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*CITY*  
*of*  
*COLSTRIP*

*COMPREHENSIVE*  
*GROWTH POLICY*

*2008*

**City of Colstrip**

**COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH POLICY**

**Mayor:** John Williams

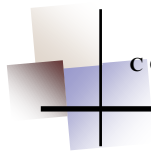
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer passed through Rosebud County before marching to his final battle at the Little Big Horn, June 25, 1876. A marker approximately 10 miles south of Colstrip indicates the location of one of his final encampments.

The city of Colstrip was established as a company town in the early 1920's by the Northern Pacific Railroad. The nearby mine provided coal for steam locomotives for 34 years. By the 1950's the mine had closed and the town had shrunk to under 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.

Today, Colstrip is still primarily a power generating and mining town. You will find the area uncharacteristic of the stereotypical strip mining community. It 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 it is the direct result of responsible energy development.

## **COMMUNITY GOALS, OBJECTIVES**

### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TIMELINE**

**GOAL I:** Ensure that adequate space, infrastructure and housing stock is available for future needs of residential, commercial, industrial uses and community facilities.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Meet the changing needs of housing within the community.
2. Encourage the development of permanent family housing stock.
3. Ensure that development is well-planned and designed, occurs on suitable building areas, makes efficient use of land, and conforms to existing policies and ordinances.
4. Ensure that developments are served by roads, water, wastewater, utilities, parking and are free from interference by incompatible uses.
5. Ensure that residential areas are pleasant, convenient, safe and healthy places to live.

**STRATEGIES:**

- a.) Assess the existing housing infrastructure and determine the condition, areas of weaknesses, and changing character of housing within the community. (fall of 2007)
- b.) Develop a housing plan that addresses the housing and shelter needs of growing segments of the population, including special needs population and short-term employment populations. (2008)
- c.) Align the zoning districts to meet the unmet need for permanent housing structures. (2010)
- d.) Identify funding strategies to develop housing projects within the community. (2008)
- e.) Identify areas for growth and create an efficient and practical pattern of development that will make efficient use of land and allow the economical provisions of services and utilities. (2008)
- f.) Develop housing that will meet the needs of special populations within the community including seniors and handicapped residents. (2010)

**GOAL II:** Expand existing recreational opportunities serving all ages, including youth, senior citizens, and disabled.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Meet the short-term housing and recreational needs of temporary workers and guests within the community.
2. Continue to maintain and expand premier recreational facilities, park lands and programs.

**STRATEGIES:**

- a.) Develop recreational vehicle and camping facilities that could accommodate temporary workers and guests within the community without disturbing the safety or family appeal of neighborhoods within the community. (2008)
- b.) Further develop and improve park lands within the community. (ongoing)
- c.) Expand recreational programs, opportunities, and activities to meet a broader spectrum of participants and spectators. (ongoing)

**GOAL III:** Provide public infrastructure, facilities and services that are identified as good to excellent by residents, businesses and guests of Colstrip.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Continue to maintain and improve infrastructure within the community to meet the changing community needs.
2. Ensure that services are improved in a cost-effective manner to residents and businesses, at reasonable public costs and tax expenditures.
3. Develop sound and effective public services through capital improvement planning activities and sound maintenance programs.
4. Ensure that infrastructure has adequate back-up systems in place to alleviate potential for service failures.
5. Ensure that infrastructure continues to meet environmental discharge requirements long into the future.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Continue with street improvement projects resulting in more streets repaired. (ongoing)
- b. Assess traffic flows within the community and identify areas of safety concerns, install traffic control systems as warranted. (2012)
- c. Construct a permanent city hall to provide a stable community structure. (2008)
- d. Continue to maintain and upgrade water and wastewater infrastructure within the community. (ongoing)
- e. Continue to maintain existing jurisdictional coordination and identify new areas to increase jurisdictional cooperation with private, public, or non-profit entities. (2011)
- f. Install a secondary power source or standby generator for emergencies with the Lift Stations estimated at \$121,500. (2012)
- g. Install a new ultraviolet light disinfection system in the WWTP, estimated to cost \$112,000. (2008)
- h. Install WWTP system components that provide redundancy or a back-up so that if break downs occur, effluent quality can be maintained, estimated to cost \$445,000. (2012)
- i. Resolve the backwash problem, estimated to cost \$297,000. (2010)

**GOAL IV:** Create stronger, more diversified primary and secondary sector including retail, services and primary industries resulting in a stronger economic base.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Broaden and diversify the economic base and increase the number and mix of stable, long term jobs that enhance the vitality of the community.
2. Increase access to capital and technical assistance for businesses.
3. Increase the capacity of the community to house small service and retail businesses.

4. Create more employment opportunities for youth.
5. Encourage local youth to become educated and return home to Colstrip to work and raise families.
6. Foster increased local buying

STRATEGIES:

- a. Encourage the development of rental space for small businesses, service industries, and retail businesses. (ongoing)
- b. Identify and adopt incentives to encourage the creation of start-up businesses. (2009)
- c. Identify and encourage the development of a central business district. (ongoing)
- d. Encourage the research and development of “environmentally friendly” natural resources, primarily coal, industries. (2012)
- e. Create more employment opportunities for youth through the creation of service industry businesses. (2012)
- f. Conduct a feasibility study on the development of a centralized business district in Colstrip. (2008)
- g. Create a Revolving Loan Fund to provide necessary capital for business expansion and development. (2008)

**GOAL V:** Increase the quality of life through improved living conditions and aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide for safe, healthy and decent neighborhoods for families.
2. Present an aesthetically pleasing appearance to guests to the community.
3. Increase industry’s ability to attract employees and their families due to the appearance of the community.



STRATEGIES:

- a. Encourage and enforce the removal of decay within the community. (ongoing)
- b. Develop incentives for homeowners to remove vehicles in yards and clean up their property. (2010)
- c. Encourage development of attractive trailer courts and recreational vehicle parks. (2010)

**GOAL VI:** Provide emergency response services that are well-equipped, well-trained, able to timely respond, and available to meet the emergency needs of the community.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Enhance emergency response services within the community
2. Provide medical services within the community.
3. Provide a safe and healthy environment to live and raise families.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Explore and identify ways to provide better access to pharmaceutical supplies. (2012)
- b. Assess and explore the creation of a professional emergency response service. (2010)
- c. Expand community safety and volunteer crime reduction programs within the community. (2008)

## LAND USE

The unincorporated community of Colstrip became an incorporated city in 1998. The new 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 first Comprehensive Growth Policy was adopted in 2001 and has been the guiding document for land use in Colstrip during the past six years. To understand the land use history of Colstrip, it is important to review how the city was developed.

