

RICHLAND COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

“Creating a strategic plan is not enough.”

(Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, John M. Bryson)

“Let no one be deluded that a knowledge of the path can substitute for putting one foot in front of the other.”

(Mary Caroline Richards, poet)

Planning is a continuous process. It involves implementation (the action steps to get things done), monitoring (regular review of progress), and evaluation (how are we doing, what is working and what is not, and how can we better achieve goals), and then as needed, revision to update goals and objectives. Adaptive learning is important as new information becomes available and circumstances change. Such learning leads to more effective implementation. Actual *realized* strategies and effective actions are a blend of what is *intended* (through planning) and what *emerges* in practice.

Timeframe

The Growth Policy is intended to be a long-term document. It may take 10 or more years to accomplish some of the goals. Goals may be added or changed. Specific objectives will likely be accomplished in a shorter period of time.

The specific timetable for implementing actions identified in this Growth Policy is included in the section entitled “Implementation Measures-Action Plan.” The action plan identifies timeframes for each specific objective.

Strategic Approach to Implementation

The Growth Policy is an ambitious long-term plan.

How will all of the actions in this plan be accomplished? Implementing the Growth Policy will take the actions of county government, municipal governments of Sidney, and Fairview, civic and non-profit organizations, educational and research facilities, private sector businesses, and private citizens.

The local governing bodies (Richland County Commission, Sidney City Council, and Fairview Town Council) formally adopt the Growth Policy. These jurisdictions can take responsibility for specific government-oriented action items, such as the proposed capital improvements plans. They can also serve to encourage the successful implementation by other groups.

There were a number of ideas and projects that surfaced from the public meetings held in August and September of 2006 for this Growth Policy. Some of these were ideas at

the beginning stages, and others were farther along. Some groups, organizations, and governmental entities already have detailed long-term plans of their own, with action steps that dove-tail with the goals and objectives of this Growth Policy.

At the public hearings held for the Growth Policy, some participants wanted to know how they could initiate projects in their community. Individuals or groups wanting to get a project started can call the Richland County Planning Office for initial assistance in identifying what is needed and potential resources.

To facilitate the Growth Policy as a living, usable plan for the future, the planning board proposes to host an annual workshop. Intended as a get-together for the diverse interests involved in implementing various elements, it would provide an opportunity to update each other and the public on actions relevant to the Growth Policy, and discuss new issues and changes.

Following the conference, the planning board will prepare their annual report, which evaluates progress on the Growth Policy, assesses need for revisions, and includes an annual work plan prioritizing projects for the following year.

The ongoing Communities in Action project, coordinated in part by the Richland County Health Department, offers considerable potential for assisting in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Growth Policy. Communities in Action is about to begin the second phase of their multi-year planning effort. Much of what Communities in Action does overlaps with goals and objectives of the Growth Policy. Communities in Action has many resources, including VISTA volunteers and staff who are experienced in community involvement and other actions needed to implement the Growth Policy.

Schedule for Review

Annually: The Planning Board will submit an annual report and work plan to the County Commission. The report will also identify any revisions proposed for the Growth Policy.

Revisions:

Conditions that might trigger changes and revisions to the Growth Policy include:

- Issues that come up during implementation phase that may not have been anticipated during the drafting of the plan.
- New development proposals not provided for in the plan.
- Modifications needed to comply with changes in state legislation, judicial decisions or state programs.
- Priorities that need to be reassessed to take advantage of new opportunities such as grants, partnerships, and State and Federal programs.
- Planning Board evaluation of implementation measures and progress, and determination that modifications would enhance the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Development Plan.
- Changes affecting information assumptions, needs or legal framework
- Additional public input suggest the need for changes
- New data and/or changed circumstances and issues

STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The adoption of a CIP [Capital Improvements Plan] is simply good business for local governments.

(Montana's Growth Policy Resource Book, Montana Department of Commerce)

Infrastructure can be a powerful tool in managing or guiding growth. Development is more likely to occur where infrastructure, such as roads, and water and sewer facilities are already in place.

The Growth Policy by law must include a strategy for development, maintenance, and replacement of public infrastructure, including drinking water systems, wastewater treatment facilities, sewer systems, solid waste facilities, fire protection facilities, roads, and bridges.

Richland County proposes to develop a Capital Improvements Plan as the strategy for addressing public infrastructure.

Capital improvements are major, high cost public facilities or public works with a lifespan of two years or more. A Capital Improvements Plan helps communities identify their public facility needs, establish project priorities, and create a long-range program for scheduling and funding construction, repair, or other major projects. A Capital Improvements Plan can address "Life cycle costs," the long-term range of projects needed to keep infrastructure functioning well into the future. For buildings, life cycle costs include scheduling and budgeting for those parts of the building with a defined "life expectancy," such as a roof or a boiler (or other component of a heating and cooling system).

The CIP includes planning, setting priorities, effective public works management, financial management, and community decision process. A CIP consists of five basic elements:

- 1) inventory and evaluation of existing conditions for each facility (needs assessment);
- 2) prioritization of improvement needs for each public facility and prioritization of the needs for the entire infrastructure;
- 3) identification of monetary options that can be used to meet the needs;
- 4) establishment of a time schedule that matches available funds to the improvements required to meet the system needs; and
- 5) a brief written document (the CIP which is formally adopted by the governing body by resolution or by ordinance."

