long term. Expenses will increase as facilities age and suffer the effects of deferred major life cycle and maintenance costs. The reliance on volunteer labor to maintain parklands and provide scheduling and logistics is wearing down the volunteers. Revenues are not keeping up with expenses overall in the study area. The dependence on general fund revenues and subdivision ‘cash-in-lieu’ is a concern.”

The Regional Parks, Recreation, and Trails Feasibility Study defines “Alternatives for Management and Funding,” including:

- A no-change scenario
- Coordinated management between jurisdictions
- Other new actions by individual jurisdictions (new taxes or funding strategies)

Each scenario is presented with definitions of the scenario, sustainability assessments, and projected costs and revenues.

From the Regional Parks, Recreation, and Trails Feasibility Study:

“Working regionally to address parks, open space, trails, etc. has potential to increase overall benefits in the region and those of individual jurisdictions as well. Regional efforts have greater likelihood of receiving certain types of grant funds. Creating a regional funding mechanism could leverage a greater array and amount of funding.

“The current approach to budgeting costs and revenues for parks, trails, open space and programming is not sustainable in the long-term. Revenues are simply insufficient to cover long-term costs of maintaining existing resources over the long-term. Except for a very small portion, revenues are not dedicated to parks and consequently funding is potentially unstable. The most reliable source of long-term funding would be dedicated tax revenue, established through a multi-jurisdictional Regional Special District or separate improvement districts created by each jurisdiction.”

While a district seems like the logical long-term goal for the County, it should look at ways to consolidate operations with other public agencies in the short-term and push to generate an appropriate amount of revenue with its current infrastructure, including strengthening partnerships and developing more strategic projects with the City to minimize a duplication of services. Creating these efficiencies also allows for a smoother operational transition in the future.

From a staffing perspective, users would benefit from joint staff within the County and City, namely, marketing staff and a recreation manager. Creating these two positions would allow the City’s Parks and Recreation Department to manage the current demand of the system, while also allowing the County to shift recreational responsibilities away from a department without dedicated staffing. Operationally, this would also allow the County and City to consolidate the public park planning and development; ensuring that park types and recreational components are appropriately dispersed throughout the County. These two positions will be key in the success of joint operations in the long-term, and should be considered as short-term opportunities to build advocacy for a larger, more cohesive park system in the future.

Financially, the County needs further direction regarding the use of funds and appropriate development within the County parks system. Development of neighborhood- or community-type parks is out of the purview of the County. While neighborhoods are developing, the County should focus on regional parks or sports fields/ complexes. These types of parks require less maintenance tasks, and open the County up to more sponsorship and partnership opportunities, and other sources of funding.

To support this process, the County should pool cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication money and direct it toward a master site planning effort; providing for more active components at community/neighborhood park for residents, and additional ball/soccer fields for the region (design should also include hazard mitigation strategies and other cross-functional uses). Directing this money toward planning should be considered an active use of the funds or investment into the County. A plan does not immediately translate into infrastructure, but it is the first step in creating advocacy within the County, budgeting/finding appropriate resources, and ultimately gaining the capital needed to build, as many funders, donors, or sponsors require a planning effort before giving to a project. Citizen buy-in and attractions for grant money could come easier if the dollars are stretched for more value, such as including storm water management in the park designs.

Regardless of the decision to pool funding for planning, the County is limited in funds for operation, maintenance, and capital. Park tax funding is available to be directed toward maintenance and improvements in the short-term, but not to the degree to continue to increase the level of service within the County.

To support the efforts to find additional funding during this planning process, the County was provided with a funding exercise that lists over 150 funding or cost saving opportunities that have been used throughout the country. The exercise then asks staff to identify which opportunities are currently being implemented, which could be implemented, which could possibly be implemented, and which are not possible.

Operating and Funding Recommendations

- Evaluate and strengthen partnership agreements with other agencies.
- Continue to pursue strategies that move toward consolidating resources, including creating a district.
- Create Rural Improvement Districts (RIDs) for park maintenance and improvements.
- Consider the creation of full-time joint staff members.
- Evaluate development code and requirements.
- Determine best use of available cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication and tax funding.
- Develop sponsorship policy and opportunities.
- Identify potential funding sources per exercise.
- Communicate the cost of doing business.

B. INVENTORY AND LEVEL OF SERVICE INVENTORY

The project team conducted an inventory of parks and facilities from April to June of 2018. During this process, the team paired a compilation of County and City spatial data with information collected from local governments and alternate providers. The inventory is intended to represent the parks and recreation infrastructure within the County's service profile and is being utilized to help determine the equity of access and service provision throughout the service area. Having a deep understanding of the physical layout of the system will also strengthen the County's ability to prioritize projects, focus on partnership opportunities, and better allocate public resources.

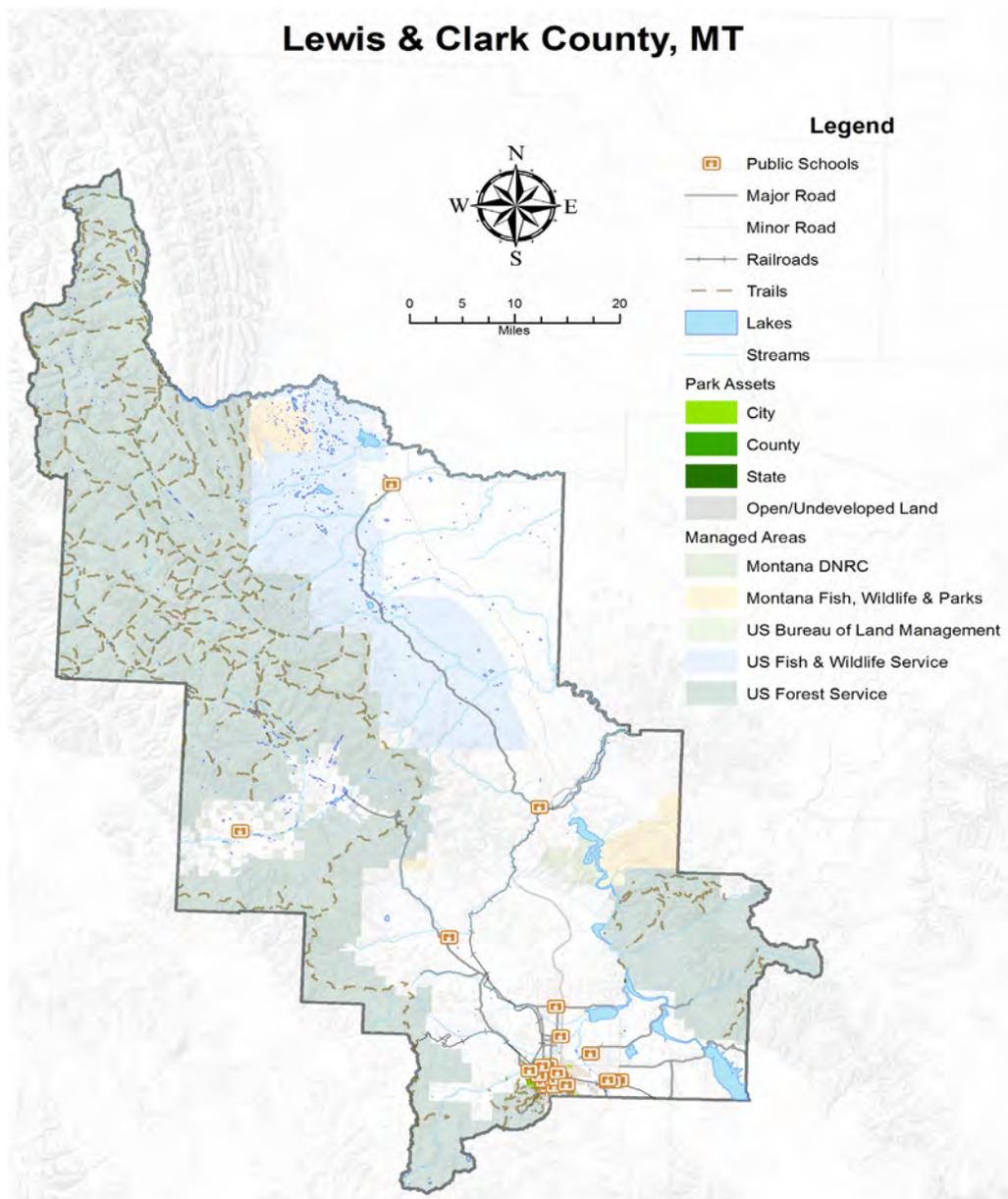
Representative park sites were visited firsthand by the project team in April 2018.

Current Conditions

Multiple entities provided a full profile of the service area. On a larger national or regional scale (**Figure 29**), providers include the Bureau of Land Management and the National Parks Service, and on a smaller, local scale the County

and City (**Figure 30**). Compiling data from each organization begins to answer how much recreational opportunity exists to users within the area (regardless of who is providing the service or opportunity). Larger maps and graphics can be found in **Appendix A**. Additional information can be found in the current parks and recreation master plan and the Board report regarding the formation of a district in the area.

Figure 29: National/Regional Recreational Opportunities



Inventory within the System

To take an additional step in the inventory process, the project team also looked at the physical layout of the recreational components within the park system. This process included identifying the following in each park:

- Name
- Ownership
- Park category (or type)
- Acreage
- Amenities

Table 5 is a sample of the inventory spreadsheet created. A full report can be found in the Appendix.

