

Phillips County Growth Policy

2013-2017

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Introduction

Purpose of the Growth Policy

The purpose of a growth policy is to create a county-wide vision for the future. This future will take into account the importance of the land, population, housing and economic patterns as well as the unique character and quality of life that provides cultural identity in Phillips County. The growth policy examines land use trends within and outside of city/town limits and provides guidance on how land uses can be adapted to accommodate socioeconomic trends while promoting health, safety, and efficient use of resources. This growth policy represents a thorough update to Phillips County's 2006 document. The process of developing this community plan has been done in accordance with Montana State Law (76-1-610, MCA) which provides guidance as to the context of the document.

History of Planning

Comprehensive planning has been utilized by Montana communities since 1957 when Montana cities and towns were authorized to adopt comprehensive or master plans. This authorization was extended to counties in 1971. Comprehensive plans provide local governments with the opportunity to plan for the use of resources located within the government's jurisdiction. They also establish basic objectives, goals and policies for any future land use and act as a blueprint for addressing a community's needs and goals for future development. Until 1999, the state statute provided general guidance as to what governments might include in a growth policy, but did not establish any specific or minimum criteria.

In 1999 The Montana Legislature recommended passage of the Montana Growth Policy Act (Senate Bill 97), to address rapid growth and changes in population being experienced in Montana Communities.

The Phillips County Growth Policy has been developed through a process coordinated by the Phillips County Planning Board through the Phillips County Commissioners.

Beginning in 2003, PhillCo Economic Growth Council facilitated the gathering of the following information to include within this policy:

- Community Needs and Income Survey - Dodson (5/2003)
- Resource Team Assessment conducted in cooperation with Montana Economic Developer's Association (9/2003)
- Follow – up Resource Assessment – Malta, Saco (3/2004)
- “Around the County Meetings” – Zortman (8/2004)

- Public Growth Policy Kick-Off Meeting – (11/2004)
- PhillCo Economic Growth Council Strategic Planning (Fall 2005)
- Capital Improvements Plan Public Information Meetings – Malta, Saco (2005, 2006)
- Malta Chamber of Commerce – Growth Policy Review (8/2006)
- City of Malta Growth Policy Public Hearing (9/2006)
- Phillips County Growth Policy Public Hearing (9/2006)
- Capital Improvements Plan Public Hearing (4/2011)
- “Around the County Meetings” – Malta, Dodson, Saco, Whitewater and Zortman (2011)
- City of Malta Growth Policy Public Hearing (11/2011)
- PhillCo Economic Growth Council Strategic Planning (10/2012)
- “Around the County Meetings” in cooperation with Vibrant Futures – Dodson, Malta, Saco, Whitewater, and Zortman (Fall 2012)
- Vibrant Futures Scenario Planning Workshop (3/2013)
- PhillCo Community Needs Assessment with Montana Economic Developers Association (10/2014)

This update to the, “2006 – 2011 Phillips County Growth Policy (Including the City of Malta),” has been prepared by the PhillCo Economic Growth Council. The Phillips County Growth Policy is divided into sections addressing existing conditions and trends, land use trends and changes, goals, objectives and implementation strategies, regulatory strategies, and addendums. The policy covers a five year period from 2013 – 2017.

Updating the Policy

Updating the Phillips County Growth Policy regularly ensures that communities have a process to regularly examine change within their boundaries and adopt goals, objectives and strategies to address change (or the lack of change). Regular updates also ensure compliance with associated state laws which change at the discretion of the Montana State Legislature. Therefore, in addition to presenting a current assessment of country trends, this growth policy update was modified to meet requirements to address sand and gravel resources.

Following public hearing, the Phillips County Planning Board will consider, recommend and by resolution either:

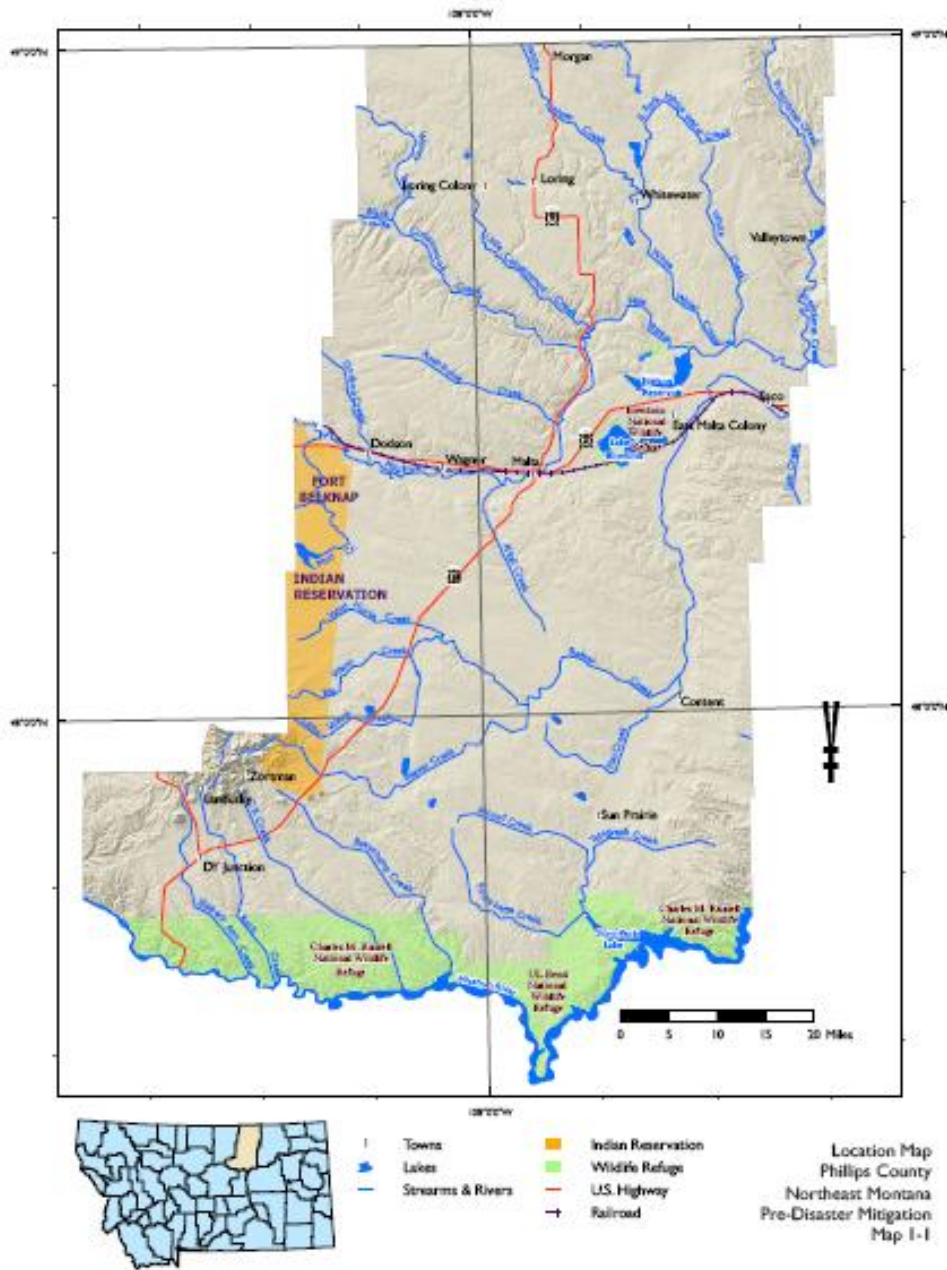
- Recommend the proposed growth policy
- Recommend that the proposed growth policy not be adopted
- Recommend that the governing body take some other action related to preparation of a growth policy

The governing body, shall adopt a resolution with intentions to adopt, adopt with revisions, or reject the proposed growth policy as outlined in MCA 76-1-604. If adopted, the Phillips County

Growth Policy must be used according to MCA 76-1-605 with subsequent impacts on subdivision regulations according to MCA 76-1-606.

The Planning Area

The planning area for the purposes of this growth policy is the county of Phillips. The county encompasses 5,019 square miles of land. The population, according to the 2010 census, is estimated at 4,253. There are an estimated 2,343 housing units within the county. Communities of Malta, Saco and Dodson make up the majority of the population. Remaining residents live in rural areas.



1.0 Chapter One: Phillips County Overview

1.1 Natural and Human History

The Lewis and Clark Expedition explored the southern part of what is now Phillips County between 1804 and 1806 and found the region inhabited by Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Indian Tribes. In 1887, the Great Northern Railroad was constructed through the Montana territory and by 1880 livestock production was making its appearance on the plains of northeastern Montana. For many years this was the chief industry in Phillips County, from the Missouri Breaks to the Canadian border, thousands of head of sheep and cattle ranged the plains and the slopes of the Little Rocky Mountains.

In the 1880's, gold was discovered in the Little Rockies and the communities of Zortman and Landusky thrived as active mining towns. Mining activity in the Little Rockies was sporadic with most recent activity by Pegasus Gold Corporation from 1979-1990's. In 1906, the dryland farming movement began and the momentum of the homestead era continued until 1918. The Milk River Irrigation project was opened for settlement in 1913, providing improved cropping options and expanded livestock base for producers.

Phillips County became a part of Valley County in 1893 when it separated from Dawson County. The new county contained all lands north of the Missouri River to the Canadian border and from the North Dakota border west to the then Chouteau County border, with Glasgow as the county seat. This area has since been divided to include five counties – Phillips, Sheridan, Roosevelt, Valley, and Daniels.

1.2 Character of Phillips County

Phillips County includes approximately 1.6 million acres of public (state & federal) lands mingled with 1.6 million acres of private lands. Land use in the county is mainly farming and ranching with mineral activity within the county. Population for the county is approximately 4,253 (less than 1 person per square mile).

Famous for wide-open spaces and diversity in landscape, Phillips County boasts a variety of wildlife and cultural history. The C.M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (including the western portion of Fort Peck Lake) and Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge are just a short drive from the county seat at Malta. The Little Rocky Mountains are rich in mining history and offer a diverse mountain experience. Fishermen find that Nelson Reservoir, the two rivers and local ponds a haven for walleye, historic paddlefish, perch, northern pike and more. Prehistoric remains of several dinosaur species are currently under excavation and are on display in local museums. Residents of Phillips County place considerable value upon the positive attributes of small-town life such as: friendly

people, un-crowded surroundings, good schools, access to outdoor recreation, and lack of crime.

Neighboring counties are Blaine County to the west, Valley County to the east, Fergus County on the southwest, Petroleum County to the south, Garfield County to the Southwest and the province of Saskatchewan, Canada to the north. Malta, population 1,997 is the county seat. Malta has an active business district supported by an active Chamber of Commerce. There are two incorporated towns in Phillips County, Saco and Dodson. Other towns in Phillips County include Zortman, Loring and Whitewater. A small eastern portion of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation is located in the western part of the county.

2.0 Chapter Two: Existing Conditions and Trends

2.1 Overview

Socioeconomic trends in Phillips County have historically been linked to the Agriculture and natural resource extraction industries. The Agricultural Industry has retained a prominent role in the Phillips County economy for over a century and the agricultural life style is reflected in current land use patterns.

77% of area land cover is rangeland, 17% is used for dry land crops, 2% is used for irrigated crops, 3% is woodland and about 1% is water. Winter wheat, spring wheat and alfalfa are considered the primary crops in Phillips County. However, some farmers are diversifying and growing pulse crops such as peas and lentils.

According to, “Montana: 2012 Agricultural Statistics,” Phillips County produced 58,000 beef cattle, more than any other northeastern Montana county. The number of people fed by those 58,000 beef cattle is approximately 355,598. Phillips County also produced 2,641,000 bushels of spring wheat and 1,410,000 bushels of winter wheat.

For over 20 years, gold mining in the Little Rockies contributed greatly to the local economy and tax base. Pegasus Gold Company brought active gold mining back to the area in the late 1970’s and maintained operations, employing as many as 230 employees until the mid 1990’s when low gold prices, internal problems, and permitting issues forced the closure of the Zortman and Landusky mines.

Natural resource extraction is seen as a major industry in Phillips County and changes in this industry have had socioeconomic consequences over the years.

2.2 Demographic Trends and Projections

Historical and Current Population Trends

The City of Malta and Phillips County grew throughout the 1890’s as people headed west in search of a new life and prosperity. As a result of the Homestead Act, the population of Phillips County peaked in 1920, at 9,316 and has been declining by varying degrees ever since. The acreage allowed in the Homestead Act was an unrealistic size to be sustainable. Between the severe drought in the 1930’s and the small homesteads being unsuccessful, the population in Phillips County dropped greatly from its peak number.

The years following 1920 were years of population decline followed by a brief stabilization throughout the 1970s and 1980s due to operations of the Pegasus Gold Mining Company in the Little Rocky Mountains. Just as mining opportunities drew people to Phillips County, decline in the industry precipitated population decline. After the closure of the Pegasus Gold Mining Company in the mid 1990s the population once again began to decline. Malta, Zortman, Landusky and Dodson realized a 20% reduction in tax base and Phillips County’s population decreased by 562 people between 1990 and 2000.

