



City of White Sulphur Springs Montana

Growth Policy | February 2017



PIONEERING
ENVIRONMENTS



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan was made possible by the time, commitment and input of the people of White Sulphur Springs, as well as the following public boards, councils, or groups:

White Sulphur Springs City Council

White Sulphur Springs Planning Board

White Sulphur Springs City Administration Staff

Meagher County

With Assistance From:



CTA ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS

PO Box 268

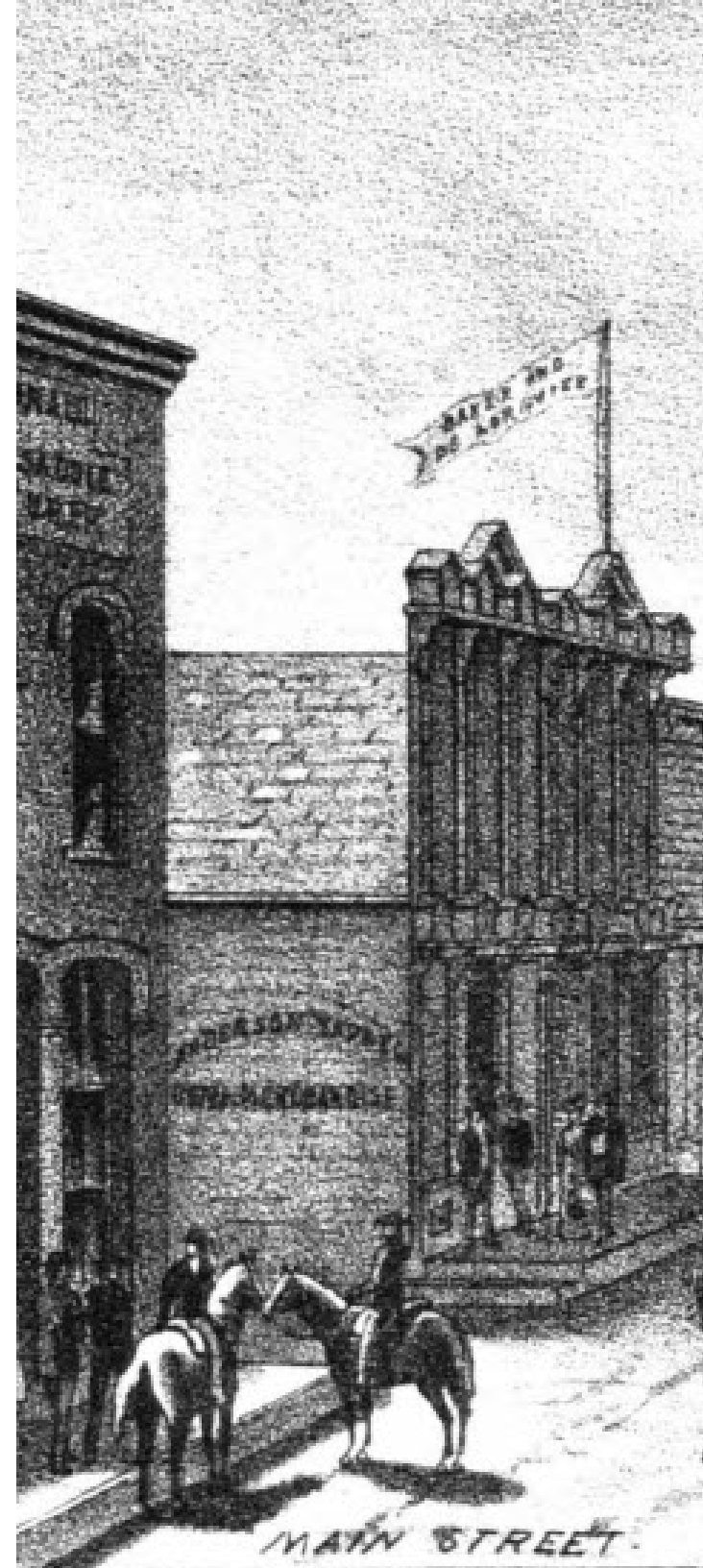
Red Lodge, MT 59068

ph 406.896.6286

monicaplecker@ctagroup.com

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	2
Executive Summary.....	5
Introduction.....	6
Purpose.....	6
Methodology: Planning for Uncertain Growth... 	8
Key Issues.....	10
Goals & Objectives.....	11
Economic Development.....	11
The City will:.....	12
Public Facilities and Services.....	13
Housing.....	15
Public Communication and Information.....	15
Geography.....	17
A Brief History.....	17
A Quick Snapshot.....	18
A Vision of White Sulphur Springs.....	36
Population Projections and Natural Resources... 	37
Future Land Use and Growth Areas.....	40
Implementation Plan.....	46
Summary.....	46
Project List.....	47
Local Review of Subdivision.....	55
Defining Subdivision Evaluation Criteria.....	55
Public Hearing Procedures.....	55
Coordination with Meagher County.....	56
76-3-608 Review Criteria.....	57
Review and Revision of Growth Policy.....	59





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The White Sulphur Springs Growth Policy was developed over a nine-month period starting in May of 2016 through January of 2017. The primary purpose of a growth policy is to:

1. Be a guiding document, NOT a regulatory document.
2. Establish the foundations for where and how the city will grow, often referred to as a Master Plan or Future Land Use Plan, focusing on where and what type of new growth is desirable.
3. Provide a framework for governmental regulations, specifically subdivision and zoning.
4. Balance community needs with the protection of individual property rights.

The 2017 White Sulphur Springs Growth Policy was developed during a time of change within the community. Like many communities in the Rocky Mountain West, White Sulphur Springs has seen its share of fluctuation in population and prosperity related to a natural resource economy. For many years, agriculture and timber were the primary industries within the Community. In recent years, increased tourism and independent

businesses have started to create new and unique opportunities. These trends are likely to continue, making White Sulphur Springs a more vibrant and resilient community.

Looking forward, White Sulphur Springs faces the potential of another cycle of natural resource development with the Black Butte Copper Mine and the Gordon Butte Project. While a trend back towards natural resource development is certainly likely in the area, this type of development is more unpredictable in terms of the challenges and opportunities that it provides to a community like White Sulphur Springs. At the time of the draft of this Growth Policy, the certainty of these specific projects was also unknown. Regardless of an individual project, it is likely that additional natural resource development will develop near White Sulphur Springs in the future, some yet to be predicted. Balancing the community's heritage with new opportunities will be critical to a thriving community.

White Sulphur Springs has a number of assets and recent activity that provide a positive framework for thinking about the future. A couple of examples of these are the construction of a new school, the reconstruction of main street and the community-driven street lighting project,

its central location in Montana, excellent natural amenities, hot springs, a ski mountain, medical facilities, and buildings with historic character and charm.

At the same time, White Sulphur Springs faces challenges similar to many communities in the west, primarily with aging infrastructure and an aging population with limited resources to remedy all of the needs. In this way, the Black Butte Copper Mine specifically provides new opportunities to fix some of the infrastructure within the community based upon potential impacts. This growth policy provides a general overview of the projected growth in White Sulphur Springs as a result of the mine, but a more detailed analysis will be required of the mine through the State's Hard Rock Mining Impact Program.

The White Sulphur Springs Growth Policy was developed following the development of the Meagher County Growth Policy. The Meagher County growth policy has a wealth of technical information and a variety of similar goals to this policy that should also be referred to as the Community considers actions in the future.

INTRODUCTION

White Sulphur Springs, Montana is located in the heart of Central Montana, among the rugged landscape and geology of central Montana. The community is rimmed by the Little Belt Mountains, Big Belt Mountains, and the Castle Mountains providing for expansive vistas in all directions. The area is known for its rich history in agriculture (ranching and farming), tourism (located directly between two national parks and adjacent to the famed Smith River), mining (formerly a center for silver, copper and gold) and recreation. Recreational activities include hiking, biking, fishing, hunting, skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing and four wheeling. These assets have added to the vibrancy of the area.

The people from this part of Montana retain their western agricultural heritage while looking to their future. That progressive mindset has led to the initiation of a comprehensive growth planning process which will update the vision and policies for growth in White Sulphur Springs over the next several decades.

Once known for its timber and milling industry the community suffered a great loss in the early 80's with the closure of the mills and a severe downturn in the logging industry. Like much of Montana, the population has decreased both within the City limits and the county in general.

The City remains the focal point of the county. White Sulphur Springs offers the area a medical center, a K-12 school and a business community that supports the area. White Sulphur Springs is the county seat for Meagher County. A number of county and state agencies support a significant number of employees. In addition, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Postal Service employees provide services to the City and county, and the U.S. Forest Service White Sulphur Springs District office manages this area of the Helena Lewis and Clark National Forest.

This growth policy update is intended to help the White Sulphur Springs community plan for the future in a way that will support current residents and attract new ones.

In short:

This plan is an expression of the People's vision for the City of White Sulphur Springs.

These broad elements include the following:

1. Maintain and develop infrastructure to enhance the town's functioning;
2. Preserve and enhance the town's unique character;
3. Build and make use of the town's amenities; and

4. Support the efforts of the residents to enhance and better the community

Purpose

The purpose of the White Sulphur Springs Growth Policy Plan is to guide city officials and residents in addressing current and future actions and decisions affecting the community. Those actions and decisions affect the physical, environmental, economic, fiscal, and social characteristics of the community. This growth policy plan attempts to provide organization and direction to the community and its officials and non-governmental leaders. It hopes to encourage the community to reflect upon itself and its best interests, and how to move forward to foster good growth, a safe, healthy, functional place to live, shop, and sell goods and services.

The White Sulphur Springs Growth Policy intends to guide city officials and citizens to provide good public facilities including but not limited to streets, water, sewer, utilities, parks and recreation facilities, and affordable housing. Also imperative is the provision of exceptional public services like education, health care, and town administration. The resulting plan will bolster economic development and the creation of jobs, which expands safety nets for those in need and generally increases the quality of life community-wide.

This Growth Policy Plan is the enabling authority that can allow White Sulphur Springs to adopt reasonable land use regulations, accept state or federal grants or loans, and implement those measures that enhance this community's strong points and virtues.

After setting the stage and presenting the issues, the following document gives the citizens and leaders of White Sulphur Springs a list of strategies to achieve their vision. Being more than a list of policies for growth, this is a communication tool designed to keep planning concepts simple and useful.

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.

The planning process created several opportunities for public input. In the early stages of plan development, a kick-off meeting was held with city staff and elected officials. This meeting served as a way to highlight expectations for the

plan and also to establish existing conditions and concerns related to White Sulphur Springs' current environment. During this time, several needs were identified, especially infrastructure projects related to the town's ability to grow.

There were several meetings and touchpoints during the input process. This effort focused on gaining public input from a large percentage of the population on the following topics:

- Economic development for creation and/or stabilization of jobs and income;
- Orderly land use development utilizing land use regulations, building codes;
- Sound development and maintenance of public services, e.g., water, sewer, streets, parks and recreation areas;
- Efficient public services , e.g., for law enforcement, ambulance, library services;
- Housing development that provides adequate housing for persons living in the community;
- Educational services provided within the community, and connection to the outside world by use of electronic means.

White Sulphur Springs will be a community of the future. By learning from its past and leading to the future, White Sulphur Springs can develop based on realistic optimism and steady growth through planning. The schedule was as follows:

May 10th – Planning Board Meeting, Existing Land Use, Housing and Public Participation

June 8th – Planning Board Meeting, Data and Analysis, review Goals, Objectives and Policies

July 20th – Joint Planning Board and City Council Meeting, General Overview of purpose of Growth Policies

August 9th – Planning Board Meeting, Hard Rock Mining Act Discussion

September 13th – First Public Meeting, Land Use and Goals, Objectives and Policies

October 25th – Planning Board meeting, Survey Instrument and Land Use

December 6th – Planning Board Meeting, Review of Draft Plan

December 14th – Second Public Meeting for Presentation of Draft Plan

January 2017 – Adoption Hearings before Planning Board and City Council

Methodology: Planning for Uncertain Growth

Due to an uncertain future regarding large-scale natural resource development projects, projecting population and economic growth in White Sulphur Springs is challenging. Should these projects be permitted and developed, it is likely the town will experience a burst of modest to moderate growth. This poses a challenge to the task of growth planning, meaning that accommodations must be made for new development while room must be created for flexibility and resilience. Policies that take advantage of existing conditions, such as housing stock, should take precedence. Such a policy considers the possibility of improving housing without exacerbating the risk of overbuilding.





KEY ISSUES

1. The declining tax base, population, income, employment, school enrollment challenges the City in providing and maintaining public facilities and services, and enhancing a growing, vibrant local economy.
2. Growth in jobs and the local economy was the most critical and urgent priority cited by residents. Creating and maintaining an effective economic development program to increase the number of jobs and income should be a high priority.
3. The potential permitting of Tintina Mine would have positive impacts on population, work force population, tax base and tax revenues, private sector economic growth, and school enrollment. The mine would also increase the need and costs of providing and maintaining public facilities and services, and would increase the need for new or rehabilitated housing within the city. The mine would also increase the need for the City and Meagher County to use measures to direct new associated growth and development into appropriate locations in or adjacent to the City.
4. WSS streets are in poor condition in some locations throughout the city. The issue is exacerbated in some locations where underlying water and/or sewer lines are also deteriorated and need replacing.
5. A significant number of housing units in WSS are in deteriorated or deteriorating condition, and programs should be pursued to rehabilitate or replace housing in poor condition. Should the Tintina mine go forward, this becomes even more urgent.
6. Residents are becoming more and more concerned that new growth and development be located in suitable locations, and be designed and constructed to ensure the health, safety, and livability for residents.
7. There is no public transportation into or out of White Sulphur Springs, so elderly, handicapped and low-income residents are challenged to get necessary out-of-town medical, dental, and other services

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Economic Development

Goal:

Promote economic development by expanding or stabilizing employment, income, the local economy and tax base.

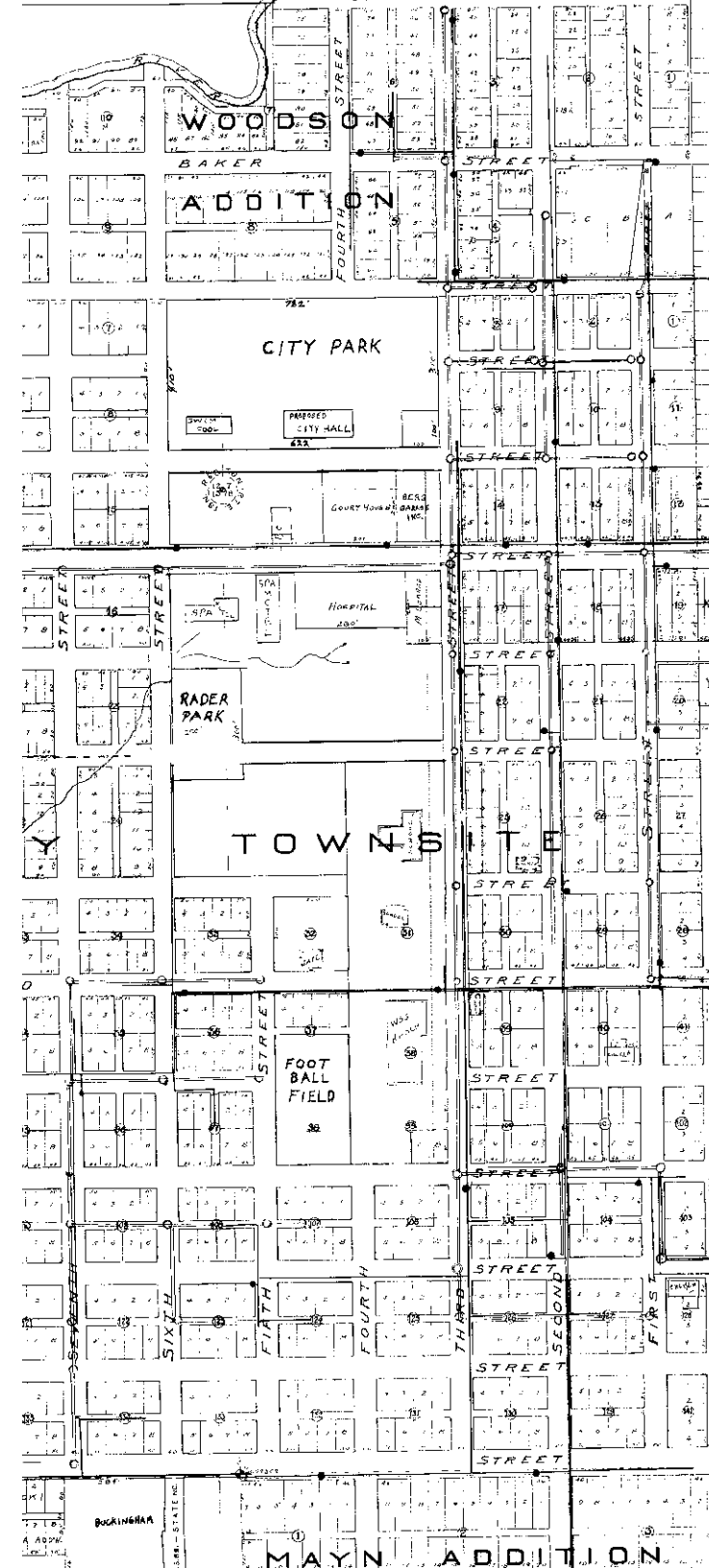
Objectives:

1. Diversify the City's economic base and tax base by encouraging growth in basic industries (e.g., processing, manufacturing, tourism/travel, natural resources)
2. Promote the development of tourism, recreation and cultural resources to expand the economy and broaden the tax base.
3. Stimulate the retention and expansion of existing business, recruitment or development of new businesses and value-added businesses.
4. Develop and maintain an effective Economic Development Council that would assist with development and recruitment of potential businesses.
5. Support business opportunities that strengthen employment, income and the tax base.

Policies:

The City will coordinate with a local economic development organization, the Meagher County Chamber of Commerce, and Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC) to implement the following policies:

- Policy 1. Maintain the focus of business assistance on basic sector businesses, including those that promote recreation, travel and tourism.
- Policy 2. Promote recreational and cultural opportunities and quality of life offered by our small town environment.
- Policy 3. Protect selected sites that are particularly suitable for commercial or industrial uses from conflicting or incompatible uses or development.
- Policy 4. The City should form a City (or joint city/county) Economic Development Council, which would develop an active economic growth program that would include the local capacity and capability to assist new start-up businesses, recruit new businesses, and help existing businesses with expansion plans.



Land Use

Goal:

Foster orderly land use development that ensures adequate amounts of land are available for the future needs of residential, commercial, and industrial uses and for public facilities.

Objectives:

1. Utilize land use planning and regulation to support a mix of residential, commercial and industrial development to accommodate growth and minimize conflict with adjacent areas.
2. Encourage new development to locate within or adjacent to the city.
3. Support the use of building permits within the City's planning area for new construction and remodeling, and explore city-wide adoption of the International Building Code.
4. Support adoption of state building codes to insure safe construction practices.
5. Establish development patterns that are well-designed and ensure properties have access to public services.

6. Ensure that new developments are located and designed to be safe from natural disasters.
7. Evaluate the Land Users Permitting system and consider the applicability or necessity of city-wide zoning regulations.

