

2024 Lewistown Plan

ADOPTED OCTOBER 7, 2024

 **Lewistown** MONTANA
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The 2024 Lewistown Plan was informed by the voices of hundreds of participants representing the people of Lewistown between August of 2023 and October 2024, and ongoing support through the Interim Planning Commission process. Special thanks to those who contributed their time and thoughts through the outreach process.

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Cushing Terrell

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NOTE: Throughout the document, terms and plan chapters/sections are [linked](#), shown in blue text and underlined. Definitions of terms can be found in the Glossary in the Appendix.

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FOREWARD

Montana State Law allows cities and towns to exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction. In Lewistown, the extraterritorial area or "Planning Area" was established in 1965, and has not been modified since its establishment. Until the initiation of this planning effort, there has not been intentional coordination of land use and subdivision regulation between Fergus County and the City in the Planning Area.

It is the intention of this Plan to significantly increase coordination as development patterns and land uses in the Planning Area influence both the City and County. The Future Land Use Map on page 65 guides the use and character of properties within the Planning Area to ensure that growth is orderly, sustainable, and that cherished agricultural and natural lands are protected.





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0.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 0.1 | PURPOSE & NEED
- 0.2 | COMMUNITY INPUT
- 0.3 | GUIDING PRINCIPLES
- 0.4 | FUTURE LAND USE
- 0.5 | GOALS, POLICIES, & IMPLEMENTATION

0.1 | PURPOSE & NEED

► PURPOSE

The 2024 Lewistown Plan is a planning tool used to communicate the future vision for the community with the goal of improving the lives of all people who live, work, play, learn, grow, and move within the Lewistown community.

It is the position of both the City and County governments that this Plan will play a significant role in land use decision making. It is the intent of this Plan that its use will:

- promote just and rational development;
- be an equitable, fair, and a long-term means of allocating scarce resources;
- allow all government officials, professional planners, and citizens to participate fully in the process of regulating land use and allocating resources; and
- curb overly discretionary or inconsistent actions of planners and government officials.

Previously called a Growth Policy, this Plan was created under the guidance of the Montana Land Use Planning Act as a Land Use Plan (Title 76, Chapter 25, Montana Code Annotated). This new planning framework gives local leaders tangible tools to be responsive. It moves public participation and analysis up to the community-wide planning stages, eliminating duplicity so that the permitting and subdivision process is more efficient.

This Plan will be a success if one fundamental outcome is achieved: leaders and planners learn from the past to craft a vision of the future by guiding growth in a logical and sustainable way. The goal is for there not to be one outcome, but many, and in this process the community has stated their vision for the change that is needed to elevate and RE-GROW Lewistown. It is not the intention of the Plan to restrict growth, but instead to allow it to develop in a logical and thoughtful manner.

► NEED

The last update to the Lewistown Growth Policy was in 2006, almost 20 years before the adoption of this Plan. Change is inevitable and communities are wise to address it rather than to deny its inevitability. As the larger region experiences changes in character, Lewistown experiences more rapid growth than it has historically, which places increasing pressure on City services and infrastructure. This guiding plan for all aspects of Lewistown's future channels the community vision using a comprehensive set of statements and visual ideas that will guide ongoing discussions on growth and change. A community is like an ecosystem: to thrive, all of the parts must work together in order to sustain the City's future. The tools within this Plan, like the Future Land Use Map and matrix of action steps, remain fluid and are meant to be changed as the people, neighborhoods, industries, marketplaces, creekbeds, animals, plants, or other human and physical elements change within and around the community.

0.2 | COMMUNITY INPUT

The City of Lewistown understands that community participation is a critical component of the long-range planning process. Input was solicited in 2023 and 2024 through a number of in-person and online engagement opportunities to ensure that the Lewistown community's vision for their future was captured and reflected in the Future Land Use Map, Goals, Policies, and Actions of this Plan.

► WHAT WE HEARD

Lewistown residents told us they want...



A variety of housing types at affordable prices for both renters and owners.



To protect agriculture/farms and the natural features that make Lewistown unique.



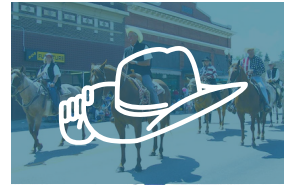
More family and youth services including childcare, youth sports, and higher education.



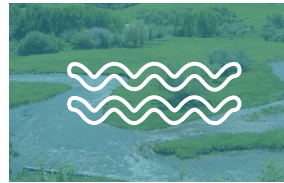
A downtown that is easy to access and has a variety of retail, restaurant, and entertainment options.



To continue to invest in outdoor recreational facilities such as parks, trails, and open space.



To preserve the rural character and small town cultural values of Lewistown.



To invest in water resources that improve the condition of and access to Big Spring Creek.



To focus on maintaining and improving infrastructure including roads, water, sewer, and the airport.



Greater economic opportunities by way of industry attraction, job growth, and employee retention.



More social events and opportunities to come together as a community.

0.3 | GUIDING PRINCIPLES



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Make the 2024 Lewistown Plan a plan for and of the people”

Lewistown prioritizes and encourages community and stakeholder collaboration.



HOUSING

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Create a range of housing opportunities and choices”

Lewistown residents have opportunities to live in safe, stable, healthy, and affordable homes.



COMMUNITY CHARACTER

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Foster distinctive, attractive neighborhoods with a strong sense of place”
- “Develop strategies that help protect the natural environment and make Lewistown more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse”
- “Advance compact, environmentally friendly, and energy efficient building design”

Lewistown grows and reinvests strategically to complement the community’s small town and historic character, strengthen its unique neighborhoods, and maintain its focus on arts, culture, and the natural environment.



LAND USE & GROWTH

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Preserve open space, farmland, forestland, rangeland, cultural and historical resources, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas”
- “Strengthen and direct development within the existing city footprint and infrastructure”
- “Mix land uses to provide proximity of residential uses to amenities, jobs, and complimentary uses”

Lewistown manages growth and land use consistently with our community values and with respect for private property rights, our commitment to environmental stewardship, and in fairness and equity to the people who live here.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Develop a land-use system that effectively balances competing economic, environmental, and social demands while ensuring the sustainability of new developments that benefit Lewistown”
- “Leverage new growth to improve Lewistown”

Lewistown cultivates a vibrant, resilient, and year-round economy that provides opportunities for the full spectrum of community members and entrepreneurs through innovation and collaboration.



NATURAL RESOURCES

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Prioritize conservation and restoration of land, water, and fish and wildlife habitats”
- “As Lewistown grows, integrate natural resources into its fabric”

Lewistown stewards its resources in a responsible manner that enhances community resilience and the natural environment for future generations.



INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Make development decisions predictable, fair, safe, and cost effective”

Lewistown promotes the use of fiscally responsible infrastructure systems that encourage low-impact development and provides services that promote a healthy and connected community.



TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Provide a variety of transportation and parking choices”
- “Strengthen and create walkable and bikeable neighborhoods”

Lewistown plans for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods using all modes of travel.

0.4 | FUTURE LAND USE

► NEED

How and where our community grows has a major influence on how community members get around, the character of the City and its neighborhoods, natural resources, and sense of community. The Future Land Use Map responds to the need to accommodate a growing population and the subsequent demand for additional housing, services, and employment in a manner consistent with this Plan's guiding principles.

The purpose of the Future Land Use Map is to establish a framework that illustrates the desired locations and patterns for this growth. While only advisory, the Future Land Use Map is intended to be a roadmap to guide updates to the zoning regulations and to nudge new development in a direction consistent with the community's vision for orderly, efficient, and sustainable growth in appropriate locations of the City and its Planning Area.

Within the Future Land Use Plan, there are [Future Land Use Designations](#) and a [Future Land Use Map](#). The designations of the Future Land Use Map articulate the general character of land uses identified on the map. They are intended to guide an update to the zoning code and inform development review for consistency in the kind and character of growth that is desired in each

designation. The Future Land Use Map serves as a tool to guide future development within the City and its Planning Area by communicating a vision about how and where the City will grow over the next 10 to 20 years.

► A TIERED APPROACH

This Plan outlines a new approach to future land use planning for Lewistown that places priority areas for growth in hierarchical tiers. The intent is to RE-GROW LEWISTOWN - to target areas within the existing City limits or immediately adjacent for growth before considering development in more rural areas of the Lewistown Planning Area. The five tiers and the Future Land Use Designations that fall within them are as follows:

Tier 1: Current Urbanizing Tier - the almost fully developed, centrally located areas of the City, and areas along key transportation corridors. The focus will be on infill development with associated infrastructure improvements, redevelopment of areas that need investment, economic development, and employment opportunities. The land use designations of the Current Urbanizing Tier are:

- Downtown
- Built Up Neighborhoods
- Mixed Use Corridor
- Medium Commercial
- Airport

Tier 2: Planned Urbanizing Tier - areas adjacent to the City, most of which are in the unincorporated Planning Area, where City services are already available or are most practically extended. The land use designations of the Planned Urbanizing Tier are:

- Urban Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Rural Residential Node

Tier 3: Future Urbanizing Tier - holding areas that are to see little or no change in use until Tier 1 and Tier 2 growth areas reach full build-out. The land use designation of the Future Urbanizing Tier is:

- Urban Reserve

Tier 4: Rural - larger-lot residential areas where agricultural activity (and/or associated activity) can occur. The land use designation of the Rural Tier is:

- Rural Residential

Tier 5: Environmental / Conservation / Open Space - areas where protection and conservation of agricultural land, rangeland, and forestland within Lewistown's Planning Area are critical. The land use designations of the Environmental/Conservation/Open Space Tier are:

- Agricultural land/Rangeland/Forestland
- Stream/Creek Overlay
- Conservation Easement
- Agricultural Covenant

Lewistown Planning Area Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

Adopted 8-14-24

 City Boundary

 Planning Area

 Urban Services Area
Tier 1: Current Urbanizing Tier
 Downtown

 Built Up Neighborhoods

 Medium Commercial

 Airport

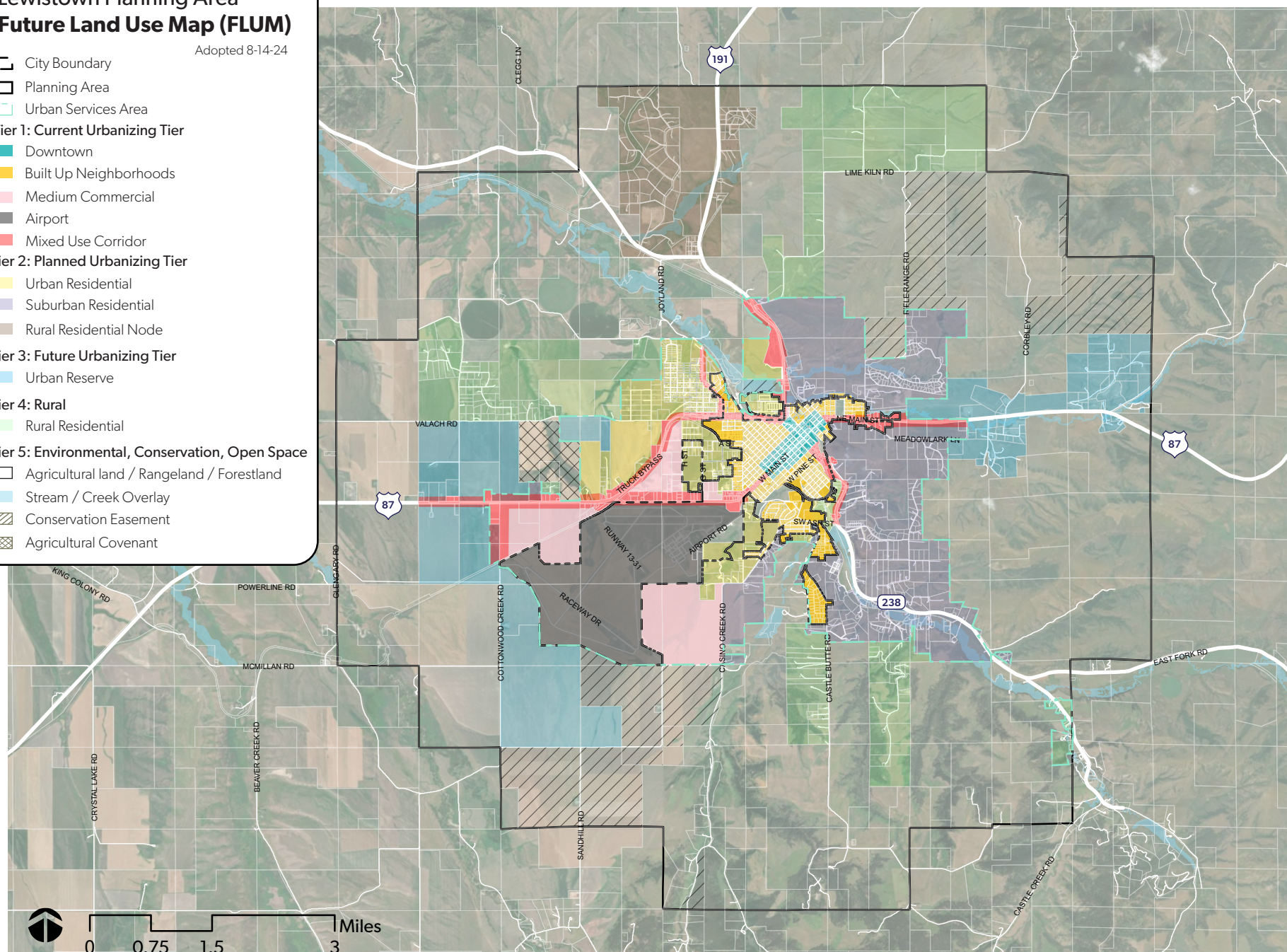
 Mixed Use Corridor
Tier 2: Planned Urbanizing Tier
 Urban Residential

 Suburban Residential

 Rural Residential Node
Tier 3: Future Urbanizing Tier
 Urban Reserve
Tier 4: Rural
 Rural Residential
Tier 5: Environmental, Conservation, Open Space
 Agricultural land / Rangeland / Forestland

 Stream / Creek Overlay

 Conservation Easement

 Agricultural Covenant


0.5 | GOALS, POLICIES, & IMPLEMENTATION

▶ GOALS & POLICIES

[Chapter 2](#) outlines Goals and Policies organized by planning elements to guide City staff and leadership. They were developed based on two primary inputs: existing conditions data and community input.

GOALS are broad statements that push towards the aspirational vision for the future of Lewistown described in the Guiding Principles.

POLICIES are derived from goals and represent a set of guidelines that inform decision making.

ACTIONS translate policies into actions that departments/organizations should perform to implement the plan. Actions are found in the Implementation Chapter, [Chapter 4](#).

The planning elements are as follows:

- Land Use & Growth
- Housing & Childcare
- Transportation & Mobility
- Economic Development
- Natural/Cultural Resources & Recreation
- Infrastructure & Community Services

▶ IMPLEMENTATION

[Chapter 4](#) will serve as a roadmap for Lewistown staff, leadership, and partner organizations to implement the 2024 Lewistown Plan's Goals and Policies. Actions outlined within this chapter are assigned responsible parties, whose duty it is to initiate the action. Actions are also assigned a priority, following this framework:

Action Priority Levels:

HIGH = 0-3 years to implement

Staff and funding resources are either available or can be procured; and/or this Action gained high levels of community support, deeming it a high priority.

MEDIUM = 3-6 years to implement

Staff and resources are likely to be found, but are not readily available to implement this Action; and/or this Action gained medium levels of community support deeming it a medium priority.

LOW = 6+ years to implement

Given available staff and funding resources, and/or this Action gained lower levels of community support, deeming it a lower priority than others.

Lewistown has also committed to adopting six strategies to incentivize the production of more housing, which are outlined on [page 79](#).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 | BACKGROUND
- 1.2 | LAND USE PLANNING
- 1.3 | CURRENT CHALLENGES
- 1.4 | COMMUNITY INPUT
- 1.5 | EXISTING CONDITIONS
- 1.6 | GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1.1 | BACKGROUND

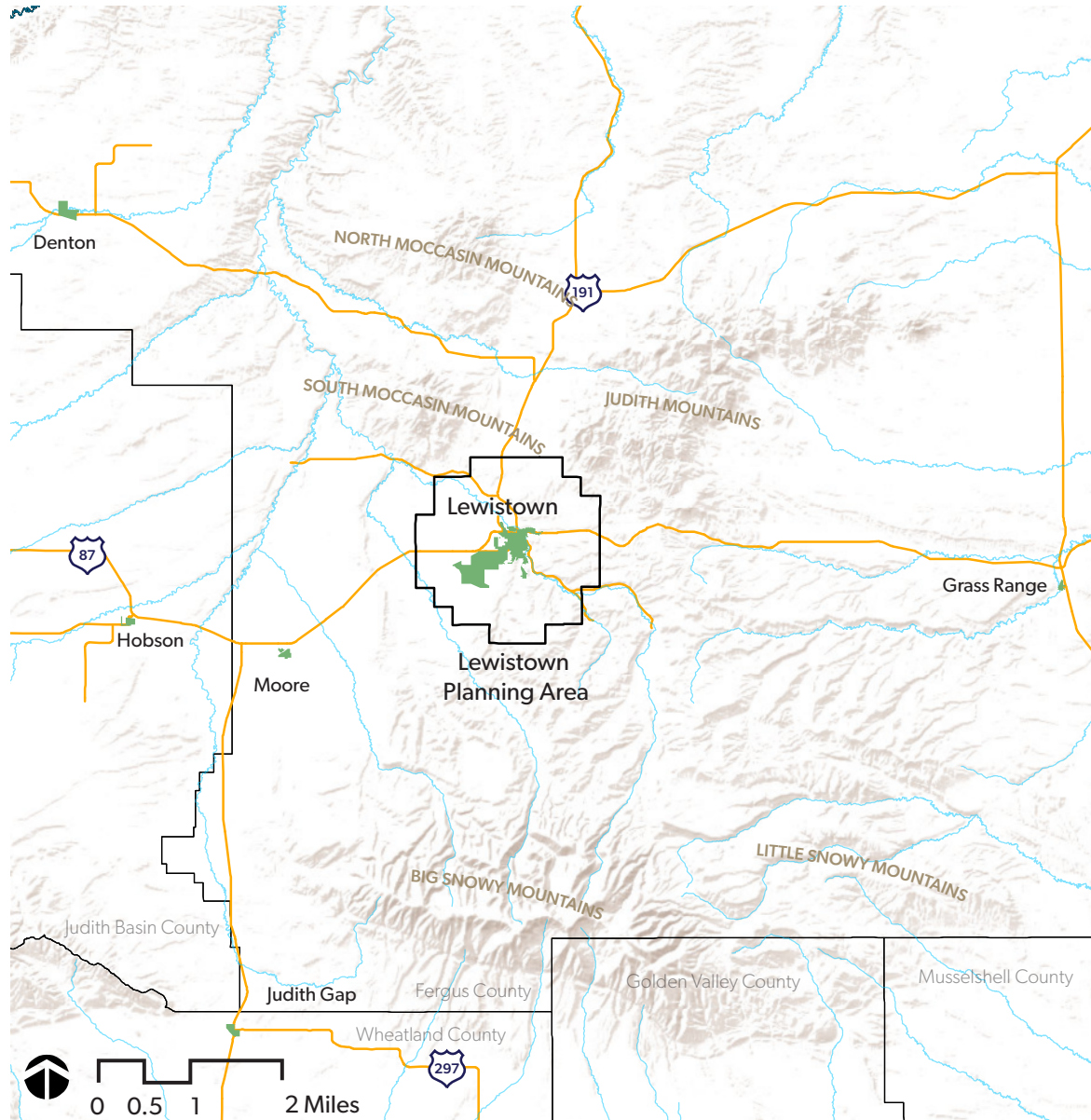
► LEWISTOWN HISTORY

Lewistown's history dates back to 1879, when 25 Métis families, descendants of marriages between French Canadians and native peoples, established the first permanent settlement in the area. Soon cattlemen took advantage of the open range, the sheep industry became established, and gold was discovered in the nearby Judith and Moccasin Mountains.

The town site was incorporated in 1889. By the turn of the century a land rush was on, and Lewistown experienced tremendous growth. The presence of good building stone and the building boom encouraged many stonemasons to settle in Lewistown, including a sizable community of Croatian craftsmen.

