A large, leafy tree in a park with people sitting on the grass and a blue tent in the background. The scene is a public gathering in a green space. The text 'CITY OF COLSTRIP' is overlaid in white, italicized font on the tree's canopy.

*CITY  
OF  
COLSTRIP*

COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH POLICY  
2013

## City of Colstrip

# COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH POLICY 2013

**Mayor:** Rose Hanser

**City Council:** Tom Jankowski      Evan Stewart  
John Williams      Lawretta Miller

### City Planning Board:

Gary Parry, Chairman	Betty Jo Ellison, Vice Chairman
Cheryl Fulkerson	Zane Longacre
Lawretta Miller	Mark Stevens
Donna Rogers	Doug Martens, Rosebud County Commissioner

### Others Assisting in the Planning Project:

Jan Morgan, City of Colstrip Planning/Building Official

John Marks, Rosebud County Planner

Jim Atchison, Director Southeastern Mt Development Corp.

*This Comprehensive growth Policy conforms to the requirement of 76-1601, M.C.A.*

**RESOLUTION NO. 2013-R18**  
A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH POLICY

**WHEREAS**, Sec. 76-1-601, MCA provides that the Planning Board prepare and propose a growth policy, and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council determined that the Growth Policy needed to be updated and the Planning Board was asked to review and update the existing 2008 policy, and

**WHEREAS**, public meetings were held to gain input from citizens, necessary research was completed, information compiled, and proposed policies to manage growth and land use were developed, and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Colstrip Comprehensive Growth Policy is fully compliant with the requirements of Sec. 76-1-601 and provides a clear assessment of the existing circumstances of the City of Colstrip and proposes a basis for policies to deal with community growth, either negative or positive, and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Colstrip Planning Board recommended that policies be adopted and implemented in accordance with Sec. 76-1-604 MCA;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that “City of Colstrip Comprehensive Growth Policy, 2013 Update” be adopted effective September 24, 2013.

**PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLSTIP IN REGULAR SESSION THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rose Hanser, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle Richards, Clerk Treasure

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## INTRODUCTION

The town of Colstrip was established as a company town in the early 1920's by the Northern Pacific Railroad. The nearby mine provided coal to use in steam locomotives for 34 years. By the 1950's the mine had closed and the town had decreased to less than 1,000 people. In 1959, Montana Power Company purchased the Northern Pacific Railroad coal leases, mining equipment and a town site to meet the needs of its projected coal-fired electrical power plants.

The community of Colstrip was developed in two distinct phases. In the early 1970's phase one took place: the platting and development of the Original Town site. This occurred in response to the population growth created by the construction of Colstrip electric power generating plants 1 and 2. Phase two development of the Colstrip Town site Expansion began in the late 1970's and early 1980's to accommodate the growth that occurred in response to the construction of Units 3 and 4. The community grew and developed from a population of 250 in 1970 to approximately 7,500 in 1982. The population was generated in part by mining employees but the majority was based on construction workers. After the construction of Units 3 and 4 was completed and the plants became operational, a smaller population centered on coal mining, power plant generation, secondary services, retail employees and their families. The subsequent reduction of temporary construction workers and the stabilization of permanent employees and families determined the present land use pattern of Colstrip.

In 1998, when Colstrip became an incorporated city, the mayor and city council prepared a comprehensive plan to guide the city in decisions relating to the physical and economic development of the community. The council formed a city planning board to assist it in the land use planning program. The Colstrip 2013 Growth Policy is an extension of the first Comprehensive Growth Policy which was adopted in 2001 and has been the guiding document for land use in Colstrip since incorporation.

Today, Colstrip is still primarily a power generating and mining town. You will find the area uncharacteristic of the stereotypical strip mining community. The Colstrip area has received nationally recognized awards for planning and city engineering as well as environmental awards for land reclamation. Quality of life issues are a big part of Colstrip as it boasts numerous parks and a trail system that connects the entire community. Castle Rock Lake, a water source for the City and the power plants, is another benefit to the community as a direct result of responsible energy development.

## LAND USE

Colstrip's zoning ordinance has eleven (11) different land uses. See the figure/table below for designated areas. Established set-back and lot size differences distinguish R-1 from R-3 and R-2 from R-4 Residential Districts.

Designated land use areas in and immediately surrounding the City of Colstrip are:

### **R-1 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT**

#### **PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USES:**

- Home occupations.
- Single-family dwellings constructed on site or assembled as modular homes

CONDITIONAL USES: (subject to approval)

- Bed and breakfasts, churches, nonprofit religious or philanthropic institutions, day schools, nursery schools, preschools, kindergartens, libraries, museums, public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, public uses: city hall, substations, lift stations, pumping stations, fire stations.

LOT SIZE:

- Single-family dwelling: Each lot shall contain a minimum of seven thousand (7,000) square feet and be at least fifty (50) feet wide.

### **R-2 MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT**

#### **PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USES:**

- Home occupations.
- Multiple-family dwellings.
- Single-family and two-family dwellings constructed on site or assembled as modular homes.

CONDITIONAL USES: (subject to approval)

- Bed and breakfasts, churches, nonprofit religious or philanthropic institutions, day schools, nursery schools, preschools, kindergartens, libraries, museums, public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, public uses: city hall, substations, lift stations, pumping stations, fire stations.

LOT SIZE:

- Single-family dwelling: Each lot shall contain a minimum of seven thousand (7,000) square feet.
- Multiple-family dwellings: Each lot shall contain a minimum of four thousand (4,000) square feet per dwelling unit.

### R-3 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

**PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USES:**

- Home occupations.
- Single-family dwellings constructed on site or assembled as modular homes.

**CONDITIONAL USES:** (subject to approval)

- Bed and breakfasts, churches, nonprofit religious or philanthropic institutions, day schools, nursery schools, preschools, kindergartens, libraries, museums, public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, public uses: city hall, substations, lift stations, pumping stations, fire stations

**LOT SIZE:**

- Single-family dwelling: Each lot shall contain a minimum of twenty (20,000) thousand square feet

### R-4 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

**PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USED:**

- Home occupations
- Multiple-family dwellings
- Single-family and two-family dwellings constructed on site or assembled as modular homes

**CONDITIONAL USES:** (subject to approval)

- Bed and breakfasts, churches, nonprofit religious or philanthropic institutions, day schools, nursery schools, preschools, kindergartens, libraries, museums, public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, public uses: city hall, substations, lift stations, pumping stations, fire stations

**LOT SIZE:**

- Single-family dwelling: Each lot shall contain a minimum of seven thousand (7,000) square feet.
- Multiple-family dwellings: Each lot shall contain a minimum of four thousand (4,000) square feet per dwelling unit.

### M-H MOBILE HOME RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

**PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USES:**

- Home occupations
- One single-family mobile home on an individual lot

**CONDITIONAL USES:** (subject to approval)

- Bed and breakfasts, churches, nonprofit religious or philanthropic institutions, day schools, nursery schools, preschools, kindergartens, libraries, museums, public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, public uses: city hall, substations, lift stations, pumping stations, fire stations.

## GC GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

### PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USES:

- Bars, taverns, lounges, night clubs
- Clubs and lodges; hotels and motels
- Libraries, museums, art galleries, information centers
- Nursing homes, medical and dental offices and clinics, healthcare facilities
- Off street parking areas
- Offices: professional, business, administrative, government and services
- Police, fire stations and other governmental uses; educational uses
- Recreational facilities; senior citizen centers
- Retail, service, financial businesses
- Service stations; automotive sales, service and repair
- Other uses commensurate with the above uses and compatible with the purpose of this district

### CONDITIONAL USES: (subject to approval)

- Bed and breakfasts. recreational vehicle parks, shopping centers

## LI LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

### PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USES:

- Building materials manufacture, sales and assembly
- Light manufacturing or processing in which no excessive fumes, odors, smoke, noise or dust is created
- Open storage
- Research and testing laboratories
- Service stations, motor vehicle, equipment, trailer, repair, sales and service
- Warehousing
- Welding, machine and sheet metal shops
- Other similar light industrial uses

## MU MULTIPLE USE DISTRICT

### PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USES:

- Home occupations.
- Multiple-family dwellings
- Single-family and two-family dwellings, constructed on site or assembled as modular homes
- All uses permitted in the General Commercial District

### CONDITIONAL USES: (subject to approval)

- Bed and breakfasts, churches, nonprofit religious or philanthropic institutions, day schools, nursery schools, preschools, kindergartens, libraries, museums, public or private schools, parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, public uses: city hall, substations, lift stations, pumping

## OS OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

### PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USES:

- Agricultural uses
- Air monitoring and other monitoring stations; communications facilities; other similar facilities requiring only occasional human occupancy
- Greenbelt areas
- Parks, recreation and sports activities
- Public utility installations
- Undeveloped open space

### ACCESSORY USES AND STRUCTURES:

- Parking, playgrounds, tennis courts, tennis buildings, health clubs, golf, swimming pools and buildings, baseball and soccer fields, basketball and volleyball courts, bicycle and pedestrian paths, storage

## PG POWER GENERATION DISTRICT

### PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USES:

- Any building, structure, facility, equipment, use or activity associated with electric power generation

## CM MINING DISTRICT

### PERMITTED PRINCIPAL USES:

- Agricultural production including livestock grazing and crop production
- Coal mining, including any building, structure, facility, equipment, use or activity associated with production of coal
- Open space uses

