

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: COUNTY-WIDE GOALS AND POLICIES**

The Lewis and Clark County Growth Policy (previously known as the Comprehensive Plan—see 76-1-601 MCA) provides long-term, general planning guidance for the County. This executive summary contains a summary of the county-wide planning direction in the Growth Policy, without getting into the specifics of particular geographic areas of the County. The main topical areas covered here include the following: land use; natural environment; housing; economic development; transportation; utilities, and; public safety and emergency services. Each of these topics is discussed in more detail later in the Growth Policy.

It is important to note that implementation of the Growth Policy and the following goals and policies are dependent on the availability of limited funding and staff. Additionally, County priorities as adopted by the Commission necessarily will change over time, as circumstances change. Implementation of recommendations is contingent on approval by the County Commission; implementation steps must be in compliance with this Growth Policy.

### **Land Use**

#### **Introduction/Purposes**

It is generally understood that land, and the various uses put to it, is what drives our economy. We grow food with land, harvest trees from it, recreate on it, and build our homes and businesses on it. How land is used is a chief ingredient in our community character. But what goes largely unnoticed is that growth and land development--when not managed or planned thoughtfully--may carry significant costs affecting not only a developer or builder, but surrounding land users, the broader community, and the natural and cultural environment.

Additionally, once land is developed, an on-going financial responsibility results for the entire taxpaying public. Roads, water and sewer systems, police and fire protection and other services all have costs which must be considered when designating land for development. Since public and private fiscal resources are limited, it only makes sense to think carefully about the long-term effects of our land use decisions. With careful planning, the substantial investment which is often necessary to serve land is better secured and protected.

Defining how our various lands can and should be used provides predictability for individuals and businesses making long-term decisions. More importantly, the public costs associated with serving these lands can be minimized, and the qualities that make many of

them unique preserved. Furthermore, public costs associated with serving these lands can be minimized, and the qualities that make many of them unique preserved.

Public comments reflected a recurring concern throughout the process of developing the County Growth Policy regarding a lack of land use predictability. Many commented they feel they have no say in the land use changes going on around them. In recent years, the subdivision process has generated on-going conflict over proposed changes in land uses and densities: Examples include low density neighborhoods versus high density residential development, farmers and ranchers opposing residential subdivisions near their operations, and homeowners resisting commercial or industrial development in or near their residential neighborhoods.

Property owners are often surprised that subdivision regulations provide little or no protection against what they see as the intrusion of incompatible land uses into their neighborhoods. Likewise, developers are frustrated that there appears to be so little consensus on the types of development that are appropriate or acceptable for areas of the county.

Nationally, and under Montana law, the appropriate legal tool for determining appropriate land uses for areas of the community and for regulating changes in land use is zoning. Zoning was developed approximately a hundred years ago to protect residential areas and property values from negative impacts from uses considered undesirable or incompatible. Since its origins, zoning has evolved into a more flexible tool that can be tailored to achieve particular goals. For example, it can be used not only in its traditional role of demarcating general types of land use zones, but it can also identify uses that would be acceptable only if they meet certain conditions. Zoning can be used to establish general performance standards for various types of development, or overall density of development, with or without specifying particular land uses for geographic areas. It can also be used to help preserve open space or prime agricultural land.

Residents of several areas of Lewis and Clark County have asked for the County's assistance in developing zoning regulations to provide them protection from types of development they see as incompatible or inappropriate for their neighborhoods. A related concern regarding "predictability" has been raised by both developers and homeowners. The desire is that the County provide better guidance on where future growth should or should not be directed (e.g., which areas of the County are most suitable for development as well as least suitable due to issues such as water quality and availability, soils, earthquake or liquefaction prone areas, floodplains, seasonal high groundwater, and wildland urban-interface areas.) Many commented that areas with development constraints should be more clearly mapped or otherwise identified so that developers and prospective homebuilders or homebuyers know where the problem areas are and avoid them.

## **Summary of Key Trends and Facts: Land Use**

- The Helena Valley is the primary population center and economic hub for Lewis and Clark County, and northern Jefferson and Broadwater Counties. The Valley continues to encompass the largest percentage of County population and growth. The majority of the growth is occurring in unincorporated areas within the Valley.
- The number of parcels created through subdivision review has increased substantially in Lewis and Clark County since the 1980s. In 1986, for example, 94 lots were granted through subdivision review (via either preliminary or final plat approval) in the County. By 2002, that number increased to 685. Additionally, unreviewed land divisions have added to this total.
- The Helena Valley Irrigation District (HVID) irrigates approximately 15,000 acres of cropland in the Helena Valley and Spokane Bench (HVID, 2003). The Helena Valley's irrigated haylands, in particular, are an important agricultural resource for Lewis and Clark County. Additionally, a significant portion the recharge of the Helena Valley aquifer is locally attributable to the operation of the irrigation system (U.S. Geological Survey—USGS, 2000).
- Agricultural operations in the Helena Valley (and the County as a whole) are relatively small in nature, with many operators working second jobs in nearby towns and cities.
- The amount of land being utilized for agriculture in Lewis and Clark County is expected to decrease as residential development continues. The majority of the growth and development in the County is occurring in the Helena Valley. According to the most recent Montana Census of Agriculture, the amount of acreage in farms in Lewis and Clark County decreased 7 percent between 1992 to 1997, from 883,479 acres to 822,066 acres. The average farm size in the County decreased 19 percent during the same period, from 2,017 acres to 1,638, while the number of full-time farms actually increased from 207 in 1992 to 211 in 1997. (Source: USDA, Montana Agricultural Statistics Service, 1997. Note: The Montana Census of Agriculture is conducted every five years, and was repeated in 2002, but the results were not available at this writing.)
- A majority of the residential lots located outside the City of Helena are served by individual wells and on-site wastewater treatment systems. According to the City-County Environmental Health Department (2003), since the inception of the County Wastewater Treatment Regulations, approximately 5,100 on-site wastewater treatment systems have been permitted and completed within the Helena Valley planning area.
- Groundwater in the Helena area is the sole source of drinking water for more than 27,000 people, approximately 55 percent of the population. The Helena Valley

alluvial aquifer provides water through approximately 5,600 domestic wells and 71 public water supplies (Lewis and Clark Co. Water Quality Protection District and MT Bureau of Mines and Geology, 2003).

- In the past 15 years, Lewis and Clark County has witnessed a number of wildfires that have destroyed property and affected wildlife habitat, scenic resources, and air quality. In 2003, for example, two major fires threatened the area around Lincoln. High fire hazard areas around Helena exist in several places, including the South Hills, the Scratchgravel Hills, the North Hills, and the Spokane Hills.

## **Issues, Goals, and Policies**

**ISSUE A      Development is affecting the rural character of Lewis and Clark County.**

**Goal 1**      Maintain the opportunity for a rural lifestyle.

**Policy 1.1**    Encourage low-density residential, agricultural, and forestry-related rural development outside the urban and transitional areas.

**Policy 1.2**    Level of Service/Design Standards shall reflect the goals and policies of the Growth Policy.

**Goal 2**      Support the continuation of farming and ranching operations.

**Policy 2.1**    Establish review procedures for land uses that may be especially sensitive to locations near existing agricultural activities (e.g., schools, day care facilities, hospitals, medical clinics, outdoor recreational facilities, etc.).

**Policy 2.2**    When considering the proposed subdivision of agricultural lands, minimize potential land use conflicts or adverse impacts that may be detrimental to adjacent agricultural operations.

**Policy 2.3**    Guide appropriate growth to less productive agricultural lands or nonproductive lands that are suitable for development.

**Policy 2.4**    Evaluate rural, agricultural, or open space zoning as a tool for limiting non-agricultural development to densities and development patterns that are consistent with the continuation of agriculture, and the desires of the affected planning areas or neighborhoods.

**Policy 2.5**    Encourage the purchase of conservation easements by private non-profit land trusts or other entities to retain agricultural lands in production.

- Policy 2.6** Encourage in-fill development of urban and transitional areas already committed to development, where community facilities and services can be provided cost effectively in order to reduce development pressure on agricultural lands.
- Policy 2.7** Support federal or state agricultural policies that help maintain the viability of agriculture.
- Policy 2.8** Encourage agricultural land owners considering land subdivision to develop the least agriculturally viable portion of their properties, such as grazing land or non-irrigated cropland.
- Policy 2.9** Create incentives for cluster development where the majority of the land would remain undeveloped and in agricultural production.
- Policy 2.10** Convene a task force to study ways to effectively retain agricultural lands in production and provide landowners options for a reasonable financial return.
- ISSUE B** **Some property owners perceive they have no control over the quality and character of development occurring around them. Some developers believe there is no predictability or community consensus on where development should take place, or the types of development that are appropriate.**
- Goal 3** Provide more predictability for property owners and the development community regarding appropriate changes in land use by directing growth to areas most suitable for development, and by developing standards that allow county residents to more effectively manage change within the affected planning area.
- Policy 3.1** Inform developers and prospective homebuilders or homebuyers (through maps or other means) about areas of the county that are most suitable for development and those which are least suitable because of development constraints.
- Policy 3.2** Guide growth to urban and transitional lands or nonproductive lands that are suitable for development.
- Policy 3.3** Adopt minimum countywide development standards to address general land use concerns (e.g., compatibility with adjacent land uses, site suitability, access and traffic generation, road construction, lighting or noise, etc.).
- Policy 3.4** Assist interested planning areas or neighborhoods in developing appropriate development standards or zoning regulations consistent with local objectives.

Establish minimum requirements for neighborhood plans that can be used as templates.

## **Natural Environment**

### **Introduction/Purpose**

Lewis and Clark County recognizes that the condition of the natural environment and the health and quality of life enjoyed by the citizens of the County are integrally linked. Assuring that development does not occur in areas prone to natural disasters or areas with serious constraints is important. Preservation of natural resources--while managing economic and population growth--presents a challenge to the citizens of Lewis and Clark County. Noxious weeds also continue to threaten agricultural lands and natural vegetation, and have become an important issue in the County and elsewhere in Montana.

### **Summary of Key Trends and Facts: Natural Environment**

- A U.S. Geological Survey study (1992) identified areas of recharge for the Valley aquifer. Inflow from bedrock aquifers accounts for 46 percent of Valley recharge, irrigation water infiltration accounts for 31 percent, infiltration from streams contributes 15 percent, and leakage from the Helena Valley irrigation canal accounts for 8 percent. The study describes the valley-fill aquifer system as being "relatively susceptible to potential contamination from surface and near-surface sources."
- Preliminary results of groundwater sampling conducted by the Water Quality Protection District in 2001 and 2002 demonstrate higher nitrate concentrations in shallow groundwater and decreasing concentration with depth.
- Many of the soil types of the Valley and other alluvial aquifers are mapped by the Natural Resource Conservation Service as being severely limited for on-site wastewater treatment systems. This severe ranking is derived from the coarse porous nature of the soils, shallow groundwater, and the wetness of the soils.
- Lewis and Clark County does not have a complete inventory of the number, type, and condition of on-site wastewater systems in the Helena Valley. Many of the on-site wastewater systems were installed prior to 1973, and a large number were installed prior to the adoption of the State minimum standards. Many older systems are in poor condition and malfunctioning; they may have had little or no maintenance, and may be contributing to groundwater degradation of the valley aquifer.