The Montana Railroad gave Lewistown its first train service in 1903. The Great Northern Railroad extended a branch line to Lewistown in 1913, and both railroads encouraged homesteading and the expansion of wheat farming.

Figure 1: Lewistown Regional Context Map



REGIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Lewistown encompasses 5.7 square miles and serves as the county seat of Fergus County, located at the approximate geographic center of the State of Montana. Hidden in a valley basin surrounded by mountains and open range, Lewistown appears as a green oasis in a rugged grassland environment. The City is nestled in a valley between five island mountain ranges, the Big Snowies, Little Snowies, Judith, and the North and South Moccasin Mountains. With the spring-fed Big Spring Creek meandering through town and a network of trails traversing the landscape, a multitude of recreation opportunities are available. Surrounding farm and ranch lands exemplify Lewistown's rural western lifestyle.

Beautiful architecture constructed by early residents forms the centerpiece of Lewistown's five historic districts. The downtown was largely constructed in the first two decades of the 20th century and remains substantially unchanged, with most of Main Street lined with historic building facades of both brick and stone.

1.2 | LAND USE PLANNING

► WHAT IS THE 2024 LEWISTOWN PLAN?

The 2024 Lewistown Plan is a planning tool used to communicate the future vision for the community with the goal of improving the lives of all people who live, work, play, learn, grow, and move within the Lewistown community.

It is the position of both the City and County governments that this Plan will play a significant role in land use decision making. It is the intent of this Plan that its use will:

- promote just and rational development;
- be an equitable, fair, and a long-term means of allocating scarce resources;
- allow all government officials, professional planners, and citizens to participate fully in the process of regulating land use and allocating resources; and
- curb overly discretionary or inconsistent actions of planners and government officials.

Previously called a Growth Policy, this Plan was created under the guidance of the Montana Land Use Planning Act as a Land Use Plan. While Lewistown's population does not meet the threshold to require planning under the Act,

City Commission gave staff direction to "opt in" to the bill understanding the critical need for housing and modernizing the City's zoning code. The new planning framework gives local leaders tangible tools to be responsive. It moves public participation and analysis up to the community-wide planning stages, eliminating duplicity so that permitting and subdivision process is more efficient. The Montana Land Use Planning Act also requires local municipalities to quantify their housing needs and adopt at least five zoning reforms to accommodate those needs while considering the systems and infrastructure unique to each community.

This Plan will be a success if one fundamental outcome is achieved: leaders and planners learn from the past to craft a vision of the future by guiding growth in a logical and sustainable way. The goal is for there not to be one outcome, but many, and in this process the community has stated their vision for the change that is needed to elevate and RE-GROW Lewistown. Where warranted, the plan shall be flexible in its implementation and interpretation. It is not the intent of the Plan to restrict growth, but instead to allow it to develop in a logical and thoughtful manner.

This Plan is designed to be a "living document." It is subject to ongoing and frequent monitoring and amendment if required. In the end, the

policies contained herein must remain relevant to the community and area, the development community, and to market realities.

► HOW SHOULD THIS PLAN BE USED?

For local government, this plan reflects community desires for resource investments and should inform decision making for consistency with the Plan's Goals and Policies. The City should actively pursue recommendations in this Plan in a strategic manner as funding is available. For the development community and property owners, this Plan provides greater clarity about the desired character of land uses and type of future development. This Plan should be used to inform updates to the City's Zoning Regulations.

This is a document that government, both at the city and the county levels, shall substantially adhere to with respect to zoning and development decisions within the [Planning Area](#). This document will serve as the guideline whereby the local government regulates land use, growth, and development. Just as important is the concept of consistency resulting from the development of this Plan.

► WHY IS UPDATING THE PLAN IMPORTANT?

The last update to the Lewistown Growth Policy was in 2006, almost 20 years before the adoption of this Plan. Change is inevitable and communities are wise to address it rather than to deny its inevitability. As the larger region experiences changes in character, Lewistown experiences more rapid growth than historically which places increasing pressure on City services.

As a guiding plan for all aspects of Lewistown's future, this Plan channels the community vision using a comprehensive set of statements and visual ideas that will guide ongoing discussions on growth and change. A community is like an ecosystem: to thrive, all of the parts must work together in order to sustain the City's future. These tools, like the [Future Land Use Map](#) and

matrix of action steps, remain fluid and are meant to be changed as the people, industries, marketplaces, creekbeds, animals, plants, or other human and physical elements change within and around the community.



Growth in our community is often measured in terms of population, housing, tax base, area and/or employment. We support the concept of growth. In general, growth is necessary for a community to survive and flourish. However, unplanned and unchecked growth often results in air and water pollution, road congestion, overcrowded schools, tax increases, higher housing costs, and burgeoning development. The aim of this Growth Policy is not to curtail or limit growth, but to alleviate its negative impacts by directing the location, timing, type, and quality of future development. This growth management policy is a strategy for healthy community development, balancing planning, regulation, tax revenues, and spending.



1.3 | CURRENT CHALLENGES

► 2024 LEWISTOWN PLAN MOTIVATORS

Most issues faced by Lewistown are connected to growth, and the City's capacity to continue to provide safe and reliable public services, housing, and economic opportunities for all residents. On a deeper level, the fundamental issue is change, and where people have resistance to change usually ties back to changes in quality of life. The following challenges and opportunities are based on the current state of affairs in Lewistown in 2024 and how they provide motivation for the planning elements and land use actions put forth in this Plan.

There is more growth pressure in Lewistown than has existed in the last 50 years due to several key factors.

Lewistown has available land and infrastructure for new industries to locate their facilities and bring employees into town.

VACOM, a German manufacturer of vacuum products, is locating a new American headquarters in Lewistown. This facility may bring with it about 500 new jobs to Lewistown, and the accompanying employees and families. This is just one example of industry growth that will bring new residents to Lewistown, and many more are expected given both the State-level incentives and the locally established [TED District](#) aimed at bringing in new industries and employers.





The upcoming Sentinel project will bring up to 3,000 employees to the Lewistown area over the course of several years.

The US Air Force is planning to replace the Minuteman missiles in the area constructed in the 1960s with more updated systems. Northrop Grumman has been contracted to replace and expand the communication infrastructure for the missile silos and launch facilities. Due to the magnitude of this effort, they will be building two “workforce hubs” to house the workers, one of which will be located in Lewistown. This hub would house the up to 3,000 workers during the project, at 50-60 acres in size with housing, dining facilities, and clinics for the workforce. The intent is that these hubs will be completely self-sufficient and temporary - likely trucking in water, trucking out wastewater, and not connecting to City utilities. The timeline for the project is still being determined, but early information provided indicated that the construction of the workforce hub would begin in the early 2030s.

Understanding what the long-term impacts of the Sentinel project workforce hub on Lewistown could look like is challenging for several reasons. All physical and non-physical aspects of the

workforce hub are meant to be temporary. Workers will be brought in for 3-week contracts, after which they will return home, most never bringing their families and likely not establishing deep roots in the community. While Northrop Grumman has agreed to work with Lewistown to help them reuse the facilities, if they are not connected to City utilities, there may not be many viable, long-term uses for the land that are needed in the community (such as housing and industry). The biggest impact the workforce hub will likely have on Lewistown is during its construction and while workers are living there, between four and seven years.

Lewistown is comparatively more affordable than other parts of Montana.

While housing costs have increased rapidly in recent years, Lewistown is still more affordable than other parts of the State. The median home price in Lewistown was \$152,000 in 2022, compared to Fergus County at \$175,800 and the State of Montana at \$305,700. Residents who have been priced out of other Montana cities may choose to relocate to Lewistown for its affordability. This is causing land, housing, and building costs to increase rapidly.



The cost of living is increasing, threatening to displace community members and change the City's character.

Land, housing, and building costs are increasing rapidly.

According to Realtor.com, the median listing home price in Lewistown was \$589,000 in April 2024, up 62.5% year-over-year. The monthly median rent in Lewistown rose from \$419 in 2000 to \$974 in 2022, a 132% increase in just over 20 years. Those suffering the most from the affordability crisis are low-income renters - almost half (49%) of whom are spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Anecdotally, contractors have wait lists and are in high demand throughout the County.

The City's demographics are changing.

Lewistown's population is aging, and almost half of the population (46%) lives alone. This points to an untapped market for more multi-family housing and smaller units that are more affordable for single householders. Accommodation for non-traditional family units and larger senior housing developments is also needed.

Availability is a problem on top of affordability.

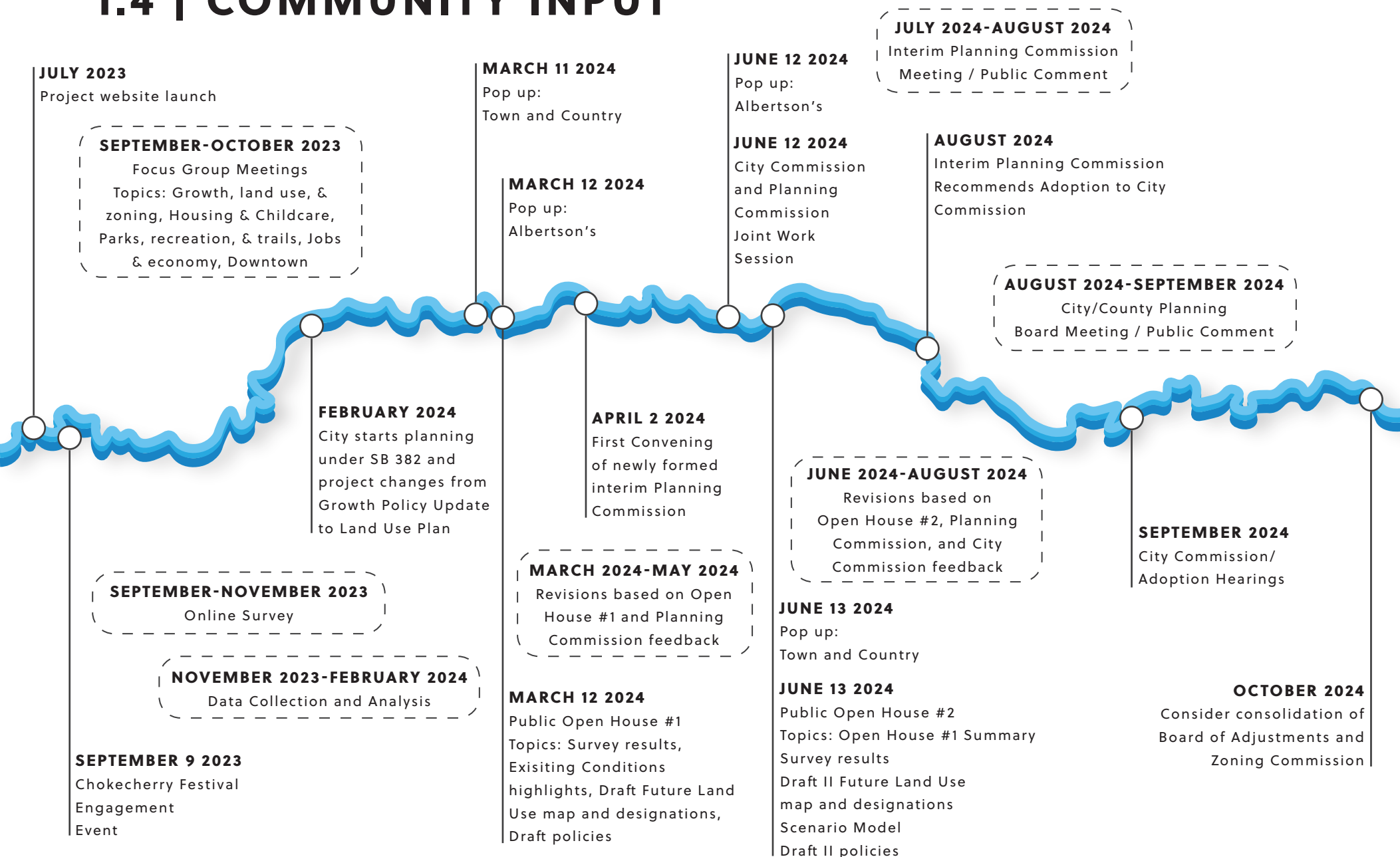
There is a severe lack of long-term rental housing in Lewistown. Long-term rental housing is critical for the City's workforce and has been a limiting factor for some of the larger employers like the Hospital and School District, which have lost potential new employees due to the unavailability of housing.

The community lacks a unified vision for the future of Lewistown and its Planning Area.

There is no [Future Land Use Map](#) for the Planning Area surrounding Lewistown.

The 2006 Growth Policy did not assign future land uses to the City's Extraterritorial Area (or "[Planning Area](#)"), a 4.5-mile area surrounding the incorporated City boundary. Fergus County's Growth Policy does not address this area either. Left unplanned, this area is subject to unpredictable, sprawling development that is resource-inefficient and could change the character of the City.

1.4 | COMMUNITY INPUT



Public Participation Plan

► INTRODUCTION

The City of Lewistown understands that community participation is a critical component of the long-range planning process. Not all policy decisions about land use, housing, transportation, economic development, and capital facilities will impact us all in the same way. Providing the opportunity for public input invites citizens to participate in formulating the vision for the future of their community and helps ensure that recommendations that are developed as a part of the 2024 Lewistown Plan are implemented and sustained over time. It is the responsibility of the City to listen, elevate, and incorporate community voices throughout the planning process.

The full [Public Participation Plan](#) is available in the Appendix of this Plan, and describes how community members and stakeholders were engaged throughout the planning process. It is intended to raise awareness of the 2024 Lewistown Plan, provide a roadmap for the public of a clear and accessible process, and ensure input is sought and considered from a broad range of participants. The following is a summary of engagement conducted for the 2024 Lewistown Plan.

► PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website was launched in July of 2023: www.CityofLewistown.com/Government/GrowthPolicyUpdate. The website provided a platform and landing page for information regarding the project, its status, and posted project updates as different planning milestones were completed. The website hosted a place for residents to leave general comments about the project at any time throughout the process. The website was continually updated throughout the lifetime of the project with engagement activities and reporting.

Figure 2: Project Schedule on the Website

PROJECT SCHEDULE:

Phase 1: Review of Existing Growth Policy (Jul-Aug 2023) Existing conditions, vision and purpose statements, goals, objectives and policies, and the implementation strategy will all be reviewed in this phase.

Phase 2: Current Characteristics, Projected Trends, Mapping (Sept-Dec 2023) Examining demographic, economic, and geographic data will begin to shape the opportunities and constraints within the City.

Phase 3: Draft Plan (Jan-Jun 2024) Informed by the prior phases, a draft document will be written and include community feedback, recommendations, and implementation strategies.

Phase 4: Review and Adoption (Jun-Sept 2024) In this final phase the draft will be revised in partnership with stakeholders and public officials. The end result would be a fully adopted Plan that will guide development for years to come.

Figure 3: Input collected at the Chokecherry Festival in September 2023

► ONLINE SURVEYS

Two online surveys were launched in September 2023 and were available through November 2023. One survey was for adults ages 19 and older, which received 316 responses. The second survey was for young residents, 18 years of age and younger, which received 37 responses. Complete survey responses are in the Appendix.

► CHOKECHERRY FESTIVAL

At Lewistown's biggest public event of the year, the project team set up a booth at the Chokecherry Festival with information about the project, an engagement activity with sticky notes, a raffle with a prize to get contact information, and the team handed out postcards with QR codes for the online surveys. See input collected from this event in Figure 3.



► FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

The project team identified various stakeholders, organizational representatives, and subject matter experts with whom to conduct topic-based focus group discussions. There were 5 focus group discussions conducted in September and October, 2023 on the following topics:

- Growth, land use, & zoning
- Housing & childcare
- Parks, recreation & trails
- Jobs & economy
- Downtown
- A personal interview was conducted with the Chamber of Commerce to accommodate scheduling conflicts.

The following departments/organizations were invited to participate in Focus Group discussions:

City of Lewistown/Fergus County:

- Planning Department
- Building Department
- Public Works Department
- City Manager
- Parks & Recreation Department
- Lewistown City Commission
- Lewistown Rural Fire
- Fergus County Planning
- Fergus County Emergency Services

Organizational Stakeholders:

- Lewistown Downtown Association
- Lewistown Airport
- Snowy Mountain Development
- Friends of the Trails
- Big Spring Creek Watershed Council
- Lewistown Chamber of Commerce
- Fergus County Health Board
- Montana Childcare Alliance
- Homeword
- Human Resource Development Council
- Accelerate (U of M workforce development program)
- Fergus County Council on Aging
- Montana Bureau of Land Management

Businesses/Employers:

- Lewistown School District
- Allied Steel
- Central Feed
- Yogo Inn
- Central Montana Medical Center

► ORGANIZATION BRIEFINGS

In March of 2024, Planning Director Doug Osterman gave presentations on the status of the 2024 Lewistown Plan to the following groups that included the Draft Future Land Use Map and Community Engagement Themes:

- March 5 – Kiwanis – 18 attendees
- March 7 – Rotary – 7 attendees
- March 14 – Lewistown Jaycees – 6 attendees
- March 18 – Fergus County Community Council – 7 attendees

POP-UP EVENTS

The project team set up Pop-up booths at the two grocery stores in town to advertise both Open House events. The team caught residents on their way into the grocery store and personally invited them to the Open Houses, handing out postcards with information about the meetings.

- March 11, 2024: Town & Country, 4-6pm
- March 12, 2024: Albertson's, 11am-1pm
- June 12, 2024: Albertson's, 4-6pm
- June 13, 2024: Town & Country, 11am-1pm



ALBERTSON'S POP-UP EVENT, JUNE 12 2024



TOWN & COUNTRY POP-UP EVENT, MARCH 11 2024



ALBERTSON'S POP-UP EVENT, MARCH 12 2024

► **OPEN HOUSE #1**

On March 12, 2024, an Open House was hosted at Central Feed Restaurant from 6-8 p.m. Information boards displayed summaries of feedback from engagement via surveys, focus groups, and the Chokecherry event; educational information about opting into the Montana Land Use Planning Act and how it differs from a typical Growth Policy; the Future Land Use Map and Designations, and the Draft Goals. Participants were encouraged to engage with staff and the consultant team at each station and feedback was collected via sticky notes.

Donated prizes were raffled off throughout the night, and 84 attendees signed in at the event, though not all attendees did, so attendance is estimated at 100. Participants submitted a total of 73 written comments.



OPEN HOUSE #1

Photo credit: Lewistown News-Argus



OPEN HOUSE #1



OPEN HOUSE #1



OPEN HOUSE #1

► OPEN HOUSE #2

On June 13, 2024, a second Open House was hosted at Central Feed Restaurant from 6-8 p.m. Information boards displayed summaries of feedback from previous engagement; the modified Future Land Use Map and Designations, the Draft Goals and Policies; and two potential development scenarios in areas of interest in Lewistown. Participants engaged with staff and the consultant team at each station and feedback was collected via sticky notes.

Donated prizes were again raffled off, and 34 attendees signed in at the event, though not all attendees did, so attendance is estimated at 48.



Summary of Community Input

Lewistown residents told us they want...



A variety of housing types at affordable prices for both renters and owners.



To protect agriculture/farms and the natural features that make Lewistown unique.



More family and youth services including childcare, youth sports, and higher education.



A downtown that is easy to access and has a variety of retail, restaurant, and entertainment options.



To continue to invest in outdoor recreational facilities such as parks, trails, and open space.



To preserve the rural character and small town cultural values of Lewistown.



To invest in water resources that improve the condition of and access to Big Spring Creek.



To focus on maintaining and improving infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer, and the airport.



Greater economic opportunities by way of industry attraction, job growth, and employee retention.



More social events and opportunities to come together as a community.

1.5 | EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following information represents highlights from an extensive report on Lewistown’s existing conditions, available as an attachment to this Plan. This data and findings directly influenced this Plan’s Goals, Policies, and Actions outlined in the following chapters.

► GROWTH & LAND USE

Historically, Lewistown has had more people, more rapid growth, and greater population density than it has today.

Lewistown’s population in 2022 was estimated at 5,988 according to the US Census. The City’s peak population was in 1960 at 7,408 residents, and its peak population growth occurred between 1900 and 1910, when it saw a growth rate of 173%. There were also historically more people per household than there are today, at a national average of 3.33 people per household in 1960 compared to 2.05 in Lewistown today.