Figure 30: Local Recreational Opportunities

Lewis and Clark County/City of Helena Needs Assessment

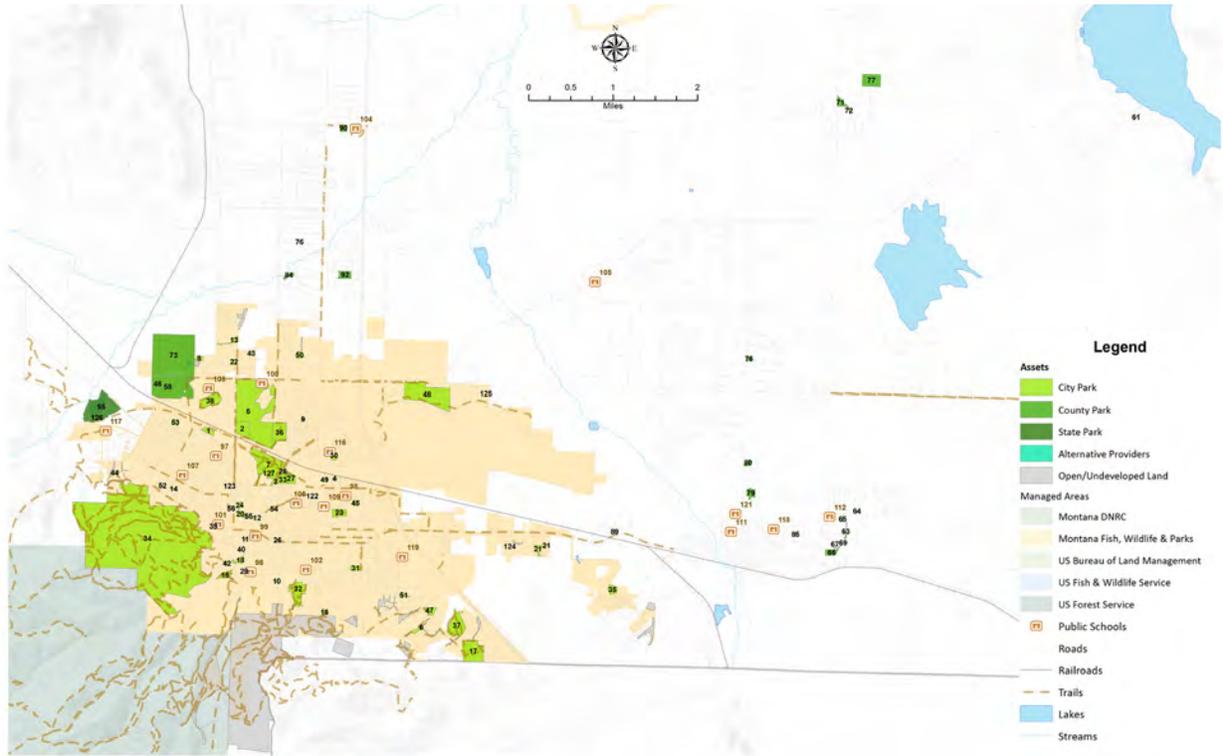


Table 5: Sample Parks Inventory Table

Park Name	City or County	Type	Notes
Centennial Park	City	Community-Sports	Major large and newer park with diverse programs. One of the major parks of the City. Construction is ongoing.
Sierra	County	Sports-School	County park with mostly athletic facilities adjacent to a school.
Northstar	County	Undeveloped	A neighborhood open space parcel that has not been developed yet.
Ryan Park	City-County	Sports	A destination baseball complex. Large enough to host regional tournaments.
Northwest Park	City	Sports-School	Larger sports park adjacent to a school with several active rec program areas.

Level of Service Analysis

Looking at the physical layout of the system and comparing it to the population centers identified in the demographics report, area residents live in close and reasonable proximity to a variety of park types. Neighborhood parks are generally the closest to residential areas, followed by community parks, and regional or sports parks. National providers also extend the service profile of the area for individuals or groups that are able to access those types of amenities.

Each park type should also follow a similar pattern when being developed. For example, community parks, which are generally the closest to homes, should be smaller in relative size and contain a higher number of amenity or activity options (playgrounds, small picnic areas, a trail access, etc.); where a national park is known as a place of seclusion with much larger acreage and larger scale amenities (lakes, trails, forests, etc.). Specialty-use parks, like memorials or sports parks, are also found within the system. These parks have a more specific draw and purpose than general amenities, like a playground or picnic shelter, and should be considered on a site by site basis.

Comparing the system to the trends report, area residents live within close proximity to many desirable opportunities (camping, open water, trails, regional biking opportunities, etc.). Service providers in the area should be looking at ways

to bring those larger scale opportunities into community or neighborhood parks, like nature play opportunities, walking paths that connect to hiking paths, and local biking trails that connect to regional commuter trails. Additionally, sport-specific uses are in high demand by area residents and in line with national trends. Future development should consider space required for additional, multi-use fields or a sports complex.

When looking at the survey and focus group responses, participants noted that they are highly satisfied with the quality and quantity of recreational services in the area, and thought it was most important to maintain and upgrade the current infrastructure moving forward before building or developing new amenities. Some of the upgrades that were noted that would improve the level of service were increased routine maintenance, picnic shelters, support services, and more trail connectivity.

Indoor facilities do not necessarily factor into a level of service analysis. However, it should be noted that citizens did seem to note that the lack of an indoor facility (with public access) does create a service gap. As a cold weather community, it is no surprise that this was identified during the community outreach portion of the project. Indoor, multi-use spaces are key pieces within recreational space that provide opportunities for a wide range of programs and can help supplement the use and demand for outdoor facilities.

While a high percentage of the population lives close to a park, distance is not the only determining factor indicating equitable and accessible service. Community members experience barriers that hinder their ease of access to parks and recreational services. Barriers may include dangerous street/railroad crossings, operational policies, awareness, and access to services like a car. There are number Open or Unimproved Park sites in the system particularly at the County level. These sites should be evaluated for development to improve service to specific geographic areas within the region.

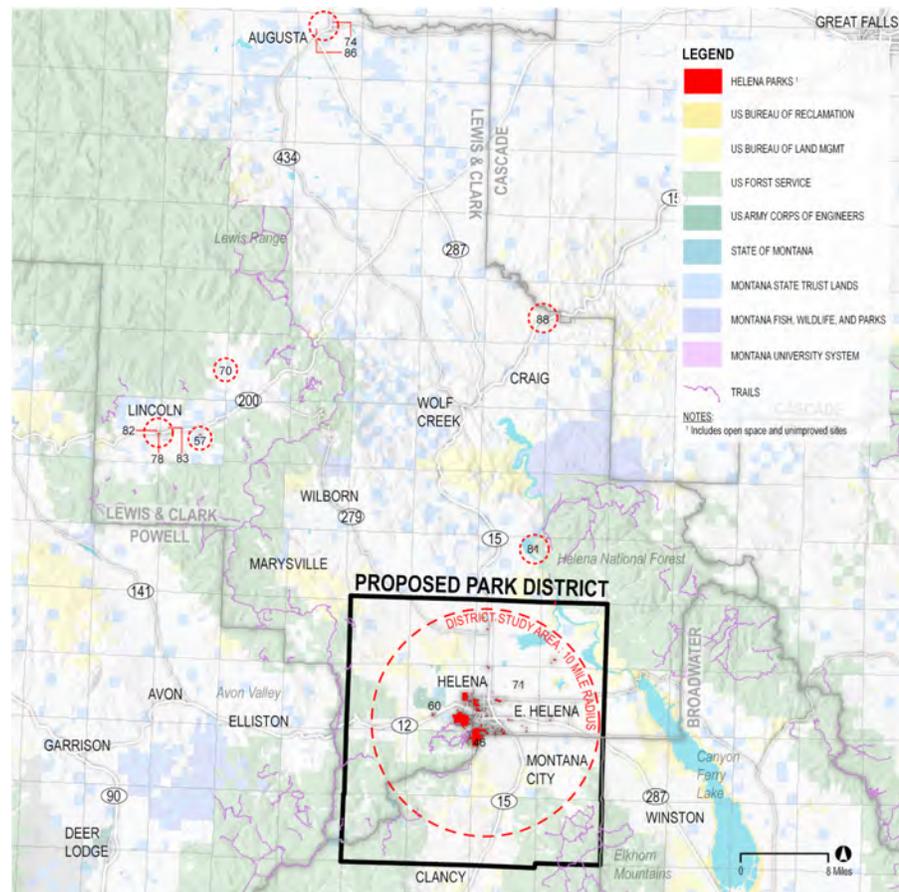
Inventory and Level of Service – District-wide

The Regional Parks, Trails, and Recreation District Feasibility Study describes how citizens recreate on a regional level:

“The recreational resources in the study area are for the most part regional resources (with the exception of a few neighborhood parks.) Certainly the trails and open space are regional amenities and the expressed desire of residents for connecting trails reflects this. Residents of the area may identify their residence or workplace within a specific jurisdiction, but when it comes to recreation, the distinctions between jurisdictions is often unclear to people or simply doesn’t matter. Driving or biking from east to west or north to south across the region, most people do not care to distinguish if they are in the County, Helena, East Helena, Jefferson County, or Montana City. For recreationists, it is the experience that is important.”

Figure 31: District Boundary within Region (Larger map available in Appendix)

Because of this finding, and the previous operations analysis, a level of service analysis was conducted on the regional system, rather than for the individual jurisdictions (**Figure 31**). (It should be noted that parks within Jefferson County were not analyzed in this study, but were included in the District Feasibility Study.) To analyze the level of service within the system each County- and City-owned park, within the original district boundary identified, was categorized based on three approximated catchment radii and then a buffer was applied to each park to spatially represent a catchment zone.