Policies:

The City will:

- Policy 1. Discourage development in areas of constraints, such as high ground water, flood hazards, shallow bedrock, natural drainage ways, unless special design, construction or other techniques can overcome the constraints.
- Policy 2. Encourage new development to locate in desirable locations through revised subdivision regulations, building codes, land use regulations, and extension or upgrading of city infrastructure.
- Policy 3. Through revised subdivision regulations, ensure sound lot and block patterns and street access, proper provision of utilities, and require developers to pay for water and sewer facilities and street improvements within, or extending, to new developments. City subdivision

regulations will require developers to provide grading and drainage plans and proper removal of storm run-off waters.

- Policy 4. Explore options for instituting city-wide zoning, based on analysis and future land use mapping provided in this plan.

Public Facilities and Services

Goal:

Provide adequate public facilities and services to serve current and future residents and businesses, and at reasonable public cost and tax expenditures.

Objectives:

1. Provide adequate, cost-effective, properly designed city facilities and services, including streets, water, sewer, fire protection, parks and recreation, and law enforcement; and provide adequate on-going maintenance of those facilities and services.
2. Support adequate community services provided by Mountainview Medical center, Meagher County Ambulance, White Sulphur Springs Fire Department, Meagher County Senior Citizens, Meagher County Historical Association and other organizations that provide such services.
3. Achieve efficiency, where possible, by sharing services and facilities with Meagher County, the White Sulphur Springs Public Schools, and other entities.

4. Develop and maintain a 5-6 year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to help provide sound and effective public facilities in the city.
5. Maintain adequate levels of equipment and qualified personnel to provide proper and functional operation and maintenance of city facilities and services.
6. Facilitate a transportation program to transport elderly, handicapped and low-income citizens to needed out-of-town medical, dental and other services.

Policies:

Policy 1. The City will provide water and sewer services only to properties located within the City boundaries. Adjacent properties will be provided those services upon annexation.

In exceptional cases, where property is isolated from the City boundaries, and the property has no other reasonable means of obtaining the service, the City may extend water and/or sewer services without annexation, provided the property owners pay the costs of extension.

Policy 2. Water and sewer hook-up fees should reflect the actual costs of connecting to the city systems or of extending the facilities. Developers will be responsible for paying the costs of extending the services to new development. The City may approve special districts as a means of financing.

Policy 3. New, expanded, or upgraded water and sewer facilities will meet engineering and construction standards approved by the City Council, and will be inspected for compliance with those standards. Where possible, new facilities will be designed and constructed to minimize maintenance and operating costs.

Policy 4. New or extended city streets will closely follow the present street pattern, and be approved by the City Council. New and extended streets must meet engineering and construction standards approved by the City Council, and be inspected to ensure proper construction.

Policy 5. The City will undertake combined street-water/sewer repaving-line replacement projects where old, deteriorated, or inadequate water/sewer lines underlie streets needing repair.



The purpose of these combined projects is to avoid repaving recently repaired streets after repairing or replacing broken water or sewer lines.

- Policy 6. Facilities will be properly maintained and operated by trained personnel according to approved procedures to minimize deterioration and need for repair or replacement.
- Policy 7. Before approving new public facilities, the City Council shall consider whether funding for future operation and maintenance costs will be available.
- Policy 8. The City will try to achieve efficiencies by coordinating with Meagher County and the White Sulphur Springs Public Schools to find opportunities for sharing in costs of providing facilities and services.
- Policy 9. The City will work with the Meagher County Senior Center to facilitate a public transportation program to transport seniors, low-income and handicapped residents for out-of-town medical, dental and other services.

Housing

Goal:

Promote a variety of safe, affordable housing types to meet the needs, preferences, and incomes of White Sulphur Springs' residents.

Objective:

1. Facilitate safe, energy-efficient, affordable housing choices and opportunities for all residents, with particular focus on elderly, low-income persons, and persons with disabilities.

Policies:

The City will:

- Policy 1. Maintain understanding and knowledge of appropriate state and federal housing programs.
- Policy 2. Work with developers and realtors to encourage and facilitate new housing and housing rehabilitation that serves, and is affordable for, all income sectors of the White Sulphur Springs community.

Public Communication and Information

Goal:

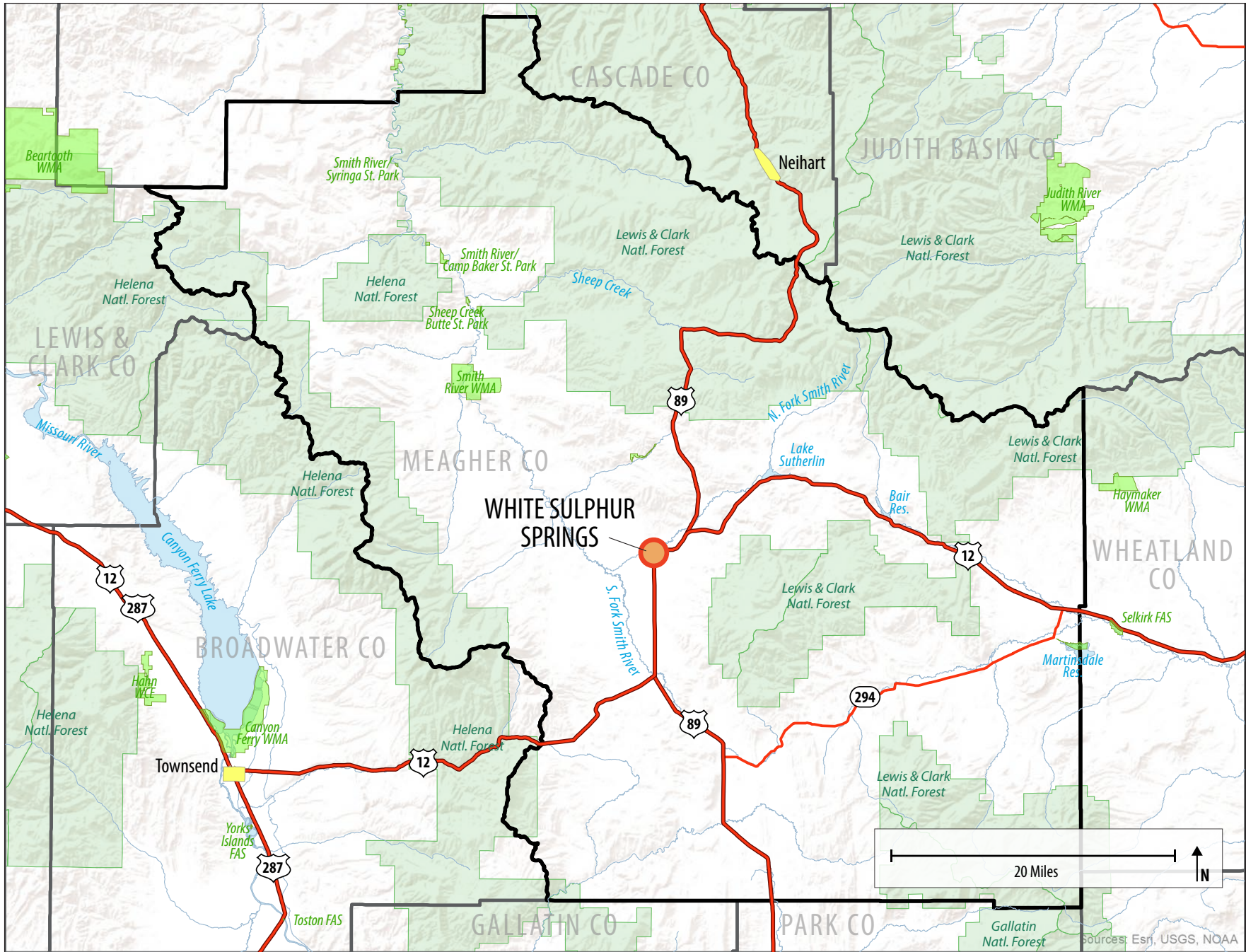
Foster open communication and flow of information with city and county residents, businesses, Meagher County departments, state and federal agencies, public schools, and other organizations.

Objectives:

1. Ensure city and county residents and businesses are informed of the city's plans and actions relating to the physical, economic, fiscal and social development of the city.
2. Ensure opportunities for local residents to be aware of, and participate in, the city's plans and actions.
3. Collaborate with county, state, federal, school agencies and affected private organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, MBAC, Human Resources Development Council, local service clubs).

Policies:

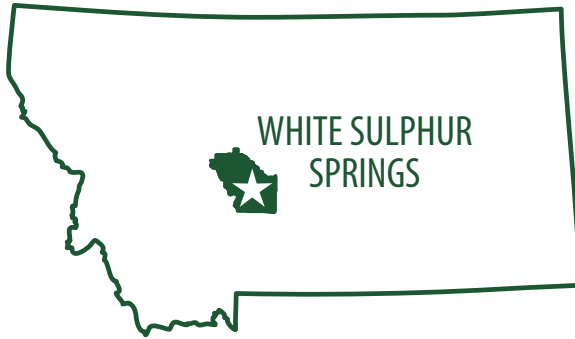
- Policy 1. The City will openly communicate with, and inform local residents, businesses, and agencies of city plans and actions, through printed and electronic media and open meetings. The City will offer every possible opportunity for citizens to express their ideas and opinions on city plans, actions and activities.



▲ Regional Context Map

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS TODAY

Geography



White Sulphur Springs is set in the central Montana landscape, characterized by flat glaciated plains, broad river valleys, and high forested mountain peaks with panoramic vistas. In the classic Big Sky Country, White Sulphur itself is settled on the banks of the North Fork of the Smith River surrounded by the Lewis & Clark and Helena National Forests. Newlan Creek Reservoir, Lake Sutherlin, Bair Reservoir, the Smith River, the Missouri River, and Canyon Ferry Lake are the nearest water features .

Located in central Meagher County, White Sulphur Springs had an estimated population of 910 people in 2015 (US Census Bureau ACS). The City is the seat of and the largest community in Meagher County, which had an estimated population of 1,830 people in 2015 (US Census ACS). The City gained its name from the high mineral content, natural occurring hot springs in the valley.

Helena, 76 driving miles west of the City (about a one hour and 20 minute drive), is the closest center for goods and services. Bozeman is 80 driving miles south, or about 1 hour and 30 minutes away, while Great Falls is 97 driving miles north (1 hour and 38 minutes). Major transportation corridors include US Highways 89 and 12 which connect White Sulphur Springs to Townsend, Livingston, and Great Falls to the north and south. The City is not connected to active passenger and freight rail transportation networks. There are very few nearby towns or cities with major services. Smaller communities include Townsend, Neihart, Wilsall, Clyde Park, Harlowton, and Hutterite colonies. Agriculture is abundant in the Smith River drainage, as well as the Sheep Creek drainage and other small drainages. Ranching on pastureland is prominent elsewhere in the area, as irrigating field crops is only suitable where there is adequate water.

Natural amenities are abundant, including plentiful recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, and boating. Major recreation sites include a developed hot springs resort in the City, Showdown Ski Area and Silver Crest Winter Trails on Kings Hill. Major recreation areas include the Helena Lewis and Clark National Forest.

A Brief History

The history of the City of White Sulphur Springs goes back to pre-European settlement, when Native Americans coveted the natural healing powers of the City's namesake mineral springs.

The City's website offers the following history of the settlement of early White Sulphur Springs:

"The hot springs have been frequented by Indians for many years. Crow Chief Plenty Coups recalled pilgrimages by warriors to the medicinal mud baths. In 1886 James Brewer stumbled onto the area as the stagecoaches rumbled through the Carroll Trail. Brewer first called the spot Brewer Springs and developed the hot springs into a stage stop and resort.

The Smith River Valley, with White Sulphur Springs as its trading center, was once the home of buffalo and later of prospectors working the Castle Mountain lead and silver mines. Since the days of Fort Logan, White Sulphur Springs has been famous for its fine cattle (from Cheney's Names on the Face of Montana, Mountain Press Publishing Company). Weathered homes and out-buildings at the nearby ghost town of Castle are all that remain of the 1880s silver mining boom."

<http://www.whitesulphurspringsmontana.com/>

A Quick Snapshot

This section takes a glance at where the City of White Sulphur Springs is today by looking at the big trends and existing conditions. This includes a brief survey of local geography, population, jobs and economics, and municipal services to paint a clear picture for crafting growth planning strategies.

Climate

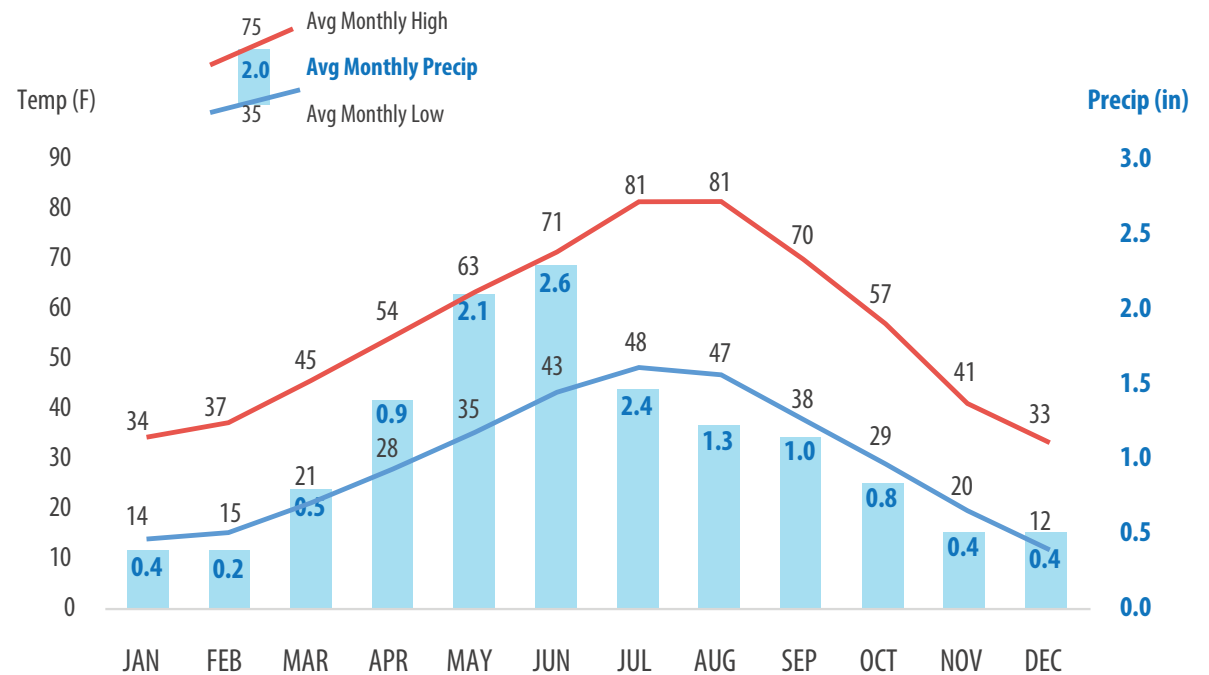
The City is situated at an elevation of about 5,020 feet and latitude of 46 degrees and 32 minutes north. Low, flat valleys and steep buttes are typical physical landforms, with few trees in the lowlands and heavily forested highlands. The City experiences a semi-arid continental climate characterized by warm, dry summers and cold winters. Average annual rainfall is 12.9 inches (US Climate Data 2016). May and June experience the most significant rainfall. White Sulphur Springs is located in the Northwestern Great Plains ecoregion, characterized by rolling grasslands, savanna, wildlife-abundant breaks, and pine forests, depending on elevation and slope aspect (Ecoregions of Montana 2000).

The Smith River is the main natural surface water passing the town. Hot Springs Creek is a natural spring that supplies the hot springs resort pools.

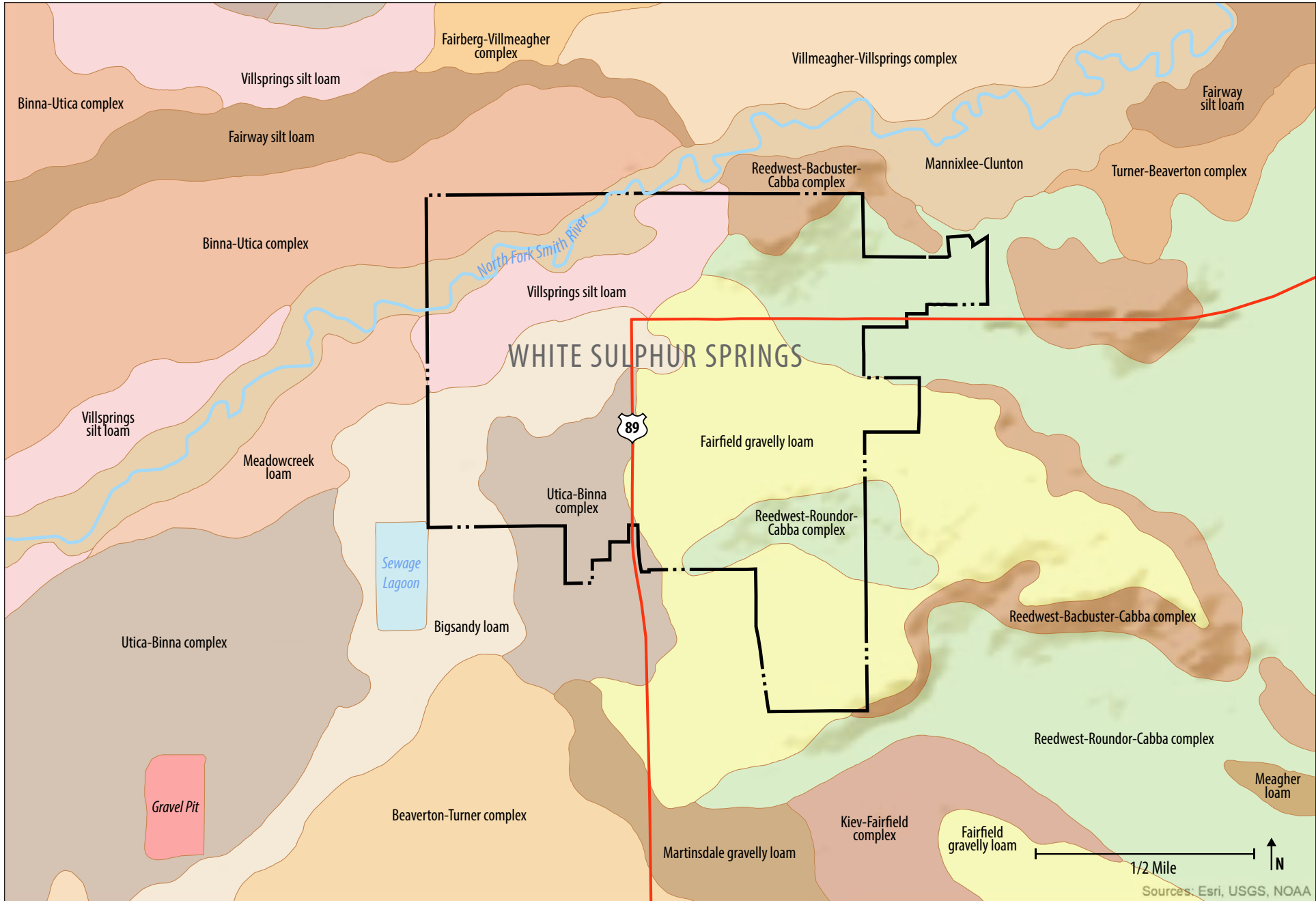
Soils

Soils in White Sulphur Springs and the vicinity are composed of well-drained silty to cobbly loams typical of valley floors in intermontane basins. The Binna-Utica complex and Musselshell cobbly loams are the most prevalent soil types.