Figure 4: Lewistown Population & Population Change, 1890 - 2020

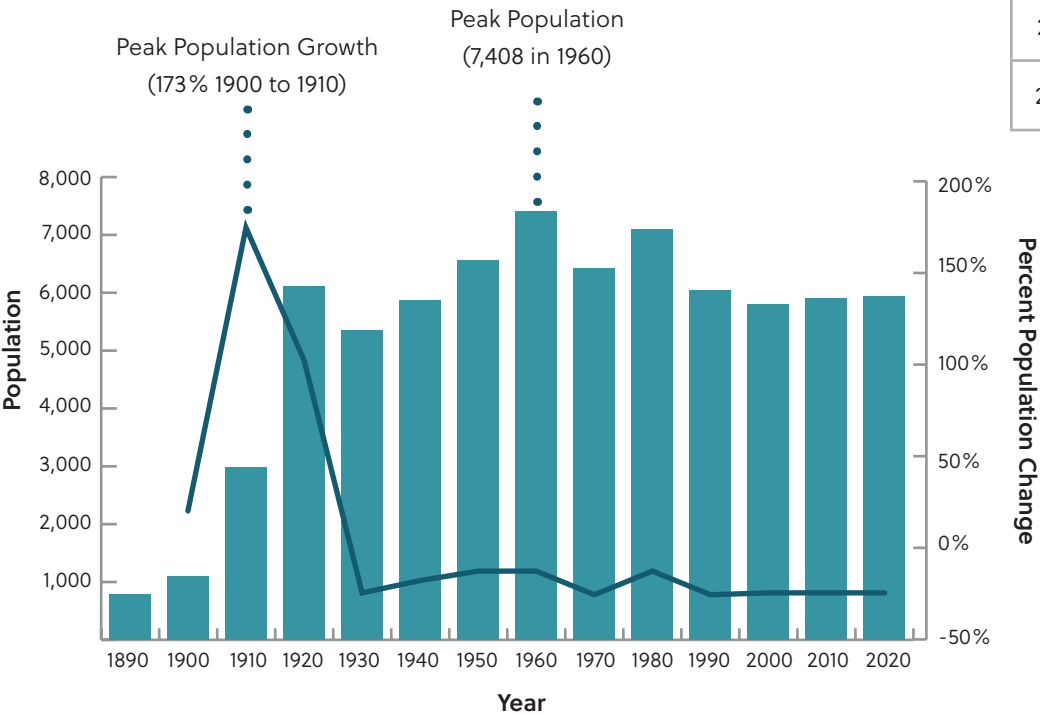


Table 1: Average Household Size by Year

Year	Average Household Size	
	United States	Lewistown
1960	3.33	Data not available
1970	3.14	
1980	2.76	
1990	2.63	
2000	2.62	2.15
2010	2.59	2.08
2020	2.53	2.05

Lewistown can expect slow to moderate growth over the next 20 years with population and employment boosts from VACOM.

Utilizing a linear growth curve model, paired with population increases from known factors, projections show a Low, Moderate, and High growth scenario for Lewistown. The City and its [Planning Area](#) is projected to return to its peak population level of around 7,400 by the year 2030 (see Figure 5 and Table 2). This is in part due to anticipated industry growth as VACOM becomes more established in the area.

Figure 5: Lewistown Population Projections, 2023 - 2043



Table 2: Lewistown Population Projections, 2023 - 2043

Year	Low Projection (0.5% growth)	Moderate Projection (1.0% growth)	High Projection (1.5% growth)	Known Factors
2024	6,048	6,108	6,169	
2027	6,639*	6,793*	6,951*	*Added 500 for projected VACOM employees & families
2030	7,439**	7,699**	7,968**	**Added 700 for projected VACOM employees & families
2035	7,627	8,092	8,584	
2040	7,820	8,505	9,248	
2044	7,977	8,850	9,815	

Lewistown’s changing demographics point to shifting needs for housing and services in the near future.

Like many small communities in Montana and the US, Lewistown’s population is aging. The median age for Lewistown residents in 2022 was 48 years, compared to 45 in 2010 and 43 in 2000. Over one quarter (26.2%) of residents in Lewistown are 65 years or older (see Figure 6). Additionally, more Lewistown residents than ever before are living alone. Almost half (45.8%) of the population lives alone, compared to Fergus County at 35.4% and the State at 30.9% (see Table 3). The City will likely see increased need for senior housing and smaller housing units to accommodate lower-income, single residents.

Figure 6: Lewistown Age Demographics

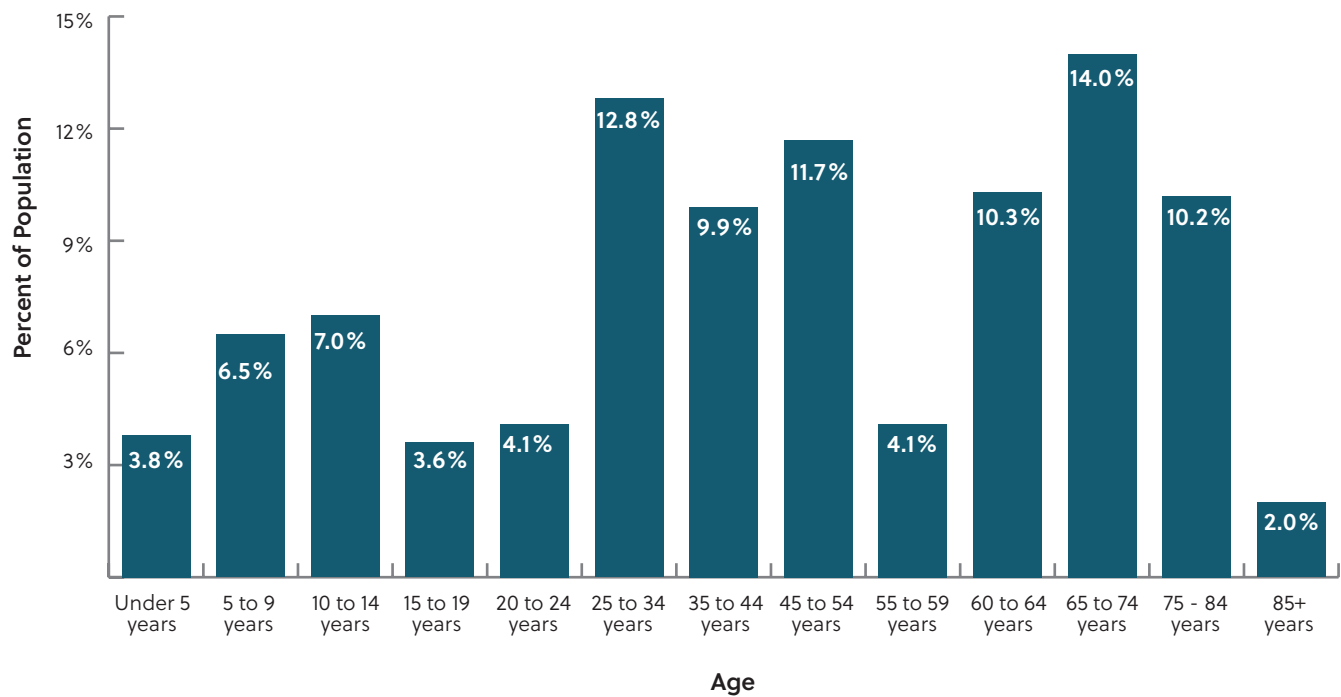


Table 3: Household Characteristics of Montana, Fergus County, and Lewistown

Household Characteristics	Montana	Fergus County	Lewistown
Married couple household	48.7%	49.0%	36.1%
Cohabiting couple household	7.2%	7.8%	10.3%
Householder living alone	30.9%	35.4%	45.9%

► HOUSING

Lewistown is on the downswing of the affordability crisis - and those suffering the most are low-income renters.

While this is on par with State and national trends, the unaffordability in Lewistown is deeper and affecting a larger share of its residents. Almost half - 49% - of Lewistown residents are cost-burdened, meaning they are spending more than 30% of their income on housing (see Table 4). According to Realtor.com, the median listing home price in Lewistown was \$589,000 in April 2024, up 62.5% year-over-year. The monthly median rent in Lewistown rose from \$419 in 2000 to \$974 in 2022, a 132% increase in just over 20 years. According to the 2022 Lewistown Housing Needs Assessment, the main driver of unaffordability may be more demand-related rather than supply. A steady increase in housing units and vacancy rates are in contrast with a large decrease in the number of jobs over the same period. The increase in population and slow growth in household income suggest economic development and job growth may be an effective way to combat the affordability crisis.

Table 5: Existing Housing Types in Lewistown

Housing Type	Number	%
Total Housing Units	3,052	
1-unit, detached	2,122	69.5%
1-unit, attached	0	0%
2 units	15	0.5%
3-4 units	78	2.6%
5-9 units	208	6.8%
10-19 units	13	0.4%
20+ units	251	8.2%
Mobile home	365	12.0%
Source: US Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018-2022		

Table 4: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Income

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Income	Montana	Fergus County	Lewistown
Less than 15%	17.6%	28.7%	25.0%
15.0% - 19.9%	13.5%	7.0%	6.5%
20.0% - 24.9%	12.9%	20.3%	20.8%
25.0% - 29.9%	11.4%	1.7%	0%
30.0% - 34.9%	8.6%	4.5%	5.2%
35.0% or more	36.0%	37.8%	42.5%
Source: US Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018-2022			

To accommodate growth and aid in affordability, density and diversity in housing are needed.

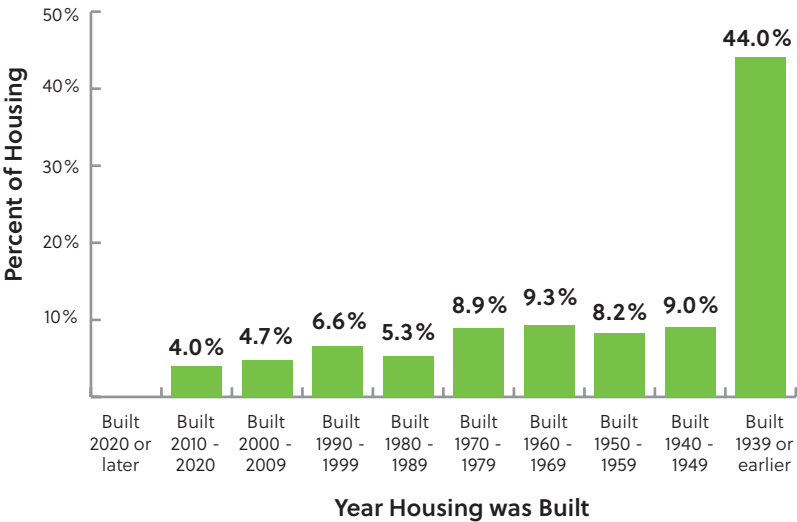
Most of Lewistown’s housing stock is aging, single-family homes with small clusters of multi-family and mobile homes - pointing to a need for more housing development that meets diverse needs. The vast majority (70%) of housing in Lewistown is single-family homes, which by nature, are less affordable than smaller, multi-family units (see Table 5 on page 33). Mobile homes make up 12% of the housing units in Lewistown - which can function as “starter homes” at lower price points than stick-built houses. However, depending on the land ownership structure, they can be less stable if they are being charged lot rent. According to housing unit need projections, Lewistown will have a housing deficit of 274 units in 2027, and by 2030, 720 additional units are needed (see Table 6).

Table 6: Lewistown Housing Need Projections, 2027 - 2044

Year	Low Projection (0.5% growth)		Moderate Projection (1.0% growth)		High Projection (1.5% growth)	
	Units Needed	Deficit	Units Needed	Deficit	Units Needed	Deficit
2024	3,386	-	3,386	-	3,386	-
2027	3,622	236	3,660	274	3,699	313
2030	3,943	557	4,022	636	4,106	720
2035	4,018	632	4,179	793	4,352	966
2040	4,095	709	4,345	959	4,617	1,231
2044	4,158	772	4,483	1,097	4,844	1,458

Methodology: This forecast is built utilizing the population projections. The net population gain each year is divided by the national average household size according to each estimated growth rate. This is then added to the current residential housing stock to give the total estimated housing units needed to accommodate the projected population growth.

Figure 7: Year Structure Built in Lewistown



Source: US Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018-2022

► ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Lewistown needs to attract employers that offer higher-paying jobs to offset the City's high proportion of retirees and retain its younger population.

While housing prices and the cost of living have increased rapidly in recent years, household income has lagged behind. While the median home value in Lewistown is increasing by 62% year-over-year, the median household income only increased by 14% between 2020 and 2022. The median household income for residents in Lewistown in 2022 was \$62,917, which is lower than Fergus County at \$72,574 and the State at \$95,131 (see Table 8). This is likely due a combination of comparatively lower educational attainment and a high percentage of retired residents at 43.5% of the population (see Table 7).

Lewistown has available land and infrastructure for new industries to locate their facilities and bring employees into town.

VACOM, a German manufacturer of vacuum products, will be locating a new American headquarters in Lewistown. This facility will bring with it about 500 employees, many of whom will bring their families. This is just one example of industry growth that will bring new residents to Lewistown, and many more are expected given both the State-level incentives and the locally established [TED District](#) aimed at bringing in new industries and employers.

Table 7: Employment Status of Lewistown Residents Compared to Fergus County and Montana

Employment Status	Montana	Fergus County	Lewistown
In labor force	63.0%	60.7%	56.5%
Employed	60.2%	58.8%	53.3%
Unemployed	2.4%	1.9%	3.2%
Not in labor force	37.0%	39.3%	43.5%
Source: US Census ACS 5-year Estimates, 2018-2022			

Table 8: Lewistown Median Household Income Compared to Fergus County and Montana

2022	Montana	Fergus County	Lewistown
Median Household Income	\$95,131	\$72,574	\$62,917
Source: US Census ACS 5-year Estimates, 2018-2022			

► NATURAL RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Big Spring Creek is the City's water supply and represents the lifeblood of Lewistown, and its protection is critical for the health of the community.

The impacts of development on creek, stream, and overall watershed health must be minimized to ensure future access to Big Spring Creek's mineral-rich water.

Lewistown's municipal water and sewer systems have capacity for growth both through infill and annexations.

A primary objective of this Plan has been to create a plan for orderly growth that contributes to the City's fiscal sustainability. Lewistown aims to avoid future sprawling subdivisions in unincorporated Fergus County on individual well and septic systems that have potential to create

environmental and health impacts. Of particular environmental concern is the Lewistown Heights neighborhood, which is served by individual well and septic systems and reports have been made of system failures and groundwater pollution. Efforts to connect areas like the Heights to the City's municipal infrastructure should be prioritized.

Note: The Lewistown Plan does not include data and maps of natural resources in the Lewistown Planning Area that were considered in establishing the land use designations of the Future Land Use Map and policies of the Plan. Instead, interested readers should refer to the State of Montana data base for information on minerals, groundwater, surface water, floodplains, wildlife, and much more. Montana's natural resources data, including mapping, can be found at: <https://gis-data-hub-mbmng.hub.arcgis.com/>



► MOBILITY

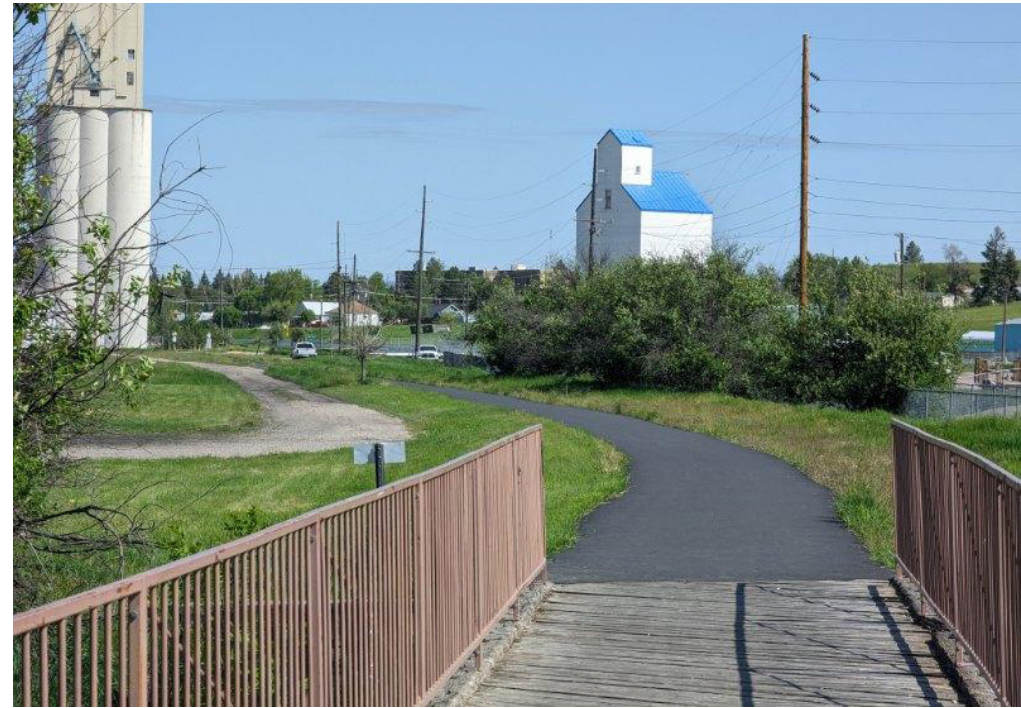
Montana State Highway 87 is Lewistown's Main Street, which makes roadway improvements more complicated due to Montana Department of Transportation's involvement.

The stretch of Highway 87 that runs through Downtown Lewistown experiences heavy traffic, even with truck traffic being routed around the City on the truck bypass. Since the highway is owned by the State of Montana, there are limitations on any potential streetscape improvements that can be done.

Lewistown's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructures need improvement to provide alternative mobility options.

While many streets in Downtown Lewistown have sidewalks, gaps exist in the pedestrian network that need to be addressed for [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) compliance and safety. Outside of Downtown, many streets do not have sidewalks. Children often walk in the street to and from school as there are many gaps in the sidewalk network.

Lewistown does not have dedicated bike lanes on any streets. While the City's trails are well-used by cyclists, the lack of on-street bike lanes makes biking around the City less accessible.



1.6 | GUIDING PRINCIPLES



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Make the 2024 Lewistown Plan a plan for and of the people”

Lewistown prioritizes and encourages community and stakeholder collaboration.



HOUSING

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Create a range of housing opportunities and choices”

Lewistown residents have opportunities to live in safe, stable, healthy, and affordable homes.



COMMUNITY CHARACTER

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Foster distinctive, attractive neighborhoods with a strong sense of place”
- “Develop strategies that help protect the natural environment and make Lewistown more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse”
- “Advance compact, environmentally friendly, and energy efficient building design”

Lewistown grows and reinvests strategically to complement the community’s small town and historic character, strengthen its unique neighborhoods, and maintain its focus on arts, culture, and the natural environment.



LAND USE & GROWTH

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Preserve open space, farmland, forestland, rangeland, cultural and historical resources, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas”
- “Strengthen and direct development within the existing city footprint and infrastructure”
- “Mix land uses to provide proximity of residential uses to amenities, jobs, and complimentary uses”

Lewistown manages growth and land use consistently with our community values and with respect for private property rights, our commitment to environmental stewardship, and in fairness and equity to the people who live here.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Develop a land use system that effectively balances competing economic, environmental, and social demands while ensuring the sustainability of new developments that benefit Lewistown”
- “Leverage new growth to improve Lewistown”

Lewistown cultivates a vibrant, resilient, and year-round economy that provides opportunities for the full spectrum of community members and entrepreneurs through innovation and collaboration.



INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Make development decisions predictable, fair, safe, and cost effective”

Lewistown promotes the use of fiscally responsible infrastructure systems that encourage low-impact development and provides services that promote a healthy and connected community.



NATURAL RESOURCES

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Prioritize conservation and restoration of land, water, and fish and wildlife habitats”
- “As Lewistown grows, integrate natural resources into its fabric”

Lewistown stewards its resources in a responsible manner that enhances community resilience and the natural environment for future generations.



TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

WHAT WE HEARD:

- “Provide a variety of transportation and parking choices”
- “Strengthen and create walkable and bikeable neighborhoods”

Lewistown plans for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods using all modes of travel.

