



July 25, 2023

Dear Our Missoula Code Reform Team,

The ability to afford housing is becoming more challenging for numerous residents of Missoula who wish to buy homes. The limited availability of homes across various price ranges coupled with substantial demand has led to a significant rise in the median home price within the Missoula urban area. In fact, from 2018 to the first quarter of 2023, the median price of a home in Missoula has surged by 80.6%, soaring from \$290,700 to \$525,000 in less than five years.

Missoula Organization of REALTORS (MOR) recently hosted a candidate real estate education forum for city council and mayoral candidates. The Forum was an opportunity to discuss housing at all price points in our community, challenges in building, and an exchange of ideas to address our community's need for increased supply.

While debriefing the forum with our partners from Missoula Building Industry Association (MBIA), we felt it was important to bring to the team's attention some of the key ideas deliberated.

The forum featured a panel of four developers who shared experiences creating housing for the Missoula market. During subsequent discussions by the attendees there was consensus and broad support for the following three key objectives. Code reform outcomes should be Fast, Simple and Flexible

Fast – it is generally acknowledged that extended time/delays between initial application and final permits can and often defeat housing projects; time is the enemy. All parties present agreed code reform must squeeze time delays out of the process.

Simple – too many rules prevent developers and the CPDI from efficiently bringing housing to market. Rules need to be simplified, trusting that most developers are working to create housing in the best interest of the community, acknowledging prior successful projects. Recognition that increased production of new homes has a higher value to the community than attempting to regulate for all contingencies.



Flexibility – but for a lack of two feet of parking, an attainable housing project died. If addressing the critical need for new housing is the number one issue facing our community, the overriding directive should be to empower reviewers and planners to utilize flexibility when making decisions; seeking creative solutions to allow development whenever possible, and exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

MOR and MBIA would ask that you incorporate these suggestions into the Code Reform review process and, when possible, implement changes as soon as practicable. We look forward to the outcomes of code reform, Fast, Simple and Flexible regulations that increase housing production, help alleviate affordability issues and provide more options for Missoulians.

Sincerely,

Carly Kelley McDonnell

Carly McDonnell
Board of Directors President
Missoula Organization of REALTORS®


Matthew Cavanaugh (Jul 25, 2023 12:25 MDT)

Matt Cavanaugh
Board of Directors President
Missoula Building Industry Association

cc. Mayor Jordan Hess
City Council
Eran Pehan