



RICHLAND COUNTY GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

September 2015

PREPARED BY  KLJ™





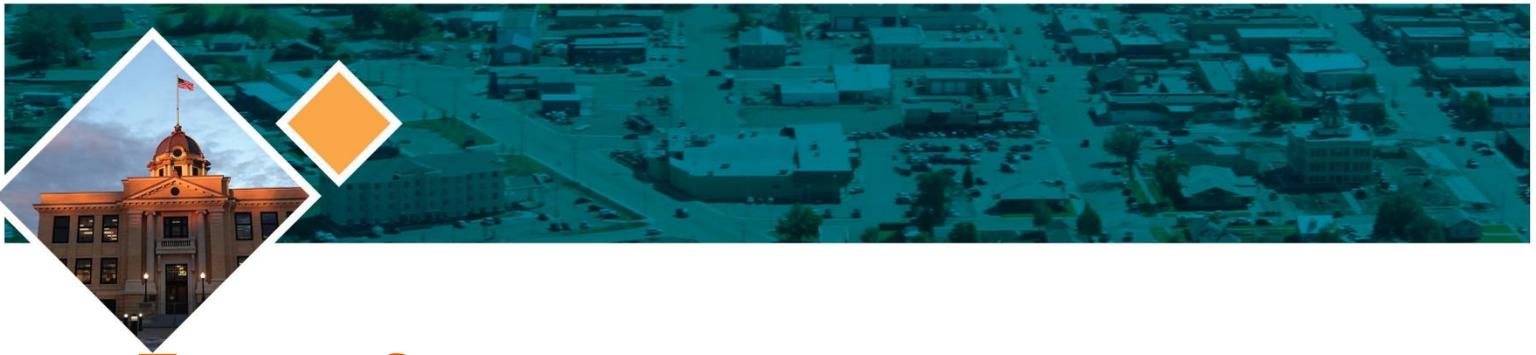


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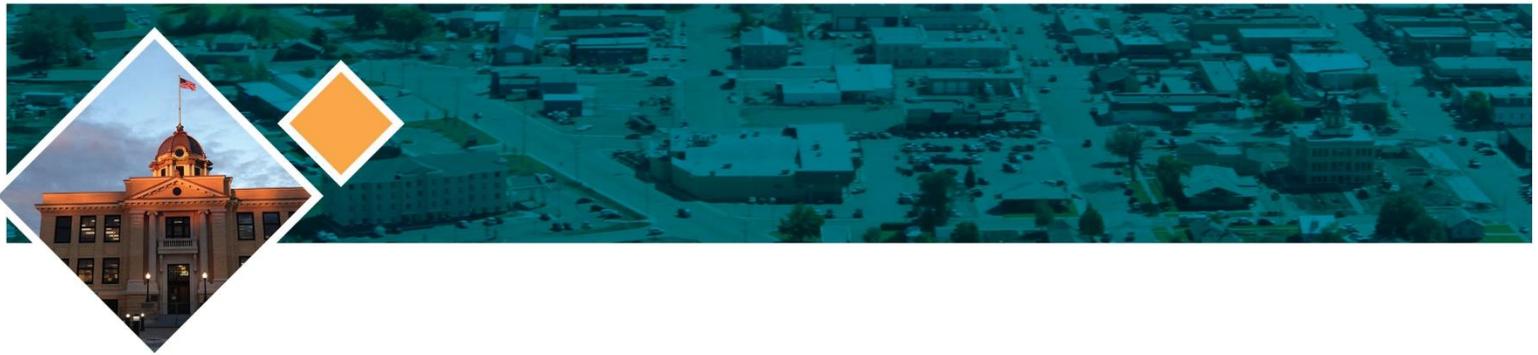


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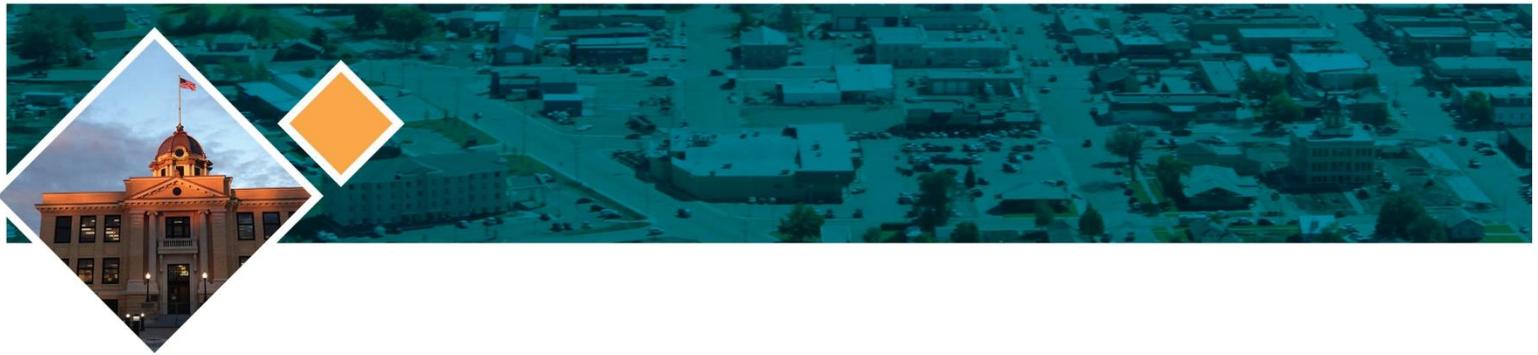
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The update to the Growth Policy would not be possible without the time and dedicated efforts from the following people, organizations, agencies and local jurisdictions.

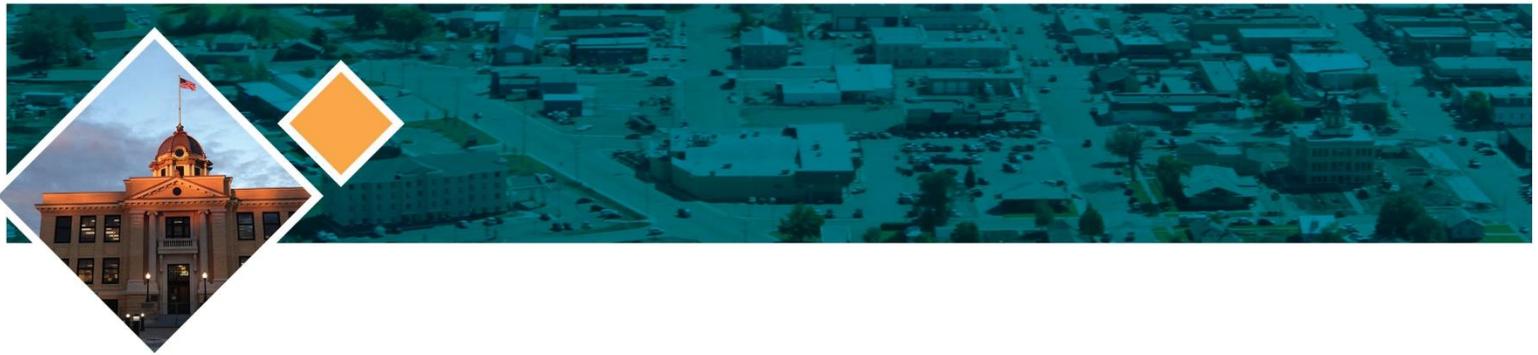
- » Richland County, City of Sidney and Town of Fairview Joint Planning Board
- » Richland County Commissioners
- » Sidney City Council
- » Fairview Town Council
- » Richland County Health Department
- » Communities in Action Work Groups
- » Richland County Economic Development Corporation
- » Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project

A special thanks to Richland County Planning staff for their time and efforts in collecting data, providing input and reviewing the document.

- » Marcy Hamburg
- » Sam Wick

Lastly, we would like to thank the multiple businesses, companies and general public that provided valuable feedback, information and ideas as well as for their input on solutions to issues facing their respective communities in which they live and operate. Without their input, this study would not be feasible.

This Growth Policy is an update from the 2006 Richland County Growth Policy, which included vision statements and jurisdictional maps. The vision statements from the 2006 Growth Policy did not change for this update, however, the jurisdictional maps did change based on each city and town's official boundaries.



VISION STATEMENTS

Richland County

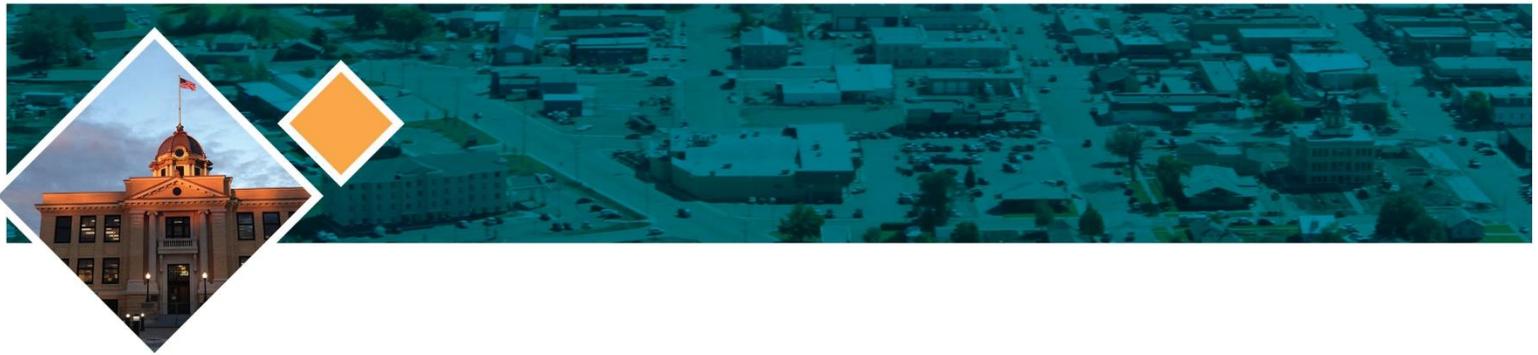
Richland County is a healthy community based on agriculture, energy production, outdoor recreation and value added programs for all industries. The County is dedicated to maintaining the strong pioneering spirit that helped to settle this area generations ago by continuing to promote a self-reliant and viable residential and business community—supported by a sustainable and diversified economic base. This commitment extends to offer opportunities for new entrepreneurs as well as expansion of existing industry, while also promoting and encouraging families of all ages to put down roots. Richland County is dedicated to helping create an environment that is friendly to business; helping create an adequate and reliable tax base, which will afford public services declared essential by the citizens of the county; and improving the quality of life throughout the county. A comprehensive and coordinated effort must be made by local citizens to provide decision-makers with the technical information, assistance, and access to resources; to better manage—conserve—protect and utilize the natural and human resources of the county.

City of Sidney

Sidney is a thriving regional center embracing its identity as a destination for experienced-based outdoor recreation and building on its homestead heritage by supporting local businesses and growing downtown businesses. The City's value-added agriculture is world renown and showcases a unique natural western quality while the City's location within the natural resource shale play makes it a vibrant economic hub for oil and gas activity. Sidney is a cohesive and healthy community with a strong pioneering spirit that offers opportunities for entrepreneurs and new leaders. The City encourages and supports young families to put down roots in a community with small town values and big town services.

Town of Fairview

Fairview maintains a viable, self-reliant community and business community supported by a sustainable and diversified economic base with an adequate and reliable taxable evaluation to afford the public services declared essential by the community's citizens. The Town continues to improve the quality of life for Fairview residents - both Montana and North Dakota - through a comprehensive and coordinated effort of local citizens. Fairview strives to provide local decision makers with the technical information, assistance and access to resources to better manage, conserve, protect, and utilize the town's natural and human resources.



JURISDICTIONAL PLANNING AREA

While Sidney and Fairview are located within Richland County, each municipality has a jurisdictional planning area whereby and its respective planning board members have the ability to provide comments on subdivision and development applications that fall within these boundaries. Montana law, MCA 76-1-501 through 76-1-508, allows the County to establish jurisdictional planning boundaries by resolution and an inter-local agreement and up to 4.5 miles from limits of cities. While the County has the final decision on applications within the jurisdictional planning boundary but outside each municipality's city/town corporate border; both Sidney and Fairview have the ability to provide comments on development applications pursuant to MCA, 76-3-601(2)(b). The County's jurisdictional planning area encompasses the entire county except the corporate boundaries of an incorporated municipality. Sidney and Fairview's jurisdictional planning areas are shown in the following maps.



Figure 1 - Richland County Planning Area

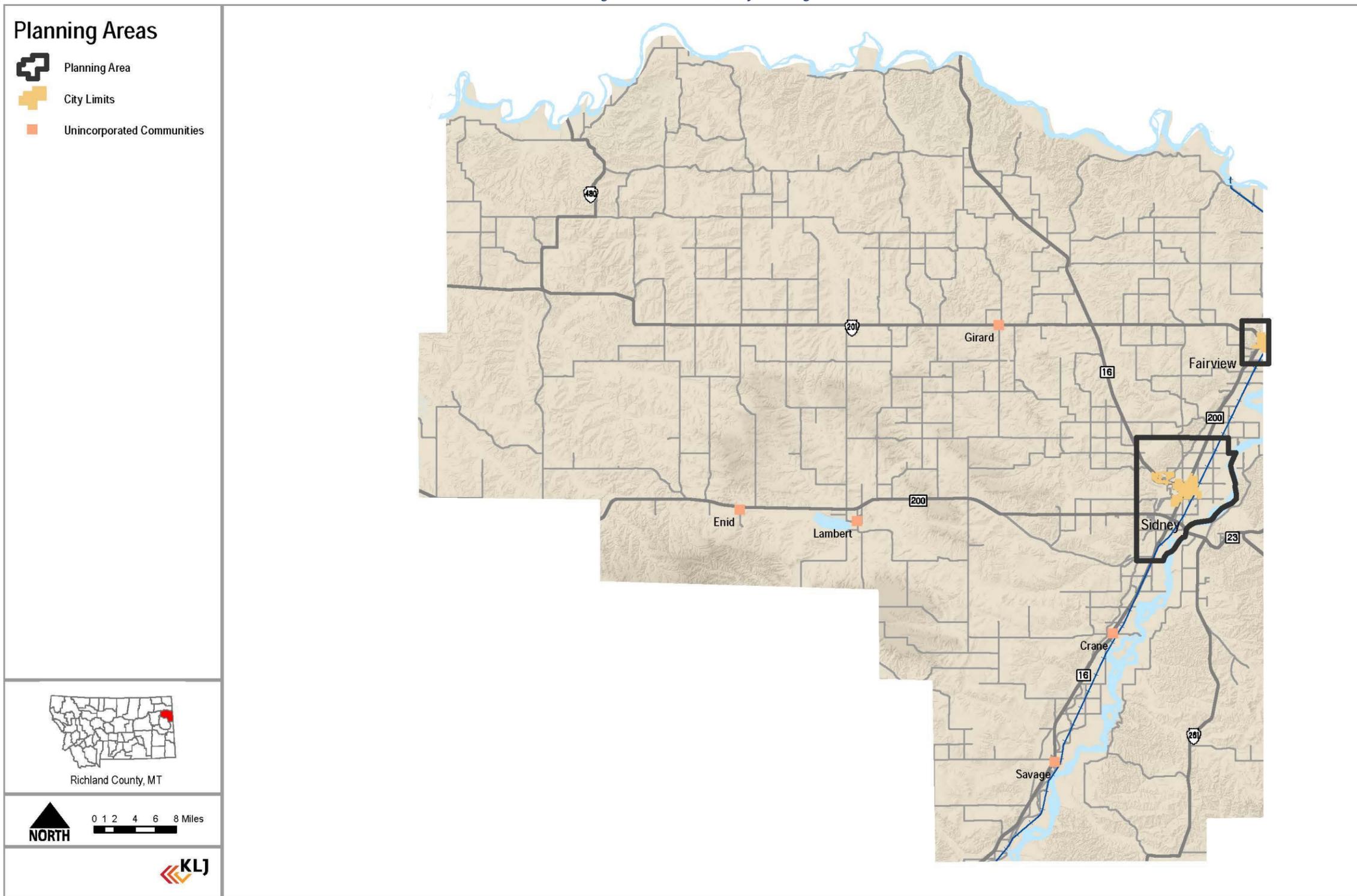




Figure 2 - Sidney Planning Area

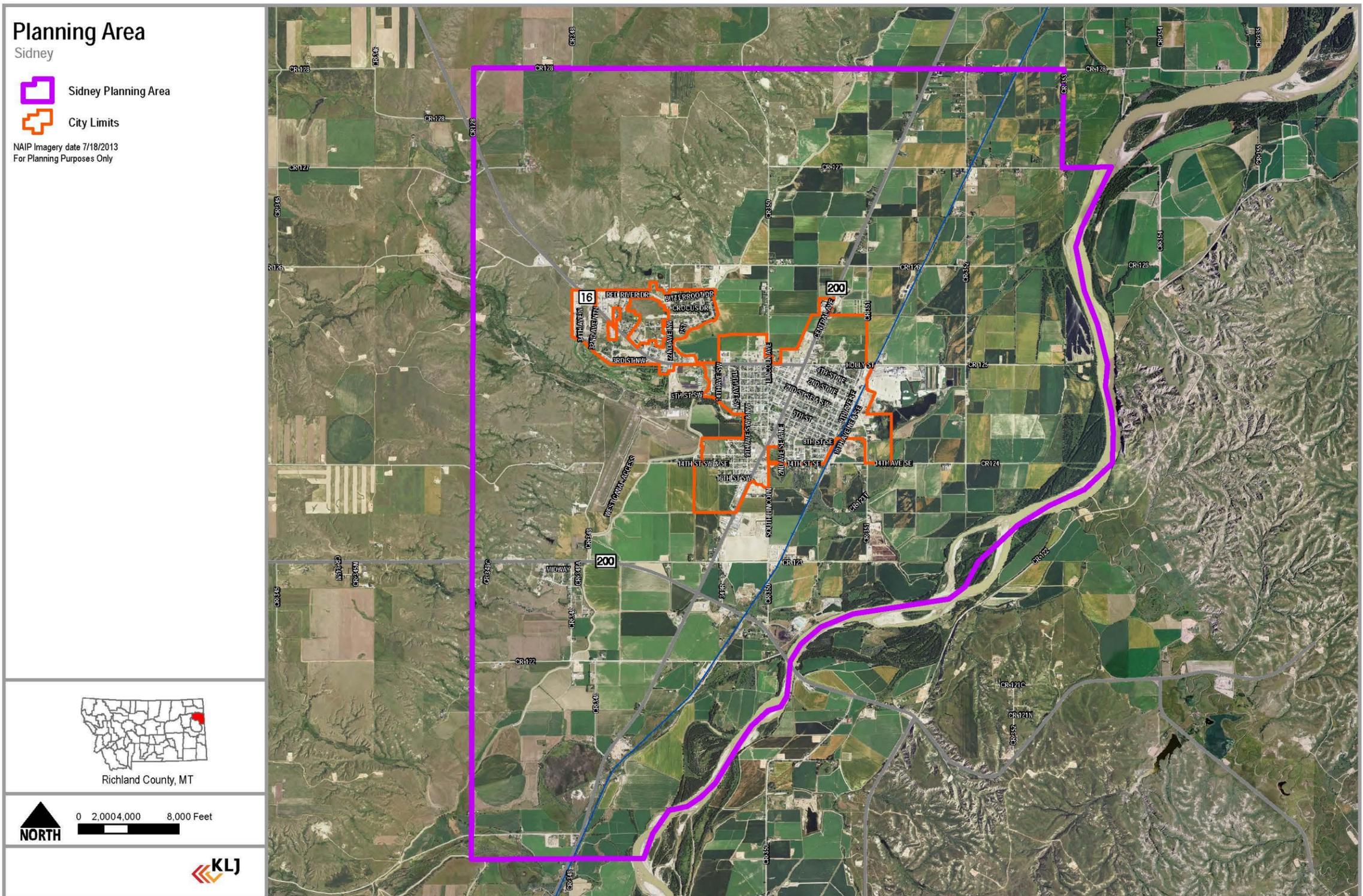
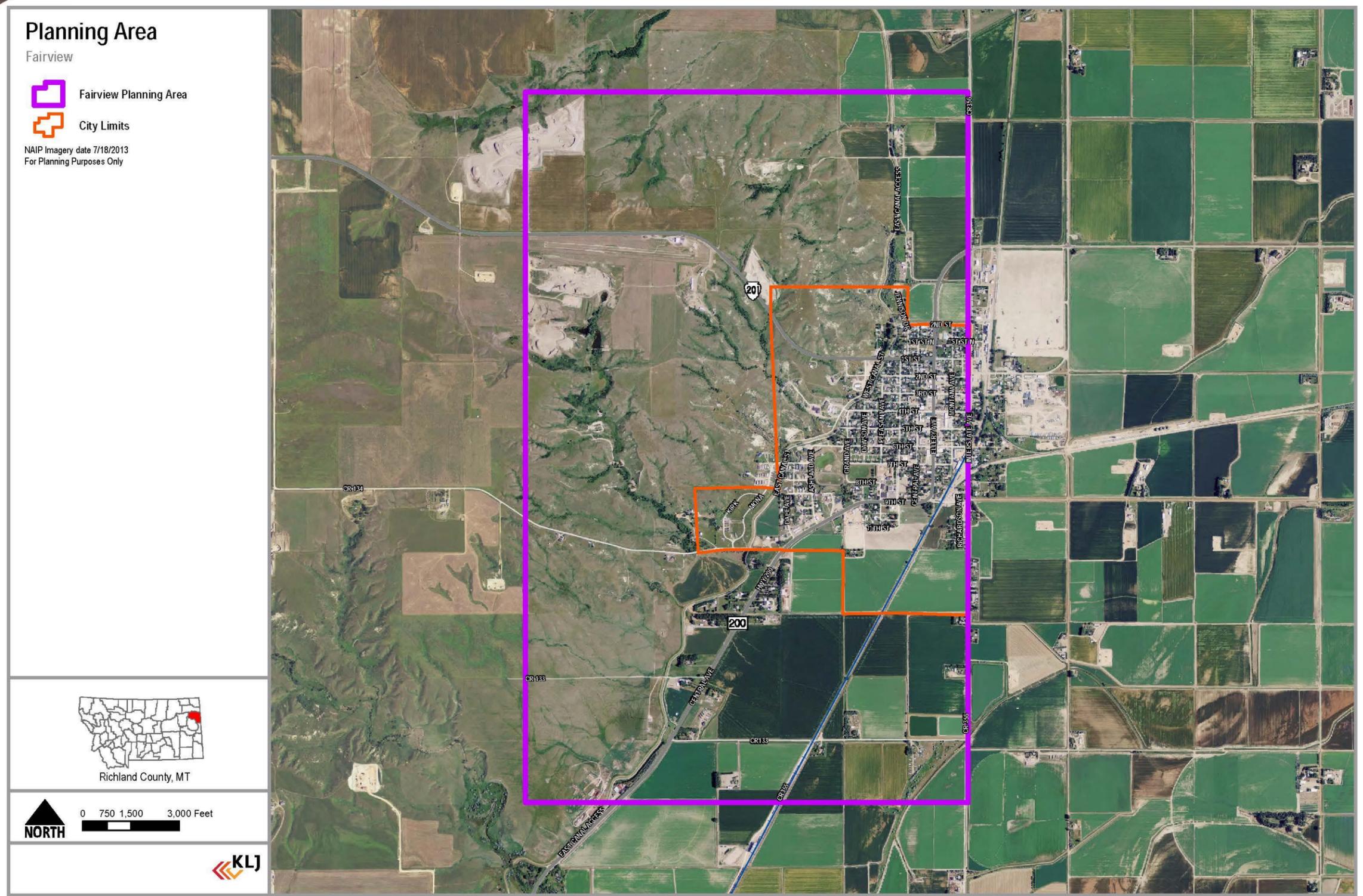
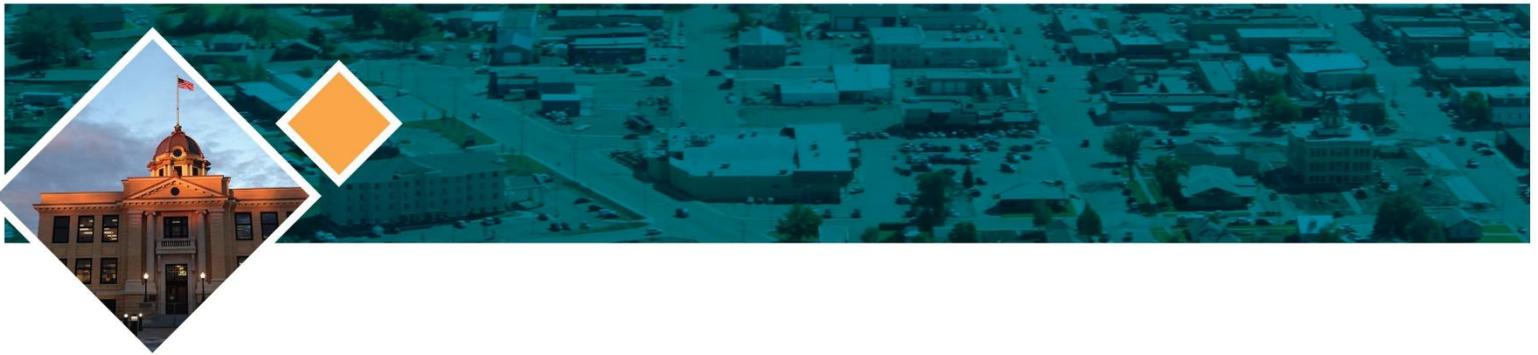




Figure 3 - Fairview Jurisdictional Planning Area





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POPULATION TRENDS

Demographics

Historical and projected population in Richland County is shown in Figure 1. Historical population is from the US Census Bureau Decennial Census. Population projections were released in April 2013 by the MT Department of Commerce Census and Economic Information Center. The projection shown is the result of a projection software known as eREMI. eREMI utilizes demographic information and advanced statistical models to determine projected population for every county in Montana.

The county’s population increased by 0.8 percent between 2000 and 2010, which is much lower than the statewide rate of 9.7 percent growth during the same period. It was the first ten-year period since 1970 to 1980 that the county experienced growth. However, the population numbers do not accurately reflect the transient population, which - anecdotally - is not accounted for in population numbers. For example, a recent site visit to a county RV park showed approximately 15 RV units with multiple people living in the units. Additionally, a site visit to an apartment complex in Sidney showed that six people were living in a two-bedroom unit.

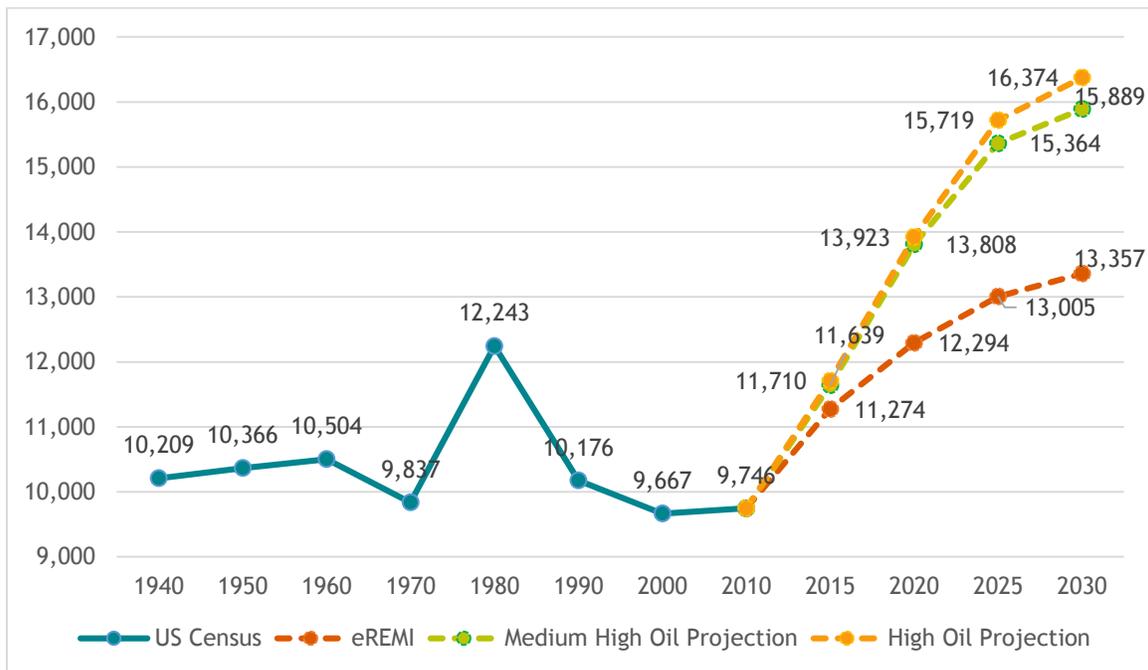
Growth for each incorporated jurisdiction in the county is shown in Figure 2. The figure shows population totals for each jurisdiction and the percentage of population in relation to the total county.

Projected Trends

The county’s population is projected to increase 15 percent between 2010 and 2015, 9 percent between 2015 and 2020 and 6 percent between 2020 and 2025.

The US Census Bureau estimates the county’s 2013 population to be 11,214, which represents a 15 percent increase over the 2010 census. It is also roughly equivalent to the county’s projected 2015 population, suggesting that the projection may have underestimated the county’s growth rate.

Figure 4 - Richland County Historical and Projected Population, 1920-2030



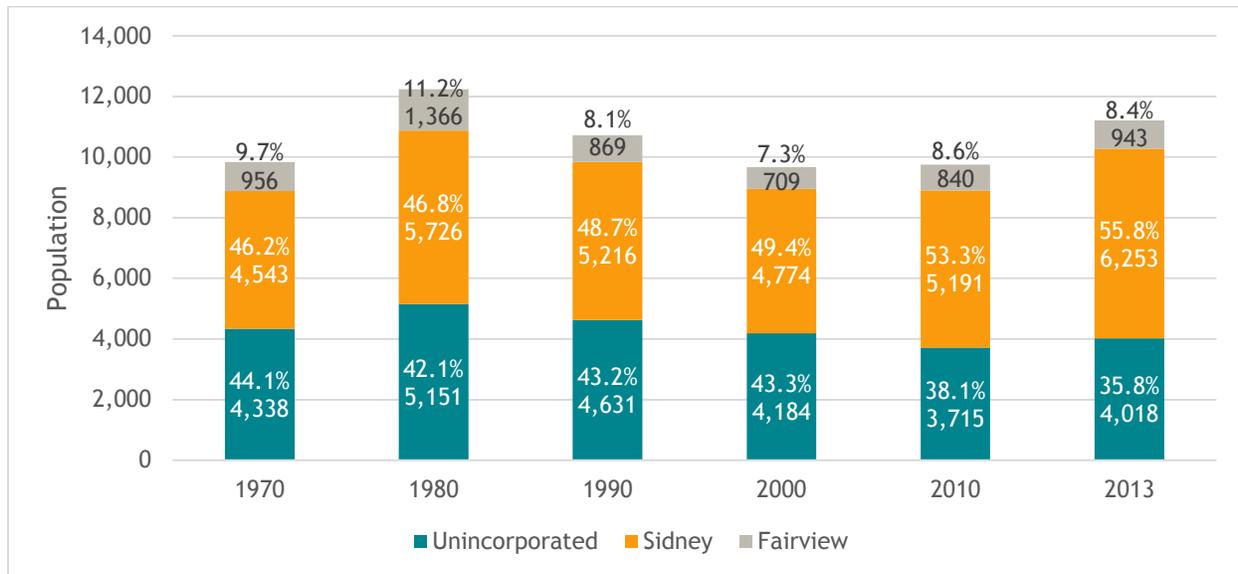
SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU (HISTORIC); MT DEPT OF COMM, CENSUS & ECON INFORMATION CENTER (PROJECTED)



Local Jurisdictional Growth

The proportional share of residents in unincorporated areas of the county has decreased since 2000.

Figure 5 - Comparative Jurisdictional Growth in Richland County, 1970-2013



SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, DECENNIAL CENSUS, 2013 POPULATION ESTIMATES

POPULATION DENSITY

Population density for the county was 5.4 persons per square mile in 2013, compared to the statewide density of 7.0 persons per square mile. Population density in the county has increased since 2010, from 4.7 persons per square mile.

AGE

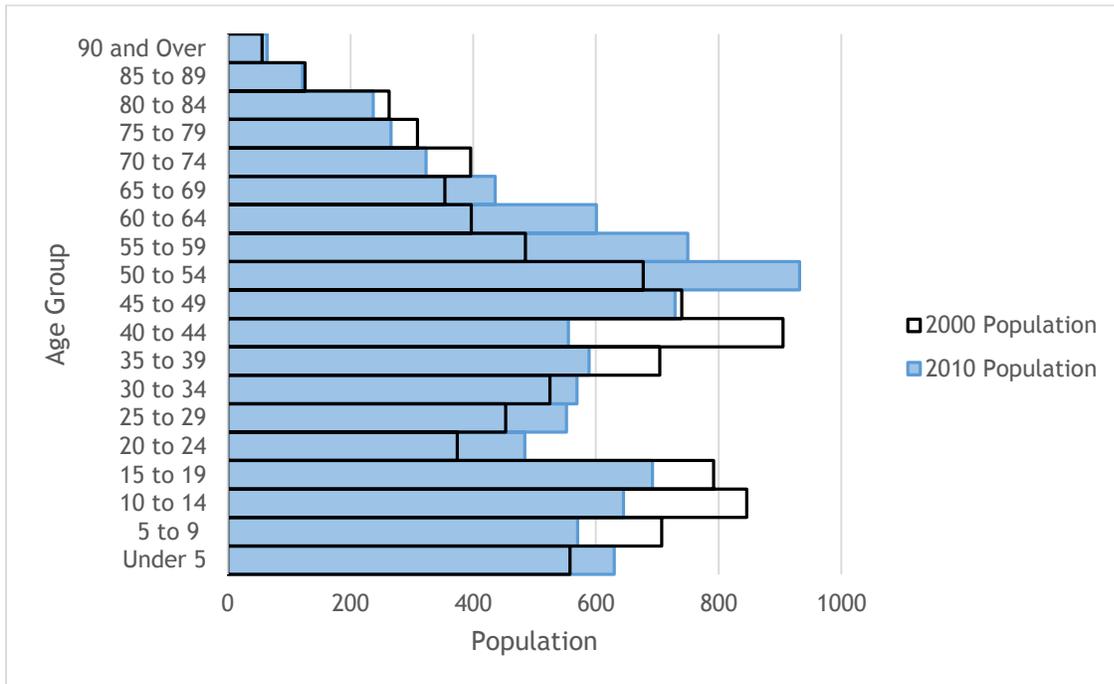
Richland County became generally older between 2000 and 2010. The median age in the county was 41.3 in 2010 and 39.2 in 2000 according to the US Decennial Census. It is expected that the number of young working-age persons in the county has increased since 2010 due to the area's energy-related growth during that time.

