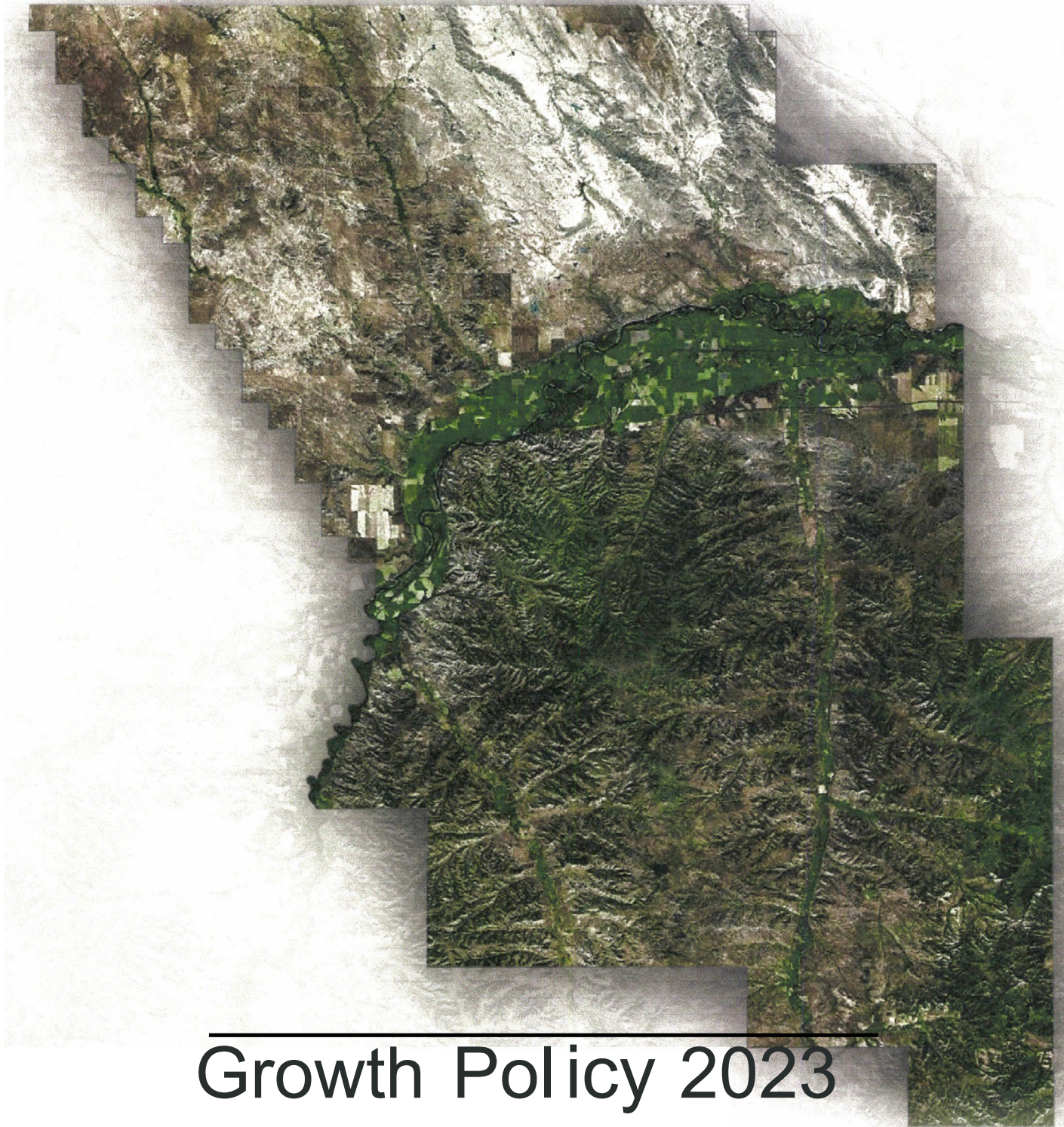


TREASURE COUNTY

Montana



Growth Policy 2023

Updated from 2015

Acknowledgments

This plan benefitted from the time, commitment, and input of the people of Treasure County, as well as the Treasure County Planning Board, Treasure County Commissioners, and the Town of Hysham.

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Introduction

In the heart of Yellowstone River Country in central Montana is Treasure County - a wide open, rugged, and charming landscape. The resourceful, industrious residents of the county retain their western agricultural heritage while looking to their future. That forward-thinking has led to the initiation of a comprehensive growth planning process which will update Treasure County's growth policy from 2003. In short:

This plan is the people's expression of their vision for Treasure County.

After setting the stage and presenting the issues, the following document gives the citizens and leaders of Treasure County a list of strategies for achieving their vision.

This is more than simply a list of policies for growth, it is a communication tool designed to keep planning concepts simple and useful.

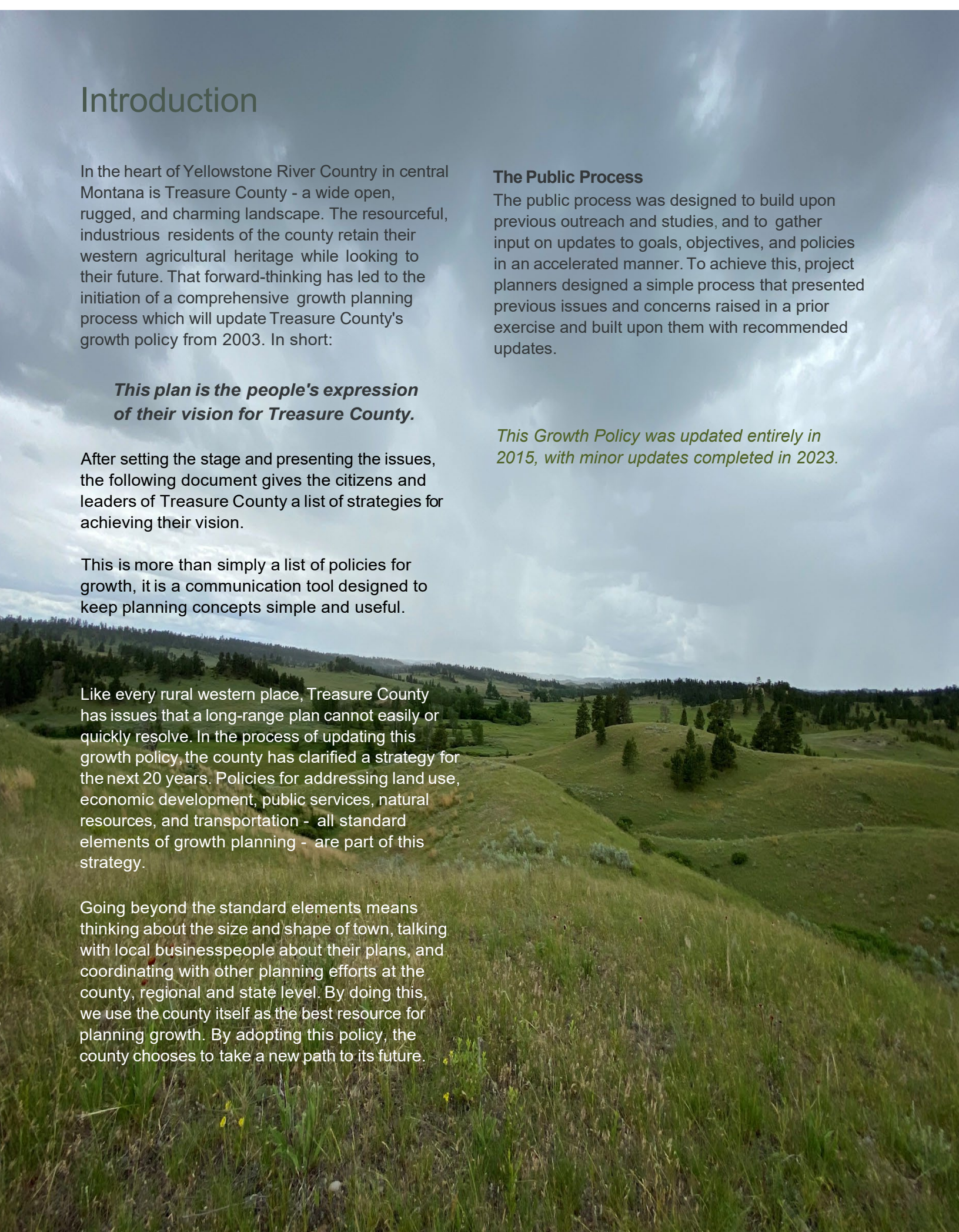
Like every rural western place, Treasure County has issues that a long-range plan cannot easily or quickly resolve. In the process of updating this growth policy, the county has clarified a strategy for the next 20 years. Policies for addressing land use, economic development, public services, natural resources, and transportation - all standard elements of growth planning - are part of this strategy.

Going beyond the standard elements means thinking about the size and shape of town, talking with local businesspeople about their plans, and coordinating with other planning efforts at the county, regional and state level. By doing this, we use the county itself as the best resource for planning growth. By adopting this policy, the county chooses to take a new path to its future.

The Public Process

The public process was designed to build upon previous outreach and studies, and to gather input on updates to goals, objectives, and policies in an accelerated manner. To achieve this, project planners designed a simple process that presented previous issues and concerns raised in a prior exercise and built upon them with recommended updates.

This Growth Policy was updated entirely in 2015, with minor updates completed in 2023.





Treasure County Today

Geography



Treasure County is set in a landscape of rugged terrain characterized by rolling hills, ravines, timbered slopes, broad river valleys, and sweeping vistas. From a 4,262-foot-high point in southeastern Treasure County, the land drains through canyons to the Yellowstone River running through the center of the county and Bighorn River which forms part of the county's western boundary.

