

CHAPTER 11

COORDINATION

INTRODUCTION

Montana law (MCA 76-1-601) (3) outlines the requirements for Growth Policies, stating growth policies must contain (f) *an implementation strategy that includes:* (g) *a statement of how the governing bodies will coordinate and cooperate with other jurisdictions that explains:*
...*how the governing body will coordinate and cooperate with the county in which the city or town is located on matters related to the growth policy;...*

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This chapter is intended to meet the requirement of state law by outlining the various mechanisms to facilitate coordination with Lewis and Clark County and East Helena. In addition, this section will examine potential opportunities to coordinate development with the federal government, State of Montana, and Broadwater and Jefferson Counties. Inter-governmental coordination may include public participation so people can be involved in issues that may affect them.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

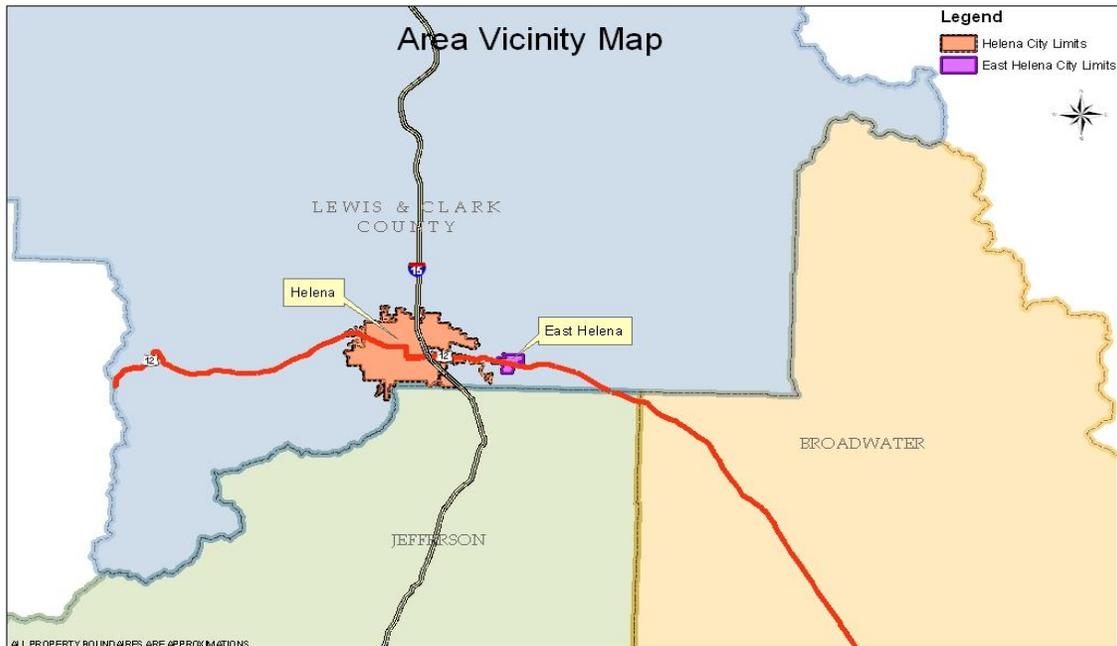
The City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County are served by numerous joint administrative and advisory boards. These boards or committees work together to address problems and opportunities that are not confined to a single jurisdiction.

Joint administrative boards include City-County Building Board of Directors, City/County Health Board, Lewis and Clark City/County Library Board, Information Technology and Services Board, and the Support Services Division. Joint advisory boards include the City-County Parks Board, Helena/Lewis and Clark County Consolidated Planning Board, Helena/Lewis and Clark County Historic Preservation Commission, Intergovernmental Transit Committee, Transportation Coordinating Committee, and the Water Quality District Board.

Joint committees with representatives from the City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County include the joint Infrastructure Committee and the Tri-County Working group. The elected officials for both the City of Helena and the Lewis and Clark County meet monthly to discuss mutual issues.

Area Map

The area vicinity map shows the geographical relationship between Helena, East Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Jefferson County, and Broadwater County.