(Source: Montana Department of Commerce, The Mini Capital Improvements Plan for Small Towns"

County-owned Facilities

Richland County owns and maintains the following facilities:

- Community Services Building
- Richland County Court House
- Fairgrounds
- Law Enforcement Center
- Library
- Nutter Building (old post office)
- County Shop- (public works maintenance equipment etc.)
- County roads and bridges
- County parks

The county has already begun significant steps to develop an overall capital improvements plan.

- 1) The Public Works Department has inventoried all the county road equipment on a depreciation schedule and has identified life expectancy and replacement year and estimated cost. All county roads and rights-of-way have been inventoried, identified by type, and rated for current condition.
- 2) The County Commissioners contracted for a building assessment, completed in January 2005. The resulting report includes an assessment of the building's condition, expected life span, and recommendations for improvements and maintenance. Costs for needed repairs and upgrades were allocated by level of need by three levels (1) immediate, 2) within 5-8 years, and 3) 8 or more years).

Factors identified to date for county facilities include:

- Issues of maintaining over 1,200 miles of county road
- Need for a justice center building that would house jail, law enforcement, court offices. The basic need was identified in the 2005 Building Assessment report, which among other things clearly indicated the existing jail does not meet minimum requirements.
- Need to replace the Fair Ag building (from 2005 Building Assessment)
- Need to upgrade (or possibly replace) several other buildings with consideration for existing and projected future space needs of various departments and functions

The county is also looking ahead to the role that they might play in addressing other identified major construction projects such as a public community center. Currently there is no location in the county to house major events. No private sector development has filled the gap and there is interest in having a public facility. The desire for a public convention/community center was also identified as a need in the 1983 County Comprehensive Plan.

The Horizons Community Development Project conducted a survey in 2006 that indicated several different potential components or needs for a community center

including convention reception hall, meeting space-classrooms, kitchen facilities, and performance space.

A Capital Improvements Plan, with community involvement, would provide opportunities for assessing needs and identifying long-term solutions. The county has already begun to explore potential for new construction to address a variety of needs that could logically and efficiently share or utilize common space (e.g., the justice center providing space for a new jail *AND* needed expansion for law enforcement and justice).

Other Community Infrastructure in the County

The Growth Policy encourages new development to locate in or near existing communities to take advantage of existing infrastructure. This is a good opportunity to look at existing and projected needs in these communities and facilitate local capital improvements plans.

The incorporated communities of Sidney and Fairview have specific infrastructure needs and concerns that are addressed in their growth policies.

The unincorporated communities also have infrastructure needs. Lambert's water and sewer system, and Savage's sewer system are operated by local users. Lambert's system has received several recent upgrades and is in the process of completing others. Savage is facing some needed improvements. As part of the Growth Policy process, the public identified other infrastructure needs including street lights, paving, and special projects like a small golf course near Lambert. In addition, in each community people indicated that there is more demand for housing than houses available for sale or rent. Planning ahead on how the need for housing might be incorporated into existing communities will necessitate a look at community infrastructure needs for the future as well.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

State law requires that a Growth Policy include a statement explaining how the county will coordinate with the incorporated municipalities on matters related to the Growth Policy.

From the start, the process to develop this Growth Policy demonstrated considerable cooperation among the city of Sidney, town of Fairview, and Richland County. There was a joint understanding that the three jurisdictions would stand to gain individually and collectively by pooling their efforts to develop growth policies.

Looking ahead to growth in the county, it made sense to the county and municipalities of Fairview and Sidney to establish a joint city-county planning board. Standing committees on the planning board represent the Sidney Jurisdictional Planning Area and the Fairview Jurisdictional Planning Area.

The county proposes to coordinate with Fairview and Sidney as follows:

- Coordinate county planning issues within each city-county planning area with the standing committees on the city-county planning board
- Include the goals and objectives for the county in a single Growth Policy document along with the goals and objectives for Sidney and Fairview
- Coordinate planning for capital improvements and annexation
- Share information and data bases related to planning and Growth Policy implementation
- Share the results of the county planning board's annual process of evaluating work to date on the Growth Policy and establishing a work plan for the upcoming year
- Coordinate with town of Fairview regarding joint use of county planning staff

SUBDIVISION REVIEW POLICIES

This section provides information, required by state law to be included in a Growth Policy, on how the county will review subdivisions. This section explains:

1. how the county defines the state's review criteria,
2. how those criteria will be used to evaluate and make decisions on subdivisions, and
3. how public hearings will be conducted.

Since 1974, every county, city, and town has been required by state law to “adopt and provide for the enforcement and administration of subdivision regulations.”

Criteria Definition

State law requires that subdivisions be reviewed for their effects on six primary criteria: agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, natural environment, wildlife and wildlife habitat, local services and public health and safety. This section clarifies how the county defines those criteria.

AGRICULTURE: All aspects of farming or ranching including the cultivation or tilling of soil; dairying; the production, cultivation, growing, harvesting of agricultural or horticultural commodities; raising of livestock, bees, fur-bearing animals or poultry; and any practices including, forestry or lumbering operations, including preparation for market or delivery to storage, to market, or to carriers for transportation to market.

AGRICULTURAL WATER USER FACILITIES: Those facilities which provide water for irrigation or stock watering to agricultural lands for the production of agricultural products. These facilities include, but are not limited to, ditches, head gates, pipes, and other water conveying facilities.

LOCAL SERVICES: Local services are defined as any and all services that local governments, public or private utilities are authorized to provide for the benefit of their citizens.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: The natural environment is defined as the physical conditions which exist within a given area, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, sound, light and objects of historic and aesthetic significance.

