

**Regional Land Use and Economic Planning
Billings-Cody Sub-region
Seasonality Project
Yellowstone Business Partnership**



Historic Irma Hotel, Cody

Made possible with funding from
USDA Rural Development and the Idaho Transportation Department

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
I. Introduction.....	4
II. Area Overview.....	6
III. Land Use Planning.....	14
IV. Cross-Boundary Issues.....	19
V. Impacts and Trade-offs.....	25
VI. Recommendations.....	28
VII. Conclusions.....	32

Appendices

A. Where to Find the Plans.....	33
B. Planners and Contact Information.....	34
C. Infrastructure Status.....	35
D. Map Information...map pocket.....	37

Tables

1. Population by County, 1980-2005.....	6
2. Land Ownership by County.....	7
3. Per Capita Income Adjusted for Inflation.....	9
4. Rent and Homeowner Costs.....	10
5. Existing Land Use Plans-Local Jurisdictions.....	15
6. Existing Land Use Plans-Federal Agencies.....	17

Figures

1. Land Cover.....	8
2. Distribution of Seasonal Housing.....	10
3. Land Ownership.....	12

Executive Summary

The following research results cover a five-county area including Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, and Yellowstone counties, Montana, and Park County, Wyoming. The research topic was selected by a volunteer sub-regional team that continued to guide the work for its duration. Beck Consulting and Map Murals completed the research and prepared this report for the Yellowstone Business Partnership. Funding for the project was obtained from USDA Rural Development and the Idaho Transportation Department.

The purpose of the research was to obtain copies of comprehensive local plans and summarize the status of land use planning in the five-county area specifically as it pertains to the economy and related factors such as seasonality, housing, infrastructure, and transportation. Further purposes were to identify cross-boundary issues, potential impacts that could be considered in decision-making, and to provide mapping tools and recommendations.

A number of cross-boundary issues were identified during the research. The issues include; loss of lands from agricultural production, minimizing urban sprawl, maintaining the character and supporting the vitality of the central business district, economic development and living wages, meeting housing needs, providing cost-effective government services, providing parks and recreation experiences, protecting the natural environment, and providing and maintaining a functional transportation system.

Four critical areas of impact from growth and development rose to the top of the plans and planner interviews conducted for the project.

- Economic effects
- Development patterns
- Effects on the natural environment
- Effects on housing

Further investigation and action was recommended in six areas based on the research.

- 1) Structure an on-going conversation.
- 2) Develop and test a web-based decision support tool that could be used across the region.
- 3) Support multi-jurisdictional organizations.
- 4) Analyze transit and housing needs from a regional and multi-modal perspective.
- 5) Make use of the nexus between economic development and land use with federal land management decisions.
- 6) Conduct a planning capacity study.

I. Introduction

The purpose of this research project has been to collect local land use plans and identify issues, obstacles that are common to more than one jurisdiction; generally assess the infrastructure situation, and list potential impacts that should be considered by decision makers. The project is funded by USDA Rural Development and the Idaho Department of Transportation. The project was administered by the Yellowstone Business Partnership, a non-profit corporation that promotes sustainable business practices.

Project Area

The area covered by this research project includes Park County, Wyoming, and Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, and Yellowstone Counties in Montana. This project area, referred to as the Billings-Cody Sub-Region, is one of five regions located around the Yellowstone/Grand Teton National Park ecosystem, all of which are part of the larger Yellowstone Business Partnership Seasonality Project.

Report Contents

- I. The Introduction helps the reader understand the purpose, background, and methodology of this research.
- II. The Area Overview provides information on several key characteristics of the sub-region. This information, while not exhaustive, provides a context for the subsequent land use/economic discussion and recommendations. Much of this information was taken from the *Turning on the Off-Season* report.
- III. The current status of Land Use Planning in the five-county area including the type of plan, the date of the plan, and some notes about the plan—first by local jurisdiction, and then by federal agency are provided in Section III. Planning staff capacity is also listed here.
- IV. Based upon interviews with local planners, the Infrastructure section addresses infrastructure challenges related to both existing demands and potential expansion and future demands. Corresponding maps show the locations of the present infrastructure and any areas local jurisdictions have identified for potential annexation.
- V. Cross-boundary Issues—issues that were either prevalent in local plans across the five-county area and/or mentioned during planner interviews are highlighted with some key examples that illustrate the nature of the issue.
- VI. Impacts and Trade-offs are listed to advance awareness of the effects a particular decision may have on other related variables. For example, the cost of

providing services and/or infrastructure is often related to the distance of a proposed development from a community, a factor the local governing body might wish to consider during decision making.

VII. Finally, Conclusions and Recommendations are provided on potential next steps.

Methodology

The research for this project was articulated and has been guided by the Billings-Cody Sub-regional team. The team is made up of volunteer business and community members and leaders from within the five-county area. The team oversaw the research project from inception of the larger project in March and continued through the fall of 2008 when the final report was prepared. The team met to define the scope of the project, list key deliverables, select the contractor, monitor progress, and provide direction to the researchers.

The following activities were completed between November 1 and December 15, 2008, to produce this report:

- Prepared an overview or general profile of the area using information from “Turning on The Off Season”
- Obtained county and incorporated community comprehensive land use plans and growth policies for the five-county area
- Reviewed above plans and interviewed county and community planners to identify cross-boundary issues and obstacles and opportunities for collaboration
- Drafted the report and posted it at www.yellowstonebusiness.org
- Obtained sub-regional team review of the draft report
- Incorporated comments received from the team and YBP]
- Finalized the report for distribution and inclusion in larger project report.
- Compiled base map layers in a Geographic Information System (GIS) for the five-county region and made them available within an easy-to-use desktop mapping application (See Appendix D).

Acknowledgements

Planners and other town, city, and county staff who contributed time and knowledge to this study were invaluable. Their names and contact information can be found in Appendix B. While planning capacity remains an issue in some areas, the experience and professionalism of the current planners is exceptional.

The Yellowstone Business Partnership is truly visionary and a positive force for the region. YBP’s pursuit of this grant opportunity and ability to engage a cadre of dedicated volunteers made this project possible. The sub-regional team brought a broad perspective to the project. They are the ones who defined the need for this work and supported and guided it from beginning to end.

II. Area Overview

The majority of the following information was taken from Turning on the Off-Season report of April 2007. Dr. Larry Swanson was the key researcher for that report, prepared for the Yellowstone Business Partnership.

Population

The population has been growing in each of the five counties. Yellowstone County, with the largest population and largest city of Billings, increased at the fastest rate during the period from 2000-2005. Along with an increasing population comes the need for additional housing, employment, and all types of infrastructure.

Table 1. Population by County 1980-2005

County	1980	2000	2005	% Change 2000-2005
Carbon	8,099	9,552	9,902	+3.7%
Stillwater	5,598	8,195	8,493	+3.6%
Sweet Grass	3,216	3,609	3,672	+1.7%
Yellowstone	108,035	129,352	136,691	+5.7%
Park, WY.	21,639	25,786	26,664	+3.4%

According to the U.S. Census, the median age in 1999 was 37 in Yellowstone County, 40 in Park County, 41 in Stillwater and Sweet Grass Counties, and 42 in Carbon County. From 30-40% of the residents are either high school graduates or the equivalent, with approximately one fourth of the counties' residents having completed some college.

Land Use

- Public Ownership

A large percentage of the five-county area, approximately 50% is in federal ownership (Table 2). Federal owners include the Bureau of Land Management; the Bridger-Teton, Custer, Gallatin, and Shoshone National Forests; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and the National Park Service—Yellowstone National Park and Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. These federal lands are managed for timber, forage, and energy production, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat among other uses. The states of Montana and Wyoming each own land sections distributed in a checkerboard pattern as a result of railroad land grants at the turn of the past century. County, city, and towns in the area own lands that are used for offices, shops, infrastructure, parks, airports, and other purposes.

- Private Ownership

Private land ownership in the area consists of individuals and corporations. Some examples of the types of corporations that own land would be ranching and farming operations, hard rock mining and oil and gas production companies, manufacturers, and railroads. Dr. Larry Swanson’ research for Turning on the Off Season found that agricultural lands comprise most of the region’s private lands creating value through employment, production, contributing to the region’s character, and protecting wildlife habitat and open space.

Developed lands in the five-county area include communities, commercial and industrial areas, mines, and lands supporting the transportation infrastructure.

