

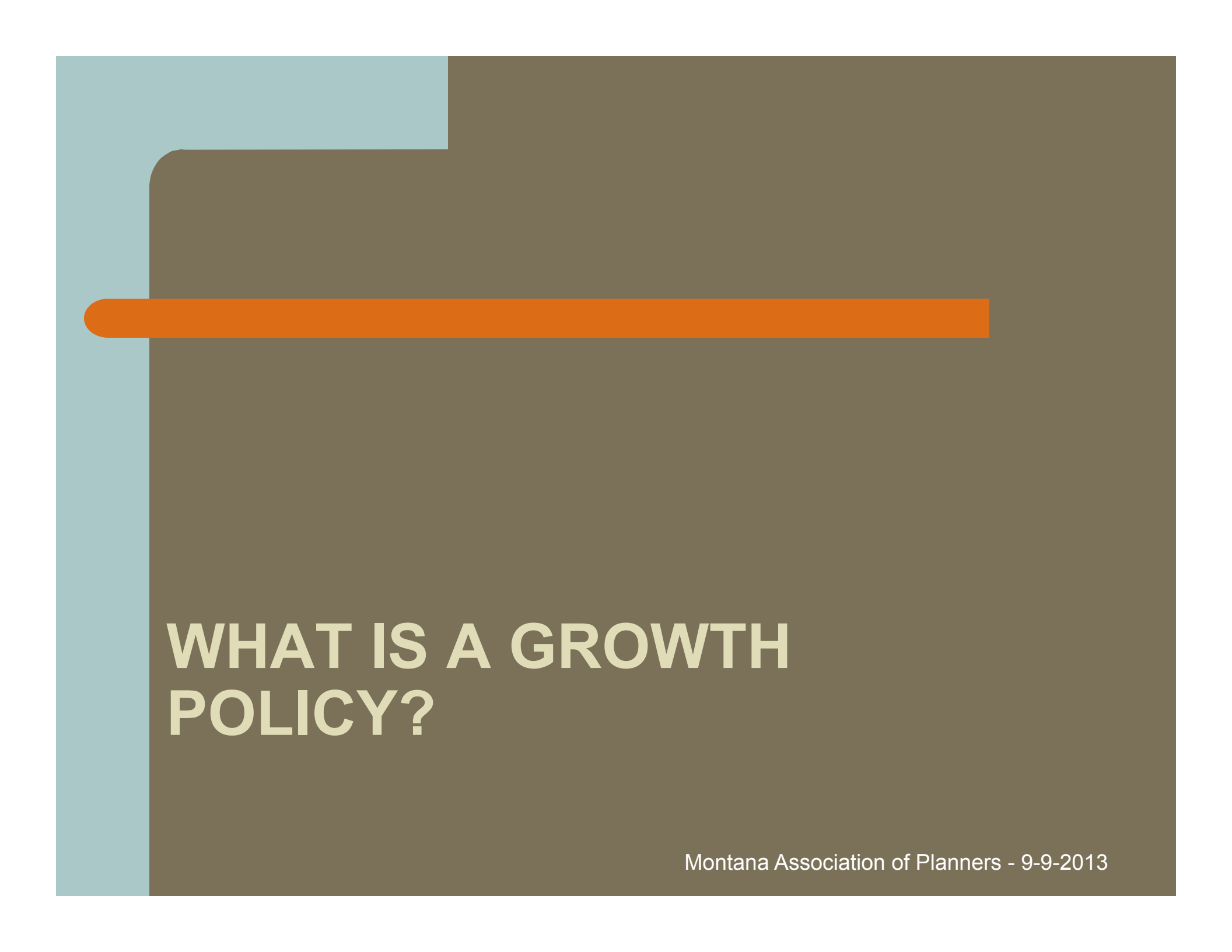
Growth Policies

Presented by Janet Cornish
CDS of Montana

Montana Association of Planners -
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Growth Policies – Presentation Overview

- What is a Growth Policy?
- What is the purpose of a Growth Policy?
- What are the contents?
- How do we involve the public?
- How is it implemented?
 - Programs and Activities
 - Regulations
- What are the Roles and Responsibilities in Developing the Document?



WHAT IS A GROWTH POLICY?

What is a Growth Policy?

- A growth policy is an official public document adopted and used by local governments as a guide for decisions regarding the development of a community.
- A growth policy may cover all or part of a jurisdictional area within a city or county.

Growth Policy is the same as:

- Master plan
- Comprehensive plan
- General plan

The 1999 Legislature changed term from “Master Plan” to “Growth Policy.”

How does it serve the community?

