



Work Session Meeting Agenda
2 Park Drive South, Great Falls, MT
Gibson Room, Civic Center
May 20, 2025
5:30 PM

The agenda packet material is available on the City's website: <https://greatfallsmt.net/meetings>. The Public may view and listen to the meeting on government access channel City-190, cable channel 190; or online at <https://greatfallsmt.net/livestream>.

Public participation is welcome in the following ways:

- Attend in person.
- Provide public comments in writing by 12:00 PM the day of the meeting: Mail to City Clerk, PO Box 5021, Great Falls, MT 59403, or via email to: commission@greatfallsmt.net. Include the agenda item or agenda item number in the subject line, and include the name of the commenter and either an address or whether the commenter is a city resident. Written communication received by that time will be shared with the City Commission and appropriate City staff for consideration during the agenda item, and, will be so noted in the official record of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMENT

(Public comment on agenda items or any matter that is within the jurisdiction of the City Commission. Please keep your remarks to a maximum of five (5) minutes. Speak into the microphone, and state your name and either your address or whether you are a city resident for the record.)

WORK SESSION ITEMS

1. EPA Lead & Copper Rule Update - Presented by Mark Juras. (estimated 30 minutes)
2. Update on Growth Management Public Engagement Report - Presented by Brock Cherry. (estimated 20 minutes)

DISCUSSION POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

ADJOURNMENT

City Commission Work Sessions are televised on cable channel 190 and streamed live at <https://greatfallsmt.net>. Work Session meetings are re-aired on cable channel 190 the following Thursday morning at 10 a.m. and the following Tuesday evening at 5:30 p.m.

Wi-Fi is available during the meetings for viewing of the online meeting documents.

UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

City Commission Work Session - Tuesday June 3, 2025 5:30 p.m.

City Commission Meeting - Tuesday June 3, 2025 7:00 p.m.



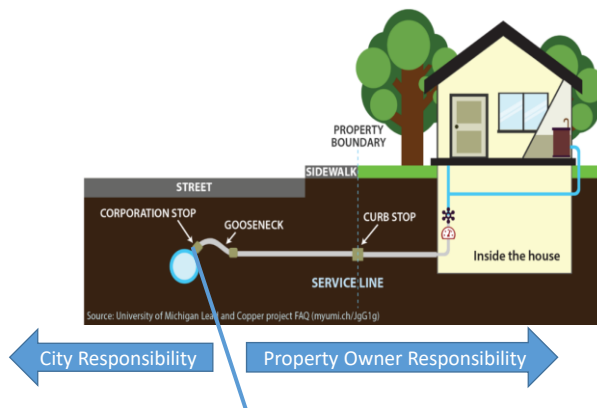
EPA LEAD & COPPER RULE UPDATE MAY 20, 2025

LEAD AND COPPER RULE IMPROVEMENTS

EPA promulgates “LCR Improvements”

- 10 year mandatory replacements, 2027-2037
 - Lead, galvanized, unknown lines
 - Only full replacement counts
 - 4 documented attempts per property
- Service line replacement plan available online
- Lead action level 10 ppb, 2027
- More public noticing and education requirements
- Trump admin - no changes yet

Galvanized	655	2.9%
Lead	166	0.8%
Non-Lead	17,253	77.9%
Unknown	4,072	18.4%
Total	22,146	100%



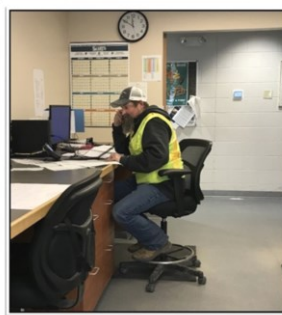
INVENTORY UPDATE

Summary of Unknown Line ID Efforts

- 2022 - Records research - ~10,000 unknowns
- July 2022, ~10,000 mailed notices - 30% response
- Nov-April 23/24, ~7,000 phone calls - 30% response
- Nov 2024 ~5,000 mailed notices - 6% response
- Jan-April 2025 ~4,000 door knocks/hangars - 20% response
- **Still have ~4,000 unknowns**
 - Only those who receive unknown notice/door knock/hangar need to respond
 - EPA - unknown = lead until proven otherwise