Table 2. Land Ownership by County

County	Privt	St	USFS	BLM	BOR	NPS	Tribl	Loc Gov	Othr	Watr
Carbon	52.5%	3.3%	24.8%	17.0%	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%
Stillwater	76.6%	4.2%	16.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.4%
Sweet Grass	70.3%	4.0%	23.9%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.4%
Yellowstone	80.5%	4.3%	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	0.5%	1.8%	0.6%
Park, WY.	17.3%	3.5%	38.5%	14.0%	1.5%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Sub-Region Total %	46.4	3.8	25.6	9.6	0.7	11.6	1.3	0.1	0.5	0.3

Natural Resources

The stunning natural features in the five-county area serve as a draw for both residents and visitors. The area is characterized by great natural diversity. Elevation ranges from just under 13,000 feet above sea level to 2,850 feet. As a result, the geology, soils, climate, and plant and wildlife communities differ significantly across the landscape.

Dominant natural features in the area include mountains, rivers, intermountain basins, and Yellowstone National Park. Portions of the Absaroka, Beartooth, Crazy, Granite, and Pryor Ranges are situated in these five counties. The area is home to Montana’s highest mountain peak--Granite Mountain at 12,799 feet, on the borders of Carbon and Stillwater Counties in Montana. The Yellowstone River and its tributaries drain all of the Montana counties and the western portion of Park County, Wyoming. The rest of Park County is drained by the Shoshone River and its tributaries.

Land cover in the region is dominated by shrublands, grasslands and evergreen forests (Figure 1). Cultivated crops and pastures are more pronounced in northern Yellowstone and Sweet Grass Counties as compared to the other three Counties.

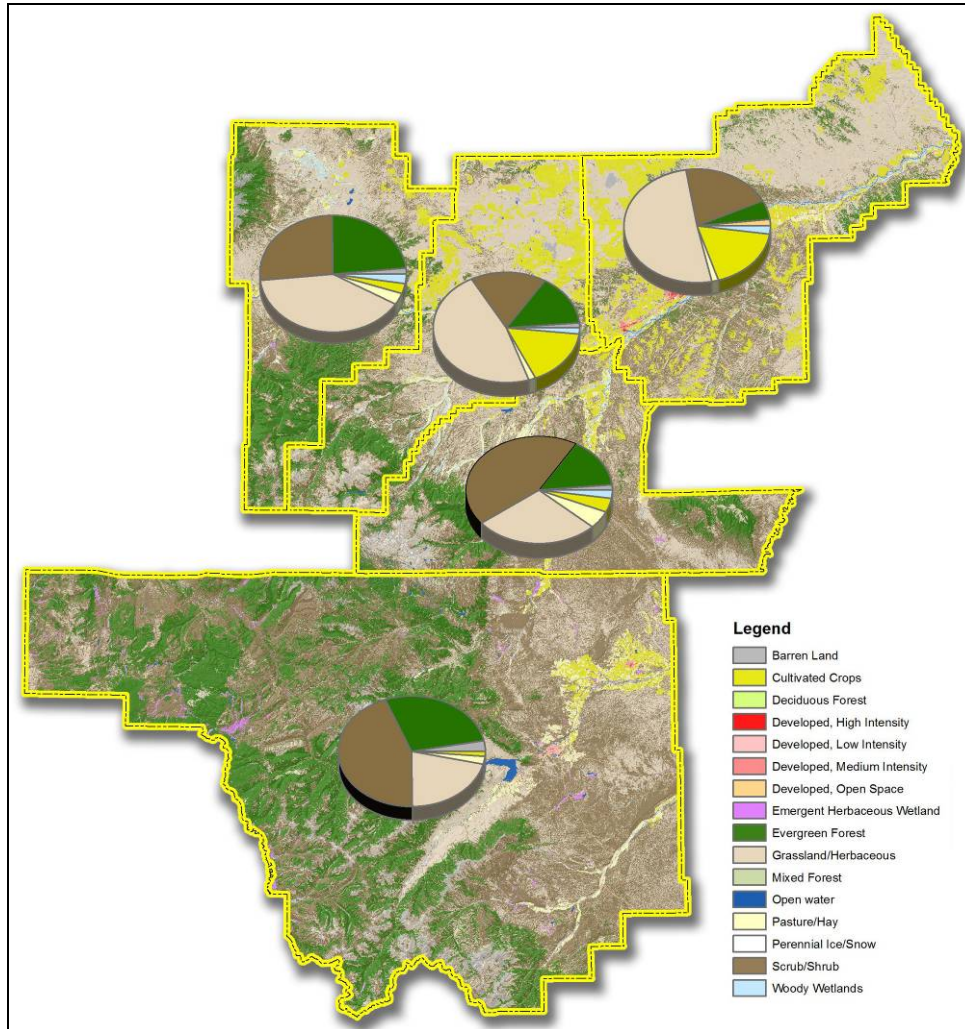


Figure 1. Land Cover

High elevation headwaters produce generally excellent quality ground and surface waters throughout the region. However, there are areas in the counties with issues related to water availability and quality issues. Water quality concerns relate both to natural conditions in the aquifers such as alkalinity and also to human influences.

Economy

Table 3. Per Capita Income Adjusted for Inflation

County	1980	1990	2004	% Change 80-90	% Change 90-04
Carbon	15,976	18,562	26,185	16.2	41.1
Stillwater	17,049	18,090	28,047	6.1	55.0
Sweet Grass	17,051	18,520	21,972	8.6	18.6
Yellowstone	20,068	21,695	28,808	8.1	32.8
Park, WY	22,424	21,035	28,893	6.2	37.4

(Turning on the Off-Season from the U.S. Department of Commerce)

Per capita income has grown steadily in the larger Yellowstone-Teton Region from 1980-2004.

Carbon County, Montana and Park County, Wyoming were and likely remain two of the most tourism-dependent counties in the region at 18% and 17% respectively in 2004. Additionally, Park County experiences a significant seasonality in employment. July 2005 employment exceeded January 2006 employment 16.5%. Traffic flow data for U.S. Highway 20 between Cody and Yellowstone National Park and to a lesser extent--enplanements at Yellowstone Regional Airport in Cody--provide another indicator of the seasonal nature of the economy for Park County. Enplanements at Billings Logan Airport also show a summer high season.

Housing

Although not the primary focus of this study, housing availability and affordability repeatedly arose in discussions about land use and economic development in the sub-region. Housing units are needed for the growing number of full-time residents, seasonal residents, and the workforce.

The seasonal nature of the area's economy creates both demands and impacts on housing. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2000, 18.5% of the housing units in Carbon County, 12% in Stillwater County, 10.9% in Sweet Grass County, .5% in Yellowstone County, and 6.8% in Park County were seasonal units. Figure 2 shows that seasonal housing is more prominent toward the mountains and/or public lands in Montana (data was unavailable for Park County Wyoming). The trend for seasonal housing units as a percentage of total units was up in every single county in the study area between 1990 and 2000.