These soils are classified as relict stream terraces and generally are very deep (60 inches). Rangeland and some crop activities are supported by these soil types.



▲ Monthly Annual Temperatures and Precipitation (NOAA Climate Data Online)



▲ Soils Map (USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey)

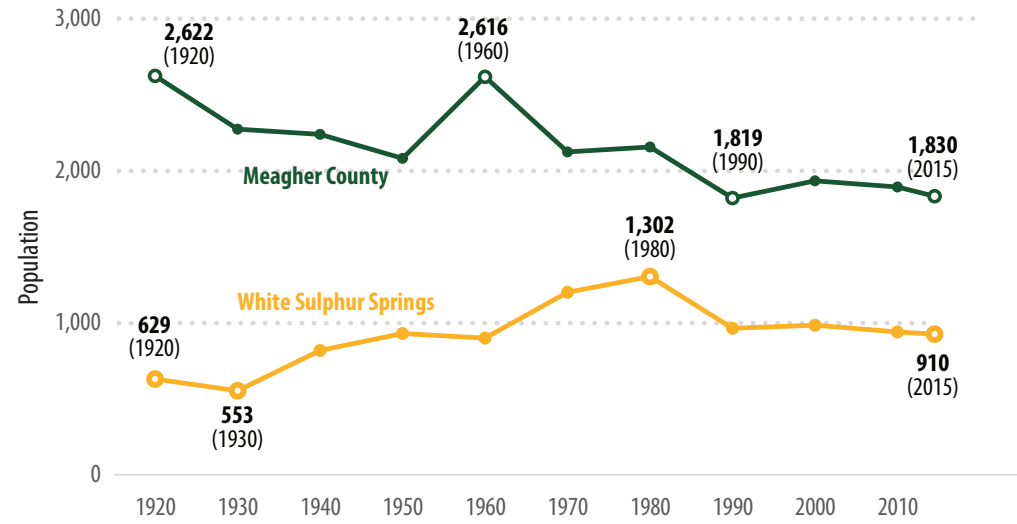
Population

Population trends in White Sulphur Springs over the past 100 years have been variable. From 1910 to 2015, the City has seen population growth of 122%, or a net increase of about 500 people. However since 1980 to 2014, population has declined about 30% or roughly 275 people (US Census Bureau).

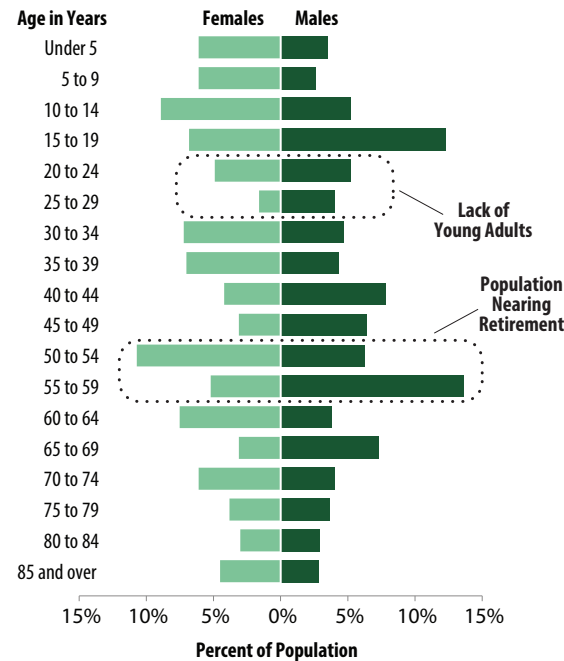
The City's age structure indicates that a moderate gap exists between 19-30 year old adults. This age group is most likely being attracted to larger nearby population centers like Helena or Great Falls, or are leaving the region entirely in search of education and economic opportunities.

There is a relatively large "bulge" between the 50 and 60 year old age range of the population structure. This demographic is nearing retirement age, with few younger working-aged adults to take their place.

The median age in White Sulphur Springs in 2014 was estimated at 43.8 years old, which is slightly older than the median for the state of Montana (about 39.8 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 would care for them.



▲ Population, White Sulphur Springs and Meagher County (US Census Bureau)



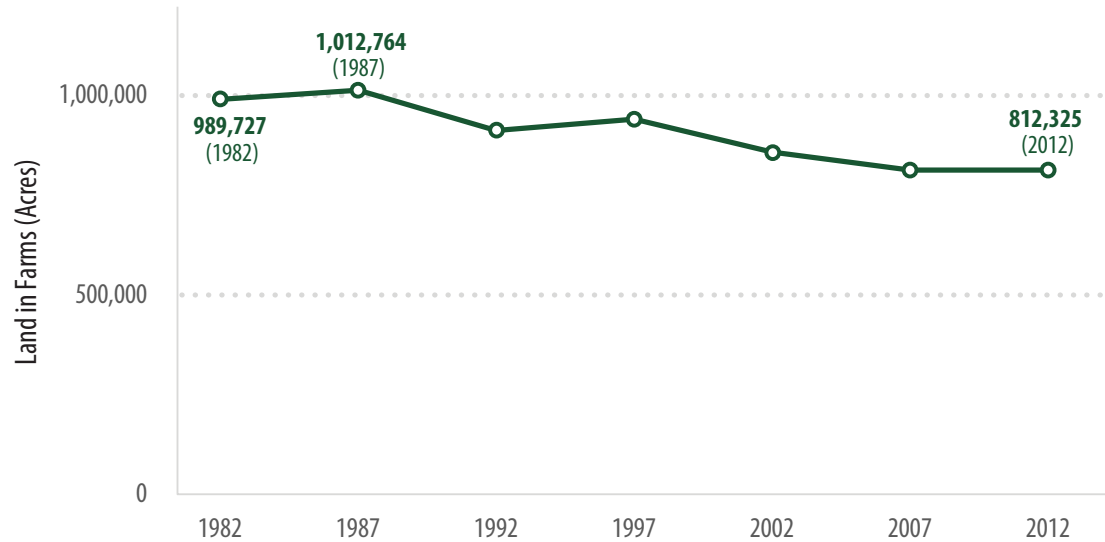
▲ Age and Gender Structure, White Sulphur Springs, 2014 (US Census Bureau)

Economy

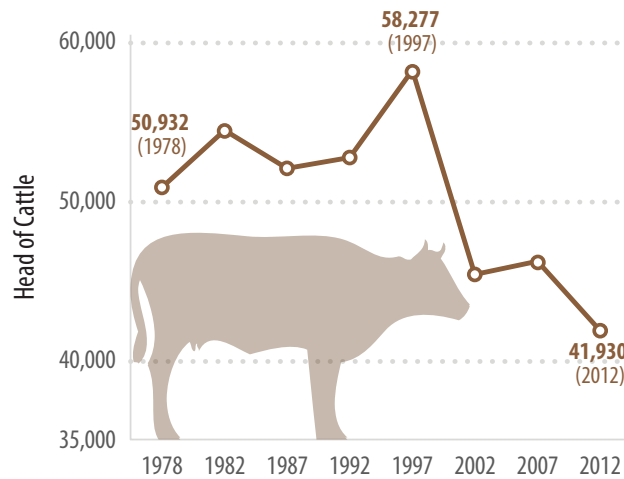
Hot mineral-rich springs put the town on the map, but at different times during the town's history the local economy shifted between the logging industry, agriculture, mining, and tourism. The town is located strategically between productive forest lands in the Little Belt, Big Belt, and Castle Mountains. Once rail connections were built to the area in the late nineteenth century, White Sulphur Springs gained access to shipping channels via the national railroad network. Having proximity to the timber resource and a source of fresh water, the town became a hub for the logging industry.

Agriculture

Agriculture in Meagher County is largely ranchland or field crops, however the latter is limited to flat river drainages throughout the Smith River Valley. After cattle production in the county increased to a 35-year peak in 1997, production has seen a dramatic 28% decline since then, losing over 16,000 head of cattle. Sheep production in Meagher County has seen a similar rise and fall over the same time period, stabilizing at about 5,000 sheep in 2002. Disclosures for head of sheep were no longer kept in the US Census of Agriculture after that date.



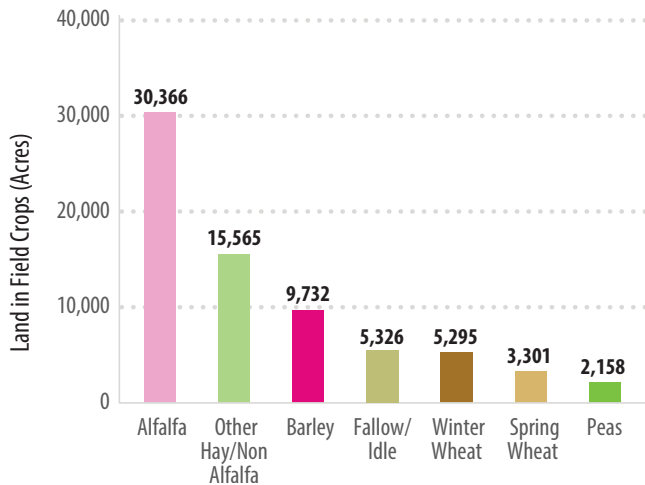
▲ Land in Farms, Meagher County, 1982 - 2012 (US Agricultural Census)



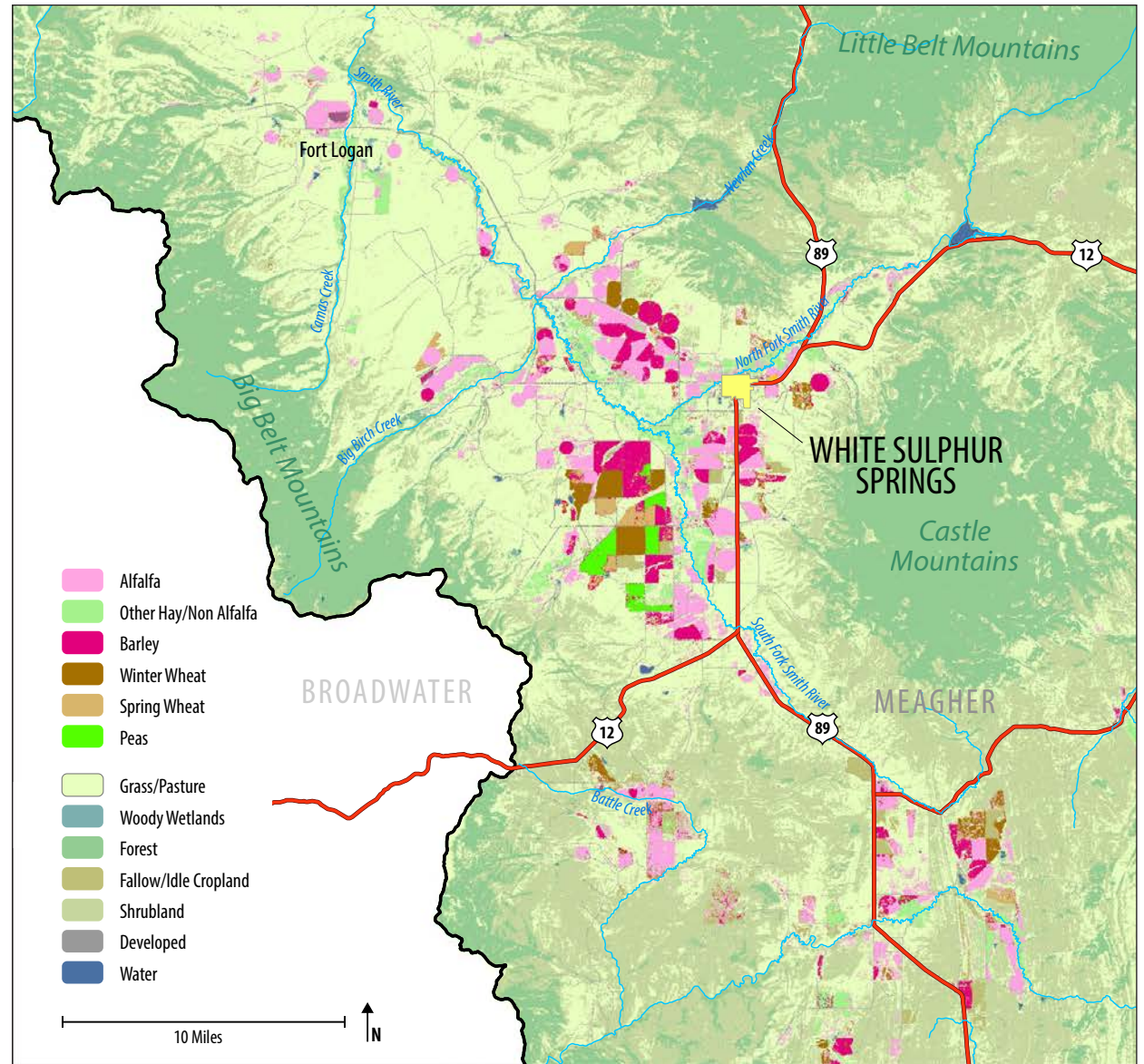
▲ Cattle, Meagher County, 1978 - 2012 (US Agricultural Census)

In 2015, the top producing field crops in the county were alfalfa, non-alfalfa hay, and barley. Near White Sulphur Springs along the Smith River, alfalfa and barley are the predominant crops, while farmers raised a limited amount of winter and spring wheat and peas on the foothills of the Big Belt Mountains.

Alfalfa is the predominant field crop near Fort Logan with a limited amount of oats in production along Camas Creek. Grass pastureland is found nearly everywhere in the county below the evergreen forest and is suitable for cattle production.



▲ Top Field Crops, 2015 (USDA NASS)



▲ Crops and Land Cover 2015 (USDA NASS)

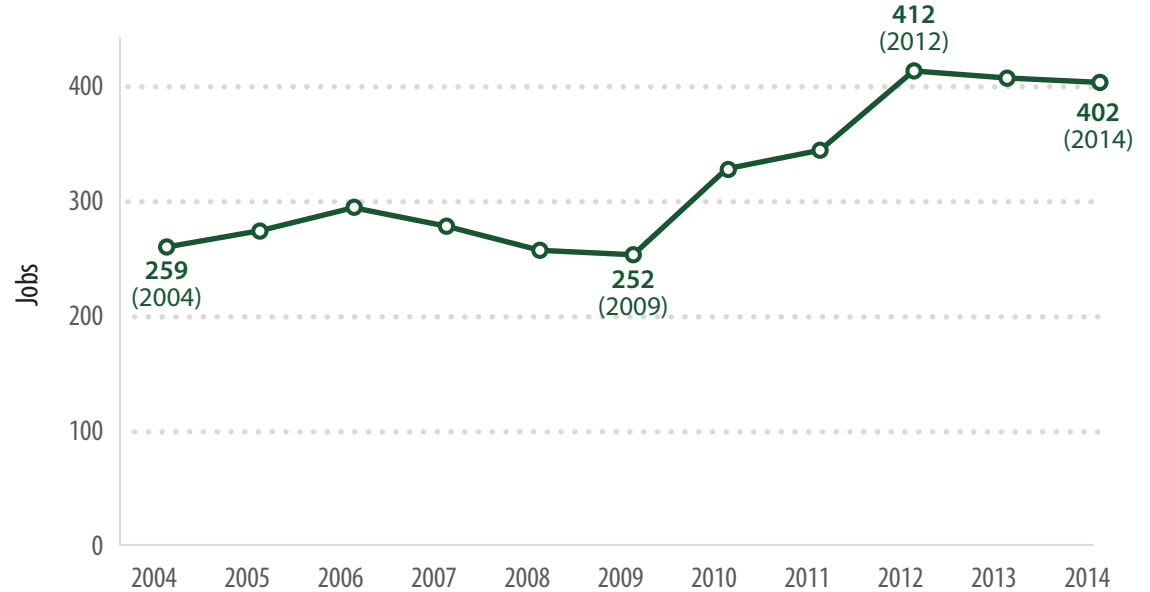
Jobs

US Census Longitudinal Employment Housing Dynamics estimates from 2004 to 2014 in the City of White Sulphur Springs show a steady increase in total jobs. In this ten-year period, total jobs increased about 55%, or about 143 jobs have been added. In the same period, jobs grew at a rate of 14% in Meagher County. A slight decline was observed from 2007 to 2009, likely echoing the global economic recession.

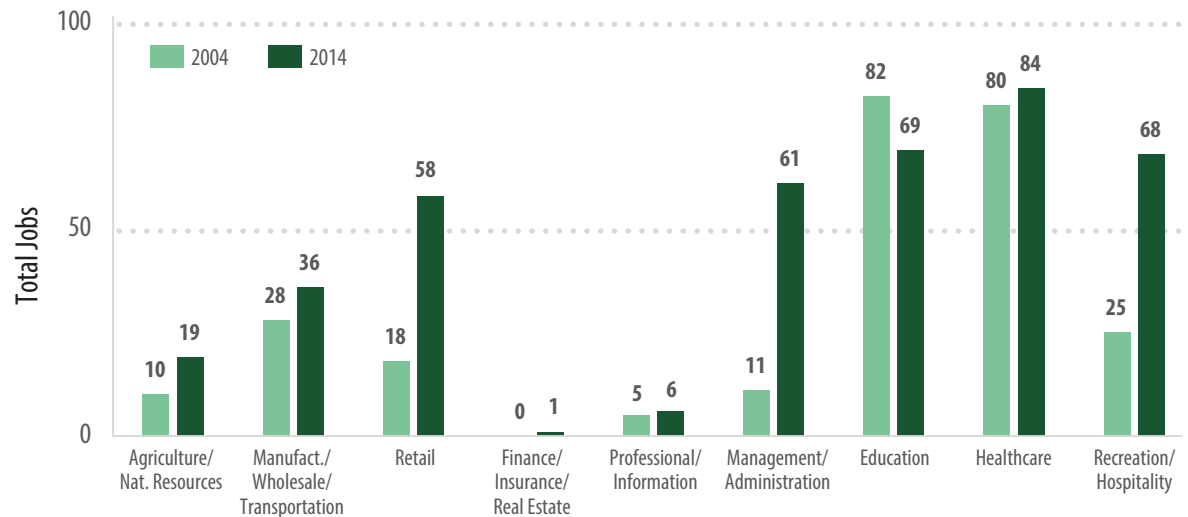
Jobs within the City of White Sulphur Springs accounted for about 73% of all jobs in Meagher County. The remaining 27% of jobs were widely dispersed throughout the county.