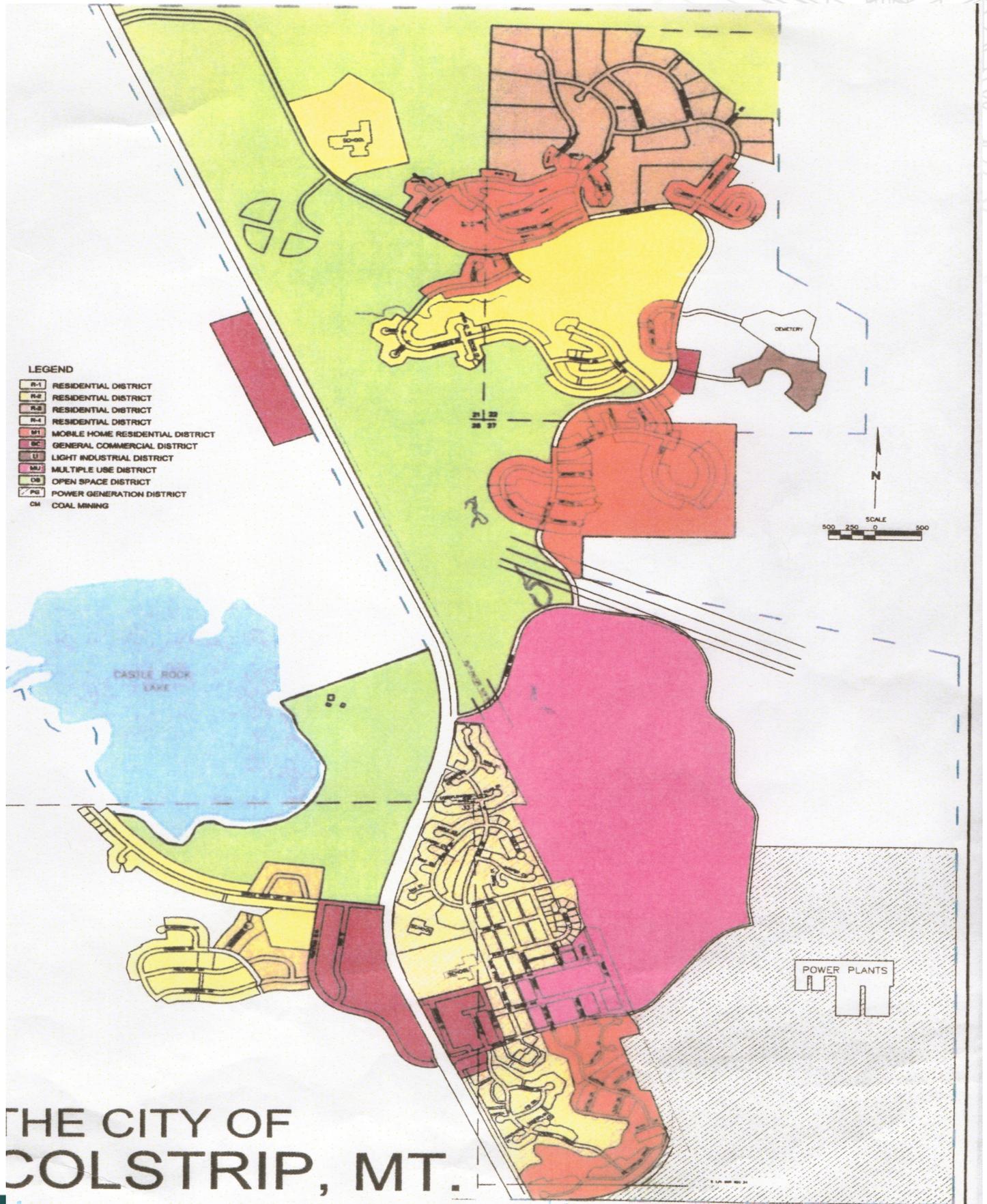
The designated industrial district within the city limits of Colstrip functions as residential acreage tracts. A Light Industrial Park adjacent to highway 39 but located just outside of the city limits functions as the only industrial area near the city.

## Community Land Use Goals

**GOAL:** Increase efficiency in Land Use.

### Objectives:

1. Facilitate methods to make undeveloped property available for the following uses: Commercial, Industrial and Residential
2. Identify properties within and outside the city limits for potential development
3. Identify specific land use needs, i.e. light industrial, rental and amend zoning ordinance to encourage such use
4. Develop master plans for identified growth areas
5. Review and update city of Colstrip subdivision regulations



## **TRANSPORTATION**

Colstrip is located 526 miles north of Denver; 1,124 miles west of Chicago; 994 miles east of Portland; and 410 miles south of Regina, Canada.

An active Burlington Northern-Santa Fe branch line connects Colstrip to the main east/ west rail line that lie thirty (30) miles to the north of Colstrip.

Colstrip is served by MT Route 39, a high quality state highway that runs through the town. In 2004, average traffic volume was 2,230 vehicles per day and the road is in excellent condition. This is a minor arterial from the principal arterial, Interstate 94, which is approximately 30 miles north of Colstrip and runs east and west through Montana.

There is one overpass located within the city limits but by state law cities have no jurisdictional authority over bridges.

Colstrip is served by a number of freight carriers. As of 2013 there is no bus service available from Colstrip. The nearest bus service is 35 miles away in Forsyth. The nearest commercial air transportation is 125 miles away in Billings, MT at the Logan International Airport and Sheridan County Airport at Sheridan, Wyoming at 110 miles away.

Colstrip has a county owned and operated airport five miles from the center of the community, with an elevation of 3,426. The runway is a hard surface with the longest runway 5,100 feet by 75 feet wide. The runway is lighted and there is aircraft storage available. The airport is overseen by a five (5) member board appointed by the County Commissioners.

### **Community Transportation Goals**

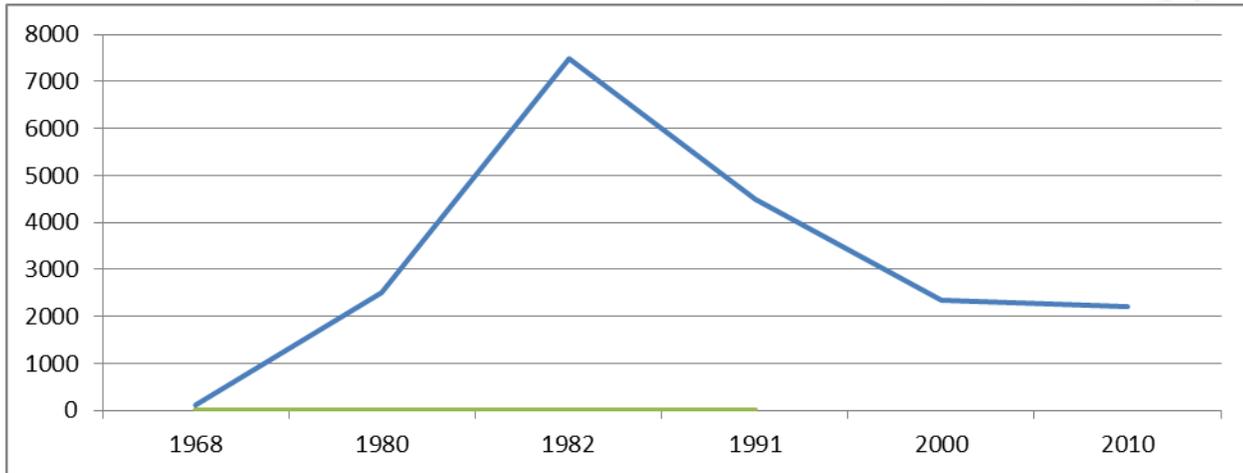
**GOAL:** Monitor efficiency and safety of transportation services

#### **Objectives:**

1. Engage and cooperate with Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and Rosebud County for any maintenance, improvements or new construction.
2. Engage and cooperate with BNSF and MDT for safe at-grade crossings with city streets.
3. Engage and negotiate with BNSF for reasonable access to competitively priced rail transport in future development.
4. Focus use of a Capital Improvement Plan to maintain and upgrade streets within the city.

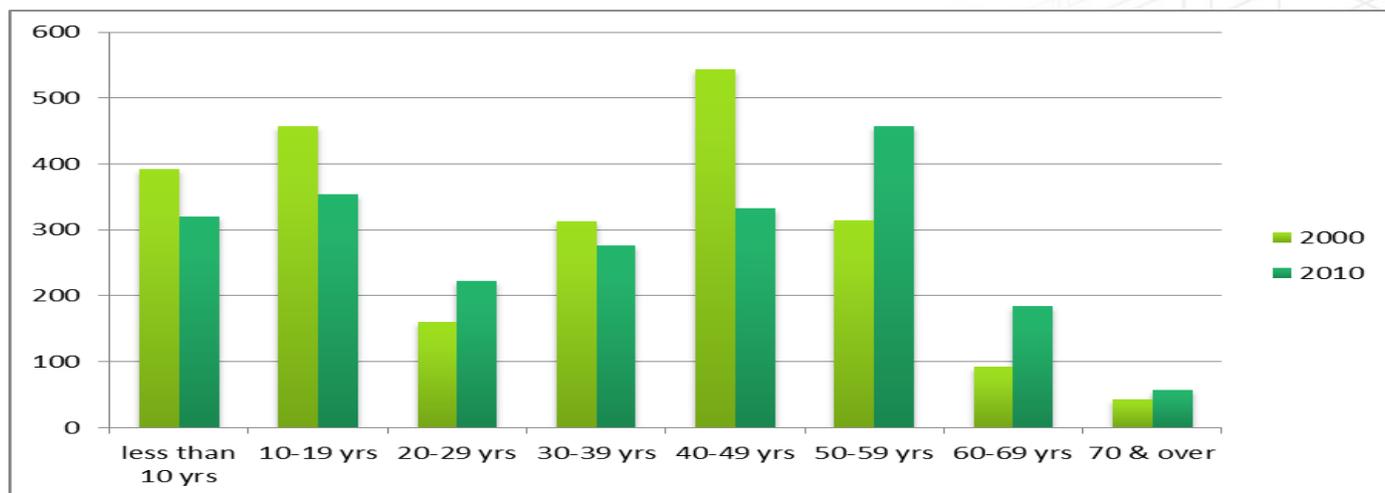
## POPULATION

Colstrip's population has fluctuated significantly in correlation with coal mining and generation activities. As can be seen in the line graph below, the population has gone from 100 upwards to nearly 8000. Today, according to the 2010 Census, Colstrip has a population of 2,214, which translates into 493 residents per square mile, with the median age of 38.6.



According to the 2010 Census, 30.4% of the residents are under 20 years of age. And only 5.2% of the population is 65 years old and over. The Census indicates a decrease of 6% in population as compared to the April 1, 2000 census population of 2,346. The following chart shows numbers of residents in each age category.

## POPULATION CHANGES (2000 to 2010)

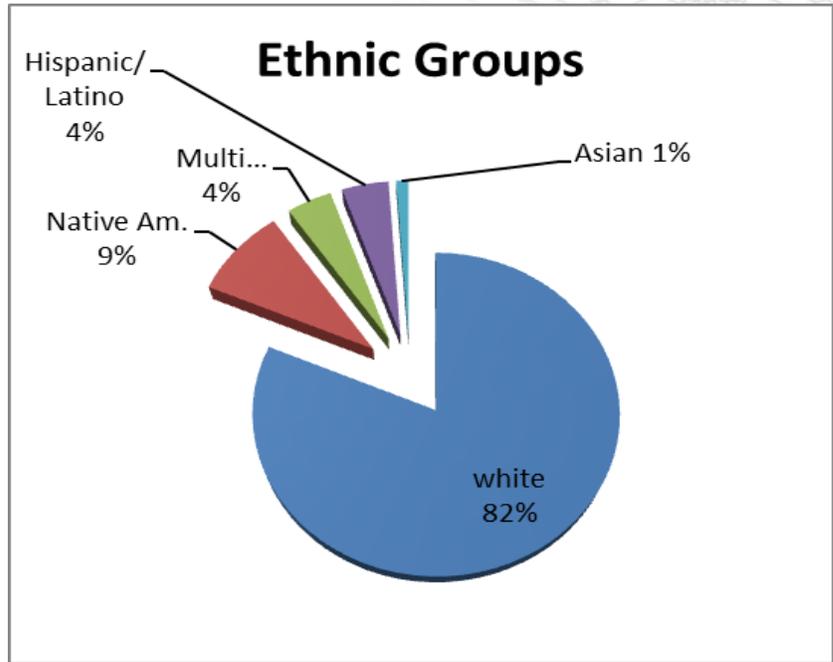


## POPULATION CHANGES (2000 TO 2010)

Colstrip Population by Age Category	2000 Census	2010 Census
Less than 10 years	392	320
10-19 years	457	354
20-29 years	161	222
30-39 years	313	276
40-49 years	544	333
50-59 years	314	458
60-69	92	184
70 & over years	43	57

Colstrip is seeing a marked increase in the population age groups from 50 to 70 & over. Those aged 50 and above have increased 55% in the last 10 years. Most notably the 60-69 age group has increased 100% since the 2000 census. Since Colstrip has seen a 29% increase in the 20-29 age group, which would generally be comprised of young families, there may be a corresponding increase in the elementary population.

