Vibrant Futures

Growth Policy Review

2-6-13

Prepared by: Applied Communications - Whitefish, MT

Part 1: Executive Summary

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formed the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The partnership coordinates federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments to promote sustainable development. The partnership agencies incorporate six principles of livability into federal funding programs and legislative proposals. One such program from this partnership is the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant.

In November, 2011 Opportunity Link was awarded the HUD Sustainable Communities grant to develop a regional sustainability plan for an 11 county region in north central Montana. Opportunity Link is a non-profit organization based in Havre, MT, that was created in 2004 following a two-year strategic planning process to address poverty issues in the region. Opportunity Link submitted the grant application on behalf of a consortium comprised of county and city governments, three reservations, and three economic development districts. The objective of the grant is to enable the communities of north-central Montana to complete a region-wide visioning, capacity building, and information exchange system that will help local officials coordinate their planning efforts and promote economically and environmentally sustainable development. The project is referred to as "Vibrant Futures" (http://www.vibrantfuturesmt.org/).

The planning process includes a task to review growth policies from the region in order to determine how local jurisdictions are already addressing sustainability issues and to use these existing efforts as a foundation for preparing the regional sustainability plan. This review had the following objectives:

- Identify important planning issues, common trends and local priorities from the region.
- Ascertain how communities are currently incorporating various aspects of sustainability into their growth policies.
- Conduct a quantitative analysis to establish benchmarks for evaluating program goals.
- Summarize available data and mapping resources to identify where additional data are needed. Use this information to develop a web-based tool where local officials can easily access data and maps that can be incorporated into future growth policy updates.
- Compile examples of policies that address sustainability and livability principles in order to provide a peer-to-peer database that localities can reference as part of their growth policy updates.
- Complete individual reviews of growth policies for compliance with the MCA requirements and identify opportunities for each locality to incorporate livability principles into future updates.
- Identify which planning topics meet the greatest need for training and best practice information.
- List indicators specific to the region that can augment the HUD indicators and be incorporated into the scenario planning model.

There was a great deal of variation in the growth policies. Although some were more comprehensive than others, there was no one growth policy that included every indicator and could be used as a model. Rather, this report can be referenced by communities to determine which of the policies from the region are relevant in their locality. Additional input on the sustainability plan will come from community roundtables, expert work groups, and scenario planning workshops.

Part II. Methodology

A. Linking Livability Principles with the Growth Policy

In 1997, the Montana Legislature amended the Montana Code Annotated (MCA) to change the name of "Comprehensive Plan" to "Growth Policy." These documents present the long-term vision for the community and articulate values and a vision that will be integrated into a wide variety of local initiatives. Growth policies are key planning documents that are critical to implementing the livability principles.

For example, the growth policy provides the legal rationale for adopting land use regulations such as zoning and subdivision codes. Before communities can amend codes to address issues such as financing of public improvements, walkability, preserving open space, or floodplain management, the locality must first establish the need for these regulations. This need is documented with data in the growth policy along with specific goals and objectives that provide a framework for decision makers to tackle these important issues. Land use decisions that are challenged in court will be evaluated on whether the decision was consistent with the goals and objectives in the growth policy and will more likely be upheld if there are maps and data to support the governing body's action.

In additional to providing the legal basis for regulations, growth policies also provide a basis for reviewing grant applications. Many grant programs that provide funds to upgrade infrastructure will give a higher ranking to proposals that are consistent with priorities expressed in the growth policies. Grant proposals will be more competitive if they can demonstrate a strong link to these planning documents. Communities with growth policies that incorporate livability principles will be more likely to receive funds from the Sustainability Partnership. Community groups that are applying for grants can use the data in the growth policy to help them formulate their grant proposals and they can reference the goals and objectives in the growth policy to demonstrate community support of a project. A thorough, up-to-date growth policy can help localities leverage significant outside funds to implement their plans.

Another benefit of growth policies is that they facilitate coordination between various agencies. For instance, it is more cost effective to design roadway improvements to simultaneously include upgrades for water and sewer utilities, trails, and broadband deployment rather than having multiple construction projects. Growth policies have timetables to identify opportunities for coordinating these improvements.

For all of these reasons, a key goal of the project is that strategies that are developed for the regional sustainability plan also be reflected in local growth policies. To accomplish this goal, this will involve:

1. Assisting counties, tribes, and municipalities to update their growth policies
2. Coordinating, as much as is possible and desired by local partners, the strategies for local and regional sustainability.

B. Review Framework - Montana Code Annotated

This analysis relies on the framework for growth policies mandated by Section 76-1-201 of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA). The MCA specifies that growth policies of should contain the following elements.

- Land Use
- Population
- Housing
- Economic conditions
- Local services
- Natural resources
- Public Infrastructure strategies

The MCA requires that each element must describe existing conditions and trends using both text and maps and include community goals and objectives to address issues identified as part of the data analysis. In addition to the required elements, growth policies must include an implementation timetable, provisions for revising the growth policy, a statement of intergovernmental cooperation, subdivision review requirements, an evaluation of wildland fire, a description of gravel resources, and a description of policies and other measures to implement the plan. Generally, public input supplements the data analysis in identifying important community issues.

C. Group Indicators According to Growth Policy Elements

A key component of the project is an extensive effort to compile data on over 200 indicators. These indicators can be used to describe existing conditions and will be incorporated into a scenario planning model using CommunityViz software. The model will allow public officials to test various planning alternatives by comparing the effect of proposed strategies on these indicators. The list of indicators was developed using HUD recommendations on measuring the livability principles and then the list was supplemented with input from local officials in the region as well as teams of subject matter experts in housing, health, government, transportation, energy, and agriculture.

In order to evaluate the growth policies, the overall list of 200 indicators was grouped in general categories and then each category heading was assigned to one of the growth policy elements required by the MCA. For example, under the heading of “Housing Cost” there are a number of indicators such as average rent, average home value, housing affordability index, housing cost as a percent of household income, and other measures. A full list of indicators is available on the Vibrant Futures website.

It should be noted that the MCA includes list transportation facilities such as roads as part of the public facilities element. Most growth policies, however, treated “Transportation” as an independent element. For this reason, transportation is listed as a separate element for this analysis.

D. Review for Both Supporting Data/Trends and Goals/Objectives

The MCA requires that growth policies include an analysis of existing conditions/trends as well as corresponding goals and objectives to address the trends. The data/ tends analysis is important because it provides the justification for including a certain goal or objective in the plan. Data also provide valuable measures to determine if progress has been made in achieving the goals. Conversely, it is good planning practice to have corresponding goals and objectives that address the trends described in the existing condition section. This indicates that the community has undertaken a thoughtful analysis of the data and considered specific actions or strategies to address community issues.

The subsequent analysis tabulates whether a growth policy contained information regarding both trends for each of the subject headings and corresponding policies for each subject heading. For purposes of this analysis, terms such as "goal," "objectives," "policy," or "strategy" were all considered as "Policy Directive." The term "trends" included data, maps, charts or descriptive text related to the subject heading. The results of the analysis are depicted in the bar charts for each of the elements. If the bar graph is longer on policy than trends, then the jurisdictions were more likely to have stated policy but did not include corresponding trend data. If the trend bar is longer, the jurisdictions documented trends but were less likely to have policies addressing the trends.

E. Other Information

In addition to the analysis described above, other information that was compiled as part of this review includes:

- Data sources that were used for the various elements.
- Quality of the data that were collected.
- Typical policies/goals/objectives that growth policies included to address issues
- Common issues that were described in the growth policies yet were not addressed in the original list of HUD indicators
- Differences between county and city growth policies

This information is included in the notes section accompanying each bar chart. A glossary is included in the appendix to define common planning terms from the growth policies and to provide additional web links to planning resources.

Part III: Conclusions

A. Data/Trends Analysis

- Most growth policies were completed prior to the release of 2010 Census data and should be updated reflect current data. Many growth policies were adopted prior to changes to the MCA to require information on "Wildland Fire" or "Sand and Gravel Resources." Updates to growth policies should include this information.

- Many growth policies have goals and objectives that are not supported by a description of trends. It is important to have these accompanying data in order to provide the rationale for the including the goals and objectives. Providing this background information will create a stronger justification for decision makers in the case of legal challenges.

- The bar charts indicate a number of subject headings where growth policies provide little information on trends. In many cases, this can be attributed to the lack of readily available data at the time the growth policy was prepared. As part of the Vibrant Futures project, new data will become available to meet these gaps. Additionally, the GIS mapping and scenario models being developed for the project will be easy to reproduce and include in growth policy updates.

