

#### **BOARD of COMMISSIONERS**

#### COUNTY OF CARBON • STATE OF MONTANA

Post Office Box 887 Red Lodge, MT 59068

Phone: (406) 446-1595

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#### RESOLUTION 2015-02 GROWTH POLICY

A resolution by the Carbon County Board of Commissioners adopting an update to the 2009 Carbon County Growth Policy in accordance with MCA 76-1-604.

WHEREAS: The Carbon County Board of Commissioners adopted the County's first Comprehensive Plan in 1978 which operated as the community's guiding document for over twenty years, AND;

WHEREAS: When Montana's state planning statute was updated in 1999, the County followed suit by adopting a Growth Policy in 2003 and followed with an update in 2009, AND;

WHEREAS: The Carbon County Board of Commissioners is desirous of establishing and maintaining up to date growth management regulations including, but not limited to, a Growth Policy, Subdivision, Development and Floodplain Regulations, intended to protect the public's health, safety and welfare, AND;

WHEREAS: The Carbon County Board of Commissioners is statutorily required to update and examine the Growth Policy on a time frame not to exceed 5 calendar years, AND;

WHEREAS: Following extensive public outreach and stakeholder involvement as part of the Growth Policy update, the Carbon County Planning Board held a public hearing on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014, and January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and recommended adoption of the updated Growth Policy to the Carbon County Board of Commissioners, AND;

WHEREAS: The Carbon County Board of Commissioners held a public hearing on March 2, 2015.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Carbon County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts Resolution No. 2015-02 adopting the 2015 Growth Policy Update in accordance with MCA 76-1-604.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CARBON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS THIS 2<sup>nd</sup> DAY OF MARCH, 2015.

Dated this 26th day of January, 2015

Carbon County Commissioners

John E. Prinkki Presiding Officer Doug Tucker Commissioner

John L. Grewell Commissioner

**ATTEST** 

Marcia Henigman, Clerk and Recorder

#### RESOLUTION

#### CARBON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

A resolution by the Carbon County Planning Board recommending approval of an update to the 2009 Carbon County Growth Policy to the Carbon County Board of Commissioners in accordance with MCA 76-1-603.

WHEREAS: The Carbon County Board of Commissioners adopted the County's first Comprehensive Plan in 1978 which operated as the community's guiding document for over twenty years, AND;

WHEREAS: When Montana's state planning statute was updated in 1999, the County followed suit by adopting a Growth Policy in 2003 and followed with an update in 2009, AND;

WHEREAS: The Carbon County Planning Board and Board of Commissioners is desirous of establishing and maintaining up to date growth management regulations including, but not limited to, a Growth Policy, Subdivision, Development and Floodplain Regulations, intended to protect the public's health, safety and welfare, AND;

WHEREAS: Carbon County is statutorily required to update and examine the Growth Policy on a time frame not to exceed 5 calendar years, AND;

WHEREAS: Following extensive public outreach and stakeholder involvement as part of the Growth Policy update, the Carbon County Planning Board held a public hearing on December 16th, 2014, continued to January 20<sup>th</sup>, AND:

WHEREAS: After consideration of the recommendations and suggestions elicited at the public hearing, MCA 76-1-603 requires the Carbon County Planning Board to forward a recommendation to the Carbon County Commission on the adoption of the updated Growth Policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Carbon County Planning Board hereby recommends that the 2015 update to the Carbon County Growth Policy be adopted by the Carbon County Board of Commissioners as drafted.

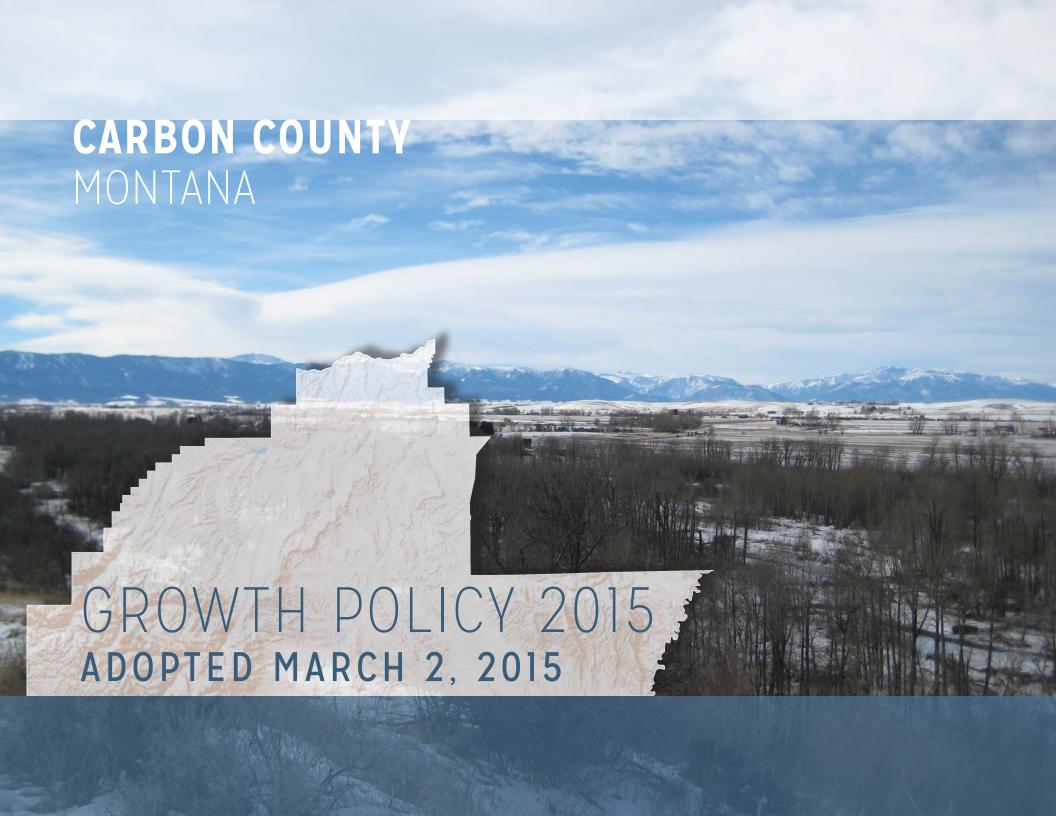
PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CARBON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD THIS 20th DAY OF JANUARY, 2015.

CARBON/COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Julie Jones, Chair

ATTEST:

Diann Larson, Secretary





### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This growth policy was made possible by the contributions and cooperative input from numerous citizen participants, local stakeholders, county and city staff members, and elected and appointed officials. The project team thanks all those that participated, including the following:

#### **Carbon County Commission**

John Grewell, District 2, Presiding Officer John Prinkki, District 3 Doug Tucker, District 1

#### **Carbon County Planning Board**

David Alsager
Annette Anderson
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Mike Creeden
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Mike Shara

#### **Growth Policy Prepared By:**



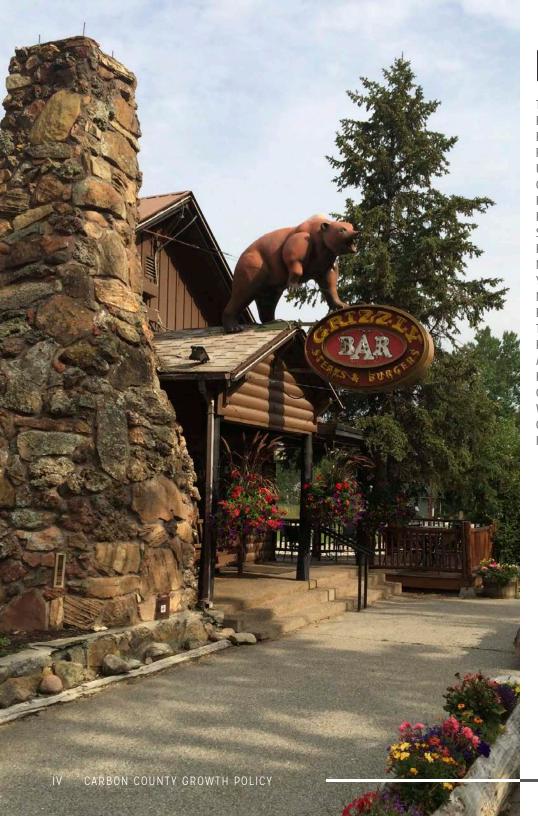
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# CTA Project Team Brent Moore, Project Manager Anna Claire Davis Dave Dixon

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# INTRODUCTION This plan expresses the citizen's vision for sensible growth and development that preserves and

enhances the community's quality of life and rural character.

This growth policy will provide decision makers with a resource for balancing diverse goals while creating a more vibrant, sustainable community. It is also the voice of local residents and formalizes how they want the County to grow in the future.

This plan is intended to be easily understood by the local citizenry and used as an educational tool on the county's broad land use issues and opportunities. It aims to simplify, clarify, and update previously compiled sections only when substantial shifts

have occurred that necessitate revisions. It is a plan for the future focusing primarily on the physical and economic issues pertinent in our present economy. This can best be summarized with a quote from notable educator and business consultant, Peter Drucker:

"Long-range planning does not deal with future decisions, but with the future of present decisions."

#### This growth policy is:

- General and long-range
- Enabling for future public policy decisions
- Focused on physical and economic development
- Responsive to the community's goals and objectives

#### **Local Planning History**

Carbon County's first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1978 and operated

as the community's guiding document for over twenty years. When Montana's state planning statute was updated in 1999, the County followed suit by adopting a growth policy in 2003 and followed with an update in 2009. The terms growth policy and comprehensive plan are sometimes used synonymously and both represent valuable tools for consensus-based policy planning and community development.

#### Plan Approach and Methods

The first phase of plan development involved data collection, identifying local population and housing outlooks, and an analysis of existing conditions. This included county-wide mapping relative to each plan topic to discover trends among the various communities.

Towards the end of this initial discovery phase, consultants completed a field survey of the primary transportation

corridors and the towns along those routes. These are the communities that experience the greatest impacts in terms of traffic and development. The field survey also represented the start of phase two: public engagement.

The second phase of plan development consisted of public input opportunities spread across the County. This not only gave public officials and consultants invaluable guidance on citizen's preferences, but it was also informative for community members. The public came away from these discussions with a better understanding of the challenges the County faces and vice versa. The process of gathering together to envision common goals and objectives is valuable.

The final phase of plan development was publicizing the draft growth policy to gather final comments and feedback.



# 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS Carbon Country is an arrestity with somewrith situated along the base of the Decreast Mountains

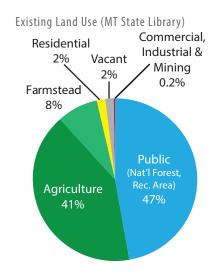
Carbon County is an amenity-rich community situated along the base of the Beartooth Mountains. Valuable resources exist among its diverse landscape.

#### Land Use

The majority of land in Carbon County (47%) is in public use by the Bureau of Land Management, State of Montana, National Park Service or other agencies. Various uses, including livestock grazing, recreation, logging or habitat conservation occur on these lands.

Land Use	Approx. Acres
Public	617,683
Agricultural	537,019
Farmstead	107,684
Residential	22,371
Vacant	20,218
Industrial	1,631
Commercial	662
Mining Claim	351
Utilities	81

About 41% of the county is used for agricultural activities, while about 8% is occupied by farmsteads. Residential land uses account for almost 2%, and 1.5% of county land is vacant. Industrial and commercial uses combine for about 2,300 acres, or about 0.2% of all county land.



#### Land Ownership

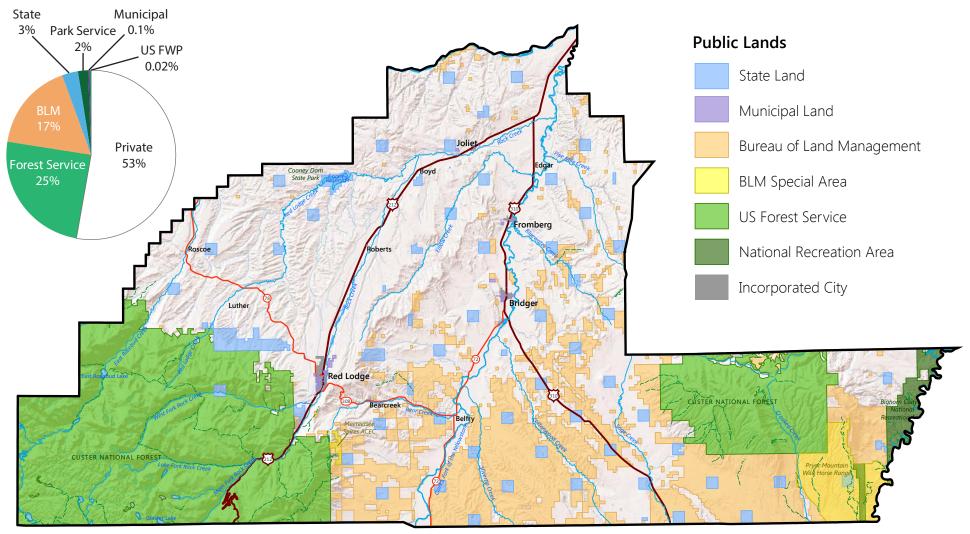
All of the land in the county was included in the Crow Reservation until 1877, when a small area around Red Lodge was withdrawn for coal development. In 1882 and 1892 agreements with the Crow Tribe opened additional lands for settlement. Carbon County was formed in 1895 from portions of Park and Yellowstone counties.

The lands now in private ownership passed at one time from federal ownership primarily by means of homestead and mineral entry. Approximately 53% of the county is privately-owned land.

Existing Land Ownership by Acre (MT State Library)

Owner	Approx. Acres	
Private	696,500	
US Forest Service	325,600	
Bureau of Land	226,150	
Management		
State of Montana	42,140	
National Park	22,300	
Service		
Municipal	730	
US Fish and Wildlife	270	
Service	270	
Carbon County	130	

Privately-owned lands in the county are generally situated along the Clarks Fork and Rock Creek Valley bottoms and in the north county. The lands in



Public and Private Land (MT State Library)

private ownership are generally lower in elevation, more level, drier, and have more productive soils than publicly owned lands.

Both the Custer and Gallatin National Forests manage land in Carbon County. The majority of the land is managed by the Custer Forest. The Forest Service lands are concentrated in two blocks. The largest block is situated to the south, west and northwest of Red Lodge,

in the southwestern corner of the county. This block of forest land is high in elevation and rugged in character, containing a portion of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Area. Forest Plan management

direction for land uses along the mountain front and wilderness area includes; grazing, wildlife habitat, water quality, multiple use, interpretation along the Beartooth Scenic Byway, and promoting the wild character.

The second block of National Forest lands are located on the southeast flank of the Pryor Mountains. The Forest Plan guidance on uses for the Pryor lands include; grazing, wildlife habitat, wood products, and recommended wilderness. The Forest Service lands are primarily managed from the Beartooth Ranger District located in Red Lodge.