2.0 GOALS & POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

2.1 | LAND USE & GROWTH

2.2 | HOUSING & CHILDCARE

2.3 | TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

2.4 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2.5 | NATURAL/CULTURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION

2.6 | INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY SERVICES



INTRODUCTION

The following chapter outlines Goals and Policies organized by planning elements to guide City staff and leadership. They were developed based on two primary inputs: existing conditions data and community input.

GOALS are broad statements that push towards the aspirational vision for the future of Lewistown described in the Guiding Principles.

POLICIES are derived from goals and represent a set of guidelines that inform decision-making.

ACTIONS translate policies into actions that departments/organizations should perform to implement the plan. Actions are found in [Chapter 4, Implementation](#).

2.1 | LAND USE & GROWTH

Community Character

► LUG GOAL 1:

Conserve agricultural land, waterways, and open space around the community by growing from the inside out, and encouraging efficient, pedestrian-oriented development with distinct activity centers.

POLICIES:

- LUG 1.1** Create distinct and unique places with smooth transitions between neighborhoods and/or districts.
- LUG 1.2** Develop land use patterns that provide for efficient transportation with a reduction in fuel and energy consumption, while still encouraging economic development.
- LUG 1.3** Encourage infill development designed to be compatible with the scale and character of the City's existing neighborhoods, especially in designated historic districts.
- LUG 1.4** Enhance the Lewistown arrival experience by improving priority gateways into town.
- LUG 1.5** Preserve agricultural lands that surround the City that act as open space transitions between City and country.

► LUG GOAL 2:

Maintain and promote the distinct identity and character of Lewistown as a Central Montana hub with small town charm and rural surroundings.

POLICIES:

- LUG 2.1** Promote Lewistown's identity as a rural center of amenities and services, offering a convenient and desirable travel destination in Montana.
- LUG 2.2** Seek opportunities to incorporate art into public projects, such as buildings, parks, recreation facilities, streetscape enhancements, and other infrastructure improvements. Encourage the incorporation of art amenities in private development and the involvement of local artists in the design process.

Downtown

► LUG GOAL 3:

Maintain and promote Downtown as the commercial, civic, and cultural heart of Lewistown.

POLICIES:

- LUG 3.1** Encourage the redevelopment of vacant properties in the Downtown.
- LUG 3.2** Enhance the visual appearance and sense of place of Downtown Lewistown.
- LUG 3.3** Preserve the historic character of Downtown.
- LUG 3.4** Provide parks and public spaces Downtown to offer connections to nature and areas for the community to gather.
- LUG 3.5** Encourage the development of quality living opportunities Downtown.
- LUG 3.6** Encourage redevelopment and new development within Downtown to be done in a consistent manner with the historic character of the historic districts in Lewistown.

► LUG GOAL 4:

Foster a pedestrian-friendly environment Downtown while allowing for the efficient movement of vehicles.

POLICIES:

- LUG 4.1** Improve sidewalk connectivity Downtown.
- LUG 4.2** Provide for a “park once” experience to reduce vehicular circling and promote walking downtown.

► LUG GOAL 5:

Practice principles of [Smart Growth](#).

POLICIES:

- LUG 5.1** Concentrate growth in areas that can be served by infrastructure in an efficient and fiscally responsible manner.
- LUG 5.2** Encourage [conservation subdivision design](#) in new subdivisions.
- LUG 5.3** Protect agricultural lands, forests, and open space through zoning.
- LUG 5.4** Work with the Airport Board to establish allowed uses in the Airport zone district.

Land Use

► LUG GOAL 6:

Plan for projected population growth to encourage a well-balanced mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses.

POLICIES:

- LUG 6.1** Zone land for residential, commercial, and industrial uses to accommodate projected population growth.
- LUG 6.2** Encourage the development of multi-use neighborhoods that are a mix of housing, jobs, stores, and public space, all within a well-planned pedestrian environment.
- LUG 6.3** Identify lands for future annexation.
- LUG 6.4** Encourage the rehabilitation of underutilized strip commercial areas and single use commercial centers as opportunities arise.

► LUG GOAL 7:

Foster an inclusive development community.

POLICIES:

- LUG 7.1** Make development and redevelopment decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
- LUG 7.2** Reduce red tape, eliminate conflict, duplication, and inconsistencies in the Zoning Regulations regarding growth and development.



2.2 | HOUSING & CHILDCARE

Housing

► HC GOAL 1:

Promote the development of housing that serves residents across a range of demographics, abilities, incomes, and collective needs.

POLICIES:

- HC 1.1** Provide for a variety of housing types in existing neighborhoods.
- HC 1.2** Support new [affordable housing](#) development that is located near childcare, health services, and grocery stores.
- HC 1.3** Work with nonprofits and/or pursue public private partnerships on a community land trust model.
- HC 1.4** Consider the formation of a Regional Housing Authority to facilitate the creation of [affordable housing](#).

► HC GOAL 2:

Preserve Lewistown's existing housing stock.

POLICIES:

- HC 2.1** Preserve, improve, and rehabilitate the existing housing supply.
- HC 2.2** Preserve long-term rental housing.

Childcare

► HC GOAL 3:

Foster an inclusive community for people of all ages.

POLICIES:

- HC 3.1** Incentivize affordable childcare and after school programming to support working families.



2.3 | TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Multi-modal

► **TM GOAL 1:**

Design a transportation network that emphasizes and integrates multiple modes of travel and serves existing population and activity centers.

POLICIES:

- TM 1.1** Provide bicycle and pedestrian connections between residential areas, major activity centers, and recreational opportunities.
- TM 1.2** Address mobility at a regional scale.
- TM 1.3** Ensure Downtown is pedestrian and bicycle-friendly.
- TM 1.4** Improve the regional trail network.
- TM 1.5** Improve Safe Routes to Schools.

► **TM GOAL 2:**

Provide an efficient and interconnected road network.

POLICIES:

- TM 2.1** As traffic levels increase, consider more efficient intersection design to reduce traffic backups.
- TM 2.2** Develop and implement mitigation strategies to reduce the impact of regional growth on traffic congestion on State Highways.



2.4 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Jobs & Industry

► ED GOAL 1:

Create and maintain a balanced economy of sustainable economic growth that provides a broad range of job opportunities and goods and services for locals and visitors.

POLICIES:

- ED 1.1** Create new or utilize existing incentives for new businesses and industries to locate in Lewistown, particularly those with higher paying jobs.
- ED 1.2** Support efforts by the Chamber of Commerce to recruit and train businesses.
- ED 1.3** Provide education on business and eco-tourism to promote economic resiliency.
- ED 1.4** Maintain the Lewistown Airport, understanding its current and future role in supporting regional transportation, commerce, and manufacturing.

► ED GOAL 2:

Support small and local businesses.

POLICIES:

- ED 2.1** Work with local and regional partners to connect small businesses to resources available to support their creation and growth.
- ED 2.2** Encourage the creation of new businesses and growth of small businesses and ensure there are ample building sites/ commercial spaces for these businesses to start and grow.

► ED GOAL 3:

Retain Lewistown's role as a regional commercial center.

POLICIES:

- ED 3.1** Identify gaps or missing opportunities that may exist in the recreation and light manufacturing sectors.
- ED 3.2** Zone more land for commercial and manufacturing uses to support economic growth.

► ED GOAL 4:

Support the needs of and advance opportunities for the community's workforce.

POLICIES:

- ED 4.1** Expand post-secondary educational opportunities including community colleges, vocational, and trade school programming to promote a locally-grown workforce.
- ED 4.2** Support and collaborate with the [Human Resource Development Council \(HRDC\)](#) and others to align educational offerings and workforce training with the community's existing and target industries.

Tourism

► ED GOAL 5:

Promote Lewistown as the center for local and regional tourism.

POLICIES:

- ED 5.1** Promote Lewistown as a recreational destination.
- ED 5.2** Continue to host events that attract tourists from across the State and the nation.
- ED 5.3** Maintain the appearance of Main Street and Downtown.



2.5 | NATURAL, CULTURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION

Parks, Trails, Open Space, & Recreation

► NCRR GOAL 1:

Create an integrated and quality parks, recreation, greenway, and open space system.

POLICIES:

- NCRR 1.1** Maintain adequate levels of service for open space, parks, recreational facilities, and programming.
- NCRR 1.2** Identify future funding to develop a Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan for Lewistown.
- NCRR 1.3** Explore all possible mechanisms for funding open space, park, and recreational facility land acquisitions and appropriate development.
- NCRR 1.4** Encourage the expansion of the trail system to connect rural and urban trails, parks, and public open spaces with trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrian use.

Scenic & Cultural Resources

► NCRR GOAL 2:

Preserve the City's historic, scenic, and cultural resources that make Lewistown unique and contribute to residents' high quality of life.

POLICIES:

- NCRR 2.1** Support community-based groups in their efforts to preserve historic, scenic, and cultural resources.
- NCRR 2.2** Keep "working lands" working by supporting agricultural economics and helping agricultural operations manage increasing conflicts and costs associated with increasing population.
- NCRR 2.3** Continue to support the Lewistown Chamber, the Library, the Museum, and other opportunities to provide programs that educate residents and visitors on the history and culture of Lewistown.

Water Resources

► NCRR GOAL 3:

Preserve and protect Big Spring Creek, its tributaries, and manage water resources to ensure a resilient and sustainable water supply that can support residents and ecosystems.

POLICIES:

- NCRR 3.1** Protect the water quality and quantity in Lewistown's springs, creeks, and ditches.
- NCRR 3.2** Manage wetlands and streams by using practices, tools, and methods that support natural stream and wetland form and function.

- NCRR 3.3** Create a Stream Corridor Overlay within the Zoning Code that offers incentives for properties to develop in a manner that mitigates potential impacts to waterways in accordance with MDEQ guidelines.
- NCRR 3.4** Continue to partner with and support the Big Spring Creek Watershed Council on future educational, restoration, and other improvement projects.
- NCRR 3.5** Encourage the use of native and drought tolerant landscape materials and water conserving irrigation systems.
- NCRR 3.6** Work collaboratively with property owners, [Montana Department of Environmental Quality \(MDEQ\)](#), and the Department of Natural Resources & Conservation to encourage the protection and monitoring of existing water rights.



Wildlife

► NCRR GOAL 4:

Protect and preserve critical wildlife habitat and corridors.

POLICIES:

NCRR 4.1 Work with private landowners, nonprofits, and government agencies to invest in the protection and restoration of priority wildlife habitats.

Climate & Hazards

► NCRR GOAL 5:

Promote local decisions that mitigate the effects of climate change and prepare the City and its residents for the impacts climate change will have on the human, natural, and built environments.

► NCRR GOAL 6:

Build fire and water resiliency into community planning.

POLICIES:

NCRR 6.1 Discourage development in areas deemed high risk for wildfire or flooding.

NCRR 6.2 Educate residents about the unique challenges of wildfires in the [Wildland Urban Interface](#).

► NCRR GOAL 7:

Promote the production of renewable energy.

POLICIES:

NCRR 7.1 Review regulations for infrastructure for solar and wind energy production and remove any potential barriers.

NCRR 7.2 When renovating or redeveloping City-owned buildings, consider incorporating on-site renewable energy production.



Photo courtesy of Kristine Manley, provided by Lewistown News Argus

2.6 | INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Municipal Infrastructure

► ICS GOAL 1:

Provide, maintain, and enhance public infrastructure, facilities, and services to meet the changing needs of the community.

POLICIES:

ICS 1.1 Annually prepare a Capital Improvement Plan and prioritize expenditures in areas consistent with the Goals and Policies of this Plan, and in areas where the City's residents will receive the greatest economic, social, and environmental benefits.

ICS 1.2 Ensure that new development provides its proportionate share of cost for any improvements necessary to provide infrastructure and services to the property, and consider alternative methods to finance public improvements (for example, the [TIF](#) District).

► ICS GOAL 2:

Manage water infrastructure to ensure a resilient and sustainable water supply that can support current and future residents.

POLICIES:

ICS 2.1 Direct public infrastructure investment by adopting mechanisms (regulations, agreements, etc.) to guide and encourage growth where it meets the community's vision in the Future Land Use Plan.

ICS 2.2 Encourage connection to City water services when feasible in the [Urban Services Area](#) to avoid additional individual wells. Facilitate the consolidation of existing private wells and connection to municipal water system.

ICS 2.3 Consider providing utility service outside of the [Urban Services Area](#) only when City Commission determines such extensions benefit the City's interests.

► ICS GOAL 3:

Plan for wastewater infrastructure extension to serve new developments within the [Urban Services Area](#).

POLICIES:

ICS 3.1 Encourage connection to City sewer services when feasible in the Urban Services Area to avoid additional cost-prohibitive, on-site sewage treatment systems. Facilitate the conversion of existing on-site systems to municipal sewer service.

ICS 3.2 Consider providing utility service outside of the Urban Services Area only when City Commission determines such extensions benefit the City's interests.

► ICS GOAL 4:

Promote sustainable building practices, including [low impact development](#) practices, that promote public safety and wellbeing.

POLICIES:

ICS 4.1 Develop and implement a stormwater management program.

► ICS GOAL 5:

Foster sustainable waste management.

POLICIES:

ICS 5.1 Work to increase the City's waste diversion rate.

Public Facilities

► ICS GOAL 6:

Continue to support the Lewistown Airport.

POLICIES:

ICS 6.1 Continue to leverage the Airport and [TED District](#) to attract new businesses to locate in Lewistown.

► ICS GOAL 7:

Leverage the Fergus County Fairgrounds for event recreation purposes.

POLICIES:

ICS 7.1 Expand programming options at the Fairgrounds.



Community Engagement

► ICS GOAL 8:

Foster an engaged community.

POLICIES:

- ICS 8.1** Routinely engage the community to ensure that needs and desires are understood and can be addressed.
- ICS 8.2** Offer ample opportunities for engagement during long-range planning processes.

Public Health

► ICS GOAL 9:

Support healthy and active lifestyles among residents of all ages.

POLICIES:

- ICS 9.1** Collaborate with schools, community health and wellness organizations, and the medical community to encourage active lifestyles, expand recreation options, and increase awareness about the benefits of healthy living.
- ICS 9.2** Promote health and human services and programs that strengthen and support individuals, families, and neighborhoods. Focus resources on a continuum of services and programs to assist residents with varying levels of need that address human conditions or issues before they develop into significant individual, family, and/or community issues.



3.0 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

3.1 | INTRODUCTION

3.2 | FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

3.3 | FUTURE LAND USE MAP



3.1 | INTRODUCTION

► WHY PLAN FOR LAND USE?

How and where our community grows has a major influence on how community members get around, the character of the City and its neighborhoods, natural resources, and sense of community. The Future Land Use Plan responds to the need to accommodate a growing population and the subsequent demand for additional housing, services, and employment in a manner consistent with this Plan's Guiding Principles.

The purpose of the Future Land Use Plan is to establish a framework that illustrates the desired locations and patterns for growth. While only advisory, the Future Land Use Plan is intended to be a roadmap that guides updates to the Zoning Regulations and nudges new development in a direction consistent with the community's vision for orderly, efficient, and sustainable growth in appropriate locations of the City and its [Planning Area](#).

Within this Future Land Use Plan, there are Future Land Use Designations and a Future Land Use Map. The Future Land Use Designations articulate the general character of land uses identified on the map. These designations are not regulatory, nor do they reflect specific parcel boundaries. Instead, they are intended to guide an update to the Zoning Regulations and inform development review for consistency in the location and type of growth that is desired. The Future Land Use Map serves as a tool to guide future development within the City and its Planning Area by communicating a vision about how and where the City will grow over the next 10 to 20 years.

3.2 | TIERS & DESIGNATIONS

TIER 1: Current Urbanizing Tier

Tier 1 areas are almost fully developed, centrally located areas of the City. The focus for these areas will be on infill development with associated infrastructure improvements, redevelopment of areas that need investment, economic development, and employment opportunities.



DOWNTOWN

Intent: Serve as the civic and cultural hub of Lewistown, and attract commercial and office uses, housing, and encourage a board socio-economic mix.

Permitted Uses:

- [Mixed Use](#)
- Commercial/Office
- Residential
- Civic/Public



BUILT UP NEIGHBORHOODS

Intent: Preserve existing housing stock, redevelop deteriorating structures, provide neighborhood-serving commercial uses, and promote infill development.

Permitted Uses:

- Residential (Single-family, duplexes - fourplexes)
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Civic/Public



MIXED USE CORRIDOR

Intent: Promote vertical and horizontal [mixed use](#) along major corridors to create activity centers and provide housing in close proximity to services.

Permitted Uses:

- Mixed Use
- Commercial/Office
- Multi-family Residential
- Civic/Public

TIER 1: Current Urbanizing Tier (continued)



MEDIUM COMMERCIAL

Intent: Provide employment, wholesaling, manufacturing, and utility centers

Permitted Uses:

- Commercial/Office
- Light Industrial
- Manufacturing
- Civic/Public



AIRPORT

Intent: Preserve the Lewistown Airport and promote commercial development where practicable, while providing for employment and education opportunities.

Permitted Uses:

- Commercial/Office
- Light Industrial
- Manufacturing
- Civic/Public

TIER 2: Planned Urbanizing Tier

Tier 2 areas are either adjacent to the City limits or areas likely to see growth, most of which are in the unincorporated [Planning Area](#), where City services are already available or are easily extended.



URBAN RESIDENTIAL

Intent: Extend the urban street network and development pattern of Lewistown's older neighborhoods to create walkable residential areas.

Permitted Uses:

- Residential (Single-family, duplexes - fourplexes, Multi-family conditional)
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Civic/Public



SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

Intent: Provide single-family homes at a lower density while strongly encouraging [conservation subdivision design](#).

Permitted Uses:

- Residential (Single-family, duplexes)
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Civic/Public



RURAL RESIDENTIAL NODE

Intent: Acknowledge a large-lot, low density residential development pattern that is unlikely to see increased density or connection to City services.

Permitted Uses:

- Residential (Single-family)
- Agricultural

TIER 3: Future Urbanizing Tier

Tier 3 areas are holding areas to see little to no change in use until Tier 1 and Tier 2 growth areas reach build-out.



URBAN RESERVE

Intent: Provide high-quality development in proximity to urban services, if justified by population growth.

TIER 4: Rural

Tier 4 areas provide homes on larger tracts of land where agricultural (and/or associated) activities can occur and preserve the rural character of Lewistown.

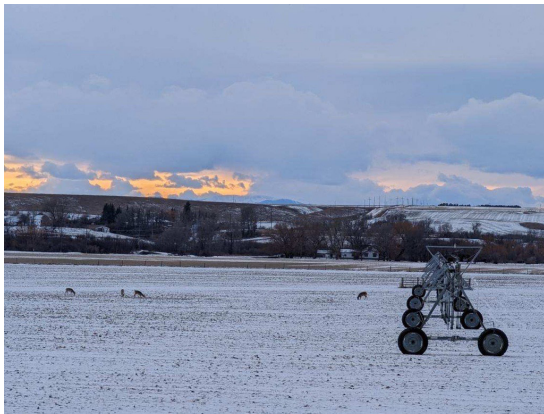


RURAL RESIDENTIAL

Intent: No change in use is envisioned.

TIER 5: Environmental / Conservation

Tier 5 areas are lands that are designated to protect agricultural operations, rangelands, and forests within Lewistown's Planning Area.



AGRICULTURAL LAND/RANGELAND/ FORESTLAND

Intent: Provide for agricultural production, protect forests, and provide wildlife habitat.



STREAM/CREEK OVERLAY

Intent: Protect waterways from the impacts of development. Functions as an Overlay District.

URBAN SERVICES AREA

The [Urban Services Area](#), as shown on the [Future Land Use Map](#), is the area outside of which urban services (water and wastewater) should only be extended if it is determined to benefit the City of Lewistown. The purpose is to ensure the City of Lewistown remains fiscally sustainable and is able to maintain the levels of service that are expected from the community.