Agriculture has been the stabilizing factor for population in Phillips County. In the last five years Phillips County has seen a substantial number of young families returning to farm and ranch in Phillips County. As a result of fewer acres of crop land being returned to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and high commodity prices, young agriculture producers are able to purchase land and take over family operations. The PhillCo Economic Growth Council held a community needs assessment through the Montana Economic Developers Association where it was determined that at least 100 young families have returned or moved to Phillips County. Of those 100 young families, approximately 75% are actively involved in agriculture.

Population Gains and Losses

Decennial Census	Gain/Loss	Percent Change
1920 - 1940	-1,424	-15.3%
1940 - 1960	-1,865	-23.6%
1960 - 1970	-641	-10.6%
1970 - 1980	-19	-0.4%
1980 - 1990	-204	-3.9%
1990 - 2000	-562	-10.9%
2000 - 2010	-348	-7.6%
Net Change	-5,063	

Source: Based on U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Censuses; 1920 – 2000

Population, 2000-2011*

	Phillips County, MT	Montana	U.S.
Population (2011*)	4,227	982,854	306,603,772
Population (2000)	4,601	902,195	281,421,906
Population Change (2000-2011*)	-374	80,659	25,181,866
Population Percent Change (2000-2011*)	-8.1%	8.9%	8.9%

* The data in this table are calculated by ACS using annual surveys conducted during 2007-2011 and are representative of average characteristics during this period.

Population Distribution and Density

Phillips County covers an area of 5,019 square miles and includes less than 1 person per square mile. Approximately 47% of the county’s population resides within the county seat of Malta. 5% reside in the Town of Saco and 3% reside in the Town of Dodson. The remaining 45% reside in rural areas. See the City of Malta Growth Policy located in Chapter Six for information on zoning and population densities within the City of Malta.

Population Projections

Phillips County population projections are:

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055	2060
Total	4,267	4,290	4,276	4,256	4,234	4,156	4,038	3,937	3,881	3,873	3,932

Source: Montana Department of Commerce; Census and Economic Information Center

2.3 Characteristics of the Population

Age and Gender

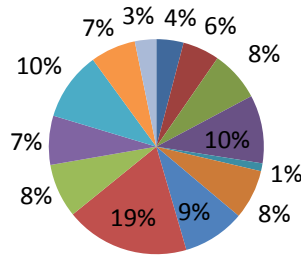
The median age of Phillips County is steadily increasing over time. At 47.5 the median age in 2011 was higher than both the state (38.9) and the nation (37.1). Residents aged 65 and over, comprise the largest age group in the county. Seniors make up 20% of the Phillips County population compared with 15.2% from the state and 13.3% for the nation.

A primary factor contributing to the increasing median age is that the age group most commonly associated with child bearing, 25-34 years, only makes up 8% of the population resulting in a fewer number of small children. This trend correlates with the closure of small schools in rural areas.

Another factor contributing to the increasing median age is the increase in people between the ages 45 to 54 years who make up 19% of the population and make up the second largest age group in Phillips County. This group experienced significant gains between 1990 and 2000 following a national trend associated with increased births in the two decades following World War II. These “baby-boomers” started increasing the number of people aged 65 and older in 2010 and are expected to continue increasing the median age through 2030.

Phillips County Age Distribution 2011

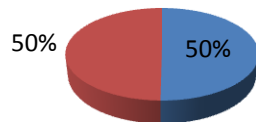
■ Under 5 Years ■ 5 to 9 Years ■ 10 to 14 Years ■ 15 to 19 Years ■ 20 to 24 Years
 ■ 25 to 34 Years ■ 35 to 44 Years ■ 45 to 54 Years ■ 55 to 59 Years ■ 60 to 64 Years
 ■ 65 to 74 Years ■ 75 to 84 Years ■ Over 85 Years



The ratio of males to females in Phillips County has remained fairly constant over the years. According to current data, females comprise slightly more than half of the general population with males comprising slightly less than half. According to the 2011 ACS Profile Report for Phillips County, females make up 50.2% of the population with males making up 49.8% of the population.

Gender Distribution 2011

■ Female ■ Male



Race and Ethnicity

The majority (96%) of Phillips County claimed one race during the 2010 census. Of those 87% classified themselves as “white.” The largest single minority race claimed in 2010 was “American Indian/Alaskan Native” which comprised 8.3% of the county population. 11.6% of the population claimed, “American Indian/Alaskan Native and some other race.”

Families and Households

According to the 2010 Census there were 1,159 families in Phillips County at the time of the census count. People in families comprised 63.7% of the population and the average size of a family was 2.86. The percentage of the population in families is lower in Phillips County than it

is in Montana as a whole where families comprise % of the population. Phillips County’s lower family population is attributable to the high percentage of people over 65.

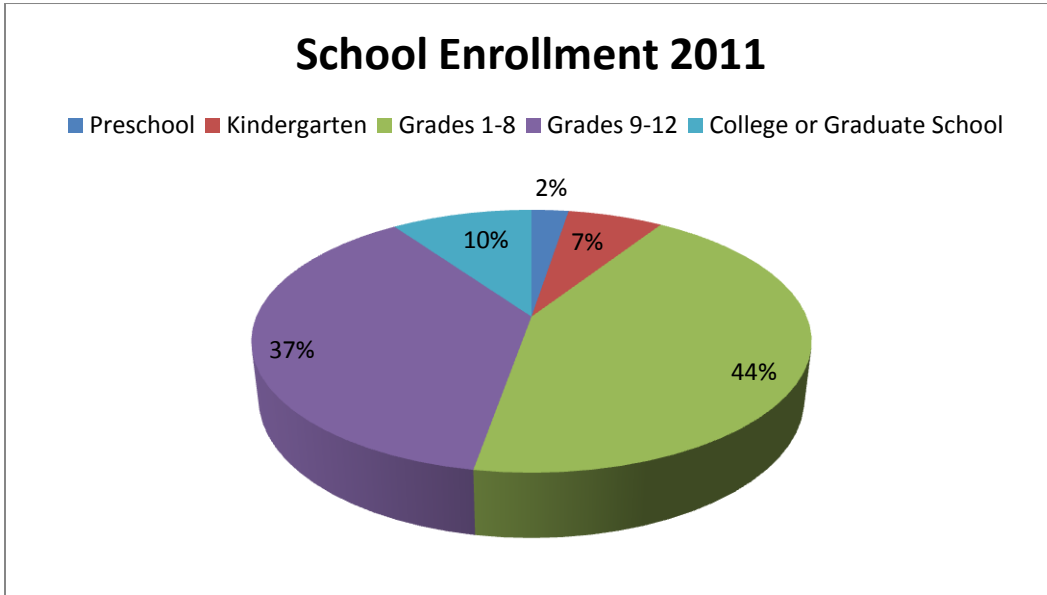
In 2010 there were 1,819 households in Phillips County. The average household size is 2.27.

Households by Type	Number	Percent
Total Households	1,819	
Family Households	1,159	63.7
Family Households with Own Children Under 18	456	25.1
Married Couple Family	962	52.9
Married Couple with Own Children Under 18	339	18.6
Female Householder, No Husband Present	135	7.5
Female Householder, No Husband Present, with Own Children Under 18	88	4.8
Non Family Households	660	36.3
Unmarried Partner Households	88	4.8
Same-sex Unmarried Partner Households	5	0.3
Householder Living Alone	585	32.2
Householder 65 Years and Over	574	31.6
Households with Individuals Under 18	502	27.6
Households with Individuals 65 Years and Over	605	33.3

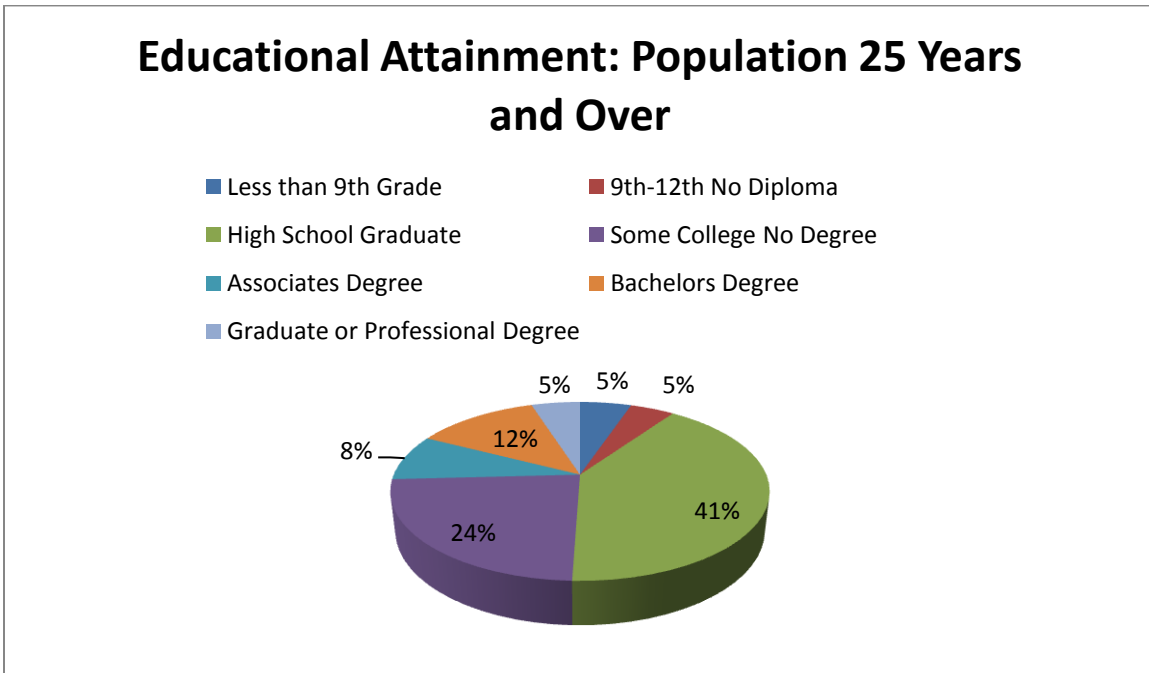
Source: 2010 Census Data

Education

In Phillips County the population 3 years and over is 4,105 and the population 3 years and over enrolled in school is 1,016 or 24.8%. The majority of school aged kids in Phillips County are in elementary school or grades 1-8.



There are 3,015 people over the age of 25 in Phillips County and 90.2% of those are high school graduates or higher with 527 attaining a Bachelor's degree or higher.



2.4 Housing Conditions and Trends

The Housing Stock

Housing Units and Density

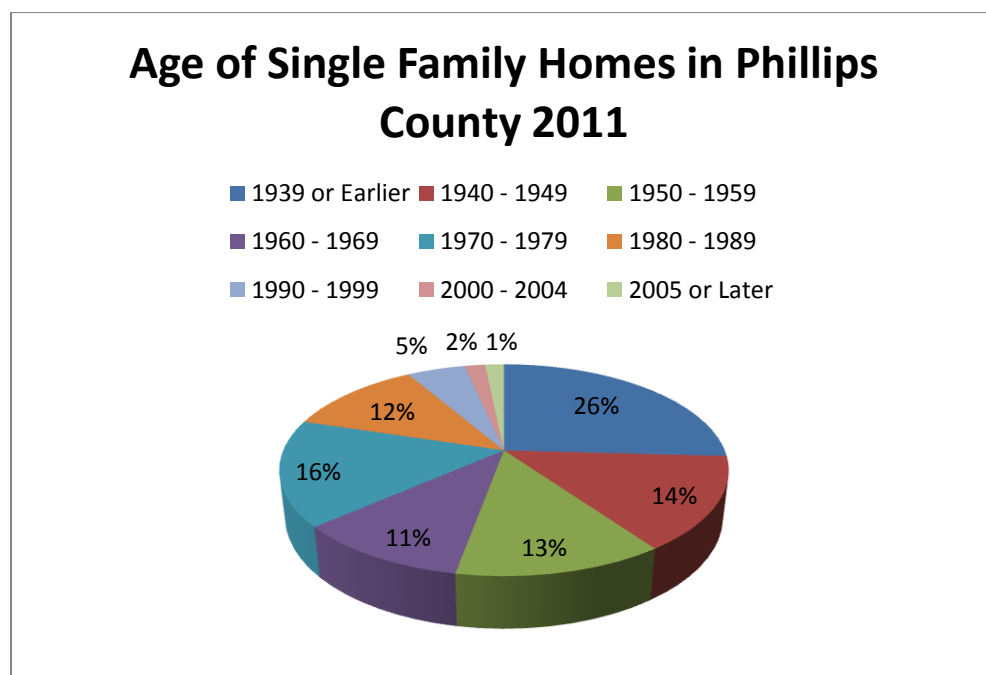
Phillips County had a total of 2,343 housing units in 2011. Of those, 1,740 are occupied. Out of the occupied units 1,396 are owner-occupied and 344 are renter-occupied. The average household size of an owner-occupied unit is 2.4 and the average household size of a renter-occupied unit is 2.1. There are 603 vacant housing units in Phillips County. There are 325 units for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. There are 1,402 total owner units with a 0.4% homeowner vacancy rate. There are a total of 380 rental units with a 9.5% vacancy rate. There are 3,355 people or 79.4% of people living in owned homes and 724 or 17.1% living in rental homes.