WILDLIFE: Those animals that are not domesticated or tamed, or as may be defined in a Growth Policy.

WILDLIFE HABITAT: The place or area where wildlife naturally lives or travels through.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY: The prevailing healthful, sanitary condition of well being for the community at large. Conditions that relate to public health and safety include but are not limited to: disease control and prevention; emergency services; environmental health; flooding, fire or wildfire hazards, rock falls or landslides, unstable soils, steep slopes, and other natural hazards; high voltage lines or high pressure gas lines; and air or vehicular traffic safety hazards.

Evaluation

Subdivisions will be evaluated for their material effect on the six criteria. The evaluation of the effect of the proposed subdivision on these six criteria determines if there are significant unmitigated adverse impacts. Unmitigated adverse impacts are potential grounds for denial of a proposed subdivision. Below are examples of items considered in evaluating the impact of a proposed subdivision on the six criteria. These examples do not reflect all potential items, but they do include a preponderance of the items under consideration. Depending on the proposed subdivision, some of these items included may not apply. In addition, some proposals may require evaluation of other topics not included in these examples to weigh the subdivision's effect on these criteria. It is the subdivider's responsibility to document proposed mitigation of any adverse impacts on these six criteria.

Effect on agriculture.

- Number of acres that would be removed from the production of crops or livestock
- Acres of prime farmland (as defined by the USDA) that would be removed
- Effect on use of remainder and adjoining properties as farm or ranch land
- Potential conflicts between the proposed subdivision and adjacent agricultural operations including:
 - Interference with movement of livestock or farm machinery
 - Maintenance of fences
 - Weed proliferation
 - Vandalism or theft
 - Harassment of livestock by pets or humans

Effect on agricultural water user facilities.

- Location and proximity to agricultural water user facilities
- Potential conflicts between facility users and subdivision residents including:
 - Seeps, flooding, washouts
 - Obstructions and interference
 - Unintended uses (recreation or landscaping)
- Water rights
- Vehicular access to facility

Effect on local services.

- Increased demand on services and need to expand services
- Ability to provide services to subdivision
 - Response times
 - Conditions of roads, bridges, and railroad crossings
 - Physical Barriers
- Provision of adequate local services and public facilities simultaneous with or prior to onset of impact
- Any special or rural improvement districts that would obligate local government involvement fiscally or administratively

Effect on natural environment.

- Noxious weeds
- Runoff reaching surface waters (e.g.: streams, rivers or riparian areas).

- Impacts on ground water supply, quantity, and quality
- Impacts on air quality
- Impacts on scenic resources
- Impacts on historic, pre-historic, and cultural resources
- Wetlands
- Cumulative impacts of multiple subdivisions on natural environment

Effect on wildlife and wildlife habitat.

- Loss of significant, important and critical habitat, as defined
- Impacts on significant, important and critical habitat including potential effects of
 - roads and traffic
 - closure of existing operations and/or potential to provide new access to public lands
 - effects of humans and pets on wildlife

Effect on public health and safety.

- Creation of potential man-made hazards (e.g.: unsafe road intersection, development in wildland residential interface fire areas)
- Natural hazards (e.g.: wildfire, flooding, steep slopes)
- Existing potential man-made hazards (e.g.: high pressure gas lines, lack of fire protection, cumulative impacts)
- Traffic safety
- Emergency vehicle access
- Emergency medical response time
- Cumulative impacts on groundwater from individual sewage disposal systems and/or individual wells
- Any other item that endangers public health and safety

Public Hearing Procedures

A fundamental component of the subdivision review process is the opportunity for members of the public and interested groups to offer comments on the proposal. The opportunity to make comments in public is provided by the public hearing process. The Planning Board will also accept written comment received outside of the public hearing, but may set deadlines for the receipt of such comment. Under state law, the requirement to hold a public hearing does not apply to the first minor subdivision from a tract of record. A minor subdivision is defined as containing five or fewer lots.

The steps for the public hearing, which is conducted by the Planning Board, are as follows:

- (a) President presents the procedures to be used for the hearing. The Subdivision Administrator (as defined in the subdivision regulations) or other designee of the respective jurisdiction presents a staff report that addresses the criteria for local government review of subdivisions as identified in state law.

The Subdivision Administrator or other designee of the respective jurisdiction also reviews options of approval, approval with conditions, and denial, proposes

- conditions for approval as relevant, and makes recommendations to the City/County Planning Board. The Planning Director and/or committee chairperson may add any related or background information. Board members are permitted to address any relevant questions relating to the application, to the president, jurisdictional committee chairperson or staff.
- (b) Public hearing opened by the President.
 - (c) Proponents in audience including the applicant and his/her representatives will be given an opportunity to speak in favor of the application. Information submitted should be factual, relevant and not merely duplicative of previous presentations. A reasonable time will be allowed each speaker. Each person speaking must give name, address, and nature of interest in matter before presenting their information.
 - (d) Opponents in audience will be given an opportunity to speak against the application. Information submitted should be factual, relevant and not merely duplicative of previous presentations. A reasonable time will be allowed each speaker. Each person speaking must give name, address and nature of interest in the matter before presenting their information.
 - (e) Other interested parties will be allowed to comment briefly or make inquiries. A reasonable time will be allowed each speaker. Each person speaking must give name, address and nature of interest in the matter before presenting their information.
 - (f) Public hearing closed by the President.
 - (g) Board/Committee discussion. Members may raise potential special conditions for approval or other, significant considerations relevant to the petition. If necessary, members shall pose any relevant questions through the President, and the President interrogates proper parties for answers.
 - (h) Motion to recommend approval, conditional approval, or denial of the subdivision application.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES – ACTION PLAN

This section identifies specific measures to implement the objectives of the Growth Policy. The first section provides a general description of types of implementation measures. The second section is the action plan that includes each goal and objective of the Growth Policy, lists implementation measures, and identifies general timeframe, costs, and outcomes.

