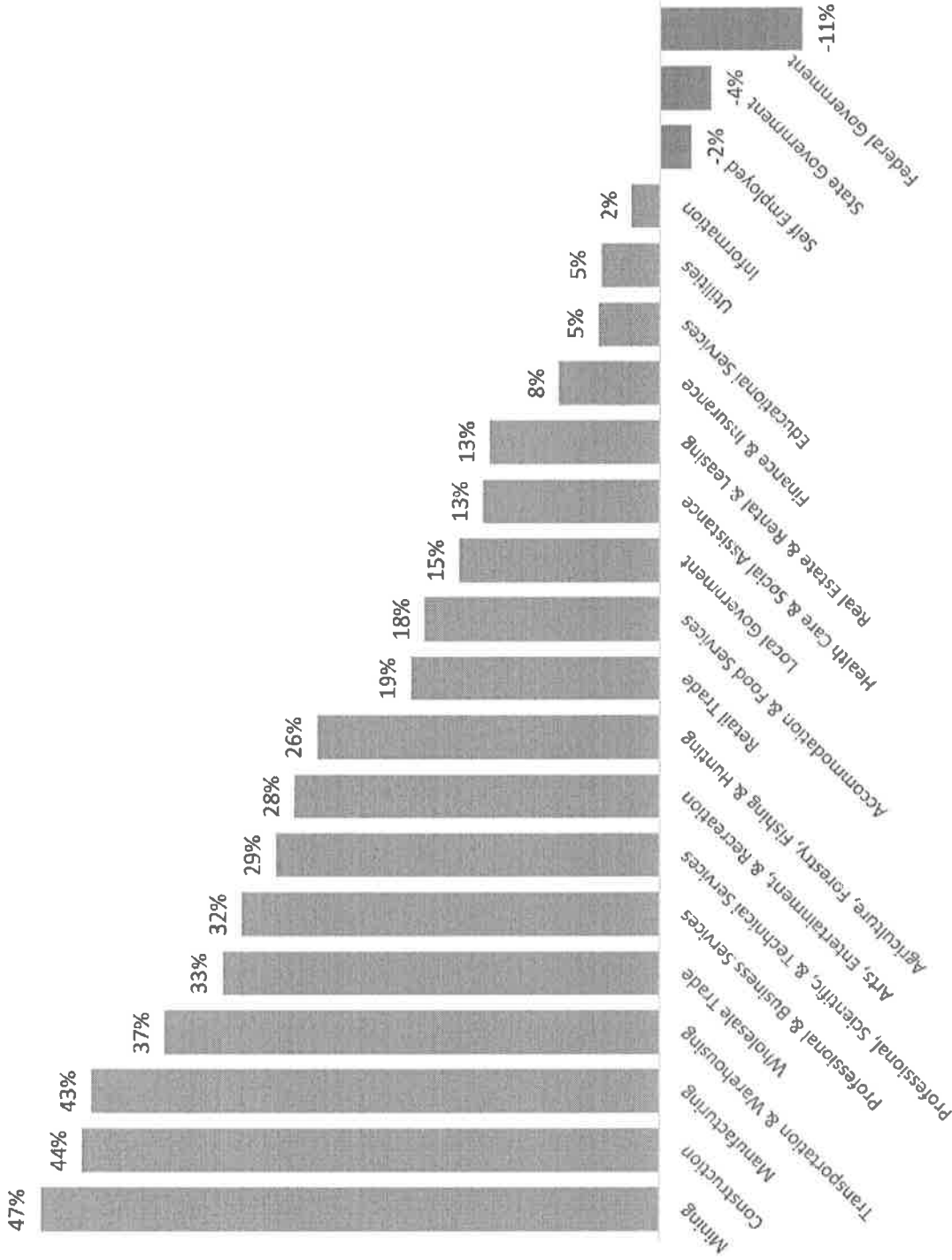


Figure 9 - Projected Change in Employment for the 16 County Eastern Montana Region: 2012-2022



Source: Montana Department of Labor and Industry

1 Foster Sustained Economic Growth in Miles City

Objective 1.1

Sustain and grow existing businesses in Miles City.

Objective 1.2

Attract businesses providing living wage jobs.

Objective 1.3

Expand workforce development opportunities.

Objective 1.4

Support the development of MCC's agriculture advancement center.

2 Enhance the Economic Viability of Downtown Miles City

Objective 2.1

Implement recommendations from the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan.

Objective 2.2

Encourage infill development on vacant lots and in vacant buildings.

Objective 2.3

Preserve the historic character of downtown

Objective 2.4

Conduct a parking study of downtown and revise parking requirements according to actual need.

3 Support Industrial and Commercial Development

Objective 3.1

Cluster industrial uses along Baker Highway.

Objective 3.2

Identify a location for and develop a rail off-loading site.

Objective 3.3

Work with commercial and industrial developers on how the city can accommodate their needs while mitigating adverse impacts.

4 Promote Miles City as a Destination for New Residents and Businesses

Objective 4.1

Develop a Miles City gateway along the portion of the I-94 business loop which acts as the west entrance into the City.

Objective 4.2

Work with the Montana Office of Tourism to market Miles City throughout Montana and in key out of state markets.

Miles City Housing Snapshot

	2000	2013
Housing Units:	3,890	3,983
Owner Occupied:	63%	60%
Renter Occupied:	28%	29%
Vacant:	9%	11%
For-Sale Vacancy Rate	2.4%	4.3%
Rental Vacancy Rate	12.4%	5.2%



Change in Rental Vacancy Rate Since 2000



73

Number of Single-Family Units Constructed: 2000-2013



81

Number of Multi-Family Units Constructed: 2000-2013

Source: Decennial Census and American Community Survey 2013 5-year estimates

Housing

Recent population and economic growth has increased pressure on Miles City’s housing market. Miles City residents have expressed concern over the affordability of both rental and owner housing in Miles City. Miles City needs a variety of additional housing options to accommodate growing demand. The challenge for housing developers is finding suitable land for new housing given the development constraints noted previously – floodplain, publicly owned land, and lack of city services. However, there are several areas to the east and south of Miles City which could support both single family and residential housing, as well as some locations in developed areas that can support additional housing.

Housing Availability

As of 2013 there were an estimated 3,983 housing units within the corporate limits of Miles City. The housing stock in Miles City is dominated by single family housing, while mobile homes made up 11% of the housing stock and multi-family units made up 14%. Out of the 3,983 housing units in Miles City, 60% were owner occupied, 29% were renter occupied, and 11% were vacant as of 2013.

Since 2000 the total number of housing units in Miles City has increased by 2%. During this same time period the proportion of renter occupied housing units has increased by 1% while the proportion of owner occupied housing units has decreased by 3%. The most substantial change since 2000 occurred with housing vacancy rates which decreased by 7.2 percentage points for rental housing and increased by nearly 2 percentage points for homeowner housing. This information coincides with anecdotal evidence suggesting there is growing pressure on the rental housing market in Miles City.

Housing Costs

As of 2013 the estimated median rent in Miles City was \$557, with 40% of renters paying less than \$500 in

monthly rent. However, in order to get a better understanding of housing affordability and housing cost burden in Miles City it is helpful to look at housing costs as a percent of household income. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development defines housing cost burden as paying more than 30% of household income on housing. In 2013 an estimated 32% of renters in Miles City had a housing cost burden, which is substantially lower than the state as a whole where an estimated 46% of renters had a housing cost burden in 2013. While the figure is slightly better for owner occupied housing, still over one fifth of homeowners in Miles City in 2013 were estimated to have a housing cost burden.

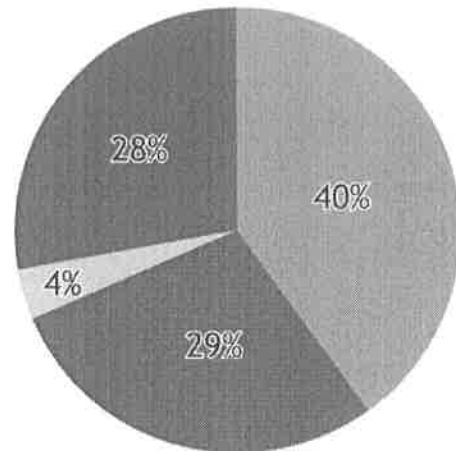
Miles City Housing Authority

The Miles City Housing Authority (MCHA) provides housing options for seniors and individuals living on limited incomes. Currently, the MCHA offers 21 units in their main building (12 three-bedroom units, 6 two-bedrooms, and 3 one-bedrooms). Additionally, the MCHA also offers several second floor apartments on Main Street for seniors and individuals living on limited incomes. At the time of writing there was a long wait list for one-bedroom units, indicating a need for additional one-bedroom housing units in Miles City.