Employer	Number of Employees
Mountainview Medical Center	50-99
White Sulphur Springs Schools	10-19

▲ **Top Employers, White Sulphur Springs 2015** (MT Dept. of Labor and Industry)



▲ **Total Jobs, White Sulphur Springs 2004-2014** (US Census LEHD)

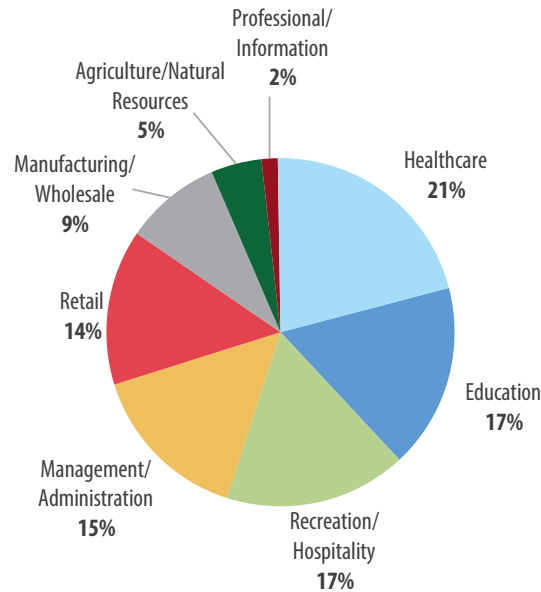


▲ **Job Sector Change, White Sulphur Springs 2004 and 2014** (US Census LEHD)

The Mountainview Medical Center, opened in 1953, is the largest employer in the city and county. Located on Main Street in White Sulphur Springs, the center is a Critical Access Hospital and Nursing Home that employs between 50 and 99 people. Other large employers include White Sulphur Springs High School, the Bank of the Rockies, and the Spa Hot Springs Hotel. The remaining jobs are found in small one to four employee companies providing many different services.

White Sulphur Springs exhibits a fairly diverse economy in terms of job sectors. In 2014, the largest job sector was Healthcare with 21% of total jobs in the city, largely influenced by Mountainview Medical Center. This was followed by Education with 17% of the total, and Recreation and Hospitality also at 17%.

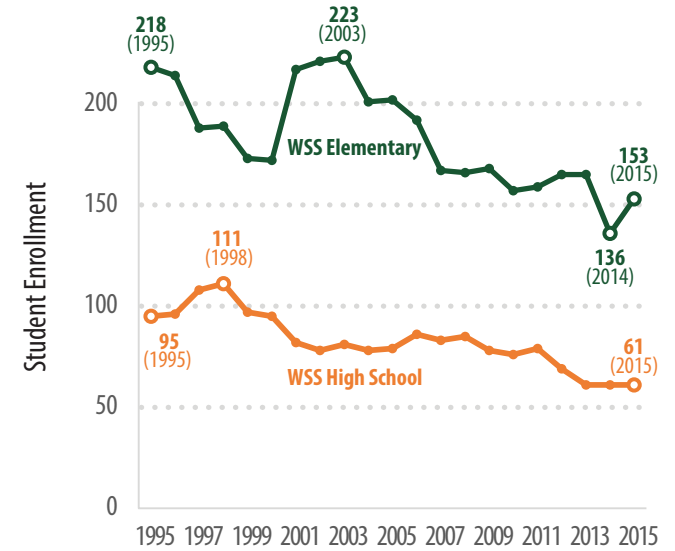
From 2004 to 2014, job growth occurred largely in the Management and Administration, Retail, and Recreation and Hospitality sectors (see Figure X). The only sector to experience decline was Education, which may be related to the general decline in population and the decreases seen in student enrollment over the past few decades at the city's two public schools.



▲ **Job Sectors, White Sulphur Springs 2014** (US Census Longitudinal Employer Housing Dynamics)

School Enrollment

Total enrollment at the City's two schools was 214 in the 2015 school year, down 32% from 1995. School enrollment from 1995 to 2015 in White Sulphur Springs Elementary decreased by 65 students, or about a 30% decline. During the same period, enrollment at White Sulphur Springs High School decreased by 34 students, or about 36%.



▲ **School Enrollment 1995-2015** (MT Office of Public Instruction)

In 1995, Meagher County had two other rural elementary schools in Lennep and Ringling. By 2011, both of these schools were annexed, bringing those students to White Sulphur Springs Elementary which subsequently saw a peak enrollment of 223 students in 2003. Despite a dramatic decline since then, recent figures indicate enrollment may be stabilizing at both the Elementary and High Schools.

Personal Income

Personal income is a measure of the various earnings received by working individuals in an area. Personal income is the total amount of money derived from wages, salaries, investment enterprises, and other sources.

Personal income data is collected at the county level and can be compared as farm and non-farm categories.

The table at right shows Meagher County's personal income and employment by farm and non-farm economic sectors. In 2004, non-farm income was 89% of the total personal income, and accounted for 82% of county jobs. Ten years later non-farm income made up 80% of the total and farm income increased to 20% of the total income, a net increase in earnings of \$10,531,000.

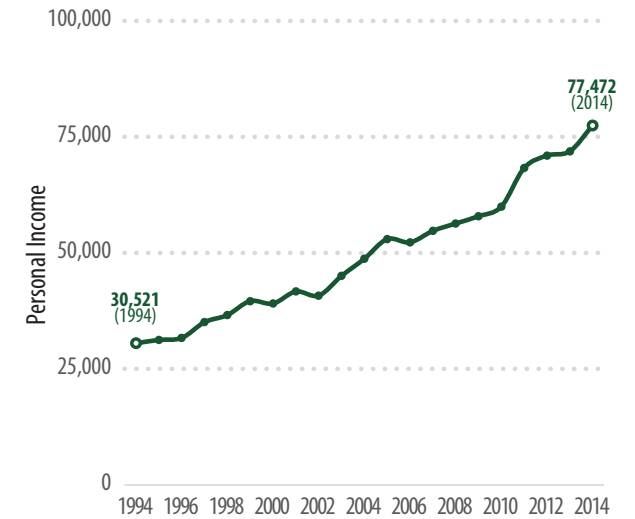
Total earnings have increased strongly (59%) in the ten-year period between 2004 and 2014. The 42% increase in non-farm income was complemented by a dramatic 200% increase in farm income. The total number of employees in the work force increased by 217 employees, or by 19%. Although farm income showed the strongest growth, farm employment actually decreased 7%, meaning fewer farmers are contributing to higher personal incomes.

2014	Income (\$1000s)	% of Total	Employment	% of Total
Total	77,472	100%	1,347	100%
Non-farm	61,724	80%	1,163	86%
Farm	15,748	20%	184	14%
2004	Income (\$1000s)	% of Total	Employment	% of Total
Total	48,724	100%	1,130	100%
Non-farm	43,507	89%	932	82%
Farm	5,217	11%	198	18%
% Change	Income	Employment		
Total	59%	19%		
Non-farm	42%	25%		
Farm	202%	-7%		

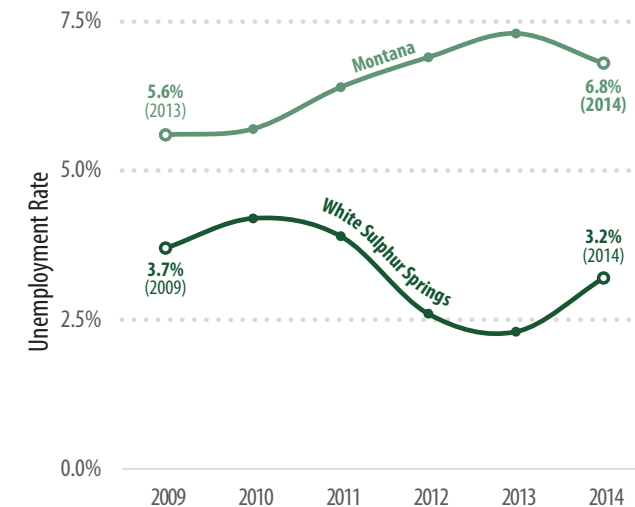
▲ *Personal Income, Meagher County 2004 and 2014 (US Bureau of Economic Analysis)*

Unemployment

Based on US Census estimates, unemployment rates in White Sulphur Springs have fluctuated over the five-year period between 2009 and 2014. Rates peaked at over 4% in 2010 as the nationwide economic recession worsened. During the recovery, rates fell to a low of 2.3% in 2013 but have since climbed. In general unemployment in the city has been in the 4% range, which is much lower than that of the state and nation. Unemployment rates have also changed inversely to that of the state.



▲ *Personal Income, Meagher County 1994-2014 (US Bureau of Economic Analysis)*



▲ *Unemployment, White Sulphur Springs 2009-2014 (US Census)*

Tax Base and Tax Revenues

Based on figures from the Montana Department of Revenue, the appraised value of property in White Sulphur Springs has increased steadily, while the taxable value has remained relatively stable.

Since 2008, the appraised value of property in White Sulphur Springs increased 63%. In the same eight-year period, the city's taxable value increased about 17%, a net increase of \$158,438. Over the last five years, the taxable value increased 13%, which is a net increase of \$127,554.

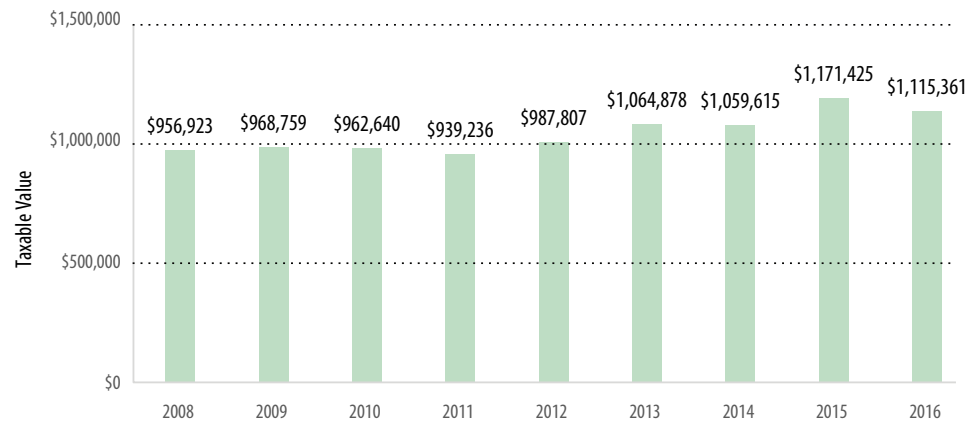
▼ *Estimated Appraised Value, White Sulphur Springs, 2008-2016 (MT Dept. of Revenue)*

Tax Year	Class 3: Agricultural	Class 4: Commercial	Class 4: Residential	Class 5: Pollution control, electric and telephone cooperatives, new and expanding industry, etc.	Class 8: Business equipment	Class 9: Pipelines and non-electric generating property of electric utilities	Class 13: Telecommunication utilities and electric generating property of electric utilities	Total
2008	\$5,091	\$6,545,782	\$32,017,286	\$10,732	\$657,345	\$643,565	\$1,223,619	\$41,103,420
2009	\$4,430	\$12,182,775	\$43,773,181	\$11,234	\$787,165	\$611,332	\$1,374,462	\$58,744,579
2010	\$2,365	\$10,818,515	\$44,140,605	\$11,102	\$735,405	\$659,144	\$1,314,296	\$57,681,432
2011	\$2,365	\$10,802,976	\$44,231,070	\$11,284	\$745,043	\$559,681	\$1,278,747	\$57,631,166
2012	\$2,365	\$11,490,083	\$44,863,779	\$10,032	\$899,170	\$613,670	\$1,722,084	\$59,601,183
2013	\$2,365	\$11,534,977	\$45,245,947	\$19,820	\$954,014	\$627,116	\$2,879,688	\$61,263,927
2014	\$2,365	\$11,410,821	\$45,739,858	\$24,000	\$440,771	\$694,073	\$2,768,151	\$61,080,039
2015	\$7,058	\$12,450,124	\$49,616,122	\$25,908	\$497,437	\$709,902	\$3,144,916	\$66,451,467
2016	\$31,471	\$12,358,841	\$49,426,625	\$3,345,078	\$548,431	\$850,945	\$357,898	\$66,919,289

▼ *Estimated Taxable Value, White Sulphur Springs, 2008-2016 (MT Dept. of Revenue)*

Tax Year	Class 3: Agricultural	Class 4: Commercial	Class 4: Residential	Class 5: Pollution control, electric and telephone cooperatives, new and expanding industry, etc.	Class 8: Business equipment	Class 9: Pipelines and non-electric generating property of electric utilities	Class 13: Telecommunication utilities and electric generating property of electric utilities	Total
2008	\$153	\$167,485	\$618,595	\$322	\$19,722	\$77,228	\$73,418	\$956,923
2009	\$116	\$199,735	\$589,127	\$337	\$23,617	\$73,360	\$82,467	\$968,759
2010	\$64	\$189,333	\$592,893	\$333	\$22,062	\$79,097	\$78,858	\$962,640
2011	\$62	\$194,848	\$577,749	\$339	\$22,352	\$67,162	\$76,724	\$939,236
2012	\$61	\$212,969	\$578,077	\$301	\$19,432	\$73,641	\$103,326	\$987,807
2013	\$59	\$218,255	\$577,452	\$594	\$20,481	\$75,255	\$172,782	\$1,064,878
2014	\$58	\$221,256	\$583,045	\$720	\$5,159	\$83,287	\$166,090	\$1,059,615
2015	\$153	\$235,324	\$651,522	\$777	\$9,764	\$85,189	\$188,696	\$1,171,425
2016	\$680	\$233,596	\$646,814	\$100,350	\$10,332	\$102,115	\$21,474	\$1,115,361

▼ *Estimated Taxable Value, White Sulphur Springs, 2008-2016 (MT Dept. of Revenue)*



Natural Resources

Oil and Gas

There has not been extensive development of oil and gas resources near White Sulphur Springs or in the nearby area.

Coal

Similar to many rural areas of Montana, coal has been mined since the 19th Century near White Sulphur Springs and Meagher County.

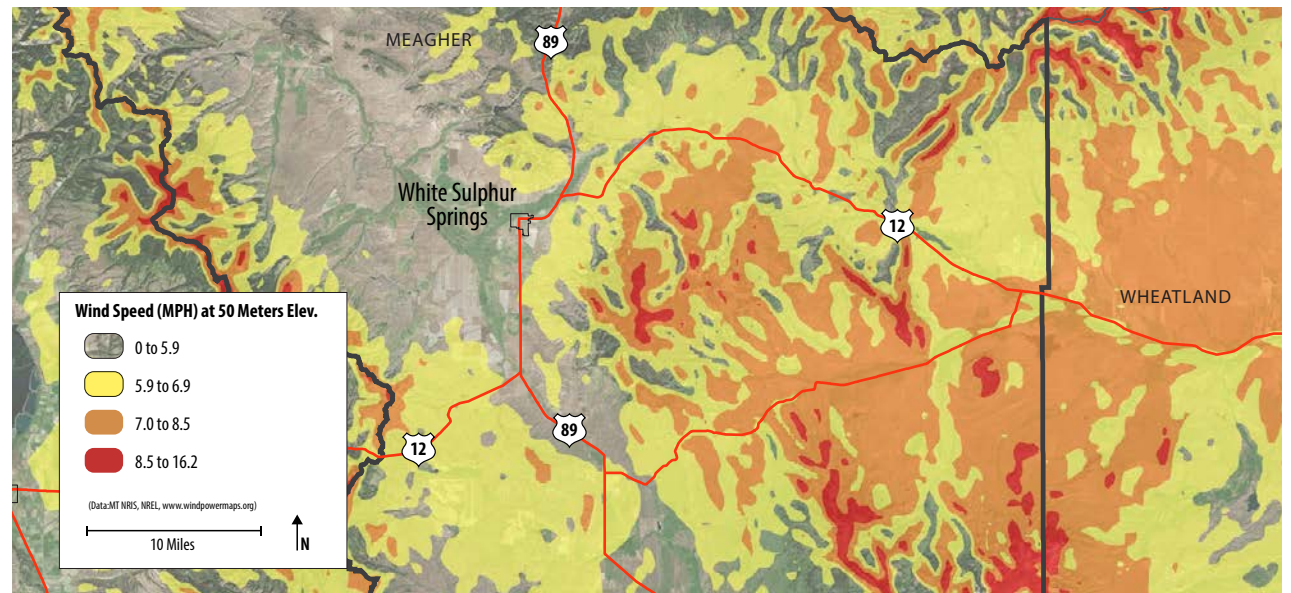
According to the USGS National Coal Resources Database (NCRDS), there are a few estimated instances of medium and high volatile bituminous coal of doubtful value for coal located within 25 miles of White Sulphur Springs. This classification is divided “into three classes: (1) areas containing thin or irregular beds, which locally may be thick enough to mine, (2) areas in which coal is of poor quality, and (3) areas where information on the thickness and quality of coal beds is meager or lacking” (USGS NRCDS). This indicates extensive coal development is unlikely. Should a dependable resource be discovered, White Sulphur Springs would be the closest center for goods, services, and housing in the region, and the impacts should be considered in future updates to this growth policy.

Wind

Like other intermontane valleys in central Montana, the Smith River Valley generally has high average wind speeds which in may be suitable for wind power generation. Should wind power be developed nearby, temporary impacts would likely be directed to existing towns and cities and White Sulphur Springs would be the nearest center of housing and commerce. Subsequent updates to this growth policy should evaluate the probability of wind power development.

Forestry

White Sulphur Springs has a long history of forestry and timber production. The City was once the center of a vibrant industry, with timber mills and rail infrastructure occupying much of the western blocks of the original townsite (source?). International policy has since changed the industry, leaving much of this land vacant. The resource, however, is still prevalent.



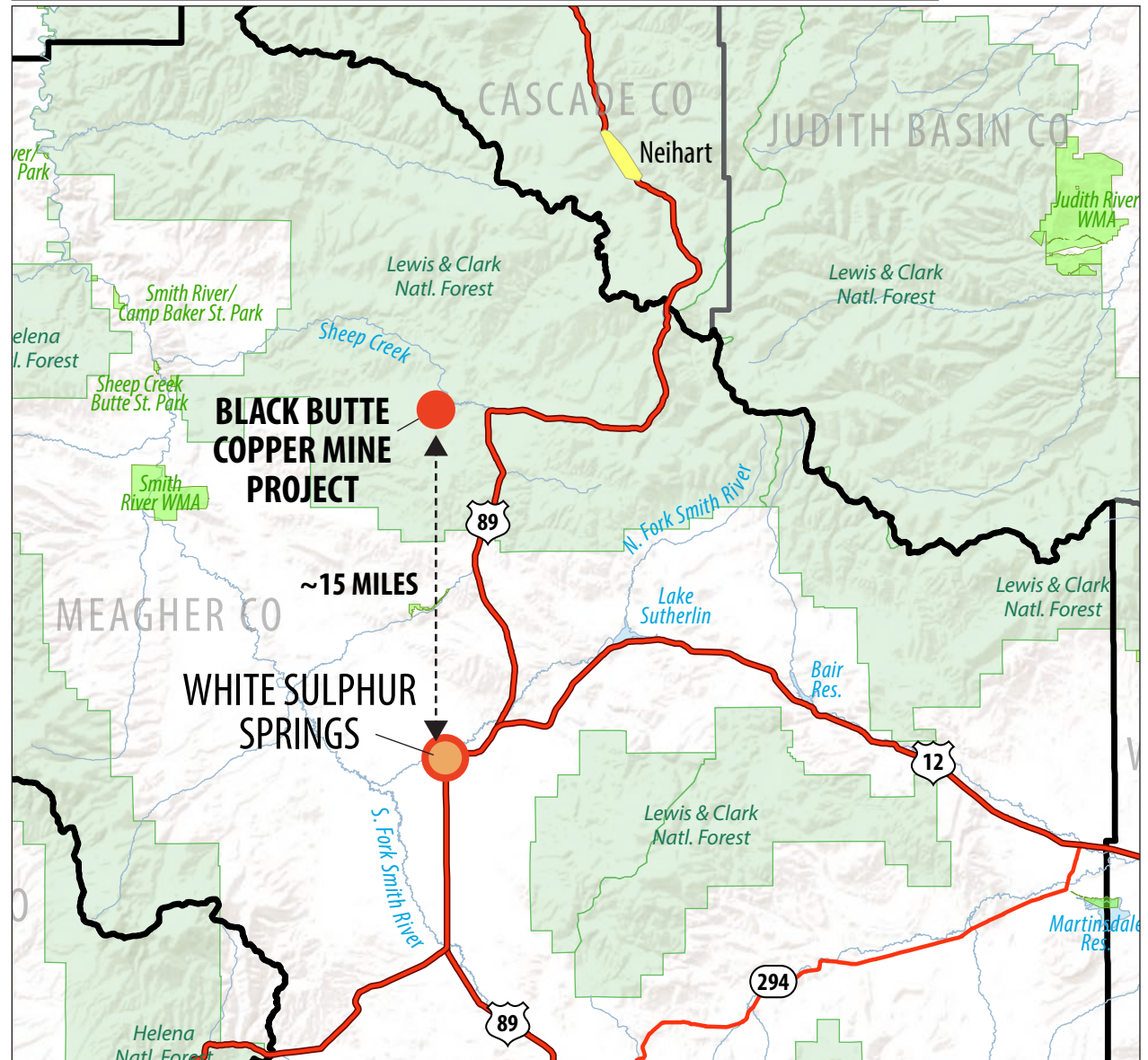
▲ *Wind Speed near White Sulphur Springs (MT State Library)*

Hard Rock Mining

Mining companies have proven the existence of plentiful mineral resources in the area north of White Sulphur Springs. The Black Butte Copper Mine project proposed by Tintina Resources could have potentially large impacts to the city. The proposed project site is approximately 15 miles directly north of the city, or about 18 driving miles on US Highway 89. Facilities such as mill buildings, tailing and process water ponds, rock stockpiles, plant buildings, and access roads are proposed in project plans and reports. Tintina Montana Inc. has provided mitigation strategies and reports that outline the impacts the project may have on local economics, housing, and environmental conditions

These issues and impacts all contribute to land use policy and are critical to the city's future growth.