FUTURE LAND USE TABLE

Future Land Use Tier	Future Land Use Designation	Intent	Permitted Uses	Envisioned Density Range	Acres Designated
Tier 1: Current Urbanizing	 Downtown	Serve as the civic and cultural hub of Lewistown, and attract commercial and office uses, housing, and encourage a board socio-economic mix.	Mixed Use, Commercial/Office, Residential, Civic/Public	10 - 30 units per acre	City: 112 acres (3.5%) Planning Area: 112 acres (0.2%)
	 Built Up Neighborhoods	Preserve existing housing stock, redevelop deteriorating structures, provide neighborhood-serving commercial uses, and promote infill development.	Residential (1-4 units), Neighborhood Commercial, Civic/Public	6 - 15 units per acre	City: 680 acres (21%) Planning Area: 688 acres (1.4%)
	 Mixed Use Corridor	Promote vertical and horizontal mixed use along major corridors to create activity centers and provide housing in close proximity to services.	Mixed Use, Commercial/ Office, Multi-family Residential, Civic/ Public	Up to 27 units per acre	Calculated in underlying designation
	 Medium Commercial	Provide employment, wholesaling, manufacturing, and utility centers.	Commercial/Office, Manufacturing, Light Industrial, Civic/Public	Up to 27 units per acre	City: 156 acres (4.8%) Planning Area: 1,703 acres (3.4%)
	 Airport	Preserve the Lewistown Airport and promote commercial development where practicable, while providing for employment and education opportunities.	Commercial, Manufacturing, Light Industrial, Civic/Public	N/A	City: 1,900 acres (58.6%), Planning Area: 1,900 acres (3.8%)
Tier 2: Planned Urbanizing Tier	 Urban Residential	Extend the urban street network and development pattern of Lewistown's older neighborhoods to create walkable residential areas.	Residential (1-4 units, conditionally more), Neighborhood Commercial, Mixed Use, Civic/Public	10 - 15 units per acre	City: 269 acres (8.3%) Planning Area: 1,716 acres (3.4%)
	 Suburban Residential	Provide single-family homes at a lower density while strongly encouraging conservation subdivision design .	Residential (1-2 units, conditionally more), Neighborhood Commercial, Civic/Public	4 - 10 units per acre	City: 2.4 acres (0.1%) Planning Area: 4,283 acres (8.5%)
	 Rural Residential Node	Acknowledge a large-lot, low density residential development pattern that is unlikely to see increased density or connection to City services.	Residential (1 unit), Agricultural	Up to 1 unit per acre	City: 0 acres Planning Area: 1,896 acres (3.8%)

Future Land Use Tier	Future Land Use Designation	Intent	Permitted Uses	Envisioned Density Range	Acres Designated
Tier 3: Future Urbanizing Tier	 Urban Reserve	Provide high-quality development in proximity to urban services, if justified by population growth.	TBD	TBD	City: 0 acres Planning Area: 4,004 acres (8.0%)
Tier 4: Rural	 Rural Residential	No change in use is envisioned.	Residential (1 unit), Agricultural	Up to 1 unit per acre	City: 0 acres Planning Area: 4,776 acres (9.5%)
Tier 5: Environmental / Conservation	 Agricultural land / Rangeland / Forestland	Provide for agricultural production, protect forests, and provide wildlife habitat.	Agricultural, Recreation	N/A	City: 123 acres (3.8%) Planning Area: 24,547 acres (48.8%)
	 Stream / Creek Overlay	Protect waterways from the impacts of development.	Agricultural, Recreation	N/A	Calculated in underlying designation

3.3 | FUTURE LAND USE MAP

► HOW IT SHOULD BE USED

The Future Land Use Map represents the desired future land use and character of Lewistown and its Planning Area, and is intended to inform the development of future zoning districts and code revisions. The map shows areas of the Planning Area where existing conditions are unlikely to change and areas where infill and expansion of suburban and urban growth will occur based on:

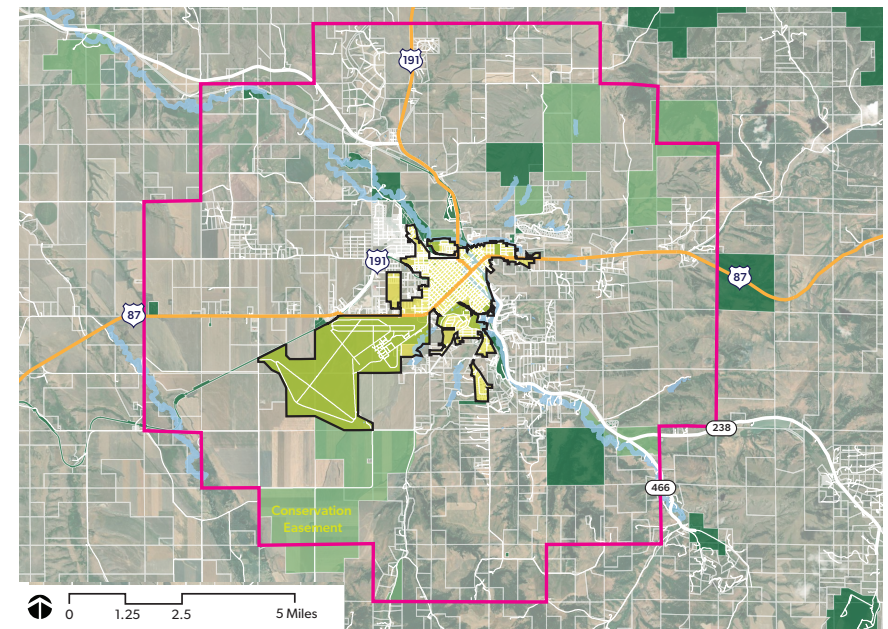
- Proximity to a municipal planned growth area
- Presence and capacity of existing water and sanitation infrastructure
- Location on or near a major road or transportation network
- Character and intensity of surrounding or proposed development
- Location relative to natural resource constraints including natural hazards, waterways, high fire risk zones, wildlife habitat, conservation areas, and scenic resources
- Real estate market conditions.

► LEWISTOWN PLANNING AREA

Montana State Law allows cities and towns to exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction. In Lewistown, the extraterritorial area or “[Planning Area](#)” was established in 1965, and has not been modified since its establishment (see Figure 8). Until the initiation of this planning effort, there has not been intentional coordination of land use and subdivision regulation between Fergus County and the City in the Planning Area.

It is the intention of this Plan to significantly increase coordination as development patterns and land uses in the Planning Area influence both the City and County. The Future Land Use Map on the following page guides the use and character of properties within the Planning Area to ensure that growth is orderly, sustainable, and that cherished agricultural and natural lands are protected.

Figure 8: Lewistown’s Planning Area



Lewistown Planning Area Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

Adopted 8-14-24

City Boundary

Planning Area

Urban Services Area

Tier 1: Current Urbanizing Tier

Downtown

Built Up Neighborhoods

Medium Commercial

Airport

Mixed Use Corridor

Tier 2: Planned Urbanizing Tier

Urban Residential

Suburban Residential

Rural Residential Node

Tier 3: Future Urbanizing Tier

Urban Reserve

Tier 4: Rural

Rural Residential

Tier 5: Environmental, Conservation, Open Space

Agricultural land / Rangeland / Forestland

Stream / Creek Overlay

Conservation Easement

Agricultural Covenant

Figure 9: Lewistown Planning Area Future Land Use Map

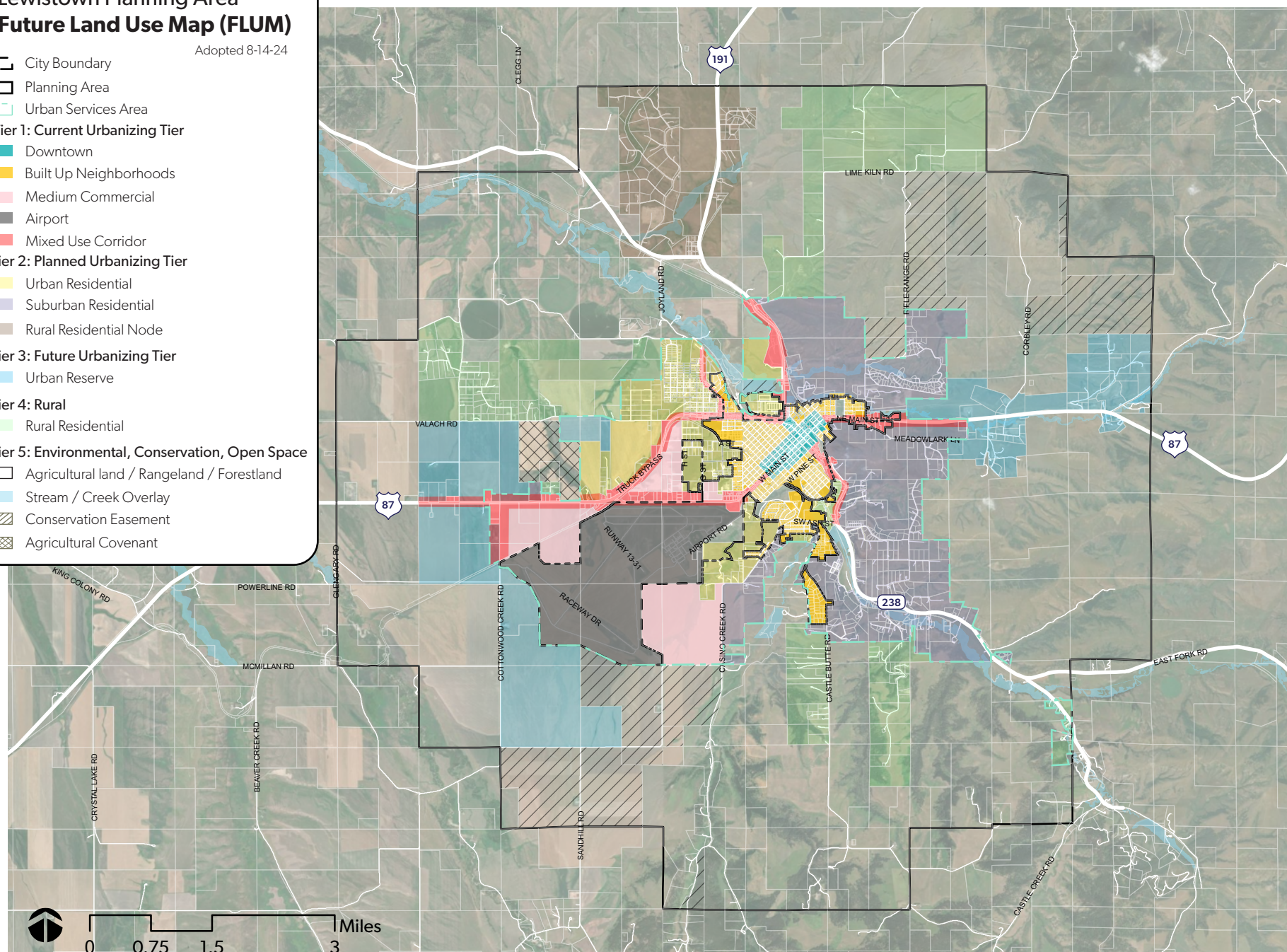
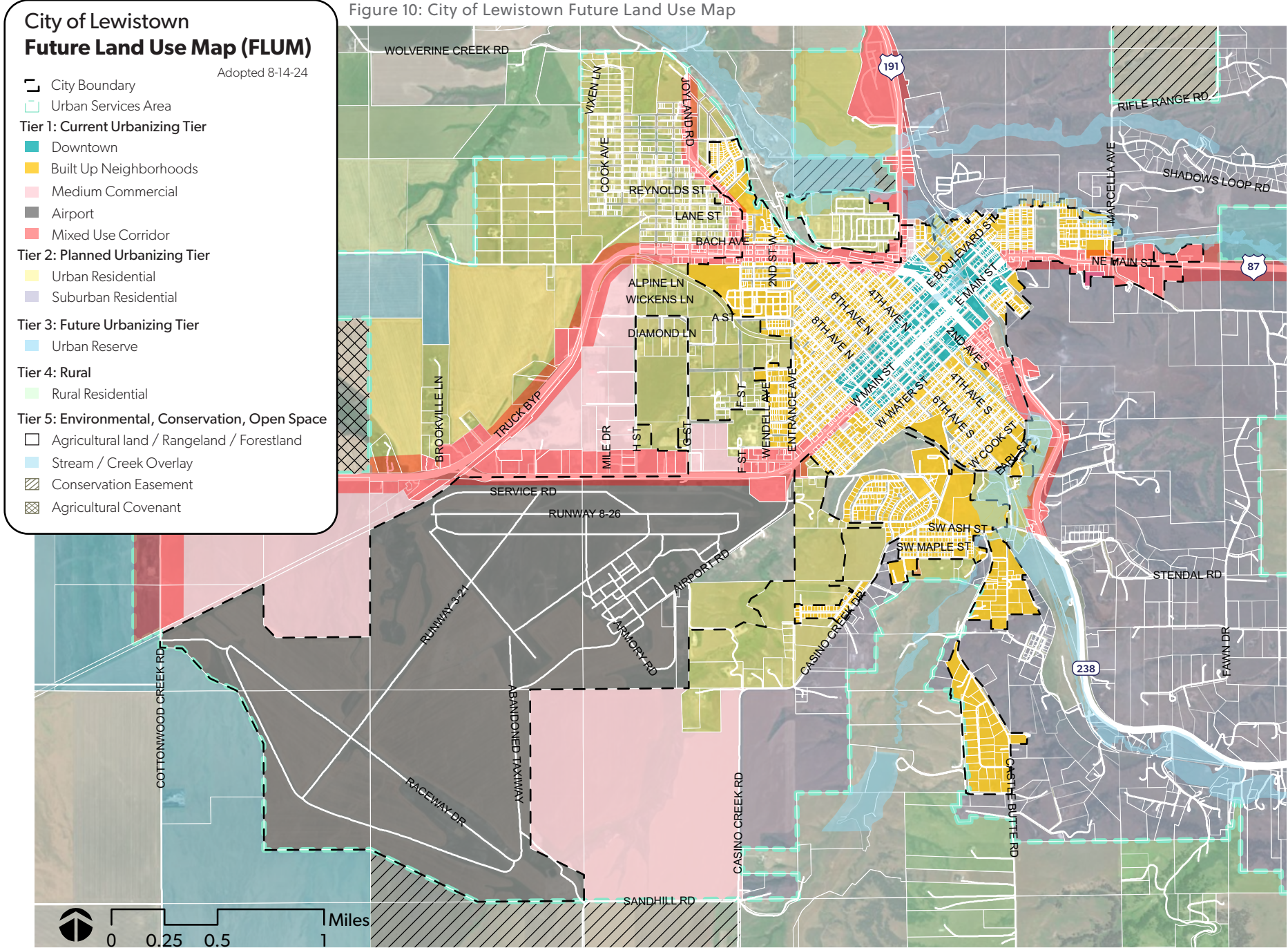


Figure 10: City of Lewistown Future Land Use Map



4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 | FRAMEWORK

4.2 | IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

4.2 | PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & ADMINISTRATION

4.1 | FRAMEWORK

This chapter will serve as a roadmap for Lewistown staff, leadership, and partner organizations to implement the 2024 Lewistown Plan's Goals and Policies. Actions outlined within this chapter are assigned responsible parties, whose duty it is to initiate the action. Actions are also assigned a priority, following this framework:

Action Priority Levels:

HIGH = 0-3 years to implement

Staff and funding resources are either available or can be procured; and/or this Action gained high levels of community support, deeming it a high priority.

MEDIUM = 3-6 years to implement

Staff and resources are likely to be found, but are not readily available to implement this Action; and/or this Action gained medium levels of community support deeming it a medium priority.

LOW = 6+ years to implement

Given available staff and funding resources, and/or this Action gained lower levels of community support deeming it a lower priority than others.

Ongoing - Some Actions will be ongoing in nature. These are marked with an asterisk () to signify that they are not expected to be completed within the lifetime of this Plan.

Finally, some Actions have potential funding sources, understanding that the City of Lewistown has limited resources and may need to look outside the municipal budget at grants or partnership opportunities to aid in the Action's implementation.

4.2 | IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

LAND USE & GROWTH					
CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Distinct Neighborhoods	LUG 1.1	Create distinct and unique places with smooth transitions between neighborhoods and/or districts.			
	LUG 1.1A	Designate seven, unique Neighborhood Commercial Centers (North, East, West, Downtown, Central Corridor, Gateway, Airport).	Planning Department, Planning Commission	Medium	
	LUG 1.1B	Establish standards for development and structures within each of the seven Neighborhood Centers that encourage efficient, mixed-use infill to serve existing and future neighborhoods. Careful placement and design of structures and parking affords visual access to the surrounding mountains and other vistas, pedestrian and bicycle access to and within them, and efficient residential housing options. Encourage pedestrian-oriented site design while recognizing the needs of automobile travel in a rural community.	Planning Department, Planning Commission	Medium*	
Open Space	LUG 1.5	Preserve agricultural lands that surround the City that act as open space transitions between City and Country.			
	1.5A	Consider acquiring or trading (in a tax-neutral manner) property for open space.	Parks & Recreation Dept, Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High*	Conservation Easements, Trust for Public Lands
Downtown	LUG 3.2	Enhance the visual appearance and sense of place of Downtown Lewistown.			
	LUG 3.2A	As properties redevelop, where feasible, require dedicated public space, tree planting, and parking.	Planning Dept, Public Works, Planning Commission	Medium*	Trust for Public Lands
	LUG 3.2B	Consider a Business Improvement District for streetscape maintenance.	Planning Dept, Downtown Association, Planning Commission, City Commission	Medium*	Business Improvement District assessments and loans

LAND USE & GROWTH

CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Downtown	LUG 3.3	Preserve the historic character of Downtown.			
	LUG 3.3A	Provide incentives for the adaptive reuse of buildings of historic or cultural significance to Lewistown. This could include tax incentives, financial assistance (i.e. rehabilitation grants or loans), regulatory relief (like parking requirements), zoning incentives, technical assistance, TIF grants, or revolving loan funds.	Planning Dept, Planning Commission, Historic Resource Commission, SHPO, Snowy Mtn Development	High*	TIF , Business Improvement District assessments & loans
	LUG 3.3B	Improve Main Street infrastructure to seamlessly and visually connect the five Historic Districts in Lewistown.	Planning Dept, Public Works, DOT	Medium*	TIF , Montana Main Street Program Grants , MT Coal Endowment
	LUG 3.4	Provide parks and public spaces Downtown to provide connections to nature and areas for the community to gather.			
	LUG 3.4A	Develop Big Spring Creek/Mill Ditch from Brassey Street to Boulevard Street be a publicly accessible feature and green space.	Planning Dept, Public Works, Planning Commission, City Commission, FWP, Lewistown Downtown Assoc.	Low*	Land & Water Conservation Fund , Local Assistance Program
	LUG 3.5	Encourage the development of quality living opportunities Downtown.			
	LUG 3.5A	Create a program for property owners in the Downtown with vacant second stories to identify funding for renovations to create space for uses that increase the vitality of downtown. Assistance can also be utilized for residential additions.	Planning Dept, Public Works, Planning Commission, City Commission, DOT, Lewistown Downtown Assoc.	High*	TIF , Montana Main Street Program Grants
	LUG 4.1	Improve sidewalk connectivity Downtown.			
	LUG 4.1A	Identify available funding to complete high-priority gaps in the sidewalk network within the Urban Renewal Area .	Planning Dept, Public Works, City Manager, Planning Commission	Medium*	TIF , MDT Transportation Alternatives Program , Business Improvement District assessments & loans

