



Growth Policy

CITY OF DEER LODGE



February 2024



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Prepared for the:
City of Deer Lodge Planning Board

Prepared by:



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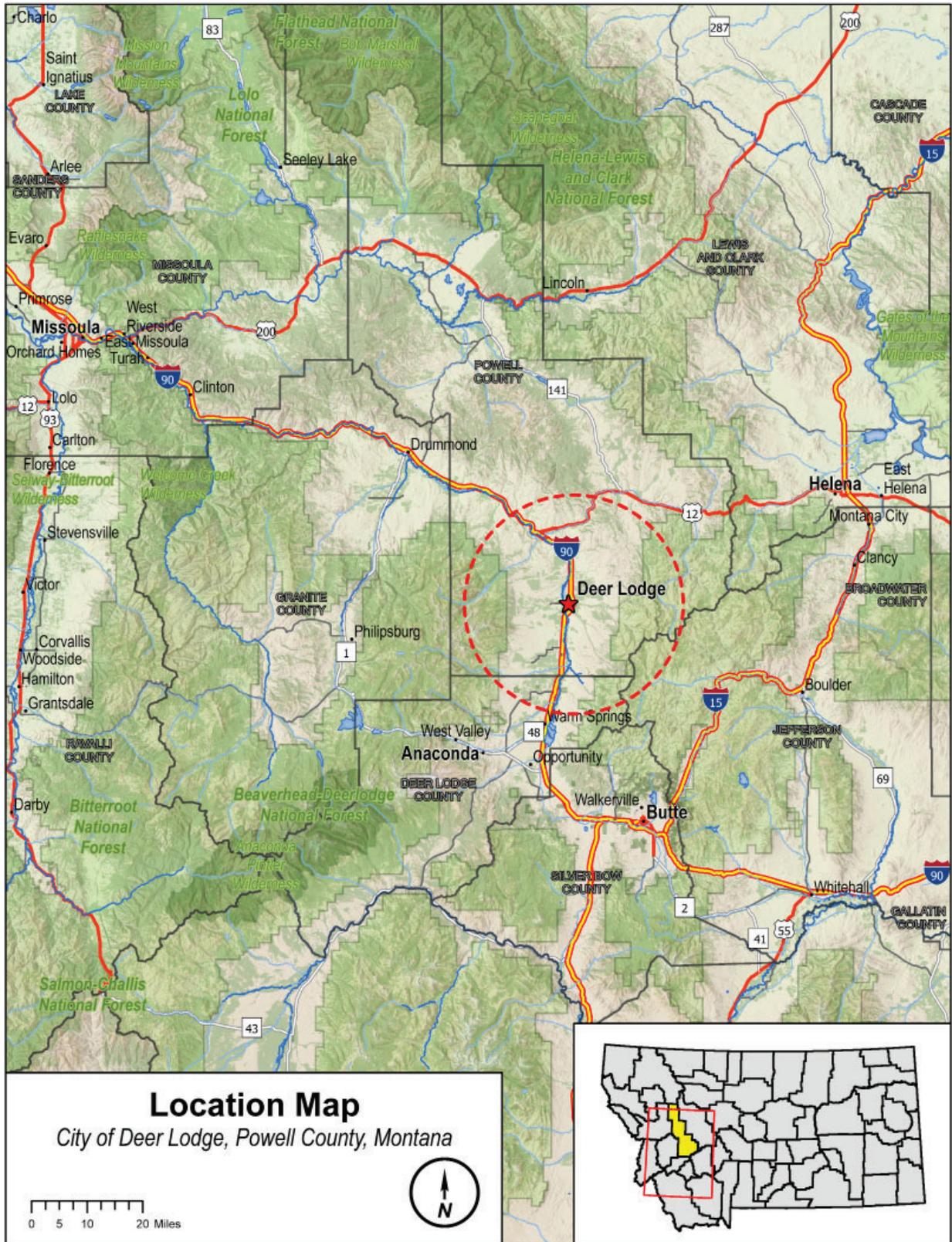
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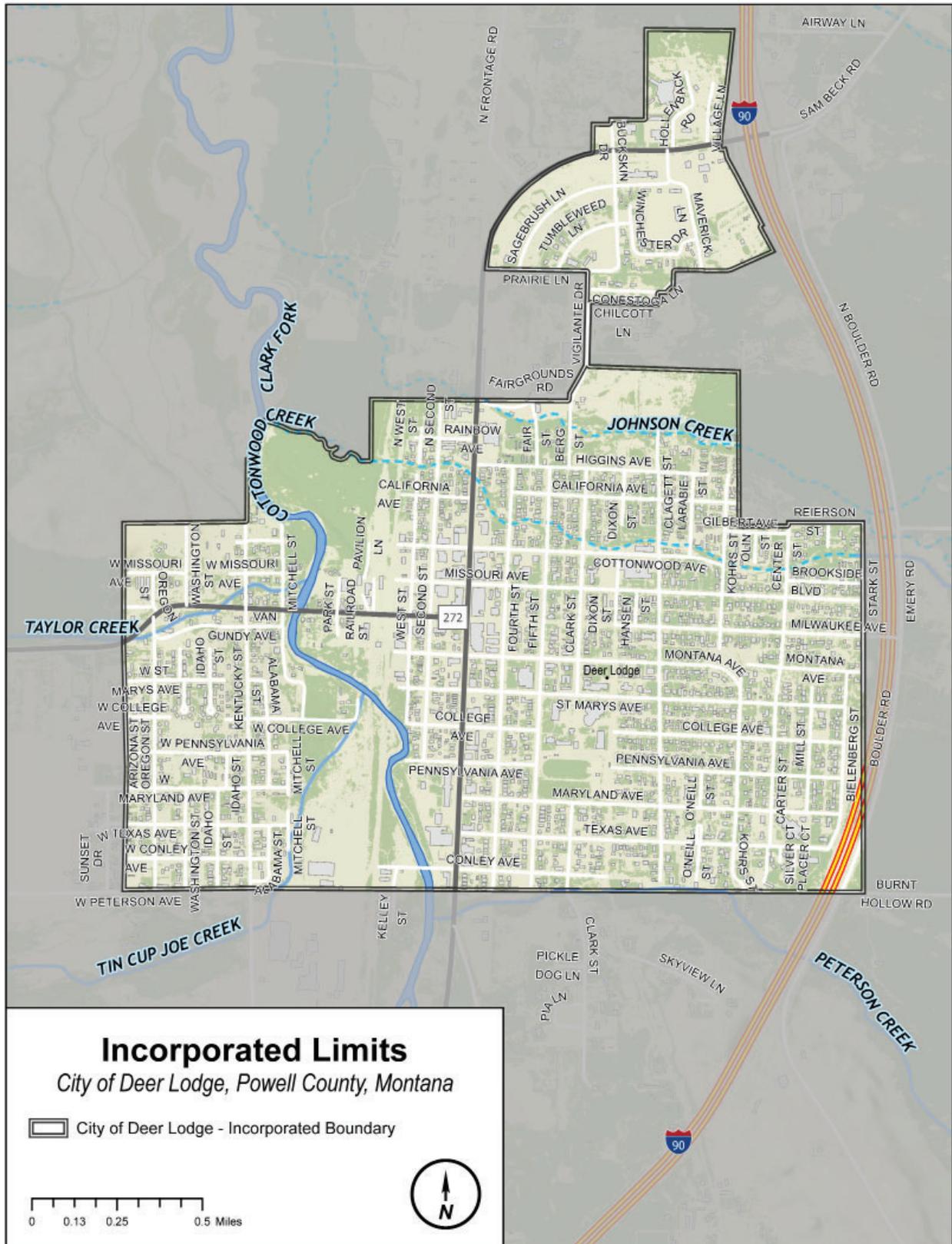
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

▼ Map 1 - Location of Deer Lodge



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

▼ Map 2 - Incorporated Limits of Deer Lodge



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Deer Lodge residents take pride in their community, sharing a unique history based on natural resource industries common to the west. Historically the City's economy was driven by industries such as the Milwaukee Railroad and timber. Today the foundation of the City's economy is still natural resources (logging and milling of timber) and employment at the State Prison but it is transitioning to more jobs in the services, tourism, and recreation. Deer Lodge faces many challenges, including a reduction in the number of railroad and natural resource jobs, a shortage of workforce housing, needed infrastructure improvements, and like everywhere else in the country, having to deal with significant changes in the national economy. Like any community, people come and go, but everyone who visits or lives in the community recognizes the unique value and character of Deer Lodge. The goals expressed in this plan are intended to strengthen and support these shared values as residents of the City look to the future.

This updated Plan is meant to help the City Council, Planning Board, residents and potential new residents or prospective investors to make decisions regarding the economy, infrastructure, local services, and land use. The update should help these stakeholders achieve specific goals instead of reacting to individual events and applying short-term fixes year after year. Issues of concern to the City range from providing local services and improving infrastructure (water-sewer-streets) to deciding what amendments to land use regulations are appropriate within the City.

This document contains nine sections that provide the rationale for understanding and achieving the goals listed in this document. These sections include:

Goals, Objectives, and Actions	Taking advantage of opportunities and overcoming challenges does not happen by chance. City residents must be willing to set practical and achievable goals to make things happen.
Introduction	A description of the City, its location, features, and history.
Population	A brief description of the City population and demographics.
Economy	A description of the City's current economic situation and a vision for addressing issues and capitalizing on economic opportunities and challenges.
Local Services and Public Facilities	A description of the City's revenues and expenditures, and its infrastructure and services, including those that the City is responsible for operating and maintaining.
Housing	A description of the current housing opportunities in the City.
Land Use	A description of land use in the City including future growth, the impacts of flooding and wildland fire, historic preservation efforts, the potential for new land use regulations such as zoning and the administration of subdivision regulations.
Resident Outreach	This section describes the process used to gather advice and guidance from City residents on issues of importance to them.

COMMUNITY VISION

The City of Deer Lodge is an attractive, stable, growing community with the amenities and capacity necessary to be competitive throughout Western Montana at attracting new residents and businesses. The community recognizes its deep historical roots and capitalizes on this history to create a unique identity and grow the local economy. Deer Lodge embraces its amenities and integrates them into the fabric of the community.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

Deer Lodge is a distinct example of small-town Montana life, one that has proudly and boldly overcome its historic economic disinvestment and natural resource extraction legacy issues. It is an attractive community, a desirable destination for both visitors and residents. Its Main Street is thriving, and its neighborhoods are charming.

People of all ages and interests want to spend time in Deer Lodge, and their time at its beautiful theatres, museums, restaurants, and festivals easily become cherished memories. Maybe they remember fondly their time of quiet reflection or family fun at one of its several riverside parks, where anglers are catching fish, children are playing in the crystal-clear water, and families are having picnics. Whatever it is, residents and tourists alike all appreciate that time spent in Deer Lodge is time well spent indeed.

People notice the energy of Main Street immediately. They see art in windows and on walls of authentic western buildings. Plaques and displays tell the story and history of Deer Lodge. There is a park downtown with a food truck and a musician playing for a group of people enjoying good food and good drinks. People leave a restaurant and are eager to go to the shops, breweries, art galleries, and antique stores right next door. They catch a live theater production or a movie and stroll a block or two down to the river to unwind before heading back to their homes or to their hotel rooms.

In its revitalization, Deer Lodge has come to realize what makes it unique – its history is unrivaled, its culture is distinctive, its downtown is lively, and its access to outdoor recreation is first class. Its events and businesses confidently carry the Deer Lodge brand because its residents and businesses recognize that the Deer Lodge experience is one that people enjoy.

These desired future conditions can be achieved by incorporating three strategies into the decision-making process for city officials, business owners, nonprofits, and involved citizens. These strategies build on one another. For example, the third strategy is easier and more effective when the first two have been addressed.

1. **Expand the Infrastructure.** Deer Lodge needs the population to be able to support and sustain a thriving business community. There should be a substantial focus on constructing new housing, expanding infrastructure to meet commercial and residential needs, and improving the amenities that draw people to a town such as parks, trails, and schools. Furthermore, both public and private property owners should diligently maintain their existing infrastructure. A clean and well-kept city is key to attracting potential businesses and residents.
2. **Enrich the Organization.** Improving and expanding existing amenities can only occur when there is cooperation, not competition, between the different organizations in town. These groups should organize their efforts, when possible, on shared strategies and goals. Collaboration is essential for tackling projects with big impacts, and cooperation allows for shared resources, shared expertise, and better results for all parties.
3. **Enhance the Experience.** Deer Lodge needs to provide fantastic experiences in order to attract visitors and retain residents. A Main Street with fun events, unique locations, lighting, signage, walkability, color, art, safety, and variety creates a city worth living in and visiting. These experiences are best and most easily created when there is adequate infrastructure and rich organization between local individuals and groups.

GOALS-OBJECTIVES-ACTIONS

2015 Growth Policy- Goals Achieved

While this updated Growth Policy contains new goals for City residents to focus on, it is important to note that many of the goals in the City's 2015 Growth Policy were achieved. Many projects identified in that Growth Policy have either been attempted, completed or are currently underway. These include but are not limited to:

- An attempt was made to create a Business Improvement District but did not succeed.
- Engaging Deer Lodge's youth in downtown revitalization has occurred in small steps through community organizations.
- The City has maintained its status with the Montana Main Street Program.
- Deer Lodge has developed a specific logo for the community, which is found on the cover of this Growth Policy.
- Increasing the number of cultural and seasonal events in the City has occurred to a limited extent along with finding funding sources to support such events.
- A vision is being developed in conjunction with EPA and the County for parkland owned along the Clark Fork River.
- Remediation is currently underway at the Passenger Refueling Area, Milwaukee Roundhouse Area, and Clark Fork River superfund sites
- Creating wider trail connections is being undertaken by the City, County Parks Board and Grant Kohrs Ranch and is still underway.
- Planting street trees in conjunction with MDT along Main Street has been moderately achieved.
- Creating iconic public art in the north end of Town leading into downtown was achieved in 2023.
- A downtown building façade improvement program has been created.
- A pocket park is being developed next to Main Street Bridge over Cottonwood Creek.
- A Small Business Development Center has been established.
- Relationships have formed leading to cooperation on flood control along Cottonwood Creek.
- New floodplain maps are being created for the City and County.
- A floodplain mitigation plan has been created for Cottonwood Creek and six (6) properties have been acquired.
- The revitalization of downtown properties has occurred to some extent, including City Hall and remediation at the Deer Lodge Hotel.
- City is working closely with Headwaters RC&D on Brownfields projects.
- The Zoning Code was amended to allow greater lot coverage maximums and decreased minimum lot sizes in most residential districts. Duplexes, Triplexes, and Fourplexes were also added as permitted uses in most residential districts.
- The City adopted an Annexation and Extension of Services Plan in 2016.
- A Planning and Community Development link has been created on the City's website and all City Planning forms are available online.
- The City Chief Administrative Officer now serves as the City Planner.

The following are the goals, objectives, and actions that City residents would like to achieve to address the opportunities and challenges identified in this plan. The goals and objectives in this section are listed by topic and are followed by the actions identified to achieve them. Actions meant to implement Growth Policy include but are not limited to considering how to protect the historic character of the City, evaluating the potential need for a zoning code, updating the City's Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations, ensuring cooperation between the City and Powell County, the upgrade of infrastructure and providing day to day services.

GOALS-OBJECTIVES-ACTIONS

ECONOMY

The City's residents need economic opportunities and stability to prosper in a post industrial economy and a constantly changing global economy. The City's economy has traditionally been based upon railroads, natural resources, and employment at the State Prison. Natural resources have been in decline while the Prison has provided stable employment. Nonetheless the City should work to strengthen and diversify its economy into a postindustrial and global economy.

Economic Goals

- E-1: Maintain existing living wage jobs and attract new ones i.e. timber, industrial, manufacturing, high tech.
- E-2: Create a successful image and brand based upon the City's history and character and that instills pride in residents and facilitates economic growth.
- E-3: Ensure Main Street is the economic and social hub for the City.
- E-4 Create a welcoming environment for business development.

Economic Objectives

- a. Examine the viability of creating an industrial park.
- b. Examine the potential of attracting a trade school.
- a. Undertake a professional marketing and branding process.
- b. Become a "gateway community" to Montana.
- c. Provide wayfinding signage to help residents and visitors find locations of interest.
- a. Update and implement the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan.
- b. Minimize storefront vacancies.
- c. Improve pedestrian connectivity and safety.
- d. Examine ADA accessibility issues.
- e. Identify incentives for businesses and property owners to improve their store fronts.
- f. Provide signage to help residents and visitors find locations of interest.
- g. Promote additional downtown events.
- h. Improve the visual appearance of the Main Street corridor (street art, improve storefronts/facades, seasonal decorations, etc.)
- i. Consider the creation of a business development district (BID).
- a. Undertake a market sector analysis and SWOT analysis of the City's economy.

GOALS-OBJECTIVES-ACTIONS

Economic Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Schedule
E-1.a	Develop an industrial park feasibility study.	City Council, Chamber of Commerce and Headwaters RCD	Low
E-1.b	Attract a trade school to the City.	Headwaters RCD	Low
E-2.a	Develop a marketing plan and brand for the City.	City Council, Chamber of Commerce and Headwaters RCD	High
E-2.b	Include “gateway community” discussion in marketing and brand for the City.	City Council, Chamber of Commerce and Headwaters RCD	High
E-2.c.	Update and implement the City’s Wayfinding Plan recommendations.	City Council, Chamber of Commerce and Headwaters RCD	Medium
E-2.d	Identify and pursue tourism as a major economic development strategy	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, and business owners	Medium
E-3.a	Update the Downtown Master Plan.	City Council and Planning Board	High
E-3.b	Minimize storefront vacancies using methods such as making buildings more tenant-ready, buildings comply with City codes, and improving the visual appearance of buildings.	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, business owners and Headwaters RCD.	High
E-3.c.	Develop a pedestrian transportation plan for Main Street.	City Council and Planning Board.	Medium
E-3.d.	Develop an ADA assessment for Main Street.	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, and business owners	Low
E-3.e.	Create incentives to maintain downtown storefronts.	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, business owners and Headwaters RCD.	Low
E-3.f.	Update and implement the City’s Wayfinding Plan recommendations.	City Council, Chamber of Commerce and Headwaters RCD	Medium
E-3.g.	Create a working group to consider providing street art along Main Street.	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, business owners and Headwaters RCD.	Low
E-4.a	Undertake discussions about the merits of creating a business improvement district (BID).	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, and business owners	Medium
E-4.b	Help create a hotel and convention center in town	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Headwaters RCD.	Low

GOALS-OBJECTIVES-ACTIONS

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Well maintained infrastructure is necessary to ensure the health and safety of City residents and help promote economic growth. Infrastructure managed by the City can range from streets and buildings and water and sewer to equipment such as loaders, trucks, and computers.