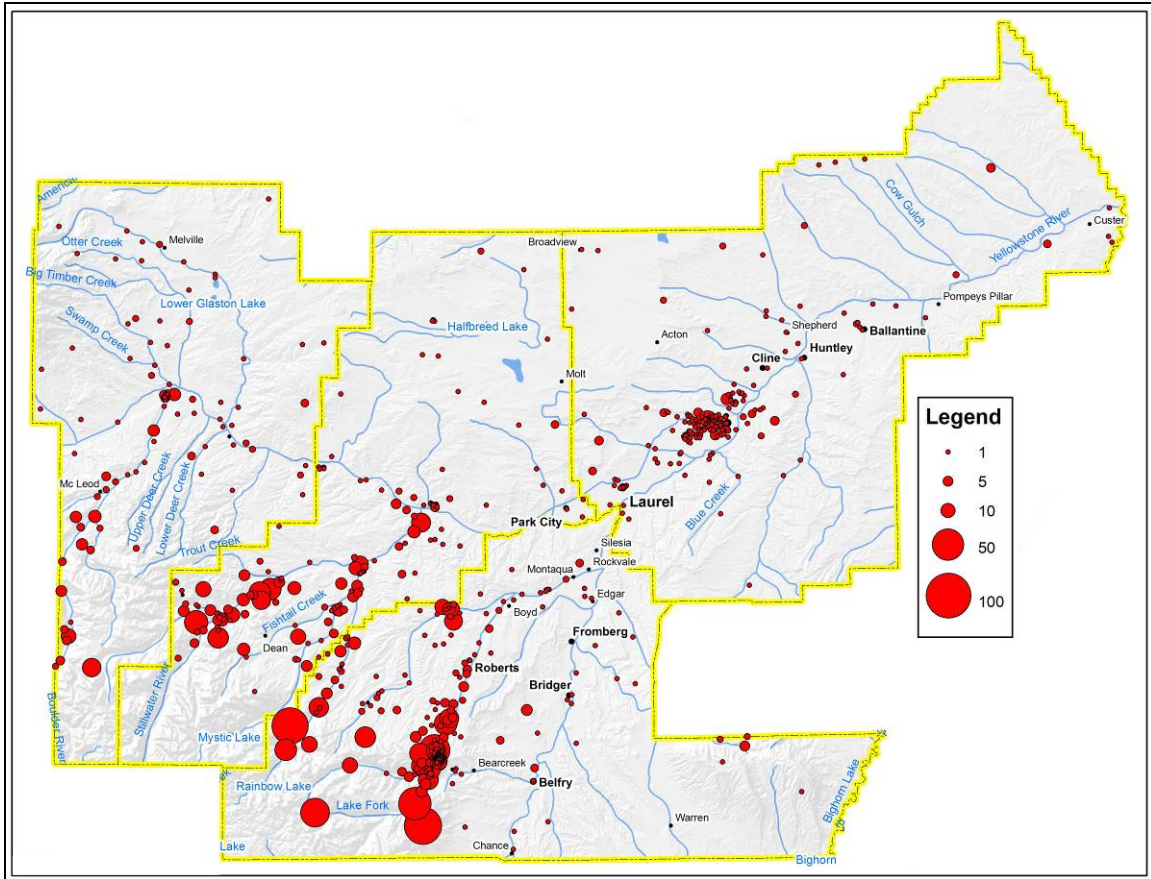


Figure 2. Distribution of seasonal housing in Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Yellowstone County Montana.

While not an issue in all of the smaller rural communities, affordable housing is a major obstacle for workers and employers across most of the area. Median rent and homeowner costs can be an indicator of well-being.

Table 4. Rent and Homeowner Costs

County	Median gross rent as share of median income 2000	Median selected monthly owner costs as percentage of median household income 2000
Carbon	22.2%	22.1%
Stillwater	19.5%	19.8%
Sweet Grass	20.9%	21.7%
Yellowstone	25.2%	21.2%
Park	22.0%	21.2%

(U.S. Census Bureau)

Energy development—hard rock mining and oil and gas--exacerbates already difficult housing situations in some communities in the sub-region.

Transportation

Not surprisingly, according to Dr. Swanson in *Turning on the Off-Season*, traffic flow on highways leading through some of the main national park gateways shows a strong seasonal pattern resembling visitation of Yellowstone Park.

Two entrances to Yellowstone, the east gate and the northeast gate are situated in this study area (Figure 3). Cody and Red Lodge are gateway communities along these routes and both of these entrances are closed in the winter to automobiles. Despite the fact that Cody is 50 miles from the east entrance, residents of both communities describe themselves as “being at the end of the road in winter.” The route between Red Lodge and the northeast entrance to Yellowstone travels the Beartooth All-American Highway. The route between Cody and the northeast entrance travels the Chief Joseph Highway. Both of these highways have special designations because of their scenic nature. Two of the study area counties have no interstate highway, Park and Carbon. I-90 runs east-west through the remaining three counties along the heart of the Yellowstone River Valley. The road network in the counties also consists of state secondary highways, county roads, and municipal streets.

The only urban mass transit in the area is found in the city of Billings and is provided by MET transit. MET operates a bus system. Cody has a seasonal shuttle—the Cody Colt—that provides transportation around the city during the summer months. A small number of operators provide taxi service, airport shuttles, and transportation for seniors and others for medical appointments. There is no regularly-scheduled public transportation between any of the communities.

Airports offering commercial service are found in Billings and Cody. Other public airstrips exist in Big Timber, Columbus, Laurel, and Red Lodge. Billings Logan Airport carries the majority of air traffic in and out of the five-county area and is located no more than 90 miles from the farthest point in the area.

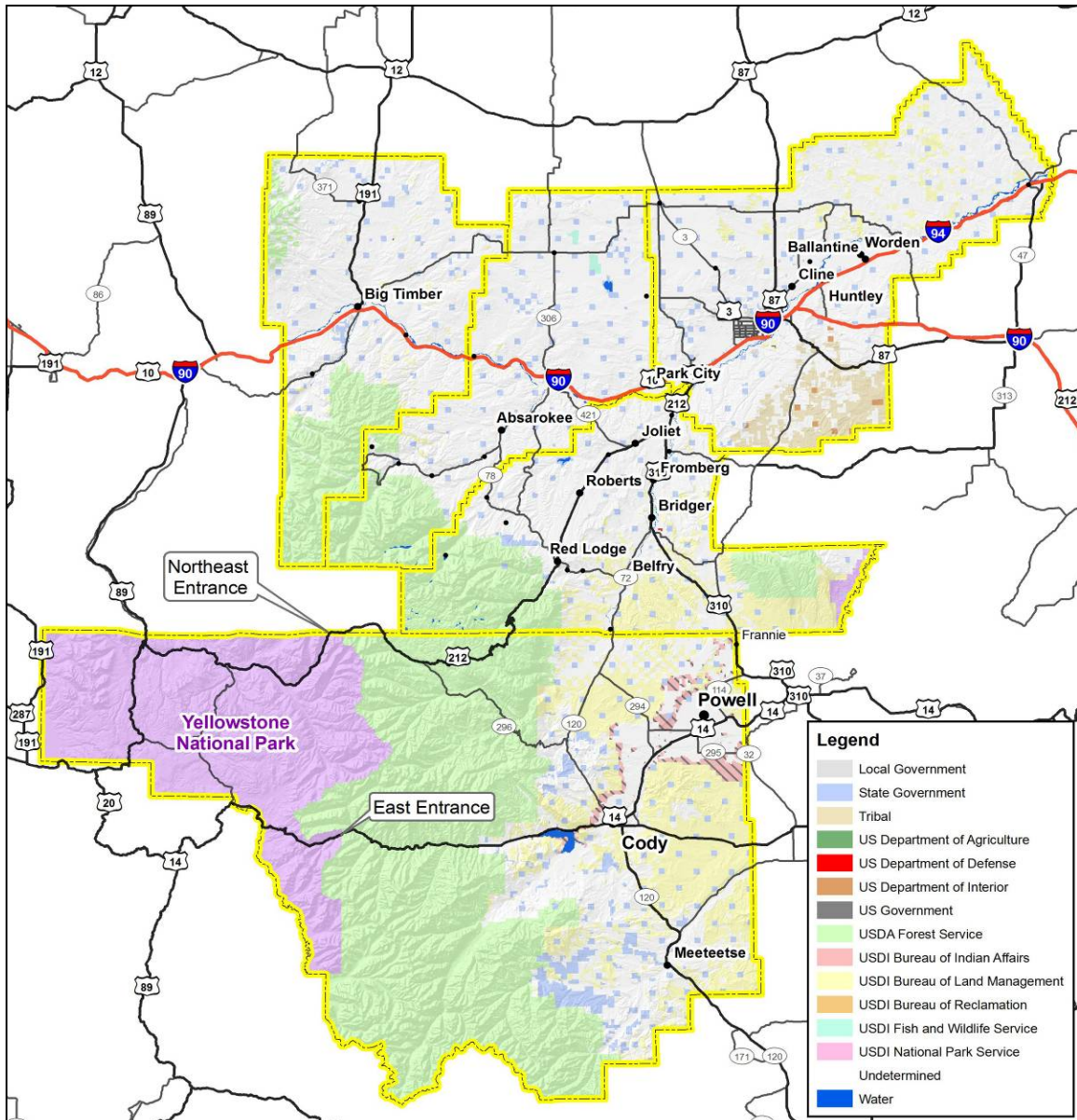


Figure 3. Landownership

Walking and biking trails are identified in a number of the land use plans. The Heritage Trail Plan in Billings, the Comprehensive Trails Plan in Red Lodge, and the Cody Parks and Pathways Plan are some of the plans that guide development of trails and bike systems. In general, with Billings as the exception, bicycle travel has not been well planned for and/or funded in the five-county area. There are no bicycle corridors linking gateway communities to Yellowstone National Park and no dedicated bicycle routes within the Park.

Several communities reported intention to apply for Safe Routes to Schools grants that will be used to address sidewalk and potentially some biking needs.