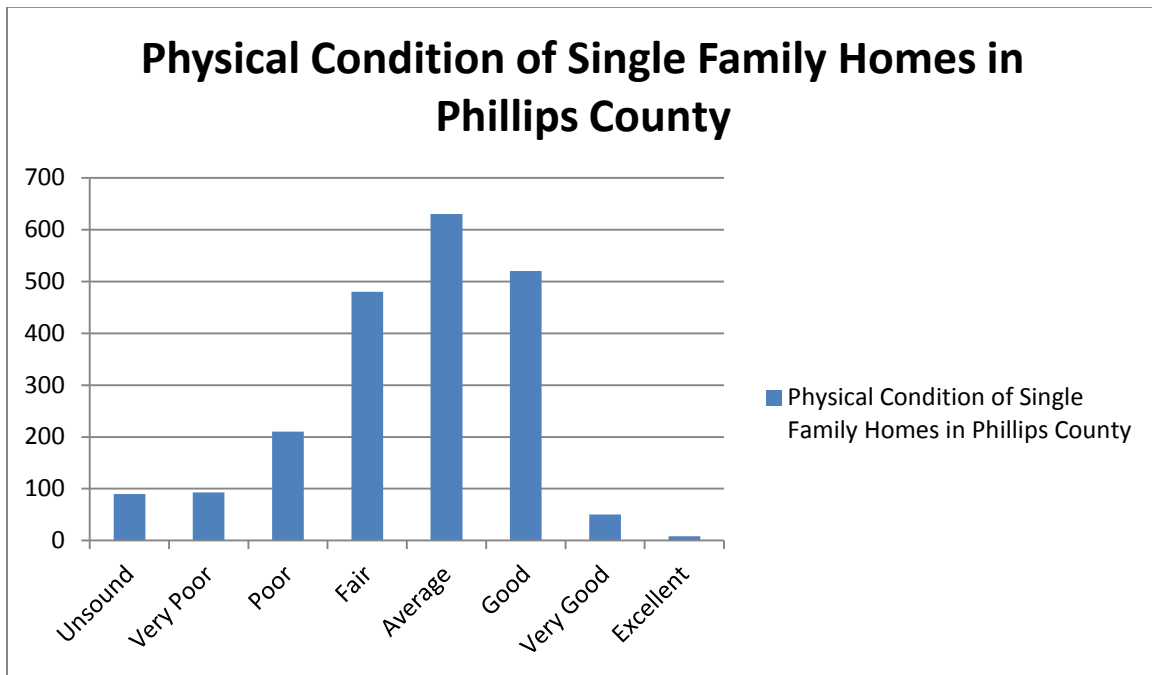
Unit Types

The housing stock in Phillips County is largely characterized by single-family detached units. Single-family homes comprise 83% of the local housing stock and are dispersed throughout the community. There are several duplexes and housing communities in Phillips County as well.

Age and Condition

Of the 2,343 housing units in Phillips County 26% were built prior to 1939. Homes continued to be built at consistent levels until the market saw a 6% increase in the 1970s due to operations at the Zortman/Landusky mines. After 1989 building started to taper off and only 38 housing units have been built in Phillips County since 2005. The majority of housing in Phillips County would be considered average.





Rental Housing

There are a total of 344 renter-occupied units in Phillips County. 251 or 73% are paying cash rent and 93 or 27% are not. The median rent in Phillips County is \$429. Gross rent is 30% or more of household income at 50 units. 10 units have a gross rent of \$750 or more.

There are three subsidized rental housing communities in Malta. Heritage Manor is a 20 unit apartment complex dedicated to the elderly and handicapped. Phillips Village is a 15 unit complex with both 2 and 3 bedroom units available. Phillips Village is currently undergoing remediation efforts. Cedar View is a multi-unit apartment complex with 2 and 3 bedroom units dedicated to low income families and handicapped individuals. Cedar View is on schedule to undergo extensive renovations to the interior and exterior in 2014.

Special needs housing is provided by Malta Opportunities Inc. (group home living for disabled individuals). The Country home provides assisted living for seniors and Hi-Line Retirement Center provides nursing, assisted living and senior apartments.

Affordability

The median home value in Phillips County is \$77,900 and the average home value is \$95,358. Out of the 1,396 owner occupied units, home values are as follows:

Home Values in Owner-Occupied Units	Number	Percent
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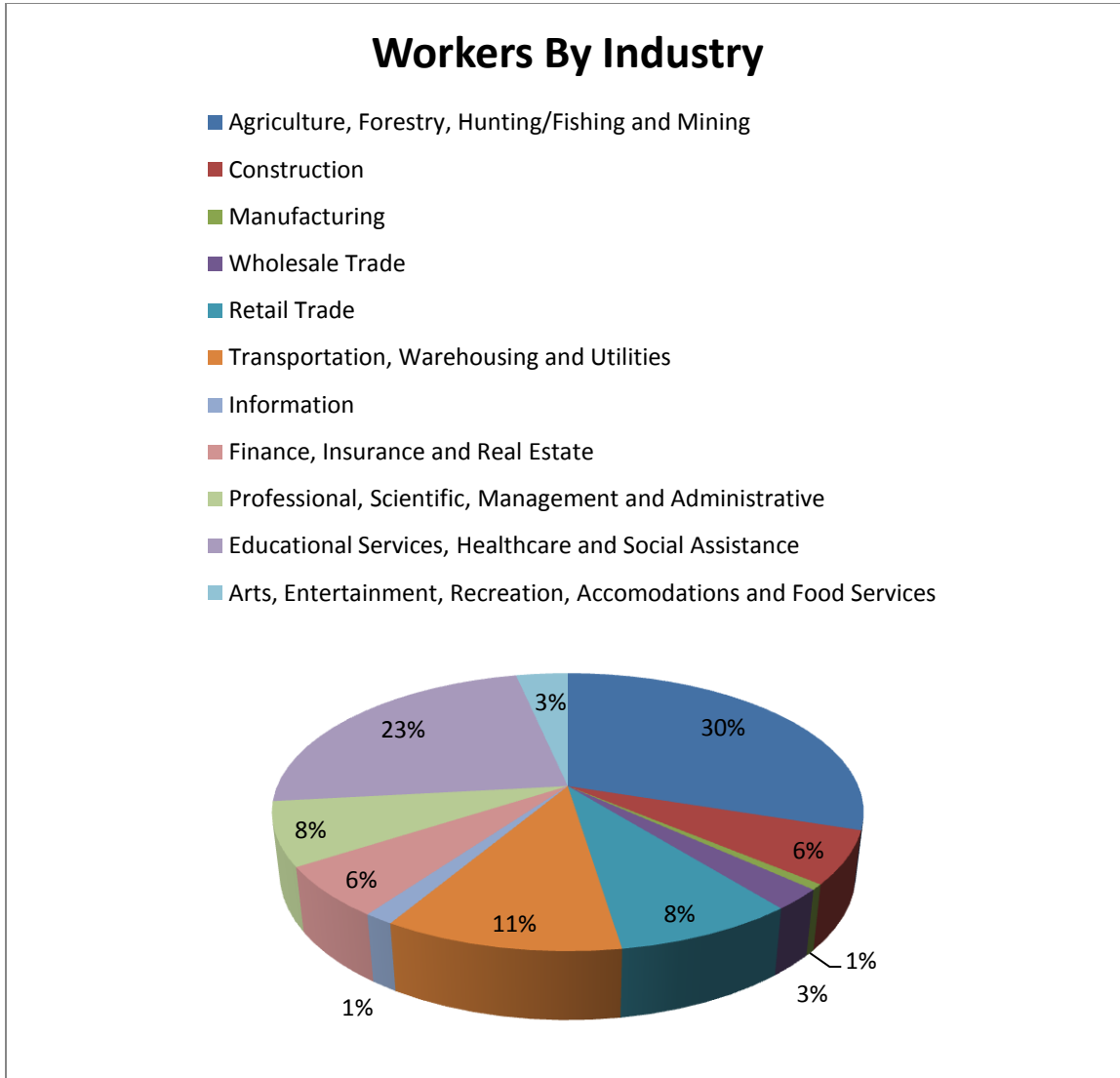
Less than \$50,000	390	27.9
\$50,000 - \$99,999	605	43.3
\$100,000 - \$149,999	172	12.3
\$150,000 - \$199,999	141	10.1
\$200,000 - \$299,999	54	3.9
\$300,000 - \$499,999	31	2.2
\$500,000 - \$999,999	3	0.2
\$1,000,000 or More	0	0.0

Source: ACS Profile Report 2011

2.5 Economic Conditions and Trends

Industries

The mix of industries that comprise Phillips County’s economic base has remained fairly consistent over the years. Agriculture and natural resource extraction have been the dominant industries and continue to be, providing 30% of jobs in Phillips County. Educational services, healthcare and social services provide 23% of jobs, with transportation, warehousing and utilities providing 11%. Manufacturing provides only 1% of jobs in Phillips County. It has been a long-term goal of the PhillCo Economic Growth Council to diversify the Phillips County economy by encouraging manufacturing.



Employment and Labor Force

Employment Status	Number	Percent
Population 16 Years Old and Over	3,403	
In Labor Force	2,056	60.4%
Civilian Labor Force	2,056	60.4%
Employed Civilians	1,958	95.2%
Unemployed Civilians	98	4.8%

In Military	0	0.0%
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Source: ACS Profile Report

Household Income and Benefits

Household Income and Benefits	Number	Percent
Total Households	1,740	
Less than \$10,000	99	5.7%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	106	6.1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	296	17.0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	294	16.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	247	14.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	275	15.8%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	220	12.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	159	9.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	37	2.1%
\$200,000 or more	7	0.4%
Median Household Income	\$38,958	
• Mean Household Income	\$55,130	
With Earnings	1,290	74.1%
• Mean Household Earnings	56,409	
With Social Security	686	39.4%
• Mean Household Social Security Income	\$14,987	

With Retirement Income	275	15.8%
• Mean Household Retirement Income	12,981	
With Supplemental Security Income	92	5.3%
• Mean Household Supplemental Security Income	\$8,085	
With Cash Public Assistance Income	16	0.9%
• Mean Household Cash Public Assistance Income	\$1,588	
With Food Stamp Benefits in the Past 12 Months	90	5.2%

Economic Indicators

Per Capita Personal Income

Per capita income in Phillips County is \$23,840.

Other Income Measures

Other Income Measures	Number	Percent
Per Capita Income	\$23,840	
Nonfamily Households	680	39.1%
• Median Nonfamily Income	\$25,096	
• Mean Nonfamily Income	\$33,131	
All Full-Time Workers	1,469	
• All Male Full-time Workers	824	56.1%
• All Female Full-time Workers	645	43.9%
Median Earnings for Workers	\$24,754	
Median Earnings for Male Full-time, Year-round Workers	\$45,833	
Median Earnings for Female Full-time Year-round Workers	\$26,832	

Median Household Income

The median household income in Phillips County is \$38,958.

Family Income

Family Income and Benefits	Number	Percent
Family Households	1,060	60.9%
• Less than \$10,000	21	2.0%
• \$10,000 to \$14,999	36	3.4%
• \$15,000 to \$24,999	110	10.4%
• \$25,000 to \$34,999	139	13.1%
• \$35,000 to \$49,999	173	16.3%
• \$50,000 to \$74,999	227	21.4%
• \$75,000 to \$99,999	193	18.2%
• \$100,000 to \$149,999	117	11.0%
• \$150,000 to \$199,999	37	3.5%
• \$200,000 or more	7	0.7%
Median Family Income	\$56,250	
Mean Family Income	\$69,228	

Poverty Rate

Poverty Status Over The Last 12 Months	Number	Percent
Persons for whom Poverty Status is Determined	4,175	
• Persons Below Poverty	468	11.2%
• Persons under 18 for whom Poverty Status is Determined	964	
• Persons Under 18 in Poverty	103	10.7%

• Persons aged 18-64 for whom status is determined	2,386	
• Persons aged 18-64 in Poverty	317	13.3%
• Persons over 65 for whom status is determined	825	
• Persons over 65 in poverty	48	5.8%
• Persons in families for whom poverty status is determined	3,238	77.6%
• Unrelated individuals for whom poverty status is determined	937	
• Persons in families in poverty	234	7.2%
• Unrelated persons in poverty 15 years and over	234	25.0%
• Poverty ratio under 0.5	146	3.5%
• Poverty ratio in 0.5 to 0.99	322	7.7%
• Poverty ratio in 1 to 2	1,181	28.3%
• Poverty ratio in 2 and over	2,526	60.5%

2.6 Trends in Local Services and Public Facilities

Law Enforcement Services

County officers in Phillips County consist of: a Sheriff, Under Sheriff, five deputies, three full time and three part time dispatchers, all who are stationed in Malta. The County jail is located in Malta within an annex to the Phillips County Courthouse.

In Phillips County, there is one District Judge, one Justice of the Peace, a Juvenile Probation Officer and one City Judge. There are two attorneys at law, including a County Attorney and Deputy County Attorney. Additional law enforcement in Phillips County includes one Game Warden, a BLM Ranger and multiple Border Patrolmen and Highway Patrolmen.