The community of Colstrip was developed in two distinct phases. The first phase was the platting and development of the Original Town site in the early 1970's, which occurred in response to population growth created by the construction of Colstrip electric power generating plants Units 1 and 2. The second development phase, the Colstrip Town site Expansion, occurred in the late 1970's and early 1980's in response to the construction of Units 3 and 4. The community grew and developed from a population of 250 in 1970 to approximately 8,000, a population generated by mining employees but primarily construction workers. After construction of Units 3 and 4 was completed and the plants became operational, a smaller population centered around permanent Western Energy Company officials, coal mining and power plant employees, the secondary service and retail employees and their families. The great influx of temporary construction workers and families and the subsequent reduced population of permanent employees and families determined the present land use pattern of Colstrip.

The residential areas making up the Colstrip expansion are of "modern" design, with curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs. Residential neighborhoods are geographically separated from industrial districts and the business centers. A business district is located in the Original Town site and another is located west of and adjacent to Highway 39. The dominating power generation complex is located on the south end of Colstrip. A light industrial park is located on the north end of the community, outside of the incorporated city limits, and identified as commercial through covenants. An elementary school and a middle school are located in the Original Town site; an elementary and a high school are located on the north end of Colstrip. An industrial area was laid out on the east side of town but never developed. Present housing with acreage demands are changing that designated area to acreage home tracts.

To avoid conflict with the dominating power plants and power transmission lines, no development has been allowed near the power plants or under the transmission lines.

Open space has been used to ensure the separation of incompatible development with the electric power facilities. Open space also has been used to effectively prevent development near the water and the wastewater treatment plants. Open space and some park and recreation development are located along the East Fork of Armells Creek to complement that stream corridor.

Western Energy Company, in laying out the Colstrip community, provided for extensive parks and recreation areas. Since then, the Colstrip Parks and Recreation District has further developed and maintained the parks and recreation facilities. Colstrip has 25 parks and recreation facilities, including a 9-hole golf course and hiking and biking trails. The community park system, totaling approximately 53 acres, is designed to complement and enhance the residential neighborhoods, school facilities, and the overall community.

Western Energy Company instituted protective covenants to implement land use and development requirements. The covenants for the Original Town site, initiated in the 1970's were enforced by a Colstrip Property Owners Association and expired prior to the city's incorporation.

The covenants for the Colstrip Town site Expansion areas were enforced by the Colstrip Town site Expansion Property Owners Association. Those covenants were in effect through 2000. In November, 2000 the Colstrip City Council adopted interim zoning regulations that essentially kept the substantive regulations of the covenants in place. The City Council approved a Comprehensive Growth Policy in June of 2001 and then adopted zoning ordinances in December of 2001. These policies remain in effect today. The City Council has asked the planning board to update the Comprehensive Growth Plan in an effort to continue this planning process, set and identify new goals and objectives, and identify implementation strategies to ensure that the community remains progressive in its planning efforts and responsive to changing needs.

## **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 serves the Colstrip mine site, with a 144 ton rail rating limit. Most trains are a minimum of 100 cars.

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 width is 75 ft. and 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.

Colstrip is served by Diversified Transport Service and Bob's Pickup and Delivery freight carriers. There is no bus service available from Colstrip. The nearest bus service is 35 miles away in Forsyth.

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.

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. Airlines serving the Billings airport include Big Sky, Horizon, United, Northwest, Delta and SkyWest with approximately 30 daily scheduled flights and in 1995 331,000 enplanements. Airlines serving the Sheridan County Airport include Great Lakes Airlines (United, Frontier) and Big Sky Airlines (Northwest, America West/US Airways, Alaska/Horizon Airlines) with direct flights to Denver and Billings. Air service is provided with EMB 120, 30 passenger Brasilia and Beechcraft 1900D, 19-seat aircraft. There is a full service FBO which is the largest and most complete aviation service center in the state of Wyoming. The FBO provides helicopter and aircraft air charter, aircraft repair, flight instruction, full service fueling, avionics installation and repair service.

## POPULATION

In 1968 there were 100 residents in Colstrip this boomed to 2,500 in 1980 and 7,500 in 1982 with the construction boom. In 1991 the population had decreased to 4,500 and today that population is 2,346 with the median age of 35.3 years.

Montana Power finished construction of their first two Colstrip plants in 1976 and a second two in 1986. The coal mined from the Rosebud Mine by Western Energy Company provides the fuel for the power plants. Early in the 1990's the union negotiated a 4-day workweek for the majority of power plant employees. On the surface, this would seem to be a minor change for the city. However, with positions that paid as well as these, and the fact that small town life isn't desirable for all, the 4-day work week provided the opportunity for some families to live elsewhere. The employed member of the family could share a motor home or apartment with a few other employees for the three nights a week they stayed in town. Although it is difficult to track the exact figure, some population was lost when those families moved.

To further exasperate the situation, some coal contracts were lost and in 1996 Montana Power announced the plan to downsize the existing operation. Approximately 500 jobs were lost in a town of less than 3,000 people. In 1998 Montana Power announced the intended sale of the Colstrip operation to Pennsylvania Power & Light (PPL-MT). Also in 1998, the citizens of Colstrip voted to incorporate. Colstrip had been a city with 620 employees at its generating plants, but energy deregulation led to Montana Power's demise, and the workforce at the plants was down to approximately 400 in 2004 according to an article by the Billings Gazette. Likewise the high school had shrunk from a peak enrollment in the 490's down to 260 projected for the fall of 2004.

Colstrip has a population of 2,346 residents, according to the 2000 Census, which translates into 523 residents per square mile. This shows the decrease from the 1990 Census population of 3,185 and an increase from the 1980 Census population of 1,476. Colstrip's population has fluctuated significantly in correlation with coal mining and generation activities. According to the 2000 Census, 34.6% of the residents are under 18 years of age. And only 2.7% of the population is 65 years old and over. The following chart shows numbers of residents in each age category.

Less than 10 yrs.	392	40 – 49 years	544
10 – 19 yrs.	457	50 – 59 years	314
20 - 29 yrs.	161	60 – 69 years	92
30 – 39 yrs.	313	70 & over years	43

Non-Hispanic whites are the dominate race with 81.4% of the population in this category. However, 9.2% of the population is non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native population and an additional 3.8% of the population is non-Hispanic multiracial population. Another 2% are non-Hispanic Asian, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population; and 3.6% are Hispanic or Latino population.

According to the 2006 Subcounty Population Estimates prepared by the Census and Economic Information Center, Colstrip’s July 1, 2006 population is 2,342 not much different than the April 1, 2000 census population of 2,346.

Colstrip is experiencing new students in school. Pre-school through fifth grades decreased from 247 in 2006 to 245 in 2007. The middle school, grades six through eight, increased from 156 in 2006 to 157 in 2007. The high school increased significantly from 221 in 2006 to 241 in 2007. Total enrollment increased 19 students from 624 in 2006 to 643 in 2007. This increase in students is partially related to the increase in younger workers replacing those retiring from the coal generation plants and mine. Please refer to the Housing section on page 15 and 16 regarding this changing population and needs related to housing.