Comparison of Five-County Area to All U.S. Counties

(Note: The source of the following information is the SocioEconomic Profile for each county in the Economic Profile System (EPS.) The EPS information can be found at www.headwaterseconomics.org)

- Carbon County has a roughly average annualized population growth rate with a somewhat fast employment growth rate. The median age is old. Per capita income in 2005 was somewhat high, but average earnings per job in 2005 were low. The rich-poor ratio was roughly average. Housing affordability was somewhat less affordable. The unemployment rate was somewhat low.
- Stillwater County has a somewhat fast average annualized population growth rate with a fast employment growth rate. The median age is somewhat old. Per capita income in 2005 was somewhat high, average earnings per job in 2005 was somewhat high. The rich-poor ratio was roughly average. Housing affordability was somewhat less affordable. The unemployment rate was low.
- Sweet Grass County has a roughly average annualized population growth rate with a somewhat fast employment growth rate. The median age is old. Per capita income in 2005 was roughly average, average earnings per job in 2005 was roughly average. The rich-poor ratio was roughly average. Housing affordability was somewhat less affordable. The unemployment rate was low.
- Yellowstone County has a somewhat fast average annualized population growth rate with a somewhat fast employment growth rate. The median age is roughly average. Per capita income in 2005 was high, average earnings per job in 2005 was somewhat high. The rich-poor ratio was roughly average. Housing affordability was somewhat less affordable. The unemployment rate was low.
- Park County, Wyoming, has a somewhat fast average annualized population growth rate with a somewhat fast employment growth rate. The median age is somewhat old. Per capita income in 2005 was high, but average earnings per job in 2005 were roughly average. The rich-poor ratio was roughly average. Housing affordability was somewhat less affordable. The unemployment rate was somewhat low.

III. Land Use Planning

Land use planning is active and on-going in the five counties. While land use planning is not required in Montana, a comprehensive land use plan, referred to as a Growth Policy must be in place before zoning can be adopted. Growth policies are not regulatory documents, but set forth goals and objectives for subsequent regulations should the governing bodies wish to adopt them. The primary vehicle for implementing regulatory controls in Montana counties are the subdivision regulations. While these regulations address a wide variety of issues that could occur in any given development, developers are not required to address cumulative effects. Wyoming statutes do require local level land use plans (Section 9-8-3.)

Several of the municipalities are already working closely with their counties. Billings and Yellowstone County share planning staff and operate under one growth policy. Columbus and Stillwater County also share staff and have a combined growth policy. In Sweet Grass County, staff is shared, but Big Timber and the county have separate growth policies, prepared by the same staff. All of these efforts lead to closer cooperation and consistency in identifying and addressing issues across jurisdictional lines.

Some smaller incorporated communities address their needs under a county plan rather than developing their own municipal plans, for example the town of Bearcreek and other small towns in Carbon County are covered by the county's Growth Policy. Web site references for each plan available on line can be found in Appendix A.

The professional planning cadre includes both long-term planners in the area and relatively new ones—less than one year. Planners' names and contact information can be found in Appendix B. Several planners have worked in different jurisdictions within the five-county area over the past twenty years. There is overlap specifically with planners in Sweet Grass and Yellowstone Counties, Sweet Grass and Park County, Wyoming, and Laurel, Billings/Yellowstone County and Columbus/Stillwater County. So, these planners have experience and understanding of issues not just in their current counties, but also in other counties within this Billings-Cody sub-region research area. While it seems logical that the planners would communicate frequently with each other, this doesn't seem to be the case--likely simply due to the constant press of business and workloads.

The oldest plans in the area are slightly over ten years. Several plans have either been adopted in 2008 (Red Lodge and Stillwater County) or are being updated currently (Billings/Yellowstone County and Big Timber.)

Table 5. Existing Land Use Plans—Local Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Title	Date	Comments	Capacity
Carbon County, MT.	Carbon Co. Montana Growth Policy	2003	Available on-line.	1 PT planner, 1 PT support, Contractor for subdiv. review
Bearcreek, Bridger, Joliet, Fromberg		2003	Covered under Carbon County GP	0
Red Lodge	Growth Policy	2008	Recently adopted, working on implementation regs, available on line	2 planners
Park County, WY.		1998	Available on-line	3 planners 1 wastewater 1 admin staff
Cody	Comprehensive Plan	1997	Not available on-line	1 planner
Meeteetse	N/A	N/A	Planning area, no master plan	0
Powell	Master Plan-update	1997	Not available on line.	.5 engineer 1 bldg official
Stillwater County, MT.	Growth Policy	2007	Available on-line.	1 contract planner-shared with Columbus
Columbus	Columbus Area Growth Policy	2005	Not available on-line.	1 contract planner, 1 admin staff, .3 FTE econ. development
Sweet Grass County, MT.	Growth Policy	2008	Recently revised Available on-line.	1 planner-shared with Big Timber 1 administrative staff
Big Timber	Growth Policy	2008	Currently in draft form Available on-line	1 planner, 1 administrative staff
Yellowstone County, MT.	Growth Policy	2003	Combined with Billings—under revision Available on-line	5 GIS staff Planners employed by Billings—below
Billings	Growth Policy	2003	Combined with Yellowstone Co.—under revision	10.1 FTE total, 1 Division Mgr, 6 planners, .6 trans planner, 1 plan asst, 1.5 clerks
Laurel	Laurel Growth Management Plan	2004	Not available on-line	1 planner

In some of the local plans, areas of potential for future annexation have been identified. Some of the communities are bounded by natural features limiting expansion in one or more directions. Examples of this include the Yellowstone River running through Billings, the Shoshone River and its deeply incised channel running through Cody, and the east and west benches defining the Rock Creek Valley in which the city of Red Lodge is situated.

The 1997 Cody Master Plan envisions annexations to the south, southwest, north and northeast. These areas are situated along major highways into the community. Billings is growing to the north and west. Irrigated prime farmlands are being lost in the westward expansion of the city.

There are very real differences in staffing models and capacities across the five counties. Permanent staff is the lowest in Carbon County with a part-time planner and a part-time secretary. This capacity is expanded with a planning contractor used as needed for preparing subdivision staff reports. The county has relied on this staffing configuration for a number of years. It allows for flexibility when application numbers fluctuate, but little capacity to engage in comprehensive or long-ranger planning. A contract planner is also utilized, as the department head, in Stillwater County and Columbus. The part-time contract planner has a small staff that includes a part-time position for economic development. On the other end of the staffing spectrum is Billings/Yellowstone County, currently with 10.1 full time equivalents, down approximately two positions from recent years. GIS capabilities vary as well with some GIS departments residing under the planning department and others elsewhere. In Cody and Powell, planning is found within the public works/engineering departments.

Legal authority for local planning in Montana is found in Section 76-1 of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA.) Section 76-1-106 defines the role of the Planning Board. Section 76-1-601 offers guidance on the contents of a growth policy. Sections 76-1-605-606 explain the use of growth policies and their effect on general policy, pattern of development, zoning regulations, and subdivision regulations.

Legal authority for planning at the municipal level in Wyoming is found in Title 15. Sections 1-503, 9-1, 9-2, and 10 contain the direction for master planning, urban renewal, downtown development authority, and housing projects respectively. Land use planning for Wyoming counties is found in Title 18, Section 5.

Table 6. Existing Land Use Plans—Federal Agencies

Jurisdiction	Title	Date	Comments	Study Counties
Bridger-Teton National Forest	Land and Resource Management Plan	1990	This plan contains a section titled Socio-economic setting. The section provides information on the prehistory and history of the area. The plan also designates Human Resource Units (HRUs), but there is no HRU for the area of the Forest in Park County, WY.	Park, WY.
Bureau of Land Management—Billings Field Office	Resource Management Plan	1984	Currently under revision—conducting analysis of the management situation. BLM plans to address social/economic factors. Energy development decisions likely to be a key driver of local impacts, along with recreation, fire, and vegetation mgmt decisions.	Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Yellowstone
Bureau of Land Management—Cody Field Office	Resource Management Plan	1990	No specific mention of social, economic, or land use impacts. Energy development and production decisions could impact social and economic conditions in neighboring jurisdictions.	Park, WY.
Custer National Forest	Forest Plan	1986 Due for revision	Revision not scheduled due to funding issues. Social and economic impacts not addressed. Forest Service decisions on energy development and production, access and recreation, and wildland fire could affect social, economic, and land use conditions in neighboring jurisdictions.	Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Yellowstone
Gallatin National Forest	Forest Plan, Travel Management Plan	1987 2006	Forest Plan due for revision. Not scheduled due to lack of funds. Existing Forest Plan does not address social or economic impacts of decisions. Travel plan has good socio-economic impact study of decisions related to travel management.	Carbon, Sweet Grass
Shoshone NF	Forest Plan	1986 draft update May 2008	Process on hold due to Roadless Area litigation. May 2008 revision does not address social, economic or adjoining land use issues/impacts.	Park, WY.
Yellowstone National Park	Winter Use Plan	2008	September 2008 judicial decision on lawsuit over Winter Use Plan resulted in invalidating plan. Park trying to propose solutions for motorized use for 2008-09 season.	Park, WY.

