



2015 Legislative Session Policy Statement

Montana Annexation Laws

Background: The Montana Association of Planners (MAP) believes that effective annexation and land use regulations are necessary to ensure the long-term economic sustainability of Montana municipalities, allowing them to manage expansion of their service areas, maximize cost efficiencies in delivering public services, and protect Montana’s environmental and natural resources.

Annexation may be appropriate or encouraged when there is a need or demand for municipal services in fringe areas, and when those services can best be supplied by the municipality. However, municipalities need to maintain the authority to decide annexation of outlying areas to make sure they can adequately provide the services without negatively impacting existing municipal residents. It is also easier for municipalities to support annexation when rural and suburban development on the fringe is already built to urban standards. Parks, streets, utilities, and other facilities that are already built to an urban standard make it easier for municipalities to support annexation and deliver services to newly annexed property.

For municipalities to provide efficient urban services, they also need to guide development in an orderly manner and avoid the extension of services to distant and scattered “pockets” of development. Clear authority for annexation guarantees a measure of responsible control while also allowing the annexation process to be fair to municipal and county residents.

Position: MAP supports the annexation laws as currently written in MCA 7-2-42 through 7-2-47 and would discourage changes in legislation negatively impacting the ability of Montana’s municipalities to effectively manage services and annex property when it is appropriate.