B. Goals/Objectives/Policies

- Many growth policies include description of trends that identify important community issues but there are no corresponding policies to address these trends. Some growth policies merely downloaded data reports from various sources but did not discuss how the trends from these data would impact the community. Lack of such analysis, and corresponding policies, does not provide the policy framework to respond to important issues. Providing such a framework for decision makers is an important aspect of adopting a growth policy.

- Some issues transcend a number of elements. The aging of the population in rural communities, for example, has a number of implications in housing, economy, transportation, and local services. In order to plan for the growing population over age 65, communities need to adopt policies regarding provision of housing for seniors, transit services, walkable communities, provision of aging services, health care services, and work force shortages.

- Different trends in different parts of the region will require different policy responses. For example, while rural counties and municipalities have experienced steady population decline, reservations demonstrate population growth. Also, rural counties and municipalities demonstrate reduced numbers of young people and increasing numbers of elders, while neighboring reservations demonstrate strong numbers of young children. Different development strategies and policies will be required for each scenario.

C. Public Input

- Public input efforts that were described in the growth policies included community surveys, town meetings, open houses, steering committees, planning board workshops, and public hearings. Some jurisdictions supplemented their public input with other planning efforts such as community meetings from Montana Economic Development Association (MEDA) Resource Assessments or community meetings associated with the development of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS). Opportunity Link is conducting a series of community meetings and workshops as part of the process to develop the regional sustainability plan. Input from these meetings can provide valuable information for growth policy updates in the region.

D. Growth Policy Elements

- Population – While most growth policies had data on overall growth trends and aging trends, less than half contained data on other indicators such as disability, education levels, and migration trends. Only about a quarter of growth policies had any goals and objectives addressing population issues.

- Housing – While most growth policies had data on housing costs and housing condition, only about half had goals and objectives to address issues such as affordability or dilapidated structures. There were few data or objectives addressing energy costs and energy conservation strategies. While fair housing policies were present in about half of the documents, there were almost no data or references to community input to support these policies. Less than half of the growth policies mentioned housing assistance programs and policies to promote home ownership.

- Economy – Most growth policies had current economic data and accompanying policies to promote business growth. Goals and objectives to address poverty issues were only present in two growth policies. Policies to promote tourism were common but there were few supporting data on tourism trends.

- Land Use – Existing and future land use patterns were addressed thoroughly in most growth policies. Policies regarding open space preservation, infill development, and urban sprawl were common but there were few data documenting trends in these areas. Most growth policies lacked data or goals regarding brownfield development or impervious surface. Common issues that should be added to the list of HUD indicators were downtown revitalization, preserving community character, blight, gateway entrances to communities, zoning, and historic preservation.

- Transportation – Most growth policies had basic information on the road network but lacked any type of Level of Service (LOS) analysis. Only half had policies to address the operation of the street system. Although supporting the development of trails was a common policy, there were no maps or specifics on where the trails should be located. Mention of total vehicle miles traveled and commuting was rare. Transit services were listed in only about one-quarter of the growth policies reviewed but only one had a policy to support transit. Information on rail and air travel was provided but there were only a few growth policies that had a goal or objective related to these travel modes. About half of the growth policies contained strategies to finance road improvements through concurrency provisions, special improvement districts, or impact fees.

- Public Facilities – Growth policies typically had data regarding public water systems, wastewater systems, and parks but few had corresponding policies to address issues in these areas. Energy usage and alternative energy systems were mentioned in only about one-quarter of growth policies. Well and septic systems generally were not addressed. Financing strategies for public facilities were mentioned in about half of the documents.

- Natural Resources – Only about half the growth policies had specific mention of water quality, floodplain management, or agricultural sustainability. Integrated water management such as coordinating with watershed councils was mentioned in only about one-quarter of growth policies. Air quality data and policies were included about one-third of documents. Indicators that should be added to the HUD list include wildlife, noxious weeds, scenic resources, climate, irrigation, access to public lands, and earthquake hazards.

- Local Services – There were typically data on fire protection, law enforcement, education, and cultural resources but there were few goals and objectives addressing these issues. About half had information on libraries and cultural resources but again there were few supporting policies. Policies and data on health providers, healthy living, and broadband were rare. Topics to be added to the list of HUD indicators include local government info, aging services, and social services.

Part IV: Evaluation

A. List of Growth Policies

This analysis includes a review of 23 growth policies from throughout the region. The MCA requires that growth policies be updated every five years. Of the 23 growth policies, nine were adopted more than five years ago and will likely undergo updates over the next few years. The process to update the growth policies offers an opportunity for communities to incorporate the livability principles and other concepts from the regional sustainability plan into local planning documents.

Counties

County	Year Adopted
Cascade	2006
Chouteau	2011
Glacier	2011
Liberty	2005
Hill	2010
Pondera	2011
Phillips	2006
Teton	2003
Toole	2007

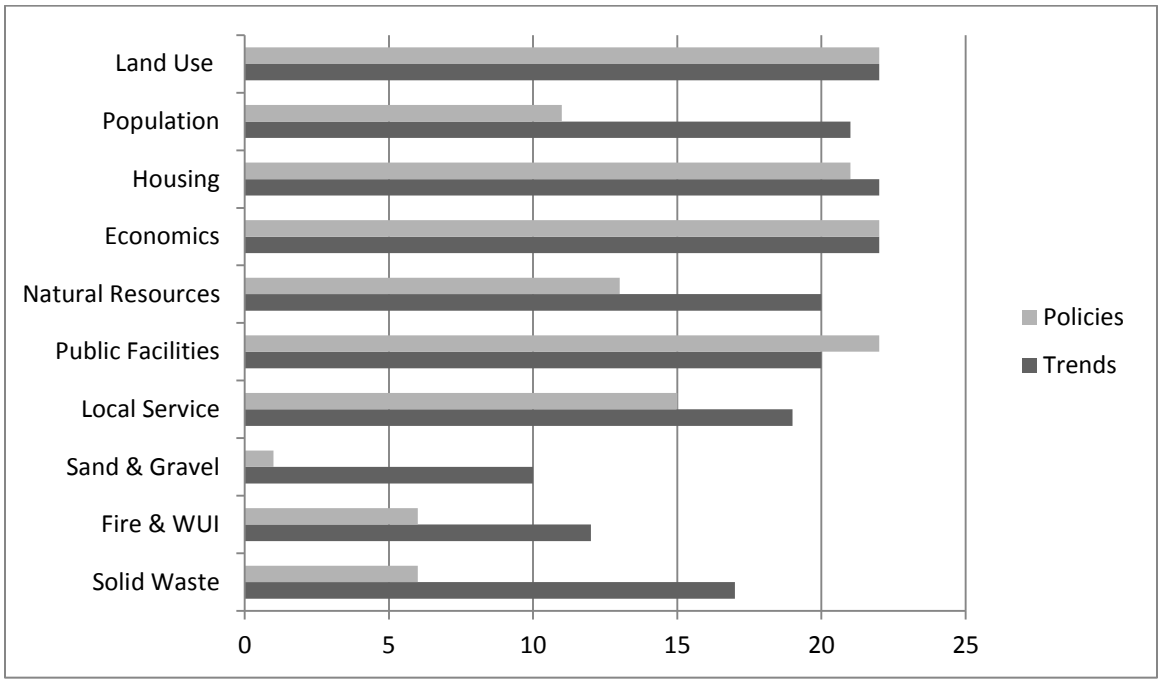
Municipalities

City	Year Adopted
Big Sandy	2008
Browning	2011
Chinook	2007
Choteau	2009
Conrad	2011
Cut Bank	2005
Fort Benton	2010
Great Falls	1999
Havre	2010
Hingham	2010
Kevin	2011
Malta	2006
Shelby	2011
Valier	2011

Notes

- Blaine County and Judith Basin Counties do not have growth policies
- The cities of Harlem and Cascade have growth policies but we were unable to obtain review copies
- Bear Paw Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), Sweet Grass CEDS, and Chippewa Cree Health Complex Community Recovery Master Plan were reviewed as resource documents.