▼ Location of the Black Butte Copper Mining Project



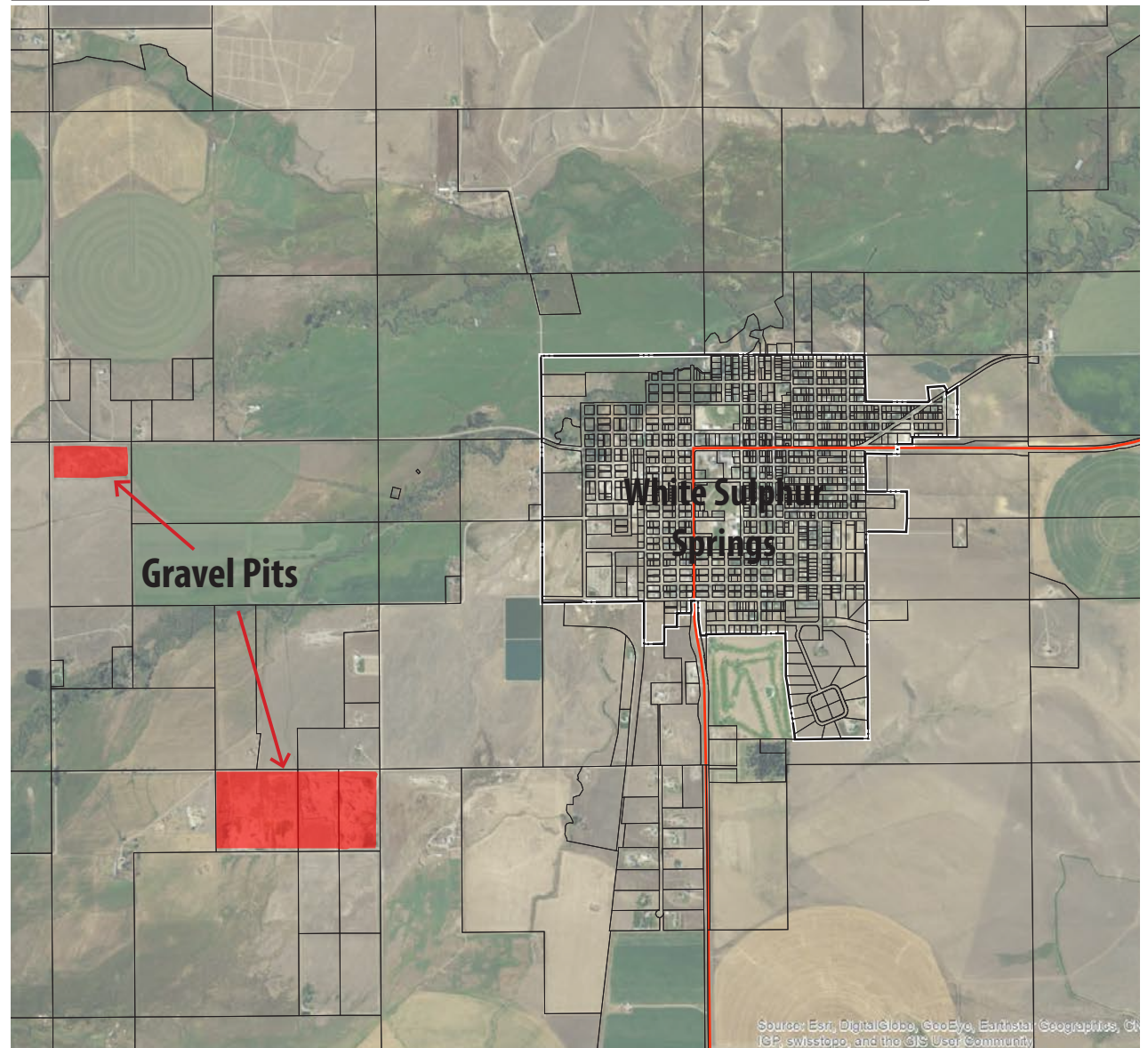
Sand and Gravel Resources

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality permits opencut mining operations throughout the state, including gravel pits. The Opencut Mining Act (MCA 82-4-401) regulates the mining of gravel, clay, scoria, soil materials, bentonite, sand, or peat. Opencut mining operations that remove more than 10,000 cubic yards of materials and overburden are subject to DEQ provisions, and require a permit issued to the operator by the DEQ. Operations on certain federal or state lands may be exempt, pursuant to a determination by the state Board of Environmental Review.

According to the MDEQ database, there are eight opencut mining operations in Meagher County. Two gravel pits are located within two miles of the town.

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

▼ Opencut mining operations near White Sulphur Springs (MT DEQ)

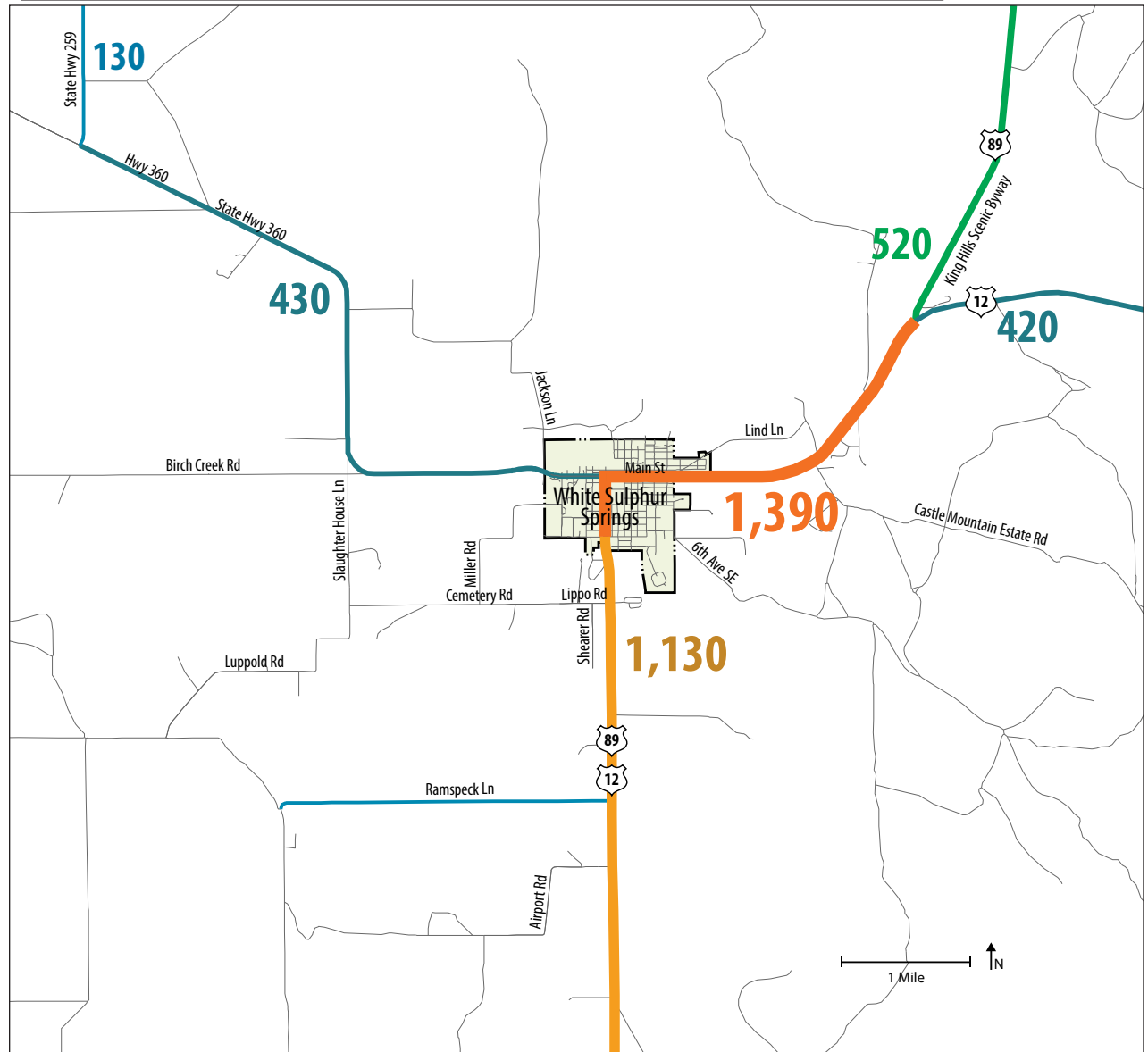


Traffic and Highway Corridors

According to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), there were about 39 million average vehicle miles traveled (AVMT) in Meagher County, 63% of which were traveled on state highways.

Additionally, MDT records average annual daily traffic (AADT), which is the number of vehicles that pass a point on a roadway over one year averaged per day. These figures create an estimate of traffic volumes on major roadways. US Highway 89/12 has the most traffic, as it links White Sulphur Springs to other larger population centers such as Great Falls to the north and Livingston to the south.

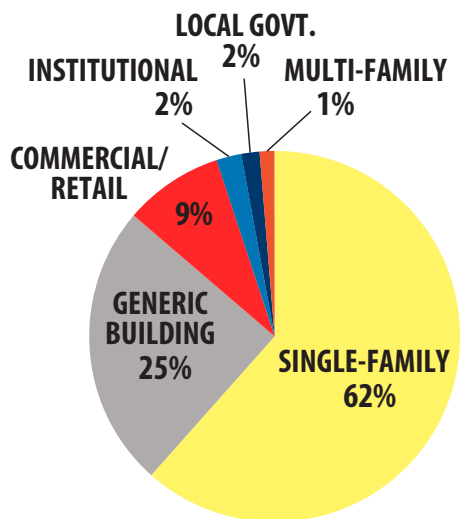
▼ Average Annual Daily Traffic (MT Dept. of Transportation, 2014)



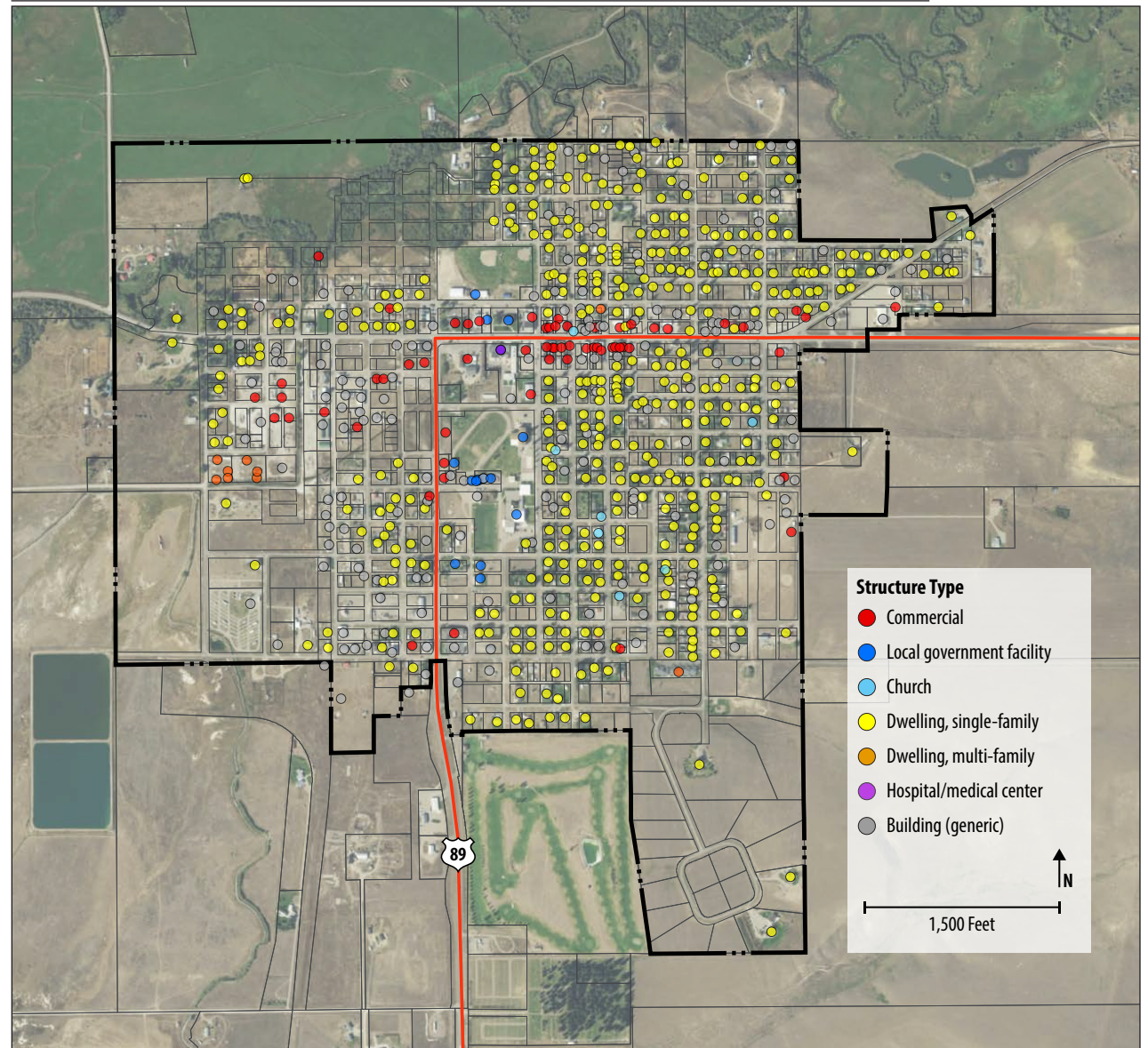
Buildings and Land Use

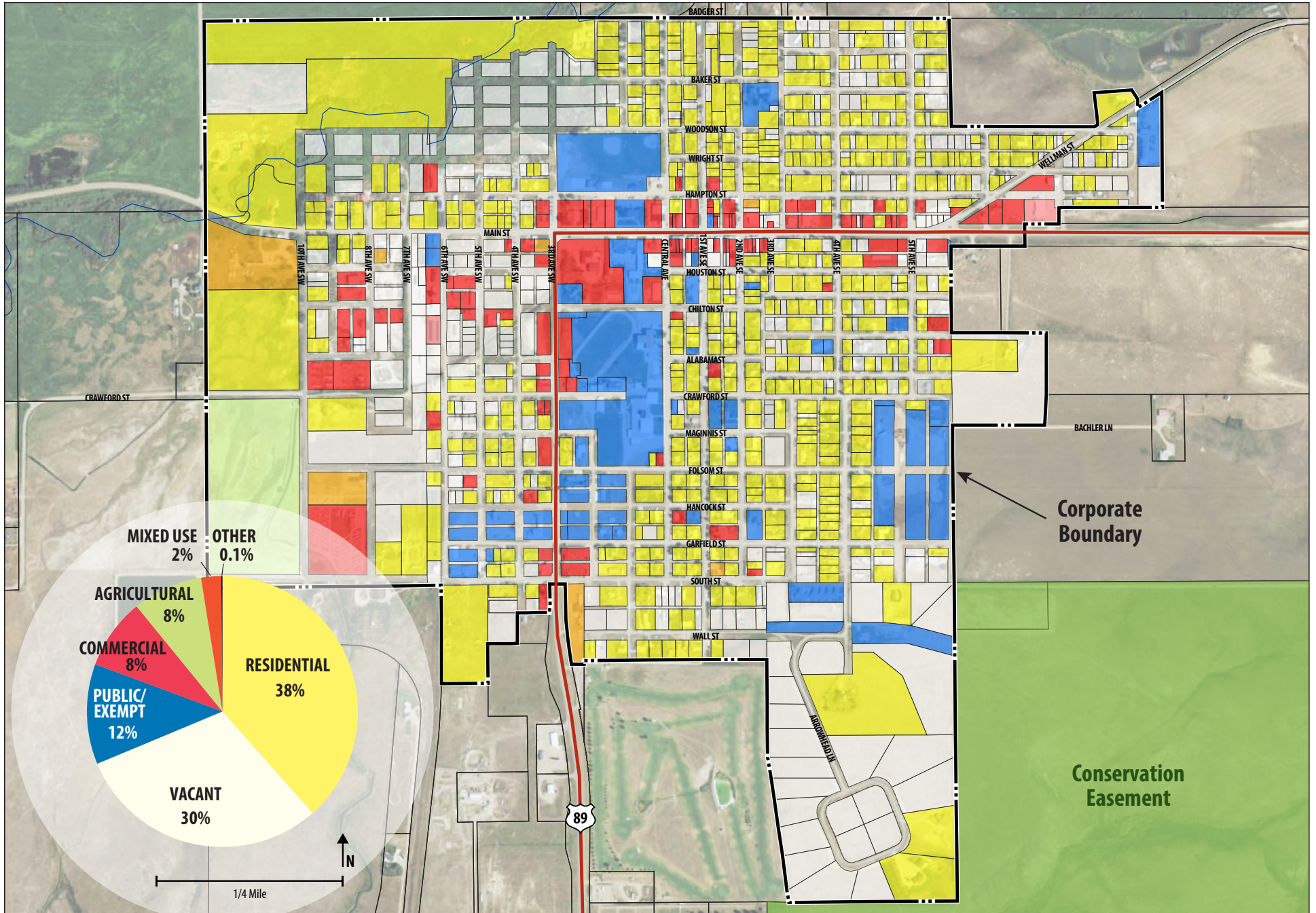
There are about an estimated 700 structures within White Sulphur Springs. Tax assessment rolls show that about 62% of these are single family dwellings, 25% are generic storage or shed buildings, and 9% are commercial or retail sites. Two percent are institutional structures (churches, schools), and another 2% are local government structures. The remaining 1% of buildings are multi-family dwellings.

