Cascade County Growth Policy Update

January 2014

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CASCADE COUNTY GROWTH POLICY UPDATE

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Cascade County Planning Division
121 4th Street North #2H-2I
Great Falls, MT 59401

Prepared by

Matrix DESIGN GROUP

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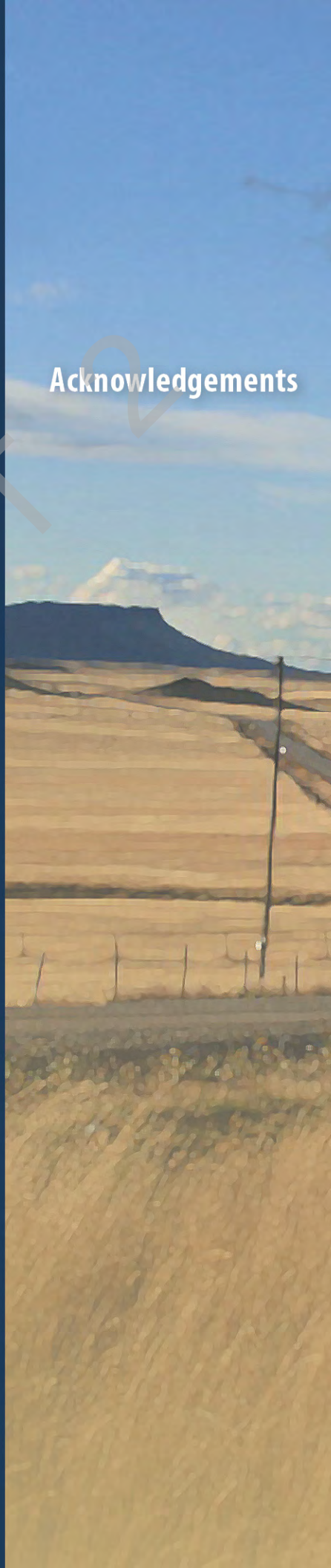

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Cascade County Planning Board

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- Ken Thornton

JLUS Coordinating Committee

- Joe Briggs, *County Commissioner*
- Brian Clifton, *Cascade County Public Works Director*
- Susan Conell, *Cascade County Planning Director*
- Carl Seilstad, *Fergus County Commissioner*
- Rudy Verzuh, *Malmstrom AFB Civil Engineering*
- Craig Raymond, *City of Great Falls Community Development-Planning Direct*

Cascade County Planning Staff

The Cascade County Growth Policy is managed by the Cascade County Planning Division. The staff members listed below were key to guiding and managing the development of this study.

- Joe Briggs, *County Commissioner*
- Brian Clifton, *Cascade County Public Works Director*
- Susan Conell, *Cascade County Planning Director*
- Kim Thiel-Schaaf, *Cascade County Commissioners Grant Coordinator*

Malmstrom Air Force Base

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Public Involvement

Cascade County would like to thank all the citizens who gave their time in assisting in the development of the Growth Policy by participating in the public workshops and corresponding with members of Cascade County and the JLUS Coordinating Committee.

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Consultants

Matrix DESIGN GROUP

- Celeste Werner, AICP
- Mike Hrapla
- Rick Rust, AICP
- Bren Cox

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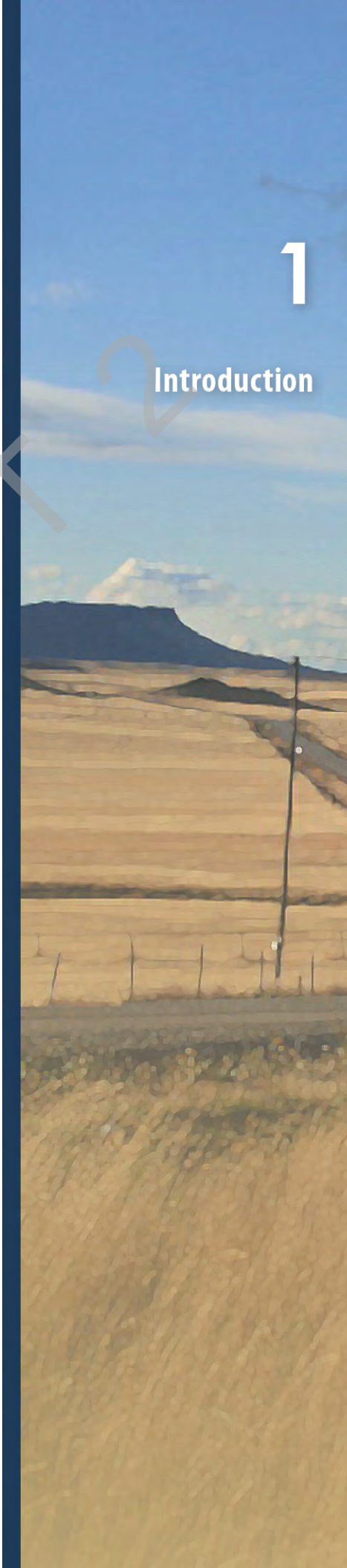

1.1 GROWTH POLICY PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Cascade County Growth Policy serves as a comprehensive plan to provide guidance on decisions regarding land development and public investments. This document is non-regulatory and is only implemented through regulatory tools such as Subdivision, Zoning and Floodplain Regulations or similar ordinances enacted by the Cascade County Board of County Commissioners. Because growth policies have a significant impact on the ability to develop private land, a thorough public involvement process is critical to formulating these strategies. This growth policy's designated growth areas are the result of time intensive public involvement efforts. The Cascade County6 Growth Policy is a living document that is reviewed and updated periodically in order to address changes within the community that may alter the considerations for land development and public investment.

1.2 HISTORY OF CASCADE COUNTY

Two years before Montana was granted statehood, T.E. Collins proposed the creation of Cascade County. Collins, a representative at the first legislative assembly held in Virginia City, proposed a bill to the Territorial Congress which would designate a new territorial county. The year was 1887 and Montana was still a territory that President Abraham Lincoln had approved of creating in 1864. Collins' bill proposed taking land from Lewis and Clark, Meagher, and Chouteau counties in order to create this new territorial county. The bill was approved, after many debates, and Cascade County was created. Two years later, in 1889, Montana was granted statehood.

Cascade County is located in north central Montana, east of the Continental Divide. The topography of the area varies from steep, mountainous terrain in the southern third of the County to rolling plains in the north. Elevations range from peaks over 8000 feet to river valleys near 2700 feet. The County is drained by four major watercourses: the Missouri, Smith and Sun Rivers and Belt Creek. The climate has many "Continental" characteristics with an important exception being the "Chinooks," an occasional warm winter wind from the southwest. Rainfall generally occurs in the spring and summer months.

The first government sponsored exploration within the present boundaries of Cascade County was made by the Lewis and Clark Expedition in June 1805. The area was soon named for the many cascades along the Missouri River which characterize the area near Great Falls, the County seat.

Organization of the County took place on September 19, 1887. The year also marked the first railroad services connecting the area to other parts of the nation. Spur lines were constructed to many mining areas making Great Falls the transportation hub for much of north-central Montana. Steamboats plied their trade from Great Falls to the upper end of the "Gates of the Mountains".

Cascade County is also the site of Montana's first hydroelectric plant. The Black Eagle Plant was built in 1890 along the Missouri River on the outskirts of the young Great Falls downtown. Since then, a series of four more hydroelectric dams have been constructed on the Falls of the Missouri River within the County.

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Both mining and agriculture have played an important role in development of the area. Major mining operations took place in the southeastern part of the County in the Little Belt Mountains, but have since been discontinued. Smelting operations for copper and zinc played an important part in the region's economic development. Great Falls is also a regional center for agricultural exchange and supply. Cattle and grain are the primary agricultural products and provide the economic base for the area. Coal mining in Sand Coulee, Stockett, Giffen, Belt and Armington was used for heating, powering trains and smelting.

An additional factor in the development of the area was the establishment of Malmstrom Air Force Base (AFB) and its numerous projects following WWII. Light diversified manufacturing has also been important to growth as well as increased services available to customers.

One could argue that early planning by Collins and others, in order to create Cascade County, loosely created the first Cascade County Planning Department. Officially, Cascade County Commissioners created the Cascade County Planning Board on November 19, 1973. The first meeting of the Cascade County Planning Board was held on January 22, 1974. While it may seem planning within Cascade County has only been around for 40 years, the first organized planning for Cascade County actually began in 1934 with the City of Great Falls Planning Commission. Later, in 1958, a joint City-County Planning Board was operating, but was disbanded due to a Montana State Supreme Court decision in the early 1960's. Under new legislation adopted in 1963 by the State Legislature, Cascade County Commissioners and Great Falls City Commissioners established the City-County Planning Department. This department operated within a jurisdictional area that included the city limits of Great Falls and an area which extended approximately 4.5 miles surrounding the city limits at that time. Within 10 years of the establishment of the City-County Planning Department, the Cascade County Commissioners realized the need for planning throughout the rest of the county, and therefore created the Cascade County Planning Department in 1973. The Cascade County Commissioners dissolved the City-County Planning Department in April 2005, and each local government created separate planning departments.

In January 2010, the Cascade County Commissioners created the Public Works Department (PWD). As part of this creation, restructuring was done and the Planning Department became a division of Public Works.

Cascade County was not the first county to realize the need for planning. Other counties were developing planning departments throughout the state in order to guide development; solve conflicts that were occurring; and, prevent future conflicts between land users. In 1975, the newly created Cascade County Planning Department staff began work on the Cascade County Development Plan. The plan was intended to guide and establish land use policies. These policies included designating resource protection areas, preserving prime agricultural soil areas, reviewing development in flood hazard areas, butte areas, and forest management areas. The plan also was intended to guide citizens on residential land uses, commercial land uses, and industrial land uses. The staff started the process in 1975 and through the use of community surveys, citizen advisory committees, public hearings, and citizen comments; the Cascade County Development Plan was written and adopted in 1979.

In 2003, the Montana Legislature amended the laws regarding development plans. Senate Bill 326 mandated the creation of a growth policy whereby all governing bodies (such as the Cascade County Commissioners) which have a current development plan may be revised following the procedures in Chapter 1, Title 76, Part 6 of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA). This new "Growth Policy" must contain all of the required elements outlined in MCA 76-1-601 and be adopted by October 1, 2006. With this new legislation, the Board of County Commissioners requested that the Cascade County Planning Department update the existing master planning document in place at that time.

The procedure followed in establishing land use policies and defining a development plan has been centered on a program involving extensive citizen participation. The plan is the product of a process started late in 2005 when the first community public hearings were held.

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Those initial public hearings, conducted in Monarch, Sun River, Centerville, Cascade, Belt and Great Falls, allow public input, ideas, suggestions, etc.

In 2012 Cascade County, along with the other Malmstrom AFB Missile Complex Counties, completed a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) which was funded in part by the Secretary of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment. The JLUS made recommendations regarding updating the Growth Policy to incorporate language related to potential conflicts between development and the military mission. Those changes were incorporated along with several minor updates in 2013. The public was invited to attend a kick off meeting to review the draft changes and make public comment. Following that public comment period, Cascade County adopted the changes recommended. More extensive updates to the Growth Policy may require a possible re-write with additional public participation in the future.

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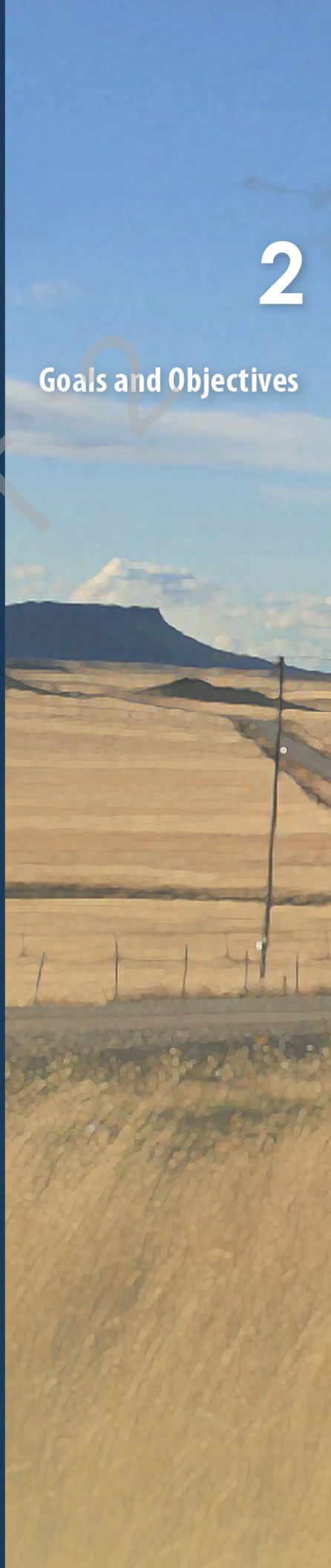
Goals and Objectives



Goals and objectives are the principle elements in guiding the Planning Board. In this context, a goal is a broad, generalized expression of a commonly held community value regarding growth, development patterns and quality of life. Goals, as used in this policy, express the overarching theme or general direction of the policy. An objective is a more narrowly defined and specific (measurable) expression of community intent. A goal may contain one or more objectives with each objective responsive to a particular aspect of a broadly stated goal. For example, a goal might be "mitigate development's impact to wildlife and fisheries." A related objective could be "encourage subdivision designs that do not restrict wildlife movement."

A policy is a fairly precise statement of how county government will exercise its authority, responsibility and fiscal resources to achieve a specific goal. Policies are tangible and can be quantitatively measured. Examples of policies related to the goal of "mitigate development's impact to wildlife and fisheries" could include such statements such as "Subdivisions may be designed to mitigate impact on wildlife movement." in county subdivision regulations.

The following goals summarize the citizens' aspiration for their community and have guided the Cascade County Planning Board's development of this policy:

- Sustain and strengthen the economic well-being of Cascade County's citizens.
- Protect and maintain Cascade County's rural character and the community's historic relationship with natural resource development.
- Maintain the agricultural economy.
- Retain the presence of the U.S. military in Cascade County.
- Preserve and enhance the rural, friendly and independent lifestyle currently enjoyed by Cascade County's citizens.

This Growth Policy is designed to help guide community decision-making in its effort to achieve these goals. These primary goals are the same goals listed in the 1982 Cascade County Comprehensive Plan, as well as additional goals identified within the 2006 Cascade County Growth Policy. These goals continue to provide the best overall direction for county planning.

Under each goal, the Planning Board has defined a number of objectives to guide the county in its efforts to reach each of the primary goals.

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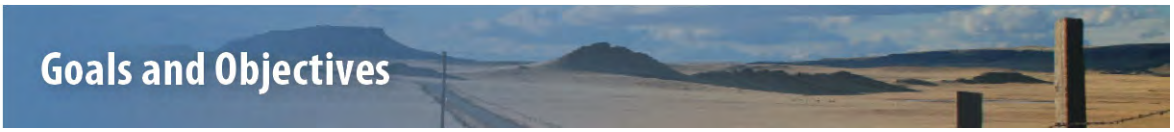
2 Goals and Objectives



2.1 PRIMARY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1 **Sustain and strengthen the economic well-being of Cascade County's citizens.**

Objectives

A. Stimulate the retention and expansion of existing businesses, new businesses, value-added businesses, wholesale and retail businesses, and industries including agriculture, mining, manufacturing/processing and forest products.

B. Stabilize and diversify the county's tax base by encouraging the sustainable use of its natural resources.

C. Identify and pursue primary business development that complements existing business, which is compatible with communities, and utilizes available assets. Identify and pursue targeted business development opportunities to include, but not limited to, manufacturing/heavy industry, telecommunications, and youth/social services.

D. Promote the development of cultural resources and tourism to broaden Cascade County's economic base.

E. Foster and stimulate well-planned entrepreneurship among the county's citizenry.

F. Promote a strong local business environment. Encourage and strengthen business support mechanisms such as chambers of commerce, development organizations and business roundtable organizations.

G. Improve local trade capture for Cascade County businesses. Promote local shopping as well as well-planned businesses and new businesses.

H. Network with and support other economic development efforts in the region and statewide, in recognition of Cascade County's interdependence with other communities and to leverage available local resources.

I. Encourage the growth of the agricultural economy.

J. Stimulate the growth of the economy by encouraging the use of alternate methods of energy production, including wind energy.

GOAL 2 **Protect and maintain Cascade County's rural character and the community's historic relationship with natural resource development.**

Objectives

A. Foster the continuance of agriculture and forestry in recognition of their economic contribution and the intrinsic natural beauty of grazing areas, farmlands and forests.

B. Preserve Cascade County's scenic beauty and conserve its forests, rangelands and streams, with their abundant wildlife and good fisheries.

C. Preserve Cascade County's open space setting by encouraging new development to locate near existing towns and rural settlements and by discouraging poorly designed, land subdivisions and commercial development.

D. Assure clean air, clean water, a healthful environment and good community appearance.

E. Support the development of natural resources including but not limited to timber, mining, oil and gas production, and renewable energy production.

F. Continue to work with federal and state agencies to redevelop properties within Cascade County which are currently undergoing Superfund and Brownfields processes.

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GOAL 3 Maintain agricultural economy.

Objectives

A. Protect the most productive soil types.

B. Continue to protect soils against erosion.

C. Protect the floodplain from non-agricultural development.

D. Support the development of value-added agricultural industry in Cascade County utilizing the products from the regional area.

GOAL 4 Retain the presence of the US Military in Cascade County

Objectives

A. Encourage the federal congressional delegation to actively support maintaining the current mission status at a minimum.

B. Promote the location of additional military missions in Cascade County.

C. Encourage the reactivation of the runway at Malmstrom Air Force Base for fixed wing operations.

D. Refer to the Joint Land Use Study for resolving conflicts and promoting mission compatible development.

GOAL 5 Preserve and enhance the rural, friendly and independent lifestyle currently enjoyed by Cascade County's citizens.

Objectives

A. Maintain Cascade County's citizens independent lifestyle and minimize local governmental intervention, to the extent possible, consistent with the requirements of a continually evolving economy and constantly changing population. Was this language in the growth policy originally? Is there room for discussion or potential edits to reinsert? Is there any reason to worry about re-inserting?

B. Preserve and promote Cascade County's rich cultural heritage, rooted in natural resource development and reflected in its numerous cultural/historic sites and archaeological areas.

C. Promote fire prevention measures throughout the county, giving special emphasis to the extreme fire hazards present at the wild land/urban interface.

D. Encourage the continued development of educational programs and facilities, recreational opportunities and spaces and health services for all county residents.

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2.2 SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Planning Board and County Commission support growth and development in Cascade County. In addition to the broad goals and objectives developed in Chapter Two of this policy, the Planning Board and County Commission have designed specific goals and objectives in the following areas to address current and projected change and growth in the county. Growth and development however, does bring new issues and concerns to long-time county residents as well as visitors and new residents. Many of the goals and objectives in this chapter deal with the issues and concerns created by the new growth and development anticipated and encouraged to occur in Cascade County.

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL 6 **Promote and maintain a transportation system that provides safety, efficiency, and is cost effective.**

Objectives

A. New additions to the transportation system should be compatible with the existing road system and coordinated with roads from other jurisdictions.

B. Transportation planning for new developments should support the Cascade County Growth Policy.

C. Ensure that all new roads, both public and private, are built to county design standards for new construction. These standards can be found within the Cascade County Subdivision Regulations.

D. Encourage provisions for multi-modal types of transportation including: bike lanes, trails, pedestrian facilities, etc.

E. Develop and implement road and bridge improvement standards and maintenance schedules.

F. Develop a policy and implementation program in cooperation with developers and school districts to provide walks, bridges and pathways for children to improve safety and reduce transportation costs between residential neighborhoods, schools and stores.

G. Develop secondary means of access, where practical, to settlements and subdivisions in order to improve safety and overall traffic circulation.

H. Continue using Road Improvement Districts and Rural Maintenance Districts to maximize funding strategies.

I. Coordinate transportation issues with wildfire and fire protection issues, policies and goals.

WILDFIRE AND FIRE PROTECTION

GOAL 7 **Minimize risk of fire by management and planning, and to permit the effective and efficient suppression of fires in order to protect persons, property and forested areas.**

Objectives

A. Encourage fire protection measures throughout the county, giving special emphasis to the extreme fire hazards at the wild land/urban interface.

B. Subdivisions should be planned, designed, constructed and maintained so as to minimize the risk of fire. Developers should submit a defensible space plan for each subdivision to the appropriate fire district for its review.

C. Encourage fire resistant construction materials and the use of sprinkler systems.

D. Promote cooperation with local fire districts and state and federal agencies to develop and provide a wildfire educational program.

E. Promote fire services for all subdivisions.

F. Promote adequate water supply systems.

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G. Support adequate ingresses and egresses in all subdivision planning.

H. Promote vegetation policies that reduce fire hazards.

WATER QUALITY

GOAL 8 **Protect surface and groundwater quality from pollution.**

Objectives

A. Discourage development with on-site wastewater treatment systems in areas having inappropriate soils or high groundwater, as indicated on the revised Cascade County soil maps, to help prevent the contamination of groundwater supplies.

B. Promote education designed to further awareness of how waste water systems function, their proper maintenance and permitting requirements.

C. Require local review of subdivisions to meet Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) regulations.

D. Encourage the formation of rural water districts and the development of community water systems by supporting funding applications for preliminary engineering and construction work.

E. Promote grants available to local organizations under section 319 of the Clean Water Act for the reduction of non-point source water pollution.

F. Promote education for land users on the necessity of obtaining appropriate permits before doing any work to alter streams.

G. Require all construction to be setback from streams and to be in compliance with applicable regulations, in order to prevent water quality degradation and stream bank erosion.

H. Promote policies that ensure greater setbacks for commercial, industrial, and multi-family development to reduce the risk of negative impacts.