#### **Land Development Patterns**

Platted subdivisions outside of incorporated places in the county cover approximately 12,000 acres. The county contains five incorporated cities and towns (Bearcreek, Bridger, Fromberg, Joliet, and Red Lodge) with an area of about 2,700 acres. There are also several unincorporated communities including Belfry, Boyd, Edgar, Luther, Roberts, Rockvale, Roscoe, and Silesia. Most of the subdivided areas of the county – approximately 80%

of the land area – reside outside of an incorporated city or town, giving the county a large role and responsibility in proving government services. A number of communities that once existed are no longer inhabited. These communities are listed in the history section of the county's 1986 comprehensive plan.

The dominant development pattern during the previous growth policy update was the widespread subdivision of land along Highway 212, largely between Red Lodge and Joliet. While there are fewer large subdivisions, an emerging development pattern is the increasing use of divisions of land exempt from subdivision review. These are typically one- or two-lot subdivisions dispersed throughout the county's sparsely populated areas.

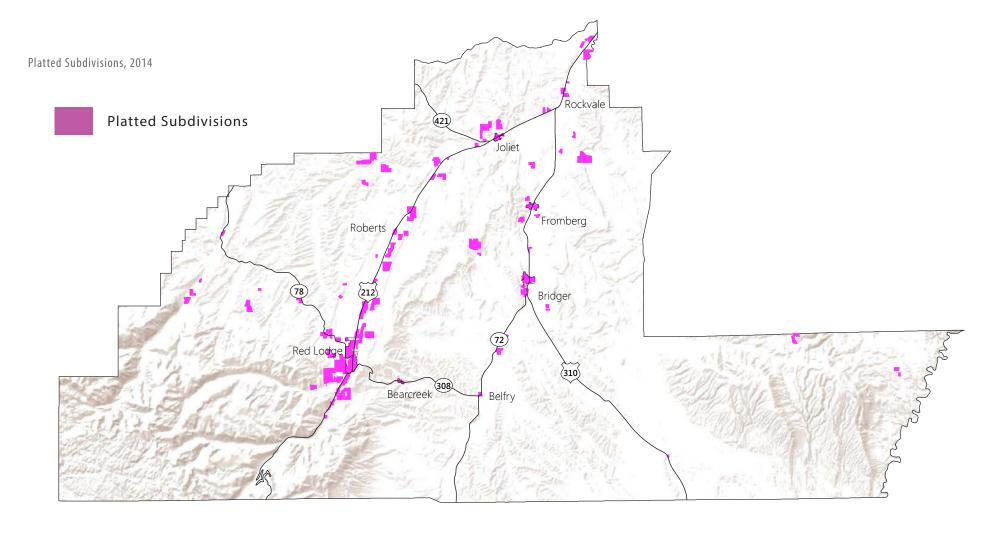
The county planning board has representation from each of the five incorporated communities, the Conservation District, and a member representing each of the three commissioner districts in the county. When a subdivision application that does not meet the summary review provisions is received by the county, the county prepares a staff report and the county planning board holds a public hearing. The planning board then makes one of three possible recommendations to the commissioners, approve the preliminary plat, approve the preliminary plat with conditions, or deny the preliminary plat. Exempt subdivisions do not go before the Planning Board or County Commissioners and may be decided administratively by the Planning Director.

#### <u>Farmland</u>

The amount of land used for farming in 2012 was 791,295

acres, with the county losing about 2,300 acres since 2007. While this is a small change, the number of farms has increased while the average size of farms has decreased. About 77% of land in farms was pastureland Alfalfa and non-alfalfa hay are the most produced crops in the county as of 2013 combining for about 63% of total acres of crops planted. Barley was the thirdmost produced, with 12% of the total. Corn, sugarbeets, winter and spring wheat, dry beans and oats are other major crops, all combining for 19% of the total.

Geographically, the largest acreage of farmland is near the confluence of Rock Creek and the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone. Flat alluvial soils here provide ideal conditions for growing sugarbeets, corn, alfalfa and barley. Abundant farmland exists along the Clark's Fork valley, while some alfalfa and non-alfalfa hay is farmed in the Rock Creek valley. Most of the county is grass and shrubland.



#### **Livestock and Ranching**

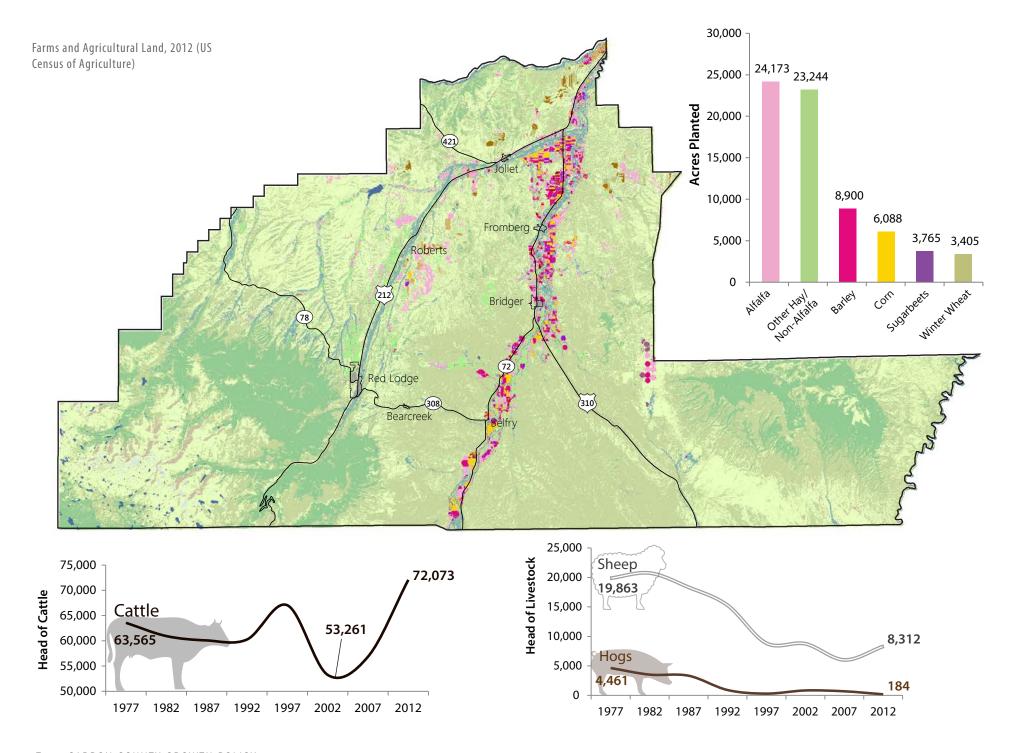
The climate and topography of Carbon County is ideal for ranching and livestock production, which is a significant component of the

county's economy. Carbon
County ranks 5th in the state for
value of sales of horses, ponies,
mules, burros and donkeys; 11th
in the state for value of sheep
goats, wool and mohair; and
13th in the state for value of
cattle.

Livestock production has fluctuated over the past 35 years, with number of cattle seeing the largest swings. Cattle production was at a recent high in 2012 with 72,000 head. A historical low of 53,261 head

of cattle was hit just ten years before.

Sheep and hogs have seen a historic decline since the 1970s, with sheep recently experiencing a resurgence



back to 1997 levels (around 8,500 animals). Hog production has declined and remained low with only 184 animal units inventoried in the 2012 Agricultural Census.

#### People

Carbon County's population growth has remained fairly stable in recent years despite the national recession and the community's semi-rural locale. Some cities and towns have declined and since stabilized, while Joliet stands out, seeing almost 9% growth in the last five years.

#### Rural and Urban Population

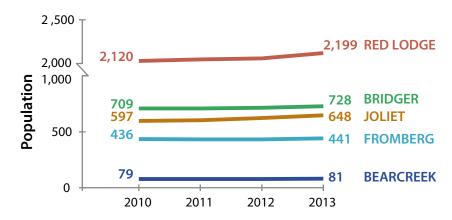
Since the 2009 update, the number of people living in unincorporated rural areas has increased 18% while the overall population of incorporated cities and towns has decreased by 8%, although both have seen growth in recent years.

#### Age and Gender

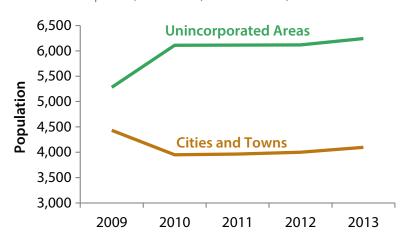
With a median age of 49.3 in 2013, Carbon County is almost ten years older than the rest of the state (39.8 years) and the US (37.6 years). The county's median family size of 2.85 also reflects the aging population when compared to the state (2.95), and the country (3.21), as older families generally do not have children in their households.

The age and gender composition is not unlike other rural communities in the state and country. An aging population is illustrated in the County's population pyramid by a "bulge" between the ages of 45 and 74. This is represents the baby boom generation, who typically are still working or near retirement. When this generation retires, there will be a significant change in demand for jobs and healthcare.

Population by Place, 2010 - 2013 (US Census Bureau)



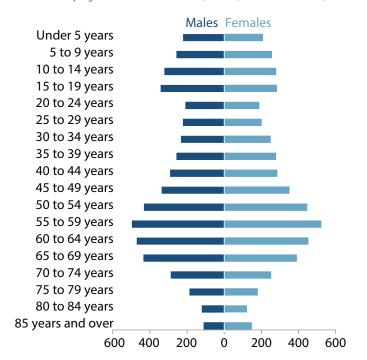
Urban and Rural Population, 2009 - 2013 (US Census Bureau)



A smaller bulge in schoolaged children (ages 5 to 19 years) indicates a balance in the number of families and a potential younger workforce for the county. Conversely, there is a gap between the ages of 19 and 25, most likely meaning that the county's youth are

leaving after completing high school or turning 18 as they seek employment or education elsewhere in the state or region. This lack of working-aged youths may indicate job opportunities or education is lacking in Carbon County.

#### Carbon County Age and Gender Estimates, 2012 (US Census Bureau)



#### **Racial Composition**

By 2012 estimates, the most prevalent race in Carbon County is White at 95.7%, with Hispanic or Latino the second largest at about 2%. These figures are similar to those found in the 2010 census. American Indian and Alaska Native is third at 1.1%, which is higher than in 2010 but lower than the rest of the state (6%).

#### Racial Composition Estimates, 2012 (US Census Bureau)

Race (2012 Estimates)	Percent	
White	95.7%	
Hispanic or Latino (of	2.0%	
any race)		
American Indian and	1.1%	
Alaska Native		
Asian	0.7%	
Native Hawaiian and	0.10/	
Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	
Black or African	0.1%	
American		

#### **School Enrollment**

The Montana Office of Public Instruction provides enrollment numbers for schools in the county. Since the 1990s, total enrollment has steadily declined, with the largest losses in elementary students. High school student enrollment has increased through the 2000s, while many small elementary and K-12 schools were annexed or became inactive.

#### **Population Projections**

The 2009 growth policy utilized data from the Montana Department of Commerce's (MDOC) Census & Economic Information Center (CEIC), which projected growth for Montana counties. The projection was for Carbon County to gain about 870 people between 2000 and 2010, or a 9% increase. In reality, the county added 518 people, or grew about 5.5%.

In 2013, the MDOC provided updated population projections to the year 2060. The projection for Carbon County (shown as the red dashed line at right) shows a steady decline after 2010, with the county stabilizing and again gaining population around 2055.

The data, provided by the CEIC and using dynamic prediction

software from Regional Economic Modeling, Inc, project the county will lose about 1,000 in the 40-year span, despite recent population gain.

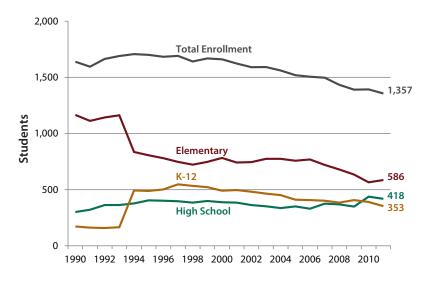
These projections are highly dependent on natural resource development in the county, which is highly unpredictable.
Oil and gas development

elsewhere in the state makes projecting population more complex, as it sways migration patterns within Montana.

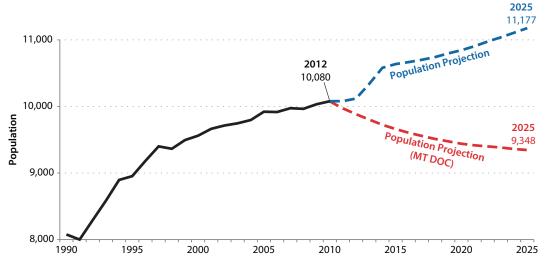
The blue dashed line on the chart below and right displays a simpler alternate projection using a least-squares linear forecast based on the histoical population since 1990. This

projection shows an increasing population, considering Carbon County's population has grown every year since 1991. These two contrasting scenarios rmake evident the challenge of predicting future population change.

School Enrollment, 1990 - 2012, (US Census Bureau)



Population and Projection 1990 - 2025, (US Census Bureau)



#### Housing

Estimates from 2012 indicate there were 6,424 housing units in Carbon County, up from 5,461 in 2005. A Housing Plan was developed in 2009 to inventory housing stock and to understand trends and issues in an effort to address needs. Housing trends were driven by migration from Clarks Fork valley communities to Red Lodge, Joliet and other places along the southern Highway 212 corridor. This left vacant, underutilized and unsound homes in cities and towns in the Clarks Fork valley.

Many of the same issues of housing cost, condition and supply remain. As the population grows in every community in the county, demand for quality and affordable housing will increase.

The 2012 Census ACS provides estimates on the value, condition, supply and ownership of housing units.

#### **Value**

Median home value in Carbon County in 2012 was estimated at \$196,800, higher than the median home value in the state (\$183,000) and the US (\$181,400). Seventy-three percent of housing is owner-occupied. In Carbon County, over half (55%) of owned housing units had a mortgage, with median monthly owner costs being \$1,180.

Median rent in the county was \$700, which is higher than the state median (\$667) but lower than the US (\$889).

#### Age and Condition

Most of the county's towns and cities developed in the late 19th and early 20th century, therefore 32% of housing units in the county were built before 1939. A small building boom occurred in the 1970s. The most recent peak building decade was the 1990s when about 1,000 new units

were constructed. The national housing boom of the 2000s is reflected in the 781 new units built in that decade, however there has been a significant slow down in new home construction since 2010.

Forty-nine occupied housing units lacked complete plumbing facilities, 66 units lacked complete kitchens and 52 units had no telephone service.

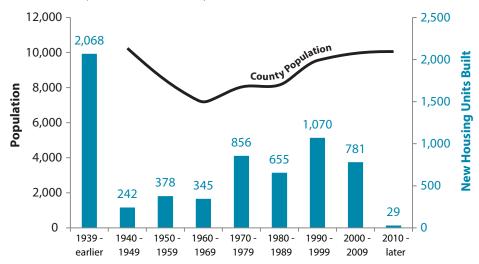
Many of Carbon County's citizens are new residents. Of all current householders, 45%

moved into their home in the 2000s, and 25% moved in during the 1990s. Twenty-three percent of householders moved in before 1989. From 2010 to 2012, 321 new householders moved into their Carbon County home. The peak migration occurred just after the peak in new unit construction.

