



2025 Missoula City Council Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire

Name: Kristen Jordan

Ward: 6

Political Party Affiliation

☒ Democrat ☐ Republican ☐ Independent ☐ Other Party (please specify)

Are you an incumbent?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Campaign Contact Information

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1. The Central Committee is empowered to vote to support candidates in nonpartisan elections. Do you want the support of Missoula County Democrats?

☒ Yes

☐ No

2. In what type of assistance would you be interested? (check all that apply)

☒ Public endorsement *

☐ Financial contributions

☒ Assisting contacting voters

☐ Other (_____)

* I believe our endorsement process should reflect the values of transparency, fairness, and democracy. Every candidate deserves to be evaluated based on their work, values, and commitment to our shared principles, not personal dynamics or unrelated concerns. This process should lift up public service and community dedication, not be sidetracked by individual disagreements. I would greatly appreciate an endorsement if the process is focused on what unites us: strengthening democracy and delivering for the people we serve.

3. Do you currently hold or do you expect to seek any other endorsements in this election, if yes, from whom?

Yes, I have the following endorsements:

- Montana State Representative **Zooey Zephyr**
- **Will and Clint Whittle-Frazier** – friends and constituents in Franklin to the Fort Neighborhood – Ward 6
- Montana State Senator **Jacinda Morigeau**
- **Kate Wilburn** – friend and constituent in Franklin to the Fort Neighborhood – Ward 6
- **Susan Mason** – friend and constituent in Franklin to the Fort Neighborhood – Ward 6
- **Joseph Hudelson** – friend and constituent of River Road Neighborhood – Ward 6
- **Rachel Pauli** – friend and constituent of River Road Neighborhood – Ward 6
- **Ellie Caplis** – friend and constituent of Franklin to the Fort Neighborhood – Ward 6
- **Stephen Ferguson** LCSW, LAC – friend and constituent of Franklin to the Fort Neighborhood – Ward 6
- **Democratic Socialists of America** – Local Chapter

4. Why do you want to be a member of the Missoula City Council?

Local government is where democracy comes to life- it is the laboratory of democracy as one of my Master's in Public Administration (MPA) professors used to say. It's where we have the unique chance to work side-by-side with our neighbors to shape the policies that affect our daily lives. As a

City Councilor, I'm only one degree away from the people I serve and that means I hear directly and often from folks about what's working, what's not, and where we can do better. And I take that seriously.

One of the things I value most is the real, personal connection I have with residents. Many people in Ward 6 have my personal phone number, and that's by design. I want to be accessible and responsive. I also genuinely love policy work. Being on a city council is something I've wanted to do- since I was young, and it's incredibly rewarding to use both data and community input to shape decisions. For me, the goal is always to craft solutions that work for the greatest number of people, while making sure that marginalized voices are heard and uplifted. That's the work I'm committed to every day.

5. How has your work and community service in Missoula prepared you to positively contribute as a City Council Member?

Serving on City Council is can be thankless, but it's always about the greater good, and that's where I'm grounded. I bring a strong foundation in data and public policy to my work on council, backed by an MPA. Most of my career has been dedicated to using data to inform better outcomes, knowing that whether the numbers paint a tough picture or an encouraging one, they're always essential to moving good policy forward.

My MPA deepened my understanding of representation, ethics, and the real-life complexities of policy-making. It helped me connect academic insight with my lived and professional experience. I'm especially focused on crafting policies that serve the broadest needs while centering those most often left out of the conversation.

In my community service, I've had the privilege of learning how different people and systems operate. That experience has shaped how I approach collaboration- seeking compromise, aligning around shared goals, and always keeping the vision of a more equitable and functional Missoula in mind. It's not always easy work, but it's work I care deeply about.

6. What do you consider to be the most important challenges facing Missoula municipal

government during the next two years?

1. Accelerate housing production through affordable and market-rate units, while simplifying codes and processes.
2. Strengthening infrastructure, especially sidewalks in Ward 6, transit, multimodal paths using Neighborways, green stormwater infrastructure implementation, and connection to municipal sewer systems to support the predicted growth.
3. Institute budget reforms with performance metrics and use them in priority based budgeting to ensure public transparency and efficiency.
4. Expand housing-first behavioral health services and shelter alternatives, especially during the transition away from temporary models.
5. Push for local governance autonomy over TIF, gas taxes, and general municipal authority, especially in the face of new state restrictions.
6. Address environmental concerns head-on with proactive water protections like implementing green stormwater infrastructure, implementing anti-climate collapse projects and code, and EV infrastructure implementation.