Outlook

As mentioned earlier, the ability to build new housing in Miles City is constrained by the availability of buildable land. With much of the City lying in the flood plain of the Yellowstone and Tongue Rivers, the most suitable areas for new housing are to the east and south of Miles City. Within these areas Miles City is in need of additional multifamily and single family housing to meet growing demand and alleviate the cost burden which currently exists in the rental and for sale markets. Based on an average household size of 2.29 people, a need of nearly 700 to over 1,700 new residential dwelling units can be expected over the next 20 years based on population projections provided by the state.

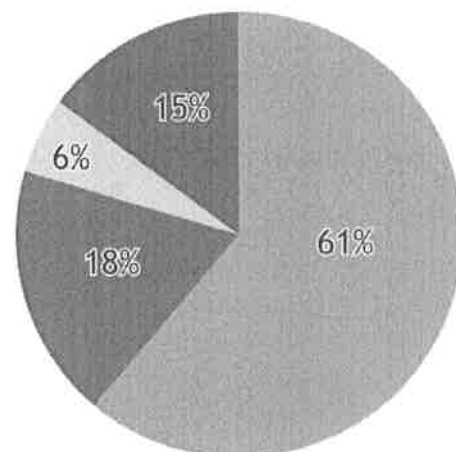
Rent as a Percent of Income: 2013



Source: American Community Survey 2013 5-year estimates



Homeowner Housing Costs as a Percent of Income: 2013



Source: American Community Survey 2013 5-year estimates

1 Provide a Range of Housing Options for all Residents

Objective 1.1

Support the development of housing for all Miles City residents including affordable housing, senior housing, work-force housing, and low-income housing.

2 Improve the Condition of Existing Housing

Objective 2.1

Work with homeowners on rehabilitating residential housing.

Objective 2.2

Provide financial incentives for low-income households to fix up dilapidated housing.

3 Make Zoning Code More Flexible

Objective 3.1

Reduce minimum lot area in residential districts to encourage development on small lots.

Objective 3.2

Provide flexibility with minimum parking requirement for multi-family, special needs and senior housing.

Objective 3.3

Remove minimum open area requirements for multi-family housing units when adequate park and recreational facilities are available.

Public Facilities and Local Services

Transportation

Streets

Miles City maintains approximately 81 miles of local streets within city limits, the majority of which are paved. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is responsible for maintenance on Interstate 94 and all state roadways within the City including state routes 59, 12, and the I-94 business loop. The City's public works department has a ten-year capital improvements plan (CIP) in place which was updated in 2012. The CIP provides a prioritized list of street maintenance projects and equipment needs. Local street maintenance in Miles City is funded primarily through three maintenance districts – maintenance district 204 covering the majority of the City, maintenance district 205 covering the NE and NW portions of the City, and maintenance district 207 covering the Miles Town Estates subdivision in the SW portion of the City. Each maintenance district assesses a tax on properties in the district to fund maintenance, street sweeping, snow removal and signage.

Street Maintenance

Miles City's streets are showing signs of wear, with many in need of varying levels of repair. Preventative maintenance techniques, such as pavement preservation, are becoming a priority in order to address maintenance before street conditions require more costly improvements. The list of road maintenance needs in Miles City (and across the country) is long, while budgets for maintenance are stretched thin. This fact emphasizes the need to be strategic about prioritizing roadway maintenance projects in order to cost effectively preserve the life of the road system.

To better manage roadway maintenance, Miles City has established a pavement preservation program for its streets using the pavement surface and evaluation rating (PASER) system, which uses visual inspections to assess pavement surface conditions and prioritize projects accordingly. Using this approach Miles City has been able to assess many of its priority streets and identify appropriate maintenance treatments whether they be overlays, chip seals, or crack seals.





Currently there are no plans to replace existing city streets. A transportation plan for Miles City is in the early stages of development, which may include recommendations and plans for development of city streets.

Functional Classification

Functional Classification is a method of classifying roads based on the service they provide as part of the overall roadway system. Classifications include principal arterials, minor arterials, collectors and local roads. Functional classification is tied directly to the Federal Aid Highway System and to eligibility for federal and state transportation funding. Only roads classified as collector or above are part of the Federal Aid Highway system and are eligible for federal funding. Therefore local roads are not normally eligible for federal funding. As Miles City continues to grow and traffic patterns change, it will become increasingly important for the City to continually assess its roadway system to ensure roads are properly classified according to their function and level of service. Functional Classification change requests can be made to the Montana Department of Transportation when a change in operating characteristics occurs. See Figure 10 for a map of Miles City’s Functional Classification System.

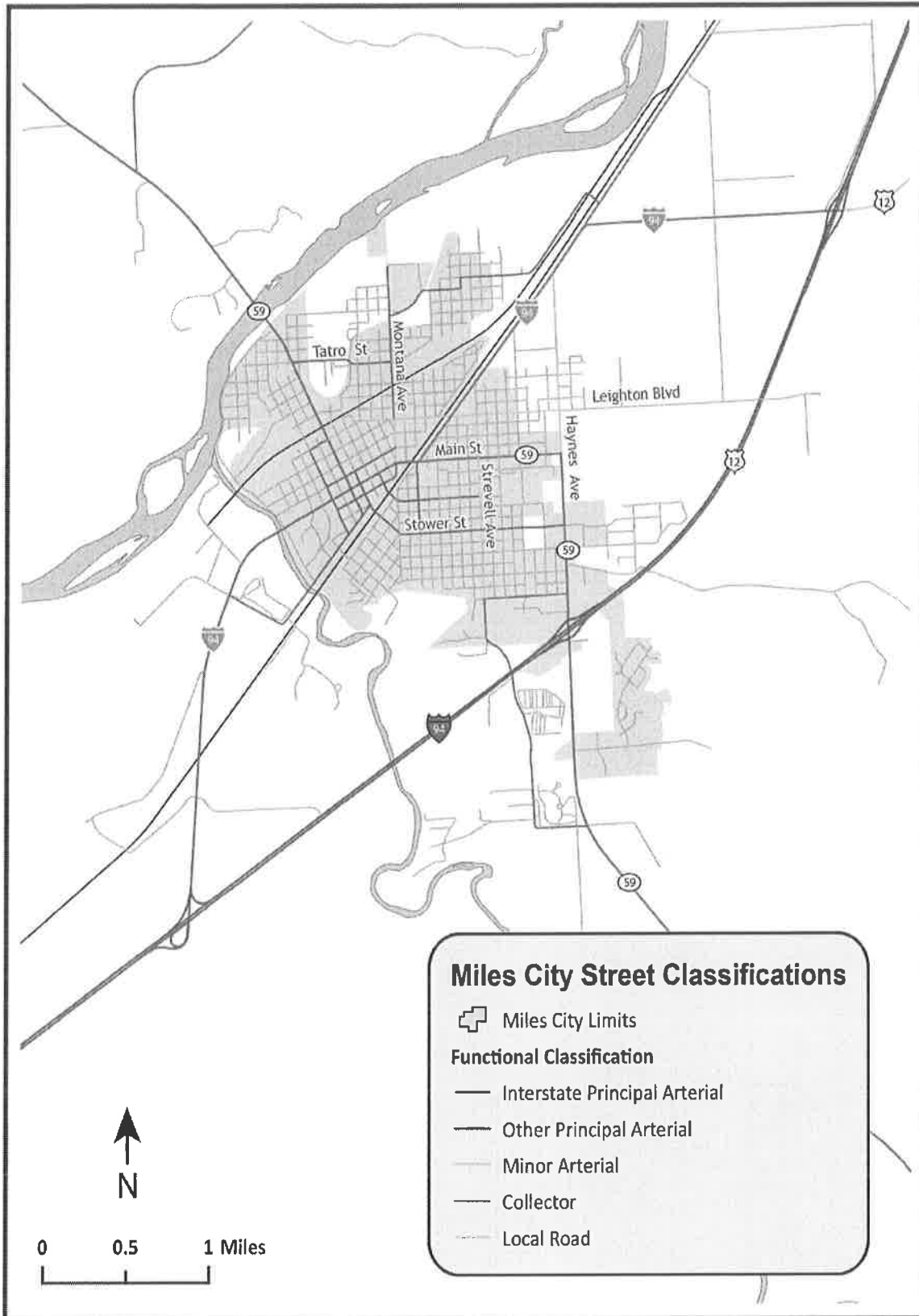
Non-Motorized Transportation

Miles City has a fairly robust network of sidewalks in existing residential and commercial areas. While there are several off-street paths in Miles City, the bicycle network by comparison is not as expansive in terms of dedicated infrastructure – e.g. bike lanes, off street paths, cycle tracks, etc. However, many of the residential streets in Miles City are low volume and low speed, making them ideal for safe bike travel. Going forward the City should identify designated bike routes on low volume streets to encourage increased bicycle travel. This can be done through simple street improvements and signage to direct people onto safe routes. As residential development expands to the east and south, Miles City will need to ensure adequate and safe bicycle and pedestrian options are available, which connect residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Airport