LAND USE & GROWTH

CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Downtown	LUG 4.2	Provide for a “park once” experience to reduce vehicular circling and promote walking downtown.			
	LUG 4.2A	As new development opportunities arise, evaluate the potential to create a new joint-use parking structure at a key location for public and private use.	Planning Dept, Public Works, Planning Commission, City Commission	Medium*	Business Improvement District assessments & loans, Montana Main Street Program Grants
	LUG 4.2B	Identify side streets and underutilized properties for potential parking solutions.	Planning Dept, Public Works, Planning Commission, City Commission	High*	Business Improvement District assessments & loans, Montana Main Street Program Grants
Growth	LUG 5.1	Concentrate growth in areas that can be served by infrastructure in an efficient and fiscally responsible manner.			
	LUG 5.1A	Establish an Urban Service Area for future annexation and to delineate where public services will be provided and to separate urban and rural land uses. Extension of services to the Urban Residential and Suburban Residential designated areas on the Future Land Use Map shall only occur when it is demonstrated that extension will not negatively impact the maintenance and repair of services within the City.	Planning Dept, Public Works, Planning Commission, City Commission	Medium	
	LUG 5.1B	Develop a Service Plan for potential annexation and service extension areas that discourages leapfrog development, costly extension of roads, dead-end streets, and fiscal impacts to the City. See Policy ICS 2.1 when considering leapfrog development proposals.	Planning Dept, Public Works, Planning Commission, City Commission	Medium	MT Coal Endowment Program
	LUG 5.1C	Encourage Fergus County and DEQ to create an infrastructure and neighborhood plan for the Heights to address issues of environmental quality.	Fergus County, MT DEQ, Planning Commission	Medium	CDBG Public and Community Facility Grants, State-Local Infrastructure Partnership Act
	LUG 5.1D	Update the Zoning Code to allow for higher density infill and redevelopment Downtown and along Mixed Use Corridors.	Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High	CDBG Planning Grants
	LUG 5.2	Encourage conservation subdivision design in new subdivisions.			
	LUG 5.2A	Update the Zoning Code to require conservation subdivision design in the Suburban Residential and Urban Residential districts, to allow for transferring density with a dedication of open space or parkland.	Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High	CDBG Planning Grants

LAND USE & GROWTH

CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Zoning	LUG 5.3	Protect agricultural lands, forests, and open space through zoning.			
	LUG 5.3A	Establish an Agricultural land use designation with protections.	Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	Medium	
	LUG 6.1	Zone land for residential, commercial, and industrial uses to accommodate projected population growth.			
	LUG 6.1A	Establish pre-zoning in the Planning Area on properties that may one day be annexed into the City to regulate growth.	Planning Dept, Fergus County, Planning Commission, City Commission	Medium	CDBG Planning Grants
	LUG 6.1B	Modify the Zoning Code to allow for more efficiency in residential neighborhoods and provide more diversity in housing types while aligning with existing covenants .	Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High*	CDBG Planning Grants
	LUG 6.1C	Identify and zone more land for industrial and manufacturing use to encourage the location of new industry in Lewistown.	Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High	
Annexation	LUG 6.3	Identify lands for future annexation.			
	LUG 6.3A	Develop an Annexation Policy that clearly defines the criteria for annexation.	Planning Dept, Fergus County, Planning Commission, City Commission	High	
Commercial	LUG 6.4	Encourage the rehabilitation of underutilized strip commercial areas and single use commercial centers as opportunities arise.			
	LUG 6.4A	Update the Zoning Code to allow for vertical and horizontal mixed use along Mixed Use Corridors.	Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High*	CDBG Planning Grants
Growth Regulations	LUG 7.2	Reduce red tape, eliminate conflict, duplication, and inconsistencies in the City code regarding growth and development.			
	LUG 7.2A	Fully align growth policies with zoning and subdivision criteria to enable administrative review and streamlining of development proposals.	Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High*	
	LUG 7.2B	Consolidate the Board of Adjustments and the Zoning Board into a new Planning Commission.	Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High*	
	LUG 7.2C	Update the Subdivision Regulations to reflect changes from the Montana Land Use Planning Act and to be consistent with the policies within this plan.	Planning Dept, Fergus County, Planning Commission, City Commission	High*	

HOUSING & CHILDCARE

CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Housing Diversity	HC 1.1	Provide for a variety of housing types in existing neighborhoods.			
	HC 1.1A	Update the Zoning Regulations to allow for more duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes housing in existing neighborhoods with respect for existing covenants .	Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High	CDBG Planning Grants
	HC 1.1B	Expand the supply of homes in the City that are accessible to seniors and persons with disabilities using universal design principles in the construction of new housing and the rehabilitation of existing homes.	Planning Dept, HRDC	Medium*	HOME Program Grants , CDBG Housing Grants
Affordable Housing	HC 1.2	Support new affordable housing development that is located near childcare, health services, and grocery stores.			
	HC 1.2A	Review development regulations and identify and remove regulatory barriers to affordable housing development.	Plannnig Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High	
	HC 1.2B	Provide incentives for the development of affordable housing in the Zoning Regulations.	Plannnig Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High	
	HC 1.2C	Develop standards for infill and affordable housing that considers reduced parking requirements, vehicle trip generation, levels of service, neighborhood character, and overall livability.	Plannnig Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High	
	HC 1.2D	Reduce setbacks and increase building height standards in residential zone districts to allow for higher densities as specified in the Montana Land Use Planning Act.	Plannnig Dept, Building Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	High	
	HC 1.4	Consider the formation of a Regional Housing Authority to facilitate the development of affordable housing.			
	HC 1.4A	Create a dedicated housing fund to be used to support the Housing Authority's affordable housing programs.	Planning Dept, Fergus County, neighboring jurisdictions, Planning Commission, City Commission	Low	MT Dept of Commerce Housing Trust Fund , CDBG Housing Grants
	HC 1.4B	Seek public/private partnership opportunities to support the construction of more permanently affordable homes.	Plannnig Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission, HRDC	Low*	MT Dept of Commerce Housing Trust Fund , CDBG Housing Grants , LIHTC

HOUSING & CHILDCARE

CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Existing Housing	HC 2.1	Preserve, improve, and rehabilitate the existing housing supply.			
	HC 2.1A	Seek out grants and other funding sources to provide financial assistance to homeowners for rehabilitation.	Planning Dept, HRDC, Planning Commission	Medium*	MT Dept of Commerce Housing Trust Fund , CDBG Housing Grants , PRICE Grants
Rental Housing	HC 2.2	Preserve long-term rental housing.			
	HC 2.2A	If short-term rental lodging expands in Lewistown and negatively impacts the availability of long-term rental housing, consider a short-term rental lodging tax to contribute to affordable housing funds.	Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	Medium	Potential revenues from a future Lodging Tax
	HC 2.2B	Collaborate with local and regional partners on programs and resources to help residents stay in their homes, whether owned or rented, to avoid eviction and displacement.	Planning Dept, Fergus County, neighboring jurisdictions, Planning Commission, City Commission	Low*	HRDC Homeowner Assistance Programs , Rental Assistance Program
Childcare	HC 3.1	Provide affordable childcare and after school programming to support working families.			
	HC 3.1A	Support the Central Montana Childcare Alliance's goals of expanding childcare access by addressing facilities needs.	Planning Department, Montana Childcare Alliance, Planning Commission	Medium*	
	HC 3.1B	Amend the Zoning Regulations to remove obstacles to the provision of childcare facilities in all Zone Districts in locations that are appropriate and safe for children	Planning Department, Montana Childcare Alliance, Planning Commission, City Commission	High	
	HC 3.1C	Work with the School District to identify opportunities to build subsidized employee housing on land owned by the District to attract and retain teachers and staff.	Planning Dept, School District(s)	Medium*	
	HC 3.1D	Work with the School District to identify opportunities to provide space for on-site childcare operations.	Planning Dept, School District(s)	Medium*	

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Bike & Pedestrian Connectivity	TM 1.1	Provide bicycle and pedestrian connections between residential areas, major activity centers, and recreational opportunities.			
	TM 1.1A	Work with MDT to identify funding for on-street bike lanes on priority State highways that have a wide enough shoulder to accommodate the bike lane and a buffer zone.	Public Works, MDT	Medium*	MDT Transportation Alternatives Program , FHA Complete Streets Funding Sources
	TM 1.1B	Identify and address gaps in the current pedestrian and bicycle system and barriers to walking and biking for varying user groups.	Public Works, Planning Dept	High	MDT Transportation Alternatives Program , Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program
	TM 1.1C	Identify priority routes for cyclists (low-stress streets) and use signage and wayfinding to direct cyclists to these routes and sharrows to alert drivers.	Public Works, Planning Dept	Medium	MDT Transportation Alternatives Program , Safe Streets & Roads for All Grants
Regional Mobility Planning	TM 1.2	Address mobility at a regional scale.			
	TM 1.2A	Seek funding to develop a Regional Transportation Master Plan.	Planning Dept, Public Works, Fergus County, neighboring jurisdictions, Planning Commission	High	FHA Complete Streets Funding Sources , Reconnecting Communities Grants
Downtown Mobility	TM 1.3	Ensure Downtown is pedestrian and bicycle-friendly.			
	TM 1.3A	Adopt a Complete Streets policy to encourage alternative modes of travel.	Public Works, Planning Dept, Planning Commission, City Commission	Medium	FHA Complete Streets Funding Sources
	TM 1.3B	Identify and address sidewalk gaps and needs for pedestrian crossings Downtown.	Public Works, Planning Dept, Downtown Association	Medium	MDT Transportation Alternatives Program , Montana Main Street Program Grants
	TM 1.3C	Identify funding sources to provide artful bicycle parking Downtown that can also enhance the sense of place.	Public Works, Planning Dept, Downtown Association	Medium	MDT Transportation Alternatives Program , Montana Main Street Program Grants

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Business Attraction	ED 1.1	Create new or utilize existing incentives for new businesses and industries to locate in Lewistown, particularly those with higher paying jobs.			
	ED 1.1A	Promote the TED District and available resources for new businesses.	Planning Dept, Airport Board, Planning Commission	Medium*	Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program grants , MT Coal Endowment Program
	ED 1.1B	Support efforts to expand broadband and other utility infrastructure.	City Manager, City Commission	High	See ED 1.1A sources
Small Business Resources	ED 2.1	Work with local and regional partners to connect small businesses to resources available to support their creation and growth.			
	ED 2.1A	Partner with Snowy Mountain Development or others to create a program to provide affordable spaces for small businesses in the community.	Planning Dept, Snowy Mountain Development, Chamber of Commerce	Medium*	
	ED 2.1B	Explore ways to offer opportunities for local food production.	Planning Dept, Fergus County Public Health	Medium*	
Economic Growth	ED 2.2	Encourage the creation of new businesses and growth of small businesses and ensure there are ample building sites/commercial spaces for these businesses to start and grow.			
	ED 2.2A	Plan for and invest in public and private spaces in the URA and TED Districts that facilitate the interaction of local businesses, workers, and residents.	Planning Dept, City Manager, Planning Commission	Low*	TIF
	ED 2.2B	Collaborate with the private sector in establishing an environment for nurturing small and start-up businesses.	Snowy Mountain Development, Chamber of Commerce	Low*	Accelerate Montana , Montana Comeback Plan

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Post-secondary Education	ED 4.1	Expand post-secondary educational opportunities including community colleges, vocational, and trade school programming to promote a locally-grown workforce.			
	ED 4.1A	Work with higher education institutions on the potential to create a satellite branch of a community college in Lewistown.	Planning Dept, School District, Planning Commission, City Commission, eligible higher ed institutions	Medium*	CDBG Economic Development Grants
	ED 4.1B	Explore grants or programs to expand vocational and technical training programs at the high school level.	Planning Dept, School District	Medium*	Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program
Recreation	ED 5.1	Promote Lewistown as a recreational destination.			
	ED 5.1A	Increase promotion that supports recreation industries.	Parks & Recreation Dept, Chamber of Commerce	Medium*	MT Dept of Commerce Tourism Grant Program
Events	ED 5.2	Continue to host events that attract tourists from across the State and the nation.			
	ED 5.2A	Work with the County to further develop the Fergus County Fairgrounds into a year-round event and recreation complex.	Parks & Recreation Dept, Fergus County	Medium*	See ED 5.1A sources
Main Street Appearance	ED 5.3	Maintain the appearance of Main Street and Downtown.			
	ED 5.3A	Update the 2006 Downtown Plan to include a comprehensive parking strategy and wayfinding plan.	Planning Dept, Downtown Association, Public Works, Planning Commission, City Commission	Medium	CDBG Planning Grants , Montana Main Street Program Grants

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION

CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Parks, Open Space, & Recreation	NCRR 1.1	Maintain adequate levels of service for open space, parks, and recreational facilities and programming.			
	NCRR 1.1A	Regularly review conditions of existing park facilities to identify necessary improvements, replacements, and expansions over time reflective of recreational priorities.	Parks & Recreation Dept	Medium*	Land & Water Conservation Fund Local Assistance Program, MT Coal Endowment Program
	NCRR 1.2	Identify future funding to develop a Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan for Lewistown.			
	NCRR 1.2A	Identify gaps in the park and recreational assets in Lewistown and develop strategies and funding mechanisms to fill them.	Parks & Recreation Dept, Planning Commission	Medium*	Land & Water Conservation Fund Recreation Grants, MT Coal Endowment Program
	NCRR 1.3	Explore all possible mechanisms for funding open space, park, and recreational facility land acquisitions and appropriate development.			
	NCRR 1.3A	Evaluate the City's public land dedication standards and update them as necessary to ensure future development is providing for both parks and open space needs.	Planning Dept, Public Works, Planning Commission	High	DNRC grants & loans
	NCRR 1.3B	Encourage an open space buffer adjacent to the City on lands designated Agriculture/Range/Forest on the FLUM.	Planning Dept, Planning Commission	High	DNRC grants & loans
Trails	NCRR 1.4	Encourage the expansion of the trail system to connect rural and urban trails, parks, and public open spaces with trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrian use.			
	NCRR 1.4A	As part of the development review process, identify trail connection priorities within the Planning Area.	Planning Dept, Parks & Recreation Dept, Planning Commission	Medium	MT FWP Recreational Trails Program Grants
Agricultural Lands	NCRR 2.2	Keep "working lands" working by supporting agricultural economics and helping agricultural operations manage increasing conflicts and costs associated with increasing population.			
	NCRR 2.2A	Collaborate with landowners and Fergus County to promote the preservation of working farms and agricultural lands.	Planning Dept, Fergus County, landowners, Planning Commission	Medium*	USDA Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, IRA funding

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION

CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Water Quality	NCRR 3.1	Protect the water quality and quantity in Lewistown's springs, creeks, and ditches.			
	NCRR 3.1A	Develop a stormwater management plan that employs green infrastructure techniques.	Public Works	High	IRA funding
	NCRR 3.1B	Study pollutant loading of all streams and wetlands to identify any source and non-point sources of pollution to the water bodies throughout Lewistown and the Planning Area. The study shall identify priorities for pollutant prevention and clean up, including from and within existing cleanup sites.	Planning Dept, Montana DEQ, Big Spring Creek Watershed Council, Fergus County, Sanitarian, DNRC	Medium	MT DEQ Water Quality Grants , EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund
	NCRR 3.1C	Revisit the feasibility of the Stream Restoration Feasibility Study: Reviving Big Spring Creek in Downtown Lewistown, Montana, July 2003.	Planning Dept, Montana DEQ, Big Spring Creek Watershed Council, Fergus County, Sanitarian, DNRC	Low	IRA funding
	NCRR 3.1D	Identify potential funding sources to aid property owners in maintaining and improving creek frontage (such as bank stabilization, aesthetics, habitat).	Planning Dept, Montana DEQ, Big Spring Creek Watershed Council	Medium	IRA funding
Wetlands	NCRR 3.2	Manage wetlands and streams by using practices, tools, and methods that support natural stream and wetland form and function.			
	NCRR 3.2A	Protect vegetation that enhances infiltration of precipitation for groundwater recharge and erosion prevention.	Planning Dept, Montana DEQ, Big Spring Creek Watershed Council, MSU Extension, Fergus Co. Conservation, District	Low	Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust , EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund
Landscape Materials	NCRR 5.5	Encourage the use of native and drought tolerant landscape materials and water conserving irrigation systems.			
	NCRR 5.5A	Consider use of untreated water and grey water for irrigation.	Public Works	Medium	EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund
Wildlife Habitat	NCRR 4.1	Protect and preserve critical wildlife habitat and corridors.			
	NCRR 4.1A	Work with private landowners, nonprofits, and government agencies to invest in the protection and restoration of priority wildlife habitats.	Planning Dept, Montana Fish & Wildlife, landowners, Conservation District, MSU Extension	Low	Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust , National Wildlife Foundation grants

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION

CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Wildfire/Flooding	NCRR 6.1	Discourage development in areas deemed high risk for wildfire or flooding.			
	NCRR 6.1A	When reviewing subdivision applications, consult the Wildland Urban Interface map.	Planning Dept, Building Dept, DES	Medium	Permit review fees, International Wildland-Urban Interface Code
	NCRR 6.1B	Continue to restrict development in the 100-year floodplain such that no structure is located, constructed, extended, converted, or altered without full compliance with Lewistown and/or Fergus County floodplain standards and regulations.	Planning Dept, Building Dept, Fergus County	Medium	Montana Watershed Coordination Council , FEMA FIRM Program
	NCRR 6.2	Educate residents about the unique challenges of wildfires in the Wildland Urban Interface			
	NCRR 6.2A	Encourage homeowners to use their own best practices to reduce the spread of fires by creating defensible space and by reducing structural ignitability.	Building Dept, Fergus County, DES	Medium	Department of Interior Wildfire Management - Preparedness

INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

CATEGORY	#	POLICY / ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PRIORITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Capital Improvements	ICS 1.1	Annually prepare a Capital Improvement Program and prioritize expenditures in areas consistent with the goals and policies of this Plan, and in areas where the City's residents will receive the greatest economic, social, and environmental benefits.			
	ICS 1.1A	Budget funding for the maintenance and operation of public improvements consistent with the City's budget priorities.	Public Works, City Manager, City Commission	High	
Water Service	ICS 2.2	Encourage connection to City water services when feasible in the Urban Services Area to avoid additional individual wells. Facilitate the abandonment of existing private wells and connection to municipal water system.			
	ICS 2.2A	Develop and implement programs to help property owners pay for conversion to public water service.	Public Works, Planning Dept, City Manager	High	State-Local Infrastructure Partnership Act, MT Coal Endowment
Sewer Service	ICS 3.1	Encourage connection to City sewer services when feasible in the Urban Services Area to avoid additional on-site sewage treatment systems. Facilitate the conversion of existing on-site systems to municipal sewer service.			
	ICS 3.1A	Develop and implement programs to help property owners pay for conversion to public sewer service.	Public Works, Planning Dept, City Manager, DEQ, DNRC, Sanitarian	High	State-Local Infrastructure Partnership Act, MT Coal Endowment
Waste	ICS 5.1	Work to increase the City's waste diversion rate.			
	ICS 5.1A	Develop and implement a comprehensive solid waste disposal plan for the planning area that encourages recycling and includes a public education campaign.	Public Works, Planning Dept, City Manager, Fergus County, ROWL, DEQ, Snowy Mtn Industries	Medium	Delivering Local Assistance Program
	ICS 5.1B	Work with area farmers to investigate the potential for a City-wide composting program.	Public Works	Medium	DNRC grants & loans
Community Engagement	ICS 8.1	Routinely engage the community to ensure that needs and desires are understood and can be addressed.			
	ICS 8.1A	Timely disseminate documents used to develop, support, and implement the plan; provide multiple opportunities for public comment; hold public meetings and hearings; provide electronic communication and access; and analyze and respond to public comments.	Planning Dept, City Manager, City Commission	High	
	ICS 8.1B	Consider creating an engagement website for all City efforts.	City Manager, City Commission	High	

4.3 | PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & ADMINISTRATION

► HOUSING

This plan addresses the minimum of five housing policies required by the Montana Land Use Planning Act. The following six strategies shall be implemented in addition to the City's existing Zoning designations (Two-Family, Multiple-Family, and Mobile Home Zoning Districts) that place higher-density housing near and within places of employment and population centers, and areas in which higher-density housing will preserve, protect, and restore natural resources:

1. Zone for higher-density housing near transit stations, places of employment, higher education facilities, and other appropriate population centers, as determined by the local government;
2. Eliminate or reduce off-street parking requirements to require no more than one parking space per dwelling unit;
3. Eliminate aesthetic, material, shape, bulk, size, floor area, and other massing requirements for multi-unit dwellings or mixed-use developments or remove at least half of those requirements
4. Allow multi-unit dwellings or mixed-use development as a permitted use on all lots where office, retail, or commercial are primary permitted uses; or

5. Allow multi-unit dwellings as permitted uses on all lots where triplexes or fourplexes are permitted uses.
6. Increase building height limits for dwelling units by at least 25%, not to exceed capacity of current fire department equipment.

► DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

The following administrative updates are aimed at making development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective:

1. Reduce red tape; eliminate conflict, duplication, and inconsistencies in the Zoning Regulations regarding growth and development.
2. Require developers to comply with the City's Zoning Regulations, Subdivision Regulations, Floodplain Regulations, and Design Standards.
3. Fully align the zoning and subdivision criteria with this Plan's policies to enable administrative review and streamlining of development proposals.
4. Consolidate the Board of Adjustments and the Zoning Commission into a new Planning Commission.

