Revised Growth Management Action Plan *for the Madison Valley*

SPRING 2007

SCOTT BOSSE

Preamble

The Madison Growth Solutions process is an inclusive, citizen-based grassroots effort to address growth in the Madison Valley. Launched in the summer of 2005, this collaborative process involved many citizens from diverse backgrounds in exploring options and identifying actions to positively manage growth from Raynolds Pass to Harrison/ Pony. Madison Growth Solutions has organized numerous opportunities for the community to be involved and give input including: 10 widely attended educational public forums, 3 work sessions, 2 box-holder mailings, on-going outreach to community leaders and stakeholders, and regular newspaper articles. The goal is to get this Plan adopted and incorporated into the Madison County Growth Policy by the Madison County Commission, and then implemented by county officials and the citizenry.

LANE ADAMSON

Vision

Ten years from now, we hope Madison County is still a place we're proud to call home. Still blessed with people who are hard working yet fun loving, independent yet compassionate and generous in time of need. Still devoted to supporting our youth and senior populations. Still relatively free of crime and pollution. Still rich in water, scenic beauty, wildlife, historical, and recreational resources. Still rural in character and agriculturally productive. Still rooted in the tradition of being good stewards of the land.

Ten years from now, we hope Madison County's economy has gained strength and diversity, with agricultural households enjoying a more financially secure position. We hope our river bottoms, hayfields, rangelands and foothills have not become cluttered by scattered development. We hope noxious weeds have lost their foothold on our landscape. We hope our towns have retained their small-town atmosphere, while offering a variety of goods and services to local residents and visitors. We hope families of modest income levels can afford to live here. We hope local public services have adequate funds to support our increased population. We hope the art of being a good neighbor is widely practiced by both newcomers and old-timers. We hope we have become even better stewards of the land.

Overarching Principles

- Decisions and actions of individuals affect other individuals, the neighborhood and the community as a whole.
- Under the law, all citizens have protected rights to health, safety and welfare.
- Under the law, individual property rights are protected.

Guiding Principles

- Encourage "infill" and discourage "sprawl" by locating new development close to existing services and communities and by supporting the expansion of community infrastructure.
- Protect our water resources and river corridors.
- Preserve our most productive agricultural lands.
- New development should pay its own way.
- Respect private property rights and community values.
- Maintain open space, including wildlife corridors and viewsheds.
- Maintain a sense of community.
- Actively manage growth using a combination of rules, education, and incentives.

Shared Community Values

- Open Space
- Wildlife
- Small Town Attributes
- Natural Beauty
- Ranching
- Viewshed
- Outdoor Recreation and Public Land Access
- Healthy economy, including good jobs and housing opportunities
- Quality low impact development

Recommendations for Action

When implementing these recommended actions, efforts should be taken to provide a range of landowner options and opportunities.

MILLIE ARMSTRONG

#1. Adopt policies to preserve, protect and provide open space, viewsheds, agricultural lands, critical wildlife habitat and diverse housing opportunities in the Madison Valley. As part of this effort, develop and implement a plan using financial incentives and disincentives.

a. Direct growth to favorable areas, as suggested by the Guiding Principles. Apply tools such as:
   1) An Open Space Bond, which requires voter approval to provide funds to purchase lands, easements or development rights.
   2) Transfer and/or Purchase of Development Rights, which places new development in the most suitable locations and compensates landowners where development is less suitable.
   3) Voluntary Conservation Easements, which enable willing landowners and willing easement holders to limit development, continue agricultural use, and promote conservation on individual properties.

b. Encourage clustering and appropriate densities to discourage sprawl, promote infill development and provide housing opportunities that are attainable to all who live in the Madison Valley.
   Apply tools such as:
   1) Transfer of Development Rights
   2) Density Bonus System, which allows increased density in return for special project features (e.g. substantial open space preservation or provisions for affordable housing).
   3) Development standards such as those outlined in the Code of the New West (guidelines for signage and billboards, compatibility with the landscape, ridgeline and viewshed protections, wildfire protection, and dark skies preservation).
   4) Development review process incentives, such as reduced fees or fewer "hoops to jump through."

c. Use building setbacks to protect rivers and streams (Setbacks along the Madison River currently exist for subdivisions approved since 1993. Setbacks along streams in the Madison Valley have been in place on subdivisions approved since 2000. There are currently no setback requirements for construction on land not subject to subdivision review).

d. With new development, create trail systems and non-motorized paths.

Implementation Steps:

- Use a combination of science-based assessments and shared community values to define terms such as critical wildlife habitat and viewsheds.
- Pursue public-private dialogue (local, state, federal), and consider the interconnectedness of public and private land uses.
- Tap financial and technical assistance resources on attainable housing and open space preservation.
- Identify ways for our local land use regulations to incorporate these policies and tools.