- The growth policy is a formalized version of the community's "to do" list.
- The statute (**76-1-601 MCA**) outlines its content.
- It is meant to provide a rational framework for decision making on those issues and opportunities facing a community:
 - Where resources will be committed.
 - How land use related issues can be managed.
 - Who will do what and when.

What it is not....

- A Growth Policy is not a regulatory document ((76-1-605(2), MCA).
- While Montana statute sets forth the contents of a Growth Policy, the extent to which each topic is covered is not governed by the State. This is a community decision.

- Nonetheless there is confusion on this point.

- 76-1-601(2)(d & e), MCA states a growth policy must contain:

- A description of the policies and regulations to be implemented.

- An implementation strategy that includes:

- Timetable for implementation

- Regulations or other tools identified in the document are *not* required to be adopted.

- Use of “shall” or “must” in the growth policy does not change this.

- Simply indicates and/or enables the community to pursue various tools, programs and regulations

- Implementation is an entirely separate public process and applicable statutes must be followed....zoning, subdivision regulations etc.

What is the Purpose of a Growth Policy?

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- To Provide a Vision for the Community's Future
 - To Measure where we have been and where we are going with respect to:
 - Land Use
 - Population
 - Housing
 - Community Facilities and Infrastructure
 - Economic and Community Development
 - Natural and Cultural Resources



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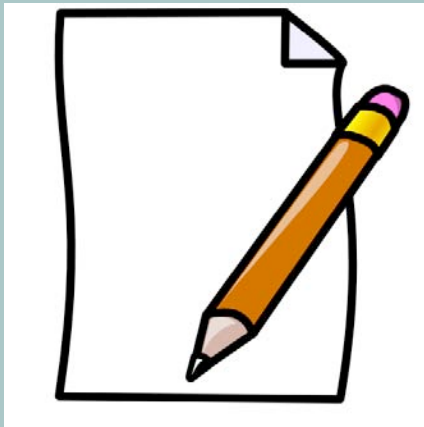
Why Prepare a Growth Policy?

- To identify community goals and objectives
- To set priorities in order to allocate resources efficiently
- To provide a framework and context for:
 - Land Use Regulations
 - Community and Economic Development Programs
 - Capital Improvement Planning

And.....

- Having a Growth Policy in place can place a city or county in an advantageous position when seeking grant support for community projects:
 - Infrastructure, Public Facilities and Services
 - Housing
 - Economic Development

Growth Policy Contents



Community Goals and Objectives

- Based on Key Findings
 - Research
 - Public Input
- Should be achievable
 - Public wants to see results from a planning effort....not a document that collects dust.

Existing Characteristics and Trends for the Life of the Growth Policy

- maps and text describing an inventory of the existing characteristics and features of the jurisdictional area
- projected trends for the life of the growth policy for these characteristics and features

Characteristics and Features

- Land Use
- Population
- Housing Needs
- Local Services
- Public Facilities
- Economic Conditions
- Natural Resources (Cultural Resources)
- Sand and Gravel Resources

Implementation Strategies

- Description of Policies, Regulations and Other Measures to meet the Goals and Objectives of the Policy
- A strategy for development, maintenance, and replacement of public infrastructure
- Timetable for implementation



Future Land Use Map: FLUM

- (FLUM) Future land use map shows land use types and densities that have been determined to be the most desirable for a particular area.
- FLUM is meant to guide future development and re-development and.....annexation

Updates and Revisions

- A List of conditions that will lead to a revision of the document
- A Timetable for reviewing the document at least once every five years and revising the policy if necessary

Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation

- Must discuss how the jurisdiction will work cooperatively with cities, towns or counties
- May include a discussion about cooperation with the Tribes, Federal and State land management agencies (etc.)

Subdivision – Related Concerns

- a statement explaining how the governing body will:
 - define the criteria in [76-3-608](#)(3)(a)- the impact of a proposed subdivision on agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, local services, the natural environment, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and public health and safety
 - evaluate and make decisions regarding proposed subdivisions with respect to the criteria in [76-3-608](#)(3)(a)
 - explain how public hearings regarding proposed subdivisions will be conducted

Wild Land Fire Provisions

- Evaluation of the potential for fire and wildland fire in the jurisdictional area
- Recommendations as to whether 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
 - adequate water supply for fire protection.



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A Growth Policy May include...

- One or more neighborhood plans
- Infrastructure development plans including inter-jurisdictional approaches
- Projected density and growth patterns
- Affordable housing plans
- Agricultural Development
- Water and Other Natural Resources Planning



Annexation (for City and Town Growth Policies)

- Should discuss in the growth policy the municipality's philosophy towards
 - Preferred areas for annexation;
 - Necessary services to accommodate growth
 - ❖ Sewer, water, fire, police etc.