Staff is better informed and is considering next steps to increase response rates and/or ID service line materials:

- Incentives
- Potholing
- Water off/on



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POTENTIAL FUTURE IMPACT TO RATEPAYER

Best Case

~1,100 replacements @ \$15,000 each = ~\$17M
 10% replaced per year
 \$17M over 10 years = \$1.7M per year
 \$1.7M divided by 12 months = \$142K
 \$142K divided by 22K customers = **\$7/Month**

Worst Case

~4,900 replacements over 10 years
 ~\$73.5M or **\$28/Month**

Numbers to vary based on total lines to be replaced and actual cost per replacement

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Unknown	4,072	18.4%
Total	22,146	100%

Goal - Identify material of all unknown water service lines, required by EPA!

PILOT PROJECT UPDATE

Replace 20 known lead service lines

- Ratepayer funded SRF loan with 60% principal forgiveness
 - 2.5% for 20 years on ~\$300,000
 - DNRC application submitted Nov 2024
 - Bipartisan infrastructure law allocated funds
- Lead Water Service Line Replacement Agreement
- Start with Tier 1 tap sampler locations
- Reimbursement Resolution - Summer 2025
- Construction Summer/Fall 2025



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REPLACEMENT PLAN

Replacement plans due Nov 2027

- Must be made available on website & submitted to DEQ
- Outlines plans and strategies for:
 - ID remaining unknowns
 - Conduct replacements
 - Communications
 - Replacement prioritization
 - Funding strategy
 - Cite city specific laws
- Pilot project to lay foundation
- Updated annually



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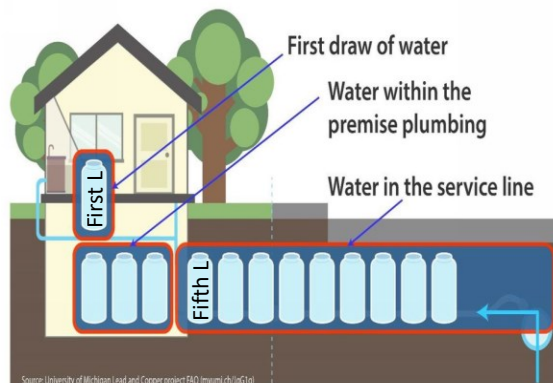
MONITORING/TAP SAMPLING UPDATE

Effective Today

- 60 Tiered sampling sites, 2x/year
 - Looking for lead service owners to participate - call water plant at 406-727-1325
 - Pilot project incentive
- Provide filter and sample disturbed lead/galvanized lines
- Corrosion control being implemented
- Action level 15 ppb for lead

Effective 2027

- Action level 10 ppb for lead
- 1st and 5th liter - report highest
- Public education efforts
- List of elementary schools and daycares to DEQ
 - Sample 20% per year for 5 years



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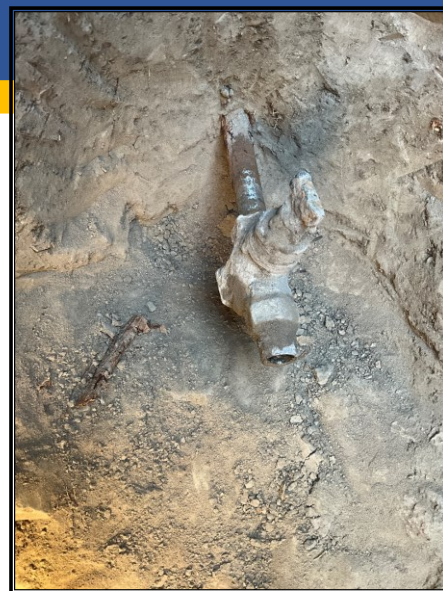
MANDATORY NOTICING