## **HOUSING NEEDS**

With the construction of Colstrip power plants 1 and 2 in the 1970's housing needs greatly changed. Over 7,500 construction workers came to Colstrip to build and work in the plants. Their immediate housing needs changed the housing profile of the community, even to 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, yet very few neighborhood businesses.

According to the 2000 Census, Colstrip has 936 total housing units with 825 or 88.1% owner occupied and 111 or 11.9% vacant housing units. Of the 825 occupied housing units in Colstrip 677 or 82.1% are owner occupied while 148 or 17.9% are renter occupied units. For the population five (5) years and older, 51.7% or 1,121 of the 2,168 residents have lived in the same house since 1995.

46.5% of the housing units are single-family detached homes. 361 or 38.6% of the homes are mobile homes, as a direct effect of the boom and sudden need for housing in the 1980's. 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 median value for a specified owner occupied housing unit is \$75,400. The median gross rent of a specified renter occupied unit is \$497 a month.

PPL-MT estimates that 150 employees will retire within the next five (5) years at the age of 60 – 62. A similar number of retirees are projected for Western Energy Company, as well. This influx of retirements means that approximately 300 new employees, possibly with families, will 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. However, there is a concern that houses will be built outside of the city limits because there are no building lots available within the city limits in desirable locations. Recently, housing developers have considered purchasing lots and developing “stick-built” homes, but are concerned with the availability of desirable single-family housing lots; development of water, wastewater and roads infrastructure; and neighborhood compatibility.

The planning director is receiving inquiries about the possibility of placing a “grandmother house” on the same lot as the principal structure. Demographic trends indicate a growing need for single-unit housing for the aging population or other single renters. Also, affordable workforce housing for entry-level or service oriented employees has been a concern recently. One way other communities have started to address these needs has been by implementing provisions for single unit rentals in the basement, above a garage, or as a separate guest house on owner-occupied lots. Accessory dwelling units (ADU) are often limited in size and number of renters, require their own off-street parking, and require the main residence to be owner-occupied. These and other restrictions have made ADUs successful and compatible uses in other communities.

In addition, today’s family structures are changing. Many grandparents are raising children, divorced women and children are living together for financial reasons, gay and lesbian couples are adopting children, and many other family structures exist. With these growing housing issues within the community, the planner has become aware of ambiguities within the zoning codes regarding housing units. It is unclear, with today’s changing family structures, what is the definition of a single family.

The community has formed a committee to look at housing needs within the community. They are concerned with the aging population and are looking at potential assisted living facilities for seniors and developmentally disabled people within the community. The Meadowlark Subdivision adjacent to Castle Rock Lake Drive is zoned for multiple family use and may provide the opportunity to meet changing housing needs within the community.

Housing is probably the single most important need that should be addressed within the next five years in Colstrip. Rising construction costs and the lack of local construction contractors will compound the issue and create challenges as the community strives to address the need.



## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Local economies are shaped by a number of different factors. For example, the economies of both Colstrip and Rosebud County, like any other local economy, are a result of these factors:

- a. Money coming into the county from the out-of-county sale of goods and services;
- b. The extent to which those in-coming dollars are spent in Colstrip for local goods and services;
- c. Money leaving Colstrip that is spent on goods and services outside the city.

A community's economy is strengthened when (1) income from basic industries increases, (2) sales of local goods and services increases, and (3) less money is spent for out-of-county goods and services.

To understand a local economy, it is very important to analyze the role of local basic industries. Basic (or primary) industries are those economic sectors that bring income from outside into the city, primarily through the sales of goods or services to out-of-city purchasers. Derivative (or secondary) sectors are those that sell local goods and services that are purchased as a result of subsequent spending of basic income within the city. Secondary industries principally serve the local population.

Income from sale of agriculture, forestry, mining, and manufacturing products is basic income because these products are sold out-of city (Even if a basic product is sold within the city, the income is still considered basic income because the sale replaces a purchase the buyer would otherwise have made out-of-city). Travel/tourism is considered a basic industry because it brings income from out-of-city travelers. The secondary sectors include retail and wholesale trade, services, building contractors, finance, insurance, real estate and local government. These are secondary sectors because they serve the local population and are supported by the spending of basic sector income.

Out-of-city travelers, recreationists and tourists purchase goods and services provided by the retail and service sectors. Therefore that portion of the income and jobs in the retail and service sectors must be considered basic because the sales come from the out-of-city. No clear method exists to estimate the amount of sales or number of jobs in retail and services jobs that are generated by travel/tourism. Motels and hotels serve

almost exclusively out-of-city persons and thus clearly are basic industries. Retail stores and eating and drinking establishments receive some portion of their income from out-of-city patrons.

Colstrip's economy historically has been and continues to be tied to coal development and the two associated industries – coal mining and power generation. In 1968 Western Energy Company opened its Rosebud Mine and a year later Peabody Coal Company opened its Big Sky Mine. Colstrip power generation plants Unit 1 and 2 began operation in 1976 and Units 3 and 4 began operation in 1984. Montana Generation opened a 35-megawatt generation plant seven miles north of Colstrip in 1991, and Rosebud Syncoal Partnership opened the Advanced Coal Conversion Plant at the Rosebud Mine west of Colstrip. Within the past five years, the Big Sky Mine and Rosebud Syncoal Partnership's Advanced Coal Conversion Plant have been closed. In addition, PPL-MT owners of the Colstrip power generation plants have moved some of their management staff into the Billings, MT operations. These changes have resulted in a decrease of approximately 50 employees residing in Colstrip.

Local businesses include two hardware stores, two motels, a vacated bowling alley, grocery store, floral shop, post office, one bank, one credit union, many service providers, restaurants and convenience stores. The 2002 Colstrip City business licenses showed 65 licensed businesses within the incorporated limits of the city. While as many as 100 businesses were identified in an informal survey which included all types of businesses and services including those that were not required to be licensed by the city. These businesses are supported by income from the power plant and coal mine as well as the production agriculture located in the area surrounding Colstrip.

Efforts led by Southeastern Montana Economic Development Corporation and the City of Colstrip staff have resulted in the opening of a community owned clothing store, "Got Socks" in an attempt to increase the secondary sector of the economy.

Recently, a large retail store, Ducwall-Alco has shown interest in locating within the community. They commented on the communities pleasing appearance, infrastructure, services and the close proximity to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation as reasons why they were looking at locating within Colstrip.

The city also received ownership of the Cherry Street Mall for the use in economic development and extensive studies were conducted to determine if the Mall was

salvageable as a retail facility. Recently, the city determined that the Mall and that area would be better utilized by demolishing the building and building new construction. The city is considering building a permanent home for the city offices and administrative functions on the space formerly home of the Cherry Street Mall. These efforts also improve the secondary sector of the Colstrip economy.

### **Personal Income**

There are 821 households in Colstrip with the median household income at \$55,650. According to the 2000 Census 94.2% or 773 households have earnings with a mean earning of \$55,923. 74 households or 9% have social security income with the mean social security income at \$12,239. 23 households or 2.8% have public assistance income with the mean public assistance income at \$4,274. 76 households or 9.3% have retirement income with the mean retirement income at \$11,748.