- According to a survey of homeowners in the Helena Valley, Colorado Gulch, Wolf Creek, and Craig, 63 percent of the residences indicated that their septic tank had been installed or pumped within the last three years. Taking a slightly longer time-frame, 73 percent said their systems had been installed or pumped within the last five years. Lewis and Clark County recommends that tanks be pumped every three years; the EPA recommendation is three to five years (Lewis and Clark County Environmental Health Division, 2002).
- In August 2002, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) responded to a petition by designating a temporary controlled groundwater area (CGA) for the North Hills, along the edge of the Helena Valley. According to the DNRC proposal for decision, “the evidence shows the public health, safety, or welfare of the groundwater users in the proposed CGA is of concern because of declining water levels and increasing nitrate levels. However, facts are insufficient at this time to require permanent corrective controls to be adopted on this basis.”
- The Montana Natural Heritage Program identified twenty-three plant species and three plant associations that are considered to be rare or vulnerable to extinction in Lewis and Clark County. Most of the identified species are associated with wetlands or transitional wetland areas.
- Lewis and Clark County provides abundant and varied habitat for a large number of wildlife species. According to the Montana Natural Heritage Program, approximately 22 species of fish, six species of amphibians, eight species of reptiles, 286 species of birds, and 61 species of mammals utilize portions of the County for permanent or migratory habitat.
- Noxious weeds have infested Lewis and Clark County and the rest of Montana for decades, but the problem has grown in severity; statewide, they now infest approximately eight million acres. Some of the negative impacts of noxious weeds include degradation and loss of wildlife habitat and species diversity, decreases in property values, declines in agricultural productivity, and possible water quality/quality degradation.
- Currently Lewis and Clark County has two sites listed on the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) National Priority List (NPL). The listed sites are the East Helena Smelter and the Upper Tenmile Creek Watershed. The NPL is a published list of hazardous waste sites in the U.S. eligible for extensive, long term, cleanup under the EPA's Superfund Program.
- In 1991, the EPA and ASARCO signed an Administrative Order of Consent to begin a residential soil removal in East Helena. Since 1991, the removal action has resulted in the clean-up of at least 518 residential yards, 421 sections of adjacent

alleys and road aprons, 32 commercial sites, 6 public parks, 4 parking lots, 3 day-care centers, 2 schools, 6,600 linear feet of irrigation ditch, and a 45 acre site for the proposed K and R residential subdivision (Lewis and Clark County Health Dept., 2002).

- Today the Upper Tenmile Creek area consists of abandoned and inactive hard rock mines that produced gold, lead, zinc, and copper from the 1870s to the 1920s. Today the water quality in the Upper Tenmile watershed has been degraded by the historic mining operations. The remains of many of the historic mines contain trace metals known to be hazardous to human health and the environment. Coordinated by the EPA, reclamation in the area has started.

## **Issues, Goals, and Policies**

**ISSUE A**     **Development in environmentally critical areas, particularly in places identified at high risk for flooding or wildfires, has proven costly for residents, local government, and the natural environment.**

**Goal 1**        Encourage development in areas with few environmental hazards or development constraints to minimize degradation of the natural environment, and the loss of capital investment and life due to natural disasters.

**Policy 1.1**    Encourage development in areas that are relatively free of environmental problems (e.g., soils, slope, bedrock, high water table, and flood prone areas).

**Policy 1.2**    Discourage or prevent development that is incompatible with the designated 100-year floodplain. Prohibit development in designated floodways.

**Policy 1.3**    Prevent increased storm water runoff from new development from adversely impacting other properties.

**Policy 1.4**    Preserve existing natural drainages.

**Policy 1.5**    Preserve hazardous areas (e.g., subject to geologic and flood hazards) as open space wherever possible.

**Policy 1.6**    Systematically reduce the existing level of storm water damage. Diminish exposure of people and property to storm water runoff, and reduce flood hazard.

- Policy 1.7** Improve the usefulness of flood-prone lands as active and passive recreational areas.
- Policy 1.8** Develop residential and commercial setback requirements along streams, rivers, lakes, and reservoirs to preserve water quality and other natural resources, viewsheds, and recreational uses.
- Policy 1.9** Discourage development within areas designated by the Tri-County Fire Working Group as "High to Severe" to "Severe" fire hazard risk, unless developed in a manner consistent with the "Fire Protection Guidelines for Wildland Residential Interface Development," and the design standards in the Lewis and Clark County Subdivision Regulations.
- Policy 2.0** Examine the cumulative effects of development on flood plains, flood ways, levels of flood activity, and potential property damage.
- ISSUE B** **Groundwater and surface water quality are threatened and need to be protected.**
- Goal 2** Preserve, protect, and improve water quantity and quality in Lewis and Clark County.
- Policy 2.1** Discourage development with on-site wastewater treatment systems in areas having inappropriate soils or high groundwater to help prevent contamination of groundwater supplies.
- Policy 2.2** Encourage feedlots and other intensive livestock operations to locate in areas with low potential for ground and surface water contamination.
- Policy 2.3** Conduct water quality protection projects for high priority threats to Lewis and Clark County water resources.
- Policy 2.4** Improve water quality by minimizing erosion and sedimentation problems. Promote best management practices for timber harvests, road, bridge, and building construction to avoid water pollution, soil erosion, and the spread of noxious weeds.
- Policy 2.5** Assess stormwater runoff diversion and collection systems for efficiency, impacts to natural systems, and flood prevention.
- Policy 2.6** Encourage development of wellhead protection zones in areas of existing or proposed source water use.

- Policy 2.7** Provide education regarding the source and distribution of water supplies, potential threats to the quality and quantity of drinking water, and pollution prevention methods.
- Policy 2.8** Coordinate watershed user groups to develop sound watershed management recommendations.
- Policy 2.9** Support the Water Quality Protection District in its efforts to carry out programs that further the intentions of this goal, including the identification and evaluation of existing groundwater issues and alternatives.
- Policy 2.10** Consider the interrelationship between surface water and groundwater in subdivisions, by requiring the identification of areas of recharge and discharge around new development occurring in the Helena Valley, and elsewhere whenever economically feasible.
- Policy 2.11** Implement a wastewater maintenance program (see implementation plans).
- Policy 2.12** Define the role on-site wastewater treatment systems play in groundwater and surface water interactions by performing an inventory of septic systems, and monitoring their impacts on water resources.
- Policy 2.13** Recognize the important role played by wetlands in watersheds regarding groundwater recharge, water storage, flood abatement, and water quality.
- Policy 2.14** Review the Helena Area Wastewater Treatment Facility Plan (HAWT), prioritizing and implementing realistic strategies.
- ISSUE C    The quality of the County’s wildlife habitat and open space may be threatened by development.**
- Goal 3**        Maintain the quality of the County’s critical wildlife habitat, wetlands, and open space.
- Policy 3.1**    Identify and protect the natural wetland buffers along the County’s rivers, lakes and streams.
- Policy 3.2**    Identify and encourage preservation of critical wildlife habitat.
- ISSUE D    The character and quality of Missouri River Corridor is impacted by increased development and recreational pressure.**

**Goal 4** Preserve, improve and protect the Missouri River Corridor.

**Policy 4.1** Work cooperatively with local watershed groups, conservation districts, private landowners, and other entities involved with Missouri River issues.

**ISSUE E: Wetlands are critical areas that affect water quality, wildlife, and community aesthetics.**

**Goal 5** Preserve existing wetlands within the County, and restore historic wetlands where possible.

**Policy 5.1** Prohibit construction activities within delineated wetlands.

**Policy 5.2** Encourage subdivisions and other projects to avoid or reduce loss of wetland functions.

**Policy 5.3** Provide incentives to avoid impacts to wetlands.

**Policy 5.4** Develop effective land use controls to protect wetlands.

**Policy 5.5** Identify the location of historic wetlands. Work with landowners, developers, agencies and organizations to develop projects to restore historic wetlands.

**Policy 5.6** Integrate wetland conservation with other resources such as floodplains, groundwater, streams, and lakes.

**Policy 5.7** Adopt a wetlands rating system to reflect the relative function and value of wetlands in Lewis and Clark County.

**Policy 5.8** Continue to support the Helena Wetlands Partnership or similar efforts in identifying, inventorying, and mapping wetlands throughout Lewis and Clark County.

**Policy 5.9** Work with agencies or land trust organizations to obtain conservation easements that protect wetlands and riparian areas.

**ISSUE F: Noxious weeds continue to threaten agricultural lands and natural vegetation.**

**Goal 6** Work cooperatively to reduce the impact of noxious weeds in the County.

**Policy 6.1** Efficiently spend limited weed management funds according to an established

set of priorities (see implementation plans).

**Policy 6.2** Enhance the County's enforcement mechanism for weed violations, to promote good weed management.

**ISSUE G** **Prehistoric and historic resources are critical features that affect our understanding of and connection to the land.**

**Goal 7** Encourage protection of historic and prehistoric resources.

**Policy 7.1** Inventory historic and prehistoric resources.

**Policy 7.2** Consider the effect of development on historic and prehistoric resources.

**Policy 7.3** Provide for the protection of historic and prehistoric resources with reasonable mitigation, including education about these resources.

**Policy 7.4** Encourage transportation improvements that are compatible with cultural resources.

## **Housing**

### **Introduction/Purposes**

Lewis and Clark County recognizes that obtaining adequate and affordable housing choices are essential for all county residents. There is a continuing need for a diversity in the type, density, and location of housing within the County while protecting public health, safety, and quality of life.

### **Summary of Key Trends and Facts: Housing**

- The housing stock in the County has increased considerably during the past 30 years, more than doubling between 1970 and 2000. During this period, the most rapid growth in housing occurred during the 1970s, when 6,212 housing units were built in the County, an increase of 50 percent. As the economy slowed during the 1980s, the growth in new housing decreased considerably, before rising again during the 1990s (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).
- The housing stock in Lewis and Clark County is slightly newer than that in Montana as a whole (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

- Average household size in Lewis and Clark County has shrunk from 2.96 persons per household in 1970 to 2.38 in 2000. This reduction of household size is in keeping with long-range national trends during the same period. Some of the factors contributing to this decline include families having fewer children, an increase in single parent households, and people living longer (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).
- According to 2000 census data, nearly 66 percent of the total households in Lewis and Clark County were composed of families; 32 percent of all households had children under 18 years of age in the dwelling. Approximately 29 percent of the households in the County were composed of an individual living alone (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).
- In 2000, approximately 70 percent of the Lewis and Clark County population lived in owner-occupied dwellings, with the other 30 percent living in rental properties. The percentage of ownership has declined by 4 percent since 1990 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).
- According to 2000 Census data, the vacancy rate for owner-occupied property in the County was 1.5 percent, compared to 5.8 percent for rental housing units (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).
- Across the State of Montana, a major concern for many residents is the lack of affordable housing. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the average citizen to purchase a new home. Housing is typically deemed affordable if either the monthly rent, or mortgage, principle and interest, is no more than 30 percent of a household's monthly income (U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, 2003).
- According to the 1996 Lewis and Clark County Housing Needs Assessment, low income households could afford to purchase a home for no more than \$75,000, assuming a 30 year mortgage at an 8 percent interest rate. The maximum affordable home purchase price for moderate-income households was \$93,000. As a point of comparison, the cost of single-family housing increased in the Helena area from \$85,605 in 1993 to \$117,140 in 1998. During the same period, the average cost of mobile homes nearly doubled, rising from \$22,929 to \$37,724. In general, the Helena area, in particular, has a shortage of homes in the \$60,000 to \$100,000 price range (data from City of Helena Growth Policy).
- Often, the private housing market does not provide adequate affordable housing for low to moderate-income groups without some type of subsidy or incentive. For many years, the County has worked with other organizations to help provide housing for low and moderate-income families. However, housing costs have risen faster than incomes during the last decade, contributing to the on-going challenge of securing adequate housing for all income groups.

- The senior population is a significant and growing presence in Lewis and Clark County, resulting in an important housing issue. This group has needs that are different from the rest of the population. Twenty percent of the households in the 2000 census included at least one individual 65 years of age or older. People 60 years and older made up 15.7 percent of the population, a figure that has been increasing in recent decades as the population ages (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).
- Resources to meet the housing needs are fairly limited in Lewis and Clark County. To some degree, this is a reflection of national trends, as Federal funding for housing was substantially reduced during the 1980s. However, the County is now in a strategic position to access grants and develop targeted programs to meet housing needs, with the completion of the County-wide needs assessment and this Growth Policy.

## **Issues, Goals, and Policies**

### **ISSUE A Not all county residents can afford market rate housing.**

**Goal 1** All residents should have the opportunity to obtain safe, sanitary, and affordable housing.

**Policy 1.1** Work to maintain adequate and diverse housing opportunities for all income levels.

**Policy 1.2** Consider the locational needs of various types of housing with regard to proximity of employment, and access to transportation and services.

**Policy 1.3** Work to disperse affordable housing throughout the County.

**Policy 1.4** Participate in periodic analyses to determine immediate and long-range affordable housing needs.

**Policy 1.5** Study and consider innovative housing programs to reduce dependency on subsidized housing.

**Policy 1.6** Group homes, foster care facilities, and facilities for other special populations, should be equitably distributed throughout the county.

**Policy 1.7** Encourage preservation, rehabilitation, and redevelopment of existing housing, with special attention to historic structures and historic areas.

**Policy 1.8** Encourage compatible mixed-use development.

**Policy 1.9** Participate in periodic inventories of housing conditions in unincorporated areas.

**Policy 1.10** Develop programs, as funding allows, to access available public/private funding for affordable housing and related infrastructure.

