



## Lewis & Clark County, MT

### Key issues continued



#### 3 . Roads

Recent population increases have added roughly 50,000 vehicle trips daily to a county road network that was never designed to handle this traffic. That trend is likely to be repeated in the next decade.

Spreading the costs of road building and maintenance in a fair and consistent way is a huge challenge. What strategies can the county use to make sure new and existing development pays its fair share for transportation costs and roads are adequately built and maintained? Who will pay for needed upgrades to our roads?



#### 4. Fire Protection

The forested hills surrounding the Helena Valley are designated as 'high fire hazard areas' by public safety experts due to dry conditions and insect infestation. Fire protection is provided by volunteer departments throughout the Valley that lack resources to keep up with new development.

We have witnessed the havoc created by wildfires throughout the West and right here in Helena Valley with the recent Corral Fire. How can we reduce the threats that already exist while ensuring new development is designed with adequate water supplies, vegetation clearance to roads and structures, escape routes, and other safety measures needed to protect lives and property?

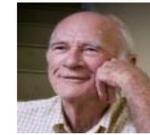
**Help your community. The more ideas we have the better we will be able to manage these and other key issues in the coming years.**



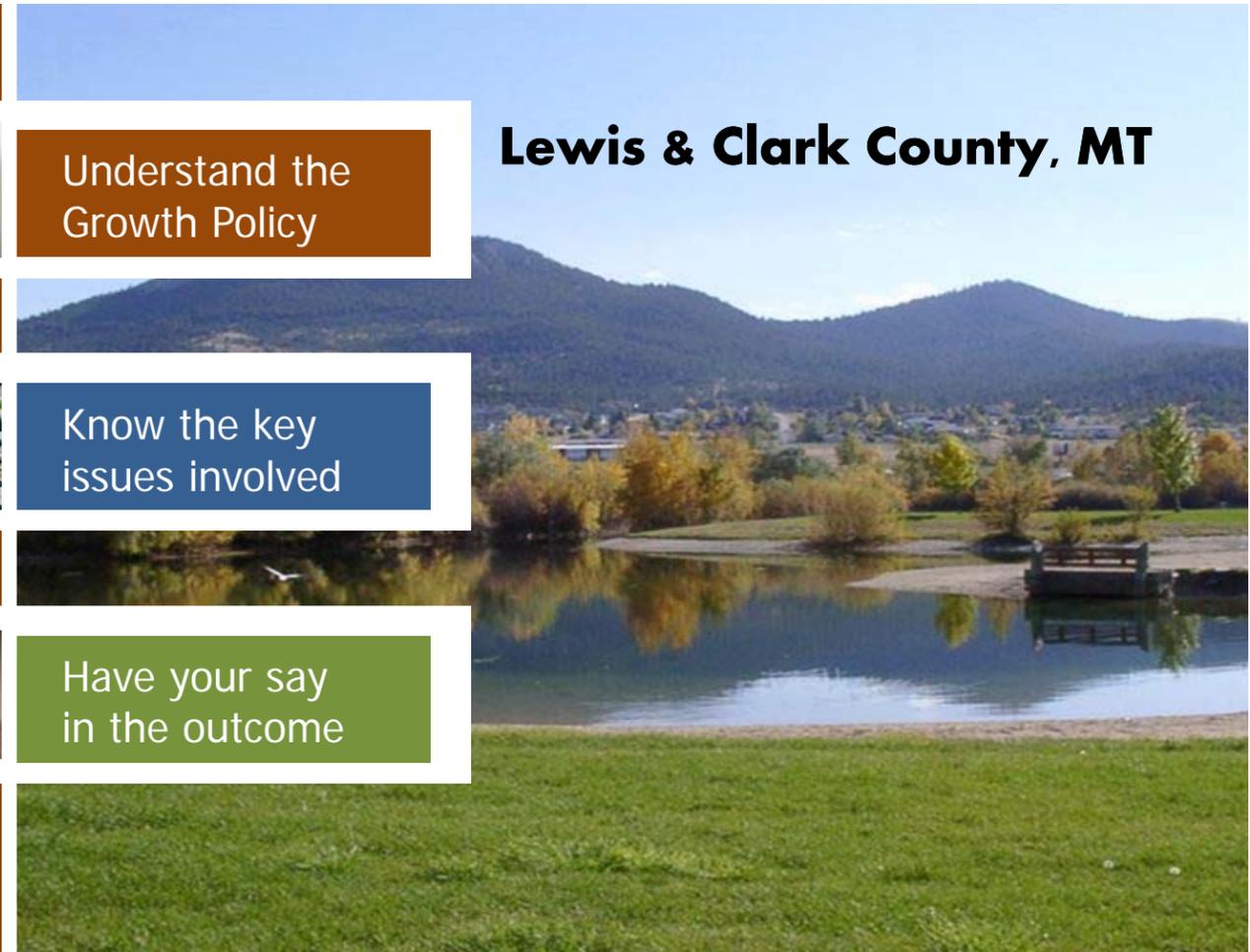
Understand the Growth Policy



Know the key issues involved



Have your say in the outcome



## Helena Valley Growth Policy Update

### Project Overview

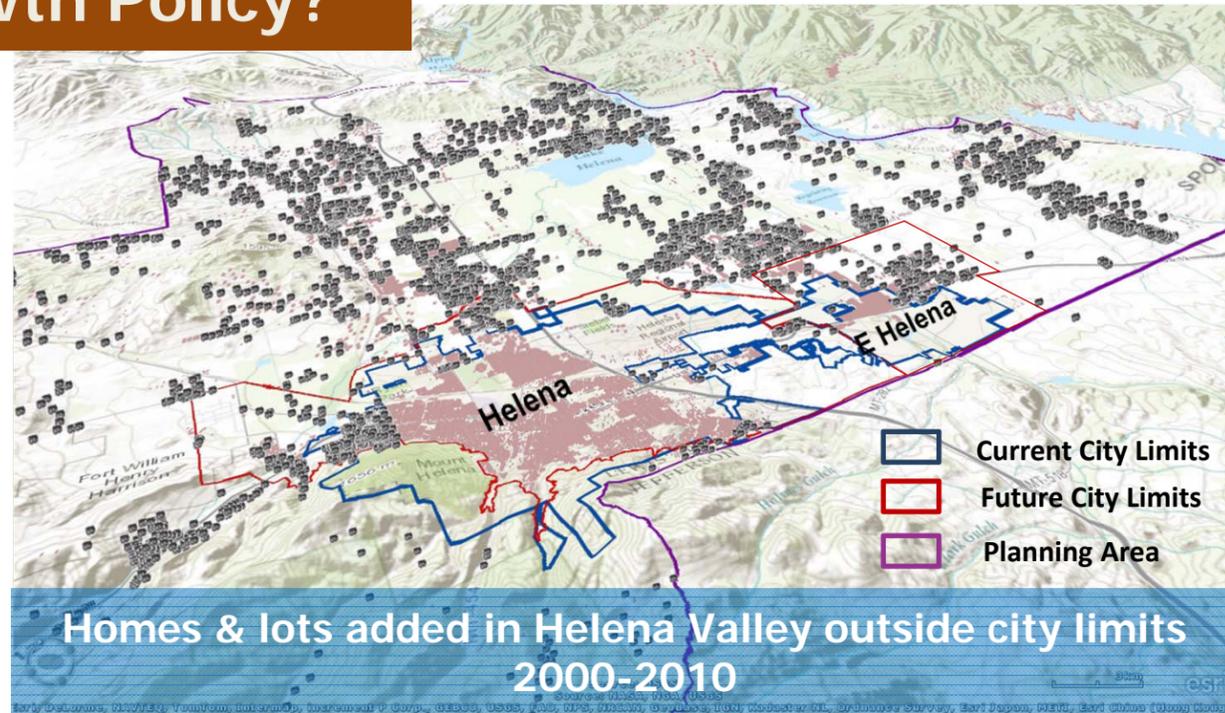
Lewis & Clark County adopted a long range community plan – a growth policy – in 2004. The Growth Policy includes different planning areas, including one for the Helena Valley.

To address the most critical issues facing Helena Valley now and in the near future, the county is beginning to update this portion of the growth policy.

# What is a Growth Policy?

A growth policy is a community's growth and development plan. It evaluates community conditions and sets goals for housing, land use and development, public safety, natural resources, employment, transportation and recreation.