The map opposite shows the density and general type of structures in the town.



▼ Structures in White Sulphur Springs (MT State Library GIS, Structures and Addresses Framework)





▲ Existing Land Use, 2016 (MT State Library, MT Cadastral Mapping Project)

Single family residential is the most prevalent use of land in White Sulphur Springs, occupying 38% of the city's area. A large percentage of the city is vacant land (30%), while 12% is occupied by public or exempt uses such as government facilities, schools, or non-profit organizations. The public land uses are generally dispersed evenly throughout the city. About 8% of land is used for commercial or retail purposes, most of which is concentrated on the major highway corridors or Main Street. Agricultural activities also occupy 8% of the city's total land area and are found on the city's periphery.

The city utilizes a Land Users Permit system to regulate site development within the city. The permit conveys site design standards by requiring applicants to complete a site plan diagram for new structures, which complies with the minimum building setback. The permit also ensures all buildings are constructed with an approved building permit.

Large conservation easements managed by the Montana Land Reliance lie just outside of the city's incorporated limits and include the Townsend Ranch and an extensive easement along the Smith River Valley.

Public Facilities

Public facilities include public buildings, public services, and infrastructure. The City shops and City Hall building are located on Hampton Street near the City Park. The Meagher County Courthouse and other departments are located on West Main Street in White Sulphur Springs. The city wells and a sewer lift station are located in a well house on the northeast corner of the city on city-owned property. A new 560,000-gallon tank provides storage for city water which is filtered and chlorinated to produce very high-quality public water. Additional upgrades to municipal water and sewer infrastructure is underway.

The White Sulphur Springs School District #8 Elementary and High Schools have undergone major renovations, remodels, or additions over the last several years.

Land has been purchased along Highway 12/89 adjacent to the Forest Service lands for a new library. Eighty-two percent of the project's funding been raised.

Business and Other Community Amenities

White Sulphur Springs' Main Street offers many restaurants and retailers that offer local goods and services as well as employment opportunities.

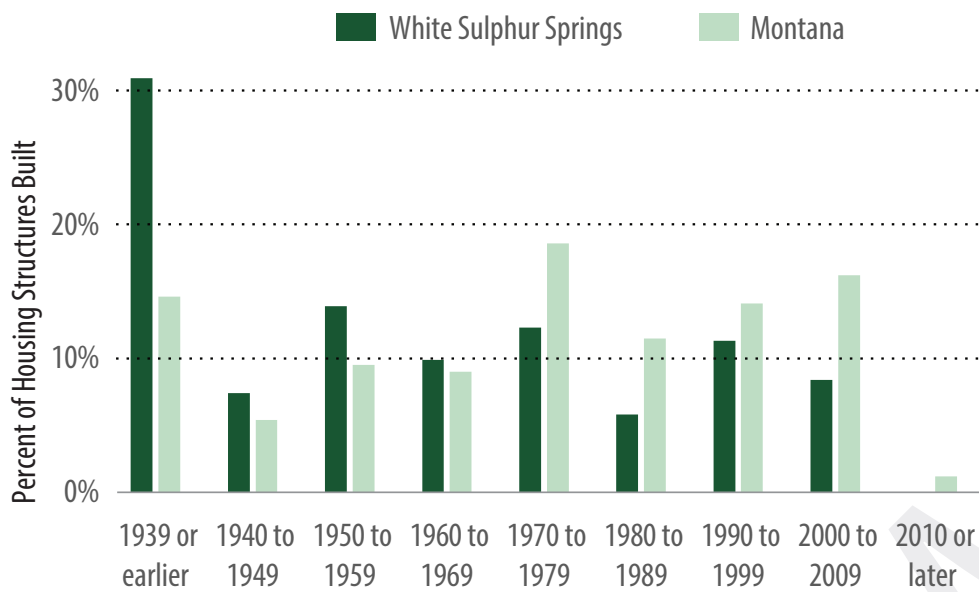
These amenities include sporting goods and outfitters, gas and service stations, eateries, bars, banks, grocers, clothing retailers, and lodging. There are no national large-format retail franchises in the city.

Main Street Improvements

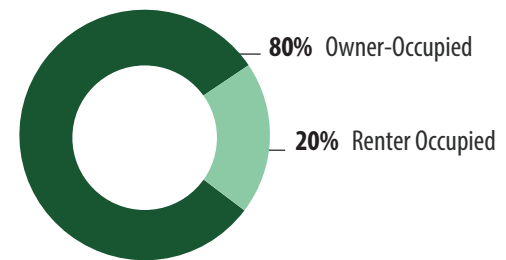
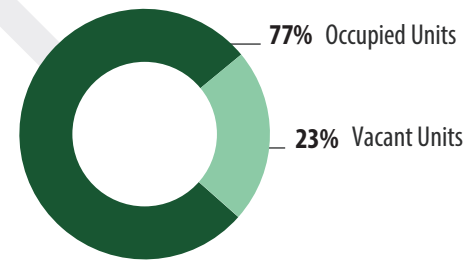
The City's Main Street has undergone major renovations that included new streetlights that reflect the street's historical character. The public investment reflects a community-wide downtown revitalization effort in White Sulphur Springs'

Housing

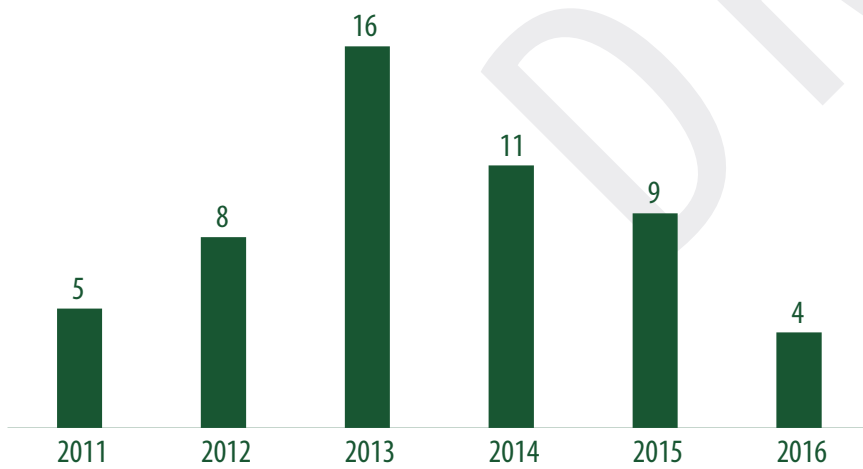
Because most small towns hope to provide high quality and affordable housing, the condition of housing becomes an important issue, being that houses are the largest portion of the building stock. Almost every residential structure is a single family home or mobile home. A few multiple family structures, mostly apartments, exist in the city. Affordable housing is often easier to develop with many units in one building. An abundance of multifamily buildings in other places can make it easier to adaptively reuse such buildings to provide affordable housing. In rural areas with an abundance of single family housing, this becomes challenging.



▲ **Year Housing Structure Built 2014** (US Census ACS)



▲ **Occupied Housing Units 2014** (US Census ACS)



▲ **Housing Starts, Meagher County, 2011-2016** (MT Building Industry Assoc.)

The Montana Building Industry Association (MBIA) tracks housing starts by county. In 2015 Meagher County had nine housing starts, down from eleven starts in 2014, and 16 starts in 2013. Since 2006 housing starts in the county have declined by 40%.

Montana Main Street Program

The Montana Department of Commerce administers the Main Street Program. From the Community Development Divisions website:

“The Montana Main Street Program, established in 2005 and currently serving twenty-seven communities across the state, is a collaborative effort between the Community Development Division and the Montana Office of Tourism at the Montana Department of Commerce. The program helps communities strengthen and preserve their historic downtown commercial districts by focusing on economic development, urban revitalization, and historic preservation through long-range planning, organization, design, and promotion.

“Using the National Trust Main Street Center Four Point Approach™ to downtown revitalization, the Montana Main Street Program provides a range of services and assistance to communities striving

to enhance economic and business vitality while maintaining local historic integrity, quality of life, and sense of place. Such goals are best met by uniting larger community ideas and efforts with program organization, coordination, and resources.

“The Montana Main Street program offers technical assistance and expertise to member communities and awards competitive grant funding to communities actively working on downtown revitalization, economic development, and historic preservation.”

<http://comdev.mt.gov/Programs/MainStreet>

The City of White Sulphur Springs could potentially benefit from certification in the state Main Street program, as added investment in both the public and private realms could boost revitalization of the downtown’s storefronts.

A VISION OF WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

This Vision Statement reflects how White Sulphur Springs should look in ten to twenty years.

White Sulphur Springs will have maintained its small town, rural community character. It will amplify its history and historical features. The public facilities and services will be in good condition, adequate to serve the existing and future population and businesses. The community will enjoy a strong economy, with good jobs available. The commercial sector will comprise a diverse mix of available goods and services to serve the needs of local residents and businesses.

The community will have quality, affordable health care, with the presence of a qualified hospital and clinic, and a local pharmacist. Residents will have access to, and enjoy, city parks, ball fields, a golf course. Quality education will be provided by a sound elementary school and high school. A balance of affordable, safe and healthy housing will available for rent or ownership.

A compact, efficient land use development pattern will provide safe, healthy residential neighborhoods, efficient and convenient commercial areas, and functional and safe industrial areas for processing and manufacturing of goods.



POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The population in White Sulphur Springs has remained relatively flat over the past 10 years, and current estimates have the population in slight decline. Several recent studies have been completed that provide different perspectives on current and future growth within the community. This plan has referenced in previous sections the challenges of looking forward in terms of projecting new growth. Based upon a review of existing literature, a conservative estimate of population growth is recommended. Several population projections have been completed over the years that should have relevance to this discussion.

White Sulphur Springs Preliminary Engineering Report for Water System, 2010:

In this report, the 20-year design population for White Sulphur Springs was projected to increase at a relatively conservative 1%/year. Starting with a population of 951 in 2008, projection for 2015 was 1020, with the projection for 2030 at 1184. That's an increase of 233 persons over a 20-plus year time-frame. Comparatively, current population estimate from 2015 Census figures has the community declining to a population of 925 (26-person decline from 2008). The population projections in this document did not consider potential mine impacts as they were not on the horizon at the time.

Meagher County Growth Policy:

The Meagher County Growth Policy (2014) estimated that population increase as a result of the Black Butte Copper Mine would be 396 by 2020, with all of the population residing in White Sulphur Springs.

Black Butte Copper Mine Website, accessed November 28, 2016:

The Black Butte Copper Mine Website estimates that 200 positions will be needed during the mine construction phase which will last 24 to 36 months. When the mine opens, the operational phase will provide approximately 240 jobs. Mine operations are anticipated to begin in 2020 and continue for an estimated 20-years.

Gordon Butte Environmental Impact Study, September 2016 (p. 106-112):

In addition the Black Butte Copper Mine, other natural resource development projects are likely to have an impact on White Sulphur Springs. One of those is the Gordon Butte project planned near the town of Martinsdale. This study identifies construction labor to be between 100 to 350 personal over the three-year construction period.

More interestingly, the study assumes that only five to ten percent would reside within Meagher County (a maximum of 100 at peak construction). The study goes on to indicate that this population will be dispersed across existing communities in Meagher County, but also will attract workers from Billings, Livingston, Bozeman and other regional communities.

During the operations phase of the project it is estimated that 60 additional residents would reside within the County. The study goes on to say that the existing vacant housing units could accommodate the additional population.

The Stillwater Mine Experience:

The Stillwater Mining Company provides the model for anticipating impacts to communities, and as the Black Butte Copper Mine continues along its permitting process, information from mine impact plans for the two main mines operated by the Stillwater Mine will provide a critical resource. In reviewing those documents, it is clear that a much more detailed picture of the specific impacts to White Sulphur Springs will be generated through the mine impact process administered by the State of Montana.

In conversations with John Beaudry, public affairs director for the Stillwater Mine, he emphasized the importance of the mine's bus system in order to obtain an adequate labor force from the region. In the case of the Boulder and Stillwater Mines, buses run from Livingston to Billings to Red Lodge, providing a broad labor force to draw from.

It should also be recognized that the scale of mining at Stillwater and Boulder is greater than that currently proposed at the Black Butte Copper Mine.

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS:

In looking to the future, it is likely that White Sulphur Springs would not continue to see a flat growth trend. Even without natural resource development, due to all of the other opportunities in the community, it is likely that growth would occur. The main question is how much growth and how should the community accommodate that growth.

Even if each of the two projects discussed came to fruition, it should be noted that White Sulphur Springs has adequate land area within the existing community to support this additional growth. The existing housing stock will need to be rehabilitated, and vacant lots will be converted

to better uses, but the community does have the capacity to support projected growth. As the mine impact plan is created, it is recommended that as much effort as possible be placed on focusing infrastructure investments to the built environment, rather than focusing on expansion beyond the existing city limits.

It should also be noted that the community of White Sulphur Springs' population was 1,302 at its peak in 1980. Even with both projects coming on-line, it is unlikely that the population in White Sulphur Springs will rebound to this peak population within the period of this plan.

Again, regardless of the increase in population, it should be noted that population increase can be fully accommodated within the existing city limits so long as the community focuses infrastructure improvements within the community, rather than extending services.

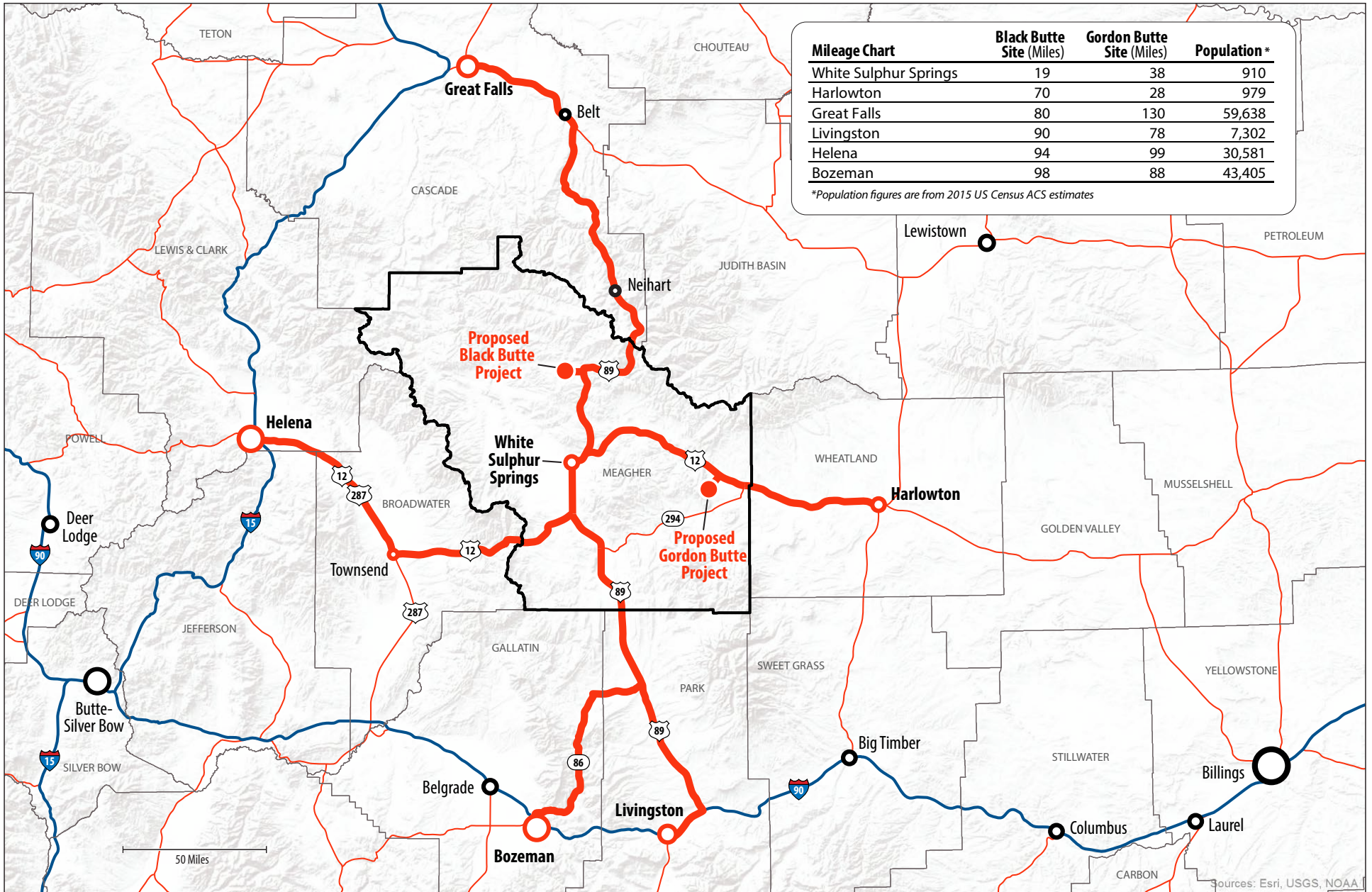
The implications on land use are that limited change is necessary in terms of annexation. There is sufficient room for the community to grow within the existing municipal limits. It should be recognized, however, that two primary new growth areas along the highway corridor do provide some opportunities for expansion of the

community. This should come as a secondary priority to infill development. Much of the demand for expansion should be driven solely by the need for additional commercial and/or light industrial needs, which provide a greater opportunity to have a positive impact on the community's tax base.

It is estimated that the impacts of population on White Sulphur Springs will be less than those cited in the Meagher County Growth Policy. This is based upon the assumption that the labor force will be drawn from a wide catchment area reaching out to communities like Townsend, Livingston, Helena, Great Falls and Lewistown. It is likely that the availability of transportation and long-shifts within the mining industry will create opportunities for the catchment area of employees to be much broader than focused just on White Sulphur Springs.

It should be noted that currently the Black Butte Copper Mine operations are headquartered in White Sulphur Springs. Maintaining and increasing management presence within the Community of White Sulphur Springs will certainly provide some longer-term opportunities for continued investment in the community.

▼ Location of proposed natural resource development projects in relation to the transportation network and population centers.



FUTURE LAND USE AND GROWTH AREAS

A future land use map can lay the blueprint for enacting land use regulations at a later date. Areas for future growth are designated locations where the City can target the development of public services to encourage growth. The future land use map and growth areas include places within and outside the municipal boundaries.