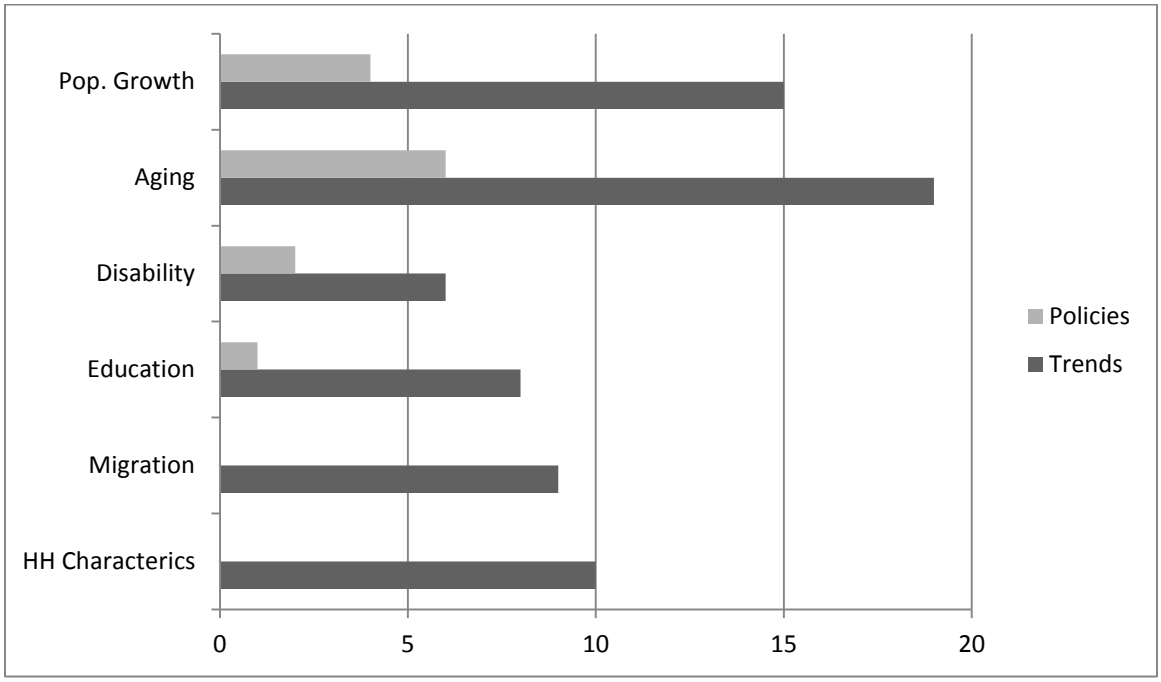
B. Montana Code Annotated Requirements



Notes:

1. Counties were more likely to have policies on natural resources while cities were more likely to have information and policies on local services.
2. Sand and Gravel Resources – MCA did not require sand and gravel information to be included until 2010. Growth policies prepared prior to that date are less likely to have information on gravel resources. Although the MCA only requires that an inventory be included, the Chouteau County Growth Policy contained a policy that development of gravel resources should be compatible with surrounding land uses. USDA Soil Survey has an on-line mapping tool to identify sand and gravel resources.
   http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/
3. Wildland Fire – In 2007, the MCA was amended to require that growth policies evaluate the potential for wildland fire and determine the need to adopt regulations regarding 1) defensible space, 2) adequate ingress and egress for fire equipment, and 3) adequate water supply. Few plans contained any policies addressing these issues. Some growth policies referenced "Community Wildfire Protection Plans." These plans include maps and recommendations that can be incorporated by reference, along with pertinent summaries in growth policies. Other plans referenced Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plans (funded through FEMA) regarding firefighting resources that could also be cross-referenced in a growth policy. Counties were more likely to reference these planning documents than cities.
4. Solid Waste – Although most growth policies included information on landfill capacity and solid waste collection, most growth policies did not have any corresponding goals and objectives on solid waste. Those that did had policies that addressed recycling, hazardous waste disposal, household hazardous waste, and coordination on planning for future landfill sites.
5. Other MCA Requirements – Most growth policies contained a description of implementation tools and subdivision review requirements. Only about half had the required sections for an implementation timetable or procedures for review and update of the growth policy. The MCA also requires strategies for public infrastructure such as water drinking systems, wastewater, and roads. These strategies were typically integrated into in the public facilities element.

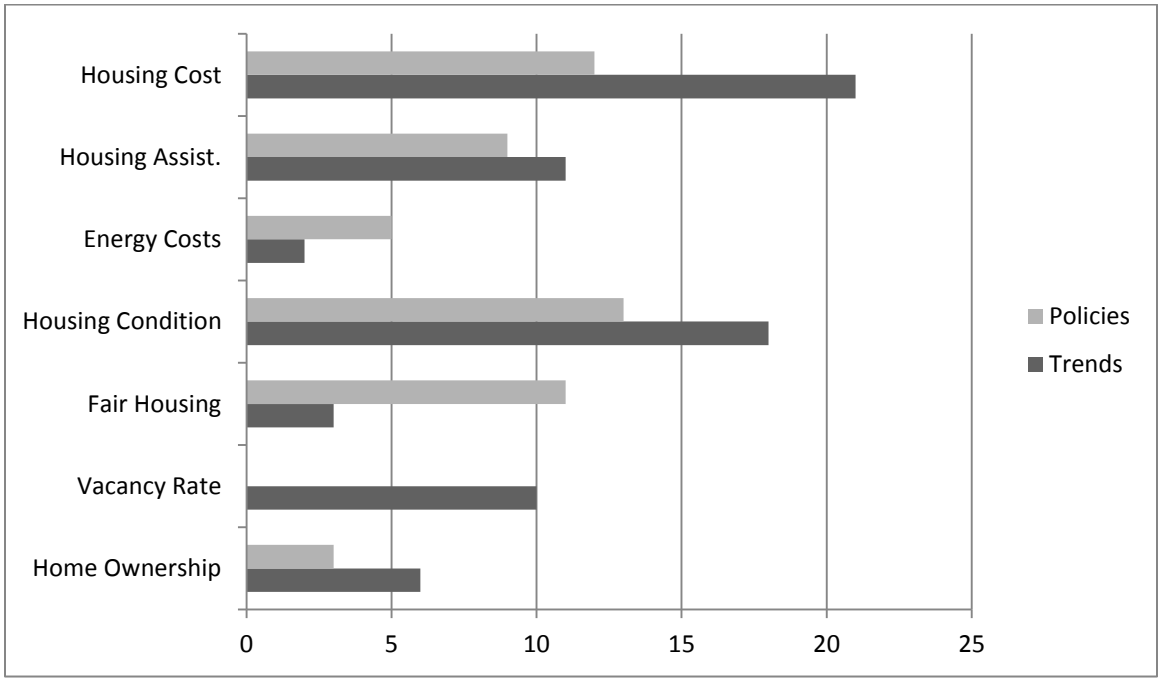
C. Population Indicators



Notes:

1. Most growth policies were adopted prior to the release of the 2010 Census and still have 2000 Census population data. Many data items collected as part of the 2000 Census were not collected in 2010. The U.S. Census American Community Survey data provide sample data on most of these items.
2. The most common type of population data described trends in population change. About half of growth policies contained projections on future population growth. In order to plan for future needs it is advisable to include population projections. County population projections are available from: www.ceic.mt.gov/Demog/project/proj_mt_pop_total_08.pdf. Population projections for cities are often contained in water and sewer facility plans.
3. Only a few policies addressed the growing senior population. Population projections for the population age 65+ are available from: ceic.mt.gov/Demog/project/PopProjPercentChg2030_65+(07).pdf
4. Only a few growth policies contained goals and objectives addressing population growth and related indicators. Those that did had policies that addressed the following issues:
    - Policies that contain population targets (1-2% a year)
    - A policy for sustainable population growth that does not exceed the capacity of the infrastructure such as water and sewer.
    - Policies to "attract young families" by providing leadership opportunities or facilities such as a teen center or other family friendly attractions.
    - Policies to meet the needs of the aging population by providing senior services
5. Other – "Race" was a common data item.

D. Housing



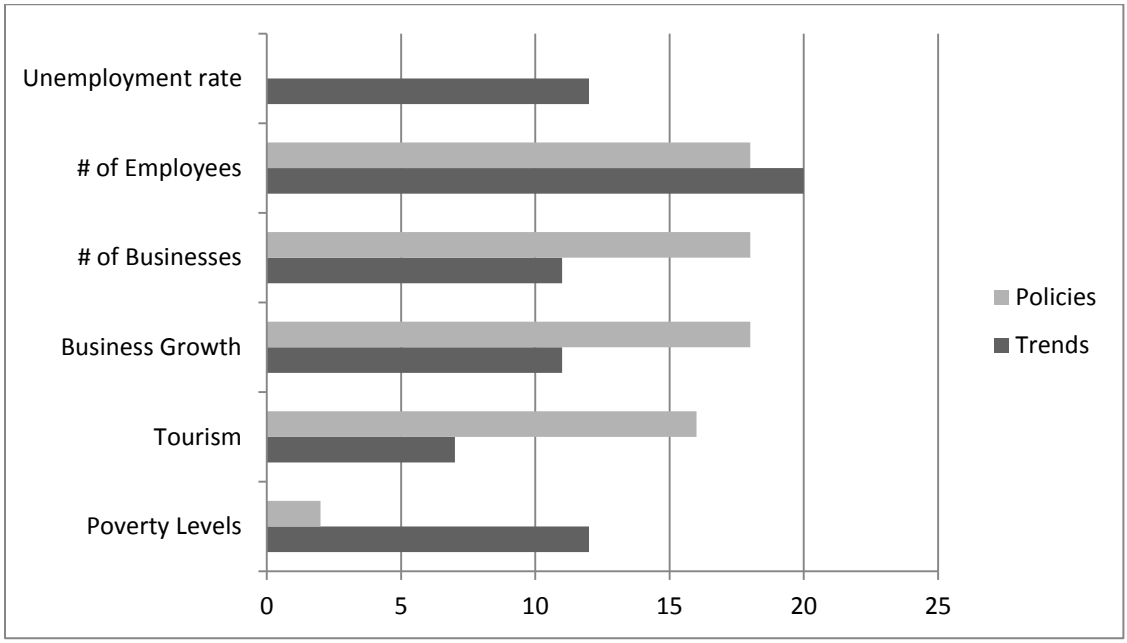
Notes:

1. The 2010 Census does not include data on housing costs. Data on housing costs are available from the U.S. Census American Community Survey or from the MT Dept. of Commerce at: http://housing.mt.gov/FAR/whitepaper.mcpx
2. Housing assistance trends were typically described as an inventory of programs but did not include statistics on number of clients or budgets. Housing affordability policies generally promoted coordination with the various assistance programs. A number of growth policies recommended more detailed analysis through a "Housing Needs Assessment" and working with the private sector on solutions.
3. Data sources for energy costs include the "Low Income Energy Assistance Program" (LIEAP) data and the MT Dept. of Com.: http://housing.mt.gov/content/FAR/docs/HomeEnergyAffordabilityGap.pdf
4. Policies to reduce energy costs included:
    - Promote weatherization and publishing a resource directory.
    - Promote energy audits.
    - Use of green technology and alternative energy in new housing developments
5. Most growth policies used 2000 census data on the age of housing to provide an indirect measure of housing condition. More comprehensive data are available for both counties and municipalities from the Dept. of Commerce: http://housing.mt.gov/CP/housingconditionstudy.mcpx
6. Policies addressing housing condition included:
    - Promote housing rehab programs. Historic preservation. Demolition of deteriorated houses
    - Undertake property maintenance efforts including code enforcement and education
    - Encourage upgrades to mobile homes
7. Common policies in growth policies that addressed fair housing included:
    - Providing for special needs population (seniors, disabled, mentally ill, and homeless)

- Disperse public housing throughout city
- Address the shortage of rental units (both affordable units and overall rentals)
- Provide fair housing education for lenders and landlords.

8. Info on fair housing from MT Dept. of Commerce: http://housing.mt.gov/FAR/fairhousing.mcpx

E. Economy



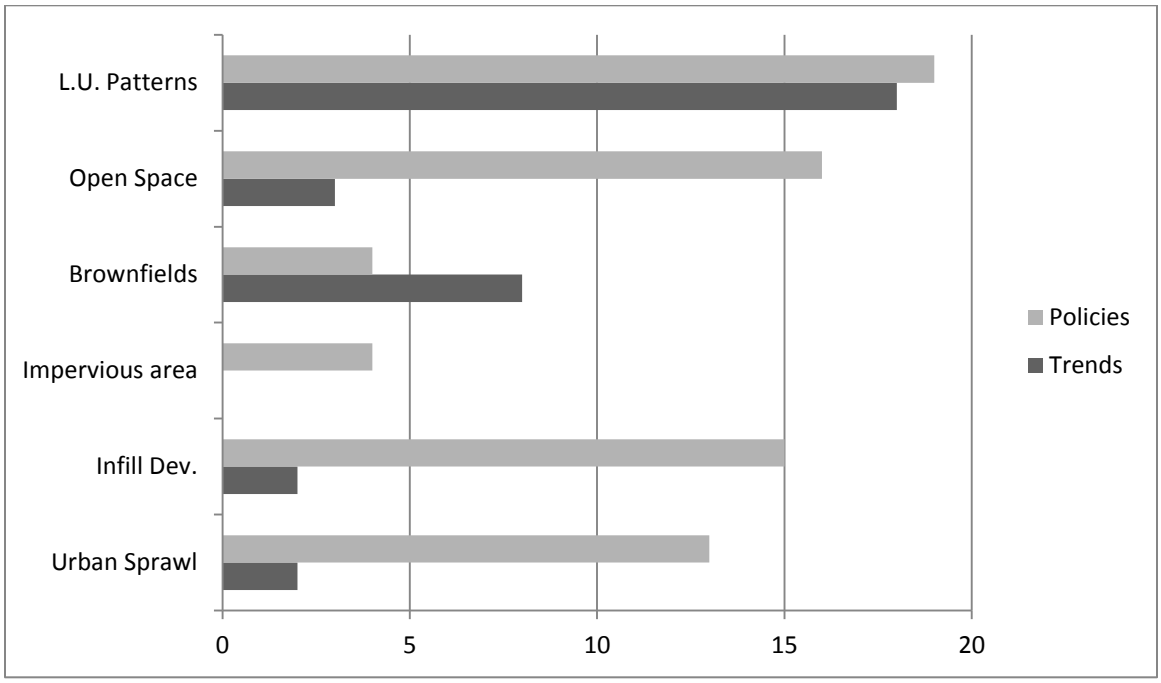
Notes:

1. Economic development policies/objectives that addressed employment and business growth:
   - Promote value-added agriculture (most popular policy overall)
   - Promote telecommuting/Internet Business (2nd most popular policy)
   - Undertake business retention efforts (business survey, training, small business dev.)
   - Engage in downtown revitalization (more common in city growth policies)
   - Participate in Main Street Program (http://mtmainstreet.mt.gov/default.mcpx)
   - Buy local policies
   - Promote Entrepreneurship (training, networking, etc.)
   - Attract business to diversify economic base
   - Promote clean industry (more common in city growth policies)
   - Promote development of natural resources (more common in county growth policies)
   - Provide economic incentives (tax incentives, revolving loans, cost-benefit analysis)
2. Tourism data are available from University of Montana http://www.itrr.umt.edu/. Lodging revenue data can be found at: http://travelmontana.mt.gov/newsandupdates/. Tourism policies include:
   - Promote tourism
   - Promote cultural tourism and attractions in the region such as museums – Missouri River…
   - Improve visitor services (lodging, meeting space, visitor center, etc.)
   - Coordinate with MT Dept. of Tourism and apply for tourism grants
3. Several growth policies recommended coordinating with regional economic development agencies. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) are good sources of data and policies and should be cross referenced. CEDS can be found at:
   - www.bearpaw.org

- http://www.sweetgrassdevelopment.org/
- www.snowymtndev.com

4. Some growth policies mentioned supporting specific projects or industry such as development of industrial parks, MSU-Northern, MATL, Border Patrol, Big Sandy Industries, and Malstrom AFB.
5. Two growth policies had a strategy to promote jobs with a living wage in order to address poverty.
6. In addition to the indicators in the above chart, income data were commonly included.

F. Land Use



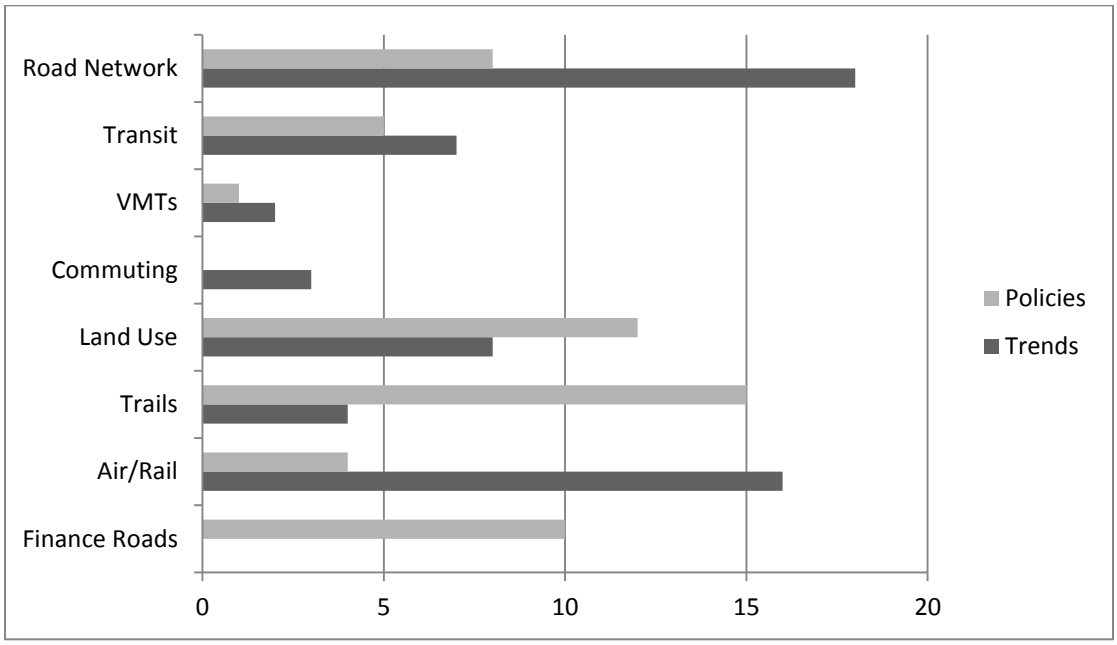
Notes:

1. Land use patterns are typically displayed on an existing land use map while the future land use map is a visual representation of land use policies. Cities were more likely to have a future land use map than counties. County growth policies often had land use maps for small towns and unincorporated towns in the county but generally did not have a county-wide future land use map.
2. Some counties used bubble diagrams to depict future growth areas around towns. Some city growth policies cities included statistics on the amount of land dedicated to various types of land uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, and open space. These stats can be generated using GIS software.
3. Land use policies that promoted the proximity to services to residential developments included:
    - Locate new developments in close proximity to city services
    - New development should follow an extension of city services plan
    - Neighborhoods should have convenient access to shopping, parks, and other services
4. For purposes of this analysis, open space is generally defined as both public and private land that is protected in some manner from urban development and has recreational, scenic or environmental benefits. The growth policies that had information on open space identified environmental benefits such as: providing wildlife habitat, protecting scenic views, providing water quality benefits in flood zones, and providing public access to natural environments. Open space policies included:
    - Promote conservation easements
    - Create open space through greenways and streamside setbacks to protect water quality
    - Use open space as a buffer between incompatible land uses
    - Promote the general preservation of open space

    (Note: Although parks are generally considered open space, urban parks are addressed separately in the public facilities analysis.)

5. Brownfields include Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST, http://www.deq.mt.gov/LUST/LUSTSites.mcpx), superfund sites, and other sites that require remediation from hazardous waste. LUST sites were the most likely to be mentioned in growth policies. Other remediated sites can be found through the Montana Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) at http://maps2.nris.mt.gov/mapper/. Policies for brownfield sites included:
    - Apply for brownfield funds to clean up contaminated properties
    - Apply for EPA funds to conduct a phase-one assessment of properties
    - Implement a household hazardous waste collection program
    - Education for land owners on resources to clean up contaminated properties.
6. There were only a few growth policies with information on stormwater systems. Policies regarding stormwater included:
    - Managing stormwater run-off so as not to negatively impact neighboring properties
    - Use stormwater management techniques to reduce non-point pollution
    - Require stormwater management plans from new development
7. The growth policies typically expressed an overall preference for infill development as a way to control urban sprawl and as an efficient use of infrastructure. While it was common to have infill policies, there were limited data on amount of land that was available for infill or the actual cost benefits of infill development. Policies to promote infill development included:
    - Encourage infill development
    - Promote infill development before annexing property
    - Offer incentives to promote infill development
    - Conduct an inventory of vacant lots to identify infill opportunities.
    - Make sure infill lots have adequate water/sewer services
8. About half of growth policies had explicit policies to discourage urban sprawl. These policies included:
    - Encourage compact development
    - Plan for urban-rural transition areas
    - Adopt logical extension of services plan
    - Promote cluster development
9. Other land use issues commonly addressed in the growth policies included:
    - Downtown revitalization/Main St. (more common in city growth policies)
    - Community character – small town character
    - Blight – Property maintenance – Community appearance
    - Zoning – Updating zoning codes was mentioned in most city growth policies. Counties typically did not have zoning regulations.
    - Gateways or entrances to the communities (mostly in city growth policies)
    - Historic preservation

G. Transportation

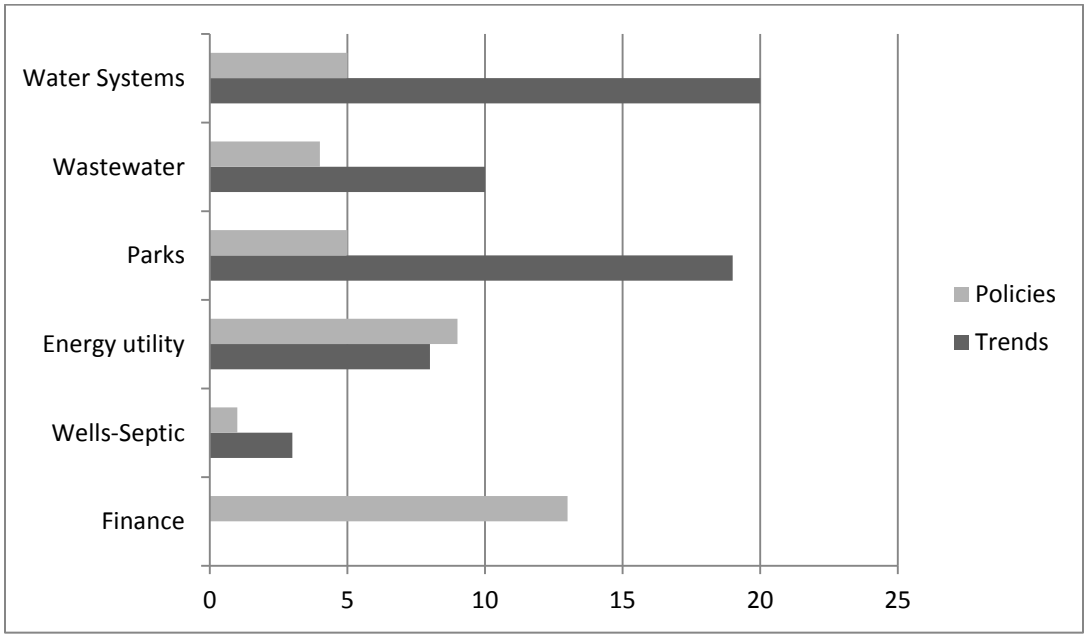


Notes:

1. Information regarding road networks included maps, Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes, functional street classification, and data on miles of roads. Policies regarding road networks:
    - Adopt design standards.
    - Require roads in new developments to connect with existing network
    - Provide adequate R.O.W. for emergency vehicles
    - Promote Transportation Demand Management (TDM) techniques
2. The transit information provided was just a list of service providers. No ridership data were provided. Policy statements were limited to general support for expanding transit opportunities.
3. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs)– No specific data were provided in any growth policy but two growth policies did promote live-work-play opportunities within new subdivisions to reduce VMTs.
4. Commuting – Some data were provided from the 2000 Census but no policies addressed this issue.
5. Land use – Policies to address the relationship of land use to transportation included:
    - Direct development where it is most efficient to extend the street network
    - New development should not cause traffic congestion
    - Provide for safe ingress/egress for new developments
    - Promote neighborhood sensitive design for transportation improvements
    - Undertake a transportation planning process
6. Trails and walkability –Two growth policies had descriptions of existing trails. The majority had policies to promote the expansion of a trail system. Creating walkable neighborhoods was also mentioned.
7. Airport information, including economic impact data, is available from MT Dept. of Transportation at: www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/economic-impact-study.shtml. Information on rail systems: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/railplan/. There was one policy to support airport expansion.

8. The policy that new development should pay a proportional share for road improvements was the most common financing strategy. CTEP was noted as a funding source for trails. Impact fees, Special Improvement Districts (SIDs), and grants were mentioned as other possible funding sources.