The Proposed Parks District, as shown in **Figures 31 – 33**, is based on the 10 mile radius generated in the Feasibility Study. The District boundary is aligned to the closest Public Land Survey System (PLSS) townships and range grid lines beyond the 10 mile radius for simplicity sake. If the County and the City decide to move forward with creating a Parks District, this boundary needs to be looked at in detail, and population growth trends and land ownership should be considered, among other features.

Park categories include:

- *Neighborhood park* – A park or site that can be considered a neighborhood gathering place or is embedded within a residential neighborhood. Citizens will generally walk to this type of park from their residence. Amenities in the park are generally higher density; including playground equipment, benches, smaller courts, splash pads, paved walking paths, horseshoe pits, picnic areas, etc. These parks are generally smaller than other types of parks. The catchment area for this type of park is set to 0.5 mile radius, which can typically be covered by a pedestrian in 10 minutes.
- *Community park* – A park or site that can be considered a gathering place for multiple neighborhoods. Citizens will typically drive but sometimes walk to these parks. Amenities may include destination playgrounds, ball/sport fields and courts, dog parks, picnic shelters, regional trail access, etc. The catchment area for this type of park is set to a 1 mile radius.
- *Regional park* – A park or site servicing a larger region. These are generally the largest parks, and contain larger amenities like multiple ball/sport fields, hiking trails, water access, and nature areas. The catchment area for this type of park is set to a 3 mile radius.

After the catchment zones were applied to each park, they were overlaid on the system base map, and the resulting heat map depicts the level of

service; dark colors on the map show a denser aggregation of catchment zones which in turn represent higher levels of service in the given area. **Figures 32-34** are depictions of these heat maps. Larger format resources can be found in **Appendix A**. Digital files and layers for these resources have also been provided to staff.

Residents in the County receive a high level of service. They generally live in close proximity to all park types with a variety of components. Further considering the level of service provided by alternative providers, like national and state parks, area residents live in very close proximity to a wide range of recreational opportunities.

If a District is to be considered then growth or expansion of the system will likely happen in East Helena, Jefferson County, Lewis and Clark County, as predicted in the District Feasibility Study and the demographics projection of this report. **Figure 33** depicts the population densities within the proposed District. Park impact fees, parkland dedication, and fees-in-lieu should fund much of this growth; ensuring that the community's quality of life services grow at the same rates as residential and commercial development. A district may also change the profile of services offered within the City. Community parks in the City may be able to develop further into destination type parks to include larger or themed amenities, like playgrounds, public art installations, or heritage resources/walks/installations.

While the Parks District is a long-term strategy to serve the residents of the region, the County maintains the responsibility to provide a high-quality service to its residents in the short-term.

In order to continue to maintain a high level of service, the County should:

- Pursue/identify land available for potential regional park site/sports complex.
- Identify priority areas of maintenance or upgrade in existing and aging infrastructure.

- Address barriers to access within the existing infrastructure by partnering with providers to be responsible for sidewalks and bike path development. Barriers to access include railroads, major roadways, crosswalks, etc. (Trails throughout the District are depicted in **Figures 33 and 34.**)
- Partner with alternative providers to identify key regional trail connections, allowing residents to access parks inside of City boundaries and out to State and national parks. (Trails throughout the City are depicted in **Figures 33 and 34.**)

Figure 32: District Boundary with Population Densities (Larger map available in Appendix)

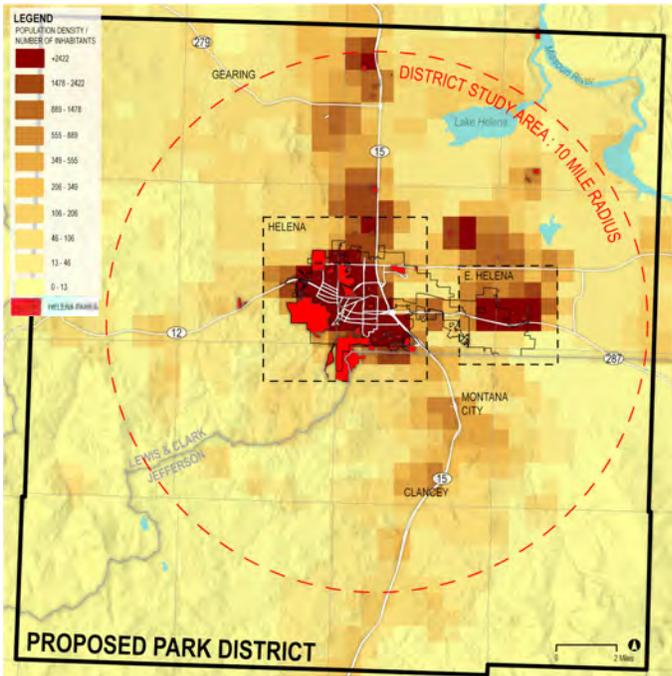


Figure 33: Trails within the District (Larger map available in Appendix)

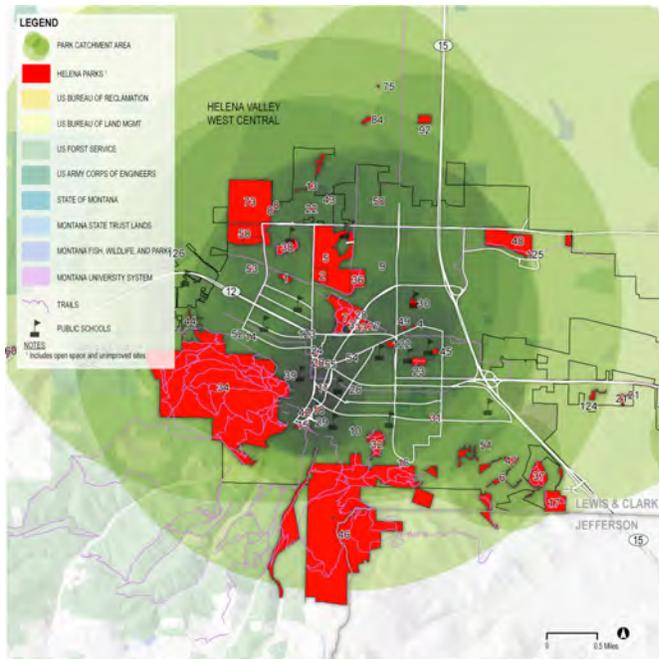
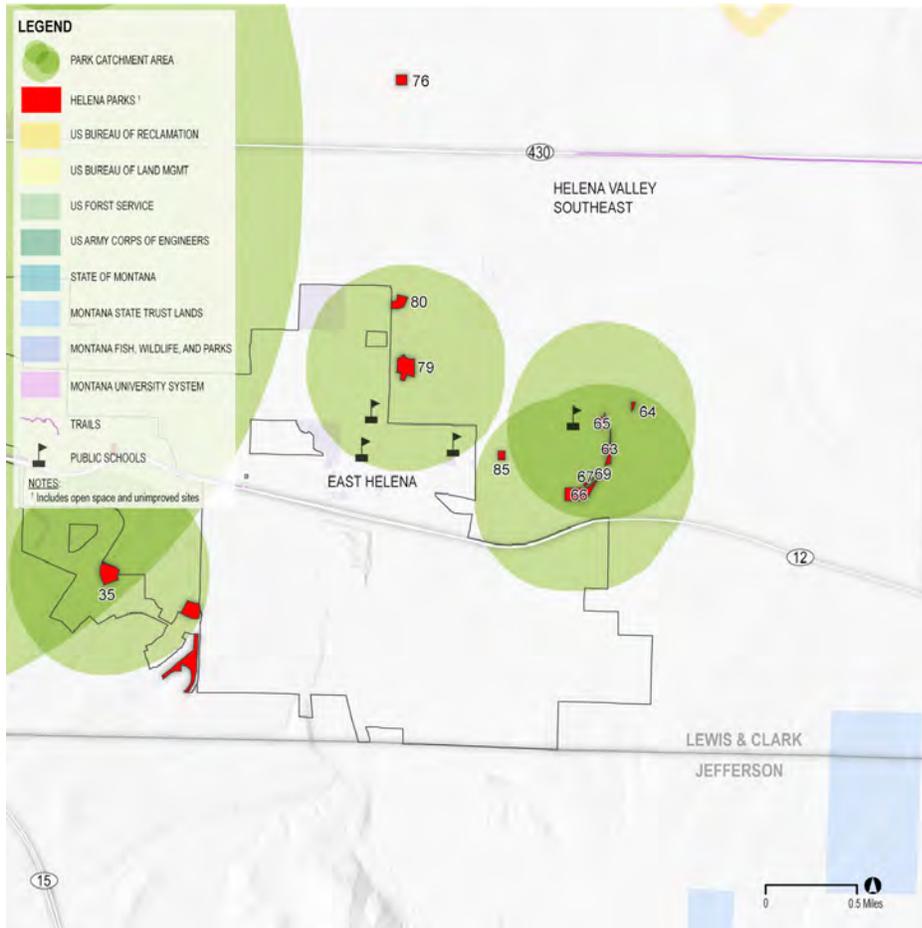


Figure 34: Trails east of City Center (Larger map available in Appendix)



Having these plans in place and reviewing them on a yearly basis will allow the County to ensure consistency in addressing maintenance standards, developing cost efficiencies, and increasing the quality of life for residents in the region.