OVERVIEW

Coordination

Coordination is listed as an implementation measure for objectives where there are already existing efforts or interest from other organizations (private or public), and/or from other local, state, federal agencies.

Support

Support is intended in its broadest sense, rather than a narrow definition of financial support. Support is a natural extension of existing agreements or plans that have been adopted by the county, or support for county-run programs.

Planning Studies and Data Gathering

There are areas and issues that require more detailed studies and special strategies. These issues can be identified as needing additional, more specific planning and implementation measures. Data gathering includes items such as housing needs assessments that would provide more specific information by community as to existing and projected future housing demand by type of housing. Planning studies would involve more community involvement to clarify community needs, perspectives, and strategies.

Education Programs and Public Outreach

Education and outreach efforts include disseminating information through publications, websites, brochures, news releases, service announcements, displays, and other public relations methods. It also means obtaining regular feedback through task forces, surveys, public meetings, and customer service questionnaires.

In addition to general education and outreach, it is important that elected officials and staff also are up to date on the latest techniques and approaches to dealing with the public, coordinating overlapping functions among departments, understanding roles related to regulatory responsibilities, and keeping an invigorated approach to community objectives.



Growth Policy Public Meeting in Savage, Fall 2006

Community Involvement and Facilitation

Community involvement is essential throughout the planning-implementation-evaluation cycle. Resources for assisting in identifying best ways to involve the public and facilitate discussion include County Extension Service, local groups, and the county.

Award Excellence Programs

These are programs, as in the annual Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture community awards, that provide awards or other public recognition of outstanding efforts that contribute to achieving Growth Policy goals and objectives. They function in several ways—reward outstanding achievements, acknowledge success, and enhance public awareness.

Program Funding Sources/Technical Assistance

Many of the projects identified in the Growth Policy will require funding and/or technical assistance, and other implementation resources.

Individuals or groups wanting to get a project started can call the Richland County Planning Office for initial assistance in identifying what is needed and potential resources.

The county can play a role in locating potential funding sources, and may also provide some assistance with applying for grants. There are a variety of private and public organizations, and state and federal government agencies that provide funding and technical assistance. Examples of government programs include: Community Development Block Grant program, Treasure State Endowment Program, State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Department of Transportation, and USDA Farm Service Agencies and Rural Development Programs.

Fiscal Impact Analysis and Cost-Benefit Analysis

This is an analysis of a development proposal to determine the cost-benefit to the public. Costs and benefits may include financial and non-financial benefits and costs, including effects to community character, and public health and safety.

Process and Criteria

Some of the efforts outlined in the Growth Policy will need to clarify the process for implementation. This includes identifying the “who, when, how” other parties will be involved. In some cases the process is clear, but decision-making could be clarified by defining criteria for project consideration and approval.

Capital Improvements Plan

An important tool for implementing Growth Policy goals and objectives is the use of a community capital improvements plan and corresponding capital budget. The purpose of a capital improvements plan is to match needed improvement projects with revenue and financing sources to ensure public facilities will be repaired, expanded, or constructed to support future growth, public health and safety, or other community needs.

Measures Specific to Land Use

Non-Regulatory Measures

Non-regulatory measures for land use projects include all of those already listed above (Coordination through Process and Criteria), as well as the following:

- ❖ Design Guidelines. Design guidelines describe and illustrate site plan and design techniques that promote good design and environmentally sound practices. Guidelines are mostly an education tool and compliance with the guidelines is voluntary. Guidelines could be used as part of cost-benefit impact analysis of specific projects.
- ❖ Conservation Easements. Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements between a landowner and a public agency or qualified private tax-exempt organization. Easements set conservation parameters for the land for a specific period of time (typically long-term) or in perpetuity.

Regulatory Measures

The Growth Policy is a non-binding, non-regulatory document (Montana Department of Commerce). Any new regulation or any changes to existing regulations must go through a separate process and public review as outlined in state law before they can be adopted by the local governing body.

The Growth Policy provides broad direction in relation to proposed regulatory measures. Details, such as exact distances for setback requirements and how they would be applied, and specific zoning requirements, would be worked out as the regulations are drafted.

- ❖ Subdivision Regulations. Montana state law requires all units of local government to adopt and enforce subdivision regulations, and to review and decide on development proposals that would divide land into parcels of less than 160 acres.
- ❖ Zoning. Fairview and Sidney have zoning. Purposes of zoning are different from subdivision. Zoning deals with types of uses and compatibility of uses. Traditional zoning separates incompatible uses with zoning districts and sets requirements for standards to protect public health and safety.
- ❖ Development Permit Regulations. A more flexible alternative to traditional zoning. Development permit regulations focus primarily on the character or quality of new development with less concern regarding location of the development.
- ❖ Floodplain Regulations. Required under state law.

ACTION PLAN

The action plan is a matrix that lists each objective, and identifies implementation measures, potential leads and partners, staffing, costs considerations, and timeframe parameters for each task. Following is a description of those parameters.