I. Encourage wetland protection to preserve waterfowl and other wildlife habitat.

WORKING LANDSCAPES

GOAL 9 **Foster the heritage of the area in agriculture and forestry in recognition of their economic contribution and the intrinsic natural beauty of grazing areas, farmlands, and forests.**

Objectives

A. Encourage cooperation between new development and agricultural/forestry operations.

B. Educate prospective rural residents of potential conflicts with neighboring farm, ranch, and forestry operations.

C. Require appropriate fencing of rural residential developments to keep livestock out and allow free movement along traditional stock driveways.

D. Protect irrigation systems from the adverse impacts of rural residential development.

E. Ensure development plans provide protection from the introduction and spread of noxious weeds.

F. Encourage open buffers between rural residences and adjoining agricultural lands.

G. Encourage agricultural landowners considering land subdivision to develop the least agriculturally viable portion of their properties.

H. 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.

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WILDLIFE HABITAT

GOAL 10 **Minimize impact to wildlife and fisheries.**

Objectives

A. Encourage developers to coordinate with Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks in the pre-application phase to protect wildlife from negative impacts caused by development.

B. Encourage subdivision designs that do not restrict wildlife movement and preserve important wildlife habitat and corridors.

C. Direct homeowners to educational resources that provide strategies to avoid homeowner wildlife conflict.

D. Protect riverine habitat.

LAND USE

GOAL 11 **Protect and maintain Cascade County's rural character, encourage efficient use of land.**

Objectives

A. Preserve the county's open space setting by encouraging cluster development.

B. Encourage cluster development to locate near existing towns and rural, more densely populated settlements and discourage poorly designed, unsafe land subdivisions and unsafe commercial development.

1. Encourage the creation of neighborhood plans in developing areas of the county, which have previously had an environmental assessment completed upon the area, and to provide incentives such as density bonuses.
2. Maintain and refine the existing capital improvement plan for roads, sheriff's department, weeds, facilities and other departments.
3. Coordinate planning and service provision efforts with incorporated cities within the county and with neighboring counties to direct development to existing developing areas.

C. Encourage new development to meet the recreational needs of its residents.

1. Using the subdivision review process, encourage new development to retain access to public lands for the general public use.
2. Require new subdivisions to dedicate land or provide a cash donation in lieu of dedication for parks as provided by 76-3-621, MCA.
3. Revise the county's subdivision regulations by adopting standards for the type and location of dedicated parkland. The following guidelines should be used in developing these standards:
   a) The proposed park space should be within one-half mile of the majority of the lots to be served;
   b) The proposed park space shall be safely accessible by pedestrians coming from lots to be served, but have direct access to a collector street, or otherwise be located where it will not channel traffic into local residential streets; and
   c) Where possible, the proposed park should be connected to existing or proposed pedestrian/bicycle trails.

D. Maintain an inventory of all subdivision lands accepted as parklands in the county.

E. Encourage use of completed inventory when staff makes recommendations to developers as to whether more parklands are needed in developed areas or whether cash should be accepted in lieu of land.

F. Encourage existing homeowners' associations to take responsibility for improvements and maintenance of dedicated parkland within its subdivision.

G. Encourage homeowners' associations in future developments where parkland is incorporated into the design to keep parks and existing equipment well-maintained.

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H. Utilize the subdivision review process to coordinate with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Cascade Conservation District to preserve stream banks, prevent erosion and enforce Montana's 310 permit process.

GOAL 12

Support effort to ensure residents of Cascade County have an opportunity to obtain safe, sanitary, and affordable housing.

Objectives

A. Work to maintain an adequate land supply for diversity of all housing opportunities.

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

C. Promote dispersal of affordable housing throughout the county.

D. Participate in periodic analyses to determine immediate and long range affordable housing needs.

E. Study and consider innovative housing programs to reduce dependency on subsidized housing.

F. Encourage group homes, foster care facilities, and facilities for other special populations are equitably distributed throughout the county, yet near daily services.

G. Encourage preservation, rehabilitation, and redevelopment of existing housing, with special attention to retaining historic structures and protecting historic areas.

H. Encourage compatible mixed-use development.

I. Encourage preservation, rehabilitation, and development of existing housing, with special attention to historic structures and historic houses.

J. Coordinate with neighborhood housing programs to ensure affordable housing is available and to promote home ownership.

GOAL 13

Protect areas near missile silos from encroachment and incompatible development.

Objectives

A. Discourage intensive development, density increases, and further subdivision of land in the Yellow-coded Development Coordination Area (DCA). See Figure 2-1.

B. Encourage development proposals to coordinate plans with the Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) if the proposed development indicates a potential for incompatibility with mission.

C. Maintain a formal process in concert with MAFB for coordinating the development review effort between Cascade County and MAFB.

D. Maintain local regulations for promoting compatible land use as recommended in the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS).

E. Encourage the use of easements to conserve lands near missile silos.

F. Encourage and support citizen-led land conservation easement efforts.

G. Determine willingness of property owners to deed land and or/establish conservation easements.

H. If appropriate, establish a property trust and/or conservation easement program with those landowners.

I. Educate landowners and others about encroachment issues and incompatible land uses in the vicinity of missile silos.

   1. Prepare a brochure, fact sheet and/or a newsletter that raises public awareness about encroaching onto missile silo sites. Regularly distribute this document to land owners, Chambers of Commerce, libraries, community service organizations, real estate offices, BCB, county and city offices and departments.

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2. Maintain a webpage on the county's website that addresses issues relative to military compatibility.
3. Prepare maps for placement on the county website delineating areas where there are special concerns about encroachment or incompatibility.
4. Publicize the functions, duties and responsibilities of the office of the MAFB Base Community Planner.
5. Utilize public community events to provide information about encroachment and compatibility issues and provide opportunities questions and answers.
6. Work with the local realtor's association to require a disclosure statement upon the sale of fee simple land where areas of concern are indicated on the Figure 2-1.

J. Maintain communications between Cascade County and MAFB and the Montana Building Codes Bureau (BCB).

1. Study, evaluate and prepare a report for County Commissioners on ways to improve communication and coordination between the County and MAFB.
2. Study, evaluate and prepare a report for County Commissioners on ways to improve communication and coordination with the BCB.
3. Develop a formal notification process for building permits issued by the BCB.
4. Consider establishing protocols for coordination between jurisdictions, state agencies, and the military.
5. Work with MAFB to identify preferred densities and necessary height limitations in the vicinity of missile silos.

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3 Population

Data analysis and projections form the basis for almost all major planning decisions as a measure of the size and density of various groups for future facilities and services. Thus, when developing future policies, urban or rural, an understanding of population dynamics is of major importance. Cascade County population data is primarily supplied by the Bureau of Census, Montana Department of Commerce, and supplemented by various additional sources. Cascade County has experienced a low to moderate growth rate in the last ten years.

Closer analysis of the information indicates that the percentage of the population classified as "rural" appears to be decreasing. More importantly, over the 2000-2010 timeframe, the total number of residents in Cascade County has been on the increase. The total Cascade County population has increased while the population of Census Designated Places (CDP) and Towns has decreased, with the notable exceptions of Great Falls (City) and three new CDPs as shown in Table 3-1 below in Findings. This phenomenon is not surprising, however, following typical past trends towards increasing urbanization, characteristic of most other rural portions of the country. Conversely, some areas of the County, specifically the area south of the City of Great Falls, south of the Town of Cascade and U.S. 89 from Manchester to Simms, have experienced development pressures as new people move into the Great Falls area. Many of these residents work and shop in the Great Falls urban area and for census purposes are classified as "rural non-farm". While this classification has shown a decline in the past, ten-year to current trends indicate that this sector continues to show an increase. A major factor in affecting this trend may be due to the increasing subdivision of land.

Table 3.1 Cascade County Population Projections

Year	Actual Population[1]	Percent Change Over Previous Period	Estimated Population Cascade County[2]
1970	81,804	--	--
1980	80,696	-1.4%[3]	--
1990	77,691	-3.7%3	77,788
2000	80,357	3.4%3	80,318
2010	81,327	1.2%3	81,509
2015	--	5.1%4	85,673
2020	--	5.3%4	90,176
2025	--	4.4%4	94,147
2030	--	2.5%4	96,502
2035	--	0.2%	96,676
2040	--	-0.5%	96,172
2045	--	0.6%	96,759
2050	--	2.5%	99,174
2055	--	4.0%	103,151
2060	--	4.3%	107,638

[1] US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010

[2] Regional Economic Models, Inc., released April 2013; Census and Economic Information Center, Montana Department of Commerce

[3] Percent change in actual population

[4] Percent change over previous year projection

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3 Population

3.1 FINDINGS

- *Based on past trends and current factors, rural farm populations will continue to decrease. This will be due mostly to a continuing consolidation of farms.*
- *Rural non-farm population will increase due partially to the availability of rural residential lots. The population and influence of the City of Great Falls will result in even greater development pressures on the rural and suburban portions of the County.*
- *The Montana State Department of Commerce estimates Cascade County's population to increase from 80,357 in the year 2000 to 82,239 in 2025.*
- *The population has gotten older since 1990. The median age in 2000 was 36.7 years, up from 32.7 years in 1990. In 2010, the median age in Cascade County is 38.9, up from 36.7 in 2000. This compares to 39.8 for the state, up from 37.5 in 2000, and 36.8 for the nation, up from 35.3 in 2000.*
- *Total Population in 2000 was 80,357 people, up 3% from 77,691 in 1990; by 2010, the population had grown to 81,327.*

During the 40-year period ending 2010, the population of Cascade County has fluctuated from just under 82,000 to less than 78,000. However, the net loss in population during the same period was only 477. Figure 3-1 charts the comparative trend in population from 1970 to 2012. Table 3-2 indicates the 40-year growth trend for Cascade County, its cities, towns and census-designated places, where data was available.

Figure 3-2 provides the comparative trend in age groups for Cascade County for the 30-year period between 1990 and 2010. Table 3-3 indicates the trends in population by selected categories for 2000 and 2010.

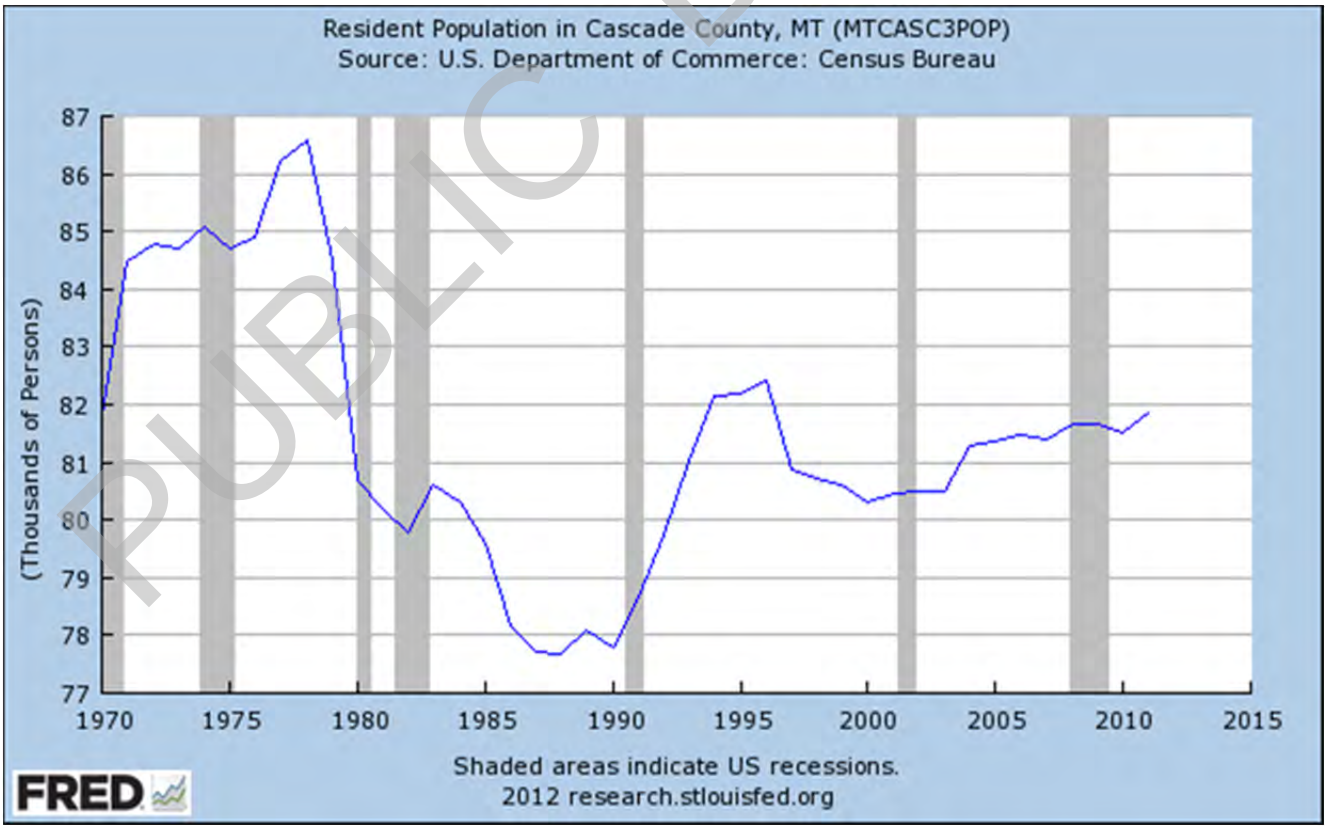

Figure 3.1. Comparative Population Trends

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Table 3.2 Population Growth Trends 1970 – 2010

City	1970[1]	1980[1]	1990[1]	2000[1]	2010[2]
Cascade County	81,804	80,696	77,691	80,357	81,327
Belt (Town)	656	825	571	633	597
Black Eagle CDP	--	--	--	914	904
Cascade (Town)	714	773	729	819	685
Fort Shaw CDP	--	--	--	274	280
Great Falls (City)	60,091	56,884	55,125	56,690	58,505
Malmstrom AFB CDP	--	--	--	4,544	3,472
Neihart (Town)	109	91	53	91	51
Simms CDP	--	--	--	354	373
Sun Prairie CDP	--	--	--	1,772	1,630
Sun River CDP	--	--	--	131	124
Ulm CDP	--	--	--	764	738
Vaughn CDP	--	--	--	701	658
Remainder of County	--	--	--	12,665	13,329
New Census Designated Places					
Gibson Flats CDP	--	--	--	--	199
Sand Coulee CDP	--	--	--	--	212
Stockett CDP	--	--	--	--	169

[1] Cascade County Growth Policy 2006.

[2] Table 1.1 Population of Cascade County, Incorporated Places and Census Designated Places, 2010, US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau.

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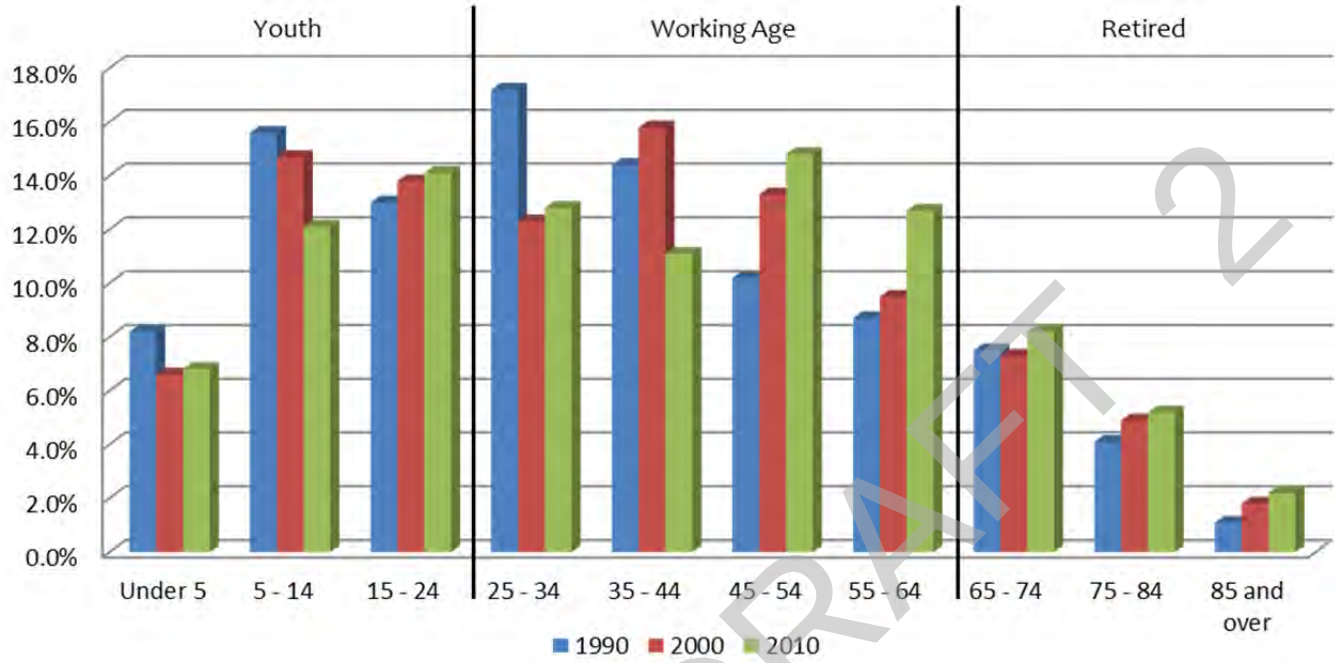

Source: Montana Department of Commerce, Census and Economic Information Center; US Census, 1990, 2000, 2010 (Margin of error less than 1%).

Figure 3.2. Age Breakout 1990, 2000, 2010

Table 3.3 Trends – Population by Category in 2000 and 2010

Category	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	% Change 2000-2010	Average % Change per Year 2000-2010
Population	80,357	--	81,327	--	1.21%	.121%
Male	39,756	49%	40,568	49.88%	2.04%	.204%
Female	40,601	51%	40,759	50.12%	0.39%	.039%
Under 20 years	23,164	29%	20,758	25.52%	-10.39%	-1.039%
65 years and Over	11,248	14%	12,690	15.60%	12.82%	1.282%
Median Age	36.7	--	38.9	--	--	--

Source: Cascade County Growth Policy 2006; US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau.

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To determine housing trends for Cascade County, information is obtained from the U.S. Census of Housing. A comparison of housing data shows the number of units in 1990 were 33,063, 35,225 units in 2000, and 37,276 units in 2010. About 72% (26,854 units) of the housing units were located in Great Falls, leaving 10,422 housing units for the balance of Cascade County. Table 4.1 outlines the location of Cascade County's housing units as of 2010.

Table 4.1 Housing Units in Cascade County, 2010

City	2010 (Total)	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant	For Rent	For Sale Only
Belt	295	188	73	34	13	6
Black Eagle	474	277	150	47	18	3
Cascade	328	203	84	41	10	8
Outside of Designated Areas	6,550	4,450	871	1,229	54	94
Fort Shaw	116	86	22	8	1	1
Great Falls	26,854	15,999	9,302	1,553	616	246
Malmstrom	1,171	12	847	312	6	0
Neihart	170	26	6	138	0	0
Sun Prairie	672	556	72	44	15	12
Sun River	61	40	16	5	2	1
Ulm	281	228	30	23	3	4
Vaughn	304	225	46	33	18	5
Cascade County Total	37,276	22,290	11,519	3,467	756	364

Affordability and attainability continue to be a concern for many households in Montana, not just low income families. Attainability considers whether a household is willing to pay up to 30% or more of its income for housing, and whether a household is able to obtain a 10% down payment or a rental deposit.

Clearly, the median home price, and to a lesser degree, fair market rent, have increased much more than median household income, bringing attainability into question. The median home price in Cascade County increased 50.2% from 2000 to 2008; while median household income only increased 25% in the same years. The median household incomes and median home costs for each county in Montana are shown in Table 4.2 for the years 2000, 2006, and 2008.