#### Composition

Of all housing units, 38% were three bedroom houses, 29% had two bedrooms and 14% had four bedrooms. One bedroom

New Units and Population in Carbon County 1939 - 2010, (US Census Bureau)

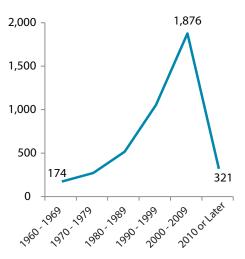


houses are more prevalent in Carbon County than the state or country, while large houses (five bedrooms or more) were slightly less prevalent than the state.

Carbon County's homes have many more cars per house than the state with 41% having three or more vehicles. Statewide this figure is 29% and only 20% of US homes have three or more vehicles available.

Almost all of the county's housing units (98.8%) had one occupant per room. This

1950 - 2010, (US Census Bureau)



indicates low density housing and a probable lack of multiple family dwellings.

#### Demand

One demand calculation uses the number of households compared to the number of housing units to produce an estimate of housing availability or vacancy rate. In 2010, there were an estimated 4,571 households and an estimated supply of 6,441 units. Of these, 1,870 units were vacant. Seasonal or occasional use accounts for 21% of vacant units Year Householder Moved Into Unit, Carbon County and 2% were rentals.

> A "household" consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit. The average number of persons per household is 2.19, lower than the state average. This is likely due to the large percent of seasonal/vacation homes in the county.

#### **Economy**

#### **Sectors and Jobs**

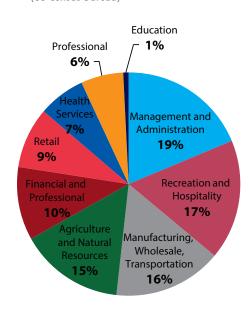
In 2012, the US Bureau of Economic Analysis reported there were 5,156 jobs in Carbon County, down 4.7% from the recent peak in 2007, but up 3.6% from 2002. The county's economy is evenly distributed among sectors, with management and administration (including government services)

being the largest, supporting 19% of all jobs. Recreation and hospitality is the second largest (17%), showing the importance of tourism for the local economy. Manufacturing, wholesale and transportation is the third largest sector, with 16% of all jobs.

The economy has been shifting away from agriculture, manufacturing and retail into

the professional, financial and management sectors. Since 2001, the agriculture and natural resources sector experienced the greatest reduction, losing 191 jobs. Retail experienced a 17% reduction, losing 90 jobs. With 31% growth, the financial and professional sector expanded the most, adding 121 jobs. Recreation and hospitality grew the second most, adding 94 jobs over the 11-year period.

Economic Sectors, 2012 (US Census Bureau)



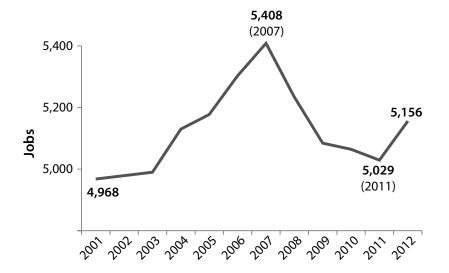
Of all workers living in Carbon County, almost 70% commute to jobs outside the county. About 1,260 people are employed in Carbon County but live outside the county. The top work destination for employees living in the county is Billings (27% of all jobs), followed by Red Lodge (17%), Laurel (3.4%), Bozeman (2.6%), and Joliet (2.3%).

A majority of commuters (64%) drive alone to work in a car, truck or van. Thirteen percent carpooled while 9.5% walked and 1.4% took public transit. Nine percent of workers 16 years and older worked at home. Average commute time was 26 minutes, much longer than the state average of 18 minutes.

#### **Employers**

The top private employers in the county are as follows (by size class then by alphabetical listing as provided by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry - 2nd Quarter 2011).

Number of Jobs in Carbon County, 2001 - 2012 (US Census Bureau)



#### Top County Employers 2013 (MT Dept of Labor and Industry)

Employer	Size
Employer	Class*
Beartooth Billings Clinic	6
Red Lodge Mountain Resort	6
Pollard Hotel	5
Red Lodge Pizza Company	5
Rock Creek Resort	5
Bank of Bridger	4
Beartooth Food Farm	4
Beartooth Industries	4
Cedar Wood Villa	4
Town & Country Supply	4

<sup>\*</sup>Size Class Breakdown:

Size Class 4 = 20-49 employees;

Size Class 5 = 50-99 employees;

Size Class 6 = 100-249 employees.

(Does not include government or tribal employers.)

income into the area. Most often, these "basic" industries bring in revenues by "exporting" products or services. These exports can be manufactured goods, financial services, technology services, or any other number of activities that go far beyond the traditional sectors of mining, agriculture, and forest product industries that have been referred to as the "three-legged stool" or foundation of Montana's economy. In addition to basic industries, other activities such as retirees living off their domestic stock portfolios also bring basic income into the area.

Since 2010, personal income strongly increased for both farm and nonfarm categories, with farm income resurging back into positive figures after seeing net losses. Total personal income is up 15% while per capita personal income increased \$4,891 over the two-year period.

Median household income in the county is estimated at \$47,030, slightly higher than the state median of \$45,456. Average household income is \$59,804, indicating the top half of workers are earning disproportionately more than bottom half.

An estimated 22% of workers earn between \$50,000 and \$74,999.

A US Census survey from 2012 estimates about 1,500 households with earnings are receiving supplemental social assistance of some kind. About 17% of households with earnings are receiving retirement income. The county's unemployment rate for the population 16 years and older is 2.3%, lower than the state rate of 4.5%, and significantly lower the national rate in 2012 (5.9%).

#### Income and Wages

Although employment is an important measure of economic activity, it does not tell the whole story. The health of the economy depends upon the vitality of industries bringing

Personal Income, 2010 -2012 (US Census Bureau)

Income Category	2010	2012	% Change
Personal Income (Thousands of	\$340,837	\$392,102	15%
Dollars)			
Nonfarm Personal Income	\$341,997	\$389,201	14%
Farm Income	-\$1,160	\$2,901	150%
Per Capita Personal Income (Dollars)	\$33,857	\$38,718	14%

#### **Public Services**

#### **Local Government**

The Carbon County government consists of a three-member commission. Each commissioner represents one of three districts in the county, serves a sixyear term, and is elected by all of the electors of the county. The commission elects a presiding officer from among their members annually. In addition to the commission, there are five other elected positions; Treasurer/Assessor/ Superintendant of Schools, Clerk, Sheriff, Clerk of District Court, County Attorney.

Carbon County is home to five incorporated communities.
Four of these communities are classified as towns, Bearcreek, Bridger, Fromberg, and Joliet.
Red Lodge is a city. All of the municipalities in the county have commission-executive forms of government (mayor and council.) Bearcreek and Joliet

have general powers. Bridger has self-governing powers and a charter.

#### Planning and Sanitation

The Planning and Sanitation
Office was staffed and operated
as one department until
2013, when those services
were contracted to private
consultants.

Planning services provided by the Planning Office include; assisting the public and developers in understanding the rules and regulations, subdivision review, survey review, comprehensive planning, floodplain administration and providing support to the planning board. The sanitation services provided include; food service inspections for the approximately 300 restaurants, tourist homes, bed and breakfasts, and bars, inspection of septic system construction and installation, approving plans and issuing septic permits. County administration advises the Board of Health.

Planning services are funded by a combination of subdivision review fees, some state reimbursement, and the taxpayer supported general fund. Grants have been obtained for comprehensive planning. The sanitation services are funded by a combination of permit fees, state reimbursement and General Fund tax revenues.

#### **Law Enforcement**

The Carbon County Sheriff has responsibility for the county-wide dispatch system, coroner duties, and the search and rescue program. The county enforcement staff includes the Sheriff, Undersheriff, Lieutenant, Sargeant, and five deputies. Dispatch staff includes the head dispatcher, five full-time and one part-time permanent dispatchers. The county has a reserve deputy program with 18

individuals currently certified. The sheriff also serves as the County Coroner. The sheriff/ coroner estimates there are approximately 50 unattended deaths per year in the county.

The county search and rescue (SAR) program is comprised entirely of volunteers. Carbon County Search and Rescue averages roughly 30 calls annually and is working with the ambulance service to integrate advanced life support medical care into the program.

Funding for the programs under the sheriff which includes law enforcement, coroner services, and search and rescue has been relatively stable despite the increasing demands of a growing population.

The sheriff's overarching administrative issue is how to provide services to an increasing population under a stable budget scenario. Rural residents' expectations for response are

high, and an increasing number of special promotional events drawing visitors consume more and more patrol staff time.

#### Fire Protection

The county is divided into nine fire districts. From outside the county, Laurel provides fire protection on the Whitehorse Bench area in the north end of the county, and Absarokee provides fire protection for the Roscoe area.

Funding for the departments comes from a variety of sources including the county, fund raisers, donations, grants, special contracts and wildland fire tours with local apparatus.

Issues of concern to the rural fire chiefs are the tax structure to fund operations and apparatus (new fire trucks cost approximately \$250,000), attracting and retaining volunteers, the county radio system, water supply, funds to

purchase personal protective equipment, and the lack of accurate maps. The number of new subdivisions and lots approved which require fire protection is also a concern.

#### <u>Delinieating the Wildland Urban</u> <u>Interface</u>

Home construction in or near forested areas has been increasing over the last 30 years. These areas have been named Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). According to one study, it is estimated WUI covered 9% of all land area in the U.S. and as many as 39% of all structures are in WUI. Wildfires in the WUI can provide unique challenges for firefighters. By delineating the WUI, fire managers and the public can better prepare for these challenges. For instance, structures located in the designated WUI area can have home assessments completed to help the owner better understand specific risks. See

the 2012 Community Wildfire Protection Plan for additional information on the county's significant wildland-urban interface issues.

#### **Ambulance**

Three ambulance services cover Carbon County, each one working in a different geographical area. Red Lodge Ambulance is housed in Red Lodge at the District VII fire station and covers all of Rural Fire District #7 and the southern portion of Rural Fire District #6. The areas covered include Red Lodge, Bear Creek, Roberts, Luther and Roscoe. The Red Lodge service also covers Beartooth Pass and Scenic Highway to the Wyoming border.

The City of Red Lodge employs four full time firefighter/ paramedics who assist the Fire Chief in the administration of the Fire Department and emergency medical service.

Some of the paramedics have

additional training to the Critical Care Paramedic level. The service has between 20 and 50 volunteer emergency medical technicians trained to various levels.

Joilet Ambulance covers an area from north of Roberts to South White Horse Bench Road, Joliet, Edgar, Silesia, and the Cooney Reservoir area.

The Clarks Fork Valley
Ambulance covers
approximately 750 sq. miles.

Each of the districts are funded by user fees, donations and payments in lieu of taxes totaling \$12,000 per year.

#### **Disaster and Emergency Services**

The county has a part-time **Disaster Emergency Services** (DES) Coordinator located in the Carbon County Administration building in Red Lodge. The DES program is funded primarily by the state. The county has an active Local Emergency Planning Committee or LEPC. The county completed an Emergency Operations Plan in 2004 to address earthquakes, hazardous materials, dam failure/flooding, national emergency, forest/ range fire, mass casualty accidents, and volcanic ash.

#### Health Care and Child Care

The county has four clinics and one hospital. The Beartooth Billings Clinic is located in Red Lodge and has three general practitioners and four registered nurses. The Beartooth Billings Clinic is affiliated with Billings Clinic Hospital in Billings. The Mountain View clinic, affiliated with St. Vincent's Healthcare

in Billings, also located in Red Lodge has two general practitioners, two registered nurses, and administrative staff. The Clarks Fork Medical Center, located in Bridger is operated by Riverstone Health based in Billings, and staffed by a nurse practitioner, nurse, and administrative staff. Riverstone also offers a clinic in Joliet. The clinics in Red Lodge regularly host visiting specialists from the larger area.

Beartooth Billings Clinic, a
10-bed facility, is located in
Red Lodge and is affiliated
with Billings Clinic. Beartooth
Billings Clinic also operates the
Children's Center in Red Lodge.
The Children's Center can
accommodate up to 48 children.

There are two dentists in the county, both located in Red Lodge. Dental care is also available in Laurel and Billings. An optometrist from an eye clinic in Billings sees patients one day per week in Red Lodge.

Mental health care is provided in Red Lodge by two therapists in a satellite office of the Mental Health Center of Billings. One of the two therapists works full-time in chemical dependence. The other therapist works one-half to three-quarters time in general counseling. An estimated 200 cases annually are handled by the two therapists.

There are three nursing home/assisted living facilities in the county. Cedar Wood Villa Nursing home is a 76-bed home located in Red Lodge. Cedar Wood Villa reports an approximate occupancy of 75%. The Willows constructed a nursing home near the campus of the hospital.

Senior services are provided by the Belfry Senior Citizens Center, the Golden Age Society in Bridger, the Joliet XYZ'ers, the Valley Senior Citizens Center in Fromberg, and the Red Lodge/ Roberts Senior Center in Red Lodge. Beartooth Billings Clinic employs the county's Public Nurse and is situated in the Carbon County Public Personal Services Building in Red Lodge. The nurse also visits Bridger, Roberts, and Red Lodge.

The State of Montana Quality
Assurance Division currently
has seven licensed day care
operators in the county. Group
facilities can handle up to 12
children, family facilities can
handle up to six. There are six
group facilities located in Joliet,
Fromberg, Bridger, Red Lodge,
Red Lodge Mountain and the
Senior Center in Boyd.

#### **Public Assistance**

The Department of Public Health and Human Services Office of Public Assistance is located in the Carbon County Public Personal Services Building in Red Lodge. The public assistance office administers local financial assistance programs including Pathways, Medical Assistance

(Medicaid and medical assistance for medically needy), the CHIP program (Childrens' Health Insurance Program), food stamp eligibility, and the local food bank. The Office of Public Assistance is operated and funded by the state of Montana.

#### **Library Services**

There are three public libraries in the county. They are located in Red Lodge, Bridger, and Joliet. The Carnegie Library in Red Lodge, built in 1919, is operated by the city and staffed by one full-time librarian and one part-time assistant. The Bridger library is located in the historic Bowler schoolhouse and is operated by three part-time employees. The Joliet library, located in the Joliet Community Center, is staffed by a full-time librarian. There is a six-mill countywide levy supporting the libraries. There are no fees for using the libraries in the county.

#### **County Attorney**

The county attorney is a full-time elected position located in Red Lodge. The county attorney is elected for a four-year term. The office is staffed by the attorney, a deputy attorney, and full-time assistant. Additional legal assistance is contracted as needed.

#### **Utilities: Electricity**

Electricity is provided to county residents by the Beartooth Electric Cooperative, Northwestern Energy (NWE), and the Yellowstone Valley Cooperative. Beartooth Electric serves approximately 2,450 customers in the county. Beartooth Electric customers are located outside incorporated communities, and in the unincorporated communities of Roscoe, Luther, Roberts, and East Rosebud. The customer base of the cooperative has recently been growing by approximately 200-250 new users per year.