1. Lead Resources/Partners.

This column includes existing or potential key participants in implementing an objective. Other participants may also be identified in the future, the list is not meant to be exclusive.

2. Staffing.

Refers to staffing needs for county government, and includes staffing in all departments, not just Planning Dept.

In-house - Will be completed with existing staff.

Contract - Contract with outside firm to complete work.

Partner - Partner with other state/federal agency, non-profit, or other organization to complete work

Volunteer- Could be implemented at least in part with volunteer work from community

3. Cost.

Refers to costs at county government level only.

High - Requires allocation of new funds that are not existing in budget.

Medium - Can be accomplished with existing budgeted funds.

Low - Zero or minimal costs.

4. Time Frame/Priority

Near Term - Immediate need. To be addressed within one year.

Mid Term - Defined need. May phase in implementation within 1 to 2 years.

Long Term - Requires program development that necessitates a longer timeframe 3+ years

Ongoing - Ongoing activity.

As Needed - Monitor and take action when need arises

Notes

- Use of the term "Economic Development Organizations" in the action plan below is intended to include:

Richland Economic Development Corporation, Eastern Plains RC&D, Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce, Fairview Chamber of Commerce, Savage Inc., and other organizations, formal and informal, working on economic development issues as relevant.

- Eastern Montana Branch-Montana State University Experiment Station is referred to as MSU Experiment Station
- USDA-ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory/Pest Management and Agricultural Systems Research Unit is referred to as USDA-ARS.

POPULATION GOAL A: Promote population growth to sustain new businesses and schools at a rate that can be supported with government services and infrastructure.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Attract and retain businesses and young families	Coordination and support of ongoing efforts	Economic Development Organizations	In-house	Ongoing	Low	Increase in new permanent residents
2. For planning purposes, set population growth targets based on best available information	Data Gathering Incorporate into Growth Policy Annual work plan, and into capital improvements planning and other planning efforts	Planning Board, Census Economic Information Center (State of Montana technical resource), Economic Development Organizations (information and coordination)	In-house	Near Term	Medium	Improved coordination of planning and infrastructure development
3. Assist unincorporated communities in identifying areas desirable for growth and target capital improvements in those areas	Planning studies Community involvement facilitation Program funding sources/Technical assistance	Local communities, Planning Board, county staff	In-house	Near Term Mid Term	Medium	More land available for “in-fill” development (e.g., land previously not for sale); cost-efficient extension of community boundaries and infrastructure, (e.g., streets, roads, community water and sewer systems, etc.), infrastructure in good repair and adequately sized
4. Identify areas for future growth within the city-county planning areas and facilitate extension of municipal capital improvements	Coordination with municipalities Planning studies Capital improvement plans	Planning board, county staff, Town of Fairview, City of Sidney	In-house and contract	Near Term Mid Term	Medium	Coordinated, cost-effective extension of capital improvements beyond existing municipal boundaries

HOUSING GOAL 1A: Expand housing stock in good condition to meet needs.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Assess and quantify demand for housing based on existing and projected future needs	Housing Needs Assessments for county and for specific communities	Local Communities, Richland Housing Authority, Planning Board, Montana Department of Commerce (grant funds and technical assistance)	Contract	Near Term	High	Quantification of existing and projected future housing needs by community by type of housing
2. Expand programs to rehabilitate housing units	Data gathering Public education and outreach Program funding sources/Technical Assistance	Local Communities, Richland Housing Authority, Planning Board, Montana Department of Commerce (grant funds and technical assistance)	In-house Contract Volunteer	Mid Term	High	Increase in numbers of existing housing units in fair or better condition
3. Identify and initiate programs to address decay and assist with demolition	Data gathering Public education and outreach Program funding sources/Technical Assistance	Local Communities, Richland Housing Authority, Planning Board, Montana Department of Commerce (grant funds and technical assistance)	In-house Contract Volunteer	Mid Term	High	Reduction in numbers of vacant, uninhabitable, unsafe structures; increase number of lots available for development

HOUSING- GOAL 1B: Continue historical trend of residential development growth primarily in existing communities with scattered homesteads in rural areas. *

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Encourage new residential development to locate in existing communities	Public education and outreach* Award Excellence	Local Communities, Planning Board, Real Estate Businesses and Developers City-County Planning Boards, Town of Fairview, City of Sidney	In-house	Ongoing	Low-Medium	Continued historical trend of new development in and around existing communities, where there are services and support
2. Assist communities in identifying expansion areas desirable for residential growth	Planning studies Community involvement facilitation Program funding sources/Technical assistance	Local communities, Planning Board, county staff	In-house	Near Term Mid Term	Medium	Communities can expand for growth in cost-effective manner
3. Promote in-fill development and historical community housing densities	Public education* and outreach Award Excellence Coordination of policies and land use regulations	Local Communities, Planning Board, Real Estate Businesses and Developers City-County Planning Boards, Town of Fairview, City of Sidney	In-house	Mid Term	Medium-High	Cost-effective provision of services; retention of historical community character Reduce potential "leap-frog" development outside of existing communities

* The Growth Policy would not preclude or prohibit residential development in rural areas outside of existing and proposed zoning areas for Sidney and Fairview.