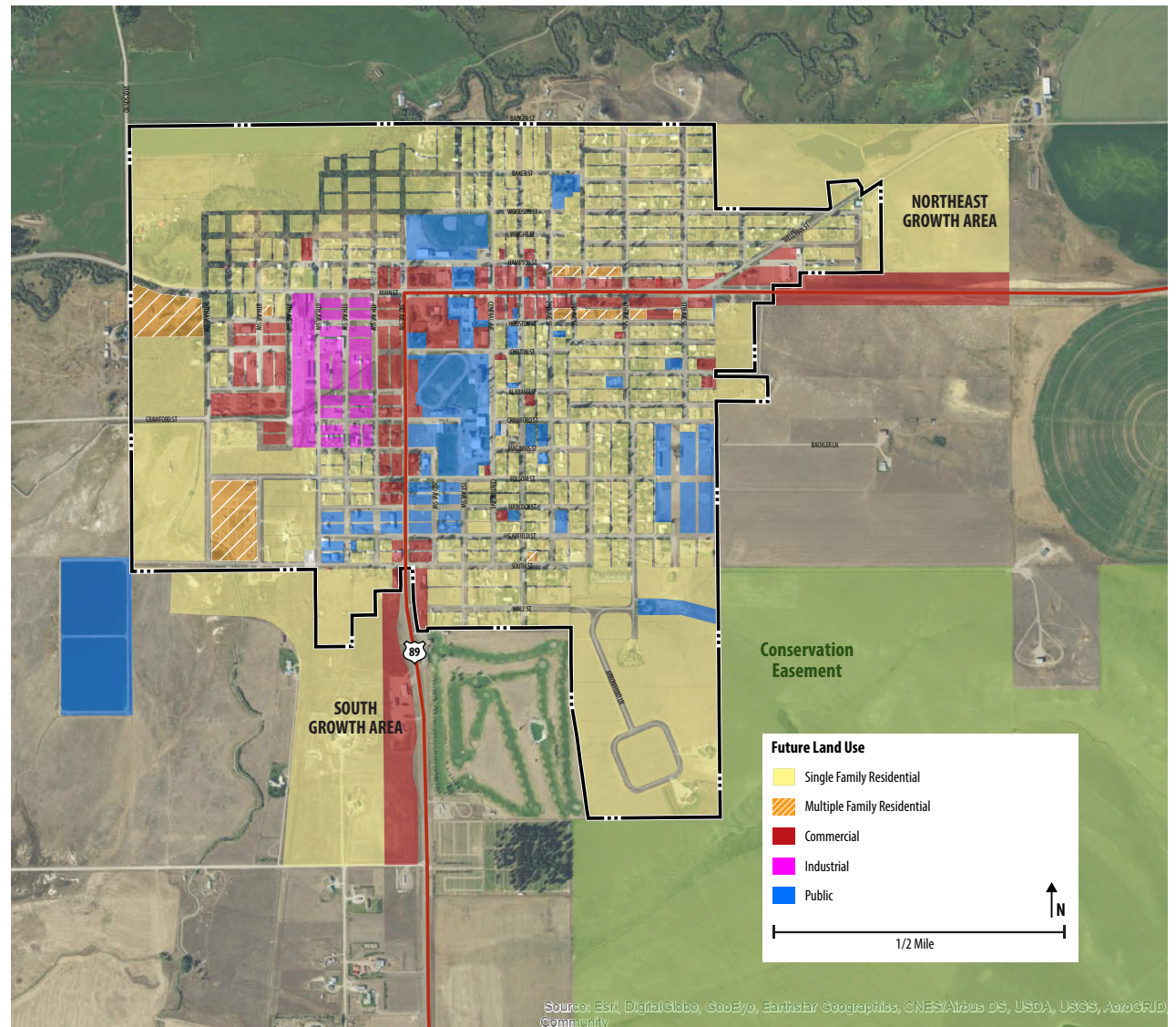
Within the City

Developing land inside the city rather than on rural land without services is an efficient and cost effective policy for future growth, which can be driven by availability of public infrastructure and vacancy of land. One particular development opportunity area exists south of Main Street between 10th Ave West and 3rd Ave West on land formerly used for railroad-oriented activities. These parcels are under-served by public infrastructure, and many of these parcels are vacant.

Additionally there are several vacant parcels of various sizes in platted additions and subdivisions. These are generally zoned residential and exist in the city's established neighborhoods as well as the Arrowhead Meadows Estates subdivision.

Land uses in these areas should match the historical and existing character of development. Along Main Street, for example, buildings and uses should be consistent with the historic storefront retail shopping environment.

▼ Future land use map and growth areas outside the municipal boundaries



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, Community

Land Use and Urban Design

Downtown/Main Street

The downtown is largely defined by Main Street, the City's key commercial corridor. The central business area generally extends north to Hampton Street, south Houston Street, west to 4th Avenue SW, and east to 3rd Avenue SE. The City's primary businesses are located here which include grocery stores, markets, banks, food and beverage establishments, the Meagher County Courthouse, hotels and tourist amenities, gas stations, and retail shops that front the sidewalk. The latter provide a desirable retail shopping environment where pedestrians can glimpse products in storefront windows as they walk along the street. This urban design is found on Main Streets across Montana. The amount and condition of the retail environment in White Sulphur Springs has, however, changed over the years.

In addition to retail storefronts, a key element of a downtown's urban design are sidewalks. Main Street sidewalks were reconstructed in the summer of 2016 and are in excellent condition.

The recent investment in downtown infrastructure improvements creates a substantial economic benefit to the community.



Pedestrian-scaled lighting and streetscape fixtures

Glazed storefronts



Upper floor mixed uses, preferably residential

Main entrances on the front/ corner of buildings

Parking and vehicle access to the side and rear of building

Materials that reflect local culture, history, or agricultural heritage



Street trees in landscaped tree lawns/planters

US Highway 89 Corridor

The US Highway 89 is described as the north/south corridor of the highway that transitions into 3rd Avenue SW as it enters the City from the south. The urban design and land use vision for this area can be described as a “highway commercial” corridor. Highway commercial can be described as large buildings and facilities associated with commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses that require sites with high visibility and accessibility along the highway. Activities may include transportation and warehousing businesses, large garages, storage facilities, gas and service stations, convenience stores, hotels or motels.

Signage should generally be situated towards the highway. New access and approaches must comply with all applicable state and federal design standards.

▼ *Urban design recommendations for new highway commercial development*



Vehicle access predominantly from side and rear of parcel

Street trees and landscaping along highway frontage

Parking to front, side or rear of buildings

Vehicle access along frontage

Freestanding signage matches primary building in design and materials



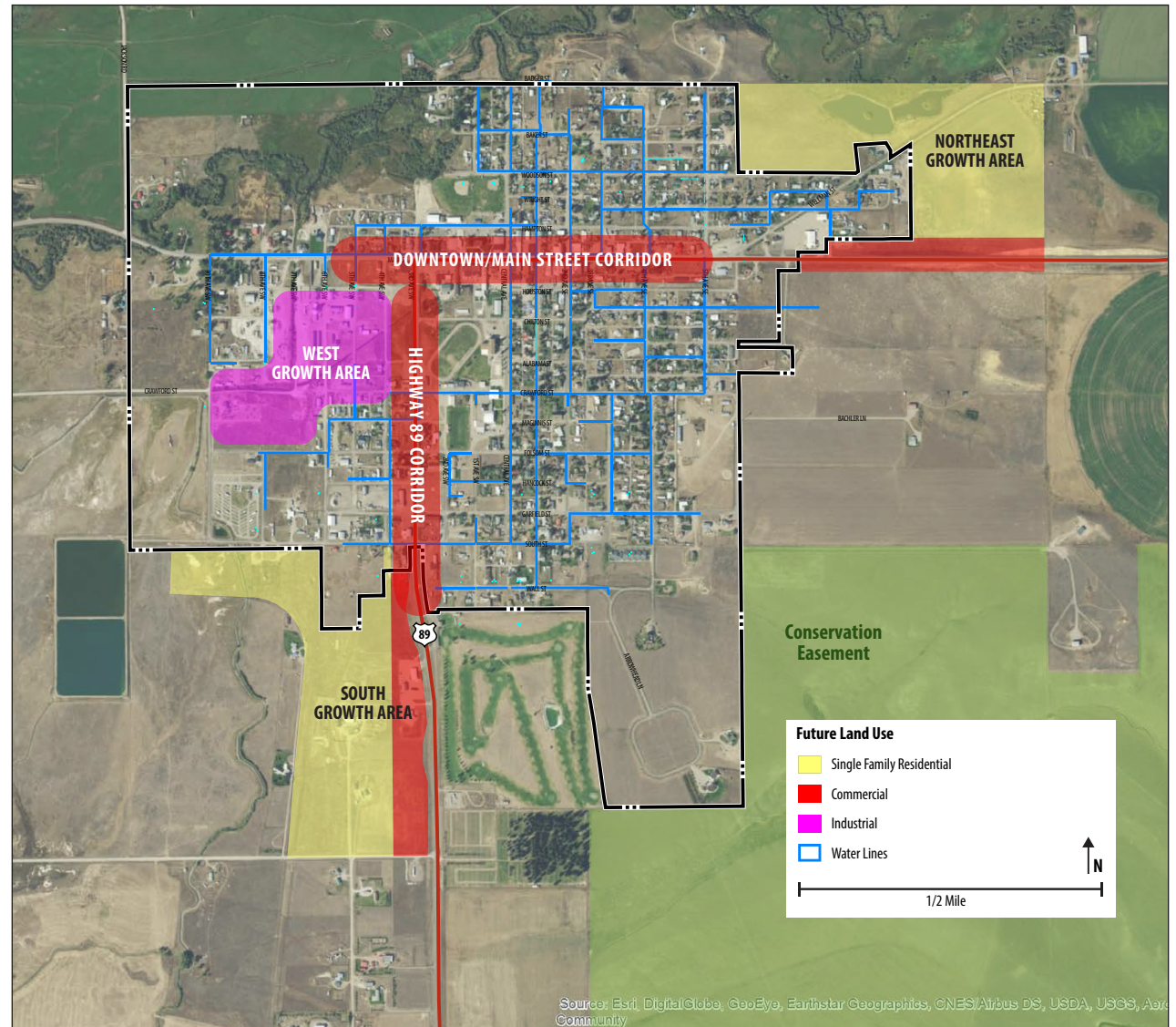
West Growth Area

Future growth generally follows areas where public infrastructure exists and has sufficient capacity to support new development. West of 3rd Avenue SW, however, there exists a large gap in water and sewer infrastructure which may be prohibitive to development.

The west growth area has an abundance of vacant land, therefore this area is intended to target light industrial land uses. Most parcels are not adjacent to residential neighborhoods, limiting nuisances related to incompatible adjacent land uses.

The west growth area geographically corresponds to former rail yards and industrial activities that accommodated heavy equipment and material movement and storage. This is a preferred area for light industrial uses as it is known that highway corridor areas near a city's gateway--typically prime for commercial uses--are absorbed by industrial. As such, light industrial should be targeted for the west growth area.

▼ Major commercial corridors, growth areas

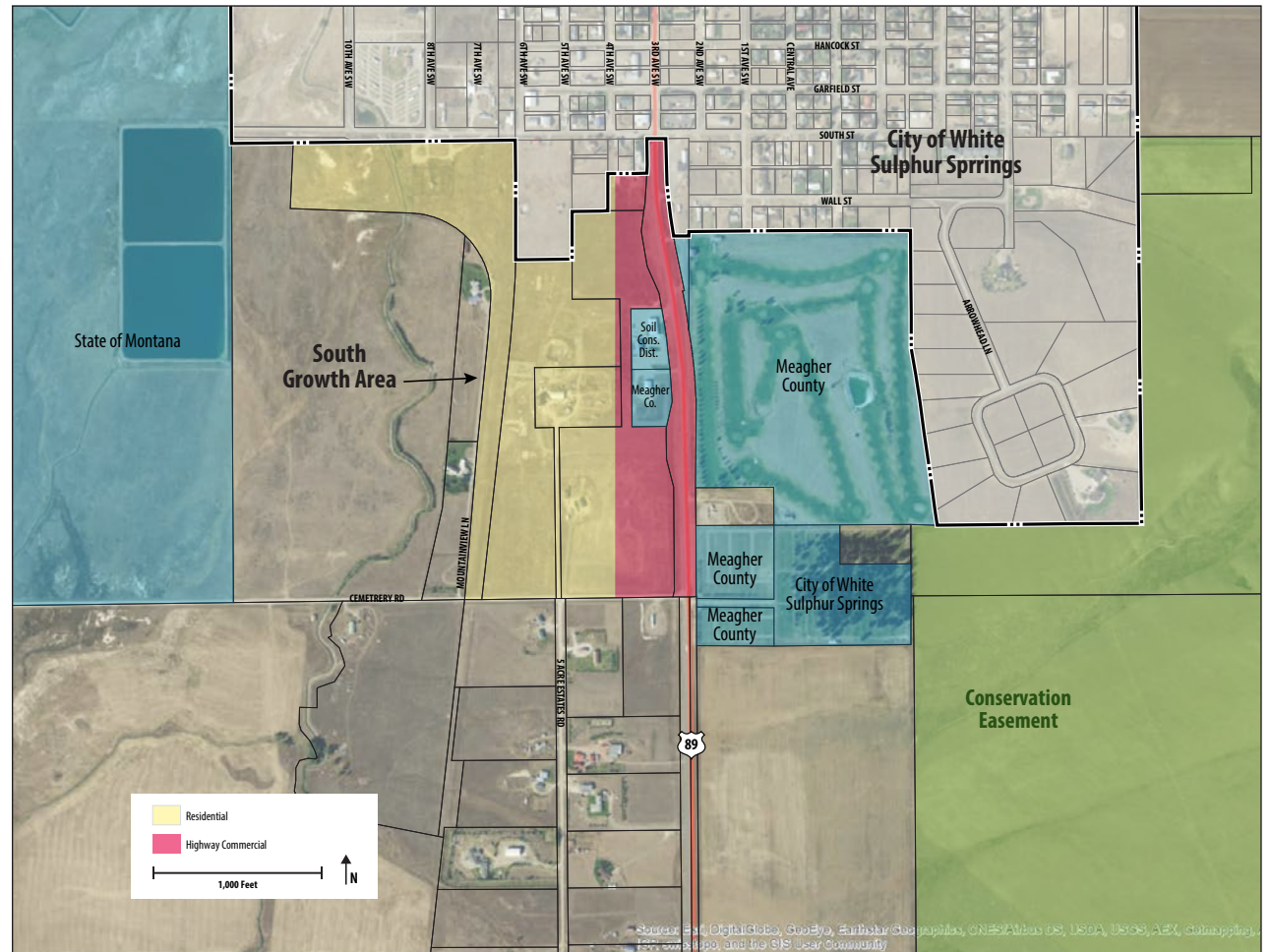


Outside of the City

South Growth Area

The South Growth Area is located along the US Highway 89 corridor as it enters/leaves the City of White Sulphur Springs at the southern municipal boundary. Uses in this designated growth area are envisioned to be similar to the highway commercial uses discussed for the growth area within the city. This area will likely become a target for new commercial development in the next few decades. Municipal services are located adjacent to the municipal boundary on the north end of the South Growth Area.

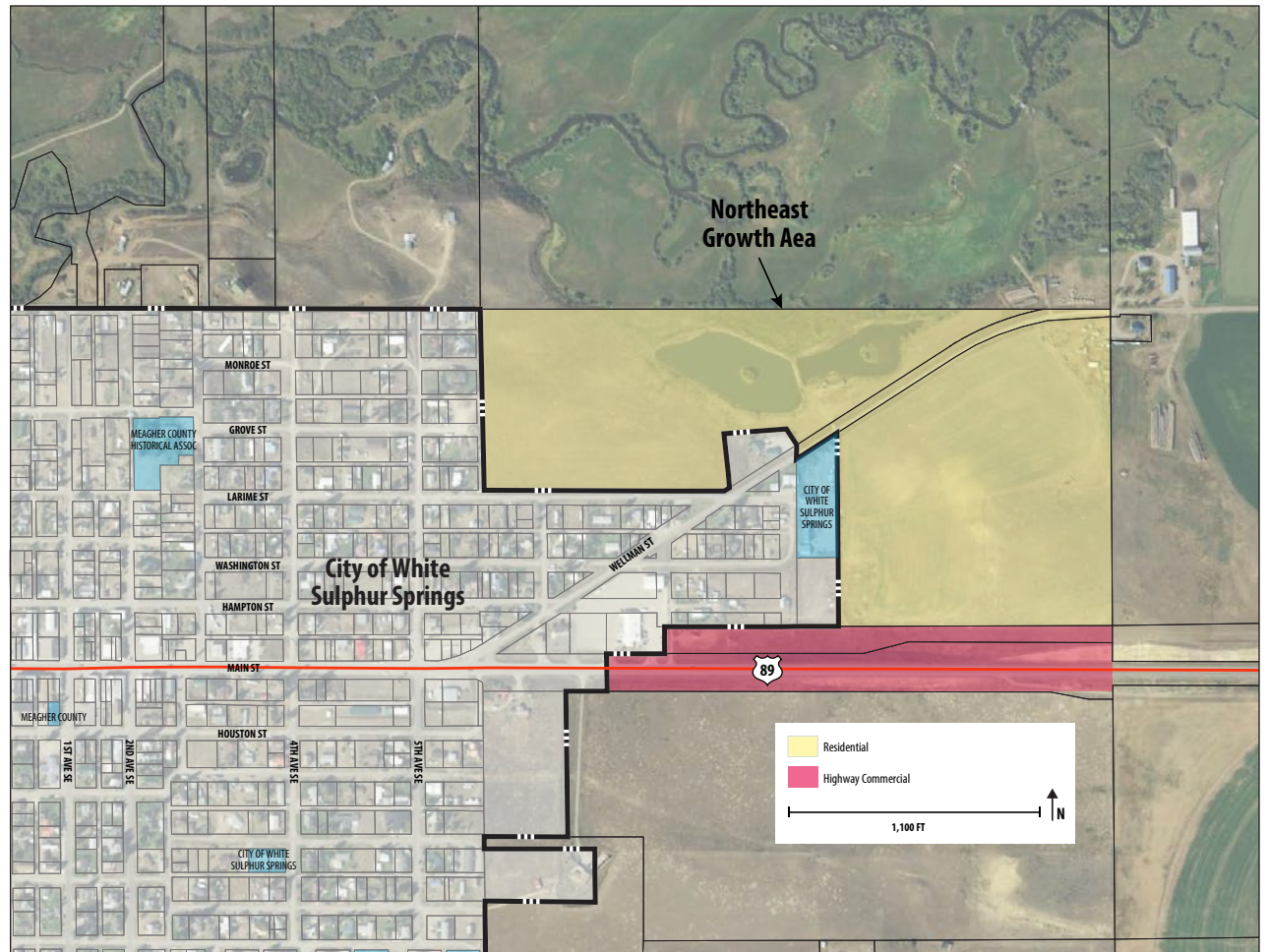
Residential acreages and uses exist nearby, particularly to the south, however commercial or industrial uses are specifically envisioned for this growth area.



Northeast Growth Area

The Northeast Growth Area is located outside the municipal boundary to the northeast corner of White Sulphur Springs. In general, public infrastructure is not as available along the northern boundary due to high ground water and floodplain and other physical barriers, however fewer obstructions exist near the Northeast Growth Area. This location generally presents the most likely opportunity for new residential development outside of the city.

Limited highway commercial uses are envisioned for this targeted new growth area.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Summary

After asking *Where is the City of White Sulphur Springs now?* and *Where is the city going?*, the next question is *How does the city get there?* The Implementation Plan is the answer to the last question. After voicing aspirational visions and using it to inform goals and objectives, the Implementation Plan delivers place-specific projects that will execute this plan. The framework for implementation begins with the Opportunity Site Map which provides an evaluation of specific sites in the city which translate to projects or development opportunities.

