Minimum Lot Areas are a common local government regulation which mandate that a certain type of home can only be built on a certain size of lot within a particular zoning district.

YES! Over 70% of primary residential areas in Montana's most in-demand cities either outright prohibit or penalize affordable starter homes using a combination of Minimum Lot Areas and Single-Family Zoning.

**PROBLEM**

**WHAT ARE MINIMUM LOT AREAS?**
Minimum Lot Areas are a common local government regulation which mandate that a certain type of home can only be built on a certain size of lot within a particular zoning district.

**DO MONTANA CITIES HAVE EXCESSIVE MINIMUM LOT AREAS?**
YES! Over 70% of primary residential areas in Montana's most in-demand cities either outright prohibit or penalize affordable starter homes using a combination of Minimum Lot Areas and Single-Family Zoning.

**HOW DO EXCESSIVE MINIMUM LOT AREAS HURT MONTANA?**

- They contribute to Montana’s housing shortage, driving up the cost of housing for everyone.
- They prohibit affordable starter homes like duplexes, townhomes and triplexes when the lot size required exceeds the dimensions of existing lots.
- They penalize affordable starter homes by requiring larger and more expensive lots for each additional unit added to a building, even if the building takes up no additional room.
- They drive urban sprawl, eating up surrounding open space and rural land with development.
- They inflate city infrastructure costs by forcing housing development to spread out, requiring more government spending and higher taxes.
- They rob cities of new sources of revenue by blocking more residents and businesses.

**REFORM #1:**

**SENSIBLE LOT AREAS**

These are examples of the homes that would be made possible across Montana with lot area reforms.
The Montana legislature should implement Recommendation 2A from the Montana Housing Task Force, which would prohibit residential excessive minimum lot areas in cities:


(6) Zoning regulations may not include a requirement to:

(a) pay a fee for the purpose of providing housing for specified income levels or at specified sale prices; or

(b) dedicate real property for the purpose of providing housing for specified income levels or at specified sale prices.

(c) comply with dimensional standards that cumulatively result in a minimum lot size of greater than 2,500 square feet for a lot that is currently serviced by both a municipal water system and a municipal sewer system.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Q:** Does this proposal mandate we all live on denser, smaller lots?
**A:** No, this proposal gives property owners more freedom to choose what size of lot they want for their house.

**Q:** Will prohibiting excessive lot size mandates overwhelm municipal utilities with development?
**A:** No, smaller lots are 40% cheaper to serve with up-front utility needs than excessive lots.

**Q:** Will this cost taxpayers money?
**A:** No, prohibiting excessive lot size mandates is a no-cost way Montana government can boost the supply of housing.