EXISTING PLANS AND AGREEMENTS

The 2004 Helena Area Transportation Plan documents existing transportation challenges, identifies future improvements that will be needed, and provides transportation recommendations for the City of Helena and the Helena Valley in Lewis and Clark County. More information about this Plan is included under the [TRANSPORTATION](#) chapter of this Growth Policy.

The Transportation Plan is the only adopted joint plan by Helena and Lewis and Clark County. Helena has not undertaken formal planning efforts with the other adjacent local jurisdictions except for the 1985 South Hills Planning Study, and the establishment of the City of Helena-Lewis and Clark County Planning Board which has a regional focus.

The South Hills Planning Study was adopted by the City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County in 1985. Although this study includes northern Jefferson County, it was not adopted by that governing body. This study addressed stormwater drainage, transportation, fire protection, and density in the area located south of the city limits in northern Jefferson County. The study identified road standards and a general development plan. This study became the basis for the Open Space Residential (OSR) zoning district, the City's only extra-territorial zoning district in Lewis and Clark County.

The South Hills Planning Study's Development Plan provides guidance for landowners and public officials to:

- protect natural drainages to reduce the off-site development impacts of flooding, erosion, and sedimentation.
- outline a coordinated transportation system that distributes future traffic as equitably as possible among Helena's neighborhoods, reduces conflicts, and ensures that roads are located in the safest corridors to drive and the least costly to develop and maintain.
- ensure health, safety, and public welfare through the provision of information about the area.
- plan for a mixture of land uses while recognizing topography, natural features, and constraints to development, such as slope, depth to bedrock, soil conditions, and water supply where information is currently available.

The City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County have entered into numerous inter-local agreements, MOUs (memorandums of understanding), joint contracts, and funding agreements, such as vehicle maintenance support, youth services project, DARE program, DUI enforcement, noxious weed management support, fire protection, and impact fee analysis. This list is not all inclusive.

In addition to working with Lewis and Clark County, the City has established operational relationships with the Helena School District; other city administrative boards include the Helena Housing Authority and Helena Airport Authority.

As the state's capital city and home of many state agencies, Helena has the opportunity to directly and frequently interact with the State of Montana (i.e., Montana Departments of Administration, Environmental Quality, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Natural Resources, Transportation, and Commerce), and federal agencies, such as the Economic Development Administration Bureau of Reclamation, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Reserve, and the Forest Service. For example, the City works closely with Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the Federal Highway Commission through the Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC) on transportation issues and plans that affect Helena and the surrounding area, and with Montana Department of Commerce to address low-income housing needs. Additionally, the City has worked in cooperation with state and federal agencies in the residential area around the State Capitol and regarding the redevelopment of state lands.

Noting the inter-relationship of the City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County for extending infrastructure for city and county development, the two governing bodies adopted an MOU in 2009. This MOU recognizes the value of sustainable land development and its necessity in efficiently providing services and infrastructure, such as water and wastewater treatment, parks, transportation networks, and emergency services in the Helena Valley. The MOU is further discussed in the [LAND USE](#) chapter of this Growth Policy and is included in the Appendix.

Urban Standards Area Plan

In July 2009, the City of Helena and Lewis & Clark County entered into a memorandum of understanding ([2009 MOU](#)) in which they agreed, among other things, to “cooperatively develop a plan for sustainable land development in the City of Helena and southern Lewis & Clark County.” The City agreed to “assist and engage with the County to define an urban growth area outside city limits . . .” and to work with the County to establish joint development standards and comprehensive zoning for that urban growth area . . .” which the County agreed to establish and implement by July 1, 2011. This area is now referred to as the Urban Standards Area.

Since both the City of Helena and Lewis & Clark County are now in the process of updating their growth policies, those documents should describe how the two jurisdictions will carry out the intent of the 2009 MOU to “cooperatively develop a plan for sustainable land development” in the urban growth area. The urban standards area could serve as the urban growth area for this purpose.