Miles City’s Frank Wiley airport is located two miles north of the City on City owned land. The airport is administered by a joint city-county Airport Commission. The airport has two runways –one is 5,680 feet long, 75 feet wide, and rated at 24,000 pound double wheel gear; while the second is 5,628 feet long, 100 feet wide, and rated at 38,000 pounds single wheel gear. The airport

Figure 10 - Miles City Street Functional Classification Map





provides fueling as well as other services, and also has visual and radio navigational aids and lighting. The airport was recently awarded a \$2.5 million grant to upgrade its runway and improve its visual guidance system.

Rail

Miles City is served by the east-west Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad line. BNSF contracts with Transco for maintenance in a rail yard on the north end of the City. The rail line through the City is well utilized with up to 38 trains per day carrying coal, grain and oil. The number of trains and high speeds through the City present safety concerns. The City may seek to work with BNSF and rail officials to reduce train speeds and develop quiet zones. In recent years there has been an expressed need for a rail offloading site in the City.

Tongue River Railroad

The proposed Tongue River Railroad, from Decker to Miles City, is intended to serve proposed coal mines near Ashland. While the process of coal development has begun the proposed Tongue River railroad has changed alignment through the years and has been stalled by legal challenges. A draft EIS was released on April 17, 2015, containing ten alternatives for the Tongue River Railroad including an alternative for bringing the rail line to the BNSF rail line in Miles City north of Spotted Eagle Recreation Area. The comment period for the draft EIS ends on June 23, 2015 at which point a final EIS will be prepared identifying a preferred alternative.

Water

The primary source of drinking water for Miles City is the Yellowstone River. Water system infrastructure includes distribution mains, a treatment plant and three storage tanks. The water distribution system is made up of approximately 63 miles of water lines serving 3,907 residential and commercial customers. Miles City's water treatment plant was built in 1973, and much of the other water storage and distribution infrastructure is over 100 years old.

There are three water storage tanks located throughout Miles City – the Riverside park storage tank (capacity 500,000 gallons), the Carbon Hill storage tank (capacity 1.5 million gallons) and the Southgate Storage Tank (capacity 250,000 gallons).

Miles City's water treatment plant has a design flow of 7 million gallons per day, where current maximum flows are around

4 million gallons per day during summer months with minimum flows of around 1 million gallons per day occurring during winter months. Prior to entering the water treatment plant, Yellowstone River water enters a series of pre-sedimentation basins to remove up to 80% of excess sedimentation. Water is then treated through a process of rapid flash mix, flocculation, and sedimentation, with rapid sand filtration. Chlorine gas is added for disinfection and fluoride is added for dental protection.

There are no current plans for replacement of the water treatment plant. Upkeep and maintenance of the water treatment plant, as well as that of the distribution lines and storage tanks, is addressed on a continual basis as needed. In addition, the City must assess the need to replace existing water lines that are past their useful life or unable to handle increased capacity. Miles City is currently underway with a water and sewer capacity study which will help assess the City water system's ability to accommodate future growth, identify future projects, and address upgrades through a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). In the event of future annexation, and subsequent residential and commercial growth, water will need to be extended to the east and south.

Wastewater Treatment

Miles City's wastewater treatment plant was built in 1980 with an average design flow of 1.98 million gallons per day, and the ability to handle up to 3.77 million gallons per day. Current flows are between 1.2 and 1.3 million gallons per day. The plant is an extended aeration oxidation ditch with brush aerators that treats both domestic sewage and industrial wastewater. The collection system is made up of 16 lift stations and 56 miles of sewer lines serving 3,500 metered customers and 230 unmetered customers.

While there are no current plans for replacement of the wastewater treatment plant, an upgrade is currently underway. Upkeep and maintenance of the wastewater treatment plant, as well as that of the sewer lines and lift stations, is addressed on a continual basis as needed. In addition, the City must assess the need to replace existing sewer lines and lift stations that are past their useful life or unable to handle increased capacity. The aforementioned water and sewer capacity study will help assess the City wastewater system's ability to accommodate future growth, identify future projects, and address upgrades through a CIP. In the event of future annexation, and subsequent residential and commercial growth, sewer services will need to be extended primarily to the east and south.





RID # 1

A special sanitary sewer system serves a mostly-unincorporated area along North Sewell Street from Leighton Boulevard to Valley Drive - see Figure 11. Originally installed in the period from 1900 to 1960 this system was in serious need of replacement. Custer County secured financing through grants, bonds, and RID #1 reserve funds to replace the sewer system in 2014. Residents of the North Sewell neighborhood now have a safe and reliable sewer system.

Custer County Water and Sewer District No. 2

The Custer County Water and Sewer District No. 2 (CCWSD2) is a district that provides water and sewer, water-only, and sewer-only services to customers in the Aye-Dent Additions, South Haynes area, Michel's Addition, North Haynes area, Richland Addition, and Highway 12 area - see Figure 10. The City delivers water to the district and receives wastewater from the district under an interlocal agreement, which extends to June 2016, and it is then up for renegotiation. The district owns all infrastructure within its boundaries, while the City maintains district lines and is reimbursed for the work. According to the interlocal agreement the district maintains control of district lines even upon annexation until all district debt has been paid. The City and District have a long history of working together for the benefit of local residents and business owners and the City plans to continue working with the District in the best interest of the public.



Fire

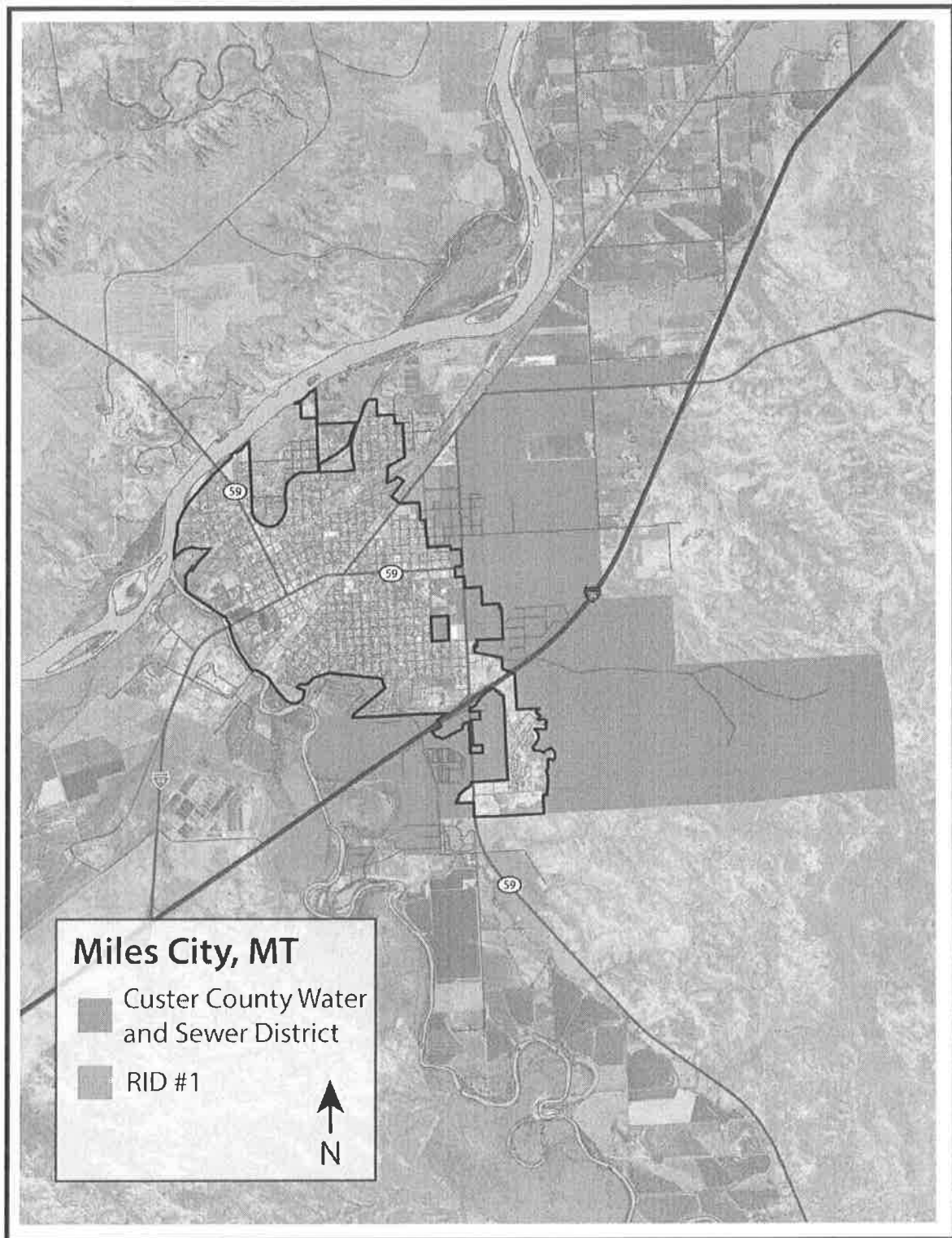
Miles City Fire and Rescue provides fire protection and emergency medical service within Miles City corporate limits. The department has 14 full time and 20 part time employees and has a mutual aid agreement with Custer County. With projected growth, the Miles City fire department will likely see more demand and may need to add resources including personnel and vehicles. Another issue that will need to be addressed is water pressure. As water service extends outward to support residential and commercial development, Miles City will need to ensure adequate water pressure is maintained for responding to structure fires.