Homeland Security

The Customs and Border Protection employs a multi-layered approach to protect America from the introduction of nuclear weapons, radiation dispersal bombs (dirty bombs), and other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Malta is home to the Malta Border Patrol Station. The Malta station was established in mid 1925 with three officers assigned. In February 1926, two officers were stationed in Malta. A Border Patrol station was established at Opheim in 1925, and discontinued in the latter part of 1948 or the first part of 1949. There were also Border Patrol stations at Glasgow and Hinsdale for a number of years. The Malta station area at that time was

much the same as it is now except that officers of the Opheim station worked the northeastern part of the present area.

Through the years the location of the Border Patrol office has changed numerous times. It has been located in the homes of the Patrol Agents, in local office buildings, and in 1959 the Border Patrol moved to the Malta City Hall, where it remained until 1984 when it was moved to a one-room office in the district BLM office on the east side of Malta. In December of 1994 it moved to the Department of Agriculture building. It remained there until the present facility on U.S. Highway 2 was built, which was occupied in November 2005.

The Malta Border Patrol station is a 25 man station whose area covers approximately 15,400 square miles of north central Montana, with 91 miles of the International Boundary. Malta, Montana is the ideal site for the Malta station area as it is located at the intersection of Highways 2, the main east/west artery, and State Highway 191, leading north to the Port of Entry at Morgan, Montana. With the enactment of The Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico, the Port of Entry at Morgan is rapidly becoming a major commercial truck port. The route through Malta provides a direct route from Canada to Billings, MT, the largest Montana city, to Interstate 25, which exits the U.S. at El Paso, Texas, and enters Mexico at Ciudad Juarez.

Port Of Entry-Morgan, MT (Port code 3319) Located 16 miles north of Loring on US Highway 191. Morgan is a "Permit Port", which means that importations of cargo must be approved in advance by the Great Falls Service Port. Contact the Supervisory Entry Officer at 406-453-7631 x212 for more information. Personal vehicles are accepted at the Port of Morgan. Individuals seeking entry into the United States are inspected at Ports of Entry (POEs) by CBP officers who determine their admissibility. The inspection process includes all work performed in connection with the entry of aliens and United States citizens into the United States, including pre-inspection performed by the Immigration Inspectors outside the United States. " Description: A Port of Entry is any designated place at which a CBP officer is authorized to accept entries of merchandise to collect duties, and to enforce the various provisions of the customs and navigation laws (19 CFR 101.1).

The Havre Sector is responsible for 452 miles of border area between Montana and Canada, Wyoming, Colorado and Utah, as well as, part of Idaho. The Havre Sector has stations in Havre, Plentywood, and Shelby, Montana, as well as, Twin Falls, Idaho. There are also substations in Billings, Malta (new facility constructed in 2005), St. Mary, Scobey, and Sweetgrass, Montana.

Fire, Disaster, and Emergency Services

Phillips County has Volunteer Fire Departments located in Malta and Saco with the remainder of the county covered by the Phillips County Rural Volunteer Fire Co. The Bureau of Land Management and Phillips County have signed a Mutual Aid Agreement where the BLM provides initial attack for a portion of the county during the fire season. The BLM also operates a wild land operation from a new facility in Zortman.

Both Malta and Saco have approximately 28 firefighters each and the County Dept. has approximately 100 members. Malta has two active structure pumpers and Saco has one active structure pumper. The County has approximately 24 pieces of equipment stationed throughout the County, including wild land engines, water tanker and structural engines.

All three departments are volunteer based and operate under state restricted budgets. These departments are dispatched from one central dispatch center which operates 24 hours a day in Malta. E911 became effective in 2006 with the finalization of new rural addresses. The departments respond to wild land, structural, vehicles, hazardous materials and transportation incidents as well as any emergency or disaster situation that they are dispatched to. The County is supported by a county cooperative agreement with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to assist at the county's request. There are also several mutual aid agreements in place with several surrounding counties and the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

Disaster Emergency Services Coordinator

Phillips County has a Disaster Emergency Services coordinator in conjunction with the Phillips County Sheriff's Department. They are tasked with serving the people of Phillips County by providing support in the event of a natural disaster. They also oversee recovery activities in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

Weed Control Services

Phillips County has a Noxious Weed Control Department located in Malta that provides noxious weed control for the entire county. The Weed Department is responsible for the control and eradication of all Montana State listed noxious weeds within the county. The weed department also contracts with the Montana Department of Transportation to provide noxious weed control along US Highway 2 and US Highway 191. The Weed Department has one person full time employee and has three seasonal part time employees. The Weed Department is overseen by a Weed Board made up of Phillips County residents.

Water and Sewer Services

Phillips County Zortman Water and Sewer District (Zortman WSD) established according to Montana Code Annotated in 1999. The District is served by one of two water wells owned by the District. Well #1 is drilled to a depth of 785 feet and supplies groundwater to the community from the Madison Aquifer Formation. Current capacity is estimated at 60 gallons per minute. Well #2 serves as a backup well and is drilled to a depth of 735 feet and has a capacity of 30 gallons per minute. Both wells offer quality potable water with no necessity for treatment. The District also has rights on a third well not in production. This well, known as Alder Well #232 is located to the south of Zortman and is a stand-alone well. If utilized, it would need to have a control system implemented along with the distribution piping to the well to tie it to the current system.

Zortman WSD constructed a new water distribution system in 2001 at a total cost of nearly \$600,000. The metered system provides service to about 40 customers through a central

distribution system with 4" mains. No public wastewater services are provided. Private septic systems serve the area. The District is governed according to Montana Code Annotated by a locally elected board of directors.

Phillips County Whitewater Water & Sewer District (Whitewater WSD) Residents of Whitewater depend on a shallow ground aquifer, averaging 17-20 feet for their potable water. Prior to the establishment of the Whitewater WSD in 1998 an informal study of the groundwater and testing by the Whitewater School District indicated the groundwater contained several harmful contaminants. Formal assessment noted that due to the proximity of septic system drainfields to the shallow water well in the community, a public health risk existed. A wastewater improvement project was initiated and completed in 2002 at a cost of 1,062,000. The project included abandoning existing septic systems in the community and installing a standard gravity collection system with 8" sewer mains, sewer lift station, force main and a new central wastewater treatment facility southeast of the community consisting of a total retention lagoon. The Whitewater WSD serves 43 households, a population of 95 and the Whitewater School District. The District is governed according to Montana Code Annotated by a locally elected board of directors.

Phillips County Green Meadows Water and Sewer District was legally structured in 2001 and encompasses a small rural subdivision located northwest of the City of Malta. Lots in the WSD are 5 to 10 acre in size and each have 2 or fewer animals per lot. In 2004 the District installed a new 8 inch looped was distribution system which connects to the City of Malta's public water system, allowing for adequate fire flows and consistent availability of water that meets all current standards. Project costs were \$262,000. At the time of the project, the population of Green Meadows was 45 with a total number of 16 household served. No public wastewater services are provided. Private septic systems serve the area. The District is governed according to Montana Code Annotated by a locally elected board of directors.

Communications

Central Montana Communication and Triangle Communications are the Local Exchange Carriers (local telephone company) providing service to Malta. According to Tim Hodges, Advanced Services Manger, they can provide a full range of data connectivity from that location (up to OC-48 bandwidth) to Havre, where multiple long distance carriers have Points-of-Presence. At this time, the City of Malta has completed installation of fiber networks with outlying areas expected to have full fiber service by 2016. They also provide more traditional T-1 and DSL internet access, as well as many telephone features such as caller ID, voice mail, and other CLASS services. As a partner involved in economic development, CMC/TTC is ready to work with potential employers to meet their requirements in a timely and economical manner.

St. Mary's and Milk River Irrigation System – US Corps of Engineers

The Milk River Project in north-central Montana furnishes water for the irrigation of about 121,000 acres of land. Project features are Lake Sherburne; Nelson and Fresno Storage Dams; Dodson, Vandalia, St. Mary, Paradise, and Swift Current Diversion Dams; Dodson Pumping Plant;

200 miles of canals; 219 miles of laterals; and 295 miles of drains. A water supply is furnished to project lands which are divided into the Chinook, Malta, and Glasgow Divisions and the Dodson Pumping Unit. The lands extend about 165 miles along the river from near Havre to a point 6 miles below Nashua, Montana. Local benefits of the project include:

Irrigation - The principal crops produced on the farms in the Milk River Project are alfalfa, native hay, oats, wheat, and barley. Recreation and Fish and Wildlife - Fresno Reservoir provides swimming, boating, and fishing, in season, for walleye, northern pike and perch. Nelson Reservoir provides excellent fishing, primarily for wall-eyed pike and trout and excellent duck and goose hunting.

The Dodson Diversion Dam on Milk River 5 miles West of Dodson, Montana, has a bladder and is a weir-type structure with movable crest gates, and an earth fill dike section. The structural height is 26 feet; the crest length is 8,154 feet. The Dodson North Canal, diverting on the north side of the river just above Dodson Dam, has an initial capacity of 200 cubic feet per second and conveys water to Malta Division lands north of Milk River. The Dodson South Canal has a capacity of 500 cubic feet per second, conveys water for irrigation of Malta Division lands south of Milk River, and also conveys water for storage in Nelson Reservoir.

The Dodson Pumping Plant, located 2.5 miles northwest of Dodson, Montana, lifts water from the Dodson North Canal 20.5 feet to the Dodson Pump Canal which serves 1,147 acres of land in the vicinity of Dodson. Two impeller pumps of 15 cubic feet per second capacity each, driven by 50-horsepower electric motors, provide 30 cubic feet per second of water.

The Nelson Reservoir, located 19 miles northeast of Malta, Montana, provides off stream storage for irrigation of Malta Division lands in the Saco and Hinsdale areas. A series of dikes, with a maximum structural height of 28 feet, crest length of 9,900 feet, and total volume of 233,000 cubic yards, provide for storage of 79,224 acre-feet of water. The reservoir does not have a spillway. Slide gates installed in the Nelson North Canal outlet works permit releases of water to Milk River for use in the Glasgow Division. Slide gates installed in the Nelson South Canal outlet works permit releases of water for irrigation of project lands.

Electric and Gas Services

Utility services are provided to Phillips County by Big Flat Electrical Cooperative, Northwestern Energy and Montana-Dakota Utilities, Inc. Natural gas, propane, electricity, telephone, satellite TV, 3G service, and cellular phone service are all available in the area. The town of Saco owns natural gas wells, therefore people living within Saco receive very low cost natural gas.

Solid Waste Management Services

Phillips County has a county wide refuse district with collection sites throughout the county. The City of Malta Landfill operates their own solid waste service and has twice weekly pickup service for residential and daily pickup for businesses.

Public Transportation

In 2006 Phillips County, the City of Malta, the Town of Dodson and the Town of Saco, by Joint resolution to create a Transportation Improvement Authority, a public body, corporate and politic, to be known and doing business as PHILLIPS TRANSIT AUTHORITY. The purpose of the Phillips Transit Authority is blending the interests of local, state, and federal governments with the interests of the general public and the business community to build, modify, or improve transportation facilities and systems according to 7-14-1001 through 7-14-1007 of the Montana Code Annotated in Phillips County, Montana. Phillips Transit Authority is governed by the board of directors who work to expand public transportation to those of need. To date, participating historic transportation providers include: Malta Head Start, Hi-Line Boys & Girls Club, Phillips County Council on Aging, Malta Opportunities, Inc. and Hi-Line Retirement Center.

Transportation

Rail - The Northern Corridor Main Line in Montana is a segment of one of BNSF's principal east-west main lines, which connects the Midwest with the West Coast. The route, which dissects Phillips County and the City of Malta hosts considerable intermodal (container) traffic and is a key corridor for grain moving to Pacific Northwest Ports. It is a major transcontinental rail freight trunk route.

The line is single tracked in Phillips County. The route has centralized traffic control (CTC), a trail movement system by which a remote dispatcher controls the throwing of switches and clearing of signals. Maximum track speed is 60 miles per hour (MPH) for freight trains and 79 MPH for passenger trains. Maximum gross car weight on this line is 286,000 pounds (143 tons). The primary commodities moving are grain (over half the volume) and forest products (about 16% of traffic). Metallic ores account for over half inbound traffic and 13% of total volume on the Northern Corridor Main Line. Petroleum and coal products move inbound accounting for 5% of all traffic. Primarily outbound metal products generate just under 5% of the highly diverse business on this line.

Oil production in the Bakken Oilfield has dramatically increased the number of trains passing through northern Montana. At this time, BNSF plans to double track their entire line through Montana to accommodate the increased traffic.

With less acres being re-enrolled in CRP, there has been an increase in wheat production. Resident of Phillips County would like to see a grain loading facility built. There is no 110 car grain loading facilities in Phillips County, many producers truck transport grain to the facilities in Harlem and Havre, both west of Malta on US 2. BNSF double track loading lines are located in Malta and Wagner and are most used to offsite transport loads.

Amtrak provides passenger service along the northern US with daily service both east and west at an unmanned station in Malta.

US and State Highways - US Highway 2 Runs from North Dakota border near Bainville to Idaho border near Troy for 666 miles. Phillips County is included within Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) District 4 with headquarters in Glendive.