## **Economic Development**

### **Introduction/Purpose**

A healthy economy is essential to Lewis and Clark County's vitality and quality of life. A thriving economy provides jobs and a tax base to support basic infrastructure, schools, parks, public safety, and other public facilities and services.

While the County's natural setting sets the stage and determines the parameters within which economic development may take place, virtually every other feature of community life stems from the area's economic health. The County should attempt to encourage existing businesses and attract new ones by providing assistance through appropriate local, state, and federal programs. It is worth emphasizing that the scenic, natural, and cultural amenities present in Lewis and Clark County contribute to the local quality of life, and are an important incentive for attracting and retaining businesses.

### **Summary of Key Trends and Facts: Demographics and Economics**

(Note: All the information below is taken directly from the full Growth Policy, most of which is derived from the U.S. Census.)

- According to the most recent U.S. Census (2000), the County's population was 55,716 persons in 2000, more than double the population in 1950 (24,540). The rate of population growth in the County—like the Valley--has fluctuated significantly over the years, varying with the economy and other factors, as listed below:
  - 1950s: 14 percent increase
  - 1960s: 19 percent increase
  - 1970s: 29 percent increase
  - 1980s: 10 percent increase
  - 1990s: 17 percent increase
- The projected 2010 population for the County is 63,316, up from 55,716 in 2000 census, a 14 percent increase.

- From 1970 to 2000, the population growth rate in unincorporated portions of Lewis and Clark County (outside of Helena and East Helena) was the highest of any unincorporated area in Montana, at 218 percent.
- Recent increases in County population are primarily attributed to a net increase in migration (for employment purposes) of persons between the ages of 35 and 55, as well as retirees age 65 and older. The long-range trend in the County is an aging population, with a number of important implications for the workforce, healthcare system, and other areas of life.
- Approximately half of the adults in Lewis and Clark County have received some training beyond high school, and more than 30 percent of the population has attained a college or technical degree.
- Females comprise a larger share of the workforce than in the past decade, but continue to hold jobs paying less than males. The County's economy is predominantly based on the government and service sectors.
- Per capita income in Lewis and Clark County as a percentage of the national figures decreased significantly in the period between 1970-2000, but remains higher than in Montana as a whole.
- Unemployment in Lewis and Clark County has consistently remained lower than that in Montana and the United States as a whole, primarily because of government jobs.
- During the past three decades, the economies of southern Lewis and Clark County, northern and central Jefferson County, and central and western Broadwater County, in particular, have been increasingly linked in an economic and demographic region that transcends county boundaries. A growing portion of the workforce in Lewis and Clark County, for example, commutes to work from homes in Broadwater and Jefferson Counties. This trend has increased the need for inter-county planning and cooperation in the region.
- Expenditures on new housing can have an important effect on a local economy. A recent study completed by researchers at Montana State University—Billings attempted to quantify the economic benefits of new home construction in a variety of Montana counties (The Economic Impact of Home Construction on Montana Counties, by Dr. Ann L. Adair and Cheryl Heath, CPA, December, 2002). According to the study, the 284 housing starts in Lewis and Clark County in 2001 generated 541 local jobs during the first year, producing \$20,227,470 in local income, and \$1,100,500 in local taxes. These figures include both direct, construction-related impacts, as well as indirect, non-construction effects.

- The location of new housing can have a significant effect on whether it becomes a net financial benefit or loss to local government. Development located a long distance from existing infrastructure and services can require costly public expenditures in new schools, roads, sewer lines, fire protection, and other items. Numerous studies in Montana and throughout the country have suggested that sprawling housing developments constructed away from existing infrastructure can be a net drain on local government coffers, particularly compared to the agricultural land that may have been taken out of production. A study in Gallatin County during the 1990s, for example, indicated that housing in outlying areas cost local government \$1.45 to service for every dollar generated in taxes, while providing service to farms only cost \$0.25 for every tax dollar paid (Mark Haggerty, 1997).

## **Issues, Goals, and Policies**

**ISSUE A**    **Trade, retail business, agriculture and government provide the backbone of the County's economy and present significant opportunity for economic expansion.**

**Goal 1**        Promote retention, diversification, and expansion of existing businesses.

**Goal 2**        Provide opportunities for commercial growth and development in Lewis and Clark County.

**Policy 2.1**    Encourage commercial development in central neighborhood areas, when sufficient population is present.

**Policy 2.2**    Encourage cluster commercial development over strip commercial development.

**Policy 2.3**    Prepare, in conjunction with community leaders and economic development institutions, an economic development strategy to promote and recruit new business to the County.

**Goal 3**        Support the agricultural sector of the County's economy.

**Policy 3.1**    Support opportunities for value added natural resource-based business (e.g., food products made from locally grown crops, furniture or building materials made from locally harvested timber).

**Policy 3.2**    Encourage preservation of areas suitable for agricultural-based business.

**ISSUE B    The tourism industry presents an economic opportunity for the County.**

**Goal 4**    Assist the tourism industry as a vital part of the Lewis and Clark County economy.

**Policy 4.1**    Improve the visual entrances or gateways to the County and the communities within the County.

**Policy 4.2**    Encourage the location of compatible visitor support services near attractions, when consistent with other land use planning activities.

**Policy 4.3**    Assess the impact of tourism on the County's economy.

**Policy 4.4**    Maintain and protect historic areas which are a significant tourism attraction.

**Policy 4.5**    Foster preservation and conservation by supporting the efforts of the Historic Preservation Commission and other similar organizations.

**ISSUE C    Growing industrial development may provide further wage and job opportunities, increase housing needs, and expand other services.**

**Goal 5**    Provide opportunities for industrial development at locations with suitable access to transportation and adequate public services.

**Policy 5.1**    Conduct a county-wide industrial lands suitability study.

**Policy 5.2**    Industrial lands should have access to arterial roads and to adequate basic services (for example water, sewer, fire, and police).

**Policy 5.3**    Industrial development should be undertaken in ways that reduce impacts on the natural environment.

**Policy 5.4**    Industrial development, other than that which is dependent on a natural resource, should be located in or near urban or transitional areas.

**Policy 5.5**    Infrastructure investment should be directed to areas identified for planned industrial expansion.

**ISSUE D    Sports Facilities attract visitors to the County.**

- Goal 6** Continue working with the schools, Carroll College, the Fair Grounds, the University of Montana, technical colleges, the Helena Regional Airport, and the private sector to develop sporting complexes that not only provide activities for County residents, but attract sporting events throughout Montana and the Northwestern U.S.

## **Transportation**

### **Introduction/Purposes**

People and goods are connected to one another via a community's transportation system, which consists of facilities that accommodate many modes of transport including cars, trucks, buses, bicycles, pedestrians, railcars, and airplanes. Lewis and Clark County must work to establish an efficient and safe road system that supports desired development patterns, in order to accommodate an increasing population and be economically competitive.

### **Summary of Key Trends and Facts: Transportation**

- The Helena Valley transportation network consists of numerous north-south road corridors, such as North Montana Avenue, McHugh Drive, Green Meadow Drive, Applegate Drive, Wylie Drive, Valley Drive, and Lake Helena Drive. These roads traverse large sections of the Valley and allow relatively unrestricted travel north and south. There is a lack of corresponding east-west routes across the Valley; consequently, many Valley residents are limited to using the north-south routes for travel purposes.
- An environmental impact study (EIS) process began in 2002 will determine future improvements to the I-15 corridor between Montana City and Lincoln Road. The EIS is expected to be completed in late 2003.
- The County has maintained a summary of the cost and type of maintenance performed on all County roads since 1994. The available resources have not kept pace with the maintenance needs of roadways, in part because of funding changes made by the Legislature. The County has not been able to conduct road surface maintenance in accordance with accepted standards for paved and chip seal surface roads. Consequently, many road segments have suffered from deferred maintenance.
- The State assumed maintenance obligations for some of the paved Secondary

Roads in the County in 2000, reducing maintenance obligations and costs to the County.

- For at least fifty years, transportation improvements in Lewis and Clark County and throughout the country have emphasized the movement of motorized vehicles, especially automobiles. This emphasis has resulted in a transportation system and land use patterns largely centered around the automobile. While it is expected that cars will continue to account for the majority of trips in the foreseeable future, alternative non-motorized modes can play an important role in the transportation system, especially for relatively short excursions. Encouraging these modes may lessen congestion, reduce infrastructure maintenance, and decrease air pollution, while providing health benefits to the users.
- Incorrect designation of a street segment to a lower classification when anticipated traffic warrants a higher class can result in under-designed facilities, producing long-term safety or capacity problems. Additionally, as traffic volumes begin to exceed certain levels on residential streets, complaints from local residents tend to increase.
- There are 181 bridges in Lewis and Clark County. The majority are generally in fair to good condition, but more than a dozen are in need of immediate repair. Overall, 27 bridges need some type of work (2002 County Bridge Inventory).
- There are a number of transit providers operating in the County, principally in the Helena Valley planning area. There are several private charter services, in addition to non-profit providers serving specific clientele. The only taxi company operating in the County is Capitol Taxi, which provides door-to-door service 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Its service area for passenger transport is defined as the area within a 50-mile road radius from downtown Helena. Special services include hotel/airport shuttle and wheelchair accessibility.
- The only commercial aviation airport located within the County is Helena Regional Airport (HRA), located on the northeast side of the City of Helena. Delta Air Lines, the primary carrier, operates jet flights to their Salt Lake City hub. Skywest Airlines, a Delta connection, supplements the Salt Lake City service using regional jets. Horizon Airlines offers three daily, round-trip flights to their Seattle hub using regional jets. In mid-2002, Northwest Airlines announced they would begin one flight a day between the Twin Cities and Helena, with a stop in Billings. Big Sky Airlines serves Helena with 6 flights per day, providing service to Billings, Kalispell, and Missoula.
- Montana Rail Link (MRL) operates a rail line extending across the southern part of the Helena Valley, running from the southeast corner of the County to the Continental Divide at the Mullan Tunnel. This segment is part of a longer line

extending from Logan to Missoula. MRL also operates a couple of small industrial spurs in the vicinity. A rail yard and switching facility operated by MRL is located within the City of Helena, and extends eastward into the County jurisdiction. The Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) also operates a rail line extending from the northwest corner of the City of Helena northward, passing Silver City, Wolf Creek, and Craig, on the way to Great Falls.

**ISSUE A    Sufficient funds are not available to maintain all public and County roads in Lewis and Clark County.**

**Goal 1**        Maintain and improve the condition and operational level of service of the existing road system.

**Policy 1.1**    Road system maintenance should remain a high priority.

**Policy 1.2**    The construction of passing lanes and left and right-hand turn lanes, appropriate to accommodate traffic growth or where needed for safe operation, should be a priority on the major arterial street/road system.

**Policy 1.3**    Prioritize and program subsurface improvements to minimize seasonal road restriction or closures due to frost heave.

**Policy 1.4**    Support the restriction/elimination of access points as opportunities arise to maintain capacity of existing arterials.

**Policy 1.5**    Development should pay its proportional share of the cost of improvements to the existing roadway system necessitated to address the impacts of development.

**Policy 1.6**    Prioritize road maintenance needs on the County road system.

**ISSUE B:    Future development may limit access to public and private lands and needed right of ways.**

**Goal 2**        Identify and protect future road corridors to serve future developments and public lands.

**Policy 2.1**    Require dedication of roadway rights-of-way in both the planning and platting process. Dedications should be according to the appropriate functional classification, subdivision regulations, design standards, and County policy.

**Policy 2.2**    Identify, protect, maintain, and—when appropriate—purchase rights-of-way providing access to key public and recreational lands, along with potential parking areas.

**Policy 2.3** Efficiently connect roads in new developments to the existing road network.

**ISSUE C** **A well-designed and adequate road network is essential for developing areas.**

**Goal 3** Facilitate road construction to serve developing areas, and encourage development in identified urban areas.

**Policy 3.1** A process should be established to assure that planned transportation projects are coordinated among Lewis and Clark County, cities in the County, the Helena Area Transportation Coordinating Committee, adjoining counties, and the Montana Department of Transportation.

**Policy 3.2** Require traffic impact studies to determine the need for additional or improved roads, or for traffic signals at major intersections.

**Policy 3.3** Promote the equitable distribution of transportation construction costs between Federal, State, and County government; cities in the County; and the private sector. Commitments for future transportation improvements should be pursued.