Figure 6 shows 2010 and 2000 population broken into age segments, also known as age cohorts or groups. The figure illustrates the county's changing cohort group distribution between 2000 and 2010.

Adults aged 35 to 44 experienced the greatest population decrease. This decrease is likely due to baby boomers aging out of these cohorts. Young persons, aged five to 19 also experienced a large decrease. This is likely due to the children of baby boomers aging out of these cohorts.

Adults aged 55 to 64 and 20 to 34 experienced a population increase, likely due to baby boomers and their children aging into these cohorts.

Figure 6 - Richland County Population by Age, 2000-2010



SOURCE: 2010 AND 2000 US DECENNIAL CENSUS

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The county’s White not Hispanic population decreased between 2000 and 2010. All other race and ethnicity groups in the county increased or remained stable. The county would have experienced a population decrease if it were not for the growth of minority residents.

The Hispanic or Latino population grew the most in terms of total population, with an increase of 167 persons. The growth of minority populations in the county generally mirrors statewide trends.

Table 1 - Race and Ethnicity in Richland County, 2000-2010

	Richland County			Montana		
	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	% Change
Population	9,667	9,746	0.8%	902,195	989,471	9.7%
White not Hispanic	9,222	8,976	-2.7%	807,465	862,819	6.9%
Hispanic or Latino	213	380	78.7%	18,044	30,674	70.0%
Black or African American	10	29	202.5%	2,707	5,937	119.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	145	166	14.3%	55,936	64,316	15.0%
Asian	19	29	51.2%	4,511	6,926	53.5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0.0%	902	989	9.7%
Two or more races	77	185	139.4%	15,337	24,737	61.3%

SOURCE: 2010 AND 2000 US DECENNIAL CENSUS



Goals and Objectives

Goal

- » Promote population growth to sustain new businesses and schools at a rate that can be supported with government services and infrastructure.

OBJECTIVES

- » Coordinate with ongoing efforts to attract and retain businesses and young families.
- » For planning purposes, set population growth targets based on best available information.
- » Identify areas in the county area that are desirable for growth and target capital improvements in those areas.
- » Assist communities in identifying areas desirable for growth and target capital improvements in these areas.
- » Identify areas for future growth within the city-county planning areas and help facilitate extension of municipal capital movements when appropriate.



LAND USE

Existing Land Use

Richland County encompasses 2,084 square miles of which more than 1,170,000 acres is rural farmland or ranches. Sidney, the county seat, and Fairview are the only incorporated communities in the county. Land ownership is predominately private. Public land ownership includes scattered state sections throughout the county (generally two sections in each township), and approximately 50,000 acres of federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Land use maps for Sidney and Fairview and are also included in their separate policies.

Table 2 - Land Use Patterns in Richland County

Land Use	Parcels	Acreage	Percent (Acres)
NA - Not Available	164	11,778	0.88%
AR - Agricultural Rural	3975	1,008,756	75.39%
AU - Agricultural Urban	5	534	0.04%
CA - Centrally Assessed	1	8	0.00%
CN - Centrally Assessed Non-Valued Property	26	356	0.03%
CR - Commercial Rural	144	1,073	0.08%
CU - Commercial Urban	487	336	0.03%
EP - Exempt Property	892	122,061	9.12%
FR - Farmstead Rural	672	169,213	12.65%
IR - Industrial Rural	11	460	0.03%
IU - Industrial Urban	9	7	0.00%
NV - Non-Valued Property	46	12,846	0.96%
RR - Residential Rural	899	6,001	0.45%
RU - Residential Urban	2425	1,400	0.10%
TU - Townhouse Urban	22	2	0.00%
VR - Vacant Land Rural	275	2,834	0.21%
VU - Vacant Land Urban	640	369	0.03%
TOTAL	10,693	1,338,036	100%

SOURCE: MONTANA CADASTRAL INFORMATION

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Agriculture is the predominant land use with approximately 88% of the county's land mass is classified as rural farmsteads and agricultural lands. The main agriculture-related industries include the Sidney Sugars beet processing plant and the Busch Agricultural plant near Sidney. The USDA Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) at the Northern Plains Agricultural Research Lab, which is a high-level Ag research station - and MSU Extension have agricultural extension offices in Sidney. These two offices provide a wealth of knowledge and resources for several eastern Montana Counties.

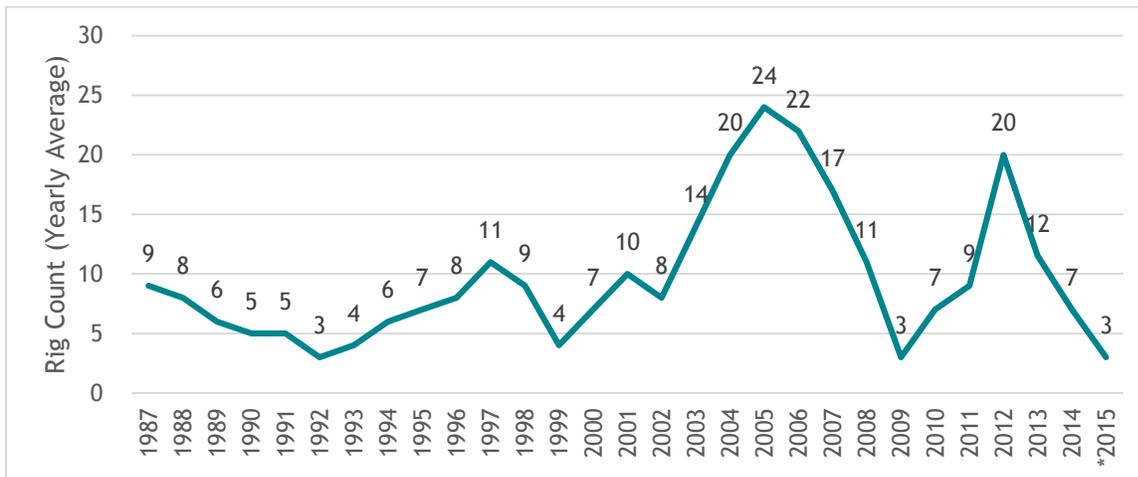


OIL AND GAS EXTRACTION

Oil and gas development is a growing trend in Richland County, especially as technological advances in drilling techniques allow for more rigs on a well pad. In addition, the infrastructure used to access the wells, including roads, power lines, and pipelines is increasing throughout the County. Once developed, the wells can operate in proximity to other operations such as farming, residential uses or industrial spaces. The primary surface impacts of this energy production include impacts at the drill site with tanks, rigs and electrical boxes; transportation system impacts such as increased semi-truck vehicles, transportation of water, salt water, and oil; and land use conversion for industrial purposes to stockpile equipment and supplies.

Rig count, which is a good indicator of oil and gas development in Richland County, has remained relatively stable for the past three years. The North Dakota Department of Mineral Resources, Oil and Gas Division estimate that it will take a minimum of 15-20 years to extract oil and gas from the Williston Basin, of which the Bakken formation is the central and deeper layer. However, technology improvements in resource extraction are extending the life of the Bakken, which may last up to 30 years. The Williston Basin also contains additional resource layers such as the Three Forks Formation and Tyler Formation, which could extend extraction rates.

Figure 7 - Yearly Oil Rig Count for Montana



SOURCE: BAKER HUGHES (*MARCH TOTAL)

COAL MINES

Richland County has one active coal mine, which is 5 miles west of Savage, and the mine has recently increased the amount of coal extraction. According to the 2006 Growth Policy, the County has considerable coal reserves but McCone County is estimated to be the closest major coal development. In addition, Fairview has several abandoned coal mines that are not mapped or noted other than through local knowledge by planning board members.

Commercial and Industrial

Commercial and industrial areas near Sidney are located near the Hilltop Estates subdivision as well as south of Sidney along MT-16. Lambert and Savage have limited commercial development partially due to the lack of water in Lambert and limited sewer capacity in Savage; although Savage is developing a new lagoon to expand capacity. The vast majority of development has occurred since 2011 and potential development may add an additional 50-70 acres of commercial and industrial development to the City of Sidney depending upon where annexations occur.



Outside of the established commercial areas, scattered commercial development is occurring along the major transportation routes, but the need for water and sewer services are driving development closer to urban centers.

Residential

As a result of limited water and sewer capacity, Savage and Lambert have experienced limited residential growth. However, another issue is the lack of available lots for sale in each community although some landowners have begun subdividing lots in both communities.

Parks and Recreation

Park and recreation sites in Richland County consist of developed parks in Sidney, Fairview, Savage, and Lambert. However, the County does own Richland Park and MDU Park. Other areas used for recreational purpose include state of Montana fishing access sites, wildlife management areas, and reservoirs. The County also currently lacks a dedicated recreation center for the general public and youth activities, but plans have been discussed to create a flexible community space for multiple uses.

Public/Open Space

Public lands in Richland County include state lands and federal managed by the BLM. Depending on access and type of use these lands may be available for certain types of recreation. The County also has a wide array of public uses such as the airports in Sidney and Fairview, town/city/county administration buildings such as the court house and city/town halls and fire/police buildings. The uses are described in detail in the Local Services and Public Facilities chapters.

Future Land Use

Sidney and Fairview are the only incorporated jurisdictions in the County and therefore have the ability to define a future land use plan to help guide growth in these communities. However, Lambert and Savage and the County itself can adopt a future land use plan to guide future development, but without zoning or other tools to help regulate land uses, these three entities lack the regulatory items to enforce land use policies.

Residential Growth Areas

Residential growth areas have been identified for infill areas around new and existing developments. Residential uses should be located near existing residential areas of the same type and density. High density residential areas should be used as a buffer between commercial uses and low density residential uses. The areas identified are generally defined to direct new residential development.

Commercial Growth Areas

Commercial growth areas are identified along major transportation corridors including arterial and collector streets as well as state highways. Large scale commercial uses - big box stores and large parking areas - should be directed toward major arterials including highways. Neighborhood business uses - dry cleaners, dental/health offices, pharmacy, etc. - can be allowed near low density residential areas, but should be targeted for development at intersection and existing commercial areas. A landscape buffer should be provided when commercial areas directly abut residential uses. The areas identified are generally defined to direct new commercial development. Commercial infill may be suitable in areas adjacent to industrial uses.



Figure 8 - Sidney Existing Land Use

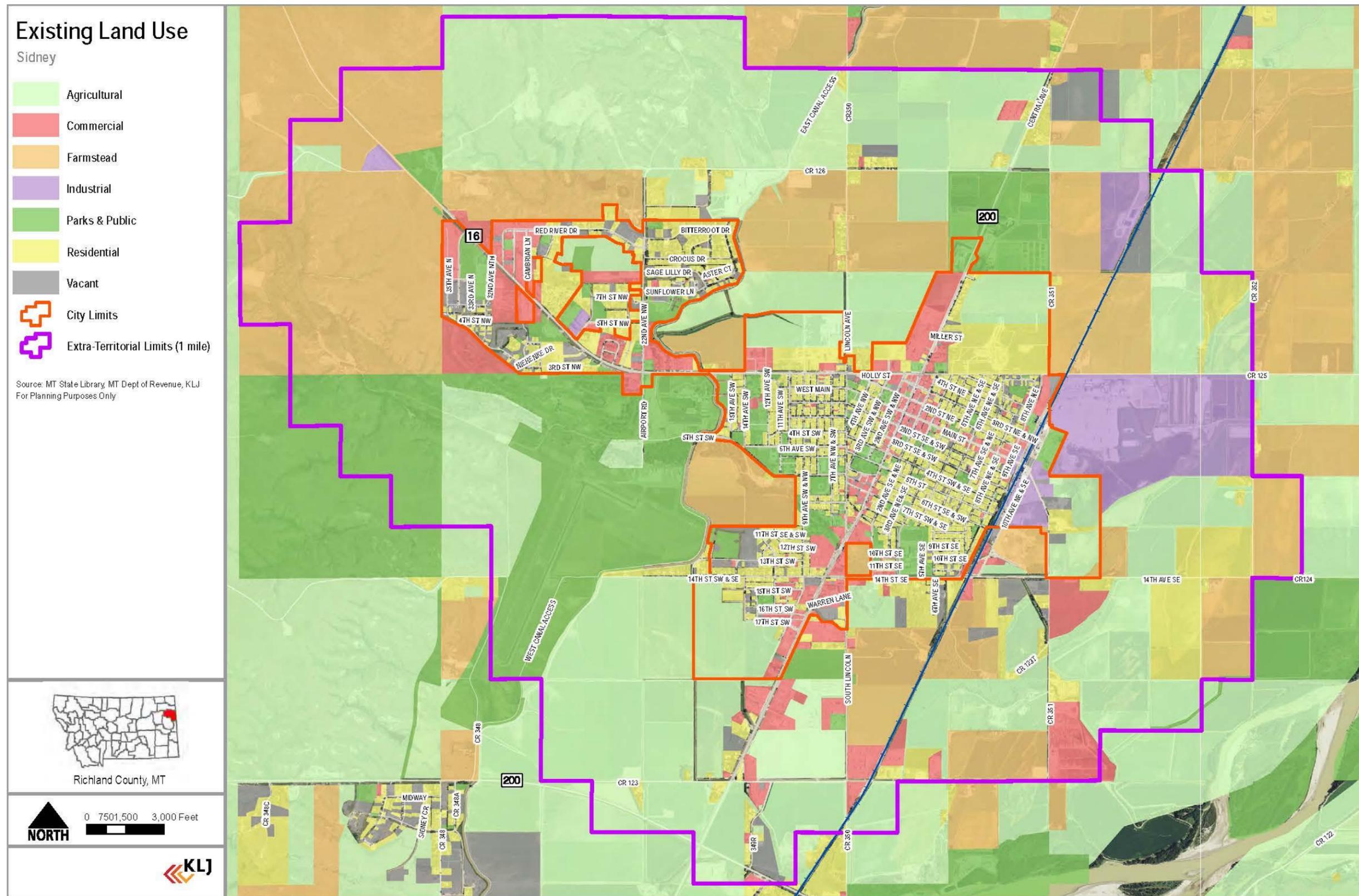




Figure 9 - Fairview Existing Land Use

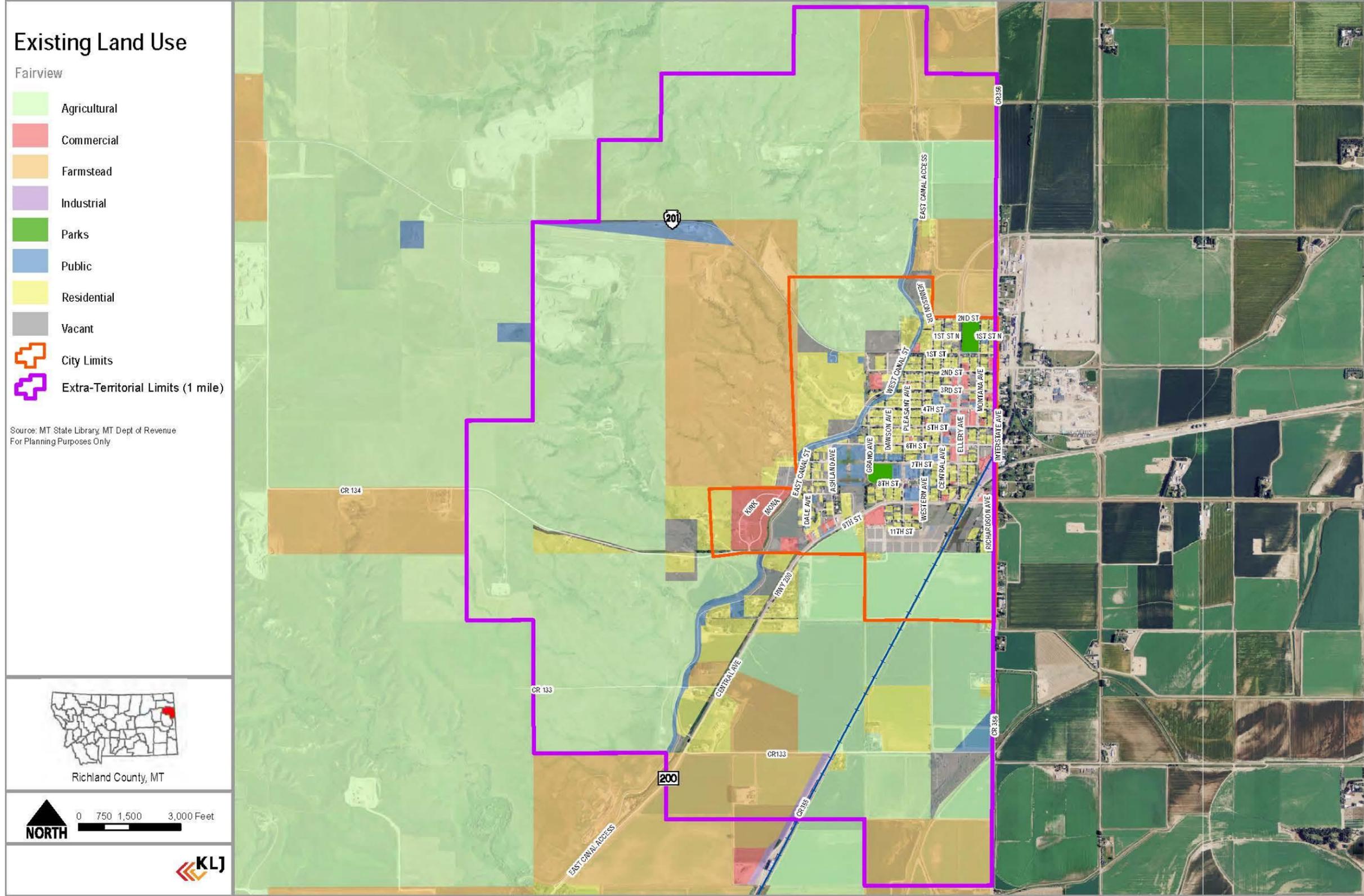




Figure 10 - Lambert Existing Land Use

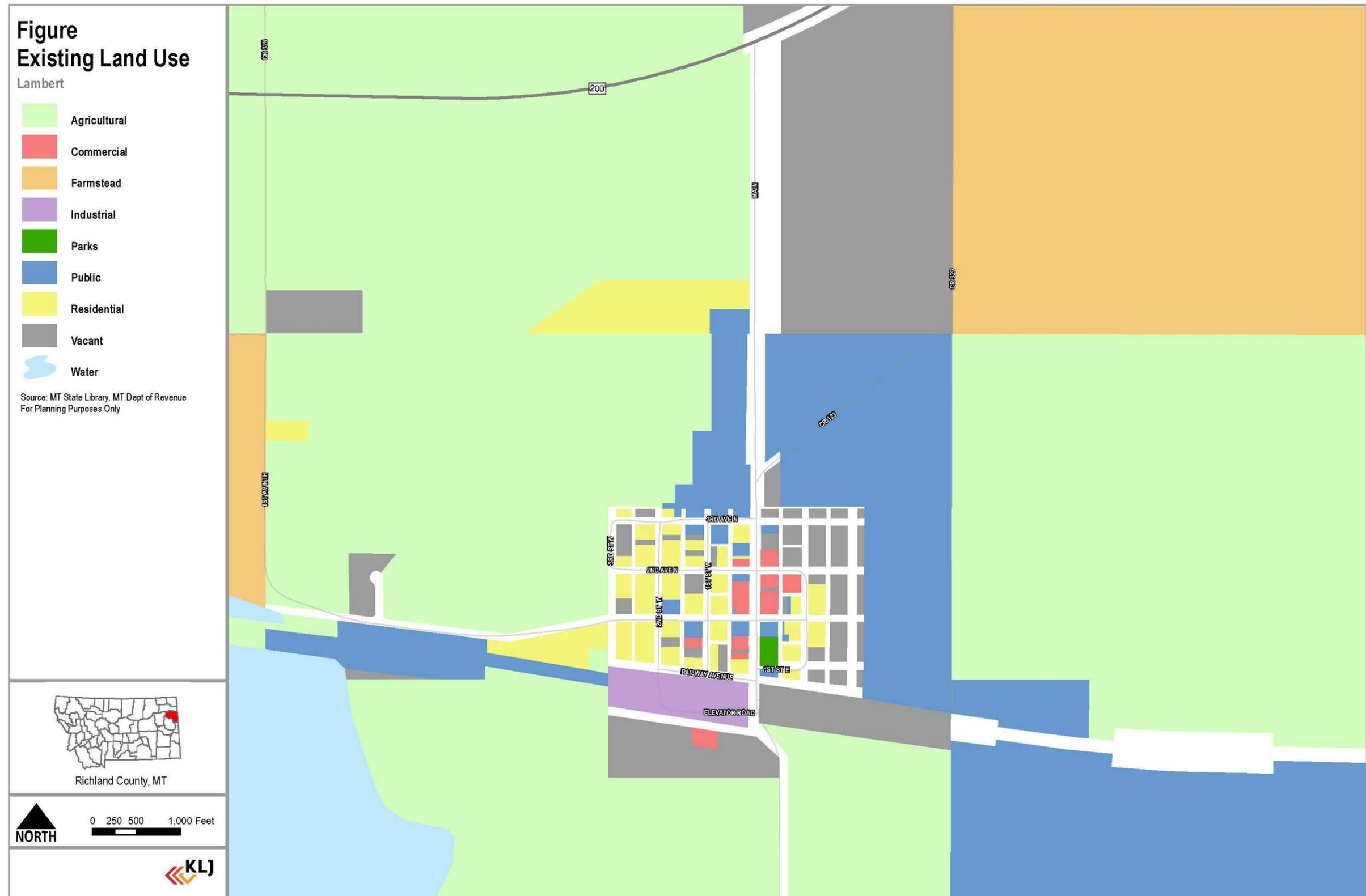
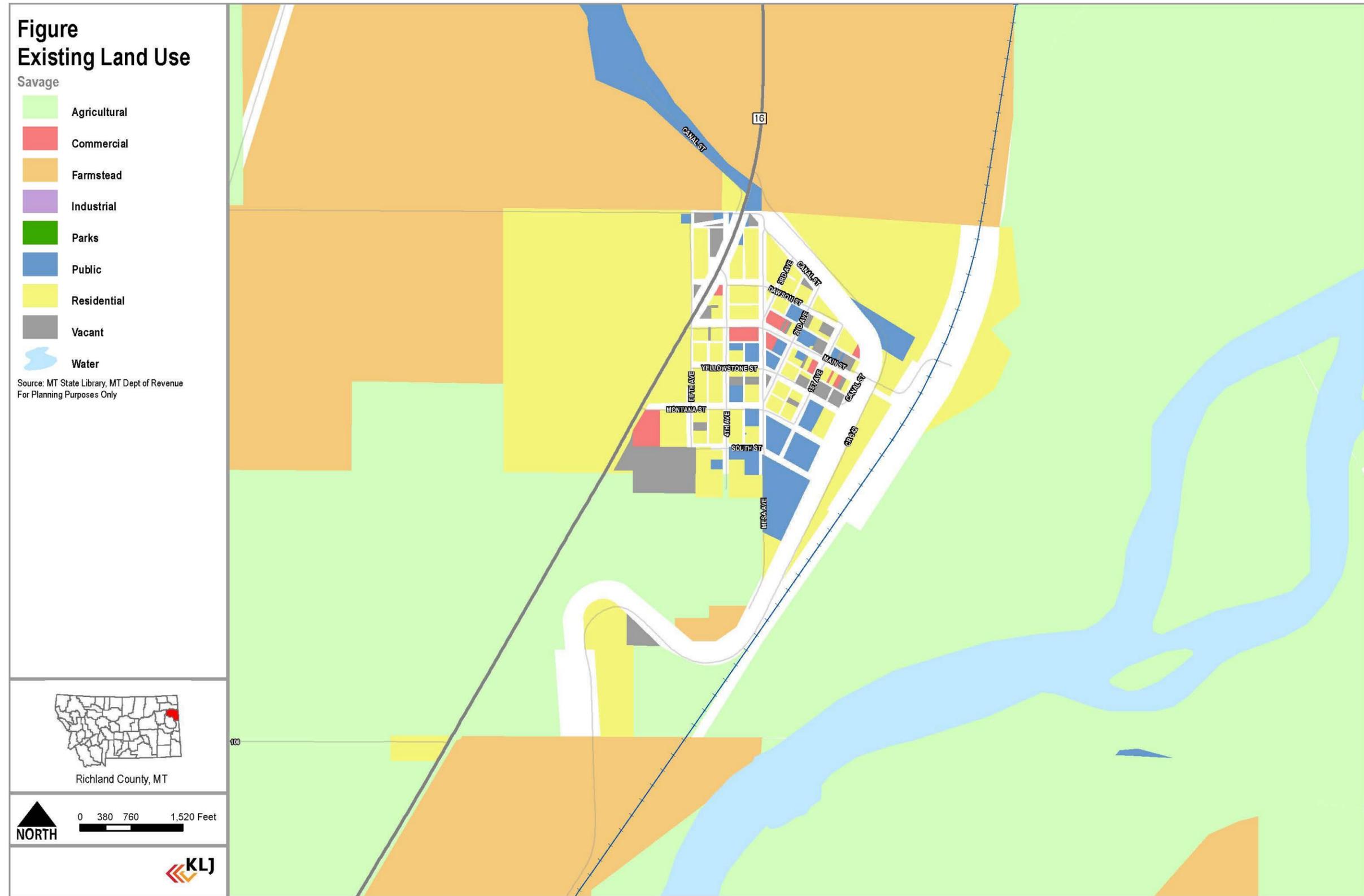




Figure 11 - Savage Existing Land Use





Industrial Growth Areas

Future industrial areas should be directed away from all existing and planned future residential development; only under unique and extreme circumstances should industrial uses be allowed adjacent to residential areas. Industrial uses should be encouraged in appropriate areas especially as the oil and gas development in the Bakken is projected to continue for at least 20 more years. Industrial uses should be directed toward existing industrial areas and space should be preserved to accommodate future expansion. Similar to commercial uses, industrial areas should be targeted near major transportation corridors including railroad tracks and away from environmentally critical areas such as wetlands, floodways, steep slopes and wildlife habitats for endangered or threatened species. The areas identified are generally defined to direct new industrial development.

Public Space and Parks and Trails

It will be at the discretion of the Park Board and City/County Planning Board to identify future areas for public uses and park space throughout the county including Sidney, Fairview, Lambert and Savage. The County and Fairview have not initiated public park plans although each jurisdiction should consider developing such plans to address future locations of public parks. However, the Transportation Plan for Richland County includes a trail system for the greater Sidney and Fairview areas.

Agricultural Preservation

Future agricultural areas have been identified as a preservation method to protect prime farmland soils and environmentally critical areas such as canal/irrigation pathways, wetlands, underground mines and steep slopes. The goal is not to prohibit development in these areas but to encourage compact or cluster development to preserve as much prime farmland as possible. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to prohibit development if the area in question contains prime farmland soils that are not located elsewhere within the county. A cluster development is one in which homes are clustered together on smaller lots to preserve natural areas from future development such as protecting wetlands or preserving grazing lands for antelope or elk. The undeveloped land is either put into a land trust or an agricultural or preservation easement is placed on the open land.

Richland County Projected Trends

The county is analyzing the effect of area-wide zoning for communities such as Lambert and Savage and is considering the use of extraterritorial zoning beyond existing city limits for Sidney and Fairview. The county will need to coordinate and form a joint board with each municipality if extraterritorial zoning is adopted beyond city and town limits. The ability to help unincorporated communities better plan for future development and manage existing growth will help the County plan long term land uses. In addition, assisting Sidney and Fairview to manage development on the fringe areas of both cities will help the County as a whole plan for future infrastructure costs and reduce issues related to land use conflicts as each community grows.

Lambert Projected Trends

While Lambert is not an incorporated town, it has expressed interest in potentially adopting area-wide zoning or future land use designations to help guide growth. The town has the ability to request an overlay zoning designation from the County Commission and City/County Planning Board.

Savage Projected Trends

Savage has expressed interest in adopting area-wide zoning and land use guidelines to help regulate future uses as growth occurs throughout the unincorporated town. The sewer district boundary would serve as a starting point for outlining the zoning area. The City/County Planning Board would identify zoning designations and uses with input from Savage residents.



Figure 12 - Development Constraints for Richland County

Figure Development Constraints

-  Wetlands (NWI)
- FEMA Flood Zones**
-  Zones A & AE (100-Year Floodplain)
-  Zone X (500-Year Floodplain)
-  Slopes > 25%
-  Prime Farmland
-  Incorporated Communities
-  Unincorporated Communities

Note: Prime Farmland soils identified as farmland of statewide importance in the USDA National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.
 Source: NRCS SSURGO Database, FEMA DFIRM, National Wetlands Inventory, USGS Digital Elevation Model 10 m
 For Planning Purposes Only



Richland County, MT



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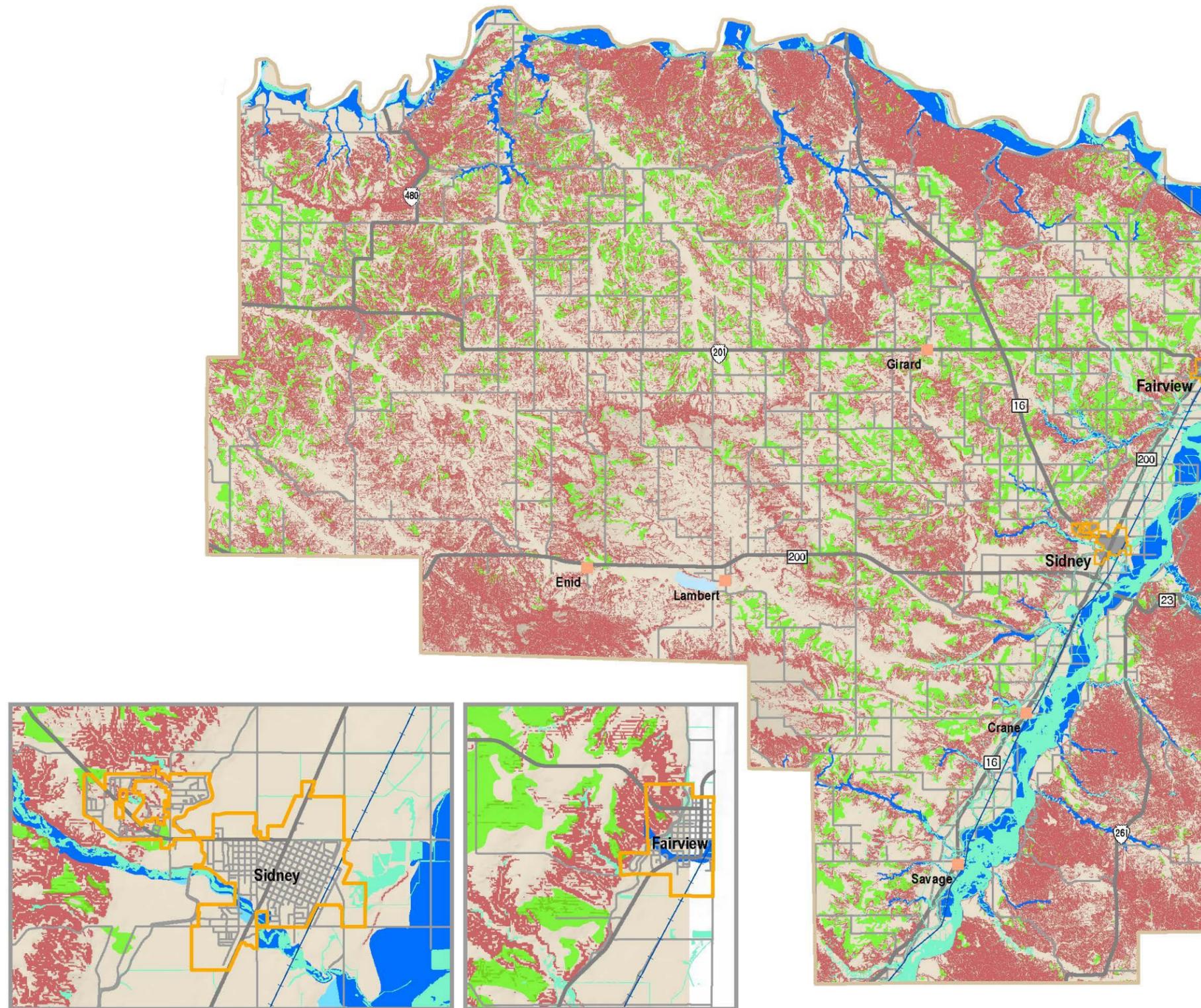