7. As a general matter, to what extent, and by what means, should the City of Missoula shape business and residential growth using regulations on private development?

The City absolutely has a role in shaping business and residential growth, but that role must be carried out with fairness, transparency, and a commitment to the greater public good. When a property owner is following existing local and state laws, the City shouldn't selectively override their rights through spot zoning or inconsistent enforcement. That kind of reactive approach undermines trust in the process and creates confusion for everyone including developers, neighbors, and city staff alike. If the rules aren't serving the people of Missoula and if they're leading to displacement, rising costs, or community harm, then we need to change the laws through a democratic, transparent process, not by bending them on a case-by-case basis.

At the same time, regulation is a tool to guide growth, not block it. Right now, one of our biggest challenges is making sure growth reflects Missoula's values. We see commercial buildings sitting empty while small businesses are priced out. We see residential projects go up that few

Missoulians can actually afford. These are signs the system isn't working as it should. Our regulations should prioritize affordability, long-term sustainability, and neighborhood integrity. That means encouraging adaptive reuse of vacant spaces, supporting local businesses over speculative development, and ensuring housing serves the people who live and work here, not just investors and developers.

Growth is inevitable, but how we grow is a choice. And my priority will always be to make sure that choice reflects equity, transparency, and community voice, not profits.

8. Does the City of Missoula offer good value for the cost, quality and quantity of services it offers? Please explain your approach to budgeting in light of your answer.

The answer to whether Missoula offers a “quality of life you can afford” depends entirely on who you ask and what metrics you use. There are certainly articles from outlets like *Money*, *Montana Right Now*, and *KGVO* citing studies or accolades that highlight Missoula as a place where you can enjoy a high quality of life relative to cost. I understand why those narratives exist- Missoula is beautiful, vibrant, and community-oriented.

But we also have to be honest: for many Missoulians, particularly renters, that version of affordability is out of reach. A 2021 report from the Montana Budget & Policy Center estimated that 50–55% of renter households in Missoula spend more than 35% of their income on housing. That is far beyond the federal affordability threshold and is neither sustainable nor equitable.

On top of that, our current city budgeting process lacks the tools and transparency necessary to prioritize public spending effectively. We essentially write a blank check each year without using performance metrics to evaluate which programs are delivering results. As a city councilor, that means I'm being asked to vote on budgets without having the data I need to make responsible, informed decisions. That's not good governance, and it doesn't reflect the level of accountability Missoulians deserve. We need to implement program efficiency and effectiveness metrics and adopt priority-based budgeting so we can clearly show taxpayers how and where their money is being spent and why.

I bring my own lived experience to this work. At 54, I'm just now at a point in my life where I occasionally have a small amount left over after paying my bills. Becoming a single mother was not something I planned, and it was financially devastating. I know firsthand how quickly people, regardless of how hard they work, can become financially vulnerable. That's why I believe budgeting must be approached with empathy, discipline, and transparency. We have to make sure every dollar we spend is grounded in community need, not legacy systems or politics.

9. What, in your opinion, are the principal issues facing Indigenous people in Missoula today? Do you think Indigenous Missoulians are adequately served by city government, and if not, what should the city do better?

I don't speak for Indigenous people, and I believe it's essential that we listen directly to Native voices about the challenges they face in Missoula. What I can say is that the ongoing impacts of colonization are undeniable and deeply harmful, and we see them right here in our community. Indigenous people are disproportionately represented in the criminal legal system, as are other communities of color.

The crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People, especially women, is ongoing and compounded by a jurisdictional system that is confusing by design. Right now, before any agency can investigate a violent crime involving Indigenous people, the system demands answers to complex questions about race, geography, and the nature of the crime before an investigation can even begin. This deliberate legal maze delays justice and causes real harm in the form of lost human lives.

City government has a responsibility to actively dismantle the barriers that keep Indigenous Missoulians from being fully and safely served. That includes advocating for reforms, investing in culturally competent services, and making sure Indigenous voices are not only heard but centered in decision-making. We can and must do better.

10. One of the consequences of growth is a lack of affordable housing. How do you think the city should tackle the issue?