*Non-Hispanic whites are 81.8% of the population in this category. However, 9.0% of the population is non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native population and an additional 4.2% of the population is non-Hispanic multi-racial population. Another 1.1% is non-Hispanic Asian, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population; and 4.3% are Hispanic or Latino population.*



PPL-MT estimates that 97 employees will retire within the next five (5) years at the age of 60 – 62. Western Energy Company, predicts an additional 55 retirees. This influx of retirements means that approximately 150 new employees, possibly with families, may be employed to replace these retirees. Some retirees may choose to leave Colstrip, but it is anticipated that the majority will remain in Colstrip as this has been their home for the past 30 years. It is anticipated that houses will be built to meet this growing demand, and is starting to be evidenced even today.

## Community Population Goals

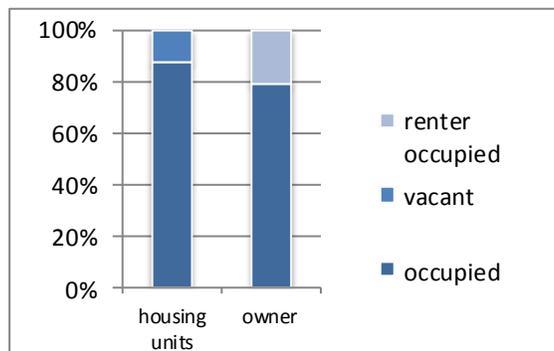
**GOAL:** Monitor population growth

### Objectives:

1. Identify the needs of a diverse and changing population.
2. Promote and support city/community services reaching all age groups.
3. Identify needs of an expanding retired population ( i.e., senior housing, other)

## Housing Needs

With the construction of Colstrip power plants 1 and 2 in the 1970's housing needs greatly changed. During construction over 7500 people came to Colstrip to support the construction of the plants. Their immediate housing needs changed the housing profile of the community, which continues through today. Mobile homes placed in neighborhood clusters throughout the city answered this immediate need. The neighborhood clusters included parks, bike and walking trails to schools and work, and a few neighborhood businesses.



Colstrip has a work camp area that was developed by PPL in stages from 2008-2012 and is used exclusively to provide housing and RV parking for seasonal workers during the annual outage/overhaul .

According to the 2010 Census, Colstrip has 986 total housing units with 863 or 87.5% occupied and 123 or 12.5% vacant housing units. Of the 863 occupied housing units in Colstrip 678 or 78.6% are owner occupied while 185 or 21.4% are renter occupied units. 52% of the population lives in the same house they did 5 years ago.

46.5% of the housing units are single-family detached homes. According to Rosebud County Assessor, there are 315 mobile homes in Colstrip com-

prising 32% of the housing. Any mobile home built before 1976 was not required to comply with HUD minimum housing standards, and therefore could be deemed unsafe and not cost effective for any improvement.

The median year a structure was built is 1980. The Census does not differentiate between “stick built” and mobile homes on the year a structure was built. Thorough research should be conducted into housing types and suitability before a program of housing improvement could be undertaken. Mobile homes must be occupied by an owner who also owns the lot upon which the home is placed, and be built after 1976 to be eligible for housing rehabilitation with state or federal funds.

Lead-based paint could be present in homes built before 1978, when its use was banned. According to the 2000 Census figures, over 448 housing units or 48% of the houses were built in 1979 or earlier, with another 394 housing units or 42% of the houses being built between 1980 and 1989. When assessing housing conditions, it should be assumed that lead-based paint could be present in the majority of these units.

The mean value for a specified owner occupied housing unit in 2009 is \$133,066. The median gross rent of a specified renter occupied unit is \$646 a month. All classes of housing are needed in Colstrip at this time.

### Community Housing Needs Goals

**GOAL:** Monitor the demands for housing types, ( i.e., single family, multi-family, RV Parks, Mobile parks ,etc.)

**Objectives:**

1. Explore the formation of a Colstrip Housing Authority (or development of a non-profit) to provide housing services for low-income, seniors, and/or assisted living facilities.
2. Review and amend Zoning Ordinance to encourage growth, specific types of development, and housing

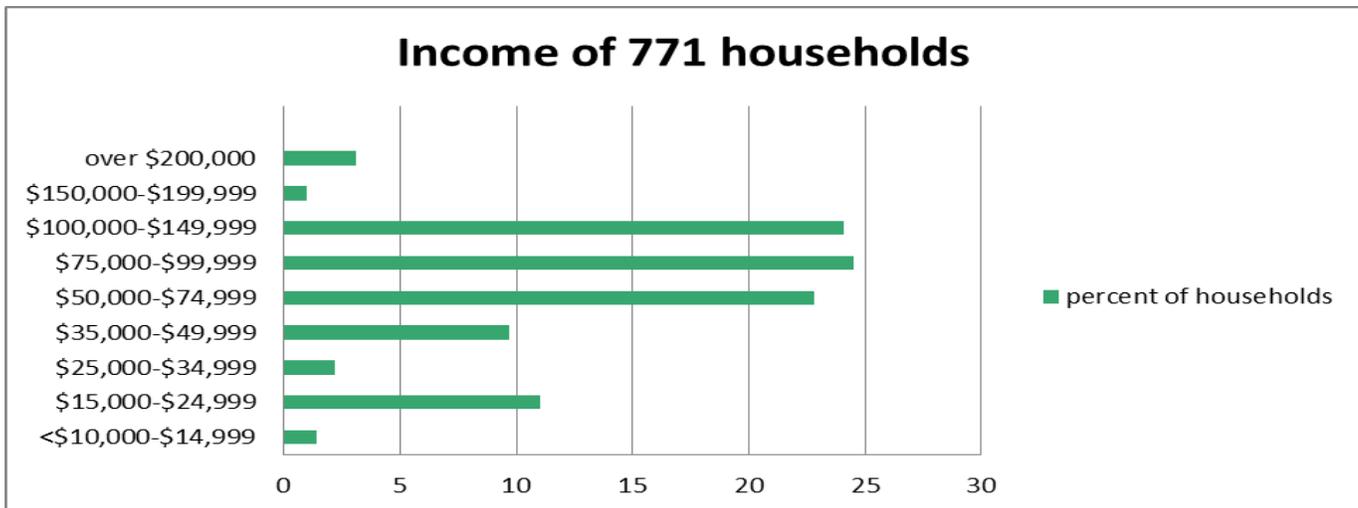
## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Colstrip’s economy historically has been and continues to be tied to coal development and the two associated industries – coal mining and power generation. Proposed coal mine development at nearby Otter Creek has potential to increase the economy in the Colstrip community.

Local businesses include a mix of hardware stores, motels, hair salons, a bed and breakfast, a grocery store, a floral shop, a community owned clothing store, a post office, a bank, a credit union, many service providers, restaurants and a convenience store, as well as, a Fraternal nonprofit organization with a restaurant, bar and bowling alley.

Colstrip has more home based businesses per capita than anywhere else in the state. The 2012 Colstrip City business licenses showed 115 licensed businesses within the incorporated limits of the city. The vast majority of those were home businesses.

### PERSONAL INCOME



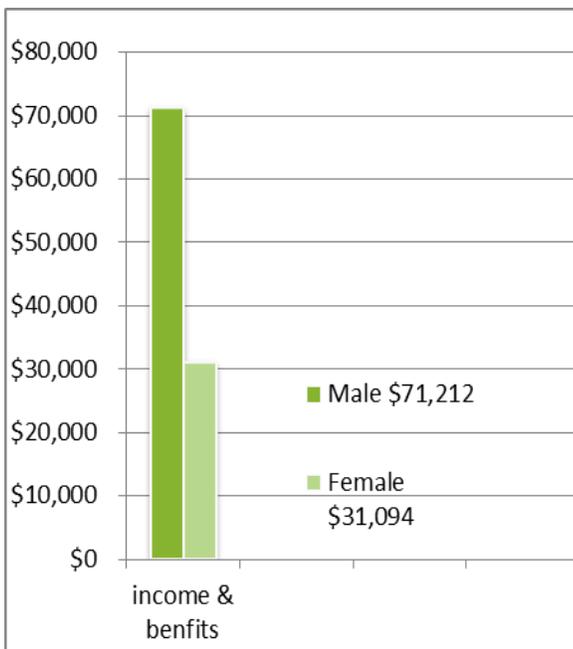
Total Households 771	
Income & Benefits (in 2011 inflation adjusted dollars)	
FRACTIONAL PERCENTAGE	
Less than \$10,000	0.9
\$10,000 to \$14,999	0.5
\$15,000 to \$24,999	11.0
\$25,000 to \$34,999	2.2
\$35,000 to \$49,999	9.7
\$50,000 to \$74,999	22.8
\$75,000 to \$ 99,999	24.5
\$100,000 to \$149,999	24.1
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1.0
\$200,000 or more	3.1

Out of 771 households, it is significant to note that in the 2008 Colstrip Growth Policy 9.3% of Colstrip households were noted as receiving retirement income. This report documents almost twice as many, (16.5%), current Colstrip households with retirement income. That indicates that as expected some retirees are staying in Colstrip.

<b>Median household income (dollars)</b>	<b>\$77,337</b>
<b>Mean household income (dollars)</b>	<b>\$80,850</b>
<b>Mean Retirement income (dollars)</b>	<b>\$15,702</b>
<b>Households With Retirement Income</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

*(U.S. Census Bureau 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Economic Characteristics)*

**Income & Benefits (in 2011 inflation adjusted dollars)**



<b>Median earnings for female full-time, year-round workers</b>	<b>\$31,094</b>
<b>Median earnings for male full-time, year-round workers</b>	<b>\$71,212</b>

*(U.S. Census Bureau 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Economic Characteristics)*

## Employment

<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>ESTIMATE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Employed population 16 yrs and over</b>	<b>1,146</b>	<b>1,146</b>
<b>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing &amp; Hunting, and Mining</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>20.7%</b>
<b>Construction</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>6.1%</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
<b>Retail trade</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
<b>Transportation &amp; Warehousing and Utilities</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>23.6%</b>
<b>Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>21.2%</b>
<b>Professional, scientific , and management and administration and waste management services</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
<b>Other services, except public transportation</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>3.7%</b>
<b>Public administration</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>5.9%</b>

*(U.S. Census Bureau 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Economic Characteristics)*

The main employment opportunities in Colstrip are directly attributed to the coal mining, the generation facilities or a subsidiary service to these industries. The PPL power plant currently employs about 388 full time employees. An onsite company that specializes in the maintenance and repairs to large coal fired plants employs an additional 20 to 25 full time employees. During the annual “over-haul” periods, employment within the power plant may increase anywhere from about 35 workers to more than 500 workers. This is mainly from out of town contractors with some local contractors. This seasonal increase in workers is a huge economic boost to nearly every Colstrip business.

WECO coal mine employs about 380 full time employees. Rosebud Power Plant which is located 7 miles north of Colstrip employs about 32 full time employees. Both companies employ a small number of seasonal temporary workers.