Figure 13 - Sidney Future Land Use

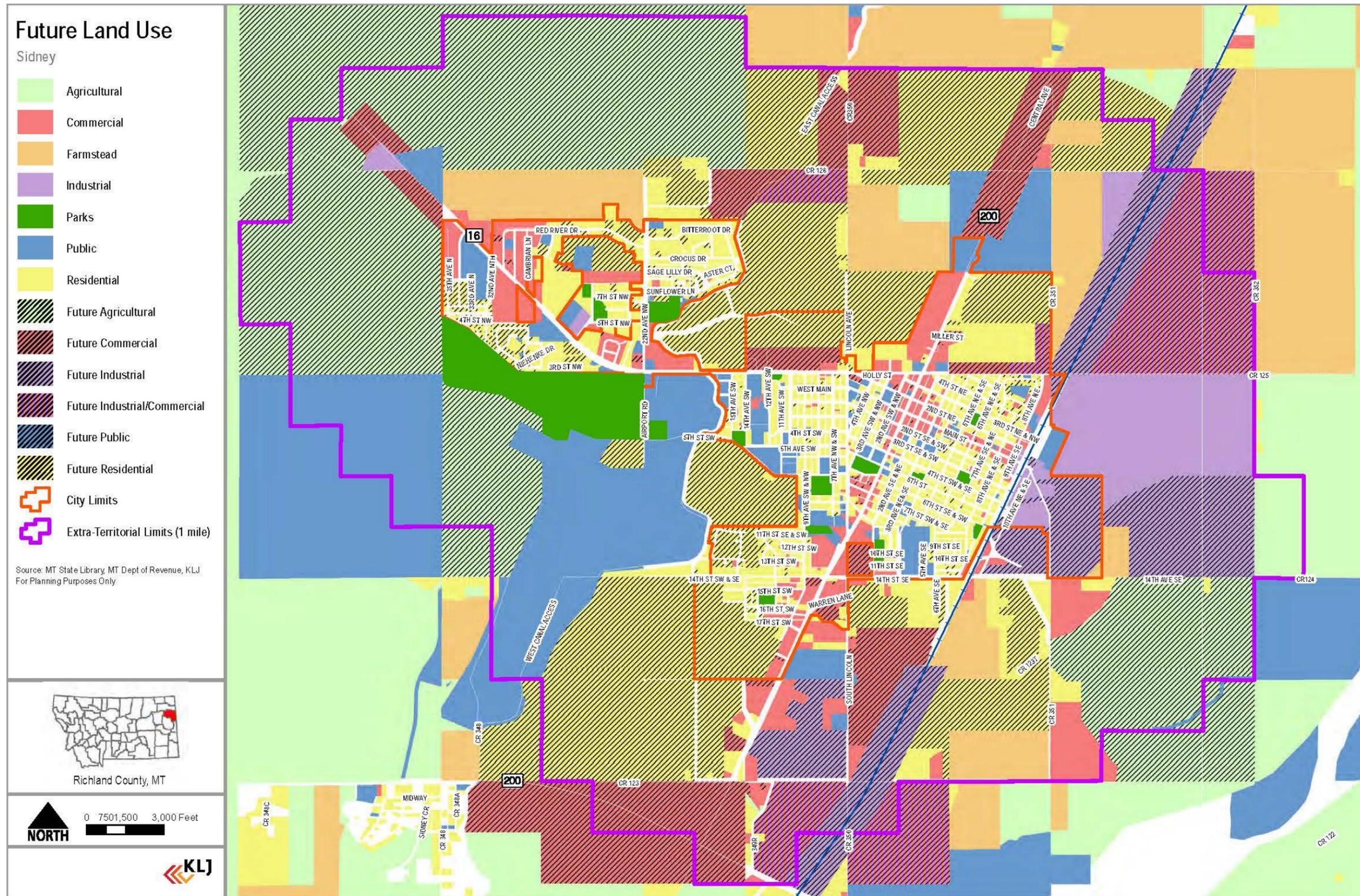




Figure 14 - Fairview Future Land Use

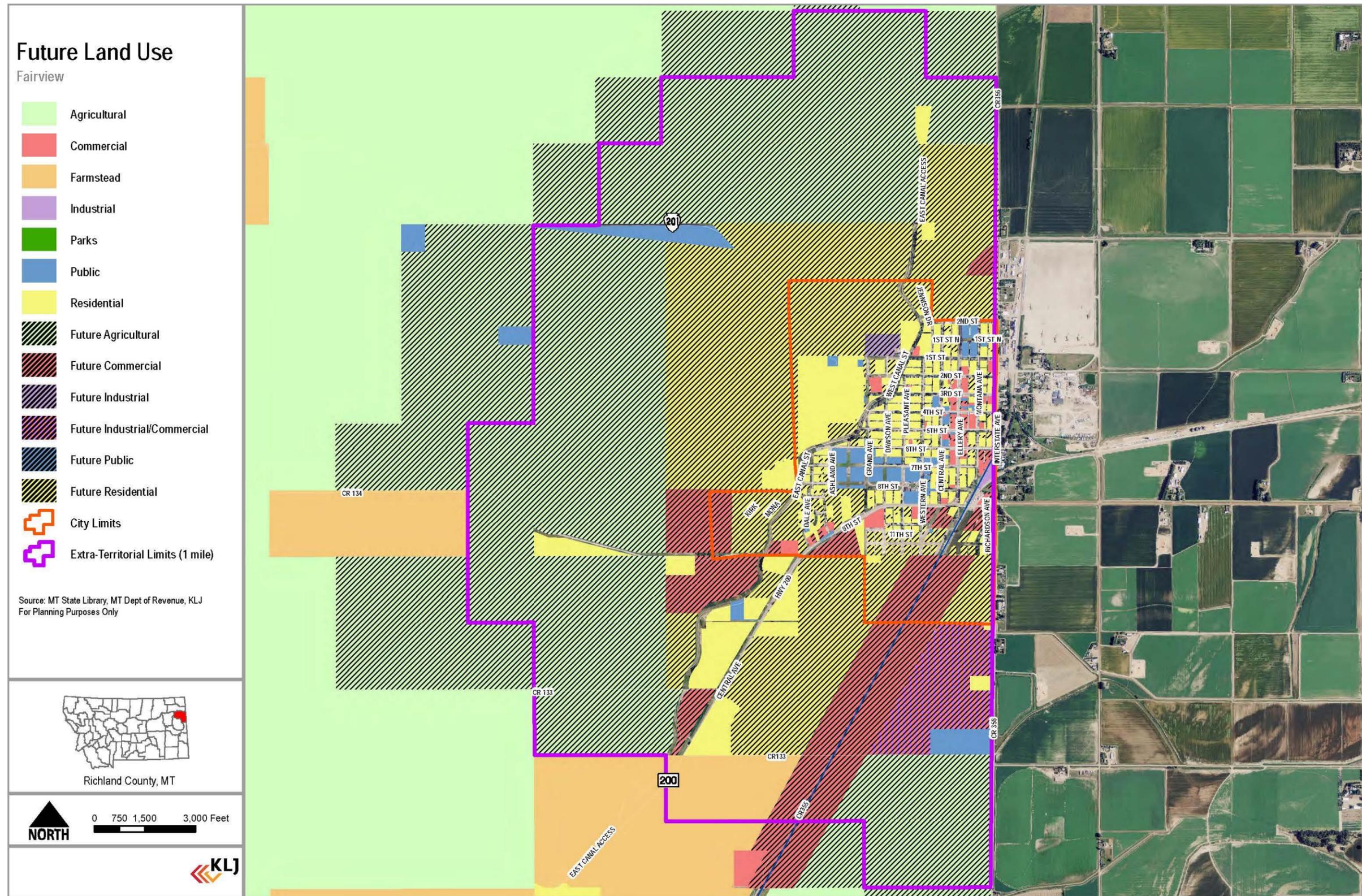




Figure 15 - Lambert Future Land Use

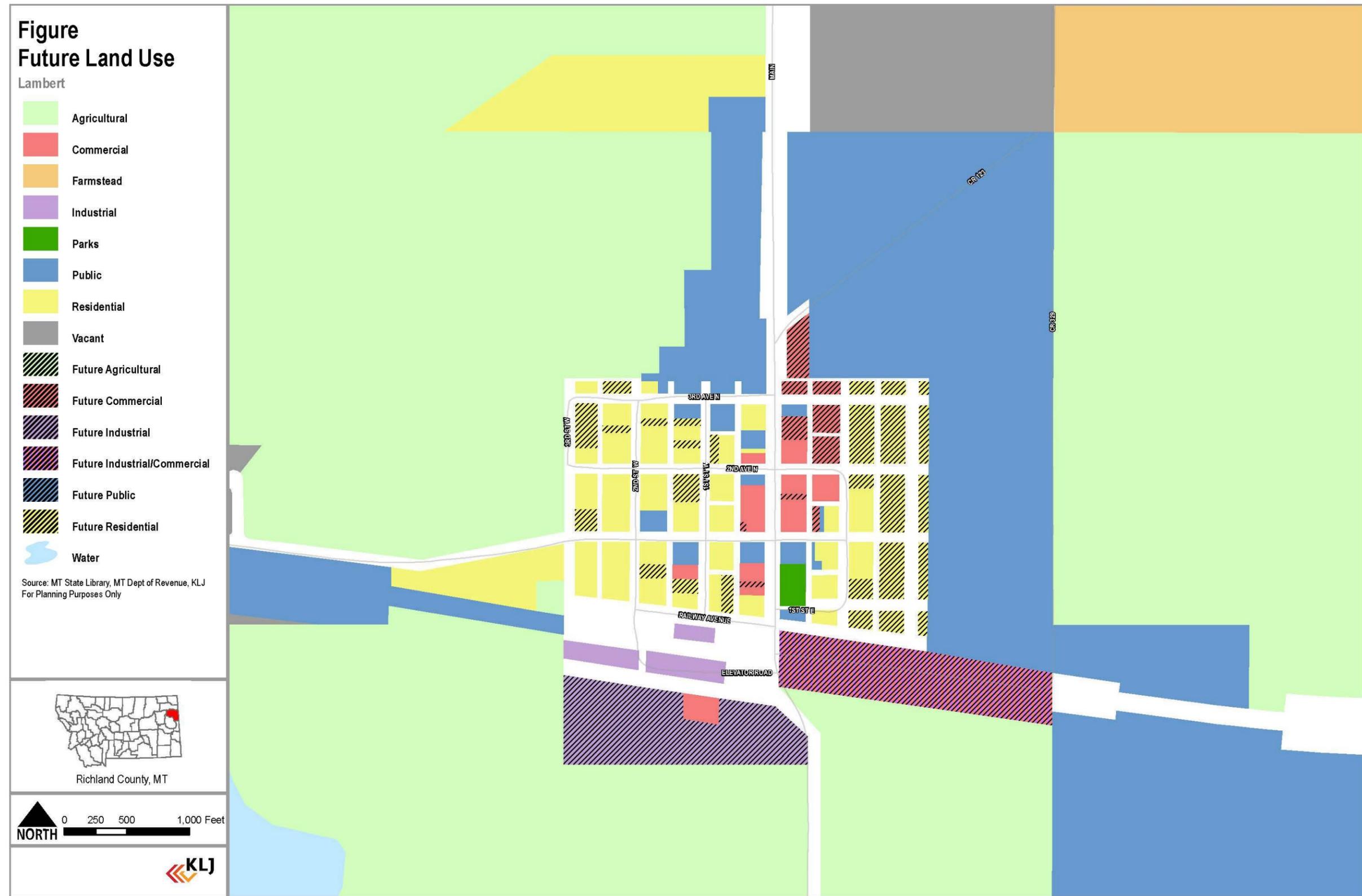
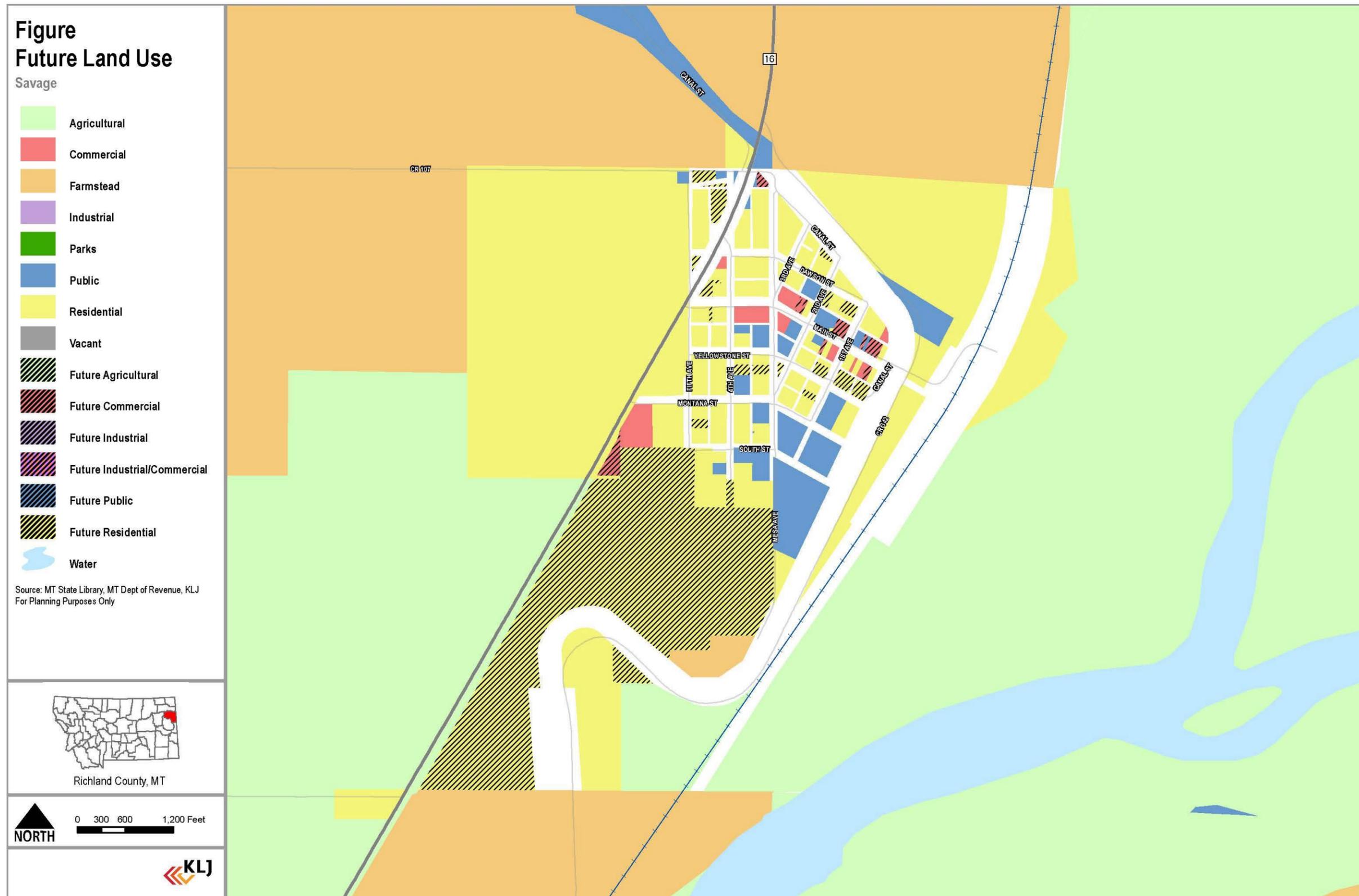




Figure 16 - Savage Future Land Use





Policy, Regulatory and Financial Items

Regulatory items that can be used to implement the future land use plan and map are listed below for reference; however, a more detailed explanation of the items is listed in the implementation section. The goal of the regulatory items is not to restrict what land owners can do with their private property, but rather to guide future development to encourage conflict-free land uses with the objective of creating a better place to live, work and play for existing and future generations. The County, Sidney or Fairview can adopt, implement and enforce any of the listed tools deemed appropriate to encourage uses deemed appropriate throughout the county.

Policy

- » Long-range Planning
- » Infill and Reuse Policy
- » Eminent Domain
- » Urban Growth Area or Infrastructure Extension Area (coordinate with Sidney and Fairview)
- » Interjurisdictional Coordination
- » Extraterritorial Zoning (ETZ) (coordinate with Sidney and Fairview)
- » Targeted Economic Development District (TEDD)
- » Safe/Complete Street Policy
- » Prime Farmland/Agricultural Preservation

Regulatory

- » Subdivision Regulations
- » Zoning (Part 1 or 2)
- » Floating/Overlay Zoning
- » Resource Protection Zoning
- » Design Standards
- » Conservation Easements/Ordinances
- » Floodplain Regulations
- » Park and Open Space Dedication Standards
- » Buildings for Lease or Rent (BLR)
- » Temporary Workforce Housing Zoning

Financial

- » Grants
- » Land Acquisition
- » Tax Increment Financing
- » Targeted Economic Development Districts
- » Capital Improvement Plans (CIPS)

Goals and Objectives

Goal

- » Provide for logical, cost effective future extension of infrastructure near cities and towns.

OBJECTIVES

- » Identify areas of potential growth expansion and coordinate urban development guidelines with Sidney and Fairview where development occurs within one mile of city/town boundaries (city required infrastructure, street standards, etc.)
- » Explore the feasibility to extend zoning up to one mile within each city-county planning area or establish an extraterritorial zoning designation or joint zoning board for urban fringes in Sidney and Fairview.
- » Develop infrastructure extension area standards that are coordinated with Capital Improvement Program (CIP) documents.
- » Coordinate with Sidney and Fairview to identify areas for potential city growth and expansion.



Goal

- » Reduce potential for development to be impacted by natural, man-made or other hazards.

OBJECTIVES

- » Implement relevant actions in the county Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan such as coordinating mitigation improvement projects with a CIP and adopting hazardous material transport guidelines.
- » Develop setback guidelines for development near oil and gas well extraction points.

Goal

- » Preserve existing land uses by encouraging compatible development and land uses near established neighborhoods.

OBJECTIVES

- » Explore the use of overlay zoning districts in Crane, Lambert and Savage to protect existing land use patterns.
- » Update subdivision regulations and other regulations such as BLR and Workforce Housing Ordinances as necessary to reflect changes in state requirements or land use patterns occurring with each community.
- » Adopt a county “decay ordinance” that removes unsafe structures and junk RVs and unsafe mobile homes, and prohibits accumulating debris in front yards.

Goal

- » Encourage appropriate development in growth areas defined in future land use maps.

OBJECTIVES

- » Utilize policy, regulatory and fiscal tools outlined in the Growth Policy to guide and promote appropriate land uses.
- » Direct industrial development to existing or planned industrial and coordinate with Sidney and Savage on accommodating such uses.
- » Locate commercial uses along major transportation corridors.
- » Promote residential development near community amenities.
- » Prioritize and implement historic building retention, preservation, and restoration.

Goal

- » Promote value-added agriculture and preserve existing agricultural lands, high-production crop land and prime farmland soils by limiting development in these areas, especially those served by irrigation canals.

OBJECTIVES

- » Collaborate with Richland Economic Development Corporation USDA-ARS and MSU Extension Office to attract resources for agricultural research that support growth of agribusinesses.
- » Research and consider adopting new policy to limit sprawling, rural residential development to preserve prime farmland soils for future agricultural use.
- » Incorporate standards from the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project to preserve irrigation canal, laterals, drainage ditches and easements.
- » Coordinate with local farmers and ranchers to identify specific areas for preservation and begin utilizing agricultural exemptions and conservation easements to protect existing farmlands.



TRANSPORTATION

A detailed Transportation Plan will accompany the Growth Policy and identifies specific improvement projects, outlines future road network extensions and classifies future streets. A brief description of the public transportation facilities in the County is included in the Transportation Chapter; however, detailed information such as traffic forecasts, future projects and other elements is included in the Transportation Plan. Future developments within the County, Sidney and Fairview will be analyzed using the future functional classification maps and data to reserve adequate future right-of-way, determine where access points will occur and build to adequate design standards.

Streets and Roads

Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)

MDT owns and maintains Highway 16, 23, 200 and 201 and all primary and secondary highways throughout the county. Highway 16 is designated as a National Highway of Significance, indicating its importance at the national level, and will continue to be a priority for maintenance and upgrades especially since it serves as the primary route for oil and gas development.

Richland County

The County maintains approximately 1,240 miles of county roads and 134 bridges. County road maintenance includes inventorying road conditions, ongoing surface maintenance, snow removal, and dust suppression. A majority of the roads are gravel; however, increased traffic from the oil and gas exploration has led to several roads being paved and more than half of all county roads have been impacted by such development.

As noted in the 2006 Growth Policy, according to an article in *Governing* magazine, engineers estimate that a fully loaded truck—a five-axle rig weighing 80,000 pounds—causes more damage to a highway than 5,000 cars. Heavy trucks create more dust than passenger vehicles and reduce the expected life of the roadway. Increasing a truck's weight to 90,000 pounds results in a 42 percent increase in road wear; pavement designed to last 20 years deteriorates in 7 years.

Air Transport

Two airports are located in Richland County: the Sidney-Richland Airport and the Fairview Airport.

SIDNEY-RICHLAND AIRPORT

The airport, which is an essential air service airport, is operated by the Richland County Airport Authority. Cape Air currently provides service with five round trips daily, which is a substantial increase in the availability of flights into Sidney. The airport recently adopted (2013) an Airport Affected Area ordinance to limit development that is not compatible to air service. In addition, the airport has an airport influence area and special zoning to protect airspace and ensure future development does not impede the airport's ability to expand.

Because the airport is within the Bakken oil and gas play, several air carriers, private businesses and the general public have requested that the airport upgrade facilities to accommodate larger airplanes. The airport is finishing with a 5-year Master Plan that outlines future growth areas and projects.

FAIRVIEW AIRPORT

The Sidney-Richland Airport Authority administers operations at the Fairview Airport. The grass strip airfield historically services private aircraft and seasonal commercial crop spraying activity. The airport also adopted an Airport Affected Area ordinance and is considering options to expand operations at the airport.

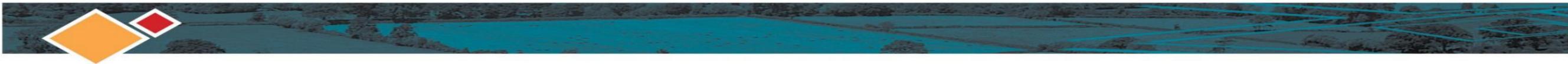
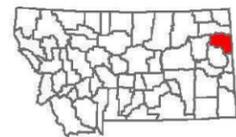


Figure 17 - Transportation Corridors in Richland County

Figure Transportation Corridors

- Highways
- Railroads
- Incorporated Communities
- Unincorporated Communities

Source: MT State Library
For Planning Purposes Only



Richland County, MT



0 1 2 4 6 8 Miles

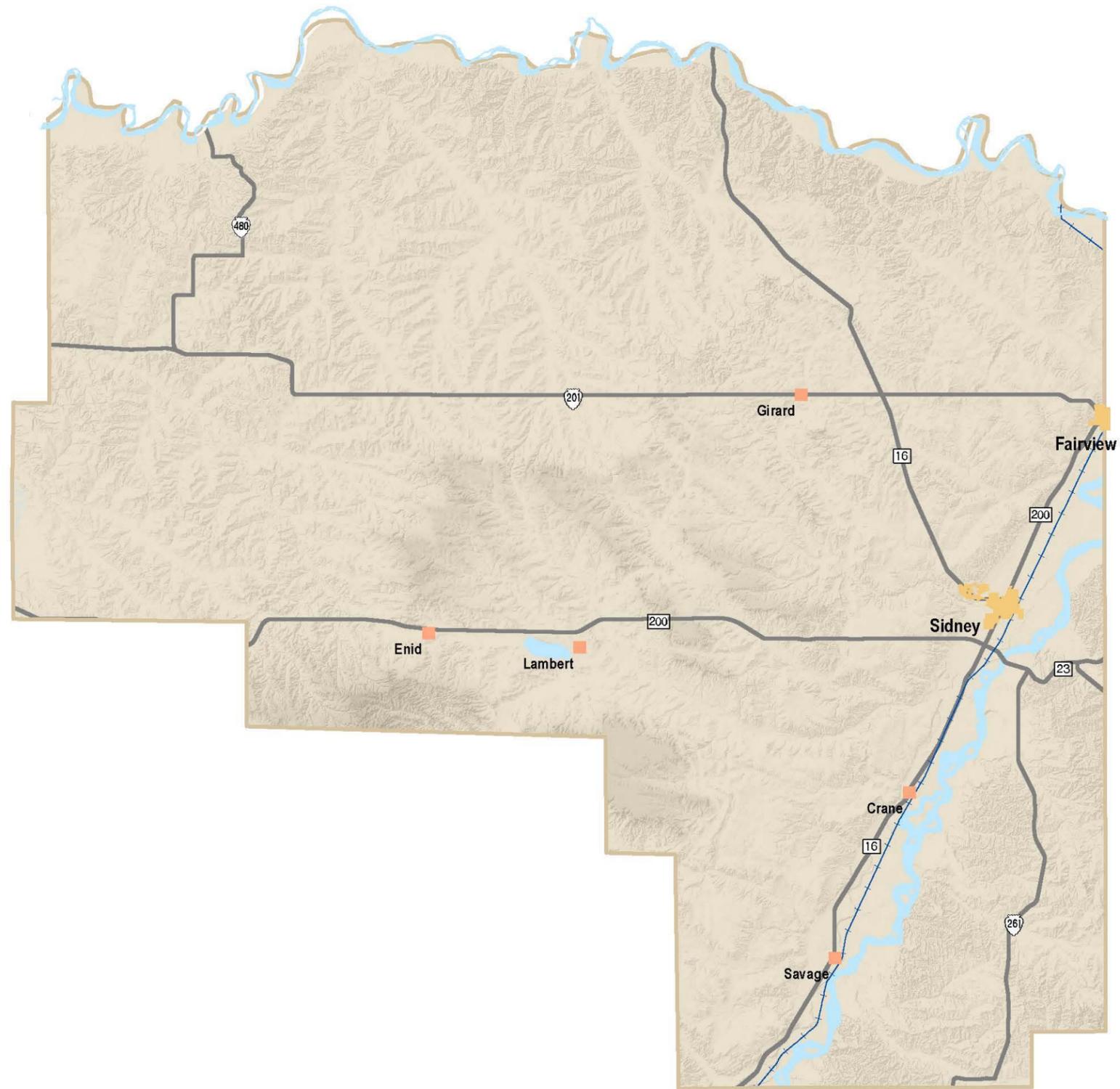
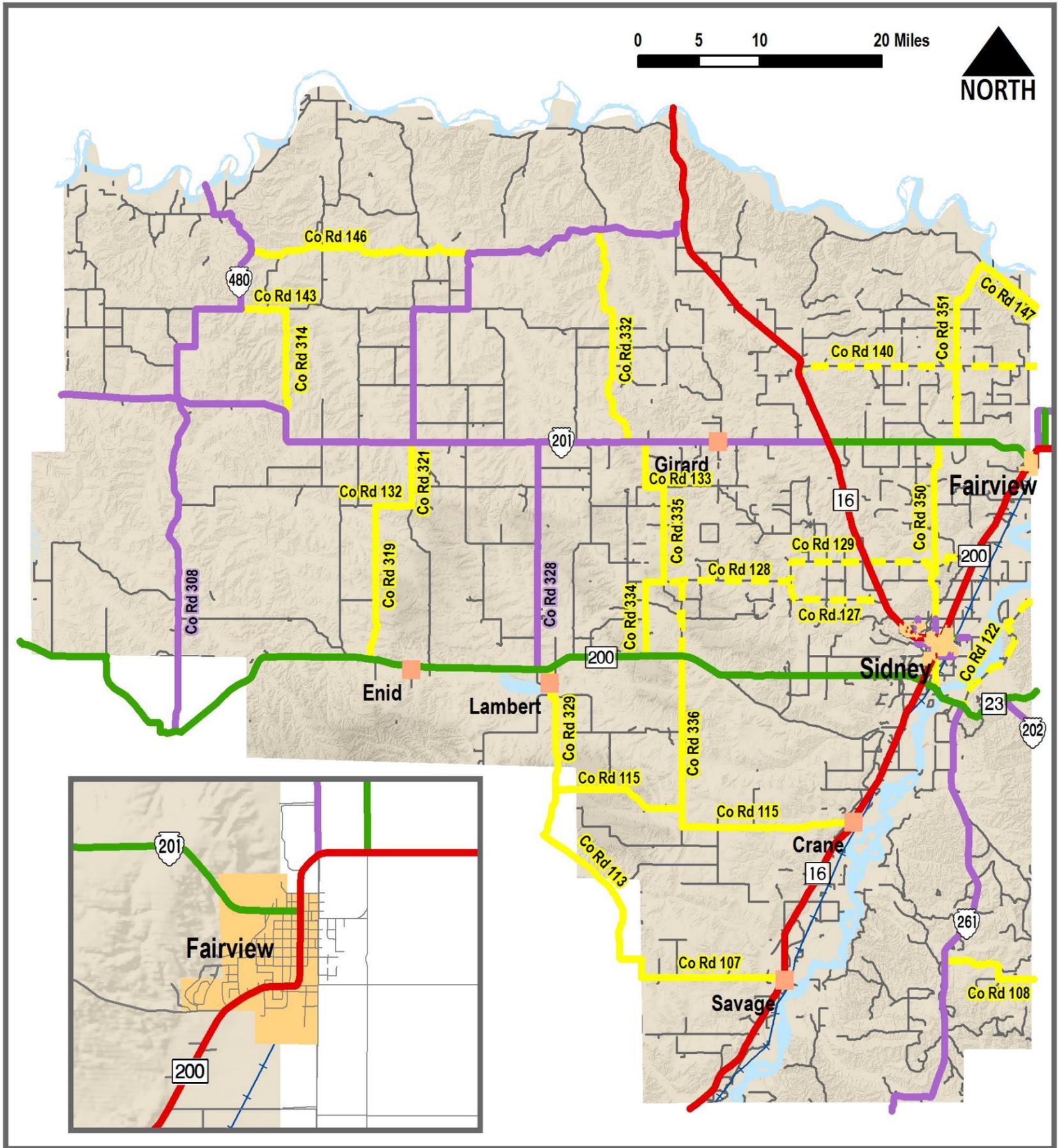




Figure 18 - Richland County Future Functional Classification



Functional Classification

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- - - Proposed Minor Collector
- Incorporated Cities
- Unincorporated Communities
- + + + Railroads



Richland County, MT

Source: KLJ, MDT Detailed Roads



Rail

BNSF Railway Company operates the line from Glendive north through Fairview. No other rail lines are operating in Richland County. The primary commodity are grains and refined sugar during harvest season; however, during all other times oil and gas commodities including oil tankers, frac sand, machinery and other goods related to the energy extraction business are routinely shipped on the line.

This unique stretch of rail serves as a critical link during times of derailment on main lines. Trains are detoured on the line as a result of few north-south connecting links, which makes this line an important resource for BNSF. Additionally, a proposed new transloading facility north of Fairview is undergoing planning and may become operational in the future. The transloading facility will primarily service the oil and gas companies doing business in Richland County, but may offer opportunities for other industrial uses specific to the continued growth in Richland County.

Transit

The only operating multi-county transit provider is Jefferson Lines; however, the Richland County Transportation Service (RCTS) also operates a Dial-A-Ride program for those in need and is typically targeted toward seniors but the service is open to whomever needs a ride. RCTS service all of the County's major towns and cities. Jefferson Lines operates two daily stop sin Sidney with destination going to North Dakota and western Montana.

Trail Systems

Richland County

Richland County does not have a master trail system, but the Transportation Plan does include corridor systems that could eventually connect communities such as Savage, Sidney and Fairview together through a regional trail situated along Highway 16. Active Richland County, a CIA program, also continues to provide guidance to the County on priorities and funding of recreational facilities.

Sidney

Sidney has pedestrian walkways including sidewalks that provides access to pedestrians; however, Sidney is the only community that has a trail system dedicated specifically to pedestrian and bicycle users. The system has several gaps and is in need of repairs along certain portions. A trail plan was developed in the mid 90's but was never fully achieved. Trail development is approximately 70 percent complete and connects the High School to Johnson Park and extends to the rodeo/fair grounds. The project has been a joint venture between Sidney and the County.

Fairview

While Fairview does not have a dedicated trail system, the Town is upgrading sidewalks to provide safe, pedestrian mobility throughout town.

Savage

Savage residents expressed a need for trail system during public input meetings. Residents currently use Mesa Avenue that extends south to the cemetery as a walking path because Main Street is too busy with truck traffic and the community lacks a sidewalk system. The general consensus was for a crushed gravel trail to connect the High School with the cemetery and east toward the Yellowstone River.

Lambert

Lambert is currently constructing a dedicated trail system to connect the high school with the new football stadium, which is located east of Main Street. A dedicated crossing with flashing lights will be needed to safely move students across the busy street. Residents also expressed a need for a looped trail system that would utilize the trail by the new stadium and connect County Road 329 with Main Street and Lambert High School.