Infrastructure Goals	Infrastructure Objectives
▪ IPF-1: Improve the Water System.	a. Complete inventory of water distribution lines to identify lead and copper service lines. b. Replace lead and copper service lines. c. Improve distribution of water to City residents.
▪ IPF-2: Improve the Wastewater System.	a. Work to adopt the Administrative Order of Consent (AOC) permit. b. Address areas of Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) in the collection system.
▪ IPF-3: Improve the Stormwater System.	a. Reduce stormwater flows into the wastewater collection system. b. Develop a comprehensive approach to addressing stormwater in the City.
▪ IPF-4: Improve the Maintenance and Safety of the Street System.	a. Use the City's existing planning documents such as the PASER to prioritize street maintenance. b. Increase pedestrian safety along Main Street.
▪ IPF-5: Identify and use alternative funding sources to improve infrastructure and facilities.	a. Examine the potential to create a tax increment financing district (TIF) within the City. b. Develop strategies for reducing the impact of railroad crossing on vehicle and alternative transportation
▪ IPF-6: Climate Resiliency.	a. Pursue retrofitting of existing lights with energy-efficient LED lights. b. Create and/or incentivize solar power infrastructure. c. Promote energy efficient practices at City Hall and City facilities. d. Update the actions and responsibility table as necessary to incorporate this goal.

GOALS-OBJECTIVES-ACTIONS

Infrastructure Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Schedule
IPF-1.a-b	Complete inventory of water lines to identify lead and coppers services	City Council and City Public Works	High
	Replace lead and copper service lines.		
IPF-1.c	Complete water distribution modeling.	City Council and City Public Works	Medium
IPF-2.a	Continue to work with Montana DEQ to obtain an approved Administrative Order of Consent (AOC) permit.	City Council and City Public Works	High
IPF-2.b	Address Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) through the replacement of leaking collection lines and reducing stormwater flows entering the system	City Council and City Public Works	High
IPF-3.a	Develop a stormwater management plan for the City.	City Council and City Public Works	High
IPF-4.a	Use the City's PASER to prioritize street maintenance.	City Council and City Public Works	Medium
IPF-4.b	Develop a pedestrian transportation plan for Main Street.	City Council and Planning Board.	Medium
IPF-5.a	Consider the creation of a tax increment financing district for the Main Street area.	City Council and Chamber of Commerce	Medium
IPF-5.b	Develop strategies for reducing the impact of railroad crossing on vehicle and alternative transportation	City Council and Public Works	Low

GOALS-OBJECTIVES-ACTIONS

LOCAL SERVICES

Quality of life for City residents depends upon many things, particularly the provision of services such as law enforcement, fire protection, parks and recreation, healthcare, education, emergency services, senior services, and solid waste disposal.

Local Services Goals	Local Services Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LS-1: Provide City youth with a variety of recreational and social opportunities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Examine the continued functionality of Trask Hall for youth activities. b. Support efforts in town to renovate and improve the track and football field.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LS-2: Ensure the City’s senior citizens have well-funded and quality services and facilities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Upgrade or replace the current senior center. b. Examine alternative methods to fund senior services and facilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LS-3: Provide residents with high quality parks and trail facilities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to create trail connectivity within and outside the City. b. Improve the maintenance of parks and trails such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dog park -Pickle ball courts -Splash park -Jaycee Park improvements -Connect Old Yellowstone Trail to the City c. Promote the planting of trees within parks and along appropriate City streets. d. Support the efforts of the County Park Board. e. Consider a parks improvement district to fund upkeep and improvements. f. Pursue funding for the creation of new parks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LS-4: Ensure City residents are provided with well-maintained streets and sidewalks. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Examine the potential to expand snowplowing on non-emergency route streets. b. Examine alternative methods to improve and replace aging sidewalks. c. Create a sidewalk inventory.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LS-5: Improve mental health services. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promote the creation and expansion of local mental health services. b. Coordinate with the County and the Medical Center to improve access to mental health services and better advertise their availability.

GOALS-OBJECTIVES-ACTIONS

Local Services Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Schedule
LS-1.a	Develop a preliminary architectural report (PAR) for Trask Hall to identify needed improvements.	City, County, School District, Headwaters RCD	Low
LS-1.b	Support efforts in town to renovate and improve the track and football field.	Ted Rule Memorial Track and Football Field Foundation	Medium
LS-2.a	Develop a preliminary architectural report (PAR) for the senior center to identify needed improvements.	City, County, Powell County Seniors Center	Medium
LS-2.b	Examine the potential for a mill levy to support senior services.	City Council and County Commission	Medium
LS-3.a	Implement the recommendations of the City Parks and Trails Plan.	City Council	High
LS-3.b-c	Examine the potential of creating a parks and trails improvement district.	City Council	Low
LS-3.e	Ensure regular attendance by the City appointee to the County Parks Board meetings.	City Council	Medium
LS-3.f	Develop a park and trail funding strategy that dovetails with the City Parks and Trails Plan.	City Council	Medium
LS-4.a	Examine the potential of creating a special improvement district for expanded snow plowing on non-emergency routes.	City Council	High
LS-4.b	Examine the potential of creating a special improvement district or low interest loans for sidewalk improvements and replacement.	City Council	Low
LS-4.c	Develop a sidewalk inventory and condition assessment that identifies the City's highest priorities, estimated costs and funding options.	City Council and Public Works Department	Medium
LS-5.a	Identify additional funding mechanisms for emergency services.	City Council and County Commission	Medium
LS-5.b	Create a mental health advisory committee to examine steps that can be taken to improve and increase access to mental health services.	City Council, County Commission, Deer Lodge Medical Center, Western Montana Mental Health Center	High

LAND USE

To be successful, the City will need to work to attract new residents and businesses, and the City's regulatory environment must be predictable and fair. New development should occur in areas with limited natural hazards such as flooding and where it is efficient for the City to provide services. To improve the appearance of the City areas that contain debris, junk vehicles and/or abandoned/dilapidated structures should be cleaned up.

GOALS-OBJECTIVES-ACTIONS

Land Use Goals	Land Use Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LU-1: Maintain the historic character of the City. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support the work of the Historic Preservation Commission. b. Create a historic preservation planning document. c. During the creation of the historic preservation plan, identify the most appropriate actions to protect the historic character of the City i.e., incentives, regulations, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LU-2: Improve the visual appearance of the City. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consider creating a program to help residents clean up debris and junk. b. Organize community clean up days. c. Enforce current community decay codes as necessary and consider appropriate amendments. d. Support funding for the renovation or removal of older/dilapidated structures. e. Other?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LU-3 Ensure that new subdivisions are safe, efficient and in the best interests of the City. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. City Subdivision Regulations will comply with state statute and best practices.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LU-4 Ensure that the City zoning code provides for safe, efficient development that is in the best interests of the City. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. City Zoning Code will comply with state statute and best practices.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LU-5: Ensure that permitted uses within floodplains protect public health and safety, property, and the natural environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. City Floodplain Regulations will comply with state and federal statutes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LU-6: Preserve the Cottonwood Creek Corridor to protect public health and safety, reduce property loss and improve the natural environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement the recommendations of the Cottonwood Creek Flood Mitigation Plan. b. Consider amendments to the City Floodplain Regulations and Zoning Code. c. Incentivize voluntary property acquisitions where appropriate. d. Pursue grant funding to assist with preservation work and property acquisition.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LU-7: Support the continued Superfund cleanup work at the historic Milwaukee Railroad Roundhouse and Passenger Refueling Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coordinate and cooperate with the County and state and federal agencies. b. Pursue grant funding to assist with remediation and improvement work. c. Continue the process of creating a future land use plan for the superfund sites.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LU-8: Support the Superfund cleanup of the Clark Fork River. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coordinate and cooperate with the County and state and federal agencies. b. Keep the public informed about the process.

GOALS-OBJECTIVES-ACTIONS

Land Use Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Schedule
LU-1.a	Create a historic preservation plan for the historic district that provides concrete guidance about how to protect and improve the district such as zoning code amendments, incentives, grant funding etc.	Historic Preservation Commission, City Council and Planning Board	Medium
LU-2.a-b	Create an incentive program to help residents clean and maintain their properties.	City Council	High
LU-2.c	Actively enforce the City community decay ordinance.	City Council	High
LU-2.d	Consider the CDBG Housing Stabilization Program at the Montana Department of Commerce to renovate or remove dilapidated structures.	City Council	High
LU-3.a	Amend the City Subdivision Regulations to comply with state statute.	City Council and Planning Board	High
LU-4.a	Amend the City Zoning Code to comply with state statute.	City Council and Planning Board	High
LU-5.a	Amend the City Floodplain Regulations to comply with state and federal requirements.	City Council and Planning Board	Medium
LU-6.a	Implement the recommendations of the preservation plan for Cottonwood Creek.	City Council and Planning Board	Medium
LU-6.c	Pursue funding to purchase properties from willing sellers that are located in the Cottonwood Creek floodplain.	City Council and Planning Board	Low
LU-6.d	Pursue funding to complete preservation work in the Cottonwood Creek floodplain.	City Council and Planning Board	Low
LU-7.a	Schedule regular meetings with MDEQ and EPA to discuss remediation projects and actions that the City can take to facilitate cleanup projects.	City Council	Medium
LU-7.b	Pursue funding to continue the cleanup of the properties for public or commercial use including the Passenger Refueling Area and Roundhouse area.	City Council and County Commission	Medium
LU-7.c	Implement the recommendations of the land use plans that are being developed for the Passenger Refueling Area and Roundhouse area	City Council and County Commission	Medium
LU-8.a-b	Maintain regular communication with MDEQ and EPA about the cleanup process and schedule to keep the public informed.	City Council and County Commission	Medium

GOALS-OBJECTIVES-ACTIONS

HOUSING

Safe and maintained housing is essential for the well-being of each City resident. The City will work to identify ways to provide housing options for all residents.

Housing Goals

- H-1: Provide housing options for all of the City's residents.

Housing Objectives

- a. Coordinate the efforts of the City and Powell County residents in promoting housing options.
- b. Promote infill development on vacant lots or replace and improve dilapidated buildings.
- c. Inventory and assess vacant properties in the City.
- d. Promote the conversion of second story Main Street buildings to residential uses through "permitted" uses under the zoning code.
- e. Understand the potential impact of second story residential uses on parking along Main Street.
- f. As necessary, amend the zoning codes to promote additional housing while protecting public health and safety.
- g. Identify funding sources available to developers for the construction of a range of housing options.
- h. Support grant and loan applications such as CDBG Housing Stabilization funds for the rehabilitation of existing low to moderate income housing units.
- i. Minimize regulatory barriers to developing safe and efficient housing.
- j. Encourage the use of vacant properties and abandoned buildings for redevelopment.
- k. Examine the use of the Brownfields Program to do site assessments and potential redevelopment of vacant lots and/or abandoned buildings.

GOALS-OBJECTIVES-ACTIONS

Land Use Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Schedule
H-1.a – k.	<p>Create a City-County Housing Taskforce/ Authority.</p> <p>Update the current housing assessment to identify concrete actions that the City and its partners can take to increase housing options in the City ordinance.</p> <p>Develop an inventory of vacant lots and lots with existing structures that have the potential to be redeveloped.</p> <p>Review the zoning code to identify how to promote second story residential uses along Main Street.</p> <p>Undertake an engineering parking assessment along Main Street to understand the current status of parking and what the potential impacts of new development such as second story residential uses would be.</p> <p>Facilitate the use of funding sources such as CDBG Housing Stabilization and Brownfields Program to renovate or remove dilapidated structures and to conduct site assessments for the redevelopment of vacant lots and abandoned structures.</p> <p>Review the City’s vacant properties and abandoned building code to identify if the Code can be updated to encourage redevelopment of properties.</p>	City Council and Planning Board	High

INTRODUCTION



LOCATION

The City of Deer Lodge is located in western Montana within the Rocky Mountains. It is located within close proximity to the cities of Anaconda, Butte, Helena, and Missoula. Helena is the state capital and Missoula is home to the University of Montana. In 2021, the City had an estimated population of 2,935 people and serves as the County seat for Powell County.

CLIMATE

The climate of the City is considered Continental with cold and dry winters, cool and moist springs and falls, and hot and dry summers. The average daily high and low temperatures for Deer Lodge from 1959 to 2016 are displayed below.

(1959-2016)	Average Daily Temperatures at Deer Lodge Airport
January	▪ High: 32.3 degrees F
	▪ Low: 9.1 degrees F
July	▪ High: 80.4 degrees F
	▪ Low: 43.1 degrees F

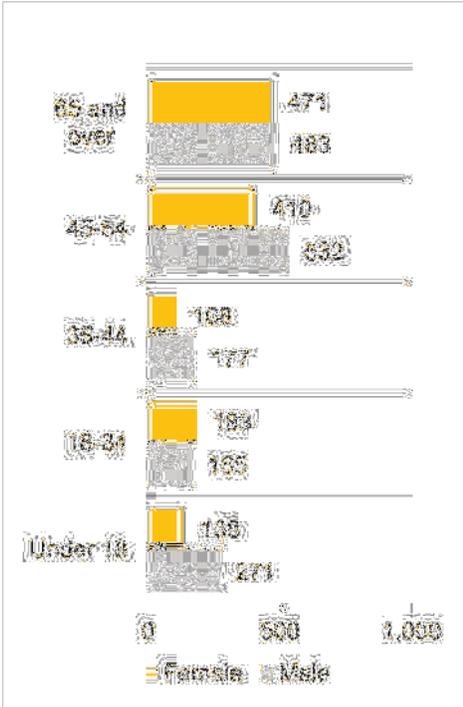
Western Regional Climate Center, 2021

Like most of Montana, the City of Deer Lodge's climate can be one of extremes but is mild and dry. The average annual precipitation in the City was 10.78 inches between 1959 and 2016, with most of the precipitation falling between May 1st - September 30th and May and June being the wettest months of the year.

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Since 2010, the City has experienced a gradual decrease in population. In 2010 the City population was estimated at 3,145 people, and by 2021, it was estimated to have decreased by almost eight percent to 2,938 people.

In 2021, the median age of City residents was 55.1 years of age. This was a significant increase of 28.7% from 2010, when the median age was estimated at 42.8 years.



With regards to age and gender, since 2010, the City has seen a decrease in the number of people in the age groups under 18, 18-34 years and 35-44 years, which declined by an estimated 357, 115 and 140 people, respectively. Conversely, the age group 65 and over saw a significant increase in the number of people from an estimated 579 people since 2010 to 954 in 2021. These changes explain the increase in the City median age over the last ten plus years. An aging population will likely require additional senior services and facilities in the near future.

The City should monitor the demographics of residents over the next few years. Significant changes in any age group may affect the ability of the City to provide services to seniors, ensure adequate education and recreational facilities for children, and ensure a stable and experienced workforce for the City's businesses.

▲ **Figure 1 - Population Age Breakout by Gender for City of Deer Lodge, 2021**

Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021
 Washington, D.C., as reported in Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps)

ECONOMY

Estimates from the U.S. Census Longitudinal Employment Housing Dynamics show that from 2010 to 2020, jobs in the City remained very stable with slight increases and decreases over that period. In 2020 total estimated jobs in the City were 1,016 which accounted for just over 45 percent of all jobs in all of Powell County. The remaining 55 percent of jobs were dispersed throughout the County with many associated with employment at the State Prison. Sun Mountain Lumber and the Deer Lodge Medical Center are two other major employers. The City exhibits a fairly diverse economy in terms of job sectors. In 2020, the largest job sectors were Healthcare (22.3 percent), Accommodation/Food Service (17.7 percent), Retail Trade at (16.4 percent), Educational Services (12.1 percent), Public Administration/Government (11.6 percent), followed by Arts/Entertainment (4.5 percent).

PERSONAL INCOME

Personal income is a measure of the various earnings received by working individuals in a community. Personal income is the total amount of money derived from wages, salaries, investment enterprises, and other sources. Personal income data is collected at the county level, and can be compared as farm, and non-farm categories. Specific data for the City of Deer Lodge is difficult to obtain through Census data, but Powell County data is readily available and serves as a good proxy for the City. Please note that this data is only for residents actually living in the County.

From 1970 to 2021, personal income in the entire County increased from over \$106 million to over \$156 million, or a 47 percent change. The 2021 figure was made up of labor earnings (40.5 percent) and non-labor income (59.5 percent). Non-labor income includes income dividends, interest, rent, and transfer payments (i.e., government retirement and disability insurance benefits, medical payments).

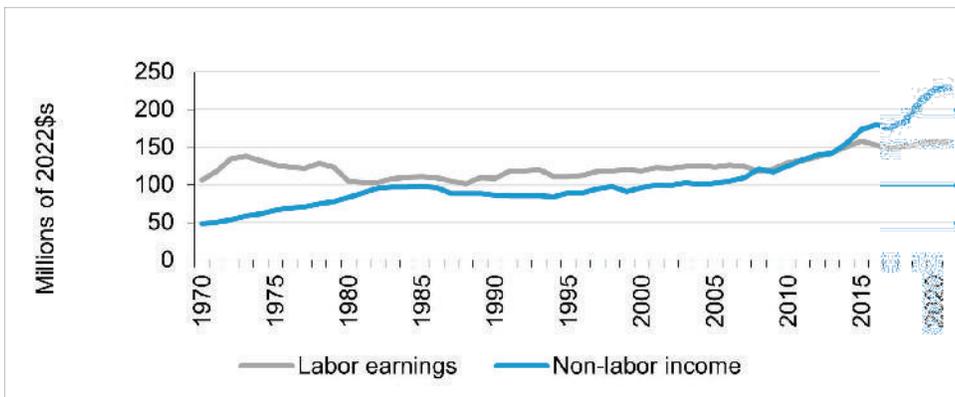


Figure 2 - Components of Personal Income, Powell County, Montana 1970-2021

U.S. Department of Labor. 2023. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Washington, D.C., as reported in Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps).

TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES

Based on figures from the Montana Department of Revenue, the market value of real property in the City has increased steadily, while the taxable value has remained stable.

In 2014, the market value of all real property in the City of Deer Lodge was over \$82 million. By 2022 this figure had increased to over \$185 million, a 125 percent increase. During the same period, taxable values in the City only increased from over \$1.9 million to over \$2.4 million.