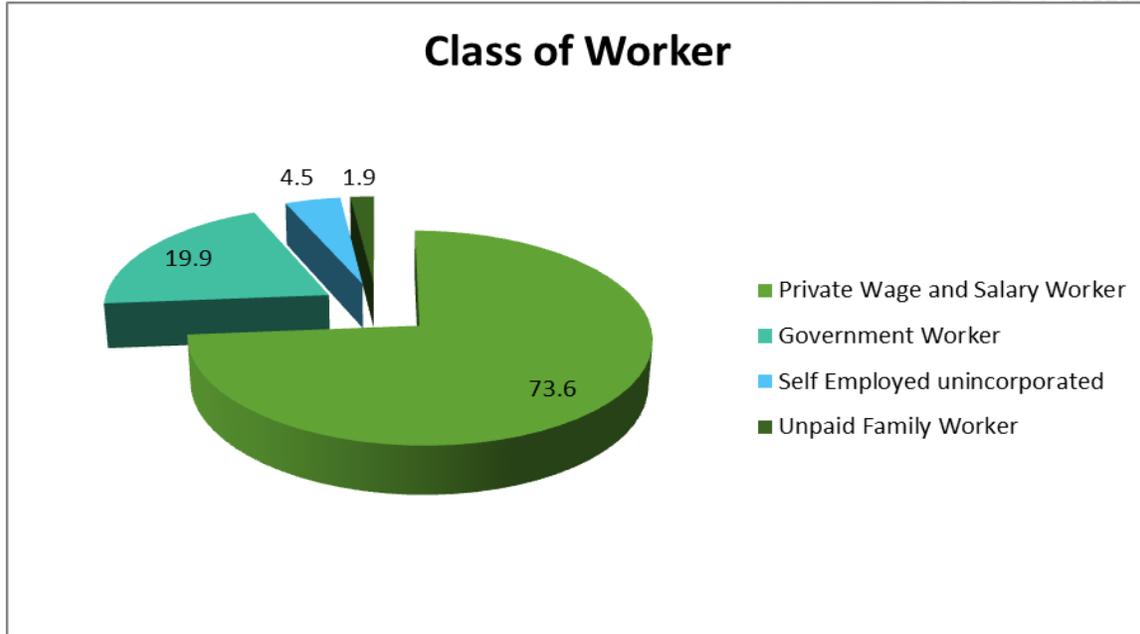
## Employment Status of Population 16 Years of age and Over



SUBJECT	ESTIMATE	PERCENT
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>		
<b>Population 16 yrs and over</b>	<b>1577</b>	<b>1577</b>
<b>In labor force</b>	<b>1,184</b>	<b>75.1%</b>
<b>Employed</b>	<b>1,146</b>	<b>72.7%</b>
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>Not in labor force</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>24.9%</b>
<b>Mean travel time to work (minutes)</b>	<b>10.2</b>	

*(U.S. Census Bureau 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Economic Characteristics)*

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Economic Characteristics there are 1,557 residents in Colstrip over the age of 16 years and of those 1,184 are in the labor force. Of the 1,184 labor force, 1,146 are employed which leaves Colstrip with an unemployment rate of 2.4%. It is lower than the March 2013 average for the state at 5.6% and the nation at 7.6%. It is also lower than that stated in the 2008 Growth Policy which indicated a 3.3% unemployment rate. This is somewhat surprising in light of the 7.2% increase of retirement households within Colstrip.



CLASS OF WORKER	PERCENT
<b>Employed population 16 yrs and over</b>	<b>1,146</b>
Private wage and salary workers	73.6%
Government workers	19.9%
Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers	4.5%
Unpaid family members	1.9%

*(U.S. Census Bureau 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Economic Characteristics)*

Of the 1,146 workers 73.6% are private wage and salary workers; 19.9% are government workers including employees of the city, county, federal, state, schools, Colstrip Parks and Recreation District and the Colstrip Medical District; 4.5% are self-employed workers in their own business which is not incorporated; and 1.9% are unpaid family members.

Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) is a non-profit organization formed in 1997. The primary purpose for SEMDC is stabilizing existing businesses and encouraging growth of business in southeastern Montana. SEMDC serves the four Counties of Custer, Powder River, Rosebud, and Treasure along with the communities of Ashland, Broadus, Colstrip, Forsyth, Hysham, Miles City and the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Their office is located within Colstrip. SEMDC has developed and maintains a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region with the assistance of communities and a planning committee. The CEDS serves as a five year economic development plan.

## Community Economic Conditions Goals

**GOAL:** Encourage business growth and development

**Objectives:**

1. Promote use of coal and generation of electricity from this resource. Colstrip's main economy is based around coal mining and fossil fueled steam electric stations
  - \* Promote use of commercialization opportunities related to coal generation byproducts
2. Promote additional business development by improving land use opportunities
3. Explore and evaluate tax incentives for new businesses or new facilities for existing businesses
4. Cooperate with and support Southeastern Montana Economic Development Corporation to develop economic diversity
  - \* Identify business opportunities for Colstrip

## **LOCAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT/EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

The City of Colstrip formed its own Police Department in 2004. The police department consists of six (6) police officers including the Chief and Assistant Chief; four (4) dispatchers; and one (1) animal control officer. In addition, there is one (1) reserve officer, one (1) part-time dispatcher and one (1) fill-in dispatcher. The Department provides 24 hour, 7 days/week on-duty officer and dispatching. The Department also has available a seven-bed 72 hour holding facility in Colstrip, which is operated by the city.

The city has one (1) code enforcement officer that is in charge of planning, code enforcement, building and zoning permits, and other ordinance enforcement.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH**

Health care is a major economic factor for the Colstrip area. Because of the unique industry and employment base at Colstrip, occupational testing and special health care programs are needed. The Colstrip Medical Center has a state of the art, 20,000 square foot facility and highly trained personnel to handle the needs of the rural population and industry. The Colstrip Medical Center, established in 1991, is a total medical services clinic. The center is operated as a county hospital taxing district and levies approximately 5 mills each year to provide annual revenues for operating and maintenance. The Colstrip Medical Center has a staff of over 20 employees. The clinic provides routine, urgent, special and preventative health services and also offers 24-hour on-call urgent care services. Colstrip Medical Center also provides telemedicine and mental health services. Two full-time physicians, two physician assistants, two physical therapists, registered nurses, laboratory/radiology and Health & Wellness personnel staff the clinic. The Colstrip Medical Center is managed by and affiliated with Billings Clinic.

The Rosebud County health nurses are in the Colstrip office one day a week, however, there is a receptionist available five days a week for information or scheduling. Immunizations, family planning, and blood pressures are done by appointment. Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center conducts ACT (DUI) classes in Colstrip once a week. The Women, Infants, Children program is held once a week or by appointments.

There is a senior citizens center located on the ground floor of the Human Services Building which provides a multitude of services. The seniors use the center for activities, meetings, and educational programs. Low cost lunches are served to the seniors Monday through Friday at the center.

Emergency medical services are provided by Rosebud County, which funds the service through its Ambulance Fund. In Colstrip, two ambulance vehicles are housed in the Rosebud County Law Enforcement facility. Both vehicles are intermediate level and provide advanced life support services. Colstrip has 14 volunteer emergency medical technicians.

Located in Lame Deer, 25 miles to the south, is Indian Health Services that serves the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation including those members who live in Colstrip.

### **EDUCATION**

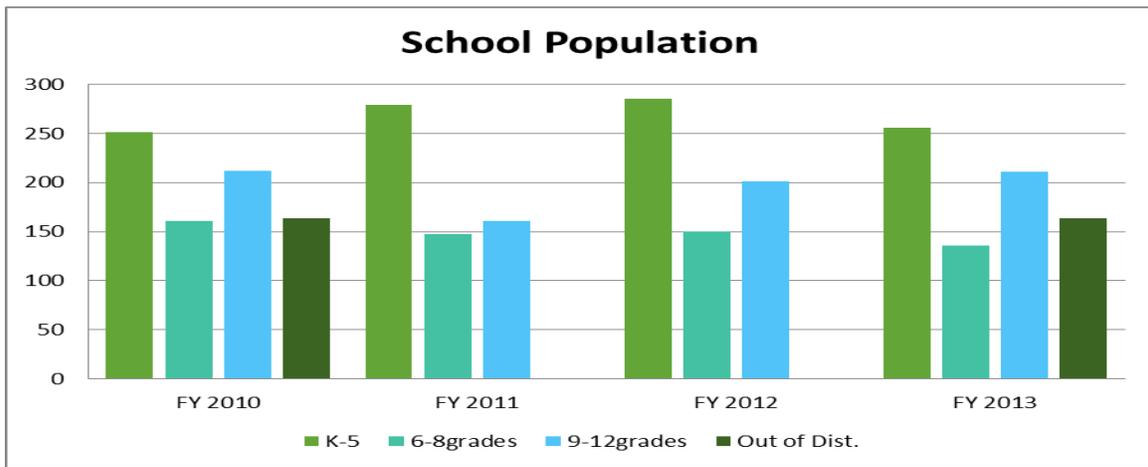
The Colstrip School District is the third largest employer with over 100 employees. The District operates three schools plus a former school building with additional personnel in operations and administration. The District benefits from the large tax base (power plants) in the Colstrip city limits and is blessed with the state of the art facilities and a highly educated work force.

It should be noted that in the 2009-2010 school year, 35.6% of students enrolled in the Colstrip schools were Native American; only 9.17% live within the school district.

## EDUCATION cont.

It is no surprise that as the overall population fluctuates, so does the school enrollment. Some of the variation in school population could also be a result of out of district students, primarily from the Northern Cheyenne Reservation south of Colstrip. According to 2012-13 school year records, approximately 27% of the students came from out of district. The K-8 classes are the most heavily impacted with 116 out of 392 students, nearly 30%, coming from out of district. The High School has nearly as large a percentage of out of district population with slightly less than 27% or 48 out of 211 students.

Colstrip also has an active homeschooling community comprised mainly of K-8 grade students and a few High School students. With 24 students noted in district by the Rosebud County Superintendent of Schools, homeschoolers comprise 3.8% of the school population in Colstrip.