Note: One potential local land use impact of federal managers' decisions is now being seen in western Montana, but not yet in the five-county area to any great extent. This impact is related to divestiture of federal parcels with good access in areas proximate, but not necessarily immediately adjacent or contiguous to communities. Once these lands come into private ownership, they are subdivided because they are considered highly desirable for solitude, vistas, the presence of wildlife and other characteristics. This can cause leapfrog development with corresponding impacts on the costs to local governments to provide services. In the Cody area, however, BLM lands are located within close proximity to the municipal limits and could be desirable for city expansion from a proximity and corresponding cost of services perspective.

Federal land and resource management plans were reviewed as part of this study because with the prevalence of federal lands in this five-county area, actions taken on federal lands have the potential for both positive and negative effects on local jurisdictions' land use and economies. During the previous and initial round of federal land use planning, the plans did not specifically take these potential effects into account. Updates to existing BLM Resource Management Plans in both Montana and Wyoming are underway during this research look to be more promising in their consideration of these local effects. A short list of potential specific land and economic impacts of federal land decisions is provided at the end of the following section.



East Rosebud drainage, Carbon County

IV. Cross-boundary Issues

All available land use plans were obtained and/or reviewed for each of the local jurisdictions in the five-county area. Currency of these plans stretched from the present--2008, back to 1996. Common issues and goals were identified from the plans and also from discussions with each of the planning professionals representing the jurisdictions. However, it cannot be assumed that each of the issues listed below is present as an issue in every one of the local jurisdictions, or present to the same extent. The following issues emerged from the local plans, interviews with planners, and map research. Examples have been selected from the plans to illustrate each issue.

- **Loss of lands from agricultural production**

“Promote and direct urban and suburban growth to marginal or non-productive lands and areas contiguous to the Cody city limits to protect rural agricultural operations from encroaching non-compatible land uses.” (Preservation of Agriculture Goal, Cody Master Plan, 1997, p. 23)

“To protect, encourage and support the agricultural land base of the county and its agricultural resources, and, to achieve the most appropriate use of land within the County so sufficient areas are provided for existing and future residential, commercial, and industrial needs and, at the same time, enhance ecological and environmental values.” (Sweet Grass County 2003-2008 Growth Policy, p. 72)

“Goal One: 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 that is compatible with the retention, to the greatest extent possible, of land currently in agricultural production.” (Carbon County Growth Policy, 2001, p.6)

- **Minimizing or preventing “urban” sprawl.**

Issue: “Urban sprawl threatens the rural character of land surrounding Billings, increases the cost of providing public services, and threatens the vitality of the city core and downtown area. Goal: Contiguous development focused in and around existing population centers separated by open space.” (Draft Growth Policy Update, Billings and Yellowstone County, 2008, Ch 3, p.2)

“Issue-1: Urban sprawl weakens communities by increasing the cost of providing central services, takes farmland out of production, damages wildlife habitat, increases transportation and energy costs, facilitates the gap between the rich and poor, and leads to land use conflicts between agricultural operations and residential neighborhoods.” (Laurel Growth Management Plan, 2004, Land Use Element p.6)

- **Maintaining the character and supporting the vitality of the central business districts, in many cases the districts are also historic.**

“The Central Business District (downtown Powell) should continue to be the retail, service, governmental, social and cultural heart of Powell. Public investment and land use decisions should be consistent with this goal and the long-term economic health of the downtown area.” (Powell Central Business District Goal, Powell Master Plan Update, 1997, p.19)

“The Red Lodge Commercial Historic District and Central Business District must continue to be the retail, service, governmental, social, and cultural heart of Red Lodge. Public investment and land use decisions must be consistent with this goal, and strive for the long-term health of the central business district. Historic structures need special attention and incentives to preserve the character while addressing potential risks such as substandard infrastructure and fire risk.” (CBD Goal, 2008 Red Lodge Growth Policy, p. 18)

“Issue-4: Laurel’s Downtown needs revitalization and new businesses. Specific land use issues include redevelopment of old buildings, development of vacant lots, diversification of land uses, and cooperation of revitalization efforts. Policy-1: Support revitalization of the Downtown.” (Laurel Growth Management Plan, 2004, Land Use Element pps.8-9)

- **Economic development, living wages**

“Economic Development Goal: To maintain stable employment areas and pursue diverse employment opportunities in order to achieve full employment within the available labor force, to maintain Big Timber as a viable business community, to encourage a diversified year-round economy within the entire county, and to broaden the tax base of the city.” (Draft Big Timber Growth Policy, 2008, P. 40)

“Issue: Lack of living wage jobs. Goal: Increase the median income of households and individuals.” (Draft Growth Policy Update, Billings and Yellowstone County, 2008, Ch 3, p. 3)

“Community infrastructure needs to be improved to support economic development. The cost and benefits of each project should be considered before a final decision is made.” (Economic Development Issues Goal, Columbus Growth Policy, 2007, p. 3-10)

“Issue: The Billings economy faces a severe shortage of skilled workers in a number of sections (a problem that will worsen as the population ages.) Goal: Community-wide planning and incorporation of a skilled workforce to meet the diverse and growing economic development needs of the community.” (Draft Growth Policy Update, Billings and Yellowstone County, 2008, Ch 3, p.5-6)

“Issue #1 Economics: The economy is at the top of the policy agenda in Park County because of the role the economy plays in shaping the culture and environment, distributing resources and sustaining vital activities. Goals and Objectives for Economics: Achieve a sustainable diverse economy, retain and expand existing businesses and industries, sustain agricultural business, diversify business and industry, and retain multiple use of public lands.” (Park County Land Use Plan, 1998, p. 12)

“To stabilize existing employment areas and pursue diverse employment opportunities in order to achieve full employment within the available county labor force. (Economic Development Goal, Sweet Grass County 2003-2008 Growth Policy, p. 75)

- **Housing needs, specifically affordable housing and a diversity of housing types.**

In the interview with the Cody and Park County, Wyoming planners, the issue of impacts to the housing situation as a result of the seasonal economy came up. Cody Planner, Kathy Spencer, reported that non-resident property owners offer multiple-month rental opportunities during the off or winter season and then evict renters during summer months when nightly and weekly rentals are more lucrative, exacerbating the difficulty of renters to find stable, affordable housing.

Issue: There is a serious lack of affordable housing for low to moderate income households. Goal: Affordable housing for all income levels dispersed throughout the City and County.” (Draft Growth Policy Update, Billings and Yellowstone County, 2008, Ch 3, p. 3)

“Promote the construction of a wide range of housing types, sizes and costs including modular homes and quality mobile home parks, to assure the opportunity for residents to obtain a choice of affordable living environments.” (Powell Affordable Housing Goal, Powell Master Plan Update, 1997, p. 31)

“Encourage a diverse supply of safe and appealing housing for residents of all ages, needs, and income levels, including single-family homes, apartments, townhouses, mobile/manufactured homes and other types of housing with a special emphasis on maintaining neighborhood character and stability.” (Draft Big Timber Growth Policy, 2008, P. 38)

“Recognize land subdivision is necessary to meet housing needs, and develop a strategy for adequate and affordable housing required for an increasing population.” (Subdivision Issues Goals, Columbus Growth Policy, 2007, p. 3-5)

- **Providing government services efficiently and cost-effectively. Bearing the cost of growth.**

The subject of funding adequate to provide planning services came up repeatedly in planner interviews. Planners are conscious of the need to meet both the current demand to process applications and permits, and the demand to plan effectively for future needs. With the current economic recession, planning staff at municipal and county levels are expecting revenues to local governments to decline, thereby threatening to erode the capacity of local planning offices to deliver these important services.

