

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE



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Montana Department of Commerce

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1.0 Introduction

The [Montana Land Use and Planning Act \(MLUPA\)](#) serves as a cornerstone for the development and management of local services and public facilities throughout the state. The [MLUPA](#) empowers communities to conduct a thorough analysis of their existing public infrastructure and create a comprehensive land use plan that aligns with their unique needs. Essential services such as transportation, education, public safety, municipal water/wastewater, and a variety of other public utilities and infrastructure, can be strategically integrated into the planning process.

This ensures that communities are equipped to support current and future populations. As Montana continues to evolve, the principles established by the [MLUPA](#) will guide localities in creating vibrant, resilient environments that enhance the quality of life for all its residents.



Data Sources

- [Montana Department of Transportation](#)
- Capital Improvements Plan (if applicable)
- Hazard Mitigation Plan/Local DES
- Local GIS

Tip #1

This analysis will look very different for Counties that adopt MLUPA

1.1 Existing Conditions

The existing condition analysis should begin by reviewing the current level of public safety and emergency services that serve the community. This could take the form of analyzing the existing staffing numbers and response times and reviewing any contracts or memorandums of understanding that impact public services, such as a contract with the County sheriff's office for example. Communities should consider engaging with their Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC) to assist in identifying these existing conditions. Maps should be produced displaying jurisdictional areas of protection for fire, law enforcement, and Emergency Management Services. A brief analysis of response times should also be assessed.

During this initial condition report, the community should examine the jurisdiction's existing infrastructure and service capacity. This analysis includes infrastructure such as water and wastewater capacity and local service capacity to serve the community, such as fire protection. This report should identify any deficiencies that could potentially have an adverse impact on growth in the community. These deficiencies will have a cause and effect on planned expansion for the community and should help identify areas that could be annexed into the municipality.

Stakeholders

- EMS
- Local Fire Department
- Law Enforcement
- Public Works
- Telecommunications/ internet providers
- School districts
- Road department
- Transportation companies
- Mental health
- advisory committees
- GIS department
- Airport
- Recycling locations
- Solid waste management office
- Post office

* *The Locations of offices should be included on the inventory map.*

1.2 Capital Improvements Plan

Under the requirements of [MLUPA](#), communities must identify necessary capital and service improvements for fire protection, law enforcement, emergency services, and health services to accommodate projected population growth, as outlined in the existing conditions report. It is considered a best practice for communities to develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which can then be integrated into the [MLUPA](#). If a community has recently completed a CIP, that document can be fully incorporated into the Land Use Plan.

When developing a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), communities should remember that they are not limited to large-scale infrastructure projects. It's beneficial to identify a range of capital improvements, including smaller items like a new air conditioning unit for a local school, alongside larger projects like roadway reconstruction. Both types of projects should be included, allowing the community to prioritize their implementation.

Communities can utilize instructional videos on CIP's, zoning and many other planning tools through the Montana Department of Commerce website ([Presentations, Publications and Model Documents](#) | [Montana Department of Commerce](#)).

Data Analysis at a Glance:

- Capacity of infrastructure
- Existing deficiencies
- Anticipated improvements
- Planned expansions



1.3 Inventory Mapping

A key element of the local services and infrastructure section of the [MLUPA](#) is the inventory and mapping of utility service areas, system networks, and facilities. Many communities in Montana face challenges due to limited Geographic Information System (GIS) resources for effective mapping within their Land Use Plans. To address this, communities may need to seek grant funding for data collection or collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions, such as the County, to enhance their mapping efforts.

It is considered best practice to create an interactive online map that includes meaningful attribute data. For instance, when mapping municipal water lines, it is important to note the material of the piping, as this affects both the system's carrying capacity and its susceptibility to corrosion, which can impact water users. This inventory map should be created for the following:

- Water (water lines, mains, service lines, clean outs)
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- Solid Waste Disposal
- Transportation
- School Bus Routes
- Sidewalks/Pedestrian Path
- Other Utilities as Identified by the Jurisdiction
- Parks
- Recycling locations
- Phased expansion projects

1.4 Water, Wastewater, Stormwater

As communities assess their existing infrastructure, it is essential to identify any limitations that these systems may impose on future growth through annexation. In addition to considering the physical characteristics of areas outside the jurisdictional boundaries, the constraints of existing infrastructure will help determine whether annexation is feasible. The insights gained from this analysis will significantly inform the development of the Future Land Use Map.

The existing conditions report should evaluate whether there is adequate capacity for extending infrastructure. Municipalities must be aware of the costs associated with upgrades and extensions, which should be clearly outlined in the Capital Improvement Plan. For example, lift stations can be particularly expensive, and areas requiring such infrastructure may not be suitable for annexation due to the financial burden on both the municipality and taxpayers.

While stormwater management is often assessed alongside water and wastewater, it can also be examined during transportation analysis to identify necessary upgrades such as curb cuts and other improvements. The community should determine the appropriate timing for conducting this analysis.

Communities should also include links to any preliminary engineering reports for water, wastewater, or stormwater in the Land Use Plan.