Level of Service Recommendations

- Strengthen partnerships with alternate trail providers and partners including the Regional Trail Steering Committee.
- Partner with public works or transportation to develop plan for connections.
- Develop existing undeveloped parks throughout the system.
- Actively pursue land acquisition for regional park or sports complex outside City limits.

- Identify key areas for upgrade and develop implementation strategies with existing funding identified through funding exercises.
- Develop strategies to fund/build large, regional sports complex.

C. PROGRAMMING ANALYSIS

Current Circumstances

The County does not offer traditional recreational programs. However, much like the demand for park services, there will be an increased demand for recreational services over time, as the County continues to grow.

Recreational services and programs are offered throughout the County by other alternate providers and public agencies. Based on feedback from the focus groups, public meetings, and survey, the community is satisfied with the diversity and quality of these efforts, but is looking for more access to indoor recreational opportunities. There is currently a coalition of community members that are organizing around creating an indoor recreational facility.

The County is a key provider of recreational components in the area. Since much of the parkland in the County are larger acreages with more green space, the County's system contains a high number of ball fields and athletic fields, mostly operated, programmed, and maintained by partners.

Recreation Programs Analysis

Since a considerable portion of the population lives in the County, the County should be aware of its recreational environment. Opportunities that have been identified for improvement or reevaluation include:

- Improvements in marketing and communication
- Build stronger partnerships
- Hold Cultural and special events
- Grow the volunteer programs
- Establish indoor recreational programming and deeper partnerships
- Provide opportunities for Pickleball
- Increase interpretive/educational opportunities to help user better understand and appreciate the land
- Change fee structure

In addition to these services mentioned in the focus groups, the County will continue to see a high demand for regional parks, access to water, trails, hiking, and sports fields.

Since the County does not have the current resources to build additional programming into their service profile, it should continue to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with other public agencies and alternate providers to offer recreational services and volunteer opportunities in the area.

Athletic fields are a significant opportunity for the County. While these spaces tend to show lower relative importance in the survey, they are high impact amenities, especially for youth. The community would benefit from additional fields. These types of amenities are also good avenues for alternative sources of revenue, including sponsorships, rentals, and concessions.

Limited staff is a significant issue the County is facing. Growth in amenities of any kind will result in the need to program, coordinate, and schedule services and activities to mitigate user conflicts. In its current form, the County should not be looking to add amenities or program, but rather improving the quality of existing offerings and strengthening partnerships. This responsibility would be addressed by the implementation of joint staff, allowing one employee to manage and balance the recreational interests of citizens between the County and the City.

Programming Recommendations

- Continue to evaluate and strengthen partnerships with alternate providers.
- Determine feasibility of creating mobile application for local and regional trails.
- Support the efforts of the collaborative YMCA/HRSA indoor facility project at the best new location.

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V. ACTION PLAN

The final deliverable for Phase 2 will result in a prioritized timetable for the development of parks, recreation, and open space, sorted into the following priorities:

- Immediate Goals (2019)
- Short-Term Goals (2020 – 2021)
- Mid-Term Goals (2022 – 2025)
- Long-Term Goals (Post 2025)

This will include new charts, graphs, maps, and other data as needed to support the plan and its presentation to the appropriate audiences.

1. OPERATING AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

OPERATIONS AND FUNDING			
Strategies	Primary Responsibility/ Support	Resource Impact/Budget Requirement	Timeframe to Complete
1.1: Evaluate and strengthen partnership agreements with other agencies.	Parks Board	O&M-Staff Time	Short-Term
1.2: Continue to pursue strategies that move towards consolidating resources; including creating a district.	Parks Board/ Community Development and Planning/ County Commission	O&M-Staff Time	Long-Term
1.3: Create Rural Improvement Districts (RIDs) for maintenance and improvements.	Parks Board/ Community Development and Planning/ County Commission	O&M-Staff Time	Short-Term
1.4: Consider the creation of full-time joint staff members.	County Commission	O&M-\$25,000	Short-Term
1.5: Evaluate development code and requirements.	Parks Board /County Commission	O&M-Staff Time	Immediate
1.6: Determine best use of available cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication and tax monies.	Parks Board/ County Public Works/County Commission	O&M-Staff Time	Short-Term

1.7: Develop sponsorship policy and opportunities.	Parks Board	O&M-Staff Time	Short-Term
1.8: Identify potential funding sources per exercise.	Parks Board	O&M-Staff Time	Immediate
1.9: Communicate the cost of doing business	Parks Board	O&M-Staff Time	Immediate

2. LEVEL OF SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

LEVEL OF SERVICE			
Strategies	Primary Responsibility/ Support	Resource Impact/Budget Requirement	Timeframe to Complete
2.1: Strengthen partnerships with alternate trail providers and partners including the Regional Trail Steering Committee.	Parks Board	O&M-Staff Time	Short-Term
2.2: Partner with public works or transportation to develop plan for connections.	Parks Board/ Community Development and Planning	O&M-Staff Time	Mid-Term
2.3: Develop existing undeveloped parks throughout the system.	Parks Board/ Community Development and Planning/ County Public Works/ County Commission	\$30,000 per Park Master Plan/ Site cost dependent on amenities. Approx. Trail Cost – \$100k- \$350k/ Mile Approx. Park Cost – \$200k- \$450k/ Acre	Short-Term
2.4: Actively pursue land acquisition for regional park or sports complex outside City limits.	Parks Board	O&M-Staff Time	Mid-Term
2.5: Identify key areas for upgrade and develop implementation strategies with existing funding identified through funding exercise. (Staff Resource Document)	Parks Board/ County Public Works	O&M-Staff Time	Short-Term
2.6: Develop strategies to fund/build large, regional sports complex.	Parks Board/ County Commission	Capital-\$ TBD O&M-Staff Time	Mid-Term

3. PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

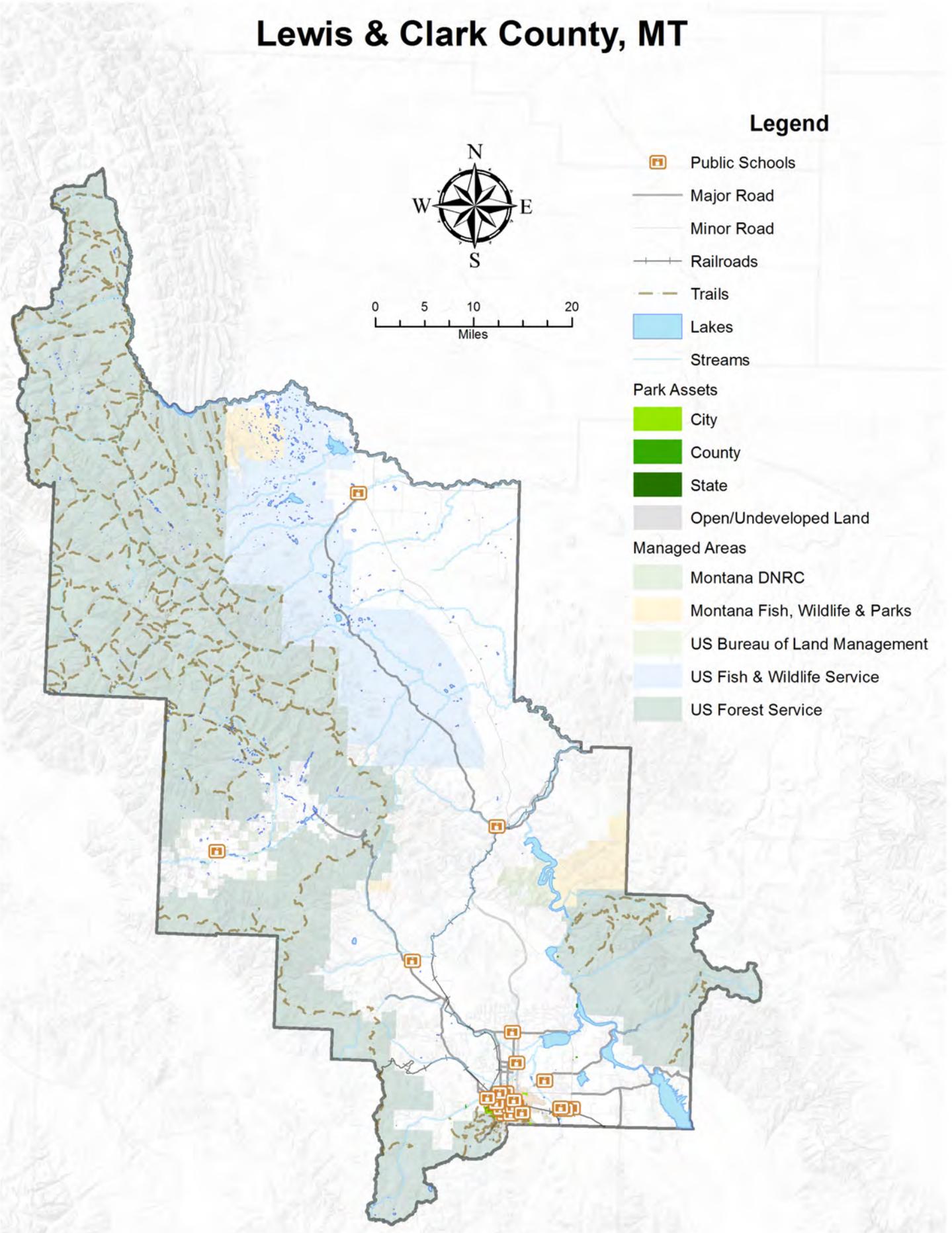
PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES			
Strategies	Primary Responsibility/ Support	Resource Impact/Budget Requirement	Timeframe to Complete
3.1: Continue to evaluate and strengthen partnerships with alternate providers.	Parks Board	O&M-Staff Time	Short-Term
3.2: Determine feasibility of creating mobile application for local and regional trails.	Parks Board	O&M-Staff Time	Mid-Term
3.3: Support the efforts of the collaborative YMCA/HRSA indoor facility project at the best new location.	Parks Board	O&M-Staff Time	Short-Term