“To provide the following services in an efficient, well coordinated and economical manner; emergency medical services, fire protection, law enforcement, medical care, education, social services, cultural services (Library), recreation opportunities, and general county administration.” (Sweet Grass County 2003-2008 Growth Policy, p. 76)

“The costs of growth should not be passed on to future generations. The City of Red Lodge and other local service providers should adopt a “pay as you go” policy that requires developers to provide on-site improvements and make fair contributions to the cost of off-site facilities impacted by their activities...” (Infrastructure and Services Goal #6, 2008 Red Lodge Growth Policy, p. 52)

“Ensure that new development mitigates to a reasonable extent, increase costs and/or impacts to levels and/or quality of services, and conditions of public facilities already provided to existing residents and landowners.” (County Financial Management Goal, Carbon County Growth Policy, 2001, p.10)

Issue #6 Government: Diminishing public fiscal resources coupled with increasing demands for services and facilities seriously challenge the solvency of local governments. The rapid urbanization many parts of Park County are now experiencing compound these issues by placing fiscal burdens on local governments. Goal: Require county government to be accountable, accessible, efficient, and sensitive to the changing demands of the community through competent and decisive leadership and meaningful citizen participation.” (Park County Land Use Plan, 1998, p. 16)

- **Providing parks and recreation experiences and access to recreation experiences.**

“Issue 2: There is a need for well-designed, integrated, and connected open space and park land in the community.” (Laurel Growth Management Plan, 2004, p.7)

“The City of Red Lodge will maintain and improve existing parks and trails.” (Trails, Parks, and Open Space Goals, 2008 Red Lodge Growth Policy, p. 38)

- **Protecting the natural environment including water quality, wildlife, viewsheds, and open space, and preventing the spread of noxious weeds.**

“Park County is a superbly beautiful natural environment. Conservation and management of basic natural resources and the environment are important. Goals and Objectives for Environment: sustain renewable resources, conserve scenic areas and open spaces, manage the quality and quantity of big game habitat, maintain watershed quality, maintain and where feasible improve air, water, and soil quality, and limit the introduction of exotic species of plants and animals.” (Issue #2 Environment and Natural Resources, Park County Land Use Plan, 1998, p. 15)

The City of Red Lodge shall encourage a landscape where wildlife can thrive, roaming and reproducing widely in natural corridors used for movement and avoiding the perils of human waste, development, and automobiles...” (Goals to Mitigation Human-Wildlife Conflict, 2008 Red Lodge Growth Policy, p. 66)

Issue: The quality of the Yellowstone River and the associated riparian habitat is threatened. Goal: A healthy river ecosystem that supports multiple uses.” (Draft Growth Policy Update, Billings and Yellowstone County, 2008, Ch 3, p.7)

- **Providing and maintaining a functional transportation infrastructure (largely oriented to moving automobiles) in the given jurisdiction.**

“Provide the safest and most cost effective surface transportation system possible to the taxpayers and traveling public.” (County Roads and Bridge Issues Goal, Columbus Growth Policy, 2007, p. 3-3)

“Plan for the development and maintenance of a public street system based on a master street plan which can accommodate both current and anticipated city growth, tied to appropriate and workable funding mechanisms. (Cody Master Plan Streets Goal, 1997, p.39)

Goal and Objective for Transportation: Encourage meeting transportation needs of people, goods, and services; encourage maintenance of roads and air service.” (Park County Land Use Plan, 1998, p. 20)

“Issue: Safe and efficient traffic circulation around and through the City. Goal: Efficient cross-town and in-town traffic.” (Draft Growth Policy Update, Billings and Yellowstone County, 2008, Ch 3, p.7) Note: The Billings plan does contain goals for public and alternative transportation, including bicycle facilities.

Finally, as a check on the above cross-boundary issues, the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (referred to as a CEDS) prepared by the Beartooth RC&D and Economic Development District was reviewed. The plan, updated in

November 2007, represents an area that overlaps with four of the five counties in this research project. The counties covered by the CEDS include Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater Sweet Grass, and Yellowstone counties in Montana. This differs from the Billings-Cody Sub-region of the seasonality project by inclusion of Big Horn County, Montana and exclusion of Park County, Wyoming. The goals in the CEDS overlap considerably with this study and include;

- Infrastructure (water and waste water, housing, solid waste, transportation, and communications)
- Economy
- Communication
- Services
- Natural Resources, and
- Human Capital.

Note: The Beartooth RC&D/Economic Development District CEDS has detailed appendices with information about population growth and characteristics, income and employment, the supply and quality of housing, and the capacity, maximum demand, water source, and condition of community water systems.

A number of issues associated with federal land management emerged during the plan reviews, but primarily during the planner interviews.

- 1) There has been and remains a great deal of uncertainty about the durability of winter use decisions in Yellowstone National Park and travel management on National Forest lands due to on-going litigation. This uncertainty makes planning and investment decisions difficult for local businesses and governments.
- 2) Lack of access to Yellowstone National Park in the winter months contributes to the seasonality of the economy in parts of the five-county area.
- 3) There is a perceived lack of willingness on the part of the Forest Service to entertain additional guided recreation uses, uses that are believed to be potential economic opportunities in the area.
- 4) Funding is not available for the update of a number of out-dated Forest Plans.
- 5) Decisions on development of federal energy resources (primarily by the Bureau of Land Management) have the potential to positively affect the local economic climate and negatively affect the natural environment.
- 6) There is a perceived lack of appropriate priority for creating bicycle opportunities to and from gateway communities to Yellowstone National Park, and within the Park.
- 7) Residential construction in the wildland-urban interface creates a corresponding need for suppression resources and services. Federal vegetation management and fire policies can affect the demand at the local level for these services.
- 8) Decisions to divest federal parcels that are subsequently subdivided may create opportunities and/or costs for providing services.

V. Impacts and Trade-offs

Development can produce positive and negative impacts, and one development will often have some of each. Local jurisdictions frequently struggle with trade-offs that can include negative impacts to one area or resource (the cost of providing emergency services, or air quality, for example) against considerations of positive impacts (more affordable housing or additional jobs.) The fact remains that over time the five-county area has seen sustained growth and there is no reason given the enduring qualities of the area that attract new residents, to expect a change in that long-term trend. Therefore land and housing are needed to accommodate the increasing population and economic activity.

The following four elements, gleaned from existing plans and planner interviews, appear to be the issues of critical concern for guiding growth across the area in a sustainable manner. Obviously there are many more, but these appeared to rise to the top. These elements; effects on the economy, natural environment, development patterns, and housing, can form the basis for evaluating and adding thoughtful consideration of potential impacts to decision making on development proposals. They are not listed in priority order. Subdivision applications in Montana are required to address a standard set of impact criteria which overlap substantially but not wholly with the suggested considerations below.

I. Economic Effects

Economic effects in the five-county area are wide-ranging. Employment issues include the availability of jobs, the quality of the jobs in terms of wages and benefits, and the skills and availability of the workforce. Another piece of the economy critical to maintaining functioning communities is the cost to local governments to provide essential infrastructure such as water, wastewater, and transportation; and services such as fire protection, emergency medical services, and law enforcement. Finally, land use and development decisions and policies at all levels of government also have the potential to affect the short-term and sustainability of local and regional economies.

- What will be the initial and long-term costs to local government of providing essential required services to the development?
- Is current infrastructure adequate or are additional investments needed?
- Who will bear the burden of infrastructure costs related to the development?
- Will there be any effect on jobs as a result of the development?
- If jobs are created, will the wages and benefits allow their occupants to afford housing in the local market?
- What is likely to be the job security situation associated with any jobs created?
- How might this development cause impacts to other jurisdictions--such as neighboring municipalities, counties, and/or public lands?

II. Development Pattern

Providing for growth in the most sustainable, cost-effective manner is a key challenge of land use planning in the five-county area. To do so requires local government investment and anticipation of needs and demands so that growth can be directed wisely. A number of crow-boundary issues such as sprawl, loss of lands in agricultural production, and costs to local governments to provide infrastructure and services point out the need to continue efforts to see that development occurs on suitable land in the most appropriate locations.

- Will the proposed development concentrate population growth in or near existing urban/developed areas?
- Is the location of the land suitable for the proposed development?
- Are the physical properties of the land suitable for the proposed development?
- Is the current transportation infrastructure adequate to serve the development?
- Will transportation options be multi-modal?
- How are transportation costs likely to affect residents of the development?
- How will new road and trail construction and/or higher O&M costs be borne?
- Will the proposal remove prime agricultural land from production?
- Will the proposed development increase the potential for conflict between agricultural producers and new residents?