The City of Missoula has both the responsibility and the tools to take meaningful action on housing affordability and availability. We can, and must, prioritize the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for infrastructure that directly supports affordable and workforce housing, rather than subsidizing luxury development or for servicing debt on school levies. We should expand the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, deepen our investment in community land trusts, and strengthen partnerships with nonprofit builders who are committed to long-term affordability not speculative returns, as long as we don't then let them out of their obligations to support lower income initiatives like we did with the childcare center in Ravara-Scott Street development.

Zoning reform is also essential. We've made some progress, but it's not enough. We need to go further by legalizing duplexes, fourplexes, and ADUs citywide, and we must remove local policies that automatically increase construction costs, such as the Design Excellence overlay, which makes new buildings unfeasible for affordable housing developers.

Supply alone won't solve the crisis, we must also protect renters. At the municipal level, we can:

- Fund and expand tenant legal aid services, especially for eviction defense;
- Strengthen rental registration and inspection programs to ensure safe and habitable housing;
- Support tenants' rights education, so renters know what protections already exist; and
- Invest in rental assistance programs, especially for people on fixed incomes, people with disabilities, and low-income families at risk of displacement.

We also need to explore creative municipal solutions, like using city-owned land for permanently affordable housing, and continue to push the state to restore local control, including the authority to enact inclusionary zoning, enact local taxations for public infrastructure, and implement stronger tenant protections.

These practical, community-focused actions center people over profit. Missoula can, and should, be a place where working families, young people, elders, and long-time residents can all afford to live with dignity and stability.

11. Missoula has attempted over the past decade to support residents who are unhoused.

What do you think it has done right, and what would you hope to change and improve about community supports for the unhoused?

Missoula has made some meaningful progress toward addressing homelessness, but its efforts remain incomplete and are undermined by punitive ordinances that criminalize poverty and create displacement. The city has supported important initiatives such as permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing for those displaced by the closing of Johnson Street, and innovative alternatives like the high barrier, Temporary Safe Outdoor Space (TSOS) and the now defunct Authorized Camp Site, all of which reflect Housing First principles. Missoula's Mobile Support Team (MST), for which I secured the original funding, and participation in the Coordinated Entry Systems are also aligned with best practices, helping to connect people to services and housing more efficiently.

However, these positive efforts are being undercut by the enforcement of Ordinance 12.60, which prohibits camping in city rights of way and city owned properties. In practice, this ordinance criminalizes homelessness by penalizing people for sleeping or resting outside, even when no shelter is available. More recently, the Missoula Police Department has used Ordinance 12.40 to target and displace unhoused individuals in visible public areas. Ordinance 12.40 was not designed to address homelessness. It focuses on park hours, blocking sidewalks, placing items in public right-of-way, and "impeding the flow of traffic." But in the absence of shelter or safe alternatives, unhoused residents have little choice but to live in public, where enforcement of this ordinance results in citations (\$500 for 12.40 and \$50 for 12.60), forced movement, or the loss of personal belongings. These enforcement tactics do not solve homelessness, they push it out of view and make stability even harder to achieve for people already in crisis. It also ensures the services we have set up, like our Homeless Outreach Team and other frontline service providers cannot maintain contact with their clients because they cannot find them.

With the closing of Johnson street, Missoula will lack a low-barrier, 24/7 emergency shelter that accepts everyone without restrictive conditions related to sobriety, pet companions, documentation, or family structure. Without this infrastructure, criminalizing survival in public spaces is both unethical and ineffective. Instead of enforcement, the city should expand shelter options that are safe, trauma-informed, and responsive to individual needs.

In terms of prevention, Missoula does not yet have a strong eviction defense system, nor does it consistently fund rental assistance, legal aid, or landlord mediation services, all tools that are far more cost-effective and humane than emergency responses. While some progress has been made on zoning reform to increase housing supply and density in previously zoned SFH areas, the city still falls short when it comes to deeply affordable housing for extremely low-income residents. Local policies like the Design Excellence Overlay increase development costs and can limit the ability of nonprofit or community builders to deliver affordable units.

Tenant protections also remain limited. While constrained by state preemption laws, Missoula can still implement stronger rental inspection programs, habitability standards, and tenant education efforts to help renters stay housed and safe. The city also lacks a real-time public dashboard to track homelessness data, service outcomes, and housing needs, tools that could greatly improve accountability and public trust.