Figure 20 - Sidney Future Trail System

Figure Trails

Sidney

-  Existing Trails
-  Future Trails
-  Parks
-  City Limits

Source: KLJ, MT State Library, NAIP Imagery date 7/18/2013
For Planning Purposes Only



Richland County, MT

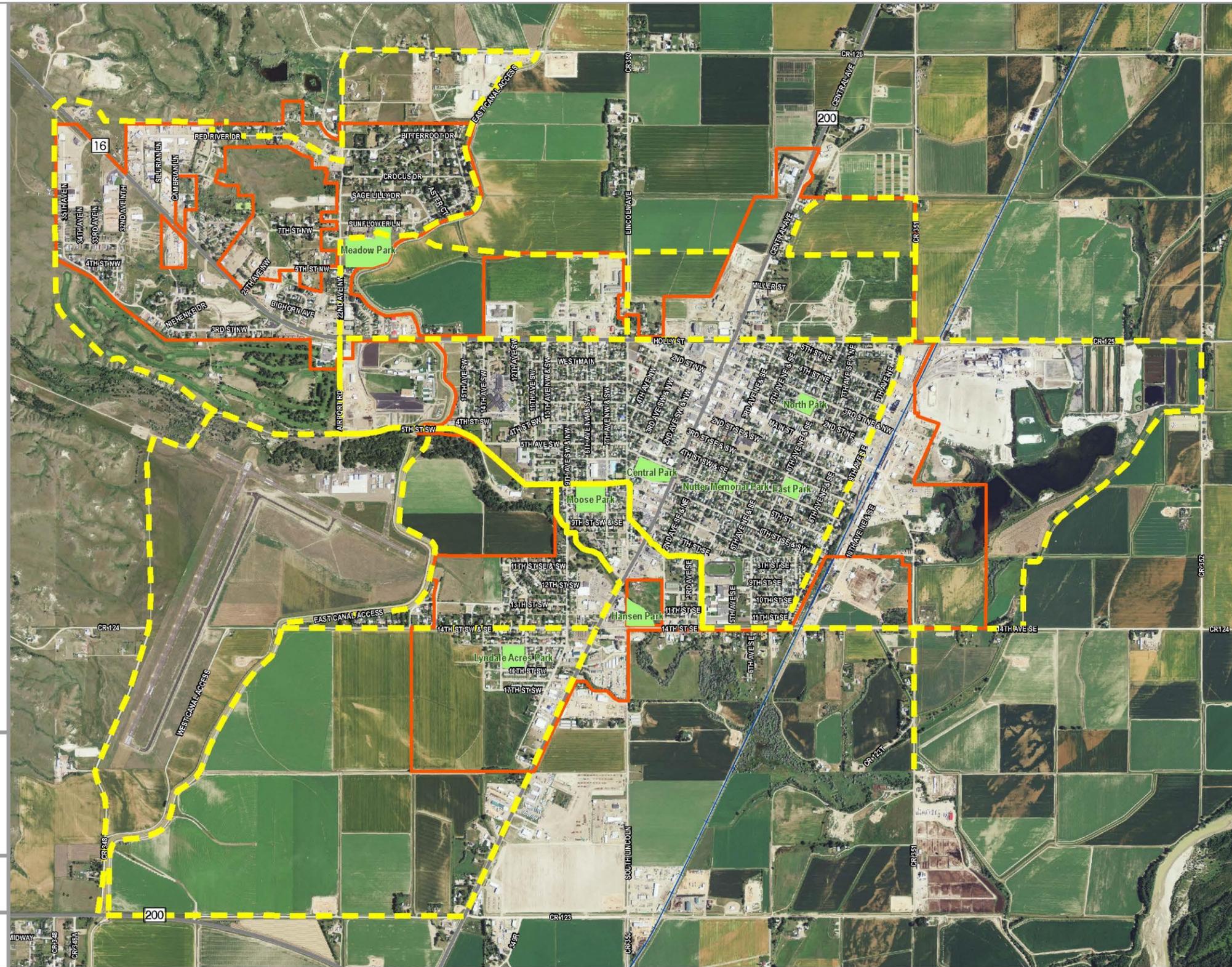
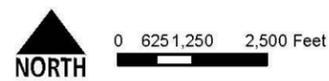




Figure 21 - Fairview Trail Development Plan

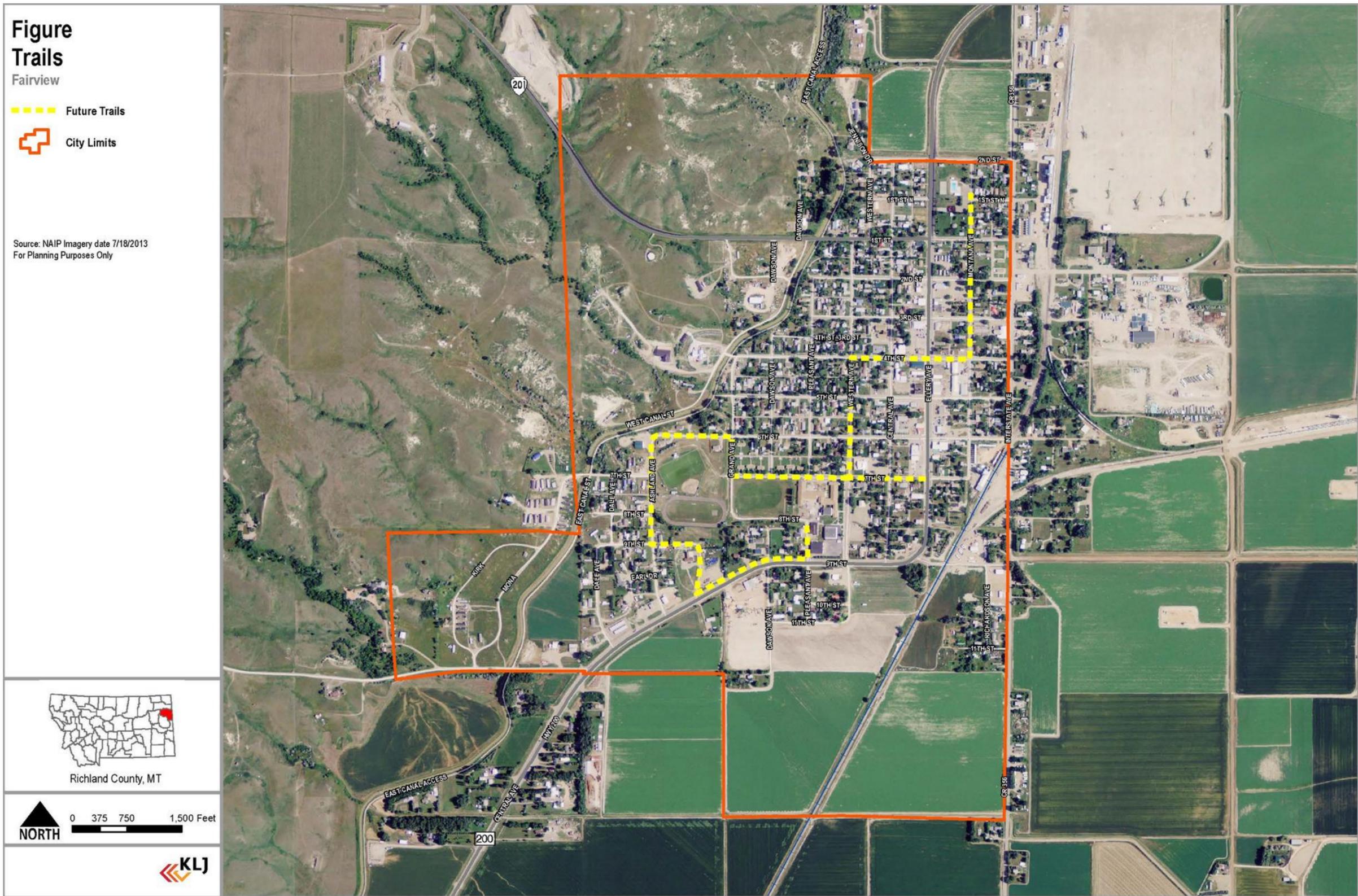




Figure 22 - Lambert Trail Development Plan





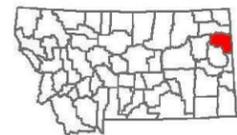
Figure 23 - Savage Trail Development Plan

Figure Trails

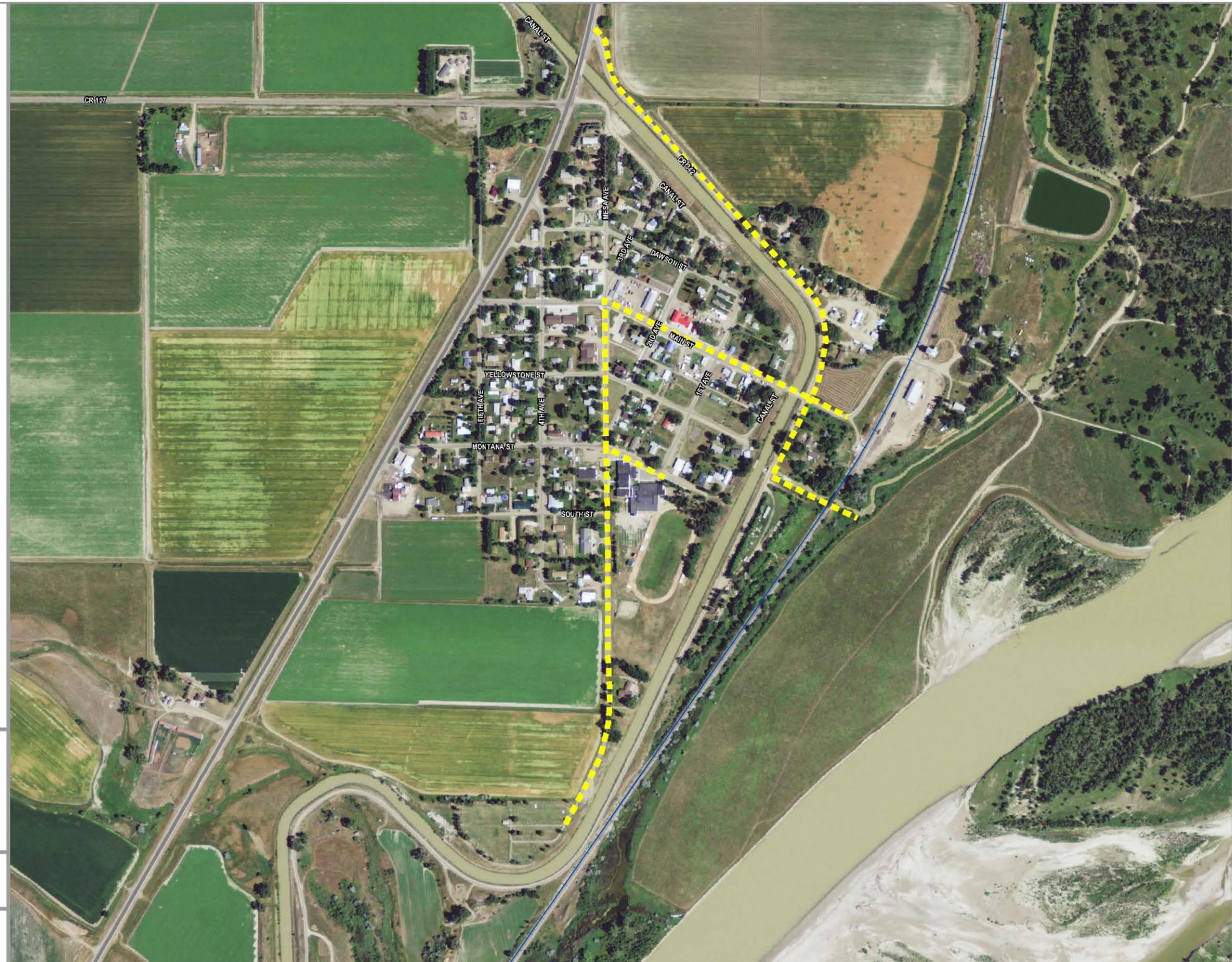
Savage

Future Trails

Source: NAIP Imagery date 7/18/2013
For Planning Purposes Only



Richland County, MT





Goals and Objectives

Goal

- » Incorporate recommendations from Transportation Plan, including preserving right-of-way for corridors and implementing road development standards.

OBJECTIVES

- » Implement recommendations from the Transportation plan into existing planning documents such as subdivision regulations, local ordinances and other applicable regulations.
- » Utilize recommendations when reviewing subdivisions and site plans to ensure development is meeting minimum design standards.

Goal

- » Work with the state to maintain and improve safety on state routes.

OBJECTIVES

- » Coordinate with Montana Department of Transportation on improvements to state highways and access to state roads.
- » Upgrade priority for improvements on Highways 16, 23, 200 and 201.

Goal

- » Develop an interconnected trail and park system in Savage and Lambert.

OBJECTIVES

- » Coordinate with Park and Recreation Boards, City/County Planning Board and City of Sidney and Town of Fairview City/Town Councils to develop a regional trail system along Highway 16 or 200.
- » Collaborate with Savage and Lambert to create a walking trail along established roads with adequate right-of-way.

HOUSING

Housing was the top priority identified in all communities through multiple public input meetings, stakeholder interviews and town/city/county staff comments. Richland County is facing a housing crisis as a result of energy extraction related to the Bakken oil and gas play. Oil field development has created a strong demand for oil field workers and support businesses; the result is a temporary non-resident workforce that has significantly strained all housing, including rentals, motels, and RV parks. Affordability was the highest rated issue facing all communities followed by housing quality and availability. Instability in the housing market has also caused prices to substantially increase; creating an imbalance between what residents can afford and what the market will bear.

Occupancy Characteristics

According to the 2012 American Community Survey (ACS), total housing units increased for each community. Between 2000 - 2012, Sidney has experienced the greatest increase in housing units constructed with 552 new units (27.5 increase), yet Savage-Crane experienced the largest percent change in rental units occupied with 108 increase (94 additional units rented). Sidney also added the most owner occupied units, while Richland County added the most rental units. The trends match what is going on throughout the County with Sidney attracting more owner-occupied units such as townhomes while the County is experiencing an increase in rental properties such as RV sites.

Rental vacancy rates are decreased dramatically across all communities with the exception of Lambert, which actually experienced a slight increase in the number of vacant rental units available. However, this does not include work camps or RV parks that account for a large portion of unofficial rental units that were not captured in the census numbers. Owner vacancy rates were not calculated because the ACS did not have accurate percentage for owner-occupied units. However, in speaking with three local realtors in Sidney all noted that homeownership vacancy rates are below one percent and homes remain in the market less than 45 days on average. The trends suggest that with the exception of Lambert, all communities are experiencing decreases in vacancy rates.

Data also indicate that more rental occupied units are being constructed than owner-occupied units; the trend matches the transient employee profiles generally associated with oil and gas development. However, All communities should be aware and tracking the potential overdevelopment of rental-occupied housing such as apartments, RV sites and other housing choices for temporary residents. Overbuilding one sector -multifamily housing - can depress prices and cause vacancy rates to rise.

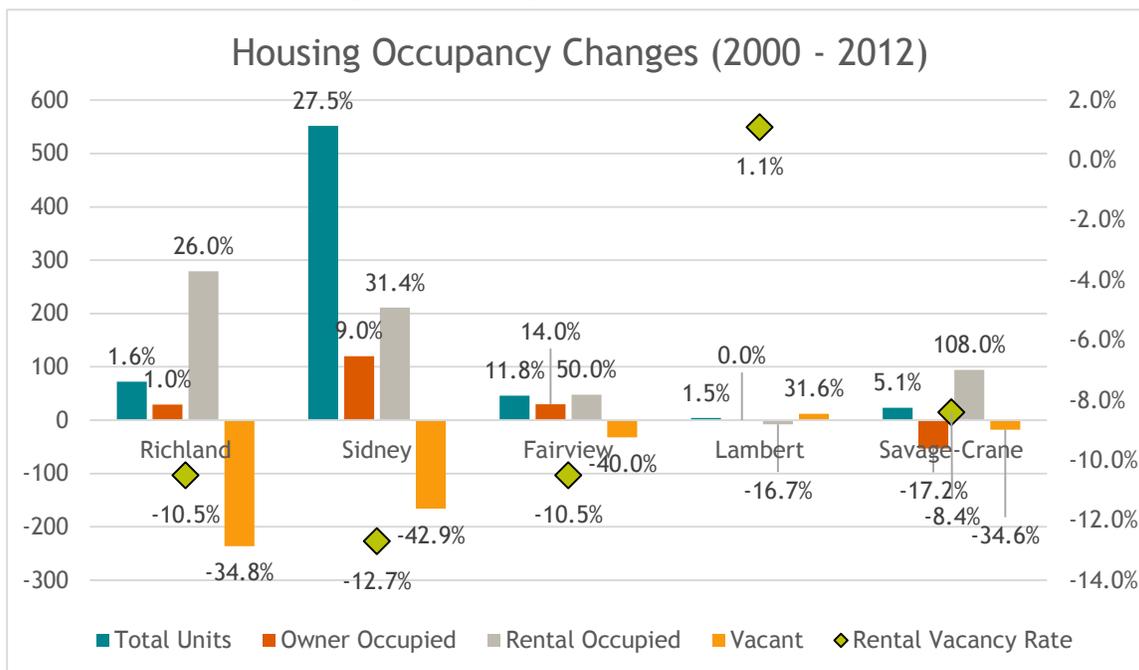
Table 3 - Housing Occupancy Rates

	Richland County		Sidney		Fairview		Lambert		Savage-Crane	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Housing Occupancy										
Total Units	4,629	--	2,558	--	436	--	269	--	470	--
Occupied	4,186	90.4%	2,337	91.4%	388	89.0%	219	81.4%	436	92.8%
Owner	2,835	67.7%	1,453	62.2%	244	62.9%	179	81.7%	255	58.5%
Rental	1,351	32.3%	884	37.8%	144	37.1%	40	18.3%	181	41.5%
Vacant	443	9.6%	221	8.6%	48	11.0%	50	18.6%	34	7.2%
Vacancy Rate										
Owner	--	0.0%	--	0.0%	--	0.0%	--	0.0%	--	0.0%
Rental	--	3.7%	--	3.7%	--	9.5%	--	7.0%	--	0.0%

SOURCE: US CENSUS 2010, ACS 2012



Figure 24 - Housing Occupancy Trends



SOURCE: US CENSUS 2010, ACS 2012

Projected Trends

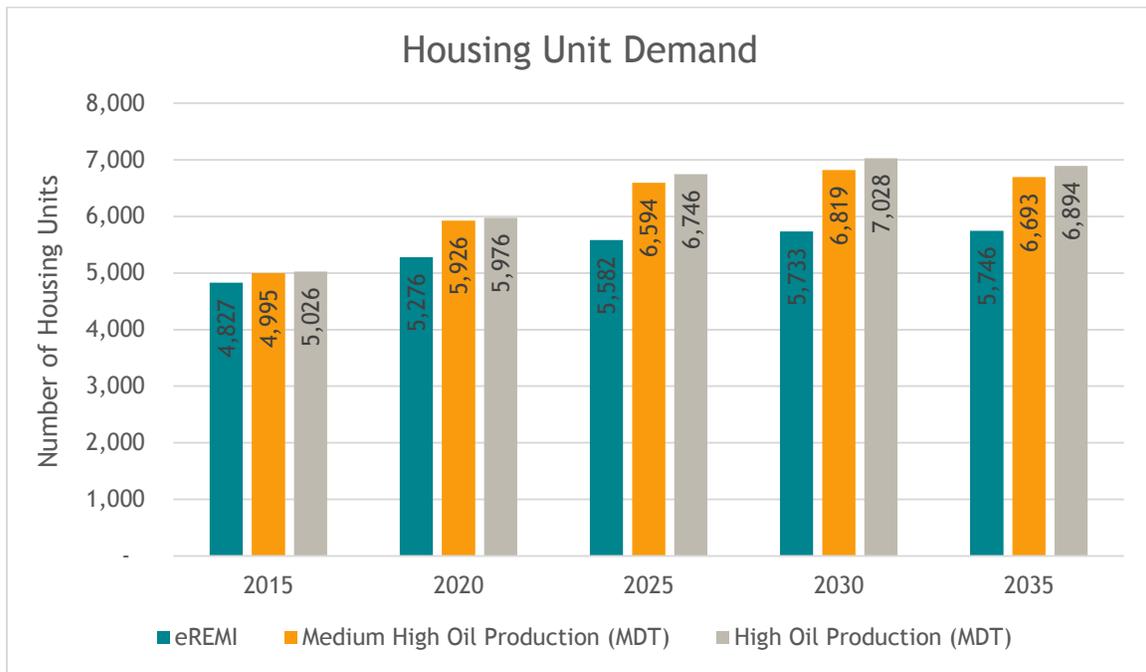
In 2009, the Montana Department of Commerce (MT-DOC) prepared a housing needs assessment that analyzed future trends for housing occupancy types. The most striking trend is the steady increase in the number of housing units (occupied and rental) with unmet needs - overcrowding, severe overcrowding, cost burden, severe cost burden, incomplete plumbing facilities or incomplete kitchen facilities - especially for the elderly and those below 50 percent median family income. Approximately 140 elderly households and more than 150 family households will have unmet housing needs through year 2030. This number is staggering and will likely rise as elderly and low-income residents continue to be financially burdened from the oil and gas development in the Bakken.

While the data also indicates a steady increase in the number of units needed, it does not match what Richland County is experiencing. The County's revised future housing demand was calculated using population projections provided by Census Economic and Information Center (CEIC) specific to Eastern Montana, and the 2010 average household size for Richland County. While the average household size will undoubtedly change throughout the years, this estimate is a better indicator than the 2009 MT-DOC assessment; however, both projections should be used to determine impacts to the County.

Richland County will need approximately 5,700 - 6,900 new housing units to simply meet demand from population growth forecasts; this does not include units in poor condition (898 units) that will also need replacement. The County will likely need 6,500 - 8,000 new housing units by 2030 to meet population demand, which also accounts for units in poor condition that will need to be replaced. Population projections from the State Census Economic and Information Center (CEIC) do not include forecasts for cities or towns; therefore, it is not possible to predict the number of new housing units needed for each community.



Figure 25 - Housing Demand per Population Forecast Estimates



SOURCE: MONTANA CENSUS & ECONOMIC INFORMATION CENTER, US CENSUS 2010

Housing Conditions

The majority of housing structures built in Richland County and all four communities was constructed more than 30 years ago (prior to 1980) and more than 85 percent of all units were constructed prior to 1990. The aging housing stock has led to deteriorating structures and decreasing living standards in some communities as noted in several stakeholder interviews and public input meetings. Moreover, as elderly residents continue to live alone, their ability to maintain structures become more difficult and structures become more deficient year after year.

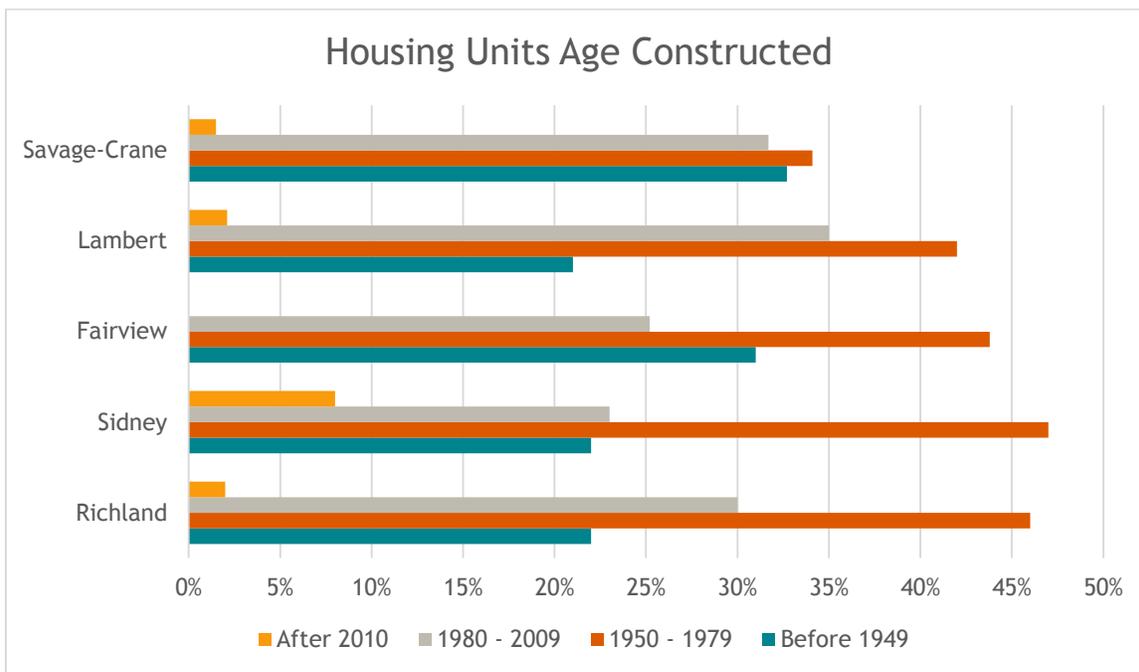
MT-DOC conducted a housing study (Montana Housing White Paper) in 2012 to assess the condition of units across the State. Similar to the 2009 Assessment Study, the 2012 White Paper analyzed conditions of structures within Richland County and developed a unit condition profile; neither study drilled down to the city or town level.

Nearly 900 units are in poor condition - unit is undesirable and barely useable - throughout Richland County. This is approximately 20 percent of all units in Richland County that are classified as poor condition. Because of low vacancy rates, high demand for housing and increasing prices, many residents have no choice but to live in sub-standard conditions.

Additionally, the 2010 Richland County Land Trust study identified nearly one-fourth of all housing units in the County were classified as unsound and in very poor to poor condition. Therefore, the trend of poor housing has likely contributed to the lack of affordable, quality units especially in the rental market as noted in the 2010 Land Trust study.

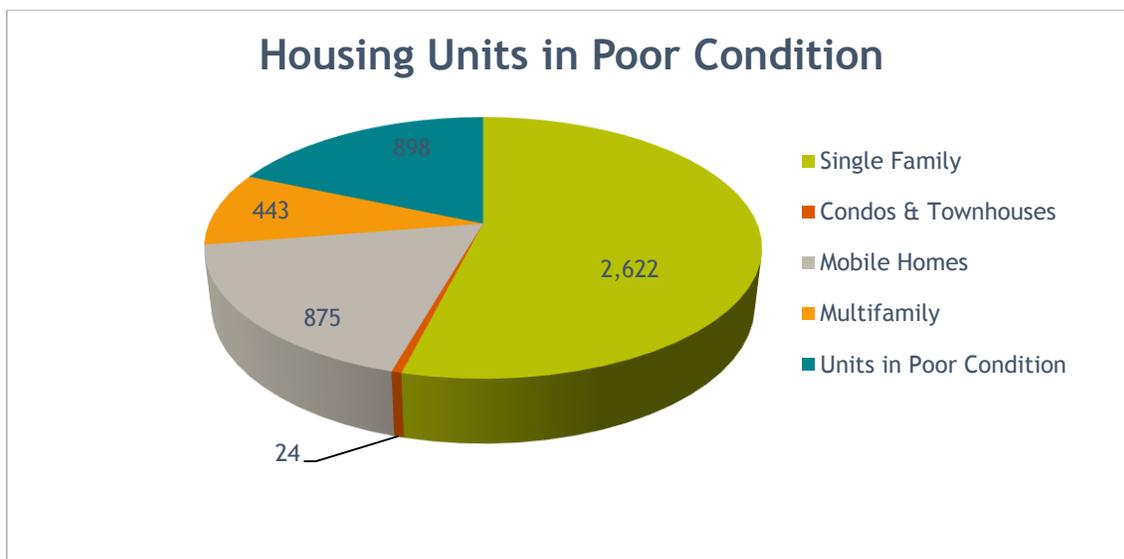


Figure 26 - Housing Units Constructed by Age



SOURCE: US CENSUS 2010, ACS 2012 AND CITY OF SIDNEY BUILDING PERMIT INFORMATION

Figure 27 - Number of Housing Units in Poor Condition in Richland County



SOURCE: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, HOUSING WHITE PAPER 2012



Projected Trends

Unit condition trends are difficult to forecast. Savage and Lambert have experienced little growth in new home construction; however, the Lambert School did construct a new housing subdivision for teachers. Currently six homes have been developed as well as a triplex. Savage is experiencing slow growth in new home construction; similar to Fairview and Lambert, Savage has few open lots and wastewater limitations have limited new home development. Until wastewater systems in all three communities are upgraded to allow for additional capacity, new residential development will remain stagnated. As such, housing stock will continue to age and deteriorate thus requiring even more new housing or repairs to meet the increasing demand for housing in the County. More information regarding housing conditions can be found in the 2010 Richland County Community Land Trust study.

Table 4 - Richland County Project Unmet Housing Needs

	2015		2020		2025		2030	
	Owner	Renter	Owner	Renter	Owner	Renter	Owner	Renter
Total Units	2631	1008	2638	1012	2667	1023	2718	1042
Total Unmet Housing Needs	495	190	497	191	503	193	512	196
50% below MFI								
Elderly/Other	136	95	136	95	137	95	139	99
Small HH	127	57	128	58	130	58	132	60
Large HH	27	4	27	4	27	4	27	4
50.1% - 80% MFI								
Elderly/Other	46	8	46	8	46	8	47	8
Small HH	66	10	66	10	66	10	68	10
Large HH	19	0	19	0	19	0	19	0
80.1% - 95% MFI								
Elderly/Other	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Small HH	23	0	23	0	24	0	24	0
Large HH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

SOURCE: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE; HOUSING ASSESSMENT 2009

Housing Price

The MT-DOC 2009 housing needs assessment noted that cost of land, labor and materials, condition of rental housing and NIMBYism (Not in My Back Yard) were the greatest factors in developing affordable housing. In addition, local stakeholder interviews noted that labor costs for construction have risen as much as 200 percent in some instances. Building materials have risen between 20 - 50 percent according to phone interviews conducted in March 2014. These factors and costs are directly transferred onto the future home buyer or renter in the form of increased housing and rental prices.

Affordability

The 2012 White Paper analyzed housing affordability for community across eastern Montana as well as what a typical employee could afford within the County. The results are staggering. The median single-family housing cost in 2012 was \$337,500; in 2010 the estimated median cost was \$112,500. Prices increased more than \$220,000 or 200 percent in less than two years. In addition, as noted in the 2012 White Paper, "Home purchase prices have soared; a three-bedroom home that was \$75,000 a few years



ago (2009) sold for \$280,000 (2012) while a 16' by 80' trailer on a 100 foot lot sold for \$180,000. Price increases such as these are not sustainable nor affordable.

Table 5 - Housing Unit Cost Comparison in Eastern Montana

	Daniels	Dawson	Fallon	Richland	Roosevelt	Sheridan	Wibaux
Single Family Median Home Cost	\$75,000	\$330,000	\$165,000	\$337,500	\$187,500	\$169,500	\$108,000
Condos & Townhomes Median Appraised Value	\$0	\$386,145	\$0	\$174,990	\$94,530	\$175,620	\$110,280
Manufactured Home Median Appraised Value	\$61,290	\$92,670	\$195,960	\$50,805	\$70,080	\$91,710	\$56,640
1 Bedroom Rental Cost	\$1,485	\$1,485	\$1,485	\$1,485	\$1,485	\$1,485	\$1,485
2 Bedroom Rental Cost	\$1,764	\$1,764	\$1,764	\$1,764	\$1,764	\$1,764	\$1,764

SOURCE: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, HOUSING WHITE PAPER 2012

Rental costs have also risen dramatically. One-bedroom rents are nearly \$1,500 per month and two-bedroom costs exceed \$1,700; in 2010 rental prices were just below \$500 and \$600 for one- and two-bedroom units respectively. The Richland County Housing Authority (RCHA) commissioned a study that analyzed rents across the County; the study was completed as part of their due diligence for constructing new affordable and low-income rental projects.

According to RCHA's study, in 2013 vacancy rates for market units were 1.5 percent and 0.0 percent for low-income units (314 units surveyed). Average rental prices for market units were as follows:

- » 1 bed/1 bath: \$1,000
- » 2 bed/2 bath: \$1,962
- » 2 bed/1 bath: \$966
- » 3 bed/2 bath: \$1,675

Table 6 - Housing Cost Changes 2008-2012; Median Appraised Values

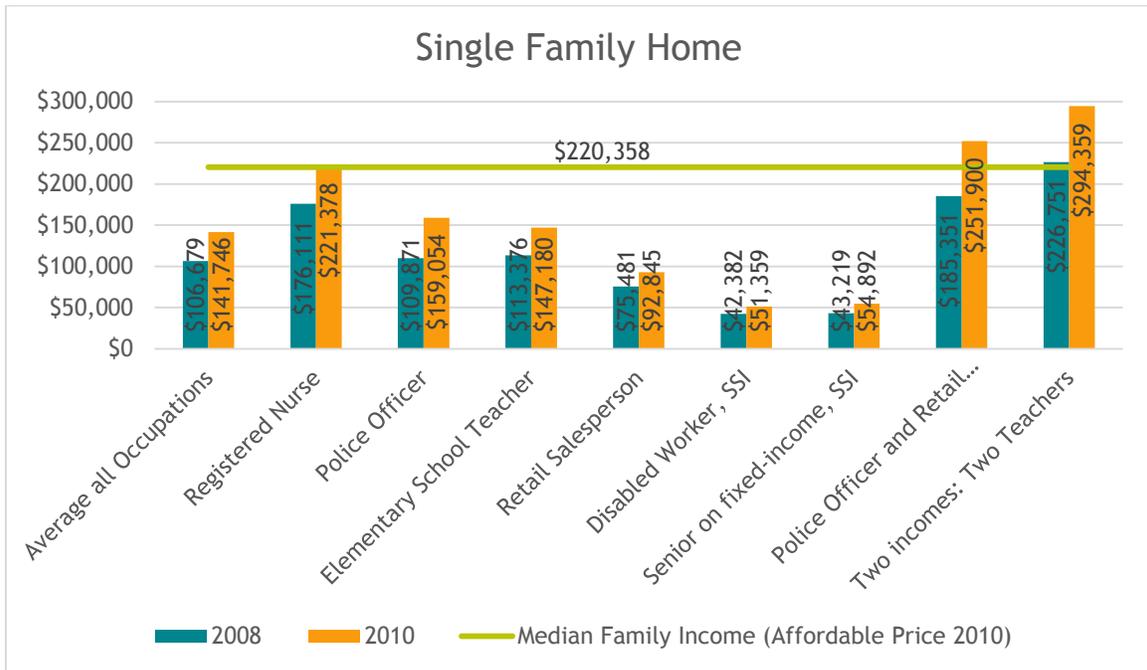
	2008	2010	2012	Percent Change (2008 - 2012)
Single Family Home	\$92,500	\$112,500	\$337,500	265%
Condos & Townhomes	\$58,330	\$58,330	\$174,990	200%
Manufactured Home	\$16,800	\$16,935	\$50,805	202%
1 Bedroom Rental	\$467	\$495	\$1,485	218%
2 Bedroom Rental	\$555	\$588	\$1,764	218%

SOURCE: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, HOUSING WHITE PAPER 2012

Projected Trends

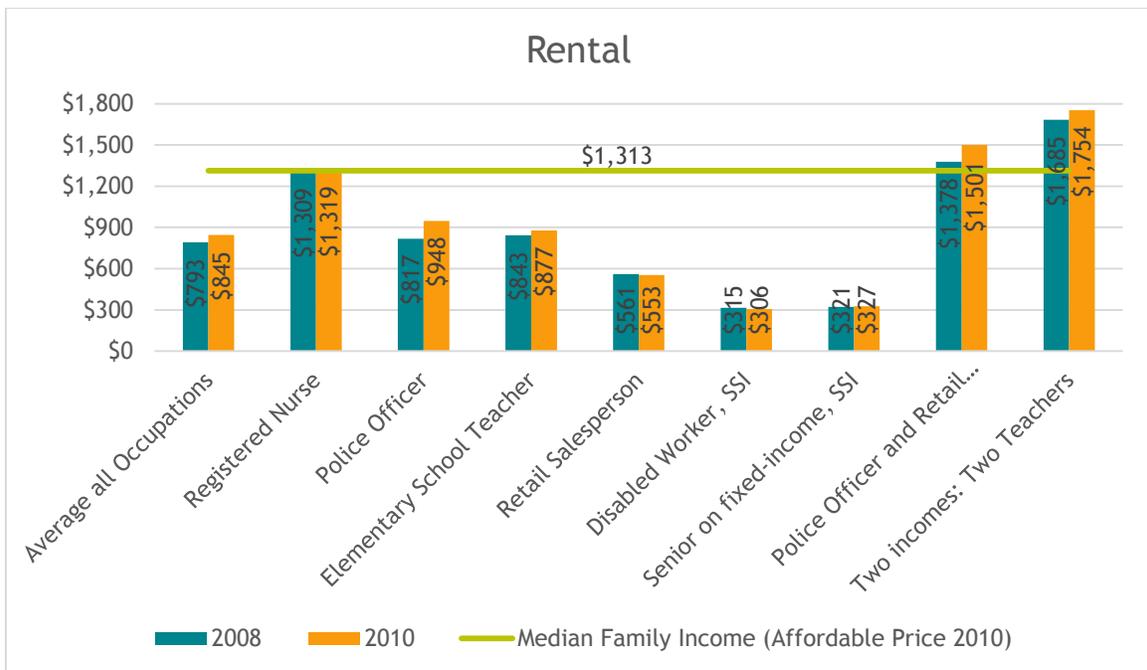
Affordability will continue to be the greatest housing issue facing Richland County residents. MT-DOC's analysis of affordable jobs shows that only three profession categories can pay the affordable price for a single-family home or rental unit; two categories require both people to work full-time to be able to pay for an affordable unit. With the increased demand for housing and the market still "catching up" to demand, affordability will be an issue for at least the next couple years. However, two different realtors noted that prices are tending to coming down (in Sidney) due to the new multifamily housing projects that have been developed in the past two years. Prices would need to drop significantly, more than 200 percent to be at year 2008 levels, before the oil boom hit.

