

Planning and Zoning Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I find the zoning of my property?

- You can find the zoning of your property by calling or visiting the Planning and Community Development Department and requesting that information. Planning staff can look up the zoning for your property with your address.
- Find the [City Zoning Map](#) here.
- Allowed land uses and subsequent definitions are listed within [Title 17 Land Development Code](#), Chapter 20 Land Use, Article 3 Allowable Uses, Exhibit 20-1.

2. What are the building setbacks on my property?

Building setback is the minimum distance that a building can be from your property line. Building setbacks can vary by zoning district, building type (primary vs. accessory), and the nature of the adjacent property. Building setback information is found in Exhibit 20-4, Chapter 20 of Title 17 of the City's Land Development Code – available online at:

<https://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientID=14988&stateID=26&statename=Montana> or in the Planning and Community Development Department, Room 112 of the Civic Center.

3. What is the River's Edge Trail and where can I get a map of the Trail?

The River's Edge Trail, Great Falls' nationally-known, 44 mile trail along the Missouri River connects many urban parks and attractions with all the waterfalls and reservoirs east of the city. Paved trail extends from Warden Park to Crooked Falls on the South shore and from Garden Home Park to Black Eagle Memorial Island on the North shore. Challenging single-track trails follow the river canyon as far as Box Elder Creek on the South shore and from Rainbow Dam to Sulphur Spring on the North Shore.

Maps of the River's Edge Trail are available in the Planning and Community Development Office, Room 112 of the Civic Center; or online at Recreation Trails Inc.'s website - <http://thetrail.org/> - or various locations throughout Great Falls.

4. Can my business be run from my home address?

The City's Land Development Code defines a home occupation as: "a lawful business carried on by a resident of a dwelling as an accessory use within the same dwelling or an accessory building which will not infringe upon the right of neighboring residents to enjoy the peaceful occupancy of their home." The following regulations apply to home occupations:

A. Appearance. The activity must be conducted in a manner so as not to give an outward appearance nor manifest any characteristics of a business in the ordinary meaning of the terms, nor shall it create undue amounts of traffic which would infringe upon the right of neighboring residents to enjoy the peaceful occupancy of their home.

B. Employees. That portion of the Home Occupation conducted at the dwelling unit must be carried on by at least one (1) resident of the dwelling unit. In addition, non-resident employees where the aggregate hours worked do not exceed forty (40) hours per week and when no more than two (2) employees are present at one (1) time are permitted

C. Location. For Home Occupations whose services are rendered at the customer's location, the use of the dwelling unit shall be limited to the office portion of the business.

D. Secondary use. The Home Occupation must be incidental and secondary to the use of the dwelling unit as a residence.

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E. Area. A maximum of thirty (30) percent of the dwelling may be dedicated to the Home Occupation.

F. Exterior Use. No exterior storage of material or equipment or any variation from the residential character of the principle building shall be permitted.

G. Noise, etc. No offensive noise, vibration, smoke, dust, odor, heat or glare shall be produced.

H. Delivery. No material or commodities shall be delivered to or from the residence which are of such bulk or quantity as to create undesirable traffic or congestion.

I. Weight. No materials or commodities shall be placed within the building which exceeds the allowable floor loading of forty (40) pounds per square foot.

J. Parking. No parking of customers' vehicles shall be permitted in a manner of frequency so as to cause a disturbance or inconvenience to neighboring residents or so as to necessitate off-street parking. Business vehicles shall not exceed one (1) ton rated capacity.

K. Sign. No exterior display shall be permitted except that one (1) non-illuminated nameplate or Home Occupation sign shall be permitted; however, the sign shall not exceed one hundred forty-four (144) square inches (one (1) square foot) in area and further; shall not exceed twenty-four (24) inches in length. Such sign or nameplate shall be placed flat against the dwelling unit.

L. Garage. The Home Occupation cannot be conducted upon the area, including garage space, provided to fulfill the off-street parking requirements for the dwelling unit on the lot.

5. What is the Growth Policy – where do I get information about the 2013 Growth Policy?

The Growth Policy is an official public document that is intended to guide future social, physical, environmental and economic growth and development of the City. Montana Code Annotated (MCA) identifies several elements that must be addressed in the Growth Policy. The required elements include provisions to guide land-use, transportation, economic development, housing needs and population projections, among other considerations.

The adopted Growth Policy will be used by the City of Great Falls and the Planning and Community Development Department as a guide for policies and decisions regarding the City's future growth and development and will set a course of action for the City to thrive.

The current Growth Policy received a full update in 2013, and can be found at:

<http://www.greatfallsmt.net/planning/growth-policy-2013>

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