Hysham is the county seat with 321 residents. Billings, 76 miles west of Hysham (about a one-hour drive), is the closest center of regional commerce and services. Miles City is 74 miles east. Other nearby towns and cities include Forsyth, Colstrip, and Hardin. Agriculture is predominant in the Yellowstone and Bighorn River valleys, as well as the Sarpy Creek drainage and other small drainages. Rangeland is prominent elsewhere in the county, where the terrain is better suited as pastureland.

Natural amenities are abundant, including about 290 miles of waterways. Plentiful recreational opportunities include excellent hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, and camping. Several Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks properties totaling 1,542 acres exist along the Yellowstone River in the county.

A Brief History

Once part of the Crow Reservation, the lands of Treasure County opened for settlement when the U.S. Government moved the reservation boundary further west in 1906. Around that time, Charlie J. Hysham moved from Iowa to an area around the present-day town of his namesake to take over management of the Flying E, a large cattle ranch. The first structure in Hysham was built soon after.

As the Northern Pacific Railroad extended into the region, a siding was built near Hysham to load and unload goods, attracting local commerce and settlers to the county.

Treasure County was partitioned out of what was once Rosebud County, which itself was created out of sprawling Custer County in 1901. The present-day boundaries of Treasure County were created in April of 1919.

Most settlements in the county occurred in the early 20th century as homesteaders migrated from the eastern US and Europe. In 1920, the county was home to almost 2,000 people, but experienced steady decline from 1920-2020.

As has long been the case, most residents make their livelihood in agriculture. Farm employment continues to make up the largest job sector, although this sector is also declining.

Today Treasure County faces issues like many communities in the rural west, with low population and tax base alongside changing economic conditions. These issues have motivated leaders to create a new vision, one that begins with this growth policy update.

A Quick Snapshot

This section takes a glance at where Treasure County is today by looking at large-scale trends and existing conditions. This includes a brief survey of local geography, population, economics, and county services to paint a clear picture for creating growth planning strategies.

Climate

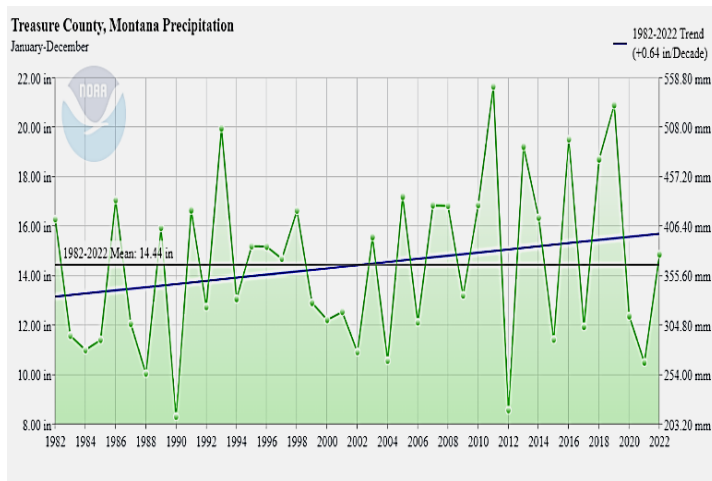
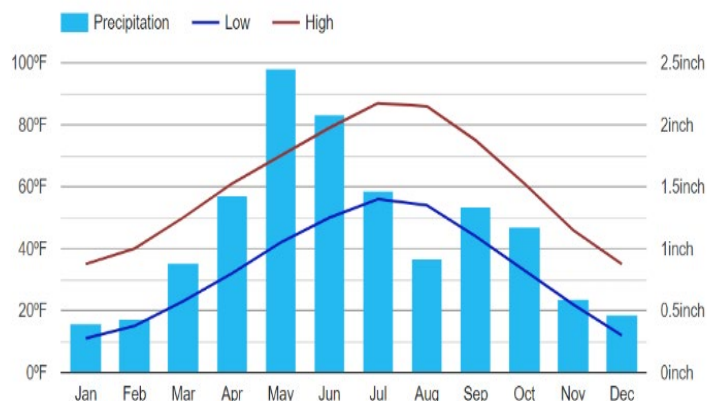
The county is situated between elevations of 2,576 to 4,262 feet. Rolling hills and coulees are common landforms. Plentiful timberlands cover the north slopes of hillsides. The county experiences a semi-arid continental climate characterized by warm, dry summers and very cold winters. Average annual rainfall for the 20-year period (2002-2022) is 15.81 inches. The average rainfall of the previous 20-year period (1982-2002) was 14.33.

The Yellowstone River is the principal natural surface water traversing the jurisdictional area. The confluence of the Yellowstone and the Big Horn Rivers is located at the western boundary of Treasure and Yellowstone County. Lesser drainages include Tullock, Alkali, Muggins, Froze to Death and Sarpy Creeks.

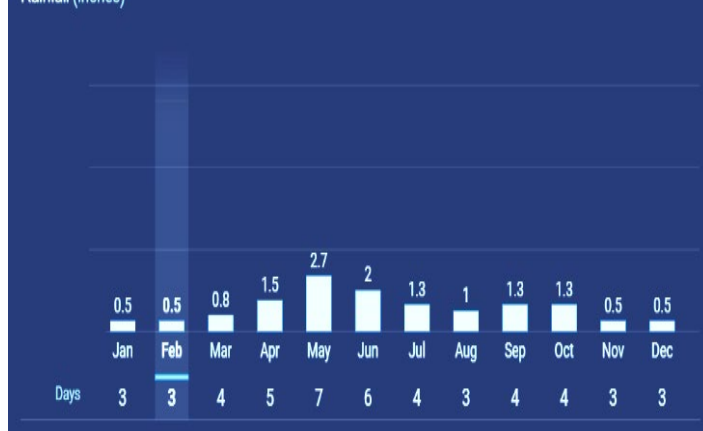
Geology and Soils

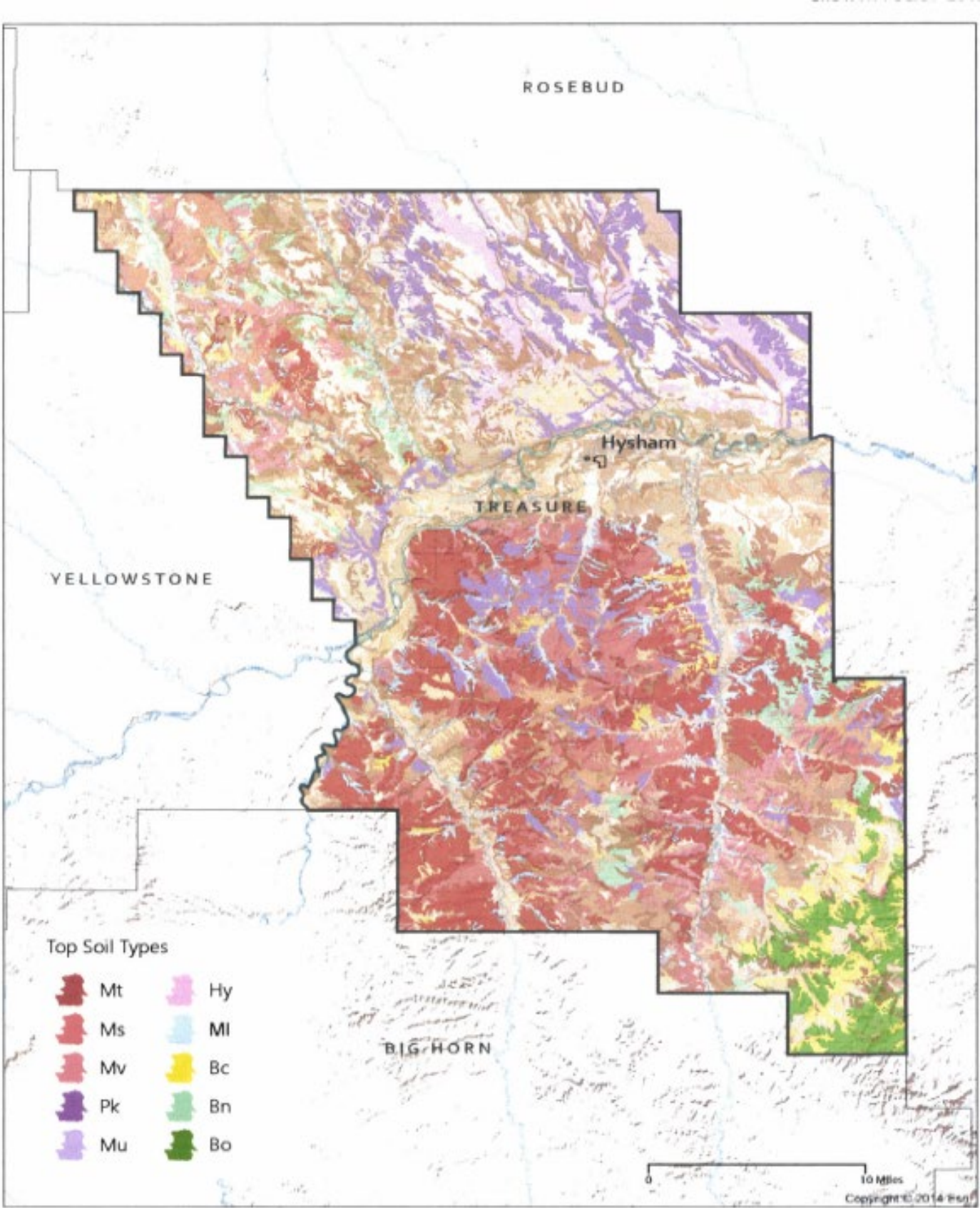
Bedrock geology in Treasure County is largely composed of shales and sandstones, with alluvium along the large river drainages. The alluvium formations support clays, sands, silts, and gravelly soils. The Midway-Bainville complex is the most prevalent soil and is located primarily in the undulating and rolling hills of the southern county. The Midway-Shale outcrop complex is found throughout the county. The northeast areas of the county are composed of saline and alkaline clays of the Pierre-Lismas complex.