Figure 28 - Single Family Housing Affordability, 2012



SOURCE: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, HOUSING WHITE PAPER 2012

Figure 29 - Rental Housing Affordability, 2012



SOURCE: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, HOUSING WHITE PAPER 2012



Temporary Housing

Temporary housing has become a significant issue for all communities in Richland County, including the County itself. While not as high of a priority as affordability, quality or even some community features (trails, community event center); it has raised questions as to how best accommodate transient populations. Richland County adopted workforce housing zoning and adopted Buildings for Rent or Lease regulations to help guide temporary housing development. The substantial increase in the number of mobile home subdivisions, RV units, trailers, campers, skit units and FEMA -type trailers has pressured all jurisdictions to enact resolutions or ordinances to deal with the growing problem of unauthorized temporary housing units.

Mobile Homes and RV Parks

As of January 1, 2014 Richland County had 116 mobile home/RV parks with two or more units. Most parks are not in compliance with local regulations as only 18 are licensed and 14 were approved or conditionally approved. Sidney has seven licensed mobile home/RV parks; only one was conditionally approved. Fairview has one mobile home subdivision. Average RV spaces per camp range from 20 to 80 units.

Savage and Lambert were was experiencing temporary housing unit development on multiple fronts including parking units on the street, connecting to existing property owner's sewer or water hookups, dumping sewage into storm drains and constructing semi-permanent structures in open areas on parcels with existing homes and/or structures. Several stakeholders and community members noted that the biggest concern is the health, welfare and safety of these structures for long-term use as they were never intended for more than 180 days of consecutive use (mobile homes only exception) and the illegal sewage disposal at some sites.

As noted by the County Planner, rates for workforce housing have significantly increased resulting in more landowners willing to rent spaces to capitalize on the market. However, the vast majority of these uses are not permitted and do not meet DEQ standards. Mobile home and RV spaces typically rented for \$65 per month in 2008 and in early 2014 ranged from \$550 - \$900 per month.



LONG-TERM USE OF RV UNITS



SEWAGE DISPOSAL ISSUES ON SITE



IMPROPER SPACING AND ROAD/DRAINAGE ISSUES



Crew Camps

The goal of crew camps - specifically designed housing developments for oilfield workers - and workforce housing is to construct a temporary housing development that can relieve pressure from the housing market and that can be reused or deconstructed once the housing crisis has subsided. The County did enact workforce housing zoning to help guide future development of crew camps. Additionally, Sidney is updating its zoning code to allow for workforce housing or crew camp type quarters on existing industrial or commercial lots. Crew camps range from 30 to 200 units (2 camps with 600+ beds).



PROPER CREW CAMP UNIT DEVELOPMENT

Projected Trends

Rates for RV and mobile home units have decreased from a peak of \$1200 per month to \$550 - \$900 per month. The number of reviewed applications has dropped from its peak in 2012. However, until the supply of permanent housing structures increases to meet demand, the need for low-cost housing will drive the need for temporary housing units especially as rental prices continue to exceed \$1200 per month. Richland County should continue to revise codes to ensure temporary housing units meet minimum safety standards, but have a place to develop for those individuals who cannot afford homes or rental units.



IMPROPER CREW CAMP SPACING AND DEVELOPMENT

Special Needs Housing

Special needs housing - housing for seniors, disabled, and homeless persons - is in high demand as a result of the increased housing prices. During three of the four public input meetings throughout the County, housing for special needs was referenced especially for those on fixed incomes. As the County's population ages, it becomes more difficult for seniors to manage household repairs and pay increased rental prices. As referenced in the 2009 MT-DOS Housing Assessment Study, the County will have more than 180 elderly households with unmet housing needs. Moreover, seniors and individuals on fixed incomes are more than \$900 below the median affordable rental price and more than \$150,000 below the median affordable housing purchase price; both of which are nearly impossible to overcome.

Existing housing dedicated to seniors or others with special needs include:

- » Crestwood Inn—housing for low-income seniors
- » Sunrise Manor—assisted living facility in Savage
- » Lodge at Lone Tree—assisted living facility in Sidney
- » Sidney Health Center—93-bed extended care facility



Low-income housing is also needed throughout the County and Richland County Housing Authority currently administers subsidized housing and low-income housing projects. The Authority currently manages 86 low income units in Sidney and Fairview, but that number is increasing as current and future projects are slated for development in Sidney.

Richland Opportunities, Inc. provides educational and residential programs to persons with disabilities in Richland County. They operate two group homes with capacity for eight persons each and a transitional living apartment complex with capacity for seven residents in four units, plus an additional unit for staff. The County does not have a homeless shelter.

Projected Trends

Special needs housing, especially for the elderly and those on fixed incomes, will be needed as rents and housing costs continue to rise throughout the county. While Richland County Housing Authority is working to construct low-income units; more housing options for an aging population will be needed to support community members that have lived in Richland County for more than 50 years.

Goals and Objectives

Goal

- » Expand housing stock choices that provide high quality and affordable units for all residents.

OBJECTIVES

- » Develop affordable housing policies that encourage affordable units such as inclusionary zoning, density bonuses (allowing more units per acre for constructing affordable housing) and fee waivers or reductions for affordable unit construction.
- » Identify state and local resources to rehabilitate housing units in poor condition.
- » Create programs to address affordable housing issues including working with state and local governments to create a housing development fund similar to North Dakota's Housing Incentive Fund (a state sponsored program whereby developers can access state funding to construct affordable housing).
- » Expand programs to rehabilitate existing housing units in good condition as noted in the 2010 Richland County Land Trust study.
- » Identify and initiate programs to address decay and assist with demolition.

Goal

- » Preserve neighborhood character by developing similar-style housing in established residential districts and promote clustering residential units near existing residences especially in rural settings.

OBJECTIVES

- » Encourage new residential development to locate in existing communities or near existing residential uses.
- » Assist communities in identifying expansion areas desirable for residential growth.
- » Promote in-fill development with historical community housing densities; locate single-family near single-family and multifamily near multifamily.
- » Utilize the future land use plan and potential zoning overlay districts in Lambert and Savage to guide residential development in appropriate areas with buffer areas as needed.
- » Discourage industrial and large-scale commercial development within established residential areas and future residentially planned growth areas.



Goal

- » Improve capabilities of low-to-moderate income persons to purchase and maintain quality-built homes.

OBJECTIVES

- » Expand the number of low-to-moderate income persons receiving assistance through education campaigns about housing programs within the County.
- » Encourage new development to include affordable housing options and provide incentives to promote affordable housing in communities.
- » Collaborate with NeighborWorks Montana and Richland County Housing Authority to utilize information from the 2010 Richland County Land Trust study to develop land trusts or similar land/rent control mechanisms such as deed restrictions or housing rehabilitation programs for households below median family income.

Goal

- » Encourage development to meet housing needs of seniors, service workers and those with disabilities.

OBJECTIVES

- » Work with Richland Opportunities, Inc. to expand number of persons assisted.
- » Collaborate with local and regional developers to construct more low-income units through policies such as reduced fees or joint housing projects with local governments.
- » Develop a local housing incentive fund and/or affordable housing program for public service workers to show as an example to other communities.
- » Identify options for additional senior housing needs (e.g., assisted living).

Goal

- » Continue historical trend of residential development primarily in existing communities with scattered homesteads in rural areas.

OBJECTIVES

- » Encourage new residential development in the county to locate in existing communities.
- » Assist communities in identifying expansion areas desirable for residential growth and capital improvement needs.
- » Promote in-fill development and historical community housing densities to maximize use of existing and future infrastructure.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Richland County has experienced significant economic growth in recent years. This growth is primarily tied to continuing development of the Bakken region in eastern Montana. Employment and income in this section are analyzed by industry. Industry groups are classified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which divides establishments into 20 industry sectors based on their primary output. This section also highlights two critical sectors for the county's economy - agriculture and energy development.

Employment

Total average employment increased by 38 percent between 2009 and 2013, from 4,856 to 6,706.

The top five industries in 2013 by employment are shown below. The mining industry, which includes business that extract naturally-occurring mineral solids, liquid minerals and gases, and includes oil-related industries such as frac sand, saltwater and rig movements leads the county in average employment.

Table 7 - Richland County Top Industries by Employment and Percent Change, 2013

Industry (Employment)	Average Employment 2009	Average Employment 2013	Percent Change
Mining	425	848	99.5%
Transportation and Warehousing	300	683	127.7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	729	653	-10.4%
Construction	347	642	85.0%
Retail Trade	514	631	22.8%
Industry (Percent Change)	Null	Null	Percent Change
Transportation and Warehousing	Based on largest employment change in terms of percent		127%
Professional and Technical Services			106%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing			100%
Mining			99%

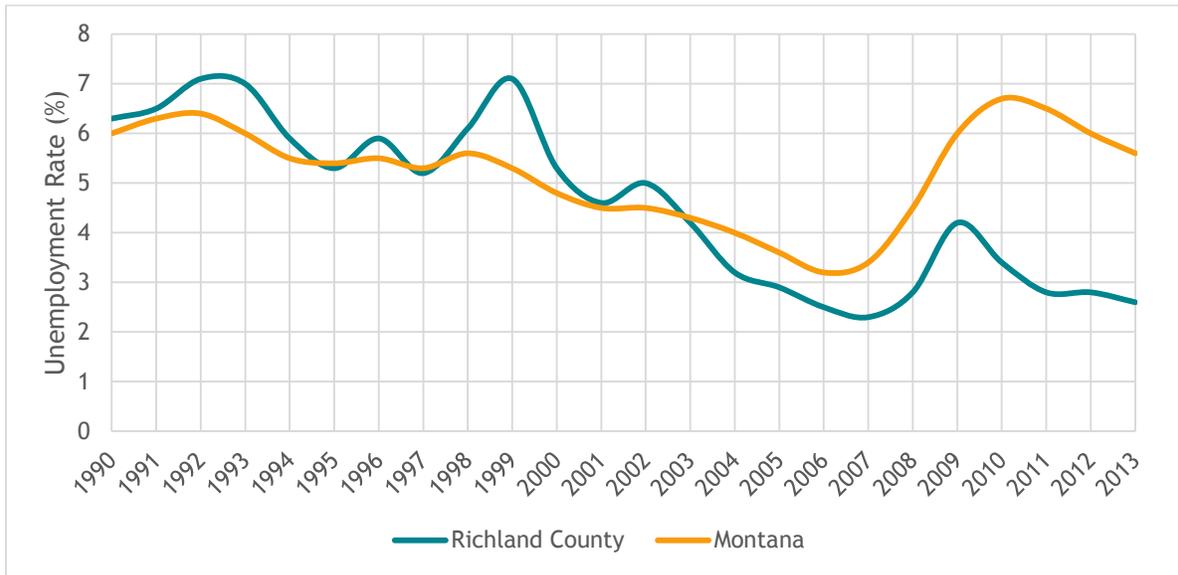
SOURCE: QUARTERLY CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES, US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

The fastest growing industries by employment percentage between 2009 and 2013 were Transportation and Warehousing (127 percent), Professional and Technical Services (106 percent), and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (100 percent). The Transportation and Warehousing industry includes businesses providing transportation of passengers and cargo, warehousing and storage for goods, scenic and sightseeing transportation and support activities related to modes of transportation. The Professional and Technical Services industry includes establishments that specialize in performing professional, scientific and technical activities for others.

Health Care and Social Assistance was the only industry with declining employment between 2009 and 2013 (-10 percent).

The county's top employers in 2012 were Agri-Industries, Franz Construction, Hurley Ent, Mitchell's Oil Field Service and Pauper Industries (Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, US Bureau of Labor Statistics). The county's unemployment rate has been consistently lower than the state since 2004. In 2013 the average annual unemployment rate in the county was 2.6%, which is generally considered to be full employment.

Figure 30 - Annual Unemployment Rate, 1990-2013



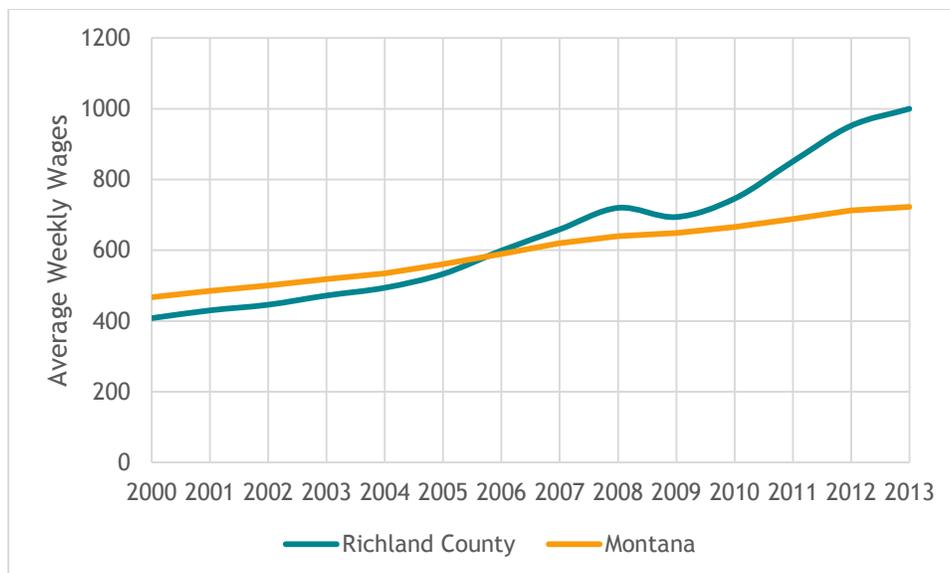
SOURCE: MT RESEARCH & ANALYSIS BUREAU

Income

Median household income for the county is \$56,050 according to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey. The county's median household income is 23 percent higher than the statewide median of \$45,456.

Average weekly wages are shown in Figure 2. Average wages in the county surpassed Montana in 2006 and have been consistently increasing since 2009. The county's average weekly wages were \$1,000 in 2013.

Figure 31 - Average Weekly Wages, 2000-2012



SOURCE: QUARTERLY CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES, US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS



The top five industries in 2013 by weekly wages are shown in Table 8. The mining industry leads the county in average weekly wage and average employment.

Table 8 - Richland County Top Five Industries by Weekly Wages, 2013

Industry	Average Weekly Wages 2009	Average Weekly Wages 2013	Percent Change
Mining	\$1,371	\$1,707	24.5%
Utilities	\$1,548	\$1,651	6.7%
Professional and Technical Services	\$901	\$1,550	72.0%
Wholesale Trade	\$837	\$1,369	63.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	\$1,016	\$1,291	27.1%

SOURCE: QUARTERLY CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES, US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

The fastest growing wages by industry between 2009 and 2013 were Professional and Technical Services (72%), Other Services (69%) and Wholesale Trade (64 percent). The Other Services industry includes a variety of businesses not otherwise classified, including equipment and machinery repairing, promoting or administering religious activities, advocacy, and providing dry cleaning and laundry services, personal care services, pet care services, photofinishing services, temporary parking services and dating services.

The slowest growing wages by industry between 2009 and 2013 were Utilities (7 percent), Information (8 percent), and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (14 percent). The utilities industry includes businesses that provide telecommunications, electric power, natural gas, steam supply, water supply and sewage removal.

High wages in energy-related industries may be hindering growth in lower paying service industries. For example, while total employment and wages increased in the Retail Trade industry between 2009 and 2013, the total number of establishments decreased from 55 to 51. This suggests that businesses are hesitant to open new establishments, or that the opening of new establishments is offset by the closure of existing establishments.

Sixteen percent of county residents are living below the poverty level according to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey. The county's poverty rate is slightly higher than the statewide rate of 15 percent.

Agriculture

The county's agriculture industry is summarized in and was the primary industry prior to the energy extraction growth. The number of farms, land in farms and size of farms remained relatively stable between 2007 and 2012. The market value of crops sold increased by 76 percent and value of livestock and related products decreased by 15 percent. The average value of products sold per farm increased by 31 percent.

Table 9 - Richland County Agriculture Summary

	2007	2012	Percent Change
Number of Farms	548	544	-0.7%
Land in Farms	1,279,300 acres	1,293,012 acres	1.1%
Average Size of Farm	2,334 acres	2,377 acres	1.8%
Market Value of Products Sold	\$126,399,000	\$139,166,000	10.1%
Crops	\$53,188,000	\$93,696,000	76.2%
Livestock, Poultry & their Products	\$53,769,000	\$45,470,000	-15.4%
Average per Farm	\$195,177	\$255,821	31.1%

SOURCE: 2012 USDA AGRICULTURAL CENSUS

Spring wheat accounts for nearly 56 percent of harvested acreage in the county, followed by hay (19 percent) and winter wheat (8 percent). Sugar beets, a key crop in the Yellowstone River Valley, accounts for 5 percent of the county's harvested acreage. Cattle and calves make up a large majority of the county's livestock industry (National Agricultural Statistics Service 2013 Field Survey).

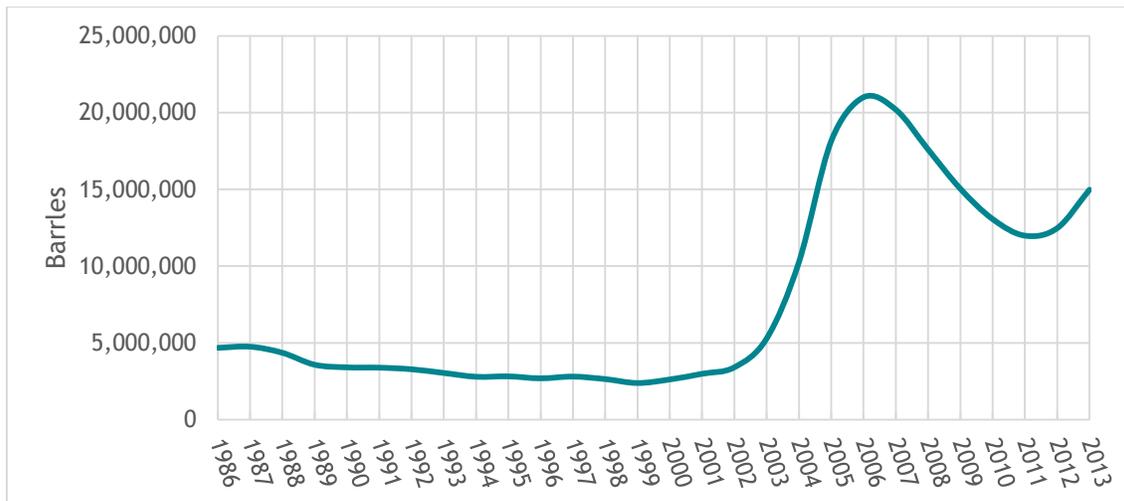
The most fertile area in the county lies along the western banks of the Yellowstone River, and was created by the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project. The project, initially completed in 1909, constructed a primary irrigation canal of 71.6 miles to bring diverted water from the Yellowstone River to nearby fields. The project has 225 miles of lateral canals that run along the western banks of the Yellowstone River and provide irrigation to 52,000 acres of farmland in the counties of Richland, Dawson, and McKenzie (North Dakota). The LYIP is instrumental in keeping the agricultural base afloat in the County; however, recent development patterns have begun to interfere with the effectiveness of the LYIP's ability to maintain canal, laterals and ditches for agricultural lands.

Soils classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as prime farmland with minimal irrigation are shown in Figure 33. There are approximately 400,000 acres of prime farmland in Richland County.

Energy Development

Oil production in the county is shown in Figure 29. Production peaked at 21 million barrels in 2006, declined to 12 million in 2011, and increased to 15 million in 2013.

Figure 32 - Oil Production in Richland County 1986-2013



SOURCE: MT BOARD OF OIL AND GAS CONSERVATION

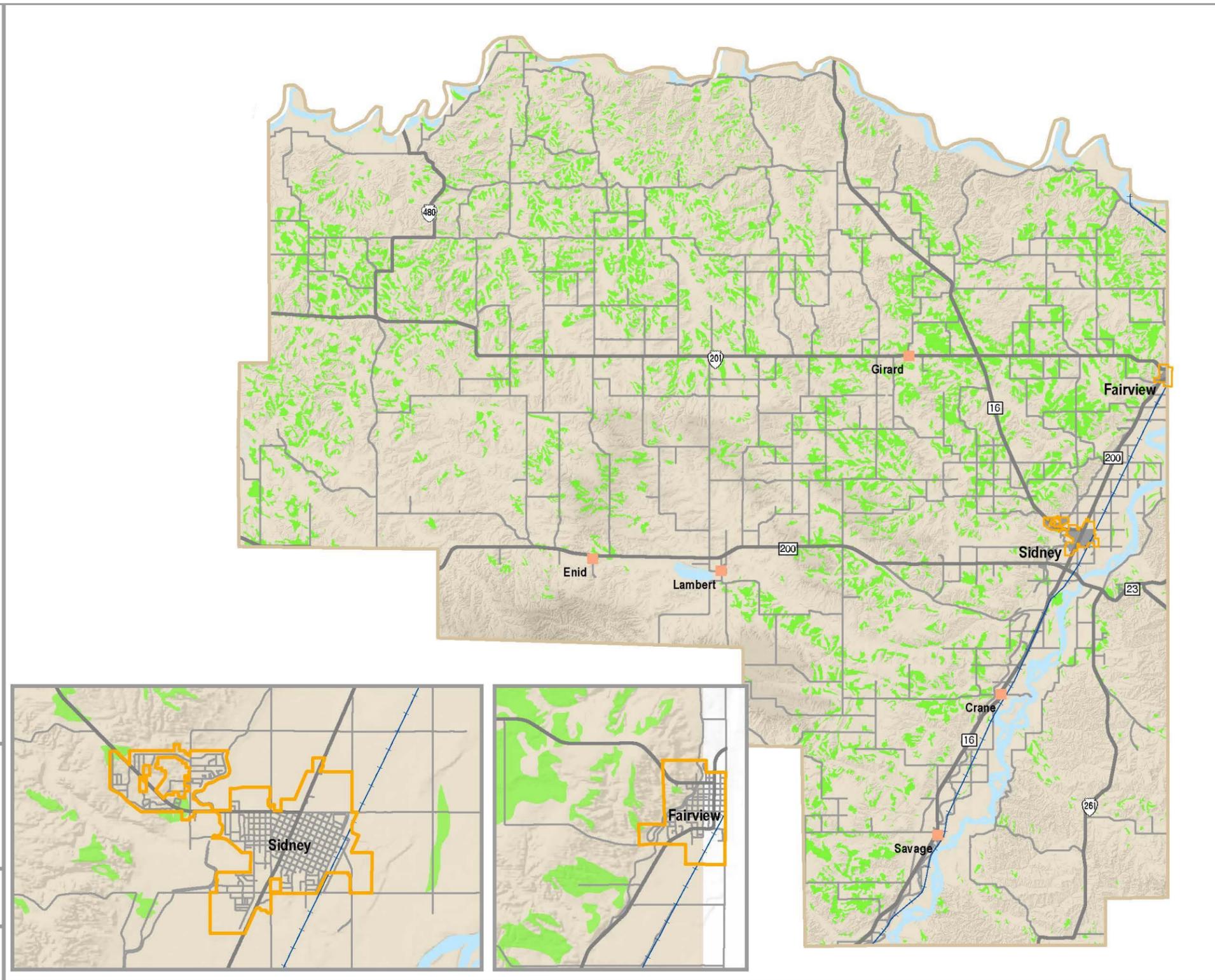


Figure 33 - Prime Farmland in Richland County

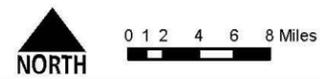
Figure Prime Farmland

-  Farmland of Statewide Importance
-  Incorporated Communities
-  Unincorporated Communities

Note: Farmland of Statewide Importance identified in the USDA National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database. No soils identified as Prime Farmland are located in the county.
Source: NRCS SSURGO Database
For Planning Purposes Only



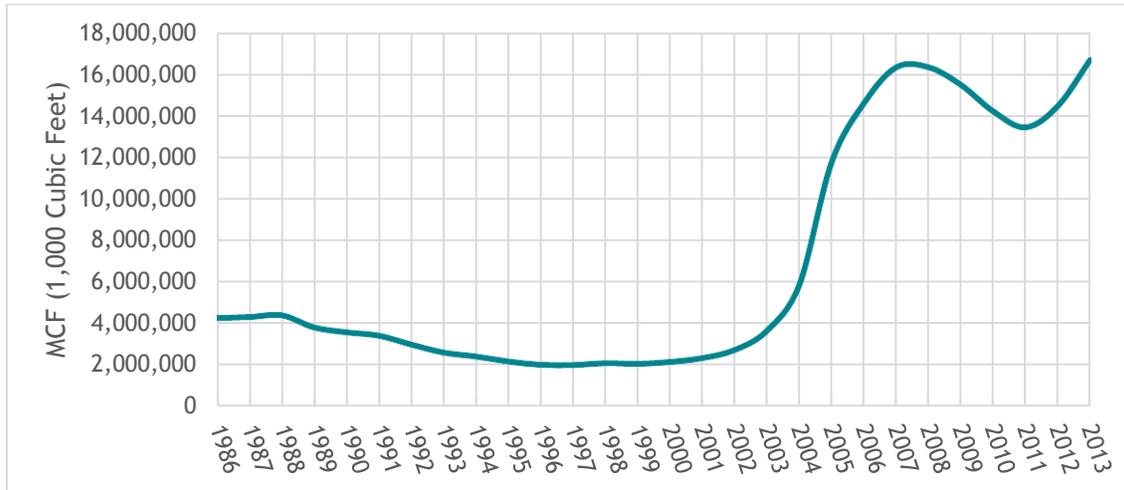
Richland County, MT





The MT Board of Oil and Gas Conservation does not track natural gas extraction from dedicated wells in Richland County; however it does track natural gas extraction occurring in the form of associated gas, which is natural gas produced in association with crude oil. Associated gas production is shown in Figure 30. Production reached record levels in 2013 at almost 17 million MCF.

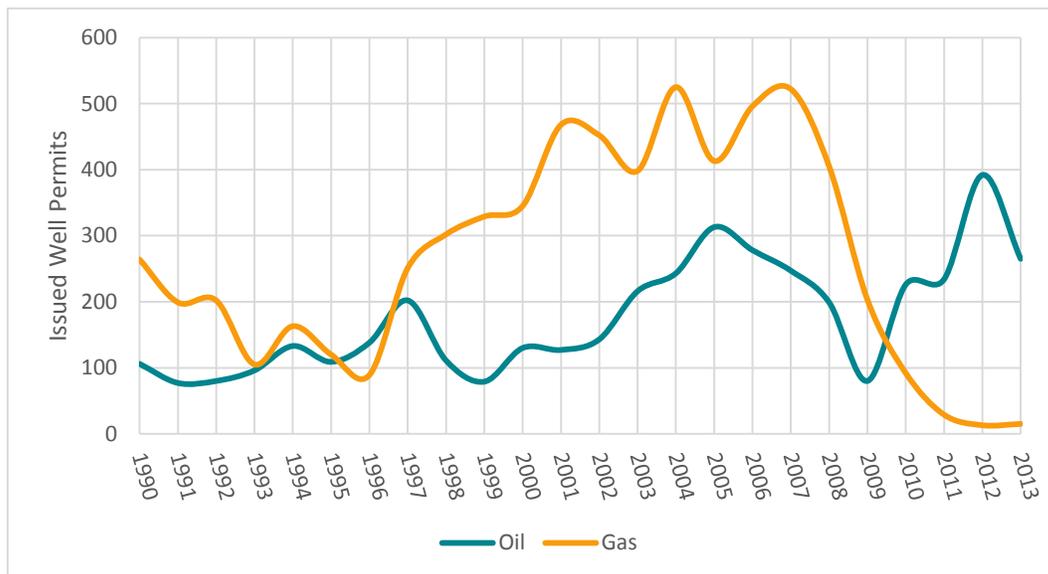
Figure 34 - Associated Gas Production in Richland County 1986-2013



SOURCE: MT BOARD OF OIL AND GAS CONSERVATION

Issued well permits are shown in Figure 31. Gas permits peaked at 525 in 2004, but have significantly decreased in recent years. There were 15 gas permits issued in 2013. Oil permits peaked in 2012 at 392. They declined to 265 in 2013.

Figure 35 - Issued Well Permits in Richland County, 1990-2013



SOURCE: MT BOARD OF OIL AND GAS CONSERVATION



There were 1,122 producing wells in Richland County as of June 3, 2014 according to the MT Board of Oil and Gas Conservation.

Richland County lies adjacent to North Dakota which contains the vast majority of the Bakken. According to the North Dakota Department of Mineral Resources, a typical Bakken well will produce for 45 years. It will produce approximately 615,000 barrels of oil, generate a \$20 million net profit, pay royalties of \$7,300,000 to mineral owners, pay salaries and wages of \$2,125,000 and pay \$4,325,000 in taxes (based on North Dakota tax structure).



OIL RIG NORTHEAST OF SIDNEY

Projected Trends

While it is difficult to project oil prices, which directly relates to energy development and the speed and amount of energy extraction, it is estimated that the Williston Basin will be a long-term oil and gas play lasting up to 45 years depending upon technological advances in oil drilling.

Economic Development Organizations

Richland Economic Development Corporation is a countywide non-profit organization. It participates in a variety of activities, most notably completion of the county's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS includes a countywide strategic plan and development strategy. An approved CEDS allows the county to be eligible for certain types of federal funding.

SAVAGE Inc. promotes community and economic development in Savage. Lambert does not currently have an economic development organization; however, Richland Economic Development Corporation provides services for Lambert.

Targeted Economic Development Districts (TEDD)

The County can utilize TEDDs in creating a new economic sector or helping to revitalize an existing economic area that requires some form of assistance whether it be infrastructure improvements, funding or studies to make a new economy thrive with value added industries. The TEDD can only be used in the County and cannot cross jurisdictional boundaries. The TEDD must follow state law.

Tax Increment Finance District (TIF)

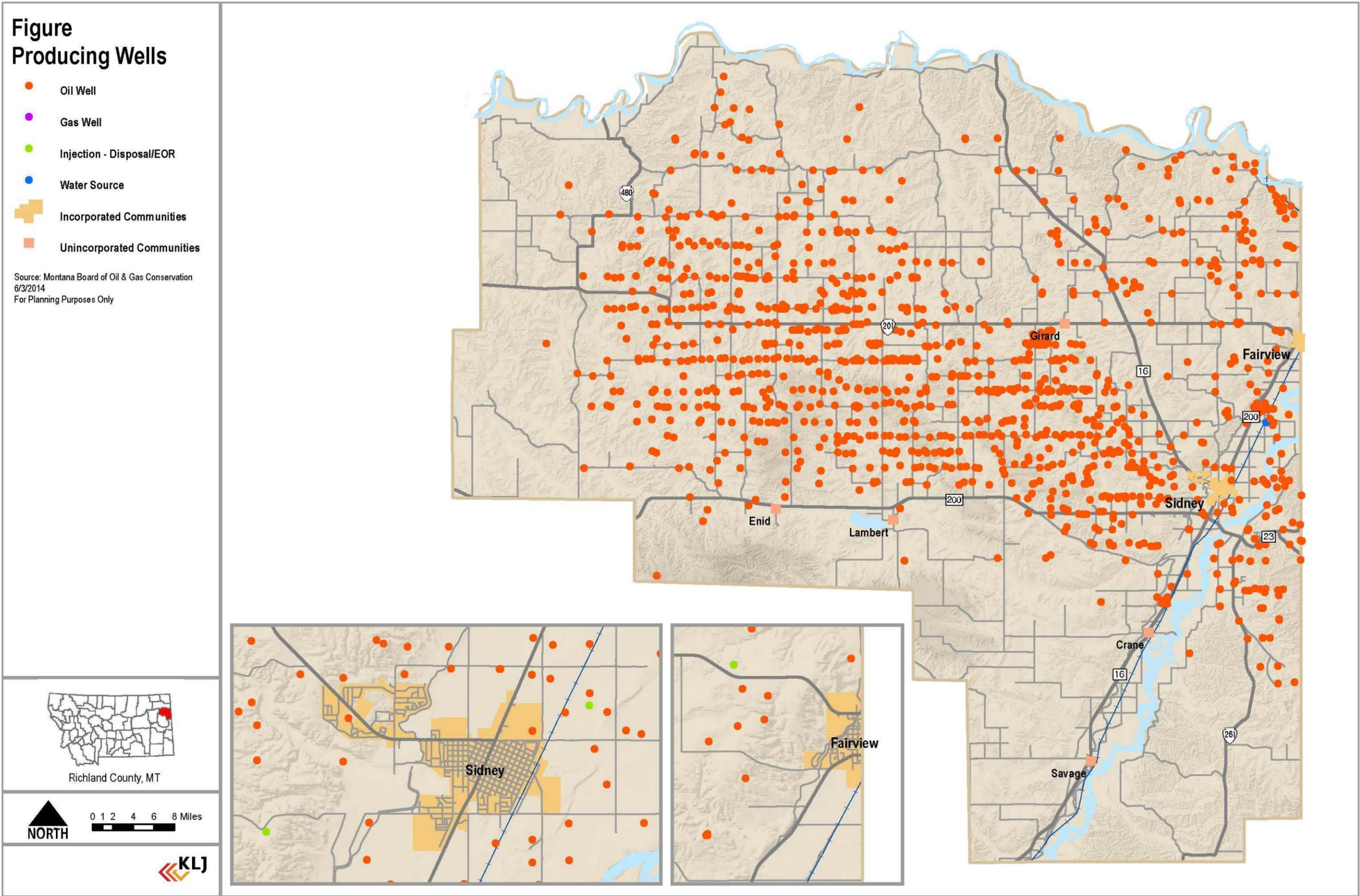
Richland County can utilize TIF funding to help finance the improvements identified in a TEDD or another area outside a TEDD. However, the County must follow state law when establishing a TIF and it can only be used to offset costs associated with improvements within the district.