Northwestern Energy provides electricity to Edgar, Fromberg, Bridger, Belfry, Bear Creek, Red Lodge, Joliet, and a small number of rural customers adjacent to the communities. The company serves approximately 4200 residential and commercial accounts in the county. Yellowstone Valley

Electric Cooperative provides electricity to the northern end of Carbon County.

#### Natural Gas

Northwestern Energy (NWE) and Montana Dakota Utilities provide the natural gas in Carbon County. Natural gas is not available everywhere. Montana Dakota Utilities (MDU) provides natural gas to Warren, Belfry, Bridger, Fromberg, Edgar, Silesia, Rockvale, and Joliet.

NWE provides gas to Roberts, Red Lodge, the Roscoe area, and one ranch in Belfry. NWE currently produces its own gas and provides natural gas to approximately 1900 residential and commercial accounts in the county. The utility will extend gas service to new customers willing to pay for installation of infrastructure.

#### <u>Telephone</u>

Local telephone service in Carbon County is provided by

Qwest and Project Telephone. Project Telephone provides services to Belfry, Roscoe and East Rosebud. The rest of the county is served by Qwest. Numerous long distance carriers are available for selection by customers. Bridger, Joliet, Fromberg, and Red Lodge are located within the Billings local calling area. Calls made between these towns, and to Billings, Hardin, Laurel, and Columbus are local. Belfry and Roscoe are not within the Billings local area.

AT&T and Verizon provide cellular services across the county. The digital signals require line of sight technology and closer tower intervals.

There has been a large increase in the construction for cell phone towers that can accommodate newer and faster communication technology. Several additional towers are being erected in the county,

particularly in rural areas such as Cooney Reservoir and Roscoe. New towers may constitute a land use change, which requires a county development permit. Before a development permit is approved, the tower applicant must receive all state and federal approvals including environmental and visual impact assessments. New towers require state building permits. Concerns have been raised regarding the increased visual impacts near scenic areas.

#### Internet

Internet services and cable are provided by a number of Billings and national companies. With the exception of Red Lodge, internet providers have been unwilling to invest in the infrastructure necessary to provide this service for the potential number of paying users.

#### Cable Television

Cable Montana located in Laurel provides cable service to the City of Red Lodge. Bridger and Joliet each have local cable television. Rural areas are not served by wire services due to the infrastructure costs per the number of customers. Many residents in rural areas obtain satellite services.

#### **Public Facilities**

#### Roads and Highways

The streets and highways in Carbon County are constructed and maintained by a combination of municipalities, the county, the state, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and private homeowners' associations.

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) maintains 23.9 miles of state secondary highway and approximately 153 miles of primary state highway in the county. A primary

highway is a major arterial connecting with a federal highway. A secondary highway is a farm-to-market road that connects to a state highway.

As shown in the table below, traffic has steadily increased on all the county's state highways since the 1990s. The largest increases in average daily flows

Average Annual Daily Traffic, Carbon County 1999 - 2011 (MDOT)

Highway	Location	Average Daily	Average Daily	
підпімау	Location	Traffic (1999)	Traffic (2011)	
72	Between Bridger and Belfry	1,400	1,664	
78	Between Red Lodge and Roscoe	836	916	
212/310	Between the Yellowstone/Carbon	F 27F	0.202	
212/310	County line and Rockvale	5,375	8,282	
212	Between Joliet and Red Lodge	2,193	2,794	
	Between Red Lodge and the			
212	Wyoming line (averaged over 12	755	953	
	months)			
308	Between Belfry and Red Lodge	889	975	
210	Between Bridger and the	1 214	1.665	
310	Wyoming line	1,314	1,665	
310	Between Rockvale and Fromberg	N/A	3,783	

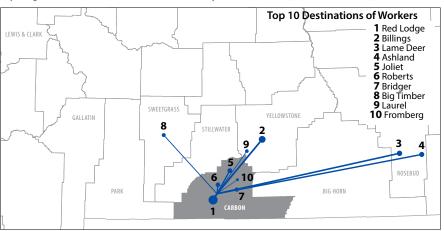
Highway Construction Projects, 2014 (MDOT)

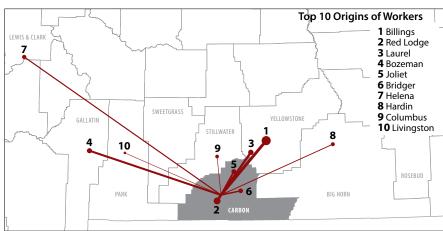
Project	Location	Construction Dates
US Hwy 212/310 Recon-	De alcuelo to Lourel	2013-2016 or beyond
struction	Rockvale to Laurel	
MT Hwy 78 Red Lodge MT Hwy 78 milepost 0 to		2014 2015
Northwest	milepost 5.1	2014-2015
	US Hwy 212 and West Fork	
West Fork Road	Rd intersection to Ski Run	2015-2016
	Road	

have occurred on Highway 212/310 from the Yellowstone/ Carbon county line to Rockvale. Almost 3,000 more vehicles travel on this route on average every day. Highway 212 between Joliet and Red Lodge has also seen much higher traffic flows. The Beartooth Pass, although only open seasonally, saw a 27% increase in average daily traffic in the twelve-year period. Traffic on Highways 78 and 308 saw modest increases of around 10%.

road construction and improvement projects are scheduled over the next few years. The largest is the reconstruction of US Highway 212/310 between Rockvale and Laurel. This project consists of a new four-lane divided roadway with depressed median with a new alignment on the west bench. An overpass at the railroad crossing south of Laurel is currently being constructed.

Top Origins and Destinations of Carbon County Workers 2011 (US Census Bureau)





#### **County Roads**

Carbon County is responsible for 900+ miles of roads and bridges. The county recently hired a road supervisor to oversee the road work for the three districts within the county and

the work is done out of three county shops located in Joliet, Red Lodge, and Bridger, by a total of 15 full-time employees. The county completes one major bridge replacement approximately every year.

#### Other Roads

The Custer National Forest and BLM both maintain road systems in the county. The Custer Forest maintains approximately 300 miles of roads in Carbon County. These roads and the roads on BLM lands provide access for public and administrative uses. There are no roads in the wilderness area.

New subdivisions often have their own internal road systems. The county does not accept responsibility of new road systems, but requires that provisions for maintenance of the roads be in place through an appropriate mechanism such as a Homeowners' Association. Subdivisions roads must be constructed to the appropriate county standard to assure safety and emergency vehicle access.

#### **Air Transportation**

There are two public-use airports in Carbon County. Red

Lodge has an airstrip located on the west bench above the city. Aviation fuel is available at Red Lodge. The Red Lodge strip is 4,000 feet in length, paved, and has a small crosswind runway. The present airport no longer meets Federal Aviation Administration standards and is ineligible for federal financial assistance.

Bridger has a paved 3,400foot airstrip on the west
edge of town. This runway
can accommodate large twin
engine planes. There is no
instrumentation at Bridger.
Aviation fuel is not available, nor
is there a fixed-base operator.
In addition to the two public
airports in Carbon County, there
are approximately 14 privateuse airstrips primarily used to
support ranching operations.

#### **Rail Transportation**

Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) operates in the County. BNSF owns and maintains 50

miles of mainline and nine miles of yard track in Carbon County. The rail line runs east of and parallel to Highway 212/310 from Laurel south to the junction with Highway 310 then on to Bridger. From Bridger the line leaves the river bottom and follows Highway 310 south into Wyoming. In any given 24-hour period, four to six trains cross the county traveling between Laurel and Denver.

#### **Public Water Systems**

The city of Red Lodge, the towns of Bridger, Joliet, Fromberg, Bearcreek, and the communities of Belfry and Roberts all have public water systems, and all have adopted hook-up fees. The incorporated municipalities do their own administration of the systems such as planning for and financing improvements, setting base rates and hook-up fees, and billing. Red Lodge, Roberts, Fromberg, and Joliet meter their water. Bearcreek, Belfry, Bridger,

and Joliet have had to institute summer water rationing in the months.

The State Department of
Revenue and the county
cooperatively assist the rural
water districts by assessing
users on their property taxes
once a year in Edgar, Belfry
and Roberts. The local districts
handle the collection of
hook-up fees and other local
administrative issues.

Water system operators and water district board members report concerns with meeting a new state requirement for having licensed operators, and also the day-to-day management of protecting the infrastructure. There are a number of private water systems serving subdivisions, campgrounds, and mobile home parks. The owners of these private systems are responsible for testing water quality and submitting results to the state and county sanitarian.

Most of the rural residents obtain their domestic water from individual wells although a few obtain water from springs. There have been no known occurrences of contaminated groundwater affecting individual wells where the wells were properly installed. Although Joliet has submitted a wellhead protection study to the Montana DEQ, none of the communities in the county have approved wellhead protection plans.

#### Waste Water Systems

Rural residents in the county typically have individual septic systems. All systems installed since 1968 are required to have a county septic permit. Most of the rural systems are standard gravity septic tank and drainfield systems. Some areas where groundwater is too high or percolation too rapid, special systems must be employed. County residents have recently raised concerns about the

potential for future groundwater contamination associated with major subdivisions that may have 40 or more individual septic systems.

Belfry, Edgar, and Roberts have sewer districts which operate community waste water systems.

Fromberg and Bridger are permitted to discharge from their waster water facilities into the Clarks Forks River while Joliet and Red Lodge are permitted to discharge into Rock Creek. Several communities are considering raising base rates, hook-up charges, or both to finance needed maintenance and improvements. Edgar reports problems with unauthorized hook-ups.

Fromberg is currently under an Administrative Order on Consent from DEQ and is in the process of planning a major rehabilitation project for their waste water treatment system in order to meet both current and future regulatory limitations.

#### Solid Waste

Solid waste collection for the entire county is provided by Allied Waste Systems or MacKenzie Disposal, both located in Billings. AWS has waste collection contracts with the City of Red Lodge and the Towns of Bridger and Joliet. There are various issues with the waste generated by rural residents and especially second home owners.

The City of Billings owns and operates the sanitary landfill in which all of the waste generated in Carbon County is disposed. The city has 700 acres set aside for its landfill, 280 of which are currently under permit with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. The permit is in effect until the acres under permit are filled with waste.

The City of Billings has separate annual agreements for waste disposal with Carbon County, the City of Red Lodge, and the Towns of Bridger, Fromberg, and Joliet. All remaining landfills in Carbon County were closed in the 1990s.

Joliet, Bridger, and Red Lodge participate in voluntary recycling programs initiated by the communities. Red Lodge has a recycling facility open two days a week. AWS hauls the recyclable materials to Billings without charge and processes the materials.

#### **Natural Resources**

#### Soil Resources

In 1975, the U.S.D.A. and the Forest Service in cooperation with the Montana Agricultural Experimental Station published a Soil Survey for the Carbon County Area Montana. The survey stated: "The soils of Carbon County can generally be described in five separate geographic areas, each having unique landscape-soil

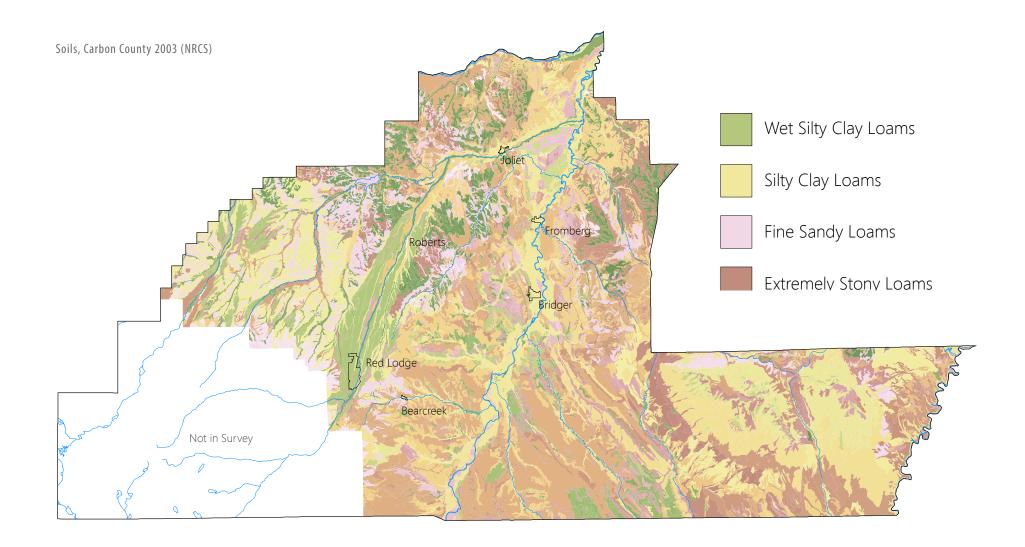
relationships" (Carbon County General Resource Assessment, NRCS, 1999). Detailed surveys completed as recently as 2003 in the NRCS Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO), the mostdetailed county-level digital soil database, provide large-scale soil unit boundaries for Carbon County. The survey identifies 178 soil types, with four major types prevalent across the county: wet silty clay loams, silty clay loams, fine sandy loams and extremely stony loams. Southwestern Carbon County (Beartooth-Absaroka Wilderness) was not included in the survey.