5. Development permitting should rely on the data, information, and analysis used to inform the policies in this Plan, its amendments, and contemporary information.
6. The Future Land Use Map of this plan shall be one of the primary guiding documents in administering growth and development inside the corporate limits of the City and the surrounding designated [Planning Area](#).
7. The Zoning Regulations and Map shall be updated to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map and Policies of the 2024 Lewistown Plan after its adoption.
8. The Subdivision Regulations shall be updated to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map and Policies of the 2024 Lewistown Plan after its adoption.
9. Administrative review of development proposals and an appeal process shall be included in the 2024 Lewistown Plan.

▶ PLANNING COMMISSION

A Planning Commission shall be established comprised of five citizens. The City Commission shall appoint the Planning Commission members for a five-year term each. There shall be no limit to the number of five-year terms a member of the Planning Commission can serve, hereby titled, Planning Commissioners. The Planning Commissioners may be made up of: one resident that lives within the corporate limits of the City, one resident from the [Planning Area](#) (outside City limits), one at-large Commissioner, and one representative each from the City Commission and County Commission. If the area in which the Commissioner from the unincorporated Planning Area is annexed into the City, the City Commission may replace the Planning Commissioner with another citizen from within the unincorporated Planning Area.

Appointments of Planning Commissioners shall be done in accordance with standard solicitation of citizen volunteers. Calls for nominations of Commissioners shall be published in the City's official posting sites (newspaper, bulletin boards, website) at least twice over a one-month period. At least two weeks shall be provided for nominations after the last published announcement. Lewistown will endeavor to fill vacancies on the Commission as soon as possible. If there are long-term vacancies, the City Commission may appoint a temporary member.

The Planning Administrator is responsible for bringing forward any legislative changes or requirements to the Planning Commission, and the Planning Commission shall make recommendations on all land-use and planning decisions to the City Commission for consideration, including:

- Future Land Use Map and Land Use Plan
- Zoning Map and Regulations
- Subdivision Map and Regulations
- All other legislative land use planning documents that the City Council designates.

Plan Review & Amendment

The Planning Commission shall review the policies in this Plan every five years after its initial adoption. The review shall commence no later than six months prior to the end of each five-year increment of policies and Plan implementation. The review shall include the public participation process and should endeavor to not exceed three months in length.

Should the Planning Commission, through the five-year review, identify new or increased impacts from the original analysis, the Commission shall make recommendations to amend the Lewistown Plan to the City Commission for consideration. The

City Commission may approve recommended changes or remand the changes back to the Planning Commission for additional analysis of impacts and public comment. In remanding recommended changes, the City Commission must document the facts and rationale for the remand. The scope of additional analysis and public comment must only address the specific remanded recommendations. Approval or remand by the City Commission must be made as soon as possible after it receives the recommendations of the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission, in turn, must work quickly to address the remanded changes to the Lewistown Plan. The City Commission must hold a public hearing as soon as possible after receiving the recommendations from the Planning Commission on remanded recommendations and, following the hearing, make a final decision. The timetable for updating the plan again begins when the amended plan is approved or it is determined that revisions are not necessary at the time.

A comprehensive review and assessment of the current Lewistown Plan shall be conducted at the 20-year mark of the initial adoption of the Plan by the City Commission. A fully transparent scoping process to identify issues, new or changed information, and impacts must be conducted. The same public participation procedures for any updates to the Plan used for developing the initial Plan shall be followed.

► URBAN SERVICES AREA

This Plan establishes an [Urban Services Area](#) for future annexation to and extension of city services and capital facilities to the unincorporated Planning Area that is congruent with the Urban Residential and Suburban Residential designated areas of the Future Land Use Map. Extension of services to the Urban and Suburban Residential areas shall only be done when it is demonstrated that extension will be done in a fiscally responsible manner.

Pre-Zoning shall be designated for the Planned Urbanizing Tier (Tier 2) of the Future Land Use Map. When the City is officially annexed, these zones shall be formally designated to areas annexed.

A Service Plan shall be established for annexation and service extension that is consistent with the Future Land Use Map. The Service Plan shall include mechanisms to stimulate logical, incremental, and cost-effective extension of services.

► ZONING

Following the adoption of this Plan, updates should be made to the Zoning Regulations to aid in implementing the Goals and Policies herein. These updates will encourage the development of diverse housing for current and future residents, promote the protection of natural resources, spur economic development, and “REGROW Lewistown”. Zoning should be applied to areas within the Lewistown Planning Area, outside City limits, in accordance with the Future Land Use Map.

Zoning Administration

A Zoning Administrator will be appointed by the City Commission and authorized to administratively review and prepare staff reports on rezoning applications consistent with the City of Lewistown’s Zoning Regulations and the current Lewistown Plan.

1. No additional public review, hearing, or comment shall be required for site specific permit applications that are fully consistent and compliant with the Zoning Regulations and Map and previous public review and comment.

2. All permit applications, including conditional uses and variances, found by the Zoning Administrator to be inconsistent and not compliant with the Lewistown Plan shall be subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission.
3. The Planning Commission shall consider permit applications pursuant to a staff report prepared by the Zoning Administrator and shall set a date for a public hearing or on the date to which such hearing may be continued from time to time by the Planning Commission to obtain a complete record as the Commission deems appropriate. The provisions of the Zoning Regulations for Planning Commission review of permit applications, including any required public hearing, shall be followed.

► SUBDIVISIONS

- 1. A Subdivision Administrator shall be appointed by the City Commission and is authorized to administratively review and prepare a staff report on subdivision applications consistent with the City of Lewistown's Subdivision Regulations.
- 2. No additional public notice or comment shall be required when the Subdivision Administrator determines a subdivision application to be fully consistent and compliant with (1) the 2024 Lewistown Plan and Map, (2) all the requirements of the City's Subdivision Regulations, and (3) impact analysis and mitigation previously analyzed, and (4) previous public review conducted, and comments addressed.
- 3. Pursuant to requirements of the Lewistown Subdivision Regulations, the Planning Commission and City Commission shall review, provide public notice, and decide on subdivisions when an application is not consistent with the 2024 Lewistown Plan and Map and all requirements of the City of Lewistown Subdivision Regulations as determined in the Subdivision Administrator Report.

HOW THIS PLAN STREAMLINES HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Previous Process



New Process



5.0 APPENDIX

5.1 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ACRONYMS

5.2 | PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



5.1 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ACRONYMS

Affordable/Workforce Housing

Housing units with or without public subsidy that can be rented at a below market rate and considered “affordable” if an individual or family spends no more than 30% of their income to live there. Workforce housing refers to housing that is attainable to the local workforce.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

A civil rights law that protects people with disabilities from discrimination in many areas of public life: employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Grants that support community development activities to build stronger and more resilient communities.

Conservation Subdivision Design

A residential subdivision that devotes at least half of its potentially buildable land area to undivided, permanently protected open space. In contrast, conventional subdivisions devote all, or nearly all, buildable land area to individual lots and streets.

Covenants

A binding agreement made by two or more persons or parties. Usually restrictive covenants are created by the developer of a subdivision. They outline the land uses allowed in the subdivision subject to city or county restrictions.

Covenants are enforced by the property owners within the subdivision.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

A Federal agency tasked with protecting human health and the environment.

Future Land Use Designation

A strategic and visionary plan that helps communities envision their future without getting into the details of how buildings, streets, and other spaces will be designed and built.

Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

A geographical and thematic representation to guide land use planning in specific areas of the City, consistent with the goals and policies of the 2024 Lewistown Plan.

Human Resource Development Council (HRDC)

A nonprofit organization that offers wrap-around services that address community needs including housing, food and nutrition, childcare, and transportation.

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

An Act that provides funding in incentives, grants, and loans to support new infrastructure investments in clean energy, transportation, and the environment.

Lewistown Planning Area

A geographic area extending out up to 4.5 miles outside of the city limits in which it can legally

exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction. See map on page 62.

Low Impact Development

Systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat; an approach to land development that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible.

Mixed-Use Development

Urban development that combines different types of uses — residential, commercial, retail, office, cultural, institutional, or entertainment — in a building or complex of buildings.

Montana Coal Endowment (MT Coal)

A State-funded program that helps address the “affordability” or local infrastructure projects by providing grants to lower the cost of constructing public facilities.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

A governmental agency whose role is to protect the environment and promote a healthy and thriving way of life for all Montanans.

Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)

A governmental agency responsible for numerous programs related to the construction, maintenance, and monitoring of Montana's transportation infrastructure and operations.

Montana Land Use Planning Act

Described in Title 76, Chapter 25, Montana Code Annotated, requires cities in Montana with populations over 5,000 people that are located in counties with populations over 70,000 people update their land use plans and zoning and subdivision regulations within 3 years of the passage of the act.

Multi-modal

When describing a street or transportation network, multi-modal means it provides options for people to get around on foot, on bicycles, in transit, or in motorized vehicles.

Right of Way

Land that is controlled by the city and reserved for public use such as for streets and sidewalks

Short Term Rental (STR)

A dwelling unit that is rented for vacation/short-term lodging for a time period of less than 30 days.

Smart Growth

A development and conservation strategy that aims to make communities more livable,

economically efficient, and environmentally sustainable. It encourages a mix of both building types and uses, diverse housing and transportation options, development within existing neighborhoods, and robust community engagement.

Targeted Economic Development District (TEDD)

A tax increment financing program to help fund development of infrastructure within an established district to attract industry, grow population, and revitalize commercial and residential areas.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

A state authorized, locally-driven funding mechanism that allows cities and counties to direct property tax dollars that accrue from new development, within a specifically designated district, to community and economic development activities.

Universal Design

The design of buildings, products or environments to make them useable and accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, mobility challenges, or other factors.

Urban Renewal Area (URA)

A designated area that is characterized by blight and/or infrastructure deficiencies in which tax increment financing can be used to fund

redevelopment, revitalization, and other public infrastructure projects to promote economic development.

Urban Services Area

An area outside of which urban services (water and wastewater) should only be extended if it is determined to benefit the City of Lewistown. The purpose is to ensure the City of Lewistown remains fiscally sustainable and is able to maintain the levels of service that are expected from the community.

Urban Sprawl

Development of residential, commercial and industrial land uses that occur in a dispersed, random and/or low density manner outside of designated growth areas or beyond a municipal planning area.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

The zone of transition between unoccupied land and human development. It is the line, area or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.

Zoning

The classification of land for specific allowable uses such as housing, commercial retail service, agriculture, and industrial uses.

2024 Lewistown Plan

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



ADOPTED APRIL 2024

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PLANNED ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Public Participation Plan was prepared

**Cushing
Terrell.**

Cushing Terrell

cushingterrell.com

01. PURPOSE

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IS THE
FOUNDATION OF THE 2024 LEWISTOWN
PLAN.**

► INTENT.

The City of Lewistown is revising and updating its 2006 Growth Policy. The Growth Policy is a guiding document that represents a community's vision of how it wants to grow and change - how land is developed, older areas redevelop, ensure adequate housing, provide infrastructure, protect natural and culturally significant areas, and meet other community and statutory objectives while preserving Lewistown's character.

The City of Lewistown understands that community participation is a critical component of the long-range planning process. Not all policy decisions about land use, housing, transportation, economic development, and capital facilities will impact us all in the same way. Providing the opportunity for public input invites citizens to participate in formulating the vision for the future of their community and helps ensure that recommendations that are developed as a part of the 2024 Lewistown Plan are implemented and sustained over time. It is the responsibility of the City to listen, elevate, and incorporate community voices throughout the planning process.

This Public Participation Plan describes how community members and stakeholders will be engaged throughout the planning process. It is intended to raise awareness of the Growth Policy update, provide a roadmap for the public of a clear and accessible process, and ensure input is sought and considered from a broad range of participants.

► MONTANA LAND USE PLANNING ACT

In 2023, the Montana Senate passed the Land Use Planning Act, or Senate Bill 382, in response to the State's rapidly increasing cost of housing and inability to produce enough housing to meet current and future demands. The Bill applied by default to counties with at least 70,000 residents as well as cities and towns in those counties with populations of 5,000 or more. While Lewistown does not technically meet that threshold, City leadership voted in February 2024 to opt into planning under SB 382, which requires:

- The creation of a Land Use Plan (with differing requirements from a Growth Policy)
- The creation and adoption of a Public Participation Plan

This Public Participation Plan represents the required documentation under MT SB 382 to plan for and provide public engagement opportunities as part of the 2024 Lewistown Plan. This plan aims to gather input from a broad and representative cross-section of the community, providing residents the opportunity to weigh in on long-range planning decisions.

Community members will establish a community vision for land use, providing direction and predictability and consensus on how Lewistown changes over time.

Role of Decision Makers, Commissions, and Staff

▶ PLANNING COMMISSION

A three-member Interim Planning Commission was chartered by the City Commission in March 2024. The Interim Planning Commission oversaw the development of the Plan from March through October 2024. The Commission:

1. Drafted, recommended for adoption, and implemented this Public Participation Plan;
2. Land Use Plan, Map, and Implementation Plan;
3. Updated zoning regulations, making the regulatory framework align with the findings of the Land Use Plan's Future Land Use Designations and Map;
4. Updated subdivision regulations to align with the Land Use Plan's Future Land Use Designations and Map.

▶ CITY COMMISSION

The Lewistown City Commission is the governing body and final decision maker on the adoption of the 2024 Lewistown Plan. Commissioners will be notified of all public engagement opportunities and will be invited to participate in the entire planning process. The Commission will receive periodic briefings on the update and will review the Planning Commission's recommendation on the Plan. Following a recommendation from the Planning Commission, the governing body is required to adopt a resolution of intention to adopt, adopt with revisions, or reject the proposed Plan. The Commission will hold several public hearings on the final draft of the 2024 Lewistown Plan.

▶ ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

When a development proposal is submitted, administrative review is conducted to ensure the proposal is substantially compliant with the plan, zoning regulations, and subdivision regulations and design standards. Review also must determine that impacts resulting from the proposed development are consistent with the impact analysis and public review conducted for the plan. The proposal is permitted, and preliminary plat/subdivision approved administratively by staff.

**"IF THERE'S
ONE THING
THAT WE HAVE
THAT'S TRULY
PRICELESS, IT'S
BIG SPRING AND THE
WATER WE HAVE IN THIS
COMMUNITY"**

– Public comment

02. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL
ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES
THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS



► DISSEMINATION OF DOCUMENTS

Documents for public review will be posted on the project website (www.CityofLewistown.com/GrowthPolicyUpdate), announced on the City's main webpage (www.CityofLewistown.com), emailed to an email list of contacts collected at the September 2023 Chokecherry Festival and March 2024 Open House #1, made available at all public meetings, and printed copies will be available for review at City Hall. o Public meetings will be advertised through

► OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENTS

Comments will be collected:

- 24/7 through the project webpage and on social media.
- At engagement events, including: 2023 Chokecherry Festival, online survey, focus group meetings, organization briefings, Planning Director Office Hours, open houses, and pop-up events.

During all public meetings regarding the 2024 Lewistown Plan, it will be emphasized that the 2024 Lewistown Plan is intended to identify the opportunities for community growth while acknowledging and addressing impacts. It will be publicly noted that the final adopted Plan will comprise the basis for implementation of land use regulations and subdivision approvals, and

as mandated by the State, the scope of public comments on site specific development will be limited to new or significantly increased impacts not initially considered.

► PUBLIC MEETINGS & HEARINGS

Public meetings will be advertised through news release, the project website, social media, posters in local businesses and at City Hall, and email notifications. The following is a list of both completed and scheduled public meetings and hearings:

- September 9 2023 Chokecherry Festival
- September-October 2023 Focus Group Meetings (5)
- March 2024 Organizational Briefings (4)
- March 12, 2024 Open House #1
- March 11-12 2024 Pop-ups (2)
- June 12 2024 City Commission & Planning Commission Joint Work Session
- June 12-13 2024 Pop-ups (2)
- June 13 2024 Open House #2
- September 18 2024 Planning Commission Adoption Hearing
- September 19 2024 Joint City/County Planning Board Adoption Hearing
- September 25 2024 County Commission Adoption Hearing
- October 7 2024 City Commission Adoption hearing

► ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION & ACCESSIBILITY

All documents for public review will be available on the project website for anyone to access.

Feedback from engagement will be summarized and posted on the project website.

► ANALYSIS & RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comment and staff analysis are responses to such will be made available on the project website and in correspondence with Planning Commission and City Council. Staff will respond directly to emails.

**"ONE OF THE
CHALLENGES
AS A COMMUNITY
IS THAT WE ARE
ABOUT TO GROW, AND
CAN WE GROW WITHOUT
DESTROYING WHAT'S
MAKING IT GREAT?"**

– Public comment



03. ENGAGEMENT DOCUMENTATION

COMPLETED AND PLANNED
ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR THE 2024
LEWISTOWN PLAN

Completed Engagement Activities

PROJECT WEBSITE LAUNCH

The project website was launched in July of 2023: www.CityofLewistown.com/GrowthPolicyUpdate. The website provides a platform and landing page for information regarding the project, its status, and provides project updates as different planning milestones are completed. The website hosts a place for residents to leave general comments about the project at any time throughout the process. The website will be continually updated throughout the remainder of the project with engagement activities and reporting.

City of Lewistown Growth Policy Update

PROJECT WEBSITE SCREENSHOT



Key Dates

- Chokecherry Festival - 9/9/23
- Open House - 3/12/24

Timeline

- Phase I: Review of Existing Growth Policy (Jul-Aug 2023)
Existing conditions, vision and purpose statements, goals, objectives and policies, and the implementation strategy will all be reviewed in this phase. This will help identify what is still relevant and what has changed since the 2006 Growth Policy.
- Phase II: Current Characteristics, Projected Trends, Mapping (Sept-Dec 2023) This provides the foundation for technical analysis of Lewistown. Examining demographic, economic, and geographic data will begin to shape the opportunities and constraints within the City.
- Phase III: Draft Growth Policy (Jan-Jun 2024) Informed by the prior phases, a draft document will be written and include community feedback, recommendations, and implementation strategies.
- Phase IV: Review and Adoption (Jun-Sept 2024) In this final phase the draft will be revised in partnership with stakeholders and public officials. The end result would be a

▶ **ONLINE SURVEYS**

Two online surveys were launched in September 2023 and were available through November 2023. One survey was for adults ages 19 and older, which received 316 responses. The second survey was for young residents, 18 years of age and younger, which received 37 responses.