The per capita income in Colstrip is \$20,336 with the full-time, year-round male worker's median income at \$54,241 and the full-time, year-round female worker's median income at \$25,234.

### **Employment**

There are 1,625 residents in Colstrip over the age of 16 years and of those 1,238 are in the labor force. Of the 1,238 labor force, 1,184 are employed and 54 are unemployed or Colstrip had an unemployment rate of 3.3 according to the 2000 Census. When you consider the 1,184 that are employed, nearly one third (385 or 32.5%) of these are employed in management, professional and related occupations. One fourth of the employed (279 or 23.6%) are in construction, extraction, and material moving occupations. The remaining employees are in service occupations (181 or 15.3%), sales and office occupations (176 or 14.9%) or production, transportation and material moving occupations (160 or 13.5%).

These employees are working in the main industries of agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining at 20.4% of the employed or 242 employees; transportation and warehousing and utilities at 21% of the employed or 249 employees; educational, health and social services at 25.3% of the employed or 300 employees; arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services at 9.1% of the employed or 108 employees; and the remaining employees (285) in a variety of industries including construction (55 or 4.6%), manufacturing (11 or .9%), wholesale trade (4 or .3%), retail trade (81 or 6.8%), information (11 or .9%), finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and

leasing (22 or 1.9%), professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services (24 or 2.0%), or public administration (33 or 2.8%), and other services (44 or 3.7%). Most of the employment opportunities are directly attributed to the coal mining or generation facilities or a subsidiary service to these industries. According to “Montana Coal 2001” a brochure prepared by the staff of the Montana Coal Council, the Big Sky Coal Co. had 43 employees with an estimated payroll of \$2,532,000; Western Energy Co. had 356 employees with an estimated payroll of \$20,583,000; and Westmoreland Resources had 83 employees with \$5,900,000 estimated payroll.

Of the 1,184 workers, 906 or 76.5% are private wage and salary workers; 246 or 20.8% are government workers including employees of the city, county, federal, state, schools, Colstrip Parks and Recreation District, and the Colstrip Medical District; 29 or 2.4% are self-employed workers in their own business which is not-incorporated; and 3 workers or .3% are unpaid family workers.

Power Maintenance Resources Inc. (PMRI) is a company that specializes in power plant maintenance and repairs. It has a substantial operation at Colstrip as it contracts with PPL-MT to do numerous repairs and daily operational maintenance at the power plants. During the annual “over-haul” periods, their employment swells from about 35 to 200+ workers. This seasonal increase in workers is a huge boost to nearly every Colstrip business.

Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) is a non-profit organization formed in 1997 for the purpose of creating an on-going foundation for future economic planning and activity within the region. 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. Colstrip is a member of SEMDC, with offices located within Colstrip. SEMDC has developed 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.

## **LOCAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

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

The Rosebud County Sheriff Department provided law enforcement to Colstrip under a contract in which the city paid the county \$420,000 per year up until the year 2004, which is the year that Colstrip formed its own police department. The police department consists of six (6) police officers, counting the Chief and Sergeant; six (6) dispatchers; and one (1) animal control officer. In addition, there are two (2) reserve deputies, 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 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 medical taxing district and levies approximately 4.45 mills each year to provide annual revenues for operating and maintenance. The Colstrip Medical Center has on staff over 15 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 specialty and preventive health services. Two full-time physicians, a physician assistant, registered nurses, laboratory and radiology personnel and a physical therapist and assistant staff the clinic. Mental health services are provided via telemedicine with psychiatrists in Billings. The Colstrip Medical Center is managed by and affiliated with Deaconess Billings Clinic. The clinic is completing an 11,000 square foot addition on two levels for Physical Therapy and Health and Wellness. Originally, the clinic occupied 12,000 square feet, this addition will nearly double the space available for services.

The Rosebud County health nurses are in the Colstrip office one day a week. 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.

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 however it is difficult to maintain a trained volunteer staff.

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

## **EDUCATION**

The Colstrip School District is generally the third largest employer in Colstrip with over 100 staff. 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.

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 Reservations 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, adult book discussion groups and reading programs are offered. The library contains over 20,000 holdings in books, magazines, videos, CD's, audio-books, and participates in an inter-library loan program. Yearly patron visits total approximately 13,500 including more

than 860 children at story time sessions.

In 2003-04, the City of Colstrip participated with Rosebud County on an expansion project for the library facility within Colstrip. The city contributed \$110,000 towards the expansion project and an additional \$20,000 to complete the project in 2004-05. The new space provides for a larger story time area, a comfortable area for young adults, the Montana collection and other functions of the library.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

Social services programs are provided primarily by Rosebud County and the agencies that are supported by Rosebud County or have some affiliation with them. Eastern Montana Mental Health and Chemical Dependency agency provides mental health services within the community on a limited basis. The Rosebud County public nurses offices provides services to the community and have an office located in the Human Services Building, upstairs of the public library in Colstrip.

According to the 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census, the per capita income is \$20,336 in Colstrip with the median household income at \$55,650. 94.2% of the households have earnings with the mean earnings at \$55,923. 74 or 9% of the households have social security income. 23 households or 2.8% have public assistance income. 76 households or 9.3% have retirement income.

According to the 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census, 40 families or 5.9% of the families were in poverty status in 1999. These 40 families represented 163 individuals including 76 youth under the age of 18 years. 27 of these families had incomes less than \$10,000. A total of 85 families had incomes less than \$24,999.

Colstrip, MT ranks the 10<sup>th</sup> lowest on elderly poverty rate of any place in Montana. It has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest Median household income and the 6<sup>th</sup> highest median family income in 2004. It ranked the 34<sup>th</sup> lowest on poverty rate and 15<sup>th</sup> highest on average family income. Colstrip has the 10<sup>th</sup> highest average household income last year.

The seniors have a center located in the human services building and have meals daily. In addition, the seniors use the center for activities, meetings, and educational programs. The center is used to capacity and the seniors are interested in seeking larger facilities.

## **PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES**

The newly formed City of Colstrip (1998) has been focusing its energies on the newly created responsibilities, which include the take-over of city wastewater and water infrastructure and services. The city now 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. Prior to the city's incorporation, these services were provided by the county and Montana Power. The city has determined that wastewater system improvements are needed and has performed an engineering study and is in the process of attaining funding.

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. During the summer of 2000, the city chip-sealed 12 miles of streets to keep them in good condition. To keep up with the demands of residents, infrastructure improvements were completed in 2001 and 2002 in Phase I and II. In these phases, the city improved approximately 21 blocks of streets and curb walks while replacing public infrastructure beneath the streets. The summer of 2007, Colstrip improved Olive Drive and Castle Rock Lake Drive Streets and Sidewalks. While much has been done in the past ten years, it is an ongoing process in order to keep a well-maintained transportation system within the city. The city continues to identify streets that need work and have incorporated street improvement projects within its 5-year planning document for capital improvement items.