MARKET ANALYSIS-ATTRACTING BUSINESS

While the City cannot directly play a role in the expanding of existing businesses and the development of new business opportunities it can help facilitate the process. The City can serve as the lead in communicating of things such as infrastructure capacity, location of City utility services, City codes, and available and developable properties and assistance with connecting businesses and developers with those properties and sites. In order to do this the City needs

ECONOMY

to understand its strengths and weaknesses and what types of businesses would be interested in locating in Deer Lodge. A market analysis is an excellent tool for helping the City understand all of this. A report by Main Street America entitled Market Analysis For Community Transformation says it best:

“Market analysis is a tool to help local leaders make informed decisions about their commercial district. Information about consumers, businesses, and trends helps leaders make educated guesses about the future and choose a deliberate direction among several options. It is a set of measurements that together provide a snapshot of a commercial district’s current economic condition and its potential for growth and change.”

COMMUNITY BRANDING AND MARKETING

There is a strong desire to create a brand to market the City of Deer Lodge to attract new residents and tourists and to improve the local economy. Creating a brand and marketing the City could be important for many reasons, including:

- Attracting tourists who can bring money to the local economy.
- Increasing the number of people who move to the community.
- Encouraging new businesses to set up in the City.
- Showing potential investors why they should invest in the City.

With this in mind the City should consider undertaking a professional branding process to create an image and approach that respects the historic nature of the community while also understanding the City’s current situation and desired future. The branding process should include a review and update of the City’s current Downtown Master Plan to ensure that plan supports the outcomes of creating a brand for the City.

INDUSTRIAL PARK

The City would like to attract additional industrial uses to the community in order to diversify its economy and to provide residents with options for higher wage jobs. The question becomes how to attract such uses. One way may be to provide a location within or near the City that provides adequate infrastructure such as transportation, utilities, and communications. In order to identify such a location, the City should consider working with Powell County, Headwater RC&D, and the Chamber of Commerce to develop a feasibility study to determine if an industrial park is viable and where one might be best located. Such a study should at a minimum provide for the following:

- Market analysis.
- Assess the supply and demand for industrial land.
- Evaluate site options and high level operational plans.
- Discuss ownership options.
- Provide recommendations for creating such a park if viable.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)

Business Improvement Districts (BID) are funding districts authorized under Montana statute. Revenues to fund a BID and its programs and services are derived from a special assessment on the district’s property owners’ tax bill. In general, most BIDs are meant to serve as a catalyst for economic development in the downtown areas of Montana communities. The work of most BIDs is to create beautiful, vibrant, and safe downtowns. Work can range from aesthetics such as installing banners and streetscaping to marketing and other actions. BIDs should represent property owners within a district.

LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Providing services and maintaining reliable, affordable infrastructure is the primary function of the City of Deer Lodge. Services provided by the City include but are not limited to law enforcement and emergency services, street maintenance, and providing drinking water and sewage collection and treatment. Infrastructure that the City is responsible for maintaining includes buildings, streets, parks, and equipment such as loaders, trucks, and computers. Providing these services, infrastructure and equipment requires the City to collect enough revenue to cover its costs.

Based upon data from the Local Government Services Bureau of the State of Montana, and the City, in 2021 the City generated over \$4.3 million in governmental revenues. The two largest sources of revenue in that year were from taxes and assessments, which were over \$3 million and State and Federal intergovernmental payments which were over \$1.0 million. Over \$1.8 million of the taxes and assessments were collected as part of the City's enterprise funds for water, sewer, and solid waste services.

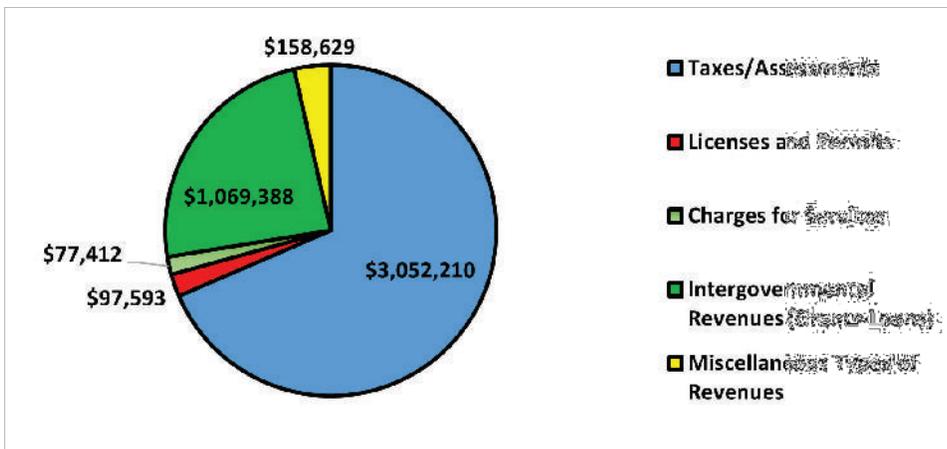


Figure 3 - City of Deer Lodge Governmental Revenues in 2021

Financial Statements-City of Deer Lodge, Montana Department of Administration, Local Government Services Bureau 2023.

Based upon data from the Local Government Services Bureau of the State of Montana, and the City, in 2021 the City had expenditures of over \$4.7 million. The City's largest expenditure was for public works which included expenditures of the enterprise funds for water, sewer, and solid waste.

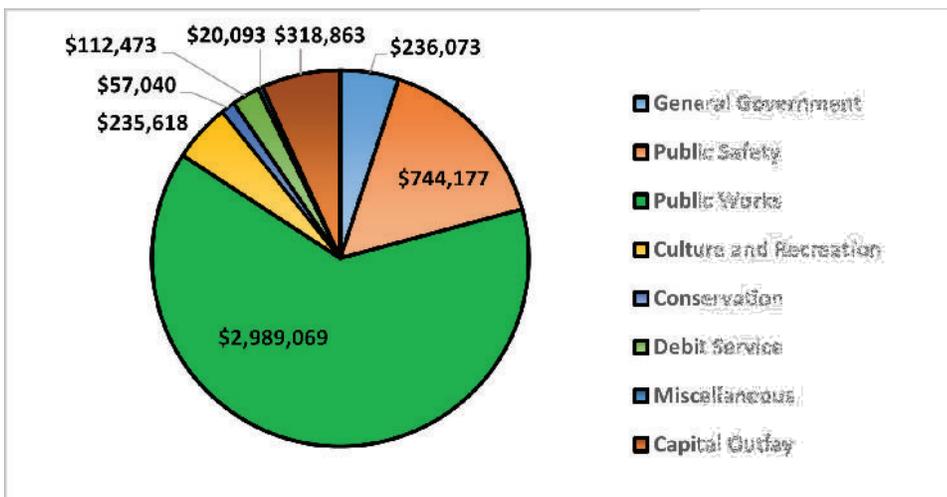


Figure 4 - City of Deer Lodge Governmental Expenditures in 2021

Financial Statements-City of Deer Lodge, Montana Department of Administration, Local Government Services Bureau 2023.

LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

MILL LEVIES

Local property taxes in Montana are calculated by applying mills to a property's taxable value. A "mill" is simply a unit of measurement, and one mill will generate \$1 dollar of property tax revenue for every \$1,000 of a property's taxable value. Each year, the City Council for Deer Lodge can enact a "mill levy," which is a calculation determining how many mills need to be assessed for each dollar of taxable value there is in the City to meet the budget.

Thus, if the City has a significant increase in property taxable value, the City Council would have the opportunity to reduce the number of mills levied on each property with the City to meet its budget. Thus, the higher the total value of property in the City is, the fewer mills are needed to meet the City's general budget.

The other component to property taxes in Montana are voter-approved mill levies. Voter mill levies are created through the direct election of the local residents. These mill levies would be presented to City residents via the ballot, and voters can vote whether to approve them. If mill levies for new schools, recreation facilities or public safety, etc. are approved, property taxes for City residents would go up.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)

Tax Increment financing (TIF) is a funding mechanism under state law that would allow the City to raise revenues for "blighted properties" within the City that would be the focus of improvement. Such an area is known as a TIF district. As improvements are made within a TIF district, and as property values increase, the incremental increases in property tax revenue are earmarked towards a fund that is used for improvements within the district. Expenditures of TIF revenues are restricted to certain uses and must be spent within the district. TIF funds could be used for projects such as street and parking improvements, tree planting, installation of new bike racks, trash containers and benches, and other streetscape beautification projects within the district. A TIF district could be one mechanism that the City considers for generating infrastructure funds for the Main Street area of the City.

STRATEGY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

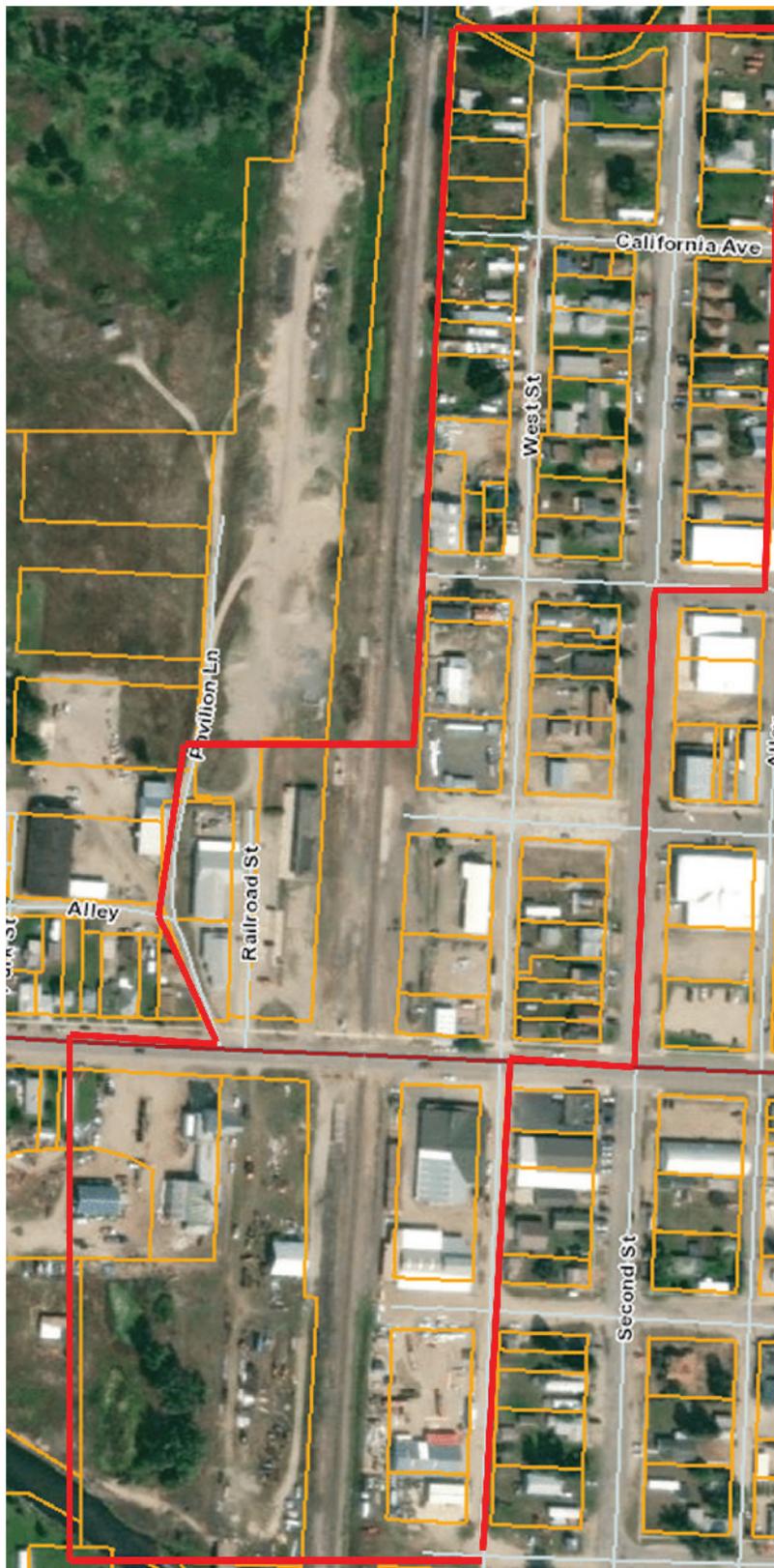
The City of Deer Lodge has a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) that was adopted in 2017 and it guides the operation and maintenance of the City's infrastructure and equipment. The adopted CIP serves as the City's strategy for the maintenance and replacement of its infrastructure. A CIP is a 5-year plan and should be updated on a regular basis. The City will use this Growth Policy to inform an update to the CIP that will occur in 2024.

The main focus of a CIP includes the identification of projects; evaluation and prioritization of projects; and the development of cost estimates and funding approaches. The plan helps the City be positioned to:

- improve its infrastructure through construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance;
- maximize the useful life of capital investments by scheduling major renovation, rehabilitation, or replacement at the appropriate time in the lifecycle of the facility or equipment;
- identify and examine current and future infrastructure needs and establish priorities among projects so that available resources are used to the community's best advantage;
- improve financial planning by balancing needs and resources and identifying funding options; and,
- develop an implementation schedule for prioritized projects.

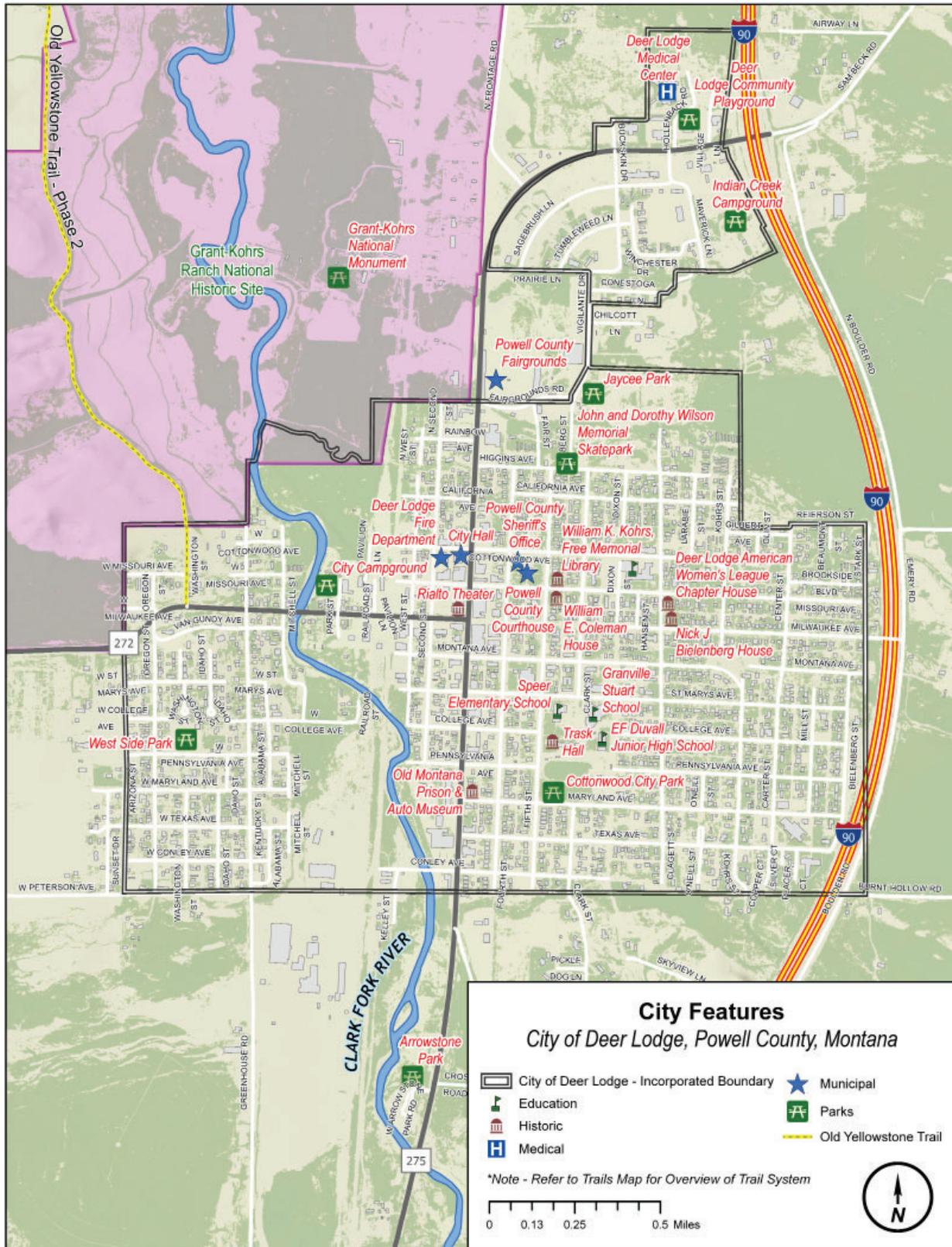
LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

▼ Map 3 - Boundaries of a Potential Tax Increment Financing District (TIF)



LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

▼ Map 4 - Features of the City



LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

DEER LODGE CITY-COUNTY AIRPORT

The Deer Lodge City/County Airport sits on approximately 450 acres west of Deer Lodge. The airport sponsors are both the City of Deer Lodge and Powell County, who have joint ownership of the facility. The airport is operated by a board consisting of 5 voting community members and nonvoting members from both sponsors. Both 100LL and Jet A fuel is available at the airport.

The runway is currently 5,800 feet long and 75 feet wide. The airport board has been working with the FAA for over 10 years on an expansion project. The proposed \$15 million expansion will increase the runway to 7,000 feet long and 100 feet wide, doubling the current ramp space, taxiways, and moving an adjacent road are included in the project. The current FAA guidance states that the project will begin in 2024, but this is the latest in a long line of projected start dates.

The airport currently has 18 based aircraft with 11 hangars. Utilization has significantly increased since 2009, especially jet traffic. Current jet operations are roughly 650 per year. Most of this jet traffic is a result of the growth of Rock Creek Cattle Company, a luxury subdivision and golf course northwest of Deer Lodge. The lack of ramp space and runway length are the limitations that inhibit additional jet operations. Utilization of the airport includes civilian aircraft, air ambulances, and military aircraft.