H. Public Facilities

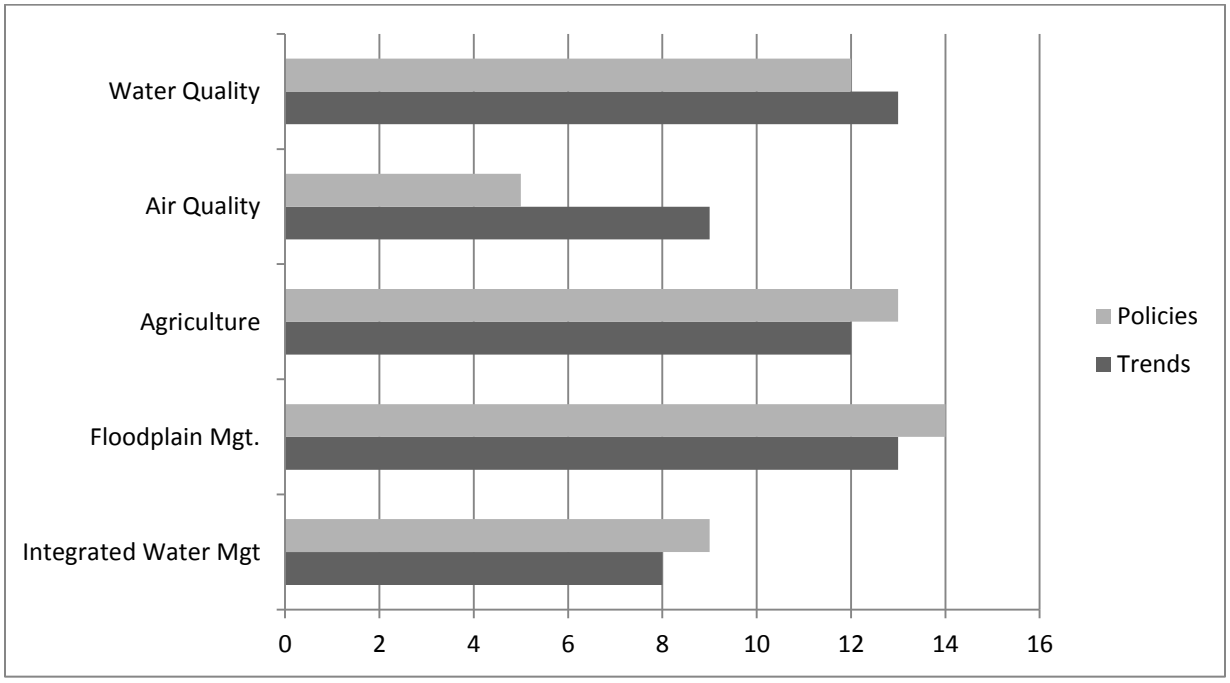


Notes:

1. While most growth policies had information on water and sewer systems, it was often incomplete. A full description for water systems should include water supply, storage capacity, treatment plants, distribution systems, usage, water quality issues, and planned upgrades. A full description of wastewater systems should include treatment plants, collection systems, capacity, discharge, water quality, and planned upgrades.
2. Information sources for water systems and wastewater systems may include facility plans, Preliminary Engineering Reports (PERs), interviews or source water assessment reports (http://www.deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/swp/default.mcpx). Typical policies included:
    - Undertake measures to protect source water
    - Require subdivisions to annex in order to hook up to water and sewer systems
    - Conduct preventative maintenance for more efficient use of systems
    - New developments should not exceed capacity of system or lower existing level of service
    - Promote water conservation
    - Develop facility plans
    - Work with state agencies to meet water quality standards
    - Coordinate with regional water systems
3. Parks – A list of parks facilities was the most common type of information. No growth policies had maps or level of service analysis. Strategies for parks included:
    - Policies for park dedication as part of a new subdivision
    - Develop a park and recreation plan
    - Use partnerships to develop park and rec facilities
4. Energy – Policies to encourage wind energy, energy conservation and green building techniques.
5. Wells – Septic - Data and maps available from http://maps2.nris.mt.gov/mapper
6. Financing policies included:
    - Conduct cost-benefit analysis before expanding to new developments
    - Funding from user fees, grants, SIDs, impact fees, partnerships
    - New development should pay proportional share for upgrades

- Concurrency or adequate facilities requirements

I. Natural Resources



Notes:

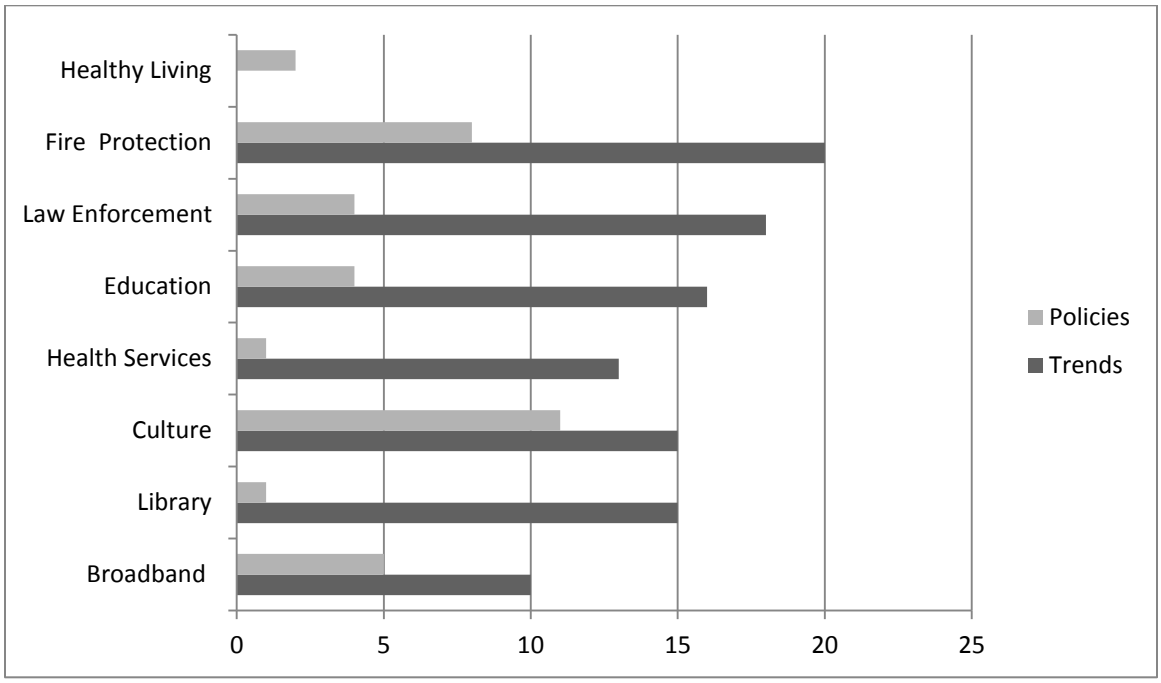
1. Information on water quality and Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL) is available from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (http://www.deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/TMDL/default.mcpx)
2. Water quality policies include:
    - Promote Best Management Practices (BMPs) for agriculture and construction
    - Landowner education on BMPs, grants, and planning efforts
    - Adopt wellhead protection zones
    - Address groundwater contamination from failing septic systems
    - Adopt performance standards for industrial/commercial uses to protect water quality
3. Air quality policies include coordinating with regulatory agencies and reducing VMTs to lessen auto emissions.
4. Agriculture info included statistics on farms and soils maps showing prime farmland. Policies included the following:
    - Right to Farm policies (primarily in county growth policies)
    - Protect prime farmland
    - Encourage use of conservation easements
    - Study impacts of Conservation Reserve Program (primarily found in county growth policies)
    - Promote soil conservation practices
5. Flood Control information was limited to a general description of the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) requirements. Only four growth policies actually contained maps of flood zones or flood prone areas. Policies addressing flooding issues, however, were more common. These policies included:
    - New development should have stormwater management plans
    - Discourage development in the floodplain
    - Use natural drainage techniques
    - Update, enforce, and adopt floodplain ordinance
    - Update floodplain maps (some counties still require floodplain mapping)

- Work with FEMA on programs dealing with floodplain issues (Community Rating System, Grants)
- Coordinate with the Milk River – St. Mary's Canal project

6. Less than half of growth policies had objectives that integrated land use planning with water quality. Those that had policies included:
    - Coordinate with watershed planning groups
    - Adopt streamside setback requirements
    - Acquire riparian areas to use as parks and to promote water quality
    - Reduce non-point pollution through better storm water management techniques
    - Reduce erosion and sedimentation through better land planning

7. Other – The natural resource elements contained additional subject areas that were not identified by HUD as indicators. These included:
    - Fish and wildlife habitat
    - Noxious weeds
    - Scenic resources
    - Climate (drought, growing season, etc.)
    - Earthquake hazards
    - Mineral – oil – gas development (more likely to be found in county growth policies)
    - Irrigation (more likely to be found in county growth policies)
    - Access to public lands and coordination with public land agencies