To move forward, Missoula must stop relying on punitive measures like Ordinances 12.60 and 12.40 to manage homelessness. Instead, it should deepen its investment in housing, prevention, and coordinated care, strategies that treat all residents with dignity and create a healthier, more equitable city. Criminalizing homelessness doesn't solve it, it only worsens the crisis, distracts from the real solutions we know work, and costs taxpayers more through increased criminal legal involvement and emergency room visits.

12. What is the best use for tax increment funding in Missoula, and do you think the City has been using TIF wisely?

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can be one of Missoula's most powerful tools to support equitable growth, if used thoughtfully and transparently. The best use of TIF is to invest in public infrastructure that directly supports affordable and workforce housing, not luxury development or high-end commercial projects that don't serve the broader community. Recent reforms to Montana state law have expanded what counts as eligible infrastructure, and Missoula was the first city in the state to apply TIF dollars to actual workforce housing construction. That shift is a step in the right direction and reflects the kind of people-centered investment we need more of.

TIF has also funded sidewalks, sewer and water lines, bridges, and trails that help unlock land for mixed-income development. Projects like *SweetGrass Commons* in the Old Sawmill District show that when done right, TIF can support permanently affordable homes through partnerships with groups like Homeword. But the City hasn't always used this tool wisely. TIF has been used to subsidize high-end hotels and market-rate development that contribute little to community affordability, while property values and rents rise around them, displacing low- and moderate-income residents. That's a misuse of public dollars.

There's also a serious accountability gap. The Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA), which manages TIF spending, operates outside direct oversight of the City Council. I believe MRA's budget, amendments, and project proposals should come before Council for review and public input. TIF districts must also have clearly defined goals and expiration dates so that revenue eventually returns to schools, fire departments, and other taxing jurisdictions, not just ongoing private development.

To better align TIF with community needs, I support setting aside a fixed percentage of all TIF revenue for deeply affordable and permanently affordable housing, including for people at 60% of area median income or below. We should also ensure that housing projects funded with TIF include long-term deed restrictions and community benefit agreements. And where the City already owns land, like in Midtown, we can use TIF to fund infrastructure that allows nonprofit builders and land trusts to develop affordable homes tied to transit and public services.

TIF should never be a blank check for private gain. It should be a targeted investment in infrastructure and housing that reflects our values: equity, transparency, and putting people over

profit. I believe Missoula has made progress in that direction, but we still have work to do to ensure every public dollar builds a stronger, more just community.

13. What role can the City of Missoula play in large scale environmental issues like climate change, waste management, water quality, and habitat preservation?

Missoula is well positioned to lead on environmental priorities, even as a small city, through climate action, waste reduction, water protection, and habitat stewardship. Our municipal government has already embraced a range of ambitious strategies, but there is more work to be done.

First, the City has adopted a robust *Climate Lens Toolkit*, implemented through the *2022 Climate Lens Resolution*, which ensures every city decision, whether it's infrastructure investment or operations, accounts for emissions and resilience (ci.missoula.mt.us). We've set strong targets too: achieving carbon-neutral municipal operations by 2025, 100% clean electricity for the Missoula urban area by 2030, and a community-wide carbon neutrality goal by 2050 (ci.missoula.mt.us).

To reduce emissions and support clean transportation, the City is actively developing an *EV Infrastructure Plan*, aimed at cutting solo car commuting and expanding electric vehicle access ([Engage Missoula](#)). These efforts complement programs like Electrify Missoula and advancements in green building policies.

In waste management, the City recently enhanced downtown recycling infrastructure (adding 30 public recycling bins) and launched solar at the Resource Recovery Facility, demonstrating our commitment to a *Zero-By-Fifty* waste reduction plan (missoulaparks.org). Partners like Home ReSource are helping expand these efforts through material reuse initiatives.

Additionally, developers should not be able to simply write a check instead of delivering real green space. Yes, *Affordable Housing Trust Fund* contributions are useful, but green and park spaces must be embedded within our neighborhoods, especially in Ward 6, where park access is critically low, as identified in the City's 2024 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Plan. With

just two parks in Ward 6 serving a fast-growing community, every new development should be required to include and maintain adequate green land on-site.