POWELL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Powell EMS (PEMS) is a progressive Advanced Life Support (ALS), emergency medical service (EMS) agency operating out of the Deer Lodge Medical Center. Powell EMS has transitioned from a volunteer Basic Life Support ambulance service to a career ALS service and employs approximately 20 emergency care providers. PEMS now has a reliable service that staffs two ambulances 24/7. The rural location of Deer



Lodge requires its EMS staff to be highly trained because of the long distance to a cardiac catheterization lab, stroke center or trauma center and the winter weather that often limits the transfer of critical patients to travel by ground. Due to these needs, PEMS plans to train its ALS staff to become critical care paramedics. PEMS is available to respond to emergencies throughout Powell County and often responds outside of the county to assist neighboring agencies. They provide medical training to EMS agencies in Powell County and throughout the southwest region of Montana. PEMS has partnered with the Council on Aging to provide a Community Integrated Health (CIH) program that involves EMS making home visits to those in need. This is funded by a grant that will expire on May 31st, 2024. Future funding for this program is a priority for our community.

Like most EMS agencies, Powell EMS faces increasing costs and decreasing reimbursement. One of our heaviest users is the Montana State Prison. When an inmate is transported to the hospital by ambulance, PEMS is reimbursed at Medicaid rates that are a fraction of the standard billing rate. This creates a financial liability that is partially offset by a county tax levy that began in 2019.

PEMS has many expenses that cannot be met by the current budget including the training required to keep staff performing at a high level, equipment needed to maintain the standard of care such as video laryngoscopy, and vehicles to provide a reliable response such as an ambulance and quick response vehicle.

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Other challenges that face PEMS include the recruitment and retention of high-quality personnel. This requires paying a competitive wage, providing progressive medical protocols, supplying the equipment to support these protocols and up-to-date apparatus to work from.

While PEMS provides an example of what a local EMS is capable of in Montana, limited funding is a challenge for current operation and expansion. Taxes, grants, and unconventional revenue sources are important for the financial health of Powell EMS.

DEER LODGE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Department provides fire protection and emergency services and also responds to medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents and incidents involving hazardous materials. The Department currently staffs 30 members, and its firefighting apparatus includes 2 engines, 2 tenders, 1 ladder truck, 1 utility engine and 1 rescue truck.

DEER LODGE MEDICAL CENTER

Deer Lodge Medical Center is a non-profit 501(c)3 community hospital. It is a certified critical access hospital serving Powell County and the outlying communities. The facility offers inpatient and outpatient care, 24-hour emergency care, physical therapy, general surgery, chiropractic care, and a broad array of specialty services supported both through the hospital and clinic. It has 150 employees that serve patients. As a Gold Certified Planetree Facility, its goal is to keep person-centered care as the top priority.

The Medical Center was built and moved to a new facility, the Powell County Memorial Hospital, in 2011. A helipad at the facility offers fast transport to other medical facilities in the region. The new facility is located in the north part of the City, near the intersection of Main Street and Interstate 90. Recently, the Medical Center constructed a conference and office space directly adjacent to the hospital. The Medical Center faces consistent challenges with staffing, housing limitation, and community economic hardship.

DEER LODGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Deer Lodge Police Department consists of five full-time Police Officers and one Chief of Police. It services the Deer Lodge incorporated area but aids in response to incidents near and around the City as well. The Police Department contracts its dispatch services with the Powell County Sheriff's Department. Available funding for the program is limited, and because of an increase in illegal drugs and juvenile cases in the community it has a variety of infrastructural, programmatic, and funding improvements to meet Deer Lodge's growing needs.

The Police Department would benefit first and foremost from increased staff. Overtime becomes a necessity whenever there is an injury, sickness, open position, or vacation within the department. Another patrol officer would benefit the Department and decrease overtime expenditures. The department would also like to coordinate with the local School Districts to fund a school resource officer, as right now all juvenile issues at the school are dealt with by the officer on duty. Also, an investigator would aid in the investigation and closing of cases, as well as relieve the officers on duty from additional workload.

The Department also needs to stay up to date on law enforcement technology, and to provide better supplies and vehicles to officers. Purchase or upgrade of car computers, mobile data terminals, updated radar detection systems, mobile radios, handheld radios, patrol rifles and shotguns, optics and mounted lights, hard body armor, and helmets would all benefit the Department. In addition, the Department would also like to get on a 3-year cycle of body camera purchases to improve camera reliability. The Department also needs funding to adopt a regular fleet rotation to keep the vehicles in the best working condition and reduce fleet maintenance costs.

LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES



GRANT KOHRS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site is located on Main Street near Deer Lodge’s downtown core and is the only unit of the National Park System designated to commemorate the Nation’s frontier cattle era. It was established on August 25, 1972, and was open to the public July 16, 1977. The site has a visitation of around 25, 000 visitors per year. Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS is one of America’s best surviving examples of ranch life, spanning the period from cattle ranching’s inception in the 1850s, its zenith during the free grass, open range period of the 1880s, to its partial extinction by the 1930s. This history is evident in the original buildings, objects, landscapes, and records preserved at the ranch.

Among the original buildings on the site are the historic ranch house, bunkhouse, blacksmith shop, horse barns, and cattle sheds. Guided tours of the ranch house are conducted year-round, as are self-guided tours of other significant buildings. During the summer months, you can watch blacksmithing demonstrations and listen to the chuckwagon cook tell tall tales and trail driving stories. Special programs are offered throughout the summer and range from roping to presentations on cowboy life to guided walks on the nature of ranching. Special events, such as the Cattle Branding event, Historic Haying Demonstration, and Victorian Christmas Open House, are held throughout the year. Youth are offered a Junior Ranger program. One key event that draws people regionally is the annual Pumpkin Sunday, held in the middle of October. This event provides pumpkins to youth in town as well as classic fall activities such as a hay maze and tractor wagon rides. Admission is always free at the National Historic Site.

Currently, Grant-Kohrs does not anticipate any need for increased staffing but does face the issue of having a lack of affordable housing to attract employees. Of specific importance to the rest of Deer Lodge is the increase in visitation in the past few years. This could have effects on Deer Lodge’s infrastructure capacity and ability to provide amenities for the increased number of visitors.

LODGING AND RV SPACES

There are approximately 100 lodging units spread across the three hotels within the City. There are also a growing number of short-term rentals that are being operated out of existing residential homes. The City does not track the number of short-term rentals, but there is a growing concern across the state about this removal of residential units affecting lodging businesses and housing availability.

The number of lodging units is far less than what the City requires, especially during large events in town. Increasing the number of lodging units would allow the City to host more events, such as tournaments and conferences. One location of great interest to the community is the abandoned Hotel Deer Lodge, in the heart of downtown. This hotel was the first steel-frame 3-story structure in Montana and has a wealth



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of history. While the exterior and structural elements of the building appear sound, the interior damage and dilapidation renders the building unusable without substantial interior remodeling. The building is currently owned by a nonprofit corporation, which is working with both the City and County to secure funding to remove contamination from within the structure and potentially stabilize the structure. However, future reuse would require significant outside investment.

In addition to lodging units, there is a substantial RV campground economy within the City. There are two active RV campgrounds: one privately owned called Indian Creek Campground, and another that is owned by the City. Indian Creek Campground has 72 sites with sewer, water, and electricity. It operates from April 15-October 15 and provides a range of services, including Wi-Fi, laundry, showers, restrooms, a dump station, propane sales, and a fire pit and picnic pavilion. 10 sites are set aside year-round for monthly campers.

The City-owned campground is near downtown and is adjacent to the Clark Fork River. It is operated by a private business, who contracts with the City for the commercial use of the campground. There are approximately 40 sites within the campground; however, utilities are not consistent across all sites. While many have water, sewer, and power utilities, many provide only power and water. Unfortunately, floodplain restrictions and the placement the campground within the Clark Fork River Operable Unit Superfund Site make further infrastructure improvements very difficult. However, the operator is diligently working to improve the capacity and quality of the campground.

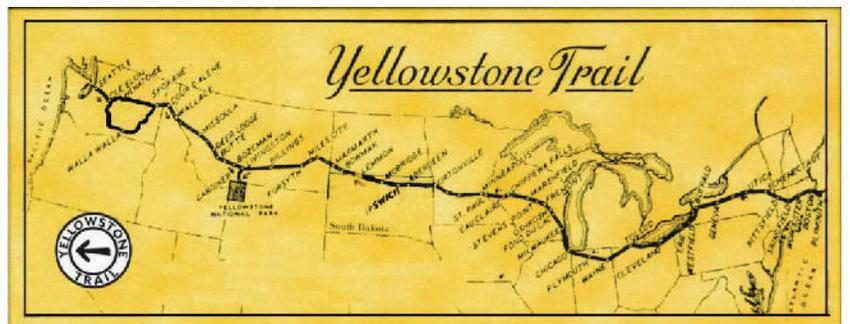
PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS

The City contains numerous recreational facilities that are owned and maintained by several entities including the City, County and School District. These include:

- JayCee Park (City)
- West Side Park (City)
- Skate Park (City)
- Outdoor Education Center (School District)
- Frisbee Park (County)
- Sledding Hill/Basketball Court (City)
- JayCee Park Trail (City)
- Cottonwood Creek Park (School District)
- Johnson Creek Connector Trail (County)
- Grant Kohrs Trails (National Park Service)
- River Trail (City)
- Sledding Hill Trail (City)
- Arrowstone/Folf Park (County)
- Old Yellowstone Trail (County)
- Brianna Rome Park (City)

In 2021 the City adopted a Parks and Trails Master Plan. Details about the City's park and trails needs and priorities are listed in that plan.

Like other City infrastructure and facilities, parks, trails, and trees all need regular maintenance and eventually replacement. With the limited financial resources the City has,



LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

it may be necessary to consider asking residents if they would support a park improvement district to help fund needed maintenance and upgrades.

POWELL COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

The Powell County Fairgrounds is located on Main Street in Deer Lodge, adjacent to Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site and close to the downtown. It is one of the largest fairgrounds in the state and hosts many events, such as the annual tri-county fair with Powell, Granite, and Deer Lodge counties. It offers rentable facilities, such as an outdoor arena and a smaller roping arena, for a variety of private events. The Blue Ribbon Pavilion has indoor restrooms and a kitchen and is available year round for livestock shows or any other type of large event. There are approximately 100 stalls available for equine events. The exhibit building is seasonally available for indoor events and also contains kitchens and restrooms. There is also a covered picnic area with multiple picnic tables available for outdoor socializing. There are currently 24 campsites available for exhibitors and travelers passing through. Overnight stalling is available year round.

The entire electrical system on the fairgrounds will be undergoing an upgrade in 2023-2024 to better accommodate the increase in usage over the last few years. Planning has also begun to evaluate and upgrade the existing grandstands and exhibit building areas in the future. The Fairgrounds will need funding for these updates and for future expansions.

POWELL COUNTY MUSEUM AND ARTS FOUNDATION

The Powell County Museum and Arts Foundation was founded in 1974 as a self-supporting, nonprofit charitable organization. It is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the history of Montana, Powell County, and Deer Lodge. Primarily, it operates the five museums that together are called the Old Prison Museum Complex. This Complex is one of the largest collections of museums per capita in the northwest United States. The Foundation operates the museums under a 99-year lease with the State of Montana, which owns the property.

It is the Foundation's strategy to adaptively re-use and leverage the assets and campus of the Old Montana Prison in ways that create a tourist destination and economic engine for the area. This effort encompasses the operation and maintenance of fifteen historic structures on more than six square city blocks. These attractions include the following: the Old Prison (circa 1871-1979); the world-class Montana Auto Museum; Yesterday's Playthings, a doll and toy museum; Frontier Montana, a western collectible, and a WWII museum; the Montana Law Enforcement Memorial; and the Powell County Museum with Cottonwood City, which celebrates Montana's heritage. The Powell County Museum & Arts Foundation also supports the development of Montana's performing and fine arts.

The Foundation has been implementing capital improvement projects since the early 1980's to restore the Old Montana Prison Complex through extensive work and repair to the 15-plus historic structures. However, because of the size of the Complex and the number of historic buildings, restoration and maintenance is very expensive and often cost-prohibitive. The Foundation is continuously seeking funding opportunities as they become available to help preserve the buildings and improve the amenities provided throughout the Complex.

POWELL COUNTY SENIOR CENTER AND PROGRAMS

The Powell County Senior Center provides nutritious hot lunches in a socially interactive setting to both dining room guests and to the region's homebound seniors, through the Meals-on-Wheels program. It has been operating in a facility at the old railyard depot for almost 40 years.

The facility is also a community gathering place for the region's Senior residents. It offers educational programs and light physical fitness activities to its visitors. It hosts health and medical services along with Medicare counseling throughout the month. It also provides social services such as, puzzles, a game of cards, and weekly Bingo games.

LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

As with most non-profit organizations, the Covid-19 pandemic presented many challenges to the organization. Due to a lack of funding, the Center closed its doors for several months in the summer of 2023. An inability to fundraise, a lack of organizational expertise, and rising costs of services and supplies placed the organization into a deep financial hole that led to the laying off of key staff and the temporary closure. The most distressing impact of the pandemic for the organization was the inability of the Meals-on-Wheels Driver/Runner teams to provide daily check-in services to the region's home-bound seniors.



Some of the challenges the Powell County Senior Center now faces post-pandemic are raising sufficient financial resources to hire qualified staff and keep up with rising food costs, while still providing nutritious meals. Our facility has also been challenged by the lack of financial resources, and as such the organization has had to forego maintenance and servicing of key equipment in the kitchen and has not been able to upgrade/replace its aging infrastructure.

As noted in the recent census, Deer Lodge's aging population continues to grow at a rapid pace, and with the expanded programs and services the Senior Center hopes to provide the Senior Community in the coming years, it will likely outgrow the small and outdated facility along the railroad tracks and will have to raise funds to build a larger facility. Outside funding sources will be essential for this effort. One option would be to combine a future senior facility with a city youth recreation facility. This would have the benefit of reducing construction costs and also put seniors and youth in close proximity, which is shown to have positive impacts on both groups.

STORMWATER

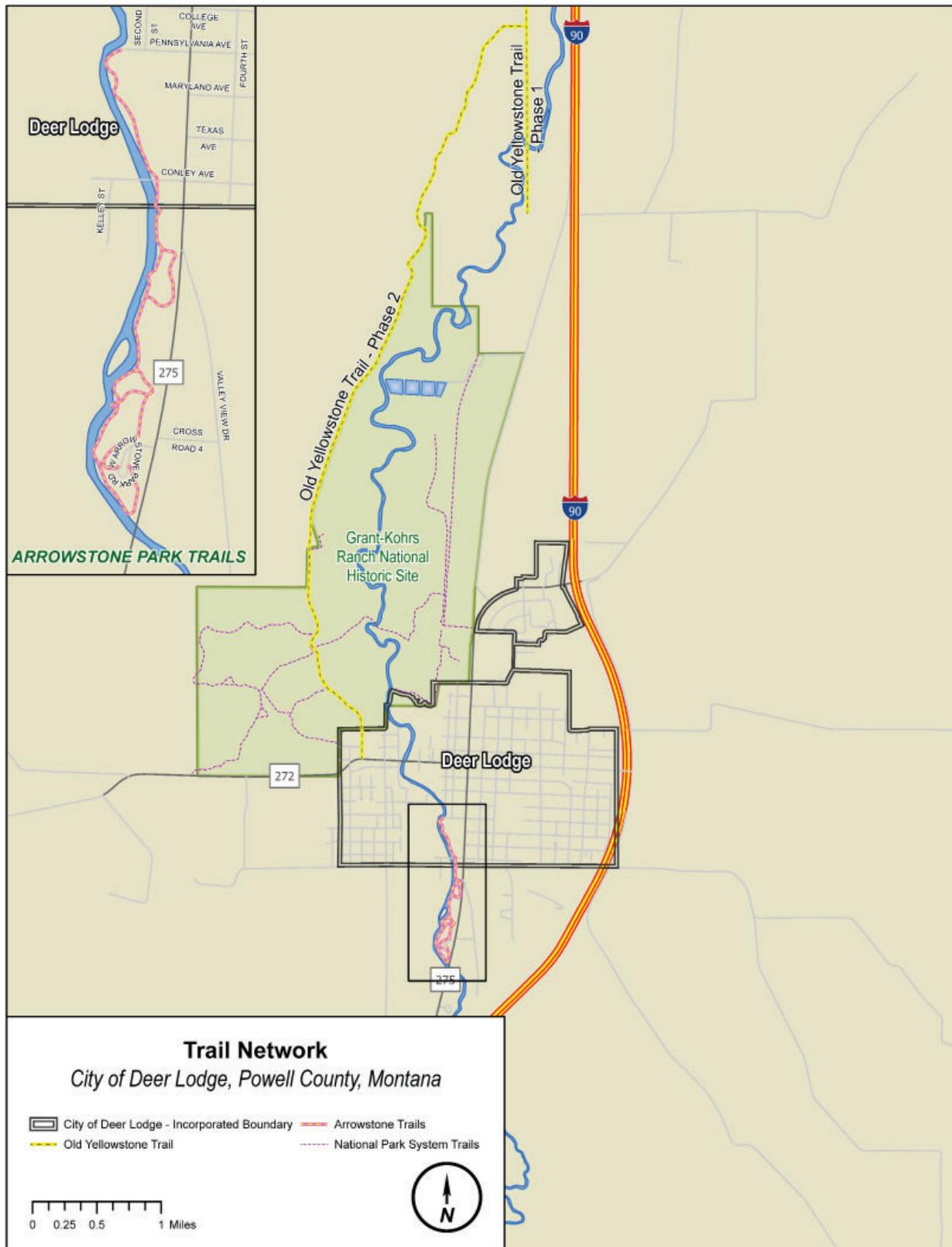
The City has very limited storm water infrastructure and very poor drainage in most areas. Storm drains inlets and piping exist along Main Street for only four blocks between Cottonwood Avenue and St. Mary's Avenue that dumps into the Clark Fork River. There is also a small section of piping on Pennsylvania Avenue that is approximately three blocks long that also flows into the Clark Fork River. There are two small culverts that run under Cottonwood Avenue at the intersection of 4th Street and dump into Cottonwood Creek. The only other stormwater system in place is on Clark Street and runs to Cottonwood Creek.

There are numerous residential and commercial properties in town with sump pumps that pump groundwater from their basements or stormwater runoff from their roofs directly into their sewer service lines. There is no current solution to this as there is no stormwater system that these properties could be using instead of sewer service lines. Completing a comprehensive stormwater system in the city is crucial to eliminating the impact of stormwater on the surface and also the negative impact of excess stormwater on the wastewater treatment plant.