Hysham Climate Graph - Montana Climate Chart



Rainfall (inches)





Soils and Topography

Population

The Population of Treasure County, Montana in 2021 was 768, 7.6% up from 714 in 2010. For comparison, the US population grew 7.3% and Montana's population grew 11.5% during that period.

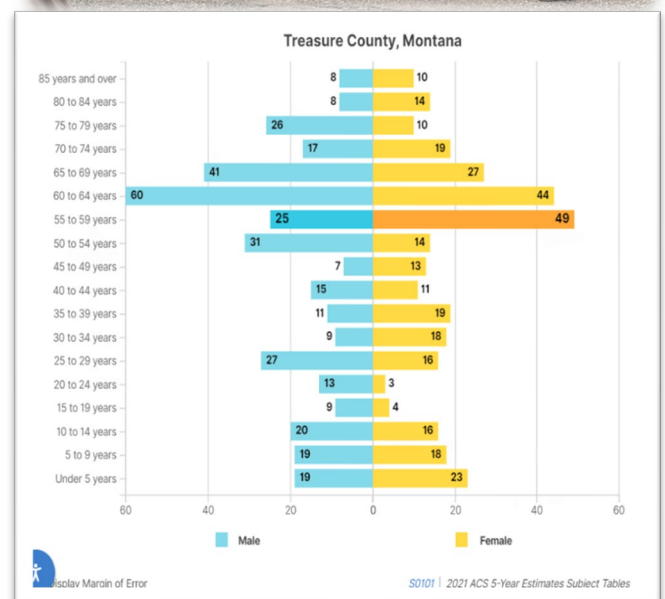
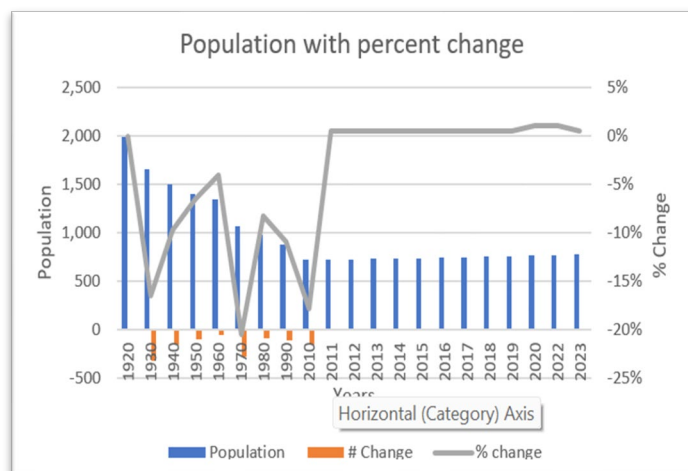
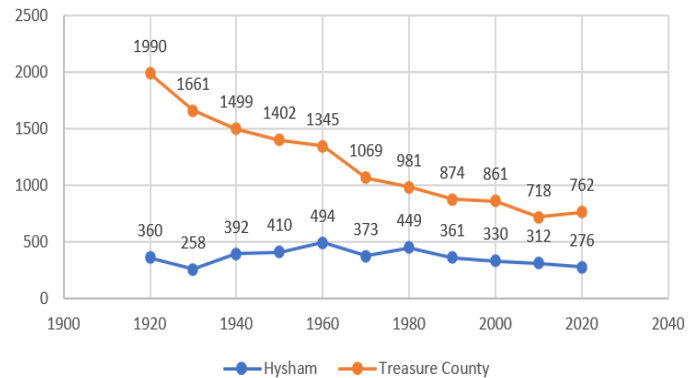
Treasure County's population increased 4 out of the 11 years between the year 2010 and year 2021. Its largest annual population increase was 9.2% between 2019 and 2020. The county's largest decline was 2012 -2013 when the population dropped 4%. Between 2010 and 2021, the county grew by an average of 0.7% per year. (USFACTS.org)

The county's age structure indicates a large gap in post-high school aged (15–25-year-old) adults. This demographic is most likely attracted to larger population centers in search of education and economic opportunities.

There is a larger population of residents between the 50- and 64-year-old age range. This demographic is nearing retirement age, with few younger working-aged adults to take their place.

The median age in Treasure County in 2021 was 55.5 years old, which is significantly older for the state of Montana (about 40 years old). The aging population may eventually strain the availability of local healthcare and elderly services, particularly with respect to the loss of young workers who provide these services.

Population of Treasure County and Hysham 1920-2020





Economy

There are two types of industries that drive the local economy in the county:

- 1) **basic industries**, including agriculture and tourism.
- 2) **secondary industries**, such as sales of local goods to the people and businesses within Treasure County, and services including the local government.

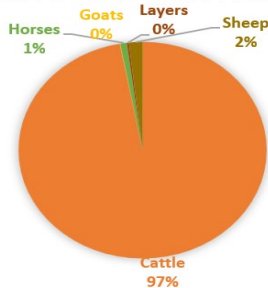
Agriculture

The economy of Treasure County historically has been, and is today, strongly tied to agriculture. In terms of livestock, approximately 28,375 cattle were raised in Treasure County in 2017. Despite a major decline from 1997 to 2002, the number of cattle has increased 6% since 1978. The county ranks 39th out of 56 in the state in cattle production.

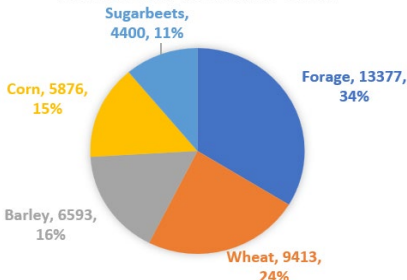
Census of Agriculture		
	2017	2012
Farms	121	72
Farmland	614142	617635
Cattle	28385	27844
State Rank-Cattle Production	39	20
Average size farm:	5076 acres	
Family Farms:	92%	
Hire farm labor:	45%	
Share of sales:		
 Crops	60%	
Livestock	40%	
Total # of Producers:	209	
Age of Producers:		
 under 35	2	
35-64	126	
65+	81	

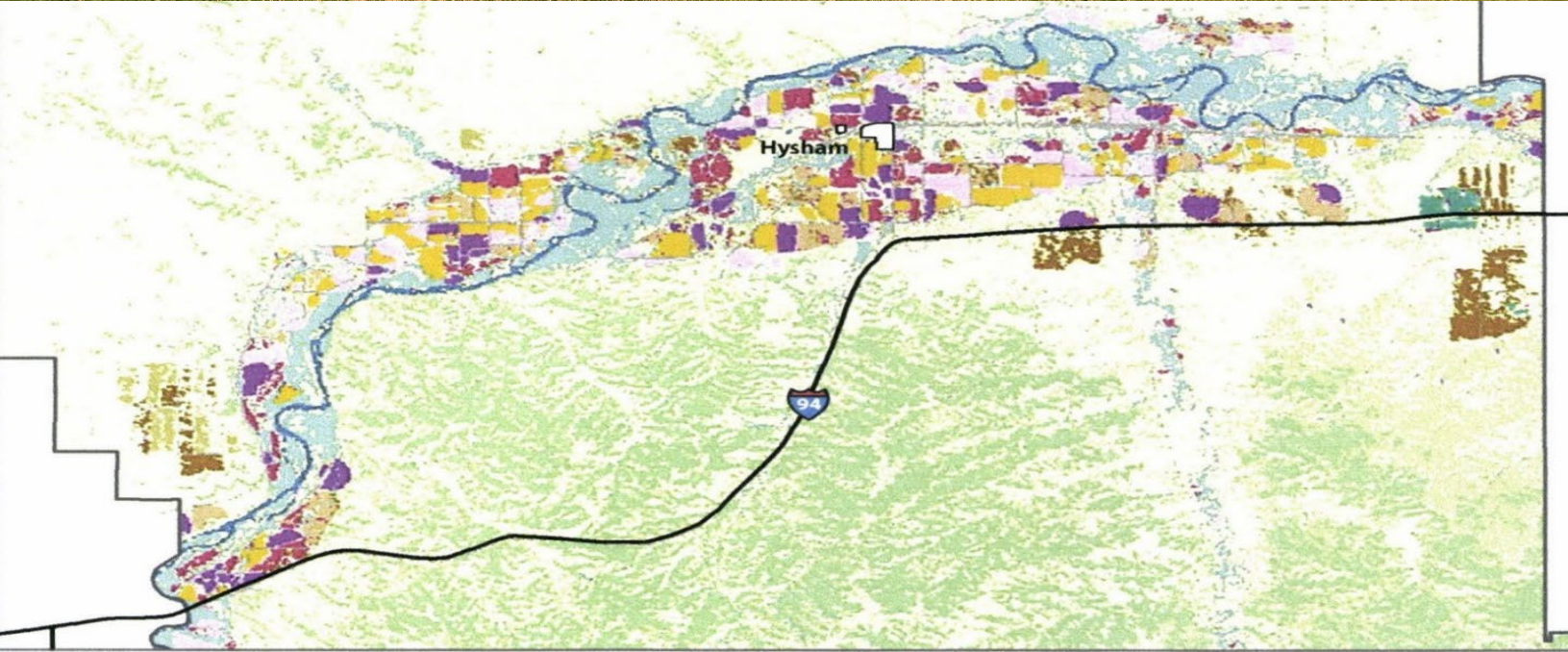
The main crops around Treasure County consist of alfalfa, wheat (spring and winter), barley, corn, and sugar beets. According to USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service data, there have been a few above average years (2005 and 2010) in between years with average or low yields. Over the past decade, about 25-30 bushels of wheat per acre on dryland was an average yield.