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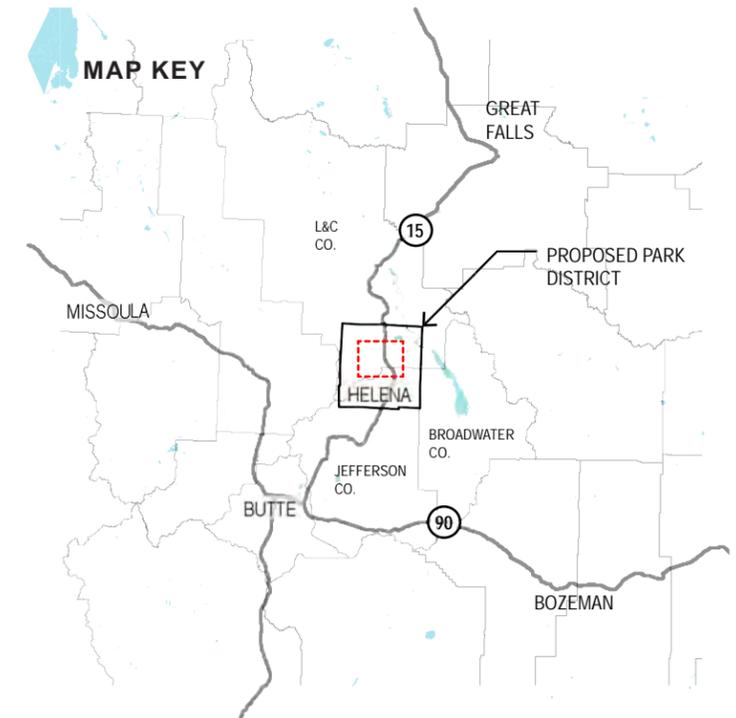
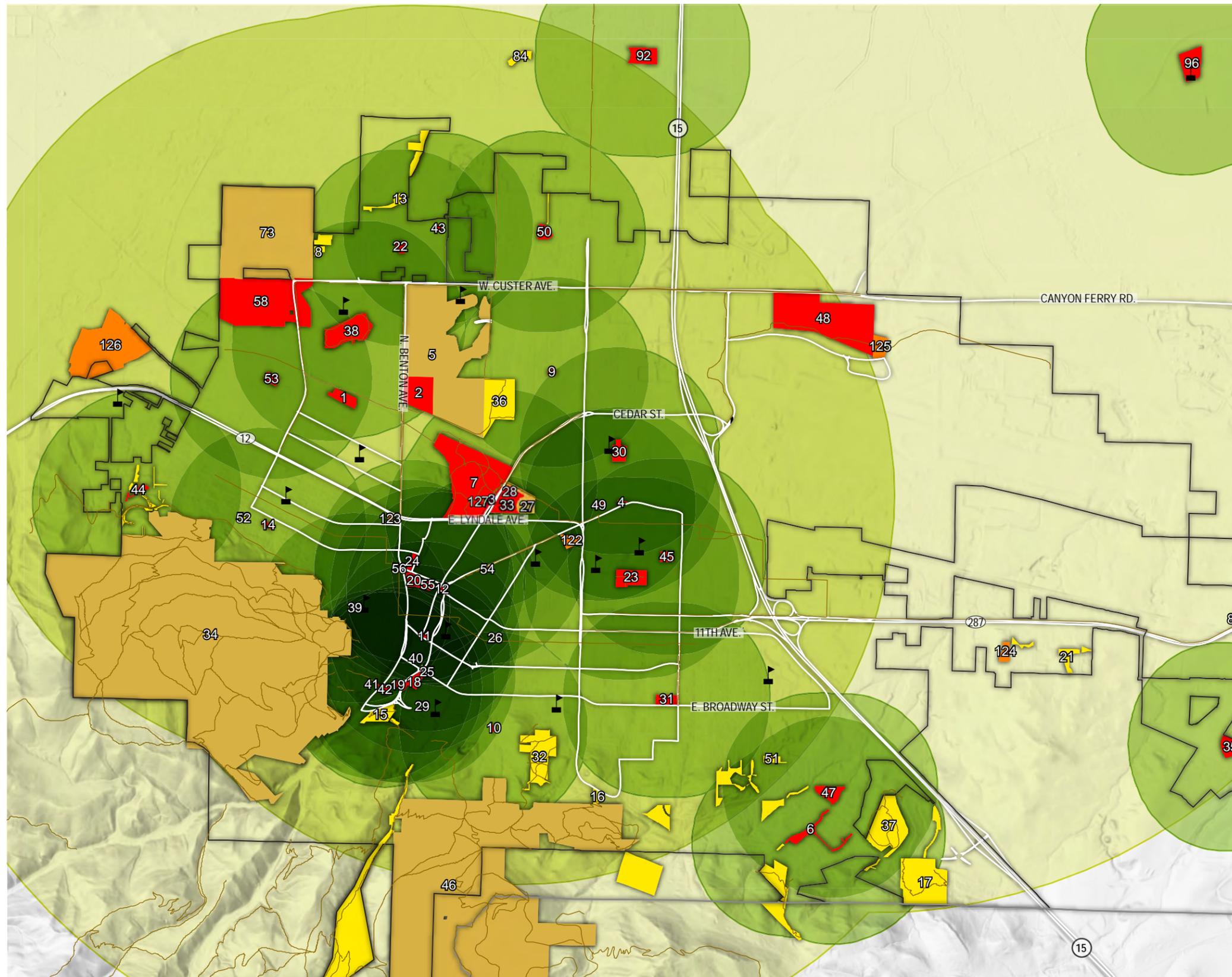
APPENDIX A: MAPPING RESOURCES

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Lewis & Clark County, MT



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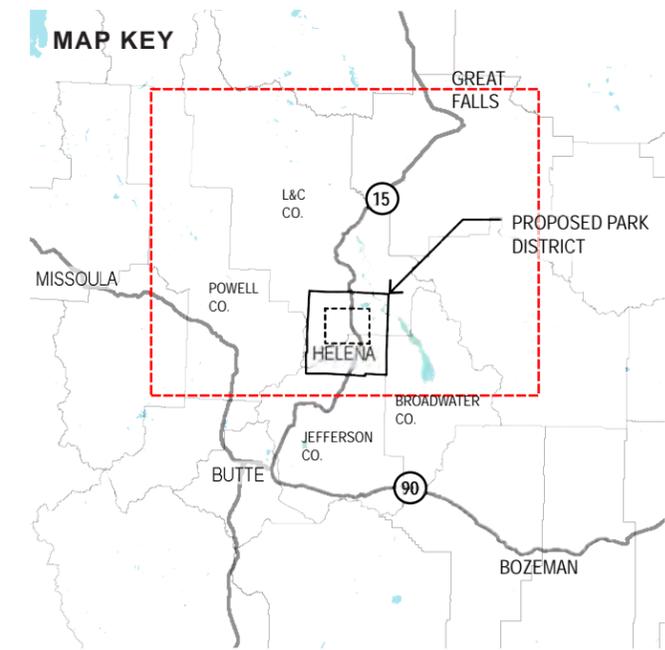
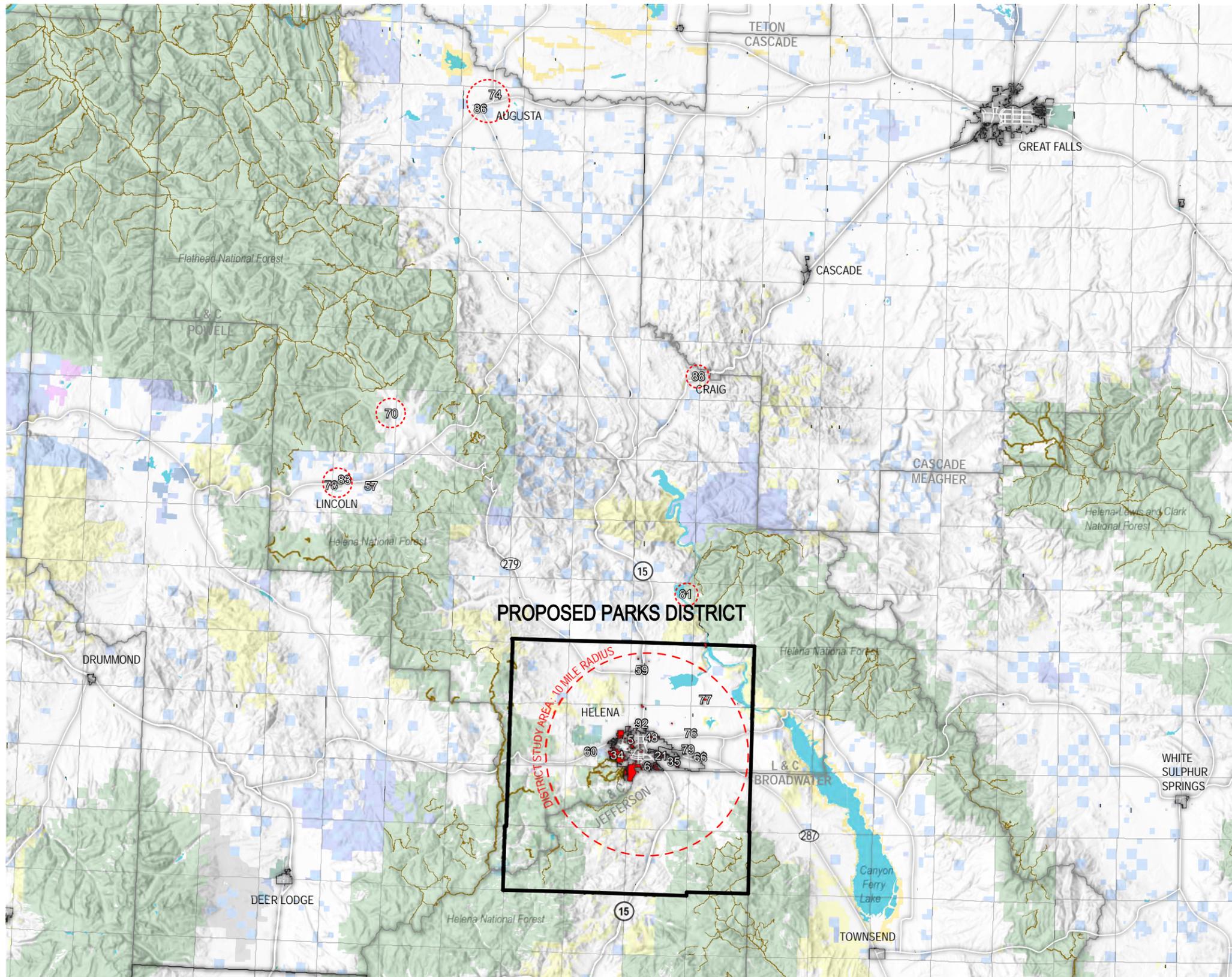