HOUSING-GOAL 2A: Improve capabilities of low-moderate income persons to purchase and maintain homes.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Expand the number of low-moderate income persons assisted	Coordination and support	Richland Housing Authority, County Commission, Planning Board	In-house	Near Term-Mid Term	Low-Medium	More low and moderate income persons own their homes. More homes in fair or better condition.
2. Encourage new development to include affordable housing options	Information to developers* Public education and outreach Award excellence	Richland Housing Authority, Real estate businesses, Developers, Planning board and staff, Local Communities, Planning Board	In-house	Near Term-Mid Term	Low-Medium	More home-ownership in traditional developments by those who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford it
3. Assess need for and develop a housing foundation fund	Data gathering Planning (for long-term sustainability)	Richland Housing Authority, County Commission, Planning Board, Local Communities	In-house	Mid Term	Medium-High	A sustainable fund that provides assistance to individual households to purchase, maintain, and/or rehabilitate existing homes.

* Identify specific measures that could be taken by developers, such as options for low-income housing financing that could be provided to potential buyers

HOUSING GOAL 2B: Encourage development to meet housing needs of seniors and those with disabilities.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Identify options for senior housing needs*	Coordination-support existing efforts Data gathering Planning Program funding sources/Technical Assistance	Local communities, Senior Coalition	In-house Contract	Mid Term	Medium- High	More housing for seniors that meets needs.
2. Work with Richland Opportunities, Inc. to expand number of persons assisted as needed.	Coordination-support existing efforts Data gathering Planning Program funding sources/Technical Assistance	Richland Opportunities, Inc., Richland Housing Authority, Planning Board	In-house	Long Term	Medium- High	Housing for those with disabilities meets needs and is sustainable over long term

* At August Growth Policy meeting, persons in Lambert indicated there could be demand for locally-provided senior care (e.g., similar to Sunrise Manor in Savage). Senior housing needs were also identified at the meeting in Girard.

AGRICULTURE GOAL A: Expand the county’s production of high value crops and potential for value-added industries.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Develop the area’s agricultural resources and expand irrigation	Coordination-support existing efforts	Local Producers, Producer Groups, ARS, Economic Development Organizations, Irrigation Facility Operators	In-house	Ongoing	Low	More land in irrigation with high value crops. Diversity of crops with high value.
2. Develop and expand market for new and existing agricultural businesses	Coordination-support existing efforts	Local Producers, Producer Groups, ARS, Economic Development Organizations, Irrigation Facility Operators	In-house	Ongoing	Low	New agri-businesses. Expanded existing agri-businesses.
3. Coordinate with land use policies and infrastructure development to maximize potential for new irrigation.	Incorporate future irrigation plans into planning processes and capital improvement plans for city-county areas Coordination of policies and land use regulations	Planning Board, Local Producers, Producer Groups, ARS, Irrigation Facility Operators	In-house	Mid Term	Medium	Minimize conflicts and increased cost for irrigation facilities resulting from existing and planned community infrastructure.
4. Increase resources for agricultural research that supports growth of agribusinesses and improves competitiveness of growers	Coordination-support existing efforts	Local Producers, Producer Groups, ARS, Economic Development Organizations, Irrigation Facility Operators	In-house	Ongoing	Low	New agri-businesses. Expanded existing agri-businesses.

ECONOMY GOAL A: Continue to build a sustainable and diversified economic base.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Expand and diversify businesses.	Coordinate-support existing efforts	County Commission, Economic Development Organizations, Local Communities	In-house	Ongoing	Low	More businesses. More diversity in economy.
2. Coordinate economic development with land use, natural resources, and capital infrastructure policies, and local community values.**	Community involvement facilitation (clarify local values)* Design guidelines Development Permit Regulations	Local Communities, Planning Board, Economic Development Organizations, Communities in Action	In-house Contract	Mid Term Ongoing	Medium-High	Public acceptance of economic development projects and new businesses. New development situated with best management practices and location to reduce effects on natural environment. Efficient and cost effective provision of infrastructure with equitable cost-share

*** Based on public meetings held to date for the Growth Policy, the following was identified as general values by community for economic development:*

- Savage: Interested in all types of economic development, large or small*
- Lambert: Interested in building local services industry—e.g., carpenters, etc., small “clean” industry, no major “smokestack” industry*
- Girard: Concerned about environmental effects of new development, and concerns about traffic increase and traffic safety*

ECONOMY GOAL A: Continue to build a sustainable and diversified economic base.

(Continued)

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
3. Evaluate effect of specific development proposals on community character and health prior to committing public resources.	Process definition and criteria for review Fiscal impact analysis Cost-benefit analysis	Local Communities, Planning Board, Economic Development Organizations, Communities in Action	In-house	Mid Term	Low	Future commitment of public funds for specific projects prioritized toward those with net positive effect on community character, health, and strengthened economy.
4. Identify and quantify county resources and infrastructure (e.g., water, power) that may be needed by major industry. Use as marketing tool.	Data gathering Public outreach	Economic Development Organizations, utility companies, state and federal agencies, (e.g., MTBureau of Mines and Geology for groundwater inventories)	In-house Some potential contract	Near to Mid Term	High	Useful baseline data that can be used to attract and recruit new industry and expansion of existing businesses

ECONOMY GOAL B: Continue to build county capacity to provide needed infrastructure to support a strong economy.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Continue to work at state level to safeguard allocation of oil production taxes for impacts to county.	Information sharing	County Commission	In-house	Ongoing	Low	Impact-related revenues continue at current or improved levels for county.
2. Balance expenditures of oil and gas revenues between construction and infrastructure projects and long term needs.	Community involvement facilitation Fiscal impact analysis	County Commission, Local Communities, Economic Development Organizations, and other public groups	In-house	Ongoing	Low	Impact-related revenues used on projects with immediate needs, as well as long-term, long-lasting projects, and with some “reserve” for future needs, whatever those may be.