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Table 4.2 Average Price of Housing in Montana, 2000, 2006, and 2008

County	2000		2006		2008		Median Home Cost Change, 2000-2008
	Median Household Income	Median Home Cost	Median Household Income	Median Home Cost	Median Household Income	Median Home Cost	
Beaverhead	$30,499	$75,000	$34,774	$103,450	$39,284	$128,513	71.4%
Big Horn	$27,502	$69,500	$31,938	$138,202	$37,798	$75,000	7.9%
Blaine	$26,157	$63,000	$29,654	$92,784	$32,605	$47,500	-24.6%
Broadwater	$33,572	$83,000	$37,104	$182,218	$40,104	$169,500	104.2%
Carbon	$33,556	$115,000	$37,855	$243,770	$47,802	$193,000	67.8%
Carter	$27,850	$59,767	$30,705	$95,000	$34,070	$55,000	-8.0%
Cascade	$33,819	$98,050	$39,430	$189,404	$42,528	$147,250	50.2%
Chouteau	$30,054	$72,750	$33,724	$96,231	$40,588	$51,750	-28.9%
Custer	$31,361	$62,000	$35,223	$96,592	$39,859	$95,500	54.0%
Daniels	$29,720	$59,767	$31,832	$61,604	$34,239	$35,000	-41.4%
Dawson	$33,200	$63,800	$37,559	$159,333	$43,399	$83,500	30.9%
Deer Lodge	$27,795	$50,000	$31,833	$110,045	$34,126	$84,500	69.0%
Fallon	$32,339	$59,767	$38,634	$52,542	$47,099	$68,000	13.8%
Fergus	$31,624	$63,000	$35,655	$160,277	$39,561	$81,550	29.4%
Flathead	$36,327	$138,950	$41,554	$263,033	$44,013	$218,700	57.4%
Gallatin	$39,592	$139,900	$47,170	$254,738	$53,042	$240,000	71.6%
Garfield	$28,622	$59,767	$29,487	$108,722	$35,585	$50,000	-16.3%
Glacier	$27,049	$65,750	$31,527	$83,213	$36,149	$85,250	29.6%
Golden Valley	$26,886	$70,888	$28,581	$73,680	$33,753	$40,000	-75.5%
Granite	$29,362	$57,000	$33,378	$239,025	$38,323	$175,000	207.0%
Hill	$32,043	$86,500	$37,339	$160,163	$40,341	$50,000	42.2%
Jefferson	$43,283	$144,500	$51,167	$160,000	$56,650	$196,750	36.2%
Judith Basin	$29,704	$56,650	$32,361	$50,230	$37,033	$61,500	8.6%
Lake	$29,527	$141,000	$37,217	$208,500	$38,505	$184,500	30.9%
Lewis & Clark	$39,893	$112,194	$47,156	$193,523	$49,959	$186,500	66.2%
Liberty	$29,505	$70,888	$33,092	$71,286	$35,663	$68,000	-4.1%
Lincoln	$28,389	$81,250	$31,654	$146,934	$33,383	$156,000	92.0%
Madison	$31,457	$87,500	$35,879	$275,138	$37,576	$335,000	282.9%%
McCone	$30,876	$59,767	$32,291	$98,471	$45,770	$45,000	-24.7%
Meagher	$28,172	$73,929	$30,292	$111,394	$30,142	$45,000	-39.1%
Mineral	$28,209	$79,900	$32,833	$232,800	$34,985	$150,000	87.7%
Missoula	$35,353	$132,000	$42,976	$261,700	$43,260	$209,950	59.1%
Musselshell	$26,278	$80,875	$31,632	$111,394	$34,318	$77,500	-4.2%
Park	$32,593	$92,500	$37,227	$184,806	$39,847	$209,000	125.9%
Petroleum	$24,618	$70,888	$26,626	$111,394	$31,243	$50,000	-29.5%
Phillips	$29,414	$75,000	$33,634	$76,696	$35,229	$47,500	-36.7%
Pondera	$30,569	$53,000	$32,482	$111,394	$35,718	$59,498	12.3%
Powder River	$29,830	$73,929	$34,947	$98,471	$36,933	$55,000	-25.6%

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County	2000		2006		2008		Median Home Cost Change, 2000-2008
	Median Household Income	Median Home Cost	Median Household Income	Median Home Cost	Median Household Income	Median Home Cost	
Powell	$31,530	$72,500	$38,523	$194,206	$38,836	$130,000	79.3%
Prairie	$27,568	$59,767	$31,881	$113,500	$33,590	$36,000	39.8%
Ravalli	$33,121	$129,900	$38,427	$235,963	$43,613	$235,400	81.2%
Richland	$33,605	$63,500	$37,985	$131,353	$49,838	$84,000	32.3%
Roosevelt	$25,474	$55,000	$28,543	$98,471	$32,671	$50,000	-9.1%
Rosebud	$36,980	$71,250	$42,874	$239,025	$45,789	$100,000	40.4%
Sanders	$27,798	$135,000	$30,840	$221,449	$30,250	$133,500	-1.1%
Sheridan	$31,392	$59,767	$33,709	$74,489	$40,127	$42,500	-28.9%
Silver Bow	$31,284	$65,500	$34,784	$169,687	$38,439	$95,000	45.0%
Stillwater	$42,082	$127,900	$48,180	$150,000	$54,493	$155,000	21.2%
Sweet Grass	$34,190	$114,546	$38,497	$210,694	$44,424	$157,000	37.1%
Teton	$31,351	$76,750	$35,387	$129,749	$40,111	$103,000	34.2%
Toole	$30,785	$60,000	$35,313	$111,394	$37,175	$60,750	1.3%
Treasure	$31,447	$59,767	$38,511	$98,471	$38,296	$55,000	-8.0%
Valley	$32,194	$50,000	$35,604	$92,335	$39,344	$66,250	32.5%
Wheatland	$23,993	$56,650	$26,677	$111,394	$30,486	$40,000	29.4%
Wibaux	$29,080	$59,767	$31,920	$98,471	$37,217	$40,000	-33.1%
Yellowstone	$38,308	$107,500	$42,859	$177,038	$49,337	$169,900	58.0%
Montana	***$33,281***	***$115,000***	***$40,082***	***$172,180***	***$43,948***	***$168,200***	***46.3%***

Source: White Paper on Housing in Montana, Montana Department of Commerce Housing Coordination Team, June 2010

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4 Housing

The U.S. Census Bureau 2007-2011 American Community Survey five-year estimate for Cascade County identified a total of 37,116 housing units, which is slightly different than the 2010 Census data. Using this estimated data (which was not available from the 2010 Census), Table 4.3 shows the types of housing units in Cascade County by structure.

Table 4.3 Housing Units by Structure Size, 2007-2011

1 Unit Detached	24,545
1 Unit Attached	1,631
2 Units	1,845
3-4 Units	1,763
5-9 Units	1,252
10-19 Units	1,540
20 or more Units	2,169
Mobile Homes	3,364
Boat, RV, van, etc.	7
Total (Including Great Falls)	**37,116**

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

Cascade County's housing stock includes some of the oldest homes in the state. Table 4.4 shows that Cascade County has the second largest number (after Silver Bow County) of houses constructed before 1939.

Table 4.4 Year Structure Built for Montana

County	Total Housing Units	1939 or Earlier	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000 or later
Beaverhead	5,223	1,251	148	495	584	916	520	827	482
Big Horn	4,689	579	453	375	606	1,138	802	459	277
Blaine	2,848	700	222	363	317	617	279	271	79
Broadwater	2,287	357	52	106	135	427	242	521	447
Carbon	6,377	2,181	249	388	372	914	627	1,011	635
Carter	261	76	12	11	14	55	19	60	14
Cascade	37,116	6,399	3,184	5,736	5,676	6,254	2,962	4,386	3,455
Chouteau	2,868	773	289	528	650	385	211	260	72
Custer	5,550	1,345	508	849	528	1,531	308	237	244
Daniels	1,091	306	122	199	65	187	102	59	51
Dawson	4,222	938	287	874	457	847	560	115	144
Deer Lodge	5,115	1,990	572	834	326	577	213	336	267
Fallon	1,478	315	116	213	205	289	125	78	137
Fergus	5,825	2,349	466	607	451	638	539	508	267
Flathead	46,121	3,151	2,118	3,431	3,361	8,357	7,411	8,900	9,392
Gallatin	41,545	3,971	1,242	1,890	2,424	6,891	5,175	8,562	11,390
Garfield	894	256	118	83	107	120	77	78	25
Glacier	5,355	587	519	620	531	1,201	781	813	303

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County	Total Housing Units	1939 or Earlier	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000 or later
Golden Valley	470	186	19	32	28	78	47	37	43
Granite	2,751	747	126	298	293	390	270	312	315
Hill	7,266	1,311	581	1,313	856	1,709	675	572	249
Jefferson	4,983	504	132	208	479	1,016	787	1,209	648
Judith Basin	1,371	398	147	188	143	200	148	106	41
Lake	16,366	2,378	771	958	1,429	3,505	2,182	3,56	2,087
Lewis & Clark	29,887	4,829	1,325	2,216	2,737	6,346	3,453	4,281	4,700
Liberty	1,125	311	107	160	91	201	115	124	16
Lincoln	11,246	1,679	504	905	1,105	1,945	1,679	1,935	1,494
Madison	6,580	1,085	204	227	330	1,146	758	1,584	1,246
McCone	1,043	224	133	230	126	152	123	41	14
Meagher	1,322	304	67	113	105	271	146	159	157
Mineral	2,411	217	203	275	180	590	265	425	256
Missoula	49,608	5,769	2,455	3,964	4,577	10,622	5,041	8,620	8,560
Musselshell	2,607	830	154	190	190	404	239	366	234
Park	9,295	2,292	642	752	583	1,418	1,032	1,646	930
Petroleum	346	124	24	25	28	36	25	60	24
Phillips	2,343	606	335	298	250	380	277	118	79
Pondera	2,671	631	296	387	286	480	285	189	117
Powder River	1,011	156	118	169	100	213	135	59	61
Powell	3,097	784	378	315	232	623	183	407	175
Prairie	664	238	128	80	37	88	54	29	10
Ravalli	19,319	2,047	603	1,061	983	3,876	2,519	4,933	3,297
Richland	4,545	735	409	813	382	941	799	272	194
Roosevelt	4,070	494	529	892	631	820	459	166	79
Rosebud	4,049	634	120	274	308	1,290	908	342	173
Sanders	6,572	1,127	379	576	306	1,167	1,020	1,169	828
Sheridan	2,122	527	305	296	233	312	268	77	104
Silver Bow	16,675	6,996	1,193	2,007	1,327	1,858	1,137	1,400	757
Stillwater	4,744	1,045	355	314	238	739	529	802	762
Sweet Grass	2,322	722	146	197	171	281	280	262	263
Teton	5,265	116	116	170	237	565	913	1,298	1,850
Toole	2,334	584	245	393	188	459	304	129	32
Treasure	414	144	28	46	22	53	64	41	16
Valley	4,870	666	390	968	1,667	614	278	129	158
Wheatland	1,357	560	160	164	71	127	92	158	25
Wibaux	520	164	60	79	62	59	55	23	18
Yellowstone	63,345	5,637	3,881	9,122	5,664	14,003	9,023	7,489	8,526
Montana	***478,030***	***76,015***	***28,727***	***48,654***	***43,250***	***90,399***	***56,894***	***69,539***	***64,552***

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

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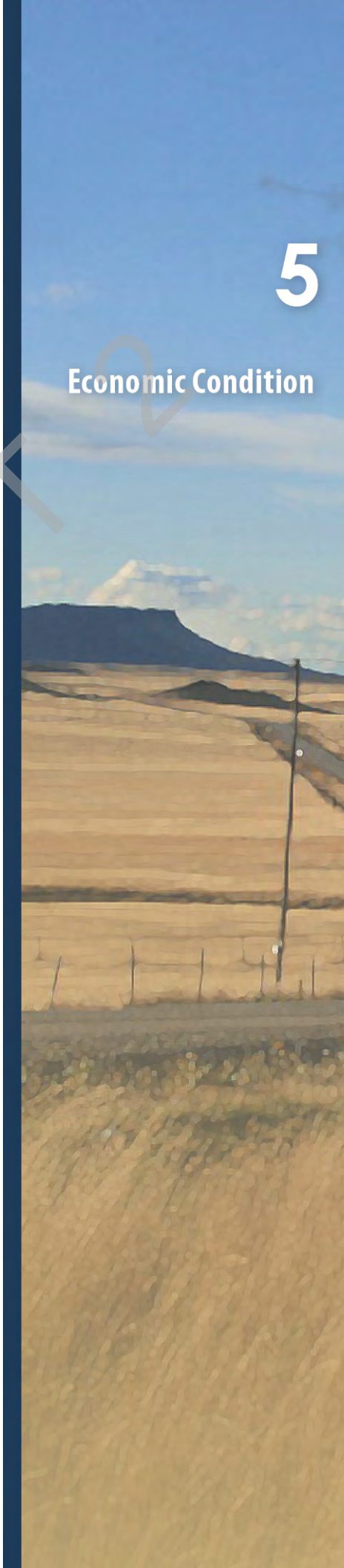

5 Economic Condition

Economic studies have two purposes. The first is to provide information about the local economy that will assist in arriving at a series of policies and goals, which form a basis for making decisions. The second is technical in that it provides a quantitative estimate (or estimates) of future employment. This section will attempt to present a systematic investigation and interpretation of inventory and analysis of past and present economic conditions of Cascade County and the Triangle Area, thus establishing a basis for policies and goals. To establish this base, extensive use will be made of data supplied by the State's Department of Commerce.

The information contained in this section should be helpful in providing an understanding of the forces involved in the local economy. Overall, it provides a quantitative picture of employment and population dynamics.

The past and future population of an area is closely linked to its economic growth – Cascade County is no exception. It follows then, that it is very important that people and governmental decision makers know what to expect in terms of economic conditions (specifically employment) and numbers of people in order to plan rationally for the future of an area. Traditionally, all major decisions have been based on projected employment and population, which in turn provide the local government with the necessary tools to make sound decisions regarding land use, transportation and public facilities and services. Energy, or the shortage and cost of energy will play an important role in the future of both Great Falls and Cascade County. This vicinity is fortunate in the fact that there is virtually unlimited supply of electricity, both produced locally and imported through the electrical network. Cascade County is not as fortunate in the area of transportation as the area is off the major transportation routes and is a great distance from major marketing centers.

The economy of Great Falls and Cascade County is tied to three key elements: Military spending in support of Malmstrom AFB and the Montana Air National Guard, Agricultural Spending, and Health Care Services.

The Health Care Sector has experienced rapid growth over the past few years with an expansion of services and capabilities across health care providers, but in particular, by Benefits Health Systems.

The other facet, military spending, has fluctuated widely in recent years and continues to do so, most recently with the decommissioning of the 564th Missile Squadron via the 2007 Quadrennial Defense Review; the remissioning of the Montana Air National Guard from fighters to cargo aircraft; and, the scheduled implementation of the NEW START treaty which will cause an unknown reduction in the number of ICBMs stationed at Malmstrom.

5.1 AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT

The importance of agriculture to the economy of Great Falls cannot be over emphasized. This impact is not limited to only Cascade County's agricultural industry, but also to the contributions of the remaining counties comprising the Sweetgrass Development Region, as shown in Table 5-1. The Sweetgrass Certified Development Corporation is comprised of Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole Counties which have adopted an approved Certified Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

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According to the Sweetgrass CEDS for 2012-2017:

> *"This region, with the exception of Great Falls, is predominantly rural and has a large amount of land dedicated to agriculture; ranching, farming and businesses which support the agriculture industry. 3.5% of employment is based in the agricultural industry."*

Table 5.1 Personal Income from Farm Employment, 2009 (Thousands of 2010 $s)

	Cascade County	Glacier County	Pondera County	Teton County	Toole County	Sweetgrass Region	Montana	US
Earnings by Place of work ($1000)	2,167,170	254,476	102,513	118,438	140,538	2,783,135	23,167,108	8,955,678,270
Farm Earnings	9,720	24,445	21,369	23,775	17,481	96,790	317,513	69,627,466
Farm Proprietors' Income	2,669	19,754	16,767	18,228	14,712	70,845	72,130	41,563,645
Non-Farm Earnings	2,157,450	230,031	81,144	94,663	123,057	2,686,345	22,849,595	8,886,050,804
Percent of Total								
Farm Employment	0.4%	9,6%	20,8%	20.1%	12.4%	1.4%	3.5%	0.8%
Farm Proprietors' Employment	0.1%	7.8%	16.4%	15.4%	10.5%	0.3%	2.6%	0.5%
Non-Farm Employment	99.6%	90.4%	79.2%	79.9%	87.6%	98.6%	96.5%	99.2%

Source: Praxis Strategy Group – Regional Diversification Study 2010

FINDINGS

- *According to the Praxis Strategy Group Economic Diversification Study completed in 2010 for Cascade County and the Sweetgrass Region, the region has a near ideal environment for prairie grasslands and their related cousins, small grains. As in other semiarid prairie grassland regions of the world, the raising of small grains, forage crops and forage animals has and will continue to dominate agricultural production.*
- *The Sweetgrass Region's agricultural crop profile is dominated by wheat, barley, and forage crops. Only 2.6% of harvested land is used for crops other than wheat, barley, and forage. Of that, the majority is made up of another class of wheat, durum wheat for the production of pasta. An alternate crop that is making some inroads in the Region is dry peas.*
- *Montana is a major beef producing State and ranks seventh among all states in the number of cattle raised per year. Only 1.7% of all cattle in Montana are placed in Montana-based feedlots. Montana and the Sweetgrass Region are predominately geared toward cow/calf operations. Calves from Montana are shipped to feedlots in other states such as Colorado and Nebraska that have massive feedlots in combination with beef packing facilities.*
- *The Sweetgrass Region is a major source of farrow to finish hogs in Montana. Over 90% of the hogs raised in Montana are raised on Hutterite-owned farms. Compared to the province of Alberta, however, Montana raises the equivalent of about 10% of the Alberta annual hog production. The importance of the hogs raised in the Sweetgrass Region lies in the fact that 90% of the hogs produced are farrow to finish and those hogs are*

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ready for slaughter. Currently, most of the Sweetgrass Region's finish hogs are shipped live to Idaho and California for slaughter and processing.

- *Crops grown in the Sweetgrass Region other than winter wheat, spring wheat, barley, and forage in order of harvested acres are durum wheat, dry peas, and canola. These crops represent a small percentage of acreage harvested compared to total acreage harvested, however, the crops can be grown in the Region with a high degree of success and can be produced in much larger quantities provided ag producers can identify profitable markets for those commodities. The list of other small grains, oilseeds, and pulses that can thrive in the Region is lengthy and can be successfully grown in the Region provided markets are available for producers.*
- *Some farms have found they can support their main agricultural endeavor farming and lease out portions of their ground to support wind energy. In a recent report, "Wind Energy for a Cleaner America II" by Environment Montana Policy and Research Center, it shows there are several benefits for the environment as well. Montana's avoided carbon dioxide emissions in 2012 from Wind Energy was 743,065 metric tons which is the equivalent of removing 156,000 cars from the road in 2012.*

Table 5-2 shows the number of farms in the Sweetgrass Region by type and percentage of the total, as of 2007."

Table 5.2 Number of Farms by Type, 2007

Category	Cascade County	Glacier County	Pondera County	Teton County	Toole County	Sweetgrass Region	Montana	U.S.
All Farms	1,112	625	542	770	428	3,477	29,524	2,204,792
Oilseed & Grain Farming	113	91	218	206	197	825	4,197	338,237
Vegetable & Melon Farming	3	0	0	0	0	3	170	40,589
Fruit & Nut Tree Farming	3	0	0	0	0	3	344	98,281
Greenhouse, Nursery, Etc.	13	4	2	0	0	19	344	54,889
Other Crop Farming	349	100	136	261	131	977	7,867	519,893
Beef Cattle Ranch & Farm	339	263	134	187	58	981	9,804	656,475
Cattle Feedlots	15	3	4	3	1	26	244	31,065
Dairy Cattle & Milk Production	4	0	0	4	0	8	138	57,318
Hog & Pig Farming	9	6	3	5	2	25	118	30,546
Poultry & Egg Production	16	3	4	3	1	27	398	64,570
Sheep & Goat Farming	26	3	12	7	4	606	52	67,254
Animal Aquaculture & Other Animal Production	222	152	29	94	34	531	5,294	245,675
Percent of Total								
	Cascade County	Glacier County	Pondera County	Teton County	Toole County	Sweetgrass Region	Montana	U.S.
Oilseed & Grain Farming	10.2%	14.6%	40.2%	26.8%	46.0%	23.7%	14.2%	15.3%
Vegetable & Melon Farming	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.6%	1.8%
Fruit & Nut Tree Farming	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	1.2%	4.5%

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Category	Cascade County	Glacier County	Pondera County	Teton County	Toole County	Sweetgrass Region	Montana	U.S.
Greenhouse, Nursery, Etc.	1.2%	0.6%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	1.2%	2.5%
Other Crop Farming	31.4%	16.0%	25.1%	33.9%	30.6%	28.1%	26.6%	23.6%
Beef Cattle Ranch & Farm	30.5%	42.1%	247%	24.3%	13.6%	28.2%	33.2%	29.8%
Cattle Feedlots	1.3%	0.5%	0.7%	0.4%	0.2%	0.7%	0.8%	1.4%
Dairy Cattle & Milk Production	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	2.6%
Hog & Pig Farming	0.8%	1.0%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.7%	0.4%	1.4%
Poultry & Egg Production	1.4%	0.5%	0.7%	0.4%	0.2%	0.8%	1.3%	2.9%
Sheep & Goat Farming	2.3%	.05%	2.2%	0.9%	0.9%	1.5%	2.1%	3.1%
Animal Aquaculture & Other Animal Production	20.0%	24.3%	5.4%	12.2%	7.9%	15.3%	17.9%	11.1%

Source: Praxis Strategy Group 2010 Diversification Study

5.2 GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT

Government employment includes those persons directly employed by city, county, state or federal government agencies. The Montana Department of Labor statistics current through 2012 indicate that 5,912 persons are employed by Government entities in Cascade County. Of those, the larger employers are Malmstrom Air Force Base and School District #1.

FINDINGS

- *Malmstrom Air Force Base — According to the 2009 Commander's Data Card, Malmstrom AFB employed 3,149 active duty military personnel and 619 civilian personnel. By comparison, Malmstrom employed 6,090 military personnel and 1,068 civilians in 1972.*
- *The current intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) system located within the Malmstrom missile field is expected to remain an important function in the nation's defense; however, predicting future levels of military expenditures and employment is nearly impossible.*
- *In 2007, as part of the Quadrennial Defense Review, the US Air Force announced plans to deactivate the 564th Missile Squadron from the mission on Malmstrom. As a result, 50 missiles were deactivated and 500 airmen were reassigned to different bases and left Malmstrom. Compliance with the New START treaty will require an additional reduction of 30 to 50 Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles within the US Strategic Forces. As of this time no decision has been made on how those reductions will be spread across the remaining three ICBM Bases.*
- *The loss of both civilian and military jobs at Malmstrom since 1972 is the result of the loss of all fixed wing flying missions from the base coupled with the deactivation of the 564th Missile Squadron. The Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission process in 1996 closed the runway and it remains closed today. Recently completed engineering studies confirm the runway's condition as very good and it could be reopened should a flying mission be found for Malmstrom. The runway at MAFB is one of the community's largest untapped resources.*
- *A Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) was conducted beginning in 2009 and finalizing in 2012. It was a seven county effort to identify potential conflicts with surrounding land uses and the military operations. The Study was useful in identifying areas to bolster communications between the military, landowners and local governments.*
- *As part of the JLUS, Malmstrom Air Base and Cascade County Planning Division could see the value of a Red, Yellow, and Green mapping project to further identify areas of concern for the military.*

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This document incorporates the Red, Yellow, Green Map.