**Policy 3.4** An east-west transportation by-pass corridor should be established.

**Policy 3.5** As resources allow, identify and provide access for non-auto travel between communities or neighborhoods that does not parallel auto access.

**Goal 4** Guidelines to provide adequate emergency service access to County residents should be established.

**Policy 4.1** Review proposed developments to accommodate emergency vehicles.

**Policy 4.2** Proposed transportation projects and their impacts on emergency service access should be evaluated.

**Policy 4.3** Where appropriate, identify an integrated road network. Plan to ensure that adequate rights-of-way and access easements are preserved and acquired for future road extensions, widening, and proper drainage.

**ISSUE D:** **There is a benefit to providing non-motorized travel in the County, including developed areas, and recreational and tourist areas.**

- Goal 5** Establish safe pedestrian and bicycle access in designated areas of the County as part of the non-motorized circulation system, as resources allow.
- Policy 5.1** Establish provisions for non-motorized and pedestrian features in the design of roadway and bridge projects.
- Policy 5.2** Provide for improvement and dedication of bikeways and pedestrian paths through developing areas.
- Policy 5.3** Provide widened shoulders where possible to accommodate pedestrians/bicycles on existing roadways as appropriate, ideally with physical separation between motorized and non-motorized traffic.
- Policy 5.4** Establish design standards for widened shoulders for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Policy 5.5** Explore opportunities for separated non-motorized paths to natural and scenic areas, including available rights-of-way.

## **Utilities**

### **Introduction/Purposes**

County residents rely on many basic services, including utilities, that help define their quality of life, and maintain their health and well-being. Water supply, sewage waste disposal, natural gas delivery, electricity, and telecommunication services are considered utilities. These services are usually taken for granted, but coordination and conscientious planning for future growth must be established to assure service is uninterrupted and adequate.

### **Summary of Key Trends and Facts: Utilities**

- Electrical power is generated in the planning area by Pennsylvania Power and Light (PPL Montana). Hauser Dam, located on the Missouri River in the northeast corner of the area, was constructed in 1911. This is a run-of-the-river hydropower facility with a generating capacity of 16.5 MW; flows are governed by operations at Canyon Ferry Dam, which is controlled by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The FERC

license (50 years) for the Hauser Dam facility was recently up for renewal. PPL purchased the generating facilities but Montana Power Company retained its distribution system, until it was taken over by NorthWestern Energy in 2002.

- Natural gas is distributed in the planning area by North Western Energy. The extent of the distribution system is generally confined to the Helena Valley. Some major supply lines and pump stations were installed in the Valley in the 1990s to increase the service area and the capacity of the distribution system.
- Telephone services in the area are provided by a number of entities. US West (now Qwest) has historically been the principal provider and maintains a network of lines (principally underground). Since deregulation of the industry and advancements in fiber optic and cellular communications technology, other providers are also serving the area. Several communications towers have been sited in the area, some of which have been controversial due to visual and/or other impacts.
- The Yellowstone Pipeline maintains three major petroleum product transmission lines in the planning area. These are related to the bulk storage facility located at the east edge of the City of Helena.
- The City of Helena utilizes several water resources to supply the daily needs of the community. The principal resources are the Tenmile Creek watershed, Chessman and Scott Reservoirs, and the Tenmile Water Treatment Plant; this system produces approximately 90 percent of the average daily use and 60 percent of the maximum daily use. The other principal resource is the Missouri River, which is used to meet peak demands in the summer.
- There are nine large wastewater treatment facilities that are treating approximately 45 percent of the 1.8 million gallons per day (mgd) of wastewater being generated in the Valley area. This leaves 1 mgd being treated by on-site wastewater systems overlying the Helena Valley alluvial aquifer. With the projected population growth of the Valley, by the year 2020 there will be approximately 1.7 mgd being treated by on-site systems.
- Wastewater treatment in the (Helena Valley) planning area is provided by central treatment systems and individual on-site treatment systems. The City of Helena operates a mechanical treatment plant located at the north edge of the City, which treats approximately 60 percent of the entire area's wastewater. There are also six lagoon systems located in the Helena Valley that treat about 10 percent of the wastewater generated in the area. The remaining 30 percent of wastewater is treated through individual on-site treatment systems.
- The Helena Area Wastewater Treatment (HAWT) Facility Plan, completed in June of 1998, notes that of the six lagoons in the Valley, four do not meet current standards

and may be in violation of the Clean Water Act and the Montana Water Quality Act. Discharge from lagoons to groundwater totals 0.46 million gallons per day (mgd). These systems also need to be reviewed and, if necessary, updated or repaired.

## **Issues, Goals, and Policies**

**ISSUE A**    **Utilities that are safe, affordable, and cost effective should continue to be provided to Lewis and Clark County residents.**

**Goal 1**      Land use patterns that permit logical and effective extension of utilities and integration of utilities should be established.

**Policy 1.1**    Encourage development patterns that use common water and wastewater systems, and are designed in a way that permits abandonment of the old system in favor of regional systems when available.

**Policy 1.2**    Encourage the design and development of residential subdivisions within one-half mile of a municipal boundary to incorporate the municipality's design standards.

**Policy 1.3**    Developments within 500 feet of a public water or sewer system should be required to connect to those systems, when feasible.

**Policy 1.4**    The negative effects of utility installations on cultural resources should be mitigated.

**Policy 1.5**    Establish standardized regulations for wireless and fiber optics communications infrastructure that ensure the following are maintained: public health; safety; general welfare; convenience; natural resources; and the visual environment/appearances. Co-location of wireless communication providers. is preferable.

## **Safety and Safety Services**

### **Introduction/Purposes**

Lewis and Clark County recognizes the need to provide a safe living and working environment for its citizens. Assuring the provision of adequate safety services is directly linked to providing a safe living and working environment. Lewis and Clark County must work to ensure that adequate fire, law enforcement, and emergency management services are provided. There needs to be better recognition that the county rural volunteer fire

protection services are the only emergency services facilities located throughout the county.

## **Summary of Key Trends and Facts: Safety and Safety Services**

- Flooding is historically documented throughout Lewis and Clark County. Major floods occurred in June 1975, May 1981, and as recently as February 1996, when a Presidential Disaster Declaration was declared. Major flooding occurred along the Blackfoot River in 1908, 1964, and 1975. The peak of the flood season is during May and June, which usually are the wettest months of the year. Flooding has typically been caused by heavy rainfall combined with snowmelt.
- Summer in Lewis and Clark County typically brings the fire season, the result of low rainfall, high temperatures, low humidity, and thunderstorms. Nevertheless, major wildfires can occur at any time of the year.
- The 1988 Warm Springs Fire in the Elkhorn Mountains burned 32,700 acres, along with thirteen homes and cabins, as well as numerous outbuildings. The summer of 2000 was another devastating fire season in Montana, one of the worst ever recorded. In the Helena area alone, fire suppression agencies averaged more than 150 wildland fire responses for the year, including lengthy involvement with huge blazes such as the Bucksnot (9,300 acres), Cave Gulch (29,270 acres), and Toston-Maudlow (81,000 acres) fires. The 2003 fire season was also severe, particularly in the Lincoln area.
- In Montana, 86 primary residences, 133 outbuildings, and 2 commercial businesses were lost to wildfire in 2000. More than 2,000 people were forced to be evacuated from 23 different communities. Nationwide, approximately 1,000 structures and more than 470 homes were lost to wildfires in 2000. Throughout the country in the 1990s, the number of structures destroyed by wildfire increased six times over the previous decade's total, as increasing numbers of people moved to fire-prone areas.
- The Lewis and Clark County Volunteer Fire Department is charged with responding to wild land fires on private lands in those portions of the County not within a formal fire district or service area.
- The Helena Valley is located within the Intermountain Seismic Belt, a seismically active zone associated with major fault structures. The western half of Lewis and Clark County is in Seismic Zone 3, which means that an earthquake can cause major damage. Geologic investigations conducted by the MT Bureau of Mines and Geology (1981, 1988) indicate that an earthquake of magnitude 7.7 Richter could occur, subjecting the Helena Valley to severe ground shaking and liquefaction.

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Montana Occupational Health Bureau conducted numerous radon sampling studies throughout Montana in the late 1980s, including Lewis and Clark County. Montana had the fifth highest percentage in the country of homes with indoor radon concentrations exceeding the federal action level of 4 pCi/l (picocuries per liter of air measure of radioactivity). Lewis and Clark County was identified as being in potential radon Zone 1, the highest designation.

## **Issues, Goals, and Policies**

**ISSUE A: Citizens of Lewis and Clark County support and require adequate fire fighting and emergency response apparatus, equipment, personnel, training, and facilities for their service areas.**

**Goal 1** Support the efforts of all fire service entities to provide adequate fire fighting and emergency response services, apparatus, equipment, personnel, training, and facilities.

**Policy 1.1** Support the efforts of all fire service entities to clearly define the level and types of services that they provide and move toward development and adoption of a fire protection master plan for their service areas.

**Policy 1.2** Support the development of County fire protection standards to be included in the County Subdivision Regulations.

**Policy 1.3** Facilitate completion of the fire protection facilities portion of the County's Capital Improvement Program.

**Policy 1.4** Continue to support the work of the Lewis and Clark County Rural Fire Council.

**Policy 1.5** Work to enhance cooperation and communication between state and federal agencies and local fire departments to ensure equal partnerships are attained.

**Goal 2** Work towards obtaining full fire protection throughout Lewis and Clark County by having all land and cities in a fire service area or fire service district.

**Policy 2.1** Encourage County fire districts and fire service areas to work toward implementation of the goal.

**ISSUE C:** Lewis and Clark County is situated in a wildland fire prone ecosystem. Many areas of Lewis and Clark County are developing into significant wildland/urban interface areas and result in many challenges for the fire service entities.

**Goal 3** Work with fire service entities to provide adequate fire fighting and emergency response services, apparatus, equipment, personnel, training, and facilities.

Minimize exposure to wildland/urban interface and all other fire hazards through proactive code enforcement, public education programs, use of modern fire prevention measures, and adequate emergency management preparation.

**Policy 3.1** Ensure a safe living and working environment by facilitating code development, public education, and awareness programs, and the use of the most up to date fire prevention strategies.

**Policy 3.2** Require development proposals to include an evaluation of the impact of the proposal upon the capability of the affected fire entity to maintain its appropriate level of service to existing development in its response area and to adequately serve the proposed new development. The level of sophistication of this evaluation shall be commensurate with the type of development proposed.

**Policy 3.3** Provide educational training throughout the County to address wildland/urban interface fire issues.

**Goal 4** Recognize wild land fires as a natural part of the ecosystem in which we live. The County should strive to balance natural ecosystem processes with development concerns so residents can co-exist in a fire dependent ecosystem.

**Policy 4.1** Continue to support the Tri-County Fire Working Group's Fuel Hazard Mapping Project, that includes surveying and mapping the extent of wild land fire hazards and areas at risk.

**Policy 4.2** Development reviews in areas identified to be at risk of wild land fires (based on the Tri-County Fire Working Group's Fuel Hazard Map) must comply with the design standards in the *Lewis and Clark County Subdivision Regulations* for wildland/urban interface areas.

**Policy 4.3** Encourage inter-jurisdictional and inter-agency cooperation to further the goals of protection of life and property from wild land/urban interface fires.

The Lewis and Clark County Rural Fire Council, the Tri-County Fire Working Group, and the South Hill Interface Team should continue to work cooperatively to develop and implement programs to reduce the hazards of wild land/urban fires and to ensure safe and effective responses.

**Policy 4.4** Encourage private and public landowners to manage forest ecosystem processes by developing and maintaining a diversity of native species, ages, and stand densities to serve as a natural deterrent to pests and fires.

**ISSUE D: Emergency services requested by citizens of Lewis and Clark County require adequate funding.**

**Goal 5** Pursue adequate funding for emergency service entities through special levies, grants, bond issues or other mechanisms.

**Policy 5.1** Provide rapid and timely response to emergencies and maintain the capability to have minimum average response times.

**ISSUE E: The Sheriff's Department is the primary agency for immediate response and crisis intervention. The Sheriff's Department can not be solely responsible for controlling and limiting crime and interpersonal conflicts.**

**Goal 6** Support a safe and secure environment for people and property in Lewis and Clark County.

**Policy 6.1** Continue to support community-oriented policing services.

**Policy 6.2** Support crime prevention through planning and community design.

**Policy 6.3** Encourage education/liaison for gang and drug prevention progress, in cooperation with law enforcement and school districts.