PUBLIC SERVICES GOAL 1A: Make improvements to overall community health and safety a priority for the county’s future.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Identify and prioritize specific needs and measures to address overall community health and safety.	Coordination Community involvement and facilitation Projects and Programs to implement	Communities in Action, Local Communities, Fire Departments, Law Enforcement, Medical Emergency Services, Senior Coalition, Youth groups	In-House Contract	Near Term	High	Measurable outcomes for success Progress toward health and safety issues (as identified in Growth Policy and Communities in Action process)
3. Implement actions in the county Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan and Community Wildfire Protection Plan	Measures are identified in the plan, but coordination is needed to implement	Planning Board, Communities in Action, county DES, emergency service providers	In-house Contract	Mid Term	Medium-High	Reduced exposure to costs from natural disaster Continued high standing for mitigation project funding and disaster assistance from FEMA

PUBLIC SERVICES GOAL 2A: Continue emergency medical response and fire protection and suppression services throughout the county.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Attract and retain volunteers, and provide training and funding for programs.	Program funding sources and technical assistance Award excellence programs Public Outreach and Education	Local Emergency Response Committee, DES Coordinator, Ambulance Services, Fire Departments, Communities in Action	In-house	Mid-Term	Medium-High	More persons staffing Emergency Medical Response and fire departments Continue to bring in new persons to replace aging volunteer staff

PUBLIC SERVICES GOAL 3A: Expand opportunities for life-long learning for adults and children beyond the K-12 system.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Expand post-secondary opportunities in Richland County.	Community involvement and facilitation Planning Data Gathering Consider role of county library in these efforts and consider how library space needs could serve dual purpose of post-secondary education.	Communities in Action, county Library, public school system, Economic Development Groups	In-house	Near Term Mid Term	Medium-High	More persons with post-secondary training received locally through internet or other means
2. Support library in providing life-long learning opportunities	Coordination-Support existing efforts	Communities in Action, county Library, public school system, Economic Development Groups	In-house	Ongoing	Medium	a diversity of local resources for residents to live, learn and work in the 21 st century

PUBLIC SERVICES GOAL 4A: Continue to meet needs for recreational facilities and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Improvements to county recreation facilities	Continue to identify needs and work with partners to make improvements	County public works, local communities	In-house Contract	Ongoing	Medium-High	Increased use of county recreation facilities Higher satisfaction among those using facilities
2. Assist local communities in identifying recreation needs, long-term demand, and cost-benefits*	Community involvement facilitation Planning Program funding sources/technical assistance	Local Communities, county staff, school systems	In-house Contract	Mid Term	Medium-High	Needed projects identified and implemented
3. Bicycle and walking trails in county	Work with local communities and recreationists to identify interest and long-range plan, as needed	Local communities, recreationists, planning board, public works	In-house Volunteer	Mid Term Long Term	Medium	Identify potential routes and support for trails system

* A number of projects have already been identified from Growth Policy meetings to date--Youth recreation center in Savage; golf course in Lambert

PUBLIC FACILITIES GOAL 1A: Plan and design for long term public facilities development, maintenance, operation, and eventual upgrades or replacement over time.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Prepare an overall capital improvements plan for county-owned infrastructure.	Capital improvements plan	County Commissioners, Public Works	In-house Contract	Near Term	High	Capital improvements plan used as part of long-term and annual budget cycles Anticipated major replacements (e.g., new roof, upgraded heating systems) are planned for well in advance Existing and future space needs of various county departments identified and planned for
2. Provide technical assistance to communities to assess and address needed improvements to water and sewer systems.	Program funding sources and technical assistance Capital improvements planning	Local communities, Public Works, County Public Health	In-house	Ongoing	Medium	Local community water and sewer infrastructure designed for existing demand, capable of expanding for future
3. Identify opportunities for mix of uses and location of proposed new construction	Capital improvements plan	City of Sidney, Law Enforcement, Justice Court, other city and county departments	In-house Contract	Near Term Mid Term	Medium-High	New construction meets needs in cost efficient manner—considering multiple uses of space
4. Develop a community convention-auditorium center.	Community involvement and facilitation Fiscal impact analysis and cost-benefit analysis Program funding sources/technical assistance	Communities in Action, non-profit organizations and local government offices and departments, elected officials, school districts	In-house Contract	Ongoing	High	A place for meetings, conventions, performances, etc. to meet Richland County's needs as a regional economic hub

PUBLIC FACILITIES GOAL 1B: Promote development with adequate services that does not add to tax burden of existing landowners.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Promote development in city limits and discourage inefficient land use patterns	Same as for Population objectives 3 and 4, Housing Goal 1B (all objectives)	Same as for Population objectives 3 and 4, Housing Goal 1B (all objectives)	In-house Contract	Mid Term	Medium	Cost effective provision of infrastructure and services
2. Include provisions for subdivisions to pay their portion of infrastructure and services.	Review and rewrite subdivision regulations as needed	Planning boards	In-house	Near Term	Low	Equity in cost sharing for expanded infrastructure
3. Require subdividers to pay for infrastructure and services.	Review and rewrite subdivision regulations as needed	Planning boards	In-house	Near Term	Low	Local government isn't left with burden of improvements if subdivider defaults