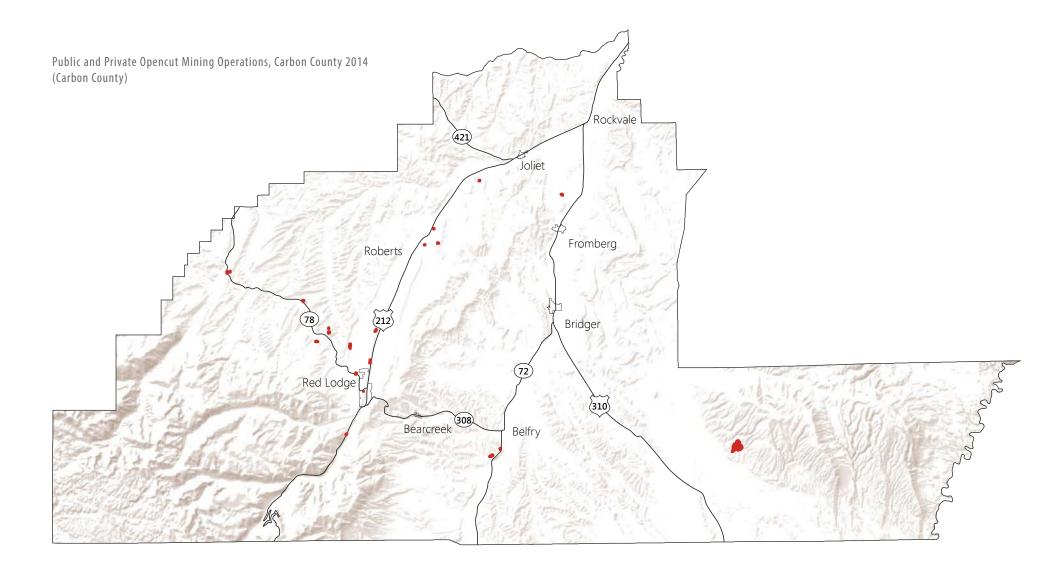
#### Mineral Resources

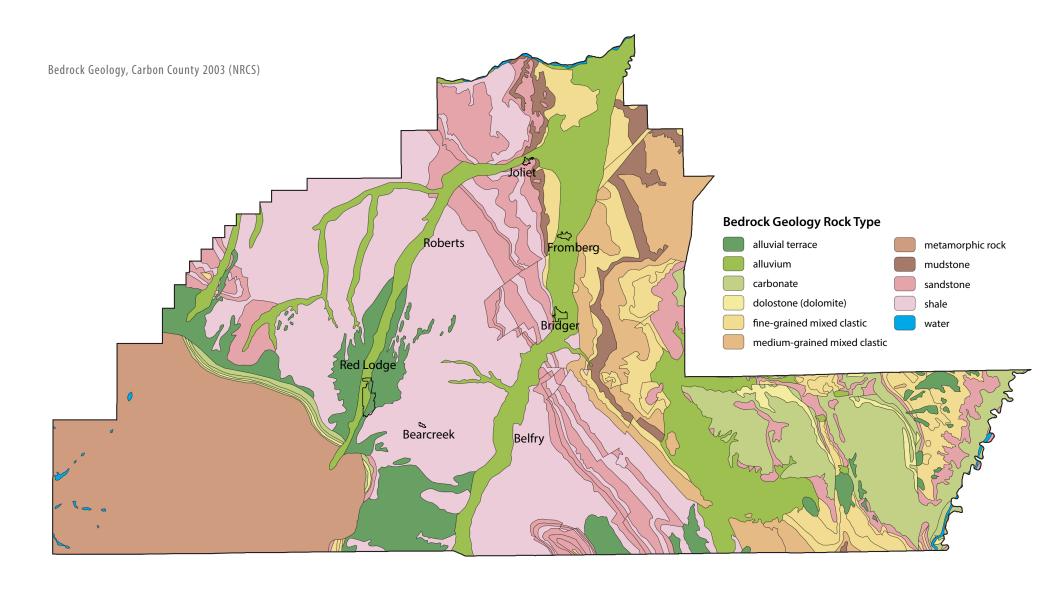
These are located generally along major highway corridors throughout the county, with most along the State Highway 78 and US Highway 212 corridors.

Gravels generally suitable for construction uses are found throughout the county in the alluvium and alluvial terraces.
Montana Bureau of Mines and
Geology maps showing the
locations of these formations —
specifically Quaternary Alluvial
Terraces (Qat), Quaternary
Pediment Gravels (Qpg), and
Alluvial Fans (Qaf) — indicate
the potential gravel sources in
Carbon County. These maps can
be found at www.mbmg.mtech.
edu by going to one of the
four appropriate quadrangles
covering Carbon County.

Bentonite is found to the west and southwest of the Pryor Mountains. Gypsum which has not been mined commercially since the 1920's is found in outcrops east of Gypsum Spring and in three locations west of the Pryor Mountains. Large private surface mining operations exist in the southwest corner of the Pryor Mountains on private land.





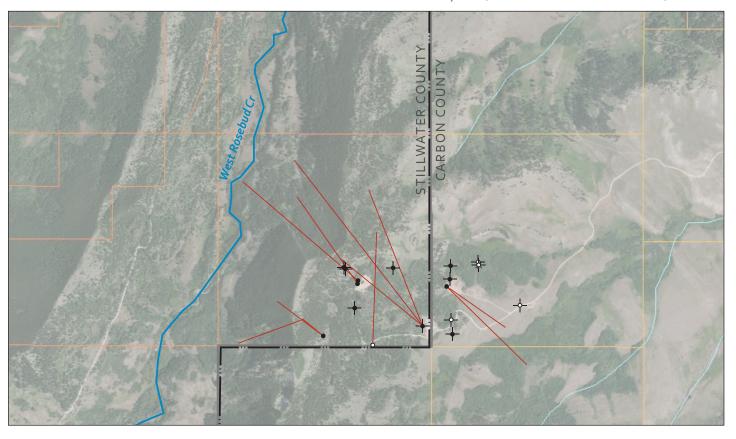


#### Oil and Gas

The first oil well drilled in Montana was in Elk Basin, in 1915. At present, only the Dry Creek and Elk Basin Fields are in significant production. Oil exploration is currently occurring near Belfry on private land, and on the Mackay Dome in the western county.

#### Coal

Coal is found in several locations in the county including Bridger, Fromberg, Red Lodge, Bear Creek, and the Silver Tip coal field on the Wyoming border. The coal at Bridger is found in three distinct beds covering a total of 13,660 acres. The Bear Creek field contains nine separate beds in the Fort Union formation with a total thickness of 71 feet of coal. West of Rock Creek, coal lies in a narrow, steeply-dipping zone which terminates against the Beartooth thrust fault. The BLM estimates that there are still



significant coal reserves in the Bridger and Bear Creek fields.

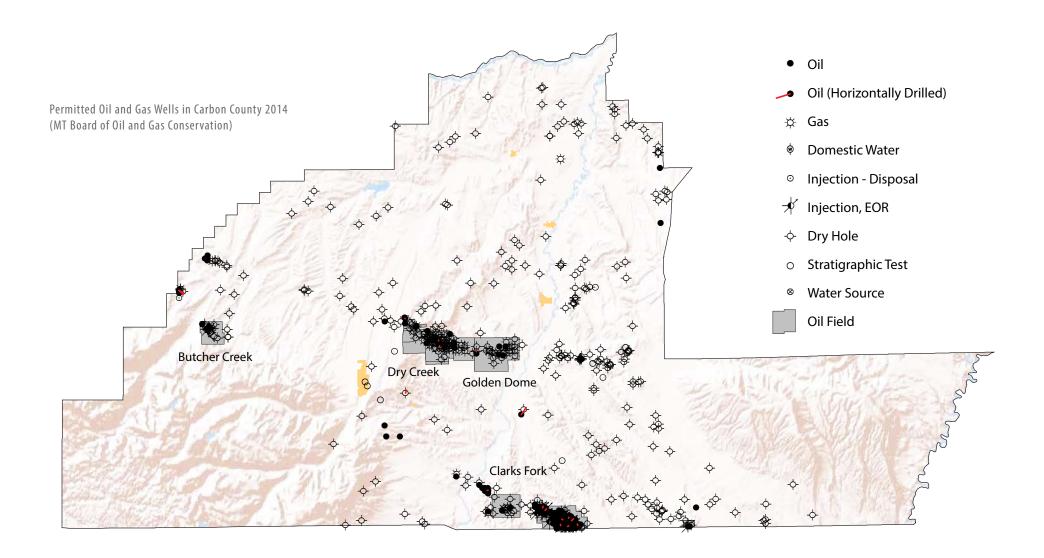
Despite the potential availability of coal, there are currently no operating coal mines in Carbon County.

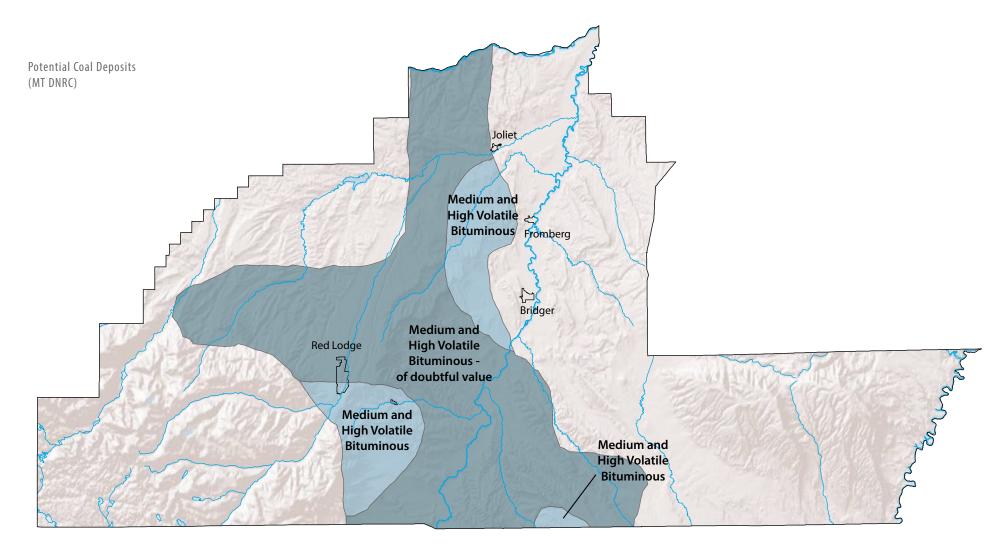
#### Surface and Ground Water

Carbon County's water resources are managed by private and public landowners, water rights holders, and municipalities.

The water resource consists of both surface and groundwater.

Groundwater in Carbon County is stored both in consolidated and unconsolidated aquifers. The three primary groundwater areas in the county are the Beartooth Plateau, the Pryor uplift, and the basins.





There are approximately 6,298 water wells in the county. Peak water well drilling occurred in 2006, while in 2010 only 75 wells were drilled. About 3,691 wells

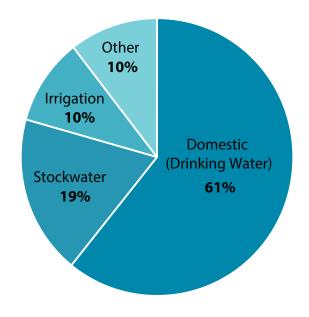
(61%) are used for domestic drinking water. Nineteen percent, or about 1,127 wells are used for stockwater, while ten percent are irrigation wells.

Domestic water resources are typically less than 100 feet deep. Most of the wells in Carbon County are shallow wells, with only 85 deeper than 500 feet. The first well was drilled in 1883. There are two hydroelectric generating stations in the county, both located on the

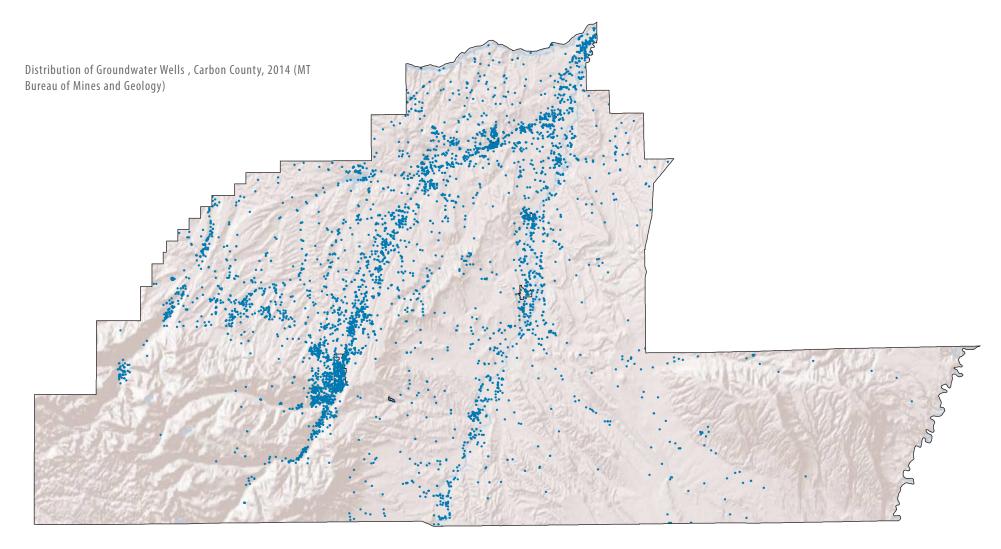
# Groundwater and Aquifers (MT Bureau of Mines and Geology)

Aquifer	Thickness	Well Yields	Locations	
Alluminum and calluminum	5.00 (	10 200	East Rosebud Creek, Red Lodge Creek, Willow Creek, Rock Creek (below Roberts), and the Clarks Fork	
Alluvium and colluvium 5-80 feet 10-300 gpm va		10-300 gpm	valley bottoms, eastern tributaries to Bridger Creek	
Terrace gravels	7-115 feet	10-50 gpm	Upper East Rosebud Creek, base of Beartooth Face, Upper Rock Creek down to Roberts,	
Fart Union formation	(00 0 500 (	1 50 000	Much of the dry uplands between the Clarks Fork and Rock Creek Valleys from south of Bearcreek	
Fort Union formation 600-8,500		1-50 gpm	north to Boyd, western quarter of the county excluding the higher elevations and stream bottoms	
Hall Crack	100 600 6	1 15 00000	Butcher Creek area, uplands between Cottonwood and Silver Tip Creeks, uplands between Boyd and	
Hell Creek 100-600 feet 1-15 gpm		1-15 gpm	Bridger	
Eagle formation	200-250 feet	12 220	Uplands east of Cottonwwood Creek, east side of the Clarks Fork valley from Bridger north to the	
Eagle formation	200-230 feet	12-330 gpm	Yellowstone County line	
Telegraph Creek formation			East side of Clarks Fork Valley north to the Yellowstone County line (parallel to Eagle formation)	
	180-300 feet	1-18 gpm		
Chugwater formation	100-650 feet	Large	West side of the Big Horn River, west and south flanks of the Pryor Mountains	
Madison limestone	1,000+ feet	Large	West wall of Big Horn Canyon, Crooked Creek, headwaters of Bridger Creek	

Water Well Usage, 2013 (MT Bureau of Mines and Geology)







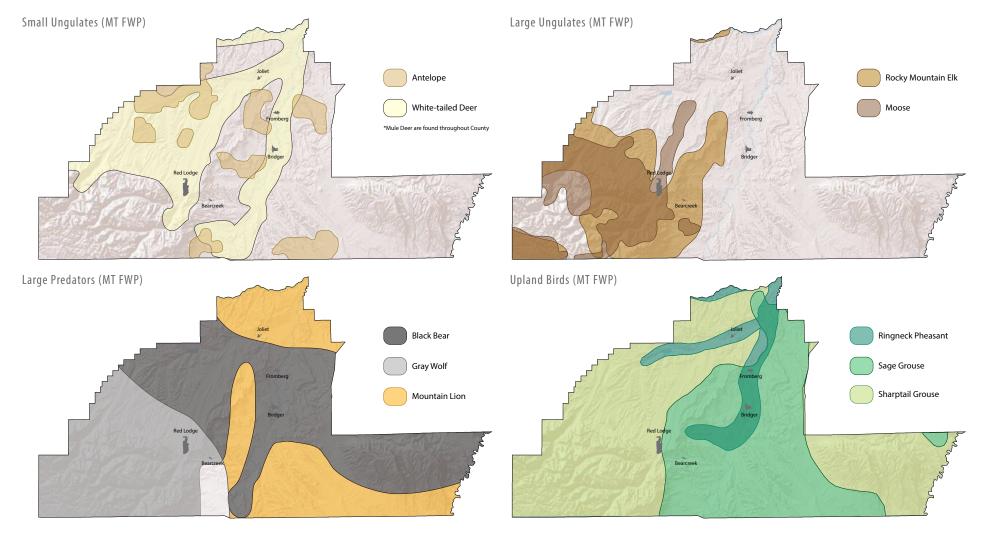
South Fork of Dry Creek east of Red Lodge. The larger station generates 2 Megawatts while a smaller downstream station generates 0.5 Megawatts. There are two state-owned dams in the county. Located on Red Lodge Creek, Cooney Dam, which is 102 feet high, was completed in 1937 to provide water storage for irrigation.