Currently, the city has not adopted a stormwater management plan, which is the first step in the process of identifying and constructing stormwater systems as efficiently as possible. Funding is necessary in order to complete the planning, design, and construction of stormwater system infrastructure.

LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

▼ Map 5 - Trail System Around the City



LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

The City of Deer Lodge maintains approximately 36 miles of roadways and alleyways which are composed of a mixture of street surfaces ranging from thin asphalt, double chip seal surfacing, to streets with 6 inches of asphalt. The city adopted a Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) plan in 2017, which is a national program that rates road pavement conditions on a scale of 1-10. PASER helps the city prioritize annual street repair and maintenance. Informed by the PASER plan, the city adopted a Street Maintenance Plan that will repair or maintain all surfaced streets within the city every 10 years. Throughout this 10-year cycle, the PASER plan is consistently reevaluated to help identify priorities. Since the start of this Street Maintenance Plan, approximately 40 percent of the streets have been repaired. Most repairs consist of crack sealing, dig out and replacement of failed asphalt, and then chip sealing over the top. Some roads can be in such poor shape that they are milled and overlaid.

Funding for the Street Maintenance Program is two-fold. A portion of the funding is drawn from State Gas Tax allocations. The most substantial funding source is from the establishment of a street maintenance district, into which each property in town pays a small amount per square foot of property. This new plan has been a great success for the city and the community. The city has also cut down on its regular maintenance costs due to the implementation of this plan.

Other street projects not included in regular maintenance include a total street and infrastructure overhaul of 2nd Street, which is a major street located next to Main Street and as such is prime for redevelopment for higher density uses, as well as a partnership with the Montana Department of Transportation to identify improvements to the Main Street corridor that benefit Main Street safety and experience.

Railroad crossing also creates a key concern within the city. Milwaukee Avenue is currently the only road that accesses the entire west side of the city, and it has an at-grade crossing of an active rail line. Furthermore, this road also accesses the Montana State Prison, a key employer. Whenever there is a train utilizing the rail line in the city, access to the entire west side and the State Prison is completely cut off. This has major impacts on traffic flow and first responder response time. The city should pursue funding for planning and project implementation that would provide alternative crossings or crossings not at-grade to alleviate these problems.

The city has limited sidewalk infrastructure. Many sidewalks are in poor condition, and there are many residential streets in town that currently lack sidewalks. The sidewalks on Main Street are maintained by the Montana Department of Transportation, and the city has an ordinance that places responsibility for sidewalk maintenance on the adjacent property owners. However, many people in town lack the capacity to maintain or replace their sidewalks, and those that do maintain their sidewalks only do so in front of their property. This exacerbates the problems with connectivity in city walking infrastructure. The city has expressed interest in a program where the city would share the cost with property owners but lacks the time and resources to do this effectively. The city would benefit from an alternative transportation master plan that would collect data to identify key walking and biking paths and provide a prioritization plan. Both the creation of a plan and the implementation of projects would require outside funding.

SOLID WASTE

The city runs its own solid waste collection program for businesses and residents both inside and adjacent to the city. It has two garbage trucks that operate with mechanical arms to pick up garbage cans. Currently, the city has one full-time truck driver, but there are a few other public works employees that can operate the trucks if necessary. Garbage is collected once a week for all residential properties and three times a week for commercial properties unless there is a request for additional collections. The solid waste is then deposited at the Powell County Landfill. This presents a small challenge during winter months, as the road to the Landfill is uphill and unpaved.

The city is currently in need of a new garbage truck. Maintenance costs are increasing on the two current trucks, and the time needed to repair the vehicles can impact garbage collection schedules. Ideally, the city would find the funding

LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

necessary to cycle the garbage fleet on a regular basis to avoid these concerns long-term. Also, the city needs a facility to house the garbage trucks in so they are not exposed to extreme temperatures and the elements.

This garbage collection program is funded through an enterprise fund, and as such, the only funding source for the program is through fees and the occasional grant. Rising costs, plus the need for a garbage truck and facility, have necessitated garbage rate increases in the past and will continue to do so. Furthermore, if the city wants to continue to operate a public solid waste collection service, it will need to pursue outside funding for capital improvements and vehicle purchases.

WATER SYSTEM

The City of Deer Lodge currently has two groundwater wells, the Milwaukee Well and the 2nd Street well, which provide untreated potable water to the city. There was also a third well, the Park Street well, which had to be taken out of service in early 2013 due to detection of high levels of Arsenic. The city is installing a third well south of town in response to the loss of the well in 2013. That well is currently in the drilling phase. The current wells provide adequate water service for most of the community, but lawn watering restrictions are enforced during summer months to protect capacity for fire hydrants until the new well is completed. Furthermore, the city will more than likely need to construct another well once the third well is completed, to accommodate future growth in the city.

The Milwaukee Well produces approximately 1200 to 1400 gallons per minute and was installed in October of 1946. This well is approximately 201 feet deep. The 2nd Street Well produces approximately 1200 gallons per minute and was also installed in October of 1946. This well is approximately 150 feet deep. The Park Street Well produced approximately 700 gallons per minute and was installed in 1999 and taken out of service in 2013.

The City of Deer Lodge also has two water storage tanks. The tanks are inspected every three to five years by means of divers. The two tanks are hooked together through piping to supply water to the City through two water mains. One tank is a 2-million-gallon steel tank which was installed in 1983. The other storage tank is a 660,000-gallon buried concrete tank which was installed in 1968. These tanks are located on Powder Hill, immediately southeast of town on the other side of I-90. Water from the wells is piped directly into the distribution system, which in turn is connected to the tanks.

The water system is run through the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA System). This system electronically connects the tanks and wells and monitors tank levels. Once the water level in the tanks reaches a certain depth, it communicates with the wells to begin pumping water to fill the tanks to adequate levels.

The city has approximately 25 miles of piping in the distribution system that consists of 4-inch to 12-inch water mains of various materials. These materials include cement lined cast iron pipe, unlined cast iron pipe, cement lined ductile iron pipe, and PVC. The age of the lines is dependent on when they were installed and where they are located in town. The city has lines that have been installed anywhere from 1932 to the present day. These water mains provide potable water to approximately 1,460 water service line connections. Due to the new Lead and Copper Rule Revisions, the City is currently inventorying all service lines to determine their material and the presence of lead and copper. The City will need to pursue funding to replace any service lines that are found to have lead or copper.

The city is also working on the incorporation of a distribution system model that will allow it to analyze flows and pressures throughout the service area. This will enable the city to determine the best approach for improving water distribution services. These improvements will include looping dead-end lines and replacing undersized lines. The city will need to pursue funding for these improvements once the distribution system model is completed. Furthermore, the model will provide data regarding how development will affect the pressures and volumes in the surrounding area.

Lastly, as Deer Lodge is located in a dry climate, it should consider drought planning and mitigation in the long term. These projects will require outside funding.

LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM

The City of Deer Lodge completed a biological nutrient removal mechanical wastewater treatment plant in 2017. Prior to the new mechanical plant, the city had operated a four-cell lagoon system that was failing and therefore prompted an Administrative Order of Consent (AOC) permit from the DEQ. The city is still working under the AOC permit until the DEQ releases a new Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit to the city. The city is currently working with the DEQ trying to get this permit developed and adopted.

The new treatment plant has an average daily capacity of 1.00 million gallons per day (MGD), a maximum monthly capacity of 1.25 MGD, a maximum daily capacity of 1.80 MGD, and a Peak Hour Flow of 3.4 MGD. As our average daily capacity is much lower than our maximum daily capacity, the treatment plant can service a large amount of new development without building additional treatment systems.

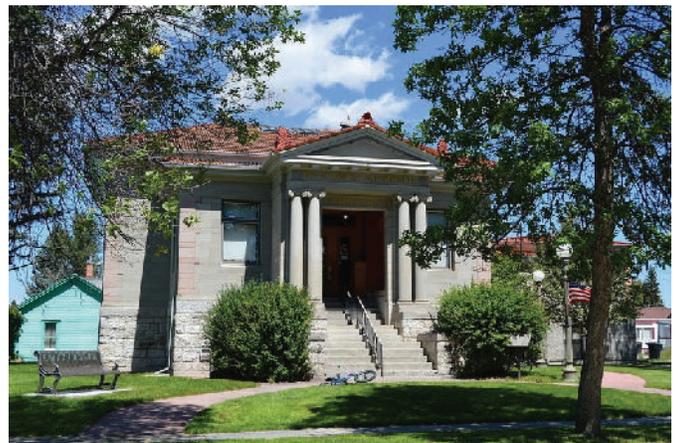
The sanitary sewer collection system is aging but is in relatively good condition. There are approximately 26 miles of sewer main pipe which vary in size from 4" to 24". Much of the piping is clay tile but there is some newer PVC pipe. A cement main trunk line runs from the City Shop to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, into which every sewer on the east side of the Clark Fork River drains. This main trunk line was lined in 2015 with a Cast In Place Liner. In 2019, the city installed cast in place liner on some of the city piping. The sewer collection system on the west side of the Clark Fork River all flows to a lift station and pumped through a force main into the main trunk line heading to the wastewater treatment plant. The lift station was replaced in 2003 and continues to operate well.

The city cleans and camera inspects all lines every year as part of an annual maintenance program. However, there are some areas of town that are receiving Infiltration & Inflow (I&I) into the system through groundwater, stormwater, and snowmelt. This unwanted water into the sewer collection system puts a large strain on the wastewater treatment plant making it much harder on all the equipment. It also makes it very difficult to remove the unwanted microorganisms from the sewer water since the influent sewer water is so diluted. The city is actively pursuing funding to reduce the amount of I&I through maintenance projects. One of the key I&I concerns is that many homes and businesses that have sump pumps and roof drains tie directly into the sewer service lines. This is a major contributor to all the excess stormwater that is received at the wastewater treatment plant.

WILLIAM K. KOHRS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The William K. Kohrs Memorial Library was established in 1902 by pioneer cattle baron Conrad Kohrs and his wife, Augusta. Modeled off public libraries donated by Andrew Carnegie, the building was placed on the national register of historic places in 1979 as a prime example of late Beaux-arts period architecture and is a symbol of the intellectual and cultural capacity of Deer Lodge at the turn of the century.

The library is managed by a board of directors and is staffed by one full-time employee and three part-time employees. It provides many services to the community such as books, movies, magazines, local newspapers, e-books and audiobooks, internet access, computers and printers, fax service, and mobile hot spot checkouts. It also offers assistance to those in the community who need help navigating the internet. It also has a meeting space that is available for nonprofit groups. Currently, the library offers programs for rural schools in the county, a preschool story time, and a summer reading program.



LOCAL SERVICES & PUBLIC FACILITIES

The library hopes to grow its capacity and provide more programs to children, teens, and adults. It would like to offer after school programs and a Lego club for children, story time for babies, book clubs, and educational classes for teens and adults. Their wish is to see the library become a type of community center. However, it is limited by the size of its staff. In order to increase its offerings, it would need funding to hire qualified individuals to create and sustain these programs and activities. Additionally, funding would be required to purchase supplies and advertising to promote these programs.

YOUTH SERVICES AND RECREATION

The City administers a youth and adult recreation program that is organized by two part-time staff members. The program offers flag football, tackle football, volleyball, soccer, and basketball for youth from kindergarten through 5th grade. The program also offers volleyball, softball, and a cornhole league for older youth and adults.

The recreation program has plans and has attempted in the past to incorporate ice hockey, pickleball, golf, lacrosse, adult basketball, kickball, dodgeball, and curling into its offerings. However, there are many challenges that need to be overcome to expand and improve the recreation program. The program is only staffed by two part-time individuals. Funding for full-time staffing would allow the program to provide better opportunities. Furthermore, the Program does not have a gym of its own for practice or games, and currently uses the school district's antiquated gyms around town when they are available. A proper sports complex, including a gym, would allow the program to provide more recreational opportunities to the community. A complex this size would be a significant investment of the City's money and is financially unfeasible at this time without bonding or grant funding. A sports complex would also allow the facility, and potentially the school district, to attract tournaments and outside users to the City. Another creative funding solution is to combine a future youth recreation facility with a Powell County Senior Center facility. By doing so, the cost will be less than creating two separate facilities. This would also have secondary benefits by having seniors and youth in close proximity, which is shown to have positive impacts on both seniors and youth.



HOUSING

Data from the Census Bureau, American Community Survey, estimated that there were 1,665 residential housing units in 2021. Of the total number of residential structures identified in 2021, 865 were built between 1940 and 1969, and 291 were built between 1970 and 1979. It is important to note that according to the American Community Survey (ACS) reliability of this housing data ranges from high to low with variation of less than 12% on the high range to over 40% on the low range. Thus, one must take the numbers with a grain of salt.

Age of Residential Structures in the City of Deer Lodge (2021) (American Community Survey 2022)		
Year Built	Number of Units	Percentage
2010 or later	25	1.5%
2000 to 2009	27	1.6%
1990 to 1999	40	2.4%
1980 to 1989	0	0.0%
1970 to 1979	291	17.5%
Older than 1969	865	52.0%

The older a home is, the more maintenance and upkeep it requires. Older homes are also often less energy efficient, and the increased cost to heat them in the winter can add to the overall cost of housing. Low-income families are more likely to live in older homes as they have a lower market value. Thus, increased costs for maintenance and utilities can be a significant economic burden for them.

According to the ACS, of the total housing units in the City in 2021, 189 or 11.4 percent of all units were identified as being vacant. These numbers are for housing units not vacant lots. Compared to the average for other communities in Montana, this is a relatively high vacancy rate.

HOUSING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There is an expressed need for additional housing options in the City particularly workforce housing. The City completed a housing assessment in 2021, but that assessment should be updated to better reflect the City's current situation and needs.

One option the City could consider is to encourage the development of additional housing units to allow second story residential uses on Main Street as "permitted" uses rather than conditional uses. This would require an amendment of the City Zoning Code. There is a concern among many residents that adequate parking does not currently exist along the Main Street and that increasing residential housing units in this area would further impact parking. In order to understand the current parking situation and the potential impacts of any future development, the City should undertake a parking assessment for Main Street.

According to a report produced by Main Street America called "At Home on Main Street" communities should promote housing on their main streets for the following reasons:

- "There is increasing demand and limited supply of housing in communities,
- Residents who occupy Main Street housing will bolster the small businesses that fill most ground-floor spaces—shopping as locally as anyone ever could.

HOUSING

- Having more residents in the heart of communities supports greater community safety on Main Street. As Jane Jacobs famously noted, few things can more simply prevent crime than the presence of having more “eyes on the street.”
- Adding and improving housing in the hub of a community means more people can fulfill more daily needs with less reliance on personal automobiles. With more people out of their cars, the buildings and blocks of Main Street districts will be more animated with people walking, bicycling, and visiting with one another.
- With greater local self-reliance and support for local businesses, greater walkability, greater density and diversity of activity, and fewer people getting into their own cars and trucks, Main Streets can lighten our collective carbon footprint and mitigate our impact on the climate.”



LAND USE

COMMUNITY PLANNING EFFORTS

The City's previous planning efforts are evidence of the resident's desire to be proactive in regard to planning for the community. Planning efforts include those related to land use, infrastructure, parks and trails and economic development. The following is a list of the major plans that the City has developed since 2015:

- Capital Improvements Plan (2017)
- Downtown Plan (2017)
- Engineering Standards (2019)
- Plan for Annexation and Extension of Services (2016)
- Growth Policy (2015)
- Main Street Grant Wayfinding Plan Final (2018)
- Park and Trails Master Plan (2021)
- Wayfinding Plan (2019)
- Cottonwood Creek Flood Mitigation Plan (2021)
- Successful Deer Lodge Housing Assessment

These plans are available on the City website <https://www.deerlodgecity.com/community-plans>

ANNEXATION

The City of Deer Lodge has a Plan for Annexation and the Extension of Service, which was adopted in 2016. The plan is a guide meant to provide a more predictable process for annexing new properties. It is important to note that if the City is proposing to annex property that will also be subdivided, the City Council must officially annex the properties before deciding whether to approve a subdivision application.

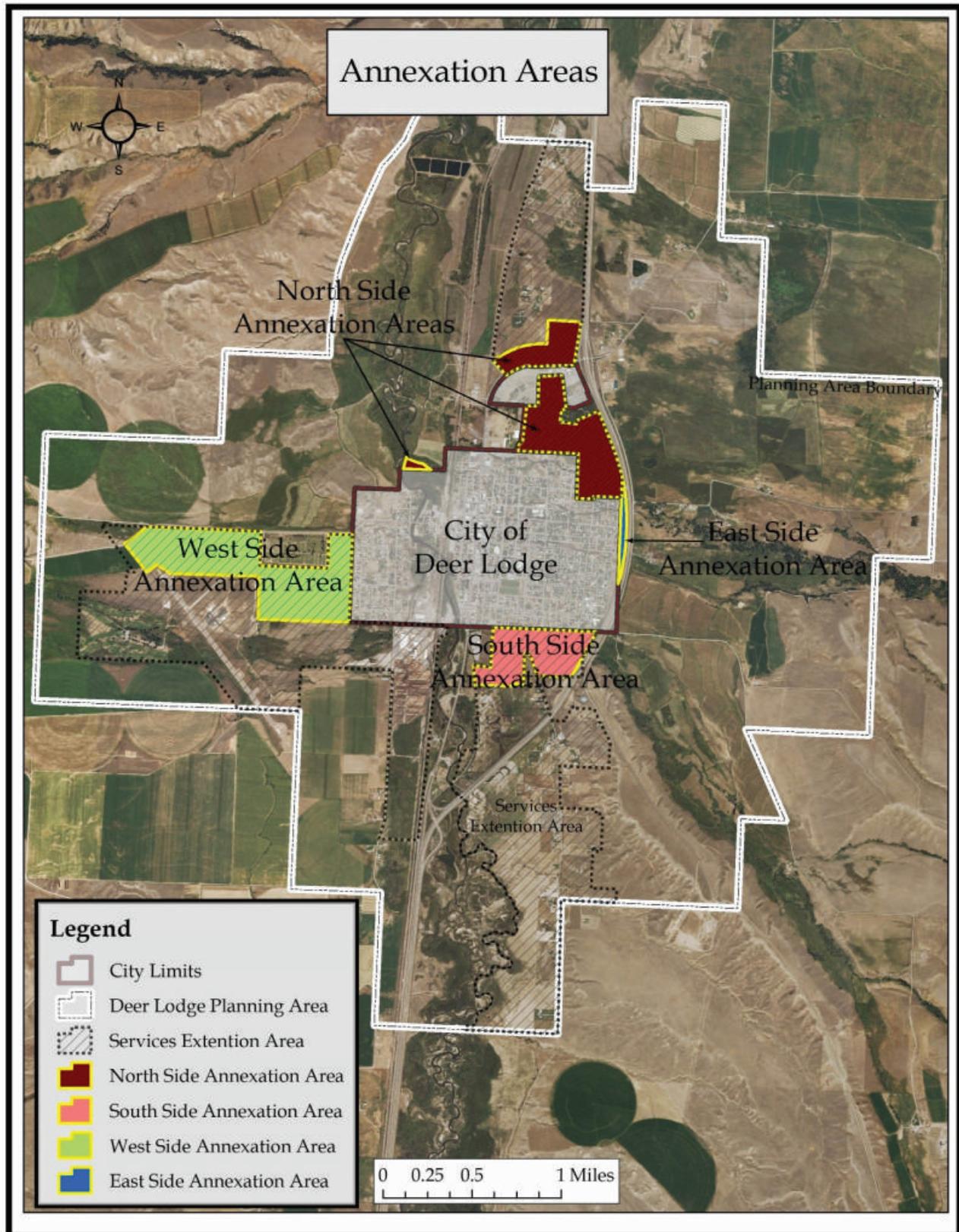
While some new development will occur via the construction of homes and businesses on existing vacant land within the City boundary, inevitably the annexation of new land into the City may be necessary. Most if not all future

annexations would take place following the statutory process called "Annexation by Petition" found under 7-2-4601 of the Montana Code Annotated. Annexation by Petition is initiated by a property owner and is a voluntary process.