- *Non-Military Government Employment — Government employment in Cascade County has been relatively stable over the past several years. As of March 2010, the Great Falls Public School District #1 was the second largest school district in Montana and the third largest employer in Cascade County employing 1,407 persons.*
- *The majority of government employment primarily benefits the City of Great Falls.*
- *Fluctuation in military strength and spending will have direct effect on the County Planning Board's jurisdictional area.*
- *Indirect effects may be in the form of development pressures due to shortage and high cost of housing in and around the Great Falls metropolitan area.*

5.3 UTILITIES, COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION

In recent years, the energy related utilities have become a controversial topic throughout the region. The Montana Alberta Tie Line (MATL) runs through the County, gracing the NW and trending south east through our County. Surrounding counties are also experiencing some activity because of this but not at the exponential rate as the eastern part of the State. Great Falls hosts regional offices of Northwestern Energy Company employing a substantial number of people. Employment growth in these two areas is expected to be less than proportional increases in population, due to increased utilization of present facilities and automation. There are also no anticipated major changes in employment by Energy West or any other employers in this sector.

A recently proposed sale of the five hydroelectric dams on the Missouri River currently owned by PP&L Montana could have an effect on the County. The proposed sale to Northwestern Energy includes retention of the existing employees, but the planned sale must be approved by regulatory agencies and it is uncertain at this time what the impacts of the sale will include.

Great Falls hosts regional offices of Northwestern Energy Company employing a substantial number of people. Employment growth in these two areas is expected to be less than proportional increases in population, due to increased utilization of present facilities and automation. There are also no anticipated major changes in employment by Energy West or any other employers in this sector. The Montana Department of Labor 2012 statistics indicate that 183 persons are employed with Utilities in Cascade County.

5.4 TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYMENT

According to the Montana Department of Labor Research and Analysis Bureau's most recent 2012 data, the transportation industry as a whole employs 984 people in Cascade County. This includes 275 in truck transportation and 257 couriers and messengers. Historically, there have been significant decreases in employment in the transportation sector, specifically due in large part to mergers and bankruptcies in the airline industry. Since the merger of the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe railroads, Great Falls is no longer on the main line for rail traffic to either the South or Midwest and West Coast. This has resulted in the closure of two wholesaling firms. Reasons cited were increased shipping time and thus the necessity of maintaining much larger inventories. At this time, further decreases in railroad employment are not anticipated. Increased employment, on a small scale, may be possible, due to increased rail shipments of coal to the Pacific Northwest.

FINDINGS

- *Both trucking freight and airfreight have shown some increases in employment. Increased wholesale business, agribusiness and Canadian markets have benefited truckers. These two sectors show a fairly stable growth rate and moderate increases can be expected.*
- *There is no apparent reason to expect any significant changes in these sectors, although oil and gas development to the north of Cascade County may provide some increase in the future.*

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- *Present employment is stable and should increase slightly in the future.*

5.5 CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT

Of all the employment sectors, construction employment has traditionally been the most radically fluctuating variable in the local economy. The prime reason contributing to these fluctuations has been the area of military spending. The Montana Department of Labor 2012 data indicates that 2,191 persons are employed in construction related jobs in Cascade County. Additionally, large projects such as the Rainbow Dam Powerhouse Replacement, continued construction on Malmstrom AFB and the announcement of new companies locating in Great Falls and existing company expansion have created significant multiyear construction projects in recent years. ADF's facility, Pacific Steel & Recycling's new corporate headquarters and planned construction of a new recycling facility are recent examples.

FINDINGS

- *Home building and housing starts have increased. This is in response partially to the slight housing shortage in Great Falls and the surrounding metropolitan area, with expansion occurring mostly in a southwesterly direction. Remodeling of a large number of older homes in Great Falls has also been noted.*
- *Highway construction employment is also up at this time, as the re-construction on Interstate 15 in and around Great Falls. It is not known at this time how long the project will take or how many people will be employed.*

5.6 MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT

According to the Montana Department of Labor Research and Analysis Bureau's 2012 Cascade County Data Card, a total of 941 persons are employed in manufacturing jobs in Cascade County.

FINDINGS

- *Agricultural Products. The 2012 data indicates that 447 persons are employed in the manufacture of food and another 86 are employed in beverage and tobacco product manufacturing. Included in these employers are two large flour milling operations, a malting barley plant, a pasta production plant, and a feed producing operation. The sector represents a fairly stable economic base and while dependent somewhat on agriculture prices, it should provide about the same employment through 2020.*
- *Recent additions to the Cascade County Manufacturing employment picture include Avmax, Emteq and the ADF group. Combined, these firms have added over 500 manufacturing jobs since 2007.*

5.7 WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE EMPLOYMENT

The county and Great Falls are also home to service industries, and acts as a hub for many other communities and small towns in and out of this region. This includes agriculture trade areas surrounding Cascade County as well as general merchandise stores, automotive and related business, apparel and specialty shops as well as groceries. The trade area includes the other counties within the Sweetgrass Development Region as well as significant portions of Fergus, Judith Basin and Meagher Counties as well as Alberta and other Canadian provinces.

Throughout the Sweetgrass Region, most retail and service establishments primarily serve the needs of local communities. The majority of the retail establishments are comprised of general stores (including groceries) service stations, restaurants, bars, and lumber and hardware suppliers. Farm implement and auto dealers operate on a significant scale.

Increased wholesale and retail employment will result as residential subdivisions continue to develop outside of the City of Great Falls. The increasing urbanization will create a demand for local convenience and service-oriented businesses. Department of Labor statistics for 2012 indicate that 1,263 persons were employed in Wholesale Trade

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and another 5,003 were employed in Retail Trade in Cascade County.

5.8 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND CONSTRAINTS: AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

According to the latest figures available from Montana Agricultural Statistics, published in October 2005, Cascade County ranked 8th in the state in cash receipts for all agricultural products (7th for livestock and products and 9th for crops). Further breakdowns for crop productions show the County ranked 4th in the production of winter wheat, 17th in durum wheat, 9th in barley, and 6th in all wheat. A closer look at livestock production shows that farmers in the County produced 70,000 cattle and calves; 8,000 sheep and lambs; and 16,300 hogs and pigs in 2005.

The number of farm units has remained essentially the same from 1,033 in 1960 to 1037 in 2002. Although this trend is expected to continue, due at least in part to the fact that over half of the farm operators are over 45 years of age, the rate of farm consolidations should not be as rapid. As these operators retire, it is likely that neighbors will buy them out, tending to generally increase farm size.

Even though Cascade County's agricultural output is overshadowed by other counties (mostly to the north and east) and the dominance by the City of Great Falls, the importance of agriculture in the County's economy should not be understated.

Cascade County also has several large grain processing operations which mill flour and produce livestock feed. Numerous dairy products are also manufactured locally, mostly for market in Great Falls and vicinity.

FINDINGS

- *The "family farm" is Cascade County's predominate form of agricultural operation.*
- *Subdivision and development will decrease the total amount of land devoted to agriculture.*
- *Farm size, technology, and capital have increased as agricultural employment has decreased.*
- *The trend toward farm consolidations is slowing. Recent studies suggest the return after taxes of a 1,200 acre and a 1,500-acre wheat farm to be about the same per acre.*
- *There appears to be sufficient capital for present farming units to increase their size of operation.*
- *There appears to be economic justification for a meat processing plant in the County.*
- *Production of agricultural products is very sensitive to prices, markets, and consumer demand.*

5.9 CONSTRAINTS TO AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL MANUFACTURING

FINDINGS

- *The lack of an adequate slaughter facility.*
- *High cost of transporting agricultural products to out-of-state markets – limited to local markets.*
- *Competition from larger agricultural firms.*
- *Relatively high labor costs.*
- *Strict federal inspection and safety requirements.*
- *The late maturing date of crops often puts the local farmer at a disadvantage when marketing these goods.*
- *The distance from major population and market centers and the resulting high transportation and fuel costs.*
- *Inflation.*
- *The farmer and rancher often cannot pass on cost increases to the processor, wholesale, retailer, or consumer.*
- *Inflation encourages the investor to look at land as a hedge against the loss in value of money, being interested in land not for agriculture but as a commodity that retains and increases its value. Continued inflation will result in competition between the investor and the farmer for the available land supply.*

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5.10 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND CONSTRAINTS: MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing includes those activities involved in the fabrication and production of metal, fiberglass products, grain food products, vegetable oils, oil refining, concrete or other stone products or dairy products. The majority of the County's manufacturing is centered in and around Great Falls. General economic health of these operations is good at this time, but is to some degree dependent on the support of the local military payroll. Most are agri-business oriented and depend on the state of the agricultural segment of the economy.

FINDINGS

- *The distance to large market centers, compounded by high transportation costs.*
- *Great Falls is not located on any major east-west trade routes.*
- *Since no mining or actual smelting (only refining) takes place in Cascade County, all raw materials must be shipped both in and out.*
- *The population of Cascade County, generally speaking, is a small market.*
- *Low density population and distances between towns and markets.*
- *Severe winter weather can occasionally impair some types of manufacturing.*
- *Great Falls College-MSU is working in conjunction with a new manufacturing company to train students for their company. Additionally, the Montana University Systems, led by Great Falls College-MSU, is the recipient of a 25 million dollar grant to the two-year colleges that will establish curriculum to train work force for manufacturing and other related jobs.*
- *Increased activity in the Bakken Oil Field of Montana and the Tar Sands of Alberta has created the opportunity for the fabrication and assembly of oil production equipment in our area. Multiple firms are building facilities in the Golden Triangle to meet this demand. The largest of these is the ADF Group which is currently erecting its 100,000 square foot facility just north of Great Falls on US 87.*

Policies

1. Commercial and manufacturing uses should be encouraged, if such uses do not adversely affect agriculture and are located around and in existing rural communities.
2. Every effort should be made to protect and maintain farming units, because the family farm is important in the economy of Cascade County.
3. Efforts should be made to work or to deal with, by whatever means feasible, the economic constraints discussed in this section.
4. Efforts should be made to discourage commercial strip development along major thoroughfares.
5. Efforts should be made to stabilize and develop employment and economic activity.
6. Environmental as well as economic perspectives should be considered in any future development.
7. Efforts should be made to attract non-transportation sensitive industry to Cascade County.
8. Utilization of locally produced agricultural products and raw materials should be encouraged.
9. Increase the efficiency of transportation serving Cascade County.
10. Aggressively develop, protect, and enhance the agricultural economy of Cascade County.
11. Encourage future development to locate on non-productive or marginally productive agricultural land.
12. Minimize, to the greatest degree possible, the adverse social and environmental impacts of development and encourage beneficial effects of orderly growth.
13. Seek to attract industry from other areas to locate in Cascade County and encourage efficient economic development within Cascade County.
14. Encourage economic activities to locate in those areas most economically, socially and environmentally appropriate, as determined by the County Planning Board and other public agencies.
15. Given the importance of MAFB to the economic vitality of the region, the potential reduction in Minuteman forces and the potential value of future flying missions at MAFB, it is vital for Cascade County to actively pursue the reopening of the MAFB runway. These efforts should include, but are not limited to, protecting the runway's Accident Potential Zones, as described in the 1994 Malmstrom AFB Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Study, from encroachment by any

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non-compatible land uses. Additionally, the County Planning efforts should continue to maintain and implement the strategies addressed in the 2012 Joint Land Use Study.

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Please see the next page.

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6.1 CASCADE COUNTY: SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

Cascade County operates 40 cubic yard roll-off containers located near Vaughn, Cascade, Hardy Creek, Stockett and Armington as well as one, midway between Monarch and Neihart.

The Cascade County Solid Waste Disposal District contracts with Montana Waste Systems to provide disposal services to all residents within the County living outside the incorporated towns of Cascade, Belt, Neihart, and Great Falls, which are not included in the Solid Waste District. All residents within the District boundaries may utilize any of the Cascade County Solid Waste Disposal sites.

The Public Works Department administers the Cascade County Junk Vehicle Disposal Program. The Cascade County Junk Vehicle Graveyard site, located 1½ miles south of 10th Avenue South and ½ mile west of 13th Street South, was opened in May 1974. Residents of Cascade County may bring junked vehicles to the graveyard site at no cost, upon request, and the junk vehicles will be picked up by a contractor of the Public Works Department at no charge. A signed release form or title must be obtained by the Junk Vehicle Enforcement Technician on each vehicle before it can be picked up. County personnel are involved in enforcement of Montana Junk Vehicle Disposal Law with regards to licensing and shielding of wrecking facilities and removal or shielding of Junk vehicles on private property. Past procedure was to accumulate vehicles at the Cascade County Junk Vehicle Graveyard. The State would determine when to seek bids to crush all the vehicles with proceeds going back to the State. The new policy eliminates the County Graveyard and requirement for accumulating vehicles. The junk vehicles will be taken directly to a State contractor for processing. The proceeds will go directly back to the State's Junk Vehicle Program.

FINDINGS

- *The Cascade County Solid Waste Disposal District includes the entire County excluding the four incorporated towns: Belt, Cascade, Great Falls, and Neihart.*
- *County operated container sites are open seasonable hours.*
- *The Great Falls landfill is open seven days a week.*
- *The Cascade County Solid Waste Disposal District provides no garbage collection services. However, there is one private garbage collection firm licensed by the Public Service Commission (PSC) who provides collection services to residents who contract with them.*
- *The container sites are maintained by Montana Waste Systems personnel.*
- *Cascade County has established a policy that allows for residents to exchange unused Solid Waste Coupons for credit on their bill at Montana Waste Systems.*

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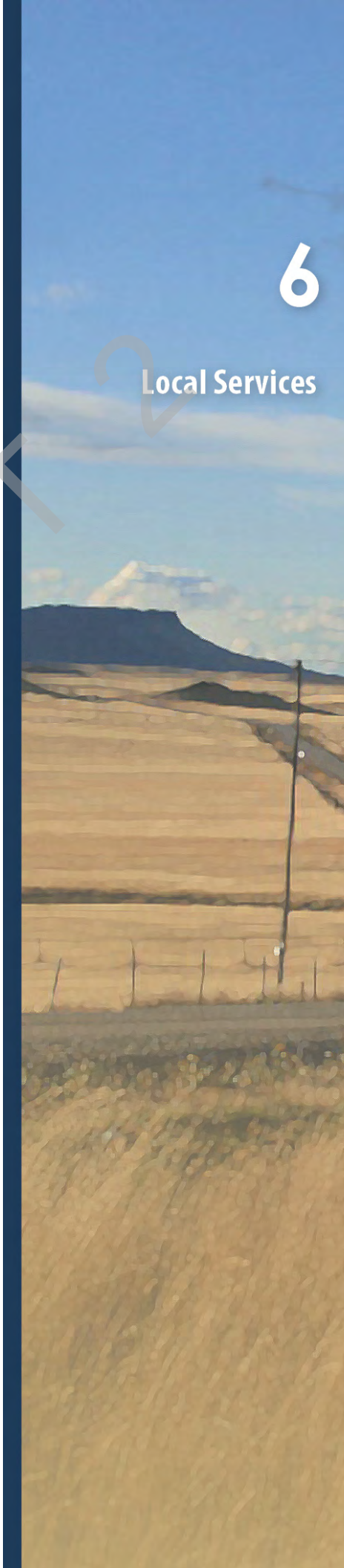

6.2 WATER SUPPLY

As the demand for water increases, the source of the pollution also increases. Therefore, in order to grow and prosper, a community must develop an adequate supply of potable water for domestic, commercial and fire protection uses. The following is a list of incorporated and unincorporated areas within Cascade County with larger water systems. There exist numerous other public water systems in Cascade County that are not identified in this Growth Policy.

FINDINGS

- *Belt – The present water supply for the Belt Public Water Supply System (PWS) is from two deep wells, measuring at depths of 440 feet (with a static water level of 194 feet and is grouted to 251 feet) and 379 feet (with a static water level of 196 feet and is grouted to 240 feet deep).*
- *Cascade – The Cascade PWS receives its water supply from six springs and two wells. The springs are located northwest of town on the hillside. The Madison Well 1 was drilled to a depth of 2,148 feet and has a static water level of 255 feet, while the Madison Well 2 was drilled to a depth of 2,299 feet, with a static water level of 240 feet. Both wells produce 380 gallons per minutes (GPM).*
- *Fort Shaw – Fort Shaw is part of the Two Buttes Water Users Association. The source of water if a spring that is believed to be controlled by the presence of a buried, gravelly channel deposited by the ancestral Sun River. Water is obtained through a well. The Well 1 Inflation Gallery is made up of a single 180-foot long infiltration line that is buried in the discharge area of the spring.*
- *Monarch – Wells in the Monarch area are drilled into Mississippian-Devonian Age bedrock and produce 1 to 50 GPM from depths of 10 to 250 feet. One appropriation for three wells each 8 feet deep has been filed claiming 4,200 GPM in "sand and gravel".*
- *Neihart – All rural communities except Neihart obtain their water from groundwater sources. Neihart's water supply is from a reservoir on O'Brien Creek. This source of water will accommodate all anticipated growth in the town of Neihart, although favorable springs do exist in the vicinity.*
- *Sand Coulee – Wells drilled 200 to 300 feet deep into the Kootenai Formation yield 10 to 50 GPM. The current water supply for this district is not adequate and available options in the area are limited due to impacts from historical coal mining activities. A study was conducted in 2011 to analyze possible alternatives and it produced some viable options. A new supply well was drilled into the Madison Aquifer in 2012 that provided a flow rate of approximately 150 GPM.*
- *Simms – Yields from sand and gravel aquifers 30 feet deep are 10 to 120 GPM per well. The aquifers are thin, making them limited as producers. There is one appropriation claiming 250 GPM from a 27-foot well.*
- *Stockett – The Stockett Water Supply Company is currently using a well 830 feet deep in the Madison Limestone formation, producing at a reported rate of 50 GPM.*
- *Sun Prairie Village – Has water and sewer systems of its own. Water comes from three wells, each sunk 100 feet plus into an aquifer, which is adequate to supply the community with its consumable water needs.*
- *Sun River – Sun River is part of the Two Buttes Water Users Association. Since Sun River is also in the floodplain, well characteristics are the same as in Fort Shaw.*
- *Tracy – Wells here have been drilled into alluvium deposited by Sand Coulee Creek as Kootenai Formation. Yields range from 12 to 15 GPM at depths of 47 to 187 feet.*
- *Ulm – Yields reported in this area are from 5 to 20 GPM at depths of 10 to 200 feet. One appropriation is for 500 GPM from a well 182 feet deep.*
- *Vaughn – Water for the Vaughn Cascade County Water and Sewer PWS is supplied by two wells located near the Sun River south of Highway 200. Well 1 was drilled to a depth of 140 feet and has a static water level of 7.2 feet. It pumps at 179 GPM. Well 2 was drilled to a depth of 134.5 feet and has a static water level of eight feet. It pumps at 350 GPM.*

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Encourage Water Districts to develop long range Capital Improvement Plans that will address the trend toward outdated infrastructure within their systems.
- Continue to monitor the changing environmental regulations to see how they will impact future subdivision development.
- Encourage and promote the development of multiple family or public water systems rather than individual wells or cisterns.

6.3 SEWER SERVICES

With the exception of Belt, Black Eagle, Cascade, Sun Prairie, Simms, Stockett and Vaughn, all rural Cascade County communities discharge wastewater effluent into lagoon systems or discharge effluent into the ground via septic systems. The result is that with increasing water consumption, mostly by dishwashers, garbage disposals and automatic washers the amount of effluent being discharged is increasing. In recent years, the amount of effluent being discharged into the ground has increased as a result of modern plumbing and increasing numbers of subdivisions and individual developments. Nearly all rural housing now has plumbing facilities, so the amount of pollutants added to the surface and ground water will also increase, compounding an already serious problem.

FINDINGS

- *Thus far, the basic sanitary sewer treatment method for communities has been in the form of lagoons. There is no reason to believe that properly maintained lagoon systems will not suffice in the future. Lagoons meet the minimum requirements of the State Board of Health and have the advantage of lower initial and maintenance costs than mechanical treatment plants.*
- *The sewer systems for Cascade and Belt are operating satisfactorily at the present time and may be exceeding initial design expectations. In fact, for Cascade, only one cell of a two cell lagoon has been placed in operation, indicating that considerable reserve capacity is available. If in the future either of these communities exceeds the total projected flow by 20% or more, consideration should be given to expanding the present treatment facilities by constructing an additional lagoon or by increasing the capacity of existing facilities by the addition of aeration equipment.*

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Aging on site wastewater systems need to be replaced as needed to meet current regulations.
- Encourage the development of multi-family or public wastewater treatment facilities rather than individual septic tanks or lagoons.
- Encourage wastewater systems to develop long-range Capital Improvement Plans in order to address the trend in outdated infrastructure within their systems.
- Continue to monitor changing environmental regulations to see how they will impact future subdivision development.

6.4 LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Cascade County Sheriff's Office protects the County outside of Great Falls and is the coroner for the entire County. Cascade County employs thirty-three deputy sheriffs. These deputies carry out all normal law enforcement duties as well as coordinate search and rescue operations.

FINDINGS

- *Each deputy is assigned an area in Cascade County.*
- *The incorporated towns of Cascade and Belt have chosen to contract with the Sheriff's Office to conduct law enforcement operations within their communities.*
- *Other than the Cities of Belt, Cascade, and Great Falls, the remaining communities in the County are provided two deputies on regional assignments to non-emergent response for questions, meetings and other contacts.*

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6.5 FIRE PROTECTION

Rural Cascade County has a volunteer fire protection system that is trained and equipped for fire protection. The County has been broken into sixteen fire districts, as shown on Figure 6-1, with the fire stations located in the larger communities. Fire related services are often extended across fire district boundaries of the County.