TOP CONCERNS & OPPORTUNITIES FROM SURVEY RESULTS

TOP CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE OF LEWISTOWN:

- 1 Housing
- 2 Change in community / values / culture
- 3 Jobs / economy / workforce
- 4 Not changing / modernizing / growing
- 5 Growth & development
- 6 Safety / crime

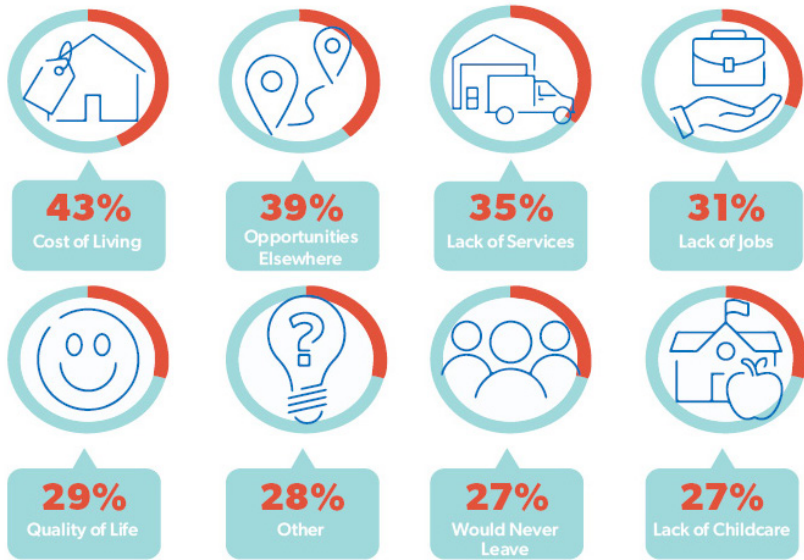
TOP IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES:

- 1 Retail / commercial industry growth
- 2 Housing
- 3 Downtown / small businesses
- 4 Location / natural environment
- 5 Tourism / hospitality
- 6 Civic center / public facilities / recreation

ADULT SURVEY RESULTS



TOP REASONS TO LEAVE LEWISTOWN:

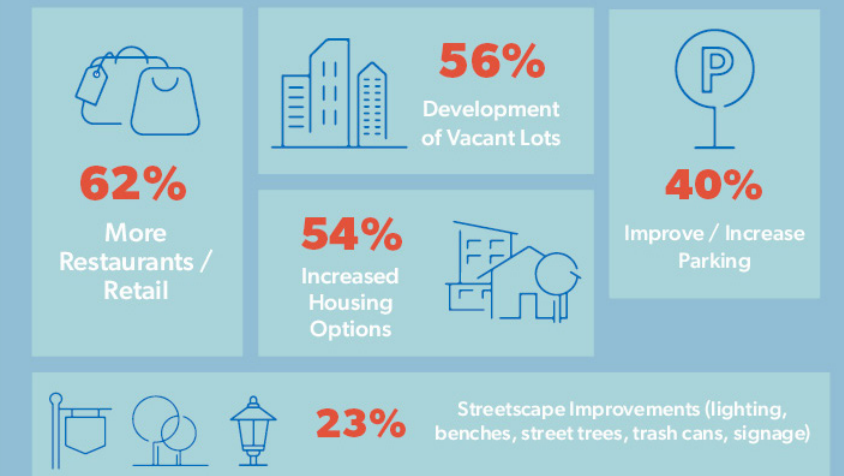


HOW RESIDENTS FEEL ABOUT POPULATION/RESIDENTIAL GROWTH:

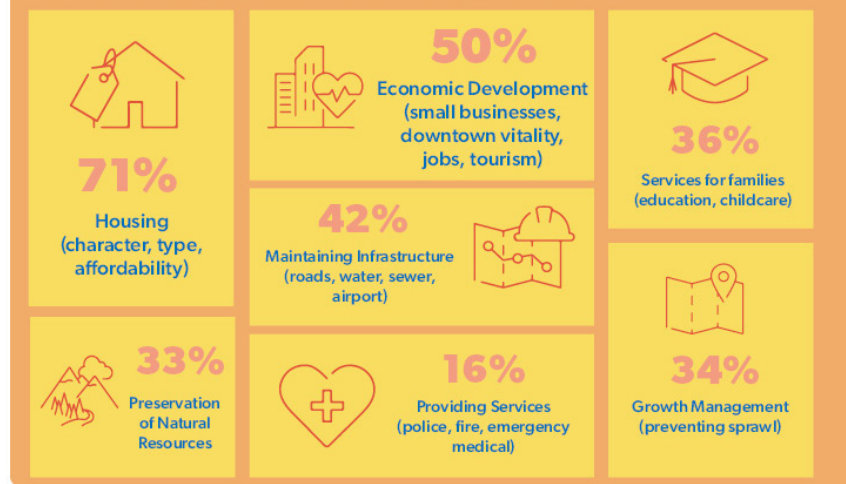


HOW RESIDENTS FEEL ABOUT RETAIL/COMMERCIAL GROWTH:

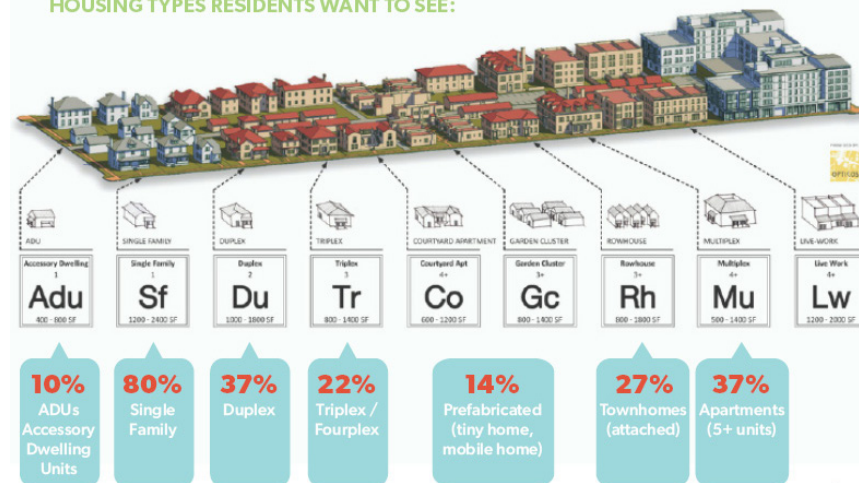
DOWNTOWN LEWISTOWN COULD BE IMPROVED BY:



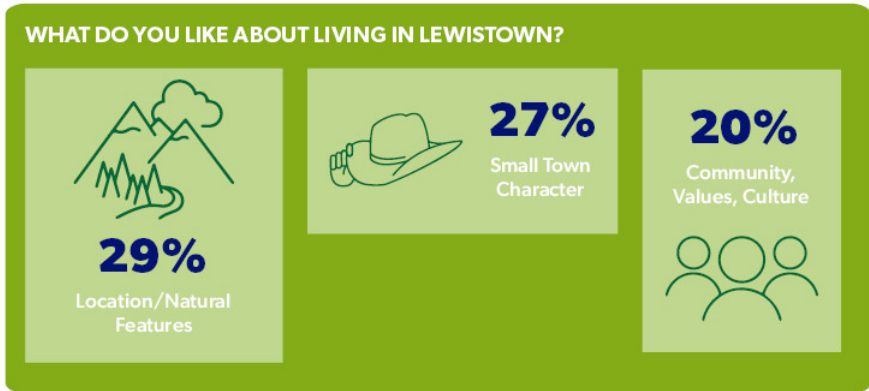
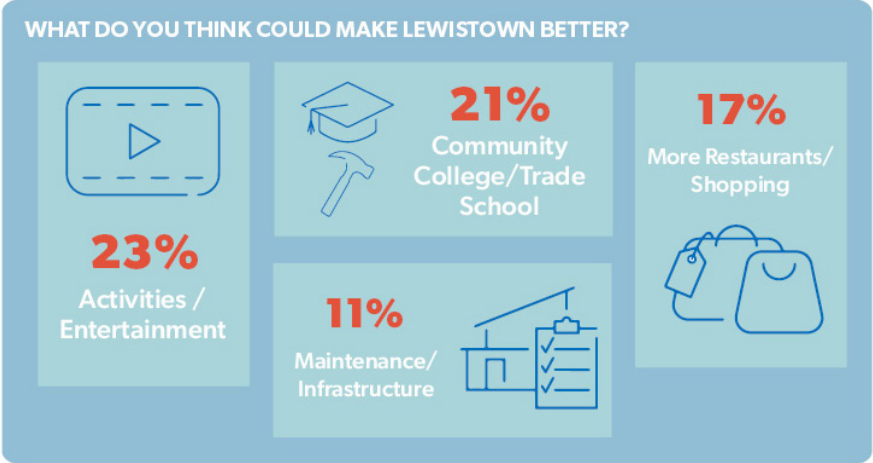
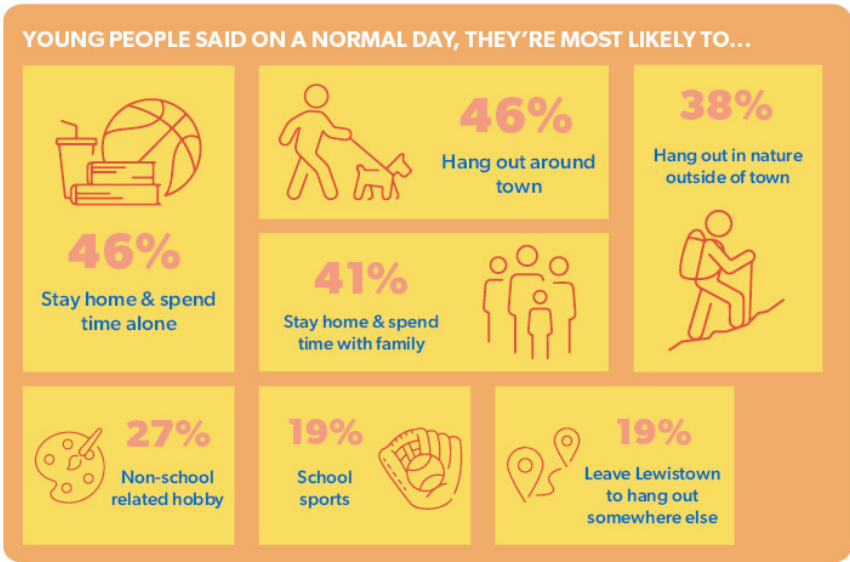
MOST IMPORTANT TOPICS FOR THE GROWTH POLICY:



HOUSING TYPES RESIDENTS WANT TO SEE:

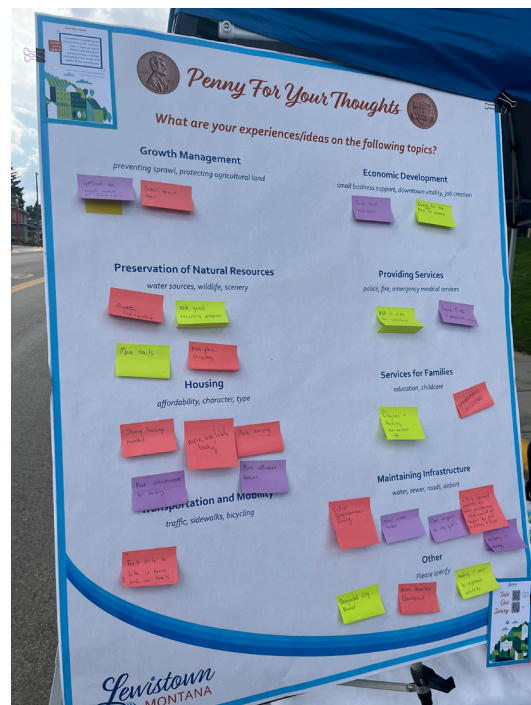


YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS



▶ CHOKECHERRY FESTIVAL EVENT

At Lewistown's biggest public event of the year, the project team set up a booth at the Chokecherry Festival with information about the project, an engagement activity with sticky notes, a raffle with a prize to get contact information, and the team handed out postcards with QR codes for the online surveys.



 FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

The project team identified various stakeholders, organizational representatives, and subject matter experts with whom to conduct topic-based focus group discussions. There were 5 focus group discussions conducted in September and October, 2023 on the following topics:

- Growth, land use, & zoning
- Housing & childcare
- Parks, recreation & trails
- Jobs & economy
- Downtown
- A personal interview with conducted with the Chamber of Commerce to accommodate scheduling conflicts.

The following departments/organizations were invited to participate in Focus Group discussions:

City of Lewistown/Fergus County:

- Planning Department
- Building Department
- Public Works Department
- City Manager
- Parks & Recreation Department
- Lewistown City Commission
- Lewistown Rural Fire
- Fergus County Planning
- Fergus County Emergency Services

Organizational Stakeholders:

- Lewistown Downtown Association
- Lewistown Airport
- Snowy Mountain Development
- Friends of the Trails
- Big Spring Creek Watershed Council
- Lewistown Chamber of Commerce
- Fergus County Health Board
- Montana Childcare Alliance
- Homeword
- Human Resource Development Council
- Accelerate (U of M workforce development program)
- Fergus County Council on Aging
- Montana Bureau of Land Management

Businesses/Employers:

- Lewistown School District
- Allied Steel
- Central Feed
- Yogo Inn
- Central Montana Medical Center

 ORGANIZATION BRIEFINGS

In March of 2024, Planning Director Doug Osterman gave presentations on the status of the 2024 Lewistown Plan to the following groups that included the Draft Future Land Use Map and Community Engagement Themes:

- March 5 – Kiwanis – 18 attendees
- March 7 – Rotary – 7 attendees
- March 14 – Lewistown Jaycees – 6 attendees
- March 18 – Fergus County Community Council – 7 attendees

POP-UP EVENTS

The project team set up Pop-up booths at the two grocery stores in town to advertise both Open House events. The team caught residents on their way into the grocery store and personally invited them to the Open Houses, handing out postcards with information about the meetings.

- March 11, 2024: Town & Country, 4-6pm
- March 12, 2024: Albertson's, 11am-1pm
- June 12, 2024: Albertson's, 4-6pm
- June 13, 2024: Town & Country, 11am-1pm



ALBERTSON'S POP-UP EVENT, MARCH 12 2024



TOWN & COUNTRY POP-UP EVENT, MARCH 11 2024



ALBERTSON'S POP-UP EVENT, MARCH 12 2024

OPEN HOUSE #1

On March 12, 2024, an Open House was hosted at Central Feed Brewing Company from 6-8pm. Information boards displayed summaries of feedback from engagement via surveys, focus groups, and the Chokecherry event; educational information about opting into Senate Bill 382 and how it differs from a typical Growth Policy; the Future Land Use Map and Designations, and the Draft Goals. Participants were encouraged to engage with staff and the consultant team at each station and feedback was collected via sticky notes.

Donated prizes were raffled off throughout the night, and 84 attendees signed in at the event, though not all attendees did, so attendance is estimated at 100. Participants submitted a total of 73 written comments, which are summarized in the graphic on the following page.



OPEN HOUSE #1



OPEN HOUSE #1



OPEN HOUSE #1



OPEN HOUSE #1

2024 LEWISTOWN PLAN:

OPEN HOUSE #1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



100+

Attendees



73

Total written
comments



**Future
Land Use
Ideas**

What we heard:



Need for more PUBLIC FACILITIES for
SPORTS / YOUTH ACTIVITIES



Focus on TREES for investment in PARKS,
TRAILS, OPEN SPACE & RECREATION



Preservation and investment in WATER
RESOURCES and BIG SPRING CREEK



More HOUSING and RENTER
PROTECTIONS



COMMUNITY COLLEGE / TRADE SCHOOL
for youth that want to stay in Lewistown

"Connect Berg Lumber site (w/ stairs) over the ridge so heights area can connect to trails."

"Let's channel change and growth instead of fight it and letting it happens to us."

"Area behind Yogo (South) - Would love to see enhanced parking / trail access / downtown access."

► ADDITIONAL OPEN HOUSE 1 ACTIVITIES

The project team uploaded all the boards from Open House 1 to the project webpage and provided a place for community members to provide online input at any time. Finally, Doug Osterman, Planning Director, began providing “Lewistown Plan Office Hours” immediately following the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings, 2:30-3:30pm every other Wednesday, where residents can come discuss the plan with staff. This provides the opportunity for folks who might need more guidance or explanation to have one-on-one conversations with staff.



► OPEN HOUSE #2

On June 13, 2024, a second Open House was hosted at Central Feed Restaurant from 6-8pm. Information boards displayed summaries of feedback from previous engagement; the modified Future Land Use Map and Designations, the Draft Goals and Policies; and two potential development scenarios in areas of interest in Lewistown. Participants engaged with staff and the consultant team at each station and feedback was collected via sticky notes.

Donated prizes were again raffled off, and 34 attendees signed in at the event, though not all attendees did, so attendance is estimated at 48.



2024 LEWISTOWN PLAN:
OPEN HOUSE #2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



30+
Attendees



26
Total written
comments



**Future
Land Use
Ideas**

What we heard:



**Focus on DOWNTOWN for investment in
SIDEWALKS and MOBILITY OPTIONS**



**Investment in RENEWABLE ENERGY to
improve ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCY**



**More HOUSING TYPES with greater
OPEN SPACE**



Need for more CHILDCARE FACILITIES

"I'd like to see the health
of Big Spring Creek
considered as a top
priority!"

"Ability for existing
structures to have
childcare without a
conditional use permit."

"Increase volunteer
programs for such
services as watering
public trees."

ADOPTION HEARINGS

The project team continued to provide updates to the Interim Planning Commission and City Commission as changes were made to the draft in a public meeting format where input from the community was welcome. When a Final Draft was developed, public hearings were scheduled with the Interim Planning Commission, City-County Joint Planning Board, County Commission, and City Commission.

The Lewistown City Commission unanimously adopted the 2024 Lewistown Plan on October 7, 2024.



SPORTS
Local athletes
earn state honors
A10-11



EDUCATION
Winifred students
experiment with
vertical farming
A12

2024 LEWISTOWN PLAN

COVERING CENTRAL MONTANA LIKE THE STARS

LEWISTOWN NEWS-ARGUS

\$2.00

VOLUME 141 NUMBER 12

LEWISTOWNNEWS.COM

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 2024

Filling a gap

Paramedic, sheriff
team up for innovative
healthcare program

DEB HILL
Reporter

Thanks to some COVID grant funding, paramedic Angela Phelps and Sheriff Ryan Peterson have joined forces for a unique approach to healthcare at the Fergus County jail.

Through the Community Paramedic program, Phelps works with inmates directly, monitoring their healthcare and medications and taking care of medical concerns that formerly would have required a trip to the hospital's Emergency Room.

"Many have chronic conditions," Phelps said. "I can help them understand their disease better, check on their mental health, make sure they have all the medications that have been prescribed and check if they are taking them."

"Until Angela came last spring, we had a huge gap in medical care for the detention center," Peterson said. "The County nurses can't work off site, but Angela can because of her licensing as a paramedic."

Prior to this, taking care of inmates' medical care was time-consuming and expensive.

"We had to call an ambulance to transport the inmate to CMMC, or we had to get a deputy to take them to a clinic. It was hours and hours of deputy time. Now Angela comes in and we treat most things in-house. She can sit down with the inmate and listen to their complaint, and help us triage whether we need to take them somewhere or they can be treated here. We don't have to tie up an ambulance or budget for the high cost of going to the ER," Peterson said.

In addition to helping triage medical cases, Phelps also does the required blood draws for DUIs and monitors inmates coming down off of alcohol or drugs. She works closely with ER doctors to determine whether inmates need to be seen at the hospital or not.

More **HEALTHCARE** | A7

'Re-growing Lewistown'

Residents engage in city's planning process open house



WILL BRIGGS/REPORTER

Lewistown residents study growth projections for the city during an open house held on the city's land use planning process Tuesday, March 12.

WILL BRIGGS
Reporter

Lewistown residents got an up-close look at the possible future for the city Tuesday night at an open house held to showcase the city's land use planning process.

During the event, hosted by the City of Lewistown at Central Feed Grilling Company, locals had the opportunity to hear the results of a community survey on priorities for the plan, view a draft future land use map, and see growth projections for the city for the next 20 years. They also were able to leave written comments on 16 different policy areas, ranging from housing and transportation to outdoor resources and



WILL BRIGGS/REPORTER

Nora Bland (at left) of Cushing Terrell discusses the city's draft land use map at Tuesday's open house.

community character. Lewistown City Planner Doug Osterman was pleased with the level of engagement at the open house.

"Tuesday night was a huge success," he said. "I didn't hear

anything that would be a deal-breaker and people are still very much interested in housing... We had over 100 people there and based on what we heard, we're on to something good." The significant interest in

Story Highlights

Much of Lewistown's housing stock is aging, with 44% of homes in city limits built in or before 1939. Meanwhile, an estimated 42.5% of renters in Lewistown spend 35% or more of their annual income on rent.

addressing housing follows on the heels of a public survey on the growth policy last fall, wherein the vast majority of 352 local respondents listed housing as a "most important topic" for the plan as well as a "top concern for the future of Lewistown."

More **GROWTH** | A7



KATHERINE SEARS
Managing Editor

After spending more than three decades responding to fire calls, a different call came for retired Hilger Fire Chief Dick Hassler.

At 79 years old, Dick passed away February 10, 2024. He was a dedicated volunteer and was one of many who origi-

"In 30 years of service to the Hilger Fire District, Chief Hassler only missed three calls," said Hilger Fire Chief Walter Wichman. "His fire knowledge and dedication to the people of the Hilger fire district and Fergus County was top notch."

Dick's memorial service was held March 9 at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Lewistown,

County Fire Warden and Sheriff Ryan Peterson gave one "last call" over the radio.

"It was an honor to do that," Peterson said of the call. "I enjoyed the time I got to work with him."

community as a volunteer firefighter and Chief. There aren't many people willing to sacrifice

One Last Call Hilger community bids farewell to longtime fire chief

PAGE 05