The PROST Plan emphasizes integrating equity and housing into parks planning, and it's time developers align with these goals by providing public green space, not seeing them as optional or replaceable with off-site fees. We need stronger policies and enforcement to ensure that new neighborhoods offer walkable, green areas, especially for families, elders, and kids in Ward 6.

In short, developers must do more than write a check. They have to build green spaces where people live and take responsibility for their upkeep. That's how we ensure a healthy, inclusive city, where everyone, regardless of income, has access to real parks and open space.

Water quality and habitat preservation are also clear priorities of the City. Climate resilience programs, such as floodplain remapping, wildlife habitat restoration, and strategies for extreme heat, have been implemented to protect the Clark Fork and Bitterroot rivers, urban canopy, and our vital sole source aquifer. Several hundred acres of parks and conserved open space already support ecological diversity in our neighborhoods as well.

What still needs attention?

- Community-wide engagement: We need deeper public involvement in resilience planning to ensure equity, particularly for vulnerable populations who are disproportionately affected by heat, smoke, and flooding.
- Urban forestry funding: Maintaining our tree canopy in urban areas, especially in Ward 6, will require more investment in native plantings and invasive species management.
- Stormwater management innovation: Green stormwater infrastructure like rain gardens and bioswales should be scaled beyond pilot projects, and septic system maintenance education is critical to protecting our sole source aquifer. The city should partner with realtors and other housing related entities in educating buyers and developers on best practices.

- Waste reduction in development: Encouraging zero-waste building materials and onsite compost solutions remains limited despite growing opportunity. Implement a city/county subsidized recycling and green waste program that is effective and affordable.
- Municipal policy integration: The Climate Lens must be fully integrated into procurement, budgeting, planning, and permitting, not just a pilot tool, and we need transparent metrics on emissions, waste, and clean energy adoption across all departments.

In short, Missoula already has many of the pieces in place: bold targets, partnering nonprofits, and progressive plans. What we still need to build is a holistic, fully integrated system in which environmental considerations shape every city action. That means:

1. Embedding climate and resilience in all policy, from housing to roads to the fire and police force practices;
2. Expanding clean energy, EV access, and sustainable transit;
3. Deepening waste reduction efforts across city operations, constituent access, and development; and
4. Protecting water quality, riparian habitat, urban canopy, and public parks.

By strengthening these systems and turning bold ambitions into measurable results, Missoula can continue to grow into a climate-smart, equitable city—one that balances environmental responsibility with healthy, people-centered communities.

14. What is your plan for getting input from and communicating with constituents once you are elected?

Connecting with constituents is why I'm running. Living and working in Ward 6, I'm regularly out walking my dogs, attending neighborhood meetings, and meeting people at local events. That casual, face-to-face conversation is one of the best ways to learn how city policies impact real lives.

I also use every communication channel available: I'm active on social media to share updates and quickly hear concerns, and I've given my personal phone number to neighbors so they can reach

me directly because the official city line goes straight to voicemail. When people call or text or DM, I answer or respond as soon as I can.

On top of that, I'd like to try some different outreach this time around, including hosting regular office hours, both in-person and virtual, where folks can drop in, ask questions, or propose ideas. I'd like to start sending out a newsletter summarizing council actions, community opportunities, and upcoming public meetings so residents feel informed and know where to go to get information while not getting overwhelmed.

I also believe we need to change the City Council's current rule that limits public comment on items unrelated to the agenda until the end of Monday night meetings. Since this change was implemented, we've seen a sharp drop in public participation and that should concern all of us. The rule was intended to streamline meetings for staff and developers, but staff are paid to be there, and developers already have scheduled agenda slots to speak on their projects. Everyday Missoulians, those who take time out of their evenings often after work or during caregiving responsibilities, shouldn't be pushed to the back of the line.

We need to make it easier, not harder, for people to engage with their local government. Public comment is a fundamental part of democracy, and when we prioritize efficiency over accessibility, we send the wrong message. If we truly want to hear from the people we serve, we must create space for them at the table early in the meeting, when their voices are still fresh and when they feel welcome. I will advocate to restore public comment to the beginning of our meetings because listening to our community isn't a formality, it's the foundation of good governance and democracy.

For me, transparency isn't a checkbox, it's a relationship. When constituents know they can reach me directly, and when I show up to neighborhood meetings, parks, or online, trust grows. That connection guides my decision-making and helps make Ward 6 a stronger, better represented community.