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#2. Using the Vision, Overarching Principles and Guiding Principles, propose zoning (county-initiated or citizen-initiated) to:

- Promote a sense of community and efficient distribution of growth.
- Promote a diverse community.
- Establish development standards that are fair and equitable.
- Reflect shared community values.
- Protect private property rights.
- Protect public health, safety and welfare.

Implementation Steps:

- Provide opportunities for community education about this growth management tool. Learn about the different ways that zoning can be designed and applied with flexibility (e.g. land use, density and density bonuses, performance-based standards and overlay districts).
- Consider how other areas are managing growth.
- Follow the open, democratic, "due process" as required by law.
- Work within Montana statutes, to provide ample opportunity for landowner participation in the development, review, and revision of any specific proposals.
- Consider means for compensating landowners (e.g. transfer of development rights, purchase of development rights, open space bond, and conservation easements).

#3. Utilize our long-term Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), adopted by Madison County in 2001 to address infrastructure needs in the Madison Valley (water, sewer, roads, streets, bridges, emergency services).

- As growth continues, consider the use of development impact fees, in accordance with state law, to fund infrastructure improvements. Development impact fees are one-time cash payments to pay for new development's fair share of capital facilities.
- Research other funding sources to address infrastructure needs.

Implementation Steps:

- The Town of Ennis, other unincorporated communities, Madison County, local service providers and public land managers should work cooperatively to develop an assessment of current and future infrastructure needs.
- Update the Madison County Capital Improvements Plan as new information becomes available.

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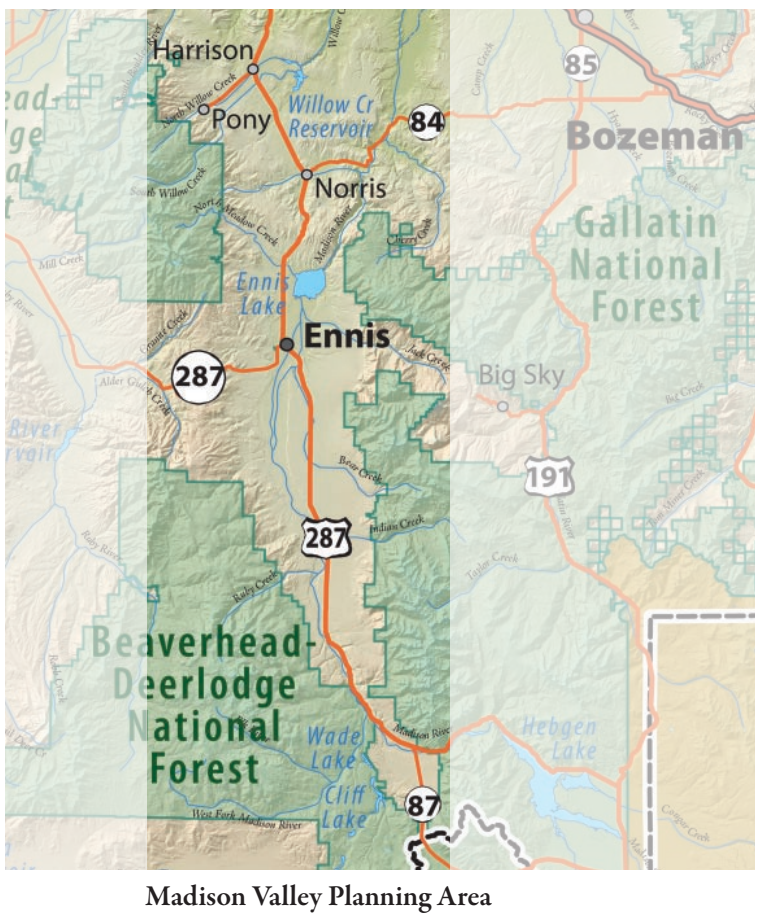
#4. Create partnerships with Madison County Economic Development Council (MCEDC) and others to create an Economic Development Plan with the following actions:

- Develop incentives to help ranchers stay in business.
- Address infrastructure to promote and encourage economic development.
- Create community-identified areas, such as enterprise zones and technology parks, which would be eligible for a variety of economic development assistance, such as low-interest loans, grants or infrastructure like roads, utilities, etc.
- Research grant funding options.
- Promote skilled workforce with education and training.
- Create higher paying job opportunities.
- Address housing issues and encourage home ownership.

Implementation Steps:

- Meet periodically with MCEDC and others to look at potential projects.
- Tap resources of other cities and counties with economic development project experience.
- Work with organizations such as the Human Resources Council (HRC-Butte), Headwaters Resource Conservation & Development and others to pursue affordable housing opportunities.

#5. Maintain a collaborative process to address continued growth and its impacts in the Madison Valley through outreach and education.



Madison Valley Planning Area

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