**Policy 6.4** Support the coordination of law enforcement planning with local, regional, state, and federal plans.

**ISSUE F: It is necessary that Lewis and Clark County conduct emergency preparedness planning on an on-going basis.**

**Goal 7** Minimize exposure to all hazards through emergency management planning

and mitigation.

- Policy 7.1** Regularly update and distribute the Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operations Plan.
- Policy 7.2** Promote greater community awareness and preparedness by working with business associations, homeowners' associations, community groups, and utility companies.
- Policy 7.3** Coordinate emergency drills with all affected operating departments.
- Policy 7.4** Designate which critical public facilities are to remain operative during emergencies.
- Policy 7.5** All County Departments have emergency plans and play significant roles in restoring infrastructure, governmental services, and coordinating communication. The County's Emergency Operations Plan includes provisions for pre-emergency planning and post-disaster recovery.



# I: INTRODUCTION

## History

Lewis and Clark County adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1983, portions of which were updated in 1989. The focus of this Plan was the Helena Valley area, but sections on the rural areas were included. In 1996, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a more specific area plan for Lincoln and the Upper Blackfoot Valley; this was initiated in response to a major open pit gold mine proposed in the vicinity. In 1997, the County began the process to update the County Comprehensive Plan and establish area plans for other rural parts of the County, as follows:

- Augusta
- Wolf Creek-Craig
- Canyon Creek-Marysville
- Canyon Ferry-York
- The Helena Valley

These areas were defined on the basis of physical geography, school districts, fire protection districts, and general sense of community.

Lewis and Clark County is composed of a variety of physical, environmental and economic conditions. This planning process identified many of these conditions and their relationship to the functioning of the County as a whole. The process began by reviewing existing conditions, and then moved on to forecast anticipated changes. Understanding these changes and their impacts helps establish a framework for more effectively managing growth in the County.

The Comprehensive Plan (or Growth Policy, as it has been referred to since 1999) is a guidebook for the County to review and manage change. It attempts to give a total perspective of the County, and establish the necessary principles, criteria, and guidelines to make logical decisions.

It is important to emphasize that the Growth Policy is not an end, but a means. In part, it is a reference document to help in the decision-making process. It is a planning document that provides information and guidance to aid staff and commissioners as they serve the public. The time-frame for the Growth Policy is the next 10 to 20 years.

The Growth Policy will regularly be evaluated and modified to assure the document remains current as it addresses future needs of County residents. Step by step, Lewis and Clark County can continue to grow and serve the current and future population efficiently and logically, as it meets the needs of residents.

## **Common Areas of Interest**

Lewis and Clark County citizens, through an extensive public involvement process, have described how they see their county today, and how they would like to see it in the future.

Expressed concerns for the future centered on the following: natural systems and their preservation in urban/urbanizing areas; water quality and quantity; upholding the unique character of smaller towns and rural communities; and representing the historic nature of communities.

Issues and priorities directed toward the future include the following components:

- Maintain the traditional character, appearance, functions, and lifestyles of the County's rural communities and areas.
- Recreational uses of rural lands and water should not interfere with private property interests or needs.
- Provide efficient access and mobility for County residents that supports existing and future land use patterns.
- Support quality natural systems. Urban/suburban development should not adversely affect wetlands, streams, wildlife habitat, water quality and natural resource activities.

- Attractive, well-designed, livable urban communities should be supported by quality services and facilities; provide a range of housing choices; should not unduly encroach on rural lands; and be sensitive to existing ambiance.
- Within the urbanized areas, a system of open space, parks, or green belts should connect community places, provide opportunities for recreation, and enhance pedestrian/bike connections.
- Encourage a vital economy that provides living wage jobs for residents.
- Strive for an efficient and responsive government that works with citizens to meet collective needs fairly.

These issues and priorities have guided the development of this Growth Policy. They give direction for both respecting rural character and examining future growth, and are consistent with the quality of life desired by Lewis and Clark County residents. This Growth Policy recognizes the complexities involved in balancing historic patterns of growth with the issues and priorities for the future. It recognizes that flexibility is necessary to adapt to changing conditions and that at all times the Growth Policy must reflect the long term priorities and goals of the people living and working in Lewis and Clark County.

## **Planning Context**

Planning for the future is happening simultaneously at several levels--regional, countywide, in local cities and towns, and by the individual property owner. The Growth Policy should work toward consistency with applicable planning policies adopted by the State and federal governments, as well as existing regional and local planning policies.

Coordination between policy setting agencies can help ensure that the issues and priorities of this Growth Policy are acted on in a responsible manner, and reflect the majority of residents. Internally, there are also coordination issues. Water and sewer service, solid waste disposal, police and fire protection, and others are all public entities that will need to make use of this document to provide the highest quality of service to County residents.

## **Authorization**

The Montana Codes Annotated (MCA) authorizes local governments to adopt a Growth Policy. The purpose of adopting a Growth Policy is to provide direction for community development. It has been recognized that community development is more integrated and cost-effective for both the public and private sectors when conducted pursuant to a Growth Policy. The specific authorization is found in Section 76-1-601, MCA, which is included at the end of this Introduction.

## **Citizen Involvement**

The Growth Policy is based on an extensive citizen involvement process that began in 1997 with the establishment of a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAG). The CAG provided overall project direction, and worked to resolve countywide and regional issues. The CAG consisted of two to three members from the Consolidated City-County Planning Board, a representative from each of the five Planning Areas of the County, and one representative each from four major stakeholder groups in the County. The CAG spent more than three years educating themselves, discussing issues, soliciting public comment at a variety of venues, and developing a draft document for the Consolidated Planning Board to consider. A consulting firm—Bucher, Willis & Ratliff—was retained to undertake much of the Growth Policy research and writing.

Public involvement was an important part of the process, and included the following efforts:

- A series of fifteen Planning Area workshops (three in each of the Planning Areas mentioned on page 1) to identify issues of local concern, determine vision and goals and for each area, and develop planning alternatives. The workshops were designed to stimulate dialog between community members and the County as the Growth Policy progressed. Written and oral comments were collected both during and after each meeting. A second series of workshops were held in 2002 during the process of revising the plan
- Interviews were conducted with various stakeholders who are very knowledgeable about the County and who could provide insight into issues facing the County and their historical context.

- Presentations were made to various agencies, service clubs, and other organizations to provide updates and improve overall understanding.
- Periodic news article releases were used to keep the public informed concerning upcoming meetings, workshops, planning progress, and other items of interest.
- Formal public hearings were used as part of the planning and Plan adoption process.

The Helena/Lewis and Clark Consolidated Planning Board serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of County Commissioners (and the Helena City Commission), pursuant to an inter-local agreement with the City of Helena. The Planning Board has the responsibility of recommending a growth policy for the County, and may also include recommended ordinances. The Planning Board reviewed the draft document forwarded from the CAG, directed Staff to make certain revisions, and held public hearings. Subsequent to the public hearings, the Planning Board considered the public comment received and made its recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

The BOCC adopted the Growth Policy in December 2000. In January 2001 the BOCC decided to begin reviewing the document for possible changes. Both the Planning Board and BOCC conducted public review and hearings prior to adoption of the revised document in December 2003.

## **Application**

The BOCC must statutorily follow the requirements outlined for growth policies in the M.C.A. listed in the section below. The Growth Policy will also be utilized by County officials and the BOCC as they develop the annual the budget, capital improvement plans, administrative programs, grant requests, and other activities. Additionally, the Growth Policy should be utilized by private sector service providers, local economic development entities, financial institutions, and the development community to better coordinate private and public sector resources. The specific requirements of the local government are found in Sections 76-1-605 and 606, MCA, which are included at the end of this Introduction.

## **Growth Policy Statutory Definition**

Senate Bill 97, which was passed by the 1999 Montana Legislature, redefined comprehensive plan as “growth policy.” Additionally, House Bill 543 which passed in the 2001 session made some other important changes related to growth policies through amendments to sections 76-1-605, 76-1-606, 76-3-504, and 76-3-604, MCA. The requirements the Legislature has defined for growth policies are as follows:

**76-1-601. Growth policy -- contents.** (1) The planning board shall prepare and propose a growth policy for the entire jurisdictional area. The plan may propose ordinances or resolutions for possible adoption by the appropriate governing body.

(2) A growth policy must include:

(a) community goals and objectives;

(b) maps and text describing an inventory of the existing characteristics and features of the jurisdictional area, including:

(i) land uses;

(ii) population;

(iii) housing needs;

(iv) economic conditions;

(v) local services;

(vi) public facilities;

(vii) natural resources; and

(viii) other characteristics and features proposed by the planning board and adopted by the governing bodies;

(c) projected trends for the life of the growth policy for each of the following elements:

(i) land use;

(ii) population;

(iii) housing needs;

(iv) economic conditions;

(v) local services;

(vi) natural resources; and

(vii) other elements proposed by the planning board and adopted by the governing bodies;

(d) a description of policies, regulations, and other measures to be implemented in order to achieve the goals and objectives established pursuant to subsection (2)(a);

(e) a strategy for development, maintenance, and replacement of public infrastructure, including drinking water systems, wastewater treatment facilities, sewer systems, solid waste facilities, fire protection facilities, roads, and bridges;

- (f) an implementation strategy that includes:
    - (i) a timetable for implementing the growth policy;
    - (ii) a list of conditions that will lead to a revision of the growth policy; and
    - (iii) a timetable for reviewing the growth policy at least once every 5 years and revising the policy if necessary;
  - (g) a statement of how the governing bodies will coordinate and cooperate with other jurisdictions that explains:
    - (i) if a governing body is a city or town, how the governing body will coordinate and cooperate with the county in which the city or town is located on matters related to the growth policy;
    - (ii) if a governing body is a county, how the governing body will coordinate and cooperate with cities and towns located within the county's boundaries on matters related to the growth policy;
  - (h) a statement explaining how the governing bodies will:
    - (i) define the criteria in 76-3-608(3)(a); and
    - (ii) evaluate and make decisions regarding proposed subdivisions with respect to the criteria in 76-3-608(3)(a); and
  - (i) a statement explaining how public hearings regarding proposed subdivisions will be conducted.
- (3) A growth policy may:
- (a) include one or more neighborhood plans. A neighborhood plan must be consistent with the growth policy.
  - (b) establish minimum criteria defining the jurisdictional area for a neighborhood plan;
  - (c) address the criteria in 76-3-608(3)(a);
  - (d) evaluate the effect of subdivision on the criteria in 76-3-608(3)(a);
  - (e) describe zoning regulations that will be implemented to address the criteria in 76-3-608(3)(a); and
  - (f) identify geographic areas where the governing body intends to authorize an exemption from review of the criteria in 76-3-608(3)(a) for proposed subdivisions pursuant to 76-3-608.

(4) The planning board may propose and the governing bodies may adopt additional elements of a growth policy in order to fulfill the purpose of this chapter.

History: Ap. p. Sec. 31, Ch. 246, L. 1957; amd. Sec. 12, Ch. 247, L. 1963; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 156, L. 1973; Sec. 11-3831, R.C.M. 1947; Ap. p. Sec. 3, Ch. 246, L. 1957; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 247, L. 1963; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 349, L. 1973; Sec. 11-3803, R.C.M. 1947; R.C.M. 1947, 11-3803(part), 11-3831; amd. Sec. 8, Ch. 582, L. 1999.

76-1-605. Use of adopted growth policy. After adoption of the growth policy, the city council, board of county commissioners, or other governing body within the territorial

jurisdiction of the board must be guided by and give consideration to the general policy and pattern of development set out in the growth policy in the:

(1) authorization, construction, alteration, or abandonment of public ways, public places, public structures, or public utilities;

(2) authorization, acceptance, or construction of water mains, sewers, connections, facilities, or utilities;

(3) adoption of subdivision controls; and

(4) adoption of zoning ordinances or resolutions.

History: En. Sec. 40, Ch. 246, L. 1957; amd. Sec. 15, Ch. 247, L. 1963; R.C.M. 1947, 11-3840(part); amd. Sec. 12, Ch. 582, L. 1999.

76-1-606. Effect of growth policy on subdivisions and plats. (1) When a growth policy has been approved, the subdivision regulations adopted pursuant to chapter 3 of this title must be made in accordance with the growth policy.