Air - M75 (FAA Identifier) Malta Airport is located 1 mile NW of Malta just north of US Highway #2. Local contact is Dixon Hitch, P.O. Box 1473, Malta, Mt. Phone 406-654-1222. Malta Airport Zoning Ordinance to limit height of objects around the airport is in effect. The Malta Airport is under the local jurisdiction of the Phillips County Airport Authority. The nearest commercial airports are over 200 miles away in the communities of Great Falls and Billings. Smaller connecting flights are available 90 miles west in Havre and 70 miles east in Glasgow. Private and freight flights are made from the Malta Airport as outlined later in this section. The Malta Airport is also the site of emergency air ambulance service.

Education Services

Each Phillips County school is responsible for a large geographic area. An expanded bus service is employed to retrieve rural students. The system is as viable and as efficient as the size of the districts will allow. Phillips County school systems operate with five-member schools boards. Malta Schools include a rural school maintained by the district at Loring Colony. Malta's middle school and high school building burned to the ground on Christmas Eve 1995. A new facility was built with an insurance settlement and the balance was funded by a district bond issue. The facility is now state of the art. Malta's elementary school, built in the early 1950's has several renovations and improvements through the years.

Saco retains its separate K-6, middle school and high school status. They have enjoyed a large part of the historic natural gas revenues which has allowed them many modern and technological improvements. A new gymnasium which includes a new library, new band rooms and computer labs was constructed in the late 1990's. Saco Schools are a modern Class C facility on the Hi-Line.

The Whitewater district has a K-12 status and has completed major renovations and new gymnasium construction (2005) with the assistance of gas tax revenues.

Dodson Schools built a new gymnasium and upgraded their facilities in the 1980's. The school has access to impact aid revenues which somewhat ease the districts taxpayer burden. Like all schools in Phillips County suffering population declines, Dodson census has somewhat stabilized as their school entices student attendance from the neighboring Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

Schools in Phillips County continue to provide strong educational opportunities and graduates enjoy success out of high school, with a work ethic taught only in Montana schools.

Public Library Services

The Phillips County Library is county operated with one main library located in Malta and two branch libraries located in Saco and Dodson. The library employee's one person full time and has several part time employees. The Phillips County Library System has over 25,000 cataloged books with several more available for online borrowing.

Phillips County Healthcare

The only hospital in Phillips County is the Phillips County Hospital and Family Health Clinic located in Malta. On the healthcare campus is the Critical Access Hospital with acute care beds and emergency room services. The hospital provides nursing care, radiology, clinical laboratory, home health, durable medical equipment and personal assisted living services. Also located on the healthcare campus is the Phillips County Family Health Clinic providing primary care services as well as visiting clinics which are very active on campus providing specialty clinic services for foot care; OB/GYN, Ear, Nose and Throat; Urology; Audiology; Mental Health; Sleep Study; and Occupational Therapy. Mobile mammography screening services are also available. Attached to the hospital is the Hi-Line Retirement Center which has 48 licensed long term care beds. The Hi-Line Retirement Center is owned and operated by the Phillips County Hospital. Adult day care is also available. Independent senior living apartments are also on the campus. Phillips County is a designated Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Area as determined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Service Administration.

Public Buildings

Infrastructure and Public Facilities within the incorporated communities of the City of Malta, Town of Dodson and Town of Saco are identified within their individual Capital Improvement Plans included in this document as addendums.

The following infrastructure and public facilities on the following pages are significantly owned and/or managed by Phillips County or other entities such as a Water and Sewer District, Airport Authority or local nonprofit’s such as PhillCo Economic Growth Council.

Phillips County—Public Facility	Age	Use/Comment
Courthouse Square Building (Malta)	1916	3 story, Brick construction, with attached dispatch and public safety department. Underwent elevator and historic restoration renovation in 2007. Jail sector is a 72 hour hold facility. After 72 hours, if necessary, prisoners are transferred to Havre or Glasgow.
Library Building (Malta)	1974	Concrete block frame construction, lower level is not ADA accessible.
Milk River Pavilion (US 2 east, Malta)	2012	Multiuse livestock arena. Under management of Phillips County Park Board.

Community Health Clinic (Malta)	Acquired 1988	Main level clinic, steel frame and metal construction. Utilized by county health nurse.
Fair buildings—located in Dodson	1929	Multiple buildings, including grandstand, livestock barns, food and other buildings. Season use for county fair. Ongoing maintenance and renovation. Under management of Phillips County Fair Board. The Phillips County Fair is the longest continuously running fair in Montana. It will celebrate its 100 th Anniversary in 2015.
Dodson Library		Small frame construction building utilized as satellite library.
Phillips County Museum, HG Robinson House and Antique Modes of Transportation Museum	1976, 2000 & 2014	Museum is wood frame construction. House is wood frame with extensive gardens and fenced yard. Antique Modes of Transportation is a new steel framed building. Both museums and house are under management of Phillips County Museum Board. Phillips County Historical Society is instrumental in fund raising and house improvements and maintenance.
B District Shop Building (Malta) Saco Shop Building (Saco) A District Shop Building (Dodson) B District Shop (Loring)	1996, 1965, 2014, 2013	Buildings and grounds are maintained by county work crews and weed district.

In addition to the previous tabled facilities, Phillips County has stockpiles of items such as gravel for county roads. There are also seven (7) refuse drop sites strategically located throughout the county. Sites vary in size from small acre site to 80 acres. Trash deposited to these sites is transferred by County truck to a landfill under contract for services in Valley County.

Previously identified facility needs in Phillips County are fire and ambulance storage buildings that can provide full year fire service and ambulance facilities that meet bio hazard and training needs. Communities of Saco, Dodson and Malta continue to develop plans for expanded facilities.

Local Roads and Bridges - Phillips County has between 1500-1550 miles of dirt/gravel roads that

are gas tax eligible. These and other designated roadways and bridges are maintained by county maintenance crews. Phillips County has several criteria in place to assist in the management of county roads. Policy copies and application forms are available from the Phillips County Clerk and Recorder:

Policy for Road Approach Easements (dated 11/13/2001) and application form
Auto Gate Policy (12/31/12)

Because of large land areas owned and under management of state and federal entities and broad use of the many acres of public lands, wildlife refuges, impacts to roadways is high. Phillips County participates in the designated 6 County Fort Peck group that has been successful in obtaining additional federal funds to develop roadways surrounding Fort Peck Reservoir.

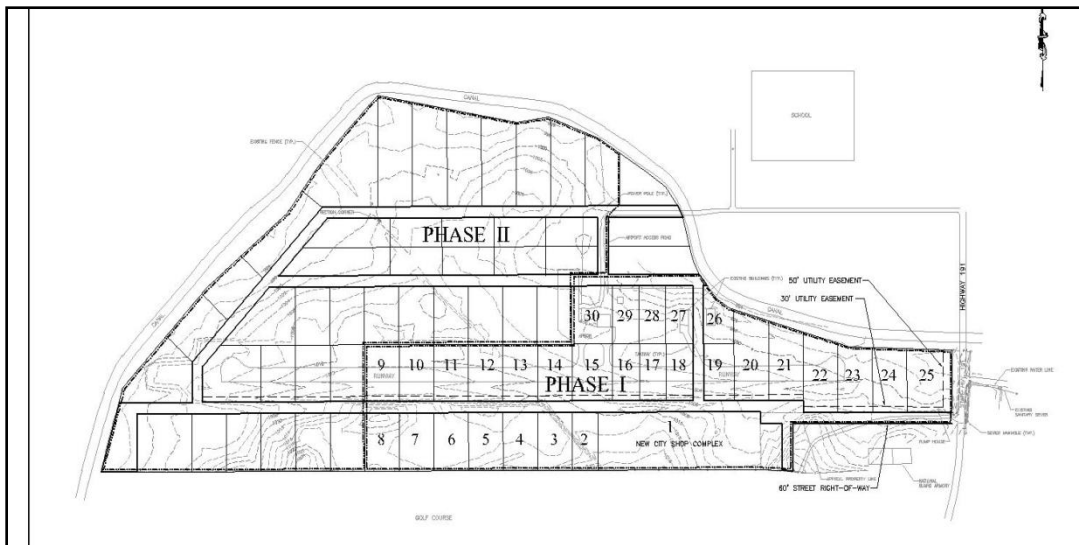
In recent years the status of aging bridges across Montana has been identified as a need. The State Department of Transportation has developed a Bridge Management System along with ranking criteria. Status of bridges across Montana can be reviewed at www3.mdt.mt.gov. According to the Master List, Phillips County currently has 45 bridges.

Community and Economic Development Services

PhillCo Economic Growth Council is a citizen-driven nonprofit organized in 1986 and based in Phillips County, Montana. The mission is to assist in improving the economic stability of the Phillips County area and the standard of living of its residents, in addition, to provide leadership in the county relative to the retention and creation of jobs with expanded wealth of our residents and tax revenue for the communities. PhillCo provides many services such as technical assistance to new and existing businesses, grant writing and management of the Phillips County Community Fund.

Bear Paw Development has served since 1969 as a federally recognized and funded Economic Development District by the US Economic Development Administration. Being involved in a variety of projects, Bear Paw Development assists communities and businesses in the following departments: community planning, business lending, value-added agriculture, community development and small business counseling.

Designated Industrial Development Areas - The Malta Business & Industry Development District (MBIDD) is located adjacent to the southwest Malta City limits at the former airport property. The subdivision is situated in portions of the following four sections: A total of 30 lots (1 through 30) are platted within Phase I. An additional 40 lots are planned for Phase II, for a total of 70 lots. The total area is more than 111 acres and lots vary in size with the majority less than 2 acres in size. The property is controlled by PhillCo Economic Growth Council and has municipal services onsite. Lots and available buildings are available for commercial and light industrial development.



In addition to the subdivided industrial areas at the Malta Business & Industry Development District, is a portion of the Malta Trails, Inc. project. In 2012, Malta Trails, Inc. applied for several grants and was able to begin construction of a walking trail around the perimeter of the Malta. Construction of the handicapped accessible trail will be completed in 2015.

The Town of Saco has identified an area within the platted town for business and industrial development. Details of the area are included with the Capital Improvement Plan for the Town of Saco (See Appendix).

Phillips County Senior Citizens

The Phillips County Council on Aging provides senior services to citizens of Phillips County with assistance from Phillips County. The Council on Aging is operated by a board of directors. Services provided include congregate meals, home delivered means, and donations to transit bus service. In addition, in limited numbers, skilled nursing, health screening, legal services, and homemaker services are provided.

3.0 Chapter Three: Land Use Trends and Changes

Land use information provides insight into the different types of land use and their distribution and density throughout Phillips County. Evaluation of different types of land use in conjunction with the physical features of the county, both natural and man-made, is an important reference to be used by local officials when assessing potential impacts from new development proposals. Land use information is also necessary when planning for new development and considering policy decisions. The location and extent of existing public land, agricultural land, residential land, and commercial or industrial areas has a profound effect on how future development occurs. Consideration of existing physical features and environmental constraints, in conjunction with infrastructure demands helps to determine the suitability of a site for a particular type of development. The information presented in this section provides an overview of existing land development and land use trends in Phillips County.

3.1 Land Description

Phillips County is located in North Central Montana and has a land base of 3,333,226 acres or 5,208 square miles and includes topography ranging from high plains to the Little Rocky Mountains. Agricultural lands and public lands account for most of the land area in Phillips County. The county is bordered to the North by Saskatchewan, Canada, to the east by Valley County, to the west by Blaine County and to the south by Fergus, Petroleum and Garfield Counties. A portion of the Ft. Belknap Indian Reservation is within Phillips County.

77% of the area land cover is rangeland; 17% is used for dry land crops; 2% is used for irrigated crops; 3% is woodland and about 1% is water. The principal dry land crop is wheat and the principal irrigated crops are small grains and alfalfa, which are used for hay.

As evident in the table below (Table 1.0), a large portion of the county is federally owned and administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service administers those portions of the Charles M. Russell and Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge that lie within Phillips County

Table 1.0

Land Ownership	Acres	Percent of Total
Private	1,593,512	48%
Federal	1,373,706	41%
State	201,181	6%
Tribal	125,810	4%
Local Government	1,276	0.04%
Total	3,333,226	100%

3.2 Historical Land Uses

The Lewis and Clark Expedition explored the southern part of what is now Phillips County between 1804 and 1806 and found the region inhabited by Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Indian Tribes at that time. In 1887, the Great Northern Railroad was constructed through the Montana territory and by 1880 livestock production was making its appearance on the plains of northeastern Montana. For many years this was the chief industry in Phillips County, from the Missouri Breaks to the Canadian border, thousands of head of sheep and cattle ranged the plains and the slopes of the Little Rocky Mountains.

In the 1880's, gold was discovered in the Little Rockies and the communities of Zortman and Landusky thrived as active mining towns. Mining activity in the Little Rockies was sporadic with most recent activity by Pegasus Gold Corporation from 1979-1990's. In 1906, the dryland farming movement began and the momentum of the homestead era continued until 1918. The Milk River Irrigation project was opened for settlement in 1913, providing improved cropping options and expanded livestock base for producers.