Strategies for Implementing a Growth Policy

Non-Regulatory Implementation

- Programs
 - Housing
 - Economic Development
 - Downtown Revitalization
- Additional Planning and Analysis
 - Transportation Plan
 - Capital Improvements Planning
 - Housing Plans
 - Neighborhood Plans

Implementation Resources

- Local Mechanisms for funding such as SID's, Tax Increment Financing Districts, general obligation bonds, general funds
- NOTE: Some of these programs are required to have enabling language in the Growth Policy
- State and Federal resources
- Non-Profit resources
- Public Private Partnerships

Regulatory Implementation

Variety of Regulatory Tools:

- Subdivision Regulations
- Zoning
- Floodplain Regulations
- Impact Fees



NOTE: A growth policy is not necessary for all of these.

Land Use Regulatory Notes

- Subdivision
 - **76-1-606.** When a growth policy has been approved, the subdivision regulations adopted must be made in accordance with the growth policy
- Zoning
 - **76-2-201.** A county that has adopted a growth policy is authorized to adopt or amend zoning regulations for all or parts of the jurisdictional area
 - **76-2-304, MCA.** A city that has adopted a growth policy is authorized to adopt or amend zoning regulations for all or parts of the jurisdictional area

Regulatory Notes (continued)

- **76-2-304, MCA.** City zoning regulations must be made in accordance with a growth policy
- Subdivision and zoning regulations would typically be in “accordance” with the growth policy when considering all of its contents, the regulations help a community move toward achieving the goals and objectives of the policy.

Roles in Developing a Growth Policy

A Planning Board Must be in Place

- *If requested by the governing body, the planning board shall prepare a growth policy and serve in an advisory capacity. (Section 76-1-106, MCA.)*
- *The planning board may propose and the governing body may adopt additional elements of a growth policy than required under the statute. (Section 76-1-601, MCA.)*

Public Hearing Requirement

- Prior to submitting the proposed growth policy to the governing body, the planning board shall give notice and hold a public hearing on the growth policy. (Section 76-1-602, MCA.)
- The planning board must consider the recommendations and suggestions elicited at the public hearing. (Section 76-1-603, MCA.)
 - *(North 93 Neighbors v. Flathead County, 2006 MT 132.)*

Public Notice

- Local Media
- Schools and Libraries
- Newspaper
 - Inserts
 - Area Briefs
 - Legal Notice(s)
- Posters
- Notice in utility bills
- Web Based Methodologies



Adoption by the Local Governing Body

- After a public hearing, the planning board *shall* take one of three actions (Section 76-1-603, MCA.):
 - Recommend the proposed growth policy for adoption by the governing body,
 - Recommend that no growth policy be adopted, or
 - Recommend that the governing body take some other action related to preparation of a growth policy.
- The governing body *may* then adopt, revise and adopt or reject the growth policy (Section 76-1-604 (3), MCA.)

Public Participation – the Key Ingredient



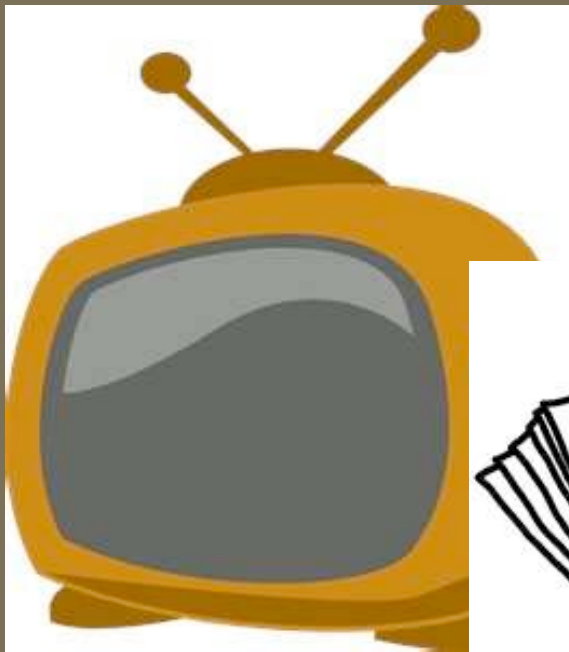
Public Meetings

- Project “Kick-Off” to Provide for Community Input, Conduct Key Person Interviews and Collect Information
- Focus Group Meetings— e.g. housing, land use, facilities
- Growth Policy Draft Document Presentations, Open Houses
- Final Adoption

Public Involvement Strategies

- General Meetings
 - Information Gathering
 - Public Review of Draft Goals, Objectives and Strategies
- Open Houses to Showcase Elements
- Focus Groups for Special elements – e.g. housing, land use, facilities
- Surveys
- Web Based Methodologies

Public Participation – Marketing



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The Growth Policy Belongs to the Community

