

PROPOSALS of Elizabeth Scanlin, Board Member, Carbon County Planning Board,  
Based on prior comments submitted to the board.

Re: CARBON COUNTY GROWTH POLICY 2020 November 2019 DRAFT  
December 28, 2019

Suggestion: Use legal names of board members and other participants for final version of the document.

The November 2019 draft appears to place most emphasis on the agricultural aspect of Carbon County. While that remains an important aspect, tourism (including recreation), is a substantial part of the county economy, and needs to be acknowledged as a significant factor in county planning. Therefore:

In 1 INTRODUCTION, I suggest adding to the existing text in this beginning of the document:

Carbon County is made up of distinctly different areas with different concerns.  
**The Clarks Fork Valley is predominantly agricultural, while the Highway 212 corridor south of Rockvale has increasing commuter residential development and tourism.**

In 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS: I think it's important to **highlight up front the significant changes in Carbon County that have occurred since the current 2015 Growth Policy** by adding text as follows: [Note: This text states conditions and not goals and implementation. Changes relating to these should be included in later text in Articles 4, 6 and 7.]

Since 2015, the following new matters are among those that currently affect or are anticipated to affect growth in Carbon County:

**PROPOSED COUNTY JAIL:** A new proposed 100-inmate jail serving Carbon, Stillwater and other Counties, if approved, will involve county decisions regarding its location and impacts including growth in the area in which it may be sited.

**WIND FARM CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION:** Construction is beginning of a 114-tower project in the Clarks Fork Valley generating 240 megawatts of electricity for out-of-county use. Impacts of construction include 100 trucks per week, with up to 300 workers on site.

**HOUSING:** As existing housing stock throughout the county ages, habitable and affordable housing continues to be a challenge, especially for service workers and other local residents competing with vacation rentals, retirees, second home owners, and employees during the construction and operation of the new wind farm as well as the proposed new county jail.

**SOLID WASTE:** County residents currently voluntarily contract with their own waste collectors. At least some of it ends up in municipal containers, however, shifting costs to city dwellers. A countywide program of waste collection including reduction, reuse and recycling is becoming increasingly important.

**FLOODPLAIN REGULATIONS.** New federal regulations based on increased flooding throughout the country are affecting county land use and related county economics. The new regulations not only affect building in floodplains/floodways throughout the county, but also affect agricultural efforts to protect productive agricultural land from erosion.

**NEW HIGHWAY 212/310 CORRIDOR:** The new link between Rockvale and Laurel, partially finished in 2019, creates the potential for new development along it or accessing it.

**INCREASED TOURISM.** State statistics confirm that tourism is a growing economic force in Montana, second only to agriculture. Carbon County, with all its attractions, continues to experience a substantial increase in the number of tourists, with related demands on county services such as law enforcement and emergency services. [See proposed **People** text addition below.]

**SUBDIVISION REVIEW:** Increased requests for family transfers continue to raise questions of whether subdivision review is being circumvented through this process.

In the **People** section (currently p. 14 -15 in the November 2019 draft), it's important to acknowledge that tourism is increasingly affecting Carbon County through both land use and additional demands on county services. I suggest adding the following information that relates to the extent that tourism affects county land use and services:

### **Non-Resident Population.**

Tourism continues to be an increasing impact in Carbon County. Regarding the Beartooth Highway itself, "Nonresident visitor expenditures contributed to over \$53 million in (local) economic activity during 2012 summer and 2013 winter seasons.... "From May 31 - September 30th, total traffic on the Beartooth Highway was 178,904 vehicles. Nonresidents represented 91% of total traffic: ...57,727 from Red Lodge...", and visitors stayed a mean over 2 nights in Red Lodge. [Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) The Beartooth Highway: 2012-2013 Economic Impacts, Use, and Destination Image 11/1/2013.] These figures reflect tourism during the summer months that the Beartooth Highway was open and do not include the number of visitors to the county from outside the county, such as the Billings, MT, and Cody, WY, areas,

and non-residents who visit outside of the summer months, including the winter ski season.