The following Fire Districts operate within Cascade County:

- Belt City – Town of Belt
- Belt Rural – Eastern part of the county from Chouteau and Judith Basin Co. lines to Highwood Rd and Evans Riceville
- Black Eagle – Great Falls city limits to Chouteau Co line to Vineyard Rd
- Cascade – Town of Cascade
- Cascade Farmer/Rancher – South central part of the county from Hardy to MM 263 on I-15
- Dearborn – Southern part of the county from Hardy to Lewis & Clark Co line
- Fort Shaw – Central part of the Sun River Valley
- Gore Hill – Great Falls city limits to Airport area and Missouri River
- Monarch – South eastern part of the county from Evans/Riceville Rd to Meagher Co line and to Lick Creek Rd
- Sand Coulee – South Central part of the county from Giffen Rd to Great Falls City limits to the Missouri River and to Eden Rd
- Simms – Western part of the Sun River Valley
- Stockett – South Central part of the county from Lick Creek Rd to Giffen Rd and Spring Creek Rd to the county line
- Sun River – Central part of the Sun River Valley
- Ulm – Area from the Missouri River to Milligan Rd to MM 263 on I-15
- Vaughn – From Teton Co line to Great Falls city limits

FINDINGS

- *The mobility or movement of people greatly affects the manpower available to the various volunteer fire departments.*
- *Additional information on rural fire departments can be obtained from the Cascade County office of Disaster and Emergency Services (DES).*

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. The Rural Fire Districts should continue to review and make recommendations to the Planning Board on new subdivisions.
2. Continue to make subdividers aware of information concerning fire protection prior to preliminary plat approval.

6.6 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Cascade County operates and maintains eight elementary school districts. The elementary school districts are:

- No. 29 – Belt
  - No. 29A – Belt Elementary and Great Falls High School
  - No. 29AA – Belt Elementary and Centerville High School
- No. 3 – Cascade District
- No. 5 – Centerville
  - No. 5A – Centerville Elementary and Great Falls High School

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- No. 95 – Deep Creek
- No. 1 – Great Falls
- No. 55 – Sun River Valley
- No. 85 – Ulm
- No. 74 – Vaughn

Five elementary schools are located on Hutterite Colonies within Cascade County:

- No. (5) – Big Stone Colony
- No. (55) – Cascade Colony
- No. (85) – Fairhaven Colony
- No. (74) – Hilltop Colony
- No. (29) – Pleasant Valley Colony

There are five high school districts:

- A – Great Falls – made up of school districts (1-5A-29A)
- B – Cascade – made up of school districts (3-85-95)
- C – Centerville – made up of school districts (5 and 29AA)
- D – Belt – made up of school district (29)
- F – Sun River Valley (Simms) – made up of school districts (55 and 74)

There are seven private schools in Cascade County.

- Holy Spirit Catholic School K-8
- Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School K-8
- Fairfield Mennonite School 1-8
- Five Falls Christian School K-8
- Treasure State Academy K-12
- Foothills Community Christian School K-12
- Great Falls Central Catholic High School 9-12
- Also located in Great Falls is the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind, which is a state-funded school for pre-K through high school students requiring specialized education due to their disabilities.
- There are 188 elementary students and 272 high school students who are home schooled in Cascade County.

Figure 6-2 illustrates the School District boundaries.

FINDINGS: ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The 2012-13 Enrollment for Cascade County is as follows:

- *Belt – 183 students*
- *Big Stone Colony – 25 students*
- *Cascade – 187 students*
- *Cascade Colony – 27 students*
- *Centerville – 171 students*
- *Fairhaven Colony – 20 students*
- *Great Falls Public Schools – 7,109 students*
- *Pleasant Valley Colony – 28 students*
- *Sun River Valley – 145 students.*
- *Ulm – 140 students*
- *Vaughn – 111 students*

FINDINGS: HIGH SCHOOLS

- *Belt High School – 94 Students*
- *Centerville High School – 78 Students*
- *Cascade High School – 102 students*
- *Great Falls – Combined enrollment between C.M. Russell and Great Falls High Schools – 3,000 students*
- *Sun River Valley High School – 100 students*

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FINDINGS: OTHER SCHOOLS

- *Holy Spirit Catholic – 175 students*
- *Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic – 175 students*
- *Fairfield Mennonite School – 38 students*
- *Five Falls Christian School – 25 students*
- *Treasure State Academy – 18 elementary and 10 high school students*
- *Foothills Christian School – 100 elementary and 49 high school students*
- *Central Catholic High School – 113 students*

Local Services Policies

1. Develop an overall facilities program and plan.
2. Develop a program to encourage more efficient use of the County's water resources and facilities by:
   a) Review alternative development where water is not available in sufficient quantities to support development.
   b) Encourage efficient use of the water resources.
   c) Insure water used for agriculture is given top priority.
3. Establish a monitoring system to keep abreast of the changing trends in land use in Cascade County and investigate the possible impacts on the environmental, social and economic aspects.
4. Develop and upgrade sewer facilities as needed in Cascade County.
5. Promote adequate fire protection for rural Cascade County.
6. Using the subdivision review process, discourage development in areas where it is not economical for the county to provide services such as road maintenance, school bus service, fire, police protection, or snowplowing. Persons purchasing land in these areas should be informed, in writing, to the fact that some services may not be provided by the county.
7. Facilitate the appropriate development and maintenance of roads, public utilities, and community facilities.

6.7 RECREATION AND TOURIST TRADE

With more leisure time brought about by shorter workweeks, longer paid vacations, holidays, and increasing disposable incomes, the average person is spending more money on recreational activities. In Cascade County indoor spectator activities rank first in the use of recreational time, but is followed closely by outdoor recreation including hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, bicycling, hiking, walking boating, and skiing as well as home related activities such as gardening. The months of May and July were cited as those which outdoor recreation activities were engaged in most frequently, while the greatest amounts of leisure time available was May and February.

Outdoor recreation activities normally reach a peak in late spring or early summer. During the months of December, January and February, all other leisure-time activities out-ranked outdoor pursuits. Nonresidents were the predominant users of outdoor recreation facilities, mostly related to travel to and from Glacier Park. The length of stay varies but day use is practically negligible.

When the various recreational activities in which residents engage were compared with those indicated as most preferred, a fair correlation was found. Driving for pleasure was found to be the most popular leisure past time in both participation and preference. Other activities that rank close to this activity include sightseeing, fishing, hunting, and camping. Fishing is the most popular water-related activity all year, although its popularity does drop slightly in the spring and fall.

Natural areas are considered the most preferable type of recreation area by local residents, followed closely by developed campgrounds and picnic facilities. The proximity of Glacier Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness area reflects this preference.

As stated earlier, nonresidents were the most apt to make use of local recreation facilities. Most are not visiting Cascade County but are merely passing through to some other attraction (such as Glacier Park). The vast majority of the area's tourist economy is repeat business, being families or groups from other parts of Montana or Canada

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returning once or twice a year. The major attractions to this group are shopping, night life and the annual state fair.

FINDINGS

- *Outside of the National Forests, there are few camping or picnicking areas.*
- *Fishing access is mostly in the southwestern portion of the County along the Missouri River but there are smaller creeks and streams that also provide fishing access and enjoyment, such as, Pilgrim Creek and Belt Creek*
- *There is a lack of recreation facilities in or near the smaller communities.*

Policy

Encourage recreation and tourism, especially in the areas that are compatible with agricultural use.

6.8 CIRCULATION – TRANSPORTATION

The criterion used to classify highways and roads is by the level of use they perform. The highest level of highway use is the primary highway. These are characteristically the ones used for the longest trip lengths and have the heaviest travel densities, serving most large urban areas. This system is an interconnected network of continuous routes without any dead-ends. The integral components of this classification are the interstate highway system and state highways. In Cascade County these are Interstate 15, US Highway 87/89 and Montana 200 which carry traffic north, south, east and west throughout Cascade County.

Secondary highways, the next level of the highway/road use classification, link cities and towns not connected by primary highways and are spaced so that all developed areas are within a reasonable distance of a primary highway. This includes routes such as the Ulm-Vaughn Frontage Road in Cascade County.

The next category in the highway/road-use classification is the light-duty roads. These are hard or improved surface roads that provide use primarily for local residents. The speeds and travel lengths are less than those of the higher use roads or highways. The light-duty roads serve as the most important travel generators in the County, such as trips to and from retail and wholesale trade centers, and schools. The light-duty roads are spaced at intervals consistent with population density and provide relatively short service travel distances and large land access. These include the streets in the unincorporated communities of Sun Prairie, Vaughn and Ulm.

The last categories of use are the unimproved roads and trails. These are mainly used or owned by individuals for their special needs, such as farmers to have access to their fields or ranchers to have access to their grazing land. In this County, trails may also be in the National Forest Land for the maintenance and management of the forests. In Cascade County this includes roads such as the Logging Creek Road near Monarch/Neihart.

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) provides freight service to Cascade County. BNSF's rails extend northwest from Laurel to Shelby. BNSF also maintains tracks from Great Falls to Choteau. East-west service follows U.S. Highway 2 along the Hi-line. Since the 1972 merger of the Great Northern, Northern Pacific and Chicago, Burlington and Quincy lines, Great Falls is no longer on the mainline between the south, the Midwest and the west coast. This, in turn, has resulted in an increase of two to four days in shipping time from the West Coast and one to three days from the transportation is by far the most important type of transportation, as the vast majority of bulk and agricultural products are moved in this manner.

A large percentage of the large, bulk incoming manufactured products and lumber are moved by rail as well.

Midwest. Railroad Findings

Air Transportation

Great Falls International Airport, the transportation hub for north central Montana, located in Great Falls, is a commercial service airport serving Great Falls and the surrounding community.

The Airport Complex encompasses approximately 2,045 acres of land. Presently the complex includes the airfield, terminal, general aviation, commercial and noncommercial activities, airport and airline

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maintenance and support facilities and a fire station. Also included on the airport is the Montana Air National Guard which in late 2012 began a transition from fighters to larger C-130 cargo aircraft. That conversion is anticipated to be completed by 2015.

Great Falls is served by Delta, United, Alaska, and Allegiant Airlines. Great Falls International Airport has daily to airport hubs in Seattle, Minneapolis, Salt Lake, and Denver. Direct flights are available several times per week to Las Vegas and Phoenix. FedEx occupies a 78,000 square foot facility at the airport. This is the regional FedEx facility serving the entire state.

The airport incorporates three sets of runways: Runways 3-21, 16-34, and 7-25. Runways 3-21 and 16-34 are designated as air carrier runways, with runway 7-25 being used only for general aviation. Runway 03 has Category III precision instrument landing system (Cat III ILS) approach, making it possible for aircraft to land during inclement weather. Runways 03-21 and 16-34 also have precision instrument markings, and 7-25 has basic runway markings. All runway surfaces are asphalt, and runway 3-21 can accommodate nearly any aircraft in the world. The airport has five aircraft gate positions with passenger loading bridges, and two additional commuter gates that utilize stairwells.

There are two fixed base operators who provide fuel and aircraft maintenance and repair. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection provides clearance for international flights and cargo. AvMax, a certified maintenance repair operation capable of servicing large passenger aircraft, is also located at Great Falls International Airport.

Bus Transportation

One carrier provides national and regional parcel and passenger service.

Rail Transportation

There is at present no passenger rail service to Cascade County. All other services, including reciprocal switching, are available in the Great Falls area. A shuttle bus service operated by Golden Triangle Transit connects passengers from several Great Falls locations to Kalispell, Browning, Cut Bank or Shelby where connections can be made to Amtrak.

Truck Transportation

Approximately thirty interstate carriers serve Great Falls providing a wide spectrum of service to and from everywhere in the United States and Canada. Second-day arrival is available to Denver, Salt Lake, and Seattle.

Automobile Transportation

Approximately 104,000 passenger automobiles and trucks are registered in the county. These travel on approximately 1,700 miles of County maintained roads, which are the secondary highways and light-duty roads, and approximately 375 miles of State maintained highways, which are primary highways including Interstate 15 and its frontage roads.

Policy

Cascade County should develop a feasibility plan for energy and energy shortages, as it relates to the following:

1. A study of the existing road systems and transportation routes.
2. Consideration concerning the efficient use and conservation of existing energy resources.
3. Encouraging the development of alternative energy resources, if not socially or environmentally detrimental.

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7.1 LANDSCAPE UNITS

Cascade County has been broken into nine landscape units, each representing a particular combination of soils, geology, topography, hydrology, and biology. The landscape units, therefore, provide a simplified framework for development and conservation policies that apply basically to the same landscape unit throughout the county. These designations and the policy recommendations attached to each unit have been useful in establishing performance standards and other land use controls. As stated earlier, the landscape unit concept reflects a set of characteristics that constitute a natural process. Therefore, the environmental policies are established to reflect the overall natural process of a landscape unit and the specific resource limitations as well.

The landscape units, which were developed for Cascade County, are:

RIVERS, STREAMS, LAKES AND RESERVOIRS

Lakes, streams, reservoirs, and rivers include water bodies either flowing or standing for all or most of the year. Included in this landscape unit are those lands immediately adjacent to water bodies which directly influence the physical, biological, and chemical properties of the water.

ALLUVIAL LOWLANDS (AL)

Include nearly level plains occupying valley floors, which resulted from the depositions of alluvial material by rivers and streams. The major conspicuous feature of this landscape unit is the floodplain.

LOWLAND TERRACES (LT)

Include nearly level to gently undulating or sloping valley floors, generally forming a transition from alluvial lowlands to the somewhat higher benches.

BENCHES (B)

Include nearly level to gently undulating or sloping topographical surfaces that comprised former valley floors.

DISSECTED BENCHES (BD)

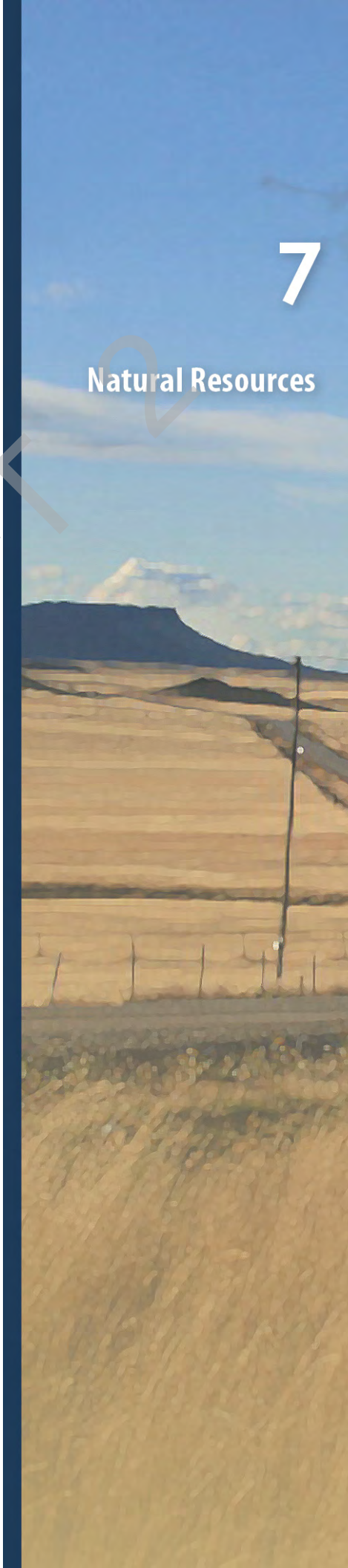
Moderately undulating to rolling benches characterized by relatively shallow, complex dissecting drainage ways.

ROUGH BREAKS (RB)

Rough, broken land dominated by numerous steep drainage channels and coulees up to 300 feet deep, and in the case of the Smith River Canyon, up to 1000 feet deep. This unit is also made up of steep, broken bluffs and escarpments separating benches from lower terraces and valley floors.

UPLANDS (UP)

Include rolling to steep terrain, generally from 4000 to 6000 feet in elevation, sloping upward to the base of the mountains in the southwestern and southeastern portions of the county and often deeply dissected by drainage ways.



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MOUNTAINS (MT)

Include generally forested, mountainous terrain in the southern portions of the county.

BUTTES (BU)

This unit is characterized by gradually steepening sides culminating in nearly vertical cliffs marking the edge of a relatively flat, rocky cap comprised of the remains of an intrusive, igneous sill. These buttes can be up to 1000 feet from base to top, and the largest has a surface area of over three square miles.

For each landscape unit, the following information is provided:

- Definition of the landscape unit.
- Extent and description of that landscape unit in the county.
- The slope, geology, soils, vegetation, and land use characteristics.
- An example area.
- Development policies for that particular landscape unit.
- Actions to implement the development policies.

Figure 7-1 shows the Landscape Units and the Units in Cross Sections. This map is as accurate as possible at this scale and there should be no question to which landscape unit a particular parcel belongs. In cases where there is some question, an on-site inspection may be required to make a determination. Given the description provided in this section, the reader should have little difficulty placing a site in the appropriate landscape unit designation.

7.2 RIVERS, STREAMS, LAKES, AND RESERVOIRS

Lakes, reservoirs, and rivers include water bodies either flowing or standing for all or most of the year. Included in this landscape unit are those lands immediately adjacent to water bodies that directly influence the physical, biological and chemical properties of the water.

EXTENT AND DESCRIPTION

This landscape unit represents the major drainages and their tributaries. The dominant drainage is the Missouri, which traverses the County from the southwest to the northeast. Included are the Missouri River's tributaries; the Sun, Smith and Dearborn Rivers and their respective tributaries; Sand Coulee and Belt Creek and their tributaries. Many lakes and reservoirs are spread throughout the county.

VEGETATION

The natural vegetation is associated with that of the alluvial lowlands landscape unit: Native cottonwood, willow, chokecherry, serviceberry, native grasses and shrubs, such as slough grass, wild barley, sage, rushes and sedges.

WILDLIFE

Cascade County's waters support abundant wildlife and fish, providing water as well for many species. Portions of the Missouri River and the Smith River are considered "high value", or "critical" for use by whitetail and mule deer, otter, pheasant, osprey, antelope, and sharp tail grouse as well as small non-game animals such as raccoons and skunks. Waterfowl includes ducks and gulls. Blackbirds, magpies, and other birds also make extensive use of this landscape unit.

GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

The major hazard inherent to this landscape unit is flooding. Extensive flooding has occurred on the lower Sun River and along Belt and Sand Coulee Creeks.

GEOLOGY

Belt Creek and Smith River flow through areas primarily composed (geologically) of alluvium of Quaternary age (3 million years before present) and is composed chiefly of sand, silt, and clay, with gravel lenses common. The alluvial material has been eroded from the local landscape. The gravel lenses are composed of moderately well sorted, sub rounded material. Within the lowlands are many

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cutoff stream meanders, which can be seen very graphically from the Proctor Hill Road, Section 23 in Township 19 North, Range 2 East, Montana Prime Meridian.

The Sun River flows on brown Cretaceous Age sandstone laid down 70 to 80 million years ago. The strata is virtually horizontal, the position it was deposited, not being involved in the uplift of the Rocky Mountains.

Sand Coulee Creek flows on the Jurassic Age Ellis Formation, having eroded its way through the over-laying strata. The Ellis Formation is characteristically sandstone and conglomerate with a limestone base.

The Missouri River flows primarily on Quaternary Period (three million years old and younger) alluvium, dune sands and glacial lake deposits that have gradually filled the valley bottom. In the southwestern portions of the county, the Missouri River cut through the mountains forming the deep canyons characteristic of the area.

Example Area Location: The "Big Bend" area approximately six miles south of Great Falls.

Policy

Since the rivers, lakes, streams and reservoirs are the highest priority landscape unit in terms of agriculture, aesthetics, wildlife habitat and recreation, development of water systems for domestic and agricultural uses should be subject to review by the Cascade Conservation District and should be in compliance with Montana's Stream Bank Preservation Act (SB310)

7.3 ALLUVIAL LOWLANDS

The alluvial lowlands are the plains and bottomlands occupying valley floors, which are the result of disposition of material by water. The floodplain is the major distinguishing feature of this landscape unit.

EXTENT AND DESCRIPTION

The alluvial lowlands represent the land bordering the major drainages and their tributaries. The areas included are the lowland areas of the Missouri, Dearborn, Sun and Smith Rivers and Belt and Sand Coulee Creeks.

VEGETATION

A large percentage of vegetation in the alluvial lowlands is cultivated, resulting in the elimination of most of the natural vegetation. Some cottonwood, willow, chokecherry, slough grass, rush, sedge and sage can be found.

WILDLIFE

Excellent habitats for big game are found in the lowlands. Both whitetail and mule deer make year-round use of these areas, while antelope sometimes winter there. Game birds include pheasant, sharp tail grouse, Hungarian partridge, and a few ducks. Otter and raccoon also make use of the lowlands.

GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

Geologic hazards in the alluvial lowlands include flooding, high ground water and stream bank erosion. Flooding has occurred along all of the major drainages sometimes resulting in much property damage. Seasonal high groundwater can present some problems with respect to septic systems. Stream-bank erosion is where streams and rivers frequently meander.

GEOLOGY

The geology varies slightly throughout the county, but the majority of this landscape unit is composed of sands, silt, and clay eroded from the local landscape or deposited by glacial lakes. Most areas display relatively flat landscapes with many cut-off stream meanders marking previous riverbeds. Gravel lenses, composed mostly of sub rounded, moderately well sorted material, are also found in the lowlands. Most sediment is believed to be of the early Quaternary Period (three million years old) and follow the riverbeds and the adjacent floodplains. Dune sands, the result of wind erosion, have formed on much of the lowlands and many are presently active.