The reservoir stores 28,400 acre feet of water. Cooney Dam also created Cooney Reservoir State Park, which is a popular recreation site in the summer months. The Glacier Lake Dam

at 57 feet in height was also completed in 1937. The Glacier Lake Dam stores 4,200 acre feet.

# **Wildlife**

The diversity and extent of high quality habitat in the county supports a wide range of wildlife species. In addition to numerous ungulates, Carbon County is home to two species of bears, gray wolves, mountain lions, a variety of upland birds, raptors, and non-game species. A recent state habitat conservation effort identified parts of the county as Greater Sage Grouse Core Areas, which continues to effect land and natural resources development in the south and eastern parts of the county. The conservation plan will seek to keep management in state, rather than federal, hands.



### Scenic Resources

Scenic resources, like all other natural and fiscal resources, should be considered a significant economic asset for Carbon County. County residents and visitors value the outstanding natural appearing landscape which is an important facet to the quality of life in Carbon County and a draw for recreationists, current residents, and potential future residents.

In 1989, the Beartooth Highway was classified as a National Forest Scenic Byway because of the spectacular views along its route. The Beartooth Highway received about 953 vehicles per day in 2011, averaged over the whole year (including seasonal closures). The Absaroka-Beartooth Mountain front range is a dramatic topographical feature visible from most the county, including along the main highways.

Height and setback requirements for development on visually sensitive high points and ridgelines have been specifically addressed in the Red Lodge Development Code. Similar regulations do not exist in the county.

### **Culture and Tourism**

In recent decades, culture and tourism have become major economic drivers in Carbon County. Retail shopping, lodging, dining and touring have been driven by growth in Billings and other outside areas. Tourism is quickly becoming the county's most important economic resource. According to a 2012 report from the US Forest Service ("The Economy of Carbon County", USFS, 2012), "Carbon County was more reliant on industries connected to travel and tourism than either the state of Montana or the nation as a whole in 2009" due to employment contributions (pg. 3).

The county can be classified by four descriptive characteristics:

- Gateway
- Amenity-rich
- Rural
- Second home/retirement

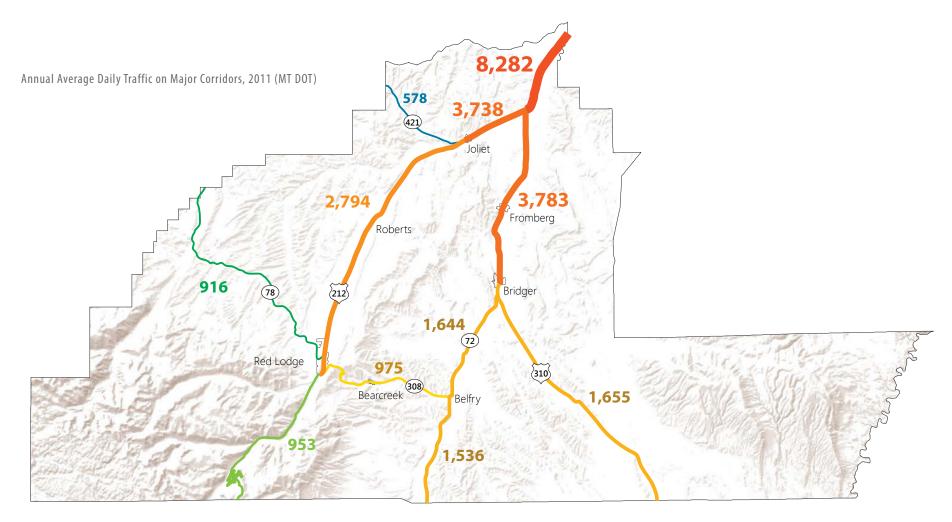
These all provide value to the citizens in this region. As a gateway community, Carbon County inherits a strong tourism base because of Yellowstone National Park and the Beartooth Highway.

Being located between fifteen minutes to a few-hour's drive from Billings, Carbon County is just far enough away from Montana's largest metro area to be considered a rural community, but close enough to be accessible to the roughly 110,000 people in the Billings metro area. Because of proximity to natural amenities like Yellowstone National Park, the city, and the availability of services and comforts,

Carbon County has become a destination for retirees and second homeowners.

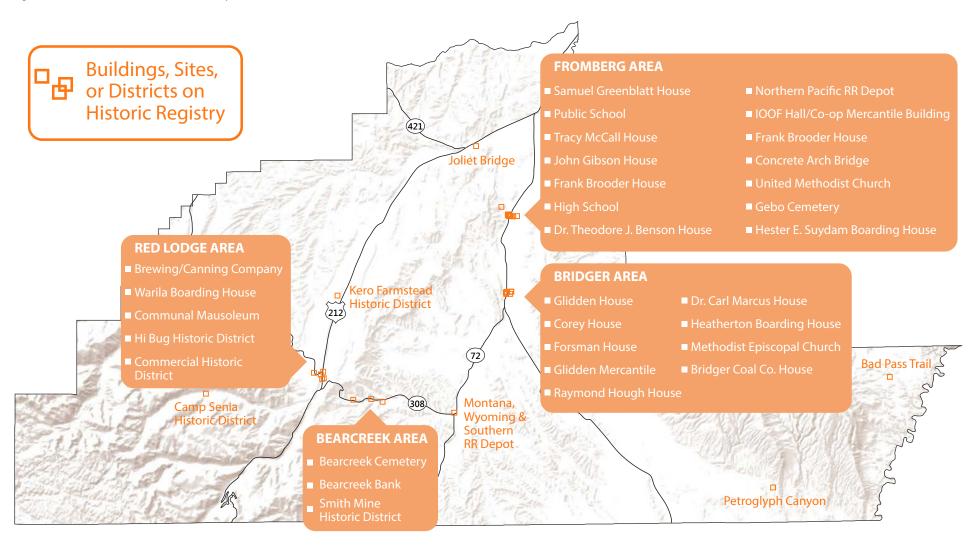
As such, the county has seen remarkable increases in vehicle traffic from Billings. Annual average daily traffic (AADT) between Laurel and Rockvale is 8,282 vehicles per day, a 54% increase from 2009 (AADT is the number of vehicles traveling on a section of road throughout the year divided by 365 days). This is higher daily vehicle travel than that between Big Timber and Livingston. About the same number of vehicles travel between Joliet and Laurel as between Bridger and Laurel. Traffic flows generally decrease with the distance traveled south from the Rockvale junction, with the exception of cars crossing the Wyoming stateline.

Yellowstone National Park and the Beartooth Pass continue to be a major tourist attraction. The Beartooth Pass entrance



Highway	Location	Average Daily	Average Daily	Percent
		Traffic (1999)	Traffic (2011)	Change
72	Between Bridger and Belfry	1,400	1,664	19%
78	Between Red Lodge and Roscoe	836	916	10%
212/310	Between the Yellowstone/Carbon County line and Rockvale	5,375	8,282	54%
212	Between Joliet and Red Lodge	2,193	2,794	27%
212	Between Red Lodge and the Wyoming line (averaged over 12 months)	755	953	26%
308	Between Belfry and Red Lodge	889	975	10%
310	Between Bridger and the Wyoming line	1,314	1,665	27%
310	Between Rockvale and Fromberg	-	3,783	-

### Registered Historic Resources in Carbon County, 2014 (National Park Service)



through Cooke City/Silver Gate is the least traveled of the three entrances to the park in Montana, however this is due to the seasonal highway closure.

The route through the Paradise Valley from Livingston to Gardiner (open year round) sees over twice as many vehicles as the Beartooth Pass. The entrance from Bozeman through the Gallatin Valley and West Yellowstone sees a similar number of vehicles.

Carbon County's abundance of cultural, heritage or archaeological resources plays a role in development permitting and review, particularly in rural unincorporated areas. Most development projects require a state cultural resources inventory and approval. For certain projects, the state generally requires impacts to these resources to be mitigated.

Of the more than fifteen-hundred sites recorded in Carbon County, 54 individual sites, five historic districts and one archaeological district have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places as of 2014. A National Register designation affords special protection for publicly-owned sites, and access to technical expertise and eligibility for tax credits on privately-owned sites.

# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT A rigorous public and stakeholder input process helped inform and create the vision, goals and

policies in this growth policy.

A large part of the growth policy update involved soliciting input from citizens and community organizations. Public engagement was both an opportunity for education and for feedback. The following is a summary of the process used to build consensus and a heightened awareness of the roles and responsibilities between public officials and the broader community.

# Stakeholder and Public Outreach

Building collaborative relationships with existing organizations was key to the

success of this plan. Consultants met with a variety of community leaders to problem solve and identify needs and goals for their constituents. The following organizations played key roles in developing a vision for this plan:

- Red Lodge Senior Center
- Joliet Town Council
- Bridger Town Council
- Bridger Senior Center
- Fromberg Zoning Administrator
- Fromberg Senior Center
- Beartooth RC&D

- Roberts Community
  Foundation
- Red Lodge Community Development Office
- Historic Preservation Board

# **County Field Trip**

As part of the county's effort to fully engage the breadth of its citizens, this growth policy update included a field trip as part of the public and stakeholder input process. This trip consisted of three days of countywide field surveys, videography, interviews and walking audits to document community conditions, and to

open a dialogue with residents and business owners about the growth policy update.
Consultants distributed meeting schedules and preliminary data concerning Carbon County growth and development.

# **Community Outreach**

Public open houses gave residents an opportunity to comment on a variety of plan elements at varying stages of development. Citizens provided insight into the unique challenges faced by their community. Open houses were held in Bridger and Fromberg.

The planning team also conducted informal conversations, interviews, and video surveys throughout the county. "Pop-ups", or events held without pre-arranged schedules or locations were held in other incorporated and unincorporated communities such as Joliet, Roscoe and Edgar.

One of the final products of the public process was a documentary of the input received. This method of public involvement has few precedents in Montana, and provides a powerful tool to gain understanding of what the growth policy is, the update process and the information gathered. Capturing interviews from local business owners, officials, residents and passersby helped understand the character of the county. Using social media, the short video was broadcast to a

wide audience, increasing the effectiveness of the plan's vision and message.

The video can be seen at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsf\_puBeAfE&feature=youtu.be

In addition, a Citizen Opinion Survey was distributed at each of the Town Halls and the feedback provided additional guidance for the direction of this plan. Many of the county's past issues or priorities were reaffirmed through the new survey results.

A secure water supply, preservation of the region's agricultural lands and natural resource development remain top priorities for residents. Additionally, affordable housing and protection of private property rights followed in importance. Respondents noted finding job opportunities within the county have been difficult.

Additionally, they affirmed impacts caused by new growth should be mitigated by the developer.

### Plan Website

Efficient distribution of information was also crucial to success of this plan. The county's website hosted a page dedicated to the update process. County staff regularly updated the site with essential documents, presentations, and schedule announcements. Consultants also utilized the county-wide newspaper to disseminate information.



The following issues were derived from data gathering, and the public and stakeholder input process. They are addressed in four broad categories: Community and Economic Development, Tourism and Recreation, Natural Resources, and Land Use and Agriculture.

# Community and Economic Development

Issues related to community and economic development varied heavily depending on location. In towns, the age and condition of public water and sewer infrastructure hindered new growth. Residents and community leaders in the Clarks Fork Valley perceived there was not enough growth in the towns or rural areas to sustain the existing population's demand for jobs and services. In these communities, any form of economic growth was desired. In areas where tourism made

up a higher percentage of the economy, the focus was on attracting more tourism in the winter season.

### Key Issues:

- Infrastructure capacity and condition, and funding public improvement projects
- **2.** Housing supply, condition, and affordability in small rural towns
- **3.** Lack of new jobs to attract residents
- **4.** Aging population and lack of younger workers
- 5. Small or declining tax base

- **6.** Year round survival of small businesses
- 7. Meeting potential growth demand while maintaining small town character
- **8.** Opposition to natural resource development

### **Tourism and Recreation**

Recreational opportunities are a major economic resource and bring many people to the county in the summer and winter seasons. Although the economies of some towns and cities are largely driven by tourism, communities in the Clarks Fork Valley do

not see significant benefits from tourism. As the Billings metropolitan area continues to grow, more and more people will visit Carbon County.

# Key Issues:

- Promoting tourism in the spring, fall, and winter months
- 2. Expanding tourism and recreation opportunities in the Clarks Forks Valley

# **Natural Resources and Environment**

Nearly every issue was geographically delineated between the county's various areas, but none more than natural resource development. County residents in the Clarks Fork Valley believe future growth will be dependent on the development oil, gas, or coal resources. Conversely, residents along the Beartooth front and activists groups were working to prevent oil and gas development countywide due to the real potential for environmental impacts. Specific environmental issues included the impacts of resource development on water and air quality, roads, and wildlife habitat.

Development of other resources was understood to be prevented by the expense of transporting the resource.

Key Issues:

- 1. Regional differences in demand for resource development
- 2. Potential impediments to economic development
- 3. Geographic location and availability of the resource
- 4. Impacts to sensitive environmental resources
- 5. Availability of groundwater
- 6. Protection of scenic and recreational resources

# Land Use and Agriculture

Land use and regulation was a divisive issue countywide. Although many criticized the proliferation of unsightly activities such as junkyards on private property, there was not a strong desire for stronger land use controls in rural areas.

Some landowners expressed a desire to utilize stronger land use regulation to mitigate potential impacts caused by oil and gas development along the Beartooth front. Interest was expressed in pursuing "Part 1" county zoning as enabled by MCA 76-2-101.

The preservation of Carbon County's agricultural land is of high importance to farmers, ranchers, and rural residents. In the past, sprawling growth and widespread subdivision of farm land in areas near towns has threatened the county's agricultural resources. In addition, suburban-type growth increases infrastructure and service costs, limiting the county's ability to provide acceptable levels of service.

The US Forest Service works closely with the county and other organizations to promote proper growth near its lands in the Custer National Forest.

## Key Issues:

- 1. Market-driven development and subdivision of productive agricultural land
- 2. Development of irrigated (rather than dryland) agricultural land
- 3. Expanding pattern of subdivision
- 4. Potential development in the wildland-urban interface
- 5. Growth along urban boundaries that increases infrastructure and service costs
- 6. Increase in commuter traffic to Billings

# VISION

The growth policy, by guiding land use decisions, is one way of moving towards the vision residents have of the future. The vision is a collection of statements designed to guide the formation of goals, objectives and implementation strategies.

The following statements describe the desired future of the residents and leaders of Carbon County.

- Agriculture remains an important component of the county's economy and way of life. Agricultural lands are largely retained in agricultural production.
- Land use change and development occurs in such a way so as not to jeopardize water quality or availability.
- Economic enterprises
   which offer a living wage,
   build upon the agricultural

base where possible, are scaled appropriately to be consistent with residents' quality of life expectations, and do not cause significant degradation to water or air quality.