Law Enforcement

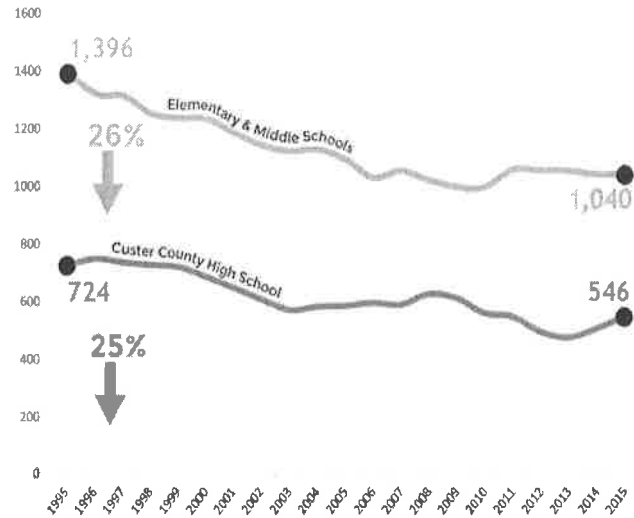
The Miles City Police Department (MCPD) provides law enforcement within the corporate limits of Miles City as well as portions of Custer County through a mutual aid agreement. Staffing



Figure 11 - Water and Sewer Districts Map



School Enrollment 1995-2015



Source: Montana Office of Public Instruction

includes the police chief, assistant chief, three administrative persons, ten patrolmen, one School Resource Officer, and one Animal Control Officer. The MCPD also operates the dispatch center (with financial support from Custer County) which serves Miles City, Custer County, and Garfield County.

Public Schools

The Miles City Public School System includes Custer County High School, Washington Middle School and three elementary schools. As of 2015 enrollment in Custer County High School was at 546, which is down 20% from 2000. However, in recent years high school enrollment has been on the rise, increasing by roughly 11% since 2012. At the elementary and middle school level enrollment has steadily decreased since 1995. However, the rate of decrease began to level out around 2012. Because school districts operate, in a sense, as separate government entities under the State of Montana, they are not emphasized in this growth policy. However, the City intends to coordinate growth management efforts with the school district to ensure adequate capacity is available to support projected growth.

Community College

Miles Community College (MCC) is one of three community colleges in the state. MCC offers a wide variety of degree and certificate programs in nursing, animal sciences, education, natural resources, professional and technical skills, construction, automotive technology and computer technology. The workforce development program is particularly popular, offering certificates in heavy equipment operations and CDL classes.

Current enrollment at MCC is around 500 students. However, in recent years MCC enrollment has decreased, due in part to a lack of facilities to attract students but also because prospective students have chosen instead to seek employment in the oil industry in eastern Montana and North Dakota.

MCC is currently working on expanding its agriculture and equine studies program, which is home to 40% of MCC students. A large part of this work is centered on the development of MCC’s agriculture advancement center. When completed the \$3.2 million

project will provide an indoor learning center, complete with a 20,000-square foot indoor arena, three classrooms for agriculture and equine studies, and seating for 500 people.

Healthcare

Miles City is home to the Holy Rosary Hospital, two major medical clinics and several elderly care facilities with differing levels of care including retirement homes, assisted living, and skilled care nursing facilities. This is also a major employment center. The physicians practicing locally represent many different medical specialties and are supplemented by visiting physicians from the Billings community. Air ambulances are available for critical patient transport. With an increasing and aging population, Miles City's healthcare system will likely experience increased demand and need for services. Vacant land to the south of Holy Rosary Hospital would be a logical area for expansion if needed.

Solid Waste

Solid waste disposal is provided by a joint city-county solid waste district and the landfill is owned by Custer County. The solid waste district manages the publicly-owned solid waste facilities, with pick-up provided by a private, licensed hauler. This arrangement is expected to continue.

Strategy for Development, Maintenance, and Replacement of Public Infrastructure

The above sections provide a high level illustration of Miles City's respective strategies for development, maintenance, and replacement of public infrastructure. Additionally, the key to Miles City's holistic strategy for public infrastructure is coordination among City departments and between neighboring jurisdictions and agencies, including Custer County and state and federal agencies. Currently, Miles City's utilities and public works departments coordinate maintenance and replacement of streets with that of water and sewer infrastructure. For example, if road work is being done that tears up a street, the City will take the opportunity to also replace or maintain exposed water and sewer lines and address sidewalk, curbs and gutters. This level of coordination provides for efficient use of tax payers dollars while also ensuring that public infrastructure is maintained at an acceptable level.



1 Maintain Existing Infrastructure

Objective 1.1

Continue with and expand pavement preservation program.

Objective 1.2

Develop a GIS based asset management program to track the condition and maintenance needs of public infrastructure.

Objective 1.3

Work on implementing the recommendations from the forthcoming water and sewer capacity study.

Objective 1.4

Maintain and update a capital improvements plan for all public infrastructure improvements.

Objective 1.5

Pursue planning, funding and construction of a dike to contain a 500-year flood event.

2 Coordinate Service Extensions and Expansions with Anticipated Growth and Future Land Use Patterns

Objective 2.1

Extend sewer and water infrastructure to areas where residential and commercial growth is occurring and expected to continue.

Objective 2.2

Create a redundant water supply system for existing developed areas to the south of I-94.

Objective 2.3

Extend streets to new residential development in a grid to maintain connectivity to Miles City's existing street network.

3 Increase Mobility and Transportation Access for All

Objective 3.1

Develop a bicycle network connecting residential neighborhoods and retail centers.

Objective 3.2

Work with human service agencies on increasing availability of ADA para-transit service.

Objective 3.3

Extend sidewalk network to residential neighborhoods currently lacking sidewalks.

Objective 3.4

Discourage Haynes Avenue traffic from diverting through residential neighborhoods.

Objective 3.5

Work with MDT to address congestion on Haynes Avenue through transportation management and operational strategies – e.g. signal timing, access management, etc.

Objective 3.6

Realign the existing truck route so as to provide a direct route that does not travel through residential neighborhoods.

4 Maintain Public Safety

Objective 4.1

Coordinate with Miles City emergency responders on new commercial and residential development to ensure adequate response times and that sufficient infrastructure is in place.

Objective 4.2

Maintain mutual aid agreements with Custer County Police and Fire.

Objective 4.3

Add emergency response resources commensurate with need as Miles City continues to grow.