Effective Today

- Annual letters mailed to non-conforming locations
- Other non-conforming location notices
 - Operating water valve notice
 - Disturbance notice
 - Partial replacement notice
- System wide notices
 - Non-conforming addresses on website & to DEQ

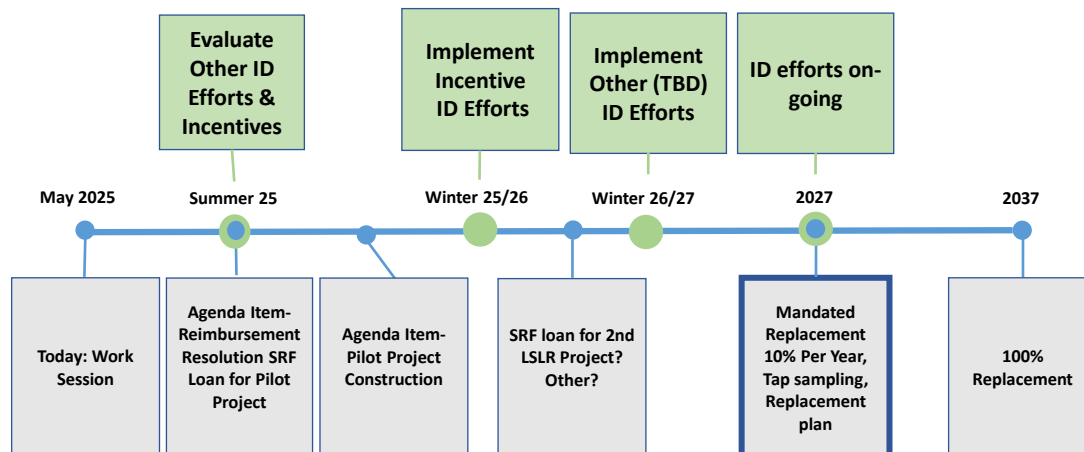
Effective 2027

- Documented replacement attempts (4 times)
- Replacement rate failure
- DEQ reporting
- Notifications will increase



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FUTURE STEPS TIMELINE & DISCUSSION



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Future GREAT FALLS

GROWTH POLICY 2025 - 2045

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT

GREAT FALLS CITY COMMISSION WORK
SESSION

MAY 20TH,
2025

1

WHY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

IT IS REQUIRED BY LAW

⚡ The Montana Land-Use Planning Act (MLUPA) mandates meaningful, ongoing public participation throughout the planning process. Article II, Sections 8 & 9 of the state constitution guarantees the public's right to participate and access government deliberations.

PROTECTED BY THE STATE CONSTITUTION

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IT BUILDS A LEGALLY DEFENSIBLE PLAN

⚡ A plan shaped by residents' values, concerns, and aspirations is not only more relevant—it's more credible. Engagement creates transparency, fosters accountability, and strengthens long-term community support.

ITS THE PEOPLE'S PLAN

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BY THE NUMBERS

The Most Ambitious Public Engagement Effort for a Planning Initiative in Great Falls History



GROWTH POLICY SURVEY

Nearly 4x the participation of the 2013 Growth Policy. Over 2,300 residents shared their perspectives on the future of Great Falls.



ROBUST DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

FutureGreatFalls.com received over 3,700 visits and served as the hub for updates, surveys, and feedback tools. Social media and email campaigns reached thousands more - 290+ listserv subscribers receiving regular updates and calls to participate.



70 + EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Workshops, roundtables, school sessions, neighborhood councils, and civic group presentations—this was planning outreach at every level.



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TOP COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

1

**HOUSING
AVAILABILITY &
AFFORDABILITY**

2

**COST OF
LIVING**

3

**PUBLIC
SAFETY**

4

**PUBLIC
INFRASTRUCTURE**

5

**DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION**

Methodology: To identify the top five community concerns, we combined results from the Growth Policy survey with input gathered through workshops, roundtables, student sessions, and neighborhood meetings. We focused on issues that were both highly ranked in the survey and consistently raised across multiple engagement activities. This approach ensures the final priorities reflect what matters most to residents—grounded in both data and real community conversations.