History: En. Sec. 42, Ch. 246, L. 1957; amd. Sec. 4, Ch. 271, L. 1959; amd. Sec. 16, Ch. 247, L. 1963; amd. Sec. 9, Ch. 273, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 11-3842; amd. Sec. 13, Ch. 582, L. 1999; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 527, L. 2001.

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## **II:**

# **DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMICS**

## **Introduction and Summary**

Population and economic characteristics and trends provide important background information for the County to study and analyze for the Growth Policy planning process. These tools can be used to provide insight into current and future needs. Population and economic characteristics also identify the County's attributes, along with the challenges its residents face. A population analysis examines the past, present and future make-up of the County in terms of the number of people living there and the age composition of the population. An economic analysis reveals where people work, the wealth of the County, its reliance on local businesses and services, and its ability to pay for needed public improvements. In order to plan effectively, the County must have a basic understanding of both the population and economic factors, and how they may impact on the County now and in the future.

Some of the key points in this chapter include the following:

- While the County experienced substantial out-migration during the latter 1980s, the annual growth rate in the first half of 1990s has increased at nearly double the average growth rate during the previous decade.
- The Helena Valley continues to encompass the largest percentage of County population and growth. The majority of the growth is occurring in unincorporated areas within the Helena Valley.
- The unincorporated communities within the County comprise a small percentage of the overall county population. Population growth within these areas, however, may eventually warrant an individual plan similar to that developed for the Lincoln area.
- The unincorporated communities within the County comprise a small percentage of the overall county population. Population growth within these areas may eventually warrant individual plans.
- Recent increases in population are primarily attributed to a net increase in migration (for employment purposes) of persons between the ages of 35 and 55, as well as retirees age 65 and older. The long-range trend in the County is an aging population, with a number of important implications for the workforce, healthcare system, and other areas of life.

- The projected 2010 population for the County is 63,316, up from 55,716 in 2000 census, a 14 percent increase.
- Females comprise a larger share of the workforce than in the past decade and continue to hold jobs paying less than males. The County's economy is predominantly based on the government and service sectors.
- Per capita income in Lewis and Clark County as a percentage of the national figures decreased significantly in the period between 1970-2000, but remains higher than in Montana as a whole.
- Approximately half of the adults in Lewis and Clark County have received some training beyond high school, and more than 30 percent of the population has attained a college or technical degree.
- Unemployment has consistently remained lower than that of the entire state of Montana and the United States as a whole as a result of government jobs.
- When examining the four-county area of Broadwater, Jefferson, Meagher, and Lewis and Clark Counties, the latter has the dominant economy and largest labor force by a significant margin, in large measure due to the influence of Helena and East Helena.
- During the past three decades, the economies of southern Lewis and Clark County, northern and central Jefferson County, and central and western Broadwater County, in particular, have been increasingly linked in an economic and demographic region that transcends county boundaries. A growing portion of the workforce in Lewis and Clark County, for example, commutes to work from homes in Broadwater and Jefferson Counties. This trend has increased the need for inter-county planning and cooperation in the region.
- New housing construction has an important, positive economic impact on Lewis and Clark County, but the location of that housing—and its relationship to existing infrastructure—influences the fiscal effect the development will have on local government.

In addition to the data included in this chapter, a much more detailed analysis of the County's population and economy is found in the East Helena-Area Economic Adjustment Strategy. This study—which encompasses the cities of East Helena and Helena, and Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, Jefferson, and Meagher Counties—was completed in July 2002, and was submitted to the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Economic Adjustment Strategy is a supporting document to this Growth Policy, and is on file at the Lewis and Clark County Planning Office.

## **History**

Prior to the coming of non-native explorers, the Lewis and Clark County area had been inhabited by Blackfoot Indians for centuries. The first European visitors to Montana may have been the Verendrye brothers in 1742-43. Trappers and fur traders were visitors in the State in the later half of the 18th century. In 1805, Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark visited the territory comprised of the present Lewis and Clark County and opened up this territory to pioneer settlement.

More than half a century after the expedition of Lewis and Clark, gold was discovered in what is now known as Last Chance Gulch. Several mines were opened throughout the later half of the nineteenth century, but the most important settlement was by far Last Chance Gulch, a gold mining camp that eventually became the City of Helena. When the placers were mined out, rich quartz lodes were found nearby, and, with more stable mining activity, Helena became the supply center for neighboring valleys. Its location on important north-south and east-west transportation routes enhanced its development. In 1875, Helena became the territorial capital and won the state capital election in 1894.

The future main street of Helena was still teeming with miners when other pioneers began to run cattle along Sun River, seventy miles north. The first herd driven out of Montana started from the vicinity of Augusta in 1868. During that year, the first homestead entry in the state was filed in the Helena land office.

The Northern Pacific Railway Company battled politicians, reluctant bankers, hostile Indians and northern blizzards to extend the railway to Helena. Overcoming all obstacles, the railway reached Helena in the summer of 1883; regular passenger service was inaugurated, eclipsing the demand for stagecoaches. Interstate commerce also expanded as the first bullion train carried a million pounds of Montana silver to New York. The coming of the railroad proved to be an economic catalyst that--along with an overall rise in the economy of Montana--provided a considerable boost to the size and economic strength of Helena. The farming and livestock industries--along with government--continue to form basic parts of the economy of Lewis and Clark County today.

## **Population**

Population trends and projections are basic guides for most planning, budgeting, and financing decisions. All elements of the Growth Policy utilize this section to determine future demands, and the usefulness of this Plan relies heavily on these projections. The population size and characteristics determine the level of demand for land development, capital improvements, utility extensions, transportation, housing and community facilities. Elements that determine the direction and magnitude of population change include births, deaths, and in/out-migration. Land ownership patterns also influences distribution (see Appendix A for population distribution map).

As time passes, the social, economic and cultural needs of the county change, and as population changes occur in Lewis and Clark County, the nature of the population, both in size and structure, will be altered according to migration patterns. These changes determine the type of land use issues that should be addressed. This section examines population trends in Lewis and Clark County. Through the analysis of these trends, population projections are made. It is crucial that these forecasts be reviewed and updated according to actual demographic changes to insure they remain consistent and serve as a useful tool for the best interests of the community.

## **Population Trends and Forecast**

Lewis and Clark County's population has grown steadily since 1950, and has doubled between 1960 and 2000 (see table 2.1). The County experienced significant growth between 1970 and 1980 (a 29 percent increase), due to substantial in-migration. Most of the impetus for the County's population growth during this period can be attributed to the creation of 1200 new jobs in State government between 1970 and 1977, and more generally, to a 30 percent increase in total employment during this period. Seventy percent of the County's population gain during the 1970s was the result of in-migration. This was almost twice the 36 percent in-migration rate experienced state-wide during the same time frame. Lewis and Clark County's in-migration rate was also higher than that of two other rapidly growing urban Montana counties, Missoula and Yellowstone.

	<b>1950</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>
L & C County	24,540	28,006	33,281	43,039	47,495	52,785	55,716
Montana	594,024	674,767	694,409	786,690	799,065	870,281	902,195

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, Montana.

Between 1980 and 1990, Lewis and Clark County's population increased minimally, rising from about 43,000 to 47,500. During this decade, the County—like the State as a whole--experienced an economic downturn that led to out-migration in the latter 1980s. During the decade beginning in 1980, the County had an annual growth rate of one percent, while the State of Montana experienced a 0.1 percent annual growth rate.

The pace of economic and population growth picked up again in the 1990s, in both Lewis and Clark County and Montana as a whole. Montana's population grew by 12.9 percent between 1990 and 2000, increasing to 902,195, a 1.3 percent annual growth rate. State-wide, the most rapid growth occurred during the first five years of the decade, when the population increased by 8.9 percent. By contrast, the state-wide growth rate between 1995 and 2000 was 3.7 percent.

The population in Lewis and Clark County grew even more rapidly than the State as a whole during the past decade, increasing by 17.3 percent between 1990 and 2000, for a total of 55,716 people, a 1.7 percent annual growth rate. Similar to Montana in general, the most rapid growth occurred during the first portion of the decade: The growth rate was 11.1 percent between 1990 and 1995, dropping to 5.6 percent between 1995 and 2000.

During the first part of the 1990s, Montana's population increased at one of the fastest rates seen in twenty-five years. However, Montana's population growth has been uneven throughout the state. The strongest growth areas are occurring in the western part of the state, including Lewis and Clark County. The population of Lewis and Clark County increased from 47,495 in 1990 to an estimated 52,785 in 1995 and 55,716 in 2000.

The population projections for Lewis and Clark County (made prior to the availability of the 2000 census data) were formulated by using the least squares linear regression method, and are based on trends in population growth over the past few decades. This method shows the population of Lewis and Clark County growing at an annual rate of 1.67 percent, resulting in a population of 63,316 in the year 2010. This annual growth rate is slower than the annual growth rate experienced in the early 1990s (2.2 percent) but greater than the annual growth rate in the later part of the 1980s (1 percent).

According to another forecast made by the City of Helena, the population of the greater Helena Valley will increase to approximately 70,000 by 2020. This constitutes an increase of 23,000 people in twenty years, nearly the equivalent of adding the population of another City of Helena to the Valley. It is important to note that population projections are not an exact science, and it is essential to periodically review the projections to ensure their continuing usefulness.

## **Population Distribution**

In 1950, almost 80 percent of all County residents lived in the City of Helena. By 1990, this figure dropped to less than 52 percent. While Helena's share of the County's population declined, the Helena Valley's share increased. From 1970 to 1980, the Helena Valley experienced slightly more than a doubling in the number of residents. This increase represented 70 percent of all the population growth County-wide during that decade. In 1990, the Census Bureau created five Census Designated Places (CDPs) to represent the Helena Valley. Table 2.2 shows the approximate geographic distribution of the County's population based upon 1980-2000 Census Data.

**Table 2.2 POPULATION IN HELENA VALLEY**

Place	1980	1990	2000
Helena	23,938	24,609	25,780
East Helena	1,647	1,538	1,642
Helena Valley Northeast CDP	---	1,585	2,122
Helena Valley Northwest CDP	---	1,215	2,082
Helena Valley Southeast CDP	---	4,601	7,141
Helena Valley W. C. CDP	---	6,327	6,983
Helena West Side CDP		1,847	1,711
Other unincorporated areas	13,278*	1,201**	---
Total Helena Valley	38,863	42,883	47,461

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, Montana.

\* Includes Enumeration Districts 0981 (75 percent), 0986 (75 percent), 0991, 0992, 0993, 0994A, 0995A, 0996, 0997 (40 percent), 0999A (50 percent), 0999A

\*\* Includes unincorporated non-CDP areas of Block Numbering Areas 9795, 9797, 9799, 9801, part of 9802

The aggregate population of the entire Helena Valley in 1990 was 42,883, approximately 39 percent of which was located outside the incorporated cities of Helena and East Helena. This represents an approximate increase of 4,000 persons in the Helena Valley in the 1980s, which was 90 percent of all County-wide growth between 1980 and 1990. Approximately 87 percent of the population growth in the Helena Valley in the 1980s occurred outside of the two incorporated areas.

This pattern of rapid population growth in the Valley continued during the 1990s. For example, between 1990 and 2000, the Helena Valley CDPs collectively increased by 28.7 percent, while Helena and East Helena grew by 4.8 percent and 6.8 percent, respectively. From 1980 to 2000 the percentage of the total Helena Valley population residing in the incorporated areas of Helena and East Helena declined from 66 percent in 1980, to 61 percent in 1990, to 58 percent in 2000.

There are a number of reasons for the dramatic increase in the number of Helena Valley residents. Undeveloped land in the Valley has generally been less expensive than vacant land in Helena. Many people wanted a country-type atmosphere in which to live. Some were avoiding what were perceived as higher building costs in Helena. Some felt there were fewer development restrictions and regulations in the unincorporated area of the County. Higher property taxes in Helena may also have been a consideration.

The movement of growth from Helena to the Helena Valley has increased the burden on Lewis and Clark County for providing public services. In the more densely populated areas of the Valley, the demand for public facilities and services has increased beyond what is typically found in rural areas.

While Helena, East Helena, and Gilman (uninhabited) are the only incorporated cities within Lewis and Clark County, there are several unincorporated communities within the County's jurisdiction. They may have no established boundaries and census counts may not be accurate (see table 2.3). The aggregate population of these unincorporated communities comprises less than three percent of the overall county population. The Montana Department of Commerce has worked with the US Census Bureau to ensure the boundaries more closely match 2000 Census results.