With increasing tourism comes increasing demand for public services within the county, such as law enforcement and emergency services.

In Section 4, Key Issues, I suggest the following:

### In **Community and Economic Development**

In 2. To “Housing supply, condition, and affordability in small rural towns, in order to attract new, permanent residents” add “ and accommodate needs of temporary construction workers of large projects.”

In 8: Replace “Potential for wind development,” which isn’t an “issue,” state “Accommodating the impacts of construction and operation of new major projects such as a wind farm or county jail.”

In **Tourism and Recreation**, Add to “As the Billings metropolitan area” the words “and marketing of area resources” to “continues to grow, more and more people will visit Carbon County.”

The text, “Key Issues” are actually goals and belongs in Section 6 Goals and Section 7 Implementation. It can be replaced with

1. Underutilized tourist and recreation resources in the spring, fall and winter months
2. Potential for expanding tourism and recreation opportunities
3. Lack of tourist attractions and marketing for small communities

### In **Natural Resources and Environment**

7. “Growing potential for wind development” is not an “issue”: a replacement could be “Potential impacts of wind energy development”

### In **Land Use and Agriculture**, Key Issue

1., 2., and 3. Can be combined as “Market-driven development and subdivision of productive agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes.”

### In Section 5, **VISION**

The statement “Economic enterprises which offer a living wage” should omit the phrase “build upon the agricultural base where possible” to acknowledge that businesses other than agriculture are as important to the county’s economy.

## In Section 6 **Goals and Objectives**

1.3.F. Omit redundant words “Protect private property rights while” and start with “Balance individual property rights with the rights of other property owners and community interests for the public health, safety and welfare of all citizens.”

**Objective 1.8.** “Cooperate across jurisdictional boundaries to discuss future projects and development approval processes” should not be limited to telecommunication towers, as pipelines, electrical systems and other industrial development may also involve other jurisdictions. 1.8.A. Can address telecommunication towers; 1.8.B. Can be included in 1.8.A., and a new 1.8.B. Can repeat 1.8.A. “for all other development proposals that may involve other jurisdictions.”

A new **Objective 1.9** should be added that states “Encourage and cooperate with other jurisdictions to upgrade existing residential housing and create new housing for existing and new county residents.”

Review **Objective 2.6** regarding floodplain regulations, adding,

2.6.C. Respond to federal floodplain regulations that affect the economic viability of both agricultural and residential development within the county.

In **Objective 3.6**, add to “Explore the feasibility of a County-wide recycling program” the words “reduction, re-purposing and” before “recycling,” adding the same to 3.6.A.

In Section 7 **IMPLEMENTATION AND FRAMEWORK**, some modifications:

1.3.F. Conform this to the language used in Section 6. 1.3.F: “Balance individual property rights with the rights of other property owners and community interests for the public health, safety and welfare of all citizens.”

1.5.C. Change “Coordination” to “Coordinate” for grammatical consistency.

Add 1.8.C. Cooperate across jurisdictional boundaries to discuss future projects and development approval processes for all other development proposals that may involve other jurisdictions. Timeframe: Ongoing

Add 1.8.D. Review process of “family transfer” exceptions to subdivision review and present proposals to address them. Timeframe: 1 year

For Goal 3.1.A. Perform an impact fee study the completion timeframe should be “Ongoing.”

Goal 3.2.A current Completion Timeframe from “An needed” to “As needed”.

3.6.A “Invite recycling industry reps should include “reduction” and “re-purposing” reps, with a timeframe “Ongoing”.

*If any of the 2015 tasks have been completed, such as the “Code of the West” availability, omit them to update tasks yet to be completed.*

At the end of the document, is it necessary to re-state the text “House Bill 543... requires subdivision regulations be revised to be in accordance with the growth policy within one year of its adoption”, since that’s already been accomplished? Do we need to re-state any of these four pages, since it’s stating what’s in the state statutes? Perhaps this could be added as an addendum, since it appears to repeat much of what is in other proposed text.

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