Parks and Trails



Parks and trails are an important quality of life component for cities of all sizes. However, parks and trails are more than simply recreational amenities, they are integral components of a city's infrastructure, helping to define the image of the city and directly contributing to the ability of a community to attract residents and new businesses. Additionally, parks and trails serve to increase the value of adjacent properties and provide valued green space in city environments.

Currently Miles City has a wide variety of parks spread throughout the City. Miles City has over 200 acres of parks offering a range of activities valued by the community including, swimming, sports activities, wildlife viewing, frisbee golf, fishing, playgrounds, and general relaxation. Spotted Eagle Recreation Area is one the City's most popular parks offering areas for picnicking, wildlife viewing, swimming, and habitat for local wildlife. Denton Sports Complex on the west end of downtown is another valued park with a swimming pool, sports facilities, and walking paths. A full list of Miles City's parks can be found in Table 1.

Parks in Miles City are maintained by the City's Parks Department, which takes care of building maintenance, mowing, weed control, underground sprinkler care, garbage service, tree trimming, and where applicable, snow removal and sidewalk maintenance.

The highest current priority for parks is renovation of the Connors Stadium in the Denton Sports Complex. This historic area was developed during the Great Depression and is in need of several improvements. A tax deductible fund has been set up to help pay for improvements.

There are several vacant and underutilized lots in and around Miles City, which, with a little love and sweat equity, could become community assets. There are several options available for developing small pocket parks and/or community gardens. If implemented these locations could turn into spaces for residents and visitors to gather and enjoy Miles City neighborhoods. One way to implement this would be to reach out to the Master Gardner program (through the MSU Extension Office), or local garden clubs, to design, build, and maintain a community garden or pocket park. This approach is used by communities throughout Montana with great success.

Table 1 - Miles City Parks

PARK	DESCRIPTION
Denton Sports Complex	The Complex includes Connors Stadium, Jaycee Park, Legion Park, Riverside Park, Scanlon Lake, and Tedesco Field.
Connors Stadium	Baseball field - currently undergoing roof replacement and upgrades to grandstands and restrooms.
Jaycee Park	Athletic Fields.
Legion Park	Tennis courts, nursery, and 2 acres to turf around American Legion Building. Park shop and four outbuildings.
Riverside Park	Picnic & shelter, playground, gazebo, bathrooms, horseshoe pit, and basketball court.
Scanlan Natural Oasis	11 million gallon/50 meter lake with pool house, docks, diving boards, and two acres of grassland surrounding the lake.
Tedesco Field	Babe Ruth baseball and Miles Community College Pioneer baseball in the fall.
Cook Lake	Lake with three acres of grass.
Wibaux Park	Picnic tables, playground, wading pool, shelter, bathrooms, fountain, and basketball court.
Bender Park	Three softball fields, Pee Wee Football, Garfield play days, restrooms, storage shop, concession stand, and picnic area.
Soccer Complex	Soccer Field with manicured turf.
Water Plant	Turf grass, picnic area, horseshoe pit, and bathrooms.
Triangle Park	Playground, picnic area, sidewalks and grass area.
Spotted Eagle	Restrooms, picnic tables, fishing platform, swimming area, gun club, trails, and benches.
Veterans Park	Drinking fountain, gazebo, and Christmas tree set up.
Anderson Park	Open Space with bench.
Milwaukee Park	Frisbee golf course, picnic tables, benches, and playground.



There are two designated off-street trails in Miles City. The Spotted Eagle Recreation Area has 2.1 miles of walking paths and the Fairgrounds walking path is 1.5 miles, starting and ending at Riverside Park. The Dike Road on the existing levee, while not technically a trail, is used extensively by bicyclists and pedestrians in Miles City.

Outlook

While Miles City has a robust parks system in place, the trail system in town needs to be further developed to provide better connections between residential neighborhoods and points of interest in the City, including exiting parks, schools, and downtown. Currently Miles City's draft Trails Master Plan (which is not completed) calls for expanding trails in the following manner:

- North of Riverside Park along the banks of the Tongue and Yellowstone Rivers.
- North from the existing Fairgrounds trail to Pumping Plant Park
- North along Highway 59 across the Yellowstone River

Going forward Miles City will need to focus efforts on completing these planned trail segments as well as planning for additional trails that provide safe and seamless connections for trail users. In addition to building new trails Miles City will also need to develop accompanying bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that will provide safe routes from residential neighborhoods to the City's trail system. While Miles City currently has an expansive sidewalk system in place, the bicycle network is currently not well developed. Fortunately, many of Miles City's residential streets are conducive to bicycling as they are low volume, low speed, and provide ample room for both cars and bicyclists to share the road safely. With a little paint and bike route signage Miles City can develop a bicycle network that will complement the City's trail system.

Figure 12 displays existing and planned trails in Miles City as well as a conceptual layout for future trails and a bicycle network. It is important to note that the conceptual layout is not intended to note exactly where future trails and bicycle facilities should be located. Rather it is intended to give Miles City an idea of the kind of connections that are needed to develop a robust trail and bicycle network.

Below are several options for trail and bicycle network improvements in Miles City.

Off-Street Paths

Off-street paths are physically separated from roads and are designed to accommodate a variety of non-motorized transportation modes including walking, biking, and skateboarding.

Signage Improvements

In downtown and residential neighborhoods the City could add wayfinding signs to direct people to bike routes, trails, parks, and other attractions in the City.

Bike Lanes

Bike lanes are designated by a white stripe on the road, a bicycle symbol, and signage that alerts drivers that a portion of the road is dedicated to bicyclists

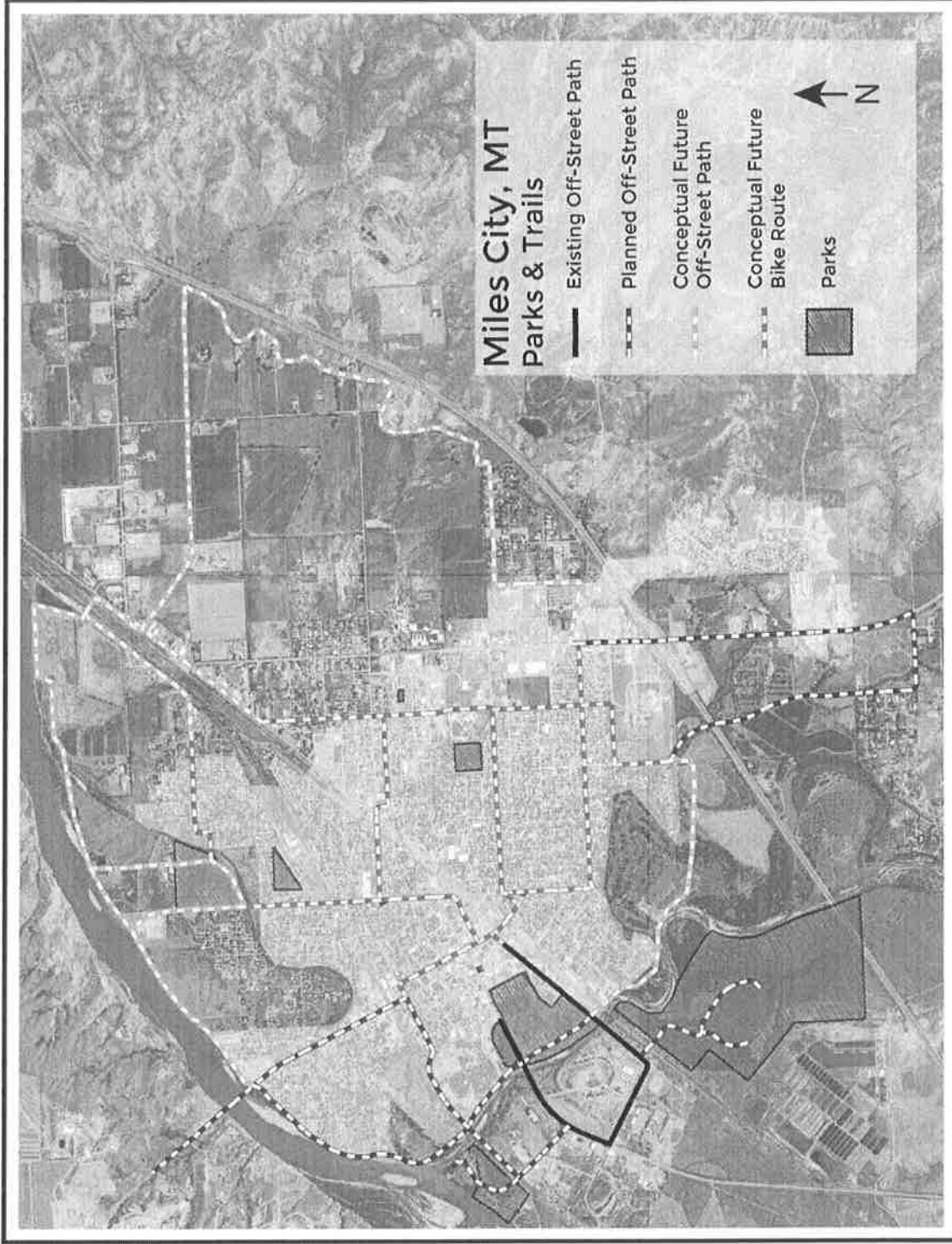
Bike Boulevards

Bike boulevards are low-speed, low-volume streets that have been enhanced for bicycle travel. Bike boulevards are designed to give priority to bicyclists as through traffic by discouraging cut-through vehicle traffic but allowing local vehicle traffic. This is achieved through small design improvements ranging from signage to traffic calming elements.