Phillips County became a part of Valley County in 1893 when it separated from Dawson County. The new county contained all lands north of the Missouri River to the Canadian border and from the North Dakota border west to the then Chouteau County border, with Glasgow as the county seat. This area has since been divided to include five counties – Phillips, Sheridan, Roosevelt, Valley, and Daniels. Phillips County was established in 1915.

3.3 Existing Land Use Trends

Land Ownership

Phillips County is a mix of private and public lands. Managers of public land include the Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Montana, Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, Bureau of Reclamation and the US Corps of Engineers.

Public Lands

Public lands administered by the **Bureau of Land Management** (BLM) in Phillips County are guided by the approved Phillips Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP). The plan summarizes decisions that pertain to Phillips County from the Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP and final environmental impact statement. The RMP sets forth the land use decisions, or direction, on public lands for livestock grazing, vegetation/riparian, cultural resource and wildlife habitat management; natural resource development; rights-of-way actions, land tenure adjustments (selling, exchanging, and acquiring land); and recreation. According to the RMP, the public lands are available for multiple use management and uses. There are two grazing districts, North Phillips County Grazing District and South Phillips County Grazing District.

The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, established in 2001, is located in Southwestern Phillips County. 52,683 federally owned acres are included in the monument. While the BLM is the managing agency for these federal acres, the BLM has no jurisdiction over private or state land within the monument.

The **Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation** (DNRC) manages the surface and mineral resources for the benefit of common schools and other endowed institutions in the State of Montana, under the direction of the State Board of Land Commissioners. The department's obligation for management and administration of Trust Land is to obtain the greatest benefit for the beneficiaries or schools. Divisions of the DNRC include Forest Management, Mineral Management, Agriculture and Grazing Management and Real Estate Management. The DNRC serves the Phillips County area from offices located in Glasgow. State lands on the Ft. Belknap Indian Reservation are served from Havre.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the leading economic industry in Phillips County. The 2014 taxable value of agriculture produced commodities in Phillips County was \$5,569,708. In 2014 there were 1,039 head of horses, 65,867 head of cattle aged 9 months and older, 2,117 head of sheep, 50 swine, 270 bison, 3 emus and 8 llamas reported to the Phillips County Department of Revenue. The number of cattle increased from 56,542 in 2010 to 65,867 in 2014. As reported by city-data.com in 2012 the average size of farms in Phillips County is 3613 acres. The average value of agricultural products sold per farm was \$72,016. The average value of crops sold per acre for harvested cropland was \$62.54. The average total farm production expenses per farm was \$69,263. In addition, the average age of principal farm operators is 55 years old. The total acres of wheat for grain was 95,155 harvested acres.

In Montana, Agriculture is the number one industry. Agriculture impacts the state's economy with a gross farm income (excluding government payments) of \$3.7 billion in 2012. Excluding government payments in 2012, Phillips County livestock sales represented \$44.8 million, crop sales was \$50.8 million, other farm income \$13.8 million for a total of \$109.4 million. Phillips County ranks 3 in livestock production in the State.

Mineral, Energy and Natural Resources

Historically, gold and silver have been mined in the Little Rocky Mountains. In 1979 Pegasus Gold Corporation obtained permits for open-pit mining and heap leach operations. During the period of 1860 and 1994, 1,709,126 ounces of gold and 6,585,870 ounces of silver were produced from the Little Rocky Mountain mining operations. Operations at Zortman and Landusky were noted as America's largest heap leach open pit ore mining operations. However, mining ceased in the late 1990's due to falling gold prices and internal problems within the corporation. This left the Zortman/Landusky Mines in a phase of reclamation, which includes water treatment in perpetuity overseen by the State of Montana and the Bureau of Land Management. According to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Zortman/Landusky Mines (ZMI) dated 1995 additional gold and silver exist within the Little Rocky Mountains. All of the former private land and mineral rights held by Pegasus Gold have been sold to private

interests.

Bentonite was actively mined at various surface pits south of Malta from 1970 to mid 1980's and processed at a former plant located east of Malta. AMCOL International Corporation holds 94 patents on 5,083 acres in Phillips County. AMCOL's subsidiary, American Colloid mined and processed bentonite in the area in the mid 1980's. AMCOL International Corp. (parent company to American Colloid Company and its mining and processing operations in southeastern Montana and Wyoming) holds a significant number of mining patents related to bentonite minerals. According to AMCOL officials, the company presently has no plans to resume operations in Phillips County.

Limestone deposits (Matador Dome) located in south west Phillips County in the Little Rocky Mountains are suitable for production of high calcium lime, or metallurgical grade limestone used in fluxes, sugar refining and oil refining. Other limestone deposits are suitable for cement rock, agricultural lime or building materials. The King Creek quarry site is located NW of Landusky on private land. Montana Gulch Quarry site is on BLM administered lands and according to ZMI EIS estimates contains approximately one million tons of limestone.

Numerous caves exist in the limestone formations, many of which have been identified in the bluffs and outcrops of the Little Rocky Mountains. Azure Cave is a well documented site about 2 miles south of Zortman. The BLM has determined this resource is significant value due to its geologic and mineralogical features and biologic community.

In 1916, drilling for natural gas production began in Phillips County. Expanded pipeline construction began in 1929 and the Bowdoin Gas Field became one of the largest producing fields in Montana. 2011 statistics reported 13,590,580 million cubic feet (MCF) of natural gas produced in Phillips County. Exploration within the Bowdoin and additional fields in the county continue. The natural gas industry is a vital sector of the local economy with multiple companies involved in exploration, drilling, gathering, storage, transportation and maintenance located primarily in the Saco and Whitewater areas of the county.

While there are currently no active oil wells in Phillips County, potential for oil and additional gas production is favorable. Northern Border Pipeline Company owns and operates a 42 inch pipeline which transports natural gas from the Montana-Saskatchewan border to interconnecting pipelines in the upper Midwestern US. Williston Basin Interstate Pipeline Co. operates a 10 inch pipeline (Saco-Morgan Creek Line) that transmits natural gas from the Bowdoin field east for local distribution via smaller diameter pipelines. At present Omimex operates multiple natural gas compressor sites north of Malta near the community of Whitewater and Williston Basin gathers to compress natural gas at plant east of Saco in Valley County. Additional compressor facilities and small diameter gathering pipelines will allow for expanded well drillings and gas production within Phillips County.

Geothermal Resources and Groundwater

Most water wells in Phillips County receive water from the Judith River Formation, alluvial deposits or glacial deposits. Several geothermal springs are present in the Little Rocky Mountains with an average temperature is approximately 75 degrees F.

The Sleeping Buffalo Hot Springs obtains water from a flowing well that was drilled into the Madison Group. The well produces approximately 90 gallons per minute from a depth of 3,200 feet. At source, the water temperature is 108 degrees F. The well is used by the resort located 18 miles east of Malta. Other known geothermal wells assumed within similar veins as the Sleeping Buffalo are located NW of Malta on private property. Sleeping Buffalo Hot Springs was recently purchased and completely renovated. The new owners are hoping to turn the hot springs in to a tourist location for the Hi-Line.

Ground water in north central and eastern Montana is located within the Great Plains Province hydrogeologic region. There are 1,998 recorded water wells in Phillips County. The oldest well was recorded in January of 1890. The deepest recorded well is 2,987 feet and the shallowest is 5.8 feet.

Water Rights

Montana is a "prior appropriation doctrine state" {meaning first in time, first in right} and this was upheld by the Montana Supreme Court in 1921. The Mining Act in 1866 was the first federal law that allowed citizens to acquire title to vested water rights for mining, agriculture, and other purposes on the federal land. This and the Livestock Reservoir Site Act of 1897 essentially severed title to water from title to the underlying federal land. These rights are recognized and protected under the Taylor Grazing Act and Federal Land Policy Management Act. (Also see U.S. v. New Mexico 1978.) The "riparian doctrine" does not apply to acquisition and ownership of water rights in Phillips County, Montana.

All existing rights to the use of any waters for any useful or beneficial purpose are recognized and confirmed by the Montana Constitution. "Existing water right" means a right to the use of water that would be protected under the law, as it existed prior to July 1, 1973.

GOAL 1: Water rights established historically and beneficially used by the citizens of Phillips County including but not limited to, the purposes of agriculture (irrigation and stockwater), domestic use, industrial use, mining and power uses are recognized as private property rights and are to be protected as such.

Objective 1A: Any new or additional development of surface water or groundwater after June 30, 1973 will be consistent with Montana laws and the Montana Water Use Act of 1973.

GOAL 2: Allocation of water resources in Phillips County are governed by applicable Montana laws and the Prior Appropriation Doctrine.

Objective 2A: Any land use inventory, planning or management activities affecting water resources in Phillips County, either directly or indirectly, is coordinated with local government

and is consistent with the Resource Use Management Plan of Phillips County. Encourage agencies to develop policy that is in conformance with applicable statutes and request notification from agencies of filing for water rights in Phillips County.

Objective 2B: Use of water resources in Phillips County is consistent with local culture and community stability with particular emphasis on the economic stability of the community

Objective 2C: Recognize that water used for recreation, fish, and wildlife purposes provide economic benefit to Phillips County although these uses are not historically recognized as historic water rights or "existing water rights". These uses are generally non-consumptive uses of water.

Paleontological Resources

Phillips County is home to a rich land mass of Northern Montana where the world's most preeminent preserved dinosaur fossils have been discovered.

Malta is also home to the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum. A premier site on the Montana Dinosaur Trail, GPDM features permanent exhibits of dinosaurs and other prehistoric fossils curated in a natural setting to advance the visitors experience, allowing them to appreciate, enjoy and fully understand the rich prehistoric resources of this region. The Museum also provides the rare opportunity for both youth and adults to explore, dig and excavate fossils with their staff and paleontologist partners in scheduled laboratory experiences and onsite dig programs.

Great Plains Dinosaur Museum is governed and operated by volunteer board members of the Judith River Foundation, Inc. The Foundation is an IRS exempt 510c3 non-profit corporation established in 2002 to bring the exciting dinosaur discoveries of Phillips County, to life. Their mission is to curate and prepare paleontological resources for use in educational programs, scientific research and interpretive displays in support of the advancement of knowledge and the benefit of all people.

Wind Resources

Historically, wind generated power for many water systems throughout rural Phillips County and it is again being recognized as a renewable resource. Individual landowners are currently exploring wind energy as a source of power for their individual operations.

Wildlife

Phillips County is located with Montana Fish Wildlife's Region 6. Throughout the region antelope and mule deer inhabit the open and rougher terrain. White-tailed deer abound along rivers and streams, and world-class elk and bighorn sheep herds inhabit the Missouri River Breaks along sprawling Fort Peck Reservoir. The productive Prairie Pothole region produces

thousands of ducks and geese. Pheasants are found in agricultural areas, and native sharp-tailed and sage grouse are plentiful in grassy and prairie habitat.

Anglers target walleye, northern pike, Chinook salmon, lake trout and smallmouth bass in Fort Peck Reservoir, and the Missouri River both above and below the lake offers great fishing for a variety of native and introduced species. Smaller reservoirs, such as Nelson Reservoir near Malta provide more good fishing.

Wildlife Management District

The Bowdoin Wetland Management District (WMD) encompasses 9,757 acres of un-staffed satellite refuges which include Black Coulee, Creedman Coulee, Hewitt Lake, and Lake Thibadeau National Wildlife Refuges. The District also contains over 8,860 acres of Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) named Holm, Webb, Dyr Dahl, Korsbeck, Pearce, McNeil Slough, and Beaver Creek, all of which are open to the public. All of these sites except Holm WPA are open to public hunting and trapping.

According to Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, the primary goal of Montana's Wildlife Management Areas is to maintain vital wildlife habitat for the protection of species and the enjoyment of the public.

Milk River Wildlife Management Area (Per MFWP)

Location: Phillips County in northeastern Montana, approximately 20 miles northeast of Malta.

Size: Area 7 - 382 acres; Area 8 - 961 acres. Leased from U. S. Bureau of Reclamation since 1953. Management goal: To provide riparian/wetland habitats for wildlife, particularly waterfowl, and to provide public recreational opportunities.

Hunting opportunities: Hunting opportunities exist for waterfowl, upland birds and deer hunters are allowed to hunt only with shotgun, muzzleloader or bow and arrow.

Wildlife viewing: White-tailed deer, upland game birds, furbearers and numerous small mammals are present on the WMA year-round. Waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and a host of songbirds can be seen during much of the year.

US Fish and Wildlife Service Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is located 7 miles east of Malta, in the Milk River Valley of north-central Montana. Established in 1936 to provide habitat for migrating, nesting, and feeding birds, the Refuge is home to more than 260 species of birds, 26 species of mammals, and a variety of reptiles, amphibians, and fish. Many of these wildlife species can be seen from the Refuges 15-mile auto tour loop.

Bowdoin NWR encompasses 15,551 acres, including more than 6,600 acres of wetlands. Refuge staff also manages Lake Thibadeau, Black Coulee, Creedman Coulee, and Hewitt Lake NWRs. In addition, Refuge staff administer Bowdoin Wetland Management District, which consists of seven waterfowl production areas and a variety of grassland and wetland.

Major habitat types on the refuge include saline and freshwater wetlands, native prairie, introduced dense nesting cover and shrubs.