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SOILS

Soils vary from one area to the next but are mostly included in the following associations:

THE ABSHER-NOBE ASSOCIATION

Found chiefly in the Ulm vicinity, these soils are characterized by deep, very slowly permeable, saline-alkaline clays. The Absher soils usually occur on slightly elevated areas between barren spots of Nobe soils. The deep, well drained, alkaline soils have a loam-my surface soil two to four inches thick over dense, very slowly permeable clay soils. The slow permeability of the Absher soils limits their suitability for septic tank filter fields.

THE STRAW-GLENDIVE-RIVER ASSOCIATION

These soils are mainly deep, well drained, dark colored loams and sandy loams. There are some shallow, very gravelly soils in narrow bands on the floodplains adjacent to streams. Ponding and flooding hazards limit the use of this association's soils for building sites.

THE YETULL-LICHEN-KORCHEA ASSOCIATION

This association is found on the nearly level to undulating terraces and floodplains and is commonly found along the Missouri River between Ulm and Great Falls. These soils are mainly deep, well-drained loamy sands.

THE FERGUS-TWIN CREEK ASSOCIATION

This association is found on the nearly level floodplains and gently sloping fan terraces along Sand Coulee Creek and on Johnson Flats. Narrow bands of wet and saline soils occur along Sand Coulee Creek.

THE HARLEM-HAVRE ASSOCIATION

This association is characterized by nearly level, light colored, deep, well drained, and moderately well drained on the floodplains and low terraces. This association is most commonly found along the Sun River.

Example Area Location: Johnson Flats, southeast of Great Falls.

Policies

1. Low-density activities, such as agriculture, shall be preferred uses of the alluvial lowlands landscape unit.
2. Subdivision of land for purposes other than agriculture will be discouraged, and will not be allowed in known or designated floodplains.
3. Soils that are prone to high groundwater are recommended for agricultural uses only.

7.4 LOWLAND TERRACES

This landscape unit represents those areas that form a transition from the alluvial lowlands to the somewhat higher benches and dissected benches. These terraces are nearly level to gently undulating or sloping to the valley floors. In most cases they represent previous valley bottoms or floodplains.

EXTENT AND DESCRIPTION

In terms of land area, this landscape unit occupies only a limited portion of the county, along the Missouri and Sun Rivers. Elevations vary between 3,400 and 3,800 feet.

VEGETATION

A large majority of this landscape unit is cultivated and the natural vegetation removed. The predominate natural vegetation is short grass types; blue gamma, thread leaf sedge, western wheatgrass and blue bunch wheatgrass.

WILDLIFE

The wildlife that occupies this landscape unit are: whitetail and mule deer, antelope, pheasant, grouse, and partridge. A variety of small non-game animals can also be found.

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GEOLOGICAL HAZARDS

The major geologic hazards are mainly water and wind erosion. A relatively high average wind velocity has caused "blow-outs" and some sand dune formation. Some soils have high clay content which can cause some problems with construction and septic tank drain fields.

GEOLOGY

Since the majority of the lowland terraces have formed from the subsequent down cutting by rivers and were at one time original or earlier valley floors, the geology of this unit will not be discussed here.

SOILS

Soils associations found in the alluvial lowlands are very similar to those of this landscape unit.

Example Area Location: Ulm Flats, southwest of Ulm.

Policies

1. Since the existing land use of the lowland terraces landscape unit is predominately agricultural, special consideration should be given for this use.
2. Topography and slope should be considered heavily in the placement of roads and structures.
3. Any subdivision of land should be in a form suited to the natural lay of the land.

7.5 BENCHES AND DISSECTED BENCHES

The benches are made up of relatively flat or gently sloping topographic surfaces and are generally considered to be former valley floors. Subsequent erosion by streams and rivers has caused these areas to stand higher than the present valley floors. Some benches in Cascade County have been dissected by erosion resulting in somewhat shallow, relatively complex drainage patterns. For the Cascade County Growth Policy both landscape units are combined.

EXTENT AND DESCRIPTION

This landscape covers most of the northern half of the county and comprises the majority of the important wheat producing areas of the county. Benches flank a major portion of the lower Smith River drainage. The benches divide the Missouri and lower Sun River watersheds and include most of the area to the north of Great Falls and east to the foothills of the Highwood Mountains. To the south of Great Falls the benches are dissected by many drainages forming many coulees and extending to the foothills of the Little Belt Mountains.

VEGETATION

Cultivation accounts for much of the vegetation in this landscape unit. Dry-land farming, hay lands and grazing are the primary uses and alteration of the natural vegetation is the result. Native vegetation includes mostly grasses such as western wheatgrass, blue gamma grass and blue bunch wheatgrass.

WILDLIFE

Big game that can be found on the benches are antelope, mule deer and occasionally whitetail deer. Game birds include pheasant, partridge and grouse, all making extensive use of these areas for feeding and nesting grounds. A variety of small animals can also be found.

GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

The major geologic hazards inherent to these landscape units include water and wind erosion.

GEOLOGY

The geology varies throughout the county. Beginning to the north and northwest of Great Falls, the benches are composed of a thick Sequence of sedimentary rocks known as the Colorado Shale. This formation is composed of dark-gray shales and siltstones with many sand units. These sediments were deposited when this area was covered by a large shallow sea and are still nearly horizontal, having not been involved in the main uplift of the Rocky Mountains. This area was also influenced by

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continental glaciations, the source of many of the soils found here.

The benches to the west, southwest, south and east of the City of Great Falls are composed of two major formations. The first, the Blackleaf Formation, is often referred to as the Colorado Shales and displays the same basic characteristics as was discussed previously. The other, the Kootenai Formation, is composed of alternating sandstone. The sandstone of this formation store and transmit fairly large quantities of groundwater. The Kootenai overlays the Morrison Formation which outcrops along most of the major drainages where the Kootenai has eroded away. In the upper Morrison there are extensive bituminous coal beds.

Other deposits, which can be found associated with this landscape unit, include dune sands and terrace deposits. The sands are believed to be from nearby formations or glacial lake deposits which have been eroded by wind. Terrace gravel is composed of well rounded, poorly sorted pebbles and cobbles which are believed to have been deposited during the Quaternary Ice Ages about three million years old. These presently are important sources of gravel.

SOILS

There are many soils associations that make up this landscape unit. Almost all the soils can be placed in two general categories:

- Loamy sands or sand loams 30 to 50 inches deep.
- Nearly level, light colored, calcareous, silty soils on glacial plains or over shale.
- Example Area Location: Swede Bench, northwest of Eden in south-central Cascade County.

Policies

1. Since the existing land use of the benches and dissected benches landscape unit is predominately agriculture, special consideration should be given to protect this use.
2. Any development or change in the use of the land should be in a form suited to the natural lay of the land.
3. Since a wide variability of limitations exists, extensive on-site evaluations should be made before any proposed action is taken.

7.6 ROUGH BREAKS

This landscape unit is made up of numerous steep sided drainage channels and is used to describe areas that are locally known as coulees.

EXTENT AND DESCRIPTION

This landscape unit is found frequently throughout the county, and is generally associated with the many small drainages and tributaries. This unit occurs most frequently in the central portion of the county in the Smith River, Eden, Sand Coulee Creek areas.

VEGETATION

The predominate vegetation is mostly short grass types such as blue gamma, thread leaf sedge, and other wheat grasses. Often, various types of dense brush are common.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife, which inhabits these areas, are mule and whitetail deer, antelope, pheasant, partridge and grouse. Numerous small non-game animals also make extensive use of the coulees.

GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

Geologic Hazards include soil creep, slumping and landslides. The generally steep slopes are a serious limitation for building sites as well as being a major potential erosion area whenever the vegetation is removed.

GEOLOGY

The geology of this landscape unit corresponds closely to the benches landscape unit. In many cases, erosion has formed the coulees, cut from the higher bench lands.

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SOILS

The major soil association is the Rough Broken Land Association which is characterized by steep and very steep, shallow to deep soils on landscapes dissected by deep drainages.

SLOPE

The slope is variable but generally is steep.

Example Area Location: Ming Coulee near Eden.

Policies

1. Since limitations vary from one area to the next in the rough breaks landscape unit, extensive on-site inspection and evaluation should be made prior to any proposed action.
2. The rough breaks landscape unit represents land which is marginal when considered for agricultural uses and carefully planned subdivision of these areas should not be ruled out.

7.7 UPLANDS

This landscape unit represents the areas that are the transition between the benches and the mountains, and are sometimes referred to as "foothills".

EXTENT AND DESCRIPTION

The Uplands extend in a band across the southern portion of Cascade County. The slope is generally steeper than those characteristics of the benches, but not as steep as slopes associated with the mountains. Steep rounded hills, sloping upward toward the mountains, set the dominate feature of this landscape unit.

VEGETATION

Vegetation is similar to that found on the benches, but a higher percentage remains as native grasses. Trees are common and the dominant grasses include western wheatgrass, bluegrass, and blue bunch wheatgrass as well as numerous shrubs and forbs.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife, like the vegetation is also very similar to wildlife found on the benches. Big game consists primarily of mule and whitetail deer, and antelope. These areas are sometimes used as winter range for elk. Game birds include grouse, Hungarian partridge and pheasant.

GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

Geologic Hazards include faults and landslides. Erosion is evident in some areas and could potentially be hazardous.

Earthquake faults can be found in some areas in the southern part of Cascade County. The Carter Ranch Fault, southeast of Cascade is one of the largest.

Landslides are common on the steeper slopes, as well as slumping and soil creep, at times of high rainfall.

GEOLOGY

Deposits in this landscape unit are similar to the bench landscape unit, but are more inconsistent in sizes and exposures. The Kootenai Formation is the oldest formation in the unit being of the Lower Cretaceous Period (100 million years old). It is composed of highly colored siltstone, sandstone, and limestone.

The Blackleaf formation including the Flood, Taft Hill and Bootlegger members is also found in this unit. Exposures are scattered and inconsistent but are of varying shades of sandstone, siltstone and shale, which were probably deposited when the area was at the shores of an inland sea. The Marias River Formation, another black sandstone-shale formation is also evident in this landscape unit. Alluvium colluviums composed of sand, silt, clay and basalt (lava) fragments are another important feature of this landscape unit. Exposures often are found at the edge of the foothills unit, near the uplands landscape unit. Thickness of these deposits is often as much as 50 feet. Faults and folding have played an important part in the geology of this area. Three minor faults and one major fault can be found in this area. The Carter Ranch Fault is a reverse fault in the Disturbed Belt caused by north-south compression stresses of two tectonic plates.

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The Carter Ranch Fold is another result of the stresses along with several other forces, which have gradually caused deformation of the strata beds.

SOILS

The Hanson-Sheege-Woosley association is the most important in this district. These soils are primarily black, stony loam and loam soils more than 20 inches deep to limestone bedrock. Hanson soils have a black loam or very stony loam surface layer and nearly white, strongly calcareous, very stony loam subsoils. The slope and coarse fragments connected with these soils provide some limits to its suitability for certain purposes.

Sheege soils are similar to Hanson soils, but the depth to bedrock is less than 20 inches. Steepness and depth to bedrock are severely limited for most uses.

Woosley soils are made of black, silt loam surface layers and dark loam, silty clay loam subsoils that are calcareous below depths of 20 to 24 inches. Depth to bedrock and slope limit some uses. These soils are used for non-irrigated small grain and hay on the sloping and rolling topography. Grazing and woodland form the uses on other areas.

Absorkee-Loberg-Blythe-Rough broken land association is of minor importance and is discussed in greater detail in the sedimentary terrace landscape unit. The Hilger-Castner-Perma Rock outcrop association is also of minor importance and is discussed in the igneous upland landscape unit.

SLOPE

Includes a variable, up to 25% or more.

Example Area Location: Harris Mountain.

Policies

1. Grazing and other agricultural activities should be utilized to the fullest, in the uplands landscape unit.
2. If any development takes place, extensive on-site evaluations should be made. Criteria weighed should be:
   - Soils limitation
   - Ground and surface water
   - Geologic hazards
   - Slope
   - Adverse effect on wildlife habitat
   - Visual impact
   - Effects on recreational uses and access
3. Land use controls should be based on the aforementioned criteria and agricultural use should be given top priority.

7.8 MOUNTAINS

This landscape unit is composed of three different geologic types of materials: sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic bedrock.

Sedimentary mountains are those areas over 5,000 feet in elevation and underlain by rock strata formed from loose sediments such as sand, mud or gravel deposited on the earth's surface. Sandstone, shale and limestone are some of the common results of this rock forming process.

Igneous mountains are those areas underlain by materials of volcanic origin and over 5,000 feet in elevation.

Metamorphic mountains include those areas geologically altered by volcanic or other activity. Metamorphic or metamorphism implies a pronounced change effected by heat and pressure resulting in a more compact, highly crystalline condition. The lower parameter for this landscape unit is also the 5,000-foot contour interval.

EXTENT AND DESCRIPTION

Sedimentary mountains occupy nearly all of the area with the exception of several igneous intrusive and metamorphic uplands. High erosion rates have caused the area to become very rugged limiting land use in the area to grazing and lumbering. Nearly the entire area is owned by the Federal Government and is included in Lewis and Clark National Forest.

The igneous mountains landscape unit represents four major areas in Cascade County. Three of these areas, Thunder Mountain, Barber Mountain and Long Mountain-Neihart Baldy Mountain are found in the southeastern part of the county. The fourth area is

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found south of Cascade in the southwestern portion of the county. The igneous mountains are generally very steep and rugged and have poor soils. Many fragmented rocks are common in the area. High resistance to erosion and weathering has left them at higher elevations than surrounding areas.

The metamorphic mountains are found principally in the Monarch-Neihart area. The formations consist mainly of gneiss and schist and are immediately adjacent to the igneous intrusive body forming Long Mountain and Neihart Baldy Mountain. The area is very rough and broken with deep erosion canyons throughout. Soils are generally shallow and vegetation consists of forests and underbrush. Steep topography is associated with the area although no major peaks or mountains are evident.

VEGETATION

Vegetation in the area is dominant by forest, much of which is a commercial value. Three types of coniferous trees are of merchantable quality. They include Yellow Pine, Lodgepole Pine, and Douglas Fir which are 160 years old or more. Forests in various stages of reproduction also exist. Lodgepole Pine and Douglas Fir of pole size or smaller are listed as being under reproduction due to former lumbering activities or forest fires. Areas under reproduction can be found scattered throughout this unit.

Non-marketable protection forests also exist in the area. They are composed of sub-alpine varieties of coniferous trees and are very sparse. Engelmann spruce is the predominate tree in this type of forest.

Other vegetation, which can be found, includes non-coniferous trees such as quaking aspen and willows. They are often found in protected gulches near springs. Brush is also important vegetation in the region. Many of the lower mountain slopes are covered with ferns, shrubs, juniper, rabbit brush and some dwarf yellow pine.

Shrubs and upland sedges occupy open mountain parks, which are scattered through the area. Grasses that also occupy the mountain parks include Mountain Timothy and Redtop Grasses. These grasses are the dominant vegetation, which is used for summer graze lands. Nutrition is not as high as those grasses at lower elevations and sheep seem to find it more palatable than cattle.

Many burned areas also exist in the planning area. Re-growth of vegetation in these areas has started with many grasses and shrubs. Burned areas are scattered through the area with large fires having occurred in the northeastern corner of the planning area.

WILDLIFE

Big game animals found in this landscape unit include: elk, mule and whitetail deer, Rocky Mountain goat and Rocky Mountain sheep. Bear, of the brown bear variety is the only other major big game animal in the area.

Small game such as coyotes, raccoons, skunks, rabbits, marmots and woodchucks inhabit the area along with many others.

Grouse is the most important game bird species but is accompanied by eagles, hawks, owls, and numerous other smaller birds.

GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

The only geologic hazards are those inherent to any mountainous, steeply, sloping terrain. Rock slides and talus slopes are common with some areas showing some instability in the form in soil creep and slumping.

GEOLOGY

The Little Belt Mountains are the eroded remains of a broad domal uplift caused by laccolithic intrusions of the Tertiary Period (30 million years ago). Around the northern borders of these mountains the sedimentary beds are steeply inclined toward the north and west. Angle of incline (dip) decreases with increasing distance from the uplifted area.

The Monarch-Neihart Planning Area is located at the northern edge of the Little Belt Mountains and is composed of a series of the more isolated intrusive domes which are the northern extremes of the main domal uplift. These isolated domes have formed the irregular more prominent mountain peaks and ridges of the area composed of igneous rock.

The sedimentary beds, which form the sedimentary uplands in the region, were probably developed by numerous inland seas, which deposited several series of sandstone, shales, and limestone. Included in these sedimentary series are rocks of the

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Mississippian Period (275 million years ago), Devonian Period (325 million years ago), and Cambrian Period (550 million years ago). Another series of sedimentary rocks of the Precambrian Era (600 million years ago to 3000 million years ago) follows.

Age of the sedimentary beds gets older with increasing distance east until the igneous intrusive bodies, which formed Long Mountain, are encountered. East of this mountain the ages reverse with rock formations becoming younger to the southeast. This reversal may be caused by the erosion of the uplifted dome formed by the igneous intrusion. Younger beds were eroded from the dome exposing the older beds that had been elevated. This has left a series of nearly concentric rings about the intrusive bodies of varying ages.

Metamorphic formations were probably formed after intense heat and pressure from the igneous intrusive, changing their composition from sedimentary sandstone, shales, and limestone to metamorphic association which would be the Whitmore-Sheege-Rock outcrop association which is a very steep, deep, stony soil. The black soils would be strongly calcareous and generally less than 20 inches to limestone bedrock. Numerous outcrops of limestone are also present. Major limitations of this association would be its steepness and dryness.

The central parts including Hoover Creek and the central part of Belt Creek is an area of steep smooth slopes. Soils hold good moisture content but are of poor quality. Much Lodgepole Pine is found in this area. Depth to metamorphic bedrock would be quite shallow.

The southern parts including the area occupying the bench-like divide between the Smith River and Belt Creek drainages are the most productive soils in the area. The terrain in the area is quite smooth and soils consist of clay pans, which are slowly permeable. The area is considered the most manageable ground and used extensively for prime grazing land and lumbering. Numerous clear cuts can be found in these areas.

SLOPE

Slopes vary greatly in this area and may range up to 90%.

Example Area Location: Long Mountain and Neihart Baldy Mountain.

Policies

1. The primary land use in the mountains landscape unit should be left as domestic grazing, however, summer homes should be allowed with the following stipulations:
   a) Approved by the County Planning Board, Board of County Commissioners, and the City-County Health Department.
   b) When warranted, because of terrain conditions, investigations for slope suitability conducted by a professional engineer or geologist should precede any subdivision of land. Farm and ranch construction should be exempt from any review.
   c) Deeds and covenants should state the county has no obligations to provide services, such as school bus service, snow plowing or road maintenance until deem economically feasible by the Board of County Commissioners, except in areas where these services presently exist.
2. Timber harvest should be allowed, however, proper ecological measures should be taken.
3. All development including the subdivision of land, with the exception of agricultural uses, should be proceeded with an environmental impact statement as outlined in Cascade County's subdivision regulations.
4. Private lands used primarily for recreation purposes should be controlled by the local landowner(s).

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7.9 BUTTES

Buttes are conspicuous hills with steep or precipitous sides that are most visible north and west of Cascade. Differential erosion has caused the more resistant capped buttes to stand above the surrounding landscape.

EXTENT AND DESCRIPTION

Buttes are one of the more unusual landscape features of the area. They are found extensively northwest of the Missouri River in the foothills and benches landscape units. Elevation is usually 300 feet to 1,000 feet higher than the surrounding land. Notable buttes are Cascade Butte, Lionhead Butte, Haystack Butte, Square Butte, Birdtail Butte, Johnson Butte, Belt Butte and Comer's Butte.

VEGETATION

Vegetation is scarce due to the absence of soils in the landscape unit. Native grasses, cactus and sage inhabit the tops of these landforms.

WILDLIFE

Little wildlife is known to exist on the buttes. Eagles can be found on some of the inaccessible buttes but little habitation is known otherwise.

GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

Hazardous conditions in the buttes landscape units are mainly landslides caused by breakdown of the formation from natural processes. Square Butte in the Sun River Valley Planning District has a large landslide on its south face. This particular slide is believed to have been caused by moisture in an extremely wet year, which provided lubrication.

GEOLOGY

Within Cascade County a number of unusual formations called buttes exist. Geologically the buttes, especially those in western Cascade County, are igneous or intrusive igneous bodies. Molten magma (or lava) from the Three Sisters area was transported through dikes and deposited in layers over a sandstone base. Resistance to erosion has left these igneous bodies standing as hogbacks and buttes, and accounts for their prominence above the adjoining landscape.

SOILS

Mucet-Sangrey-Rock outcrop soils are generally less than 20 inches deep to igneous bedrock. Mucet soils are dark colored, well drained, and free of lime. They have gravelly loam surface layers and gravelly loam subsoils underlain by igneous bedrock. Depth to bedrock and steepness limit the suitability of this soil for most uses.

The Rock outcrops are barren igneous rock in irregular shapes. The Mucet-Sangrey-Rock outcrop association is used mainly for grazing and woodland. Non-irrigated hay and grain crops are grown on Sangrey and other deep soils found on terraces and fans.

SLOPE

Relatively gently sloping tops with steeply sloping sides up to 90% near the crest.

Example Area Location: Cascade Butte in Township 18 North, Range 1 West; Birdtail Butte in Section 2, Township 18 North, Range 3 West; Haystack Butte in Section 1, Township 18 North, Range 3 West.

Policies

1. Primary land use should be left as grazing in the buttes landscape unit.
2. The buttes should remain undeveloped to protect the natural beauty of this landscape unit.

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Please see the next page.