J. Local Services



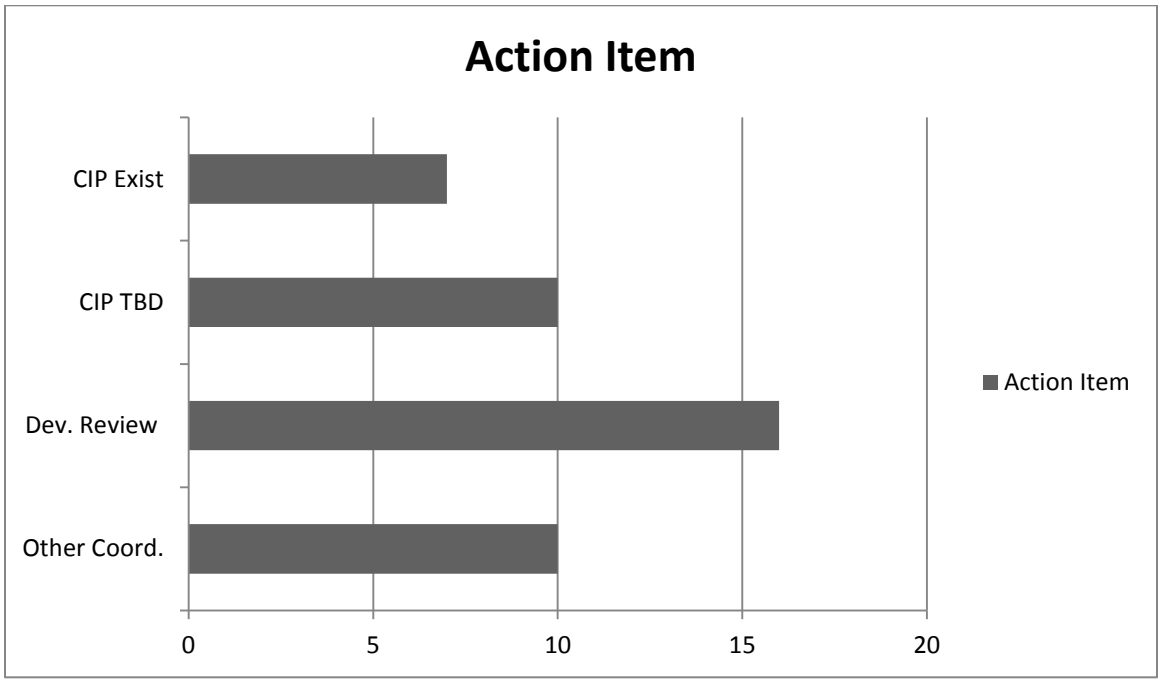
1. There were no policies or data on healthy food choices. A few had "Healthy Living" policies such as:
    - Work with social service agencies to expand substance abuse treatment and prevention
    - Work with public health department to improve public sanitation
    - Adopt urban design standards to promote mobility, walkability, and fitness
    - Consider health impacts as part of land use decisions
2. Sources for information on fire protection, Emergency Management Services (EMS), and law-enforcement services are the FEMA-funded "Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plans." "Community Wildfire Protection Plans" (CWPP) have information on fire hazards in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Typical policies for public safety included:
    - Support efforts to recruit volunteers for rural volunteer fire departments
    - Promote "Firewise" strategies in WUI.
    - Discourage building on steep slopes in WUI
    - Provide appropriate ingress/egress access for fire equipment
3. Most growth policies had a list of law enforcement agencies and information on facilities and staff. A few had crime stats from http://mbcc.mt.gov/Data/crimedata/crimedata.asp. Policies included:
    - Coordinate with other departments – mutual aid agreements
    - Promote anti-drug education (D.A.R.E.)
    - Support increased funding for public safety
    - Support forming citizen/neighborhood watch groups
    - Build new jail
4. Education – Most had K-12 enrollment data. A few had post-secondary info. The Office of Public Instruction has enrollment data: http://opi.mt.gov/ReportsandData/Measurement/Index.html. Only a few documents had goals or objective regarding education. Of those that did, policies included:
    - Coordinate with schools on facility planning
    - Identify joint projects with schools on parks and community meeting space

- Support grants and other funding opportunities for education
- Promote adaptive reuse of closed schools
- Discourage incompatible land uses from locating next to schools
- Promote technology to increase educational opportunities for all residents

5. Health Services – Most growth policies included an inventory of available health services. A few had health profiles that are available from MT Dept. of Public Health and Human Services: http://nris.mt.gov/epht/report.aspx. Only one growth policy had a general policy to support existing health services.
6. Library – Statistics: http://msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/For_Public_Librarians/Statistics/default.asp
7. Culture – A few growth policies had information an inventory of historic sites and museums. Some policies regarding culture included:
    - Promote cultural and heritage tourism
    - Promote historic preservation activities (rehabilitate historic structures, certified local government program, create historic districts, promote listing on national register)
    - Include interpretive signs in parks and at public buildings
    - Improve county fairgrounds
    - Promote events in the community that celebrate local culture/heritage
    - Develop community or teen center
8. Growth policies had limited data on broadband services. Since the adoption of almost all of the growth policies, however, the State of Montana has mapped the location and type of broadband services. The broadband maps are available at: http://www.broadband.mt.gov/. Broadband and communication policies that were mentioned included:
    - Improve cell phone service
    - Work with providers to promote Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH)
    - Promote the establishment of public wi-fi hot spots
    - Promote telecommuting and internet businesses
    - Develop a telecommunications strategic plan
9. Other – In addition to the above topics other common topics included:
    - Local government services
    - Aging services
    - Social services - Mental Health

Note: Chippewa Cree Health Complex Community Recovery Master Plan is a resource document prepared for the Rocky Boy Reservation that addresses a number of local services.

K. Implementation and Intergovernmental Coordination



Notes:

1. Seven growth policies specifically referenced existing Capital Improvement Plans. All but one of these were municipalities.
2. Ten growth policies had action items to develop a Capital Improvement Plan.
3. The MCA requires that growth policies have a statement of intergovernmental coordination. About half of the growth policies included information on how cities and counties would coordinate on development review applications. Ten Growth policies mentioned other intergovernmental coordination activities such as:
    - Coordinate with tribal governments on planning issues
    - Coordinate with regional economic development agencies to promote recommendations in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs)
    - Notify other public agencies and organizations (schools, watershed groups, rural fire districts, water and sewer districts, and utilities) of major development applications
    - Participate in planning processes for public lands (USFS Forest Plans, BLM)
    - Participate in joint planning efforts and tasks forces (i.e. St. Mary's Canal)
    - Information sharing with state and federal agencies on planning tools and resources
    - Request input of public agencies and other organizations on proposed regulations
    - Interlocal agreement between cities to share public works equipment
4. More than half the growth policies listed various grants that could be used as funding resources to implement the plan. Only one growth policy (Chouteau County) specifically referenced the HUD/EPA/DOT sustainability partnership as a funding source.

Part V: Appendix

Appendix A: Livability Principles

Partnership for Sustainable Communities

Livability Principles

Provide more transportation choices.
Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.

Promote equitable, affordable housing.
Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.

Enhance economic competitiveness.
Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.

Support existing communities.
Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.

Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.
Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.

Value communities and neighborhoods.
Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

(*Source:* *http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/aboutUs.html#2*)

Appendix B: Glossary

Best Management Practice (BMP)	BMP's are practices that have been adopted to minimize non-point source water pollution from forestry, agricultural and construction activities. While not required by regulation, the use of BMP's has been widely accepted by the forest products industry, producers, tribal and other agencies. The use of voluntary BMP's has proven to be an effective tool in limiting non-point pollution. http://dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/Assistance/Practices/bmp.asp www.deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/MPDES/pdfs/MT_BMP_FieldGuide.pdf
Brownfield	The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines brownfields as real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. http://deq.mt.gov/brownfields/default.mcpx
Bubble Diagram	Bubble diagrams consist of a series of circles or rounded shapes overlayed on a base map to indicate the general land use within the area. These land uses are designated in accordance with the base layer and the goals and objectives within the growth policy. The shapes roughly correspond to the landscape, but they are not specific and lack detail.
Capital Improvement Plan	A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a budgeting and financial tool used by a local governing body to establish public works rehabilitation and maintenance priorities and to establish funding for repairs and improvements. The CIP includes planning, setting priorities, effective public works management, financial management, and community decision process. www.comdev.mt.gov/content/Publications/docs/CIPManualOCT.pdf
Certified Local Government Program	Montana's Community Preservation program is also known as the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. In partnership with the National Park Service under the National Historic Preservation Act, the program certifies local governments with historic preservation programs and provides technical preservation assistance. In the past, each city received $1,000 to $5,000, depending on their level of activity and the federal allocation, to spend in ways that best assist their community's local preservation needs. Great Falls and Havre have CLG programs. http://mhs.mt.gov/shpo/communitypres.asp
Community Rating System (CRS)	The National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program that encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. Communities that participate may be able to obtain discounted flood insurance premium rates to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community actions. Great Falls, Cascade County and Belt participate in the CRS program. http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program/community-rating-system
Concurrency	A finding by the approving authority that basic services are adequate to serve a proposed development. http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/toolkit/m1/pptools/gm/capfo.shtml
Conservation easements	The grant of a property right(s) requiring that the described land will remain as open space or be managed for conservation purposes in perpetuity. See MCA 76-6-2 for provisions to establish a conservation easement.
Cost – Benefit analysis	An analytical method whereby the actual and hidden costs of a proposed project are measured against the benefits to be received from the project.
Conservation Reserve Program	The Conservation Reserve Program goals are to reduce soil erosion, protect the Nation's ability to produce food and fiber, reduce sedimentation in streams and lakes, improve water quality, establish wildlife habitat, and enhance forest and wetland resources. It encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover such as tame or native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filterstrips, or riparian buffers. Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the multi-year contract. Cost sharing is provided to establish the vegetative cover practices. www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/technical/nra/ceap/?cid=stelprdb1041269
Community Transportation Enhancement Program	Federal highway funding has required that a certain portion of funds be set aside for non-motorized transportation related improvements. Such improvements can be trails, pedestrian enhancements, landscaping, interpretive signs or historic preservation measures and other similar improvements. The current transportation bill will have a new funding process for local governments. http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/ctep/