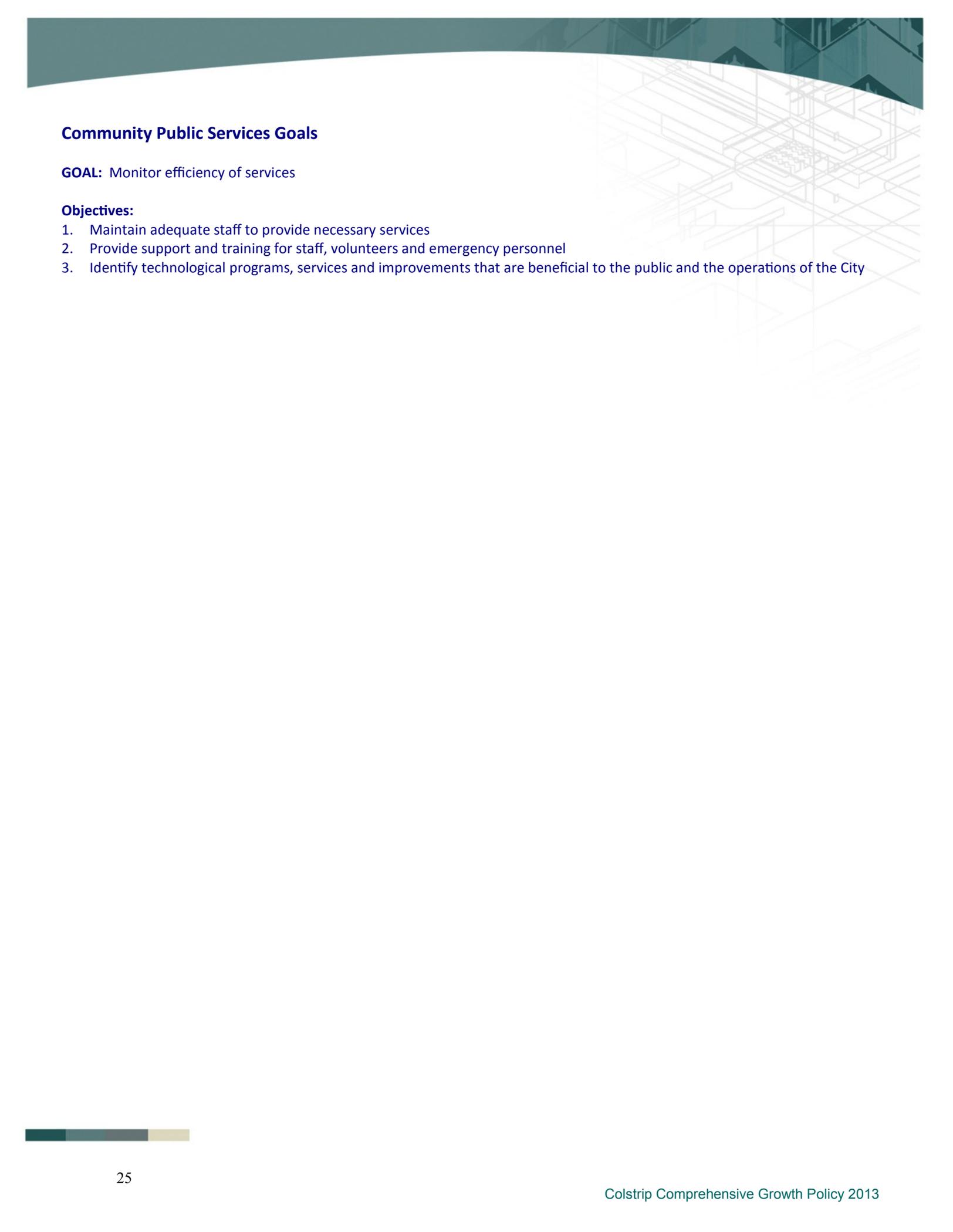


Two community and tribal colleges in the region serve the Colstrip community. Both are two (2) year schools with a broad based and balanced curriculum for today's ever changing students. Chief Dull Knife College is located 25 miles south of Colstrip and serves not only the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, but also the regional needs for post-secondary education. Miles Community College is located 75 miles from Colstrip and features both academic and athletic programs.

## LIBRARY

The Bicentennial Library provides comprehensive library services to the Colstrip community. The library was started in 1976 by volunteers with donated books. In 1986 Rosebud County assumed the operation of the library, and funds the library out of the county library fund. The library is staffed by one full-time employee and three part-time employees.

The services offered by the Bicentennial Library include faxing, copying, and internet stations. Children's story time, young adult story time and reading programs are also offered. The library contains over 49,876 holdings in books, magazines, videos, CD's, audio-books, and E-content. Bicentennial Library participates in both a national and statewide inter-library loan program. Yearly patron visits total approximately 17,000 including more than 106 children at story time sessions.



## Community Public Services Goals

**GOAL:** Monitor efficiency of services

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain adequate staff to provide necessary services
2. Provide support and training for staff, volunteers and emergency personnel
3. Identify technological programs, services and improvements that are beneficial to the public and the operations of the City

## **PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES**

The city provides water and wastewater services, solid waste disposal, law and fire services, as well as road maintenance. Street lighting is provided by the county through a special lighting district

The City of Colstrip has a public works department that includes a supervisor, lead sewer operator, a lead water operator, two operators, a solid waste technician, and two summer part-time employees. This department is responsible for solid waste, wastewater, water, roads/streets infrastructure and services.

### **ROADS/STREETS**

Colstrip has approximately 22 miles of streets and alleys, which are maintained by the Colstrip Public Works Department. In 2009, Sweetgrass Paving Phase I was completed and Phase II was done in 2010. In the summer of 2012, Phase I of the Pinebutte overlay from Power Road to Zane Grey was finished. The remainder of Pinebutte will be completed and streets in town restriped in 2013.

With the exception of approximately one-third of the Original Town site, Colstrip is served by a storm sewer system, which effectively handles storm water run-off in most parts of the city. In several areas of the Original Town site and other areas without storm drains, storm water accumulation creates problems for the city and the individual property owners. As streets are scheduled for maintenance or repairs, these problems are addressed.

### **SOLID WASTE**

All residential customers to 96 gallon containers. Only commercial or public nonresidential entities have usage of 300 gallon containers. A recycling program was implemented in 2010. Miles City Sanitation (MCS) was the contractor, charging \$350 per month per container of cardboard, aluminum cans and newspaper. The City now collects all cardboard and recycles it. MCS has continued to pick up one (1) container per month for aluminum and newspaper. The City collects waste oil at the City Shop during regular business hours. The solid waste is disposed at the Rosebud County landfill located north of the City of Colstrip. The city employs one person to conduct this service. This service is provided at a rate of two (2) pickups a week and is assessed through property taxes. A new refuse hauler was purchased in 2011 at the cost of approx. \$237,000. Due to the difficulty of obtaining service, another model will be purchased in the near future. The relatively new/used vehicle will be sold with the proceeds going back into the Solid Waste Fund to offset the cost of the upcoming purchase.

### **WASTEWATER SYSTEM**

The City of Colstrip is in the process of reviewing and updating a Wastewater Facilities Plan. There are approximately 19 miles of sanitary wastewater gravity collection mains ranging in size from 6-inches to 18-inches in diameter. Wastewater mains in Colstrip consist primarily of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe.

At present, the Colstrip Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) system treats approximately 180,000-200,000 gallons per day, less than one-half its capacity. The system consists of lagoon cells and an oxidation ditch – a mechanical and chemical treatment facility. Treated wastewater from the oxidation ditch is transmitted to the second and third cells of the lagoon. The third cell is not used at this time though available if future use of the system were to increase. In a responsible and cooperative reuse plan with Colstrip Parks and Recreation District, a county district, the treated water is pumped from those cells to irrigate the golf course. The Park District has the desire for more reuse water than the City currently has available. The wastewater collection system includes seven lift stations located throughout the city to transport wastewater to the treatment plant. Six of those seven have been replaced with the remaining lift station scheduled to be replaced in 2014.

The overall system is well beyond the life expectancy and continues to operate through diligent careful management practices. Replacement of the actual treatment facility components will be addressed in the updated Wastewater Facilities Plan

The residential base rate is \$26.83 plus a \$2.23 per 1000 gallons usage rate, which is determined by the average water usage from December through February of each year..

## **WATER SYSTEM**

Water is pumped through two pipelines 30 miles from the Yellowstone River to a surge pond located on the outskirts of Colstrip, referred to as Castle Rock Lake. Castle Rock Lake, a 160-acre raw water reservoir is owned and operated by PPL-Montana. Four 6,000 gpm pumps supply water from the pond to the electric power generation plants located within the city limits. The pond is also the source of drinking water for the city of Colstrip.

As part of the Raw Water Transportation Agreement between the city and the power plant owners, the city owns water rights to 2.1 cubic feet per second (cfs) of the water in Castle Rock Lake. The pumps and intakes from the river are owned by the power plant owners, and maintained and operated by Pennsylvania Power and Light (PP&L). Water withdrawal by the city is very small in comparison to that for the power plants, amounting to .497 mgd on a 365 day year average or 0.15 to 0.4 million gallons per day (mgd). All of the water used by the city is treated in a conventional rapid sand infiltration plant. The Colstrip Water Treatment Plant (WTP) consistently provides high quality potable water with very low turbidity, usually 0.1 NTU or less. Filter backwash water is discharged to Castle Rock Lake.

The Colstrip treatment plant, located just east of Castle Rock Lake, is designed to treat 4,000 gallons per minute. Disinfection is provided by an on-site hypochlorite system installed in 2006. A SAM leak detection unit was installed in 2003.

Discharges to Castle Rock Lake are regulated by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). The current discharge permit was issued in 2011 and sets limits on the quality of water discharged to the lake. At issue is the discharge of filter backwash water. Compliance with the turbidity and total suspended solid limits is currently not possible without modification of the water treatment plant.

There are three separate zones in the distribution system, which supply four steel reservoir towers. A 12-inch main from the treatment plant supplies two steel tanks in zone one, which has a capacity of 500,000 gallons each. A 14-inch main from the treatment plant supplies a steel tank with a capacity of 2,000,000 gallons in zone two. Another 12-inch main supplies water from the plant to a steel tank with a capacity of 650,000 gallons in zone three. The water distribution system consists of 22 miles of water lines and 219 fire hydrants.

Colstrip has conducted a two-phase process of replacing inadequately sized water lines with properly sized PVC lines to provide adequate pressure and proper fire flows throughout the city. Colstrip also installed water meters in city households (commercial, industrial and institutional water users were previously metered).

The residential water base rate is \$26.83 plus \$2.23 per thousand gallons of water used.

Currently, Colstrip is involved in a Master Water Plan with Kadmas Lee & Jackson Engineering firm. The City is having their water system evaluated and reconfigured to save finances. The aging infrastructure is in relatively good condition. As was previously noted, their capacity is considerably greater than their needs at this time. The City could realize savings in combining certain water usage areas and mothballing sections of the system. At the same time the requirements of the MDEQ will be met through system upgrades. There would be consistent service within the City without costs incurred for greater capacity than necessary. These sections would be available for growth in the future.

## **PARKS – see the section “UNIQUE GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONS/ RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES”**

Parks and recreational facilities and services within the community are owned by Rosebud County, maintained and operated by the Colstrip Parks and Recreation Department (CPRD) a legally formed taxing jurisdiction. CPRD is discussed in the following section on unique governmental functions/recreation facilities and services.

## **UTILITIES**

Northwestern Energy (formerly Montana Power Company) is the electricity supplier within the City of Colstrip. There is a capacity of 40,000 KW with peak demand of 10,000 KW. They are supplied by two 20 Megawatt feeders. There is no natural gas service available. Williston Basin Interstate Pipeline Company (an interstate transporter of Natural Gas for MDU Resources Group Inc.) provided natural gas to Rosebud Syncoal Partnership in the area south of Colstrip through a 4” pipeline which stems from an east/west pipeline approximately 18 miles north of Colstrip. Rosebud Syncoal Partnership has gone out of business and currently Westmoreland Power, Inc. owns the pipeline. This 4” natural gas pipeline runs north/south through the city limits on the west side of Highway 39.