LEGEND

- TRAILS
- REGIONAL PARK CATCHMENT AREA¹
- COMMUNITY PARK CATCHMENT AREA¹
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK CATCHMENT AREA¹
- HELENA PARKS
- ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS
- OTHER
- OPEN / UNIMPROVED
- PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- HELENA CITY LIMITS

NOTES:
¹ Level of Service Park Catch Areas have been generated by buffering Regional Parks (3 mi), Community Parks (2 mi), and Neighborhood Parks (0.5 mi). Open / Unimproved, Alternate Providers, and Other site have not been buffered.

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LEGEND

- PROPOSED PARKS DISTRICT
- TRAILS
- PARKS¹
- CITY LIMITS
- US BUREAU OF RECLAMATION²
- US BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT² US
- FORST SERVICE²
- US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS²
- STATE OF MONTANA²
- MONTANA STATE TRUST LANDS²
- MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS²
- MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM²

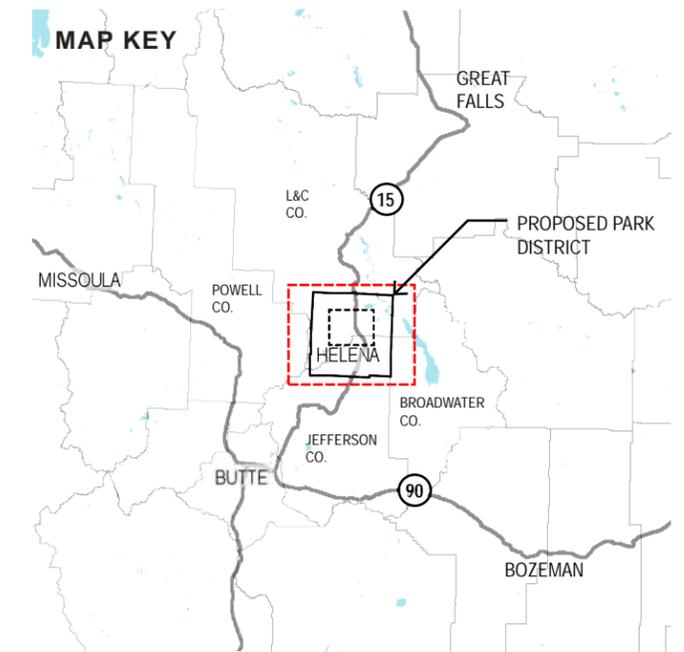
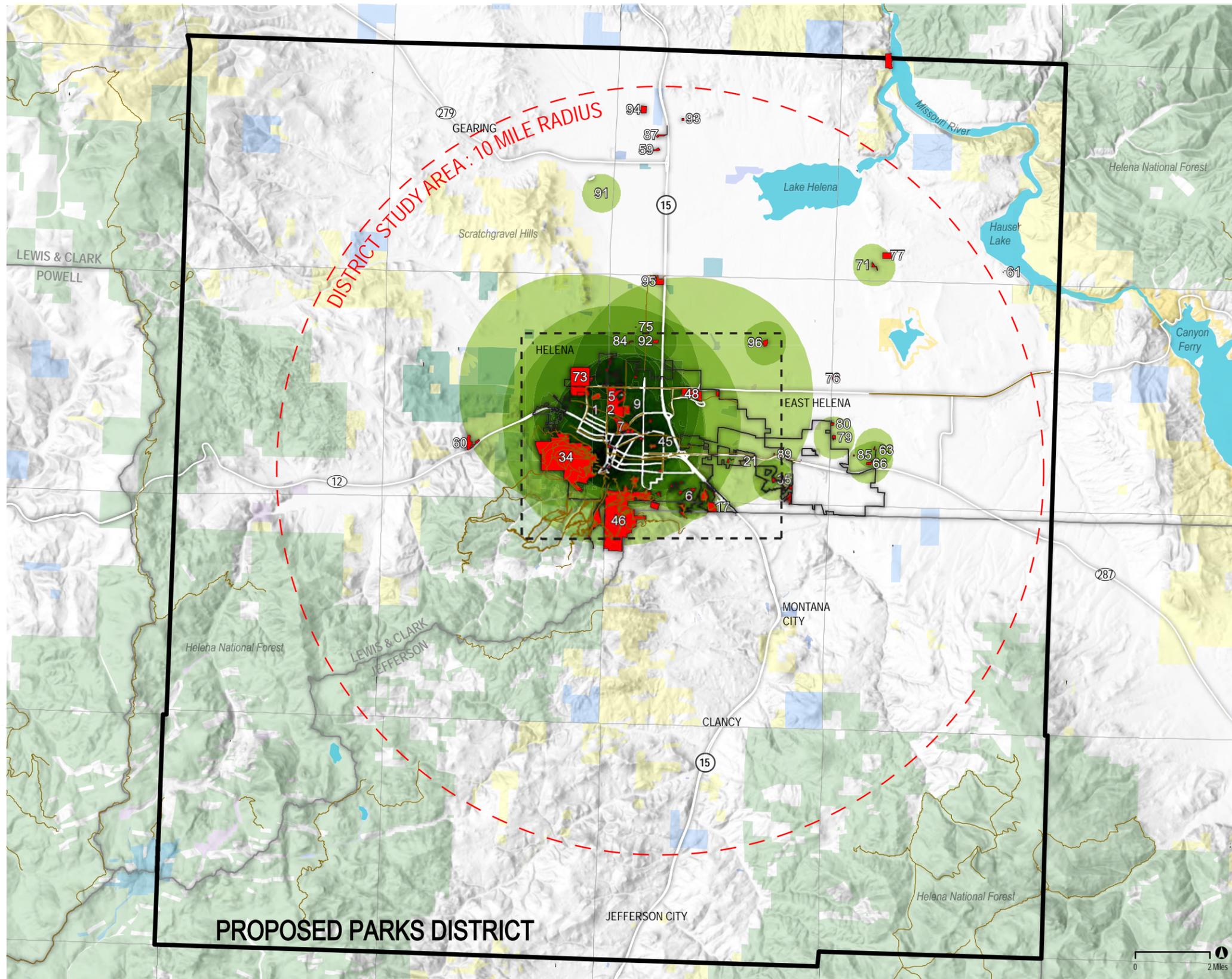
NOTES:

- ¹ Includes open space and unimproved sites
- ² Montana Public Lands: Montana State Library

**CONTEXT MAP
REGIONAL SCALE**

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN - PHASE 2
NOVEMBER 2018

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- LEGEND**
- PROPOSED PARKS DISTRICT
 - PARK CATCHMENT AREA¹
 - TRAILS
 - PARKS²
 - HELENA CITY LIMITS
 - US BUREAU OF RECLAMATION³
 - US BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT³ US
 - FORST SERVICE³
 - US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS³
 - STATE OF MONTANA³
 - MONTANA STATE TRUST LANDS³
 - MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS³
 - MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM³