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▼ Map 6 - Potential Annexation Plan Map



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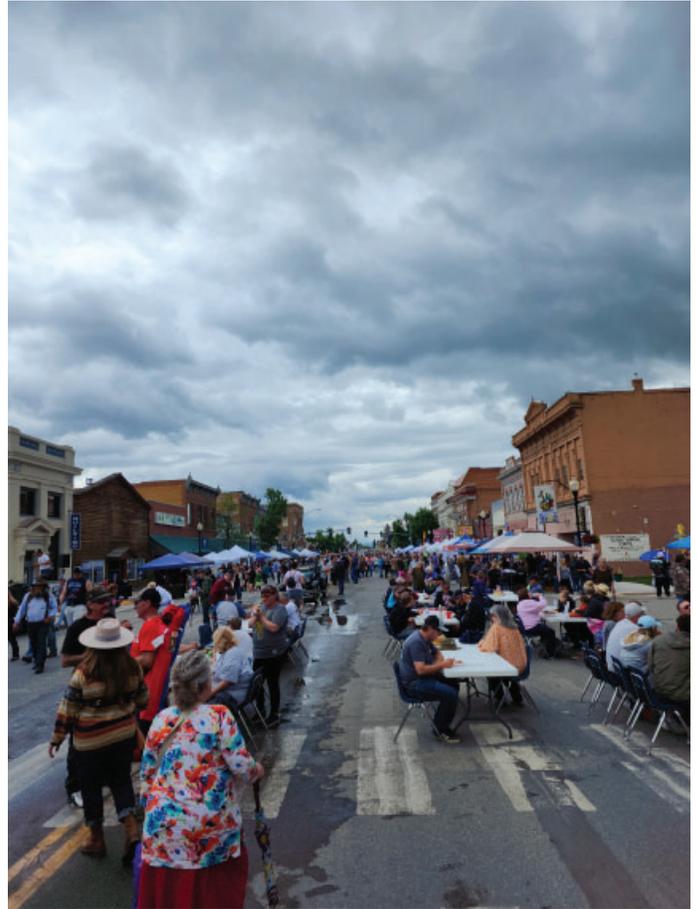
DOWNTOWN-MAIN STREET

According to the Downtown Master Plan (2017) for the City, the downtown planning area comprises the core of downtown Deer Lodge and extends along Main Street from Higgins Avenue on the north end to Conley Avenue on the south, and then extends two blocks to the east and west.

“The planning area includes the six-block Deer Lodge Central Business Historic District, stretching along Main Street between Cottonwood Avenue and Montana Avenue. The historic district has many elements of good urban design such as storefronts abutting the sidewalk, complete sidewalks, and visual appeal of the numerous historic buildings.”

Unfortunately, there are also elements in the planning area that detract from its appeal including vacant storefronts, lack of public art, wide pedestrian crossings and few marked crossings on Main Street, limited landscaping, and rundown building facades as well as some that are out of character with adjacent historic buildings. The current Downtown Master Plan contains significant guidance about how to revitalize the area and preserve its historic character, but it is now over 6-years old and should be updated in conjunction with a potential community branding process.

As mentioned earlier in this plan, there is a concern among many residents that adequate parking does not currently exist along Main Street. In order to understand the current parking situation and the potential impacts of any future development, the City should undertake a parking assessment for Main Street.



STREET ART – MAIN STREET

Street art can be one step that the City of Deer Lodge could take to improve the visual appearance and pedestrian/business traffic along Main Street. According to a March 2020 article in Forbes magazine:

“it [street art] can be the source of civic pride, public artistry, and outdoor engagement in cities across America. Strategically placed art—on the side of a business, under a bridge, on the exterior walls of a community center—not only helps with the beautification of a neighborhood, but also, it can be a return of investment for commerce.”

The article then went into some depth about the practical benefits of street art to example communities. The question becomes, what type of art and theme would reflect the character and history of the City, who would pay for the art, etc.? The appropriate type of art for Main Street could be addressed as part of a comprehensive branding process for the City.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

According to the Downtown Master Plan the Deer Lodge Central Business Historic District is included in the National Register of Historic Places and contains 45 structures, with initial construction from 1884 to 1957. Uses in the District

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are governed by the City Zoning Code, which has a specific section of the code dedicated to the preservation of the Historic District.

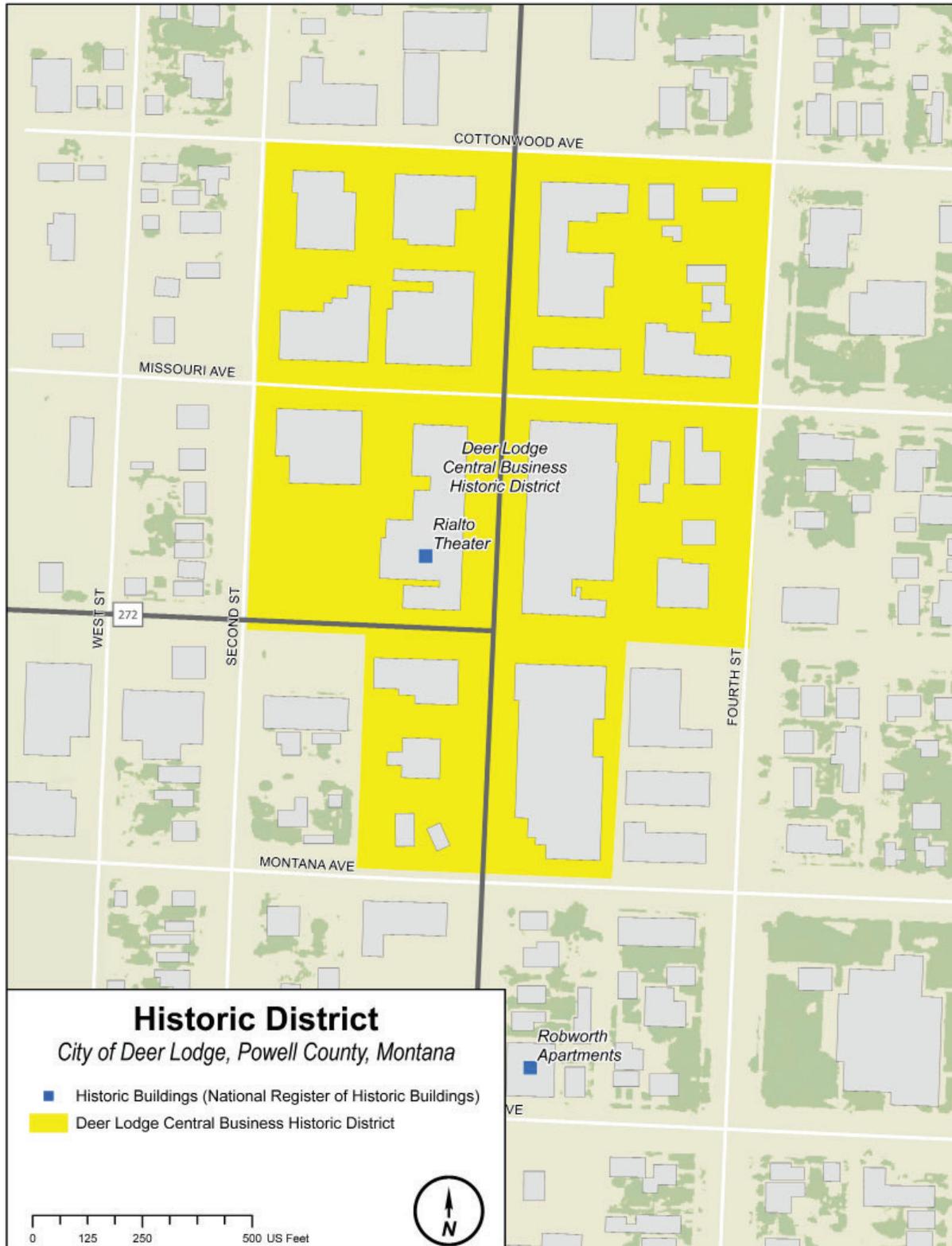
A historic preservation plan for the District could serve as a guide to help the City in the preservation, and the restoration of the character and integrity of Deer Lodge's downtown. Most residents would probably agree that a healthy and vibrant downtown is essential to helping the City thrive and having well-preserved Main Street buildings is essential for that to occur. A future historic preservation plan should also dovetail with the guidance in the City's Downtown Master Plan and this Growth Policy.

The City has a Historic Preservation Commission, and that body would serve as an excellent resource for the development of a preservation plan and for any potential updates to the City's historic preservation ordinance.



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▼ Map 7 - City's Historic District



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CITY AESTHETICS- PROPERTY CLEANUP

Based upon the community survey results, junk vehicles, garbage, and debris in the City have become an “eyesore” in many locations. In addition, the accumulation of junk vehicles and debris along streets and alleys could serve as an impediment to emergency response. One option to address this situation is to create a program to help residents clean up their property. This might include providing property owners with dumpsters or dump trucks to load debris into which the City would have hauled away. Other options are to help residents work with the Tri-County Sanitarian to use the Junk Vehicle Program to remove vehicles.

CITY AESTHETICS-DILAPIDATED HOUSING

In addition to cleaning up properties, there are a relatively high number of dilapidated buildings that should either be renovated or torn down. The CDBG Housing Stabilization Program at the Montana Department of Commerce is one option to fund the demolition of vacant, dilapidated housing if the intent of work is to make a site available for the construction of new housing.

MILWAUKEE RAILROAD PASSENGER REFUELING AREA AND ROUNDHOUSE

These facilities are located within the City of Deer Lodge and were previously owned by the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad which ceased operations in 1986. Over the decades of their operation, contamination of soil, groundwater, surface water and sediment occurred. The City of Deer Lodge owns a large part of the Passenger Refueling Area (PRA) and Powell County owns most of the Roundhouse Area (RA).

Remediation and the cleanup of each site is under way. Once the cleanup is completed it is anticipated that the properties in question can be redeveloped with appropriate uses ranging from industrial/commercial in the case of the RA to park and recreation facilities for the PRA.

The City and Powell County are developing a future land use plan for both sites using funds from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality’s Brownfield program. The plan will provide recommendations for the redevelopment and reuse of each site.



ZONING REGULATIONS

The City has a comprehensive zoning code that governs land use within the City limits. There are currently thirteen (13) different zoning districts which range from managing residential and business uses to industrial, natural resources and agriculture.

Deer Lodge, like the rest of Montana, is currently struggling with major housing and rental shortages. An influx of out-of-state home buyers, the proliferation of short-term rentals, and rising housing costs impact the Deer Lodge community like they are across the state. Of particular concern in Deer Lodge is the age of the housing stock. Over half of all housing units in the city are over 50 years old. As such, many housing units in town that could otherwise be in the market are unusable due to dilapidation and code violations. This contributes to the relatively high vacancy rate of 11.4 percent, according to the 2021 American Community Survey. While these units could be either torn down and replaced, or substantially renovated, rising construction costs make this unfeasible without incentive.

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To combat some of these concerns, the city incorporated many housing-friendly zoning changes to the zoning code in 2022. The primary change was the addition of duplex, triplex, and fourplex development as permitted uses in most residential districts in town. Before this change, 95% of residentially zoned lots in town allowed only single-family homes as permitted uses. The zoning code changes more or less flipped that number, and now approximately 80% of residentially zoned lots allow for duplex, triplex, and fourplex development as permitted uses. Other changes include increasing lot coverage maximums and reducing minimum lot size for newly created lots.

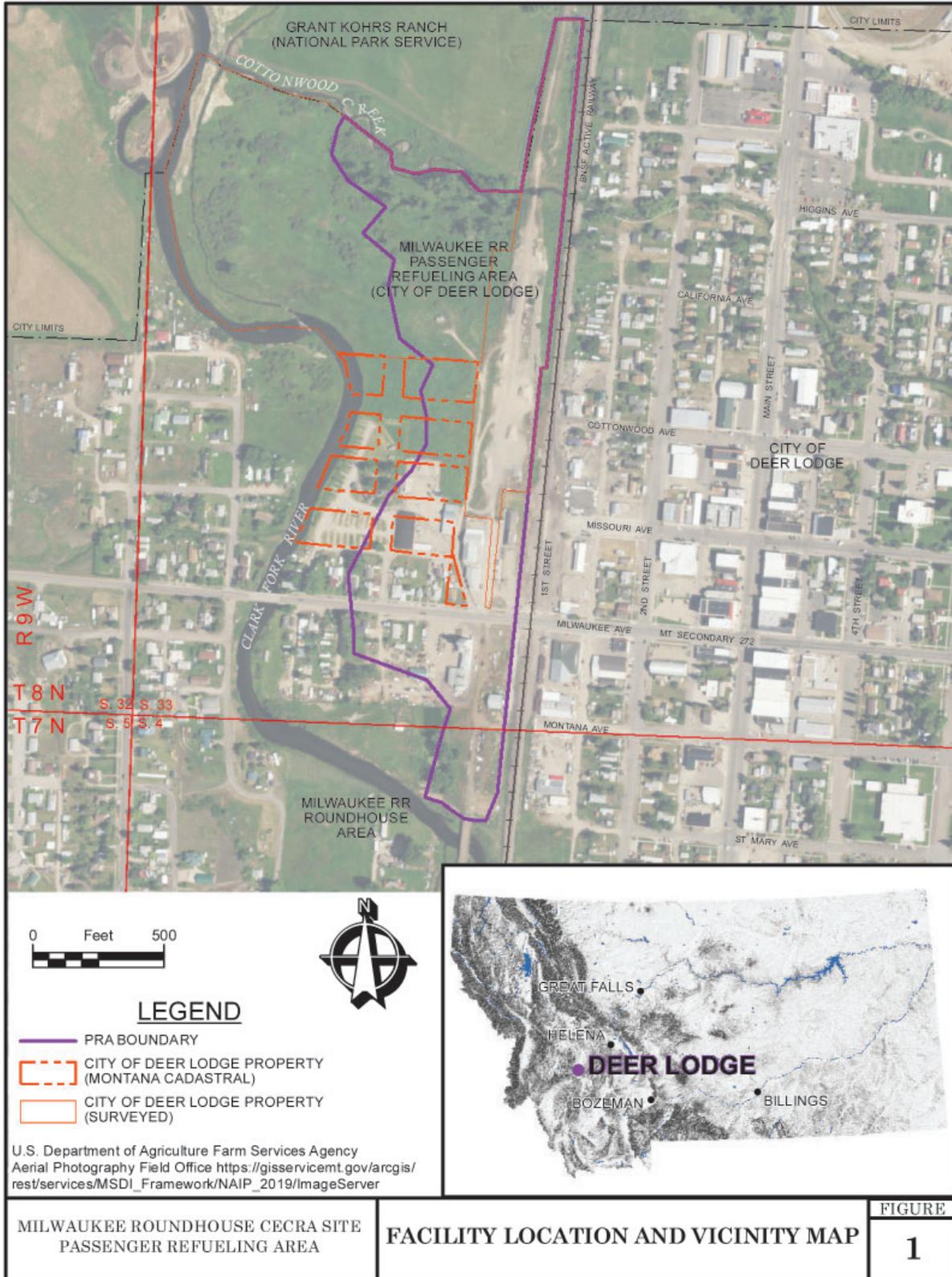
By allowing multi-family developments in most parts of town, the city over time increases its housing stock. It also incentivizes developers and property owners to remove and replace vacant structures. Whereas before it was often cost-prohibitive for a property owner to replace a single-family home with a single-family home, the new changes allow a property owner to build more units on that property. This allows for an increased return on investment for the property owner and reduced construction costs per unit, which may be passed on to a tenant. It also has the added benefit of increasing density close to the downtown core instead of seeing new development occur on the periphery.

Already, one year after the zoning changes, the city is seeing property owners and developers capitalize on the zoning changes. There have been several single-family homes demolished and replaced with duplexes, and many developers are attempting to build multi-family units on otherwise vacant and underutilized parcels.



