

PART ONE: BACKGROUND

This part describes the overall purpose of the growth policy and the process used to create it.

PURPOSE OF THIS GROWTH POLICY

This is a growth policy for the planning jurisdiction of Pondera County. A growth policy is a comprehensive plan or master plan. It sets out the vision and goals for the county and it also addresses desired future land use.

AUTHORITY FOR THE GROWTH POLICY

Counties and municipalities are authorized under state law (76-1-601 through 76-1-606, MCA) to prepare growth policies. State laws specify what should be included in a growth policy and the process for adopting and revising growth policies.

Montana growth policy law also states that a growth policy is to be used as a guide for general policy and pattern of development for streets and roads, public buildings, public utilities, water and sewer facilities, and zoning.

The Pondera County growth policy conforms to requirements of state law for growth policies. It is intended as a policy guide to the future. The plan is not regulatory and does not have regulatory force and does not confer authority to regulate that is not otherwise specifically authorized by state law.

TIMELINE FOR THE PLAN

The Pondera County Growth Policy is a long-range comprehensive plan. The timeline is approximately 20 years.

PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES

The planning area for the Pondera County Growth Policy is the entire county, including those lands within the boundaries of the Blackfeet Reservation that are owned in fee, but exclusive of the incorporated areas of the city of Conrad and the town of Valier.

PLANNING PROCESS

Recent efforts to plan for Pondera County's future have been ongoing since 2006, when survey was conducted in Dupuyer. In 2009, meetings were held in Dupuyer, Brady, and Conrad to discuss growth policies and related issues. A county-wide survey was also conducted in 2009, but there were too few responses to be able to summarize results county-wide. Committees continued to meet to discuss growth policies in 2009.

In 2010, Valier, Conrad, and Pondera County decided to proceed with a growth policy. After issuing a Request for Proposals and reviewing a number of proposals, the Cossitt Consulting Team was selected to provide technical assistance on the growth policy.

The County Commissioners appointed members to a Steering Committee for the growth policy. This committee met seven times and hosted two public open houses. They prepared a draft growth policy, which they presented to the Pondera County Planning Board in March 2011. The Planning Board reviewed the plan and held a public hearing before finalizing their recommendation to the County Commissioners.

The County Commissioners considered the recommendations from the steering committee, the planning board, and comments from the public, and adopted this Pondera County Growth Policy, following procedures outlined in state law.