<b>Community</b>	<b>Population</b>
Augusta	284
Canyon Creek	69
Craig	101
Fort Harrison	188
Lincoln	1,100
Marysville	92
Rimini	313
Unionville	370
Wolf Creek	152
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,669</b>

Note: Data from 2000 U.S. Census. Numbers generated by MT Natural Resources Information Center (NRIS) mapping program, using 1 mile buffer around each location. The totals shown are the census block totals for all census blocks that are in the search area, either partially or totally. Because of changes in census tracts and methodology, numbers are not directly comparable to those from 1990.

## **Age**

As the population of the County changes over time, the composition of the population by age changes with it. The age structure has significant bearing on the future population of the County. Many public services and facilities are designed to serve a specific age group, such as local schools. The changes in the age structure must be examined to determine and predict future needs. For instance, a decrease in the number of women in childbearing years or an increase in people of retirement age are signals to target planning efforts towards senior health services, senior centers, and other related public services. They are also signals that economic development and job creation must be encouraged to retain young families in the County.

Table 2.4 shows population by age and sex for 1980, 1990, and 2000 for Lewis and Clark County. Between 1980 and 1990, the County experienced a decrease of people in their late teens and twenties. During the 1980s, the overall population increase was primarily due to a net increase in people between the ages of 35 and 55 and persons age 65 and over. The median age has risen during the past decade, reflecting the aging of the population and the in-migration of retirees.

<b>TABLE 2.4 POPULATION OF LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY BY AGE AND SEX: 1980-2000</b>
---

Age	1980		1990		2000	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-4	1,757	1,646	1,734	1,750	1,761	1,674
5-9	1,671	1,644	2,072	1,906	1,975	1,898
10-14	1,806	1,662	1,871	1,773	2,145	2,088
15-19	2,142	2,011	1,662	1,684	2,185	2,114
20-24	1,798	2,055	1,232	1,353	1,612	1,595
25-29	2,060	2,158	1,581	1,780	1,415	1,496
30-34	1,949	1,878	1,942	2,144	1,657	1,697
35-39	1,388	1,398	2,229	2,303	2,145	2,276
40-44	1,102	1,165	2,043	1,941	2,336	2,537
45-49	964	1,007	1,475	1,396	2,518	2,547
50-54	964	975	1,158	1,174	2,208	2,064
55-59	945	998	964	965	1,535	1,517
60-64	829	943	904	947	1,120	1,114
65-69	686	791	830	913	876	949
70-74	472	572	623	814	724	882
75-79	273	457	420	651	581	776
80-84	151	268	275	402	360	610
85+	126	328	164	420	243	532
Sub-Total	21,083	21,956	23,179	24,316	27,396	28,366
Med. Age	30		34		38	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Montana.

Between 1990 and 2000, the aging of the population in Lewis and Clark County continued, with the median age rising from 34 to 38. Compared to the 1980s, every age category over 45 increased in number during the last decade. Age groups between 10 and 24 also posted increases, while the number of people between 25 and 39 declined. Age groups under 10 years of age posted minor declines overall.

## **Racial Composition of the Population**

Lewis and Clark County is racially homogenous compared to many other areas of the country. According to 2000 census data, the current racial composition of the Lewis and Clark County population is as follows:

- 95.2 percent: White
- 2.0 percent: American Indian or Alaskan Native
- 1.6 percent: Two or More Races
- .5 percent: Asian
- .4 percent: Some Other Race (Alone)
- .2 percent: Black/African American
- .1 percent: Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders

(NOTE: Hispanic/Latinos are not a separate racial category in this listing, but are included within the above classifications.)

## **Household Size**

Along with the rest of the country, Lewis and Clark County is experiencing a decrease in average household size. The average household size in Lewis and Clark County decreased approximately 5 percent from 1980 to 1990, from 2.60 to 2.47 persons per household in 1990. Similarly, during the same period the average household size decreased in the Helena Valley, from 2.94 to 2.65 persons per household.

By 2000, the average household size in Lewis and Clark County had declined to 2.38 persons, a 3.6 percent drop from 1990. This reflects national trends: People live longer (and may significantly outlive a deceased spouse), parents have fewer children, and there are more people living alone and in single-parent households. These trends are expected to continue in Lewis and Clark County.

In 1990, approximately 11 percent of the population lived alone, a figure that had increased to 12 percent by 2000. As the County's population ages, single elderly householders will become even more common. Shrinking household sizes have obvious implications for affordable housing needs, and will affect demand for different types of housing. Due to declining household size, population growth in the future will require more housing units per capita, influencing land use patterns.

## **Economics**

Population change is directly related to economic trends. Economic growth, coupled with the County's attractiveness, are two determinants of population growth. When community economic characteristics such as employment and per capita income are stable and growing, growth in population becomes more likely.

This section displays past and existing economic characteristics. These trends, along with existing profiles, allow a community to analyze the local economy and assess the ability to stimulate investment. Employment and income are the gauges for community economic growth and development; it is through these means that the County will find opportunities to diversify and improve. It also determines the need for the County to change the services it provides and build an economic development relationship with community leaders to support expansion of the current businesses, as well as attract new business to the County.

### **Employment Overview**

Table 2.5 illustrates that Lewis and Clark County, with a population of 55,716 in 2000, had 28,464 persons in the civilian labor force. The civilian labor force is defined as the population of working age persons (16 years of age or older) that are employed or actively seeking employment. It excludes those not seeking employment and those serving in the armed forces.

Between 1990 and 2000 the total civilian labor force rose by 11.4 percent in Lewis and Clark County, from 25,554 to 28,464. During the same period, the number of employed individuals in the County increased by 11.7 percent, growing from 24,404 to 27,251. According to the U.S. Census, labor force participation in Lewis and Clark County is among the highest in Montana: In 2000, 70 percent of the county population was part of the labor force, including 74 percent of the males and 63 percent of the females.

Unemployment in Lewis and Clark County has consistently remained lower than the State of Montana as a whole. The unemployment rate in Lewis and Clark County decreased from a twenty-year high of 6.8 percent 1985, to 4.3 percent in 2000, prior to the start of the recent national recession.

<b>TABLE 2.5</b>						
<b>LABOR FORCE IN LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY: 1980-2000</b>						
<b>(16 and Over)</b>						
<b>Annual Average Civilian Labor Force:</b>				<b>Annual Average</b>		
<b>Lewis and Clark County</b>				<b>Unemployment Rates</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Montana</b>	<b>U.S.</b>
2000	28,464	27,251	1,213	4.3	4.9	4.0
1999	26,985	25,725	1,260	4.7	5.2	4.2
1998	28,203	26,849	1,354	4.8	5.6	4.5
1997	28,079	26,679	1,420	5.0	5.4	4.9
1996	27,845	26,594	1,251	4.5	5.3	5.4
1995	27,610	26,184	1,426	5.2	5.9	5.6
1994	27,520	26,385	1,135	4.1	5.1	6.1
1993	26,880	25,500	1,380	5.1	6.1	6.9
1992	26,490	25,010	1,480	5.6	6.9	7.5
1991	25,720	24,250	1,470	5.7	7.1	6.8
1990	25,554	24,404	1,150	4.5	6.0	5.6
1985	25,719	23,980	1,739	6.8	7.7	7.2
1980	24,715	23,474	1,241	5.0	6.1	7.1
Source: Montana Dept. of Labor and Industry, Research						

Note: The total civilian labor force in 1999 decreased from the previous year. There was a corresponding decrease in the number of the total civilian labor force. The drop in numbers is due to a change in reporting methodology.

As illustrated in table 2.6, the County's economy is predominantly based on government employment and the services industry: Local, state, and federal government agencies employed 8,382 persons; the services category included 7,612 employees; and the retail sector had 5,009 employees. The employment data from the 2000 Census, which was aggregated differently than the data in table 2.6, broke out the major employment categories as follows:

- Services: 40 percent
- Government: 23 percent
- Trade: 20 percent
- Communications and construction: 9 percent
- Mining and manufacturing: 4 percent
- Agriculture and agricultural services: 3 percent

During the past two decades, the service sector has emerged as an increasingly dominant component of the employment mix in Lewis and Clark County.

<b>TABLE 2.6 MAJOR INDUSTRIES: 1980-1998 (LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY, TOTAL JOBS)</b>						
<b>Type of Industry</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>		<b>1998</b>	
Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries	701	3.40%	791	3.45%	805	2.89%
Mining	196	0.95%	235	1.02%	27	0.10%
Construction	1,528	7.40%	1,377	6.00%	1,236	4.44%
Manufacturing	1,177	5.70%	1,090	4.75%	1,023	3.68%
Transportation	610	2.96%	686	2.99%	741	2.66%
Communications and Other Public Utilities	1,295	6.27%	718	3.13%	393	1.41%
Wholesale Trade	563	2.73%	478	2.08%	776	2.79%
Retail Trade	3,191	15.4%	3,788	16.5%	5,009	18.0%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	1,308	6.34%	1,624	7.08%	1,819	6.54%
Services	6,132	29.7%	8,279	36.0%	7,612	27.3%
Government	3,939	19.0%	3,883	16.9%	8,382	30.1%

Source: MT Dept. of Commerce, and the U.S. Bureau of the Census, MT, 1980, 1990, 1998.  
 Note: Data from 2000 Census is not directly comparable because the job categories are different.

In Lewis and Clark County, the highest-paying employment category was government jobs, which averaged \$40,594 a year (see table 2.7). An important reason for this high figure was the influence of high-paying federal government jobs, which averaged \$68,462 in 2000.

After government jobs, the second highest-paying category in 2000 were those in the transportation and utilities sector (\$36,559), followed by construction (\$33,571) and wholesale trade (\$32,034). The lowest paying job categories in 2000 were farming (\$3,164), forestry (\$10,238), and mining (\$11,839). In general, high-paying jobs have been eclipsed by growth in lower-paying jobs during the last decade.

**TABLE 2.7 LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY: AVERAGE EARNINGS PER JOB CATEGORY (in 2000 )**

<b>JOB CATEGORY</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>NET CHANGE (1970-2000)</b>
Total Earnings	\$25,321	\$26,612	\$24,197	\$27,615	\$2,294
Farm Employ.	\$34,027	\$8,107	\$4,045	\$3,164	-\$30,863
Forestry, ag. serv., other	\$23,904	\$9,138	\$8,500	\$10,238	-\$13,666
Mining	\$15,744	\$58,497	\$24,138	\$11,839	-\$3,905
Construction	\$32,597	\$32,759	\$27,115	\$33,571	\$974
Manufacturing	\$32,937	\$40,677	\$30,076	\$30,409	-\$2,529
Transp. & Util.	\$37,084	\$45,296	\$37,925	\$36,559	-\$525
Wholesale Trade	\$30,189	\$37,260	\$28,178	\$32,035	\$1,846
Retail Trade	\$18,266	\$16,372	\$15,599	\$15,047	-\$3,219
Fin. Inst. & R. Estate	\$18,465	\$18,493	\$19,242	\$27,055	\$8,590
Services	\$20,489	\$19,362	\$19,956	\$23,973	\$3,484
Gvt. (all)	\$27,693	\$32,898	\$34,061	\$40,594	\$12,901
Fed. Gvt. (civ.)	\$40,889	\$48,498	\$54,598	\$68,462	\$27,573
Military	\$6,462	\$10,902	\$12,570	\$15,424	\$8,962
State/Local	\$25,652	\$30,521	\$30,773	\$36,367	\$10,715
State	NA	\$31,674	\$31,810	\$36,696	\$5,023 (1980-2000)
Local	NA	\$27,704	\$28,341	\$35,532	\$7,828 (1980-2000)

Source: East Helena-Area Economic Adjustment Strategy, 2000.

## **Recent Employment Trends**

In addition to being impacted by the nation-wide recession (which began in 2001) and anticipated cuts in state government in 2002, Lewis and Clark County has recently been affected by the closure of a number of key employers. Most significantly, the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO)—now a subsidiary of Grupo Mexico—closed production in its East Helena plant in 2001. Direct employment in the facility declined from 259 in 2000 to 24 in 2002. The closure had a serious, adverse impact on the local economy; for nearly a century, the smelter had been the region’s largest industrial taxpayer and employer, offering jobs that generally paid above average wages. The East Helena-Area Economic Adjustment Strategy (2002) sums up the impacts of the closure as follows:

*Suspension of the plant's operations directly displaced 235 jobs and nearly \$10 million dollars in annual earnings from the region's economy. In addition to direct reduction of jobs and earnings at the smelter, loss of plant and worker expenditures within the area economy is predicted to displace another 269 jobs and \$8 million in yearly earning from elsewhere in the economy.*

During the same period as the ASARCO closure, two other significant losses to the County economy occurred. Falcon Publishing—a well known book publishing firm that was founded in Helena—relocated its headquarters to another state in late 2000, while the consulting firm Hydrometrics Incorporated closed in 2002. Each firm employed approximately 70 workers. According to the East Helena-Area Economic Adjustment Strategy, “the combined direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts of the ASARCO shutdown, the Falcon relocation, and Hydrometrics closure is predicted to cost the economy nearly 800 jobs and \$25 million in annual earnings.