- Carbon County remains

   a good place to live as
   evidenced by good schools,
   high levels of community
   involvement, small family
   farms, low crime rates, clean
   air and water, open spaces
   and scenic vistas, abundant
   wildlife, and friendly people.
- Local governments in Carbon County are working

in harmony with each other for the benefit of all county residents, especially in the areas of land use, services, and public infrastructure.

 Parts of the county in proximity to the Yellowstone County line will continue to be an attractive location for commuters working in the Billings metropolitan area.

The goals, objectives and implementation measures contained in the growth policy originated with the issues and vision identified by county residents. Each of the major issues raised by citizens – that

the county is authorized to address - is embodied in one or more of the following goals and objectives. The goals, objectives, and implementation measures are for a fiveyear planning period. The implementation measures require a variety of actions on the part of the county. Some of the implementation measures will be ongoing during this planning period, some will extend beyond the five years, some of the measures will guide the county in responding to development applications, and some will require countyinitiated actions.





# Goal 1. Land Use and Development

Encourage land uses that are appropriate on the lands for which they are proposed, consider and act upon new development proposals to the county in a consistent manner, and approve new development compatible with the retention of lands currently in agricultural production. ("Appropriate" in this case means that the land has the physical characteristics necessary to support the proposed use).

Objective 1.1: Ensure county subdivision and development permit regulations are in conformance with the Growth Policy and development occurs according to the conditions of County approval.

offer strategies designed to complete plan implementation.

- **1.1.A.** Revise subdivision regulations as needed to be in accordance with the Growth Policy.
- **1.1.B.** Revise development regulations as needed to be in conformance with the Growth Policy.
- **1.1.C.** Develop a system to track the approvals process to confirm that conditions of

approval have been satisfied. Include costs to County for this work in final plat approval fees.

Objective 1.2: Increase understanding of present land use change trends and consequences. Develop factual information upon which to base regulations that will guide growth in a manner consistent with residents' vision for the future

**1.2.A.** Complete a buildout analysis to look at how development is presently occurring and will continue to occur without intervention. 1.2.B. Track the number of acres of agricultural land converted to residential development in the county. Report this number to the citizens of the county annually.

**Objective 1.3:** Assist farmers and ranchers who wish to continue using their lands for agricultural production.

**1.3.A.** Make resources available upon request to assist citizens in the development of local zoning districts (citizen-petition zoning.) (76-2-101 MCA)

- **1.3.B.** Revise the subdivision regulations to require that all subdivision covenants contain a statement clarifying that agricultural operations are exempt from governmental zoning and nuisance ordinances according to the right-to-farm statute (76-2-901, MCA), that developers notify owners of any existing water delivery ditches, pipelines, and facilities in the subdivision to assure unobstructed use and maintenance consistent with historic and legal rights., and that the subdivision plat shows on its face, water course easements to access, use, maintain and repair water user facilities.
- **1.3.C.** Continue to make the Carbon County Code of the West (Resolution 05-20) available to realtors and new residents. (The code

- is posted on the county's website, www.co.carbon. mt.us.)
- 1.3.D. Continue to fund and support an active County weed control program which includes both education and regulation. Streamline the process to treat noxious weeds and recover costs when landowners do not treat their weeds. Continue to require weed inspections and bonding as necessary for any land use change and new development with fees to cover staff time for inspections.
- 1.3.E. Provide basic referral information in response to requests about conservation easements. The county has no funding, nor is it proposing the use of public monies, to purchase agricultural or conservation easements.

- **1.3.F.** Protect private property rights while balancing individual property rights with the rights of other property owners and community interests for the public health, safety and welfare of all citizens.
- **Objective 1.4:** Encourage development in areas that are not in agricultural production
  - 1.4.A. As authorized by the state legislature in 2003, in 76-3-509 MCA, formulate and adopt regulations to encourage cluster development for those developments that meet the definitions.
- **Objective 1.5:** Ensure direct County input into any proposal with the potential to cause large-scale impacts to land use, natural resources, or quality of life in the county.

- **1.5.A.** Request information and briefings, and actively respond to requests for comment by state and federal agencies proposing projects such as land exchanges, and large scale mineral or recreation development in the county.
- 1.5.B. Allow the Planning Board more involvement when significant archaeological or historical properties are affected a development, and when recommending impact mitigation to significant sites (listed on the National Register of Historic Places or determined eligible for listing).

1.5.C. Request that the Montana Department of Transportation provide information on how alternatives under consideration for state highway projects will affect existing residences and agricultural land.

**Objective 1.6:** Encourage the voluntary preservation of open space and wildlife habitat in the county.

1.6.A. Encourage developers to dedicate to the property owners' association open space, wildlife habitat, and/ or riparian areas within or in close proximity to each major subdivision or development to comply with parkland requirements.

**1.6.B.** When revising the subdivision regulations, incorporate a voluntary request that developers coordinate with the local Fish, Wildlife and Parks Biologist early in the subdivision development

process about subdivision design, mitigation of impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat, and public safety related to wildlife.

**Objective 1.7:** Direct urban growth to existing communities, incorporated towns and cities, or platted unincorporated places.

**1.7.A.** Explore the potential for future land use mapping in areas immediately adjacent to existing communities

Objective 1.8: Cooperate across jurisdictional boundaries to discuss future projects and development approval processes Respond in a consistent manner to applications for the erection of telecommunications towers.

**1.8.A.** Prepare and adopt a policy which can be provided to developers ahead of time to guide the review of telecommunications towers applications and permits.

The policy should encourage consideration of visual impacts and co-location to minimize the number of towers necessary.

**1.8.B.** Consider a telecommunications tower ordinance to accomplish the policy in 1.8.A.

# Goal 2. Water Resources Management

Ensure that proposed land uses consider and disclose impacts to ground and surface water quality and availability.

**Objective 2.1:** Increase knowledge about hydrological resources in the county.

2.1.A. Continue to work with Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology to study ground water quantity on the East and West Benches of Rock Creek, and to research the effects of development on ground and surface water quantity and quality.

2.1.B. Seek grant funds and technical assistance to develop a data base for septic systems and wells. Include a septic system layer in any Geographical Information System that is implemented by the county.

Objective 2.2: Require the development of public water and/or wastewater systems when necessary to protect water quality.

2.2.A. Use the Montana Department of Environmental Quality's standards to determine the factors and thresholds to be considered when determining which developments will require a public water supply and/or public wastewater system. Incorporate these into the subdivision regulations.

**2.2.B.** Request that best management practices be used in new development projects to mitigate impacts to water quality.

**Objective 2.3:** Require developers to disclose potential effects of development on ground and surface water resources.

2.3.A. Revise the subdivision and development regulations to require developers to identify, disclose and mitigate potential impacts to groundwater and surface water resources within a one-mile radius of the proposed development, or to disclose when the effects are unknown.

Objective 2.4: Assist unincorporated communities with ongoing maintenance, repair, or expansion of sewer and water infrastructure.

2.4.A. Encourage communities to use staff assistance and resources from the Beartooth Resource Conservation and Development Area (RC&D), the Local Government Center at MSU-Bozeman, and the Department of Commerce to assist in obtaining grant funds, and in capital planning and the development of rate structures.

**2.4.B.** Identify technical training needs county-wide and coordinate resources to offer training. Continue to apply for grant funds to assist in covering costs for training water and sewer facility operators.

Objective 2.5: Assist in protecting public and private drinking water supplies due to growth causing increased pressure on scarce drinking water resources.

2.5.A. Invite the Montana
Department of Environment
Quality to make a presentation to the county, local
government public works
directors, and unincorporated community's water system
operators on developing
wellhead protection plans.

**2.5.B.** Apply for grants and request assistance from MSU, MSU-Billings, Montana Tech, and Rocky Mountain College, to accomplish the preparation wellhead protec-

tion plans. (MCA 75-6-120, Wellhead and source water protection programs)

**Objective 2.6:** Continue to administer the floodplain program for unincorporated areas of Carbon County.

**2.6.A.** Revise the Carbon County Floodplain Ordinance to comply with updates to state and federal policy.

**2.6.B.** Coordinate with DNRC, Carbon Conservation District, and any other parties involved in the joint permitting process.

**2.6.C.** Consider stream development setbacks on a case by case basis.

# Goal 3. Financial Management and Public Services

Ensure that new development mitigates to a reasonable extent, increased costs or impacts to levels of services, and public facilities already provided to existing residents and landowners.

Objective 3.1: Ensure that both on-site and off-site costs associated with development are identified and borne by the appropriate party.

- **3.1.A.** Perform an impact fee study to explore the feasibility and adoption of impact fees.
- **3.1.B.** Meet when appropriate with industry representatives to discuss demands on infrastructure and services produced by company employees residing in the county and the means to assist the county in recovering associated costs.

- **3.1.C.** Work with industry representatives as appropriate to coordinate transportation arrangements to minimize traffic and impacts to roads and bridges.
- **3.1.D.** Identify and adopt incentives for development that minimize costs to the county.
- **3.1.E.** Review, and as necessary, update planning and development review fees to cover costs including Growth Policy revision and updates.
- **3.1.F.** Review, and as necessary, revise fees collected for weed field review and bonding, and fire protection review.

Objective 3.2: Ensure that County expenditures for emergency services are planned appropriately to provide maximum benefit for the funds expended.

- **3.2.A.** Complete implementation of the rural addressing and Enhanced 911 systems.
- **3.2.B.** Update the county Emergency Operations Plan.
- **3.2.C.** Compile and review statistics on emergency service requests and response times. From this information, develop standards for levels of service for fire protection, ambulance service, and law enforcement, throughout the county. Utilize the level of service standards to guide decisions on the investment of public funds in infrastructure, staffing, and equipment for the provision of emergency services.
- Objective 3.3: Ensure county expenditures for public facilities and services are planned appropriately to provide maximum benefit for the funds expended.

- **3.3.A.** Prepare a capital improvements plan or needs assessment.
- **3.3.B.** Review and revise as necessary the road policy on accepting private roads.
- **3.3.C.** Complete a condition assessment for each countyowned building and develop a life cycle plan which identifies the projected annual expenditures for operation and maintenance.
- **3.3.D.** Complete an inventory of the known county roads. Develop a road management plan which identifies the number of road miles needing county maintenance and/or rehabilitation and the frequency, by road miles. Develop a method for prioritizing road maintenance.
- **3.3.E.** Continue updating road maintenance and snowplowing priorities maps.

**3.3.F.** Complete an inventory and condition assessment of the bridges for which the county is responsible. Continue to replace county bridges according to the schedule of priorities and availability of funds.

**3.3.G.** Assist sewer and water districts in capital improvement planning and structuring fees by providing resources and/or workshops available through MACo and the Department of Commerce.

**Objective 3.4:** Participate in economic development activities which benefit county residents and businesses.

**3.4.A.** Continue membership and active participation in the Beartooth RC&D. Utilize the RC&D staff to assist communities and businesses with locally-initiated projects.

3.4.B. Apply for grant funds from the State
Department of Commerce and the Federal Economic
Development Administration as opportunities become available, to construct and upgrade infrastructure in support of development consistent with the goals of this plan. Request and utilize technical assistance as the need arises to support economic development.

**3.4.C.** Examine case studies from other communities to determine how current business, tourism, recreation and agriculture may be supported or impacted by new development.

**Objective 3.5:** Involve county residents in economic development.

**3.5.A.** Consider "neighborhood planning" for sub-areas of the county to

identify geography-specific development strategies.

**Objective 3.6:** Explore the feasibility of a County-wide recycling program.

**3.6.A.** Invite recycling industry representatives to explore the logistical feasibility, economic feasibility, and level of interest for a county-wide recycling program.

**Objective 3.7:** Explore applications of tax increment financing districts in unincorporated county areas.

Objective 3.8: Continue to support current economic drivers such as agriculture, tourism and natural resource development.

# Goal 4. Cooperation with Other Governments

Work cooperatively for the benefit of County residents with unincorporated communities, local governments in the county, and state and federal government agencies planning activities in the county that could affect Carbon County residents.

**Objective 4.1:** Direct development to existing communities.

- **4.1.A.** Coordinate the review of subdivision and development permit applications within one mile of incorporated community boundaries, or in any cases where municipal services are being requested.
- **4.1.B.** Organize a session for members of all planning boards or public works directors in the county to

identify issues of mutual concern, and receive training.

**4.1.C.** Urge incorporated towns and cities to adopt annexation and extension of services plans that include county coordination.

**Objective 4.2:** Minimize unintentional consequences of local government policies with respect to development patterns.

- **4.2.A.** Encourage infill to take advantage of existing services, facilities, and infrastructure by monitoring local government actions to ensure consistency between municipal and county policies where possible.
- **4.2.B.** Maintain up-to-date subdivision and development permit regulations for use by the county and those communities without separate planning boards.

**Objective 4.3:** Continue to provide cost-effective services to residents for road maintenance and construction.

- **4.3.A.** Communicate with MDT, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and adjacent counties to discuss road projects, coordinate schedules, and look for efficiencies through working cooperatively.
- **4.3.B.** Continue to work with MDT on the construction/ reconstruction projects on Highways 212, 212/310, 78, 72, and 310. Coordinate with MDT on residential development planning in the north end of the county for commuters to Billings that utilize Highway 212/310.

**Objective 4.4:** Promote the public health and safety through cooperation with the state and federal governments.

- **4.4.A.** Continue to administer the Disaster Emergency Services program in the county. Utilize state funds and training to support county DES program.
- 4.4.B. Continue to work with the Forest Service to educate the public about dangers and challenges associated with the continued growth and building within the Wildland/ Urban interface. Support rural departments applying for state and federal grant monies for staffing, training, and equipment. Update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan as necessary.
- **4.4.C.** As appropriate, request the Montana Department of Transportation to conduct studies of traffic safety on highways in the county.
- **4.4.D.** Coordinate to ensure proper access and approach to sensitive irrigated agricultural lands.

# Goal 5. Natural and Environmental Resources

Develop the county's natural resources balancing economic development with environmental responsibility.

**Objective 5.1:** Leverage natural resource development to promote economic and community development.

- **5.1.A.** Partner and communicate with oil, gas, wind, or other resource developers to identify and implement best practices for exploration and development.
- **5.1.B.** Promote renewable resource development.

Objective 5.2: Promote policies and strategies to mitigate potential impacts without deterring natural resource development

- **5.2.A.** Consider possible impact mitigation policies in the development regulations.
- **5.2.B.** Attempt to coordinate with industry, landowners, and local leaders to promote "good neighbor" strategies.
- **5.2.C.** Request developers seek baseline data on air, water and soil quality in areas of development to ensure environmental quality is maintained.

# IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK The Implementation Framework provides actions and completion timeframes for action items that implement the vision and goals of the growth policy.