Projected Trends

The economy in the County is growing although it has become more dependent on the energy sector. The county has begun to help attract and retain businesses that diversify the local economy while still keeping agricultural businesses and manufacturing as important economic bases.



Figure 36 - Location of Producing Wells





Goals and Objectives

Goal

- » Continue developing a sustainable and diversified economic base including energy development and secondary-value added businesses.

OBJECTIVES

- » Expand and diversify businesses through policy and implementation funding tools such as tax increment financing (TIF) and targeted economic development districts (TEDD) that support secondary value added industries.
- » Coordinate economic development with land use, natural resources, capital improvement programs and local community values regarding economic development.
- » Evaluate effect of specific development proposals on community character and health prior to committing public resources.
- » Identify and quantify the county's resources and infrastructure that may be needed for new industry. Use as a legislative tool when seeking grant funding or support from the State Legislature and Governor's Office.
- » Target "main street" businesses and encourage infill development as appropriate in all communities.

Goal

Support existing businesses through expanding county capacity to provide needed infrastructure to support a strong economy.

OBJECTIVES

- » Continue to work at the state level to safeguard allocation of oil production taxes for impacts in the county.
- » Balance expenditures of oil and gas revenues between construction and infrastructure projects and long-term needs.
- » Collaborate with cities and local communities to support economic development projects including infrastructure, community amenities and housing for public-sector staff.

Goal

- » Expand the county's production of high value crops and potential for value-added industries including energy development and agri-business products.

OBJECTIVES

- » Develop the area's agricultural resources and retain/preserve existing irrigation easements and canals.
- » Develop market for new and existing agricultural businesses as well as energy development businesses including fast-tracking projects that bring sustained employment to the region.
- » Coordinate land use policies and infrastructure development (CIP) to preserve irrigation canals and expand easements where necessary.
- » Increase resources for agricultural research that supports growth of agribusinesses and improves competitiveness of growers.
- » Support LYIP, USDA-ARS and MSU Eastern Montana Research Center.



LOCAL SERVICES

Local services include aspects of a community not otherwise covered elsewhere in the Growth Policy and typically include police, fire, EMT, non-profit groups, hospitals, community/youth centers and other amenities that make Richland County unique.

Government

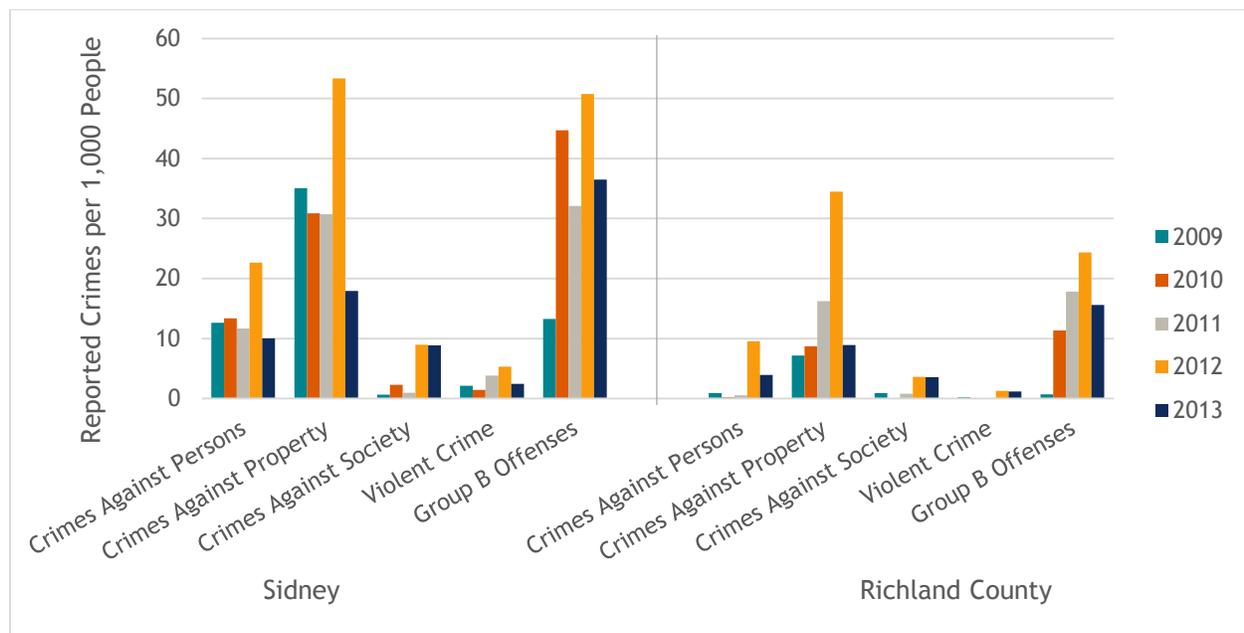
The County is a Commissioner form of government and both incorporated communities (Sidney and Fairview) are Mayor/Council form of government. The three local governments all have “general powers” of authority only; they are limited to actions only authorized by state law.

Law Enforcement

Three law enforcement providers - Richland County Sheriff, Sidney Police Department and Fairview Police department - serve and protect residents of Richland County. All three departments work well together; Sidney Police Department and the County Sheriff’s Department occupy a new law enforcement center, which was constructed in 2008.

The Montana Board of Crime Control maintains records of all crimes reported in the state. The seven major offenses (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft) peaked in 2012. Group B offenses (misdemeanor crimes) also peaked in 2012.

Figure 37 - Changes in Crime Statistics



SOURCE: MONTANA BOARD OF CRIME CONTROL



Richland County Sheriff's Office

The Richland County Sheriff's Office operates the jail, dispatch center for the county, and provides law enforcement services for the communities of Crane, Lambert, and Savage and other unincorporated areas of the county.

The dispatch center is staffed by four employees who have completed the Montana Law Enforcement Academy's (MLEA) basic course in public safety communications. County dispatchers can contact fire, emergency medical, disaster and emergency services, game wardens, and highway patrol officers. The law and justice center can hold up to 24 inmates and includes updated cells, an exercise area, offices for law enforcement personnel, adequate common space for squad rooms, evidence and records storage, justice court and offices, and a youth detention center that can hold up to eight youth per week. Currently, the youth detention center is being used for adults as the inmate population exceeds what can be accommodated in the adult cells.

The sheriff's office primarily receives calls regarding assaults, disorderly conduct, theft, DUI and drug offenses, and while the numbers have reduced since 2012, they are still well above the pre-Bakken era as noted earlier. The largest concern is finding and keeping qualified officers, especially with the cost of housing limiting where officers can live. Some deputies cannot afford to live in single-family homes and are limited to rental type housing options because of high prices.

Projected Trends

Law enforcement will continue to be a pressing issue especially hiring and retaining staff; some officers have resigned to work in the oil field where salaries are double or triple what officers currently make. Overall crime has begun to decrease slightly from 2012, but drug and alcohol related offenses and personal offense crimes such as assault continue to rise. All departments will likely need to hire staff to retain the level of service to communities and serve residents as well as work with local, state and federal agencies to leverage funds for job training and hiring of staff.

Fire/EMS/DES

Four fire departments and districts provide fire protection for Richland County. The Sidney fire marshal is the only full-time employee; all others are volunteer. The departments provide mutual aid as needed in Richland County as well as in western North Dakota.

Table 10 - Fire and EMT Data

	Capabilities	Firefighter and EMT Staff	Calls per year	Area
<i>Sidney Fire Department</i>	Structural, wildland, hazardous materials, and oil rig fires	30-32 FF 20 EMT	115 (includes city-county fire)	Serves both city and county areas; 13 stations located on farms/ranches across the county
<i>Lambert Fire District</i>	Wildland fire	15-20 FF 6 EMT	20-25	Includes Lambert, Enid and surrounding areas
<i>Savage Fire Department</i>	Structural and wildland	22 FF 9 EMT	15-20	Savage and surrounding area west of the Yellowstone River
<i>Fairview Fire Department</i>	Structural, wildland, basic life support and rescue services	18-22 FF 14 EMT	50-70	Fairview and surrounding area



Sidney Fire Department

The Sidney Fire Department responds to fires in Sidney and throughout the county and has 13 equipment stations in various locations. The equipment at these stations is aging and is currently on a replacement schedule to continue a high rating from the Insurance Services Office (ISO rating). However, having a CIP would greatly enhance the department's ability to plan for long-term resources. The largest concern facing the department is the upgrade from a volunteer to full-staffed department. If Sidney continues to grow past 7,500 residents, the Sidney Fire Department will have to be staff fulltime to provide 24-hour coverage. The County and City of Sidney are working together to construct a new fire hall that would service Sidney and Richland County areas by having a centralized location for vehicles and staff.

Fairview Fire Department

The Fairview Fire Department is also a volunteer staff that responds to EMS response calls, rescue, and wildfires. The department has experienced an increasing traffic-related accidents as a result of traffic between Williston and Sidney. Similar to Sidney, the Fairview Fire Hall will require replacement or an upgrade to the existing facility in the next 10 years to meet growing demands.

Ambulance/EMS

The Richland County Ambulance Service is a county service operated by Sidney Health Center. The County buys and owns the vehicles and the hospital stocks supplies. Approximately 50 nationally registered emergency medical technicians (EMTs), all volunteers, are located in Sidney, Fairview, Savage, and Lambert; ambulance vehicles are also located in Fairview, Lambert and Savage.

The number of ambulance calls has nearly doubled the first half of 2014 and is expected to exceed 700-800 calls; in 2012 and 2013 the ambulance service responded to approximately 450 - 500 calls. The majority of responses are trauma injuries, particularly traffic accidents and more elderly-related emergencies.

Difficulties include recruiting volunteers and response times from staff that live far from stationed vehicles.

Disaster and Emergency Services

Richland County has a Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) Coordinator. The DES Coordinator is responsible for the Local Emergency Operations Plan, the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) (completed in 2014) and continues to work with the Sheriff's office to update and maintain the county's emergency 911 system.

As noted in the 2014 MHMP, hazardous material shipments - oil, gas, chemicals - are a growing concern for the County especially as oilfield development continues to grow in relation to the Bakken. The closest HAZMAT team is located in Billings, which is a four-hour drive. The DES coordinator is analyzing current trends to determine if an eastern Montana HAZMAT team can be created to service counties impacted by oil and gas development. However, several concerns such as staffing, training, funding and location of team members need to be addressed before a formal request can begin.

Projected Trends

Hazardous material shipments via train and truck are increasing throughout the County as noted in the 2014 MHMP, which outlines a strategy for potential forming an eastern Montana HAZMAT team to respond to oil, gas, chemical and other hazardous material spills, accidents and fires. The ability to service hazardous accidents is a growing concern for local law enforcement and fire department personnel, especially since the closest response team is four hours away in Billings.



Education

Educational facilities in Richland County include elementary and secondary facilities (K-12); the County does not have a post-secondary facility. The closest college is Dawson Community College in Glendive.

Student enrollment, especially at the elementary schools, has skyrocketed for most communities. Sidney (65 new students), Fairview (23), Lambert (5) and Savage (5) all experienced significant growth in elementary schools. Middle and high school enrollment data show a steady trend.

Table 11 - Richland County School Enrollments

School	Grades Served	2013-2014 Enrollment	2012-2013 Enrollment	2011-2012 Enrollment
Brorson				
Brorson Elementary	PK-6	11	10	7
Brorson Public Schools Total Enrollment:		11	10	7
Fairview				
Fairview Elementary	PK-6	156	133	136
Fairview 7-8	7-8	50	39	37
Fairview High School	9-12	101	96	103
Fairview Public Schools Total Enrollment:		307	268	276
Lambert				
Lambert Elementary	PK-6	68	63	43
Lambert 7-8	7-8	21	16	20
Lambert High School	9-12	45	39	33
Lambert Public Schools Total Enrollment:		134	118	96
Rau				
Rau Elementary	PK-6	78	77	68
Rau Public Schools Total Enrollment:		78	77	68
Savage				
Savage Elementary	PK-6	69	64	46
Savage 7-8	7-8	17	20	16
Savage High School	9-12	35	33	31
Savage Public Schools Total Enrollment:		121	117	93
Sidney				
West Side School	PK-5	665	600	548
Sidney Middle School	6-8	313	283	306
Sidney High School	9-12	402	402	371
Sidney Public Schools Total Enrollment:		1380	1285	1225
Richland County Total Enrollment:		2031	1875	1765

SOURCE: MONTANA OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



Lambert Schools

Lambert’s school district recently developed a teacher only housing subdivision across the high school to combat the high housing prices. Teachers are offered a single-family home as a condition of their employment; the housing transfers as teachers move so that the district can afford to hire and retain quality staff. Lambert also upgraded facilities to construct a new track and football field.

Savage Schools

Savage is also experiencing similar issues to all schools with regards to staffing. The school cannot find adequate land (price and acreage) for teacher housing; although they would like to do something similar to Lambert’s arrangement with its teacher housing subdivision.

Rural Schools

Rural schools such as Brorson and Rau elementary are doing well; however, like all the other schools in Richland County, both facilities have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified elementary teachers.

Table 12 - School Impacts from Proposed Development

Development			Projected Maximum Student Enrollment Impact	Subtotal
Sunrise Village Subdivision	183	lots	570	570
North View Subdivision	31	lots	104	674
Mayo Subdivision	31	lots	62	736
North Drive Mobile Home Court	17	lots	17	758
River View Estates	15	lots	15	773
Anderson Minor Subdivision	1	family unit	1	774
Pheasant Run Minor Subdivision	54 58	Unit Apt. Comp Unit Apt. Comp	100	874
Bagnell RV Park Phase III	72	RV	1/10 or 72	881/946
Halley Subdivision	9	lots		890/955
Sugarland Subdivision	20 5	RV mobile	9	910/975
Weiss Minor Subdivision	2	lots	2	912/977
Eagles Landing	41 37 86 105	truck mobile park model RV	75	987/1052
Bouchard Subdivision	2 1	residential commercial	2	989/1054
Richland RV & Industrial Park	88 1	RV trailer	1/10 or 89	998/1143
Augustus Vaux Subdivision	7	R-3 Multi-family lots (townhomes or apartments)	7/14 per lot	1000-1150
Badlands Subdivision	22	family	22/44	1022-1172
Diamond Island Subdivision	28	family	58/56	1050-1230
Byer Industrial Park Major Subdivision	18 33	Industrial residential	28/56	1078-1288



Eberline Minor Subdivision	1 4	residential commercial	7	1085-1295
American Land Group	102 114	units-duplex 4-plex	102/204	1187/1499
HUD Residential	64	unit (multi- family)	64/128	1251/1627
MPEG Land Development, LLC	86	living units	50-75	1301/1702
Lunderby Subdivision	5	residential	5	1306/1707
SchMart Subdivision	16	duplexes single family	28/56	1334/1763

SOURCE: DAN FARR, SIDNEY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

Projected Trends

Lambert and Savage schools are experiencing a different issue in that numbers are projected to decrease unless new families with young children begin moving into the communities. While elementary numbers indicate potential growth, the lack of development in these communities from sub-standard infrastructure and difficulty in buying land for future development; as noted from all school districts these issues may eventually lead to declining school enrollments.

Public Health

Richland County Health Department

Richland County Health Department (RCHD) is dedicated to cultivating individual and community involvement in all aspects of health, safety and wellness by empowering people to capitalize on available resources to achieve our highest quality of life. To meet this mission RCHD performs the core functions of: Assessment, Assurance, and Policy Development. Some areas of focus include: Environmental Health, Immunizations, Cancer screenings and prevention, tobacco use prevention, injury prevention, maternal and child health programs, volunteer opportunities, communicable disease prevention and public health emergency preparedness. The programs do vary with available funding and the needs of Richland County.

Communities in Action (CIA)

CIA is responsible for a Community Building Process that has been in place since 2005. The process is comprehensive and engages county residents in Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation to address county Quality Of Life Issues. The CIA steering committee is responsible for implementing the annual “State of the County - Community-wide Conference” and updating the county quality of life in their strategic plan. The steering committee provides structure for the action groups that are established to address identified county issues and report back to the community. The process provides for community input that can guide the growth policy on health concerns and other social issues affecting the County. CIA has several groups focused on different issues throughout the County including: Health Behaviors; Clinical; Social and Economic; Physical Environment.

Health Care

Hospitals, Clinics, Extended Care

The Sidney Health Center is a community-owned membership corporation with a lifetime membership. The health center offers all the services of a full acute care hospital and recently completed a major renovation with a new cancer center and walk-in clinic. The health center is affiliated with the Miles City Community College whereby nurses can complete their clinical practice at the health center.

The health center has the ability to care for the existing community and population increases as a result of the renovation. ER visits have increased from 6,982 in 2012 to 7,559 in 2013 (8 percent



increase). The biggest concern is recruiting physicians to a rural area and finding adequate housing for nursing staff. As noted in a Sidney Herald article, additional “challenges for Sidney Health Center include employee turnover. There was a 34.2 turnover in 2013 compared to 32.8 percent in 2012. The biggest contributor to this is more than 80 percent of new employees leaving within their first year at Sidney Health Center. [Rick] Haraldson [CEO] said 60 percent of the employee’s [reason for] leaving are related to a family move and housing. Another element is the struggle to compete with oilfield wages.”

Projected Trends

Staffing will continue to be the largest issues facing health care industry in Richland County. Housing prices and the lack of available units makes recruiting employees difficult. While many doctors can afford higher prices, many single-family homes are either not being constructed or only remain on the market for less than 30 days thus making it difficult to secure housing before a doctor or nurse arrives.

The Health Center and RCHD both received new or upgraded facilities and should be able to treat community health needs without major site improvements.

Community Amenities

Museums and Cultural Resources

Richland County has three museums: the Lambert Museum, which contains pioneer artifacts, the MonDak Heritage Center and Art Gallery located in Sidney and the Savage Museum in Savage. The Heritage Center includes a research library, homesteader museum in with a Montana pioneer street scene, and art gallery. The Center holds major art shows each year and provides space for musical recitals, seminars, learning opportunities and festivals such as Oktoberfest.

Library

The Sidney-Richland Public Library is funded through city and county tax dollars as well as private donations, state and federal grants. The Library is administered by a five-member Board of Trustees with representatives from both the city and county.

The existing building, which is owned by the County, was completed in 1966 with an addition built in 1985, but it does not meet the needs of today’s typical library user. The library has a collection of books, periodicals and movies, and provides public access internet terminals and computers for public use, reference services, interlibrary loan, story-time, summer reading programs, literacy programs, and homebound delivery. However, the building’s outdated infrastructure and some architectural components does not lend itself to technology improvements to service a growing community need and changing library environment of digital services including eBooks.

Library programs are offered to residents of all ages and include story time, Lego Club, Family Science Night, the Read to the Dog program, the summer reading program, adult computer and tablet classes and craft classes. The library is also beginning a bookmobile service and is looking to develop a “Redbox” type service in Savage and Lambert whereby community members can check out books from a kiosk in those communities rather than at the library.

According to the library, approximately 3,000 patrons use the library with an estimated growth rate of 50 patrons per month; nearly 600 patrons have signed up since January 1, 2013. More than 200 people visit the library daily resulting in 1,200 visits a week and more than 67,000 visits in 2013.

Youth/Event Center

Currently, the Boys and Girls Club of Richland County offers afterschool activities for more than 100 children on average. Currently, the Club uses space in an elementary building but is looking to expand operations. The City of Sidney recently signed a yearly lease with the Club; the Boys and Girls Club will get access to a portion of Johnson Park to construct a new facility. Currently, the Club is reviewing architectural drawing and will commence with a funding campaign.



Community members have also expressed interest in developing a multiuse event facility that would potentially include a 3,000 - 4,000 person auditorium for regional events including music festivals, a gymnasium, daycare facilities and/or senior center gathering spaces and other uses deemed important to the community. While the facility is in early planning stages, concept development will be crucial for the successful placement and operation of the facility.

Daycare and Social Services

Daycare and social services are a critical component to quality of life for residents in Richland County. In all public input meetings, residents expressed frustration about the lack of affordable daycare centers and childcare facilities. When asked what could help, most people stated that the County and Sidney should look at developing a county/city run operation and explore options to increase the number of licensed facilities throughout the County, including in Lambert and Savage. Daycare rates ranged from \$650 per month to more than \$1000 per month and exceeded \$1500 per month in Williston, North Dakota; some Montanans work in North Dakota and use daycare near their workplaces.

Sidney has two groups involved with early childhood development and daycare: Sunrise Childcare Association and Best Beginnings Coalition. While these groups focus on improving quality and affordable childcare, the County has multiple daycare facilities although not nearly enough to satisfy demand.

Richland County also has more than 20 social service groups and organizations to help with meeting community needs not otherwise addressed by local governments. Services range from senior care to home health services to job training programs (Experience Works) to special needs services (Richland Opportunities Inc.). These services are an important element to the County and should continue to receive support from community members and local government funding.

Projected Trends

Continued population increases and a lack of affordable housing and choices in housing types will continue to create a need for local services. Law enforcement and health care organizations will likely have a difficult time attracting new employees to Richland County because of high housing prices. However, several workers also expressed that having more amenities such as after-school programs for children, more shopping and entertainment choices and improved parks and trails makes a big difference when trying to recruit employees from outside the area.

Community facilities such a new library, which is estimated to cost \$4.5 million, along with youth and/or event facilities will greatly improve the quality of life throughout the County. Residents at all four community input meetings mentioned the need for continued support of local services, especially affordable daycare, to make Richland County a welcoming and attractive place to live.

Goals and Objectives

Goal

- » Make community health and safety a priority such as developing high-quality daycare facilities, after school programs, and ensure law enforcement and medical facilities can staff positions.

OBJECTIVES

- » Collaborate with law enforcement and other city/county agencies to either construct affordable housing through city/county agreements or provide subsidized housing.
- » Support childcare groups such as Best Beginnings Coalition and Sunrise Childcare Association to improve early childhood development and education.
- » Fast track housing projects targeted for city/county law enforcement staff and other city/county staff and consider waiving or reducing fees for housing units specifically reserved for public service employees.



- » Coordinate with departments to identify potential city/county spaces for afterschool programs for youth activities; create a memo-of-understanding with local afterschool programs to utilize such spaces for free or little cost.

Goal

- » Continue providing emergency medical response and fire protection and suppression services throughout each community.

OBJECTIVES

- » Create a capital improvement plan or similar planning document to begin budgeting for new building facilities and equipment as old equipment and structures become obsolete.
- » Develop a marketing plan to attract volunteer fire firefighters and EMT staff including offering incentives such as free training, free meals, and a point system for earning cash.
- » Explore the potential of creating an Eastern Montana HAZMAT response team stationed in Richland, Dawson, or Fallon Counties with volunteers from surrounding counties.
- » Implement actions identified in the county's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan and Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Goal

- » Expand opportunities for life-long learning.

OBJECTIVES

- » Expand or create a new library that meets the needs of future library patrons with improved technology for digital media and flexible space for expanded programs.
- » Collaborate with school districts to either construct affordable housing through city/county owned land agreements or provide subsidized housing.
- » Collaborate with Richland Economic Development Corporation to expand post-secondary education such as creating a distance learning program or developing two-year College. Potential courses may be oil and gas careers, environmental careers, business and economic classes and technical services such as welding, diesel mechanics and construction management. Additional classes may include teaching, nursing and law enforcement curriculum.
- » Support local museums and cultural facilities through matching donation programs and free rental spaces for regional attractions.

Goal

- » Develop new recreational facilities and outdoor recreation opportunities such as a connected trail system and flexible recreation spaces for adults and youth.

OBJECTIVES

- » Continue supporting the Boys and Girls Club of Richland County to develop a new facility and explore options for funding and contribute resources as necessary.
- » Develop new subdivision design standards to reserve right-of-way and land for trail systems and future recreational facilities.
- » Work with developers and businesses to donate land or help create a community facility with flexible space dedicated to public use for recreation, theater/cultural events and youth.

Goal

- » Improve cultural attractions/opportunities in the area.

OBJECTIVES

- » Continue and increase support of the MonDak Heritage Center and local museums.
- » Develop a performing arts center.



PUBLIC FACILITIES

Richland County, Sidney and Fairview all operate and maintain their own public facilities such as roads and streets, water and wastewater systems, landfill and other infrastructure elements. Lambert and Savage also operate their own water and wastewater systems, but receive assistance from the County. Utility providers such as power and telecommunication services are not within the jurisdiction of the County and are maintained by such businesses/cooperatives.

Transportation

A detailed Transportation Plan will accompany the Growth Policy and identifies specific improvement projects, outlines future road network extensions and classifies future streets. A brief description of the public transportation facilities in the County is included in the Transportation Chapter; however, detailed information such as improvement projects and projected trends is in the Transportation Plan.

Water Supply

Groundwater is the source of all public water supplies in Richland County with the exception of Montana Dakota Utilities, which uses the Yellowstone River as a surface water source; LYIP also uses the Yellowstone River for irrigation purposes. In Montana, most individual wells are not required to be filed with the state although that may change in the future depending upon state legislative issues; however, in order to assure a water right, filing with the state is necessary. Statistics from the Ground-Water Information Center of the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology indicate 4,416 wells in Richland County; 1,844 are for domestic use.

Richland County

Recent county-wide developments of recreational vehicle campsites, workforce housing and land leases for residential use in the past three years has caused a spike in the number of wells drilled. Year 2012 was the highest recorded year for number of new wells followed by year 2013. The majority of well uses have been for residential purposes, which coincides with the County's request to begin preserving prime farmland from disjointed, sprawl-like rural residential development.

Table 13 - New County Wells Permitted by Year

County Well Data per Year (New Wells Only)	#
2014	37
2013	117
2012	143
2011	85
2010	66
2009	58
2008	79
2007	90

SOURCE: MONTANA BUREAU OF MINES AND GEOLOGY

Table 14 - Type of Wells Permitted in Richland County

TYPE OF WELL	#
UNKNOWN	128
INJECTION	7
INDUSTRIAL	69
OTHER	31
PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY	98
TEST WELL	132
UNUSED	193
FIRE PROTECTION	1
MONITORING	296
COMMERCIAL	41
IRRIGATION	119
RESEARCH	24
GEOTECH	71
STOCKWATER	2395
DOMESTIC	1844
* Total	5449
* Number may differ from county total since one well may have several reported water uses.	

SOURCE: MONTANA BUREAU OF MINES AND GEOLOGY



Savage

Savage does not currently have a public water system. Savage public school is on a non-transient non-community system - a system that is not a community water system and regularly serves at least 25 people throughout a six-month period. All other uses and residential structures have their own private well. Water quality varies greatly throughout the Community as does the water table depths. Some landowners have had to drill at least three wells before acquiring potable water.

Lambert

The Lambert Sewer and Water District upgraded their water system to a Reverse Osmosis (RO) system to eliminate solids and sodium found in the older system. The current facility and 50,000 gallon storage tank are at capacity and cannot accommodate any new growth. In addition, the four-inch distribution line from the storage tank is severely undersized for fire suppression services and needs to be expanded to service any new development regardless of its location. Residents expressed a need for larger lines to accommodate growth as well as to protect existing citizens from a potential fire hazard.

Projected Trends

LAMBERT

Lambert recently received a new water filtration system, however, the distribution system needs substantial improvements if the town is expected to accommodate new growth as well as to meet future fire flows. The estimated costs for distribution improvements is \$1 million.

SAVAGE

Savage is currently reviewing their well system as each individual property owner drills for water. While most of Savage has potable water, portions of the community, specifically the north east section, has variable water quality. The community is analyzing whether it should upgrade to a community system especially if growth occurs.

Wastewater

Four communities in Richland County have public wastewater systems: Sidney, Fairview, Lambert, and Savage. Only Fairview and Savage are permitted discharge systems. Individual county residents with septic systems are permitted by DEQ and/or the County Sanitarian.

Lambert

The Lambert wastewater system was upgraded to two cells to treat the reject water from the RO system installed to improve the water quality. Similar to Fairview, Sidney and Savage, the system will require a new lagoon or expansion of existing cells to accommodate new growth. The system is at capacity and may be able to accommodate less than five new uses depending upon the size and usage of proposed structures. New main lines would also be required to accommodate growth as the system currently has pinch points resulting from inadequately sized lines throughout town.

Savage

The Savage lagoon is a single cell lagoon that was built in 1967 in response to groundwater contamination from the cumulative effects of individual septic-drainfield systems. The facility usually discharges once a year to an irrigation overflow ditch that flows into the Yellowstone River downstream from the discharge point.

The town has a DEQ permit for extended use of the lagoon, but Savage will need and is planning an additional cell and new lagoon system as well as an effluent flow measuring system to comply with new State regulations. As noted earlier, Savage is experiencing growth pressures from the Bakken energy play and is limited on the number of new structures that can be built due to the existing lagoon



system's capacity. The County is helping to partially fund the planned lagoon expansion, which will be located north of town.

Projected Trends

LAMBERT

Lambert is currently working with their engineer to obtain costs for expanded lagoon system improvements to accommodate new growth.

SAVAGE

Savage is in the preliminary stages of upgrading their lagoon system with the help of the County. To date, the County has provided \$400,000 to fund future lagoon expansion. The new improvements will be able to accommodate new subdivisions and residents. Extension of services will also be dependent upon the number of units requesting service and may require new easements to provide service.

Solid Waste

The Richland County Solid Waste District administers the operations of the landfill located 11 miles northwest of Sidney and 11 miles west of Fairview. The Class II and Class IV landfill was built in 1995 with a design life of 110 years and was upgraded nearly three years ago. While the landfill originally had a design life of 110 years, the facility will reach its capacity limit earlier if trends continue to rise as drastically as they have the past three years. In addition to the landfill, the Solid Waste District maintains container or transfer sites in the communities of Savage, Lambert, and Elmdale and contracts the hauling of this garbage to the landfill. The sites are accessible at any time for household quantities.

Lambert

The County landfill, near Lambert, is unmanned and receives a high amount of traffic on the weekend. In addition, residents have noted that people with North Dakota license plates are routinely seen entering and dumping refuse; this has caused frustration among the community because the town doesn't have an enforcement officer or policy to restrict the landfill to only Lambert residents.

Savage

Savage currently uses a transfer site, which is then shipped to the County's landfill located 11 miles west of the community. Similar to Lambert, Savage residents have noticed non-residents utilizing the refuse site.

Projected Trends

The County's landfill, which services all residents, is projected to accommodate refuse for the next 80 - 95 years; however, with recent growth in the County and the increased refuse the landfill may reach capacity earlier but a future study will be needed to confirm the remaining useful life.

Park and Recreation Facilities

Richland County

Richland County has 20 facilities consisting of parks, county fairgrounds, and other amenities. The County has recreation sites that include State of Montana fishing access sites, wildlife management areas, and reservoirs such as Seven Sisters Island and Elk Island. Richland Park was upgraded with a new boat ramp, picnic shelter, restrooms and fire pits. Richland County also renovated several items at the fairgrounds including a new indoor livestock area, constructing a new Fair Event Center and paving the parking lot of the event center. However, most recreational facilities are located within Sidney and Fairview. The CIA program, Active Richland County, provides a method for community involvement by providing guidance to the county on recreational priorities and funding.



Lambert

Lambert has one park with playground equipment and a picnic area. Residents noted the park is used in summer but remains unused the rest of year. If growth occurs, Lambert would like to see improved facilities at the park but did not see a need for an additional park unless substantial growth occurs within town. Residents also use the school track and field year round for recreational opportunities.

Savage

Savage also has one park, Maschera Park that has horseshoe pits, a volleyball court, playground equipment and picnic areas. Similar to Lambert, residents noted that park meets current needs and would need improvements rather than developing a new park elsewhere. Residents also use the school track and field year round for recreational opportunities.

Projected Trends

Lambert and Savage will continue to receive requests for safe walking paths and places to recreate, especially for children. Both communities should work with their local school representatives to continue utilizing school facilities when students are on summer break as well as work with the County to plan and develop connected walking paths.

Private Utilities

Power

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association (LYREA) is headquartered in Sidney. The company is a cooperative owned by the member-users. LYREA serves all of Richland County with the exception of Savage, Fairview, and Sidney.

Montana Dakota Utilities (MDU) distributes natural gas and operates electric power generation, transmission, and distribution in Richland County. MDU provides electric service in those locations not served by the LYREA, primarily Sidney, Fairview, and Savage.

Telecommunications

Century Link Communications provides telephone services and internet connections in Richland County.

Mid-Rivers Cooperative provides telephone and cable/internet service to 28,000 square miles in 20 counties of eastern Montana. With implementation of satellite broadband service, Mid-Rivers provides High-Speed Internet access to a vast majority of its service area.

Projected Trends

While private utilities are not under the jurisdiction of the County, the County will continue to work with these companies to coordinate future capital investment projects.



Goals and Objectives

Goal

- » Plan and design for long-term public facilities development, maintenance, operation and upgrades or replacement.

OBJECTIVES

- » Prepare an overall capital improvement program (CIP) for County-owned infrastructure.
- » Provide technical and financial assistance to all communities to assess and address needed improvements to water and wastewater systems.
- » Develop a priority list of community improvements within CIP to evaluate needs per community.
- » Develop a community convention-auditorium center, regional parks and an interconnected trail system.
- » Continue to work with county departments and City of Sidney to identify opportunities for mix of uses and location for proposed new construction (e.g., recent law and justice center).

Goal

- » Promote development with adequate services that do not add to the tax burden for existing landowners; new development should pay its fair share of infrastructure costs.