In 2011 Bowdoin released a “Comprehensive Conservation Plan.” This plan will guide management of the refuge for the next 15 years.

Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge

Extending 125 airline miles up the Missouri River from Fort Peck Dam in north-central Montana, the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge contains approximately 1,100,000 acres, including the 245,000-acre Fort Peck Reservoir. Of the over 36,000 acres of State DNRC leases within the CMR boundary, 26,780 acres or 73% are held by individuals. There are also over 36,000 of privately held acres within the CMR boundary. The Refuge includes native prairies, forested coulees, river bottoms, and badlands so often portrayed in the paintings of Charlie Russell, the colorful western artist for whom the refuge is named. The historic use of the Charles M. Russell refuge is cattle grazing. There currently is a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) which is a 15 year plan for the refuge.

Fort Belknap Indian Reservation

The western portion of Phillips County is included within the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. Fort Belknap is currently developing a comprehensive wildlife management plan for the lands of the Fort Belknap Reservation to provide direction for their wildlife program. Results will enhance wildlife management on Fort Belknap Reservation by: involving Tribal membership in the planning process; more carefully assessing and assigning the resources, time, money and equipment toward identified goals and objectives; and providing measurable outcomes for the tribe.

Conservation Easements

Conservation easements work best when their purpose is to maintain existing land uses. Easements are given to government or nonprofit agencies, or local land trusts to preserve ecological or recreational values on wildlife habitat or productive agricultural land.

Conservation easements will not typically lower property taxes as property taxes are calculated in accordance with current land use. This means the assessed value of land in agricultural use will not be significantly affected by a conservation easement. However, property values could be affected by the presence of a conservation easement.

Brownfields/Reclamation Sites

The Former Malta Airport, located on the southwestern edge of Malta in Phillips County, historically served companies that applied pesticides and herbicides to farms in the Malta area. During that time, agricultural chemicals were released on-site. Previous investigations have determined cleanup is necessary at the site to reduce human health risks and protect

groundwater from chemical contamination. The former businesses that caused the contamination no longer exist, and cannot participate in any cleanup. Today, the site is underutilized and mostly vacant. The Phillips County Economic Growth Council has a long-term lease from the City for this area, and has created a platted business park subdivision in the project area. Their ability to attract businesses and investors to the business park is limited by the presence of contamination. In the absence of redevelopment, portions of the site will remain abandoned and contaminated. The City of Malta wishes to clean up the site voluntarily in order to realize environmental benefits and improve the business climate of the area.

The overall goal for the Former Malta Airport Facility is to remove pesticide and herbicide contamination, and allow the Former Airport and adjacent properties to be revitalized under the Montana Voluntary Cleanup and Redevelopment Act (VCRA) process. DNRC funds would allow implementation of the Remediation Proposal for the facility. This project would promote economic development by cleaning up legacy contamination from past agricultural chemical operations. As of June 2014, the City of Malta has received a completeness determination from the State Superfund Unit for the Environmental Assessment Voluntary Cleanup Plan (VCP) and is currently preparing the Remediation Proposal VCP.

Zortman/Landusky Mine Reclamation Project

The mines cover about 1,200 acres of intermingled private and public lands in the Little Rocky Mountains of Phillips County near the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the BLM jointly manage the reclamation activities since the bankruptcy of mine owner/operator, Pegasus Gold Corporation, in 1998. The reclamation plans for these mines were estimated to cost more than the funding available from the reclamation bonds. With supplemental funding from the BLM and the State of Montana, the reclamation earthwork was completed in May 2005. However, there is still a funding shortage to maintain water treatment. Due to excessive precipitation in recent years and construction of additional treatment systems, water treatment costs exceed available funds from the bonds by over \$1.5 million annually.

The bonds collected by the Montana DEQ were used to pay for most of the reclamation (\$29.6 million for earthwork and a \$13.8 million water treatment trust fund). To date, the BLM has provided more than \$16 million to assist with reclamation and water treatment costs. In 2006 the BLM invoked its Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) authority in order to continue site management activities. ARRA funding allowed substantial upgrades to the three water treatment plants at the mines and the construction of an additional plant in Swift Gulch. Waters going into this drainage are a particular point of contention with the Fort Belknap Tribes since Swift Gulch flows onto the Reservation. Other upgrades included improved water capture systems, additional treatment ponds, and upgrades of process used at the Biological plant to remove nitrates, selenium, and cyanide from the leach pad water. ARRA funding was also used to erect a wind turbine to help defray power costs at the mines.

Phillips County Land Resource Use Plan (2012)

Primary Planning Guidelines (See full Land Resource Use Plan in Appendix)

4.0 Chapter Four: Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies

4.1 Land Description

THE LAND - Major factors and trends regarding land use:

As documented within previous pages of this Growth Policy, the majority of land in Phillips County has historically been and continues to be used for agriculture. Agriculture land use is the main contributor to the local economy and reflects the rural quality of life that is attractive to most people in the County. Agriculture trends including a number of factors tied to economy, population shift and increasing pressure regarding management and conservation are putting pressure on agriculture producers to take land out of production.

World wide demand for fossil fuels will continue to draw on natural resources of Phillips County and increased development of gas, oil and wind resources is anticipated.

A prime area for community growth are the unincorporated communities of Zortman and Landusky in the Little Rocky Mountains of southern Phillips County.

Public sentiment places high value on private property rights and identifies preserving that right as major area of concern. Phillips County land use considerations must balance the individuals rights with those of land managers, natural resources and local capacity to provide for future population growth and development in a cohesive and intelligent manner.

Public involvement will continue to mandate attention to processes and revisions of land use and similar plans for the administration of public lands, wildlife and their impacts within Phillips County.

Residential development patterns in Phillips County have been largely dictated by the real estate market. Scattered rural residential development can result in several problems, including conversion of quality agricultural land into residential home sites, land wastage, increased demand for public services such as law enforcement, fire protection and roads. Escalating land values and demand for small rural acreages continue; subdividing and development can be expected to continue.

In consideration of the above stated trends, the following goal and objectives have been established:

GOAL: Maintain land use and development in Phillips County that balances the many needs and interests which will not remove agriculture and grazing lands from production while maintaining our rural quality of life for the County's current and future generations.

1. **Encourage development to those areas which will not remove agriculture and grazing lands from production and promote land development in and around incorporated areas that can provide services and discourage inefficient land use patterns that make it difficult to provide public services.** Encourage rural improvement districts (RID) or rural special improvement districts (RSID) as an appropriate method of funding the increased demand for these services in rural settings.
2. Work with stakeholders to maintain taxable values within the County and work cooperatively to attain "no net loss of private land" within proposed land exchanges in the County.
3. Work cooperatively with the State of Montana, Phillips County Planner, Phillips County Sanitarian, Phillips County Clerk & Recorder and incorporated communities in Phillips County to enforce Montana Subdivision Regulations. Discourage haphazard development, areas of excessive slope, those prone to flooding or detrimental to our natural resources.
4. Maintain an informed relationship with natural resource based industries, including but not limited to natural gas exploration, drilling, distribution and wholesale sectors.
5. Actively participate in processes related to land use and management impacting Phillips County and the region. These plans include, but are not limited to the following: Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, Malta Area Resource Management Plan (BLM), Oil & Gas Supplemental Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, BLM Resource Advisory Council, Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Resource Management Plan, Zortman & Landusky Mine Reclamation, Montana Air National Guard Training Range, Black Footed Ferret & Prairie Dog Management Plan, Great Sage Grouse Conservation Planning Strategy, Montana Fuel Reduction Project, Noxious Weeds, Montana Department of Transportation TRED impact study on US 2 and others.

4.2 The People & Economy

Major factors and trends regarding and use:

Agriculture is the stabilizing factor for our population and our economy.

An official definition of economic development is *improving economic health and vitality of communities through attraction, creation and retention of capital investment and jobs*. Since 1986 local officials, including Phillips County has participated in economic development activities and been a supporter of PhillCo Economic Growth Council (PhillCo). Through the various stages of developing this growth policy, PhillCo has served as a consultant to the plan

and assisted in the gathering and assessment of community needs and goals. This plan therefore incorporates the most recent goals of objectives of PhillCo as their own in relationship to the people and economy of Phillips County:

PHILLCO ECONOMIC GROWTH COUNCIL - STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of PhillCo Economic Growth Council is to assist in improving the economic stability of the Phillips County area and the standard of living of the residents. To provide leadership in the county relative to the retention and creation of jobs with expanded wealth of our residents and tax revenue for the communities.

GOAL 1: To promote a quality of life conducive to the economic growth of the area.

OBJECTIVE

A. Work with local resources to identify adult and continuous education needs, including business, (including workforce development) and individual.

Actions:

1. Appoint Committee to identify and research alternatives in cooperation with MSU Extension and county schools.

B. Maintain the PhillCo office as a clearinghouse of business information for local businesses.

With regards to the vast distance between state coordinated business assistance and development agencies in Montana, the need for local contacts providing interested persons information regarding tax laws, incentives, finance and pertinent startup and expansion technical assistance.

Actions:

1. Sponsor and promote programs such as the Montana Economic Developers Association Community Needs Assessment. Host regional specialists as speakers and panelists at area meetings. Provide for opportunities and coordinate activities for the SBDC and Regional Development officers – continue to provide in kind services and office space for SBDC (coordinate as needed with committee noted in Goal 1A.)

C. Provide affordable housing and opportunities for home ownership.

Housing has been identified by several sectors of residents within Phillips County and there seems to be a growing need for affordable housing and housing in general. PhillCo realizes the various opportunities provided by various state and federal programs, but implementation must be carried forward.

Actions:

1. Coordinate effort of North Central RCD housing program and homebuyer education programs within communities.
2. Conduct a (windshield assessment) housing survey in town of Saco. Assessment will assess general conditions and need for housing program assistance.

3. Assist as requested with City of Malta HOME program model project.

D. Improve and maintain infrastructure with the County.

PhillCo realizes stability and up to date equipment, services and infrastructure are essential to maintain our current population and attract new residents and businesses.

Actions:

1. Assist and support efforts of Town of Dodson, City of Malta and Town of Saco in cooperation with Bear Paw Development implement infrastructure improvements.
2. Complete Phillips County Growth Policy

GOAL 2: To maintain PhillCo Economic Growth Council as an effective long-term organization for the promotion of economic development.

OBJECTIVE

A. Maintain an effective organizational structure for PhillCo. PhillCo needs to maintain effective committees and board members committed to the goals and objectives of the organization. Funding must be secured from a variety of sources.

Actions:

1. Secure approved operation budget by February 1st of each year.
2. Establish plan for implementing and marketing of dues structure prior to budget adoption.
3. Review and update bylaws as needed by annual meeting in November of each year.

B. Continue to promote countywide involvement in PhillCo. According to organizational bylaws, every adult county resident is eligible to join PhillCo. We recognize that in order to be a viable organization, we must have broad based membership drawn from all segments of the county both geographically and economically.

Actions:

1. Establish schedule of visits to the community of Saco to assist with business start up and expansion and other technical assistance questions.
2. Host annual "a round the county" meetings in each community.
3. Educate citizens and promote involvement of residents from throughout the county; continue and expand presentation of Certificates of Recognition to expanding, new ownership and startup business at Annual Meeting & Banquet, continue annual newsletter and attempt more regular reports and features in local media.

GOAL 3: To expand and grow basic industry and businesses in the county and to include manufacturing and processing.

OBJECTIVE

A. Maintain the PhillCo office as a clearinghouse of business information for local businesses.

With regards to the vast distance between state coordinated business assistance and development agencies in Montana, the need for local contacts providing interested persons information regarding tax laws, incentives, finance and pertinent startup and expansion technical assistance.

Actions:

1. Host regional specialists as speakers and panelists at area meetings. Provide for opportunities and coordinate activities for the SBDC and Regional Development officers – continue to provide in kind services and office space for SBDC.

B. Establish a marketing plan to entice outside business to Phillips County.

Recognizing the need to respond quickly and consistently to potential new business inquiries, necessary information should be updated and maintained for this purpose.

Actions:

1. Establish a working committee to assess and prioritize needs with regards to marketing community ~ mid west and Dakota approach to “free land”; identify basic needs (medical eye care, additional dental).
2. Continue and update web page with emphasis on MBIDD opportunities.
3. Work with community of Saco to develop marketing plan for natural gas resources.

C. Expand basic agriculture industry to include manufacturing and direct marketing.

PhillCo realizes the importance of the improved bottom line of area producers by adding value locally to their raw products, benefiting the entire regional economy.

Actions:

1. Assist interested parties with aspects of business planning in regards to value added agriculture. This includes but is not limited to: application assistance to the Montana Growth through Agriculture Program.
2. Research options for industry development in vacant buildings in Phillips County and on other industrial sites, including MBIDD.

GOAL 4: To establish Phillips County as a regional trade and service center.

OBJECTIVE

A. Improve upon the existing retail and industrial services in the county.

PhillCo recognizes the need to make a special effort to preserve what we have already established. The primary focus of this objective is to build relationships, provide early warning signs for at-risk companies and identify expansion needs of existing businesses in addition to identifying and targeting companies that fit community niches.