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▼ Map 8 - Milwaukee Railroad Passenger Refueling Area and Roundhouse Area

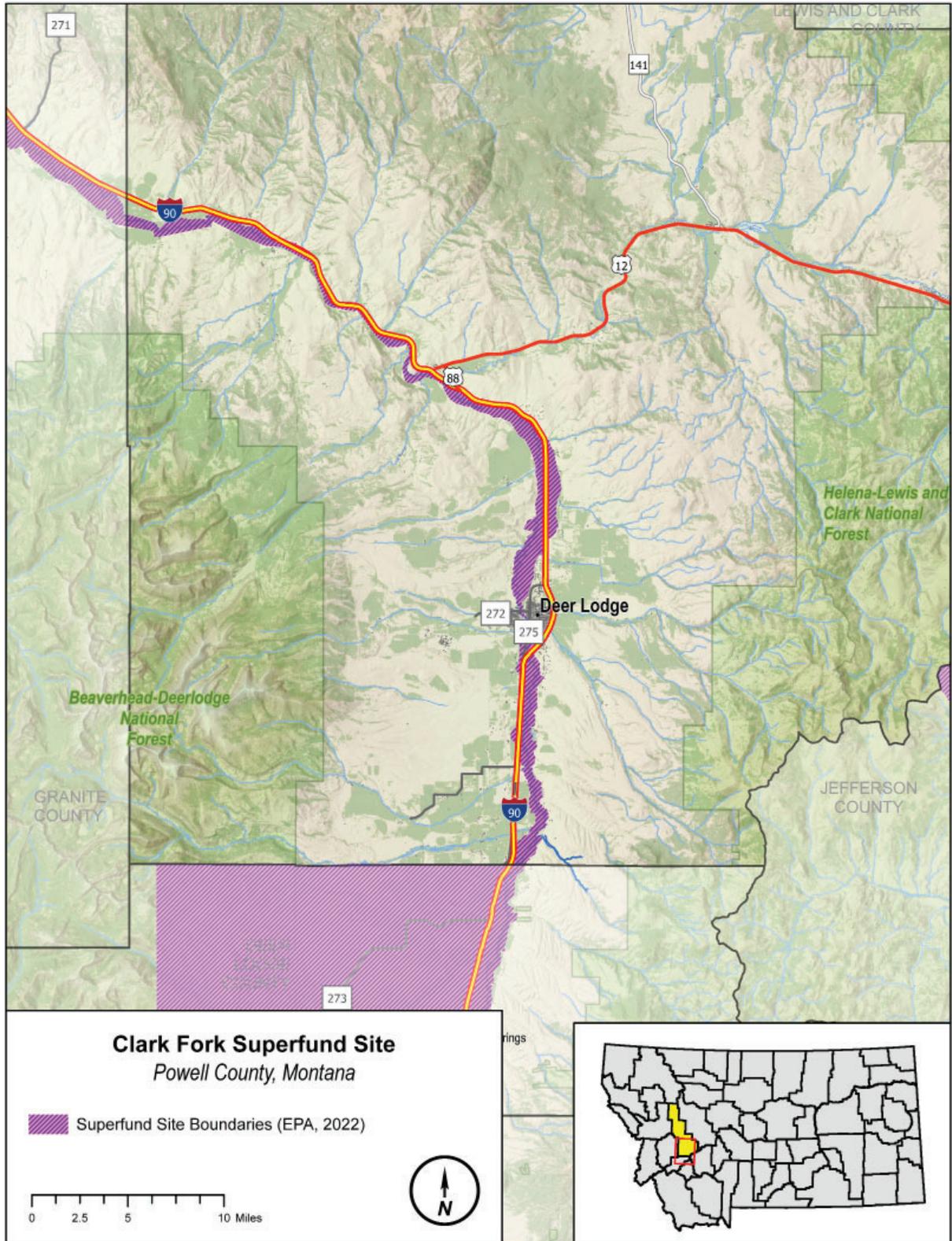


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Hydrometrics, Inc. Consulting Scientists and Engineers

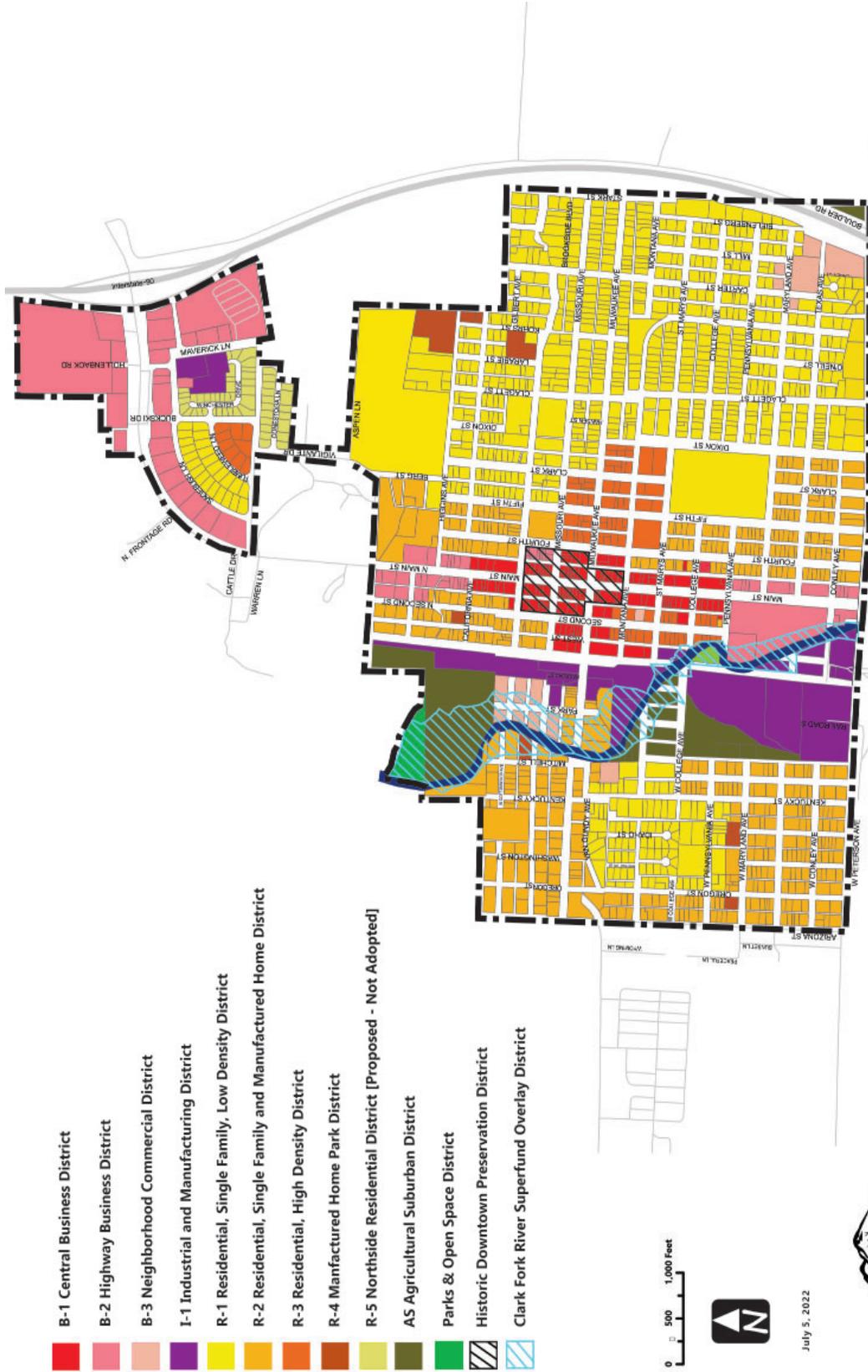
LAND USE

▼ Map 9 - Clark Fork Superfund Site



LAND USE

▼ Map 10 - City Zoning Map



City of Deer Lodge Zoning



July 9, 2022



0 500 1,000 Feet

- B-1 Central Business District
- B-2 Highway Business District
- B-3 Neighborhood Commercial District
- I-1 Industrial and Manufacturing District
- R-1 Residential, Single Family, Low Density District
- R-2 Residential, Single Family and Manufactured Home District
- R-3 Residential, High Density District
- R-4 Manufactured Home Park District
- R-5 Northside Residential District [Proposed - Not Adopted]
- AS Agricultural Suburban District
- Parks & Open Space District
- Historic Downtown Preservation District
- Clark Fork River Superfund Overlay District

LAND USE

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

The City Subdivision Regulations are meant to address issues related to the division of land for new residential and commercial development. These include ensuring accurate surveying, providing legal and physical access, provision of water, sewer and utilities, parkland requirements, right-of-way location and mitigating hazards such as flooding. The current subdivision regulations are tied closely to the City Engineering Standards to ensure that new development provides infrastructure that meets accepted engineering standards and protects public health and safety.

It will be important for the City to regularly review its subdivision regulations to ensure that they comply with state statutes and provide design and improvement standards that create safe and economical neighborhoods within the City.

FLOODING AND FLOODPLAIN REGULATIONS

Flooding is a fact of life in the City of Deer Lodge. The floodplains for the Clark River, Cottonwood Creek, and Johnson Creek areas impact large parts of the City. A small portion of the Peterson Creek floodplain is located in the southern end of the City.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is working with Powell County and the City to update the floodplain maps for the County and the City.

The City Floodplain Regulations were updated in 2022 and are currently based upon the State of Montana's Model Floodplain Regulations. New updates to the regulations will be required in order to meet state statutes and federal requirements upon the adoption of the updated floodplain maps for the City.



As mentioned earlier, the Cottonwood Creek floodplain passes through the City. Protecting the creek corridor could minimize flood risks to City residents. The Cottonwood Creek Flood Mitigation Plan was completed in 2021 and provides detailed guidance about actions that could be taken to help protect the corridor and minimize flood risks.

WATER AND SEWER ATTACHMENT FEES

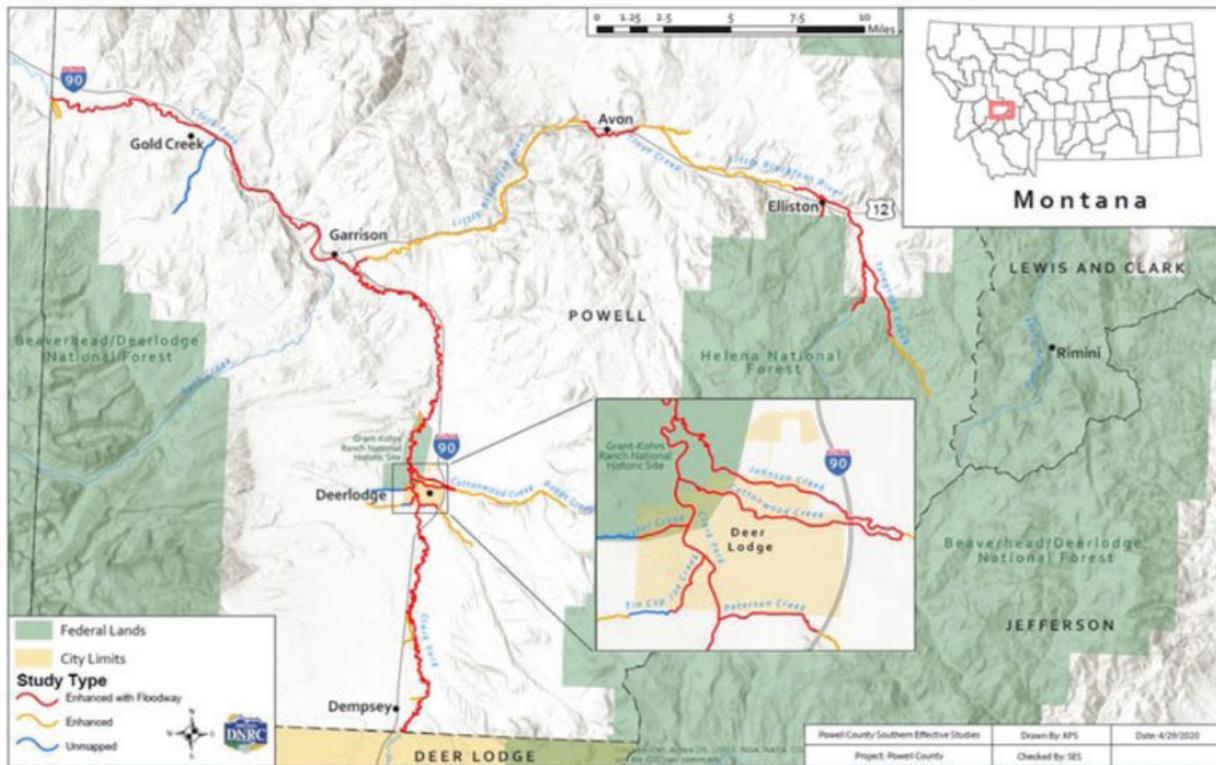
In order to connect residential, commercial, or industrial use to the City's water distribution system and sewer collection system, new users must pay a "tap-in" fee. These fees are established under the City Code of Ordinances and should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are helping to offset some of the actual costs of maintaining each system.

SAND AND GRAVEL RESOURCES

Access to sand and gravel is important for the construction and maintenance of streets and roads as well as the construction of new homes and businesses. According to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality Open Cut Mining Program, four (4) permitted gravel pits are located within six (6) miles of the City of Deer Lodge. The City's zoning regulations would govern the development of sand and gravel operations within the City and Powell County's zoning regulations would govern sand and gravel operations adjacent and near the City.

LAND USE

▼ Map 11 - Floodplain Mapping Update Map



WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE

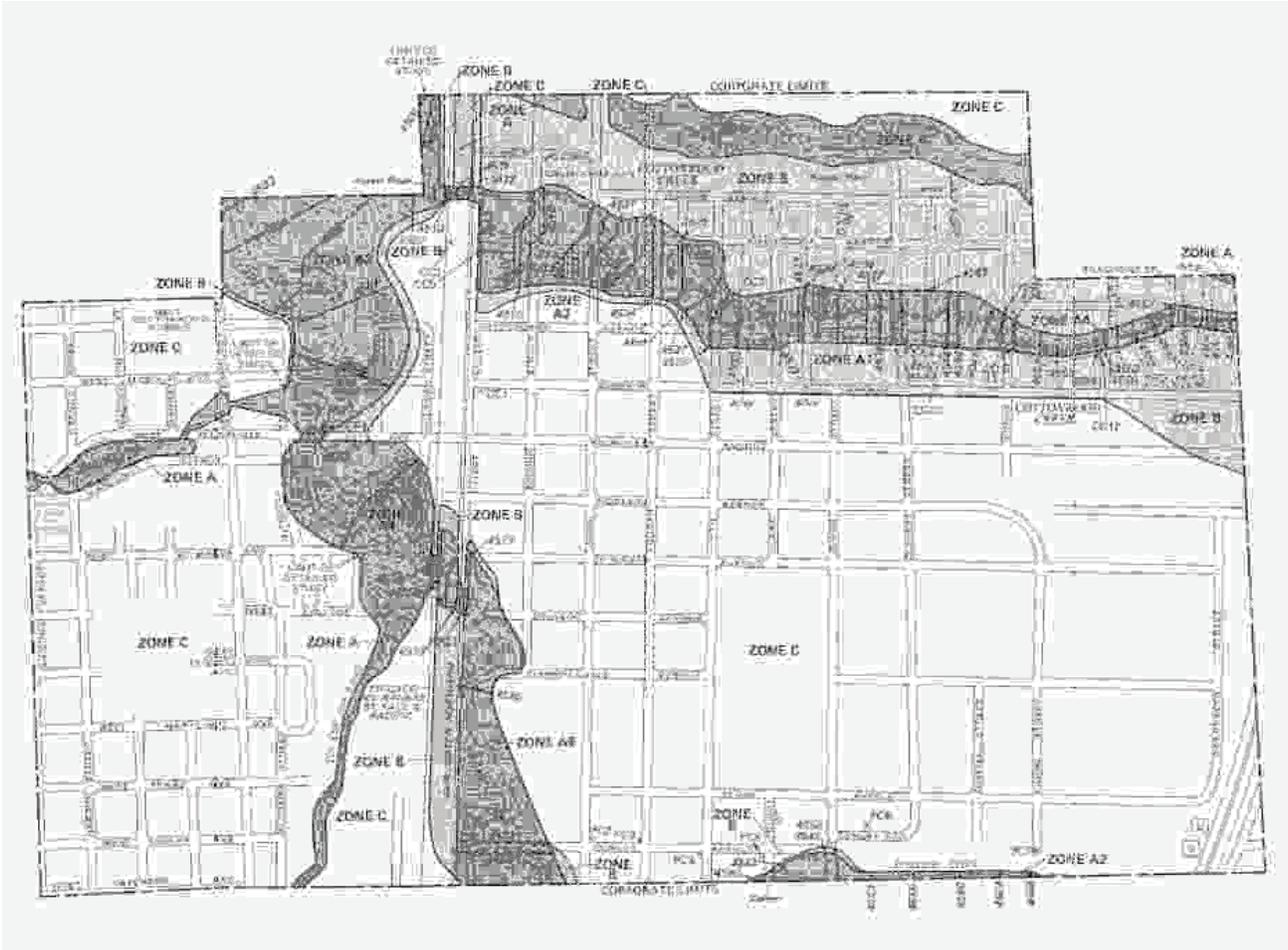
The City's wildland urban interface is primarily composed of grassland and riparian areas within and surrounding the City.

With regards to regulations meant to mitigate potential impacts from wildfire, the City has zoning and subdivision regulations that specifically address mitigation of potential wildfire impacts. In addition, the City has a centralized water distribution system that includes fire hydrants located throughout the City which would help mitigate the impact of potential wildfires.

Map 13, the Wildfire Hazard Potential (WHP) map, is a GIS map that has been produced by the United States Forest Service. The map is meant to provide a very high level evaluation of wildfire hazard and the prioritization of fuels management needs across large landscapes such as Powell County. The objective of the WHP map is to show the relative potential for a wildfire that would be difficult for suppression resources to contain. Thus the scale of difficulty of suppression on the map runs from a Very Low potential to a Very High potential.