LIVESTOCK INVENTORY
TREASURE COUNTY 2017



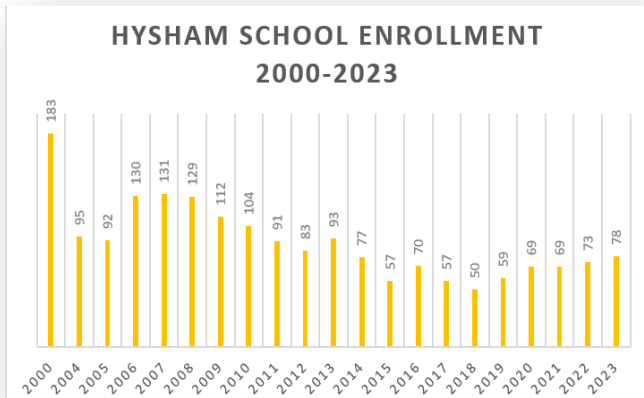
TOTAL CROPS IN ACRES
TREASURE COUNTY 2017





Schools

Treasure County's public schools have a current 2023 enrollment of 78 (PreK-12th grade). Enrollment has been slowly rising in the last few years due to an increase in younger families moving in. Enrollment was highest at 183 from 1999-2000 after Hysham Elementary became inactive in 1995 and the students joined the newly formed K-12 school. Hysham School co-ops with Custer, the neighboring town, for athletics.



Personal Income

Personal income is a measure of the various revenues received in a county. Personal income is a total amount derived from wages and salaries, investment enterprises and other ventures. The 2020 US Census shows Treasure County to have a median income of \$56,919.00. Per capita income is \$32,310.

Total earnings have increased 114% in the ten-year period. This income increase was driven by a 520% increase in farm income, even though the number of farm employees decreased by 12%. The total number of employees in the work force increased by about 100 employees, or by 21%.

US Census 2020 Median Income

Treasure
\$56,919

▲ \$5,165 (10.0%)



Montana
\$57,730

▲ \$482.0 (0.8%)



United States
\$67,340

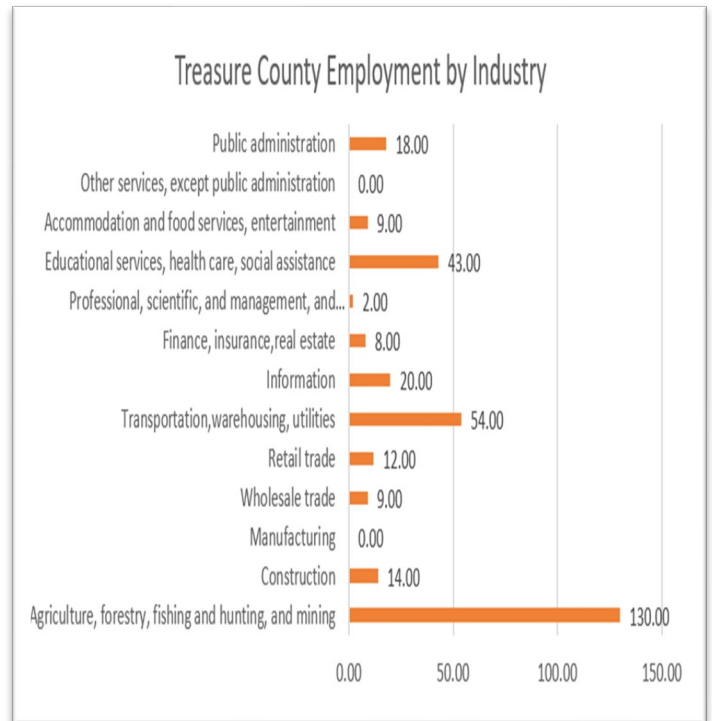
▲ \$1,628 (2.5%)



Jobs

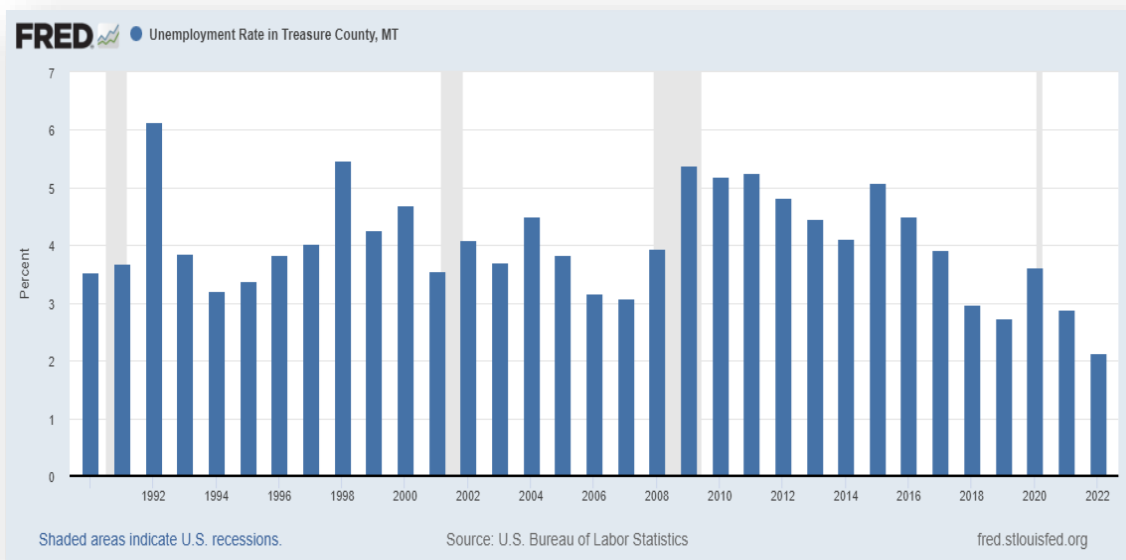
In 2021, there were 361 adults in the labor force, with 356 employed, and 5 unemployed. Based on 2021 US Census job estimates for Treasure County, Agriculture/Natural Resources is the largest job sector with just over 38% of all employment. Transportation/Utilities is second with about 15% of employment, most of which are local government administration jobs. Education is third, comprising about 12% of local employment.

Professional and Financial, Manufacturing and Information sector jobs have not been historically a major employment source in the county, which remains true in the most recent estimates.



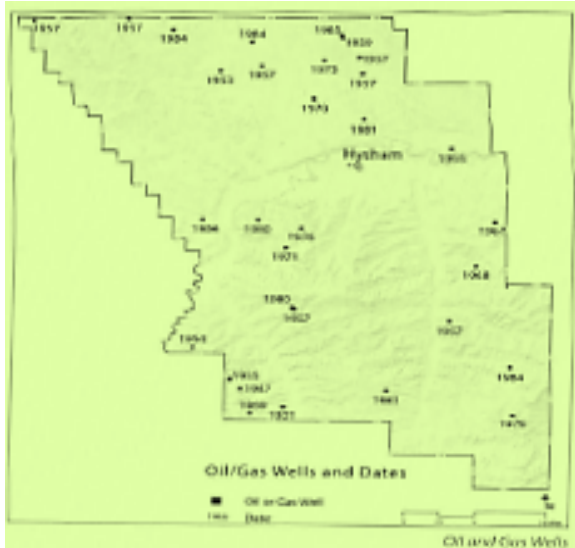
Unemployment

Treasure County's unemployment rate in March 2023 was 2.3%. The last 12 months (3/2022-2/2023) averaged 2.2%. The state unemployment rate was also 2.3% for March 2023, with an average over the last year of 2.6%.



Treasure County Unemployment 1990-2022

Natural Resources



Oil and Gas

The Montana Board of Oil and Gas conservation tracks all pending and permitted oil and natural gas subsurface drilling wells going back several decades. Treasure County has neither a history of expansive oil and gas drilling, nor any signs of an emerging trend. There are very few active wells of any kind in the county.

Coal

Despite its neighboring counties (Big Horn, Rosebud) having large scale coal mining operations, Treasure County does not have coal development as of this growth

policy update. It remains to be seen if the Sub-Bituminous reserves located in the southeastern county could provide potential for future coal development.

Opencut Mining Operations/Gravel Pits

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality permits opencut mining operations in Treasure County and offers a searchable online database of active permits. According to the search interface, there are no permitted opencut mining operations in the county as of this growth policy update. Database can be found at:

<http://searchopencutpermits.mt.gov/>



Sub-Bituminous Coal Reserves



Wind

The Silverthorn Wind Project, developed by Pattern Energy and Talen Energy, began speaking to Rosebud and Treasure County landowners in 2021. According to the Silverthorn website, this will be a 600MW Facility, providing renewable electricity equal to the needs of close to 500,000 people. Target construction date is projected for 2025, and target operations in 2027. More information can be found about this project at silverthornrenewables.com

Public Facilities

Public facilities include all public buildings, recreational areas, and service infrastructure. The Treasure County Shop, Fire Hall, and Courthouse are all located in Hysham.