Actions:

1. Appoint a task force to establish a **Business Retention and Expansion Program for Phillips County**. This process will include the following aspects: Business Inventory, Trend Analysis, Interview and Survey Businesses and Targeting as outlined in the *Learning to Lead* publication and the BEAR Program initiated through the Mt. Department of Commerce.

2. Establish a marketing plan for the Malta Business and Industry Development District (MBIDD) and Phillips County in general. This may include development of web and paper based materials such as a brochure and map of the area, available properties and possible incentives through funding programs and State of Montana options.
3. Conduct a simple assessment of local assets that could be identified as a “niche” for relocating businesses. Follow up with a targeted conversation and direct mail out lining “what we’ve got” to pre identified companies (examples-hide finishers/tanners, companies with service center needs, specialty processors, specialized medical, etc).
4. Provide assistance as requested by all county communities in regards to economic and community development projects. These include but are not limited to: Town of Saco-Capital Improvement Plan and Industrial Park planning, drinking water and wastewater project, Zortman – community planning needs, City of Malta and Town of Dodson – wastewater projects.

B. Promote positive transportation and international trade in area.

Actions:

1. Communicate importance to our Congressional Delegation, Montana Department of Transportation, US Department of Homeland Security, neighboring Canadian communities and Canadian government officials regarding commerce through the Port **and improved conditions of roadways on both sides of the border – North South.**
2. Support efforts to make improvements to the “**Bowdoin Road**” and provide continued support of congressional efforts to secure funding for repairs. This route is an integral part of our local tourism economy.
3. Continue to support efforts of the 4 Lanes for Highway 2.

C. Support efforts to maintain local medical services.

PhillCo realizes medical services are essential to maintain a viable community with any hope of growing.

Actions:

1. Continued support of all medical and emergency facilities in Phillips County, including but not limited to nursing home and ambulance, knowing the value of maintaining these facilities and services and their direct link to our economy.

D. Endorse the areas tourism industry as an area of growth within the region and state.

Actions:

1. Provide grant writing and technical assistance to community efforts that promote or provide opportunity to realize Phillips County as a destination community.

E. Promote downtown business improvements.

Actions:

1. Continue to offer the PhillCo Business Store Front Beautification Grant in which businesses can apply for a \$2500 grant to improve signage and renovate store fronts.

-
2. Investigate options for Tax Increment Financing and be catalyst if this effort becomes a priority.

4.3 Public Facilities, Infrastructure and Services

PUBLIC FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Major factors and trends regarding and use:

As previously noted, there are complex issues associated with capital improvements and associated funding issues. The strategy to maintain and replace local public infrastructure is dependent upon adequate planning, cooperation and management of financial resources.

GOAL: Provide for the governmental needs of the community at reasonable and acceptable cost to the taxpayers.

Actions:

1. Review and prioritize on an annual basis identified needs in order to improve and maintain high quality and efficient community services within all departments of the county.
2. Encourage the timely upgrade and/or expansion of public facilities, seek appropriate assistance in assessing best means on how to proceed (i.e.: seek matching planning funds initiate a Preliminary Architect Report to assess historic renovation and installation of elevator at courthouse)
3. Phillips County should continue to strive for well planned, efficient and environmentally sound systems for water, sewer and solid waste disposal needs. This includes continued County Sanitarian services, endorsement of special districts as requested and ongoing solid waste disposal to approved facilities.
4. Continue to cooperate in multi county and interagency efforts for disaster mitigation, emergency services, weed management, mutual aid and similar agreements. Remain involved in public projects such as St. Mary's and Milk River Basin rehabilitation, commercial rail and similar public benefit efforts.
5. Phillips County should encourage and support maintenance and improvement of roadways in Phillips County and work to supply residents and tourist with safe, efficient transportation and to help plan for adequate highway, rail and air services. Coordinate with Montana Department of Transportation, USFW, BLM and other public/private entities to maintain and improve roadways and access roads in and around the county. Continue involvement and support of public transit efforts which assists elderly, disabled and others in need of public transportation.

5.0 Chapter Five: Regulatory Strategies

5.1 Strategy for Public Infrastructure

Public infrastructure improvement projects which have been recently completed and those currently in the planning stages include:

- Hi-Line Retirement Home upgrade in 2010.
- Milk River Pavilion rebuild in 2012.
- Phillips County Dodson Shop in 2014.
- Phillips County Loring Shop in 2013.
- Malta Trails Trafton Park Trail in 2012.
- Malta Trails Old Airport Trail in 2014.
- Walking bridge across Dodson Irrigation District Canal for the Malta Trails Old Airport Trail in 2015.
- Pedestrian Bridge across US Highway 2 – Planning Stages.
- Bridge south of Saco on Beaver Creek – Planning Stages.

Obvious by the above planned and completed projects, Phillips County understands the value of public infrastructure to the success of their local economy and ability to provide public services to its residents. Successful planning coordinated through local and regional economic development agencies such as PhillCo Economic Growth Council and Bear Paw Development Corporation have provided the technical assistance to identify community needs and successfully complete the application and construction process.

Local strategies include continued efforts and participation in planning and economic development activities within all communities of Phillips County. While much of the infrastructure strategy is dependent upon budget funding and financial planning, efforts regarding County services, road and bridge improvements, and capital improvement planning will continue to be a priority.

5.2 Growth Policy Implementation Strategy

Change is inevitable and planning is a continuous process. Following adoption of the Phillips County Growth Policy, Planning Department staff will make a one year status report regarding the plan to the Phillips County Planning Board. This report will include a progress report on goals and objectives as stated within the Plan and will identify any issues that may require revisions to the Growth Policy. This report will be scheduled as an item on the Planning Board agenda and the public will be invited to comment.

Montana Code requires that the Growth Policy be reviewed within five years. Upon the fifth anniversary (2017), the Planning Board and staff will undertake a major review process to evaluate the plan. The plan will be modified according to public procedures specified in MCA 76-1-601. At minimum, it must be revised to reflect current conditions and community goals. Public participation will be invited at all levels of planning and revision of the Growth Policy.

5.3 Statement of Interjurisdictional Cooperation

It is imperative that the entities within Phillips County communicate. Many agencies offer various types of public services and still more are involved in land use, environmental and transportation issues. Their activities all need to be coordinated to promote efficient operations, avoid duplication and minimize the potential for conflicts. Formal cooperative agreements are in place regarding emergency service and police protection with municipal entities in the County and several governmental agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and Fort Belknap Reservation.

To further promote cooperation,

The County will provide all incorporated towns in Phillips County of the completed Growth Policy and will meet with local officials as needed to discuss the plan.

The County will consider supporting (ie letter of support) applications for infrastructure grants as identified within respective municipal Capital Improvement Plans.

The Phillips County Planning Board will encourage coordination and cooperation between themselves and the incorporated communities of Phillips County and their planning considerations.

5.4 Subdivision Review Statement

The Phillips County Planning Board will evaluate and make decisions regarding proposed subdivisions with respect to the criteria in (MCA 76-3-608 (3) (A) Montana Code Annotated which requires local governments to review a proposed subdivision's effects on "agriculture, agriculture water user facilities, local services, the natural environment, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and public health and safety."

Per this requirement, the Phillips County Planning Board will use the following definitions for each of the criteria as follows:

Anticipated effect on agriculture. MCA 41-2-103 defines Agriculture as: "Agriculture" means:

- (a) all aspects of farming, including the cultivation and tillage of the soil;
- (b) (i) dairying; and (ii) the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any agricultural or horticultural commodities, including commodities defined as agricultural commodities in the federal Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(g));
- (c) the raising of livestock, bees, fur-bearing animals, or poultry; and (d) any practices, including forestry or lumbering operations, performed by a farmer or on a farm as an incident to or in conjunction with farming operations, including preparation for

market or delivery to storage, to market, or to carriers for transportation to market.

- (d) **81-8-701. Definitions.** Unless the context requires otherwise, in this part the following definitions apply: (1) "Agricultural and food product" includes a horticultural, viticultural, dairy, livestock, poultry, bee, other farm or garden product, fish or fishery product, and other foods.

Anticipated effect on agriculture water user facilities: defined as those facilities which provide water for agriculture land as defined in 15-7-202 MCD or which provide water for the production of agriculture products as defined in 15-1-101 MCA including by not limited to ditches, pipes and head gates.

Anticipated effect on the natural environment: defined as physical conditions which exist within a given area, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance.

Anticipated effect on wildlife and wildlife habitat: defined as including living things which are neither human nor domesticated.

Anticipated effort on local services: defined as any and all services or facilities that local government entities are authorized to provide, and

Anticipated effect on public health and safety: defined as a condition of optimal well-being, free from danger, risk or injury for a community at large, or for all people, not merely for the welfare of a specific individual or a small class of persons.

Based on the above criteria, the Phillips County Planning Board will evaluate and made decisions regarding proposed subdivision as follows:

- (a) Subdivision applications and staff reports will include documentation and an analysis of as to whether and to what extent the proposed subdivision will impact agriculture, agriculture water user facilities, local services, the natural environment, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and public health and safety as defined above.
- (b) The Planning Board will evaluate each proposed subdivision as to extent of any and all expected impacts to each of the elements, and the degree to which the applicant proposes to mitigate any adverse impact. This evaluation will be based upon information gathered from public hearings, staff reports, and other sources of information as deemed appropriate.
- (c) Upon completion of its review and evaluation, the Planning Board will render a decision on the proposed subdivision with respect to the Requirements of the Phillips County Subdivision Regulations, the Phillips County Growth Policy and the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act.

5.5 Public Hearing Statement

Public hearings for subdivision review are governed by 76-3-605, MCA with legal notice given by publication in the Phillips County News (general circulation published Wednesdays of each week) not less than 15 days prior to the date of the hearing. Notice of the hearing must be given by registered or certified mail not less than 15 days prior to the date of the hearing to the subdivider, each property owner of record whose property is immediately adjoining the land included in the preliminary plat, and each purchaser under contract for deed of property immediately adjoining the land included in the preliminary plat. Hearings will be scheduled to make the times and location reasonably accessible to the general public.

The purpose of the public hearing shall be to consider all relevant evidence relating to the public health, safety, and welfare, including the environmental assessment if required, to determine whether the subdivision application should be approved, conditionally approved, or denied by the governing body.

The following procedure will be used for public hearings:

1. Chairman - announces opening of hearing, explains purpose of hearing, announces that the hearing may be taped/recorded and that each respondent should clearly state his/her name, asks all attendants to sign attendance sheet
2. Secretary - reads notice of hearing as published in local newspaper, takes minutes during the hearing
3. Chairman - orders notice placed in record
4. Secretary - reads technical reports or comments pertaining to subdivision or purpose of the hearing. Reads any letters received regarding the subject.
5. Chairman - gives floor to those persons in attendance who wish to comment or ask questions (first to proponents, the opponents, if any), moderates discussion arising from comments or questions from those in attendance.
6. Chairman - announces when the next scheduled meeting will be held and closes the hearing.

After the public hearing - the Secretary reviews tapes/notes and finalizes minutes, files copy of the public hearing notice, affidavit of publication, attendance sheet, written minutes and recorded tapes (if any).

The purpose of the public hearing is to hear testimony. No action shall be taken concerning the topic of the hearing, or any other topic, during the hearing.

5.6 Adoption of the Growth Policy

As previously noted, Phillips County Planning Department initiated the Growth Policy development process in 2002. The most previous plan was published in 2006. Abundant opportunity has been provided for public input and comment and development of the goals and objectives for the current growth policy. Community listening sessions were held in 2012 in every town in the county with over 220 residents involved in the various opportunities.

Acknowledgements

The Phillips County Growth Policy update was completed with participation and involvement from each community, incorporated and unincorporated, within Phillips County. The community vision and strategies for achieving that vision set forth in this policy are a result of direct contributions of local government and citizens. Special acknowledgement is given to local government officials and citizens of Phillips County for their participation in these, “Around the County: Needs Assessment Hearings.” Acknowledgement is also given to Vibrant Futures and Bear Paw Development Corporation, organizations who partnered with PhillCo Economic Growth Council, and contributed significantly to collecting, organizing, and utilizing information accrued at the “Around the County Meetings.”

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-08

PHILLIPS COUNTY GROWTH POLICY

WHEREAS, the updated Phillips County Growth Policy was completed by the Phillips County Planning Board March 26, 2015 and


WHEREAS, the updated Phillips County Growth Policy was approved and adopted by the Phillips County Commissioners as noted in the Commissioners Minutes dated April 27, 2015.

WHEREAS, the updated Phillips County Growth Policy has been approved and adopted by the Phillips County Commissioners dated July 10, 2017.

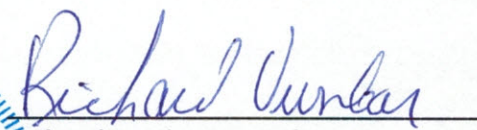
APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 10th day of July, 2017.

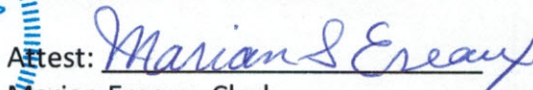
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PHILLIPS COUNTY, MONTANA**


Bruce Christofferson, Chairman


John Carnahan, Member




Richard Dunbar, Member

Attest: 
Marian Ereaux, Clerk