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HOUSING AVAILABILITY & AFFORDABILITY: THE #1 COMMUNITY CONCERN

Residents Want More Options—That Add to Neighborhoods, **Not Overwhelm Them**

- Housing was the most consistent priority - highlighted in the survey, workshops, council meetings, and thought cards.
- 75% identified housing cost as a top challenge for the next 20 years.
- 69% are concerned about rental affordability.
- 91% want the City to make it easier to build housing.

What We Heard Loud and Clear:

- Rising costs for both renters and buyers
- Limited supply - and concerns about the condition of what's available
- A need for more entry-level ownership opportunities
- Strong support for infill, small lot development, and “gentle density” - housing types like cottage courts, duplexes, and ADUs that expand housing options while fitting into existing neighborhoods

👉 **This doesn't mean apartments don't belong in Great Falls.** Many residents support them—especially when located near services, transit, and job centers. But there's a clear desire to balance larger-scale development with housing that maintains the character of established areas and supports long-term affordability.

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COST OF LIVING: A GROWING PRESSURE ON RESIDENTS

Residents Want **Affordability**, **Opportunity**, and **Better Value** for What They Pay

- The cost of living - particularly property taxes, city service costs, and basic affordability
- 70% of respondents selected it as a major long-term challenge for Great Falls.

What We Heard Loud and Clear:

- Residents are concerned about rising taxes and utility rates, especially for fixed-income households and retirees
- Many said the cost of living is rising faster than wages, creating pressure for working families and younger residents
- Stakeholder roundtables and survey comments highlighted a need for more local job opportunities, especially well-paying jobs that align with community skills and education
- People want the City to focus on efficient service delivery, clear budgeting, and policies that make Great Falls affordable - not just for housing, but for daily life

👉 **This isn't just about affordability, it's about economic security.** Residents want a city where they can live, work, and stay - with reliable services, meaningful employment, and a cost of living that makes long-term stability possible.

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SAFETY FIRST, CITYWIDE CONCERN

Residents Want **Safe Neighborhoods**, **Faster Response**, and **Visible Presence**

- Public safety was consistently ranked among the most important issues in the community survey and across public meetings, thought cards, and student feedback.
- **69%** of survey respondents rated public safety—including **Police, Fire, and EMS**—as “**very important**.” It was also identified as a **top 5** long-term challenge by half of all survey participants.

What We Heard Loud and Clear:

- Concern about response times and service coverage in growing or outlying neighborhoods
- Need for modern facilities, equipment, and training support for first responders
- Persistent calls for more visible law enforcement downtown and in neighborhoods
- Worries about drug activity, property crime, and the perception of safety, especially in the urban core
- Desire for more coordination between public safety and mental health and homelessness services

👉 This doesn't mean the public lacks confidence in first responders.

Rather, residents want to ensure that as Great Falls grows, public safety grows with it—with the tools, staffing, and infrastructure needed to protect the whole community. Maintaining safety isn't just about policing—it's about trust, visibility, and responsiveness.

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PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE: TAKE CARE OF WHAT WE HAVE — SUPPORT WHAT COMES NEXT

Residents Want **Smart Investments** That **Strengthen Existing Places** and **Enable Future Opportunity**

- Infrastructure was one of the most consistent concerns across all forms of engagement.
- 68% rated the water system as “very important,” 65% for sewer, and 61% for streets—making core infrastructure the top-rated service priority.

What We Heard Loud and Clear:

- Reinvest in aging infrastructure, especially in older neighborhoods
- Focus new development in areas where infrastructure already exists
- 91% of residents want the City to help make it easier to build—49% support using public funds for roads, water, and sewer
- Use cost sharing, grants, and partnerships to make growth feasible and fiscally responsible
- Embrace incremental, connected development that strengthens the system and builds long-term value

👉 This isn't about building more for the sake of growth.

It's about maximizing the value of what we already have—and ensuring that future development contributes to a resilient, serviceable city without burdening taxpayers or degrading system quality.