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 wastewater, storm water accumulation creates problems for the city and the individual property owners.

### **SOLID WASTE**

Until 2007, solid waste was collected in Colstrip by the private firm, Waste Connection. The



city has assumed these services and is maintaining them at the level of the private firm. Residential collection is twice per week; commercial customers receive more frequent collection based on volume. In 2007, the city provided pickup for 440 of the 300 gallon containers w/rings and 375 of the 96 gallon containers. 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 at \$112.50 per year and is assessed through property taxes.

## **WASTEWATER SYSTEM**

In May 2007, Morrison Maierle Inc., an engineering firm from Billings, completed a Wastewater Facilities Plan. The report was completed in order to review the existing treatment process's ability to meet future requirements in an environment of changing effluent discharge regulations, and to assess facilities that are approaching 30 years of age and may require near- or long-term replacement to prevent failure.

The City of Colstrip currently maintains 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.

The majority of wastewater mains within the City of Colstrip have been installed using modern construction methods and PVC pipe, with major renovations occurring since 2001. Not only were existing lines removed and replaced with new PVC lines at proper grades and alignments, many of the existing manholes were replaced. Slip lining, a technique where a flexible liner is inserted inside the existing pipes, effectively repaired deteriorated collection lines in some situations. Slip lining was used to repair a number of line segments in the Colstrip collection system. The city used a funding package comprising a Coal Board grant, city funds and an SRF loan.

The groundwater level in much of the city limits is below wastewater elevations during and after the high water period from April-August of each year. Infiltration/inflow (including residential sump pumps) is within acceptable limits for the collection system.

The collection system has seven lift stations that convey flows to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Two of these lift stations, Pasture and Birch Court, are new. Lift Station "A" and the Plum Court Lift Station are in satisfactory condition having had pumps and controls replaced recently. The remaining three lift stations – "C", Orchard Drive, and Cherry Street are 25 to 30 plus years old. In 2005-06, the public works

department replaced the Pasture lift station. In Sept. 2007, the city solicited bids for the construction of sanitary wastewater system improvements to Lift Station “C” which consisted of converting the existing lift station of two wet wells and one dry well located near the Ponderosa Butte Golf Course and baseball fields and approximately 200 feet west of the East Fork Armells Creek to a submersible configuration. Orchard Drive Lift Station commonly experiences plugging and overflow problems along with corrosion of the dry well. The Cherry Street Lift Station appears to be functioning satisfactorily. Currently, none of the lift stations have in place a secondary power source or standby generator for emergencies.

Originally, the Colstrip Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) consisted of a three-cell facultative lagoon system with discharge to the East Fork Armells Creek. The first cell of which is aerated. The system, constructed in 1978, had a design capacity of 600,000 gallons per day. At present, the system treats approximately 250,000 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. Except for approximately three winter months, treated wastewater from the oxidation ditch is transmitted to the second and third cells of the lagoon. The wastewater is pumped from those cells to irrigate the golf course. During winter months, treated wastewater is discharged in the East Fork of Armells Creek. The wastewater collection system includes six lift stations located throughout the city to transport wastewater to the treatment plant.

In general, the Colstrip WWTP is in good condition. There are problem areas that need to be addressed to ensure no major environmental problems occur in the near-term. To comply with the MPDES discharge permit, a new ultraviolet light disinfection system is required. Without addition of UV disinfection, the facility will not meet the effluent requirements for coliform bacteria and chlorine residual. Many of the system components lack redundancy and should break downs occur, effluent quality could deteriorate.

The residential base rate is \$14.61 plus a rate for the average water usage during the winter months. A typical bill is \$23.00 per month for a family of four.

## **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 city limits. The pond is also the source of drinking water for the city of Colstrip.

As part of the agreement when Colstrip incorporated, the city owns water rights to 2.0 cubic feet per second (cfs) of the water in Castle Rock Lake. The pumps and intakes from the river are owned and maintained 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 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 the surge pond.

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 2005 and sets limits on the quality of water discharged to the lake. At issue is the discharge of filter backwash water. Dechlorination with ascorbic acid is used to comply with the chlorine residual requirement and the city is in compliance with the limits for dissolved aluminum and pH. Compliance with the turbidity and total suspended solid limits is currently not possible without modification of the water treatment plant. In 2006, an analysis of the problem was studied and a recommendation to resolve the backwash problem was presented. The preferred alternative was to allow spent backwash water to flow into the existing on-site holding pond as it does now and then it would simply drain by gravity to the storage ponds located at the WWTP. This alternative would eliminate pumping and dechlorination with cost savings realized in electrical power, chemicals and labor. Cost is estimated at \$297,000.

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 \$25.00 plus \$1.40 per thousand gallons of water used.

## **BRIDGES**

There are no bridges within the incorporated city limits of Colstrip, however there is one overpass.

## **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. Their capacity is 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 .0804960 per Kilowatt Hour with a monthly service amount of \$4.61. The commercial rate is .0871690 per Kilowatt Hour with a non-demand monthly service amount of \$6.87.

## **CITY HALL FACILITIES**

The current city hall is located in a facility provided by PPL-Montana. The City of Colstrip pays for utilities but does not pay rent. The city hall has many repairs needed including repairing the leaking roof, replacement of carpet, renovations to meet ADA requirements and other aesthetic improvements. The City Council and Mayor appointed a committee to study the city hall issues and provide a recommendation on a permanent city hall facility. The Task Force's recommendation included demolition of the Cherry Street Mall and utilization of that property for a site for construction of a new city hall.

The Cherry Street Mall which included an irregular shaped parcel of land that contains 139,951.32 square feet and a 27,907 square foot class "C" shopping mall was gifted to the city by Roy Woods in October 2001. After many studies it was decided to demolish the mall and utilize the vacant area for a new city hall facility. The mall was demolished the summer of 2007. The city hired Architect Durward K. Sobek, to assist with the planning and design of the new city hall. Preliminary estimates indicate the project will cost \$2,417,000 which includes \$2,015,000 for construction of a facility with 7,088 gross square feet for administration, 1,080 gross square feet for public works and 1,280 gross square feet for the city court. A 10% contingency factor was included and design services, document preparation, bidding process oversight and inspection costs estimated at \$180,000 with an additional \$22,000 for building permits, site surveys, material testing, etc. Construction of the hall is estimated for the summer of 2008. The city has requested assistance from the Montana Coal Board in this project and has \$700,000 available in capital reserves, \$200,000 in the 2007-08 general fund budget. It is estimated that another \$1 million will need to be borrowed from the Montana Board of Investments with a 15 year pay back plan. The initial plans allow for development of a law enforcement facility in phase II of the project in future years.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Colstrip's elevation is 3,426 feet above sea level. The area is classified as having a high potential for oil and gas because of the geologic formations. 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.