D.A.R.E.	D.A.R.E. is a police officer-led series of classroom lessons that teaches children from kindergarten through 12th grade how to resist peer pressure and live productive drug and violence-free lives. http://www.dare.com/home/default.asp
Firewise	The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Firewise Communities program encourages local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters, and others in the effort to protect people and property from wildfire risks. http://www.firewise.org/
Flood Zone	Flood zones are geographic areas that the FEMA has defined according to varying levels of flood risk. These zones are depicted on a community's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) or Flood Hazard Boundary Map. Each zone reflects the severity or type of flooding in the area. https://msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/info?storeId=10001&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&content=floodZones&title=FEMA%2520Flood%2520Zone%2520Designations
Fiscal Impact Analysis	A report projecting the public costs and tax revenues that will result from a proposed program or development
Green energy (Clean energy)	Clean energy includes energy efficiency and clean energy supply options like highly efficient combined heat and power as well as renewable energy sources. http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/
Functional Street Classification	The grouping of streets and highways into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. The recognition that individual roads do not serve travel independently and most travel involves movement through a network of roads is a basic tenet of the classification system. http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/manuals.shtml#transport
Household hazardous waste	Household hazardous wastes include products that are toxic and harmful to the environment. Household hazardous wastes consist of dangerous chemicals that have the potential to catch fire, explode or negatively react, or have corrosive properties. Household hazardous waste (HHW) is that portion of a household product which is no longer usable, leftover or not wanted and has to be discarded or disposed. Many household products contain toxic ingredients and should not be discarded with the trash when other options are available. http://deq.mt.gov/Recycle/HouseholdHW.mcpx
Impact Fee	Impact fees are charges imposed upon private land developers by a governmental entity to fund the additional service capacity required by the development for which it is collected (7-6-1602). http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/toolkit/m1/ftools/dei/if.shtml
Impervious area	Impervious area is comprised primarily of pavement surfaces such as asphalt, concrete, brick, and stone that are used for construction of roads, sidewalks, driveways and parking lots. Impervious surfaces are a concern because they prevent rainwater infiltration and natural groundwater recharge. Stormwater run-off from impervious surfaces contains non-point pollution from gasoline, motor oil, pet waste, sediment and other debris. The warm runoff from impervious surfaces reduces dissolved oxygen in stream water, making life difficult in aquatic ecosystems. Impervious surfaces can create urban "heat islands" and increase energy consumption in buildings.
Level of Service	Level of Service (LOS) is a set of criteria that describes the degree to which a public facility is effectively serving the population. In transportation planning, for example, intersections are rated at how well traffic moves through the intersection during peak hour. LOS standards can also be applied to parks, parking facilities, water treatment plans and wastewater facilities.
National Register of Historic Places	The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/
Neighborhood Plan (Sub-area plan)	Section 76-1-601of the MCA provides for the adoption of neighborhood plans to be adopted as part of a growth policy. The plan provides more detailed planning for a specified area within the jurisdiction.

Non-point pollution	Non-point source (NPS) water pollution comes from contaminants (originating from a variety of land-use activities over generally large areas) that are transported to streams, lakes, wetlands, and groundwater by precipitation, snowmelt, and stormwater runoff. Non-point pollution also comes from substances that erode directly into surface waters or from aerially transported substances deposited on land and water. Common non-point pollutants include sediment, nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), temperature changes, metals, pesticides, pathogens, and salt. www.deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/nonpoint/nonpointsourceprogram.mcpx
Park land dedication	A subdivider is required to dedicate to the governing body a cash or land donation equal to be used for purposes of providing park land. MCA Section 76-3-621 contains specific formulas to determine the amount of land or cash to be donated as well as requirements for use of the funds.
Performance standards	Land use regulations whose main purpose is the protection of important environmental features. Regulations control intensity and other performance measures and how it impacts adjacent lands and public facilities.
Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plans	The Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Plans are funded by the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA). These plans and projects are intended to reduce overall risks to the population and structures from natural and man-made disasters, while also reducing reliance on funding from actual disaster declarations. They typically included an inventory of community emergency resources, an assessment of risks, and strategies to respond to different types of disasters. http://www.fema.gov/pre-disaster-mitigation-grant-program
Prime Farmland	Farmland classification identifies map units as prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, farmland of local importance, or unique farmland. It identifies the location and extent of the soils that are best suited to food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/
Right to Farm	Right to farm policies are intended to provide notice to potential home buyers in rural areas that they should be aware of potential nuisances from standard farming practices. Agricultural nuisances may include noise, odors, visual clutter and dangerous structures. Every state has some form of a right-to-farm law.
Special Improvement Districts (SIDs)	Under 7-12-4101, MCA, cities, and towns can create special improvement districts for infrastructure improvements. SIDs are financing mechanisms to create a district and property owners within the district are assessed for improvements benefiting the district. Typically, assessments are paid in installments over 20 years and calculated as part of the property tax bill.
Sustainable agriculture	Sustainable agriculture was addressed by Congress in the 1990 Farm Bill. Under that law, "the term sustainable agriculture means an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term: • satisfy human food and fiber needs • enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends • make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls • sustain the economic viability of farm operations • enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/terms/srb9902.shtml
Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL)	A TMDL is the maximum amount of a pollutant a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards. The goal of TMDLs is to eventually attain and maintain water quality standards in all of Montana's streams and lakes, and to improve water quality to levels that support all state-designated beneficial water uses. http://www.deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/TMDL/default.mcpx
Transportation Demand Management	Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies focus on identifying alternatives to single occupant vehicle use during commuting hours. Therefore, such things as carpooling, vanpooling, transit use, walking and bicycling for work purposes are most often associated with TDM. Other TDM measures include flextime, a compressed workweek, and telecommuting. TDM may also include route choice to decrease congestion. www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/hamilton/docs/final_chap7.pdf
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is one of the most widely used measures of travel intensity. For a given segment of roadway, the VMT is obtained by multiplying ADT by the length of the roadway segment. VMT is a measure of total vehicle activity. The goal of reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled

	(VMT) is an official goal of the Clean Air Act (CAA), the President's 1993 Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), and the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and is included in both the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), U.S.C. 23, Section 149. http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/pubs/pl08021/fig2_4.cfm
Watershed	A watershed is any sloping surface that sheds water. Often, the term refers to a drainage basin or area of land that discharges its surface waters through a single outlet or stream. A large stream like the Missouri River can drain a huge land area and encompass a watershed of thousands of square miles. The watershed approach recognizes the geographic basin as a logical organizing entity for natural resource management. Participants in watershed groups come from diverse backgrounds and hold varying perspectives and concerns. Identifying shared values and finding opportunities for agreement is central to the watershed approach. http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_mgmt/watershed_planning/default.asp http://mtwatersheds.org/Watersheds/StateWatershedMaps.html
Wellhead Protection Area	The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) defines a Wellhead Protection Area as: "the surface and subsurface area surrounding a water well or wellfield, supplying a public water system, through which contaminants are reasonably likely to move toward and reach such water well or wellfields." The size of the WHPA will vary from site to site depending on a number of factors, including the goals of the State's Program and the geologic and hydrogeologic features of the area. Source water assessments that have been completed for public water systems define the WHPA. These are available at: http://nris.mt.gov/wis/swap/swapquery.asp
Wetland	Wetlands are the link between the land and the water. They are transition zones where the flow of water, the cycling of nutrients, and the energy of the sun meet to produce a unique ecosystem characterized by hydrology, soils, and vegetation—making these areas very important features of a watershed. Wetlands are valuable for providing flood and erosion control, enhancing water quality and providing wildlife and fish habitat. http://www.deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/Wetlands/default.mcpx
Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)	The wildland-urban interface (WUI) is defined as the line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. Typically, Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), will define the WUI as, “the wildland-urban interface is defined as a group of homes and other structures with basic infrastructure and services within or adjacent to Federal land; in which conditions are conducive to a large scale wildfire event; and for which a significant threat to human life or property exists as a result of a wildland fire disturbance event.”