Sharrows

Sharrows are a shared lane bicycle marking, indicating to motorists that bicycles are allowed to use the full lane. Streets with sharrows do not have bike lane markings.

Figure 12 - Miles City Parks & Trails Map



1 Develop a Long-Term Vision for Parks and Trails in Miles City

Objective 1.1

Objective 1.1 – Complete trails master plan.

Objective 1.2

Improve Access to Yellowstone River.

2 Create Safe Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections Between Parks, Residential Neighborhoods, Schools, Downtown, and other Miles City Attractions

Objective 2.1

Build trails identified in Miles City's Trails Master Plan Map.

Objective 2.2

Build an off-street trail loop around Miles City.

3 Build Capacity to Maintain Existing Parks and Trails

Objective 3.1

Hire seasonal and/or full-time staff for trails maintenance and development of new trails.

4 Provide More Open Spaces in Residential Neighborhoods

Objective 4.1

As opportunities arise, acquire land that may be unsuitable for development and develop public parks or return to open space.

Objective 4.2

Develop pockets parks or community gardens on vacant and underutilized parcels.

Objective 4.3

Renovate Connors Stadium and the Denton Sports Complex.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Introduction

The Community of Miles City consists of the people who live and work within the City limits and also the surrounding area of Custer County. Compatible policies, coordinated services and regular communication between the City and County – as well as with federal and state agencies – are necessary for effective governance, to address issues of mutual interest and to provide efficient use of taxpayer dollars. This chapter describes how Miles City plans to coordinate and cooperate with other governments and agencies on matters related to the growth policy.

Custer County

Although relations between the City and County have been strained at times in recent years, both City and County officials recognize there is value in coordinating services and working together for the good of the community. The City and County maintain a mutual aid agreement for fire protection and an interlocal agreement for public health services, as well as shared library, animal control and emergency operations dispatch services. The City intends to maintain and renew these agreements as appropriate in the coming years.

In light of tight budgets there may be other areas where efficiencies can be found, such as floodplain permitting, planning and zoning or grants administration, and the City intends to keep an eye out for such mutually beneficial opportunities. Where services are combined or shared, interlocal agreements will typically be used to clearly identify duties, cost sharing, accountability and other elements that are critical to providing shared services.

City and County Planning Boards

Until recently the City and County shared a planning board. A shared planning board can be an effective way to provide for consistent policy and clear communication between City and County officials. However, there was concern with decisions

being made by City officials on development applications in the County, so the County dropped out of this arrangement and formed its own planning board. Because the City has great interest in how its outskirts develop, as of this writing the City still implements zoning within two miles of the City limits and intends to do so unless and until the County adopts zoning for that area.

Another arrangement that provides for effective representation for landowners is for the City and County to adopt consistent land use regulations (e.g., zoning and subdivision rules), but final decisions on permit applications are made by either City or County officials, depending on where the development permit is requested. In such cases, City officials have final say on applications in the City and County officials have final say on applications in the County. See Figure 13 for a flow chart outlining this decision making structure. The City intends to propose this planning board structure to the County. In the event this does not come to pass, at a minimum an annual or biannual meeting of the boards would be a good way to ensure communication and provide opportunity to work on projects of mutual interest.

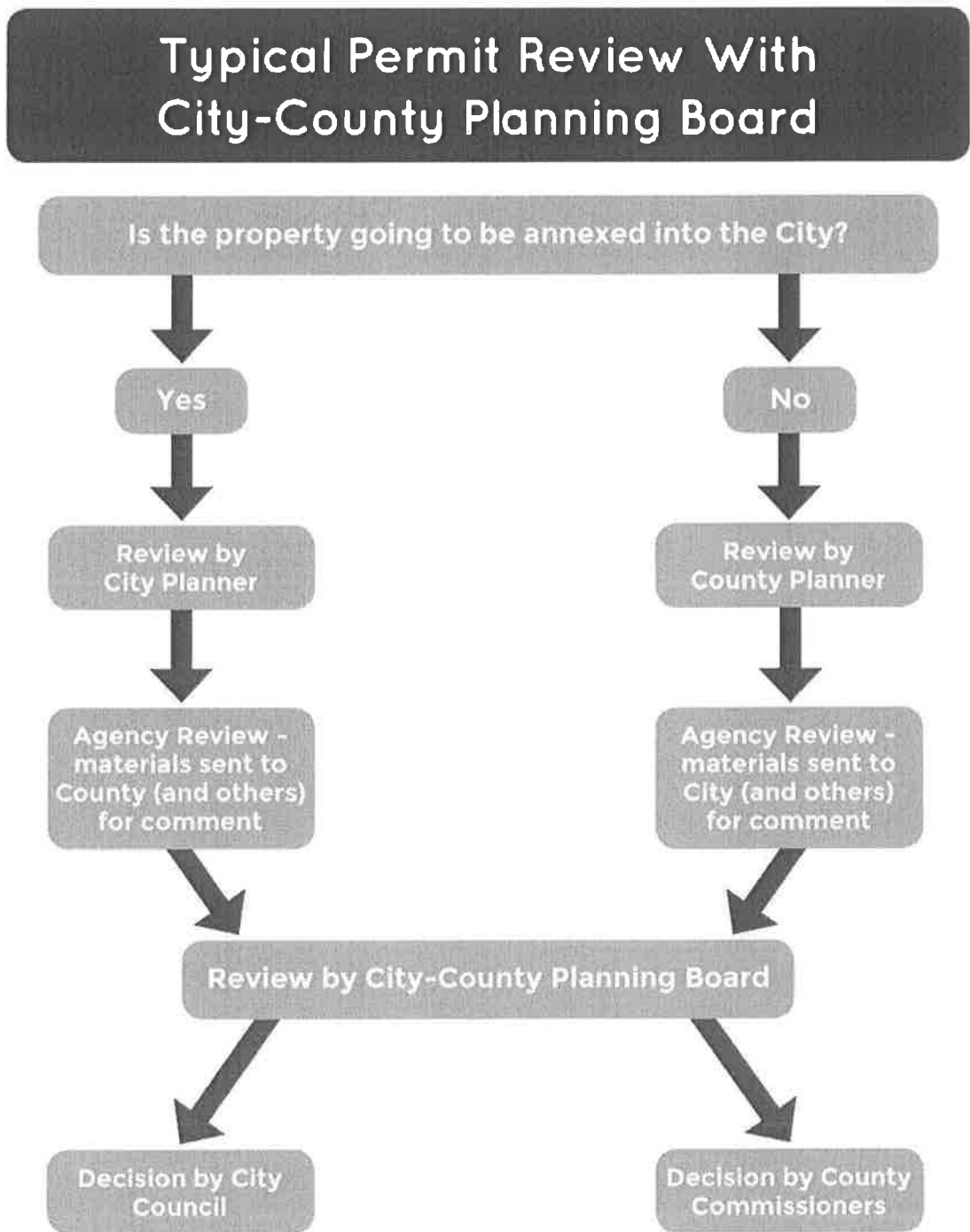
Annexation

When property is annexed into the City, the County's tax rolls will be reduced. The City intends to provide notice and the opportunity for comment to the County whenever annexation is proposed.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks maintains an access to the Yellowstone River off of Wells Street in Miles City and also operates the Pirogue Island State Park, located across the Yellowstone River to the north of Miles City. The Wells Street river access is fairly primitive but is heavily used at times. Part of the City's economic development strategy is to attract outdoor enthusiasts to the area so it would be beneficial to work with FWP to improve and expand access. The City intends to work with FWP on projects as opportunities arise, including developing an additional boat launch into the Yellowstone River. FWP has indicated this may be a project worth pursuing.