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 snowmelt. 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 25% of all of the country's coal reserves, and the Rosebud Mine, located adjacent to Colstrip, produces more coal than any other mine in the state. Coal in the Colstrip area is sub-bituminous. Sub-bituminous coal is a dull black coal with heating value ranging between 8,300 and 11,500 Btu; with a carbon content of 35-45%; and

moisture content 20-30%. It is the largest, most modern mine in the United States and the Power Plant is the second largest coal fired plant in the United States. Colstrip Electrical Generating Plants, Numbers 1-4 are mine-mouth pulverized coal generating plants with 2272 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) has participated in land reclamation since the 1970’s and has reclaimed over 7,000 acres (2004) of mined land by replacing soil to approximately the original condition and use. The company has won numerous national 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 loose the overburden for the dragline, it is blasted. The coal is fractured in the same way and then removed by large loaders, deposited in coal haulers and transported to the mine storage and loading facility.

Once the dragline has deposited overburden over the mined-out cavity, bull dozers smooth it out and contour it to blend 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 with his reclamation efforts.

Western Energy had reclaimed the majority of the disturbed land to native rangeland. Another 10% of Western’s reclamation is returned to timber and shrubland. Ponderosa Pine and Rocky Mountain Juniper are the timber species planted. Shrubs included 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 2001, 383 acres of alfalfa and wheat have been reclaimed. As of 2001, Western Energy Company has reclaimed 6,081 acres. This is nearly 60% of all coal

mine acres reclaimed in the entire state. 4,592 of the reclaimed acres are fenced and grazed each year by 608 head of cattle. Stock water is supplied by seven wells, five of which are powered by windmills. Western also maintains a heard of 28 bison on a 180-acre pasture. The bison represent an important reclamation management tool. Bison, like cattle, are grazing animals; through their preferential grazing habits and hoof action, they improve reclamation. Western Energy’s reclamation also include 395 water monitoring wells, and 5 active sharp-tail grouse dancing grounds.

The Rosebud Mine produced 12,413,482 tons in 2004 and 13,164,977 tons of coal in 2005. Western Energy Company has the following current permits and reserve potential for the existing Rosebud Mine:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Remaining Movable</b>	<b>BTU/lb</b>
Area A	13 million tons (approved, pending revision, and some not yet submitted for mining approval)	8,700
Area B	36 million 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	
Area E	In reclamation	
Area F	127 million tons (unpermitted)	8,550

Montana Power had to maintain an environmentally sound area during and after construction of the power plants. Emissions meet the 2000 federal Clean-Air Act standards, which is primary in maintaining the Class 1 air granted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Power is used in Montana and in western states as far away as California, and is on a power grid that reaches as far as New Mexico and Arizona.

Coal mining produces a residual dust and the steam produced by the power plants creates a damper than usual climate, especially in winter, creating more snow and ice than outside the city.

Massive power lines cut through the city providing electricity across the west. Dual-circuit 500



kV lines, a 230 kV line and two 115 kV lines originate at Colstrip. A proposed Northern Lights high voltage DC power line that would connect Montana to loads in the southwestern U.S. may provide additional capacity at Colstrip and potential for additional expansion. Governor Schweitzer's energy policy promotes the development of clean energy, including clean coal technologies, development in Montana. The Governor is a strong advocate of coal-to-liquid fuels and integrated gasification combined cycle (IGCC) electrical generating plants and other clean coal technologies.

Montana is the wind energy capital of the United States. Montana has some of the highest concentration of wind power potential in the nation. Colstrip has Class 1, 2, or 3 wind speeds. While there is no discussion of development of wind energy in this region, a wind project would also align with the Governor's energy policy in support of alternative sources of energy.

The region is rich with wildlife...from mule deer and antelope, to grouse, pheasants, geese, elk and even wild turkeys. In 2005 the city took a proactive approach along with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to establish a deer management plan that allows archery hunting within the city limits in an effort to control deer populations. Colstrip's Plan utilizes hunting with archery equipment as the primary control measure. MT FW&P authorizes the sale of 200 additional Deer B licenses for the Colstrip area. The 2007 licenses are for antlerless mule deer and are only valid on property administered by PPL Montana or Western Energy Company in an area that includes the city of Colstrip and extends 1 to 3 miles around Colstrip. These licenses are valid during the general archery season and during the rifle season, with archery equipment only. Hunters may also use other valid licenses as allowed in the past and are subject to all other rules and regulations proscribed by MT FW&P or administering landowner. In Montana tradition and state law recognizes the importance of our public wildlife legacy. Minor or occasional property damage caused by wild deer is a byproduct of their presence that Montanan's have chosen to accept. Colstrip's plan provides that, city deer which are causing severe and persistent damage to gardens and ornamental plants or threatened the safety of pets confined to yards will be dispatched, if feasible, or trapped and relocated if necessary by MT FW&P.

Colstrip is home to a trap club, shooting and archery ranges.

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, 4,820 feet, some 15 miles west southwest of Colstrip. Sparse pines cover this area and increase in number and size with 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 any 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 slight less than the annual precipitation at Lame Deer, a few miles to the south and at a slightly 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 of 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, so really oppressive hot spells are not very common. 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.

## **FIRE AND WILDLAND FIRE POTENTIAL**

First protection is provided to the city of Colstrip by the Colstrip 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 20-24 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 protections 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, a rubber rescue raft, Jaws of Life, and a fire training mobile unit. The department secured a Coal Board grant for approximately \$75,000 and with matching funds was able to purchase another fire tender early in 2006. The department requested budget authority to purchase a wild lands fire truck in the 2007-08 fiscal year.

<b>2007 FIRE CALLS</b>	
Other calls/incident/garbage	2
Structural Fire	9
Vehicle	3
Vegetation	7
Rescue	5
Hazardous Conditions	4
Service Call	0
Good Intent Calls/False Alarm	7

## **CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT**

The Colstrip area is atop the Fort Union coal formation, which underlies much of eastern Montana. Montana has more demonstrated coal reserves than any other state in America. The Rosebud Mine, operated by Western Energy Co., produces more coal than any other mine in Montana, and ranks among the largest and most modern surface mines in the United States. The four electric generating plants, operated by PPL Montana, comprise the second-largest coal-fired project in the western United States. The plants have a combined net capacity of 2,094 megawatts. These two private businesses comprise the central economy for Colstrip.

In addition, the community is home to a grocery store, two hardware stores, two motels, 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.

The following industries are reported in the Colstrip area:

Educational, health and social services	25.3% (300)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	20.4% (242)
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	21% (249)
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	9.1% (108)
Retail Trade	6.8% (81)
Construction	4.6% (55)
Other services (except public administration)	3.7% (44)
Public Administration	2.8% (33)
Professional, scientific, management/administrative, waste mgmt.	2% (24)
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	1.9% (22)
Manufacturing	.9% (11)
Information	.9% (11)
Wholesale Trade	.3% (4)

## **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, juried art exhibit, dinner theatres, Holiday bazaars and Colstrip Days activities. SHAC serves as Colstrip's Visitor Center and has space for community meetings, lectures and seminars. Recently, SHAC has developed a pottery center where local artists can work on their pottery projects.

