

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GROWTH POLICY

What is a Growth Policy and why is it important?

- ◆ Guide for future growth and development
- ◆ Identifies community values
- ◆ Establishes today's data and anticipates future needs
- ◆ Identifies solutions and priorities
- ◆ Becomes the basis for implementation of the identified vision
- ◆ Is not a regulatory document
- ◆ Cannot be used as sole basis for denial or imposing conditions for any land use approval
- ◆ Can affect land use decisions through the Growth Policy's implementation

Montana law identifies the following use of an adopted growth policy:

(1) Subject to subsection (2), after adoption of a growth policy, the governing body within the area covered by the growth policy pursuant to [76-1-601](#) must be guided by and give consideration to the general policy and pattern of development set out in the growth policy in the:

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

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

(c) adoption of zoning ordinances or resolutions.

(2) (a) A growth policy is not a regulatory document and does not confer any authority to regulate that is not otherwise specifically authorized by law or regulations adopted pursuant to the law.

(b) A governing body may not withhold, deny, or impose conditions on any land use approval or other authority to act based solely on compliance with a growth policy adopted pursuant to this chapter. (76-1-605 MCA)

What are we doing and why?

- ◆ Montana law states Growth Policies should be reviewed at least once every 5 years and revised if necessary
- ◆ Current Growth Policy was adopted in 2001
- ◆ New information has become available since then
- ◆ Updated plan will recognize today's situation and options

What is the process/schedule to update the Growth Policy?

- ◆ Planning Board worksessions
- ◆ Public meetings
- ◆ City Commission worksessions
- ◆ Planning Board public hearings (held in 2010)
- ◆ City Commission public hearings (in 2011)
- ◆ Growth Policy is adopted (in 2011)

What is the Growth Policy projected timeframe? The year 2030

What is the Growth Policy's jurisdictional area? Up to 4 1/2 miles (76-1-505 MCA)

What does a Growth Policy cover?

Montana law states maps and text of existing characteristics and projected trends (76-1-601 MCA):

- ◆ Land use (parks, open space, commercial, residential, public, industrial, appearance)
- ◆ Population
- ◆ Housing needs
- ◆ Economic conditions
- ◆ Local services (police, fire, water, sewer, drainage, etc.)
- ◆ Natural resources (agriculture, timber, gravel, etc.)
- ◆ Other elements proposed by the planning board and adopted by the governing bodies (energy, climate change, cultural)
- ◆ Statement of coordination with other jurisdictions;
- ◆ Provisions for implementation and future revisions
- ◆ Identify relationship to subdivisions

What happens after a Growth Policy is adopted?

The Growth Policy is implemented through:

- ◆ Zoning Regulations
- ◆ Subdivision Regulations
- ◆ Capital improvements
- ◆ City budget
- ◆ Reviewed periodically and updated as needed

Who is the Planning Board and what do they do?

- ◆ 9-member volunteer advisory body to the City and County Commissions
- ◆ Serve 3-year terms (for up to 2 terms)
- ◆ 4 city residents appointed by the City Commission
- ◆ 4 county residents appointed by the County Commission
- ◆ 1 resident jointly appointed by the City and County Commissions
- ◆ Hold public hearings and provide recommendations to the City and County Commissions for:
 - ◆ Growth Policies
 - ◆ Subdivision Regulations
 - ◆ Subdivisions

Montana law states the following purpose for planning boards: (1) *It is the object of this chapter to encourage local units of government to improve the present health, safety, convenience, and welfare of their citizens and to plan for the future development of their communities to the end that highway systems be carefully planned; that new community centers grow only with adequate highway, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities; that the needs of agriculture, industry, and business be recognized in future growth; that residential areas provide healthy surroundings for family life; and that the growth of the community be commensurate with and promotive of the efficient and economical use of public funds.* (76-1-102 MCA)