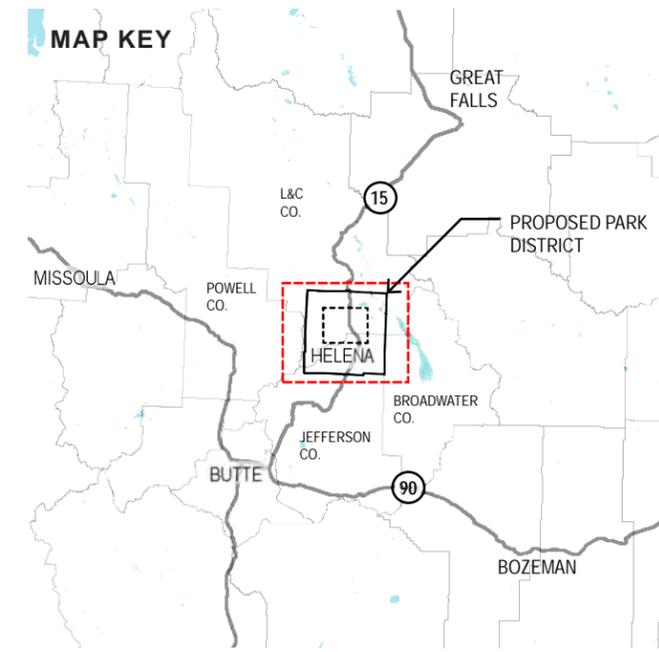
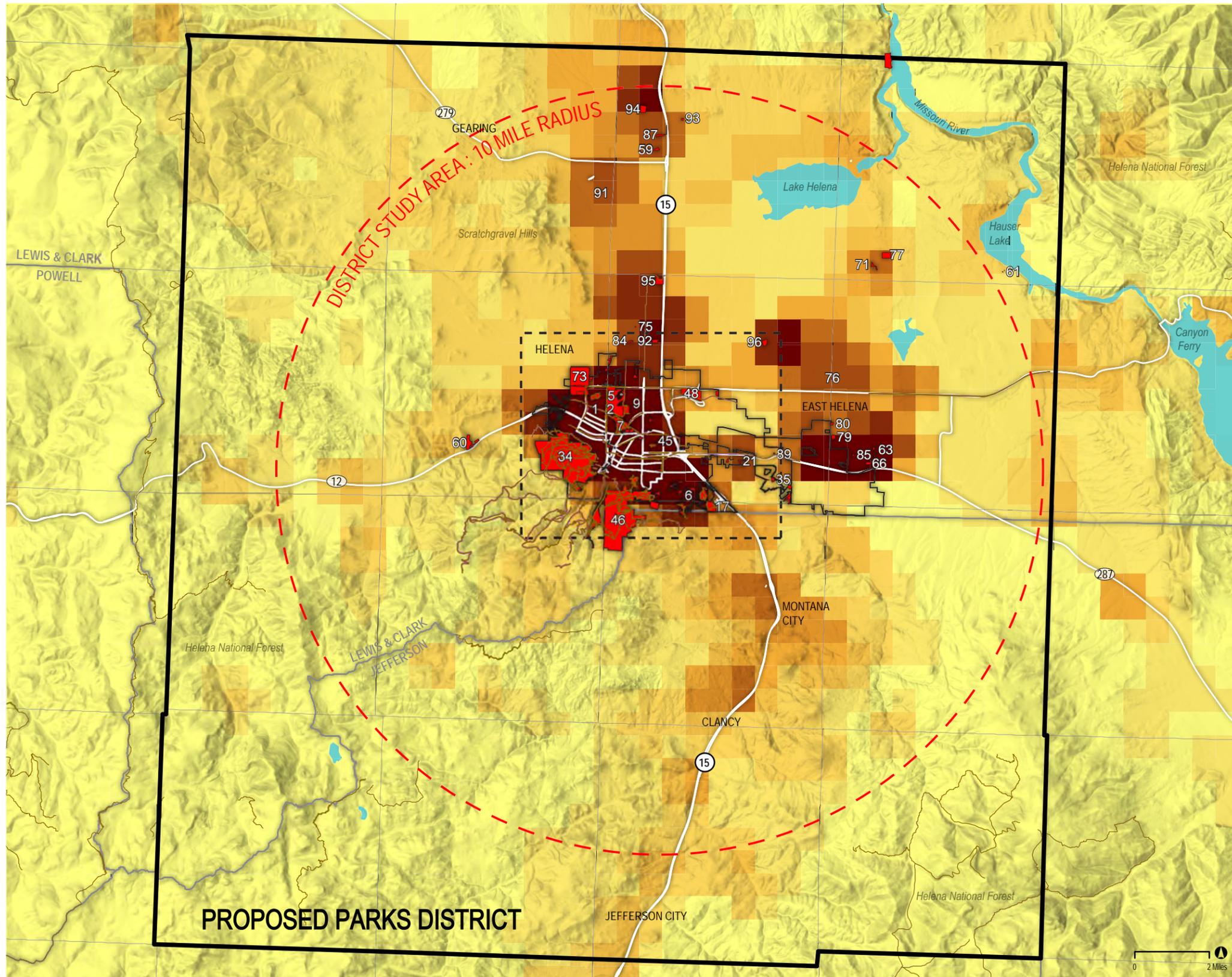
NOTES:

¹ Level of Service Park Catch Areas have been generated by buffering Regional Parks (3 mi), Community Parks (2 mi), and Neighborhood Parks (0.5 mi). Open / Unimproved, Alternate Providers, and Other site have not been buffered.

² Includes open space and unimproved sites

³ Montana Public Lands: Montana State Library

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LEGEND

POPULATION DENSITY / NUMBER OF INHABITANTS¹

 +2422	 PARKS ²
 1478 - 2422	 HELENA CITY LIMITS
 889 - 1478	
 555 - 889	
 349 - 555	
 206 - 349	
 106 - 206	
 46 - 106	
 13 - 46	
 0 - 13	

PROPOSED PARKS DISTRICT

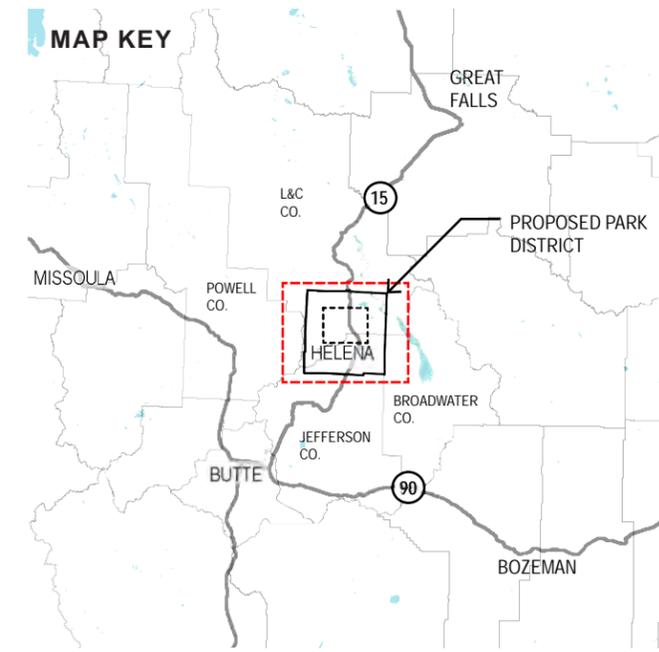
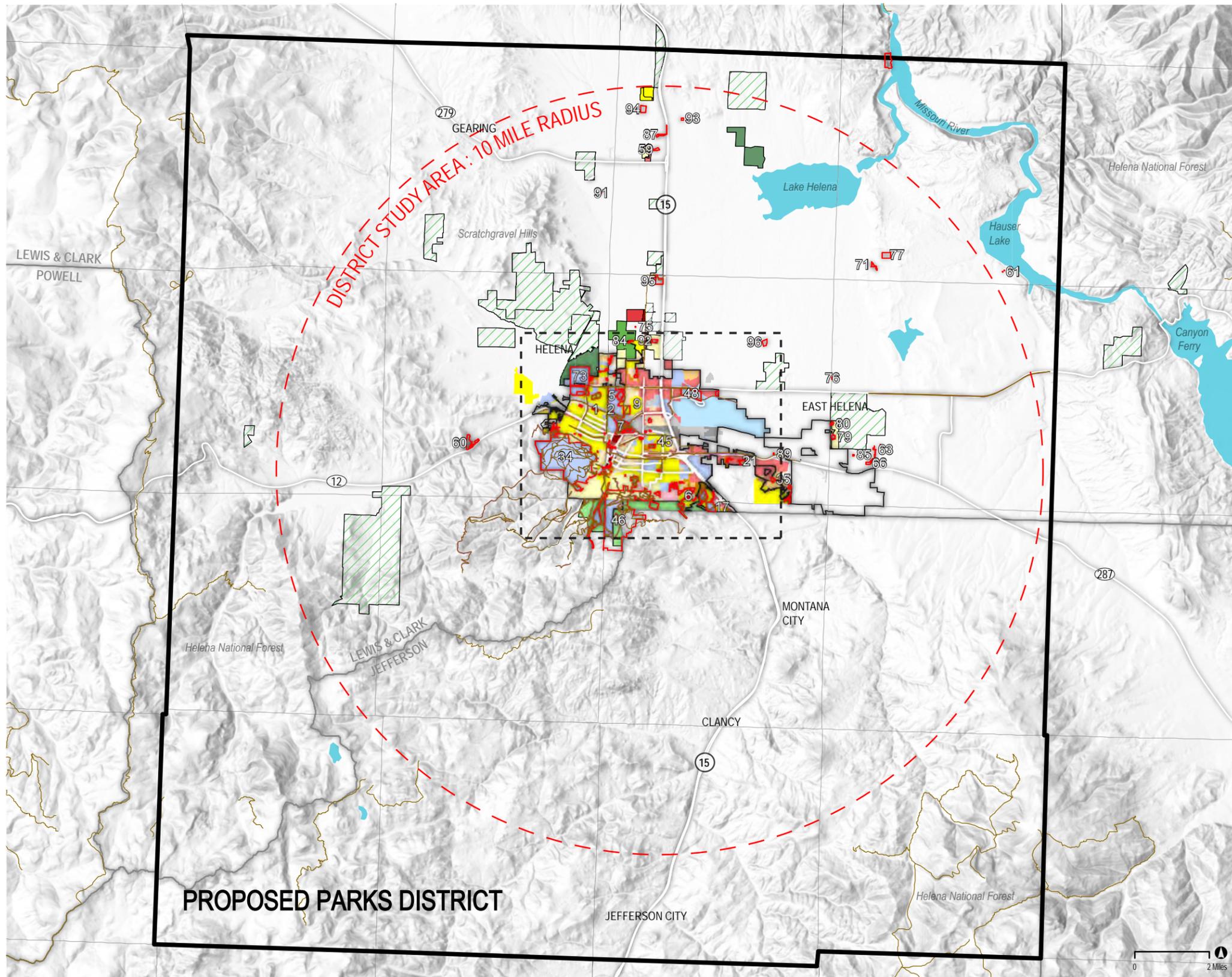
TRAILS