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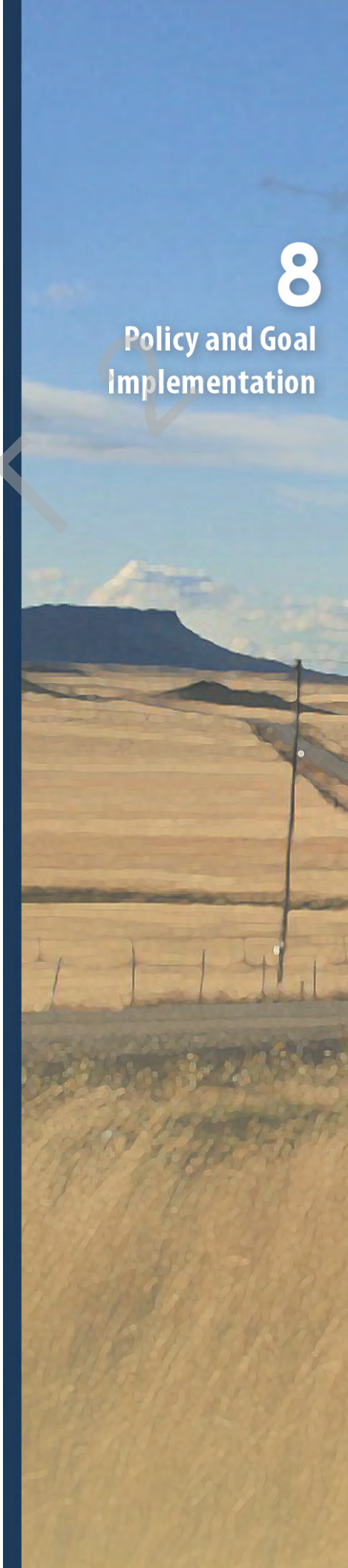

8.1 METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

The background facts, analysis and policies of the cultural and natural environments presented in the previous sections provide a basis for the establishment of land use patterns and regulations. These development patterns and regulations together have the effect of implementing the policies and goals of those sections, while creating and implementing a general plan of development in Cascade County. This method of implementation is simple and straight-forward. It takes into account the concerns expressed by the rural citizens of Cascade County by controlling the impacts of the more intense developments that may occur and protecting certain resources.

The following development patterns are designated, established or allowed as part of Cascade County's Growth Policy and Regulations:

- Resource Protection Areas
- Conditional Development Areas

The development pattern of these areas and the rest of Cascade County require that developments meet certain standards and requirements. This is accomplished by defining and classifying the existing development types, then outlining the applicable standards, conditions and procedural review requirements for each type of development. The types of development that are defined and classified are as follows:

- Subdivision Development
- Commercial Development
- Industrial Development
- Floodplain Development
- Conditional Development Area

For each type of development the requirements and review procedures are outlined. This approach tailor-makes the regulations for a particular development type and serves to reduce the red tape and processing time for a developer. This is a land management plan for development. Development can occur if sound planning principles are involved.

8.2 RESOURCE PROTECTION AREAS DESIGNATION AND ESTABLISHMENT

The following resource protection areas are hereby established as part of the Cascade County Growth Policy:

- Prime Agricultural Soils
- Forest Cover

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The locations and boundaries of these resource protection areas are set forth on their respective maps, and said maps are hereby made a part of the Development Plan. Reproductions at a smaller scale than the original appear on Figures 8-1, Cascade County Farmland Classification Map and 8-2, Forest Cover. The originals shall be kept on file in the Cascade County Planning Division Office. These maps are generalized representations of these protection areas. Developers, county planners and expert professionals would engage in on-site determinations of the exact boundaries of these resource protection areas. The Soil Conservation Service will resolve any disputes as to soil classification delineation. The Forest Service will resolve any disputes as to forest cover delineation.

8.3 PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS AREAS

The prime agriculture soils resource preservation areas are intended to contain those soil areas where it is necessary and desirable, (because of their high quality, availability of water, and/or highly productive agricultural and grazing capability), to preserve, promote, maintain and enhance the use of such areas for agricultural purposes and to protect such land from encroachment by non-agricultural uses, structures or activities.

Therefore, the prime agricultural soil preservation areas of Cascade County are those areas where the soils have been classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), according to the NRCS definition of prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance.

8.4 FOREST COVER AREAS

The forest cover resource preservation areas are intended to contain those coniferous and deciduous tree areas where it is necessary and desirable, (because this vegetation prevents wind and water erosion, slope instability, and rapid run-off; absorbs air pollutants, contaminates and noise; permits high rainfall infiltration to the water table; provides for a diversified environment for many kinds of animals and plants necessary for wildlife maintenance; and, inherently contains a high wildfire hazard), to preserve, promote, maintain and enhance the use of such areas for forest cover environmental purposes and to protect such land from encroachment by non-forest cover uses, structures or activities.

Therefore, the forest cover preservation areas of Cascade County are those areas where the coniferous and deciduous trees display a canopy or crown cover of fifteen percent (15%) or more.

The maps on the following pages show the Agricultural Land Use, the Prime Agricultural Soil Protection Area and the Forest Cover Protection Areas.

8.5 CONDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATION AND ESTABLISHMENT

The following conditional development areas are hereby established as part of the Cascade County Growth Policy:

- Flood Hazard Evaluation Areas
- Butte Areas
- Military Runway Accident Potential Zones
- Military Height Zones
- Military Affected Areas
- Forest Management Areas

The locations and boundaries of these Conditional Development Areas are set forth on a map, and said map is hereby made a part of the Development Plan. A small-scale reproduction of the original appears in Figure 8-3. Zoomed in extents of the Military Runway Accident Potential Zones Conditional Development Area and the Military Height Zones Conditional Development Area are shown on Figure 8-4A and 8-4B, respectively. The original shall be kept on file in the Cascade County Planning Division Office. This map is a representation of these areas. Developers, county planners and expert professionals would engage in on-site determinations of the exact boundaries of conditional development areas.

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FLOOD HAZARD EVALUATION AREAS

The Flood Hazard Evaluation Conditional Development Areas are intended to contain those potential floodplains where it is necessary and desirable (because of the safety hazards from floods; the financial burdens imposed upon the county through rescue and relief efforts, caused by the occupancy or use of such areas subject to periodic flooding; the potential loss of life, property damage and losses or risks associated with flood conditions; and, the potential loss of the location, character and extent of natural drainage courses), to review and determine any non-agricultural or non-open space uses, structures, or activities.

Therefore, the Flood Hazard Evaluation Restrictive Development Areas of Cascade County are those areas adjoining a watercourse or drain way, which would be covered by the floodwater of a flood of one hundred (100) year frequency, as delineated on the Floodway Boundary Maps issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Cascade County Floodplain Administrator is responsible for the regulation of said floodplain.

BUTTE AREAS

The Butte Conditional Development Areas are intended to contain those buttes where it is necessary and desirable, (because of their unique inherent geological and historical esthetic character; the extreme costs that would arise both to developers and the county in providing road access, water, sewer and other necessary services; the risks and costs involved with the inherent steep slopes; and, the erosion problems of development in shallow soils), to review and determine any non-agricultural or non-open space uses, structures or activities.

Therefore, the Butte Conditional Development Areas of Cascade County are those butte-areas that are characterized by gradually steepening sides culminating in nearby vertical cliffs marking the edge of a relatively flat, rocky cap.

MILITARY RUNWAY ACCIDENT POTENTIAL ZONES

The Military Runway Accident Potential Zones are safety zones designated at both ends of runways which support or may support military fixed wing operations. Given the economic impact of the military operations currently residing in the Great Falls area, the potential economic impact of additional flying missions as well as the noise issues and the public hazard created should non-compatible development occur within an APZ which becomes active, future development in these areas is to be governed by the Cascade County Zoning Regulations that include Section 16 “Height Military Overlay District” that identifies potential conflicts and promote cooperation between Cascade County, property owners and Malmstrom Air Force Base. It is the regulating document for heights.

MILITARY HEIGHT ZONES

The Military Height Zones are locations where the heights of structures should be monitored so that they do not interfere with height requirements for the safe operation of aircraft around the runway at Malmstrom Air Force Base. Development of structures that exceed the recommended height in certain aircraft operating areas around the runway could have impacts to the safety of aircraft and pilots, which could also cause hazards for people and buildings on the ground. To avoid incompatible development in these zones, the Cascade County Zoning Regulations Section 16 “Height Military Overlay District” will be used to establish height regulations in the Military Height Zones.

MILITARY AFFECTED AREAS

Throughout the Malmstrom AFB Missile Complex are areas identified as Military Affected Areas which encompass the 1,200 foot safety arcs currently surrounding each of the Launch Facilities (LF) and Missile Alert Facilities in the entire missile complex. Development within these safety arcs is prohibited and the arcs are protected by easement. Additionally there are communication and transportation corridors that have highly sensitive and national security implications that must be protected in order to ensure that the nuclear deterrent mission of Malmstrom AFB is not compromised by incompatible development.

FOREST MANAGEMENT AREAS

The Forest Management Areas are federal lands contained within the jurisdictional area of the U.S. Forest Service. While these federal lands are not subject to local planning guidelines, it is recognized that Forest Service Management Plans can have a

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significant impact on adjacent non-federal land. The Cascade County Planning Board will review all draft management proposals submitted by the Forest Service and determine their compatibility with the goals and policies of this plan. The Forest Management Areas of the National Forest in Cascade County, which have been delineated using State and Federal forest maps, must comply with the U.S. Forest Service management guidelines.

8.6 SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Subdivision development must receive Subdivision Approval from the Board of County Commissioners after a subdivision review process. The review process is outlined in the County's Subdivision Regulations.

Subdivisions must meet the standards and conditions outlined in those regulations and the following standards of the Cascade County Growth Policy:

RESOURCE PROTECTION AREAS STANDARD

If a parcel larger than forty (40) acres is proposed to be subdivided and that parcel is determined to have twenty-five percent (25%) or more area coverage of either of the Resource Protection Areas (Prime Agricultural Soils or Forest Cover Areas), then subdivision approval shall only be granted by the Board of Cascade County Commissioners when it makes findings that the subdivision will not significantly reduce the defined Resource Protection Area's functions, or if all of the following criterion are complied with:

- The applicant can realize a reasonable return on the fair market value of his land only by devoting the resource protection areas to uses that will significantly reduce their defined area functions.
- The applicant has no other land reasonably suited for the subdivision.
- The subdivision has been designed to minimize the reduction of the Resource Protection Area's functions.
- The subdivision must not significantly interfere with or jeopardize the continuation of agriculture or forestry on adjoining lands or significantly reduce their functions.

CONDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS STANDARD

If the parcel that is proposed to be subdivided is determined to have any portion in the Flood Hazard Evaluation or Butte Conditional Development Areas, that portion shall not be subdivided for any non-agricultural or non-open space uses, structures or activities.

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The Cascade County Growth Policy is required by state statute to include an implementation strategy that includes the following:

- A timetable for implementing the growth policy.
- Since Cascade County has an adopted growth policy, the growth policy will be revised by including the elements required by the growth policy statute as information becomes available.
- A list of conditions that will lead to a revision of the growth policy. The following conditions will lead to a revision of the growth policy:
  - Mandates dictated by changes in state laws;
  - A major disruption in the circumstances that led to the adoption of the Growth Policy occurs.
- A timetable for reviewing the growth policy at least once every 5 years and revising the policy, if necessary.

The Cascade County Growth Policy will be reviewed by the Cascade County Planning Board at their annual meeting each year. At that meeting the Planning Director will present any recommendations for revisions to the growth policy.

9.1 IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

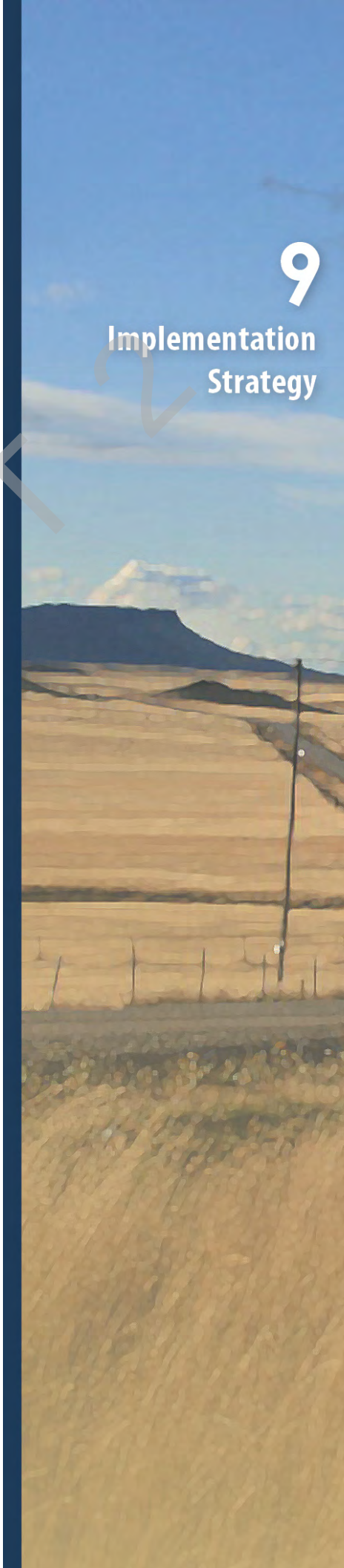
The Cascade County Growth Policy sets the goals and objectives of the community. This section provides a list of financial, statutory and program resources, which are available to local governments and community organizations, as they strive to undertake activities in support of realizing their vision for the future.

9.2 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FINANCING

LOCAL MECHANISMS FOR DEBT FINANCING

Political subdivisions can make use of various kinds of debt financing to meet their infrastructure needs. These include general obligation bonds, special improvement district bonds and revenue bonds. Debt financing enables local governments to finance major infrastructure projects using future revenue from special assessments, user fees, and other forms of revenue. Cities and counties incur various administrative costs in conjunction with issuing bonds. These costs include the retention of legal counsel and financial consultants, the establishment of reserve funds and the preparation of the prospectus and various required documents. These bonds provide tax-free interest earnings to purchasers and are therefore subject to detailed scrutiny under both state and federal law. The citations in the Montana Code Annotated (MCA) are listed below, for each type of bond described.

General Obligation Bonds 7-7-2201, MCA allows local governments to issue general obligation bonds (GO Bonds). GO bonds are backed by the full faith and credit of the local government and must be approved by the voters in an election. They are typically payable from ad valorem taxes (taxes based on the value of property), and are expressed in mills.



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Special District Financing

Cities and counties may use the creation of special districts to pay for a variety of costs.

Special Improvement Districts

Section 7-12-2102, MCA authorizes the creation of special improvement districts (SID's). The city or town council has the power to create SID's designating them by number. The property owners in the proposed district can also initiate the creation of a SID. Although not required, property owners within the proposed district will often submit a petition to the City or Town Council requesting that the district be created.

Before any formal action is taken, cost estimates are prepared and include a range of costs, which might be anticipated in association with undertaking the proposed construction or maintenance. Once the project has been defined and cost estimates prepared, the Council passes a, "Resolution of Intent" to create the district. The resolution informs the property owners of the size of the district, the nature of the improvements, the project engineer, cost estimates method of assessment and duration. The affected property owners are given due notice of the intent to create the district and opportunity to protest.

If less than 50% of those property owners protest, the municipality may proceed with the creation of the SID. Cities may use SID's to finance a number of improvements including:

- To protect the safety of the public from open ditches carrying water;
- To purchase or build municipal swimming pools and other recreational facilities;
- To grade, pave and undertake other street improvements;
- To acquire, construct, or reconstruct sidewalks, crosswalks, culverts, bridges, gutters, curbs, steps, parking and planting;
- To acquire, construct, or reconstruct sewers, ditches, drains, conduits and channels, for sanitary and/or drainage purposes, with outlets, cesspools, manholes, catch basins, flush tanks, septic tanks, connecting sewers, ditches, drains, conduits, channels and other appurtenances;
- To acquire, construct, or reconstruct waterworks, water mains and extensions of water mains, pipes hydrants, hose connections for irrigating purposes; and for a variety of other infrastructure improvements.

The county governing body may order and create special improvement districts covering projects abutting the city limits and include properties outside the city where the special improvement district abuts and benefits that property. Property owners within the proposed district boundaries outside the city may not be included in the SID if 40% of those property owners protest the creation of the SID.

OTHER LOCAL MECHANISMS

Sewer and Water Depreciation Schedules

Governments are authorized to incorporate replacement and depreciation into water and sewer user fees under Section 7-13-2301, MCA.

Resort Tax – In order to rectify the inequities experienced by Montana resort communities, which must provide services not only for seasonal tourists but also for residents, the 1985 Montana Legislature passed the local option resort tax. (Section 7-6-1501 through Section 7-6-1550, MCA). Communities wishing to take advantage of the Resort Tax must meet the following criteria:

- The population of the incorporated community is less than 5,500;
- The area derives the primary portion of its economic well-being related to current employment from businesses catering to the recreational and personal needs of persons traveling to or through the area for purposes not related to their income production, and demonstrated by an economic analysis of the proposed area using specific methodology that analyzes income, property income, government transfer payments and employment data.

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- The area had been designated by the Montana Department of Commerce as a resort area (The Department of Commerce does not conduct the required economic analysis. The candidate area is responsible for securing the professional analysis.)

The local electorate imposes, amends, or repeals the resort tax. The rate may not exceed 3% and taxes collected may be used for any local government activity, undertaking or administrative service, including the costs resulting from the imposition of the tax. Bonds may be issued; the debt to be serviced by resort tax receipts.

Contact:
Montana Department of Commerce
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-4214

STATE AND FEDERAL MECHANISMS

Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP)

This is a state-funded program, administered by the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC). It is designed to assist communities in financing capital improvements to public facilities including drinking water systems, wastewater treatment facilities, sanitary or storm sewer systems, solid waste disposal and separation systems and bridges and is authorized under Section 90-6-701 through 710, MCA. Funds are derived from the Montana coal severance tax and made available to local governments as matching grants, loans and grant/loan combinations. TSEP can also make deferred loans to local governments for preliminary engineering study costs. However, the local government must repay the loan whether or not they succeed in obtaining financing for the construction phase of the project. Funds may not be used for annual operation and maintenance; the purchase of non-permanent furnishings; for refinancing existing debt, except when required in conjunction with the financing of a new TSEP project; or costs incurred prior to the grant award.

Generally, grant awards cannot exceed $500,000 and the municipality must provide at least a 50% match, which can include other grant funds. One of the most critical issues that a municipality must address is the ability to commit other funding sources to the project. TSEP grant funds are intended to keep projects reasonably affordable. As stated above, there are a number of ways in which local governments can provide matching funds for projects. In addition to local sources, municipalities should evaluate other potential outside grant and loan sources. A thorough analysis of the feasibility of using these various funding mechanisms is a critical component in developing a proposal to TSEP and to other grant programs as well. Applications are evaluated based upon the applicant's ability to borrow funds or otherwise finance the project without the use of TSEP funds.

Eligible applicants include incorporated cities and towns, counties, consolidated governments and municipality or multi-county water, sewer, or solid waste districts.

Municipalities may form partnerships with other eligible applicants to provide the most appropriate and cost effective solution. Such partnerships would be particularly useful for bridge projects, which often involve a number of jurisdictions.

Project proposals are submitted to the MDOC every two years. Applications are due in May in the year proceeding the legislative year. MDOC staff reviews the proposals in a two-step process. The first step ranks project applications based on program criteria. In the second stage of review, applications are evaluated based upon the applicant's ability to borrow funds or otherwise finance the project without the use of TSEP funds. This evaluation is based on the premise that applicants should receive grant funds only to the extent that they cannot afford to finance their projects without TSEP funds.

It is clear that the municipality should evaluate the feasibility of using all other available funding sources as a preliminary step to seeking TSEP funding. The Governor reviews the information prepared by the MDOC staff and submits recommendations to the Legislature, which makes the final decision on funding awards.

Contact:
TSEP Staff
Helena, MT
(406) 444-3757

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Or write to the:

Treasure State Endowment Program
Montana Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 200501
1424 Ninth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-0501

Montana State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF)

The SRF provides loans for water pollution control systems, wastewater systems and non-point source control projects. Eligible applicants include counties, municipalities, other legally authorized public bodies, water/sewer districts and authorized tribal organizations. Planning funds are also available.

Funds are made available in the form of loans for 100% of project costs. There is no local matching requirement. Loans must be repaid over a period of 20 years or less. Applications may be submitted at any time in a continuous cycle.

Contact:
The Montana Department of
Environmental Quality
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-5322

Renewable Resources Grant and Loan Program

This program provides loans and grants for water and wastewater projects including feasibility, construction, and rehabilitation; and for other renewable resource related projects. Eligible applicants include local governments, water and sewer districts, irrigation districts, conservation districts, school districts, state agencies and private entities.

Up to $100,000 is available for grants and up to $200,000 for grant/loan combinations. Loans are limited by the ability of the borrower to repay. No local match is required, but local-matching funds can improve a project's ranking. Applications are due on May 15 on even numbered years.

Contact:
Montana Department of Natural Resources
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-6668

Water and Waste Water Disposal Loans and Grants (U.S. Rural Economic and Community Development Agency)

This program provides grants and loans for the construction, repair and expansion of water and wastewater systems.

Projects may receive up to 75% of total project costs in grants and no maximum for loans. Applications may be submitted any time in a continuous cycle.

Contact:
Rural Economic and Community Development
(RECD)
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 585-2520

The Montana Intercap Program

The Montana Intercap programs are administered by the Montana Board of Investments and provide loans to local governments for a variety of public projects. Up to $500,000 can be made available for each project. The program provides loans at a variable rate plus a one percent loan origination fee on loans over one year and for a term of five or ten years depending on the borrower's legal authority. Short-term loans of less than a year are also available. Interest and principal payments are due biannually (February 15 and August 15 of each year). Loans may be pre-paid without penalty with a 30 day notice. Types of financing include installment purchase loans, general fund loans, general obligation bonds, and revenue bonds. Gas tax revenues may not be used to service debt. Projects that will use special improvement district payments to cover the annual debt are limited to a total loan of $300,000. Intercap funds may be used in association with other grant and loan programs as well as local sources.