Helping to counterbalance these losses—as well as general declines in agriculture, mining, and manufacturing in recent years—the construction sector in Lewis and Clark County was strong during the 1990s through 2001. Major projects such as the Great Northern Town Center and expansions at Fort Harrison, St. Peter's Hospital, and Carroll College—as well as on-going residential and commercial construction--had major positive impacts on the local construction industry.

During the 1990s, construction employment in the four-county region of Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, Jefferson, and Meagher Counties increased from 1,400 to 2,700 jobs, with 78 percent of these jobs in Lewis and Clark County. However, construction tends to be cyclical, and it is unclear how long the present pace of construction activity can be maintained.

Another recent bright spot in Lewis and Clark County employment trends has been the success of Summit Design and Manufacturing, Montana's largest aerospace firm. As of 2002, Summit employs 45 people. However, the Company is planning a 10,560 square foot expansion to their facility near the Helena Regional Airport, an improvement that will enable them to eventually enlarge their employment base to 150, with an average annual salary of nearly \$38,000, well above the County and State-wide average.

## **Regional Perspective**

From a regional perspective, Lewis and Clark County in general and the Helena/East Helena area, in particular, drive the regional economy, and are the source of the majority of jobs and earnings in the area. According to data in the East Helena-Area Economic Adjustment Strategy (2002), when looking at the four-county area of Jefferson, Broadwater, Meagher, and Lewis and Clark County, the latter's share of the overall earnings in the area was 87 percent.

The other side of this equation is that a growing number of people who earn their living in Lewis and Clark County reside outside the County. From 1970 to 2000, the amount of money earned in Lewis and Clark County by non-residents increased from \$8 million

to \$101 million, a 1,200 percent jump. During this same period, the share of total, four-county earnings paid to residents of Lewis and Clark County declined from 83 percent to 78 percent. Many of the out-of-county residents who earn their living in Lewis and Clark County reside in northern and central Jefferson County: In 2000, 51 percent of the money earned by Jefferson County residents came from jobs located outside the County. Many residents of central and western Broadwater County also are employed in Lewis and Clark County. People living on the periphery of Lewis and Clark County also do a considerable amount of shopping in the County, particularly in the Helena area.

This data illustrates the close economic, transportation, and residential ties between Lewis and Clark, Jefferson, and Broadwater Counties, in particular. As these counties grow and the relationships between them strengthen, so too will the need for a broader and increasingly regional perspective to planning.

## **Overview: Economic Impacts of New Housing**

The economic impacts of new housing are complex and widely debated. The effects can be examined from a number of different perspectives, including direct and indirect impacts, on-going impacts, geographic location, and the relationship between costs to service new development versus the tax revenue it generates.

Expenditures on new housing can have an important effect on a local economy. The most obvious and immediate impacts are related to construction: Payments to architects, engineers, construction workers, and electricians benefit the economy as these individuals purchase goods and services with their wages, and pay taxes to local government. Once new residents move in to the completed housing, they too purchase goods and services and pay taxes, on an on-going basis. These expenditures create a ripple effect that cascades through the local economy, increasing the demand for new goods and services and creating additional jobs.

A study completed at Montana State University—Billings attempted to quantify the economic benefits of new home construction in a variety of Montana counties (The Economic Impact of Home Construction on Montana Counties, by Dr. Ann L. Adair and Cheryl Heath, CPA, December, 2002). According to the study, the 284 housing starts in Lewis and Clark County in 2001 generated 541 local jobs during the first year, producing \$20,227,470 in local income, and \$1,100,500 in local taxes. These figures include both direct, construction-related impacts, as well as indirect, non-construction effects.

The researchers also calculated the “on-going” economic impact of new housing, which includes things like landscaping, household purchases, healthcare expenditures, and taxes paid by the new residents. According to the study, the long-term benefit of the 2001 housing starts in Lewis and Clark County was 169 local jobs, \$5,801,561 in local income, and \$832,636 in local taxes.

One variable the study did not examine was the geographic location of development within the counties that were examined, and how that might affect the financial health of local government. The location of new housing can have a significant effect on whether it becomes a net financial benefit or loss to local government. Development that is located a long distance from existing infrastructure and services can require costly public expenditures in new schools, roads, sewer lines, fire protection, and other items. Conversely, all other things being equal, new housing located in areas with existing infrastructure and services with excess capacity will be less burdensome on local government.

Numerous studies in Montana and throughout the country have suggested that sprawling housing developments constructed away from existing infrastructure can be a net drain on local government coffers, particularly compared to the agricultural land that may have been taken out of production. A study in Gallatin County during the 1990s, for example, indicated that housing in outlying areas cost local government \$1.45 to service for every dollar generated in taxes, while providing service to farms only cost \$0.25 for every tax dollar paid. Similarly, a study in Broadwater County found that servicing new housing in outlying areas cost \$3.40 for each tax dollar produced, while the comparable figure for agriculture was \$0.31 (Mark Haggerty, 1996). Many other studies have been done in various locations around the country, and have produced generally similar results. From a purely financial point of view, the key questions are "Who pays?" and "Who benefits?"

To summarize a complex issue, new housing can have a significant positive impact on local economies, but the nature of the fiscal impact on local governments is strongly influenced by where the development occurs, and whether it requires significant public expenditures for new infrastructure.

## **Income and Poverty**

Trends in income reflect the standard of living of a community and affect future growth. Income and wages are changing due to a variety of factors, including national trends. Pay declines in industry can be attributed to international competition, value of the dollar, industry restructuring from higher-paying manufacturing jobs to low-paying retail and service jobs, and an increase in part-time employment. Lewis and Clark County is working to keep pace with economic development needs, as mining, utilities, and manufacturing jobs have decreased. The County is working on expanding incentives to retain current businesses or recruit new ones.

Per capita income is an important indicator that reveals the overall wealth of an area -- the buying power of the average resident. Estimated per capita personal income equals the total of all sources of income divided by the resident population. Per capita income in the County is higher than in the State as a whole, but substantially below the national average (see table 2.8). Between 1970 and 1999, per capita personal income in both Montana and Lewis and Clark County decreased significantly as a percentage of the national average. Montana's personal per capita income fell from 87 percent of the

national average, to 77 percent. Similarly, Lewis and Clark County fell from 102 percent to 85 percent during this period.

However, Lewis and Clark County has a lower poverty rate than the state as a whole. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Lewis and Clark County had 13 percent of its population below the poverty line (using a 1997 model-based estimate), compared with 16 percent for the state as a whole. According to the same data, the County had 18 percent of its children below the poverty line, compared with 21 percent for the entire state.

**TABLE 2.8 PERSONAL INCOME (Per Capita) IN MONTANA AND LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY: 1970-1999**

	State of MT	% of U.S. Ave.	L&C. Co.	% of U.S. Ave.
<b>1970</b>	\$3,524	87%	\$4,116	102%
<b>1980</b>	\$8,728	88%	\$9,879	99%
<b>1990</b>	\$10,474	79%	\$15,880	85%
<b>1991</b>	\$15,772	82%	\$16,896	88%
<b>1992</b>	\$16,555	82%	\$17,837	89%
<b>1993</b>	\$17,635	85%	\$18,726	90%
<b>1994</b>	\$17,794	82%	\$19,402	89%
<b>1995</b>	\$18,764	80%	\$21,080	89%
<b>1996</b>	\$19,383	79%	\$22,003	89%
<b>1997</b>	\$20,173	78%	\$22,587	87%
<b>1998</b>	\$21,307	78%	\$23,483	86%
<b>1999</b>	\$21,997	77%	\$24,325	85%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System. All figures in real dollars.

## Education

Education can act as an indicator of the type of work and level of income a in a community. The educational status of Lewis and Clark County residents has risen over the last ten years. According to the 2000 census, 91 percent of the adult population at least 25 years of age in Lewis and Clark County has at least graduated from high school, while 32 percent has attained a bachelors degree or higher, up from 28 percent in 1990 (see table 2.9). Conversely, 13 percent of adults in Lewis and Clark County had not graduated from high school in 1990; by 2000, this figure had dropped to 9 percent.

<b>TABLE 2.9: EDUCATION STATUS IN 2000 (PERSONS 25 YEARS AND OVER): LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY</b>		
	Lewis and Clark County	Percentage
<i>Persons (over 25 and older)</i>	36,690	100%
Less than ninth grade	802	2.2%
Some high school, no diploma	2,369	6.5%
High school diploma	10,742	29.3%
Some college, no degree	9,316	25.4%
College, Associate degree	1,874	5.1%
College, Bachelor's degree	7,799	21.3%
College, Graduate degree	3,788	10.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic characteristics, 2000.

## **Issue, Goals, and Policies:** **Economic Development**

A healthy economy is essential to Lewis and Clark County's vitality and quality of life. A thriving economy provides jobs and a tax base to support basic infrastructure, schools, parks, public safety, and other public facilities and services.

While the County's natural setting sets the stage and determines the parameters within which economic development may take place, virtually every other feature of community life stems from the area's economic health. The County should attempt to encourage existing businesses and attract new ones by providing assistance through appropriate local, state, and federal programs. It is worth emphasizing that the scenic, natural, and cultural amenities present in Lewis and Clark County contribute to the local quality of life, and are an important incentive for attracting and retaining businesses.

**ISSUE A**    **Trade, retail business, agriculture and government provide the backbone of the County's economy and present significant opportunity for economic expansion.**

**Goal 1**     Promote retention, diversification, and expansion of existing businesses.

**Goal 2**     Provide opportunities for commercial growth and development in Lewis and Clark County.

**Policy 2.1** Encourage commercial development in central neighborhood areas, when sufficient population is present.

**Policy 2.2** Encourage cluster commercial development over strip commercial development.

**Policy 2.3** Prepare, in conjunction with community leaders and economic development institutions, an economic development strategy to promote and recruit new business to the County.

**Goal 3** Support the agricultural sector of the County's economy.

**Policy 3.1** Support opportunities for value added natural resource-based business (e.g., food products made from locally grown crops, furniture or building materials made from locally harvested timber).

**Policy 3.2** Encourage preservation of areas suitable for agricultural-based business.

**ISSUE B** **The tourism industry presents an economic opportunity for the County.**

**Goal 4** Assist the tourism industry as a vital part of the Lewis and Clark County economy.

**Policy 4.1** Improve the visual entrances or gateways to the County and the communities within the County.

**Policy 4.2** Encourage the location of compatible visitor support services near attractions, when consistent with other land use planning activities.

**Policy 4.3** Assess the impact of tourism on the County's economy.

**Policy 4.4** Maintain and protect historic areas which are a significant tourism attraction.

**Policy 4.5** Foster preservation and conservation by supporting the efforts of the Historic Preservation Commission and other similar organizations.

**ISSUE C** **Growing industrial development may provide further wage and job opportunities, increase housing needs, and expand other services.**

**Goal 5** Provide opportunities for industrial development at locations with suitable access to transportation and adequate public services.

**Policy 5.1** Conduct a county-wide industrial lands suitability study.

**Policy 5.2** Industrial lands should have access to arterial roads and to adequate basic services (for example water, sewer, fire, and police).

**Policy 5.3** Industrial development should be undertaken in ways that reduce impacts on the natural environment.

**Policy 5.4** Industrial development, other than that which is dependent on a natural resource, should be located in or near urban or transitional areas.

**Policy 5.5** Infrastructure investment should be directed to areas identified for planned industrial expansion.

**ISSUE D Sports Facilities attract visitors to the County.**

**Goal 6** Continue working with the schools, Carroll College, the Fair Grounds, the University of Montana, technical colleges, the Helena Regional Airport, and the private sector to develop sporting complexes that not only provide activities for County residents, but attract sporting events throughout Montana and the Northwestern U.S.