The residential rate for electricity is \$ .094per Kilowatt Hour with a monthly service charge of \$9.43. The commercial rate is \$ .072 per Kilowatt Hour with a non-demand monthly service charge of \$11.52.

## **CITY HALL FACILITIES**

Colstrip is home to a modern spacious City Hall. In 2008, the city had requested and received assistance of \$200,000 from the Montana Coal Board, had \$700,000 available in capital reserves, and \$200,000 in the 2007-08 general fund budget. It was estimated that another \$1 million would need to be borrowed from the Montana Board of Investments with a 15 year pay back plan. The City was able through careful management, placing a hold on all other capital projects and utilizing a short term loan to be debt-free on this facility by 2009. The Public Works Director, City Clerk/Treasurer, Deputy City Clerks, Building/Planning Official, City Judge and Clerk, Mayor and City Attorney all have office space at City Hall. There is a large meeting room available to the public that is used for City Council Meetings, City Court hearings and various board meetings.

In 2012, a preliminary study was conducted on Phase II for the development of a Law Enforcement Facility. The City plans to go forward with this project, seeking funding help from the Montana Coal Board and the State Revolving Loan Fund while setting aside funds toward this goal.

## **Community Public Facilities Goals**

**GOAL:** Maintain efficient and functional public facilities

### **Objectives:**

1. Limit deferred maintenance as budget permits
2. Monitor operational costs of all facilities to ensure cost-effectiveness
3. Develop a removal and or replacement plan for unsafe or outdated structures
4. Explore funding opportunities for infrastructure upgrades

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Colstrip's elevation is 3,426 feet above sea level. At present there is no oil or gas activity in the area. Much of the Colstrip area is underlain by shallow bedrock, which occurs as frequent outcrops along hillsides and on hilltops. The bedrock is composed of sedimentary rock, with some sandstone, shale and coal horizons. Many of the outcrops were ignited, becoming underground fires. The underground fires in coal seams resulted in pink and red scoria present throughout the area.

Soils in the Colstrip vicinity are in two basic groups: sandy silt and clinker residual soils derived from bedrock, and loamy/clayey alluvium soils deposited by stream action. The soils, climate and gently rolling terrain support native vegetation that is typically mid-prairie and sagebrush with Ponderosa pine stands. Sand, gravel and similar types of construction materials are available through private industry but no sand or gravel pits are located within the city limits of Colstrip.

The East Fork of Armells Creek is the principle natural surface water traversing from south to north through the community. The Creek is mainly fed by springs that discharge groundwater into low points of the drainages, as well as natural rainfall and snow-melt. Castle Rock Lake is a man-made reservoir on the west side of Colstrip. It was constructed to receive raw water pumped from the Yellowstone River approximately 30 miles to the north, and provides raw water storage for PPL-MT power generation processes and municipal water for the city of Colstrip.

Shallow aquifers occur along the drainage of the East Fork of Armells Creek. Deep aquifers are located in the Rosebud and McKay coal seams. The Fort Union Formation is the widely used aquifer in the area. Ground water is used mostly for livestock watering. Aquifers do not have capacity to support irrigation, and is rarely used for drinking water. A deep well was drilled within the community of Colstrip to a depth of 5,200 feet. The temperature of the well was 210 degrees F, and the sulphur content is too high for domestic use.

Coal is the dominant natural resource. The area is underlain by the Fort Union Formation, which comprises the Rosebud and Mackay coal seams. The Rosebud seam, the minable coal bed at Colstrip, averages approximately 20-30 feet thick.

Montana has approximately 25% of all of the country's coal reserves, and the Rosebud Mine, located adjacent to Colstrip, produces between 9 million and 12 million tons of coal per year. Coal in the Colstrip area is sub-bituminous. Sub-bituminous coal is a dull black coal with heating value ranging between 7,800 and 9,500 Btu; with a carbon content of 30-40%; and moisture content 20-30%. It is one of the largest, more modern mines in the United States and the Power Plant is the second largest coal fired power plant west of the Mississippi. Colstrip Electrical Generating Plants, Numbers 1-4 are mine-mouth pulverized coal generating plants with 2094 MW nameplate capacity. Montana 1 (also known as CELP), just north of Colstrip, has a 41.5 MW nameplate and burns waste coal.

Due to environmental regulation of surface or "strip" mining, Western Energy Company (now a subsidiary of Westmoreland Coal Company) has participated in land reclamation since the 1970's and has reclaimed over 9,790.4 acres (2012) of mined land by replacing soil to approximately the original condition and use. Of those 9,790.4 acres 700.2 acres have been released back to the public. The company has won numerous nationally recognized awards for the reclamation efforts. Surface coal mining companies are required to reclaim and return mined land to a productive capacity that is equal to or better than before mining occurred.

The reclamation operation takes place concurrently with the mining operation. The first step taken is to remove the top soil from an area to be mined, stockpile it and stabilize it with temporary vegetation to prevent erosion.

The initial removal of overburden is called a box cut and the cavity that is left when the coal is removed will receive the overburden from the second cut. In most cases, a dragline is used to lift overburden from a new section and deposit it in the section that has just been mined. To loosen the overburden for the dragline, it is blasted. The coal is fractured in the same way and then removed by large loaders, transferred into coal haulers and transported to the mine storage and loading facility.

Once the dragline has deposited overburden over the mined-out cavity, reclamation equipment is utilized to smooth it out and contour it to the approxinant original contour which blends in with the surrounding landscape. This process is much like that employed in construction projects. After that, reclamation becomes very similar to any farming operation. Before any company is permitted to mine, it is required to post a bond sufficient to cover the cost of reclamation if any operator fails to perform their reclamation efforts.

Western Energy has reclaimed the majority of the disturbed land to native rangeland. Another 10% of Western’s reclamation is returned to timber and shrub land. Ponderosa Pine and rocky Mountain Juniper are the timber species planted. Shrubs include silver sagebrush, big sagebrush and skunk bush sumac. Through alternative reclamation plans, Western has received approval to reclaim former croplands with alfalfa and wheat. As of 2012, 738.6 acres of cropland have been reclaimed. As of 2012, Western Energy Company has reclaimed 9,792.2 acres. This is more than 60% of all coal mine acres reclaimed in the entire state. 8,021 of the reclaimed acres are fenced and grazed each year by 450 head of cattle. Stock water is supplied by seven wells, five of which are powered by windmills. Western Energy’s reclamation also include 203 water monitoring wells, and 5 active sharp-tail grouse dancing grounds.

The Rosebud Mine produced 12,230,000 tons in 2010 and 8,800,000 tons of coal in 2011. Western Energy Company has the following current permits and reserve potential for the existing Rosebud Mine:

Area	Remaining Movable	BTU/lb
Area A	33 million tons (approved, pending revision, and some not yet submitted for mining approval)	8,700
Area B	21million tons (approved and some not yet submitted for mining approval)	8,750
Area C	6.8 million tons/yr. through 2020	
Area D	3.1 million tons/yr. through 2012. Mined out as of February 2013.	
Area E	In reclamation	
Area F	71 million tons (unpermitted)	8,590

The Colstrip Steam Electric Station is owned by Puget Sound Energy Inc. (33%), PPL Montana LLC (27%), Portland General Electric Co. (13%), Avista Corporation (10%), NorthWestern Energy LLC (10%), and Pacific Corp.(7%), and operated by PPL Montana. It is one of the cleanest coal-fired generating facilities west of the Mississippi River. Its pollution control equipment removes 99.5% of

the particulate emission and mercury controls place it in the top 10% cleanest coal plants in the country. Electricity generated by the four unit facility is used throughout the Northwest.

Colstrip Steam Electric Station Ownership by Units	Units 1 & 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
PPL MT	50%	30%	
Puget Sound	50%	25%	25%
Portland General Electric		20%	20%
Avista		15%	15%
NorthWestern Energy			30%
PacifiCorp		10%	10%

The region is rich with wildlife including mule deer, whitetail deer, antelope, grouse, pheasants, geese, elk and turkeys. In 2005 the city took a proactive approach along with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to establish a deer management plan. Colstrip is home to the Colstrip Sportsman Club that provides rifle, trap, sporting clays, skeet and black powder shooting as well as archery ranges to enthusiasts at a very reasonable membership fee.

Located in the rolling hills of Southeast Montana, Colstrip is some 26 miles south of the Yellowstone River and 10 miles or so west of Rosebud Creek. Except for the area to the southwest and west the country is rolling hills covered by grass and sagebrush and an occasional area of small pine trees. The country slopes to the north and east into the Yellowstone River and Rosebud Creek drainages. A few miles to the southwest and west the elevation increases to 4,000 feet, with the highest point, recorded at 4,820 feet, some 15 miles west southwest of Colstrip. Sparse pines cover this area and increase in number and size with increases in elevation.

The annual average precipitation for the period of 1961 to 1990 was 14-16 inches for the Colstrip and surrounding area. The annual precipitation (three-fourths of which falls during the April-September growing season) is adequate for many types of grains and grasses. The average annual precipitation of 15.79 inches is 2 to 3 inches more than the lower elevation areas along the Yellowstone River and just slightly less than the annual precipitation at Lame Deer, a few miles to the south and at a little higher elevation. Heavy snow falls are not common in this area and during the 1946-1963 period the greatest daily snowfall was just under 10 inches in December of 1958. Somewhat greater daily snowfalls of a foot and a half or more, can be expected in the Colstrip area during a typical transition storm. Spring and fall are transition seasons between the cold of winter and warmth of summer, and day to day changes can be large. Summer precipitation almost always occurs as showers, but late spring sometimes will produce general rains of several hours in duration and late September and October in some years can have rainstorms of the same general character. Thunderstorms are fairly common in the general area, probably occurring about 20 to 30 days a year. Hail and strong winds occasionally occur, but the incidence of these is not large. No tornadoes have been observed in Rosebud County over the past 20 years, but this may be partially due to the sparse population of the county.

Summers are characterized by warm days, but most nights even during mid-summer, cool down to 60 degrees or less. Temperatures of 90 degrees or more occur about 40 days each year and can occur in any month from May through October, although most of the 90 degree temperatures occur in July and August. Temperatures of 100 degrees or more occur about 2 days of the year in at least 3 out of 4 years. Mornings during July and August are mostly clear and sunny, but by afternoon on most days convective cloudiness appears, occasionally accompanied by thunder and showers.

Winters are cold, but not extreme. While minimum temperatures rarely fail to cool to 32 degrees or colder, during the winter most days will find afternoons warming to at least the middle thirties. An occasional cold spell will generate sub-zero temperatures, but these spells seldom last more than two or three days. Less than one out of three days will the maximum temperature fail to reach zero during the afternoon. Wind is seldom a factor during cold spells.

## **Community Natural Resources Goals**

**GOAL:** Continue to monitor natural resource use

**Objectives:**

1. Support fossil fuel and related industry development
2. Continue to support wildlife management with Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP)

## **FIRE AND WILDLAND FIRE POTENTIAL**

Fire protection is provided by the City's Volunteer Fire Department. The main station is a shared facility with Rosebud County on Willow Street. The department has a training center on Willow Street and a north side fire station on Wagoneer Drive. The department has approximately 30 volunteer fire fighters, and has an ISO rating of 4 which is the best rating in the state for an all-Volunteer Fire Department. The fire hall is served by 4-inch water lines. The city contracts out fire protection services to residents and businesses outside of the city limits and has a mutual aid agreement with Rosebud County and surrounding communities.