Figure 13 - Potential City-County Planning Board Review Process



Montana Department of Transportation

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) maintains and operates several roadways within Miles City. Because new development impacts the safety and efficiency of traffic along state routes, the City intends to seek comment from MDT on significant development applications and work with MDT to ensure development does not compromise the transportation system. Additionally, Miles City plans to work with MDT to help improve and provide street improvements, trails, sidewalks and other transportation improvements throughout the jurisdiction as opportunities arise. One such opportunity may be improvement of the west entrance to the City; MDT has expressed a willingness to contribute to that project.

Fort Keogh Agricultural Research Station

Fort Keogh is an agricultural research station run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the City's west boundary. Fort Keogh provides several community services and works closely with Miles Community College to provide laboratory space and classes. Its leadership has expressed a willingness to help improve the west entrance to the community along I-94 and provide river access to sportsmen. The City plans to engage Fort Keogh to help improve the west entrance and work on other projects as opportunities arise.



1 Provide High Quality Service to the Public Through Improved Intergovernmental Communication and Coordination

Objective 1.1

Seek areas where consolidation of programs results in efficiencies to taxpayers and also provides effective representation and services.

Objective 1.2

Establish a regular, quarterly meeting with officials from City, County, state and federal agencies to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern.

Objective 1.3

Explore the possibility of re-forming a City-County Planning Board and establishing a permitting arrangement to provide effective communication and representation.

Objective 1.4

Send notice of, and request comment on, land use actions to the County such as zoning and annexation petitions.

Objective 1.5

Partner with City, County, state and federal agencies on an opportunistic basis in order to provide the community with better resources and services.

Subdivision Review

State law requires growth policies to include statements regarding subdivision review as part of the growth policy's implementation strategy. This chapter provides Miles City's strategy to implement the growth policy during review of subdivision proposals, which address subdivision review criteria and how public hearings are conducted. This strategy works in conjunction with the Miles City Subdivision Regulations, last updated in 2014.

Subdivision Review Criteria

The Montana Subdivision and Platting Act requires that subdivision proposals be evaluated for their impact on seven criteria:

- agriculture
- agricultural water user facilities
- local services
- the natural environment
- wildlife
- wildlife habitat and
- public health and safety

State law requires that growth policies include a statement explaining how governing bodies will define those criteria and evaluate and make decisions regarding proposed subdivisions with respect to these criteria. The following are Miles City's definitions of those criteria, how they are evaluated and how decisions are made with respect to those criteria during subdivision review.

Agriculture

Agriculture means the direct use of land for grazing and cropping to produce food, feed, and fiber commodities. This includes crop cultivation and tillage of the soil; grazing for milk, egg, meat, and breeding animal production; and animal feed production. It does not include farm animal confinement facilities or structures associated with farming and ranching.

A subdivision proposal may have an unacceptable impact on agriculture if it permanently removes good and prime irrigated soils from agricultural production, does not include measures to control noxious weeds from proliferating to surrounding agricultural properties, does not fence livestock from entering subdivision lots, does not provide a sufficient buffer between residential developments and surrounding agricultural operations, does not take steps to prevent pets from harassing livestock, or does not notify future property owners of the right to farm by surrounding agricultural landowners. If a subdivision proposal in an agricultural area includes adequate measures to minimize the impacts on agricultural operations and resources, it is likely to be found to have little or no significant impact on agriculture.

Agricultural water user facilities

Agricultural water user facilities means those facilities which provide water for agricultural land or the production of agricultural crops or animals including, but not limited to, canals, ditches, pipes, water-control devices, springs, dams and dugouts with associated collection areas, and water-spreading systems.

A subdivision proposal may be found to have an unacceptable impact on agricultural water user facilities if it does not comply with the irrigation provisions of the Miles City Subdivision Regulations or fails to implement a reasonable mechanism for delivering irrigation water to lots that will be assessed for irrigation district operation and maintenance, does not include sufficient easements for ditch and system maintenance, or is likely to result in the disruption of service to other water users. If the proposal complies with the subdivision regulations, includes measures to limit the impacts to other users and meets the requirements of the Tongue & Yellowstone (T & Y) Irrigation District, the proposal is likely to be viewed as having no significant impact on agricultural water user facilities.

Local services

Local services means any and all services and facilities that local government entities are authorized to provide. Examples of local services include, but are not limited to, those related to water, sewer, storm water, solid waste, transportation, emergency services, law enforcement, education, recreation, and public utilities and telecommunications.

A subdivision proposal may be found to have an unacceptable impact on local services if it provides a substantial and unmitigated demand on local services, decreases the service provider's ability to provide timely services to the existing public, does not provide adequate facilities for service providers to serve the

subdivision, provides barriers to service provisions, or is found to result in similar impacts without appropriate mitigation. If service providers comment on a subdivision and all applicable service provider and regulatory requirements are met, a proposal is likely to have minimal impacts on local services.

Natural environment

Natural environment means the physical conditions which exist within a given area, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, sights, sound, and smells and objects of historic, aesthetic, or community significance.

A subdivision proposal may have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment if it is found to have direct or indirect negative impacts on the physical conditions that comprise an area's natural environment or if the subdivision fails to comply with the applicable federal, state, and local regulations related to the natural environment. Any such negative impacts may require mitigation efforts by the subdivider. If a subdivision complies with all applicable regulations and mitigation measures are properly implemented, the proposal is likely to have no significant impact on the natural environment.

Public health and safety

Public health and safety means a condition of optimal well-being, free from danger, risk, or injury for the community at large or for all people, not merely for the welfare of a specific individual or a small class of persons. Examples of 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.

A subdivision proposal may have an unacceptable effect on public health and safety if it is located in an area that cannot be effectively served by emergency responders or is located in an area that is prone to natural or man-made hazards. Examples are development on steep slopes or within high fire hazard areas or areas not served by a fire department. If steps are taken to ensure that the residents of a subdivision can be adequately served by emergency service providers, the dangers posed by natural or man made hazards are mitigated, and the proposal complies with state and local regulations, a subdivision proposal is likely to be viewed as having little impact on public health and safety.

Wildlife

Wildlife means living creatures (e.g. mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish) which are neither human nor domesticated.

A subdivision proposal may have an unacceptable effect on wildlife if it directly displaces or removes wildlife from an area or it does not include measures to prevent conflict between wildlife and subdivision inhabitants, including pets. Any such negative impacts may require mitigation efforts by the subdivider. Examples of wildlife mitigation measures include preserving vegetative cover along riparian and migration corridors, requiring building setbacks from water bodies, reducing development density in areas of important habitat, donating a monetary sum to an applicable wildlife or habitat preservation organization, and developing covenants that educate lot buyers and reduce the potential for human-wildlife conflict. If mitigation measures are properly implemented or a subdivision is not in a known wildlife area, the proposal is likely to have no significant impact on wildlife.

Wildlife habitat

Wildlife habitat geographic areas containing physical or biological features essential to wildlife for living, breeding, or nesting either permanently or seasonally, or essential to the conservation of listed endangered and threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

A subdivision proposal may have an unacceptable effect on wildlife habitat if it destroys or otherwise removes important or critical wildlife habitat or concentrates human-related activities near important or critical wildlife habitat in a manner that has a significant negative impact on the wildlife the habitat supports. Any such negative impacts may require mitigation efforts by the subdivider. Examples of wildlife habitat mitigation measures include preserving vegetative cover along riparian and migration corridors, requiring building setbacks from water bodies, reducing development density in areas of important habitat, donating a monetary sum to an applicable wildlife or habitat preservation organization, and developing covenants that educate lot buyers and reduce the potential for human-wildlife conflict. If mitigation measures are properly implemented or a subdivision is not in the vicinity of important or critical wildlife habitat, the proposal is likely to have no significant impact on wildlife habitat.