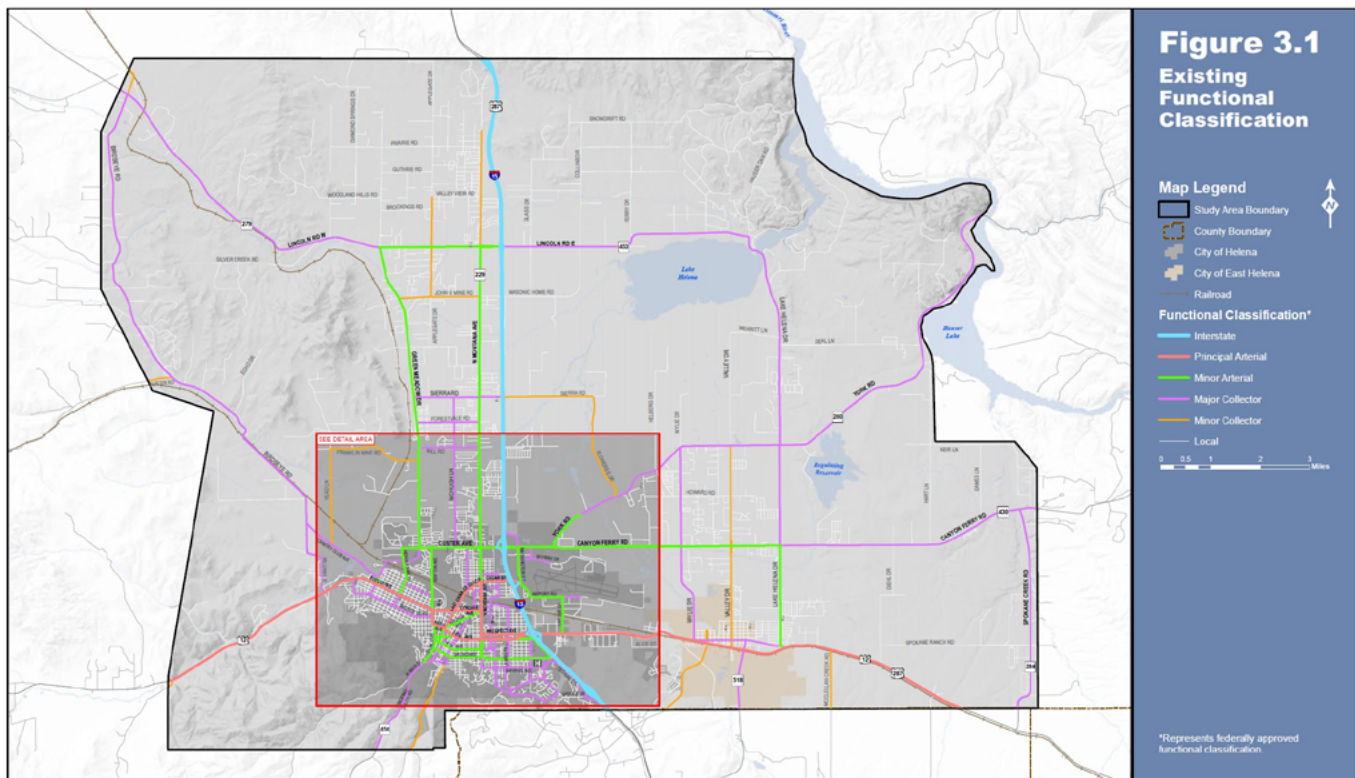


Figure 1. Functional Road Classification map example

1.5 Transportation

The transportation network should be evaluated in the same way as other public infrastructure by assessing its current capacity. Communities should collaborate with the [Montana Department of Transportation](#) regarding any state routes within their jurisdiction, as well as consult their public works department and any engineering contractors to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the roadways. This evaluation may necessitate a complete paving and street assessment; if such an assessment has recently been completed, its findings should be integrated into the Land Use Plan.

As part of this analysis, a functional classification map of the streets should be developed, encompassing all major highways, secondary highways, local routes, and non-motorized trails. Additionally, the jurisdiction should inventory and include on the map any existing bike and pedestrian routes, as well as identify all public transit locations and facilities, where applicable.

1.6 Schools

It is essential to conduct a cooperative effort between the local jurisdiction and the local school district to determine the existing capacity of the schools within that district and identify any capital improvements that may be needed. Once the existing conditions have been determined, the following questions should be considered:

Are there any planned expansions for the local schools?

Are school bus routes mapped?

What are the limitations of public infrastructure that stifle growth for schools?

What other public utilities and services are needed for school expansion?

This could look like examining the feasibility of hiring a School Resource Officer or identifying an extension of utilities. The existing road network in relation to school bus routes and pedestrian infrastructure should be analyzed for both existing schools and future schools. Student safety within the transportation network should be a key component of the analysis of schools and transportation within a community.



1.7 Additional Public Facilities & Analysis

Various other municipal buildings will need to be inventoried and analyzed to determine their current capacity, and any upgrades needed to serve a growing population. These facilities could include parks, libraries, community centers, public works buildings, etc. The same process applies to the analysis of these facilities as previously stated in this document. All of these facilities should be mapped during the inventory phase of the project. Further analysis of public facilities, services, and infrastructure may be necessary, depending on the unique needs of each community. The extent of this analysis is entirely at the discretion of the local jurisdiction.



1.8 Additional Analysis

Further analysis of public facilities, services, and infrastructure may be necessary, depending on the unique needs of each community. The extent of this analysis is entirely at the discretion of the local jurisdiction.

Additional Analysis

- Property inventory
- Collaboration with regional economic development groups
- Incorporation of previous planning efforts, such as a housing needs assessment
- Downtown Master Plans
- Neighborhood Plan
- CIPS

1.9 Implementation

Local services and facilities play a crucial role in the [MLUPA](#). Without a thorough analysis of public infrastructure, growth can be hampered by uncertainties. Public services are essential for ensuring that future growth areas are protected and that residents have access to the necessities for their health, safety, and well-being.

One effective way to implement improvements is by creating a Capital Improvements Plan. This plan should outline necessary capital upgrades, provide a timeline for each project, and estimate associated costs. Additionally, developing a future land use map can help identify suitable growth areas for the municipality. This involves assessing the current availability of public utilities, fire protection, emergency medical services, and law enforcement coverage.