Parks, Open Space and Community Amenities

Treasure County has public amenities and parks in Hysham, including:

- County Swimming pool
- Lions Park
- Hysham School Sports Fields



Community amenities (churches, schools, museums, or government buildings, for example) include:

- Yucca Theatre (National Register of Historic Places),
- 89'ers Museum
- Community Center
- Hysham School
- Four community churches

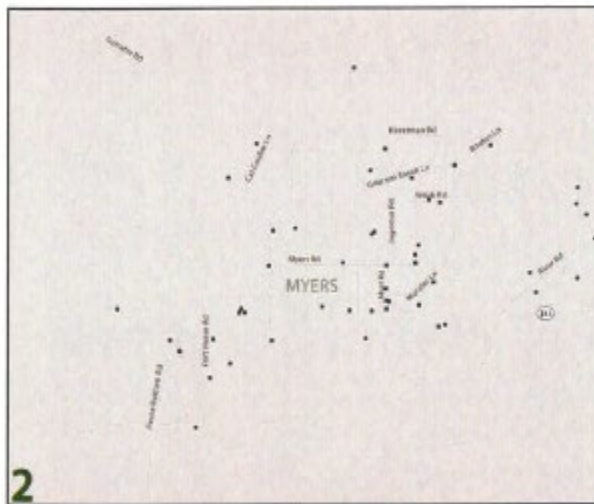
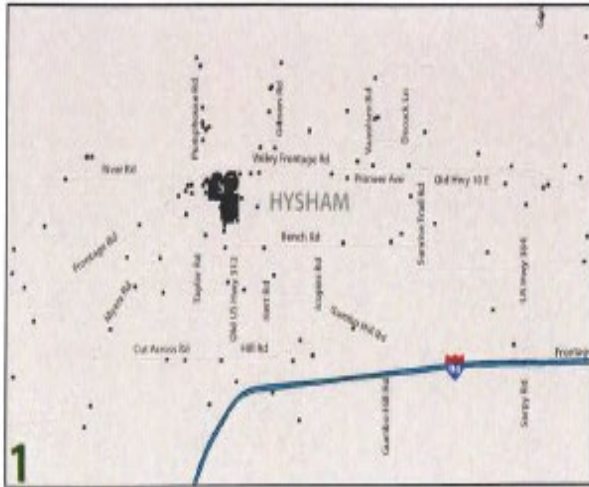
Traffic and Highway Corridors Approximately 656 miles of roads exist in Treasure County, with 27 miles being Interstate highway, 19 miles of state highway, and 610 miles county or local roads.

The Montana Department of Transportation Average records average annual daily traffic, which is the number of vehicles that pass a point on a roadway over one year averaged per day. These figures help gain an estimate of the traffic volumes on major roadways. Interstate 94 through the county (exit 67-71) experiences the highest AADT volumes at about 5120 vehicles in 2021.



The railroad through Treasure County is owned and operated by Burlington Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF) and transports mixed loads in an east-west direction through the center of the county via a main line. BNSF also operates a 38-mile spur line hauling coal from just to the south of the county line to the main line near Hysham. Freight originating in the region includes coal and coal products, petroleum, farm products, lumber and wood products, stone, clay, glass and concrete products. Ninety percent of these commodities are shipped out of state. None of the rail lines in Treasure County provide passenger service.

An airport serving small private and charter aircraft is located in Hysham. The Billings Logan International Airport is the closest airport providing commercial passenger service.



Myers Area



Bighorn Area

There are about 469 structures standing in Treasure County. Tax assessor rolls show that about 316 of these are single family residences, 51 are farm and ranch, 40 are commercial businesses and 28 are institutional buildings, which includes churches, government buildings, schools, or fire/law enforcement facilities. The remaining buildings are used for general storage.

Because most small towns hope to provide quality and affordable housing, the condition of housing becomes a critical issue, being that houses are the largest portion of the building stock. Almost every residential structure is a single-family home. There are few multiple family structures.

The map opposite shows the density of structures across the county. Three sub-areas are highlighted in detail: Hysham (1), Myers (2) and Bighorn (3). In general, structures are densest in Hysham, while the lowest density is in the interior of north-central Treasure County.

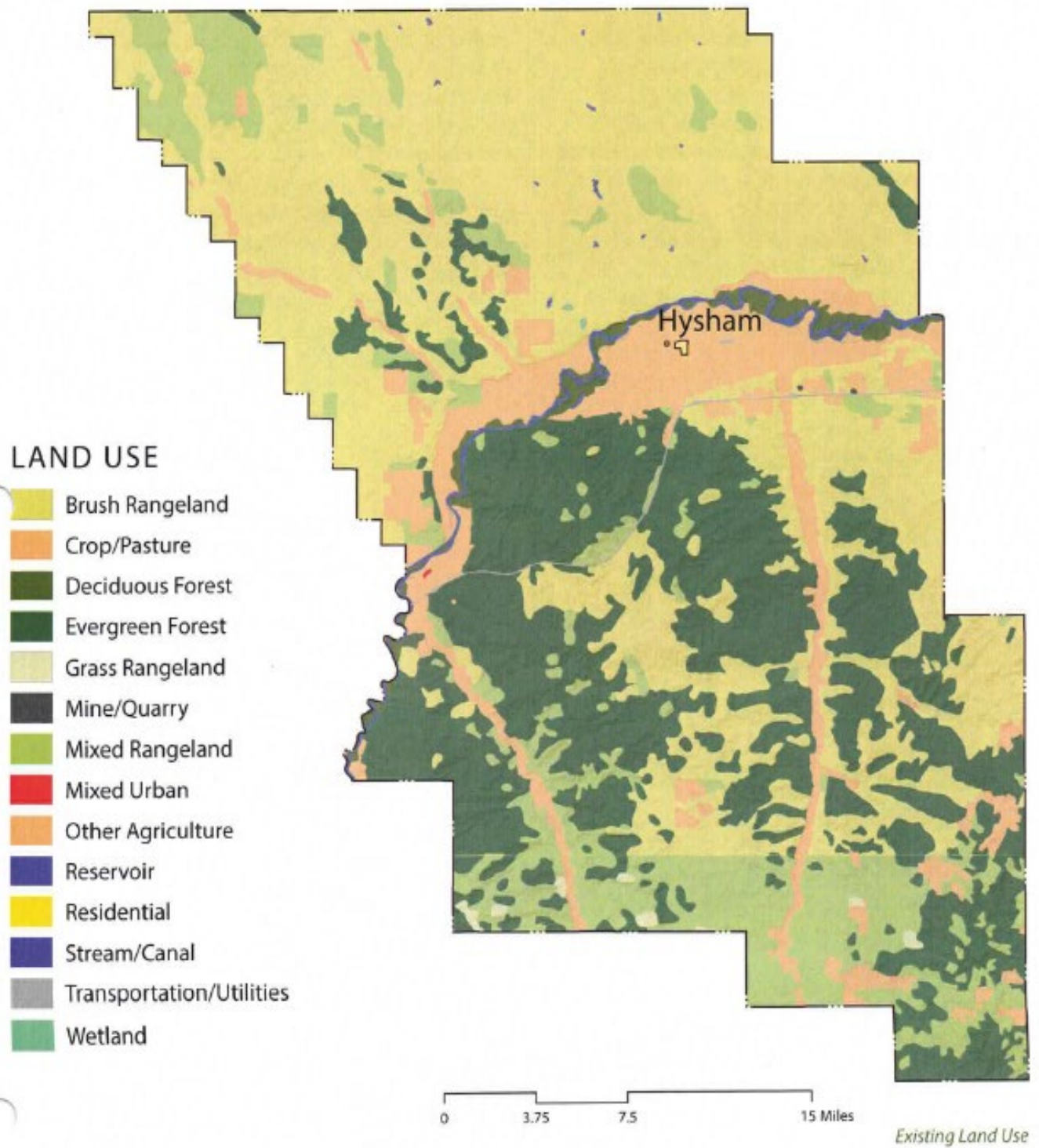
Table 3.5-1. U.S. Census Housing Data - 2019 Estimates; Treasure County

Category	Treasure County	Hysham (Town)
Total Number of Housing Units	469	180
Median Value Housing Units	\$118,200	\$104,100
Year Structure Built		
2014 or later	12	2
2010 to 2013	14	6
2000 to 2009	12	6
1990 to 1999	73	17
1980 to 1989	45	8
1970 to 1979	43	18
1960 to 1969	29	18
1950 to 1959	106	44
1940 to 1949	31	12
1939 or earlier	104	49

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021. Notes: "-"= data not available.

Structures in Treasure County





Summary

This agricultural county has been quiet for years without significant change. While the work force and tax base are small, much of the older infrastructure is nearing the end of its expected life cycle.

The county's location between Billings and Miles City makes it an ideal center for commerce that could supply rural and less populated areas, which may also put it on the map for newcomers and industry.

But first, several issues must be resolved to accommodate new developments, and this plan recommends policies and implementation strategies for how, when, and where new growth should happen.



A Vision of Treasure County

The growth policy vision is a statement about our desires for the future, a vision of what residents would like Treasure County to be. Based on comments from the surveys and public meetings, the following statements have been drafted to describe the desired future of Treasure County.

Farming and ranching remain a vital component of Treasure County's **way of life** and predominate the landscape.

The economy is diversified, building upon the **agricultural base** where possible, providing a **living wage**, and economic enterprises are **scaled appropriately** to be consistent with residents' quality of life expectations.

New **development occurs primarily in or near existing communities**, resulting in healthy, vibrant places with commercial and retail businesses close to community centers.

Treasure County would like to be known throughout the state of Montana for its for ability to accommodate **new development** while maintaining a **strong farming and ranching base** and a **high quality of life** evidenced by **clean air and water**, retention of **open and scenic vistas**, and **friendly communities**.