OBJECTIVES

- » Promote development in city and town limits and discourage inefficient and incompatible land use patterns.
- » Include provisions for subdivisions and subdividers to pay their portion of infrastructure and services through subdivision improvement agreements and impact fees.
- » Require new development to pay for all infrastructure costs to their property and extend new and existing infrastructure to the furthest extent of their property.
- » Require subdividers to provide financial guarantees to ensure development of subdivision improvements will be completed; only applicable if filing for final plat before infrastructure is installed.

Goal

- » Improve cell phone coverage and high speed internet access throughout the county including land line expansion and phone access for all county residents.

OBJECTIVES

- » Work with private utilities to ensure right-of-way or utility easements are dedicated on all future plats for services for all communities.
- » Identify future areas for cell towers and ensure they comply with FAA standards.



NATURAL RESOURCES

Land Cover

Land cover in Richland County is shown in Figure 38. Human uses, including agriculture, and grasslands are the predominant land cover categories in the county. Forest and woodland systems, shrubland systems and water constitute the remaining land cover. The figure also shows soils identified as prime farmland in the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic Database.

Projected Trends

Prime farmland has been a critical resource that is disappearing with rural residential development across the County. Rising numbers of RV sites, camper/trailer uses and industrial developments are depleting usable land for future agricultural production. If left unchecked, rural residential and disjointed industrial developments could severely limit the production value of prime farmland soils especially for sugar beet farmers and other crop producers. While data is limited on the number of acres lost, recent developments surrounding Sidney and scattered development patterns in the County have removed approximately 300 acres from future farmland as noted from review of subdivision applications since 2011 and mostly occurring near Sidney.

Weed control is also a growing concern with new subdivisions and across the county as a whole, and should be examined every two years to ensure vacant lots are abiding by current regulations. In addition, a CIA program - Natural Resources Action Group - provides guidance to jurisdictions regarding the priorities and issues relating to natural resources.

Rivers, Streams, Lakes and Wetlands

Richland County is located in the Missouri River watershed. The northern border of the county is defined by the Missouri River. The Yellowstone River flows in a northeasterly direction across the eastern side of the county, meeting the Missouri River three miles east of the county boundary in Williams County, North Dakota. Lone Tree Creek travels along the western border of Sidney and creates a flooding hazard for the city.

Wetlands play an integral part in supporting wildlife and livestock. They also improve water quality by filtering sediments, pollutants and chemical while recharging groundwater. There are approximately 28,133 acres of wetlands in the county as classified by the National Wetlands Inventory.

The Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project (LYIP), administered by the US Bureau of Reclamation, is a vital asset to Richland County that serves nearly 55,000 acres of farmland. Development pressures, especially in and near Sidney, have created issues with encroaching into existing LYIP easements for canal and outlet water resources and recent subdivisions have reduced the ease of maintaining existing canals. In addition, recent developments with saving the Pallid Sturgeon - an endangered species - in the Yellowstone River, where LYIP draws water, has placed pressure on LYIP and local farmers to determine if they could afford to pump water instead of utilizing their direct access through an intake diversion dam located in Dawson County. According to an April 12, 2014 article in the Sidney Herald, it would cost \$2.2 million to pump water annually and nearly \$5.2 billion in losses over 10 years.

Projected Trends

Water will continue to be a vital resource to agricultural users, especially LYIP, and the continued use and guarantee of available water will undoubtedly shape the future of farming in Richland County. If LYIP is forced to pump water, it could adversely impact local farmers, Sidney Sugars, Busch Ag Resources and others that rely on LYIP for accessible and affordable water.



New guidelines that delineate stream buffers, easement recordings and setbacks from LYIP canals and outlets will ensure future water users and land owners have a clear understanding of the impacts when development occurs. In addition, coordination needs to occur among jurisdictions regarding developments on the urban fringes to protect water resources and mitigate impacts.

Thorough and complete environmental assessments or impact statements, as are often required by federal NEPA regulations, should be submitted with developments that may have the potential to impact the county's surface water resources. In addition, these assessments should ensure that best management practices will be implemented by the developer in order to mitigate any potential impacts. In addition, the LYIP and the setbacks established for developments are administered and regulated by state and federal agencies. These agencies should be consulted for possible solutions to any issues that individual groups of landowners are having with developments along the canal system.

Fish and Wildlife

The species in the table are found in Richland County and listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Mitigation of potential impacts to threatened and endangered species may be required when development is proposed.

Table 15 - Endangered Species in Richland County

Species	Status
Pallid Sturgeon	Listed Endangered
Piping Plover	Listed Threatened, Designated Critical Habitat
Interior Least Tern	Listed Endangered
Whooping Crane	Listed Endangered
Northern Long-Eared Bat	Proposed
Greater Sage-Grouse	Proposed
Sprague's Pipit	Candidate

SOURCE: US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, MARCH 2014

Projected Trends

Protecting Richland County's existing agricultural resources and native wildlife are important since they contribute to the overall economy. As such, the County shall have the ability to coordinate with federal and state agencies on the removal, replacement, introduction or addition of animals such as bison, deer, elk, sage grouse, wolves and other wildlife into the County's ecosystem. Per County Resolution 2010-13, the County deemed buffalo as domestic livestock; the resolution is still in place.

Sand and Gravel Resources

Sand and gravel are an integral part of the county's road maintenance program as well as the construction industry. Sand and gravel resources are shown in Figure 40. Potential sand and gravel locations are provided by the NRCS Soil Survey Geographic Database. The county has many soils that have a fair or good potential for sand; approximately one-third of those soils are also a fair potential for gravel. The county has no soils that are considered a good location for gravel.

Projected Trends

The large number of DST open-cut sites suggests that the county has ample sand and gravel resources.



Wildland-Urban Interface

The wildland-urban interface refers to areas where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. The threat exists anywhere that structures are located close to natural vegetation and where fire can spread from vegetation to structures, or from structures to vegetation. The 1/2 mile areas around Sidney and Fairview represent the generalized wildland-urban interface in Richland County. The wildland-urban interfaces for Sidney and Fairview, as well as wildfire fuels, are shown in Figure 41 and Figure 42. The predominant fuels near both communities are grass fuels, which generally burn quickly but with a low intensity. Agriculture is not listed as a fuel source, but it can contribute to wildfires in late summer or early fall during times of drought. Data about wildfire risk is in the 2014 Richland County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Projected Trends

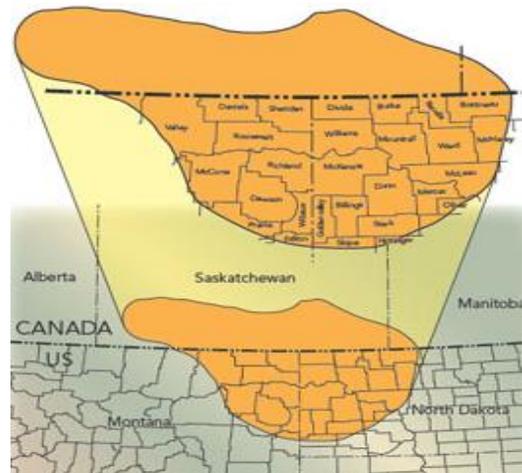
Richland County will need to continue monitoring the wildland urban interface, especially for development areas near urban settings and near oil and gas wells. Development will continue to put pressure on wildland areas; fire departments should be ready and capable to deal with the increased risks with wildland areas.

Energy

Richland County is located in the Bakken Formation (part of the larger Three Forks Formation), which is one of the largest North American oil plays in recent decades. In April 2013 the US Geological Survey released a report that estimated the amount of undiscovered, technically recoverable oil in the Bakken/Three Forks Formations to be 7.4 billion barrels; the amount of undiscovered, technically recoverable natural gas was 6.7 trillion cubic feet. Technically recoverable resources are those that are producible using currently available technology and industry practices. The amount of recoverable oil and gas may increase as new technologies are developed.

Projected Trends

It is difficult to project what the trends will be for oil and gas extraction, but according to the North Dakota Industrial Commission, Department of Mineral Resources, Oil and Gas Division, the Williston Basin will produce between 800,000 - 1 million barrels of oil per month for the next 30 - 40 years.



Approximate Bakken region in eastern Montana.

SOURCE: UNCONVENTIONAL OIL AND GAS REPORT

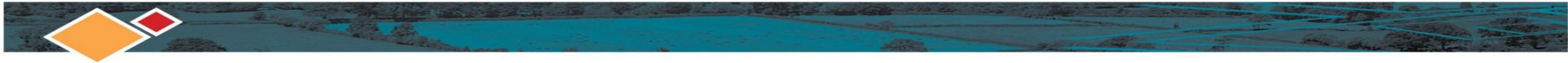
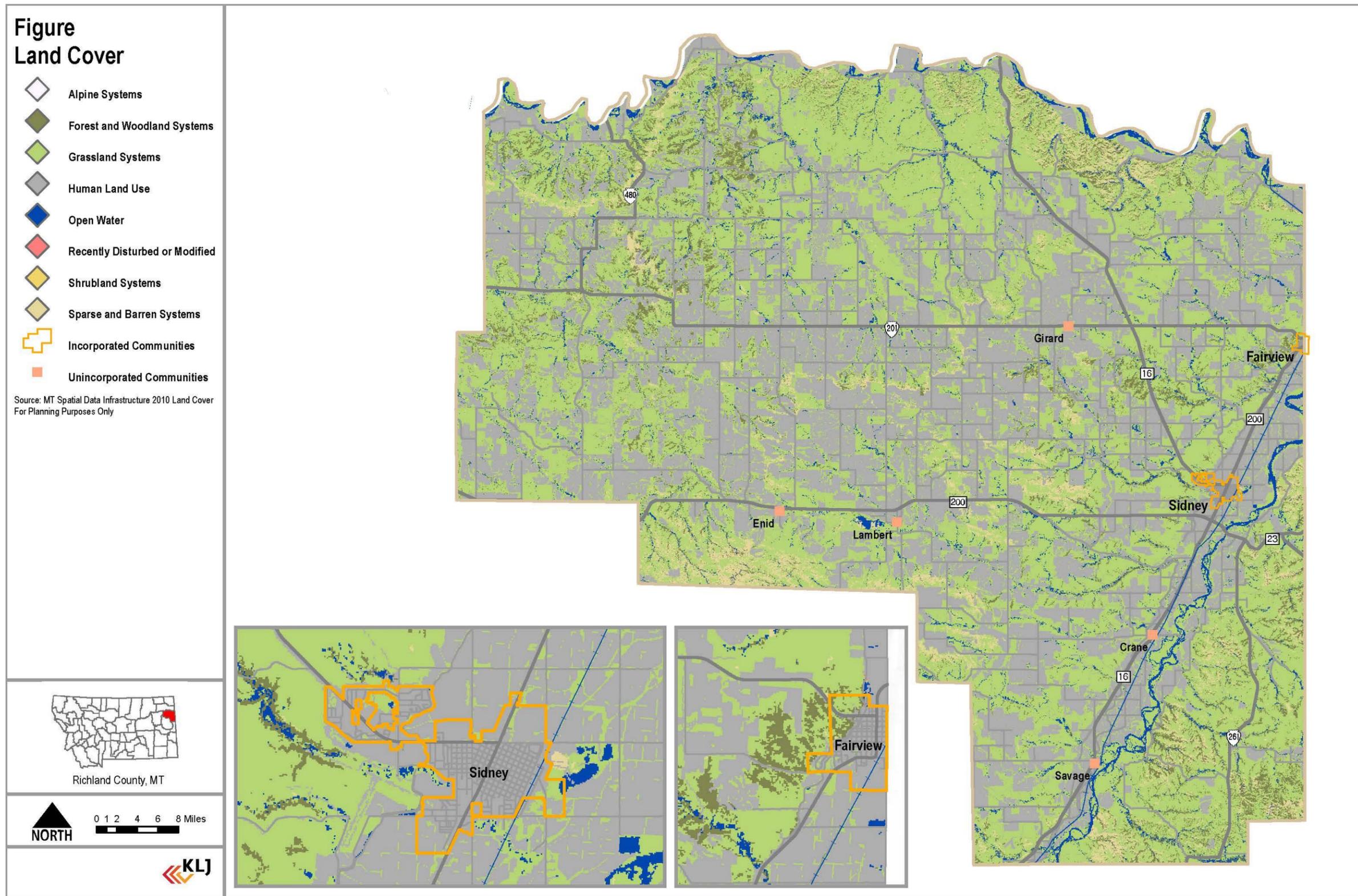


Figure 38 - Land Cover in Richland County



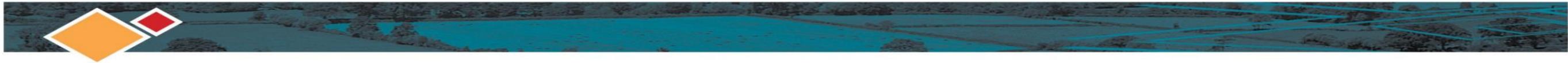


Figure 39 - Water Resources in Richland County

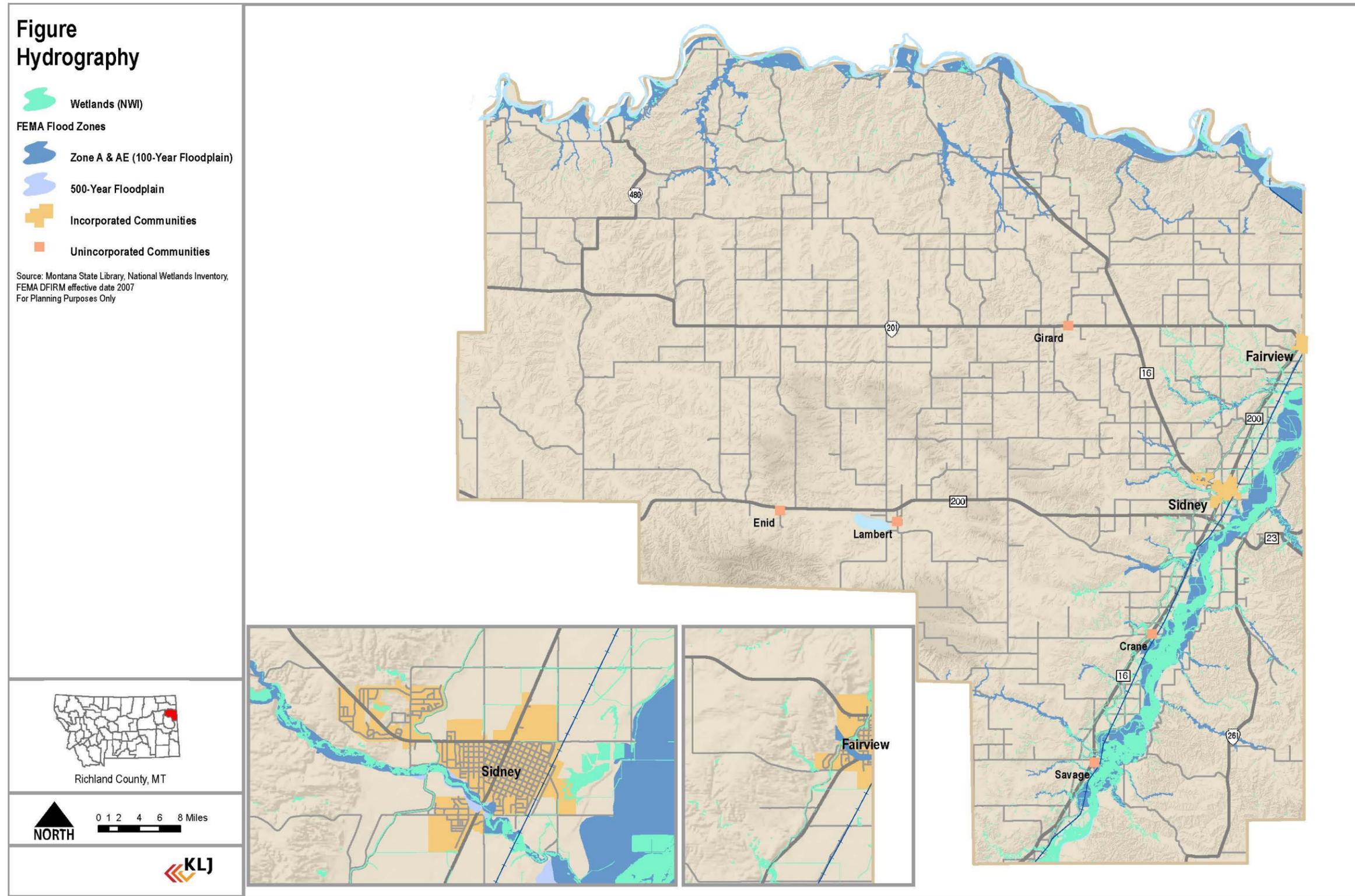


Figure 40 - Sand and Gravel Resources

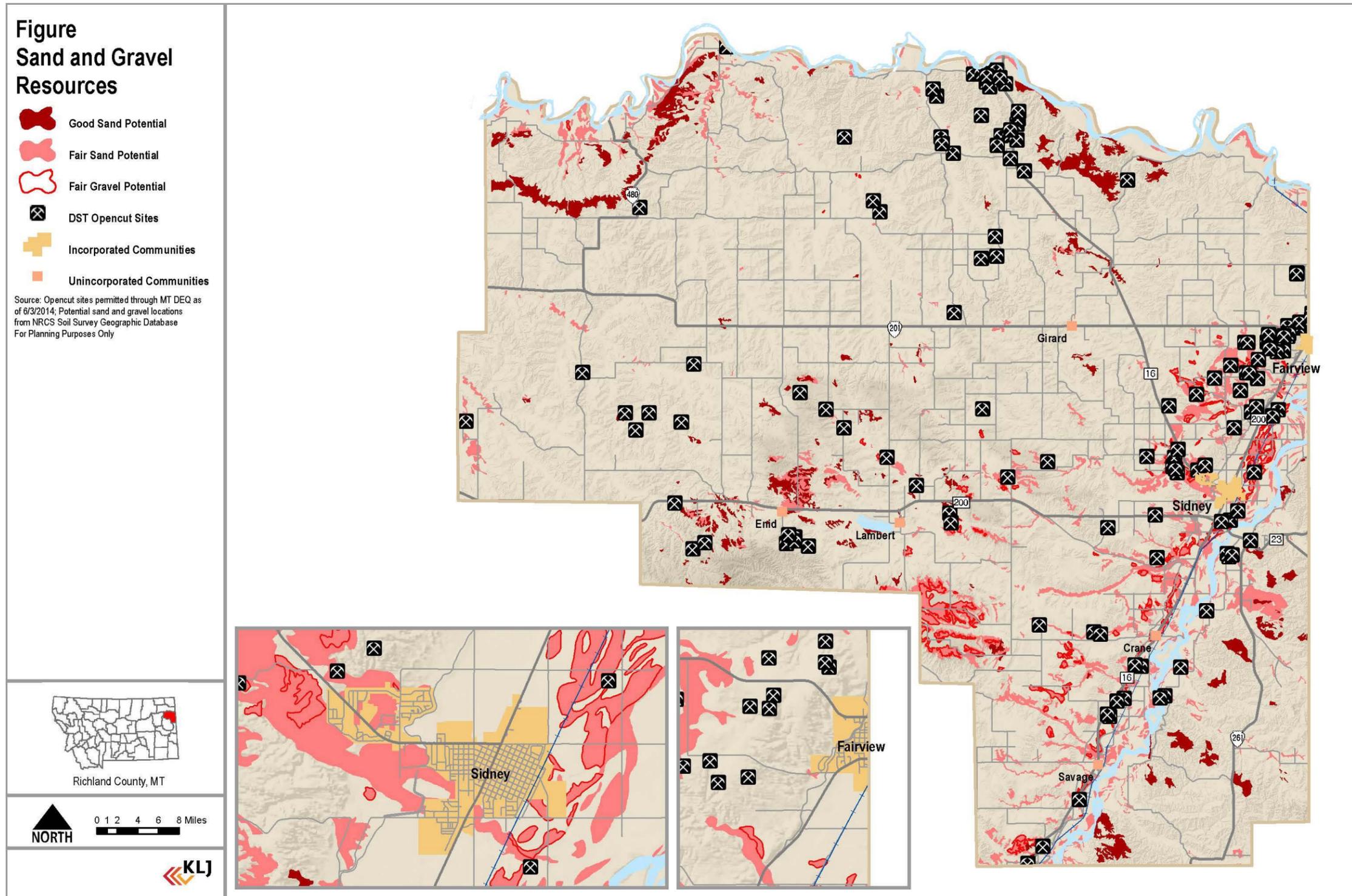




Figure 41 - Wildland Urban Interface in Sidney

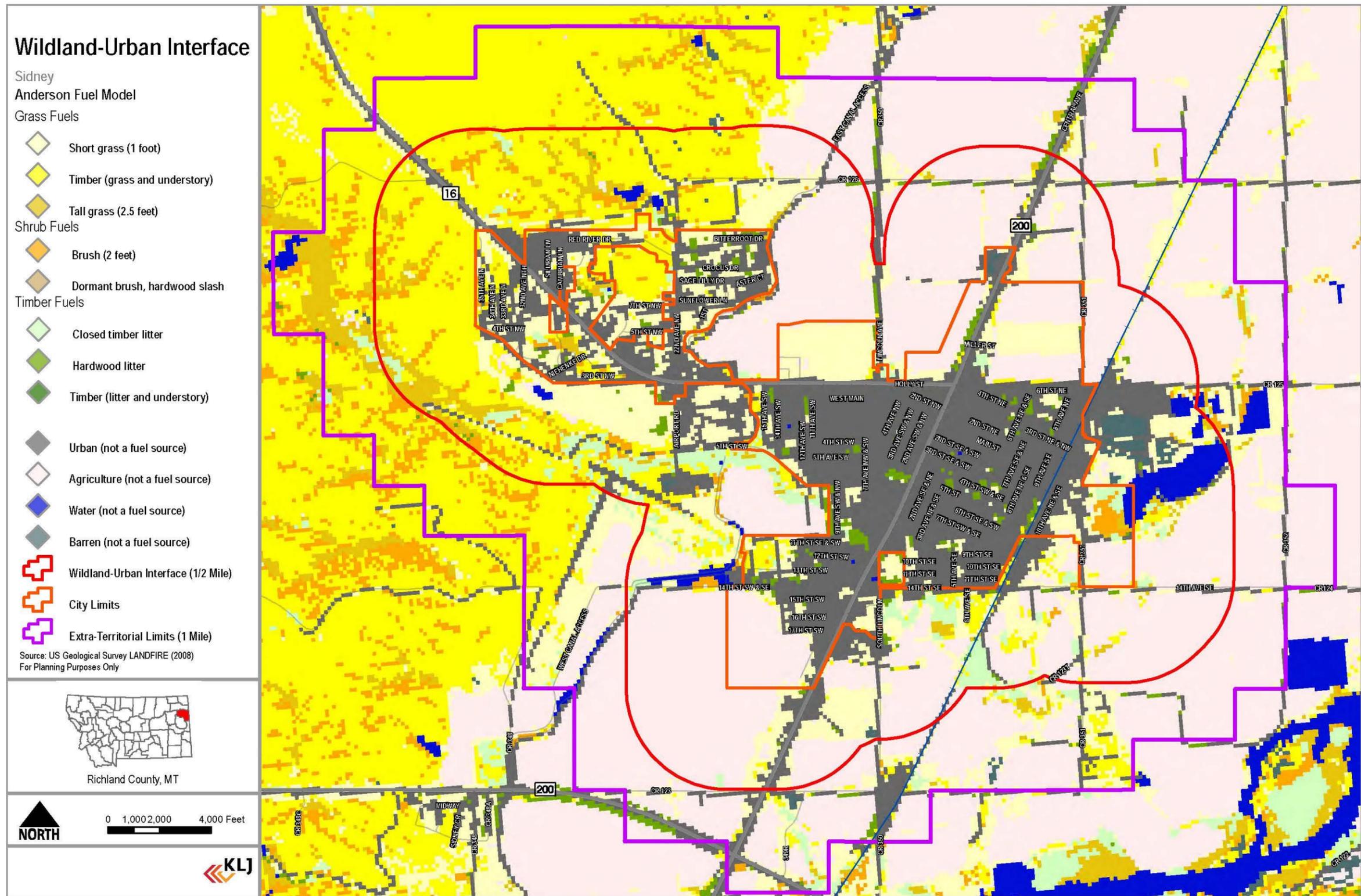
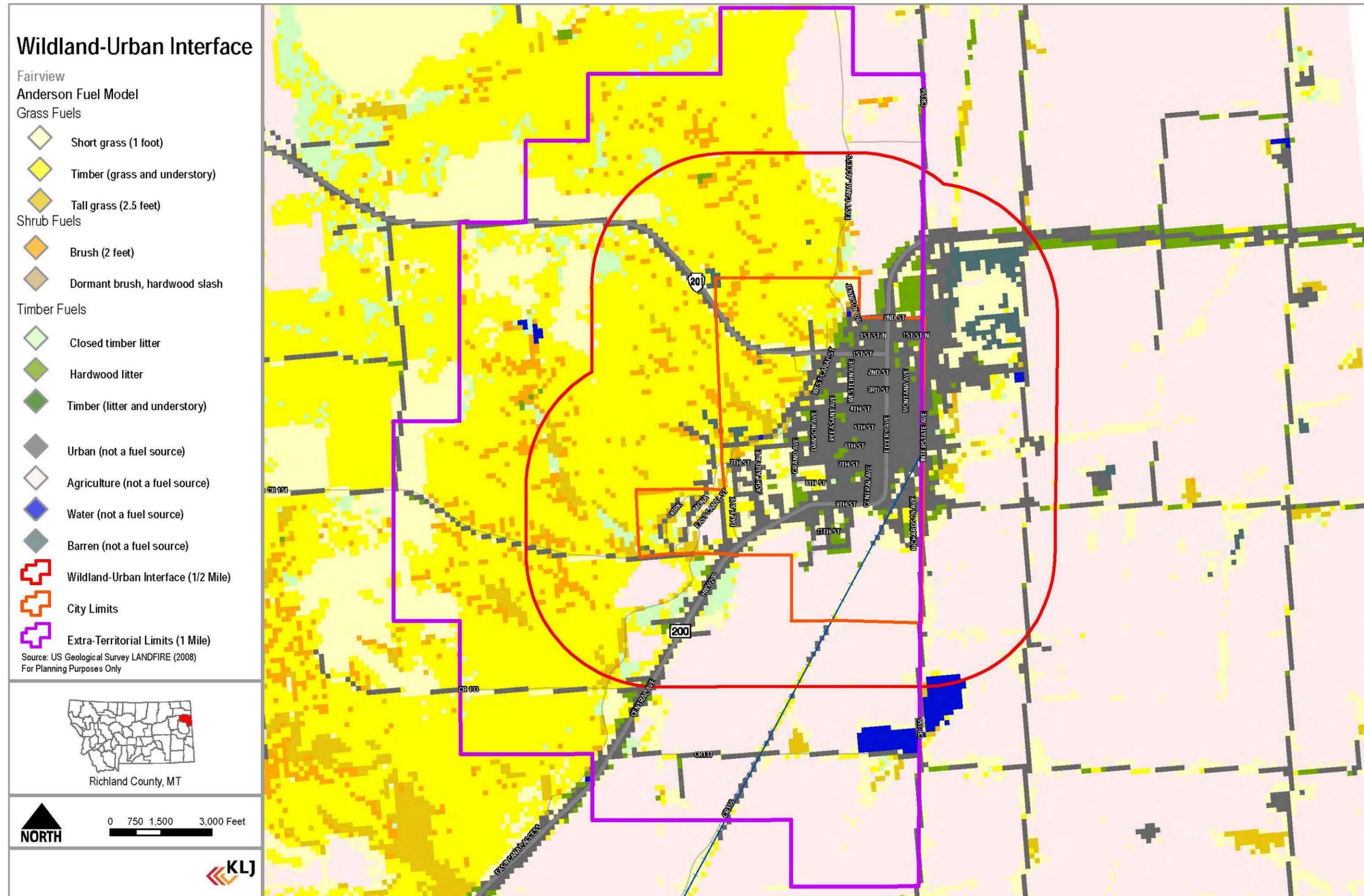




Figure 42 - Wildland Urban Interface in Fairview





Goals and Objectives

Goal

- » Provide for long-term function of natural systems and resources, recognizing a diversity of uses for those systems and resources.

OBJECTIVES

- » Develop a GIS system to collect natural resource and development information and coordinate with the Montana State Library and a county representative to update local data such as prime farmland soils, wetlands, steep slopes, underground mines and LYIP canals/outlets.
- » Continue to review the county's weed management plan every two years and update as needed.
- » Continue to protect the natural functioning of the Lower Yellowstone River and implement subdivision development standards to protect LYIP canals, ditches and outlets.
- » Develop defensible space guidelines in subdivision regulations to protect against future wildfires.
- » Ensure that wild animals and domestic and livestock can co-exist by coordinating with federal and state agencies on the removal, replacement or addition of any species such as bison, elk deer, sage grouse, wolves and other animals within Richland County that may affect agricultural lands and natural habitats.

Goal

- » Maintain and improve agriculture production farmland.

OBJECTIVES

- » Utilize agricultural covenants, conservation easements and similar policies to protect existing prime farmlands.
- » Implement land use planning guidelines and the future land use map to restrict sprawl development, especially residential and temporary housing uses; cluster similar uses near each other.
- » Collaborate with the USDA-ASR and MSU Extension Center to identify and catalog prime farmland lost to development; develop preservation policies as needed.
- » Catalog the number of acres of prime farmland lost to residential, commercial and industrial development to support new policies for protecting prime farmland soils.
- » Work with LYIP and other state and federal agencies to develop a clear set of development guidelines such as setback and buffer distances from LYIP irrigation canals, drainage ditches and streams.

Goal

- » Expand opportunities for improved residential water quality in the county.

OBJECTIVES

- » Encourage potential for Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority project across Richland County or another means for a public water system.
- » Expand abilities to address water quality issues on an individual basis or at the community level.
- » Identify potential funding resources to assist low and fixed income householders to protect and improve existing water quality.
- » Develop setbacks for oil wells from residential structures and private wells.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementation Tools

Implementation tools are organized in the following descriptive categories: regulatory, policy development, fiscal, and educational. There are a couple of tools that do not fall into these categories, which can be found in the “other” category. Regulatory tools are adopted by governing bodies as rules or requirements. Governing bodies use policy tools to show commitment to a particular direction or course of action. Fiscal tools such as CIPS are financial programs used to implement policy. Educational tools include a broad range of methods used to inform governing bodies, policy makers and the public about key planning and community development issues. They often serve as the basis for creating, reviewing, and revising policy and regulations.

Many of the techniques that make communities more attractive and affordable places to live also make them healthier places. Streets that are safe and comfortable for walkers and bikers encourage people to get more exercise as part of their daily routines. Having transportation options helps reduce traffic and air pollution, and preserving green space helps protect water quality while making communities more attractive. Richland County, City of Sidney and Town of Fairview should be looking at strategies that help ensure communities develop in ways that keep children and families healthy, with clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and safe places to exercise outside.

The decisions residents, businesses and communities make when choosing the locations for homes, office buildings, roads and other developments have long-term repercussions for the natural environment. Smart and thorough development decisions can ensure better air, water and land quality, and development decisions that protect the environment help families, businesses and whole communities thrive.

Regulatory Tools

The regulator tools provided are possible implementation measures the County could adopt to support the Growth Policy and to implement the goals and objectives. While not all regulatory tools may be feasible or desired at this point, they are listed to provide options for the County to consider especially if development within the Williston Basin continues.

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Subdivision regulations control the creation of new lots by imposing design and infrastructure standards and by establishing procedures for local government and public review. Regulating the division of land ensures that development has appropriate services and that it does not adversely affect resources. As with all regulatory tools, subdivision regulations are most effective with consistent application.

To ensure that the subdivision regulations that are currently in place are effective and consistent with the goals of Richland County’s individual communities, an educational tool might be to ask for residents’ input.

- » Are the current regulations ensuring compatible development within the county limits?
- » What is the general perception of the regulations, procedures and policies?

ZONING

Zoning is another commonly used tool for implementing land use policy. The historical rationale for zoning was to separate incompatible land uses. Typically, zoning is structured to be either cumulative or non-cumulative. Non-cumulative zoning separates uses into exclusive zones. Cumulative zoning, or pyramidal zoning, is based on a hierarchy of land uses with single family residential zoning at the top of the pyramid, and higher density or more intense uses below. Each zone with more intense uses incorporates the less intense uses permitted higher up in the pyramid. Pyramidal zoning allows for a potentially greater mix of uses than non-cumulative zoning. Zoning ordinances generally address type



of use, intensity of use, and space and bulk requirements. Development and design standards for such things as signage, parking, landscaping, noise, lighting, buildings, and site layout can also be addressed through zoning regulations. A zoning map and the descriptive text of districts are the two critical components of zoning regulations.

In addition to the more traditional form of zoning, jurisdictions have explored other zoning approaches that can be used to regulate development of property. Some of these alternatives are described below.

DEVELOPMENT DESIGN STANDARDS

Development design standards include site and building design standards adopted in zoning regulations to encourage high quality and aesthetically pleasing development. These standards are generally adopted with the intent of preserving and enhancing community character. State law supports the use of design standards if they are objective, reasonable, and applied uniformly throughout a community.

Considerations for implementing design standards should include the level of administrative review required and the potential for increased development costs. The process of creating development design standards should acknowledge the delicate balance between encouraging quality development and the potential for adversely affecting the costs of housing and business development.

AGRICULTURAL ZONING

Agricultural zoning is commonly used to restrict land uses to resource extraction and production activities. Resource protection zoning can be implemented through both nonexclusive and exclusive use zoning. Non-exclusive use zones usually require large minimum lot sizes, but do not address types of uses permitted. Exclusive use zoning limits the types of uses allowed, such as limiting residential development to what is necessary to support the agricultural use on the property, and prohibiting all uses deemed incompatible with farming. Other agricultural protection zoning mechanisms include voluntary agricultural districts, agricultural area buffers, area-based zoning or density zoning, fixed area-based allowance zoning and sliding scale area-based allowance zoning.

INTERIM ZONING

Interim zoning is specifically authorized in State law. It is a temporary land use control that expires unless replaced with permanent regulations.