The fire department has two 1-1/2 ton fire trucks, two 1-1/2 ton water tankers, 2 wildland vehicles, a rubber rescue raft, Jaws of Life, and a fire training mobile unit. The department secured a Coal Board grant for approximately \$190,000 and with funding purchased another fire truck in 2012 for \$385,000.

<b>2012 FIRE CALLS</b>	
Other calls/incident/garbage	2
Structural Fire	1
Vehicle	3
Vegetation	14
Rescue	2
Hazardous Conditions	1
Service Call	2
Good Intent Calls/False Alarm	7

## **CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT**

The community is home to a grocery store, two hardware stores, two motels, two hair salons, a community clothing store, convenience stores, floral shop, bank and auto repair shop which provide vital shopping services.

Colstrip's central business district is located off Cherry Street in an older section of town and across the highway on Main Street, a newer section of town.

## **CULTURAL, HISTORIC, ARCHEOLOGICAL & PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES, FACILITIES & SERVICES**

The Schoolhouse History and Art Center (SHAC) is a non-profit organization that serves as a historical and art museum for the Colstrip community. The structure itself was originally built in 1924 as a schoolhouse for the emerging community of coal miners and area ranchers. SHAC has one gallery devoted to Colstrip area historical photographs and another gallery for rotating art exhibits. The organization sponsors a number of events throughout the year including a golf tournament, annual quilt show, juried art exhibits, Holiday bazaars and Colstrip Days activities. SHAC has an active Outreach Program that travels to Forsyth, Lame Deer and Colstrip visiting senior centers, rest homes and the Boys and Girls Club. SHAC serves as Colstrip's Visitor Center and has space for community meetings, lectures and seminars. It also has a developed pottery center where local artists can work on their pottery projects. SHAC's Gift Gallery is very popular as it is the host for local artisans to show and sell their wares.

## **UNIQUE GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONS/ RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

With a comparatively large tax base of the power plant and coal mine, two tax districts were formed to provide services to the Colstrip community. They include the tax supported medical district with two physicians and two physician assistants on staff. More information on the Colstrip Medical Clinic can be found under the Public Health section.

**Colstrip Park and Recreation District** - Also, Colstrip has a tax supported county park district. On July 1, 1987 the Colstrip Park and Recreation District was formed with a 3 mill levy as a result of the April election. Currently this district is funded by 15.9 mills and a portion of the Coal Gross Proceeds Tax collected by Rosebud County. It is overseen by a 7-member publicly elected non-compensated board of commissioners. CPRD celebrated its 25th anniversary in the summer of 2012.

Facilities include a 32,000 sq. ft. community center with outdoor swimming pool and 147' waterslide. Colstrip boasts 32 improved playgrounds with only a population of slightly over 2,300 residents. In addition CPRD has constructed and operates a challenging 9-hole golf course with a clubhouse and golf professional. The parks include ball fields, tennis and basketball courts, a skate park, a BMX track, a swimming pool with a 147' water slide, and wading pools. For every 70 people in Colstrip there is an improved park. In addition, there are over 150 acres of dedicated open space which the district also oversees. The park district also maintains a paved pedestrian/bike trail that stretches about 4.5 miles and serves both recreational and transportation needs. You can safely travel to most areas of town on this trail which also features tunnels that cross under HWY 39 and Power Road.

The Community Center has approximately 32,000 square feet of basketball, handball, racquetball, and exercise areas including a weight room, cardio room, child care, youth room and features certified fitness instructors. An expansion in 2006 increased the facility from 24,000 sq. ft. to its current size including an elevator, offices, teen room and additional exercise gym area. In 2004 Sports Illustrated magazine recognized Colstrip as Sports Illustrated 50th Anniversary Sports town USA for Montana. According to an article in the Billings Gazette; "from July 2002 through April 2003, there were some 44,023 "touches" or uses of the community center by the locals." In addition, in 2008 the CPRD board was named "Outstanding Board or Commission" for communities with populations under 25,000 by the Citizen Branch of the National Recreation and Park Association for the nation.

Castle Rock Lake sits on the edge of town provides hours of entertainment for swimmers, non-motorized boaters and fishermen

## **UNIQUE GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONS/ RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES cont.**

with passion for warm water fishing including Large Mouth Bass, Northern Pike, Crappie, Bluegill, or Walleye. Pedestrians and cyclists enjoy a well maintained trail that vary in length from 2.58 miles to 3.12 miles around the lake. Ice fishing is popular, so the lake is a year round fishing destination. Montana state record fish for Green Sunfish and Channel Catfish are recorded as being caught in Castle Rock Lake in 1991 and 1998, respectively.

CPRD maintains a 5-year capital improvement plan. Annual improvements identified in the plan include the purchase of equipment, parkland and facility expansion and improvements. The plan is an aggressive plan which identifies major improvements, however CPRD is responsible for a large recreational infrastructure within Colstrip that requires ongoing maintenance and continued upgrades.

CPRD services are available to residents at no additional cost and are truly representative of a publicly owned and operated facility.

### **Community Recreational Facilities Goals**

**GOAL:** Encourage recreational development.

**Objectives:**

1. Cooperate with and support CPRD in the optimum utilization of park lands
2. Explore the development of RV and camping potential

## **STATEMENT OF INTERJURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION**

The city interacts with a number of agencies and organizations: The Colstrip Park and Recreation District (CPRD); Colstrip Schools; the Medical Center taxing district; Eastern Montana Drug Task Force (EMDTF); Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FW&P); Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); Rosebud County; and private companies such as PPL-Montana and Western Energy. Some of the entities provide multiple functions cooperatively such as Rosebud County which shares a VOIP phone system, the law enforcement center, provides ambulance services, operates the library, weed management, senior citizens, public health, probation, juvenile serves and county landfill in the Colstrip area. The city of Colstrip has inter-local agreements with CPRD and the school regarding cooperative efforts, shared use of facilities and other areas of mutual interest. The Colstrip volunteer fire department has a mutual aid agreement with Rosebud County Fire Services. The Colstrip police department works with the EMDTF, assists Rosebud County on calls near Colstrip and works closely with the BIA. The city, FW&P, and private landowners including PPL-Montana and Western Energy have developed a Deer Management Plan for the city which includes the harvesting of deer.

Ongoing efforts will be maintained. These efforts include the city mayor or administrative staff meeting with the director of CPRD, Rosebud County Commissioners and school administrator at least once a year to discuss ongoing cooperative efforts and coordination.

## **STATEMENT OF INTERJURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION cont.**

A County Commissioner has been actively involved in the development of the Colstrip Comprehensive Growth Plan. In addition, the Rosebud County Commissioners have asked the city of Colstrip to appoint three members to serve on the County Planning Board which has jurisdiction of matters related to growth adjacent to the city of Colstrip, yet outside the limits of the incorporated boundaries of the city. Also a copy of the Colstrip Comprehensive Growth Plan will be submitted to the County Commissioners for review and comment prior to the adoption by the City Council.

## **STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

Compact (not crowded) development should be encouraged by both Colstrip and Rosebud County. Compact development is more cost-efficient for private citizens, private businesses, and for public agencies that provide services.

The costs of schools, police, fire protection, water, sewer, and street maintenance for single-family residential areas almost always exceed the revenues derived by local governments. Scattered development increases the costs of public services, and widens the gap between public costs and public revenues – all adding to the local tax burden.

Areas in and adjacent to the urban core should be fully utilized before development spreads into the fringe area. Priority should be given to providing high standards of services to existing developed areas of the community. New areas should be allowed to develop only as services become available, and the development should be expected to pay its way.

New development should be planned and designed to deal with the physical limitations existing within the planning area, including flood-hazard areas, soil conditions, and high ground water tables. Plans should reflect those limitations with proper street layout and construction, building site location, densities, storm drainage, and new installation of water and sewer facilities.

Commercial developments that are isolated from the existing commercial centers are inefficient, tend to be marginal, become unattractive and decrease property values of adjacent properties. New commercial development should be focused on the existing business districts to maintain the economic strength of the present businesses and business districts, and to minimize conflicts and impacts on residential areas.

Quality development should be encouraged in the commercial areas to insure the people of Colstrip an attractive and efficient shopping environment. When possible, old buildings should be rehabilitated. Strip development should be discouraged.

Industrial development should be: (1) located accessible to rail and truck transportation, (2) separated from residential areas, or designed to eliminate or minimize conflicts, (3) located or designed to minimize interference with commercial activities, and (4) designed and maintained for appealing visual appearance.

Enough land should be made available for any foreseeable industrial needs. Industrial activities should be located and protected from encroachments by non-industrial land uses.

Truck transportation routes to industrial sites should be designated so they follow only major streets and highways. Disruption of residential areas by trucks should be minimized.

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) serves as a planning tool for local governments to address their infrastructure and capital needs now and into the future. The use of these documents ensures a well thought out capital improvement plan which

## **STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE cont.**

addresses funding sources for these community needs. Sewer systems, wastewater treatment facilities, water systems, streets and roads infrastructure, solid waste facilities, fire and law enforcement services and facilities, capital equipment and needs will be identified in the city's annual CIP. The city of Colstrip will develop a CIP that will include five years of capital needs and will be updated on an annual basis.

### **General Development Policies**

1. The city will require all new development to comply with the subdivision and zoning regulations, building codes, and with the city comprehensive growth policy plan.
2. The city will encourage and direct new growth to locate in, or adjacent to the city.
3. Development will be discouraged in areas of constraints, such as clay soils, high ground water, flood hazards, shallow bed rock, unless special engineering, construction or other techniques can be used to overcome the constraints.
4. Developers will pay for water and sewer improvements in, and extending to new developments. Developers will pay for street improvements in new subdivisions. The city may require the developers to pay the costs of constructing any street extensions, upgrades or improvements that are necessary to provide safe and proper access to a new development. Developers will be required to provide a grading and drainage plan and provide proper storm drainage facilities to handle storm water run-off.

### **Residential Development Policies**

1. Residential development will be discouraged in areas suitable and desirable for industrial or commercial development.
2. The city will encourage proper housing and residential development by coordinating land use planning and the provision of facilities and services.

### **Commercial and Industrial Development Policies**

1. The city will encourage and direct commercial development toward the existing business centers and will encourage and direct industrial development towards existing industrial areas, by enforcing its zoning and subdivision regulations, and through incentives such as cost sharing for services.
  - a. To encourage commercial and industrial growth in preferable locations, the city may provide incentives such as cost sharing in off-street parking, extending water and sewer trunk lines, providing convenient and functional street facilities.
2. The city will work with the Chamber and downtown business people to offer incentives to encourage and direct commercial development to locate in the existing business centers.
  - a. In cooperation with the business community, the city will draft a zoning ordinance that strengthens the existing business districts. The city will study traffic, streets and parking, and will seek opportunities to improve the business climate with changes in traffic patterns, improvements in streets, off-street parking, and explore potential business improvements programs.
3. The city will require commercial and industrial uses to provide adequate access for service trucks, garbage collection, emergency vehicles, provide adequate off-street parking and proper surface drainage.