Subsection 4(c) of Section 76-1-601 MCA, sets forth a planning process cities and counties can choose to follow to help them jointly plan for efficient, sustainable development of an urban growth area currently outside city limits. It would be highly beneficial for the City of Helena and Lewis & Clark County, and perhaps other adjacent jurisdictions willing and able to participate, to jointly complete the planning process set forth in this subsection. An area larger than the urban standards area may be more appropriate for this process. However, to do so may require professional planning resources beyond those currently available in the City and County planning staffs, and it may be necessary to seek assistance from state and federal governments in the form of grants to complete the task in a timely manner. It appears that state and federal grants for regional planning for sustainable communities are available at this time.

The City should, therefore, in consultation with Lewis and Clark County, prepare a proposal outlining a process for joint infrastructure planning for the urban growth area consistent with [76-1-601\(4\)\(c\)MCA](#), with the plan to be completed no later than July 1, 2013. This proposal should be sufficient to serve as the basis for applications for appropriate state or federal regional sustainable community planning grants. This proposal should be final no later than July 1, 2011.

ISSUES RELATED TO COORDINATION

Administratively, the City of Helena has 10 departments with a total of 28 divisions or programs. Coordination is important both internally and externally with other organizations. Often more than one division or department will have an interest in a specific development project, so it is important to maintain effective internal communications.

The City has several functions in place to assist with internal coordination. Bi-weekly pre-application meetings with applicants and city staff provide an opportunity to preliminarily discuss potential land-use proposals and issues. The City and County joint infrastructure committee addresses coordinated infrastructure development requirements and financing options. The City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County are currently analyzing a variety of impact fees that may be appropriate to implement in the future. If these fees are implemented, it will be important to coordinate the effort between the two jurisdictions to minimize economic disparities.

The City of Helena is one local government in a larger setting. Actions undertaken by the City of Helena, East Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Jefferson County, Broadwater County, and other governmental bodies can affect the others. For example, the development requirements of the adjacent counties influence how people evaluate development requirements within the City. Cooperating and coordinating with the adjacent local jurisdictions for subsequent revisions, updates, and implementation of the Helena Growth Policy can help maintain the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. Maintaining open communications with governmental advisory boards, the public and professional staffs of the adjacent jurisdictions can play an important role in intergovernmental relations.

Working effectively with all city departments, local government advisory boards, other governmental jurisdictions, and the public can maintain efficient use of resources, services, and tax payer monies. Coordinating efforts to maximize effectiveness and efficiencies in service delivery for programs, projects, buildings, lands, infrastructure, etc. will continue to be important.

Development in Jefferson and Lewis and Clark County could affect the City's watersheds. Maintaining City facilities that are not located within city boundaries, such as water reservoirs, water treatment plants, open space and parkland, and other facilities that are important to the City, will require working with adjacent jurisdictions. One option for providing coordinated infrastructure to serve a greater geographical area would be to cooperatively plan for a regional wastewater treatment system, designed to city standards.

Traffic from adjacent jurisdictions affects the City of Helena as out-of-city residents travel to and from work, shopping, and entertainment. Increasing awareness of wildfire potential in the hills that span the southern portion of the city, southern Lewis and Clark County, and northern Jefferson County (wildland urban interface) also shows the need for multi-jurisdictional coordination. Because of these interactions, establishing

cooperative approaches can provide an effective means to address challenges. Options to address this coordination are included in the [Appendix](#).

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal:

Cooperate and coordinate with East Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Jefferson County, Broadwater County, and any other adjacent local jurisdictions as needed for land use development issues to the extent possible.

Objectives:

1. Support consistency and integrity of planning efforts for facilities, services, and land uses with adjacent jurisdictions.
2. Explore options for coordinating efforts to maximize effectiveness and efficiencies in service delivery for programs, projects, buildings, lands, infrastructure, etc.
3. For any subsequent revisions, updates, and implementation of the Helena Growth Policy, cooperate and coordinate with other adjacent local jurisdiction as needed.
4. By July 1, 2011, develop a proposal for joint infrastructure planning under 76-1-604 (4)(c) MCA to be completed by July 1, 2013.