III. Effects on the Natural Environment

The natural environment is a key attractant to current and potential residents. It contributes to quality of life and public health. The natural environment may provide impediments or constraints to development in certain areas such as wetlands, areas with unsuitable soils or a lack of ground and surface water, or at high risk of wildland fire.

- Will the proposed development affect surface water quality, riparian areas or wetlands?
- Will the proposed development affect groundwater quality?
- Does there appear to be adequate water quantity on site to serve the needs of the development? If not, where will the water come from?
- How will fish and wildlife populations and habitat be affected?
- Will the development increase the potential for human-wildlife conflicts?
- Will air quality and visual quality be affected by the proposed development?

IV. Effects on Housing

Decent, affordable housing for all segments of the population is a challenge across almost all of the area. Different communities have different specific challenges, for example in some areas providing housing for the elderly and in other areas providing seasonal worker housing, but given the sustained growth, all areas have housing challenges. Housing availability and affordability is an issue that crosses geographic, political, and economic boundaries. Communities that have jobs without adequate housing create effects on neighboring communities as workers seek housing. And, when this happens, there are corresponding transportation and safety impacts.

- Will housing be provided in the development?
- If yes, what kinds of housing will be provided?
- How does this housing type or mix of housing types respond to identified needs in the area?
- What will be the pricing of the housing?
- If no housing is to be provided in the development, will the development create a need for additional housing? How is that need likely to be met off site?



Looking south across the city of Billings, Yellowstone County

VI. Recommendations

1) *Structure an on-going conversation.*

Planners in the five-county area are experiencing high demands on their time (even given the recent economic downturn) for both responding to development applications and planning for the future. Many are playing “catch-up” due to previous lack of planning staff and/or outdated plans and local codes. It is imperative for achieving the best economic and land use outcomes that planners benefit from the experience and insights of other planners in the regional “neighborhood” as they tackle the current challenges. A regional conversation could be expected to produce efficiencies in addition to better development.

There are enough common development related issues across this area that it would be highly beneficial to continue a conversation among the planning professionals. Annexation, transportation, infrastructure extension, zoning and code enforcement, and the provision of essential services are all issues where cross-boundary collaboration could benefit tax payers’, developers’, and local governments’ interests. Planning departments could rotate hosting of semi-annual discussions focused on emerging issues, best practices, and lessons learned.

2) *Develop and test a voluntary web-based decision-support tool that could be used across the region.*

This five-county area has been and will continue to experience steady--at a minimum-- population growth and corresponding development. Decisions are being made daily by the various jurisdictions that affect the economy and land use patterns. Many of these decisions have long-term and/or irreversible effects. It is essential to make smart decisions up front to prevent problems later. For example, past rural subdivisions were approved without adequate access for emergency services. Now, these subdivisions, located in the wildland urban interface may not be defensible from wildfires without significant expenditures to purchase supplemental rights-of-ways and/or replace inadequate bridges.

A decision-support tool for planners and elected officials should be developed to address sustainability, cross-boundary, and cumulative (temporal and geographic) issues. The questions in the Impacts and Trade-offs section of this research and other models currently in use can serve as a starting point for this tool. Other models include Community Viz, a suite of ArchView extensions to help assess land use alternatives, with a policy simulator, and ENVISION Utah. Utah has used the QCET model to analyze options, build consensus, and develop growth strategies along the rapidly-growing Wasatch Front area.

The expected benefits of this decision-support tool would be a more consistent regional approach to development issues (serving to encourage investment in the area), consideration of impacts on other jurisdictions, consideration of long-term impacts to the subject jurisdiction, the prevention of inadvertent costly mistakes, and other benefits. This tool could serve as a model for other groups of neighboring jurisdictions within or outside of the Yellowstone-Teton area.

3) Support multi-jurisdictional organizations.

If, as anticipated resources become tighter in the future as a result of broader economic problems there may be opportunity to share planning resources. Organizations such as the RC&D's, Yellowstone Business Partnership, regional travel and tourism organizations, and chambers of commerce are sometimes uniquely positioned to access resources, reach elected officials, or facilitate the acquisition of needed resources that are beyond the capability of any one jurisdiction to support.

For example, the Beartooth RC&D situated in Carbon County, Montana, also serves as an Economic Development District and prepares a five-county Overall Economic Development Plan or OEDP. The OEDP identifies strengths and weaknesses and lists needed infrastructure, economic, and other projects. The OEDP is a valuable resource for participating jurisdictions and one that they would be unlikely to prepare on their own. The regional nature of the OEDP is also attractive to funders and the RC&D is able to pursue funding opportunities for the identified projects.

4) Analyze transit and housing needs from a regional and multi-modal perspective.

Additional information is needed on where the workforce lives and where their jobs are located. As a starting point, the availability, condition, and affordability of housing within commuting distances of the major cities of Billings and Cody needs to be determined. There are many daily commuters between Powell and Cody, and between Laurel and Billings. How does the housing situation influence this pattern and are actions needed to provide additional housing of certain types in specific locations? What is the gap between the current situation and the need? Economic viability of service businesses in the five-county region may depend on the answers to these questions.

There appears to be opportunity for small scale intra-city public transit, for example between Cody and Powell, between Billings and Laurel, and between Billings and the north end of Carbon County. There also appears to be an unmet need for more multi-modal transportation planning and opportunities. Development of safe bicycle routes could serve residents, commuters within communities, visitors, and also provide an amenity that helps attract younger workers to the area.

5) *Make use of the nexus between economic development and land use with federal land management decisions.*

Federal public lands cover almost half of the Billings-Cody Sub-region. These lands are recognized nationally and internationally for their recreation, scenery, and wildlife values. Because of the draw of these lands, local economies in the five-county area are dependent to varying degrees on federal land policies. Local governments need to actively engage in federal land use planning and decision-making. Decision outcomes in such areas as recreation and energy development, grazing policies, water management, land disposal or acquisition, and hours and seasons of operation, directly impact local economies, employment opportunities, land use patterns, and quality of life.

As an example, several of the forest plans in the region are seriously out of date and have been scheduled for revision. Funding for the revisions has not been available. As a result, changed conditions such as opportunities identified by the private sector in Cody and Red Lodge for additional permitted recreation services can not be considered, are put on hold, and/or are missed. Decisions about threatened and endangered species--wolves and grizzly bears--have potential negative and positive economic impacts locally. And, decisions about suppression of wildland fires also affect local jurisdictions, their costs, and the ability to attract investment dollars into an area.

Local organizations and governments need to establish on-going relationships with their federal partners so that rather than waiting for formal processes--such as forest plan revision--ways can be found to pursue identified opportunities and federal partners can be made aware of and consider potential impacts of their decisions on local economies and land uses.

The Bureau of Land Management is currently revising the Resource Management Plan for the Billings Field Office. The BLM staff is working to actively engage not just local citizens, but planners and local government representatives in addressing how their decisions on federal lands will impact local socio-economic and cultural conditions. The Custer National Forest worked cooperatively with the city of Red Lodge in developing the Comprehensive Trails Plan so that where desirable, trails that originate on municipal or county lands could logically tie in with neighboring National Forest trail facilities.

6) Conduct a planning capacity study.

The numbers of planning staff, department budgets, and access to technology vary significantly by county and municipality in the five-county area. The budgets, staffing, and technological capacity of the various departments should be analyzed with respect to amount and complexity of work and population served. Such an analysis could produce recommendations for different models of organization, sharing of services, centers of special expertise or excellence, and/or greater efficiencies when taken from a regional perspective.



Unincorporated community of Absarokee, Stillwater County

VII. Conclusions

The Billings-Cody sub-region has continued to experience sustained population growth and corresponding demand for development. While these demands are not equally distributed over the five-county area, the counties and municipalities do have common issues associated with growth pressures, seasonal economies, sprawl, housing, transportation, and the influences of a large public land base.

Public and elected official support for planning activities varies based on long-held cultural beliefs about the potential benefits of planning versus restrictions on freedoms and private property rights. Highly experienced, visionary, yet practical planners are at work for the 17 local government jurisdictions in the Billings-Cody sub-region five-county area. The planning cadre includes veterans of many years in the area—some working for more than one of the jurisdictions in the region over time--combined with several relative new-comers who bring valuable experience from previous planning positions. The comprehensive plans currently in force date from 1997 to 2008. Planning duties are handled by a variety of staff, shared staff, and contract positions. Many of the planners expressed concerns with the sustainability of their programs given the economic downturn and expected decrease in revenues to local governments. There can be a tendency to cut planning budgets during slower times and then when the economy improves, the jurisdictions may be unprepared for the pent-up demand.