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DOWNTOWN IS A POINT OF PRIDE — AND A PRIORITY FOR THE FUTURE

Residents Want a **More Vibrant, Connected, and Welcoming Core.**

- Downtown was one of the most frequently discussed topics across the entire engagement process—cited as both a top success and a key area for continued investment.
- It was ranked as the **#1 positive change** over the past decade in open-ended survey responses.
- 73% of respondents said they want to see more “downtown core” development—the highest-rated commercial development preference.

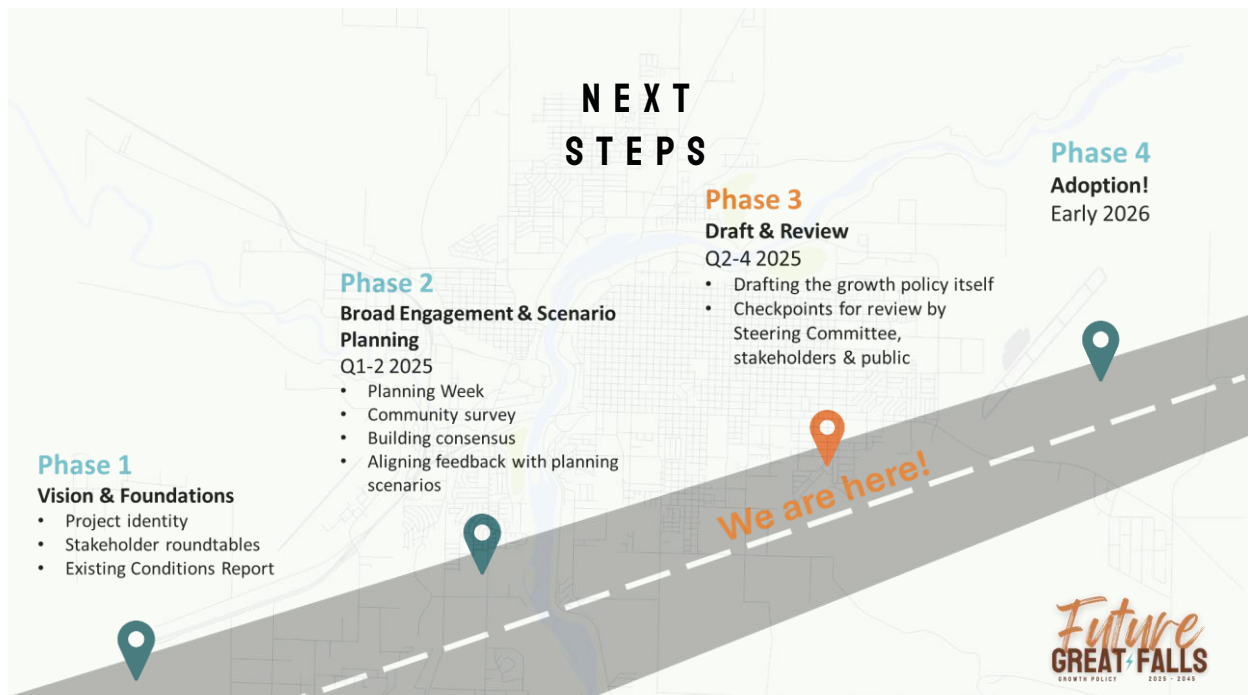
What We Heard Loud and Clear:

- Strong desire to redevelop vacant and underused buildings—including upper-story housing
- Requests for more independent retail, local restaurants, and cultural spaces
- Need for public amenities: restrooms, seating, shade, lighting, and gathering areas
- Calls for better connections—especially from the west side—via trails, safe crossings, and transit
- Mixed feedback on parking: many feel there’s enough, but poorly organized and not near destinations

👉 This doesn’t mean people want a complete overhaul.

Residents support preserving historic charm and walkability—but they want downtown to feel more alive, better maintained, and more accessible for all ages and abilities. They see downtown as a signature asset—and a reflection of how the city shows up for itself.

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