Issues/Goals

The following section presents major issues that arose through the planning process. For each issue, there is a summary of the key aspects specific to Treasure County.

1 Economy

Treasure County residents would like to see the local economy continue to improve. County residents would like to see a stronger economy, preferably based on local agriculture, attracting new industries, and utilizing opportunities for recreation based on natural, cultural, and historic resources.

Treasure County's employment is strongly tied to agriculture. In 2021 farm employment comprised 38 percent of all jobs in Treasure County, compared to six percent statewide. Other businesses in Treasure County are relatively small.

Treasure County per capita income, the average amount of income for each resident, was \$32,310 in 2021, only slightly lower than state and national averages. Previous numbers include \$24,771 in 1974, above state and national averages, \$15,707 in 1998, and \$23,948 in 2013.

Treasure County residents express interest in building the county's agricultural, tax, and natural resource base. There is past desire to attract retirees and tourism, but it is very important to attract persons able to strengthen the economy, participate in the workforce, and physically contribute to local services, such as the fire department, ambulance, and other community programs and volunteer services.

Some participants suggested that there are several unique recreation and tourism activities in the area, and residents need to know more about these so they can inform visitors. The Hysham Chamber of Commerce is working toward a website and physical information sign that will help guide locals and visitors alike to recreation in the area.

2

Public Infrastructure and Services

Treasure County provides and maintains the following infrastructure: county roads, the courthouse building, community center, and solid waste disposal transfer site. Services provided by Treasure County include law enforcement, fire protection, weed control (County Weed District), county nurse, and ambulance. The county has no library but does make provisions for county residents to use the Rosebud County public library. The County Sheriff serves as the county's top law enforcement officer and coroner. The County's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan was reviewed and updated in 2021.

The Town of Hysham provides the only public water supply and wastewater systems designed to serve households within town limits and certain areas of the county adjacent to town. The town also has a volunteer fire department that works jointly with county rural fire protection.

The cost of providing law enforcement and emergency services and public roads increases as more development occurs in outlying rural areas. As shown in several studies in Montana over the past decade, costs of providing services to outlying areas are generally not offset by the property taxes that these rural residents pay. Instead, all county residents bear the costs. Services in the county are centered in Hysham. Hysham has little room for expansion within the town's existing jurisdictional boundary. New growth in Hysham is likely to require expanding town limits.

Providing for and maintaining county roads is the county's largest expenditure (other than the school, which has its own budget, separate from other county government). Across Montana, demand for county road improvements is almost always greater than budget allowances.

The county's entire budget is one of the smallest in the state of Montana. In a small county, more of the tax burden spreads among fewer individuals, placing financial stress on a population with a per capita income that is slightly lower than state and national per capita income levels. Without additional funding sources, it is probable that levels of service will decrease, or alternatives will need to be found to reduce costs.

The county has been fortunate to have volunteers who work hard to provide needed equipment and services without requiring new tax burdens. For example, county volunteer firefighters dedicated equipment and their time to fighting a fire in western Montana. Reimbursement for this effort essentially paid for a new fire truck. Volunteer firefighters regularly service fire vehicles and coordinate with DNRC. Volunteers manage grant writing assist in supplementing fire department funds. County residents are not always aware of the personal contributions made by local people to these efforts.



3 Housing

Housing can be difficult to find in Treasure County. Vacancy rates are minimal, and many of these units are either not available for rent/sale or are in poor condition. Many Treasure County residents are unable to afford to make improvements to existing homes or pay for improved housing. Available housing in good condition, and within town limits, would assist local businesses in attracting and retaining employees.

Seniors in Treasure County are faced with leaving the county if they need assisted living or other senior living accommodations and many choose to remain in their own homes rather than leave the area. Consequently, the number of households with only one occupant continues to increase.



4

Land Use

Based on previous surveys, residents would prefer to keep agricultural land in production rather than have it become residential. There is concern that new residential development in rural areas has the potential to complicate irrigation systems. Residents would prefer to see new residential development in or near existing towns.

Trends in other parts of Montana indicate that much of the development occurs in rural areas outside of existing towns, resulting in new or more extensive urban sprawl. Increasingly, agricultural ground is subdivided into residential parcels, too large to economically provide community water supply and wastewater systems, often far from other services such as schools, law enforcement and fire protection, and too small to conduct viable agricultural operations.

In 2015, Treasure County residents consider several places as "special" to their area. Ranked on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 as "not at all important" and 5 as "extremely important;" county residents ranked the Yellowstone River highest with a score of 4.72, Big Horn River 4.46, Sarpy Creek Highway 3.65, and Manning Theater (3.50). Several other areas were also listed as important. Some areas with national historical significance, such as Fort Manuel Lisa, were ranked lower (2.82) by county residents. Currently there are no local standards to consider the impact of new development on these special places. State regulations do not ensure that special places will remain as residents would prefer.



Goals and Objectives

Goals are guiding principles related to the issues that describe how the vision is achieved. Along with goals are objectives that are broad strategies that outline how each goal may be achieved. Following this section are specific strategic actions or policies for the county to implement.

1 Economy

GOAL: Support economic development in Treasure County, building on local agriculture as the foundation, and enhancing tourism, outdoor recreation, and other opportunities for new industry and employment.

Objective 1: Support the economic development in Treasure County, working with existing efforts such as the Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC), the Chamber of Commerce, and other civic organizations.

Objective 2: Continue to be active in regional economic development.

Strategy 2.a: Continue to be represented on the Regional Resource, Conservation and Development Area Board, currently the Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC).

Objective 3: Continue to improve information-sharing among residents about existing tourism and recreation opportunities.



2 Public Infrastructure and Services

GOAL: Provide adequate services for public health, safety, and welfare of county residents, and promote the most efficient use of public funds.

Objective 1: Encourage development in areas that have easy access to public services.

Strategy 1.a: Encourage new development to locate near Hysham, where law enforcement, fire protection, solid waste transfer site, and ambulance and emergency services are located.

Strategy 1.b: Work with the Town of Hysham to provide for annexation, if land becomes available for development near town limits, and as opportunity and market demand necessitate.

Objective 2: Maintain existing county roads, bridges, and other infrastructure efficiently, economically, and based on standard criteria.

Strategy 2.a: Develop a more detailed written policy for County roads.

Objective 3: Continue to support local Volunteer Fire Departments and Disaster and Emergency Services as they work to provide fire protection to the community.

Strategy 3.a: Update Treasure County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan to address fire suppression in wildlands and urban areas.

Objective 4: Maintain an updated Treasure County Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Strategy 4.a: Support the County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator's efforts to develop this plan. The most recent plan was updated in 2021.

Objective 5: Improve communication through the news media and other sources to inform county residents about efforts to improve and reduce costs of providing services.

3 Housing

GOAL: Support improvement of housing options across all income levels in Treasure County.

Objective 1: When opportunities arise, work with Action for Eastern Montana, Community Development Block Grants, and others to identify housing planning options and funding sources for Treasure County.

Strategy 1.a: When opportunities arise, allocate time and resources for outreach to the above listed organizations.



4 Land Use

GOAL: Ensure orderly development, encourage compatibility with surrounding uses, and ensure that development proposals are considered and acted upon by the county in a consistent manner.

Objective 1: Encourage the retention of agricultural land in production.

Strategy 1.a: Consider a variety of methods to retain agricultural land in production including agricultural zoning districts, density limitations for new development, subdivision covenants, and other options, and adopt as appropriate.

Objective 2: Promote orderly development and encourage compatibility with adjacent use.

Strategy 2.a: Consider measures such as permit systems and/or zoning to provide orderly development and compatibility of use. Initiate process to adopt measures that can be developed and enforced by Treasure County.

Objective 3: Follow MDT Outdoor Advertising in Montana guidelines for signage as applicable.

Objective 4: Ensure that development does not negatively affect agricultural irrigation systems.

Strategy 4.a: Require subdividers to clarify how any irrigation water rights will be allocated within the subdivision.