DECAY ORDINANCE

Decay ordinances are enacted to protect the general public from decaying structures that are deemed unsafe and inhabitable by a building official. The ordinance may also include recommendations for limiting the amount of junk vehicles such as scrap, junk RVs, and unusable mobile homes from piling up on property. However, they can also include provisions for limiting mounds of dirt or decaying fencing.

FLOODPLAIN REGULATIONS

Floodplain regulations restrict development in areas within the 100-year floodplain of a watercourse. The purpose of these regulations is to protect the watercourses and their flood storage areas, as well as the public health, safety, and welfare. Title 76, Chapter 5 of the *Montana Code Annotated* mandates that local governments adopt floodplain management regulations.

REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT

Regulatory or code enforcement programs ensure that property owners comply with a jurisdiction's land use regulations. Enforcement of zoning includes criminal prosecution and civil action to enjoin prohibited uses. Enforcement of subdivision regulations is part of the approval process with proof of compliance established prior to final plat approval.

Enforcement programs can be institutionalized in different ways. Enforcement of building, health, and land use regulations can be conducted within the same or different programs. Additionally, enforcement programs can be proactive or complaint-driven. The approach to regulatory enforcement



is a policy choice that influences the effectiveness of a jurisdiction’s regulations. Additional questions to think about when considering regulatory enforcement include:

- » What kind and how many staffing positions will it take to implement?
- » Which county or city agency will fund this program?
- » Will there be county and city officials or a joint position?

Policy Tools

LONG RANGE PLANNING

A critical implementation tool for the Growth Policy is a more detailed policy development completed through either a regional or vicinity planning process, or a planning process to address a particular issue such as transportation, parks and recreation, economic development, infrastructure or housing. The Growth Policy establishes the framework in which issue planning and regional and vicinity planning can take place.

ANNEXATION POLICY

Annexation is the process by which a municipality expands its territorial limits and jurisdictional powers. Annexation agreements and policies are generally used to help municipalities plan for expansion and provision of municipal services. In order to help plan for growth, municipalities often set annexation policy that states the conditions under which annexation will occur.

URBAN GROWTH AREAS (COORDINATE WITH SIDNEY AND FAIRVIEW)

Urban growth areas (UGAs), also known as urban growth boundaries, distinguish the physical area surrounding a municipality where growth is encouraged and beyond which growth is limited or discouraged. Typically UGAs are created by considering the following factors: population trends, buildable lands inventories, efficiency of public infrastructure development, and protection of rural lands outside of a community. UGAs are usually delineated based on where development is anticipated and preferred within a certain period of time, usually 20 years. UGAs can be complemented by establishing zoning within and outside the UGA that controls the development pattern.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION POLICY

Agricultural preservation policies limit the amount of prime farmland or agricultural producing crops from future development. The policy helps local farmers and ranchers preserve future lands for agricultural purposes. Utilizing the “agricultural exemptions” is an example of how this policy is enforced. However, the County could create additional policies to preserve lands that do not currently have agricultural exemptions.

Fiscal Tools

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

According to the 1999 Planning Advisory Service Report 491/492, a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is “administered by a city or county government, which schedules permanent improvements, usually for a minimum of 5 years in the future, to fit the projected fiscal capability of the local jurisdiction. The program is generally reviewed annually...” Typically the first year of the CIP is a budgeting process and the remaining years are considered the actual program. The importance of a CIP for land use planning is the critical connection between where and when infrastructure is provided and what the desired land use pattern is for a community or neighborhood.

IMPACT FEES

Impact fees are charged to a developer by local government at the time of development or building permit review to pay for the impacts of new development on off-site capital facilities such as public sewer, roads, fire, or emergency services. State and local laws determine which types of facilities impact fees can cover and the requirements an impact fee program must meet. Impact fees should be based on a proposed development’s proportionate share of public infrastructure development cost and



cannot be used to support operating or maintenance costs. The process for developing a fair and equitable impact fee program can be complex and often requires local governments to obtain outside assistance.

WORKPLAN DEVELOPING/BUDGETING

There are a number of budget and work plan models. They generally differ by the level of review (program by program versus overall budget of a department) and how budget and work plan priorities are set (for example focusing on outputs, community goals, or program objectives). Annual budget processes allocate limited government resources to daily operations. The development and approval of departmental work plans and corresponding budgets effectively prioritize community development services, such as planning, by allocating resources to staffing, operations and capital purchases that support direct services to the public. The political process of crafting an annual budget and work plan, coupled with fluctuations in funding for local government services can make it difficult for jurisdictions to stay focused on long-term community development goals and objectives.

GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

Grants administration includes applying for and administering private, state and federal grants or contracts; providing grants and administering contracts for local non-profit service organizations; providing technical assistance and direct service program administration; conducting needs assessments and program evaluations; coordinating community responses to identified needs; and seeking additional resources for the purpose of addressing a variety of community development issues. Grant programs are a key means of implementing public policy regarding affordable and accessible housing, infrastructure extension, economic development, historic preservation, health and human services, crime victim assistance, environmental remediation, and provision of support to low- and moderate-income households and special needs populations.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING AND TARGETED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

Tax increment financing (TIF) is an important fiscal tool that allows jurisdictions to finance certain kinds of development costs within a Targeted Economic Development District. Bonds are sold by a jurisdiction to finance (re)development efforts in a particular area based on anticipated increases in property taxes collected from that locale. The actual increment of increased tax revenue from the area is then used to pay off the bonds. Targeted Economic Development Districts are TIF supported and can be used to support a variety of improvements both physical (infrastructure) and policy (studies).

LAND ACQUISITION

Land acquisition programs involve a jurisdiction or organization purchasing land usually for some public benefit. Some communities have used this tool to purchase land to be used for affordable housing development; others have used it to purchase property for its open space value.

Educational Tools

STUDIES, INVENTORIES AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Studies and inventories identify critical social, environmental, historic and cultural resources, which are used to guide a broad range of planning efforts. Buildable lands and other kinds of resource inventories often provide critical baseline information for land use policy development. Geographic Information System (GIS) is an important tool used for organizing and displaying data in studies and inventories. Information management within and between City and County Departments can be used to organize and maintain the wide range of information collected on a variety of topics.

Reports should be used and made available to all decision makers and key players involved in land use planning. Reports submitted from each respective agency could be shared with all the key players so informed decisions could be made. Something as simple as having EA's or EIS's shared between the Planners Office, the Sanitarians office, Board of Health, Planning Board, Conservation District Board, and City officials could prove to be invaluable in educating these decision makers.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOOLS

Public participation tools such as surveys, Community in Action, focus groups, town meetings, and design workshops, can be used to provide information used in a variety of planning processes including the community building process. They can be used to collect information on community attitudes, opinions, and preferences for a particular project or a long range planning effort.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Monitoring and evaluation methods can help track the implementation of goals and objectives of the Growth Policy. These tracking methods often involve identifying key indicators or objective measures, determining the baseline situation, then setting benchmarks and monitoring progress. Continuous assessment and evaluation can help track progress and guide policies, programs and planning initiatives. One tool is utilizing the Community in Action groups to help evaluate and monitor certain policies and objectives relevant to their Strategic Plan.

Other Tools

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Conservation easements involve the transfer of development rights from a property owner to a third party. They enable the land owner to retain title to a tract and use it for resource purposes. The transfer of development rights can be done through purchase or donation and can often result in a tax benefit to the property owner. Conservation easements may preserve critical resources such as wildlife habitat, wetlands or riparian areas, agricultural lands, forested lands or land with other scenic or natural resources. Conservation easements are often used in protecting land in TDR and PDR programs.

Intergovernmental Coordination

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

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.

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 seven primary criteria: agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, natural environment, wildlife, wildlife habitat, local services and public health and safety. This section clarifies how the county defines those criteria.

AGRICULTURE

Farming or ranching include the cultivation or tilling of the soil, the production, cultivation growing, harvesting of agricultural or horticultural commodities such as food, feed, and fiber, the raising of livestock and poultry, bees, biological control insects, fruits and vegetables, and sod, ornamental, nursery, and horticultural crops, the raising of domestic animals and wildlife in domestication or a captive environment, and including timberlands and forest lands.

AGRICULTURAL WATER USER FACILITIES

Those facilities which provide water for irrigation or stock watering to agricultural lands for the production of agricultural products. Any part of an irrigation system historically used to produce an agricultural product on property used for agricultural purposes as defined in Section 15-7-202, MCA. These facilities include, but are not limited to, ditches, head gates, pipes, and other water conveying facilities.

LOCAL SERVICES

Any and all services or facilities local government is authorized to provide that benefit their citizens, such as water supply, sewage disposal, law enforcement, fire protection, emergency services, transportation system, educational system, noxious weed control, as well as services that local government does not provide such as power, telephone, state highways, etc.

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

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 seven criteria. The evaluation of the effect of the proposed subdivision on these seven 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 seven 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 seven 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

- » Loss of significant, important and critical wildlife species, as defined
- » Impacts on significant, important and critical species 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 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 habitat

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.
- B. 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.
- C. Public hearing opened by the President.
- D. 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.
- E. 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.
- F. 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.
- G. Public hearing closed by the President.
- H. 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.
- I. Motion to recommend approval, conditional approval, or denial of the subdivision application.

Growth Policy 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 policies will likely be accomplished in a shorter period of time. However, according to MCA 76.1.601(iii) the Growth Policy needs to be updated every 5 years.

The specific timetable for implementing actions identified in this Growth Policy is included in the Action Plan at the end of this chapter. The Action Plan identifies timeframes for each specific policy.



Schedule for Review of Growth Policy

ANNUALLY

The Planning Board will submit an annual report and work plan to the County Commission. The report will also identify and 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 suggests the need for changes.
- » New data and/or changed circumstances and issues.
- » Change in state law

Action Plan

The action plan is a matrix that lists each policy, and identifies responsible entities, time frame, staffing and expected results.

- » **Responsible Entity:** This column includes existing potential key participants in implementing a policy. Other participants may also be identified in the future; the list is not meant to be exclusive.
- » **Time Frame**
 - **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.
- » **Staffing:** Refers to the staffing needs for county government, and includes staffing in all departments, not just Planning Department.
 - **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.



RICHLAND COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Population							
Goal: Promote population growth to sustain new businesses and schools at a rate that can be supported with government services and infrastructure.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Coordinate with ongoing efforts to attract and retain businesses and young families.	Econ Dev Organizations	Ongoing	In-house	Increase in new permanent residents.			
For planning purposes, set population growth targets based on best available information.	Econ Dev Organizations Planning Board	Near Term	In-house	Improved coordination of planning and infrastructure development.			
Identify areas in the town and city-county area that are desirable for growth and target capital improvements in those areas.	Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Coordinate, cost effective extension of capital improvements beyond existing municipal boundaries.			
Assist unincorporated communities in identifying areas desirable for growth and target capital improvements in these areas.	Planning Board County Commission County Public Works	Mid-Term	In-house	Coordinate smart investments with future development			
Identify areas for future growth within the city-county planning areas and facilitate extension of municipal capital movements.	Planning Board County Commission County Public Works	Near Term	In-house	Efficient, cost-effective provision of infrastructure and services.			

Land Use							
Goal: Provide for logical, cost effective future extension of infrastructure near cities and towns.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Identify areas of potential growth expansion and coordinate urban development guidelines with Sidney and Fairview where development occurs within one mile of city/town boundaries (city required infrastructure, street standards, etc.)	Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Efficient, cost-effective provision of infrastructure and services.			
Explore the feasibility to extend zoning up to one establish an extraterritorial zoning designation or joint zoning board for urban fringes in Sidney and Fairview.	Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Efficient, cost-effective provision of infrastructure and services.			



Develop infrastructure extension area standards that are coordinated with Capital Improvement Program (CIP) documents.	Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Efficient, cost-effective provision of infrastructure and services.			
Coordinate with Sidney and Fairview to identify areas for potential city growth and expansion.	Planning Board	Near Term	In-house Volunteer	Efficient, cost-effective provision of infrastructure and services.			
Goal: Reduce potential for development to be impacted by natural, man-made or other hazards.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Implement relevant actions in the county Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan such as coordinating mitigation improvement projects with a CIP and adopting hazardous material transport guidelines.	Communities in Action County DES Emergency Services Planning Board	Mid Term	Contract In-house	Reduced exposure to costs from natural disaster and continued high standing for mitigation project funding.			
Develop setback guidelines for development near oil and gas well extraction points.	Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Reduced exposure to harmful oil/gas effects and mitigate future disaster costs.			
Goal: Preserve existing land uses by encouraging compatible development and land uses near established neighborhoods.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Explore the use of overlay zoning districts in Crane, Lambert and Savage to protect existing land use patterns.	Crane Lambert Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Protect existing land uses and plan for efficient infrastructure extension.			
Update subdivision regulations and other regulations such as BLR and Workforce Housing Ordinances as necessary to reflect changes in state requirements or land use patterns occurring with each community.	Planning Board	Annually	Contract In-house	Comply with state requirements.			
Adopt a county “decay ordinance” that removes unsafe structures and junk RVs and unsafe mobile homes, and prohibits accumulating debris in front yards.	Planning Board	Mid-Term	Contract In-house	Reduce unsafe housing units			
Goal: Encourage appropriate development in growth areas defined in future land use maps.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Utilize policy, regulatory and fiscal tools outlined in the Growth Policy to guide and promote appropriate land uses.	Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Expand land uses efficiently with infrastructure development.			



Restrict industrial development to existing or planned industrial zones.	Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Prohibit incompatible land uses and protect property.			
Locate commercial uses along major transportation corridors.	Econ Dev Organizations Planning Board	Ongoing	In-house	Follow the land use plan and limit incompatible uses			
Promote residential development near community amenities.	Planning Board	Ongoing	In-house	Follow the land use plan and promote smart development			
Prioritize and implement historic building retention, preservation, and restoration.	Planning Board	Ongoing	In-house	Retain history of the County			

Goal: Promote value-added agriculture and preserve existing agricultural lands, high-production crop land and prime farmland soils by limiting development in these areas, especially those served by irrigation canals.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Collaborate with Richland Economic Development Corporation USDA-ARS and MSU Extension Office to attract resources for agricultural research that support growth of agribusinesses.	MSU REDA Richland County USDA	Mid Term	In-house Volunteer	Promote agri-business economic development with land use policies.			
Research and consider adopting new policy to limit sprawling to preserve prime farmland soils for future agricultural use.	Planning Board LYIP	Near Term	Contract In-house Volunteer	Protect existing farmland resources.			
Incorporate standards from the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project to preserve irrigation canal, laterals, drainage ditches and easements.	Local Farmers LYIP Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house Volunteer	Protect existing farmland resources and waterways.			
Coordinate with local farmers and ranchers to identify specific areas for preservation and begin utilizing agricultural exemptions and conservation easements to protect existing farmlands.	Local Farmers LYIP Planning Board	Long Term	In-house Volunteer	Protect existing farmland resources and future ag processes.			

Transportation

Goal: Incorporate recommendations from Transportation Plan, including preserving right-of-way for corridors and implementing road development standards.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Implement recommendations from the Transportation plan into existing planning documents such as subdivision regulations, local ordinances and other applicable regulations.	Planning Board County Commission County Public Works	Near Term	In-house	Preserve future corridors and improve road conditions.			
Utilize recommendations when reviewing subdivisions and site plans to ensure development is meeting minimum design standards.	Planning Board County Commission County Public Works	Near Term	In-house Contract	Ensure roads are being developed to proper standards.			

Goal: Work with the state to maintain and improve safety on state routes.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
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Coordinate with Montana Department of Transportation on improvements to state highways and access to state roads.	County Commission County Public Works Local Communities MT Dept. of Transportation	Ongoing	In-house	Better integration of county and state road systems and upgrades.			
Upgrade priority for improvements on Highways 16, 23, 200 and 201.	County Commission County Public Works Local Communities MT Dept. of Transportation (MDT)	Near Term	In-house	Better conditions on Highway 200, 16.			
Goal: Develop an interconnected trail and park system in Savage and Lambert.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Coordinate with Park and Recreation Boards, City/County Planning Board and City of Sidney and Town of Fairview City/Town Councils to develop a regional trail system along Highway 16, 23 or 200 201.	County Commission Local Communities MDT Park and Recreation Boards CIA	Long Term	In-house Volunteer	Regional trail system for safe recreation and regional attraction.			
Collaborate with Savage and Lambert to create a walking trail along established roads with adequate right-of-way.	County Public Works Local Communities Planning Board	Mid Term	In-house	safe place to recreate			

Housing							
Goal: Expand housing stock choices that provide high quality and affordable units for all residents.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Develop affordable housing policies that encourage affordable units and provide incentives such as density bonuses and fee waivers or reductions for affordable unit construction.	Local Communities Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Increase the number of affordable units through incentives.			
Identify state and local resources to rehabilitate housing units in poor condition.	County Commission	Mid Term	Contract In-house Volunteer	Increase in numbers of existing housing units in fair or better condition.			
Create programs to address affordable housing issues including working with state and local governments to create a housing development fund similar to North Dakota's Housing Incentive Fund.	Local Communities Planning Board Real Estate Professionals	Mid Term	Contract In-house	Create showcase project so other communities can develop similar funding policies.			
Expand programs to rehabilitate existing housing units in good condition.	Local Communities Real Estate Professionals	Long Term	In-house Volunteer	Increase in numbers of existing housing units in fair or better condition.			



Identify and initiate programs to address decay and assist with demolition.	County Commission Planning Board	Near Term	Contract	Remove unsafe, decaying structures			
Goal: Preserve neighborhood character by developing similar-style housing in established residential districts and cluster residential units near existing residences especially in rural settings.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Encourage new residential development to locate in existing communities or near existing residential uses.	Local Communities Planning Board Real Estate Professionals	Near Term	In-house	Expansion for growth in cost-effective manner.			
Assist communities in identifying expansion areas desirable for residential growth.	County Staff Local Communities Planning Board	Near Term	In-house	Expansion for growth in efficient, safe and desirable manner.			
Promote in-fill development with historical community housing densities; locate single-family near single-family and multifamily near multifamily.	Local Communities Planning Board Real Estate Professionals	Mid Term	In-house	Cost-effective provision of services; retention of historical community character and reduce potential "leap frog" development.			
Utilize the future land use plan and potential zoning overlay districts in Lambert and Savage to guide residential development in appropriate areas with buffer areas as needed.	County Commission Planning Board	Ongoing	In-house	Cost-effective provision of services; retention of historical community character and reduce potential "leap frog" development.			
Discourage industrial and large-scale commercial development within established residentially areas and future residentially planned growth areas.	County Commission Planning Board	Ongoing	In-house	Protect existing property values and health, safety and welfare of residents.			
Goal: Improve capabilities of low-to-moderate income persons to purchase and maintain quality-built homes.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Expand the number of low-to-moderate income persons receiving assistance through education campaigns about housing programs within the County.	County Commission Planning Board Richland Housing Authority	Near Term	In-house	More low and moderate income persons own their homes. More homes in fair or better condition.			
Encourage new development to include affordable housing options and provide incentives to promote affordable housing in communities.	Local Communities Planning Board Real Estate Professionals	Near Term	In-house	More home-ownership in traditional developments by those who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford it.			



Collaborate with NeighborWorks Montana and Richland County Housing Authority to develop land trusts through the Montana Land Trust program or similar land/rent control mechanisms for households below median family income.	County Commission Local Communities Planning Board Richland Housing Authority	Mid Term	In-house	A sustainable fund that provides assistance to individual households to purchase, maintain, and/or rehabilitate existing homes.			
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Goal: Encourage development to meet housing needs of seniors, service workers and those with disabilities.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Work with Richland Opportunities, Inc. to expand number of persons assisted.	Local Communities Senior Coalition	Mid Term	In-house Contract	More housing for seniors that meets needs.			
Collaborate with local and regional developers to construct more low-income units through policies such as reduced fees or joint housing projects with local governments.	County Commission Local Communities Planning Board Richland Housing Authority	Near Term	In-house	Housing for those with disabilities meets needs and is sustainable over long term.			
Develop a local housing incentive fund and/or affordable housing program for public service workers to show as an example to other communities.	County Commission Local Communities Planning Board Richland Housing Authority	Mid Term	In-house	Affordable units for long-term success of public service.			
Identify options for additional senior housing needs (e.g., assisted living).	Local Communities Planning Board Richland Housing Authority CIA	Long Term	In-house Volunteer	Housing options for seniors on fixed incomes.			

Goal: Continue historical trend of residential development primarily in existing communities with scattered homesteads in rural areas.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Encourage new residential development in the county to locate in existing communities.	Local Communities Planning Board Real Estate Professionals	Near Term	In-house	Expansion for growth in cost-effective manner.			
Assist communities in identifying expansion areas desirable for residential growth and capital improvement needs.	County Staff Local Communities Planning Board	Near Term	In-house	Expansion for growth in efficient, safe and desirable manner.			
Promote in-fill development and historical community housing densities to maximize use of existing and future infrastructure.	Local Communities Planning Board Real Estate Professionals	Mid Term	In-house	Cost-effective provision of services; retention of historical community character and reduce potential "leap frog" development.			



Economic Development							
Goal: Continue developing a sustainable and diversified economic base including energy development and secondary-value added businesses.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Expand and diversify businesses through policy and implementation funding tools such as tax increment financing (TIF) and targeted economic development districts (TEDD) that support secondary value added industries.	County Commission Econ Dev Organizations Local Communities	Ongoing	In-house	More businesses and more diverse economy.			
Coordinate economic development with land use, natural resources, capital improvement programs and local community values regarding economic development.	Communities in Action Econ Dev Organizations Local Communities Planning Board	Ongoing	Contract In-house	Public acceptance of projects, new development situated in ideal locations and efficient provision of infrastructure.			
Evaluate effect of specific development proposals on community character and health prior to committing public resources.	Communities in Action Econ Dev Organizations Local Communities Planning Board	Mid Term	In-house	Future commitment of public funds for specific projects that have a positive effect on the community.			
Identify and quantify the county's resources and infrastructure that may be needed for new industry. Use as a legislative tool when seeking grant funding or support from the State Legislature and Governor's Office.	Econ Dev Organizations Utility Companies	Near Term	Contract In-house	Useful baseline data that can be used to attract and recruit new industry and expansion of existing businesses.			
Target "main street" businesses and encourage infill development as appropriate in all communities.	Econ Dev Organizations Local Communities Planning Board	Near Term	In-house	Support infill development in downtown communities.			
Goal: Support existing businesses through expanding county capacity to provide needed infrastructure to support a strong economy.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Continue to work at the state level to safeguard allocation of oil production taxes for impacts in the county.	County Commission	Ongoing	In-house	Impact-related revenues continue at current or improved levels for county.			



Balance expenditures of oil and gas revenues between construction and infrastructure projects and long-term needs.	County Commission Econ Dev Organizations Local Communities	Ongoing	In-house	Impact-related revenues used on projects with immediate needs, as well as long-term, long-lasting projects, and with some "reserve" for future needs.			
Collaborate with cities and local communities to support economic development projects including infrastructure, community amenities and housing for public-sector staff.	County Commission Econ Dev Organizations Local Communities	Ongoing	In-house	Improve economic conditions for businesses and public staff to serve business community.			
Goal: Expand the county's production of high value crops and potential for value-added industries including energy development and agri-business products.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Develop the area's agricultural resources and retain/preserve existing irrigation easements and canals.	ARS Econ Dev Organizations Irrigation Facilities Producer Groups	Ongoing	In-house	More land in irrigation with high value crops.			
Develop market for new and existing agricultural businesses as well as energy development businesses including fast-tracking projects that bring sustained employment to the region.	ARS Econ Dev Organizations Irrigation Facilities Producer Groups	Ongoing	In-house	New and expanded agri-businesses.			
Coordinate land use policies and infrastructure development (CIP) to preserve irrigation canals and expand easements where necessary.	ARS Irrigation Facilities Local Producers Planning Board Producer Groups	Mid Term	In-house	Minimize conflicts and cost for new irrigation facilities resulting from planned and existing community infrastructure.			
Increase resources for agricultural research that supports growth of agribusinesses and improves competitiveness of growers.	ARS Econ Dev Organizations Irrigation Facilities Producer Groups	Ongoing	In-house	New and expanded agri-business.			
Support LYIP, USDA-ARS and MSU Eastern Montana Research Center.	Planning Board County Commission	Ongoing	In-house	Keep existing ag-businesses in the County and preserve future farmland.			



Local Services

Goal: Make community health and safety a priority such as developing high-quality daycare facilities, after school programs, and ensure law enforcement and medical facilities can staff positions.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Collaborate with law enforcement and other city/county agencies to either construct affordable housing through city/county agreements or provide subsidized housing.	City & Public Works County Commission Law Enforcement Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Create affordable housing for public service employees.			
Support childcare groups such as Best Beginnings Coalition and Sunrise Childcare Association to improve early childhood development and education.	CIA County Commission	Ongoing	Volunteer	Improve childcare facilities that provide quality and affordable daycare and educational opportunities.			
Fast track housing projects targeted for city/county law enforcement staff and other city/county staff and consider waiving or reducing fees for housing units specifically reserved for public service employees.	County Planning Staff Planning Board	Continuous	Contract In-house	Create affordable housing for public service employees.			
Coordinate with departments to identify potential city/county spaces for afterschool programs for youth activities; create a memo-of-understanding with local afterschool programs to utilize such spaces for free or little cost.	Boys & Girls Club Community Groups County Commission Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Measureable outcomes to improve recreation and learning opportunities for youth.			

Goal: Continue providing emergency medical response and fire protection and suppression services throughout each community.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Create a capital improvement plan or similar planning document to begin budgeting for new building facilities and equipment as old equipment and structures become obsolete.	County Public Works Fire Department	Near Term	Contract In-house	Ongoing and improved emergency response.			
Develop a marketing plan to attract volunteer fire firefighters and EMT staff including offering incentives such as free training, free meals, and a point system for earning cash.	City Council County DES LEPC	Mid Term	In-house	Improved staffing for emergency response.			
Explore the potential of creating an Eastern Montana HAZMAT response team stationed in Richland, Dawson, or Fallon Counties with volunteers from surrounding counties.	Communities in Action County DES Emergency Services LEPC	Long Term	In-house	Ongoing and improved emergency response.			
Implement actions identified in the county's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan and Community Wildfire Protection Plan.	County DES Planning Board	Long Term	In-house	Reduce future hazards and protect loss of life and structures.			

Goal: Expand opportunities for life-long learning.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
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Expand or create a new library that meets the needs of future library patrons with improved technology for digital media and flexible space for expanded programs.	Communities in Action County Library Econ Dev Organizations Public School System	Near Term	In-house	More persons with post-secondary training.			
Collaborate with school districts to either construct affordable housing through city/county owned land agreements or provide subsidized housing.	City & Public Works County Commission Planning Board School Districts	Near Term	In-house	Create affordable housing for public service employees.			
Collaborate with Richland Economic Development Corporation to expand post-secondary education such as creating a distance learning program or developing two-year College. Potential courses could focus on oil and gas careers, environmental careers such as geology, business and economic classes and technical services such as welding, diesel mechanics and construction management. Additional classes may include teaching, nursing and law enforcement curriculum.	Communities in Action County Library Econ Dev Organizations Public School System	Long Term	Contract In-house	More persons with post-secondary training and local educational opportunities.			
Support local museums and cultural facilities through matching donation programs and free rental spaces for regional attractions.	Communities in Action County Library Econ Dev Organizations	Ongoing	In-house	A diversity of local resources for residents to live, learn and work.			

Goal: Develop new recreational facilities and outdoor recreation opportunities such as a connected trail system and flexible recreation spaces for adults and youth.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Continue supporting the Boys and Girls Club of Richland County to develop a new facility and explore options for funding, waiving fees for development and contributing resources as necessary.	Communities in Action County Commission	Ongoing	Contract In-house	Improve after-school youth opportunities.			
Develop new subdivision design standards to reserve right-of-way and land for trail systems and future recreational facilities.	Planning Board	Mid Term	Contract In-house	Develop new routes for trail system.			
Work with developers and businesses to donate land or help create a community facility with flexible space dedicated to public use for recreation, theater/cultural events and youth activities.	County Public Works Local Communities Planning Board	Mid Term	Contract In-house	Increased utilization of facilities and higher satisfaction among facility users.			

Goal: Improve cultural attractions/opportunities in the area.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Continue and increase support of the MonDak Heritage Center and local museums.	County Commission Local Communities	Ongoing	Volunteer	Provide ongoing education and entertainment options			
Develop a performing arts center.	Planning Board County Commission	Near Term	In-house Contract	Develop a new entertainment venue for quality of life.			



Public Facilities

Goal: Plan and design for long-term public facilities development, maintenance, operation and upgrades or replacement.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Prepare an overall capital improvement program (CIP) for County-owned infrastructure.	County Commission Public Works	Near Term	Contract In-house	Assistance with budget cycles and major improvements anticipated in advance.			
Provide technical and financial assistance to all communities to assess and address needed improvements to water and wastewater systems.	County Public Health Local Communities Public Works	Ongoing	In-house	Identification of existing and future water and sewer upgrades.			
Develop a priority list of community improvements within CIP to evaluate needs per community.	County Public Works Planning Board	Mid Term	In-house	Assistance with budget cycles and major improvements anticipated in advance.			
Develop a community convention-auditorium center, regional parks and an interconnected trail system.	Local Communities	Near Term	Contract In-house	A place for meetings, conventions and performances to meet needs as regional economic hub.			
Continue to work with county departments and City of Sidney to identify opportunities for mix of uses and location for proposed new construction (e.g., recent law and justice center).	County Commission Planning Board County Public Works	Mid Term	In-house Volunteer	Improved use of resources and sharing of staffing			

Goal: Promote development with adequate services that do not add to the tax burden for existing landowners; new development should pay its fair share of infrastructure costs.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Promote development in city and town limits and discourage inefficient and incompatible land use patterns.	County Staff Local Communities Planning Board	Mid Term	Contract In-house	Cost-effective provision of infrastructure and services.			
Include provisions for subdivisions and subdividers to pay their portion of infrastructure and services through subdivision improvement agreements and impact fees.	County Commission Planning Board	Near Term	In-house	Equity in cost sharing for expanded infrastructure.			
Require new development to pay for all infrastructure costs to their property and extend new and existing infrastructure to the furthest extent of their property.	County Commission Planning Board	Ongoing	In-house	Equity in cost sharing for expanded infrastructure.			



Require subdividers to provide financial guarantees to ensure development of subdivision improvements will be completed; only applicable if filing for final plat before infrastructure is installed.	County Commission Planning Board	Ongoing	In-house	Local government isn't left with burden of improvements if subdivider defaults.			
Goal: Improve cell phone coverage and high speed internet access throughout the county including land line expansion and phone access for all county residents.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Work with private utilities to ensure right-of-way or utility easements are dedicated on all future plats for services for all communities.	Planning Board Service Providers	Mid Term	In-house	Expanded coverage areas.			
Identify future areas for cell towers and ensure they comply with FAA standards.	Planning Board Airport Boards	Long Term	In-house Volunteer	Reduce conflicts with airport growth			

Natural and Cultural Resources							
Goal: Provide for long-term function of natural systems and resources, recognizing a diversity of uses for those systems and resources.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Develop a GIS system to collect natural resource and development information and coordinate with the Montana State Library and a county representative to update local data such as prime farmland soils, wetlands, steep slopes, underground mines and LYIP canals/outlets.	MSU Extension Richland County USDA	Mid Term	In-house	Updatable GIS system used by multiple departments.			
Continue to review the county's weed management plan every two years and update as needed.	County Weed Board Richland County	Mid Term	In-house	Reduce weed spread and infestation of new weed types.			
Continue to protect the natural functioning of the Lower Yellowstone River and implement subdivision development standards to protect LYIP canals, ditches and outlets.	LYIP Richland County	Ongoing	In-house	Maintain good condition of Yellowstone River and access to irrigation.			
Develop defensible space guidelines in subdivision regulations to protect against future wildfires.	Planning Board DES	Near Term	In-house Contract	Prevent loss of life and structures			
Ensure that wild animals and domestic and livestock can co-exist by coordinating with federal and state agencies on the removal, replacement or addition of any species such as bison, elk deer, sage grouse, wolves and other animals within Richland County that may affect agricultural lands and natural habitats.	Richland County	Ongoing	In-house Contract	Protect local resources from outside interests and preserve agricultural lands and wildlife habitats.			
Goal: Maintain and improve agriculture production farmland.							
Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date



Utilize agricultural covenants, conservation easements and similar policies to protect existing prime farmlands.	Conservation District County Public Works Planning Board	Near Term	Contract In-house	Preserve future use of agricultural lands for future generations.			
Implement land use planning guidelines and the future land use map to restrict sprawl development, especially residential and temporary housing uses; cluster similar uses near each other.	Planning Board Richland County	Mid Term	In-house	Reduce sprawl development and eliminate infrastructure needs.			
Collaborate with the USDA-ASR and MSU Extension Center to identify and catalog prime farmland lost to development; develop preservation policies as needed.	Conservation District Planning Board MSU Extension MT DNRC USDA	Long Term	Contract In-house Volunteer	Protect future farmland as needed.			
Catalog the number of acres of prime farmland lost to residential, commercial and industrial development to support new policies for protecting prime farmland soils.	Conservation District Planning Board MSU Extension MT DNRC USDA	Long Term	Contract	Protect future farmland as needed.			
Work with LYIP and other state and federal agencies to develop a clear set of development guidelines such as setback and buffer distances from LYIP irrigation canals, drainage ditches and streams.	Conservation District Planning Board MSU Extension MT DNRC USDA LYIP	Near Term	Contract In-house Volunteer	Protect future farmland and ag waterways and easements.			

Goal: Expand opportunities for improved residential water quality in the county.

Objectives	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Staffing	Expected Results	Regulations Used	Funding Sources	Completion Date
Encourage potential for Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority project or other means of a good potable water public water system across Richland County.	County Commission DRRWA	Mid Term	In-house Volunteer	Ensure future water use for residents and businesses in rural areas			
Expand abilities to address water quality issues on an individual basis or at the community level.	Planning Board DEQ	Ongoing	In-house	Ensure future water quality for residents and businesses in rural areas			
Identify potential funding resources to assist low and fixed income householders to protect and improve existing water quality.	Local Communities	Mid Term	Contract	Ensure future water quality for residents and businesses in rural areas			
Develop setbacks for oil wells from residential structures and private wells.	Planning Board	Near Term	In-house	Protect future residents from dangerous gases.			