Intercap loans can also be used to cover preliminary engineering costs. Preliminary engineering studies are those, which are conducted by a professional consulting, engineer. Funds may not be used for studies conducted by municipality personnel. Many funding programs require preliminary engineering studies for funding applications. Intercap loan funds can offer a municipality a reasonable alternative for financing these engineering studies.

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Monies are continuously available and applications are accepted at any time.

Contact:
The Montana Board of Investments
555 Fuller Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-0001

Public Facilities Community Development Block Grants: Montana Department of Commerce

Montana's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is a federally-funded competitive grant program designed to help communities of less than 50,000, and is aimed at benefiting low and moderate income persons. Grants are administered by the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) and awarded in three categories including economic development, housing and community revitalization, and public facilities.

CDBG grant awards for public facilities projects may not exceed $400,000 and are most often used in combination with other federal, state or local funds to make public improvements. The program requires that applicants provide at least 25% local match.

Eligible applicants are limited to general-purpose local governments, cities and towns with less than 50,000 people, and counties. Municipalities may apply for a project, which will include activities within the jurisdiction of an incorporated city or town if the proposed activity will benefit all municipality residents.

Each CDBG project proposal must demonstrate that at least 51% of the project's principal beneficiaries will be low and moderate-income persons.

Applications for public facilities funding are submitted to the MDOC in May of each year.

Information regarding applications and application deadlines is available by contacting the Department (see below). Applicants should initially review potential projects with the MDOC staff to determine their eligibility under program guidelines. Proposed projects must be selected through a community-wide needs assessment which incorporates a strong public participation component.

Contact:
The Community Development Office of the Montana Department of Commerce
(406) 444-2488

Or write to the:
Community Development Block Grant Program
Montana Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 200501
1424 Ninth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-0501

Public Works Program: Economic Development Administration

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce. The purpose of the Public Works Program is to assist communities with the funding of public works and development facilities that contribute to the creation or retention of private sector jobs and to the alleviation of unemployment and under-employment. Such assistance is designed to help communities achieve lasting improvement by stabilizing and diversifying local economies, and improving local living conditions and the economic environment of the area.

Grants are awarded up to a participation level of 80% but the average EDA grant covers approximately 50% of project costs.

Acceptable sources of match include cash, local general obligation or revenue bonds; Community Development Block Grants, TSEP grants and loans, entitlement funds, Rural Development loans; and other public and private financing, including donations.

Projects must result in private sector job and business development in order to be considered for funding. Eligible applicants under this program include any state, or political subdivision thereof, Indian tribe (and other U.S. political entities), private or public nonprofit organization or association representing any redevelopment area if the project is within and EDA-designated redevelopment area.

Redevelopment areas, other than those designated under the Public Works Impact Program must have a current EDA-approved Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP) in place.

Applications are accepted on an annual open cycle. The program does not set specific project funding limits.

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Contact:
Montana Economic Development Representative
(406) 441-1175

Or write for more specific information to the:
Economic Development Administration
P.O. Box 10074, Federal Building
Helena, MT 59626

Federal Emergency Management Agency Funds

In case of emergencies that affect infrastructure, the federal government provides relief through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

FEMA dollars are for unanticipated needs that result from disasters and emergencies and are typically not included in a municipality's financial planning process.

FEMA personnel are dispatched to the site of the disaster and are responsible for addressing all elements of repair or replacement as required. They assess the damage, hire the necessary professional consultants, prepare engineering analyses, bid projects and manage contracts.

Contact the FEMA regional office in Denver, Colorado:

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
P.O. Box 52267
Denver, CO 80225
(303) 235-4830

Community Development Block Grants for Economic Development

Montana's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is a federally-funded competitive grant program designed to help communities of less than 50,000, and is aimed at benefiting low and moderate income persons. Grants are administered by the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) and awarded in three categories including economic development, housing and community revitalization, and public facilities. Eligible applicants for economic development awards are local governments, which in turn lend funds to for-profit businesses that agree to create jobs for low and moderate-income persons.

The maximum funding for economic development is $400,000 per local government in a program year. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis depending on available funding. The applicant business must prepare a business plan and meet certain thresholds, including providing a 1-to-1 dollar match.

Contact:
Montana Department of Commerce
Helena, MT 59626
(406) 444-1759

9.3 HOUSING FINANCING

STATE AND FEDERAL MECHANISMS

Montana Department of Commerce

Montana's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is a federally-funded competitive grant program designed to help communities of less than 50,000, and is aimed at benefiting low and moderate income persons. Grants are administered by the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) and awarded in these categories:

- economic development,
- housing revitalization,
- community revitalization, and
- public facilities.

Eligible activities include:

- Rehabilitation of substandard housing.
- Supporting the construction of new permanent, long-term affordable housing for low and moderate-income families, when a local nonprofit organization sponsors the project.
- Acquiring, clearing, or rehabilitating sites or structures for use or for resale for new housing.
- Converting existing nonresidential structures for residential use home buyer assistance for low and moderate-income persons.
- Demolition of vacant, deteriorated housing units with the intent of making the site available for new housing construction.
- Providing site improvements or public facilities to publicly-owned land or land owned by a nonprofit organization to be used or sold for new housing complementary community

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revitalization activities such as cleanup campaign, removal of dilapidated, vacant buildings, improving or constructing sidewalks, streets, street lighting, or neighborhood parks or playgrounds.

CDBG grant awards for housing projects may not exceed $500,000 and have no matching requirements. Eligible applicants are limited to general-purpose local governments – cities and towns with less than 50,000 people and counties. Local governments may apply on behalf of private businesses, private nonprofit corporations or special purpose governmental agencies.

Each CDBG project proposal must demonstrate that at least 51% of the project's principal beneficiaries will be low and moderate-income persons.

Program allocations are made annually.

Contact the staff at the:
Montana CDBG
Helena, MT 59626
(406) 444-2488

Montana Board of Housing (MBOH)

The MBOH administers a number of programs listed below:

Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program

This program provides a tax credit to owners of qualifying rental housing which meets certain low-income occupancy and rent limitation requirements. Eligible applicants include governmental entities, non-profit entities and for profit developers.

Multifamily Risk Sharing Program and the Multifamily General Obligation Program

These programs provide permanent mortgage financing for affordable rental housing which meets certain low-income occupancy and rent limitation requirements. Eligible applicants include governmental entities, non-profit entities and for profit developers.

Single Family Set-A-Side Program

The MBOH has loan prepayments that it can use to purchase FHA insured or VA and RD guaranteed mortgage loans for affordable homes. Innovative techniques in planning, construction, and building design are encouraged. Eligible applicants include government entities, non-profit entities and for profit developers.

Contact:
MBOH
Helena, MT 59626
(406) 444-4688

Montana Home Investment Partnerships Program (Home)

The HOME program was created by the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 to expand the supply of decent and affordable housing for low and very low income Montanan's. Eligible activities include acquisition, new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation; tenant based rental assistance, homebuyer assistance and transitional housing and Single Room Occupancy units. Eligible applicants include units of local governments and Community Housing Development Organizations.

Contact:
Montana Department of Commerce
Home Investment Partnerships Program
Helena, MT 59626
(406) 444-9774

US Department of Agriculture —Rural Development Programs

Following is a list of Rural Development Housing Programs.

Housing Preservation Grants

Housing Preservation Grants are partnered with Housing Authorities and/or public bodies for the purpose of rehabilitating single or multi-family units, which are, occupied by very low to low income rural persons.

Rural Rental Housing 515 Program

This program provides eligible low and very low income persons with economically designed and constructed rental facilities suited to their living requirements.

Farm Labor Housing 514 and 516 Program

This program provides loans and grants to finance construction of on and off-site housing for farm laborers and their families.

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Section 538 – Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program

This program is aimed at those rural residents with low to moderate incomes that are not being served under the 515 program. Eligible applicants include nonprofit corporations, public bodies, and for-profit organizations.

Community Facilities Loan and Grant Programs

These programs assist local governments, nonprofit corporations, and Indian Tribes finance essential facilities such as assisted living centers and group homes.

Contact:
USDA Rural Development
Rural Housing Service
Bozeman, MT 59626
(406) 585-2565

9.4 HERITAGE, RECREATION AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FINANCING

LOCAL MECHANISMS

Property Tax Abatement Program

In 1989, Montana established a property tax abatement program for the restoration, rehabilitation, and expansion of certified residential and commercial properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places or located in a National Register District. For up to five years following completion of the construction, the property may receive tax abatement up to a total of 100% of taxes due to the increased value of the property. The tax abatement is only for mills levied for local government and school districts. Local governments establish their own tax abatement program.

Two-Mill Levy for Museums

Under 7-16-2205, MCA, Montana law permits a county government to levy up to two mills for any museum, facility for the arts or collection of exhibits. Funds can be used for operations, capital improvements, and program development.

Contact:
The Montana Arts Council
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-6514

STATE AND FEDERAL MECHANISMS

Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program

Travel Montana provides grants to tourism-related non-profit groups for construction and rehabilitation of tourism and recreation attractions and historic sites; purchasing new and/or existing tourism and recreation attractions and historic sites; or artifacts and equipment purchased for a specific tourism project operation. Applications are due August 1st of each year.

Contact:
Travel Montana
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-2654

Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP)

The Montana Department of Transportation makes funds available for projects under the National Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act. The Act provides for 10% of all surface transportation funds to be used for enhancement projects including historic preservation. Funds are awarded through local governments on a per capita basis.

Contact:
Montana Department of Transportation
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-6201

Resource Indemnity Trust

The Montana Department of Natural Resources makes grants from mining severance taxes to historic preservation projects that emphasize renewable resource management and community development.

Contact:
The Department of Natural Resources
(406) 444-6700

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

Federal Tax Credits for Historic Preservation

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 permits a building owner or long term lessee to elect a 20% tax credit on qualified rehabilitation expenditures incurred after January 1, 1987 in connection with a certified rehabilitation. A tax credit provides the property owner with a reduction on his or her federal income tax due. In order to be eligible for the credit, buildings must be used for income producing purposes including industrial, commercial or rental residential uses. The building must be listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places, be a part of a National Register district or be under consideration in a pending nomination.

Contact:
The State Historic Preservation Office
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-7715

Certified Local Government Program

The 1980 amendments to the national Historic Preservation Act established the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. The CLG program's purpose is to expand the existing Federal-State preservation partnership to include local governments and citizens.

In order to qualify for CLG status, the City of Great Falls and the Board of Cascade County Commissioners established a nine-member Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC) to advise local governments on matters of preservation and to insure that historic preservation is considered at all levels of city and County Planning and is incorporated in projects throughout the area.

The Historic Preservation Office maintains an inventory of National Register listed properties in Cascade County and a wide range of technical preservation information. Educational programs are available for organizations.

Contact:
Great Falls/Cascade County Historic
Preservation Office
(406) 455-8435

National Trust for Historic Preservation

The Trust provides funding for historic preservation projects through a variety of loan and grant programs.

Contact:
The National Trust for Historic Preservation
Mountain/Plains Regional Office
910 16th Street, Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 623-1504

Montana Cultural Trust

A portion of the interest earned in the investment of the coal tax revenue is available for projects in the arts and historic preservation for operations, capital, special projects and endowment development. Applications are reviewed during the summer prior to each Montana Legislative session.

Contact:
The Montana Arts Council in Helena at
(406) 444-6514
or the Montana Historical Society at
(406) 444-2694

Montana Arts Council

Administers grant funds (in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Arts – NEA) for cultural resources planning and to sponsor activities and events. The NEA also supports projects in the field of art and architecture and provides support in the activities of local art agencies.

Contact:
The Montana Arts Council
Helena, MT 59626
(406) 444-6514

Montana Committee for the Humanities

The Montana Committee for the Humanities provides funding for historic and prehistoric surveys, for public forums on a variety of issues, for research, and oral history. The Committee also makes funds available for special speakers and conferences. Program activities must involve a humanist, which often fosters cooperative partnerships between communities and local colleges and universities.

Contact:
The Montana Committee for the Humanities
Missoula, MT 59812
(406) 243-6022

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Private Foundation Grants

Private foundation grants are available to non-profit organizations and local governments (in some cases) for projects, which advance community cultural, historic and heritage resources. A variety of publications and on-line resources provide information on individual foundation programs.

9.5 PLANNING ASSISTANCE

STATE AND FEDERAL MECHANISMS

Planning assistance for engineering costs and other consulting fees associated with capital improvements project is available through the capital facilities grants programs mentioned in above. In addition, other types of planning funds are available from a variety of sources including the following entities:

The Economic Development Administration (EDA)

The Economic Development Administration provides funds for technical assistance and planning grants for projects, which result in the creation of new employment. Planning grants usually average about $25,000 and require a small cash match.

Contact:
EDA Office, Federal Building
Helena, MT 59624
(406) 449-5074

CDBG – Technical Assistance Matching Grants

Montana Department of Commerce provides planning grants of up to $20,000 for affordable housing, capital improvements planning, growth policies and economic development planning.

Contact:
Montana Department of Commerce
Helena, MT 59624
(406) 444-2488

Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle

Community Lending Services provides planning grants of up to $10,000 for affordable housing, economic development and neighborhood revitalization.

Contact:
The Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle
1501 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 340-8737

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Janet A. Cornish
Community Development Services of Montana
954 W Caledonia
Butte, MT 59701

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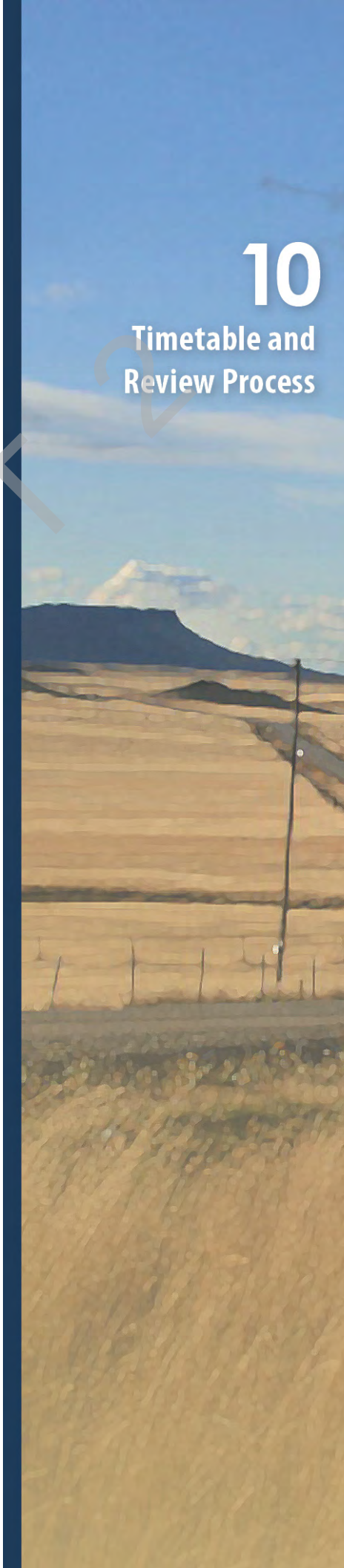

10 Timetable and Review Process

At least once every five years after adoption, the Cascade County Planning Board will review the Cascade County Growth Policy to determine if revisions are necessary, as required by 76-1-601 (3)(f) MCA. The basis for such determination whether to revise the Cascade County Growth Policy will include an assessment of the following issues:

- Changes in the legal framework regarding the Cascade County Growth Policy or its implementation;
- Significant changes in existing trends and conditions or projected trends;
- Changes in the circumstances upon which the goals and objectives are based;
- Changes in community goals;
- Plausibility and ability of the County to achieve stated goals and policies;
- Completion of implementation strategies;
- Deviation from implementation strategies;
- Public input suggesting the need to make changes; and
- Knowledge of specific and identifiable amendments that would improve the Cascade County's Growth Policy's usefulness, so that it better serves the public.

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Under the provisions outlined in Section 76-1-601 (3) (h) (i) MCA, growth policies must include a discussion regarding how governing bodies will define the criteria in Section 76-3-608 (3) (a). The basis upon which the local governing body makes a decision to approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove a subdivision is whether the preliminary plat, environmental assessment, hearing and planning board recommendations or additional information demonstrates that development of the subdivision meets the requirements as set forth in Section 76-3-608, MCA. The statute requires that governing bodies must issue "findings of fact" that weigh the effect on the following criteria:

- Agriculture
- Agricultural Water Facilities
- Local Services Natural Environment
- Wildlife
- Wildlife Habitat
- Public Health and Safety

Cascade County will evaluate and make decisions regarding proposed subdivisions with respect to the criteria in Section 76-3-608 (3) (a).

Subdivision review will include written findings of fact as to whether or not the proposed subdivision will have an impact the six criteria outlined by Section 76-3-608 (3) (a).

11.1 DEFINITIONS

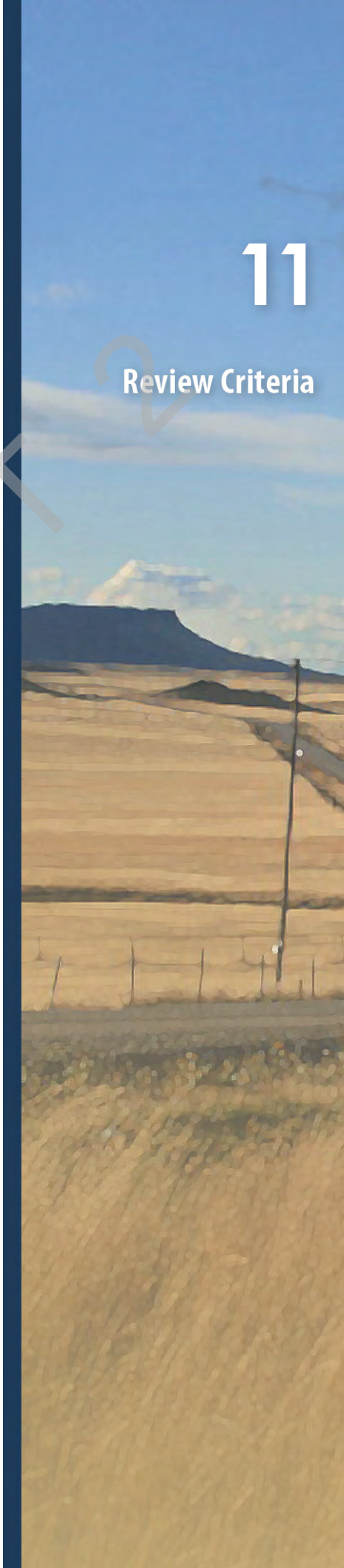
Section 76-1-601 requires Cascade County to include definitions of the criteria outlined in Section 76-3-608 (3) (a).

AGRICULTURE

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

AGRICULTURAL WATER USER FACILITIES

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



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

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

WILDLIFE
Animals (vertebrate and invertebrate) that exist in their natural environment. These exclude domesticated or tamed species.

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

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

11.2 PUBLIC HEARINGS ON PROPOSED SUBDIVISIONS

Cascade County will conduct all public hearings in accordance with the provisions outlined in the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act, Title 76, Chapter 3 Montana Codes Annotated.

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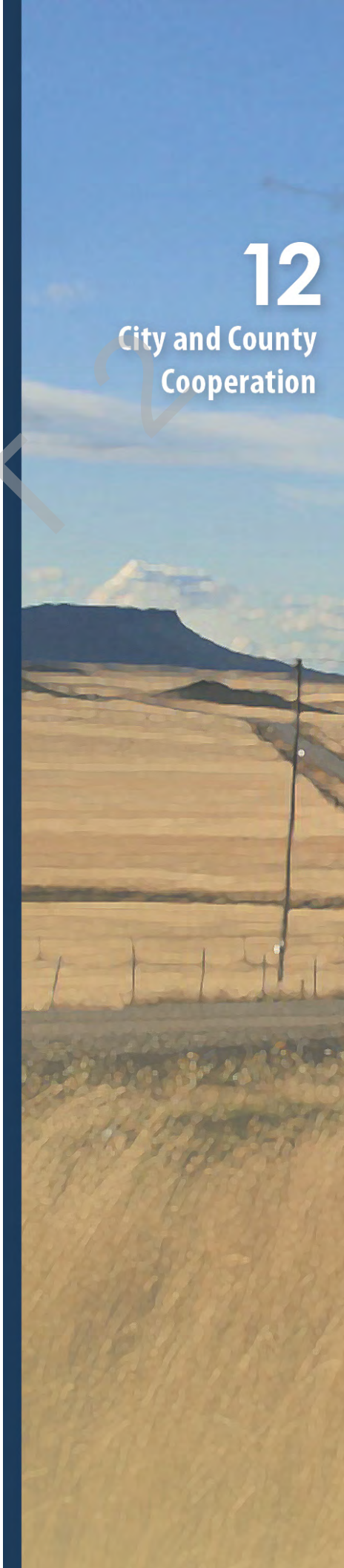
12.1 CITY AND COUNTY COOPERATION

The Montana Growth Policy Statute (76-1-601, MCA) requires governing bodies include in their growth policies a statement of how governing bodies will coordinate and cooperate with other jurisdictions on growth policies.

On April 26, 2005, the Board of Cascade County Commissioners moved to dissolve the Great Falls City-County Planning Board. This resulted in the formation of the Great Falls City Planning Board with jurisdictional responsibility in the Great Falls city limits and the Cascade County Planning Board with jurisdictional responsibility for the remainder of the county, except Belt, Cascade and Neihart.

The Cascade County Planning Board will continue to work closely with the City of Great Falls and Belt, Cascade and Neihart to cooperate and coordinate the local planning and economic development efforts. Interlocal agreements with the incorporated cities and towns within Cascade County may be adopted to expedite cooperation between said government entities.



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Cascade County
Planning Division

121 4th Street North #2H-2I
Great Falls, MT 59401

(406) 454-6905
Fax: (406) 454-6919