The Growth Policy isn't a regulation or ordinance, but it serves as the legal basis for enacting them.



# Why update the Growth Policy now?

From 2000-2010, the Helena Valley added more than 5,000 homes and another 1,000 platted subdivision lots. Projections show this level of growth and development is likely to continue through 2020. The impacts of development and the need for cost-effective public services must be addressed.

With the country coming out of recession, development pace will increase. Now is the time to prepare for more growth.

## How can I get involved?

- Visit the Growth Policy Update website at [www.lccountymt.gov/cdp/county-growth.html](http://www.lccountymt.gov/cdp/county-growth.html). Find additional information on key issues and leave comments.
- Come to a meeting and let us know your thoughts. Check the website for dates.
- Fill out the survey available at the Planning Dept or download one from the website.
- Give us a call (406-447-8374) or drop us a line at [planning@lccountymt.gov](mailto:planning@lccountymt.gov) or at Lewis and Clark County Community Development and Planning Department 316 N. Park Ave., Helena, MT 59623



# What are the key issues the Growth Policy update will focus on?

## 1 . Water Supply

Groundwater wells in some parts of Helena Valley have gone dry due to over pumping of the aquifers or as a result of droughts. People have bought lots in approved subdivisions and have been unable to get an adequate supply of water for household use.

We live in a 'closed basin' where, except for some exempt wells, under the state's water rights laws there can be no net increase in water withdrawal even as the population and economy grow. Where will the water come from to support growth while not jeopardizing existing wells and local agriculture?



## 2 . Wastewater Disposal

The Helena Valley aquifers provide drinking water for more than 20,000 people. After water is pumped to the surface for use in homes and businesses, much of it is returned to the aquifers as treated wastewater.

Improper maintenance and management of septic systems has impacted groundwater quality and is a public health issue. How can we cost-effectively manage wastewater disposal so we do not pollute our drinking water sources? Should the County reconsider expansion of public sewers in Helena Valley?

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