Billings-Yellowstone County, Big Timber-Sweet Grass County, and Columbus-Stillwater County have shared planning staff. However, despite these examples of coordination within counties, the planners in the region have not been actively communicating across county lines. Outside of these shared staff situations, communications between municipalities and the county, and even to some extent within a county, are irregular.

Finally, decisions made in one jurisdiction often have impacts beyond that jurisdiction's boundaries. For example regulated development within a municipal boundary may push a developer outside of the community limits and into county jurisdiction in order to avoid certain requirements—thus creating sprawl, moving beyond existing infrastructure, and increasing the cost to government of providing essential services, among other effects. A voluntary mechanism to display and make transparent regional impacts would encourage communication across jurisdictions and produce more sustainable local government decisions.

APPENDIX A: Where to find the planning departments/plans

Beartooth RC&D: www.beartooth.org/CEDS

Big Timber: www.co.Sweet Grass.mt.us/planning

Billings: www.ci.bliings.mt.us

Cody: www.cityofcody-wy.gov

Columbus: www.townofcolumbus.com

Laurel: www.laurel.mt.gov

Red Lodge: www.cityofredlodge.com

Powell: www.cityofpowell.com

Carbon County: www.co.carbon.mt.us

Park County, WY: www.parkcounty.us/planningandzoning

Stillwater County: www.co.stillwater.mt.us

Sweet Grass County: www.co.Sweet Grass.mt.us/planninng

Yellowstone County: www.co.yellowstone.mt.gov

APPENDIX B: Planners

Local Jurisdiction Planning Contacts, November 1, 2008

Jurisdiction	Name	Address	E-mail Address	Phone
Carbon County, MT. and Bearcreek, Bridger, Fromberg, and Joliet	Greg McGann	Carbon County P.O. Box	gmcgann@ co.carbon.mt.us	406 446-1604
Cody, WY.	Kathaleen Spencer	P.O. Box 2200 Cody, WY. 82414	kathys@ cityofcody.com	307 527-7511
Laurel, MT.	James Caniglia	City of Laurel P.O. Box 10 Laurel, MT. 59044	icaniglia@ laurel.mt.gov	406 628-4796
Meeteetse	Steve Jones		mcd@tctwest.net	307 868-2484
Park County, WY.	Linda Gillette	1002 Sheridan Av Cody, WY 82414	lgillett@ parkcounty.us	307 527-8540
Powell, WY.	Sean Christensen	270 N. Clark Powell, WY.	engineering@ cityofpowell.com	307 754-6921
Red Lodge, MT.	Forrest Sanderson	P.O. Box 10 Red Lodge, MT. 59068	Redlodgeplanning @vcn.com	406 446- 1606
Stillwater County and Columbus	Cal Cumin	P.O. Box 881 Columbus, MT. 59019	ccumin@ Stillwater.mt.gov	406 322-8050
Sweet Grass County and Big Timber	Paige Dringman Lana King	Sweet Grass County Courthouse Big Timber, MT. 59	sgplanning@ cablemt.net sgplanning2@ cablemt.net	406 932-5470
Yellowstone County, MT. and City of Billings	Candi Beaudry, Wyeth Friday	510 N. Broadway Billings. MT 59101	fridayw@ci. Billings.mt.us, beaudryc@ci. Billings.mt.us	406 657-8249

APPENDIX C. Infrastructure

The following general assessment of infrastructure capacity to serve existing and future demands is taken from interviews with local planners listed in Appendix B.

Park County, Wyoming

Park County: County has very little infrastructure other than roads.

City of Cody: The water and wastewater infrastructure is adequate for existing users and some growth with the exception of waste water capacity on the west end. The 1997 Master Plan contains maps that indicate needs for capacity in water and wastewater facilities. Impact fees have been put into place to fund needed new capacity construction. The transportation infrastructure is adequate for vehicles, inadequate for pedestrians and cyclists. Walk-ability Study identified as a need. The Master Plan concludes that "Public utility supply and distribution is readily available for any projected population increase and beyond. Should a very major industrial facility locate in Cody, additional sub-station and other distribution facility capacity may be needed." (1997, page 82)

City of Powell: The water and wastewater infrastructure is adequate for existing users. Water lines are being replaced (and up-sized from 4 to 8"-lines) based on a ten-year plan. Major water system upgrade completed approximately 7 years ago. This will provide adequate flows and pressure for future growth. Wastewater system capacity is good with one exception, the trunk line on the east side of town. Development is occurring largely on the west end, so this is not currently much of an issue. The storm water system is undersized and incomplete. New development is required to address storm water for their development. Street situation is good. Sidewalks are lacking in some areas, adding sections as possible. Expect Safe Routes to Schools to add some sidewalk and biking opportunities. Existing 1.5 mile hardened bike path to be paved and extended at some point in the future. Town council recently voted to study public transportation issue of connecting Powell with Cody and other areas.

Town of Meeteetse: Information requested.

Carbon County, Montana (Planner: Greg McGann)

Carbon County: There is a critical need for transportation planning. The highways are not designed for the speeds and high numbers of cars and trucks using them daily. All towns and the city in the county currently pass minimum standards for water and wastewater set by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency. The towns of Bearcreek, Bridger, and Fromberg have excess capacity and desire growth.

Town of Joliet: Water system is in good condition. Some water 4" mains need replacement. (RC&D CEDS, 2007)

City of Red Lodge: Red Lodge Planner, Forrest Sanderson gave grades to the infrastructure capacity to handle both current and future needs. Water received a B+. Major recent and ongoing investments are being made in the water system. Wastewater infrastructure received a D+ because the city has been receiving extensions on its wastewater discharge permit with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and requirements could change with a new permit. Also, there is no established cash reserve for wastewater facilities. Transportation received a C. The streets are generally in good condition, but multi-modal transportation has not been developed.

Stillwater County, Montana (Planner, Cal Cumin)

Stillwater County: Absarokee waste water system does not have capacity for any growth.

Town of Columbus: Water system is on wells. For new development of any size, additional water source will be needed. Waste water capacity and condition are adequate.

Sweet Grass County, Montana

Sweet Grass County: Information requested.

City of Big Timber: Information requested.

Yellowstone County, Montana (Planner, Wyeth Friday)

Yellowstone County: Water and wastewater capacity and condition generally good. County has no capital improvements plan and no priority list for road maintenance and investment decisions. Two area transportation plans are underway--in Lockwood and Blue Creek.

City of Billings: Water and wastewater capacity and condition generally good. City has a Capital Improvements plan. Major transportation projects underway include Airport and Shiloh Roads. The city is making a large investment in the transfer facility downtown for the MET bus system. The Heritage Plan addresses corridors and trails, but needs funding for implementation. City has successfully used an "arterial fee" to help fund road maintenance.

City of Laurel: Wastewater system has good capacity and new pumps are being acquired. Water system is stretched during summer months. Streets are not in good condition, but there are no serious traffic issues.

APPENDIX D. GIS Data for Sub-Region

Enclosed with this report is a DVD containing selected GIS data for the five-county subregion and a GIS application to view, query and print mapped data. Below is a content listing of the DVD and instructions for installing the data and GIS application onto a personal computer.

Contents:

- ArcReader 9.3 GIS application
- GIS Data
 - County boundaries
 - Population centers
 - Roads & railroads
 - Lakes & Streams
 - Land cover
 - County cadastral data
 - Parcels
 - Year that home was built
 - Public lands
 - BLM basemaps
 - Census block groups and tracts
 - Population density
 - Age groups
 - Median age
 - Owner vs. Renter
 - Seasonal Housing

Installation Instructions (For PC users only):

1. **Copy Data to PC.** Locate the 'BillingsSR_GIS' directory on the enclosed DVD and copy it to a root drive (i.e., C:\) on a desktop or laptop personal computer.
2. **Install ArcReader 9.3.** Locate the file 'arcreaderwindows93.zip' under the 'BillingsSR_GIS' directory and unzip the file. Once unzipped, run the 'setup.exe' file to install the ArcReader application to your computer.
3. **Launch ArcReader.** Locate the file 'YBP_GIS.pmf' in the 'BillingsSR_GIS' directory and double click to launch the application. Instructions on how to use the ArcReader software are located under the help menu of the software.

Data Sources:

Montana Department of Revenue, Park County Assessor's Office, US Census Bureau, Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), US Geological Survey and the Bureau of Land Management.