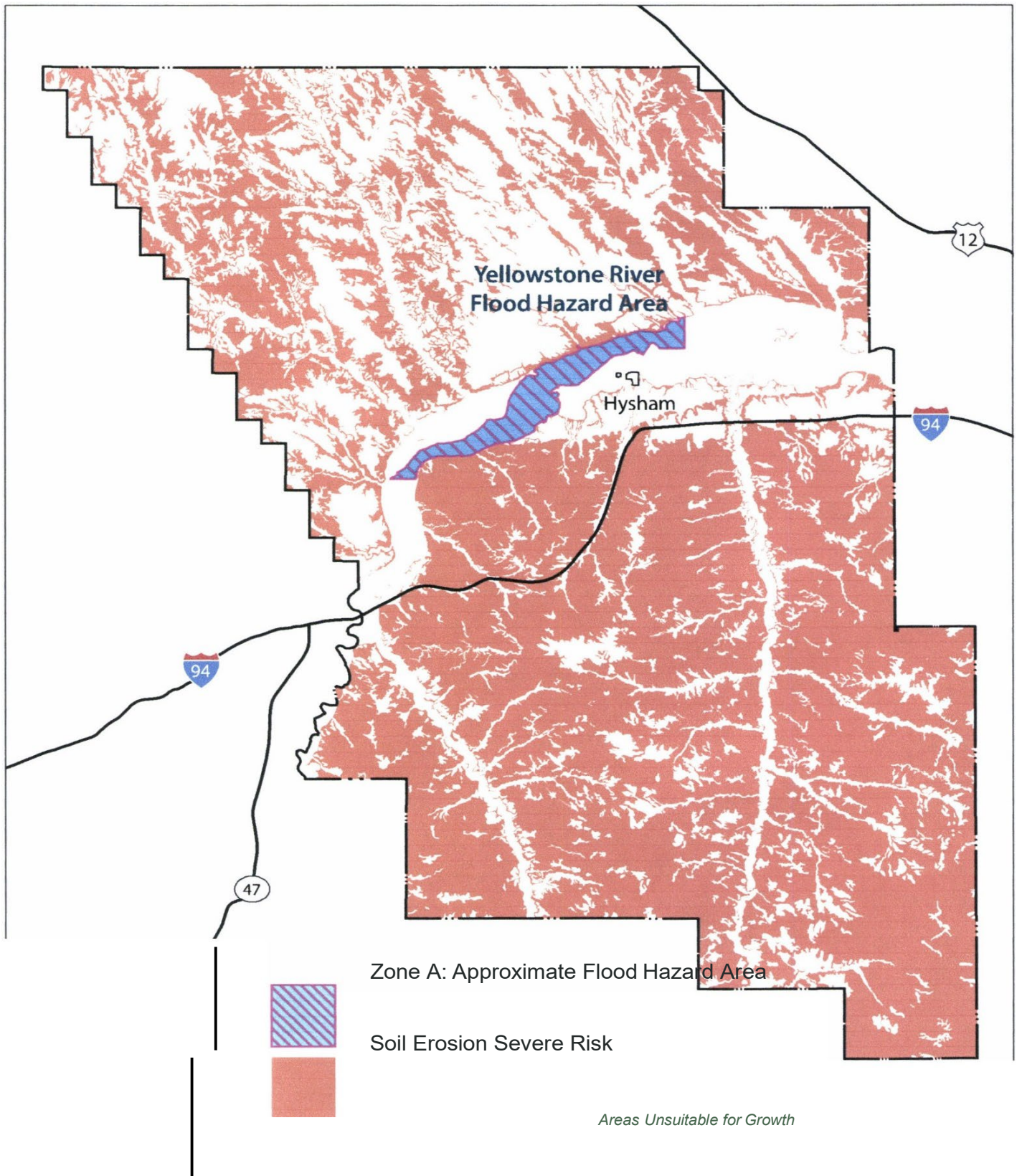
Strategy 4.b: Require any new development that affects irrigation systems to be reviewed by the irrigation district, irrigation company, or the owners/users of the system.

Objective 5: Maintain and improve public health and safety, and the environment along rivers in Treasure County, supporting a balance among various uses.

Strategy 5.a: Create safeguards against potential flood hazards and promote healthy surface water and groundwater by keeping new residential, commercial, and industrial development out of floodplains, riparian areas, and wetlands.

Objective 6: Ensure that new development creates minimal negative impacts to culturally and historically significant places, and places identified as important to many county residents.

Strategy 6.a: Work with the State Historical Society and State Historic Preservation Office to develop measures to identify and mitigate impacts from new development on culturally and historically significant places.



Areas for Future Growth

The most appropriate locations for future growth generally have the following things in common:

- Available public infrastructure
- Near existing communities
- Available land
- Good connection to the surrounding transportation grid
- Absence of environmentally sensitive features
- Suitable soils
- Not in a flood hazard area
- Avoid fire prone areas

Areas Unsuitable for Growth

The Yellowstone River generally divides the county flowing west to east, and the floodplain largely limits growth in the Yellowstone valley. Although homes and businesses may be located here, it is a policy of this plan to avoid future or further development in any flood hazard area.

According to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), a large area outside the corporate boundary is in the "Zone A" Flood Hazard Area, which is the area in which there is a 1% annual chance of a flood event. These areas are generally unsuitable for further development, and all structures in these areas are subject to flood insurance. Although the FIRM data is almost 45 years old (dated 03/20/1979) it appears the flood plain will continue to limit development.

Fire prone areas should also be identified and avoided as areas of growth.

Developing Future Growth Maps

Hysham should develop a future growth map.

A future growth map is a guide for community growth, but it is non-regulatory and is not zoning. County zoning and future land use are complementary, and should the county adopt zoning in the future, both should be occasionally reviewed to ensure they are coordinated and compatible. As annexation occurs around Hysham, future zoning should be determined on a project-to-project basis using the future growth map as a guide.

The future growth map communicates to the public and to developers where the county sees itself going, thus the county planning board uses this map to make recommendations on proposed developments. For example, should a developer submit a subdivision application, the planning board will locate the proposed development on the map and determine whether the project is within a growth area. If not, the board may recommend denial, or require that the applicant amend this growth policy and future land use map.



Coordination with Other Jurisdictions

Coordination Strategy

In Treasure County, Hysham is the only incorporated community with separate jurisdiction. In addition, the Crow Tribe owns and/or administers lands within the ceded strip.

It is the intent of Treasure County to coordinate with Hysham and the Crow Tribe on issues of mutual interest and to cooperate on issues using federal, state, county, and city laws and regulations for guidance.

Coordination with the Town of Hysham

This growth policy proposes the following specific coordination approaches with the town of Hysham.

- Coordinate a fee system that makes it easier, less costly to develop in-town, and/or to develop in areas served by town services such as water/sewer.
- Support maintenance and improvement of Hysham's water/sewer and other infrastructure systems within the county (e.g.: letters of support for grants submitted by Hysham for improvements, etc.), recognizing that sound infrastructure is necessary for existing and new development.
- Support Hysham's efforts at annexation as market demand or other factors indicate a need for annexation, as Hysham has little room to grow within its existing boundaries.
- Continue to update the existing agreements with Hysham regarding coordination of various services; such as fire protection, law enforcement, weed control, and emergency services, and file agreements with the County Clerk and Recorder.

Coordination with the Crow Tribe

Initiate and continue communication with the Crow Tribe on matters related to land use in the area of the ceded strip as issues arise that significantly affect the county and/or Crow Tribe.



Public Infrastructure Strategy

The Comprehensive Development Plan by law must include a strategy for development, maintenance, and replacement of public infrastructure, including drinking water systems, wastewater treatment facilities, sewer systems, solid waste facilities, fire protection facilities, roads, and bridges.

Drinking Water, Sewer and Wastewater Treatment Facilities

Treasure County does not currently have responsibility for any drinking water, sewer, or wastewater treatment systems. No new public systems, managed or administered by the county, are proposed in this Draft Comprehensive Development Plan.

Solid Waste Facilities

Treasure County purchased the land for the solid waste transfer site and is responsible for the maintenance of the site. The site serves county residents and the town of Hysham. No changes are proposed for the system.

Fire Protection Facilities

Fire protection in Treasure County and the town of Hysham is provided by a volunteer department, with some funding from both the town and Treasure County. Development in rural areas increases fire protection and suppression needs.

(Reference Goal 2: Public Infrastructure and Services: Objective 3 and related strategies)

Roads and Bridges

Treasure County's plan for roads and bridges is addressed in Goal 2: Public Infrastructure and Services: Objective 2 and related strategies.



Implementation

Implementation planning means creating strategies that will help make goals and action items a reality. The Implementation Plan includes the following elements:

1. Local review of subdivision
2. Review and revision of growth policy
3. Project funding strategies
4. Implementation table

Local Review of Subdivisions

State law requires a statement describing how the governing body will define criteria and evaluate and review subdivisions within the county. With the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act (MSPA), subdivision regulations have been mandated by state law since 1975. Subdivision plans are reviewed and approved through the County Planning Board and/or the State Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). It is recommended that the county use these guidelines.

The MSPA applies to any division of land into parcels less than 160 acres and provides six criteria for subdivision review (76-3-608, MCA) and regulations describing divisions of land exempt from subdivision review. It is recommended that the county use these guidelines. Therefore, subdivisions in Treasure County will be evaluated for their material effect on those six criteria, which include the impact on agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, local services, the natural environment, wildlife, wildlife habitat and public health and safety. Significant unmitigated adverse impacts to the community are grounds for denial of proposed subdivisions.

The Sanitation in Subdivisions Act applies to any division of land less than 20 acres. The DEQ and local sanitarian review the plans for sewage disposal, water supply and storm water runoff. Divisions of land with an existing septic system installed prior to April 29, 1993 may be exempted from sanitation review.

Subdivision plans are reviewed and recommended for approval or denial by the Treasure County Planning Board through the state mandated review and public hearing process. The general steps for the public hearing, which is conducted by the Planning Board in Treasure County, are as follows:

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

The Planning Board Chair, who presides over the meeting, is responsible for setting the guidelines or methods for public comment. The Chair will review general guidelines prior to public comment, reminding the public of the criteria upon which the final decision must be made. Because each meeting is somewhat different; a standardized set of guidelines may not work in every case.



Review and Revision of Growth Policy

The Planning Board will review the growth policy every five years and issue a status report to the County Commissioners. The status report will include:

- Status of goals, objectives, and specific action strategies outlined in the growth policy,
- Assessment of work to be completed in the following five-year period,
- Evaluation of need to revise growth policy.

Conditions for Revising the Growth Policy

The growth policy provides a plan for the future based on existing conditions and projected trends. It cannot cover all potential future scenarios and thus needs to be flexible to deal with new issues as they arise. Under the following conditions, the Planning Board will review the growth policy and determine if changes are needed:

- Implementation of major proposed actions outside of County authority with potential to significantly affect implementation of the stated goals, policies, and strategies in this growth policy.
- Actions with potential to significantly alter the health, safety, and welfare of citizens that were inadequately addressed in the growth policy.
- Changes in state law regarding growth policies.
- Court cases and/or litigation that sets legal precedent in Montana for growth policies.
- Individual neighborhood plans developed in accordance with state law (76-1-601) are to be included as amendments to the current growth policy.
- Planning Board evaluation of implementation measures and progress, and determination that modifications would enhance the effectiveness of the growth policy.