NOTES:
¹ Montana Census Blocks with Population Data: U.S Department of commerce, U.S Census, 2010
² Includes open space and unimproved sites

POPULATION DENSITY MAP
 DISTRICT SCALE

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN - PHASE 2
 NOVEMBER 2018

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LEGEND

ZONING CODES

OSR ¹	AIRPORT ¹
R-1 ¹	PLI ¹
R-2 ¹	CLM ¹
R-3 ¹	MI ¹
R-4 ¹	PUD ¹
R-O ¹	RRA, SAG ²
R-U ¹	A ²
B-1 ¹	CR ²
B-2 ¹	COUNTY ZONING ²
B-3 ¹	PARKS ³

PROPOSED PARKS DISTRICT
 TRAILS
 HELENA CITY LIMITS

NOTES:

¹ Helena Zoning: helenamontanamaps.org

² Lewis and Clark County Zoning: helenamontanamaps.org

³ Includes open space and unimproved sites

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Visit Sequence	PARK_NAME	CITY-COUNTY	Category	Summary	ACRES	Amenities	Bandshell	Baseball	Basketball	Fountains	Historic	Horseshoe
1	Robinson Park	City	Neighborhood	Simple park with a lot of unprogrammed turf	2.6	Picnic Tables, Picnic Shelter, Playfield						
2	Beattie Park	City	Memorial - Historic	Open space associated with old train station, Industrial area adjacency	0.6	Historic Point of Interest, Monuments, Picnic Tables, Picnic Shelter					Yes	
3	Lincoln Park	City	Neighborhood - School	Open space adjacent to school. Several different program areas	4.5	Baseball, Basketball, Horseshoe Pit, Ice Rink, Off Street Parking, Playfield, Picnic Tables, Picnic Shelter, Playground, Restrooms, Softball, Youth Baseball, Bike/Ped Trails		Yes	Yes (1) school prop?			Yes
4	Cherry Hill Park	City	Neighborhood	Smaller neighborhood park with basketball and older playground	0.7	Basketball, Drinking Fountains, Picnic Tables, Picnic Shelter, Playground			Yes (1)	Yes		
5	Skelton Park	City	Neighborhood	Newer neighborhood park with newer playground and large unprogrammed (sloping) lawn	3.2	Picnic Tables, Playfield						
6	Pioneer Village Park	City	Neighborhood	Smaller neighborhood park with little program and younger trees	0.5	Playfield						
7	Crystal Springs Park	City	Undeveloped	Undeveloped park with a stream and wetland adjacent to residential area	3.4	Natural						
8	Jaycee Park	City	Neighborhood	Newer neighborhood park with newer playground and large unprogrammed (sloping) lawn	1.7	Playfield						
9	Batch Park	City	Sports	Destination active recreation (4 softball field) park	17.5	Concessions, Drinking Fountains, Off Street Parking, Picnic Tables, Picnic Shelter, Playground, Restrooms, Softball				Yes		
10	Barney Park	City	Neighborhood - Sports	Larger neighborhood park with several different active rec program areas	5.4	Basketball, Drinking Fountains, Ice Rink, Off Street Parking, Playfield, Picnic Tables, Picnic Shelter, Playground, Restrooms, Softball, Tennis Courts, Youth Baseball			Yes (1)	Yes		
11	Waukesha Park	City	Neighborhood	Neighborhood park with large unprogrammed lawn, newer playground, and community garden	2.5	Community Garden, Picnic Tables, Playfield, Playground						
12	Clinton Park	City	Neighborhood	More established smaller neighborhood park with several different program areas and small open lawn	0.4	Basketball, Picnic Tables, Playfield, Playground			Yes (1)			
13	Memorial Park	City	Community	Large established park with diverse facilities and program areas. One of the major parks of the city	10.2	Drinking Fountains, Bandshell, Monuments, Off Street Parking, Playfield, Picnic Tables, Picnic Shelter, Playground, Restrooms, Swimming Pool, Ice Rink	Yes			Yes		
14	Centennial Park	City	Community - Sports	Major large and newer park with diverse program. One of the major parks of the city. Construction is ongoing	53.0	Bike/Ped Trails, Off Street Parking, Playfield, Skate Park, Softball						
15	Sierra	County	Sports - School	County park with mostly athletic facilities adjacent to a school								
16	Northstar	County	Undeveloped	A neighborhood open space parcel that has not been developed yet								
17	Ryan Park	City - County	Sports	A destination baseball complex. Large enough to host regional tournaments	46.7	Baseball, Drinking Fountains, Concessions, Off Street Parking, Playfield, Picnic Tables, Picnic Shelter, Restrooms, Youth Baseball		Yes (13)		Yes		
18	Northwest Park	City	Sports - School	Larger sports park adjacent to a school with several active rec program areas	19.2	Bike/Ped Trails, Off Street Parking, Playfield, Picnic Tables, Playground, Softball, Youth Baseball						
19	Mount Helena Park	City	Natural	Largest park site in the system and a gateway to the national forest. Popular for hiking and biking	909.8	Bike/Ped Trails, Hiking Trails, Natural, Off Street Parking, Restrooms						
20	Constitution Park	City	Pocket	Urban pocket park with some historic signage. This downtown space is adjacent to the beginning of the walking mall	0.2	Historic Point of Interest, Monuments					Yes	
22	Heritage Park (Anchor Park)	City	Memorial - Historic	Along the walking mall this memorial park has a large sloping passive lawn	0.7	Historic Point of Interest, Monuments, Off Street Parking, Picnic Tables					Yes	
23	Pioneer Park	City	Pocket - Neighborhood	Downtown park with grass, mature trees, and playground adjacent to the library	0.9	Drinking Fountains, Picnic Tables, Playfield, Playground				Yes		
24	Women's Park	City	Memorial - Historic	Downtown park with grass, mature trees, and historic significance	1.5	Historic Point of Interest, Picnic Tables, Playfield					Yes	
25	Hill Park	City	Memorial - Historic	Downtown park with a sloping grass lawn and some mature trees. Historically significant fountain has been removed	3.3	Drinking Fountains, Historic Point of Interest, Monuments, Picnic Tables, Playfield				Yes	Yes	

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Visit Sequence	PARK_NAME	YthBasebl	Monuments	Offstrtpkg	Playfield	Picnic	PicnicShtr	PigndEquip	Restrooms	Skateboard	Soccer*	Softball	SwimmingPl	TennisCrts	Volleyball	DiscGolf	IceRink	Natural	CommGarden
1	Robinson Park				Yes	Yes	Yes												
2	Beattie Park		Yes			Yes	Yes												
3	Lincoln Park	Yes (1)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes (1)					Yes		
4	Cherry Hill Park					Yes	Yes	Yes											
5	Skelton Park				Yes	Yes													
6	Pioneer Village Park				Yes														
7	Crystal Springs Park																	Yes	
8	Jaycee Park				Yes														
9	Batch Park			Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes (4)							
10	Barney Park	Yes (1)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes (1)		Yes (4)			Yes		
11	Waukesha Park				Yes	Yes		Yes											Yes
12	Clinton Park				Yes	Yes		Yes											
13	Memorial Park		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes				Yes		
14	Centennial Park			Yes	Yes					Yes		Yes (4)							
15	Sierra	Yes (4)			Yes						Yes (2)?								
16	Northstar																		
17	Ryan Park	Yes (13) ?		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes			?							
18	Northwest Park	Yes (2)		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes			Yes (2)?	Yes (2)?							
19	Mount Helena Park			Yes					Yes									Yes	
20	Constitution Park		Yes																
22	Heritage Park (Anchor Park)		Yes	Yes		Yes													
23	Pioneer Park				Yes	Yes		Yes											
24	Women's Park				Yes	Yes													
25	Hill Park		Yes		Yes	Yes													

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Visit Sequence	PARK_NAME	SpecialNotice	Information	BikePed	Hike	Concessions
1	Robinson Park					
2	Beattie Park					
3	Lincoln Park		Kay's Kids Summer Recreation Site	Yes		
4	Cherry Hill Park					
5	Skelton Park					
6	Pioneer Village Park					
7	Crystal Springs Park					
8	Jaycee Park					
9	Batch Park					Yes
10	Barney Park	Courts are Pickleball-compatible. Kay's Kids summer recreation program site.				
11	Waukesha Park					
12	Clinton Park					
13	Memorial Park		Warming house, Kay's Kids Summer Recreation Site			
14	Centennial Park	Softball/Soccer fields still under construction, not playable at this time		Yes		
15	Sierra					
16	Northstar					
17	Ryan Park					Yes
18	Northwest Park			Yes		
19	Mount Helena Park			Yes	Yes	
20	Constitution Park					
22	Heritage Park (Anchor Park)	Also referred to as Anchor Park.				
23	Pioneer Park		Public Art			
24	Women's Park					
25	Hill Park					

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