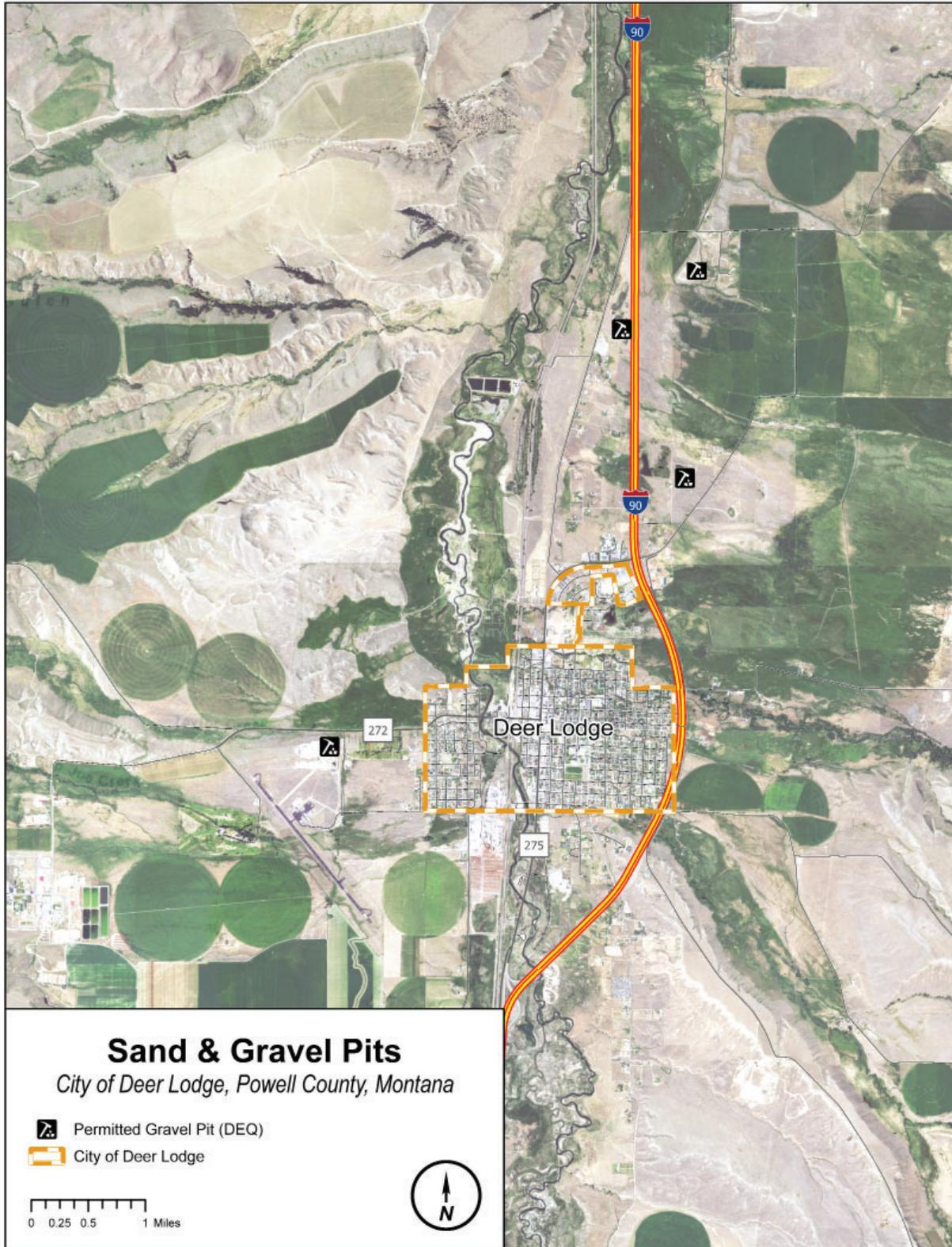
LAND USE

▼ Map 12 - City Flood Insurance Rate Map - FIRM (Map Only)



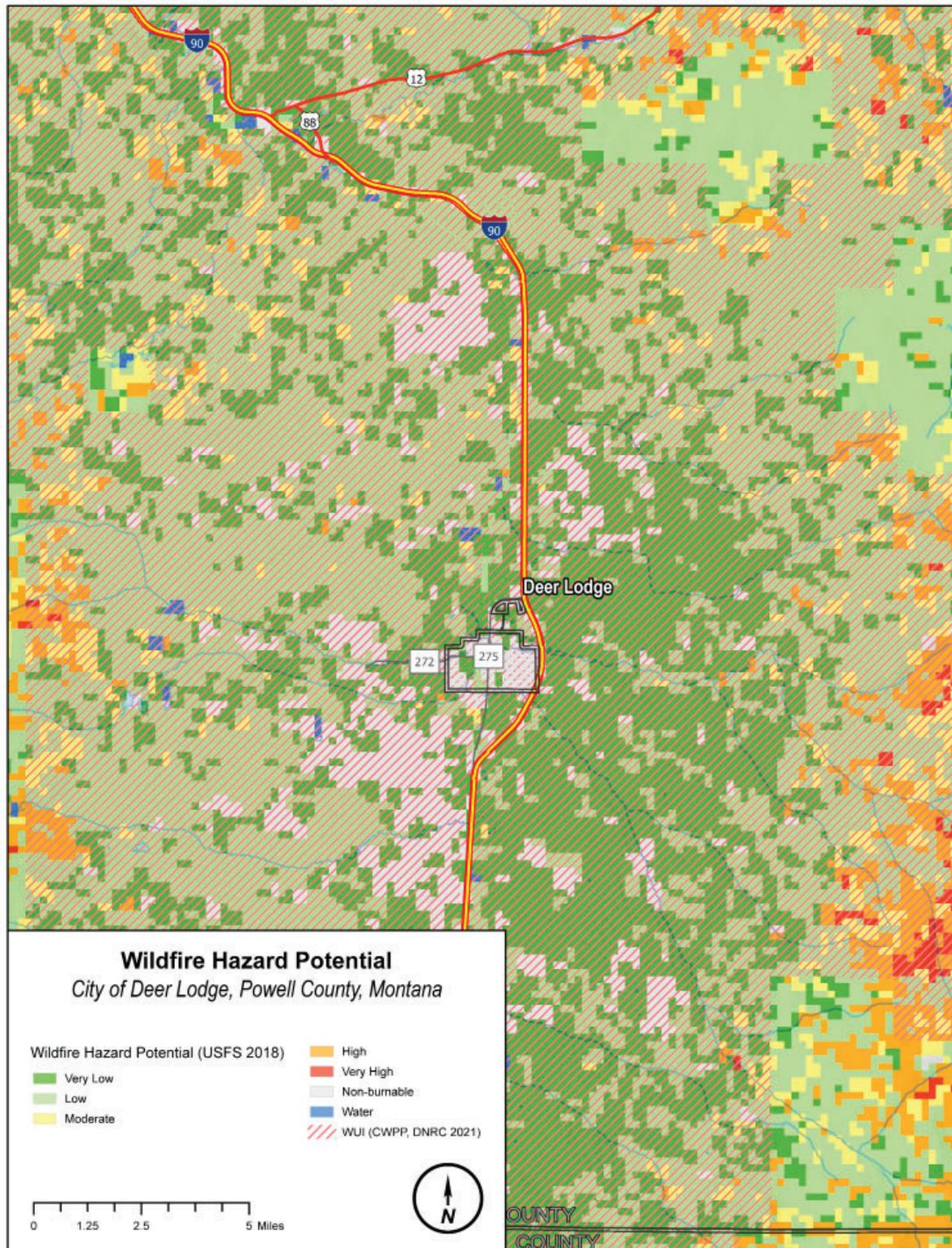
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▼ Map 13 - Sand and Gravel Resources Near the City



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▼ Map 14 - Wildfire Hazard Potential in Relation to the City



LAND USE

SUBDIVISION REVIEW

The Montana Code Annotated requires that the City Council provide a statement in this plan explaining how they will:

- define the review criteria found in 76-3-608 (3) (a) M.C.A. i.e., impacts upon agriculture, local services, public health, and safety etc.; and
- evaluate and make decisions regarding proposed subdivisions with respect to the criteria in 76-3-608 (3) (a) M.C.A.

DEFINITION OF 76-3-608 CRITERIA:

The City of Deer Lodge will use the following definitions as found in the current City of Deer Lodge Subdivision Regulation for each of the review criteria listed below. These definitions may change when the City adopts its own stand-alone subdivision regulations.

- **Agriculture:** Activities related to the production of food, feed, and fiber commodities, livestock and poultry, bees, biological control insects, fruits and vegetables, sod, ornamentals and nursery and horticultural crops that are raised, grown, or produced for commercial purposes on lands taxed as agricultural by the State of Montana.
- **Agricultural Water User Facilities:** Any part of an irrigation system historically used to produce an agricultural product on property used for agricultural purposes as defined in 15-7-202, MCA.
- **Local Services:** Any and all services or facilities local government is authorized to provide, such as water supply, sewage disposal, law enforcement, fire protection, emergency services, transportation systems, educational systems, and noxious weed control, as well as services that local government does not provide such as power, telephone, state highways, etc.
- **Natural Environment:** The physical conditions which exist within a given area, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, sound, light, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance.
- **Public Health and Safety:** The prevailing healthful, sanitary condition of wellbeing for the community at large. Conditions that relate to public health and safety include but are not limited to disease control and prevention, emergency services, environmental health, flooding, fire or wildfire hazards, rock falls or landslides, unstable soils, steep slopes and other natural hazards, high voltage lines or high pressure gas lines and air or vehicular traffic safety hazards.
- **Wildlife:** Animals that are neither human, domesticated, nor feral descendants of commonly domesticated animals.
- **Wildlife Habitat:** The place or type of habitat where wildlife naturally reside or travel through.

EVALUATION OF SUBDIVISIONS BASED UPON 76-3-608 REVIEW CRITERIA

The review of subdivision applications by the City will include documentation and an analysis as to whether or not the proposed subdivision will impact agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, local services, the natural environment, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and public health and safety.

The City will evaluate each subdivision with regard to the expected impacts upon each of the criteria, and the degree to which the subdivision applicant proposes to mitigate any adverse impacts. This evaluation will be based upon the subdivision application, staff review, reports and the information gathered from public hearings and other sources of information as deemed appropriate.

Upon completion of its review and evaluation, the City will render a decision on the proposed subdivision with respect to the requirements of the City Subdivision Regulations City Zoning Code, the City Growth Policy, other applicable plans and the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act.

LAND USE

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR EFFECTS ON AGRICULTURE

- a. How many, if any, acres of land would be removed from livestock or crop production?
- b. Are any of the lands taken out of production irrigated?

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR EFFECTS ON AGRICULTURAL WATER USER FACILITIES

- a. Will the subdivision interfere with any irrigation system or present any interference with agricultural operations in the vicinity?
- b. Will the subdivision comply with water rights requirements set forth in 76-3-504(1)(i) and (j) MCA?

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR EFFECTS UPON LOCAL SERVICES

- a. Will the subdivision connect to central water and sewer systems? Who will pay the cost of connecting to the central system?
- b. What, if any, increased costs for maintenance and operation will be incurred, and what approximately will be those costs? Will the lot buyers pay regular water and sewer charges?
- c. Which agencies will provide law enforcement, fire protection, and ambulance services? Will providing these services to the subdivision create increased costs to any of these agencies or City of Deer Lodge? Approximately how much will the subdivision increase agency costs? Will the subdivider or subsequent lot buyers bear those increased costs, or will the taxpayers and/or rate payers bear the costs?
- d. At an average of eight vehicle trips per day per lot, how many average vehicle trips per day will the subdivision generate? Will the extension of public streets or roads be needed and, if so, who will bear the costs? Will the subdivision increase the costs or road maintenance and, if so, by approximately how much? Will the subdivider/lot buyers or the public bear those increased costs?
- e. At an average of 1.5 school-age children per lot, how many elementary and high school students will be added to public schools? What net financial effect would these additional students have for the public schools?
- f. How much does the land affected by the proposed subdivision currently pay in local property taxes? After the subdivision is fully developed, how much will the land and improvements be expected to pay in local property taxes, at current mill levies?

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR EFFECT ON NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- a. Will the subdivision increase stormwater run-off: interfere with natural drainage ways, or cause or increase erosion? Has the City Public Works Director determined that the size, location, and installation of any culverts meet design standards? Will the terrain create significant surface run-off problems? Will the grading and drainage plan minimize run-off and adverse impacts?

LAND USE

- b. Is the subdivision expected to adversely affect native vegetation, soils, or the water quality, or quantity of surface or groundwater. Will areas disturbed by cutting, filling, and grading be reseeded in the same season to minimize erosion?
- c. Are weed control measures proposed to prevent the proliferation of weed growth within the subdivision and on areas disturbed by construction?

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR EFFECT ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

- a. Is the subdivision subject to potential natural hazards such as flooding, snow or rockslides, high winds, wildfire, or excessive slopes, or potential man-made hazards such as high voltage power lines, high pressure gas lines, nearby industrial or mining activity, or high traffic volumes? If so, what measures has the subdivider proposed to minimize those hazards?

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR EFFECT ON WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

- a. Will the expected effects of pets and human activity generated by the subdivision significantly affect wildlife?
- b. Will the subdivision be located in an area of significant wildlife habitat or in any critical wildlife area?

PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURE-SUBDIVISIONS

The City Planning Board conducts its meetings open to the public following the public notice requirements as prescribed by state statute. Major subdivisions and those minor subdivisions treated as major subdivisions are subject to public hearings.

The City Planning Board shall provide public notice of proposed subdivisions following the notice requirements as prescribed by statute. Public hearings are required for major subdivisions and subsequent minor subdivisions. Hearings are not permitted for first minor subdivisions.

Public hearings held by the Planning Board shall use the following format:

1. The planning board president opens the hearing and summarizes the proposal. The planning staff (or consultant or an assigned planning board member) will present a report that provides background information and describes the key technical points of the application and the proposal's relationship to the plan, other plans, any land use regulations, and the draft Findings of Fact.
2. The subdivider or representative may present information and testimony relating to the proposed subdivision. Planning board members are permitted to direct any relevant questions to staff or the applicant.
3. Any written comments submitted prior to the hearing will be noted and made available to the public upon request. The president may read correspondence aloud. If the president deems that the written comments are numerous or voluminous, he may request that the written comments be summarized.

LAND USE

4. Members of the audience will be given an opportunity to comment on the application or proposal. Comments should be factual and relevant to the proposal. A reasonable time will be allowed for each speaker. Each person speaking must give his or her name, address, and nature of interest in the matter.
5. After public comment is complete, the subdivider or representative may respond briefly.
6. Planning board members may voice other considerations and may pose any relevant questions through the president.
7. The president closes the hearing on the subdivision proposal.

COORDINATION WITH POWELL COUNTY

As the County seat for Powell County, the City Council for Deer Lodge engages in frequent conversations with the County Commission. The City enjoys a good if not great relationship with the current Commission.

- a. The City of Deer Lodge will coordinate its efforts to implement this plan with Powell County in the following ways:
- b. A County Commissioner and the County Planning Director sit on the City Planning Board.
- c. The City Council and County Commission meet quarterly to discuss updates and matters requiring coordination.
- d. The County Planning Board/Planner presents developments in the annexation area for discussion by the City Planning Board.
- e. By joint memorandum, as needed depending upon the issue or opportunity.

CONDITIONS AND TIMING FOR REVIEW AND REVISION

The document will be reviewed every five years from the date of its adoption. The City Planning Board will be responsible for reviewing the Plan and making any recommendations regarding revisions or changes to the City Council. Future reviews will include an evaluation of every section of the Plan. It is anticipated that a full update of the Plan will be necessary within ten years of its original adoption.

RESIDENT OUTREACH

The update of the City Growth Policy has been based upon the advice and guidance of City residents over the last twelve (12) months.

The City created a community survey to assist in gathering advice and guidance from residents about what opportunities and issues were their priority. The survey was available to residents in a hardcopy format and online. One hundred and seventy-seven (177) people participated in the survey.

Some of the more notable results of the survey showed the following:

- Respondents like the City’s quality of life, rural lifestyle, safety, historic character, and recreational opportunities.
- The five (5) most important issues that respondents thought should be addressed included:
 - » infrastructure,
 - » providing more dining options,
 - » improving housing options, and
 - » limiting short-term vacation rentals.
 - » Given the choice, a majority of respondents felt that the City should focus on infrastructure improvements over any other issue.

In addition to the community survey, the City held an open house on June 17, 2023, to gather additional advice and guidance from residents. The open house was held at the annual Territorial Days celebration in Deer Lodge. Approximately 15 people participated in the open house.

The City Planning Board held four work sessions to work through and discuss the various drafts of the growth policy. Each work session was publicly noticed, and varying numbers of City residents participated in each session.

The City Planning Board held a hearing on January 16, 2024 to gather resident input on the Plan creation and recommend adoption of the Plan to the City Council. The City Council held a public hearing on January 22, 2024 to consider the Planning Board’s recommendation. The Council voted on February 5, 2024 to formally adopt the updated Growth Policy.



1. How would you rate Deer Lodge as a place to live?

Excellent Good Average Poor

2. Where do you live?

Within City limits Adjacent to the City Elsewhere in Powell County Elsewhere in Montana

Other (please specify): _____

3. How long have you lived in the City of Deer Lodge?

0-3 years 4-10 years 11-20 years 21+ years

Not Applicable (I do not live in the City of Deer Lodge)

4. What is your age?

Under 21 years of age 21-35 years of age 36-50 years of age 51-65 years of age

Over 65 years of age

5. Do you rent or own your housing?

Own Rent

SOURCES

Introduction

1. City of Deer Lodge
2. National Weather Service
3. United States Census Bureau

Population Characteristics

1. United States Census Bureau
2. Headwaters Economics

Economy

1. City of Deer Lodge
2. Montana Department of Administration
3. Montana Department of Revenue
4. United States Census Bureau
5. Headwaters Economics

Local Services & Public Facilities

1. City of Deer Lodge
2. Powell County

Housing

1. United States Census Bureau
2. Headwater Economics

Land Use

1. City of Deer Lodge
2. Montana Department of Environmental Quality
3. Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
4. Montana Department of Revenue
5. Montana State Library
6. Powell County



ADDENDUM - 5 YEAR COMMITTEE GOALS

ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

1. Create a Business Improvement District
2. Create better branding for Deer Lodge
3. Create trail infrastructure
4. Create and prioritize housing
5. Pursue appropriate annexation

COUNCIL OPS

1. Review City Code of Ordinance for any updates or changes
2. Review employee applications and planning applications for updates and changes
3. Reviewing all applications used within City Hall
4. Goals for Training new Council members:
 - Article 3, Section 5: Time control during the meetings (no rabbit holes)
 - Section 7: Presentation to Council
 - Article 3, Section 17: General Rules of Council Debate
5. Having MSU come out and do training on specific areas

PUBLIC WORKS

1. Research methods for funding and implementing snowplow program
2. Improve existing City Parks
3. Install automatic sprinklers at all City Parks
4. Create public art
5. Beautify Deer Lodge, specifically Main Street

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

1. Review public health & safety codes
2. Seek more opportunity for public outreach on health and safety issues
3. Install reader board at the Fire Hall

4. Publish and promote public health & safety topics for Police and Fire Departments
5. Assist Fire Department in creating rural water supply

PLANNING BOARD

1. Create adequate housing to meet the demand currently in the City
2. Provide greater opportunities for Infill Development
3. Continue to make changes to Title 11: Zoning to accommodate community needs and desires
4. Pursue Industrial Park for new enterprise
5. Support and incentivize Historic Preservation