PUBLIC FACILITIES GOAL 2A: Improve cell phone coverage and high speed internet access throughout the county.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
No specific objectives identified	Data gathering and coordination with cell phone and high speed internet providers	Local communities, utilities, cell phone and internet system providers	In-house	Mid Term	Low	Expanded coverage areas and connection for cell phones and high speed internet

PUBLIC FACILITIES GOAL 3A: Work with the state to maintain and improve safety on state routes.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Coordinate with Montana Department of Transportation on improvements to state highways and access to state roads.	Continue information sharing Continue to coordinate and work on solutions Subdivision regulations (to ensure coordination of access with state highways)	County Public Works, Montana Department of Transportation, local communities, planning board (subdivision review)	In-house	Ongoing	Low	Better integration of county and state road systems and upgrades
2. Upgrade priority for improvements on Highway 200	Collect and submit public comments to DOT Continue information sharing Continue to coordinate and work on solutions	County Public Works, Montana Department of Transportation, local communities, County Commission	In-house	Near Term	Medium	Better conditions on Highway 200

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL1A: Expand opportunities for improved residential water quality in the county.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Encourage potential for Dry-Redwater Project to provide water across county.	Assist in planning studies and data gathering Assist to obtain state and federal technical assistance and project funding	Dry-Redwater Project leaders, local communities	In-house	Mid Term Long Term	High	Better water quality for more county residents
2. Expand abilities to address water quality on an individual basis	Data collection Education programs and outreach Program funding sources/technical assistance	County Extension, Public Health, Communities in Action, county Sanitarian	In-house	Mid Term	Medium	Better water quality for more county residents
3. Assist low and fixed income householders to protect and improve existing water quality	Data collection Education programs and outreach Program funding sources/technical assistance	Richland Housing Authority, County Extension, Public Health, Communities in Action	In-house	Mid Term	Medium	Better water quality for low income residents

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL 2A: Provide for long-term function of natural systems and resources, recognizing a diversity of uses for those systems and resources.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Develop a GIS system to collect and coordinate natural resource and development information.	Expand county's existing GIS programs	Planning Board, county Public Works, State Natural Resource Information System, Private businesses and business associations	In-house Contract	Mid Term Long Term	High	Updatable geographic data system used in planning projects and proposed developments
2. Continue to review and update county weed management plan	Planning studies	County weed board,	In-house	Mid Term	Medium	Reduce weed spread and infestation of new weed types
3. Continue to protect the natural functioning of the Lower Yellowstone Rive, recognizing irrigation needs come first	Coordination with other agencies Design guidelines Education programs and outreach	Conservation District, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Planning Board, Local Communities	In-house	Mid Term	Medium	Maintain good condition of Yellowstone River

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL 3A: Maintain and improve community character and implement beautification projects.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Assist communities in identifying priorities for beautification projects and implementation.	Planning and community involvement facilitation Program funding sources/technical assistance	Local communities, planning board	In-House	Mid Term	Medium	Specific beautification projects implemented
2. Adopt a county “decay” ordinance.	Regulation	Planning board, county commission, county sanitarian, county public works	In-House	Mid Term	Medium	Less junk and debris causing safety health issues.
3. Identify funding resources and individual assistance programs.	Program funding sources/technical assistance	Civic organizations, utility providers, local communities, Richland Housing Authority	In-House	Mid Term	Medium	More houses and yards well-maintained
4. Prioritize and implement historic building retention, preservation, and restoration	Coordination with existing programs Planning and community involvement Program funding sources/technical assistance	Mon Dak Heritage Center, Lambert museum, historical societies, local communities	In-House	Mid Term	Medium	More historic buildings saved for the future

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL 4A: Improve cultural attractions/opportunities in the area.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Continue and increase support of the MonDak Heritage Center and local museums.	Support	MonDak Heritage Center, Museums in Lambert and Savage; historical societies	In-house	Ongoing	Medium	Continued operation of museums and related activities

2. Develop a performing arts center.	Community involvement and facilitation Fiscal impact analysis and cost-benefit analysis Program funding sources/technical assistance	Communities in Action, non-profit organizations and local government offices and departments, elected officials, school districts	In-house Contract	Ongoing	High	A place for performances to meet Richland County's needs as a regional economic hub
---	--	---	-------------------	---------	------	---

LAND USE GOAL 1A: Provide for logical, cost effective extension of city limits and city infrastructure.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Coordinate with Sidney and Fairview to identify areas of potential city growth and expansion.	Planning studies (e.g., annexation studies) Capital improvements plan	Planning Boards, City of Sidney, Town of Fairview	In-House Contract	Near Term	High	City boundaries "squared" as needed; Efficient cost effective provision of infrastructure and services
2. Extend zoning up to one mile within each city-county planning area	Zoning Regulations	Planning Boards, city of Sidney, Town of Fairview	In-house Contract	Near Term	Medium	Efficient cost effective provision of infrastructure and services

LAND USE GOAL 2A: Reduce potential for development to be impacted by natural or other hazards.

Objectives	Implementation Measures	Lead Resources/Partners	Staffing	Timeline	Cost	Expected Results
1. Implement relevant actions in the Richland County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan and Community Wildfire Protection Plan.	Education programs and outreach Review and revise land use regulations	Planning Board, Communities in Action, county DES, emergency service providers	In-house Contract	Mid Term	Medium-High	Reduced exposure to costs from natural disaster Continued high standing for mitigation project funding and disaster assistance from FEMA