Colstrip has an American Indian or Alaska native population of 11.3% or 265 residents. An additional 65 residents are American Indian and Alaska Native in combination with one or more other races bringing the percentage up to 14.1%. This large cultural body brings diversity to the city and workforce of Colstrip.

## **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 one physician assistant on staff. More information on the Colstrip Medical Clinic can be found on page 19 under the Public Health section.

**Colstrip Parks and Recreation Department** - Also, Colstrip has a tax supported parks and recreation district with a community center and gym, outdoor swimming pool and slide, over 20 maintained parks, and a 9-hole golf course and clubhouse. There are over 50 acres of dedicated park lands and "tot lots" with play equipment located throughout the community. The parks include ball fields, tennis and basketball courts, rollerblade/

ice skating rinks, swimming and wading pools, a new 147' water slide. For every 100 people in Colstrip there is a park. The Community Center has 16,000 square feet of basketball, handball, racquetball, and exercise areas including a weight room. A recent expansion in 2006 increased the facility by approximately 1/3 of the current space for an elevator, offices, and additional exercise area.

In 2004 Sports Illustrated magazine recognized Colstrip as Sports Illustrated 50<sup>th</sup> 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."

Castle Rock Lake on the edge of town provides hours of entertainment for swimmers, non-motorized boaters and fishermen with passion for warm water fishing including Large Mouth Bass, Northern Pike, Crappie, Bluegill, or Walleye. Walkers and bikers enjoy the well maintained 2.58 mile trek around the lake. Ice fishing is popular, so the lake is a year round fishing destination. Montana state record fish for Channel Catfish and Green Sunfish are recorded as being caught in Castle Rock Lake in 1998 and 1991.

CPRD has a capital improvements plan through 2012. Annual improvements identified in the plan include the purchase of grounds maintenance, office, and exercise equipment and expansion of exercise rooms. It is hoped to address the aging swimming pool infrastructure in 2007-08. Plans for 2008-09 include the purchase of vehicles and park repairs or amenities. Plans for 2009-10 include the renovation of the wading pool which would entail grant support possibly from a Coal Board and/or Land and Water Conservation Fund. 2010-11 projects identified include the youth baseball fields and auxiliary building which may need a mill levy to fund the 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 cost and is truly representative of a publicly owned and operated facility.

## **COMMUNITY BLIGHT OR NEIGHBORHOOD** **RENEWAL PLANS**

Colstrip does not have a formal renewal plan or identified community and neighborhood blight. However, the planning board cited areas of concern through the planning process of this document. Areas of concern included abandoned residential units within the entire community, dwellings that were in disrepair which included broken windows, kicked out doors or other public safety issues and vacant commercial buildings or commercial buildings that are outside of the city limits and may present a fire hazard or public safety concern. The planning committee expressed concern for mobile housing units built prior to 1976 and the public safety issues associated with these dwellings.

## **RECLAMATION OF “BROWNFIELD” SITES**

Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) a regional economic development organization serving the community of Colstrip has identified potential “Brownfield” sites within the city of Colstrip. SEMDC intends to submit an application requesting assistance with the clean-up and assessment of these potential sites through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

According to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) 21 sites in the Colstrip area have been designated as having underground storage tanks. Those include the B&R Village, Benson Ranch, BN Santa Fe, Coal Corral, Colstrip 500 KV Substation, Colstrip Community Services Company, Colstrip High School, Colstrip Public Schools on Olive Drive, Colstrip Steam Electric Station Units 3 and 4, Colstrip Steam Electric Station on Willow Avenue, Colstrip Super Stop, Colstrip Units 1 & 2 MPC, Little Wolf Microwave Site, Little Wolf Microwave Station, MDOT Colstrip Section, MPC Cabin, Peabody Coal Co., Rosebud Mine Western Energy Co., Rosebud Power Plant, Roundup Powder Co. Inc. Colstrip, and Town Pump Inc. Colstrip. In addition, the Montana DEQ has a list of 26 petroleum leaks since 1990 in the Colstrip area.

Montana DEQ does not report any state superfund sites, voluntary cleanup and re-development activity, hazardous waste sites or violations of the Community Environmental Cleanup and Responsibility Act (CECRA) in the Colstrip area or Rosebud County.



## **PARKS, TRAILS OR OPEN SPACE PLANS**

Parks, trails and open spaces within Colstrip are managed by Colstrip Parks and Recreation District (CPRD), a special district organized under Rosebud County. CPRD is discussed in greater depth under “Unique Governmental Functions/ Recreation Facilities and Services”.

## **MINING IMPACT PLANS**

The Colstrip area is actively being mined and energy generated through the power plants. Mining impacts are currently addressed through plans the company’s have filed with the state and are closely monitored by the state. The community is not involved in any other mining impact plans at this time.

There is a 20-year road plan which the county has developed in cooperation with the mine. The plan identifies ongoing public access through or near the mine property.

## **IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS**

There are a multitude of potential implementation tools to use throughout the next period of time to ensure goals and objectives are reached. Many of the tools are federal or state programs including those offered through the U.S. Department of Commerce, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Federal Emergency Management Administration and the Housing and Urban Development Administration. Other implementation tools are those offered by the state through the Montana Department of Commerce, Department of Environmental Quality, and Department of Natural Resources. Following is a list of some of these programs that might be used in the implementation of this growth plan.

Southeastern Montana Development Corporation – SEMDC is a non-profit organization formed by the local governments in a four county area for the purpose of strengthening diversified industries, supporting thriving commercial centers, while maintaining a traditional, rural, high quality lifestyle. SEMDC brings a wealth of

knowledge and experience to the city and serves as an invaluable resource. The city of Colstrip will continue to participate with this partnership in order to access resources, receive technical assistance, and be a part of a thriving economic organization. SEMDC can assist the city, businesses within the city, and local residents in accessing resources under the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and USDA Rural Development.

Coal Board – The Coal Board is able to award grants from funds collected through the coal severance tax. These grants are to be awarded towards coal impacts. Colstrip has been successful in attaining over \$1 million in these funds since the city’s incorporation in 1998. The city is currently requesting assistance with the construction of a new city hall.

Brownfield RLF – Federal funds are available to assist in the clean-up of brownfields and turn these areas into useable productive pieces of property. SEMDC is interested in pursuing these funds or working with another regional economic development organization in utilizing these funds.

USDA Rural Development Intermediary Re-lending Program – Economic development organizations such as SEMDC can apply to be an intermediary and be granted funds through the USDA to assist businesses in expansion and retention efforts. It is anticipated that SEMDC will be applying for these funds in an effort to diversify the economy in Colstrip and the region, while retaining existing jobs.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Planning Document- SEMDC develops a CEDS for the region it serves which includes Colstrip. Community listening sessions and input is received during the development of the CEDS. The CEDS document serves as a roadmap for economic development efforts and identifies strategies to expand and diversify the economy. This planning document serves as a catalyst for economic activities and also documents the need within the region. The plan identifies community’s strengths and constraints, suggests measures to capitalize on the strengths and address the constraints, and sets forth an economic strategy to encourage economic development.