Given the current trend of an increasing number of elderly and retired citizens living in Colstrip, an adequate number of higher-density, lower cost housing for senior citizens in close proximity to community services, the business district, and park and recreation facilities may be needed.

## STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE cont.

Because many families are meeting their housing needs with mobile homes, the city should provide sufficient areas for mobile home development. Mobile home developments should be required to meet reasonable standards to ensure that they are pleasant, convenient places to live.

### Housing Development Policies

1. The city will work with developers to provide a full range of affordable housing types, including rental units, mobile homes and single-family housing in a broad range of prices.
2. The city will explore public housing programs and will work with developers to provide available housing for elderly, individuals with disabilities, and low and moderate income families. Housing rehabilitation, rental housing and other programs will be pursued to provide housing availability for elderly, disabled, low income, and people on fixed incomes.
3. The city will ensure that sufficient land is available and zoned for needed quantities and types of housing, and will draft its zoning, subdivision and building regulations to ensure that the provisions do not impose unnecessary barriers to provisions of affordable housing.

### Public Facilities and Services Policies

1. The city will assess properties located outside the municipal boundaries to determine the best means to provide sewer and water services upon request, annexation to the city, and funding sources for these extensions including through fees assessed the property owners, waivers of right to protest annexation, and the formation of improvement districts.
2. Hook-up fees and other assessments should reflect the actual costs of extending or expanding facilities. In the case of new development, the developer will be responsible for paying the costs of extension. Where existing development is benefited, a special district may be formed as a means of financing.
3. Where extensions pass by, or are located near undeveloped properties, the developer may be required to install larger lines or other facilities than are needed to serve his development.
  - a. If a developer is required to construct facilities larger than needed for his development, he may negotiate with the governing body for reimbursement for the oversized portion. Reimbursement methods may include cash, a term refunding agreement or credit against other fees.
4. New, expanded or upgraded facilities will meet engineering and construction standards or specifications approved by the city council. All construction and installation will be inspected to ensure construction meets the standards and specifications.
5. Facilities will be properly maintained and operated by trained personnel according to approved procedures to assure minimum deterioration and need for repair. Where possible, new facilities will be designed and constructed to minimize maintenance and operation costs.
6. Before approving new public facilities, the governing body shall assure that funding for all associated future costs (e.g. operation and maintenance) will be available.

### Streets

1. The present street pattern will be continued and will govern the layout of future streets and street extensions.
2. New, expanded or upgraded streets will meet engineering and construction standards approved by the city council. All street construction will be inspected to ensure proper construction.

## Streets cont.

3. When streets are excavated to replace water and sewer lines; install fiber optics or other communication lines and natural gas lines to reduce the cost of future installation of communication or natural gas facilities.

Parks and recreation areas are used by the whole spectrum of people, the young to the elderly residents and out-of-town travelers. The community's parks and recreation facilities must meet a number of criteria for serving that broad spectrum. Stream corridor areas within the planning jurisdiction should be recognized as valuable land for recreation and open space, and should be so developed.

Open space is an appropriate means to separate residential and commercial development from power generation and transmission facilities and other incompatible uses such as municipal water and wastewater treatment plants. Providing parks and open space in industrial and commercial areas enhances aesthetics and use by employees and customers.

## **SUBDIVISION REVIEW STATEMENT**

New divisions of land are classed in several different ways. Divisions of five lots or less are called Minor Subdivisions. Divisions with six or more lots are called Major Subdivisions. Minor subdivisions are subject to Planning Board Review for a "land review" and lots less than 20 acres are subject to "sanitation review" by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. (DEQ). Minor subdivisions with parcels over 20 acres and less than 160 acres are subject to Planning Board Review and the sanitation review conducted by the County Sanitarian. The Colstrip City Council has final approval authority on both minor and major subdivisions.

Some divisions of land may be exempt from land review and may or may not be exempt from a sanitation review. Such divisions are labeled as Certificate of Surveys. (COS) The City of Colstrip has approval authority on some COS's, but not others. The City of Colstrip, however, reviews COS's for errors and omissions under adopted evasion criteria, compliance with state and county regulations and the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 24.183.1101; 1104; and 1107. Some divisions are subject to licensing requirement under the Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS) such as mobile home courts and recreational vehicle parks.

The Montana Subdivision & Platting Act (MSPA) of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA), specifically 76-3-608, provides guidance for the review criteria to be applied in a subdivision review. This primary criterion includes impacts on agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, local services, the natural environment, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and public health & safety. A review procedure must also include compliance with survey requirements; compliance with local zoning ordinances; compliance with local subdivision regulation; the provision of easements for planned utilities; and the provision of legal and physical access from a Montana secondary route to each lot within the proposed subdivision by means of an officially adopted road.

The primary review criteria are defined as follows:

### **Agriculture**

Agricultural use is those lands used for production agriculture, including tillable lands and range or grasslands. Granaries, barns, corrals, machine sheds and other structures are not considered to be agriculture use. Livestock feed lots are typically considered to be commercial. The impacts are considered for the land being developed as well as the surrounding properties. Farming and ranching activities often generate offending sights, sounds and smells for nearby residential uses. Residential uses may negatively impact the neighboring agriculture by road dust, at-large dogs disturbing livestock. Unrestrained use of herbicides and pesticides may harm downstream crops that are chemical sensitive. Trespass on to private lands is often an issue.

### **Agricultural Water User Facilities**

Water for irrigation and livestock are critical elements for a farm/ranch operation. Open ditches, canals, pipelines, ponds, natural stream channels, and other water conveyances or water retention facilities must not be infringed upon by a proposed division. Easements must be granted for existing water user facilities within proposed divisions. Water rights are held by the individual owner. Water rights are not generally transferred to residents of non-agricultural lands.

Proposed residential, commercial, or industrial divisions shall mitigate negative impacts to agriculture water user facilities. Structures and septic disposal systems adjacent to stream channels shall have a minimum 100 foot setback from the stream's high water mark. Proposed divisions must grant easements for operation, repair, and maintenance of water facilities. Access roads crossing water facilities must be constructed so as to not restrict or hinder the operation of the water facility. Open water facilities may require fencing at the developer's expense to protect future residents of the proposed division.

### **Local Services**

The City of Colstrip provides a wide range of services under its jurisdiction. Some services are shared under agreements with Rosebud County including: weed management, fire suppression, the law enforcement center, senior center, the landfill, library, public health, and ambulance services. Other services are delivered by Special Improvements Districts (SIDs). Agreements with various agencies of the State of Montana, and the federal government also affect the delivery of local services.

Impacts from growth will depend upon the nature of the growth numbers, traffic counts, and public safety.

### **Natural Environment**

A proposed division must consider negative impacts to, or caused by, the natural environment. Flood plains, wet lands, high water tables, lack of adequate water aquifers, wildland fire, high fire fuel areas, lack of water for fire suppression, depth to bed rock, high lightning strike areas, vegetation, ground subsidence or sink holes, snow accumulation, and weather patterns are some of the elements of the natural environment found in the surrounding Colstrip area. Localized areas are known to be contaminated to the point that ground water for domestic purposes is un-useable.

Proposed subdivisions that have a negative impact to, or caused by, natural factors must be mitigated.

### **Wild Life**

Big game, small game, game birds, and fish are found in or near Colstrip. Hunting and fishing is a significant recreational and economic factor in this area. Endangered and protected species are found in localized areas in the Colstrip vicinity.

Proposed subdivisions that negatively impact wild life shall be required to mitigate those impacts.

### **Wild Life Habitat**

Wildlife habitat is those lands that provide food, shelter, and areas for nesting, breeding and calving. Wildlife of all types have seasonal breeding areas, winter/summer grazing areas, and migratory pathways that are key to their survival. There are sensitive habitats found in the in the Colstrip vicinity.

Proposed subdivisions that have a negative impact on wildlife habitat shall be required to mitigate those impacts.

### **Public Health & Safety**

Human interaction with natural and man-made features may restrict the health and well-being of the residents of a proposed division. Man-made hazards include high voltage power lines, high pressure gas & oil pipelines, open water ditches & canals, intersections with railroads, road design and construction factors, escape routes for residents during emergencies, transportation issues including traffic loads and speed control, airport activities, abandoned mines, conflict between residential and industrial operations, tower fall zones are a few of the factors. Natural factors such as wind, snow, flooding, fire hazards, lightning strike, steep slopes, vegetation that may cause drifting or shading of access routes, diseases such as rabies, West Nile Virus, and Hanta Virus may be concentrated in certain habitats, high concentrations of venomous animals such as snakes and insects must be considered. Frequently, hazards are the result of a combination of factors listed.

Proposed subdivisions that have potential negative impacts to public health & safety shall be required to mitigate those impacts.

Recent changes in the state code permits a new class of subdivision known as Cluster Development. Cluster development is a subdivision with lots clustered in a group of five or more lots that is designed to concentrate building sites on small lots to reduce capital and maintenance costs for infrastructure through the use of public services and utilities, while allowing for other lands to remain undeveloped. This type of subdivision layout has potential for use in Colstrip.

## **PUBLIC HEARING STATEMENT**

Under the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act, a local government must give notice and hold a public hearing on any subdivision proposal that involves six or more lots. The Colstrip Subdivision Regulations specify that the Colstrip city planning board is responsible for holding the public hearing. The following outlines the procedures the Planning Board will use in conducting the public hearings on proposed subdivisions.

- (a) The president opens the hearing and summarizes the proposal. The planning staff, consultant or an assigned planning board member will present a report that provides background information and describes the key technical points of the application and the proposal's relationship to the growth policy plan, other plans, any land use regulations, and the draft Findings of Fact.
- (b) The subdivider or his representative may present information and testimony relating to the proposed subdivision. Planning Board members are permitted to direct any relevant questions to staff or the applicant.
- (c) Any written comments submitted prior to the hearing will be read. If the president deems that the written comments are numerous or voluminous, he may request that the written comments be summarized.
- (d) Members of the audience will be given an opportunity to comment on the application or proposal. Comments should be factual and relevant to the proposal. A reasonable time will be allowed each speaker. Each person speaking must give name, address, and nature of interest in matter.
- (e) After public comment is complete, the subdivider or representative may respond briefly.
- (f) Planning Board members may voice other significant consideration, and may pose any relevant questions through the president.
- (g) The president closes the hearing on the subdivision proposal.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATAGY**

Following the review and adoption of this Growth Policy the City of Colstrip will take action to implement the recommended policies and begin to work on goals and objectives. The document will be made available to the community in general both on the city website and at the public library. Community stakeholders and leaders will be given a copy so that the various goals, objectives and policies are widely publicized.

General implementation will begin with reviews of existing ordinances, programs and monitoring of trends. Policy will be crafted, reviewed and moved through the public hearing and adoption process. Implementation of infrastructure needs will follow the planning process of priority setting, budgeting, engineering, and construction.

The growth policy will be reviewed at least once every five years and revised if necessary. Revisions, either whole or in part, shall be driven by substantive changes in state code or by significant changes in population or demands for City services.