Process for Revising the Growth Policy

If the Planning Board determines that a revision to the growth policy is necessary, the Board will provide a written notice to the County Commissioners prior to commencing work on the revision.

The Planning Board will follow the process outlined in state law for adopting a growth policy (76-1-602 through 76-1-603) for any subsequent revisions. Once revisions are drafted, the Board will conduct a public hearing on proposed revisions and then by resolution make its recommendation to the County Commission. The County Commission will then make its decision to adopt, revise, or reject the changes as outlined in state law (76-1-604).

Project Funding Strategies

Implementing a community development plan is largely dependent on how much financial help individual residents or business owners can acquire for specific projects. Fortunately, there are several programs and strategies that aid, whether directly through grants and loans, or through self-assessing additional taxes through a membership organization.

Montana State Revolving Fund (SRF)

The SRF program is intended to maintain and improve drinking water systems and water pollution control projects. SRF loans offer a 20% match to eligible community projects.

Intended Projects: Water and wastewater system improvements

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

This federally funded program aids economic development projects in communities that demonstrate need. Housing, public facilities and neighborhood renewal projects are eligible for CDBG funds.

Intended Projects: Water and wastewater projects, streetscape improvements, facade improvements

MDT Transportation Alternatives Programs

Transportation Alternatives Programs wrapped funding from the Safe Routes to School, Recreational Trails and Transportation Enhancements programs into a single funding source. This program provides funds for alternative transportation projects. In FY 2023, a total of \$30 million in Transportation Alternatives funding was available throughout the state.

Intended Projects: Pedestrian crossing, signage and visibility improvements, bicycle facilities, studies and reports

Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP)

This state program funds transportation projects that strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of intermodal transportation systems for eligible local governments. In small towns CTEP funds are a viable means to make walking through town safer and more enjoyable.

Intended Projects: Bicycle and pedestrian facilities (benches, bike racks), sidewalk network expansion, community gateway feature, historic rehabilitation, landscaping and beautification.

USDA Rural Development (RD)

Rural Development administers loans and grants to communities with fewer than 10,000 people. The town may be eligible for no interest loans or matched grants, depending on median household income, population, and demographics.

Intended Projects: Public facilities, infrastructure, technical planning support, small business assistance, technology

Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP)

TSEP funds contribute to public infrastructure construction and replacement projects. In the 2023 biennium, TSEP allocated \$27.7 million in funds statewide for public infrastructure projects.

Intended Projects: Water, wastewater and storm water system improvement projects, bridge reconstruction

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District

Establishing a TIF district allows businesses within the district to take advantage of incremental increases in the value of real estate to fund improvement projects. TIFs are created through state enabling legislation that allows local governments to designate the district. Although there is a risk to the community if the assessed value in the district does not increase, TIFs can be a valuable tool to provide redevelopment incentives for blighted areas in growing markets.

Intended Projects: Site-specific redevelopment projects

Business Improvement District (BID)

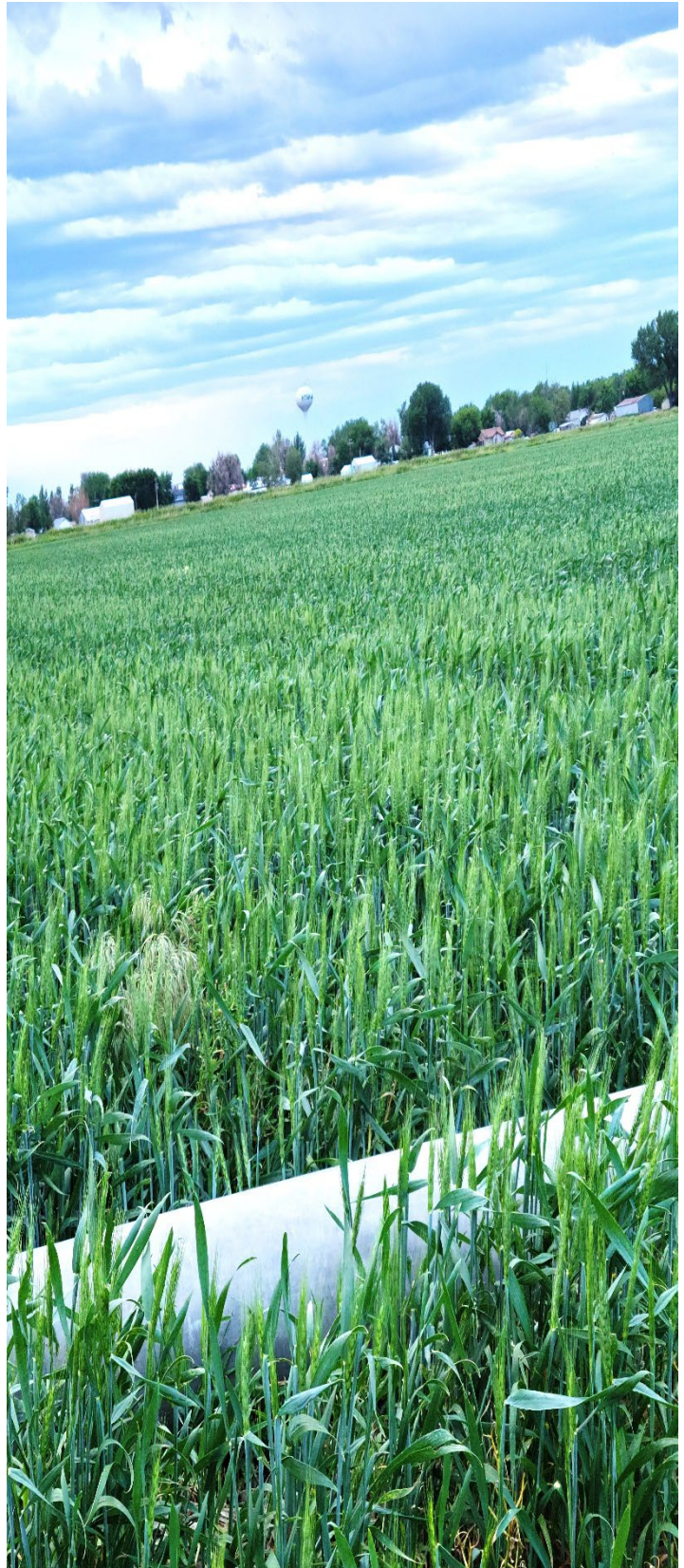
BIDs are organizations of member businesses in a district that self-assesses funds to complete projects that will promote the business environment for its members.

Intended Projects: Facade improvements, recreational amenities, streetscape improvements, sidewalk maintenance and street clean-up

Rural Special Improvement District (RSID)

A RSID may be created by the Treasure County Commission to provide funding for local public infrastructure improvements. Individuals within the district are assessed funds to complete specific projects inside the improvement district boundaries.

Intended Projects: Road, storm water, bridge, water, or wastewater system improvement



Implementation Table

The following table collects and prioritizes specific strategies and actions and assigns a timeframe and coordination strategy.

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Coordination</u>
Goal 1: Economy		
1: Continue to support economic development in the county.	Ongoing	County Commissioners, Hysham Chamber of Commerce, recommendations from County Planning Board
2.a: Work with SEMDC in developing a county economic development plan	Ongoing	County Commissioners
3: Develop better information-sharing among residents regarding tourism/recreation	Ongoing	County Commissioners, Hysham Chamber of Commerce
Goal 2: Public Infrastructure		
1.a: Encourage new development to be located in or near Hysham town boundaries	As needed	Planning Board, County Commissioners, Hysham Town Council
1.b: Work with the town of Hysham to provide for annexation as opportunity and market demand necessitates	As Needed	Planning Board, County Commissioners
2.a: Develop a more detailed written policy for County Roads	In progress, update as needed	County Commissioners, Road Supervisor, County Attorney
3.a: Update Treasure County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan	Within 1 year, and update as needed	Treasure County Fire Department, DES Coordinator, County Commissioners, and other interested County departments and boards.
4.a: Support/update County Disaster and Emergency Services plan (Per FEMA, update every 5 years)	Updated 2021 Update as needed	County Commissioners, DES Coordinator
5: Communicate with media on local services and special efforts made by volunteers	Immediate, Ongoing	County Commissioners

Strategy**Timeframe****Coordination****Goal 3: Housing**

1.a: Allocate time and resources for outreach to the listed organizations when opportunities arise.	As Needed	Planning Board, County Commissioners, Action for Eastern Montana
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Goal 4: Land Use

1.a: Consider a variety of methods to retain agricultural land in production	Ongoing As Needed	Planning Board, County Commissioners
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2.a: Consider measures, such as permit systems and/or zoning, to provide orderly development and compatibility of use	As Needed	Planning Board, County Commissioners
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3: Follow MDT Outdoor Advertising rules for signage in the county.	As Needed	Planning Board, County Commissioners
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4.a: Require subdividers to clarify how any irrigation water rights will be allocated within the subdivision.	As Needed	Planning Board, County Commissioners
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4.b: Require any new development that affects irrigation systems to be reviewed by the irrigation district, irrigation company, or the owners/users of the system	As Needed	
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5.a: Create safeguards against potential flood hazards and promote healthy surface water and groundwater by keeping new residential, commercial and industrial development out of floodplains, riparian areas, and wetlands	As Needed	Planning Board, County Commissioners
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6.a: Work with the State Historical Society and State Historic Preservation Office to develop measures to identify and mitigate impacts from new development on culturally and historically significant places	As Needed	Planning Board, County Commissioners
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