Community Development Block Grants – These grants are primarily focused towards the low to moderate income households in a community. Colstrip has extreme diversity in household incomes and some members could benefit by the programs offered under these funding sources.

## **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 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 bedrock, 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. Also, developers will be required to provide a grading and drainage plan and provide proper storm drainage facilities to handle storm water runoff.

#### 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.
  - b. 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 residents for senior citizens should be higher-density, lower cost housing in close proximity to community services, the business district, and park and recreation facilities.

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.
3. When streets are excavated to replace water and sewer lines, lay 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.

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

The city interacts with a number of agencies and organizations: The Colstrip Parks and Recreation District (CPRD); Colstrip Schools; the Medical Center taxing district; Safe Trails Task Force; 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 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 is a member of the Safe Trails Task Force, 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.

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. The city of Colstrip has requested the county commissioners to appoint a person for the recently vacant seat on the city planning board. 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.



## **SUBDIVISION REVIEW STATEMENT**

The city of Colstrip defines the subdivision review criteria specified in 76-3-608(3) (a), MCA, by posing the following questions that must be addressed in the required Findings of Fact for each proposed subdivision.

### Effect on Agriculture

1. How many, if any, acres of land will be removed from livestock or crop productions? Is any portion of the lands taken out of production irrigated?

### Effect on Agricultural Water Users and Local Services

1. a.) Will the subdivision connect to the municipal water and sewer systems? Will the cost of connecting be paid by the subdivider or lot buyers or by the municipality? Will the municipality experience an appreciable increase in maintenance and operating costs, and what approximately will be those costs? Will the lot buyers pay regular water and sewer charges?
1. b.) If the subdivision will use on-site water supply and sewage disposal, has the city public works supervisor and the Department of Environmental Quality approved the sanitation facilities?
- 2.) Which agencies will provide law enforcement, fire protection, and ambulance services? Will providing these services to the subdivision likely create increased costs to any of these agencies or the city of Colstrip or Rosebud County? Approximately how much will the subdivision increase agency costs? Will the subdivider or subsequent lot buyers bear those increased costs, or will the taxpayers and/or rate payers bear the costs?
- 3.) At an average of 8 vehicle trips per day per lot, how many average vehicle trips per day will the subdivision generate? Will extension of public streets or roads be needed, and if so, who will bear the costs? Will the subdivision increase the costs of road maintenance, and if so, by approximately how much? Will the subdivider/lot buyers or the public bear those increased costs?
- 4.) At an average of 1.5 school-age children per lot, how many elementary and high school students will be added to Colstrip schools? What net financial effect

would these additional students have for the Colstrip public schools?

- 5.) How much does the land affected by the proposed subdivision currently pay in local property taxes? After subdivision is full developed, how much will the land and improvements be expected to pay in local property taxes, at current mill levies?

#### Effect on the Natural Environment

1. Will the subdivision increase storm water run-off, interfere with natural drainage ways or cause or increase erosion? Has the Public Works Supervisor approved the size, location, and planned installation of any culverts? Will the terrain create significant surface run-off problems? Will the grading and drainage plan minimize run-off and adverse impacts?
2. Is the subdivision expected to adversely affect native vegetation, soils or the water quality or quantity of surface or ground waters? Will areas distributed by cutting and filling and grading be reseeded in the same season to minimize erosion?
3. Are weed control measures proposed to prevent the proliferation of weed growth within the subdivision and on areas disturbed by construction?

#### Effect on Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

1. Will the subdivision be located in an area of significant wildlife habitat, nor in any critical wildlife areas? Will the expected effects of pets and human activity generated by the subdivision significantly affect wildlife?

#### Effect on Public Health and Safety

1. Is the subdivision subject to potential natural hazards such as flooding, snow or rock slides, high winds, wildfire or excessive slopes, nor potential man-made hazards such as high voltage power lines, high pressure gas lines, nearby industrial or mining activity, or high traffic volumes? If so, what measures has the subdivider proposed to minimize those hazards?

## **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.

## **ADOPTION OF THE GROWTH POLICY**

The planning board met and held a public meeting in June to learn about and review the existing Comprehensive Growth Plan and start work on the revision of that plan.

The planning board met and held another meeting on August 13, 2007. This second meeting was focused on identifying areas that need addressing in the next five years, ideas of strategies to incorporate into the growth policy, changes in existing policies that need to be made, and potential goals and objectives. The planning board was given a draft of researched material and updated demographics for review.

The third public meeting of the planning board was held on September 6, 2007. The planning board reviewed the draft of goals and objectives, provided changes they wanted incorporated into the growth plan, and discussed items to be included in weak areas of the initial growth policy draft.

The fourth public meeting of the planning board was held on October 10, 2007. The planning board reviewed the preliminary draft and offered any changes that they desired in the plan. In addition, the planning board discussed extra-territorial authority over areas adjacent to the City of Colstrip yet outside the incorporated limits of the city. The planning board determined at this time that they would recommend that the city not assume extra-territorial authority over these areas.

The fifth public meeting of the planning board was held on November 6, 2007. The planning board reviewed the final draft and presented the draft to the public for input through a public hearing which was held on January 8, 2008. Following the public hearing, by resolution the planning board shall 1.) Recommend the proposed growth policy and any proposed ordinances and resolutions for its implementation to the governing bodies of the governmental units represented on the planning board; 2.) Recommend that a growth policy not be adopted or 3.) Recommend that the governing body take some other action related to preparation of a growth policy as outlined in MCA 76-1-603. The governing body shall adopt, revise or reject the growth policy as outlined in MCA 76-1-604.

## **GROWTH POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION**

This growth policy will be reviewed at least once every five years and revised if necessary. Revisions may be made more often if the planning board determines that conditions within the community warrant revisions of the growth policy. Conditions that may trigger the need for a revision include rapid growth resulting in significant subdivision or construction activity, influx or decrease of population greater than 10% in any period of time less than twelve months, significant positive or negatives changes in the economy or private sector businesses (e.g. the expansion of a generation facility, or start-up of another coal based industry resulting in the creation of 100 or more jobs), or the consensus of the planning board that conditions have changed and that a revision of the growth policy is needed to adequately represent the existing conditions within the community and to address those conditions.

The Planning Board will initiate each review by seeking comments and suggestions for changes from city officers and staff. The Planning Board itself will examine the Plan for possible needed revisions. After considering the city's suggested changes and its own, the Board will prepare a document describing all changes recommended by the Planning Board. The Board will inform the public of the recommended changes, make them available to the public, publish notices and hold at least one public meeting to discuss changes to the Plan.