The opportunities are categorized into seven fields:

1. **Community**
2. **Parks**
3. **Housing**
4. **Downtown Development**
5. **Economic Development**
6. **Public Buildings**
7. **Streets**

Opportunity Site Map



Source: Esri, DeLorme, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Project List

Community

- 1 The **Castle Museum** provides visitors with an opportunity to look into the history of White Sulphur Springs. A dedicated website and directional signage from Main Street could increase opportunities for visitation.



1 The Castle Museum

Parks

- 2 Several of the community's **parks** have been maintained over the years. Some of the parks in the community will require maintenance in order to be utilized by the public in the future.
- 3 One model of park maintenance is naming parks for local service organizations to adopt (like **Rotary Park**, for example). This model has been used successfully in Red Lodge for many years.
- 4 Another alternative is to adopt a **parks maintenance district** to provide revenue for park investment.



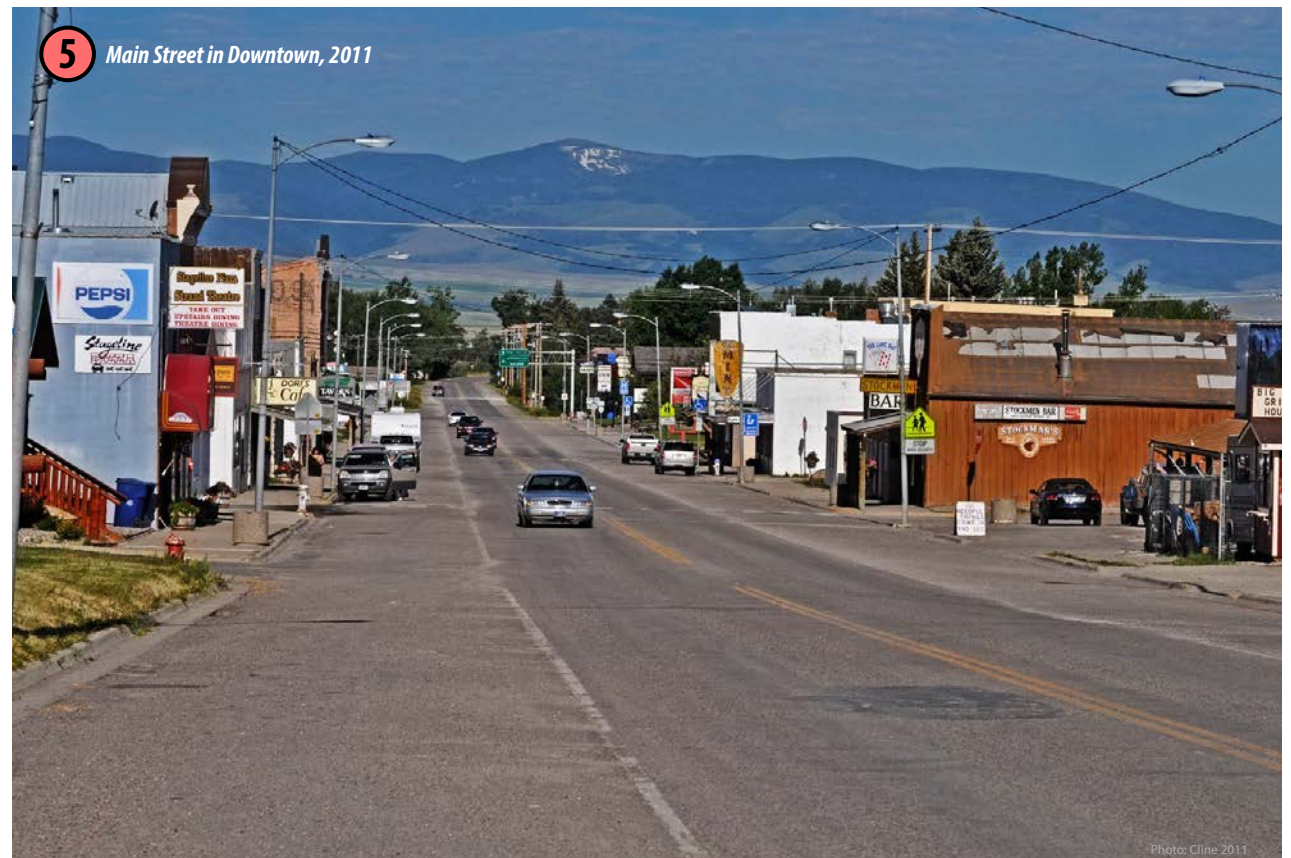
4 Old recreational facilities require additional maintenance

Downtown Development

- 5 The **Downtown Area** continues to see increased activity and reinvestment. Several new businesses have opened in the last several years. Older structures will continue to need reinvestment for the Downtown Area to thrive. Tools like a Business Improvement District (BID) may further enhance private investment in the Downtown area.
- 6 The **state highway reconstruction** through the Highway Commercial Corridor and Downtown Area provide new opportunities for private investment. The improved sidewalks and road have substantially improved the overall appearance and function of the downtown area.
- 7 The **2 Basset Brewery** provides opportunities for locals and visitors alike. The business is an indication of growth in the community, and is often full with guides and customers and those pursuing recreational opportunities such as **floating the Smith River**, a major regional tourism draw, or hunting for Elk.

- 8 **Tintina Resources and the Black Butte Copper Project** provide opportunities for the Community for economic development and increased growth.

The company has opened a storefront office on main street and provides informational sessions and tours to educate the public about the opportunities and challenges at the mine.





6 *Main Street in Downtown during the 2016 Christmas Stroll. The reconstruction project included new pedestrian-scaled streetlights, which were based on historic lamp designs.*

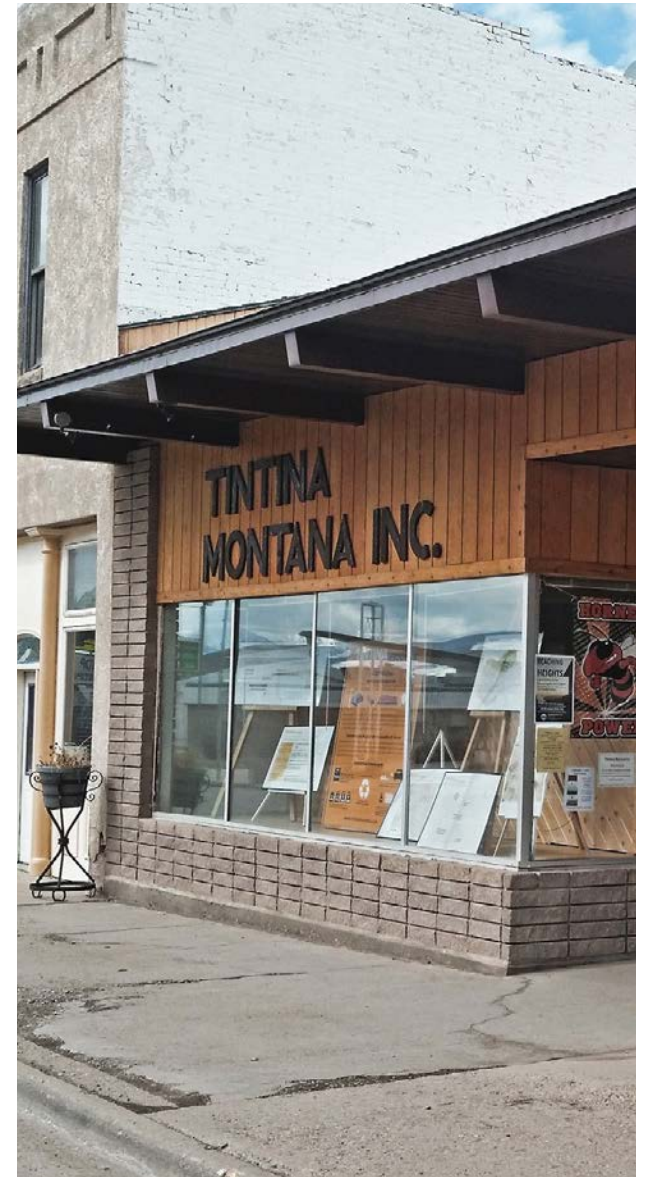


7 *Recreating on the Smith River*



Economic Development

- 9 A wall in Tintina's office displays numerous articles from throughout the region covering the proposed Black Butte Copper Mine. The Mine has the potential to have a significant impact on the community. Many of the local businesses have signs of support for the proposed mine.
- 10 White Sulphur Springs is the County Seat of Meagher County. The **County Courthouse** was built in 1953 by architect Edwin G. Osgood (www.countycourthousehistory.com).
- 11 **New Businesses** opening in White Sulphur Springs show investment in the community from a new generation. White Sulphur Springs is well known for Red Ants Pants and the associated summer music festival, but other new businesses are opening up too. Recently, Twin Sisters Trading Post opened to provide goods to locals and visitors to town.



Public Buildings

- 12 **City Hall** sits one street off of Main Street.
- 13 **The old Elementary School building** will be torn down after completion of a new school.

New Growth Opportunity Sites

- 14 **Older structures** exist in several areas throughout the community.
- 15 **Open area** with vacant parcels to the west of Highway 89.
- 16 **Existing Light Industrial** on the West side of town leads to opportunities for new light industrial to be located in this area.
- 17 **Vacant lots** are available on the edge the community, but lack city sewer.

Streets

- 18 **White Sulphur Springs'** streets are in poor condition in some locations throughout the city. The issue is exacerbated in some locations where underlying water and/or sewer lines are also deteriorated and need replacing.

- 17 **Vacant lands inside the municipal boundary can create redevelopment opportunities**



Implementation Table

This Implementation Strategy /Action Plan sets forth the measures and actions the City plans to carry out the goals, objectives and policies specified in this growth policy plan.

These statements, taken together, establish a community framework for fostering economic growth, providing public facilities and services, managing land use and development, and faci-

tating safe, affordable housing. Importantly, any and all implementation actions will require commitment by White Sulphur Springs residents and the city council to follow through on the guidance provided in this Plan.

Action	Responsibility	Schedule
Economic Development		
1. Form an Economic Development Council to promote new start-up businesses, recruit new businesses and retain/expand existing local businesses and increase employment	City Council, County Commission, Chamber of Commerce, MBAC	Within 1 Year
2. Through the EDC, develop a business assistance program.*	City Council, County Commission, Economic Development Council	Within 1 Year
3. In coordination with the EDC, identify properties suitable for commercial or industrial uses, and adopt policies and/or regulations to protect those properties from uses or development incompatible with commercial or industrial activities.	Economic Development Council, MBAC	Ongoing
4. Work with the EDC and Chamber of Commerce to enhance promotion of the travel and recreation industry.	City Council, County Commission	Within 2 Years
5. Through EDC, work with Dept. of Commerce and Main Street Program (Pg. 35).		
Land Use		
1. Through its planning board, draft and adopt updated subdivision regulations.	City Council, City Planning Board	Ongoing
2. Through its planning board, (A) study the options available in Montana for enacting municipal land use regulations, and (B) pursue adoption of suitable land use regulations to ensure sound, thoughtful future development.	City Council, City Planning Board	Within 1 Year

Action	Responsibility	Schedule
3. With its planning board, meet with the Meagher County Commissioners and county planning board to coordinate managing land use development near and adjacent to the city.	City Council, County Commission, City Planning Board, County Planning Board	Within 2 Years
Public Facilities and Services		
1. Develop a 5-6 year capital improvements plan (CIP) that identifies the city's needs for public facilities, sets priorities among those needs, identifies the expected costs for planning, engineering, construction, and on-going maintenance and replacement after construction; and identifies likely funding sources. A key component of the CIP will be a combined street repair / water-sewer line replacement plan.	Consultant, City Council, County Commission, City Planning Board, County Planning Board	Within 2 Years
2. Establish a coordinated joint program with Meagher County for sharing personnel and road/street maintenance equipment on road/street improvement projects.	City Council, County Commission	Within 1 Year
3. Adopt ordinances implementing the public facility operating policies set out on pages 11-12.	City Council	Within 2 Years
4. Meet at least every 2 years with: MOUNTAINVIEW MEDICAL CENTER, MEAGHER COUNTY CITY LIBRARY, MEAGHER COUNTY SENIOR CITIZENS, and MEAGHER COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION to discuss provision of city services to the facilities, supporting their programs, and where appropriate, sponsoring grant/loan applications.	City Council, MVMC, Library, MCCSC, MCHA	Ongoing
5. Organize interagency meetings to include at least the City, Meagher County, White Sulphur Springs Public Schools, MT Department of Transportation, MT Business Assistance Connection to discuss opportunities to improve efficiencies in providing public facilities and services through sharing or cost sharing, cooperation and coordination.	City Council, County Commission, WSSPS, MDOT, MBAC	Ongoing

Action	Responsibility	Schedule
Housing		
1. (A) In coordination with realtors, Meagher County Senior Citizens, and MBAC, assess the needs for additional housing and rehabilitation of existing housing units, especially for senior citizens, handicapped and low income residents. (B) Study state, federal and private housing programs available for Montana cities.	City Council, City, Planning Board, MCCSC, MBAC	Within 2 Years
2. Develop and implement a housing plan to meet the identified housing needs with appropriate housing programs.	City Council, City, Planning Board, MCCSC	Within 2 Years
Public Communications and Information		
1. Publish notices and articles in local newspapers and newsletters, post notices on the City and other appropriate websites, and hold open public meetings to inform citizens of City actions and planning.	City Council, City, Planning Board	Ongoing
2. Give notice of, and hold, open public meetings, and allow public comment at all regular or special meetings of the City Council or any of its boards or committees to hear and consider citizens' ideas and opinions on proposed City actions.	City Council, City, Planning Board	Ongoing

* The Business Assistance program will develop local capability to:

- Secure grant/loan programs to foster economic growth;
- Help prospective businesses prepare business plans and marketing plans, and assemble capital and financing packages;
- Develop and maintain an inventory of commercial lots and vacant buildings available for rent or purchase by new or expanding businesses. The inventory will include the asking rental or purchase prices, availability of electric power, water, sewer service, and street access.

LOCAL REVIEW OF SUBDIVISION

Defining Subdivision Evaluation Criteria

Requirements for a growth policy under 76-1-601 include:

“(h) a statement explaining how the governing bodies will:

- (i) Define the criteria in 76-3-608(3)(a); and
- (ii) Evaluate and make decisions regarding proposed subdivisions with respect to the criteria in 76-3-608(3)(a);”

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 city 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 town use these guidelines.

Therefore, subdivisions in the White Sulphur Springs 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.

Public Hearing Procedures

Subdivision plans are reviewed and recommended for approval or denial by the White Sulphur Springs 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 White Sulphur Springs, 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.

COORDINATION WITH MEAGHER COUNTY

It is the intent of the City of White Sulphur Springs to coordinate with Meagher County on issues of mutual interest and to cooperate on issues using federal, state, county, and city laws and regulations for guidance.

Coordination with the Meagher County

This growth policy proposes the following specific coordination approaches with the Meagher County.

- Coordinate a 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 during a municipal annexation.
 - Support maintenance and improvement of any county infrastructure systems (e.g.: through letters of support for grants submitted by the County for improvements, etc.), recognizing that sound infrastructure is necessary for existing and new development.
 - Support the joint effort of annexation as market demand or other factors indicate a need for annexation, at the time when White Sulphur Springs has outgrown its existing boundaries.
- Create an inter-local agreement regarding coordination of various services, such as fire protection, law enforcement, weed control, and emergency services and file the agreement with the County Clerk and Recorder.

76-3-608 REVIEW CRITERIA

Definition of Review Criteria

The following are standards that the City of White Sulphur Springs will use to evaluate proposed subdivisions under the review criteria set out in 76-3-608(3)(a) MCA.

Effect on Agriculture

Determine:

- The number of acres of land that will be removed from livestock, crop, timber or irrigated production;
- Whether the subdivision would have an adverse impact on agricultural operations, such as interfering with movement of livestock, maintaining fences, harvesting or planting crops, or results in proliferation of weeds or harassing livestock by pets or human activity.

Effect on Agricultural Water Users

Determine whether the proposed subdivision would interfere with any irrigation system or other agricultural water facilities, including irrigation ditches, headgates, sprinkler systems; or would impact water rights or access for maintenance purposes.

Effect on Local Services

Determine:

- The projected increase in population, school-age children, and daily vehicles;
- The additional costs to provide water, sewer, streets, law enforcement, fire protection, and ambulance services;
- Whether extension of public streets or roads be needed, and if so, who will bear the costs;
- Property tax revenues currently generated by the land, and projected tax revenues after the subdivision is fully developed.

Describe whether the subdivision would connect to a central water and/or sewer system;

Determine:

- What will be the cost of connecting to the central system(s); who will pay those costs;
- What will be the increased costs for maintenance and operation, and who will pay the costs;

Proposed subdivisions that will use on-site water supply or sewage disposal, must have approval from Meagher County and the Department of Environmental Quality for the sanitation facilities.

Effect on Public Health and Safety

Determine:

- Whether the subdivision would be subject to potential natural hazards such as flooding, soils unsuitable for building, wildfire, excessive slopes, or high seismic risk;
- Whether the subdivision would be subject to potential man-made hazards such as high voltage power lines, high pressure gas lines;
- The measures the subdivider has proposed to minimize or overcome the above hazards, where applicable.

Effect on the Natural Environment

Determine:

- Whether the subdivision will increase storm water run-off, interfere with natural drainage ways, cause or increase erosion, or alter stream banks;
- Whether the City Public Works Director approved the size, location and planned installation of any culverts; whether the terrain creates significant surface run-off problems; and whether the grading and drainage plan minimizes run-off and adverse impacts.

- The extent of cutting and filling and proposed measures to prevent the proliferation of weed growth within the subdivision and on areas disturbed by construction.
- Subdivisions are considered to have an adverse effect on the natural environment where proposed on land with historical, cultural archaeological or paleontological features; soils with building limitations or slopes greater than 25 percent; water tables within 4 feet of ground surface; adjacent to riparian areas, wetlands, lakes or streams or other natural water features.

Effect on Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

Determine:

- Whether the subdivision will be located in an area of significant wildlife habitat, or in any critical wildlife areas: riparian areas, wetlands, streams, lakes, other natural water features;
- Whether the expected effects of pets and human activity generated by the subdivision will significantly affect wildlife.

REVIEW AND REVISION OF GROWTH POLICY

The Planning Board will review the growth policy annually and issue a status report to the City Council. 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 year
- 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 city 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, and
- 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 City Council 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 Planning Board will conduct a public hearing on proposed revisions and then by resolution make its recommendation to the City Council.

The City Council will then make its decision to adopt, revise, or reject the changes as outlined in state law (76-1-604).

Growth Policy Amendment Application

Description of Amendment:

Elements of Growth Policy to be Amended:

Summary of Proposed Amendment:

Provide or attach the following in a narrative format with any maps or drawings as needed. Please demonstrate:

- How or where an error was made in the Growth Policy that requires an amendment to preserve a property right or to preserve equal protection under the law:
- How or where conditions in the City have changed to a degree that requires an amendment to the Growth Policy:
- How the amendment furthers the visions, goals, or objectives in the Growth Policy:
- How the proposed amendment will provide clear, extraordinary community benefit:

Applicant's Signature:

Date