Goal or Action Task Description Summary

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Goal 1	Land Use and Development	
1.1.A	Revise subdivision regulations as necessary	Annually, Ongoing
1.1.B	Revise development regulations as necessary	1 year
1.1.C	Develop a system to track the approvals process	1 year
1.2.A	Complete a build-out analysis	Prior to next growth policy update
1.2.B	Track number of acres of agricultural land converted to residential development	Ongoing
1.3.A	Make resources available to assist residents with Part 2 zoning	Ongoing
1.3.B	Revise the subdivision regulations	6 months
1.3.C	Make the "Code of the West" available	Ongoing
1.3.D	Fund and support an active County weed control program	Ongoing
1.3.E	Provide referral information on conservation easements	Ongoing
1.3.F	Protect private property rights while balancing individual rights	Ongoing
1.4.A	Encourage cluster development	Ongoing
1.5.A	Comment on state and federal undertakings	Ongoing
1.5.B	Develop recommendations on historic preservation	Prior to next growth policy update
1.5.C	Coordination with the Dept. of Transportation	Ongoing

<b>Goal or Action</b>	Task Description Summary	Completion Timeframe
1.6.A	Encourage open space and habitat dedications for parkland requirements	1 year
1.6.B	Obtain input from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks	Ongoing
1.7.A	Explore potential for future land use mapping	Prior to next growth policy update
1.8.A	Guide review of telecommunication towers	Ongoing
1.8.B	Consider telecommunications tower ordinance	1 year
Goal 2	Water Resource Management	
2.1.A	Compile and study groundwater science	2 years
2.1.B	Seek grants for well and septic system data countywide	Prior to next growth policy update
2.2.A	Identify public water/sewer system thresholds	Prior to next growth policy update
2.2.B	Request best management practices in new development projects	Ongoing
2.3.A	Revise subdivision regulations	1 year
2.4.A	Aide in securing grants for capital projects	Ongoing
2.4.B	Coordinate water/sewer training needs	Ongoing
2.5.A	Invite Dept. of Environmental Quality to present on wellhead protection	2 years
2.5.B	Apply for grants to complete wellhead protection projects	2 years
2.6.A	Revise floodplain regulations to comply with state and federal policy updates	As needed
2.6.B	Coordinate with joint floodplain permitting agencies	Ongoing
2.6.C	Consider stream development setbacks	1 year
Goal 3	Financial Management and Public Services	
3.1.A	Perform an impact fee study	1 year
3.1.B	Discuss demands on infrastructure with industry	Ongoing
3.1.C	Coordinate with industry to mitigate transportation impacts	Ongoing
3.1.D	Identify incentives that minimize county costs	6 months
3.1.E	Review/update planning fees	As needed
3.1.F	Review/update weed and fire fees	As needed

Goal or Action	Task Description Summary	Completion Timeframe
3.2.A	Complete rural addressing and E911 system	Ongoing
3.2.B	Update the Emergency Operations Plan	1 year
3.2.C	Develop level of service standards for emergency response services	1 year
3.3.A	Prepare a Capital Improvements Plan/Needs assessment	Prior to next growth policy update
3.3.B	Review and revise private road policy	Prior to next growth policy update
3.3.C	Assess county-owned buildings	2 years
3.3.D	Inventory known county roads	Ongoing
3.3.E	Update county road maintenance priority map	Ongoing
3.3.F	Inventory and assess bridges	6 months
3.3.G	Pursue resources available from MACo and the MT DOC to complete water/sewer	Ongoing
	improvement projects	
3.4.A	Continue participation in Beartooth RC&D	Ongoing
3.4.B	Apply for state/federal grants for infrastructure projects and technical assistance	Ongoing
3.4.C	Examine case studies in new development	
3.5.A	Consider neighborhood planning	1 year
3.6.A	Invite recycling industry reps to discuss recycling program feasibility	1 year
Goal 4	Cooperation with Other Governments	
4.1.A	Coordinate subdivision and development permit application review within one	Ongoing
	mile of incorporated places	
4.1.B	Identify mutual areas of concern	Ongoing
4.1.C	Encourage extension of services planning	1 year
4.2.A	Encourage infill development	Ongoing
4.2.B	Update and administer subdivision regs for unincorporated areas	1 year
4.3.A	Communicate with other agencies regarding road projects	Ongoing
4.3.B	Continue coordination with MDOT on all highway projects	Ongoing
4.4.A	Utilize state funds to administer Disaster and Emergecy Services program	Ongoing
4.4.B	Coordinate with US Forest Service on wildfire danger	Ongoing

Goal or Action	Task Description Summary	Completion Timeframe
4.4.C	Request MDOT traffic studies where appropriate	As needed
4.4.D	Ensure proper access and approach to sensitive agricultural lands	Ongoing
Goal 5	Natural and Environmental Resources	
5.1.A	Partner and communicate with developers to identify best practices	Ongoing
5.1.B	Promote renewable energy development	Ongoing
5.2.A	Consider impact mitigation policies	Ongoing
5.2.B	Attempt to coordinate with industry, landowners and local leaders	Ongoing
5.2.C	Request developers seek data on air, water and soil quality	Ongoing

# **Development Regulations**

The county adopted the development permitting system in 1981 to manage any change in use from agricultural, residential, or recreational to commercial or industrial. The Development Regulations are adopted under MCA 76-2 Part 2 "County Zoning".

Future updates to the development regulations should acknowledge potential impacts of new development to the

public health, safety or welfare, and should allow for such impacts to be mitigated when necessary.

# **Subdivision Regulations**

The review of subdivision and the regulations governing the review process affect the ability of the local government to achieve the growth policy's goals. Since 1974, every county, city, and town has been required by state law to "adopt and provide for the enforcement and

administration of subdivision regulations." The governing bodies have also had the authority to review subdivisions for their compliance with master planning documents. House Bill 543, passed by the 2001 state legislature and signed into law by the governor, now requires subdivision regulations be revised to be in accordance with the growth policy within one year of its adoption.

This section provides information on how the county will review subdivisions. It explains:

- 1. How the county defines the state's review criteria,
- How those criteria will be used to evaluate and make decisions on subdivisions, and
- **3.** How public hearings will be conducted.

### Criteria Definition

State law requires that subdivisions be reviewed for their effects on six primary criteria: agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, natural environment, wildlife and wildlife habitat, local services and public health and safety. This section clarifies how the county defines those criteria.

Agriculture: The use of the land for grazing and cropping to produce food, feed, and fiber commodities. Examples may include: cultivation and tillage of the soil; dairying; growing and harvesting of agricultural or horticultural commodities; and the raising of livestock, bees, fur-bearing animals, or poultry. This definition does not include concentrated animal feeding operations.

Agricultural water user facilities: Facilities that provide water for the production of agricultural products on agricultural land including, but not limited to ditches, canals, pipes, head gates, sprinkler systems, tanks, reservoir, ponds, or developed springs.

Local services: Any and all services or facilities local government is authorized to provide, such as water supply, sewage disposal, law enforcement, fire protection, transportation system, and educational system as well as services not provided by local government such as electricity, gas, telephone, and solid waste disposal.

Natural environment: Existing physical conditions relating to land, water, air, plant and animal life of an area and the interrelationship of those elements, such as soils, geology, topography, vegetation, surface water, ground water, aquifers, drainage patterns, recharge areas, climate, floodplains, noise, scenic resources, and objects of

historic, prehistoric, cultural, or aesthetic significance.

<u>Wildlife:</u> Animals (e.g. mammals, birds, reptiles, fish), that are not domesticated, existing in their natural environment.

Wildlife habitat: Geographic areas containing physical or biological features essential to wildlife for breeding, rearing, nesting, and/or winter feeding and forage; and/or essential to the conservation of listed endangered and threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

Public health and safety: A condition of optimal well being, free from danger, risk, or injury for a community at large, or for all people, as well as for the welfare of a specific individual or a small class of persons.

# **Evaluation**

The evaluation of the effect of the proposed subdivision on these six criteria determines if there are significant unmitigated adverse impacts. Unmitigated adverse impacts are potential grounds for denial of a proposed subdivision. Below are examples of items considered in evaluating the impact of a proposed subdivision on the six primary criteria. These examples do not necessarily reflect all potential items. Depending on the proposed subdivision, some of these items may not apply. In addition, some proposals may require evaluation of other factors not included in these examples to weigh the subdivision's effect on these criteria. It is the subdivider's responsibility to document proposed mitigation of any adverse impacts on these six criteria.

# Effect on agriculture.

 Number of acres that would be removed from the production of crops or livestock.

- Acres of prime farmland (as defined by the USDA) that would be removed
- Effect on use of remainder and adjoining properties as farm or ranch land
- Potential conflicts between the proposed subdivision and adjacent agricultural operations including:
  - » Interference with movement of livestock or farm machinery
  - » Maintenance of fences
  - » Weed proliferation
  - » Vandalism or theft
  - » Harassment of livestock by pets or humans
- Other items to be considered include:
  - » Effect on market value of surrounding land
  - » Net effect on taxes resulting from additional services

# Effect on agricultural water user facilities.

- Location and proximity to agricultural water user facilities
- Potential conflicts between facility users and subdivision residents including:
  - » Seeps, flooding, washouts,
  - » Obstructions and interference
  - » Unintended uses (recreation or landscaping)
- Water rights
- Vehicular access to facility

### Effect on local services.

- Increased demand on services and need to expand services
- Ability to provide services to subdivision

- » Response times
- » Conditions of roads, bridges, and railroad crossings
- » Physical Barriers.
- Provision of adequate local services and public facilities simultaneous or prior to onset of impact
- Any special or rural improvement districts that would obligate local government involvement fiscally or administratively

### Effect on natural environment.

- Runoff reaching surface waters (e.g., streams, rivers or riparian areas).
- Impacts on ground water quantity and quality.
- Impacts on air quality.
- Impacts on scenic resources.
- · Impacts on historic,

- prehistoric, and cultural resources
- Noxious weeds.
- Wetlands not covered under nationwide permits.

# Effect on wildlife and wildlife habitat.

- Loss of significant, important and critical habitat, as defined by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Impacts on significant,
   important and critical habitat
   including potential effects of
  - » roads and traffic
  - closure of existing operations and/or potential to provide new access to public lands
  - » Effects of humans and pets on wildlife.

Effect on public health and safety.

- Creation of potential man-made hazards (e.g. unsafe road intersection, development in wildland urban interface fire areas).
- Natural hazards (e.g. wildfire, flooding, steep slopes).
- Existing potential manmade hazards (e.g. high pressure gas lines, lack of fire protection, cumulative impacts).
- Traffic safety.
- Emergency vehicle access.
- Emergency medical response time.
- Condition of road leading to proposed subdivision.
- Condition of bridges on road leading to proposed subdivision.
- Any other item that endangers public health and safety.

# **Public Hearing Procedures**

A fundamental component of the subdivision review process is the opportunity for members of the public and interested groups to offer comments on the proposal. The opportunity to make comments in public is provided by the public hearing process. The Planning Board will also accept written comment received outside of the public hearing, but may set deadlines for the receipt of such comment. Under state law, the requirement to hold a public hearing does not apply to the first minor subdivision from a tract of record. A minor subdivision is defined as containing five or fewer lots.

The general steps for the public hearing, which is conducted by the Planning Board in Carbon County, are as follows:

1. Introduce public hearing.

- **2.** Explain subdivision review procedure and decision criteria.
- **3.** Planning Department staff report.
- 4. Applicant presentation.
- **5.** Public testimony.
- **6.** Close public hearing.

Court decisions have held that public meetings that extend late into the night are not really accessible to the general public. The meeting should be conducted so that those who want to speak for or against, or who seek additional information, will have an opportunity to do so while still providing a reasonable adjournment time.

The Planning Board Chair, who presides over the meeting, is responsible for setting the guidelines or methods for public comment. The Chair will review general guidelines prior to public comment, reminding

the public of the criteria upon which the final decision must be made. Because each meeting is somewhat different, a standardized set of guidelines may not work in every case. Options to manage public discussion can include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Asking those who wish to speak to sign in, and use the list to call on speakers.
- Limiting the amount of time each person can speak.
- Allowing each person to speak only once until all have had an opportunity.
- Requesting individuals to address new issues only and not repeat what has already been addressed.

The planning board will vote on the subdivision application after the public hearing is adjourned. Their decision will be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners as a formal recommendation.

# Implementation and Amendment of the Growth Policy

# Timetable for implementing the growth policy

The growth policy should be implemented according to the implementation measures listed under each goal and objective in the Implementation Framework.

# A list of conditions that will lead to revision of the Growth Policy

To remain a useful tool for guiding land use development in the county, this growth policy will need to be periodically updated. The following conditions will trigger a revision of the growth policy.

The passage of five years from adoption;

Legislative changes which mandate significant additions, corrections, or amendments to the growth policy; Changed conditions including but not limited to litigation in Carbon County or elsewhere in Montana which sets legal precedent clearly contrary to stated goals, objectives and strategies in the County's growth policy.

# A timetable for reviewing the growth policy

The Carbon County growth policy shall be revised at a minimum every five years from the most recent date of adoption. Review may occur more frequently than five years if one or more of the conditions that lead to a revision of the growth policy listed above occur. The County Planning Board shall be responsible for reviewing the growth policy and making recommendations for changes to the goals, objectives, and implementation measures.

# Amending the Growth Policy

Amendment of the growth policy may occur as

recommended by the County
Planning Board. Triggers
which could cause the County
Planning Board to recommend
amendment could include, but
are not necessarily limited to; a
determination that an issue was
not adequately addressed in the
growth policy or an issue arising
which was not contemplated in
the growth policy.

The process by which the growth policy will be amended is as follows;

- 1. An issue or deficiency is identified to the Planning Board by a member of the Planning Board, the Board of County Commissioners, the County Planner, or a local government member.
- 2. The Planning Board has oversight responsibility for language proposed for any amendments of the growth policy.

- 3. Prior to the submission of the proposed amendment to the governing body, the board shall give notice and hold a public hearing on the growth policy. At least 10 days prior to the date set for hearing, the board shall publish in a newspaper of general circulation in the jurisdictional area a notice of the time and place of the hearing.
- 4. The Planning Board conducts a public hearing on the proposed amendment and votes on whether to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners adopt the amendment.
- 5. Within 60 days of the vote of the Planning Board and not less than 30 days, the Board of County Commissioners votes to accept or reject the recommendation from the Planning Board.

# **Application for Growth Policy Amendment**

Description of Amendment  Elements of growth policy to be amended:	How the amendment furthers the visions, goals, or objectives in the growth policy:
Summary of proposed amendment:	How the proposed amendment will provide clear, community benefit:
Provide or attach the following in a narrative format with any maps or drawings as needed. Please demonstrate:  How or where an error was made in the growth policy that requires an amendment to preserve a property right or to preserve equal protection under the law:	I hereby certify under penalty of perjury and the laws of the State of Montana that the information submitted herein, on all other submitted forms, documents, plans or any other information submitted as a part of this application, to be true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Should any information or representation submitted in connection with this application be untrue, I understand that any approval based thereon may be rescinded and other appropriate action taken. The signing of this application signifies approval for Carbon County staff to be present on the property for routine monitoring and inspection during the approval and development process.
<ul> <li>How or where conditions in the city have changed to a degree that requires an amendment to the growth policy:</li> </ul>	Applicant's Signature
	Date