Public Hearings on Subdivision Proposals

This section describes how all public hearings will be conducted for the review of subdivision proposals when a public hearing is required. Minutes shall be taken at all public hearings and be made available to the public. Public hearings shall be conducted in the following order:

1. The Chairman of the Planning Board shall open the public hearing and introduce the subdivision proposal to be heard.
2. The Planning Board shall determine whether proper notice of the public hearing has been provided. If proper notice has not been provided, the public hearing shall be re-scheduled.
3. The Chairman shall ask if any Board members wish to declare a conflict of interest in the matter to be heard, and excuse any member who declares such a conflict from participation in the hearing.
4. The Chairman of the Planning Board shall ask for a staff report to be presented.
5. The subdivision administrator shall give an overview of the staff report and proposal, evaluating the proposal relative to state law, local regulations and the applicable review criteria, and make a recommendation to the Planning Board.
6. Members of the Planning Board may ask questions of the subdivision administrator.
7. The Chairman shall ask the subdivider or his/her designated agent(s) to present the subdivision proposal, describe pertinent features of the proposal, and respond to the staff report and recommendation.
8. Members of the Planning Board may ask questions of the subdivider.
9. The Chairman of the Planning Board shall open the public hearing to public comment. The Planning Board may direct all public comment to be given in a manner and of a limited duration per person as determined by the Chairman and members of the Planning Board.

10. All members of the public choosing to speak shall identify themselves prior to commenting and shall direct comments to the Board and not members of the audience or the subdivider.
11. After public comment has been received, the Chairman may then close the hearing to public comment.
12. The Planning Board shall deliberate and make a recommendation on the proposal to the City Council. During the Board's deliberation, any Board member may ask further questions of the subdivision administrator, the subdivider, and the public.
13. Any member of the Board may move to recommend approval, conditional approval, or denial of a proposal. Any motion requires a second prior to the Board voting on the motion. All Board members may vote on the motion or abstain from voting.
14. If unanswered questions persist, the Board may also ask the subdivider for an extension of the preliminary review period and if an extension is agreed upon, the Board may continue the public hearing to a date, time, and place announced during the hearing.
15. The Planning Board shall forward its recommendation to the City Council for a final decision prior to the mandatory review deadline.

Wildland-Urban Interface

Section 76-1-601(3)(j)MCA requires an evaluation of the potential for fire and wildland fire in the jurisdictional area. The statute requires a discussion of whether or not there is a need to:

- Delineate the wildland-urban interface; and
- Adopt regulations requiring defensible space around structures, adequate ingress and egress to and from structures, and developments to facilitate fire suppression activities and provide adequate water supply for fire protection.

Need to Delineate Wildland-Urban Interface

Montanans know that every summer wildfires are likely to occur throughout the state. Wildland fires are commonly associated with heavily forested areas although grasslands are also a significant threat. While Miles City is not surrounded by forests it is adjacent to grasslands. With the right temperature and wind conditions, these fuels can pose a threat to nearby homes. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) defines the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) as:

“A WUI fire situation exists anywhere that structures are located close to natural vegetation. A fire can spread from the vegetation to structures or vice-versa. A WUI can vary from a large housing development adjacent to natural vegetation to a structure(s) surrounded by natural vegetation. The two general categories of WUI are:

The boundary WUI means an area where a clearly defined, linear boundary of homes meets wildland vegetation. Typically, this sort of interface is on the fringe of large towns; and

The intermix WUI means an area where structures are scattered among or mixed with wildland vegetation, without a clearly defined boundary. Typically, the intermix WUI is in rural areas where people have subdivided wildlands into small parcels of 1 to 40 acres.

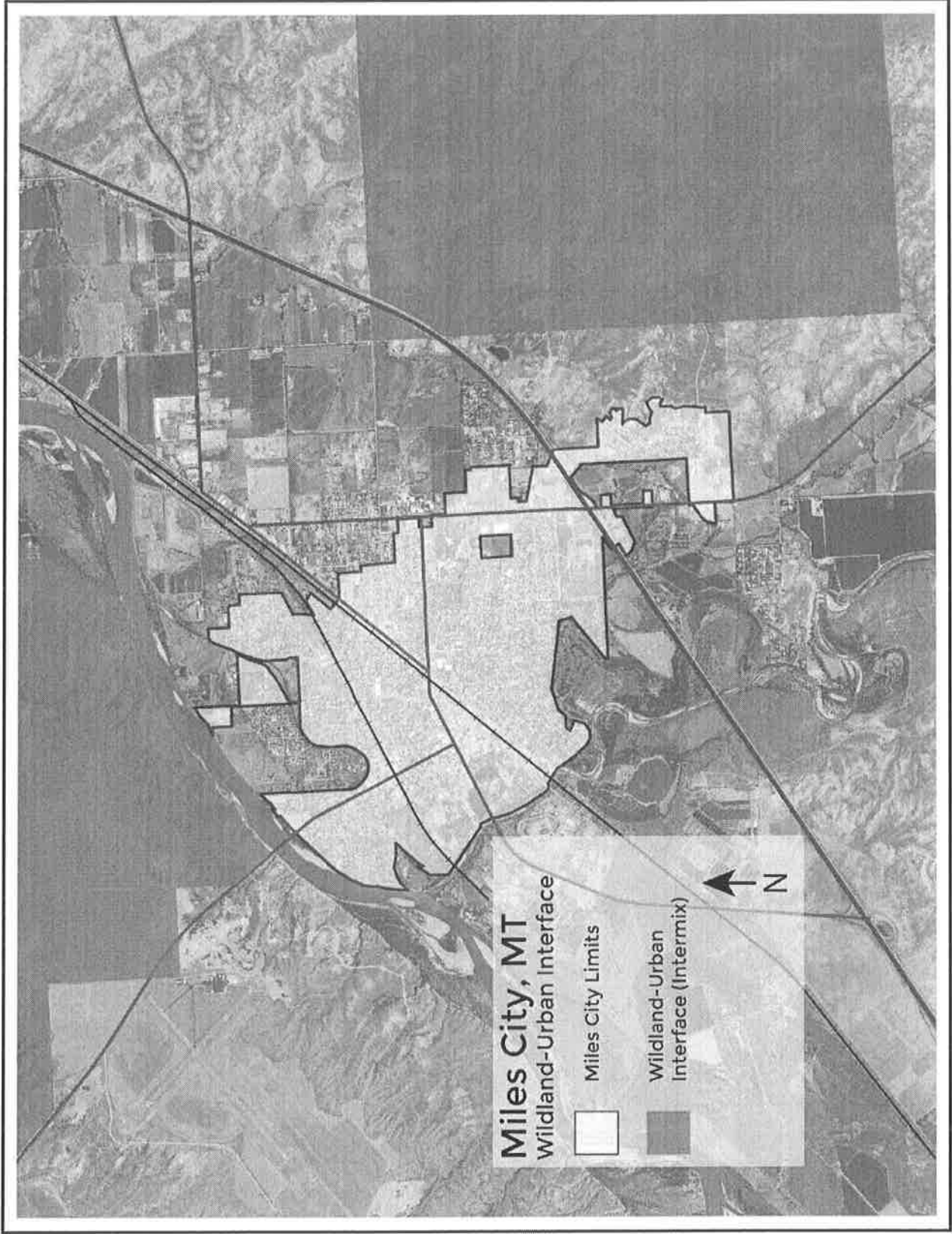
In 2011 the Montana DNRC identified parcels in the WUI for all counties in Montana, including Custer County. As can be seen in Figure 14, there are several WUI intermix areas in Custer County adjacent to Miles City limits. While the map does not show

Miles City as being the in the WUI there are portions of Miles City that border natural grass vegetation. With that being said, Miles City fits the description of the boundary WUI. The areas of Miles City where the boundary WUI is most evident are south of I-94. Other areas in Miles City abut the Tongue and Yellowstone Rivers or irrigated agriculture land with little capacity to carry fire.

Need to adopt WUI Regulations

While there is a boundary WUI in Miles City there is not a need to adopt regulations for defensible space, access, or water supply. Miles City is largely surrounded by irrigated land and the Tongue and Yellowstone Rivers. Additionally, most structures in the Boundary WUI have lawns, which offer protection. Miles City is also served by Miles City Fire Rescue, with relatively short response times throughout the City. In addition, much of the City is served by public water.

Figure 14 - Miles City Wildland-Urban Interface Map



1 Ensure New Development is Protected from Risks Associated with Wildland Fire

Objective 1.1

Work with Miles City Fire Rescue and Custer County Fire Department to ensure all new development has adequate water for fire protection and egress routes.